

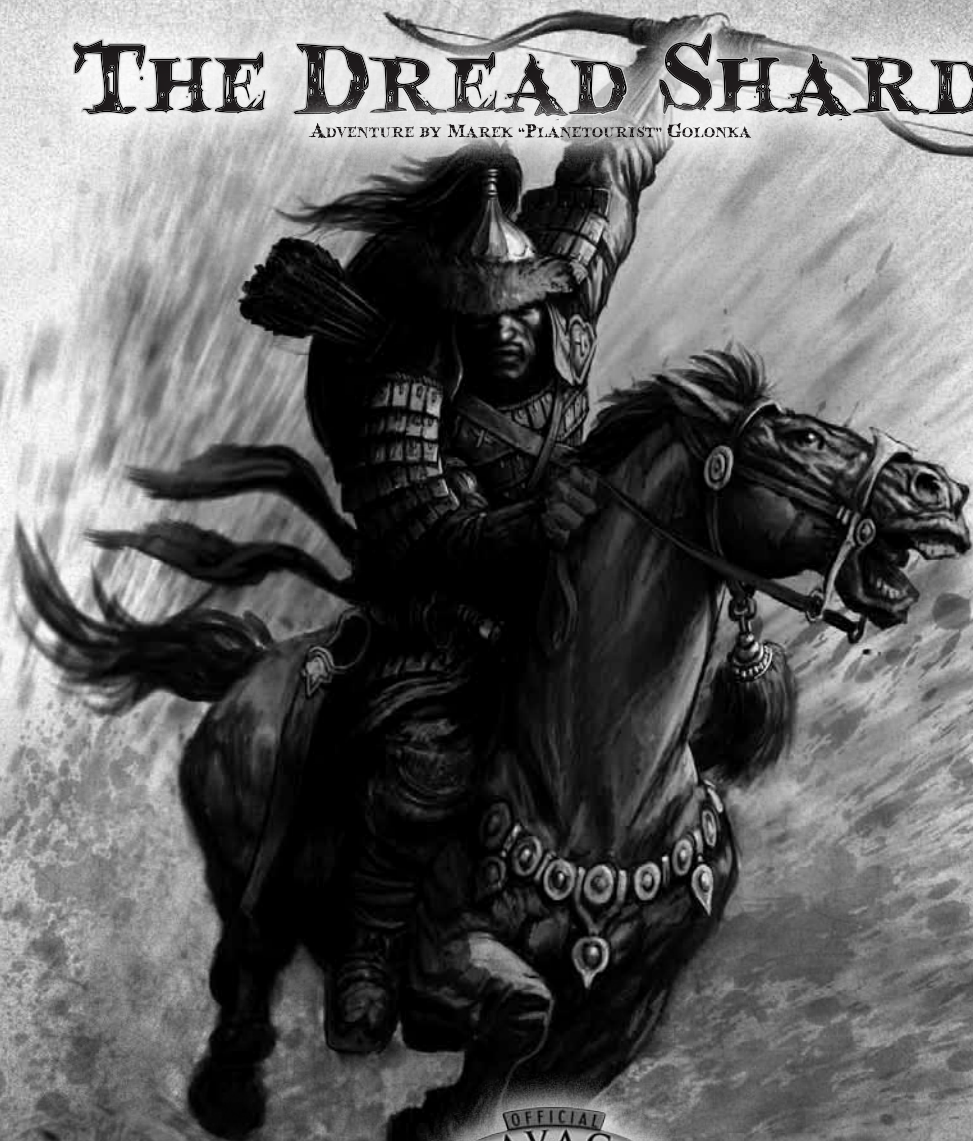
BEASTS BARBARIANS

A Sword and Sorcery Savage Worlds setting

By UMBERTO PIGNATELLI

THE DREAD SHARD

ADVENTURE BY MAREK "PLANETOURLIST" GOLONKA



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THE DREAD SHARD

Our heroes visit a great festival only to discover that it's a trap devised to trigger a powerful demonic ritual. The feast soon becomes a slaughter as a Valk horde charges into the city.

INTRODUCTION

Five years ago a small meteorite fell from the sky right in front of the gates of Dalaxium, one of Faberterra's most remote cities. It looked like a smaller version of the Dread Star of legend, so it was called the Dread Shard and considered an omen of a terrible fate.

Lucius, the governor of Dalaxium, decided to investigate this phenomenon and soon became obsessed with it. He spent long years among ancient astrology treatises and learned men. Finally he declared that he had discovered the real power of the Dread Shard – a power that could save Faberterra from its decay! To celebrate this discovery, Lucius is inviting everybody to a great festival on the streets of Dalaxium and has promised to reveal his plan at the feast's climax.

