

REALITY BLURS PRESENTS

KARTHADOR

SWASHBUCKLING SCIENCE FICTION



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WELCOME TO KARTHADOR

Karthador is a world of beauty, danger, drama, and horror. A world where swashbuckling heroes battle merciless villains across ancient vistas or above shining cities, in a world where science is magic, and adventure is always a whisper away.

Noble warriors ride dinosaurs into battle, swords in their hands and blaster pistols on their hips. Crafty sky traders dodge air pirates and thread the needle of storm clouds in the name of profit. Scholars sift through ancient ruins, looking for bits of eldritch technology to complete their new inventions. Kings and revolutionaries alike pore over maps, looking for high ground and choke points, ever wondering if their energy crystals will hold out just a little longer.

What adventures await *you*?

FORTUNE FAVORS THE BOLD

Adventurers abound in Karthador. Explorers and scouts are always in demand, as are mercenary warriors, bodyguards, spies, smugglers, and scientists. In a world of danger, those willing to face that danger can make a lucrative living—for as long as they remain alive.



THE NINE NATIONS

The known world was once dominated by a continent-spanning empire, but is now divided into nine major nations, each striving to forge its own destiny.

Arcona: The hunters of this northern land stalk the snow in search of game, ever wary of predators, both natural and human.

Myratas: Formerly the center of the Myratan Empire, Myratas boasts the highest technology of all Karthador.

Doongarda: This once-proud nation has been all but destroyed by mysterious invaders from across the sea.

Ferazonn: The savage jungles of Ferazonn hide ancient ruins and the secrets of lost technology.

Porothon: The main rival of Myratas, Porothon boasts a kingdom of modern factories defended by dinosaur-riding cavalry.

Rathiveen: Once a colony of Doongarda, Rathiveen is a strict theocracy that values cold steel and hard work over modern, fallible technology.

Sparasool: This desert nation is known for its nomads, ironglass, and vicious raiders.

Tharran: This isolated land of poets and plantations is as gray and gloomy as the people who live here.

Ursicor: The queens of Ursicor are cruel, but their land is full of dark beauty and artistic delights.



HISTORY OF KARTHADOR

The Ancients

No one knows who the so-called "Ancients" were or where they went, but they left amazing technology in their wake. The most common theory has it that, when faced with some calamity, the Ancients hid their mysterious machines in vaults beneath the earth. When the crisis ended, the Ancients were gone, leaving these technological tombs untouched, for a time.

The Darkness

Records from the time before the Myratan Empire are spotty, but it's known that Karthador was populated by people much as it is today, though there was much more conflict between the various cultures. Empires rose and fell as one kingdom conquered another, only to be conquered by another in kind. Myratan historians call this "Age of Darkness" a time of terrible chaos and barbarism which, while tainted as Myratan propaganda, is probably somewhat true.

It was during this time that old kingdom of Myratas was founded, and the seeds of the Empire were sown.

Elder Machines and the Ancients

Zephis the Scholar, a citizen of Myratas, was exploring a system of caves along the western sea when he made a world-shaking discovery.

He found a crack in one of the walls of the deepest cave. Slipping through it, he discovered a vast underground city that had clearly been left by the Ancients. While the Ancients had left plenty of other ruins across the land, none were as intact and untouched as this city.

The legends claim Zephis spent a year in the abandoned city, experimenting with the elder machines there and decoding what he could of the Ancients' glyphs, until he made the ultimate breakthrough: energy crystals. Once he realized that these crystals were the key to bringing the forsaken machines back to life, everything changed. The power of the Ancients was his.

He took his new-found knowledge to the king of Myratas, who gave the young scientist anything he wanted in order to study the elder machines.

Founding of the Machinist Order

Zephis gathered the brightest scholars in all of Myratas. With their wisdom to help guide him, and the riches of the king to support him, he established an organization to systematically study the secrets of the Ancients. Working together, the group used the principals of the elder machines to create their own crystal-powered devices known collectively as "crystal machines."

After his passing, this informal group of scientists and engineers became known as the Philosophical and Technological Order of the Elder Machines—or more commonly, the Machinist Order.

Rise of the Empire

As the Machinist Order unlocked the secrets of the elder machines, the king of Myratas used those machines to improve the nation. He built roads, canals, and massive buildings. Myratas became the shining jewel of the west.

But all that was nothing compared to the first airships. Barriers to overland travel became a thing of the past. Rough hills, rushing rivers, dense forests, and even towering mountains were no longer obstacles to the ambitious Myratans.

Clearly, the king realized, it was time to expand. It was time for conquest.

Over the next three hundred years, Myratas spread across the whole continent, overpowering the other tribes and nations with the power of their crystal machines. The best army in the world was of little use when faced with an enemy that could fly.

Conquered territories were garrisoned by military personnel and heavily taxed, but largely allowed to maintain their current government systems, so long as those governments agreed to follow Imperial edicts. Life under the Empire could be harsh, as its taxes and quotas cared little for the circumstances of the people who had to pay the levies or produce the goods. If a drought all but wiped out a nation's food supply, its people were still expected to offer the required tribute. Those that were unable to keep up with the Empire's demand had their people taken as slaves to serve either in Myratas proper or in one of the other conquered territories.

Spread of the Order

One of the reasons the Myratan Empire was forced to expand was that it needed resources for its machines. Most of them required energy crystals for power, which were found in deposits all across Karthador. Other regions also had vaults of elder machines hidden beneath ruins of the Ancients, which the Machinist Order needed to advance its studies. Finally, the Empire's economy was fueled by raw materials: for example, wood from Porothon and ironglass from Sparasool.

As the Empire spread across Karthador, the Machinist Order spread with it. The Order established chapterhouses in each conquered region that served as clearing houses for any elder machines that were discovered. Because of the great distances involved, the chapterhouses were largely independent, and did much of their own research and study without the oversight of the central Machinist headquarters in Myratas.

The Order also added new members to its ranks from the occupied regions. Locals who showed an exceptional aptitude for technology were adopted into the Order, given a top-notch education, and allowed to rise to the highest ranks. Parents often pushed their children towards the Machinists, knowing it was one of the few ways for non-Myratans to get ahead in the Empire.

Imperial Age

The so-called Imperial Age was a time of glory, decadence, and stagnation for the Myratan Empire. For centuries, the Empire had been expending its resources on expanding its infrastructure in order to conquer the rest of Karthador. Now that it had done so, it turned those same efforts towards achieving the pinnacle of comfort for those living in Myratas. (Outside Myratas, crystal machines were strictly regulated, and ordinary citizens were prohibited from owning them.)

The Myratans built enormous, sky-scraping buildings, fleets of flying vehicles, and eccentric crystal machines that offered little practical value but required vast amounts of resources to produce. They didn't care about the costs. The resources came from the provinces: that's why those provinces were there.

But the people who lived in those conquered territories were unhappy with the imbalance of power and wealth and began to resist the Imperial occupation. The Porothon rebellion was certainly not the first, and would have been crushed easily by the Empire's military might, except that at the same time, the Order was having its own crisis of conscience.

The Schism

The Machinist Order was established to learn the lore of the Ancients. When the Empire grew, it took much of its strength from the technology the Order provided, and in return gave the Machinists the resources they needed to fund their exploration and research. But over the centuries, as the Empire's domination of Karthador became secure, the Empire gradually stopped supporting the Order. This was especially true for the chapterhouses in the outer provinces, which were largely left to fend for themselves while the Order headquarters in Myratas wanted for nothing.

As a result, the provincial chapterhouses relied more on the locals and set deeper roots into the societies around them. They started teaching the local children basic math, literacy, and history in exchange for the resources they needed. As more children from the provinces showed they had a gift for technology, many of them stayed in the province rather than going to Myratas for training, thus strengthening the ties between the local chapterhouses and their neighbors.

All this came to a head when the chapterhouse in Porothon discovered a vault of elder machines. This was the first major discovery in decades, and the Machinists in Myratas were very excited. They demanded the cache be turned over to them at once.

The Porothonian Machinists refused. It was their find, they said. They had the first rights to it.

Enraged at this insubordination, the Myratan Machinists called for the other chapterhouses to shun the Porothonian house. Only a few of them did. Many sided with the Porothonians, saying it was time the outer houses got the same respect and resources that those in Myratas did.

The Machinist leaders turned to the Imperial military and asked for its help to bring the unruly Porothonian chapterhouse to heel. The military agreed. But when its forces arrived in Porothon, they found that the locals had joined in the defense of the chapterhouse and were armed with the Machinists' own crystal machines. The army was repulsed and forced to flee back to Myratas.

This was the first victory of the rebellion. And the first step in the fall of the Empire.

Fall of the Empire

Porothon had been trembling on the edge of insurrection for years. The incident with its Machinist chapterhouse pushed it over the edge into all-out rebellion. Armed with Machinist gear, its people rose up against their oppressors... and lit the flame that would eventually burn the Empire down.

The Empire had grown corrupt and complacent. By the time its leaders realized the seriousness of the situation in Porothon, other provinces had already started their own revolutions. The Machinist chapterhouses in those provinces were joining the locals and arming them with Imperial-grade weapons, vehicles, and other crystal machines.

The Empire didn't fall in a day, or even in a decade. But within fifty years of the Porothon uprising, Myratas' sphere of control was pushed back to the western coast. Rather than face war on its own doorstep, the Empire signed peace accords with the newly-freed provinces and officially halted its policy of conquest and colonialism.

Provincial Interim

The century immediately following the fall of the Empire was one of freedom and chaos. Some of the provinces, such as Sparasool, had been devastated by the war. Others, like Doongarda, remained relatively unharmed because most of the fighting had been far from them. Leadership and governance was in question: did the provinces go back to the governments they'd had before the Empire, or had those governments betrayed their people by serving the Empire for years?

Without strong leaders or the Empire to keep the peace, ancient rivalries reared their heads. Tribe turned on tribe and province on province in innumerable border skirmishes and retaliatory attacks. This was made all the worse by the weakening of the Imperial infrastructure, which devastated some of the provinces' economies. Things were looking grim... and then they got worse.

Invasion of the Black Ships

No one knows where the black ships came from. The most likely theory is that there is another continent to the east of Karthador, but no one truly knows. Of those who have sailed east, none have ever returned.

What is known is this:

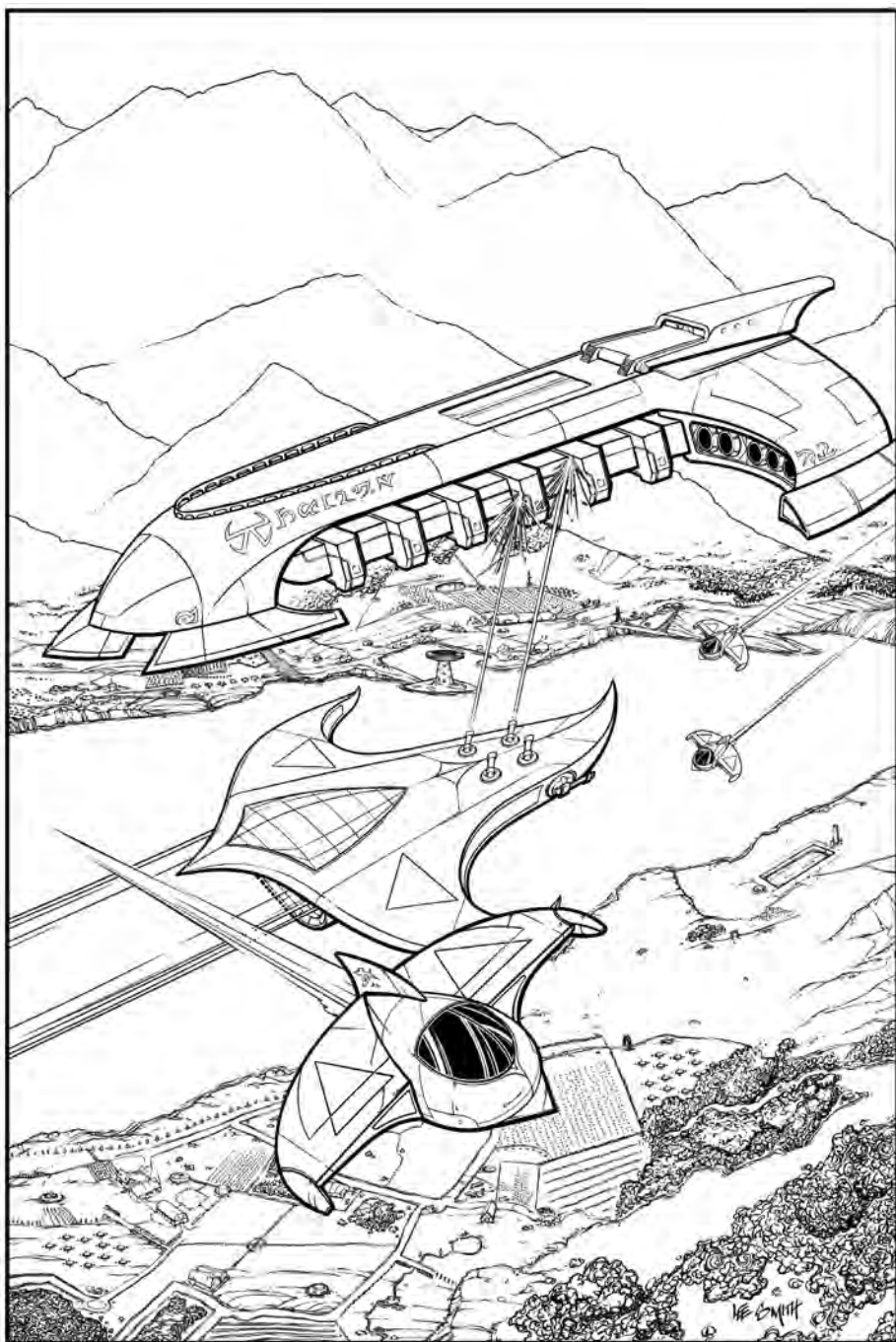
After the fall of the Myratan Empire, when the provinces were just getting back on their feet, a fleet of black ships appeared on Karthador's eastern shore. Each was at least fifty feet tall, propelled without sails, and full of horrors. The ships stopped offshore in Doongarda, where they disgorged flying vehicles filled with soldiers, war machines, and caged monstrosities.

The invaders washed over Doongarda like a black wave. Their weapons were obviously crystal machines, but of such power as to make Myratan designs look like toys. They destroyed anything and anyone in their way, demolishing entire cities as they blasted their way inland. They captured people as they went, rounding them up in invisible nets of force and hauling them back to their giant black ships.

No one could tell if the soldiers of the black ships were even human. Even today, there is debate. They were encased in hard black armor, full helmets and solid faceplates. When killed, the fallen were found to be humanoid, but pale and sunless, with overly-large eyes. None were ever captured alive.

As refugees streamed from Doongarda to nearby Porothon and Rathiveen, those two nations sent what troops they could to help defend the rest of the nation, and contain the invaders. Porothon reached out to Sparasool and Ferazonn, who contributed what they could to the effort. Porothon even dispatched ambassadors to Myratas and Ursicor, who sent airships full of food and weapons.

What followed was a brutal, nine-year war pitting every nation in Karthador against this mysterious invader. In the end, the black ships withdrew. Nothing would ever be the same.



Aftermath

Doongarda was destroyed. What was once a thriving seaside province full of fishermen and merchants was reduced to smoldering wreckage. A large part of its population was taken captive or killed; those who survived fled to Rathiveen or the other provinces.

The black ships left weird horrors behind. The ruins of Doongarda were now dotted with strange pylons made of unknown metals that thrummed and hummed and glowed. Their purpose and origins are unknown. Scientists, soldiers, and treasure seekers alike are certain, that, at the very least, they hint at the possibility of other elder machines buried beneath the wreckage.

The invaders also brought a menagerie of strange beasts trained to protect their camps, hunt for prisoners, and kill their enemies. They left their beasts behind, whether by accident or intent is left to debate. Many still prowl Karthador, hunting for prey, both human and otherwise, living reminders of the bloody battles that nearly destroyed the land.

Karthador Today

It has been fifty years since the black ships sailed from the eastern coast. In that time, the provinces have rebuilt as best they could, and re-established themselves as Free Nations. While peace may be on their lips, their hearts still strive for power, and the peace has been uneasy at best. Tensions rise and fall as the seasons, and angry words often given rise to battle. Border skirmishes and the like are not uncommon, despite numerous calls for unity.

Myratas has officially put its aggressive policies behind it, and embraced its new role as the center of an economic empire rather than a military one. Porothon has arisen as a new political and economic power, rivaling that of Myratas. The two nations are engaged in a cold war, as they continually jockey for political and economic dominance over Karthador.

In this time of rebuilding and change, there are opportunities for fortunes to be made and adventures to be had.

ARCHETYPES

In the world of Karthador, adventure lies around every corner, and the heart of a hero beats inside every breast. Whether beggar, merchant, warrior, or king, those who look danger in the eye and accept the challenge are heroes, regardless of their backgrounds. Nevertheless, those backgrounds help define who those heroes are.

Below is a short list of sample character archetypes to help you choose what sort of character you want to play. This is by no means a comprehensive list, and you're not required to choose an archetype from it. These are merely suggestions of the types of heroes one might find in the world of Karthador.

Agent

Every trade guild, nation, and city state has an agenda, and it's their agents who are on the front lines, making sure that those agendas are being fulfilled. This might mean delivering supplies, arranging payments, or negotiating with a rival faction. Or it might mean sabotage or blackmail. It's all the same to the agent, who'll play troubleshooter, troublemaker, and whatever else the patron requires.

Archaeologist/Treasure Hunter

Karthador is littered with ruins from the previous ages, and it's the archaeologist's duty to explore them. Scholarly archaeologists—typically affiliated with the Imperial Academy or the Machinist Order—are interested in documenting their finds and learning how the Ancients lived. Others are treasure hunters, looting tombs and elder vaults in search of riches more than knowledge.

Artist

The artist is always looking for new inspiration. The practical artist is always looking for new markets. When these two interests combine, the artist can become an adventurer, and the Free Nations her canvas.

Beast Rider

Some are born to the saddle. Whether part of the lizard cavalry of Porothon, a skitter-rider from Sparasool, or a golbok-tamer from the forests of Ursicor, the beast rider and his mount move as one. He's happiest while on the move. He'll jump at any chance to explore, invade, or just travel as long as he's got his mount.

Bodyguard

In a world of assassins, predators, raiders, and countless other dangers, the bodyguard is never without a job to do. She is commonly found working for nobles, scientists, missionaries, or others who need to be out in the world, but are unable (or unwilling) to defend themselves against it. Some bodyguards work for a guild or other organization, protecting its top members. Most are freelance, taking contracts as their wallets and consciences dictate.

Clergy

The priest takes to the road to serve his flock or spread the sacred teachings. Some, like the missionaries of Rathiveen, travel armed and are ready to defend their faith with steel if they must. Others are gentler folk, dedicated to teaching the will of the divine to those willing to listen.

Craftsman

Whether toiling on a Porothonian assembly line, weaving fishing nets on the Tharran seashore, or handcrafting advanced machines in Myratas, the craftsman takes pride in his work. He is the master of construction and repair. He seeks to improve his skill by learning new techniques and mastering new materials. It's a journey into excellence, wherever that journey may take him.

Diplomat

In this world of conflict, the calming words and subtle machinations of the diplomat are needed now more than ever. The diplomat usually speaks on behalf of her sponsors, managing their relationships with their allies and rivals. A skilled diplomat can prevent conflict. A master can start and end a war with a single well-placed word.

Engineer

From the furnaces of Arcona, to the gleaming towers of Myratas, to the fleets of airships that traverse the continent, the engineer is the master of the technological miracles of Karthador. He is one of the few who comprehends the mysteries of the crystal machines and can bend them to his will. A savvy engineer can turn his skills into wealth, power, and prestige. One with a heart for adventure may find his fortune traveling across the Free Nations, selling his services to the clients with the most money or biggest challenges.

Entertainer

Everyone enjoys a song, a dance, or a stylish retelling of one of the old tales. A skilled entertainer is welcome wherever she goes. Some nobles take their entertainment quite seriously, paying their performers very well. But even commoners are willing to trade a meal and a mattress for an evening of stories and songs.

Farmer

For all its flying ships and ray guns, Karthador is still an agrarian society. Farms are the backbone of life in the Free Nations. The farmers who tend them have the mental and physical strength to adapt to whatever adventures life throws at them—and the farmer who seeks that adventure will find himself well-suited to survival on the road.

Healer

While the masters of Myratas have access to the healing secrets of the Ancients, most folks make do with the local healer. Armed with herbs, bandages, and whatever education she can afford, the healer makes her own medicine, sets bones, and tries to keep her patients alive. To improve their skills, some healers leave home in search of mentors and old books of healing wisdom. Others sign on with explorers—who always welcome their skills—in search of adventure.

Herder

Some herd sheep. Others herd cattle. Still others herd people and call themselves "caravan master." The herder knows how to feel the crowd—whether animal or human—and steer their directions and emotions as he sees fit.

Historian

The historian lives to plumb the depths of Karthador's past. She's equally at home in musty libraries and in moldy tombs, peering at crumbling scrolls or digging through ancient skulls. It's all a hunt to her, and she will go wherever the prey is found.

Hunter

The hunter stalks his game to keep himself, his family, or his tribe fed. If he's lucky, he hunts for sport. The point of the hunt isn't the prey, but the hunt itself. The hunter may find adventure while out searching for game, or adventure may find him when others need his skills.

Insurgent

Many are unhappy with the current distribution of wealth and power, but the insurgent is willing to do something about it. She's willing to risk her reputation, freedom, and life itself to fight against the powers that be. She doesn't enjoy violence and destruction. But when the rulers have taken away her voice, rebellion may be the only word she has left.

Inventor

Few people have the resources, education, and sheer brilliance needed to create new crystal machines. Those who do are inventors, and they are the ones who spark Karthador's technological leaps. Inventors are typically stuck in workshops and labs. They jump at any chance to go out into the world they've helped shape.

Mechanic

Inventors may dream up new machines and engineers may build them, but it is the mechanic who keeps them running. Without her skilled touch, they would be little more than curious hunks of metal or, worse yet, rusting husks scattered across the countryside. The mechanic may have once been an invisible cog in the industrial machine, but fate has bigger plans for her. Now she's on the front lines of adventure—and would never go back to being a cog.

Mercenary

Sooner or later, every conflict needs more troops—and that's where the mercenary comes in. His sword, his blaster, his courage are for sale, though not necessarily to the highest bidder. Yes, he has his price, but has his principles, too. For those who can satisfy both, he'll fight to the death.

Merchant

If there's money to be made, the merchant is there. Whether a shopkeeper in remote Arcona or a trader princess with her own air ship, a merchant follows the money. She knows what merchandise is going to be hot, and where to get it. She knows a bargain when she sees one and the best spots to resell those bargains at a fantastic profit. If that means facing a little adventure and hardship, she just considers it part of the price of doing business.

Miner

Karthador's crystal machines run off energy crystals and are built of iron and steel. Without the miner to claw these raw materials from the earth, the Free Nations' technology would grind to a halt. But mining is hard work, and the miner wouldn't mind a little fresh air and sunshine. He'll take those explorers to the old mine on the hill. He'll help them dig it out, looking for fresh ore. But once he's out of that hole, don't ask him to go back in full-time.

Noble

Born to a ruling family, the noble has power, wealth, and prestige simply by value of her name. While not every Free Nation supports an upper class (Ferazonn and Rathiveen find them silly), even the people of those nations will respect the noble's wealth when she brings it to bear. What the noble wants, the noble gets. What she can't acquire by prestige, she'll get through her money or connections.

Pilot

The pilot is only truly happy while in the air. He might own his own airship, but airships are expensive. He probably flies for a guild, a noble, or a privately owned company hauling cargo. It might not be glamorous, but it's a whole world of adventure that the ground-walkers will never know.

Psionicist

While some seek mental mastery to attain inner peace, the winds of the world blow others to use their powers for subjugation and personal gain. Often viewed with distrust, psionicists can be powerful forces for good (or evil) within the nine kingdoms.

Raider

The raider sows only terror and reaps whatever she's strong enough to take. Whether a lone bandit stalking the back roads of Porothon or part of a tribe swooping out of the Sparasool desert, the raider respects no law but her own: the mighty shall take from the weak.

Sailor

The professional sailor hails from one of the fishing or whaling vessels. The sailor is no stranger to adventure; working at sea is as dangerous as it is lucrative. The sailor may go inland for an extended leave in search of greater wealth, or might be looking for a drier change of pace.

Scholar

While the scholar may seem most at home in a library, she knows there's nothing like experience in the field to give her credibility—and a bit of excitement. The scholar may be part of a school-sponsored expedition. She might be taking a sabbatical for some private research. Or maybe her studies uncovered an adventure that swept her up when she'd much rather be at home with good book.

Scientist

The scientist is more concerned with hard facts ("How does this work?") than any practical applications ("How is this useful?"). Research and understanding are the scientist's masters, and he'd just as soon serve them in the lab as in the field. But science is a demanding mistress. Sometimes you just can't figure out the migratory pattern of the great lizards unless you're out in the jungle tracking them, a notebook in one hand and a blaster in the other.

Scout

For every scientific expedition, military patrol, or hunting safari, there is a scout to lead the way. The scout is often the only one who knows the way, and leads the others down secret paths between pockets of civilization. Other times, the scout is discovering a new path himself; it's up to him to read the ground like an old manuscript, looking for hints and clues about the best way through.

Sky Pirate

As long as there have been airships, there have been airborne criminals to prey upon them. The sky pirate is a marauder of the air, boarding other airships and relieving them of their cargo—and occasionally, their crew. The sky pirate is fearless, remorseless, and utterly ruthless with a sword in her hand.

Smuggler

Illegality means opportunity to any good smuggler, while danger sounds like coins falling from heaven. Whether it's sneaking kina into Sparasool or the latest crystal machines into Rathiveen, the smuggler knows that where there's prohibition, there's a well-paying market. Yes, there's a risk. But if he were honest, the smuggler would admit that the risk is part of what makes the endeavor so exciting. It turns a job into an adventure.

Soldier

The soldier is a tool. She is a weapon. She is a sword in her master's hand, pointed at the throat of his enemy. And if necessary, that sword will draw blood. She fights with honor, not for her master's sake, but for the sake of her fellow soldiers. Together, they are the sword that will bring victory or death. And if doing her part for her fellows means going on some crazy adventure, then so be it.

Spy

In a world of shifting alliances and hidden motivations, information is a commodity—and the spy is its dealer. Myratas is best known for its spies, but every nation has intelligence agents of some sort working abroad. Some spies specialize in industrial espionage, stealing blueprints and business plans. Others deal in state secrets for rival nations or simply the highest bidder.

Thief

The thief isn't one for confrontations. She prefers to slip into the target site, steal what she came for, and vanish without a trace. Armed robbery really isn't her style. The thief prefers to work alone, but if the money's right, she'll work with a crew in need of her skills.

Woodsman

The woodsman has no need for civilization. He's got nothing against the cities, airships, ray guns, and such, but is quite satisfied with his life in the wilderness. It's pure. It's simple. He hunts, he traps, he gathers. He knows the ways of the wilderness. And when someone needs his help, he'll give it. The wilderness is harsh, and folks have to work together to survive.

Writer

It's the role of the writer to record the histories, legends, and classic tales of Karthador—and make up a few of his own creations as well. While the writer might prefer a more sedentary existence, she can't deny that adventures are both inspiring and a good source of research.



CHARACTER CREATION

Now that you've looked over the sample archetypes, it's time to determine your hero's abilities, strengths, and weaknesses.

While other races are sometimes rumored to exist on Karthador, your character is Human. You start with one free Edge of Heroic Rank or less; other than Rank, you must meet all other requirements.

Step One: Choose Birthplace

Select one of the Free Nations (p. 2) as your home. This provides the basis for your Common Knowledge in the course of play, and serves as a guidepost to create your background, personality, and outlook. A noble scholar from Ursicor, for example, will have a different perspective on life than a Porothonian lizard rancher. If you're not quite sure, you can leave it to fate and roll a die (see National Origin table, p. 249).

Step Two: Traits

Next, determine your character's attributes, skills, and derived statistics.

Attributes

Your character begins with a d4 in each of the five attributes: Agility, Smarts, Spirit, Strength, and Vigor. You then have 5 points to distribute among them as you choose. Raising an attribute a die type costs 1 point, and you may not raise an attribute above d12 at character creation.

Skills

You have 15 points with which to purchase your character's skills. Raising a skill by a die type costs 1 point, so long as it's no higher than the attribute to which it's linked. It costs 2 points to raise a skill above its linked attribute. Skills cannot be raised above d12 at character creation.

All standard skills in the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook are available, including the arcane skills Psionics and Weird Science.

Derived Statistics

Unless modified by Edges or Hindrances, your character's derived statistics are as follows:

Charisma is 0.

Pace is 6”.

Parry is 2 plus half your character's Fighting die (2 if your character does not have Fighting).

Toughness is 2 plus half your character's Vigor die.

Step Three: Edges and Hindrances

As a human, you get one free Edge of Heroic rank or less; other than Rank, he must meet all other requirements.

You may also choose to take one or more Hindrances to gain additional Edges or other benefits. Unlike the *Savage Worlds* core rules, you may take up to four points of Hindrances in any combination of Major (worth 2 points each) and Minor (worth 1 point each). You may take additional Hindrances beyond this, but gain no points for them.

For 2 Hindrance points you can:

- Raise an attribute a die type
- Gain an Edge

For 1 Hindrance point you can:

- Gain another skill point
- Gain additional money equal to your starting funds

Nearly all the Edges and Hindrances listed the *Savage Worlds* core rules are available to your character. Check the Setting Rules section for Edges and Hindrances unique to this setting.

Step Four: Gear

Characters start out with a set of clothes befitting their backgrounds and 500 crowns. You may spend as much of this as you like on weapons, armor, and equipment before the game begins.

Step Five: Final Touches

Finally, define your character's background, languages, and Defining Interests.

Background

The final touch is giving your character a background, starting with his name. Then think about where your character came from, where he is now, and where he wants to go with his future. Consider his motivations, his likes and dislikes. What drives your character to adventure? Is it money, duty, vengeance? Or was he simply swept up in events, and carried away on a tide of dangerous thrills?

You needn't know the answers to all, or even any, of these questions right now. But keeping them in mind will make playing your character more fun for you and the other players.

Languages

All characters know “old Imperial,” which serves as the universal language of the Free Nations. They are likewise fluent in the language of their birthplace, and in a number of other languages equal to half their Smarts die. Any permanent increase in his Smarts during play grants him additional languages. (Note that Rathiveen and Doongarda share the same language.) Unless illiterate, a character can read and write any language they know how to speak.

Defining Interests

Heroes often have interests and hobbies that may have nothing to do with their professional pursuits or may, at best, be complementary to them on occasion. These odd little skills they have may be of use from time to time.

Your character begins with a number of Defining Interests equal to half his Smarts die. Any permanent increase in his Smarts during play grants him additional selections. A Defining Interest gives your character either a +1 (for a broad, useful interest) or a +2 (for a more esoteric interest) to a Common Knowledge roll when the subject is called into question.

Sample Interests

Culture: Archeology, Astronomy, Biology, Botany, Business, City Knowledge (Specific), Classical Literature, Cooking, Cosmetics, Culture (Specific), Etiquette, Folklore, Gardening, Heraldry, Hunting, Knowledge (Specific)

Craft: Art (Specific), Basket making, Jewelry, Mechanical Repair, Pottery, Tanner

Perform: Acting, Comedy, Dance, Disguise, Juggling, Oratory, Instrument (Specific), Puppetry, Singing

Note that this list is by no means exhaustive. You are free to come with your own interests that fit with your characters, subject to your GM's approval.

Also, Defining Interests are additional elements to round out your character and do not preclude your character having a more general knowledge of such things, based upon their background or upbringing as reflected in their Common Knowledge. They provide only a general knowledge of a topic and are not as detailed as the specific Knowledge skill.

Example: *Agon Dexes, a noble from Myratas, has a Smarts of d6, giving him three Defining Interests. While he defines himself as businessman (and has the skills pertaining to that profession), he also has interests in biology, hunting, and oratory. While on safari in Ferazonn, he comes across some tracks in the mud. As a city-bred Myratan, Agon would normally make a Common Knowledge roll at -2 when trying to identify the tracks. But because of his interest in hunting, he gets a +1 on the roll instead; his experience in hunting trumps his urban background.*

NEW SKILLS

Knowledge (Business)

With this skill, the character knows how best to run a business and maximize profits. The character also knows what the markets looks like: what to buy, when to sell, and what investments are the safest bets. This skill is commonly found amongst sky traders, caravan captains, the plutocrats of Myratas, and the guild masters of Porothon.

Note that this is a more "high level" skill than Streetwise, which is used to buy and sell specific items. For example, this skill would tell you that the highest quality swords are found in the city of Margash in Rathiveen, but a Streetwise roll in Margash would tell you that Old Jonas on River Street is having a sale on steel blades for the next three days.

Knowledge (Crystal Machines)

Characters with this skill are able to operate and figure out advanced crystal machines. While anyone can use the simplest of such machines with basic instructions ("Flip the green switch when I say!"), attempting any sort of advanced use ("Adjust the shield frequency to 60 micro-pulses!") without this skill incurs a -4 penalty.

NEW HINDRANCES

Bravado (Minor)

Some heroes (and villains) don't know the difference between the time for action and the time for bragging. A character with this Hindrance must spend the first round of any combat announcing how great he is or how he's about to defeat those who oppose him. If for some reason the character absolutely must act instead, it costs him a benny.

A villain with this Hindrance never delivers a finishing blow to his enemies. Instead, he leaves them to die in some complicated death trap or orders his minions to finish them off while he stalks off well out of earshot.

Clumsy (Minor/Major)

Some people know how to throw a punch, while others don't. Through inexperience or physical ineptitude, the character is no good at fighting and suffers a -1 or -2 to Fighting rolls, depending on whether the Hindrance is taken as Minor or Major. The character can't have this Hindrance and any Edges that award a bonus to Fighting. The character may reduce or eliminate this status over the course of game play through rigorous training. They may expend an Advance to reduce this Hindrance by one category (Major to Minor or Minor to eliminate completely) at Seasoned or any time thereafter.

Dark Secret (Major)

The character harbors a dangerous secret that could endanger his very life and how he is perceived if it came to light. Should others learn of this secret, they have a -4 Charisma reaction to the character. If it becomes public knowledge during the course of play, the character loses this Hindrance and it is replaced with Wanted (Major) in addition to the -4 Charisma modifier.

Disgraced/Dishonorable (Minor/Major)

The character — or someone in his family line — has brought shame to his family. At the Minor level, the shame is often embarrassing and/or inconvenient. The character receives a -2 Charisma modifier when interacting with anyone recognizing his family name. The character is automatically the first upon whom suspicion is cast when a crime is committed in a community where he is present. At the Major level, the character descends from a dishonorable family or is the subject of great personal shame (being branded a criminal, for instance). The character receives a -4 Charisma modifier when interacting with those who are aware of his status. If the character is caught committing any serious crime or is even located in the proximity of such an event, he is often summarily punished without trial or investigation.

Exiled (Minor/Major)

The character has been exiled from her homeland. Perhaps she was falsely (or perhaps not falsely) accused of a terrible crime, or maybe performed some unspeakable act of aggression or taboo against the ruling body. If the character is exiled from a single city or town this is a Minor Hindrance, but if she's exiled from an entire nation it is a Major Hindrance. An exiled character returning to her homeland risks further penalties, but no one is actively searching for her so the risk of getting caught is lower. Exiled cannot be combined with Wanted.

Glass Jaw (Major)

The character doesn't handle physical pain and injury well and thus suffers a -2 penalty on all Soak rolls. This Hindrance is commonly found amongst scholars, merchants, and high nobles.

Isolated (Minor)

Some characters from very isolated backgrounds are unable to function socially out in the real world. They might be bug-eating savages from the deepest swamps of Ferazonn, or snooty nobles who have never been outside the royal palace of Porothon. Wherever they came from, it hasn't prepared them for getting along with others in the wider world of Karthador, so they receive a -2 modifier to Charisma except among others of their background. (Note that not everyone from an isolated background has this Hindrance. It's just that some characters have a hard time adapting outside their home territories.)

Characters can reduce or eliminate this status over the course of play. They may expend an Advance to eliminate this Hindrance at Seasoned Rank or any time thereafter.

Lawful (Minor/Major)

Some people obey the law to a fault. To them the world is black and white, or rather right and wrong. This character is one of those people. He follows the law of the land, or of a deity, or of a belief, without question or hesitation. As a Minor Hindrance he can see the spirit of the law in most cases where the situation may be a bit grey (if it makes a difference). As a Major Hindrance he follows the word of the law with no exceptions. The law the character follows is generally the law of whatever authority has control over the area he is in, or of his homeland.

Low Born (Minor)

While other characters may be born of low society, it is obvious this character is not far removed from his bad upbringing. He receives a -2 Charisma penalty except among others of his station. The character may reduce or eliminate this status over the course of game play. They may expend an Advance to eliminate this Hindrance at Seasoned or any time thereafter.

Milquetoast (Minor)

Like most royalty, diplomats, and scientists, the character with this Hindrance isn't accustomed to dodging punches or blaster shots. The character is inexperienced in combat and recovers slowly from shock and trauma. He suffers a -2 penalty to Spirit rolls to recover from being Shaken. He may use an Advance once he reaches Seasoned Rank or any time thereafter to eliminate this Hindrance.

Obligations (Major or Minor)

The character is connected to someone or something that demands a portion of her time. This can vary from something as minor as checking on a sickly aunt to the major obligation of repaying a Myratan noble family to avoid slavery. Failure to fulfill such obligations will have serious repercussions.

A character with Obligations and Connections to the same organization has a special relationship with the group in question and gains a +2 or +4 bonus to Persuasion rolls (depending upon whether their Obligations are Minor or Major). In essence, the Connection has a vested interest in the character and is more likely to want to see her succeed.

Obsession (Major)

The character is obsessed with something: acquiring artifacts of the Ancients, protecting a loved one, wreaking vengeance on an enemy, and so on. This Obsession is just about the most important thing in the character's life. He'll neglect friends and responsibilities, expend vast amounts of energy and resources, and even put himself and his companions in danger in order to pursue his Obsession. To control this Obsession requires a successful Spirit roll at -2.

Savage (Major)

The world is a wild place, with cities and towns shining a civilized light like a torch in the darkness. The character has not seen this light, however, or has at least forgotten what it was like. She grew up in the wilderness, away from the comforts of society, and has become feral and savage. She suffers a -2 to all Streetwise rolls and a -2 to Notice rolls made in a civilized setting (a town, city, or even a bar). She starts with 2 fewer Defining Interests, as she had other things that took up her time while dealing with threats in the wilderness. A character may not take both Simple and Savage.

Self-Taught (Minor/Major)

Not everyone learned their skills under the guidance of a school or even a peer. Some people had to fend for themselves, and some of those people really should have had a teacher. The character is one of those people. As a Minor Hindrance, the character begins play with only 12 skill points rather than the normal 15. As a Major Hindrance, he begins play with only 10 skill points.

Simple (Minor)

The character has not had the time or inclination to engage in unusual or esoteric studies. As such he begins play with 2 fewer Defining Interests. A character may not take both Simple and Savage.

Stand Out (Minor)

The character doesn't look like everyone else. Whether he has distinctive facial tattoos, stands a head taller than everyone else, or his muscles bulge out of whatever clothing he's wearing, he stands out in a crowd. He's easily remembered and recognized, regardless of how he dresses. Any attempts to disguise his features are at -4.



NEW AND MODIFIED EDGES

BACKGROUND EDGES

Arcane Background (Psionics)

Arcane Skill: Psionics (Smarts)

Starting Powers: 2 (Special, see text)

Requirements: Novice

Powers: *armor, barrier, beast friend, blast, blind, bolt, burst, confusion, damage field, deflection, disguise, dispel, entangle, fear, fly, havoc, mind reading, pummel, puppet, quickness, slow, slumber, speak language, speed, stun, succor, telekinesis*

New Powers: *boost/lower body, boost/lower mind, cloud mind, mind sense, telepathy*

While psionic powers are not common in Karthador, they do exist. Some people activate them by ingesting certain plants, or strange teas brewed with the dust of energy crystals. Others unlock their powers through study and meditation. Still others are simply born with mysterious abilities that appear to be hereditary.

Psionic powers in Karthador are based around telepathy and telekinesis (*armor* Trappings may consist of a telekinetic wall of force, for example, and *confusion* Trappings consist of a telepathic assault on the target's senses). As such, only those powers that can operate within the realms of telepathy and telekinesis are allowed. Furthermore, since mental energy is invisible, inaudible, and doesn't create secondary effects (like acid or electricity), powers have no trappings that cause secondary effects. Of course, those who use psionic powers have their own trappings (gestures, mutterings, glazed eyes, scowls of concentration, etc.).

Range for psionic powers is handled differently from the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook. Those listed with a Range of Touch have a Range of Smarts instead.

The character gains two powers of his choice—even those of higher Ranks. Using any power requires the Psionics skill. Taking powers of higher Ranks is not without a price. The character suffers a penalty of –1 to his Psionics rolls for each Rank difference between his current character Rank and the power's Rank. Power Points are not used—further details are found in the **Using Powers** section of the Setting Rules.

This Edge may be taken during play with the GM's permission.

Example: *Ghuval takes bolt I (Novice) and puppet (Veteran) at Novice Rank. When he casts bolt I, he suffers no penalties to his roll, but suffers a –2 when using puppet. This penalty is reduced to –1 when he reached Seasoned Rank and goes away altogether when he reaches Veteran Rank.*

Arcane Background (Weird Science)

Arcane Skill: Weird Science (Smarts)

Starting Powers: 1

Requirements: Novice

Powers: All powers are permitted, but note that several powers are modified in these rules (see the **New and Modified Powers** section of the Setting Rules).

New Powers: *boost/lower body, boost/lower mind, cloud mind, mind sense, telepathy*

This inventor has spent much time studying the strange elder machines left behind by the Ancients. Through this study, he has gained unique insights into the manufacture and use of such devices and is able to recreate the strange effects of these elder machines, albeit generally on a lesser scale.

The character gains one power of his choice—even those of higher Ranks. Using any power requires the Weird Science skill. Taking powers of higher Ranks is not without a price. The character suffers a penalty of -1 to his Weird Science rolls for each Rank difference between his current character Rank and the power's Rank. Power Points are not used—further details are found in the **Using Powers** section of the Setting Rules. Unlike the *Savage Worlds* core rules, maintaining a Weird Science power does inflict a -1 penalty to all subsequent Weird Science rolls.

Each new Weird Science power is actually a new crystal-powered machine. The player must write down exactly what the device is when he gains the power. An inventor with the *invisibility* power, for instance, actually has an invisibility belt, cloak, etc. Other characters may use these devices as per Weird Science rules in the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook.

Weird Science is the skill an inventor uses when activating most devices, and raises increase the effects of the power as usual. If a device uses a different skill, such as Driving, Fighting, or Shooting, the inventor uses that instead. A ray gun, for example, uses the Shooting skill, while a “vibroknife” (a knife with the *smite* power) uses Fighting.

Powers that require an opposed roll, such as *puppet*, also use the scientist's Weird Science skill.

This Edge may be taken during play with the GM's permission.

Auspicious Birth

Requirements: Novice

The character's birth happened during a festival, a celestial alignment, or some other such monumental moment. When dealt a Joker, the character receives a benny in addition to the Joker's usual effect.

Inherited Vehicle

Requirements: Novice, Boating, Driving or Piloting d6+, Repair d6+

The character starts play with a vehicle. Perhaps it's been in the family for generations; perhaps it's something he's been tinkering with for a few years. It might even be something won in a game of cards. However the character got it, he's got it, but it certainly isn't the best. If your GM allows the character to take the Inherited Vehicle Edge, he can have a snow runner, ice crawler, ranch runner, scout skimmer, flight pod, pirate sloop, contract freighter, or other conveyance. Work out the specific details with your GM. Should the vehicle be destroyed, the character may get it repaired or replaced between adventures/sessions as appropriate.

Innate Power

Requirements: Novice

The character was born with a genetic mutation that manifests through force of will (Spirit). He chooses one power regardless of Rank and may also take Power Mod Edges, as normal. The penalty to use this power is the difference in the characters' Rank and the power's Rank. When he rolls a modified result of 1 or less on the Spirit die, regardless of Wild Die, he suffers a Fatigue level. A critical failure causes a wound.

Example: *Drig, a Novice character, knows bolt II (Seasoned). His attempts to use it are at -1 until he achieves Seasoned Rank.*

Iron Hearted

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d6+

Through his discipline and training, the character is able to ignore 1 point of wound penalties. This stacks with the Nerves of Steel and Improved Nerves of Steel Edges.

Nosy

Requirements: Novice

The character has a knack for sticking her nose where it doesn't belong, perhaps in search of the truth of things or possibly just out of curiosity. She gains a +2 bonus on Investigation rolls.

Photographic Memory

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d8+

The character gets a +2 to Smarts rolls to remember everything he sees, hears or reads down to the tiniest detail.

Rugged

Requirements: Novice, Spirit or Vigor d8+

Whether in the jungles of Ferazonn or in the snow-covered steppes of Arcona, the character has become used to tough environmental conditions and receive a +2 bonus on any Fatigue roll resulting from environmental effects such as cold, heat, hunger, sleep deprivation, or thirst. In addition, she may ignore one Fatigue level, regardless of its source.

Savvy

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d10+

Whether highly educated, well-read, or simply in touch with his surroundings, the character seems to know at least a little bit about everything. When the character takes this Edge he gains a +1 bonus on all Common Knowledge rolls and half his Smarts in additional Defining Interests.

Steely Gaze

Requirements: Novice, Intimidation d6+

The character has a withering gaze that can turn opponents' heart cold. When attempting to make a Test of Wills using Intimidation, the character's opponent suffers a -2 penalty to their Spirit roll.

Survivor (Specific)

Requirements: Novice, Survival d6+

Karthador is a land of dangerous environments. The knowledge that keeps your character alive in one environment might be useless in another. When this Edge is taken, the player chooses an environment (desert, jungle, arctic, urban, etc.). The character gets a +2 bonus to Survival rolls while in that environment. (At the GM's discretion, this bonus might also be added to other rolls, such as Common Knowledge or Notice while the character is in that environment.)

Vigorous

Requirements: Novice, Vigor d8+

By virtue of the character's amazing constitution, he gains a +2 bonus on all Vigor rolls made to resist the effects of alcohol, drugs, disease, poison, knockout gas, and so on. This bonus applies to Vigor rolls to resist the effects of such substances. If he fails, the character is still affected normally (e.g., suffers extra damage from a poisoned blade or falls asleep when hit with a cloud of sleep gas). The bonus is not applied to Soak rolls.

COMBAT EDGES

Bring it on!

Requirements: Seasoned, Fighting d10+

The character is a master of defending against multiple attackers. Opponents gain no Gang Up bonus against him.

Carnivore

Requirements: Novice, Strength d8+, Berserk, Fighting d8+

As a free action, the character may make a Spirit roll to voluntarily go berserk. He may also go berserk automatically by spending a benny.

Close Fighting

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Fighting d8+

This Edge is especially useful for knife-fighters and martial artists who pride themselves on defeating their foes up close and personal. Close fighters move inside most weapons' reach, adding a bonus to the fighter's Parry equal to an enemy weapon's Reach +1 for that particular foe. No bonus is granted if the foe is unarmed or using a knife or other small weapon.

Example: *Chinzar Dak possesses the Martial Artist Edge. He closes against a desert bandit with a spear (Reach 1). While so engaged, he enjoys a +2 Parry.*

Improved Close Fighting

Requirements: Novice, Close Fighting

Expert close fighters are able to best exploit their enemy's weak spots for quick and lethal kills. The character gets a bonus to his Fighting roll equal to his enemy's Reach + 1 for that particular foe.

Example: *Chinzar Dak engages more spearmen (Reach 1) later on in his journeys. With Improved Close Fighting, he'd have a +2 bonus to both his Fighting rolls and his Parry.*

Deadly

Requirements: Heroic, Fighting, Throwing, or Shooting d10+

When making a Called Shot or when your character's target has Cover, he ignores 2 points of penalties. This Edge applies to Fighting, Throwing, or Shooting attacks, but may be taken up to three times, applying to each kind of attack separately.

Dirty Fighter

Requirements: Seasoned

Some fight with honor. Some fight to win. This Edge is most likely known by thugs, pirates, and assassins. A Dirty Fighter is particularly good at Trick maneuvers, gaining a +2 bonus with them.

Really Dirty Fighter

Requirements: Seasoned, Dirty Fighting

A master at capitalizing on every deadly opportunity, the character can, with a successful Trick and the expenditure of a benny, attain the Drop on his target.

Disarm Mastery

Requirements: Seasoned, Fighting d8+

The character excels at removing an opponent's weapon in melee combat. He makes an opposed Fighting roll against his opponent. With a success, the adversary drops his weapon. With a raise, the opponent is Shaken and the weapon flies 1d4 random inches away, or the character may elect to take it if he has one or both hands free.

Entangle

Requirements: Seasoned, Fighting d8+

This maneuver enables the character to trap one of his opponent's weapon arms, granting him an advantage in combat. The character makes a Disarm check to perform the action. Success indicates an opponent's arm is trapped, rather than disarmed. Whether this is through an arm lock or other means, the foe becomes an Unarmed Defender (unless he has two weapons or the Martial Artist Edge) and cannot withdraw from combat. The attacking character may continue to use a one-handed weapon or unarmed martial strikes against his foe. On his action, the foe may try to escape as per breaking a grapple.

Focused Shot

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d8+

Through great concentration, when the character Aims, the Range increment is reduced by 1 category.

Example: *Chinzar Dak spends one round Aiming at a target at Long Range. This provides the normal +2 bonus for Aiming, but the target is now considered at Medium Range (with a -2 penalty). Had he not Aimed, he would need to roll an 8 (due to the -4 Long Range penalty) rather than a 4 (as the +2 for Aiming offsets the -2 Medium Range penalty).*

Grizzled

Requirements: Seasoned, Spirit d6+, Vigor d8+

The character's field work has made him tough—even his scars have scars. He gains +2 to Soak rolls.

Lunge

Requirements: Novice, Fighting d8+

A lunge allows the character to extend the Reach of any melee weapon or unarmed attack by 1. He may not use this Edge with First Strike, Frenzy, Sweep, or Nimble Strike.

Nimble Strike

Requirements: Veteran, Agility d8+, Fighting d8+

The character has learned to fight with great dexterity — moving in and striking quickly and then moving away before his opponent may strike. If the character can move at least 2" before making an attack against an adjacent foe, he may attack and withdraw from combat without his foe or other adjacent opponents receiving a free attack.

The attacker is still subject to attacks from foes with the First Strike or Improved First Strike Edges if he moves adjacent to them when using the Nimble Strike Edge.

One with the Machine

Requirements: Seasoned, Boating, Driving or Piloting d8+

Your character knows how to squeeze a little more juice out of a particular vehicle to escape a tight spot. When involved in an abstract vehicular chase or dogfight (see the **Chase** rules in the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook), he adds +2 to his Driving or Piloting rolls when rolling for the number of Action Cards drawn.

Ranged Pin

Requirements: Seasoned, Shooting d8+ or Throwing d8+

The character may use certain missile weapons (knives, arrows, spears, etc.) to pin opponents to nearby surfaces. The opponent must be within 1" of a wall, tree, or similar surface. Make a Shooting or Throwing roll at -2. If successful, the target takes normal damage and is pinned, requiring a successful Strength roll to break free. With a raise, the opponent must make his Strength roll at -2 or remain pinned.

Ready for Battle

Requirements: Heroic, Improved Level Headed

A hero with this Edge draws 4 Action Cards in combat and acts on the best of the draw.

Example #1: *At the start of a combat round, Chinzar Dak is dealt four cards (three for Improved Level Headed and one for Ready for Battle) and acts on the best of the draw.*

Sharpshooter

Requirements: Seasoned, Shooting d8+

Whenever the character takes the Aim maneuver, he may spend a benny (before rolling the dice) to double the normal bonus.

Signature Moves

Requirements: Novice, Fighting, Shooting, or Throwing d10+

The character gains a +1 to all skill rolls with one specific weapon type selected upon taking this Edge. This Edge may be taken multiple times, with the character selecting a new weapon each time he takes the Edge. A character may take this Edge for unarmed maneuvers as well, granting him the bonus with bare fisted strikes and grapples (this bonus does stack with Grab and Hold). When the character takes this Edge, the player must describe his Signature Move.

Example: *Chinzar Dak has the Signature Moves (Martial Arts) Edge. He gains a +1 to Fighting rolls when he attacks with a punch, pummel, or kick. His friend, Jatt Fokarr, has the Signature Moves (Long Sword) Edge and gains the same bonus when using any long sword.*

Improved Signature Moves

Requirements: Veteran, Signature Moves

The bonus from the Signature Moves Edge increases to +2.

Pierce

Requirements: Seasoned, Strength d10+

Particularly strong warriors can learn how to strike weak points in Armor to great effectiveness. Any melee attack made by someone with this Edge ignores 1 point of Armor, whether crafted or natural. This stacks with other AP bonuses.

Improved Pierce

Requirements: Veteran, Pierce

As with Pierce, but the amount of Armor ignored is raised to 2 points.

Superior Defense

Requirements: Veteran, Agility d8+, Block

The character has mastered special defensive techniques. When using the Defend maneuver, his Parry is increased by +4 (instead of +2). If using the Full Defense maneuver, add +2 to his Fighting roll to determine the Parry score; this stacks with the +2 that is normally granted by the Full Defense maneuver.

