

JUMPSTART

A Beasts and Barbarians Sourcebook
A Sword and Sorcery Savage Worlds setting
By Umberto Pignatelli

BEASTS & BARBARIANS

STEEL EDITION

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DIARY OF JUSTINUS OF SYRANTHIA

My beloved Master Velastios, it is with utmost respect that I write you this letter. Six long years passed from when I left our beloved Library in Syranthia to wander in the Dominions, because, as you used to say, the place of a Sage is in the world, observing the world with always fresh and curious eyes, and to register, with words and paintings, the many marvels, beautiful and horrible alike, of our lands.

In these long years I took a number of notes, which I send you now, praying to register them in the annals of the Library, for future instruction of the future generations...

- *From the Diary of Justinus of Syranthia*

FROM THE DREAD STAR TO THE FALL OF THE IRON EMPIRE

As my old master, Velastios always told me, to understand the people of a land, you must know her history, so it is the point from which I'll start my narration.

I'll try to be short, but in case I'll talk too much, please stop me.

From where the records of the Library of Syranthia begin, the lands today known as the Dominions, in times of yore, were a large empire, belonging to an ancient, inhuman race: the Keronians.

Powerful sorcerers and demon worshippers, they controlled all the known lands, due their powers and a legion of slaves.

The Keronian empire of terror ended, around five thousands of years ago, due a terrible cataclysm, the fall of the Dread Star, which destroyed the very center of the empire, creating a large body of water, the Dread Sea, and altering forever the geography and history of the Dominions.

Nobody knows the real nature of the Dread Star, the Priests of Hulian tell it was a sign of the wrath of the gods, but if you wander the Dominions how much as I did, you'll hear the wildest stories on this topic.

Whatever the cause of the Fall, the Dread Sea, still today, is warm in its heart, as if the Dread Star would still be burning somewhere in its depths.

The Fall dramatically altered the climate: the dust raised by the cataclysm altered the land, destroying forests, creating new deserts and causing the death of countless innocent people.

Slowly, the climate returned normal, and a host of city states were born around the Dread Sea, which are collectively called "the Dominions".

The most important of them was Faberterra, a city of humble farmers, not very different from the

others, apart for a single fact, which changed the history of the world.

In 1224 AF, Fabron, a Faberterran priest of the minor god Hulian, discovered that the gray stones on the bed of the river near Faberterra can be melted and forged in a very strong metal: iron.

From that moment on, Faberterra's raise was unstoppable. The mighty Iron Phalanxes, supported by the Smith Priests of Hulian conquered all the surrounding lands.

In the south it annexed Syranthia, where the Great Library stands from innumerable ages, and Kyros, land of Elephants, while in the north it conquered Tricornia, home of the decadent Priest Princes, heirs of Keron, worshippers of the demon queen Hordan, hated enemy of Hulian.

From the conquest of Tricornia, it wasn't Faberterra anymore, it was the Iron Empire, ruled by Domestan I, Masterarkos of all the Phalanxes and first Emperor in Faberterra.

Not everybody subjugated to the might of the Iron Phalanxes: in the north, the fierce Northlanders and the fearful Cairnlands, which dwells in the tombs of their Ancestors, and the mysterious Piets, dwelling in an ancient, untouched forest, resisted to the Iron Empire's rapacious appetite, while in the south the black-skinned tribes of the Ivory Savannah, which are luckily too far away from the Empire's grip, continued to live their savage lives free.

Another noticeable exception was the Island of Ascaia, where the women rebelled to the cruel governor and declared independence, becoming the fierce Amazons and forbidding their land to any man, which exist still today.

But the Empire was tainted till from its birth: the peace treaty with Tricornia included the marriage between Domestan and Salkaria, a Tricornian Princess of legendary beauty, which became the first Empress of the Empire and which imported the corrupted customs and deities of her people, subtly corrupting the customs of Faberterra.

The Iron Empire known an apogee lasting eight centuries, even if the bloodline of the Emperor was slowly tainted by the Tricornians, which slowly introduced themselves in the highest ranks of the Empire.

So great was the hunger of the Iron Empire, which expanded eastward, crossing the Iron Mountains and conquering the vast Zandor, from north, to Jalizar, the City of Thieves, to south, to the borders of mountainous Lhoban, where the holy monks dwell in their monasteries.

But the might of man is nothing, in front of the god's will: in 2450 AF, while the Iron Empire was enjoying a stagnant prosperity, a new, terrible threat, came from the unknown steppes of the east: the Valk, a race of savage, nomad, horsemen, worshippers of demons, invaded the Iron Empire.

Driven by the prophecies of the Valkyrie, the warrior-priestess of their demon god, Sha-Mekri, they were led by Dhaar, the greatest warlord ever known, which came to the west to pillage the Iron Empire and crush it under the hooves of his horse.

The Valk Invasions were terrible: Zandor was totally devastated, and the Cairnlanders and Northlanders of the north, pushed by the Valk, attacked the Iron Empire from north looking for shelter in the civilized lands, while the southern provinces, like Kyros, quickly declared independence from Faberterra.

In few seasons, thousands of years of civilization were wiped away.

It could have been worse, but Dhaar, swamped in the long siege of the city of Jalizar, suddenly died, in a mysterious way, in his tent.

The Valk horde shattered, the various clans siding the three sons of Dhaar, but they remained in Zandor, while the rest of the Iron Empire was agonizing.

This was six years ago, in 2510 AF.

HERO'S JOURNAL: THE LOTUS

One of the most mysterious changes after the fall of the Dread Star was the diffusion of the Lotus. It is a strange plant with flowers of intense colors: red, white, purple and many other. The Lotus appeared all over the continent in several different forms. In the Caledlands the Green Lotus grows, like mistletoe, on the branches of ancient oaks. In the Ivory Savannah, flowers of Gray Lotus blossom from the top of tall weeds. In the Brown Sea, the Purple Lotus closely resembles water lily. Whatever its form is, the Lotus has great magical powers, but it is also very dangerous. If eaten fresh, it is toxic and might lead to death but, if processed and mixed with other ingredients, it can create fantastic essences, poisons, and so on. Each type of Lotus has a different effect depending on the color of the plant and the ingredients it is mixed with. Lotusmasters are an exclusive sect of alchemists specializing in the study of this remarkable plant. Their recipes are handed down from a master to a disciple in the utmost secrecy and Lotusmasters are ready to kill to learn the recipe of a rival sect member. The greatest Lotusmasters are the Alchemists of the Free City of Gis.