The truth, however, is much more dreadful. Lucius has in fact made a deal with Maab, a Valk Jalka Maiden. She promised to use the power of the Dread Shard to make him immortal, but such a ritual requires spilling the blood of a thousand men. Nobody suspects that his guests are in fact going to be a sacrifice – and Lucius doesn't imagine that he'll join them. Maab has lied to him; the real purpose of the

ritual is to give her Valk demonic power and fury.

PLOT SUMMARY

The adventure begins when the PCs visit the festival in Dalaxium. At first they simply have fun and meet people, but they may also get a hint that something is wrong here.

Then the moment comes for Lucius to go among his guests and explain his great plan. But when the gate of his palace opens, Valk riders charge from it into the shocked guests! The PCs can slow them down a little, but the enemy is too overwhelming to be defeated. The only option is to sneak away – maybe to the palace, maybe outside the city. Moving through the dying city will be full of random encounters to challenge the players and show them further hints of what is really going on.

The most probable final scene is a showdown with Maab, the leader of the Valk. However, it may well be that our heroes will gather reinforcements in other cities and take part in a great battle against the Valk.

THE FESTIVAL

The festival takes place mainly in the city square, a huge open space at the center of Dalaxium. This place usually holds a large market, but for this one day all commerce has been removed from the city to make more room for feasting guests (and, in fact, Valk riders). Even the nearby streets are free of stalls except for a few that sell curiosities from foreign countries. Some people are also celebrating in the wider streets, but few want to spend this day in the shady passages between them unless they have an attractive companion to spend time with. You should mention the removal of obstacles from the streets at least once because it may help the players to understand what's really going on (see **Optional Scene: Investigation**).

This festival hosts over a thousand people from around the Dread Sea and sometimes even from such far lands as Lhoban or the Ivory Savannah. Everyone is eating free meat, drinking free beer and having fun in many ways. All these people came in by the main city gate. There's also another, smaller gate – the Lumber Gate that leads to a small forest south of Dalaxium. The Valk will strike from this gate.

Now it's time to introduce the PCs to this scenario and find them some friends (or maybe enemies?). Below are descriptions of interesting NPCs, worthwhile competitions and interesting rumors. Feel free to enrich this scene with characters and gossip from other adventures you've already run or those you want to use later.

First read or paraphrase the following:

The mixture of sights, sounds and smells from around the world is dazzling. You see hundreds of people who are here to

have fun and they are having a lifetime's worth of it. They are drinking, eating, boasting, seducing and fighting all over the city square – would you like to join them?

If the PCs ask what they can do here tell them about the competitions described below. If they're looking for interesting people, describe Ethella, Iathus or Sangius. Also look at PCs' Hindrances and try to provoke a situation in which they will cause some trouble. A Greedy character may stumble upon a wealthy gambler, while a Vengeful one will surely meet somebody who wronged him in the past.

NPCs

NERA, A BRAVE AMAZON

Nera is a beautiful woman looking for a good fight. She is utterly convinced that such a festival won't be memorable without an epic brawl and is ready to taunt or seduce any man to begin the biggest tavern brawl ever – in the biggest tavern of the town. And since the town watch is hopelessly drunk she may well succeed.

She may be a character's opponent during a boozing or fighting competition, but after the competition she'll accuse the hero of cheating and try to taunt him into attacking her.

DOLCIUS, AN ASTRONOMER'S SON

Dolcius is a seven year old boy of great good looks and equal curiosity. Being too shy and cowardly for a real man, he will surely be a laughing-stock in a few years (he has the Damsel in Distress Hin-

drance), but right now he is liked by everyone who knows him.

Dolcius is the son of Arthines the Astronomer. He hasn't seen his father for a few weeks because Arthines has been summoned to Lucius' palace to help in solving the riddle of the Dread Shard.

This boy is an endless source of gossip. If he is at least Helpful towards one of the PCs, he'll share one piece of gossip (see **Rumors** below), two with a Friendly attitude. He is also gifted – or cursed – with fragmentary visions of the future, maybe because of being an astronomer's son. Today he constantly hears the remote sound of horseshoes. He will tell this to somebody who earns his trust and it may be one of the clues the PCs need to start an investigation.