Swashbuckler

Requirements: Novice, Acrobat, Agility d10+

You don't have to be a swashbuckler to be a good air pirate, but it helps. When the character is unencumbered (i.e., carrying weight equal to or less than his normal Load Limit), he gains an additional +1 Parry. He also gains a +2 bonus on any roll related to performing a particularly “swashbuckling” act such as swinging from an airship rope, sliding down a banister while engaged in swordplay, or leaping out of a window only to bounce off an awning and make good his escape.

Takedown

Requirements: Novice, Fighting d8+

The character is trained in how to throw or trip an opponent. Make an opposed Fighting roll versus the target. Each Size category difference incurs a -2 penalty. With a success, the now prone opponent may be placed in any spot within 1" of the character. With a raise, the opponent is prone and Shaken; if already Shaken, he takes a wound.

Tricky Fighter

Requirements: Seasoned, Agility d8+ or Smarts d8+, Fighting d8+

The character suffers no multi-action penalty when using a Trick in the same round as a Fighting attack. The player must choose which type of Trick this Edge applies to (Agility or Smarts) and the character must have a d8+ in that attribute. The character may take this Edge twice to apply it to both kinds of Tricks.

Two-Weapon Fighting

Requirements: Seasoned, Two-Fisted, Fighting d8+

The character is trained in the art of fighting with two weapons. When using a melee weapon in each hand or when fighting unarmed, the character ignores the normal off-hand penalty and receives a +1 to Parry.

Weapon Finesse

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+

The character has learned true grace in combat. As such, he may use his Agility to determine the melee weapon damage cap or ranged weapon minimum attribute requirements, rather than Strength.

Example 1: *Jatt Fokarr possesses a Strength d4 and Agility d8. When using a long sword (Strength d8 requirement), she does 2d4 damage normally. Should she take Weapon Finesse, she does a d4 + d8 (as her Agility substitutes for Strength to determine the damage cap) and is considered to meet the minimum requirements to gain any benefits of the weapon.*

Example 2: *When using a bow with Weapon Finesse, Jatt Fokarr does 2d6 damage and ignores any attack roll penalties she would otherwise incur due to her low Strength.*

Weapon Focus

Requirements: Novice, Signature Moves

Through experience or training, the character is better able to inflict damage with his fists or a specific melee or thrown weapon type chosen from among the Signature Moves he knows. His damage is increased by 1 die type.

This may be taken multiple times. Each time it applies to a different weapon.

Example 1: *Jatt Fokarr has Signature Moves (Long Sword) and Signature Moves (Knife). When she takes Weapon Focus, she must choose between long sword and knife. She selects Weapon Focus (Knife). When she now uses a knife, it does Str+d6 damage in her hands, rather than the Str+d4 damage it did previously.*

Example 2: *Kazuma is an elderly warrior with a Strength d4 and Agility d8, who is often underestimated by his enemies. With Weapon Finesse, he does d4+d8 damage with his long sword. He takes Weapon Focus (Long Sword), and this damage increases to d4+d10. If he had none of these Edges, he would merely do 2d4 damage.*

Example 3: *Chinzar Dak has continued to diligently train his body into a formidable weapon. He has Marital Artist, Improved Martial Artist Master, Signature Moves (Martial Arts) and takes Weapon Focus (Martial Arts). He has devoted a lot of Advances to reach this point in his training but he now does Str+d8 damage with his bare hands and feet!*

Improved Weapon Focus

Requirements: Veteran, Weapon Focus, Fighting d10+

The character learns further secrets of his Weapon Focus. The damage with the weapon in question is increased an additional die type.

Example: *Jatt Fokarr now has Improved Weapon Focus (Knife). A knife in her hand now does as much damage as a long sword, having increased two die types from the base damage of d4 to a d8.*

CREATION EDGES

Craft Device

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Background (Weird Science)

This inventor is proficient in adapting elder machine concepts and creating incredible new devices. The character has created an item that adds +1 to an attribute roll. The specifics of the device and the attribute it affects must be defined when the Edge is taken. A character can take this Edge multiple times, applying it to a different attribute each time. If the device is lost or destroyed, the character creates a new such item upon his next Advance. The item is uniquely attuned to the creator and is useless in the hands of anyone else.

Craft Greater Device

Requirements: Veteran, Craft Device

The bonus when using the item from the Craft Device Edge increases to +2.

Gadget

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Background (Weird Science)

The character has built a gadget that replicates any Edge the GM allows. Common sense should prevail in most cases. The governing factors are the inventor must meet the Rank requirement of the Edge, and his Weird Science skill must equal or exceed the highest skill or attribute die type requirement (if any) of the Edge in question (minimum d4). This gadget can be lost, broken, or stolen, but the inventor should be able to replace it within a week or so of game time. Other characters may use the inventor's gadgets, but they may only use them for a length of time equal to or less than the inventor's Rank in hours per day.

For instance, a Novice inventor's powered armor (granting the wearer the Brawny Edge) can only be lent to other characters for up to one hour per day, while a Legendary inventor can lend them for up to five hours per day. The lending time need not be consecutive. The inventor, however, is not restricted by time constraints when using his own gadgets. A character can take this Edge multiple times, each time granting the character a new gadget-embedded Edge. The specifics of the gadget must be defined when the Edge is taken. Edges that should be excluded include Arcane Backgrounds, Rich, and Filthy Rich, among others at GM discretion. Should an Edge have another Edge as a requirement, the pre-requisite Edge must be already incorporated

into the gadget before the new one may be added.

Note: Gadgets do not stack with the Edge they are replicating.

Example 1: *Kandai is rather clumsy, but always wished to master the Acrobat Edge. Looking at the Acrobat Edge, he sees it requires Agility d8. His Weird Science d8 means he just meets the requirements to build the Nimble Harness, a gadget that grants him all the benefits of the Acrobat Edge while he wears it, though he only has an Agility d4. Ahh, the wonders of crystal machine technology!*

Example 2: *Regor decides he wants to build a gadget that makes him Rich. The GM tells him, “Nice try,” and Regor goes back to the drawing board.*

Example 3: *Vinzay is always getting into firefights and wants to build a gyro-stabilized scope that helps him aim his blaster (represented by the Marksman Edge). As he is Seasoned Rank and possesses Weird Science d10, he can certainly build the device by taking the Gadget Edge. Starting the next adventure, he has the Gadget (Marksman) Edge, represented by his gyro-stabilized scope.*

POWER EDGES

Power Mastery

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Psionics) or Innate Power

The character has learned to control one of his powers and gains +2 to Psionics (or Spirit) rolls with the chosen power. This Edge may be taken once per Rank, with the character selecting a new power each time.

POWER MODS

These Edges modify existing powers known to the psionist, allowing them to be used in new ways. Each time a Power Mod is selected, it is applied to a specific power.

Multiple Mods may be taken for any given power.

Area

Requirements: Special, Veteran, Arcane Background (Psionics) or Innate Power

This Edge expands the area of effect of one power. The character must be two Ranks above the power in question. When chosen, the caster must select the power it affects, as well as the shape of the area: Small Burst Template, Medium Burst Template, Large Burst Template, or Cone.

This does not increase the Range of the power nor does it provide selectivity of targets. The caster must take the Selective or Increased Range Power Mods separately.

Example: *Arlei knows deflection, which normally affects one target. She may take the Area Power Mod for it when she is Veteran Rank or higher. When she casts it upon herself, all characters—friends or foes—standing near her are caught up in the blurring effect of her power. She must take Selective should she only want her friends to gain the benefits.*

Increased Range

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Background (Psionics) or Innate Power

This Power Mod doubles the effective range of the associated power.

Example: *Drig knows bolt which has a Range of 12/24/48. Increased Range doubles it to 24/48/96.*

Selective

Requirements: Heroic, Arcane Background (Psionics) or Innate Power

This Edge is generally used in conjunction with area effect powers such as *burst* or *blast*, or applied to powers to which the Area Power Mod has been added. When the power is used, the caster determines who (within Range) is/is not affected.

Example: *Drig and Arlei are in a forest surrounded by frightening war-mutants. Drig decides to activate his burst power with the two of them at ground zero. He has the Selective Power Mod, so he announces it will only affect the war-mutants in their midst and casts it. A moment later, the war-mutants are ash!*

Triggered

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Psionics) or Innate Power

This Edge enables a specific power to be cast in advance and then activated as the result of a specific condition or within a pre-arranged time frame. A Triggered power requires a great deal of concentration. Each instance of a maintained Triggered power incurs a -2 to further casting rolls—double the normal penalty. The GM is advised to approve which powers he deems modifiable by the Triggered Power Mod and exactly how they may manifest.

Example 1: *Drig penetrates a hidden cult lair, but is unable to bypass the crystal machine security field. He casts triggered puppet on the machine's access panel. The next time someone accesses the system, they will be forced to bring him the access codes.*

Example 2: *Arlei is a psionist going into the battle against a psionist cultist. She casts triggered dispel on her person that is set to go off should the cultist attempt to use his mental powers upon her. Anyone else, including herself, may use psionic powers, for good or ill, upon her as normal.*

PROFESSIONAL EDGES

Ace Amongst Aces

Requirements: Novice, Ace

While Driving, Piloting, or Riding the character may make one additional action (subject to GM approval) without invoking the normal multi-action penalty. For example, she could fire her blaster while driving her scout skimmer, rush by and sweep someone off their feet while riding her tricorn, or drop a bomb while piloting her trusty airship.

Battle Commander

Requirements: Novice, Knowledge (Battle) d8+

At the beginning of each hostile encounter, the commander may make a Knowledge (Battle) roll. For each success and raise, he receives a benny that may be used for any characters on his team. Bennies not used by the end of scene are discarded.

Note: If more than one commander is on a team, the test is treated as a cooperative roll as detailed in the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook.

Beast Rider

Requirements: Novice, Agility d6+, Fighting d6+, Riding d6+

The character is trained to fight from the back of riding beasts such as tricorns. He uses his Fighting skill when mounted, rather than the lower of his Fighting or Riding skills.

Crystal Machinist

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d8+, Knowledge (Crystal Machines) d8+, Repair d8+

This character has been trained under master machinists who have studied crystal machines. He is able to apply what he has learned in his daily tasks. He gains +2 to Repair and Knowledge rolls on anything regarding mechanical devices and crystal machines. With a raise, he halves the time normally required to fix something. This means if a particular Repair job can be accomplished in half the time with a raise, a crystal machinist could finish the job in one-fourth the time.

Duelist

Requirements: Seasoned, Quick, Fighting d8+

This character gains a +2 bonus to opposed Agility rolls to interrupt an action when coming off Hold.

Example #1: *Chinzar Dak and Ghorval the Repugnant are having a duel. Chinzar Dak has the Duelist Edge, and when they roll Agility to see who strikes first, Chinzar Dak adds 2 to his roll.*

Example #2: *Chinzar Dak is fighting some war-mutants and goes on Hold. When a war mutant tries to rush past him to attack Jatt Fokarr, he adds 2 to his opposed Agility roll to interrupt the war-mutant's action.*

Master Duelist

Requirements: Veteran, Duelist, Weapon Focus (Melee Weapon)

The character does an extra 1d6 damage with a successful hit when coming off Hold. This can stack with a raise as normal.

Example #1: *Chinzar Dak and Ghorval the Repugnant are having a duel. Chinzar Dak has the Master Duelist Edge. He hits Ghorval when he comes off Hold and rolls his normal long sword damage an additional + 1d6 for Master Duelist.*

Example #2: *Chinzar Dak is fighting some war-mutants and goes on Hold. When a war-mutant tries to rush past him to attack Jatt Fokarr, he comes off Hold and strikes for a raise. He rolls long sword damage + 1d6 for Master Duelist + 1d6 for the raise.*

Entertainer

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d6+, Persuasion d8+

The character is a skilled entertainer and receives +2 to Persuasion rolls when singing, dancing, or otherwise performing in front of an audience.

Herbalist

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d6+, Healing d6+, Survival d8+

The herbalist knows the countryside well and knows what plants are both helpful and hurtful. He receives no penalty on Healing skill rolls for not having the proper equipment or tools in most situations. At the start of each session, the character makes a Survival roll to see what herbs he has collected in his travels. With a success, he begins the adventure with d6+1 herbs (2d6+1 with a raise). Each herb is treated as a Power Point the character can spend to create specific effects, be they poisons, poultices, or herbs that impact a character's attributes. Each item's effect is equivalent to a normal success with the power in question (ignoring any extra effects that occur with a raise). Often roots and leaves are simply ingested as the herbalist prepares them for personal use, but they may be placed in powder or liquid form as well, giving rise to the illusion among many that he uses potions. These herbal items have a limited shelf life and do not carry over from one session to the next.

Contact Poison (2 herbs): The character creates a poison that generates an effect similar to the *smite* power. A dose must be applied to the weapon in question. If applied to a melee weapon, the effect lasts for three successful strikes.

Note: If applied to ranged or thrown weapons (such as twenty arrows or throwing knives), the effect lasts until the dosed item is fired or thrown, or until the end of the game session.

Light or Dark Herbs (2 herbs): Light or Dark herbs generate an effect similar to the *boost trait* or *lower trait* powers, respectively, with the exception that for the *lower trait* effect, the target must make a successful Vigor roll to avoid the effect rather than an opposed Spirit roll. The character must designate what attribute the herbs affect and the manner in which the herbs are applied (i.e. powders may be absorbed, inhaled, or ingested, while a liquid form may be ingested or applied to a weapon).

Note: If applied to a melee weapon, the effect lasts for three successful strikes. If applied to ranged or thrown weapons (such as twenty arrows or throwing knives), the effect lasts until the dosed item is fired or thrown, or until the end of the game session.

Poultice (3 herbs): The character creates a healing poultice that generates an effect similar to the *healing* power. Though it staunches a wound immediately (automatically stabilizes a character from Bleeding Out in one round, although he remains unconscious until the wound is removed), it takes 10 minutes to remove 1 wound. It may also draw out poison or diseases at the GM's discretion. The character may travel with the poultice on with no ill effect.

Insurgent

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d8+, Stealth d6+, Streetwise d6+, Survival d6+

To their enemies they are terrorists. To their allies, they are freedom fighters. Insurgents are masters of creeping through the cracks of the ruling machine, finding its weaknesses, and then striking where it's most vulnerable and vanishing into the night. They get the Connections (Local Insurrection) Edge for free, and when it comes to finding a spot to hide—whether for five minutes while the guards pass by, or three days until the state of emergency is lifted—they get +2 to all Stealth, Streetwise, and Survival rolls.

Merchant

Requirements: Novice, Knowledge (Business) d6+, Persuasion d6+, Streetwise d6+

An experienced broker of goods, the merchant gets a +2 to all Knowledge (Business) rolls and +2 to Streetwise rolls for buying and selling items on the open market. He is also skilled at evaluating the basic worth of goods. A merchant may evaluate the exact worth of a common item automatically and that of a unique or unusual item with a successful Smarts or Knowledge (Business) roll.

Mountaineer

Requirements: Novice, Strength d6+, Climbing d6+

The mountaineer is a skilled climber and receives a +2 to all Climbing rolls. He may move his Strength in inches per round with proper equipment and half that without.

Mounted Shooter

Requirements: Novice, Agility d6+, Riding d8+, Shooting d6+

This highly skilled rider has the Steady Hands Edge while riding on the back of a beast such as a tricorn and may use the aim maneuver while riding.

Mythic Warrior

Requirements: Veteran, Brave

This warrior has made a living by fighting war-mutants and other equally monstrous creatures. He never suffers from Fear effects and cannot be Intimidated.

Natural Rider

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Riding d8+

The character was born to the saddle and may add a +2 bonus to all Riding rolls. By spending a benny he may make a Riding roll to Soak any wounds his mount may take. Each success and raise negates one wound. He may also mount or dismount as a free action.

Protector

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Fighting d6+, Notice d6+

The character may be a bodyguard or just devoted to an individual. In either case, he can jump in front of attacks intended for another. Choosing a new person to guard costs the protector a regular action, and additional actions in the round cause multi-action penalties as normal. As long as the protector stays within 1" of the chosen person, any attack aimed at that person is automatically rolled against the protector instead. The character receives a benny each time he suffers a wound from such an attack during an encounter. If the protector Soaks the wound, he doesn't get the benny.

Raider

Requirements: Veteran, Fighting d6+, Stealth d8+

Raiders are masters of the element of surprise. During the first round of any combat they initiate, they draw an additional Action Card and act on the best of the draw (this stacks with Level Headed and Improved Level Headed). Furthermore, during this round, they cannot be Shaken by combat damage (although they do still suffer wounds) and get a +2 on all Fighting and Shooting rolls.

Smuggler

Requirements: Novice, Persuasion d6+, Stealth d6+, Streetwise d6+

When it comes to illegal goods, the smuggler knows all the right people. He gets +2 to Streetwise rolls for buying and selling contraband on the open market—even if the merchandise isn't illegal in the current market. As a professional liar, he also gets +2 to Persuasion and Stealth rolls related to hiding or explaining away contraband. When the player takes this Edge, he may choose to take the Wanted (Minor) Hindrance (in addition to his normal allotment of Hindrances) in exchange for an extra 1000 crowns.

Second Story Artist

Requirements: Seasoned, Agility d10+, Thief

A master of infiltration, Second Story Artists gain +1 to Climbing, Lockpicking and Stealth rolls. These benefits stack with those gained from the Thief Edge.

Treasure Hunter

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d8+, Climbing d6+, Notice d6+

Treasure Hunters are adventuring archaeologists who plunder the past for fortune and glory. They receive +2 to Survival and Notice rolls when looking for or scavenging through ancient or abandoned locations.

SOCIAL EDGES

Animal Magnetism

Requirements: Novice

Characters with this Edge are irresistible to members of the opposite sex. They receive a +2 Charisma bonus when dealing with members of the opposite sex. If your character chooses to do so, he may pour on the charm by spending a benny to double this bonus. However, if the attempt fails, he will be unable to sway the target for the remainder of the session, regardless of how thick he lays it on — they're on to his game!

Authority

Requirements: Novice, Intimidation d6+

The character is a member of a recognized authority or governing body. This could be the tribal council, the priests of Onu, a simple city guardsman, or any other powerful entity with political clout.

Whenever he flashes his badge or other symbol of authority he gains a +2 bonus to Intimidation, Persuasion, and Connections rolls.

Cosmopolitan

Requirements: Novice

The character has traveled the world and experienced many of its cultures, and therefore never suffers penalties to Common Knowledge rolls dealing with cultures or social etiquette.

Cultured

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d6+

The character has a refined air about him, increasing his Charisma by +1. Additionally, the character gains two additional Defining Interests. Nobles are typically the only ones with this Edge, but commoners who have it can more easily pass themselves off as nobility.

Gift of Gab

Requirements: Novice, Persuasion d6+, Charisma +2

This is a common Edge amongst merchants, diplomats, and others who make their living with a silver tongue. A character with this Edge receives a +2 bonus to all Persuasion rolls.

Low Profile

Requirements: Novice, Wild Card

The character is less recognizable than might be expected. People encountering the character receive a -2 to Common Knowledge rolls to recognize him in addition to any other modifiers, and he receives a +2 to all Stealth (Blending) and Persuasion (Disguise) attempts.

Street Smarts

Requirements: Novice, Streetwise d8+

From the domed city-states of Arcona to the bustling fishing ports of Tharran, there are common rhythms to urban life. Those who can sense these rhythms have an easier time navigating the city, and gain a +2 bonus on all Streetwise rolls.

Flash and Panache

Requirements: Veteran, Charismatic

The character knows how use his wealth to maximum effect. He gains an additional +2 bonus to reaction modifiers and related skill rolls (such as Persuasion) when throwing money around.

Smooth Talker

Requirements: Novice

The character can speak any language she knows with complete fluency and does not suffer any penalties as a non-native speaker. Additionally, she may adopt regional accents and use idioms of any language she knows, including her native tongue. When language can reinforce a cover, this adds a +2 to his Disguise rolls.

Well-Connected

Requirements: Wild Card, Veteran, Connections

Whether a high-ranking Academy official, a smuggler with a network of contacts, or businessman in good standing with his guild, the character is more than capable of calling in favors when he needs them. He may spend a benny to automatically get a raise on Persuasion rolls with his Connections. He may spend multiple bennies on the Persuasion rolls. Each benny thus spent grants one raise or turns an initial failure into a success.

WEIRD EDGES

Elder Machine Relic

Requirements: Novice, Luck or Knowledge (Crystal Machines) d6+
The character has gained access to an elder machine relic, which grants one power. Using the power requires the Knowledge (Crystal Machines) skill to operate the relic effectively. The power may be of any Rank, but the character suffers a -1 penalty to his Knowledge (Crystal Machines) roll for each difference between his character Rank and that of the power. Should it be lost or stolen, the character gains a replacement relic at the start of an adventure, subject to his GM's approval. If a modified result of 1 or less is rolled on the Knowledge (Crystal Machines) skill die, the device won't function again for a d6 hours.

LEGENDARY EDGES

Awe-Inspiring Presence

Requirements: Wild Card, Legendary, Strong Willed
The character may double her normal command radius and make Tests of Will against groups of Extras as if they were a single entity (i.e., the group makes a group roll when opposing the character's attempt).

Bedrock

Requirements: Wild Card, Legendary, Spirit d10+, Vigor d10+
The character is physically tough and mentally resilient, and can only be taken out by a truly decisive blow. If he is ever Shaken, further Shaken results are ignored (i.e., they do not inflict wounds).

Famous Personage

Requirements: Legendary, Flash and Panache
The character is easily recognizable and gains an additional +2 Charisma bonus.

Inside Man

Requirements: Legendary
This character may spend a benny to have a contact inside one enemy location per adventure.

Last Man Standing

Requirements: Legendary, Grizzled

Through sheer determination, the character can push past the effects of shock and trauma. By spending a benny, he ignores the effects of wound penalties for the remainder of the scene.

Legendary Duelist

Requirements: Legendary, Master Duelist

A dominating duelist, this character gets a +4 to opposed Agility rolls when coming off Hold. This character is used to defending himself while waiting for the right time to strike, while on Hold, the first attack directed at the character has a -1 penalty. If the character has the Bring it on! Edge, this penalty applies to all incoming attacks while the character is on Hold.

Master of Disguise

Requirements: Legendary, Persuasion d8+

The character is able to easily throw together a disguise at a moment's notice and receives a +4 to Persuasion rolls to pass himself off as someone else.

Quick Strike

Requirements: Legendary, Agility d10+, Quick

The character has amazing reaction speed. Should he be dealt less than a 10 for initiative, his card is treated as a 10 of the same suit (ties are resolved via opposed Agility rolls).



ARMS AND EQUIPMENT

Karthadorian Money

Under the Myratan Empire, the Imperial coin, known as the crown, was the only currency allowed by law. Today, the crown is still the standard currency throughout Karthador, though the locals of each nation might prefer to barter or use local trinkets instead. In Ferazonn, for example, money means little to most natives, but they will gladly trade you some lizard hides for a music box from Myratas.

Karthadorian Technology

Aside from the use of force ray projectors, the technology level of Karthador is not that different from Earth, circa 1900. Oil is used for heat, light, and to fuel some industrial machines. Sewer systems and running water are common in the cities, though rarer in rural areas. Crystal power is less common than oil, but is also used for heat, light, and to power certain devices – though there is no central "power grid." Rather, each building has its own crystal power core, and the power is distributed via thick metal wires.

Karthador lacks any sort of communications technology. There is no radio or telegraph, much less telephone or television. Airships communicate with each other and air docks by way of coded messages sent via flashing lights. By extension, there are no devices for recording sounds, images, or other data. While some elder machines may appear to think, there are no "computers" to speak of.

Karthadorian Machines

There are three types of gear in Karthador: standard equipment, crystal machines, and elder machines.

Standard Equipment

Standard equipment is a broad category that includes everything that doesn't require energy crystals to operate. Swords, armor, carts, saddles, books — if it doesn't have a power source, it falls under "standard equipment" and can be used by anyone. The Repair skill is used to fix and put together standard equipment.

Crystal Machines

Crystal machines include any item that requires energy crystals to make it function. The most common examples of crystal machines are airships and blaster weapons. Anyone can use crystal machines once they know how ("Push that button to turn on the lights!"), but attempting to fix or modify it without the Crystal Machinist Edge inflicts a -4 penalty to the Repair or Knowledge (Crystal Machines) roll. Attempting to figure out an unfamiliar crystal machine, or using one for complicated tasks and/or specific settings ("Decrease the starboard projectors by 30 percent!") requires the Knowledge (Crystal Machines) skill.

Elder Machines

Elder machines are mysterious devices left behind by the Ancients. Few understand how they work, and those few are typically high-ranking members of the Machinist Order. Those without the Crystal Machinist Edge find these devices incomprehensible; they can't even try to repair or modify them, and can only attempt to use them through trial and error.

Elder machines use ancient technology so advanced it might as well be magic. These devices are allegedly able to read a person's mind, create matter, transform living creatures, and open portals to other planets. They're also nigh indestructible and are so incredibly complex that not even those who know how to use them truly understand their inner workings.

Force Ray Projectors

The most commonly used crystal machine is the force ray projector. The "force ray" is a beam of pure force used to turn cranks in engines, shoot projectiles, push flying ships into the air, and perform dozens of other tasks.

Depending on its housing and purpose, the ray can be broadened and narrowed, like water from a hose. While broad, it provides a softer, more cushioned "wall" of force. While narrow, it is a harder "beam" that can launch projectiles or punch through hard materials. Force ray projectors come in a variety of sizes and shapes, but the most common are a thin cylinder (commonly used in blasters) and large disc (used in airships).

Energy Crystals

Crystal machines (and most elder machines) are powered by energy crystals. Each machine has one or more "crystal tubes" into which the crystals are slotted. These tubes range in size from two inches to three feet long, and are connected to their respective machines by metal wires. Energy crystals must be cut to fit inside their tubes. As a general rule, the more crystal the machine needs (with larger or more numerous tubes), the more powerful it is.

Energy crystals are found in deposits across Karthador and mined with picks and shovels. In their natural state, they are roughly rectangular, and vary in shade from white to a pale, colorless, translucence. They are very durable; dropping one on the stone floor won't hurt it, though smashing it with a hammer will eventually crack it, rendering it useless. (See below for crystal Toughness.)

While in use, an energy crystal glows and heats up, such that touching it may burn flesh (see below for damage ratings.) Eventually, it burns out and turns black. Once a crystal burns out, there is no known way to recharge it.

Different types of crystal-powered weapons and devices require different types of energy crystals. General-purpose crystals are about six inches long and an inch wide, and used in most common devices. Weapon crystals are smaller (about two inches long) and thinner, and used in handheld weapons. Fuel crystals are the largest crystals, from 24 to 36 inches long, and are used to power vehicles and household generators. Larger energy crystals exist, but they are much rarer, and often special-ordered for specific devices.

Crystal Type	Toughness	Heat Damage
Weapon	8	1d4
General Purpose	10	1d6
Fuel	12	1d8

BUYING

Standard items (food, clothing, simple tools, etc.) can commonly be found in the public marketplace for the listed price. More uncommon items (weapons, armor, crystal gear, etc.) may, at the GM's discretion, require a Streetwise roll in order to locate the proper vendor. If an item has been imported (such as ironglass from Sparasool, or a bound tome from Tharran), its cost is multiplied by at least two; cost may be as much as four times the listed price if its source is far from the market, such as buying Arcona goods in Rathiveen.

If the character is buying in bulk, he may, at the GM's discretion, be given a discount of 5% for every 500 crowns' worth of merchandise he buys.

SELLING

Characters wishing to sell their goods in major urban areas must make a successful Streetwise roll to sell their goods for a quarter of its normal value, while a raise gives them half value. In smaller areas, such as villages or rural communities, the roll is made at a penalty of -2 or -4, respectively. In all cases, the Streetwise roll may be attempted once per week. At the GM's discretion, the characters may earn more money for goods coming from a distant part of Karthador relative to the point of sale.

HAGGLING

Once per transaction, a character may attempt to haggle with the vendor or customer to get a better price by making Persuasion roll. If buying, a successful Persuasion roll decreases the cost by 5%, or 10% with a raise. If selling, a successful Persuasion roll raises the price by 5%, or 10% with a raise. Note that the Merchant Edge provides a bonus to all these Persuasion rolls.

THE MARKETPLACE

Because of the airship trade routes, local merchants can provide items from all over Karthador, not just those produced nearby. Just because these things are available doesn't mean they're inexpensive, however. Transportation is costly, and the further an item's had to travel to market, the more costly it's likely to be.

THE BLACK MARKET

There are many kinds of contraband to bought and sold in Karthador. Kina is the most popular contraband item, since it's commonly available in some areas (Ferazonn) and highly illegal in others (Sparasool, Rathiveen).

But there are also stolen crystal machine prototypes, smuggled artifacts from Doongarda, stolen books from Tharran, small mutants kept as pets by decadent lords, and hundreds of other items that are equal parts danger and riches.

Finding the black market in a community requires a successful Streetwise roll at -2 in major urban centers and -4 in rural communities. This modifier may vary depending upon the specific location. Once located, the character has to make a Persuasion roll to gain access to the black market contacts. As it deals in some dangerous goods, the black market is rarely in the same place two nights in a row. Attempts to locate the black market may be made daily. Note that the Merchant Edge provides a bonus to the relevant Streetwise and Persuasion rolls.

EQUIPMENT NOTES

This section focuses on weapons, vehicles, and other specialized items, which may appear on an adventurer's shopping list. For mundane items, refer to the *Savage Worlds* core rules. If an item existed in the year 1900 A.D. on Earth and could theoretically be powered by an energy crystal, some version of it likely exists in Karthador.

FORCE RAY BLASTERS

The principle of the ray blaster is this: a force ray shoots out of the weapon in a concentrated beam, designed to punch holes through the enemy's physical defenses. While blasters have a number of "shots" listed, they don't have ammunition per se. Instead, they are limited by the power of their energy crystals. It takes a crystal to power a blaster, and no one knows exactly how much power remains in a given crystal. To reflect this, only expends a "shot" if the shooter gets at least one raise on a damage roll.

Flex Beamer: The flex beamer fires an adjustable-width force ray. The shooter can spend an action to adjust it to a narrow, medium, or wide beam. With a wider beam, the ray hits a larger area (possibly hitting multiple targets), but does less damage. The listed damage is for a medium-width beam. A narrow beam incurs a -2 penalty to hit, but does 3d6 damage. A wide beam gets a +2 to hit, but does 1d6 damage.

Force Ray Cannons: A vehicle-based ray weapon works according to the same principles of its hand-held counterpart. Unlike hand weapons, ray cannons don't have their own energy crystals but instead are powered by the vehicle's crystal power core. An engineer can adjust the amount of damage a ray cannon does by changing how much power it gets from the core.

Pocket Ray Blaster: This tiny pistol is good for only a single shot. Once fired, the weapon is useless until its crystal is replaced. Because of its size, it's very easy to conceal (-2 to Notice rolls to spot) and is often found on diplomats and merchants who want a little insurance against potential attackers.

Stunner: This short-ranged pistol projects a force ray that's calibrated to weaken and disorient the target rather than damage him outright. Each success and raise on its damage roll inflicts one Fatigue level on the target. A target Incapacitated this way can make a Vigor roll every 30 minutes to awaken and fully recover from any Fatigue effect.

PROJECTILE WEAPONS

Some force ray weapons are designed to hit the enemy not with a ray of force, but with a projectile. The projectile is commonly called a "slug," and the device that launches it is called a "slug chucker." The downside of such weapons is that they require both ammunition (which can run out) and extra energy from the crystals that power them (launching a projectile takes more force than firing the force itself). The upside is that projectiles have a longer Range since the beam doesn't have to reach the target, just the slug it launches does.

Slug-Sprayer: This weapon blasts a wide spray of metal projectiles. When firing it, use the Cone Template and make a single Shooting roll at +2 against all targets. Defenders who make a successful Agility roll are able to move out of the way and are unaffected. Those targets directly inside the Cone Template take 2d6 damage (or 3d6 if they are also within 3 inches of the shooter). Targets outside the Cone Template but within its arc and within 12 inches take 1d6 damage.

Chucker Cannon: Airships are often protected by shields, which are made from force rays calibrated to cancel out incoming beams. Unless reconfigured, they are useless against incoming projectiles. This is why some airships are armed with chucker cannons, which hurl shells at the enemy, even though those shells do less damage and have less Armor Penetration capability than ray cannons. When rolling damage with a chucker cannon, ignore any bonuses to Toughness from shields.

PROJECTILE WEAPONS

Airship Bombs

The early airships were designed as bombers. While such dedicated ships are rare today, most military vessels carry at least a few warheads just in case. These are generally explosive incendiary devices used to destroy buildings.

Blastwave Grenade

The standard blastwave grenade is a pocket-sized sphere. It's primed by rotating the two halves of the sphere until certain symbols align along its center line. When the grenade goes off, it projects a powerful force ray blast in a sphere around itself. There is no shrapnel or fiery explosion, but the blast hits everything within a Medium Burst Template.

Grappler

The grapppler isn't technically a weapon. It's a sharp talon-like claw attached to a cable and winch system designed to haul cargo up into an airship. Normally it allows the crew to take on supplies without landing. However, the claw can also be fired from a specialized ray projector in order to latch onto an enemy airship to secure it for boarding actions. (See "Boarding" for details.)

OTHER ADVENTURING GEAR

Clock

Every airship needs its own crystal-powered clock to stay on schedule. A clock can run for months on a single general-purpose crystal. Pocket-sized clocks exist, but cost ten times as much.

Cutting Torch

This is a hand-held, crystal-powered device, which uses extreme heat to cut through metal. On a successful Knowledge (Crystal Machines) or Repair roll, the user can make a six-inch cut through a metal sheet, or cut through a metal cable or chain. On a raise, the torch can cut 12 inches and uses up one of its five charges. In combat, the burning inflicts 3d6 damage and has a chance of setting the target on fire.

To cut a hole large enough for a person to get through (such as while boarding an airship), the user must accumulate a number of successes and raises equal to half the target's Toughness (including Armor).

Firestarter

This tiny cylinder creates a fingertip-sized tongue of flame at its tip. It burns oil and uses crystal energy to light its spark. If used as a constant torch, its oil is used up in ten minutes.

Kina

The price listed is the purchase price for a single dose of kina. Imbibing the drug (either by smoking it or drinking it in tea) gives the user a sense of euphoria for an hour. While under the influence, the user has a -1 penalty to all rolls, but ignores Fatigue. If used too often, kina can be addictive. The price of kina is double or even triple in places where it's illegal.

Light Globe

This lantern is powered by a general-purpose energy crystal. Its light can be adjusted from a narrow, fifty-foot beam to a diffuse orb of light ten feet in diameter. Its light lasts 1d6+2 hours before burning out its crystal.

Portable Force Field Projector

This large device projects a 10'x10' wall of force. This wall has a Toughness of 10 and will last for an hour on a single fuel crystal. The projector itself has a Toughness of 6. If damaged, the projector will stop working until someone resets it with a successful Repair roll. If the projector takes 10 damage or more on a single hit, it is destroyed.

Scanner

This handheld device lights up and makes noises when within range of another crystal-powered device. With a successful Knowledge (Crystal Machines) roll, the user can set the scanner's parameters to look for a specific type of energy (vehicle, weapon, power generator, etc.) within a range of between one to one hundred yards.

Melee Weapons

Type	Damage	Weight	Cost	Notes
Dagger	Str+d4	1	25	
Ironglass Sword	Str+d8	4	750	AP 2
Long Sword	Str+d8	8	300	
Rapier	Str+d4	3	150	Parry +1
Spear	Str+d6	5	100	Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands

Ranged Weapons

Type	Range	Damage	RoF	Cost	Weight	Shots	Notes
Airship Bomb	-	4d8+2	1	1000	200	see notes	AP 3, Heavy Weapon, LBT
Blastwave Grenade	5/10/20	3d6	-	500	1	1	MBT, See notes
Chucker Cannon	75/150/300	3d8	1	1000	200	1	Heavy Weapon, See notes
Chucker Pistol	12/24/48	2d6	1	200	5	10	
Chucker Rifle	24/48/96	2d8	1	300	10	15	
Double-shot Ray Pistol	8/16/32	2d8	2	500	4	5 (see notes)	AP 1
Flex Beamer	15/30/60	1-3d6	1	600	8	see notes	See notes

Type	Range	Damage	RoF	Cost	Weight	Shots	Notes
Grappler	30/60/120	2d8	1	1000	150	see notes	See notes
Heavy Ray Cannon	75/150/300	4d8	1	2000	150	see notes	AP 5, Heavy Weapon
Pocket Ray Blaster	4/8/16	2d8	1	300	2	1	AP 2, see notes
Ray Blaster Pistol	8/16/32	2d8	1	300	4	5 (see notes)	AP 1
Ray Blaster Rifle	16/32/64	2d10	1	750	8	5 (see notes)	AP 2
Ray Cannon	50/100/200	3d8	1	1000	100	see notes	AP 3, Heavy Weapon
Repeating Ray Rifle	16/32/64	2d10	3	1000	15	10 (see notes)	AP 2, Auto
Slug-Sprayer	15/30/60	1-3d6	1	150	10	1	Cone Template, see notes
Stunner	6/12/24	2d6 (see notes)	1	600	4	3	See notes

Armor

Type	Armor	Weight	Cost	Notes
Lizard Leathers	+1	15	50	Covers torso, arms, legs
Banded Leathers	+2	25	300	Covers torso, arms, legs
Metal Chestplate	+2	25	400	Covers torso
Metal Arms	+3	10	200	Covers arms



EQUIPMENT LISTING

Crystals and Ammunition

Type	Weight	Cost
General-purpose Crystal	1	10
Weapon Crystal	1/2	20
Fuel Crystal	5	100
Chucker Slugs	3/50	10/50

Other Adventuring Gear

Type	Weight	Cost	Notes
Climbing Boots	6	45	+2 to Climbing rolls, no rope
Clock	2	100	
Compass	1	100	Bonus to Survival rolls to find location
Cutting Torch	3	150	
Firestarter	1	50	
Kina	1	25	Illegal in some places
Light Globe	1	100	
Machete	2	100	Str+d6 damage
Mirror	0.5	50	Pocket/purse size
Portable Force Field Projector	20	500	Requires fuel crystals
Scanner	4	300	
Spy Glass	2	250	Doubles or more the Range seen clearly
Tent, 10 man	35	300	Protects 10 adults from weather
Water skin	1+ 1	10	Holds 2 qts. of water and weighs 5 lbs. full

Livestock**Type** **Cost**

Bounder Lizard	750
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Feeder Lizard	1000
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Skitter Lizard	250
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Tricorn	300
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Transportation Fare**Type** **Cost**

Airship Transport across city	25
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Airship Transport across nation	300
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Airship Transport across continent (per day)	350
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Ground transport across city	10
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Lodging**Type** **Cost**

Cottage	2000
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House	5000
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Mansion	15000
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Rent, Apartment	20 per day
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Inn	10 per day
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VEHICLES

Crystal vehicles are powered, at least in part by crystal machines. There are three broad types of crystal vehicles: crawlers, skimmers, and flyers.

Crawlers are ground vehicles that use their crystal engines to turn wheels or tracks in order to provide propulsion.

Skimmers float up to several feet above the ground, held aloft by force ray projectors. While many also use projectors for propulsion, a number are drawn by animals, which are considered more reliable over long distances.

Flyers soar through the skies on their force ray projectors. While airships are the flyers most commonly seen throughout Karthador, there are many smaller shuttle ships and single-passenger pods flitting around the major cities of Myratas and Porothon.

Vehicles in Karthador are described using the following game stats.

Acc/Top Speed: This represents the vehicle's Acceleration and Top Speed in inches per round, per the *Savage Worlds* core rules.

Climb: A flying vehicle's Climb value is a relative value of its ability to gain altitude. It's used in chases, and also as a modifier to any Piloting rolls to change altitude while in battle.

Toughness: The vehicle's ability to withstand damage. A vehicle's Armor is already figured into its Toughness (and listed in parentheses). Note that though many vehicles are listed as having Heavy Armor, it is not always to denote they are particularly well armored, but rather to reflect the inability of non-Heavy Weapons to damage them.

Crew: The number of crewmembers required to operate the vehicle at full capacity. A "+#" following it indicates the maximum number of passengers. The next number is the quantity of gunners ("G") needed to man the vehicle's armaments effectively.

Cost: The average price of the vehicle, in Imperial crowns. If the cost is "Military," the cost is beyond the means of most characters and is typically purchased only by state militaries.

Fuel Capacity / Duration: The first number indicates how many crystals the vehicle needs to function properly. The second number indicates how many days the vehicle can operate before its crystals start burning out.

Supplies: How many days' worth of food and water supplies the vehicle carries for its crew. By going to half-rations, the vehicle can keep going twice as many days before re-supplying.

Cruising Range: The average distance in miles the vehicle may travel per day under normal conditions.

Handling: Some vessels are more maneuverable because of their design, the power of the steering projectors, or the skill of those who built it. A ship's Handling adds directly to the pilot's Piloting rolls, and may be added to others' Boating rolls, if the circumstances merit it.

Cargo Space: This is the number of cargo spaces the ship has. Cargo is purchased by "spaces," and the exact dimensions of cargo spaces are deliberately vague to minimize bookkeeping.

Weapons: This is a listing of all the vehicle's weapons and their firing arcs. There are six firing arcs: "F" indicates the weapon can only fire toward the front arc (90°) of the vehicle. "A" indicates the weapon can only fire toward the aft arc (90°). "P" and "S" indicate the weapon fires toward the port (left) and starboard (right) side respectively. Combinations permit multi-directional firing; for example, "FSA" enables firing to the front, the starboard side and the aft of the vehicle, a full 270°. On airships, arcs are also be marked as Dorsal ("D") if they can fire above the vehicle, or Ventral ("V") if they can fire downwards, below the vehicle.

Type: This indicates whether the vehicle is a crawler, skimmer, or flyer, and its relative size. The size classification has no mechanical game effect, but is useful for reference. The type determines how high the vehicle can go. Crawlers are ground vehicles, skimmers can move only up a few feet (hover), while flyers can reach all altitudes.

Crystal Power: If the vehicle has an adjustable crystal power core, this value indicates how much power the engineer can allocate to the vehicle's various systems. In general, only airships have crystal power available.

Shields: This is how much damage the vehicle's shields can help absorb. In combat, the vehicle's Shields value may be added to its Toughness for a round (as detailed in the airship rules starting on page 100).

Following is a sampling of the crawlers, skimmers, and flyers most commonly found in Karthador. This is by no means an exhaustive list, and the GM is encouraged to create new vehicles as he sees fit.

Aeronavy Warship

While Myratas and Porothon are known for their aerial navies, most other nations have at least a few large airships patrolling the skies above their territories. These airships are larger, slower, and more heavily armed and armored than regular freighters.

Type: Large flyer

Acc/Top Speed: 5/50

Toughness: 20 (4)

Crew: 4 + 10 +4G

Handling: -2

Climb: -1

Fuel Capacity/Duration: 16/100 days

Supplies: 20

Cruising Range: 750

Cargo Space: 10

Crystal Power: 5

Shields: 4

Cost: Military

Weapons: Dorsal heavy ray cannon (Range: 75/150/300, Damage: 4d8, RoF: 1, Shots: see notes, AP 5, Heavy Weapon) (FPAS-D), Ventral heavy ray cannon (Range: 75/150/300, Damage: 4d8, RoF: 1, Shots: see notes, AP 5, Heavy Weapon) (FPAS-V), Starboard chucker cannon (Range: 75/150/300, Damage: 3d8, RoF: 1, Shots: see notes, AP 5, Heavy Weapon) (FSA), Port heavy ray cannon (Range: 75/150/300, Damage: 4d8, RoF: 1, Shots: 1, Heavy Weapon) (FPA), Ventral Grappler (V), Starboard Grappler (FSA)

Notes: Heavy Armor, Hover, may carry 1d6 bombs

Cargo Cruiser

The simplest cargo-hauling flyer, the cargo cruiser is little more than a cockpit and a large cargo hold. It's not meant for long-distance travel, but is typically used to move goods from one end of the city to the other. Still, it has a crystal power core and a shield generator in case the pilot runs into trouble.

Type: Medium flyer

Acc/Top Speed: 10/40

Toughness: 16 (3)

Crew: 1 + 4

Handling: -1

Climb: +0

Fuel Capacity/Duration: 4/30 days

Cruising Range: 550

Cargo Space: 5

Crystal Power: 3

Shields: 2

Cost: 40,000

Notes: Heavy Armor, Hover

Contract Freighter

This is the most common airship in Karthador, with dozens of models and hundreds of variations across the airways. When cargo or passengers need to be taken from one nation to another, they need a contract freighter. Some freighter crews are employed by shipping companies while others are strictly freelancers who are always looking for their next contract.

Type: Medium flyer

Acc/Top Speed: 10/40

Toughness: 16 (4)

Crew: 2 + 3 +2G

Handling: -1

Climb: +0

Fuel Capacity/Duration: 4/30 days

Supplies: 4

Cruising Range: 550

Cargo Space: 4

Crystal Power: 3

Shields: 2

Cost: 42,000

Weapons: Dorsal ray cannon turret (Range: 50/100/200, Damage: 3d8, RoF: 1, Shots: see notes, AP 3, Heavy Weapon) (FPAS-D), Ventral ray cannon turret (Range: 50/100/200, Damage: 3d8, RoF: 1, Shots: see notes, AP 3, Heavy Weapon) (FPAS-V)

Notes: Heavy Armor, Hover

Flight Pod

Amongst the wealthy technocrats of Myratas, having one's own flight pod is a mark of prestige. There are many different models of personal flying machine. The stats below are for a fast-flying civilian model.

Type: Small flyer

Acc/Top Speed: 20/40

Toughness: 10 (3)

Crew: 1 + 1

Handling: +1

Climb: +1

Fuel Capacity/Duration: 2/20 days

Cruising Range: 200

Cost: 30,000

Notes: Heavy Armor, Hover

Ice Crawler

Commonly found hauling cargo and passengers between the remnant city-states of Arcona, the ice crawler features an enclosed cabin and a crystal-powered heater. Crawler owners often customize these vehicles by adding seats for passengers, remove seats for extra cargo, add fuel storage, install ray blasters, or perform any number of other modifications. The stats here are for an armed version.

Type: Medium crawler

Acc/Top Speed: 10/20

Toughness: 10 (3)

Crew: 1 +2 +1G

Handling: +0

Fuel Capacity/Duration: 1/10 days

Supplies: 5

Cruising Range: 300

Cargo Space: 5

Cost: 20,000

Weapons: Ray Blaster Rifle (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d10, RoF: 1, Shots: 5, AP 2) mounted on the top.

Notes: Tracked, Enclosed cab with crystal-powered heater

Ranch Runner

This hard-working, wheeled utility vehicle is found throughout Karthador, but is commonly associated with the lizard ranches of Porothon and the plantations of Tharran. It's useful for hauling feed, getting workers to the fields, pulling stumps, and hundreds of other agrarian tasks. Ranch runners are generally unarmed, though criminals (and ranchers threatened by rustlers) have been known to mount blasters on them.

Type: Medium crawler

Acc/Top Speed: 20/40

Toughness: 14 (3)

Crew: 1 +4 +1G

Handling: +0

Fuel Capacity/Duration: 1/10 days

Cruising Range: 500

Cargo Space: 3

Cost: 20,000

Notes: 4WD

Scout Skimmer

This personal skimmer is commonly used by scouts and outriders for both military and commercial caravans. Its speed and maneuverability make it popular with raiders too, who often mount a front-facing blaster that can be fired by driver. (The stats below are for such an armed model.)

Type: Small skimmer

Acc/Top Speed: 20/36

Toughness: 8 (2)

Crew: 1 + 1

Handling: +2

Fuel Capacity/Duration: 1/10 days

Cruising Range: 550

Cost: 22,500

Weapons: Ray Cannon (Range: 50/100/200, Damage: 3d8, RoF: 1, Shots: see notes, AP 3, Heavy Weapon) (F)

Notes: Hover

Skim Chariot

This small cart has no locomotion of its own, but is pulled by an animal, usually a tricorn or some other megalizard. While it can't go any faster than the animal pulling it, it does provide the driver (and a passenger) a smoother ride and more storage space than simply riding the beast itself. It also provides a weapons firing platform for those willing to modify it. Although not a terribly practical vehicle, it's most commonly used for sport racing.

Type: Small skimmer

Acc/Top Speed: Half the animal's Pace / animal's Pace + running die

Toughness: 10 (2)

Crew: 1 + 1

Handling: +0

Fuel Capacity/Duration: 1/20 days

Cruising Range: 30

Cost: 20,000

Notes: Hover

Skim Sledge

The skim sledge resembles a large, flat barge, and is typically hauled by teams of two or four megalizards. It's commonly used to haul cargo long distances. The sledge isn't fast, but since the ray projectors absorb its weight, the animals can pull it all day without tiring.

Type: Medium skimmer

Acc/Top Speed: Half the animal's Pace / animal's Pace + running die

Toughness: 15 (3)

Crew: 2 + 10

Handling: +0

Fuel Capacity/Duration: 3/60 days

Cruising Range: 30

Cargo Space: 5

Cost: 30,000

Notes: Hover

Snow Runner

This personal snow-vehicle is commonly used by Arconan scouts and hunters. Its tracks power it across the snow and are wide enough to keep it from breaking through the drifts.

Type: Small crawler

Acc/Top Speed: 15/20

Toughness: 8 (2)

Crew: 1 +1

Handling: +1

Fuel Capacity/Duration: 1/10 days

Cruising Range: 300

Cost: 15,000

Notes: Tracked

Pirate Sloop

Pirate airships are generally faster, smaller, and more heavily armed than their victims. The stats below reflect a common example of such an airship.

Type: Medium flyer

Acc/Top Speed: 13/40

Toughness: 14 (4)

Crew: 2 + 3 +4G

Handling: +0

Climb: +0

Fuel Capacity/Duration: 4/30 days

Supplies: 3

Cruising Range: 550

Cargo Space: 3

Crystal Power: 3

Shields: 2

Cost: 45,000

Weapons: Dorsal ray cannon turret (Range: 50/100/200, Damage: 3d8, RoF: 1, Shots: see notes, AP 3, Heavy Weapon)(FPAS-D), Ventral ray cannon turret (Range: 50/100/200, Damage: 3d8, RoF: 1, Shots: see notes, AP 3, Heavy Weapon) (FPAS-V), Starboard heavy ray cannon (Range: 75/150/300, Damage: 4d8, RoF: 1, Shots: see notes, AP 5, Heavy Weapon) (FSA), Port Grappler (FPA)

Notes: Heavy Armor, Hover

SETTING RULES

In Karthador, some rules are slightly different from those found in the *Savage Worlds* core rules. These rules changes are listed below.

Modified Skills

Boating: Note that this skill is used for not only nautical vessels, but airships as well.

Driving: Note that this skill is used for handling carts, wagons, and other beast-drawn vehicles.

Disallowed Hindrances

Doubting Thomas: Since there are no truly supernatural elements in Karthador, this Hindrance is irrelevant.

Disallowed Edges

The following Edges from the *Savage Worlds* core book are not allowed.

Background Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Arcane Background (Miracles), and Arcane Background (Super Heroes)

Power Edges: Power Points, Rapid Recharge, Improved Rapid Recharge, Soul Drain

Professional Edges: Champion, Gadgeteer, Holy/Unholy Warrior, Mentalist (this is replaced by Power Mastery), Mr. Fixit (this is replaced by Crystal Machinist), Wizard

Weird Edges: Danger Sense, Liquid Courage

Wild Card Edges: Power Surge

Notables

Nearly all powers are allowed, although some are modified to work with this setting and the absence of Power Points. See the **Modified Powers** section (p. 92) for an explanation on how these are handled.

EXTENDED TRAIT CHECKS

Situations often arise when the GM wants a bit more structure on how to handle events taking place over a period of time. He may simply hand-wave the event or offer a flat modifier to the skill roll. This is acceptable and practical in most situations, some may feel more comfortable with mechanics to aid in the decision making process.

An Extended Trait Check (ETC) is comprised of three parts:

Difficulty: how hard is it to accomplish the task?

Depth: how many opportunities exist for failure?

Duration: how long does it take to complete each phase of the task?

Difficulty Modifier: How Hard is the Task?

These modifiers stack with any others the character may have (such as being unskilled, etcetera), but should be a composite of all other variables (environmental and so on). The table can be extended to even more extreme Difficulties as desired.

Difficulty	Modifier
Trivial	No roll
Simple	+2
Easy	+1
Basic	0
Tricky	-1
Hard	-2
Very Hard	-3

Depth: How Many Success are Needed?

Depth represents how many successes are needed to accomplish something. Obviously, if no roll is involved, this is irrelevant. By default, anything requiring a roll has a Depth of one.

Depth	Success
Basic	1
Intermediate	2
Advanced	3
Complex	4

Duration: How Long Does Each Trait Check Take?

Completing an ETC is done like any other trait check in *Savage Worlds* — the requisite attribute or skill die is rolled, and modifiers are factored into the equation. Each attempted roll denotes one unit of duration. More than one success can be earned by a single roll. A one on the skill die (regardless of Wild Die) indicates the loss of all accumulated successes. A critical failure indicates bad consequences (to be determined by the GM). A normal failure indicates the passing of one unit of time with no change in progress.

Unit of Duration

1 round
5 rounds
1 minute
5 minutes
1 hour
12 hours
1 day
1 week
1 month
6 months

Structure

The format for presenting Extended Trait Checks is as follows: Trait (Difficulty/Depth/Duration). This integrates into existing materials where a standard roll could be written out in long form as Trait (0/1/1 rd) — the action takes one round to attempt with no penalty. Something more complex might be written as Repair (–1/2/1 hour).

Consequences

The only time to use Extended Trait Checks is when time matters. Frequently, this is not the case, but in any situation where time is a factor, or consequences for failure exist along the way, ETCs increase the dramatic tension.

Accomplishing Something

Let's look at some practical examples of how this can be used in game:

Use Knowledge (Crystal Machines) (-2/3/5 rd) to disarm a malfunctioning elder machine set to overheat in 5 rounds. Here, the consequences are clear: if success is NOT achieved, a wave of flesh-melting radiation will wash over the entire village.

