

BEASTS BARBARIANS

A Sword and Sorcery Savage Worlds setting

By UMBERTO PIGNATELLI

MOONLESS NIGHT OVER GRIMDELL



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INTRODUCTION

This scenario is best suited for a group of heroes, but can also be played by a Lone Wolf hero.

The heroes are mercenaries at the service of Baron Grotho of Grindell, a bannerman of the Count of Felantium. A few months ago, the Baron left his castle and his only daughter, Lia, in the care of Gilastius, a learned man as well and Lia's personal physician. At the request of his lord, he fought the Cairnlanders in Northeim.

Now Grotho is returning home. As he approaches his castle, he can hardly believe the news. During his absence Gilastius revealed himself as a wicked Lotusmaster and has used his dark arts to create a legion of minions. He has proclaimed himself lord of Grindell and forced Lia to marry him.

Baron Grotho has laid siege to Castle Grindell, but the fortress has sturdy walls, is surrounded by a moat, and its northern side is protected by the mountains. Gilastius has closed the gates and his small army of foreign soldiers has been resisting Grotho's assaults for three weeks.

The heroes are among Grotho's infantrymen. As the scenario begins, they are standing in chains in the Baron's tent. Grotho is drinking wine from a horn and looking at them with his piercing eyes. In a booming voice, he says:

"The sergeant told me you quarreled with another soldier and killed him. You know the rules: kill and be killed. You will all be beheaded at dawn. But he also told me you are among the toughest men in my army. Our scouts have reported Syranthian mercenaries approaching.

They number twice our size, and will be here in a day or two. Gilastius — may the crows devour his black heart — will pay them with gold from my own coffers! We cannot stand against them. If we don't conquer the castle tomorrow, we'll all be food for worms. I need a group of men who will sneak into the castle, kill the traitor, and save my daughter. Without their leader, Gilastius' army will surrender.

The mission is dangerous, but if you succeed, you'll be spared and rewarded. Refuse and the executioner's axe will show you no mercy. Tonight is moonless, and this will give you an advantage. The choice is yours, but you must decide now."

PREPARATIONS

Given their situation, the heroes are forced to accept. As they are about to depart, a pale man steps out of the shadows and the Baron introduces him as Swiss Vann, a skilled Lotusmaster at his service.

"You must be very careful," Swiss says in a whispering voice. "Gilastius has mastered the Lotus arts of illusion and shape shifting. I wonder where he learned such forbidden knowledge. Take this Lotus Pearl, it will help you see through his deceptions."

He hands the party a small glass ball full of milky liquid. It is a White Lotus of Truth, a powerful concoction having the dispel power (Arcane skill d10). It must be broken against the target to dispel any foul sorcery, and can double as sling projectile if necessary. This item can be used in various ways during the adventure, but the heroes have only one and should not waste it.

CASTLE DESCRIPTION

The castle vaguely resembles a traditional medieval fortress. It is a mix of traditional Imperial mansions and rough Northeim buildings, consisting of a large, two-story tower protected by a stone fortification with battlements. In the courtyard there is a well (fundamental during sieges), the stables, and a smithy. The entire complex is surrounded by a moat full of water. The drawbridge is activated by a mechanism located in the tower above the gate.

Grotho gives the heroes their gear back and offers his help in making a plan. There are two ways into the castle, from above or from below.

Castle Grimdell's northern side is bordered by the almost vertical face of a mountain. With the right equipment, the party can climb up the mountain and reach the castle's battlements. The daring feat must be accomplished quickly and silently, because there are sentinels patrolling the walls.

As for the second way in, Grotho knows there is a passage somewhere under the moat leading into the castle's dungeons. The problem is no one has ever seen it or used it. It might have caved in, or now be the lair of some terrible beast. This plan is not as daring as the first, but the heroes must swim underwater across the moat without alerting the sentinels on the battlements, then dive to the bottom and find the passage, if it exists.

As a general rule, the party sets off in the dead of night (1 AM) and the mission must be completed before the sun rises (5 AM).