ETHELLA, A WOMAN OF THE WORLD

Ethella is a bored courtesan from the city of Faberterra. She is one of most elegant and witty companions in the Dread Sea Dominions. Usually only lords and the greatest heroes can afford her services, but this time she isn't seeking profit – she seeks the company of somebody who could amuse or impress her. It might be a simple smith or an aging sage – all that matters is finding someone who can cure Ethella of her boredom.

Of course she doesn't make her intentions obvious and even if somebody recognizes her (Common Knowledge -2) she rejects any attempts to buy her services or seduce her. She is friendly and kind towards everyone, even giving coins to beggars, but one needs to capture her attention even to speak to her for any length of time. She

also looks down on men who seek the company of paid prostitutes.

IATHUS, AN EMISSARY OF FABERTERRA

An aging but still impressive man, Iathus is an emissary from the capital of Faberterra. He tried to find out what exactly Lucius has discovered, but the administrator was reluctant to tell him anything. Iathus doesn't suspect the truth, but he is worried about Lucius' motives. However, he doesn't share his worries with those around him. The PCs have to impress him with their courage or righteousness to gain his confidence. If he sees a brave or just action of theirs, he'll invite them to a private conversation and share his worries with them.

SANGIUS, THE CAPTAIN OF THE WATCH

Sangius is a good-hearted but short-tempered man who wants to feast and drink more than anyone else today. When the PCs stumble into him he is encouraging his men to get as drunk as they can for this one day. Maybe they'll be willing to stop them? After all even the greatest hedonist wants his guards to be sober. Or maybe they'll offer to replace some guards so that they may indulge themselves without any consequences?

GAMES

Various games and competitions are being held at the festival. Each has its stakes, but the greatest victory one can achieve is fame: a character winning in one of those

games gains +1 Charisma toward other festival guests.

BOOZING COMPETITION

Both contestants drink booze, one mug after another. Each round requires a Vigor roll with a penalty starting at -1, and then increasing by -1 each round. Whoever fails this test first loses, both contestants failing in the same round means a draw. The loser is drunk and unconscious for an hour, but the winner is not safe either – he has to test Vigor one more time, with the penalty of the last roll. If he fails he too is far from sober and suffers -2 to all Agility- and Smarts-based rolls for an hour. Of course passing this test doesn't prevent the player from declaring his character drunk, roleplaying it and maybe earning a Benny.

The reward for winning this competition is a bottle of invigorating, wonderfully warm brandy from Lucius' own cellar. Drinking it removes a level of Fatigue, but bestows -1 to all Agility- and Smarts-related rolls for an hour.

The most probable opponent in this noble competition is, of course, Sangius.

ASPERIOS THE GREAT'S TRIAL OF WILL

Asperios the Great is an illusionist wandering between cities of Faberterra and entertaining the masses. His "trial" doesn't sound like much – one simply has to hit him with a sack filled with feathers (Improvised weapon, no damage, -1 to Fighting, +1 to Agility-based Tricks). The only problem is telling where he *really* is – Asperios always uses the *Deflection* Power with the *I am not there!* trapping before a trial.

Asperios negotiates the stakes of his trial separately with each opponent, but they are typically about 50 Moons. He usually wins.

BRAWLS

Duels of all sorts are organized during the festival. Fighting to the death is strictly forbidden among free people, so the most common are duels to first blood – that is, the first attack that causes a Shaken result. Such a duel follows one special rule – a Shaken character can spend a Benny immediately to cancel the attack that wounded him. This applies only to attacks that didn't cause actual Wounds – these have to be soaked as usual.

Other modes of dueling include trying to push an opponent out of the ring or to rip off a special, tight band worn on the opponent's left hand (doing so requires a Called Shot at -4).

The most unusual competition is fighting until somebody makes a sound. Not making a sound while being hit requires a Spirit roll with a penalty equal to damage taken -2. Of course there are other ways to make somebody break the silence – Taunt rolls are especially effective. Those duels are always between bare-fisted opponents.

A typical participant in a brawl is a Right Hand version of a fighting NPC, like an Amazon Warrior, a Barbarian Warrior or a Veteran Soldier. Nera is a very interesting opponent, but you'd better let the PC meet her at the festival before pitting her against him. Stakes are usually 50 to 100 moons.

You could consider giving both brawlers a Benny or two that can be used only during their combat. That will make it last a little bit

longer and generate more excitement, otherwise the fight may end in a single round.

RUMORS

With a successful Streetwise roll a PC hears one of these rumors for a success and each Raise. Some gossip can be reached only with a Raise. Rolling “1” on the Streetwise die (regardless of the Wild Die) means that while gathering information the hero got drunk.

