

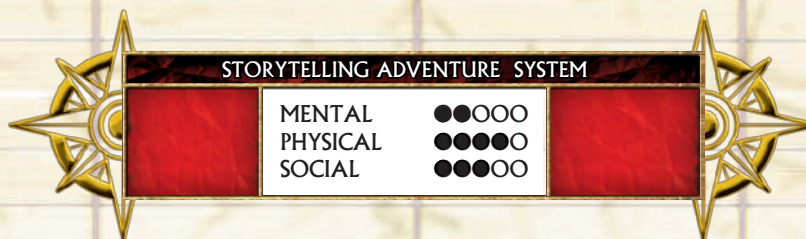
Morality is contraband in war.
- Gandhi

DISEASE OF AN EVIL CONSCIENCE

An adventure for Exalted
using the Storytelling Adventure System

Written by David Nurenberg Developed by Eddy Webb Edited by Genevieve Podleski Layout by Jessica Mullins
Art: Eric Canete, Shane Coppage, Franchescol, Andrew Hepworth, Imaginary Friends, Josh Spinell, Chris Stevens,
Andie Tong, UDON and Emily Warren

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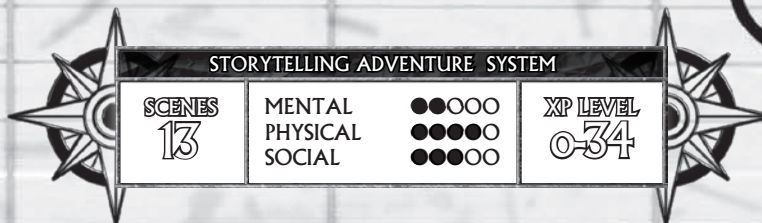


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Introduction

Out in the Scavenger Lands life is difficult, and compassion can seem like a dangerously unaffordable luxury. But despite the propaganda you might hear in the Realm about the savagery of those beyond the Threshold, most of the folk who call the Confederation of Rivers their home consider themselves good people. How could they have survived so close to the Shadowlands and the Fair Folk without a will not only for individual survival, but also for survival of the community? But what happens when the imperative to survive challenges one's moral commitment to one's fellows? Sacrifices have to be made, but when do the needs of the many justify the losses of a few?

What's Inside

Disease of an Evil Conscience gives you everything you need to run a full **Exalted** story, which can stand alone as one (or a few) day's entertainment, or serve as merely a chapter in a much longer saga. We have built the story as a generally linear path with a few twists, turns and complications; you can keep it that way or you can modify it, adding characters, locations and all sorts of embellishments to challenge the most ambitious players.

We made this Storyteller Adventure System (SAS) product to be an exciting, ready-made story for relatively inexperienced characters in **Exalted**. You won't find many new rules, Charms or items here, but instead we knit the existing rules into a tightly woven story. This way, we hope to help novice Storytellers and players find their footing while remaining flexible enough to allow modifications and add-ons for more experienced groups.

ABOUT THE STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM

If this is your first Storytelling Adventure System (SAS) product, you're in luck – you can start here with little to no experience. To keep this product trim and concise, however, we haven't chosen to bundle in the many of the core premises and Storyteller suggestions that are at the heart of the SAS. All Storytellers, fresh or veteran, are encouraged to read the *free SAS Guide*, found at the SAS website:

www.white-wolf.com/sas

Here are some of the features available in **Disease of an Evil Conscience**:

- **Interactive links.** Clicking on anything in red will take you directly to the section referenced, or to an appropriate character sheet or prop. It may also take you to an external website that could be useful.
- **Scenes.** Clicking on a scene name in the scene flowchart or the page number in the scene card will take you to the full write-up of the scene.
- **Bookmarks.** This PDF is fully bookmarked, so you can jump to major sections at any time when the file is open.

Treatment

The small city of Haven is dying, its people succumbing to a plague many fear to be the second coming of the Great Contagion. Abandoned by its neighbors, idiosyncratic Haven places its faith in a circle of Solars who must set out on a quest to find a cure. Their travels bring them to Celeren, seat of the Marukan Alliance, which is under siege by a Deathlord's armies. The circle soon learns that the key to Celeren's protection and Haven's salvation are one and the same. Will the circle condemn one city to death to save another? Even if they make such a choice, do they have the power to carry out that decision? How will they deal with the other powers from the Abyss and the Wyld who have a stake in this matter? How will the circle be remembered in the stories of each of these lands, and will anyone be left to sing tales of their adventures?

Act One begins with the circle learning of Haven's crisis. They uncover a prophecy on which Haven's elders have pinned their hopes, which draws clues as to where to proceed next. After several days of journeying, the circle finds a slaughtered village (Unferth) that has fallen to the undead, who have left a small detachment of undead soldiers behind as a rear guard. The circle must fight for their lives.

Just as they defeat the Shadowland forces, a squad of Marukani soldiers arrives under commission from Celeren. Unferth was a Marukani village, and these troops are quick to avenge the deaths of their clansmen. The weary circle finds another fight on their hands. Fortunately, if the circle can survive to meet Zara Swiftsteed, captain of the Celeren guard and powerful Dragon-Blood, they may be surprised to find someone willing to hear their side of the story. Surprisingly, she wears a crest on her armor that is strikingly similar to the blood-red rose from the prophet's drawing.

Celeren's people are proud, despite the siege they are facing from the armies of Tain Without Reflection, a powerful Abyssal Exalted detached from Mask of Winters' fortress at Thorns. The Marukani leader, Kyurtin Stallion-Breaker, is convinced that the key to defeating Tain's menace lies in hunting down the magical Rock Ram in the forests to the south. The circle joins Kyurtin on the hunt and, braving the perils of woods tainted by the Wyld, manages to trap the elusive beast over the protests of its shepherd. Kyurtin explains that the Ram will be used to save the lives of hundreds, and offers the Shepherd a princely amount of jade as

compensation, which he refuses in outrage. Then a swift circuit rider from Celeren bursts into the woods with news that Tain's armies are attacking their city.

The second act throws the circle into a pitched battle between the forces of Celeren and Tain. The circle discovers that the Ram has been crying since its abduction from its home wood, and its tears possess powerful magic that can imbue ordinary weapons with legendary force, not to mention heal any wound – including Haven's plague! The circle has a new dilemma: As grateful as he is for their help, Kyurtin won't let the circle walk away with the Ram to go cure Haven. While the healing effects of the Ram seem permanent, the improved weapon abilities wear off after a few hours, and thus the Ram's continued presence is needed against the Tain and his undead forces. Meanwhile, the Ram itself looks as if it is suffering. It clearly loathes being captive in a city, and pines day and night for its old home. The circle doesn't initially realize that the Lady Goldenrain, a powerful forest spirit, has answered the Shepherd's complaints, and sent the Emerald Bull, an ancient behemoth, to punish the Ram's abductors.

At this point, the circle has several options and the story can branch in several directions:

- They can remain with Kyurtin and help him defeat Tain decisively, after which he claims he will give them the Ram. Kyurtin, of course, has no intention of parting with the Ram – he will never feel safe if it leaves his hands.
- They can try to just take the Ram, but all of Celeren will fight them to keep it. A fighting flight from the city will claim many innocent lives, and even should they make it out (perhaps through clever thievery), they will be leaving Celeren defenseless.
- Kyurtin is convinced the Ram is Celeren's best and only hope, but Zara Swiftsteed distrusts this "fix" and dislikes how Kyurtin has been relishing his autocratic powers. She makes it known to the circle that, if they can find another way besides this Ram to keep Celeren safe from Tain, she will give them the Ram, and lead a rebellion against Kyurtin if necessary.

- The circle can visit Tain's army's camp. Stymied and a little fearful of the Marukani's new weapon, the Abyssal is willing to accept emissaries rather than attack them on sight. The circle can try to bluff their way into getting Tain to stand down. Alternatively, they could try to work a skillful sabotage of Tain's army, something that would, if not deal a permanent defeat, at least set them back a bit.

- The circle can go back into the woods to find the Shepherd and explain the situation. They can do it of their own initiative, or, once the Emerald Bull arrives, they will have little other choice. Once there, they will find Lady Goldenrain willing to call off the beast, assuming the circle can get her back the Ram. But if Tain has not been defeated by now, the circle still has the moral issue of leaving Celeren vulnerable.

Sooner or later, at Celeren or on the road back to Haven, the Emerald Bull will attack, starting off Act Three. The primordial monster is essentially unstoppable – not that the circle can't try its best. Nothing short of returning the Ram to the Shepherd will quiet its rage.

When the characters bring the Ram back, the Shepherd will bring them before the Forest Court, where the Lady Goldenrain reveals she is responsible for the plague that ravages Haven. They must convince her to deliver the cure, but to do so they must endure a gauntlet of her mental, physical and moral tests. When her curiosity is satisfied, she will produce the cure.

With cure in hand, the circle returns to find that the wandering prophet they met in an early scene, Thercite, has set himself up as something of a local evangelist. He is a recently-Exalted Lunar who knows a few tricks, and has produced enough (temporary) effects to feed people's hope that he can cure them. In their desperation, many of the sick and fearful of Haven have become his followers. The circle must expose and depose this false messiah without hurting the innocent people who desperation has driven to follow him.

As grateful as the elders are for the cure, they have their duty to their city god of justice, Anjos. They cross-examine the circle, demanding the Exalted make a moral accounting for themselves. The elders, and maybe even the city god himself, will reward or penalize the circle accordingly.

Theme: Complex Morality

Making choices is easy when there are clear rights and wrongs. **Disease of an Evil Conscience** is a story about the choices we make when no option seems ideal, when every path seems to lead to a bad end for *someone*. Throughout the story, the circle's choices can lead to the salvation of one party at the cost of another's destruction or suffering. Will they take it upon themselves to decide which ends justify which means? The circle can't just hand off the job to someone else: Resting on their shoulders are the fates of thousands throughout the Scavenger Lands.

Mood: Desperation

A series of undeniable threats loom over the land. Options are few, situations look bleak and time is waning. Solutions have to be found *now*, and even terrible actions may seem more palatable in the face of worse alternatives. The Exalted have great power, but that means the consequences of using that power are also great. These consequences can in turn make the situation even more desperate, thus forcing even more extreme choices.

An Episode in Your Series

Disease of an Evil Conscience is written to be an early adventure in your series, perhaps even the first story. What happens in this tale can create friends and enemies for your circle right from the beginning, recurring allies for later adventures and long-term foes who will plot continually throughout the next dozen tales you create.

We recommend **The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I–The Scavenger Lands** as an aid for Storytellers running tales in the Confederacy of Rivers. Although this SAS contains all you need, **The Scavenger Lands** will give you a wealth of information about Celeren, Thorns and the neighboring cities with their rich history, all of which can help you set a captivating and compelling backdrop to this and future tales.

If this session begins a series, spend some time with your players establishing why their characters are in Haven and how they react to the plight of the people there. A confrontation with suffering beggars or family members, for example, can give a player a chance to show off her character's personality.

CHOSEN OF A DIFFERENT TYPE

What if your circle is not composed of Solar Exalted? There are ways to adapt the same story for different types of Exalted characters. Here are some suggestions:

Dragon-Bloods: In the story as it stands, other cities don't much care about Haven's plight. But what if the General Staff of Lookshy (*Exalted*, p. 62, and *The Scavenger Lands*, p. 53) decides to lend a hand after all, sending some Dragon-Blooded from the Seventh Legion to address the problem? The General Staff need not be acting out of altruism: a plague in Haven, if not cured, could spread all the way to Lookshy someday. Just killing all the infected isn't good enough, as even one escapee could spread the plague far and wide. A cure must be found, for the security of the city.

Lunars: The plague is as much a threat to the Chosen of Luna as anyone. Since the disease was created by a powerful forest spirit for her own purposes, she might find a way to steer any Lunars in her wilderness towards Haven to be her unwitting eyes and ears as she observes the plague's effects. Lunars might not feel the same ties to humanity that other Exalted might, so your players' characters will need a particularly personal hook in order to make the moral dilemmas appropriately compelling; see "Set-up" for some advice on this.

Sidereals: The Bureau of Destiny is extremely concerned over signs that the Great Contagion might be returning, and deputizes the circle to investigate and deal with the threat. They can provide identities and supplies, but not much direct support. Of all the Exalted, the Sidereals are perhaps the most comfortable in treating people like pawns, making necessary sacrifices in the name of the greater plan. You should ensure that signs and portents are ambiguous or contradictory when it comes to deciding between Celeren, Haven and the Shepherd, pushing the characters to make their own decisions.

Abyssals: Tain makes an ideal rival for any up and coming band of Abyssal Exalted, who may try to save Celeren for the sheer pleasure (and tactical advantage) of thwarting him. Part of the reason Mask of Winters sent Tain out was not only to extend the power of the Shadowlands, but to get the fiery young Tain out of his own hair and installed elsewhere so he won't threaten his rule of Thorns. Perhaps he sends the characters to "help" Tain, but really to serve as a check on him should the need arise. As for Haven and the plague, perhaps the Abyssals want to uncover the secret of the plague so they can use it for themselves, and their desire to aid Haven is nothing more than a useful deception.

Disease of an Evil Conscience can also be adapted into an episode in an ongoing series. Haven can be relocated or replaced with pretty much any small, isolated settlement beyond the Realm proper, isolated by distance, terrain or magic. The plague could even threaten a well-established city – just be sure to find an analogue for Lady Goldenrain's grudge against Anjos.

Similarly, Celeren and the Marukani could be replaced with another small local power, uncomfortably handing over their freedom to a strong ruler. If your players' circle has a long-standing Abyssal foe or meddling god, perhaps she could stand in for Tain or Lady Goldenrain, respectively.

Backstory and Set-up

Backstory

Few events have scarred themselves on the collective memory of Creation more than the Great Contagion. Even the disappearance of the Empress, a disaster to many, was an opportunity for some to advance their personal ambitions. But whether you hail from the gilded halls of the Imperial City or the mean streets of Nexus, whether you're a farmer in a village in the East, a slave in the gem mines of the South or a pirate in the Western sea, you have one thing in common – you were raised on stories of the great plague that nearly ended humanity. Terrified memories of the Contagion rise to the surface when a disease ravages the small city of Haven, a disease impervious to all known healing arts, Charms and sorcery.

Although it doesn't evoke as primal a fear as the Contagion, the fall of the nearby city Thorns to the Deathlord Mask of Winters fanned cold fires of dread in the hearts of the Marukani, Thorns' closest neighbors. Many Marukani feel Tain Without Reflection's attack on Celeren was as inevitable as the approach of death.

This story, then, is essentially a tale of two cities: Haven and Celeren. Haven lies off the trade route between Puyo and Celeren, a reclusive location that suits its residents just fine and has allowed the village to maintain its own insular culture in the service of Anjos, the god of justice. Unfortunately, this isolation has also given rise to rumor and suspicion among other villages. Puyo and its satellite villages have always suspected there was something a little strange about Haven, and these local powers have found their prejudices confirmed with news of this plague. They take the plague as a clear sign of judgment upon Haven's people for their wicked ways, and have declared quarantine. Small groups of gangs masquerading as concerned locals have set up checkpoints along all the major roads under orders from their chieftains. While as much an exercise in sanctioned piracy as a true quarantine, these gangs have still been surprisingly successful at intercepting anyone trying to enter or exit Haven. Not that there are many people trying to come; Haven received few enough visitors before word spread that a visit there could be fatal. Haven's days look numbered.

In contrast, Celeren is a comparatively large central realm for the far-ranging Marukani tribesmen. A proud and fiercely independent people, Celeren is the closest thing the Marukani have to a capital. It's a center for meeting, trade and the loose kind of government that is all the tribesmen will tolerate. (More on Celeren and the Marukan Alliance can be found in **Exalted** p. 65 and **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands**, pp. 75-79). Like the people of Haven, though, the Marukani have fallen on hard times. Their worst fear has finally come to pass, as the Deathlord who claimed Thorns has sent an army to conquer them as well. The Abyssal general named Tain Without Reflection is eager to capture a city of his own.

Tain has been careful to make non-aggression pacts with the surrounding cities. He and Winters have managed to turn the eyes of Lookshy, the only power strong enough to actually stop him, toward other directions. While sympathetic to their Marukani allies, Lookshy's leaders have been skillfully manipulated by Tain to feel it is worth their while to stay out of this matter. While protesters are clamoring inside Lookshy's citadels, the famed horsemen of Marukan are on their own. The normally wide-ranging Marukani tribes, facing the destruction of their smaller villages, have made the difficult decision to converge on Celeren and hole up there. More difficult still, they have suspended the Council of Elders and agreed to the singular rule of the Mayhiros clan elder, Kyurtin Stallion-Breaker. Kyurtin has grown a little too used to this power for the liking of many of his clansmen, particularly their greatest warrior, Zara Swiftsteed. Still, she won't openly challenge him for now, as the Marukani have all sworn loyalty to Kyurtin until the crisis passes.

Set-up

Disease of an Evil Conscience assumes that the circle is a band of Solar Exalted. Haven's god Anjos has deemed the Immaculate Order's Wyld Hunt an unjust practice, and thus one of Haven's many idiosyncratic quirks is that the stigma of the Anathema does not fall upon Solars there. This alone might be motivation for the circle to save Haven from destruction.

It is perhaps easiest for the circle to have grown up in Haven, or to have settled there some time ago seeking refuge from the Hunt. Perhaps they have a friend, relative or lover in Haven (or, later, in Celeren). They will start the story with an attachment to the people and a natural desire to save them. However, the circle might very well be just visiting

when the plague hits, and moved by the plight of Haven's people. A more self-interested circle on a visit might be interested in the rewards Haven's elders would offer them in return for a rescue. You might even want to run a preamble where the characters are on the run from pursuers, establishing Haven, with its indifference to the Wyld Hunt, as their rescue. Haven's elders will call upon the circle for the simple reason that there is no one else for them to turn to. There are no other Exalted in the village, and this is a quest beyond the power of ordinary men and women. Now, it's their turn to return the favor.

Of course, if all other encouragement fails, keep in mind that the Exalts in the circle will become infected with the plague. While Exalts are immune to many elements of the disease, the illness can still produce enough annoying effects (*see p. II*) to make the characters eager to rid themselves of it.

