

CITY STATES OF MARS

✧✧✧✧ KORIUM ✧✧✧✧



BY PAUL KIDD

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HEARTS OF THE WISE

On! *On, Warriors of Elysium, On to Glory!* Long, loping Jakaluurs gave cry, their deep-throated roars thundering across the sands. One instant, the nomad warriors were charging, lances lowered. An instant later the battle line slammed into the Green Martian riders, hurtling them to the ground. Red lances pierced Green breasts, and the dank red beasts ridden by the Greens reeled and fell. The melee churned, lit by radium blast – Nomad sabres rising and falling, to be met by the clubs and axes of the Green Martian horde.

The Green Savages were many. But these were the Red Nomads of Elysium – the guard of Borak Tor. Grim men forged by the desert and tempered by an unbreakable honour. The Green cannibals had ridden through the lands of the Red nomads, slaughtering and eating helpless prey. But there was no escape. Not even the infinite desert wastes of Mars could hide them from the wrath of Borak Tor.

The Red War Chief fought with lance and hand bow, sword and fist, cleaving a path through the snarling Green riders. The savages had gathered about a fallen, ancient ruin, their attention drawn to something in their midst. A great battle was being fought there, deep amidst the stones. Finding their enemy at last, one hundred Red nomads of Elysium had not paused for an instant. In one great mass of flesh and steel, they had attacked.

The melee raged, with Green men falling before the fury of the nomad blades. At the ruins, Green Warriors gathered about the largest of their kind – their chieftain. The monster roared in challenge to the reds, then cast aside his daggers, sword and axe in invitation. No man of honour would attack a challenger with longer weapons than his enemy. The Green Giant flexed his thews and roared at his enemies to come at him without the protection of their blades. The Green Chieftain snarled his challenge at Borak Tor.

“Face me, Red Man! Face me if you dare!”

The tusks and claws of the huge Green monster were as sharp as knives. But Borak Tor threw aside his sabre, sprang from his Jakaluur and attacked. Raging fists sent the Green man reeling, but the monster clawed back in return.

But Borak Tor was known as Borak Tor the Wise – deep with honour, but whose sharpest weapon was his mind. As the Green Chieftain roared and rushed upon him, Borak Tor moved so that the rising sun hung behind his own mighty shoulder. As he span aside, the light suddenly seared into the Green man's eyes. Blinded, the savage clawed and missed, to be felled by a huge blow from the fist of Borak Tor.

With the battle raging behind him, the Green monster whirled and saw a fallen hand bow lying cocked and loaded in the dust. He seized upon it and fired the bolt at Borak Tor.

“Red Man! Tonight we feast upon your flesh!”

The Red War Chief hurtled himself aside. His hand went to the dagger on his belt, and his cast was true. The treacherous Green Chieftain arched, the knife of Borak Tor buried in his throat. The monster fell, as the Red Nomads swept past on their Jakaluurs to override the last remaining warriors of the cannibal horde. Borak Tor swiftly took up a fallen blade.

At the heart of the ruins, a strange melee still raged. Green men had charged into the ancient buildings. Their corpses lay scattered in the dust. Borak Tor overleapt the bodies, and came to a chamber where a last Green warrior lunged at him in attack. The nomad Chieftain met the charge and turned aside the raging warrior's steel. He ran the beast through and stepped aside, leaving his opponent lying lifeless in the dust.

Someone was already here – someone who had engaged the Greens in battle, allowing the Nomads their chance to attack. Now honour required that the debt be repaid.

Within the ruins, in a great chamber covered in ancient script, Borak Tor found the red hero who had so enraged the Greens.

The woman stood surrounded by a ring of her slain enemies. Though slight and wearing a city scholar's harness, she knew how to wield a pistol and a blade. She was fair of skin – the light red of an early dawn upon a flawless Martian sky. Her hair fell like molten copper across shoulders freckled to the kiss of the sun. No wild desert beauty – no proud warrior maid with thews of steel. But in her violet eyes there was a mind so sharp it took away the breath of Borak Tor where he stood.

She had notebooks beside her – records she had taken of the writings in the ruins. It was these notes that she had defended, caring more for them than her own life. Borak Tor approached in wonder as he sheathed his blade.

“Woman! Why are you here in the Green Waste, where only fools and heroes dare to tread?”

She spoke to him in a voice as level and as calm as a priestess. “I am no fool, warrior.”

The Red lord gestured to her books. “Then what is this, that you would risk your life so recklessly.”

“These are the merest childish thoughts of our forbears. Mere musings for children on how to bring magnetic charge to iron – how electric current is born and passes from one place into another.” She walked – tall and slender, her hands ink stained yet graceful. “The knowledge of our fathers. Thoughts long lost and gone.”

Borak Tor turned and gazed upon the chamber walls. “Surely you did not ride here alone?”

The woman quietly rested her hand upon the ancient runes. Her voice held a note of sadness. “Alone indeed, oh warrior. I have long searched alone, for none grasp that what I seek is the future.”

Outside the ruins, the Red nomads gave their cry of victory. The Green savages had fallen. The dead of Elysium had been avenged. Borak Tor gazed upon the slight figure of the woman scholar, then held out to her his hand.

“I would not see you risk your life alone in the wastes. You have slain the enemies of Elysium. You have brought victory to our arms and vengeance to our houses. Eat with us and ride with us. You shall not ride unguarded as long as you venture out to seek your future.”

They left the chamber, with the scholar carrying her books, her notes. As they reached the open sky, the woman's hair caught with all the colours of the dawn. Swallowing, the mighty War Chief felt his heart skip a beat to a strange new emotion in his breast.

“I must introduce myself. I am of the Riders of Elysium, War chief of the Tribe of Lazad...”

“You are Borak Tor – called Borak the Wise”. The scholar maiden smiled at the nomad War Chief, and a brilliant light seemed to shimmer in her eyes.

“And I am Talaan. Talaan, scholar of Avar...”

INTRODUCTION

Korium is a small independent city state sitting off the main trade routes at the northern edge of the Elysium plateaux. Placed near to exotic deserts, ruined cities and mountains haunted by ancient, it is a perfect gateway to adventure. A perfect home base for adventurers who are about to set forth into the wondrous lands of mars.

The city state is at the edge of a band of independent allied city states. While some conflicts do occasionally break out, the region has largely been at peace for the past 200 years. Korium stands beside vast tracts of wilderness – places filled with the ruins of the ancients, with warbands of Green Martians, and with hidden secrets buried far beneath the sands.

Korium stands upon a high rock peninsula overlooking the spectacular gorge of ghosts. Outside of the main fortified city is her adjoining port, Kardak – built to service the canal traffic that brings trade to the city.

BACKGROUND

Far to the west of the Kingdom of Callor Maralin, hard on the edges of the Green Wastes, lies Red Korium – the twice-built city.

Korium is unique in the withered world of Mars. It is a new city built upon the ruins of the old. A new people have come upon the bones of the past. Rather than scavenging, they have built. Rather than thieving from the past, they have built towards a future. The people of Korium may be the future face of Mars – if only they survive.

OLD KORIAM

Old Korium was a minor canal city, powered by mighty radium generators. Her tall towers saw the withering of the Martian forests behind her, and the drying of the vast seas at her feet. She saw the creation of the vast canals – rejoiced at the first flow of water. She weathered the savage canal wars, but emerged from centuries of conflict broken and dazed, her thousands of years of history all but forgotten in the struggle for survival.

For thousands of years, the city strove on. The Green Men spread – the sinister Grey Martians emerged onto the surface once again. Empires arose and fell. But it was the hand of nature that destroyed proud Korium. Mighty earthquakes gripped the city and shook it like a leaf. All but the mightiest of towers fell.

THE COMING OF THE ELYSIANS

Enter the Nomads.

From the far south, there came a nomadic people – the Elysian nomads – driven north in the hunt for water and new grazing land. Here at the edge of the Red cities, there were a few small states who shared at least some pieces of their culture with the Nomads – the same alphabet, the same gods. The new nomads displaced the Green Men who swarmed the North Western corner of the wastelands, and watered their Jakaluurs in the mighty Martian canals.

The nomads fought ferocious wars with the Green men – then with other red nomads who hoped to overrun the Elysians and capture the canals. For a time, the Elysian nomads lived as bandits – charging canal traffic tithes to pass along their territory. It was a fierce existence – a proud existence... But within the ranks of the Elysian nomads, there were those who began to dream of something more...

KING OF NOMADS, THE QUEEN OF SCHOLARS

The tribal leader Borak Tor was a visionary leader. While scouring the deserts for artefacts, he encountered a young female scholar from the far east – Talaan of Avar. The girl had braved the deadly wilds almost alone to seek out not weapons, not loot – but the secrets to old technologies.

Borak found her fascinating. Through many adventures, he protected Talaan and guided her to new ruins, and long lost sites. She studied not the easy rote learning of the old Martians, but the most basic, elemental knowledge that lay beneath the magic. Fired on by Talaan, Borak began to dream new dreams. He married Talaan, and made her his Queen.

Together, Borak and Talaan came out of the deep desert, and asked themselves what could be done to win a future for their people.

They looked towards the ruins of old Korium.

The canal gave the tribe an opportunity to no longer wander the wastes, but to sink down roots and stay in place. By settling, they could better protect their hold upon the water – but by settling, they could evolve their people into something more.

They could become civilised.

To make tools and weapons, not merely trade for them. To generate wealth – not extort it from hapless travellers. But to move on and away from the past, dvancing rather than looking back. Perhaps to discover new sciences to replace the old. To stop the slow decay of Mars and become a new people, proud and glorious.

Thus ran the dream of Borak and Talaan.

KORIUM: THE CITY OF FUTURES

The site of Old Korium gave the needed base for a new city. The rubble provided ready building materials, and several vast towers were intact. The city sat at the edge of the canal, able to water itself, irrigate any fields the nomads chose to make. Borak and Talaan led their tribe to the city site. For the first time in generations, Red Martians struggled to build anew, and not merely scavenger and repair.

The stones that once made palaces now formed mighty city walls, defending the settlement against the predations of other Martians, both Red and Green. The old rumble was levelled, and entirely new houses were built using the stone. Wars were fought as other cities thought to prey upon the new settlement – but the Red nomads of New Korium were fierce and cunning. They struck at the air ports of their enemies, stealing their very ships out from under them. The once-nomads now took to the skies to defend their home.

City of Korium, adult population

Korium citizens: 82,000

Noble families: 300

Resident aliens: 1,000

Regional Red nomads: c16,000

Current ruler: Queen Hathina Jadad

Main exports: Spices, silks, radium

Imports: Steel, nomad riding beasts, high technology goods.

Notable strengths: Air navy, ferocious mounted warriors

Industries: Sky ship refurbishment and repair

The natives are noted for their honour code, their fiery cuisine, and their kinship to the Red nomad peoples. Notably energetic attitudes, and great wanderlust.

The city lacks radium power generator. Local technology is considered somewhat backwards.

A Map of Korium can be found on Page 52.

Talaan repaired fallen air ships, bringing life to damaged engines. The airships linked the new city to new trade routes, bringing life flowing into Korium's veins.

Korium was a city again.

She had no radium generators – only windmills and water wheels that provided a trickle of electric power. The only radium weapons she possessed were those won in battle from her enemies. But Korium was alive. And as the first centuries of her new existence passed, the city began to prosper.

THE SLAVE LORDS OF GHUTAN

For the first centuries of her new life, Korium as preoccupied with her own birth struggles: war against marauding Greens and Red cities, construction, exploration and founding industries. She was outside of the cut and savage thrust of Red Martian politics. But her ties to the Nomads that lived about her in the wastes were strong. And when the nomads suffered, Korium came to her aid.

To the south of Korium, at the rim of what is now known as the Baltan Confederacy, lay the terrible city of Ghutan. The slave lords of Ghutan were a horrific tyranny – a city of brainwashed, terrified slaves driven by sadistic lords and masters. City after city fell before them, swelling the slave pits with bodies, and filling their army with more terrified, beaten soldiers. But the Ghutanian overlords required more and more living cattle to fuel their ongoing conquests. They raided into the deserts, seizing red nomads as slaves. Korium's air navy came to the defence of the nomads, and the empty skies of the desert lit red with battle.

Korium took a fearless stand against the warlords of Ghutan. The great slave empire of Ghutan demanded first trade subsidies, and then protection money from all of the smaller states to the north. Most cities paid – but Korium proudly refused.

Thus began the siege of Korium. The shambling slave army headed north, and swarmed about the walls of Korium like ants. They met the sheer fury of Korium – nomad skills blended with the determination of civilised men. The outnumbered air navy of Korium fought like Chu'grahk, raiding and boarding – swelling her own ranks with ships taken from the hands of the slave drivers.

Against all odds, Korium held her own.

As the siege continued, Ghutanian assassins slew Korium's King, expecting resistance to crumble. But a commoner arose, rallied the people, and raised an army that held the besieging hordes of Ghutan at bay. This brave stand gave time for the other city states to break their bonds and rise up against the Bandit empire. The Ghutanian army was defeated in the great 'battle of the bones' – a savage battle between the alliance of free cities and the armies of Ghutan. Defeated in battle, the Ghutanian slave army disintegrated. Their capital was attacked, destroyed, and untold numbers of their captives set free.

To this day, the desert where the Ghutanian slave lords fell is named the 'desert of bones'.

THE PRESENT

Two hundred years have passed since the warriors of Korium stood upon the fallen battlements of Ghutan. The old alliances still remain – the "elysian Cities" who share some language and cultural ties with neighbouring Korium remain her friends.

Korium is derided in the south as being a 'settlement' – a mere nomad encampment, picking over the bones of the past. But to the people of Korium, the city is a place of pride. Her wind and water generators give her electric light. Her shipyards, steeped in the lore of Talaan, make repairs and refurbishments of sky ships that are impossible to the decadent cultures of the south. Her people retain the wanderlust of the nomads: Korians are explorers, travellers and soldiers of fortune. Like their nomad ancestors, they are poets as well as warriors.

Korium supports herself by commanding several small but useful trade routes. The sands to the west yield useful finds of radium: radium prospectors are a burgeoning and vital part of city life. Her shipyards bring in business from far across Mars. Most famously of all, the spices of Korium are exported by air and canal to cities all across the globe.

The city's reputation for bravery and independence remains strong. Her rulers are descended from Jadad, the commoner who arose to lead the city to victory against the slave lords so long ago. For these reasons, society is more fluid than in many states – a brave warrior or renowned explorer can make their way to the highest levels of society.

Characters from Korium

The people of Korium re raised the traditions of the nomads of the Elysian race. Every child is taught to ride, and to defend themselves. They are also culturally versed in the arts of poetry and music.

All characters born to the local setting must purchase a d6 riding skill or a d6 in Pilot skill. They also receive a free Knowledge skill of d4 in poetry, and d4 in music. Remember, the characters also gain the d6 Survival skill given to all warriors of Mars.

Characters born and raised in Korium should take the 'hindrance' of 'Code of Honour'.

Race

The natives of Korium are part of the Elysian peoples. Elysians tend to be on the dark end of the scale for red Martian skin colouration – a smoky red that most Martians find extremely attractive. Elysians tend to have very straight, black hair. Eye colours include violet, lavender, green and grey.

Elysians tend to be tall and slender. Their faces are somewhat angular and proud of bearing.

Typical warrior/citizens

The defences of the city of Korium are not her walls, not her cannon – but an entire citizenry trained to arms. Every man and woman is trained from a young age to ride and shoot. Even with most women taking on the duties of raising families, at any given time at least 50% of the population can rise to join the army in times of war.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d4, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4, Poetry d4, Survival d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Honour Code

Edges: Block, Steady Hands

Gear: Sand Sabre (Str+d8, Attk +1, AP 1), Dagger (Str + d4), Handbow (2d4), Bow (2d6), Jewel Harness.

* One person in each household (minimum) will have a riding Jakaluur, lance and bow.

* Full time soldiers take a raise in Fighting skill, Shooting skill, Notice and Riding skill.

* About 1 in 4 ordinary warriors will substitute a radium pistol for their handbow.

* A typical skyship crewman would add some piloting skill.

The culture of Elysium is based upon nomad virtues. Self reliance, individuality, and a certain democratic sense. They see themselves as being somewhat apart from other races of Red Men. While they do not have the great cultural achievements of the past (cities, canals, radium engines) to look back upon, there is a sense that they are the “new men” of Mars – the people who move forward rather than look back.

Other, more ‘civilised’ Red cities look on the folk of Korium as being slightly barbaric. “Not one of the chosen intellectual elite”.

The people of Korium definitely have nomadic roots. This now shows itself through a wanderlust – a desire to explore and see far climes.

- Many families of Korium encourage their young men to take a nomad bride. This gives them close ties to the Nomads.

HONOUR CODE

Warriors of the Elysian cities have a definite honour code. Only the worst outcast or must devilishly warped mind would cast this honour system aside. No one will deal with a creature who lives without honour. Foreigners are warily given the benefit of the doubt.

(- An exception are foreigners from Baltan – who are presumes to be honourless scum unless proven otherwise. Baltans are not welcome – their traders and ambassadors are barred from the city)

An Elysian will not ‘escalate’ a conflict unless they are outnumbered. If a warrior is attacked by a dagger, they may respond with bare hands or a dagger. If attacked by a sword, they can respond with sword (or axe etc), dagger or bare hands. If faced with a pistol or hand bow, they can respond with a like amount of force or melee weapons. If faced with a rifle or bow, they can respond in kind.

Upping the numbers allows a warrior to up their response. If outnumbered, the response can be upped by 1 level with no loss to personal honour.

Except in times of war, it is considered cowardly to attack an enemy who cannot respond. Sniping from afar or stabbing a combatant in the back is considered unbelievably cowardly. A ringing cry of challenge is considered to be warning enough.

Hooks:

A young man is being attacked by enemies. His back is to the wall, and he is sorely outnumbered. Will the players leave him to his fate, or will the even the odds and bring honour to the fight? Who is the young man, and why were so many attacking him at once, in all defiance of honour? What kind of terrible feud have the player characters walked into?

A proud, ailing old man is found as he weakly ties to do armour and answer the call to arms. He is the head of his household, and has no warrior offspring – so when the city calls he must answer the call.

Will a player character step up and take the old man’s place?

But the old man did have one offspring – a scholarly daughter who studies at the academy. She is unskilled, but was willing to take the old man’s place, even though it might mean her certain death. But she is enraged and dishonoured when she finds that a player character has usurped her honour and taken her place! The enraged maiden challenges the usurper with sword or pistol!

How can the player defend themselves, stay alive, and bring this well-intended interference to a non tragic conclusion?

A professional duellist from the city to Laes Tabor is attacking locals, drawing his sword and challenging them. The man is an absolute expert in fencing, and uses this to overcome victims who are less skilled in the sword.

How can his reign of terror be stopped, and honour codes still held?

- And what is the purpose of these duels? Could this be assassination hidden under the guise of honour and law?

THE GODS OF KORIAM

Korium and the nomads of the Elysian region subscribe to a form of ancestor worship. Each household has a shrine to its forbearers, and the city maintains a temple where the spirits of those from the past are remembered. There

is a general belief that the universe itself is eternal and renewing, with different parts going through different phases of existence. Strong personalities survive after death as potent spirits. Weaker minds become part of the background 'haze' of the spirit world.

Priests interpret messages from the ancestor spirits, which come as dreams of visions to those the spirits choose to serve them. Most commonly, this power comes to a girl in her pre-puberty, developing more strongly as she achieves womanhood. The temple is therefore dominated by female seers and officials.

Powerful spirits have a particular interest in the city – particularly the spirits of Borak and Talaan, the city founders, the heroes of past wars, and several allied beings who have never lived a corporeal life. Some of these beings are elemental spirits tied to fire and water.

THE CULT OF BLOOD

A heretic cult has spread into the city from the desert. This deems that certain powerful spirits can be used to gain power in the physical world. The most potent of these spirits is Goggokk, he who hungers. By making blood sacrifice to Goggokk, an adept can gain immense physical, mental and even psionic powers.

The few prophets of this dire cult that emerged a hundred years ago were immediately stamped out. The cult is viewed with universal revulsion.

Hooks:

Have all the cultists of Goggokk truly disappeared?

The player characters become friendly with a young city guard. At his family home, they meet his sister – a young girl just short of womanhood. The girl is seen as 'gifted', and occasionally has vivid dreams.

But her dreams become lurid and disturbing. She begins to report vague, dazed images of blood and deep, dark caverns. Of chanting and horrifying screams.

Are these merely dreams? Visions of something going on beneath the city? Or is the girl somehow being used by cultists to contact their evil spirits?

Could this poor child be sleepwalking? Helplessly putting her body and mind into the hands of evil?

TRIBES OF THE CITY

The city populace is still split administratively into seven 'tribes' – and each tribe is split into four extended family clans. These tribes and clans form the basis of military units when the city gathers for war.

Tribes do not live only in set parts of the city – they make their homes all across the city's territory.

Tribe of Amat – The Royal clan. Famous breeders of Jakaluur.

Tribe of Guur – Famous for its engineers and scientists.

Tribe of Lazad – The tribe of the founders of Korium. They have an important place in all city rituals.

Tribe of Xedd – The most famous swordsmen and heroes of Korium have hailed from this tribe.

Tribe of Thuul – Renowned for the dark beauty of its women and the grace of its dancers. Many diplomats hail from this clan.

Tribe of Fuzal – Famed for their artisans and craftsmen. Also for brewing of beers. Their cooks make meals considered to be spicy even by Korian standards!

Tribe of Buran – Famous for their wanderlust. Prospectors, explorers and far traders.

TATTOOS

The citizens of Korium and the canal/desert tribes closest to them in kinship have a tradition of wearing body tattoos. Due to the very dark skin of the Elysian race, tattoos tend to be made in a type of white or white/electric blue. The patterns are careful geometric marks that show clan, tribe, and totemic affiliation.

The folk of Korium are proud of their honour, of their families and of their city. These are all displayed in their tattoos.

Display of these tattoos is a reason why the folk of Korium wear essentially no clothing. It also makes disguise far more difficult.

TECHNOLOGY

The city of Korium does not have a radium engine at its core. The city has been built by nomads who have created their own life and culture on the site of an ancient city.

The city lacks much of the ancient infrastructure enjoyed by other Martian cities. There are no visiscreens or giant computers. No radium power generators – and therefore no massive electrical smelting plants to make strange alloys and vast quantities of steel.

The city operates two ‘power mills’ to produce electricity by other means; there is a water wheel that generates power from the canal, and a wind farm that lines the ridges above the Gorge of Ghosts. The city therefore does not make lavish use of electrical power. Homes have electric lighting, and the main streets have lighting at night, but smaller streets and side alleys are never lit. Due to the lack of firewood and electricity, most cooking is done with stoves fuelled by vegetable oils or bottled gas (methane gas, brewed beneath the city).

Lack of electrical power and fossil fuels means that Korium imports most of its steel and glass.

Where Korium excels is at the application of nomad adaptability to technological problems. Unlike most cities, they have managed to provide limited electrical power rather than glumly walking away from a city site that has no radium generator. Using this flexibility, they have managed to create a thriving air industry. Korium’s workshops are quite capable of renovating old and damaged sky ships. Not only the superstructures, but the controls and engines themselves can be pieced together and repaired. Many teams are sent to scour the land for old sky wrecks and bring in the old engines and parts that were simply abandoned by their old owners.

If you can get your ship to Korium, then they can make it fly...

Radium rifles are slightly more rare in Korium than they are in many Red Martian cities. Pistols, however, are in more common supply. Radium, found by desert prospectors, is still rare enough to make people think twice before shooting with these valuable weapons.

POEMS

The Elysians set high store by their poets. Young men create impromptu ‘staves’ and ballads to celebrate the joy of a ride, the beauty of a woman, or the call of battle. Women express their feelings in carefully created sonnets and verse.

There are two basic “Official” local poetic forms: ballads and sonnets.

Sonnets are short poems written in a complex,

rigid metre. Layered meanings, echoed references to other works and juxtaposition of imagery make this an art form of immense depth and flexibility. A character skilled in sonnet writing has a very definite advantage when wooing a fair maid, or delivering a needling message.