- This muscular old man who seems bored by the festival is an important figure from the capital.

Raise: he is Iathus, an Imperial emissary and an old friend of Lucius the governor.

- The Dread Shard was summoned by Lucius - he only pretended to study it for so long. Why? Don't ask me, I'm too lowly to understand the elite of the Empire. (This rumour isn't true).

- None of the astronomers researching the Dread Shard have been seen in the city for a week.

- Asperios the Great is possessed by a demon! (This isn't true - unless the GM wishes it to be so.)

- The palace servants have recently bought lots of wheat.

- Members of the Watch seem to be more drunk than anyone else.

Raise: thankfully a group of mercenaries is guarding the city gates and the palace.

- A huge group of Valk have been seen in Dalaxium.

Raise: they are being led by a Jalka Maiden.

DREAD SHARD IRON

Weapons made from the Dread Shard count as iron for purposes of breaking. They deal +1 damage and give +1 to Fighting rolls against wounded characters.

Once the ritual is complete (see The wild horde) the Valk become bound to their weapons - if somebody shatters a Valk's sword, the raider must make a Spirit roll or suffer a Wound.

If a PC gets one of these swords he can use it and gain the bonuses, but there are two problems. First, the owner must make a Spirit roll the first time he kills somebody with the weapon or acquire the Bloodthirsty Hindrance. This roll has to be repeated once a week as long as he's the owner of the sword.

Second, after the ritual is complete the PC suffers a Wound when the sword shatters just as Valk do, but he gains no benefit from the bond.

THE CARNAGE

When the party begins to get bored by the festival, or when they discover the truth about Lucius' plan, the Valk invasion begins. The city and palace gates open to let the horde in. The following turn of events assumes that the PCs are in the city square (but see **Optional Scene: Investigation** below).

Two hundred Valk swarm from the Lumber Gate, twenty-five more charge from the palace gates. Their drawn swords shine with a reddish glow - they are forged from the Dread Shard. Both groups are accompanied by packs of great, demonic hounds. The riders' intent is to spill as much blood as they can so they focus mostly on defenseless victims. Almost half of the Festival's guests are slain within a few minutes.

Only a few Valk attack the PCs, but they can't just stand and fight back – other people are running away and if our heroes stand still they'll be easy prey for the entire horde. Play this scene out as a five-round chase. Each hero is chased by two Valk and one demonic mastiff. Complications in this chase are connected to the panicked crowd.

(M) Valk riders (2 per hero)

(M) Demonic Mastiffs (1 per hero)

Once the chase is finished the PCs have managed to hide in a narrow street or inside a building. Now they must decide what to do next – jump to the **What to Do?** section.

OPTIONAL SCENE: INVESTIGATION

Events take a more favorable turn for our heroes if they begin investigating during the festival. The information below replaces that from **The Carnage** section for investigating parties. Keep in mind, however, that the Valk won't be surprised by a little trouble, and as soon as they notice any banqueters poking their noses into their plot, they blow the horn and begin the massacre.

Asking about horses or horseshoes requires a Streetwise roll. Success indicates that the party members meet a crop merchant who has recently sold a lot of wheat to the Palace (as in the **rumors** section). A raise allows hearing about a little girl named Augatha who swears she heard a horse neighing in a wagon transported to Lucius' palace a few days ago.

The PCs have two clues to follow – the palace and the mercenaries at the gates. The palace is also protected by mercenaries, but each of the three groups of them knows

different things. Making any of them talk about Lucius' orders requires a raise on a Persuasion or Intimidation roll. Intimidation can be used only if the PCs have a credible means of threatening the mercenaries (such as an official paper from Iathus) while Persuasion requires bribing them with at least 200 Moons worth of coins or goods.

Palace Guards: they have relatively innocent orders – do not let anybody into the palace, open its gates when a horn blows and don't do anything else. The last order is to ensure that the mercenaries won't stop the Valk. If the PCs want to open the gates, they have to defeat the mercenaries. No bribe can make them betray the powerful Lucius in such a direct way.

(M) Mercenaries (8)

And if the PCs open the gate, the horn blows and Valk charge straight into them! The riders want to get to the festival as soon as possible, so they don't pay much attention to the party – play it out as a chase just as in **The Carnage** section, but without any complications. When the chase ends the PCs are near the city square.