Chinzar Dak (Knowledge (Crystal Machines) d8) comes equipped to the scene. He is at -2 to his roll for the difficulty of the task—it's Hard. He needs to get three successes in five rounds, or he's done for. Round 1: He achieves one success. Round 2: No successes. Round 3: A one on the skill die—all accumulated successes are lost. Round 4: He gets two successes. Round 5: He achieves the final success and the elder machine powers down instead of exploding.

Let's examine how this plays out:

Round 1: The first wire is broken

Round 2: Chinzar Dak fumbles with the device, unable to make headway

Round 3: A wrong wire is cut, causing the elder machine to heat up internal elements even faster

Round 4: He manages to shut down the timer, but the machine is still active, and the heating element pulses as it cools down, but is it in time?

Round 5: Muttering a small prayer, he cuts one more wire, and the elder machine powers down.

Putting it All Together

These rules provide a clear-cut way for the GM to manage Extended Trait Checks. As the GM, simply ask yourself the three questions at the beginning of this section, and list each with a consequence at the end of the time frame. The GM should prepare ETCs ahead of time until familiar with the system, and then use them on the fly as circumstances dictate.

Let's examine one scenario through this lens:

Var Palashon is being chased through one of the paperwood forests of Porothon. She learns of a broken ranch runner (it will not start due to some mechanical damage) inside an old shack nearby. She needs to get in and get the ranch runner working again before the bounty hunters discover her. The GM decides the bounty hunters will find her in three hours, at which point combat will ensue.

The shack is in disrepair and no one has lived in it for a few years, but there are many old crystal vehicle parts out back, half-buried in a mound of weeds and rotten logs. Still, refitting them to this purpose could be easier, so the GM sets the difficulty to Tricky (−1). He decides it is an Intermediate task — digging out the replacement parts, and then completing the repairs is comprised of two discrete actions (2 successes needed). Finally, he sets the Duration at one hour. The roll is presented as (−1/2/1 hr). If all goes well, there should be no problems — she'll be long gone before her pursuers discover her.

Hour 1: One success. Some good parts are located, but they need to be cleaned up, as they are rusty.

Hour 2: Critical failure. The parts are far rustier than thought, and they break apart and go flying when the crystal vehicle is started. (Luckily no one is hurt.)

Hour 3: The bounty hunters and their golboks can be heard rustling around the forest nearby — they have detected a scent, but cannot locate it yet. A success and two raises are rolled. Var Palashon scrambles to discover some parts in the rusting shell of a half-buried old crystal vehicle and finds they are in surprisingly good condition. She hurriedly works to replace the parts in the broken ranch runner and manages to pull it off just in the nick of time. She hears the bounty hunters cursing and their golboks roaring as they just miss her. Var quickly makes her way on the ranch runner through the forest. Two successes were what she needed to make the roll. Had this roll been made initially, she would've been long gone (having discovered the parts and completed the repairs in her first effort).

Total time spent in the shack: 3 hours.

Remember: ETCs should serve as an adjunct to the existing system, not overpower it. (And NEVER tell the players how many successes are needed, just ask them if they want to keep going.)

Using Intimidation for Interrogation

Getting the answers you need out of those who don't want to give them is more of an art than a science. To do so, the player makes an opposed roll against his opponent's Spirit. Since he has to capture a target to even initiate an interrogation, he starts off with a situational modifier of +2 (with other adjustments as the GM sees fit). With a success, the character is able to obtain some minor piece of information; or maybe more if the opponent realizes the information could be gained from multiple sources, or if the subject is more afraid of the character than his own superiors. With a raise, the character is able to either obtain a major piece of information, if the person interrogated knows anything, or has a willingness to help—treat this effect as eliciting a Friendly result on the **Reaction Table** (see the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook). With two or more raises, the person interrogated spills everything he knows. An interrogation session cannot be attempted more than once per day on a given subject.

Using Persuasion for Disguise

Does the character want to disguise herself? That's an active use of the Persuasion skill. Taking on an anonymous role requires a basic success. To maintain cover as a specific individual requires a Persuasion roll versus the Notice roll of the person(s) actively engaged with. Even if successful in one scene, a new roll is required in subsequent encounters.

Disguise	Modifiers
Proper Disguise	+2
Specific Person	−2
Person Known to Target	−6

Example 1: *Var Palashon wants to pass herself off as a Porothonian diplomat to get into a high-class party. Dressed to kill, she approaches the door and is greeted by the guard. The guard has a Neutral reaction—he has to keep out the riff-raff. The guard doesn't know this diplomat and she has no invitation, so Var needs to shift his attitude to Friendly or better. She can make a Persuasion roll (with no modifiers—+2 Proper Disguise and −2 for Specific Person) and needs one success or more to get past him and inside the party.*

Example 2: *Once admitted to the party, Var Palashon encounters the host who has previously met “the diplomat”. Var must make an opposed Persuasion roll at -4 ($+2$ Proper Disguise -6 for Person Known to Target) versus her host’s Notice. Should she succeed the host treats her as he has on past occasions, divulging secrets of state he would NEVER share with a foreign spy.*

Using Persuasion as Seduction

Seduction is used to establish a close, romantic relationship with an NPC (usually of the opposite sex) with the intent of changing the NPC’s disposition towards the character. Seduction attempts are treated as Extended Trait Checks using the Persuasion skill. Each attempt at seduction has a Duration of 1 hour, and the Difficulty is set by the initial reaction of the target NPC as outlined below. Depth is set by the GM depending on the gullibility of the target (2 being average). If the seducer loses all accumulated successes due to rolling a 1 on the Persuasion skill die, further attempts at seducing the same target suffer a -2 penalty.

Example: *Var Palashon is attempting to seduce a minor diplomatic aide (initial reaction: Uncooperative) in order to get him to give her access to his superior’s office. The seduction Extended Trait Check is rated $-2/2/1$ hour. She must achieve two successes in order to have a successful Seduction. She achieves an 11 with her initial Persuasion roll, so it takes her only an hour to successfully seduce the aide (a success and a raise on the first Persuasion roll, for a total of 2 successes).*

NPC Initial Reaction	Modifier
Hostile	-4
Uncooperative	-2
Neutral	—
Friendly	$+2$
Helpful	$+4$

Using Stealth as Blending

Does the character wish to blend into a crowd so the guards pass him by? That's an excellent use of Stealth. This can certainly be modified by appearance (at the GM's discretion) and definitely by what the character is wearing. More memorable or distinctively dressed people have a harder time blending in.

Example: *Var Palashon has left the party, but one of the guests has begun pursuit. Var notices her tail as she reaches the market and attempts to lose herself in a group of shoppers wending their way home. Since she is attractive (-2 modifier) and nicely dressed (-1 modifier), the GM gives a -3 modifier to her Stealth roll. Had she at least a round's head start, she certainly could have muddled her appearance to help her blending efforts. As it is, her emerald green dress, exotic hairstyle, and perfect complexion give her away.*

The Downside of Standing Out

A character with any sort of Charisma modifier (positive or negative) uses the absolute value of his Charisma as a penalty when blending in.

Manhunt

To search the streets for clues in tracking down a target, use Streetwise versus Stealth (or optionally Streetwise). For a full widespread search an Extended Trait Check may be useful, with a Difficulty equal to the target's Rank (or d6-2 at the GM's discretion) and Depth equal to half the target's Stealth (or Streetwise) die type. Duration of a manhunt ETC is normally 1 hour but may well vary.

USING POWERS

Power Points

Powers do NOT require or use Power Points.

Psionics is the ability to focus and direct mental powers and Weird Science inventions utilize esoteric knowledge gleaned from the Ancients. When a power is activated, it may remain active until the character drops it, the conclusion of the scene, or until dispelled or disrupted. All powers which are not instantaneous require maintenance as soon as they are activated, making the activation of additional powers more difficult, but not impossible.

Because Power Points are not used, additional effects (or targets, or damage) fueled by Power Points can't be used.

Maintaining Powers

All powers with Duration greater than Instant may be maintained, but maintenance begins immediately. Normal Durations of powers listed in the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook (and other sources) are ignored. It's only important to know their Rank and whether they are instantaneous or not. Maintained powers inflict a -1 penalty to future Psionics or Weird Science rolls, but a character may drop any maintained power as a free action.

Example: *Ariel has deflection up on herself and her partner during an intense firefight. The last smuggler is attempting to get away. She can either cast her bolt I at -2 to the roll (for the two instances of sustained deflection) or cross her fingers, drop deflection on herself or her partner and be at -1, or drop both sustained powers and cast bolt I with no penalties whatsoever.*

A power cannot be maintained beyond the Duration of the current scene. At the GM's discretion, if a character overuses a power by activating, then maintaining it over the course of multiple scenes, the -1 penalty may begin to be applied to *all* his Trait rolls, not just to Psionics or Weird Science rolls. (The psionist begins to grow exhausted, or the crystal machine over-taxed, and it takes more concentration to keep the powers going.)

Disrupting Powers

Maintained powers may be disrupted if the character is damaged. He makes an opposed Psionics or Weird Science roll against the amount of damage taken, as per the *Savage Worlds* core rules. If he succeeds, all active powers are fine. Should he fail, his concentration is broken and all active powers fail immediately after the attack is resolved.

A character who is simply Shaken, on the other hand, must make a Smarts roll to maintain his powers.

BACKLASH

Brain Strain: Psionic powers can be both taxing and dangerous to use. A modified result of 1 or less on the Psionics die, regardless of Wild Die, causes the user to suffer a Fatigue level and become Shaken. A modified result of 1 or less on both dice, a critical failure, causes a wound instead.

Explosion: Tinkering with unstable technology can be dangerous. When using an invention's power, a modified result of 1 or less on the Weird Science die, regardless of Wild Die, causes the user to suffer 2d6 damage and the invention is rendered inoperable. Repairing the invention typically takes 1d3+1 hours, minus one hour for every success and raise on the Repair roll.

NEW AND MODIFIED POWERS

The following powers from the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook are modified, as listed below.

Beast friend, *entangle*, and *speak language* have all been modified to work with the absence of Power Points (see descriptions below).

Blast and *bolt* are no longer treated as single powers, but are instead broken down into discrete iterations, each with varying degrees of strength (see below). These powers must be purchased individually, hence a character knowing *blast II* cannot cast *blast I* unless he possesses it as well.

Boost/lower trait is split up as two discrete powers, one focused on affecting physical Traits (*boost/lower body*) and one focused on affecting mental Traits (*boost/lower mind*).

Detect arcana and *conceal arcana* are no longer treated as single powers, but are instead discrete powers.

Light and *obscure* are no longer treated as single powers, but are instead discrete powers.

Additionally, the power *drain power points* is not used in Karthador, since Power Points are not used in the setting.

Beast Friend

Rank: Novice

Range: Smarts x 100 yards

This power allows the user to speak with and guide the actions of nature's beasts. It works only on creatures with animal intelligence, not humanoids. It does not work on mutant or otherwise "unnatural" animals. The target must be within the user's range in order to be targeted.

A character may learn this power while of Novice Rank but cannot control the more powerful creatures until he attains the appropriate Rank, as indicated on the table below.

Rank	Maximum Creature Size
Novice	0
Seasoned	3
Veteran	6
Heroic	9
Legendary	10+

Swarms may also be controlled. Small swarms may be controlled at Novice Rank, Medium swarms at Seasoned, and Large swarms at Veteran.

Blast I

Rank: Seasoned

Effect: 2d6 Medium Burst Template

Blast II

Rank: Veteran

Effect: 2d6 Large Burst Template or 3d6 Medium Burst Template

Blast III

Rank: Heroic

Effect: 3d6 Large Burst Template

Bolt I**Rank:** Novice**Effect:** One 2d6 bolt**Bolt II****Rank:** Seasoned**Effect:** One 3d6 bolt or two 2d6 bolts**Bolt III****Rank:** Veteran**Effect:** One 3d6 bolt or three 2d6 bolts**Boost/Lower Body****Rank:** Novice**Range:** Smarts

This power allows a character to provide the target's muscles a telekinetic boost of strength and speed. It can increase the target's Agility, Strength, or Vigor Traits by one die type for a standard success, by two with a raise. The affected Trait can exceed d12. Each step over d12 adds +1 to his Trait total. For example, a raise on someone who already has a d12 in the affected Trait grants him d12+2 for the Duration of the power.

The power can also be used to lower an opponent's Agility, Strength, or Vigor. This is an opposed roll against the victim's Spirit. Success lowers the chosen Trait one step, a raise lowers it two steps. A Trait cannot be lowered below a d4. Multiple uses of this power stack, though the user must maintain each use as normal.

Boost/Lower Mind

Rank: Novice

Range: Smarts

This power allows a character to provide the target's mind a telepathic boost of speed, clarity and insight. It can increase the target's Smarts or Spirit Traits by one die type for a standard success, by two with a raise. The affected Trait can exceed d12. Each step over d12 adds +1 to his Trait total. For example, a raise on someone who already has a d12 in the affected Trait grants him d12+2 for the duration of the power.

The power can also be used to lower an opponent's Smarts or Spirit. This is an opposed roll against the victim's Spirit. Success lowers the chosen Trait one step, a raise lowers it two steps. A Trait cannot be lowered below a d4. Multiple uses of this power stack, though the user must maintain each use as normal.

Cloud Mind

Rank: Seasoned

Range: Smarts

The character telepathically clouds the minds of those around him, hiding himself from their senses. Clouding a target's mind is an opposed roll of the user's arcane skill versus the target's Spirit. On a success, the user (and any of his personal items) can't be seen or heard by the target. On a raise, the user may affect a number of targets up to half his Smarts.

If the user draws attention to himself (such as by making an attack or a loud noise), the target can try to detect him by making a Notice roll at -4. Once the character is detected, the target can attack at -4 as well.

Entangle

Rank: Novice

Range: Smarts

The arcane skill roll is opposed by the target's Agility.

Success indicates partial restraint so that the target suffers a -2 penalty to Pace and skills linked to Agility and Strength.

A raise restrains the target fully. He cannot move or use any skills linked to Agility or Strength.

If the power is not maintained, the target is freed at the start of the caster's next turn.

If the power is maintained, then each following round, an entangled target may make a Strength or Agility roll to break free. Other characters may also attempt to free the ensnared person by making a Strength roll at -2.

Mind Sense

Rank: Novice

Range: Smarts x 100 yards

With this power, the user can determine how many sentient beings are within her range and their general emotional states (asleep, afraid, alert, joyful, curious, etc.). On a raise, she can also determine their physical locations.

Speak Language

Rank: Novice

Range: Smarts

By psychically tapping into the knowledge of others, this power allows a character to speak, read, and write an unknown language. In order to do so, he must be within range of someone who can likewise speak, read, and write the language in question. (If the target is illiterate, then the user will be likewise unable to read or write the language.) The language must be of an advanced form — not animalistic. A raise on the arcane skill roll allows the user to project a particular dialect as well.

Telepathy

Rank: Novice

Range: Smarts x 100 yards

This power allows the user to telepathically communicate with a single designated target in Range. This communication is the same as if they were having a conversation, but takes place exclusively in their minds, and can include images as well as words.

On a raise, he can transmit a brief message to any and all targets inside his range. This transmission does not allow the targets to respond; it's a one-way broadcast.

If a target is unwilling to receive the user's message, initiating telepathic communication is an opposed roll against the target's Spirit.

POWERS BY ARCANE BACKGROUND

Power	P	W
Armor	Δ	Δ
Banish		Δ
Barrier	Δ	Δ
Beast Friend	Δ	Δ
Blast I	Δ	Δ
Blast II	Δ	Δ
Blast III	Δ	Δ
Blind	Δ	Δ
Bolt I	Δ	Δ
Bolt II	Δ	Δ
Bolt III	Δ	Δ
Boost/Lower Body	Δ	Δ
Boost/Lower Mind	Δ	Δ
Burrow		Δ
Burst	Δ	Δ
Cloud Mind	Δ	Δ
Conceal Arcana		Δ
Confusion	Δ	Δ
Damage Field	Δ	Δ
Darksight		Δ
Deflection	Δ	Δ
Detect Arcana		Δ
Disguise	Δ	Δ
Dispel	Δ	Δ
Divination		Δ
Elemental Manipulation		Δ
Entangle	Δ	Δ
Environmental Protection		Δ

Power	P	W
Farsight		Δ
Fear	Δ	Δ
Fly	Δ	Δ
Greater Healing		Δ
Growth/Shrink		Δ
Havoc		Δ
Healing		Δ
Intangibility		Δ
Invisibility		Δ
Light		Δ
Mind Reading	Δ	Δ
Mind Sense	Δ	Δ
Obscure		Δ
Pummel	Δ	Δ
Puppet	Δ	Δ
Quickness	Δ	Δ
Shape Change		Δ
Slow	Δ	Δ
Slumber	Δ	Δ
Smite		Δ
Speak Language	Δ	Δ
Speed	Δ	Δ
Stun	Δ	Δ
Succor	Δ	Δ
Summon Ally		Δ
Telekinesis	Δ	Δ
Telepathy	Δ	Δ
Teleport		Δ
Wall Walker		Δ
Warrior's Gift		Δ
Zombie		Δ

AIRSHIP RULES

One of the defining elements of the Karthador setting is the airship. These flying vessels are what allowed Myratas to conquer the continent centuries ago and today they maintain trade routes across thousands of miles.

Airships generally follow the rules for vehicles, chases, and combat, but have a few extra twists that make them unique.

CREW STATIONS

While in charge of an airship, each character may take control of a station. The basic positions are as follows.

Captain: It falls upon the captain's role to coordinate and command the rest of the crew. In battle, victory may depend on a strong captain who can make smart decisions in battle and communicate them effectively to his crew. On a small ship the captain is usually the pilot as well. During combat, if he's not piloting, the captain is barking orders and his main skill is Knowledge (Battle).

Pilot: The pilot is responsible for maneuvering the airship. Some very large airships also have a copilot position, so the pilot's duties can be split. The pilot's main skill is, of course, Piloting.

Engineer: The engineer manages the ship's crystal power core. She is responsible for allocating the core's power to the various systems. The engineer's main skill is Knowledge (Crystal Machines).

Gunners: Each shipboard weapon is assigned a gunner. A gunner's main skill is Shooting.

Shieldsman: Force ray projectors are used not only to keep the ship airborne, but also to create shields of force to protect the ship from attacks. It's the shieldsman's role to maneuver those shields where they'll do the most good. Only the largest airships have multiple shieldsmen.

Crewmember: When an enemy blast tears a hole through the hull, a lightning strike takes out the starboard force projector, or a fire breaks out on the bridge, it's up to the rank and file air sailors to make it right. These are the general purpose crewmembers essential to keeping the ship airborne. A crewmember's main skill is Repair.

AIRSHIP CHASES

On a clear day, crews of opposing airships can spot each other from many miles away. If one decides to give chase, it's resolved using the chase rules from the *Savage Worlds* core rules, with the modifications to chase cards detailed below.

The pilot rolls his Piloting skill. His Action Card represents how well he is "maneuvering" this round, determines if the airship has the "advantage," and establishes the initiative for everyone on the airship (everyone acts on his Action Card).

The co-pilot (if the airship has one) can make a cooperative Piloting roll to help the pilot's total.

The captain can make a cooperative Knowledge (Battle) roll (representing his leadership and knowledge of airship battle tactics) to help the pilot's total.

The engineer can make a cooperative Knowledge (Crystal Machines) roll to help the pilot's total. This represents the engineer's ability to allocate power where it's needed most.

AIRSHIP TABLETOP COMBAT

On the tabletop, battles between full-sized airships are fought according to the *Savage Worlds* rulebook, but with a few changes. The biggest change is in movement and the use of bonus tokens.

Movement

Airship movement works as detailed in the *Savage Worlds* core rules, with a few modifications.

Altitude

There are six altitude levels: Ground (landing and takeoff), Very Low, Low, Medium, High, and Very High. Changing levels requires a Piloting roll.

Handling

Airships have a Handling value, which represents how maneuverable the ship is. This value is added to any Piloting rolls the pilot makes.

Bonus Tokens

Bonus tokens represent extra resources the crew can use to help each other perform their tasks. These tokens are allocated by the engineer, captain, and shieldsman.

Power Tokens

The engineer gets a number of bonus "power" tokens equal to the ship's crystal power score. These tokens represent the ship's surplus power that's available to be allocated to its various systems. With a successful Allocate Power action (detailed below), the engineer can give these tokens to other members of the crew to aid them in their roles.

Command Tokens

If the ship's captain is not playing any other role (such as pilot or gunner), he can create and give out bonus "command" tokens with a successful Command action (detailed below). These tokens represent the captain's leadership and intimate knowledge of airship operation.

Shield Tokens

The shieldsman gets a number of bonus "shield" tokens equal to the ship's shields rating. These tokens represent where the shieldsman is focusing the ship's shields. With a successful Focus Shields action (detailed below), the shieldsman can allocate these tokens to the six sides of the airship in order to better defend it against attacks.

Using the Airship Control Sheet

While not strictly necessary, the players may find it easier to manage tabletop airship combat with the use of the airship control sheet. This sheet not only lists the ship's stats, altitude, and wounds, but also provides spaces for the shieldsman to place his shield tokens (for a quick visual reference of where the shields are focused) and slots for the ship's crew stations (so if players are using miniatures, they can place them in these slots to see which station each character controls).

NEW MANEUVERS

In addition to the maneuvers listed in the *Savage Worlds* core rules, the pilot may perform one of the maneuvers below.

Change Altitude (-0): Success on a Piloting roll enables a one-level altitude change; two levels of altitude may be changed on a raise. The airship's Climb value is added to the Piloting roll.

Evasive Maneuvers (-2): By swerving and weaving through the sky, the pilot makes the airship harder to hit. For each success and raise, all attackers get a -1 penalty to any attacks until the beginning of the pilot's next turn. If there is cover nearby (clouds, mountain peaks, tops of tall buildings), the pilot can try to use it, rather than the ship's movement, to avoid enemy fire. If using cover, the roll is made with a -1 penalty instead of -2.

Hold Steady (-0): The pilot holds the airship steady so the gunner can fire without the usual -2 penalty for firing from an unstable platform.

Parallel (-0): The pilot brings the airship into line with the enemy, setting it up for a boarding. The airship must be within 1" of the enemy in order to use this maneuver. (Note that even if the two ships are next to each other on the tabletop, this maneuver is still necessary before a boarding action can take place.) This is an opposed Piloting roll by both ship's pilots. The defending pilot gets a +1 on his Piloting roll for each difference in speed and altitude between the two airships.

On a success, the attacking airship matches the defender's speed and altitude, and is in position to begin boarding operations.

On a raise, the airships are close enough to allow crew to pass from one to the other. (See "Boarding" for details.)

Reverse Loop (-4): With is aerial equivalent of the Bootlegger Reverse, the pilot loops the ship around to face the opposite direction. The airship moves forward at half its current speed and then turns 180 degrees.

Strain the Rays (-2): By carefully adjusting the output on the ship's force ray projectors, the pilot can coax a little more speed out of the airship. The airship's current speed is increased by its Acceleration plus 1 for each success and raise she gets on a Piloting roll. This maneuver can take the ship above its Top Speed, but if it does, the ship's speed is reduced to its Top Speed at the beginning of the pilot's next turn.

CREW ACTIONS

The pilot is the only crewmember on board an airship that makes maneuver rolls, but every character in a crew position can make Trait rolls to help out in combat. These are crew actions. Which crew actions a character can perform is based on that character's station. Below are the most common crew actions, with any penalty to the Trait roll listed in parentheses.

Allocate Power (-0): A skilled engineer can redirect the ship's power to where it's needed most, whether that's to the ship's speed, its firepower, or shields.

At the start of his turn during airship combat, the engineer gets a number of bonus "power" tokens equal to the airship's crystal power score.

For each success and raise on a Knowledge (Crystal Machines) roll, the engineer can give one of his bonus "power" tokens to the pilot, a gunner, or a shieldsman. The maximum number of tokens he can allocate this way is equal to the airship's crystal power score (i.e, he can't give out more tokens than he has).

For the pilot, each power token is worth a +1 on a Piloting roll, and is discarded either when that roll is made or at the end of that player's turn.

For a gunner, each power token is worth a +1 on a Shooting, and is discarded either when that roll is made or at the end of that player's turn.

For a shieldsman, each power token is converted to a bonus "shield" token. (See the Focus Shields action for details on shield tokens.)

Change Stations (-0): Moving from one station to another (from a gunner to a shieldsman station, for example) doesn't require a roll, but does take up the player's full turn. If the player wants to change stations and then perform an action for that station on the same turn, he gets the standard multi-action penalty of -2 on that action's Trait roll.

Drop Bombs (+2 to -2): Hitting a ground target with a bomb requires a successful Piloting roll by any crewmember. This roll is modified by the airship's altitude as follows: Very Low: +2, Low: +1, Medium: -0, High: -1, Very High: -2.

Power Override (-2): On most smaller vehicles, the output of the crystal power core is fixed (i.e., there is no surplus crystal power to allocate to systems).. With a successful Knowledge (Crystal Machines) roll at -2, an expert engineer can override these settings and re-allocate the power amongst the systems. For each success and raise, the engineer can shift power from one system (Top Speed, Shields, Handling, or weapon damage (if it has force projector weapons)) and allot it to another at a ratio of 2:1. In other words, for each -2 he assigns to a system, he can give a +1 to another one of these systems. The override lasts one round, or 1d4+1 rounds on a raise.

Focus Shields (-0): Shield generators are specialized force ray projectors designed to dissipate and nullify ray attacks. A skilled shieldsman can maneuver the projectors to focus the shields where the attacks are the heaviest, thus increasing their efficiency.

At the start of his turn during airship combat, the shieldsman gets a number of "shield" tokens equal to the airship's shields score, plus a "bonus" token for each power allocated to shields by the engineer, as described under the Allocate Power action.

On a successful Knowledge (Crystal Machines) roll, the shieldsman may allocate one of his shield tokens as he wishes to any of the ship's six sides (front, back, left, right, dorsal, and ventral) for each success and raise he achieves.

Each "shield" token adds +1 Toughness to the ship's side to which it is designated.

At the beginning of the shieldsman's turn, all shield tokens are removed from where they were previously allocated and his pool of shield tokens resets to the ship's shields score, plus any power from the engineer.

Command (-0): For each success and raise he gets on a Knowledge (Battle) roll, the captain can create and give a bonus "command" token to any crewmember. Each command token is worth a +1 on a Trait or damage roll, and is discarded either when that roll is made or at the end of that crewmember's turn if unused.

Emergency Repairs (-2 to -4): When a ship's system is damaged by a critical hit, any character in a crewmember position can try to fix it with a Repair roll. The roll is at -2, unless that system has already been damaged and repaired, in which case it's -4. If a system receives a second critical hit before the first is repaired, the system requires more than emergency repairs and can't be fixed while the ship is still in the air. Emergency repairs do not remove wounds, but only remove the effects of the critical hits. Systems damaged by critical hits and fixed with emergency repairs may continue to sporadically suffer problems until the ship's wounds are repaired on land or in an air-dock (see **Repairs** on p. 111 for details).

Damage

When damage equals or exceeds an airship's Toughness (including Shields, if applicable), the pilot must make a Piloting roll or go Out of Control (roll on the **Airship Out of Control Table**).

Each raise on the damage roll also inflicts a "wound." Each wound caused to the vehicle inflicts a -1 penalty to all the pilot's Piloting rolls until that wound is repaired. The attacker also scores a critical hit for each wound inflicted; roll on the **Airship Critical Hit Table** to determine which system was affected.

When an airship receives its fourth wound, it is "crashing." The pilot can still try to land it (see **Crash Landing** on p. 111), but the ship is otherwise wrecked. It can't be steered or stay aloft, though its weapons and shields might still be operational.

AIRSHIP OUT OF CONTROL TABLE

2d6	Effect
2	Destabilized: The airship's ray projectors are out of balance. The pilot must make a Piloting roll (-4) or the airship immediately loses one level of altitude. If he fails, he must make another check each turn until he succeeds. For each check he fails, the ship drops one altitude level. If it reaches Ground level, it crashes (see Crash Landing on p. 110).
3-4	Turn: Move the ship 1d4" in the direction of the maneuver, or 1d4" away from a damaging hit. Roll a d12, read it like a clock facing, and point the ship in that direction.
5-9	Slip: Move the ship 1d4" left or right (in the direction of a failed maneuver, or away from a damaging attack).
10-11	Major Slip: Move the ship 1d6" left or right (in the direction of a failed maneuver, or away from a damaging attack).
12	Dip: The pilot must make a Piloting roll (-4) or the airship immediately loses one altitude level; all passengers who aren't strapped in must make Agility rolls to keep from taking 1d6 damage as they are thrown about.

AIRSHIP CRITICAL HIT TABLE

2d6 Effect

- 2 **Shield Projectors:** The shield-generating ray projectors have been hit! Until repaired, reduce the airship's Shields by 3.
- 3 **Propulsion Projectors:** The ray projectors responsible for propulsion have been damaged! Until repaired, reduce the airship's Acceleration by 1 and Top Speed by 2.
- 4 **Lift projectors:** The elevation controls are jammed! Until repaired, the airship cannot voluntarily change altitude, and all Piloting rolls have a -2 penalty.
- 5 **Controls:** The navigation controls are locked up! Until repaired, the airship can only perform turns to one side (1-3 left, 4-6 right), and all Piloting rolls have a -2 penalty.
- 6-8 **Hull:** The airship rocks and shudders, but suffers no special effects.
- 9 **Crew:** A random crewmember is hit! The damage from the attack is rerolled. If the crewmember is inside the vehicle, subtract the vehicle's Armor and Shields from the damage. Damage caused by an explosion affects all passengers in the location of the hit on the airship.
- 10 **Passengers or Cargo:** If the airship is carrying passengers, this is resolved as for Crew, but for passengers. If it's carrying cargo, a random piece of cargo is damaged or destroyed instead. If it's carrying both, roll to see where the attack lands (1-3 passenger compartment, 4-6 cargo hold). If the airship is carrying neither passengers nor cargo, resolve the hit as for Crew instead.
- 11 **Weapon:** A random weapon is knocked offline! Until repaired, the weapon can no longer fire. If there is no weapon, this is a Hull hit instead.
- 12 **Wrecked:** The blast penetrates to the engine core! The core is damaged beyond emergency repair, and the ship is losing power and crashing. The pilot must execute a crash landing (see **Crash Landing** next page) to minimize the damage and loss of life.

Crash Landing

When an airship crashes, those on board take 6d6 damage.

While an airship is crashing, the pilot can try to reduce this damage and bring the vehicle somewhat safely to the ground. To do so, the pilot makes a single Piloting roll (with all relevant modifiers). Other characters in a position to point out hazards or otherwise help out may spend bennies to help (as found with Common Bond). For each success and raise the pilot gets, the crash damage is reduced by 2d6.

Upon impact, first roll the modified crash damage against each Wild Card aboard, in turn. Then, roll the final crash damage once for all the Extras on board. Those who aren't killed outright must make a Vigor roll to determine his or her fate per the **Aftermath** section of **Healing** in the *Savage Worlds* core rules.

Unless it was sufficiently secured, any cargo on board is likely destroyed. Most equipment, aside from what the characters are carrying, is lost or ruined at the GM's discretion.

CRASH SITE

Exactly where an airship crashes can also affect how much damage its occupants take. Just before impact, the GM may either choose a terrain from the list below or roll 2d6 to determine where the ship hits the ground.

2d6	Terrain	Effect
2	Deep Water	-2d6 crash damage, airship starts sinking upon impact
3-4	Soft/Swampy Ground	-1d6 crash damage
5-9	Normal Ground	Normal damage
10	Rocky Ground	+1d6 crash damage
11	Jagged Rocks	+2d6 crash damage
12	Inhabited Area	+2d6 crash damage, collateral damage

Repairs

An airship's wounds can only be repaired while on the ground or at an air-dock. Air-docks are usually found in all major cities, though more uncommon in Ferazonn, Doongarda, and Rathiveen.

Until the airship's wounds are repaired, any systems that were damaged by critical hits and then fixed with emergency repairs are subject to occasional problems. At the GM's discretion, these systems may inflict a -2 penalty on anyone using them who draws a club for initiative, give off strange sounds and smells, or simply stop working at the most inconvenient times.

Airships are repaired as detailed under **Repairs** section of **Vehicles** in the *Savage Worlds* core rules.

Boarding

For the crew of one airship to board another, the pilot of the boarding ship must first make a successful Parallel maneuver roll to move his ship into position.

Once the two ships are parallel, the boarding gunners can fire the ship's grapples to connect their airship to its target with powerful cables. This is a Shooting roll with no modifiers; the ships are close enough that all but the unluckiest gunners can't help but hit the enemy. If the gunner scores at least a success, the grapple penetrates the target's outer armor and the two ships are tethered. A character can now use the grapple's winch to draw them close enough together to allow crew to pass from one to the other. This takes one round or happens immediately if the pilot succeeded with a raise on the Parallel maneuver roll.

Those aboard the boarded ship can try to sever the grapple's grip. This entails crewmembers outside the ship hacking at the cable (which has Toughness 10) or dislodging the grapple claw (which requires a raise on a Strength (-2) or Repair (-2) roll). Alternatively, the pilot can try to shake the grapple claw with a Piloting (-4) roll. If the defender successfully breaks free of his attackers, the pilot of the boarding ship must make another Parallel maneuver to start another boarding attempt.

Once a ship has been grappled, the boarders must gain access to the ship. Methods vary from one ship to another, ranging from climbing through an open portal to breaking down the door (Toughness 12), or cutting through the bulkhead with a cutting torch.

Running NPC Airships

The tabletop airship combat system is designed to allow all the characters—not just the pilot or gunner—to have an active role in aerial battles. However, when it comes to handling airships controlled by NPCs, Game Masters may wish to streamline the system. Especially when juggling multiple enemy ships, micro-managing each NPC crewmember is particularly impractical. Therefore, the Game Master may wish to use the following guidelines for NPC airships:

Crew Strength: Rather than have stats for each member of the crew, the Game Master may simply assign a single die to represent the crew's overall skill. A strength of d6 represents a competent crew, while a d8 suggests one that's more experienced, and a d10 or better speaks of a veteran, professional band of air-sailors. Whenever the airship needs a Piloting, Shooting, or other roll, use its crew strength die. (It's up to the Game Master whether or not the NPC rolls a Wild Die as well.)

Initiative: Each NPC airship gets one card for initiative.

Actions: When an airship's card comes up, it may perform the following actions in any order.

- Make a maneuver (which requires a Piloting check).
- Move (per its current speed and the core rules).
- Adjust its speed (per its Acceleration score and the core rules).
- Fire once with each weapon in range and firing arc (each attack requires a Shooting check).
- Adjust shields to put all its shield points on one side (where they remain until moved).

SCALING TABLETOP COMBAT

Since airships move at speeds of up to 50 inches per turn, running airship combat at the same scale as regular humans may require more table space than most players have available. Therefore, some Game Masters may wish to “scale down” combat using a smaller unit of measurement. For example, you may play with centimeters instead of inches, so that an airship with a top speed of 50 is actually moving 50 cm (about 19.5 inches) instead of 50 inches. If 50 cm is still eating up too much table space, you could try 50 picas, which equals just over 8 inches. Whether or not to scale movement and how to do so is up to the Game Master.

THE FREE NATIONS OF KARTHADOR

From the sweeping deserts of Sparasool to the gleaming towers of Myratas, from the lush jungles of Ferazonn to the devastated wastelands of Doongarda, Karthador is a land of beauty and danger. This land was once united beneath the terrible yoke of the Empire, but now the former Imperial provinces have established themselves as free nations, each with its own shared history, culture, and dreams of greatness.

The two most influential nations are Myratas and Porothon. They are economic rivals from opposite sides of the continent, competing for access to both raw materials and markets to sell their goods. The other nations use this conflict to their advantage, playing one side against the other in order to secure the best deals for themselves. This is a dangerous game, however, as they may find their territories used as battlefields in proxy wars between the two powers.

The continent of Karthador is vast, teeming with countless hidden valleys, forgotten forests, and shrouded mountain peaks. These borderlands are populated with isolated clans or minor kingdoms outside the authority of the Free Nations. Most keep to themselves, but some are a source of strife for the nations around them.



ARCONA

Overview

Arcona is frozen land of ice and snow. Hardy hunters, vicious raiders, and the remnants of what used to be an Imperial occupying force populate it. While the true natives live in traditional villages designed to survive what cold and blizzards may come, the former Imperial colonies make their homes in heated, domed city-states. Arconan raider tribes eschew both villages and domes, but make their nomadic way through the ice lands on the backs of beasts, sledges, and vehicles cobbled together from ancient Imperial machines and survive by preying on others.



Personality

Arconans are tough, practical people. The only thing they value more highly than physical endurance is loyalty to one's tribe. They are taciturn and cold to those they don't know well, but unswervingly loyal once they have warmed to someone.

Government

Arcona has no central government. A council of elders, who may in turn be led by a chief, rules each tribe. The city-states are ruled in the Myratan fashion, with a handful of wealthy families on top and the working masses below.

Economy

Arcona's primary export is yaran oil. The yaran is an enormous, four-legged "land whale" the Arconans have hunted for centuries. Its blubber is used to make oil for use in fuel and lubrication. Pursuit of this oil led the Empire to invade Arcona in the first place. In exchange for yaran oil, the Arconans import tons of energy crystals. They need the crystals to power their heater machines, which are more efficient than traditional heating fires.

Politics

Arcona is politically isolated and largely ignored by the other Free Nations. Ursicor is its main trading partner, and its ties are more commercial than diplomatic. Myratas has ties to some remnant city-states based on their common Imperial heritage. Beyond this, the people of Arcona are more concerned with surviving the next blizzard or raider attack than joining the other Free Nations in the dance of international politics.



DOONGARDA

Overview

Doongarda is a blasted wasteland covered in ruins, infested with monstrous mutants, and populated by scavengers and idealists.

It was once a peaceful land of farmers, miners, and fishermen. All that changed when the mysterious black ships arrived from across the sea. The ships disgorged invaders with weapons and technology the likes of which had never been seen before. Accompanied by their mutant war-beasts, the invaders devastated Doongarda. They marched on the rest of the continent, and would have conquered it had not the free nations banded together to drive them back across the sea.

The invaders are gone, but Doongarda has never recovered.

Weird artifacts and hungry mutants still remain from the invasion. Its cities are in ruins. Most of its people have fled, though some have come back to re-settle the land and claim what was once theirs. Others have returned not as settlers, but as grave robbers, looters, and thieves. Every day in Doongarda is a fight for survival, and every night is a mutant-filled adventure.



Personality

Most of those who once lived in the peaceful nation of Doongarda are dead or living in other nations. Those who now call it home are bold, stubborn people driven by their passion for either rebuilding, or scraping every bit of meat from the bones of this fallen giant.

Government

As a virtually uninhabited wasteland, Doongarda has no central government. Each settlement has its own laws and government, though they are usually simple and straightforward. The strongest become the leaders, and they make the laws.

Economy

The nation offers little in the way of exports, but money does flow in through scavengers, mutant hunters, scientists, and others who come to visit. Other nations also help finance new colonies in Doongarda, in hopes of profiting from the land's eventual return to productivity.

Politics

The people of Doongarda have a close connection to Rathiveen, which was founded by Doongardan expatriates. Porothon is the largest foreign investor, and has a vested interest in the nation's recovery. In the short term, Doongarda has little to offer a potential ally, and remains a minor pawn in the cold war between Myratas and Porothon.



FERAZONN

Overview

The nation of Ferazonn is covered in lush jungle whose danger is matched only by its beauty. Dinosaur-like “megalizards” stalk the land as both hunter and prey, and frog-men with ape-like intelligence lurk inside crumbling, waterlogged temples that promise ancient treasures to the bold.

Ferazonn has been largely ignored by the other free nations until recently, when energy crystal deposits were discovered here. Now there are foreign expeditions all over, buying up land, setting up mines, and fighting with both the natives and each other for another taste of crystal wealth.



Personality

Because the jungle has always provided everything they need, the people of Ferazonn have rarely fought wars over natural resources. They tend to take a philosophical, low-key attitude towards life, always looking at things in the long-term. When they do fight, it's to protect their tribes or to acquire something new and unique; the Ferazonni value the unique over the merely useful.

Government

The people of Ferazonn are divided into three major tribes and hundreds of smaller tribes. While they have no central government, the three major tribes have established a loose confederacy that negotiates with other nations on Ferazonn's behalf.

Economy

Ferazonn's biggest exports are its natural resources—especially energy crystals. While some of the wealth from the crystal mines ends up in tribal hands, most of it flows back to the foreign companies that established the mines in the first place. Some tribes see this as unfair. The majority take the long view, and don't care as long as their way of life isn't threatened and they can trade for imported manufactured consumer goods when they want to.

Politics

Ferazonn is technically a protectorate of its neighbor, Porothon. As such, Porothon officially maintains the right to approve any foreign investment in Ferazonn, as well as a claim to a cut of the profits. The other nations – especially Myratas – are not pleased with this arrangement, and are not above making “unofficial” arrangements to secure the resources they need without giving Porothon its due. Territorial disputes occasionally break out along the border between Ferazonn and Sparasool, as the desert people encroach on the jungle in search of farm land.



MYRATAS

Overview

Myratas is a land of gleaming towers, fabulous wealth, and scientific wonders.

In the previous age, Myratas ruled the whole continent, and what are now free nations were mere provinces of the glorious Myratan Empire. Today, Myratas is known as the technological center of the world, the source of the newest and most advanced crystal machines. It's a nation driven to succeed, no matter what the cost.



Personality

Myratans are proud, ambitious profiteers with a twisted sense of honor. While they think nothing of lying or cheating to get ahead, they have the highest respect for both their families and their workmanship. They respect wealth and education. Those who have accumulated both are counted as true Myratan nobility.

Government

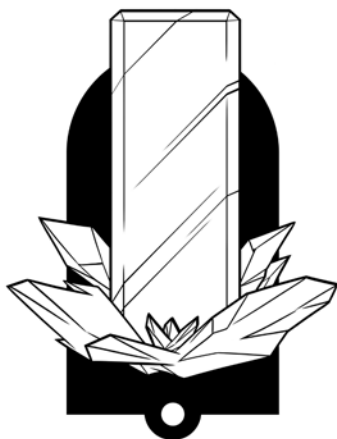
Myratas is ruled by a Great Council comprised of the nation's wealthiest citizens. Seats on the council are not truly hereditary, but since the seats are literally purchased each year, and wealth is hereditary, the seats might as well be too.

Economy

To fuel its insatiable technological output, Myratas imports vast amounts of energy crystals, wood, ironglass, and other raw materials from across Karthador. The factories then turn the materials into high-quality goods that are sold across the continent for great profit.

Politics

In its ambitions to establish a new, commercial Empire, Myratas finds itself opposed by Porothon. The two nations have sparred for decades. Sometimes it's with heated words in a boardroom; sometimes it's with proxy armies on the field of some third nation. This cold war between the two defines the politics of Karthador and often forces other regions to align with one nation or the other.

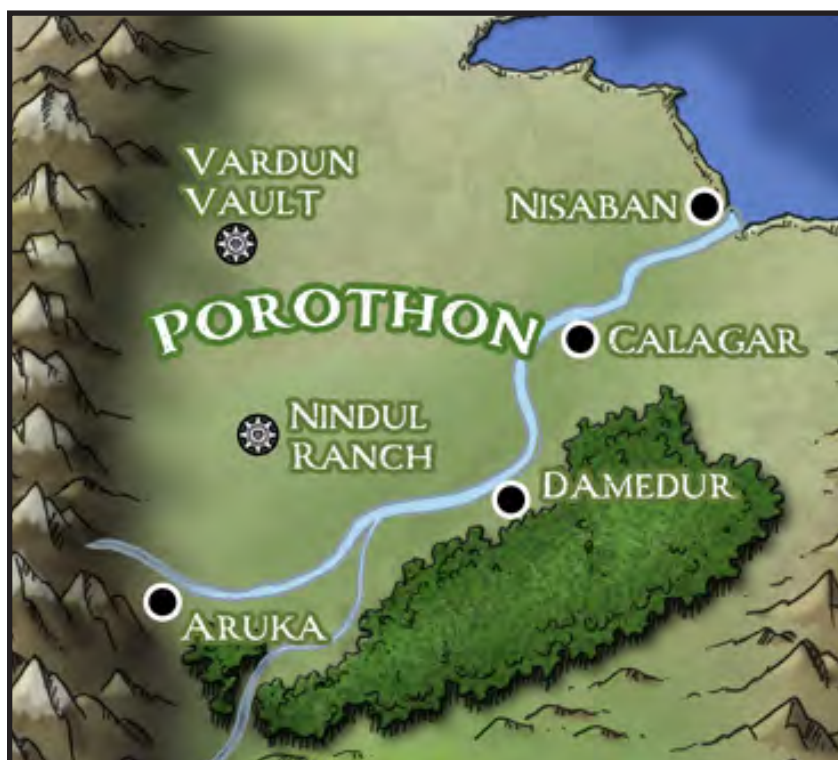


POROTHON

Overview

Porothon is a nation in transition. On the one hand, it's a feudal society, divided into landed nobles and working-class commoners. On the other, it's an increasingly industrialized land, filling the coffers of the merchant and manufacturing guilds with more money and power each year. It's a nation where anyone, with enough hard work and ambition, can become great—but you can still be born to greatness as well.

Porothon is a manufacturing center. While it lacks the technological wizardry of its rival Myratas, it can produce goods quickly and efficiently, and those goods are sold all across Karthador. It's also known for its megalizard ranches, Machinist chapterhouses, and industrial spies.



Personality

Porothonians value ingenuity, practicality, and ambition. They are endlessly adaptable, always looking for how to turn a setback into an opportunity. Even the nobles of Porothon embrace practicality. They have been known to reject the empty traditions of the upper classes in order to better capitalize on the opportunities of the growing middle class.

Government

A king rules Porothon. But he is old, and his son handles most of the day-to-day business. Outside the capitol, local lords and ladies rule their fiefdoms as they see fit, so long as they remain loyal to the king.

Economy

Porothon is the center of mass production in Karthador. Its assembly lines are always working, manufacturing whatever the rest of the world is demanding this season. Its airships cross the skyways, delivering manufactured goods and picking up more raw materials. As for crystal machines, the guilds prefer merchandise that can be reproduced efficiently in mass quantities, so while the quality of Porothonian goods might not be as good as their counterparts from Myratas, more people can afford to buy them.

Politics

While Porothonians vehemently deny any dreams of conquest, they are always looking for new markets in which to sell their products and from which to buy raw materials. Once they've found such a market, it makes sense to defend it—with soldiers, if necessary, but hopefully just with judiciously-placed bribes, threats, and promises.

This policy has brought Porothon into conflict with Myratas, which is likewise trying to establish a new mercantile presence across the continent.



RATHIVEEN

Overview

Once a colony of the now-devastated nation of Doongarda, Rathiveen is a relatively new country, only truly settled since the Empire fell. Its founders were religious dissidents who felt that the Doongarda was too sinful a place to live and needed a land of their own.

Rathiveen is a theocracy, ruled by the priests of Onu, who frown on the use of crystal machines and encourage their followers to be strong and self-reliant.



Personality

Rathiveenni are as generous as they are stubborn, for it is Onu's law that those who have been blessed with much must share with those who have little. This philosophy, along with the resource-poor land and constant threat of mutants from Doongarda, has led to the people of Rathiveen being very close-knit and loyal to one another.

Government

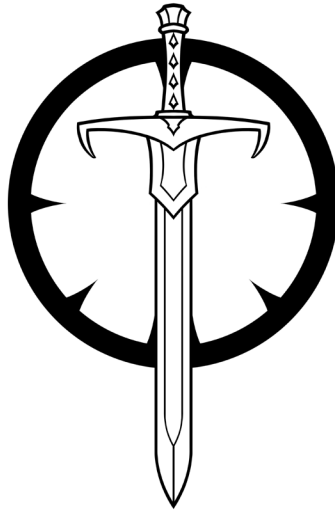
The rulers of the theocracy are priests, called Mornu. The High Mornu rules over all the land, speaking for Onu and ensuring peace and piety amongst the people.

Economy

In according with its philosophy of self-reliance, Rathiveen imports very little from outside nations. Its people make do with what farming, fishing, and iron-making the land will support. They do export, however, and their iron goods are found throughout Karthador.

Politics

Rathiveen is a strong supporter of Doongarda, and dedicated to seeing that blasted land restored to its former glory. Porothon is courting Rathiveen as an ally, but the theocracy is suspicious of that nation's morality, and leery of allying with ambitious heathens. Rathiveen has little to do with the other nations, and that's how they like it.



SPARASOOL

Overview

Sparasool is a desert. Its people are largely nomads who support themselves by raising livestock, raiding trade caravans, and producing Sparasool's signature export: the transparent, sturdy substance known as ironglass.

In this land of danger and opportunity, outsiders have a low life-expectancy, but those who survive may find themselves wealthier than they ever imagined.

Personality

The people of Sparasool suffered mightily under the Myratan Empire and are still rebuilding their culture. While some want to return to their past as fearsome raiders and warlords, others seek a new destiny as international traders dealing in ironglass, ivory, and stone-silk. The Sool value courage, honor, and above all, independence.

Government

The Sool are divided into independent tribes, each with its own rulers. An inter-tribal council of elders is the closest thing the nation has to a true central government, and the head of the council is the closest it has to a king.

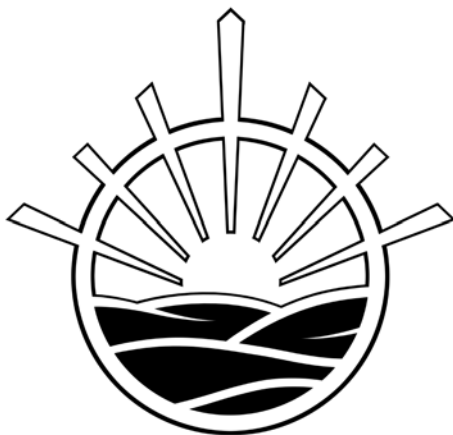
Economy

Ironglass, ivory, and stone-silk are the nation's top exports. In return, the trade caravans bring back wood, paper, and fruit.



Politics

Sparasool remains staunchly neutral in its dealings with Porothon and Myratas. Its leaders see the trouble brewing between the two nations, and want nothing to do with it—though they will gladly do business with both sides. There is always conflict – often with bloodshed – between Sparasool and Ferazonn as they squabble over the fertile river valley that separates them.



THARRAN

Overview

An isolated land cut off from the rest of Karthador by water, tundra, and xenophobia, Tharran has become an inbred land of fishermen, farmers, poets, and mystics

Before the rise of the Myratan Empire, Tharran was known for its universities and tradition of rich literature. The best novels, plays, and poems came from Tharran, and were translated into multiple languages across Karthador. When the Empire nearly destroyed Tharran with mass aerial bombings, the nation closed its borders, isolating itself even further from the rest of the world.

Tharran is just now beginning to break through that isolation, unsure of its place in post-Imperial Karthador. Its novelists and reporters are going out into the world, looking for new stories to write. Its universities are opening their doors once more to the nobles of other nations. This is a time of awakening of Tharran.



Personality

The people of Tharran are fantastically literate; most have volumes of poetry and fiction memorized. Family and family honor are exceptionally important to them, and they will fight to defend either. They respect those of intelligence, education, and civility. The uncouth and illiterate are shunned.

Government

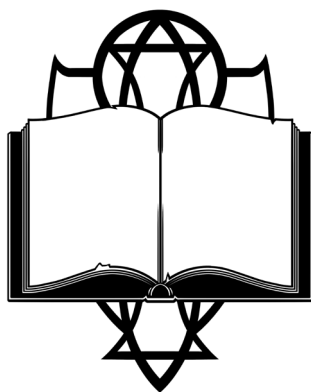
Tharran is ruled by a Senate composed of representatives of all the nation's leading families. The Senate is notoriously conservative and slow to change.

Economy

Tharran supports itself through plantation farming and sea fishing. Its most famous exports are books, plays, and other publications.

Politics

On the international scene, Tharran is as isolated as it was under the Empire. While some families are cautiously exploring the idea of long-term trade arrangements with Porothon, the Senate refuses to officially ally with or against any other nation.



URSICOR

Overview

Ursicor is home to universities and forests, and is equally defined by both. It's a land known for its scholars, philosophers, and artists – as well as its violent revolutionaries.

The nation balances on the brink of civil war. The queens who have ruled it for centuries are losing control, and the revolutionary rhetoric of their enemies is starting to take root in the hearts of the common people. Even with the support of their close ally, Myratas, the queens may not be able to hold back the tide of anarchy to come.



Personality

Ursicorans value intellectual and artistic pursuits, embracing those ideals that feed both the mind and the soul. They are a passionate people. Once they attach themselves to a person or idea, they remain firmly committed to it, no matter the price they must pay.

Government

Ursicor is a feudal, matriarchal society ruled by six queens. The most powerful of these is High Queen Shura, who has no mercy or patience when it comes to those who defy her rule. She is dedicated to seeing the rebellion destroyed.