The Cast

Kyurtin Stallion-Breaker, Marukani Leader

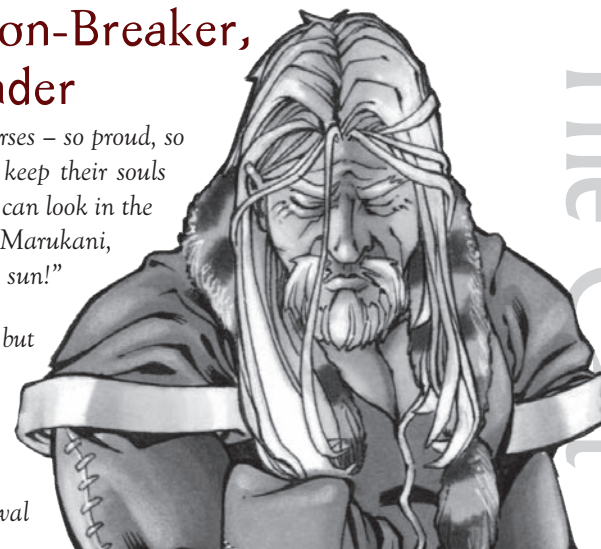
Quotes: *"Look at the horses – so proud, so strong. Men of other lands keep their souls bottled inside them, but you can look in the fields and see the souls of the Marukani, trotting and prancing in the sun!"*

"I dislike it as well, brother, but these are desperate times. If the sun is not to set forever on the savannas of the Marukan, we must accept make certain small sacrifices. Our survival outweighs all other concerns."

"Now is not the time to question me, whelp!"

Motivation: Preserve his own power.

Background: Kyurtin had proven himself a hero long before most Marukani had climbed out of the cradle-saddles on their parents' horses. He fought in the now-legendary battle of Mishaka, where he led the Marukani horsemen to help Lookshy and its allies defeat



Mask of Winters' terrifying grand army (See **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands**, p. 48). Born to the powerful Mayhiros clan, the young Kyurtin could have led a life of privilege, but strove in every way to prove his mettle. Ironically, the Mayhiros elders have since used Kyurtin's grand achievements to justify their unofficial preeminence among the egalitarian Marukani.

In his youth, there was no greater champion of such egalitarianism than Kyurtin, but age and circumstances have changed the elder's priorities. What he faced at Mishaka gave him a proper fear of the horrors a Deathlord can commit, and Kyurtin can think of no worse fate for the people he loves than to become victims of that kind of nightmare. In the face of that, even establishing an autocracy is a preferable alternative.

When Tain's armies descended upon the Marukan lands, few blanched at the call to fight them, but the scattered, uncoordinated horselords fell easily before the shock troops of the eerily unified undead. Soon even the proudest among the Arbogassu clan were considering the merits of banding together to face this menace. When the clan leaders finally assembled to offer Kyurtin the mantle of leader, he accepted with due gravity, but not with humility. Kyurtin now wears the title with comfort and ease, like an old cloak. He does not question that what he wants and what is best for the Marukan are one and the same. Others, however, are beginning to, and only fear of Tain is keeping them in line for now.

Description: While Kyurtin is a man in his twilight years, a lifetime of physical conditioning has helped him maintain an imposing, muscular physique. His tanned, weathered skin remains taut, his gray hair is still lustrous, and although his blue eyes have grown a bit rheumy, he can still out-wrestle and out-ride much younger men. His mind and his patience, however, have not held up as well as his body. He has become prone to long-winded speeches, and can be quick to anger at those who question his authority, though he does not nurse grudges. Kyurtin remains a man who values practicality, loyalty and the power of a man's deeds as proof of his worth.

Storytelling Hints: Kyurtin does not see himself as a tyrant. He truly loves his people, and truly wants to save them from Tain. If the circle show themselves to be friends to the Marukani, Kyurtin will treat them with respect and even listen to their ideas, using the ones he finds useful. He will not, however, take criticism from them, and will read repeated critiques as an attack on him – and thus, by extension, the Marukani people.

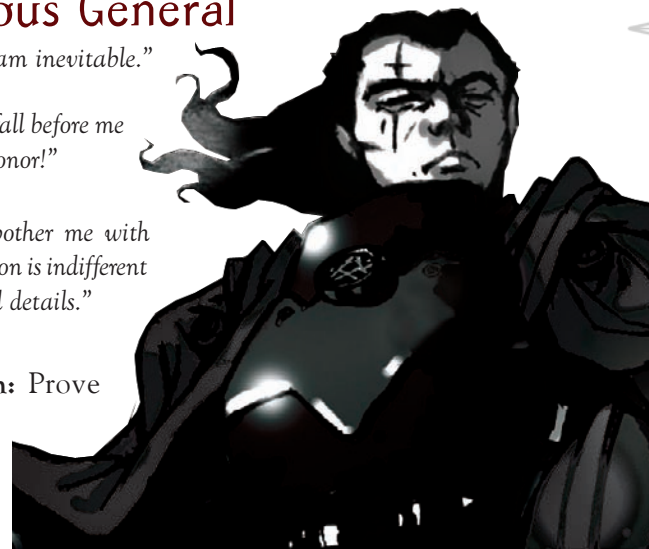
Tain Without Reflection, Ambitious General

Quotes: *"I am inevitable."*

"To fall before me is an honor!"

"Do not bother me with trifles. Oblivion is indifferent to such small details."

Motivation: Prove that he is the most important Deathknight in Creation.



Background: It wasn't Tain's fault he was born without much fortune. He had ideas! He had ability! But ideas, ability and ambition were not enough to raise him from his position as a minor clerk in the bureaucracy of Thorns. Young Tain was always stymied and thwarted by men who were neither his intellectual superiors nor his moral betters. Rather, they had simply had more years to sit, like corpulent spiders, in the webs of power, twisting and pulling the strands tight to prevent his rise. They closed off every avenue, bestowed every favor on their own protégés, leaving young Tain to languish in obscurity, pained by the certain knowledge that he was meant for greater things.

When at last opportunity knocked, Tain seized upon its throat, and one small murder was all it took to open the door to the comptroller's seat. The very next day, however, Mask of Winters staged his gruesome and bloody takeover of the city of Thorns. Amid all the horrors of the invasion and conquest, the one Tain could stomach the least was the destruction of the city's hierarchy, and with it, his own position. All his efforts, his entire struggle, had been for nothing! He set about to hang himself the very next morning. But as the world darkened, Mask of Winters' voice whispered in Tain's ear, offering him the power that had always eluded

him. His name was such an easy thing to part with in exchange. Tain was reborn into death, and, finally, the greatness he knew to be his destiny.

Description: Tain wears magnificent (some might say gaudy) ebon armor, polished to an unnaturally bright sheen, as befits the grandeur he now feels he has. He takes great care with his appearance, carefully combing and slicking his raven hair, filing his nails, and holding himself with regal posture. He wears an elaborate belt made of the clavicles of foes he deemed worthy enough to slay personally.

Storyteller Hints: Tain is hungry. He treats his underlings and his foes alike with the contempt that he feels befits a man of his status, which betrays his insecurity. Even with all the power he now commands, Tain bristles at the thought of an eternity as a servant to Mask of Winters, and suspects the Deathlord only humors him. He cannot figure out whether Winters has sent him to conquer Celeren because the Deathlord trusts him, or if he simply wants to get Tain out of his hair. Only once Tain unseats Winters and takes the skeletal throne for his own will he finally feel secure.

Tain's doubts, however, will not keep him from crushing Celeren. To fail to do so would invalidate all his beliefs in his own greatness. In engagements with foes, Tain is cool and calculating, and can bide his time for as long as he needs to. On the other hand, he has to feel he is getting somewhere: perceived roadblocks infuriate him, and may cause him to take rash actions.

I DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO ABYSSAL CHARMS

If you don't have access to a copy of **Manual of Exalted Power: The Abyssals** or the **Storyteller's Companion**, we suggest using the most of the Melee, Athletic and Presence Charms.

Zara Swiftsteed, Captain of the Celeren Guard

Quotes: *"Halt! Speak your name, or face my spear."*

"Yes, we face impossible odds. Yes, our allies have abandoned us. Yes, we will fight. Yes, we will prevail."

"This is madness. We should place our trust in our swords, not in some magic trick."



Motivation: Protect the Marukani.

Background: Zara Swiftsteed exists to serve. It is her life's penance.

Growing up she was always faster, stronger and tougher than her peers. She had to be, since her younger sister was a cripple. The inability to ride a horse was a death sentence on the harsh savannahs, and the elders of her clan had wanted the girl, Prairie's Rose, to be given to the river, as was the custom for such children.

Zara defied their wishes, and guided and protected Rose all through their early years. But Zara couldn't be with Rose every moment. When a party of barbarians raided her village while Zara was away, Rose could not flee like everyone else. Zara, out foraging, blamed herself for Rose's capture. She tracked the raiders for days before coming upon their camp. When she saw what the bandits had done to her sister, Zara threw herself into their midst in a rage. Her Exaltation took place at that very moment, and with her newfound power she managed to slay half the barbarians before the rest fled in terror. Zara cradled Rose's broken body in her arms, feeling her sister's spirit pass, and vowed to devote the rest of her days to the protection of the clans. She passed the initiation rites of the tribe and was anointed a hammer of the cavalry at sixteen years of age.

Zara is now twenty, and has vowed never to marry. She has never taken a lover, and she has few friends, though she has many comrades. She has earned the unflinching respect (and no small



amount of fear) from the forces she now captains. Zara distrusts authority – it was the elders of her own clan who had wanted Rose dead, after all, and who had not seen fit to take her with them when they fled from the barbarians. While she has sworn the same oath of loyalty to Kyurtin as the other Marukani, she does not have much patience for his rule. Zara wields powerful Charms as a Dragon-Blood, but she prefers to place her trust in her weapons and other things of the physical world. She wears Rose's emblem on her armor as a reminder of what she is fighting to defend.

Description: The horse-women of Marukan do not primp and preen the in the way of city folk, but even by Marukani standards Zara does not pretty herself up. She keeps her chestnut hair in a severe ponytail, does not adorn herself with makeup or trinkets, and wears loose, functional clothing beneath her armor. Still, she is not unattractive: her body is lean and toned from rigorous physical conditioning. Her face and arms bear some minor scarring, and her reddish skin usually bears the dirt and grit of riding or battle upon her. Like many Marukani, her walk is slightly bow-legged from constant riding.

Storyteller Hints: Zara is guarded, even hostile to strangers, but will treat those who prove themselves with respect and loyalty. She does not consider her Exaltation a sign of divine favor, but rather one more mark of her responsibilities, responsibilities she bears without complaint and without giving herself any respite. She has neither talent nor patience for politicking and speaks her mind plainly.

Although she seldom smiles, when with her comrades-in-arms Zara will raise a glass of ale, laugh and even sing. This is not a side she shows beyond her closest associates, but members of the circle who win her trust and respect just might see this it. However, "close associate" is the most intimate Zara ever lets anyone become.

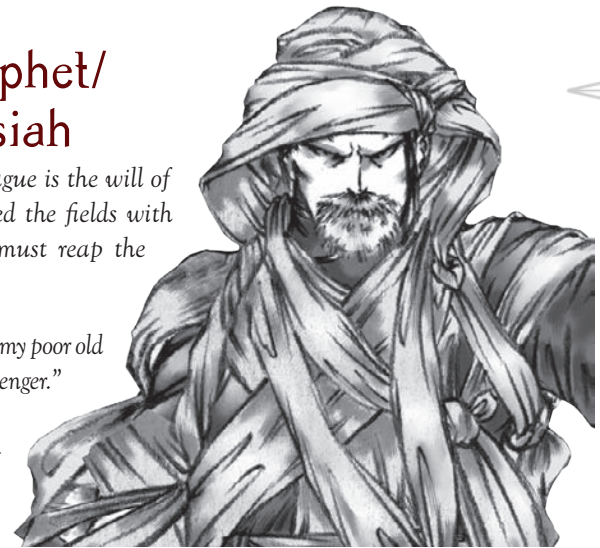
Even though Zara is a Dragon-Blood, Celeren is far from the lands where the Immaculate Order holds sway, and she feels no particular allegiance to the Wyld Hunt. She has never met a Solar before, and while she might initially regard the circle with suspicion, tales of the Anathema don't inspire nearly as much fear for the Marukani as the far closer and more real threat of local barbarians or the undead.

Thercite, Bitter Prophet/ False Messiah

Quotes: *"This plague is the will of Anjos! We have sewed the fields with our sins – now we must reap the god's wrath."*

"Do what you will to my poor old bones. I am but a messenger."

"Anjos has spoken – I am your redemption. Accept me, and find salvation. Reject me, and perish. The choice is yours."



Motivation: Force people to face the reality of their wretchedness and their impending destruction.

Background: Thercite never fit in to Haven's community, although no one quite remembers why. He passed his own judgment on Haven's people years ago, but now the coming of the plague has affirmed his beliefs in their evil nature. While at first satisfied with rubbing the people's misfortune in their faces, Thercite sees an opportunity for vengeance. His recent Exaltation has convinced him that the god Anjos really *does* agree with him. He now has accepted what he believes to be the mantle of the ruler of Haven, his just desert after a lifetime of mistreatment.

Description: Thercite is not an old man, but you wouldn't know by his appearance. He walks with a stoop, dresses in rags and tatters, and seems to delight in violating social custom by refusing to bathe, clean his teeth or speak in a soft tone of voice. He wears his thick gray-blond hair wild and uncombed, and always has a wild-eyed expression on his face. His body is emaciated but surprisingly strong and durable.

Storyteller Hints: Thercite is angry and bitter, and wants the world to feel the pain he has felt at its hands. Even when he takes charge of Haven, he doesn't have much of a long-term goal beyond making people feel the weight of his yoke. He has long ago ruled out the possibility of true friendship or love, treating everyone like maggots and assuming they seek to treat him the same way. His new "followers" do not delight him at

all. Even as he promises them salvation, secretly cares little for them and only enjoys watching them place themselves in his power.

The following stats refer to Thercite only in the scene “False Messiah,” after he has been Exalted. Before that, use ordinary townspeople statistics (**Exalted**, pp. 281-282).

Lady Goldenrain

Quotes: “Morning’s light through the canopy brings such delightful guests!”

“What color is your sap? Where do your roots stretch? Do tell me, and I’ll make it worth your while.”

“Hrm? Oh. Trouble yourself not about it, I was merely listening to the grasses – they do complain ever so much. Go on, now.”

Motivation: Learn about humans.

Background: Lady Goldenrain is a spirit as old as the forest itself, powerful in the magics of the Wyld and wise in knowledge humans will never attain. Still, she remains frustrated by

her inability to leave the patch of soil in which she is rooted. While her Fae brethren sallied forth in the two great invasions of the human lands, she could only remain and hear the stories that filtered back, deep into her glade. What she heard thrilled and excited her to no end. She wanted to learn everything there was to know about humanity, and still does.

Lady Goldenrain nurses a grudge against Anjos, the god of Haven. In the early days of the First Age when parts of the world still belonged to the monsters of the forest, Anjos slew Tyranodon (a behemoth favored by the Lady) and placed its skull at the site where centuries later his followers would construct Haven. The Lady still mourns the loss of her bestial associate, and while she dared not challenge Anjos openly, she is certain enough that he has withdrawn from the world that she is ready to try a way of punishing his followers – hence, the plague.

The Lady does not feel regret for harm caused either by the plague or the Emerald Bull. She will comprehend the circle’s explanation if they

describe to her how the Ram’s powers are needed for saving Celeren or if they explain the innocence of Haven’s citizens, but she will not feel the emotional weight of it. She’s very sorry for their inconvenience, but the Ram really has to stay in the forest. She knows the people of Haven aren’t Anjos himself, but they’re the only option she’s got for retribution.

The tragedy of the Lady is that, for all her desire to learn, she lacks the capacity for it. The Forest Test is the best way she knows to acquire information, but the test by its nature forces those who take it to make certain choices in order to escape. Because of this, she’s only going to get the results she expects. Successful arguments to persuade her will hinge around playing to her sense of “morality” – what is good for the forest’s sense of order is morally right – as opposed to any human conceptions of the term.

Description: Lady Goldenrain appears as an impossibly beautiful young woman with bark-colored skin and long green hair, garlanded with clusters of brilliant yellow flowers. She is naked except for bladder-like rings of green that circle her body. Her torso protrudes out of the trunk of an enormous broadleaf tree, which is also a part of the Lady herself.

Storyteller Hints: Lady Goldenrain is amiable and welcoming in the regal manner of a queen receiving her inferiors as guests. Her curiosity about the circle makes her extremely tolerant of their behavior, even if they make accusations or threats. She will only respond with hostility to outright attacks, and even then, she is surprisingly quick to forgive. She doesn’t want to miss out on a rare chance to learn about humans!

The Lady is a moderately powerful god (Essence 7). In terms of traits, she essentially exists as a Storyteller fiat, with one important exception: she cannot physically leave the forest or directly affect events outside it through any Charm or magic.

Rock Ram

Quote: (bleats and wails)

Motivation: Protect the freedom of its ewes and itself

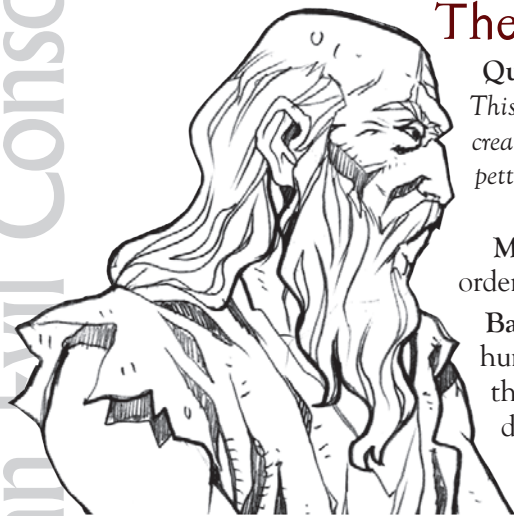
Background: The Rock Ram is as old as the forest itself, a Wyld-spawned template of the undomesticated mountain sheep. It knows only a life of negotiating steep hills and sparing with rivals to earn the honor of mating with the choice ewes.



With this privilege comes responsibility, of an animal sort, to protect them from predators. The Ram is so attuned to its environmental niche that changing its surroundings causes it unending grief, confusion and despair.