City Gate Guards: they are ordered to lock the gates when they hear the horn blow and not let anybody outside. They think that they can escape easily so they can be bribed (for a further 300 Moons) to ignore this order. There are no Valk nearby, so this deal goes unnoticed by them. You may make one of mercenaries sneak away to sell out his friends to Lucius, but with his poor Stealth skill (d4) he'll be easily caught by the PCs.

However, if the PCs try to intimidate the mercenaries and fail, the guards order them to go back to the festival – and if the PCs won't listen, they attack!

(M) Mercenaries (8)

Lumber Gate Guards: these mercenaries are to open the gate wide and not let anybody close it. However, they've noticed the Valks hiding in the wood and feel really bad about helping these barbarians – they might be greedy soldiers of fortune, but they have their standards. They are too afraid to oppose the Valk on their own, but when somebody comes in asking about “something unusual”, “Lucius’ orders” and so on they quietly explain what’s really going on.

But being quiet isn't enough. One of the Valk notices the conversation, fires an arrow at the mercenaries and blows the horn. The invasion begins, but being here the PCs can slow it down a bit. They can assume control of the mercenaries and try to hold off the invaders. The gate is currently open, but it takes only two actions in consecutive rounds (no rolls required) to operate its mechanism and close them. Opening them takes just as much effort.

(M) Mercenaries (8)

(M) Valk Riders (2 per hero +2d6 per round)

There are 200 Valk in the wood so defeating them all simply isn't an option. They rush toward the gates and each round 2d6 new riders join the battle (this roll can ace!). They rush into the city while the gate is still open and then try to kill those who close the gate and open it once again. Those who remain outside shoot arrows at the defenders, but they aim to weaken rather than kill (Called Shots at arms and Tests of Will) because they have to spill as much blood as possible with their weapons.

Since they want to break into the city and into the festival, they won't chase the PCs

if they escape from the Lumber Gate and into the narrow streets.

The best the PCs can do is to send someone to warn the festival guests. It takes 3 rounds to get there (2 with the Fleet-Footed Edge or if on horseback). When the messenger arrives there he sees panic as the guests notice the Valk charging from the palace. Warning the guests about more Valk makes them hide in the buildings or, if the main gate remains open, flee the city. Saving so many people clearly earns every character a Benny.

WHAT TO DO?

No matter if the party has investigated the Valk plot or not, they are somewhere in the dying city right now. They have two reasonable options: get inside the palace and confront Lucius or escape from the city. Each option leads to a different conclusion of this adventure.

GETTING ANYWHERE

Crossing is handled in an abstract way. Each exploration round the party does a cooperative skill roll. They gain an Advancement Token with a success, two with a raise or better. The Skill for gaining tokens can be Stealth, Streetwise or Climbing (if the party is going through the rooftops). Going only across rooftops and through small streets gives a -2 penalty, but makes encounters easier – the Valk do not see the PCs automatically and so they have the chance to gain the Drop.

Eight Advance Tokens are needed to get outside the city (see **The Great Escape** section) or to the palace (**The Ritual**). However, if the PCs fought Valk at the Lumber Gate they are already near to the city walls and gain the first three tokens for free. Sim-

ilarly if they were already at the palace gates they need three tokens less to get there.

Draw a card from the Action Deck for each roll and check what encounter awaits the party:

2-4 – a patrol of 2d4 Valk riders with 1d4 mastiffs rides down the street. They roll Notice against the PCs' main ability roll to find them.

(M) Valk Riders (2d4)
(M) Demonic Mastiffs (1d4)

5-7 – a group of 2d4 Valk riders surround a citizen, soaking their spears in his blood and chanting in an unholy language. They aren't on active watch but if they are attacked, the bloody ritual grants them the Berserk Edge.

8-9 – a patrol (as in 2-4) is chasing somebody the PCs know.

10 – a sacked armory! Most of the equipment is gone, but the PCs may find a specific weapon or armor by making a Notice roll (-1 for each 100 Moons of the item's worth).

Jack – a bloody star appears in the sky, an omen of the unfolding ritual. Everyone in the city (except for the Valk) must make a Fear (-1) check. Roll separately for every NPC group PCs run into.

Queen – Yanksha, a Valkyrie serving Maab, is leading a siege - 2d4 Valk against 1d6+1 commoners that have fortified in a house. She could have burned them or summoned a demon, but she really wants to soak her people's swords in their blood. If helped, the commoners join the party. They are armed with bows and knives.

(WC) Yanksha
(M) Valk Riders (2d4)
(M) Commoners (1d6+1)

King – the PCs stumble upon the city prison. The guards are murdered and most of the prisoners have escaped. Save for one man: Arthines the Astronomer! He's furious at Lucius for betraying him and putting his son in mortal danger so he'll gladly explain Lucius' plan to the PCs. However, he knows nothing about Maab's plot to betray the governor.