BOOK OF LORE

“WORD AND FIRE, THESE ARE THE WEAPONS HULIAN GAVE MANKIND TO TURN
AWAY DARKNESS.”

-The Book of Steel, holy tome of the Smith Priests

CULTURES OF THE DREAD SEA DOMINIONS

AMAZONS

Amazons are a relatively young culture: Ascaia, which is an island, rebelled and gained independence from the Iron Empire in 1536 AF, killing or sending away all males of the island.

From that day, apart the slaves brought on for mating purposes, very few men put foot on the holy land of Ascaia.

Given their peculiar mating habits (they take men, usually captives of any race, for those purposes), Amazons tend to be very different in appearance, with skin and hair of many colors, but several centuries of war and natural selection made them generally tall and muscular, and many of them have a fierce stare, which few men can stand.

Giving birth is a crucial event in the life of many Amazons: if the baby is a male, he is immediately taken away from the mother and sent to foster families on the continent, which identity is kept secret, while if she is a female she remains with the mother and eventually she'll join the Amazons.

Normal families don't exist in Ascaia and children are educated in public structures, seeing not much their mothers, but blood bonds, especially between sisters, are very strong and encouraged. For obvious reasons, same-sex marriage is also quite common.

Being theirs a martial culture of warriors and mariners, great part of their education concern weapons and sea faring, arts in which they excel.

In truth probably not all Amazons are so warlike, but they constantly try to project an image of strength and fierceness toward the external world to discourage attacks, which, cyclically, happened in their history, always to be repelled.

Amazon's clothes, during day-to-day activities, tend to be practical and sturdy, made for war more than appeal, reserving dresses and gowns to young, elders, and important figures, like the Queens or for very special occasions.

Amazon names came from a number of cultures, but they tend to have an Imperial sound: one of the rights a new Amazon has, after swearing faith to Ascaia, is changing name, and many of them, especially those who did a long and dangerous trip to reach the holy land of Ascaia, decide to take a new one.

Typical Amazon names are Andorra, Epra, Galla, Kystera, Remitia, Talyria, Vella, Zanarra. Some of them, but not many use a matronymic (like Zandorra, daughter of Thara).

CAIRN LORDS

Cairnlords or Cairnlanders are tall and muscular, with grayish skin and usually black or gray hair. They are a truly remarkable—and slightly disgusting—race because, well, they are tomb dwellers.

Their land was once a powerful empire, even more ancient than the Keronian Empire, but even its name is forgotten today. The only remnants of that distant past are the massive Cairns,

artificial hills containing the tombs of the so-called Ancestors.

Some of the Cairns are so large that they can be considered true necropolises. The Cairnlanders inhabit them, sleeping, eating, mating and generally living side by side with the ancient dead ones. They also bury their relatives in the Cairns, so the Ancestors' numbers are always growing.

For a Cairnlander the difference between life and death isn't that big, or that important. He sees them as two only slightly different states of existence.

Even after death, he continues to stay with his family, and his skull may become a relative's favorite pot, his femur a war club or some other useful tool. They are convinced that the spirits of the Ancestors speak to them, leading and protecting their lives. Controlling a large Cairn grants great power, not only because of the ancient treasures buried within (the Cairnlanders' metalworking techniques are primitive and almost all their metal comes from the Cairns), but also because of the protection granted by the newly acquired Ancestors.

The kingdom of the Ancestors was once so vast that some Cairns are within the boundaries of the Northlanders' territories and even of the Iron Empire. However, this does not stop enemy Cairn Lords from fighting savagely to gain control of the major Cairns, near or far though they might be.

The Cairnlanders are organized in clans, ruled by a chief or a king. They live off hunting, herding, very primitive agriculture, and pillaging. They usually wear pelts and ancient rags or armor they found in their Cairns. Almost all of them also wear an amulet or some other object belonging to an Ancestor, in the belief that it will grant protection.

Moreover, they tend to have self-imposed names, more similar to nicknames than to standard, civilized names.

Some examples are Whispering Ears, Goatpaw, Brokensword, Seven He Killed, Bride of the Dead One, Skeletal Horse, etc.

JALIZARANS

The City of Thieves is a multicultural place, where men of very different races trade, cheat, bargain, and generally live side by side. Let's be honest: there is probably no such thing as a true Jalizaran. The City of Thieves is a melting pot of so many different races and cultures mixed and mingled together that a "true Jalizaran" is very difficult to identify. The original Jalizarans are an archaic mix of Zandorians and Cairnlanders. Of average height, they tend to have black or brown hair, hazel eyes and very fair complexion, which reddens very quickly when they quarrel or are out in the cold. Although oral hygiene is unknown in the Dread Sea Dominions, the true Jalizarans tend to have very white teeth (having a perfect set of teeth is a sign of great luck among them). Many have a tendency to put on weight as they grow older, but this is probably the effect of their diet rather than a general physical feature.

They are fond of capes, cloaks and similar garments, which are a sign of social importance in their culture. Many of them are also quite chatty, so the origin of the northlander insult: "You are mouthier than a Jalizaran whore".

Typical Jalizaran names are a mix of Imperial and Zandorian ones. They tend to be euphonic and with a distinctive sound (as in Sebajos, Jall, Emella, Torran, Vandaïos, Renya, Furius) or to have a double vocal (as in Vaaro, Taaso, Mecna).

TRICARNIANS

Tricornia is inhabited by two different races: High Tricornians—who are nobles, priests, top military personnel, merchants, and so on—and slaves, who form the bulk of the nation. Tricornian

slaves are a mix of other races, captured in raids or bought from pirates and slave traders in Caldeia, Kyros or in the Independent Cities.

