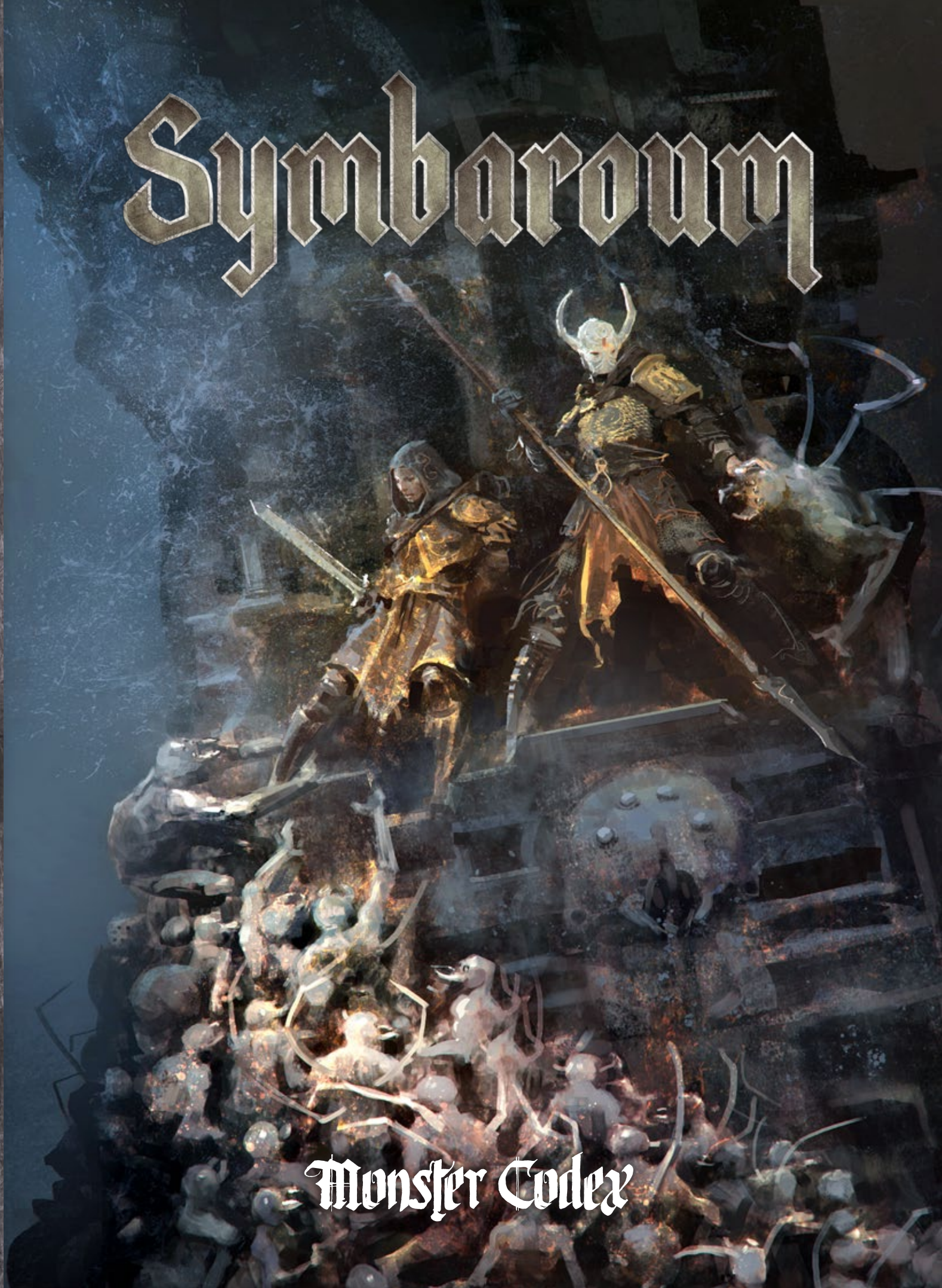
Symbaroum



Monster Codex

"By the end, at the dawn of the future,
blightlings were swarming, humans would run or be dead.

In the abyss, in darkness nocturnal: parents and spawn,
in combat till dawn, a slaughter to finish them all.

But the ending would hatch a beginning,
here we bravely create, a world that again,
will fall into ruin and silence."

SYMBAROUM

Monster Codex

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Symbaroum

Järnringen

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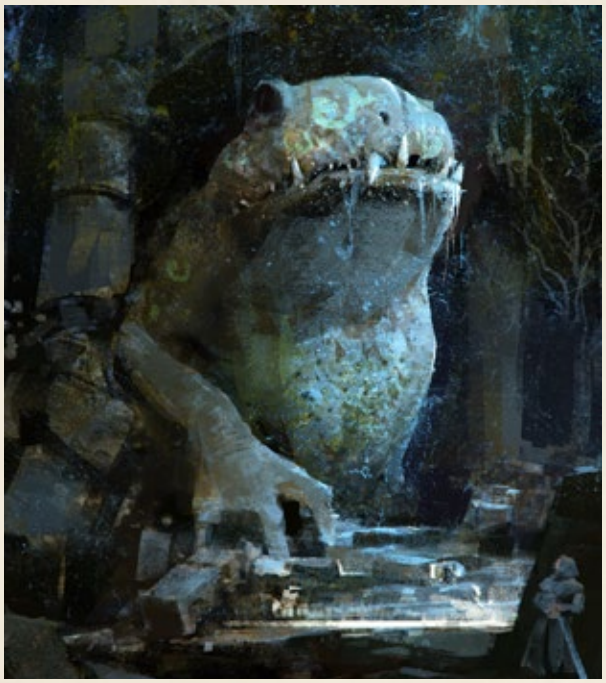
Beasts, fiends & abominations!

JUST ABOUT FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, Team Järnringen released the bestiary for our version of the RPG Mutant, called Zonernas Zoologi (the Zoology of the Zones). When we look back at all we have written and illustrated, this magnificent book is always mentioned in the discussion regarding which product fills us with the most pride and joy. Knowing this, it is easy to understand that it took some time before we felt ready to start working on a bestiary for Symbaroum's more or less notorious creatures. And it hardly comes as a surprise that we launched the project with a notable sense of performance anxiety.

But now, here it is: the SYMBAROUM MONSTER CODEX, brimming with beasts and abominations that are longing to sink their teeth, claws or swords into the characters of your gaming group. The production process was guided by three primary goals: the outcome should be beautiful, enjoyable to read and useful at the gaming table. It is now up to you to decide the extent to which we succeeded, but regardless of what your judgment may be, we are sending the book to print with a pleasant feeling that this monster codex will make Symbaroum an even better roleplaying game.

Happy gaming!

TEAM JÄRNRINGEN



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Welcome...

... TO SYMBAROUM'S Monster Codex, a book featuring a collection of astonishing creatures and remarkable phenomena which can be encountered in the vast forest of Davokar and its surroundings. Between its covers, you will get to meet previously unknown, or at least not yet described, monsters and adversaries who are very eager to put your players and their characters to new and tougher tests. You will also find rules and guidelines that will be helpful when you are creating your own, unique monstrosities or when you are designing interesting challenges in Ambria, Davokar or the mountains.

The Advanced Player's Guide

When writing the Symbaroum Monster Codex we have assumed that gaming groups also have access to the Core Rulebook and the Advanced Player's Guide. It is fully possible to use the material in this book without the latter, but in that case, the Game Master must be prepared to ignore or replace the abilities and mystical powers taken from there.

WE HOPE THAT this bestiary will demonstrate how Symbaroum's more or less beastly inhabitants are constructed, so that you who shoulder the Game Master's jacket will have an easier time creating, adding and modifying the content to your liking and needs. The book is divided into three sections, entitled Hordes of the Eternal Night, Monsters & Adversaries, and Rules & Guidelines – sections that are very dissimilar in style and content but that we believe will complement each other and together provide material for many, many thrilling (and probably dangerous) hours at the gaming table.

SECTION 1: HORDES OF THE ETERNAL NIGHT

The opening section is in many respects based on its namesake – the original work written by the famous monster scholar Father Almagast. Initially, we had plans to base most of the section's descriptive texts on the words of the venerable black cloak, but we soon noticed that his analyses, accounts and judgements would convey an all too biased and overconfident description of the creatures in question. Instead, we have striven to apply a broader, less categorical perspective, so that the presentations are more in line with the uncertainties that actually exist when it comes to their history and nature, also supplemented with examples of the reports, depictions and legends which the black cloak drew from in his work. It should also be mentioned that we have kept much of the style and design that signifies the original, in honor of Father Almagast, and maybe also in the hope that he will forgive us for diverting from his portrayals to such a degree.

The twenty seven parts of Hordes of the Eternal Night describe one creature each. Often, two or more versions of the same creature are introduced (with different age, size or rank), and sometimes the parts present different types of what may seem to be one and the same creature. But on the whole, the idea is that each part will serve two main ends: it should say something about and deepen the understanding of Symbaroum's setting, while at the same time introduce adversaries that can challenge the gaming group in new ways, socially or tactically.

Finally, each part presents an adventure set-up. The Game Master can choose to take it as it is and develop it into a playable scenario, or let it act as inspiration and an example of how the various creatures can be put into action.

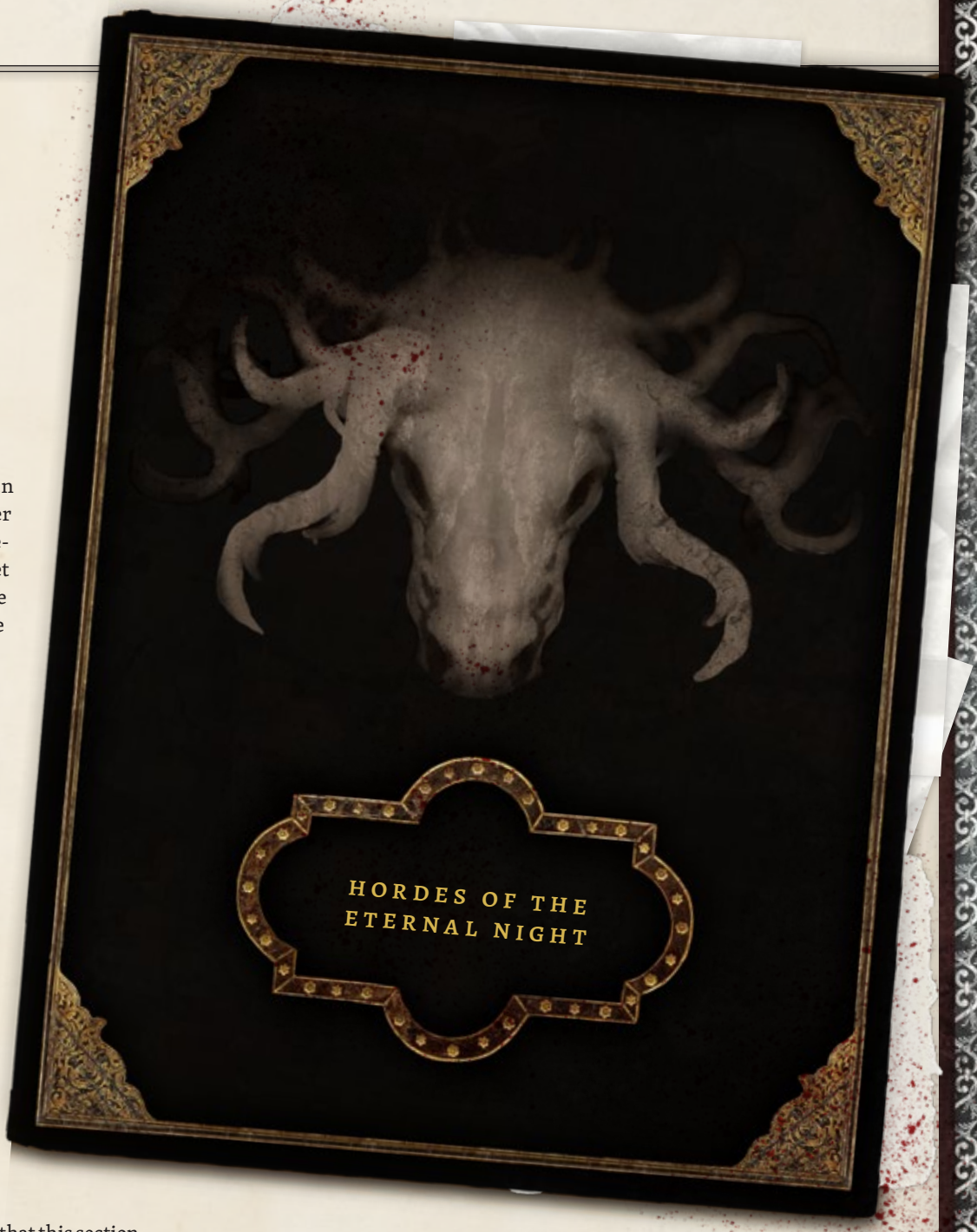
SECTION 2: MONSTERS & ADVERSARIES

The second section of this book aims for quantity rather than depth. Without being completely exhaustive, it introduces close to ninety persons, animals and beasts with stats and short descriptions – some residing in the shadows of Davokar, other more often encountered under the open skies of Prios. Most of them are new, but we have also taken this opportunity to collect some of the creatures which were introduced in previous publications, as for instance the episodes in The Throne of Thorns – with or without small adjustments. The intention is that this section will make it easier for the Game Master to find relevant stats for the monsters and adversaries encountered by the characters, but we also hope that it will function as inspiration in the process of designing unique homebrewed non-player characters, and non-player beasts.

SECTION 3: RULES & GUIDELINES

The final section of Symbaroum's Monster Codex features thirty seven monstrous traits, adding to the nineteen in the Core Rulebook – enough to build hundreds of creatures that challenge the characters in different ways. In this section you will also find the previously mentioned guidelines on how to create your own creatures and balanced combat challenges, hopefully clear enough to explain how the rules are intended to work, and still short enough not to be perceived as long-winded. Furthermore, this section features tips on how to use the many creatures of the bestiary when creating three types of adventure campaigns, or "Monster Chronicles" as we call them.

In conclusion, we wish you much fun with this book, and we hope that it will live up to our high ambition: that its content will provide material for hundreds of unforgettable gaming hours, in a world that the same material contributes to make even more marvelous and captivating!



The original edition of Father Almagast's Hordes of the Eternal Night is the Sun Church's principal work when it comes to understanding the monsters of the world.

It is likely true that few people, if any, know as much about the Lawgiver's enemies as I do. I know them all, from the hugest abomination to the smallest glint, from the oldest arch troll to the youngest blight spawn. I've heard the legends, studied the accounts, examined both cadavers and living specimen. Still, I have no definite answer to the question that meets me more often than others: which is the most abominable monster under Prios' sky?

The candidates are many, but naturally there are those who stand out from the rest. The ancient blight beasts which have ravaged and ruined since long before the fall of Symbaroum display both the darkness and strength to be qualified contenders. For sure, the same can be said about the world serpents, especially if the World Serpent itself would awake; also the dragons, supposing that the rumors of their return can be taken as truth. Additionally, there are more devious, and in that respect vile beasts, such as ravenous willows, parasitical glints and lurking night swarmers – all immensely hungry, all cunning and calculating in their hunt for life and blood.

However, one must wonder if there isn't another creature that overshadows them all, a creature with the actual potential to drown all of Creation in the darkness of the Eternal Night. Even if this creature revels in light, it can be seduced to blacker paths, if it isn't warned about the temptation, taught to resist the lure and punished for every transgression. Yes, dear reader, I am speaking of you. I am speaking about the human...

– Excerpt from Hordes of the Eternal Night, Father Almagast

SECTION 1:

HORDES OF THE ETERNAL NIGHT

Arachs

The predatory arachs comprise the remains of the Spider King's subjects, survivors of the realm that was finally crushed by the early High Chieftains of Karvosti. The existence of the arachs is closely linked to the Spider King and it was commonly assumed that they had been destroyed along with their ruler. However, in recent years there have been reports, from more or less credible groups of explorers, claiming that **the arachs still live and are active in the deeper parts of Davokar**. Some say they have encountered arach hunting parties in the woods or scouring for artifacts in some ruin; others testify that members of their group have been abducted, presumably to be used as slaves or eaten. **According to the wildest rumors, inhabited pyramids have been found, as grand as Serand's** but uncharted, sunken and overgrown with dense forest.

These sporadic, but all the more frequently occurring, reports and rumors have triggered speculations about **the people of the Spider King being ready to rise again.** A legend told among the clans warns of precisely this: that the arachs will resurrect their fallen monarch and launch a new war of conquest, spreading fear and death in Davokar. But such a development is highly unlikely. A majority of the eye-witness accounts describe the arachs as **certainly dangerous but basically nothing more than the pitiful remains of a once glorious race,** now roaming the forest much like other predatory beasts.

It is said that the humanoid arachs can be mistaken for humans from a distance, especially if they dress in human garb. But on closer inspection, there is no mistaking their spider-like attributes: **four spider-eyes in a row, jaws with poison channels, limbs with seven joints that end in three claws rather than fingers, bodies covered in bristling hairs.** It may even be that there are different kinds of arachs. A few statements affirm that threatened arachs have rubbed off their hairs so as to create an irritating or even poisonous cloud around them; other witnesses claim that sometimes a single arach has a back covered in wart-like spinnerets, able to produce spider webs. Hence, one theory is that **arachs evolve towards the more and more spider-like**, without knowing if this change has to do with maturation, or if it is an effect that comes with elevated social standing or some kind of holy exaltation.

The Transformation

The process through which a cultural being is transformed into an arach involves a ceremony, performed in two phases. Initially, an egg-shaped, human-sized cocoon of silken threads is spun. Through the ritual's power and clangor it is given a golden luster. This egg may wait up to a year for phase two, when a dazed or unconscious cultural being is placed within.

During the hour-long chanting of the second phase, the cocoon slowly shrinks while the threads grow harder and thicker, so that the prisoner finally is caught as if in a vice and the transformation can begin. The malnourished creature that emerges about a month later retains its memories, but is consumed by a desire to serve its new leaders and comrades. It takes a passed *Resolute* test for him or her to be able to leave the collective, and then repeated tests not to return. To perform an action which is directly harmful to other arachs requires a successful *[Resolute –5]* test.

Dear sister,

I am writing to you from inside an egg of golden threads, with a dying candle as my only source of light. The letters spread over the parchment as the poison spreads through my veins. My killer lies next to me, her body pierced by my trusted estoc; death has captured the many joints of her limbs at unnatural angles, and her face features the spider's four eyes in a row. Her jaws are poisonous mandibles, one of them broken and set deep in my thigh.

My other hand is squeezing the Taar-cross, wrongly called an ancient symbol of Prios by the seller in Thistle Hold. It is not a sun, it is a golden spider, the holy symbol of Angathal Taar whose realm once stretched out around a network of pyramids. Serand's Pyramid is known and surveyed, but I found another, sunken into the ground and untouched for centuries. The taar-cross was my key, the way into the pyramid, down to the lower chambers and the golden egg. Oh, how it sang at my touch; how it opened up, thread by thread, to expose its empty interior.

When the watchers came climbing I fled in here to avoid certain death. It was not until the egg closed that I realized that this was their intent, to drive me into this golden trap. I hear them singing out there, hoarse and with clattering jaws. Initially, I wondered if they sang for me or their fallen sister, but now I realize that it is part of the ritual. I will transform, I will die and be reborn as one of them. You who are reading this letter, please take it to my sister in the town of Thistle Hold.

Beloved sister, the house is now yours, and you won't have to put up with my sloppiness and dreams of the Spider King. I have been drafted into his army, and the next time we meet, your poisonous words will be nothing compared to the venom of my jaws.

Respectfully, Lemelio Starak

Crumpled up letter, found on a dead arach, killed in the depths of Davokar.

THUS SPOKE AROALETA

"... and there, in the clattering, hissing enemy swarm, there fought Angathal's spawn, erect and proud. With spear and axe, with dripping jaws, arak-an and arak-zanz attacked the stronghold of Serembar..."

Adventure Set-up

The exalted arach Maz-at-tezz has started spinning **the gospel of spiders** in a sunken, partially collapsed and completely overgrown ruin at the border between bright and dark Davokar. Her Poisoners have banished (or killed) all beasts and a goblin tribe from the area, and started their most important tasks – **hunting for artifacts in nearby ruins and ensuring the growth of the princess' army.** The latter is achieved by taking human prisoners to the bottom level of the pyramid to be transformed.

The player characters might get involved when people start vanishing from some outpost or village at the border of Davokar. Maybe one of the banished goblins can be found and tells about the ruin it lived in; maybe the characters visit the goblins' former home and encounter a group of treasure-hunting Poisoners? Why not let them come across **Lemelio Starak's letter in the ruin**, to give them a hint of what is happening? If so, their next task will be to find the overgrown pyramid, get inside and try and free the prisoners that are yet to transform – likely with heavy resistance from Maz-at-tezz and her warriors.

The thread that's been spun has beginning, has end, but never ceases to be. The thread that's been ended still remains, forever bound to existence — essential, unbroken, unchanging. If end is merged with end, beginning is void, end is void, and that which ended becomes eternal. So shall happen, one day, to Angathal Taar, our sovereign and lord of the world.

Excerpt from Taar's Prophecy

ARACH, POISONER

Manner	Clacks fiercely with its mandibles		
Race	Arach (cultural being)		
Resistance	Ordinary		
Traits	*Armored* (I), *Natural Weapon* (I), *Poisonous* (I)		
Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 15 (–5), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 9 (+1), **Strong** 11 (–1), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Backstab* (adept)		
Weapons Discreet/ Accurate	Bite 3 (short), +4 with *Advantage* and poison 2 for 2 turns		
Armor	Leathery skin 2		
Defense	–3		
Toughness	11	**Pain Threshold**	5
Shadow	Spotted gray brown, like a chunk of bog iron (corruption: 0)		
Tactics: Tries to encircle and flank the enemy to gain *Advantage*, after which they rely on their venomous bites.			

ARACH, EXALTED

Manner	Proudly observing		
Race	Arach (cultural being)		
Resistance	Strong		
Traits	*Companions* (III; one Poisoner, one Tricklesting and one Etterherd), *Harmful Aura* (II), *Natural Weapon* (II), *Poisonous* (III), *Web* (III)		
Accurate 5 (+5), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 9 (+1), **Persuasive** 15 (–5), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 13 (–3), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 7 (+3)			
Abilities	*Backstab* (adept), *Dominate* (master), *Loremaster* (adept)		
Weapons Persuasive	Bite 4, +4 with *Advantage* and poison 4 for 4 turns		
Armor	None		
Defense	–1		
Toughness	10	**Pain Threshold**	5
Shadow	Rusty brown with golden stripes, like unpolished amber (corruption: 0)		
Tactics: Urges its companions to attack first and focuses on one target at a time, capturing and poisoning it while all who come within melee range suffer from its harmful aura of poisonous hairs.			

Bestiaal

I didn't understand the odd looks and signs of protection that were aimed at us in Thistle Hold, and it took a long while before I realized that they actually were about our choice of guide. The masked girl was reclusive and careful not to show her face in view of others, but there is no doubt she was qualified – she found the quickest route through the forest, and on several occasions her instincts led us unharmed past ambushes and traps. Sure, she tracked like a dog, sniffing along the ground, but this is a method also practiced by barbarians.

Honestly, I couldn't see what caused the alarm and worry – until we were surrounded by dragouls. The girl grew wings and flew over us with her bow singing, to later dive to the ground and launch into battle, suddenly tall, muscular and with long, razor-sharp claws. I must say, in that moment our guide became the most interesting thing about our expedition.

Brother Erbalmer
expedition leader in the name of Prios

According to their own tales, the age-old race of shapeshifters calling themselves bestiaals began as allies to the humans of Symbaroum, but eventually **became their slaves and enemies.** Judging by some of the fragmentary mosaics found at Odaban, assumed to tell about the siege of Symbar, **the bestiaals fought against the humans, alongside the elves.** It took the scholars many years to realize that the multi-shaped creatures depicted in the mosaics were of the same race, sometimes winged, sometimes not; at times tall and sturdy, at other times tiny and seemingly harmless. **A bestiaal's natural form – the one they wake up in every morning and assume at the moment of death – is human-like with beastly features, sparse fur and a hairless tail.** Because of their shapeshifting ability, they may assume a variety of forms and traits, thus adjusting to the requirements of the situation.

Homing pigeon from the Ravens

Surrounded in the Ravens, far to the north. We found their village, in wooded vale. Darean and Sagal were there, he pierced on a skewer, she bound. The beasts discovered us, we ran, here. The silence reveals they are closing in. May Prios lead this pigeon to you with my farewell. Yours always – Enon.

After the fall of Symbaroum, the shapeshifters withdrew into isolation amongst the Ravens. Lately they have reappeared in regions occupied by humans – first in Vajvod, then spreading to the west and south. **Their agenda, if they indeed have a common one, is unknown.** The individuals encountered in bright Davokar and in Ambrian border-settlements and outposts seem to act alone or in small groups, as hunters, or more precisely: as predators. According to many horrific stories, not even humans are safe from their appetites.

From what is known, almost all members of this race are capable and dangerous in combat. However, there are some tales describing bestiaals who truly excel in this respect; individuals feared even by others of their kind. This is supposedly the matter of specimens whose highly developed shapeshifting ability makes them **capable of entering into a kind of symbiotic relationship with glints** (see page 46). So far, no such glint-carrying bestiaals have caused a racket on Ambrian soil, and this is fortunate since they are said to be both lightning fast and extremely tough. On the other hand, **there are stories from both Thistle Hold and Kastor about bestiaals having vanished or been found slaughtered after claiming to have glint-carriers on their trail.** Maybe there is some truth to the analysis of Order Master Eufrynda, that most bestiaals found in Ambria are on the run, and that the glint-carriers are sent from one or more settlements hidden in the vales of the Ravens?

Adventure Set-up

The characters receive a distress call from a logging camp or similar outpost in Davokar – **people have been killed or taken, up to two at a time; all that has been found are the slaughtered remains.** The best (maybe only?) way to expose the murderers is to use live bait, possibly one or two disguised player characters. At the first attempt they can be attacked by something entirely different (predators, rage trolls or elves), but it is soon evident that these could not have caused the previous killings.

A second attempt yields results; they are attacked by 4–5 bestiaals. However, as the trap slams shut, one or more bestaals **falls to its knees, begging for mercy.** If the characters let them live, they disclose that they are refugees from a mountain village, and that the glint-carrier sent to hunt them down holds two of their children captive and **forces them to feed him with fresh meat, preferably human.** The characters will have to choose whether to slay the hunting party, help them to kill the glint-carrier, or try to rescue the children so that the refugees can get away from their tormentor.

True Form and Bestiaal

The mystical power *True Form* can reveal the basic form of a bestiaal, without any of the traits added by the *Metamorphosis*. Additionally, with the adept level of the same power, the bestiaal can be forced to assume its basic form, without extra traits, and the master level can stop it from reactivating the extra traits.

BESTIAAL, CLAWING FIGHTER

Manner	Purposefully aggressive
Race	Bestiaal (cultural being)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Armored* (II, from *Metamorphosis*), *Bushcraft*, *Metamorphosis* (III), *Robust* (II, from *Metamorphosis*)

Accurate 15 (–5), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 9 (+1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 7 (+3), **Strong** 11 (–1), **Vigilant** 10 (0)

Abilities	*Marksman* (adept), *Man-at-arms* (novice), *Twin Attack* (adept)		
Weapons Accurate	Bow 5, two one-handed weapons 7/4		
Armor	Leathery skin 7		
Defense	–1		
Toughness	11	**Pain Threshold**	6
Shadow	Deep, unreflective grey, like a worn lump of lead (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: Moves over the field of battle to reach the enemy's archers and mystics. When these are down, it takes on the melee fighters.

BESTIAAL, GLINT-CARRIER

Manner	Shifts between calm and furious
Race	Bestiaal (cultural being)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Armored* (II, from *Metamorphosis*), *Bushcraft*, *Metamorphosis* (III), *Robust* (II, from *Metamorphosis*), *Sturdy* (I), *Swift* (I)

Accurate 15 (–5), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 9 (+1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 7 (+3), **Strong** 11 (–1), **Vigilant** 10 (0)

Abilities	*Marksman* (adept), *Man-at-arms* (novice), *Twin Attack* (adept)		
Weapons Accurate	Bow 5, two one-handed weapons 7/4		
Armor	Leathery skin 7		
Defense	–1		
Toughness	17	**Pain Threshold**	6
Shadow	Deep grey with fiery streaks, like a faintly glowing lump of lead (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: Walks straight towards the enemy's strongest fighter to slay it with flashing strikes. When the glint-carrier dies, a glint is released and immediately attacks (see page 48).