(WC) Arthines

Ace – a secret gateway or a street too narrow for Valk. +2 advancement tokens.

Joker – a bloody star appears as for a Jack, but instead of inspiring fear it gives the PCs a vision of what's happening inside the palace right now. Other NPCs are fearful as for a Jack.

THE GREAT ESCAPE

If the PCs want to escape the city, after reaching the city walls they have to sneak out by making a group Stealth (-4) roll, else they attract the attention of eight demonic mastiffs that begin to chase them.

(M) Demonic Mastiffs (8)

The nearest city is Theranium, located two dozen miles to the North. Its governor, Marcus Helirion, could be persuaded to send his forces against the Valk – up to 300 men. However, each of 200 Valk counts as two because of the power of the Dread Shard (see **The Wild Horde** below), giving Maab an effective advantage. It makes the battle against them extremely hard unless the PCs are superb tacticians (Maab has Knowledge (Battle) d6 and Marcus Heliri-

on has d8). Thankfully some of people that PCs befriended have hidden in the city and now can join the combat, gaining +2 to the combat roll because of the surprise. Draw a card for Iathus and each named, fighting NPC our heroes have met (like Sangius or Nera) – a red card means this NPC is alive and joins the battle.

Furthermore if the party has warned the festival guests some of them are still alive, giving Marcus' army an additional token (two if the main gate was open – more people have escaped).

INSIDE THE PALACE

The gates of Lucius' palace are guarded by eight mercenaries (unless PCs killed them earlier).

Just like those at the Lumber Gate, they are appalled by the fact that they work for an ally of the Valk but too scared to rise against Lucius. If they see the party they attack, but a Notice (-2) roll lets one of the PCs notice that they really don't want to fight. Then a simple Persuasion roll is enough to make them allies. They don't know what exactly is happening inside the palace, but they know that there are nearly a dozen Valk in the palace, including a beautiful but intimidating woman.

However, if the combat with the mercenaries lasts for at least two rounds, Maab hears it and sends half of her riders (5 Valk) to help the mercenaries. They arrive in the third round and the mercenaries are so afraid of them that they can't be persuaded to join the party while at least one Valk is alive.

(M) Mercenaries (8)

(M) Valk Riders (5)

USING TATTERED BANNERS

If you have Tattered Banners supplement you can use the rules from that book to enhance the battle scene.

Treat both armies as Bands with following stats:

Marcus Helirion's army

Experience: 10 XP (Novice)

Commander: Governor Marcus Helirion (Knowledge (Battle) d8, Spirit d8)

Size: Large

Discipline: High

Battle Value: 900

Personalities: Pigaros (Standard Bearer), Hicaros and Mellena (Armorsers)

Edges: Animosity (the Valk).

Hindrances: Breaking Point, Cumbersome, Exclusive

Maab's Valk

Experience: 5 XP (Novice)

Commander: Maab the Jalka (Knowledge (Battle) d6, Spirit d8)

Size: Very Large

Discipline: Low

Battle Value: 1200

Personalities: Yanksba (Sorcerer) if she still lives – see Queen in the Getting Anywhere section.

Edges: Creatures (demonic mastiffs), Mindless Army (raging riders).

Hindrances: Individualistic (Minor), Undisciplined, Wanted (Major in Faberterra, Minor elsewhere)

Players won't have to manage these bands so their Support values aren't listed.

The PCs may also want to sneak past the guards. It takes a Stealth (-1) roll not to be noticed by them and a Notice (-2) roll to notice a small door hidden behind a patch of vines. The door opens into a hidden corridor that leads to the garden inside the palace.

The ritual takes place in this garden. It is centered on a red orb forged from pure Dread Shard metal.

Timing. Which point of the ritual the PCs arrive at depends on how much time they spent in the city, that is, how many cards have already been dealt. The events in the palace are described below by the number of cards dealt in the **Getting Anywhere** scene. Once in the palace add 1 to this number for every three rounds they spent in combat.

The ritual begins when the third card is dealt – Lucius puts his hand on the orb and Maab begins chanting, circling him on her demonic steed. The ritual will go on until Maab is Incapacitated or Shaken for a full round. Lucius thinks that he is just as crucial as she, but in fact he'll simply be the final sacrifice, the blood spilt directly on the orb. All her minions who remain in the palace – both Valk and mastiffs – protect her and the governor.

