



10402

The Savage Foes of Solomon Kane

BASED ON THE WORKS OF ROBERT E. HOWARD



The SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

Written by: Rush Lilavivat and John Goff

Edited by: Jodi Thies Black, Joel Kinstle, and Piotr Korys

Interior Art by: Louie De Martinis and Kieron O’Gorman

Cover Art by: Daniel Rudnicki

Cover Design by: Robin Elliott

Layout and Maps by: Joel Kinstle

© 2010 Solomon Kane Inc. Solomon Kane® and related logos, characters, names, and distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of Solomon Kane Inc. All rights reserved.

© 2010 Pinnacle Entertainment Group. The Savage World of Solomon Kane, The Savage Foes of Solomon Kane, Savage Worlds, and all related marks and logos are trademarks of Pinnacle Entertainment Group. All rights reserved.

Produced under license by Studio 2 Publishing, Inc. The Studio 2 logo is a trademark of Studio 2 Publishing, Inc. © 2010. All rights reserved. Printed in Thailand.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
BESTRIDER	2
THE BORGIA TWINS	8
CAPRUS	17
CROSSROADS MAN	22
THE CULT OF THE IRON RING	29
ERASMUS DEIN	38
GOBLINS	46
THE GODS IN IVORY	53
HARLOW HOBBS	61
HOARFROST WARRIORS	70

HOMONCULUS	76
ICHTHYNITES	85
IMPS	92
THE LIBER VORAGO	99
MANDRAKE	108
PEDRO DE RAMELLO	115
RAVARA	121
SCYLLA	128
THE TASKED	136
THE VERMILLION MASK	145
WILL O' WISP	150

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME to The Savage Foes of Solomon Kane! Within these pages, you'll find enemies and nemeses both sinister and vile. When crafting these particular threats, we attempted to make each one as close to the themes of Solomon Kane as possible. This isn't just a mash-up of the latest monsters.

So what were are some of the themes that Robert E. Howard's monsters and villains possessed in the Kane stories?

Mystery: Almost all of the exotic creatures that Howard wrote about had some element of mystery to them. There was always an untold history to the dark creatures that Solomon Kane faced, from the vampires of the hills to the flying akaanas. We're giving you the whole story, but how much you reveal to your players is up to you.

Lost Civilizations: In many of Howard's stories, Solomon Kane stumbles upon lost empires or rotting civilizations. One common factor is that these societies were always undergoing slow disintegration.

Many of the foes that Kane faced in his journeys were by-products of these dead or dying ancient civilizations. Some had found a kind of life after death through their cults or secret societies. Others were degenerate beings that arose from the remnants of a vanished culture. But regardless of their presentation, they often possessed a combination of both societal disintegration and hidden power.

Primal Forces: In the Kane stories, chaos and disorder are palpable forces, constantly encroaching upon the world of man. Monsters are things that are untamable – or if they are controlled, they are only restrained for a

while before they ultimately break free and unleash havoc. The primal forces of nature and entropy are always churning beneath the surface, waiting to burst forth and overcome mankind's trivial attempts to tame them.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

If you've played roleplaying games before and flipped through this book, you've probably noticed that this is not your typical catalogue of foes. Contained in these pages are not just monsters, but cults, individuals, and even some inanimate objects. We don't want this to be just a resource for things to fight in your campaign. We hope this book can be a tool to stimulate your imagination.

If you are running the Path of Kane, then the adventures within these pages can fill gaps between the Plot Points and fit right into it. One of the entries, the Liber Vorago (page 99), even provides a subplot for an ongoing campaign and blends nicely into the Path of Kane as an additional Plot Point.

Many of the foes are designed to provide you with the opportunity to use them more than once to vex your players with their nefarious schemes. Where possible, we've even given examples of how these recurring villains can be linked to other Savage Tales in this book.

READING THE ENTRIES

Each foe entry comes with background information about that threat. After the setting information, you'll find the detailed profile (or profiles) for the threats described in the text. Lastly, you'll find the Savage Tale dedicated to highlighting the particular foe or foes detailed in the entry.



BESTRIDER

Thereafter, a change came over the maiden. She remained fair to look upon but she was eternally fatigued, in need of much rest. As time passed, her shoulders became stooped and her back bent. Then, one day she was seen beside a lake by her beloved. In her reflection on the water, he learned what so weighed upon his love. In the rippling surface, he saw a strange creature sat upon her shoulder, its legs crossed around her neck....

—*The Liber Vorago*

A BESTRIDER is a skeletal entity that rides on the backs of its victims, bending them to its will. This type of malevolent spirit is drawn to people beset with intense fear. When one finds a person who carries enough terror in his heart, it takes possession of his body. While in control of a victim, it rides upon his shoulders, locking its legs around his neck. With rare exception, the bestrider is invisible and intangible to all except the person it possesses.

Once a bestrider becomes attached to its prey, it does not relinquish him willingly. The burden of having this creature affixed to the back invariably takes its toll on the poor soul and usually results in the death of the host, for the bestrider drinks his life-force as it rides.

A hero can spot a bestrider in a reflective surface, such as the surface of a pond, a mirror, or even polished silver with a Notice roll (–4). Once another person catches a glimpse of a bestrider, she can always see the spirit with a reflective surface, but she can become subject to fear and paranoid delusions of her own. If her fear overwhelms her, she will attract the attentions of another

bestrider herself. An entire community may become possessed by these malicious spirits in this fashion.



BESTRIDER

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Stealth d10, Throwing d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d6
- **Madness:** Anyone who has seen a bestrider will begin to experience strange delusions and paranoia over the course of the following day. He begins seeing things out of the corner of his eye, hearing whispers in his ears, and so forth. The character must make two Fear checks (–2) during the day. Should the victim pass the Fear checks over the course of a day, the delusions fade. If he fails both rolls, a bestrider may visit him and attempt to possess him. Otherwise, the delusions simply continue.
- **Partial Invisibility:** Normally, a bestrider is invisible to sight. A hero may detect one in a reflective surface with a Notice roll (–4). Once detected, the spirit can be attacked at –4. If the attacker is able to use a reflective surface for reference, the penalty is only –2.
- **Partial Intangibility:** Normally, a bestrider cannot be physically touched except by its victim. However, once a

character has seen its reflection, it may be touched or attacked by that person.

- **Puppet:** A bestrider can use the *puppet* power using its Spirit as its arcane skill. It may only use this power upon people once it has climbed upon their backs. It gets one attempt per victim. If it fails, that bestrider can never again try to possess that person.
- **Size -1:** Bestriders are small creatures.



SAVAGE TALE: NOT OF THE PEOPLE

The wanderers are led by a vision to a remote Indian village in the New World. There, they are greeted by Otetani, an Iroquois wise-man. He asks the party to help solve a murder in his village. Otetani informs the party he was also sent a vision by the spirits telling him of the heroes and where he would meet them.

THE VILLAGE

Otetani leads the characters into his village and introduces them to the tribe, explaining these are the strangers from his vision. At first, most of his people avoid the wanderers. As time passes, however, the villagers begin to show more and more fascination with the party. It's not that they have never seen outsiders but the fact the adventurers were summoned by Otetani's spiritual vision that has them in awe. Children, in particular, will be curious about the characters' presence.

The village itself is more sophisticated than the travelers may initially expect. The Iroquois live in longhouses arranged like the spokes of a wheel. A wooden palisade forms a twenty foot high wall around the village. Everyone in the village has a specific role and task to perform at every hour of the day. It is a place of well-honed efficiency.

Very few men are about the settlement, as they spend much of their time hunting. In this village, as is customary in many Iroquois villages, many of the leaders are women, which may consternate European travelers used to patriarchal societies.



THE MURDERS

The tribe has been rocked by recent murders in the village and Otetani seeks the heroes' assistance. Not just one, but three of the village matrons were murdered horribly in their longhouse. The bodies have already been buried in shallow graves and



THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

BEHIND THE MURDERS

The murders were committed by two bestriders who had possessed the chieftess Gennesheyo and another village elder for a long time. Sensing Gennesheyo's time was running out, the two bestriders sprang from their hosts' backs, and killed all three of the village elders in the longhouse.

The first bestrider then possessed young Chepi just as she was entering the longhouse after hearing a commotion. Currently, it is still in possession of Chepi. The second bestrider followed the hunter L'tayan and his men as they exited the village. There, it possessed one of the hunters, but not before L'tayan caught sight of it stalking them through the woods.

the longhouse cleared of any belongings (or clues). The adventurers must interview the tribe members to learn about the crime. Fortunately, many of the villagers speak a variety of European languages. Some speak English, others French, and some Dutch.

By simply talking to the tribe members, the wanderers can learn the following (one per member questioned):

- "The murders took place three weeks ago. They were...horrible. I cannot stomach speaking of them for too long."
- "The three most prominent members of the village council were killed, including the chieftess – Gennesheyo."
- "The place of the murders was terrible. Blood, bone, flesh, and hair were thrown about. So much that one could not tell what part belonged to what body."
- "Our new village chieftess is Chepi. She is no more than a girl, not ready to lead. I fear her leadership weakens our tribe."
- "One of our best warriors, L'tayan, is in the wilderness. He is convinced a creature came into our village and done this deed. He and his hunting party seek to find and kill it. He has most likely traveled to one

of the nearby hunting camps. You should be able to easily find him if you wish."

Attempting to learn more requires a Streetwise roll. For each successful roll, the party learns one of these clues:

- "Whoever, whatever, killed our leaders was obviously strong. And savage. Not a wolf, bear, nor any other animal I can think of could have done such a thing."
- "They say there were tracks left where the killing took place. Some of the hunters said the prints were small, but unlike anything they had ever seen."
- "Even stranger...the tracks appear and disappear. They are not seen going into the longhouse or out."

If an adventurer get a raise on a Streetwise roll, he learns one of the following in addition to any other information he may gain:

- "You should know...Gennesheyo, the village chieftess. She was not liked. In her old age she had become stern, unyielding, and angry, always angry."
- "I heard that, truly, L'tayan and his men are hiding at the camp in fear. He wanted to hunt the creature, yes. Now, he is deathly afraid of something."

A CHIEFTESS TOO YOUNG

Should the wanderers wish to interview young Chepi, the current chieftess, they find her in the longhouse where the village leaders reside—and where the murders took place. Like other houses in the village, it has a sturdy frame and a thick covering of bark which blocks almost all light from outside. Elaborate spirit masks are hung on the wall and intricately woven baskets line the floor. But despite these trappings, the place seems empty, and Chepi, a young Indian girl of fourteen, seems small in the long, dark space.

Chieftess Chepi greets the party with a sad smile. Conversing with her reveals the following information:

"I knew of your coming through the visions of Otetani. I truly hope you can guide us through these dark times. I am afraid I cannot be of much help. What a poor chieftess I am turning out to be! I came upon the scene of the murders



just after they happened. I heard terrible noises. The ripping of tendons, the cracking of bone, but not so much as a scream. I saw nothing at, or leave, the longhouse. And it was just as gruesome as some others here had described it."

A Notice roll reveals Chepi seems to be quite tired and slumped, as if burdened by a great load. If asked about it, she merely says it is the "weight of leadership and the turmoil of the tragedy."

THE HUNTING PARTY

Eventually, the heroes may wish to visit L'tayan. Any member of the tribe can give the wanderers directions to the hunting camps. L'tayan and his men are at the nearest one, less than half a day from the village, camped with his men by a wide stream. Their camp is in disarray. The men with L'tayan are obviously starving and their equipment looks worn. They are listless and one even seems so weak that he cannot stand up straight.

L'tayan caught a glimpse of the bestrider that was following his band and ever since he has become more and more paranoid. Now, he does not allow his men to go and hunt, even for food. Because L'tayan left before Otetani had his vision, he is highly suspicious of the characters when he firsts encounters them. A Persuasion roll (-2) is necessary to convince L'tayan to speak with the party.

At first, L'tayan insists that he and his men are hunting the creature that he believes killed the elders. He denies any accusation that he is afraid. Further, he declines providing a description of the thing, but claims he knows what it looks like. A character must make a Streetwise roll to convince him to say more. If the roll is successful, L'tayan reveals the following:

"We came here to hunt the creature, but now it hunts us. It is thin and bony. A leering mouth stretches across its face. I saw its reflection in a puddle as it stole upon me not long after we left the village. I whirled, but it fled into the forest. In my dreams I see it still hiding behind the next tree, waiting for me to sleep so it can choke me!"

None of the other hunters admit to having seen the creature L'tayan is talking about, but over the past few days, his paranoia has infected the entire camp. The hunters are in terrible shape and it's obvious that if they remain at the camp they may well starve. Many of the tribe's able-bodied men are with L'tayan and their loss would be a terrible blow to the village.

Getting the hunters to leave camp, whether to return to the village or continue their hunt for the creature takes another Persuasion roll (-2). Even then, they agree to do so only if the travelers accompany them.

THROUGH A STREAM, DARKLY

If they decide to try to continue seeking the beast, the group wanders through the surrounding forest for hours, searching for any trace of footprints or sign of a creature matching L'tayan's description. Any character who makes a Tracking roll (-2) finds an odd bit of sign. At one point, a small pair of prints, almost bird-like in appearance, seem to trail the prints of one of the hunters but then disappear. (This is where the creature leapt on the hunter's back, taking possession.) Regardless of whether anyone spots the strange tracks, the search takes the group near the stream at several points.

Conversely, if the heroes forgo any further search and instead simply return with the hunters to the village, much of the trail parallels the stream.

Whether the wanderers convince the hunters to return to camp or resume the hunt with the party's assistance, the end result is the same. Whenever the group nears the stream, each of the heroes can make a Notice roll (-4). With a success, the character spots a small, gaunt creature riding the shoulders of the stooped hunter!

Remember, even once spotted, the bestrider is visible only in a reflective surface. This may put the party in a difficult situation unless they can show L'tayan and his hunters the reflection as well. The bestrider is no fool, so as soon as any of the characters attempt to call attention to it, it has its victim hurl a rock into the water—perhaps claiming he saw a spirit or demon beneath the surface.



THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

BUT WHAT IF...

If the characters decide to leave L'tayan and his hunters to their fate, allow each of the adventurers a single Notice roll (-4) to spot the best rider's reflection in the nearby stream before they depart. If they still don't, it's likely that the members of the hunting party are lost to starvation and madness. Or, if you're feeling generous, you can always just have all the characters make a Notice roll and allow the one with the highest total to catch a glimpse of the best rider's reflection.

If those options fail, all is still not lost. Once back in the village, allow each traveler a Notice roll (-4) each day they remain with the Iroquois to spot the best rider on Chepi's shoulders. Perhaps the chieftess passes a puddle in the village when the hero is nearby or maybe he spots the creature in a hand mirror or even cup of water.

How the party handles this dilemma is up to them. They can try to convince L'tayan of what they've seen or they can just begin attacking an invisible (and intangible!) entity sitting astride the shoulders of one of his friends. It makes the difference between fighting the best rider and its victim or fighting both the creature *and* half a dozen warriors.

Once attacked, the best rider stays on its victim's shoulders and both fight off any attackers. Due to its location and size, the best rider receives the benefit of medium cover (-2) against attacks from the front. Any attack that misses as a result of this modifier instead hits the best rider's victim. A called shot to the best rider's head (-4) ignores this modifier, as do attacks from the side or rear.

Regardless of the outcome of the fight, don't forget the Madness effect the best rider has on any that view it.

🐾 **Best rider (1):** See page 2.

🐾 **Best rider's victim (1):** See Iroquois Hunter, page 7.

🐾 **Iroquois Hunters (5):** See page 7.

🐾 **L'tayan:** See page 7.

RETURN TO THE VILLAGE

If the heroes defeat the best rider plaguing the hunters, the village breathes a great sigh of relief. The people's mood noticeably lightens. Chieftess Chepi, however, seems saddened when she hears of the monster's defeat. If questioned, she says, "I feel sorrow at the loss of my tribe. If only we had found this thing sooner."

Each member of the party may make a Notice roll at this point. The character who rolled the highest realizes Chepi's slumped and tired posture is nearly identical to the hunter who was possessed. Hopefully, the wanderers exercise some restraint and don't begin immediately attacking the village's new chieftess. If they do, they soon have the entire village fighting to save its leader!

If the heroes returned with L'tayan and the hunters, they help the party explain the situation to the rest of the tribe. With the help of the village, the party should be able to quickly subdue the creature without causing harm to Chepi. However, if they end up in a battle with the whole tribe, many senseless casualties are almost inevitable.

Regardless of the route the characters choose, L'tayan finally succumbs to his fear and paranoia, clearly horrified that there is more than one of the creatures. At some point during the final resolution (whether by battle or not), he begins screaming, believing an invisible spirit is mounting his shoulders and trying to seize control of his body.

Whether L'tayan is actually succumbing to a best rider or not is up to you. It may be interesting to simply have L'tayan overcome with paranoia and madness, particularly since many of the heroes are likely to also be plagued by delusions over the near future.

🐾 **Chieftess Chepi:** See page 7.

🐾 **Otetani:** See page 7.

🐾 **L'tayan:** See page 7.

🐾 **Iroquois Hunters (5):** See page 7. (If the heroes returned with L'tayan, add any surviving hunters to this number.)

🐾 **Tribe Members (15):** See page 7



HEROES AND VILLAINS

FOLLOWING are the statistics for other friends or foes found in this Savage Tale.

IROQUOIS HUNTER

Due to the murders, the hunters are carrying weapons more appropriate to warfare than hunting game animals. They are armed with tomahawks and bows.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Shooting d6, Survival d8, Throwing d6, Tracking d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Illiterate, Loyal

Edges: —

Gear: Axe (Str+d6) and bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6).

TRIBE MEMBER

Tribe members tend to the daily tasks of the village. They normally do not engage in combat, but are not afraid to fight if necessary. They are armed with whatever weapons they can find—usually knives or clubs.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d4, Fighting d4, Guts d4, Notice d6, Survival d6, Throwing d4

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Illiterate, Loyal

Edges: —

Gear: Hand weapons (Str+d4).

CHIEFTESS CHEPI

Chepi is a young, pretty girl who has had the mantle of leadership thrust on her before her time. Unfortunately, she has also had demonic spirit possession thrust on her as well, and her actions are not her own. Chepi is not much of a combatant, but the thing

riding her shoulders fights fiercely to protect itself (see page 2 for the Bestrider).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d4, Guts d6, Persuasion d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: +4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Illiterate, Loyal

Edges: Attractive, Noble

Gear: Dagger (Str+d4).

OTETANI

Otetani is the tribe's wise-man and a leader of the village. The tribe looks to him for advice on any subject, particularly those of a spiritual or occult nature. He is aging, and while no longer the warrior he once was, remains a potent force among his people.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Knowledge (Spirits) d10, Shamanism d8

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Illiterate, Loyal

Edges: Arcane Background (Shamanism)

Gear: Dagger (Str+d4), fetish bag.

Powers: *Boost/lower trait, dispel, spirit ward, vision quest.*

Treat Otetani as a Veteran character.

L'TAVAN

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Shooting d6, Survival d8, Throwing d6, Tracking d8

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Illiterate, Loyal

Edges: Alertness, Woodsman

Gear: Axe (Str+d6), bow (Range 12/24/48, 2d6).



THE BORGIA TWINS

We gazed upon the tangle of limbs and bodies that lay strewn upon the floor like vines. The dead faces forced their way between the twisted limbs, with mouths open as if gasping for one last breath. Their eyes were unfocused and crossed in odd directions, some seeming to gaze at each other while others looked to Heaven for an answer that would never come.

The razor-thin dilettante did not even glance at us from the canvas where he continued to work in his oils.

"They wouldn't stay still," he said in disinterested explanation.

DESCENDENTS of the villain Cesare Borgia, this murderous brother and sister team fled their native country to travel the globe, sowing sorrow and death in their wake. Born without any morality or even humanity, murder is no more troubling to them than watching a worm wither in the sun.

Alistair fancies himself an artist, but his paintings and sculptures are as disturbed as they are brilliant. His works often lead to horrific acts, such as when he drowned over a dozen women just to see how their hair flowed in a river's current.

Whereas her brother may be roused to murder in search for "art," Delia simply enjoys the act itself. An expert poisoner, she specializes in hallucinatory and debilitating toxins. She enjoys watching victims succumb to her concoctions. Once, she chatted pleasantly with a delirious noble who was convinced his feet were being tickled while they were in fact being eaten by a pair of rabid dogs.

Both of these wicked souls are intelligent enough to hide their predilections. To continue their profligate and homicidal lifestyles, they usually rob their victims. As they consider themselves "noble" and above petty physical endeavors, they often have a large retinue of minions on hand, usually made up of sociopaths and cutthroats like themselves.

Like their ancestors, it has long been suggested these twins also share an unnatural relationship although none of their accusers has ever produced any evidence of such.



ALISTAIR AND DELIA BORGIA



ALISTAIR BORGIA

Alistair is not a particularly attractive man, but he is an imposing physical specimen and possesses an undeniable presence. Tall and lean, he moves with the grace of a jungle panther and the speed of a striking viper. He is a skilled combatant and has absolutely no compunction against using any means to gain an edge over his opponent. Alistair quickly flees any battle that turns against him, willingly abandoning any ally except his sister.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d12, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Art) d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d8

Charisma: +2

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 8



THE BORGIA TWINS

Gear: Rapier (Str+d4, +1 Parry), dagger (Str+d4), wheellock pistol (5/10/20, 2d6+1, AP 1).

Hindrances: Arrogant, Delusional (sociopath), Vengeful

Edges: Acrobat, Ambidextrous, Charismatic, Combat Reflexes, Command, Dirty Fighter, Fervor, Fleet-Footed, Hard to Kill, Harder to Kill, Improved Level-Headed, Improved Riposte, Improved Sweep, Rich



DELIA BORGIA

As beautiful as she is insane, her looks often lead her opponents to underestimate her. Delia plays up her "helplessness" until she finds an opening to strike, often while her foes are focused on Alistair.

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d12, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Knowledge (Poisons) d12, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Shooting d12, Stealth d8

Charisma: +4

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Gear: Dagger (Str+d4 plus poison), two-barrel pistols x2 (5/10/20, 2d6+1, AP 1).

Hindrances: Delusional (sociopath), Vengeful

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Fleet-Footed, Hard to Kill, Harder to Kill, Improved Nerves of Steel, Marksman, Really Dirty Fighter, Rich, Two-Fisted, Very Attractive

Special Abilities:

- **Envenomed Weapon:** Her dagger is usually coated with viper poison, requiring anyone struck by it to make a Vigor roll (-2). Success means the victim becomes Exhausted within 1d6 rounds



KMAN
09

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

and remains that way until healed. On a failure, the victim is instead Incapacitated.

- **Hallucinogenic Concoctions:** She also crafts hallucinatory concoctions, which affects victims through drink, injection or wounding. Once someone has contacted these poisons, they must make a Vigor roll at -2 or suffer wild hallucinations and gain any one Hindrance from this list: Delusional (Major: various), Habit (Major: poison), Bloodthirsty, and Phobia (Major).
- **Poison Craft:** Delia is able to create any poison listed in *The Savage World of Solomon Kane*, including all types of snake venoms.



SAVAGE TALE: Unexpected Guests

ARRIVING at Brouch, a small village somewhere in Europe, they hear the unmistakable sounds of conflict. When they investigate, they find the community under attack. Bandits are raiding the village, looting it in a frenzy. None of its residents possesses any martial ability to speak of and the town is being overrun. Bandits go from house to house virtually at will. A few buildings are on fire, and a number of bodies lie in the street.

Some of the raiders flee at the heroes' approach, but others stand their ground. Their behavior is closer to that of berserkers than robbers; these bandits fight with reckless and wild-eyed abandon, always making wild attacks (+2 to Fighting rolls and damage, -2 to Parry). They neither surrender nor retreat.

♣ **Bandits (2 per hero):** See page 15.

BROUCH SAVED

The citizens are grateful to the party for coming to their rescue. However, they tell the travelers that the bandits abducted some of their number and carried them away when they fled. No one knows why the raiders chose to kidnap the villagers. It is a poor community and no one there has any wealth to ransom the captives back.

There are no trained fighters among the villagers, so they appeal to the heroes to rescue their families and loved ones. They can offer the travelers nothing but gratitude and perhaps a warm meal in return.

By quickly asking around, the characters can learn a rumor that a group of highwaymen had recently settled in an abandoned manor house in nearby Hog's Head Wood. They had supposedly been preying on travelers on the road through the forest, but they had never raided into the village before today.

Getting precise directions to the manor is a little more difficult. It seems it has sat vacant for over half a century and no one in the village has visited it in memory. If a character succeeds on a Streetwise roll, an aging farmer volunteers what he knows about the house.

"There's a reason no one can tell you anything about Grisson Manor—none of us has been near it for years. It's haunted by the ghosts of the Grisson family. My father told me the story when I was a lad about how the entire family was murdered as they sat at the dinner table. No one knows who—or what—did it, but the servants found them around the table with their throats cut from ear to ear. All except the patriarch, Nicodemus. Whoever had killed the family had dragged him to the cellar and hanged him. Now, a ghost walks the halls and only a fool or a madman would live there."

He is able to give the party rough directions to the location of the manor.

GRISSON MANOR

The villagers are correct. A group of bandits has taken residence in Grisson Manor. What the locals do not know is that a few weeks ago, the bandits captured a young couple they took to be nobles, the Borgia Twins, and planned to hold them for ransom.

Within less than a day, Delia had administered a fatal dose of poison to the leader of the bandits and dosed the rest with enough hallucinogens to allow her and her brother to take control of the gang. The twins

had been drawn to the area by a tale they'd heard of the manor. Alistair believed that its macabre history would make it the perfect backdrop for a new series of paintings he had been planning. The gang provided him with just the manpower he needed to secure subjects for his project.

Until recently, the bandits had restricted their activities to the road through Hog's Head Wood, waylaying and kidnapping any passing travelers they encountered. However, word has reached nearby communities of the dangers of the forest and fewer and fewer people choose to risk the road. Alistair, ever a slave to his creative lunacy, has been forced to send the gang further and further abroad to obtain captives to use in his "art."

To keep control of the bandits, Delia has applied ever increasing amounts of her poisons. Most at this point have had their brains poisoned by the toxins to the point they have become madmen. They completely obey the twins' commands, but are violent and utterly unpredictable otherwise. From prior experience, Alistair and Delia have recognized the signs of the robbers' decline and plan to abandon them as soon as Alistair completes his paintings.

During the adventure, the characters encounter people in various stages of madness, and Nicodemus' ghost has further influenced the now-insane bandit gang and a few of the captives. Nicodemus' presence occasionally affects the heroes, and they may begin to worry about their own sanity. Do your best to keep the party guessing as to what's really going on until the last minute.

Inside the mansion, the aroma of incense lies thickly in the air, battling the odor of decay and dust. The twins, used to more opulent, civilized surroundings, have tried to mask the smells of the ancient house. There is no sinister effect to the fragrance, but the heroes may begin to suspect one after observing the behavior of the current inhabitants. That's fine—it adds to the tension!

THE GATE

These rusty gates are twisted and knotted through with dry vines. Hanging between the

THE GHOST OF GRISSON MANOR

It was none other than Nicodemus Grisson himself who killed his family. Long plagued by bouts of insanity, he alternately doted on his family and subjected them to terrible torments. His wife and children lived in abject fear, dreading his terrible mood swings and what new suffering he might inflict with each one.

Ironically, during a period of better humor, Nicodemus slaughtered his family after drugging their meal, believing he was doing them a favor by releasing them from further torment at his hands. In a moment of lucidity he realized what he had done, retreated to the cellar, and he hung himself.

Now, the arrival of the Borgia Twins and their terrible depravities has awakened Nicodemus' spirit to once again roam the halls of Grisson Manor.

Unfortunately, his ghost is no more sane than he was in life.

iron bars are two bodies, shot through with crossbow bolts and pistol shot. Both men were bandits who fell victim of the growing insanity plaguing the gang.

THE CARVER

A man lies on the ground, cutting spiraling patterns into his flesh while muttering: "Getthemout. Getthemout. Getthemout." He ignores anyone who approaches or speaks to him, but immediately attacks if a character tries to stop him from cutting himself.

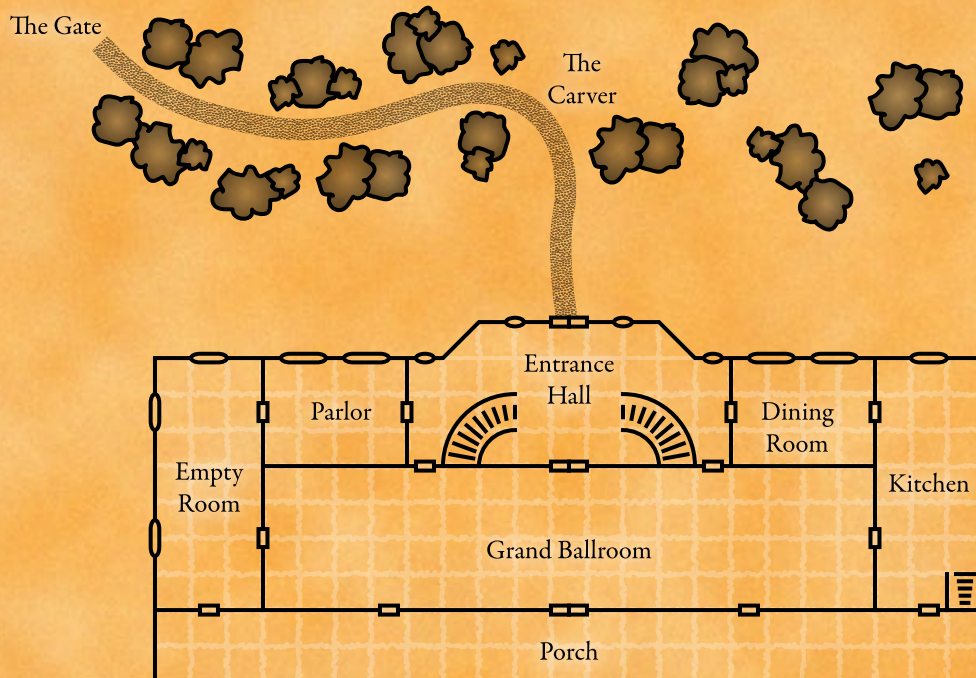
Bandit (1): See page 15. Armed with a dagger.

THE ENTRANCE HALL

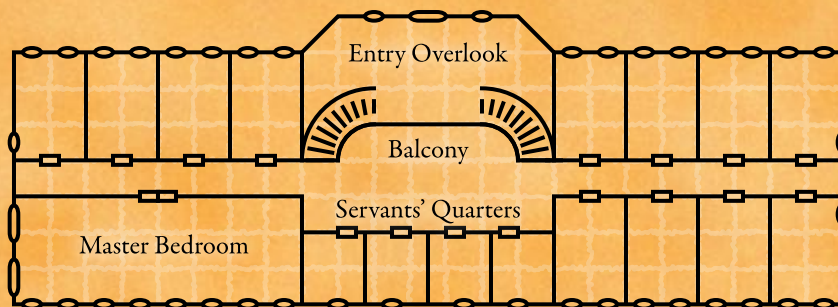
The entrance hall to the manor hall is littered with leaves, broken glass, and animal droppings. A hollow wind blows continually

Grisson Manor

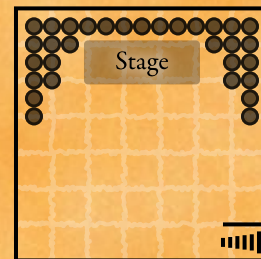
1"



Main Level



Second Floor



Cellar

through the jagged, shattered windows. Dried-out birds' nests dangle lifelessly from the large chandelier.

Beneath the chandelier, a former bandit dances with a dead body about the entrance hall. He looks at the wanderers when they enter and asks, "Why won't he dance for

me?" Anyone who attempts to answer the dancing man is immediately attacked. The bandit has no weapons, but snaps his teeth at his opponent in an attempt to bite them.

🗡️ **Bandit (1):** See page 15. Unarmed, bite damage only (Str).

THE BORGIA TWINS

THE DINING HALL

A long dining table stands here, covered with half eaten food and wine. A number of bandit bodies have been placed at the dinner table, all stabbed multiple times, in a ghastly reenactment of the legend of Grisson Manor. Nicodemus' influence combined with Delia's poison led a number of the bandits to recreate his terrible deed.

Bedrolls line the sides of the hall. On one sits the lone survivor of the massacre, a bandit who whispers to himself, "It burns, it burns." The unfortunate soul feebly stabs himself in his own stomach repeatedly, trying to end the effects of one of Delia's more painful toxins. In moments, he succumbs to his wounds.

THE BALLROOM

The ballroom has murky puddles where water has gathered over the years. Wallpaper curls from the walls like peeling skin.

A number of captives, some from the village, stand in the middle of the ballroom, weeping. They are posed in place as if frozen in mid-dance and dressed to look like clowns. As they attempt to hold completely still, their limbs tremble. Three bodies, also dressed to look like clowns, lie on the floor in pools of blood. Placed back from the people is a canvas with a half-painted picture, which depicts dancing clowns who cry and scream at a red background.

Three of the posed are bandits. Alistair has given them orders to kill anyone who try to move from their place. Their minds are so addled by drugs that they are extremely literal in their interpretation of this command. Unless the adventurers try to move the captives, they remain in their own poses.

If the townspeople are spoken to, they purse their lips, and shake their heads. If they are repeatedly spoken to, a few of them begin blubbering and crying. After a moment of crying, the three madmen spring into action, attacking those who dared to sob. When they attack, the madmen scream out, "No! Master Alistair says to stay still!" If the townspeople are rescued, they will tell the heroes more innocents are upstairs and in the cellar.

🐉 **Bandits (3):** See page 15. Armed with meat cleavers (Str+d4).

THE PARLOR

In this library, a man kneels by the fire, in the act of slowly cooking his own head. His burned face is bloated and shiny; his eyes are swollen shut. Meanwhile, two madmen paint a landscape upon the spine of the books, sometimes chatting casually.

The two men, Arnold and Oliver, gladly speak with the party. The pair explain that they are finishing a landscape painting for Alistair, who left abruptly (they don't know where). They happily answer any questions to the best of their ability, but keep in mind that they are now irrevocably insane.

Alistair felt the men had a spark of talent and has had them painting for the last few days. In fact, the landscape they are working on is not too bad—provided the viewer can overlook the image of a man in the fireplace roasting on a stake in the center of it.

The men know little of the twins beyond Alistair's penchant for art and that his sister is seldom far from his side. They admit they originally captured the two "nobles" several days ago, but it somehow made more sense to make the two leaders of the outlaw band.

From time to time, one of the two gently reminds the man in the corner to put his head back in the fire. If asked, the men reluctantly let the man in the fireplace go – at which point, the man in the fireplace gets up and begins attacking the party. Should such a fight occur, Arnold and Oliver casually go back to painting.

They retaliate viciously if attacked. The man in the fireplace does not enter the fray unless one of the heroes attempts to remove him from the fire.

🐉 **Arnold and Oliver:** See Bandit, page 15. Armed with long swords.

🐉 **Burning Man:** See Bandit, page 15. Armed with club (log) from fireplace. Blind (–6 to attacks).

THE KITCHEN

The fires in the kitchen still smolder and a few scraps of food lie about the tables here. Nothing else is of interest. Nicodemus' presence is strong in this room, however.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

Once the heroes have time to examine the kitchen, call for a Spirit check. The character that rolls the lowest total looks down to see her whole body is pierced through with gaping knife wounds. Bloodstains spread rapidly over her clothing, spreading out from her injuries. Then, just as suddenly, the vision is gone and her body is unharmed. No one else sees the injuries. The experience requires a Fear check from the recipient.

THE SECOND FLOOR

The second floor is filled with barren bedrooms. Most have windows that have been broken for decades and the furniture is long gone. In these rooms, the wanderers encounter any number of these things:

- A woman with a meat cleaver attacks the party recklessly. The woman is one of the townsfolk, forced to drink poison by Delia. Though she attacks wildly, she sobs the entire time and begs for everyone to kill her. Unlike the bandits, with time she recovers from the effects of the poison.
🐾 **Citizen (1):** See page 16. Armed with a cleaver (Str+1d4).
- In another room, two former captives fight each other viciously, having been fed a considerable portion of some of the Borgia hallucinogens. They are literally trying to bite each other to death. They ignore everyone else to the exclusion of their viciousness. They do not attack anyone else, even if physically restrained. However, their minds are forever lost.
🐾 **Citizens (2):** See page 16. Unarmed, bite damage only (Str).
- A chill wind blows through the broken window. The traveler who gets the highest total on a Notice check hears a faint voice that says, "Let me give you peace..."

THE MASTER BEDROOM

The master bedroom retains its furniture. The bed is the nest of a variety of animals, and vines creep through the windows, throughout the room and around much of the furniture, like dark veins in dry flesh.

Here, a crowd of the Borgia Twins' bandits are trying to get a handful of the captured townspeople to drink poisoned wine. They continually chant, "Drink it! Drink it! Mistress Delia's drink will make you feel better!" The madmen are in a circle about the townspeople, led by a woman who wears a frilly white apron stained with blood.

🐾 **Bandits (2, plus 1 per hero):** See page 15.

🐾 **Citizens (5):** See page 16.

THE CELLAR

The cellar is where Nicodemus finally killed himself. Alistair and Delia are currently putting on an impromptu theater performance of Pulcinella (Punch and Judy) for their assembled followers. A large number of bandits sit here, and their great number is immediately apparent.

Delia is dressed flamboyantly as Pulcinella, while a townspeople trembles beside her as Judy. Delia demands jokes from her soon-to-be victim, threatening her with a large mallet. In the corner of the cellar are the remaining townsfolk.

The cellar is well lit by torches on the walls. The impromptu stage is framed by stacked barrels; their audience faces away from the cellar stairs and are unaware of the characters. To the right of the barrels, a small group of captives cowers, apparently awaiting their turn on the stage.

Delia, a small, supple woman, stands in the center of the stage, dressed in black and white and wearing an enormous false nose. She holds a large and bloody mallet over one shoulder. At her feet are two dead bodies who bear gruesomely crushed faces. Broken teeth litter the ground like tiny, bone snowflakes.

Another woman, obviously a captive, cowers in front of her. She asks, "Why are you doing this?"

Alistair, a handsome young man appears from behind some barrels and responds. "Don't you know?" he cries. His voice drops down to a sinister rasp. "We're possessed by the spirit of Nicodemus Grisson. We're reenacting his family's massacre because...."

The man's face grows blank, then he bursts into laughter. "Can you believe it?" he cries to the insane audience. "She actually believed me for a second!"

The crowd explodes into raucous laughter.

"Oh, who am I kidding," says the young man. "We are doing this because we were bored, my dear. And now you are boring us. Exeunt stage left!"

The woman with the mallet raises it above her head, preparing to smash it down on her next victim.

Hopefully, the heroes take this as a cue to take action. If the party steps in before Delia notices them, they can take advantage of a round of surprise to act against the bandits. If they don't, Delia kills the woman with the mallet and then notices the group and calls out a warning to her minions. Determine initiative normally in that case.

Three rounds after the melee begins, the spirit of Nicodemus Grisson materializes in the center of the room, raging, "Be quiet, my children! Must I silence you once more?" His features are distorted with anger and red flames of hatred burn in his eyes. All the adventurers, surviving citizens, and the Borgias must make Fear checks (-2). The bandits are so far into their madness that the ghost holds no terror for them.

Nicodemus begins attacking the nearest person without regard to bandit, hero, or citizen, moving to the next once he has slain his victim. The battle is now a three-way conflict between the madmen, the spirit of Nicodemus Grisson, and the heroes. Some of the madmen attempt to fight Nicodemus, others the heroes, but a few attack the remaining townspeople in the corner of the room. Alistair and Delia fight only as long as they hold the upper hand, aiding each other when possible. Once the tide turns against them, they seek to escape at the earliest opportunity, although neither is willing to abandon the other.

Nicodemus does not respond to questions, taunts or dialogue and attacks indiscriminately. When all of the bandits and

the Borgias are dead or have fled, the spirit dissolves away for the time being. A *spirit ward* stops Grisson as normal.

It's likely the travelers protect the townspeople who are being attacked and get them out of the mansion. Unless prevented from doing so, Alistair and Delia flee into the woods where their horses wait while the party is rescuing the captives.

Alistair Borgia: See page 8.

Delia Borgia: See page 9.

Bandits (3, plus 2 per hero): See page 15. Armed with longwords and pistols.

Citizens (6): See page 16. Unarmed.

Nicodemus Grisson: See page 16.



HEROES AND VILLAINS

FOLLOWING are the statistics for other friends or foes found in this Savage Tale.

BANDITS

All of the bandits have been so twisted by Delia's toxins that they are in effect madmen under the direction of Alistair. Each manifests his insanity in a different way—and almost always violently.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: -2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Delusional (Major: Delia's hallucinogens)

Edges: Berserk

Gear: Leather armor (+1), various weapons as noted.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

CITIZENS

These poor folk are either travelers or villagers taken captive by the mad band. They have been subjected to such abuse and horrors that they have been reduced to cowering in fear from the slightest threat. None are capable of even defending themselves any longer.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d4, Knowledge (one trade) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: —

Edges: —

Gear: Clothing.

NICODEMUS GRISSON

The ghost of Nicodemus is a manifestation of his insanity further warped by his continued undead existence. His specter appears as a shadow version of himself in life, albeit with rope burns on his obviously broken neck. He now perceives the world of the living as nothing more than an extension of his family and he seeks to punish all within it for any number of imagined transgressions.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d12+2, Notice d12, Taunt d10, Stealth d12+4, Throwing d12

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: Thrown objects (Str+d4).

Special Abilities:

- **Ethereal:** Nicodemus is immaterial and can only be harmed by magical attacks or truly courageous heroes. A hero can attack a ghost with his bare hands (not with weapons), by using his Guts skill in place of his Fighting skill. All modifiers associated with Fighting apply to Guts for this purpose.
- **Fear -2:** Ghosts cause Guts checks at -2 when they let themselves be seen.
- **Ghostly Touch:** A ghost's touch is soul-chillingly cold. If it succeeds at a Fighting attack, it does damage equal to its Spirit. The target gets no benefit from non-magical armor.

CAPRUS

For a few of the greatest sorcerers of the age, the temporary compelling of a demonic entity was not enough. They desired a race of slaves to do their bidding, to answer every summons, to respond to every whim. To that end, they carved graven images from living rock and animated them by the blood of lesser demons.

Arrogantly believing that the more powerful the slave, the more powerful the master, they foolishly granted these abominations the dearest of man's gifts—that of creation itself. This proved to be the beginning of their downfall, for while the caprus were birthed into slavery, the blood of demons still coursed through their veins...

—*The Liber Vorago*

The caprus are a race of goat-men sculpted from stone by ancient sorcerers. The statues were then imbued with the essence of lesser devilkin to create a race of indentured, diabolic beings. Caprus are capable of creating other weaker versions of themselves through complex rituals. They command these lesser beings to further vile deeds on behalf of their own masters. To avoid losing control of the creatures, their creators required a caprus to remain in service or be turned to stone until someone releases it.

In the time of Solomon Kane, the caprus' former lords are long-dead, yet a small number of them that remain have found new masters to serve. These beings dwell in secret dens, usually far removed from humanity where they breed their bizarre horrors for their new owners. However, as the

exact rituals necessary to compel complete servitude from the monsters have been lost to time, a caprus always perverts any orders and requests it receives. Its demonic nature bleeds into every act it completes, often with terrible results.



CAPRUS

ACAPRUS resembles a cross between a devilkin and a satyr of legend, but possesses a goat's head atop its torso instead of a man's. It is usually dressed in savage rags, but, when it can obtain it, the caprus adorns with crude jewelry. These creatures favor large, curved swords to complement their natural weapons.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Occult) d10, Magick d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d8

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Gear: Scimitar (Str+d8).

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Caprus possess a thick, clay-like skin.
- **Create Progeny:** Caprus have the ability create progeny (see below). The process requires a clay vessel large enough to house the creature. While the process of preparing the clay vessel is time-intensive, the actual creation of a creature only takes a single round. A caprus may use a single vessel only once a week in this fashion,

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

but a group of them may share a vessel, each creating a single monster from it.

- **Horns:** Str+d6
- **Powers:** All caprus know the following spells: *barrier* (flaming wall), *dispel* (mystical sign), *fear* (blazing eyes), *puppet* (hypnotic gaze). Treat them as Seasoned characters for the purpose of spellcasting.
- **Ram:** If a caprus scores a raise on an attack roll with its horns following a Charge maneuver, any target Size 2 or smaller is knocked prone.
- **Size +1:** Caprus are tall and rangy.

CAPRUS PROGENY

Progeny are created by caprus using a clay vessel, a mixture of vile ingredients which include the blood of a murdered victim, and rituals only the caprus themselves may perform. The progeny appear like smaller, cruder versions of the caprus. Covered in patchy hair and with only half-formed features, progeny lack the magical abilities of the caprus, but they are more physically powerful and well-suited for their role as lackeys and foot-soldiers.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d8

Charisma: +0

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Progeny possess a thick, clay-like skin.
- **Claws/Horns:** Str+d6
- **Fleet Footed:** Progeny have a d10 running die.
- **Improved Frenzy:** The caprus may make an attack with both its claws and its horns in the same round with no penalty.
- **Ram:** If a progeny scores a raise on an attack roll with its horns following a Charge maneuver, any target Size 2 or smaller is knocked prone.





SAVAGE TALE: FROM THE MOUTHS OF BABES

The travelers come across a small village in the foothills of the Alps or other mountain range as suits your campaign. A burial service for not one, but two people is taking place when they arrive. There are a few other fresh graves nearby as well.

A VILLAGE IN MOURNING

When the characters ask what is going on, the villagers explain that they have been plagued by strange creatures that come in the night. On a nearly nightly basis, bizarre goat-like men have plundered their community. Several members of the village have been murdered in the course of these raids. No one has any idea where the creatures came from or what they want. The village is too small to have any standing militia and, while the people have sent a request to the local lord, no help is likely to come soon. They quickly recognize the heroes represent their only hope at stopping these attacks.

INVESTIGATING THE RAIDS

Any of the travelers who makes a Knowledge (Occult) roll knows that some demons often are described as goat-like.

For each successful Streetwise roll and raise made while talking to the villagers, the party learns one of the following facts (multiple rolls may be attempted):

- The first victims of the goat-men were Oscar and Maria, farmers who lived on the outskirts of the village.
- To make the tragedy worse, Oscar and Maria's children, Carlo and Annetta, had disappeared just two days before they were murdered. The couple doted on the children and were devastated by their loss. The villagers think it was likely the children were also killed by the goat-men.
- Since then, four other villagers have been killed. Three died as their homes were robbed.
- The creatures have taken a wide variety of items: food, blankets, chairs, and so forth.

One of the victims, a teen-ager named Nardo, was murdered without any apparent motive. However, other than his parents, not many tears were shed over his loss, as he was known to be a bully and a layabout.

Should any of the party follow up on Carlo and Annetta's disappearance, a second Streetwise roll reveals that the children often played in the nearby mountains. The children talked of finding a "castle" in the hills. The villagers hunted for them with no luck. The village hunter, Renaldo, went on an extended search for the children over a week ago and has not yet returned. No one in the village recalls any castle nearby, and given children's imaginations, most assumed it was just a pile of rocks or maybe a cave.

Investigating the scene of any of the murders produces few clues to help the heroes in their hunt. At the site of the most recent, another farmhouse where another couple was murdered, a character who makes a Tracking roll finds several large, cloven-hoofed footprints around the area. The tracks lead off toward the hills. The only missing items appear to be a pair of chairs and possibly more food.

Too long has passed for any significant tracks to remain at Oscar and Maria's home, but there are a few odd things of note. A wanderer who makes Notice roll finds odd charcoal marks on an outside wall of the house. A Knowledge (Occult) roll (-2) identifies the markings as incomplete and crudely drawn, but reminiscent of symbols related to mystical bonds. Finally, a character who makes a Smarts roll (-2) realizes that not only is there just one bed, it is not big enough for four people to sleep in, and there is not a single plaything in the house.

THE CASTLE

The "castle" that the children referred to is the ruins of an ancient tower constructed eons ago by a powerful, but cruel and tyrannical, sorcerer. The sorcerer is long since dead, but a few of his creations remained intact. Among them were a handful of caprus and a portion of the Liber Vorago. The caprus were in a state of suspended animation, trapped in stone form by wards triggered by the sorcerer's demise.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

The children had been playing in the ruin for a short while when Annetta discovered the fragment of the Liber Vorago. She was intrigued by the “pretty pictures” she saw within its pages. She took to practicing them herself, drawing them everywhere—not realizing that they were capable of unleashing powerful magics. Then, two weeks ago, she unwittingly scrawled a series of them on one of the caprus statues that contained the right markings to release the beast from its prison.

The caprus, released from its bond to its original master, immediately transferred its service to the children in order to remain on this plane. It quickly set about freeing the others of its kind. The children, not realizing the corrupt nature of the caprus, believed them to be magical playmates come to life.

The demons began fulfilling the children’s every request, perverting them to evil whenever they could. When the children complained of having to go home, the caprus promised them their parents would not punish them if they stayed at the castle. Of course, the creatures ensured this by murdering the parents. They have also tended to the children’s other wants by plundering from the village and tormenting its inhabitants. Oscar, for example, mentioned that he wished Nardo would leave him alone.

It was not too long before the children began to miss their family and seek to return home. The caprus have told them that their parents abandoned them, leaving the farm empty. Oscar and Annetta, truly orphans, believe they have nowhere else to go. In the meantime, the caprus have been crafting a creation vessel to begin raising a demonic army with which to dominate the region—to protect the children, of course!

FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

Following the caprus from the village is not a difficult task. They were not crafted for stealth. Relatively fresh traces are present at the scene of their last murder and a simple Tracking roll (–1) is all that is necessary to follow them to their lair in the hills. The trail is five miles long (that’s a total of five Tracking rolls), winding through the hills as it climbs ever higher towards the mountains.

The caprus are not foolish. They know at some point their actions are going to attract the attention of potential threats. They have had enough time to create a few guardians for their lair. A small group of caprus progeny lies in wait for anyone who gets too close to the ruins. Renaldo fell victim to them over a week ago.

The progeny ambush the party as it passes through a narrow draw along a dry creek bed about four miles into their trek. Low cliffs form a natural choke point and the monsters attack from front and rear, trapping the heroes between them.

♣ **Progeny (1 per hero):** See page 18.

THE RUINS

Shortly after the ambush by the caprus progeny, the characters reach the tower. Any hero who makes a Notice roll sees the ruins sitting on an overlook above the creek bed.

The remains of the tower are barely recognizable as such. The stones have long since tumbled into piles around the base and only the roughly circular nature of the debris hints at what once stood there. Grass, vines, and even a few bushes spring up between the rocks further hiding the nature of the structure. A wisp of smoke drifts up from the center of the rubble.

If the heroes choose to approach the ruins quietly, they must make a Stealth roll. Should they succeed, they creep over the top of the pile of fallen masonry to see a circular area inside the former walls. There, an oddly-shaped clay pot filled with some noxious, boiling fluid sits atop a fire pit. Right beside the boiling pot is a ring of caprus who continually fawn over two children, Carlo and Annetta. The creatures speak to the children in voices that are both sycophantic and sinister.

“Yes, yes, young masters. What else do you wish? More toys? More pies? We will get them for you. Is there anyone else in the village who has made you feel bad? We will make sure they don’t make you feel bad ever again. And soon, we will finish cooking up your new playmates! Won’t that be fun?”