New Rule: Playing a Bestiaal

It is fully possible, though challenging, to play a character of the Bestiaal race. It is challenging in two respects: first in the sense that bestiaals do not have a given role in Ambria, making them difficult to portray; second, it can be difficult from a rules perspective, to handle the flexibility provided by the trait *Metamorphosis*. Nonetheless, if the player is prepared to accept these conditions, members of this beastly race may prove very rewarding to play.

Note that the basic form of a Bestiaal has only the monstrous trait *Metamorphosis*, the trait/boon *Bushcraft* and (as a suggestion) the burden *Pariah*.

BESTIAAL, WINGED HUNTER

Manner	Squinting, focused
Race	Bestiaal (cultural being)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Armored* (II, from *Metamorphosis*), *Bushcraft*, *Metamorphosis* (III), *Wings* (II, from *Metamorphosis*)

Accurate 15 (–5), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 9 (+1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 7 (+3), **Strong** 11 (–1), **Vigilant** 10 (0)

Abilities	*Marksman* (adept), *Man-at-arms* (novice), *Twin Attack* (adept)		
Weapons Accurate	Bow 5, two one-handed weapons 4		
Armor	Leathery skin 4		
Defense	–4		
Toughness	11	**Pain Threshold**	6
Shadow	Deep, unreflective grey, like a worn lump of lead (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: Flies up and hovers above the battle. From there it fires arrows at melee fighters, attempting to hamper their movements so that its allies can get through to mystics and enemies with ranged weapons.

Colossi

Well, sure, you'd better believe I have seen a coloss up close, terrifyingly close.

It was on one of those days when you'd rather stay in the tent – a gushing rain fell on the tree tops; the droplets smashed into a wet mist or assembled on the leaves to fall in heavy sheets that truly hammered against the scalp. But I buckled on the quiver and forced myself out to check the traps.

One of the traps was placed close to the ruin of the Anchor Cross, and it was there I found him. That he was a witch, I knew immediately, from his cloths and the mask of bark. Lifeless. As if dead. No visible wounds but with black stains in the face, as if from acid or possibly... well, from death?

Anyway, I hurried to feel his pulse. The heart was beating, though faintly. Shortly after I started dabbing his face with an herbal cure, I heard it – a loud creaking bang behind me, as if a sturdy tree branch slowly broke asunder. I turned my neck, was met by an abysmal bellowing and a foreleg that was raised to crush me. I froze. Completely paralyzed.

At that moment the witch awoke, and the coloss froze, like me. If the herbal cure had taken one single breath longer to work, I would have become one with the soil, and you would not exist. That's the truth of it!

Grandpa Toste brags to his grandchildren over a pint of beer at The Rusty Dragon, Kastor

Among Ambrians as well as most barbarian clans, the legendary mounts of the witches are called Colossi. These massive carnivores that **look like a blend of wood and flesh,** instill fear and respect in any and all, but maybe these feelings would be even stronger if those meeting them knew their true origin. **In truth, the colossi are not beasts like all others. They are created.**

The mystical ceremony used by the witches in this context is a well-preserved secret, **only known by the most experienced among them – the Huldra, the Keepers of the clans and their equals.** When speaking to outsiders, the initiates claim that the colossi came with the Iron Pact from the west, **why they tend to use the Elven name for the creature, eliend, as often as they say coloss.**

The act of creation starts with a witch who is balancing on the edge of becoming blight born, and who **willingly agrees to be sacrificed in order to continue fighting.** During the ceremony that transforms the witch into a hybrid of flesh and wood, the subject is **cleansed of all corruption, and stripped of memories and will.** All that remains is the unruly hunger of the coloss and a desire to serve the witch the ritual bound it to.

This also explains why **wild specimens are so rare.** Lonesome colossi are always the result of their witch being **killed or otherwise hindered in caring for his or her creation.** Such individuals are instinctively drawn to places where beasts or cultural beings gather, with the aim of finding a new master, worthy of their loyalty and assistance. They often linger in an area for an extended period of time, and if they do not get help to satisfy their hunger for fresh meat, they will sooner or later attack – **to feed before they journey onwards to some other place.**

Adventure Set-up

The characters arrive at a settlement around which **a lone and hungering coloss** is stalking. Initially, tracks are found in the vicinity; later, loud creaks are heard when the frustrated beast beats down on fully grown trees, followed by actual observations. **Then come the first attacks** (possibly against livestock), soon followed by the slaying of a cultural being.

One of the authority figures in the settlement asks the characters for help in dealing with the situation. **This can be done in several ways** – direct combat is possible, but a passed *Cunning* test with *Beast Lore* opens up for the option to feed, and hence clam, the creature. Whatever they do, a serious complication is revealed: someone recognizes a piece of equipment on the coloss (a witch's braid, facial mask or similar) and knows **who used to ride and care for this particular animal: the witch Ayda.**

This is deeply worrying, since every fall (or at some other suitable time) the settlement suffers problems associated with a passing monster (arch troll, winter elf, lindworm or similarly powerful being). **Ayda has always helped the residents to divert the attention of the hungering, threatening monster when it passes the settlement;** with her gone, maybe dead, the residents are in serious danger.

The player characters are asked to track down Ayda. As a suggestion, they find her dead, after having been captured or ambushed, but among her belongings they discover **instructions on how to divert the monster's attention from the settlers.** Putting these instructions into practice also falls on the characters, and if they fail they must prepare for a really tough fight – or they can decide to run away, knowingly leaving hundreds of children, women and men in great peril.

COLOSS			
Manner	Stoically enraged		
Race	Predator (beast)		
Resistance	Strong		
Traits	*Colossal* (II), *Natural Weapon* (III), *Robust* (III), *Sturdy* (II), *Wrecker* (III)		
Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 9 (+1), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Iron Fist* (adept), *Natural Warrior* (adept)		
Weapons Strong	Hoofs 12/8 (long, wrecking), two attacks at the same target		
Armor	Bark-like hide 4		
Defense	+1		
Toughness	30	**Pain Threshold**	8
Shadow	Trembling bright green, like beard-lichens in the wind (corruption: 0)		
Tactics: The coloss charges forth, trampling its enemies to death.			

The witch's coloss can carry
The witch's coloss can trample
Kick and scratch and chew, indeed,
yes, that is what the colossi need.

Popular children's song in Davokar

Create Eliend, ceremony

The mystical ceremony which transforms a witch into a coloss requires a minimum of four participants, one of which acts as officiant. It takes a whole day to complete and the participants jointly suffer 5D6 temporary corruption, divided equally between them, and without causing any further side-effects. One of the participants is bound to the newly awakened creation, just as if it was a familiar.

Furthermore, should a witch encounter a lone coloss in the wilds and gain its trust, he or she can bind to the creature using the ritual *Familiar*.

Corrupted Nature

We had the witch surrounded, and she knew it. She had nowhere to run; with the face of the cliff on one side and the swamp on the other, she retreated into the gorge and had her cursed Thorne Beasties hinder our advancement.

Several of our guides hesitated when ordered to follow her down into the shadows, but I pressed on. Admittedly, the floor of the gorge offered a disheartening view – ashen grey, as if the rock itself had been incinerated and no life later returned; even the air was dry in a way which suggested that the winds could not bring moisture into this valley of cinders. A befitting place for the death of a witch, I thought. It was not until we started our attack that I realized that her withdrawal was carefully planned, that she too knew she would die and had decided to take us with her.

As our warriors moved in, we spoke our prayers and weaved our spells while the witch called upon her dark allies to combat us. The corruption oozed in the air, as unavoidable here as everywhere else. We knew what we were doing – fire may be fought with fire, by those who are disciplined enough. Or so we thought. Then and there, we were totally wrong.

Corruption fell to the ground like black teardrops, and where each drop landed, a daemon appeared to immediately attack – us or the witch; they did not discriminate in deciding who to tear asunder. The last sound I heard before my squires dragged me away wounded was the witch laughing, a laugh that turned into a scream when she and the rest of my troop were destroyed in the depths of that cursed gorge.

Templar Aralo Patio, statement after the return to Templewall

Discovering Corrupt Nature

That you are entering an area with corrupt nature can be noticed with a successful *Vigilant* test by anyone with *Bushcraft* or *Witchsight*. With *Bushcraft* the character realizes that the place is unnatural and dangerous; with *Witchsight* it is also possible to perceive the corruption in the air, ground and waters.

If the test is successful, it is possible to turn back and find a way around the area, at the cost of a longer route (+1D12 hours).

The hallucinations that sometimes occur in corrupted areas can feel so real that they in themselves may be the end of an entire adventuring party.

Understanding the Danger

When the characters have established that they are in a corrupted area, someone with the abilities *Witchsight* or *Beast Lore* may try to predict what is coming. A passed *Cunning* test gives information regarding which type of danger/dangers are likely found in the area (Virulent Corruption, Retaliation and/or Materialization). Should the test pass with a difference of 5 or more, the character also gets an idea of how grave the dangers are (the Game Master gives a hint of the resistance in terms of ordinary, challenging, strong or mighty).

There is no doubt that in the deeper parts of Davokar, there are **places which are very dissimilar from what normally passes for natural.** Whoever claims that similar phenomena can be encountered in the mountains and on the rolling fields of Ambria is also correct. No matter if the area's corruption has long been evident, if it has bloomed after centuries in fallow or if it recently came to be, there are places that should not be visited; **places whose wrath threatens all that live.** Unfortunately, the malice can be difficult to notice before it is too late.

Corrupt nature appears in many different forms – it may be dense fog banks that slowly drift through the woods, places where the ground and all vegetation have blackened, wetlands reeking of putrefaction, or **areas suffering from tears in the physical structure of the world.** The witches call such places by names like **Blight Mists, Night Mirrors, Black Lands and World Wounds,** and claim that they all vary in strength and girth. There are tales of world wounds that have turned into **gaping Doom Chasms, linked to the Yonderworld and spewing out hungering daemons;** of creamy mists hovering about and following monstrous primal blight beasts; even of grounds stained by darkness so vile that they can **thoroughly corrupt travelers and beasts at first breath.**

In common for all these types of blighted nature is that they can harm the living in many different ways: **they can infect with corruption, punish outbreaks of corruption or embody corruption in the physical form of abominations and daemons.** Regarding the latter, the beasts may appear in different ways – at times they crawl out of the Black Land's mires; at times they seem to materialize from the fog; and sometimes they force their way through the tears of the world wounds.

When encountering corrupt nature, the following tables are used to determine **what dangers are found in the area.** A roll on Table 1 decides how many times the Game Master must roll on Table 2. If several rolls are to be made, **the same result may not appear twice;** if this happens, roll again. Likewise, **only one outcome resulting in Virulent Corruption is allowed.** Finally, note that **if more than one roll results in encounters with attacking creatures, these will appear in waves with 5+1D6 turns between them** – always with the weakest first, and then in accordance with rising might.

Adventure Set-up

One way to give corrupt nature a clear role in an adventure is to **let a person that the characters are hunting flee into the mists,** out onto the blackened or putrid grounds, or to an area plagued by world wounds. **Maybe the prey just happens to end up there, or it is a calculated move** – the enemy trusts itself to find the way out and hopes that the hunting characters will not.

As for the characters, the question is whether they perceive the danger or if they unknowingly run into the area and risk getting lost. **As usual, one of the players gets to roll for the fleeing enemy, to see if he or she finds a way out or not.** Chances are that both hunters and prey get stuck in the area; maybe the situation forces them to negotiate a temporary treaty so they can face the dangers of corruption together?

"The uncultivated man is like a mire sick with corruption: reeking, terrifying and full of abominable impulses."

Eufrynda, notorious Order Master

Combating Corrupt Nature

The ritual *Nature's Lullaby* can always be used to traverse areas of corrupt nature; when it is used, those protected will not suffer the effects of Virulent Corruption or Retaliation, and the area's hunting daemons will keep at a distance.

Most places can also be temporarily cleansed or healed with rituals like *Sanctifying Rite* and *Exorcism*, but this requires the mystic to actually be in the area and remain safe while performing the ritual. Doing this means that the Virulent Corruption is neutralized for a period from one day up to a whole year (the Game Master decides), after which it returns to the (un)normal. How much truth is in the legends of ancient, powerful ceremonies with the power to actually heal corrupted nature is debated – and this to no avail, since the knowledge of such rituals is long forgotten.

Table 1: Number of dangers

1D10	NUMBER OF ROLLS ON TABLE 2
1	1
2–3	2
4–7	3
8–9	4
10	5

Table 2: Dangers in Corrupt Nature

1D20	TYPE	EFFECT
1	Virulent Corruption	Pass a *Strong* test each hour/scene or suffer 1D4 temporary corruption
2	Virulent Corruption	Pass a *Strong* test each hour/scene or suffer 1D6 temporary corruption
3	Virulent Corruption	All suffer 1D4 temporary corruption per hour/scene
4	Virulent Corruption	All suffer 1D6 temporary corruption per hour/scene; also, a failed *Strong* test gives one point of permanent corruption
5	Retaliation	All temporary corruption generated in the area is doubled
6	Retaliation	Those who suffer temporary corruption in the area, suffer an equal amount damage to *Toughness*
7	Retaliation	Those who suffer temporary corruption in the area, suffer 1D4 damage to *Toughness* per point of corruption
8	Retaliation	Each point of corruption generated in the area gives rise to a daemon (stats as Intruder, page 173) which attacks a random target
9	Retaliation	Each turn when corruption is generated, all in the area suffer from horrifying hallucinations; all who fail a *Resolute* test spend one turn defending against imaginary enemies (no actions allowed).
10	Retaliation	The hallucinations are even stronger and requires a test against *[Resolute –5]*; a failure means paralysis for 1D4 turns.
11	Materialization	1D4 daemons with stats as Blight Born Human
12	Materialization	1D8 daemons with stats as Blight Born Human
13	Materialization	1D4 daemons with stats as Blight Born Elk
14	Materialization	1D8 daemons with stats as Blight Born Elk
15	Materialization	1D4 daemons with stats as Intruder
16	Materialization	1D8 daemons with stats as Intruder
17	Materialization	1D4 daemons with stats as Blight Born Aboar
18	Materialization	1D8 daemons with stats as Blight Born Aboar
19	Materialization	1 daemon with stats as Scorner
20	Materialization	1 daemon with stats as Primal Blight Beast

Darkling

To whom it may concern,
The jewel in this flask is yours. All I ask in return is that you deliver the letter to master Ildered, by the Octagon in Ravenia, my husband.

Loved ones, dear family, I will never return. I set off to find happiness, and I found it in the most peculiar place, in the strangest of circumstance.

The journey through the woods cost us many lives, so many that only four of us finally reached Whitewater and continued towards the Twilight Field. If this field really exists, and if it is full of Twilight Thistles, I will never know, because two days upstream we walked straight into my owners' ambush. We heard nothing, saw nothing, did not get the slightest feeling of unease, until the arrows were lodged in our legs, stopping us from running away.

Slender unhumans appeared from out of the greenery, disarmed us and tied us up in a row. My colleagues were eaten within a couple of weeks, but you know me – my stubborn inquisitiveness must have amused them, or made them curious, because I still live, as their obedient slave, servant and medicus. I am no longer afraid; all that remains is a harmonious, almost euphoric feeling of finally really living, as life is intended to be.

Forget me, just as I will forget about you. Know that I am happy.

Hedla, your mother and spouse

Letter found in glass bottle, floating on Lake Volgoma

There are beings in the Davokar region which almost never leave the woods and thus are **seldom seen on Ambrian soil.** One of these is the creature that in ancient barbarian legends is called the Darkling, or sometimes Nightling. They are an intelligent race which has existed in the area since long before humans came wandering across the Ravens. It appears they have never been dominant, never sought conquest and **barely left any trace of their existence in the form of buildings or writing.**

The few accounts that speak of these creatures are consistent on a couple of issues, whether they come from alleged encounters or conversations with knowledgeable barbarians. Darklings **do not seem to discriminate between cultural beings and the beasts of the wilds,** meaning that humans as well as elves and trolls are counted among their prey. Aside from this, their strangest and most prominent feature is their **resistance to mystical influence** – a characteristic that some witches claim has to do with them, from tradition and necessity, **living in total harmony with Wyrtha,** without trying to cultivate, refine or manipulate nature.

As a consequence, the darklings are **genuine hunter-gatherers,** and their hunting takes place in both the woods and the Underworld. They use simple weapons, **such as bows, spears and traps,** often without metal, giving them the quality Blunt. However, the leaders sometimes have tips of bog iron, or weapons inherited from killed prey animals.

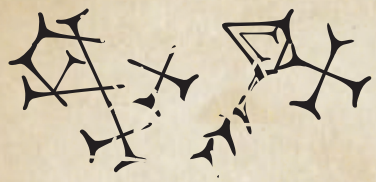
DARKLING, HUNTER			
Manner	Always tense		
Race	Cultural Being		
Resistance	Challenging		
Traits	*Bushcraft*, *Mystical Resistance* (II), *Regeneration* (I)		
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 11 (–1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 15 (–5), **Resolute** 9 (+1), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 13 (–3)			
Abilities	*Acrobatics* (novice), *Marksman* (adept), *Sixth Sense* (master), *Polearm Mastery* (novice)		
Weapons Vigilant/ Accurate	Bow 4 (blunt), Spear 4 (blunt, long)		
Armor	None (regenerates 2 *Toughness* per turn, except unholy damage)		
Defense	–5		
Toughness	10	**Pain Threshold**	5
Shadow	Shimmering dark green, like damp moss on a stump in the moonlight (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: The darklings fight unhindered by darkness and hunt in groups, commanded by a strong leader. Aside from defending the leader, they aim for the target he or she has appointed. If the opposition seems tough the leader may give the order to retreat, but they will not be taken alive and if someone in their group cannot get away they all stay and fight to the death.

Darkling Language

The darklings communicate with a combination of gestures and sounds, where the latter are enough to convey functional messages, while the former add value judgements, emotions and detail. One effect of this is that darkling jokes are often formulated so that the sounds say one thing and the gestures another.

To learn the darkling language a character needs the *Loremaster* ability at adept level, but also a teacher or a lot of time spent with someone who actually knows the Darkling tongue – such as a group of darklings or possibly a former captive.



Symbols carved on rock face by Lake Volgoma; the earliest known distress call from a human captured by darklings.

Protective Braid

The Protective Braid is a lesser artifact developed by the darklings over the centuries, making it possible for them to move through corrupted terrain. It can be made from any natural material; its power lies in the structure of the braiding and the melodies sung while it is being made.

The artifact's effect is that each time its carrier suffers temporary corruption, the outcome of the effect roll is modified by –1, though never as low as zero. On the downside, the power of the braid shields the carrier from the mystical energies of the world, resulting in a –3 modification on all success tests that can potentially result in corruption.

DARKLING, LEADER			
Manner	Calmly calculating		
Race	Cultural Being		
Resistance	Strong		
Traits	*Bushcraft*, *Mystical Resistance* (III), *Regeneration* (I)		
Accurate 5 (+5), **Cunning** 11 (–1), **Discreet** 7 (+3), **Persuasive** 15 (–5), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 9 (+1), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 13 (–3)			
Abilities	*Acrobatics* (novice), *Leader* (master), *Marksman* (master), *Sixth Sense* (master)		
Weapons Vigilant	Bow 5 (ignores *Armor*)		
Armor	None (regenerates 2 *Toughness* per turn, except unholy damage)		
Defense	0		
Toughness	10	**Pain Threshold**	5
Shadow	Glossy green, like water algae at the bottom of a sunlit stream (corruption: 0)		
Tactics: The darkling leaders keep a cool head, remain at a distance from the enemy and coordinate any attacks. Attacking with ranged weapons during a tactical retreat is their usual strategy when facing aggressive opposition.			

Adventure Set-up

It has been known to happen that a leader among the darklings will **grow fond of a captured prey, be it a cultural being or a beast.** In the former case, it is not a question of the darkling thinking that it can learn from the captive. Sure, the prey is allowed to contribute to the community, but aside from this, the relationship between the parties is **similar to that between owner and pet.**

The characters may be given, or decide to take on, the mission to track down a missing person, maybe even Hedla, **the author of the letter on the previous spread.** When, after an eventful journey, they find the person, the darklings will likely hesitate – the strangers look too tough to be regarded as prey. At a tense meeting where the captive acts as interpreter, it is made clear that the leader will not let the slave go unless the characters **assist the hunting party in dealing with a local threat** (for instance an abomination, undead or a liege troll).

Should the characters agree, they will soon face the next setback: **the captive wants to remain and only played along to get their help in dealing with the threat!** Do the characters decide to leave without the person they came for, or will they resort to violence and force?

Death Prince

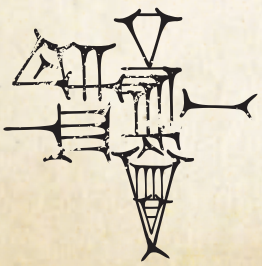
Ancient legends, as well as more contemporary stories, are **full of examples of sorcerers with the ability to create Death Lords** – a dead body that has been brought back to life through a ritual that **burns its flesh and bones into a blackened suit of armor, which is bound to serve the sorcerer forever.** But what these horror stories often fail to mention is what happens if, or rather when, the master dies...

The death lord is incapable of harming its master, but if he or she should die from something else, **the undead is freed from the chains of servitude.** Such free death lords are usually called Death Princes and are very rare, which is fortunate, as they can only be described as particularly terrifying. **The death prince's liberation unlocks the dark energies that were bound in the ritual creating it;** the power is then under the prince's control, to be used against any who displease it.

Once free, the death prince also develops a ferocious hunger for power, **possibly as a reaction to the enslavement it suffered while its master still lived.** They are normally drawn to places where there are humans or beasts to subjugate, **where they can crown themselves sovereigns** and start spreading their bleak terror. But there are also stories about death princes who, after being freed, have traced their memories back to places that were once important to them, before their death and subsequent reanimation. **The burning jealousy that flares up whenever the death prince learns that other people have gotten their hands on its property has claimed many lives in Ambria, Davokar, and the once great Alberetor** – lives that are often reanimated and forcefully recruited into the growing army of the death prince.

List of Wanted Death Princes

- **Kelira Homril:** Traveling knight who is said to seek revenge on the Sun Church, particularly on the individuals who branded her family heretics. Was last seen near Yndaros.
- **Mandar of Blood & Fire:** Mystically trained death prince who fled after the black cloaks killed his mistress near Kastor. Rumor has it that Mandar has settled down in southern Davokar, populating his domain with bestial subjects.
- **Feliar the Frightful:** A centuries-old death prince who according to witnesses (albeit unreliable ones) has stalked the people across the Titans and assembled an army of goblins and trolls. If true, his long-term plan is most likely a full-scale invasion, probably beginning in the south.
- **The Nameless One:** The death prince who was freed upon the demise of Judge Abigal, one of the Dark Lord's closest followers, is said to be operating in Ambria. Whether he is hunting his master's killer or seeking revenge on the master's surviving colleagues is unclear.



Segments of obscure cuneiform found in Odaban. It may concern the last ruler of the city, who might have been slain by a death prince known as Shieldbolt, or possibly Boltguard.

For a long time I traveled with the talkative bard Tulgalo and his mistress, a knight whose armor was covered in runes. The bard referred to the knight as Baroness Kelira Homril; the knight did not say a word and kept her visor down even in the most blistering heat. This did not strike me as particularly strange, as the knights of the Realm of the Order are famously disciplined, not unlike the templars of Prios.

Neither was I unsettled by the knight's extraordinary composure. When we were attacked by the Ice Witch's robbers in the borderlands of the Titans, she took blows and strikes like no one I have ever seen. Not even the most hardened Pansar could remain standing after such a beating, but Tulgalo simply put it down to the holy power which the knights of the Realm of the Order draw from their deep faith in the Young Gods. Although this answer offended me, as a follower of Prios, I did not inquire any further.

Only when we arrived in Yndaros and went our separate ways did my critical faculties come into play. With growing suspicion, I headed to the open section of the Triplet Towers, where I learned the true state of things: the fiefdom of Homril, near the Realm of the Order's southern border, was devastated in year 4 by raging abominations from the wastes of the Mastodon, and Baroness Kelira died defending her lands. I immediately notified the liturgs at the Cathedral of Martyrs, and received the disconcerting reply that they have been hunting this death prince ever since Master Malesio – who was later exposed as a sorcerer – died and Kelira Homril became her own black princess.

Story recorded by Perela, notary at the Queen's Legation in Thistle Hold

New ritual: False Life

The mystic weaves a veil over an undead creature, thereby concealing all signs of death during the following day. As long as the ritual is in effect, the undead will appear alive to anyone in its presence, except that its shadow remains the same – a successful *[Vigilant←Discreet]* test with the *Witchsight* ability reveals that the person is in fact thoroughly corrupted.

DEATH PRINCE			
Manner	Commanding		
Race	Undead		
Resistance	Strong		
Traits	*Companions* (II, one dragoul, a flock of violings), *Gravely Cold* (II), *Undead* (II)		
Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 10 (0), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 13 (–3), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 9 (+1)			
Abilities	*Iron Fist* (adept), *Man-at-arms* (master), *Revenant Strike* (adept), *Ritualist* (adept: *Desecrating Rite*, *False Life*, *Raise Undead*), *Two-handed Force* (master)		
Weapons Strong	Bastard sword 10 (bastard weapon, precise, reanimating), ignores *Armor*		
Armor	Full plate 5		
Defense	–1		
Toughness	15	**Pain Threshold**	–
Shadow	Matte black, like sooty steel (thoroughly corrupt)		
Tactics: The Death Prince marches into combat flanked by its followers, and makes use of *Gravely Cold* to paralyze the enemy before crushing it with mighty, reanimating blows.			

Adventure Set-up

The player characters have come to a castle or a larger estate belonging to a noble, as guests or perhaps as emissaries of some suitable faction. **Late one evening, a funeral procession arrives at the estate, carrying the corpse of the knight Aridna on a stretcher.** Karmalo, the late knight's squire, explains that his mistress burned to death while battling a fire breathing monstrosity. He asks for the noble's protection and help in bringing Aridna home.

The corpse is placed in the local chapel for the night. **At midnight, a group of violings silently gathers on the ridges of the roof.** Shortly thereafter the settlement is attacked by undead, and what is more: **just as the battle reaches its height, the dead knight rises and joins her equally undead squire Karmalo (disguised during the day through the False Life ritual) in trying to open the gate from the inside!**

The knight's full name is **Aridna Kaora.** She was killed in Alberetor by the Dark Lords, when the grandparents of the current castle/estate owner betrayed her family's hiding place. Now she has come to seek revenge, and **take the residence of the traitor for her new stronghold.** Perhaps the opposition is so overwhelming that the characters are forced to escape; perhaps they bring the noble along? And maybe a series of future adventures can revolve around them **driving off the undead princess and cleansing the region of undead.**

Dragon

To the right: Letter which can be found in a cave close to a tower ruin in the south Ravens

According to most authorities in Ambria, dragons are **a thing of the past** and most doubt that such creatures have ever existed. **The few who beg to differ often simply refuse to agree with the vast majority or refer to obscure sources** – conversations with ancient arch trolls, examinations of unearthed bone fragments or scriptures recovered from crumbling ruins, preferably carved in ambiguous types of cuneiform writing. **However, in this case, like in many others, the majority are wrong and the alleged maniacs right.**

Actually, it is even the case that a **dragon was dissected** at the Vivisectory in Yndaros, as late as in the **winter of year 19,** albeit in its larval stage – the stage that in both Ambria and Davokar goes by the name Lindworm. Not even the lindworms themselves know why none of them have evolved to higher life-stages these past hundreds of years, just as none of them can explain **why it has started happening again.** Supposedly, the former had to do with the fall of Symbaroum and the intervention of the Iron Pact; likely, the latter development is connected to the accelerating darkening of Davokar.

Lindworms fall into slumber just like elves, **preferably deep inside a remote cave, at the bottom of a lake or dug down into the ground and covered by a thick layer of soil.** Just as with the elves, many individuals perish during this slumber, while those who awake grow in both strength and size. According to some legends, the life-cycle of a dragon involves at least three stages after the lindworm, but in [illegible]'s Davokar you can only find representatives two of those. It is a small number of individuals, especially at the stage called Dragon and whose members have both extremities and the ability to breathe fire, **but they are all particularly proud, powerful and greedy.** Furthermore, they are intelligent enough to avoid catching the attention of humans; **their collective memory contains many dark events of the past, demonstrating just how vexing human monster hunters and heroes with delusions of grandeur can be...**

Adventure Set-up

A lindworm's evolution into a dragon **should be introduced step by step.** Maybe it starts with the player characters seeking out a well-known and **reasonably friendly-minded lindworm,** in the hunt for knowledge about some ruin, artifact or mystical truth. When they arrive, they are forced to combat minions the serpent assembled prior to its slumber. After many ordeals, they reach the lindworm's underground lair just in time to witness its rebirth – in the form of a famished Drakworm.