Ballads are long poems designed for spoken recitation. They often celebrate or examine great stories, great evens – famous loves or famous duels. They are a favourite of the warrior classes. Being immortalised in a ballad is the dream of most young warriors.

As a strange note: poets have also served great roles in war. Not only do they lionise heroes, they can also satirise fools and cowards. The thought that poetic eyes are watching has spurred many young warriors onwards into action.

Characters can gain FAME by creating and publishing poetry. If a character makes a great success when presenting a poem at court, or at an artistic soiree, they gain +1 FAME. A character properly lionised in ballads also gains +1 FAME. Likewise, a woman celebrated in a sonnet gains +1 FAME.

CUISINE

The cuisine of Korium is noted for its spicy flavours. Many outlanders find the local addiction to fiery flavours to be rather difficult to adjust to. The spicy foods give the folk of Korium a unique and attractive scent – the tresses of a local maiden’s hair will carry the scent of her spicy homeland for life.

Typical dishes include seared flat breads and rich curries, sometimes cooled by soothing yoghurt sauces. Animals are valued for their milk and eggs; so yoghurts, milk drinks, cheese and eggs form a notable part of the diet. When meat is served, it is baked in earthen ovens with spice. Korium spice roasts are justifiably famous across half of Mars.

As a contrast to the spicy food, local cooks also excel in making cool, soothing iced puddings, delicious iced confections and drinks. Those who leave Korium behind them will soon develop a wistful craving for these treats.

Adjusting to the local food can be a painful experience for the unwary traveller. Oddly enough, once a taste for the local food is acquired, it stays forever. Travellers will seek out chefs from Korium wherever they go.

Korium brews a dakka-seed ale that is nutritious and tasty. There is also a mildly alcoholic fermented

ilk drink which is extremely popular. The city is bereft of wines; the only source of wine are airship crewed by those few souls brave enough to trade with the great white apes of the north.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

The ancient culture of the Red Martians has a sophisticated tradition of musical expression. All well bred Red Martians are expected to play a little, or at least be conversant with the language of music. Highly skilled performers can actually 'talk' to one another through tone and metre.

Red Martian music is played upon several instruments. The Suuth, or Martian lyre, is a sophisticated instrument capable of extremely rich and subtle sounds. By adjusting the sounding box, many different pitches and tones are possible. Electrical enhancement allows many interesting effects and tones. The Elysian lyre tends to be taller and more slender than the southern lyre, with a more metallic sound. Lyres are the instruments of the great songs and ballads. A lyre made by a master craftsman will give a player a +1 on their performance rolls, although only for one type of song – war songs, romance, songs of peace etc.

Another unique instrument is the kutaash – an electrical instrument something like a later-earthly theramin. The sounds produced by a kutaash are far, far more sophisticated and flexible than those made by a theramin – and the instrument is infinitely more portable.

Other instruments include Hussha wood side-flutes – an instrument of great sophistication. There are also reeded flutes – so called 'marsh flutes', as well as percussive xylophones and several types of sistrum.

Military units use a three-mouthed horn – something like a Roman Buccina. These instruments are traditionally used for signalling, and also for grand fanfares at occasions of festival and state. In a local quirk – Elysian city states do not use drums in military music or signalling. Drums are the mark of the Green Warhordes.

It is often worth checking on the unique bargains found in the markets of Korium. Many wonderful gems have been found lying in the dust.

Performing a critical success in music at the court or at a festival gains a character +1 FAME.

DANCE

Korium is extremely famous for her dancers.

The Elysian people have a complex tradition of male and female dance. These are done as performance art – they are not social dances (eg they are not 'ballroom dances'). The most notable dancers are female. Their art is performed for audiences, and is... extremely memorable. Dances use a complex hand and body posturing to visually tell stories (dancer can actually communicate to one another silently by hand signals and eye signals alone). The 'dances of romance' are passionate, and extremely arousing.

Dance is a public entertainment. They are performed at court functions, at festivals, at notable parties and marriages – and also to welcome home troops who return in victory.

Critical successes when performing dance at court, at a festival, or when celebrating a military victory in a city festival earn a female character +1 FAME.

LANGUAGE

The musical local dialect is extremely easy on the ear.

The Elysian cultures share an alphabet with the Callorian kingdoms and most of the minor states on the north. This alphabet differs greatly from that used by the Baltan cities, and cultures found to the far south.

ORNAMENTS AND CLOTHING

The citizens of Elysian cities wear very little clothing; merely loin coverings, and decorative harnesses from which to hang weapons and tools. Harnesses are decorated with ornaments and jewels, and class as "Jewel Harness armour".

Displaying the harness is considered a social necessity. Cloaks are only worn in winter. Foot coverings consist of sandals. Warrior harness can be worn over silk armour, or combined with mesh. These armours would only be donned just before battle.

A person's history is told by their harness ornaments. The places they visit, the clan and region from which they hail are all revealed by their harness. Awards and decorations granted by the city are all clipped to the recipient's harness where they can be seen by one and all. Wearing a harness above one's station can be disastrous – simply

because one is advertising skills and services you cannot actually provide...

A few variations on the usual warrior/citizen harness often appear in the streets of Korium:

Nomad harness: *A cut of harness unique to the Elysian area, this style harkens back to the old times when Elysian peoples were wandering nomads riding across the plateaux. It is either seen as 'fiercely traditional' or old fashioned, depending on your point of view. A person in Nomad harness will gain a +1 social bonus when dealing with very old, traditional families – but a -1 when trying to mingle with the more avant garde.*

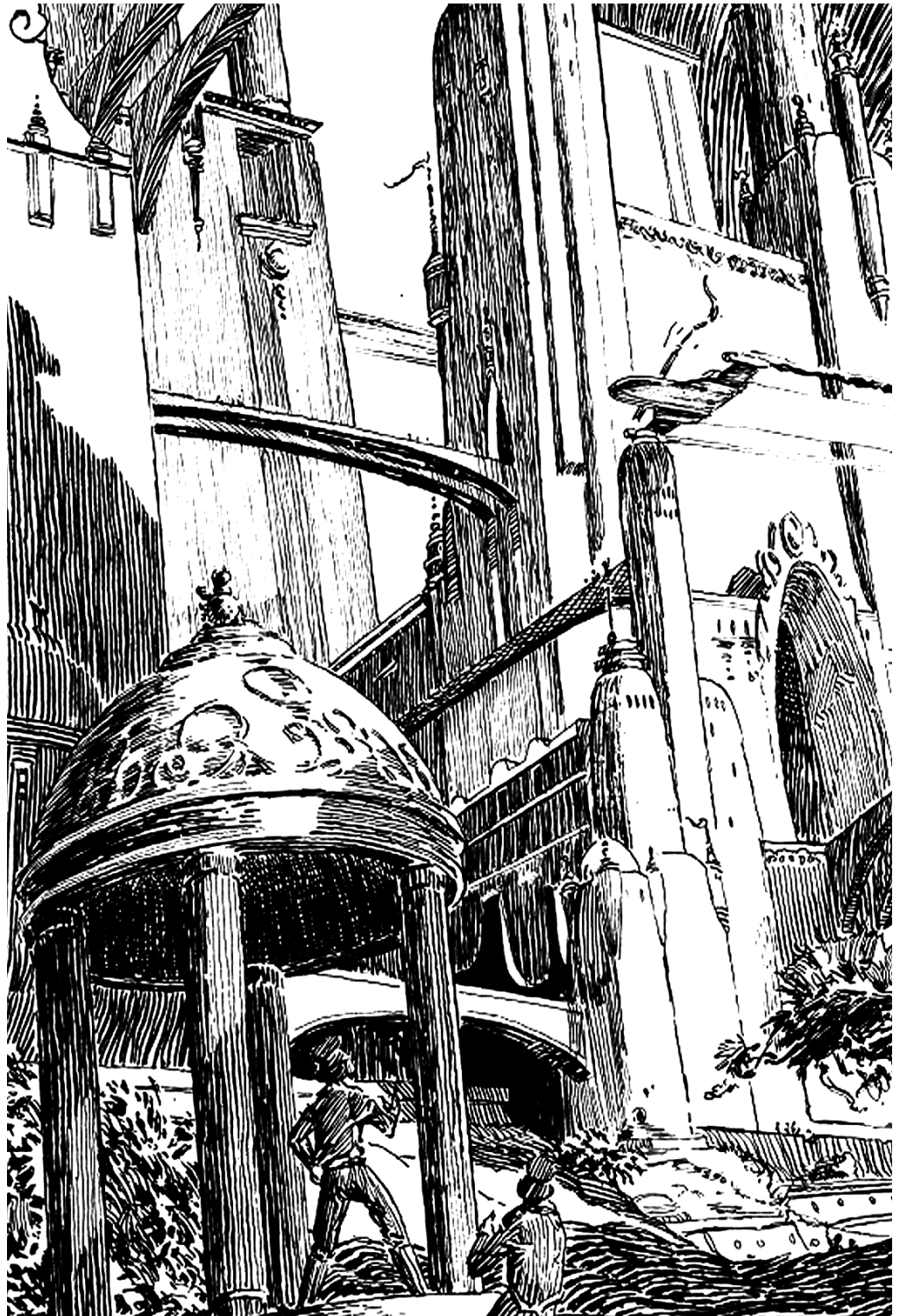
Female's warrior harness: *Advertises the character as a fighter. A female in warrior harness gains a -1 on social rolls in high society or when dealing with 'matronly' individuals, but a +1 on rolls when dealing with racers, warriors, explorers etc.*

Dancer harness: *Not capable of supporting a sword sheath or a pistol, a dancer's harness is designed to compliment the figure to its utmost. Expensive, transparent silks used for loin coverings. The colours change and shimmer depending upon the mood of the wearer. Adds +1 to all tests for allure.*

CUTS/ACCESSORIES

Prospecting fittings: "Prospector" fittings contain the numerous small vials required for testing ores and sands, as well as holding lenses and a small pick used for collecting and examining minerals.

Sky-ship fittings: "Racer" fittings can be added to any warrior or working harness. They include reinforced anchor points for safety lines. Characters who wear harnesses modded for sky ships are always hooked by safety lines when aboard ship (they are never 'spilled to the ground' as an effect of battle damage – although they can still fall overboard!)



Korium lies 60° West by 30° North on the Mars map – at the edge of the green wastes, at the canal junction south of Kor Va Krel. The city lies close to the equator, and enjoys a relatively balmy climate.

This region is at the join of a high plateau to the North, and the great dead seas to the south. The whole region has a look rather like Arizona's 'monument valley' on Earth: Tall spires and mesas, rough ridges and weird rock formations rise above a landscape of folded rock. Out on the old dead seas, the tall columns that once were islands stand high above the rich red sands of the desert.

Directly to the south lies the Desert of Bones – a desert littered with the remains of ancient battles between Martian city states during the canal wars. Many old city sites lie there, buried beneath the ever shifting sands.

The city is far removed from the Great White apes of the north. Green men are a threat, but are canny enough to avoid the region of Korium, whose sky navy can inflict immense destruction on roving green warbands.

The unpleasant states of the Baltan confederacy lies across the desert far to the south. Relations with the Baltan Confederacy are hostile. The confederacy, however, is deeply and passionately distracted by their hatred of the mighty kingdom of Callor Maralin.

To the east of Korium lie three other cities that share similar racial roots – the "Elysian cities" of Shandaar, Hezium and Voratta. Although these cities are 'traditional' cities – still occupied by their founders, still possessing radium power generators – they share the same honour code, language and cuisine as those enjoyed by the folk of Korium. Together, they form a loose alliance for mutual self defence.

CLIMATE

The Elysian reach has a warm, mild climate – made bothersome only by the total lack of rainfall. In the winter, the temperatures drop down lower. This season does, however, increase the amount of dew that coalesces out on the open desert; winter sees the desert carpeted with many types of soft green, grey and lavender lichen. This is also the main growing season for the city farms. The fields burgeon with life, and herds of food animals are taken out to graze upon the lichen and multiply.

The citizens of Korium are inventive and quite proactive when it comes to survival – their nomad heritage makes them far more energetic than most Martian city dwellers. During the winter, the city operates huge dew traps along the edges of the city walls and throughout all of the cliffs in the region. The collected dew is transferred into city reservoirs for safekeeping. Water from the brimming winter canals is also pumped into huge covered reservoirs. In this fashion, the city continues to grow foodstuffs in irrigated fields during the summer months, and there is always a water reserve to help see the city through a season of drought.

Each year, trade winds shift in the autumn and in the spring. The spring shift is celebrated by the founding festival, where trade ships from the eastern kingdom of Callor Maralin come sailing into the city to trade.

TRADE

The city serves as the meeting place of several minor trade routes. Korium grows many spices that are valued by connoisseurs across the face of Mars.

The northern canal links the city with other minor states. Kor Va Krel to the north is a major trading partner, supplied goods made with the use of plentiful electrical power – radium-forged steel, glass and textiles. In return, Kor Va Krel is given radium and power gems gleaned from the desert, spices, and rich red copper mined from the open faces of the cliffs.

Also from the north come a few goods gleaned from the kingdom of the white apes at the northern pole. This is the only source of wine and wood. Wood is vital to the shipyards of Korium.

To the West is the independent state of Jaillakallah. Considered somewhat morose, the people of Jaillakallah are grimly defending their city both from Green Men and the incursions of the Grey waste. Jaillakallah has elemental needs – they require radium, food, mercenaries, and medicinal herbs. Korium gains by trading with the nomads. In return, Jaillakallah trades manufactured goods.

The East canal leads into the minor states – with particular friendly relations with the other Elysian cities to the east. Korium grows spices vital to the cuisine shared by these cities. In return, the cities trade blade weapons, precious metals.

Each spring, the winds make it easy for vessels to ply their way from Callor Maralin to Korium. Callorian

vessels and visitors are most welcome – and Callorian crews have the right to enter in the local air races if they so desire. Callorian ships bring advanced goods for sale to the city. In return, they leave laden with spices, textiles, and the luxuriant Korian silks that are so valued by the women of Callor.

Korium maintains a steady trade contact with the red nomads of the deserts. They share a common background, and relations between Korium and the nomads is relatively cordial. Korium sets great store by nomad-bred Jakaluur and nomad-made bows. The nomads value silks, spices and Korium's tasty beer.

The workshops of Korium are also a popular place for airships of all nations to visit for repairs and modifications. Ships from the furthest, most obscure places on Mars will come visiting, hoping for repairs. If it once flew, then Korium can make it fly again.

The net result of these many converging trade routes is that there is a constant and colourful flow of visitors to the city. The bazaars of Korium are filled with a dazzling array of weird, wild and strange goods – many of which might be the opening chapter to an adventure...

Hooks:

A food shipment is headed to the grim city of Jaillakallah. Green Martians are besieging the city, stripping the city fields, and food imports are desperately required. Thankfully, the Green Men do not have boats. Canal barges might get through. A barge captain has suddenly lost his crew – they have abandoned him. He has hired more men, but has suddenly decided to hire more guards. Are the player characters up for the job?

But the barge owner has been betrayed. The new crew he has hired are all pirates, who seek to slay the true crew and seize the priceless food shipment. If the player characters somehow uncover the plot and survive, they will find themselves in charge of a badly needed food shipment, alone and afloat. But the pirates will not give up.

With enemies before, enemies behind and danger closing in on all sides, can the player characters somehow fight through pirates, hack their way past the blockading green men and deliver the food to Jaillakallah before it is too late?

—
The player characters are hired as caravan guards to help explore a new route to a tribe of nomads. The route might be dangerous – there are green men and terrible dangers lurking in the sands. And when they arrive, the player characters may end up having to prove their mettle in order to open up negotiations with the tribe.

En route, the party finds ancient, crumbling ruins. But one night, a player character makes a sickening

discovery. The neatly folded skin of one of the other caravaneers is found stashed somewhere in the ruins. What is going on here? Was the missing man merely some one – some thing – wearing a stolen human skin? And why did the creature discard its disguise? Is it still here, walking amongst the others? What does it do to the people it replaces – and when will the terrible being strike again...?

—
The player characters are hired to guard a foreign vessel docked at Korium. Many large crates come aboard at night. A player character makes the shocking discovery that the crates contain a living cargo! Red Marians, drugged into slumber – being shipped off in secret for some dark, nefarious purpose!

Are the ship's crew slavers? Or do they serve a more sinister master?

The ship is about to depart! Should the players attack the ship's crew and free the captives? Or is it a more cunning plan to see where the ship is taking the captives, and somehow stamp out this evil scheme at the source?

RULERS

Korium retains very nomadic roots. While there is a ruling family, the current ruler takes the advice of an elected council, from whom public officers are chosen. Each district elects its local representatives on a yearly basis. These local representatives meet with their constituents fairly regularly.

There are also even 'Noble' families of the city. These live in the palace district, and all provide a member to the royal council. Their function is essentially military: they provide full time educated officers for the armies, leaders for exploratory expeditions, and career ministers for the crown.

Overall, the main council of Korium consists of 17 members, plus the ruler.

The royal family itself is descended from a commoner, the great hero Jadad. Jadad led the entire city to victory against the evil Ghutanian Slavocracy. For 200 years, his descendants have served as the nation's rulers, passing the mantle from father to son.

—
or in this case, possibly mother to daughter.

Korium is currently led by a queen. Good Queen Hathina Jadad is a handsome woman of middle years. When her Husband died, she remained in command of the city. Nomad tradition allows women equal legal rights to men; on her husband's death, the Queen inherited all of his rights and duties – including leadership of the nation in battle.

The Queen has two sons – Darak and Maataash. The eldest son, Darak, is a renowned warrior. He spends perhaps too much time with the city's corsairs, and frequently disappears to join them (or even lead them) on their raids. The younger son, Maataash, is a famous scholar and a poet.

The Queen's particular burden is her tear-away reprobate of a daughter - Princess Jutaala Jadad. The princess is a headstrong (some would say argumentative) young lady who wears a warrior's harness, angrily rejects all male suitors. Her main fascinations include airboat racing, swordsmanship, airboat engineering and arguing with her mother. Jutaala is definitely a firebrand.

Hooks:

Prince Darak is embracing the corsair's life. Unbeknownst to the Queen, he is slipping out to engage in more and more raids into Baltan territory, taking greater and greater risks. The player characters are either a part of a corsair crew, and find a strangely enthusiastic, naïve and likable new companion – or perhaps are hired by the Vizier to keep a close guard on the Prince.

While on a raid, the corsair craft finds a clue to the distant whereabouts of a vital cargo of spare engine parts. These could be invaluable to the navy of Korium. But the player characters begin to have reservations. How was this information gained so easily? Could it be a trap? But why go to such lengths to entrap a simple corsair vessel...?

—

Princess Jutaala intends to run in the yearly air races as a contestant! Furious arguments have broken out between her and the Queen, but Jutaala cannot be dissuaded. But the Queen's displeasure means that few citizens will risk signing on as the Princess's crew. Where oh where might she find nitwits who would take on such a reckless job?

... and what if some opportunistic person decides to ambush the princess during a training run – either to kill her, or carry her off? If Jutaala is kidnapped, then the players are the only ones who can give pursuit and somehow rescue the fiery princess!

—

A Suitor has arrived, seeking the hand of the Queen. He is from the allied city of Shandaar – a prince of the blood. Handsome, educated and raffish. He has clearly sparked the Queen's interest – and the match seems good. The Queen will hear nothing said against him. ... But then the player characters find a dying man in the desert – a servant of the true Prince of Shandaar! The dying servant claims that the Prince's entourage were ambushed and destroyed in the desert before they ever reached Korium.

... So who is this "Prince" and his new entourage? And what sinister plans are they actually trying to bring to fruition?

THE GREEN HORDE OF KALAK THAAN

In the Green Wastes, hidden by the immensity of the deserts, the green Men of Mars gather. Savage raids are conducted against the canal dwellers. Small bands of Green Warriors try to ambush herd guards, slaughter their beasts and carry away both dead beasts and dead Red Martians as meat.

Recently, there have been changes. Somewhere in the heart of the desert, a terrible new threat begins to grow.

A Green Martian warrior has risen to pre-eminence in his clan, not only through his prowess, but through his sadistic cunning. Kalak Thaan has used assassination, and scavenged technology to wipe out his rivals within his clan. By leading successful ambushes against Red Men, he has equipped his warband with a few captured Radium Weapons. Using these, he has ambushed several canal vessels, providing met for his clan.

Kalak Thaan has a new tactic. He has made a safe breeding place for his warband. The infants are cared for, and are raised directly by Kalak Thaan himself, drilling into them a loyalty to their chief. The survival of 100% of the new infants (although perhaps 2 in 10 are slain in the savage training process) has led to an immense uprise in the numbers of the warband. These new warriors are fed on foodstuffs taken from the Reds. Already, this warband has dominated several other tribes in the wilderness, bringing them under Kalak Thaan's domination.

Recently, Kalak Thaan has begun to gather clues that point to the location of an ancient cache of military equipment hidden deep beneath the wastelands. Armouries filled with modern weapons – and a sky fleet lying in harbour, waiting to take to the skies.

Should Kalak Thaan find this lost cache of technology, suddenly the Green Martians will have radium pistols. Radium rifles...

... Suddenly they will have a sky navy to rival that of Korium.

Hooks:

While exploring the wilderness, the player characters find a band of Green Martians who are attacking Red Martian prospectors. But these Green Martians use radium weapons, and use them with skill. They strip their dead prey of their cargo of radium, and then head off into the wilds.

How have Green Martians come to arm themselves so well – and why are they stockpiling radium?

Deep in a ruined city, the player characters find an

old ruin used to imprison Red workers. When the characters see that the ailing workers are turning radium into power chips for radium guns, it will be obvious that something new and deadly is happening in the sinister Green Wilds.

Food shipments are going missing on the canals. Several loads of food destined for the west have vanished en route.

The shipments are being ambushed by Green Warriors of Kalak Thaan's horde. The Greens hide inside a derelict barge, and erupt out in ambush when the food barges come alongside to investigate. A single wailing red Martian child is left on deck as a lure to draw the player characters' bare in close...

This is uncharacteristically cunning planning for Greens (few Green Martians would keep their hands off a nice tender, tasty child...)

A young female scholar needs assistance to hunt for ancient bas reliefs said to tell the tale of a lost city in the desert. But there seems to be a Green Martian expedition hunting the exact same clues – indecipherable hieroglyphs in an ancient tongue. When the Greens capture the scholar and carry her off, the player characters must pursue them through an ancient maze – a series of tests left by the ancients to ensure that their secrets will only be yielded to the most worthy, intelligent successors. The scholar is being forced to lead the Greens through the deadly tests.

If the player characters catch sight of their prey, should they risk rescuing the poor scholar, or slay her to keep her from being used as a tool to destroy all of Korium?

THE RED TRIBES

Several tribes of Red Nomads range the general area of the city. They make their bases along the canal. These 'canal nomads' are welcome within the city, take part in city festivals, and are closely linked by marriage to the families of Korium.

Further out afield, there are other Red nomads who live a wider ranging lifestyle. Relations with the men of Korium are usually non hostile. Korium shares the same language as the nomads, and Korium's healers are a useful resource for the wanderers. The men of Korium consider the women of the Outer Nomads to be extremely desirable as wives.

One hundred years ago, an incursion of Red Nomads from a more Eastern people attempted to displace the local Elysian nomad tribes. The fleet and riders of Korium came to the aid of the Elysian Nomads and turned the tide of battle. The leaders

of the Elysian tribes do not forget this very real demonstration of Korium's support.

Recently, there has been a new religious movement building within the desert tribes. Called "Kor'taa", this movement believes that all city dwelling is unclean, and that those who deal with city dweller are corrupt. So far, this seems to be just the ravaging of a few fanatics. Surely there is no cause for alarm?

Hooks:

A nomad prince has seen and fallen in love with a maiden of the city, but has been refused her hand since she is promised to another man. The young man and his warband abduct the girl in the night, carrying her off into the desert.