High Tricarnians aren't fully human, because the blood of the old Keronians runs in their veins. They are mostly very tall and slender, with pale or rarely jet-black complexion. They have very smooth skin and no body hair, a feature which other cultures find a little repulsive. Despite this detail, many of them are very beautiful, with elongated and sharp features. Some say that the High Tricarnians have found a way to extend their lives beyond the limits of the other races, but no evidence has ever been found to confirm this rumor.

They usually wear long, elaborated garments of silk, a fairly ordinary commodity in Tricarnia, since it is produced in the local silkworm farms, a relic from the region's Keronian past. In battle they used to wear exquisite armor made of bronze, replaced now by iron, and pointed helmets.

Tricarnians tend to be cruel, a natural instinct to them, like that of a cat torturing a mouse.

They consider other races inferior, worth using only as slaves, as victims on the altars of their alien gods, or as guinea pigs in gruesome experiments. They brought decadence to the Iron Empire, but the worst vices of the dissolute Imperial nobles or merchants appear quite ridiculous if compared to what happens daily in the citadel of a Priest Prince of Tricarnia.

The other two distinctive traits of this civilization are slavery and sorcery. As said before, the whole economy of Tricarnia is based on slavery. Being only a fraction of the total population, the High Tricarnians alone cannot keep the masses of slaves under control, so various levels of slavery exist. The most unfortunate are the humble rice field workers, the slave miners, and the leech catchers (the medicinal use of leeches is a common practice among High Tricarnians).

Just above them are the slave warriors and guards, who live in better conditions. They control their inferiors and are the bulk of the army. At the top of the slaves' social ladder are the eunuchs, a caste of castrated men who are the elite warriors and administrators. Sorcery is common. Almost all true-blood Tricarnians have some knowledge of sorcery which is necessary to survive the scheming and plotting of their equals, eager to enhance their power and social standing.

Various forms of sorcery are practiced, but corrupting magic and the evocation of dark creatures are the most widespread. Lotusmastery and drug use in general are common and encouraged, also among the slaves. The reason is obvious: a drugged slave is easier to control. Tricarnia is divided in Principalities, each of them totally independent and governed by a single noble family. Scheming, plotting and open warfare among the Princes are common.

The capital of Tricarnia, the City of Princes, is considered as a neutral ground, and no open act of war can be committed there. It is also the seat of the High Prince, the ruler of Tricarnia. Tricarnians deeply hate (and secretly fear) the Caleds, the descendants of their ancient slaves, who still seek revenge for thousands of years spent in slavery.

Typical high Tricarnian names have an ancient ring to them and are always preceded by title, like Princess Salkaria, Price Hoolon, Priest Tokariel, and so on. Omitting the title when addressing a Tricarnian noble is considered a mortal insult, except among family members.

VALK

Valk are the shortest of the common races, with the exception of the Pygmies. Most are slightly over five feet tall and a Valk surpassing six feet is considered a giant. They have black or brown hair, with the exception of the Valkyrie, their priestesses, who always have white or blonde hair (usually dyed). The warriors use long braids, and cut them only in case of dishonor. The longer the braid the most powerful and brave the warrior.

They have little or no beard, because one of their rites of passage, the Blood Offering, consists in self-inflicting wounds to the cheeks, thus preventing the growth of facial hair.

Valk dress in leather and both sexes use trousers and boots, the most practical garments for a race of horse riders. They learn to ride even before being able to walk and are incredibly skilled on their ponies. The basis of Valk economy, in times of peace, is herding sheep, cows, and, naturally horses. Horse milk and goat meat are their staple and they are particularly fond of fermented milk spirits, which all the other races find disgusting.

They are organized in clans, led by warlords, who share the power with the Valkyrie. Except for the priestesses, who are respected and feared, Valk women have a very low standing in society, so much so that marriage is rare and a warrior simply keeps in his tent the women he wants, in a condition of semi slavery. Only after the birth of a son, the father becomes responsible for supporting the woman.

Valk religion deeply influences their way of life. They are demon worshippers and see demons in many manifestation of the natural world, such as thunder, the steppe winds, and the terrible plagues that often decimate the cattle and bring famine onto the clans. They don't fear the demons, at least not openly, but recognize and respect their supernatural powers. Valk names are throaty and with many consonants: Dhaar, Khull, Dakka, Rigga, Throgg, Vulkat are all good examples.

GAZETTEER PRIMER

NORTHEIM

The lands of Northeim are full of deep valleys, wild rivers and ancient forests. Northeim is mostly uninhabited, because the Northlanders live in isolated clans and don't farm on a large scale.

The Northlanders aren't the only dwellers of this immense area. The Cairnlanders, the Nandals, and the few dwellers of Imperial outposts call this place home.



Norheim is a wild land: wolves, bears, mountain lions and many other creatures roam the land and only the strongest of men can endure life in this harsh place. It is also rich in natural resources, such as wood and excellent stone, but also copper, iron and gold. Yet, the Northlanders are too uncivilized to be skilled in the use of metals. They can barely work them and have no idea about how to build a decent mine. It is easier for them to buy or steal metal weapons and tools from the southerners, although some of them are slowly learning the secrets of metalworking, that fascinates them.

An important land feature of Norheim is the Smoking Mountain, or Mount of Fire, a big volcano in the heart of the land. Fifty years ago, a group of Imperials came here and built a strange temple, called the Monastery of the Hammer. The Northlanders attacked it, thinking they would find only weak priests defending precious artifacts. But they were wrong. The temple was inhabited by a horde of metal-clad warriors, who slaughtered the barbarians. Now the Northlanders grudgingly respect their neighbors and some friendly relations are budding. The temple dwellers have revealed themselves as the true followers of Hulian, the Smith God, and are teaching the Northlanders a lot of things, among them the secret of forging iron!