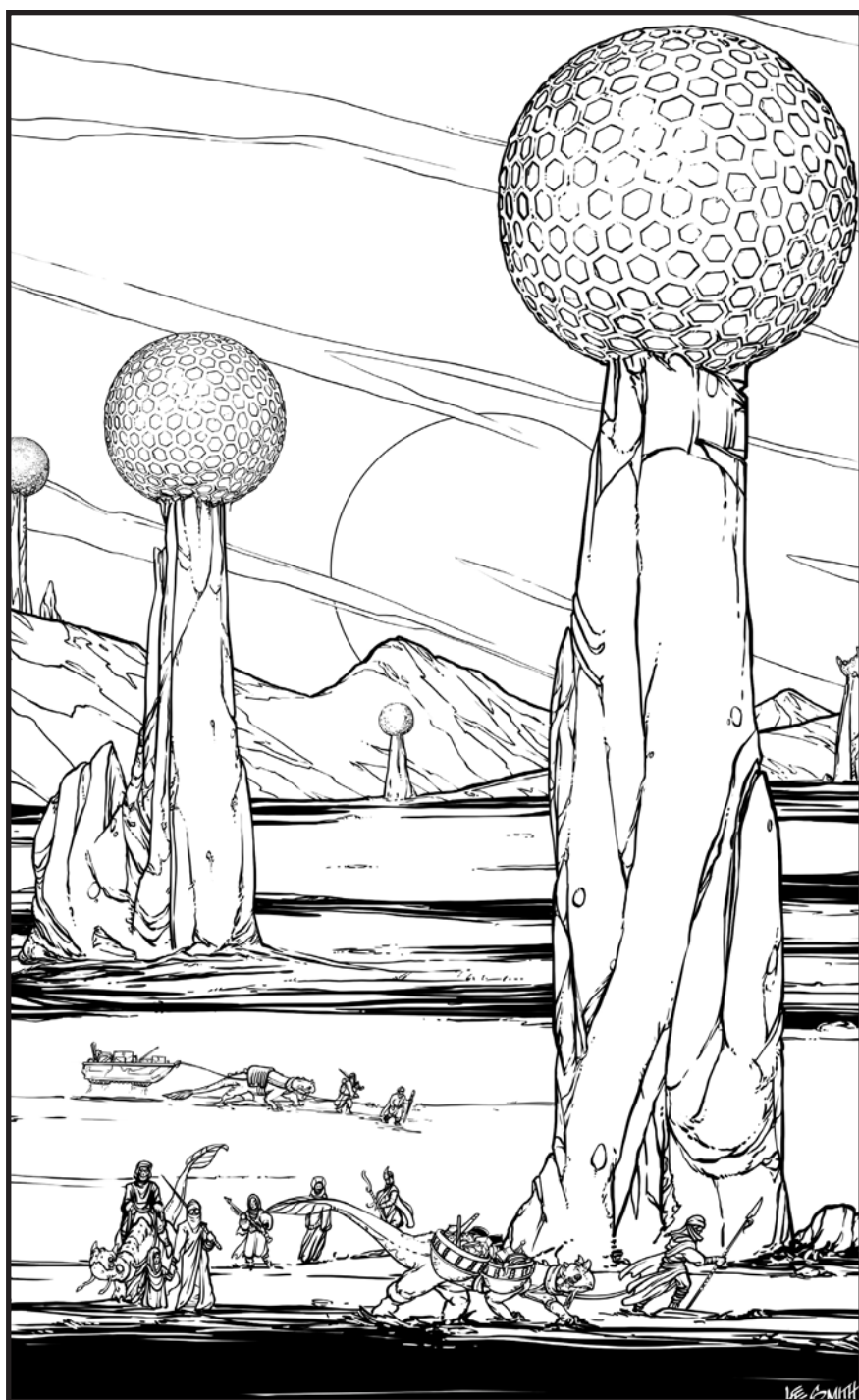
Economy

Rich in lumber, iron, and energy crystals, Ursicor is a major supplier of raw materials to the rest of the world—though mostly to Myratas. Its other major industry is education. Ursicor's universities attract the best, brightest, and richest students from across Karthador. Tharran's growing interaction with other nations may threaten this in a few decades, but for now Ursicor remains a center of higher education.

Politics

Ursicor has been an ally of Myratas since before the Empire was founded. It was the first nation to join the Empire—by choice; it was never conquered—and the last to accept its independence when the Empire collapsed. Theirs is a symbiotic relationship. Myratas provides the technology to keep the nobility of Ursicor in power, and Ursicor provides the raw materials to keep the technology flowing.





MYSTERIES OF KARTHADOR

The following section is for the Game Master only. It provides a veritable treasure-trove of information on the world of Karthador, and its environs, as well as certain secrets with which to delight and entertain players for countless hours.

GAZETTEER OF THE FREE NATIONS

The continent of Karthador is divided into nine Free Nations, each with its own culture, geography, and political struggles. Each nation is described in detail below.

ARCONA

Overview

Arcona is an arctic land of danger and hardship. Considered a frozen wasteland suitable for habitation only by savages, it's largely overlooked by the rest of Karthador. It would be completely ignored, except for two things: Arcona is the best source of yaran oil, a key ingredient in the land's industrial revolution, and the savages' occasional raids on the more civilized lands of the south.

Brief History

Before the rise of the Empire, the people of Arcona were simple folk who scraped out a living in the land of ice and snow through hunting, gathering, and trading with their neighbors to the south. In the early days of the Empire, scientists discovered that the blubber of the yaran (a massive, four-legged, shaggy "land-whale" hunted by the Arconan tribesmen) could be refined into oils for use as fuel and lubrication. It was this discovery that led the Empire to invade.

Under the Empire, the snow tribes became more civilized. They acquired heaters powered by energy crystals, vehicles to get around faster, and permanent buildings made of imported stone, glass, and metal. In return, they provided the Empire all the yaran oil it needed to maintain its hold on the continent.

The Arconans didn't rebel against the Empire. Instead, the Empire slipped out of Arcona bit by bit, as its resources were required elsewhere to defend its holdings. Eventually, the garrisons were emptied, the oil processors shut down, and the Arconans were abandoned. Without fresh supplies of energy crystals, the heaters and vehicles became useless. Crystals were hoarded, and those who had them grew both powerful and hated. The new civilization broke down and the Arconans returned to their savage ways.

Today, the snow tribes of Arcona carry on much as they did a thousand years ago. Some survive by trading yaran blubber for energy crystals. Others hunt or herd, while many tribes, having known the luxury of life under the Empire, have taken to raiding others rather than eke out such meager, cold lives for themselves.

The People

Arconans are a hardy people of necessity and have no patience for weakness of any kind. They're not mindless savages, however, and value wit and intellect – so long as it's supported by enough physical brawn to pull its own weight. The only thing they value more highly than physical endurance is loyalty to one's tribe.

Most Arconans live in small tribes that support themselves through hunting and gathering. Natives typically have pale skin and light hair, with blue or brown eyes. Before the Empire, they wore leather and furs, but took to wearing cloth as a sign of prestige while under the Empire. Today, their clothing is a mix of traditional and Imperial styles, with armor made from scraps of Imperial metals.

Arconan adventurers may be warriors looking to test themselves, merchants looking for items to trade, or raiders looking for soft southern prey. Some go south searching for crystal machines and other devices to help protect their tribes from the cold and raiders. And some simply leave, saying, "It's just too cold back there!"

Factions

Arcona has no central government. Each tribe is ruled by its own council of elders, who may in turn be led by a chief. Arconan city-states are former Myratan colonies and ruled in the Myratan fashion, with a handful of wealthy families on top and the working masses below.

Traders

The trading tribes of the south serve as middle men between the yaran hunters of the north and the rest of Karthador. Many of them specialize in energy crystals, metal goods, crystal machines, or other goods otherwise unavailable to the snow tribes of Arcona. While some have permanent settlements near the Ursicor border, most are nomadic and follow trade routes with their caravans. Traders are typically very wealthy, and their caravans are defended well enough that raiders think twice about attacking them. The real danger comes from other traders. Competition for the best routes is fierce and has been known to turn to bloodshed.

Raiders

Under the Empire, the raiding tribes of Arcona were all but wiped out in a series of Imperial "pacification" campaigns. Today, while the old abandoned Imperial fortresses still dot the northern plains, the raiders are back with a vengeance. The old raiding tribes had a sense of cruel honor that bound them together, but the current raiders are bands of savages that will turn on each other at the least provocation. The most dangerous ones, such as the Ice Daggers and the Blood Winds, are armed with salvaged machines from the Imperial days such as snow vehicles, armor, and blasters. Of course, maintaining these machines requires more energy crystals, which means more raiding, so they find themselves locked into a vicious cycle.

Remnants

Arcona didn't completely collapse into savagery when the Empire withdrew. There are still pockets of what the Myratans would consider "civilization," mostly existing as independent city-states across the realm. Some cities are built underground to avoid the worst of the climate. Others are protected by domes of ironglass. One city boasts a force field dome powered by hundreds of energy crystals. The inhabitants of these city-states see themselves as remnants of what was Arcona's highest point and prefer to focus on education and industry rather than simple hunting and trading. Of course, to maintain these high-brow concepts, they need to maintain their supplies of oil and energy crystals, so they have become major trade hubs, exchanging their vat-grown food, old Imperial goods, and access to their crystal machines for yaran oil and fresh energy crystals. Most of these "remnants" trace their lineage back to Myratas or Ursicor. While they consider themselves native Arconans, many other Arconans do not. The remnants are proud of their "civilized" heritage and each city-state considers itself the "true heir" of Arcona's Imperial legacy. This pride—and competition over outside resources—often leads the city-states to make war against each other.

Religion

Arconans have no temples, ceremonies, clergy or other religious trappings. What they have is a traditional belief that mankind was created as a pet or toy for the Supreme Being and then abandoned. They occasionally pray to this distant and uncaring god, but generally assume their prayers will go unanswered.

There are exceptions. Some of the remnants, which still have the cultures of Myratas and Ursicor in their blood, worship their ancestors as the Myratans do. Some far northern tribes have given themselves over to primal superstition and hear the howling wind as the voice of spirits. A few have gone even further, selecting shamans to interpret these voices and give direction to their tribes.

People of Note

Artan Mang

No one elected Artan the mayor of Tebtengri. He just cajoled, bribed, and blackmailed his way into a position of leadership some decades ago, and no one's had the power to remove him since. Artan is the public face of Tebtengri: gracious and generous to visitors with valuables to trade; cold and devious towards those who've worn out their usefulness. While he is rich in material goods, he maintains a very modest home. His true wealth, he says, is in information: wealth he's willing to share, if the price is right.

Magai Dosh

Rumor has it that Magai used to be one of the remnant—the pampered "princess" of a domed, heated city-state. Something happened (the rumors conflict on this point) and now she's the leader of the Ice Daggers raider tribe. Under her leadership, the Ice Daggers have grown from a squabbling mob of barbarians into an organized raiding machine. The tribe is ruthlessly efficient, taking what it needs from its victims, but leaving enough for those villages and traders to grow fat again. Magai is always at the front of these raids, demonstrating the cruel discipline she uses to keep the tribe in line by killing any who oppose her.

Kuzhuk Bor

Arconans traditionally live or die by their hunting prowess. Good hunters are respected. Great hunters are revered. Master hunters become legends. Kuzhuk Bor is a legend.

There are dozens of stories about Kuzhuk Bor: how he saved his tribe from starving by bringing in a yaran with his bare hands; how he tracked a snow tunneler for ten days without sleep; or how he took down two ice bears with a single spear-thrust. Not all these stories are true, but many of them are.

Kuzhuk Bor is an old hermit now. He lives by himself in the far north and takes on one apprentice each year. His methods are grueling but effective. Those who have studied with the master are the best hunters their tribes have ever seen.

Economy

Arcona isn't a wealthy nation. While some get rich trading yaran oil for energy crystals, many live from one season to the next by hunting, gathering, and occasionally trading with the neighboring tribes.

The nation's most important export is yaran oil. The second most important export is furs, which are used in manufacturing goods both practical (warm blankets and clothing) and fashionable (fur hats are all the rage in Myratan high society).

Arcona imports energy crystals to keep its machines (especially the heaters) running. It also imports most of its metals and other raw materials.

The city-states grow crops inside their heated domes, and use them to trade with other tribes, but never enough to trade to other nations.

Technology

Arcona is not a manufacturing nation. While a few city-states have very limited facilities for making crystal-powered goods, most technology in Arcona is either imported or left over from the Imperial occupation. Crystal machines are most commonly found in the city-states, though the raiders often use salvaged gear to jury-rig their snow-crawlers and other vehicles. Airships are uncommon in Arcona, as the high winds—especially in the far north—make air travel difficult and dangerous.

Military

While its people are well-armed, Arcona is full of hunters, not soldiers. Arconans are too busy trying to survive to form any sort of unified standing army.

The remnant city-states do have their own small armed forces to protect their borders and keep the peace inside their heated walls. When they declare war on each other, they usually supplement their armies with as many mercenary soldiers as they can afford.

The Land

South of Arcona lie the forests of Ursicor, which form a natural boundary between the two countries. To the west lies the western ocean. To the northeast lies nothing but madness. "The White" some call it, or "the Frozen Nothing." Most who venture too far in that direction never return. Those that do are changed, and madness forever lurks behind their eyes.

Settlements

Chagirce, the Fallen Remnant

Chagirce is what most Arconans think of when the remnant cities are mentioned. The sprawling ironglass dome of Chagirce houses what was once a great city, fallen into disrepair in the wake of the Imperial withdrawal. The remnant rulers live in fabulous towers equipped with elder machines imported from Myratas and protected by armed security forces. Others are allowed to live beneath the dome—there's plenty of room—but must work for the privilege. Here, they are allowed to work as servants for the rulers or virtual slaves in the factories. If they complain of the hardship, they are welcome to leave. Some do leave, but many have lived in the city-state for generations and lack either the experience or the courage to try and make lives for themselves outside the dome.

Perusan, the Last Stronghold

Perusan is the most northern of all the remnant city-states. It has very little trader traffic and few yaran in the area. But what it does have makes up for all it lacks: its very own energy crystal mines.

The citizens of Perusan mine the crystals that are used to heat the city-state. The city's ironglass dome is too small to support all the miners necessary to keep the crystals flowing, so the miners live in small villages outside the dome. These villages stay warm through the use of "heat receivers" – machines that allow the dome to "beam" energy to the villages. In this way, the crystals from the mines can heat both the people of the dome and the people of the villages. This method also allows the dome-dwellers to keep the workers in line. If the miners start to rebel, the government can cut off their heat supplies until they fall back into line. And if that isn't enough, the "domers" think nothing of sending squads of peacekeepers to beat, arrest, or kill troublemakers.

It has been this way since the Imperial days. In fact, those ruling with an iron hand are descendants of the original Imperial occupiers.

Tebtengri, the Trade Town

Just north of the Ursicor forests is Tebtengri, which serves as a gateway between the two nations. Brave (or foolish) merchants come here from all over Karthador to trade energy crystals, metals, weapons, and tools for Arconan furs and oils. Those who are smart and tough enough to make it here can return home with a fortune in northern goods. Those who aren't find themselves broke and abandoned – and count themselves lucky to survive with their skins intact. Tebtengri is a lawless place where right and wrong are determined by the fastest blade or blaster. While Artan Mang calls himself "mayor" of Tebtengri, his first priority is ensuring that business stays brisk, not that justice is upheld.

Flora and Fauna

Blood Moss

This red lichen is commonly found dotting the jagged rocks and hillsides not covered with snow. While not really suitable for human consumption, it is the mainstay of many Arconan animals. Blood moss is especially thick around natural hot springs. Here, it carpets the ground and powders the bushes and stunted trees that live in the thin soil.

Delger

A smaller, domesticated version of the ice bear, the delger is the size of a man, with a keen nose and strong muscles. Domesticated delgers pull Arcoan sledges, serve as mounts, provide milk for the young, and provide meat in times of hardship.

Ice Bear

Man's main competitor for the yaran is the ice bear, a white-furred predator commonly found on the snowy plains. It hunts and then rests, burrowing into the snow until hunger stirs it again. Once it gets the scent of prey, it won't stop coming. Woe to the village in its path.

The Snowblind

These madmen were human once. They might still be, but their minds are completely gone. These are those who have gone into the Frozen Nothing and were unlucky enough to survive. Their eyes are glazed over and they no longer seem to feel cold, though it still affects them. If they speak at all, it comes out as wordless gibbering. They attack any living thing they see, clawing at with their hands and teeth if they don't have weapons. According to tradition, they have been "too long in the storm" and it is considered a mercy to kill them if you see them.

Snow Tunneler

This giant creature never leaves the lands of permanent ice and snow. Its long, sinewy body slithers through the snow, its myriad limbs digging new tunnels as it goes. It springs out of the snow to attack its prey, usually yaran, humans, or other large creatures. Its mouth is large enough to swallow a man whole. Those hunting the beast know how to see its signs in the snow and can predict where it will appear, but attacking one – even if you can find it – is very dangerous. Killing one is the mark of a master hunter; its carcass can provide meat for a tribe until spring and claws that can be sold to the traders for a fortune in energy crystals.

Yaran

The mighty yaran stands twice as tall as a man, is covered in shaggy white fur, and shambles across the snowy plains on four massive tree-trunk legs. Herds of these beasts roam the northlands, migrating from one hot springs watering hole to another, licking up tons of blood moss as they travel. The creature is hunted for its meat, thick fur, thicker hide, and even thicker layer of blubber beneath the skin. This blubber is rendered into an oil that's used across Karthador as lamp oil, lubricant, and an ingredient in hundreds of other concoctions. The creatures are herbivores but surprisingly quick when agitated; they have killed many would-be hunters.

Places of Interest

Daraxes Ruins

No one knows what doom came to Daraxes. Sometime before the Empire retreated, the city's ironglass dome collapsed and most of its inhabitants were killed. Today, snow covers the grand avenues, and icy winds howl through the corpses of buildings. While the ruins have been plundered hundreds of times, each new season brings new rumors of hidden treasures there yet to be discovered.

Ghost Town

Somewhere on the northeastern plains is a village that's been frozen solid, or so the rumors say. It's been perfectly preserved, but there's no sign of the people. Where did they go? Why did they leave? There have been many theories, but the village is hard to find and those who are looking for it tend not to find it.

Imperial Outposts

When the Empire pulled out of Arcona, it left dozens of abandoned garrisons. Many of these stone and ironglass structures have stood the test of time, and some are even inhabited by local tribes. Some are said to be haunted and others are rumored to have old Imperial machines hidden inside them. One story has it that one of the fallen garrisons has an energy dome generator somewhere inside it. The person who finds it would be able to make his own domed fortress to keep out the cold and snow, even without Imperial ironglass.

Ship Down

According to the traders' tales, in the eastern mountains are the ruins of a vast airship. The description makes it sound like no airship that anyone knows. Perhaps it was left over from the Ancients? Or was it sent from the people over the sea as a precursor to another black ship invasion? In any case, it's no surprise the ship crashed; the icy winds make it nearly impossible to keep an airship aloft in Arcona.

Warrens

Arcona is dotted with underground caverns used by the natives to escape the snow and wind. Most are too small to support whole tribes, but hunting parties, raiders, smugglers, and predators like to use them to lie low while a storm passes overhead. Old Imperial maps show where many of these caverns are located, but not all. No one knows them all – except maybe Kuzhuk Bor.

Whispers and Rumors

Crystal Chaos

A visiting scholar from Myratas has discovered a new lode of energy crystals in the no-man's land between two remnant city-states. Clearly, both cities will want to claim the site, but the tribes who currently hunt that land have ideas of their own. At the moment, only a handful of people know the location of the lode; what will they do with that information, and what happens when it goes public?

Flawed

The last few batches of energy crystals delivered to the hunters' village have been quick to burn out, leaving the hunters in the cold and dark between shipments. They realize the crystals had been used before they got them and that they'd been sold faulty merchandise! The tribe has called for the death of the crystal trader, but he swears the crystals were good. Someone has to figure out what's going on before the hunters and the trader come to blows.

Medicine Run

A terrible blizzard has swept across the region, snowing in entire villages. This is a normal part of living in Arcona, but the people in one of the villages are infected with a terrible, fast-spreading fever. Someone needs to brave the blizzard to get them the medicine they need to survive.

Rise of the Raiders

A new raider tribe is gaining power in the north. It's working its way slowly southward, absorbing other raider tribes on the way and leaving nothing but corpses and ruins in its wake. Those who are in its path have called out for help. Who will protect them? And where did this vicious new tribe of raiders come from?

Tunneler Trouble

A colossal snow snake has been reported on the coast lands, devouring whole villages. A reward has been offered for whoever takes the beast down. Hunters have come from across Arcona, but some of them might be hunting the competition before going after the big game.

Trade War

The hostilities between two rival trading tribes have reached the boiling point. They're now attacking each other's caravans, stealing each other's merchandise, and sabotaging each other's supply lines. That would be bad enough, but the hunting tribes who depend on the traders for precious fuel and supplies are running out of heat, time, and patience.

DOONGARDA

Overview

Before and during the Myratan Empire, Doongarda was a thriving nation of fishermen, farmers, iron miners and blacksmiths. But when the black ships arrived from the east, everything changed. The invaders swarmed across the nation, scattering its inhabitants and destroying everything in their path. By the time the armies of Karthador united to drive out the newcomers, it was too late to save Doongarda. The nation was destroyed.

Today, Doongarda is a blasted wasteland covered in ruins and infested with monstrous mutants and opportunistic scavengers. Its few permanent inhabitants are brave, hardy souls dedicated to resettling this one-bountiful land. Aside from these colonists and a handful of other explorers and monster-hunters, the realm has been abandoned by the rest of Karthador.

Brief History

Before the Myratan Empire invaded, Doongarda wasn't so much a proper nation as it was a collection of tribal towns and city-states. The Doongardian tribes supported themselves through fishing, farming, and iron working. With plenty of natural resources to go around, they were at peace with each other and their neighbors.

Doongarda suffered under Imperial rule. Where the tribes had once harvested and mined only what they needed for themselves and their trading partners, the Empire now imposed quotas. Long shifts of terrible labor became the norm as the peaceful people of Doongarda were forced to feed the Empire's endless appetites while they themselves went without.

In this time of hardship, the traditional Doongardian religion experienced a revival. Their god, Onu, stood for independence and strength. According to his scriptures, it was a shameful sin to ask help of others. That the Empire not only asked, but demanded such help—under penalty of law and punishment—was an affront the devout Doongardians could not withstand. Though they were historically not fighters, these religious devout took up arms against their oppressors and became the backbone of the Doongardian resistance movement.

When the Empire fell, the revivalists surveyed Doongarda and found it wanting. What had once been a nation of proud, self-sufficient tribes was now corrupted into an imitation of Myratas: the weak begged protection of the strong, and the strong demanded tribute of the weak.

The revivalists gathered all their like-minded fellows in the northern part of the country, which they annexed and established as their own new, separate nation: Rathiveen.

When the black ships invaded Doongarda, the attack was so sudden that the nation was partially occupied before its people knew what was happening. Those who survived the initial assault fled to Rathiveen, Porothon, and Ferazonn. A few tried to stay and fight, but their warrior tradition began and ended with the militant zealots of Rathiveen and they were quickly overwhelmed.

By the time the invaders were driven back into the sea, the land was devastated. The buildings were in ruins. Strange pollutants had killed much of the soil and fish. And to top it off, the invaders had left hordes of misbegotten war-mutants in their wake, which now prowled the land in search of prey.

The People

Physically, Doongardans are a mix of Ferrazonni and Porothonians, with dark skin and blue or green eyes. They traditionally dressed in bright, solid colors in layers (such as a vest on top of a jacket on top of a shirt). The colors and their sequence indicated what tribe their wearer was from.

The few who call Doongarda their home today are either descendants of the original Doongardans who survived the invasion, or new settlers from other nations. To live in Doongarda is to choose a life of hardship and danger, and it's a mark of pride for those who do.

Expatriate Doongardans have set up their own communities in Porothon, Ferazonn, and Sparasool, usually inside larger, native communities. They try to maintain their old culture, but are more integrated with each passing generation. Many descendants of refugees live in Rathiveen, where the culture is largely the same as old Doongarda, even with its emphasis on Onu-worship.

Factions

Doongarda is virtually uninhabited. The idea of any sort of functional, central government is a dream so remote no one speaks of it. Each settlement has its own laws and government, though they are usually simple. Generally, the strongest become the leaders and they make the laws. While those who currently live here are united in their common struggle for survival, they compete as much as they cooperate with each other, and trust is hard to find. These people can be roughly divided into a four broad categories.

Hunters

War-mutants, left behind by the invaders, stalk Doongarda in numerous shapes and sizes, all of which are dangerous to anyone who would live here. Hunters, in turn, come from all over Karthador to track and kill the mutants.

Some do it for love of Doongarda, and see themselves as patriotic or even holy guardians, protecting the land and its people from lingering invaders. Others are strictly mercenary, selling their skills to rebuilders and adventurous nobles from other countries. Still others hunt for trophies, proving their skill to themselves and others.

Hunting lodges are scattered throughout Doongarda. They are often abandoned for months at a time, but equipped with enough basic supplies to help preserve the life of the next hunter who comes through.

Rebuilders

It's been decades since the invasion, say the rebuilders, and the time has come reclaim the land.

That's easier said than done, of course. Most of the reclamation efforts are centered in the northern parts of the country, where the settlers are trying to recapture the farmland that was lost. Rebuilders typically live in armed colonies with defensive walls to protect against mutants and raiders. These colonies are populated not only by native Doongardans, but adventurers from other nations as well. Most have strong ties to Rathiveen, but some are sponsored by Porothonian guilds.

In the short term, the rebuilders want to be self-sufficient. Some colonies have already achieved this dream. After that, they want to start exporting food and iron back to their sponsors—though some feel they should invest it in themselves and new additional colonies instead.

Scavengers

Before the invasion, Doongarda was a wealthy nation. Its people used the old Imperial supply routes to export almost as much food and iron as they did under the Myratans, but were able to profit from what they shipped.

Much of that old wealth still lies hidden in the ruins of Doongarda. The invasion happened so quickly the people had no choice but leave whole cities' worth of artworks, iron goods, and even cash.

Officially, Rathiveen holds the reclamation rights for all Doongarda, making any unauthorized scavenging illegal. Scavengers are outlaws, attacked on sight. Nevertheless, scavenging is a lucrative profession in the wastelands. Rathiveen soldiers only patrol the borders (if that) and experienced scavengers know how to get in and out with their goods while avoiding them altogether. Scavengers are generally armed and dangerous. They assume that anyone else they see is either going to try to make them stop or take over the dig themselves.

Scholars

The invaders left more than mutants and destruction behind. Their machines are unlike those found in other places in Karthador, and scholars come from all over to study them. Most of these scholars come from the Machinist Order, but some are just curious scientists. Their studies focus on the constructs the invaders made, but new caches of elder machines sometimes turn up, providing additional insights into the invaders' technology. These valuable new technologies are usually found in the harshest territories, so the scholars must always be on the lookout for mutants, raiders, or even unscrupulous explorers who are willing to kill to protect their discoveries.

Religion

According to the zealots of Onu, the black ship invasion was a divine judgment against Doongarda. If its people had been more devout, Onu would have strengthened their sword arms, fueled their resolve, and brought them victory against the invaders.

While not everyone believes this, it's become something of a tradition in Doongarda. Most who live here at least pay lip service to Onu, and there is no shortage of Onu zealots. Even those who have no use for Onu find it easiest to just keep silent on the topic of religion.

People of Note

Alster Dodd

The leader of Coormag, the oldest resettled community in Doongarda, Alster Dodd is an expert on the rebuilding process. Other leaders often seek him out for his experience. He is a hard man with strict rules and brutal punishments for those who break them, but none can argue with his success. What started as a walled village, Coormag has expanded into a small city that not only sustains itself, but exports food to Rathiveen. Alster Dodd is a devout Onu zealot and runs his colony as a theocracy. This rubs some of its inhabitants the wrong way, but they can't deny that his methods work.

Elseth Mair

Elseth Mair and her family used to live in the forests of the southwestern mountains. It was a small, poor community, but deep enough in the mountains to be safe from the ravages of the war-mutants below—or so they thought. While Elseth was out hunting for food, a pack of mutants discovered the village. By the time she returned, the whole settlement had been wiped out. Elseth returned to the forest, this time hunting the mutants who had massacred her family. She found them, killed them, and hasn't stopped killing mutants ever since.

Most people say Elseth Mair is crazy. She might be. But she's also a phenomenally skilled hunter who knows the forests and mountains of southern Doongarda better than anyone else. She appears from time to time in various settlements, selling trophies or meat, or defending those settlements against mutant attacks.

“King” Rendar

Most scavengers scurry into the wastelands of Doongarda by way of the mountain passes, get what they can, and scurry back out. But not Rendar, the so-called “scavenger king.” He has established a permanent home in the ruins of a Doongardan noble's manor house, where he lives in as much decadence and splendor as he can. He has a gang of followers that he sends out scavenging for him. They also raid other scavengers, scholars, and even colonists who look like they might have something worth taking.

Rathiveen officials are aware of Rendar and the threat his personal “kingdom” poses not just to their salvage rights, but to the whole rebuilding effort. Removing this threat will be difficult however. Not only is Rendar's “palace” well-defended, but the whole region is crawling with war-mutants.

Economy

As a ruined wasteland, Doongarda doesn't offer much in the way of economic opportunities. Most people in the country are visitors on expeditions centered on hunting, scavenging, or studying the artifacts left behind. Those who do live there are too concerned with daily survival to give much thought to getting ahead.

The exception to this is the handful of northern reclamation colonies strong enough to export food across the border to Rathiveen. Foreign investors have seen these successes and some are sponsoring their own reclamation colonies. The guilds of Porothon are especially interested in reclaiming the iron mines of the northern hills.

The guilds have also taken an interest in the southern coast of Doongarda, which is said to be swarming with fish once more. It's also said to be swarming with aquatic mutants, but reports are sketchy and unreliable. If anyone were to reclaim the sea for fishing, it could help bring Doongarda back into the fishing industry.

Technology

Doongarda's manufacturing days are long past. In the days before the invasion it boasted the most advanced Machinist Order chapterhouse on the coast, and scavengers can still find crystal gear in its the ruins.

Military

Doongarda has no military. Even before the invasion, it had no fighting force beyond each tribe's own hunters and guards. Now, there aren't enough people to count it as populated, but the people who are there are all armed with blades, bows, and blasters. Those who are in Doongarda to fight wear metal armor, while those who are scavenging or studying wear lighter lizard-hide armor.

The Land

Doongarda is bordered by the ocean on the south and east, and by the Blackwall Mountains on the west. The land is warm and forested in the southern region, turning to temperate rolling grasslands in the mid-lands, and eventually rocky hills in the north. These hills form the border between Doongarda and Rathiveen.

Settlements

Coormag, the Unbroken City

Rathiveen established three reclamation colonies in Doongarda. Coormag was the only one to survive its first year.

Today, under the leadership of Alster Dodd, Coormag is more than just surviving; it's thriving. The center of the colony is a walled village that offers protection to the nearby farms. The farms ring the village and most of them are walled as well. Citizens of the colony are all armed and experienced at fighting off mutants and raiders.

The colony is fiercely theocratic and run like a Rathiveen town. Those who speak against Onu and his servants may find themselves persecuted, ostracized, or even banished to face the wilderness alone.

Newspring, the Foreign Colony

The first colony wholly sponsored by foreigners, the optimistically named Newspring is dedicated to reclaiming one of the iron mines. Its sponsors are a collection of Porothonian smithing guilds that hope to make profit on their investment from the ore coming from the mine. So far they haven't had much luck. The mine is apparently infested with mutants, the miners are getting sick, and the well-supplied colony has become a favorite target for wasteland raiders. Still, Newspring is over a year old and its sponsors believe in it enough to keep it supplied with the people and goods it needs to stay afloat.

Sholto, the Gateway

The town of Sholto started as a refugee camp on the eastern slope of the Blackwall Mountains, where it was situated high enough to avoid the worst of the invasion. With a steady supply of fresh water, and a nearby pass leading into Ferazonn, the location was ideal for a permanent settlement.

Today, Sholto is one of the main gateways into Doongarda. Most expeditions set off from here, and those that survive come back here to regroup and resupply. The town is full of merchants selling goods to would-be hunters and scholars, often at inflated prices. It's also full of armed explorers hoping to strike it rich down in the wastelands below. It can be a rough town, but its people are hardy and good-natured.

Flora and Fauna

The black ship invaders brought with them a horde of monstrous creatures the natives call "war-mutants," since they resembled mutated versions of men and beasts and were seemingly bred only for war. When the invaders left, they abandoned their mutant minions, who have since flourished in the wastelands of Doongarda.

No one knows how many different types of war-mutants exist. Whenever the scholars think they've cataloged all the invaders' horrors, another one appears they've never seen before. The current theory is that the mutants reproduce by somehow interbreeding with the local animals, creating bizarre new breeds of mutants with every generation.

Below are the most common types of war-mutants. Note that there are dozens of variations on these basic types and entirely different types as well.

Destroyers

These four-legged beasts are as tall as a man, with vicious claws, enormous teeth, and a barbed tail. They were the mutant shock troops of the invasion. While herders seemingly hunt for food, destroyers simply hunt to kill. It's not uncommon for them to attack a whole party of people and leave them all dead without feeding. Herders sometimes steer their victims toward the destroyers, who obligingly kill them, leaving the bodies for the herders to devour.

Herders

These four-legged canine-shaped predators secrete an acidic mucous from their fur that burns any flesh that touches them. They travel in packs and normally "round up" their prey before attacking. During the invasion, these creatures were used to gather prisoners. Now, they are likely to simply eat whatever prey they have rounded up.

Seekers

These hideous monkey-like creatures have four long limbs and a head full of eyes. They apparently serve as the scouts of the mutant horde, tracking prey from the trees and calling its location in their eerie, inhuman voices. Seekers are sometimes found sneaking around inside Doongardan colonies. A seeker sighting is often followed by a mutant attack.

Workers

The scholars who study such things have dubbed the rarest of the mutants “workers”. They resemble giant, lumbering men, with three digits on each limb. They are not as aggressive as the others mutants, but will defend themselves with fists and weapons if threatened. They can be found in the ruined cities, building structures of unknown purpose. Some say they are carrying out the last task their masters gave them before fleeing the coast. Others say they are intelligent beings working on their own plans with their alien minds.

Places of Interest

The Black Pyramid

The largest and most mysterious of the invader artifacts is the great black pyramid. It stands a hundred feet tall and seems to be made of a smooth, shiny stone. Its surface is etched with symbols of unknown meaning. Scholars come here from all over Karthador to study it and try to find their way inside. There are rumors of people who have somehow stumbled inside the pyramid and escaped with their lives. Such stories are likely told by madmen, and believed only by fools.

The Iron Gate

A great iron gate in the northern hills marks the border between Doongarda and Rathiveen. It's part of a larger keep whose job is to prevent monsters from running up the valley into Rathiveen. During the invasion, Rathiveen soldiers held this pass for weeks against the invaders. Today, the gate is as much a symbol as it is a functional barrier, demonstrating the strength of Rathiveen and the resilience of Doongarda.

Loogan

Before the invasion, Loogan was the richest city in Doongarda and boasted the most advanced Machinist chapterhouse on the eastern coast. It was reduced to ruins during the invasion and has since been infested with war-mutants. Nevertheless, it draws scavengers like a magnet. Some of those scavengers find enough elder machines, art works, and other "treasure" to make it rich—if they live long enough to escape back to civilization with them. Gangs of scavengers are forever fighting over the ruins.

The Royno Temple

The central temple of Onu in the ruined city of Royno stands unscathed. Though the city around it has been turned to rubble, the temple remains largely unharmed. Some see this as a sign of divine favor, evidence of Onu's presence and power. Many zealots feel it's a sign from Onu that they are to reclaim the temple and rebuild the city around it. Some scholars are not so convinced and wonder if there is some forgotten crystal machine protecting the temple from harm.

The Taskol Watchtower

Several miles off Doongarda's eastern shore is an island with a massive stone watchtower reaching to the heavens. The tower was built shortly after the invasion ended and its inhabitants have been charged with watching the seas for the return of the black ships. Its construction was a cooperative venture between Rathiveen and Porothon. The tower is located on the outskirts of a small fishing village called Taskol, which has embraced the tower as its communal responsibility.

Whispers and Rumors

A House Divided

The Newspring colony was sponsored by the Porothonian smithing guilds, which are expecting to see a return on their investment by now. But disease and other hardships have made it difficult for the colonists to get into the iron mines, so they are behind schedule. The guilds feel the colonists aren't holding up their end of the bargain and are threatening to cut off their support. The colony and its sponsors are locked in a conflict, and if nothing is done, they may come to blows and lose the colony altogether.

A Mutant Army

Rumor has it that the mutants in a certain valley are organizing. The workers are working on something and appear to be giving orders to the other mutants. Have they grown intelligent? Is this the next stage of the invasion? While it's easy to dismiss such unconfirmed, unreliable reports, the leaders are privately concerned. They need someone to check it out.

Machine Voices

A piece of invader technology has been found deep in the wastelands of Doongarda. Mutants, of course, surround it but rumor has it the device has started making sounds recently. Does it mean they're coming back? Or is it simply malfunctioning? The Machinist Order would no doubt reward anyone who brought them this mysterious machine.

Monstrous Science

The Imperial Academy is putting together an expedition in Doongarda to study the war-mutants. While most of the locals scoff at the idea ("You're supposed to run away from those things, not towards them!"), they admit it might be useful to have a better idea of how they live and reproduce. The expedition needs hunters, of course, but also scholars, guides, and other support staff.

New Colony

A new colony needs help. The colonists sent a first wave of settlers to lay the groundwork for the settlement; they succeeded, but now the site has been taken over by scavengers. If the colony is to claim the territory as its own, it needs help expelling the squatters. There might be a couple mutant nests in the area too. The reports from the first wave were unclear on that, but they were clear that they needed help.

Sunken Treasure

Doongarda used to be a merchant shipping hub. When the black ships invaded, they destroyed most of the merchant fleets. But according to legend, a fleet of ships slipped through the black ship blockade and was making its way around the southern coast with an entire city's worth of coin, artifacts, and artworks when a storm rose up and sank it. Now rumors have arisen that new evidence has washed up on the southern shores suggesting the final resting place of these sunken ships. Several expeditions are being put together to see if anything can be recovered.

FERAZONN

Overview

The jungle nation of Ferazonn has a reputation as a wild, dangerous place full of uneducated savages and ferocious beasts. The reputation is an exaggeration, but not entirely inaccurate.

The people of Ferazonn may seem uncivilized to outsiders since they've never pursued advanced technology or sophisticated agricultural techniques. They've never had to. The ever-fertile jungle has always blessed them with fruits, vegetables, and plenty of game.

As for the creatures of Ferazonn, while they aren't all vicious predators, many of them fall into that category. The jungle is home to countless species of giant reptilian “megalizards,” many of which hunt man as well as the lesser beasts. Frog-men with ape-like intelligence lurk inside crumbling, water-logged temples.

Before the time of the Empire, Ferazonn was ignored by rest of Karthador as a worthless wilderness. But once energy crystals were discovered there, everything changed.

Brief History

Because life in Ferazonn is simple, it's been little changed by the passage of time.

Before the Myratan Empire, the tribes of Ferazonn hunted jungle beasts, collected fruit, and squabbled amongst themselves over ancient feuds.

Under Imperial occupation, life continued much as it had before, only with more Myratan soldiers around, sweating in their armor and cursing the high humidity that ruined their delicate equipment. Without their blasters, airships, and other advanced equipment, the Imperial garrisons lost most of whatever authority they had over the tribes. The chiefs of that time were wise. Rather than take advantage of the faltering garrisons, they largely ignored them – and even offered aid to those soldiers who were in danger of dying in the jungle. As a result, the Myratans kept only a token force in Ferazonn and did not consider the natives a threat. When the Empire began to fall, Myratas had no regrets about pulling troops out of the jungle. Ferazonn just carried on as it had for generations.

When the black ships invaded the east coast, ambassadors from Porothon convinced some of the Ferazonni tribes to help fight off the invaders. Most of these fighters moved into the eastern mountains, which they held against the attackers trying to get through from Doongarda. Some warrior clans crossed the mountains and fought inside Doongarda itself. After the war, many of them chose not to return to Ferazonn.

It was during this time that Porothonian agents discovered energy crystals in Ferazonn. After the war, Porothon took on Ferazonn as a protectorate, ostensibly to help it recover from the war. As a protectorate, Ferazonn allows Porothon to mine its energy crystals in exchange for tools, vehicles, and other manufactured goods from the Porothonian factories.

Today, Porothon has a number of mining colonies throughout Ferazonn and the crystals they provide are an essential part of the Porothonian economy.

The People

The people of Ferazonn have never had to worry about food, water, or shelter. The biggest threat to their lives comes from predators and many of them can be avoided by climbing one of the ever-present trees. This carefree environment has led to a calm, relaxed culture that can be frustrating to outsiders. Ferazonni tend to take a philosophical, low-key attitude towards life, and look at things in the long-term.

In a land of plenty, the tribes of Ferazonn value what is unique. They are willing to fight over things such as the perfectly preserved skull of a great beast, a gem of unusual size and shape, or an elder machine that does nothing but glow at night. The tribes are constantly competing with each other over control of unique sites, such as an ancient ruin, a waterfall, or a particular rock formation.

The people of Ferazonn are shorter than human average, with brown skin and black hair. Their clothing is simple and light; the heat and humidity make anything else unbearable. Loincloths, skirts, and short tunics are common, though those who spend time with Porothonians or other outsiders may adopt their styles of boots, trousers, and shirts. Because uniqueness is valued, personal decoration (body paint, tattoos, piercings, jewelry, hair styles and ornamentation) is very important.

Farazonni adventurers are not often motivated by wealth, but will leave their homes in search of unique trophies, new stories to tell, or adventure for its own sake. They are very aware that there's a much larger world out there, full of strange machines and vast cities, and some of them want to see it for themselves.

Factions

Ferazonn has no central rulership. Instead, the land is divided between three major tribes (Casaca, Imchic, and Taruca) and countless smaller tribes. The tribes constantly make and break alliances and feud with each other over control of territory—specifically, the unique sites within that territory.

The three major tribes have officially established a confederacy that allows them to negotiate, on behalf of the entire nation, with outsiders. It's this confederacy that's agreed to let Porothon mine the crystals here, even though the mines aren't all inside territory controlled by those three tribes.

Casaca

The Casaca tribe prides itself on its honor. A Casacan's word is his bond. Since Casaca dominates the eastern part of the nation, most of the warriors who fought during the invasion were Casacans. Casaca has the closest relationship with Porothon. Some say it's too close and that Casaca is nothing but a puppet for its foreign masters.

Imchic

The Imchic tribe mocks the Casacans' honor and prides itself on its shrewdness. While straight-up lying and cheating is frowned upon, Imchicans embrace the art of coming out ahead on every deal they make. They have their own side arrangements with Porothon—and Myratas, and Sparasool, and anyone else willing to bargain with them—and expect to eventually rule all of Ferazonn. Imchic is the controlling force in the western part of the country.

Taruca

The Tarucans, who live in the central area of Ferazonn, look upon both Casaca and Imchic with disgust. They see how those tribes are being changed and manipulated by Porothon and other foreign powers. They point out to any who will listen that Porothon, with its trinkets and baubles, has done what the Myratan Empire was unable to do with force: change the tribes' way of life. The Tarucans know there's no turning back, but are looking for ways to preserve their nation's traditions while stepping out into this new world not as a protectorate, but as their own power.

Religion

The people of Ferazonn have a vague and animistic religion that honors the land. They acknowledge it was the land itself that held the Empire in check and kept them free while those around them suffered under the Myratans' rule. They also recognize that it's the jungle's bounty that keeps them fed and sheltered and offer thanks and praise for these gifts.

There is no organized clergy and not every village has shaman, but there is usually an elder or two who understands the power of the jungle and advises the tribe on the jungle's behalf. Some claim to commune with the spirits of the trees. Most do not.

These animistic beliefs sometimes conflict with foreign mining and harvesting operations, which can result in harsh words or even violence. The three major tribes try to minimize the conflict through diplomacy and compensation, but the smaller tribes—who profit little from these operations—are less concerned with keeping the peace and more worried about honoring the jungle that provides so much for them.

People of Note

Chief Pankiso

The chief of the Casaca tribe sees this time of change as a rebirth for Ferazonn. He thinks the tribes have grown complacent and lazy, coddled by the jungle that takes such good care of them. Ferazonn has a lot to offer the rest of Karthador and much to learn from its neighbors. He supports all efforts to send Casacans into the world to bring back new knowledge from beyond its borders.

Chief Ampallu

The chief of the Imchic tribe has never been happier. He's playing Porothon and Myratas against each other, promising them rights to energy crystal deposits that may or may not exist, hinting at other valuable ores, and selling them useless leaves from the valleys. He has embraced the materialistic joys of the foreigners and can often be seen flying over the jungle in his own personal airship.

Chief Mekay

The chief of the Taruca tribe is frustrated that the others can't see what she does: all of Ferazonn is in danger. Porothon and the other wealthy nations will slowly take over the whole jungle, stripping it of its resources. The others might think the land has bounty enough to support the world, but Mekay knows better. She's seen what happens when you harvest too much. The land might heal, but while it lies wounded, its people starve.

Mekay is working from the inside to curb the foreigners' appetites. Her tribe is one of the three that agreed to the protectorate arrangement, but only because the Taruca saw such an arrangement was inevitable and wanted to be able to shape it as best they could.

While Mekay officially opposes any violence against the outsiders, she has turned a blind eye to her people's occasional efforts to sabotage the foreign mines.

Economy

Few in Ferazonn are what outsiders would consider "wealthy." They don't use money except when dealing with foreigners, so have little reason to stockpile it. The local chief might have more unique items than those around him, but they are more symbols of status than actual wealth.

The Ferazonn economy (such as it is) is based on exporting natural resources. The most important resources are energy crystals, which are mined primarily by Porothonian mining guilds (though Myratan companies and other interests have a few mines of their own as well). The narcotic *kina* is the country's second most common export. It's sold primarily to merchants from Myratas, but smugglers also stock up here before risking their lives and freedom in Sparasool or Rathiveen. Other exports include megalizards (both living and dead), paperwood, exotic fruits, and medicinal plants

The people of Ferazonn have little use for cash money or interest in industry. They therefore trade for manufactured goods they find useful, beautiful, or otherwise unique, such as metal tools, steel blades, jewelry, or clothing. Crystal machines, such as blasters, don't make good trade items, since the hard environment quickly destroys their delicate inner workings.

Technology

Native Ferazonni don't bother manufacturing anything beyond the simplest tools and weapons. If they need metal blades, crystal torches, blaster rifles, or other such goods, they trade for them with the people of the other nations. The environment is hard on crystal gear; the humidity erodes the wiring, and the heat wears on the delicate workings.

Military

Ferazonn is full of warriors, but has no standing army. Each village is responsible for its own defense and every able-bodied man or woman is expected to be able to handle a bow or spear. Multiple villages will band together when faced with a large enough threat and will actually go to war together as allies if necessary. Such wars are usually against other tribes that are encroaching on their territory. They are small skirmishes, more interested in breaking the enemies' spirits than actually destroying them outright.

Most Ferazonni warriors wear light leather armor made from lizard hides. Anything heavier would only make them slower and weaker in the jungle environment. Some use blades of stone, bone, or horn, but the more modern warriors use imported steel for their weapons and aren't afraid to bring blasters to a sword fight.

The Land

Most of Ferazonn is covered with rain forest. To the east, the jungle fades into the Blackwall Mountains, which form the border between Ferazonn and Doongarda. The Nasili Mountains form the nation's western border and reach high enough into the sky that no rain can escape their grasp. To the north, the jungle gives way to the cooler, drier forests of Porothon. The southern jungle turns into lush savanna, .on the western edge of which lies a fertile river valley that separates Ferazonn from Sparasool.

Settlements

Tiny villages, each populated by less than a hundred people, are scattered all across Ferazonn. Most villages are occupied by a single tribe that has lived there for generations. Villages are commonly walled off to protect against predators and built above the ground, often in the trees themselves, to protect their floors from the heavy rains.

Ferazonn does have a number of larger towns. Most of these have grown to accommodate foreign interests and feature an atmosphere of jumbled cultures. Some of these are listed below.

Ancopac, the Crossroads

Ancopac is the gateway for trade with Porothon, and to a lesser extent Sparasool, Doongarda, and Rathiveen. It was once a Casaca village on the northern edge of the jungle, but when the energy crystal caravans started using it as a layover point, it blossomed into a trade center. This city on the crossroads is where explorers come to look for jungle guides, merchants look for exotic trading goods, and mercenaries look for caravans to protect—or raid, if the score is just too juicy to resist.

Conchua, the Kina Market

Conchua's economy is dominated by the export of kina, which is grown in the nearby fields. Since the plant is heavily regulated in some places and outright banned in nearby Sparasool, its sale floods Conchua with both riches and criminals. The Imchic who control the town don't care if outsiders kill each other in the streets over the seasonal kina crop, but are fiercely protective of their own people and will banish or kill any outsider who harms a native. Because of the large number of smugglers and thieves in town, Conchua also boasts a thriving black market for stolen and contraband goods.

Potaumbo, the Crystal Heart

This is home to the largest mining operation in Ferazonn. It was originally a Casacan village, but was essentially taken over by the Porothonian mining guilds and turned into a foreign colony. Most of the people who live here are Porothonian. The natives who remain work either in the mine or support the miners. Security is tight in Potaumbo, since it produces more energy crystals than any other mine in Ferazonn and has been attacked by both Myratan agents and Tarucan saboteurs.

Flora and Fauna

Daggermouth

While there are dozens of species of megalizards in Ferazonn, the most fearsome predator of them all is the daggermouth. This bipedal beast stands thirty feet tall, runs faster than a man on open ground, and sports a mouth full of dagger-like teeth. The king of the jungle predators, the daggermouth hunts smaller lizards and humans with equal impunity. Taking down a daggermouth is an amazing feat of bravery and strength and one few Ferazonni are willing to try.

Greenbacks

These amphibians resemble giant frogs that have learned to walk on two legs and use crude tools. They are sometimes called "frog-men" but are closer to apes than men in intelligence. Greenbacks make their nests in the murky swamps of Ferazonn, where they live in packs and lay their eggs. They are extremely territorial and will savagely try to kill anyone who comes near their nests. Unfortunately for those living near a greenback swamp, their nests are so well hidden that the first sign that one is encroaching on greenback territory may be a primitive spear through the chest.

Kina

This flowering plant grows wild in several places across Karthador, but truly flourishes in the super-fertile soil of Ferazonn. Kina leaves produce a narcotic effect when ingested through tea or smoked in pipes. Under the Empire, wide swaths of southern jungle were burned down to make room for kina fields. This remains the preferred method of kina farming, though it has its drawbacks. Kina draws all the nutrients out of the soil, leaving the fields a dead zone after several decades of growth, forcing the farmers to burn increasingly more fresh jungle land in which to cultivate new fields.

Tree Viper

This giant poisonous snake hunts at night, slithering through the trees in search of prey. Its bite does not kill, but paralyzes its prey long enough for the viper to swallow it whole. It is large enough to swallow a man, though it prefers smaller prey, such as children. The viper's oversized fangs are valued as talismans against bad luck.

Places of Interest

Darkstone Caves

The Ferazonni consider these caves to be sacred, for it's here that the jungle calls its children and blesses them with psionic powers. The caves are filled with dark-hued energy crystals. Those who fast and meditate in the presence of the crystals may find themselves undertaking hallucinatory vision journeys that unlock their psionic abilities. In the thought that it is the crystals themselves that make this possible, Myratan and Porothonian scholars have acquired dark crystals and ground them up to be ingested. This experimental "crystal infusion" has resulted in psionic powers, but those who don't manifest such abilities sometimes fall sick or even die from the procedure. The caves are deep inside the jungle, where they are protected by the local Paltac tribe. While non-Ferazonni are officially prohibited from entering the caves, the Paltac are not immune to bribery, threats, or the heart-felt words of those seeking the jungle's wisdom.

The Great Road

Getting energy crystals out of the ground is one thing; getting them to market is another. To this end, Porothon constructed a massive road leading from the heart of Ferazonn to Ancopa in the north. This is a river of commerce, with tributaries leading off to various Porothonian mines and other operations. The road is often washed out, plagued by raiders, and serves as a hunting ground for predators, but it's still better than cutting one's own way through the jungle. Mercenaries, natives, and anyone else who can hold a shovel or spear can find employment working for the guilds to maintain and protect the road.

Greenstone Valley

On the western edge of the savanna, there is a wide, shallow river running through the center of a long, fertile river valley separating Ferazonn from Sparasool. For generations, the people of Ferazonn and Sparasool have fought over this stretch of land. The Sool value it as it is the most fertile of the few crop-bearing areas in their nation; the Ferazonni value it for its uniqueness, and more practically, for the crops that grow here so much better than in the jungle. A troubled peace lies over the valley as long as the farmers and settlers stay on their own side of the river, but where the river is shallow or narrow, conflicts still break out. Peace-keeping forces from both sides patrol the region the best they can, hoping to defuse conflicts before they turn into bloodshed.

The Stone Bones

Deep in the jungle are ruins of an antediluvian city. According to legend, this was a city of the Ancients. Scholars have been studying the ruins for generations and most believe the legends to be true. They also believe there are more ruins even deeper in the jungle that have never been found, or at least, have never been reported by the natives. Rumor has it there is another cache of ancient secrets hidden beneath the Stone Bones ruins, but the natives hold the area sacred and won't allow any excavation.

Topizac Mine

The Porothonian mining guilds maintain several energy crystal mines across Ferazonn. The Topizac mine, named for the native prospector who found it, is both the newest and the most remote.

The mining camp is a small, crude village mostly populated by Porothonian miners and defended by mercenaries hired by the mining guilds. The camp has come under attack both from natives who don't like miners digging this deep in the jungle, and greenbacks that apparently have a nest nearby. To make matters worse, disputes between the mining guilds and the caravan guild have often left the miners stranded for months on end.

Whispers and Rumors

Crystal Mine

A new lode of energy crystals has been discovered, but it's deep in the jungle, well inside the territory of one of the minor tribes. Anyone acquiring the mining rights to the site would become fabulously rich. Unfortunately, the natives aren't interested in selling the rights. The Porothonian mining guilds are grumbling about how they should have the rights automatically due to their arrangement with the nation. Other parties (especially Myratas) are interested in making their own offers for the rights, and point out that Porothon's arrangement was with the main three tribes, not all the tribes of Ferazonn.