The Player Characters either witness the abduction, or are hired by the angry parents to retrieve the girl. But what will they do when they find that this is true love? And what of the religious fanatics? Should the fanatic get hold of the player characters and the lovers, what might ensue? How will they prove to the religious fanatics that a man of the city has muscles as strong and a blade as sharp as any man of the desert?

While exploring in the desert, the characters accidentally trespass into the burial grounds of the nomads.

The spirits of the ancestors must be appeased. But only the trial of blood and sand can expiate this fault – a gauntlet where the player characters must face the fell beasts of the sands armed only with courage and bare steel

- But the followers of the mad priests see the opportunity to shatter nomad faith in the city men. They arrange to have guns left for the player characters to find and use. Will the players take up these weapons and blast their way free? Or will they hold honourably to the test and rely on their blades alone?

The player characters encounter a band of Red Nomads beleaguered by Green savages. If the PC's intervene, then perhaps some red lives can be saved.

More Greens are on the way. The player characters flee towards what seems to be a thorn patch – ruins covered by tangled, thorny vines.

One inside the thorn patch, the characters discover it is a trap. Even the Green Men fear to enter the ruins, for the deadly thorns are mobile and carnivorous. Finding refuge atop a pile of ruins, the characters see the Green Men settling down to wait – hoping that the characters prefer the swift death of a sword to the agony of being slowly eaten by the carnivorous vines.

Deep tunnels lie beneath the ruins. But the plants seem to be here as well.

Water is running low. The only way out is forwards – down into the tunnels filled with carnivorous plants – and who knows what other fell monstrosities?

Raiders disguised as local Red Nomads have attacked one of the canal tribes. The Canal nomads are incensed. They resentfully claim that the air navy of Korium is not aiding them in the hunt for these new raiders. Cordial relations between the canal nomads and the bordering desert tribes may well suffer.

While visiting the canal nomads to trade, the player characters are caught in a raid. They find the body of one of the fleeing raiders. The man's dark skin has been enhanced by cosmetic oil – his skin is clearly a lighter shade of red. Surely this is not an Elysian desert nomad?

Who could be behind these raids? Who would profit from a war between the nomads of the desert, and the canal people? And if there is an enemy at work – where are they hiding? In the desert – or in the city itself...?

THE GREY MEN OF MARS

To the west, beyond the cities of Jaillakallah and Goremon, the Grey Waste slowly spreads. At the heart of the wasteland looms the dread mountain – the vast volcanic pinnacle.

The Grey Martians have begun to extend feelers in the area of Korium. What they seek is unknown. But here and there, a wanderer has gone missing. The tracks of tripods have been found upon the sands. Once, an entire caravan of travellers were found lying in the dust, their skulls opened – their brains stolen by some terrible, unseen foe...

Hooks:

Grey Martians are infiltrating operatives into the area. These are agents with the bodies of Red Men, but whose brains have been horribly brainwashed and conditioned. These agents sometimes try to capture ordinary Martians and spirit them back to the dark tunnels of the Grey Martians. The players might witness such an attack, and pursue their agents to their underground staging post.

Three times now, teams of scrap prospectors heading into a certain area of the desert have failed to return. When the players investigate, they discover a strange facility deep in the desert, guarded by hideous mutant beasts. Strange Red Martians are constructing an apparatus – helped by the zombie-like ex-prospectors, who seem to now be their servitors. A force field seems to fence the facility off from the surrounding desert. What terrible thing is being built out in the desert – and how can they be stopped?

THE BALTAN CONFEDERACY

The evil, scheming, dishonourable and rather sinister Baltan Confederacy is to the south of Korium – separated from Korium by the impassable wastes of the desert of Bones. The Baltan's can only directly threaten Korium from the air – or by subtler means.

The Baltians could conceivably amass a huge airfleet to cross the desert. The clandestine aim of the corsairs of Korium is to keep Baltian air power busy protecting its trade much, much further afield, drawing the Baltian airships away to the far west and south. More direct action by the Black Corsairs attacks Baltian anchorages, stealing airships right out from under the Baltian Navy.

The Baltian Confederacy would dearly like to destabilise the area around Korium to allow her to wedge into the region. However, their attempts so far have been for naught. The Red Nomads of the area are unlikely to be swayed away from their support of Korium – the city maintains close blood ties with all of the tribes. Baltian attempts to sway the tribes have been violently rebuffed. The Baltians, however, hope to utilise Green Hordes as a cat's paw to weaken Korium and the tribes. So far, this policy has never been actively pursued: the cold war with Callor Maralin keeps the Baltians well occupied elsewhere.

Hooks:

There are many secret tunnels that lead from places within the city walls to hidden caves outside the city. The player characters begin working with new recruits to the army. One of these recruits proves himself by fighting off a wild beast that ambushes an officer. But some time later, this recruit can be seen taking an unhealthy interest in the location of the tunnels that lead under the city walls.

- Could the beast attack have been a hoax? Is this a Baltan spy, seeking to map the secret ways of the city? Or is he a helpless victim – perhaps being extorted by a Baltan mastermind who has threatened all that the poor recruit holds dear?

Baltan spies wish to seize the secrets of Korium's shipyards. The yards are well guarded – but can the same be said for the scientists, engineers and designers who see to the ships?

When a new ship is cobbled together, using spare parts, the current lead designer takes the ship out for a trial cruise to examine his handiwork in action. The player characters are on hand when the ship is captured in mid flight by the Baltians. Gas capsules have been hidden inside the structure of the ship – knocked out and helpless, the crew are captured and imprisoned.

A terrible storm strikes – wrecking the captures ship in the desert. The shipyard designer is injured. Blinded by sand, the player characters must somehow evade the Baltan hijackers and bring the ship designer back home to medical care.

-But hurry. A Baltan strike force is surely on its way...

FESTIVALS

The city celebrates the usual Red Martian festivals. In Korium, particular import is given to the eighth year after a Martian's naming day (the Martian year is twice that of an earthly year: so this ceremony takes place when a character is c. 20 earth years of age). On this day, a Korian is deemed to be a full adult, with full military and political responsibilities to the city. The city gives the young man (or young woman, if she declares herself to be a warrior) a sword. The proud parents name their child before the entire city at the palace steps.

The great 'day of canals' is celebrated, but it is not a major holiday. People do traditionally exchange gifts on this day.

The most important holiday held by the city is *Cholak* – the day of blooming. This is a nomad festival, and is shared with the nomadic Red peoples of the entire region. Many nomads come to the city to enjoy the celebration. The time coincides with the arrival of the first trade ships from Callor Maralin.

Cholak celebrates the beginning of winter! Increased dewfall causes the region to grow a ground cover of lichen, allowing food animals to graze and breed. It is also a time when mating urges are at their highest both for man and beast. Many engagements begin at *Cholak*!

Cholak is a time of feasting. The years vintage of beer is breached. Great dances are held and ballads are sung. The height of the celebrations are the two great races, held on adjoining days. The great Jakaluur race is a pell mell riding race that plunges right through the heart of the city, and out into the wilderness. On the next day, there is the great air race – famous up and down the length of Mars. Great glory comes to the winners of the races.

The air racers of Korium have a planet wide reputation for insanity and derring-do. Visitors flock to the city from far distant cities to enjoy the spectacle.

Hooks:

Two outlanders have come to compete in the sky boat races. One man is in dire need of a crew, and hires the player characters to sign on as his team.

These two foreign boats are locked into a dire contest.

Both captains vie for the hand of a reluctant maiden. Their families have decided that she will be betrothed to whichever captain wins the race.

But to what lengths will the opposing team go to ensure they win the race?

- And what happens if one of the player characters should fall for the girl?

—

Celebrations have gone too far! A girl drank too much beer at a party, and has been raped. A young lad who had been injured in a confused brawl in the dark is accused of the assault. He is someone related to a player character (through blood or friendship), and the player characters will feel a need to defend him.

Tempers are high. The boy is charged with rape, but he is disabled and cannot defend himself. Will a player character dare to combat a beast in the arena and prove the boy's innocence?

- And who did really assault the girl? What will they do once the player characters finally suspect his identity?

THE MILITARY

Situated close to the Baltan Confederacy, and close to the Green Wastes, Korium maintains a very considerable military force. In the great nomad tradition, all adult male citizens serve as warriors. At any given time, each household will have at least one member who serves full time with the city's well-drilled army.

Unlike most Martian cities, Korium is a civilised new city founded by nomads. The mounted tradition runs strong. Korium fields no infantry in her army. A warrior fights mounted – either on one of the plentiful sky skiffs or sky ships, or on beast back or crawler. Troops on foot are used only for guarding the walls and halls: even the gates of the palace are guarded by men mounted on the noble Jakaluur (see below).

Soldiers will usually carry swords and sabres, as well as powerful bows. Officers will have pistols, handed down father-to son, while the rank and file will often carry hand bows. When mounted, long lances are carried in the charge, and then discarded after impact in favour of sword and pistol.

Troops mounted on crawler vehicles are used as support for the cavalry. While few of these vehicles have radium guns and cannon, they are well armoured and make useful 'mobile forts' from which to fire bows and rifles.

The great pride of Korium is her sky navy. It is disproportionately huge for so small a city – her peoples are explorers and travellers at heart. She has only two large dreadnaught style vessels, but a great many speedy air frigates and raiders. Most prolific

of all are small 2 to 6 man skiffs, used for raiding. Engaging in war against Korium invites an instant host of raids from countless small parties mounted on these *annoying little boats*.

CORSAIRS

A certain amount of unofficial military action takes place behind the scenes. Corsairs operate out of Korium.

These corsairs never attack local traffic. They travel far – usually into Baltan territory – tackling rich merchant ships and tax barges. While the state of Korium could never officially condone such attacks, it makes no attempt to investigate or stop them.

ELITE UNITS

The elite of Korium include the following full-time military units.

The Red Guard

The palace guards are the direct military retainers of the royal family. The guard only admits to its ranks those who re proven in battle, and who have shown themselves to be valiant and with unshakable honour. Guards must be excellent riders, and top level swordsmen.

Officers of the guards are expected to be men of intelligence, and are trusted with many special missions.

All guards are armed with radium pistols, daggers, swords, axe and heavy wire weave armour. Their armour is a dark, deep red.

The Chu'grahk of Korium

The famous 'Night Tigers' are a regiment of mounted scouts (although they frequently work with the airships of the navy for transport). Skilled swordsmen and pistoliers, the Chu'grahk are expert scout, scoring the wilderness for enemies (Be they Red, Grey or Green).

The Star Squadron

The fighting elite of the Korium air navy is the famous Star Squadron. Her highly trained crews are officered by men and women promoted for valour.

Black Corsairs

An unofficial 'elite' – these are the finest sky corsairs in the world, and they do revive secret funding, support and encouragement. These corsairs conduct a clandestine war designed to keep the Baltian confederacy destabilised and incapable of mounting an attack against the Elysian cities to its north. The Black Corsairs are frequently engaged in top secret missions for the crown.

Hooks:

The life of a palace guard is sometimes not a happy one. Imagine being detailed to watch after a princess who refuses to be watched – a girl who delights in evading guards and slipping from the palace without an escort. The problems of following her through a test run for the yearly air race would be challenging, to say the least.

But when the princess evades the character's one more time, disaster strikes. A man is found dead – a relative of one of the player characters. And the Princess is accused of the crime. She claims the dead man was slain by mysterious black-cowled men – but there are no witnesses to corroborate her story.

The Queen must support an accusation of murder against her own daughter.

A player character is then chosen to champion the fallen man in the arena against the princess. Honour entraps the characters. They must fight in the arena, unless the player characters can find the black-cowled men.

The only clue is the Princess herself. Someone else has been watching her. But why? What could it profit them to ensure the death of a princess? Unless rumours are right – and the spilled blood of the royal family somehow heralds the awakening of the dark god of ancient Korium...

—
Characters who wish to join the elite "Chu'grahk" of Korium must pass an arduous test. They are required to navigate week's journey to ruins in the desert without taking water. At the ruins, they must face a Caver Scorpion alone armed only with a blade. The final test is the most difficult. The potential recruit must head into the wastelands, and drink from one of the wells of the Green Men of Mars.

LAW

The city is run by a codified version of Nomad law. It is extremely simple. The people of Korium are extremely just.

Public disorder is penalised by aiding the city for a week or a month. This consists of doing the worst work in the methane generation facility under the city.

However, once the work period is over, the crime is utterly erased and forgotten. It is considered over and forgotten.

Theft is punishable by work in the methane farm until the cost of the stolen goods is repaid. A repeat offender is considered 'dishonourable', and will effectively be ejected from the city.

A death in a duel of honour is not murder.

A person slain by a dishonourable act is cause for

instant vendetta against the culprit. Any person who aids the culprit takes an equal part in their shame.

Anyone accused of a major crime – kidnap, treason, murder – has a right to trial by combat in the arena. The accused will either fight their accuser, or battle against the beasts of Mars.

Divorce is allowed, requiring a regional tribunal to hear a declaration of grievance from one or the other party involved.

Women have the same inheritance rights as men.

All citizens are expected to be able to aid the city in battle at instant notice. Every citizen should own weapons (weapons can be swiftly leant to those who for some reason lack them). A household legally must maintain one war mount, one warrior and one rifle or bow.

SLAVERY

The nomads of Elysia do not own slaves. It is illegal in Korium for one intelligent being to 'own' another. Slaves are legally freed the moment they cross onto (or over) Korium's soil.

THE METHANE FARM

Beneath the city is a large underground facility where sewerage and animal dung are composted and used to generate methane gas. This gas is then bottled and brought up to the city for use in city stoves.

The process of methane farming includes several very undignified tasks. These are performed by minor offender. Since most people of Korium hold rigidly to their honour code, these small time offenders are usually foreigner and visitors who pushed their luck a little too far.

The work is not particularly arduous. Just unpleasant.

WEAPONS

Martians are all expected to be able to serve their city and their ruler instantly at any time. In Korium, the independent nature of many centuries of nomadic life has also left the people martially inclined and self reliant.

No Red Martian male will ever be without at least a dagger, sword and either pistol or hand bow. Bows and rifles are generally not carried on the streets, but are swiftly available in households for the head of the house.

Women are always equipped with at least a dagger. No one would be taken aback at a warrior woman armed with sword and gun – Elysian women are renowned for their independence and outspoken nature.

The local's sense of honour is keen. If a fight breaks out, and one combatant acts dishonourably, it is common for passers by to come in on the side of the underdog to even up the odds.

SAND SABRE

Damage: Str + d8

Weight: 6

Minimum Strength: d6

Notes: AP 1, +1 to attacks

The signature weapon of the Elysian peoples, the Sand Sabre is a razor sharp, superbly balanced, curved scimitar. The weapons have a full bell guard to protect the hand, and have a small mercury reservoir that runs from the pommel and along the back of the blade in a tube. A slug of mercury can flow from the handle towards the tip. This gives the weapon extra weight towards the tip in a cut, and more weight in the handle during a parry.

Hooks:

A slave girl flees to the characters. She has escaped from a ship owned by diplomats for a far state. Legally, she is free the moment the ship crosses into Korian territory. The girl is now free. ... but later, raiders attack the players to try and seize the girl. Men are slain – but the captain of the ship claims that the girl is not his slave- but rather his wife! This may all end up in the arena, with a player character duelling with the foreign captain blade to blade. Is the girl truly the captain's wife? Or is she merely his slave, as she claims? And if she IS a slave, then why does he want to go to such violent means to take her back?

—
Valuable gems are stolen, and the player characters lose sight of the thieves. But these thieves are all past offenders – and all have spent time in the methane farms beneath the city. The thieves have taken refuge down below.

If the player characters decide to search and pursue, they may end up facing enemies who know the methane farm like the back of their hand. And one misplaced spark – or shot from a radium pistol – could mean an explosion that spells fiery death for the player characters.

FAME

"Fame" is a temporary additional bonus that adds to Charisma in certain social situations. It also measures whether a character is known by reputation by people they may have never even met!

Characters who gain fame add their fame rating to their charisma when courting, when trying to gain favours or influence people.

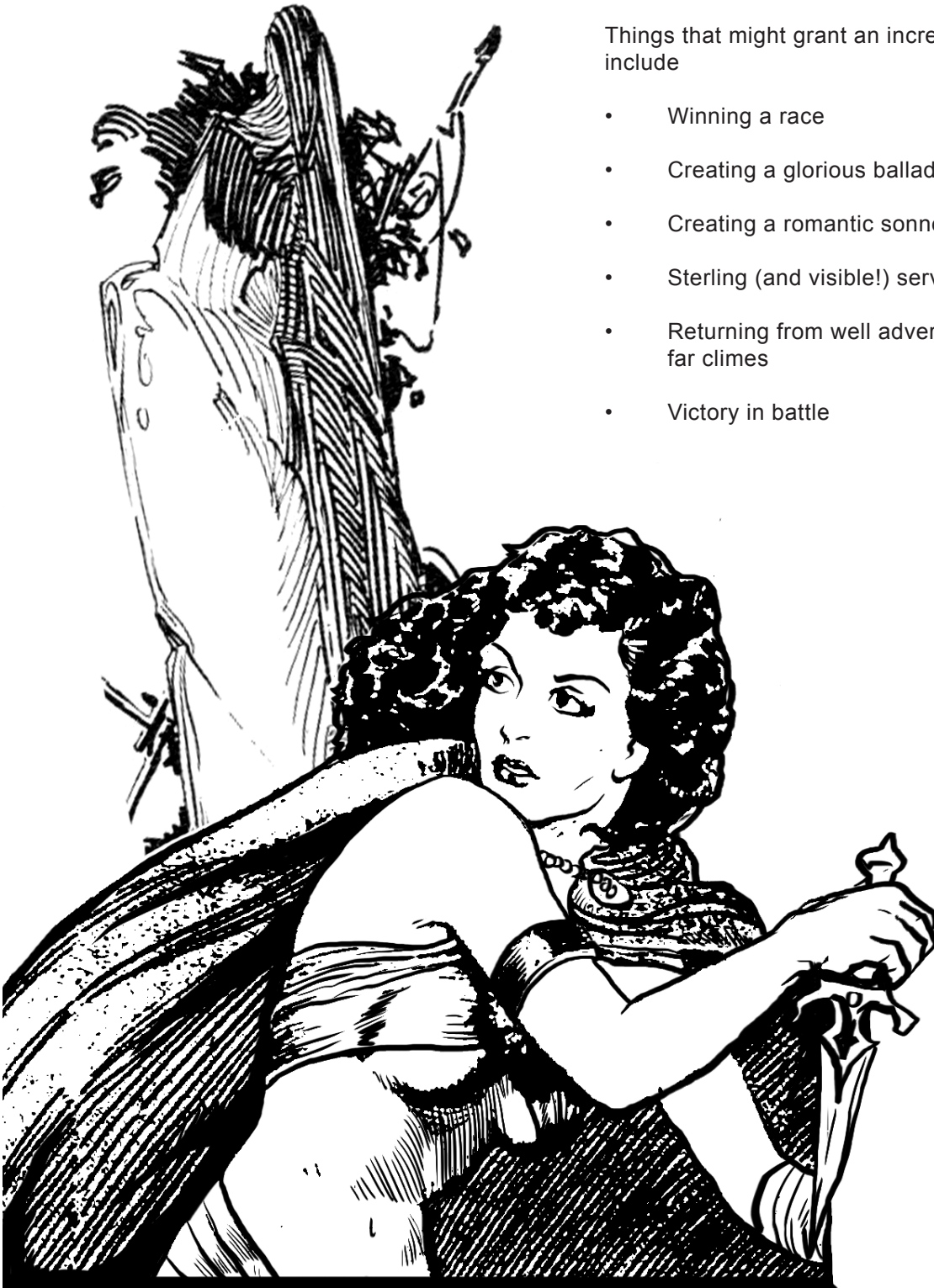
Fame points wither by half a year after they are earned (store half points – they gain no DRM', but can accrue together to make for bonuses).

Fame can never exceed half a characters SPIRIT in points.

A character's fame rating lessens by one dice step for each 'remove' from the city. Eg when dealing with local canal nomads, the raiding would be one dice step less. When dealing with local desert nomads – 2 steps less. Dealing with citizens of a neighbouring city – 3 dice steps less, etc.

Things that might grant an increase in fame might include

- Winning a race
- Creating a glorious ballad
- Creating a romantic sonnet
- Sterling (and visible!) service to the crown
- Returning from well advertised exploration to far climes
- Victory in battle



Korium consists of two main areas – the city itself, and the canal port, Kardak. Both settlements are heavily fortified, and are joined by a tall fortified wall. A roadway runs along the top of the wall.

The main city walls are tall (c. 60 feet) and run between tall towers left over from the original city. They are made of a dense (40 ft thick) core of rubble mixed with cement, faced with dressed stone. There is a tunnel system inside the core of the walls, allowing for rapid under cover deployment of troops (and also exiting out beyond the walls through several secret tunnels. A deep ditch lies before the walls.

The towers mount radium cannon, supplemented by simpler old-style siege engines.

The city is surrounded by fields. These grow food plants – grain for bread and beer, vegetables and pulse for food. Fodder is another major crop, with dense curly lichen growing along the canal banks in the dry summer, and tall dense crops of fodder plant in the winter. Gorgeous, colourful fields of spice plants range up into the hills and all along the canal. Beyond the fields, carefully tended herds of food animals range the lichen. These herds are always guarded by mounted warriors.

Many immigrant farmers have moved into the area, operating “tump barges” – huge rafts loaded with soil that are moored along the canal banks. These barges grow their own food as small farms. The entire canal banks on both sides of the river are dotted with these rafts for miles around.

A standing patrol of air ships circle the city. Scout boats are placed at all possible approaches. Heliographs are used for emergency signalling between scout posts and the city.

The city houses, being built upon the rubble of a former city, have access to extensive cellars. In case of aerial bombardment, the city dwellers would swiftly shelter their families below ground. The soldiers of Korium would use these tunnels and exits as a deadly advantage if conducting street fighting within their own city.

ARCHITECTURE

Korium has been built anew, amidst the rubble and ruins of an ancient Martian city. There is thus a clear blend of the old and the new. Some of the most massive towers of the old city have survived

– these now form the basis of the royal palace and the city walls. The rest of the city – including the massive city walls – are all built more recently. The building materials were already on hand; the rubble and blocks left by the ancient fallen city. The houses and public buildings of Korium thus are made of stone, with a distinctly different architectural style to that found in most of the old cities of Mars; square, flat rooved, and quite roomy.

Private residences in Korium are designed to take advantage of the fair climate. The low dwellings of commoners and the palaces of the mighty all have

Jadalla – hot spiced coka

Jadalla is the signature drink of Korium and the Elysian region.

This sweet, hotly spiced drink – described by transient Earthmen as somewhat similar to vanilla cinnamon chocolate – is served in Jadalla ‘cafes’ all through the city. These Jadalla shops are places to meet, speak and gossip. Some Jadalla shops are renowned as being the haunts of avant garde artists, of political cliques or far-flung adventurers.

The Jadalla of Korium is well renowned. There are several different blends available -some sweet, some more salty, and some definitely too fiery for outlanders to stomach! The most famous Jadalla is the “Iron mountain Blend” – a blend of Jadalla made from herbs and Jada pods grown high in the local mountains. It is so expensive and rare that it is effectively reserved for the royal court.

Kadat

A local ‘fast food’ made by cooking a croquette formed from spiced, herb crumbed suufa root – usually spread with the juice of a sour citrus-like fruit and served wrapped in fresh, hot bread. The centre of the croquette holds melted hummmm – a cheese-like substance created by the insects that live in hives on the plateaux.

Kadat stalls are found on many street corners in the city. The delicious smell of the frying croquettes and baking bread makes lunchtime in the city particularly mouth watering.

rooftop gardens. These gardens grow plants and plant/animals that are values for their perfumes, their beauty – their relaxing odours or soothing noises. On an evening, most families spend their time on their rooftop gardens, eating and relaxing out of doors

This service is also offered by most inns. Hostleries and inns all have rooftop gardens that may be enjoyed by all of their visitors.

Most people will live in extended families – though young men and women may live communally in academies or barracks. The typical house is somewhat rambling, having been expanded upon over a few generations. They will be one or at most 2 stories high.