A Knowledge (Occult) (+1) roll tells a hero that the creatures are demonic in origin and appear to be compelled to take orders from the children for some reason, although being of diabolic nature they likely twist any request to evil. A raise on the roll further reveals that their servitude is somehow tied to whatever has freed them from the pot.

If the wanderers choose to remain hidden and wait, the caprus eventually begin to pull progeny from their seething pot.

The moment any of the caprus spot one or more of the party, they immediately turn to Carlo and Annetta and say, "Little masters! These are the people we told you about—the ones who mean to harm you! Do you want us to protect you?"

The children immediately respond, "Yes!"

TO BATTLE!

Assuming the heroes step in at some point, the children become frightened and scared. The caprus attempt to keep the party away from them, using barrier and brute force. They continually assure the children that the heroes would surely take the children away from their "playmates."

During the battle, any caprus not engaged directly first draws forth another progeny from the cauldron. (Note only one caprus may pull forth a creature per round). The creatures attempt to swap opponents as needed to allow each of them to summon a progeny. Any caprus still not in melee with the heroes after this uses either *fear* or *puppet* to strike at the heroes from afar.

The easiest way to defeat the caprus is to convince the frightened children to command the caprus to "go away," or release them from service. Doing so forces the diabolic being back to a stone form. If the party begins to appeal to the children, the caprus grow angry and try to convince the children otherwise. After all, they argue, haven't they brought the children toys and candies? Haven't they attended to the children's every wish?

Treat this as an opposed contest between a hero's Persuasion or Intimidation and a caprus' Persuasion. If the player roleplays the exchange well, award him with a benny



and allow his character to use Righteous Rage on the contest. If the heroes convince the children to order the caprus away, the creatures turn to stone, one per round, until all are once again statues. During this time, the remaining caprus try to inflict as much harm as possible before being vanquished.

☛ **Caprus (1, plus one per hero):** See page 17.

☛ **Progeny (1, plus see above):** See page 18.

EPILOGUE

Obviously, the caprus were using the children, since these beings need masters to serve at all times. Each of the children's innocent requests were granted, but always perverted in a way to inflict harm upon the village. The children are now orphans as a result. How the adventurers proceed from here is up to them. However, if the villagers find out that the children were involved—even unwittingly—in the raids by the caprus, then the wanderers face a difficult situation. Only a Persuasion or Intimidation roll (–4) convinces the citizens to accept the children back into their midst.

CROSSROADS MAN

IT is unclear if there are many crossroads men or a single powerful entity with multiple, diverse aspects. Regardless of whether they are one or many, their ill purpose is clear – to gather the souls of those who have made dark bargains. Whenever someone makes a deal with diabolic entities, when the time comes to pay the debt, a crossroads man arrives to collect. Some believe that the crossroad men don't directly represent Hell, but instead hoard lost souls themselves which are later used to barter with other dark beings.

Each crossroads man appears very distinctive, but all radiate an aura of power and malevolence. Despite their name, not all of these powerful beings are male. Examples of such beings include:

- The Reined King is a tall man with a dusty, black coat who bears a horse-skull for a

As befits an entity charged with enforcing diabolic contracts, crossroads men must always follow peculiar rules. Although individual manifestations may have additional strictures, mandates common to all of crossroads men include:

- Cannot travel in straight lines
- Cannot see anyone in a completed circle, though they can once they enter the circle
- Cannot approach any place where three or more birds are perched
- Cannot stand the sound of church bells and are Incapacitated for the duration of their ringing

head. In his jaw are long chains which drag on the ground.

- The Girl in Waiting is a little girl whose shadow is far too long and dark for her small body. It constantly gestures and moves, even when she is still.
- The Carrion Lord is an elderly man who has a tumor in the shape of a pig's head which constantly struggles to break free from his back. In one hand, he carries his own entrails, which drag behind him.
- The Maggot Bride appears to be a beautiful woman, surrounded by flies which crawl in and out of her empty eye sockets.



CROSSROADS MAN

REGARDLESS of their form, crossroads men prefer to avoid physical conflict, relying on their powerful magical abilities instead. If pressed to melee, they fight with either wicked claws or unnaturally powerful blows of their fists.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d12+2, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d12, Intimidation d12, Investigation d10, Knowledge (Occult) d12, Magick d12, Notice d10, Persuasion d10, Stealth d8

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (4)

Gear: None.

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +4:** An invisible force surrounds these beings.

CROSSROADS MAN

- **At All Crossroads:** Crossroads men can instantly travel from one crossroads to another.
- **Claws/Fists:** Str+d4.
- **Crack the Bones:** The crossroads man produces a small marionette of its target and damages it. The target must pass an opposed Spirit test against the crossroads man's Magick or suffer 2d6 damage. This power has a range 12/24/48, and the range modifies the Magick roll.
- **Fear (-2):** Anyone facing a crossroads man must make a Guts -2 roll.
- **Improved Strong Caster:** Crossroads men reduce the Casting Modifier of all spells by 2, to a minimum of 0.
- **Immunity:** Such is the strength of the pact which drives it, a crossroads man is invulnerable to any harm (mundane or magical) from its intended prey.
- **Puppet:** The crossroads man may use a small marionette of its victim to manipulate it. Treat this as the puppet power, using the crossroads man's Spirit as its Arcane skill.
- **Sorcery:** Crossroads men are potent sorcerers. They know the following powers: *animate band, curse, deflection, dispel, elemental manipulation, entangle, grave speak, obscure, spirit ward, summon beast, summon spirit, tempest, withering curse, zombie*. When casting spells, they benefit from the Improved Strong Caster Edge. Treat them as Legendary characters.
- **Track the Soul:** A crossroads man always knows the general location of his intended target to within a few hundred feet.



SAVAGE TALE: THE LAST STAND

EITHER an old recluse contacts the heroes and wishes to hire their services for protection, or one of the infamous crossroads men enlists the adventurers to find and hunt down a sorcerer.



THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

A SORCERER'S REDEMPTION

If you've already introduced the party to Erasmus Dein (page 38), you may consider using him instead of Mortimer Greene this Savage Tale. If you do, Erasmus has struck a bargain with dark powers—if he can hold the mansion for a certain period of time on a particular day, he can free his wife and finally trade in his soul. If Dein has been a villain for the party before, this struggle makes a fitting—and somewhat redemptive—end for him.

Alternately, if you wish to keep Dein villainous, he simply uses the party as Greene does in the adventure, to delay the crossroads man long enough to transfer his soul into its body.

AN UNUSUAL REQUEST

The heroes are contacted by Mortimer Greene. A character that makes a Knowledge (Occult) roll (–1), recognizes the name as belonging to a sorcerer who once held much power. He summons the party to his mansion and brings them before him in his Grand Chamber.

An aging, weakened Greene explains:

"Long ago, when I was young and driven by what some would call mad ambition, I made a pact with darkness. I agreed to turn over the soul of my firstborn son on his seventeenth birthday in exchange for mastery of the black arts. Today is that day.

"Over the years, I have learned that power is not the most important thing a man may have. Through my studies, I have found a way in which I may exchange my soul for that of my son. However, I cannot hold back the forces of darkness and perform the necessary rituals. I have heard you are both mighty and virtuous, so I ask you, will you aid me in preserving my son's very soul?"

Greene then introduces the wanderers to his son, Edmund. The young man is handsome, if somewhat slight of frame, and clearly terrified. He is truly an innocent in this affair. He is dimly aware that his father dabbles with forces he doesn't understand, but was intentionally kept out of his father's dark practices.

In truth, Edmund is in no danger from the crossroads man. Greene's pact is for his own soul. However, he believes he has found a way to cheat Hell. He plans to use the heroes to delay and weaken the crossroads man while he prepares a ritual that will allow him to transfer his consciousness into that being's far more resilient body and then harvest his son's soul.

If the travelers seem reluctant to aid the sorcerer for altruistic reasons, Greene offers them gold, jewels, or even perhaps obscure information or a magical item to secure their assistance. He has no intention of paying anyway; if his plot comes to fruition he plans to simply kill the heroes himself.

The House

Greene tells the party a powerful demonic creature, possibly in the guise of a man or child, will arrive soon. He informs them that he has already begun some preparations and tells them about each and every trap in the house. Allow the party a few hours to prepare for the crossroads man's arrival. Greene gives them free reign with his defense. He explains he will wait in the master bedroom where he has prepared sorcerous wards that may aid in a final defense should it come to that.

ENTRANCE

The front entrance to the house is marked with a set of large, darkly polished double doors. Grotesque faces of wrought iron hang on the doors. The door is rigged with a small cask of black powder. Forcing the door open causes the cask to explode, doing 3d6 damage in a Medium Burst template centered on the door. Picking the lock prevents the explosive trap from going off.

FOYER

The entrance opens into a large foyer with windows to the outside. A large chandelier

hangs over the foyer. If the defenders think of it, the chandelier can be rigged to fall, dealing 2d6 damage to all underneath it. Use a small burst template centered on the middle of the foyer.

PARLOR

The parlor is a large room lined with bookshelves and a window to the front lawn. There are two secret doors from this room, one to the Grand Chamber and the second to the cellar.

DINING ROOM

The dining room features a large, long and somber looking table with an iron chandelier above it. Two trapped sets of plate armor stand here. Anyone passing in front of one of the armors gets attacked with a Fighting d10 roll. On a successful attack, the trap does 2d8 damage. They can also be set to Grapple or Trick opponents (Corps a Corps or Pull the Rug). Once the traps have gone off, they do not reset. A trap door goes down into the cellar from here.

GRAND CHAMBER

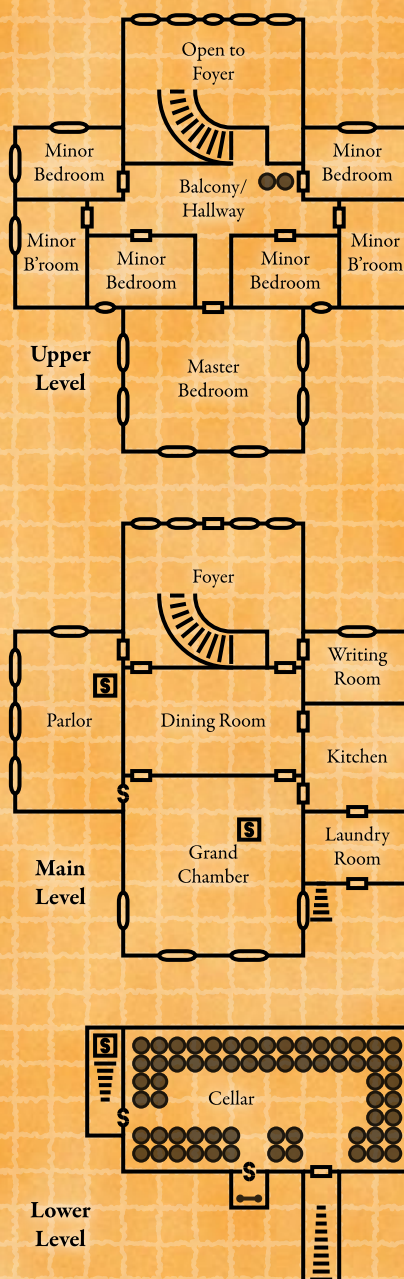
The Grand Chamber is a multi-purpose room which can be used for balls, gatherings, or even mystical rituals. At the far end is a large throne crafted of oak and iron. Paintings of angels gaze down from the high ceiling above. Their smiles are unnerving, as if the painted figures know something. Lining the walls are racks of weapons.

There are four braziers here which are trapped. Each must be triggered by a switch on its base. Thereafter, the brazier is dealt a card and explodes on its initiative doing 2d6 in a Small Burst. They are rigged to be rolled across the floor as well. A Strength roll sends one 3" in a straight line and a raise sends it up to 6".

WRITING ROOM

This room features a writing desk and small bed. The writing desk has an array of hidden daggers underneath it. They must be manually triggered and the daggers fire with Shooting d6 and 1d6+2 damage.

The Greene House



LAUNDRY ROOM

This room features large wooden basins and barrels of water for washing. There is a door to the back of the house.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

LANDING STAIRS

These stairs leads to the second floor.

CELLAR STAIRS

This flight of stairs leads to the cellar.

BALCONY

The balcony overlooks the foyer. Greene has positioned barrels of oil at the top of the stairs so that they may be rolled down them on anyone ascending. The barrels have a Pace 5 and move until they hit an obstruction. Anyone in the way must make an Agility roll or take 2d6 damage.

CELLAR

This large chamber is filled with row upon row of wine barrels. There is a secret door leading from the cellar to the Grand Chamber.

MINOR BEDROOMS

These bedrooms are mostly empty. Two of them are “special bedrooms”, with rigged beds, however. The rigged beds are set to explode if someone passes through a tripwire that runs from bed to the wall. The explosion is a Small Burst for 3d6 damage. A Notice roll allows one to observe the cord.

MASTER BEDROOM

The master bedroom has fine furnishings, but nothing deadly within. This is where Greene awaits the crossroads man. The floor is carpeted with a Persian rug decorated with dozens of intricate woven circles. If the crossroads man reaches this room, Greene uses these to remain invisible to him while he casts *transfer soul*.

THE ASSAULT

After the defenders have had ample time to prepare the house, the crossroads man arrives in the form of the Reined King. (Feel free to choose another aspect or even to make up your own if you’d prefer a different appearance for him.) With him are a number of the Tasked (see page 136). These have been created from the bodies and souls of past debtors from whom the crossroads man has collected his due..

His minions first attempt to enter through the Entrance (1). If the party succeeds in blocking them there, they move to the door to the Laundry Room (7). Next, the undead attempt to gain access through the first-floor windows. If necessary, they can come up through the floors from the cellar, the second-story windows, or even hack through the roof. In short, it is highly likely the attackers gain entrance to the house.

Once inside the house, the undead work through the lower level first and then move to the second floor. Neither the crossroads man nor his tasked attack the heroes until they act against them, either directly or by triggering any traps. Once a character does so, she becomes fair game. The crossroads man remains at the back of his minions, using Crack the Bones and his sorcery, avoiding melee combat as long as possible.

❖ **The Tasked (2 per hero):** See page 136. Armed with battle axes (Str+d8).

❖ **Crossroads Man:** See page 22.

THE SORCERER’S GAMBIT

Assuming the crossroads man and the tasked fight through to Greene’s location, the final battle commences. The crossroads man is unable to see Greene as he steps from circle to circle on the carpet. Unless a defender directly interferes with it, the crossroads man focuses on trying to find Greene. Instead, the remaining tasked engage the heroes to try to keep them occupied while their master seeks his quarry.

Throughout the battle, Edmund huddles in a corner, ignored by both his father and the crossroads man and its minions. This might provide a clue to an observant hero that all is not as Greene claimed.

All the while, Greene chants an arcane ritual. Any character making a Knowledge (Occult) roll (–2) recognizes the ritual as connected to an exchange of souls between host bodies (effectively, it’s a special version of *transfer soul*). If confronted, the sorcerer stops just long enough to explain he’s trying to trade souls with his son as he explained earlier. However, with a raise on the roll, the listener realizes that the targets of the ritual

CROSSROADS MAN

are Greene and the crossroads man, not Greene and his son.

The crossroads man attempts to follow a logical search pattern moving from one corner of the room to the other, trying to herd Greene into a corner. After four rounds of combat, it succeeds in limiting the sorcerer to a small section of the room and uses entangle in a Small Burst Template to capture him.

Once it has snared him, the crossroads man calls out to Greene in a sepulchral voice, "You may hide, but you cannot escape me, mortal. In the end, I will collect my debt." Greene answers, "I am not trying to escape you. With the help of these fools, you have fallen into my trap!"

BODY SNATCHING

With a sinister laugh, Greene completes the final words of his ritual. Both the sorcerer and his hunter go rigid and dual streams of wispy ectoplasm flow between them as their souls swap places. In barely a round's time, the flows stop and the two shudder and relax.

Greene, now in the demonic form of the crossroads man laughs again and says to his one-time defenders, "I could not have accomplished this without your assistance. For that I grant you a quick death!" With that he attacks.

After the swap, Greene gains all of the crossroads man's physical attributes (Agility, Strength, and Vigor), its Pace and Toughness, its Armor, claws, Immunity and Fear powers. He retains his own Smarts and Spirit, Edges and Hindrances, and sorcery powers. The crossroads man takes on Greene's physical attributes and retains all its other powers. However, after the swap, it finds itself unable to do any harm to Greene while he is in its old form.

Possessing both the physical body of the crossroads man and his own sorcerous abilities, Greene is a truly formidable foe. The crossroads man, now in the sorcerer's weak physical body joins the battle—this time on the side of the heroes. It aids them as it can through its remaining powers, using for example deflection or entangle. Any tasked

that still survive are able to affect Greene is his new body and attack as well.

If you feel the adventurers may have too easy of a time with this battle, allow Greene to have summoned a spirit servant prior to the battle. Once he begins his assault on the party, the spirit servant attacks with a longsword. The spirit servant has Fighting d10 and does d12+d8 damage.

Should the heroes succeed in defeating Greene, the possessed body of the crossroads man crumbles in upon itself while a mist-like essence leaks from it. The crossroads man gathers up the wisps and its old form erupts from inside Greene's former body. Then, the crossroads man bends and twists the wispy soul into the strange likeness of a dog with the sorcerer's head upon it, and attaches an iron chain to it. The thing nods its head appreciatively to the travelers, turns, and walks into the hallway, disappearing when it has left their sight.

☛ **Mortimer Greene:** See page 27.

☛ **The Tasked (varies):** See page 136. Armed with battle axes (Str+d8).

☛ **Crossroads Man:** See page 136.



HEROES AND VILLAINS

FOLLOWING are the statistics for other friends or foes found in this Savage Tale.



MORTIMER GREEN

Greene is ancient, stooped by the years and terrible knowledge he has accumulated. His hair is thinning, his face sagging and tired, and it is obvious that his time is limited even without the approach of the crossroads man.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d12, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d12, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Occult) d12, Magick d12, Notice d6, Persuasion d8

Charisma: +0

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4



THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

Hindrances: Elderly, Overconfident

Edges: Arcane Background (Sorcery), New Powers, Rich, Strong Caster

Gear: Dagger (Str+d4).

Powers: *Boost/lower trait, curse, deflection, dispel, grave speak, puppet, spirit ward, summon spirit, spirit servant, transfer soul, zombie.*

Treat Mortimer Greene as a Heroic Character.



MORTIMER GREENE

(AFTER TRANSFER SOUL)

These are Greene's statistics after he possesses the crossroads man's form.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d12, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d12, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Occult) d12, Magick d10, Notice d6, Persuasion d8

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 10 (4)

Hindrances: Overconfident

Edges: Arcane Background (Sorcery), New Power, Rich, Strong Caster

Gear: Dagger (Str+d4).

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +4:** An invisible force surrounds Greene's new form.
- **Claws/Fists:** Str+d4.
- **Fear (-2):** Anyone facing Greene in this form must make a Guts -2 roll. (This does not apply to the heroes, as they've already faced this creature in this encounter.)
- **Immunity:** Ironically, the very magic that protected the crossroads man from Greene now protects Greene from it.
- **Powers:** Greene still retains his sorcerous knowledge as well. *Boost/lower trait, curse, deflection, dispel, grave speak, puppet, spirit ward, summon spirit, spirit servant, transfer soul, zombie.*

Treat Mortimer Greene as a Heroic Character.



CROSSROADS MAN

(AFTER TRANSFER SOUL)

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d12, Spirit d12+2, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d12, Intimidation d12, Investigation d10, Knowledge (Occult) d12, Magick d12, Notice d10, Persuasion d10, Stealth d8

Charisma: +0

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 4

Gear: Dagger (Str+d4).

Edges: Improved Strong Caster

Special Abilities:

- **At All Crossroads:** Crossroads men can instantly travel from one crossroads to another.
- **Crack the Bones:** The crossroads man produces a small marionette of its target and damages it. The target must pass an opposed Spirit test against the crossroads man's Magick or suffer 2d6 damage. This power has a range 12/24/48, and the range modifies the Magick roll.
- **Improved Strong Caster:** Crossroads men reduce the Casting Modifier of all spells by 2, to a minimum of 0.
- **Puppet:** The crossroads man may use a small marionette of its victim to manipulate it. Treat this as the puppet power, using the crossroads man's Spirit as its Arcane skill.
- **Sorcery:** Crossroads men are potent sorcerers. They know the following powers: *animate band, curse, deflection, dispel, elemental manipulation, entangle, grave speak, obscure, spirit ward, summon beast, summon spirit, tempest, withering curse, zombie.* When casting spells, they benefit from the Improved Strong Caster Edge. Treat them as Legendary characters.
- **Track the Soul:** A crossroads man always knows the general location of his intended target to within a few hundred feet.

THE CULT OF THE IRON RING

The body of the Great Being was broken and rent. As Death drew close, it chose to cheat Her of Her prize. To this end, it cut out its own dark heart and carved it into pieces, eleven in all. It sent the still-quivering parts to far corners of the world, where they reside to this day. So the beast lingers on as well with its soul incomplete, not alive, but not yet dead either. Its followers have even forgotten its true name and know now it only as the Eleven-Parted Lord.

—The Liber Vorago

THE Eleven-Parted Lord is all that remains of a primordial entity of unfathomable power and alien evil that once ruled a race of sub-human creatures. It was destroyed nearly a millennium before the rise of humankind by another, more powerful, but no less unnatural, being. The demigod's humanoid followers carved pieces from its unliving—yet not quite dead—remains and spirited them away around the globe. Even now, these small portions of the entity contain, if not its consciousness, then at least a portion of its bizarre and unwholesome essence.

Over the ages, the original race of worshippers disappeared from the Earth. However, followers of the demigod persist in humanity, its worship initially perpetuated by sorcerers and necromancers who sought mistakenly to harness its power for their own purposes. The largest group of these worshippers exists as the Cult of the Iron Ring, which has slowly spread not only across Europe, but into Africa and parts of Asia as well.

On the surface, the Cult of the Iron Ring preaches that the human body and, indeed, all human creations are nothing more than

prisons that trap the mind and soul of the unenlightened in a world of misery. It claims to offer freedom from the strictures of society and the material world. Not surprisingly, the Cult draws most of its followers from the abandoned or forgotten members of society: beggars, lepers, and the like. These forsaken souls are drawn to the promise of a release from the injustice and suffering they endure on a daily basis.

Not surprisingly, given its origins, the Cult is considered heretical by the Catholic Church in spite of its seemingly innocuous teachings. Its followers are hounded by inquisitors and witch-hunters alike, forcing the Cult into hiding wherever it exists.

However, beneath the façade it presents to potential converts, it hides a far more sinister motive. In truth, the Cult is dedicated to restoring the Eleven-Parted Lord to life. The iron ring from which the cult takes its name represents the eternal nature of the demigod. Initiation into the outer circle of the cult requires a convert submit to a ring being branded onto his chest. Upon entry to the inner ranks, a searing iron ring is actually melted into the cultist's flesh at the site of the brand.

Although only the highest-ranking members know it, the brand gives the Cult terrible power over a cultist and the ring even more so. The Cult can seize control of a branded member as if by a *puppet* spell or even simply snuff out her life. The imbedded ring allows the same powers to be exercised or the Cult can channel some of the Eleven-Parted Lord's essence directly into the cultist's body, causing it to burst spontaneously into flame!

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE



The largest congregations of the Cult have possession of a shard of the Eleven-Parted Lord. Each such piece is capable of possessing a properly prepared human host, at least temporarily. Thus far, the Cult has not been successful in finding a host capable of holding even a portion of the being's essence for longer than a few days, but it continues to search for a human capable of serving as a vessel for their deity.



SHARD OF THE ELEVEN-PARTED LORD

According to legend, there are exactly eleven pieces remaining of the alien demigod, each jealously guarded by the Cult of the Iron Ring. The Shards vary in size and shape, but all are quivering lumps of unidentifiable, dark flesh. The tissue writhes and squirms of its own accord until used to possess a human host, preferably someone of pure heart and motives. The Cult spends much of its efforts in locating suitable hosts for the Lord.

Regardless of the host's original form, when possessed by the Eleven-Parted Lord, it takes on the appearance of a tall, lanky man. Pustules raise and then burst forming open, gnashing mouths at various places on the body and face as well. While the Shard is serving as a conduit for the Eleven-Parted Lord to control a host, it pulsates and throbs like a massive, beating heart.

Attributes: Agility —, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength —, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Occult) d12, Notice d10, Magick d12, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 0/as host; **Parry:** 2 (the shard)/as host, at least 7; **Toughness:** 8

Gear: As per host.

Power List: *Boost/lower trait* (flesh withers or distends), *curse* (eyes glow), *deflection* (wall of air), *fear* (air filled with gibbering), *puppet* (muscle control), *spirit servant*, *spirit ward*, *viper weapon*, *tempest*.

Special Abilities:

- **Inanimate:** The shard itself cannot move, only quiver in place. However, it can attempt to possess those who touch it.
- **Host Immunity:** Those possessed by a shard are immune to physical damage. They may only be hurt physically through attacks on the shard.
- **Possession:** Those who touch the shard or have it touched to them must make opposed Spirit rolls with the shard. If the shard wins, the Eleven-Parted Lord takes control over its target. The victim retains



THE CULT OF THE IRON RING

his or her Agility, Strength, and Vigor scores. All other skills and abilities are as the shard's listed above. The only way to save the victim is to destroy the shard itself, or by separating the shard from its host. If the shard is ever more than 5" away from its host, the shard begins to take 1d6+2 damage each round. A shard can only possess one being at a time.

- **Size -2:** Shards are small fragments of a long dead body.
- **Sorcerous Mastery:** A host possessed by the Eleven-Parted Lord has access to the following spells: *Boost/lower trait* (flesh withers or distends), *curse* (eyes glow), *deflection* (wall of air), *fear* (air filled with gibbering), *puppet* (muscle control), *viper weapon*, and *tempest*. Treat the host as a Legendary character with the Edge Strong Caster.
- **Supernatural Toughness:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. No wound penalties.
- **Will of the Lord:** The Eleven-Parted Lord may instantly activate the Instant Death, Puppet, or Spontaneous Combustion abilities of branded and ringed cultists with merely a thought. This requires neither a roll nor action on its part.

Treat the Shard of the Eleven-Parted Lord as a Legendary character.

BRANDED CULTIST

Branded members of the Cult of the Iron Ring have been deemed devoted enough to allow a limited knowledge of the Eleven-Parted Lord. All bear a brand of seared flesh 4" across on their chests that not only marks them as faithful, but literally allows the Cult the power of life and death over them.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Stealth d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: Club (Str + d4) or Dagger (Str + d4).

Hindrances: Loyal (to the Cult)

Edges: None

Special Abilities:

- **Instant Death:** A branded member of the cult may be instantly slain at the will of the High Priest or a host of the Eleven-Parted Lord.
- **Puppet:** Likewise, the cult or the host may take control of a branded member of the cult as if through a puppet spell. However, there is no range or duration limit to this control and the controller has full access to the cultist's senses as well.

RINGED CULTIST

Once a cultist has proven his dedication beyond a shadow of a doubt, the Cult sears an actual iron ring into his chest at the site of his brand. Not only does this ring display his loyalty and acceptance to the innermost secrets of the Cult, it turns him into a living weapon of the Eleven-Parted Lord.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Stealth d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: Club (Str + d4) or Dagger (Str + d4).

Hindrances: Loyal (to the Cult)

Edges: None

Special Abilities:

- **Instant Death:** A branded member of the cult may be instantly slain at the will of the High Priest or a host of the Eleven-Parted Lord.
- **Puppet:** Likewise, the cult or the host may take control of a branded member of the cult as if through a puppet spell. However, there is no range or duration limit to this control and the controller has full access to the cultist's senses as well.
- **Spontaneous Combustion:** When a cult member is captured or Incapacitated, at the whim of their masters, they may burst into flames, causing 2d10 damage in a Small Burst Template centered on the body, and possibly igniting people or objects around them (as per the rules on Fire in the Savage Worlds Core Rulebook). Needless to say, this is fatal to the cultist.



THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE



SAVAGE TALE: HOUSE OF SACRIFICES

While traveling near Paris, the wanderers are approached by a member of the local clergy, Father Julien, who asks for their assistance. A woman from his church has been missing for several days and he fears ill-fortune may have befallen her. He asks for the party's assistance in locating her.

VANISHED

Father Julien tells the heroes that one of his parishioners, Simone Desporte, has not been seen in several days. She is a young widow and without family in the city. Simone regularly volunteers her time helping him minister to the sick and poor, but she has failed to visit the church in nearly a week. He is concerned because he has for some time felt that Simone's charitable nature overcomes common sense, leading her to areas of the city where a woman alone may find herself in considerable danger.

The priest has little concrete information on Simone's likely whereabouts, but directs the party to the Hôtel-Dieu, a large hospital near the Notre Dame cathedral on Ile de la Cité, an island in the Seine River near the center of the city. He knows that when she was not visiting the parish poor, she often spent the day helping tend the sick there. Perhaps, the Father suggests, someone there may be able to set them on her track.

HÔTEL-DIEU

The Hôtel-Dieu has ancient roots, predating the famous nearby cathedral by almost six centuries. The building has been rebuilt several times since its founding and now is a huge facility that, at any given time, may hold a couple of thousand patients. Most of these are housed in large open wards with hundreds of beds lining the walls. The hospital admits virtually anyone who requests treatment and even serves as temporary shelter for vagabonds who may stay a single night free of charge.

The heroes find canvassing the hospital a daunting task. There is a sizeable staff and

the sheer volume of patients makes finding anyone who knows something about Simone beyond the fact that she helped out with more mundane tasks (serving meals, laundry, changing bedding, etc.) difficult. After some time, the travelers do eventually come across a harried nurse who tells them Simone had recently spent time in the evenings visiting with a young savage from the New World.

Not surprisingly, the hospital does not often receive American Indian patients, so a character who makes a Streetwise (+1) roll quickly learns the person in question is a young girl by the name of Giving River and that she is still a patient.

The party finds Giving River with little difficulty. Unfortunately, she fades in and out of consciousness, not even recognizing that the characters are present. She ignores any question and murmurs unintelligibly in her native tongue. Each hero who makes a Notice roll, however, hears her whisper what sounds remarkably like the French for "iron ring." No amount of effort can get Giving River to elaborate or respond to her visitors.

Speaking to one of the ward's nurses, the heroes learn that the staff does not expect her to survive the night. She tells the adventurers, "The poor girl has a terrible infection. Some fiend branded her right on her chest. I heard she worked in a brothel. No doubt she was bought as a slave and her owner did that to the poor savage."

A character who succeeds on a Persuasion roll (-2) convinces the nurse to show her the wound. A 4" circle of burned flesh mars the young girl's chest, and a severe infection has set in. The nurse knows nothing further about the young Indian, but recalls Simone sitting with her for hours on end and seeming very interested in the girl's injury.

ON THE STREETS

Even in the wider expanse of the city, American Indians are a rarity, so any hero looking to find further information on Giving River need only make a Streetwise roll. Success points the party toward Yuri Ramelovic, a rough and sadistic man from the Russian steppes. Ramelovic is a notorious thug and operates more than one brothel within Paris.



THE CULT OF THE IRON RING

Although technically illegal in Paris, brothels are tolerated as a necessary evil and even regulated, paradoxically, by law. Ramelovic is careful to ensure he complies with all legal requirements and bribes any bothersome officials. On top of that, he is always accompanied by several henchmen and bodyguards. As a result, he is fairly secure in his business and doesn't take kindly to interlopers nosing around it.

He freely admits that Giving River worked for him until about two weeks ago. He claims that she was an indentured servant and owed him several years of "labor" yet, but she ran away. Ramelovic denies knowing anything at all about Giving River's strange injuries. He suggests perhaps she was moonlighting and took in the wrong customer.

He claims he has never heard of Simone Desporte. It's clear to any character that makes a Notice roll that Ramelovic is holding back information. However, to get him to talk, an investigator has to succeed on an Intimidation roll. On a success, Ramelovic and his men attack the party, fighting until half their number are Incapacitated. At that point, he surrenders and tells them what he knows. With a raise on the Intimidation roll, Ramelovic offers up the information without a fight.

If the party convinces him to talk, Ramelovic tells them:

All right, all right! A few days ago, I spoke to this woman you ask about. She wanted to know about the burns on the Indian girl and something about an iron ring. I tell her I know nothing, but some of my girls speak of a ring or circle before and they leave too. They go to Left Bank, but I do not hear of them again except one, Sophie Coubat. I do not bother with her, she is too old to bring much money anyway. Maybe your woman went to her.

🐉 **Thugs (2, plus one per hero):** See page 37.

🐉 **Yuri Ramelovic:** See page 36.

TALKING TO SOPHIE

Yuri Ramelovic directs the travelers to a small tavern on the Left Bank. There they find Sophie Coubat, a tired, world-weary woman who toils her days away as a barmaid,

trying to make ends meet. If the heroes ask her about either Giving River's injury or Simone's disappearance, she unconvincingly pleads ignorance and then attempts to get away from the heroes. Any mention of an "iron ring" brings a sudden look of fear to her eyes. Either way, a Persuasion or Intimidation roll is necessary to get her to answer any questions, even then, she whispers, "Please! Let us go where we cannot be heard! They have eyes everywhere."

There are a number of patrons in the tavern at this time. A hero who specifically states he is looking for suspicious characters and makes a Notice roll (-2) sees a raggedly dressed man slip out shortly after the group begins questioning Sophie. Any characters attempting to follow him find he has disappeared by the time they reach the street.

Sophie leads the adventurers out the back of the tavern to a small alleyway. There she tells them her story.

I spoke to the Desporte woman. I told her who did that to that poor girl. There's a group of them. and they call themselves the Iron Ring. Maria Epalza took me there. I went along with them for a while and I fear it may have cost me my immortal soul for what goes on there ain't Godly by my reckoning. When they chanted, you could almost feel the shadows of the room come to life and hear whispers that come from nowhere and everywhere at the same time.

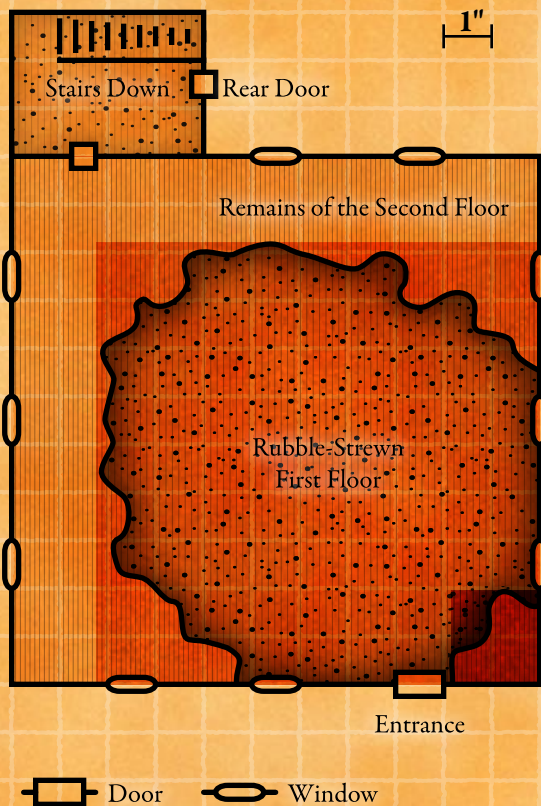
I don't know what happened to your friend, but the Iron Ring is still around. They used to meet in caves under an old custom house. I can't say they still do, but look for their mark...

Before she can tell the party anything further, she appears to suffer a seizure of some sort. She begins to talk to herself. "You shouldn't have told them! We would have let you go, but now, you must pay the price." She grabs her chest, and her mouth begins to froth. She falls to the ground thrashing, but oddly silent. After but a moment, she lies still—dead. Should a hero think to check, she finds the scar of a circular brand on Sophie's chest.



THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

Custom House



MARIA EPALZA

Before searching for the Iron Ring's lair, the wanderers may try to speak with Maria Epalza. A Streetwise roll leads them to a small house on the Left Bank. As the characters approach the house, anyone making a Notice roll (-1) spots a small iron ring hanging on the wall near the door. This is the mark that Sophie mentioned just before her death.

Maria Epalza is a dark-haired, olive-skinned woman no doubt of Mediterranean origins. She does not seem pleased to see the heroes, but admits them to her home immediately. Once they are inside, she doesn't answer any questions, but instead immediately begins speaking to them.

Hello travelers. I know why you are here. We are aware of your search, but know this. The woman belongs to the

Eleven-Parted Lord and will soon be his. As for you, you will burn with me as a sacrifice to him!

With this, Maria attempts to tackle the nearest member of the party. Whether she succeeds or fails, her body immediately bursts into flame. The fire quickly spreads throughout the house, forcing the adventurers to flee the burning structure. However, a hero who makes a Notice roll (-2) finds a pair of her shoes near the door covered in a whitish, chalky substance. A Knowledge (Science) or Knowledge (Chemistry) roll identifies this powder as gypsum dust.

FINDING THE CULT

The Cult of the Iron Ring meets in a section of abandoned mine tunnels under the Left Bank of the city. They gain entrance to the mines at any number of points, including several places in the sewers. However, the most common point of entry is through the basement of an abandoned building that once served as a custom house.

The party has a few clues at its disposal with which to locate the Cult of the Iron Ring. The first came from Sophie Coubat when she mentioned an old custom house. An Investigation or Streetwise Roll reveals there are several such structures in Paris and at least two that are still in operation. If the heroes have guessed the Cult's mark is a small iron ring, it's a simple matter of spending a day wandering the city and visiting each until they spot the small iron ring (no roll necessary).

If they haven't identified the iron ring, the travelers may have taken note of the dust on Maria's shoes. If so, a Knowledge (History), Knowledge (Science) or Common Knowledge roll tells a character that plaster (or gypsum) was mined heavily at one time on the Left Bank. Armed with that knowledge and Sophie's mention of a custom house, the heroes can identify the correct building in a day of searching with a single Smarts roll.

THE CUSTOM HOUSE

The custom house has served a variety of purposes. It was once a church, a hospital, and finally a warehouse. At some point in the

THE CULT OF THE IRON RING

past, a fire burned down most of the interior, making it a hollow-shell of a building. Most locals believe the place to be haunted—thanks in no small part to the activities of the Iron Ring—and avoid it at all costs.

From the exterior, the custom house resembles a simple church with its high, narrow windows. Any adventurer specifically looking for it quickly spots a small iron ring hanging near the door. Less canny heroes do so only on a Notice Roll. Within, the custom house is blackened from the flames of years past. The second floor has long since collapsed, leaving only a narrow strip of soggy wood that circles the interior of the walls.

The Cult is aware the party is looking for both them and Simone at this point and has assembled a motley crew of beggars and street thugs to fend off any interlopers. A single branded cult member tries to slip into the tunnels to warn the rest of the cult while the rest of the guards fight to give him time to escape. If captured, the cultist immediately convulses and dies in the same manner as Sophie Coubat.

Most of the initiates here pick up pieces of wood from the floor and use them like clubs, but others are armed with daggers and knives. To complicate matters, there are four guards up on the remnants of the second story of the custom house. They use their ledges as position points to fire crossbows at any party members they see.

It should quickly become apparent to the heroes that they are not fighting trained opponents. The initiates aren't the most fearsome opponents being comprised of beggars and other social outcasts misled by the Iron Ring, still they are fanatical and do not surrender or retreat, choosing to fight to the death.

🐉 **Branded Cultist (1):** See page 31.

🐉 **Initiates (2 per hero):** See page 37.

🐉 **Crossbowmen (4):** See Branded Cultist page 31. These cultists also possess Shooting d6 and are equipped with a crossbow (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6) and 10 bolts each.

INTO THE MINES

The entrance to the mines is in the cellar of the ruined building and is roughly camouflaged. If any of the adventurers followed the guard, he can easily locate the hidden doorway. Otherwise, it requires a Notice roll (-2) to find it. Alternately, a sharp-eyed hero may follow the tracks of cultists entering and exiting the mines with a Tracking roll.

The mine tunnels are uneven in width and height and water pools dot the floor. The trip from the custom house to the Iron Ring's lair takes approximately ten minutes of winding through the underground passageways. The mines underneath Paris in this area are extensive and a party roaming randomly through them could easily become lost for days. Fortunately, the cultists have mounted torches in the walls to light the way to their central meeting place.

If the guard escaped to warn the rest of the Cult, the fanatics are ready and waiting when the characters arrive. Otherwise, the heroes emerge from the tunnel into a large limestone chamber that has been converted into a church of sorts. Burned and splintering beams carried from the ruined custom house lie in rows that act as pews for the worshippers. A group of cultists is seated in the pews facing the opposite end of the chamber.

At the far end of the chamber, a man in dark robes stands beside a ramshackle altar made of charred wood and large stone blocks. There, the travelers see the missing woman they have been seeking for the last few days.

Atop the altar lies the body of a woman—Simone Desporte! The man is holding her down on the makeshift altar, pressing a throbbing piece of black, sticky flesh onto her forehead. To make the scene even more horrifying, as she is possessed, her body and face stretches to accommodate what appears to be a tall, powerful man. But most disturbing is the fact that her eyes retract and are replaced by a pair of gaping mouths.

"My brothers and sisters!" he calls to the crowd. "Too long have they trod upon you! Too long have they ravaged us in



THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

Cult Chamber



the name of their man-god! Behold the face of the Eleven-Parted Lord, who will grant you all that you—" He stops in mid-sentence and points directly at your group. "There! There are the unbelievers who seek to thwart the Lord's return!"

Almost as one, the cultists rise and turn to attack the heroes. The priest places the pulsating Shard of the Eleven-Parted Lord on the altar next to Simone and casts spells as appropriate. He also causes the ringed cultists to immolate themselves whenever he can catch more than one hero in the resulting inferno. Simone, now the host to the Eleven-Parted Lord, also attacks the party, fearlessly wading into the melee.

Remember that the Eleven-Parted Lord cannot be harmed by physical attacks. It can only be harmed by blows done to the throbbing Shard. The cult priest knows this and stands guard over the Shard.

The cultists and priest fight to the death. However, should the battle go badly for the cultists, the Eleven-Parted Lord attempts to grab his Shard and flee while in possession of Simone's body.

☞ **Branded Cultists (10):** See page 31.

☞ **Ringed Cultists (4):** See page 31.

☞ **High Priest:** See page 37.

☞ **Simone Desporte (now possessed by the Eleven-Parted Lord):** See Shard of the Eleven Parted Lord, page 30.

FIGHTING THE CULT

If the heroes destroy the Shard, Simone's body returns to her normal form. She collapses to the ground, unconscious. If questioned, she tells the party that she was outraged over the harm done to Giving River and sought to find those responsible in the hopes of bringing them to the authorities. She was seized by the Cult and brought to their abominable church. Fortunately, Simone has no memory of her possession or the events immediately preceding it.



HEROES AND VILLAINS

FOLLOWING are the statistics for other friends or foes found in this Savage Tale.

YURI RAMELOVIC

Yuri Ramelovic is a brutish and violent man who has carved a niche for himself in Paris. He dresses in nice clothing and jewelry, but seems as out of place in them as a bear wearing a bow.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Throwing d8

Charisma: -2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8 (1)

Hindrances: Greedy, Mean

Edges: Block, Combat Reflexes, Command

Gear: Longsword (Str+d8), leather armor (1).



THE CULT OF THE IRON RING

THUGS

Ramelovic's men are big, dumb, and strong. They enjoy a good fight—a "good" fight being any where they are beating their foes senseless.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6

Charisma: -2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Hindrances: Illiterate, Mean

Edges: —

Gear: Club (Str+1d4), leather armor (1).

INITIATES

These confused and misled souls have been manipulated by the Cult of the Iron Ring to delay or defeat the heroes. They are ill-equipped to do so, being little more than poor, malnourished street dwellers.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d4, Notice d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: -1

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Outcast, Poverty.

Edges: —

Gear: Club (Str+d4) or dagger (Str+d4).



HIGH PRIEST

The high priest of this splinter of the Cult of the Iron Ring is an accomplished sorcerer who draws his power from the Eleven-Parted Lord. Although he is aware of the Cult's true aims, he is no less devoted than his followers—whom he does not hesitate to sacrifice for the greater good of the Lord.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Magick d10, Shooting d8, Streetwise d6, Throwing d8

Charisma: +2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

SPLINTER RING

The high priest wears a ring carved from ebony with a strange, dull stone imbedded in it. The stone is actually a tiny, calcified piece of the Eleven-Parted Lord's body. This splinter does not have the power to possess a host as does a full Shard, but it does a small amount of the entity's essence. As a result, its wearer gains +2 to all Spirit rolls made to resist possession or possession-type effects (such as a *puppet* spell). However, against possession-type effects and spells cast by the Cult of the Iron Ring (including a host or Shard of the Eleven-Parted Lord), the wearer instead suffers a -2 penalty.

Gear: Dagger (Str+d4), crossbow (Range 15/30/60, 2d6), splinter ring.

Hindrances: Vow – Cult of the Iron Ring

Edges: Arcane Background (Sorcery), Charismatic, Command, New Power, Fervor, Hold the Line!

Power List: *Boost/lower trait, curse, smite.*

Special Abilities:

- **Spontaneous Combustion:** When a cult member is captured or Incapacitated, and at his own option, he may burst into flames, causing 2d10 damage in a Small Burst Template centered on his body, and possibly igniting people or objects around them (as per the rules on fire in *The Savage World of Solomon Kane*). As with the other cultists, this is immediately fatal to the high priest.
- **Will of the Lord:** Like the Eleven-Parted Lord itself, the High Priest may instantly activate the Instant Death, Puppet, or Spontaneous Combustion abilities of branded and ringed cultists with merely a thought. This requires neither a roll nor action on its part.

Treat the high priest as a Veteran character.



ERASMUS DEIN

In days long past, Erasmus Dein was a scholar and magician. His two greatest loves were knowledge and his doting wife, Rebecca. In his quest for ever greater understanding, Dein explored much of the world. During one such travel, he stumbled upon an ancient temple dedicated to pagan woodland gods that predated even druidic worship.

Delving into these practices, he found the promise of long-forgotten rituals and spells that promised great power. However, this knowledge came at a price, and Dein gladly paid that price through the sacrifice of his own body and soul. Over time, he relinquished first a hand, then a foot, and even one of his eyes. Dein hid his practices from even his beloved wife, using his newfound art to replace his body parts with living wood that melded with his own flesh.

Finally, seeking immortality, he pulled his own heart from his chest, replacing it with a bundle of quivering roots. His wife became curious as to Dein's secretive activities. She burst into his study and watched him as he performed this terrible ritual. Rebecca, a devoutly religious woman, was horrified at what she saw. Denouncing him as a witch, she fled. In a moment of panic and still unsteady from his own ordeal, Dein cast a spell to restrain her. However, the magic went hideously awry and transformed his wife into a gnarled tree, rooted to the spot.

For centuries, Erasmus Dein has devoted his unnaturally long life to finding a way to transform his wife back. He keeps her twisted

form in a coffin filled with fresh dirt which he must feed with human blood regularly. Time and again, he has failed to return her to the world of the living. To remind him of the cost of failure, Dein carries a cane crafted from one of her arms, severed from the trunk in a disastrous attempt to restore her years ago. Like Rebecca's body, the cane also has a thirst for blood and must be fed or it will wither and die.

Erasmus Dein is not truly an evil man. His lust for knowledge is stronger than ever but driven now more by his desire to alleviate his wife's suffering rather than for personal power. However, he is ruthless in pursuit of any solution that he believes will remove the curse. Ironically, Dein knows he could accomplish this goal by sacrificing his soul to the dark entities with whom he deals, but he is loath to pay that ultimate price—even for his own wife. So, he continues to research further into the dark arts, hoping against hope that one day he will succeed in finding a release for his one true love.

In his travels, Dein has heard of Solomon Kane, although he has never met him personally. Though he holds no particular fear or hatred for Kane, he sees him as a terrible danger. In Dein's eyes wherever Solomon Kane has unleashed his wanton justice, has the world become a truly better place or has chaos and darkness still lingered? Dein holds precious the concepts of knowledge, exploration, and understanding, while he perceives Kane and those like him as a destructive force that vanquishes with little thought or consideration.





ERASMUS DEIN

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d12, Strength d6, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Magick d12, Knowledge (Occult) d12, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Taunt d8

Charisma: +0

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Edges: Arcane Background (Sorcery), Command, Improved Strong Caster, Improved Tough as Nails, Natural Leader

Hindrances: Elderly, Lame, One Arm

Powers: *Armor* (bark-like skin), *barrier* (wall of thorns), *beast friend*, *curse* (slowly turns to wood), *deflection* (wooden body), *dispel*, *entangle* (animated vines), *slumber*, *spirit ward*, *summon beast*, *transfer soul*, *zombie* (animated through vines growing through body)

Gear: Thirsty Rod (Str + d6) — When Dein strikes an opponent with his cane and achieves a result of at least Shaken, any living being must make a Vigor roll or take one additional Wound as the staff sends shoots into her skin and drinks her blood.

Special Abilities:

- **Immortality:** Erasmus Dein cannot be killed permanently through conventional means. If he is Incapacitated, he enters a state of suspended animation that causes him to appear dead until his body heals itself (one Vigor roll per day). Even if his body is completely destroyed, it regrows again from the ancient temple where he first discovered the dark pagan gods with whom he now traffics for his power.
- **Rooted to the Spot:** Dein can attack an opponent (with a Fighting roll), causing roots to grow out from their legs and into the ground, instead of dealing damage. The victim must make a Vigor roll (with -2 modifier if Dein hit with a raise) or becomes entangled. Breaking free causes no damage to the victim, but characters killed while rooted turn instantly into gnarled trees.



THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

- **Weakness:** Dein can be killed if crucified on the twisted and wooden body of his wife. Likewise, staking him through the heart with his cane also destroys him. Should the temple of the pagan gods he serves be destroyed, his body does not regrow from total destruction.



SAVAGE TALE: DARK PATRON

THE party is approached by a servant of Erasmus Dein. He asks them to meet with his master regarding a matter of mutual interest. He explains that his master is a learned man who may be able to help the wanderers on their quest—in return for a small service.

A MEETING IN THE GARDEN

Should the wanderers agree to meet with Dein, they are led to a small clock shop in a sizable city. The clocks are of various sizes and shapes, mostly of the spring-driven variety but a few water clocks are present as well. The shop is a curious blend of invention and the natural world. There is a large, wild, and sprawling garden in the back of the shop and potted plants abound in the shop. In places, vines and leaves curl around the clocks in strange patterns.

Dein sits in the center of the shop, pleasantly humming to himself and working on a clock with his one good hand. He hobbles over to the heroes merrily when he sees them, using his knotted staff for support. His left eye is a painted wooden eye and wanders occasionally, especially when he gets excited. Attempt to portray him as an eccentric, but harmless, old man.

He greets the heroes warmly and offers them a seat. Dein asks the wanderers to recover an item for him—the Woman Enchained. He explains that the Woman Enchained is a relic of great power which grants the possessor the power of foresight. He notes that the party may be able to use it themselves—with his assistance, of course—to gain insight into their own quest.

Dein tells them that he has reason to believe that other individuals are after the Woman Enchained and would use it towards ill ends. To prevent the abuse of the relic, he seeks to acquire it and, using mystical rites, mask its location.

What he doesn't tell the party is that the Woman Enchained is an oracle of great power, but it is a creature, not an inanimate object. He intends to use it as a sacrifice in another attempt to free his wife. If the party seems skeptical, then Dein thanks them for their time and indicates he will simply hire someone else to do the job.