"You have until dawn. Then I attack, whether you have killed the sorcerer or not." Lord Grotho says as you leave.

INFILTRATION FROM ABOVE

Preparation. If the heroes choose to infiltrate the castle this way, they are given ropes and tiger's claws and are taken to the foot of the mountain.

Climbing. The climb is considered Prepared (see *Savage Worlds*) and consists of three 10" sections. Each section requires a Climbing roll. The first part is easy (+2), the second has very few handholds (-2), and the third is normal. The heroes can secure themselves with ropes to avoid falling. In addition, if experienced climbers lead the way the others can benefit from their experience. In game terms, choose the heroes' climbing order. A hero receives +1 to his climbing roll for each success and raise scored by a climber before them. So, if a group of three climbers rolls 4, 8, and 6, the 8 scored by the second climber means the third climber receives +2 to his roll.

In case of failure, a hero simply doesn't advance, which stops the party members coming after him in the climbing order, and must retry the roll. In case of a critical failure, draw a card from the Action deck. If it is red, the hero falls (if he is secured with ropes, he only suffers from Bumps and Bruises). If it is black, he makes a lot of noise when he falls, and the party receives a Detection Token.

Grappling Hooks. Once the group has reached the top, the heroes must throw their grappling hooks and climb to the battlements. The top is 10" away at Medium Range (-2). With a successful throw each hero must also make an Agility roll to properly anchor the hook. If the roll to anchor the hook fails, draw a card from

the Action deck. A black card means he makes noise and the group receives a Detection Token.

Arms' Work. Now for the hardest part: the heroes must climb the ropes using only their muscles. This requires a Strength roll. In case of failure, a hero doesn't fall but gains a level of Fatigue and must retry the roll until he scores a success. He will only fall if he reaches Exhausted. The Fatigue level can be removed by resting for five minutes.

Securing the Battlements. Every time a hero reaches the battlements, draw a card. If it is a black face card, a Twisted Guard is nearby. The adventurer must use stealth to evade him, or dispatch him quietly. There are 4 guards in total on the battlements.

After securing the battlements, the party can reach the Courtyard (see below, **In the Castle**)

(M) Twisted Guards (4)

INFILTRATION FROM BELOW

Preparation. If the heroes choose this way to infiltrate the castle, they are stealthily taken to the moat and given rough indications of where the underwater passage might be. No specific gear is provided unless the heroes ask for it. For example, they might want to take waterproof sealskins, containing lanterns as well as weapons.

Swimming. The party must make a Swimming roll to cross the moat. The water is very calm and it is almost impossible to drown, so a failure involves repeating the roll, while a critical failure means making

DETECTION

This scenario is a stealth mission; not being detected is crucial. Since it is impossible to detail how each NPC will react in each situation, Detection is handled in an abstract way. Every time the heroes do something conspicuous (detailed in the scenario), they receive a Detection Token. The number of Detection Tokens influences the behavior of those dwelling in the castle. Staying quiet for half an hour in a secure place automatically reduces the tokens by one unless they have 5 or more, in which case the whole castle is being actively searched.

Unless it is completely stealthy (the GM's decision), combat gives the heroes a Token every two rounds. The Tokens are for the GM's eyes only, and should be concealed from the eyes of the players.

Zero Tokens. *No alarm. All NPCs are considered Inactive Sentinels.*

One Token. *Low-level alert. All NPCs are considered Active Sentinels.*

Two Tokens. *The guards are actively looking for suspicious activity. Every time the heroes come to a new location, draw a card from the Action Deck. If it is a club, a patrol from the Guards Room (1 per hero) arrives in 1d6 rounds!*

Four Tokens. *All NPCs in the same area (Court, Ground Floor or Upper Floor) are actively looking for the heroes.*

Five Tokens or more. *General alert! All NPCs are actively looking for the heroes. Gilastius is awake, so the heroes won't be able to attack him in his sleep.*

too much noise and the party receives a Detection Token.