RED DESERT

The sages say that the Red Desert was created by the dusts raised by the fall of the Dread Star and it had once been a great forest. Seeing it today, it is hard to believe the sages. Rocks and thin reddish sand stretch for hundreds of miles in every direction, interrupted only by the occasional oasis. Despite its appearance, the Red Desert hides several treasures and marvels, like great forests of petrified trees, plains lined by veins of precious ore and dotted with gems surfacing from the ground and, finally, the Red Lotus, a very precious variety of Lotus that lives as tiny spores on the stone petals of desert roses.

It is also a dangerous place, inhabited by deadly beasts. Besides scorpions and snakes of small to giant size, there are Skull Jackals, very dangerous predators, and the dreaded Ulatisha, The Being That Digs in the Sand, a legendary monster.

For what concerns its civilizations, the Red Desert hosts some Independent Cities and is home to nomads and tribes of herders, the only people capable of surviving in this harsh land. They are divided in clans, usually recognized by the color of their capes.

Brown and green nomads are quite peaceful, but the red-caped ones aren't.

These desert dwellers aren't a friendly people, except when they expose the face, which happens very rarely. Then, they are jovial and amicable. But, if the face of a Red Nomad is covered by the kballa, a sort of heavy veil, he is ready to assault and rob you of all your belongings, and leave you to die of thirst in the desert, without remorse or good reason.

Some say that the Red Nomads descend from the survivors of the Fallen Kingdom of Keron, because they speak a strange language and worship desert spirits called Djinnns. The Red Nomads are a very warlike people and sometimes trespass into the Ivory Savannah and engage the Ivory Savannah Tribes in bloody battles.

HEROES OF THE DOMINIONS

“MY NAME IS SHANGOR, DOG! AND YOU’LL DIE FOR THESE CHAINS YOU PUT ME!”

– Riotous slave and his new owner at the flesh market of Faberterra

HEROIC CONCEPTS

The world of *Beasts & Barbarians* is full of interesting characters, but you might be a little overwhelmed or simply out of ideas, so here is a list of character types you can use or tweak to create your outstanding hero.

Amazon. The Dread Sea Dominions are a very chauvinistic world and women are usually seen as objects for pleasure or, even worse, as breeding machines. An Amazon is a woman who has emancipated herself; she fights and lives exactly like a man. Ascaian Amazons are the only Amazon culture of the Dread Sea Dominions, but also outside Ascaia a courageous woman can leave her place in society, for example the Spear Widows of Norheim, women which, having lost their families, pick up their father’s weapon and go seeking for revenge.

Bandit. The Empire, the law, and civilization itself are crumbling, and the world is full of wolves ready to take advantage of the situation. This character is one of them. He usually earns his living sacking, pillaging and stealing. Most Bandits are ruthless bastards, but the more sympathetic ones steal from the rich to give to the poor. These individuals are usually liked by the commoners and become the subjects of stories and ballads.

Barbarian. Barbarian literally means “one who stutters” and the word identifies all the people who don’t speak the Imperial language fluently. Today the term refers to all the uncivilized populations beyond the boundaries of the Iron Empire. Traditionally, barbarians have been represented in two ways: as hulking brutes with none of the traits of civilized people, living only



by the law of the sword, or as good savages, living peacefully in communion with nature—an ability that the civilized men have lost. Most barbarians don't perfectly fit either archetype, but are a mix of both.

Courtesan. A courtesan can be an exotic dancer at the court of a prince, or a simple tavern wench. Whatever her origin, she is usually beautiful and, besides her erotic skills, she is quite capable of manipulating the stupid males with her beauty.

Gladiator. Gladiators are fighters who combat in the arena for the delight of the crowds. They can be rich celebrities, at whose sight women sigh and faint, but there are also desperate toughs who wrestle with rabid dogs in back alleys for a few copper coins. In many places gladiators are slaves, though they usually lead a better life than a free man, constantly pampered and well nourished by their master. At least until they meet their end in the arena.

Lotusmaster. Skilled alchemists, poisoners and healers, these feared individuals know how to use the Lotus to heal a wound, kill a man in a horrible way, or summon strange visions from the air. They are a reclusive sect and very jealous of their secrets.

Mercenary. Some fight for an ideal and some for self-defense, but a mercenary fights only for loot and money. Usually, but not always, he is a skilled warrior. A big mouth and impressive appearance might be the only weapons a mercenary possesses and it is difficult to understand before the battle if the man you hired is a real fighter or just a windbag. But remember, regardless of his skill, a mercenary is first and foremost loyal to his purse.

Monk. Monks are people in search of enlightenment and self-perfection. Through meditation and contemplation, they learn how to perform amazing feats impossible for the common man. Some of them can endure thirst and hunger for months, while others can kill a man with a single bare-handed blow. The most famous monks come from faraway Lhoban, but several other monastic groups exist, like the Stylites of the Land of Idols. Some of them are pacifists, philosophers, sages, and men of knowledge, while others, usually martial artists of great prowess, actively fight the evil of the world. Note that not every monk is pure and good: among them, sadly, exist also sect dedicated to evil, through which they think to reach a faster way to perfection.

Nomad. Nomads are constantly on the move. Some of them, like the Valk, are herders, so they are forced to move to let their beasts graze, while others are hunters that follow the migrations of their quarries, like the Ivory Savannah Tribes hunting gnus in the Ivory Savannah. Some nomads move on foot but a great part of them have horses and are excellent riders.

Pirate. The scourge of the seas, these men don't know any lord beside the captain of their ship, and hunt and prey on any vessel they find. Some of them still possess a glint of honor and humanity, but for the greatest part they are only a bunch of criminals. A specific type of pirates are the dreaded Corsairs of Caldeia, a group of pardoned sea scums which now actively roams the Endless ocean fighting other pirates at the orders of the King of Caldeia.

Priest. There are many gods in the Dread Sea Dominions, hence a great number of priests. Despite sharing the same name, there are many differences among them. A depraved priest of Hordan, for example, is very different from a pious Sheppard of the Divine Couple or from a midwife priestess of Etu. Remember that, in the Dread Sea Dominions, priests have no supernatural powers. If they want them, they must devote themselves to sorcery, a very dangerous path.