Towers and palaces have a more martial function. The homes of families who live in the court region tend to be quite well protected, with tall towers serving as the personal apartments of the most important family members.

Hooks:

Just outside of the city, on a promontory overlooking the old canal, there is an ancient tower. Supposedly clean and empty, the tower has never been reinhabited. The legend it that any single person who tries to stay the night in the tower will have disappeared by the morning.

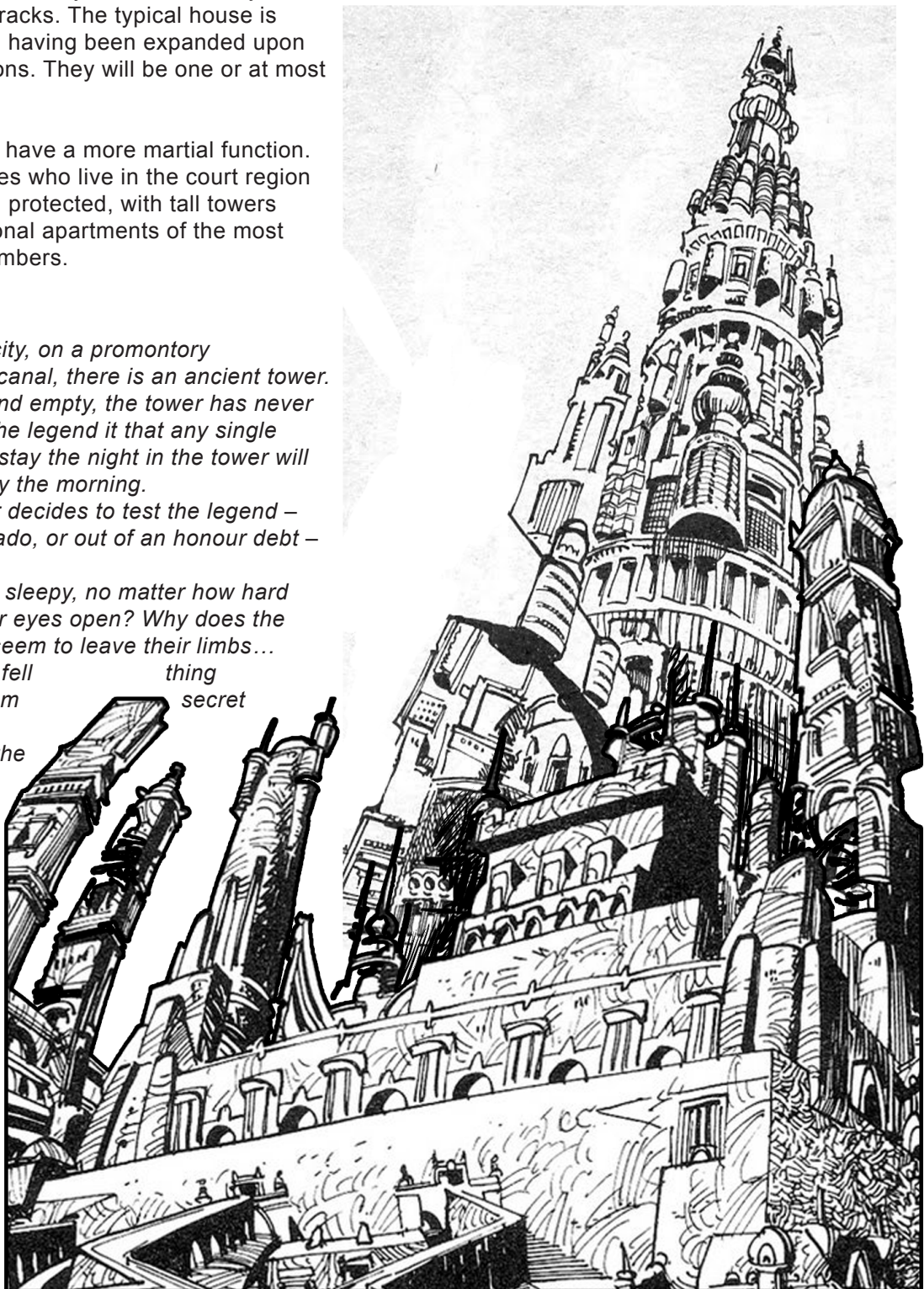
If a player character decides to test the legend – whether out of bravado, or out of an honour debt – will they survive?

Why do they feel so sleepy, no matter how hard they try to keep their eyes open? Why does the strength somehow seem to leave their limbs...

- And what strange, fell thing emerges unseen from shadows to carry its secret new victim off into the dark.

The beast herds of rancher Ezzak Raebo are being raided and diminished. Without their guardian riders seeing how, somehow the beast are being stolen from right beneath their noses. Each morning, the beasts are driven into a blind canyon rich with grazing.

Each evening, one or two valuable bests are gone. But the danger turns out to be more sinister than anyone thought. Huge sand squids have taken up residence in the sandy uplands of the canyon. But one of these has found its way into one of the escape tunnels that lead beneath the wall of the city. Unless it is tracked down, the monster could find its way into the city itself, and remorselessly begin to feed...



KARDAK – THE PORT

The “lower city” handles all river traffic. The area is a bustling port, dominated by warehouses and the delights expected by passing sailors.

The feel and ambiance here is different to that of the main city. The Port is a place of business, rather than a home. The area usually has at least a thousand temporary visitors from far off, distant lands.

Apart from military galleys and cargo vessels, the banks of the canal are also home to a number of cross-canal ferries. These range from small skiffs to large barges.

On the far side of the river, there is a small fortified town, “Banjii” (named after a rather gruff local limpet-like mollusc). Banjii is the delivery point for all of the canal ferries. It is also a meeting point for all of the caravans that come in from the southern desert. A cavalry garrison, yet more naval galleys, and a small flotilla of sky ships are based in Banjii.

THE CANAL DOCKS

The docks are a bustling place. Large warehouses hold the goods transhipped from the barges feluccas and ships that ply the canal. There are always visitors here from far cities; Dour westerners from Jaillakallah, or arrogant ship’s officers from Kor Va Krel. The place is redolent with the smells of spice bales, foreign foods and strange cargoes. This is an easy place to find taverns, and company

Retuki

These small, flightless bird-like animals are fairly commonplace in the city. They scavenge about, eating refuse.

Tokari

A small desert predator with the ability to glide short distances – are the primary predator of Retuki. Desert Tokari sometimes set up nests atop buildings, which they use as bases for hunting their prey. Most families welcome the Tokari, some even providing nesting boxes to encourage the creatures to take up residence.

Exotically coloured Tokari are popular pets. Extravagant display colours and crests can make exotic Tokari extremely striking.

for hire. There are also some shadier areas where quiet deals can be made.

Of all the districts of Korium, the canal docks are the one area always flooded with foreigners. The docklands never sleep.

The markets here are a place to find bargains on the type of bulky goods usually transported by water – raw materials, steel, fodder, even lumber.

A small section of Palace Guards are stationed at the dock area to keep the peace in case of major civic upset.

The city maintains a flotilla of canal warships to help patrol and protect trade. These consist of slim, sleek galleys, each mounting a small siege engine and with a crew of perhaps 50 armed oarsmen (warriors, not slaves) and 10 dedicated marksmen. These vessels are supplemented by a few sail powered converted merchant ships used to patrol the far reaches of the canal system.

NOTABLE CHARACTERS

Kota Vel – supplier of rare goods

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

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

Charisma: 0

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

Hindrances: Vengeful (major), Greedy (minor)

Edges: Hard to Kill, Riposte, Really Dirty Fighter

Gear: dagger (Str+d4), holdout radium pistol (3D6), rapier (Str+d6), wireweave vest

A native of the far city of Barakoom, Kota Vel is supposedly a dealer in unusual goods. In actual fact – he is a ‘transport consultant’, skilled in knowing what comes in and out of the port, and how to get a cargo to a far place unnoticed. Talk to Kota Vel if you need to be smuggled out of the city, or if you are trying to track down a strange item or mysterious cargo. His services are not cheap – he expects a favour for every favour he grants, and he WILL collect upon his debt some day.

Hartakan – Galley Captain

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Tactics) d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Survival d6

Charisma: +0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 9+; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Code of Honour

Edges: Quick, Natural Leader

Gear: dagger (Str+d4), heavy radium pistol (2d8+2), rapier (Str+d6), jewel harness

Captain Hartacan is part of the canal patrol. He often meets with Canal Nomads and captains from many far climes. The good captain has a weakness for a pretty face, and is always in the company of one or two 'dancing girls' when in port.

The captain has another weakness – a sickly but beautiful sister, who lives as an invalid in the upper city. Should an evildoer discover her existence, then a powerful weapon might be placed in the hands of the captain's enemies.

Gotakka Kor – Mercenary

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

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

Charisma: –2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 11

Hindrances: Mean

Edges: Combat Reflexes

Gear: Heavy wireweave armour, war sword (Str + d10)

Gotakka is muscle for hire, usually providing an extra guard for valuable cargo. He is slow witted but wise, and sees many things come and go along the canals.

Talk to Gotakka Kor if you wish news of strange events out along the canals, or if you need to hire guards to protect a shipment. He is a foreigner, but he is honourable and loyal to the core (Kor?).

Gutaaba Larz - Traveller

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Knowledge (far lands) d8,

Notice d10, Persuasion d6, Riding d6, Shoot d8

Charisma: 0

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

Hindrances: Code of Honour.

Edges: Alert, Connections, Hard to Kill

Gear: Rapier (Str+d6)

Gutaaba is a traveller who has passed far and wide along the canals of Mars. He usually has just enough money to survive, and somehow convinces captains to allow him to travel on their decks – usually in return for his entertaining tales and services as a lookout. Gutaaba can identify strange objects, strange accents and weird clothing. He claims to have been most everywhere.

ENCOUNTERS

Whether passing through, or engaged in a frantic chase, the streets of the port are ever changing.

1 – Tangled traffic gets in the way of progress

2 – Stop, thief!

3 – Lost children

4 – An offer of weird and wonderful goods

5 – Are you lonely, traveller?

6 – Bargain!

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Galley docks

The tall tower here has a light that burns constantly, guiding ships in to port. The entire port area is lit by street lights, night and day, making the whole port glitter like a jewel at night.

The galley docks are out of bounds for any but serving warriors of the city. The region immediately about the docks has many eateries and taverns that serve the galley crews.

The Gypsy bazaar

Canal Gypsies drift up and down the canals of Mars, trading strange little goods gleamed from cities and deserts all across the globe. The Gypsy market is a section of docks where these little boats all moor. Blankets are spread upon the docks or on the bows of the little ships, displaying weird little trinkets and wares.

Many strange and fascinating artefacts and pieces of lore can be accidentally found at markets such as these.

The Gypsy markets might also be a place where people could be abducted and swiftly bundled onto an anonymous boat, bound for who knows where...

The happy sand flea

The noisiest and most... colourful of all the city taverns. This tavern is frequented by sailors from all up and down the canals of Mars. It is a place where odd trinkets can be bought and sold – guides found and caravans organised. The tavern is an excellent rumour mill – and a place to eat foreign food that might suit less heavily armoured palates.

The Great Wall

A 40 ft high wall, 60 feet wide, that serves as a highway between the upper city and the port. There is always traffic on the wall. One of the first tasks of young warriors is to serve as guards upon the Great Wall and the walls of the harbour.

Inside the wall, huge water pipes serve to carry water up to the main city. There are two other aqueducts – one from the north canal, and one from the south, both hidden underground and accessed by long pipe shafts and pumped into holding tanks all about the city.

Field of graves

Beside the great wall lie the burial grounds of the city of Korium.

The dead are buried entire, armed with bow and blades, harness and full riding gear. If their mount dies in battle, it is interred alongside them. Brave mounts are also given their own burials.

Bodies are sealed inside ceramic coffins, and buried beneath grave mounds. Grave markers at the base of the mounds serve as a focus for visiting relatives. There are usually priests here. Burials involve a fanfare of trumpets, warning evil spirits to flee - for a new warrior has arrived to do them battle.

The Water Mill.

Although the current of the great canals are slow, they do flow steadily during the winter months. The city has a set of two water wheels housed in a building that juts from the city walls. These wheels drive generators that produce electric power when the canal rises to full level during winter and spring. With longer nights of winter causing more power drain upon the city's power grid, this little extra boost of power is welcome.

The mill serves as a teaching station. All science, engineering and ship building students from the academy come here to learn about electrical and magnetic theory. Strange experiments and odd student pranks enliven the student housing all about the mills.

Regional adventure hooks

A barge loaded with exotic beasts has had an accident. Weird, dangerous animals stamped through the markets, endangering life and limb. The player characters are on hand to try and hunt down the monsters and prevent a disaster.

But the horror has only begun. Amongst the escaped animals is the dreaded Night Leaper – a terrifying creature that can climb balconies and leap from roof to roof. The animal will hide and strike – and it never forgets a slight. If one of the characters pursues the monster – then the character is likewise pursued. And the Night Leaper is a very, very patient, cunning enemy...

—

A player finds a strange old statuette at a bazaar, and buys it. Days later, the statuette is stolen. A thief is recognised.

... but later on, that thief is found lying dead, murdered.

Consulting with antiquarians, it turns out that the statuette may be one of three keys that turned on a terrifying ancient machine - a machine that can breed a type of massive, mutated synthi-man. Who has taken the keys? Where is this machine? The machine can only be turned on by someone

who has the genes of the ancient city of Trumerra. But those people are so impossibly rare since the destruction of the city (egad! The only people who could possibly have the gene might be one of the loved ones of the players themselves...)

THE OLD CANAL

Many ruins lie beside the canal. This area is dangerous – not only do the ruins offer shelter to beasts and monsters, but the ruins themselves can be unstable.

The stones are well and truly overgrown with thorns and vines. Food can be scavenged here, and water can be found. A few thieves and outcasts live here – braving the hungry animals that prowl the nighttime shadows.

NOTABLE CHARACTERS

Horeb Gek - Fugitive from the law

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8

Charisma: +0

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

Hindrances: Wanted

Edges: Alert, Very Dirty Fighter

Gear: Club (Str +d4), badly made bow (2D6-1)

Horeb is wanted for murder in the docklands. He made good his escape, and now lives in the ruins, scavenging food and water. He fears that he is still well known enough to be recognised by canal traffic or travellers and handed in to the law. Horeb therefore keeps to the ruins, terrified that he might be found and dragged back to justice.

Shaanu and Eeku - Canal urchins

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigour d4

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d10, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Climb d6

Charisma: +1

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

Hindrances: Easily Frightened

Edges: Alert, Fleet of foot

Gear: club (Str +d4), rocks (Str+1)

These two Gypsy orphans have been hiding out here since the death of their parents. They actually know the ways of the ruins, and are fairly safe from its predators. However, their luck cannot last forever. They should be taken to safety and raised by caring parents.

Shaanu and Eeku creep into many interesting places. They see and hear the most surprising secrets...

The Ripper

A giant bull Vronag Vesh has taken residence within the ruins. The largest and most savage of his kind, this old bull had grown in strength and toughness over the years. He is a force to be reckoned with.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+6, Vigour d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d12, Notice d10, Stealth d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 15

Special Abilities:

- Armour +4: Tough scaly skin.
- Bellow: The vronag vesh can let loose with a bone-melting bellow of noise. This affects all creatures within 6" -- it is an opposed Intimidation roll vs the victim's Guts. If the victim fails, they are paralysed with fear for 1 round.
 - Bite: Str+d10.
 - Claws: Str +d6
 - Large: Attackers are +2 to attack the creature due to its size.
 - Size +6: The Ripper is almost 30 feet long and 10 feet high at the shoulder.

do the deadly ruins fit in with his careful plans for escape?

—
Cadavers are being stolen from the graveyard. Bodies have been stolen from dozens of coffins – replaced by sandbags filled with a strange rust-speckled sand. Bodies have been stolen as they lay in houses before burial – others have been taken from new graves. Dozens of corpses may now be missing!

Dark, shadowy figures have been observed exiting a tunnel at night, and carrying suspicious burdens into the old ruins by the Canal.

Deep beneath the ruins, a terrible secret lies. Who is the mad scientist who lurks there, and what does he intend with so many fresh corpses? And can he be stopped before he decides not to steal the bodies of the dead, but starts to harvest the living...?

ENCOUNTERS

Wandering the ruins is not a safe activity.

- 1 - Collapsing walls, or collapsing street.
- 2 – A nest of Xill (Mars rules, p 125) lurks within an abandoned tower.
- 3 – Chorak nest (Mars rules, p148)
- 4 – Edible berries – sweet!
- 5 – Hidden fugitives
- 6 – A dark, abandoned tower...

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The Red Tower

At the heart of the ruins is a squat tower of dark, ruby-hued stone. No vines touch it – nor do the creatures of the ruins seem to dwell within. Anyone who sleeps within the tower finds themselves gripped with mind-wrenching nightmares.

Regional adventure hooks

A Balturan spy is uncovered, but the man flees into the old Canal Ruins before he can be stopped. He carries plans that show the location of many of the secret tunnels that lead beneath the city walls.

The player Characters must pursue the spy through the ruins. But why has the man run into so dangerous a place? How



BANJII

Across the wide canal from Korium, is the ferry port of Banjii. This fortified town acts as a ferry embarkation point for visitors from the south who wish to travel to Korium. Caravan trade routes from the west, east and south all arrive here and file aboard the huge waddling barges that then cross over to the city.

Banjii keeps a very much more 'frontier' feel to itself than the main city. This is the edge of the wastes – there is no canal here to hold off the depredations of green war hordes. The garrison is on high alert, constantly patrolling the canal banks and the desert. Nomads are a constant part of the town life. The populace are also ever-winning to serve as war parties, rescue parties and posses.

NOTABLE CHARACTERS

Shordekke Jal – Sand searcher

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Riding d8, Survival d6, Knowledge (Ancient History) d8

Charisma: +2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8+; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Code of Honour, Loyal, Gruff

Edges: Alert, Explorer, Attractive, Really Dirty Fighter

Gear: dagger (Str+d4), holdout radium pistol (3D6), Sand Sabre (Str+d8, Attack +1, AP 1), Nomad Bone Bow (2D6), Jewel Harness, Extremely hardy Jakaluur (+3 to all fatigue tests)

A Veteran female 'junk prospector', Shordekke Jal combs the desert for old artefacts to sell – mostly smaller items – tools, pots, weapons, gems, jewels and so forth. Rather than heading off on suicidal journeys to find long lost cities, she tends to very carefully search areas where shifting sands might have uncovered old battlefields, old settlements and roads. She pays very close attention to rumours of Red and Green warbands, their depredations and locations. She is often in need of extra armed escorts. Talk to Shordekke if you need to know the location of ancient battlefields, or if you need to know the habits and locations of Green Martian tribes.

Captain Darrum Val – Veteran Soldier

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Survival d6, Knowledge (Nomad Culture) d6, Riding d8, Knowledge (Tactics) d8

Charisma: +1

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 9+; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Code of Honour, Loyal, Aging

Edges: Block, Natural Leader, Level Headed, Steady Hand

Gear: dagger (Str+d4), heavy radium pistol (2d8+2), Sand Sabre (Str+d8, Attack +1, AP 1), jewel harness, Swift-but-ugly Riding Jakaluur (pace 9 for short sprints) *Captain Darrum Val is an old soldier. He has been patrolling the desert for 30 years, and knows it in and out. But most particularly, he knows the politics and culture of the Red nomads – both the Canal Nomads, and the Desert nomads. His wife is a Desert Nomad, and Darrum Val is a participant in the festivals and rituals of his wife's tribe.*

Grown old, wise and grumbling in the service of his city, Captain Darrum Val is an excellent cavalry leader. He is likely to befriend brave spirits who share his love of the desert – or provide a few words of sage guidance to those who need to deal with Red Nomads out on the sands. He is also likely to turn up at the head of a rescue column should the characters find themselves in trouble in the wilds

- A weakness of the Captain is his ties to the Nomads of the outer desert. How will he react if his Wife's family should fall beneath the spell of the Desert mystics and Demagogues?

Kantas Gor – Shifty Trader

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Knowledge (Commerce) d6, Riding d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8

Charisma: 0

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

Hindrances: Greedy, Untrustworthy

Edges: Alert, Connections

Gear: Silk weave armour, Rapier (Str + d6), Poisoned dagger (Str + d4, vigour save at -1 or death!*)

Kantas Gor is a foreigner – a shifty eyed and greasily 'pleasant' character who trades with one and all. There is a suspicion that he trades weapons and secrets to hostile tribes, and even Green Martians, but no one has ever proved it. He is served by other foreigners who do his bidding.

Perhaps Kantas Gor is at the heart of some of the religious unrest out in the desert? War and strife mean more treasure flowing into Kantas Gor's greedy hands.

**Player characters will not die, but instead will be nigh unto death before being found and brought back to health by a passing Nomad Shaman girl)*

ENCOUNTERS

Out here on the far bank of the river, many people come and go. Ranchers, farmers – the entire south bank is Korium's territory.

Red Nomads are frequently here, often in large camps outside the town walls.

This area is far more vulnerable to Green attack than the lands to the north of the canal. Cavalry patrols are

disciplined and regular, and shy boats sail forth every day to spy out the land for danger and trouble.

- 1 – Incoming caravan! The streets are jammed*
- 2 – Troops conduct a ceremony*
- 3 – Delicacies arrive from the countryside. Low low prices!*
- 4 – What on earth is that weird artefact at that market stall?*
- 5 – Caravan guards or explorers needed!*
- 6 – Brawl on the street!*

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Ferry Dock

Ferries from Korium/Kardak all arrive in the little port of Banjii. In addition, Banjii sees visits from small canal boats and vessels that use the local canal network. There are often a few Canal Gypsies here selling colourful wares.

Nomad camp

The area outside the walls is usually full of campsites. Nomads visit Banjii to trade, or to meet incoming caravans. They tend to pitch their own tents outside the walls rather than bother staying inside the town. The town provides piped water and sanitation for the convenience of the Nomads. Some nomads have taken up permanent residence here. These groups typically serve as caravan guards and guides for local traders.

The Song of the Sand

A tavern that serves as a watering hole for nomads, cavalry and far-ranging caravaneers. This place seethes with history and mystique. Dishes in the style of both Korium and simpler nomad dishes are served. Many strange deals are sealed here. This is a place to visit if you seek rumours of lost cities or strange legends – or if you need to find people with strange skills who can join you on a quest. It is not as good a place to hide from your troubles. Sit here long enough, and adventure will find you. (“Of all the wine shops in all the canal ports on all of Mars, she has to walk into mine...”)

Showboat!

An odd arrival in Banjii recently has been a showboat! This huge barge contains an extensive theatre and theatre troupe. The ship moved along the canals of Mars, playing for a few nights or weeks at various cities. The ship is now in Banjii, where the troupe master hopes to engage some nomad sword dancers and Korian dancing girls to bolster the skills of his cast.

The Cavalry fort

The main army of Korium has eight cavalry regiments that cycle through assignments on the

frontier. But the Regiment of Banjii is a full time unit always on duty in Banjii and the surrounds. The regiment consists of 400 regularly Cavalry. As a strange, colourful note, another 400 men recruited from the far desert nomads are equipped and dressed in distinctive ‘desert nomad’ style. The entire regiment is mounted on rangy, tough nomad-bred Jakaluurs.

The fort is the home of the regiment. There is a solitary large ray cannon that can fire out at the canal or into the wilds. The walls of the town also have several radium ‘swivel guns’.

The Stone Guardians.

Five hundred yards from the town gates, two immense stone statues both face the south. These griffin-like beasts are thought to be mythical. They are far, far older than Old Korium, predating the canals – possibly even predating the rise of the Red men on Mars. Scholars have not been able to date them or explain them.

Regional adventure hooks

The outer tribes are in a state of unrest. A sinister religious movement is stirring them up – planting a hatred for the city dwellers.

Someone in Banjii seems to be profiting from the situation. Are some of the outbound caravans secretly taking supplies of explosives and radium guns to the fanatics? Searching out the truth leads to a web of assassination and intrigue.