Underwater Passage. Once the heroes find the right section of the moat with a Notice roll, they can find the underwater passage. The underwater passage is quite large (two people can swim side by side) and 12" long. Each hero must make a Vigor roll to hold his breath. Failure results in a level of Fatigue. What the heroes don't know is toward its end, a metal grate bars the passage!

Grate. The heroes can either go back (same Vigor roll as before) or try to force the grate open. It is quite rusty, but the heroes cannot stay underwater too long. Breaking the grate is considered a Dramatic Task based on Strength (-2). The roll can be cooperative. The heroes have five rounds to gather five successes and break the grate. After this time they can continue, but each round they must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue (see the **Drowning** rules in *Savage Worlds*).

In The Dungeons. Once the grate is broken, the heroes emerge in a low, half-flooded room. If they gain solid ground and breath and rest for a few minutes, they can recover from all their Fatigue. The whole area is in Pitch Black conditions unless the heroes brought a light source. The only way out of the room is a slippery sewer channel leading upward. The heroes are soon walking on level ground and can see strange secretions on the walls and a putrid, greenish substance in the water. With a Lotusmastery roll, they recognize the matter as Lotus waste, most likely produced by Gilastius' experiments (see **Laboratory** below). The sewer ends at the bottom of a well, full of foul-smelling junk. When the heroes come into the well, they disturb its dweller, a giant rat who

has been feeding on so much waste it has become as big as a man.

After dispatching the monster, the heroes can climb up the well (Climbing roll required), cautiously open the manhole, and enter the Stables (see below, **In the Castle**).

(M) Giant Rat (1)

IN THE CASTLE

The castle isn't very big, so no map is needed. The description of each location includes its connections, i.e. how to access nearby areas. Some are obvious (like walking through a door), while others are more subtle or complex (like climbing a wall and breaking a window). As a general rule, NPCs need 3 rounds to move from one location to the next. Unless otherwise stated, the doors are made of wood and reinforced with bronze bars (Toughness 8), whereas the rooms are in Dim light cast by sparse torches.

CASTLE COURT

Battlements. The castle is surrounded by a fortification with battlements on all four sides. The guards patrol the battlements throughout the night and end their shift one hour before sunrise (4 AM). If the replacements find their comrades dead or missing, give the players three Detection Tokens.

Connections: Courtyard (down the stairs), Stables or Smithy (jumping onto the roof: Agility roll to avoid falling, which causes 2d6 damage), Laboratory (Climbing (-4) roll to scale the wall; window has Toughness 7), Armory (jumping to reach

a narrow Ground Floor window requires a Strength roll; falling causes 2d6 damage), then an Agility roll (with -2 if the hero doesn't have the Small Hindrance) is needed to squeeze through).

(M) Twisted Guards (4)

Stables. The stables are dirty and no longer in use because Gilastius had the horses slaughtered. The poor stable boys met an even worse fate (see below). Nothing useful can be found here, except some old servants' rags (handy for an impromptu disguise) and a pack saddle (Str+d6 Improvised Weapon).

Connections: Courtyard (main door), Kitchens (side door, with a Stealth roll the kitchens can be reached without alerting the Courtyard sentinels), Smithy (side door provides direct access to the Smithy without going through the Courtyard).

Smithy. The smith died a few weeks ago and the forge is cold and empty. Besides some furniture, the only useful thing the heroes can find here is a large hammer (Str+d8 Improvised Weapon).

Connections: Courtyard (through door), Stables (door).

Courtyard. The central Courtyard is empty except for a well and a broken catapult, which someone has hopelessly tried to repair. Each time the heroes enter this area, a card is drawn from the Action Deck. If it is a club, a single guard is crossing the Courtyard, making for the Gates or the Main Hall. If the guard discovers the heroes, he tries to run to the Gates to warn his comrades.

Connections: Main Hall (door, watched by a guard), Gate Tower (door), Kitchens (side door, unguarded).