Description: A mastiff-sized male sheep with elaborately curved golden horns that look too big for the creature to hold up, yet they seem to pose it no problem. It moves with ferocious grace.

Storyteller Hints: The Ram is not a sentient being, but it is quite intelligent for an animal and dedicated to its task. It should be able to outthink or burst out of simple traps and tricks (like a pile of leaves covering a hole), but a crafty plan (a distraction that allows another character to kidnap a ewe) will be beyond its capacity to anticipate.



The Shepherd

Quote: *"Return what you have taken. This forest is not your playground. The creatures here are not for your gawking and petting! Give back, give back!"*

Motivation: Maintain balance and order in the forest.

Background: The Shepherd appears human, but is actually a minor god of the forest, to whom custodianship duties have been delegated.

Description: A leathery-skinned, aging yeoman in a weather-beaten cloak and hat, carrying a twisted and knotted awl made of birch wood. He walks barefoot on calloused feet and smells of grass and manure. He sports an untended graying beard and wild, long hair. Only his eyes, a deep forest green, seem to hint at his inhuman status.

Storyteller Hints: Bound by his nature, the Shepherd uses his powers against natural forest predators. He has no experience fighting human beings, so will make for a very unskilled opponent. He is designed to be brushed off by the characters, and will run away when he perceives the battle to be too much for him, so don't make the fight a difficult one.

The Emerald Bull

Quote: (a thundering cry that shakes the earth)

Motivation: Punish those who have the Ram

Background: Thanks to generations of human breeding and domestication, cows are a docile, dim-witted species. But there was a time in the days before men and women thought themselves a force to be reckoned with, when cattle were wild, strong-willed and fearsome. The Emerald Bull is a relic of those days, the godlike embodiment of bovine power and fury. As the centuries passed and its brethren fell one by one under humanity's yoke, the Bull grew despondent and took to hiding, nursing its memories of ancient glory. Even a spirit of Lady Goldenrain's power cannot command the Bull per se, but she has learned ways to awaken its rage and direct it at a target. Once its mission is accomplished, however, the Bull will lapse back into despair and fall into slumber in some dark part of the forest, dreaming of better times.

Description: Much like a normal bull, but green and twenty feet tall.

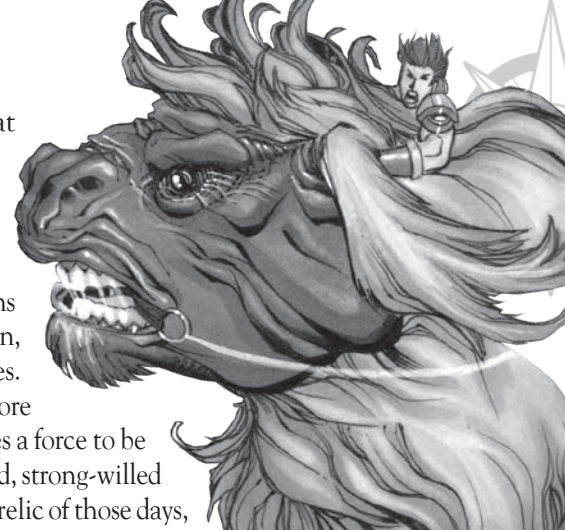
Storyteller Hints: The behemoth is a force of nature. There is little the circle (or Storyteller characters) can do to harm it, although allow creative plans to trip it up or distract it for a time. In the end, however, the behemoth will always chase after the party with the Ram. It will attempt to destroy that individual or group unless the party in question returns the Ram to the forest.

Blaze

Quote: *"Crackle twist dive fan away away! Who are you that blocks our dance breaks our song snuffs the light? No matter no care! Burn twist crackle burn!"*

Motivation: Spread themselves and their children far and wide.

Description: Fire that has coalesced into a roughly human shape. Blazes have no true form aside from the flames that compose them,

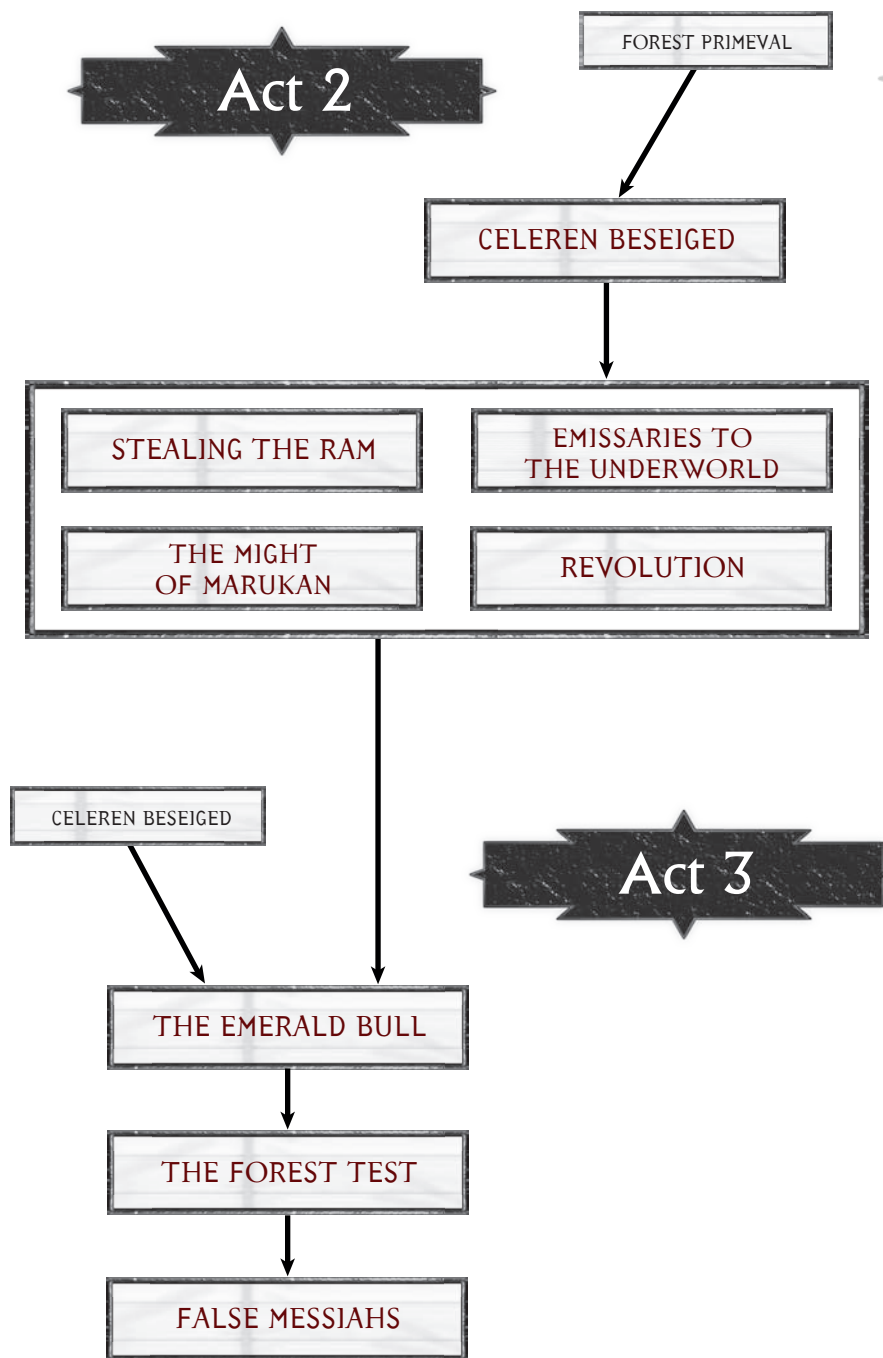
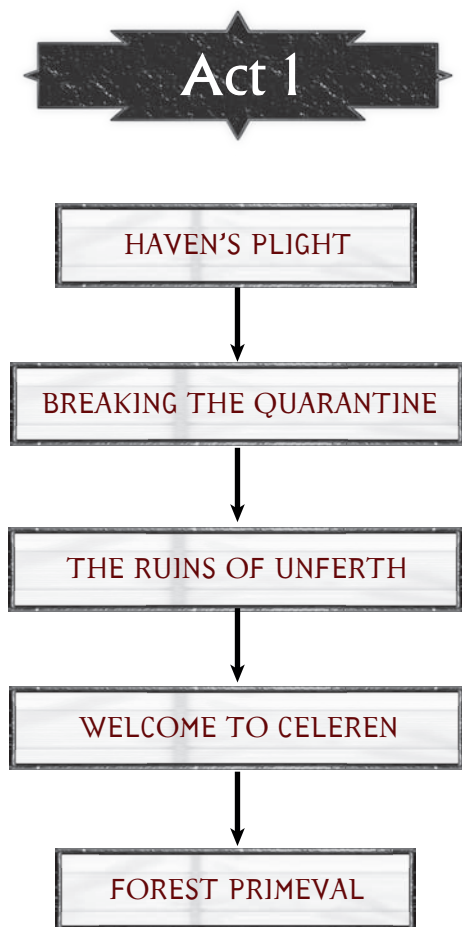


however, and can easily upon whim dissolve into mere fire. When they speak, their voice sounds like a crackling hiss and a whiff of brimstone fills the air.

Storyteller Hints: Blazes are short-tempered, hyperactive gods, not prone to long thought or consideration. Their emotions, like their bodies, run hot. They are not stupid, but because of their nature can often be goaded into making rash decisions.

Scenes

Scene Flowchart



Haven's Plight

MENTAL •

PHYSICAL –

SOCIAL •

Overview

This scene establishes the basic premise of the story: the Elders commission the circle to find a cure for the plague, enjoining them to adhere to Anjos' principles of justice. The characters meet Anjos' blind prophet who reveals to them the set of symbols that guide their quest. Finally, the circle discovers they are all infected.

Description

The hollowed-out skull of some long-dead behemoth rings the doorway to the Temple of Anjos. As you step through the bleached jaws and around the jagged teeth, each the size of a man, you emerge inside a cold and drafty atrium. You run your hands along bare, spartan stone walls marked only by carvings of the god's giant measuring scales. Beneath those scales lay three sentences: Share all that is Yours. Repair all that is Breached. Heal all who are Sick. You've seen such fine sentiments elsewhere, but outside in the courtyard, people actually seem to be following them. Women in their market finery stoop to cradle men covered in boils, indifferent to the ooze of pus that drips on their frocks. Children coughing and hacking support half-unconscious playmates on their shoulders. Sweaty, exhausted volunteers dole out hot soup and folk remedies to the lines of supplicants. After a moment, an elder, dressed in plain brown robes, beckons you to turn away from the scene. "Surely," he says, "a just god would not let his children perish so. Your presence here cannot be a coincidence. We must find Shilani. Only then can we know Anjos' prescription for us."

When the characters meet Shilani:

At first you think the motion in the darkness is the scampering of a large cluster of rats, but torchlight reveals a human shape (female, you think) crawling on the floor. It is covered only in torn sackcloth, and its nails make a scratching sound on the stone. As your footsteps draw near, the figure suddenly snaps to its feet, revealing a sweep of unkempt black hair and two wild violet eyes that stare at you without seeing – or perhaps see something you do not. Her age is indeterminate, her expression one of desperation. She begins grunting and gesturing, making sweeping circles in the air.

Storyteller Goals

Give the characters the information they need to follow the path of the prophecy to cure the plague. Let the players know that their characters are infected, and allow them a chance to experience the consequences.

Establishing sympathy for Haven's people or respect for the elders would be a big plus: No city is full of angels, but the people of Haven are better than most. There is a tradition of honest, hard work and an attempt at upholding Anjos' code of justice. Through quick scenes and anecdotes, try to impart a sense of how the loss of this kind of community would be a tragedy. If the circle is made of characters who have grown up in Haven, this will be easier. If they are visitors, you will want to develop ways to entice them: the Elders can promise rewards both financial (in the vicinity of Resources ••) and magical (feel free to use special artifacts or the services of a master who can teach new Charms). As Solars, the very existence of Haven as a safe space away from the Wyld Hunt is valuable.

The characters are welcome to try out their own Charms and skills in Medicine to cure the plague, but nothing will come of it. Their only lead is the Elders' insistence that Anjos knows the way, but Anjos only communicates through his prophet Shilani, who hides in the catacombs beneath the temple. The characters' search for Shilani is a good time to introduce them to the plague's effects, which are described in the sidebar.

When the characters enter the temple, be sure to mention the giant skull-doorway; it will come back to haunt them later when they meet Lady Goldenrain in "The Forest Test" and she reveals her grudge against Anjos. The gateway to Anjos' temple is none other than the severed skull of her favored pet, Tryanodon.

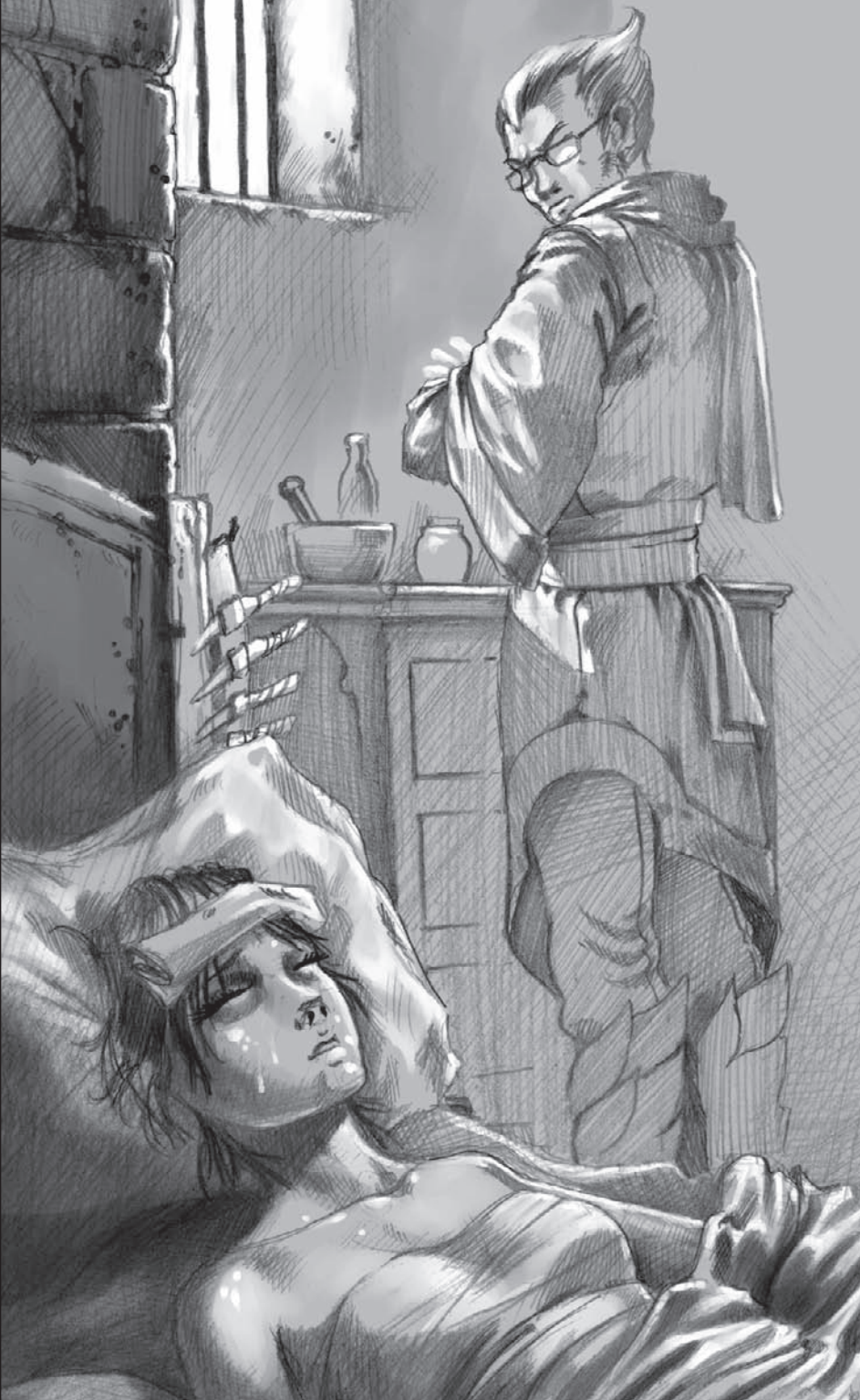
Character Goals

Learn about Haven. Find out what Shilani is saying.

Actions

Finding Shilani

Years of hearing nothing but Anjos' words and seeing nothing but his visions have not been kind to Shilani's mind. She has no context for her visions and no concept of normal behavior, so she often acts erratically.



You can make finding Shilani an automatic action, or challenge the circle with a (Perception + Awareness) roll to find her in the catacombs of the temple. Failing or botching the roll gives the plague a chance to wreak its effects on the characters a bit more.

Interpreting the prophet's words

Dice Pool: (Intelligence + Occult or Lore)

Shilani, in a fit of mad prophecy, paints a blood red rose, a pair of antlers, a golden teardrop falling from an eye and a winding snake. After Shilani paints her picture, a roll is needed to help the characters identify at least the last symbol, which is the ancient Tambourine Road. The other symbols will remain unidentifiable for now.

Hindrance: None

Help: Character has a Lore or Occult specialty in the Anjos or local legends (+1 bonus).

Roll Results

Botch: *You are convinced the snake refers to the Old River Road.* The characters will stray off course during the next scene, ending up in an obvious dead-end and will need to re-examine the painting at a -1 penalty.

Failure: *You have no idea what the snake could mean, but with a little more thought you're convinced something will click.* Continue rolling.

Success: *"Hey, wait a minute! That snake is the exact same shape as the Old Tambourine Road. But no one's used that road since the First Age...where could Anjos possibly want us to go?"*

Unnatural Mental Influence: *As you part the veil before Shilani's thoughts, you feel as if you have stepped into a maelstrom of sound and light. Your fall is finally arrested by a rising platform, one half of a giant scale. Dizzy, you watch the other half rise against a backdrop of psychedelic colors. On its plate is a road where minstrels in clothing from the First Age play musical instruments. The Tambourine Road!*

Consequences

At the end of this scene, the circle should be setting out along the path outlined by the prophecy. Move to the scene "Breaking the Quarantine."