Kina Wars

Kina is a popular cash crop, but cultivating it is becoming more difficult. Using the Imperial "burn and plant" methods, kina farmers burn away jungle to clear room for fields; however, those fields are eventually exhausted, forcing the farmers to burn more jungle land in order to keep farming. Eventually, the forest reclaims the farmed land and renews the dead fields, but that takes decades. In the meantime, the farmers must either burn deeper into the jungle or work with smaller fields.

The tribes involved in kina farming are now competing over field space and this competition has turned violent. They fight not only with each other; now that they are cutting into what has always been jungle and the non-farming tribes who claim that territory are getting involved and have taken to attacking kina shipments. Some restrict themselves to foreign buyers (who hire protection), but some will burn out their neighbors' farms to prevent them from expanding.

Rise of the Greenbacks

The greenbacks have always been a threat. One could count on at least one attack from the semi-intelligent amphibians a year. But recently they've been attacking more often and with better tactics. Are they getting smarter? Or is someone organizing them? And why are they attacking the Imchic tribe more than any other? An Imchic chieftain is putting together an expedition to hunt these greenbacks down, get answers to these questions, and wipe them out before they do any more damage.

Ruins

The "Stone Bones" aren't the only ancient ruins hidden in the jungle. Every few years, rumors arise about a ruined city in the darkest part of the jungle, hidden beneath a dense canopy of trees and occupied by vicious greenbacks. Who knows what ancient mysteries and artifacts are hidden there—or why the greenbacks are calling it home?

Safari

Nobles of other nations enjoy hunting the dangerous exotic wildlife of the Ferazonn jungle. These safaris are usually organized by natives in one of the trade towns and are always hiring scouts, porters, messengers and guards.

It's not unusual for a safari to head into the jungle and then go missing. Some vanish altogether. Others are held for ransom by natives who don't like rich outsiders hunting their game. And some, it's rumored, are kidnapped by the safari organizers themselves, who have found an underhanded way to double the profit on their expeditions.

MYRATAS

Overview

Myratas once ruled all of Karthador. In the glory days of the Myratan Empire all the other nations were mere provinces, occupied by Myratan troops and dedicated to providing the Myratans the resources they needed to maintain their decadent lifestyle. Those days have been gone for over a century, but Myratans remain proud, nationalistic technocrats with dreams of conquest. Only now, they dream of an economic conquest rather than one forged in fire and blood.

Myratas is defined by its technology. It was their mastery of crystal machines that allowed them to conquer Karthador. It was the loss of their monopoly on those things that led to the Empire's fall. And it's their continuous advances in technology that keeps them wealthy and influential in this post-Imperial age.

Brief History

In many ways, the history of Myratas is the history of Karthador.

In the Time of Darkness, Myratas was just another kingdom, striving against its neighbors and trying to get ahead. It wasn't until Zephis discovered the secret of the energy crystals that Myratas embraced what its people now consider its destiny.

For centuries, the Empire ruled Karthador, growing ever more corrupt, arrogant, and decadent, until the Machinist Order gave its support to the provinces which rose up against Myratas in war. Without its monopoly on technology, Myratas quickly lost its hold on the continent.

But even without a monopoly, Myratas is still a leader in technology. It has the most advanced science, access to the most scholars, and centuries of experience dealing with elder machines. And while the other nations talk of being free and independent, they have come to rely on Myratan technology for the vehicles, tools, other daily items now deemed necessary.

Myratas has folded the local Machinist Order into the government as the Technology Commission in order to ensure that they aren't once more robbed of the crystal machines by another wayward philosophical discussion.

Now, the lords of Myratas are focusing on reconquering Karthador through economic means, not military.

The People

The people of Myratas are arrogant, ambitious, and power-hungry. They are ruthless in their pursuit of wealth and power. There is no lie they won't tell, no deal they won't break, no line they won't cross — save one: no Myratan with even a shred of honor will betray his family.

Myratas has its nobles and its commoners. One's nobility is based on one's wealth; a shrewd businessman can buy his way into the upper ranks of society. When a noble can no longer pay his debts, he is stripped of rank and forced into the employment of his debtor. When a commoner can no longer pay his debts, he forfeits even his name and becomes an unpaid "servant" (that is, a slave) in the house of his debtor. In the Imperial days, the thought of one Myratan owning another was repugnant—that's what foreigners were for—but those days are long gone.

Myratas is a plutocracy, ruled by those with the most money. It's officially run by the Great Council, and anyone can buy a Council seat once every year. But there is a minimum cost for a seat, and it's always bid up far outside the reach of the commoners. Some seats have been in the hands of the same family since before the Empire fell.

Myratans are the most physically diverse culture in Karthador. Under the Empire, people settled here from all over the continent and, within a few generations, their traits had been added to the mix. Myratan clothing is elegant and lightweight with lots of ventilation, since the climate is warm and humid most of the year. Clothing is very much a symbol of wealth and the nobility wear elaborate, dignified costumes that reflect their status.

Factions

Warmongers

There are those who feel that open conflict with Porothon is inevitable. To that end, Myratas should be grooming its allies, arming and training them as necessary, to fight when that day arises. Warmongers (as their detractors call them) have no illusions about military conquest of Karthador; they just want to ensure, through force of arms, that their way of life is protected from Porothonian aggression. It's not a coincidence that many of these people also have a stake in the Myratan weapon factories. While warmongers are represented on the Great Council, the most powerful ones have no official government authority. They move behind the scenes, paying off those who need to be convinced, equipping their allies, and undermining their enemies.

Isolationists

Opposing the warmongers are those who see the rest of Karthador as chaotic, unstable, and dangerous. In the eyes of these isolationists, Myratas is in a fantastic position, with more wealth and technology than any other nation. There is no reason to risk these things in some useless effort to prove its superiority over Porothon or any other nation. This isn't to say that Myratas shouldn't profit from the chaos and instability of the other nations (profit is always good!) but it shouldn't take sides in others' conflicts, or go around starting its own. Porothon isn't a threat; efforts should be spent to build up Myratas, not tear down some perceived enemy. This philosophy has dominated the Great Council for a generation, but as warmongers grow in power, the isolationists are finding themselves torn between profits and peace.

Zephists

In Myratas, the Machinist Order does not officially exist. After the Schism and the Order's "betrayal," the Great Council nationalized the Order within Myratan borders and officially made it a department of the government. The self-styled "Zephists" are scientists, philosophers, and others who remain secretly loyal to the Machinist Order. Specifically, they oppose the nationalization of technology and feel it should be shared with everyone. After all, that was the point of the Machinist Order in the first place. These people secretly work to "liberate" Myratan technology and make it available to others. While the Order calls them heroes, the government labels them as traitors for providing state secrets to the enemy; their activities put their freedom and lives at risk.

Religion

Myratans worship their ancestors, who they believe stand in constant judgment from the afterlife. Just as family honor is most important in life, it remains important in death. They seek their ancestors' guidance at small home shrines, reading smoke and casting lots to receive the wisdom of the dead.

A small segment of the population worships the Ancients as well, which they see as the greatest ancestors of all. They believe the Ancients will return some day from "beyond the stars" and reward those who have been faithful stewards of the elder machines.

Finally, because the Empire pulled its influences from all regions of Karthador, all religions are represented in some form somewhere in Myratas.

People of Note

Helo Kalliston

Helo Kalliston is the High Councilor of Myratas, a position that grants him the final vote on any Council matter, and officially makes him the most powerful man in Myratas. He is a charming, charismatic man who speaks of isolationism while funding mercenary troops to fight for Myratan interests across Karthador. He has maintained his position through twenty years of blackmail, bribery, and assassination. Like most of the highest Myratan nobles, he has his own small private army to ensure the safety of his person and property. Unlike others, he also has a shadow network of spies, thieves, smugglers, and assassins to do his dirty work, both in Myratas and abroad. Kalliston has no real political motives beyond his own family's profiteering. The cold war is best for business at the moment, so he's supporting it; when military conquest pays better, he'll gladly switch sides.

Kleo Lysandra

The Technology Commission is what replaced the Machinist Order in Myratas after the Empire fell. Kleo Lysandra is the head of the Commission and a brilliant scientist with many inventions to her name. She is fiercely proud of her accomplishments; her family is not wealthy, so she bought her way into high society through her work. Lysandra maintains strict control over Myratan technology, hoarding it for Myratan use, and has spies throughout Karthador looking for new vaults and new inventions to steal from others. She hates the "Zephist" since they desire to share with everyone the technology she has worked so hard to acquire.

Lyke Nikanor

Formerly an agent for the Technology Commission, Nikanor is now a devout Zephist. But he doesn't just believe technology should be free. He actively frees it. He steals elder machines from government vaults and smuggles them to his allies in the Machinist Order. Once he was found out, he could no longer use his position in the Commission to perpetrate his crimes himself; he now has undercover agents of his own to carry out the work. There is a price on Lyke's head. He's wanted as a traitor, but is seen as something of a folk hero; his "crimes" have never hurt the citizens.

Economy

Myratas is the wealthiest nation in Karthador. Its nobles live in luxury that many can't even dream of. Even its poorest freemen are officially better off than the poor of other nations; death by starvation or exposure is rare, unlike in other nations such as Porothon. Before a person gets to the point of homeless poverty, he is taken into the household of his debtor as a bonded laborer, what others would call a slave. It's not an easy or comfortable life, but at least slaves generally get food and a roof over their heads.

Myratas exports the best crystal machines and other technological items. They are the only source of many of these items. It's common knowledge that while Myratas lacks the assembly line efficiency of Porothon, it makes up for it with hand-crafted quality. Myratas sends whole fleets of merchant airships across Karthador full of manufactured goods for sale.

To power its massive infrastructure and manufacturing base, Myratas imports tons of raw materials. Its appetite for energy crystals, ironglass, oil, metal, and wood are especially voracious, since these are some of the most important ingredients for crystal machines.

Technology

Unsurprisingly, Myratas has the most advanced technology amongst the Free Nations. Airships buzz around their twenty-story towers like crystal-powered insects. Every home has electric lights and heat. Their crystal machines are built to last and to be as attractive as they are useful; Myratans value elegance as much as utility.

Military

The Myratan military is armed with the best weapons, armor, and vehicles in the world. Military airships patrol Myratan airspace and protect its borders. The rulers of Myratas are careful to keep their soldiers within their own territories, as they are officially a defensive security force. While the Myratan military might be the best in Karthador, it's still small enough to be overwhelmed if the rest of the nations turned on them.

With that in mind, it's impolitic to make any aggressive moves without provocation.

Instead, Myratas sends military operatives out into the world in small units as spies, assassins, and saboteurs in order to promote Myratan interests in other nations.

The Land

Myratas has a pleasant ocean shore to the west and south, and is bordered by the hills of Sparasool to the east. To the north lie the forests of Ursicor.

The land is pleasant year-round, warm and humid. Its winter is a rainy season and it hasn't snowed here in decades.

Settlements

Agather, the Wooden Gate

Agather is the Myratan gateway to Ursicor. It's primarily a lumber city, moving tons of wood south from Ursicor each year, but exports iron and energy crystals northward as well. Airships leave here regularly for points north; flying over the forests is far more efficient than going through them. Recently, the back alleys of Agather have filled with both rebels from Ursicor, who are looking for recruits and patrons, and mercenaries from across Karthador heading north to help fight against the rebels.

Kranelos, the Capital

Kranelos is the capital of Myratas and the largest, most important city in the nation. It's home to top nobles, manufacturing company headquarters, and the halls of the Great Council itself. It's a city of grandeur, with gleaming ironglass towers, elaborate gardens, and airships flitting about like bees at a hive. It's a city of commerce, elegance and wealth. At the height of the Empire, Kranelos was the pinnacle of Imperial elegance and excess; entire regions were stripped of their resources to beautify its streets and parks.

Patexes, the Master Port

This city serves as home port for the city-ships of Myratas. Each massive city-ship is powered by crystal machines and home to thousands of Myratans. The ships set out for many months at a time, trolling for fish or hunting whales. They return to Patexes where their catches are sold and the sailors can spend their money on entertainment. These ships are armed against pirates, but their sheer size means they are rarely attacked. There are other fishing and whaling ships here too that operate much closer to the coast, but on nowhere near the scale of the city-ships.

Zephison, the Foundry

This is the site of the original city of the Ancients that Zephis discovered centuries ago. When he established the Machinist Order, he did so here, near the ruins. And when the Order established the first manufacturing facilities, they did it here, near the Order's headquarters. Today, the ruins of the Ancients are tightly guarded by Myratan security forces. Zephison itself is divided between the thinkers of the Technology Commission and the workers who actually turn those thoughts into crystal machines.

Flora and Fauna

Cog Bugs

As an industrialized nation, Myratas is riddled with tens of thousands of miles of sewers, conduits, ducts, and access tubes. It's in these hidden spaces in the vast Myratan machine that the cog bugs live. These hideous insects range from the size of man's thumb to the size of his hand. They are omnivores that live in huge colonies and like to lay their eggs in the cracks and crevices of Myratan machines. They bite, but aren't dangerous except en masse. They are a constant nuisance, since their chewing and egg-laying damages the wires and tubes that Myratas relies on to keep its systems running. Laborers are often sent to periodically clear out cog bug nests.

Pocket Monkeys

These palm-sized simians are kept and trained as pets by the nobility. Rumor has it that they can be trained to steal, but it's equally likely that they are naturally inclined to take shiny things that catch their attention. The monkeys' original habitat was a chain of islands off the southern coast, but now they are bred in captivity; it's possible there aren't any left in the wild. They are long-lived and grow quite attached to their masters.

Straxes

Under the Empire, Myratans kept their slaves pliant by addicting them to the narcotic kina. While the practice still exists, it's much more uncommon now as Myratans have fewer foreign slaves. Today's Myratans prefer straxes. The oils found in the leaves of this plant cause a trance-like state and hallucinations in those who imbibe them. This can be a pleasant, dream-like experience under the right circumstance and at the right dose. It can also be a living nightmare if used incorrectly. Myratan nobles use it for both, taking the good for themselves and using the bad against their enemies. Wild versions of this plant can be found throughout northern Myratas, but the most effective strains are grown in special greenhouses where the oils are also extracted and processed. These places are always at risk of thieves, since the plants and oils are so valuable. Rival greenhouses compete to see whose straxes plants are the best and are not above sabotaging the competition.

Places of Interest

Center for Technology Development

In the hills to the east of Kranelos are the proving grounds where new technologies are taken to be tested. The main building used to be an Imperial garrison on the Sparasool border, but now houses scholars and engineers. It's run by the Technology Commission, whose members recommend which new technologies to produce and which to abandon. While their certification isn't strictly required, it's much easier to get investment when the Commission has signed off on its proving ground tests.

Imperial Depository

The Depository, as it is called, is the central bank of Myratas, responsible for storing and loaning much of the nation's wealth. The central Depository is a vast complex in Kranelos, though it has branch offices across Myratas and even Ursicor. While much of the wealth stored in the Depository is in the form of cash, the vaults hold a fair share of precious gems, ancient artifacts, and other portable valuables. As the primary holder of contracts, the Depository has a controlling stake in many bonded laborers.

Labor Exchange

According to Myratan nobility, slavery is a thing of the past. However, bonded laborers are slaves in all but name and the Labor Exchange in Kranelos is where they are bought and sold. The Exchange is no armed prison camp or warehouse stuffed with slave pens. Rather, it is a complex full of offices, desks, and bonded scribes where laborer contracts are bought, sold, bundled together, and sold again. A given contract might be bought and sold a dozen times before the laborer actually changes hands. While the Exchange mostly caters to brokers, it is technically open to the public. It's uncommon, but not unheard of, for someone to come in off the street and buy a laborer's contract that's on the Exchange.

Myratan Air Yard

While Myratan airships come in many different sizes, shapes, and designs, they are almost all built here at the Myratan Air Yard. Under the Empire, this city-sized complex was the heart of the Imperial air navy. Not much has changed since the days of old, except that many of the airships being built here today have fewer guns, lighter armor, and larger cargo holds. The yard itself is surrounded by rings of homes, shops, and businesses catering to the ship-builders. Working in the yard is demanding and the long shifts and heavy labor tend to burn out the workers here, which means the crew are always hiring new blood.

Tryphania Greenhouse

This greenhouse is where the most expensive breed of straxes is grown and processed. It's also located in the penthouse of one of the tallest buildings in Kranelos and famous for its security. Thea Tryphania, the noble woman who owns the greenhouse, keeps it under constant lock and key. Private guards patrol the halls and the workers are forbidden to leave the building; they have every need and desire fulfilled inside the complex. Any airships that get too close are fired upon. Still, it remains a challenge to would-be thieves, although none have yet successfully penetrated its defenses and plenty of corpses of those who have tried have been found in nearby alleyways. Thea doesn't mind. It's all good publicity and good for business.

Whispers and Rumors

Bonded Secrets

A minor noble has set his team of technicians to reverse-engineer a piece of stolen Porothonian technology. The foreman of the project, however, owed substantial money to a previous investor and, just as he was about to crack the foreign machine, he was taken as a bonded laborer. The project is at a stand-still without the foreman and the noble needs someone to track him down and buy out his contract so he can finish the project.

Crashed Treasure

An airship full of prototype crystal machines was on its way to the proving grounds when it malfunctioned and broke apart mid-air. Now those machines are scattered across the wilderness between Kranelos and Sparasool, waiting to be discovered. The Technology Commission is offering rewards to anyone who returns their lost prototypes. Scavengers from Sparasool and agents from Porothon have also been seen in the area.

In the Know

Dozens of merchant airships leave Myratas each day, loaded with trade goods and bound for ports across Karthador. For the past few months, the Red Flag air pirates have been preying on these airships just as they leave Myratan air space. They have not been attacking every airship, however; only those with the richest loads and lightest defenses have been targeted. A conglomeration of merchants has offered a reward to whoever can find out the source of pirates' information and stop the attacks on their airships.

Sabotage

A gang of saboteurs has been caught planting bombs in the air yards where they had been allegedly helping build this year's airships. Those in the know are fearful of what the saboteurs have done to the airships. Were they targeting a specific ship? A class of ships? Every ship in the yard? Aside from the bomb, there's no sign of what the saboteurs were up to, or for whom they were working. To make matters worse, they died in captivity before they could be interrogated. Now important people are asking questions and will pay well for answers.

POROTHON

Overview

Porothon is a nation of proud, ambitious people who, while not warlike, pride themselves on never backing away from a conflict. They were the last nation to fall to Myratan Empire and the first to throw off the Empire's yoke.

An industrialized nation, Porothon's technology and manufacturing prowess are second only to its rival Myratas. As its business expands across Karthador, so does its political influence and military power.

Brief History

For centuries, Porothon thrived as a feudal culture with rich fields, bountiful forests, and a merchant fleet that kept the nobles' coffers full. When the Myratan Empire marched against it, the nation was able to hold the invaders back for years, given its wealth and defensible borders. Indeed, it might have resisted the Empire even longer, but as Myratas absorbed Porothon's trading partners, the nobles realized they would have no choice but to surrender. Rather than destroy their country's infrastructure with a prolonged war, they accepted Imperial rule and became the last province added to the Empire.

It was during the Imperial rule that the merchant guilds rose in prominence. They spoke the Empire's language of commerce and technology, though they chafed at its punishing taxes and arbitrary trade restrictions. Porothon became a center for manufactured goods and boasted a Machinist Order chapterhouse every bit as advanced as the central Order labs in Myratas.

The Machinists Schism originated in Porothon when the local chapterhouse refused to turn over its new discoveries to the Machinists in Myratas. When Myratas grew militant in its demands, the Order offered its technology to Porothon in exchange for the nation's help defending itself. Porothon accepted and thus ignited the spark that would eventually burn the Empire down.

When the black ships came, Porothon was on the front lines, fighting to defend the continent. When the invaders were repelled, Porothon supported the rebuilding efforts with its own riches, going so far as to loan money to those nations that were damaged in the attack in order to rebuild.

Porothon is now in the midst of an industrial revolution. It is still a manufacturing center and it has reclaimed its place as an economic powerhouse, shipping its good all over Karthador. Though it's still technically a feudal society, ruled by royalty and the noble class, the true power has slipped into the hands of the guilds.

The People

The people of Porothon value ingenuity, practicality, and ambition. They admire those who adapt to their circumstances and thrive no matter what. They have little patience for those who bemoan what has been lost, pine for the past, or embrace the appearance of success over success itself.

Physically, Porothonians are tall and slender, with skin color ranging from light brown to deep black, with hair to match. Their clothing is always practical; even their formal wear is comfortable and durable. Because of the rains, cloaks, capes, and hoods are always in style.

Since Porothonian culture celebrates the self-made and ambitious, it's no surprise that the nation produces so many adventurers. Some are the second or third offspring of nobility, with no hope of inheriting, who go out to seek their fortune. Others are lowborn laborers with nothing to inherit anyway. Still others may be professional scouts, entrepreneurs, or agents, either independent or working for one of the guilds. Porothonians are found wherever there is business to be done—and wherever there are Porothonians, there is business to be done.

Factions

The Guilds

The true powers in Porothon are the guilds. As the country shifted from an agrarian one to a manufacturing center, the guilds gradually rose in power. There are many guilds: cloth-makers, ship-makers, smiths, drivers... the list goes on. If a significant number of people are engaged in a business, chances are they have formed a guild. The exception is farming, which remains under the control of the nobles, though the farmers are no longer peasants legally bound to the land.

The official purpose of these guilds is to protect the lives and livelihoods of their members. But while many of them do this, they also spend a great deal of effort ensuring the wealth and power of the guild leaders. The guild system makes it very difficult for a worker to be independent. The guilds support their power by loaning money to the nobility and then demanding concessions from the indebted nobles.

Some guilders acknowledge the corruption high in the ranks and are trying to initiate reforms. A few are having success. Others are being silenced.

Nobility

While the nobles of Porothon don't have nearly the power they did before the Empire, they remain respected traditional figures of authority. A lord's keep is the seat of government for the region, and his word is law, insofar as he can enforce it. Each noble house is responsible for the commoners in its domain, both defending them and keeping the peace between them. To that end, the nobles have soldiers, administrators, and agents under their command.

Though they'd be loath to admit it, many nobles don't have the money to back up their orders and are forced to borrow what they need from the guilds. As a result, their policies tend to favor the merchants who control their purse-strings. Some nobles are trying to move in on the guilds to take their power back.

The Techs

After the Machinist Schism, Porothon became home to the new headquarters of the Machinist Order. The University of the Machine, as the former chapterhouse became known, has opened its doors to any who want to learn the secrets of the Ancients. There are more technicians residing in Porothon now than anywhere but Myratas.

Techs are at once respected and mocked. Because they spend most of their lives in the University studying, they are perceived as naïve and ignorant of the "real world" — and many of them are. They have resisted the power of the guilds and are their own independent entities, though techs are often found in the employ of guilds and nobility. They are especially common in the factories, where techs are required to keep the great machines running.

Religion

Since the people of Porothon are famously practical, they aren't much given to religion. That said, Onu, a deity worshiped in Rathiveen, is slowly growing in popularity in the rural areas of Porothon where the religion's emphasis on independence and strength seems appealing.

People of Note

Lady Alannasa

The Guild Council, which is made up of the heads of the most important guilds, regulates the guilds and advises the king on economic matters. The chair of the Council is Lady Alannasa, a noblewoman who owns dozens of businesses in Porothon. She's close to a century old and has held the chair for the past twenty years. Alannasa is incredibly shrewd and always has some subtle scheme in the works to increase her already-substantial power and wealth.

Dumat Runn

The current head of the University of the Machine is Dumat Runn, a middle-aged, jovial fellow who's genuinely excited by every new discovery and technological breakthrough the University produces. While the guilds pressure him to focus on practical (i.e., profitable) technologies, he enthusiastically pursues whatever seems the most interesting at the moment and encourages his people to do likewise. He often has the University sponsor expeditions to all corners of Karthador in search of rumored new technologies or strange phenomena.

King Durann

The king of Porothon is tired. He's an old man, worn down by decades of politics and power plays, and has relegated most of the actual decision-making to his son, Prince Ninsalla, who tends to agree with whatever the Guild Council suggests. The only time King Durann rouses himself to action, or even a strong opinion, is when it comes to the nation's opposition to Myratas. Though he won't reveal his reasons, his hatred of that rival nation is more than political or economic; it's clearly personal.

Economy

Porothon is in the midst of an industrial revolution. With the power of force rays and energy crystals, the small factories that turned out cloth, clothing, and consumer goods have been able to ramp up production capacity by a factor of hundreds. As manufacturing has grown in importance, agriculture has faded, and each generation more people leave the farms to work in the factories in the cities.

While there is more money to be made in manufacturing than agriculture, most of that money flows upwards to the guilds and merchants who manage the production. The bottom-rung workers barely make enough to survive, much less get ahead.

The poor of Porothon are just as ambitious as their wealthier counterparts and are encouraged by stories of lowborn workers who turned a great idea, a little start-up cash, and a whole lot of hard work into a successful venture. It doesn't happen that often, but it does happen, and everyone celebrates a good success story.

The nobles, by and large, don't have nearly as much money as they used to. Many of them are in debt to the various guilds, and those that retain their wealth have only done so by investing in outside businesses.

Porothon imports ironglass, energy crystals, and other raw materials for manufacturing. Ivory and stone-silk from Sparasool are important imports, as clothing is one of its biggest exports. Other exports include paper, wood products, ships, meat, and force ray weapons.

Technology

The Machinist Order has its headquarters in Porothon and each year produces many new inventions; it's up to the guild engineers to figure out ways to make these inventions profitable. Porothon produces and sells airships, skimmers, blaster weapons, and other common, practical crystal gear. Less common items are available at a premium price and all the wealthiest homes feature electric lights and heat.

Military

Each noble house has its own household guard of twenty to two hundred troops, depending on the size of the fief and the wealth of the house. Nobles can also call up conscripts from their lands if necessary in times of war, but since these are largely untrained lowborn. It hasn't happened in decades and most are loath to resort to this measure. If their household guard is short, they prefer to hire mercenaries.

Porothon itself boasts a small but professional army funded by the royal treasury. This includes the famous lizard cavalry mounted on tricornes. The military is primarily defensive, specifically assigned to defend the trade routes with the other nations. While it has numerous well-armed airships at its disposal, the military is careful when defending trade routes, as this entails encroaching on other nations' air space. It happens quite often, but it's a delicate matter that sometimes requires political maneuvering after the fact.

The Land

Porothon is dominated by thick forests to the south, which thin towards the north into sparse trees and rolling fields. It's bordered by the Blackfrost sea to the north, the Nasili Mountains to the west, and the Blackwall Mountains to the east. The climate is temperate, with heavy precipitation due to the northern sea. The Blackfrost shore is subject to freezing, snow-filled winters.

Settlements

Aruka, the Crossroads

Aruka is the gateway between Porothon, Sparasool, and Ferazonn. It's a massive trade center, with the highest concentration of foreigners in the nation. It is by far the most eclectic market in Porothon, where rare spices from Ferazonn are sold next to stone-silk from Sparasool and hand-crafted blaster pistols from Myratas.

Calagar, the Capital

Calagar, the ancient capital of Porothon, is located on the Sidur river, which serves as a trade route to the sea. Calagar is the seat of government, where the royalty live, and most nobles have a home here they visit at least a few months out of the year, just so they can be seen at court. The top guilds also have their headquarters here. The outer rings of Calagar contain the factories, which are spreading out into what had been farmland and orchards for centuries. Some say the run-off from these factories is affecting the nearby crops, but no one has been able to prove these stories true.

Damedur, the River Road

This city is the heart of the lumber industry. Its rivers serve as highways for hauling lumber from the forests where it's been cut and then ferrying its finished products – largely paper, but sometimes treated wood for ship-making – to markets for sale. Because of its rich paper supply, Damedur has also turned into a printing hub, featuring some of the most advanced printing presses in Karthador.

Nisaban, the Ghost Port

Before the Tharran closed its borders, Nisaban was a thriving port city, serving as the main connection between Porothon, Tharran, Rathiveen, and Doongarda. But after Myratas bombed Tharran and the black ship invasion reduced Doongarda to a wasteland, exports dried up to almost nothing and Nisaban dried up with them. Today, its port hosts a modest merchant fleet and hopes for the day Tharran throws wide its borders once more.

Flora and Fauna

Feeder Lizards

These giant lizards are slow-moving and thick-skinned; when butchered, they provide enough meat to feed a whole family for half a year. They eat a lot and are largely raised on the central plains where there is enough room for them to graze. Tricorn-riding ranchers watch over their herds, keeping an eye out for rustlers and predators.

Paperwood

These light, pale trees are harvested in vast quantities and shipped to the paper mills where they are turned into paper. Not all paper is made from paperwood, of course, but the pulp makes a great base regardless of what kind of paper the mill is producing. There has been concern that the supply of wood might run out, so some guilds have taken to replanting after harvesting, but the replanted wood doesn't have the quality of the original trees. The government, either local nobles or the king himself, officially assigns what parts of the forest may be harvested by whom, though the guilds are rumored to harvest in violation of their allotments.

Stalker Lizards

These predator lizards range in size from that of a large rat to a small child. They are bipedal, with long necks and tails, and armed with vicious claws and teeth. They hunt in packs and are disturbingly intelligent. Stalkers prefer weak prey and will flee from any fight they can't win. They're seen mostly in the forests near farms, where they hunt livestock, but have been found living in the sewers of the great cities, where they hunt prey of another sort.

Tricorns

These giant, three-horned megalizards, originally imported from Ferazonn, are used as mounts and beasts of burden. They have been largely domesticated and are raised on ranches in the rural northern areas. Tricorns are the backbone of the military's famous cavalry.

Places of Interest

The Guild Exchange

The heart of the guild district in Calagar, home to the halls of all the most important guilds in Porothon, is the Guild Exchange. This cavernous building is a cathedral dedicated to money and ambition. It's filled with brokers buying and selling shares in hundreds of different guild ventures on behalf of their clients. Most of these clients are nobles trying to keep their estates afloat though means more modern than agriculture. But some are trade folk, merchants, and guild leaders themselves. Some are even poor laborers who are investing in risky ventures in the hopes of striking it rich.

Nindul Ranch

Breeding tricornis is a tricky business. While some owners raise their own, most purchase them from ranches that specialize in the breeding and training of the giant lizards.

Nindul Ranch is the largest and most successful of these ranches. Its vast herd of tricornis roams the plains for miles around. Nobles and other ranchers come here to purchase breeding stock and riders come to find the best tricornis for their purposes. Some are bred small for use as nimble riding mounts. Others are broad-shouldered beasts, bred for hauling heavy carts over long distances.

The ranch commonly drives small herds of tricornis around Karthador, either delivering merchandise to those who have purchased it or bringing it around to sell to others. These herders often hire outriders and guards to keep them safe from rustlers and other dangers. The ranch also has a number of other giant lizard breeds that they are domesticating with varying levels of success.

University of the Machine

On the outskirts of Calagar is the headquarters of the Machinist Order. This former chapterhouse was the heart of the Machinist Schism and today houses the Order's best and brightest minds in Porothon. During the Schism and the fall of the Empire, the temple was turned into a walled keep. Since that time, the city has grown up around it, but the temple is still a well-protected site, complete with its own small force of armed guards. On the outside in the public areas, it's a place for scholars and academics. However, where the sensitive research occurs, security is tight; such research tends to attract spies and saboteurs.

The Vardun Vault

This is the vault of elder machines that sparked the Schism and, eventually, the fall of the Myratan Empire. The site is now a bustling town full of academics, Machinists, and even a few noble tourists. It's been cleared out of its ancient artifacts, but is still the subject of much study. Every academic hopes that he or she will be the one to find a secret extra cache. There is some danger here, as academics are known to carry crystals and artifacts and sometimes get mugged.

Whispers and Rumors

Experiment Cleanup

No one wants to talk about the muffled explosion that rumbled out of the University of the Machine, or the column of strange green smoke now climbing into the sky. But the Machinist Order is looking for some emergency short-term contractors to help clean up around the place. The top qualification the Order is looking for is discretion—though being handy with a blaster is important too.

Guild Agents

The guilds of Porothon need people to represent their interests all over Karthador. It could be as simple as delivering a package to a potential client in the next city over, or as complex as trouble-shooting why a distant mine is falling behind on production. The job isn't without its dangers, of course. It isn't unheard of for agents of rival guilds to get into sometimes violent disputes when their employers' agendas come into conflict.

Lizard Roundup

Every fall, the feeder lizard ranches of Porothon round up their herds and drive them hundreds of miles to market. They often hire on seasonal workers to ride with the herd to keep it calm and protect it from predators and rustlers. One such ranch is offering suspiciously high pay for this year's ride and is rumored to be accepting all applicants, regardless of their experience. It could be the sign of a desperate ranch trying for one last lizard drive, or it could be an elaborate trap.

Noble Debts

A noble owes a small fortune to a local guild. He claims that he can pay it back if given another season to raise the cash. The guild claims he has the money and is just stalling; they've already been more than patient. Tempers are flaring on both sides and something drastic may be brewing.

Tech Spies

Porothon is full of spies looking to steal its technology. They sneak around sites frequented by the Machinist Order and guilds with an interest in new machinery. Many of these spies work for rival guilds, but some work for Myratas, which fears losing its technological edge to its rival. A large reward is offered for those who can uncover these spies; since the rewards for spying are even greater, there's always someone willing to risk the law for a shot at riches.

RATHIVEEN

Overview

Rathiveen is a cold, hard land full of cold, hard people. The nation is a theocracy founded on the worship of Onu, their god who demands his people be strong and self-reliant. A cry for help isn't just a sign of weakness; it's a sin.

The people of Rathiveen are known for eschewing all crystal-powered technologies. They feel that using such devices requires them to rely too heavily on those who make and maintain the machines, which is an affront to Onu. They have no qualms with swords and spears, and are renowned for their melee combat prowess.

Brief History

Before the Myratan Empire, the region currently known as Rathiveen was considered the borderland between Doongarda and Tharran and largely uninhabited. Those who lived there were Doongardans who, like the rest of the nation, worshiped Onu—though more out of tradition and a vague sense of obligation rather than any fervent desire to do so.

During the time of the Empire, the rocky hills of the region became a sanctuary for resistance forces. As part of their resistance, the Doongardans turned to the old ways of Onu, rediscovering his commands for self-reliance and independence. To ask for help you don't need is a sin. To demand that help from a helpless, conquered people—as the Empire was doing—is an affront to Onu and could not be tolerated. As the Onu zealotry spread, the revivalists, as they called themselves, became the backbone of the resistance and the rocky hills they called home became its headquarters.

When the Empire fell, the revivalists called on the rest of Doongarda to join them in a renewed worship of Onu. When the others refused, the revivalists felt they had no choice but separate themselves from those who had fallen away from the faith.

With heavy hearts, the revivalists seceded from Doongarda. They claimed the Rathiveen region as their own nation and dedicated it to the right and proper worship of Onu.

When the black ships arrived off the shore of Doongarda, the warriors of Rathiveen were the first on the front lines against the invaders. Rathiveen opened its doors to countless Doongardan refugees who, even after the invaders had been repelled, couldn't return to their ruined and mutant-infested homeland. Today, the descendants of those refugees are struggling to find their place in either the theocratic culture of Rathiveen or the savage wastelands of Doongarda.

The People

As zealots of Onu, the Rathiveeni people are strong, tough, and independent. They accept no help they do not need and make a point to never ask for it. The harsh land has made them resilient and faithful. They trust in their god to provide.

Rathiveeni look the same as Doongardans, with dark skin and green or blue eyes. They wear many layers (a cloak over a jacket over a tunic, for example) since the temperature changes radically over the course of the day, especially in the spring and fall. Their clothing is generally dark in color. The adults get tattoos for each rite of passage they have passed, as dictated by the church of Onu.

Outside of Rathiveen, these zealots are usually found as missionaries, mercenaries, or both. They are known as some of the best hand-to-hand warriors in Karthador and often leave Rathiveen to make their fortunes as swords for hire. But they don't leave Onu behind and often share their faith with those around them.

Factions

Rathiveen is a theocracy. The church of Onu creates and enforces the laws and maintains order through its standing army. The common people are mostly devout, but too concerned with scraping a living out of Rathiveen's harsh environment to worry about heresies or politics.

The Displaced

Thousands of Doongardans flooded into Rathiveen during the invasion. In the decades since then, many of their descendants have fully acclimated to Rathiveen culture, but many more have not. They pay lip service to Onu, and try to stay out of trouble with the theocracy, but their hearts are in Doongarda and their minds on matters more practical than spiritual. In particular, the restrictions on buying and selling goods are difficult for the mercantile-minded Doongardans to embrace.

Theocracy

Rathiveen is governed by a theocratic ruling class. The local priest, called a Low Mornu, is responsible for the bodies and souls of the community around him. Each region is administrated by its own Mornu, who has several Low Mornus beneath him. Above the Mornus is the High Mornu, who speaks for Onu and rules as king or queen of Rathiveen. Through every level of the theocracy, the priesthood is practical. The Mornus know that strange or unrealistic rulings made from on high will only test people's faith, not strengthen it. Changes that happen usually come from the bottom up.

Mornu is not a hereditary title, but family in the theocracy is helpful. New members, both male and female, are allowed into the priesthood, but those with a legacy in the theocracy tend to be promoted faster.

Religion

Centuries before the rise of Myratas, the prophet Morven arose amongst the tribes of what would someday be Doongarda. He told of Onu, the creator, who wanted his children to be strong and join him in the afterlife. The world, he said, was a crucible, designed to test the faithful. Those who failed were reborn to test their souls in the world of suffering again. Only by pleasing Onu and standing strong can the faithful escape this cycle and be born into the next world.

Onu gives his children strength to overcome life's hardships. He desires them to stand firm and be independent, trusting in him and the strength he provides to see them through life's hardships. Asking for help is a sign of weakness. Accepting unneeded help is a sin. Asking for help that isn't needed is blasphemy. But to offer help without being asked is noble and pleasing to Onu.

All things are a gift of the Creator. To take more than we need, to hoard and luxuriate, is a sin. If we have more than we require, we are to give the surplus to those in need and thereby become the instruments of Onu's strength. If we have less than we need, we are to trust that the Creator will provide. Hardships come to teach us humility and remind us that everything, even what we consider the works of our hands, is a gift of the Creator.

People of Note

High Mornu Gilden

Gilden is the head of the church of Onu, and therefore the head of Rathiveen. He is an old man, bent and wrinkled, but bears the circular sigil of office with grace and dignity. He is only the second person to hold the position and knows it's a tricky one. To properly serve Onu, the believers must stand on their own—even if that means opposing the church leaders. The only way to keep this independent group from tearing itself apart is to balance and integrate the dual commands of "Stand on your own" and "Help your neighbor."

Kenna Franden

A scholar and a woman of the world, Kenna Franden is a philosopher and lay teacher in Cardonell, the capital. While she doesn't have the authority of a Mornu, she does have the ears of influential people and has used it to spread the rather unorthodox idea that using crystal machines under the proper circumstances and with the proper mindset may not be sinful. It may even, she suggests, improve the standard of living across the country, thus allowing them to better help their neighbors. Complaints have reached the ears of the Mornus, who are keeping an eye on Kenna. But so far her teachings, while unconventional, are still in line with the scriptures.

Mornu Lenoth

The official head of the Rathiveen military is Mornu Lenoth, who defends the nation's borders, keeps its peace, and enforces the church's laws.

Mornu Lenoth grew up on the Doongarda border and knows the dangers that come from that overrun nation. To that end, he has set his sights on retaking the fallen land, one village a time, and bringing it to heel under the sword of the mighty church. Doongarda should be a Rathiveeni colony. He knows the idea isn't an extremely popular one; the displaced don't want Rathiveeni rule in Doongarda and the more conservative Rathiveeni fear over-extending their reach with a prolonged push into the wastelands.

Economy

Rathiveen is not a rich nation. Its soil is thin and rocky, growing enough to allow its people to survive, but not flourish. Likewise the sea offers up enough fish to keep the country going, but nothing like the vast bounties that used to be harvested from Doongarda. Because their religion demands they take care of each other, they do all right for themselves, but it is tough going.

Because the other part of their religion preaches independence and self-reliance, Rathiveen imports very little. They bring in some manufactured goods from Porothon, but prefer to build or grow whatever they need themselves. They have no qualms about exporting, their metal goods are found all across Karthador and their swords are known for their durability and craftsmanship.

Technology

Onu demands that his people be self-sufficient. Crystal machines rely not only on energy crystals, which haven't been found in Rathiveen, but also on the technology required to make them, which the Rathiveenni don't have. Therefore, the followers of Onu eschew the use of crystal machines and focus on devices they can craft with their own hands. Rathiveen warriors utilize more archaic weapons and are renowned for their swordsmanship.

Military

Every faithful citizen of Rathiveen has the holy duty to defend himself and his faith with courage and steel. To this end, the Rathiveeni are trained in the use of weapons from a young age and are required to serve two years in the church's army when they come of age. This tradition was formed in the early days of the Imperial occupation of Doongarda after the revivalists saw what happened to those who weren't trained and ready to fight.

The military answers directly to the local Mornu, who receives his commands from Mornu Lenot. Soldiers protect the Rathiveeni from war-mutants, foreign invaders, criminals, and internal troublemakers. Because they are actively engaged against the mutant hordes of Doongarda, they are among the best soldiers in Karthador. When their time in the military is up, some stay on indefinitely, while some others make their way west to serve as mercenaries.

Since the church frowns on the use of crystal machines, its military is not trained in the use of blasters, but makes up for it with its skill in sword, spear, and bow.

The Land

Rathiveen is situated between the Blackwall mountains to the north and west, the ocean to the east, and hills leading to Doongarda to the south. Its climate ranges from temperate in the south to cool in the north, where the ground often freezes and turns to tundra as it approaches Tharran.

The rough hills of the south are riddled with iron mines. There are fish in the sea, but not enough to support much of an industry.

Settlements

Cardonell, the Seat of Onu

Just north of the hills, surrounded by the most fertile land in the country, lies Cardonell, the political and religious heart of Rathiveen. It's here that the church built its temple as well as a school for educating the young in the ways of the faith and independence and teaching future priests. Cardonell is also home to the only airship port in the country.

Fergoon, the Battlefront

Fergoon started out as a refugee camp just across the border from Doongarda. In the war against the invaders, soldiers would bivouac here before making sorties into the occupied territory. When the invaders struck back, the townspeople dug into the hills and reinforced Fergoon until it was a true town and not just a makeshift camp. Today, Fergoon is a staging area for the reclamation campaign. Both military and civilian groups are located here, though foreign adventurers prefer to travel via Sholto, where the Rathiveeni are less likely to preach to them.

Irvaden, the Prophet's Rock

According to tradition, it was on this bleak and desolate peninsula that the prophet first had his visions of Onu. When Rathiveen broke off from Doongarda, the village of Irvaden was already considered holy ground and it only made sense that it should be given over for the study of Onu. Today, the village is the site of an enormous black monastery, where theologians go to study the scriptures, meditate, and refresh their spirits. Some who have devoted themselves to study here have developed psionic powers. These powers are gifts from Onu and are to be used to help others. Though few speak of it, everyone knows that the monastery houses a special prison for heretics and other troublemakers who require "special" handling.

Shorneth, the Forge

Located near water and between three iron mines, Shorneth is made for steel-making. Its forges are always going and its smiths are known as the best in Karthador. Smiths who are masters in their own right come here to apprentice at the feet of these extraordinary craftsmen. The town produces most of Rathiveen's weapons, tools, and other items for internal use and export.

Flora and Fauna

Carboona

The wild carboona are sturdy, deer-like animals that roam wild near the Tharran border. Some Rathiveeni capture and break them for use as cart-pulling animals. Some ride them, but carboona won't take a saddle and are difficult to handle without one. Rathiveeni farmers have bred domesticated carboona, but those raised in captivity aren't as strong as those that grow up in the wild. Special crews of carboona-herders track down wild carboona, break them, and bring them to market.

War-Mutants

Despite the military's best efforts, countless beasts from Doongarda make their way into Rathiveen each year. The giant destroyer mutants rarely make it past the country's defenses, but seekers and herders slip through with alarming frequency, along with smaller, more insidious breeds that damage crops and livestock. The most common is the burrow-sharp; it sleeps during the day and hunts by night, lurking in shadows and growing into packs in the sewers.

Wild Kina

As Onu demands self-reliance and independence, intoxication is prohibited in Rathiveen. Drinking too much wine is a sin, and partaking in kina at all is strictly forbidden and severely punished. Actually cultivating kina is unthinkable—or it would be, except that a wild strain of the plant naturally flourishes in the southwestern hills. The church is aware of this and has taken efforts to destroy the crop, but the effects of their efforts are limited. Some people secretly harvest the kina and sell it to suppliers who smuggle it into Sparasool. They risk execution but have no other money crops and feel that if they want to get ahead in Rathiveen, this is what they must to do.

Places of Interest

The Abandoned Chapterhouse

Since the church frowns on crystal machines and those that rely on them, the Machinist Order is unwelcome in Rathiveen. Shortly after Rathiveen split off from Doongarda, the Order was asked to shut down its chapterhouse. When it refused, the people rose up and attacked the chapterhouse, forcing the scholars to flee for their lives. This was a shameful act and one for which the church has long-since apologized. The chapterhouse still stands, sealed up and abandoned. There are stories of what mysterious treasures await inside for those brave enough to explore it.

Blood Caves

The caves in the southern hills were used by resistance fighters during the war against the Empire and again in the fight against the black ship invaders. Now the cave system is largely abandoned, save for some lone hermits and cave-dwelling war-mutants.

Carboona Plains

In the northern tundra, where even the summers are cool, the carboona gather to breed and feed. It's here that crews of carboona wranglers come to find and capture wild carboona. Some are large teams that have been at it for many years and bring back hundreds of head of carboona. Others are inexperienced opportunists likely to get themselves killed, or small family operations that bring a couple back to sell each year.

Spire of Desolation

Outside the monastery in Irvaden, one can see the tall stone spire where the prophet meditated and had his visions. This is considered the holiest of ground and no one is allowed near it without permission of the High Mornu. Church soldiers stand guard constantly and rumor has it that they've driven off multiple war-mutant attacks in the area.

Whispers and Rumors

Infestation

A breed of particularly large burrow-sharps has taken up residence in a small western village. The pack has already killed the first three people who went into the darkness to root it out. The villagers are panicking and many have abandoned the village altogether. If it isn't eradicated now, the pack will spread and mutate further.

Mine Mine Mine

An iron mine has been infested by war-mutants, but the devout miners won't ask for help. They've been praying, though, and a band of brave adventurers might be the answer to those prayers. The miners say they can hear the mutants digging down in the mine, though for what, they have no idea.

Mountain Raiders

A new lode of iron has been discovered on the slopes of the Blackwall mountains. Unfortunately, the area in which the lode is located has long been established as territory belonging to the local mountain tribes. Some see this as an opportunity to grow Rathiveen by force, bringing the word of Onu to the mountain folk, sword in hand. Others wonder if there might be some way to reason with these savages.

Secret Crops

Some farmers in the more remote areas have been secretly growing kina. They know it's a sin, and that if they're caught they'll lose their farms, and possibly their heads. But they have made binding arrangements with smugglers from Sparasool; if they don't keep their end of the bargain and deliver the product, the smugglers will be as quick as the church to relieve them of their lives. The farmers are desperate and need help to find their way out.

Super Smithing

A group of smiths has developed a new, more efficient way to make steel; however, it requires using crystal machines and the church therefore frowns upon it. Is there a way to make the machines more self-sufficient?

SPARASOOL

Overview

Sparasool is notoriously hostile to outsiders. This is true not only of the land itself, with its scorching deserts and deadly predators, but of its people as well. They like outsiders' *money* well enough and will go to great lengths to expand their trade, but have little use for the outsiders themselves, whom they consider brash, arrogant, and corrupt.

The people of Sparasool suffered centuries of Imperial oppression. They are still recovering and as they rediscover their cultural heritage, they remain as philosophical and intellectual as they are fearsome and bold.

Brief History

In the days before the Myratan Empire, the tribes of Sparasool were known as fearsome raiders. Every few years, armies would swarm out of the desert and wash over farms and villages for hundreds of miles around, taking what they wanted and burning the rest. The hills between Sparasool and Myratas were dotted with watchtowers and keeps which, while incapable of actually stopping the wave of attackers, would at least slow them down long enough for the Myratans to mount a defense.

When the tables were turned, and the Myratan Empire seized control of Sparasool, the desert nation became the Empire's primary source of the transparent, nigh-indestructible substance known as ironglass. Unfortunately for Myratas, it was also their primary source of rebellion. The tribes were fiercely independent and difficult to control. In an attempt to solidify its hold over the nation, Myratas brought the entire overwhelming force of its military technology to bear. Entire cities were destroyed and whole tribes wiped out.

It wasn't the military, however, that brought Sparasool to heel. It was a leaf.

The kina leaf, used for centuries in other parts of Karthador for its narcotic qualities, was virtually unknown in Sparasool. Myratas introduced it to the Sool and almost immediately found the population much easier to control. Once hooked on kina, the tribes were less willing to rise up in rebellion. They were either too far under the drug's effects to cause trouble or too fearful of endangering their supply.

So deeply did kina embed itself in the culture that, when the Empire began to crumble, Sparasool was one of the last Imperial provinces to throw off its chains. Sparasool, which had started out as such a hotbed of armed rebellion, would only drag itself out of its drug-induced stupor when the tribal elders outlawed kina and sentenced its sellers to death.

When the black ships landed, Sparasool was too far inland to be directly affected by the invasion. Nevertheless, the tribal elders agreed that the tribes should contribute what they could to the war effort, lest the invaders break through the mountains and march west. To this end, the tribes joined with the warriors of Porothon – and found a whole new market for their ironglass.

Today, Sparasool is caught between the old ways and the new. Parts of the nation are reaching backwards to reclaim their pre-Imperial culture and independence, while others strive for a future of commerce and riches by exporting their ironglass and ivory. If its people can find a balance, Sparasool may be one of the strongest nations in Karthador. If not, they may tear themselves apart.

The People

The tribal people of Sparasool (who call themselves "the Sool") value courage, honor, and tradition. They are intellectuals, given to philosophical curiosity. While some Sool have settled permanently in cities and villages, their fierce independence means that most tribes prefer the lives of nomads, joining with other tribes only to trade, negotiate, or make war.

Sparasool has no true central government. The tribes govern themselves and keep each other in check. If a major problem arises that spells trouble for all the tribes, an informal council of elders addresses it and proclaims their solution from the hidden city of Sparidoon.

Physically, the nomads of Sparasool are slightly shorter than average human height, with broad shoulders, swarthy skin and hair ranging from light brown to a black so deep it's practically blue. Hair styles vary widely by tribe, though it is usually worn long by both men and women.

The Sool prefer practical clothing for desert travel. Flowing robes with deep hoods keep the wind-borne sand from their faces. Translucent full-face hoods help protect them even further during sand storms. They also carry heavy "night cloaks" for when the sun sets and the desert air turns cold. Wooden jewelry is valuable, since wood is rare in the desert. Such tokens are only given as gifts on important occasions such as weddings or rites of passage.

Though the nomadic tribes generally restrict their wanderings to Sparasool, individual Sool are often found throughout Karthador. Some seek new riches and business opportunities for their tribes, while others explore out of curiosity. Still others may be exiles, driven from their tribes for crimes they prefer to forget.

Factions

When the nomadic Sool organize themselves by anything other than tribe, it's usually by occupation. Those who tend ronards consider themselves separate from those who herd moranards, and those who live by the old ways are proud to say they are part of neither of those groups.

Moranard Herders

Just as the shepherd nomads have guided their flocks for centuries, so too have the moranard-herders. But while raising ronards has turned into a lucrative business, moranards are still raised for food—and neither Porothon nor any other trading partner has much interest in moranard meat. Many moranard-herding tribes have grudgingly started raising ronards just to keep afloat, but even they acknowledge that the situation is untenable. As the ronard herds expand, they consume more of the resources, leaving little for the moranards. This has led to conflict between the moranard and ronard herders and even violence between the tribes. The oases have always been "communal" areas, but now they are starting to be claimed and protected by certain tribal herders, allowing only authorized users to access them.

Pure Ones

Sparasool is corrupt, claim the so-called "Pure Ones." Its people have given themselves over to greed, selling out their nation to the very people who once enslaved them. Only by rejecting these foreign influences and embracing the old ways can they save themselves from the judgment that is to come.

These are the words of Sayril, who claims to be a prophet for the unknown Maker, the closest thing the Sool have to a god. His words are taking root in the minds of both the old, who remember stories of how things used to be in the ancient days, and the young, who find themselves adrift in a culture caught between worlds. The prophet's followers, who call themselves Pure Ones, exhort the tribes to reject foreign involvement, including financial investments, and aren't afraid to use violence for the sake of their cause. They have attacked Myratan and Porothonian operations, kidnapped, beaten, and even killed the foreign agents.

The Pure Ones operate without the council's authorization, but as the movement grows, there are some who say it's only a matter of time before the council comes around to their way of thinking.

Raiders

Not everyone in Sparasool has forgotten that they were once a nation of marauders, not merchants. Before the Empire, they exported nothing but fear and imported whatever they could take from their weaker neighbors. These modern raiders operate in defiance of the elder council and are technically outlaws, though many see them as true traditionalists. Some raiding tribes restrict themselves to raiding the neighboring lands of Myratas, Ursicor, and Ferazonn as their ancestors did. Others have expanded their operations into the passes of the Nasili Mountains, where they prey on caravans bound for Porothon. Still others have turned to pure banditry and attack other tribes as they travel across the desolate places of Sparasool.

Ronard Walkers

The ronard is a docile, herbivore megalizard that stands half as tall as a man. It is completely unremarkable except for its prominent tusks which, when broken off, grow back. In the wild, this allows the ronard to gore an attacking predator and break off the tusk to escape the battle. In the hands of the Sool, the tusks are harvested each year to provide ivory.