(M) Twisted Guards (1)

Gate. The mechanism to control the drawbridge is inside the Gate Tower. A group of Guards is always stationed here, busy drinking and warming themselves by the fire. A big horn lies on the table. If they spot any intruders the guards immediately sound it, awakening the whole castle (give the party two Detection Tokens for each round the guards sound the horn). Capturing control of this room is a good idea because the heroes can then lower the drawbridge (which takes three rounds). This won't end the adventure, however. Gilastius still makes his last stand in the Main Tower.

(M) Twisted Guards (8)

Connections: Courtyard (door).

GROUND FLOOR

Kitchens. The castle's kitchens are large and filled with tables, chairs and various cooking implements. A huge fireplace stands in the northern corner. However there is very little food and the place looks almost abandoned. Most of the servants assigned to the kitchens have disappeared in Gilastius' laboratory, except an old Cairnlander slave called Morga. Morga hates her new master, and if treated well she agrees to help the party as long as she can stay out of danger. Simple role playing or a Persuasion roll can be used to convince her. The heroes receive the information detailed below. A higher number of successes includes the information from the lower entries.

Success. "Nobody rebelled except Rukk and Redo, the stable boy brothers. And their fate has been terrible: Rukk is now

a twisted thing, and Redo... well, he just seems to have disappeared!"

Raise. "Beware of the foul magic in the Hall of Tapestries! Even my grandmother's neck bone could not protect you from it!" (Morga shows a Cairnlander amulet – macabre but worthless)

Two Raises. "I hear strange sounds in the chimney flue. They come from Gilastius' laboratory, just above us. Abhh... this old woman should live in a well-built tomb, not a fetid castle."

Connections: Courtyard (door), Main Hall (door), Laboratory (climbing up the chimney's flue, Climbing (–2) roll required).

Main Hall. The main room on the first floor is lined with tall columns. A long table stands in the middle, and a few statues are placed in the corners. The gate leading to the Courtyard is closed and two Guards stand outside. So, if they keep quiet, the heroes don't need to make Stealth rolls to avoid them. But the Main Hall is watched by a much deadlier guardian, Rukk (see **Creatures** below). Rukk is perched on the chandelier and waiting to attack. The heroes must kill him quietly or convince him they are friends of Gilastius', which can be done with a Social Conflict (party's Persuasion vs. Rukk's Smarts d6). The party must win with a margin of at least three successes, or Rukk takes flight shouting loudly, adding a Detection Token to the party's total each round until he is dispatched.

If the party wins the social conflict with five successes, Rukk reveals a useful piece of information.

"My master is too smart to fear any assassin. He knows no good man will find

the courage to put the dagger through HER chest!"

(M) Rukk (1)

(M) Twisted Guards (2, outside the door)

Connections: Courtyard (door), Guards' Quarters (door), Hall of Tapestries (stairs to the second floor).

Guards' Quarters. This big room is filled with sleeping benches and rough tables. When not on duty, the guards gather here. There are a lot of them, all created by Gilastius' foul magic. If the current number of Detection Tokens is one or less, the Twisted Guards are all fast asleep and, unless the heroes do something particularly noisy or storm the room, they can walk past the door without having make any roll.

If the party has two or more Detection Tokens, the guards are awake.

(M) Twisted Guards (20)

Connections: Main Hall (door), Armory (door).

Armory. The well stocked armory is guarded by a sleepy Twisted Guard. When dealing with him, the party is considered to have two less Detection Tokens. As a rule of thumb, with a Notice roll and a round of time, the heroes can find any non Rare weapon they need, several suits of Light armor (+1) and one suit of Medium armor (+2).

(M) Twisted Guard (1)

Connections: Guards' Quarters (corridor).

UPPER FLOOR

Hall of Tapestries. This hall is adorned with wonderful tapestries from Zandor, Tricarnia and other exotic places. It is square, 12" by 12", and dimly lit by three strange lanterns placed in deep niches, emanating a faint blue glow. The hall hosts a clever alchemic trap. The tapestries are smeared with a special Lotus concoction which is usually harmless. When it reacts to the substance burning in the lanterns, however, it creates terrible hallucinations. In particular, one of the tapestries is decorated with hundreds of tiny spiders, which, to the drugged adventurers' eyes, seem to spring to life. The spiders are lethal, but only in the heroes' minds!