Breaking the Quarantine

MENTAL –

PHYSICAL ••

SOCIAL ••

Overview

Getting to the Tambourine Road requires a few days' journey, and between Haven and the Road lies the quarantine roadblock. The chieftains of Puyo have given free rein to local mercenaries, rogues and highwaymen to police the byways and stop all traffic to and from Haven. Their incentive to do so is the "taxes" they have permission to levy from such travelers. One such band will attempt to turn the characters back to Haven, demanding tribute in the process.

After the mob gets a chance to match words or swords with the circle, the ragged doomsayer Thercite will make his appearance.

Description

The noonday sun shines down upon the piecemeal armor of nearly two dozen ruffians flexing their muscles, brandishing their weapons and trading obscene jokes by the roadside. You can smell their sweat from here, mingling with the lingering aroma of burnt meat and cheap ale. Only one man looks well kept by comparison. He strokes his trim beard as you approach, drawing himself up to his full height. The others, looking to his example, fall into a scattered sort of formation around him.

"Well, well, well," says their leader. "What have we here? Some lost lambs straying from Haven's pastures? You'll need to turn around, little lambs." He waves a tattered piece of parchment bearing a crumpled gold seal. "As authorized deputies of Puyo, we are here to enforce a quarantine, to protect the local villages from the sickness in your land."

A few of the others snigger, but are silenced by glares from their fellows.

"There is also," says the leader with a leering grin, "the matter of the fine you must pay for attempting to endanger us all."

When Thercite appears:

Spittle flying from his cracked lips, the old man makes a long, rambling speech about how the hour of judgment is upon all those who hail from or who would aid Haven, and how the plague is Anjos' punishment for their sins. Eventually he runs away, but not before he looks you squarely in the eyes and wags a finger. "You! Do not be so arrogant and stiff-necked to believe your day of reckoning will not come!"

Storyteller Goals

Create a chance for the characters to flex their muscles (physical or otherwise), and to realize the full extent of the danger Haven is in. Introduce Thercite.

Character Goals

Break through the quarantine.

Actions

Breaking the Quarantine

There are three ways around this situation: through combat, bribes or stealth.

Combat

Should combat ensue, there are four times as many toughs as there are player characters. They are to be treated as common outlaw extras (**Exalted**, p.282) except for their leader, an actual professional mercenary who is treated as a non-extra elite trooper (**Exalted**, p. 282-283). Should the professional mercenary be incapacitated or more than half of the group is knocked out, roll Willpower for the rest in order not to flee. Should the group be whittled down to only three, they will all immediately attempt to run away.

Bribes

This gang, while concerned about the plague, is more concerned about their own wallets. The circle might attempt a bribe to change the soldiers' minds about their duty.



Dice Pool: Since the soldiers outnumber the characters, a (Presence + Intimidation) or (Presence + Socialize) roll, contested by the lead mercenary (see below), will be necessary before the gang will even consider another recourse besides just beating up the circle and taking their possessions for their own. Once convinced a bribe is in their best interests, a (Manipulation + Bureaucracy) roll against difficulty 2 is needed, along with the resources to back it up (the thugs have a nice racket here, so Resources ••• or higher will be required).

Hindrances: The characters have obvious signs of being infected with the plague, or of being Anathema (-2 penalty)

Help: The characters look particularly threatening (and hence make bribery look like a better option) (+1 bonus)

Roll Results

Botch: *"They've got gold! Why settle for just a smidgeon? At 'em, lads!"*

Failure: *"What do you take us for? Common thieves?"*

Success: *"Do you see anyone from Haven, Sven? Seems to me these fine folk are from Puyo, and just got a little lost. Carry on your way, sirs and madams."*

Useful Charms: Listener Swaying Argument, Knowing the Soul's Price, Master of Small Manners, Terrifying Apparition of Glory, Twisted Words Technique, Unbreakable Fascination Method, Unruly Mob Dispensing Rebuke

Stealth

A circle seeking no confrontation, social or physical, could try to sneak around the blockade through the surrounding brush.

Dice Pool: Unaided by Charms, this will be difficult – each and every character in the circle will need to roll better on (Dexterity + Stealth) than the lead mercenary's roll on (Perception + Awareness; 6 dice). Even one failure exposes the whole group, and immediately begins combat.

Hindrances: Discovered while sneaking around in the brush (-1 external penalty)

Help: Character noticed that the roadblock was up ahead (+1 bonus die)

Roll Results

Botch: The circle draws the attention of the mob, which is enraged at this attempted deceit and approaches with hostility.

Failure: The circle draws the attention of the mob, which is more amused than angered but still attacks.

Success: The circle slips by.

Useful Charms: Easily Overlooked Presence Method, Mental Invisibility Technique

Consequences

Defeating or circumventing the soldiers lets the circle continue on to the Tambourine Road, but not before encountering Thercite first. Whether the characters defeat the quarantine soldiers or successfully creep past, make sure that Thercite still encounters them and makes his declaration before running off. Attempts to interrogate him will yield nothing but useless apocalyptic ravings.

If by chance all members of the circle are rendered unconscious, the soldiers will fleece them of any obvious valuables and then leave them to patrol a different part of the road. When the characters regain consciousness they can continue unobstructed on their way, or go find the soldiers for a rematch to recover their possessions.

Once they begin down the Tambourine Road, move to the scene "The Ruins of Unferth."



The Ruins of Unferth

MENTAL •

PHYSICAL •••

SOCIAL –

Overview

The Marukani village of Unferth is the only town still in existence along the Tambourine road – or was, anyway. The circle arrives at dusk after a long day's journey with the intention of spending the night there, only to find the village empty and devastated. Investigation will reveal that the forces of the undead ravaged the village, and the circle will come face to face with the rear guard of that assault. They must fight for their lives, first against the zombies and war ghosts and then against the well-meaning but mistaken Marukani warriors. At the end of the scene the circle will meet Zara Swiftsteed, who will take them to Celeren as either guests or prisoners.

Description

The setting sun casts shadows across the silent and scorched huts standing mutely over fields riddled with haphazard ruts. The fountain in the city square has cracked in two, the top half on the ground in a halo of crushed marble. There are no sounds of children or livestock, no bells from the temple or pounding from the blacksmith's. Unferth is utterly silent.

When the zombies attack:

Suddenly, the earth all around you explodes into action. Hands burst forth like rotten flowers, showering you with earth, soot and tattered bits of... human flesh? In an explosion of stench and a cacophony of moans, a dozen lumbering forms shamle out of the Earth to encircle you, while screams and a rattling clatter from below the earth herald the arrival of still darker things to come.

When the Marukani arrive:

A blur of motion sweeps kicks up the detritus in a small whirlwind as the pound of hoofbeats echoes throughout the square. Then, in the darkness, the shapes resolve into the legendary riders of Marukan. The horsemen, having sighted you, swing their panting mounts around. You can see the faces of the riders beneath their helmets – eyes wide, expressions contorted in cold fury. "For Unferth!" one cries. "For Marukan!" shouts another. "Slay the butchers where they stand!"

Zara comes onto the scene:

The phalanx of riders parts to admit a single warrior, covered head to toe in armor. The figure removes its helmet and shakes down a ponytail of ruddy brown hair. The woman's face is sharp and her skin has the reddish tint of the Fire-aspected of the Terrestrial Exalted.

"Enough," the woman says. "Stand down, all of you. Let me through."

Slowly, the Marukani warriors back away from you, inclining their heads slightly in deference to the newcomer, who guides her steed up to you. "In the name of Celeren and the Marukan Alliance, speak your names and your business."

As she draws near, you see emblazoned on her armor the rose Shilani painted!

Storyteller Goals

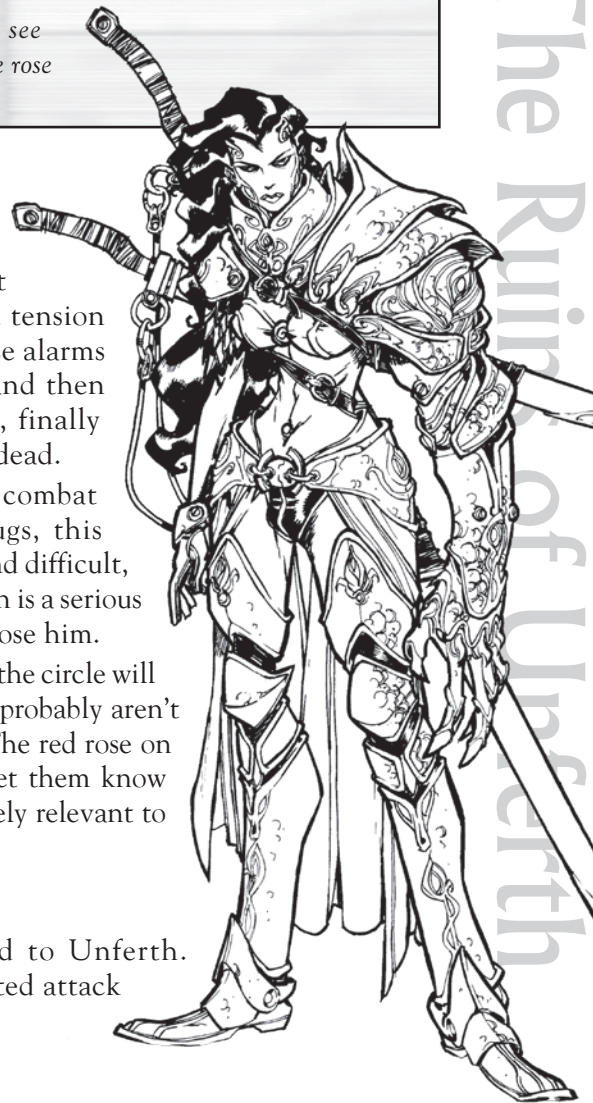
Creep the players out. Split them up, raise suspense and tension as much as you can with false alarms and unidentifiable noises, and then when they're most on edge, finally bring out the armies of the dead.

After the relatively easy combat against the quarantine thugs, this battle should be drawn out and difficult, establishing early on that Tain is a serious threat to any who would oppose him.

When the Marukani arrive, the circle will likely be low on Essence and probably aren't eager to continue the fight. The red rose on Zara's armor, however, will let them know that this encounter is extremely relevant to their quest.

Character Goals

Find out what happened to Unferth. Then deal with an unexpected attack of undead.



Actions

Digging for Clues

Dice Pool: (Perception + Investigation) will be necessary to actually find any bodies: the oncoming hordes have taken every man, woman and child in Unferth and tied their corpses into a giant person-shaped effigy, which they've lain on the floor of the town's temple. If any non-Exalted characters are traveling with the circle, gazing upon the obscenity will demand a (Stamina + Endurance) roll not to retch uncontrollably, and a (Stamina + Resistance) roll not to break down in fear for a scene.

(Perception + Investigation) will reveal signs of a battle that was swift and decidedly one-sided. The villagers didn't have a chance against the invaders.

(Perception + Occult) will reveal the resonance of the undead, as will any number of Charms (see below).

You can strive to make these investigations not just a mundane matter of dice rolls, but rather weave them into small vignettes. Try to freak your players out, and then move on to the attack.

Help: As night falls on this cloudy evening the land grows increasingly dark, but a Solar can spend 1 mote to make her caste mark flare.

Hindrances: None.

Roll Results

Botch: The circle becomes convinced that human hands worked this devastation. They will have a Parry and Dodge DV of 0 when the undead appear (see "Unexpected Attacks," *Exalted*, pp. 155-156).

Failure: Something horrible happened, but the circle needs more time to investigate. Continue rolling, or interrupt them with a zombie attack at no penalty.

Success: The circle has a very good sense of what transpired here.

Useful Charms: Evidence Discerning Method, Ten Magistrate Eyes

Fighting the Undead

Tain Without Reflection is destroying Marukani villages one by one, and leaves behind a little present for any who investigate. The rear guard he posted beneath the earth of Unferth consist of three times as many zombies as there are player characters, as many war ghosts as there are player characters, three nemissaries (*Exalted*, p. 322) and one hideous spine chain (*Exalted*, p. 321)

The undead's mission is to destroy any living beings, and they will fight to the end to do so. The zombies do not speak except to moan, while the war ghosts only reproduce the terrible screams of their own deaths in battle. The undead battalion's battle plan will be to emerge from the ground in a circle around the characters, swarming them from all sides. While the zombies and ghosts are extras, the spine chain and nemissaries are not. The three nemissaries will keep coming back in new corpses from Unferth's slain until and unless the circle burns all the village's deceased.

If the circle is losing terribly, the Marukani warriors can come in early to save them. Otherwise, the horsemen charge in several seconds after the last zombie falls. The vanguard of their force will consist of Lancer soldiers (if you have it, use **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands**, p. 78; otherwise use "Regular Troops" from *Exalted* p. 282), twice as many as there are player characters. They will attack from their steeds, dismounting if need be. Hot to avenge their clanmates' village, they will be deaf to any of the circle's arguments, especially if they see the circle fighting and burning what *appear* to be their countrymen.

When the circle either defeats or is defeated by these troops, Zara Swiftsteed will arrive, flanked by as many soldiers as you feel is necessary to send the message that battle will be fruitless.

Consequences

Zara will insist on taking the circle back to Celeren – the invitation isn't optional. She comes with enough reinforcements to make the odds look slim for resisting her, and, furthermore, she is wearing a crest on her armor that is the spitting image of the blood-red rose from Shilani's painting. Proceed to "Welcome to Celeren."



Welcome to Celeren

MENTAL – PHYSICAL – SOCIAL ••

Overview

Zara will actually listen to the circle. The ride back is long enough for Zara and the circle to share some conversation, and as Zara interrogates them about Unferth (assuming they don't tell any lies that are obvious enough for her own men to uncover) she will take them at their word.

Assuming the circle can win Zara's trust (and showing proof they avenged the dead of Unferth is an excellent start), she will overlook their status as Anathema and reveal to them the history of Tain's recent war on the lands of the Marukani, and her city's predicament. If the characters ask about the rose on her armor, Zara will say it is a memento of her sister, and will only tell the story if the characters draw it out of her. She knows nothing about the plague, but suggests they speak with Kyurtin. "After all," she adds with undisguised contempt, "he seems to consider himself the authority on everything these days." It will not take much prodding for the circle to draw out of Zara how uncomfortable she is with the temporary autocracy. Still, she has vowed to serve the Marukan, and will never be persuaded otherwise.

Once within Celeren's walls, the circle is met with fear and suspicion, but as long as the circle does not arrive in chains, some of the older townspeople will chastise the young for not showing the renowned Marukan hospitality to strangers. Zara inquires of another guard and is told that Kyurtin is out hunting... again.

If the circle has befriended Zara, she allows them to roam Celeren in the meantime, but insists they do so accompanied by several guards. Celeren has a thriving market, although the war has made some goods scarce and expensive. The characters can use this time to buy sundries – and to catch up on local gossip (see sidebar).

If the members of the circle are Zara's prisoners, they can only view the town through the windows of their cell until Kyurtin summons them.

When Kyurtin finally returns, he will summon the circle for an audience. The Marukani leader is boisterous and amiable, which is strangely disconnected from the mood of his city. He receives the circle with a bounteous feast and welcome, and makes reparations for any harm they suffered from Zara's forces. If the circle had incurred any fines or punishments, he absolves them, much to Zara's rage. He says he sympathizes with the plight of Haven, and his city too is under a terrible blight. If the circle will help him, he pledges to do whatever he can to help find a cure for the plague.

Eventually Kyurtin manages to get the circle alone, at which point his boisterous front drops away. He confides to the circle that he has received a prophecy that the military will never defeat Tain without Reflection unless the fabled Rock Ram is captured, a magical beast that most Marukani believe is only a legend. Kyurtin says he hasn't revealed this motivation to his people because they would think him insane, but he is committed, and implores them to come along, promising rewards well and above helping them find a cure. Then, to emphasize the point, Kyurtin dons a hunting hat with deer antlers that match those pictured in Shilani's painting.

WORD ON THE STREET

Conversations with Marukani townspeople can reveal much of the politics of the town. No one knows anything of the plague, although they will be sympathetic to Haven's plight once they hear of it. Demonstrate the mood of Celeren through these conversations – the people are frightened, angry and cagey. Used to wandering free, they are ill-suited to a siege mentality. Fights over trifles break out as refugees wander plaintively to and fro, asking about missing loved ones and news from the front lines.

Things characters could learn in conversation or simply overhear include:

- "Kyurtin speaks of the glories of horseback, but he seems quite comfortable on those expensive cushions, doesn't he?"
- "Our lord Kyurtin seems to go out hunting an awful lot. Is this really the time for that?"
- "Wall, walls everywhere. I can't stand being cooped up in here like a foaling mare!"
- "After all we Marukani have done for Lookshy, where are the damned Legions now? Those cowards have walked cobblestone so long they forgot the fields beneath their feet, forgot their promises to their kinfolk."
- "Tain fancies himself a conqueror, but he's just Mask of Winters' dog."



Description

The city square is crammed with farmers hauling bales of crops on oxen or on their own backs, women hawking their wares above the din of blacksmiths hammering and chickens clucking, with men tugging impatient horses through the unyielding crowds. You can tell from the exasperated expressions that the Marukani are not used to living quite so closely, and you can tell from the worried looks towards the giant city gates that people are not used to seeing them closed. Tattered looking men and women with hollowed-out faces weave in and out of the crowds, asking for news of the outside world. Then a company of mounted soldiers rides past, scattering them back into the mob.

Inside Kyurtin's chambers:

Wall-length carpets frame the edges of Kyurtin's chamber, into which are carefully woven hundreds of stallions and mustangs prancing and charging, no two of them alike. A brazier burns sweet-smelling incense into the air, mixing with the sweet smell of fresh fruit in bronze bowls all around the elders' cushions. All of the cushions save one, however, are empty. One would think Kyurtin would seem smaller for the relative emptiness of the chamber, but with his booming voice and regal bearing, the horselord seems to expand to fill the space.

Storyteller Goals

This is a chance for the characters to mend their wounds, restore Essence and re-stock their supplies. There is also a lot of information to impart to the characters here, but don't force it down their throats. Ideally, they will be exploring Celeren and getting a feel for it themselves. Kyurtin can be long-winded; find a good balance between giving a sense of Kyurtin's character and not letting the scene get dragged too far down into exposition. A question-and-answer session, with longer-than-necessary answers that all somehow relate to how grand the Marukani and Kyurtin himself are, could work well.