The second step may be introduced once they have returned to Ambria with the tale of what happened. Most people laugh and **dismiss all "evidence" as a hoax,** but one Master of the Order (or similar) reacts in a dissimilar way. Apparently, she sent a small expedition to the Ravens or Titans about six months ago, and just recently she received a message by homing pigeon. It was written with a shaky hand, completely incoherent, but one of the few words that were possible to read spelled "dragon." With reference to the player characters' earlier experience and triumphant return, she wonders if they are willing to escort her in search of the missing expedition...

Honorable Eumenos,

Brother Almagast's scornful smile and ill-concealed accusations regarding our tendency to underestimate the Dark have proved justified, as befitting as the warnings spoken by the blight-crazed treasure hunter.

We have arrived at the gorge where he found the artifact, the Sun Mirror. All in our company trusted in the assessment that you, esteemed brother, shared with me and Routefinder – that the beast the treasure hunter spoke of in his sleep must have been a lindworm, and that his speech on "fiery breath" and "roaring wings" were exaggerations caused by fear. But we were wrong, so wrong.

I hear them now, the roaring wings, and I have seen the creature's shadow. Moments from now, as we leave this shelter, we will all die. But when starvation is the only alternative, the choice is no real choice. With the grace of Prios, the beast may yet prove reasonable; if not we shall meet again, kneeling by the Lawgiver's side.

Your obedient servant, Sister Disera

The Noble Endeavor of the Lindworms

Many lindworms are convinced that exaltation is something you earn, rather than something which just happens. During the past millennium, a majority of Davokar's lindworms have lived much like other predators, but their behavior has changed radically within the latest decade. Based on the presumption that the rhythm of life is dictated by the deeds of the individual, many lindworms have started hunting for worthy opponents, amassing subjects like beasts and trolls, and even challenging each other to prove their strength. Others, having lived such a long life, have developed a deep-rooted fear of death and do all they can to avoid the hazardous dormancy.

It is unclear if there truly is a connection between an individual's power and exaltation, but for the lindworms it is considered to be fact – not least since almost all individuals who have entered the slumber can be said to have, or have had, great power over their surroundings. Yes, even in uncertain cases, interpretations underlining this idea can always be made.

THUS SPOKE AROALETA

"... and every serpent heard the call; in line by line, row by row, they covered the slope by the gaping cave; strongest atop, weakest in the shadows of the vale. Fofar the Colossal, the Destroyer, Lord of Dragons, let the fires wash over the bowing crowd, as far as it reached. Then, no growls were ever heard..."

Wisdom of the Ages

Through the eons, the race has amassed a vast collective wisdom; a deep well of knowledge and insight which many individuals can access through meditation, to solve problems at hand. Doing so is not without risk; in the twilight of the world, the process spawns corruption. *Wisdom of the Ages* gives temporary corruption as if it was a mystical power.

I **Full turn.** The creature loses itself in a short trance. With a passed *Resolute* test, it gains access to the novice level of an optional ability, Mystical Traditions, *Ritualist* and *Mystical Power* excluded. Only one ability at a time can be accessed in this way; changing to another one requires a new trance. The ability can be used for the rest of the scene, before fading from memory.

II **Active.** As I, but the closer connection to the collective memory makes the trance even shorter.

III **Active.** As II, but the individual can dig deeper into the collective memory. With a passed *Resolute* test, it gains access to the adept level of an optional ability.

DRAKWORM

Manner	Aggressively self-assured
Race	Reptiles (beast)
Resistance	Strong
Traits	*Armored* (III), *Colossal* (I), *Enthrall* (III), *Long-lived*, *Robust* (III), *Sturdy* (I), *Wings* (I), *Wisdom of the Ages* (I)

Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 11 (–1), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 15 (–5), **Strong** 17 (–7), **Vigilant** 10 (0)

Abilities	*Exceptionally Resolute* (adept), *Exceptionally Strong* (adept), *Iron Fist* (master), *Natural Warrior* (master)
Weapons Strong	Bite 14, or two attacks at the same target 12/8
Armor	Scales 8
Defense	+4
Toughness	26 **Pain Threshold** 9
Shadow	A dark, matte green, like the rustling leaves of a stinging nettle (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The Drakworms do not hesitate to prove their strength and are more hot-tempered compared to their younger cousins. Sure, they are wise enough to appraise the opposition and use their enthralling ability if necessary, but if readily provoked, they have to pass a *Resolute* test not to immediately attack.

DRAGON

Manner	Supremely dominant
Race	Reptiles (beast)
Resistance	Mighty
Traits	*Armored* (III), *Colossal* (II), *Deadly Breath* (II), *Devour* (I), *Long-lived*, *Natural Weapon* (III), *Robust* (III), *Sturdy* (II), *Wings* (II), *Wisdom of the Ages* (III)

Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 11 (–1), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 16 (–6), **Strong** 18 (–8), **Vigilant** 10 (0)

Abilities	*Exceptionally Resolute* (master), *Exceptionally Strong* (master), *Iron Fist* (master), *Natural Warrior* (master), *Steadfast* (master)
Weapons Strong	Bite 17 (long), or two attacks at the same target 15/11
Armor	Scales 8
Defense	+4
Toughness	36 **Pain Threshold** 9
Shadow	Shiny dark green, like an uncut emerald in the sharpest sunlight (corruption: 0)

Tactics: Even if the fully evolved dragon has lost its capability to enthrall it has many tactics to choose from in combat. If the resistance is challenging, it rises into the air and makes sweeping attacks with bites and fire. At other times, it opts to meet the enemy on the ground, and then draws extra power from the wisdom of its ancestors (for instance the ability *Berserker* or *Feat of Strength* at adept level).

Ettermite

The rumor spread like wildfire around the Antique Plaza: "There is an ettermite colony midway between Odaban and the Columns of Haganor!" The news was barely out there before the first bodies fell in the gutter, victims of rivals hunting for Etter Sleep to make the infernal ettermites drowsy. It was at that time I got involved, as the Commandant's special investigator.

My thankless assignment was to stop the murder spree, a truly challenging task when such sums of thaler and such dreams are at stake. But I am a loyal servant of the Crown and obviously I did my best. For a moment, when I found out how the rumors had started, I actually believed I could succeed – a fortune hunter named Broona had returned from the designated area with ettercopal in a knapsack; however, not from any ettermite colony but from the lair of a liege troll. I thought myself sly when I spread this news, convinced that it would put an end to the murders. But alas!

Another, just as damaging, rumor quickly took root: that Mayor Nightpitch tried to silence the affair with false information, hoping to claim the colony's wealth for himself. Numerous treasure hunting expeditions left for the woods, and few of them ever returned. If it was ettermites or something else that killed them I honestly do not know, but no inflow of ettercopal was ever noticed – this I kept careful track of as part of the investigation.

Excerpt from the logbook of Captain Tallios, Thistle Hold

ETTERMITE SWARM	
Manner	Like a rattling, crackling whirlwind
Race	Winged Creatures (beast)
Resistance	Strong
Traits	*Natural Weapon* (II), *Observant*, *Poisonous* (II), *Sturdy* (II), *Swarm* (III), *Swift* (III), *Wings* (III)
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 9 (+1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 15 (–5), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 11 (–1), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	None
Weapons Accurate	Bite 4, and poison 3 for 3 turns
Armor	A quarter of damage, according to *Swarm III*
Defense	–5
Toughness	22 **Pain Threshold** 6
Shadow	Glossy honey-yellow, like gleaming ettercopal (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The swarm sweeps by at high speed, showering enemies with deadly bites. When at a safe distance from melee attacks, the swarm turns and attacks again, until all enemies are down. Then the feast begins; they always start with the teeth – a crunchy delicacy for triumphant ettermites.

On the rare tree-less hills and ridges found in Davokar, explorers sometimes find **huge, strikingly beautiful pillars made from a rare type of gemstone,** often the color of golden brown but sometimes glittering blue-green or even a hypnotic deep, dark brown. The precious building material, called Ettercopal, has always attracted treasure hunters, brave enough to face the residents of the pillars – swarms of forearm long, winged, carnivorous ettermites. Studies have shown that **the copal is actually produced by the ettermites themselves,** from a mixture of their poison and tree sap.

Other studies have led to various techniques for getting close enough to harvest the ettercopal, but these are rarely effective and **the task is, as a consequence, highly lethal.** On the black market of Thistle Hold you can sometimes find an elixir called Etter Sleep, said to be able to make a whole swarm of ettermites drowsy – for a short time. Such concoctions are of course in high demand, and the price is always high when (and if) they can be found.

Harvesting Ettercopal

Anyone who manages to get close to an ettermite pillar (and possesses the proper tools) can each turn mine and bag one piece of ettercopal. However, it is wise to go for the purest possible pieces.

Attempting to mine the ettercopal requires a *Vigilant* test each turn; those with the ability *Loremaster* may instead roll against *Cunning*. A successful test gives a piece worth 1D4+1 thaler; a failure means it is worth 1 thaler.

How many pieces can be mined depends on the size of the pillar, which in turn depends on how many swarms the pillar houses. You can expect that a specific pillar is made of *[50+1D10]* pieces per residing swarm.

What is interesting, is that Etter Sleep seems to appear in small quantities and at such regular intervals that it can hardly come from finds in the woods – indicating that **there may be an alchemist in town with access to the recipe in question.** The hunt for said alchemist and his or her recipe has led to a wave of killings and torture in the shadowy parts of the Hold, which is easily understood: whoever owns the means and capacity to produce Etter Sleep will become very rich, maybe as wealthy as Nightpitch himself, if not richer still.

Adventure Set-up

The characters along with **one or more rival groups** simultaneously learn the whereabouts of a colony of ettermites. Initially, they will all compete for the only dose of Etter Sleep currently available in the settlement they are in; as a suggestion, the groups reach its owner at about the same time, leading to combat, a bidding contest or other complications.

Then starts the race through the woods. **Reliable information, a great guide and wise choices when plotting the journey may prove decisive so that the characters arrive first,** closely trailed by the competitors. Upon arrival, the problem of harvesting (or, if the characters want, protecting) the copal must be dealt with. Should the characters arrive first, the rivals will likely **attack the colony from a distance,** hoping to make the ettermites aggressive; if the rivals are first, it is up to the characters to establish a plan of action.

Elixirs

Etter Serum

Ettercopal can be used for other things besides novelties and gallantries. Schooled alchemists can use pulverized copal to brew a generally effective serum against poisons, naturally very hard to find and also very expensive (Weak 3 thaler; Moderate 6 thaler; Strong 12 thaler).

It takes a successful *Cunning* test for the serum to have effect. If successful, the effect is ongoing for an entire scene, and its strength varies with the skill of the alchemist, in line with the rules of equivalent antidotes (see page 153 in the *Core Rulebook*).

Etter Sleep

A dose of Etter Sleep is regarded as a master elixir and normally costs 12 thaler per dose. It comes in the form of a liquid, usually encased in a ceramic vessel which is meant to be thrown at the ettermite pillar. A successful *Accurate* test means that the elixir takes effect, a failure that the vessel misses and is crushed against the ground, expending the dose.

After a successful hit, it takes 1D10 turns for the entire colony to be affected. When this happens, the rattling, crackling sounds which accompany every ettermite swarm go suddenly silent. Then the effect is automatic for 1D10 turns, after which it takes a successful test against the *Cunning* of the alchemist who brewed the elixir for it to remain ongoing.

As soon as a test fails, the sounds from the pillar immediately resume. From that moment on, the copal hunters have 1D4 turns to crush a new vessel, flee from the pillar or get ready to face the ettermites' wrath!

Glimmer

It looked like it would be an easy fight. We had hunted the refugees towards the east, all the way to the foothills of the Ravens. There, they took shelter in the remains of a ruined castle, likely fatigued and with limited supplies. We already knew they were prepared to fight to gain access to the Promised Land, so we closed in with great care, right before dawn, weapons at a ready.

They saw us coming and answered with arrows, which stopped our advancement and forced us to cower behind our shields, about halfway up the slope. Once the projectile attacks began to slow, we got up and charged. At that precise moment, the sun came up and its first rays reflected off the head of the refugees' last arrow.

I admit, I ran, like a coward, like a fool. Honestly, I'd rather accept my punishment than undergo an encounter with the Glimmer. When I later dared to go back, the scene was precisely like the cries and clangor had suggested. All were dead, rangers as well as refugees – broken, battered, lifeless. Better the gallows than that, better the gallows...

Transcript of interrogation with accused deserter in Mergile

As with so many of the barbarian tribes, the Vajvod **tell tales of their enemies that stretch long into the night,** long enough to see the fire reduced to smoke and embers. Despite the fear and respect communicated in these stories of battles hard fought, **some enemies have cost so many lives that their mention has become a taboo.** To admit to such losses would be to admit weakness, despite the truth that to speak of such enemies would be to forewarn and forearm.

GLIMMER			
Manner	Complete chaos		
Race	Spirit (undead)		
Resistance	Challenging		
Traits	*Alternative Damage* (II, *Resolute*), *Spirit Form* (II), *Swift* (III), *Terrify* (II)		
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 11 (–1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 15 (–5), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 9 (+1)			
Abilities	*Mirroring* (master)		
Weapons Accurate	Horror slash 4 (damages *Resolute*, ignores *Armor*)		
Armor	Half damage, according to *Spirit Form* II		
Defense	–5		
Toughness	10	**Pain Threshold**	–
Shadow	Black as a starless night reflected against calm waters (thoroughly corrupt)		

Tactics: After having created four mirror images of itself, the Glimmer attacks from behind, surprising the target and scaring them mad by projecting their own fears right back at them. Fighting the Glimmer is like combating sunbursting shreds and glimmering rays in an otherwise black vortex of nightmarish apparitions.

One monstrosity that, for this reason, **rarely is heard of around the fires is the Glimmer.** On the battlefield, the gleam of sunlight off some trinket, weapon or armor might herald something more ominous than the truth of a hard-won battle. **The glint of the sun should not move with such purpose,** a coruscation of fragmentary light that wheels and flickers with cold purpose. The Glimmer roils and blazes through the air with ease, like the flash of swords without the substance, but **with all the malice and vile intent.**

If Ordo Magica or the black cloaks have been able to learn **what the Glimmers actually are or where they come from, it is not something they have announced publicly.** Those who want to know must therefore trust in legends and rumors, such as the sagas told among many clans that surmise some connection between the creatures and the necromantic practices of ancient Symbaroum. Other rumors state that the few Ambrians who have made it to **the lands beyond the Ravens** and back again have encountered tales which seem to be about the Glimmer, in writing or possibly in conversation with the remaining residents of the east – legends describing how **a whole army or invasion force was massacred by glimmering spirit beings,** or alternately by a lone, omnipotent Glimmer King.

For those who believe in luck, **few Glimmers have marked their presence beyond the borderlands of the Ravens.** Yet, that they extend their reach at all suggests the Glimmers have spread and that they reach ever further with little to block their advance. **Maybe they are attracted to combat and bloodshed;** maybe this means that the escalating confrontations of the Davokar region will lead to more suffering than those involved can even begin to imagine...

Adventure Set-up

As a suggestion, the Glimmer is primarily used as a complicating factor, **rather than as the main enemy of an adventure.** No matter if the characters are on a treasure hunt struggling against rivals and/or beasts, if they hunt cultists in some nest of free settlers, or if they are on a common monster hunt, **chances are that a Glimmer is in the vicinity.**

Maybe they initially **encounter the creature's victims, or hear about its rampage from some local resident or traveler?** Maybe a character with the *Loremaster* or *Beast Lore* ability realizes the gravity of the situation? In that case, it may prove necessary to form **awkward alliances** in order to combat the Glimmer. Another option is of course to have **the Glimmer appear right in the midst of a violent encounter** between the characters and their competitors/prey.

Glimmering Hope, Taubio

A shimmering light, a glimpse of hope,
that we shall not falter, that we will cope.
A lustrous shine, a flicker so pure,
promising good times for evermore.

But answer me this, oh splendid light,
for whom do you shine through the dark of the night?
You murdered my friend, my grandpa and crone,
kill any other, and I'm all alone.

Is this perchance, your ultimate goal,
to lay every human, dead in a hole;
to cleanse this domain, of woman and man,
who covets and hungers and takes all they can.

Should this be the case, take note of my words,
cease your protection of mammals and birds!
You're fighting in vain, yes this is true,
cause women and man will devour you.

Glimmer Amulet

Anyone performing the ritual *Soul Trap* where a Glimmer has just been slain can capture its spirit – a fact likely uncovered by the notorious sorcerer and artifact crafter Mad Valando when he tried to trap the spirit of his newly slaughtered servant.

Later, when the Whip of Prios placed Valando in chains, his blood stone amulet was taken to the Twilight Monastery for closer inspection. As soon as its properties were uncovered, the pendant was gifted to the leader of the group responsible for hunting down its maker, Sister Losadra.

The Glimmer Amulet counts as a lesser artifact. Normally, the stone is a deep blood red, but when close to violence its captive gets restless from bloodlust, making sharp rays of light shoot out at irregular intervals. These rays can confuse enemies in melee combat: if the carrier fails to defend against an attack but the dice lands on an uneven number, the carrier gets a second chance to pass the defense test. The downside of this is that if the roll for the second attempt lands on the number 20, the soul trap explodes and the Glimmer gets free, just as hungry and strong as it once was.

Glint

"Did you hear what happened to that pathfinder who led us astray last year, Aranman?"

"Not exactly, only that the town watch clubbed him to death outside the Salons of Symbaroum."

"He was possessed! No, not possessed, more infected. Or infested. A parasite large as an apple was lodged in his throat and had... you know, taken over..."

"Oh, right, a glint. Let me guess, he was described as being unusually quiet of late, and grew notably skinny, and the town watch accused him of attempted murder, one or more?"

"Yes, exactly! But... What? A glint? You know what it is?"

"Of course, everyone who has ventured into Davokar knows. Glints are parasites; they dig into the skull. Hah, they exist just about everywhere in the woods."

"Oh well... Right, that does it!"

"Does what?"

"By Prios, you will never see me set foot in that cursed Davokar ever again!"

Conversation heard at the Toad's Square in Thistle Hold

The Glint is a **tick-like creature, large as a clenched fist and with glowing insides glimpsed between black back-plates.** Their origin is highly debated, but according to some reports they seem to be found **more frequently in and around corrupted areas.** Maybe this is where they come from, or they are drawn there. In any case, they apparently do not need such grounds to prosper.

The glint lays in wait until a suitable host comes close. When this happens, it attacks with the aim of **getting in through the mouth to lodge itself like a pulsating cyst in the throat.** Sleeping victims are preferred, but even a fully awake creature can be targeted. Once in the throat, it sends its control organs through the softer parts of the palate, up into the host's brain, **to take over the body as a means to satisfy its own ends and hungers.** The main objective of a glint is to find more suitable hosts; many in the same location, if at all possible. The latter explains why both glints and glint-carrying hosts sometimes are found far away from the darker parts of Davokar.

The secretions of the glint contribute to the strength and quickness of the host, but its placement in the throat also **hinders the carrier from drinking and eating** – leading to death from starvation in one to two weeks' time. When the host dies, either from starvation or some other cause, **the glint leaves the corpse and starts hunting for a new victim.** However, before it leaves, it places a larva in the abdominal cavity of the carcass; **a larva that feeds off the rotting flesh** and is born as a new glint in about a month.

Revealing Glint-carriers

When meeting a glint-carrier, in combat or on the streets in one of Ambria's border settlements, it is possible to notice that something is not right with the creature. If the sun is up, it may be the deformed neck that arouses suspicion; if night has fallen, the glowing parasite can be seen to color the mouth of the carrier red. As usual, a *[Vigilant←Discreet]* test must be made, using the *Discreet* value of the glint.

GLINT

Manner	Deeply buzzing
Race	Winged Creatures (beast)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Armored* (II), *Carapace* (II), *Infestation* (II), *Natural Weapon* (II), *Wings* (II)

Accurate 15 (–5), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 13 (–3), **Vigilant** 7 (+3)

Abilities	None
Weapons Accurate	Bite 4
Armor	Hard shell 3
Defense	–1
Toughness	13 **Pain Threshold** 7
Shadow	Blushing red, like a glowing coal (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The parasite aims for the largest and most skilled warrior in sight, and tries to infest it as quickly as possible.

GLINT-CARRIER, ABOAR

Manner	Braying with glowing throat
Race	Beast
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Armored* (II), *Natural Weapon* (II), *Robust* (III), *Sturdy* (I), *Swift* (I)

Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 7 (+3), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 9 (+1)

Abilities	*Iron Fist* (adept)
Weapons Strong	Tusks 10
Armor	Hide 7
Defense	+1
Toughness	23 **Pain Threshold** 8
Shadow	Deeply red, with glowing streaks of fire (corruption: 3)

Tactics: The infested aboar attacks without mercy, and does not rest until all enemies are dead. If it falls, a glint is let lose.

GLINT-CARRIER, GUARD WARRIOR

Manner	Relentless and single-minded
Race	Human (cultural being)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Bushcraft*, *Sturdy* (I), *Swift* (I)

Accurate 5 (+5), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 9 (+1), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 11 (–1)

Abilities	*Iron Fist* (master), *Man-at-arms* (adept), *Two-handed Force* (master)
Weapons Strong	Axe 11 (deep impact)
Armor	Scale armor 4
Defense	–3
Toughness	23 **Pain Threshold** 8
Shadow	Deep green with fiery streaks (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The infested guard warrior wades through the battle, hunting for the strongest enemy fighters. If it falls, a glint is let lose.

must be the most remarkable and horrifying
I have ever witnessed on my travels.

The only crime of the man was to have traversed a mire that according to the taboos of clan Enoai is forbidden ground. He was bound to a tree; then his mouth was violently forced open and an insect large as a man's fist shoved down his throat. There he stood for two whole days, completely silent after the initial screams of torment, before he was thrown onto a raging bonfire.

I have a hard time comprehending the response my questions spawned, but apparently this is a ritual performed to appease the darkness of the forest, in the hope that it will leave the clan be. They called the insect the Blight Bug, indicating that it is a form of abomination, but

A creature infected by a glint gains the monstrous traits **Swift and Sturdy,** and should it already have those, its level in these traits increases by +1 (but can never be higher than Level III). All beings with a mouth big enough for the glint to force its way in can be infected, but thoroughly corrupt creatures seem to be immune to this particular infestation. **It should also be noted that the shapeshifting creatures called Bestiaals appear to have a special relationship with glints;** see page 16 for further information on the topic.

Adventure Set-up

An emaciated man stumbles into a town or village which **recently has experienced combat** between the residents and some hostile force (possibly crazed cultists, elves or famished rage trolls). **The man soon dies and is thrown into the mass-grave** where the fallen enemies also were buried. There, **a glint is let loose** to go hunting, after having placed a larva in the belly of the former host.

The glint makes its way to the camp for daythalers, elderly people and paupers which is located close to the settlement, where **it infests a series of destitute people who quickly starve and are thrown in the mass-grave.** Finally, the glint is exposed by a former treasure hunter, and the glint-carrying pauper is captured and burnt, along with the glint.

The characters arrive at the location about a month later, **just as half a dozen glints have gorged themselves, becoming fat and large enough to go on the hunt** – this time, inside the settlement walls, looking for sturdier hosts...

Gwann

We arrived at Outback late in the evening. All was still. Too still. The massive oak gates, worthy of an Ambrian fort, were intact. The palisade, standing upon mighty embankments, remained unbroken. Initially, our cries and knocks at the gate went unanswered and we could do nothing but wait, irresolute with darkening Davokar at our backs.

One of the scouts sniffed the air and wheezed: "The stench, can you smell it?" Before we had time to respond, a weak, trembling voice was heard from the gatehouse: "Climb, quickly, climb!" A rope was lowered down and we hurried up. In the light of the fading sun, standing atop the palisade, we saw the many dirt piles around the settlement – and inside it. "Gwann," our most experienced scout muttered and spit three times over his shoulder. "This explains the stench: this place is doomed and we along with it."

From the missionary Hulandra's journal, found on her starved corpse

Among the Davokar region's tunneling monstrosities, **the gwann is probably responsible for taking the most Ambrian lives.** This goes for both the normal sized gwanns who often team up in large packs to attack colonies and outposts, and **the massive Slaughterers which look like their smaller relatives but fortunately prefer to hunt by themselves.** Initially, after the Ambrians' arrival north of the Titans, the beasts were mainly a threat to travelers in the woods, but now it seems the gwanns have realized that the lowlands are full of accessible prey, on two as well as four legs. And there is no doubt that the feeling of dread is difficult to shake for those who have suffered a gwann attack: **living with the knowledge that a predator, at any time, may break through the ground you walk, stand and sleep on is not easy.**

Even if the number of gwann victims in Ambria is growing, it is of course **the colonies, outposts and travelers of the forest who have the worst of it.** You must

Signs of Gwann

It takes a *Vigilant* test to notice the presence of gwann piles or the reeking territory markings of the beast. To understand what it is, a character with the *Bushcraft* boon must pass a *Cunning* test, while anyone with the ability *Beast Lore* automatically knows what has made the piles and the markings.

learn to read the signs. The two most evident warnings are the **gwann piles, created when the beast shovels up dirt** to build its network of underground tunnels, and **the horrible stench of the secretion it uses to mark out its territory.** Furthermore, all who have the misfortune of running into a gwann must learn not to lower their guard even after, what seems to be, the killing blow has been dealt – the creature's death struggle can be almost as deadly as the attacks of a living individual.

Less reliable reports indicate that gwann **actually may be tamed,** and that both Ambrian explorers and warriors of the clans have encountered **trolls accompanied by seemingly loyal, obedient beasts.** There are also stories that tell of visits to underground troll settlements, where gwanns have been pets and guards. **But considering this creature's often solitary and generally aggressive character,** these are most likely lies or misconceptions; if not, the trolls must know about some special, mystical means to break and tame its hunger and will.

GWANN			
Manner	Shrill chattering		
Race	Predator (beast)		
Resistance	Ordinary		
Traits	*Death Struggle* (I), *Life Sense* (II), *Robust* (I), *Tunneler* (II)		
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 7 (+3), **Strong** 11 (–1), **Vigilant** 15 (–5)			
Abilities	None		
Weapons Accurate	Claws 4		
Armor	Thick skin 2		
Defense	+2		
Toughness	15	**Pain Threshold**	8
Shadow	Grainy dark brown, like light, loose topsoil (corruption: 0)		
Tactics: The normal-sized gwanns always hunt in packs of between five and ten individuals, and use their tunneling ability to slowly grind down the prey while avoiding counterattacks.			

GWANN, SLAUGHTERER			
Manner	Shrill bellowing		
Race	Predator (beast)		
Resistance	Strong		
Traits	*Armored* (II), *Death Struggle* (II), *Life Sense* (II), *Natural Weapon* (III), *Robust* (II), *Tunneler* (III)		
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 7 (+3), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 13 (–3)			
Abilities	*Iron Fist* (adept), *Natural Warrior* (adept)		
Weapons Strong	*Claws 11/8 (long), two attacks at the same target*		
Armor	Thick skin 6		
Defense	+2		
Toughness	15	**Pain Threshold**	8
Shadow	White striped maroon, like lean soil crisscrossed by thin root strands (corruption: 0)		
Tactics: If the enemies stand close together, the gwann tries to create a sinkhole beneath them; if not, it stays below ground and makes use of its superb senses to attack targets on the surface. When all are dead it starts to feed.			

Adventure Set-up

The player characters are somehow drawn into **a peculiar murder mystery,** where the victims have been torn apart by the murderer's claws; **a murderer that seems to have attacked from below ground only to vanish down into collapsed tunnels.** At first, no connections can be found between the victims, but further investigation reveals that they have all dealt with a certain artifact – **the treasure hunter who found it, the antique dealer who certified it, the collector who bought it, the thief who stole it, and the mystic who hired the thief.**

The killer is one of the huge gwanns that the clanfolks call Slaughterers, and it is **controlled by an illgoblin or a troll** that wants to retrieve the troll-made artifact. The solution may be to watch a probable next victim and wait for the attack, hoping to slay the murdering beast and then follow its (not yet collapsed) tunnels **in order to find the master.** Alternately, the characters can find out who currently has the artifact and somehow claim it, to **give it to the gwann** – or its master, if possible. To simply kill the creature will not stop the murders; it only leads to a pause in the killings, **until the master has tracked down and bound a new Slaughterer** to be sent on the same bloody errand.