A MEETING IN THE MOUNTAINS

If the adventurers accept the quest, then they are given a map to the approximate location of the Woman Enchained. The “relic” lies deep in the heart of the Carpathian Mountains, just north of the borders of the Ottoman Empire. A Knowledge (Geography) roll tells a traveler that the area in question is not far from the Ottoman principality known as Transylvania.

After an arduous journey into the Carpathians, the wanderers encounter the town of Murkut. It is a small, quaint village of shepherders and farmers. There are no inns or taverns in the village, but custom holds that a traveler may purchase shelter for the night as well as a meal by paying a small fee to the head of a household in the village.

Whether they choose to rest for the night at Murkut or not, the wanderers encounter a band of armed men in the village square. The men are rough looking and well armed. They are in a circle, harassing a pair of young women who stand, quite frightened, in the middle of the group.

Should the wanderers intervene, the leader, Gustav Schenk, steps forwards and offers a hearty apology. He even extends that apology to the young women—if asked. He plays the angle of the friendly ruffian to the hilt. In truth, Schenk wants to avoid conflict, wanting to save his men's strength for later. Schenk was hired by Erasmus Dein as insurance that the Woman Enchained is

retrieved. Unknown to Schenk, Dein also watches the characters, using one of the mercenaries as a host for his *transer soul* spell. If the party attempts to start a fight, Schenk orders his men to flee and he goes with them.

If the wanderers rescue the women, the grateful villagers offer free room and board. Should the characters seem reluctant, the villagers warn them of packs of roving wolves that frequently come down from the nearby mountains. A friendly family with many children agrees to house them for the night. During the course of the evening, the children continually dig through the adventurers' packs and belongings and asking endless questions of their new "heroes."

Many of the villagers cross themselves reflexively if asked about the Woman Enchained. Although they have heard rumors of an oracle in the nearby mountains, none has visited it. No one knows exactly what it is, but most make it clear they believe it to be tied to dark sorceries and best left alone.

NIGHT ATTACK!

That night, a large pack of wolves attacks the village. If the adventurers are staying in Murkut, they are awakened by the sound of gunfire and livestock bleating in a panic. Their hosts tell them that the wolves in the region have grown in number to the point they now even raid the village pens for food. The packs are so ferocious that few in the community dare try to drive them off. That is one of the reasons many were in favor of allowing Schenk's band to remain in town (not that the villagers were likely to be able to force them to leave anyway).

Outside, his men are making a stand against the wolf pack, but the animals are numerous and ferocious, driven by near starvation. It is gunfire from one of their muskets that awakens the party. If the heroes have chased the mercenaries out of the village in the previous encounter, then they show back up again, chased into the village by the very wolf pack that now plagues it.

UNLEASH THE HOUNDS!

This Savage Tale provides an opportunity to introduce the party to another character who can become an ongoing ally or foe, Harlow Hobbes (page 62). Simply replace Gustav Schenk and his men in the adventure with Hobbes and his Hounds. This sort of employment is right up Hobbes' alley, and he would have no compunction working for someone with questionable motives such as Dein. The Hounds are more competent than Schenk's men and have a trick or two up their sleeves that make them even harder to kill, so feel free to increase the wolves in Night Attack! and take care to not overwhelm the heroes in the final encounter.

The wolves are an enormous pack led by several dire wolves. They attack any living thing fearlessly, driven by their hunger. However, once two-thirds of their number or all the dire wolves are slain, they retreat to the mountains. Although Schenk is a Wild Card, allow players to control his men in the battle.

If the characters assist the men, they are grateful to the party. Schenk spits on his hand and shakes each party member's hand. "Gustav Schenk never forgets a debt, and he owes you one now," he says with gusto. If the party does not help the mercenaries, they take heavy losses but survive. At the end of the conflict, Schenk simply glares at the party and mumbles "what ye sow, so shall ye reap."

On the chance that the characters chose not to remain in Murkut, allow them to make Notice rolls to hear the sounds of the attack from far off and rush to the aid of the village. Should the wanderers simply ignore the battle, then Murkut is slaughtered and Schenk's men flee into the mountains for their lives.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

• **Wolves (30):** See *The Savage Worlds of Solomon Kane*.

• **Dire Wolves (1 per hero):** See *The Savage Worlds of Solomon Kane*.

• **Gustav Schenk:** See page 44.

• **Mercenaries (10):** See page 44.

THE WOMAN ENCHAINED

Less than half a day's travel deeper into the mountains from Murkut lies the area marked on the party's map. Unfortunately, the precise site of the Woman Enchained is not indicated, just an approximate location. The party must scour the surrounding valleys and mountainsides to find the actual site.

Searching the area takes 6 hours. Characters may make a single cooperative Notice or Tracking roll. Each success and raise lowers the time by one hour, to a minimum of one hour. At the end of the indicated time, the travelers find the hidden grotto holding the Woman Enchained.

However, the mountains are filled with hazards, so for each hour they spend searching draw a card and consult the table below:

- **2:** A rockfall (see page 304 in *Savage Worlds of Solomon Kane*).
- **3–6:** The heroes must each make a Vigor roll. Failure means the character is exhausted due to climbing up and down the treacherous slopes and suffers a Fatigue level.
- **7–9:** The party spends an hour fruitlessly searching the mountains.
- **10 or Jack:** The party finds a small shrine to a woman hidden in a crevasse. On the shrine are bas relief images of a woman drinking from a large goblet. A Knowledge (Occult) identifies that the figures are vampires and what they are drinking is blood.
- **Queen or King:** A pack of hungry wolves (1 per hero) led by a dire wolf attacks the party (from *The Savage World of Solomon Kane*).

- **Ace or Joker:** Luck is with the wanderers and they discover the entrance to the chamber.

THE GROTTO

The entrance to the small cave holding the Woman Enchained is a low-lying crack beneath a giant slab of rock, easily missed if one is not carefully searching. To enter the chamber, the heroes must flatten themselves down on the ground.

After about ten feet, the crack opens up into a small chamber filled with dangling chains, which stir and clink, though there is no breeze. In the center lies the Woman Enchained. She is lithe and muscular—and obviously not a statue. Long-dried blood stains streak down her chin, her hair is wild, and her yellowing fingernails curl in odd directions. Manacles chain her arms and legs to the ground. At her feet are bones—mostly small rodents, but some that appear suspiciously human as well.

The Woman Enchained is an oracle, but also a vampire. She requires blood to make her prophecies. Sorcerers and worse travel for leagues to consult her, bringing gifts of blood. Usually, these gifts come in the form of rats, but on occasion those seeking her wisdom have brought human sacrifices as well.

"I know who you are," hisses the woman. "And I have foreseen what the fiend Erasmus Dein would have you do, but you must not! Free me instead. For if you do not, then he or some other black-hearted fool will find me."

"Do you know the true nature of Erasmus? Do you know why he seeks to possess me? Long ago he damned his own wife to an existence more horrible than my own. Now, he seeks to break her curse with my blood. You may look at me as an monster, but I say to you that any horror you see in me is magnified a hundred fold in Erasmus Dein!"

Unbeknownst to the party, Schenk's mercenaries have been shadowing them as they searched for the vampire's grotto. After she pleads her case, Erasmus, still possessing the body of one of the mercenaries, calls to the party from the entrance into the cave. Although it is not his voice, the heroes recognize it as Dein somehow speaking to them through the man.

"The vampire speaks the truth. But... my friends. The fate that befell my wife was an accident and not by my design. The creature in front of you is an abomination, a plague upon the Earth. No doubt goodly souls like yourself are repulsed by the monstrosity, and rightly so! It deserves to be expunged, but let its end serve a purpose. It can free my wife from her prison. Can you not find compassion for my plight?"

The Woman Enchained counters Dein, saying, "If you were truly so noble, you would sacrifice your own life to save her!"

"Are you going to listen to the words of this vampiress?" says Dein with a hint of malice. "Or help me to free my wife from years of torment and pain?"

Schenk then calls down from the entrance of the chamber, greeting the party in his gentlemanly manner. If the heroes assisted him earlier, he assures them that no harm will come to them so long as they cooperate. However, if the party chooses to not do so, Schenk chuckles darkly and talks about the deliciousness of irony.

THE DECISION

If the party defies Dein and they assisted Schenk against the wolves, then the mercenary leader says, "Damnation and pox on all you soft-hearted bastards! You'll cost me a pretty sum, but let it not be said that Gustav Schenk forgets a debt!" He immediately, but reluctantly, directs his band to seize the man whom Dein is possessing. The sorcerer puts up a brief struggle—even unleashing a bag of mandrakes (page 108)—but ultimately has

RITUAL OF RELEASE

Dein allows any of the characters that wish to remain present for the freeing of his wife. The ritual is quite gruesome, requiring him to crucify the vampire oracle to the wooden form of his wife. The gnarled tree drinks the vampire's blood and Dein's wife returns—but as a vampire. Dein refuses to let the heroes slay his wife and fights against them if they attempt to do so. Whether the wanderers seek to slay the vampire or not, she escapes, fleeing into the night. Wracked by anguish, Dein collapses weeping to the ground. Eventually, his guilt overcomes him and he may contact the heroes to ask their help in hunting down his wife and destroying her.

little chance against such a large group. He is quickly subdued and relinquishes his control of the man, but not before vowing his revenge on both the heroes and Schenk for betraying him.

If the party defies Dein and they did not assist the mercenaries, then Schenk and his men simply wait with their ranged weapons for the travelers' inevitable exit from the cave. There are no other entrances in or out of the chamber. Exiting the cave requires the characters crawl out through the crack (prone); this provides no bonus against the mercenaries' fire as they are within 3" of the exit, or beside or above it when the heroes crawl out. Once two of the party have emerged from the crack, Dein unleashes his bag of mandrakes as well.

Three rounds after combat begins, Schenk begins to openly question Dein. It becomes quickly clear that Schenk was unaware that Dein planned to use sorcery on one of his own men. After another three rounds of a heated argument between the two (during which time they continue to fight against the

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

party), Schenk offers to join the heroes' side so long as they can make it worth his while (&20 or more). Should the characters refuse to ally with the mercenaries, Schenk and his men flee, as he decides to wash his hands of the whole affair.

If the party sides with Erasmus, then they must break the chains which bind the vampire oracle and battle her as well. Thereafter, they must carry her up to Schenk and his men. Dein has provided them with the means to transport the creature safely back to his abode.

🐉 **Gustav Schenk:** See page 44.

🐉 **Mercenaries (2 per hero):** See page 44.

🐉 **Erasmus Dein:** See page 38. Dein retains his Smarts and Spirit as well as his skills, Edges, and powers with the exception that he is not armed with his thirsty rod. He gains the physical abilities of Agility d8, Strength d6, and Vigor d6.

🐉 **Mandrakes (2 per hero):** See page 108.

🐉 **Woman Enchained:** See page 45.

Epilogue

If the heroes defy Dein and defeat him, they have gained a powerful foe. Dein is not likely to seek immediate retribution for their betrayal though, as he has grown accustomed to taking a long view on obtaining his goals.

If the party instead aids the sorcerer, then he is appropriately grateful. The characters are welcome to accompany Schenk and his men as they escort the vampire back to Dein's home. True to his word, the sorcerer uses the power of the oracle to grant them a clue toward finding a relic (or, if you prefer, a link to another adventure).

Should the travelers have parted company with Gustav Schenk on amicable terms, he may become a contact or even ally in later adventures.



HEROES AND VILLAINS

FOLLOWING are the statistics for other friends or foes found in this Savage Tale.



GUSTAV SCHENK

Schenk is a middle-aged, war-hardened veteran of a dozen small conflicts around the Continent. His hair is beginning to gray and a scar marks his right cheek, but his body and mind remain as hard as the steel he carries on his belt. He is fiercely loyal to his men and follows his own, albeit somewhat flexible, code of honor.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Block, Command, Level Headed, Musketeer

Gear: Rapier (Str+d4, +1 Parry), pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1), shot and powder, chain hauberk (+2).

MERCENARY

Schenk's band is composed of ex-soldiers from across Europe. By and large, they are an unsavory lot, but experienced fighters all and loyal to Schenk.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Musketeer, Steady Hands

Gear: Long sword (Str+1d6), musket (Range 10/20/40, Damage 2d8), shot & powder (20), leather armor (1).



WOMAN ENCHAINED

Although the Woman Enchained is an ancient vampire, centuries of imprisonment and a restricted diet have weakened her to the equivalent of a relatively young member of her ilk.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Swim d8, Throwing d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Special Abilities:

- **Blood Drain:** A vampire who succeeds in grappling an opponent can make a bite (Fighting) attack next round with a +2 bonus. When successful, the victim must make a Vigor roll, -2 with a raise, or suffer Fatigue from blood loss. This can lead to Death.
- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Frenzy:** Vampires can make two attacks per round with a -2 penalty to each attack.
- **Level Headed:** Vampires act on the best of two cards.
- **Sire:** Anyone slain by a vampire has a 50% chance of rising as a vampire themselves in 1d4 days.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. No wound penalties. Called Shots do no extra damage (except to the heart—see below).
- **Weakness (Holy Symbol):** A character with a holy symbol may keep a vampire at bay by displaying a holy symbol. A vampire who wants to directly attack the victim must beat her in an opposed test of Spirits.
- **Weakness (Holy Water):** A vampire sprinkled with holy water is Fatigued. If immersed, he combusts as if it were direct sunlight (see below).
- **Weakness (Invitation Only):** Vampires cannot enter a private dwelling without being invited. They may enter public domains as they please.
- **Weakness (Stake Through the Heart):** A vampire hit with a called shot to the heart (-6) must make a Vigor roll versus the damage. If successful, it takes damage normally. If it fails, it disintegrates to dust.
- **Weakness (Sunlight):** Vampires catch fire if any part of their skin is exposed to direct sunlight. After that they suffer 2d10 damage per round until they are dust. Armor does not protect from this damage.

GOBLINS

When we were little, my brother Tobias would steal food from the kitchen or take extra portions from the table when Mother wasn't looking. I thought that he was stealing for a pet, perhaps a puppy or kitten that he didn't want to share with me.

One night after dinner, I saw him outside standing by the well, talking down into it. "There's no more!" he insisted. "I have no more to give you!"

Then I saw a pair of small hands seize Tobias by the hair and drag him into the well. It happened so fast that he did not even cry out. I was young and afraid that if I told anyone the thing in the well would come for me. I told Mother and Father that Tobias had fallen down the well. They searched that well all day, digging at the sides and plumbing the cool water. All they found was his shirt, torn in places as if a bear had attacked him—although no one could explain how the shirt then got into the well.

GOBLINS are small, gnarled beings who resemble the forms of twisted, old men. Their limbs are knotted with muscle and their fingers are topped by thick nails tough enough to score solid stone. On close examination, one can't help but notice a distinct, but unidentifiable familiarity in the humanoids' features—and with good reason.

In the days before recorded history, the ancestors of goblins were once human beings. These poor souls were enslaved by an ancient and mighty race of beings serving a forgotten Elder God and forced to work in deep, cramped mines, gathering precious

metals and gems. Their masters subjected them to terrible sorceries and even more horrible physical mutilations to make them more suitable for the conditions of the mines.

In time, their overlords passed from the Earth but the goblins remained. Rendered unfit for life on the surface by the horrific changes their masters had inflicted, they kept to tunnels and caves. Over the millennia, the creatures have degenerated into a race of subterranean humanoids.

During these raids, it is not uncommon for some to make small offerings to goblins in the mistaken belief that the goblins are mythical faeries or trolls. However, goblins are not fey nor are they likely to be appeased by such gifts. Instead, it is far more likely that the offerings draw further unwanted attention for the subterranean race.



GOBLIN

Goblins are twisted creatures about the size of a child with pale, leathery skin. Their eyes are milky-white and pupil-less, rendered useless after generations of lightless existence in the dank tunnels under the earth. To compensate, they have evolved the ability to navigate solely by sound. When not trying to be stealthy, the creatures make an unnerving cooing sound by which to better sense their surroundings.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8

Charisma: +0

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Goblins are densely muscled and have a thick, leathery hide, making them surprisingly resistant to physical injury.
- **Blind:** These creatures are immune to any vision-based effects (darkness, *invisibility*, *obscure*, etc.).
- **Burrowing:** 4".
- **Claws:** Str+1d4, AP 2. Goblin claws are dense and sharp, capable of scoring solid stone.
- **Echo Location:** Goblins do not suffer any penalties for bad lighting.
- **Size -1:** Goblins stand 4' tall on average.
- **Weakness (Sound):** Loud noises, such as gunshots or explosions, force goblins to make a Vigor roll or be deafened, suffering a -6 to all physical tasks that require "vision" for the next round.



SAVAGE TALE: DEAL WITH THE DEVILS

WHILE traveling through the European countryside, the wanderers come across a village seemingly empty of inhabitants. No one works in the surrounding fields, all of which are overgrown with weeds. No children play in the streets and no livestock is visible anywhere nearby. The houses, while apparently vacant, are in good repair and do not appear to have been long abandoned. On several, however, doors swing loosely in the wind and the windows remain unshuttered.

The Abandoned Town

If they search the abandoned houses, the heroes uncover several unsettling clues that something is amiss in the small village.

The first home searched has clearly sat empty for many months. Cobwebs lie heavy around the residence and dust lies heavily on all exposed surfaces. Some pieces of furniture have been overturned, but this may have



occurred at any point. The house has clearly been ransacked at some point: drawers are pulled out, clothes scattered, even the bed has been moved.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

The next home the party enters appears to have been vacant perhaps only a few weeks. Remnants of a meal still sit on the table in the house's single room. A pot is overturned near the fireplace and a scattering of pottery shards litter the floor around the table, but little else is disturbed. A Notice roll finds a dark brown stain on the floor in the middle of the room.

The door to the third home the adventurers enter has obviously been forced. A hero who makes a Notice roll finds two deep parallel gashes in the surface of the wood near the latch. Inside, little is disturbed besides the sheets on the single bed, which have been thrown back as if the residents fled in the night or immediately after rising. A Tracking roll tells a hero that the dust in this house has been undisturbed for at least a month, possibly two.

Searching further houses finds them likewise abandoned, but completely empty of even furniture. If any of the characters specifically checks, there are no valuables of any sort in any of the homes.

Should any of the adventurers wander into the nearby overgrown fields, have them make a Notice roll (-2). Any who are successful find a few patches of disturbed ground about 2' to 3' in diameter. These are the collapsed openings to some of the goblin tunnels, but determining that takes about 10' of digging before the tunnels open up.

THE DILAPIDATED INN

Near the center of the small community is a large inn which, unlike many of the houses, shows definite signs of disrepair. Shingles are missing from the roof and the inn's sign—that of a rearing horse—is weather-beaten and its colors badly faded. However, the front door stands closed and all first floor windows are covered by shutters. Have the characters make a Notice roll and the adventurer with the highest catches sight of movement in one of the second floor windows.

Investigating closer, the heroes find the door is not barred or locked and opens with a loud creak. Behind it is the inn's common

room, where meals were once served and kegs tapped. Numerous tables fill the large open space and a fireplace dominates one wall while a short bar occupies the other. Now, a heavy layer of dust coats most of the furniture and the fireplace stands dark. A character who makes a Tracking roll finds footprints in the dusty floor indicating that someone has been in the inn fairly recently—within the last few days at least.

After they have been inside the inn for a few minutes, have the travelers make a Notice roll. Those who succeed hear a faint creak from the floor above them. A stairway opposite the door leads to the second floor.

THE INNKEEPER

Upstairs, a quick search finds a middle-aged man in one of the guest rooms, tinkering around with a loose hinge on the door. He seems startled by the heroes' appearance at first, then greets them warmly.

"Welcome to the Inn of the White Stallion! My name is Michael Drune—I'm the innkeeper here. I'm sorry I didn't hear you come in, but I've been trying to take advantage of the lull in business to get some odd jobs around the place finished."

His speech is quick and unusually cheery. The innkeeper immediately offers to prepare a meal for the travelers and ready rooms if they need a bed. Should anyone ask about the deserted town, he provides the first of several conflicting explanations.

"Yes, yes. Terrible thing. Group of bandits came through! Had the look of fighting men—mercenaries from one of the wars, probably. If you ask me, we were better off with the honest fighting than all these murderers running loose!"

Drune claims they killed anyone in town who fought against them and carried off those who didn't. He says he escaped by hiding in his cellar until they got bored and left. Since then, the town has sat empty.

If any observant heroes note that the houses clearly weren't all vacated at the same time, Drune stutters for a moment and then laughs and says, "I didn't mean all of the

bandits took all of them. A blight killed off all our livestock and many from the village left when that happened.”

THE INNKEEPER'S DILEMMA

The innkeeper dodges further questions the travelers may pose, but occasionally trips up and answers others in a contradictory fashion. Any wanderer who makes a Notice roll begins to realize that the man's grasp on reality isn't the strongest. He's hiding something, but he also might not be completely sane.

Drune is between a rock and a hard place. About a year ago, a sinkhole opened not far from the village. It exposed a cave network that was infested by a group of goblins. The goblins quickly began preying on the livestock in the village and in short order they wiped out the animal population.

The residents had no idea what was really occurring and knew only that their animals were disappearing. Most simply suspected wolves or thieves at first. Then monsters moved on to snatching villagers. A few families packed up and left, fearing the small community had been cursed somehow.

It was about that time that Drune stumbled upon the creatures. Terrified at first, he quickly learned that the goblins left him alone as long as he provided them with some form of food. By keeping their hunger sated, he found he was able to prevent further attacks on the villagers.

Soon, however, he developed a sinister plan. He began murdering lone travelers who stayed at his inn and stealing their valuables. He gave their corpses to the goblins to dispose of them, thus protecting the village while lining his own pockets. Unfortunately, the village was never on a popular trade route, so in time, he eliminated most of the few customers that frequented his inn.

Eventually, he was unable to provide enough for the monsters food, so they returned to preying on the village. Now, there is no one left in the village and guests are few and far between at the White Stallion. Drune knows it's at best a matter of days before the goblins come for him now. Furthermore,

he quickly recognizes the heroes are likely competent in a fight and may be able to eliminate the creatures.

Although this may spell the end for his nefarious business, his instinct for self-preservation is slightly stronger than his greed and wins out in the end. He offers the party a meal of potato stew—“No meat what with all the wolves in the area, you know!”—and ale. When he brings the food, Drune spins another tale for the group.

“You seem a canny sort, so I'll tell you the truth. I can only hope you won't think me insane. Some time ago, unholy goblins from the depths of the earth took notice of our little hamlet. They killed our livestock and then moved onto the villagers. I saw the monstrous trolls, but no one believed me—now they're all gone! I would have fought them myself, but I'm a weak man, afflicted by many infirmities. You, on the other hand, seem more than capable of defeating these devils and bringing justice to the dead!”

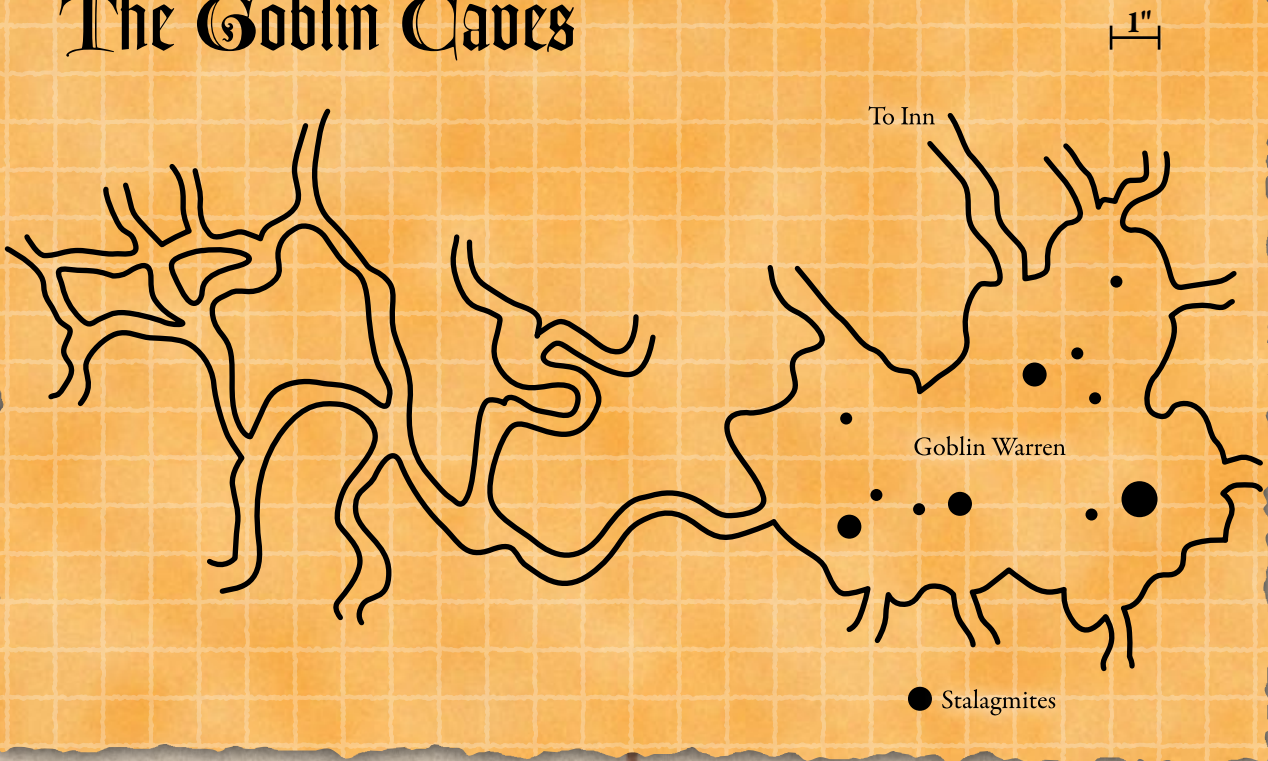
Drune describes the creatures to the heroes fairly accurately, although he is unaware of their blindness or acute hearing. He refers to them alternately as goblins, dwarves, or trolls. He tells the party they have a network of tunnels under the village and believes that one of them opens into the well in the center of town as he has seen them emerge from there on more than one occasion.

INTO THE DEPTHS

There are several entrances into the goblin warrens. Scouring the village turns up several collapsed entry holes, many near the abandoned houses. A Notice roll turns up two that aren't collapsed, but at only 2' to 3' in diameter, the tunnels are quite restrictive for humans. Anyone crawling through one of these holes has his Pace reduced to 1, is at -4 to all Fighting rolls and finds his Parry reduced by 4 as well!

As Drune indicated, there is a fairly well-traveled one in the central well, about 20' down. Getting to it requires a Climbing roll (-2) due to the wet surface—although handholds abound, many clearly gouged

The Goblin Caves



into the walls by something using the well as a travel route to the surface! However, this tunnel is much larger than any others the characters are likely to uncover initially, and nearly 5' in height.

The only other entrances of this size are in the cellar of the White Stallion and at the original sinkhole. Drune keeps the one in his inn hidden and unless the party begins randomly searching the surrounding wilderness for miles around, it's unlikely they find the sinkhole.

The tunnels under the village are clearly artificial. Gouges in the walls show where something has burrowed through the dirt with a purpose. Unexplained sounds echo through the burrows and from time to time a strange cooing noise wafts down the passages from ahead or behind the group. Be sure to play up the claustrophobia of the tunnels as well as the looming threat of something just around the next turn.

Suddenly, goblins appear both in front and behind the group, trapping them in the narrow passage! After a round of combat, additional goblins burst partially from the

walls to attack heroes caught in the middle of the group. The adventurers suffer a -1 to any Fighting rolls due to the confined nature of the tunnels. Additionally, the goblins attacking from the walls receive light cover (-2). The walls provide +3 Toughness against any attacks through them (as per the Obstacle rules in *The Savage World of Solomon Kane*).

Goblins (1 per hero): See page 46.

THE WARREN

As the characters travel deeper into the warrens, the walls change from dirt to limestone and the group soon finds itself in a large natural cave. Massive stalactites hang from the ceiling, but most of the stalagmites have been broken off and worn down. All around the chamber lay gnawed bones—animal and human—many cracked open and drained of marrow. Crude beds of straw, leaves, and even a few pieces of shredded cloth lie about the cave.

Hidden in the recesses are a large number of goblins, forewarned of the party's approach by their keen hearing. The monsters are lying in ambush, waiting the right moment

to attack. Have the characters make a Notice roll against a single group Stealth roll for the goblins. Treat the goblins as all beginning the fight on Hold. Heroes who made the Notice roll successfully get to draw cards normally the first round; any who failed get no card on the first round.

A particularly large and powerful goblin leads this band. Once he is killed, the others in the band flee, scattering into the myriad tunnels exiting the room. Also with this group of goblins are a number of young, which may provide the travelers with a difficult decision: Do they stoop to killing offspring or do they allow these degenerate creatures to grow into predatory adults?

Once the battle is over, the adventurers are free to thoroughly search the cavern. As noted, there are a number of human bones. Should anyone think to count, there are well over two dozen human skulls in the cave—far more than were likely living in the village. Not only do the characters find no valuables in the cavern, but any who make a Smarts roll realize there aren't even enough pieces of cloth to account for the clothes of all the victims they've uncovered.

🐉 **Goblins (15):** See page 46.

🐉 **Goblin "King":** See page 52.

DEFEAT

If the heroes are overwhelmed by the goblins and forced to flee, Drune graciously offers them refuge in the inn (assuming his crimes remain undiscovered). He also prepares another meal for them, but this time he laces it with poison. The innkeeper seeks to ingratiate himself with the goblins again by offering up the party to them.

Any character that eats it must make a Vigor roll (–2) a half-hour later. On a success, she becomes Exhausted. On a failure, she is Incapacitated. Once the poison has taken effect, Drune attacks, focusing on any wanderers who did not eat first.

🐉 **Michael Drune:** See page 52.

A MONSTER EXPOSED

There are over a dozen exits from the cave, varying in size from barely 2' in diameter to

At your option, you may use this adventure to lead to further underground exploration. Perhaps the heroes uncover broken pieces of statuary or strange artifacts hinting at some ancient and unknown civilization among the goblin nests. One of the tunnels out of the cavern obviously leads to the sinkhole, but one of the others may lead deeper into the bowels of the earth where some long forgotten subterranean ruin awaits.

If you choose this route, the Eleven-Parted Lord (page 30) may once have ruled over the ruled over the ancestors of this degenerate race. Down deep in the depths, the adventurers may uncover more clues to that being's nature and the goals of the Cult of the Iron Ring.

nearly man-sized in height. A Tracking roll reveals that the largest of the passages also seems the most heavily traveled. Following this tunnel leads the party on a twisting journey winding slowly up to where it finally emerges behind a stack of crates in the cellar of the White Stallion!

The crates have obviously been arranged to hide the tunnel entrance. A quick examination of the crates themselves reveals most of them to be full of a variety of clothing and other personal belongings. These are the remains of the valuables Drune stripped from the other villagers' homes and from the bodies of his own victims before giving them to the goblins. Most items of worth are long gone, but the travelers find approximately £50 worth of valuables amongst the crates after an extensive search.

Drune hears the commotion in the basement and comes to investigate, blunderbuss in hand. Seeing the heroes emerge, he claims to have no knowledge of the tunnel. If the heroes confront him with the valuables, he realizes he is undone and attacks.

🐉 **Michael Drune:** See page 52.



THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE



HEROES AND VILLAINS

FOLLOWING are the statistics for other friends or foes found in this Savage Tale.



MICHAEL DRUNE

The stereotypical innkeeper, Drune is balding, overweight, and sweats profusely at the slightest exertion. His mannerisms indicate quickly to any observant guest that he's a little off, but his affable façade hides the true depravity that coils in his breast. His madness gives him an unexpected strength and months of waylaying travelers has turned into a surprisingly competent fighter.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Stealth d6, Shooting d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Obese, Greedy (Major)

Edges: Dirty Fighter, First Strike, No Mercy

Gear: Blunderbuss (Range 10/20/40, Damage 1-3d6, cleaver (Str+1d4).

Treat Drune as a Seasoned character.



GOBLIN "KING"

Noticeably larger than the others of its kind, this goblin rules the local group of creatures by the only source of authority the monsters respect—physical strength.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Throwing d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Goblins are densely muscled and have a thick, leathery hide, making them surprisingly resistant to physical injury.
- **Blind:** The "king" is immune to any vision-based effects (darkness, invisibility, obscure, etc.).
- **Burrowing:** 4".
- **Claws:** Str+1d4, AP 2. Goblin claws are dense and sharp, capable of scoring solid stone.
- **Echo Location:** Goblins do not suffer any penalties for bad lighting.
- **Weakness (Sound):** Loud noises, such as gunshots or explosions, force the creature to make a Vigor roll or be deafened, suffering a -6 to all physical tasks that require "vision" for the next round.



THE GODS IN IVORY

Long ago, before Man even knew fire, the Lurkers in White crawled the Earth. Great spirits trapped in scaled flesh, they knew no masters. Their skin was as pale newborn maggots, and worms and all manner of grubs and carrion crawled forth from under their bellies. The great beasts ground all life beneath their vast girths.

In time, many fell to the great heroes, hunted and slain—not as demigods of myth, but merely monsters to be feared and loathed. Now those that remain coil and writhe in the deep dark places, down where no eyes can see them, awaiting their day to return to the surface.

—The Liber Vorago

THE Opalescent Gods, the Lurkers in White, the Gods of the Milky Eye—these are all titles by which these beings have been called. Although not truly gods, these beings are immense in size and preternaturally powerful. These great creatures originate from a time long before history and their lives are so long as to be considered virtually immortal by human standards. In form, the Gods in Ivory appear as giant snakes with maggot-white scales, which gleam with an oily iridescence in the light, and a malign brilliance burns in their eyes.

These serpentine beings are jealous creatures that see man as a parasite that has covered the earth and taken lands rightfully belonging to them. The majority of these beings often raise cults to themselves among nearby human populations if for no other

reason than to assure a steady supply of minions and food. Through these cults, the Gods of the Milky Eye seek to corrupt and debase man, eventually causing the cancer of humanity to kill itself.

Fortunately, scant few of these great serpents still live today, as most of their number has been slain over the millennia by great heroes of the past. Those that remain usually secret themselves in isolated locations where they are safe from the attention of the outer world. Whether it is because of some shared ancestry or simply a sense of ophidian brotherhood, snake men are frequently found in service to these self-appointed demigods in their remote locations.



GOD IN IVORY

THESE monstrous serpents are over 25' in length and up to 5' in diameter at their thickest points. Their scales are the color of dirty ivory or yellowed teeth and rustle softly when they move. Their fangs are as large as short swords and their platter-sized eyes gleam with malevolence.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d12, Strength d12+4, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Notice d10, Stealth d8, Swimming d8, Tracking d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 16 (4)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +4:** Scaly hide
- **Bite:** Str+d6

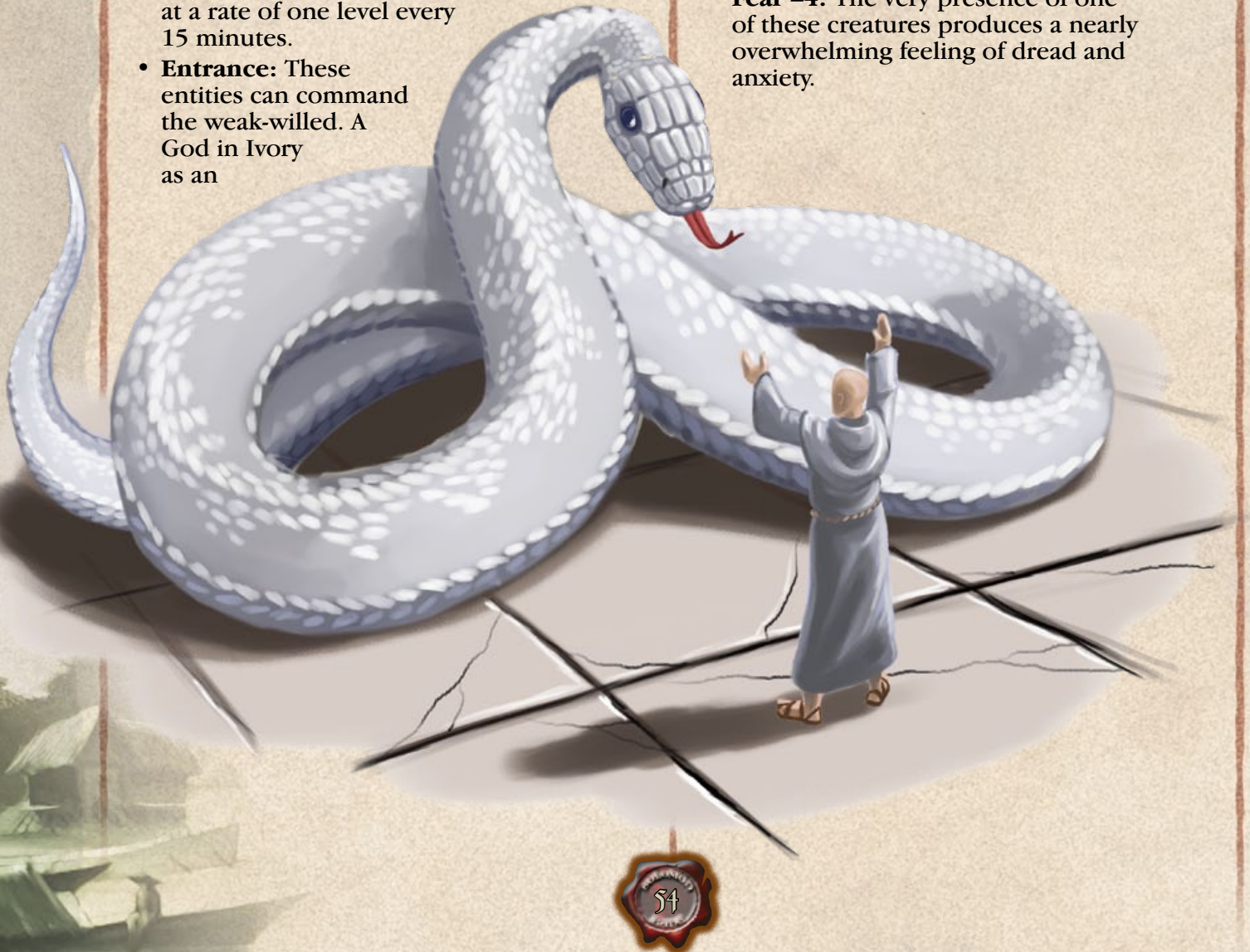


THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

- **Bones Afire:** At the creature's whim, those who directly meet this creature's gaze are subject to 2d10 damage as their marrow cooks and their blood boils. The creature can focus its gaze only into a relatively small area per round (use Cone Template). Characters can avoid the gaze by simply not looking directly at the God in Ivory, but this must be declared prior to the start of each round. Attempting to fight in this fashion saddles the attacker with a -2 to all attack rolls.
- **Constrict:** Against targets of size +4 or lower, one of these great serpents can Constrict whenever it scores a raise on a Fighting roll. On each of the being's actions, the victim must make an opposed Strength roll or gain a Fatigue level. Breaking free requires an action and an opposed Strength roll. Once incapacitated, the victim is unconscious for 1d6 hours. Fatigue recovers at a rate of one level every 15 minutes.
- **Entrance:** These entities can command the weak-willed. A God in Ivory as an

action may issue a telepathic command to a single target. If it wins an opposed Spirit roll, the victim must follow its orders for one round, as per puppet power. A character who wins this opposed roll is immune to this power for the remainder of the encounter.

- **Large:** Attackers receive a +2 bonus to hit due to the enormous size of the Gods in Ivory.
- **Poison:** Any character Shaken or wounded by the monster's bite must make a Vigor roll (-2). With success, the bite area becomes inflamed and the victim is Exhausted until healed. With a failure, the victim becomes Incapacitated, and must make another Vigor roll. Further failure means that the victim dies within 2d6 minutes.
- **Size +6:** Gods in Ivory weigh over a ton each.
- **Fear -4:** The very presence of one of these creatures produces a nearly overwhelming feeling of dread and anxiety.



SAVAGE TALE: SERVANTS OF A FORGOTTEN GOD

THIS Savage Tale occurs while the wanderers are traveling via ship near the coast of Hindoostan. During a brief stopover at a coastal settlement, the crew is mysteriously abducted, leaving the party stranded. The adventure works well as a side-adventure that occurs while traveling from one place to another by boat. Be warned, this is a very difficult adventure, recommended for adventurers of at least Veteran rank.

AN EXOTIC STOP

At some point during their journey, the wanderer's ship docks at a town on the coast of Hindoostan known as Armarabad. The town of Armarabad has a small port where the vessel can dock and resupply. The travelers find the settlement quite colorful. Bright reams of cloth drape over windows and doors. The people wrap themselves in vibrant golds, purples, blues, oranges, and yellow.

Allow the characters to browse the local market, which offers foods ranging from traditional fare (lentil soup) to truly exotic dishes (lizard's heads). Those characters who succeed in a Notice roll see small snake idols everywhere. Some are poised as though they are about to strike, while others appear to be coiled. When asked, the locals explain that Armarabad has always had a snake problem and the implements are kept as charms against snakes.

A MYSTERY UNFOLDS

After seeing the many sights of Armarabad, the adventurers travel back to the ship only to find an empty vessel. No one is on board the vessel, not even the few remaining crew who stayed behind to guard it. Investigating the ship reveals everything has been packed away and tied down, just as it might have before setting out on another voyage.

The captain's quarters are unlocked. Inside, the heroes find signs of a minor scuffle. The ship's log entry for the day is incomplete, stopping in mid sentence.

THE SHIP'S CREW

To provide reason for the heroes to be concerned about the safety of the crew beyond their own travel plans, you may want to develop the personalities of some of the NPCs on board. If you have not already introduced a crew, here are a few ideas for fleshing them out:

Captain Phillipe Marceau: The good Captain is a gruff Frenchman who has a piercing stare and a stony demeanor. Despite his stoic manners, his crew loves him dearly for he is extremely loyal to them.

Samuel Hardwick: This bright man is the boatswain of the vessel. If the party seems affable, he shares his tale with them about how he once saw strange fishmen off a rocky shore. (Use material from *Ichthyrites*, page 85, if needed.)

George: A freed slave, George was once the brother to the prince of his Masai tribe. Now, he works as a deck hand and hopes to one day earn enough money to travel back to his people with honor.

Asking around town reveals that a number of sailors were seen entering a local eating establishment called the Silver Gull. The Silver Gull is one of the few such places that service foreigners when they stop in Armarabad.

THE SILVER GULL

The large main room in the Silver Gull is lushly furnished with overlapping rugs and embroidered cushions. Heavy curtains hung over the windows and door keep the room dim even at midday. A few musicians play a strange melody that sounds discordant to European ears. The whole place is thick with a fragrant smoke which issues from hanging incense holders.



THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

This smoke is a special concoction – rhulu – a potent drug used by this cult. Those actively examining the tavern can make a Notice roll. Any hero who succeeds notes everyone else in the room is Hindoostani. There is no sign of the crew. With a raise on the roll, a wanderer notes that the incense seems to make him feel odd, blurring his vision and producing a mild numbing effect. However, none of the other patrons seems to be suffering any ill effects from the smoke.

An attractive Hindoostani woman by the name of Rajani introduces herself as the hostess. In truth, Rajani is a cult leader for a God in Ivory. She pretends to be deeply concerned for the disappearance of the crew and asks the heroes many questions about their tragedy so that the rhulu smoke eventually affects them.

While the adventurers are talking to Rajani, have all make Vigor rolls. Any character who fails the roll suddenly falls unconscious. Even those who succeed find their vision blurred and their extremities beginning to numb, giving them a cumulative –1 penalty to all rolls for each such Vigor check they make to resist the rhulu. All effects of the rhulu fade 5 minutes after the victim is removed from the smoke.

Should any of the heroes become suspicious, Rajani attempts to deflect their concerns by claiming that foreigner visitors are often overwhelmed by the hot and humid climate. However, if the party is not dissuaded by her explanation, the other “patrons” in the room stand up and attack. Due to years of exposure, the cultists are desensitized to the effects of the rhulu incense.

As the battle rages, the travelers continue to risk falling victim to the rhulu. Each time a character is dealt a Spade for initiative, he must make another Vigor roll or fall unconscious. The cultists are interested in taking captives, not killing the heroes, so when one is Incapacitated, they stop attacking.

🎲 **Rajani:** See page 59.

🎲 **Cultists (2 per hero, plus 2):** See page 60.
Armed with clubs.

AFTERMATH

The characters may escape the Silver Gull, defeat the cultists or become captured. If they escape or overcome the cultists, the sound of the conflict draws the attention of the local populace. Several men come running up after the fight to see what caused the commotion.

The people are demonstrably horrified to learn of a murderous band operating in the very midst of their own town. One of the townsfolk steps forward and claims to recognize the group as members of a cult operating in the wilderness north of Armarabad.

“The cult of the Ivory God, even here? We believed them gone from this region for decades. They sacrificed many to their blasphemous religion in the past. It was said the madmen had a temple in the highest mountains of the Darjinn Hills but it is considered cursed ground and none have visited in memory. I implore though, pray to your own gods for your friends but do not go there! Do you not value your own life?”

The residents of Armarabad explain if the cultists have taken the missing crew captive, they probably intend to sacrifice them to their deity, which they claim is a manifestation of the goddess Shiva. If the party insists, they provide them with directions to the rumored location of the cult’s temple.

On the other hand, if the adventurers lose the fight against the cultists in the Silver Gull, they are captured by the cult. The members bind them securely and take the party straight to the end of this Savage Tale — “The House of Ivory.”

It is also possible that some of the adventurers are captured while others escape. In that case, the captives can either await their compatriot’s rescue or attempt to free themselves on their own. Very likely, the cultists face a two-front war in this case which may prove challenging to run but also a very memorable battle for the players!



THE TEMPLE OF THE GOD IN IVORY

The temple lies amid the highest peaks of the Darjinn Hills, a mountainous area a short journey north of the Aramabad. The route described by the villagers leads the party along the coast for a short distance then turns inland into a dense jungle.

After a day and a half of travel, the heroes reach the Darjinn Hills. A brief search uncovers an old trail. A Tracking roll tells the travelers that the trail was likely blazed decades in the past, but that it has seen recent traffic. It leads into the hills ending at the gates of a walled temple.

The Temple to the God in Ivory is a stark structure, bone-white in color. It juts up from the hilltop like the broken tooth of some forgotten beast. A great wall, 20 feet high, surrounds the temple, bowed outwards and carved in the manner of jutting ribs. Strange statues of dark Hindoo spirits leer from the tops of the walls.

There are two large gates in the wall placed opposite each other. Both are wide open. The cultists rely on fear to ward most people away and do not expect intruders.

THE COURTYARD

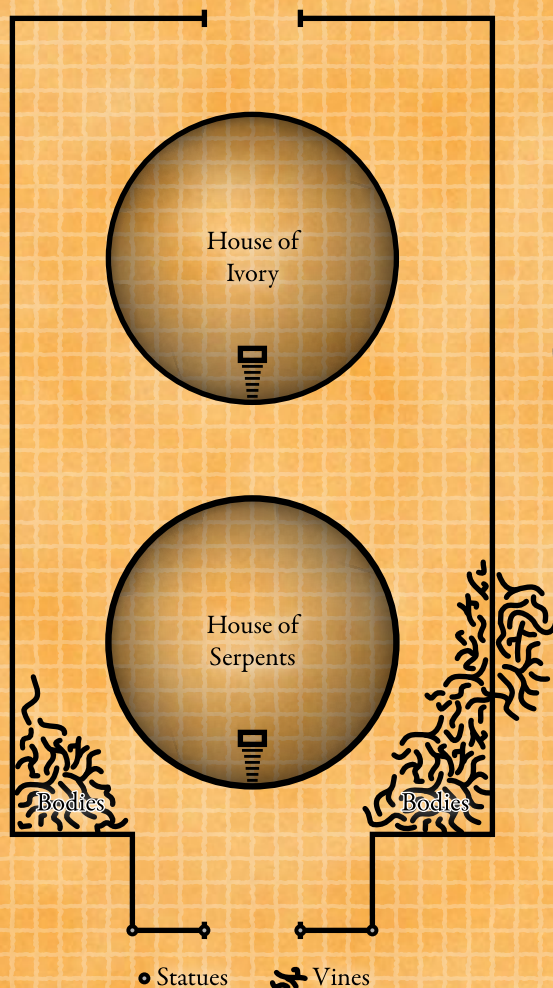
Inside the wall, the temple complex is overgrown with vines coiled across the ground in haphazard fashion. Throughout the tangled vines are nearly a dozen bodies in various states of decay. Their mouths open to the sky as if all caught in a final scream. A small band of cultists sit around a campfire in the middle of the courtyard. When they spot the party, they charge to attack!

If any of the rotting corpses are approached or prodded, a bone-white snake slithers out of the mouth and attempts to flee into the growth of vines. These creatures are the offspring of the God in Ivory that lives within this temple. The God in Ivory is aware of any of its children that are slain as well as who killed it.

🐍 **Ivory Offspring (10):** See page 60.

👤 **Cultists (6):** See page 60

Temple Complex



THE HOUSE OF SERPENTS

Within this structure are some of the ship's crew. The men are tied to chairs affixed upside-down to the ceiling in preparation for a bizarre rite of foul magic. When the crew becomes aware of the heroes, they beg for release.

A dozen lanterns hang 10 feet from the floor in this large chamber, suspended from the ceiling by thick cords. The walls of this place are carved to look like coiling snakes, making a climbing space with plenty of hand holds. Iron rungs have been set into the stone of the ceiling, allowing a person to

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

SCALING THE BATTLE

The God in Ivory is one of the tougher opponents the heroes are likely to face. It's probable that it will give even an experienced group a difficult fight all by itself. However, if the party is having too easy a time of it, you can always have more sections of the wall drop away revealing a small band of cultists or even snake men (one per hero).

travel hand over hand from the wall to the chairs in the center.

Getting up to the crew first requires an Agility roll (-2) to scale the wall and make the treacherous journey across the ceiling, swinging from rung to rung. It is 40 feet down to the domed floor at the center of the room. Once free, a crewman climbs across the ceiling on his own, unless the party rigs up a rope to lower him down. If the adventurers lack any rope, they might think to use the cords that are tied to the lanterns.

Just as a character attempts to cross the ceiling and free some of the crew, some of the carvings on the wall begin to move, revealing themselves to actually be snake men. The snake men immediately attack, focusing first on any characters who have climbed to free the crewmen. The snake men are used to the strange conditions in this room and make normal Agility rolls to navigate the walls and ceiling.

Any character who is Shaken or Wounded while hanging from the ceiling must roll Agility (-2) again or start slipping. Slipping characters cannot move. They must spend an action regaining their grip. If a slipping character is Shaken or Wounded again, they fall (Damage 4d6).

🐍 **Snake men (1 per hero, plus 1 extra):**
See page 60.

THE HOUSE OF IVORY

This pagoda holds the rest of the crew, who wait to be sacrificial meals for the God in Ivory. The walls of this chamber appear to be fashioned into the likeness of a coiling body of a snake, constructed of a chalky white stone. The top of the cavern is domed, peaking at what appears to be a massive carving of a snake's head, leering down into the chamber. Tied to the wall 10 feet from the floor by ropes and metal stakes are the rest of the crew.