For centuries, tribes of nomads have driven herds of these beasts from one Sparasool oasis to another, following routes established in the distant past. This tradition continues today, with one major difference: while in times past, the shepherds sold their full-grown ronards for their meat and tusks, today's market cares only for the ivory tusks. The merchants of Porothon buy all the ivory they can get their hands on and pay the best prices the shepherds have seen in generations. Slaughtering ronards at maturity, once the norm, has now become foolish. A mature ronard can still go on to provide many years' worth of ivory.

Because of this new emphasis on ivory, more tribes are expanding their ronard herds, the shepherd tribes are growing wealthier, and the oases that once easily supported all the herds are becoming overtaxed.

Religion

The Sool are intellectual philosophers. They study the world around them to discover the secrets of the unseen universe beyond. Given the evidence of an infinitely complex yet integrated world, they long ago came to the conclusion that it was clearly the work of a single supernatural creator. But they have no idea who this Maker is or what he wants and are suspicious of any who would claim to know the mind of the unknown and unknowable creator.

Even though they don't know the identity of the Maker, the Sool have erected temples to contemplate the world of philosophy and spirit. These temples are more akin to libraries and universities than true houses of worship, since the unknown Maker has given no indication regarding how he wishes to be worshiped. Nevertheless, the Sool have been known to offer sacrifices in time of trouble and to pray at small home altars.

The Sool suspect there is an afterlife, but again, lacking proof, have no concrete theories on the subject. Their legends are full of ghosts and spirits which are often malevolent beings returned from beyond to torment creatures of flesh. These legends are generally dismissed as mere stories, but when faced with howling winds that sound like voices in the middle of the night, it's easy to consider that they might be real.

People of Note

Amarantay Nightglass

In the glory days of Sparasool, before the Imperial occupation, the Nightglass tribe was one of most feared and respected bands of marauders in the land. It was all but wiped out during the invasion and never fully recovered.

A little over a decade ago, the struggling remnants of the Nightglass tribe were barely eking out an existence as moranard-herders. Amarantay, one of the elders of the tribe, turned a desperate eye towards one of the regular caravans from Porothon. Why not attack it, she suggested? They had nothing more to lose. The raid was a success, Amarantay was made chief, and the tribe had found its calling. It wasn't a new calling, Amarantay was quick to point out. It was the tribe's original calling; they were simply returning to their true roots. Today, there are many tribes who consider themselves raiders. Amarantay Nightglass is by no means the leader or spokesperson for them, but they afford her the respect she deserves as the first to publicly embrace a return to old ways of taking what they wanted from the outsiders, rather than meekly accepting whatever the outsiders had to offer.

Daroo Windwalker

Daroo Windwalker is the closest thing the Sool have to a true national chieftain. He's spent the last forty years living in the hidden city of Sparidoon, overseeing the council of elders with his gentle words of wisdom. Some might accuse the elderly leader of being out of touch with the outside world, but his network of agents throughout the nation brings him news of events as they happen. Perhaps it's because of these agents that Daroo usually knows what the Pure Ones and other troublemakers are up to almost before they do themselves.

Sayril the Prophet

Sayril was a religious philosopher, studying and teaching at the Temple of Raloo. After a seven-day period of fasting and meditation, Sayril had a vision. The Maker had spoken to him, he said, and instructed him to tell the Sool that their greed was corrupting them. To purify their souls—and their nation—they must cut out the foreign influences that were driving this greed and return to the ways of their forefathers. The prophet can still be found in Raloo, but often travels throughout Sparasool, spreading his message of repentance, purification, and—if necessary—violent revolution. There are some who would like to see Sayril's message stopped forever, but as his followers grow in number, they risk turning him into a martyr.

Economy

Sparasool is a moderately wealthy nation. Most of its people have enough to eat, though many are not as well-off as their parents were. Since the rise of the ivory market, more and more of the nation's wealth has ended up in the hands of a relatively small number of merchant tribes. The tribes take care of their own, so while there is starvation and poverty in Sparasool, it afflicts entire tribes rather than individuals.

Since the nation has so little metal, paper, wood, or fruit, these are all welcome imports. A popular—though very *unwelcome*—import is kina, the narcotic leaf that's been outlawed since the fall of the Empire. Smugglers risk their lives bringing kina into Sparasool. Those who survive return home rich.

Sparasool's top export is ironglass, which is a key component in making airships, modern buildings, and some crystal machines. Ivory is second, followed by stone-silk, which is sold in bolts pre-dyed in bright, eye-catching colors. A special, weaponized version of ironglass is very rarely exported, since its construction is a sacred secret held by a few master glass smiths. When ironglass blades leave the country, they're either gifts to foreign nobility or smuggled out by Sool who love money more than their nation.

Technology

Sparasool imports most of its crystal machines from Porothon and Myratas. Its warriors carry force ray weapons and its wealthiest citizens use airships and skimmers to traverse the desert. The Sool manufacture no crystal machines themselves, but are the sole producers of ironglass, which is used in many of those machines.

Military

The culture of Sparasool embraces a well-armed citizenry. This is largely a matter of practicality; the wastes between oases are full of predators, both animal and human, that are best faced with sword in hand.

Nevertheless, Sparasool has no true standing military. The tribes defend themselves in time of war, but have no professional warriors. The closest thing the Sool have to full-time soldiers are the guards who protect their handful of cities. Although this lack of an organized military made it easier for the Empire to conquer the nation since there was no centralized coordinated defense, it made it harder for the Myratans to control it as there was no central army to defeat and fighting the guerrilla tactics of the tribes with the main army of the Empire was not terribly effective.

Sool warriors wear armor made of lizard hide. It's not as strong as steel, but durable and much lighter. Most blades are made of imported steel, but the wealthiest Sool carry weapons made of weaponized ironglass.

The Land

While Sparasool is mostly desert, there's more to it than just the endless drifting sands that outsiders might imagine.

In the south, the land is rocky and hilly, dotted with thin shrubs and cactus. The north consists of harsh steppe lands, much colder than the south and covered in thin yellow grass. In between are the shifting dunes popularly associated with Sparasool, where water appears only in the occasional oasis, sometimes separated by hundreds of miles.

Sparasool is bordered to the east by the Nasili Mountains and to the west by the Myratan hills. To the southeast lies a strip of arable land along the Greenstone River, on the other side of which lie the savannahs of Ferazonn. Sparasool has no natural border to the north, but at some point the steppes blend into territory controlled by Arcona.

Settlements

Most of the tribes of Sparasool are nomadic, migrating through the desert from one oasis to another. But some oases have grown into villages and some villages into towns and cities. The most important of these cities are listed below.

Bertronos, Towers of Stone and Water

Bertronos was originally called Bertran, but when the Empire took it over, the Myratans changed the name to something they considered more fitting. They also used the town's natural stone towers as foundations for a staging area for airships to take on fuel and supplies. When the occupiers outgrew the town's natural water supplies, Myratan engineers diverted a natural spring in the Nasili mountains to artificially irrigate the region.

When the Empire fell, Myratas abandoned its garrisons and holdings in Sparasool—all except Bertronos. The commander of the airship towers refused to surrender the site, and threatened to destroy the advanced pumpworks that kept the area in fresh water. The Sool who relied on the water grudgingly accepted the arrangement. The other nations, who used the waystation for their own airships, also saw no reason to force the issue. Therefore, while Bertonos is surrounded by Sparasool, it technically remains a Myratan colony today.

Laniday, the Ivory Market

Ivory from ronard tusks is a lucrative business for Sparasool. It can be used to make practical things like buttons and machine parts, as well as ornamental items such as jewelry or embellishments. Ivory merchants from all over Karthador come to Laniday to buy ivory, descending like locusts in their airships and caravans. Some shepherding tribes bring their whole herds, since some customers believe that the fresher the ivory, the higher its quality. Others send their ivory in vast caravans, considering it cheaper to ship the end product than to drive a herd of ronards cross-country.

Monpar, City of Grain and Blood

This city was founded when some tribes decided to settle the strip of fertile land on the Greenstone River. The farmers along the river brought their surplus to the city to trade for supplies and sell to traders from the north. But since the strip is also claimed by the northern people of Ferazonn, it's been a constant source of fighting. They've negotiated a fragile truce at the moment—at least officially—but the city is always on edge and the business of farming is always threatened with violence and bloodshed.

Because of its position along the Greenstone River, Monpar is a cultural melting pot. While technically a Sool settlement, much of its population also comes from Ferazonn and Myratas.

Rannar, City of Glass

For centuries, Sparasool has been known as the source of the best glass in Karthador and the exclusive source of ironglass. Rannar is where glass sellers and buyers come together. If it's glass, it's here: ironglass panes and domes, stained glass artworks, and glass sculptures of every kind. Even ironglass blades (which are technically illegal to sell to outsiders) can be found for exorbitant prices. Each glass-making tribe has its own mark and competition between them can be fierce. Some buyers come to secure huge contracts and bring back with them not just glass but a team of glass-makers to construct what they need made on-site.

The highlight of Rannar is the Glass Palace, a vast mansion made entirely from glass. Most of it is ironglass, though it is filled with fragile glass sculptures and artwork. Part of the palace is occupied by the city's rulers, part of it is rented out at huge prices to visitors, and part of it is a public museum.

Sparidoon, the Hidden City

Very few outsiders have seen the hidden city of Sparidoon. It's known to be located deep in the heart of Sparasool, where the wind howls endlessly across the sand dunes. Only the tribal elders know how to find it by following certain stars on cloudless nights.

It's in Sparidoon that the elders meet to discuss matters of importance to the whole nation. Once they come to an agreement, their decisions are taken back to their respective tribes to be carried out. When an elder's time has come, he remains in the hidden city and gives up his tribal affiliation. Here he lives out his days in isolation and contemplation, offering his wisdom to the leaders who are yet to come.

Sparizan, the Bazaar

While Laniday and Rannar are Sparasool's gateways of commerce to the rest of the world, Sparizan is where the tribes come to trade with one another. Prices are better here and the selection more varied; yes, there's glass and ivory, but also stone-silk, moranard meat, machines for turning sunlight into energy, philosophy books, fine art, and hundreds of other items unique to the Sool culture. Because there are fewer outsiders, the tribes are more willing to let their guards down here. Tribal rivalries flare up as good-natured brawls and deadly duels. Outsiders occasionally come here to find better prices on Soolian goods, but risk finding themselves ignored, mocked, attacked, or robbed.

Flora and Fauna

Bounder Lizards

These megalizards are the preferred mounts of Sool raiders and war parties. They are faster than skitter lizards, running on hind legs designed for speed and mobility rather than carrying heavy burdens. Bounders are predators by nature and are harder to train than their skitter counterparts. Wild bounders can still be found in many parts of Sparasool and are always hungry for human prey.

Burrower Bug

These large insects burrow deep into the sand and lurk there, virtually invisible, waiting for prey to stumble upon them, whereupon they clamp onto the legs of whatever creature is around, inject a Fatigue-causing venom, and begin to digest any exposed tissue from their acidic secretions. They are feared for their capability to kill a man simply by lulling him to sleep with their venom.

Skitter Lizard

The skitter lizard is the backbone of the Soolian nomadic way of life. This megalizard stands as tall as a man on four stubby, splayed legs that help it “skitter” over the shifting sands. It can easily carry hundreds of pounds of goods, needs little nourishment, and can store weeks' worth of water inside its internal reservoirs. Skitter lizards are raised and domesticated by the desert nomads who rely on them for transporting goods and supplies and can often be found for sale in Sparasool cities.

Stone Spider

The stone spider lives in cool, dark caverns beneath the desert. Sool keep them as a sort of livestock and harvest their webbing to make stone-silk. Though the spiders are harmless, the fact that they grow as large as a man's head means that outsiders aren't always comfortable around them.

Places of Interest

Border Forts

The hills of western Sparasool are dotted with ancient forts. Many are crumbled ruins, but some are surprisingly well maintained. In the ancient days, watchmen from Myratas who warned against Sparasool invasions manned these forts. During the days of the Empire, they were used as Imperial garrisons. Today, those that haven't been completely ruined or abandoned are used as caravan waypoints, bandit hideouts, and temporary ronard pens. While some are claimed by various tribes or Myratan interests, most have no official owners.

Gauvoon's Pit

Ironglass is crafted from a special type of sand found in isolated regions throughout Sparasool. When a new "glass pit" is discovered, it is soon swarming with glass-makers, sand-miners, and others looking to make their fortune in ironglass.

Gauvoon Rocktalon found this particular glass pit a few years ago, just a few hours' travel from a grass-ringed oasis. The place is now a boomtown and people have come from all over the country to stake their claims.

Some of these people, while mostly Sool themselves, are supported by Myratan or Porothonian interests. They've got better equipment and financing than the local prospectors and are often viewed with jealousy or suspicion. According to rumor, a Porothonian company is attempting to buy out the whole pit. According to another rumor, blood will flow if they try it.

The Howling Rocks

In the southwest, there lies a rock formation unlike any seen elsewhere in Sparasool. The rocks stand hundreds of feet high and are riddled with cracks and holes. The wind howls endlessly through them, filling the air with ghostly voices.

Some say the spirits truly speak here. It's not uncommon to see pilgrims and would-be prophets meditating in the shadows of the stones, hoping for enlightenment. A few actually have achieved "enlightenment" in the form of psionic powers. The site is also a popular travel destination for foreign nobles and dignitaries, which in turn has given rise to the number of bandits, kidnappers, and raiders in the region.

Insect Mounds

Deep in the desert is a region of vast insect hives that stand tall as buildings. These structures are made of earth and stone held together by insect secretions. Some of them were abandoned by their makers and have been taken over by bandits or other indigenous desert predators. Others are occupied by thriving colonies of oversized flying insects called fire wasps that scour the region for food. Native Sool give the hives a wide berth when traveling past them and never approach them during the day, when the insects are most likely to be hunting

Temple of Raloo

The village of Raloo, a hamlet grown up around a northern oasis, would be unremarkable except for its temple and the people who worship there. The temple is the unofficial headquarters of the Pure Ones.

The place is overrun with zealots, some of whom advocate open armed rebellion against the Sool leaders they say are selling the soul of Sparasool. The prophet Sayris is often here, preaching and teaching in the temple.

Vannay Ruins

The city of Vannay was once a bustling trade town in the foothills of the Nasili Mountains. When the Myratan Empire invaded, it became a hotbed of rebel activity and a supply depot for the rebels who were hiding in the mountains. After years of unrest, the Empire decided to remove the problem altogether and sent airships to bomb Vannay into oblivion. The city was celebrating a festival when the airships appeared overhead. Thousands were killed in the ensuing bombardments.

The Empire succeeded in destroying one supply depot, but their savagery only encouraged other cities to more fully support the rebel cause.

Today, the ruins of Vannay are said to not only be full of riches if one knows where to look but also full of ghosts. Even if the ruins aren't haunted, there are certainly enough other scavengers in the area to make an expedition to Vannay dangerous enough to keep most people away.

Whispers and Rumors

Escorts

The nomadic Sool and their trade partners are forever crossing the great deserts. Whether hauling goods to market in caravans or driving herds of megalizards, these travelers can always use another hand to guard the livestock at night, scout for trouble, or serve as a guide through a tricky mountain pass.

Goods for the Pure

The Pure Ones are pursuing a low-level insurgency against foreign interests in Sparasool. They need supplies and will pay well for food, weapons and energy crystals. Of course, supporting these outlaws is strictly forbidden, except by the tribes who secretly support their radical agenda.

Oasis Quest

A new oasis is rumored to have been discovered in the central desert. The first tribe to map its location can claim it—if they can survive long enough to do so. According to the same rumor, it's in the middle of a burrower bug hunting grounds.

Sell Swords

When two rival tribes come into conflict, political realities sometimes prevent them from simply warring against each other. Many tribes have allies; to attack one is to attack all of them and invites disaster upon your own tribe. For this reason, many tribes hire mercenary troops to do their dirty work for them; jobs often include sabotaging a caravan, driving off a foreign merchant, or preventing a ronard herd from feeding at a given oasis. The targets may suspect which rival tribe is the true master of their suffering, but often can't verify their suspicions.

Smuggler Run

Kina is strictly forbidden in Sparasool. Those caught with more than the tiniest amount are sentenced to death, a sentence usually carried out on the spot. So it's no surprise that kina is the most lucrative contraband in the nation, with a local selling price up to ten times higher than in the neighboring regions. This has given rise to two lucrative occupations: kina smuggler and smuggler hunter. There are standing rewards for those who capture kina smugglers and freelance bounty hunters are always on the lookout for an inexperienced player in the kina game.

THARRAN

Overview

Tharran is an isolated nation full of passionate, ferociously literate people. The nation is cut off from the rest of the continent by the sea, the ocean, and hostile tundra. Its people are defined by their isolation, which is both a blessing and a curse.

Brief History

Before the rise of the Empire, Tharran was known for its literature and universities. Nobles from across the continent would attend its universities to study the great works of literature, learn to write epics, and to see the greatest stage shows performed. The isolation of the place gave it a romantic glamor that the Tharrans adopted as their own. They were a shining beacon of art and literature.

At first, the Myratan Empire largely ignored Tharran. The nation was simply too isolated and too far from Myratas, to justify a full invasion. The Empire merely demanded the nation's sworn loyalty and tributes, and left it at that.

All that changed when the poets of Tharran began writing anti-Imperial tracts. The tracts were smuggled into the other provinces and the Empire suddenly had a reason to worry about Tharran.

Because of Tharran's isolation, the Empire chose not to invade but instead to bomb the nation to rubble. It was far more efficient to mount a single, massive airship bombing campaign.

After the bombings, Tharran closed its borders. They barricaded the bridge over the Rathiveen Strait. They refused to let ships into their harbors. Even after the fall of the Empire, they kept themselves isolated, trying to stay away from the troubles of the world.

Today, Tharrans are torn between maintaining the isolation, reclaiming their place as an intellectual powerhouse, or finding some third destiny all their own. Already they're letting some traffic through the pass and allowing some ships to enter the harbors, but it's a slow process.

The People

Tharrans value intelligence, artistry, and family honor. Illiteracy is not tolerated and considered a mark of barbarism.

Large extended families are the norm; it's not unusual for four or even five generations to live under one roof. The younger members are expected to support the older generations, allowing the elders the time to focus on their studies, art, and writing. The idea of sending a young person to the university is unheard of. They're far more valuable on the farm.

Physically, Tharrans are pale skinned with green or blue eyes and hair of either pale gold or solid black. Men and women both wear it short and severe. Tharran clothing varies with the seasons; dark and formal in the winter, bright and whimsical in the summer.

Adventurers from Tharran are usually writers, either fiction authors or reporters, who are focused on either seeking out new stories or finding new markets to which to sell their words. Others are young people fed up with their nation's isolationism and are looking for escape. Some are exiles that have left home for reasons of honor.

Factions

The elders of the leading families send delegates to a yearly meeting of the Senate, which passes laws and rules on regional disputes. People don't worry much about Senate politics, as it is the families themselves who enforce the policies of that body; if they're bad policies, the families simply ignore them.

Agitators

There are those who feel that the time for isolationism is at an end. The Empire is gone and the country needs to reopen its borders. The people need to open their minds to new ideas. Opportunities abound for art, literature, and commerce, they say, if only the great families would be willing to grasp them.

Farmers

The Tharran economy is largely agricultural. Extended families operate vast plantations that provide crops enough for themselves and plenty of surpluses. The soil is thin, however, and requires a large area in order to produce sufficient crops. Fields of neighboring farms can bump into each other and even overlap, causing conflict. Sometimes they can be resolved just by making the proper arrangements the season before. Other times, they boil over into ugly feuds, complete with sabotage, duels, and even the use of lawyers.

Fishers

Extended fishing families live in the seaside towns, sending out their large fishing ships for days at a time. Women traditionally stay on land and run the business while the men tend the nets. When a ship is understaffed, it's not unheard of for them to take on foreigners to help with the fishing, especially if there's a fang-whale in the area.

Merchants

Behind closed doors, the farmers consider the fishers smelly and uncouth and the fishers call the farmers lazy and pretentious. But it's the role of the merchants to bring them both together for the sake of commerce. Each town can support two or three merchant families; any more than that and the competition gets too fierce and one family is inevitably driven out. Merchants are desperate for goods from outside Tharran and have been known to pay outrageous sums for even common crystal machines.

Religion

Tharrans believe that the Ancients were actually gods and that they did not abandon Karthador, but merely left for a time and shall return. The elder machines were left as a form of scripture; their purpose is not for moral guidance, but to serve as a roadmap to the strange science the Ancients want humanity to unlock for itself.

Tharran theologians actively seek out elder machines and the hidden vaults of the Ancients. The elder machines speak to them, they say, giving them visions of wonders and horrors just outside humanity's vision. The most charismatic of these theologians attract followers who listen to their teachings and obey their commands.

Psionics is more common in Tharran than in other nations, and seems to run particularly strong in certain families. Such powers are seen as further guidance from the Ancients; they are scriptures written into the Tharrans' very essence.

Outside of Tharran, worship of the Ancients is very uncommon and regarded with suspicion. It doesn't help that the various cults that spring up around these beliefs are rumored to conduct strange elder machine rituals, midnight sacrifices, and unwholesome ceremonies. These things are never spoken of in polite company, of course.

People of Note

Deen Banun

Deen is a powerful telepath and the patron of one of the leading great families. His people have been at the center of Tharran life since before the Empire, with descendants all throughout the country. Therefore, he is fantastically connected and can get anything he wants for his direct descendants—if they can get his attention. He's currently obsessed with a playwright who has been writing plays for him. If someone were to befriend the playwright, they could get on his good side; he would then be predisposed to get them anything.

Hun Kurigal

In a land that celebrates literature and writers, the most celebrated writer in the land is king, especially if that land doesn't have a king. The poet Hun Kurigal is the unofficial king of Tharran. He is dedicated to getting his works into the hands of people outside Tharran. He is insecure and feels that although they love him here, he must know how his works are accepted and performed in Porothon, Myratas, and The universities of Ursicor. He simply must find out and is thinking of visiting these foreign places himself to set his mind at ease.

Mig Numish

Not all the most popular writing is literary or poetic. Much of it is practical or political. Mig is one such tract-writer who has spent the past few years writing powerful tracts calling for the opening of the passes and harbors and for Tharran to join its siblings in the new era of openness and freedom. Her words are stirring people to action, but those in power who feel threatened are trying to discredit her by saying she's in the pay of Porothon, who just wants another market for their products.

Economy

Now that it's easing its borders open, Tharran is starting to reap the benefits of exporting its goods once more. It's wealthier than Rathiveen, though it has far to go before reaching the riches of Porothon. Each generation is expected to work in the family business until it is old enough to retire and focus on its studies. The older family members are responsible for maintaining their families' finances, and help support the arts enjoyed by all generations.

The sprawling plantations mostly grow coldcorn and cotton. Coldcorn is a grain staple used in bread and basic food; it grows even in cold, dry climates, which makes it suitable for Tharran's poor growing season. Cotton is mostly used by locals for home spinning to make their own clothing. Most manufacturing is done in-house. Particular families often specialize in woodworking, metal working, or textile manufacture. Coldcorn is the major farming-derived export of Tharran.

On the seaside, entire towns are dedicated to catching, processing, and selling fish. Barrels of salted fish are shipped to Sparasool, where it's considered a delicacy.

Tharran's most well-known exports are its books, plays, and epic songs. They have the most advanced printing presses of any nation and ship out hundreds of these books each year.

Technology

As a nation of farmers and fishermen, Tharran manufactures very few crystal machines. As a nation of intellectuals, however, it manufactures reliable printing presses and imports other devices that make its work easier and more efficient.

Tharran's theologians collect elder machines of all types, and are willing to pay large sums for those that have been recently discovered.

Military

Tharran has no standing military, but learning to use a sword and blaster is part of growing up in a learned family, and one is expected to use it when his personal or family honor is at stake.

When Tharran needs a military force, each family's elders round up the best of its fighters and send them to wherever they are needed.

The Land

Tharran is bordered by the ocean on the east and the Blackfrost Sea on the west. To the south, it's separated from the mainland by narrow strip of water known as the Rathiveen Strait.

The climate of Tharran is dry and generally cool, though the occasional hot summer day is not unheard-of. Cold wet rain comes in off the Blackfrost Sea to keep the crops irrigated and prevent the nation from turning into a frozen desert.

Settlements

Gemeka, the Heart of Culture

Gemeka is where the best plays are performed, the most popular authors write and read their works, and the hottest books are printed. This is where the leisure classes go to show off their culture. The avenues are lined with salons and entertainment centers boasting fine food, exquisite wine, and other refined things. To perform in Shelukun is one thing, but to perform in Gemeka is a true mark of success.

Rimush, City of Fish

While the sea coast is dotted with small fishing villages, Rimush is the true heart of the fishing industry. It's here that the great fishing families have their homes and dictate policy to the rest of the fisher folk. It's here that the fish are prepared, packed for export, and sent south on merchant ships. They don't export much to Rathiveen, but Porothon is crazy for the more exotic northern fish. New sailors are always welcome here. Even if a man has never been aboard a ship before, he can find a fishing ship to take him on. If he can lift and carry, they'll find a good use for him, especially if they come across a fang-whale.

Shelukun, the Heart of Knowledge

As the home of the Senate, this is the closest Tharran has to a true capital. This is where the elders of the families meet to discuss current affairs, as well as the home to Tharran's universities. There used to be dozens of universities, but after the bombings, only a handful survived; many are in the process of being rebuilt. The streets are full of university students, most often men and women old enough to have offspring who can support them while they study.

Ubar, the Open Gate

This is the one port the elders have allowed to open to foreign ships. As such, it's always full, crowded and noisy, for it is too small to handle the volume of trade. Unfortunately, this also means it's open to troublemakers, both from foreign shores and internal agitators looking for trouble. Local fishermen often have trouble navigating the port because of the foreign traders. This leads to frustration, arguments, and even violence.

Flora and Fauna

Coldcorn

The magic of coldcorn is two-part. First, it grows well even in cold, dry conditions, such as the tundra. Second, coldcorn doesn't rot for years. It doesn't take much to preserve it; kept dry and cool, it will remain for years as fresh as the day it was cut.

Cotton

This staple is spun in homesteads into cloth, which is used for clothing, blankets, and other textile products. Each farm family has a small plot of land dedicated to this crop and spins its own fabrics. Any excess finished product is traded to the merchants.

Fang-whales

These massive aquatic mammals appear sporadically off the eastern shore; when they do, they devour literally tons of fish. Rather than ignore this threat to commercial fishing, the fisher folk take to the boats and hunt the beasts down. It's a huge honor to be part of a fang-whale kill, especially since it normally requires multiple ships' worth of people to do it.

Places of Interest

Canal Island

This island is actually a series of small islands just off the eastern coast. In the coldest days of winter, when the water between the islands freezes up, the island is transformed into a shining tourist destination full of frozen canals. Races and theater performances are held on the canals, and food vendors keep people warm and fed.

Golden Sun Theater

The Golden Sun waste first theater founded in Gemeka, which was at the time just a market town. Within a few seasons, the theater had established itself as the best place to see and be seen. Over time, the city has grown up to follow the theater's lead. The theater has remained true to its roots, is still the most prestigious place to put on shows, and charges a fortune to attend. Theater tickets have become a secondary currency in the city, with people willing to work, scheme, and sometimes even kill for them.

The Great Bridge

A vast wood and stone bridge stretches for miles across the narrowest point of the Rathiveen Strait, connecting Tharran to the mainland. It's been officially closed since the Myratan bombing, but individuals or small groups of people can still make their way across it without the authorities noticing.

The Great Library

The Great Library is the oldest, most venerated building in Shelukun. It was founded in the ages before the Empire, some say as many as three hundred years before, and has continued to grow and sprawl outwards ever since. Whenever a family wants to give back to the community, and remind the rest of the world of its wealth, it adds on another wing and names it after itself. The purpose of the library is to contain all the information in the known world; it contains the greatest collection of texts on elder machines outside the Machinist Order, as well as treatises on almost every known subject and copies of every book every published in Tharran, even the ones deemed controversial. The library is run by the order of librarians, who not only manage it, but protect it with armed guards and send expeditions out to retrieve lost volumes or collect donations from other nations. No one can officially "check out" books and scrolls from the library, but powerful nobles can temporarily "rent" them.

Landun's Retreat

The small town of Demesu offers nothing particularly special other than hosting the estate of Kin Landun, a well-known writer. He has turned his estate into a writers' retreat, where he hosts writers from all over Tharran; here they are free to brainstorm and critique each other's work. He occasionally brings in foreign guests from across the continent, which always causes a stir. He's recently brought in several agitator writers, which is making the great families look at him askance. Be doing so, he's unofficially endorsing their ideas amongst the intellectuals.

Newspaper Offices

Any town worth anything has a small printing press with a writer on staff who puts together stories of general interest. There are three main newspaper families; they used to work together in collaboration but are now bitter rivals and take great pleasure in digging into each other's interests and exposing any corruption they find there. They can be hired to muck rake anyone, a practice considered fair if not exactly honorable, as long as what they print is both for the public good and factual. They sometimes hire outsiders to do research and investigations for them, especially in small towns where the local reporters are well-known.

Temple of the Mind

On the outskirts of Shelukun stands a white stone tower where those with psionic powers are sent to hone their craft and learn the lore of the Ancients. Unlike the other institutions of learning in Shelukun, this one welcomes children and young people, which makes it one of the liveliest academies in town. The temple produces many of Tharran's theologians and religious writers, and has been known to attract psionic students from across Karthador.

Whispers and Rumors

Family Feud

A feud between rival farmer families has escalated into violence and is threatening the season's harvest for both parties. While this would normally remain a private matter, a merchant family has invested heavily in both harvests in hopes of exporting the excess for profit. Rather than lose their investment, the merchants are willing to hire outsiders to help bring the feud to an end.

Missing Tale

A famous writer has gone missing! His family is offering a substantial reward for his return. Maybe he was kidnapped, but it's just as likely that he went into hiding or was killed. He owed a lot of money to people for making bad bets.

Rumor Mill is Spinning

Porothon is known for its textile mills. One of its many textile guilds has taken an interest in Tharran's cotton crop and is working with a farm family to develop a more efficient, crystal machine-powered cloth spinning operation. If successful, it could mean an increase for that family's honor and fortunes—which would be good for their supporters, but not so good for their rivals.

Whale Tale

It's that time of the year again; a fang-whale has attacked several ships in eastern sea, damaging or destroying them. The odd thing is that all four ships were from the same fishing family. Is this just a coincidence? Or is there a greater threat afoot? In either case, someone has to get out there and destroy that fang-whale before it can do any more damage.

Word Tour

A poet's work has recently caught the attention of the nobles in Porothon, who have offered her a small fortune to come do a book tour. She has agreed, but has never been outside Tharran before and is very nervous. Her family is looking to hire guides and guardians to get her safely to Porothon and back.

URSICOR

Overview

The home of the Imperial Academy, Ursicor is known for its intellectual nobles and artistic elite—as well as its savage forest barbarians. It was once the very model of a stable, feudal society, but the collapse of the Myratan Empire shook the nation to its core and the old systems are beginning to crumble. Its people grow restless and the barbarians grow impatient in the shadows of the trees.

Ursicor is rich with energy crystals, iron, and wood. It supplies many of the raw materials used for Myratan manufacturing and its brooding black forests produce as much lumber as they do tales of wild men and monsters.

The nation's culture is one of contrasts. On the one hand, it maintains strong traditions of class division and social propriety. On the other, it respects and encourages art—even art that questions these very traditions. Somehow, the people of Ursicor find a way to meld these sometimes-conflicting views into a way of life that is purely their own.

Brief History

Before the rise of the Myratan Empire, Ursicor was a strictly feudal society ruled by seven queens.

The nobility of Ursicor valued intellectual pursuits and therefore respected and admired Myratas. They were not conquered by the Myratan Empire, but were in fact invited to join it. In return for Ursicor's raw materials, Myratas offered to share the bounty of its own scholarly and artistic resources. The queens unanimously agreed to the arrangement. Ursicor became the first province—and strongest supporter—of the Myratan Empire.

Under the Empire, the queens maintained their rule. As the Imperial need for resources grew, the queens drove their people harder, quelling dissent whenever it showed its head. The nobility were unaffected by the Empire's demands; it was the peasantry who suffered. These so-called "lowborn" either resigned themselves to hard lives in service to the queens or risked fostering dissent and being arrested and hanged as traitors. Some chose a third option – escape – and fled to the deep forests of Ursicor where life was no easier, but at least it offered freedom of a sort.

When the Empire fell, the queens found themselves without the might of Myratas to support their demands. The pent-up resentment of the people exploded in a revolution that destroyed one royal family and threatened to consume the rest. Only by imposing draconian restrictions on the lowborn did the remaining queens crush the revolution and keep their nation from falling apart. But with every passing year, the rebels grow more daring and popular amongst the general populace.

Ursicor is poised on the brink of civil war. While the nobility struggles against the simmering rebellion, a number of forward-thinking minor nobles secretly support the rebels, providing them with information and equipment. As if that weren't enough, both Myratas and Porothon have agents in Ursicor trying to tip the scales. If the queens fall, the Myratan supply lines will be crippled. Porothon is secretly helping to make this happen, but Myratas will do whatever it takes to prevent it.

The People

The nobles of Ursicor consider themselves “passionate intellectuals.” Although they are intellectuals, they embrace artistic pursuits, especially music and dance, with equal fervor as the more coldly logical ones. They say that a mind without soul is nothing more than a machine; the nobles consider the lowborn to be exactly that. They value intellectual pursuits, but deny them to the masses. They nobles claim that the lowborn are hairy, unthinking, unfeeling creatures and are unworthy to drink from the goblet of culture and learning.

The nobility is of pale, blue-eyed stock that keeps itself hairless as matter of custom (“Hair is for the lowborn and other animals!”), while the lowborn are swarthier in complexion, with dark hair and eyes. Unsurprisingly, clothing preference is based on class. The nobility wear elaborate costumes as a symbol of their status, while the lowborn stick to homespun tunics and breeches, with long fur coats to keep out the cold.

Ursicoran culture is matriarchal. Women are considered more rational and less prone to violence than men, and also more in touch with the artistic side of their souls. The queens, countesses and duchesses rule their realms as traditional feudal fiefdoms. While they often quarrel amongst themselves, they try to avoid open violence when possible.

Many adventurers hail from Ursicor. They may be lowborn looking to improve their lot, rebels looking for resources to help their allies, or scholars from the Imperial Academy on scientific expeditions. Others might be performers looking for new venues, or young nobles seeking an adventurous holiday.

Factions

While the nobility are officially the ruling class, they aren't always on the same side of every issue. The lowborn are likewise split into groups with their own agendas and points of view. The politics in Ursicor are nuanced and complex, but its population can be split into a handful of broad categories.

Academics

In a land that honors intellectuals and artists, those who work in academia are given the utmost respect. Most of them are found in Pogarod, where they are associated with the Imperial Academy or one of the other universities. Here they compete with one another for honors, titles, and academic awards. While they see themselves as the pinnacle of intellectual achievement, their disconnection from the “real world” of Ursicor means most are either unbearably naive or grossly cynical.

Merchants

Since the fall of the Empire, the middle-class merchants have grown in number, wealth, and power. As a group, they are careful, however, not to overstep their bounds and use their power in a way to thwart either the nobility or the rebellion, lest they be labeled outlaws or lackeys of the nobility. Instead, they studiously remain neutral in all political affairs, keeping their heads down and focusing on making whatever profit they can from the conflict.

Nobility

The nobility of Ursicor see themselves as guardians and peace-keepers, protecting the lowborn from themselves and each other. They are defenders of education and the arts; it is they who keep the flame of culture burning even in the darkness of barbarism around them. They regret that sometimes they have to take extreme measures to keep the lowborn from destroying all they've built up, but such is the heavy burden of the intellectual elite.

Peasantry

Most lowborn want nothing to do with either the wilders or the rebels. They just want to do their work in the fields, mines, or logging camps and be left alone. They may resent the queens' high taxes, but value security over freedom, and hope growing unrest will soon blow over.

Rebels

To the nobility, there is no difference between wilders and rebels, but they are wrong. While both may use the forests as sanctuary, the wilders just want to be left alone, while the rebels want to overthrow the noble class and replace it with what they consider a fairer form of government. To this end, the rebels infiltrate proper society wherever they can, gathering intelligence and performing surgical strikes against key nobles. Rebels run the gamut from the wide-eyed academy student with a head full of poetry to the steel-gazed veteran who knows that revolutions are won in blood, not manifestos. And yes, the rebels use the woods, but only to hide until they can reclaim the cities for the common people.

Wilders

There have always been those who preferred the wild forests to the cities of Ursicor. When the queens sold their nation out to the Empire, the ranks of these so-called “wilders” swelled to unprecedented numbers. They weren't rebels and insurrectionists, as the queens called them, but merely hard-working peasants who preferred a life of freedom in the forest to virtual slavery under the nobility's rule. Today, wilders have their own society in the forests running parallel to the traditional culture found in the fiefdoms. This society is more complex than it was in the beginning, but still defined by its belief in freedom and independence.

Religion

Traditionally, the people of Ursicor have worshiped the gods of the wood, a vaguely-defined pantheon that rewards the brave and the kind, and punishes the selfish, the foolish, and the proud. During the time of the Empire, the nobility abandoned the gods of the wood as lowborn superstition and adopted the Myratan belief that one's ancestors can offer wisdom and help from the afterlife. In either case, Ursicor is not one for temples, shrines, or organized worship. Prayers are quick, quiet, and private, and whether or not they are answered is for the one who prayed to decide.

People of Note

Masha, the Forest Queen

The daughter of nobility, Masha fell in with the rebels as a university student when she saw the corruption and abuses going on around her. She abandoned her life of ease and joined the rebels in the Vorogos Forest, where she quickly earned a position of leadership.

Masha, called "Queen Masha" by her supporters, is a beloved symbol of the rebellion. To show her solidarity with the lowborn, she has grown her hair out in long, black curls. She appears throughout Ursicor, striking against the oppressors and inspiring the lowborn with fiery speeches of revolution. The nobles would like nothing better than to silence her but, even if they could find her, fear turning her into a martyr.

Queen Alyona

Queen Alyona often represents not only herself, but the other two northern queens, Dunya and Katrinka, in matters of policy debate. The three of them feel that the rebels, while wrong in most respects, are correct in pointing out the corruption at the lower levels of the feudal system. Queen Alyona is bringing in outside investigators to look into claims of unlawful taxation, needless brutality, and the general abuse of the lowborn. While she would never admit it, she feels the rebels are right about other things as well; being located further from the direct benefits of connections with Myratas, her queendom has suffered hardships the other, more southern queendoms have not.

Queen Shura

Queen Shura is the High Queen of Ursicor. She has the full support of the other two southern queens, Roza and Zoya, and the power (with their support) to force her will on the poorer, weaker northern queens. She has a very close relationship with Myratas, which provides her household with the latest and best in advanced crystal machines. Her queendom is abuzz with airships and her palace often hosts the Myratan scientific elite. Queen Shura has no patience for the rebels; those hairy fools want to endanger all she has worked for and she's not about to let that happen.

Economy

Ursicor is relatively wealthy—at least amongst the noble and merchants classes—due to its long term contracts providing Myratas with wood, energy crystals, and iron. The lowborn usually have enough to eat, but any surplus is subject to taxation at the whims of their feudal mistresses.

The nation exports tons of wood, mostly to Myratas for use in building airships. It also exports energy crystals, iron and gems from its mines, as well as performers and scholars from its universities. Ursicor does very little manufacturing itself and prefers to import crystal machines, clothing, especially highly fashionable designs, and academy students. While the Imperial Academy has been accepting noble students from across Karthador for generations, it's only in the past few decades that it's started taking on male students.

Technology

As a close ally of Myratas, Ursicor has access to many of that nation's cutting-edge crystal machines. Only the nobility can afford them, however. While the rich and powerful fly about in airships and carry blasters on their hips, the lowborn make do with animal carts, hundred-year-old iron swords, and the most basic of farming instruments.

Military

The queens each have their own small standing armies, largely composed of the sons of the minor nobility. These armies are charged with defending their realms. This mostly entails maintaining peace and security inside the queendoms.

It's been years since the queens have had to make actual war against each other, but when they do, they bulk up their armies with conscripts from the lowborn, as well as foreign mercenaries. The lowborn that survive are given a modest sum of money and returned to their homes. Those who excel in battle may find themselves given titles and land, which gives them some incentive to fight for their queens.

Several of the queens also maintain their own “secret police” forces to help root out the rebels in their midst. These shadow officers have the right to seize and question anyone—even nobility—if there is reason to suspect them of harboring or of being a member of the rebels.

Ursicoran soldiers wear plate metal armor that's been in their families for generations. With the rise of armor-piercing blaster weapons, they no longer wear full plate, but still wear the helmets and breastplates, along with padded uniforms that protect them against minor melee strikes.

The Land

Ursicor is bordered by the Sparasool hills to the east and the ocean to the west. Myratas lies to the south with its gleaming towers, and the trees of the endless Vorogos forest stretch towards the north and Arcona.

The climate ranges from temperate to warm in the southern regions. The northern regions are cooler year-round due to the cool winds off the ocean and get quite a bit of snow each winter. The northern queendoms have been snowed in for weeks at a time in the past.

Settlements

Any good-sized town or city in Ursicor is based around a noble's keep. While there are small villages without nobles in residence, they are still considered part of their local noble's domain, even if that noble lives a two-day's journey away.

Kieskor

This is not only the capital of Queen Shura's queendom, but the unofficial capital of Ursicor as a whole. Every major noble family has a palace here, and even the minor nobles maintain homes here during the winter. Queen Shura has done her best to make Kieskor a truly modern city with paved streets, running water, and public airships to transport the nobility above it all. Kieskor is the center of power and bureaucracy in Ursicor. Its marketplaces are full of enterprising foreigners that come here to sell their goods, services, and information to the powers that be.

Pogarod

While the Imperial Academy is by far the most important institute of higher learning in Pogarod, it is by no means the only one. Dozens of universities teach science, politics, philosophy, art, dance, and music to a wide range of young nobles. Those who want specialized training, no matter how esoteric, can find it here for a price. In recent years, Pogarod has become a recruiting ground for the rebellion. Here rebels find impressionable young nobles, many of whom are away from home for the first time and are willing to take risks in order to accomplish something important with their lives. Even those who don't join the rebellion find their eyes opened at the university. When they see how the real Ursicor works, they are more willing to consider reforms when they come to power.

Semiri

This idyllic small town on the bay is perfect for nobles who want to get away from the noise and chaos of Kieskor during the summer. It resembles an idealized version of a peasant village, with simple livestock and freelance “peasants” around. It's also perfect for court intrigues and affairs, often involving ambassadors from Myratas or other foreign lands. The security here is low-key and largely invisible, but second only to the palace of the High Queen herself.

Tursk

This area is rich in energy crystals and iron ore and supports dozens of mines. Miners work around the clock, using the latest in tools from Myratas, in order to fill orders as quickly as they can. Conditions in the mines are grim, as the nobles who operate them care little for the lowborn workers; miners who are killed are easily replaced. The mines and their resources have been subject to sabotage, so security is tight. Most suspect the rebels as the culprits, but some reports suggest they were actually guild agents from Porothon hoping to disrupt the Myratan energy supply.

Flora and Fauna

Golbok

These furry, omnivorous beasts are known for their long claws, mighty jaws, and vicious teeth. In addition to roots and berries, they'll eat anything smaller than them, including humans. They live in small family units of up to five members. Some wilders have succeeded in taming golboks and use them as pets, pack animals, and even mounts.

Kiepon Mushrooms

These bright green mushrooms, found in the darkest depths of the forest, are known to sometimes trigger psionic abilities in those who ingest them. As such, they fetch a high price in the market, and their groves are well-kept secrets.

Titan Wood

The forests of Ursicor are full of enormous fir trees called "titans" with trunks up to thirty feet in diameter and two-hundred feet in height. These trees have black or dark brown bark and deep green needles. Wilders climb their smooth trunks with special boots and are home in their boughs. The lumber industry cuts down dozens of these trees a day.

Vobyr

These nocturnal predators stalk the forest in packs, living from kill to kill. They hunt by night and spend their days sleeping, huddled together in huge furry piles inside caves and hollows. They prefer weak or lone prey, but if hungry enough—such as during a particularly brutal winter—they will attack armed humans. While on the hunt, these beasts demonstrate frightful intelligence, using tactics such as distraction, dividing their prey, and flanking maneuvers.

Places of Interest

Castle Markhan

When the rebels first struck, they attacked Castle Markhan, home to Barbala, the seventh queen. They killed the queen, her husband, and her entire family. Even the servants were either put to the sword or left to die as the palace burned to the ground. Today, the empty black husk of the palace looms over the eastern hills, overlooking the ruins of the lowborn village that was razed by noble armies bent on revenge. Some say the castle is haunted; others say it harbors hidden treasure. Either way, it's a grim reminder of what happens when the nobility grows complacent and the rebels act without thinking.

The Grand Revel

For decades, the Grand Revel has been a fixture in the university city of Pogarod.

The Grand Revel isn't truly a place, for its location changes each time it appears. Rather, it is an event consisting of a roaming, ongoing party, where university students are free to dance, sing, partake of wine and kina, and spout any insane political rhetoric they like. It vanishes for years at a time, suddenly reappearing in an old warehouse or the manor of vacant lord; each night the site of the party changes. Some say the Grand Revel is a recruiting operation for the rebels; they can easily surreptitiously interrogate the revelers and see who's willing to join their side. Others say it's a planned event orchestrated by the secret police, which finger party-goers as potential traitors. No one knows for sure. And just when the rulers of Pogarod are getting officially fed up with the Grand Revel, it disappears for another year or two.

Great Black Wood

The largest forest in all Ursicor, the Great Black Wood separates the northern queendoms from the southern. It also houses dozens of wilder communities who hunt its game, fish its streams, and even grow crops in its clearings—all in violation of Ursicor law. Every attempt to roust the wilders has met with failure. The soldiers who survive these attempts report abandoned camps, dangerous traps, and vicious forest animals.

The Imperial Academy

Originally known as “The Academy of the Queens and their Loyal Subjects,” the university in Pogarod changed its name to the Imperial Academy once Ursicor officially joined the Myratan Empire. Centuries later, the Empire is gone but the name remains, for the name is one of the most respected in Karthador. Only the most qualified are allowed to study at the Academy, and only the richest of them can afford the tuition. While it is officially dedicated to the study of science, the Academy also offers classes in the arts, history, and politics. Noble students from all over Karthador are welcome here if they can pass its entrance exams and pay its tuition.

Tislava Hall

The most famous amphitheater in Kieskor, Tislava Hall is known throughout Karthador for its dance troupes and orchestral performances. It's the dream of every musician and dancer in Ursicor—and many outside Ursicor—to someday perform here. It's also a widely known fact that the masters of the hall secretly tour Ursicor looking for the most talented singers, musicians, and dancers to bring back and add to their troupes. For a lowborn with talent, this is a very pleasant dream.

Whispers and Rumors Bad Ideas

According to local rumor, a band of rebels calling themselves “The Unspoken Thought of Truth” is planning to attack a military garrison outside Pogarod. But rumor also has it that the group isn't truly a band of hardened fighters, but just some university students with more passion in their hearts, and wine in their bellies, than sense in their heads. If they go through with this terrible idea, they'll likely not only be captured or killed, but it could provide the military the excuse they need to crack down on "seditious" speech and activity in the universities.

Burning Desires

The Crimson Wood is known for its wild apple trees and, more recently, for the rebels who have been raiding royal caravans passing through it. A unit of soldiers has been dispatched to stop the rebels, but every attempt to find the rebels amidst the trees has failed. The soldiers' officers are frustrated and angry. They've given an order to burn down the wood to stop the rebels, even though the apples are the only livelihood of the nearby villages.

Class Dismissed

A popular history professor from one of the universities has been abducted. Was she taken by the secret police because of her questionable teachings? Kidnapped by rebels because of her noble ties? Or are the rumors true that she was a spy for Porothon captured by Myratan agents? The professor's noble students have offered a substantial reward to anyone who brings her back to them unharmed.

Royal Rights

Prospectors have recently discovered a new lode of energy crystals on the border of two different queens' territories. While the queens remain civil, each has made it clear that she claims the lode for herself and would be most put out if the other were to begin a mining operation there. The queens' civil words are growing heated and beginning to sound more like saber-rattling; there may soon be no way to avoid an armed conflict between the two.

Imperial Expeditions

The Imperial Academy is often heading up expeditions to explore old ruins, investigate unusual phenomena, and find signs of the Ancients. For each of these treks, they hire a new batch of workers to help protect the scholars and haul the supplies. The Academy pays its freelance explorers well if the expedition is considered dangerous, but only pays upon their return. Certainly, there is almost no truth to the rumor that some expeditions have killed off their assistants on the way back to Pogarod to avoid paying them



TALES OF KARTHADOR

The world of Karthador is one of furious action, high stakes, and deadly intrigue. In the pages that follow, you will find guidelines for quickly and easily creating your own Karthador adventures. All the blaster-firing, mutant-fighting, princess-saving excitement your players crave is just a few dice-rolls away!

TALE MAKER

The following tables will help you create your own pulse-pounding adventures. While you can simply roll the dice and take what they give you, your tales will only be as thrilling as the thought you put into them, so it's best to flesh out what you roll up.

To randomly create a Thrilling Tale, first roll the adventure's Hook to see how the characters get involved. Next, roll up a Lynchpin to determine the central focus of the tale, then a Central Location and Proximity to see where the tale takes place. Finally, roll a Plot Type to figure out the meat of the adventure, then a Plot Complication, because nothing is ever simple. Optionally, if required, roll on the Villains tables to create the framework for a memorable villain.

The Hook

d6 Hook

- 1 Caught Up in Events
- 2 Mistaken Identity
- 3 Motivation
- 4 Supporting Cast (Ally/Friend)
- 5 Rumor
- 6 Supporting Cast (Foe/Rival)

Caught up in Events: The heroes find themselves in the middle of the plot, whether they like it or not.

Mistaken Identity: One or more of the characters has been wrongly identified or contacted regarding the lynchpin.

Motivation: The GM drives the story forward through the use of one or more of the heroes' Hindrances, such as Loyal, Greedy, or Heroic.

Supporting Cast (Ally/Friend): Someone familiar and friendly with one or more of the heroes asks them to look into the state of affairs revolving around the lynchpin.

Rumor: The characters' curiosity is aroused by tavern gossip, sky sailors' stories, or other "grapevine" sources.

Supporting Cast (Foe/Rival): Someone who holds the heroes in disdain comes to them to investigate a matter concerning the lynchpin.

Lynchpin

The lynchpin is the central focus of the entire tale. It might be a person in danger, a person causing danger, a treasure to be hunted, or a conspiracy to be revealed. Though the lynchpin's presence echoes throughout the tale, the lynchpin itself might not even appear in the adventure at all.

To find your tale's lynchpin, roll on the table below and then roll again on the appropriate Lynchpin sub-table.

d6 Lynchpin

- 1-4 Person
- 5 Scheme
- 6 Object

Lynchpin - Person

The lynchpin is always a Wild Card. Determine exactly who they are on the Supporting Cast table (p. 264) and where they're from on the National Origin table (p. 249).

d6 Person

- 1-2 Supporting Cast (Friendly)
- 3 Supporting Cast (Foe/Rival)
- 4 Supporting Cast (Political)
- 5 Supporting Cast (Business)
- 6 Organization

Supporting Cast (Friendly): This person is someone who begins with a positive reaction to the heroes, or has existing connections with them.

Supporting Cast (Foe/Rival): This character is someone who begins with a negative reaction to the heroes, and wants to best them in some way. It may be a past acquaintance or colleague who has had a falling-out.

Supporting Cast (Political): Through hard work or noble birth, this person has acquired great wealth, power, or position and begins with a neutral attitude towards the heroes.

Supporting Cast (Business): This individual is someone either connected to or working directly for a business or business group, such as a guild or corporation.

Organization: This group can range from a brotherhood of sky pirates to an explorers' society to a smuggling ring. You can either create the organization from scratch or roll on the Supporting Cast table (p. 264) to determine the central focus of the group. Its exact size is at your discretion.

d10 National Origin

- | | |
|----|------------------|
| 1 | Arcona |
| 2 | Doongarda |
| 3 | Ferazonn |
| 4 | Myratas |
| 5 | Porothon |
| 6 | Rathiveen |
| 7 | Sparasool |
| 8 | Tharran |
| 9 | Ursicor |
| 10 | Unknown/Wanderer |

Lynchpin - Scheme

d6 Scheme

- 1 Theft
- 2 Assassination
- 3 Sabotage
- 4 Smuggling
- 5 Spying
- 6 Capture

Theft: Something precious has been stolen, is about to be stolen, or needs to be stolen before something worse happens.

Assassination: Someone is about to be killed! Or someone's already been killed and the story revolves around the chaotic results of the murder.

Sabotage: There's a wrench in the works, and someone's to blame.

Smuggling: Contraband is as lucrative as it is illegal. Smugglers are on the move and money's changing hands.

Spying: Secrets can be more valuable than energy crystals. Spies are looking for secrets and others are looking for the spies.

Capture: The scheme calls for someone to be captured or a location to be taken over. Is it a kidnapping or an invasion? Or both?

Lynchpin - Object

d6 Object

- 1 Artifact
- 2 Invention
- 3 Vehicle
- 4 Military Object
- 5 Resources
- 6 Book / Knowledge

Artifact: The object was left by the Ancients, perhaps a strange statue, an elder machine, or the key to a mysterious vault.

Invention: The object is a device built for a specific purpose and might be simply a prototype.

Vehicle: The object is a vehicle of some sort.

Military Object: This object was made for war, such as a new crystal gear weapon, a military airship, or armor made of a newly-discovered metal alloy.

Resources: The object is a lode or cache of resources, such as iron, oil, ironglass, or kina.