Gwann as Familiar

Apparently, mystics may bind to normal-sized gwanns with the ritual *Familiar*, but according to Davokar's witches this has only been possible for trolls and ogres. Whether this has to do with the beast having a special connection to these races, or if there are specimens that could be convinced to enter into a spiritual connection with a human being, remains to be seen.

Gwann Tincture

The glands of the gwann can be milked of their reeking contents, and such Gwannoreum is coveted by alchemists and perfume makers. Dead gwanns may be milked by someone with *Bushcraft* who passes a *Cunning* test, resulting in one dose of gwannoreum worth 1 thaler. A living gwann (like a familiar) can be milked once per adventure.

An adept (or master) level alchemist has the knowledge to mix gwannoreum with alcohol and refine the substance into Gwann Tincture. A moderate, adept-made dose costs 3 thaler and gives the user's senses a superhuman edge – in terms of rules, anyone consuming a dose gains the abilities of the trait *Life Sense* at Level II for the rest of the scene (see page 170 for details). A master Alchemist can refine the substance even further, and concoct an elixir which normally costs 9 thaler and gives the user Level III in the same trait.

False Gwann Tincture

According to traditional medicine, Gwann Tincture is said to cure everything from the chills to toothache and also relieve gout, end hiccups, revive failing carnal desires, and prevent and abort pregnancies. Charlatans often sell false Gwann Tincture (diluted ten times from the original) at 1 thaler per dose, and it takes a passed *Vigilant* test with the boon *Bushcraft* to distinguish the false from the genuine. A character with the ability *Alchemy* makes the distinction directly, without the test.

The diluted elixir still has effect, but is naturally much weaker – one dose gives the user a second chance to pass all tests against *Vigilant*, during the scene which follows after consumption.

Illgoblin

A few goblins choose to **challenge their naturally short life-cycle** by seeking assistance from some power of the woods. The resulting pact means that the goblin **changes its fate, from the prospect of becoming a troll, to life as the servant of a more powerful being.** Most newly exalted Illgoblins initially strive to uphold their own personality, but **under the weight of the master's crushing will, most let go of their dreams** in order to use all their skills and cunning hoping to please their benefactors.

However, there are those illgoblins who **never abandon their independence,** meaning that their existence turns into **a difficult and dangerous balancing act between doing the master's bidding and fighting for personal goals.** The master effectively has the illgoblin's soul in its hand and may punish the servant, even from afar, if it fails in delivering on the master's wishes, or behaves in some unwanted way. **The punishment remains until the illgoblin has remedied its failures or resumed its strive towards achieving the master's goals.** Obviously, the master can also choose to reward a loyal servant, with gifts in the form of monstrous traits, powers and rituals.

Table 3 on page 57 describes a handful of possible powers – **with goals, punishments and rewards** – to be used straight off or as inspiration when creating pact-making illgoblins.

The outcome of the battle was certain before it began. The sheer number of rage trolls and swarming goblins that sundered our column made it impossible to form a unified defense. The attackers came with a kind of black power, as if strengthened by something, or someone. At times I thought I heard the rhyming words of a lisping child, like an ancient nursery rhyme forcing my warriors to attack their comrades.

Divided we fell, group by group. I was one of those who were spellbound, and found myself kneeling before a wall of trolls and goblins, barely able to move. With all my willpower, I raised my book of prayers like a shield, but no words came past my lips. The enemies stepped aside to make way for a small creature. The rhyming child. A goblin? No, a former goblin.

Its eyes were a serpent's, its tongue forked, the light danced across its scaly skin. Its gaze was hypnotic and its voice hissing as it spoke: "You travel the land of the King Serpent Gadraaltos; half of what you harvest around Gadraal's Rock will befall the ruler, death being the penalty for tax evaders. Remind your queen of this simple fact and our realms will prosper, side by side." The creature, who called itself Squagmatus, let me leave after having used its claws to carve the tax statutes of its master into my chest.

Excerpt from the Army Court's interrogation protocol with field preacher Frendola, accused of desertion and cowardliness

Adventure Set-up

The characters are off hunting for treasure and need a guide. **One of few available is the goblin Gammy Gulda,** who according to rumors around the Toad's Square knows the route to where the characters are headed. **Problem is, she is an illgoblin;** her true goal is to lead the characters to the lair of her master, **an ancient necromage.**

Gammy Gulda does her best to **hide her bestial features** and tries to play the part of a somewhat tragicomic goblin – a former fortune hunter who, gravely hurt by an aboar, no longer can search for treasures, but instead helps others in the woods.

During the journey through Davokar, Gulda will **uphold the charade of a relatively incompetent goblin,** but she assists the characters when it seems appropriate – she wants to gain their trust and **she wants them to reach the destination alive.** When they get close to the master's necropolis, she will sneak aside to perform **the ritual Magic Circle, to contact the necromage** and describe the characters as best she can, to give him a chance to prepare. A character who manages to follow Gulda when she performs the ritual will hear her describe them all. Also, if this character knows the ability *Ritualist*, he or she will be able to **identify the ritual she performs;** anyone with knowledge in a mystical tradition will reach the same insight after a successful *Cunning* test.

If Gulda is found out, she will **act desperate and lie** (can be revealed if a character passes a *[Vigilant←Persuasive]* test) about the *"wraith holding my family captive."* **Her goal remains the same: to lead the characters to the necromage.**

ILLGOBLIN, NECROMAGE SERVANT

Manner	Peers cunningly
Race	Goblin (cultural being)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Bestial*, *Bushcraft*, *Dark Blood*, *Gravely Cold* (II), *Survival Instinct* (II)
Accurate 5 (+5), **Cunning** 11 (–1), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 9 (+1), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 15 (–5), **Strong** 7 (+3), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Black Breath* (adept), *Ritualist* (novice: *Magic Circle*), *Sorcery* (adept), *Spirit Walk* (adept)
Weapons	None
Armor	Witch Gown 2 (+2 from *Survival Instinct*)
Defense	+3
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 4
Shadow	Brown and white-speckled with black veins, like a crackled quail egg (corruption: 2)

Tactics: The illgoblin moves around its enemies, spewing darkness over them. She trusts that the combination of the spirit walk and gravely cold will keep any melee fighters away.

Playing an Illgoblin

Players can choose to create an illgoblin character, or even have their goblin character enter into a pact and become an illgoblin in play. The character's appearance adopts one or a couple of features reminiscent of its master – replace the trait *Short-lived* with the boon *Dark Blood* and the burden *Bestial* (see the *Advanced Player's Guide*, page 53 and 56). Also, the player and Game Master must agree on which gifts the character can gain from entering the pact, based on who the master is and what it wants to achieve. Other than that, the agreement follows the rules of Pact Making in the *Advanced Player's Guide* (page 104).

Table 3: Pact-making Powers

POWER	FEATURES	POSSIBLE GOAL	PUNISHMENT*	TYPICAL GIFTS
Arch Troll	Trollish features, often horns	Reclaim artifacts (troll-made) from treasure hunters and monsters	Clouded mind until a change is made	Monstrous traits associated with trolls; the mystical tradition *Troll Singing*; may bind to a Gwann with the *Familiar* ritual
Lindworm	Snake attributes	Conquer or defend a certain territory	Risk of being enthralled at untimely moments, untill a change is made	Monstrous traits associated with serpents; powers and rituals having to do with the control of mind and will; may bind to a Kanaran with the *Familiar* ritual
Necromage	Death signs	Lure treasure hunters to its lair to expand its army of undead servants	"Rigor mortis" until corrections are made	Monstrous traits associated with the Undead; the mystical tradition *Sorcery* (Necromancy)
Shelob	Spider attributes	Bind mortals to its web of intrigues	Stinging poison bite which remains until the illgoblin changes its ways	Monstrous traits associated with spiders; may bind to a Tricklesting with the *Familiar* ritual
Winter Elf	Unearthly features like snow white skin, lack of iris	Safeguard a tabooed area from treasure hunters	Nightmares until a change is made	Monstrous traits associated with elves; powers and rituals befitting the winter elf's goal and temper; may bind to a Baiagorn with the *Familiar* ritual

* All punishments have the same effect: the illgoblin cannot spend *Experience* in any way; not to learn things, to bind to artifacts or to make re-rolls if this optional rule is in practice. The punishment is lifted once the illgoblin starts acting in line with the master's will, in a pleasing way.

King Toad

It was when we backed away from the ambush that we reached the riverbank. This was all according to plan, as we had our riverboat waiting for us on the water, ready to pick us up should there be enemies lurking in the dark of the forest.

Kalara signaled the boat, which weighed anchor while I kept the oncoming enemy at bay with well-aimed arrows. I was so focused on the task at hand that I almost fell into the river, but Kalara caught me at the last moment. Before I could thank her, she was swept away at tremendous speed, right into the muddy waters.

The creature in the river was simply enormous, like a black shadow in the deep. It drew my friend in with its tongue and swallowed her whole. I yelled for the vessel's crew to turn back, but they did not; soon the boat floated over the black underwater shadow. The creature's tongue hit the railing, snatching away the helmsman. The captain stood frozen in horror as the tongue emerged once more, dragging her and the boat down into the deep.

Why I survived I do not know. Perhaps the monster was busy chewing on the hull of the boat and the bodies of my friends. The last thing I saw was two enormous eyes beneath the surface, pale with a golden glitter, watching me coldly. I can no longer visit the Toad's Square and its cursed toad skeleton without hearing the echo of the creaking and cracking that occurred as our boat was chewed to bits...

Eleono, former trophy hunter from Kurun

THUS SPOKE AROALETA

"... and the hatred grew between brother and sister, Manaud the Gluttonous and Manaua the Wrathful, sent monster against monster in raging battle. For two moons the people suffered; bloodied, eaten, crushed. Then the battle was over; the wounded victor a god of the people, always fearing the hunger of the beaten..."

Of all the amphibian predators lurking in the streams and ponds of Davokar, **the king toad is probably the most famous.** The creature, known to the clans as Manauit, is as devious as it is gluttonous, and if one is to believe the eyewitness accounts circulating among fishermen and sailors, they can **grow large enough to swallow smaller vessels.** Some even claim that the skeleton on the Toad's Square must come from a relatively normal sized king toad.

Some scholars maintain that the toad creature **develops in stages, just like elves and trolls,** which would explain why there have been so few reported encounters with truly gargantuan individuals **– the number of king toads decreases with each stage of development, as many of them do not survive the transformation.** But another reason for the scarce reports could of course be that almost no one survives an encounter with the giant toads.

KING TOAD, OLDER			
Manner	Huge and wobbling		
Race	Amphibian (beast)		
Resistance	Strong		
Traits	*Amphibian, Colossal* (I), *Companions* (III, three young king toads), *Devour* (III), *Grappling Tongue, Natural Weapon* (II), *Robust* (III), *Sturdy* (III)		
Accurate 5 (+5), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 15 (–5), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 9 (+1), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 13 (–3), **Vigilant** 11 (–1)			
Abilities	*Iron Fist* (adept)		
Weapons, Strong	Bite 10		
Armor	Skin 4		
Defense	+5		
Toughness	39	**Pain Threshold**	7
Shadow	Shimmering dark blue, like deep waters in sunlight (corruption: 0)		
Tactics: The older king toad is always accompanied by three of last year's offspring and uses them ruthlessly for its own purposes. They all hide in dark or muddy water whenever possible, and attack simultaneously from different directions to gain an *Advantage* over their prey.			

Toad Legs as a Delicacy

The Ambrian elite is always looking for new culinary experiences, preferably those that cannot be easily procured and with prices that are therefore astronomical. The meat from a king toad's thighs meets this requirement and, if properly cooked, also has a butter-smooth structure and a delicious flavor. Best served with mashed root vegetables and garlic gravy.

Whatever is true regarding stages and life cycles, all who travel along the waters of Davokar should order their lookouts to keep an eye out not only for pirates and shallows, but also for hidden toad monsters. **Younger manauits often hunt in groups of three to four individuals,** usually lurking in the shade of the riverbank. They can grow as large as ogres, and have no problem **pulling in animals that come to drink or travelers passing by on water vessels,** but when it comes to actually killing their prey, these monsters rely on their powerful jaws.

The older and much larger king toads have additional weapons in their arsenal. Firstly, they are **always surrounded by younger relatives to help them hunt;** secondly, they are so huge that they can easily devour a liege troll before it has time to react, let alone fight back. The region's inhabitants are very lucky that these king toads are so rare, as **they have little competition in terms of toughness, appetite and destructive capabilities.**

Adventure Set-up

The player characters arrive at a free settlement on the border to Dark Davokar, either on their own initiative or in search of some missing person/expedition. **The houses are standing on poles in a wetland, built not around some public square, but around a muddy pond.**

The settlement is inhabited by Ambrians who, after crossing the Titans, chose to leave the realm behind and devote themselves to the aspect of the Pathfinder known as **the Trapper. Now they worship the king toad in the pond as an incarnation of the god, peacefully coexisting**

with it and its younger followers – the toads protect them against the dangers of the forest, in exchange for their reverence and servility.

The player characters are welcomed into the settlement and invited to a feast where they are offered wild boar, turnips, roka sauce, and wild berries. **And beverages. Lots and lots of beverages,** which later that night are spiked with a sleeping drug (such as Drone Dew, page 120 in the *Advanced Player's Guide*). A successful *Vigilant* test indicates that the drink tastes somewhat different; a *Cunning* test with *Poisoner* or *Alchemy* reveals exactly what has been added.

Dizzy or not, **the player characters are finally pushed into the wetland,** where the smaller king toads may pop up anywhere in their attempt to lure them toward the center of the settlement...

KING TOAD, YOUNG			
Manner	Blinks slowly		
Race	Amphibian (beast)		
Resistance	Ordinary		
Traits	*Amphibian, Grappling Tongue, Natural Weapon* (I), *Robust* (I), *Sturdy* (I)		
Accurate 5 (+5), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 15 (–5), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 9 (+1), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 13 (–3), **Vigilant** 11 (–1)			
Abilities	*Iron Fist* (novice)		
Weapons, Strong	Bite 5		
Armor	Skin 2		
Defense	+3		
Toughness	20	**Pain Threshold**	7
Shadow	Bluish green, like water moss on a rock just below the surface (corruption: 0)		
Tactics: The young king toad hides in pools and watercourses, catching its prey with its tongue before pulling it beneath the surface.			

The King of Volgoma

One of the most popular legends about the king toad concerns the King of Volgoma. Whether in Ambrian taverns or around barbarian campfires, tales are told of a giant sea monster that has repeatedly been sighted in Lake Volgoma – as large as a two-masted vessel, with a mouth that can swallow a sailboat whole, crew and all. Many even regard the monster's existence as a fact, rather than a fairy tale, due to the large number of consistent reports and the fact that observations have been made continuously throughout history.

Those who take the legend seriously include Master Lona at Ordo Magica's Kurun Chapter, Baron Olagai Haraag, and Aldamei, youngest son of the widowed Baroness Edindra Mederen. They have all hired groups of monster hunters to find evidence of the monster's existence, preferably something that points out exactly where in Lake Volgoma the King has its underwater palace. Should someone actually manage to slay the creature, it is safe to assume that these three will be prepared to go very far in a bidding war for the carcass!

Living Thorns

There are many types of dangerous flora in Davokar. One of the most widespread examples are the **strangling and pricking thorns** that slowly move through the woods, searching for good sites to lay in wait for prey – possibly close to a clearing with luscious grass, a body of water or some ruin; **places which tend to catch the attention of both beasts and cultural beings.**

Living thorns only move at night, **crawling and tumbling on their meaty branches.** At dawn, they take root to rest and heal any wounds, before **the long and patient wait for large or small prey animals begins.** Smaller targets are attacked as soon as they come close, while bigger creatures are lured to step into the midst of the bush, where the leathery branches grow sparser. If the hunt is successful, the prey is squeezed to death and then emptied of life-giving juices and nutrients. **All that is left are skin, bone and any equipment;** remains which can be used as bait when trying to capture future prey, but which in most cases have a deterring effect and hence prompts the thorn creature to relocate.

Reports from the northern and inner parts of Bright Davokar tell of **barbarian settlements whose residents have learned to tame the living thorns;** they lure them in with live bait, and then continue to feed them so they in time grow into **a living perimeter defense, surrounding the palisade or embankment.** Even wilder stories from Davokar's darkest parts describe ruins, vales or fields completely covered by living thorn bushes, but many scholars and know-it-alls dismiss these tales. So many thorn creatures remaining together in one place for a long time would most likely see all of them going to their thorny grave from starvation.

Living Thorns as Familiar

Witches of the green path can use living thorns as familiars (see the ritual *Familiar*, page 142 in the *Core Rulebook*). Such a familiar obeys the will of the witch, meaning it does not share the circadian rhythm of wild specimens. Instead, the familiar moves, tumbling and winding, in the witch's steps; it acts when it is expected to and rests when the witch does.

"Living thorns? Like some kind of strangling vines? Folly and fantasies, it may be the stupidest thing I've ever heard!" Aside from a heretical expletive at the moment of surprise, those were Order Master Ulagra's last words in life.

We had travelled long through Wild Davokar, and were hopelessly lost. Our supplies were dwindling and what we found in the woods only made us sicker and more confused – a clear sign that we had entered the dark: even if the forest seemed relatively bright and harmonious, it was treacherous in many ways. Just when we feared that all was lost, our guide warned that we were not alone. Only moments later, we all could see her: a witch, sitting on a huge, moss-covered stone, as if in a trance, listening to the wind whispering in the leaves.

She looked up as we approached. Nothing but a thorny bush separated us from her. Master Ulagra opened his mouth and aske- no, he ordered the witch to help us. When she didn't react, our honorable Master of the Order was offended and grew angry, threatening to burn her off the boulder, even summoning an orb of sulfurous fire between his hands to underline the threat. The guide, whispering and pleading, tried to calm the pyromancer's fiery wrath, but in vain. Not even the information that the thorny bush at the base of the stone was moving in answer to the threat had any effect besides the previously quoted, patronizing harangue about folly and fantasies.

The fortune hunter Salmara's account after she was found by a group of Queens Rangers

LIVING THORNS, FAMILIAR

Manner	Winding, swaying
Race	Flora
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Crushing Embrace* (II), *Many-headed* (I), *Natural Weapon* (I)

Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 9 (+1)

Abilities	*Root Trap** (novice)
Weapons Accurate	Sturdy branches 3
Armor	None
Defense	–3
Toughness	15 **Pain Threshold** –
Shadow	Speckled pale green, like a newly sprung foliage (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The thorns use their two combat actions per turn to capture the prey, in order to crush it to death in a strangling embrace.

* Like *Entangling Vines*, but with *Strong* as the basis for success tests.

LIVING THORNS, WILD

Manner	Tumbling, swaying
Race	Flora
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Crushing Embrace* (III), *Many-headed* (II), *Natural Weapon* (II)

Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 9 (+1)

Abilities	*Root Trap** (adept)
Weapons Accurate	Sturdy branches 4
Armor	None
Defense	–3
Toughness	15 **Pain Threshold** –
Shadow	Shifting bright green, as a swaying bush (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The thorns use their four combat actions per turn to capture the prey, in order to crush it to death in a strangling embrace.

* Like *Entangling Vines*, but with *Strong* as the basis for success tests.

Adventure Set-up

Living thorns will likely appear during the characters' travels in Davokar, to spice up an adventure which is about something entirely different. **They may for example creep up to a camp site and attack right after dawn, when the characters have awakened and ask themselves why the site looks different from the night before.** Alternately, they encounter some antagonist who can control or is allied to a group of thorn creatures, like the witch in the previous narrative.

Another option is that the characters find themselves in a situation where someone is using living thorns as a private army – **possibly a sorcerer, witch or undead with the capacity to Enslave other beings.** It may be some cult leader that the characters themselves have killed or driven out into Davokar, but if this does not fit your particular story they may instead be involved in stopping a retaliatory action against some acquaintance or quest-giver.

Nature's Lullaby

The character who knows the ritual *Nature's Lullaby* can use it to pass through whole fields of living thorns. As long as the song or music goes on, they only sway to the melody, without attacking or moving.

Managaal

We stood in a row, silent and excited. All of us were marked by corruption; all of us hoped to get rid of the stigmas, dreaming of being able to walk around undisguised, unmasked, without fear. The thought made my heart beat faster. ¶ The creature before us was fettered to the wall, like a pinned up, gigantic bat. It squirmed and hissed; it reached for us with the thorny tongue playing in its predatory maw. It was thirsty and we were willing. The row moved steadily forward, as one by one we were licked bloody by the creature. Our Master's death lord stood ready to pull monster and cultist apart, so that the latter would not be licked to death. ¶ It was nearly my turn, but the woman before me refused to be separated from the monster's kiss. Master saw the danger and cried out to his death lord to part the two; the edge of the rusty sword cut through the head and shoulder of the woman, and the creature jerked back its tongue to save it. Then our Master berated us, about never allowing the beast to drink itself full. And after that, you charged in, so I never received the cleansing kiss. ¶ That you mean to burn me, I know. But what will you do with the blight beast?

Transcript from the black cloaks interrogation with Aramo, surviving cultist

The beastly Managaal hunts for blight marked creatures, drinks their blood, and seems to be able to **filter the corruption from the blood by adding it to its own life force.** According to myths, these remarkable daemons were created by the hex masters of Symbaroum in a vain, and mainly failed, attempt to **cleanse themselves of darkness.** Regardless of whether this is true or not, the creature does have the capacity to free its victims from corruption, wholly or partly, **but only so long as it does not drink its fill.**

Up until a managaal has managed to placate its thirst and hunger, it can use the accumulated corruption as a power source, to catch more victims or get away from threatening situations. But **once it is full** (i.e. when its accumulated corruption is as high as its *Resolute* value), **it stops and spends the following turn spewing out a new managaal** – a black, winged child, flapping about in bloody vomit. These dark spawns are said to be **very aggressive,** and nearly as dangerous as a grown managaal, not least since their apparent frailty leads others to see them as more tragic than threatening. Even worse: the managaal who spews up the dark spawn becomes positively **rabid from corruption hunger.** Woe to the wretched adventurer who happens to be close by when spawn and parent go on the hunt together!

MANAGAAL, ADULT

Manner	Plays with its thorny tongue
Race	Phenomenon
Resistance	Strong
Traits	*Bloodlust* (III), *Corruption Hoarder* (III), *Enthrall* (II), *Natural Weapon* (III), *Robust* (II), *Wings* (I)

Accurate 5 (+5), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 7 (+3), **Persuasive** 15 (–5), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 11 (–1), **Vigilant** 9 (+1)

Abilities	*Acrobatics* (novice), *Dominate* (novice), *Leader* (novice), *Natural Warrior* (novice)
Weapons Persuasive	Bite 9
Armor	Tough skin 3
Defense	0
Toughness	11 **Pain Threshold** 6
Shadow	Purple, shifting towards deep black as it accumulates more corruption (thoroughly corrupt)

Tactics: The beast tries to enthrall its enemies in order to drink their (preferably corrupted) blood. The creature starts the scene with 1D4 accumulated corruption.

MANAGAAL, SPAWN

Manner	Crouching pitifully
Race	Phenomenon
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Bloodlust* (II), *Corruption Hoarder* (II), *Diminutive*, *Natural Weapon* (II), *Wings* (I)

Accurate 5 (+5), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 7 (+3), **Persuasive** 15 (–5), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 11 (–1), **Vigilant** 9 (+1)

Abilities	*Acrobatics* (novice), *Dominate* (novice), *Leader* (novice), *Natural Warrior* (novice)
Weapons Persuasive	Bite 5
Armor	None
Defense	–3
Toughness	11 **Pain Threshold** 6
Shadow	Burgundy, shifting towards purple as it accumulates more corruption (thoroughly corrupt)

Tactics: The spawn tries to drink the blood of one (preferably corrupted) victim at a time. It starts the scene with 1D4 accumulated corruption.

Creating Vile Water

To use a managaal for the purpose of creating Vile Water, the creature must be at least half full of corruption *[Resolute/2]*. Moreover, it takes a codex or manuscript which describes the actual procedure – sources of knowledge that can be found in Davokar's dark ruins, or bought from cultists and sorcerers for the price of a small fortune.

It takes a full day to slowly boil down the creature's blood to the desired thickness; then, a Master Alchemist and a Master Artifact Crafter (can be one and the same individual) must roll a *Cunning* test. If both tests are successful, ten drops of Vile Water are created if the managaal was an adult, or five if it was a spawn. Should any of the rolls land on the outcome 20, the individual in question suffers 1D12 permanent corruption.

ARTIFACT: VILE WATER

Vile Water consists of pure corruption, like an opposite Water of the Dusk (page 186 in the *Core Rulebook*). It looks like black mercury and gives off dark fumes of corruption if not contained in a vial of glass, crystal or similar material.

The only way to bind to this artifact is to accept one point of permanent corruption.

Black-Light: In the hands of one who has accepted Darkness, the vial can radiate with the dark of the Abyss, thereby blackening an area even if the sun is high in the sky. This means that a place (for instance a room indoors or a forest clearing) becomes dark for the remainder of the scene, dark like a night without stars or moonlight.

Action: Free
Corruption: None

Revelations of the Night: The liquid can be dripped on living tissue. Each drop grants 1D12 *Experience* to be used however the receiver wishes, at the cost of one permanent corruption. When all drops are used, the vial is empty and the artifact spent.

Action: Active
Corruption: 1 permanent corruption/drop

Black Synergy: He who bows before the supremacy of the Dark can use its blackness to enhance the powers of *Sorcery*. Once per scene, the synergy can add +1 tier to the effect die.

Action: Reactive
Corruption: None

Salvation of Darkness: The master of the artifact can crush the vial with a thought, thereby releasing its darkness. All creatures present with at least 1 corruption (temporary or permanent) immediately suffer 1D12 permanent corruption. Beings that already have permanent corruption are only affected if the outcome is higher than their current corruption – if so, they suffer the difference. If the outcome is equal to or lower than their current corruption value, nothing happens. This also affects the master himself if he has any corruption; only creatures with zero corruption are safe from harm.

Action: Free
Corruption: 1D12 (see description)

The managaal is very rare, but is none the less relatively well known since it is **mentioned in several Symbarian sources.** For one thing, there are descriptions of its origin and hunting methods, but there are also referrals to **the creation of an artifact called Vile Water.** Distilling the blood of a managaal is said to be one way of creating such an artifact, and for that purpose a newly born spawn is supposedly sufficient, but **an adult is even better.**

Adventure Set-up

A cult in one of Ambria's towns has managed to capture a managaal and means to use it to the fullest, **first to cleanse themselves of corruption, then to create Vile Water.**

The first phase goes as planned, but as the distillation begins one of the cultists (maybe the Master Alchemist or Artifact Crafter) suffers a blow of corruption and becomes thoroughly corrupt. **Moreover, the blight born cultist escapes out into town.**

The characters are visiting the settlement **when the newly awakened abomination runs amok.** After having bested the creature, they discover strange puncture wounds on its neck, armpits and groin. Someone with the *Bushcraft* boon can testify that these wounds have not been made by any common beast; anyone with the *Beast Lore* ability may, after a passed *Cunning* test, recollect **descriptions of a strange beast said to suck corruption from others, called a Managaal.**

The adventure continues with the characters trying to **find the source of the corruption,** either by following the blight beast's physical trail or by investigating the individual that was blight born. In the latter case, it is probably a notable alchemist or artifact crafter, meaning that **interviews with or break-ins at the homes of people in his circle of acquaintances (or the use of rituals) can lead the characters to the dark chapel of the cultists.** A complication – or an opening for groups that have a hard time moving forward – is that the cult is in need of a new alchemist/artifact crafter, and decides to kidnap one. **Maybe even one of the characters can become the target,** if he or she is known to master the required skills?

Fettering a Managaal

A captured managaal can be bound in the same kind of circles as daemons, according to the ritual *Summon Daemon* on page 94 in the *Advanced Player's Guide*. These circles, along with any physical restraints, are broken if the managaal spews forth a dark spawn (see the textbox Create Managaal).

Create Managaal

Once a managaal is full of accumulated corruption it spews up a new managaal, a dark spawn. This black act of creation empties the managaal of corruption, and it becomes so crazed with hunger that it immediately and automatically breaks all physical and mystical shackles currently binding it.