Character Goals

Convince Zara of their good intentions. Recharge. Learn about Celeren's situation.

Actions

Convincing Zara

Zara is actually willing to listen to the circle's story, and well-spoken characters will be able to convince her that they are not to blame for Unferth's demise. While she is well aware of the Wyld Hunt, this is not the Realm and she is willing to be convinced that the circle can be more of an aid than a threat.

Dice Pool: (Charisma + Presence) vs. Zara's (Manipulation + Integrity)

Action: Dramatic

Hindrances: The circle killed any of the Marukani in the previous scene (-2 penalty)

Help: Zara has no particular quarrel with the Anathema (+1 bonus die). If the circle killed all the undead themselves in the previous scene before the Marukani arrived, add another bonus die.

Useful Charms: Listener Swaying Argument, Unruly Mob Dispersing Rebuke, Rout-Stemming Gesture, Twisted Words Technique, Unbreakable Fascination Method

Roll Results

Botch: The characters offend Zara to the extent that she will insist upon taking them back in chains and throwing them in a cell until Kyurtin comes.

Failure: Zara remains unconvinced, and continuing attempts to influence her will probably result in having to go into social combat.

Success: Zara relaxes a bit and gives the characters free run of the city, although she will make it clear that she is keeping an eye on them.

Consequences

Unless the circle has done horrible things in Celeren (in which case escaping with their lives will be a feat in itself), they will likely be accompanying Kyurtin on his next hunt. Proceed to the scene "Forest Primeval." If the circle instead elects to remain in Celeren or the surrounding area, Tain will attack sooner or later (as described in "Celeren Beseiged"), and a call will go out for someone to bring back Kyurtin, the perfect chance for the circle to volunteer. Kyurtin won't return until and unless he has the Ram in hand.

Forest Primeval

MENTAL •••

PHYSICAL ••

SOCIAL •

Overview

Kyurtin is a skilled hunter, but the Wyld-tainted woods to which he takes the circle are baffling. The woods' cursed nature complicates an already challenging quest to find the Rock Ram's mountain and capture the ram himself. Only the circle's skills and command of Charms will enable them to succeed.

Once they find the Ram, they will need to catch and subdue it. This is no easy task: the beast is fierce, fast, and has magical powers. If they cannot best the Ram of their own abilities, observant characters may notice that the Ram never strays far from its flock of ordinary ewes. Capturing or threatening the ewes is a sure way to bait the Ram into doing something foolish.

As Kyurtin and the circle withdraw from the woods with the Ram, a gnarled old Shepherd with the air of the Fair Folk about him appears. Angrily he demands that they not take the Ram from its mountain. Kyurtin explains that the Ram will be used to save the lives of thousands, and offers the Shepherd a princely amount of jade as compensation, but he refuses it in outrage. Kyurtin, in turn, calls the Shepherd unreasonable and selfish. The circle can try to intervene, but no argument will convince Kyurtin to abandon the Ram or the Shepherd to take a payoff.

In the end, the Shepherd vanishes into the woods, calling for vengeance. If the circle is tempted to follow him or dawdle, a swift circuit messenger from Celeren bursts into the woods with news that Tain's armies are attacking the city.

Description

These woods were not meant for human feet. No sooner do you clear away a bramble than vines and creepers seem to rush in to fill the gaps you've made. Sunlight filters in and out in spurts, swallowed by the wide, greedy leaves of the trees above. The birds are deafening – a continuously changing, dissonant static of cries and yelps. Small pairs of eyes seem to peek out from every dark spot in the brush, staring at you with an alien detachment. They seem to be saying, "You should not be here. You are irrelevant to us."

Upon seeing the Ram:

As you come to a clearing, a cluster of white, irregularly placed rocks suddenly bolts outwards in all directions, revealing itself to be so many wild sheep, rugged creatures for whom the uneven ground of the woods might as well be open track. Dancing in and out of their ranks as they flee is a proud creature the size of a large dog, with head held high as befits a lion, unbent beneath the weight of two magnificent bronze-colored horns. It races around the periphery, nudging stragglers forward, then pauses, sniffing the air. Its golden rhomboid eyes glisten for a moment in the sunlight – then it bucks, rears on its hind legs rocks forward and bolts off into the brush after its cousins.

The Shepherd:

A gnarled, wizened man hunched over an awl lurches out of the brush, shouting in a language alien to your ears. "Thieves!" he finally spits out. "Trespassers! Return to the forest that which is of the forest. Villains! The beasts here are not for your sport."

Storyteller Goals

Make sure the Ram is captured. Introduce the circle to the Shepherd, and the complications that taking the Ram will create.

Finding the Ram should not be easy. The Wyld has left its curse upon the forest. Paths should continually shift and change, while the characters continue to encounter minor mishaps like hidden sinkholes and falling tree-limbs. Once the Ram is cornered, it will put up a wild fight, and Kyurtin's hunters are likely to be of little help: there are four of them, treated as extras with Militia stats.

There are many opportunities for you to adjust the difficulty depending on the circle's progress, to give them a run for their money but stop short of making them feel hopeless. It is very important that Kyurtin be the one to take the Ram and secure it to his horse, so as to give him control of the Ram.

Make sure that the news of Tain's attack comes quickly enough so that they circle doesn't waste too much time with the Shepherd.

Character Goals

Get the Ram and return to Celeren.

Actions

Finding the Ram

Dice Pool: (Perception + Awareness) or (Perception + Survival), difficulty 3. Each success beyond 2 adds to the cumulative total; 10 successes total are needed to corner the ram

Additionally, these woods are tainted by the Wyld, and strange things can happen. Sudden rockslides or falling branches might hinder an intruder's progress, a sinkhole may open up unexpectedly underfoot or a freak thunderstorm might unload rain and lightning without warning. You can introduce one of these each action, adjusting them based on how well the players are doing. Keep it challenging but not hopeless.

Action: Extended (every roll represents 15 long ticks).

Hindrances: Random obstacles (-1 to -3 external penalty).

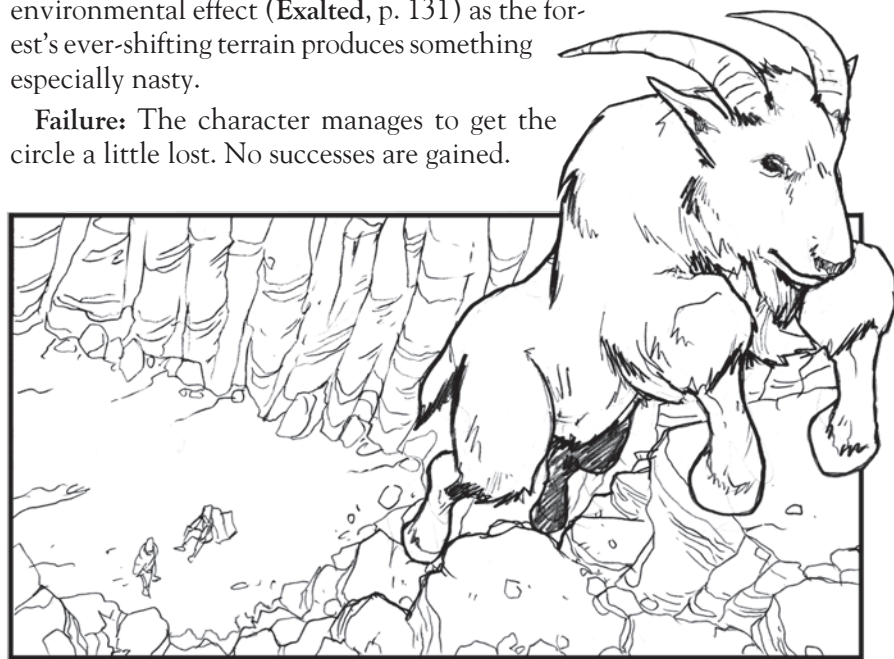
Help: If the players capture an ewe (Athletics + Survival), the Ram will immediately turn and run towards the players to try to free the captive, effectively ending the search for the Ram early.

Useful Charms: Trackless Region Navigation Charm.

Roll Results

Botch: Not only does the character fail, she also suffers a random environmental effect (**Exalted**, p. 131) as the forest's ever-shifting terrain produces something especially nasty.

Failure: The character manages to get the circle a little lost. No successes are gained.



Success: Add successes above the threshold to the running total.

Trapping the Ram

Finding the Ram is one thing, but capturing it is something else entirely. The Ram is a fierce opponent, but will fight only as much as it needs in order to get the players to back off. Then it will try to outrun them in the woods. If it succeeds in outrunning them in a contested roll of its (Stamina + Athletics) vs. the chasing character's (Stamina + Athletics), then the last character to be eluded gets to make a roll of (Perception + Survival) against the Ram's (Wits + Survival) in order to keep the trail warm. A failure or a botch will result in the circle needing to go through the whole hunt all over again.

Only when the Ram is incapacitated will it be ready for transport. Once the players have the Ram tied up, it will not be able to escape on its own. If they untie it at any time later in the story and it is not in the forest, the Ram will be bewildered and unable to act.

If the players are failing miserably, you can have one of Kyurtin's hunters actually land the net on the beast. The Ram will quickly free itself, but it might give the players the opening they need.

Useful Charms: The Survival Charm or Friendship With Animals Approach adds two dice to rolls to capture the Ram. Chaos-Repelling Pattern can help with the ever-shifting nature of the woods.

The Shepherd's Complaint

When the Shepherd appears, the players may try to either negotiate or fight with him. Neither will be effective (or much fun for the players).

Remember, the Shepherd's role is to issue the complaint and foreshadow the Emerald Bull's arrival, not to be another challenge. If part or all of the party elects to stay behind and fight or follow him, the woods quickly thwart their tracking skills and help the Shepherd vanish.

Consequences

The circle, Ram in hand, will rush back to Celeren in time for "Celeren Besieged."

Celeren Besieged

MENTAL ••

PHYSICAL ••••

SOCIAL –

Overview

Tain without Reflection has launched an all-out assault on Celeren. Hordes of monsters are advancing upon the city, and the circle seems to face a hopeless battle... until they discover the amazing properties of the Ram's tears.

Description

You can smell the smoke long before you see the rising columns of flame. From this distance, the arrows peppering Celeren's walls look like clouds of confetti. Even from here, though, you can hear the clanking of siege engines, and faintly smell the stench of rotten flesh. But then you hear the bleat of trumpets, the distant cries of "For Celeren! For Marukan!" Banners waving, lances flashing in glow of the siege fires, the legendary horsemen ride out to meet their foes.

Storyteller Goals

This scene needs to reveal the special properties of the Ram's tears. Until then, it's a crazed battle for survival.

Kyurtin and his foresters charge bravely into the fray, and while it would be a loss of face for the characters not to do the same, it is also understandable if they don't rush headlong into what looks like suicide. If the characters hesitate to charge into battle, they will eventually be spotted by a detachment of Tain's forces (Kyurtin and his men certainly aren't keeping a low profile) who bring the fight to them. On the other hand, it's a big battlefield, and characters might find effective ways to hide themselves for a time. Give them a few moments to develop some sort of plan of attack, but keep the time pressure on.

After the battle has proceeded for a while, start the Ram crying. Make sure someone is in a position to see it doing so as it flops around, tied to Kyurtin's horse. The golden tears look precisely like the final image in Shilani's painting!

Players are an inventive lot and will likely begin investigating if they can, but if they don't, have Zara or another Storyteller character force the issue by calling attention to "something strange happening."

Once the characters have figured out the tears' power, Kyurtin will allow the circle to come near and let them partake. Allow a few combat exchanges with the characters' increased abilities. It should be almost impossible for Kyurtin and the circle to keep their discovery quiet: Zara or any Marukani who see the effects will immediately suggest that the characters share the tears with them as well, since the circle can't be everywhere at once.

Let the characters take an active hand in cutting through Tain's armies before the Abyssal general, stunned, orders a retreat.

Character Goals

Survive long enough to make the discovery about the Ram's tears; then turn the tide of battle and win a reprieve for Celeren.

Actions

Into the Fray

The characters cannot engage Tain's entire army at once; their fight will be against a small piece of it. Throw enemies at them as needed. If you're looking for inspiration in the realms of Necrotech, try referencing **The Manual of Exalted Power: Abyssals** and **The White and Black Treatises** (specifically the Black Treatise). The spell Iron Reanimation (**The Black Treatise**, p. 35) is particularly useful for creating siege engines and other battle-machinery of the undead. If you just have the core book, refer to the rules on creation of manses, items and artifacts (**Exalted**, pp. 135-137), keeping an underworld theme in mind. Also, the **Scroll of Kings** might offer useful suggestions for mass combat.

The characters should not feel as if they are fighting alone – while you can choose to run the battle as mass combat (see **Exalted**, pp. 161-172), you might elect instead to use the occasional cut scenes of Marukani and Deathlord forces doing battle, so long as they are not too disruptive, can help set the scene. **The Marukani** (see **Compass of Terrestrial Directions Vol. I – The Scavenger Lands**, p. 78-79) have one Guard talon and six additional wings of soldiers on the battlefield: two Hammer wings, two Lancer wings, and two Arrows wings. An additional Arrows wing and Guard wing remain at Celeren and will not enter the fight until Tain's forces breach the gates. **Tain**, on the other hand, commands one dragon of zombies, two talons of war ghosts, two wings of Thornguard and several necromantic war machines (see **Compass of Terrestrial Directions Vol. I – The Scavenger Lands**, p. 109-112). The number and power of the war machines is up to you.

All of these units come with appropriate equipment, support staff and handlers, who are either undead themselves or unfortunate mortals from the Shadowland that is Thorns.

Additionally, you should give the circle the occasional helping hand from a few warriors of Marukan, particularly Zara. Soon after the fight begins, she should join the circle if at all possible and fight alongside them.

Discovering the Tears' Secret

An (Intelligence + Investigation) roll (or simple trial-and-error) will reveal the tears' properties. The Ram can produce 1 tear every six ticks (or 5 per long tick). Each tear provides all of the following benefits:

- **Healing wounds:** An application of the tears to a wounded character immediately restores 2 health levels per tear applied. This effect is permanent, until, of course, a character is wounded again.
- **Curing the Plague:** Anyone touched by the tears immediately lose their plague symptoms, permanently. No more plague checks are necessary, and the characters cannot become re-infected.
- **Enhancing weapons:** A single tear falling on a weapon will add +1 to its Defense and triple its Damage rating. This effect, however, is temporary, only lasting for 25 ticks (or one long tick). A weapon cannot be re-energized with the tears until at least an hour has passed.

Once the tears get spread around (assuming they do), either run mass combat for a few exchanges or just paint a cinematic scene of the Marukani armies driving Tain's forces over the hills.

Consequences

Having routed Tain for now, the circle is now faced with the immense responsibility of the how best to use the Ram's powers.

The tears appear to be a perfect cure for the plague facing Haven. Would that things were so simple as just bringing the Ram back

home. As it turns out, the weapon-boosting effects of the tears are temporary, requiring repeated reapplications and thus the constant presence of the Ram. Kyurtin, feeling justified by the prophecy, will insist the Ram remain in his possession. As grateful as he is to the circle, Kyurtin is in no way willing to give up the Ram while Tain's forces are still a threat to Celeren. But this means the circle will not be able to take the tears to Haven, as the drops cannot be preserved; they quickly dissolve and vanish when bottled. (The Ram, incidentally, will be mewling in misery from here on in. You should make the players realize the necessity of making the Ram even more miserable in order to keep it crying.)

Although even Zara, hardly Kyurtin's biggest fan, is forced to acknowledge the tactical necessity of keeping the Ram around, she also distrusts both magic "fixes" and Kyurtin's now-even-stronger position of authority. She makes it clear to the circle that if they find an alternative to the Ram, she will help them depose the leader.

The next scene will entirely depend upon the circle's decision.

If the circle decides to hang around with Kyurtin in his attack on Tain, move to "The Might of Marukan." If the characters decide they can't wait that long and want to just take the Ram from the Marukani, move to "Stealing the Ram." From there, they may choose to take the attack to Tain in "Emissaries to the Underworld," or run straight home, where they will be intercepted by the Emerald Bull in "The Emerald Bull." If they decide to return the Ram to the forest, move to "The Forest Test."

If they try to remove the threat from Tain first, and in doing so remove Kyurtin's need for the Ram to begin with, move to "Emissaries to the Underworld" first, and then, since the leader will not part with the Ram even then, "Revolution" might be the next scene.

If the characters wait around long enough, or if they try one of the above scenes and are stymied, steer them toward "The Emerald Bull."

Unless the characters have stolen the Ram, Zara offers to travel and fight alongside them.

The Might of Marukan

MENTAL ••••

PHYSICAL ••••

SOCIAL –

Overview

Kyurtin, Ram in hand, now has the power to save his people. He enlists the circle as his vanguard in an all-out battle against Tain's army. If the circle is thinking they will get the Ram afterwards, however, they are sorely mistaken.

Description

Zara rides up and down the ranks of mounted cavalry, their faces alight with hope and confidence for the first time since you've seen them. She shouts warnings and admonishments, but even she cannot keep the excitement out of her voice. Kyurtin, astride his finest war steed, looks years younger, his body rejuvenated by new hope. At his side is the Ram, bawling pitifully, its tears milked by ministering squires. Everywhere, the nation readies for war, as, in the distance, the smoke of Shadowland fires rises over the hills.

Storyteller Goals

Remove Tain from the equation, give the circle a chance to bust some heads (and maybe loot some corpses), and reveal Kyurtin's duplicity.

Character Goals

Defeat Tain. Try to get the Ram afterwards.

Actions

Depending on the preferences of you and your players, you may choose any of several options for this scene. If you find the idea of acting out a sustained military engagement to be somewhat tedious, then handle this scene cinematically: the brave Marukani horsemen charge battlements made of bone, their swords and lances slicing through rotted flesh, driving the horrors back to the Shadowlands from whence they came. Allow the circle a few moments of center-stage, and you're done.

Alternatively, if your players really like to get into strategy and heavy combat, you can play this scene out in great detail. Kyurtin will gladly accept the circle's council in matters of war strategy, and it's always easier to plan such things when you know your side has a decided advantage. That said, Tain's forces are still numerous and formidable. The Abyssal general is a talented strategist, and will do whatever he can to negate the advantage of the Ram's tears. For example, he will include in his tactics mental attacks on the sanity and composure of the Marukani. You're encouraged to find other creative ways for Tain to make sure this is a fight that will cost the Marukani dearly.