Sage. Although the world is in the hands of warriors, barbarians and other men of the sword, there are some who actively seek, protect, and preserve knowledge, in all its forms. These individuals are Sages. They might be archivists at the Library of Syranthia or enlightened aristocrats with a passion for books. Whatever their origin, knowledge is what they seek and protect.

Slave. Sadly, slavery is very common, so it is no surprise if a hero is born in chains or made a slave.

Slaves come from all social classes, and a slave, or an ex-slave, can be a very motivated character and have a very wide array of skills. He can be a lowly servant, but also a warrior slave of the Tricornian army, or a sage or a scribe kept alive for his unusual abilities. Remember, anyone can fall into slavery.

Sorcerer. Magic is a dangerous business that requires constant application and a strong mind. The very soul of the practitioner is involved in the dark rituals necessary to bind the arcane forces to the caster's will. So mages of all types must be aware of the risks they run when they whisper their forgotten spells. A sorcerer is a generic term for all those wizards, warlocks and petty practitioners involved in magic. Although many of them are only charlatans, the few individuals truly gifted with magical powers are among the most powerful, and most dangerous, individuals of all the Dominions.

Thief. Wherever there is wealth, there is someone ready to snatch it. A thief is an expert in stealing property, and no safe, wall, or guard can stop him. She can be a member of a powerful thieves' guild, like those of Jalizar, or a freelance, but her skills are not in question when it comes to stealth and break-ins.

NEW EDGES

CLOAK HERO/HEROINE (COMBAT)

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

What is a cloak-and-dagger scoundrel without her cape? This Edge allows the heroine to use any cape, mantle, or cloak in combat to deflect blows and hinder enemies. As long as the heroine is unencumbered, she can use a cloak as a shield (gaining +1 Parry, +2 Toughness against ranged attacks), still having both hands free (but she cannot use another shield). In addition, whenever she does a Trick using a cloak, the player can place a Small Burst Template on the battlefield with one edge in contact with the heroine. The Trick affects any character caught by the Template.

COUNT THE DEATHS! (WEIRD)

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d6+, Strength d6+, Vigor d6+

A blood soaked hero, digging deep in enemies and dedicating each kill to his god or patron-demon is a cliché of Sword and Sorcery. This Edge simulates this highly heroic behavior. Immediately after killing an enemy in combat, as a free action, the character can make a Spirit (-2) roll, but adds +1 per opponent to the roll if he killed more than one opponent in the same round. In the case of success, the gods (or fate, or maybe it is simply a morale effect) look favorably upon the hero and he gains +1 to damage rolls or +1 to Toughness, both if he scored a raise. Characters with the Priest Edge roll with +2. The effect lasts till the end of the scene. The Edge stacks with itself, but only up to +2 damage rolls and/or Toughness.

LOINCLOTH HERO/BIKINI HEROINE (COMBAT)

Requirements: Wild Card, Novice, Agility d8+, Vigor d6+

Comics, movies and books always depict bare-chested barbarians fighting hordes of enemies without suffering the slightest scratch. They also show scantily dressed amazons engaging in savage melees with bug-eyed creatures and finishing their fight with no more than tousled hair. This Edge allows you to emulate this cinematic way of fighting. A hero or heroine with this Edge can make a free soak roll for each wounding attack as long as they are unarmored. To get the bonus, a character must have no torso armor on (shields are allowed). If he wants, he can wear bracers, greaves or a helm, but these are only cosmetic, granting no armor bonus.

MIGHTY ROAR/WITTY REMARK (COMBAT)

Requirements: Seasoned, Intimidation or Taunt d8+, Fighting d8+

Combat is more than mere sword-bashing: barbarians roar before slashing you with their axes, while rapier-witted swordsmen puncture you with words before stabbing you with their blades. When taking this Edge, the player must choose either Intimidation (in this case the Edge is called Mighty Roar) or Taunt (and the Edge is called Witty Remark). He can make a free Test of Will of the relevant type per round, which doesn't count as an action.

STILL GOT ONE (WEIRD)

Requirements: Seasoned, Smarts d6+, Stealth d6+, Repair d6+

The heroine has done her best to conceal on her body a number of home-made blades, disguised in clever ways. They might look like hairpins, parts of her armor, or whatever she wants. These blades deal Str+d4 damage, can be thrown at Range 4/8/16 and can also be used in melee as daggers, but their main utility is for ranged attacks. If the hero has higher-than-minimum requirements their quality is improved (see table below).

Their number isn't fixed: unless the character rolls 1 on the Throwing die, regardless of the Wild Die, she still has another blade concealed somewhere. When a 1 is rolled, the character has run out of blades and cannot use this Edge again till the end of the combat, provided that she can then retrieve her weapons. Otherwise, she cannot use the Edge before she has a chance to restock.

This Edge has another use. Once per session, the character can state she has a normal dagger or a lock pick concealed on her body even though she was captured and searched before. This declaration cancels any other use of this Edge for the remainder of the session. This Edge also works on bare-chested heroes and bikini heroines, even though it is not quite clear where they can conceal a weapon while wearing such a scanty outfit...

SETTING RULES

SAVINGS

Sword and Sorcery heroes usually find enormous riches in their adventures—and dilapidate them just as fast. At the start of their next adventure they are often almost penniless and desperate enough to embark on another mission.

To simulate this cliché, after replenishing their basic equipment (repairing armor or stocking up on arrows—note that buying a lost weapon is free), the characters are supposed to spend all the money on booze, courtesans or other recreational activities suited to their background (even books for learned characters!).

They only keep a small sum for emergencies and for purchasing new equipment, i.e. their Savings. The Savings are usually 100 Moons multiplied by the hero's Rank, but the GM can change the amount as he sees fit.

Logically, Savings cannot be higher than the money the hero earned in the previous adventure. So, if a Seasoned character only gained 30 Moons in his last adventure, that is what he owns—and he will likely be very sad, since he has no money to spend on courtesans and wine...

Savings can be stashed between adventures, unless an After the Adventure Event interferes (see below) or something happens during the game (e.g., the heroes are robbed).