If the characters trail a suspicious caravan and brave the wilds, what will they find? Are these merely religious fanatics stirred up into hatred? Or is it something far more sinister? What sort of dark powers from a far beneath the rocks could be stirring and controlling this new threat to Korium?

—
One of the performers on the show boat becomes a favourite of the player characters. But is the performer really what they seem. They sometimes seem to hide from certain nobles from Korium. And a murder in the streets might be connected to the performer.

Is the performer a criminal, hiding from justice? A spy?

- Or perhaps an exile? Royalty from a far land, fleeing the assassins sent by the dictator who have usurped their throne? Will the players defend the performer against their enemies? And if so – where might the adventure lead? A counter-revolution in a far land would need weapons – perhaps hidden in a lost cache in the desert, protected by mutated monsters set to guard the horde. And surely any such venture would end blade-to-blade with the evil dictator, finishing the whole affair with righteous steel!

KORIUM- THE UPPER CITY

The main city of Korium stands proudly on a promontory overlooking the canals. Her position atop the rocks is almost as much of a deterrent from attack as her massive ditches and walls.

Beautiful Korium, with her nomad banners streaming from the walls. Her rooftops alive with flowers and growing things. It is a garden city – a place of poets and dancers, proud warriors and doe eyed women – of great explorers and scholars filled with dreams.

KORIUM: A CITY FIT FOR HEROES.

The upper city is colourful. Her population are warriors, steeped in an honour code – adventurers and explorers. It is a place of strong women, proud men, colour and light.

Bear in mind that all citizens NOT serving the air navy tend to serve in wartime as cavalry. There are Jakaluur stabled in every house, and animals ridden on all the streets. Dung is collected from the streets by state-run collecting carts – it is a valuable resource used for methane generation and fertiliser.

Just outside the city walls, there are regular instruction and training meets for riders. Most citizens will exercise and ride their mounts about the walls and fields at least twice a week. There are areas constantly in use for training in mounted archery, mounted pistol use and the use of the lance. These riders also act as impromptu posses and guards, keeping the entire area about the city safe for many miles around.

THE SKY DOCKS

This is the beating heartbeat of the upper city. Skyships come drifting in from distant lands, discharging strange cargoes into the thriving marketplace. Aircrews from distant lands walk forth to marvel at the strange splendour of Korium. The shipyards are busy, repairing and modifying ships both local and foreign. There is also housing for local science students who seek to research the secrets of flight. The sky navy takes off on missions and adventures – the naval crews have their own cafes, headquarters and barracks here. Many merchants, travellers and explorers keep their homes in the Sky Dock district.

The air racers of Korium form an energetic sub cult. Many teams have boat sheds here, and small boats constantly take off for speed trials, test drives and joy rides. There are many cafes here that cater to racing enthusiasts and crews. Princess Jutaala can frequently be found hanging with the racing crews. There is also another loose, swashbuckling brotherhood in this district of the town. The Corsairs of Korium. Amongst the ships that take off and land at the port, there are often small warships – sleek, fast and manoeuvrable as only the ships of Korium can be. Officially, these vessels are explorers and traders. In reality, they are the royally sponsored corsairs. Their captains are always nobles and citizens of Korium. Their crews are colourful, honourable men and women. These are no mere pirates: they are swashbuckling servants of the crown. The crews often intermingle with the Navy in a friendly rivalry.

KORIAN CORSAIR SLOOP

The Corsair vessels of Korium are a product of her shipyards. Entirely new bodies are designed for reconditioned old engines. The resulting vessels are the fastest warships on Mars.

Size: Large

Acceleration/top speed: 25/200

Climb: 20

Toughness: 16 (4)

Crew: 8 (+36)

Base manoeuvre: Good

Hard points: 5

Cargo: 5 tons

Width: 6

Length: 23

Height: 3 decks

A Corsair usually carries one 'racing skiff' which can be used for scout missions.

NOTABLE CHARACTERS

Princess Jutaala

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d8, Pilot d10, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Knowledge (Tactics) d6, Knowledge (Statecraft) d4, Knowledge (ship repair/design) d6

Charisma: +4, +2 Fame

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 11+; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Code of Honour, Loyal, Headstrong

Edges: Fencer, Sky Corsair, Charismatic, Block, Noble

Gear: dagger (Str+d4), heavy radium pistol (2d8+2), Radium rifle (2d10), Sand Sabre (Str+d8, AP 1, +1 to hit), jewel harness.

The Princess delights in air racing. She has her own jet black racer, and she affects the plain racing harness of a commoner captain. She is outspoken, swashbuckling, lackadaisical and sarcastic, with long, glorious black hair, a slender figure and the weapons of a warrior. A combination some find utterly entrancing, and that others find a tad bizarre. Talk to Princess Jutaala if you want to find out about racing, spare parts, airship design, or swordsmanship.

Do not talk to her about politics or the court. Definitely do not talk to her about marriage!

Dondor Jakk - Royal Naval Captain

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Piloting d8, Shooting d8, Streetwise d8, Knowledge (tactics) d8

Charisma: +2

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

Hindrances: Loyal, Honour Code

Edges: Sky Corsair, Natural Leader, Noble

Gear: Sand Sabre (Str+d8, AP 1, +1 to hit), knife (Str+d4), Radium Pistol – Double Cell (Range 12/24/48), Damage 2d6+2), Jewel Harness

Haraman Vedd - Repair yard manager

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Repair d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Piloting d6, Fighting d4, Knowledge (ship design) d6

Charisma: 0

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

Hindrances: Honour code, loyal

Edges: McGuyver

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), rapier (Str+d6)

Haraman is a dedicated ship designer who runs the secondary repair yards – the yards most favoured by corsairs.

Talk to Haraman if you need repairs, advice on buying or hiring a good ship, or if you need to locate crew for a voyage.

Vokka Vel - Merchant

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigour d4

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (artefacts) d10, Notice d8, Streetwise d8

Charisma: +2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Short Sighted

Edges: Charismatic, Connections

Gear: Jewel Harness, Sand Sabre (Str+d8, AP 1, +1 to hit).

Vokka is a foreign merchant who has set up his shop within handy reach of both the Bazaar and the Corsairs' shipyards. He specialises in the strange, the weird and the obscure. He is a hilarious companion – big and booming. Friends are always welcome in his ship, which serves as a sort of impromptu café.

Talk to Vokka if you need an obscure item identified, or want to find rumours about far off climes.

Zodda Garr – Veteran Corsair Captain

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Tactics) d10, Notice d6, Piloting d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Survival d6

Charisma: 0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 10; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Loyal, Honour Code

Edges: Block, Sky Corsair, Two Fisted

Gear: Jewel Harness, Axe (Str+d6, +1 parry), 2x double-cell Radium pistols (2d6+2), Sand Sabre (Str+d8, AP 1, +1 to hit).

A strangely quiet man – passionate and intense. His ship, the Akkermion (Halley's comet) is one of the most successful corsairs.

Zodda and the Akkermion are actually a part of the elite 'Back Corsairs', who take all of their orders directly from the throne.

Talk to Zodda if you need transport for a secret mission, or if you seek news of some strange ship glimpsed far afield

ENCOUNTERS

The sky dock district is always full of comings and goings, aircrew recruitment, weird things offered in strange street stalls, and aircrew making joyous celebrations.

- 1- Carousing Corsairs
- 2- A Corsair vessel departs on a clandestine mission
- 3- An exploration mission is recruiting!
- 4- New goods in the markets (what on earth is that?)
- 5- A badly battered vessel arrives. Tales of woe!
- 6- Racers making a bet

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Shipyards

The shipyards of Korium are a busy place. Vessels from all across Mars come here for expert repairs.

Korium is one of the few places where the lifting equipment and engines can be refurbished. Korium makes a great study of this equipment. Although they cannot replicate it (due to the mysterious materials often used), they can at least repair malfunctions and damage.

There is a second, usually well hidden layer to the yards. Here, corsair ships are made from scratch, using old engines and equipment placed into gleaming new bodies.

A part of the academy of sciences is housed here. Scientists and students carefully study the principals involved in engines and lifting equipment, trying to replicate the effects with lower-tech materials.

The shipyards and their surrounds are a good place to meet foreign ship crew and captains, travelling scholars and avid engineers.

Skyhawk café

This broad multi-level café and garden is the boisterous home to the local air racers. Many different crews gather here. This is a place to find new crewmen, to listen to the gossip and to enjoy the company of the happy-go-lucky racing fraternity. Princess Jutala is frequently here – but when here, it is clearly bad form to refer to her by rank (only as ‘pilot’). Air racers follow the same honour code as Korian warriors, although they extend this to include adherence to race rules, and a belief in the brotherhood of all racers. Racers are loyal to each other. They are a hell-for-leather group, and in wartime, they act as scouts, raiders and commandos.

Do not wear racing harness unless you have earned it. It will soon win the scorn of the racing crews. The region around the café is home to the little workshops and hangars used for repairing, modifying and building air racing skiffs. Many racers live in their own hangars.

The Emerald

A tavern frequented by Corsair crews. This tavern is noted for its exotic beverages, brought in by crews who raid the far lands of the Baltan Confederacy. Exotic wines from the land of the White Apes are not unknown here.

The corsairs of Korium are not freebooting cruel pirates. They are swashbucklers descended from desert nomads who now sail the skies for their queen. They are fiercely loyal to the crown, and actually form a part of the Kingdom’s navy.

Traditionally, to enlist in a corsair crew, a recruit must be able to shoot out a hokka gourd that is raised to the top of a pole high above the tavern. This is a difficult shot, and will be witnessed by the cheering (or jeering) crews gathered here to socialise.

It is possible to sometimes find Prince Darak here. The Prince is usually in ‘mufti’ in such places.

But he clearly knows many of the crews, and is particular friends with a Female Corsair Captain named Jatresh. In reality, the Prince frequently joins her crew for raids.

The Royal Naval Officers Club

A tavern and social club for serving officers of the navy. Inside the bounds of the club, it is traditional not to talk shop. The officers of the navy are professional, motivated and loyal. Where the navy officers of Callor Maralin tend to be stoic, disciplined and brave, the fliers of Korium are more hell-for-leather, valuing individual initiative. Officers from Callor Maralin are always welcomed at the Royal Officer’s club.

The sky markets

The sky markets are effervescent with activity. Sky ships do not bring in huge bulk cargoes – their lifting capacity is too small. So the cargoes that arrive here tend to be exotic goods, wines, beers, fabrics – art and spices, weapons and instruments, gems and crystals, perfumes and leathers. Some exotic Tokari (small predators) range the markets, hunting for vermin. Champion hunters are greatly cosseted by the local market owners. Careful searching of the markets can turn up the most surprising goods and people – many of them will be gates to new adventures.

Regional adventure hooks

Small air races are constantly held all about the city – often purely for the enjoyment of the crews. Typical courses weave past mesas and outcrops in the desert. Crews may even dare one another to snatch flags from canal boats, or to plant banners in some strange (or restricted) places.

A friendly rivalry with another crew can lead to some strange adventures. While engaged in a contest with their rivals, the player characters must first steal a valuable banner, and then race their opponent in a twisting course far across the wastes. But when the rival boat suddenly begins to go down, will the players race for glory, or will they abandon the race and help their fellow racers.

The damage is worse than anyone suspected. It seems a radium rifle shot has damaged the other boat. As a desert storm closes in, the crews must somehow survive. Somewhere out in the storm, there is an enemy who wants the racers dead. A rift in the desert stone leads to underground caves. What is the best course of action – to brave the horrors underground, or to fight a battle with an unseen enemy hidden by the storm?

—
There is something very suspicious about the new corsair recruit. He has the right tattoos, the right skin colouration – but he seems to ask too many questions.

Once aboard ship, the new man seems to settle in. But why does he show so much interest in the maps of the ship's proposed expedition –
- And what is it about the many small, sealed food canisters in the bottom of the hold that he finds so fascinating...?

A piece of jewellery purchased at the market seems pleasing to the eye – ancient and strange, but the perfect gift for a quirky young lady of a player character's acquaintance.

When given to the young lady, she seems pleased with it. But for a moment, she feels weak – as though a far off voice has spoken to her...

But later, an assault is made on the girl. They seek to seize both her and the jewellery.

If the jewellery can be examined, then a secret compartment can be found. What lies inside? What were the voices the girl heard? And what will the next move be for the evil men who desire the secret of the jewel?

A wrecked ship has been sighted in the far desert. A salvage party is sent to look carefully over the wreckage and salvage the valuable old instruments, engines and generator core.

But the wreck is an ambush. Green Warriors of the horde of Kalak Thaan lie hidden in the dust nearby, lying in camouflaged pits. They will allow the salvage party to land, and will observe to see who the skilled engineers may be. At night, when the salvage vessel hovers at anchor up above, the Green Men will stealthily climb the anchor rope and board the ship...

If captured, the Player characters will find themselves transported to the dreaded slave pits of Kalak Thaan...

The player characters are at the shipyards (perhaps for repairs on their own vessel) when a ship from a far nation limps into port. The foreign ship settles in for repairs. Her crew wander the port and ask many questions.

The ship is secretly from the Baltan Confederacy – here not only for repairs, but to snatch any reconditioned engines that she can. The crew will attack the shipyards before departure, trying to snatch spare engines and then flee off into the dark of night. Can they be stopped? The fight is ferocious, and no ships are available for pursuit. A leap from a high tower might just enable a character to snatch a dangling rope – or a racing crew might be able to match pace and secretly climb aboard. But what then? How will they turn the ship about and save the day?

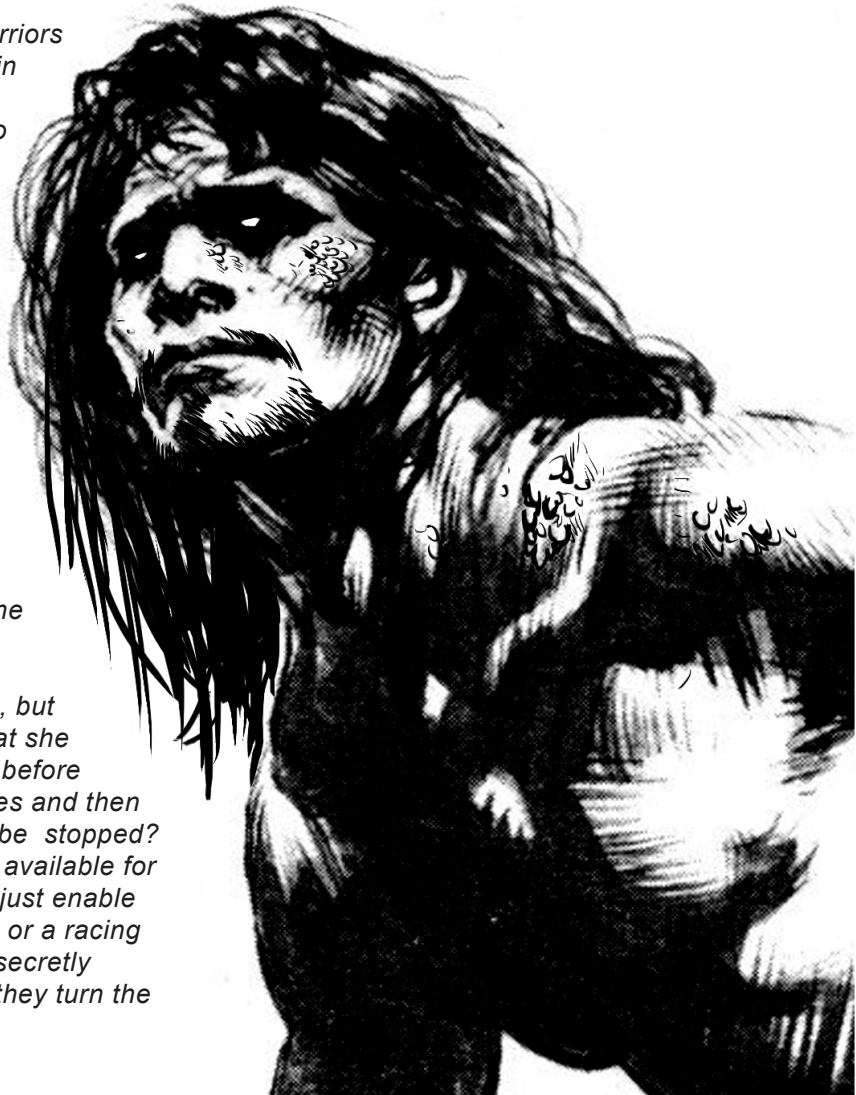
Plague ship

A corsair ship has been found wandering, abandoned in mid air near the city. Dead men lie on the decks. A terrified merchantman has reported the vessel drifting towards the city.

Should the encroaching vessel be shot down before it can spread its plague to the city? Or perhaps towed safely away into the desert and there burned?

Player characters brave enough to search the ship will find that the crew have indeed been slain by plague. The vessel had been on a mission far to the south.

Strange signs of conflict are found. The ship's boat has been deliberately disabled. A rope is dangling from the side of the vessel – was the ship taken down to the ground, and did someone then escape out into the wilds? Why? Are they a fugitive, perhaps a plague carrier headed for the city? Or a spy who spread a disease amongst an entire crew? A safe in the captain's cabin has been burned open by radium fire. Something in the vault has been taken. What was here? And was this why the crew of the vessel has been slain?



THE ARTISANS DISTRICT

This is the district where cunning, glittering harnesses are made for man and beast. Where steel brought from far-off cities is made into the supple, razor-sharp swords of Korium. Where gems are crafted, silks are woven and the heady beers of Korium are made.

The folk of Korium are no mere craftsmen. Each household is a warrior household. Each supports one full time fighter, and all other adult males (and many females) are part of their tribal forces in times of war. Jakaluurs are stabled at every house, and weapons hand on every belt, ready for when the city needs the courage of her people.

The Artisans' District is where much of the population lives. It is a place of cafes and taverns, and many many workshops and businesses. This is where swords and weapons can be bought, good steeds found, and doughty warriors enlisted for adventures. In the evenings, the dancers of Korium perform before crowds who take their dinner in the pleasant parks. In the evenings, the rooftop gardens flow with song, poetry and merriment.

NOTABLE CHARACTERS

Dokuur - Master Jakaluur breeder

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Riding d10, Knowledge (Jakaluur) d10

Charisma: +0, +1 Fame

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

Hindrances: Honour Code, Loyal, Gruff

Edges: Alert, Connections, Steady Hands

Gear: Sand Sabre (Str+d8, +1 attack, AP1), knife (Str+d4), Hand bow (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d4), Jewel harness

Grim, dour and gruff, Dokuur is definitely a no nonsense individual. He gives superb advice about Jakaluur, but will not hide his opinion of people he thinks cannot control the mount that they have chosen. Talk to Dokuur to identify strange breeds or brands, or consult with him about potential winners or tactics for the yearly Jakaluur races.

Sota Kal – Veteran Fencing trainer

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

Skills: Fighting d12, Guts d12, Notice d6, Ride d6, Knowledge (instruction) d8

Charisma: -2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 12; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Code of Honour, Loyal, Ugly

Edges: Level Headed, Fencer, Block, Improved

riposte, Improved precision strike

Gear: Jewel harness, Sand Sabre (Str+d8, +1 Attk, AP 1)

Sota-Kal is an expert fencer. Cool, calm, and impossible to rile. He calmly and dedicatedly teaches his art to the youth of Korium – here and there taking on special students for more intensive training.

Princess Jutaala is one of these special students. He believes she can rise to considerable skill if she can only learn to control her temper.

Talk to Sota Kal if you need recommendations of swordsmen and skills, or if you want to hear his opinions of his latest crop of young students. Or talk to him if you need an excuse to watch over Princess Jutaala (ah my – that rule about naked exercise!)

Sota Kal lives with an ailing and deeply beloved wife. His own daughter was abducted from the canal banks as a child. Sota Kal holds to the belief that his wife would return to health if only the child could be returned to her.

Haala - Dancer

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigour d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (poetry) d8, Knowledge (gossip) d8, Dance d10, Notice d4, Persuasion d10, Shooting d6, Stealth d8.

Charisma: +6, +1 Fame

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

Hindrances: Tease, Gossip, Honour Code

Edges: Very Attractive, Alert, Charismatic, Connections.

Gear: dagger (Str+d4), Jewel Harness

Supple, lithe and wild, Haala is a dancer that can haunt men's' dreams.

Haala taunts, but she never stays with one man for long. She takes quite a shine to new men with growing reputations for valour. This can, of course, cause problems with those who have already fallen for her...

Netara - Apothecary

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6, Knowledge (poisons, drugs and medicines) d8, Streetwise d8

Charisma: +0

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

Hindrances: Honour code, Greedy

Edges: Connections, Alert

Gear: Short Sword (Str+d6), knife (Str+d4), Jewel Harness

Netara is a female apothecary who runs a strange, fascinating shop hidden down one of the quiet alleyways of the Artisans' quarter.

The apothecary will not sell poisons – it is far outside of the noble honour code of Korium. She can be persuaded, however, to sell love potions...

Yuutan - Caravan Captain

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Riding d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8

Charisma: +0

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

Hindrances: Greedy (Major)

Edges: Connections

Gear: Rapier (Str+d6), knife (Str+d4), radium rifle (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d10), Silkweave armour.

Merchant caravans constantly arrive and depart from the square beside the Jakaluur markets.

Yuutan is a common visitor to the city. He brings caravans across the wilds from far off settlements of nomads, and places where half-civilised men cling to the ruins left by greater men. A shifty character, he can always find a use for stalwart characters – as guards, as explorers – or perhaps as dupes taking a dummy cargo into the desert to draw bandits away from his own valuable convoys...

Madam Mataab - Matchmaker

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigour d4

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (politics) d10, Knowledge (gossip) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6.

Charisma: +2

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

Hindrances: Curious, Gossip, Honour Code

Edges: Level Headed, Charismatic, Connections.

Gear: dagger (Str+d4), Jewel Harness

The Matchmaker is a self-appointed 'purveyor of wedded bliss'. She has an astounding knowledge of the marriage prospects, personality flaws, income and stability of every prospective bachelor and bachelorette in the city. She conceives of 'perfect matches', and then sets forth to convince her targets to take her advice and be wed.

Madam Mataab is a handsome woman, grey haired and still extremely attractive. She is a wonderful font of gossip and city knowledge, knowing the most surprising details. She also had an annoying habit of somehow being on hand at the worst possible times, seeming to just materialise out of the shadows. She will take a great interest in the player characters, particularly as they acquire a reputation for adventure and heroism. (Aaah – there you are, young man! How is your family – your lovely sister, your brother? How are you settling in to their new quarters? Did you get the pot of cadallah casserole I sent over? Wasn't it delicious? No – it wasn't made by me, but by a young lady of my acquaintance. Now this young lady – aaaah, such a wonderful girl! Alas, she needs an escort to the races tomorrow. But wait – didn't you say that you were free tomorrow? What a wonderful coincidence...!)

ENCOUNTERS

The Artisan's quarter is forever filled with activity.

1- Impromptu race! Grab your Jakaluur, or duck off the street!

2- Colliding caravans! The streets are blocked until the traffic jam is somehow solved.

3- Festival! (Dear Gods – who is that stunningly graceful dancer?)

4- A glimpse into the gym...(could a heart be lost?)

5- A fine new racing Jakaluur arrives! But who could ever tame so proud a beast?

6- The matchmaker has had a brilliant new idea! (no, wait! come back!)

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Jakaluur market

This is the place to procure mounts and pack animals. Given the local enthusiasm for riding mounts, the market is a popular place to visit. New arrivals are discussed – new breeds examined. Jakaluur are available – both the powerful mounts bred in Korium, and also the more fiery beasts imported from the desert tribes.

Jalfs – used as pack beasts – are also available.

Some riding Jalfs are here in case foreigners need to buy their accustomed mounts.

There are also Guuto – a placid red furred semi intelligent ape like beast smaller than a man. These animals can make useful pack beasts for those who intend exploring mountains or even deep caves.

The taverns and cafes across them the markets are the meeting places of enthusiasts of riding beasts and Jakaluur racing. Many incoming and outgoing caravans also host their beasts here beside the markets.