(WC) Illusionary Spider Swarm (1).

Connections: Laboratory (door), Lia's Room (door).

Laboratory. The door to the Laboratory is locked and Gilastius has the key. The lock can be picked or bashed in. Alternatively, an acrobatic hero can climb up through the kitchen's flue. The Laboratory hosts bubbling cauldrons, shelves full of jars, a dissection table, and an alchemist's workbench.

The laboratory is well worth exploring. With a Lotusmastery or Healing (-4) roll, a hero can find 1d6 Refined doses of Lotus.

The dissection table is covered in blood and body parts. This is where Gilastius created many of his twisted servants.

Any hero not acquainted with the inside of the human body (lacking the Healing skill) must make a Spirit roll or being Fatigued until he leaves the room as for the Nausea rules (SWD, page 86).

Finally, the alchemist's workbench is truly wonderful, cluttered with stills and twisting

tubes. There are three containers, each full of bubbling liquid of a different color (Red, Green, Blue) and connected to a central bowl via a tube with a tap. By opening the taps, the heroes can mix the liquids and, depending on their skill, they can create a potion or make a terrible mess! Each potion requires two doses of liquid and each container holds three doses (so, nine doses are available, to make a total of four potions). It is also possible to create potions by using two doses of the same liquid (for instance, RR= red + red). Each power is considered to have d10 Arcane skill and lasts twice as long as normal (see the **Alchemical Potions** table).

Note that creating the potions requires no skill roll, only mixing the components. In addition, the order in which the components are mixed matters, because the first is boiling and the second not.

A book lies open on the table, its pages made of thin metal sheets and full of strange formulas. "Giscamon's Secrets" is a forbidden book of the Alchemists of Gis. It is written in the Alchemists' Code. With a cooperative Smarts or Lotusmastery (+2) roll, a hero who knows the language can decipher the right ingredients for one of the potions (GM's choice), plus another for each raise.

Connections: Lord's Bedroom (door, see **The Killing Blow**).

Lia's Room. This beautiful room, with many feminine touches, is in complete disarray. The window is barred by a sturdy metal grate. The room is empty; Lia is in the Lord's Bedroom. An exquisite silver coronet (value: 400 Moons, clearly a unique piece) has been left on the bedside table.

Connections: Hall of Tapestries (door), Lord's Bedroom (there is a secret door hidden in the northern wall, which can be located with a Notice (-2); see **The Killing Blow**).

ALCHEMICAL POTIONS

Combo	Effect
RR	Explosion! <i>Causes a huge 3d6 damage explosion in a Large Burst Template. Destroys the alchemist's workbench. Party gains 3 Detection Tokens.</i>
RG	Fizzy Green Liquid. <i>A tasty boost trait (Strength) potion.</i>
RB	Blood Red Gas. <i>A blast potion. Detonates on impact.</i>
GR	Transparent Gas. <i>If inhaled, this dangerous concoction causes terrible visions (fear Power).</i>
GG	Bubbling Oil. <i>If smeared on a weapon, this liquid burns with a fiery blaze (smite).</i>
GB	Black liquid. <i>A healing potion.</i>
BR	Acid! <i>Uh oh! The cup starts to melt! If a hero is quick enough, he can throw the contents away (out of the window is a good choice). Otherwise, the acid melts the whole apparatus in three rounds! This heroic action can be simulated with a short (3 successes in 3 rounds) Dramatic Task based on Agility.</i>
BG	Blood Snake! <i>The liquid in the cup solidifies, starts growing and becomes alive! The container breaks and a fully grown, intensely red snake emerges: a Blood Snake, born of the powerful magic of the Alchemists of Gis. The snake has the same stats as a Poisonous Snake from Savage Worlds (replace the Poison Special Ability with Paralysis) and is considered summoned through the summon ally Power.</i>
BB	Smoke! <i>This combination creates a cloud of foul-smelling fumes that fills the room! A Vigor roll is required to avoid coughing and watery eyes (being Fatigued).</i>

THE KILLING BLOW

When the heroes enter the Lord's Room, they see two people lying on a massive queen-size bed in the semi-darkness. One is a half naked, blonde girl with a coronet on her head. The other is a handsome man with remarkable, ink-black skin. The two are asleep, but it is clear they are about to wake up.