Whether in broad strokes or up close and personal, the cardinal rule here is to make sure the circle plays a key role in the battle. Make them the generals, or have them carry out the crucial assault or the most dangerous secret mission. They are the focus of this story, so don't reduce them to spectators.

Either way, a battle between the circle and Tain himself would be appropriately climactic. For details on how such a battle could go, see "Emissaries to the Underworld."

Consequences

If the circle royally screws up, Tain will stop short of crushing Celeren and pull back to the hills in order to conserve his forces, effectively resetting the situation to the way it looked in the previous scene. Otherwise, the Marukani and the circle will defeat Tain. After it becomes clear he cannot win the engagement, Tain will order a full retreat, vowing revenge. Kyurtin will not pursue them all the way back to Thorns, and if the circle are tempted to, remind them not only of their mission for Haven, but also of how suicidal an attack on a full-fledged Deathlord would be. (If the circle kills or captures Tain, this is obviously not an issue.)

No matter how the day's engagement ends, though, one thing is clear: Kyurtin will offer all manner of rewards to the circle for their assistance, but he will not relinquish the Ram. Tain, or some other threat, could come back at any time. Kyurtin will stay in power, and the Ram will stay with him. If the characters try to steal the beast, move to "Stealing the Ram." If they wish to talk to Zara about overthrowing Kyurtin, move to "Revolution." If the circle tries something else or waits too long, sooner or later you'll need to move to "The Emerald Bull."

Stealing the Ram

MENTAL •••

PHYSICAL ••••

SOCIAL •

Overview

The circle has decided to steal the Ram from Celeren. They will have to use the utmost stealth, or else find themselves fighting their way through the entire Marukani population!

Description

Huddled inside its cage, the Ram's weeping sounds eerily like a human child's. Its fleece is starting to look matted and its one proud head dips low. When you approach, it doesn't even bother to look up.

Storyteller Goals

If the circle decides to just grab the Ram in plain sight and run, your job is to make sure the Marukani don't make it easy for them. Ditto if the circle tries to be sneaky and fails.

If the characters want to talk their way into getting the Ram, see "The Might of Marukan" for Zara's preconditions for helping them. She will not be moved to aid them otherwise, not will anyone else in Celeren.

Character Goals

Get the Ram and get away!

Actions

Thieves in the Night

Dice Pool: (Dexterity + Stealth or Larceny) versus the Marukani's (Perception + Awareness). Roll as a group for any random soldiers, but roll for Kyurtin and Zara as individuals. Any Marukani who succeed raise the alarm.

Stealing the Ram will be more or less difficult depending on when the characters try to do it. If they try during or soon after the battle, they have the advantage of the chaos around them, but the disadvantage of hundreds of Marukani who might notice and quickly rally their companions. If the circle lets Kyurtin take the Ram and then wait until nightfall to steal it, they must free the creature from Kyurtin's private chamber, which is

guarded by Zara and four guards (treat as Elite troops). In the chamber, Kyurtin himself is sleeping with his pillow propped against the cage.

Hindrances: In Celeren: Still of the night (-1 penalty)

Help: Out on the plains: Chaos of the battlefield (+2 bonus dice)

Roll Results

Botch: The character not only fails to grab the Ram, but also fails to notice her act has been discovered. The next combat that follows is treated as unexpected.

Failure: The character fails to secure the Ram and alerts the Marukani in the process.

Success: The character snatches the Ram without anyone being the wiser.

Useful Charms: Easily Overlooked Presence Method, Mental Invisibility Technique, and Sound and Scent Banishing Attitude can all be of help. Stealing from Plain Sight or Magpie's Invisible Talon will only work at night when the Ram is unguarded. In this case, however, you may allow the characters to make a distraction first, via a (Manipulation + Performance) roll.

Fighting your way out

If the circle decides to openly steal the Ram, or if they are discovered, they'll have quite a fight on their hands. Fighting their way off the battlefield will require them to either outfight or outrun the Marukani army – first the Guard Wing and Arrows Wing inside Celeren, led by Zara herself, flanked by her own Hammer Scale, ten elite troops who are not treated as extras.

If the characters take longer than 60 ticks to defeat or elude these foes, word will reach the Marukani Army outside the gates, who will move to close in, attempting to prevent their escape.

Fighting their way out of Celeren will also involve the circle having to face hundreds of miscellaneous townspeople (see **Exalted**, pp. 281-282) already angry and looking for an enemy to string up. The Mob-Dispersing Rebuke and Authority-Radiating Stance Charms would be very useful against them.

Consequences

If the characters are caught in the act and subdued, they will spend the rest of the scene rotting in jail until the Emerald Bull attacks (move to "The Emerald Bull"), which will generate more than enough chaos to allow their escape. If on the other hand the circle succeeds in a stealthy theft or outruns their pursuers, the next scene depends upon their destination: If they're heading to Haven, move to "The Emerald Bull." The forest leads to "The Forest Test," while Tain's camp leads to "Emissaries to Underworld."



Emissaries to the Underworld

MENTAL ••

PHYSICAL •••

SOCIAL ••••

Overview

In this scene, the characters confront Tain Without Reflection in his camp. They have the advantage of arriving as the victors, possessed of mysterious powers the Abyssal general fears. That said, they still must tread carefully.

Tain's curiosity will lead him to honor a flag of truce, at least until he can figure out some way to nullify the circle's advantage. The circle can in turn try to press that advantage with a skillful bluff, or secretly sabotage Tain's army so that it will be ineffective.

Description

The camp is in constant motion. Phalanxes of corpses move like ocean waves, bodies rising and falling over one another without heed or regard to one another. Commanders, whose rotting flesh protrudes from gaps in their ebon armor, march up and down the ranks, inspecting the hunch-backed ghouls whose spindly hands deftly fit together pieces of corpses to make spine chains and other living artillery. The smell of rot and brimstone clogs your lungs, and blood and gore cake the ground like so much moss beneath your feet. The smoke from their forges blots out the sun, and after a few minutes' walk you can no longer see the world beyond. Immediately you begin to fear it never existed.

As you walk by, heads turn, disjointed eyes and empty sockets follow your motion. The horrors pull back as you walk near, but only slightly. They seem to be assessing who should be afraid of whom. You get the feeling you don't want to be around for the verdict.

Storyteller Goals

Give the characters their chance to break the no-win scenario by ending Tain's threat to Celeren.

Tain appears composed and confident, but he is insecure and paranoid. The circle can play on these flaws to bluff into making the Abyssal withdraw. Alternatively, they can try to find a more physical way to sabotage Tain's army's.

Character Goals

End Tain's threat to Celeren, either through swift talking, sabotage or direct physical confrontation.

Actions

Talking Tough

A bluff will involve social combat against Tain, as described in **Exalted**, pp. 172-178. The characters attempt to convince him that he cannot possibly prevail against their newfound power, and that if the Abyssal general knows what's good for him he will withdraw. Tain's possession of Scathing Cynic Attitude (**The Manual of Exalted Power: Abyssals**, p. 176) will make him difficult to trick, however, without the use of some sort of counter-Charm. (If you just own the core book, the closest equivalent Solar charm would be Sagacious Reading of Intent – see **Exalted**, p. 233.)

Help: The circle has already bested Tain's forces on the battlefield using the Ram (+1)

Hindrances: None.

Botch: Tain calls the circle's bluff right then and there, and attacks them. He will take them on single-handedly, and his vanity will not permit him to call in reinforcements unless the battle seems to be truly going against him.

Failure will result in Tain calling the circle's bluff and maintaining his desire to crush Celeren. If the characters don't sabotage him, he will remain camped until he figures out a way to counter the Ram's power. This might include waiting until the circle leaves Celeren with the Ram before attacking again.

Success: Tain and his army packing, vowing revenge – a perfect setup for his return in a future adventure with a grudge to settle.

Useful Charms: Listener Swaying Argument, Knowing the Soul's Price, Master of Small Manners, Twisted Words Technique, Unbreakable Fascination Method

The Purloined Letter

Instead of (or while) trying to bluff Tain, the circle may try to sabotage his army's effectiveness. There are any number of plans the players might come up with, and you should entertain any intelligent-sounding plans, most of which will likely involve rolls of (Dexterity + Stealth or Larceny) to cause subtle damage without being noticed.

If they are low on ideas, give them an (Intelligence + Awareness) roll. If successful, the circle will notice that every time they look towards a certain



part of Tain's field headquarters, their eyes keep turning away. Tain has written up all his battle plans using the Charm Soul-Snaring Tract (**The Manual of Exalted Power: Abyssals**, p. 178). In this case, he has infused his words with the magical command of "look away," ensuring he can hide his secret documents in plain sight. As per the Solar Charm Twisted Words Technique (**Exalted** p. 234), would-be decoders who have less than twice Tain's essence (in this case, 8) must make a Willpower roll to overcome the effect.

Breaking through Tain's Charm reveals his long term planning: Celeren is a stepping stone to an eventual assault on Lookshy. The powerful Lookshy, which at the moment is turning a blind eye to Celeren's fall, will no longer be able to do so if this information comes to light. Tain knows his army cannot stand against a full-on assault from Lookshy's Seventh Legion just yet.

To actually take the plans from Tain's desk poses another challenge: they are tied by a chain of human sinew in an elaborate knot to the desk. Simply snapping the chain, should anyone try it, will cause the paper to instantly dissolve; you should feel free to let this start to happen when they yank on the chain, giving the character in question time to notice and stop what he's doing before it's too late. The knot actually has to be untied in order to free the page.

Dice Pool: (Dexterity + Larceny) vs. a difficulty of 2 – every success beyond the first counts towards the running total. 5 successes are needed.

Action: Extended (every roll represents 5 long ticks).

Useful Charms: Lock-Opening Touch

Roll Results

Botch: The character triggers a warning spell that immediately causes the page to dissolve as well as alerting Tain, exposing the culprit in the act. The circle may have to fight their way out of Tain's camp.

Failure: The knot is proving trickier than expected. No success is made.

Success: Add successes above the threshold to the running total until the sinew unwinds, letting loose a small burst of fluid.

With the letter in hand, the characters can send it on to Lookshy via a swift-rider from Celeren, or bring it themselves. If they successfully get the message through, Tain orders a withdrawal the moment Lookshy begins mustering its forces, claiming it was all a misunderstanding.

The Two-Fisted Method

The characters may decide to try to capture or incapacitate Tain. Without Tain, the undead army will lose much of its cohesion, as Tain

has been too paranoid to keep truly intelligent advisers by his side for fear they might try to overthrow him. With Tain out of the picture, the forces of Celeren could defeat Tain's army in a decisive raid.

This is risky business, however, as failing to take down Tain quickly and quietly will result in his whole army bearing down on the circle. If the circle is tempted to even the odds by bringing the Ram with them to Tain so they can power-up with its tears, Kyurтин will never allow such a plan, so they will have to steal it first (see the scene "Stealing the Ram"). Bringing the Ram to Tain's camp also runs the risk of Tain or one of his followers stealing it, which would be disastrous.

For all of Tain's combat skills, he prefers diplomatic manipulations to exchanges of blows. Nevertheless, if backed against the wall, he is a fearsome combat opponent who will use his Vampire Blade combo to try to quickly drain the essence from his foes. Although this combo is draining, Tain will hope to power himself back up with the stolen Essence, then unleash his many combat-related Charms on foes too weakened to effectively resist.

Consequences

If the circle successfully disables Tain, they will return to find Kyurтин still unwilling to give up the Ram. Proceed to either "Stealing the Ram" or "Revolution."



Revolution

MENTAL –

PHYSICAL ...

SOCIAL ...

Overview

When and if the characters have disabled Tain, they can convince Zara to raise the Marukani to rebel against Kyurtin. Kyurtin may or may not go quietly.

Description

Zara marches up to Kyurtin, her eyes blazing, features set in grim determination. “Enough, Breaker of Stallions,” she says. “You have served our people well, but the Marukani are not to be saddled and penned.” She holds out on hand, and places the other at the hilt of her sword by her side. “Will you consent to come with me?” Her tone does not make the sentence sound like a question.

Storyteller Goals

Remove the Kyurtin roadblock from the story.

If the circle (and the players) are exhausted from many battles, this scene can be handled cinematically; Zara and circle lead the horsemen of Marukan and relieve Kyurtin of command at swordpoint. Allow the leader a defiant, perhaps even sympathetic defense of his actions, and then have him led off, perhaps later to fall on his own sword in disgrace.

If your players seem in the mood for a slugfest, however, Kyurtin can go down fighting with his most loyal followers. If he has the Ram, unseating him will be no easy task, as his followers will be able to make use of the Ram's tears. On the other hand, his forces will be in the minority, and Zara will have a circle of Exalted on her side.

Character Goals

Convince Zara to overthrow Kyurtin and turn the Ram over to them.

Enlist Zara's aid

The characters either have demonstrable proof that they've removed Tain as a threat or they don't. If they have the proof, no rolls are required. If they do not, they must attempt to bluff Zara, with or without Charms. Treat as social combat, with the following results:

Botch: *“You dare! To think that I trusted you!” Zara reaches for her blade.*

Failure: *“Do you think this is some game, that I would lightly breach the most sacred oath to my people? If you cannot be of use, be gone from my sight.”*

Success: Zara sighs deeply. *“This is a dark day for the riders of the plains. May my ancestors forgive me for what I must now do.”* She puts a hand on her blade and motions for the circle to follow her.

Useful Charms: Listener Swaying Argument, Twisted Words Technique

Civil War

Should it come to blows, you have the choice to run this scene as mass combat, or cinematically as the circle and Zara's forces face off against Kyurtin. If you decide on mass combat, then Kyurtin has about two fangs worth of supporters, while Zara can rally one fang immediately. Her forces roughly double every ten long ticks, until her supporters amount to two scales.

Consequences

If the circle unsuccessfully tries to bluff Zara she will send them packing, either with words or (in the case of a botch) with swords. If they succeed in persuading her to lead the revolt, then Kyurtin will be overthrown and Zara will find herself, awkwardly, assuming the mantle of leader. She will return the Ram to the characters.

If Tain remains a threat, his spies in Celeren will get word of this development and attack the city as soon as they know the Ram is gone. They will not pursue the circle just yet. Proceed to either “Emissaries of the Underworld,” “The Forest Test” or “The Emerald Bull,” depending on the characters' choice of destination.

The Emerald Bull

MENTAL –

PHYSICAL ●●●●

SOCIAL ●●

Overview

The Shepherd's complaint has been heard by Lady Goldenrain, who has sent The Emerald Bull, a Behemoth, to punish whoever has the Ram.

The scene will vary widely depending on the Ram's location at the time. If it is in Haven, either in Kyurtin's possession or in the circle's, the beast attacks the city. The circle can try to intervene, run away with the Ram (with the monster in pursuit) or leave Celeren to its fate. If the circle is in Tain's camp, the Bull attacks Tain's forces. If the circle has taken the Ram back to Haven, the behemoth intercepts them on the road before they can get home.

The Emerald Bull can be temporarily outrun or frustrated, but it is single-minded and tireless in its pursuit. Eventually, the only option will be to return the Ram to the forest.

Description

With a thunderclap, a pair of trees splinter at mid-trunk and fall apart as a green shape plows into the open. An enormous bull the color of a priceless emerald and the size of a siege engine flexes its beautifully shaped muscles, its deep green eyes ablaze with rage. It throws back its head, framed by horns each the size of three men end-to-end and bellows, the boom of its roar drowning out the crash of the trees as they hit the ground. Birds fly from its path, and animals flee in terror. Pawing deep trenches into ground, the bull bucks and twists, sniffing the air. Its head turns and cocks, its bovine eyes narrowing in humanlike comprehension, and it rolls its giant haunches, preparing to charge.

Storyteller Goals

Put the circle in a position where they must return the Ram. Give them a chance, if they want to take it, to use the Emerald Bull to either destroy Tain's forces or unseat Kyurtin.

Character Goals

Get the Bull off their backs. Get back to the forest with the Ram.

Actions

Determining that the Bull is after those with the Ram is a simple matter of observation via a (Perception + Awareness or Intelligence) roll.

The behemoth is a force of nature. There is little the circle (or the Storyteller characters, for that matter) can do to harm it, although allow creative plans to trip it up or distract it for a time. If the circle purposely leads the Emerald Bull into Tain's camp to destroy his army, feel free to narrate the ensuing scene of carnage. Remember, though, that in the end, the behemoth will always chase after the party with the Ram. It will attempt to destroy that individual or group until the party in question returns the Ram to the forest.

Consequences

The circle either dies, takes the Ram back to the forest (move on to "The Forest Test"), or plants the Ram in someone else's hands indefinitely. In the event of this last option, the circle can still move on to "The Forest Test," but they will need to find some way of gaining access to Lady Goldenrain that doesn't involve the Shepherd.



The Forest Test

MENTAL ••

PHYSICAL •••

SOCIAL •••

Overview

Whether of their own volition or with the Emerald Bull at their heels, the circle will end up in the forest. The Shepherd will be waiting for them, and won't give them any help at all until they hand over the Ram. Once they do, with a smug air of righteous indignation, he will bring them before the Lady Goldenrain. The Shepherd expects the Lady to punish the circle, but as it turns out the Lady is content, so long as the balance of the forest is restored by the Ram's return.

Once the circle begins to request, protest or in other way advocate for the Ram as a cure for Haven's plague, however, the Lady becomes quite upset indeed. She reveals that in the early days of the First Age, Anjos, God of Haven, slew her favored monster Tyranonon and tossed its head in the spot where Haven would one day be forged. Lady Goldenrain feels humans do not respect the laws of the forest, and she has, after centuries of brooding, found a sneaky way to retaliate: the plague. Since her time sense operates on a scale vastly different from that of mortals, she does not see anything wrong with punishing Haven's citizens for something their ancestors' god did.

It is the circle's job to convince the Lady that Haven is worth sparing. If they can, through words or deeds, she will give them the cure.

Description

Sunlight seems to caress the broad-trunked tree at the center of the glade. Its canopy contains sparkling green-gold leaves as numerous as the stars, forming a corona at the center of which stands the most beautiful woman you have ever seen. She seems a very extension of the bark and leaves around her, and although her face appears young, her smile has that playful wisdom seen only among the elderly.