MAGIC

“FOR THE ANCIENT PACTS OF KERON, MIGHTY ULASHA, DEVOURER OF SOULS,
COME TO ME AND SHOW YOUR POWER!”

-Zanator, Tyrant of Quollaba

SORCERY

Arcane Skill: Sorcery (Smarts)

Starting Power Points: 10

Starting Powers: 2

Available Powers: *armor, barrier, beast friend, blast, boost/lower trait, bolt, confusion, darksight, deflection, disguise, drain power points, draining touch*, detect/conceal arcana, divination, entangle, fear, havoc, intangibility, invisibility, obscure, puppet, slumber, smite, speak language, stun, summon ally.*

Sorcery is a very dangerous type of magic. The sorcerer, through arcane invocations and unholy rites, asks the intervention of forgotten divinities and powers that man isn't meant to know.

These entities are usually generous toward the sorcerer, but they are also very demanding. Many of those who meddle with dark magic end up with their minds destroyed and their souls eaten by creatures of unimaginable horror. Evil entities are always eager for nourishment, so a sorcerer can decide to willingly give them a little of his living energy in exchange for extra power.

This is done by self-inflicting a Wound to gain 2 Power Points or +1 to a Sorcery roll. These wounds represent energy sacrificed to dark powers, cannot be Soaked and can only be healed naturally. The penalty caused by these wounds applies after the Sorcery roll they are inflicted for. Sorcerers also have access to the Soul Drain Edge, with lower requirements than usual.

Backlash: A sorcerer who rolls 1 on the Sorcery die regardless of the Wild Die, has somehow displeased the evil entities he works with to gain his powers.

He must roll on the Sorcery Critical Failures Table to discover what happens to him.



Sorcery Critical Failures Table

D20	EFFECT
1	Evil Twist. The character's body is permanently twisted. His nails become long and claw-like, his teeth elongated and sharp, or whatever the Game Master decides. He permanently loses 1 Charisma point. On the plus side, his unarmed attacks deal +1 damage from now on. If the hero is exposed to this effect more than once, he only loses another Charisma point, but receives no further damage bonus.
2-4	Dark Energies. The caster's body is overwhelmed by another worldly force. He is Shaken for 1d6 rounds and loses one step of the Sorcery die for 24 hours.
5-8	Energy Sap. The caster must make a Vigor roll or be Incapacitated. Even in case of success, he suffers a level of Fatigue, which is recovered after an hour.
9-12	Not for The Human Mind. The caster has a brief glimpse of what the entity he is contacting REALLY is, and this can shatter the hardest of minds. He must make a Fear (-4) roll.
13-15	Devils' Joke. The spell works as if cast with a raise, but the evil entities change target: a positive spell affects an enemy; a negative one affects the caster or an ally.
16-18	Manifestation of Unholy Gods. The evil gods appear in all their terrible might, releasing a wave of pain and terror! Put a Large Burst Template on the caster. Whoever is within the template, caster included, suffers 3d6 damage and must make a Fear roll.
19	Satiate My Hunger! One of the evil forces the sorcerer is contacting decides to take away some of the character's living energy. His Vigor die drops by one step. Every week the sorcerer is allowed a Vigor (-4) roll to regain it. In case of critical failure on one of these rolls, the loss is permanent. If this reduces the attribute below d4, the character dies horribly, his body consumed by the evil forces.
20	Soul Drain. A part of the sorcerer's soul is snatched and devoured by evil entities. His Spirit die drops permanently by one step. If reduced below d4, the character soul is destroyed, and he becomes an NPC, possessed by some evil entity, under the control of the GM (restore the Spirit to the initial level).

THE THING IN THE TOMB

"PRAY THE ANCIENT ONES BUT KEEP THE DOOR CLOSED AT NIGHT"

-Old Cairnlander Saying

Abstract Navigation System. This adventure uses a special system, which you'll find in other Beasts & Barbarians adventures to navigate large labyrinths without mapping them. The system is particularly useful when the heroes are trying to reach a specific location (for example, the main room of the unholy temple where a human sacrifice is about to start) and must do so in a limited time. First, choose an Advancement Trait, like Tracking if they are following a path or Smarts if they are navigating a labyrinth. Then, determine the duration of the exploration rounds in real world terms (i.e. five minutes, an hour, half a day and so on). For each exploration round, the party makes a Cooperative Trait roll on the Advancement Trait. For each success and raise, they receive an Advancement Token (usually, maximum 2 per round) and draw a card from the Action Deck. Each card value and/or suit is linked to a specific encounter/location the heroes must face. When they earn a suitable number of Advancement Tokens (usually between 8 and 16), they reach the "final" room. The duration of the rounds also helps you determine roughly how much time they

have used for the exploration. This system is a little more complex than the previous one, but it has the advantage of providing a non-linear, virtually endless exploration system.

You wake up with a terrible headache, the debris upon which you lay not helping at all. You are in a large, dark room of some type. Probably a tomb. The only light you see comes from a fissure in the ceiling, very high, where you see the face of Zalora, the pretty courtesan you entertained with at the village of Takora, and her father, near him.

She seems quite sad. "Please forgive me." She says "But there is no other manner. If we villagers won't provide the Thing of the Tombs a sacrifice every full moon, it comes out, taking our people."

You frantically look around, noticing the pale bones shimmering among the debris. Human bones. "It is late afternoon now." Tarro, Zalora's father says. "The Thing won't wake up before dusk. You have time to say your last prayers, strangers. Good luck. May your death in the Tombs of Nar Takar be merciful."

The party is in a ruined underground room, part of a large Keronian necropolis, somewhere west of the Fallen Kingdom of Keron. It is late midday, and they must find an exit from this place before dusk, when the Thing in the Tomb wakes up and goes looking for them. This means they must explore the place to find an exit as fast as they can. Unless the heroes have a light of some type, they are considered being in Dark Lighting condition. Note that the fissure on the ceiling is impossible to reach by normal means (only the Thing of the Tombs, using her Wall Walker ability uses it to leave the tombs to go hunting).

The whole scenario is run with the Abstract Advancement System.