The girl is Gilastius, while the man is Lia! The devious Lotusmaster, who doesn't even trusts his men, has smeared himself and the girl with a particular Lotus concoction which swaps their appearances as long as they are in bed. He has the girl's shape and she has his, but it is only an illusion.

The illusion can be revealed by using the Lotus Pearl on the bed or by paying attention to specific details (for instance, Lia is wearing her coronet, but an identical one is in her bedroom). In addition, if the party remembers Rukk's strange words, they might realize what Gilastius has done.

If the heroes have been stealthy enough (have three or fewer Detection Tokens), hand them Action Cards. Only the hero with the highest card can deliver the finishing blow on one of the sleepers before the other wakes completely. The hero can briefly discuss with the rest of the party to choose which target to hit.

Whoever they strike, he or she dies, putting an end to the illusion. If the hero kills the real Gilastius, the party can concentrate on fighting Redo (see below), and the killer receives a Bennie. If Lia is killed, the sorcerer wakes up immediately and the murdering hero loses a Bennie for his terrible mistake.

Read the following:

"Fools! You have killed the one you were sent to save! And you have fallen into the spider's web, quite literally. Redo! Kill them!"

You notice something moving on the ceiling, and suddenly a gigantic eight-legged shape drops onto you!

The party must check for surprise. Redo, the twisted giant spider, attacks the most dangerous looking hero (or the one closest to his master). The two opponents must make an opposed Agility roll and, if the hero fails, the creature gets the Drop.

If the hero kills the real Gilastius, Redo immediately attacks the party.

If the players hesitate, Gilastius wakes up and tries to distract the party by pretending to be Lia, while Redo approaches the adventurers stealthily. When the wicked Lotusmaster leaves his bed, the illusion is broken and his real guise is revealed (the same is true for Lia).

If the heroes have been noisy (four or more Detection Tokens), the situation is much worse. Gilastius is awake, hiding in a dark corner with some guards, while Lia is sleeping in the bed in her own guise. Gilastius, Redo and the guards ambush the party.

(WC) Redo the Spider (1)

(WC) Gilastius Vang (1)

(M) Twisted Guard (1 per hero)

AFTERMATH

After killing Gilastius and depending on what time it is (at the Game Master's discretion), the heroes must either sneak out of the castle or wait for Grotho's attack to start. In the latter case, the attack begins mere minutes after the evil Lotusmaster's death, giving the players the real flavor of their success.

Without the Lotusmaster's evil presence, Grotho's army easily conquers the castle.

GISCAMON'S SECRETS

This ancient book made of metal is a prized encyclopedia of alchemical knowledge and was stolen from the laboratories of the Sixth Alchemist of Gis. A hero with the Lotusmastery Arcane Background can study it to unravel its secrets. Every time the hero levels he may make a Smarts (−4) roll. With a success, he acquires one of the following powers: barrier, boost/lower trait, detect/conceal arcana, environmental protection. He must meet the requirements for the power as normal. If the hero already knows the power, he gains a new trapping of his choice instead.

Using the book is dangerous because it requires a great deal of experimenting. If the modified roll result is 1 or less, the hero suffers a Lotusmastery Backlash.

No hero can acquire more than one new power/trapping per rank by using the book.

The book is also a very valuable object. Any alchemist worthy of his name would pay as much as 4,000 Moons for it. Otherwise, the heroes can embark on a new adventure to bring it back to Gis, where the Twelve Master Alchemists are eager to get it back...

Any Twisted Guards who survive the attack soon start feeling ill and revert to their true form of castle servants. Sadly, only one in three survives the excruciating transformation.