When the sixth card is dealt, Maab betrays Lucius – she stabs him in the heart with her spear. Now she needs only one more card to finish the ritual.

Shattering the orb interrupts the ritual, but it has Toughness 12.

(M) Demonic Mastiffs (4)

(M) Valk Riders (10 or 5*,)

(WC) Maab

*If Maab sent half of them to help the mercenaries.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

- **Orb Magic.** First and foremost the orb thirsts for blood, making every attack made within 6" of it deal +1 damage.
- **Trees and Bushes.** The garden has lots of plants where one can take cover – randomly spread three Small Burst Templates and one Medium Burst Template on the battlefield – they grant Cover (-2).
- **In defense of Faberterra!** This battle takes place in the heart of a Faberterran palace so any character with the Loyal (Faberterra) or similar Hindrance gains a Benny. A PC who doesn't have such a Hindrance can decide that he begins to believe in Faberterra *right now* and *permanently* gain the Loyal Hindrance in exchange for *two* Bennies.

THE WILD HORDE

When the ritual is complete the Valks' weapons glow with hellish red and the riders go berserk. They gain a constantly active Berserk Edge and Hardy ability (no Wound when Shaken twice). They become a furious horde of slayers obedient only to Maab. She plans to use them to attack and pillage other cities. If the PCs killed Maab after she finished the ritual the horde becomes completely uncontrollable, slaughtering all the citizens of Dalaxium and then spreading among the wilderness of Faberterra, becoming the most dangerous bandits in the history of the empire.

If the PCs are in the palace when this happens, they are relatively safe because the Valk prefer to roam the wide streets of the city. Escaping Dalaxium requires only four Advancement Tokens now, but if the PCs get caught the fight will be much more difficult.

After the escape they'll probably call reinforcements as in **The Great Escape** above.

AFTERMATH

This bloody adventure can end in very many ways and only a few things are sure.

First, the betrayal of Lucius is a heavy blow for Faberterra. He was a good man before he became obsessed with immortality and the news of his despicable end sounds like another omen of the empire's forthcoming collapse. Characters loyal to Faberterra may even consider concealing his crime and spreading the rumor that he died trying to stop the Valk.

Second, Dalaxium is in ruins. If the Valk were defeated it is safe for now, but the Empire doesn't have enough gold (or good will) to rebuild it. Some of the citizens return to live among the ruins and corpses of their relatives – this "haunted city" may become the base for the party if they became emotionally attached to it.

Third, Iathus has taken notice of the party. He may consider them noble heroes or efficient mercenaries but he's surely impressed by their abilities and may hire them for some task at the behalf of Faberterra.

CREATURES AND NPCs



ARTHINES THE ASTRONOMER

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (Astronomy, Faberterranean history) d10, Investigation d10, Persuasion d6, Notice d6, Taunt d4.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4

Edges: Sage, Scholar.

Hindrances: Big Mouth, Elderly.

Gear: Robes.



ASPERIOS THE GREAT

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Sorcery d8, Stealth d4, Streetwise d4, Taunt d4.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Edges: Arcane Background (Sorcery), Impressive Aura, New Power, Power Points.

Hindrances: Arrogant, Greedy.

Powers [15 PP]: *bolt* (tendrils of darkness), *boost/lower trait* (corrupt), *deflection* (I am not there!).

Gear: Dagger (Str+d4), robes.

COMMONERS

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (one craft) d6, Notice d4.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Edges: None.

Hindrances: Fear of Magic (minor)

Gear: Bronze knives (Str+d4)

DEMONIC MASTIFF

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Tracking d10.

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

Special Abilities

• **Armor +1:** Thick hide.

- **Beak: Str+d8.** Their saliva is acidic, so this attack has AP 1.
- **Demon:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; immune to poison and disease.
- **Mane of Thorns:** The Demonic Mastiff can shoot a volley of black spines. This is a ranged attack with range 3/6/12, dealing 2d6 damage in a Small Burst Template, and uses Agility as the Shooting die. The Mastiff can shoot up to three volleys each day.
- **Size +1:** Demonic Mastiffs are the size of a pony.
- **Supernatural Tracker:** The Demonic Mastiff ignores all Tracking penalties for bad light and old tracks.



DOLCIUS

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d4
Skills: Knowledge (Astronomy) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d4.
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 4
Edges: None.
Hindrances: Damsel in Distress (although not a girl), Young.