Marlit

The tracker proved to be worth her salary – she caught the scent after a mere afternoon in the woods. Judging by the tracks, it was a relatively small marlit, but "big enough to make a splendid cape," as Bardel, our leader, put it.

We trailed the creature through the evening and into the night. It moved erratically to the northeast, out on wetlands which slowed our progress. Naturally, the marlit itself had no problems where it moved along, up in the foliage, but after a while we noticed that it started moving in a wide circle. It took some time before we figured out why, before Bardel and our guide discovered other marlit tracks in the tree tops: our intended prey was no longer alone.

After some mumbling and worried glances, Bardel explained what was going on. We were no longer hunters, but prey, and those hunting us were both large and many in number. The twist was sinister, to say the least; frightening enough even to make Dumdum anxious.

Bardel was trying to reassure the ogre when the first cry echoed through the forest. Gaping in a mixture of surprise and fright, we saw our tracker being hoisted from the ground by several grappling tongues. I ran! Everybody ran. Only me and Tugvar escaped...

Eleono, former trophy hunger from Kurun

The masterful hunter called Marlit by the clanfolk is described as a reptilian beast, larger than a man. **It moves around in the foliage with a skin that changes color and pattern in a way which makes it very hard to discover.** As for hunting grounds, it seems to prefer Davokar's outer regions, but once the prey is downed **it retreats to the wilder and darker parts** where the packs gather to share the daily bounty. At least this is how the predator in question is described by members of the northern clans.

It may very well be that the marlits **in the north differ from those further to the south;** that the northerners are like members of a large clan or tribe, while the ones down south are more like families. Or it could be like the Goeds say, that **the further north you go in the forest, the more dangerous it gets and the greater the reason for sticking together,** which also holds true for predators. Master Argoi, Chapter Master in Kurun and Ordo Magica's authority on troll studies, claims that there may be yet another reason for the

The Marlit's Camouflage

The living marlit has better camouflage properties than the cape which can be made from its skin: +3 (instead of +1) in *Discreet* when rolling tests to sneak and/or hide. For hunters and other travelers of the woods, this means they have a –3 modification when trying to discover a sneaking reptile beast by making a test against *Vigilant*, in addition to the modification which comes from the creature's value in *Discreet*.

Section 8:24, Famous marlit hunters and their passing

Aneas of Mark Lowborn braggart, mainly known for his self-endearing poems and for having killed and flayed the beast whose skin is now in worn by Mayor Nightpitch as a hunting cape. The hunter's demise became known when his spear-hauler, Maltuld, returned alone from a hunting trip, carrying the right earlobe of his master – what remained after the self-mutilation Aneas happened to perform as he was pulled into the foliage.

Jonhor of Baiaga The handsome barbarian Jonhor – immensely popular among both women and men; also cherished by the odd ogre – became the brightest monster hunting star of Kastor for a period of three years, until his death. At the time of his disappearance, worried admirers went out to search the woods but returned empty-handed, save for Jonhor's peculiar leather vest and a few ill-matching pieces of his tattooed skin.

Yhaaka Brusque but well-regarded tutor in the art of monster hunting, from the Karabbaddokk tribe but up to her death active in Thistle Hold. She died during a field trip with hunting pupils, including the youngsters Mateo Derego and Alvio Argona, officially after having defended her students from a huge marlit. However, rumor has it that the remains displayed stab wounds rather than bite marks, and also that one of the noble youngsters returned without his fencing sword.

Fredo the Slaughterer Talkative entrepreneur who founded the tailor store Fredo's Marlit Attires in Yndaros, and who enjoyed traveling in the hunt for raw material and thrills. It is said he died because of a wager, after having claimed that he was able to slay a full-grown marlit with nothing but his teeth. Distasteful as it may be, all that remains of him are his four golden teeth, found and excavated by his sons from a, reportedly, steaming lump of marlit excrement.

Excerpt from "Victims of Davokar", register established at the Queen's Legation in Thistle Hold

MARLIT			
Manner	Purrs and gurgles		
Race	Predator (beast)		
Resistance	Ordinary		
Traits	*Grappling Tongue*, *Natural Weapon* (I), *Robust* (I)		
Accurate 5 (+5), **Cunning** 10 (), **Discreet** 15 (–5), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 9 (+1), **Strong** 13 (–3), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Iron Fist* (adept)		
Weapons Strong	Bite 7		
Armor	Marlit skin 2		
Defense	+1		
Toughness	13	**Pain Threshold**	7
Shadow	Multifarious green, like a sunlit oily leaf (corruption: 0)		
Tactics: The Marlit cooperates with its companions in order to achieve *Surprise* attacks or flanking. Then they grab and pull the target in using their tongues, and bite it to death.			

alleged difference – that the marlits up north gather around some forest spirit or mighty beast **which they provide with food and protection,** for instance an arch troll or a lindworm.

Since the skin of the lizard is in demand among both barbarians and the people of the Queen, many monster hunters have **specialized in hunting marlits.** They risk their lives, going up against this cunning, patient predator that hunts in packs and **often employs the method of having lone, wandering bait-beasts lure foolhardy hunters into well-planned ambushes.** On the other hand, because of the danger, the marlit hunters have high status in places like Kastor and Thistle Hold, and they would likely not hesitate if someone could lead them to where one of the great northern packs gathers.

Adventure Set-up

A wealthy Ambrian, as for instance **Count Arnon Melion** or one of his close relatives, is preparing to host a masquerade ball and wants to make the event memorable for the prominent guests – **the Queen, the dukes and most of the kingdom's elite.** The idea is to prepare extraordinary costumes for all, sewed from color shifting marlit skin.

The quest-giver has bought information from a credible source, detailing the whereabouts of one of southern Davokar's largest packs of marlits. He wants to **send a hunting party to the location, supported with expertise needed to travel far into the woods.** The characters can join the expedition, which initially runs smoothly – until it arrives at the destination.

Apparently, **the pack is under the protection of the Iron Pact.** When the actual hunt is afoot, projectiles as well as mystical powers are used in defense of the lizards. Even if the hunting party manages to slay the handful of wardens present in the area, they now have to hurry: **reinforcements are inbound from The Halls of a Thousand Tears.** If things go really bad, the characters become known to the elves, which may cause troubles later in their adventurous lives...

Marlit, marlit, you yellow hare,
you wouldn't suffice as a scarecrow,
you dart like a rabbit, now here, now there,
afraid of your very own shadow.

You lowest of creatures ever born,
unwanted like ulcers and rachet.
You're worthy of nothing but hate and scorn,
until you're turned into a jacket.

Lampoon signed One-Legged Elnar, Ravenia

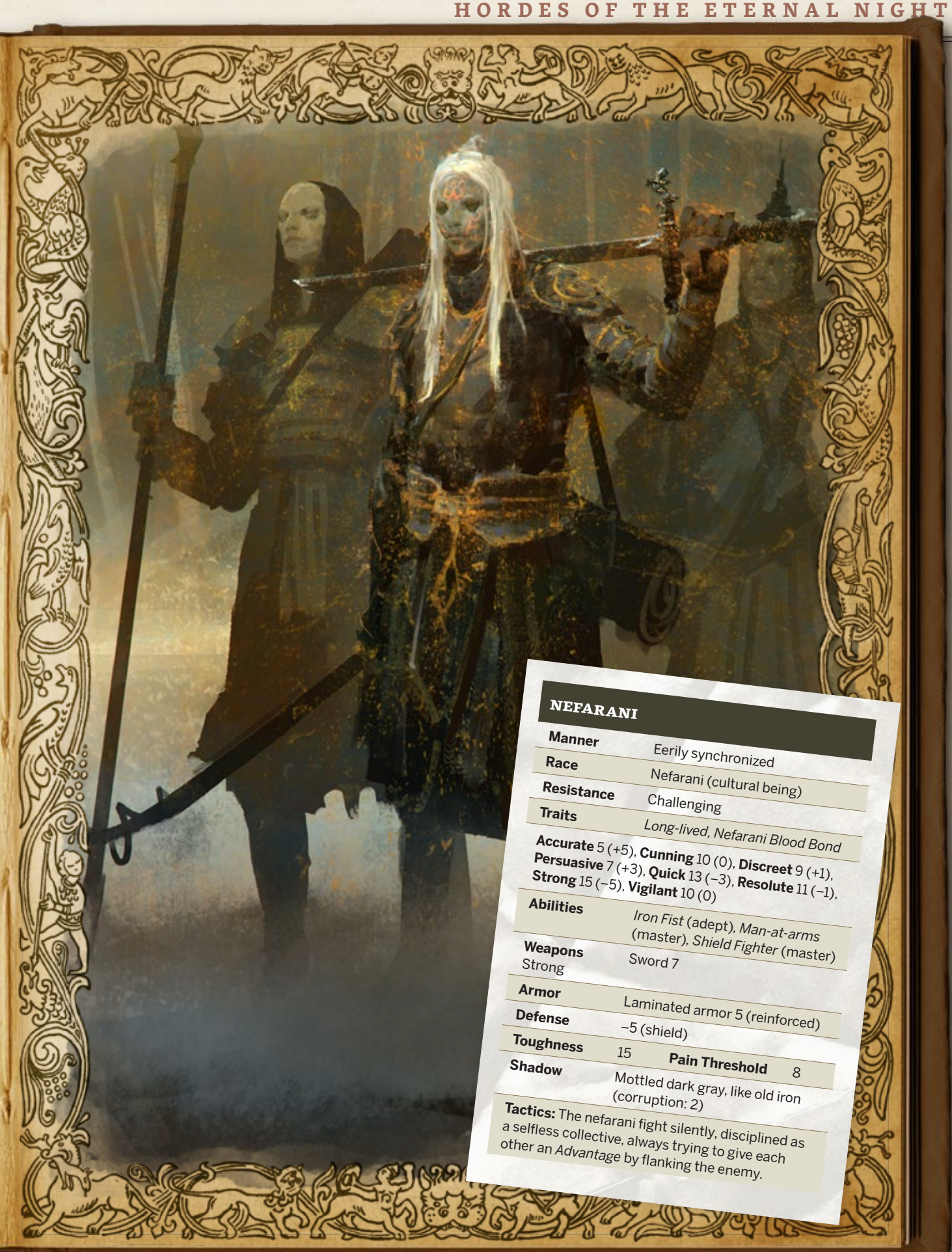
Nefarani

By all indications, the Nefarani are **what is left of a warrior guard that was bred in Symbar** to combat the increasingly numerous enemies of the emperor. Since the fall of Symbaroum, they have swept through northern Davokar, where they have been **hired by various barbarian chieftains to slay monsters or do battle with other clans.** As the nefarani communicate with each other in total silence, no one knows how they decide where to go or whom to fight for. However, it is clear that **they are constantly seeking someone to serve, and that they will not stay with the same master for more than one major battle.**

In recent decades, the nefarani have made their way south and fought in **battles between barbarians and Ambrians, usually – but not always – on the side of the barbarians.** Although they can all speak, and will do so to outsiders if need be, they are collectively represented by a spokesperson, recently identified as Asenath. In combat, this woman is no more a leader than anyone else, which has led Ambrian military strategists to conclude that the **nefarani fight the way they speak: silently and, somehow, collectively.** Some scholars even hypothesize that nefarani is actually the name of **a powerful spirit that has possessed an entire army of warriors.**

At any rate, the nefarani are known **not to age as others do,** and will only die by the blades of their enemies. With **no new nefarani being born or created,** they are slowly fading away. However, those still alive gain power with every fallen brother or sister, growing stronger over time. According to scholars who have studied them closely, there is

> They fought in close formation, moving as one large body, rather than as individuals. They fought without words or spoken orders; grunts of exertion and moans of pain were all that came from them. Only when one of them fell did they scream. First one called out the name of the fallen, then the others did the same, all at once. They then fought on in silence, though, if possible, even more frenetically. ¶ They were few, we were many – we slew them all, at the cost of heavy casualties. I heard rumors that there are more like them; that what we fought was but the rearguard of a larger force. Bahiti, Teremun, Madaai, Hadar, Idona. Yes, even now, my beloved will sometimes wake me up as, in a cold sweat, I scream their names in my sleep.
>
> Colonel Alusa, on the battle at Karo's Fen in year 8.



NEFARANI			
Manner	Eerily synchronized		
Race	Nefarani (cultural being)		
Resistance	Challenging		
Traits	*Long-lived, Nefarani Blood Bond*		
Accurate 5 (+5), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 9 (+1), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 13 (−3), **Resolute** 11 (−1), **Strong** 15 (−5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Iron Fist* (adept), *Man-at-arms* (master), *Shield Fighter* (master)		
Weapons Strong	Sword 7		
Armor	Laminated armor 5 (reinforced)		
Defense	−5 (shield)		
Toughness	15	**Pain Threshold**	8
Shadow	Mottled dark gray, like old iron (corruption: 2)		
Tactics: The nefarani fight silently, disciplined as a selfless collective, always trying to give each other an *Advantage* by flanking the enemy.			

Varying weapons

The Game Master may well replace *Shield Fighter with Twin Attack* or *Two-handed Force* on some of the nefarani that the characters encounter, to make the challenge more varied.

Table 4: The Nefarani's Individual Resistance

NUMBER ALIVE	ADDITIONAL STATS FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL NEFARANI
27	Challenging resistance: The stats specified here
13	Strong resistance: Upgrade to *Iron Fist* (master), add *Exceptionally Strong* (master) and *Steadfast* (master). Strong 18 (–8), Toughness 18/9.
3	Mighty resistance: 10 × master, including *Acrobatics* (master), *Berserker* (master), *Exceptionally Quick* (master), *Exceptionally Resolute* (master), *Regeneration* (III)
1	Legendary resistance: 20 × master, including *Armored* (III), *Death Struggle* (III), *Exceptionally Cunning* (master), *Exceptionally Vigilant* (master), *Rapid Reflexes* (III), *Sturdy* (III)

a widespread belief among the nefarani that **the last of their kind will finally have a vision about the higher purpose of their collective existence** – a vision that, with the combined strength of the fallen siblings, will help him or her determine the fate of the world.

Today, 27 nefarani are all that remains of the original force of roughly one thousand warriors. Their individual strength is already considerable, and **whenever one is killed, those that survive become stronger,** as shown in Table 4.

Adventure Set-up

The nefarani can be used as tough opponents for combat-oriented characters, or **as a mystery in themselves.** This adventure seed focuses on the latter, but also offers potential for the former – depending on how the characters decide to tackle the situation.

The characters find themselves in a place under siege **when suddenly the nefarani show up, offering to aid the enemy;** a battle is imminent, and with the nefarani involved, the defenders are not likely to prevail. Surprisingly enough, the nefarani do not participate in the first attack, **but discretely send a negotiator (Asenath) to speak with the characters,** who have presumably distinguished themselves in the first battle and are clearly not part of the defenders' main force. As it turns out, **the nefarani do not wish to fight here, but someone in the area has kidnapped one of their brothers, and they want him back before nightfall.** Otherwise, the nefarani will attack and retrieve him themselves. Should the characters ask how Asenath can be so sure that her blood brother is there, she answers: *"He cries out to me from underground. They are stealing his blood."*

The truth is that a black cloak/sorcerer/Ambrian panzer alchemist/local mystic has captured a nefarani to, through alchemy, extract the answer to the mystery of their mighty blood bond; a secret many would pay almost anything to learn. The mystic's companions will initially try to fight the characters, but when that no longer seems like a viable option, the mystic offers the characters a part of his/her future wealth on the condition that they do not return the prisoner; **an offer which, if accepted, means battle against the nefarani,** or at least an intense escape from the doomed location.

UNIQUE TRAIT: NEFARANI BLOOD BOND

The nefarani are linked by a mystical blood bond, a unifying force that goes back to the time of their creation. The blood bond has the following effects:

Mystical connection: The nefarani can speak to one another telepathically, as long as they are within physical earshot of each other – they can "whisper" to a specific individual, "talk" so that the nefarani closest to them can hear, or "shout" and reach all nefarani within normal hearing distance. They can also sense the presence of other nefarani within the same distance, and prefer not to stray farther than that on their own; however, they may of course do so in groups, if the mission requires it. The nefarani communicate and coordinate their fighting through this mystical connection, all in complete silence.

Might from the fallen: Every time a nefarani dies, three things happen.

- All nefarani within earshot immediately recover 1D6 *Toughness*.
- All present nefarani shout out the name of the fallen, which affects present enemies as if they suffered from a mystical attack: they all get a second chance to fail all success tests. The effect is automatic during the first turn, and lasts until the individual enemy passes a *Resolute* test.
- Finally, all nefarani, no matter the distance, receive part of the fallen's life force, so that each remaining individual grows stronger and stronger as their collective numbers dwindle. Through this process, the remaining nefarani develop monstrous traits (among other things).

The Last of the Nefarani

What happens when there is only a single nefarani left alive is still unknown. Should such a situation arise, it is up to the Game Master to decide what best suits his or her particular gaming group and campaign, but we would suggest the following:

- The last nefarani realizes that no one could ever replace the last emperor of Symbaroum, and withdraws to Symbar to make sure that the Throne of Thorns remains vacant.
- The last one has a vision about a certain person being chosen to sit on the Throne of Thorns in Symbar, and joins him or her to make sure that the prophecy is fulfilled.
- A variant of #2, where the chosen one has no wish to sit on the throne of Symbar. The last nefarani will not accept this, but kidnaps said person and brings him or her along to Symbar to complete the mission.
- The last one has a vision about a world without humans and corruption, and commences an all-encompassing purge.

Nightmare

Nightmares are disembodied ghouls that **move between various unwitting hosts** in constant search of more corrupted ones. Some scholars believe them to be **deceased sorcerers** who, having refused or been denied the final rest, continue to pursue their dark desires long after their physical demise; **other sources claim that they are necromages who have lost their bodies yet linger in the world by virtue of their insatiable appetite.** Corrupted creatures seem to be more susceptible to the nightmare's invasion, though thoroughly corrupted ones are immune.

The hosts lead normal lives during the day, but at night they are **possessed and forced to do the nightmare's bidding.** The possessed perceive these nightly activities as increasingly **wild dreams,** probably thinking that their dirty feet and fingernails are the result of sleepwalking – at least until the nightmare starts killing and devouring the corpses, or whatever other desires that particular nightmare happens to have; **it seems to vary from ghoul to ghoul.** If the victim fights back, the host will of course carry these wounds in the morning, as clear signs that something is terribly wrong.

Banishing a nightmare requires that the host is either **killed or thoroughly corrupted,** or that the individual is exposed, voluntarily or otherwise, to a cleansing *Exorcism*. But the nightmare may of course leave on its own and **target someone else, provided that the new host makes physical contact with the old one.** For that very reason, the nightmare sometimes seduces, or breaks into the home of what it hopes will be the next host, in order to get close enough to touch it.

Adventure Set-up

An old friend, mentor, or some other person dear to them, asks the characters for help. After a time of **increasingly bad nightmares,** he (or she) has developed a rather unwelcome sleepwalking habit, and **thinks that he might be possessed – the question is, by who or what, and why?**

It soon becomes clear to the characters that their friend is **no longer in his right mind;** studying forbidden books and visiting malevolent ruins has corrupted him beyond what is healthy.

The Gifts of the Nightmare

A person possessed by the nightmare retains all traits and abilities, but may use the possessing spirit's *Resolute* value for the duration of the possession. Furthermore, the host acquires the traits *Night Perception* and *Natural Weapon* (I) while its body is being controlled by the nightmare, the latter in the form of short, thick claws.

Uncle Janos was always a peculiar man, slightly odd, but not in a threatening way. Just different, you see – a bit too interested in the macabre, perhaps, but no more than the average bored scholar. You know how these bookworms can be, isolated from reality, from the blood, the stench, and the squalor. I have seen a lot of them in my family circle. My mother was in many ways the same. She did not even give birth to me, and therefore never physically experienced the connection between life, pain, and blood. For her, bodily fluids would instead be exclusively associated with unhealthy desires and death.

Of course, it bothered me when my dear uncle started spending time with the poets in the graveyard; they met at night, reciting poetry over open, empty graves or, even worse, to the decay. From there, perhaps it was not such a big leap to enter the mausoleums as well, and do the same in the direct vicinity of the dead. Then something happened; what I do not know. The City Watch was called to the burial grounds after someone had dug open a grave; shortly thereafter, one of the poets was found dead in an otherwise empty crypt. That was when I decided to confront my uncle, and went to see him.

I found him emaciated, exhausted, showing signs of madness, with bruises on his hands and dirt under his fingernails. Still, he ensured me that he was well, and that he no longer had anything to do with the poets. To verify whether he was telling the truth, I waited outside his house, and as suspected, he climbed out of his bedroom window wearing nothing but his nightgown. I called out to him, and as he turned toward me, I was petrified. Believe me, the eyes staring back at me from Uncle Janos' eye sockets were not his own.

Liveta, Adept of the Order, in her report to the Black Cloaks

Drawing closer to the dark, the friend has also grown **extremely curious about what the possessing force could want.** Of course, he would like to be free of the ghoul, but not right away – not until someone has solved the mystery of what the ghoul is looking for under the city!

For the characters, this becomes a dilemma. They can either oblige their friend by **spending each night in the nightmare's company,** or prepare a treacherous *Exorcism* in order to save the friend against his will. The most exciting scenario would of course be if **the characters succumb to the same fascination about what the ghoul is seeking.** Perhaps the friend's nightmares are somehow linked to one of the gaming group's goals, or at least to that of some individual character?

NIGHTMARE			
Manner	Giggles childishly		
Race	Spirit (undead)		
Resistance	Challenging		
Traits	*Alternative Damage* (I), *Haunting* (III), *Spirit Form* (III)		
Accurate 9 (+1), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 13 (–3), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 15 (–5), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 7 (+3)			
Abilities	*Dominate* (master)		
Weapons Persuasive	Touch of death 3, damages *Resolute*, ignores *Armor*		
Armor	Half damage according to *Spirit Form* III		
Defense	–1		
Toughness	10	**Pain Threshold**	5
Shadow	Glossy black, like the sweaty hide of a pitch-black horse (thoroughly corrupt)		
Tactics: A nightmare without a host has only one thing in mind – finding a new body to possess, as soon as possible.			

THUS SPOKE AROALETA

"... and while the body and power were hers, the eyes and desire were not; words and deeds, solace and lust, were that of a hungering spirit. But blind to his dear and beloved, the liege was unable to see, the alien gaze, the sundering claws, that soon brought his life to an end ..."

"Hear ye, hear ye, the Bohemian Cannibal captured! Last night, after ten maimed and partially devoured victims, Jorval, the romantic bard behind the popular poem 'To rest in your arms', was caught red-handed, sinking his teeth into a dead youngster's thigh. While maintaining his innocence, he admits to sometimes having woken with blood on his face; thinking it was only a nighttime nosebleed.

Friends and rivals in shock; Kurto, the Power-poet, was heard shouting his most recent lampoon 'Digesting your arms' outside the Depths of the Titans just before dawn. Despite the accused's denial, Commander Alvo Steelneck has no doubt that the Bohemian Cannibal has been caught; execution scheduled tomorrow on the Triumph Plaza."

Town crier in Yndaros

Night Swarmers

The embodiment of corruption, is how **Master Cornelio,** Chapter Master in Thistle Hold, describes the Night Swarmers. **Father Elfeno,** First Theurg in the same town, was as drastic in his judgement when he called them **"Swarms of the Eternal Night",** after having been told about a catastrophic expedition to the Serpent Temple of Syravan; only one member returned, with **serious blight marks as the sole pay for his effort.** However you describe these blighted creatures, there is no doubt that any fortune hunter that dares venture into the depths of Davokar is at risk of waking them to swarming life.

As single creatures they are not very impressive, **barely the height of a human palm and thin as splinters.** But they are never encountered alone. According to reports from the forest, they assemble in great numbers at locations oozing with or radiating corruption, **often in haunted ruins or on grounds where major battles or momentous events once took place.** Master Cornelio based his analysis on these kinds of reports – concluding that **the Night Swarmers can appear, or rather be born, as an effect of massive outbreaks of corrupting energies,** and that they may survive thanks to the lingering blackness, to spring into action when living beings enter their territory.

The witness statements collected at the Twilight Monastery indicate that **these swarmers are territorial** and that they will not pursue intruders very far. Furthermore, the archives contain information describing swarms of **approximately one hundred individuals, and some locations that hold more than one swarm.** According to less reliable rumors, careless explorers may find themselves in even worse situations; this may actually have happened already, without any survivors to tell about it. Cautionary tales told among several of the clans describe areas plagued by thousands of swarmers, which, if stirred into action, **form a virtual cloud of clattering, corruption-dripping tiny jaws.** How an explorer should behave if attacked by such a "murder cloud", there is no one, neither witch nor wizard, who dares say or even offer suggestions.

Crackling Premonition

No matter if it is a swarm or a murder cloud, the night swarmers lie dormant in the ground, in wall cracks or beneath the bark of trees until a living target comes within reach. From the moment they are roused, it takes two turns for the collective to get ready – up until then, the swarm is too scattered to attack or be attacked.

A passed *Vigilant* test leads to the discovery of the crackling, rustling sound which comes from the night swarmers' movements; combined with *Bushcraft* or *Beast Lore*, it also gives insights about what is actually about to happen. During the second turn, everyone present can see the swarmers emerge, take flight and start rallying. Of course, the intruders can choose to run away; the Game Master determines (or rolls 1D6 to decide) how many turns they have to run before the pursuers stop hunting them.

It was unbelievable! We made it all the way to the legendary Serpent Temple of Syravan without casualties, actually without suffering any kind of wounds, infections or poisons. Master Muldar was like a child at Queen's Day. He jumped around by the foot of the hill and shouted profanities at his mother, who apparently had never believed in or supported his ambitions, saying that the treasures would become the death of him. Boy, was she right...

We waited until the following morning before parading up the slope and entering through the vines covering the entrance. Many of us immediately heard it – the clicking, the crunching and the skitter of falling pebbles. But Muldar would not listen, and he did not heed our warnings. He refused to permit us to turn around. I was the only one who disobeyed.

As soon as I saw the pale, tiny creatures emerge out of the ground, the walls and the vegetation I turned and ran. Before I even reached the entrance, the creatures had assembled in several hungering swarms that soon attacked my companions. Shortly thereafter, howls and abominable screams echoed from the top of the hill. If Muldar's men had happened to awake something or if the howls came from them... Well, I'd rather not know...

OF

From the mystic Galfenio's debriefing with Mother Mehira

Adventure Set-up

Night Swarmers are mainly meant to be **an obstacle or complicating factor during travels in Davokar,** especially when the player character are exploring ruins or journeying in regions **where the Iron Pact once battled the perverse deities and abominable creations of Symbaroum.** But they may of course be given a more prominent role.

Perhaps someone is performing private excavations beneath a smaller town or outpost, and happens to **break through into a night swarmer lair.** The characters may be there when this occurs or be tasked with **investigating what has happened** and in that case arrive to a settlement which is deserted, apart from the blight born humans and animals which come out at night.

Another option is to have a **vengeful witch gain access to a mystical link which lets her possess a swarm,** and send it to attack the residents in a free settlement or outpost that has displeased her. The possession can be revealed with the ability *Witchsight* and a passed *Vigilant* test, after which the possessing power can be tracked down and dealt with.

If you run into Night Swarmers, flee for your life! If you cannot flee, attack with fire. If you don't have fire, gulp purple sap while fencing like a maniac. And if you have gone to Dark Davokar without purple sap, it's your funeral!

Master Cornelio's Advice

NIGHT SWARMERS, SWARM

Manner	Chattering, swirling		
Race	Abomination		
Resistance	Challenging		
Traits	*Corrupting Attack* (II), *Fleet-footed*, *Night Perception*, *Piercing Attack* (II), *Regeneration* (III), *Swarm* (II), *Wings* (II)		
Accurate 11 (–1), **Cunning** 5 (+5), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 15 (–5), **Resolute** 9 (+1), **Strong** 13 (–3), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Natural Warrior* (adept)		
Weapons Accurate	Bite 0 (penetrating: 5), two attacks at the same target, 1D6 temporary corruption		
Armor	Half damage according to *Swarm* II, regenerates 4 *Toughness* per turn except fire damage.		
Defense	–5		
Toughness	13	**Pain Threshold**	7
Shadow	Flickering black, like swirling soot flakes in starlight (thoroughly corrupt)		

Tactics: The swarm has nothing in mind besides gorging until it is full, and it does not quit until the target is blight born or leaves its territory.