Storyteller Goals

Introduce the circle to Lady Goldenrain, and give them the ability (through passing her test of the character's respect for nature) to recall the Emerald Bull and cure the plague. Lady Goldenrain's disdain for

Haven is balanced by her curiosity about humans in general; she doesn't get many visitors to her glade, and cannot leave herself. You should use her curiosity to give the circle a chance to plead their case.

The negotiations can go any number of ways, the outcome of which will help or hinder the circle when they take the forest test. If the circle tries to pick a fight, however, Lady Goldenrain's power insures that they will quite likely be outmatched. The Lady, however, will not kill the circle, and still be willing to speak with them afterwards once they've cooled down.

Character Goals

Convince Lady Goldenrain to dispense the cure; pass the Lady's test of the circle's respect for nature.

Actions

Teaching a tree to feel

This is a social combat. You can ask for a Join Debate roll and proceed with long-tick based timing, or just call for rolls when you feel the need. Social combat with Lady Goldenrain will be a challenge. She is utterly unrepentant about the suffering of humans, and has only a childlike curiosity about the plague's effects on the humans beyond the glade. The only pain she has felt is the theft of the Ram from her forest. Characters could try to encourage the Lady to feel some empathy for the people of Haven, based on her distress at the death of Tyranonon or the kidnapping of the Rock Ram; she at least knows that kind of suffering and loss. The characters would feel the same sort of grief over the loss of Haven; doesn't she understand?

The Rock Ram's kidnapping could also give the circle a different kind of leverage. Her plague has already led this group of humans to violate the forest and kidnap a creature in it. What if more humans come, swiping more beasties? Can the Lady send the Emerald Bull after each and every one of such thieves? Maybe it's in her best interest to give the cure over now.

Roll Results

Botch: "Sap rotten, leaves half-dead! You are a blight! Earth grant that the woods teach you some wisdom!" The characters begin the forest test with 3 motes of Essence drained from each of them.

Failure: "Silly cubs-that-walk-on-tuos. Tongues to the wind, ears to the earth! Learn from her, and then we may resume." The characters begin the Lady's test with 1 mote of Essence drained.

Success: *A dangle of creepers lowers from the Lady's canopy, scratching her chin thoughtfully. "Hmm. Your winds shuddery-shake my leaves, turn my shades, stir my sap. Let woods' roots soak up the truth of you."* The characters begin the test, each receiving an additional 1 mote of Essence from the Lady as encouragement.

Useful Charms: Listener Swaying Argument, Knowing the Soul's Price, Master of Small Manners, Understanding the Court, Wise-Eyed Courtier Method

The Forest Test

The forest test is actually a series of three challenges, all of which the circle must pass in order to please Lady Goldenrain. When the circle passes a test, they will see a large firefly spirit glow brightly in approval before the next test begins. In between each test, call for a (Perception + Awareness or Survival) roll, or else the circle spends a few minutes lost in the woods. You should feel free to add or swap in tests of your own design that fit Lady Goldenrain's philosophy of "follow the natural order of the forest."

Strix and Marmot: The circle comes across a small furry mammal caught up in a thicket, mewling pitifully. A giant owl-like strix (**Exalted**, p. 350) circles overhead, sure to devour the cute little guy if the circle does not intervene. The strix will not respond to attempts to shoo it away, so the characters will have to actively attack it in order to persuade it to leave (it will do so only after losing at least 4 health levels).

Passing: To pass the test, the characters must let the strix devour the marmot. That is the way of the forest world. An (Intelligence + Survival) roll can give a character the necessary inspiration to recognize this in time to let the strix finish its business.

Necessary Fires: The circle comes to a clearing where pack of five blazes (**fire elementals**; see p. VI) are leaping and dancing around the glade, torching the trees around them. If the circle is looking for clues as to what to do, a (Perception + Awareness or Survival) roll will reveal that a small cloud of forest sprites are buzzing angrily around the new-growth trees, futilely trying to protect them, while forming no such barrier around the old, decaying trees. The blazes want to burn all the trees – it's the circle's job to get the spirits to burn only what they're "supposed" to.

Passing: The circle successfully protects the young trees and lets the blazes consume the old, dying trees.

Hungry, yet?: The characters suddenly become wracked with hunger pangs. Eating whatever food they have brought, however, will make them fail the test. The characters must forage (Intelligence + Survival)

or use the Charm Food-Gathering Exercise. If characters have not brought along the appropriate gear, they face a -2 internal penalty (see "Endure Wilderness," **Exalted**, p. 142).

Passing: The characters successfully "live off the land."

Consequences

When the circle finally emerges triumphant, Lady Goldenrain will consent to give them the cure. If the characters didn't pass any of the tests, the Lady doesn't give them anything. If they pass only one or two of the tests, the Lady gives them a bulb containing the cure to the plague. If they pass all three, the Lady is so impressed that she not only presents the cure, but a second flower bulb full of as many Ram's tears as there are player characters.

If the characters have not yet resolved the issue of Tain's threat to Celeren, they may elect to return to sort that all out in "Emissaries to the Underworld." Even if the circle has kidnapped the Ram, the Marukani may well forgive them if they remove Tain's menace through other means.

If the Celeren issue is settled, or if the circle simply chooses to abandon the Marukani, proceed to "False Messiahs."



False Messiahs

MENTAL –

PHYSICAL ••

SOCIAL ••••

Overview

On their voyage home, the circle may well expect to face the surly guards of the quarantine again – only to find them mysteriously absent. Haven is under new management; the itinerant prophet whom the circle met in “Breaking the Quarantine,” Thercite, has recently Exalted and set himself up as Haven’s would-be savior. The people of Haven are dying and desperate, and are willing to place their hopes even in the small tricks Thercite can pull off with his new powers. Thercite, capitalizing on the situation, has decreed that Anjos is testing the people of Haven and that the plague is a pronouncement on the elders’ failure to govern. The elders have now been overthrown and imprisoned, and anyone who helps them risks the wrath of the god, and thus will run afoul of Thercite’s enforcers.

Thercite is power-mad enough (or maybe believes his own scam at this point) that he will denounce the circle’s cure as a false hope, and warns the populace that if they partake in it they will be sealing the city’s doom. The circle could try to directly oppose Thercite, but if they use open violence, they will be going up against the townspeople of Haven who support him – if they are from Haven, this could even include their own family members.

Description

The smell of refuse pours in waves from the piles of garbage now stacked between the great jaws that form the entrance to the temple of Anjos. A wooden platform has been erected several dozen meters away, upon which stand several hulking guards. They surround an old man whose posture has risen from bent to erect, whose scratchy voice now seems to boom with newfound confidence. It is Thercite, laying hands upon the heads of a coughing, spasming supplicant, a young woman suffering from the plague.

“Anjos is displeased with your false worship, your temples and tributes. Cast off your false faith, and heed the message of the plague. Be baptized anew, through your faith in me, Anjos’ one true prophet, and you may yet be saved!”

The woman kneels and nods, her body wracked with palsy. Thercite’s eyes glow with the unmistakable crackle of Exalted power. “Arise,” he says, “and be saved!”

The woman rises to a shaky stand, her cough subsiding. She still appears weak, but she gazes up at Thercite in grateful, beatific worship.

Storyteller Goals

Having thought the main story concluded, this last bit of mop-up should be a small but poignant curve ball, reminding the characters that time hasn’t stood still since their departure. Thercite’s menace is a challenge for the circle’s charisma: they must persuade the people to trust them, that what they’re offering is good.

Thercite cannot cure the plague; he uses his illusion Charms to mask its symptoms. Once he is exposed as a fraud, he will put up a fight only if the circle tries to stop him from fleeing.

Character Goals

Convince the Haven’s people to reject Thercite and drive him out of town.

Actions

Convincing the Masses

Dice Pool: (Charisma + Presence); the difficulty for this action is the citizens’ overall Dodge MDV of 2 plus their Magnitude of 2. However, Thercite faces the same difficulty. The first party to reach 10 successes wins.

Action: Dramatic (5 long ticks, should timing matter).

Hindrances: The circle physically attacks Thercite in an obvious way (+3 bonus to Thercite, thanks to the sympathy the characters will be evoking for the prophet).

Help: The circle manages to show a demonstration of the cure’s power (+3 bonus to them).

Useful Charms: Gathering the Congregation can be used to simply woo the people outright, but Thercite will respond with his illusions, attempting to sway the people back to him.

Consequences

Once Thercite realizes his power has been broken and the people are no longer with him, he will attempt to flee and will only fight the circle if cornered. Even then, he will fight just enough to get away.

The people of Haven will treat the circle with all due gratitude as saviors for curing them. Haven's elders (upon their release from imprisonment in the temple), while equally appreciative, will nevertheless try to get the circle to submit to a non-hostile yet firm debriefing, during which they will praise or chide the circle for acting in accordance with, or in opposition to, Anjos' code of justice: Share all that is Yours. Repair all that is Breached. Heal all who are Sick. If the circle did something truly reprehensible (like abandoning Celeren to Tain), and admits it, the elders will feel they have no choice but to reluctantly pronounce a sentence of banishment. Anjos would not want his people to survive, the elders reckon, at the expense of the people of another land.

Aftermath

The circle has saved Haven, and possibly Celeren as well. They have restored order to Lady Goldenrain's forest, and just possibly made allies of the Marukan. Potential rewards and plot threads could include:

Haven: Although the elders will pass judgment as they feel Anjos requires, the people of the village can't help but see the circle as heroes. Virtually anything the circle asks will be theirs. However, it is equally likely that the villagers will come to rely on, even expect, the circle to stay on as their perpetual protectors. This might suit the circle just fine, but what if they want to keep on moving?

Celeren: How the circle dealt with Celeren will govern how the Marukani regard not only them, but Haven as well. Assuming the circle saved the Marukani from Tain, the tribes owe quite a debt to the band. It is a sure bet their legend will spread wherever the horsemen travel. This might not be a blessing once the servants of the Wyld Hunt catch wind of it, but the characters can bet on aid and protection from Marukani should they ever pass through. Just the same, if the circle abandoned the Marukani to their fate (or if they were perceived to have), an ill reputation will spread as fast as hooves can carry it.

Kyurtin and Zara: If the characters aided in deposing Kyurtin, the horselord's allies may plot their revenge on the circle. The circle might well get embroiled in a power struggle between Zara and Kyurtin for control of Celeren.

Tain Without Reflection and Mask of Winters: Tain, if he still lives, will not rest until he has taken revenge on the circle. A humiliating defeat at their hands will cost him much esteem in Mask of Winters' eyes, and when the circle next encounters the Abyssal he will no longer have an army at his beck and call. He will, however, have been single-mindedly plotting revenge. As for the Deathlord himself, the circle will have attracted Winters' attention, and that can't possibly be a good thing for them.

Lady Goldenrain: Has she really forgiven Haven? Whether the Lady has truly come around, or whether her gift to the circle was merely a strategic

move in an ongoing gambit against Anjos is up to you to decide. For the circle, the Lady could make an invaluable ally and font of information about the land and its history, or an intractable and powerful enemy.

Thercite: If the false prophet survives, he will run away to lick his wounds and plan a comeback. Thercite can mature into a legitimate villain, or forever remain a loser, a recurring thorn in the circle's side who is in the end more pitiable, perhaps even comic, than threatening.

Lookshy: A miniature war just went on right under the nose of the most powerful city-state in the Scavenger Lands. The General Staff is likely cursing how easily Tain managed to befuddle them, and will be looking to reassert their power in the region. This could mean an attack on Thorns, an attempt to annex Celeren or even Haven (for their own protection, of course). There are any number of ways for the circle to get swept up in a development of this magnitude.

Anjos: Has the god really withdrawn from the world? Will he, through Shilani, encourage the circle to throw a new gauntlet at Lady Goldenrain's feet? Being a pawn in a war between gods can be frustrating and dangerous, but it can also be immensely profitable.

Experience

As per normal, characters should receive 4 experience points after each session of play. In addition, **Disease of an Evil Conscience** confers some additional awards after the story concludes:

- Characters who manage to defeat Tain Without Reflection through bluffing or sabotage gain 1 experience point.
- Characters who make a particularly articulate and moving argument to Lady Goldenrain, or the people of Haven in the final scene, should gain 1 bonus experience point for each feat of oratory.
- Players who roleplay wrestling with the moral choices their characters are facing, or who really get into dramatic and impassioned debates with other characters about what course of action to take, should receive 1 point as well.
- Remember to reward any character who comes up with a three die stunt with the option of gaining 1 experience point.

Don't forget that if **Disease of an Evil Conscience** runs as a multiple-session story, you might want to consider bestowing the 5 experience point Story Award (see **Exalted**, p. 273).

SCENE: Haven's Plight



MENTAL • PHYSICAL — SOCIAL •

HINDRANCES

No Lore or Occult
(-2 internal penalty)

HELP

Character has three or
more dots in Lore or Occult
(+1 bonus).

OTHER

Useful Charms:
Crafty Observation Method

STs Get the characters to agree to find a cure. Give characters the information needed to follow the prophecy. Players realize they are infected, and begin to experience the consequences.

PCs Learn about Haven. Find out what Shilani is saying.

SCENE: Breaking the Quarantine



MENTAL — PHYSICAL •• SOCIAL ••

HINDRANCES

Discovered while sneaking
around in the brush
(-1 external penalty)

HELP

Character noticed that the
roadblock was up ahead
(+1 bonus die)

OTHER

Useful Charms:
Easily Overlooked Presence
Method, Mental Invisibility
Technique

STs Create a chance for the characters to flex their muscles (physical or otherwise), and to realize the full extent of the danger Haven is in. Introduce Thercite.

PCs Break through the quarantine.

SCENE: The Ruins of Unferth



MENTAL • PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL —

HINDRANCES

Darkness

HELP

None

OTHER

Useful Charms:
Evidence Discerning Method,
Ten Magistrate Eyes

STs Provide a suspenseful, challenging combat scene. Introduce Zara and the Marukani.

PCs Defeat the undead.

SCENE: Welcome to Celeren



MENTAL — PHYSICAL — SOCIAL ••

HINDRANCES

The circle has killed any
of the Marukani in the
previous scene (-2 penalty)

HELP

The circle killed all the
undead themselves in the
previous scene before the
Marukani arrived
(+1 bonus die)

OTHER

Useful Charms:
Listener Swaying Argument
Unruly, Mob Dispersing
Rebuke, Rout-Stemming
Gesture, Twisted Words
Technique, Unbreakable
Fascination Method

STs Give the characters some recharge time, introduce them to the problems at Celeren, both internal and external.

PCs Convince Zara of their good intentions. Recharge. Learn about Celeren's situation.

SCENE: Forest Primeval



MENTAL ●●● PHYSICAL ●● SOCIAL ●

HINDRANCES

Random obstacles

HELP

Capturing a Ewe.

OTHER

Useful Charms:
Chaos-Repelling Pattern,
Friendship With Animals
Approach, Trackless
Region Navigation Charm,
Unshakeable Bloodhound
Technique, Survival Charm.

STs

Capture the Ram. Introduce the circle to the Shepherd,
and the complications that taking the Ram will create.

PCs

Get the Ram and return to Celeren.

SCENE: Celeren Besieged



MENTAL ●● PHYSICAL ●●●● SOCIAL —

HINDRANCES

None

HELP

None

OTHER

None

STs

Reveal the tears' powers to the characters.

PCs

Survive the battle, discover the secret of the Ram's tears, turn back Tain's forces.

SCENE: The Might of Marukan



MENTAL ●●●● PHYSICAL ●●●● SOCIAL —

HINDRANCES

None

HELP

None

OTHER

None

STs

Remove Tain from the equation; reveal Kyurтин's duplicity.

PCs

Defeat Tain. Try to get the Ram afterwards.

SCENE: Stealing the Ram



MENTAL ●●● PHYSICAL ●●● SOCIAL ●

HINDRANCES

In Celeren: Still night,
sounds carry (-1 penalty)

HELP

Out on the plains:
Chaos of the battlefield
(+2 bonus dice)

OTHER

Useful Charms:
Easily Overlooked Presence
Method, Mental Invisibility
Technique, and Sound and
Scent Banishing Attitude
can all be of help.
Stealing from Plain Sight
or Magpie's Invisible Talon
will only work at night
when the Ram is unguarded,
as opposed to on the plains
where everyone is watching
the Ram being put to use.

STs

Make stealing the Ram a challenge.

PCs

Steal the Ram and escape Celeren.

SCENE: Emissaries to the Underworld



MENTAL ●● PHYSICAL ●●● SOCIAL ●●●●

HINDRANCES

None

HELP

None

OTHER

Useful Charms:
Listener Swaying Argument,
Knowing the Soul's Price,
Master of Small Manners,
Twisted Words Technique,
Unbreakable Fascination
Method. For getting the
letter, Lock-Opening Touch.

STs

Give the characters their chance to break the no-win scenario by ending Tain's threat to Celeren.

PCs

End Tain's threat to Celeren, either through swift-talking, sabotage, or direct physical confrontation.

SCENE: Revolution



MENTAL — PHYSICAL ●●● SOCIAL ●●●

HINDRANCES

Not having a genuine
alternative to the Ram for
protecting Haven

HELP

Having one

OTHER

None

STs

Remove the roadblock that is Kyurtin from the story.

PCs

Convince Zara to overthrow Kyurtin and turn the Ram over to them.

SCENE: The Emerald Bull



MENTAL — PHYSICAL ●●●● SOCIAL ●●

HINDRANCES

None

HELP

None

OTHER

None

STs

Put the circle in a position where they must return the Ram. Give them a chance, if they want to take it, to use the Emerald Bull to either destroy Tain's forces or unseat Kyurtin.

PCs

Get the Bull off their backs. Get back to the forest with the Ram.

SCENE: The Forest Test



MENTAL ●● PHYSICAL ●●● SOCIAL ●●

HINDRANCES

If the circle came to
the Lady only after the
Emerald Bull came breath-
ing down their throats,
add a -1 external penalty.

HELP

If they came here before
the behemoth attacked,
add a +1 bonus.

OTHER

Useful Charms:
Listener Swaying Argument,
Knowing the Soul's Price,
Master of Small Manners,
Understanding the Court,
Wise-Eyed Courtier Method

STs

Introduce the circle to Lady Goldenrain, and give them the ability, through passing her test, to recall the Emerald Bull (if necessary) and cure the plague.