If the heroes were defeated in the Silver Gull, then they awaken, chained to the iron rings set into the walls of this very pagoda, along with the rest of the crew. Breaking or wriggling free of the bonds requires a Lockpicking roll or Strength or Agility roll (-4). A character can attempt each roll only once. Their belongings, not yet claimed by the God in Ivory, lie in a pile near the entrance to the chamber.

If the adventurers prove unable to free themselves, they must remain trapped until the God in Ivory arrives. It snatches one of the hapless crew from the wall, devouring him. As it does, the creature's great body brushes past one of the heroes, knocking her iron ring loose from the wall. This allows that hero to make another Strength or Agility roll to escape her bonds, this time at no penalty.

Freeing a crewman or another hero requires a Climbing roll to get up to their location. If the God in Ivory has not appeared at this point in the adventure, it appears just as soon as one crewman is freed. A 3-yard section of the wall slides down and out of sight and the God in Ivory slithers forth from the opened crevasse.

The first thing you hear is the low sound of stone grinding. Then, you are immediately overwhelmed by a dry, reptilian smell. Something is moving. At first, it appears like a piece of the wall, fashioned to look like the body of a coiled snake, is moving, unraveling. Then, you see it – that large, diamond shaped head, a long as a man. Palm-

sized white scales that gleam with an oily light. Somehow, in the base of your spine, you can sense it. Somehow, you know – what you behold is a being who has seen whole peoples die, continents rise and sink, and now...it stares at you, bringing its terrible intelligence to bear.

Anyone facing the God in Ivory for the first time has to make Fear check (-4). As soon as it is able, the creature uses its Bones Afire power. On its next action, the monster uses its Entrance ability on the strongest character, forcing him to attack his comrades for that round. Then, the God in Ivory moves in to physically attack those who killed any of its children in the courtyard.

TRAPPING UP

Should the adventurers defeat the God in Ivory, the creature's body immediately begins to petrify, turning into a chalky, white stone. The hole through which it entered the chamber leads to a dank cavern filled with the belongings of the victims the thing has claimed over the centuries. Although the monster cared little for human wealth and took little interest in preserving it, there are enough items of value here to reward the heroes for their difficult battle.

All told, there is £250 worth of treasure in various forms—jewelry, ancient coins, statuettes, etc. It's not easily portable though and the booty averages 5 pounds of weight for every £10 of value.



HEROES AND VILLAINS

FOLLOWING are the statistics for other friends or foes found in this Savage Tale.

RAJANI

This attractive young woman has a silky voice and exotic air, even amongst her countrymen. Beneath her lovely exterior beats the heart of a murderous fanatic devoted to the God in Ivory.

RELIC: THE GOD-FANG

At your option, one of the fangs from the great white serpent can be a relic. Only one of the God in Ivory's fangs is a relic, distinguished by the intricate carvings on that single tooth. The carvings are in some strange and forgotten language, created with barbed runes and sinister strokes.

The fang is too large and unwieldy to use very well as a weapon by itself. However, it can be affixed to a shaft and used as a spear. In this case, it functions as a normal spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, requires 2 hands). If it inflicts a wound on a human target, it also injects him with a poison. The victim must make a Vigor roll. With success, the bite area becomes inflamed but the victim suffers no additional damage. With a failure, the victim also gains a level of Fatigue.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Knowledge (Spirits) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Shamanism d8

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Delusional (believes God in Ivory is a deity), Loyal (to cult)

Edges: Arcane Background (Shamanism), Attractive

Gear: Dagger (Str+1d4), fetish (necklace of bone)

Powers: Boost/lower trait, curse, deflection, fear, smite

Treat Rajani as a Seasoned character.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

CULTIST

The cultists dress in normal clothing and blend with the populace as much as possible.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Hindrances: Delusional (believe God in Ivory is a deity), Loyal (to cult)

Edges: —

Gear: Club (Str+d4), leather armor (+1).

IVORY OFFSPRING

The children of the God in Ivory resemble pale, milky-skinned cobras. They seek to flee attackers, but if pressed, their venom is deadly.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d12

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 2

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str.
- **Poison (-2):** A character Shaken by the bite of one of the serpents must make a Vigor roll at -2. With a success, the bitten area swells and becomes numb. The victim becomes Exhausted until healed. With a failure, the victim dies in 2d6 minutes.
- **Quick:** Like normal snakes, the offspring are startlingly fast. They may discard action cards of 5 or lower and draw another. They must keep the replacement card, however.

- **Size -2:** These creatures are over six feet long, but only a few inches thick.
- **Small:** Anyone attacking the offspring must subtract 2 from her attack rolls.

SNAKE MAN

These snake men are unmistakably ophidian, with scaly skin, tails instead of a lower body, and serpentine heads.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Survival d6, Tracking d8

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Hindrances: —

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Frenzy, Quick

Gear: Scimitar (Str+d8)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +1:** Scaly hide.
- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Poison (+0):** Snake men inject deadly venom through their bite. A character bitten by a snake man must make a Vigor roll. With success, the bite area swells and becomes numb. The victim becomes Exhausted until healed. With a failure, the victim becomes Incapacitated and must make a second Vigor roll or die in 2d6 minutes.

HARLOW HOBBS

Rodrigo slowly drew out his blade. He could feel the blood in his ears. His pulse raced at the thrill of battle. And then his muscles froze at the click of a pistol's hammer.

"What is this?" he rasped.

"You well know what this is," muttered a voice from behind him.

"So you're siding with these heretical fiends, Harlow?" said Rodrigo, throwing a glance over his shoulder at the portly bandit.

"Please," snorted Harlow. "Give us some credit. We've no more love for that lot than you. But if you go charging in there, you'll be stirring up the hornet's nest nice and proper, you will. And angry hornets always want to sting."

Rodrigo's eyes narrowed and he set his jaw. "These men are black-hearted demons—and they have prisoners. You know what they mean to do!"

"Perhaps, but that is not my problem, lad," said Harlow. "And you're not going to make it my problem, either."

HARLOW Hobbes was once nothing but the leader of a small band of mercenaries. The men, calling themselves Harlow's Hounds, traveled the Continent, fighting for whoever would put coin in their purses without regard to country, religion, or cause. Over the years, they fought beside the English in the wars with the Spanish, for the Turks against the Hapsburgs, and for the Catholics in France—but never because they cared for either side. The only thing that commanded the Hounds' loyalty was gold and each other.

As the major conflicts cooled down and countries selfishly settled their disputes with no concern for the Hounds' financial well-being, they found themselves taking ever odder employment from even stranger employers. On one such job for a scholar in Vienna who fancied himself a student of the arcane arts, the Hounds were tasked with retrieving a tome of ancient lore held at the time by another collector. This book was none other than the Liber Vorago (see page 99).

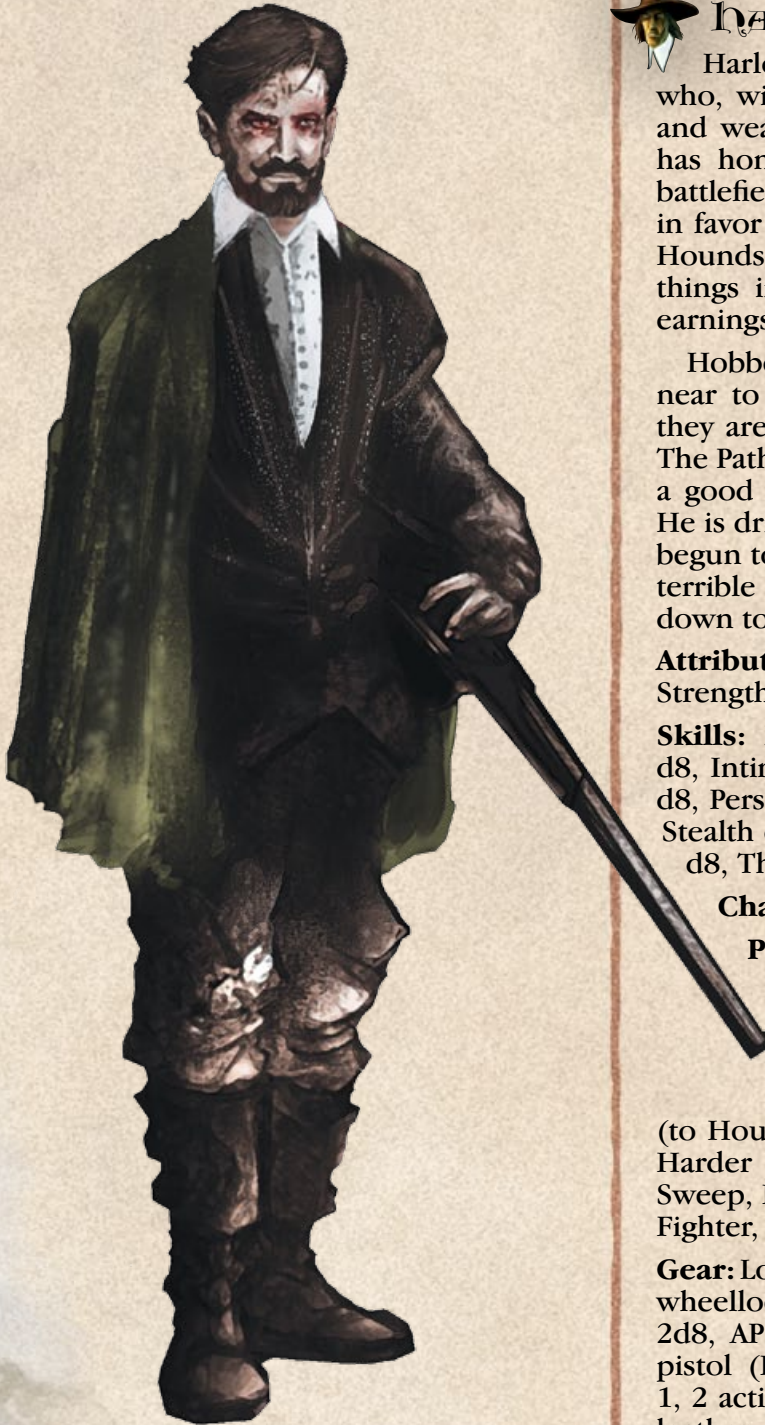
The band obtained the book, albeit only after killing the original owner when he tried to prevent the mercenaries from robbing him. Deciding to see what would drive a man to die for a simple book, Hobbes paged through the volume, his own hands still red with the blood of the collector. Hobbes did not understand much of what he saw in the book, but it left him profoundly unsettled. He made haste and delivered the Liber Vorago to his employer, hoping that by relinquishing possession of it he could end the unease the book caused in him.

Unfortunately, Hobbes found the effects of the tome were lasting. He was plagued with dreams of strange creatures or ancient artifacts from long vanished empires. Although these visions were often greatly disturbing to the mercenary, Hobbes, ever the entrepreneur, discovered that there was often coin to be made in association with the dreams. Many across Europe paid good money to obtain the relics of which he dreamed.

Now, Hobbes and his Hounds often find themselves confronted by foes that most common folk believe exist only in superstition. He and his men could be a powerful force for good if not driven by

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

greed. As a result, Hobbes is a rogue who stands on the cusp of great good, although more often by fortune than his own choice.



HOBBS AND HIS HOUNDS



HARLOW HOBBS

Harlow Hobbes is a middle-aged man who, with the exception of his battle scars and weaponry, is largely unremarkable. He has honed his fighting skills on countless battlefields and forgoes fancy techniques in favor of the effective. Like the rest of the Hounds, he has a weakness for the finer things in life and seldom holds on to his earnings for long.

Hobbes' visions often lead the Hounds near to dark and malevolent forces where they are likely to encounter heroes walking The Path of Kane. If Hobbes cannot be called a good man, neither can he be called evil. He is driven by his desire for wealth, but has begun to question his motives in light of the terrible images he glimpses when he lays down to sleep.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Gambling d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Lockpicking d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Riding d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6, Survival d8, Taunt d8, Throwing d8

Charisma: +2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 8 (1)

Hindrances: Cautious, Greedy, Loyal (To Hounds only)

Edges: Charismatic, Command, Command Presence, Common Bond (to Hounds only), Great Luck, Hard to Kill, Harder to Kill, Improved Block, Improved Sweep, Iron Jaw, Natural Leader, Really Dirty Fighter, Tough as Nails,

Gear: Longsword (Str+d8), dagger (Str+d4), wheellock musket (Range 10/20/40, Damage 2d8, AP 2, 2 actions to reload), wheellock pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1, AP 1, 2 actions to reload), shot & powder (20), leather armor (+1).

Special Abilities:

- **All-for-One:** The Hounds have been to Hell and back and share a bond that hardens their bodies as well as their souls. Subtract 1 point of damage from every attack that hits a Hound for each other Hound within 3", to a maximum of -4. If four Hounds fight together, for example, they ignore three points of damage from every attack that hits them.
- **Hound's Bond:** Hobbes can give his bennies to any of the Hounds with whom he can communicate, even if they are not Wild Cards.

HARLOW'S HOUNDS

The Hounds are, to a man, an experienced fighting unit. These men have survived countless battles by fighting smart and watching each other's back.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Gambling d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7(1)

Hindrances: Greedy, Loyal (To Hounds only)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Dirty Fighter

Gear: Short sword (Str+d6), wheellock musket (Range 10/20/40, Damage 2d8, AP 2, 2 actions to reload), powder & shot (20), leather armor (+1).

Special Abilities:

- **All-for-One:** The Hounds have been to Hell and back and share a bond that hardens their bodies as well as their souls. Subtract 1 point of damage from every attack that hits a Hound for each other Hound within 3", to a maximum of -4. If four Hounds fight together, for example, they ignore three points of damage from every attack that hits them.

While this Savage Tale works fine as presented, it flows best if the heroes already have a reason to be searching for the Nameless City. If they've met Erasmus Dein (page 38), perhaps he has sent them there in search of a specific herb or even the fragment of the Liber Vorago (page 99). Or, if one of the characters already has a portion of the Liber Vorago in her possession, her own vision leads her to the village in search of it.



SAVAGE TALE: THE NAMELESS CITY

While traveling across the Dark Continent, the wanderers find a small village deep in one of the wildest parts of a heavily forested region just as twilight begins to fall. The village is home to a small number of residents, all of whom cover all exposed skin in a fine, white ash. The inhabitants identify their home only as the Village of Whispers and the reason is readily evident. Everyone in the small community speaks only in hushed whispers.

The group that preceded the heroes is none other than Harlow's Hounds, although the party won't discover this until later in the adventure. The Hounds are seeking a fragment of an ancient and evil tome Hobbes saw in one of his visions and their search has lead them into darkest Africa to recover it.

THE VILLAGE OF WHISPERS

Soon after they arrive, the heroes are approached by the village elder, who asks if the characters are seeking their brothers who recently passed through the village as well. When the elder is questioned further, the elder explains that a band of outsiders visited them only a day earlier and the villagers assumed the travelers were a part of the first group.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

The villagers describe the earlier visitors as white-skinned men, wearing clothes like of the heroes and carrying similar weapons and equipment. The men stopped only long enough to seek directions to a long-abandoned city. Although the elder tried to warn them against this, they did not heed his words and left soon after refilling their water supplies.

The elder is reluctant to speak further about the city, but a successful Persuasion or Intimidation roll convinces him to say more. He tells them that the city lies in the center of a lake about a day's journey from the Village of Whispers, but warns them against visiting it as well.

"They make a terrible mistake by visiting the city, but they laughed at my warnings. You would also do well to heed my words. Do not go!"

"My ancestors spoke of spirits that still live in the island—man-shapes that lurk in the ruins of the distant shore. They told of dark nights, when the breeze was still and the night creatures had retreated from the water. On those nights, they could hear the strange whooping and howling of half-beasts echoing over the crumbled walls and across the waters."

"I have never seen them, but our people once lived on the edge of the lake. When my father was yet young, our tribe moved to this place, to be further from the ghosts on the island, but even here, we speak only in whispers to avoid drawing their attention."

The elder allows the party to stay the night in the village should they desire. If they do, several times during the evening he and other villagers continue in their attempts to dissuade the heroes from attempting to follow the other party to the ruins. Any character who is interested in the reason why the other group was seeking the Nameless City may make a Streetwise roll. On a success, she learns only that the men mentioned a treasure of some sort—an item of great power that made the risk worthwhile to them.

FINDING THE WAY

While the natives in the Village of Whispers do reluctantly give the wanderers a little information on the location of the Nameless City, they don't provide enough for the group to find it without some effort. The easiest way to find the ruins is to follow the tracks of the other group to pass through the village. Thanks to the frequent rains in the jungle, a hero attempting this method must make a Tracking roll (–2) to locate the route followed by the earlier men.

If the party doesn't find the tracks of the other group, all hope is not lost. A character making a Survival roll (–2) finds the traces of an old trail shortly after leaving the village. The villagers used to walk this route before they abandoned their village on the shores of the lake. If the heroes follow it, it eventually leads to the lake in question.

Finally, the characters can attempt to wheedle more information on the location of the lake out of one of the villagers. This is very difficult as the inhabitants fear the party may bring the wrath of the "spirits" down on the village. Only an Intimidation or Persuasion roll (–4) can convince anyone to give them precise directions to the lake.

ON TO THE ISLAND

The travelers' route eventually leads them to the remains of an abandoned village on the shores of a large, freshwater lake. This is the former home of the inhabitants of the Village of Whispers. For more than a generation it has stood empty. Little remains of the huts and other structures now, but a Tracking roll reveals that a large group of men wearing boots passed through the area within the last day.

From the village, the heroes can see a large island about a mile from shore. Experimentation shows the water is calm, but quickly becomes fairly deep. Anyone foolhardy enough to attempt to swim to the island quickly discovers the lake is home to numerous crocodiles! A Notice roll before entering the water easily picks out several

of the reptilian monsters lounging on the shore. One crocodile attacks each adventurer that swims more than 30 yards from shore.

Searching the village uncovers a pair of old, but still serviceable canoes on a Notice roll (–2). Each can hold up to four characters for the journey out to the island. Crocodiles swim menacingly close to the small boats, but do not attack. With a Boating roll, the trip takes only 15 minutes. Failure doubles that time as the party struggles with piloting the small craft.

The heroes can also fashion a crude raft from materials in the surrounding jungle with a Survival roll. Up to four characters can ride a single raft built this way. As before, the crocodiles approach the small vessel, but do not attack. However, the raft is considerably slower than the canoes, and the voyage takes half an hour with a successful Boating roll, or 45 minutes on a failure.

🐊 **Crocodiles (1 per hero):** See page 69.

HARLOW HOBBS, I PRESUME

Upon reaching the shore of the island, have each party member make a Notice roll. The character who rolls the highest catches sight of a small plume of smoke rising out of the jungle near their landing point. Investigating this plume leads the wanderers to a camp of more than a dozen men. They are met by a pair of guards armed with muskets who are cautious, but not threatening.

The party is quickly led to the band's leader, Harlow Hobbes. Hobbes greets them jovially, and if any of the group are English, notes how pleasant it is to meet a fellow countryman in such an unusual setting. He offers the travelers a share of his band's rations and asks how they came to be in such a God-forsaken place. He gladly answers questions about his own reasons for seeking the idol, although not altogether truthfully.

"My men and I hired on as marines for a Portuguese vessel that was plying the waters along the coast of this hateful land. We ran afoul of pirates off Zanzibar. The lads and I put up too much

of a fight for the scurvy bastards—which, in retrospect, might have worked against us. They backed off and holed the ship with cannon shot. We managed to get ashore in the ship's boats and have been trudging through this green Hell ever since."

Attentive heroes are likely to note that Hobbes' story does not quite add up. They may wonder, for example, why the band bothered to cross to the island or why they mentioned treasure to the natives. If confronted, Hobbes laughs.

"You have me! We passed through another village about a week back. They spoke of a lost city long abandoned, but that still held riches for the taking. All that guards it are the ghosts and hobgoblins of silly native superstition. You have to forgive me for not volunteering that bit of information, but I'm sure there's enough to share!"

In reality, Hobbes is seeking a fragment of the Liber Vorago. He has no idea if there is any other treasure in the ruins of the city. However, he has enough experience with the visions that plague him to know the artifact is likely to be guarded heavily. He figures if he can lure the characters with promises of easy wealth, maybe they can be of use to him—if for no other reason than to delay whatever horrors may wait behind the walls long enough to allow him and the rest of the Hounds to escape.

OVER OR THROUGH

Finding the city was one thing, actually getting into it proves to be another matter altogether. The ruin is ringed by a massive stone wall that towers 30 feet into the air. Circumnavigating the wall takes hours but reveals no gate. A Notice roll (–1) identifies a narrow crack that appears shallow but in fact winds its way completely through the wall's ten feet of thickness. It's a tight fit for a human, but even Brawny characters can squeeze through with an Agility roll.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

The only other way into the ruined city is to climb the wall. Once nearly sheer, the centuries have taken a toll on the wall and there are now cracks and scattered vegetation that make for scattered hand- and footholds on its surface. Scaling it requires a Climbing (-2) roll and an adventurer who makes it to the top can secure a rope that gives any characters who follow a +2 to the roll. The interior of the wall has fared much better and cannot be climbed with the aid of a rope.

WANDERING THE RUIN

Once past the great wall, the party gets its first look at the lost city. The ruins occupy most of the island and were obviously at one time a vast metropolis. Enormous stone buildings line what were clearly once wide avenues, but vegetation has overrun the once great city and now the streets resemble tree-lined canyons rather than any human creation.

Given the size of the ancient city, the travelers could wander through the city for days. Fortunately—and inexplicably—Hobbes seems to have some idea of where he is going. His route meanders from street to street, but party members paying attention to his actions quickly note that he appears to be looking for something in particular. If asked, he claims he has visited other ruins over the years and the layout of this one seems familiar.

The party finds no indication that the ruins are inhabited. A Tracking roll tells them that the only other creatures that have used avenues on which they are traveling are small game animals. Any hero who takes the time to explore one of the stone structures finds the building filled with dirt and slowly encroaching plant life. On some of the interior walls, the adventurers can find mosaics combining odd pictographs and hieroglyphics.

After the group has been inside the wall for a short time, have the characters make a Notice roll (-2). Any who succeed catch a glimpse from the corner of an eye of figures

darting between trees on the tops of the surrounding structures. Keeping a careful watch fails to identify what is shadowing the party.

THE TREASURE ROOM

After about an hour of weaving through the dilapidated city, Hobbes leads the group up onto a structure that is slightly larger than the surrounding buildings. The climb is arduous as the heroes pick their way through the vines and other overgrowth, but not particularly challenging. Near the top, he draws his sword and begins hacking at the vegetation, exposing, in short order, a gaping stone portal that leads into the building. One of his men produces a torch and Hobbes heads into the building leaving two Hounds to guard the entrance.

Inside, they find a large chamber with a stone table opposite the entry. More of the strange writings cover the walls. As before, these are completely indecipherable. Hobbes begins scouring the walls, obviously looking for something. If asked, he only says, "Some of this writing looks similar to a script I once encountered in Hindoostan. Perhaps I can decipher it. It may point us toward the city's treasury."

In reality, he is seeking a hidden compartment he saw in his vision. He tries to distract the travelers from his search by having them examine the table or sections of the walls he has already eliminated.

Heroes looking closely at the walls note some recurring patterns in the frieze along the top. The pictographs there depict a race of odd-looking men either in chains or wielding weapons of war. The age of the carvings make it impossible to exactly interpret them. The figures seem overly muscular and have unusually long arms. A Knowledge (Science) roll tells a character the figures depicted are not men, but likely an ancestor or offshoot of man. A raise on the roll reveals the beings are closer to apes than men.

Unseen Attackers

After about ten minutes of searching, Hobbes finds the hidden compartment he's seeking and attempts to remove the fragment of the Liber Vorago without any of the party catching him. Fortune favors the rogue for at that moment, one of the Hounds lets out a warning cry, immediately followed by two musket shots. Seconds later a horrible scream sounds briefly outside only to be abruptly cut off.

Hobbes yells, "Hounds, to arm!" His men move quickly to the exit. Hobbes, on the other hand, uses the commotion caused by the attack to attempt to spirit the Liber Vorago from its hiding spot. If any hero remains inside the chamber, he must make an opposed Stealth roll, but he gains a +2 bonus due to the circumstances unless the player specifically states she's watching him. If caught, Hobbes acts nonchalant about his discovery, slipping it into his jacket and claiming he found some badly decayed cloth that he plans to use to make patches for his musket loads.

Outside, the body of one of the guards lies near the doorway, his head crushed horribly by a single blow. There is no sign of the other guard, although his discharged musket lies tangled in vines near the corpse of the first Hound. A search of the area turns up no clue as to either what attacked the men or what happened to the missing guard. Moments later, far off in the labyrinthine ruins, a someone—or something—sounds a gong.

The Hounds and even Hobbes himself seem disturbed by the turn of events. He suggests that the group retreat from the city. "We've had no luck finding any treasure, but I've lost two men without even seeing what slew them. I suggest we make haste and leave this island!" With that, he and his men begin heading back toward the point at which the explorers entered the city—whether or not the heroes follow.

Fleeing the City

As the group retreats from the city, call for Notice rolls. Any character that succeeds glimpses furtive movement all along the tops of the buildings surrounding the avenues. As before, no one can get a good look at what is pursuing the band of explorers, but it is now evident there are several of them. Hideous, almost demonic, grunting howls echo through the avenues. Hobbes has several of the Hounds take a position at the front and sides of the group and asks the party to watch the rear.

If the party chooses to follow him and the Hounds, Hobbes seems less certain of the route out than he did when entering the city. He takes several wrong turns and has to backtrack to find his way. All the while, the shadowy stalkers on the crests of the structures become more and more brave. Should the heroes appear to be losing patience with his leadership, Hobbes stops meandering and begins a more direct route to the exit.

Hobbes is actually attempting to gather more pursuers. He's not sure what the characters know about the Liber Vorago and doesn't trust their motivations. He plans to double-cross them at the exit and leave them trapped in the city with its guardians.

Running Battle

The ruins are "haunted" by a tribe of albino apes. These creatures are the degenerate descendants of either an inhuman race that once ruled the island or its former slaves. It's entirely your choice if you wish to develop this angle. What's of more immediate importance is that the apes are extremely territorial and the Hounds and party have trespassed on their home ground.

The gong has alerted the creatures that their territory has been invaded and the apes rapidly converge on the band of explorers. The apes have a startlingly high intelligence for animals and wait until they have amassed a large group before they attack the humans. This occurs right as the adventurers reach their exit point.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

The apes begin by hurling stones from the tops of buildings where they have heavy cover (–4) from ranged attacks. They then close to melee range with running leaps. Initially, there are 20 apes plus one for every hero. Two more arrive every five rounds until the group escapes the ruins.

Allow the players to control the Hounds (minus Hobbes) for the first three rounds. Then, Hobbes takes charge and attempts to maneuver the Hounds out of the ruins ahead of the heroes. If he succeeds in leaving the majority of the characters, he immediately takes steps to trap them in the ruins, cutting ropes if the band climbed in and jamming the crack with rubble if they entered via that route.

Scaling the wall without a rope requires a Climbing roll (–4) if the heroes choose that route. If the heroes did not use the crack to gain entrance, it's unlikely they have time to search for it with a horde of albino apes howling for their blood!

Albino Apes (20, plus one per hero):
See page 69.

GOING SOLO

If the party chooses to ignore the Hounds and remain in the ruins or to simply cut and run on their own, they are likely to find themselves quickly in serious trouble. Greedy characters who insist on searching nearby ruins for treasure find nothing for their trouble but empty rooms and dirt. Heroes who try to find their own way out must make either a Tracking roll (+2) or a Knowledge (Navigation) (–2) roll to find the correct route thanks to Hobbes' winding path into the city. Reaching the exit takes 15 minutes with a successful roll. The heroes can attempt the roll to find the way out every five minutes.

Regardless, five minutes after they separate from the Hounds, the guardians of the ruins begin attacking the travelers. In the first wave, there is one albino ape for each character. After the first group, the apes attack again approximately every five minutes. That means the adventurers face at least two more

attacks before they reach the way out. Each successive wave gains an additional ape attacker.

If the heroes reach the exit in 20 minutes or less, they beat the Hounds and find the way clear. However, should the party take more than 20 minutes, the Hounds escape before them and Hobbes takes measures to block the way out. If the group entered by the crack, he has it blocked with rubble which requires five minutes to clear—leading to another attack. If the group used ropes to climb down from the wall, he has the ropes pulled up after the Hounds, leaving the party to climb the nearly sheer wall, requiring a Climbing roll (–4). In this case, the party can also search for another route (the crack). This requires 15 minutes and a successful Notice roll. Of course, this also means the party faces three additional attacks by the apes!

Albino Apes (1 per hero—see above):
See page 69.

AFTERMATH

Whichever method the travelers use to escape the city, the apes are not able to follow. The creatures are too stocky to fit through the crack and the handholds on the interior wall are too small to allow them to scale it. Feel free to play up the apes scrabbling at the wall as they try to snatch at the heroes' feet!

Should Hobbes have managed to double-cross the party and leave them trapped inside, he and the Hounds return to their camp and gather any supplies they left behind. They then head to the beach where they load their own boats and scuttle any other rafts or canoes to trap the party on the island before leaving for the opposite shore and beginning the long journey home.

Should Hobbes have betrayed the group but they manage to escape in time to prevent the Hounds from leaving the island, it's likely that the adventurers take issue with the mercenary band. If so, a fight ensues. The Hounds fight fiercely, but Hobbes is no fool. He admits defeat should more than half his men fall in battle. Surrender is a far more acceptable option to him and his men than death.

If the characters get out ahead of Hobbes, he is secretly disappointed, but he does not initiate a confrontation. Instead he feigns relief and seeks to part ways as soon as possible. However, if the party is suspicious of his actions and forces the issue, Hobbes does not flinch from a fight.

Hobbes' preference would be that the characters never learn about the fragment of the Liber Vorago. If they do, he claims to have been hired by a scholar in Venice to retrieve it and feared the party would try to rob him. Regardless, Hobbes is not willing to die over the book and relinquishes it if his life is threatened.

Depending on the outcome of the adventure, the party may feel they've found a potential ally or foe in Hobbes. However, to Hobbes and the Hounds this was merely business. The next time the groups meet, all bets are off!



HEROES AND VILLAINS

FOLLOWING are the statistics for other friends or foes found in this Savage Tale.

ALBINO Ape

Unlike most apes, these have learned the basics of tool use, and can even craft crude stone axes. Many wear the skulls of their victims on lengths of dried skin, a clear sign that these beasts are more intelligent, and aggressive, than standard apes.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Throwing d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5 or 7 (see below); **Toughness:** 8

Gear: Stone maul (Str+d8, AP 2 vs rigid armor (plate), Parry -1, two hands) or stone spear (Str+d6, Parry +1, Reach 1, requires 2 hands), throwing rock (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+1d4).

Special Abilities:

- **Frenzy:** An albino ape can make two Fighting attacks each round at -2 penalty.
- **Leap:** Albino apes can leap 2" horizontally, or 4" from a running start. Each success and raise on a Strength roll grants one additional inch.
- **Size +1:** Albino apes are about the same height as humans, but are much stockier.

CROCODILE

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6

Pace: 3; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Crocodiles have thick skins.
- **Aquatic:** Pace 8.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Rollover:** Crocodiles are notorious for grasping their prey in their vice-like jaws and rolling over and over with their flailing victims in their mouth. If one of these large amphibians hits with a raise, it causes an extra 2d4 damage to its prey in addition to its regular Strength damage.

HOARFROST WARRIORS

*In long black ships
On silent waves
Their ghostly forms
Swords shadow-made
They charge forth, cursed
Again and fade
On foreign shores
Where their souls have stayed
Never to go home
On foreign shores
—The Song of the Northmen*

THESE malevolent spirits were once Norse warriors, traveling from frozen, northern lands to raid for both riches and flesh. Unlike many of their Viking brethren, these ghosts were spawned from men who were neither proud nor honorable. Little more than murderous thugs in life, the souls of these men were denied admittance to the afterlife and are now cursed to roam the seas, raiding seaside communities again and again.

In life, Vikings limited their raids mainly to European shores. In general, hoarfrost warriors are most likely to be found in these regions. However, the power of the curse upon them may send hoarfrost warriors onto any seacoast where the temperature drops below freezing.

When these entities appear, they approach the shore in long, dark boats which are nothing more than silhouettes in the night. The hoarfrost warriors silently glide across the waves from their shadowy craft and into unsuspecting towns, spreading havoc and death throughout the settlement.

On occasion, these spirit raiders claim live victims and take them aboard their ethereal longboats. Invariably, they choose male victims for hostages. Legend claims that these spirits do so to fill holes in their own number, turning the victim into a hoarfrost warrior himself through some unknown process.



HOARFROST WARRIOR

THESE ghosts are invisible except in moonlight. There, they appear as translucent, hulking Norse warriors with pale white skin accented by pale blue veins and hair. Deep within their chests, a character making a Notice roll can see the sparkling outline of their frozen hearts pulsing in time with their blood lust.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d8, Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Shooting d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Gear: Two Battle Axes (Str+d8), Bow (Damage 2d6, Range 12/24/48).

Special Abilities:

- **Ethereal:** These spirits are immaterial and can only be harmed by magical attacks or as noted below. Their weapons can still harm corporeal targets.
- **Fear:** Hoarfrost warriors cause Fear checks when they are visible.

HOARFROST WARRIORS

- **Partial Invisibility:** A hoarfrost warrior is normally invisible. A character may detect the invisible spirit if he has a reason to look and makes a Notice roll at -6. Once detected, a hoarfrost warrior may be attacked at a -6 penalty. In direct moonlight, however, hoarfrost warriors are visible as shimmering ghostly outlines and may be seen and attacked without penalty.
- **Two-Fisted:** Hoarfrost warriors are trained to fight with two weapons. They gain the benefits of the Two-Fisted Edge.
- **Weakness (Daylight):** Hoarfrost warriors can only appear at night once the moon has risen. They disappear when the day comes or the moon has set.
- **Weakness (Fire):** Hoarfrost warriors suffer normal damage from fire or flaming weapons.

- **Weakness (Icy Heart):** A Hoarfrost warrior spirit can be harmed physically if someone dares to grab their icy heart. To do this, an opponent must spend an action, reach into the creature's chest, and make an opposed Spirit roll against the ghost. If the opponent wins the Spirit roll, the Hoarfrost warrior loses the Ethereal power until sunrise.



SAVAGE TALE: The Oncoming Frost

This Savage Tale begins as the heroes arrive in an isolated Irish seacoast village sometime in late fall or early winter. Even for the season, the weather is unseasonably cold and the travelers realize it would be wise to seek shelter against the coming night's chill.



THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

ENTERING THE VILLAGE

The community is quaint and scenic, with sod-roofed homes made from smooth ocean stones. Sheep abound here and wander throughout the village, watched by several large sheep dogs.

Near the center of the village stands a narrow tower, nearly 40 feet tall. While it is still in good repair, it is obviously unused by the villagers. A close examination of the tower reveals several religious symbols (crosses) in the stonework.

None of the travelers can recall any common celebration on this date, but preparations for a festival of some sort are underway as the party enters the village. A large bonfire is being erected in the middle of the small settlement. Many of the residences are festooned with plant wreaths and garland.

THE FESTIVAL

If any of the wanderers asks about the coming festivities, one of the locals tells them a bit of the local history.

"The tower you see there near the center of the village was home to an order of monks hundreds of years ago. They built it as shelter against raids of the Norsemen who once plagued the coast hereabouts.

"Over time, a small settlement sprang up around the tower and the people would retreat inside its walls when the raiders came. They would hurl flaming pitch down on the Norse from atop the tower until the raiders either fled or tired of their sport.

"For hundreds of years, our village has held this festival to mark the first frost, for winter marked a respite from the raids. Even the Vikings would not brave the northern seas when the winter storms came."

The villagers explain that they have maintained the tower for generations out of respect, even though the order of monks that once resided there has long since passed from existence. They invite the party to remain with them to celebrate the coming of winter with the community. There is also a small hostel where the travelers can stay the night afterwards.

What even the local residents don't know is that on this day over 500 years ago was the last attack on the village by a particularly ruthless band of Viking raiders. The Norsemen struck as night fell, but found the community more than able to withstand their attack from within the tower. A lucky shot from a villager's longbow planted a flaming arrow into the sail of the Viking longboat as the raiders retreated and the fire spread quickly. Before the Vikings could make it back to shore, the boat burned and sank, drowning all aboard.

RETURN OF THE NORSEMEN

As evening approaches, the festival gets underway. The bonfire is lit to mark the beginning of the celebration. Villagers and residents of outlying farms bring a wide variety of foods. The heroes are invited to share in the feast. Some of the locals produce musical instruments and an impromptu dance is struck up after everyone has eaten their fill.

Feel free to play up the warm and open nature of the villagers. Later, when the attack begins, it may add a sense of urgency to the adventurers' choices as they try to save them from the ghostly marauders.

Shortly after darkness falls, the moon begins to rise over the ocean. Allow all the characters to make a Notice roll. The one rolling highest glimpses a dark shape out at sea pass across the face of the moon. As the adventurers focus their attention upon what is transpiring upon the ocean, they witness a long dark shape silently glide up to the shore of the village. It appears to be the silhouette of an ancient Viking longship.

The eerie vessel slides through the water coming to rest on the shore. Shadowy forms spill forth from the dark craft and glide across the beach into the village. Their skin is as pale as moonlight and covered in rivulets of dark blood. From somewhere in the night, screams begin. The attack is on!

The hoarfrost warriors surge ashore with the waves and begin attacking the unarmed villagers. The few that stand and fight fall quickly, their weapons useless against the



HOARFROST WARRIORS



immaterial spirits. Like the villagers, the heroes find any non-magical weapons they have are completely ineffective against the hoarfrost warriors.

Much as the tower thwarted them in their mortal lives, the ghosts cannot enter its confines now—albeit for different reasons. The tower is holy ground even after all these years. If none of the adventurers thinks to suggest it, one of the locals calls for everyone to retreat to the tower. However, without the party's assistance the villagers are slaughtered.

☛ **Hoarfrost Warriors (20):** See page 70.

Villagers (30): See page 75.

FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL

After a few rounds of combat, have each of the characters make a Notice roll (–2). Any

who succeed observe that while the hoarfrost warriors are clearly insubstantial, they detour around the bonfire. This is a clue toward one of the spirits' few weaknesses—fire.

Five rounds after the attack begins, the heroes hear hideous screams coming from a man and woman in a nearby house. At the same time, a few of them hear a mother calling for her children from the top of the tower. She begs the adventurers to find them.

Now, the party must choose between helping the people in the house who are screaming or finding the children who are missing. Finally, if any of the adventurers noted the ghosts' aversion to fire, they may begin searching for more effective weapons against the hoarfrost warriors.

Carefully note the order in which the characters go to these locales, because it affects the outcome of the adventure. It's

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

also possible that the party splits into smaller groups to accomplish more than one goal at once. If so, you'll need to factor that in as well in determining the effect it has on the events of this Savage Tale.

SCREAMS IN THE NIGHT

Within the house where the screaming can be heard, a number of hoarfrost warriors have set upon a husband and wife. Two of the spirits are hauling the husband away towards their shadowy craft while two others are attacking the wife.

Through an open window, you can see a man struggling and screaming. His arms are pinned up into the air, apparently held by nothing at all. Yet he is being pulled towards the doorway by some unseen force. As you enter, you also find a woman is being tossed back and forth – also by nothing. Her hair flings wildly about her body as her head bobbles from the impact. Then, as the moon peers out from behind a cloud, the bodies of the frost-laden warriors appear in the silvery light. Their luminous eyes turn towards you now.

The hoarfrost warriors are attempting to drag the man to their longship. It takes five rounds for them to drag him to the water's edge. Once there, he disappears as they drag him aboard their vessel. Any wanderer who approaches the shadowy boat finds that it vanishes just as he gets within reach of it.

If the heroes arrive at this location after first completing one of the other encounters, then the husband has already been taken away to the shadow-boat, and the party sees him just as he disappears. However, there are two less hoarfrost warriors present. If they arrive at this location after completing the other two encounters, then the woman has one round before she is torn to pieces by the hoarfrost warriors. As before, there are only two of the ghosts here in this case.

🐾 **Hoarfrost Warriors (4):** See page 70.

🐾 **Villagers (2):** See page 75.

THE MISSING CHILDREN

The children, a brother and sister, have wisely decided to hide in one of the cottages in the village. As the heroes search each house for the children, draw a card and consult the table to see what they find. If they search all of the houses (there are seven houses in all), then the children are automatically in the last house checked.

CARD EFFECT

- **2–4:** The house is empty
- **5–7:** One or two hoarfrost warrior-scouts and a hoarfrost warrior-shaman
- **8–10:** Two to four hoarfrost warriors
- **Jack–Queen:** A useful item is found, such as a torch or a barrel of oil
- **King–Ace:** The children are found
- **Joker:** The children are found, but they are under attack by 4 hoarfrost warriors

If the party pursues the children only after completing one of the other encounters, then two hoarfrost warriors have found the children and are about to attack. If the group undertakes this encounter after the other two, then they find the warriors attacking them. Unfortunately, the boy has already been slain trying to protect his sister.

🐾 **Hoarfrost Warriors (varies):** See page 70.

THE BOATWRIGHT'S YARD

Should the adventurers have deduced the ghosts' weakness to fire and begin looking for better weapons, any of the villagers gladly direct them to the boatwright's shack near the shoreline. In the boatwright's yard are a few small vessels under construction. However, lying about are all sorts of flammable materials. Bundles of torches, lanterns, and barrels of pitch and tar. There is enough tar and pitch to coat a weapon for every able-bodied fighter in the village. Unfortunately, there is a group of hoarfrost warriors already in the yard, throwing these items into the sea.

HOARFROST WARRIORS

If the heroes arrive here first, then all of these items can be rescued. If they arrive here after one of the other two encounters, then only a dozen torches and enough tar to coat the party's weapons remain. If they arrive here after the other two encounters, then only half a dozen torches can be salvaged.

🐉 **Hoarfrost Warriors (1 per hero):** See page 70.

WRAPPING UP

After rescuing what villagers they're able, prudent travelers may likely retreat into the confines of the tower to wait out the attack from within the safety of its walls. When morning dawns, the boat and its ghostly passengers withdraw ahead of the sun's rays.

Zealous heroes, however, may choose to go out and meet the supernatural evil ravaging the community. There are 25 hoarfrost warriors, minus any the heroes managed to destroy during the earlier encounters. Should the party sally forth to face the warriors, they may be able to raise an impromptu militia from among the villagers—provided they salvaged flaming weapons from the boatwright's yard. Without such armament, none of the locals is willing to risk certain death fighting the spirits.

If the party and any allies are successful in defeating at least half of the hoarfrost warriors, the rest retreat to their longship and sail back out to sea. As before, the ghosts' accursed vessel fades from view should any mortal approach it. All attacks against it pass harmlessly through it with the exception of fire and flaming weapons. Should the heroes succeed in somehow setting the boat alight, they manage to rid the world of this particular band of hoarfrost raiders.

Nonetheless, in this Savage Tale, victory is more likely measured not by evil defeated, but by lives saved. In the end, the villagers are very grateful for the heroes' intervention and certainly tell them so—even if none of the innocents left in the encounters were saved.

🐉 **Hoarfrost Warriors (varies):** See page 70.



HEROES AND VILLAINS

FOLLOWING are the statistics for other friends or foes found in this Savage Tale.

VILLAGER

While most of the locals know the history of the old Viking raids, it has been centuries since the last occurred.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d4, Knowledge (one trade) d6, Notice d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances & Edges: —

Gear: Knife (Str+1d4), tools of the trade.

HOMUNCULUS

Once upon a time, eschewing more mundane material pursuits, an alchemist sought to create life in his own image. For years he labored in vain. Finally, as he neared the end of his own life, he found just the right combination of elements. The alchemist mixed the ingredients with moist clay and shaped the mixture into a crude, miniature facsimile of a man. Then, leaning close, he breathed the breath of life into the homunculus.

Exhausted by his efforts, the alchemist retired to his bed to rest, satisfied that he had fulfilled his goal. The next morning, his servants found him with his throat slashed from ear to ear. When they pulled the sheets back, a tiny man leapt out, holding a straight razor and covered in the man's blood. The thing dropped to the floor and tried to scamper under the bed, but one of the servants stomped the minute abomination.

From that day forth, their dreams were haunted by the fact that even in the brief moment before the thing was crushed underfoot, there was time enough to see the tiny figure's face held the alchemist's features.

—The Liber Vorago

SINCE the time of Albertus Magnus, nearly 400 years earlier, alchemists have been best known for their obsession with

creation of a philosopher's stone, an item capable of turning base metals into precious ones. Centuries before even Magnus' time, Musselmen alchemists also pursued the creation of artificial life and this pursuit continues through the time of Solomon Kane, although it is viewed as heretical by the Church.

The homunculus is the result of an alchemist successfully crafting a living creature using his art. These creatures are tiny, man-shaped, and sometimes take on the rough appearance of their creators. The recipes for homunculi vary from alchemist to alchemist and often vary greatly. However, all have one thing in common: even though they are somehow granted a spark of life, these strange constructs lack a soul.

This fact makes homunculi extremely dangerous for they are perfect vessels for demonic or other types of spiritual possession. Few escape falling prey to the attentions of fell beings, often within hours—or even minutes—of their creation. Ironically, since most alchemists fancy themselves scientists rather than magicians, the majority of them scoff at the possibility of such an event.

While in service of their creator, these creatures are typically used for innocuous purposes, or at worst, to spy on others. Under the control of a malevolent spirit, they become focused on mischief and mayhem—or far worse.



homunculus

INITIALLY, the appearance of these small constructs depends largely on the ingredients used in their manufacture. Some appear plantlike, while others may vaguely resemble lizards or other reptilian creatures. Over time, they may take on more human features as they bond to their creator—or more demonic ones if they succumb to diabolic influences.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str
- **Malleable Body:** A homunculus can squeeze its body through any space at least 1 inch in diameter.
- **Noxious Breath:** A homunculus can exhale a small cloud of gas that works as a very mild sedative. There is no effect against a fully conscious target, but a victim who is already sleeping must make a Vigor roll (–2) or fall into a deeper slumber that lasts one hour. Targets that have suffered one or more Fatigue levels are also susceptible, but they roll a straight Vigor roll instead (minus any Fatigue modifiers, of course). The sleep is so deep that a victim is only allowed a Vigor roll to awaken whenever she takes actual physical damage.
- **Poison:** A character struck by a homunculus in combat must make a Vigor roll, regardless of whether the creature deals enough damage to overcome Toughness. If he fails, he gains a Fatigue level. This poison is not strong enough to cause death and Fatigue levels gained in this fashion are removed after one hour.
- **Size –2:** Homunculus stand 6 inches tall.
- **Small:** Attackers suffer –2 to attack rolls against a homunculi, due to its size.



THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE



SAVAGE TALE: POSSESSED

The heroes are traveling through Russia or another eastern European country. They seek shelter in an unnamed roadside inn ahead of an approaching winter storm. While they have passed a few farms over the last few hours, they have seen no other places that seem likely to welcome them for the night.

INN OF THE STARVING WOLF

A few other travelers have also taken shelter at the inn. The group is a mixed bag and a testament to the scarcity of other accommodations in the region. Spending a little time warming up in the common room allows the party to get a feel for their fellow guests as well as their host.

GUESTS AND STAFF

- **Thomas Alberti.** Alberti is an Italian scientist and talented physician. He has been summoned from his home of Genoa to treat a patient afflicted with an unusual and persistent malady. Alberti is very learned and speaks several languages, but keeps to himself.

In addition to his professed pursuits, Alberti dabbles into alchemy as well, although he does not usually make note of it. He has found many of his colleagues have begun to dismiss that pursuit as foolishness at best or, at the worst, heresy. Recently, he has become fascinated with creating a homunculus although he is having only limited success.

- **Ivar Petrik.** Petrik is a local trader that frequently stops at the inn on his trips between cities. He is a coarse man with earthy appetites and speech. It becomes clear to anyone spending any time in his presence that the man likely bends the law when it runs counter to his best interests.

Petrik occasionally buys stolen goods from bandits along their trade route. He then sells them at a distant market,

lessening the chance they'll be identified. Petrik used to deal with Georgi Zacek, a bandit in this area, but betrayed him to the local boyar when the man demanded too much money for the merchant's tastes.

- **Josef Kutkin.** Kutkin is Petrik's right-hand man and teamster. He looms silently behind Petrik and the cudgel on his belt makes his primary role for Petrik fairly clear. Kutkin drinks heavily.

Kutkin used to be one of Zacek's underlings. He defected to Petrik's employ shortly before the merchant turned the bandit into the boyar.

- **Aleksei and Jana Torshin.** This middle-aged couple claim to be pilgrims traveling to the north to visit the remains of Philip of Moscow which are interred at the Solovetsky Monastery. There have been reports of healings and other miracles at his tomb. A hero who makes a Notice roll observes that Aleksei hovers over Jana, never leaving her alone.

This couple is exactly who they say they are. Jana is ill suffering from tuberculosis and they hope for a miracle at Solovetsky. The pair pass off Jana's coughing as merely a cold and the very reason they sought shelter from the storm.

- **Dmitri Turov.** Turov is the owner of the inn. He is a jovial man who, by the size of his waist, enjoys his own cooking tremendously. He is very knowledgeable about local history and more than willing to share a tale or two with passing travelers.

- **Yelena Ivanova.** Yelena is Turov's serving girl, although she is closer to middle-age than her teenage years. She is attractive and friendly, but keeps her distance from guests.

Yelena was secretly in love with Zacek. She knows that Petrik turned him in to the boyar, but she was afraid to speak up on his behalf.

LAST TO ARRIVE

Shortly after nightfall, the storm begins to pick up outside. Seemingly moments after it

does, the door to the inn bursts open and a richly dressed noble enters, escorted by five soldiers. Turov and Yelena immediately bow to the noble and guide him to the nicest table. Petrik and his man quickly rise and pay homage to him as well.

The noble is Pavel Nevsky, the local boyar. He tells Turov loudly enough for any of the characters to hear that he has come to meet a man from Italy and personally escort him to his manor. The innkeeper points out Alberti. The boyar says because of the storm, he and his men will have to stay the night. Turov obsequiously tells Nevsky that he will make his best room available—at no cost, of course.

Should any of the heroes attempt to strike up a conversation with the boyar, he waves them away imperiously. The soldiers, and even the captain himself, are more approachable. A successful Persuasion roll—or even just a round of beer—is all that is necessary to befriend the men.

CONFLICTS ABOUND

During the course of the evening, it becomes apparent to any party member paying attention that there is tension between some of the guests. A hero can catch one of these with a Notice roll, but it will add to the overall atmosphere of the adventure if you place these scenes into the roleplaying instead. The portions in parenthesis are for your information only.

- The innkeeper glares at Kutkin each time he asks for more vodka and finally refuses to serve him any more. (Turov knows Kutkin can get violent and doesn't want to risk any trouble with the boyar present.)
- A short while after he speaks to the boyar, the Torshins approach Alberti. They speak in hushed tones, but it quickly becomes obvious that Aleksei is unhappy. He stands angrily, but Jana restrains him gently and they retire for the evening. (Aleksei overheard that Alberti was a doctor and asked for his help. The Italian asked for more money than the Torshins could afford.)
- The captain of the boyar's guard appears to watch Yelena closely. She, on the other hand, goes out of her way to remain busy

THE STARVING WOLF

The inn is a two-story building constructed of heavy timber with stone chimneys. The inn is well-appointed and prepared for the Russian winters. The second floor is a single, open common room covering the northern half of the first floor.

on the other side of the room as much as possible. (The captain has long suspected her of some connection to Zacek.)