Book/Knowledge: Whether a bound book, a rune-covered artifact, or the notes of a long-lost explorer, there is a tantalizing bit of secret lore for those who seek it out.

Location

Where the story takes place can be every bit as important as what it is about. Roll on this table as many times as needed to flesh out your adventure.

d10 Location

- 1 Hidden Site
- 2 Rural Settlement
- 3 Keep/Estate
- 4 Exotic
- 5 Important Building/Landmark
- 6 Urban Center
- 7 Residence/Lair
- 8 Ruins
- 9 Institution
- 10 Wilderness

Hidden Site: Whether hidden on purpose, such as the secret headquarters of conspiracy, or simply forgotten in the march of time, this site isn't listed on any map. It may be a lost city, a secret cave, or a forbidden valley.

Rural Settlement: Karthador is dotted with small villages. These are usually dedicated to supporting the largest local industry, such as farming, mining, or fishing.

Keep/Estate: Ranging from grandiose to crumbling decrepitude, keeps and estates are typically home to the wealthy classes, be they merchants or nobles. Keeps can be found throughout the countryside, while estates are more common on the outskirts of developed regions, with some actually located within the larger cities.

Exotic: Exotic locations are unusual wilderness locales, such as active volcanoes, hollow glaciers, or air-filled undersea caves.

Important Building/Landmark: Ranging from the Imperial Academy in Ursicor to the Black Pyramid of Doongarda, these places are well known in the local region—if not across the whole of Karthador.

Urban Center: Any large city is full of adventure. You can particularize this location even more to focus on those places that might otherwise seem rather ordinary—a kina tea house, a merchant square, or a theater, for example—for an intriguing change of pace.

Residence/Lair: A home of unassuming appearance, a residence is the place where anyone lays his head, whether he is a peasant, noble, or guild lord. This can also include the lairs of war-mutants.

Ruins: During the rise of Myratan Empire, many villages, cities, and keeps were destroyed in the fighting. Many more fell during the bloody rebellion. And some ruins have remained abandoned since the time of the Ancients.

Institution: This location is dedicated to a cause larger than itself. This could be a library, a Machinist chapterhouse, a temple, a guild hall, or a university. The people here, who may live on-site, are dedicated to that larger cause.

Wilderness: While the air lanes allow people to travel from one city on Karthador to another without considering the overland space in between, the truth is that most of the land is still dominated by wilderness. This location includes forests, cave systems, and mountain ranges far away from the safe roads and havens of civilization.

Proximity

You may roll on the table below to determine the distance between where the characters are now and where the adventure takes place. Or if you prefer, you can skip this table and roll on the Nations table below instead.

d6 Proximity

1	Local
2-3	Regional
4-5	International
6	Karthador

Local: Within an hour or two of travel.

Regional: Within a day or two of travel.

International: One or more nations away.

Karthador: Anywhere in Karthador that best suits your tale.

The Nations

d20 Nation

1-10	Local
11	Regional
12	Arcona
13	Doongarda
14	Ferazonn
15	Myratas
16	Porothon
17	Rathiveen
18	Sparasool
19	Tharran
20	Ursicor

Matters of State

Karthador has always been shaped by war. Whether it's the conquest of the Myratan Empire, the violent rebellion that threw down that Empire, the invasion from across the sea, or any one of a thousand smaller conflicts, war is a crucible of change. Even in times of peace, the memory of past wars and the specter of future ones can mold policies and drive personal ambitions.

The shadow of war still looms over Karthador. This can be as pronounced as you like it to be, ranging from background political tensions with little effect on the characters, to cold wars and border skirmishes, to full-out invasions and mass destruction.

This table is entirely optional. You may use it to add flavor and depth to your game, or select an entry that's most appropriate to your tale. As your campaign progresses and tensions rise or fall between the nations, you may wish to add modifiers to this roll to reflect the changing likelihood of military action.

d20 Matters of State

- | | |
|-------|-----------------|
| 1-10 | All's Quiet |
| 11-16 | Rumors of War |
| 17-19 | Clashing Swords |
| 20+ | Ravages of War |

All's Quiet: Peace has broken out across the land and there is little visible military activity. In these times, any given nation may be licking its wounds from a recent defeat, celebrating a recent victory, or secretly preparing for upcoming engagements. In any case, the lands are easily traveled and borders are crossed with little difficulty.

Rumors of War: Peace is an uneasy thing to keep and diplomatic relations are delicate at best. The borders are defended by military forces. Elite agents undertake deniable, covert operations in enemy territories. Spies, diplomats, and power brokers wage their own shadow battles both in public courts and in shadowy back rooms.

Clashing Swords: Diplomacy is breaking down, border skirmishes are regular occurrences, and threats of all-out war loom large on the horizon. Nations begin manufacturing or purchasing mass quantities of airships, weapons, and other military hardware. There is a heavy military presence along the borders and in major population centers. Border patrols make it difficult for outsiders to get into the country unless they sneak through the wilderness or wear the mantles of emissaries or nobility.

Ravages of War: Major military actions are under way. National leaders can be seen amassing their troops and giving speeches. Uprisings are frequent, as opportunistic nobles and populist revolutionaries seek to expand their own power. War is everywhere, within the borders and without. Military forces perform regular patrols throughout the whole of the land — it is not uncommon to see them even in villages and towns of little strategic importance. Border wars are common as are full scale military invasions. No one is permitted to enter or leave a nation as borders are made fully secure. Sea and air travel are restricted and trade goods may be held at a premium. Getting in and out requires serious connections, deep pockets, or both.

Plot Type

d20 Type

- | | |
|----|------------------------|
| 1 | Adventure |
| 2 | Ascension |
| 3 | Descension |
| 4 | Discovery |
| 5 | Escape |
| 6 | Forbidden Love |
| 7 | Love |
| 8 | Maturation |
| 9 | Metamorphosis |
| 10 | Mystery |
| 11 | Pursuit |
| 12 | Quest |
| 13 | Rescue |
| 14 | Revenge |
| 15 | Rivalry |
| 16 | Sacrifice |
| 17 | Temptation |
| 18 | Transformation |
| 19 | Wretched Excess |
| 20 | Roll twice and combine |

Adventure: This type of adventure puts the "thrill" in thrilling tales. It immediately thrusts the heroes into the action and often begins "in medias res." The plot hook comes quickly, followed by a number of complications over the course of play. An adventure-type tale may keep the heroes hopping from one location to another, similar to a quest but with more physical challenges than mental ones. Or it may focus on a single location: the palace of a corrupt noble, a lost city full of riches and mutants, or the mountain fortress of a band of sky pirates. Twists come in the form of the obstacles the heroes must overcome.

Ascension: This plot focuses on a rise to power. Such a powerful theme can be embodied in a single session, or be woven into a whole campaign's worth of tales. Who is stepping into a position of authority? How did she achieve it? And who is trying to oppose it? It may be the heroes themselves who are ascending. What happens if they accept the command of the trade vessel? Or are awarded their own estate? Or given grand titles that gain them entry to the highest social echelons, but earn the suspicion of the common people?

Descension: The spiral downward makes for a dramatic, tragic plot. The lynchpin can be a path of destruction causing madness, decay, ruin and death all around it. A once-noble scholar may be corrupting his students with half-truths, a venerable airship may be secretly falling apart; the best-intended schemes may have horrible, unintended consequences. It's up to the heroes to redeem the fallen or, alternately, to prevent innocents from being caught up in the spiral of destruction.

Discovery: Much like in the quest and mystery plots, the discovery plot begins with a question and a search for answers. But unlike in those plots, each of these answers only leads to more discoveries that raise new questions of their own. For example, once the heroes discover who killed the guild leader and how, they discover she was killed for an ancient manuscript—but now they need to know what was in the manuscript, where it came from, and where it went. One discovery leads to another until either the plot is resolved or the characters feel they have all the answers they need.

Escape: Someone or something has captured the heroes, and they must fight for their freedom. A paranoid noble might think they're asking too many questions about him and throw them into the dungeons. They might be imprisoned for a crime they didn't commit. Or they might be trying to escape a rare disease they picked up while exploring a vault of the Ancients.

Forbidden Love: This need not be romantic love, but can instead be any sort of unhealthy obsession. It may include love between man and mutant, man and machine, or man and ancient secrets man was not meant to know. A farmer who discovers an elder machine in his field may focus on it to the neglect of his family and farm. A scholar studying a war-mutant may work to keep it from being captured, even though its hunger for human flesh can never be satiated. An ambitious guild-master may destroy anyone and anything in his way in pursuit of the power he's lusted for his whole life.

Love: The lynchpin determines the type of love—is it obsession (as with an object), eros (as with a person), or does it enter some stranger territories (with a creature or mutant as the focus)? Our heroes enter the story and have to sort out all the details. Love in *Karthador* can be complicated given the tangled webs of national, commercial, and tribal loyalties. Are the heroes trying to bring two lovers from warring tribes together? Are they hired to keep them apart? Is it real love, or is it merely masking some more malicious intent? Alternately, for good or ill, one of the characters is the focus of another's attention, as this other might certainly use any and all resources at their disposal to see that their love is requited.

Maturation: Someone or something is growing up. In some stories this can be a joyous thing: perhaps the local lord is throwing a party to celebrate his daughter's birthday, a tribal elder is joining the ruling council, or a new model of airship is finally brought to market. Maturation can also mean danger: an artifact left in *Doongarda* by the invaders may be beginning to stir, a war-mutant in *Porothon* is spawning new horrors, or a conspiracy started long ago finally has the pieces in place to unleash its chaos.

Metamorphosis: This plot focuses on physical change. People can be changed by their exposure to elder machines, experimental new crystal gear, or even (according to rumor) the war-mutants of the black ships. War and natural disasters transform the face of the land itself. Unknown elder machines change form and function without warning, and even crystal gear suffers strange malfunctions and sabotage.

Mystery: A mystery tale demands deliberation and careful consideration, as it is difficult to run one without proper planning. The heroes are presented with a question: Who killed the ambassador? Where did the prince vanish to? What makes that green stone worth killing for? Then they must put their minds (and probably fists) to answering it. As the GM, you can use the lynchpin of the tale however you see fit, but it should be the ultimate root cause of the mystery. A mystery tale requires critical thinking and often regular interactions with any number of NPCs. Give the heroes multiple clues to help drive the story forward, with a mix of complications that can drive them down various paths. Keep the story moving forward; if it looks to be stalling out for lack of clues or direction, you can always jumpstart it with a bit of action. If the heroes are getting too close to the villain's plans, for example, they find themselves attacked by thugs—who are carrying clues leading to the next stage of the story.

Pursuit: The heroes must either evade or capture the lynchpin, as appropriate. For example, if the lynchpin is an item, they may chase it down in order to keep it out of the hands of the power-mad technocrat who has it. If the lynchpin is a person, they may be trying to outrun the lynchpin in order to expose his plots before it's too late. If the lynchpin is a scheme, the perpetrators of the scheme are on the move, and it's up to the heroes to catch them (or avoid being caught by them). In a pursuit-type adventure, the heroes are either the hunters or the hunted, and the roles can often change over the course of play as events unfold.

Quest: The heroes seek out the lynchpin. They undergo trials and tribulations as they travel across the land, visiting various people and places, each with its own complication, before finding that which they seek (if indeed they find it at all). Investigation and intellectual challenges are every bit as common as subterfuge and swordplay. Over the course of the quest, the heroes are faced with choices and dilemmas that make them question their beliefs and consider the price of seeking the lynchpin. Exploration and travel are often important to this type of adventure, as the characters may journey to remote and exotic locations in pursuit of their goal.

Rescue: The characters must rescue the lynchpin (or its potential victims) from someone or something (which can be determined with another random roll). For example, a royal spy may have been captured by the woodland rebels of Ursicor, and must be rescued before the information he's carrying falls into the wrong hands.

Revenge: A past enemy has sworn vengeance upon the heroes. It might not be a true enemy, but merely someone who was offended by what they have done. Or perhaps someone has sought out the heroes to be the tools of his own revenge. The lynchpin can determine the seeker, the target, or the method of revenge.

Rivalry: There is no shortage of rivalries in Karthador. Nations oppose each other, as do the various clans, cities, and organizations within those nations. Depending on the lynchpin, hook, and location, the heroes may find themselves joining one side of a rivalry (such as helping one group of Sool tribesmen defend its oasis from another), working both sides (such as scheming to help two opposing guilds destroy each other), or bringing the rivals together (such as negotiating a peace between two warring tribes in Ferazonn).

Sacrifice: What is heroic adventure without the potential for sacrifice? This plot type generally focuses on the performance of a selfless deed, either by the characters or their companions, or alternately, one that the heroes must prevent. Will the Rathiveen missionary give up his life for the sake of his religion? Will the guild agent let people die to ensure her deal goes through? What will the heroes be asked to give up in order to fulfill their goals?

Temptation: The lynchpin holds the promise of something—great knowledge, power, or wealth—in exchange for transgressing normal societal mores or the boundaries of good sense. The heroes themselves may be tempted to betray their friends or employers. Or someone else has already sold out, and is now looking for help—or needs to be brought to justice.

Transformation: This plot focuses on emotional or psychological change. Transformation is internal, affecting either one of the heroes' allies, or the heroes themselves. Change can come from external sources (how the heroes feel about their patron, who's revealed as a kina-smuggling murderer), or internal (a noble warrior decides it's better to be rich than loved and turns tyrant). The lynchpin provides greater insight into the heroes' own characters and the world around them. As you might expect, roleplaying challenges abound in a transformation plot. The impact of such a plot usually has ripple effects in subsequent campaign play, so deliberate on how great a transformation you want to put into play.

Wretched Excess: This plot's core involves those who have given themselves over to their vices and obsessions. From the technocratic slave-lord of Myratas to the burned-out kina junkie in the gutters of Porothon, or the tyrannical theocrat in Rathiveen, there are opportunities for corruption and excess everywhere in Karthador. If the lynchpin in an object, it may be the focus of someone's addiction. If it's a scheme, it may be the lengths that some will go to in order to wallow in their vice.

Plot Complication

d10 Complication

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Mutant |
| 2 | Person (Roll on Supporting Cast Table, p. 264) |
| 3 | Betrayal |
| 4 | Trap/Ambush |
| 5 | Rescue Supporting Cast |
| 6 | Chase |
| 7 | Natural Hazard |
| 8 | Shock/Revelation |
| 9 | Discovery |
| 10 | Political/Military |

Mutant: A war-mutant stands (literally or figuratively) between the characters and success.

Person: Someone causes problems for the characters.

Betrayal: Someone close to the heroes turns on them at a critical moment.

Trap/Ambush: Someone or something poses a very real threat to the party's survival.

Rescue Supporting Cast: An associate of one or more of the heroes gets into trouble and requires them to set aside other matters to aid him.

Chase: During the course of the tale, the heroes find themselves involved in a chase. Whether they are the pursuers or the pursued depends upon the type of story they find themselves in.

Natural Hazard: The heroes are faced with a physical obstacle and they must surmount it in order to proceed.

Shock/Revelation: The characters learn something that shakes their beliefs.

Discovery: The heroes find someone or something is not what it seems, and this knowledge forces them to reconsider what has happened thus far in the adventure.

Political/Military: The heroes have been determined to be either allies or adversaries of local government or military agencies, and must perform some task or prove their innocence for the group in question.

Supporting Cast

Typically, one or more supporting cast members are interwoven into an adventure to help the heroes on their journey. Roll on the table below to find out who is willing to help them. Roll on the National Origin Table (p. 267) to determine where the character is from.

d100	Ally
1-3	Agent
4-6	Archaeologist
7-8	Artist
9-10	Beast Rider
11-13	Bodyguard
14-16	Clergy
17-19	Craftsman
20-22	Diplomat
23-25	Engineer
26-28	Entertainer
29-30	Farmer
31-33	Healer
34-35	Herder
36-38	Historian
39-41	Hunter
42-44	Insurgent
45-47	Inventor
48-50	Mechanic
51-53	Mercenary
54-56	Merchant
57-59	Miner
60-62	Noble
63-65	Pilot
66-68	Raider
69-71	Sailor
72-74	Scholar
75-77	Scientist
78-80	Scout
81-82	Sky Pirate
83-85	Smuggler
86-88	Soldier
89-91	Spy
92-94	Thief
95-97	Woodsman
98-100	Writer

Villains

Not every adventure needs a villain. If the heroes are racing against time through the jungles of Ferazonn to deliver the life-saving cure for a plague, for example, there are plenty of dangers and thrills without introducing a person who's actively trying to stop them.

Nevertheless, the world of Karthador is a rich, pulp setting, and pulp tales are often defined by their villains. If your tale needs a good villain, you may roll on the following tables to quickly create your antagonist's motivation, goals, and methods. After rolling, take a little time to flesh out your villain's personality. Keep in mind that most villains don't consider themselves evil; they're just above the morality of the common man, and their ends justify their means.

Villain Type

First, roll to determine the overall type of villain the heroes will be facing. A villain's type suggests the sort of minions, equipment, and connections he might have.

1d6 Villain

- 1 Corrupt Plutocrat
- 2 Criminal Overlord
- 3 Cult Leader / Theocrat
- 4 Evil Ruler
- 5 Loyalist
- 6 Mad Scientist

Corrupt Plutocrat: While the idea of a corrupt business person may bring Myratas immediately to mind, Porothon has no shortage of morally-bankrupt profiteers either. In fact, wherever there is coin to be made, there are those willing to cross the line into villainy in order to make it.

Criminal Overlord: This could be a smuggling kingpin, a pirate lord, or the head of some other shady organization concerned with controlling crime inside its territory. The size of the territory depends on the scale of the adventure. It could be just one neighborhood in a single city, or it could be a continent-spanning network.

Cult Leader / Theocrat: While there are only a couple major religions in Karthador, there are many regional cults with bizarre beliefs and charismatic leaders. These leaders claim they want the spiritual best for their followers (and some of them do), but some may be willing to hurt others to achieve their aims.

Evil Ruler: A dictator or local noble drunk with power, the evil ruler cares little for his people. Instead he is dedicated to pursuing his dreams, whether they are of conquest, debauchery, or vast monuments to his own greatness.

Loyalist: The loyalist is a true believer who wants his country (or tribe, guild, or other legitimate group) to grow and prosper—even at the expense of other such groups, or those who oppose him inside his own group. The loyalist is usually an influential person inside the group, such as member of the high council or a tribal elder.

Mad Scientist: The megalomaniac inventor uses elder machines and crystal technology to improve the lot of humanity—whether they like it or not. She feels her intellect places her above the less-intelligent masses. She simply knows best.

Villain Motivation

What drives your villain? Roll on the chart below to find out his overall motivation. Motivation is long-range. While he might be hatching a plot to acquire wealth that might just be to finance the next step in his master plan to acquire power.

d20 Motivation

1-4	Power
5-7	Wealth
8-10	Fame
11-13	Collection
14-16	Revenge
17-19	Love
20	Madness

Power: This is usually authority over a region, nation, or even all of Karthador! But it could also mean power over an organization, an important location, or even a single (very important) person.

Wealth: While wealth is often a means to an end, it can be an end in itself. Vast wealth buys most anything a person could want, including privacy, luxury, and an air fortress of one's own.

Fame: What good is it to be rich or powerful if no one knows who you are? The villain wants to be famous, and doesn't care if she's adored by the masses or feared by them, so long as they all know her name.

Collection: The villain is a collector. He collects a class of objects (or people, or mutants) and won't stop until he has them all.

Revenge: A villain who is driven by revenge will forgo luxury, respect, or honor, so long as she can have her revenge on those who wronged her. This may be a single person, a group of people, or even a whole institution or nation.

Love: The villain is driven by his love of another person, an object, or an ideal. He is obsessed with his love-interest, and will do anything he thinks will make it happy or make it love him back.

Madness: While the villain may not truly be insane, she appears to have no motivation beyond sowing chaos and destruction. Unlike many other villains, who justify their actions as "for the greater good" or "beyond mortal law," the villain driven by madness revels in the horror her actions cause. More than any other motivation, this could be considered truly evil.

Villain Goal

To determine your villain's immediate goal, first roll a goal on the chart below, then roll that goal's objective on the goal objective chart. Note that this may not be a long-range goal. A mad scientist may want to collect the thirteen elder machines of the Fallen Keep, but it's just the first phase in his plan to create a robot army.

1d6 Goal

- 1-2 Create
- 3-4 Destroy
- 5-6 Control

1d10 Goal Objective

- 1 Important Person
- 2 Community
- 3 Knowledge
- 4 Elder Machine
- 5 New Invention
- 6 Location
- 7 Organization
- 8 Region
- 9 Objects
- 10 Mutants

Important Person: The villain may want to assassinate a king, control the mind of an ambassador, or use her malevolent influence to "create" a powerful new insurgent leader who will secretly carry out the villain's plans.

Community: Genocide may be the villain's plan. Or perhaps he wants to create his own personal army, or take over a group of people to call his own.

Knowledge: The villain might be trying to control the flow of information out of his country, or learn the secrets of a nearby enemy. Knowledge could include objects such as books and artifacts from the time of the Ancients.

Elder Machine: Wars have been fought over who will control a given elder machine. And if the villain can't control it, she may destroy it, or try to create a copy based on what knowledge she's been able to glean from it.

New Invention: Villains traditionally love to create new machines of conquest. They also love to steal or destroy new machines that might threaten their power.

Location: The villain might be trying to destroy the academy that rejected his brilliant ideas. He might be building a new monument to his own glory—complete with a blaster cannon on top. Or maybe he just wants to take over the capitol building to prove that the government is weak and powerless.

Organization: This may be a guild, a corporation, or even an academic expedition team. The villain wants to destroy it, or turn it to her own purposes.

Region: Depending on the scale of the tale, the villain might be declaring war on a nation, taking over a city-state, or carving out her own, independent province in the shadow of the larger nations.

Objects: These include resources such as ironglass, steel, and contraband. The villain has plans for these things, and will stop at nothing to acquire them—or prevent his enemies from doing so.

Mutants: Ever since the black ships fled the shores of Doongarda, there have been those who have tried to tame, train, or otherwise utilize the mutants they left behind. The villain may be trying to create a mutant army, train his own personal mutant, or maybe declare war on all mutants, regardless of who or what else gets destroyed in the process.

Villain Methods

Two villains may have the same goals, but their methods of achieving those goals may be completely different. Some prefer subtly and subterfuge, while others lean toward acts of terrorism. To find your villain's favorite methods, roll on the chart below.

d6 Method

- 1 Corruption
- 2 Espionage
- 3 Smuggling
- 4 Theft
- 5 Violence
- 6 Hands-on (roll again, ignoring this result)

Corruption: The villain prefers to use blackmail, bribery, and other forms of manipulation to force others to carry out his schemes for him.

Espionage: Working from the shadows, the villain works toward her goals through the use of spies, double-agents, and covert operations.

Smuggling: The villain's plans typically include acquiring, transporting, and selling illicit goods.

Theft: The villain prefers to get what he wants by taking it. This may mean intricate capers with decoys and distractions, or it could be a series of smash-and-grab operations.

Violence: When it comes to pursuing her goals, the villain prefers the direct approach. She is not above breaking bones or breaking necks to achieve her objectives.

Hands-on: While most villains have their minions carry out the details of their operations, this villain prefers to get his hands dirty, and participates in the jobs himself. Roll again to see what kind of job that is; ignore this result and roll until a different result is obtained.

MUTANT GENERATOR

These tables are used to design unique war-mutant enemies for your group to encounter.

The two main types are shown below, and the GM should start with the appropriate baseline and flesh it out from there.

Lesser War-Mutant

These statistics represent a standard war-mutant.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6

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

Special Abilities

- **Bite/Claws/Horns**
- **Low Light Vision**
- **Monstrous Abilities (2)**
- **Monstrous Edges (2)**

Greater War-Mutant

Dangerous alone and deadly in groups, the greater war-mutant is frightening in its power.

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

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

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

Special Abilities

- **Armor +2**
- **Bite/Claws/Horns**
- **Low Light Vision**
- **Monstrous Abilities (2)**
- **Monstrous Edges (2)**

Basic Form

This table provides the GM with a general idea of what the mutant looks like. All creatures begin Size 0 (human equivalent) and are bipedal. Roll a d6, on a 5-6 the creature is a Wild Card.

Roll d6 to determine the creature's basic anatomical form.

d6 Form

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Insectoid. (roll 1d6. 1-4 normal, 5-6 winged and can fly (Pace x3, Climb 1). Natural Armor +2, Claws/Bite (Str +d4), Burrow $\frac{1}{2}$ Pace, Agility +1 die, Vigor +1 die |
| 2 | Mammalian. (Roll 1d6, 1-5 normal, 6 is winged and can fly (Pace x2, Climb 1). Claws/Bite (Str +d6) |
| 3 | Aquatic d6 Swimming, Vigor +1 die |
| 4 | Dinosaurian. Size +2, Strength +1 die, Natural Armor +2, Claws (Str +d4), Bite (Str +d6) |
| 5 | Reptile. Bite (Str +d8). Weakness (Cold). Vigor +1 die |
| 6 | Arachnid. Gain six arms and two extra attacks per round at no multi-action penalty. Wall Walker. Bite (Str +d4)+Poison (Vigor roll at -1, or suffer additional 2d4 damage) |

Fear

Some mutants look exceedingly disturbing. Roll a d6 to determine Fear.

d6 Fear

- | | |
|-----|--------|
| 1-4 | None |
| 5 | Fear-1 |
| 6 | Fear-2 |
| 7 | Fear-3 |
| 8+ | Fear-4 |

Note: Results of 7 or greater can arise due to certain Monstrous Abilities found in the Monstrous Abilities table.

Monstrous Abilities

If a duplicate result is rolled, reroll. Always take the greater result if a second roll is required. For example, between Size -1 and Size -2, simply take the -2. They are not cumulative. Should rolls arise that inspire you to modify the creature's basic appearance, do so.

d100 Monstrous Ability

1	Aquatic
2-3	Armor +2
4-5	Burrowing
6	Fear -1*
7	Fear -2**
8-10	Fearless
11-12	Gargantuan
13-14	Hardy
15-17	Shapeshifting
18-20	Infection, roll d100 and consult the chart below.
01-25	Vigor reduced -1 die
26-50	Agility reduced -1 die
51-75	Spirit reduced -1 die
76-100	Smarts reduced -1 die
21-23	Infravision
24-25	Immunity: Fire
26-27	Immunity: Cold
28-29	Immunity: Disease
30-31	Immunity: Poison
32-33	Immunity: Electricity
34-36	Low Light Vision
37-38	Paralysis (as the Paralysis Monstrous Ability in <i>Savage Worlds</i> core rulebook)
39-40	Poison, roll d100 and consult the chart below.
01-25	+1d6 damage
26-50	+2d4 damage
51-75	+2d6 damage
76-100	+2d8 damage

d100 Monstrous Ability

41-43	Slow Regeneration
44-45	Fast Regeneration
46	Reduced Size -1
47	Reduced Size -2
48-49	Increased Size +1
50	Increased Size +2
51	Increased Size +3
52	Small (Size -2) Reduce Str -1 die
53	Large (Size +4) Increase Str +1 die
54	Large (Size +5) Increase Str +2 die
55	Large (Size +6) Increase Str +3 die
56	Huge (Size +7) Increase Str d12+1
57-58	Increase Strength +1 die
59-60	Increase Strength +2 die
61-63	Increase Toughness +1
64-65	Increase Parry +1
66-68	Wall Walker
69-70	Flight (Pace x2, Climb is 1, Gains wings)
71-73	Horns (Str +d6) (Gore attack if charged at least 6". +4 damage.)
74-75	Go for the Throat
76-78	Fleet-Footed
79-81	Prehensile Tail (Gain Prehensile, spiked tail. May Tail Lash (An extra attack, and damage is Strength +d6-2, and provides Reach 1))
82-83	Stretchy (Can squeeze through spaces $\frac{1}{4}$ of size, but at $\frac{1}{2}$ Pace)
84-86	Improved Frenzy
87-89	Pounce (Leap 1d6", gain +4 to attack and damage, but Parry reduced -2)
90-91	Webbing (Shooting roll for a Small Burst Template, up to Str x2 Range. Web has Toughness 7, all caught suffer -4 to all physical actions)
92-94	Limbs/Tentacles (Str+d6)

d100 Monstrous Ability

95-96 Spit Attack (Str x2 Range. 2d6 damage. Various trappings)

97 Roll again, add an extra Monstrous Ability

98 Roll again, and add an extra Edge from Monstrous Edges
below

99 Roll again, and add a Minor Mutation

100 Roll again, and add a Major Mutation

* Increase Fear by one step

** Increase Fear by two steps

Monstrous Edges

Roll a percentile die and consult the chart below. If an Edge is rolled twice, simply discard it and roll again. Should a result require certain Edges or skills to be at a given level, then the necessary prerequisites should be added to the creature immediately.

d100	Edge
1-4	Alertness
5-8	Ambidextrous
9-12	Berserk
13-16	Brawny
17-20	Fast Healer
21-24	Quick
25-28	Block
29-32	Improved Block
33-36	Combat Reflexes
37-40	Dodge
41-44	Improved Dodge
45-48	First Strike
49-52	Improved First Strike
53-56	Fleet-Footed
57-60	Frenzy
61-64	Improved Frenzy
65-68	Hard to Kill
69-72	Harder to Kill
73-76	Level Headed
77-80	Improved Level Headed
81-84	Nerves of Steel
85-88	Improved Nerves of Steel
89-92	Sweep
93-96	Improved Sweep
97-100	Two-Fisted

Monstrous Abilities

Shapeshifting

In order to pass as human or some other mundane creature, the mutant can shift its form, including basic clothing, but not weapons or gear. It may maintain this guise unless Shaken, at which time it must make a successful Spirit roll or revert to its original nature.

Limbs /Tentacles

These appendages allow a creature to take an additional physical action per tentacle or extra limb each round, with no off-hand or multi-action penalty. It may also use the appendage to take a sustained action, such as grappling someone.

ELDER MACHINE GENERATOR TABLES

Generating an elder machine consists of two steps. First, draw a card from the Action Deck to determine the general Form of the elder machine. Second, draw a card from the Action Deck to determine the Powers the elder machine possesses.

Step 1: Machine Form

Spades	Clothing Form
2	Gauntlet/Greaves
3	Belt
4	Boots/
5	Hat/Headpiece
6	Mask
7	Pants
8	Goggles
9	Brooch
10	Cloak/Robe
Jack	Eye patch
Queen	Bracelet
King	Ring
Ace	Necklace/Charm/Pendant

Hearts General Form

2	Bottle
3	Container/Flask
4	Figurine
5	Lacquered/Engraved Wood/Stone/Metal Box
6	Lantern
7	Book
8	Chest
9	Rod/Staff/Wand
10	Instrument
Jack	Satchel/Backpack
Queen	Unguent/Paste
King	Potion
Ace	Tome/Book/Scroll

Diamonds Uncommon Form

2	Gemstone
3	Prism
4	Tapestry
5	Manacles
6	Orb
7	Herbal Concoction
8	Cauldron
9	Lens
10	Metal Skull
Jack	Edible Food/Liquid
Queen	Amulet
King	Puzzle Box
Ace	Painting

Clubs	Rare Form
2-4	Fixed Location (Roll 1d6)
	1 Throne
	2 Temple
	3 Archway
	4 Cavern
	5 Symbol-Inscribed Circle
	6 Altar
5-6	Mechanical Construct
7-8	Large Statue
9	Melee Weapon Shape (roll 1d6)
	1-2 Blades
	3-4 Axes and Mauls
	5-6 Pole-Arms
10	Ranged Weapon Shape (roll 1d6)
	1 Throwing Weapon/Grenade
	2 Blaster
	3 Sling
	4 Rifle
	5 Bow
	6 Crossbow
Jack	Small Size Advanced Technology Vehicle
Queen	Medium Size Advanced Technology Vehicle
King	Large Size Advanced Technology Vehicle
Ace	Vehicle Ranged Weapon

Red Joker

Draw again to determine the elder machine form, ignoring this result (redraw if the Red Joker comes up on the second draw). The elder machine will have two randomly-generated powers (see Step 2). If the Black Joker is drawn for the Form of the machine, the numbers of powers the machine contains is additive with those from the Red Joker.

Black Joker

Draw again to determine the elder machine form, ignoring this result (redraw if the Black Joker comes up on the second draw). The elder machine will have three randomly-generated powers (see Step 2). If the Red Joker is drawn for the Form of the machine, the numbers of powers the machine contains is additive with those from the Black Joker.

Step 2: Powers

Spades

2	Armor
3	Banish
4	Barrier
5	Beast Friend
6	Blast I/II/III (GM choice)
7	Blind
8	Bolt I/II/III (GM choice)
9	Boost Trait (Body or Mind, GM choice)
10	Lower Trait (Body or Mind, GM choice)
Jack	Burrow
Queen	Burst
King	Conceal Arcana
Ace	Confusion

Hearts

2	Damage Field
3	Darksight
4	Deflection
5	Detect Arcana
6	Disguise
7	Dispel
8	Divination
9	Elemental Manipulation
10	Entangle
Jack	Environmental Protection
Queen	Farsight
King	Fear
Ace	Fly

Diamonds

2	Growth/Shrink
3	Greater Healing
4	Havoc
5	Healing
6	Intangibility
7	Invisibility
8	Light
9	Obscure
10	Mind Reading
Jack	Pummel
Queen	Puppet
King	Quickness
Ace	Shape Change

Clubs

2	Slow
3	Slumber
4	Smite
5	Speak Language
6	Speed
7	Stun
8	Succor
9	Summon Ally
10	Telekinesis
Jack	Teleport
Queen	Wall Walker
King	Warrior's Gift
Ace	Zombie

Red Joker

Draw from the Action Deck, ignoring this result again and any Black Joker result (redraw if either of the Jokers come up on the second draw). Any powers generated by the elder machine will always act as if they had been cast with a single raise.

Black Joker

Draw from the Action Deck, ignoring this result again and any Red Joker result (redraw if either of the Jokers come up on the second draw). Any powers generated by the elder machine act as if only a success had been generated and may never benefit from any raises on casting roll.

CAMPAIGN FRAMEWORKS

Karthador is a huge setting with countless potential adventures. When faced with running a Karthador campaign, it can be hard to know where to start.

Following is a list of potential campaign frameworks. The GM can use these, either as written, or as inspiration for his own campaign.

While these ideas barely scratch the surface of the types of campaigns the GM can run in Karthador, they both give the players the freedom to create characters from virtually any background or nation, and give the GM the freedom to take those players anywhere in Karthador the adventure leads.

SKY TRADERS OF KARTHADOR

Merchant airships crisscross Karthador, buying and selling goods wherever they land. In this campaign, the characters operate one of these ships, flying where they will in search of profit, adventure, and more profit.

This campaign framework lends itself to free-wheeling, player-driven adventures. While the GM may offer contracts and other external incentives, the players are literally the captains of their own ship.

Flying an independent merchant ship is dangerous business. Aside from storms, mechanical problems, and tiny profit margins, the characters must also contend with sky pirates, unscrupulous suppliers, cash-strapped buyers, and hostile natives where ever they land. Taking on passengers can be lucrative, but incurs all kinds of drama. Smuggling is likewise a shortcut to profitability, but brings with it whole new sets of dangers (and adventures!).

Note that this type of campaign can turn into one of logistics, spreadsheets, and profit/loss data analysis. While some GMs and players may wish to explore those elements, others would be better-served to focus on the adventures that happen when things don't go as expected. While making a routine delivery, the airship is attacked by flying monsters! The passenger is a wanted criminal! The buyers for the cargo have gone missing!

Matters of State: All's Quiet, Rumors of War

Common Archetypes: Bodyguard, Craftsman, Engineer, Entertainer, Healer, Mechanic, Mercenary, Merchant, Pilot, Sailor, Smuggler

Starting Nations: Ferazonn, Myratas, Porothon, Sparasool, Tharran, Ursicor

Central Locations: Cities, market towns, mountain peaks, smugglers' dens, warehouses, shipyards, supply depots

Suggested Enemies: Rival merchants, criminal organizations, smugglers, pirates, government agents, guild agents, bureaucrats

Rewards: Wealth, respect, the freedom of the skies

Profits and Pirates (Savage Story Arc)

1. The characters have recently acquired their own airship. It's old, fussy, features years' worth of hasty repairs and amateur upgrades, but it's theirs free and clear so long as they can keep it flying. The ship's next port of call is in Myratas, where the characters have been contracted to drop off a load of ironglass from Sparasool. In return, they are to receive a load of Myratan glow-rods, which are said to be bringing in a good price in Tharran this season.

The characters are almost to Myratas when they are attacked by sky pirates! It's a stealthy midnight sneak attack; by the time the crew realizes something's wrong, there are already pirates on board. It's up to the characters to repel the invaders!

2. The characters' airship lands in Myratas. Its cargo is unloaded, and arrangements are made to deliver the glow-rods in the morning. But at dawn, it's not the warehouse crew, but local law enforcement officials who appear pounding on the airship doors. According to the guardsmen, a band of ruffians sneaked into the Myratan prison where the notorious sky pirate Red Scarven was being held, and broke him out. The authorities are furious. Red Scarven is famously difficult to catch, no one knows where his ship puts into port, and now that he's gone, they may never catch him again.

According to the official investigation, the ruffians killed nine people in the course of the breakout – and they originally came from the characters' ship.

No matter how much the characters deny their involvement, the authorities don't believe them. They demand the characters surrender themselves for arrest, questioning, and sentencing. Though it costs them their load of glow-sticks and any profits, the characters must fire up the airship engines and escape!

3. Despite their protestations, the characters are now labeled as outlaws. If they return to Myratan air space, their ship will be shot on sight.

Because of their criminal reputation, the characters find it harder to find legitimate work. Smugglers, however, have plenty of jobs for them. One such smuggler has need of a ship to haul illegal blaster weapons to the rebels in Ursicor. He normally has Red Scarven and his crew take care of it, he says, but he hasn't seen them for months.

The rebels' cause is a just one, and the money is fantastic. But as the characters help unload the weapons outside the rebels' camp, they are attacked by the Ursicor royal military. The soldiers don't differentiate between rebel and smuggler. The characters must hold them off long enough for the contraband to be unloaded and the airship to get away.

4. As the characters' airship leaves Ursicor, it is attacked by a pirate airship. From its markings, the characters recognize the ship as Red Scarven's vessel – the same one that attacked them on their way to Myratas. Scarven is back in business after his time in prison, and doesn't take kindly to interlopers stepping in on his lucrative smuggling operation. When the characters return fire, the pirate ship retreats. If the characters can catch it – and capture Red Scarven – they can clear their names!

5. The characters follow Red Scarven's ship to a hidden sky fortress. It's a vast structure, the size of a small city, composed of multiple airships bound together with steel and wood, and held aloft with hundreds of powerful force ray projectors. The air pirates spot the characters, surround their ship with their own fleet, and capture it. As captives, the characters are taken before Red Scarven, the current unofficial lord of the pirates. He laughs and thanks them for their help. It was they, he explains, who transported his men into Myratas to free him. The guardsmen weren't wrong. The killers had been stowed away on their ship since the attack the night before. He then sentences the characters to an immediate battle in the fortress' gladiator arena, where they will face a giant six-armed “dagger mutant” in a fight to the death.

6. After fighting in the arena, the characters must devise a plan to escape the flying fortress. They have several assets that can help. Dozens of other gladiators, mostly crew of captured airships, can be convinced to fight. One of the pirates lost a brother in the gladiator pit, and is sympathetic to their plight. Finally, the characters can use the cobbled-together nature of the fortress to their advantage. Walls don't line up properly, energy systems flicker and fail, a strong wind can set the whole thing to creaking as if on the verge of collapse. Using these assets and their own ingenuity, the characters must find a way off the fortress and onto an airship.

7. Free from the sky fortress, the characters have a decision to make. If they want to continue as outlaws, all they have to do is keep flying, keep running, and hope that Red Scarven and his crew never catch up with them. If this is the choice they make, the story arc ends here. If, however, they want to clear their names, reclaim their cargo of glow-rods, and secure the bounties on the heads of Red Scarven and the other pirates, they must return to Myratas (without being shot down or arrested) and inform the authorities there about the pirates' floating hideout. The authorities might need some convincing, but if the characters offer to lead them to the sky fortress, they eventually relent.

8. The Myratan air navy, led by the characters' words, descends on the pirates' fortress. A massive sky battle ensues, pitting one fleet against another, but the characters have a job to do aboard the fortress itself. Since the characters are the only ones who know their way around the fortress, it's up to them to rescue the gladiators, if they haven't done so already, and shut down the power to the main defensive cannons. Once the cannons are deactivated, the characters must race to the rendezvous point while the fortress falls apart around them.

9. With the sky fortress gone, the air pirates have lost their regional base and are sure to be much more scattered and disorganized for quite a while. The characters are given the opportunity to join the Myratan air merchant league, and a position with the league comes with its own official trade route. They can continue to go their own way, of course, and may even become pirates or smugglers themselves if they wish. They have the experience and reputation, after all.

No matter where they wish to go from here, the characters should be sure to keep a wary eye on the horizon. For the survivors of the fortress assault are still out there, and they want revenge.

TROUBLESHOOTERS

In this campaign, the characters are agents for a higher authority. This could be a merchant guild, a government agency, a secret society, or even a powerful family. Those who they work for have interests throughout Karthador, and it's the characters' responsibility to tend to those interests. This could mean defending an investment against an enemy attack, raiding a rival group's holding, negotiating a trade agreement with a foreign power, or any other task their masters deem necessary. As troubleshooters, the characters are sent where the trouble is; when the trouble's been resolved, they move on to the next assignment.

While the characters receive their orders from on high, they are given much freedom in how they carry out those orders. As agents, it's their job to produce results. Their bosses don't care how those results are produced, so long as it can't come back to undermine their efforts. The characters also have enough freedom to pursue their own side projects, so the players don't feel stifled by constantly following orders.

Matters of State: All's Quiet, Rumors of War, Clashing Swords

Common Archetypes: Agent, bodyguard, diplomat, engineer, entertainer, mercenary, merchant, noble, scholar, scientist, scout, smuggler, soldier, spy, thief

Starting Nations: Ferazonn, Myratas, Porothon, Rathiveen, Sparasool, Tharran, Ursicor

Central Locations: Remote mines, noble palaces, market districts, forests, towns, jungles, deserts

Suggested Enemies: Local troublemakers, corrupt officials, rival agents, assassins, saboteurs, smugglers, thieves

Rewards: A regular paycheck, the agency's logistical and political support, respect of the people (if the agency is well-regarded)

The Mother Lode (Savage Story Arc)

1. The characters work for the Guild Council of Porothon. As such, they help protect and promote Porothonian business interests throughout Karthador.

Their current assignment is to meet with Dankor Lee, an independent agent with whom the Council has previously worked. Lee is a purveyor of business intelligence. He can be relied on to accurately provide new leads and warn of competitors' upcoming plans.

The characters meet with Dankor in a bustling Sparasool trade town. He smiles and hands them a raw, uncut energy crystal. "There's plenty more where that came from," he says. "And for the right price, I'll let you know where that is." But before they can even begin to negotiate over his latest find, a blaster shot rings out and Dankor Lee collapses! The group is being attacked by masked gunmen, and must fight for their lives!

2. Energy crystals fuel Porothonian industry. In order to keep this industry humming, the Guild Council is always looking for new sources of energy crystals, and set up mines wherever crystal lodes are found. Knowing that Dankor Lee had information on a new crystal lode, the characters must investigate to discover what they can about this lode—and hopefully avoid Dankor's fate themselves.

Through a combination of questioning the hired guns who attacked them, speaking with the locals, and bribing the authorities, the characters discover that Dankor had been meeting with a prospector who had recently returned from Ferazonn. This prospector had found a new lode of energy crystals somewhere in those forbidding jungles. He even had a map leading right to it. Now he's gone missing—but not before selling the map to an agent from the White Diamond Company.

White Diamond is a mining company owned by the plutocrats of Myratas, and a bitter rival of the Guild Council. The company has an office in town, and further investigation confirms it still has the map locked up on-site.

3. The characters must get that map! The White Diamond office has some security, but is no fortress. Do the characters charge in, blasters blazing, demanding the map be handed over? Do they sneak in at night, cutting their way in through an unguarded second-story window? Or do they walk in through the front door, claiming to be corporate superiors from the home office—with the paperwork to prove it?

4. Once they have the map, the characters follow it into the jungles of Ferazonn. Here they must brave treacherous swamps, vicious predators, and the perils of the green fever (symptoms include fever, exhaustion, and greenish, scale-like patches of skin). As they near the site of the crystal lode, they discover the remains of a White Diamond expedition. It appears the expedition was just a few days ahead of them, and was savagely wiped out with primitive weapons.

The crystal lode lies in the territory of a Ferazonni tribe that's generally hostile to outsiders. Just as the characters reach the lode, they find themselves surrounded and vastly outnumbered by Ferazonni warriors. If they leave now, the lead warrior tells them, he will let them live.

The characters can try to retreat, then fight their way back in, perhaps with a large force of mercenaries hired with Guild Council coin. The Council would never send its own official security forces for such an operation, as it would be political suicide to do so. If they negotiate with the natives instead, they find them to be a shrewd, savvy people, who have seen the dangers and rewards of allowing mining on their lands. They agree to cede the lode over to the Guild Council, but only if the characters help convince a rival tribe from an adjacent territory to abandon their location. For the lode region is useless to the tribe, but the region occupied by their rivals is one of the few spots in Ferazonn to grow spice fruit.

5. The rival tribe is small enough that surgically-applied violence (eliminating the leaders, destroying their weapons, etc.) may be enough to convince its leaders to hand over the territory in question. They're also willing to be bribed with gifts from the Guild Council. The crystal-keeping tribe doesn't care what methods the characters use, so long as their rivals are evicted.

6. Once the characters have secured the rights to the lode, the natives inform them that the nearby caves (which would make an excellent start to a mining operation) are infested with mutant lizard beasts. These cougar-sized predators hunt by night, and have a taste for human flesh. Before any mining operation can begin in earnest, the characters must eliminate this threat, which means exploring the caves and destroying the lizards' nest.

7. The Guild Council has sent the first wave of workers to set up the mining operation. It's the characters' responsibility to serve as liaisons between the natives and the newcomers, and provide safety and security for the workers.

One of the workers is badly injured when a piece of equipment malfunctions and collapses on him. Investigation proves this was no accident; it was sabotage! Even as the characters look for the culprit, more workers are hurt and more machines are destroyed. Further investigation proves it isn't the natives who are to blame, but a covert agent working for the White Diamond Company.

8. White Diamond is attempting a hostile takeover of the crystal mine! The company is sending in an airship full of mercenaries with orders to secure the crystal lode and kill anyone—native or otherwise—who gets in their way. The characters catch wind of the attack before it happens, and have a day or two to prepare their defenses.

The Guild Council agents and workers are outnumbered and outgunned. But if the characters can convince the natives to stand with them, their combined knowledge of the jungle, the caves, and what kinds of technology the Myratans are bringing to the battle might be enough to put up a serious fight. While they might not destroy their attackers outright, they can at least hold them off until reinforcements from the Guild Council arrive.

9. Thanks to the characters' efforts, the energy crystal mine is fully staffed and operational. Guild workers have started clearing the nearby jungle to set up permanent housing and shelter for the newest mine. While the challenge of setting up the initial mine has been overcome, there are plenty of challenges remaining: helping the newcomers adapt to the jungle, defending the mine from hostile natives, defending the natives from hostile miners, and keeping an eye out for spies and saboteurs from rival mines. And of course, when rumors begin to circulate of a new lode a few hundred miles away, the characters are the Council's first choice of whom to send to investigate...

MERCENARIES

In a world as dangerous as Karthador, there will always be money to be made by those willing to face down those dangers on the behalf of their employers. In a mercenary campaign, the characters sell their swords to the highest bidder, whoever that may be. They aren't permanent agents of any one patron, but hired guns contracted for a time, then released to the freedom of the road.

Of course, just because the characters are working for wealth doesn't mean they can't have their own motivations as well. Some may maintain their own codes of honor, and refuse work they find dishonorable. Others may fight to make up for past mistakes, or to help them escape a past that's still trying to catch up with them.

By necessity, characters in a mercenary campaign are often working within the limited orders they've been given. To keep the campaign from being a stale series of railroaded adventures, the characters should have plenty of opportunities to make their own choices between contracts—and the most important choice is which contract to take next.

Matters of State: Rumors of War, Clashing Swords, Ravages of War

Common Archetypes: Beast rider, bodyguard, diplomat, healer, hunter, insurgent, raider, scout, soldier

Starting Nations: Arcona, Doongarda, Ferazonn, Porothon, Rathiveen, Sparasool

Central Locations: Fortresses, camps, caravans, war-torn cities, dense forests, disputed lands

Suggested Enemies: Enemy warriors, bandits, enemy agents, insurgents, sky pirates, invaders

Rewards: Money, spoils of war, honor, fame

Have Blaster, Will Travel (Savage Story Arc)

1. The characters are their own mercenary band, working short-term contracts for those who need their services. Their current job is protecting a small trade caravan traveling from Porothon to Sparasool. Aside from some bad weather in the mountains, the journey has been relatively uneventful. The caravan master is optimistic about reaching the Soolian trade city of Laniday without incident.

Laniday looms large on the horizon when the caravan master's hopes are crushed and Soolian bandits ambush the caravan! It's up to the characters to keep the caravan's people and cargo safe from the brigands!

2. In Laniday, the characters are approached by traders from a small Soolian tribe called the Sunstriders. The traders are in town selling their tribe's ivory. They've heard of the characters' skill, and hire them to escort them back to their settlement in the deep desert. They saw some fire wasps on the way out, and fear running into them again on the way back.

Sure enough, once they reach the deep desert, the small caravan is set upon by fire wasps. The characters have to hold them off long enough for their clients to reach some nearby caves, where they'll be safe until nightfall. The traders warn them that the giant insects are attracted to bright colors, which the characters may be able to use to their advantage.

3. The Sunstriders are a small, peaceful tribe of herders who keep to themselves and the oasis they've held as their own for centuries. According to tradition, they were once a much larger, more belligerent tribe, but their last war against a neighboring tribe nearly wiped them out. The strongest voice for pacifism is Ellay, an old wise woman who serves as the tribe's spiritual leader.

When the characters arrive at the Sunstrider settlement, they discover the whole tribe is in need of their help. Another tribe, calling themselves the Blackbloods, has been harassing them and demanding regular tribute in the form of ivory. The ronard herders can't supply enough ivory fast enough to provide both cash for the tribe and tribute for the raiders. The Sunstriders have been able to dip into their reserves to satisfy the Blackbloods, but now even that is gone. They fear that when the raiders return, they will find there is no tribute and wipe out what remains of the small tribe.

The Blackbloods arrive while the characters are in the settlement. It's a small party, and not expecting any trouble, but its members are well-armed with blades and blasters. When they discover there's no ivory, the characters are all that stands between the Sunstriders and destruction.

4. After the attack, the characters have a chance to investigate the Blackbloods further. It's not a true tribe, they realize, but more of a cult, and its leader is a warlord calling himself Zankrel Blackblood. The cultists are headquartered in the ruins of ancient temple two days to the west.

By tracking the Blackbloods and spying on their operation (perhaps even going undercover to do so), the characters can learn some fascinating things about the cult. For one thing, it's far larger and more organized than they thought: there are dozens of tribute parties sent to collect from the small tribes all over in the region. For another, the leader of the group has an elder machine mask that gives him the power to destroy targets with his gaze and, he claims, it also gives him visions of the future (though they see no obvious proof of this).

Finally, the characters learn that the Sunstriders' defiance has been noted, and the raiders are coming en masse to destroy the tribe at the next full moon.

5. When the characters tell the Sunstriders what they have learned, the tribe's people are split. The wise woman Ellay calls upon the tribe to flee this conflict, and cast out the characters, which brought the horror of battle upon them. Yes, they defended the tribe against the small Blackbloods raiding party. However, she states that the tribe could have negotiated peacefully to placate them rather than resorting to violence. The traders who hired the characters disagree that a peaceful solution is possible and encourage the people to stay and fight, asking the characters to help them persuade the rest of the tribe as well.

In order to convince the tribe to fight for its survival, the characters must persuade the tribe's most influential people, not only with words, but with deeds: doing favors and proving themselves capable of both bravery and wisdom.

6. If the heroes are successful, the elders are convinced; the tribe will fight. To the characters' surprise, the peace-loving Sunstriders produce weapons that have been in their families for generations. They're old but still very serviceable. Unfortunately, the tribe doesn't know how to use them, and turn to the characters for training.

The characters have ten days to train the Sunstriders and develop a plan for defending the tribe against the raiders. While the raiders have greater numbers, the tribe has a greater knowledge of the land.

7. Driven to betrayal by her bitterness, the wise woman Ellay decides to save the tribe from itself by revealing their plans to the raiders. When the leaders of the tribe catch wind of this, they dispatch the characters to track her down before she reaches the raiders' camp. She refuses to go down without a fight, and unless the characters are exceptionally clever, they need to injure or kill her in order to stop her. It's a tragedy, but a sacrifice that must be made to keep the tribe safe.

8. The day of the Blackbloods' attack finally arrives. The Sunstriders' training and the characters' plans are put to the test as the horde of cultists swarms over the hill towards the tribe's settlement.

One thing the characters didn't count on is Zankrel Blackblood's ability to fly! Powered by the strange elder machine mask he wears, he is able to float twenty feet above the earth, blasting his enemies with energy bolts from his eyes! Once the characters figure out a way to take down Zankrel, his followers lose heart and break off the attack.

9. The Sunstrider tribe is safe for now. Its people have proven to both their enemies and themselves that they can and will fight to protect what is theirs. But there remain plenty of questions for the characters to answer: Where did Zankrel's elder machine mask come from? What other relics or treasures are hidden in the Blackbloods' fallen temple? And what will become of the scattered remnants of the raider cult?