NIGHT SWARMERS, MURDER CLOUD

Manner	A rustling, whining storm		
Race	Abomination		
Resistance	Strong		
Traits	*Corrupting Attack* (III), *Fleet-footed*, *Harmful Aura* (I, temporary corruption), *Night Perception*, *Piercing Attack* (III), *Regeneration* (III), *Swarm* (III), *Wings* (III)		
Accurate 11 (–1), **Cunning** 5 (+5), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 15 (–5), **Resolute** 9 (+1), **Strong** 13 (–3), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Natural Warrior* (adept)		
Weapons Accurate	Bite 0 (penetrating: 6), two attacks at the same target, 1D8 temporary corruption		
Armor	Quarter of damage according to *Swarm* III, regenerates 4 *Toughness* per turn except fire damage		
Defense	–5		
Toughness	13	**Pain Threshold**	7
Shadow	Raging black, like a downpour in pitch black darkness (thoroughly corrupt)		

Tactics: The murder cloud has no special tactics, but aware of their automatically harmful aura, the individuals are extra eager to get to the warm flesh before it is spoiled by corruption.

Ravenous Willow

Father wanted to show me Davokar. He said we must understand the forest, now that we are living in its shadow. He said that we must see through the lies being spread by elves and witches; yes, even by our own sun church, in order to prevent simple folk from mistaking the wild beauty of the woods for something other than the enticing illusions of the Eternal Night.

We got ourselves a berth on a small sailboat north of Kastor and disembarked on the northern bank soon after reaching the Eanor River. We were supposed to spend three days in the dark, no more. But it would become only one night for me, and an eternity for father. He was slain that very first night.

The last rays of sunlight shone through the foliage, gleaming on something at the foot of a towering, crooked tree, its branches completely bare. Father chuckled, saying that the find strengthened his conviction – that Davokar is full of treasures from the once glorious Symbaroum; that the treasures are simply laying around, waiting to be found by fearless wanderers. He ran the last bit, and this saved my life, for as soon as he reached them, the tempting objects vanished in the blink of an eye, and the tree came to life.

Father had barely drawn his sword before the strong branches embraced him, squeezing him so tightly that his steel armor buckled. I ran. Ran. Ran...

Baron Erlamei Elderras' granddaughter after returning from Davokar

The ravenous willow is a treelike, bloodsucking creature that, for obvious reasons, **is easily overlooked in the woods of Davokar.** An analysis of eyewitness accounts indicates that both the **size and appearance can vary considerably.** This may be linked to the individual's age and nutritional state – that they can seem old and sick (or even dead) until they **feast on the warm juices of their prey, when crimson leaves suddenly shoot out on their branches and the bark gains a healthy luster.** Much also suggests that they can develop different types of abilities, perhaps as a result of where they first sprouted or what they usually eat.

The same accounts state that these woodland creatures **always live alone, far away from others of their kind,** possibly because the competition for food would otherwise be too great. It seems that they can remain still for weeks, waiting for birds, squirrels and sometimes even larger animals to come near. **Then they wrap their tentacle-like branches around the victim,**

Detecting Ravenous Willows

The Queen's rangers have learned, at heavy cost, how to distinguish ravenous willows from other vegetation: they are never completely motionless; even in still air, its branches will sometimes tremble and its tree trunk writhe or creak ominously. A person with the *Loremaster* ability or the *Bushcraft* boon reacts to such signs if the player passes a *Vigilant* test. Others can also sense that something is wrong with a successful *[Vigilant –5]*.

Mirage

The creature has a mystical gift and may create illusions to lure in potential prey. The prey must pass a *[Vigilant←Persuasive]* test in order to see through the illusion.

strangling it or breaking its bones, before feeding on its blood.

Ravenous willows move slowly, but then again, they do not need to be quick, as they (or at least some of them) can **snare their prey with Entangling Vines or try to block its escape with their roots.** It is also said that the monster has the ability to **lure creatures in by mystical means;** to dress its branches with the illusion of covetable fruit, or sprinkle the ground with juicy tussocks or gold-shimmering objects which, they have learned, some prey find utterly irresistible.

Adventure Set-up

Like other examples of Davokar's predatory flora, the ravenous willow **may very well be encountered on the player characters' travels,** but the devious killer tree can also serve as the main opponent in smaller scenarios.

One option is to let the ravenous willow be positioned inside a ruin which the player characters will visit in search of treasure, knowledge or a certain artifact. **With the Root Wall trait, it will then try to isolate one or two of them from the rest of the group,** in a courtyard or similar open space.

Another alternative is to let a ravenous willow be **worshipped by some cult,** whose members are kidnapping people to be offered as sacrifices. The cult could be based in a town or village on the border with Davokar, or inhabit an outpost somewhere in the depths of the forest. **In any case, the adventure could culminate in a battle with the bark-clad deity.**

RAVENOUS WILLOW, YOUNG STRANGLER

Manner	Swaying, flailing movements
Race	Flora
Resistance	Strong
Traits	*Armored* (III), *Crushing Embrace* (III), *Many-headed* (I), *Mirage*, *Natural Weapon* (III), *Robust* (III), *Root Wall* (II)

Accurate 11 (–1), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 10 (0), **Quick** 7 (+3), **Resolute** 13 (–3), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)

Abilities	None		
Weapons, Accurate	Gnarled branches 9 (long)		
Armor	Thick bark 8		
Defense	+7		
Toughness	15	**Pain Threshold**	–
Shadow	Furrowed gray and brown, like rough bark (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: The strangler first raises its root wall near enemies with ranged weapons, before letting loose on the melee combatants with its two combat actions. It will usually restrain and try to crush one enemy, while using the second action to strike with its branches.

RAVENOUS WILLOW, OLD CRUSHER

Manner	Stomps forth unstoppably
Race	Flora
Resistance	Mighty
Traits	*Armored* (III), *Colossal* (I), *Crushing Embrace* (III), *Many-headed* (II), *Mirage*, *Natural Weapon* (III), *Robust* (III), *Root Wall* (III), *Sturdy* (II), *Wrecker* (III)

Accurate 14 (–4), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 10 (0), **Quick** 7 (+3), **Resolute** 13 (–3), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)

Abilities	*Berserker* (master), *Exceptionally Accurate* (master)		
Weapons, Accurate	Gnarled branches 11 (long, wrecking)		
Armor	Thick bark 7		
Defense	+7		
Toughness	30	**Pain Threshold**	–
Shadow	A ragged greenish brown, like bark attacked by moss (corruption: 0)		

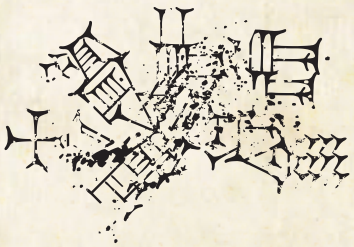
Tactics: Filled with contained anger over the burning, chopping and cleaving of lesser creatures, the colossal crusher launches a thundering attack. How it uses its four combat actions may vary, but heavily armored enemies are always the primary target of its wrecking attacks.

Scorner

The daemonic abomination that goes by the name Scorner is **insufficiently studied and poorly understood.** However, significant for the blight beast in question, is that it can become **invisible to the naked eye, and that it kills by crushing the victims in its brutishly strong tentacles.** Regarding the invisibility, there are accounts claiming that both mystical powers and various substances (especially flour, dyes and other fine-grained dust) can make the creature at least partially visible, revealing a shape that one can fight or defend against.

Less reliable sources state that some **alchemical elixirs and lesser artifacts** may make the abomination visible, but regardless of method this gives rise to other problems. This tentacle armed monstrosity is **supposed to be so unnatural and otherworldly** that the sight of it induces a terror that will paralyze or send all but the fiercest blight beast hunters fleeing like frightened children.

Cuneiform writings at the Azure Temple, which according to some indicates that the first Scorner forced itself on the world through a mirrored, parodically distorted etching of the Symbolist ritual *Rune Guardian*.



Collection of symbols carved into a floor plate in one of Odaban's best preserved ruins; it supposedly describes the gravely failed assassination attempt on Prince Almanthor. The Prince died, and so did the rebels.

Summon Scorner

Sorcerers can summon Scorners by performing a version of the ritual *Summon Daemon* (see page 94 in the *Advanced Player's Guide*).

Judging by songs, tales and written portrayals, **encounters with Scorners are nothing new but they are rare.** Should the attacks have been more frequent, the knowledge on how to reveal and combat the creatures would probably have been further developed. **But maybe this is about to change,** since the intrusions into the darker parts of Davokar mean an increase in the number of accounts – often combined with **descriptions of "tears in the fabric of creation" or "porridge-thick blight mists"...**

I should never have insulted Baron Oramei. The rumors about him being in league with sorcerers are not the least exaggerated: to this I can testify in these, the final hours of my miserable life. The Baron's troops are circling my castle, and the fortifications I once raised to my protection are now the walls of my death chamber. They killed my alchemist first, with an arrow, so now they can just sit and wait while the Baron's death magic murders us in here, one by one: crushes us to shapeless skin sacks full of broken, pulverized bones.

I write this alone in my chamber, with wife and children chased out into the hallway, as pointless offerings to the abomination. It will not settle with them. I am wearing armor that will not protect, am locked behind a door that will not hinder, and on the table rests my mother's sword, which hardly can save me from an enemy that cannot be seen. The abomination's embrace will soon crush my lungs and break my spine, while I sit with sword in one hand and pen in the other. May all abominable beings of the Yonderworld haunt the Baron of Haaras for all eternity.

Baron Saludo's Farewell, year –25, Alberetor

Adventure Set-up

The Scorner can be used in several ways, one of the most interesting being illustrated by **Baron Saludo's letter on the previous spread:** the characters are in a place attacked by a sneaking, invisible Scorner that they have to fight in order to save themselves and anyone else present in the building or structure. If the game master wants to expand on the scenario, **the characters may instead be reached by a distress call from inside the site,** so that they have to get past the besieging force before rescuing the residents and arranging a counter-attack.

Another option is that the characters are in **a more open location, exposed to the attacks of a Scorner.** Maybe they first have to combat the creature, to later explain its presence? If so, it should be quite easy to find out where the abomination comes from. **Could it be a demonologist or a malicious cult?** Or maybe **a festering world wound has opened up** near or even inside the settlement?

THUS SPOKE AROALETA

"... and Kasion and Bruto aimed their blades, at noble tyrant, towards silverblack heart. In the dusk of the throne room were rebels and prince, but also a lurking danger; the blood of the rivals slowly merged where broken bodies soon fell down..."

My beautiful lass,
like a scorner to me,

so close to me always,
even when I can't see.

My heart did you break,
my bone structure too,

in that sweetest embrace,
when I ceded to you.

Verse from the love song Scorning Beauty

SCORNER			
Manner	Terrifying		
Race	Abomination		
Resistance	Strong		
Traits	*Crushing Embrace* (III), *Invisibility* (III), *Natural Weapon* (III), *Robust* (II), *Sturdy* (III), *Terrify* (II, if visible, partially or fully)		
Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 15 (–5), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 13 (–3), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Iron Fist* (adept)		
Weapons Strong	Tentacles 10 (long), and Crushing Embrace 4		
Armor	Tough flesh 3		
Defense	+3		
Toughness	36	**Pain Threshold**	7
Shadow	Furiously, swarming black (thoroughly corrupt)		

Tactics: Uses its invisibility to maneuver around the enemies and attack them one by one. It starts with mystics, scholars and others who may possess the means to counteract the invisibility, then finishes off with the rest.

Skullbiter

The armored killers known to the staff mages as **Shield Beasts, and to the clanfolk as Skullbiters,** probably have their breeding ground somewhere near the castle of the staff-wielding mystics. That is where they usually appear and demonstrate their battle tactics, as simple as they are devastating: **huddle behind their carapace, then roll straight at – and through – the enemy's defensive line, into the heart of the opposing force.** There, they rear up, baring their jaws. A huddled shield beast is not easily wounded, which the staff mages can attest to. **One must patiently wait for them to rear up, and then strike hard.**

It seems that the shield beasts cannot be corrupted, but **take physical damage from corruption in a way that is reminiscent of dwarves.** Some scholars claim that they really are transmogrified dwarves, while most simply believe that **the beasts and the dwarves are children of the same deranged science** – that they were bred through similar methods, without being related in any other way.

In any event, the fact that they take damage from corruption can be used against them, mainly by **seeking out routes above ground that are so corrupted as to be contagious, and therefore harmful to shield**

The eastern passage to the burned temples is closed. There are shield beasts lurking underground. They broke through our front after only two attack waves. I am surprised that we could even withstand the first crushing assault; such was its shielded might. Once they had broken through, when they were in our midst, it was staff mage against shield beast, duel upon duel. We all know how such battles usually end.

I retreated, staff whirling, toward a broken pillar whose top now serves as my writing desk. I am the only one left. There are forsaken staves, broken staves, scattered across the ground below. The beasts dragged their crushed victims down into the burrows. Their own dead, too, to strengthen the survivors through cold-blooded cannibalism. I cannot but feel a certain respect for this foe. As someone said: it is as if they were created to battle staff mages. Even if they were not bred for that purpose, they are certainly very well equipped to withstand the power of our staves, break through our warriors' ranks, and strike directly at our pathetically feeble flesh.

The sun is slowly setting, and the violings are gathering. I must either head back down and risk the fury of the shield beasts, or be pecked to death by a hundred greedy beaks as soon as night falls.

One of many accounts of shield beast attacks that are kept in the archives at the staff mages' castle, deep within Davokar.

beasts. Moreover, mystics who are able to use corruption successfully as a weapon may of course do so against the skullbiters, even though the staff mages would never consider this possibility or tolerate someone else resorting to such methods.

Shield beasts come in different sizes. As hatchlings they are the size of hogs, and after having filled their bellies with the flesh of their enemies, it does not take long for them to grow as large as a horse, into veritable crushers. Much later, having reached their full strength, they stop growing, but use the nutrients from slain enemies to lay eggs as large as (and easily mistaken for) boulders. These eggs are themselves a threat to adventurers, as they have a tendency to hatch just as warm-blooded creatures are passing by.

Adventure Set-up

Skullbiters are mainly a threat to those attempting to infiltrate Dark Davokar, but it is of course tempting to have them show up in more civilized areas as well – with the help of unwitting or malevolent agents. Scholars may have come across the eggs and, convinced that they would be able to handle such a threat, brought them to a settlement for study. This leads to a catastrophic massacre: the settlement soon becomes a breeding pit for newly hatched shield beasts – a threat which, if not dealt with immediately, results in a crushing onslaught of full-grown skullbiters, and later in a queen dwelling somewhere beneath the settlement, which basically means that the place is doomed.

A similar scenario could be caused by someone – a monster cult or agents of a particularly hateful attacker – smuggling skullbiter eggs into their enemies' midst, and then watching from afar as the settlement or castle is devastated by the predators.

In both cases, the characters could get involved as someone is killed by a hatchling, after which they must figure out what is going on based on the clues available to them – namely, the corpse, tracks on the ground and the empty egg. Such a scenario will have the greatest effect if set in a place which the characters are fond of or dependent on; this would intensify the drama and strengthen the characters' will to solve the situation.

Egg Cluster, trap

Those who come within one Movement Action of an egg cluster must pass a *Discreet* test (unmodified); another option is to destroy the cluster with weapons and powers, in which case it must sustain a total of 15 damage in a single turn (*Armor* 2). Should any of these attempts fail, 1D4 shield beast hatchlings are released and attack immediately.

SKULLBITER, HATCHLING			
Manner	Plays with its claws		
Race	Predator (beast)		
Resistance	Ordinary		
Traits	*Armored* (I), *Carapace* (I), *Earth Bound*, *Fleet-footed*, *Natural Weapon* (I), *Rampage* (I), *Robust* (I)		
Accurate 5 (+5), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 9 (+1), **Persuasive** 10 (0), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Iron Fist* (novice)		
Weapons Strong	Bite 5		
Armor	Shell 4		
Defense	–1		
Toughness	15	**Pain Threshold**	8
Shadow	Mottled gray like coarse gravel (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: Skullbiter hatchlings are cautious by nature and prefer not to attack on their own, unless the victim appears to be wounded, in which case they never hesitate.

SKULLBITER, CRUSHER			
Manner	Waddling back and forth		
Race	Predator (beast)		
Resistance	Strong		
Traits	*Armored* (III), *Carapace* (III), *Earth Bound*, *Fleet-footed*, *Natural Weapon* (II), *Rampage* (III), *Robust* (III)		
Accurate 5 (+5), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 9 (+1), **Persuasive** 10 (0), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Iron Fist* (novice), *Natural Warrior* (adept)		
Weapons Strong	Bite 9/5, two attacks at the same target		
Armor	Shell 8		
Defense	+1		
Toughness	15	**Pain Threshold**	8
Shadow	Silvery gray, like slate rock (corruption: 0)		
Tactics: The crusher uses the typical tactics of a skullbiter: to burst through the enemy's defensive line and, once in their midst, slay the weaker enemies first.			

SKULLBITER, QUEEN			
Manner	Hissing haughtily		
Race	Predator (beast)		
Resistance	Mighty		
Traits	*Armored* (III), *Carapace* (III), *Companions* (III, three shield beast hatchlings), *Earth Bound*, *Fleet-footed*, *Mystical Resistance* (III), *Natural Weapon* (III), *Rampage* (III), *Robust* (III), *Sturdy* (II)		
Accurate 5 (+5), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 9 (+1), **Persuasive** 10 (0), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 17 (–7), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Acrobatics* (adept), *Exceptionally Strong* (adept), *Iron Fist* (master), *Natural Warrior* (master)		
Weapons Strong	Bite 17/11 (long), two attacks at the same target		
Armor	Shell 8		
Defense	+1		
Toughness	30	**Pain Threshold**	8
Shadow	Glossy silver-gray, like a dirty diamond (corruption: 0)		
Tactics: The queen's main goal is to survive and lay more eggs. She ignores enemies as long as they do not get in the way of her escape to a secure nesting place.			

The Staff Mages' Arena

Even though there are some indications that the shield beasts are spreading south, and both the clans and the Ambrians are taught to recognize their tracks, the staff mages are still the ones who suffer most from the creature in question. Individual staff mages have even remarked that the shield beast is the single biggest reason why they have not yet located Symbar, and that they are obstructing all attempts at mapping the northern ruins of Davokar.

To remedy the situation, the staff mages have created an arena in a secluded part of their castle, to train their warriors and mystics to withstand the threat. There they are breeding shield beasts for study, and staff mages and warriors are taught how to fight them in controlled combat situations – only in the form of hatchlings, of course, but it is still very useful for future encounters.

Sly River Hunter

The worst I've seen on the river? Well, it was a long time ago, but I remember it as yesterday – the noise, the cries, the blood.

I don't believe I was older than eight or nine. Mother had sent me to the riverside with the fishing rod and an order for a dozen trout for supper. It was a nice day. River Eanor ran fat and strong, the sun glittered on its surface; a day I immediately knew would end in a whipping, since both weather and water suggested that I wouldn't catch much.

Right before the sun was at its highest, a small sailboat came gliding with the stream. Young as I was, I still knew the river currents as well as the inside of my eyelids, so I immediately saw that something was wrong – as if the vessel pulled to the portside. Also, it scraped against Arfert's Cay, in spite of the high water level. The crew was not unaware. A boy, no older than me, rushed to the railing holding a boathook; he leaned out and poked at the hull, with the hook as a spear. This was just when the boat floated past me...

Two gigantic claws appeared from the water, gripped the boys neck and squeezed so the blood sprayed in all directions before pulling him under. Panic erupted. The crew fled towards the other railing, but then the claws appeared there to nearly chop a woman in two. Wide-eyed I watched the crew members being pulled down below the surface, one by one, and a bit further down the stream, the vessel capsized.

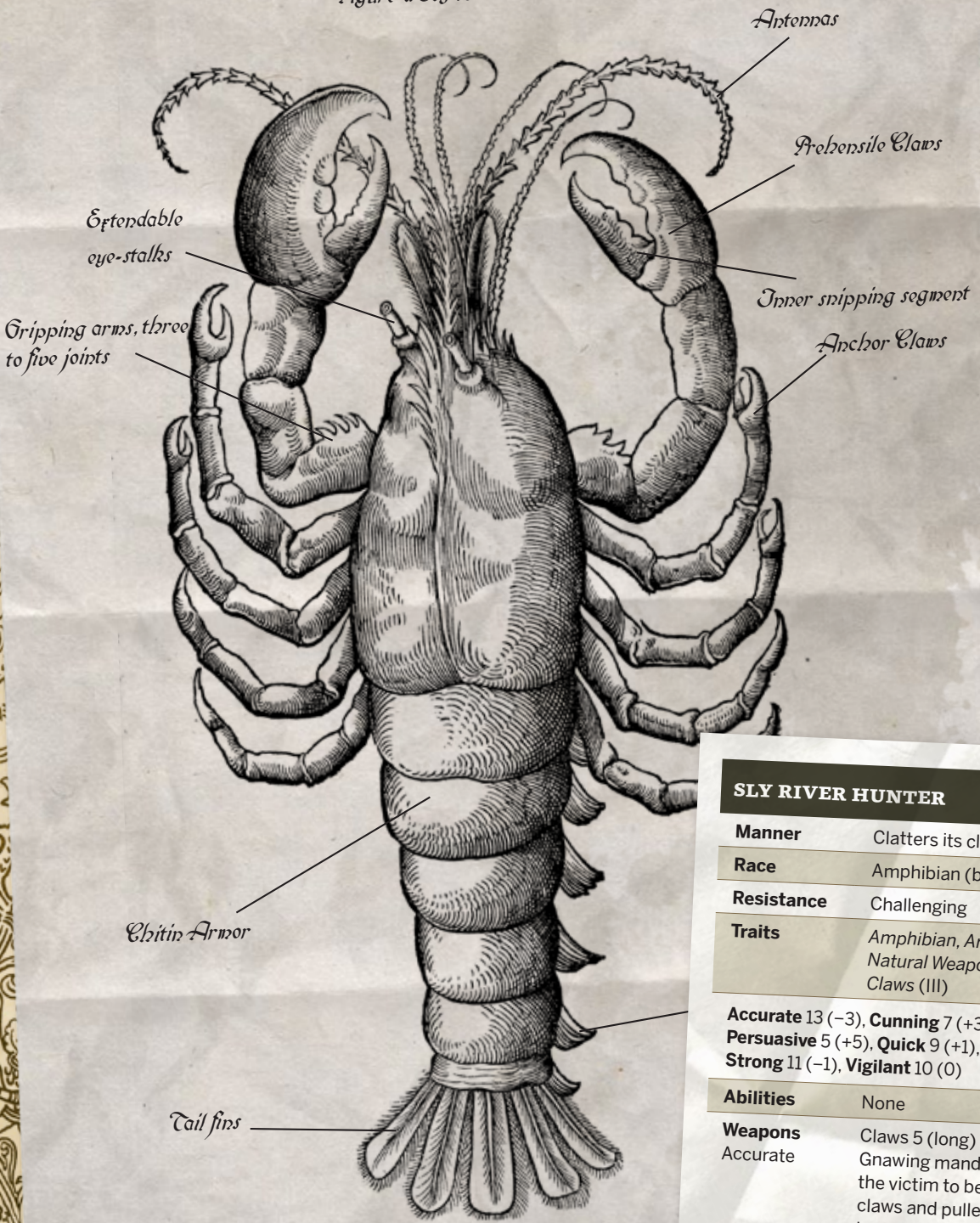
How many were onboard I do not know. Maybe ten. Maybe fifteen. What I absolutely do know, is that none of them ever set foot on land again ...

The fisherman Svanne's childhood memory, told at Kastor's soup kitchen

Discovering River Hunters

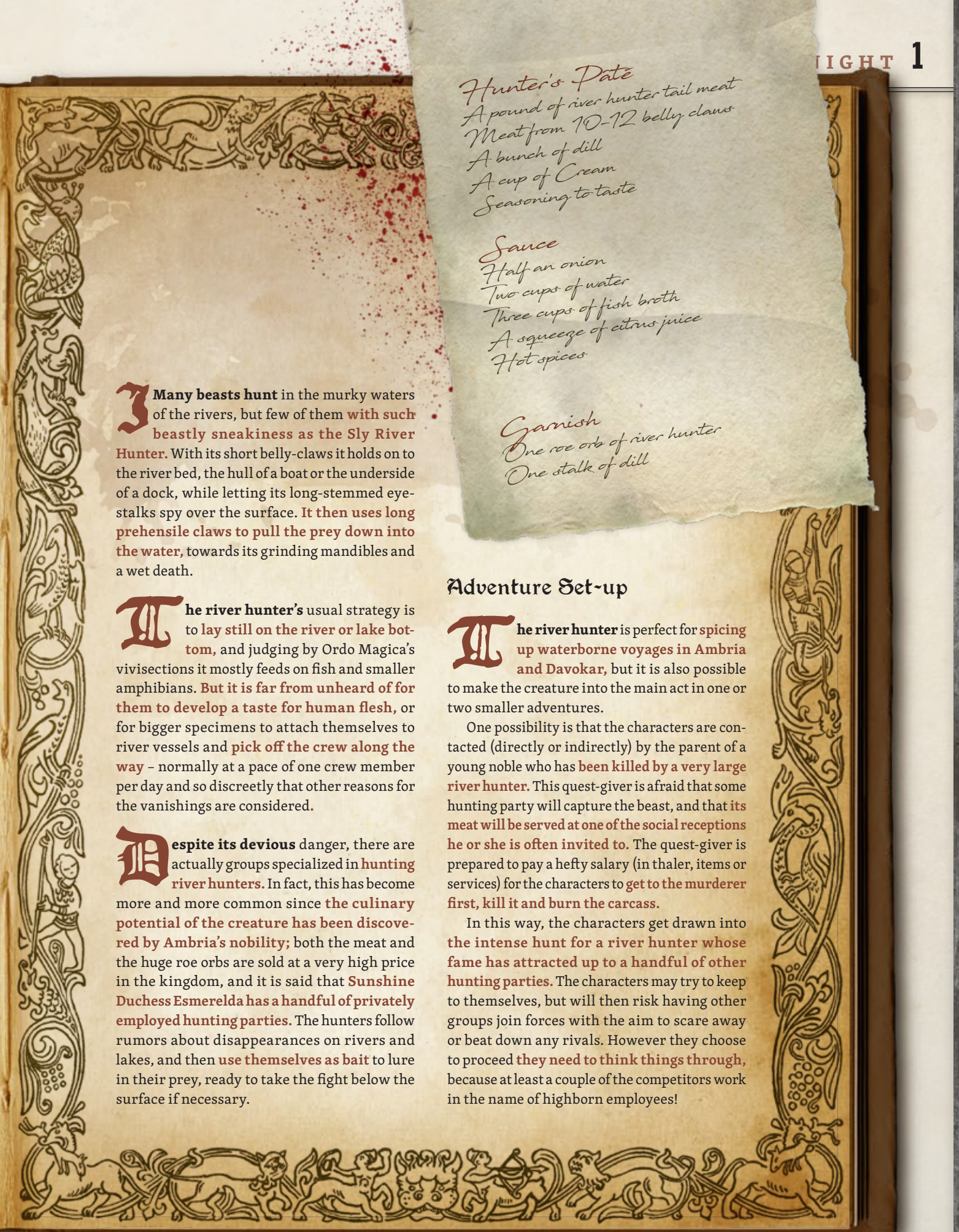
The huge, vaguely transparent river beast is very difficult to spot through the rippling surface; even when looking right at it – it takes a test against *[Vigilant –5]* to notice it. The same goes for taking note of the slender eye stalks it uses to spy over the surface and select its victims. In both of these cases, an active, verbalized search is required for the players to be allowed to roll the tests.

Figure 1: Sly River Hunter



SLY RIVER HUNTER			
Manner	Clatters its claws		
Race	Amphibian (beast)		
Resistance	Challenging		
Traits	*Amphibian*, *Armored* (III), *Natural Weapon* (III), *Prehensile Claws* (III)		
Accurate 13 (−3), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 15 (−5), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 9 (+1), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 11 (−1), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	None		
Weapons Accurate	Claws 5 (long) Gnawing mandibles 2, requires the victim to be held by the claws and pulled towards the hunter.		
Armor	Chitin Shields 4		
Defense	+1		
Toughness	11	**Pain Threshold**	6
Shadow	Greenish brown, like an algal bloom in water (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: The sly river hunter uses the water as cover, spies with its antenna eyes and attacks targets with the prehensile claws to pull them beneath the surface. The target basically fights the claws, until it is pulled into the water.