Street of gems

The street where banks keep their main vaults, and gem merchants do their trade. This street is always busy with 'men of business'. Most banks have privately hired guards.

This street is a place to go if characters seek work as guards, or as escorts for valuable treasures.

Street of blades

The shops of weapons dealers are found here. In time of war, their stock is willingly volunteered to the city to equip those young warriors who have not yet had their naming ceremony. These young warriors then bolster the city garrison, freeing their older brethren to ride with the main army.

All manner of swords and axed, daggers and lances are available here. Hand bows of many different shapes and origins. Nomad Bone Bows can be had here, and are considered an automatic part of every warrior's equipment. There are almost never radium weapons for sale here – they are scarce, and if an

enemy is defeated in battle, his conqueror will lay claim to his pistols and rifles.

Radium power cartridges are available. Desert prospectors bring in a steady supply of the valuable mineral, and workshops beneath this city street carefully convert the radium into power charges. These underground workshops are a strategic resource that might perhaps benefit from higher security.

NOMAD BONE BOW

Range 15/30/60, **Damage** 2d6. **Minimum Strength** d8
Composite bows imported from the desert are renowned for their range and speed of shot. Every Jakaluur saddle has a holster for one bow and 30 arrows.

Garden of Jaihallum ("Those who float like dreams")
A broad and beautiful park that is used by the populace as an extension of their own homes. Communal cooking takes place here under the open skies. Dances and celebrations frequently take place here.
This is a fine place to meet new people. Maidens practice their dancing here at the rotunda. Young lovers walk through the park under the evening skies. A great green stone stands at the centre of the parl. Three times in the past, a spring has suddenly blossomed into life beside the stone. Legend says that if the water is clear and pure, then a hero shall arise to serve the city – and that is the waters are poisoned, then the city is in the gravest peril.

The Inn of Screams!

By cooks from the tribe of Fuzal, this restaurant serves food that is so spicy it is hotter than a raging radium furnace! It's colourful nickname comes from the howls of foreigners who often come to eat here as an 'iron man' bet. A trough for watering Jakaluur is placed outside the restaurant, and serves to try and slake the throat of these hapless victims.
Oddly enough, the Inn makes an incredibly tasty trail mix that is a favourite of departing caravans.

The gymnasium

A place for training. Lessons are given in marksmanship and fencing. There are always archers and hand bow men training on the archery field. Physical exercise is conducted under the careful eyes of trainers. All citizens are able to access the facilities, and most do.
Exercise is always conducted naked. Many a foreigner has fallen helplessly in love on glimpsing the active, handsome women of Korium at their exercises. Men and women train separately.
Princess Jutaala, the Princes, and even the Queen exercise here amongst their fellow citizens. It is acceptable to talk to such persons when in the gym, ignoring titles and honourifics.

Guuto – pack beast

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d6, Notice d6, Climb d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6

Special abilities: Defensive scream (Check vs enemy "Guts", or enemy hesitates 1 round)

These six-limbed herbivorous ape-like creatures have four eyes and stiff, bristling ruffs of fur behind their naked heads. They can carry a backpack, and are thus used as pack animals for those who have to scale mountains and delve into deep caves. Not particularly brave, these creature's generally flee from combat – after making a horrific wailing scream that can stop many monsters in their tracks.

Regional adventure hooks

A wild, savage male Jakaluur comes to the city markets. The beast was captured wild, and its savage spirit has already cost one trainer a broken arm, and another a broken leg. The nomad owner is slammed aside. He raises a weapon in fury, ready to slay the best.

Will the player characters intervene?

Saving the wild steed will make an enemy of the shamed nomad. The conflict may escalate until a duel occurs.

But perhaps the Gods will provide a wiser plan.

The conflict can only be solved by competing in the great Jakaluur race at the coming city festival. The nomad vs the player character. The player character can prove himself by riding the savage steed.

But is the noble desert steed really the right choice for the race? What if the experts are correct, and the Jakaluur's savage nature become the player character's downfall?

(Perhaps a long and dangerous 'bonding in the desert' experience will be needed first!)

—
Rumour in the marketplace has it that a great expedition into the wilds is being planned. The player characters stand a good chance of being made a part of the team.

But all is not as it seems. The expedition is ostensibly being led by a sky captain – but really it is under the command of the scholarly Prince Maatash.

If she knew, the Queen would never allow the Prince to go on so dangerous a journey.

The voyage gets underway – its mission? To penetrate by secret means up into the north polar jungles, there to seek scientific secrets locked in the heart of an ever changing mechanical maze.

But something is amiss. Are all of the crew truly what they seem to be? Or have agents of the Baltan Confederacy (or worse – sinister operatives of the Grey Martians) made their way aboard the ship to betray the mission, and perhaps lead Prince and crew into a fate worse than death?

A shop has been selling radium cartridges more cheaply than other, claiming to have a new secret source of the mineral. But the shop does not seem to be getting new deliveries from prospectors and miners. How are they gaining radium? A team of foreign agents try to break in and wring the secret from the shop owner, but the Player characters can intervene and save the day.

The rescued shop owner cheerfully informs player characters never to fear - his business is on a firm footing.

A young apprentice from the shop seems to be growing more and more erratic. Finally, he runs amok. He races off after attempting to murder the shop owner, yelling that guns are evil, and that they must be scourged from the city.

There is actually a vein of radium running deep under the city. The mad apprentice has a route through the labyrinth, where he has been slowly mining radium. But now he intends to detonate the radium vein.

The madman must be stopped!

A tavern near some old ruins has a haunted room. Three times now, guests have disappeared. The rooms have been locked from within, and the beds have not been slept in.

A phase beast is living in the abandoned building that adjoins a wall with the tavern. The monster is capable of erupting clean through a solid wall, seizing its victim and pulling them into the wall into the empty building next door.

If a player character stays in the room, they will soon discover the monster. Should they survive, it would seem the adventure is over – the mystery has been solved...

... until the body of a previous victim is found in the abandoned building. A man from a far city, who seemed to be worried that he was being followed. The dead man has a map that shows a hidden location in a canyon many miles from the city – a place shunned due to the poisonous vapour that creep from crevices all along the canyon walls. Who was the dead man? What was he hiding? And what lies concealed at the secret canyon?

An evening at the Inn of Screams
Players characters find themselves engaged in a mighty duel with the champions of an incoming caravan. A race – shooting, arm wrestling.... Locals gather and egg the contestants on. They suggest that the only true test is how the contestants weather the true test of mettle..

.. the 'extra spicy' menu at the inn of scream...

Of course, having quaffed ale to kill the flames, a character might just fall asleep. That character might just awaken find themselves on a ship sailing though the night sky. And they might discover that they are in chains – slaves or sacrifices destined for who knows where.

Or perhaps the contest was real – a way of finding a champion that will be forced to perform an arduous, deadly task for their captors...?

An unscrupulous girl has purchased a love potion from the apothecary. She slips the potion to one of the city Princes in a cup of wine, winning his heart. The besotted Prince now spends all of his time with the girl, neglecting his comrades, his old pastimes – even his duties to the realm. The prince needs regular doses of the drug – and the increasing doses are making his health begin to suffer.

The players might suspect that something is wrong. But the girl gains new allies – Baltian 'merchants' who will try to thwart any investigations into the source of the Prince's strange new fascination.

THE COURT DISTRICT

The royal palace is built about the grandest of the surviving towers of old Korium – tall structures made from moulded molten stone. The palace and its gardens serve as home to the Royal "Red Guard", and the retainers of the crown. The palace is a fort all in itself, and is protected by its own extensive fortified walls and batteries of radium cannons. Courier boats that land on the roof and met by a platoon of alert royal Guards.

This district also houses the noble families of the city, with their extensive retinues of full time, well equipped warriors.

The Court District holds important civic buildings.

The palace and the noble houses are the social centre of this district. The streets do not have the hustle and bustle of the main city.

Except on days when Hukku matches are to be played.

Hukku is the local equivalent of 'polo' – a cross between lacrosse and pony polo played on aggressive war mounts. The game is fast moving, rough and exciting. Tactical skill is tested as much as guts, riding skill, strength and accuracy. The game is excellent training for war. Games are regularly played in the city arena, and the entire city floods in to watch.

The arena is situated here in the palace district. The area around the arena has a great many eateries

and taverns. The arena is used for Hukku matches – but it is also a place that has a grim official function. Those who elect to take their right of trial by combat face their tests here, before the eyes of their peers.

Another lively part of the Court district is the area around the Academy of Science. Student carouse here. Cafes are places where new avant garde poets try to tear down old barriers and make new art. Places where dancing girls discuss philosophy with avid scholars, and where scientists debate the value of old science over new. Get your Jadalla cup ready – tonight, there will be poetry!

NOTABLE CHARACTERS

Queen Hathina

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Tactics) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Knowledge (Statecraft) d10, Knowledge (History) d6, Knowledge (Gossip of the city) d6, Poetry d6

Charisma: +4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Loyal, Code of Honour, Preoccupied

Edges: Charisma, Fervour, Inspire, Hold the Line, Natural Leader, Noble

Gear: Rapier (Str+d6), Radium Pistol (2d6+2), Jewel Harness

In her middle years and decidedly still handsome, there is silver in the good Queen's hair, but strength in her mind. A canny ruler, beloved by her people, the Queen has her own sources of information that fill her in on the life of her city. Not much manages to escape her notice.

The Queen sometimes uses teams of loyal adventurers as her particular agents. These teams are not tied to the world of promotions, city politics or official policy.

Many of the Queen's activities and duties ring her into daily contact with her people. She exercises naked in the gymnasium. She rides her favourite mount outside the walls, practicing archery and shooting. She presides over naming ceremonies, and inspects vehicles in the ship yards. Her personal bodyguards – the most dedicated of all the Red guards – might wish she were a little more aloof and conscious of her own vulnerability.

The Queen is always accompanied by 4 guards – 2 male, 2 female.

Her three children are troublesome. Prince Darak takes too many risks. Princess Jutaala is forever arguing with every little request the Queen makes of her. Prince Maatash is perhaps too scholarly for his own good.

The Queen's husband died in battle against Baltan

pirates ten years ago. Those who know her say that the queen still wistfully hopes for romance to come flooding into her life.

Prince Maatash

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigour d4

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Knowledge (Science) d8, Knowledge (History) d6, Knowledge (ship design) d6, Notice d8, Piloting d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, First aid d6

Charisma: 0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Honour code, Curious, Preoccupied.

Edges: Arcane (weird science), Scholar

Gear: Rapier (Str+d6), Radium Pistol (2d6+2), Jewel Harness

The Scholarly second son of the Queen, Prince Maatash virtually resides at the Academy. He is a dedicated student of technology – both basic sciences and its principals, and the strange secrets of the Ancient Martians.

The Prince is always interested in new finds and discoveries. He aches to do 'field work', but his mother prefers that he remain closer to the city. But if enthused about a new project, he might well ignore the Queen's commands – for instance, he might team up with Adventurers if they can excite him about their map to a long lost trove of knowledge.

Lady Juruun - The Prime Minister

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Knowledge (Statecraft) d8, Knowledge (gossip) d10, Notice d6, Persuasion d12, Shooting d4.

Charisma: +2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Code of Honour, Loyal, Dour

Edges: Level Headed, Noble, Alert

Gear: Rapier (Str + d6), Holdout pistol (3d6), Jewel Harness

For a noble Queen, we have a female Prime Minister. Lady Juruun is a scion of the Noble Family of Kedd, placed by them into the Royal Council. Juruun handles the administrative affairs of state, and has worked in Partnership with the Queen for many many years. Their relationship has never been strained.

Lately, Juruun has sensed the Queen's longing for romance. She hopes it does not lead to heartbreak or foolishness.

Juruun has no time for Prince Darak, who she feels is a hot head incapable of serious rule. Her own preferred successor to Queen Hathina would be none other than Princess Jutaala – if only the girl could be made to listen to good advice.

Lady Juruun often engages Adventurers as her

agents to perform unofficial missions. These missions can include quietly guarding and guiding the errant offspring of the Queen. Like the Queen, Lady Juruun always travels with four Bodyguards – two male and two female.

Lord Xaark - Outspoken Courtier

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigour d6
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Riding d6, Knowledge (Gossip) d6, Streetwise d6
Charisma: +4
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 10; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Honour Code, Arrogant, Scheming
Edges: Charismatic, Connections, Danger Sense, Noble, Fencer, Block
Gear: Sand Sabre (Str+d8, +1 Attack, AP 1)
Xaark represents the opposition to official policy. He speaks out for the Baltanese Confederacy, trying to smooth over difficulties and dissuade the Queen from her unspoken, unacknowledged operations against Baltan.
Is he really a traitor in Baltanese pay? Or is the man simply a voice of reason, trying to defuse a potentially explosive situation? Only time will tell...

Itaana - Intense Scholar

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigour d4
Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d4, Knowledge (Science) d10, Notice d8, Shooting d4, Knowledge (Ancient History) d6
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 4
Hindrances: Elderly
Edges: Noble, Explorer, Archaeologist
Gear: Dagger (Str + d4), Rapier (Str + d6), Jewel Harness
Every time you meet him, Itaana seems to be somewhat distracted. He forever seems to have an intense problem to ponder, a puzzle to solve. He will suddenly have an epiphany part way through conversations and either begin furiously writing notes, or will simply swiftly return to his laboratory. If he can be kept 'on message', Itaana can be an invaluable resource. He is insightful, and intelligent, and a font of information on all things technological.

Zorra Zatan - The People's poet

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigour d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Knowledge (Poetry) d10, Knowledge (Politics) d8, Notice d4, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, Riding d6
Charisma: +2, +1 Fame
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8
Hindrances: Code of Honour, Outspoken, Loyal

Edges: Inspire, Charismatic

Gear: Radium pistol (2d6+2), Dagger (Str+d4), Rapier (Str + d6), Pages and pages of poetry, Political pamphlets.

An intense young man (some would say obnoxious), who dedicates himself to tearing down barriers and redefining art. He writes reams of poetry, but his refusal to keep to accepted styles and metres makes his work utterly unappreciated. However, he is a loyal friend, and a helper in times of need. The player characters may find Zorra coming to the rescue with physical help or much needed advice. His work has a political content. Zorra is an avowed democrat. He believes the royal family should step down, the noble houses be abolished, and that a true equality of the people should be established. This young fool may end up getting himself into trouble – and it may be up to the player characters to bail him out

Shuulari - Shy Young Priestess

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigour d6
Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d6, Knowledge (Religion) d8, Knowledge (Ancient History) d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Shooting d4, Music d8, Healing d6, Knowledge (Dream Interpretation) d8
Charisma: +2
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Code of Honour, Loyal, Shy
Edges: Alert, Attractive
Gear: Jewel Harness, Dagger (Str + d4)
Shuulari is a shy but beautiful, scholarly young priestess. Crowds of people make her nervous. She sees many of the comings and goings of the royals and nobles, and is often in the palace. She is so quiet that her presence is usually overlooked. Talk to Shuulari is you need dreams of visions interpreted, or if you have had strange feelings of foreboding...
Recently, Shuulari has been having strange blackouts. Sometimes, she awakens feeling very tired. She has not yet spoken to anybody about these episodes...

Nutaak Vel – Veteran Off duty guard

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigour d10
Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d8, Notice d8, shooting d8, Riding d6
Charisma: –2
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 12
Hindrances: Code of Honour, Loyal, Ugly
Edges: Alert, Block, Brawny, Danger Sense, Level Headed
Gear: Heavy wire weave armour, Sand Sabre (Str +d8, +1 Attack, AP 1), Heavy Radium Pistol (2D8+2)
A big man, some might say an ugly man – but loyal

to the core. The palace does not enlist idiots – Nutaak is not slow. But he thinks carefully before he acts.

Nutaak refuses to speak of any of the doings in the palace. His work does, however, constantly take him to the academy and the sky port, and he is on good terms with both scholars and sky captains.

Talk to Nutaak if you want to find how to join the Guards, or if you are looking for expeditions to join.

Lord Fenna - A Merry 'bravo'

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Poetry d8, Music d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Piloting d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Survival d6

Charisma: +2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 10; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Honour Code, Overconfident, Romantic

Edges: Fencer, Florentine, Charismatic

Gear: Sand Sabre (Str+d8, Attk +1, AP 1), Axe (Str + d6, +1 Parry), Radium Pistol (2d6+2), Jewel Harness

A laughter, a lover, a poet and a singer of serenades, this merry young man engages in horse races, Hukku games and pranks. He makes for a wonderful companion on an adventure, although he is forever getting himself into trouble with his impulsive behaviour.

Lord Fenna is likely to leap into a fray just to even the odds to honourable levels. His romantic excesses and his half-cocked adventures can definitely lead his friends into trouble.



ENCOUNTERS

While the streets of the Court District do not throng with merchants and street stalls, they are still wonderfully full of life. The intellectual life of the city centres here – students, scientists and scholars about. This is a place filled with poets, dancers, musicians – explorers and men of government.

- 1- An academy experiment goes awry (a mechanical man – an escaped beast, an explosion...)
- 2- Religious cultists interrupt a ceremony. Dire predictions are made.
- 3- Boisterous nobles start an impromptu Hukku game in the streets.
- 4- A courier races for the palace.
- 5- Angry, contentious crowds walk to the arena. Who is on trial? How clear is the evidence? Can they face the trial themselves, or should a champion from the people come forth to defend their honour?
- 6- Riders are needed for a mission! Report to the palace, if you dare!

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Arena

The city arena has wild and exciting matches of Hukku at least once every 4 or 5 days. Teams frequently practice here. Maidens sometimes gather to spy for potential husbands.

Beneath the arena, there are cells that hold the few violent criminals that appear in the city. These are dishonourable individuals who pose a risk of flight. When placed on trial in the arena, they may choose right of combat – choosing to face either some of the savage beasts of Mars, or their accusers.

More honourable individuals accused of crimes will duel publicly in the arena (or if accused of treason or a crime against the community, they will face combat against wild beasts).

At any given time, the beast pens contain monsters such as Vronag Vesh and Chu'grahk.

The area around the arena has many small cafes and eateries.

The Royal palace

Well fortified, and garrisoned by the 500 strong Red Guard, the Royal Palace is split into two main areas: The private residence of the Royal Family, and the 'court' – the public buildings where the royal council meets, public records are kept and the daily administration of the city takes place.

All citizens are welcome to view open sessions of the Royal Council. Citizens with petitions have a right to present their grievances.

Unbeknownst to the residents, there are secret ways inside the palace that open up into the dread labyrinth below the city...

The noble houses

The noble families each have a large family manor in the court district. These houses maintain considerable numbers of warriors, and are a ready source of available, motivated manpower should military needs arise.

The noble houses are all well and truly interwoven by marriage – but some small tensions do arise. Romeo and Juliet could happen on Mars!

The Royal Academy

The Royal Academy of Learned Arts is directly sponsored by the Crown. It consists of many rambling buildings, based around several old towers. The tallest and oldest – an ancient tower from Old Korium – mounts one of the city's anti-air radium cannon, manned by student warriors.

The academy of Korium thrives. Here, scholars are rediscovering the old, basic sciences. They try to work towards the basic principals that allowed ancient Martians to make their amazing machinery. Officially, the academy frowns on those who try to simply find old artefacts and reverse engineer them: There is a constant grumbling fight between the 'Plodders' (those who try to work forward to facts) and 'Pokers' (those who take apart ancient machines trying to see how they worked...) In actuality, both processes have merit.

The students maintain their military duties. Students ride, shoot and train at the gymnasium like any other citizens.

The academy is a hotbed of ideas. Scholars often try to raise expeditions into the wilds, or need escorts, funding and vessels to take them to far lands to seek artefacts, find old libraries in the middle of the Green Wastes, or consult with hermetical sociopathic foreign scientists.

The Third Moon Jadalla House

The haunt of avant garde poets, musicians, dancers and artists. The Jadalla here is dark and thick. Many of the most inventive and eclectic minds of the city gather here.

The Third moon is a place to find some truly hunting, beautiful women, mad poets who can spin vivid dreams – and also stores of legends and tales of ancient mars. Many an adventure has begun with a tale told within these walls...

The city temple

Ancestor worship and spiritualism are conducted within every family household. The city temple organises the larger ceremonies, oversees hatching, naming and burial rituals. Most importantly, the Temple is served by Seers who can interpret dreams and messages from the spirit (and sometimes experience messages from beyond the veil).

Attached to the temple is the Royal Hospital, where the sick are ministered to by doctors trained in both the herbal medicines of the Nomads and Surgical

skills learned at the academy. Korium lacks the miraculous healing machines owned by many cities.

The pillars of honour

The names of warriors who die valiantly in the service of their city are inscribed upon greenstone pillars that range beside the city square.

The presence of the spirits here is intense. This is a likely place for a priestess to keel over and receive a vision from beyond the veil...

Liquid Silk

A very "high end", luxurious restaurant, café, tavern and hotel. "Liquid Silk" is always filled with dancing girls and nobles. Many of the upper classes come here to relax outside of their homes. The tavern is also a common meeting place for striking political deals, proposing expeditions or discussing clan politics.

The city square and rostrum

Speeches are delivered here. Major events and announcements are made here. The square is wide and clean. Courtiers and officials walk back and forth, going about their tasks. But there are also occasional outbreaks of high-spirited Hukku players, and adolescents racing one another on their new Jakaluurs. The Queen is said to be pleased and amused by such antics.

The Incubator

The city's main incubator is a sturdy, well fortified dome beside the palace. Warriors from each tribe take turns in guarding the incubator. "Hatching Day" is a joyous celebration, with the city taking a holiday.

Nurses from the royal Hospital are always on duty inside the dome, seeing to the environment and the wellbeing of the eggs. Songs are sung to the infants by visiting priestess to help nurture the young. Parents are always welcome to visit their eggs.

Regional adventure hooks

A mad scientist from the academy sought to unlock the secrets of an ancient healing machine, hoping to bring life to the sick and injured. Instead, the radiations o the machine began to effect his mind. The machine mutated and warped flesh – it did not heal it. Forbidden to work upon the machine, the scientist continued to work in secret, experimenting upon animals. The violent, mutated spawn of his machine were thrown into the deep labyrinths beneath the city.

When he tried experimenting on sick men taken from a foreign caravan, th scientist was outlawed. He was shot while he fled into the night, and was presumed to have fallen into the canal and died. But now...

Now, the old machine has gone missing from its

sealed archives. Has the madman returned? And will he stop now with only torturing the injured – or will he try to see how his machine works upon already healthy bodies and minds...

—
An evil Baltan conspiracy in slowly beating fruit. A brain machine is being used to plant false visions into the minds of a priestess. The most vulnerable priestess is one who walks alone from the temple to the incubator at night. The nurse on night duty manages to drug the priestess's drink, and then hooks her up to a mind device concealed inside a false egg.

The device is planting a vision of war and conflict – of mighty air armadas in conflict. The girl has these visions, thinking them to be real. They seem to be pointing to war – not with the south, but with the allied city of Kor Va Krel. The visions clearly show a surprise air attack being launched against Korium by her erstwhile trading partner.

The priestess becomes so troubled that she speaks to the Queen.

The Royal Council urges war – backed by the oratory of Lord Xaark. But the Queen is unsure.

A secret mission to Kor Va Krel should be sent. Is the other city secretly preparing for war? What will Lord Xaark do to interfere with the mission?

And if Kor Va Krel is innocent – then what of the Priestess? Who is behind these visions, and how deep does this conspiracy go?

—
The player characters are given a dangerous commission – to deliver a message to a merchant in a far city. If they run the gauntlet of enemy agents and succeed in their mission, they are now marked as useful agents of the crown.

A messenger quietly informs the player characters that the Queen herself has a mission for them. They are invited to quietly see her in the palace in a few hours time.

But disaster strikes. Someone tries to drug the player characters and take their places, thus gaining access to see the Queen.

Assassins masquerading as the player characters are loose in the palace. And somehow, they seem to look exactly like the player characters...

—
There is one egg too many in the incubator. Normally, no one would notice – but a nurse reordered the eggs, and has discovered an anomaly.