PCs

Convince Lady Goldenrain to dispense the cure; to that end, pass the Lady's test.

SCENE: False Messiahs



MENTAL — PHYSICAL ●● SOCIAL ●●●●

HINDRANCES

The circle physically attacks Thercite in an obvious way (+3 bonus to Thercite, thanks to the sympathy the characters will be generating for the prophet)

The circle uses use Charms on the people to convince them, and are exposed in doing so by Thercite (-3 penalty; no one likes being manipulated)

HELP

The circle manages to show a demonstration of the cure's power (+3 bonus to them)

OTHER

Useful Charms:
Gathering the Congregation

STs

Give the circle one final, unexpected challenge.

PCs

Convince the people of Haven to reject Thercite, drive him out of town.



NAME: The Emerald Bull

CONCEPT:

CASTE:

ANIMA:

S/D/S 15/5/18 **C/M/A** 1/1/8 **P/I/W** 2/2/2

Abilities: Awareness 1, Brawl 6, Dodge 4, Survival 6

Virtues: Compassion 1 Temperance 1
Conviction 5 Valor 4

Join Battle 7 **Dodge DV** 9 **Soak** 15L/26B

Willpower: 9

Health Lvl: -0x5/-1x12/-2x12/-4x12/Incap.*

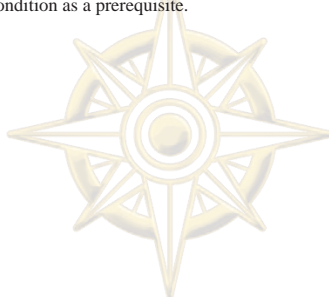
Essence: 6

Attack:

	Spd	Acc	Dmg	Def
Bite:	8	10	20L	7
Gore:	9	10	25L	8
Stamp:	9	10	18L	8

NOTES

* The Emerald Bull cannot be killed in normal combat – should you modify this to include the possibility of the Bull's death, apply some special condition as a prerequisite.



NAME: Rock Ram

CONCEPT:

CASTE:

ANIMA:

S/D/S 5/5/7 **P/I/W** 2/2/3

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Dodge 3, Intimidation 3, Resistance 5, Survival 5.

Dodge DV 8 **Soak** 8L/10B
(Supernaturally tough skin)

Willpower: 5

Health Lvl: -0x2/-1x3/-2x3/-4/I

Attack:

	Spd	Acc	Dmg	Rate
Headbutt:	5	5	7L	1
Bite:	2	6	4L	1

NOTES

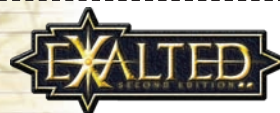
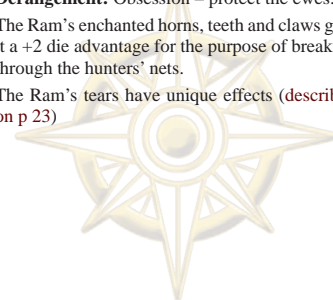
Poxes: Enhanced Smell and Hearing, Large.

Afflictions: Thick Skin, Tusks/Horns.

Derangement: Obsession – protect the ewes.

The Ram's enchanted horns, teeth and claws give it a +2 die advantage for the purpose of breaking through the hunters' nets.

The Ram's tears have unique effects (described on p 23)



NAME: The Shepherd

CONCEPT:

CASTE:

ANIMA:

S/D/S 3/3/3 **C/M/A** 1/1/1 **P/I/W** 3/2/2

Abilities: Survival 5

Virtues: Compassion 2 Temperance 2
Conviction 2 Valor 2

Join Battle 5

Willpower: 5

Health Lvl: -0/-1/-4/Incap

Essence: 2

Essence Pool: 43

Cost to Materialize: 35

Attack:

	Spd	Acc	Dmg	Def
Staff:	5	6	2B	-

NOTES

Charms: Materialize (*Exalted*, pp. 295-296), Friendship With Animals Approach, Stoke the Flame.

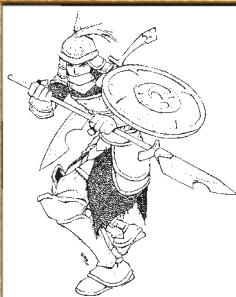




Mass Combat Statistics

MARUKAN

THORNS



Guard Scale

Overall Quality: Good

Magnitude: 2

Drill: 3

Close Combat Attack: 3

Close Combat Damage: 3

Ranged Attack: -

Ranged Damage: -

Endurance: 6

Might: 0

Armor: 2

Valor: 3



Lancer Scale

Overall Quality: Good

Magnitude: 2

Drill: 3

Close Combat Attack: 3

Close Combat Damage: 2

Ranged Attack: -

Ranged Damage: -

Endurance: 6

Might: 0

Armor: 2

Valor: 3



Arrow Scale

Overall Quality: Good

Magnitude: 2

Drill: 3

Close Combat Attack: -

Close Combat Damage: -

Ranged Attack: 3

Ranged Damage: 2

Endurance: 6

Might: 0

Armor: 2

Valor: 2



Hammer Scale

Overall Quality: Good

Magnitude: 2

Drill: 4

Close Combat Attack: 3

Close Combat Damage: 5

Ranged Attack: -

Ranged Damage: -

Endurance: 8

Might: 0

Armor: 3

Valor: 4



Zombies

Overall Quality: Low

Magnitude: 5

Drill: 0

Close Combat Attack: 3

Close Combat Damage: 2

Ranged Attack: -

Ranged Damage: -

Endurance: N/A

Might: 1

Armor: 1

Morale: N/A



War Ghosts

Overall Quality: Good

Magnitude: 3

Drill: 3

Close Combat Attack: 4

Close Combat Damage: 3

Ranged Attack: -

Ranged Damage: -

Endurance: N/A

Might: 3

Armor: 3(-2 mobility)

Morale: 3



Thornguard

Overall Quality: Elite

Magnitude: 5

Drill: 5

Close Combat Attack: 4

Close Combat Damage: 3

Ranged Attack: 3

Ranged Damage: 3

Endurance: 9

Might: 2

Armor: 3(-3 mobility)

Valor: 4



Haven's Plague

For normal humans, the plague has the following effects:

Virulence: 5 (only for visitors to Haven)

Difficulty to Treat: Infinite

Morbidity: 5

Treated Morbidity: 5

Symptoms: A series of red, star-shaped welts pepper the infected person's body. Weakness and fatigue set in shortly afterwards, followed by violent nausea and vomiting. Starvation usually takes over from here, leading to a long, lingering death, accompanied by additional symptoms as opportunistic infections like the common cold and pneumonia take advantage of the body's weakened state.

Duration: The plague's incubation period seems to vary widely; sometimes victims will take ill the same day as meeting an infected party, and other times the process will take almost a week. Most victims perish within one to two weeks after the onset of symptoms. (You can adjust the timing for your story.)

Vector: Because the disease is a magical ailment tailored to specifically seek out and harm the people of Haven, being in Haven will result, sooner or later, in a person contracting the plague.

Treatment: No conventional treatment or healing Charm (including Contagion-Curing Touch or Immunity to Everything Technique) has any effect on the sickness. The secondary infections and sicknesses can be treated as usually befits such conditions, and doing so can prolong the life of the individual in question.

Exalted exposed to the plague react differently. The star-shaped lesions appear on the skin of an infected Exalt, although with the expenditure of 2 motes of Essence the character can hide these marks for the duration of a scene. Unfortunately, the annoyance doesn't end there. Each scene after infection, each player needs to roll (Stamina + Endurance) vs. difficulty 3. It's important for you to ask the players to keep making these checks; alternatively, you can simply declare that a certain effect happens, but the randomizing element can add an element of trepidation.

Roll Results

Botch: The plague momentarily becomes active in the character's body. Pain and discomfort apply a -2 penalty to all the character's actions for the duration of the scene unless she spends 2 motes of Essence to counter these effects. Otherwise the effects subside when the scene ends.

Failure: The plague asserts itself in one brief, unpleasant symptom. The character may double over, be overcome with nausea or faint, posing a slight impediment during a battle or delicate social situation (-2 to one roll).

Success: The character resists the plague, but develops a noticeable but non-detrimental symptom: a facial tic, an unpleasant looking rash, the loss of skin pigmentation, etc. You determine the precise effect, which lasts only for the duration of the scene and can be eliminated with the expenditure of 1 mote of Essence.

The good news for those who come in contact with an infected Exalt is that, due to the nature of the plague, they cannot spread it to anyone not from Haven... not that anyone is likely to believe that. Covering up the plague lesions might be costly in terms of Essence, but perhaps less costly than compounding the fear and suspicion with which Solars are already regarded. Peaceful townspeople can quickly become an angry mob when they think the second coming of the Contagion is in their midst.





TAIN WITHOUT REFLECTION

CHARMS

NAME	COST	NAME	COST
Accursed Overlord Authority		Shadow Races the Light	3m
Artful Maiming Onslaught	3m	Second Presence Excellency	2m per success
Blade-Summoning Gesture	1m	Soul-Snaring Tract	6m
Blood Calligraphy Technique	4m	Unfurling Iron Lotus	2m
Broken Toys Riposte	varies	Vengeful Riposte	3m
Command the Dead	5m+1m per target	Void Sheath Technique	1m
Death Deflecting Technique	3m		
Dodge Essence Flow			
Eloquent Example Inspiration	8m		
Elegant Flowing Deflection	2m		
Eye of the Tempest	5m, 1wp		
Falling Scythe Attack	3m, 1wp		
First Melee Excellency	1m per die		
Five Knife First	6m, 1wp		
Five Shadow Feint	2m per DV		
Flitting Shadow Form	1m		
Foe-Shaming Defense	3m		
Inescapable Iron Grip	3m		
Insidious Undertone Trick	6m		
Melee Essence Flow			
Ox-Body Technique	x2		
Rapacious Lamprey Technique	2m		
Ravening Mouth of Melee	3m		
Savage Shade Style	1m		
Scathing Cynic Attitude	3m		

NOTES

Other Notes: Tain's armor accounts for the soak values on this sheet. His favorite combo is below:

• **Vampire Blade (Cost: 10m + 2wp to activate):** Time Scything Technique + Ravening Mouth of Melee + Rapacious Lamprey Technique. Faster than the eye can follow, Tain's dagger falls everywhere at once, drawing blood from a dozen wounds. The blade leaves a trail of Essence in its wake. The trail spirals up like smoke to be sucked in by Tain's caste mark, glowing as it consumes his foe's power.

• **Sudden Manifestation of Wounds (Cost: 6m + 2wp to activate; +1wp if triggering Cripple effect):** Artful Maiming Onslaught, Shadow Races the Light. Tain's opponent finds himself crippled before he even realizes the attack has begun – by the time a ghostly afterimage flickers of an ebon sword falling upon the limb, the wound has been made.



NAME: Tain Without Reflection

CONCEPT: Ambitious General

CASTE: Moonshadow

ANIMA: A corona of ravenous, grasping black tentacles

STRENGTH ●●●●○ CHARISMA ●○○○○ PERCEPTION ●●●●○
DEXTERITY ●●●●● MANIPULATION ●●●●● INTELLIGENCE ●●○○○
STAMINA ●●●●○ APPEARANCE ●○○○○ WITS ●●●●○

ABILITIES

■ Martial Arts	●●●●○	□ Ride	●○○○○	□	○○○○○
■ Melee	●●●●●	□	○○○○○	□	○○○○○
■ Athletics	●●●●○	□	○○○○○	□	○○○○○
■ Awareness	●●●○○	□	○○○○○	□	○○○○○
■ Dodge	●●●●○	□	○○○○○	□	○○○○○
□ Integrity	●●●○○	□	○○○○○	□	○○○○○
■ Presence	●●●●○	□	○○○○○	□	○○○○○
■ Resistance	●●○○○	□	○○○○○	□	○○○○○
□ Bureaucracy	●●●●○	□	○○○○○	□	○○○○○
■ Linguistics	●●●●○	□	○○○○○	□	○○○○○

BACKGROUNDS

Abyssal Command ●●●●●
Liege
(Mask of Winters) ●●●○○
Spies ●●○○○
Whispers ●●○○○

WEAPONS

	Speed / Accuracy / Damage / Defense / Rate				
Punch:	5	9	3B	11	3
Kick:	5	8	6B	6	2
Clinch:	6	8	3B	-	1

WILLPOWER

●●●●●○○○
□□□□□□□□

VIRTUES

COMPASSION ●○○○
□□□□
CONVICTION ●●●○
□□□□
TEMPERANCE ●○○○
□□□□
VALOR ●●○○
□□□□

DODGE DV

7

ANIMA

Spend 1 extra mote to conceal
Peripheral mote use. Double
cost for Obvious Charms.

SOAK

B 6 L 6 A 5

HEALTH

-0	□□□□
-1	□□□□
-2	□□□□
	□□□□
-4	□
INCAPACITATED	□

LIMIT BREAK

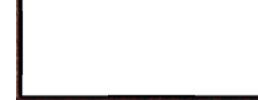
□□□□□□□□□□

FLAWED FATE

ESSENCE

●●●●○○
PERSONAL 19 |
PERIPHERAL 44 |
COMMITTED 10
ESSENCE POOL

EXPERIENCE





BLAZE

CHARMS

NAME	COST	NAME	COST
Elemental Domain: For 5		Materialize: A blaze may	
motes and 1 Willpower, a blaze		materialize for 40 motes.	
may dissolve itself into any fire		Essence Plethora: Blazes have	
around it, making it temporarily		10 extra motes of Essence in	
immune to damage. This power		their Essence pools.	
lasts for as long as the blaze		Natural Elemental Powers:	
concentrates and commits the		Blazes have all the powers that	
motes of Essence spent to acti-		are natural to elementals, except	
vate the power. This is the only		Dragon's Suspire.	
activity in which the blaze may		Principle of Motion: Blazes	
engage during that time.		usually maintain a pool of six	
Harrow the Mind: For 10 motes		extra actions.	
and one Willpower, a blaze can			
create terrifying hallucinations			
of immolation in the mind of			
a single target. The Storyteller			
makes a (Manipulation + Perfor-			
mance) roll against the target's			
Mental DV, adding a number of			
automatic successes equal to its			
Temperance. Only one success is			
necessary to create the illusion,			
but each additional success adds			
to the difficulty of any roll made			
to break free of the illusion.			

NOTES

Blazes have First and Second Excellencies for the following Abilities: Dodge, Brawl and Performance.

Join Battle: 5



NAME: Blaze

CONCEPT: Fire Elemental

CASTE:

ANIMA:

STRENGTH	●●●●○	CHARISMA	●●●●○	PERCEPTION	●●●●○
DEXTERITY	●●●●●	MANIPULATION	●●●●○	INTELLIGENCE	●●●●○
STAMINA	●●●●○	APPEARANCE	●●●●●	WITS	●●●●○

ABILITIES

<input type="checkbox"/> Martial Arts	●●●●○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Awareness	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Dodge	●●●●○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Integrity	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Performance	●●●●○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Presence	●●●●○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Resistance	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Linguistics (Native: Old Realm;		<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
Others: Firespeak)	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○



BACKGROUNDS

○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○
○○○○○

WEAPONS

Speed / Accuracy / Damage / Parry DV / Rate

Flame-touch: 5 9 3B 5 3

Flame bolt: 5 8 6B 3 2

WILLPOWER

●●●●●○○○○
□□□□□□□□

DODGE DV

6

ANIMA

LIMIT BREAK

□□□□□□□□

VIRTUE FLAW

SOAK

B 3 L 1 A

HEALTH

-0	□□□□
-1	□□□□
-2	□□□□
	■ ■ ■ ■
-4	□
INCAPACITATED	□

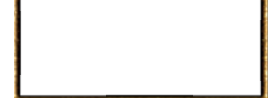
VIRTUES

COMPASSION	●○○○ □□□□
CONVICTION	●●○○ □□□□
TEMPERANCE	●○○○ □□□□
VALOR	●●○○ □□□□

ESSENCE

● ● ○ ○ ○ ○	
PERSONAL	— —
PERIPHERAL	— —
COMMITTED	— —
ESSENCE POOL	60

EXPERIENCE





CHARMS

NOTES

Tell: Two horn-like nubs poke through his forehead.

Join Battle: 7

Other Notes: Thercite has not yet learned any combat Charms, so he relies mainly on his ability to create illusions to humble or distract his opponents.

Additional Weapons:

	Speed / Accuracy / Damage / Parry DV/ Rate				
Staff (thrown):	5	7	6B	-	2



NAME: Thercite

CASTE: Changing Moon

CONCEPT: Bitter Prophet (False Messiah) ANIMA: A bucking, kicking goat

n) ANIMA: A bucking, kicking goat

STRENGTH ●●●○○ CHARISMA ●●●●○ PERCEPTION ●●○○○
DEXTERITY ●●●●○ MANIPULATION ●●●●● INTELLIGENCE ●●○○○
STAMINA ●●●○○ APPEARANCE ●○○○○ WITS ●●●○○

ABILITIES

<input type="checkbox"/> Athletics	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Stealth	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Awareness	●●●○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Lore	●●●●○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Dodge	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Occult		<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Martial Arts	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> (Anjos +3)	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Melee	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Resistance	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Thrown	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Performance	●●●●●	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Presence	●●●●○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Socialize	●●●○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○



WEAPONS

Followers	Speed / Accuracy / Damage / Parry DV/ Rate				
(People of Haven) ●●●○○	Punch:	5	8	3B	5 3
○○○○○	Kick:	5	7	6B	3 2
○○○○○	Clinch:	6	7	3B	- 1
○○○○○	Staff (hand to hand):	5	8	9B	4 2

WILLPOWER

● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

DODGE DV

4

VIRTUES

Compassion ●○○○○
 Temperance ●○○○□

CONVICTION VALOR
 ●●●●○ ●●○○○
 □□□□□ □□□□□

— ESSENCE

● ● ● ○ ○ ○

PERSONAL 17 | _____

PERIPHERAL 42 | _____

COMMITTED _____

ESSENCE POOL _____

—EXPERIENCE

ANIMA

SOAK

B 3 L 3 A

HEALTH

-0 ■■■■
-1 ■■■■
-2 ■■■■
-4 ■■■■

INCAPACITATED ■■

LIMIT BREAK

[illegible]

VIRTUE FLAW