Many beasts hunt in the murky waters of the rivers, but few of them **with such beastly sneakiness as the Sly River Hunter.** With its short belly-claws it holds on to the river bed, the hull of a boat or the underside of a dock, while letting its long-stemmed eye-stalks spy over the surface. **It then uses long prehensile claws to pull the prey down into the water,** towards its grinding mandibles and a wet death.

The river hunter's usual strategy is to **lay still on the river or lake bottom,** and judging by Ordo Magica's vivisections it mostly feeds on fish and smaller amphibians. **But it is far from unheard of for them to develop a taste for human flesh,** or for bigger specimens to attach themselves to river vessels and **pick off the crew along the way** – normally at a pace of one crew member per day and so discreetly that other reasons for the vanishings are considered.

Despite its devious danger, there are actually groups specialized in **hunting river hunters.** In fact, this has become more and more common since **the culinary potential of the creature has been discovered by Ambria's nobility;** both the meat and the huge roe orbs are sold at a very high price in the kingdom, and it is said that **Sunshine Duchess Esmerelda has a handful of privately employed hunting parties.** The hunters follow rumors about disappearances on rivers and lakes, and then **use themselves as bait** to lure in their prey, ready to take the fight below the surface if necessary.

Hunter's Paté
A pound of river hunter tail meat
Meat from 10-12 belly claws
A bunch of dill
A cup of Cream
Seasoning to taste

Sauce
Half an onion
Two cups of water
Three cups of fish broth
A squeeze of citrus juice
Hot spices

Garnish
One roe orb of river hunter
One stalk of dill

Adventure Set-up

The river hunter is perfect for **spicing up waterborne voyages in Ambria and Davokar,** but it is also possible to make the creature into the main act in one or two smaller adventures.

One possibility is that the characters are contacted (directly or indirectly) by the parent of a young noble who has **been killed by a very large river hunter.** This quest-giver is afraid that some hunting party will capture the beast, and that **its meat will be served at one of the social receptions he or she is often invited to.** The quest-giver is prepared to pay a hefty salary (in thaler, items or services) for the characters to **get to the murderer first, kill it and burn the carcass.**

In this way, the characters get drawn into **the intense hunt for a river hunter whose fame has attracted up to a handful of other hunting parties.** The characters may try to keep to themselves, but will then risk having other groups join forces with the aim to scare away or beat down any rivals. However they choose to proceed **they need to think things through,** because at least a couple of the competitors work in the name of highborn employees!

Spite

The overgrown insect which barbarians call the Spite **exists solely to procreate.** The creature can be found throughout the Davokar region, **underground as well as above,** and judging by the stories circulating among treasure hunters and explorers, the size of their colonies ranges from **a handful of individuals to several hundred of them.** Expeditions unlucky enough to encounter any of the larger, often subterranean, spite nests should turn back and pray that they are not detected...

Gadlag, Adept of the Order at the Kastor chapter, has submitted a text which many fortune hunters would do well to study. **An excerpt from his findings can be read below,** but he also stresses that the creature can be deadly to humans and that its infestations are not the only thing to worry about. Sure, the spite may **prefer to place its offspring in hibernating elves and trolls,** or even in conscious trolls whose regenerative ability furthers the evolution of the larvae, but it is not very picky when choosing its host.

Grown Spites are inclined to target hibernating or cocooned members of the elder folk, sinking their barbed stings into the back of the victim's neck. The insect then sheds the rear part of its own body, thus leaving its offspring behind to thrive and evolve.

The infestation manifests itself in a red, swollen, purulent amniotic sac far down on the host's neck, with a forked outgrowth along its throat, protruding from the skin on both sides of the larynx. The larvae then grow inside this attached sac, while the host's body is poisoned and its mind and senses clouded – the latter to such an extent that the creature no longer has the self-control and awareness necessary to perceive the infestation of the spite.

The venom in the host's blood provides perfect conditions for the maturation of the larvae, but also seems to be the insect's greatest weakness. Tests have shown that a strong antidote can neutralize the toxin, thus, effectively and immediately, eliminating the parasite. The sting, the amniotic sack, and the larvae can then be removed by a trained Medicus, although doing so often results in great pain and serious injury.

Excerpt from Adept Galdag's essay
"The nature and danger of the spite."

The fact that infected individuals **ignore their own infestation as well as that of other people** has on two occasions led to **violent incidents in Ambria.** Both were caused by groups of fortune hunters returning from the woods, infested with the venomous larvae of the spite. In **a haze of paranoid aggression,** these groups assaulted all who tried to help them, and caused great damage before they could be subdued.

Adventure Set-up

Rumor has it that **a band of ruthless killers** is raiding the farms of some barony on the border with Davokar. The player characters are given, or take on, the task of hunting down this group. Their first stop could be a solitary inn that was attacked a couple of nights ago. It turns out that the killers were **calm upon arrival, but became angry when some of the patrons stared at them** and a waitress asked if there was something she could help them with – they killed or wounded as many as they could before disappearing into the night, heading "east."

The next stop could be a homestead. **The family living there has been slain, as have all the maids and farmhands in their service,** and the corpses have attracted predators or some other threat. After a thorough search of the estate, the characters find one of the killers with the parasite still in his neck (can be identified with *Loremaster* or *Beast Lore* and a successful *Cunning* test). **A trail of blood leads off in a suitable direction,** and can be traced with *Bushcraft* or similar talents.

Finally, the characters catch up with the infested killers. Perhaps they have stationed themselves inside a smaller border fort, along with one or more hostages? **The characters must get inside without triggering the paranoid madmens' aggression,** preferably in a way that allows them to neutralize the killers without using lethal force. **The question is to what extent the group can be considered responsible for actions performed under the influence of the spite...**

Incident report

Witnesses claim that the woman was pale, dirty, drooling, and making guttural sounds which were sometimes reminiscent of a rooting pig, sometimes of an angry goose or a rutting young bull. She was jumping up and down, waving her fists and attacking anyone who came near. Eventually Watchman Lerk saw past the dirt and recognized her as Lea, one of Goldengrasp's assistants. He approached the woman, unarmed, attempting to calm her down, which explains how she managed to leap forward and bite his throat open. I saw no option but to order my men to fire. She died gargling with five crossbow bolts through her body.

Squad Leader Pellio
Town Watch, Thistle Hold

SPITE			
Manner	Buzzing hypnotically		
Race	Winged Creature (beast)		
Resistance	Challenging		
Traits	*Infectious* (II), *Infestation* (I), *Natural Weapon* (III), *Wings* (II)		
Accurate 11 (–1), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 15 (–5), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 5 (+5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Backstab* (novice)		
Weapons, Discreet/ Accurate	Stinger 5 (+4 when at an *Advantage*)		
Armor	None		
Defense	–3		
Toughness	10	**Pain Threshold**	3
Shadow	Dull green with winding lines of grayish white, like an overwintering weed (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: The spite silently attacks after first having tried to gain an *Advantage* over the victim by approaching it from behind or above. It always prioritizes targets with regenerative abilities, but otherwise does not discriminate between potential victims.

Spite Sickness

The venom which the spite releases into the bloodstream of its host takes effect on the turn after the process has begun. The first thing that happens is that the host becomes paranoid, confused and aggressive; it views everyone around it as a potential threat, ignores the infestation completely, and gains the *Berserker* ability at adept level. If the person in question already has said ability, the level is raised or lowered to adept.

Furthermore, the venom may infect the victim with a disease which slowly breaks down its mental capacity. Spite sickness counts as a Moderate disease (see page 169) but affects the host's *Cunning* instead of its *Strong*. As long as the effect remains active, the victim is in danger of becoming less and less intelligent, before it finally – when *Cunning* reaches 0 – dies in some spectacular way (e.g. jumping off a cliff, running head first into a rock wall, stabbing its own eye).

The infestation lasts 10+1D6 days. Should the host survive that long, it may still be killed as the larvae burst through the amniotic sac and set off, which deals as much damage as if a Medicus managed to abort the infestation prematurely (see page 168).

Troll Shadow

Troll Shadow

74 These creatures, recognized by their gaunt physique and unhealthy complexion, should be avoided whenever possible. Alone they are merely a distraction, but in groups they become a growing threat; they steal whatever they can find, often destroying what they do not understand. In larger groups they generate some kind of mystical power that is a serious threat to the integrity of a ranger squad.

75 ✢ It should also be said that troll shadows seldom have any knowledge worth collecting or using, unless one happens to be in search of an artifact, as these pitiful lifeforms seem able to detect the scent of such items. The downside is that what little help one receives comes at a greater cost than the mission can afford.

76 ✢ The basic rule is simple: Keep a safe distance, or increase the distance by leaving something small for them to eat or occupy themselves with.

Better to kill them on sight, or you will regret it!

From the pupa of a goblin, a rage troll usually emerges; sometimes an ogre, and **in rare cases six so called troll shadows come crawling out of the shriveled cocoon** – small, twisted, scrawny creatures who, according to legend, **rip babies from their cradles, strip hen houses of both eggs and birds, and sometimes join forces to attack careless travelers.** Experienced wanderers of the woods sometimes refer to them by the derogatory term "Dark Fairies," but even seasoned treasure hunters are reluctant to face large collectives of troll shadows, as the creatures not only gain courage from their increased numbers, but **a strange mystical force as well.**

Excerpt from the Ranger Field Manual

Even though troll shadows appear to originate from the race of trolls, they have **no sense of kinship with them,** nor with goblins or ogres. They seem afraid of just about everything, including their own troll cousins, though not of **changelings, to whom troll shadows are drawn with great excitement.** Perhaps it is true what some witches say: that troll shadows view the existence of the changeling as an exalted version of their own deformity. In any case, since changelings reside in Ambrian towns and barbarian settlements, troll shadows can appear there as well, **often accompanied by a changeling who may or may not be delighted by their company.**

Bothersome as they may be, troll shadows do have one beneficial and potentially useful ability: **they can sense the presence of, and therefore track down, mystical artifacts.** Since rumors of this ability started circulating throughout Ambria's border settlements, many fortune hunters, explorers and moneygrubbers in general have tried to use it for personal gain. **Some stories describe fortune hunters who encountered troll shadows in Davokar and followed them to what turned out to be well-stocked treasure troves of untold riches;** other rumors tell of explorers who have caught and enslaved one or several individuals to aid in the exploration of untouched ruins.

Whatever the truth may be, it is **hardly safe to travel with a group of troll shadows** – even shackled ones. Also a small collective can cause serious problems, for the sake of revenge or simply to amuse themselves, and the effect of such mischief can of course be disastrous for a group that has ventured deep into the forest of Davokar...

Sensing Artifacts

The only thing troll shadows love more than changelings is mystical artifacts, which leads some scholars to conclude that they were actually created for the purpose of sniffing out lost or secretly created mystical items.

Exactly how this is done is unclear, but collectives of troll shadows are undoubtedly drawn to so called free artifacts – that is, artifacts that have never had a master, or whose masters have died or broken their link to such objects. The distance to the artifact seems to be significant in that, the larger the collective is, the farther away the item may be – the range of the collective's ability is one kilometer for each individual member.

Unscrupulous treasure hunters (particularly changelings) can use this gift, provided that they manage to lure or capture at least four individuals. When these troll shadows gather in a collective, they will instinctively be drawn to the nearest free artifact, without knowing exactly what or where it is. If the artifact is found and bound to a master, they will immediately start searching for another one.

Adventure Set-up

The characters become involved in a situation where a landlord is **having trouble with "pests" on his or her property;** it could be a place in Davokar or in a town where the sewers allow the troll shadows to move freely through the area. The troll shadows have taken an interest in the place because **they can sense the presence of an artifact inside or beneath a building.**

One option is to have the scenario take place at the inn of the Witch & Familiar in Thistle Hold. In that case, **it all started with a few troll shadows bothering guests at night by tapping on the foundation, roof and basement walls of the house.** But over time their numbers have grown, and there is now enough of them to become a real problem: **using their powers, they are prompting both the staff and guests** to search the lower levels of the building or tear down walls in search of hidden compartments. Eventually **it goes so far that a guest is killed** after having crawled down the basement floor drain and, as the passage widened, fallen to her death.

One way to solve the problem is to locate the troll shadows' hideout in the sewers; another is to use their love of changelings to lead them away from the city. **Perhaps it is possibly to negotiate with them, or give them an artifact?** Or are they in fact being commanded by a changeling who either led them to the inn or found them there, and now uses his allure to lead them on the hunt for the artifact?

TROLL SHADOW			
Manner	Anxiously wide-eyed		
Race	Troll (cultural being)		
Resistance	Weak		
Traits	*Collective Power*		
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 13 (–3), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 15 (–5), **Strong** 7 (+3), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	None		
Weapons Accurate	Knife 3 (short)		
Armor	None		
Defense	–1		
Toughness	10	**Pain Threshold**	4
Shadow	Pale red, like unripe lingonberries (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: Troll shadows avoid confrontation until they can form a larger pack. They then rely heavily on their collective power, while stabbing nearby enemies with rusty knives.

The Allure of Changelings

One of the stranger things about troll shadows is that they, for whatever reason, cannot help but fall in love with every single changeling that crosses their path. If the changeling is indifferent or downright dismissive, the admirers lose interest after 1D4 months – the only way to get rid of them before then is to kill them, unless they happen to pick up the scent of a free artifact (see the text box Sensing Artifacts).

On the other hand, should the changeling welcome the admirers, he (or she) can use them as if he was *Privileged* in relation to the troll shadows – the changeling gets a second chance to succeed with all social challenges and only needs to pass a test when asking for something difficult or dangerous.

Alahara Walks Anew

If the gaming group has played the adventure *The Mark of the Beast*, and the changeling Alahara remains alive, he could very well be the one who orchestrates the troll shadows' search for the Witch & Familiar's hidden artifact. Other suitable candidates are Klagander and/or Sibela from *Wrath of the Warden*. After all, reunions with familiar antagonists are usually appreciated around the gaming table!

Vengeful Terrain

Sleep my little almond biscuit
Fire chases you, to death
Water showers you, to death
Winds are throwing you, to death
Earth devours you, to death
The dreams will keep you sheltered

Nursery rhyme engraved on a bronze doll found in a prince's tomb

Vengeful terrain is the **collective name of several dissimilar phenomena** with a common origin: when corruption takes hold of the physical world, **it sometimes spawns hateful, blight stricken elementals.** Some scholars have put forth the theory that each patch of vengeful terrain is in fact a living incantation, consistsing of **mystical power which has gained life and a will of its own,** and that remains alive thanks to the life force or corruption of the victims it claims.

From what is known, vengeful terrain **only appears in and close to corrupted nature** (see page 22) or in places where grand mystical ceremonies have been performed, bequeathing a hateful legacy. In addition, there are witch hunters who claim to have found scriptures written by sorcerers, indicating that **black elementals may be possible to conjure through the practice of horrible rituals, involving sacrificial murder.** This is also underlined by certain mosaics and murals found in Davokar's ruins, portraying **mystics which appear to summon vengeful elementals in combat.** Such powers would indeed be powerful tools in the wrong hands, making all witch hunters eager to find and destroy them.

Among the more or less credible reports which supposedly tell of encounters with vengeful terrain, Ordo Magica's scholars have been able to sort out **four special types, named Hunger Fury, Choking Undine, Gobble Gnome and Ire Sylph.** The first of these is described as **living fire,** glowing in the ground or moving between flammable materials, waiting for living creatures to incinerate; the undine appear in the form of **water that bubbles and whirls when it should be still,** and which lashes out at all who come near in an attempt to force its way down their lungs to drown them.

The Gobble Gnome is described as **"jealous and murderous ground that slowly heaves up and down,"** and it is said to open up beneath its victims feet and then slam shut in a crushing embrace. Finally the Ire Sylph, which seems to be **able to lair just about anywhere, waiting to lift passing creatures into the air and throw them against rough surfaces** with the intent to kill, or at least damage them severely.

Conjure Vengeful Terrain, ritual

It is true that the clerics of Symbar could conjure vengeful terrain, even if they called the phenomenon Black Elementals instead. Since then, the forms of the ritual have fallen into oblivion, at least according to the findings of Ordo Magica. But maybe there are still some who keep the knowledge alive, or who have found it described in a ritual codex or collection of formulas?

The procedure requires the mystic to perform a sacrificial killing, directing the resulting corruption towards the sacrificial site and thus awaking it to hateful unlife. The vengeful terrain is then bound to this place, and will therefore primarily work as a guardian or mystical trap. The phenomenon's maker is not at risk of being victimized by its wrath, and the same goes for all who were present at the time of the ritual or who are moving alongside the maker – if he or she so wishes.

As previously mentioned, for the terrain to come alive it takes the blood sacrifice of a cultural being, and also a successful *Resolute* test. The mystic decides which type of terrain is created, provided that the element can be found on site. For an undine, a permanent body of water or a mire is required, while the fury demands lava (alternately a bonfire continuously supplied with fuel); the Gobbling Gnome requires solid ground and the Ire Sylph a site or passage accessible by winds.

Adventure Set-up

Player Characters who move in **corrupted environments** can come up against vengeful terrain in many ways and quite often. However, there may be other, more interesting set-ups for the Game Master to build upon...

One example may be that the characters are **hunting the leader of a dark cult,** in Davokar or quite possibly in one of Ambria's towns. When they close in on the hideout of the cultists, it becomes apparent that they have performed the ritual Conjure Vengeful Terrain in strategic places. **And not only that: the cultists themselves are immune to the wrath of the elementals, and use this as much as possible when fighting the intruders.**

As a suggestion, the cult members may be a motley bunch devoted to the Eternal Night, hoping to be rewarded when darkness finally falls. Or it can be **an exceptionally corrupt group within Ordo Magica,** whose members are experimenting with black elementals, and who are **foolishly claiming to be working in a little understood mystical branch that they alone are brave and clever enough to explore.**

Discovering Vengeful Terrain

Anyone with the boon *Bushcraft* can identify vengeful terrain by passing a test against *[Vigilant←Discreet]*. That being done, the surroundings determine if it is possible to move around the phenomena; usually they dwell (or are placed) in a spot where it will take a *[Discreet←Vigilant]* test to sneak by without awaking its fury. Vengeful terrain can also be put to sleep using the ritual *Nature's Lullaby*.

CHOKING UNDINE

Manner	Boiling, bubbling
Race	Phenomenon
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Regeneration* (III), *Sturdy* (III)

Accurate 14 (–4), **Cunning** 16 (–6), **Discreet** 9 (+1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 7 (+3)

Abilities	*Drowning Wave*, Exceptionally Accurate* (novice), *Exceptionally Cunning* (novice)
Weapons Accurate	Drowning 3
Armor	None, regenerates 4 *Toughness* per turn, except fire damage
Defense	–1
Toughness	30 **Pain Threshold** 5
Shadow	Shifting blue, like the ripples on Lake Volgoma (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The Undine embraces one victim at a time and does not let go until it is dead.

* Works as *Strangler* (novice) but does not require an *Advantage*

IRE SYLPH

Manner	Whining, howling
Race	Phenomenon
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Spirit Form* (III)

Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 11 (–1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 17 (–7), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 9 (+1)

Abilities	*Exceptionally Resolute* (adept), *Mind-throw* (master)
Weapons	None
Armor	Half damage according to *Spirit Form* III
Defense	–3
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 5
Shadow	Raging white, like a swirling snowstorm (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The Sylph soars around the battlefield throwing its enemies about, against rocks, trees and down precipices if possible.

HUNGER FURY

Manner	Sizzling, rustling
Race	Phenomenon
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Harmful Aura* (II), *Spirit Form* (II)

Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 15 (–5), **Strong** 11 (–1), **Vigilant** 10 (0)

Abilities	*Brimstone Cascade* (master), *Fire Soul* (master)
Weapons	None
Armor	Half damage according to *Spirit Form* II
Defense	–3
Toughness	11 **Pain Threshold** –
Shadow	Whirling orange, like a dancing flame (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The Fury attacks with fire from a distance but is not afraid to enter melee since its burning hunger damages all who come close.

GOBBLING GNOME

Manner	Heaving, cracking
Race	Phenomenon
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Armored* (I), *Natural Weapon* (II), *Robust* (II), *Tunneler* (III)

Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)

Abilities	*Iron Fist* (novice), *Natural Warrior* (adept)
Weapons Strong	Fists 8/5, two attacks at the same target
Armor	Stone hard body 5
Defense	0
Toughness	15 **Pain Threshold** 8
Shadow	Flowing brown, like a landslide (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The gnome moves below the targets and tries to get as many of them as possible to fall into its pit trap, where it attacks them with heavy blows.

World Serpent

I can report that the colony Free Wilds no longer exists. What we found there is not easily described, but now that I have had time to gather my thoughts, I will try to explain what must have befallen the colony. Slaughter. Massacre. Total annihilation.

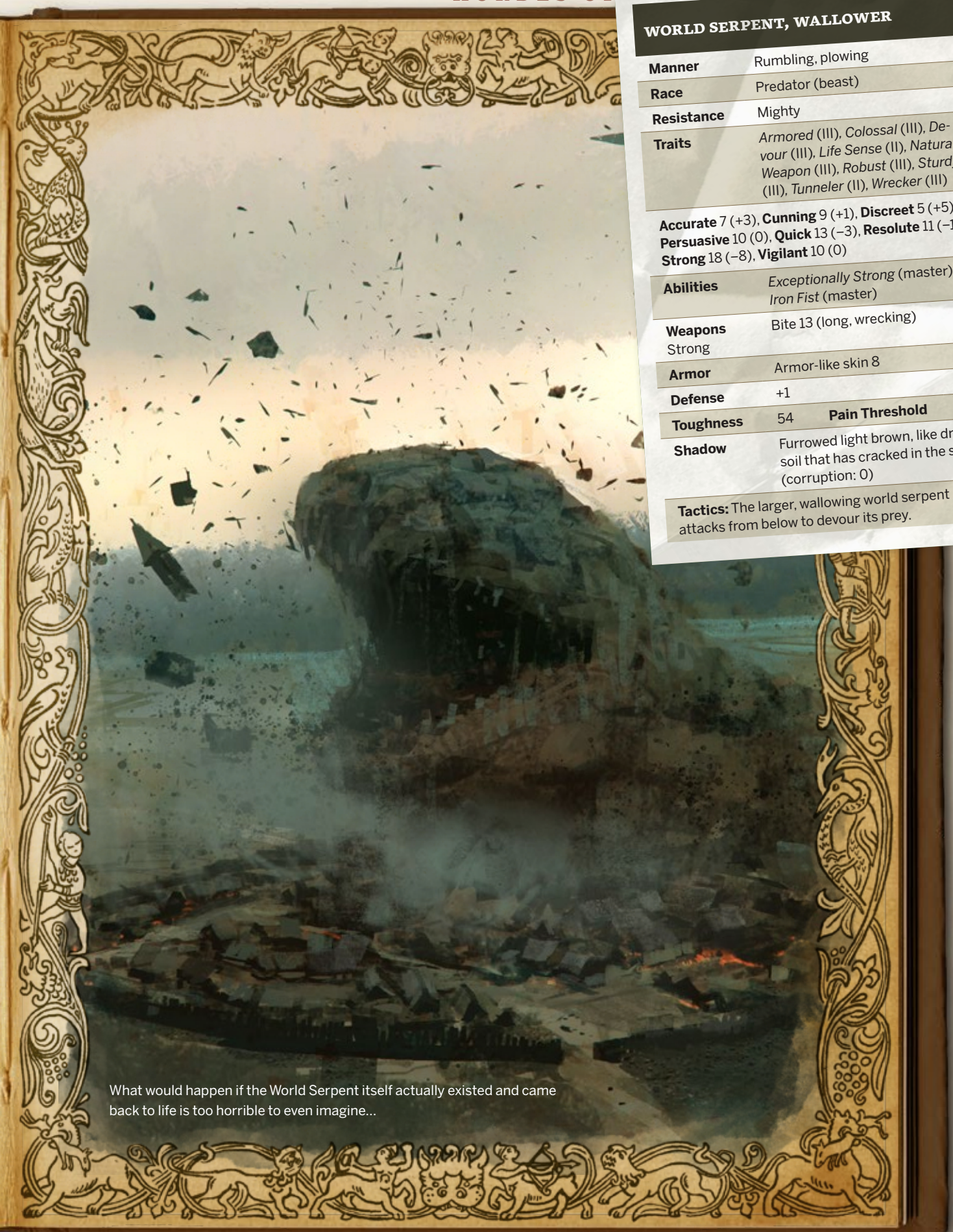
How can I know with certainty what happened? Well, because I saw with my own eyes the slithering daemon snake that devoured the inhabitants, their livestock and most of their homes. If you do not believe me I can show you my right leg, which bears the mark of its three rows of teeth. It bit straight through my armor and then tossed me aside, seemingly uninterested in a steel-clad piece of meat.

My companions were not so lucky. I managed to rescue Hagha from the creature's belly with a well-aimed strike, but she is in no condition to testify as the serpent's gastric acid burned her eyes, and the experience of being swallowed whole has wrecked her mind – whether her madness is temporary or permanent remains to be seen.

Telema Iesel, knight and leader of the rescue expedition to Free Wilds

The creatures commonly known as world serpents are **obviously not the actual World Serpent, but may very well be its enormous offspring.** These tunneling monstrosities indiscriminately devour all lifeforms that get in their way, be it rangers exploring the Underworld or the inhabitants of the troll realms that exist down there. **They rarely appear on the surface, but when they do, they will often cleanse entire colonies or outposts of people and animals alike.** All that remains in their wake is a desolate settlement and a network of tunnels leading down into the Underworld.

WORLD SERPENT, TUNNELER			
Manner	Slithers unstoppably		
Race	Predator (beast)		
Resistance	Strong		
Traits	*Colossal* (II), *Devour* (III), *Life Sense* (II), *Natural Weapon* (II), *Robust* (III), *Sturdy* (II), *Tunneler* (I), *Wrecker* (III)		
Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 10 (0), **Quick** 13 (−3), **Resolute** 11 (−1), **Strong** 16 (−6), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Exceptionally Strong* (novice), *Iron Fist* (adept)		
Weapons Strong	Bite 10 (wrecking)		
Armor	Thick skin 4		
Defense	+1		
Toughness	32	**Pain Threshold**	9
Shadow	Glossy light brown, like the slimy skin of an earthworm (corruption: 0)		
Tactics: The tunneler is rarely seen above ground, but woe betide the enemy who intrudes on its underground territory.			



What would happen if the World Serpent itself actually existed and came back to life is too horrible to even imagine...

WORLD SERPENT, WALLOWER

Manner	Rumbling, plowing
Race	Predator (beast)
Resistance	Mighty
Traits	*Armored* (III), *Colossal* (III), *Devour* (III), *Life Sense* (II), *Natural Weapon* (III), *Robust* (III), *Sturdy* (III), *Tunneler* (II), *Wrecker* (III)

Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 10 (0), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 18 (–8), **Vigilant** 10 (0)

Abilities	*Exceptionally Strong* (master), *Iron Fist* (master)
Weapons Strong	Bite 13 (long, wrecking)
Armor	Armor-like skin 8
Defense	+1
Toughness	54 **Pain Threshold** 9
Shadow	Furrowed light brown, like dry soil that has cracked in the sun (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The larger, wallowing world serpent attacks from below to devour its prey.

New ritual: Sing World Serpent (Troll Singing)

The trollsinger uses his or her deepest register and sings a song that can either summon a world serpent or send it away. The former is practically suicide, and only used when death is already assured and the trollsinger wishes to meet his doom taking as many enemies with him as possible. The latter is often used by the trolls' court singers, to halt a world serpent's advance through their realm.

To the left: Cloth map found in the springtime waters of the river Eanor near the Graywade Inn. Several expeditions have set off in the hope of finding the tunnel system and its sunken ruin.

Ordo Magica's uncrowned expert on the Underworld, **Master Argoi,** is perhaps right in guessing that **the world serpents can sense vibrations from above ground,** at least those that are strong and synchronized enough. That would explain why **two marching Ambrian battalions were attacked by world serpents during the war against Haloban and his Jezites,** and also why two major ruin expeditions were visited by unwelcome guests while trying to hack their way into hidden cellar levels. But even if this is true, one would still have to be very unlucky to encounter a world serpent up on the surface.

Most attacks that have been reported since the Ambrian exodus across the Titans, aimed at barbarians or the Queen's own people, **have taken place below ground, or at least in mines and caves connected to the Underworld.** The witness statements are both many and consistent, detailing how the serpents swallow humans, ogres and trolls whole, equipment and all. **Such encounters have also given rise to unexpected heroes,** like the Ambrian squire Begomo Snakeslicer and the barbarian warrior Vaivana, who both freed their commanders from a serpent's belly after dealing it a killing blow.