Why? Where has this egg come from?

Is it an illegitimate child, somehow hidden here to be born? Some noble girl?

The new egg seems.. strange. Could it be a monster, designed to hatch out and destroy the unborn children of Korium where they lie? What foul maniac would mastermind such a thing?

Or perhaps the tale is stranger still? What if the egg turn out to be the egg of a Green Martian? But why would a Green Martian woman conceal her egg here,

away from the savage wastelands populated by her people? How did she manage to slip her egg into the city incubator – and what strange love story is blooming out in the desert, where the Green Men roam?

—
A dedicated, oddly attractive yet blundering female scholar is keen to find the ancient radium generators beneath the city. She intends to study the science behind the machinery, and dream of finding a way to reproduce such machines in the future.

She needs an escort into the terrifying deeps. A faceless benefactor has given her money for supplies and equipment. The scholar wants the PC's to help her on her quest.

This sounds... dangerous.

And who is this faceless benefactor? A sterling patriot, or perhaps a spy egging the girl on, only to slay her team and snatch both her and her knowledge once the quest is done?

And... are rumours of a great entity that slumbers in the old radiation chambers of the ancient generators true? Surely not!

THE BARRACKS DISTRICT

The full time regiments who serve the Crown are housed here in barracks buildings with attached stables. The regiments train every day – riding, shooting, field problems of various kinds. When a unit returns, it is dusty, thirsty, and keen to relax.

Most young warriors will be attached to a training unit here full time to learn their trade.

In addition to the warriors, there are all the social structures that support them – fodder barns, eateries, taverns and even a bath house. Many many young women come here to see sweethearts, or to spy out the land for potential husband material.

Many citizens live in this district – particularly if they have family traditions of full time military service.

NOTABLE CHARACTERS

Prince Darak

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Riding d8, Knowledge (Statecraft) d4, Knowledge (Tactics) d6

Charisma: +2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Honour Code, Arrogant, Overconfident

Edges: Natural Leader, Noble, Connections

Gear: Sand Sabre (Str+d8, +1 Attk, AP 1), Dagger (Str+d4), radium pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage

2d6+2), Jewel Harness

In theory, Prince Darak is studying at the Officer's academy and serving with his own Cavalry Regiment. He is frequently away, however – usually enjoying the company of the corsairs at the Sky Port. Adventures with the corsairs are his first love.

The prince's wanderlust makes him vulnerable. Should enemies of the city ever learn that he is indulging in distant corsair raids, then he would certainly be in danger of abduction or worse...

General Voor

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Knowledge (Tactics) d10, Notice d8, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Survival d6

Charisma: +4

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 8

Hindrances: Aged, Loyal, Code of Honour

Edges: Block, Hold the line, Command, Charismatic, Noble

Gear: Sand Sabre (Str+d8, Attk +1, AP 1), Heavy Radium Pistol (2D8), Jewel Harness

The grand old General of Korium's army has officially retired from field command – although should war break out, he remains the titular head of the army and General of Korium's ground forces. The General holds a position on the Royal Council, and enjoys a huge popularity. *General Voor's wife, Manetta, is a handsome, motherly figure much beloved by all new recruits and young officer cadets. She has been 'mother' to most of the regular army.*

Hurian Xol – Seasoned Cavalry Captain

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d6, Knowledge (Tactics) d6, Knowledge (Gossip) d6, Notice d8, Riding d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d4, Survival d6

Charisma: 0

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 10; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Honour code, loyal, Hypochondriac

Edges: Two Fisted, Florentine,

Gear: Jewel Harness, double-cell Radium pistol (2d6+2), Sand Sabre (Str+d8, +1 to hit, AP 1).- axe (Str + d6, +1 parry)

Half Korian, and half Callorian, Hurian Xol is a droll, likeable, cynical, sarcastic fellow who serves as an officer in the "Jeel Feeders" Regiment. His style is flamboyant, his wit acerbic, and he is a fearless warrior in battle. A good companion – amusing and droll. His only real quirk is a feigned concern for his health. He is forever taking herbal cures, claiming fatigue and resting his 'ailments'. None of these ailments seem to stop him lunging into action when he is needed.

Talk to Hurian is you need a strange-but-stalwart blade beside you in an adventure.

- Or if you need to know about the latest drug or herbal cure...

Tadetta Lor – Female courier

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Knowledge (Navigation) d6

Charisma: +0

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

Hindrances: Loyal, Honour Code, Argumentative

Edges: Alert, Steady hand.

Gear: Sand Sabre (Str+d8,+1 to attack, AP 1), knife (Str+d4), heavy radium pistol (Damage 2d8), Radium rifle (2d10), Jewel Harness, Telescope

Tadetta is brusque, irritating and annoying – definitely not a social favourite. She is, however, highly valued as a courier. She can wend her way past all manner of obstacles to get the mail through.

Ask Tadetta about road conditions, hidden routes, obscure box canyons and possible hiding places for bandits.

Occasionally, some officers come up with bright ideas like providing Tadetta with an escort when she has vital information to deliver. She has to live with these kind of orders - Just don't get in her way.

Taddak – the "Black Chu'Grahk"

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigour d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Tracking d8, survival d8, Riding d8, shooting d8

Charisma: -2

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

Hindrances: Honour Code, Mean, Vengeful

Edges: Danger sense, Quick, Brawny

Gear: Dagger (Str +d4), War Sword (Str + d10), Holdout Radium Pistol (3d6), Jewel harness

Taddak is the grim, savage leader of the city's elite scout unit. His 'black ops' troops penetrate behind enemy lines, raid enemy fortresses, and can survive in the desert for weeks on end. Taddak is a "functional mute" – he rarely speaks, but when he does, it is concise and to the point. He has an implacable hatred for all things Baltan.

Of course, if something should turn Taddak into an enemy – either a cause of honour, or evil mind swap technology – he would be a formidable opponent for the player characters.

ENCOUNTERS

Busy and businesslike, this section of the city is dominated by the army. Given that the army has a great deal of slap and dash, that is no bad thing. Recruits race their Jakaluurs along the streets, whooping soldiers celebrate promotions in the taverns, and gorgeously mounted soldiers exercise on the riding fields.

- 1- Troops march out on an assignment.
- 2- Ladies of an 'executive stress relief facility' offer a bargain.
- 3- A champion challenges passer by to a wrestling match.
- 4- Supply columns block all traffic.
- 5- General Voor's wife is in difficulties
- 6- Runaway cart!

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The main barracks

Four main regiments are maintained here in the city. A fifth is on patrol to the north of the city. A sixth patrols to the south, at seventh to the east, and the eighth regiment to the West. The Patrolling regiments are all housed at fortresses in their respective patrol zones. Regiments are rotated in duty every half year- those out on patrol come into the city, and those in the city head out to the patrol zones.

First Division

- Regiment 1* – The Jeel Feeders (A 'Jeel' is a carrion feeder of the desert)
- Regiment 2* – Glorious in Victory
- Regiment 3* – Savage in adversity
- Regiment 4* – Flame of the desert.

Second Division

- Regiment 5* – Prince Darak's Guard
- Regiment 6* – Swift as arrows
- Regiment 7* – Radium fire
- Regiment 8* – Vronag Vesh

Permanently based in the city
 The Field Artillery Regiment
 The Chu'Grahk Regiment (usually 50% dispersed on special duties)

Chu'Grahk barracks

The barracks of the elite scout regiment is kept separate from the main army. Beneath the barracks, a series of tunnels and halls have been excavated. Many of these are used as a testing ground to keep a sharp edge on the members of this elite unit.

The Street of Laughter

Many tavern and entertainment establishments that entertain the troops are clustered along one long road near the barracks. The taverns overlook the training ground where new recruits get their first lessons in formation riding and drill. Their struggles and catastrophes can be watched from the comfort of the tavern gardens. Veterans can hoist a tankard of beer and make helpful comments upon the activities of the recruits below.

Officer's academy

This establishment is the private gift of old General Voor to the city. The heroic old General opened up his entire mansion and turned it into an academy for prospective officers. Recruits who show promise, and nobles who would become full time officers all come here to gain their skills. This has given Korium a highly professional officer corps. The General and his wife are still in residence. The General's wife receives particular deference from the young officers. She is seen as their good luck charm.

Food storehouse

A large, sealed storage facility contains stores of carefully preserved food. The city can sustain itself through a considerable period of famine. The grains and meats preserved here are kept desiccated and stored in containers filled with carbon dioxide, to make them proof from vermin. The building itself is sealed, and perpetually guarded. Food is a valuable resource on Mars; the storehouse could mean the difference between life and death for the entire city.

Regional adventure hooks

Cavalry patrol – Yeo-oh!

The player characters are given a military escort mission, taking much needed supplies out past the outer rim of cavalry forts.

But the Religious fanatics in the desert have stirred up the outer tribes. Should the characters go on with the mission? Return to base as a failure? Or investigate this strange new occurrence.

Finding a friendly chief would give the players knowledge of the new religious movement in the desert. Apparently, an idol was found in old ruins to the south. The idol has been enshrined in a cavern in mesas in the tribal heartlands. Ever since then, warriors who gather in the cave become aggressive and wild. This has been manipulated by a local seer as a directive from the spirits to attack the city men. Is this old statue merely a statue? Is it perhaps an artefact that causes aggression – or maybe even a receiver, broadcasting an ultrasonic signal sent from elsewhere? Can it be snatched from the heart of the sacred cave – or perhaps the transmitter can be found and destroyed (but who would have set up such a thing? And who might be guarding it?)

*A war party is going to assemble to attack the nearest fort. It could mean war with the nomads. Should the players duel the fanatical war chief? Attack and slay hi warriors? Or maybe the situation can be neutralised by stampeding the nomad's Jakaluurs and leaving them unable to ride to war? It's all in a day for the Cavalry!
 Mount up! Yeo-oooooh!*

General Voor's wife has decided to travel to one of the forward forts with two young brides who are

joining their young officer husbands after laying eggs at the incubator. The Player characters get to play escort, and amuse the ladies.

But when they get to the far fort, the place is abandoned. The garrison has gone – but it has left a dozen bodies behind – poisoned by the poisoned water supplies.

An intruding horde of Green Warriors thunders towards the fort. The player characters must stave off the attack, and somehow escape with the ladies intact.

But the Greens know they are out there. Surely the most direct route home has been blocked. What is the best route to safety? Hack a path back to the city? Or perhaps head to another frontier fort and try to hold out until rescue can arrive...

A far desert tribe is in desperate straights. A new tribe of Red Nomads have invaded from the south, and are pressing the local Nomads hard. Korium intends to stand by its allies and defend the local Nomads.

But the invaders cannot be found from the air. They strike at night, and are gone by the day.

A cavalry strike force is sent to the area to find the enemy and destroy them. But the invaders clearly have hiding places in the canyons of the desert. The player characters are sent as advance scouts to seek out the enemy.

Where do the invaders hide? And what motivates them to attack?

Perhaps they flee an even greater desert in the wastes behind them – a danger that will take the combined forces of the invaders, the Korian Cavalry and the local nomads to withstand...

A caravan carrying settlers across the desert has been attacked by Green Martians. The adults have been slain, but the children have been carried off to serve as the 'stars' in a war feast. The Green Martian warband will use this to bring other Greens beneath their banner.

The navy cannot find them. Looks like it's up to the cavalry.

The player character's patrol has to find the massacre sight, then track the Martians. But the Greens have taken refuge in a set of ruins, and they would surely slay the children in attacked. So the children will have to be secured before the big attack is made.

What to do? Looks like a job for the player characters.

Plunge in, take out the vile guards, break into the old tower where the children are being

kept – and hold until relieved!

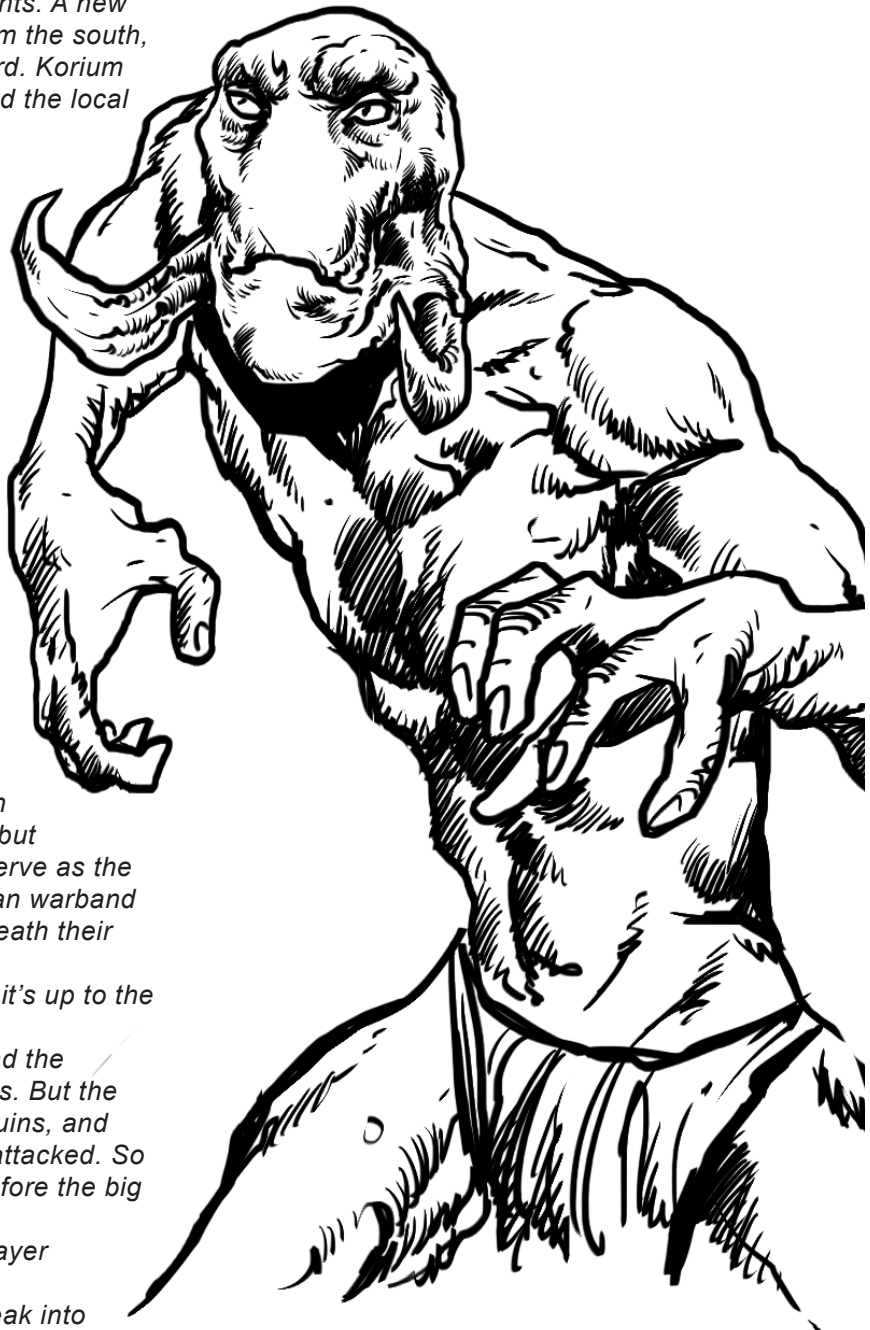
Two dancing girls each have set their sights on the same warrior. Their rivalry becomes fierce.

At a victory celebration for returning troops, a merry chaos reigns. Old General Voor welcomes the troops home. Suddenly a shot is fired at one of the girls. Suspensions instantly falls upon her rival. But was the shot really intended for the dancing girl? Or has an assassin decided to use the confusion as a chance to even an old rivalry?

Could the intended target have been General Voor, or one of the other officers?

Who had motive and opportunity?

And where is the slave girl who has been accused of firing the shot?



NEARBY LOCATIONS

The canal banks on both sides of the canal are heavily cultivated. Various types of low-technology irrigation systems are used to lift water up from the canal and transfer it out to the fields – often piping the water miles away from the canal. Grain and vegetables are the most common crops. But specialised ranches nurture herds of food beasts.

Farms and ranches are well fortified buildings – with walled enclosures for sheltering beasts, and signal beacons to ask for help in times of trouble. Regular cavalry and sky boat patrols help to protect the agricultural and herding zones from predation by beasts and raiders. The farmers and ranchers are well armed and alert – seasoned, hardened warriors who keep close watch upon their realm and upon each other's welfare.

THE LABYRINTH OF DOOM

Far beneath the ancient city of Korium, mighty radium generators once provided power for the city and its surrounds. The generators were buried deep, where their by-products could not effect the city high above. To service the generators, tunnels were driven deep into the rock. There were workshops and power transmitters, computational machines many stories high, and storage vats for the radium slugs the machinery burned for power. Over millennia, the labyrinths were expanded to include store rooms, transit tunnels. An underground transit system led between many of the city buildings, and even out beneath the canal itself. The end creation was a vast mass of tunnels, chambers and radium-spattered caverns.

When the great earthquakes destroyed the city up above, the smashed generators began leaking their poison out into the tunnels. The main routes into the tunnels were blocked by ruins and rubble. Entire sections were sealed off as cave-ins blocked the caverns...

Some routes to the surface remained open here and there. Some beasts from the world above climbed down into the cool, moist caves for safety. While other, less wholesome things crept up from below...

When the New city was founded, the openings into the labyrinth were sealed over. The secret maze was buried beneath new streets, new walls, new homes...

But the labyrinth still exists. And its secrets are deadly...

Lost Children, stolen princesses, abductees of all kinds – stolen secret plans, maps to old library rooms... There are many things that can lead the player characters down into the labyrinths of Korium. Many, many miles of tunnels exist, at countless levels. Umpires can create their own maps of tunnels and chambers. There will always be more to discover. On the other hand, given the idiom of the game, exact maps may not be necessary. MARS is a game of dramatic thrust, and not cartography. It should be enough to describe the regions the adventurers pass into, and the travails they encounter.

"Pleasures" of the Labyrinth might include the following:

- Mutated hell spawn of animals trapped for millennia in the radioactive darkness. What hellish forms and powers will these beings possess?*
- Failed experiments locked into the Labyrinth to be covered over and forgotten.*
- The descendants of trapped workers, forced to live for generations in the dark – mutated into half-mad albino cannibals that come shrieking from the dark.*
- Hideous fungi that tries to colonise the minds of living beings and bend them to its evil will.*
- Mechanical caretakers and guardians, driven mad by their long exile in the poisonous dark*
- A living shadow, crept from the dark, forgotten heart of Mars. A thing drawn to life force, sucking living beings dry (May the gods help us if it breaks out to the surface!)*

And those rumours that some stranger being emerges from the labyrinth in the dark of night to creep stealthily through the Royal Palace? Clearly false!

THE DESERT OF BONES

This desert runs between Korium and the site of the accursed city of Ghutan. It is a dangerous place, haunted by hungry Jeels and Sendokk. A parched wilderness where death at a Green Warrior's sword might be preferable to an agonising death by thirst...

There are, however, reasons to explore the desert. The remnants of the great battles against the slave lords of Ghutan lie here. Rusted blades and the skeletons of entire legions. Here and there, a usable Radium weapon can be found; these are treasures beyond any price.

Crashed sky ships are also a valuable resource. As are the cities destroyed by the evil slave lords. Unfortunately, the shifting sands cover up all of these treasures. When a storm strikes, prospectors and explorers head out into the sands, hoping that new treasures have been uncovered.

Adventure hooks

A Green Martian warlord has conceived a desire to take on Red Martian 'wives'. But only the strongest and the fittest of Red Martian females will be taken. Abducted female characters will find themselves pitted in combat against beasts in a horrifying Green Martian arena. But as appalling as the contest seems, it is worse when they realise what the 'prize' will be – a short life as the concubine of a sadistic Green savage. Can the girls break free before the survivors are forced to fight one another to the death in a final blood fest? And how will they escape? Does the open, empty desert offer an escape route? What of the Green Martians? They seem to be drawing water from a well served by an underground river. Dare the escapees brave the pitch black waters of the underworld to escape a fate worse than death?

—
A hunt for the lost city of Wadahl leads the player characters on a long and dangerous trek. There are treasures found here and there. An ancient airship half buried in the sand. The bones of an entire slave legion, half melted by radium bombs...

Betrayed by allies – attacked by bandits, the characters are pursued by rivals who seek to use the player character's to lead them to the prize.

- Battles in the ruins are raging, when a Green war horde can be seen approaching in the dark. How to survive an attack from the green Martians? Could that old airship found back in the desert be the clue? Could a cunning character somehow repair the guns for long enough to loose off a volley that might stop the Green warriors in their tracks?

THE GORGE OF GHOSTS

Above the city lies a series of stone ridges. A great twisting, turning gorge cuts through the ridges, carved by ancient waters long, long ago. Pillars and balancing rocks, narrow zigzags and plunging caverns make this spectacular location a breathtaking sight. It is also the wild and dangerous route used in the air races celebrated during the yearly city festival.

The city's power generators line the ridges above the city. These huge windmills are made from metal blades raised upon stone towers. Electricity is then sent through underground wires and into the city.

The wind generators are vulnerable to attack. A fort here contains troops whose task is to protect and defend the generators. These are often new recruits getting their first taste of active soldiering.

Thankfully the city does not rely on electricity to survive!

Also waaay up here on the high mountain ridges is the city's Stellar Observatory. This facility is a part of the Royal Academy of Science and Learning. A dedicated team of students and specialists study the heavens, plotting the motion of planets and comets. A small group of enthusiasts are currently discussing the notion that life may exist on other planets – notably the third and second planets orbiting the sun. Thus far, they have only very dubious evidence of back up their claims.

Down on the floor of the gorge, a few Jeels make their living. Some herbivores manage to survive here, eating plant life that grows in the deep laces of the gorge.

Adventure hooks

A racing skiff has been testing its new modifications, heading down into the gorge to conduct its trials.

This is common enough. But when a storm rises in the desert, all aircraft are grounded.

A rider comes from the city, looking for the racing boat's crew. Apparently, the boat never emerged from the gorge...

Has it crashed down there in the gorge? Or in the dread, dark caves? Are the crew injured? With the storm thundering in and visibility dropping, someone must get into the gorge as a rescue party before the Jeels close in to feed.

But what happened? Did the boat crash, or has something more sinister happened? Perhaps there is someone in the crew that somebody wants dead and gone.

- A party of assassins might even now be creeping towards the boat wreck in the storm.

—
The patrols around the electrical generators are all new recruits – full of enthusiasm, but unsure.

One by one, different wind generators have been briefly going off line. The power interruption lasts only a few minutes, but overall power generation seems to be steadily dropping. Patrols of recruits and electrical engineers have found nothing suspicious. Could it just be a strange glitch in the system?

Then one day, a player character is on hand one

dark night when a set of strange, hunched shapes flee from one of the wing generators. The power has just ceased flowing from that generator. Is someone or something actually stealing power from the generators? Do the power disruptions mean that someone is re-routing power. Perhaps shunting power far off into the caverns of the gorge, to some strange, secret place far below. Who are the power thieves? And what do they intend to do with so vast an amount of stolen energy.

—

As the player characters approach the power windmills, a sky ship approaches – beam ion, drifting low. A battle seems to be raging on the decks. As the ship passes low over the ground, an intrepid character might be able to race to the top of a windmill and leap for one of the mooring ropes still dangling from the hull. What has happened aboard ship? Who is fighting? Is this the prelude to a larger attack?

AIR RACING GAME

The great air race is open to all those who have an appropriate racing skiff – and who have either the patronage of a great family of the city, or have distinguished themselves in some way (in battle, exploration or adventure).

RACING SKIFF

Small, fast air boats used for racing and raiding. They typically have one helmsman, one forward lookout, and 2 to 3 other crew who can defend the boat with rifles, bows or
In a race, the typical arrangement is to use 2 crew to operate lances (1 per side), snatching wreaths from the target balloons, and one man to fire weapons at the targets presented on the course.