A GHOST STORY

The inn quiets down a little after the boyar's arrival. His soldiers take one of the tables near the door, while Nevsky speaks to Alberti in hushed tones. Petrik, however, has had enough to drink that he's still looking to swap stories. He corners one or more of the adventurers and begins a tale, although he's sober enough to keep his voice down as he tells it.

"You know that the inn is haunted, no? No? Well, I will tell you. A few years ago during a snowstorm—just like this one, if I remember correctly—the brave boyar over there chased a local bandit to this very inn. Zacek the Bloody he was called.

"His soldiers cornered the robber's band, killed the lot of them, and put a few bullets into Zacek as well. The boyar had him dragged out of the inn and chopped off his head while he begged for mercy!

"Now, on cold winter nights, particularly ones where the snow falls heavy, they say Zacek roams the halls of this inn, looking for a head to replace the one he lost!

Petrik ends his story with a raucous laugh, drawing glares from the boyar and innkeeper both. The merchant becomes uncharacteristically quiet and retires, but his drover remains behind, continuing to drink. Slowly, the room thins until only the soldiers

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

and their captain remain. The captain assigns one of the men to stand guard and the rest retire upstairs to the common room. After the soldiers turn in, if any characters remain in the main hall, Turov bids them good night as well.

Any hero who stays awake until midnight may make a Notice roll. If he succeeds, he hears the sounds of rustling and movement coming from Alberti's room. Should the character knock on the door, no one answers. Two hours later, any traveler awake may make a Notice roll (-2). On a success, she hears a scampering sound somewhere in the walls of the inn, like that of rats.

WHODUNIT?

The inn is indeed haunted by Zacek's ghost. Until now, the spirit has merely been trapped, unable to manifest itself or affect the material world. However, the arrival of the boyar raised such rage in the bandit's specter that it was able to possess the inert homunculus Alberti had crafted. It uses the tiny figure to begin exacting its revenge.

Due to its small size, the homunculus is able to travel throughout much of the inn through the connected fireplace flues—at least on the north side of the inn. Those of the kitchen and Turov's living quarters are separate. The creature puts its unsuspecting victims into a deep slumber before cutting their throats with Alberti's own razor.

FIRST VICTIM

The next morning, the party awakes to a commotion in the inn. Alberti has been found dead in his room by Yelena, his throat slashed nearly from ear to ear. The boyar is in an outrage and commands that no one leave until the murderer is identified. Nevsky takes the killing as a personal attack on him and his family as he had hoped Alberti could cure his son's illness.

The boyar orders each of the guests accounted for and their rooms quickly searched. The soldiers are rough with the searches, but quick and do no damage to any belongings. Should any of the characters refuse to allow the search, it's immediately

taken by Nevsky as an admission of guilt and results in a fight with his soldiers. No evidence of any sort is uncovered, so the boyar orders his captain to find the murderer. He then retires to his room in a rage.

The captain is out of his element and knows it. If any of the heroes managed to befriend him the night before, he quickly looks to them for advice. If not, a Persuasion roll now convinces him to allow the adventurers a look at the murdered man's room.

SCENE OF THE CRIME

Alberti's room is largely untouched. The door was not barred or locked when Yelena found him. His body lies on the single bed with the covers pulled up to a little below his arms. His arms are out from under the blankets and crossed across his chest.

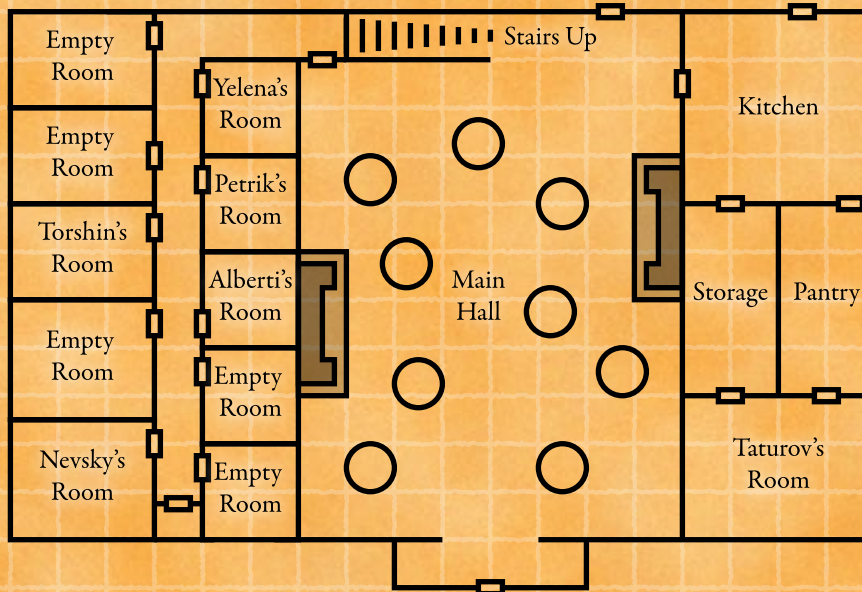
As the party has already heard, his throat is indeed cut, but very deeply and it is nearly severed from his neck. There is a large blood stain on one side of the body and a spray of dried blood across the floor on the same side. The grisliness of the scene requires a Fear check to avoid nausea (-1 to all rolls for the duration of the period the characters are in the room).

Searching through Alberti's room can reveal a number of clues and a couple of false leads as well. There is a fireplace, bed, a single chair, and a chest at the foot of the bed. There is no external window and only the single door to allow entry. Allow the information below only if a player specifically states her character is searching the area in question.

- **Alberti's Body.** The body is still tucked into the bed and there is no sign of a struggle. The limbs are just beginning to stiffen. Other than the horrible wound on his neck, there are no other injuries to his body. A hero who makes a Healing roll (-2) while examining the wound notices that it appears to have been made not by a single savage cut, but rather by sawing motions with a small, very sharp blade.
- **Bed.** The blood stain is largely dried and primarily on the left side of the body and extends to the floor. The right side of

The Starving Wolf Inn

1"



the bed rests against the wall. There is a sizeable quantity of blood on both the bed and the floor. A Tracking roll finds no footprints in the blood on the floor. A Notice roll finds several small prints of blood, about finger-tip sized, on the blaket as well as the exposed part of Alerti's bedshirt.

Tucked under the pillow is a small leather-bound journal. No roll is necessary to find this, but the adventurer must state he is searching under the pillow before he can find it. Note that this necessitates lifting the nearly severed head first—requiring another Fear check.

- **Chest.** Inside the chest are Alberti's belongings and clothing. The clothing is unremarkable. There are several scientific and medical texts, as well as an assortment of chemicals and ground herbs. A successful Knowledge (Occult) or Knowledge (Alchemy) roll identifies many of the ingredients as being used exclusively in alchemical concoctions.

A small wooden case, about the size of a jewelry box, is also in the chest. It is unlocked and lined with blue velvet, but is otherwise empty. A character making a Notice roll observes there is no coin purse or any money amongst the physician's belongings.

- **Fireplace.** Should any hero check the fireplace, the flue is far too small for a human to use, barely over a foot wide. The ashes are still warm. A traveler who specifically digs through them discovers two items concealed in the ash: a coin purse filled with Italian lire and a broken handle to what appears to be a straight razor.
- **Journal.** The cover to this small book is locked. The key is nowhere to be found, but a Lockpicking roll quickly defeats the simple device. Failing that, the cover can easily be cut without damaging the contents. Inside, a reader finds pages and pages of coded entries. These entries are encrypted in a code created by Alberti.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

Deciphering the text takes 6 hours and requires a Smarts roll (-2), but also the ability to speak the Latin language. If no one in the group understands Latin, the captain of the guard, Stanislaw Jablonski, knows the language. Using the soldier as an interpreter adds another 6 hours to the time necessary to decipher the book.

Assuming the heroes are able to eventually read the journal, it's clear that Alberti was mixing alchemical concepts with his medical studies. A character who makes a successful Investigation roll quickly notes that the Italian had been experimenting in creating artificial life, a homunculus, but thus far without success. Otherwise, it takes an additional 2 hours of study to uncover this fact.

A TIMELINE FOR REVENGE

The party may have uncovered several items of interest in Alberti's room, but is unlikely to have any answers to the murder, at least not right away. Among the other guests, finger-pointing and accusations begin almost immediately. Largely, the boyar stays out of the investigation. He emerges from his room occasionally to rant and rage, but leaves the legwork to his captain. He remains convinced that the murder was a direct attack on his family, and rightly so, although he has no inkling as to the nature of the real culprit.

Unless they acted provocatively earlier, the wanderers themselves aren't immediately suspected as so many of the non-player characters already distrust each other. If the party succeeded in befriending the captain of the boyar's troops, the other guests privately bring their suspicions to the heroes.

Petrik mentions the argument Aleksei had with Alberti in passing. Taturon tells the heroes that rumor has it that Kutkin used to be a bandit. Aleksei discreetly points out that Petrik's room is right next to Alberti's. If the party didn't find the coins in the ashes, Yelena drops the hint that Petrik may obtain some of his merchandise from highwaymen. Even the captain himself brings his concerns about Yelena's association with the former bandit to their attention.

Don't just blurt this information out, though. Roleplay each of the other characters as they approach the party, keeping in mind their own secrets and biases.

One by One

As the heroes work to solve the mystery, the homunculus continues pursuing its murderous revenge. Moving forward, the events of this Savage Tale are largely dependent on the actions of the party. Unless the heroes take proactive measures, the homunculus slays its victims in the order and locations we've listed below.

However, Zacek's ghost is no fool, so it will adapt to the situation. For example, if the adventurers place one of its targets under guard, the homunculus moves to the next available victim. Should the party convince the others in the inn to stick together, the tiny creature waits until someone is alone, preferably one of its targets, but Zacek's rage is so great he'll settle for anyone at this point—perhaps a soldier patrolling the outside of the inn, a character that goes to the privy, etc. Only Yelena is spared attack by the creature in this case.

VICTIMS

- **Kutkin.** The traitorous drover is the next victim. The homunculus strikes the man around midday, catching him snoozing in the common room while the soldiers were downstairs on guard. As before, his throat is slashed. A Notice roll finds more of the tiny bloody "fingerprints" on his clothing. If the travelers specify they're looking for them, no roll is necessary. There is nothing missing from the man at this point. However, should a hero search the room, a successful Notice roll uncovers a small Eastern crucifix with a broken chain near the man's bedroll. (The homunculus stole the cross from the Torshins' and planted it to sow confusion.)
- **Soldier.** One of the boyar's guards is slain just before nightfall while guarding the exterior of the inn. As with the others,

his throat was slashed. There are no other footprints in the snow other than the victim's. (The homunculus is small enough to burrow under the 2' of snow currently on the ground.)

Carefully searching the body grants a Notice roll (–4) or a Healing roll (–2). A success finds a pair of small scratches just above the man's boots. (The homunculus first weakened him with its poison claws from under the snow. When he bent over to see what had cut him, it subdued him with its breath.)

Should any of the wanderers think to inquire, the captain of the guard recalls that this soldier was among those that helped corner Zacek. In fact, he was the only member of the contingent—including the captain himself—that was present.

- **Petrik.** On the night following Alberti's murder, Petrik is slain in his room. The door is barred from the inside. The "fingerprints" are present on his bedclothes as before. This time, a Tracking roll (–2) finds one or two on the floor near the bed as well. Additionally, the same roll finds a couple of soot marks on the floor near the fireplace as well. Any character searching the fireplace itself may make a Notice roll. If she succeeds, she finds a small chain with a tiny key about a foot up the flue. The key fits Alberti's journal. (The homunculus lost the key as it was climbing back up the chimney.)

THE BOYAR'S DEATH

Should the heroes have failed to halt the murderous revenge spree by this point, the boyar is the next victim. Zacek had intended to let the man live with the hopes that the inevitable death of his son would break his spirit. However, the unnatural hatred that kept his own soul tied to the inn overcame him, forcing him to kill the noble.

Boyar Nevsky refuses to remain with the rest of the occupants of the Starving Wolf, choosing to stay in his room. A soldier is always posted outside his door and another outside his window, so he believes himself safe from any common murderer. Thus the boyar becomes one of the easiest victims for the homunculus to kill.

A scream from the noble's room alerts all within the inn that he is under attack. The boyar had barred his door, so getting in requires a Strength roll (–4). Only two characters can cooperate on the roll, as the door simply isn't big enough for more to help. Alternately, the adventurers can simply break the window from the outside.

Regardless, by the time they get into the room, the boyar has been murdered. Like the rest, his throat has been slashed. However, this time the tiny body of the homunculus—looking disturbingly like the long-dead bandit—lies covered in blood on the floor. Once the boyar was dead, the vengeful spirit lost its tie to the material world.

DEFEATING THE HOMUNCULUS

Once the travelers have an inkling what form their opponent has taken and possibly even how it is moving around the inn, there are any number of ways they may go about forcing the homunculus into the open. The simplest is to block fireplaces and literally smoke the creature out. Another method might be to identify likely targets and lure the creature with one as bait. How effective your group's method for dealing with the diminutive killer is ultimately up to you.

Should the heroes succeed in defeating the ghost before it murders the boyar, the noble and his soldiers return to his estate. The captain of the guard thanks the party for its help and may, if you choose, serve as a contact in the future. The boyar, however, does not thank or even acknowledge the wanderers' contributions, unless one (or all) of them is a Noble. Then, he thanks the party (or character) and invites them to his estate.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE



HEROES AND VILLAINS

FOLLOWING are the statistics for other friends or foes found in this Savage Tale.

PAVEL ALEKSANDROVICH NEVSKY

A man in his early middle-age, Nevsky has a well-earned reputation for a bad temper. However, he is not a fool and, contrary to popular rumor, seldom makes rash decisions.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Taunt d6

Charisma: +2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: Arrogant, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Command, Connections, Noble

Gear: Sabre (Str+d6), wheellock pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1, AP 1, 2 actions to reload), chain hauberk (+2), powder & shot (10).

SOLDIER

The boyar's guard is composed of some of his most trusted soldiers. These men have been in the noble's service for years.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7(2)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Musketeer, Steady Hands

Gear: Sabre (Str+d6), musket (Range 10/20/40, Damage 2d8 AP 2, 2 actions to reload), chain hauberk (+2), powder & shot (20).



STANISLAW JABLONSKI, CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

The captain of the boyar's soldiers is a former Polish soldier, a defector from the Polish army occupying Moscow. He is a talented tactician, but very aware of his own limitations. He also knows that he is often mistrusted by Russians.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Knowledge (Latin) d4, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Charisma: -2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8(2)

Hindrances: Outsider, Vow (protect Pavel Nevsky)

Edges: Command, Dodge, Hold the Line, Level Headed, Musketeer

Gear: Sabre (Str+d6), wheel lock pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1, AP 1, 2 actions to reload), chain hauberk (+2), powder & shot (20).

ICThYNITES

They come from the sea on certain nights. If you look you may see their forms, just visible against the deeper black of the ocean. They sing old songs that speak of forgotten times—ages before the very memory of man. If you look long enough, you may catch a glimmer of silver skin, still wet and briny. God help you should catch a glimpse of their eyes.

I've been caught in their cold gaze before. I looked into those lustrous wells, and a part of me harkened back. Some piece of my mind, long-buried in the bloodlines of my ancestors, awakened. I began to remember their terrible song. Even now, as I retell it to you, it makes me yearn. Even now they call to me. It's on nights like this that I long to walk into the waves..."

The ichtynites are a race of fish-men who hail from a time long forgotten by humanity. From a distance, they appear to be humanoid. However, once nearer one can see the silver sheen of their scaled skin. The mouths of these creatures are gaping and piscine, filled with sharp, translucent teeth. Most remarkable of all are their glistening, metallic eyes which never blink.

Travelers have claimed sighting ancient cities occupied by these fish-men in lonely stretches of the sea. Perhaps these lost megalopolises were even built by the ichtynites themselves. If so, the secrets to their ancient civilization are long lost, for the feral fish-men seem to have no recollection of it. Instead, they clamber over the neglected ruins, fighting each other and feeding on any mortals that dare wander close to their abodes.

Icthynites are capable of breeding with human women. Usually, any offspring born to a human parent is horribly deformed. Few of these survive even the first moments of life. Over the years, a small number have been born with none of their inhuman father's traits and have integrated into human society. Most have no idea of their unnatural parentage.

Those offspring that survive—as well as their own descendants—have hidden ancestral memories deep within their souls. For this reason, the fish-men croon from the sea at night, recalling all mortals who can remember their alien song. Should any wander towards the waves, they are taken from the shore and into the deep below to never be seen again.

We don't recommend you apply this fate to heroes. Being the ancestral offspring of a degenerate race of fish-men is probably something a player shouldn't learn about as a result of a random Trait check!



ICThYNITE

These creatures are humanoid in size and shape, but their features are decidedly fish-like. Sharp teeth and claws further identify these monsters as predatory in nature as well. Icthynites always attempt to croon for a round prior to attacking their victims.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Swimming d12



THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE



Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8(2)

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 8
- **Armor +2:** Icthyrites have tough scales.
- **Bite or Claws:** Str+d6
- **Blood Frenzy:** When another character or animal suffers a Wound, all ictthyrites

within 6" are driven into a frenzy by the scent of blood. This causes them to go Berserk (as the Edge). Ictthyrites cannot end their rage until the battle is over.

- **Crooning:** As an action, an ictthyrite can sing an alien song which draws those with ictthyrite blood inexorably to it. In other humans, it causes a mild hypnotic state in those exposed to it for more than a single round. Anyone who fails a Spirit roll upon hearing the crooning suffers a -2 to all rolls for the duration of the scene. For each additional ictthyrite crooning in the chorus, apply a -1 penalty to the initial Spirit roll.
- **Low Light Vision:** Ictthyrites ignore any penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

ICTTHYNITE HYBRID

These hideous mutations are created when an unfortunate human with ictthyrite ancestry responds to the fish-men's call. Very soon after making contact with the ictthyrites, his skin develops a thin covering of sickly gray scales and his teeth become more pointed and cartilaginous. In time, he develops a gill-like structure on the side of his neck and webs between his toes to allow him to live in the depths with his scaled cousins.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d4, Knowledge (one trade) d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d8

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: None.

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 6
- **Bite or Claws:** Str+d4
- **Blood Frenzy:** When another character or animal suffers a Wound, all ictthyrites and hybrids within 6" are driven into a frenzy by the scent of blood. This causes them to go Berserk (as per the Edge). Unlike their full-blooded cousins, a hybrid can attempt to end his rage by doing nothing (even moving) for a full action and making a Smarts roll (-2).

- **Crooning:** A hybrid's vocal cords aren't developed enough to initiate the ichtynites' hypnotic song. However, as an action, it can lend its voice to the chorus and counts as an additional ichtynite for puposes of penalties to the Spirit roll to resist the crooning.
- **Low Light Vision:** Ichtynite hybrids ignore any penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.



SAVAGE TALE: FROM THE DEEP

This Savage Tale takes place during a sea voyage, preferably one that takes the party far from familiar shores.

One night during the journey, the travelers' vessel attracts the attention of a group of ichtynites. The creatures call out to the passing ship with their alien song. Any characters awake at the time must make Spirit rolls or be lulled to sleep by the strangely melodious wails. To sleeping heroes and crew, the crooning is a half-remembered dream at best.

The ichtynites remain far from the ship and never come within sight of anyone on board, so the next day the crew passes off the odd incident as just another unsolved mystery of the sea. Several offer a variety of explanations from whales or wind to ghosts or even mermaids pining for a sailor to comfort them. To one member of the crew, unfortunately, the crooning has a much more lasting effect.

THE CALL OF THE SEA

Unbeknownst to anyone onboard the ship, one of the ancestors of Delwen Marsh, the vessel's first mate, was an ichtynite. Even the man himself is unaware of his unnatural heritage. However, the fish-men's song the night before stirred a subconscious memory in his blood and he is now drawn to respond to it.

Marsh handles the ship's navigation during two of the ship's six watches. During those periods, he subtly alters course to follow the crooning of the ichtynites—now inaudible to

all onboard save himself. At the end of his watch, he then alters the vessel's heading to disguise his actions. This goes on for two days as he edges the ship closer and closer to the destination the fish-men's song has revealed to him.

Cloudy weather on the first day helps Marsh hide his course alterations, but after the second day, the skies clear. The ship's master, Robert Chambers, detects that the ship is somewhat off course. He corrects the course and Marsh realizes he must act quickly or he will never be able to answer the overwhelming lure of the fish-men's call.

TREACHERY!

On the night of the third day after the ichtynites first encounter the vessel, Marsh drastically alters the vessel's course during his watch. When the ship's master comes on watch to relieve Marsh in the early morning hours, he quickly realizes something is amiss. Marsh creeps back on deck and strikes Master Chambers on the head, knocking him unconscious. Then, to hide his crime, he slips the body overboard into the waiting sea.

If any of the heroes is on deck at this time, the ichtynites come closer and commence crooning again to distract them. Even should the characters resist the hypnotic effect themselves, many of the sailors become lethargic, mesmerized by the song, unable to perform all but the simplest tasks. Those in the rigging are in actual physical danger, facing potentially fatal falls, and require rescue.

The first mate tells the few other sailors on the late watch that Chambers was not feeling well and that he's volunteered to sit the man's watch. Within a few hours, Marsh has piloted the vessel close enough to his final destination for his purposes and he slips overboard.

MISSING CREWMATES

When the second mate, Robert Olmstead, comes on duty, he quickly realizes something is badly amiss. The travelers are awakened by the crew scouring the vessel for any sign of either the ship's master or first mate. A top-to-bottom search turns up no evidence of either.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

Should the heroes assist, allow each to make a Notice roll (–2). Any who succeed spot a small, but definite trail of dried blood leading from near the ship's wheel to the railing. No other sign of either man is found and all their belongings (less any they may have had on them) are still in their cabin.

Olmstead quickly calms any fears the party may have over the loss of the two ship's officers.

"There is no cause for alarm for your own safety. I and the crew are more than capable of bringing this vessel safely to port. I am loathe, however, to make much further progress until we have put to rest the fate of Master Chambers and Mate Marsh. Master Chambers would not leave one of the crew behind and I cannot either until we have determined their final fates."

Further discussion of the matter is cut short with the rising of the sun, for on the horizon is what at first appears to be a small rocky island or atoll. Olmstead quickly sets a course for the island, stating it is likely the men would have made for it if they were capable.

CITY OF THE FISH MEN

As the vessel nears the "island" it becomes clear that it is actually a small city of some strange design. The city has been carved directly out of an outcrop of volcanic stone rising from the ocean's depths. The architecture of the place seems to defy all known concepts of engineering and has an unsettling effect on the heroes and the crew. Everyone must make a Fear check or suffer a strong feeling of disorientation (nausea) that persists through the rest of this Savage Tale, granting them a –1 penalty to all rolls.

Once the details of the city are clear to the crew, Olmstead finds himself unable to convince any of the sailors to mount a shore party to search for their crewmates. The men are too unnerved by the sight of the strange metropolis rising from the waves and are willing to consign the ship's master and mate to whatever destiny has befallen them. Olmstead, his loyalty overcoming the worst of his fears, asks the heroes to visit the strange metropolis and at least perform a cursory

search for the missing men. Unfortunately, Olmstead himself cannot go with them as the last ranking officer—and navigator—for the ship.

INTO THE CITY

A recent volcanic upheaval thrust the ruins to the surface. Originally, it stood above the waters, home to an advanced culture of humans. Shifting geologic formations caused it to begin to slowly subside into the sea's waters over centuries. During that time, its inhabitants came into contact with ichthyites and, seeking to escape the doom of their own culture, willingly comingled with the piscine creatures. As the city slowly sank beneath the waves, it changed from one of land-dwelling inhabitants to one of aquatic creatures, resulting in the strange design and construction that confronts the party.

Entering the city, the wanderers are immersed in the most alien of its architecture first. The avenues between the buildings are not level and many of the foundations seem to ooze toward each other across the streets. There are no obvious entrances and what pass for windows are often narrow or placed higher on the walls than seem suitable for man-sized inhabitants. Seawater pools in every low spot throughout the city.

Any hero scaling the walls finds openings on the roofs of the buildings that appear to allow egress into the buildings from above. However, there are no stairs or ladders to provide a safe way down to the floors of the structures—often more than 10' below. (This is because by the time these buildings were constructed, they were underwater and their inhabitants adapted to an aquatic environment.)

As they move further into the city, the architecture becomes more and more standard, until there is little to discern it from any of a number of ancient human cities throughout the world. Similarly, as they first enter the city, the travelers find murals of bestial piscine creatures with only a passing resemblance of humans. However the further they travel into the ruins, they find the features of the people in the murals seem to evolve to more human-like and the quality of the carvings likewise becomes more refined.

All the while, snatches of a strange piping song occasionally echoes through the ruins. The melody is at the same time guttural and high-pitched. Try as they might, the characters are unable to locate the source of the song.

SEARCHING THE RUINS

Properly searching the city requires 6 hours of wandering the odd avenues and streets. The party can reduce this time by making a cooperative Notice roll. Each success and raise reduces this time by 1 hour, to a minimum of a single hour.

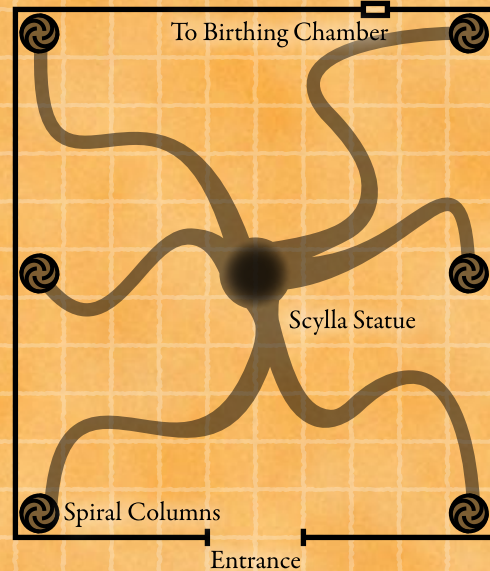
During that time, the heroes have to face the dangers that the risen city contains. For each hour of searching, draw a card and consult the table below. After the first two hours, draw an additional card and discard the lower card.

Ichthynites (1 per hero): See page 85.

CARDS RESULT

- **2:** The searchers find a waterlogged and torn piece of clothing they recognize as belonging to either Master Chambers or First Mate Marsh.
- **3–5:** The city is shaken by a fairly strong tremor. Small pieces of stonework crumble from nearby buildings and each hero must make an Agility roll or be knocked from his feet.
- **6–8:** The party finds a large and spacious room clearly wrought by a once-advanced society. Beautiful and mysterious artwork lines the walls. Each time the group encounters a room like this one, it should be clear that it once served a civilized function such as a laboratory, library, bedroom, bath, or dining room.
- **9–10:** Part of the ruin the heroes are walking on crumbles, giving way to the ocean. Everyone must make an Agility roll or fall into the crashing waves. The fall is about 20 yards, so falling damage is half of $2d6 + 10$ (falling into water halves the damage). A falling character may make an Agility roll to dive and take no damage. Once in the waves, she must make a Swimming

Ceremonial Chamber



roll to stay afloat and reach the rocky shore. Clambering back up to the ruin requires a Climbing roll.

- **Jack-Queen:** A small group of ichthynites (1 per hero) attacks.
- **King:** The group enters the ceremonial chamber (see below).
- **Ace:** The party finds a hidden door leading to the holding chamber (see below).
- **Joker:** Have the characters roll Spirit. The one who rolls lowest experiences a strange sensation of déjà-vu. Perhaps she has the sensation of recognizing the constant song and can even anticipate of its words or maybe the murals begin to become disturbingly familiar.

THE CEREMONIAL CHAMBER

The heroes discover a large domed structure near the center of the ruins. Inside, they find a large room with a domed ceiling. Faded pictures of the fish-men dancing and swimming are painted across the interior surface of the dome. In the center of the room

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

The idol is of a creature known as a scylla. A scholarly character can recognize it with either a Knowledge (Literature) or Knowledge (Occult) roll (both at -2), but the only references to it he is aware of are found in ancient Greek mythology. If you choose, this can provide a link to the Savage Tale "The Under-Market" where the party encounters one of the actual monsters.

stands a large statue of a creature with the torso of a man, but a lower body composed of writhing tentacles. The tentacles stretch across the floor, curving form stylized pillars which spiral up to the curved ceiling.

In the center of the room is a ring of ichtynites that dance and cavort around the statue, carrying torches which flicker with a greenish fire. An altar is set at the base of the statue and one of the creatures is standing before it with a coral knife in hand and singing in the same strange voice the travelers recognize from several nights ago. The body of a man—Master Chambers—rests on the altar. The man is not moving and the adventurers cannot tell if he is merely unconscious or already dead at this point.

If the heroes take no immediate action, opting instead to watch the proceedings, the creature at the altar plunges the knife into the master's chest. The scent of blood drives the ichtynites into a frenzy and they leap upon the carcass, tearing at it with their teeth and claws. Additionally, delaying this long exposes the party to the full effect of the fish-men's crooning, requiring Spirit rolls.

If the adventurers have not attacked by this time, some of the frenzied ichtynites notice them and charge! The fish-men fight to the death.

Should the heroes have interrupted the ceremony and defeat the ichtynites, they find Master Chambers unconscious and in need of medical attention, but alive. If, on the other hand, they delayed until the creatures completed their sacrifice, the man is dead and his body horribly torn.

The only other exit from this room is a doorway approximately 10 feet up the wall opposite the portal through which the party entered. It opens to a short passage that leads to the transformation chamber (see below).

🐟 **Icthynites (1, plus 2 per hero):** See page 85.

🐟 **Icthynite Priest:** See page 91.

THE TRANSFORMATION CHAMBER

Within this low-ceilinged chamber, the travelers find Delwen Marsh. He is seated in the middle of the room, surrounded by a small number of ichtynites. When the heroes enter, the fish-men rise to attack, but Marsh steps between them and the party and says something in a queer warbling tongue. The monsters pause, but remain tense.

He turns to the heroes and says, "Flee, you fools! You are trespassing and your lives are forfeit if you remain!" If the party tries to convince him to come with them, Marsh says, "The song in my blood is too strong. I had no choice but to follow its call. This is where I belong now—with my family." He confesses to attacking Master Chambers if asked, but explains that an uncontrollable madness had overwhelmed him.

If the adventurers reached the transformation chamber through the secret door (and did not enter the ceremonial chamber) they may retreat at this point and escape the room without any fight. However, if they fought the ichtynites in the ceremonial chamber or remain to ask further questions, the fish-men attack.

Marsh steps back from the fight, torn between his waning humanity and the monstrous call of his ancestry. When any of the characters or fish-men suffers a Wound, he is overcome by the blood frenzy of his kind and lunges into battle against the heroes.

As the battle rages, tremors begin to rock the island, mild at first but growing in strength every minute. If the fight with the ichtynites takes more than 10 rounds, a quake rolls the floor with such intensity that everyone must make an Agility roll to keep their feet. There are no other consequences to the tremors; they are present merely to give the heroes a sense of urgency in escaping the island.

There are two exits. One is a short passage leading to the ceremonial chamber. The second is an opening in the ceiling of the room. This one emerges atop the roof of the building, 30 feet from the ground.

❧ **Icthynites (1 per hero):** See page 85.

❧ **Delwen Marsh:** Use Icthynite Hybrid, page 86.

THE SINKING CITY

As the characters flee—either with Master Chambers or merely their lives—tremors rock the city. Seawater begins lapping into the streets as the ruins begin subsiding back into the ocean depths. If the threat of an earthquake sinking the island isn't enough, feel free to have a few icthynites (no more than 1 per hero) harry the adventurers back toward their boat.

Once at their boat, just as the party prepares to cast off, a pair of the fish-men burst from the surface and attack. After the travelers deal with those, there are no further assaults—although you should feel free to add to the group's fears if they seem worried about being ambushed while rowing the dinghy back to the ship! Moments after they clamber aboard the main vessel, there is a deep rumble that builds to a crescendo as the strange metropolis slides back beneath the waves. The ship is tossed by waves generated by the event, but the crew manages to keep her afloat.

Should the heroes have rescued Master Chambers, the second mate orders him taken immediately to the ship's surgeon. The master does not recover from his injuries until the vessel reaches its next port. Regardless of whether the party was successful or not, the crew is grateful for their efforts. The heroes have forged a new set of allies for future adventures.



HEROES AND VILLAINS

FOLLOWING are the statistics for other friends or foes found in this Savage Tale.



ICThYNITE PRIEST

The fish-man priest is more intelligent than his mundane brothers, however he is just as susceptible to blood frenzy. Until he loses control, he tries to use his spells as much as possible.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Notice d8, Shamanism d10, Stealth d8, Swimming d12

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8(2)

Gear: Fetish necklace, dagger (Str+1d4).

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 8
- **Armor +2:** Icthynites have tough scales.
- **Bite or Claws:** Str+d6
- **Blood Frenzy:** When another character or animal suffers a Wound, all icthynites within 6" are driven into a frenzy by the scent of blood. This causes them to go Berserk (as per the Edge). Icthynites cannot end their rage until the battle is over.
- **Crooning:** As an action, an icthynite can sing an alien song which draws those with icthynite blood inexorably to it. In other humans, it causes a mild hypnotic state in those exposed to it for more than a single round. Anyone who fails a Spirit roll upon hearing the crooning suffers a -2 to all rolls for the duration of the scene. For each additional icthynite crooning in the chorus, apply a -1 penalty to the initial Spirit roll.
- **Low Light Vision:** Icthynites ignore any penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **Shamanism:** The icthynite priest has mastered several spells: *armor*, *environmental protection* (water only), *fear* (cold chills), *smite* (runes on dagger), *tempest*. Treat the priest as a Veteran character for purposes of spell casting.

IMPS

Farmer Goode found himself without candles by which to read his beloved books at night, and with the harvest still months away, had no wherewithal to purchase any. While visiting his neighbor, the blind Widow Altman, he happened upon a drawer full of tapers. As he slipped a handful from her cupboard Farmer Goode said to himself, "She is blind and has no need of light. Surely, she will not miss a few candles."

That night, he saw a figure in his garden—small, like a child, but oddly shaped. He watched the figure for a time and soon found its appearance unsettling. He called out to the figure, only to see it flee into the night at the sound of his voice.

The figure returned the next night. This time, Farmer Goode was fearful of the strange apparition and fetched his pistol. Upon his return, he found the creature had once again disappeared.

On the third night, the figure appeared in his doorway.

"What do you want of me?" asked Farmer Goode, his voice quavering with fear.

"I have come for what you have stolen," said the figure.

"Here—take the candles," said the farmer, holding forth the remaining tapers to the little man.

"Ah, but they are not all here. Since you stole light by which to see, I will take the same!" said the creature. And, with that, it leapt upon him and plucked out an eye, fleeing into the night with a hideous laugh.

Farmer Goode was later heard to say that on certain cold nights, he could still see through his missing eye. His stolen orb sat upon a shelf in a dank, earthen-walled cave, where it watched the imps dance and dance around strange fires and bubbling cauldrons.

IMPs are pernicious creatures who may be the source of myths of faeries and similar creatures. However, unlike the faeries of legend, imp mischief is usually marked by violence. Most often summoned by a witch or necromancer, their injurious acts are almost always focused on those who have committed some wrong, leading some stories to claim they are merely elemental manifestations of justice. But there is very little that is "just" about imp work.

Without fail, these monsters inflict much harsher punishment upon their victims than they deserve. These creatures have been known to snatch the tongues of liars, or blind a man for coveting his neighbor's house. Conversely, they rarely punish truly heinous crimes such as murder or the like, instead reserving their torments for those guilty of only small immoralities. In rare instances, imps will offer to undo their harm. In such cases, the imps invariably require their victims to perform even worse acts—usually upon another transgressor—than that of which the imps first found them "guilty."

Imps abide by odd rules of behavior for reasons beyond human understanding. These restrictions are magical in nature and their effects so strong that a imp cannot choose to disobey them. This, no doubt, is why some arcane practitioners call on them.



A hero who makes a Knowledge (Occult) roll can recall these strictures, but it is up to her to use them to her advantage.



Imp

IMPS are short, humanoid beings with large heads and pointed ears. They favor darkened areas, recoiling violently from bright light with hisses or curses. Should their fanged mouths and clawed fingers leave any doubt, the malevolent gleam in their eyes make their wicked natures clear.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Magick d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d10, Taunt d8

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 4

Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Imp Code:** Imps must abide by special rules of behavior (see *The Imp's Strictures* sidebar).
- **Immunity:** These creatures suffer half damage from non-magical attacks.
- **Low Light Vision:** A imp can see perfectly in all but pitch black conditions.
- **Shadow Magick:** Imps are magical creatures tied closely with darkness. In areas of darkness (at least -1 to attack rolls), they can cast the following spells: *burrow* (steps into one shadow and out another), *ghost form* (becomes a shadow), *invisibility* (vanishes into a shadowy area), and *slumber* (blows wisps of shadow). Treat them as Seasoned characters.
- **Size -1:** Imps stand 3'-4' tall
- **Snatch Essence:** This sinister ability allows a imp to temporarily snatch part of a victim's essence or life force. If an imp inflicts a wound, instead of doing damage, the creature can inflict a Fatigue level on the victim. Wild Cards can prevent this effect by winning an opposed Spirit check



THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

THE IMP'S STRICTURES

- A imp is not required to tell the truth, but it cannot tell a lie.
- If asked to parley, a imp must listen to the bargain.
- If it agrees to a bargain, the imp must always keep the letter of a bargain, if not the spirit.
- A imp must always accept something if it is offered to them.

with the imp. Defeating the monster causes it to drop the essence, removing the Fatigue levels from the victim. Imps often use this method of attack to incapacitate a victim before inflicting their "justice" upon them.

- **Weakness (Iron):** These creatures suffer normal damage from weapons of pure iron (not iron alloys, such as steel).
- **Weakness (Sunlight):** Imps receive a -2 penalty to all attack and Magick rolls in direct sunlight.



SAVAGE TALE: SINS OF THE FATHER

WHILE traveling through the English countryside, the wanderers come upon Dorshire, a lonely town nestled amongst rolling hills. A newly-built church stands out from the other buildings in town, all of which are clearly decades old—if not older. Some construction materials—boards, a cask of nails, etc.—still sit to one side indicating the building was a very recent addition.

The townspeople acknowledge the strangers, but the atmosphere is staid, almost oppressive. A startling number of the residents appear to have suffered grievous injuries, many missing digits, a limb, or even an eye. A particularly pathetic man sits near the road, his back against a wall. He is missing both arms and begs any passers-by for morsels of food—which they must also hand

feed him. He doesn't respond to questions about his injuries, except to say, "It's nothing more than I deserved."

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

With a Streetwise roll (+1), a hero quickly finds another citizen willing to tell him, "That's Will Fisher. He was a bit of a layabout, fond of stealing fish from other's nets instead of doing honest work. Now, he'll never hoist a net again." If the character follows up and asks who mutilated the man, the person quickly shakes his head and makes the sign of the cross before hurrying off.

A visit to the town's single inn furthers any impression something is amiss. There, the adventurers find only the blandest fare available and no alcoholic beverages of any kind. If one of the heroes should question this, the innkeeper responds, almost with embarrassment, "Alcohol is the Devil's own brew—and gluttony should not be encouraged."

Here, at least, the party finds the patrons are a little more talkative than the townsfolk on the street. A Streetwise roll convinces an old farmer at a corner table to open up to the adventurers.

"Aye, we're a cursed town, we are. Our sins have all come home to roost thanks to that old witch. Farmer Talbot used to brag about his strong back—and it was the strongest in the village—now he can barely leave the bed. Goodwife Jenkins was always too fond of her cooking. We found her torn open on her bed, as if by a wild animal, but the only thing that was missing was her stomach! I tell you, you'd be best advised to leave before our curse falls on you!"

Should the travelers ask about the witch, the old man tells them that she was an old Gypsy called Grey Ellie that lived on the outskirts of town for years. The townsfolk used to go to her for all manner of things, from medicinal potions to fortune telling to midwifing, all the while unaware they were courting with the Devil's mistress. Then, the error of their ways was pointed out to them by their new minister, Reverend Jefferies. They ran the woman out of town, but not

before she laid a curse on them that each would suffer in kind for his sins.

AMONG THE TOWNSFOLK

Speaking further with the townsfolk about Grey Ellie at first generates only nervous glances and more signs of the Cross. With a Streetwise roll, a hero can elicit more information. Most of the residents only know what the old farmer or Reverend has likely already told the party. However, it soon becomes clear that the Reverend was not only present when Grey Ellie was chased out of town, he was the primary motivator of the entire affair.

Further questioning reveals that while a large number of townsfolk did go to Grey Ellie's hovel, only the Reverend and one other man, Gilbert Brewer, entered the hut. After they had been inside for a few minutes, Gilbert emerged dragging Grey Ellie. The rest of the folks chased her off, throwing stones and catcalling as she fled after the Reverend told them of her curse upon the town.

One of the townsfolk, Percy Webb, was near the door while the Reverend and Brewer were in the house and disputed the Reverend's claim, but—as he was a man of God—the citizens of Dorshire took the Reverend's word over Webb's. Also, it's common knowledge in the town that Webb is more than a bit of a drunkard.

PERCY WEBB

Percy Webb sits in his home near the outskirts of Dorshire. He was, as the other townsfolk have indicated, a heavy drinker and, since the inn stopped serving alcohol, has been suffering heavy withdrawal. He's reluctant to speak about the events at Grey Ellie's, mainly because he took a great deal of abuse for contradicting the Reverend and requires a Persuasion or Streetwise roll to talk. If successful, he tells his side of the story.

"I was standin' at the door and I hear what old Ellie said to the Reverend. She didn't tell him the town would suffer for its sins, only that him and Brewer would. Or, at least that's what I thought I heard. When Brewer got his, I figured the town'd have to listen to me, but then nothing

happened to the Reverend and the other folks started getting hurt, so maybe I did hear wrong..."

THE REVEREND JEFFERIES

Dorshire's minister, Reverend Howard Jefferies, spends most of his time in the newly constructed church. He is a young man to hold such a position, barely in his late twenties. He welcomes the heroes into both the town and his sanctuary.

Reverend Jefferies is very open with the party and answers their questions readily. He arrived in Dorshire a few months ago and found the populace surprisingly accepting of pagan beliefs. However, they were receptive to his sermons, being God-fearing—if somewhat misguided.

"There was an old woman—Grey Ellie, they called her—who passed herself off as something of a midwife. In truth, she was practicing witchcraft thinly disguised as folk remedies. The good townsfolk were quick to realize the error of their ways when I pointed them to the proper passages in the Good Book, and in short order, they convinced her to move on to less Godly parts."

Should the party confront the Reverend with Percy Webb's claim, he denies it with a smile and says, "The Devil's brew can do terrible things to a man's mind!" He admits that he was present when the townsfolk confronted Grey Ellie, although he downplays his own role in the event. He describes the curse she placed on Dorshire exactly as did the old farmer, that each resident would suffer in kind for his sins.

In parting, the minister adds, "While terrible afflictions have been visited upon the good folk of Dorshire, ironically I feel the curse may work to their benefit. If anything, the witch's pronouncement has made the people aware of the palpable wages of sin. And what is the loss of a hand to the value of one's immortal soul? I would wager few parishes are as faithful as Dorshire, now. Why, most of the folk even attend my nightly prayer services!"



THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

GILBERT BREWER

Gilbert Brewer is a hard-working man—so hard-working, in fact, that the adventurers are not able to catch up with him until he returns to his one-room cottage in the early evenings. Brewer is rather stand-offish, but not rude. He invites the party into his home and offers what sparse food he has, mainly vegetables and some stale bread.

It rapidly becomes clear that Brewer is a devout man. He prays a lengthy prayer before eating, punctuates any statement of his plans with “if the Lord wills,” and shoots disapproving glances at any character who acts inappropriately. It’s also apparent that he holds the Reverend in utmost esteem.

If questioned about the events at Grey Ellie’s, he tells the same version as the Reverend, noting that Percy Webb is a known drunkard and an embarrassment to the town. A hero who makes a Notice roll gets the impression that Brewer is uncomfortable about something. On a raise, she realizes that he is lying. If confronted with this information, he becomes angry.

Before the characters can act on this, a trio of imps appear from the shadows of the room, whispering, “Liar, liar,” and attack Brewer. Unless the party comes to his aid, they quickly subdue the man. Then, before the wanderers can intervene, with horrifying swiftness tear out his tongue and disappear back into the shadows. Should the heroes step in to aid Brewer, two of the imps turn and attack them while the third continues to use its Snatch Essence attack to attempt to incapacitate Brewer.

If they succeed in defending him from the imps, Brewer breaks down, weeping. He confesses that he was indeed lying about the curse.

“Percy was telling the truth. I was afraid to contradict the Reverend, him being a man of the cloth and Percy just being a drunk. Later, he told me he’d taken care of the witch’s spell and we didn’t have nothing to worry about. When all the horrible things started happening, he said it was just God’s will.”

Brewer tells the heroes he now believes that the lies he and the Reverend told are somehow responsible for the town’s suffering. He suggests that perhaps if the two men confess their sin before the town, it will lift the curse and offers to speak to the Reverend with the party.

On the other hand, even if they didn’t prevent his mutilation, Brewer is still wracked with guilt, realizing his own transgression at this point. While he can no longer talk and is in enormous pain, he scrawls a short note in his own blood before losing consciousness. It says, “Percy truth. Reverend lied.”

👉 **Imps (3):** See page 93.

👉 **Gilbert Brewer:** See Townsfolk, page 98. Brewer’s Strength and Vigor are both d8.

VESPERS

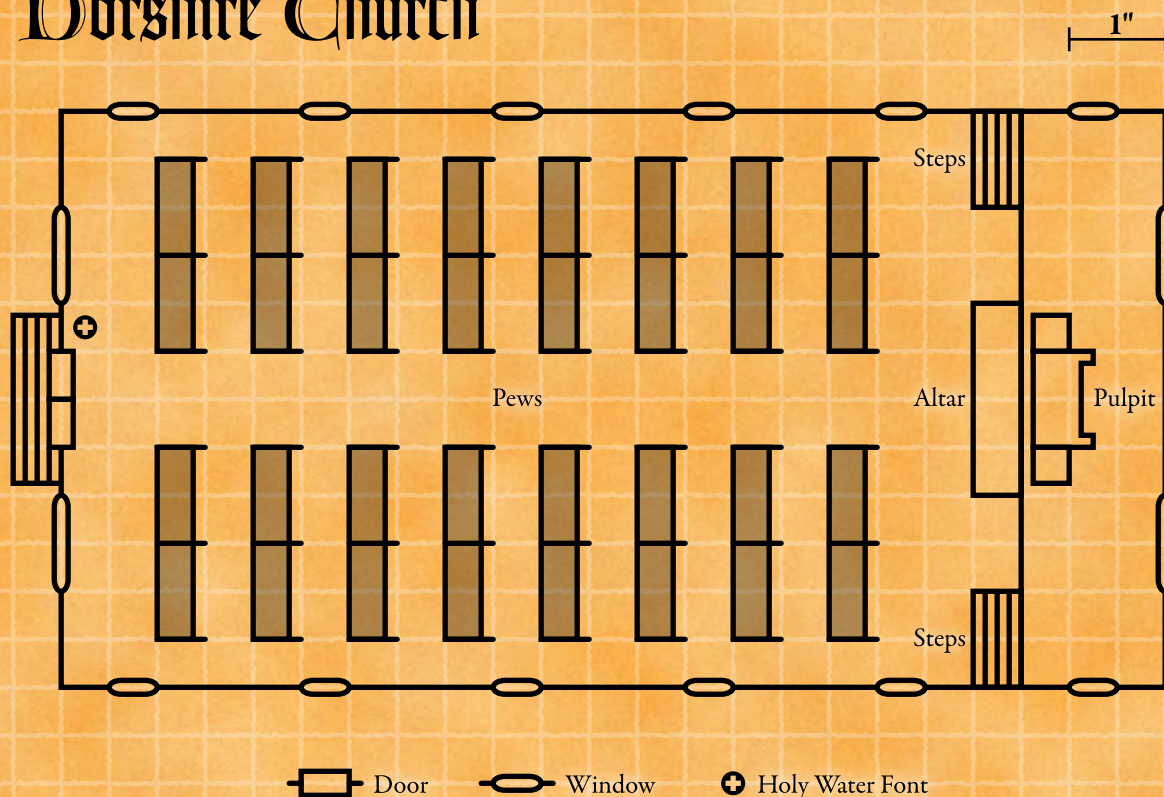
Regardless of the outcome at Brewer’s home, it’s likely the characters want to speak to the Reverend again. By this point, night has fallen and the majority of the village has adjourned to the church for the Reverend’s nightly prayer service.

Inside the church building, flickering light from candles reveals the townsfolk are all sitting quietly with their heads bowed, obviously engaged in silent prayer. Only one person is not praying when they enter, Reverend Jefferies. He stands at the pulpit looking out over the congregation and beaming with pride. He sees the party enter and greets them, oblivious to his own flock.

“Come in, come in! All are welcome here! Join us in humble prayer. Not only is it good for the soul of itself, but it is difficult to transgress against the Word while one is bowed in prayer.” He pauses briefly, clearly for dramatic effect, then continues. “If only more of our number had learned that sooner...”

At this point, a swarm of imps emerges from the shadowy recesses of the church hall. The creatures fall upon the congregation, each accusing its victim in a whispering voice of some sin or slight against a neighbor. One leaps at the Reverend, hissing, “Pride and lies!”

Dorshire Church



The imps take no notice of the heroes unless the party tries to defend the people. If left to their own devices, the imps inflict terrible wounds on the townsfolk, each corresponding to the wrong of which the victim stood accused. The Reverend is literally torn apart by his attacker.

Should the heroes move to protect the congregation, initially only the imps the characters directly interfere with attack them. Once the adventurers slay one of their number, however, the imps turn most of their attention onto the heroes. Each hero is then attacked by one of the creatures. The imp attacking the Reverend does not stop its assault on him, even if a hero attacks it directly.

If the heroes are successful and save the Reverend, he collapses to the floor, weeping. He admits his role in the affair.

“Mr. Webb was telling the truth all along. The witch leveled her curse only at Mr. Brewer and me. The imps came for me that first night, but I struck a deal with them. In return for sparing us, I offered them the right to punish any who sinned in Dorshire. I spoke out of fear, but I truly believed I could save you all by showing you the straight and narrow path, but now I see I was overwhelmed by my own pride. Sin is in the nature of man, even my own...”

If the Reverend was slain by the imps and Brewer is present, he tells his story to the town, adding that he believes the Reverend somehow traded the town for Brewer's and his own punishment.

Either way, the attack on the church service ends the curse on the town. Still, the townsfolk are angered almost beyond reason with the Reverend, and to a lesser

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

extent with Brewer. Only a Persuasion or Intimidation roll (-2) can prevent them from dragging the Reverend out and stoning him to death. Cooperative rolls are allowed on this attempt.

Even if they succeed in convincing the citizens to release the men, both Brewer and Reverend Jefferies are chased from Dorshire that night by the angry crowd.

♣ **Imps (3, plus 1 per hero):** See page 93.

♣ **Townfolk (15):** See Townfolk, page 98.

♣ **Reverend Jefferies:** See page 98.



HEROES AND VILLAINS

FOLLOWING are the statistics for other friends or foes found in this Savage Tale.