Grotho is very grateful and gives the heroes a large reward (1,000 Moons for each surviving hero). If the Game Master wants, the adventure can continue: a mercenary army is approaching, and they certain haven't marched this far to return home without any loot...

If the party killed Grotho's daughter, however, Grotho refuses to see them. Sviss Vann hands them half the reward (500 Moon each). He also strongly recommends the heroes leave the castle quickly. Grotho, overcome with grief, might seek revenge...

CREATURES AND NPCs

GIANT RAT

Once a common sewer rat, the Lotus waste this creature consumed has turned it into a huge, ravenous abomination.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10

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

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

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Frenzy:** The Giant Rat can attack twice each round, once with its bite and once with its claws, without any penalty.

• **Weakness (Lotus Pearl):** If the Rat is smeared with the liquid of a Lotus Pearl and fails an opposed Vigor roll against the Pearl's Arcane skill (d10), it reverts to being a common sewer rat and scuttles off.



GILASTIUS VANG

Gilastius Vang is a handsome, muscular man from Faberterra. His skin is ink-black, much darker even than the Ivory Savannah people, but it isn't his natural complexion. He is an outcast of Gis, betrayer of his master, the Sixth Master Alchemist. When he was discovered he was stripped of his rank, his skin was permanently dyed with a special Lotus ink – hence, the black color – as a mark of infamy, and was cast out of the city.

But the Alchemists made a big mistake! Before being discovered, Gilastius had stolen a precious alchemic tome (Gisamon's Secrets) and several alchemic implements. When the Alchemists discovered the theft, he was already far away. With these tools, as well as his charm and knowledge, it was easy for him to find employment at Lord Grotho's castle.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Healing d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Knowledge (Anatomy) d6, Lotutmastery d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Taunt d8, Throwing d8.

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

Edges: Arcane Background (Lotutmastery), Attractive, Improved Level Headed, New Power x2, Power Points x2.

Hindrances: Arrogant, Curious, Greedy.

Powers [20 PP]: *barrier* (Crimson Lotus of Burning Wall), *entangle* (Greenish Lotus of Living Tentacles), *fear* (Gray Lotus of Horrible Visions), *shapechange* (Oil of Shapes), *stun* (Yellow Lotus of Choking).

Gear: short bronze sword (Str+d6), Gis Fiery Wand (see special abilities), 5 doses of Refined Lotus.

Special Abilities

- **Gis Fiery Wand:** Gilastius Vang stole this strange ruby-tipped iron wand from his master. It casts a ray of fire, as per the *blast* power. It uses the owner's Agility as arcane skill and stores 12 Power Points, which don't recharge and can be used for its power only. Once the Power Points are used up, the gem turns black and the wand becomes useless.
- **Master of Shapes:** Gilastius Vang was a disciple of the Sixth Master Alchemist of Gis. This enabled him to learn the secrets of a concoction that allows him to use the *shapechange* power, normally forbidden to Lotusmasters. His favorite shape is a Snake (constrictor) (see *SWD*, Size +1, retains human head).
- **Weakness (Lotus Pearl):** Any of Gilastius Vang's powers can be negated by the Lotus Pearl's *dispel* power.



REDO, THE SPIDER

This hideous creature has the bloated body of a giant spider and a fanged mouth, but the rest of his face is Redo, one of the castle's stable boys. Gilastius turned him into a monster to punish him for his rebellious attitude.

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

Skills: Climbing d12+2, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d10

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

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **A Man's Soul:** Gilastius has twisted his body and tortured his mind, but the soul of a brave man still fights within the monster's body. A hero can try to bring Redo over to the party's side. This is a social conflict (he-

ro's Persuasion vs. Redo's Spirit). Mentioning Redo's brother Rukk or being a heroine grants +2 to the roll. If the adventurer wins three successes or more, Redo becomes an Ally controlled by the party.

- **Venom:** Venomous poison (see *SWD* page 89).

- **Wall Walker:** Redo can walk on vertical surfaces at a Pace of 8.