ETHELLA

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d4, Healing d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d8.
Charisma: +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5
Edges: Very Attractive.
Hindrances: None.
Gear: Fancy clothes.
Special Abilities
 • **Pleased to Please You!:** After doing Ethella a favor that requires some time or effort (like duelling in her name, saving her from hungry monsters or gifting her with a piece of jewellery), a male character

gets a Benny. This ability works only once per session for a single PC.



IATHUS THE EMISSARY

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Knowledge (Battle) d10 (see below), Persuasion d8, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Throwing d6.
Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5
Edges: Command, Leader of Men, Noble, Tactican.
Gear: Dagger (Str+d4).



MAAB THE JALKA MAIDEN

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Sorcery d10, Riding d10.
Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6(1)
Edges: Arcane Background (Sorcery), Attractive, Born in the Saddle, Charismatic, Command, Fervor, New Power, Power Points.
Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Vow (Valk religious tenets).
Powers [25 PP]: *bolt* (invisible strangling force), *deflection* (demonic wind), *fear* (hideous laughter), *summon ally* (fighting bird, demonic mastiff, jatakal).
Gear: Spear (Str+d6, 1 hand: allows Tricks at Reach 1, 2 hands: +1 Parry), small shield (+1 Parry), bone dagger (Str+d4), boiled leather armor (+1), Jalka (see below).
Special Abilities
 • **Jalka:** A Jalka is an abomination born of a demonic steed and a mare. It has the

same stats as a Henchman warhorse, plus the Demon Monstrous Ability. It feeds on meat, has razor-sharp teeth (Str+d6) and causes Fear the first time it is seen. It can be ridden only by a Jalka Maiden.

• **Living Banners:** Very few Valk warlords use insignia on the battlefield. A band of warriors usually gathers around a Valkyrie, her long blonde mane acting as a banner. The Command Radius of a Valkyrie is 15" when she is on horseback. For this reason, a Valkyrie is sometimes referred as a "Living Banner".

MERCENARIES

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Throwing d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6(1)

Edges: None.

Hindrances: Greedy.

Gear: Bronze short sword (Str+d6), small shield (+1 Parry), light leather armor (+1).



NERA THE AMAZON

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

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d4, Persuasion d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Throwing d6.

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6 (7 vs males); **Toughness:** 6(1)

Edges: Amazon, Attractive, Combat Reflexes.

Hindrances: Code of Honor (Amazon), Loyal.

Gear: Bronze long sword (Str+d8), light leather armor (+1), medium feathered helm (+2, only head), spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands), medium shield (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness vs. ranged

weapons), bow (Damage: 2d6, Range: 12/24/48).



SANGIUS

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d10, Throwing d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8(2)

Edges: Combat Reflexes.

Hindrances: None.

Gear: Bronze long sword (Str+d8), medium shield (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness vs. ranged attacks), medium bronze armor (+2).

VALK STEPPE PONY

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities

• **Fleet-Footed:** Steppe Ponies roll a d8 instead of a d6 when running.

• **Kick:** Str.

• **Run All The Day:** Steppe Ponies gain +2 to Vigor rolls to resist fatigue.

• **Size +1:** Steppe Ponies are smaller than normal horses.

VALK RIDER

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d4, Intimidation d6, Shooting d10, Riding d10, Survival d6.

Charisma: -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6(1)

Edges: Born in the Saddle, Steady Hands.

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Greedy.

Gear: Bronze short sword (Str+d6), bronze dagger (Str+d4), Valk composite bow (Damage: 2d6+1, Range: 15/30/60, AP 1), boiled leather armor (+1), steppe pony (see above).

Special Abilities

• **Hit and Run:** A Valk Rider is trained to fight on horseback from youth. For this reason he is particularly adept in hit and run tactics. While mounted, unlike the normal rules, he can move part of his pony's Pace, make a Shooting attack, and then finish his movement. This is considered an action (so causes a multi-action penalty).



YANKSHA THE VALKYRIE

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Sorcery d10, Riding d10.

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6(1)

Edges: Arcane Background (Sorcery), Attractive, Born in the Saddle, Charismatic, Command, Fervor, New Power, Power Points.

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Vow (Valk religious tenets).

Powers [20 PP]: *bolt* (invisible strangling force), *deflection* (demonic wind), *fear* (hideous laughter).

Gear: Sorcerer's Staff (Str+d4, +1 Parry, 2 hands, reach 1, deliver touch), bone dagger (Str+d4), boiled leather armor (+1), steppe pony.

Special Abilities

• **Living Banner:** The Command Radius of a Valkyrie is 15" when she is on horseback.