REVEREND HOWARD JEFFERIES

The Reverend Jefferies is a young man to hold such a position, even in an out-of-the-way town like Dorshire. Barely in his late twenties, he smiles often and keeps himself impeccably dressed. Observant heroes may notice a twinge of pride in the way he carries himself.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Guts d6, Knowledge (Religion) d10, Notice d6, Persuasion d8

Charisma: +2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Vow (Church of England), Yellow

Edges: Charismatic

Gear: Cross.

TOWNFOLK

The residents of Dorshire lead simple lives, whether as farmers, laborers or shop owners. Over the last generation or so, few forces have threatened the town or its routine.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d4, Knowledge (one trade) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d4

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances & Edges: —

Gear: Tools of the trade.



THE LIBER VORAGO

Of the myriad threats that abound in the Savage World of Solomon Kane, few are as insidious as the Liber Vorago. At first glance, the tome appears to be a collection of stories and legends, bound in an unusual leather. Closer examination reveals the cover is cured human skin and the pages some form of ancient parchment or even vellum. The text is written in Latin, curiously enough, given the apparent age of the book.

The tales within are startlingly accurate, often delving into great detail on horrible aspects of supernatural or diabolic entities. A careful reader can use the book to identify and even unearth weaknesses of specific unnatural creatures. As a result, the Liber Vorago is likely to appear quite useful, particularly to a wanderer on the Path of Kane.

However, the truth behind the origins of the document is far more sinister. Ages ago, a group of sorcerers fought a powerful demon, Ba'aloth, which had been loosed on the world as a result of their own arrogance. Unable to destroy the fiend, the magicians instead trapped it in a seemingly harmless corporeal form—that of a book. They then split the text into seven parts and dispersed it across the globe, thus intending to prevent it from freeing itself from enchantment.

The diabolic essence of the demon is laced inexorably through the text; in fact, it defines it. While a tremendous amount of occult knowledge is possessed within, so is the very soul of the monster it confines. Worse, the entity retains some of its sentience and power.

Once a person has taken ownership of the text, the demonic tome begins to exert a subtle but powerful influence over them.

At night, the owner's dreams are plagued by nightmares of terrible creatures and frightening events, hinting at a horrible fate which can only be averted by learning secrets contained in another fragment of the Liber Vorago. Conveniently, the dreams also provide the necessary clues to find the next piece of the book.

While most would set such a volume aside, the Liber Vorago does not like to be ignored. Those possessing it often awaken in the middle of the night, with the text in their lap and find their own fingers turning the pages. The knowledge documented within the vile accounts begins to seep into the possessor's mind unbidden, whether its carrier chooses to read its words or not.

Destroying or ridding oneself of the tome is difficult as well. Once the book has chosen an owner, that person finds it impossible to divest himself of it. The text may be burned, shredded, given away, sold, or simply tossed aside. However, the Liber Vorago always appears intact the next morning, lying next to its chosen owner when he awakes or suddenly turning up amongst his possessions.

OWNERSHIP

At first, possessing a copy of the Liber Vorago may seem like a godsend to a hero walking the Path of Kane. Although the tales contained in the tome are explicit and often unsettling, there is a wealth of knowledge available to a strong-willed reader.

An adventurer may attempt to plumb the text for occult or profane knowledge by making a Fear check. If she fails, she has to roll on the Fright Table. However, if she's successful, she gains a +1 bonus to a



THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

Knowledge (Occult) roll to identify a specific supernatural creature. On a raise, she learns a specific weakness of that creature. For each fragment of the text beyond the first, she gains an additional +1 bonus to the Knowledge (Occult) roll, but also a -1 to the Fear check.

However, the tome soon begins its campaign to bend its new owner to its will. Each night, the character is plagued by nightmares and quickly finds herself unable to gain a good night's sleep. At the beginning of each session, she must make a Spirit roll or receive one less benny than usual. For each fragment she's obtained beyond the first, she receives a -1 penalty to the Spirit roll.

Only by actively pursuing the next fragment of the Liber Vorago can she avoid this effect. It's up to you as the Game Master to determine when a hero is actively pursuing this goal and when she's just paying lip-service to it.

Once all seven parts of the text have been joined into a single volume, the fiend the book imprisons needs only one final step to be released from bondage—blood. The dreams now turn to convincing the owner to spill blood—her own or someone else's—onto the tome. At this point, there is no way to destroy the book, so the owner either must succumb or suffer the night terrors indefinitely. If she ever succumbs, the demon Ba'aloth is released to wreak havoc on the world once again!



DISPOSING OF THE LIBER VORAGO

The book occasionally allows an owner to gift it to another person, provided the entity judges the other individual to be a better servant to its needs. A young, foolhardy explorer is much more useful to the tome than a wizened scribe barely capable of mounting the stairs to his study, for example. And, in keeping with its diabolic origins, it always binds itself to an owner who steals it or takes it by force. In any of these cases, the former owner is freed from the nightmares by which the Liber Vorago torments its possessors.

The only way to destroy the book is by introducing it to another fragment of itself. When different pieces of the tome are brought in contact with each other, they begin to weave themselves together. This process takes less than a minute, but during that time, both pieces lose their previous invulnerability.

Setting the book afire appears to destroy the fragments. In reality, it only separates them once again and then transports them elsewhere in the world, but it does free the previous owners from their connections to them. Once the pieces have fully joined, however, the text becomes again indestructible and the newly joined volume chooses one of the owners to haunt once again, beginning the process anew.



BA'ALOTH, DEMON OF THE TOME

Once blood is spilled on the rejoined tome, this terrible demon bursts forth. Ba'aloth appears as an enormous, vaguely humanoid being. Its eyeless face is dominated by an enormous mouth surrounded by a mass of small, writhing tentacles. Grayish-green, membranous wings sprout from its back, but are merely vestigial, being far too weak to carry a being of this bulk aloft.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d12+2, Strength d12+4, Vigor d8

THE TOME AND THE PATH OF KANE

The Liber Vorago is clearly more than just a simple book or even just a useful magic item with a drawback. Including it into your campaign is likely to provide an ongoing subplot to the Path of Kane. A player afflicted with the diabolic volume is likely to soon become fixated on riding himself of it, which may seem to conflict with the Plot Point campaign. However, Ba'aloth itself is another of the great evils that N'Longa has gathered the wanderers to fight. Also, don't forget the book can serve as a handy plot device to point your heroes to their next adventure through its nightmarish visions.

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8

Charisma: +0

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 17 (2)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Thick calloused hide.
- **Bite:** Str+d8.
- **Fear (-2):** Anyone seeing this creature must make a Fear check (-2).
- **Gargantuan:** Heavy Armor. Attackers add +4 when attacking Ba'aloth due to the thing's immense size.
- **Hardy:** This creature does not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.
- **Size +9:** Ba'aloth stands over 40' tall.
- **Swallow:** When the demon hits with a raise, it swallows man-sized prey or smaller whole. The victim suffers 2d6 damage every round from the monster's crushing gullet and acidic bile. Armor does not protect against this damage. The only way to get out is to kill Ba'aloth. The demon does not gain the benefit of its armor against attacks from swallowed victims.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

- **Weakness (Artifacts):** The six artifacts obtained on the Path of Kane can ignore both Ba'aloth's Heavy Armor and its Armor rating. Against attacks from these weapons, the demon has Toughness 15.



SAVAGE TALE: BEDLAM

ONE of the heroes receives a brief note from one Harmonius Quill, who identifies himself as an antiquarian in London. If a character already has an ally, contact, or friend who fits this description, feel free to use that NPC instead. In the letter, Quill tells the adventurer that he has come across a tome that may be of interest to her.

THE LETTER

The heroes are approached by a courier shortly after reaching a city or port. The courier asks for one of the party by name and hands her a letter. The letter is sealed with wax and the exterior lists the traveler's name and the city (or port).

Cracking the seal, the reader finds a brief missive.

Dear Friend,

I have recently come into possession of a tome of lore quite ancient. It has been brought to my attention that this particular volume may be of assistance to you in your own endeavors. I dare speak no more of it via intermediaries. Please contact me in person at my residence on 23 Burching Lane in London.

H. Quill

The letter was delivered to the courier less than a day ago and has no other knowledge about the sender.

THE MISSING ANTIQUARIAN

Should the heroes follow up on Quill's request and visit his London home, they find it to be a small scribe's shop on a fairly busy street. The front door is closed and locked. Knocks, even yells, go unanswered, however, after a few moments, a neighbor emerges from next door.

"You looking for Harmonius Quill? A couple of nights ago, I heard a commotion coming from the back of his shop. I looked out my rear window—I live above my shop, same as Quill—and saw three men hauling him out of the back door—two of them nearly giants! I yelled at them, but the third man said they'd been sent for him from a hospital. Said he'd gone mad or something! Quill seemed like a sane enough fellow, but even all tied up he was thrashing hard enough to be a lunatic."

Should the party check, a nearby alley leads to the rear door to Quill's shop. Even a brief glance confirms that the lock to the door has been broken by brute force.

Inside, the shop is a mess. Furniture is upended, shelves overturned, and books scattered across the floor. A large desk sits near the front of the shop. An inkwell has spilled across it, ruining numerous pages that Quill was apparently transcribing. Searching the downstairs shop turns up nothing indicating why the man contacted the heroes or why he was apparently abducted.

QUILL'S JOURNAL

A small staircase leads to Quill's living quarters on the second floor of the building. This area has been tossed as thoroughly as the downstairs, although here it is more obviously the result of someone thoroughly searching rather than as the result of a scuffle. Drawers are pulled out, shelves cleared, and so forth. While there are several older books in Quill's residence, there are none that seem particularly of interest to any of the characters.

However, on a Notice roll (–2), one of the wanderers discovers a small, plain book that Quill was using as a journal. In it he details obtaining a strangely bound book from a ship's master. Curiously, Quill notes, although the trader found the book somewhere in the Far East, it is penned in Latin. The scribe does not detail the contents of the book, but there are several passages of interest in his notes.

"I will not record the name of this tome, as I fear the consequences of the written word with respect to this blasphemous volume.

"Although we have never met, I am certain I should contact [insert hero's name here] regarding this book. Still, for the life of me, I'm not sure why..."

"The dreams have become ever stronger. Perhaps I should consult with Dr. Tyne. He is well-versed in these matters."

LOCATING QUILL

Following up on Quill's whereabouts is fairly easy, assuming the travelers ask the right questions. A Streetwise roll finds the most likely place a lunatic would be taken is to Bethlehem Hospital, a place better known to the populace as "Bedlam." It lies just outside Bishops Gate on the north side of the city.

If the heroes found Quill's journal, another Streetwise roll (-2) identifies Dr. Tyne as the Keeper overseeing Bedlam. He's regarded as a bit of an odd bird by those among the general populace who've heard of him. Canvassing the neighborhood around Quill's shop grants an additional Streetwise roll (-2). If successful, the adventurers learn that the scribe was visited on at least a few occasions by a man who well may have been a doctor, but no one knows the man's name.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Harmonius Quill came into possession of a fragment of the Liber Vorago. The book quickly recognized the aging scribe was of little use to it and pushed the man to seek out a more suitable owner, one who was capable of joining it to other parts of itself. Driven by visions provided by the demonic tome, Quill contacted the heroes.

Shortly after sending the missive to the heroes, Quill sought the advice of an acquaintance of his, Dr. Tyne. Unfortunately, years of working in the cacophony and lunacy of Bedlam has made the doctor quite mad. As a result of his delusions, Tyne became fascinated by the occult, so when Quill approached him with his concerns about the Liber Vorago, Tyne attempted to convince

the scribe to give it to him. Quill refused, so Tyne returned with two of the inmates from Bedlam and took it by force, abducting the scholar at the same time.

BEDLAM

Bethlem Hospital is on Bishopsgate Street, which exits the city walls via the Bishops Gate. At one time, it was a priory for the Order of the Star of Bethlehem but in the 14th century it became a hospital. Now, it is dedicated entirely to housing the insane.

"Care" is not an appropriate word for the treatment received at Bedlam. In fact, its residents aren't referred to as patients, but rather inmates. It is a place of hopelessness and despair. There is no expectation that any committed to the hospital will improve; they are committed and then often forgotten.

In the time of Solomon Kane, mental illness is woefully misunderstood. Treatment within Bedlam is often thinly disguised torture. Some of the inmates are forced to wear metal helmets or masks for weeks, months, or even years at a time. Others are strapped to reinforced chairs and spun daily until incapacitated. Those who cannot control their hands are manacled to walls or floors and the particularly tenacious are forced to lie in coffin-sized cages. Forced dunkings, brandings, and even maimings are not unheard of here.

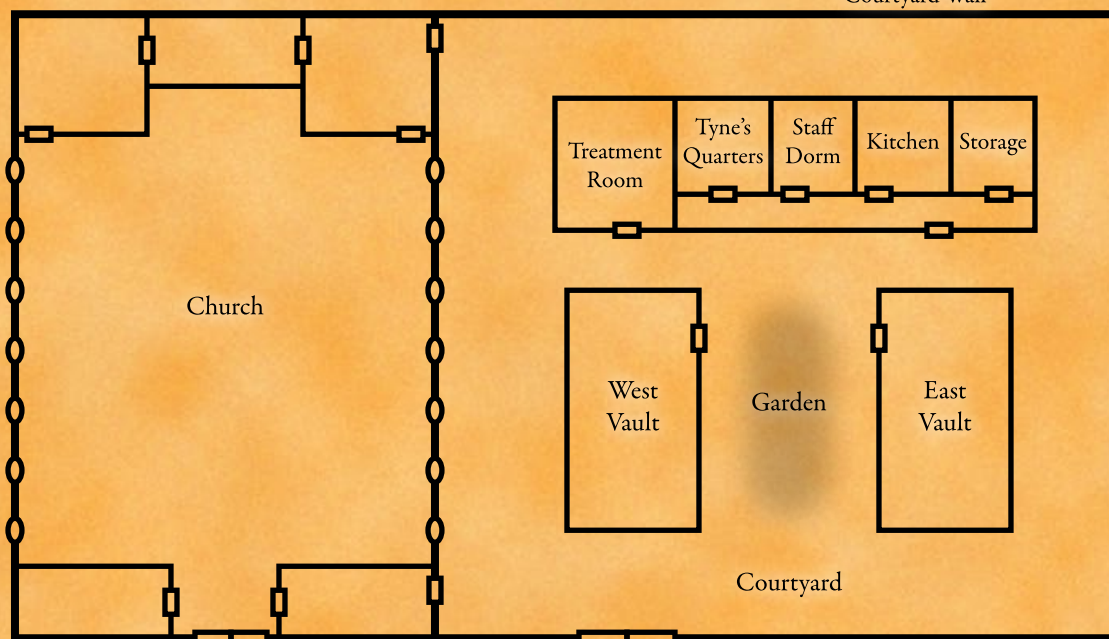
The hospital is actually composed of several buildings, the largest of which is a church. Attached to the eastern side of the church is a walled courtyard that holds the living quarters for the inmates as well as a small garden. The wall is 10' high, but two gates provide access to the courtyard without passing through the church.

TREATMENT ROOM

This is where Dr. Tyne conducts his treatments on patients. There are manacles on the walls, a table with restraint straps, a dunking vat, a set of branding irons, and other accoutrements that are more at home in an Inquisition torture chamber than a hospital.

Bethlem Hospital (Bedlam)

1"



DR. TYNE'S LIVING QUARTERS

This fair-sized room is where the good doctor sleeps and studies his medical and occult texts. There is a wide array of unusual items, including bleached skulls, shamanistic fetishes, and jars of unidentifiable creatures in formaldehyde. A Notice roll (-2) finds Quill's fragment of the Liber Vorago secreted behind a drawer in Tyne's writing desk.

STAFF DORMITORY

This open sleeping area housed the hospital staff. Now, it serves as sleeping quarters to the lunatics who work as Tyne's assistants. During the day, there is usually a single madman in this room. At night, four of them are asleep here while a fifth patrols the grounds.

♣ **Assistants (4 or 1):** See page 107.

KITCHEN

A large, unsanitary room filled with a variety of pots, pans, and utensils. The sinks

sit half-full of stagnant water, and several dishes and pans have rotting food in them. At meal times, two of Tyne's assistants are here preparing food.

♣ **Assistants (2—see above):** See page 107.

STORAGE

Bed sheets, lumber, and other common items are kept here.

WEST VAULT

The least unstable of Bedlam's patients are kept here. The windows are not barred, but the door is locked from the outside after dark. There are currently ten patients in this room. They do not attack but do defend themselves.

♣ **Lunatics (10):** See page 107.

EAST VAULT

The worst of the madmen living in the hospital are usually restrained here. The windows to this stone building are barred

and the door is usually locked. Since Tyne lost his sanity, they are no longer restrained and roam freely throughout the open area—with the exception of Quill, who is kept manacled to the wall.

🐉 **Lunatics (8):** See page 107.

🐉 **Harmonius Quill:** See page 107.

GARDEN

Situated between the two patient vaults, the garden was once a well-tended distraction from the insanity surrounding it. Now, it is largely untended and becoming overgrown with weeds.

CHURCH

This old house of worship seldom sees any visitors with the exception of the few patients from Bedlam that attend the rare holiday service. The screaming of lunatics from the adjacent hospital long ago drove away any sane parishners.

DAYTIME VISITS

Although the courtyard is gated, the gates are not barred during the daytime. Some of the less severely ill patients are even granted licenses to beg on the streets of the city. Visitors can simply walk through the gate during daylight hours, although this is not encouraged.

The cacophony of Bedlam is so terrible most claim that if one is not insane when they are condemned to this place, they must surely go mad during their tenure. When the heroes enter, they are met at the gate by a pair of large men who appear slightly “off” themselves. They ask the characters their business at the hospital.

Virtually any answer results in the men leading the characters to the rear building where they meet Dr. Tyne. The doctor is wandering the garden between the two inmate vaults, observing the activities of a few of the inmates and taking notes when the party arrives. He stops when the travelers are introduced and welcomes them to his hospital.

If asked about Harmonius Quill, the doctor gives a brief synopsis of his diagnosis of the man’s condition.

“Clearly Master Quill has been losing his somewhat tenuous grip on sanity for some time now. He has become obsessed with some unusual and disturbing dreams that he has been experiencing. After several of his neighbors complained about his erratic and oft dangerous behavior, we took steps to protect both his own safety and that of the community.”

Doctor Tyne denies knowledge of any unusual book, claiming that it was likely part of Quill’s delusions. He does not answer any questions regarding the scholar’s current treatment, saying only that he has the man’s best interests at heart. If pressed on the issue, Tyne does admit to having met Quill in the past but plays down their relationship, saying that he had consulted with the man on a few legal documents he needed transcribed.

If the party becomes belligerent or attacks Tyne, his assistants—actually vicious inmates he now uses as minions—immediately come to his aid. Tyne, or one of his assistants if he is unable, rushes to the East Vault and releases the inmates kept there as well. All of these fight to the death; they are insane, after all!

🐉 **Dr. Tyne:** See page 106.

🐉 **Assistants (5):** See page 107.

🐉 **Lunatics (8):** See page 107.

AFTER DARK

At nightfall, the gates to the asylum are barred from the inside. Tyne and four of his assistants retire to their living quarters after dinner. A single assistant patrols the grounds with a torch all night. All visitors are turned away, although patients are admitted. The courtyard is lit only by what light bleeds out through the windows of the vaults and staff buildings.

The doors to the vaults are locked from the outside, but the locks open with a simple Lockpicking roll. Patients inside the East Vault are not restrained and ignore anyone who enters as long as they are not assaulted. Likewise, patients inside the West Vault wander loose inside the open sleeping room, but violently assault anyone other than staff who enters. Fortunately for any intruders, these inmates are always quite noisy, so the sound of any fighting is ignored by the staff.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

THE BORGIA TWINS

This Savage Tale provides another route to introduce the party to the Borgia Twins (page 8), albeit a more circumspect one. Bedlam and its residents are perfectly suited to the unhinged brother-sister pair.

If you choose to use them in this tale, Delia's poisons are responsible for Tyne's descent into madness. Later, she passes along a similar concoction for the doctor to use against Quill. In this case, Quill is actually driven insane, at least temporarily.

The twins not only visit the asylum frequently for amusement and "artistic" purposes, they also have been using their new contact in Tyne to recruit henchman from among the more violent—but pliable—inmate population. All of this occurs behind the scenes, but Tyne keeps a record of it in a journal of his own. Or, if you prefer, you may have the wanderers actually observe the Twins visit the grounds of Bedlam. This introduction may make the encounter in the Savage Tale Unexpected Guests (page 10) more meaningful to the party when they finally confront the pair.

Quill is manacled to a wall inside the West Vault. Unless the characters have obtained a set of keys from Tyne or his assistants, it requires two more Lockpicking rolls to free him.

If the assistant spots any heroes sneaking into the hospital after dark, he immediately calls out an alarm and attacks. Tyne and the other assistants arrive four rounds after the man sounds the alarm. At that point, the battle proceeds as noted in Daytime Visits (above).

🗡️ **Dr. Tyne:** See page 106.

🗡️ **Assistants (5):** See page 107.

🗡️ **Lunatics (8):** See page 107.

RESCUING THE SCHOLAR

Assuming the party succeeds in saving Quill (or another NPC, if you chose to substitute a different one), all is not necessarily well in London. If the adventurers took a brute force approach in their endeavors and anyone witnessed them, they may find themselves hunted by the city authorities. Dr. Tyne held the post of Keeper legitimately and there is little evidence that he was acting improperly. His methods weren't that far from accepted treatment of the mentally ill. Even Quill's testimony is likely to offer little help as he was technically an inmate of the hospital. How this resolves is up to you, based on what actions your players take.

Quill is quite upset by his stay in Bedlam. He not only suffered abuse at the hands of Tyne, but also several days chained to a wall in a room full of lunatics. His own sanity is, quite understandably, in jeopardy. As to why he contacted the hero in the first place, he can offer no rational explanation, only that he had startlingly clear dreams depicting the adventurer.

If the group retrieved the Liber Vorago from Tyne's quarters, Quill offers it to the traveler about whom he dreamed. And, since the tome manipulated this meeting in the first place, it allows itself to pass to its new owner...



HEROES AND VILLAINS

FOLLOWING are the statistics for other friends or foes found in this Savage Tale.



DR. TYNE (MAD DOCTOR)

The doctor is a man of average height and appearance, if perhaps a little thin for his frame. He is in late middle age, but his body is wiry and surprisingly fit. In battle, Tyne constantly engages his foe in a battle of words as well as weapon, seeking to gain any advantage possible.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Healing d10, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Knowledge (Science) d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Taunt d10

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Arrogant, Delusional (Major—obsessed with insanity)

Edges: Improved Close Fighting, Level Headed, No Mercy, Really Dirty Fighter, Strong Willed.

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), keys to Bedlam locks.

Special Abilities:

- **Head Games:** Dr. Tyne may make a single Test of Will each round as a free action.

ASSISTANT

These men are some of the most brutal and violent of the inmates. Tyne selected them to replace the original staff based on their physical prowess. They are all raving combatants capable of sustaining far more damage than seemingly possible for a human.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Charisma: -2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Delusional (Major), Outsider

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Frenzy, Iron Jaw, Improved Nerves of Steel

Gear: Axe (Str+d6) or Knife (Str+d4), keys to Bedlam locks.

Special Abilities:

- **Berserk:** Assistants go berserk (as per edge) when they enter any fight. They don't need to roll to see if they enter berserk, but also cannot stop this state, unless the fight is over or they are unconscious
- **Bite:** Str
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.

LUNATIC

These poor souls are the average inmate of Bedlam. Not in full control of their facilities, they easily fell prey to Dr. Tyne's manipulations.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d8+2, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6+2, Intimidation d8, Notice d6

Charisma: -2

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 3; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Delusional (Major), Outsider

Edges: Sweep

Gear: Club (Str+d4) or knife (Str+d4).

Special Abilities:

- **Berserk:** Those poor souls are in the state of constant berserk, as per the Edge. Their Traits and Abilities already reflect this enraged state.
- **Bite:** Str
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.

HARMONICS QUILL

Quill is an aging scholar who's never known a day of adventure in his life. His fingers are habitually stained blue and black from his inks and his hair is usually slightly unkempt

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Guts d6, Knowledge (Occult) d6, Knowledge (Greek) d8, Knowledge (Latin) d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Elderly, Quirk (mumbles to self)

Edges: Scholar (Latin, Greek)

Gear: Writing utensils.

MANDRAKE

MOST know the mandrake as a type of plant whose roots resembled a shriveled and twisted man. Many legends exist about the mandrake and its roots. Some claim that they only grow under trees where murderers have been hanged, while others say they emit a scream when pulled from the ground that can strike a man dead. Each of these myths is based in a touch of reality. For although most mandrake roots are nothing more than passive matter, there are some that possess both power and sentience.

When a particularly vile man dies, a portion of his essence sometimes escapes passing on to its punishment in the afterlife. Mandrake roots have a unique ability to absorb that essence, taking on a form of sentient life. As a result, mandrakes are most often found at the scenes of hangman's gibbets or other execution sites, but they may spring up anywhere a particularly evil person has died.

Not surprisingly as these creatures are formed from the spirits of the wicked, mandrakes are malevolent creatures, prone to mischief and destruction. Fortunately, unless these strange creatures are disturbed, most seem content to remain buried at the site of their creation.

A live mandrake root, if captured, can be used in all manner of alchemies and potions, some containing great potency. This makes live mandrakes even more rare since sorcerers and magicians constantly hunt them for use in their dark craft.



MANDRAKE

AMANDRAKE resembles a miniature human made out of vegetable matter. Its features are crudely formed, however, with dimples for eyes, a small bump for a nose, and a hole for a mouth. Its flesh is a uniform reddish-brown in color and heavily wrinkled.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities:

- **Keening:** Once per day, as an action, mandrakes can emit a horrible screech—which it normally does when pulled forcibly from the ground. Anyone hearing it must make a Spirit roll or become Shaken. This counts as a damaging attack, so it can cause a Wound if the character is already Shaken.
- **Leap:** Mandrakes can leap up to 6" in any direction.
- **Plant:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; Called Shots do no extra damage; immune to disease, Fear, and Intimidation.
- **Size -2:** A mandrake is tiny, perhaps the size of a potato.
- **Small:** Attackers suffer -2 to attack rolls against the mandrake.



SAVAGE TALE: A FAMILY AFFAIR

While on the road, the wanderers encounter Lilianna, a woman of surpassing beauty, traveling the same direction. She enjoins the party in lively conversation with the adventurers. She is very pleasant, frequently complimenting the heroes on particular traits without seeming ingratiating. After winning over at least one of the characters, she asks if she might travel in the group's company to their next destination, as she fears bandits—or worse—should she continue alone.

A GENTLEMAN OF MEANS

Lilianna, of course, is no ordinary woman. She is a powerful sorceress and skilled alchemist who has been using mandrake root to achieve perpetual youth. She is currently traveling the countryside gathering as much of the plant as possible. She is also being pursued by a rival, a necromancer by the name of Fergus.

And it just so happens that Fergus is Lilianna's brother. He also has created a formula that prolongs his life. Unfortunately, it does not extend his youth, leaving him feeble and bowed by a century of existence. He has tried time and again to convince his sister to give him her formula, but she delights in his suffering and refuses.

The sorceress keeps all of this information hidden, of course. Instead, she does her best to charm everyone in the party. She acts impressed at the wanderers and any tales of adventure they may share. She does allude at some point to having run afoul of a "villain" in the not-too-distant past who she fears may be pursuing her.

At some point, she targets the member of the party who seems most sympathetic to her, confiding in that character that she is dying from a terrible curse and only particular herbal concoctions can cure it. She claims to be embarrassed about her affliction and asks the traveler to keep the information private.

FERGUS'S REVENGE

Fergus first attacks his sister by sending intermediaries. He sends in a few hired swords to test the mettle of the party. The attack might happen anywhere from a campsite to an inn room at your choice. The bandits are



THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

under orders to take Lilianna alive, but have no such restrictions on dealing with the rest of the group.

If the heroes capture any of the men, they know nothing of their employer beyond the fact the man wore a sackcloth mask and spoke with a whispering voice. After the attack, Lilianna feigns horror, confessing that the villain she spoke of earlier is actually her “wicked” brother.

“I was not entirely truthful earlier. The villain of whom I spoke is none other than my own brother. When we were young, I was always favored over him because where nature was kind and blessed me with a fair appearance, he was instead afflicted with a burden of deformity. I tried to earn his love by insisting he be included in everything, providing him gifts for every one I was given, and so forth, but in the end he hated me all the more for what he saw as pity. Now, his hatred has grown to the point he wishes me dead!”

Lilianna even weaves her half-truths together, claiming that Fergus is behind her illness. She says that left untreated, it will leave her as scarred and twisted as her brother. She begs for the party’s protection until she can reach safety in a city a few days’ travel away.

Bandits (3, plus 1 per hero): See page 112.

SORCERESS REVEALED

Sometime after the first attack, one of the characters catches Lilianna pulling up a mandrake root. If the wanderers are traveling near the wilderness, then the person who rolls highest in a Notice roll (or whoever is on watch) detects Lilianna leaving in the middle of the night to a private location where she extracts the root. If the party is constantly in urban areas, then the hero spots Lilianna sneaking out of the inn in which they’re staying to dig up her mandrake beneath a hangman’s gibbet in the town square.

Witnessing this event is horrifying. Dug from the ground, the mandrake resembles a tiny man, whose naked, shriveled form quivers in a sickly fashion. It struggles against the sorceress’ hand and its crude mouth

contorts into a grimace. It emits a terrible keening noise and those hearing this scream must make a Spirit roll or become Shaken.

Unless stopped, Lilianna proceeds to use a knife to slice the head off of the creature. If a character immediately states he is intervening, then draw initiative. Otherwise, she cuts off the creature’s head while it thrashes and screams in a manner both pitiful and terrifying. Once done, the creature’s body trembles like a beheaded chicken, before lying still.

Whether she kills the mandrake or not, Lilianna stands and holds up her hands in surrender. She attempts to explain that mandrakes are evil, unnatural creatures and no one should mourn them. As for why she is out finding mandrakes, Lilianna explains that she is gathering the necessary components for her medical concoction.

FERGUS’S RETURN

Whether the wanderer believes Lilianna or not, Fergus chooses this moment to attempt his second attack. This time, he arrives himself, bringing with him a small number of human bandits.

Fergus, unlike his sister, is foul to look upon. He wears his customary sackcloth mask, but even so, his deformities are obvious. He bears a hunched back and his flesh is rotting in patches all over his body. When he speaks, he sputters and slobbers, because his purple tongue constantly lolls out of his mouth.

Fergus holds his men back as he rants at Lilianna and her protectors. Since it is possible that the entire party is not present, during his brief speech allow any absent heroes Notice rolls to realize something is amiss and rush to their comrades’ assistance.

“Lilianna, you hateful wench! All I asked was that you provide me your secret and this could have been avoided. What good is eternal life if I must live it as a disfigured monster!” He turns to any characters present. “And you—who are you to fight for a witch who would damn her own brother? You should aid me instead and together we could rid the world of her selfish, black heart!”

Lilianna responds to his outburst even-temperedly, also speaking to the heroes.

"I have never harmed any of you. Have I not been a pleasant companion? Perhaps I wasn't truthful, but in this time of inquisitions anyone who practices the lost arts—even for good—must hide it from plain sight."

By this time, allow any of the party not initially present to reach the scene. A traveler can make a Notice roll (–4) to determine which of the two is being truthful. Lilianna is a skilled deceiver. She has been careful to avoid telling a direct lie and she uses her personal charisma to tremendous effect as well, so catching her is difficult.

The wanderers now have a choice to make. Do they side with Lilianna, Fergus, or neither? As they ponder this, Fergus' other allies, a group of zombies he has reanimated from the last group of bandits he sent against the heroes, shamle out of the darkness. Regardless of the heroes' opinion of Lilianna at this point, clearly Fergus is no saint either!

Should the wanderers side with Lilianna, she is appropriately grateful and offers them each a dose of witch's favor (see above). She may even become an ally (albeit one of questionable morals) in future endeavors. She explains that she uses mandrake extract to prolong her life and keep a youthful appearance. However, she claims, it only harms mandrakes, which are wicked beings anyway. (The process also requires the blood of a virgin, but she omits this particular bit of information.)

Should the wanderers side with Fergus, Lilianna surrenders to her brother, offering the secret to prolonged youth. Fergus will readily agree to this bargain. At this point, the party has yet another decision. Do they allow this exchange to take place? If so, both Fergus and Lilianna part ways after the event. Lilianna remains pleasant to the wanderers, though she provides no further aid to them.

Finally, the heroes may choose to side with neither or even fight both. Remaining out of the conflict entirely ends up with Lilianna taken captive by her brother. Attacking them both causes Lilianna and Fergus to team up.

ALCHEMY AND MANDRAKES

Mandrake can be used for a variety of alchemical purposes and are highly sought after by practitioners of that art. Some remedies require special or rare ingredients like the finger bones of a thief, the sweat of an honest man, the milk of a witch, or the eye of a supernatural being. Examples include:

- **Death potion:** The imbiber must make a Vigor roll –2 or become Incapacitated until treated.
- **Love potion:** The imbiber must make a Spirit roll –2 or succumb to its effects.
- **Curse or blessing potion:** The drinker is affected by a boost/lower trait spell.
- **Witch's Favor:** The character must inhale mandrake ash and succeed on a Vigor roll. If she does, she receives an additional benny, but it must be spent before the next moonrise or it is lost.

Due to the dark origins of the root, each such concoction carries a risk. Every time a character consumes a mandrake-based potion, he must make a Spirit roll. There is a cumulative –1 penalty for every other potion of that type he has imbibed—ever. Failure indicates that the drinker begins developing strange predilections, often based on death or graveyards. In game terms, the character gains a Delusion (Minor) of a sort determined by you.

🐉 **Fergus:** See page 112.

🐉 **Lilianna:** See page 112.

🐉 **Bandits (1 per 2 heroes):** See page 112.

🐉 **Zombies (1 per hero):** See page 112.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE



HEROES AND VILLAINS

FOLLOWING are the statistics for other friends or foes found in this Savage Tale.



LILIANNA

Lilianna is a beautiful woman with raven-black hair and skin only slightly darker than porcelain.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d10, Knowledge (Alchemy) d10, Knowledge (Occult) d6, Magick d10, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Taunt d6

Charisma: +4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Arrogant, Habit (Major—mandrake youth potion)

Edges: Arcane Background (Sorcery), Strong Caster, Very Attractive

Gear: Dagger (Str+1d4), numerous alchemical ingredients.

Powers: *Boost/lower trait, curse, deflection, dispel, fear, obscure, spirit ward, summon beast, summon spirit, viper weapon.*

Treat Lilianna as a Veteran character.



FERGUS

Fergus is as ugly as his sister is beautiful. He is aged far beyond normal human years and usually hides this behind a cloth mask. Fergus does not truly wish his sister dead, but is willing to kill her to obtain the secret of lasting youth.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Alchemy) d6, Knowledge (Occult) d10, Magick d10, Notice d6, Taunt d8

Charisma: -4

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Elderly, Mean, Ugly

Edges: Arcane Background (Sorcery), Strong Caster

Gear: Knife (Str+1d4).

Powers: *Animate band, boost/lower trait, curse, deflection, fear, grave speak, puppet, spirit ward, summon spirit, zombie.*

Treat Fergus as a Veteran character.

FERGUS' BANDITS

These men aren't the most capable fighters, but they are willing to take up arms for anyone who'll put gold in their purses.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: -2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: Greedy, Mean

Edges: —

Gear: Leather armor (+1), various weapons.

ZOMBIES

Fergus raised these from the bandits that attacked the characters to augment his human thugs.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice, d4, Stealth d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str.
- **Fearless:** Zombies are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; Called shots do no extra damage.

PEDRO DE RAMELLO

BORN the youngest son of a minor Spanish noble, Pedro de Ramello stood to inherit precious little wealth and even less land. Rather than seek his fortune in the military, de Ramello instead chose to enter the Church and make his name there. The young Spaniard quickly found that while interpretation of Church law and doctrine fascinated him, he had little interest in ministering to the masses or saving the lost. De Ramello naturally gravitated toward the Inquisition as he rose through the ranks of the church.

While his skills and experience qualify him to sit as a judge or perhaps even hold the rank of an inquisitor-general presiding over an entire tribunal, de Ramello instead prefers to serve as a prosecutor of the accused. Unlike some of his peers who hold a misguided belief that they are somehow saving the souls of sinners and heretics, de Ramello has no concern for the disposition of the souls of those placed before him. He is driven by an obsessive dedication to the letter of the law and sees each trial as merely a way in which to demonstrate his own tremendous knowledge and intellect. De Ramello considers each “heretic” he exposes a personal success rather than a service to either God or the Church.

Although he was trained by expert swordsmen in his youth and remains an accomplished fencer, his position and nearly limitless authority are what make him a formidable foe. He seldom engages in combat, instead relying on his status to protect him. And in the rare instances where his position in the Church does not dissuade an aggressor, he is seldom without the presence of soldiers assigned to his tribunal by the Spanish throne. Any character foolish

enough to assault de Ramello quickly finds himself an enemy of both the Church and the Spanish crown.



PEDRO DE RAMELLO

De Ramello's obsession with order is evident in his appearance. He maintains himself immaculately, from his red robes to his impeccably groomed hair and moustache.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Law) d12, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Knowledge (Religion) d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Riding d6, Taunt d6

Charisma: +2/0 (Jingoistic)

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Arrogant, Jingoistic (Minor), Vow (Major: Uphold the Inquisition)

Edges: Block, Connections, Hard to Kill, Noble, Riposte, Scholar (Law & Religion)

Gear: Rapier (Str+d4, Parry +1), crucifix.



SAVAGE TALE: A MATTER OF GUILT

Traveling through a village on the Spanish coast, the heroes are approached by Eleonora Santiago, a young woman who seeks their assistance. Her aging aunt, Imelda, was seized by the Inquisition earlier that week, accused of witchcraft. While few in the small community believe she is guilty, no one will

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

speaking up for her for fear of being labeled a heretic as well. She begs the travelers to help prove her aunt is not a witch.

THE COUNSEL FOR THE DEFENSE

Eleonora sends the party to speak with Carlos Valencia. Valencia was appointed to act as an advocate on Imelda's behalf before the tribunal. Eleonora hopes that the wanderers can help him prepare his defense.

Valencia is a young man who recently completed seminary. He also has a background in law and elected to join the Inquisition because he honestly believes its methods save heretics—including Protestants and Jews—from eternal damnation. In spite of his years, however, he is canny enough to realize that not everyone brought before the tribunals is guilty. And he believes Imelda is one of the innocent.

"I am glad for your assistance in this matter. It is rare for any to step forward to help the accused, even more so for complete strangers. This speaks well of the goodness of your own souls. Having seen Imelda stand before the questioners, I do not believe she was untruthful in her professions of innocence."

"Unfortunately, the prosecutor, Signor de Ramello, is one of our greatest prosecutors and seldom fails to prove the accused's guilt—regardless, perhaps, of its actual existence. The Inquisition has appointed me to stand for Imelda's defense, but I have few resources. Also, I am not as...experienced in these matters as Signor de Ramello. Therefore, I welcome any aid you may be able to offer."

Valencia shares with the adventurers what evidence has been provided to him. As is often the case, the accusations are vague and the evidence is incomplete. The young advocate explains this is to protect the witnesses against any recriminations, but it gives him precious little to work with as well.



The Evidence

He tells the party there are two ways to overcome the charges against Imelda: disprove the evidence against her, and find friendly witnesses to speak on her behalf. There are four primary pieces of evidence presented against Imelda. These are various items associated with witchcraft taken from her home, strange lights seen near her residence, a landowner who claims his cattle died as a result of a curse, and a witness who claims he heard Imelda pronounce that curse on his neighbor.

He has four days to prepare his defense. During that time, he asks the party to help discredit the evidence against her and find other members of the village to testify for her.

Each piece of evidence below has a number of facts associated with it. This number is listed in parentheses at the beginning of each section and noted in the text. These facts are gathered during the character's investigations. Keep track of how many of these facts the players are able to uncover as they play an important role in determining whether Imelda is found guilty or released. Additionally, as they investigate the evidence, the characters are also likely to discover witnesses of use to the defense.

WITCHCRAFT TRAPPINGS (1)

These consist almost entirely of a collection of herbs which was seized from Imelda's home. Most were taken from inside the house, but a (normal) mandrake root was found nearby as well. De Ramello has claimed that she was using these in preparing her spells and potions.

A Common Knowledge roll identifies those taken from the house as also being used for legitimate cooking purposes. A character who makes a Knowledge (Science) or Knowledge (Alchemy) roll knows that mandrake roots grow natively in this region. Valencia acknowledges both of these as true, but says that in the eyes of the tribunal, those facts alone are not enough to disprove their use in witchcraft.

Fact: Should the adventurers delve further into the matter of the herbs, a Streetwise

INQUISITION HEARINGS

Unlike the secular trials we are familiar with in today's society, the tribunals of the Inquisition were far less structured. There were no formal trials as we know them. Instead, a hearing usually consisted of a series of audiences with the tribunals during which the prosecution and defense each made their cases. Prisoner interrogations were often a part of the process and in many cases even proceeded the jurists' presentations.

While the Inquisition allowed for an advocate to represent the accused, the advocate himself often walked a fine line between defending his client and decrying any heresy of which she stood accused. These advocates—also known as *abogados de los presos*—were considered officials of the Inquisition by the time of Solomon Kane.

Complicating their efforts were elaborate protections in place for any hostile witnesses. It was not uncommon for the tribunal to not only keep the identity of such witnesses secret, but also to withhold from the defense any evidence which might identify said witnesses. As a result, the defense often found itself working without even knowing of what the prisoner stood accused and by whom!

roll reveals that nearly 2 out of 3 households in the village have the same herbs in their kitchens as well. Furthermore, a traveler making a Survival roll made while searching the surrounding countryside finds nearly a dozen mandrakes dispersed across the area. The heroes must uncover both the commonness of the herbs and the frequency of the mandrakes to claim this fact.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

STRANGE LIGHTS (1)

One of the secret witnesses claimed to have spotted strange lights near Imelda's home during nights of the new moon. The most recent sighting was approximately one month ago. The lights seemed to waver and dance of their own accord. Imelda herself admitted to having seen the lights, but could not explain them to the inquisitors when put to the question.

Fact: Imelda's home is two miles from town and lies atop a bluff overlooking the sea. Investigating the area near the bluff finds the stub of a torch within sight of the house, but a few hundred yards away. A further search and successful Tracking roll (-2) uncovers a set of wagon tracks leading to a crack near the edge of the cliff. The crack leads to the base and a Notice roll finds a set of pulleys and rope nearby. The tracks appear to be at least several weeks old.

There are no other residences near Imelda's home. Armed with this information, a Streetwise roll (-2) identifies the likely witness who claimed spotting the lights—a local shepherd by the name of Santos Herrera. If an adventurer makes an Intimidation or Persuasion roll, Herrera admits that he saw the lights as he sat watch over his flock. He was frightened by the lights and never approached them. If asked, he agrees that it is possible they were caused by torches, although they seemed to stay mainly in one place and moved erratically.

Most importantly, should any heroes think to follow up on it, checking with the local constable reveals that Imelda herself reported these lights to him many times over the last few years. While he looked into the matter, he found nothing.

DEAD CATTLE (2)

Fact: Several cattle owned by a local landowner died of mysterious circumstances recently. A Streetwise roll leads the party to a local farmer by the name of Feliz Roca. Roca tells the heroes that to his knowledge only one person has lost cattle in the last year, a local merchant named Fabio Valdez. Roca adds that he was not surprised by this, either.

"I told the Signor when he purchased the cows that they were sickly and unlikely to survive. He did not seem particularly worried and told me to mind my own farm and let him mind his. Signor Valdez is a successful merchant, but I do not think he knows much about cows."

Fact: If they look further into Valdez, with an Investigation or another Streetwise roll, the travelers learn that Valdez owns property that is adjacent to Imelda's and near the bluffs. The merchant is known to trade far and wide across the region and maintains an establishment in the village primarily to warehouse his goods, but does sell items from there as well.

If the wanderers visit the merchant's shop, they find it remarkably well stocked for such an establishment in a relatively small rural village. In addition to local products and clothing, they find a few ornately carved statuettes, some knives of unusual design (from the Far East), and a finely carved chest. A hero who makes a Notice roll (-2) finds a small heraldic design on the chest. A Knowledge (Heraldry) roll identifies it as belonging to a minor French noble.

Valdez denies any involvement with Imelda's trial, although he professes concern over not only the danger she posed to the village, but also her immortal soul. He further says he has never owned any cattle and has no idea why anyone in the village would tell lies about such a thing. If the heroes don't provide Roca's name, Valdez asks who has so slandered him.

WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION

The adventurers have little luck in identifying the individual who claims to have heard Imelda pronounce the curse. None of the villagers admit to being the witness and no one can offer any suggestions to who it is. This particular bit of evidence is unfortunately a dead end for the party.

The witness is actually one of Valdez's drovers, who he has paid to falsely testify to the matter.

FINDING SUPPORT (3)

During the course of their investigations, the travelers encounter several witnesses who may be convinced to testify on Imelda's behalf. Each requires a successful Persuasion roll. They are listed below, along with what they can provide and any penalty to the Persuasion roll noted in parentheses beside their name.

- **Santos Herrera (-1):** Herrera, if convinced, admits that the lights he saw could have been caused by torchlight. The shepherd is reluctant because this detail makes his story seem somewhat foolish now.
- **The Constable:** The constable tells the inquisitors that Imelda did indeed approach him several times over the last few years about the lights herself. He also spoke with Herrera at that time, but found no other evidence to pursue.
- **Feliz Roca:** The farmer testifies that he advised Valdez about the sickliness of his cattle when he purchased them.

DE RAMELLO

While the heroes are conducting their investigations on Imelda's behalf, they draw the attention of two parties that are interested in seeing them fail. Both take steps to dissuade the characters from pursuing Imelda's innocence, although both for different reasons and by different means.

The first is Pedro de Ramello, the prosecutor holding Imelda forth before the tribunal. Regardless of whether she is truly guilty or not, de Ramello cares only that he wins the case. The wanderers' involvement can only complicate his victory.

After the first or second day of their investigations, de Ramello approaches the heroes. A number of soldiers stop a short distance away, not exactly threatening, but clearly there in support of the inquisitor. He takes a moment to make clear that he views their assistance to the defense in a very negative light.

"So, you are the outsiders—interlopers, some might say—who are helping Valencia attempt to free the witch? Has it been explained to you that by aiding in the defense of her practices you are calling into question your own motives. I, for one, believe that anyone who would step forward to speak on behalf of a witch is as guilty of crimes against God as the witch herself. When she is convicted of her crimes, do not then be surprised when I come for you."

De Ramello does not use an angry or even threatening tone as he speaks to them. Instead, his voice is merely matter-of-fact and cold. The inquisitor does follow up on his threat should he obtain Imelda's conviction. If the heroes fail in providing for her defense, they become wanted by the Spanish Inquisition, although not actively hunted.

The inquisitor does not engage in any discussion with the wanderers over Imelda's guilt. Attempting to deal with de Ramello in a straightforward or physical manner proves disastrous. The inquisitor does not rise to the bait. Instead, he motions the soldiers forward. Persisting in any aggressive behavior quickly results in a skirmish with the Spanish soldiers. De Ramello removes himself from the scene should a fight break out, and regardless of whether they win or lose, the characters find themselves enemies of both the Inquisition and the Spanish Crown at this point.

♣ **Soldiers (10):** See page 120.

THE MERCHANT'S PLAN

Fabio Valdez is behind not only the accusations against Imelda, but also the source of the strange lights seen on the bluff. He has made an arrangement with Dutch pirates to smuggle the goods they capture on the high seas into Spain to sell. Valdez has his drovers carry the stolen items all across Spain to sell them, but sometimes keeps choice pieces himself.

Each month, on the new moon so their vessel cannot be spotted, he and his henchmen signal the pirates from the bluff with torches. They then use the ropes and

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

pulley to descend through the crack to the shore. There, they pay the pirates their cut of the last month's sales and take any new goods to sell.

Imelda, living nearby, has seen the lights on several occasions and complained to the constable. Valdez recently concocted the scheme to turn her over to the Inquisition. This, he hopes, will remove her from the area while leaving him and his men free from suspicion.

Valdez purchased diseased cattle he knew were on the verge of death. When the cows began to die, he notified representatives of the Inquisition that he had been the victim of "witchcraft." One of his men claimed to have overheard Imelda curse his cattle. The merchant also pointed de Ramello to the shepherd Herrera, who he knew had also mentioned seeing the signal lights.

The merchant is himself laboring to a timeline. His plan to turn Imelda over to the Inquisition took longer to come to fruition than he had hoped. The new moon falls on the third night of the heroes' investigations. Valdez knows that if the strange lights are spotted on the bluff while Imelda is in the custody of the Inquisition it will not only speak strongly to her innocence but will also draw a good deal of unwanted attention to his own activities.

VALDEZ TAKES ACTION

Valdez is no fool. He knows a direct attack on the adventurers would be counterproductive. At best, it would draw attention to the party's investigations. Worse, if the heroes should succeed in defeating his henchmen, it would expose his own involvement.

However, if any of the wanderers revealed Roca's name as the witness who told them about his cattle, Valdez has a few of his men kill the man late one night and toss his body into the ocean. Without Roca present, the heroes are unable to refute the merchant's claim of Imelda cursing his cows.

On the day of the new moon, Valdez moves to ensure that Herrera is not with his flock that night. The merchant does not want Herrera killed, however, as the shepherd is integral to his plan to have Imelda convicted.

Instead, his men, disguised as bandits, waylay the man as he is watching his sheep. Late in the afternoon, the heroes see Herrera carried into town on a cart by another farmer. He is battered and bruised, but not seriously injured.

THE PIRATES ARRIVAL

It's likely that the heroes have put together enough of the clues to suspect they would benefit from observing the bluff on the night of the new moon. Whether or not they have found enough to believe that Valdez is involved in any wrongdoing, at the very least they are likely to want to see if they can determine the origin of the lights themselves.

There are no plans by the Inquisition to watch the bluff as it operates under the presumption of guilt, not innocence. Since they have Imelda in custody, they are not concerned with acts for which she is currently held responsible. In particular, de Ramello is particularly opposed to any such suggestion. Attempting to convince any of the representatives of the tribunal beyond Valencia to join them requires an opposed Persuasion roll against de Ramello's Persuasion as he argues against them.

Waiting near the bluff, the heroes see a group of men arrive on a wagon near midnight. Soon a torch is lit and waved in an elaborate fashion. Moments later, the adventurers see flashes of light coming from out to sea. If they continue to wait, the men set up the rope and pulleys and descend to the shoreline. There, they are met by another group of men arriving by a ship's boat.

When they confront the smugglers determines what opposition the adventurers face as well as what evidence they are able to uncover.

If they act while the smugglers are still on the top of the bluff, they are opposed by only Valdez and his men. However, there is no real evidence to prove the man is involved in any wrongdoing beyond a princely sum of £500 in a pouch (the pirates' take of the sales). He claims he was visiting the bluff to see if the strange lights manifested themselves while Imelda was jailed. He adds that the only light he saw was the light from the torch his men lit to avoid stumbling off the cliff!

Should they wait until the smugglers meet with the pirates, they face a more formidable force, but also stand to garner much more proof of Valdez's crime. In this instance, they face both the smugglers and the pirate landing party together.