The Advancement Trait is Tracking or Smarts (-2) and the party rolls every half hour. Each Exploration round the GM draws a card from the Action Deck and plays the scene below.

When the group has eight Advancement Tokens, they find the Gate (see below).

Noise Tokens. The heroes can also acquire Noise Tokens if they perform certain actions. They represent the alarm level of the dungeon and having them triggers specific events.

Keep track of the number of Exploration Rounds: when the sum of the number of Exploration rounds plus the Noise Tokens is eight or more, the Thing of the Tombs wakes up and finds the heroes, wherever they are!

SCENES

Deuce – Rolling Death. The characters are going up (if the card is red) or down (if it is black) a flight of stairs, when the first of them walks over a trapped step, which releases a huge stone cylinder, on the top of the stairs, which runs down, trampling everything on its path, heroes included! Consider this scene a Short (5 rounds) Chase, based of Agility. The stone cylinder is considered a Wild Card with Agility d4 and Fighting d4 the first round, and they go up one die step per round up to d12 at the fifth one. It can only hit in Short Range, dealing 3dX damage, where X is its Agility dice step. Once a hero is hit, he is excluded by the Chase (the cylinder passes over him). Characters with the Fleet Footed Edge roll with +2.

Three – The Gong. The heroes enter in a large room, probably an old temple of some sort, where there are the remnants of a broken altar (probably due an earthquake) and, behind it, there is large bronze gong. Looking around the altar, with a Notice (-2) roll an old sacrificial dagger can be found, while a big bronze mallet (Str+d8, 2 hands, Improvised Weapon) lays near the gong. It was used to ring the gong. If the party sounds the gong apparently nothing happens, but they gain one Noise Token and, after 1d4 rounds a group of 2d6 Tomb Rats, huge ferocious beasts, arrive, attacking the party!

(E) Tomb Rat (variable). Use Dog/Wolf stats from *Savage Worlds* core rules.

Four - Blocked Passage. The heroes path is blocked by a huge stone boulder, fallen down due some ancient earthquake. The heroes must move it away, with a Strength (-4) roll, which can be cooperative. The roll can be attempted how many times they want, but every failure causes a level of Fatigue to the adventurer (wears off in two Advancement rounds). If the roll is successful the path is free, but the group also receive a Noise Token. If the party doesn't manage to move the stone away they must go back, losing two advancement tokens.

Five - Unfortunate Thief. The heroes find the corpse of a man, probably a thief, laying dead in a small room, a hand on a closed chest, made of finely engraved silver. He was killed by a poisonous needle, which can be found with a Lockpicking or Notice (-2) roll. The chest contains a number of black, polished opals, which, once exposed to sunlight, will hatch reveals to be eggs of an exotic type of scarab. The thief has three torches, a dagger, a sling and a set of lockpicks with him.

Six - The Well. The heroes are in a corridor which is apparently a dead end, but, if they look up, they understand being on the bottom of a well. With some skill, they can climb up, reaching the higher level of the temple. This can be done with three Climbing (0, -2, +2) rolls. If the heroes reach the upper floor, they are nearer to the exit, and gain two Advancement Tokens.

Seven - Vaako, the Dark Dweller. The tomb, apart the Thing of the Tombs, is inhabited by Vaako, sole survivor of the Tricornian slaves of the city, reduced to a feral beast. If the heroes haven't Noise Tokens, the Dark Dweller is intent hunting rats, and he must check for surprise, if he wins, he escapes, then he'll sneakily shadow the party. If the group has Noise Tokens the Dark Dweller is hidden in the shadows, ready to ambush the group (he particularly tries to kidnap a girl of the group). If wounded, he surrenders. He knows a lot of this place and can lead the party to the exit (+2 to every Advancement roll), or, if the party really insist, he leads them to the Den of the Thing. He will try to escape and betray the party at the first occasion.

(H) Vaako the Dark Dweller. Use Twisted Servant profile, raising Smarts and Stealth by one dice step.

Eight - Room of Carvings. The walls of this room are carved with inscriptions and decorations of a forgotten past. Examining them, a character who knows the High Tricornian (or who does a Knowledge (Legends and Lore) or (Arcana) (-2) roll), understands that this place was the prison of Takara, a particular Tricornian princess, which was a normal woman transformed by a curse into a giant spider and sealed in the tombs. Princess Takara is actually the Thing of the Tombs! The GM is free to add extra details to the story. If the heroes know this piece of knowledge have +2 to any Fear roll against her.

Nine - Whispers in the Corridor. Tricornian tombs are haunted by ghosts, and this is no less. A randomly selected adventurer feels a cold wind and hears strange words. He must do a Spirit (-2) roll or be scared and escape! (Draw another card for another location he visits, alone, before the rest of the party finds him).

Ten - Spring and Vines. The party finds a room surrounded by a shady colonnade. Through a fissure in the wall, water springs, and this caused a tall, strong, vine which engulfed the columns. The vine is thick enough to be used to create a rope (which can be used to climb out from the fissure in the beginning room), but this requires a Repair (-2) roll and 1d4 exploration rounds of time.

Jack - Sorcerous Torch. The adventurers are exploring a corridor, when they see a pale light coming out from a side opening. Peering inside they see a small room where a strange torch is burning, hanging from the wall. The torch is made of unknown metal and emanates a bluish, cold light. It is a Keronian light fire. It works as a normal torch but it last for a very long time (at least one thousand years). It can be snuffed out, but to be turned alight again it is necessary a Sorcery roll

and the expense of a Power Point. This artifact is worth one thousand Moons, for the right people.

Queen – The Spectral Singer. The party hears a strange music, coming from a nearby room. If they go exploring, they see the following scene. In a low ceiled room, with broken columns all around, there is a beautiful, pale girl, sitting cross legged at the end of the room, on a stone gradon, long black hair hiding her face. The room is very damp, and there is faint fog on the ground, at ankle level.