- **Weakness (Lotus Pearl):** If Redo is smeared with the liquid of a Lotus Pearl and fails an opposed Vigor roll against the Pearl's Arcane skill (d10), he reverts to his human shape. The stable boy is alive but Exhausted.

- **Web:** Redo can shoot a web the size of a Small Burst Template. This is a Shooting roll with a range of 3/6/12. Any target caught in the web (Toughness 7) must break free. While trapped, he can still fight, but all his physical actions suffer -4.

RUKK

One of Gilastius' weirdest experiments, Rukk has the body of a fully grown owl and the face of a young man. The mutation has also transformed his mind, making him a fanatical follower of his master. Despite being a poor combatant he is an excellent spy and sentinel.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Taunt d8.

Pace: See Below; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 3

Special Abilities

- **Flight:** Rukk flies at a Pace of 8 and has a Climbing Pace of 4.

- **Size -2:** Rukk is quite small.

- **Small:** Attack rolls against Rukk suffer -2 due to his small size.

- **Talons:** Str+d4.

- **Threaten:** Rukk flies around his enemies to hinder and distract them. This counts as an Agility Trick with a +2 modifier.

• **Weakness (Lotus Pearl):** If Rukk is smeared with the liquid of a Lotus Pearl and fails an opposed Vigor roll against the Pearl's Arcane skill (d10), he transforms back into the dead body of a boy.



SWARM OF ILLUSIONARY SPIDERS

The swarm consists of hundreds of poisonous spiders the size of a man's hand! Luckily, they are just an illusion in the heroes' mind, caused by the Blue Lotus of Madness burning in the lanterns of the Hall of Tapestries.

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

Skills: Notice d6.

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities

• **Disbelieving:** Every hero is allowed an opposed Spirit roll against the Swarm's Spirit each round. If he wins with a raise, he realizes the swarm is an illusion. If a friend tells the hero the spiders are not real, he gains +2 to the roll.

• **Hundreds of Bites:** The swarm deals hundreds of bites, hitting automatically and causing 2d6 damage to everyone inside the Template. The damage is applied to the least armored location; only targets in completely sealed suits are immune. The damage is illusory; unless the hero is Incapacitated, it fades five minutes after the swarm is dispersed.

• **Invulnerability:** The spiders are totally immune to any physical damage. The only ways to dispatch them are Disbelieving, using the Lotus Pearl, or destroying the Lanterns (see below).

• **Swarm:** Parry +2. Cutting and piercing weapons only deal half damage. Area-effect weapons work normally.

• **Weakness (Lanterns):** If the lanterns are destroyed, the effect of the Lotus weakens

until the illusion disappears. Each lantern has Toughness 3. Every time a lantern is broken, the Swarm suffers a Wound (i.e., it becomes less realistic and compact).

• **Weakness (Lotus Pearl):** If a Lotus Pearl hits the Swarm, it temporarily cancels the effect of the Lotus. However, unless the party leaves the area or finds a more permanent solution the swarm reappears in 2d4 rounds.

TWISTED GUARD

This ugly humanoid only vaguely resembles a man. Through his evil Lotusmastery, Gilastius has created many of them, each with a different animal feature. One has a long rat-like tail, another a pig's snout, and so on. When a Twisted Guard is killed, his features revert to those of the castle servant he was before.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4, Throwing d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Gear: **Bronze tipped** polearm (Str+d8, 2 hands), bronze coated mace (Str+d6), bow (damage: 2d6, range: 12/24/48), light leather armor (+1).

Special Abilities

• **Animal Reflexes:** The creature recovers from minor traumas very quickly. He has +2 when rolling to recover from being Shaken.

• **Sniffing:** Twisted Guards are part animal, so their senses are very sharp. They have +1 to Notice and Tracking rolls.

• **Weakness (Lotus Pearl):** If a Twisted Guard is smeared with the liquid of a Lotus Pearl and fails an opposed Vigor roll against the Pearl's Arcane skill (d10), he reverts to his human shape (castle servant, use Commoner stats). Depending on his personality, he might choose to help the party.