A clever party may eliminate the smugglers atop the cliff and go meet the pirates themselves. However, if there are any gunshots during the first battle, the pirates immediately turn their boat around and return to their ship, sailing away into the darkness.

It's also possible the wanderers wait until the smugglers meet with the pirates and then ascend back to the top of the bluffs. If they choose this course, they only have to defeat the smugglers. The smugglers are laden with a significant amount of exotic goods. If captured, Valdez claims he purchased the goods legitimately from a passing merchant who happened to stop offshore nearby. Even his own men seem skeptical of this response.

If a fight breaks out, the smugglers fight until more than half their number are down. At that point, the rest attempt to flee into the night. Valdez surrenders once he takes two wounds. The pirates, on the other hand, fight to the last as the penalty for piracy is death, whether at sea or ashore.

🦋 **Fabio Valdez:** See page 119.

🦋 **Smugglers (2, plus 1 per hero):** See page 120. Two of them are armed with blunderbusses, the rest with pistols.

🦋 **Pirates (2 per hero):** See page 120.

🦋 **Pirate First Mate:** See page 120.

THE FINAL VERDICT

Whether Imelda is found guilty or innocent is entirely reliant on the party's investigation. If the party confronted Valdez and his men while they were dealing with the pirates, the tribunal finds Imelda innocent of the charges. The Inquisition is well acquainted with false accusations and takes Valdez into custody both for false testimony and his smuggling activities.

On the other hand, if the heroes did not catch the smugglers red-handed, Valencia must present his defense for the tribunal's assessment. At this point, tally up the number

of facts and witnesses the heroes uncovered. If they confronted Valdez at the bluff before he dealt with the pirates, add another point to the total. If they confronted the smugglers after they returned to the bluff with the stolen goods, add another two points to the total.

Once you have the total, if it is 5 or greater, the wanderers have succeeded in proving Imelda innocent of the charges against her. If, however, the total is 4 or less, the tribunal finds her guilty and she is taken away to an inquisitorial jail in Seville to be "awarded" the chance to confess her heresy and repent.

True to his word, if Imelda is found guilty, de Ramello immediately begins compiling his case to have them charged of conspiring with a witch. Valencia, grateful for their assistance even though he lost, warns the travelers to flee before the prosecutor can seize them. If they were instrumental in his defeat, de Ramello takes no immediate action against them, but the party has made an enemy with a long memory and powerful connections.



HEROES AND VILLAINS

FOLLOWING are the statistics for other friends or foes found in this Savage Tale.



FABIO VALDEZ

Valdez has obtained much of his wealth through illegal and immoral means. Still in good physical condition even as he settles into middle age, he is not afraid to take matters into his own hands if necessary. Whenever possible, though, he prefers to leave unpleasant tasks to his hirelings.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Riding d6, Streetwise d6

Charisma: +2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Greedy

Edges: Charismatic, Rich

Gear: Rapier (Str+1d4, Parry +1), rich clothing.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

PIRATES

The pirate crew is a group of former Dutch sailors. As the wars of the late 16th century have begun to die down, they've turned to piracy to fill their pouches.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d6

Charisma: -2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Greedy (Minor), Illiterate, Mean

Edges: Dirty Fighter

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), cutlass (Str+d6), pistol (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 2d6+1) shot & powder (20).

PIRATE FIRST MATE

Once a minor naval officer, he has had little trouble adjusting to a pirate's life.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d8, Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Swimming d6

Charisma: -2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Greedy (Major), Mean

Edges: Block, Dodge, Command, Dirty Fighter

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), cutlass (Str+d6), pistol (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 2d6+1) shot & powder (10).

SMUGGLER

While Valdez employs many of these men as drovers, he prizes them more for their fighting skills and loose morals.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Charisma: -2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Greedy, Mean

Edges: —

Gear: Short sword (Str+d6), pistol (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 2d6+1) or blunderbuss (Range: 10/20/40, Damage: 1-3d6).

SOLDIER

Technically in service to the Spanish Crown, the soldiers have been assigned to guard the inquisitors not only from bandits and highwaymen, but also from regular citizens who may resent the Inquisition's methods.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8(3)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Musketeer

Gear: Long sword (Str+1d8), musket (Range: 10/20/40, Damage: 2d8), shot & powder (20), plate corselet and steel helmet (+3).

RAVAKA

And so it is written that they were spawned in the ancient fires. The nine sorcerers whose names have been struck from stone and wall and scroll mustered together and stoked the flames, fueled by the bones of their own fathers. They wove their hate into form so that it would live on beyond them.

—The Liber Vorago

The ravakas are among the most foul and hideous creatures in the world of Kane. They have large, pinkish heads with bat-like ears and noses, but lack eyes of any kind. Instead, the focal point of their inhuman faces is a large, fanged maw. Their large, fleshy bodies continually glisten with foul sweat. It is unknown from where these creatures sprang, but is likely from the spirit world. Others believe them to be creations of an ancient curse woven together by a cadre of corrupt sorcerers.

Ravakas feed on hate. They not only consume the emotion, they subconsciously feed negative emotions in humans. Anyone exposed to their presence for any length of time quickly becomes more and more irrational as any feelings of animosity toward another are magnified tenfold.

The creatures always appear first as ravaka spawn, erupting from the ground in large swarms of bloated, grub-like creatures. The grub-forms grow at a variable rate, largely dependent on the intensity of nearby feelings of anger, eventually turning into repulsive vein-covered sacks of bile. At last they explode, giving birth to full-grown ravakas. This hideous transformation usually requires days, but in areas where hatred rages strongly, it may take as little as a few hours.

One of the most disturbing characteristics of the ravaka is its ability to mimic those whose blood it tastes, creating a vile mirror of hatred. Upon tasting of the blood, the ravaka begins to take on mannerisms of its victim, sometimes speaking a bit in his voice, although the creature retains its own disgusting features.

In areas of extreme hatred or anger, such as in a war-ravaged area or the scene of ongoing and terrible oppression, a ravaka may grow to enormous size and power. The creature, called a brute, becomes engorged on rage and is incapable of any action but mindless destruction.



RAVAKA

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Throwing d8, Tracking d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d6
- **Frenzy:** Ravakas may make two attacks per round at -2 to their roll.
- **Sinister Strength:** A ravaka who inflicts a wound gains traits and likenesses from the creature it injured. For example, a ravaka may gain the ability to speak a particular phrase uttered by a person, or begin to take on some of that person's movements and mannerisms. It also gains either an Edge or special ability identical to one from the creature wounded.
- **Size +2:** Ravakas are large and hulking.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

RAVAKA BRUTE

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d10, Throwing d10, Tracking d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d6
- **Improved Frenzy:** A ravaka brute may make two attacks per round without penalty.
- **Swallow:** A ravaka brute who gets a raise on a Size 1 or smaller victim may swallow its victim whole. The victim suffers Str+d8 damage each round until killed by stomach acid or freed. A victim may attempt to break free with an opposed Strength roll or by using a small weapon to cut himself free, though all physical actions are at -4.
- **Size +3:** Ravaka brutes are massive.

RAVAKA GRUB SWARM

Use the Swarm stats from *The Savage World of Solomon Kane*.



SAVAGE TALE: THE HORDE

While traveling in North America during the winter, the heroes find themselves seeking shelter in the face of an approaching blizzard and come across a trio of Algonquin hunters. The hunters have not had any luck finding game, but offer the wanderers refuge in their nearby village. As the band makes its way through the snow back to the village, it is set upon by a band of Cree warriors. Whether the heroes assist their new friends or not makes little difference to the Cree; they attack everyone in the group.

Due to the heavy snow, all terrain is treated as difficult (each inch counts as two for movement purposes).

♣ **Cree Warriors (4 plus 1 per hero):** See page 127. The Cree are armed with bows and clubs.

♣ **Algonquin Hunters (3):** See page 127. The Algonquin are armed with bows and daggers.

RIISING TENSIONS

After the battle, the hunters quickly lead the travelers to their village, racing both the coming storm and any other Cree war parties in the area. Any hero familiar with the Algonquin tribe knows immediately something is amiss as the Algonquin don't typically winter in villages but rather break up into family hunting camps.

The community is made up of longhouses and smaller round huts (called wickiups) surrounded by a wooden palisade for protection. While there are

hand-width gaps between the walls of the palisade, the only entry is through a single gate. There are clearly defined paths and roads within the village, displaying the sophistication of this advanced culture.

The travelers are welcomed into the village when the hunters tell of their bravery but, even so, there is an undeniable atmosphere of tension. The conflict with the Cree has prevented this particular tribe from breaking up into their usual family groups, and, as the Algonquin do not farm heavily, food is beginning to run low in the village. Despite the situation, the villagers do their best to treat their guests warmly.

The heroes are soon approached by a group of tribe elders led by an aging man who introduces himself as Noshi. He speaks a smattering of both English and French thanks to passing fur traders. He leads the group to a vacant longhouse and tells them they may shelter from the storm there.

If a hero questions Noshi about the Cree, he tells the wanderers briefly of the conflict.

"Many times, we have had conflicts with the Cree over hunting grounds. It is the way of our peoples. However, over the past few moons, the Cree have become more hostile than in the past. Now their attacks range far from the hunting grounds into all our territory. I do not know the reason, but they seem only interested in killing our people. Not only must we fear their attacks, but our hunters are not able to gather enough game for all our mouths."

A few of the elders are clearly displeased with Noshi's words and a hero who makes a Notice roll overhears the name "Oq-sem." If one of the characters makes a Persuasion roll Noshi tells him that Oq-sem was a former member of the tribal council.

"Oq-sem was the tribe's medicine man until the last year. He always spoke of not trusting the Cree and that we should always consider them enemies. He often called for war against them over any transgression. I and many of the council no longer felt he spoke with wisdom. His heart was tainted because the Cree had slain his wife and son. After a bad argument with the council, he left

the tribe. Many of the council now believe he was right to hate the Cree."

Noshi adds that he still believes attacking the Cree would be suicidal. The Cree greatly outnumber his people and are more warlike. However, he adds, current events are turning the tribe against his viewpoint.

WITCHCRAFT!

One of the elders who was grumbling as Noshi spoke then claims they have evidence that the Cree are using witchcraft against the village. He leads the wanderers to a nearby wickiup. Sacks of foodstuffs lay about the floor, haphazardly spilled into the dirt. Huge, bloated grubs or maggots writhe amidst the grains. He points to the creatures and says, "The Cree have cursed our foods! Grubs do not live in the winter."

An adventurer who makes a Survival roll recognizes that the creatures are neither grub nor maggot, but cannot identify them. In reality, they are ravaka spawn.

The same elder then drags a blanket off a lump near the door and says, "Our hunters found this in the forest—their witches even call forth demons to plague us!" Under the blanket are the remains of a ruptured fleshy sack. Inside is a half-formed, human-like body lacking any features save a wide, tooth-filled mouth. The elders have all seen this loathsome mass before, but the heroes must make a Fear check or be filled with nausea and revulsion.

Even Noshi has no explanation for the fleshy bag or its contents. He believes it is an omen, but since Oq-sem has left the tribe, there is no one that can tell them what the thing means.

NOSHI'S REQUEST

Noshi leads the adventurers back to their longhouse and leaves to meet with the tribal elders just as the blizzard begins to blow. The storm lasts all night, but the hide-covered structure provides ample protection. If the heroes choose to build a fire, the longhouse is quite comfortable—possibly the best accommodations they have enjoyed in the New World.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

The next morning, Noshi comes to the party to ask a favor of the visitors. The elders have decided Noshi should seek Oq-sem's advice, believing he may have an answer to their dilemma. However, with the threat of more Cree attacks, they fear sending any hunters along to guard him will weaken the village's own defenses too greatly. Noshi asks the travelers to accompany him.

If the heroes agree and aid their host, go to Seeking the Wise Man. If they choose not to, proceed instead to The Cree Attack!

SEEKING THE WISE MAN

The elders know that Oq-sem now lives in a cave less than five miles from the village. The trip to Oq-sem's home takes the better part of half a day due to the deep snow. A wisp of smoke rises from a narrow cave mouth, but as the group gets closer a foul odor of rot and corruption overpowers the scent of wood smoke. Human footprints abound in the snow outside the cave and any hero who makes a Tracking roll knows that they are all made by a single person.

Noshi calls out to Oq-sem from outside the entrance. When there is no response, he leads the group into the cave. A short distance inside, the cave opens into a large chamber about thirty feet across. A fire is lit near the center and Oq-sem is crouched next to it.

He rises when the group enters and brusquely asks Noshi why he has come. The elder explains the tribe's current dilemma and asks Oq-sem's advice. The medicine man laughs evilly and says:

"I know of your troubles and I revel in your cries for help. For a time after I left, I carried out my vengeance against the Cree on my own, murdering members of that tribe I caught in the forest alone. I left signs to implicate your people, Noshi, hoping the Cree would fall on you as they did my own family so you could taste my sorrow. The Cree were slower to act than I expected, but then a shaman from another tribe far to the south taught me how to summon the ravaka."

He motions toward the back of the chamber. There, with their eyes now adjusted

to the gloom of the cave, the heroes see masses of the grub-like creatures they saw in the wickiup and another, intact sac of flesh and veins. Even in the flickering light of the fire, they can see it pulses and ripples as if something inside is beginning to struggle to escape.

"They feed on hatred. Even my own hatred was not enough to sate them, so I worked harder to cultivate it between your tribe and that of the Cree. I killed Cree and they blamed the Algonquin. Likewise, I killed Algonquin and you blamed the Cree. Now, I have bred war between you and the ravaka will gorge on your slaughter. I see you foolishly think to stop me, but it is too late. Even now the Cree move on your village and the ravaka are beginning to hatch!"

A sickening, wet cracking sound not unlike an egg hatching comes from the back of the chamber and the fleshy sac bursts open. A full-grown ravaka bursts forth into the cave as the mass of grubs surges forward toward the group, requiring a Fear roll from the heroes. The grub swarm moves immediately to attack the wanderers but the ravaka instead attacks Oq-sem, grabbing him by the shoulders and tearing out his throat with its fangs. The medicine man dies with a look of surprise on his face. After Oq-sem's death, the ravaka turns on the heroes, now taunting them with the old Algonquin's voice.

After the battle, Noshi urges the party to hurry back to the village with him to warn of both the impending attack and Oq-sem's betrayal.

🐛 **Ravaka Grub Swarm (1):** See page 122.

🐛 **Ravaka (1):** See page 121.

👤 **Noshi:** See page 126.

👤 **Oq-sem:** See page 127.

THE CREE ATTACK

Near twilight the day after the heroes first entered the village, a large Cree war party arrives with the intent of wiping out the Algonquins. If the wanderers traveled with Noshi to see Oq-sem, they arrive shortly before the Cree do. If they instead declined to accompany Noshi, the elder dies at Oq-sem's

Algonquin Village

20' 40'



cave along with the old medicine man, but the Cree attack nonetheless.

Although the Cree approach stealthily, any hero making a Notice roll (–2) spots shadowy figures darting from tree to tree through the gaps in the palisade. If the group spots them prior to the attack, a hero can attempt to delay them from attacking by calling out and making a Persuasion roll (–4). If the wanderers accompanied Noshi to Oq-sem's cave and volunteer what they learned, the roll is only at (–2).

If the heroes succeed, the Cree are not completely convinced of the Algonquins' innocence, but agree to further parley. Go to Oq-sem's Legacy.

On the other hand, should the heroes fail in negotiating with the Cree war party, a one-sided battle begins. The Cree warriors outnumber the able-bodied men of the Algonquin village by more than three to one. Even with the help of the travelers, the odds are heavily stacked against the Algonquins.

If the battle commences, the defenders have a fight on their hands. As before, the deep snow makes all movement cost two inches for every one inch traveled. The palisade provides only medium cover to the defenders, but allows them to fire back through the gaps. Any Cree seeking to enter the village must either make a successful Climb roll to scale the wall or enter through the single gate. After five rounds of combat have occurred, go to Oq-sem's Legacy.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

OQ-SEM'S LEGACY

Over the past few months in preparation for his vengeance on his former tribe, Oq-sem littered the woods near the village with ravaka spawn. Now, with emotions running high in the area, the monsters quickly evolve to their mature forms. Whether a battle begins or the heroes convince the Cree and Algonquin to talk, a horde of ravakas burst from the surrounding forest and begin attacking the Cree, the villagers, and the heroes indiscriminately. Two of the creatures emerge from the wickiup holding the befouled foodstuffs. The village and surrounding area becomes a swirling mass of chaos as the beasts tear into the human prey.

Algonquin and Cree are forced to fight together for survival. Many of the ravakas fall upon the Cree outside the palisade, but five attempt to scale the walls to get at the villagers as well. Three rounds into the fight, two ravaka brutes emerge from the woodline and wade into the battle.

Keep the battle moving quickly, focusing on the heroes' actions rather than the entirety of the battle. If you don't want to game out the entire battle, you can simply remove one ravaka, two Cree, and one Algonquin from the fight as casualties each round on top of whatever damage the characters inflict. Just remember Savage Worlds is designed to handle this sort of fight and it gives the players a chance to exercise their tactical muscles.

In the end, if the heroes are successful, the battle is won; if not, the surviving villagers and Cree are scattered to the frozen wilderness.

❧ **Cree Warriors (30):** See page 127. The Cree are armed with spears and bows.

❧ **Algonquin Hunters (10):** See page 127. The Algonquin are armed with bows and daggers.

❧ **Noshi (1):** See page 126 (only if present).

❧ **Ravakas (20):** See page 121.

❧ **Ravaka Brutes (2):** See page 122.

AFTERMATH

Heroes who are able to survive and rescue the village are thanked heartily by Algonquin and Cree alike. The two tribes put aside their differences in the face of the ravaka and work to mend fences. A joint feast is held in the travelers' honor and peace is restored to the region.

Noshi, if he survives, invites one or more of the heroes to perform a sweat lodge ritual with him. The sweat lodge is a small hut with a ring of heated stones placed in the middle. Water is poured onto the heated stones until all vision is obscured and the heat becomes near unbearable. During this time, many are known to have visions. If the wanderers accept, the sweat lodge produces a mysterious vision that provides a clue toward finding a relic or perhaps a future adventure.



HEROES AND VILLAINS

FOLLOWING are the statistics for other friends or foes found in this Savage Tale.

NOSHI

One of the Algonquin elders, Noshi is no longer a young man, as evidenced by his graying hair, but still in good health. He speaks with a deep voice, but seldom raises it, even when speaking on subjects about which he feels passionately—such as the safety of the tribe.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: +4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6/5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Illiterate, Loyal

Edges: Charismatic, Noble

Gear: Spear (Range 3/6/12, Damage Str+d6, +1 Parry).

OQ-SEM

The medicine man is ancient beyond his years, his face wrinkled and weathered underneath a thin head of long, silvery hair. Scars criss-cross his features and one empty eye socket, obviously gouged out long ago, remains uncovered.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Knowledge (Spirits) d10, Shamanism d8, Stealth d8

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Illiterate, Vengeful (Minor), One Eye

Edges: Arcane Background (Shamanism), Strong Caster.

Gear: Fetish bag, Oq-sem's dagger (Str+d4+2, see notes).

Powers: *Curse, deflection, fear, summon spirit.*

CREE WARRIOR

Not only are these warriors battle-hardened from many fights, thanks to Oq-sem's manipulations, they believe they are fighting for their tribe's survival. They ask—and give—no quarter to their foes.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Shooting d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6/5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Illiterate, Loyal

Edges: —

Gear: Spear (Range 3/6/12, Damage Str+d6, +1 Parry) or warclub (Range 3/6/12, Damage Str+d6), and bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6).

OQ-SEM'S DAGGER

Carved from bone of an unknown origin, Oq-sem's double-bladed dagger is unusually sharp. Its hilt is fashioned from a deer's hoof. Strange sigils have been seared into the blade along its length. Oq-sem imbued some of his most powerful magic into this dagger, originally intending it to be used to defend his tribe and family. Unfortunately, over the years it has been saturated by his hatred as well.

The dagger grants a +2 damage bonus to all attacks and allows its wielder to harm creatures immune to non-magical attacks. If used by a character with the Enemy Hindrance, it inflicts +4 damage when used against the owner's named enemy (or enemies) instead of the usual +2. Unfortunately, anyone who takes possession of the weapon gains the Vengeful (Minor) Hindrance as long as they carry it.

ALGONQUIN HUNTER

The tribe's hunters are also its best fighters. Although warfare is not their primary occupation, they don't hesitate to fight to protect their people.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Shooting d6, Survival d8, Tracking d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6/5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Illiterate, Loyal

Edges: —

Gear: Dagger (Str+d4), and Spear (Range 3/6/12, Str+d6, +1 Parry) or bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6).

SCYLLA

WHETHER these frightful creatures preceded man is uncertain, but clearly they have existed for millennia. These scaled fiends terrorized Greek sailors, plucking men from the decks of ships passing their lairs. However, the monsters are not unintelligent beasts and capable of dealing with lesser beings when it profits them to do so. Some even cultivate human followings in remote coastal areas, passing themselves off as gods.

A scylla's lifespan is far longer than that of a human, often spanning centuries, and these creatures continue to grow during their entire lives. The greatest of these become enormous creatures with the head and torso of a giant human, but from whose waist springs forth a mass of tentacles. A greater scylla's tentacles often end in strange perversities such as human or wolf heads, hands, feet, or other unnatural growths.

Invariably, these monsters reside in large bodies of salt water. Being removed from salt water, even for a brief time, causes them to rapidly dehydrate and soon die. Most frequently, they favor coastal regions, particularly those with restricted waterways, such as straits or archipelagos, as those areas make raiding passing vessels easier for the creatures.

Greater scylla are capable of transforming humans into smaller, weaker versions of themselves sometimes referred to as "lesser scylla." While it's not clear whether this is how the abominations procreate, the altered humans take on many aspects of the scylla. These mutants sometimes serve as go-betweens with a human populations, sometimes even taking the role of "priests" for savages who worship the great tentacled monstrosities.

SCYLLA



GREATER SCYLLA

Greater scylla vary greatly in size, but the smallest is the size of a bull elephant.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d12, Guts d10, Intimidation d12, Knowledge (Occult) d12, Knowledge (Navigation) d10, Notice d10, Persuasion d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 15(2)

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 8
- **Armor +2:** Greater scylla have tough and scaly hides.
- **Bite/Claws or Tentacle:** Str + d8
- **Fear -2:** Anyone who sees a greater scylla revealed is struck by its aura of power.
- **Infection:** Anyone slain by a greater scylla's Bite attack has a 50% chance of slowly returning to life as a lesser scylla. The transformation takes approximately a week and can be stopped by killing the scylla that infected the victim.
- **Large:** Attackers receive a +2 bonus to hit due to the enormous size of greater scylla.
- **Mystic Powers:** A greater scylla can use the powers of *entangle* (small whirlpool—usable only in water), *tempest*, and *withering curse* as if it had a Magick rating of d12.
- **Size +6:** Even small greater scylla are the size of elephants.
- **Tentacles:** Reach 3. A greater scylla may attack up to three simultaneous targets at

no penalty with its tentacles. If it succeeds on a Fighting roll with a raise, it entangles its victim, causing normal damage. Each round thereafter, the tentacle constricts, causing Str+d8 damage to the monster's prey. The victim may attempt to escape on his action by getting a raise on an opposed Strength roll.

- **Weakness:** A greater scylla must remain partially immersed in salt water. Each round it is not in contact with salt water, it must make a Vigor roll or gain a Fatigue level. This can lead to Death. Fatigue levels gained in this fashion can only be healed by a minute of salt-water immersion for each such level.



LESSER SCYLLA

These beings bear the mark of their creators, the greater scylla. Their legs have been replaced by a mass of tentacles and their arms no longer have a bony structure and are instead ropy and malleable as well. Their skin takes on a pale grayish sheen and scales form on their torsos and limbs. These creatures often wear long robes to conceal their less human features.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge

(pick one) d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Throwing d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Gear: Long sword (Str + d8), Harpoon (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str + d8)

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 8
- **Armor +2:** A lesser scylla has a tough and scaly hide.
- **Bite/Claws:** Str + d6
- **Constrict:** A lesser scylla may entangle its victim as per Grappling, but with +2 to his rolls.
- **Fear:** Anyone who sees a lesser scylla revealed is struck by its aura of power.
- **Weakness:** Each day that it does not immerse itself in salt water for at least an hour, a lesser scylla must make a Vigor roll or gain a Fatigue level. This can lead to Death. Fatigue levels gained in this fashion can only be healed by an hour of salt-water immersion for each such level.



THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE



SAVAGE TALE: THE UNDER MARKET

THIS Savage Tale has the potential to be very difficult for new characters and is best undertaken by those of Seasoned or even Veteran rank.

This adventure takes place while the party is traveling along the Mediterranean coast, preferably in Spain or Italy. As they are wandering, the heroes hear of terrible raids by Barbary pirates that have the entire region fearing the next attack. Whole villages have been obliterated, their populace taken captive and sold into slavery. You may even choose to have the party encounter one or more villages that has suffered just such a raid during their travels, or perhaps a community that has been abandoned by its populace to avoid suffering a similar fate.

STRANGE PEACE

After hearing of the horrors of the Barbary pirates, the travelers arrive late in the afternoon at the small town of Romana del Monte which lies nestled between foothills and the sea. Romana del Monte has not only been spared any of the terrible raids, the populace is apparently completely unaffected by the fear gripping the other communities in the area.

Bright, colorful curtains hang in open windows and the wanderers are welcomed warmly by several residents as they enter the village. Children play, racing along the sloping streets chasing balls or dogs. A blacksmith's hammer sounds in the distance, while workers lead wagons filled with grapes from local vineyards to the wine presses.

In the town square, which overlooks the harbor, there is a moderately rusted cannon facing the sea. There is a stack of cannon balls beside it, but they also have a coating of rust. Should the heroes ask about it, the townsfolk say it was left over from defenses against a feared Ottoman invasion nearly 30 years earlier. It has not been fired since.

There is a single inn in the town. The characters learn quickly that it has become popular with travelers in the region as it

is one of the few still open during these troubled times. In fact, there are several other guests already staying the night when the group arrives. The heroes discover there are barely enough accommodations for the entire party left available.

Should any of the adventurers bring up the issue of the pirate raids, it becomes quickly clear that the residents of Romana del Monte are not concerned. Different villagers provide different responses, but all dismiss the likelihood of an attack. "We are too large a community for a band of pirates to risk attacking," "It is a seasonal thing. The pirates come and go—like the wind and the rain," or "We have a cannon! They would be fools to attack us!"

The heroes may even mention having visited one of the devastated villages, but no one seems worried about any danger in Romana del Monte.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Few in the town are aware of the real reason Romana del Monte has been spared the attentions of the Barbary pirates. They truly believe that the town is safe for any number of the reasons given above. However, the real reason for the town's respite lies in an unwitting, but hellish, bargain made not long ago.

Shortly after the Barbary pirate raids began in earnest, several of the town's leaders were approached by a mysterious stranger who offered a solution to their problem in exchange for access to records stored in an abandoned monastery nearby. The man was a sorcerer searching for another fragment of The Liber Vorago, one which had been given to the care of monks in the old monastery.

After a brief search, he found the section of that accursed book and used it to call forth a terrible protector for the Romana del Monte—a greater scylla. The sorcerer, having fulfilled his part of the bargain, slipped away while the leaders of the town were distracted by the arrival of their new "ally." The townsfolk had no inkling that this was the so-called "solution" to their problem, but were helpless against such a powerful creature.

For a time, the greater scylla did indeed protect the town from any would-be raiders, devouring the crews of smaller vessels and summoning terrible storms to destroy the larger ones before they ever made landfall. As long as there were pirates to sate its hunger, it required nothing from the townspeople.

Of late, fewer Moorish ships have braved the waters near Romana del Monte, but the Scylla's hunger remains great. It recently sent emissaries—lesser scylla it created from among its previous victims—to demand a tribute: seven humans to be sacrificed each full moon that passes without any raiding ships.

The party has arrived just as the first of the scylla's tribute has come due. A pair of the leaders of the town volunteered to be given to the scylla, but that still left a shortfall of five captives. The townsfolk aren't warriors and they know it, so they've hired a band of mercenaries to gather captives for them.

BUMPS IN THE NIGHT

Late that night after they have gone to bed, have the characters make a Notice roll. If the heroes left a guard awake, this roll is unnecessary. Those who succeed awaken to the muffled sounds of a commotion from elsewhere in the inn. If they rush into the main room, they're met by a small group of armed men who immediately attack! On the other hand, if they delay for more than five rounds, the men have already departed.

Examining their attackers after the battle tells the adventurers very little. None of the heroes recognizes any of the men. Their arms and gear appear absolutely ordinary for the region. Even the most cursory examination identifies the men as European—not Moorish pirates.

Raiders (1 per hero): See page 135.

IDENTITY OF THE ATTACKERS

Any heroes who head outside see a wagon departing toward the seafront at a fairly good clip. By the time anyone can mount any pursuit, the wagon is out of sight. A quick search of the inn reveals that several other patrons are now missing. The doors to their

rooms stand open, but it appears that any valuables remain. There is no sign the doors were forced.

The innkeeper appears shortly after the wagon departs. He seems shocked by the recent events. He carries on about a "pirate raid" to any who listen. However, a character who makes a Notice roll quickly realizes he is lying—and badly. An Intimidation or Streetwise roll convinces him to confess to the truth.

"Listen, I was opposed all along, but the others said it was the only way—you have to believe me! They said if we didn't want to be raided like the other towns, we had to make a deal. I don't know any of the details, but they took those people to the Under Market."

The man answers questions to the best of his ability, but his knowledge of exactly what is going on in Romana del Monte is very limited. Apparently, several of the community leaders made some sort of deal that protects them from pirate attacks. He suspects that someone made a deal with the Barbary pirates themselves to provide slaves directly if the raiders would leave the village in peace.

If asked about the Under Market, he says that it is an ancient Roman ruin that lies under the fishmarket near the docks. In the past, smugglers used it to hide from the local lord's tax collectors. Supposedly, there is a tunnel that even allows small boats to dock there. He can also provide them directions to the easiest entry to the Under Market if they think to ask.

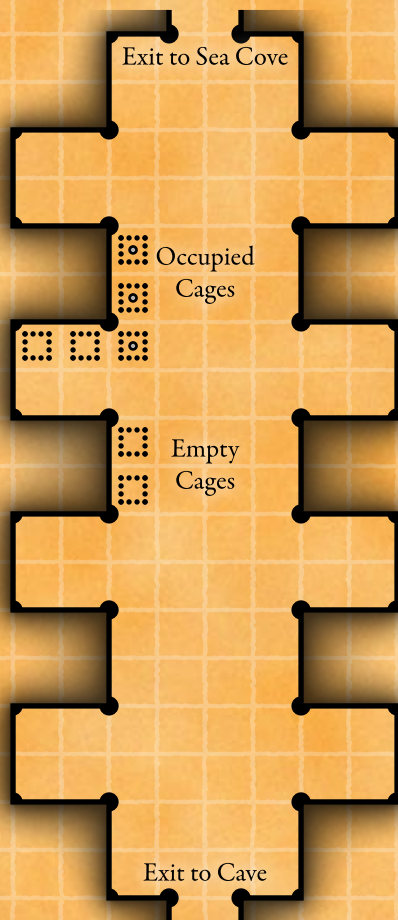
ARRIVAL IN THE UNDER MARKET

The party arrives at the hidden entrance described by the innkeeper. It lies at the back of a small cave on the outskirts of the town. Inside the cave, the adventurers find a wagon similar to the one they may have seen fleeing the inn earlier. A Tracking roll identifies several footprints leading from the wagon into the entrance to the Under Market.

A natural passage leads out of the back of the cave and down a steep incline into which steps have been crudely cut. The steps end

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

The Undermarket



at a narrow and low-ceilinged passageway that seems to head back under the town. It has been roughly carved from dirt and stone and the odor of seawater wafts up from the depths of the tunnel. A glow of light comes from within and, upon entering, the heroes find the passage is lit intermittently by lanterns hung from its walls.

After about a hundred feet, it opens into a much larger space. A long colonnade supports a towering, barrel-vaulted ceiling. Strung up between the many columns are lanterns, several—but not all—of which are lit. The remains of wooden platforms, now dilapidated by age and a pervasive moisture that permeates the strange cavern, rest beside a few of the columns. Obviously, at one point

in the past, a fairly successful black market operated from the Under Market.

Now, a group of men stand in the middle of the cavern. They are apparently engaged in, if not an argument, then a heated, three-way discussion. The largest faction is a group of armed men—the same band that attacked the inn earlier. The second group is composed of townspeople; the party may even recognize some of the faces. The last set of participants is a pair of large, heavily robed men.

The adventurers can also see several cages along the wall, four of which are currently occupied by captives. The armed band has another three bound figures in their custody. The discussion, based on what the travelers can gather as they enter the chamber, seems to center around payment for the captives and is primarily between the townsfolk and the raiders. The robed men stand slightly off from the other two and only occasionally make comments.

The raiders are a mix of bandits and mercenaries hired by the townsfolk to gather a few additional captives. They are currently bickering with their employers over a price for the three they recently kidnapped. The two robed men are actually lesser scylla, here to collect the offering for the greater scylla.

Unless the party has taken pains to approach the Under Market stealthily, they are spotted within moments of their entry. If, on the other hand, they are attempting to creep in unnoticed, have each make a Stealth roll each round opposed by the highest Notice amongst the occupants of the chamber (d8). Once the heroes are spotted, the raiders attack.

The raiders are ruthless and experienced warriors. They realize they're basically trapped in the confines of the Under Market and fight without expecting any quarter. They do not surrender.

The townsfolk fight only if one of their number is attacked. They try to stay out of the conflict and surrender as soon as the raiders are defeated.

The lesser scylla begin rounding up the captives and herding them out a tunnel at the opposite end of the Under Market. If one

is attacked, it fights back while the remaining creature continues herding the captives out.

After the battle—assuming the wanderers are victorious—the party may either pursue the lesser scylla (“robed men”) with the captives or they may pause to interrogate the townsfolk. Neither action precludes or even affects the other.

🐉 **Raiders (2 per hero):** See page 135.

🐉 **Townsfolk (5):** See page 135.

🐉 **Lesser Scylla (2):** See page 129, but they are Extras.

PURSUIT!

The lesser scylla, if any escape the Under Market, are leading the captives down a tunnel that leads to a sea cave. Should the characters pursue, they overtake the monsters as they are attempting to load their victims onto a longboat. If both are still alive at this point, one remains to fight off the group, while the other tries to take the “offering” to its master. If only a single lesser scylla is alive at this point, it attacks the adventurers.

Once the heroes defeat the creatures, they can free the captives. Five of them turn out to be fellow guests at the inn, three captured that very night and two who were taken less than a week earlier. The other two, however, are townsfolk who seem more angry with the heroes than grateful, exclaiming, “You’ve doomed us with your meddling!”

Before the characters have a chance to inquire what is meant by those words, the water in the cave sloshes heavily against the shore as if a large rock has been dropped into it. Suddenly, from the center of the pool, a huge and hideous form erupts—the greater scylla. The monster reaches nearly to the ceiling of the sea cave and it surges toward the party to attack!

The captives flee almost immediately, even the two townsfolk, as they are overcome by the creature’s terrible presence. The greater scylla is enraged, both at the party’s interference in its tribute and the deaths of its spawn. This will likely be a very difficult battle for the heroes. If they try to fight it within the confines of the cave, they may well be overcome by the powerful creature.

Unless they are extremely heavily armed, their best bet may lay in retreat. The cannon in the town square offers a potential weapon against the greater scylla. If they do not remember it, allow the characters a Smarts roll to recall its presence.

🐉 **Lesser Scylla (1 or 2, see above):** See page 129.

🐉 **Greater Scylla (1):** See page 128.

CONFESSION

If the party accepts the townsfolk’s surrender, they readily admit to their role in the events in Romana del Monte. One of the men tells the party of the terrible outcome of the bargain they struck with the strange magician. Although they are ashamed of what they have come to, none of the men can see any way out for their village.

“What would you have us do? We did not wish this curse. No one knew what that man intended; we only wanted to protect our homes and our children. Now, we cannot defeat this monster the sorcerer summoned, so we have no choice. Seven lives is far less than would be lost if we did not appease it—less even than the pirates themselves would have taken!”

If the heroes prevented the lesser scylla from taking the captives to the greater scylla, the townsfolk respond with anguish. Some sigh while others openly sob. They explain that the monster will no doubt now take out its vengeance on the town. If allowed, they hurry to try to warn their families and friends.

THE SCYLLA’S REVENGE

Hopefully, the heroes opted for the better part of valor and exercised some discretion when faced with the greater scylla. If so, upon emerging from the Under Market, they find the monster laying waste to Romana del Monte’s small harbor. Its reliance on salt water makes it loath to emerge completely from the sea, but it is wreaking havoc on the town’s docks and the few small boats moored there.

One of the townsfolk from the Under Market volunteers to scrounge up powder for the cannon if the party asks. This takes a

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

few minutes and during that time the greater scylla destroys what was left of the docks and has begun short forays against nearby buildings.

Firing the cannon requires a Shooting roll. Only solid shot is available (Range: 50/100/200, Damage: 3d6+1, AP 4, Heavy Weapon) and the volunteer was able to gather enough powder for four shots. There is a full moon and the harbor is within 100 yards of the town square, so the total modifier to the roll is -1. Reloading takes one round with a crew of four, or two rounds with any less than that. Fortunately, due to the location of the square on a slope, there is line of sight over the entire harbor.

Should the party choose to fight the monster without using the cannon, as before they face a very tough battle. There is more room to maneuver outside, however, so the odds are a little better. After three rounds of fighting the greater scylla, allow the heroes to make a Notice roll to observe the creature never strays far from the water and frequently returns to it should it leave it. A clever group may use this to its advantage by employing Taunt rolls to lure it further from the water and weakening it.

If the party is successful in defeating the beast, the townsfolk—most of whom had no idea of the bargain in the first place—emerge from their hiding places. They quickly proclaim the travelers to be heroes of the sort of which legends are made!

Greater Scylla (1): See page 128.

UNWANTED ATTENTION

The townspeople condemn those of their number who undertook the bargain in the first place. Few have any sympathy for them, noting that dealing with practitioners of the dark arts is both sinful and unwise. The majority of the community, at least initially, seems in favor of chasing those involved out of Romana del Monte.

These recriminations and accusations counterpoint the accolades the heroes receive. The townsfolk make it clear they are welcome to remain in town as long as they wish. The residents even suggest a small festival the following night to honor the party.

Should the characters choose to remain, the commotion on shore that night draws the attention of a passing pirate vessel. The crew had been sailing the coast searching for a tempting target in vain when they caught sight of Romana del Monte. Since no pirate ships had yet escaped the wrath of the scylla, no survivors had spread warning to avoid the town either. And, without the protection of the monster, the town is now defenseless against the raiders.

Have the heroes make a Notice roll (-1) to catch sight of the ship slipping into the small harbor. If any of them spot the approaching ship, the adventurers have 10 rounds in which to prepare before the raiders reach the shore. If not, they have only half that by the time one of the townsfolk notices the vessel. During this time, they can fire on the ship if they have any powder for the cannon remaining from the battle with the greater scylla, try to evacuate the townsfolk, or simply steel themselves for battle.

Firing on the ship has little actual effect on it. The single cannon, with a very limited supply of shot, simply can't do enough damage to significantly affect the vessel. However, if the party is accurate with its shots and hits the vessel twice, the pirates turn aside from Romana del Monte to seek less well-armed victims. If not, roll 1d6 and assess that many casualties against the total number of pirates listed below.

Should the travelers decide to stand and fight, a number of the villagers are encouraged by their example and step forward as well. They willingly follow any orders the characters choose to give. When the pirates rush ashore, they face not a helpless community still half-asleep but rather a determined militia prepared to fight!

Once the pirates lose fifteen of their number, or ten plus the captain, they abandon the attack and flee to their vessel. Whether the heroes defeated them on land or scared them off with the cannon, word quickly spreads amongst the raiders of the defense. Romana del Monte is left alone by all but the largest or bravest bands of pirates.

Tales of the travelers' brave deeds spread throughout the region. Henceforth, the

adventurers are treated as if they had both the Charismatic and Good Reputation edges while traveling in the surrounding countryside.

🏴‍☠️ **Pirate Captain (1):** See page 135.

🏴‍☠️ **Pirates (30):** See page 135.

🏴‍☠️ **Townfolk (20):** See page 135. One half this number is also armed with blunderbusses.



HEROES AND VILLAINS

FOLLOWING are the statistics for other friends or foes found in this Savage Tale.

RAIDERS

These men have been recruited from out-of-work mercenaries, former soldiers, and even bandits.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: -2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6(1)

Hindrances: Greedy, Mean

Edges: —

Gear: Short sword (Str+d6), pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1), leather armor (+1), shot & powder (10).

TOWNSFOLK

These people aren't warriors by trade, but have found themselves pushed into a position where they must fight to protect their loved ones and homes.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d4, Knowledge (one trade) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d4

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances & Edges: —

Gear: Axe or short sword (Str+d6).

PIRATES

The pirate crew is a band of merciless killers and thieves.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d6

Charisma: -2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Greedy (Minor), Illiterate, Mean

Edges: Dirty Fighter

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), cutlass (Str+d6), pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1) shot & powder (20).

PIRATE CAPTAIN

This man is both the strongest and most skilled of his crew. The other pirates fear more than respect him.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d8, Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Swimming d6

Charisma: -4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Greedy (Major), Mean

Edges: Block, Brawny, Command, Dirty Fighter

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), scimitar (Str+d8), 2x pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1) shot & powder (20).

The Tasked

THOSE who are Tasked, or simply the “Tasked” are a group of undead beings who have been cursed to dwell upon the earth forever, constantly driven to complete some final undertaking. Many Tasked appear to be normal men or women, except perhaps for a slightly waxen complexion, while others bear the scars of horrible death wounds or even traces of decay. Regardless, living persons who spend much time in the presence of one eventually feel an uncomfortable awareness of the nearness of death.

All Tasked have risen from the grave through the power of their own will. Some bear an undying hate or desire for unfulfilled justice. Others have pulled themselves up from the earth for matters of honor or even love. These are tragic figures, unable to complete the one thing that will give them peace. As long as the Tasked’s driving goal remains unfulfilled, the undead is bound to the world of the living.

These creatures retain the memories, personalities, and skills they possessed in life, so all vary widely in abilities. The most common of the Tasked are those motivated by a desire to avenge a wrong. Often these are skilled fighters, made more terrible by their relentless unlife. However, an undead scholar may become so immersed in her studies that she persists beyond mortal bounds in search of the one last morsel of knowledge. Even a farmer may be so intent in his work that his dead body lifelessly tills the earth after his passing, driven to reap the last harvest.

Due to the nature of their unnatural existence, most Tasked inevitably become bitter and destructive. Those who have risen because of a sense of duty or honor may

instead become forlorn. All desire some form of final peace, but are unable to bring it about upon themselves except through the completion of their one guiding purpose.



The Tasked

The Traits listed below are only for basic reference purposes. Each Tasked is unique in its attributes and skills, based on what it possessed while alive. The Special Abilities, however, are common to all these undead.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8

Gear: Varies.

Special Abilities:

- **Fearless:** The Tasked are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Invulnerability:** If a Tasked is destroyed by any means while its purpose remains unfilled, it returns to life the following morning.
- **Purpose:** Each Tasked has a specific goal that keeps it tied to the world of the living. Once that goal is fulfilled—or becomes permanently unobtainable—the Tasked immediately crumbles to dust.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; Called shots do no extra damage.



SAVAGE TALE: LEGION OF THE DAMNED

WHILE traveling through the Middle East, the heroes come upon an old stone fortress which appears to be inhabited. After days of wandering through an empty region in near-desert conditions, the fort offers the possibility of rest and, more importantly, water. This Savage Tale can take place in Turkey, Egypt, or even North Africa, but flows best when placed in the Holy Lands.

THE LOST ORDER

As the adventurers approach the front gate to the stronghold, they are hailed from one of the watchtowers. The guard, who is wearing chainmail armor, speaks English, albeit with a slightly odd accent. "Identify yourselves!" he calls from above. As long as none of the wanderers is obviously of Musselman origin, the guard calls for the gates to be opened.

Inside, the travelers are met by several men, also in chainmail armor. They are all heavily armed, but a Notice roll quickly identifies the fact that none of them are carrying firearms of any sort. Both their weapons and armor show signs of heavy use, but also meticulous care and maintenance.

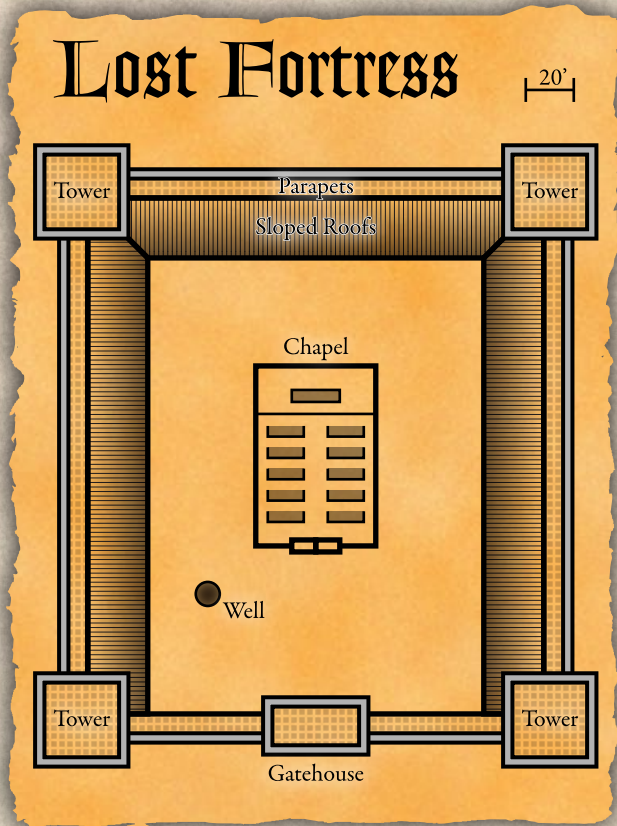
One of the men steps forward and identifies himself as Knight Commander Andrew Halford, Order of the Cathedral of St. Peter of Antioch. The name of the order is not familiar to any of the party, but a Knowledge (History) roll allows a player to recall that Antioch was once a crusader principality in the Middle East. With a raise, the character remembers that it fell to the Mamluks sometime in the middle of the 13th century.

Halford welcomes the party to the small fortress. "You are welcome to rest here within our walls. You are lucky you found our fortress, for the wilderness abounds with Mamluk raiders—as you will no doubt see if you remain. Our order seized their battle standard and since then they test us nightly. We always welcome able warriors to aid us in repelling their attacks."

Another Knowledge (History) roll tells the players that the Mamluks were fierce



THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE



Musselman warriors repelling both Mongol invaders and European crusaders in the 13th century. With the rise of the Ottoman Empire, their power and influence were drastically reduced.

If he's questioned regarding any of these, Halford tries to deflect his interrogators. He states only that his is an ancient order, one of the first, in fact. And, isolated as they are, they have understandably lost contact with the outside world over the years.

TOURING THE FORT

Halford does not offer a tour of his stronghold, but allows his guests to wander freely as they wish. Most of the facilities in the fortress—living quarters, a storeroom, a smithy, and even a stable—are built into the walls. Work appears to be constantly underway within the keep. The sound of a blacksmith's hammer sounds nearly all day as maintenance is conducted on battle-damaged armor and weapons. Minor repairs are constantly being made to the walls of the fort as well. The work is ceaseless and the men never seem to stop even for brief rests.

If the party asks about water, any of the knights can direct them to a well near the center of the fort. The heroes find the well located as described, with a bucket beside the opening. The rope for the bucket is unusable due to dry rot, though, and the party must use their own to retrieve water from the well.

At no time does Halford mention food or invite the group to dinner. Should any of the wanderers mention dinner, he says only, "We have much work to complete. My men have little time for formal meals. I regret we have insufficient supplies to extend an offer of a repast to you. You, however, are welcome to dine of your own whenever you see fit."

THE CHAPEL

Only a single building stands inside the walls. The doors are always open and entry shows it to be a small chapel. Each evening at twilight, the keep's garrison files in for a brief vesper service. Oddly, no scripture is spoken during this service, but frequent references to honor and duty abound.

At the front of the chapel, behind the small altar, stands a weather-beaten and fading battle standard with Arabic writing. The aged silk cloth is thin and threadbare. An honor guard of five knights is always present to protect the standard. They allow no one to actually touch the standard, going so far as to attack anyone who ignores their warnings.

♣ **Knight (5):** See page 141.

SIEGE

Assuming the heroes remain in the fort, they get to experience the Mamluk attack first-hand that night. Shortly after moonrise, the warriors charge out of the darkness on foot from all sides of the stronghold. Many carry ladders with which to scale the wall. Others begin peppering the wall with arrows.

Halford calls his own fighters to the parapets. English longbowmen return fire on the charging Mamluks while his knights stand by to repel any that reach the top of the wall. The crusaders are outnumbered by a considerable margin, but the walls of their fort make the fight even. There are plenty of combatants in the fight, so just place them around the battle map as you see fit and add

more (to either side) as necessary to maintain a general level of parity between the forces.

No more than a few Mamluks can reach the parapets at any given time and the knights at first prevent them from penetrating too deeply into the fortress. Allow the heroes to participate in the battle as they wish, but after five rounds, a band of Mamluks equal to the total number of characters in the party push through the defenders on the western side of the fort and threaten the interior of the stronghold. Halford calls out to the characters to intercept them before they reach the chapel where the captured standard is held.

If the travelers choose to stand aside, the raiders enter the chapel where a pitched battle begins place with the small rearguard Halford left to protect the standard. Although fairly evenly matched, the knights in the chapel repel the small group of Musselman warriors.

Eventually, the knights prevail and the Mamluks withdraw into the night empty-handed. Halford orders any wounded to be transported to the infirmary (actually the dining hall). Fallen knights and archers are carried to the infirmary as well. Wounded Mamluks are quickly put to the sword and dead Musselmen are cast over the walls, where, the heroes are told, their own comrades will retrieve their bodies.

🐉 **Mamluks (1 per hero):** See page 142.

THE NEXT DAY

Rising the following morning, the travelers find that work has resumed around the keep. In fact, all the same tasks they witnessed the day before are once again being performed. Any hero making a Notice roll observes one or more of the men she saw injured or even killed the night before is up and about, seemingly uninjured. There is no sign of the Mamluk dead either.

By this point, the adventurers should have strong suspicions that something is amiss at the fort. If they confront Halford directly, his shoulders slump slightly as he sighs.

“Our original victory over the Mamluks marked a great defeat for the Saracen, one which we thought would turn the Crusade. We vowed to protect it with our mortal souls, not realizing what we had promised. Now, we cannot die but nor do we live, trapped here protecting a tattered piece of cloth from a foe that suffers the same fate. Every night we fight the same battle, each side doomed to never prevail.”

It quickly becomes obvious that Halford wishes for some release from the vow to protect the standard. Night after night for centuries he and his men have fought to keep possession of it. Now, the standard no longer holds any meaning for him, but an overwhelming compulsion forces him to fight to prevent the Mamluks from retaking it.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW

Any character making a Notice roll (–2) while Halford is speaking with them realizes the man would welcome any release from his burden. If directly asks, he admits this, but says, “This compulsion is stronger than my will to resist. I would never allow the standard to be returned to the Saracens.”