The girl is dressed as a Tricornian ceremonial singer, with only a scant bejeweled bikini, and is very concentrated on the music. She ignores the party until someone enters the room and touches her. At this point she raises the eyes and the adventurer can see a lot of minuscule golden scales covering her face, this causing a Spirit roll to avoid being Shaken from disgust. Then the girl disappears with a ghastly wail (she is the ghost of a Tricornian servant with Caudru blood in the veins), and the hero hears scaly sounds, dozens of them, coming from the floor. Concealed from the fog, a number of poisonous snakes are surrounding him, ready to attack (consider they hidden, a Notice roll is necessary to spot them).

Once defeated the snakes, if the heroes look around, they only find an old, ebon flute on the ground. It is worth 300 Moons and is faintly magical: it can be used to perform Smarts tricks using Persuasion in place of Smarts, it works only on demons.

(E) Poisonous Snakes (4 + 1 per hero). See *Savage Worlds* core rules.

King – Hall of Sepulchers. The party is crossing a long, high vaulted dome, where the tombs of ancient Tricornian princes stand. The sarcophagi are open, and the bodies look untouched by time (this is due the advanced embalmed techniques of the Sons of Keron), even if covered in cobwebs. Many of them are also covered in jewels, are dressed in ancient armors and wield old weapons in their cold hands. Heroes can ransack the bodies, if they want: armors and weapons crumble under their hands, but they can find 1d6x50 Moons worth of jewelry (double it with a successful Notice roll). Draw a card from the Action Deck for each stealing adventurer, in order. The first club suit means that one of the dead ones raises with unnatural speed a hand and grabs the neck of the adventurer strangling him! Consider it a grapple, made with Strength d12+2! This last for 2d4 rounds (rolled secretly) or until the hand is severed (Toughness: 9). When it happens the party hears the dead ones stirring and should go away very quickly....

Ace – Room of Creeping Things. The heroes stumble in a black door decorated with disgusting symbols. If they manage to open it (Lockpicking or Strength (-2) roll), they find a round shaped room, with a pedestal in the middle upon which lays a black stone amulet. The walls of the room are strange, they are filled of small holes, like the cells of a beehive. If someone touches the amulet from the fissures came out a horde of small black spiders which attack the poor sod. The spiders cannot leave the room. The amulet is magical and confers the Holy Warrior Edge, but only against the Thing of the Tomb.

(E) Black Spiders of Tricornia (1 per 2 Heroes). Use Swarm stats from *Savage Worlds* core rules, adding a Venomous (+1) poison.

Joker – A Gust of Fresh Air/The Den of the Thing. The first time a Joker is dealt, the party feels a gust of fresh air: they are near the exit, and this hearten them. The player with less Bennies gains one and the group gains an extra Advancement Token.

The second time the heroes draw a Joker, it means they find the den of the Thing of the Tombs: a large, dark room, which can be entered only by a large portal. The room is filled with cobwebs, thick as ropes and the ground is littered with the bones of old victims (it is Difficult Ground). If the heroes have less than two Noise Tokens, the beast is sleeping, and needs a full round to wake up, otherwise it is awake and hidden on the ceiling, ready to fall over the party (gaining the Drop). If the heroes kill the Thing they can leave the Tombs without any problem.

(WC) Thing of the Tombs. See below.

Redraws. If the group draws an already drawn card, they are returning on their steps. If the card drawn is red, they find a previously un-spot corridor gaining +2 to their next Advancement round, if it is black, they got confused and suffer -2 to the same roll.

The Gate. The heroes finally reached the exit of the tomb: they are in a ruined room, but a massive stone gate, closed, prevent them to leave. Open it is a Dramatic Task based on Strength (-2). The gate opens when the party gathers at least five successes/raise. Each attempt is very noisy, so each round of effort on the gate, the party receives one Noise Token, so it is quite probable the Thing of the Tomb arrives. If the party manages to open the gate and escape, during daytime, the Thing back off in darkness and doesn't follow them. If the party kills it, the region will be free by a real nightmare (but the adventurers could be more interested in taking vengeance of the villagers which throw them in the tombs...).

CREATURES

THE THING OF THE TOMBS

An enormous, black hairy spider, this creature if stories are true, was one time Princess Takara of Tricarnia, transformed in an immortal beast from a curse. Nobody knows if the legend is true or not, but certainly there is a glimpse of human cunning in the blue eyes of this beast.

Golden Bennie of the Spider Killer: The hero delivering the killing blow to the Thing of the Tombs receives this Golden Bennie, which grants +2 damage and attack rolls against spiders.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10

Skills: Climbing d12+2, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d8.
- **Hardy:** The creature does not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.
- **Long Claws:** Str+d4. Reach 3. The Thing can attack all the targets in range with a single attack with no penalty.
- **Fear (-2):** Seeing the Thing of the Tombs is so horrible it causes a Fear Check.
- **Size +3:** The Thing of the Tomb is big as a horse.
- **Wall Walker:** The Thing can walk on vertical surfaces at Pace 8.
- **Weakness (Eyes):** A Called Shot (-2) to the eyes of the beast ignores the Hardy Special Ability but, if the Thing is damaged, it drives her in frenzy, giving her +2 to damage rolls and -2 to Parry.
- **Webbing:** The thing can cast webs from its thorax that are the size of Medium Burst Templates. This is a Shooting roll with a range of 4/8/16. Anything in the web must cut or break their way free (Toughness 7). Webbed characters can still fight, but all physical actions are at -4.

TWISTED SERVANT

Twisted Servants are primitive humanoids, somehow similar to Nandals, whose bodies and minds have been deformed and mutated by evil magic. They are the typical creatures summoned by sorcerers. The sages have a strange theory about them: they might have been ancient slaves of the Keronians, snatched from their age to the present era by the power of magic. Twisted servants aren't very intelligent, but they are perfect when the only requirement is killing people or doing heavy physical work.

Twisted Servants are Novice creatures for the purpose of the *summon ally* Power.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d4

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

Gear: Stone axe (Str+d8).

Special Abilities

- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Mutated Aspect:** Twisted Servants are truly hideous to look upon, so they have the Ugly Hindrance.
- **Size +1:** Twisted Servants are bigger and more muscular than men.