BEAST HUNTERS

Even before the black ships came, Karthador had its share of carnivorous megalizards, giant insects, and other beasts too dangerous for most people to face. When the black ship raiders added their mutants to the mix, the wilderness became even more dangerous; whole regions have been abandoned and are now the hunting grounds of abominations from beyond the sea.

The characters are among those few who are skilled and brave enough to challenge these monsters. Perhaps they hunt for the sake of vengeance, stalking the beasts that wiped out their families. Perhaps they're driven by reward, and only hunt those creatures with bounties on their heads. Or perhaps they hunt for the thrill of the hunt, seeking only a trophy to prove their skill.

Matters of State: All's Quiet, Rumors of War

Common Archetype: Beast rider, healer, herder, hunter, mechanic, mercenary, noble, scholar, scout, soldier

Starting Nations: Arcona, Doongarda, Ferazonn, Rathiveen, Sparasool

Central Locations: Deep forests, isolated villages, ruined cities, remote mountains, mysterious caves, hostile wastelands

Suggested Enemies: Mutants, small swarming creatures, huge monstrous beasts, rival hunters

Rewards: Trophies, honor, respect and gratitude of the people, wealth

Bounty of Blood (Savage Story Arc)

1. The characters are a party of trophy hunters in search of game in the wastelands of Doongarda. They have tracked a rather large, bear-like mutant into a dense patch of old forest. As they close in for the kill, another creature bursts through the trees and guts the beast in one swipe. Snarling, the creature turns on the characters. They're next!

The mutant is generally feline in appearance and movement, not entirely unlike a tiger, but with bony scales in place of fur. The creature is a born predator, armed with teeth, claws, and frighteningly fast reflexes. It's like nothing the characters have ever hunted before. They must kill it before it kills them.

2. When the characters bring the dead mutant back to the settlement they're using as base camp, others there tell them that Maxa Varden, a scholar visiting here from Rathiveen, has been looking for samples of such a creature, and will pay highly for its remains. Maxa and her team have set up camp in the ruins of a small village a day's journey away from here.

Arriving at the scholar's camp, the characters find it under attack by a gang of scavengers! The Rathiveen expedition has the high ground and a defensible position, but is outnumbered and outgunned by the vicious scavengers. If the characters are to meet with Maxa to learn what she knows of the mutant—and collect their reward—they need to first defeat the scavengers.

3. Maxa is grateful to the characters for both the rescue and the body of the strange new mutant. She's been tracking this new breed, she says, ever since they appeared on the Doongarda / Rathiveen border. It's not terribly uncommon for mutants to make their way into Rathiveen, but these "bone tigers" are larger and more vicious than most border-crossing beasts. Maxa fears what will happen if entire herds of these things start migrating into Rathiveen.

The characters later come across another "bone tiger" mutant. After killing or tracking it, they find additional tracks; there was a pack of these creatures here, and it is heading north for Rathiveen.

4. Just across the Rathiveen border, the characters find a mining camp full of hostile locals who meet them with weapons drawn. They have lost many of their number to mutant attacks recently. They believe Doongardan scavengers have been driving the mutants northward in order to weaken their defenses and that the characters are those scavengers, come to raid the mine in its ravaged state.

The miners are angry and scared, but not entirely unreasonable. If the characters can convince them of their innocence, the stand-off can end without violence. If not, there will be trouble.

5. Both the miners and the tracks on the ground tell a disturbing tale: several packs of mutants have been through this region, all heading north. Furthermore, one pack has taken up residence in a small nearby cave system. The caves are at the top of a hill and have three different entrances, making it hard to approach without being seen and attacked.

The characters have faced bone tigers before, but never more than one at a time. Nevertheless, if they are to prove themselves as hunters, and keep the mutants from claiming more miners as victims, they must find a way to wipe out the nest.

6. As they are finishing off the nest of mutants, the characters see another, even larger pack of mutants heading in their general direction. These beasts aren't interested in hunting them, however, but are marching more or less straight northeast.

Examining the mutants' trail (either after killing them, or following at a distance), the characters see a well-trod path suggesting that hundreds of these beasts have already walked this way. The trail dissipates into the dust of the road, ending at a Rathiveen village. The villagers confirm that they've seen quite a few bone tigers about, though there have only been a few isolated attacks. The people are nervous. It's unusual to get mutants this far from Doongarda, and in such large numbers. If the characters can eliminate this threat, they would be more than grateful.

Through investigation and tracking, the characters can discover where the mutants are going. Unbeknownst to the villagers, their town lies atop a vast cavern now filled with these mutants.

7. The path into the cavern is dark and dangerous. The characters must face not only natural pitfalls, but man-made traps as well, which confirm that whatever is behind this mutant madness is being guided by a human hand.

At the center of the cavern is an elder machine in the shape of a man-sized pillar. This is clearly what has been calling the mutants, for hundreds of the creatures are milling around it, snarling and snapping at each other. It's up to the characters to destroy or otherwise shut down the machine. The mutants don't make it easy for them, however, and do their best to kill these intruders who want to harm the obelisk.

8. On their way out of the cavern, the characters run into an old man with a coat covered in a patchwork of pockets. He is shocked to see anyone else down here, and bolts for the surface.

The old man, Nagar Shan, was once a member of the Machinist Order. He was cast out for his strange theories. He was using the device to call this breed of superior mutant and then breeding them to create his own mutant army. His connection to the elder machine gives him limited mental control over the hideous creatures.

Realizing that his master plan is falling apart, the scientist runs to his laboratory in the village, where he has secretly bred a super-mutant. It's similar in design to the bone tigers, but the size of an elephant! Nagar Shan unleashes the beast and climbs on top of it. Riding it like a horse, he directs it to destroy the village in order to make his escape! The villagers are panicked and helpless. Only the characters can save them and stop the mutant rampage.

9. If the characters are successful, the scientist has been stopped and his mutants dispersed or eliminated. The characters can stick around and help hunt the beasts if they wish, or return to the hunt in Doongarda.

As for Nagar Shan, if he's still alive, he isn't talking. If he does break, it will probably be at the hands of either the church of Onu or the Machinist Order, who are fighting over which one of them gets to take him into custody first. The characters may never know where the bone tigers came from in the first place. Did Shan have some other elder machine in the south creating them? Or were they always in Doongarda, hiding and waiting for the opportunity to attack?

EXPLORERS OF THE UNKNOWN

Characters in this campaign are scholars, academics, and support staff who have been sent to explore the mysteries of Karthador. Of course, "support staff" includes bodyguards, scouts, pilots, and just about any other adventuring occupation the players want to play. They may be associated with a university, the Machinist Order, or a science-minded government agency.

The purpose of these expeditions is research; perhaps the characters are to learn about the Ancients, mysterious new creatures, or other scientific oddities. Characters may be able to get into secure areas and out of legal problems by claiming the research prerogatives of their academic backgrounds. After all, they're researchers, not troublemakers; any trespassing they do or trouble they cause is in the name of science.

As members of scientific expeditions, the characters are sent on specific—though often open-ended—missions of research and discovery. They are given necessary equipment and contacts, though they are expected to do a certain amount of scrounging on their own.

Matters of State: All's Quiet

Common Archetypes: Archaeologist, bodyguard, diplomat, historian, inventor, pilot, scholar, scientist, scout

Starting Nations: Myratas, Porothon, Tharran, Ursicor

Central Locations: Ancient ruins, underground vaults, dusty libraries, elder machine laboratories, remote deserts, rugged mountain peaks

Suggested Enemies: Hostile natives, rival explorers, local fauna, ancient traps

Rewards: New (or newly-discovered) technologies, fame, knowledge, wealth

The Heart of Aphanas (Savage Story Arc)

1. The characters are part of an Imperial University archeological dig in Tharran. The expedition's purpose is to explore some underground ruins that were recently discovered along the eastern sea shore. Just as the expedition is wrapping up, two important things happen.

First, the characters find an artifact of the Ancients. It's a metal disc, engraved with strange symbols, which the expedition leader recognizes as the most important find on the site.

Second, the excavation collapses a portion of the unstable ruins, and sea water comes rushing in to flood everything. The characters must race against the rapidly-rising waters to escape the ruins alive with their treasures intact!

2. Back at the University, the experts examine the artifact and recognize the markings on it. There is another such artifact, they say, in the ruins of a vault in Rathiveen. The characters are dispatched, via airship, to the old site to retrieve the artifact.

When the characters arrive, they discover the vault site has been shut down by the local authorities, who don't like Machinists poking around their territory. In order to access the site, the characters must either convince the authorities to let them in (perhaps through bribery, persuasion, or threats), or sneak in under cover of darkness.

Since the old vault was shut down, it's been taken over by a local bandit gang, who are using it as their secret hideout. Once the characters get into the vault, they must fight their way through the bandits, who are more than willing to kill in order to keep their hideout a secret.

3. The Rathiveen artifact is another metal disc. When the two discs are placed together, they form a map to what might be Aphanas, the legendary city of the Ancients, long rumored to be buried somewhere beneath the snows of Arcona.

The University assigns the characters to a new expedition to find Aphanas. The expedition is led by Bon Zokar, an expert archaeologist who has spent his entire life looking for the fabled city. No one in the University knows the landmarks and history of Arcona like he does.

While en route by airship to the first landmark on the map, the characters pass over the city-state of Kragen, which opens fire on them! Kragen's cannons tear a hole in the airship, forcing an emergency crash landing. Kragen, a remnant city populated by former Myratan colonists, is at war with another city-state, and fired upon the characters' airship assuming it was the enemy. If the characters meet with the city's rulers, those rulers are appalled to learn of their mistake,

and offer to help with the repairs—though it could take months to get the necessary parts. They also offer the characters a snow-crawler, which can get them where they need to go, albeit much slower than an airship would. Bon Zokar is impatient, and insists they take the snow-crawler, rather than wait for repairs.

4. The expedition sets out for the first landmark, which the Kragenites warn them is in the territory of a dangerous tribe of barbarians. These "barbarians" are actually native Arconan hunters. They aren't overly hostile, but will fight to defend their hunting grounds.

When the characters get to the first landmark, the tribal hunters greet them and, after some negotiation as to their presence in the hunters' lands, offer to show them a shortcut to the second landmark. The shortcut will cut many days off their travel time, but the tribe requires a favor from the characters in return. A heating pod in one of the tribe's remote hunting lodges has burned out and needs a new energy crystal. The characters are to journey to the pod and replace the crystal with one of their own. While doing so, the lodge comes under attack from a rival tribe armed with crossbows and snow-crawlers. The characters must hold off the attackers long enough to get the heating pod operational, without letting the lodge itself get damaged.

5. Guided by the snow tribe's directions, the characters pass through the shortcut and find themselves at the next checkpoint, a tiny village on the threshold of a terrible, frozen wilderness the locals call "the White." A snow storm makes travel to the next checkpoint impossible for a few days, but the village is friendly and hospitable. When the villagers learn the expedition intends to head out into the White, they warn the characters against it. It's too dangerous, they say. There are no men out there, but only monsters, demons, and blizzards that last for weeks.

When the storm passes, the characters discover that some of their equipment is missing, and the snow-crawler has been sabotaged beyond repair. The villagers appear concerned and offer to help search for the missing equipment and the saboteur, but then members of the expedition begin to disappear as well. As the characters investigate, they realize that the isolated village has given itself over to madness. Its people worship a demon of storms and pain that allegedly speaks through the howling wind. The villagers have captured the crewmembers to offer as sacrifices, and intend to offer up the entire expedition to appease their frozen lord!

6. After defeating the cultists, the expedition puts the village of the madmen behind them and presses onward into the White. They must cross a frozen, snow-scoured plain before reaching the craggy mountains that mark their next checkpoint. The mountains are pocked with shallow caves that hide pitfalls as often as they offer shelter. Blizzards hound the characters' every step. So do the snow bears, which stalk their prey for days before striking. The expedition is likewise growing hungry, as their food stores are running out. Expedition members begin to fall. And through it all, the expedition must face the cold, which only gets worse the further north they travel.

Regardless of the mission's challenges, Bon Zokar cannot be discouraged or turned aside. He has come too far, he says, he has sacrificed too much to turn back now. Anyone who suggests abandoning the search for Aphanas is a traitor, he says, and is probably in league with the wind demons. The further the expedition travels, the more paranoid and withdrawn its leader becomes.

7. At the first sign that the expedition might rebel against him, Bon Zokar breaks off from the group to find the hidden city on his own. He sneaks off in the middle of the night, taking with him the map and the rest of the party's food. The characters can try to make it back to civilization, but their best bet is to chase after Zokar.

Following the madman's trail into the mountains, the characters find what can only be the entrance to Aphanas. A massive door, covered in ancient script, is set into the side of the mountain. Knobs and buttons are scattered across the door; activating them in the proper sequence opens the door, but the characters don't have a lot of time to figure it out. Another storm is brewing on the horizon, and a pair of snow bears is hot on their trail!

8. The city of Aphanas, hidden for centuries in the cavernous heart of the mountain, is many things, but most importantly, it is warm. It's dimly lit by countless glowing energy crystals, and protected by elder machine traps and force fields.

The characters hear the voice of Bon Zokar echoing in their heads. He rants about his destiny, and how he's been chosen by the Ancients to bear their terrible power and usher in a new age of death or possibly enlightenment. Or maybe both: enlightenment for some, death for those who doubt his greatness. To prove his power (and confirming his madness) he unleashes a mental attack on one of the surviving expedition members.

Bon Zokar has discovered a throne-like elder machine in the center of the city. He sits in it now, the power of the throne enhancing his mental abilities and insanity. It gives him the ability to sense the thoughts of those around him, and read the thoughts of any one person he focuses on. If he focuses even harder, he can assault that person's mind, destroying it.

The characters must find a way to keep Zokar distracted long enough for them to cut the power to the elder machine. Shutting down the elder machine creates a backlash that burns out both the elder machine and Zokar himself.

9. Aphanas is a treasure trove of elder machines and energy crystals. It seems strangely sterile, however, as if the Ancients stripped the place of what they could before abandoning it to the ages.

With the energy crystals from the city, the characters can fully charge their heaters and blasters, and still have plenty to trade for anything they need from the Arconan people. If they search around, they even find some parts that could be used to repair the snow-crawler that was sabotaged in the village of madmen.

When they return to the University, the officials there cover up what a fiasco the expedition was, and immediately start prepping a return journey to the lost city. Since the characters are already familiar with the area, the officials would love to have them lead it... once they've properly warmed up, of course.

REBELS

In this campaign, the characters fight against their rulers, who they judge to be too corrupt, oppressive, or incompetent to continue their reign.

The characters may be assassins and saboteurs in a bloody guerrilla war. Or they may play a more subtle game of blackmail, espionage, and propaganda. In any case, they are the underdogs in this conflict. While the characters may have the tacit support of the people, the rulers have more and better resources at their command, and would love nothing better than to bring them all to bear on the rebellion. To succeed—indeed, just to survive—the characters must be faster, smarter, and bolder than their enemies.

Matters of State: Rumors of War, Clashing Swords, Ravages of War

Common Archetypes: Farmer, healer, herder, hunter, insurgent, mercenary, raider, scout, smuggler, spy, thief

Starting Nations: Arcona, Ferazonn, Rathiveen, Sparasool, Ursicor

Central Locations: Seedy rebel hideouts, back alleys, safe houses, wilderness camps, prisons

Suggested Enemies: Foot soldiers of the tyrant, haughty nobles, exploitative merchants, traitors

Rewards: Justice for the oppressed, revenge against unlawful rulers, a better way of life

Machines and Machinations (Savage Story Arc)

1. The characters are part of the resistance movement in Ursicor, hiding in the forests and fighting a guerilla war against the tyrant queens. Their group, the Silver Star Army, is led by the clever and charismatic Yurog, a former royal who has thrown away his legacy to join the rebellion. His second in command is Tania, an accomplished spy and his suspected lover.

The two of them are leading a rebel task force (of which the characters are a part) on a raid against a royal supply depot. It's up to the characters to take out the depot's guards, and hold off any reinforcements until the rest of the team has a chance to escape with the stolen supplies.

2. The mission is a success, but Tania has been captured! Yurog is distraught, and refuses to rest until his lieutenant is rescued. The characters are part of a small team sent to the royal prison where Tania has been taken. There, they must sneak past guards, overcome locked doors, and find their captured compatriot; they must then escape safely.

3. Ever the master spy, Tania was able, even while in custody, to learn her captors' secrets. Safe amongst the rebels again, she reveals that the royals have acquired a new secret weapon, codenamed Juggernaut.

Juggernaut is a Myratas-designed airship equipped with a massive stun wave battery. With this weapon, the royals can simply fly over a section of forest and blast the region, stunning every living thing below into unconsciousness. The trees, which have sheltered the rebellion for so long, don't block the stun waves. And while they might still hide the rebels from royal eyes, the Juggernaut's gunners don't need to see their targets in order to hit them.

Tania's information corroborates other intelligence the rebels have gathered, but includes something new: the hidden location of the secret weapon.

Yurog assembles the largest assault team the Army has seen in years, with the characters in important positions, and attacks the hangar where the Juggernaut is being housed. But when the rebels arrive, they find it's a trap! The airship was here until recently, but now the hangar is full of royal troops who proceed to slaughter the rebels. Was Tania set up? Was she brainwashed or convinced to betray her allies during her incarceration? The characters may never know, as she's one of the first ones killed.

4. While the characters escape the royal trap with their lives, the Silver Star Army is in shambles. Many rebels have been killed—including Yurog—and many who survived the ambush have abandoned the cause and gone to ground. If the characters have any hope of rebuilding the rebellion, they must find Nolga.

Nolga was the original leader of the Silver Star Army. After she was injured in an attack some ten years ago, she stepped down from her position, and later went into hiding. If Nolga were to return to the rebellion she helped form, her presence would provide hope and inspiration to the rebels. Before this can happen, the characters must find her and convince to once more assume the mantle of leadership.

Finding Nolga requires the characters to sneak into Pogarod, where she was last seen. Here, they contact a rebel spy, who puts them in touch with a local crime lord who will gladly take them to Nolga if they help him kidnap and rob a certain royal official.

5. After the kidnapping goes well, the crime lord is true to his word, and delivers the characters to a large, walled manor house on the outskirts of the city. The guards on the door confirm that Nolga does indeed live here, but she has a strict policy against receiving strange visitors – especially those who smell of rebellion. To reach the retired rebel, the characters must find some way to either sneak inside, convince the guards to let them pass, or fight their way in (which will not ingratiate them to Nolga).

When the characters finally reach Nolga, they find an old woman whose passion for freedom has long since flickered out. She has seen too many battles and lost too many friends to take up that torch again. She does, however, give the characters a torch of their own to carry. It is the original silver star, the sigil she wore when she led the troops. The star went on to become the rebellion's sigil that the members use to identify one another. Nolga informs them that whoever wears the silver star will be recognized as having her blessing. It's a powerful symbol, and one the rebellion can rally around.

6. Who shall bear the silver star? Fate has put this important decision in the characters' hands, and it's up to them to decide. They may choose one of their own to lead the rebellion. Or they may suggest another candidate whose skills and connections they feel will better serve the cause. Either way, they may have some work cut out for them convincing the rest of the rebels to follow their newly-appointed leader. The silver star serves as potent symbol, but a symbol by itself can't inspire courage, loyalty, or passion.

7. While the Juggernaut hangar was a trap, the Juggernaut itself is no myth. Intelligence reports from across Ursicor confirm that the airship is in its final testing stages, and will soon be headed for the forest the characters call home. The surviving rebels are scattered and defenseless. It's up to the characters and their newly-appointed leader to rally the troops, gather the rebels, and come up with a plan to stop the royals' scheme to wipe them out. Do they set up anti-airship weapons in the trees? Find some way to block the stun wave? Find an airship of their own to blast the Juggernaut out of the sky?

8. The Juggernaut is coming! The slow-moving airship appears on the horizon. It's accompanied by scores of royal troops following in its wake, with orders to kill or capture any rebels they find. This is the climactic battle the characters have been planning for. If the new leader and gathered rebels can repel this attack and defeat the machine, it will prove they have what it takes to defy the queens, and scores of disgruntled citizens will flock to them, replenishing their numbers. If not, it could be the end of the Silver Star Army.

9. After the battle of the Juggernaut, the characters are in positions of de facto leadership within the rebellion. Will they lead the rebels to victory through frontal assaults and sabotage? Will they choose the subtle path of blackmail, propaganda, and espionage? Or will they follow Nolga's example and walk away while they still can?

VISITORS FROM ANOTHER WORLD

The characters are from Earth, not Karthador.

Perhaps the ancients created a portal to Earth, and the characters have slipped through it. Perhaps an isolated Earth scientist has developed a device to fold space between here and Karthador, and tricked the characters into testing it for him. Or perhaps the characters are caught up in a strange, extraterrestrial energy storm that draws their house into its vortex and deposits them, shaken but unharmed, on Karthador.

This campaign serves as a good way to introduce Karthador to new players. The characters know nothing about the world, and can take their time absorbing the details of the local region without worrying about Karthador at large. Once they're more integrated into their new home, the characters can explore the rest of setting further at their own pace.

Matters of State: All's Quiet, Rumors of War, Clashing Swords

Common Archetypes: Artist, craftsman, diplomat, entertainer, farmer, healer, merchant

Starting Nations: Any

Central Locations: Palaces, dungeons, forests, caves, towns, ancient ruins

Suggested Enemies: Agents assigned to capture the out-worlders, hostile natives, local flora and fauna

Rewards: Excitement of exploring exotic experiences, the overwhelming relief of arriving home again

No Place Like Home (Savage Story Arc)

1. The characters are all friends or family of an eccentric millionaire who has recently died and left them all something in his will. The characters are all at least somewhat acquainted with one another, and have gathered at the millionaire's sprawling rural estate for the reading of his will. Some or all of the characters should have family or other strong ties to their current, Earth-bound lives, in order to help motivate them in the adventures to come.

One of the characters inherits an oddly-shaped necklace with a crystal as part of its design. It's a family heirloom, the millionaire's lawyer explains. It's been passed down for so many generations that no one knows where it originally came from.

One of the other characters receives possession of the estate itself—including the mysterious barn that the millionaire kept locked and never allowed anyone to visit. When the characters investigate the barn, they find ancient stairs in the floor leading to an underground chamber. In the center of the chamber is circular slab of black stone etched with strange symbols. When the characters approach the stone, both it and the strange necklace begin to glow. The glow explodes into a blinding light.

When the characters' vision returns, they find themselves, and anything they had brought to the stone chamber, sitting atop the stone (or an identical black stone) in a jungle clearing. Everything feels just a little bit off. The color of the sunlight, the smell of the air, the very pull of gravity is not quite right. And if the characters still don't suspect they're on an alien planet, when they look up, they see a sparkling stripe across the sky—the rings of Karthador!

2. The characters have arrived in the jungles of Ferazonn. They quickly discover that the jungle is home to many dangers: predatory dinosaurs, giant blood-sucking insects, dangerously swampy ground, and the oppressive, ever-present heat. By the time they catch a glimpse of campfire smoke in the distance, it comes as a relief. Where there's smoke, there may be people, civilization, and safety!

Following the smoke and other signs of human habitation, the characters make their way towards a Ferazonni village. The village is full of natives armed with spears, bows, and a handful of blasters that are gifts from their Porothonian friends. Much to everyone's surprise, the characters and the natives can communicate without difficulty; whatever elder machine brought the characters here also implanted the common tongue of Karthador into their minds.

The natives are suspicious. They have run into strangers here before, and they turned out to be agents of Myratas, sent to kill and destroy. If the characters are very clever and diplomatic, they can convince the tribal elders of their innocence, and are kept as honored guests. If not, they are locked up and kept as foreign prisoners.

3. The Ferazonni tribe has allied itself with the guilds of Porothon, who have agreed to start an energy crystal mine inside its territory. The guilds are especially interested in the tribe's land since there are clues and legends that it may also contain a vault of elder machines. While the guilds are preparing to begin development, the village has come under attack from agents of the Myratan White Diamond Company who want the natives' resources—and access to the vault—for themselves.

Agents representing the Porothonian guilds have set up a fortified camp a day's journey from the Ferazonni village. The Ferazonni take the characters (either as guests or prisoners) to meet with these Porothonian allies. When they arrive, they learn that the guild agents have found the White Diamond agents' hidden camp, and are about to launch a counter-attack.

The Porothonians and Ferazonni invite the characters to help with the attack in order to prove they aren't secretly working for White Diamond after all. The characters can join in the fighting proper, or serve as look-outs, couriers, or other support roles. It's a small camp, and the Myratans are out-numbered, so the characters aren't in terrible danger so long as they aren't reckless.

4. Now that the immediate Myratan threat has been eliminated, the Porothonian agents set off by airship for Calagar, the capital of Porothon and the headquarters of the Guild Council. They bring the characters with them, along with any Myratan agents they might have captured. The industrialized city is a dramatic change of scenery from the primal jungles of Ferazonn.

In Calagar, the agents turn the characters over to Akara Duran. Akara is a lovely, brilliant young noblewoman and guild leader who has dedicated herself to the study of crystal technology and elder machines. She is helping the Guild Council with its project in the jungle because she would love to be the first scientist to access the Ferazonni vault.

Akara is eager to hear the characters' story, but is skeptical of it all the same. She's heard wild tales of doors to other worlds, but never seen any evidence that they exist. If they can convince her that what they're saying is true, perhaps by showing her the strange crystal necklace, she agrees to use her knowledge of elder machines to try and get them home.

5. Upon examining the weird necklace the character brought with them, Akara declares it's an elder machine. It's a sort of key, she says, that broadcasts a signal that must have unlocked a door between the two worlds. The bad news is that the key is burned out and can't be repaired. The good news is that she has seen another such device in the artifact depository of a Machinist chapterhouse in Tharran. If she can get her hands on it, she believes she can get the characters home again.

The characters, the scientist, and her entourage set out by airship from Porothon to Tharran. On the way, Akara answers any questions the characters might have about Karthador, its nations, and its technology. She explains about the ancients, the elder machines, and the role of the Machinist Order.

When they arrive in Tharran, the Machinists at the chapterhouse confess that their depository has been raided. The key the characters seek, along with most of the Machinists' other treasures, are now in the hands of local bandit clan. The clan maintains a thin veneer of respectability, however, along with a run-down plantation and a small army of hired hands who double as thugs.

The characters must find a way to retrieve the key from the criminal clan. They could try a frontal assault. They're outnumbered, but they have Porothonian allies to help out, as well as an airship. Or they could try to talk their way into the clan's good graces, appealing to their pride and greed. They could sneak in under cover of darkness. Or maybe even gather the support of the other plantation families, and take a unified stand against the thieves, demanding reparations of all they've stolen.

6. Key in hand, the characters are flying to Ferazonn. Akara wants to see the black stone where they first appeared, and test if the key will react to it. It's possible, she theorizes, that if she can get the settings on the key just right, the characters could go home immediately. She doesn't get a chance to test theory, however, for while crossing the deserts between Tharran and Ferazonn, the airship is attacked!

The attackers are White Diamond agents, seeking vengeance for the defeat they suffered in the jungles of Ferazonn. They board the airship, and close-quarters combat ensues.

The characters and their allies manage to repel the boarders, but as the White Diamond airship flies away, they realize three things: Akara has been captured, the pilot is dead, and the airship is crashing. It's up to the characters to rescue Akara, but before they can do that, they must crash-land the airship as safely as they can.

7. The characters have crash-landed in Sparasool. They have the key, but they don't have Akara.

With the key, they can theoretically get home. But without Akara, they have no idea how to use it. While at first glance it's similar to the necklace that brought them here, it's actually covered in minute dials and switches. Akara has studied the device and understands it. No one else does.

Still, things could be worse. Yes, they're stranded in the desert with little in the way of supplies. But they're also just a few miles from a major trade road traveled by numerous caravans heading to and from Myratas. If they can convince a caravan to take them on, they can reach Myratas in a matter of days—assuming the caravan doesn't run into raiders, fire wasps, or sand storms.

Akara's people inform the characters that White Diamond has its headquarters in Kranelos, the capital of Myratas. This is no doubt where their attackers have taken her.

8. Kranelos looks like nothing the characters have seen before on Karthador. Its gleaming towers and flying vehicles make industrial Calagar look like Dickens' London. Surrounded by these technological marvels, the characters can understand how this nation once ruled the continent.

But they're here to rescue Akara, not to sight-see. Investigation confirms that she is being held as a "special guest" in White Diamond's corporate tower. The corporation isn't expecting a rescue attempt, however, so security, while plentiful, is lax, and the characters can take their enemies by surprise. Subterfuge is likely to be more effective than a direct assault, but with the help of their Porothonian allies, the characters can make any plans they wish.

Akara can be found in a locked apartment on the residential level of the tower. Armed guards patrol the halls and guard the door, though they aren't expecting trouble. Once the characters reach Akara, she tells them there's a White Diamond airship parked on the roof. If they

can get her there, she can fly them out of here.

If the characters are fast and subtle enough, they can be gone before the White Diamond knows something's wrong. If not, they have to escape a squad of Myratan patrol ships with orders to bring them down.

9. At last, the characters reach the black stone circle where they first entered Karthador. They have the key. They have Akara, who knows how to use it. The question now is will they go back? Akara can't guarantee that key will work to bring back to Karthador if they change their minds once they return to Earth. If they do return, they will have memories of amazing adventures. If they stay, they may have adventures even more amazing yet—as well as a place among the Porothonians, and enemies in the Myratans.

PEOPLE OF KARTHADOR

AGENT

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

Skills: Intimidation d6 (+2), Knowledge (Law) d10, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Authority, Connections

Languages: Native + Common Type + 4

Defining Interests: 4

Gear: Fine suit, pocket ray blaster (Range: 4/8/16, Damage: 2d8, RoF: 1, Shots: 1, AP 2)

ARCHAEOLOGIST/TREASURE HUNTER

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Knowledge (Antiques) d8+2, Knowledge (History) d8+2, Notice d6 (+2), Survival d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Scholar (Antiques and History), Treasure Hunter

Languages: Native + Common Type + 4

Defining Interests: 4

Gear: Digging tools

ARTIST

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

Skills: Knowledge (Art) d10, Notice d8+2, Persuasion d6, Streetwise d6, Taunt d8

Charisma: +1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Alertness, Cultured

Languages: Native + Common Type + 3

Defining Interests: 5

Gear: Relevant media

BEAST RIDER

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Riding d8+2, Shooting d6, Survival d6, Tracking d8

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

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Beast Bond, Natural Rider

Languages: Native + Common Type + 3

Defining Interests: 3

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), riding animal

BODYGUARD

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Protector

Languages: Native + Common Type + 3

Defining Interests: 3

Gear: Long sword (Str+d8), ray blaster pistol (Range: 8/16/32, Damage: 2d8, RoF: 1, Shots: 5, AP 1)

CLERGY

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

Skills: Healing d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Theology) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Streetwise d4

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

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Authority, Charismatic, Connections

Languages: Native + Common Type + 3

Defining Interests: 3

Gear: Holy books

CRAFTSMAN

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

Skills: Knowledge (Craft) d10, Notice d6, Repair d10, Streetwise d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Brawny, Connections

Languages: Native + Common Type + 4

Defining Interests: 4

Gear: Relevant tools

DIPLOMAT

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

Skills: Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Etiquette) d8, Knowledge (Karthador) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Taunt d6

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

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Charismatic, Connections, Strong Willed

Languages: Native + Common Type + 4

Defining Interests: 4

Gear: Fine clothes

ENGINEER

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

Skills: Knowledge (Engineering) d10, Knowledge (Crystal Machines) d8+2, Lockpicking d6, Repair d10+2

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Connections, Crystal Machinist

Languages: Native + Common Type + 4

Defining Interests: 4

Gear: Tools

ENTERTAINER

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

Skills: Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Music) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8 (+2), Taunt d8

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

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Charismatic, Entertainer

Languages: Native + Common Type + 3

Defining Interests: 3

Gear: Change of clothes, overnight bag

FARMER

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

Skills: Driving d6, Gambling d6, Healing d6, Knowledge (Farming) d8, Notice d6, Repair d6, Swimming d4, Survival d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Herbalist

Languages: Native + Common Type + 3

Defining Interests: 3

Gear: Farming tools

HEALER

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

Skills: Healing d10+2, Knowledge (Medicine) d10, Notice d8+2, Persuasion d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Alertness, Connections, Healer

Languages: Native + Common Type + 4

Defining Interests: 4

Gear: Herbs, tonics, and poultices

HERDER

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8, Riding d6+2, Shooting d4, Survival d6, Tracking d8

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

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Beast Rider, Command, Natural Rider

Languages: Native + Common Type + 3

Defining Interests: 3

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), riding animal

HUNTER

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d6 (+2), Survival d8 (+2), Tracking d8 (+2)

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

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Iron Hearted, Woodsman

Languages: Native + Common Type + 3

Defining Interests: 3

Gear: Ray blaster rifle (Range: 16/32/64, Damage: 2d10, RoF: 1, Shots: 5, AP 2), waterskin

INSURGENT

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8+2, Shooting d6, Stealth d6 (+2), Streetwise d6 (+2), Survival d6 (+2), Taunt d6+2

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

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Connections (Local Insurrection), Insurgent, Strong Willed

Languages: Native + Common Type + 4

Defining Interests: 4

Gear: Long sword (Str+d8), chucker pistol (Range: 12 / 24 / 48, Damage: 2d6, RoF: 1, Shots: 5)

INVENTOR

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (Crystal Machines) d10+2, Notice d8, Repair d10 (+2), Shooting d6

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

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Craft Device, Crystal Machinist

Powers: Choose 1

Languages: Native + Common Type + 5

Defining Interests: 5

Gear: Devices, tools

MERCENARY

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Battle) d4, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Survival d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Brawny, Nerves of Steel

Languages: Native + Common Type + 3

Defining Interests: 3

Gear: Long sword (Str+d8), ray blaster pistol (Range: 8/16/32, Damage: 2d8, RoF: 1, Shots: 5, AP 1), leather armor (+2)

MERCHANT

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

Skills: Gambling d6, Knowledge (Business) d10+2, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Streetwise d8 (+2)

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

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Charismatic, Merchant

Languages: Native + Common Type + 4

Defining Interests: 4

Gear: Various goods and merchandise

MINER

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Knowledge (Mining) d8, Notice d8, Survival d8 (+2)

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Brawny, Survivor (Underground)

Languages: Native + Common Type + 3

Defining Interests: 3

Gear: Mining tools

NOBLE

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

Skills: Investigation d6, Knowledge (Nobility) d8, Knowledge (Local) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8

Charisma: +3; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Connections, Cultured, Noble, Rich

Languages: Native + Common Type + 3

Defining Interests: 3

Gear: Rich clothing

PILOT

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

Skills: Boating d6+2, Fighting d8, Knowledge (Karthador) d6, Notice d6, Piloting d8+2, Shooting d6

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

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Ace, Inherited Vehicle (Airship), Steady Hands

Languages: Native + Common Type + 3

Defining Interests: 3

Gear: Airship

PSIONICIST

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Healing d6, Knowledge (Ancient History) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Psionics d8, Streetwise d6

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

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics), Increased Range

Powers: Choose 2

Languages: Native + Common Type + 4

Defining Interests: 4

Gear: Knife (Str+d4)

RAIDER

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8

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

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Raider

Languages: Native + Common Type + 3

Defining Interests: 3

Gear: Long sword (Str+d8), chucker pistol (Range: 12 / 24 / 48, Damage: 2d6, RoF: 1, Shots: 5), riding animal

SAILOR

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

Skills: Boating d8, Fighting d6, Knowledge (The Sea) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d4, Survival d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Brawny, Rugged

Languages: Native + Common Type + 3

Defining Interests: 3

Gear: Knife (Str+d4)

SCHOLAR

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

Skills: Investigation d8, Knowledge (Geography) d10+2, Knowledge (History) d10+2, Notice d6+2

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Alertness, Linguist, Scholar (Geography and History)

Languages: Native + Common Type + 8

Defining Interests: 4

Gear: Various charts, books

SCIENTIST

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

Skills: Knowledge (Crystal Machines) d10+2, Knowledge (Science) d10+2, Knowledge (History) d8, Notice d6, Repair d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Scholar (Science and Crystal Machines)

Languages: Native + Common Type + 5

Defining Interests: 5

Gear: Scientific instruments

SCOUT

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8+2, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d8, Tracking d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 8 (Run d10); **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Alertness, Fleet-Footed

Languages: Native + Common Type + 4

Defining Interests: 4

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), ray blaster pistol (Range: 8/16/32, Damage: 2d8, RoF: 1, Shots: 5, AP 1)

SKY PIRATE

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Battle) d4, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Shooting d6, Taunt d4

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Acrobat, Swashbuckler

Languages: Native + Common Type + 2

Defining Interests: 2

Gear: Long sword (Str+d8), ray blaster pistol (Range: 8/16/32, Damage: 2d8, RoF: 1, Shots: 5, AP 1)

SMUGGLER

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6 (+2), Shooting d8, Stealth d8 (+2), Streetwise d6 (+2)

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

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Low Profile, Smuggler

Languages: Native + Common Type + 3

Defining Interests: 3

Gear: Long sword (Str+d8), contraband

SOLDIER

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Healing d4, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Survival d6

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

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Brave, Signature Moves (Long Sword)

Languages: Native + Common Type + 3

Defining Interests: 3

Gear: Long sword (Str+d8), ray blaster rifle (Range: 16/32/64, Damage: 2d10, RoF: 1, Shots: 5, AP 2), leather armor (+2)

SPY

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Poisons) d4, Persuasion d6 (+4 Disguise), Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6 (+2 Blending), Throwing d6

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

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Attractive, Low Profile, Smooth Talker

Languages: Native + Common Type + 3

Defining Interests: 3

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), disguises

THIEF

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

Skills: Climbing d6+2, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Lockpicking d8+2, Notice d4 (+2), Repair d4 (+2), Stealth d8 (+2)

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

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Close Fighting, Thief

Languages: Native + Common Type + 3

Defining Interests: 3

Gear: Knife (Str+d4)

WOODSMAN

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

Skills: Climbing d8+2, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6 (+2), Survival d6 (+2), Tracking d6 (+2)

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

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Mountaineer, Woodsman

Languages: Native + Common Type + 3

Defining Interests: 3

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), water skin

WRITER

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

Skills: Investigation d8+2, Knowledge (Literature) d10, Knowledge (Any Subject) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d6

Charisma: +1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: One Major and Two Minor

Edges: Cosmopolitan, Cultured, Nosy

Languages: Native + Common Type + 5

Defining Interests: 7

Gear: Ink, quills, paper



ELEVATING EXTRAS

Sometimes a character or creature is tougher than the average Extra, but isn't quite a Wild Card either. When you want to turn an encounter into something a little more challenging, you may wish to elevate an Extra or two to Henchman status, and/or make them Really Tough.

HENCHMAN: This character/creature gets a Wild Die for his/its actions, but is otherwise identical to an Extra.

REALLY TOUGH: The character/creature gains the Hardy monstrous ability, and may be of any difficulty type.

Elevating a character/creature to Wild Card status should be reserved for those fights that you want to be set pieces.

CREATURES OF KARTHADOR

BURROWER BUG

These insects are gigantic for an insect, reaching sizes of small animals (Size -1). They burrow deep into the sand and lurk there, virtually invisible, waiting for prey to stumble upon them, whereupon they clamp onto the legs of whatever creature is around, inject a Fatigue-causing venom, and begin to digest any exposed tissue from their acidic secretions!

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

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

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

Special Abilities

- **Armor +1:** Hard shell.
- **Bite:** Str+d4 acid damage with the Acid Burn Trapping.
- **Burrowing (10'')**: While in the sand, burrower bugs can disappear and reappear on the following action anywhere within 10''.
- **Paralytic Poison (-2)**: Any creature that suffers a wound from a burrower bug's bite attack must make a Vigor roll at -2 or suffer a Fatigue level.
- **Size -1:** These insects reach the Size of small animals.

CARBOONA

These broad-shouldered, deer-like animals prefer to flee trouble than fight, but will slash and stab with their antlers if cornered. Domesticated carboona can be taught to pull a cart or carry a rider, but will never accept a saddle. Those trying to ride a carboona bareback get a -1 to all their Riding rolls.

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d8, Stealth d6

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

Special Abilities

- **Antlers:** Str+d6.
- **Bite:** Str.
- **Fleet-Footed:** Carboona roll d10s instead of d6s when running.

COG BUG SWARM

Cog bugs make their nests wherever warm conduits, ducts, and crawlspaces can be found. They especially love sites with lots of wires to chew. Individual cog bugs are at best a nuisance, but when they swarm, they can become a true threat.

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

Skills: Notice d6

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

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Cog bug swarms inflict hundreds of tiny bites every round to their victims, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the Medium Burst Template. Damage is applied to the least armored location (victims in completely sealed suits are immune).
- **Split:** Cog bug swarms are clever enough to split into two smaller swarms (Small Burst Templates) should their foes split up. The Toughness of these smaller swarms is lowered by -2 (to 5 each).
- **Swarm:** Parry +2; because the swarm is composed of hundreds or thousands of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area-effect weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict his damage in Strength each round. Cog bug swarms are usually foiled by jumping in water.
- **Stun:** The bite attacks of a cog bug swarm emit electrical shocks from the stored electrical energy from the conduits on which they feed. When a swarm successfully hits a character (even if it causes no damage), the victim must make a Vigor roll or be Shaken. He cannot attempt to recover from being Shaken for 1d6 rounds.

DELGER

Delgers look like miniature white bears. They're often domesticated by Arconans, who use them as mounts and pack animals.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Swimming d6

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

Special Abilities

- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Immunity (Cold):** Covered in thick layers of fur and fat, delger are unaffected by the cold.



FANG-WHALE

— These enormous predator whales require vast amounts of food to survive. A single one can wipe out a season's fish supply in just a matter of days. When they're seen in the fishing lanes, it's up to the fishermen to drive them off or die trying.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d12, Swimming d10

Pace: —; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 16

Special Abilities

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- **Bite:** Str+d8.
- **Hardy:** Fang-whales do not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.
- **Huge:** Attackers add +4 to their attack rolls when attacking a fang-whale due to its massive size.
- **Size +8:** Fang-whales can grow up to 25' in length.
- **Tail Slap:** Fang-whales can slap the surface of the water, causing nearby ships to rock and tip. This is a standard Fighting attack that does no damage, but the pilots of nearby ships must make a Boating check or go Out of Control (see the *Savage Worlds* core rules).



GOLBOK

The bear-like golbok is found in the forest, where it eats anything that holds still long enough for it to get its claws into it. Golboks can be domesticated if they are raised from when they are cubs.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Fleet-Footed:** Golboks roll d10s instead of d6s when running.
- **Size +2:** Golboks are large enough for two people to ride.

GREENBACK

These ape-like "frog-men" are found in remote swamps, where they protect their nests with crude tools and shocking violence.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d4, Stealth d10, Swimming d8

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

Gear: Spear (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d6, RoF: 1, Min Str: d6, Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands)

Special Abilities

- **Aquatic:** Pace 8.
- **Fearless:** Greenbacks are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Low Light Vision:** Greenbacks ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

ICE BEAR

Ice bears are enormous, relentless predators who hunt yarans, humans, and whatever else they can find across the frozen wastes.

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

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

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11

Special Abilities

- **Bear Hug:** Bears don't actually "hug" their victims, but they do attempt to use their weight to pin their prey and rend it with their claws and teeth. A bear that hits with a raise has pinned his foe. The opponent may only attempt to escape the "hug" on his action, which requires a raise on an opposed Strength roll.
- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Immunity (Cold):** Covered in thick layers of fur and fat, ice bears are unaffected by the cold.
- **Size +3:** Ice bears stand up to 9' tall at the shoulder and weigh over 1200 pounds.

MEGALIZARDS

Similar to dinosaurs of Earth's prehistoric past, megalizards are giant reptiles found throughout Karthador. While many have been domesticated, others are savage, brutal predators that will never bend to the will of man.

Bounder Lizard

This desert predator can easily outrace a fleeing human while running on its powerful hind legs. Wild bounder lizards stalk Sparasool and its neighboring regions, and are the preferred mount of Soolian raiders.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+6, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12 (2)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +2:** Thick hide.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Fleet-Footed:** Bounder lizards roll d10s instead of d6s when running.
- **Size +2:** Bounder lizards are large enough to be ridden by a single rider.



Daggermouth

The most fearsome megalizard known to Karthador is the bipedal predator called the daggermouth. Daggermouths are most commonly found in Ferazonn, but reside firmly at the top of the food chain regardless of where they may find themselves.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+8, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d12, Notice d10, Tracking d12

Pace: 12; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 17 (2)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +2:** Thick hide.
- **Bite:** Str+d8.
- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Fearless:** Daggermouths are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Fleet-Footed:** Daggermouths roll d10s instead of d6s when running.
- **Huge:** Attackers add +4 to attack rolls when attacking daggermouths due to their size.
- **Size +7:** Daggermouths stand 30' tall.

Feeder Lizard

These slow-moving, long-necked herbivores are big enough to ignore most predators. When provoked, they swing their armored heads around to club their enemies, or stomp them beneath their massive feet.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+8, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d4

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 15 (3)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +3:** Thick hide.
- **Head-butt:** Str+d6.
- **Huge:** Attackers add +4 to attack rolls when attacking feeder lizards, due to their massive size.
- **Size +4:** Feeder lizards are the size of a two-story house and weigh several tons.
- **Stomp:** Str+d8.

Moranard

As far as most folks are concerned, moranards are only good for their meat. They're stupid, smelly, and to be honest, they do not taste that great either. But herding them has been the way of life in Sparasool for countless generations, so they aren't likely to lose their place in that culture any time soon.

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 11 (2)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +2:** Thick hide.
- **Size +2:** Moranards are stocky creatures weighing up to 1000 pounds.

Ronard

In the wild, these omnivores travel in small packs, foraging for vegetation and using their tusks to drive off or kill would-be predators. Domesticated ronards are gathered into large herds, and their tusks are harvested each year for ivory.

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 8 (1)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +1:** Thick hide.
- **Gore:** If ronards can move at least 6" before attacking, they add +4 to their damage total.
- **Tusks:** Str+d4.

Skitter Lizard

This desert-born megalizard uses its wide-splayed legs to nimbly keep its balance on the shifting sands. It's commonly used by the nomads of Sparasool as a mount and pack animal.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+6, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 13 (2)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +2:** Thick hide.

- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Enduring:** Skitter lizards can go twice as long as normal without food or water.
- **Size +3:** Skitter lizards are bred to carry passengers and haul cargo.

Stalker Lizard

The bipedal stalker lizards scamper and sneak after their prey all across Karthador. They love to prey on livestock, and have no problem hunting humans when hungry enough.

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

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

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

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Fleet-Footed:** Stalker lizards roll d10s instead of d6s when running.
- **Swarming:** Stalker lizards get +2 for gang-up bonus instead of +1.

Tricorn

These three-horned megalizards are native to Ferazonn, but are most commonly associated with Porothon, where they serve as cavalry mounts and beasts of burden.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+6, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 13 (2)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +2:** Thick hide.
- **Gore:** If tricorns can move at least 6" before attacking, they add +4 to their damage total.
- **Horns:** Str+d6.
- **Size +3:** Tricorns are bred to carry passengers and haul cargo.



MUTANTS

When the invaders from the black ships retreated back across the sea, they left an army of war-mutants in their wake. Since that time, the mutants have thoroughly infested Doongarda and spread throughout the other Free Nations.

Mutants reproduce through budding. When a mutant senses that it's nearing the end of its lifespan, its body retains the bioform of the creature it last devoured, then creates several mutant versions of that creature as "pods" on the mutant's body. When the new creatures are mature, they burst from their pods, killing the original mutant.

Through this method, each new generation of mutants is well-suited to its environment (as it is a mutant version of a creature of that environment). If a colony of mutants remains in the same area for several generations, its body types remain stable, as they consume the same creatures each generation.

Note that mutants are not required to mutate with each generation. If a particular form is useful, it may keep it into the next generation, regardless of what other creature it's most recently consumed. Mutants come in innumerable shapes and sizes, and the GM should feel free to create whatever type of mutant best suits his needs. Below are some of the most common war-mutants found in Doongarda.

Burrow-sharp

These war mutants resemble small black lizards with serrated, beak-like mouths. They're found in the shadows of Rathiveen, where they hunt in packs. If there are fewer than five of them they won't attack people. If there are five or more in the pack, however, they will try to kill and eat humans.

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

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

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

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d6

Low Light Vision: Burrow-sharps ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

Destroyer

These massive, four-legged mutants live only to kill. With their claws, fangs, and barbed tails, there is nothing subtle about them. They were shock troops during the invasion, and continue in their role as relentless killing machines.

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d8

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

Special Abilities

- **Bite or Claw:** Str+d6.
- **Hardy:** Destroyers do not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.
- **Pounce:** A Destroyer can leap 1d6" to gain +4 to its attack and damage. Its Parry is reduced by -2 until its next action when performing this maneuver..
- **Size +2:** Destroyers can weigh over 500 pounds.
- **Tail Swipe:** Str+d6; on a raise, this attack hits all targets within Reach 1.

Herder

These pack hunters use their acidic flesh to "herd" their prey where they want it to go—usually a dead-end where the herder mutants can kill and eat it.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d10

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

Special Abilities

- **Acid Touch:** 1d6 acid damage with the Acid Corrosion Trapping.
- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Fleet-Footed:** Herders roll d10s instead of d6s when running

Seeker

With four long limbs and a head literally covered in eyes, the seeker is a hideous, monkey-like mutant that prefers surveillance to battle. When spotted, it will flee rather than fight—and a fleeing seeker is tough to catch.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Notice d10, Stealth d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Special Abilities

- **Acrobat:** +2 to Agility rolls to perform acrobatic maneuvers; +1 Parry if unencumbered.
- **Fleet-Footed:** Seekers roll d10s instead of d6s when running.
- **Low Light Vision:** Seekers ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **Size -1:** Seekers stand 3-4 feet tall.

Worker

These lumbering mutants look almost human. They are the least aggressive of their kind, but will attack any who try to interfere with their mysterious "work."

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6

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

Gear: Crude club (Str+d8)

Special Abilities

- **Hardy:** Workers do not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.
- **Size +1:** Worker mutants are slightly larger than humans.

POCKET MONKEY

These tiny, furry creatures are commonly kept as pets, but may be found in the wild as well. They are attracted to shiny things, and have been known to steal them.

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

Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d4, Notice d10, Stealth d8

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

Special Abilities

- **Acrobat:** +2 to Agility rolls to perform acrobatic maneuvers; +1 Parry if unencumbered.
- **Bite:** Str.
- **Size -2:** Unsurprisingly, pocket monkeys are small enough to fit inside a pocket.
- **Small:** Attackers subtract 2 from attack rolls when attacking pocket monkeys due to their size.

SNOWBLIND

Those who have been too long in the storm come back as snowblind: violent lunatics whose minds have been obliterated by their time in the frozen wastes.

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

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

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

Gear: Crude club (Str+d8)

Special Abilities

- **Combat Reflexes:** +2 to recover from being Shaken.
- **Fearless:** Snowblind are immune to Fear and Intimidation.



SNOW TUNNELER

Snow tunnelers are giant, worm-like mammals that hunt by — burrowing through the snow and surprising their prey.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+10, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d10, Stealth d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 21 (4)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +4:** Scaly hide.
- **Bite:** Str+d8.
- **Burrow (Snow 20'')**: While in the snow, snow tunnelers can disappear and reappear on the following action anywhere within 20''.
- **Gargantuan:** Snow tunnelers have Heavy Armor, so they can only be hurt by Heavy Weapons, and all their attacks count as Heavy Weapons as well. They add their Size to their Strength rolls.
- **Hardy:** Snow tunnelers do not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.
- **Huge:** Attackers add +4 to attack rolls when attacking snow tunnelers due to their massive size.
- **Size +9:** Snow tunnelers are large enough to swallow a man whole.
- **Slam:** Snow tunnelers can attempt to rise up and crush their prey beneath their massive bodies. This is an opposed roll of the creature's Fighting versus the target's Agility. If the worm wins, the victim suffers 4d6 damage.
- **Swallow:** If a snow tunneler gets a raise on a bite attack and the target is Size +2 or smaller, the target makes an Agility roll. If the target fails, he is swallowed whole, suffers 2d6 damage, and must fight his way out of the beast's gullet. Victims are at -4 to any physical actions and -4 to damage while swallowed. Victims must make a Vigor roll each round or gain a Fatigue level. This can lead to death as the victim is slowly digested.

TREE VIPER

The poison of this viper does not kill, but merely paralyzes its victim long enough for it to be swallowed alive.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d12

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

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str.
- **Paralysis:** Anyone bitten by a tree viper must make a Vigor roll or be paralyzed for 3d6 rounds.
- **Quick:** Tree vipers may discard Action Cards of 5 or lower and draw another.
- **Swallow:** If it does nothing else, a tree viper can inflict Str+d6 damage each round to a paralyzed victim as it begins to swallow the victim. The viper can be pulled off the victim with a success and a raise on a Strength roll within 3 rounds; otherwise, it has swallowed the victim completely. Victims must make a Vigor roll each round or gain a Fatigue level. This can lead to death as the victim is slowly digested.

VOBYR

These frightfully intelligent forest predators hunt in packs, culling the weak—animal or human—from any herds they encounter.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Tracking d6

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

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Fleet-Footed:** A vobyr rolls d10s instead of d6s when running.

YARAN

These massive, plant-eating arctic mammals are hunted for their blubber, but are no easy prey. They travel in herds, and are given to stampeding when attacked.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 18 (4)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +4:** Thick hide.
- **Charge:** If yarans can move at least 6" before attacking, they add +4 to their damage total.
- **Huge:** Attackers add +4 to attack rolls when attacking yarans due to their size.
- **Size +6:** Yarans stand up to 20' tall.
- **Slam:** This is an opposed roll of the yaran's Fighting versus the target's Agility. If the yaran wins, the victim suffers 3d6 damage.

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