Halford answers any questions the party asks to the best of his ability. However, the nature of his undead existence prevents him from being able to suggest ways to circumvent it. The crusaders are damned to fight to protect the standard as long as they have possession of it. The Mamluks seem likewise cursed to fight to gain its return.

He believes that returning the standard to the Mamluks would release both sides from their undead existence, but also notes that neither he nor his men would permit that. If specifically asked, he does believe that destroying the standard might serve the same function. However, he adds, “I do not know that we could stand aside as you destroyed it. Our own vows might force us to fight you. I would not ask you to place your own lives at risk over this.”

Without the wanderers’ intervention, the battle between the crusaders and Mamluks continues to play out night after night.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

ENDING THE CURSE

There are basically two courses of action open to the adventurers if they seek to end the curse afflicting the fort. They may either try to return the battle standard to the Mamluks or simply destroy it. Either grants the Tasked release from their purpose, causing crusader and Musselman alike to crumble into dust.

TAKING THE STANDARD

If they attempt to simply remove the standard from the chapel and return it to the Mamluks, they face a fortress filled with undead knights and bowmen seeking to stop them. Halford himself leads the garrison against them. It is highly unlikely that a straightforward attempt succeeds in light of the opposition.

🐉 **Knights (40):** See page 141.

🐉 **Bowmen (30):** See page 141.

🐉 **Andrew Halford:** See page 142.

HELP THE MAMLUKS

A clever party may simply wait until the next attack by the Mamluks. As before a band of Muslim warriors (again equal to the number of characters) breaks through the knights on the parapet and charges the chapel. If they choose this route, they must overcome five knights in the chapel before reaching the standard.

The standard must be carried outside the walls for this method to succeed, so the group now has to fight its way back across the courtyard and over the wall. Along the way, they must face a determined band of crusaders that harry their every step. However, thanks to the pressure by the Mamluks, much of the garrison is engaged in other fights. Only Halford, a dozen knights and five bowmen stand between them and the wall.

🐉 **Andrew Halford:** See page 142.

🐉 **Knights (15):** See page 141.

🐉 **Bowmen (5):** See page 141.

🐉 **Mamluks (1 per hero):** See Tasked Mamluk, page 142.

DESTROYING THE STANDARD

The simplest method is to simply burn the standard inside the confines of the chapel. The five knights guarding it fight to protect it, but at least initially, they are all that stands in the heroes' way. Every five rounds, another five knights arrive though, so the adventurers need to work quickly. Halford arrives with the second set of reinforcements.

The cloth is dry and brittle and catches fire immediately when exposed to any flame or spark. Even firing a gun while in contact with the banner is enough to set it ablaze. Two rounds after it is lit, the banner falls to ash. Moments later, the remaining crusaders disintegrate.

🐉 **Knights (5):** See page 141.

🐉 **Andrew Halford:** See page 142.

RELEASE GRANTED

As the crusaders are released from their watch, read the following:

The passing centuries catch up with the knights in a heartbeat. Their weapons clatter to the ground as their bodies crumble to dust. A dry wind blows around you and a faint, but unmistakable "Thank you" is carried on the breeze. Suddenly the fortress seems very old and empty.

Should the travelers remain another night, they find that the Mamluks do not return either. Both groups have discharged their vows and gone on from this world. Around the keep are dozens of sets of chainmail, swords, bows, and other weapons. These are the only remains of the defenders of the fortress. All are aged, but well-maintained should any of the adventurers choose to claim them.

If you wish, the first night after the Tasked are sent to their final reward, Halford appears in a dream that each of the characters experiences. In it, he tells them he has been granted the ability to give them a boon in gratitude for their actions. Halford provides the wanderers a clue to the location of one of the relics—or perhaps to a solution to another dilemma plaguing the heroes.



HEROES AND VILLAINS

FOLLOWING are the statistics for other friends or foes found in this Savage Tale.

TASKED Bowman

Although lacking the social standing of the knights with whom they serve, these Tasked are just as honor-driven to protect the Mamluk standard from recapture. Their arrows are an odd mix of English and Mamluk design as the two sides are forced to recycle their opponents' missiles each night.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8 (1)

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), bow (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6) leather armor (+1), arrows (20).

Special Abilities:

- **Fearless:** The Tasked are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Invulnerability:** If a Tasked is destroyed by any means while its purpose remains unfilled, it returns to life the following morning.
- **Purpose:** Each Tasked has a specific goal that keeps it tied to the world of the living. Once that goal is fulfilled—or becomes permanently unobtainable—the Tasked immediately crumbles to dust.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; Called shots do no extra damage.

TASKED Crusader

These knights have stood guard for nearly three and a half centuries over the captured Mamluk standard. Their tabards have long since been ripped and torn by battle damage, but their equipment is painstakingly maintained daily.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Throwing d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10(2)

Gear: Long sword (Str+1d8), chainmail (+2, torso only), medium shield (+1 Parry, +2 Armor vs. ranged shots).

Special Abilities:

- **Fearless:** The Tasked are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Invulnerability:** If a Tasked is destroyed by any means while its purpose remains unfilled, it returns to life the following morning.
- **Purpose:** Each Tasked has a specific goal that keeps it tied to the world of the living. Once that goal is fulfilled—or becomes permanently unobtainable—the Tasked immediately crumbles to dust.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; Called shots do no extra damage.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

ANDREW HALFORD, KNIGHT COMMANDER

Halford is driven by his sense of duty and honor, but he finds his loyalty to his men almost as powerful. If provided with a way to both satisfy his honor and give his command peace (such as destroying the Mamluk standard), he may accept it.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Throwing d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 11(3)

Gear: Longsword (Str+d8), plate corselet (+3), kite shield (+2 Parry, +2 Armor vs. ranged shots).

Special Abilities:

- **Fearless:** The Tasked are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Invulnerability:** If a Tasked is destroyed by any means while its purpose remains unfilled, it returns to life the following morning.
- **Purpose:** Each Tasked has a specific goal that keeps it tied to the world of the living. Once that goal is fulfilled—or becomes permanently unobtainable—the Tasked immediately crumbles to dust.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; Called shots do no extra damage.

TASKED MAMLUK

Their mounts long dead, these warriors assault the fortress nightly. Only the destruction or return of their battle standard can release them from their undead existence.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Throwing d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

Gear: Saber (Str+d6), bow (Range: 12/24/48, Damage 2d6), chainmail shirt (+2, torso only).

Special Abilities:

- **Fearless:** The Tasked are immune to fear and Intimidation.
- **Invulnerability:** If a Tasked is destroyed by any means while its purpose remains unfilled, it returns to life the following morning.
- **Purpose:** Each Tasked has a specific goal that keeps it tied to the world of the living. Once that goal is fulfilled—or becomes permanently unobtainable—the Tasked immediately crumbles to dust.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; Called shots do no extra damage.

THE VERMILLION MASK

There were many who worshipped the Mask. It haunted them with its unblinking gaze and lurid grimace. So wrapped were their thoughts about that Vermillion Face that many began to craft masks of their own. Once these mockeries were made, these men—fully obsessed—wore them incessantly, even sleeping with them on. Some even took to nailing the masks to their own cheeks and foreheads. Others grafted them to the flesh of their faces.

When I saw the devotion that the Mask evoked, I was inspired. For to create a following is not to be but a leader, but to spark worship? Why, that is to be a god.

—The Account of Feng Liang

THE Vermillion Mask is an undying sorceress, ruling a bandit empire for centuries. Legend even claims that she was among those who fled the fall of Lemuria. Her mastery of the dark arts is said to be without peer and date back to a time before even Great Cathay existed.

Or at least that's what the populace of a small area in Cathay has believed for generations.

In reality, the Vermillion Mask is not a single great sorceress. She is actually a succession of women who head a large network of bandits from any of a number of hidden lairs across Cathay. Through clever manipulation of rumor and deception, the bandits have perpetrated the myth of an immortal sorceress to give their robber clan a more fearsome reputation. Over the years, this has served to extend reach of the Mask and her clan across vast rural areas and into several major metropolitan areas.

The bandit clan is actually a large extended family. This ensures the fanatical loyalty of its members both on the battlefield and in the darkened alleyways of the cities of Cathay. The core of the family is centered in a remote mountain stronghold far from prying eyes. There dozens of young girls are chosen from the clan's daughters and cousins and trained extensively. From early childhood, each is meticulously readied to assume the role of the Mask should that duty fall to her.

Whenever the woman wearing the Vermillion mask reaches the age of 30—or dies, by means natural or otherwise—she is replaced by another girl. Her replacement has been prepared for often more than a decade to mimic her predecessor in speech and mannerisms. Even though the clan cannot always choose candidates who are exact physical matches, since the Vermillion Mask has never been seen without her namesake facial covering, this charade has proven remarkably easy to maintain.

Occasionally one of these Masks-in-waiting exhibits some minor talent for sorcery, but most rely on a combination of reputation and trickery to maintain the illusion of magical power. Other candidates for the position that do not quite meet the clan's standards may function as doubles for the Mask herself, to confound any would-be attackers.



VERMILLION MASK

THIS profile is for the current wearer of the Mask. Every candidate chosen to wear the mask is from the bandit clan's extended family and between 20 and 30 years

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE



of age. Her successors may differ in Traits and Edges, but all are master manipulators and tacticians.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d10, Knowledge (Area Knowledge) d10, Notice d10, Persuasion d10, Streetwise d8, Taunt d8

Charisma: +2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Enemy (Major: Various nobles and other criminals), Wanted (Major)

Edges: Bad Reputation, Charismatic, Fervor, Filthy Rich, Strong Willed

Gear: Dagger (Str+d4), Vermillion Mask, robes.



SAVAGE TALE: LADY OF JADE

TRAVELING along a road in Cathay, the party runs into an elaborate procession of men carrying a curtained sedan chair. The guards scoff at the wanderers and order them out of the road. Before tempers flare, however, they are halted by their passenger.

An alluring noble woman, the Lady Min, peers out from the curtain. She introduces herself in the common language of the party and actually apologizes for the rudeness of her guards. The guards stand stoically while she speaks to the heroes.

Before any meaningful conversation takes place, including how she came to speak the wanderers' language, the group is attacked by a number of bandits. Within the first few rounds of combat, it should become clear to the characters that the attackers are more intent on abducting the noblewoman than merely robbing anyone's valuables.

Lady Min does not herself fight, even if she is being taken captive. Her guards fight to the death, but so do the bandits. This may strike the adventurers as unusual behavior for a band of robbers, but do not specifically point it out for them.

Assuming the party wins the fight, Lady Min thanks the wanderers for their assistance and invites them back to her estate.

♣ **Bandits (6, plus 1 per hero):** See page 148.

♣ **Guards (4):** See page 149.

♣ **Lady Min:** See page 149.

THE JADE PALACE

Along the way, she speaks with the heroes extensively. She begs them for a tale of any adventure they have been on. After a tale told by one of the wanderers, the Lady Min will confess she is concerned the bandits who attacked them are minions of the Vermillion Mask.

At this point, the noblewoman tells the party the legend of the Vermillion Mask. The Lady Min explains that her father and mother were both recently murdered by the Mask for refusal to pay the required tribute. In the past, her father had paid the Mask and her bandits to avoid trouble with the group, but recently their demands had increased greatly. Her father refused to pay more because to do so would have placed simply too great of a burden on his subjects.

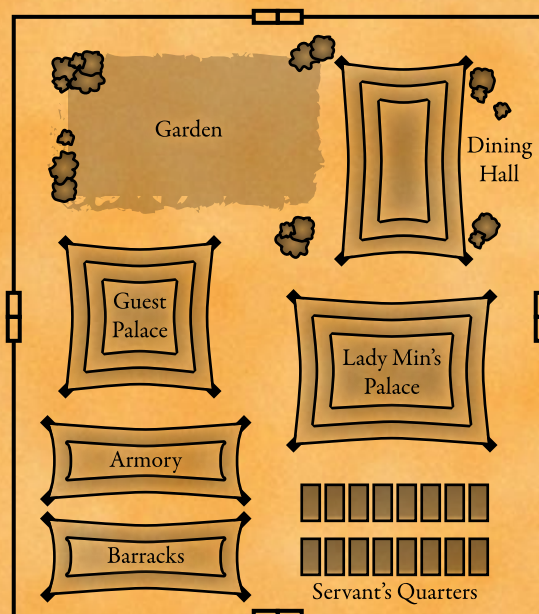
The Lady Min is the only daughter and now controls her family's holdings. She informs the heroes that she is frightened of the Mask's retribution, but plans to honor her father's wishes and not pay tribute to the Mask either.

Her abode is an elaborate residence, protected by high walls and guards. Within the grounds are tall buildings so decorative in their design that they resemble works of art rather than mere structures. Each bears the likeness of curling dragons at the corner of its rooftop. At the base of each building are perfectly manicured gardens and peaceful pools.

An elaborate feast is held in honor of the heroes at the Lady Min's palace. While at the great dinner, the adventurers soon find they have gained the ire of one of the local nobles—Lord Xiang. Xiang is a minor noble who has been vying for Lady Min's attention for years. He balks at the foreigners who have carried her favor so easily.

At the height of the party, Lady Min gives two of the wanderers who have distinguished themselves to her special lotus flowers—The Fate Lotuses. She tells them they will bring the heroes good luck (in game rules, they gain an additional benny for this adventure). These gifts particularly infuriate Lord Xiang, though he dares not say anything openly before Lady Min.

The Jade Palace



NIGHT OF DAGGERS

While the palace is asleep, servants of the Vermillion Mask arrive to try once again to kidnap the Lady Min. Traitorous servants within the palace aid the raiders by letting them through the back gate. The bandits are able to put many of the palace guards to sleep using gourds full of green mist.

The traitors are led by Xiang, who has made a bargain with the Vermillion Mask. Any wanderers who follow Xiang's activities will notice this, of course. In exchange for turning the Lady Min and her lands over to him, he has agreed to provide protection to any members of the clan within the borders of both holdings.

If any of the adventurers stay on guard that night, they notice the raid as it takes place with no rolls required. If the heroes all go to bed, allow each a Notice roll at -4. If any succeed, they wake to whispering in the courtyard of the compound. If the whole party fails their Notice rolls, they wake the next morning to find the Lady Min abducted during the night. The characters are only able to vaguely remember red-masked bandits

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

FLAME LANCES & GREEN MIST

FLAME LANCES

Range: Cone, Damage: 2d8, Shots: 1

The bandits of the Vermillion Mask use many tricks and devices to spread the rumors of her magical power. One such device is the flame lance. Actually a fairly old Chinese weapon, the lance is a long tube that sprays a gout of flame and shrapnel like a single-shot flamethrower. Use the exact same process as the flamethrower found in *The Savage World of Solomon Kane*, except that a flame lance only does 2d8 damage instead of 2d10.

GREEN MIST

Range: 5/10/20, Damage: Special, Shots: 1

Another tool the Mask's servants use are gourds filled with a green-colored anesthetic gas. They hurl the gourds, which break on landing and spread the gas in a Small Burst Template. The gas dissipates in a single round, but everyone exposed to it must make a Vigor roll or fall into a deep sleep. The victims may be awakened by any normal method that would awaken a normal sleeper. Otherwise, the effects wear off after one hour.

leering over them before a green mist settled over their face and they fell unconscious.

Once the heroes realize an attack is underway, a quick look out of the window reveals a line of bandits quietly scuttling towards the buildings. As the players engage the bandits, the palace guard quickly becomes alerted as well and aid in the battle. Lord Xiang concentrates on the abduction of the Lady Min, so unless the wanderers become involved in that conflict, they do not encounter him just yet.

The battle in Lady Min's palace should be large and sprawling. Be sure to describe conflict in all parts of the palace—in the courtyard, the halls, or even the rooftops—not just where the adventurers are concentrated.

Should the adventurers win the day, they discover the Lady Min has been kidnapped during the battle. If the party specifically goes to protect the Lady Min once the battle has started, then they arrive to find out she has already been taken from her room and her captors are long gone.

However, if some or all of the adventurers made it abundantly clear that they are looking out for the Lady Min's safety before they go to bed, then allow them to come upon the raiders, led by Lord Xiang, as they are kidnapping her. There are five bandits, one armed with a gourd of green mist and another with a flame lance. If she is saved, reward the the heroes involved with a benny! The Lady Min then beseeches the party to rid her of the menace of the Vermillion Mask.

🗡️ **Guards (10):** See page 149.

🗡️ **Bandits (25):** See page 148. Two are armed with green mist gourds (see sidebar). Five others are armed with flame lances (see sidebar) instead of bows. The rest are armed normally.

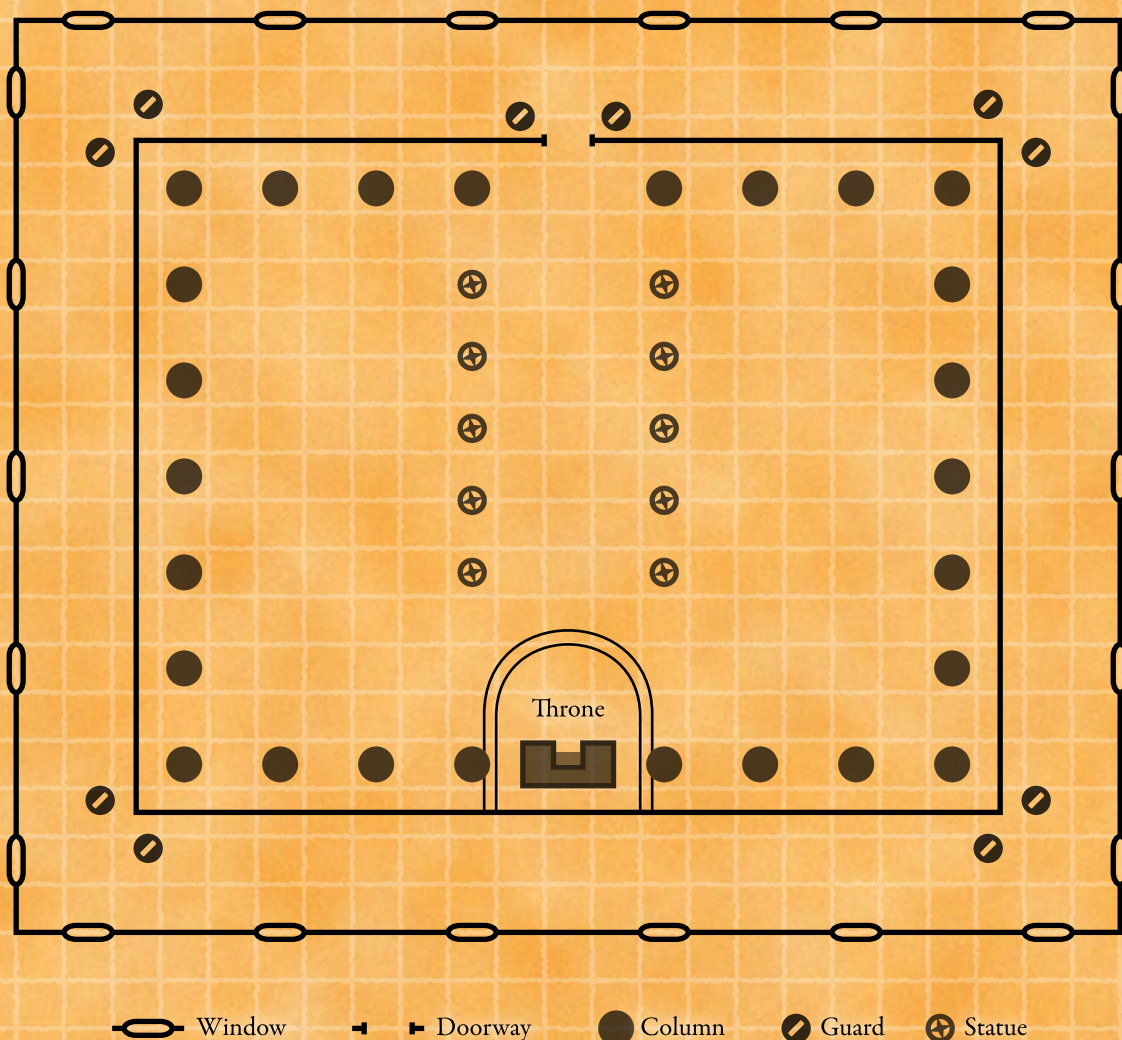
🗡️ **Lord Xiang:** See page 149. The noble is wearing the clothing and red mask of the bandits. Unless the mask is removed, his identity is likely to remain a secret for now.

THE LAIR OF THE VERMILLION MASK

Should the wanderers win the conflict, they find out from questioning any bandits who remain alive that they are extremely loyal to the Vermillion Mask. They are immune to attempts of Persuasion or Intimidation. Only by winning an opposed roll of Smarts vs. the captive's Smarts can a traveler trick him into revealing where the others have taken the Lady Min.

On the other hand, if Xiang is captured, he is not made of such stern stuff. He readily admits to having made a deal with the Vermillion Mask and reveals the destination

Lair of the Vermillion Mask



of the raiders—a building lying in the heart of the nearby city of Guanghwang.

Failing either of those options, a successful Tracking roll allows the heroes to follow the bandits.

GUANGHWANG

The city of Guanghwang is a teeming mass of people shoved into rotting wood hovels. The buildings here are about three to four stories tall and all huddled together, allowing easy travel from rooftop to rooftop. The streets are muddy and lined with trash

and sewage. Beggars of all ages and gender are on every corner begging for coin, while merchants swarm travelers in the street, desperately selling their wares.

The current lair of the Vermillion Mask is a building which can only be accessed by climbing to the rooftop of the nearby buildings. The building is completely enclosed by other structures with no street access to the ground floor, but numerous windows allow egress from any of the four sides once atop the adjoining buildings.

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

Unfortunately, the Vermillion Mask's stronghold is well guarded. Guards are posted on the "G" locations on the map. They are well-concealed in the shadows of the hallways, but a Notice roll (-2) allows a character to spot one for each success and raise. If any of the guards has the opportunity to call out an alarm, the occupants of the Mask's throne room start combat on Hold.

BATTLE WITH THE MASK

The Vermillion Mask's central chamber is a throne room lined with colorfully painted statues bearing masks that look precisely like the one true mask itself. Bound and kneeling at the base of the throne is the Lady Min. If Lord Xiang has run away with the bandits, he is standing beside her. The Vermillion Mask stands atop a small dias that surrounds the throne. There are apparently no other guards in the chamber.

Before you stands a figure draped in a golden robe. Though heavily clothed, the slight and feminine form beneath it is obvious. Most noticeable of all, however, is the garish sanguine mask where the woman's face should be. The Vermillion Mask slowly lifts a finger out at you. "You were foolish to pursue us here—as foolish as this one at my feet."

Her voice booms and resonates around you, almost as if many voices were speaking at once. "I have lived for thousands of years and shall certainly live to spit on your graves!"

She mutters some incomprehensible words and motions to the statues surrounding you. The sculptures gracefully prowl from their pedestals and move in far quicker than anything made of stone should.

The "statues" are simply other members of her clan who are wearing replicas of the Mask. They draw short swords from beneath their robes and attack. Lord Xiang joins the fight against the party if he is here. Finally, any remaining guards from the surrounding hallways rush to the sounds of battle.

Should any of the heroes threaten the Vermillion Mask herself, she steps forward, draws her dagger and holds it to the Lady

Min's throat, threatening to kill her unless the adventurers surrender. Treat this as though the Mask has the "drop" on the Lady Min.

🐉 **Vermillion Mask:** See page 143.

🐉 **"Statues" (8):** See Mask Doubles, page 149.

🐉 **Lord Xiang:** See page 149 (if present).

VICTORY OR DEFEAT

If the adventurers submit to the Mask's demand and surrender, they find themselves at the mercy of a ruthless criminal organization. How you handle their fate is up to you as the Game Master, but we suggest that they find themselves sold into slavery, but are soon provided with a chance to escape and seek vengeance. In this case, the Lady Min is married at sword point to Lord Xiang and he seizes control of her inheritance as well.

If the heroes find a way to defeat the Mask, the Lady Min returns to govern her province. Another candidate soon steps in to replace her fallen predecessor and the Vermillion Mask's depredations begin anew elsewhere in Cathay. For the time being, the party has granted the Lady Min and her subjects a brief reprieve from the bandits. However, they may also have earned themselves a relentless and seemingly unkillable foe in the process!



HEROES AND VILLAINS

FOLLOWING are the statistics for other friends or foes found in this Savage Tale.

BANDIT

These brigands are all members of the same family and thus fiercely loyal to each other and the secret of the Vermillion Mask.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: -2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: Loyal

THE VERMILLION MASK

Edges: —

Gear: Axe (Str+1d6), bow (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6) leather armor (+1), arrows (20).

GUARD

The Lady Min's guards served her father first and now her with unswerving dedication, even in the face of the wrath of a seemingly immortal foe.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7(2)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: —

Gear: Dao (Str+d8), bow (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6), brigandine hauberk (as chainmail, +2), arrows (20).



LADY MIN

Grace flows through every action this young noble takes, whether walking across the room or negotiating a trade treaty. Although she has lived a life of privilege, the Lady has a will of iron and heart of gold.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d8, Knowledge (Heraldry) d8, Knowledge (History) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Streetwise d6

Charisma: +4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Loyal

Edges: Attractive, Noble, Strong Willed

Gear: Expensive robes, dagger (Str+d4).



LORD XIANG

Xiang is easily 20 years elder to the Lady Min, but that has not quelled his lecherous desire for her. He has honed his skills on many battlefields and in countless duels, but underneath his grim exterior lies the soul of a cowardly bully.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Taunt d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: Arrogant, Greedy

Edges: Block, Frenzy, Iron Jaw, Luck, Riposte, Sweep

Gear: Dao (Str+d8), dagger (Str+1d4), brigandine hauberk (as chainmail, +2).

MASK DOUBLES

These young women did not quite meet the requirements the bandit clan holds for Mask candidates. Instead, they have been trained more extensively in hand-to-hand combat and are used to confound and confuse any possible assassins. They are remarkably similar in physical appearance, but a careful examination quickly reveals individual traits.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Taunt d8, Throwing d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Vow (Major: Protect the Vermillion Mask) Wanted (Major)

Edges: Block, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Quick Draw, Spot Weakness

Gear: Short sword (Str+d6), Vermillion Mask, robes.

Special Abilities:

- **Fanatics:** Any Mask Double within 1" of a Vermillion Mask becomes fanatical, sacrificing her life so the Mask can live. Any attack made against the villain is instead made against one of the Doubles as she leaps in the way of the sword, fist, or pistol with her Mistress' name on it.

WILL o' WISP

Calling on the darkest of her black art, the witch brought the foul concoction of molten gold and lamb's blood to a boil. She carefully poured the alloy into the mold. With the metal still soft, she etched the ancient runes into the band, chanting words in a long dead tongue. While it was still blisteringly hot, she slid the newly cast ring onto the middle finger of her left hand and quickly doused it in brackish water drawn from the stump of a hangman's tree—just as her accusers burst through the door.

When the villagers tied her atop the pyre, one sought to snatch the ring. "A shame to let a fine bauble such as this burn!" he said. But try as he might, he could not pull it from her hand. The ring had shrunk against her bone when it cooled and held fast to her finger.

As they lit the wood around her, the witch laughed as the flames rose around her. As the fire consumed her, her body burst with a pop, leaving only a swarm of embers that fled into the night, but the laughter echoed through the village even after the pyre burned out.

None of the men that dragged her from her home that night lived out the fortnight.

They say if you are so unfortunate to encounter a will o' wisp and look hard enough, you can still see the old witch's face looking back at you.

WILL o' wisps are the ghosts of witches and necromancers who have been burned at the stake. They manifest as small handfuls of flickering white flame that is

oddly cold to the touch rather than hot. Legend claims a brave observer can see a grinning face inside of a will o' wisp.

A will o' wisp uses the glimmering light produced by its form to lure its intended victim to a secluded spot. There, it weakens the poor soul with a fire that seems to spring from Hell itself. Once its target succumbs to the heat, the ghost possesses his corpse which immediately bursts aflame. These burning zombies are sometimes referred to as "flaming jacks", particularly amongst more rural populations. The ghost uses the reanimated body to wreak as much havoc as it can before it is consumed by the creature's otherworldly flames—preferably on those it believes wronged it in its former life.

Initially, a will o' wisp haunts the area near its death, seeking vengeance on those responsible for any and all wrongdoings against it during life. However, even once it has revenged itself on everyone guilty of even the slightest infraction, the hatred and anger that drove it to an undead existence continues to burn within the ghost. Eventually, these spirits tend to gravitate toward lonely, desolate areas where their unnatural spite for all things living leads them to prey upon unsuspecting travelers.

The process by which a will o' wisp is formed is a closely guarded secret amongst the few practitioners of the dark arts that know it and often varies greatly in the details. Invariably though, it involves the creation of a talisman of some sort which must be on the black magician at the time of his death and which serves as the ghost's anchor to this plane. The talisman is not consumed in the flames, but remains ever after searing hot to the touch.

WILL o' WISP



WILL o' WISP

The light of a will o' wisp varies from cold white to flame orange. The ghost can lessen its brilliance to that of a mere candle or brighten it to that of a torch at will.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d10, Stealth d8, Taunt d6, Tracking d8

Pace: —; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Special Abilities:

- **Ethereal:** Will o' wisps are immaterial. They don't suffer additional damage from called shots; Fearless; Immune to disease and poison.
- **Flaming Jack:** The will o' wisp can reanimate and possess the body of a victim slain by its Spiritual Exhaustion (see below) attack.
- **Flight:** The will o' wisp flies at a rate of 8". They may not "run."
- **Focus:** The ghost is tied to a specific talisman—usually a piece of jewelry—which remains unnaturally hot to the touch (2d6 damage to exposed flesh). If this item is submerged in water, the will o' wisp suffers 2d6 damage per round as long as it remains so. If it is submerged in holy water, the wisp is destroyed immediately.
- **Invulnerability:** Will o' wisps are immune to all non-magical attacks, but suffer 1d6 damage when doused in at least a gallon of water, +2 per additional gallon.
- **Spiritual Exhaustion:** A will o' wisp's only means of attack in its initial form is by subjecting its victim to a supernatural heat that only she can feel. The wisp and its target make an opposed Spirit roll. If the victim loses, the victim suffers a Fatigue level.
- **Size -1:** Will o' wisps are approximately 2'-3' in diameter.

- **Weakness (Holy Water):** Sprinkling a will o' wisp with holy water does 2d10 damage to it.



FLAMING JACK

The very flesh of a flaming jack burns from the intensity of the will o' wisp's unholy flames, quickly scorching its features and burning away any hair and clothing. A strong odor of charred human flesh accompanies the creature.



THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Taunt d6, Tracking d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

- **Consumption:** The fire from the wisp always consumes its victim's corpse, often quickly. Every 10 minutes, a flaming jack makes a Vigor roll. If the roll is failed, the flames have so damaged it that it collapses forcing the will o' wisp to vacate it.
- **Flaming:** On a successful melee attack, the burning touch of a flaming jack inflicts Str+1d8 damage. Anyone struck by a flaming jack's attack may catch fire as well. See the rules on fire in *The Savage Worlds of Solomon Kane*. A victim set aflame in this fashion suffers 1d10 damage.
- **Host:** If a flaming jack is killed, the possessing will o' wisp vacates the corpse to either flee or attack in its original form.
- **Possessed:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. No wound penalties. Called Shots do no extra damage.
- **Weakness (Holy Water):** Sprinkling a flaming jack with holy water forces the will o' wisp to make a Spirit check or flee the body.
- **Weakness (Water):** A flaming jack suffers 1d6 damage if splashed with a gallon of water, +2 damage for each additional gallon.



SAVAGE TALE: THE BURNING

TRAVELING through Spain, the party passes through a small village at the edge of a wooded region. A recently burned farmhouse sits on the edge of the settlement. The heroes encounter a funeral procession returning from the nearby cemetery.

A TRAGEDY AND A MYSTERY

Should any of the characters inquire as to either the funeral or the burned house, a local tells them of a recent misfortune.

"Ah, it is a terrible heartbreak! Alfredo Sacasa and his entire family died when his home burned the night before last. No doubt you saw the ruins on the way into town. 'Fredo was one of our most respected men and, if that were not bad enough, another member of the village, Feliz Cabrera, has been missing for several days!"

No one in the town has any clue as to what started the fire—only that it began late at night. Before the town could organize to fight it, the Sacasa house was blazing out of control. None of the family escaped the house. Sacasa was well respected in the community and it seems unlikely to locals that anyone would have wished him harm and certainly not his wife or two children.

Feliz Cabrera was a shepherd and, while it was not uncommon for him to be out with his flock overnight, he has been gone for nearly a week and many in the village are concerned that he may have fallen victim to bandits or even wolves.

Any suspicious traveler that asks about any connection finds that none of the villagers was aware of one, besides the obvious fact that the community is small and everyone knows everyone else to some degree. Sacasa was considered one of the leaders of the small town while Cabrera was more of an outsider due to the nature of his work.

THE INQUISITION'S AFTERMATH

As the wanderers near the center of town, have them make a Notice roll. Any that succeed observe a faded, but faintly visible blackened area on the ground on the village commons. The spot is almost 10 feet across and roughly circular. Closer inspection finds ash and perhaps a small piece of charred wood or two. Clearly, a large bonfire had been built here at some point, perhaps as part of a local festival or meeting.

Any adventurer asking around about the fire is met initially with blank or furtive glances, but a Streetwise roll (-2) uncovers the story behind it. "That's where the Inquisitor had Baltasar Taveres burned. It was a terrible thing, but Baltasar was consorting with the Devil, practicing the black arts, and all. They say he was even raising the dead—not like in

the Bible, but mindless abominations that he used for slaves!”

Further questioning on the matter reveals that Pedro de Ramello, an inquisitor from Seville, held court at the request of the village leaders and found the man guilty of heresy. Baltasar refused to recant and cursed the court. De Ramello then ordered him burned at the stake a little over two weeks ago. The Inquisitor and his retinue left shortly thereafter.

The villagers aren't proud of the execution, but no one has any doubt that Baltasar was a necromancer. The local gravedigger, Esteban Uribe, saw him removing bodies from the local graveyard and Feliz Cabrera even testified he later saw villagers he knew to be dead in the forest near Baltasar's home.

By this time, any heroes worth their salt should be taking an interest in the goings on in the village and probably linking them somehow with the death of the necromancer. If one of the adventurers thinks to ask if Sacasa had any role in the trial, she learns that the man was instrumental in not only bringing the inquisitor to the community, but also was the first person to level charges against Baltasar.

There are several paths the characters can follow at this point. Where they go—and when—plays a large role in what information they find and how well prepared they are to face the will o' wisp.

FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS

Following up on the sorcerer's trial, it soon becomes clear to any traveler delving into the details of the trial that the Inquisitor questioned most of the villagers. Besides Sacasa, Cabrera, and Uribe, one other—Eloisa Moreno, a middle-aged seamstress—testified she had overheard Baltasar apparently summoning spirits or demons. Moreno confirms this to the adventurers if she is questioned, saying on several occasions she had visited his home to mend some of his clothing. A few times she arrived early and overheard strange chanting from inside the house.

Moreno admits she has seen what appears to be someone prowling around her property

The Inquisition

This Savage Tale is set in Spain, refers to the Spanish Inquisition, and serves as a way to introduce the name of Pedro de Ramello to the heroes. The adventure *A Matter of Guilt* makes an excellent follow-up to this one, and allows the heroes to meet the inquisitor face-to-face.

However, if you wish, *The Burning* can also be set in a number of other European countries. Although not as famous, during the time of Solomon Kane there were also inquisitions conducted in Portugal and the Netherlands. Additionally, the Holy See established the Roman Inquisition to root out heresy on the Italian peninsula and the isle of Malta.

If you'd prefer more leeway in the setting, simply remove the reference to the Inquisition altogether. The trial of Baltasar then becomes a witch trial held by the local populace and can be set in virtually any European locale—or possibly even one of the colonies in the New World, such as Jamestown.

late at night. She tells the party she's never actually seen anyone, but she has seen the light of a torch bobbing around her fields. There is no other evidence of the visits, of course, since it's the will o' wisp and not an actual person.

The Gravedigger

Not surprisingly, the gravedigger Uribe can be found at the village's small cemetery. He is an unsavory individual who is unfamiliar with even the basic concept of hygiene. Dirt—no doubt from the cemetery—is caked under his long fingernails. A spotty beard rings a mouth filled with far too few teeth and the odor of alcohol on his breath is so strong that anyone standing too close to the man risks becoming intoxicated from the fumes alone.

Uribe readily tells the heroes that he saw Baltasar poking around the cemetery

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

frequently and caught him digging up graves on more than one occasion. He brought this information to Sacasa, who then summoned the Inquisitor. He wonders if there might be another graverobber in the area though, he adds, as he's seen a torch moving around the cemetery the last few nights. When he's gone to check though, the prowler has always escaped before he could catch up to them.

While speaking with the gravedigger, have the adventurers all make Notice rolls. Any who succeed notice the man has a crude bandage wrapped around one of his hands. If asked about it, Uribe, looks at his hand for a moment, and then somewhat uncertainly says, "I burned it pulling that devil's carcass off the post. I never had nobody burned like that before. They get awful hot."

A wanderer who wins an opposed roll of her Notice versus Uribe's Smarts, realizes he's lying. The man becomes indignant if confronted with that fact and storms off.

THE MISSING SHEPHERD

The party may decide to try to locate Feliz Cabrera. Any of the villagers can provide the whereabouts of some of the pastures where Cabrera would take his flock. Not surprisingly, neither Cabrera nor his sheep are at any of the likely places—after all, that is the first place the residents looked for him. However, a Tracking roll at one of the fields finds a trail where a large number of sheep and a single person headed into the forest several days ago.

Following the trail a little over a mile, the heroes come upon a horrific scene near a small stream. Dozens of sheep, all burned to death, lie scattered throughout the woods. Near one of the sheep lies the curled and burnt body of a man, presumably Feliz Cabrera. Many of the bodies have been gnawed on by wolves and other animals, and from the decay, all have been dead for many days.

Searching the area finds numerous areas of scorching on trees and the ground, but no other footprints leading into or out of the area.

THE NEXT VICTIM

That night, the will o' wisp returns to attack Eloisa Moreno. If she is unguarded, the ghost quickly overcomes her and animates her body as a flaming jack. It then uses her blazing corpse to attempt to set fire to the village church. Unless the heroes stop the wisp, it succeeds in burning down the building before Moreno's body is consumed by its unholy flames.

If the party sets a guard on the woman's house, they face the will o' wisp. Initially, it tries to lure any characters away from the woman's house. Then, it focuses its attacks solely on Moreno unless a hero succeeds in thwarting it or actually causing it harm. In that case, it quickly changes to attack that character until he is Incapacitated before returning to attack Moreno.

The wisp flees once it has suffered a Wound or it is defeated in flaming jack form.

♣ **Eloisa Moreno:** See Villager, page 156. Moreno is unarmed.

♣ **Will o' Wisp:** See page 151.

♣ **Flaming Jack:** See page 151.

THE NECROMANCER'S ABODE

The travelers at some point are likely to want to visit Baltasar's residence. Getting directions to the house is relatively simple, although any villagers asked about it reflexively cross themselves as they provide them. The small house lies a few miles out of town in the surrounding forest.

The woods are thicker and heavily shadowed in the area near Baltasar's former home. The door to the small house—little more than a hut, actually—is partially ajar and it's immediately clear that the house was ransacked in the not-too-distant past (by the Inquisition). A cursory search of what remains turns up a few odd items (a mandrake root, a candle made of some odd tallow, etc.) that a Knowledge (Occult) roll tells the heroes are all associated with sorcery or witchcraft.

More persistent adventurers may make a cooperative Notice roll. With a raise, one of them discovers a small hidden compartment in the floor. Inside are scraps of parchment

with notes scrawled on them. Reading through them is somewhat confusing as the notes are incomplete and often just random words, but any hero making a Smarts (-2) or Knowledge (Occult) roll grasps that the general gist is apparently Baltasar's research into a ritual to prolong his life. The ritual required the talisman to be present at the time of his death, however.

Of key importance in the ritual is a talisman of some sort, however the notes never explain exactly what sort of item it might be. Even a thorough search of the premises reveals no further clue as to the talisman's nature.

AN UNDEAD HOST

Baltasar, now a will o' wisp, remains near his former home much of the time. He is almost instantly aware of the wanderers' arrival and resents their trespass on his land. Still, until it is clear that they are pilfering through his belongings, he takes no action. Once the heroes begin a thorough search, the will o' wisp takes steps to prevent them from discovering too much about his secret.

If the party is foolhardy enough to visit the secluded house in the evening or after dark, the will o' wisp attempts to draw them into the forest and lose them in the wilderness. Appearing as a sputtering torch flame off amongst the trees, the ghost circles the house hoping to lure the adventurers after it. If they take the bait, it leads them on an hours-long wild goose chase before disappearing and leaving them miles from the village. Finding the way back to the village is difficult and requires either a Tracking roll at a -2 penalty. Also, a Knowledge (Area Knowledge, specific to the place the adventure takes place) roll—or if any of the wanderers is from that area, a Common Knowledge—also leads them back, and without any penalty. Each attempt takes 4 hours of time.

On the other hand, should the travelers have more prudently chosen to conduct their investigation during daylight hours, the will o' wisp takes a more direct route. The charges against Baltasar were correct: He had indeed been robbing the local graveyard and using the corpses in his foul rites. Several reanimated corpses are buried in shallow graves near his residence and the wisp calls

AN EVIL TOME

Instead of a collection of Baltasar's handwritten notes, you may consider including a fragment of the Liber Vorago (page 99) here instead. This is another way to subtly insert that particular relic of evil into your campaign. In this case, the fragment has sections underlined or scribbled annotations that reveal Baltasar's intent and the existence of a talisman.

them forth to attack the party, hoping to distract them from their efforts.

Zombies (1, plus 1 per hero): See page 156.

BACK IN THE VILLAGE

Once the characters have discovered the existence of the talisman, it's likely they return to the village to attempt to identify and possibly locate it. A hero who makes a Streetwise roll learns that Baltasar was wearing a gold medallion around his neck at his trial. The Inquisitor ordered it removed prior to the execution, but the chain was too tight to fit over his head, so de Ramello simply left it on the man.

While no one knows what happened to the piece of jewelry, all the villagers assume the heat of the fire melted the soft metal. What's left is probably buried with the necromancer's body. The Inquisitor ordered Uribe to bury the man specifically on unhallowed ground away from the village cemetery.

THE TALISMAN

The party quickly discovers only the gravedigger knows the location of the necromancer's body. He loaded the remains onto a cart and buried it alone. Uribe at first acts confused and pretends to have forgotten where he buried the body. An Intimidation or Persuasion roll convinces him to finally take the group to the gravesite.

Initially, Uribe refuses to help the characters dig up the remains, claiming religious reasons—unless bribed with at least 5£. Once

THE SAVAGE FOES OF SOLOMON KANE

the corpse is disinterred, the heroes find no sign of the necklace, but discover that the head has been severed from the body. On the neck, there is a ring of unburned flesh around the neck in the shape of a necklace.

Uribe claims ignorance about the missing necklace until a traveler succeeds on either an Intimidation or Persuasion roll. Then, he confesses he took the necklace, thinking it to be very valuable. He was forced to sever the man's head to remove it and burned his hand badly on the unnaturally hot necklace in the process. He quickly realized that a necklace so hot it seared the flesh was worthless, but did not know what to do with it, so he buried it behind his shack at the cemetery.

The talisman is too hot to handle with bare flesh (2d6 damage per round), so Uribe wrapped it in sackcloth. Surprisingly, the cloth is not even singed. The adventurers find that the necklace apparently only burns flesh. It can safely be wrapped in cloth or carried in a gloved hand.

THE WISP RETURNS

The will o' wisp is now fully aware of the threat the heroes pose to it and its plans for revenge. The spirit is also better prepared to face the wanderers than in the past. Left to its own devices, the ghost waits until after dark before coming for Uribe. However, if it appears the party is going to submerge the talisman, the will o' wisp attacks immediately.

It has summoned the last of the zombies Baltasar created through his necromancy and the creatures claw their way up from shallow graves where they've hidden near the gravediggers hut. Seeing the undead dig their way from the ground requires a Fear check from all. The will o' wisp attacks Uribe, attempting to create another flaming jack, while the zombies focus their attacks on the party to keep them occupied.

If the characters don't leave a guard on Uribe, the will o' wisp makes short work of the man, possessing him as a flaming jack. It then leads its zombies to find the heroes and remove the potential hazard they represent to it.

♣ **Esteban Uribe:** See Villager, page 156. Armed with a shovel (Medium Improvised Weapon)

♣ **Will o' Wisp:** See page 151.

♣ **Zombie (2 per hero):** See page 156.



HEROES AND VILLAINS

FOLLOWING are the statistics for other friends or foes found in this Savage Tale.

VILLAGER

These folk lead simple, hard-working, lives. None are proud of what happened to Baltasar, but all believe the man was truly evil.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d4, Knowledge (one trade) d6, Notice d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances & Edges: —

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), tools of the trade.

ZOMBIE

These were all created from the corpses of villagers stolen from the local graveyard. As such, they are particularly unsettling to others in the community (Fear -1).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Stealth d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str.
- **Fearless:** Zombies are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; Called Shots do no extra damage.



Index

A

Alberti, Thomas 78
 Albino Ape 69
 Alchemy and Mandrakes 111
 Aleksei Torshin 78
 Algonquin Hunter 127
 Alistair Borgia 8
 Andrew Halford, Knight
 Commander 142
 Ape, Albino 69
 Assistant 107

B

Ba'aloth, Demon of the Tome
 101
 Bandit 148
 Bandits 15
 Bandits, Fergus' 112
 Bedlam 103
 Bestrider 2
 Borgia Twins 8
 Bowman, Tasked 141
 Branded Cultist 31

C

Caprus 17
 Caprus Progeny 18
 Captain Phillipe Marceau 55
 Captain, Pirate 135
 Carrion Lord 22
 Chepi 7
 Chieftess Chepi 7
 Citizens 16
 City of the Fish-Men 88
 Cree Warrior 127
 Crocodile 69
 Crossroads Man 22
 Crusader, Tasked 141
 Cultist 60
 Branded 31
 Ringed 31
 Cult of the Iron Ring 29

D

Dein
 Erasmus 39
 Rebecca 38
 Delia Borgia 9
 Demon of the Tome 101
 de Ramello, Pedro 113, 153
 Dmitri Turov 78
 Dorshire 94
 Doubles, Mask 149
 Dr. Tyne 106
 Drune, Michael 52

E

Eleven-Parted Lord 30
 Erasmus Dein 39

F

Fabio Valdez 119
 Fergus 112
 Fergus' Bandits 112
 First Mate, Pirate 120
 Flame Lances 146
 Flaming Jack 151

G

George 55
 Girl in Waiting 22
 Goblin 46

Goblin King 52
 God-Fang 59
 God in Ivory 53
 Greater Scylla 128
 Greene House 24
 Green Mist 146
 Green, Mortimer 27
 Grisson Manor 10
 Grisson, Nicodemus 16
 Grub Swarm, Ravaka 122
 Guard 149
 Gustav Schenk 44

H

Halford, Knight Commander
 Andrew 142
 Hardwick, Samuel 55
 Harlow Hobbes 62
 Harlow's Hounds 63
 Harmonius Quill 102, 107
 High Priest 37
 Hoarfrost Warrior 70
 Hobbes, Harlow 62
 Hobbes' Hounds 63
 Homunculus 76
 Homunculus 77
 Hounds, Harlow's 63
 House of Ivory 58
 House of Serpents 57
 Howard Jefferies, Reverend 98
 Hunter, Algonquin 127
 Hybrid, Ichthynite 86

I

Ichthynite 85
 Ichthynite Hybrid 86
 Ichthynite Priest 91
 Imp 93
 Imp's Strictures 94
 Initiates 37
 Inn of the Starving Wolf 78
 Inquisition Hearings 115
 Iron Ring, The Cult of 29
 Iroquois Hunter 7
 Ivanova, Yelena 78
 Ivar Petrik 78
 Ivory Offspring 60

J

Jablonski, Stanislaw 84
 Jack, Flaming 151
 Jade Palace 145
 Jana Torshin 78
 Jefferies, Reverend Howard 98
 Josef Kutkin 78

K

Knight Commander Andrew
 Halford 142
 Kutkin, Josef 78

L

Lady Min 149
 Lair of the Vermillion Mask 146
 Lances, Flame 146
 Lesser Scylla 129
 Liber Vorago 99
 and the Path of Kane 101
 Disposing 101

O

Ownership 99
 Lilianna 112
 Lord Xiang 149
 Lost Order 137
 L'tayan 7
 Lunatic 107

M

Maggot Bride 22
 Mamluk, Tasked 142
 Mandrake 108
 and Alchemy 111
 Marceau, Captain Phillipe 55
 Mask Doubles 149
 Mercenary 44
 Michael Drune 52
 Min, Lady 149
 Mist, Green 146
 Mortimer Green 27

N

Nevsky, Pavel 79, 84
 Nicodemus Grisson 16
 Noshi 126

O

Oq-sem 127
 Oq-sem's Dagger 127
 Otetani 7

P

Path of Kane 1
 Pavel Nevsky 79, 84
 Pedro de Ramello 113, 153
 Petrik, Ivar 78
 Phillipe Marceau 55
 Pirate Captain 135
 Pirate First Mate 120
 Pirates 120, 135
 Priest, High 37
 Priest, Ichthynite 91
 Progeny, Caprus 18

Q

Quill, Harmonius 102, 107

R

Raiders 135
 Rajani 59
 Ramelovic, Yuri 36
 Ravaka 121
 Grub Swarm 122
 Rebecca Dein 38
 Reined King 22
 Reverend Howard Jefferies 98
 Ringed Cultist 31
 Ritual of Release 43

S

Samuel Hardwick 55
 Savage Tales
 A Matter of Guilt 113
 Bedlam 102
 Dark Patron 40
 Deal with the Devils 47
 Family Affair 109
 From the Deep 87
 House of Sacrifices 32
 Lady of Jade 144
 Legion of the Damned 137

Nameless City 63
 Not of the People 3
 Oncoming Frost 71
 Possessed 78
 Servants of a Forgotten God
 55

Sins of the Father 94
 The Burning 152
 The Horde 122
 The Last Stand 23
 The Mouths of Babes 19
 The Under Market 130
 Unexpected Guests 10

Schenk, Gustav 44

Scylla 128

Greater 128

Lesser 129

Shard of the Eleven-Parted
 Lord 30

Sinking City 91

Smuggler 120

Snake Man 60

Soldier 84, 120

Splinter Ring 37

Stanislaw Jablonski, Captain of
 the Guard 84

Starving Wolf, The Inn of the
 79

T

Tasked, The 136

Bowman 141

Crusader 141

Mamluk 142

Turov, Dmitri 78

Temple of the God in Ivory 57

Themes 1

Thomas Alberti 78

Thugs 37

Torshin, Aleksei 78

Torshin, Jana 78

Townfolk 98, 135

Tribe Member 7

Tyne, The Mad Doctor 106

U

Under Market 131

V

Valdez, Fabio 119

Vermillion Mask 143

Village of Whispers 63

Villager 75, 156

Vorago, Liber 99

W

Warrior, Cree 127

Warrior, Hoarfrost 70

Will o' Wisp 151

Woman Enchained 42, 45

X

Xiang, Lord 149

Y

Yelena Ivanova 78

Yuri Ramelovic 36

Z

Zacek the Bloody 79

Zombie 156

Zombies 112