Size: Small
Acceleration/top speed: 25/225
Climb: 25
Toughness: 10 (2)
Crew: 1 (+4)
Base manoeuvre: Perfect
Hard points: 2
Cargo: 250 lbs
Width: 2
Length: 8
Height: Top deck

The race tests the manoeuvrability and speed of the craft. It also tests the marksmanship, guts and agility of the crew.

The umpire can make 10 to 12 different NPC race contestants. These will be well trained crew, usually

with d6/d8 in all relevant skills. There will also be a “race favourite” crew who has a d8/d10 pilot skill, a d8/d10 marksman, and a tactical skill of at least d8.

The race is an excellent place to introduce or interact with a rival or villain. Umpires can make these racers very formidable indeed.

Favourites, rivals and at least 3 of the main racers will all have a BENNY to spend during the race.

Take a piece of paper and divide it into four rows. Mark them “LEAD”, “FRONT PACK”, “REAR PACK” or “TRAILING”. A character is either in the lead group, in the front pack, the rear pack, or out of the running. All racers start the race in the REAR PACK – but a BENNY can be spent to start in the Front Pack.

Make a test for each rider as indicated in each phase of the race.

- If the test fails – move the character back by 1 row. If a character moves back from “Trailing”, then they are out of the race.
- If the test passes, then the character remains in their current row.
- If the test is a critical success, then the character advances by one row.

Riders who have a skill in **TACTICS** may make one reroll per race, substituting their tactics skill for the ability that was supposedly being tested.

To enter phases of the race, the ship must be displaying a set number of wreaths in its rigging. Wreaths are plucked by lance men from set places along the course (suspended from balloons). Ships who lack the required total number of wreaths may not progress onward in the race – they are disqualified.

The ship is required to hit targets at set points of the course. If the target is missed, then the ship cannot progress, and is disqualified.

Skiffs who actually open fire on one another will be immediately outlawed from the city for disgracing the honour of the sacred race. However, opportunities for other aggressive tactics appear at different points during the race, as outlined below.

At any time, a critical failure on a roll will crash the skiff and cause wounds on everyone in the crew. A **BENNY** is needed to salvage the skiff. But for you, the race is over!

Phase 1: The city towers

The skiffs must race through the city, plucking wreaths hung from poles from the city towers. It is a difficult, swerving course.

Roll vs the pilots PILOT skill.

Wreaths

Each LANCER has the chance to gain one wreath (Test AGIL)

Tricks and tactics: Choose 1

Bump and grind: The Pilot rolls TACTICS vs the TACTICS of one chosen skiff in the same row. If they succeed, the victim must make a difficult (-4) piloting roll, or else be driven back by one row.

Wreath plucking: In the tight twist and turn of the race, it is possible to steal a wreath from another racer. Make a TACTICS roll for the OBSERVER. If successful, then pick a skiff in the same range band. The attacker rolls their lancer's AGIL vs the AGIL of the target lancer. If successful, they steal a wreath from their victim.

Phase 2: The Canyon of Ghosts

A twisting, turning course now plunges down along the bottom of a jagged canyon. The course is dangerous, and careful tactics need to be used. A skiff must have at least 1 WREATH to be allowed into the canyon.

Rolls VS the pilot's SMARTS

Wreaths

The observer must make a NOTICE check, otherwise no wreaths are found.

If the notice roll is successful, each LANCER has the chance to gain one wreath (Test AGIL)

Tricks and tactics: Choose 1

Cutting it fine: The pilot cuts hard into the corners, literally skimming the stone. Make an AGILITY roll for the pilot. If made, then advance by 1 row. If failed, then skiff crashes and is out of the race. A BENNY can be spent to make this simply mean the ship ground off its paintwork, rather than crashed.

Target:

Cararn (Desert Wasps) haunt the cavern. The GUNNER will have to open fire on at least 3 of these brutes. If he fails to hit, then the wasps land on the ship and fight the crew.

Phase 3: The Narrows

A wild, narrow zig zag of caves, rocks and pinnacles. Ships must have at least 2 WREATHS to be allowed into the Narrows.

The Observer must make a NOTICE check, otherwise the ship drops back 1 row.

Rolls VS the pilot's AGILITY as the advance/fall back test for this phase.

Wreaths

The observer must make a NOTICE check, otherwise no wreaths are found.

If the notice roll is successful, then there is a single wreath available to pluck (Test AGIL)

Tricks and tactics: Choose 1

Cutting it fine: The pilot cuts hard into the corners, literally skimming the stone. Make an AGILITY roll for the pilot. If made, then advance by 1 row. If

failed, then skiff crashes and is out of the race. A BENNY can be spent to make this simply mean the ship ground off its paintwork, rather than crashed.

Crash and ram: The Pilot rolls vs the PILOT skill of the commander of one chosen skiff. If they succeed, the victim's Lancers must roll to fend off the encroaching vessel, or else be driven back by one row. (lancers combine their STRENGTH tests vs a difficulty of -4)

Target:

The gunner has 2 tries to hit a target at long range, or else the skiff is disqualified.

Phase 4: Chasms

The race plunges down through the twisting caves and chasms that run beneath the peninsular. The course often plunges straight down into the dark before finally erupting out into the open air some mile from the city.

Checks vs the Observers SMARTS – there are many different paths that may be taken, some good, some bad. Failure means the ship falls back by one row.

Check vs pilots GUTS to advance for this phase.

Wreaths

The observer must make a NOTICE check, otherwise no wreaths are found.

If the notice roll is successful, then there are two wreaths available to pluck (Test AGIL)

Tricks and tactics: Choose 1

Cutting it fine: The pilot cuts hard into the corners, literally skimming the stone. Make an AGILITY roll for the pilot. If made, then advance by 1 row. If

failed, then skiff crashes and is out of the race. A BENNY can be spent to make this simply mean the ship ground off its paintwork, rather than crashed.

Crash and ram: The Pilot rolls vs the PILOT skill of the commander of one chosen skiff. If they succeed, the victim's Lancers must roll to fend off the encroaching vessel, or else be driven back by one row. (lancers combine their STRENGTH tests vs a difficulty of -4)

Target:

The gunner has 2 tries to hit a target at long range, or else the skiff is disqualified.

Phase 5: Chicane

Tethered balloons are used to make a fast moving but swerving course.

Ships must have at least 5 WREATHS to be allowed into the Chicane.

Test vs PILOT skill.

Jostle: The Pilot rolls TACTICS vs the TACTICS of one chosen skiff in the same row. If they succeed, the victim takes a -4 off her PILOTING roll in the next phase unless the skiff's lancers can combine their strength and successfully fend the attacker off (combined Str with a -4 on the roll)

Phase 6: The final stretch.

Test vs PILOT skill. The skiff in the foremost row who scores the highest wins the race.

The winner receives 2 FAME.

All those in the same leading section of the pack receive 1 FAME.

JAKALUUR RACES

Characters entering in the yearly Jakaluur race must have ridden to war or served for 2 years with the army of Korium, or distinguished themselves in some sort of service to the city or crown. The contestants ride with a full load of war bow swords and sidearms.

This is no mere 'speed race' – mounts bread only to run would never last the race. There are hard turns down the streets – shortcuts can be made by leaping over obstacles and fountains. The beasts climb the tall steps of the palace hill, and splash through the shallows of the flooding spring canal. The final sprint ends right at the gates of the main city.

The umpire can make 10 to 12 different NPC race contestants. These will be well trained men on well trained mounts. There will also be a 'favourite' who has a +1 to 2 aspects of their mount, and who has a Tactics rating of at least d8.

Note that the race is an excellent place to introduce or interact with a rival or villain – making this event very personal! (EG – your rival for the hand of the fair noble's daughter wishes to humiliate you! He turns up with his dark, savage steed. As one of the finest riders in the city, you know that he has a D12 riding skill...)

Favourites, rivals and at least 3 of the main racers will all have a BENNY to spend during the race.

Take a piece of paper and divide it into four rows. Mark them "LEAD", "FRONT PACK", "REAR PACK" or "TRAILING". A character is either in the lead group, in the front pack, the rear pack, or out of the running.

All racers start the race in the REAR PACK – but a BENNY can be spent to start in the Front Pack.

Make a test for each rider as indicated in each phase of the race.

If the test fails – move the character back by 1 row. If a character moves back from "Trailing", then they are out of the race.

If the test passes, then the character remains in their current row.

If the test is a critical success, then the character advances by one row.

Riders who have a skill in TACTICS may make one reroll per race, substituting their tactics skill for the ability that was supposedly being tested.

Players (or nasty NPC's) might try to get nasty during the race. An attack with weapons would be noticed by the umpires, causing the rider to be instantly ejected from the race.

When in the same row as another character, the character can choose to 'tangle' directly with another rider. Both riders check Guts vs Guts. The winner causes the loser to check vs Riding skill, otherwise the loser immediately falls back by 1 row.

At any time, a critical failure on a roll will take a rider right out of the race. A BENNY can be spent to negate this accident and get right back into the race.

Phase 1: Main streets

The tangled maze of streets, jumps and clever cornering requires a test of the rider's RIDING skill. Test again vs the mount's SMARTS. Success allows the rider to advance 1 row.

Phase 2: Palace hill

Pure strength of the mount is tested by the hill climb. Check vs the STRENGTH of each mount.

Phase 3: City walls

A sheer race of speed. Check vs each mount's VIGOUR

Phase 4: Canal shallows

Plunging down the long hill, the race suddenly hits the bad going of the muddy shallows. Check vs the mount's AGILITY.

Phase 5: Final sprint.

All characters in the foremost row (be it 'Lead' or whatever) now make a roll of their mount's SPIRIT. The highest roll wins the race!

The winner receives 1 FAME.

BESTIARY

New wonders and new horrors from the world of Mars.

CAVE MONSTROSITY

When decadent Red Martians are trapped in pitch-black, radium-smeared tunnels underground for long millennia, Cannibalistic Humanoid Underground Dwellers are the result.

These mutated humanoids are stinking, reeking, pale white monstrosities. They have lank hair, matted with filth and vermin – long gnarled arms equipped with claws, and huge broad, blind heads crammed with many, many rows of needle-sharp teeth. Their grinning countenances and blind faces are utterly terrifying when looming out of the dark. Cave monstrosities tend to attack in packs. When they slaughter an enemy, they stop to feast upon the remains.

The monsters are blind. The hunt by sight and sound alone. Loud noses can blind and stun them. These creatures are one reason why white men from earth might be greeted with great alarm the first time they are encountered.

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

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

Charisma: -4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8

Hindrances: Blind, Bloodthirsty, Greedy

- Blind: The creature hunts by smell and sound alone. Deafening noises will 'blind' the creatures, stunning them for 1d6 rounds. On the other hand, they can run in the dark with unerring accuracy.
- Bite: Str+d8.
- Claws: Str +d6
- Rubbery hide: 2 point armour
- Blood lust: Cave Monstrosities will abandon a fight to consume dead or disabled prey.



GOSSA PLANTS

This plant is not well known; it has only recently appeared, trickling slowly down from distant highland deserts. Recognising the plant requires a character to make a VERY DIFFICULT Survival role. The gossa plant grows only in areas with a heavy concentration of copper in the soil. Once it blooms, it will colonise a considerable area.

The plants consist of small comical growths that jut up to 30 CM from the soil. These tubes are capped and sealed – and contain a sweet milky substance not unlike coconut milk. This serves both as a source of water, and nutrition; Gossa milk is rich in sugars and proteins.

It is also subtly deadly.

The milk has a decidedly addictive quality. The taste rapidly grows more and more appealing.

A diet dominated by gossa milk will slowly make humanoids paranoid and delusional. After 5 days of a diet heavy in gossa milk, a character must make a CON ST, otherwise they will fall under the influence of the milk. Re-test every day.

In STAGE 1, the victim begins to feel a sense that they are being watched. Small noises disturb their sleep. There is a growing sense that someone is watching them – creeping about unseen...

After 3 more days of drinking gossa milk, the character must save once again to avoid progressing to STAGE 2 of their addiction. Re-test every day thereafter.

In STAGE 2, the victim will begin to 'realise' that these events are caused by their companions. They will become convinced that their companions are planning an attack. Make a WILL ST each day to avoid taking pre-emptive action (making an attempt to 'get them before they get you first')

After 20 days of stage 2 addiction, a victim must test daily to avoid progressing to STAGE 3. In stage three, the victim loses all reason and becomes quite homicidal. They will not leave their source of the milk, and will attack anyone who approaches, thinking they covet their beloved food source.

Freeing a victim from the grip of the root will require that the victim be restrained (they will certainly be violent and raving if kept from the milk.) If released,

they will do anything, no matter how absurd, to return to their supply of milk (including fleeing out into the wilderness without food or water to hunt for more gossa plants).

Each day of deprivation, the character must make a CON ST to avoid 1 suffering a wound from their terrible ordeal.

For each 3 days of deprivation, the character may make a WILL ST to regress back by one stage of addiction. Regressing back from Stage 1 to 'stage 0' means that the poor addict is finally free from the influence of the root, and takes no more damage from their deprivation.

JAKALUUR

The riding beast of the Elysian Red Nomads is the only beast a warrior of Korium would consent to ride. Long legged and capable of long treks through parched wilderness, Jakaluurs are more temperamental than the Jalfs used across the rest of mars. Fearless, cunning and aggressive, they are excellent war mounts. Only Green Martians and Elysians seem to be able to master the beasts.

These beasts have two low slung, forward-pointing tusks, a long neck, a hairy mane, and six powerful, limber legs. Jakaluur are herbivores who can dig and scrounge for roots and underground water with their tusks. Typical Jakaluur hide colours are umber red to a liver purple.

Jakaluur are aggressive and haughty. They are usually addressed with formal 'honorific' language, which seems to placate them.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, vigour d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d10, Notice d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10

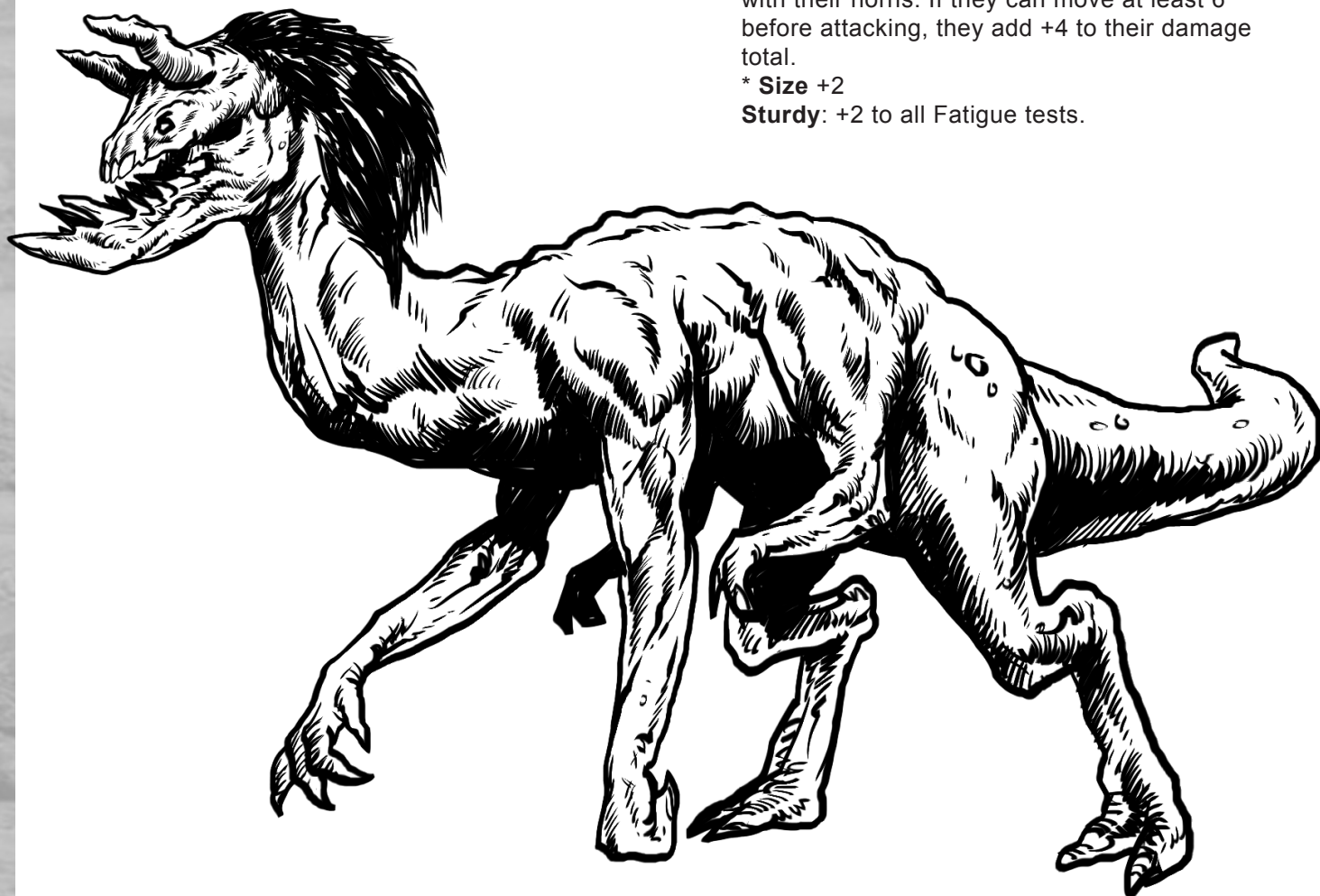
Special abilities

***Horns:** Str+d4

***Gore:** A Jakaluur can gore their opponents with their horns. If they can move at least 6" before attacking, they add +4 to their damage total.

* **Size** +2

Sturdy: +2 to all Fatigue tests.



JEEL

Jeel are ferocious carrion eaters and carnivores native to the Desert of Bones. They consist mostly of a long jaw equipped with far too many teeth, and a great many sturdy legs. They are quite speedy, and also capable of somehow squeezing into rather narrow spaces.

Jeel eat corpses and carrion, but are not above attacking solitary travellers. Packs of Jeel are quite capable of overrunning unwary groups of travellers. Caravans are advised to keep a careful watch at night, when the Jeels roam the sands.

Jeel are quite canny. They seem to be fully aware of the nature of radium pistols and rifles, and will avoid creatures who visibly brandish such weapons. Even so, the moment a man's back is turned, the Jeels will rush upon him and rend him limb from limb.

Jeel are usually found in packs of 2-7 adults.

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

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

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str +d8.
- **Night Vision:** Ignore all penalties for darkness or bad lighting.
- **Worry:** Once a Jeel gets its teeth into a victim, it's usually all over. Unless physically torn free, the Jeel will automatically deal damage for each turn after it manages a bite that rolls more than half its maximum possible damage.



SENDOKK

Long, low centipede-like creatures capable of feasting on anything organic. They tend to hide in rocks and canyons, slithering out from cracks and crevices with surprising speed.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit D60, Strength d6, Vigour d8

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

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str +d6.
- **Poison:** Victims of a bite must make a Vigour roll or be paralysed for 2d6 rounds.
- **Size** -2
- **Small:** Attacks against Sendokk are -2 due to their small size.

Adventure hooks

Thorn in the paw

A character ends up alone in the desert – (knocked from a skyship in battle? Lost in a sandstorm?

Injured when the ground gives way beneath his feet, the character finds himself in an underground chasm. Here, he sees a single Jeel holding back a horde of other predators.

If this were a Red Martian, honour would call on the character to plunge in and aid the outnumbered victim. But does honour apply to beasts?

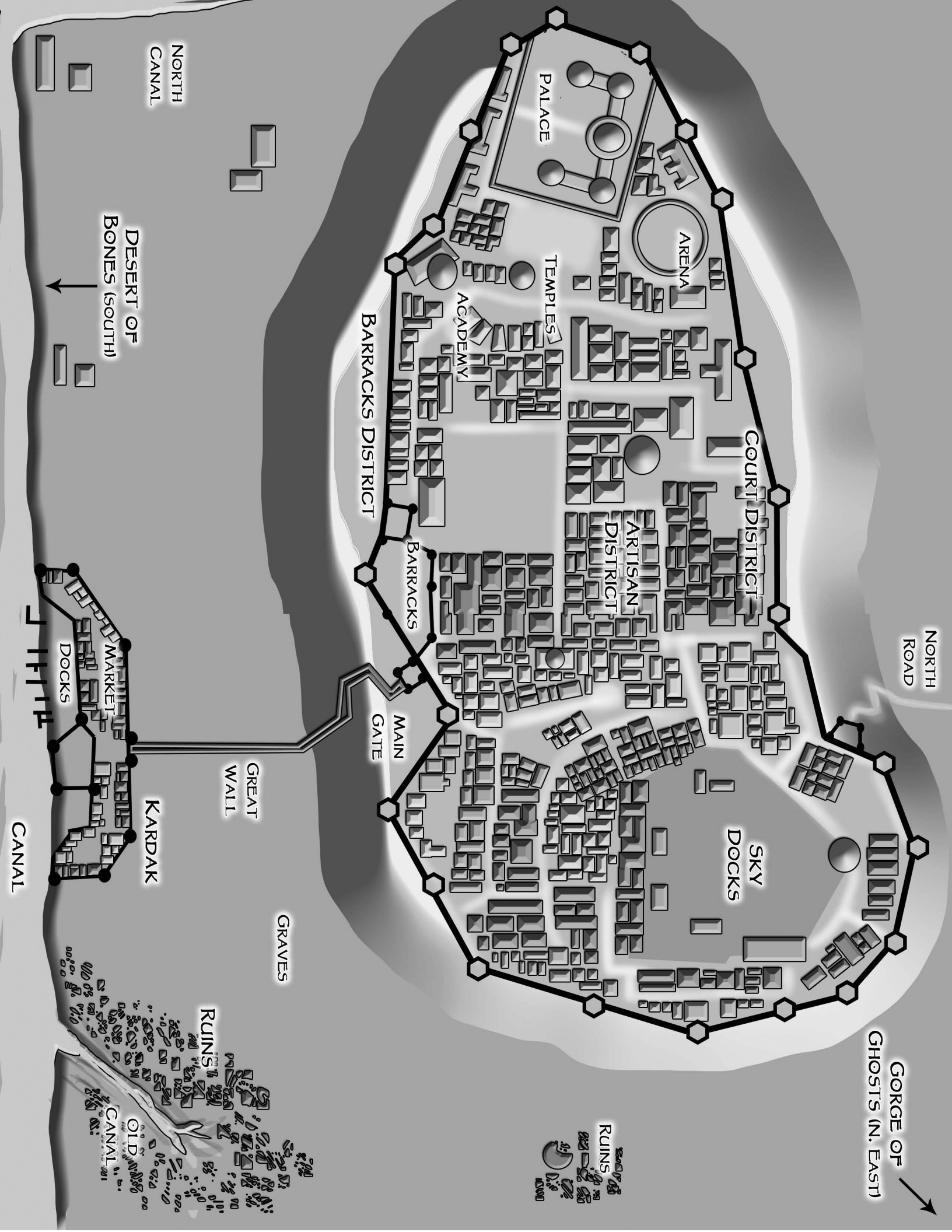
And who knows how the Jeel might repay a rescue. An ally in the animal kingdom could be a valuable thing for the character later on.

The proud Jakaluur

A player character spies a herd of wild Jakaluur in the wilderness – led by a magnificent male. What a war mount he would make!

Capturing the beast is a problem. Where does the herd range – and how can one ambush so cunning and intelligent an animal.

And once you mount him, who knows where his maddened, frenzied gallop might take you. An unconscious character, dragged by a stirrup, could end up far in the desert - beset by Jeel and Green Warriors – one an adventure both he and the Jakaluur can only survive by somehow learning to live together.



NORTH ROAD

GORGE OF GHOSTS (N. EAST)

COURT DISTRICT

SKY DOCKS

ARENA

ARTISAN DISTRICT

PALACE

TEMPLES

ACADEMY

BARRACKS DISTRICT

BARRACKS

MAIN GATE

GREAT WALL

GRAVES

RUINS

DESERT OF BONES (SOUTH)

NORTH CANAL

KARDAK

OLD CANAL

MARKET

DOCKS

CANAL