Adventure Set-up

The trollsinger and artifact crafter **Axalgha** has been captured by a group of cultists and taken to their hideout, perhaps somewhere in the Ambrian countryside or near some outpost in the woods. There she is **forced to craft all kinds of objects for the cult** – death masks, mystical focuses, soul stones, ritual daggers and so on. Realizing that she will not survive the captivity, Axalgha finally musters the courage to perform one last, desperate act: **she "sings world serpent".** The cultists do not suspect that something is wrong, as the troll always sings while crafting her artifacts.

The player characters are near the place where the trollsinger is held captive, **when suddenly the world serpent bursts through the ground with devastating force;** it devours a handful of people and livestock in a number of places near the allegedly haunted ruin where the cult has its hideout, as well as two cultists from the lower level of the ruin. **It then withdraws to digest its meal,** but a successful *Cunning* test with *Beast Lore* reveals that it will certainly be back.

Provided that they do not immediately flee the scene, the characters may be able to figure out what caused the serpent to emerge. **By identifying where the attacks took place, the ruin can be singled out as particularly suspicious.** They may also get their hands on the terrified cultist who leaves the hideout wearing his ceremonial robe and death mask, hoping to escape the danger. **When they understand what has happened, it is possible for them to face the serpent in open combat, or fight/sneak their way to Axalgha.** If they can guarantee the trollsinger's safety, she can sing the serpent away. But in that case the characters must distract it long enough for the song to be performed without interruption!

THUS SPOKE AROALETA

"... and the prince of the west marched bravely on, singing horror, chanting fear, to meet mighty Uron in battle; the serpent, the greatest, consumed by dread, struck the world in trembling fear. For nine full days, the terror was all, till Uron retreated in shame."

hat is the Eternal Night? Or more precisely, where is it? The Lightbringer manuscripts, dictated by Prios, recorded by Father Abramar, teach that the creatures of the Eternal Night are those who turn their faces from the sun, who entice others to do the same, who in this way divert the power stemming from the faith and trust of the human spirit, and who thereby are to blame for the fading condition of Prios.

According to the above, the Eternal Night must be understood as life without Prios, an existence without light, where both trust and faith are anchored in something other than the One and the Laws of the Sun. However, with this comes the conclusion that the Night is already here, among us, in each soul ready to obey other commands than those of the Lawgiver.

The battle with the Hordes of the Eternal Night is nothing which awaits us in a distant future. It is already underway, in every action, in every breath. Chastise yourself as you chastise your neighbor, to always choose obedience. Not from fear, not in the hope of any reward, but with joy, in the knowledge that the right also is the true and that which keeps the Eternal Night at bay.

– Excerpt from Hordes of the Eternal Night, Father Almagast

SECTION 2:

MONSTERS & ADVERSARIES

Introduction

AMBRIA, DAVOKAR AND THE MOUNTAIN RANGES are inhabited by creatures who all regard the area they occupy as theirs – their valley, their village, their bog or cave. Anyone who claims otherwise or tries to influence the site in some undesirable way is considered an adversary, or even an enemy. If they also happen to be strangers in a way that makes them difficult to understand and communicate with, they risk being thought of as monsters.

THIS SECTION CONTAINS short descriptions and stats of a large number of creatures, many of which would most likely view each other as adversaries as well as monsters. That a town guard in Ambria or a wilderness guide in Davokar calls the Blight Worm a monster is only to be expected. But do not forget that the Blight Worm, according to its own bestial logic, probably regards explorers and others who encroach on its territory as monstrous intruders; enemies who must be fought, driven off, or preferably destroyed. As Game Master, it is your job to portray this diverse array of creatures and how they relate to the player characters of your gaming group.

The section is arranged by themes that are mostly related to habitat, but which in the case of humans are also based on faction affiliation. Although close to ninety monsters and adversaries (or potential allies) are described in this book, the list is hardly exhaustive. Instead, our hope is that the content will serve as a starting point for the Game Master to draw from when designing his or her own challenges and adventures, and it should also be approached in a creative way. The Town Guard described here is merely an example, as are the Village Witch and the Blight Worm. If the Game Master wants to change traits, abilities, and other details (for instance to give the individual a more unique nature or adjust its values to better suit the player characters), this is of course perfectly alright!

The same applies when creating new types of monsters and adversaries. For example, by replacing the Village Witch's *Shapeshift* and *Natural Warrior* with *Nature's Embrace* and *Entangling Vines*, you get a witch who has chosen the green path of witchcraft instead of the red one. And with the addition of *Undead* (II), the Stone Boar can become a fearsome, crushing undead, ravenously attacking a village or a mining community in the mountains. There is no right or wrong here; only more or less exciting encounters!

The section begins with a chapter mainly devoted to humans, or at least cultural beings, after which the focus shifts to the inhabitants of the forests, the mountains, and the Underworld. Some creatures are taken from previously published modules, directly or with certain modifications, while others are entirely new adversaries endowed with the traits introduced in Section III.

Adversaries

THE PEOPLES OF AMBRIA AND DAVOKAR are a motley bunch that do not agree on much, except that they do not agree with each other. They form and live in groups on several levels, from the nation or clan; to factions, guilds, and local communities; to the family or closest allies. Like the rest of the region's inhabitants, the player characters must choose their friends and foes with equal caution, as the choice of the former will inevitably create more of the latter.

Champions of Prios

Experienced Black Cloak

"Expect no mercy, heretic!"

The experienced black cloaks are the Sun Church's foremost intelligence agents and witch hunters, utterly convinced of the importance of upholding Prios' laws. Each sin is a threat to the world, as well as to the soul of the individual offender.

Manner	Judgmental gaze
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Contacts* (Twilight Friars)
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 9 (+1), **Resolute** 15 (–5), **Strong** 11 (–1), **Vigilant** 13 (–3)	
Abilities	*Beast Lore* (adept: Abominations or Undead), *Ritualist* (adept: *Command Confession, Holy Smoke, Judging Bonds*), *Sixth Sense* (adept), *Steadfast* (adept)
Weapons Vigilant/ Accurate	Crossbow 5 Sword 5 (deep impact, precise)
Armor	Leather 2
Defense	2 (shield)
Toughness	11 **Pain Threshold** 6
Equipment	Mastercrafted sword (deep impact, precise), 1D4 Herbal Cures, 1D10 thaler and 1D6 shillings.
Shadow	Matte silver with black notches (corruption: 3)

Tactics: Starts by aiming a crossbow bolt at the toughest enemy, and then attacks with sword and shield.

Experienced Templar

"Heretic, accept your punishment!"

With few exceptions, all the Sun Church's templars come from lowborn families. They know how to conduct themselves, but care little for manners or etiquette when facing the apostles of darkness.

Manner	Barely restrained fanaticism
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Strong
Traits	*Contacts* (Templars)
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 10 (0), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 7 (+3)	
Abilities	*Armored Mystic* (adept), *Beast Lore* (novice), *Berserker* (novice), *Equestrian* (adept), *Iron Fist* (master), *Man-at-arms* (master), *Steadfast* (master), *Two-handed Force* (adept), *Witch Hammer* (master)
Boons/ Burdens	*Code of Honor*
Weapons Strong	Bastard Sword 12 (precise), +3 if Berserker, +3 against Abominations/Undead.
Armor	Templar Full Plate 5 (holy)
Defense	3, +5 if Berserker
Toughness	15 **Pain Threshold** 8
Equipment	1D10 thaler, the Lightbringer book, Sun Symbol
Shadow	Gold-yellow with deep red stripes and roses (corruption: 1)
Tactics: The templars fight in a controlled rage and move together to avoid being flanked. Only if the battle is tough do they enter the berserker rage and go on full attack.	

Flagellant

"Expect no mercy, heretic!"

Some black cloaks are particularly affected by the suffering inflicted upon the world and the Lawgiver. These often resort to the whip in an attempt to give their spiritual agony a physical equivalent, but may of course turn the same whip and holy wrath against the enemies of Prios.

Manner	Squinting calmly, or hatefully aggressive
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Contacts* (Twilight Friars)
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 9 (+1), **Resolute** 15 (–5), **Strong** 11 (–1), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Beast Lore* (novice), *Berserker* (adept), *Steadfast* (master), *Whip Fighter* (adept)
Boons/ Burdens	*Impulsive*
Weapons Accurate	Long-whip 3 (blunt, ensnaring, jointed), Sword 7
Armor	2 (from *Berserker)*
Defense	+5
Toughness	11 **Pain Threshold** 6
Equipment	None
Shadow	Dark gold with red, winding furrows (corruption: 0)
Tactics: The flagellant is often included when a group of black cloaks gets ready to attack some cult or nest of abominations. Once there, they have no other strategy than to punish the enemies of Prios.	

WHIP FIGHTER, ABILITY

It is not uncommon for witch hunters and black cloaks to fight with a sword in one hand and a whip in the other. This is an effective and deadly combination; in the hands of someone with the proper training, it can even bring down well-armored opponents.

Novice	**Active.** Attack with a whip in one hand and a one-handed weapon in the other. If the whip attack hits, the character gets a Free Attack with the one-handed weapon, regardless of whether or not the whip deals damage.
Adept	**Active.** As Novice, but the whip hinders the enemy's movements so that the Free Attack hits automatically.
Master	**Active.** As Adept, but the whip fighter pulls the enemy toward himself/herself so that the Free Attack also deals +1D6 damage.

Liturg

"Prios be with you."

The Sun Church consists of numerous brotherhoods and orders, all with their own way of serving Prios. The brothers and sisters who are trusted to perform the rites and ceremonies of the church but who are not blessed with mystical powers are called Liturgs.

Manner	Calm and composed
Race	Human (Ambrian
Resistance	Ordinary

Divisions within the Sun Church

Where the internal conflicts of Ordo Magica can be described as the struggle of all against all, the divisions inside the Sun Church have two clear fractions: those loyal to the Curia who worship Prios as the Lawgiver, and the Reformists who in accordance with older interpretations of Prios' commands pray to the Lifegiver. Read more about this in the episodes of the Chronicle of the Throne of Thorns.

Traits	*Contacts* (the Sun Church)
Accurate 9 (+1), **Cunning** 11 (–1), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 15 (–5), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 13 (–3), **Strong** 7 (+3), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Leader* (adept), *Loremaster* (novice), *Medicus* (adept)
Boons/ Burdens	*Archivist* (I)
Weapons –	None
Armor	Blessed robe 2 (flexible)
Defense	0
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 4
Equipment	Holy symbol, the Lightbringer book
Shadow	Golden yellow, like a blessed dawn (corruption: 0)
Tactics: Avoids danger, but if the fight is inevitable the liturg will inspire his or her allies.	

Theurg

"Night falls, and you with it."

Theurgs can be fanatical or reflective, hateful or affectionate, evangelical or oblivious to the world. The only things they all have in common are their deep love for Prios and the will to cultivate His gifts in a way that pleases the One.

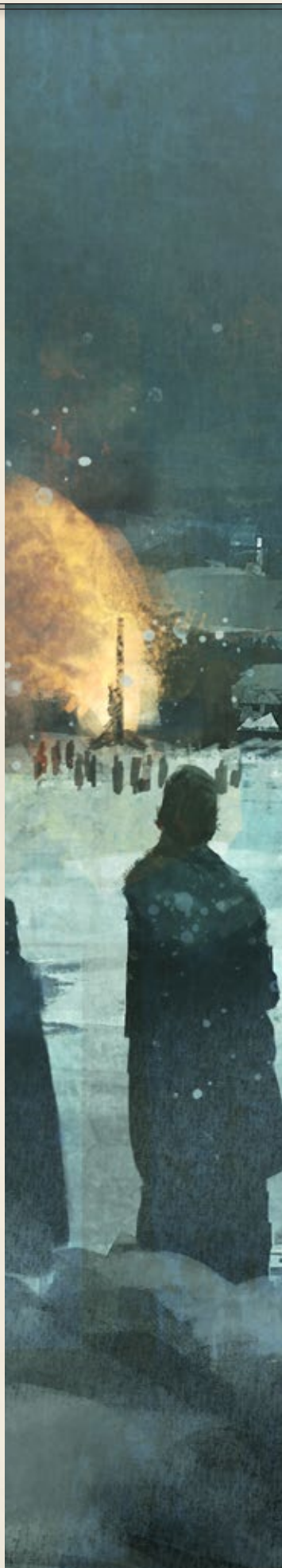
Manner	Cold and judgmental
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Strong
Traits	*Contacts* (the Sun Church)
Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 11 (–1), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 17 (–7) **Quick** 9 (+1), **Resolute** 15 (–5), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Blessed Shield* (master), *Exceptionally Persuasive* (adept), *Exceptionally Resolute* (adept), *Leader* (master), *Loremaster* (novice), *Ritualist* (adept: *Command Confession, Exorcism, Sanctifying Rite*), *Prios' Burning Glass* (adept), *Theurgy* (master)
Boons/ Burdens	*Commanding Voice* (II)
Weapons –	None
Armor	Blessed Robe 2, +4 (with *Blessed Shield*)
Defense	+1
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 5
Equipment	Flask with 1D4 drops Water of the Dusk, Sun Symbol, the Lightbringer book
Shadow	Orange as sun-touched gold (corruption: 0)
Tactics: When given the opportunity, the theurg never hesitates to battle the hordes of the night. Once surrounded by a *Blessed Shield*, the priest mage attacks the enemy with rays of holy light.	

The Whip of Prios

"The dictate of Prios is my law; you are tried, exposed, and condemned."

The black cloaks who are trained to join the elite witch hunters of the Whip of Prios put a greater emphasis on combat, but must of course also master abilities that allow them to unmask the beasts of the Eternal Night. Also, note that they are often supported by templars and theurgs.

Manner	Contemptuous, self-righteous
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Strong
Traits	*Contacts* (the Sun Church)
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 11 (–1), **Discreet** 7 (+3), **Persuasive** 15 (–5), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 5 (+5), **Strong** 9 (+1), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Dominate* (master), *Beast Lore* (novice), *Ensnare* (adept), *Flailer* (master), *Man-at-arms* (master), *Ritualist* (adept: *Judging Bonds, Holy Smoke*), *Whip Fighter* (master)
Boons/ Burdens	*Manipulator* (II), *Code of Honor*
Weapons Persuasive	Flail 4 (ensnaring, jointed) Long-whip 3 (blunt, ensnaring, jointed)
Armor	Studded leather 4 (reinforced)
Defense	–3
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 5
Equipment	Sun symbol, copy of the Lightbringer, interrogation tools (+1 to *Persuasive* during interrogations), pipe and tobacco, 13 thaler and 10 shillings.
Shadow	Glaring white like annealed steel (corruption: 0)
Tactics: Fights with a whip in one hand and a flail in the other, and will only use the subduing ability in situations where they are outnumbered.	



Ordo Magica

Adept of the Order

"Fascinating!"

Advancement from novice to adept requires the recommendation of a magistrate, which in turn may require a great deal of flattery in addition to strong test scores. Furthermore, there must be a master willing to accept the aspiring adept as his/her apprentice. From there on the person is expected to work hard and make great progress in new fields of study.

Manner	Fawning, inquisitive and ambitious
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Contacts* (Ordo Magica)
Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 13 (–3), **Discreet** 11 (–1), **Persuasive** 10 (0), **Quick** 9 (+1), **Resolute** 15 (–5), **Strong** 5 (+5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Alchemy* (novice), *Anathema* (novice), *Beast Lore or Loremaster* (novice), *Medicus* (novice), *Mystical Power* (adept: *Brimstone Cascade, Confusion* or *Mind-Throw*), *Ritualist* (adept: *Magic Circle, Soul Stone,* plus *False Terrain, Flaming Servant* or *Telepathic Interrogation*), *Unnoticeable* (novice), *Wizardry* (adept)
Boons/ Burdens	*Archivist* (II) *or Cartographer* (II)
Weapons Accurate	Quarterstaff 3 (blunt, long)
Armor	Order Cloak 2 (flexible)
Defense	+1
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 3
Equipment	Order medallion, 1D4 Herbal Cures, Antidote (weak), Waybread
Shadow	Shimmering silver red, as a fire reflected in a silver plate (corruption: 0)
Tactics: The adept uses its powers from a safe distance, or sneaks away using *Unnoticeable*.	

Artifact Crafter

"I pour my soul into my creations."

Ordo Magica greedily guards the secret of how they learned the trolls' techniques for creating artifacts. The order's artifact crafters are highly

THUS SPOKE AROALETA

"... and Cidriana battered Creation, with coarse words, with forceful gestures; wrenched her will, and the world with it. The grounds raged, oozed blackness, quivered in pain, echoed the violence and torment; Wratha had come to avenge her beloved."

sought after, but reclusive and difficult to engage in conversation.

Manner	Wandering gaze, avoids eye contact
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Contacts* (Ordo Magica)
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 15 (–5), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 9 (+1), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 5 (+5), **Vigilant** 11 (–1)	
Abilities	*Artifact crafting* (adept), *Blacksmith* (master), *Exceptionally Resolute* (novice), *Loremaster* (adept), *Ritualist* (novice: *Sanctum*), *Unnoticeable* (novice)
Boons/ Burdens	*Archivist* (II), *Forbidden Knowledge*
Weapons Accurate	Mastercrafted dagger 4 (concealed, deep impact, poison coated, short, transcendental weapon)
Armor	Mastercrafted order cloak 3 (flexible, reinforced)
Defense	+1
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 3
Equipment	Order medallion, Ritual Focus, Ritual Seal (Seven-league Stride), Field Smithy, 1D10 thaler
Shadow	Brushed steel with stains of purple rust (corruption: 2)
Tactics: Tries to avoid battle by the use of *Unnoticeable* or attacks from a distance with the transcendental weapon. If it gets really tough, the artifact crafter breaks the seal to teleport to a safe magic circle.	

Master of the Order

"The world is ours to understand and command."

Within Ordo Magica, there are as many ways to the top as there are masters. What they all have in common are powerful minds and finely honed skills when it comes to exploiting their subordinate novices and adepts.

Manner	Arrogant and patronizing
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Strong
Traits	*Companions* (II, two novices of the order), *Contacts* (Ordo Magica)
Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 15 (–5), **Discreet** 11 (–1), **Persuasive** 10 (0), **Quick** 9 (+1), **Resolute** 17 (–7), **Strong** 5 (+5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Alchemy* (master), *Anathema* (master), *Beast Lore or Loremaster* (master), *Exceptionally Cunning* (adept), *Exceptionally Resolute* (adept), *Medicus* (novice), *Mystical Power* (master: *Brimstone Cascade* and *Flame Wall*, or *Confusion* and *Mirroring*, or *Mind-Throw* and *Bend Will*), *Ritualist* (adept: *Magic Circle, Soul Stone*, plus *False Terrain, Flaming Servant* or *Telepathic Interrogation*), *Unnoticeable* (master), *Wizardry* (master)
Boons/ Burdens	*Archivist* (III) *or Cartographer* (III)
Weapons Accurate	Quarterstaff 3 (blunt, long)
Armor	Mastercrafted Order Cloak 3 (flexible, reinforced)
Defense	+1
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 3
Equipment	Order medallion, Ruler's Ring, Ritual Focus, Mystical Focus, Soul Stone, Field Library, 2D10 thaler
Shadow	Shimmering orange, as a fire reflected in a golden plate (corruption: 0)
Tactics: Orders novices to stand as a shield against the enemy while using the considerable powers at his disposal. Should this not be enough, the master makes himself and his favorite novice *Unnoticeable* and walks away.	

Magistrate

"Please see chapter seven in Augio Gabbro's Elementarica."

The Magistrates of Ordo Magica are among the realm's most prominent teachers, though not the most charming. They are mainly expected to train novices, but are also made available for independent academics and noble families, to educate the intellectuals of coming generations.

Manner	Stern and condescending
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Contacts* (Ordo Magica)
Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 17 (–7), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 13 (–3), **Quick** 9 (+1), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 5 (+5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	

Abilities	*Alchemy* (adept), *Beast Lore* (adept: varied focus), *Blacksmith* (novice), *Exceptionally Cunning* (adept), *Loremaster* (master), *Medicus* (novice), *Tactician* (adept), *Wizardry* (adept)
Boons/ Burdens	*Archivist* (III)
Weapons Accurate	Quarterstaff 3 (blunt, long)
Armor	Order Cloak 2 (flexible)
Defense	+1
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 3
Equipment	Order medallion, Field Library, 1D4 doses Elemental Essence and Herbal Cures
Shadow	Shining gold, as a beacon of wisdom (corruption: 0)
Tactics: It is beneath the Magistrate to fight and sweat – if surrender is out of the question and escape is not an option, the tricky choice is between fighting in self-defense or just giving up.	

Novice of the Order

"Yes, Magistrate. At once, Master ..."

At the very bottom of Ordo Magica's pecking order are the novices – literate Ambrians with enough motivation and concentration to learn the mysteries of wizardry, and enough patience to put up with the magistrates' and masters' arbitrary commands.

Manner	Exhausted but forces a smile
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Contacts* (Ordo Magica)
Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 13 (–3), **Discreet** 11 (–1), **Persuasive** 10 (0), **Quick** 9 (+1), **Resolute** 15 (–5), **Strong** 5 (+5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Alchemy or Medicus* (novice), *Loremaster* (novice), *Mystical Power* (adept: *Brimstone Cascade* or *Mind-Throw*), *Ritualist* (adept: *Magic Circle* or *Soul Stone*), *Wizardry* (novice)
Weapons Accurate	Quarterstaff 3 (blunt, long)
Armor	Order Cloak 2 (flexible)
Defense	+1
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 3
Equipment	Order medallion, 1D4 shillings
Shadow	Shimmering reddish brown, as fire reflected in a bronze plate (corruption: 0)
Tactics: The novice uses mystical powers from a safe distance.	

Panzer Alchemist

"Fire in the hole!"

The Order's chapter in Agrella produces battle trained siege experts and alchemists. The main responsibility of these units is inventing creative solutions to various problems on the battlefield, using siege weapons or alchemical warfare.

Manner	Excited yet focused
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Strong
Traits	*Companions* (II, two infantrymen), *Contacts* (Ambrian army)
Accurate 11 (–1), **Cunning** 15 (–5), **Discreet** 7 (+3), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 13 (–3), **Vigilant** 9 (+1)	
Abilities	*Alchemy* (master), *Iron Fist* (adept), *Loremaster* (novice), *Man-at-arms* (master), *Siege Expert* (master), *Two-handed Force* (master)
Boons/ Burdens	*Enduring March*, *Pack-mule*
Weapons Accurate/ Strong	Portable Firetube 6 (area cone, flaming) Firetube as Warhammer 8 (blood-letting, massive, unwieldy)
Armor	Double Chain Mail 5 (reinforced)
Defense	0

Ordo Magica's Internal Conflicts

Whoever thinks that Ordo Magica is a harmonious organization, with members that support each other in the fight towards a common goal is wrong. Very wrong. Not only do the Mystics quarrel with the Explorers and the Teachers over the limited assets of the order, but they are also in turn divided into sub-sections, such as Pyromancers, Artifact Crafters, Alchemists and Historians. It is also the case, that within each field of interest there are two or more individuals competing with each other, more or less violently. No, it is like Grandmaster Seldonio once said: *"Ordo Magica is an assembly of greedy, self-important know-it-alls who believe they are contributing to the common good and who at times happen to be right."*

Toughness	10	**Pain Threshold**	5
Equipment	1D6 firetube charges, 1D6+1 alchemical grenades, Field Smithy		
Shadow	Shiny gray with sooty stains, like a partially blackened silver tray (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: Unlike the common sapper, the panzer alchemists are fully trained to use the firetube as a warhammer, but they naturally make sure to fire it first and throw a couple of grenades while their allies are keeping the enemy busy.

Ritual Master

"Everything worth doing requires time and careful thought."

Wizards who prefer to stay in the comfort of the chapter tower often choose careers as ritualists. Such abilities give them a chance to excel, hone their skills, and advance in status without any significant risk of having to lead expeditions or being sent to the front.

Manner	Annoyingly patient
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Companions* (II, two novices of the order), *Contacts* (Ordo Magica)

Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 15 (–5), **Discreet** 11 (–1), **Persuasive** 10 (0), **Quick** 9 (+1), **Resolute** 17 (–7), **Strong** 5 (+5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)

Abilities	*Alchemy* (novice), *Anathema* (novice), *Exceptionally Cunning* (adept), *Exceptionally Resolute* (adept), *Loremaster* (master), *Medicus* (novice), *Mystical Power* (adept: *Brimstone Cascade, Confusion* or *Mind-Throw*), *Ritualist* (master: *Break Link, Clairvoyance, Magic Circle, Sanctum, Soul Stone, Tale of Ashes*), *Unnoticeable* (novice), *Wizardry* (master)		
Boons/ Burdens	*Archivist* (III)		
Weapons Accurate	Ritual Dagger 3 (short)		
Armor	Mastercrafted Order robes 3 (flexible, reinforced)		
Defense	+1		
Toughness	10	**Pain Threshold**	3
Equipment	Order medallion, Ruler's Ring, Ritual Focus, Mystical Focus, Soul Stone, Field Library, 2D10 thaler		
Shadow	Flaming dark red, like fire reflected in a copper plate (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: If the Ritual Master ever leaves its chamber, he or she is always accompanied by battle trained companions, but will not hesitate to use mystical powers if the situation requires it.

Lords of Ambria

Bailiff

"Crush them! In the name of the Queen and almighty Prios!"

The individuals managing the lands and properties of the highborn usually come from lesser noble houses. Their competence and disposition may vary, but with a steady voice and firm hand, they can count on the obedience of their people.

Manner	Proud and commanding
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Companions* (III, three farmhands), *Privileged*

Accurate 11 (–1), **Cunning** 13 (–3), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 15 (–5), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 9 (+1), **Vigilant** 7 (+3)

Abilities	*Equestrian* (adept), *Leader* (adept), *Man-at-arms* (adept), *Tactician* (adept)		
Boons/ Burdens	*Commanding Voice* (I)		
Weapons Accurate	Bastard Sword 5 (bastard weapon, precise), +3 when mounted		
Armor	Scale mail 4		
Defense	–3		
Toughness	10	**Pain Threshold**	5
Shadow	Dull, scratched silver (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: Points out targets for its men to prioritize and rides in to attack enemies with ranged weapons.

Knight

"On our lord's honor."

Knights are the lowest form of nobles in Ambria, often allotted a patch of land by some Duke in order

to support themselves and keep their horse and equipment in good shape. Sometimes they come from lowborn families, sometimes they have distinguished themselves in battle; either way, they are among the most loyal and grateful champions of Ambria.

Manner	Convinced of its own rightfulness
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Strong
Traits	*Companions* (I, one Squire), *Contacts* (Nobles)
Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 13 (–3), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 9 (+1)	
Abilities	*Bodyguard* (adept), *Equestrian* (master), *Feat of Strength* (novice), *Iron Fist* (master), *Man-at-arms* (master), *Polearm Mastery* (novice), *Recovery* (master), *Two-handed Force* (master),
Boons/ Burdens	*Enterprise, Code of Honor*
Weapons Strong	Lance 9 (long), +5 when mounted Bastard sword 10, ignores *Armor*
Armor	Field Armor 6
Defense	–1
Toughness	20 **Pain Threshold** 8
Shadow	Shining sun-yellow, like polished gold (corruption:0)
Tactics: Slays as many enemies as possible from horseback, then dismounts to grip the bastard sword in both hands.	

Lord

"With me, men! Prios rides with us!"

For generations, the nobles of Alberetor and Ambria have considered warfare to be one of many fields in which the nobility should distinguish itself. The Queen's lords are expected to command armies, and are trained from childhood in tactics and combat.

Manner	Upright and brave
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Strong
Traits	*Companions* (III, two Infantrymen and one Archer), *Privileged*
Accurate 9 (+1), **Cunning** 13 (–3), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 15 (–5), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 7 (+3)	
Abilities	*Beast Lore* (adept: cultural beings), *Dominate* (master), *Equestrian* (adept), *Leader* (master), *Man-at-arms* (adept), *Shield Fighter* (master), *Tactician* (adept)
Boons/ Burdens	*Commanding Voice* (III), *Heirloom* (armor)
Weapons Persuasive	Bastard sword 5, +3 against cultural beings, +3 when mounted
Armor	Full Plate 6 (flexible, reinforced)
Defense	–5 (shield)
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 5
Shadow	Scratched dark yellow, as new-brushed gold (corruption: 0)
Tactics: Orders any companions to attack certain enemies, then coordinates the fight from horseback.	

Squire

"Service breeds honor."

Youngsters of noble blood hoping to become fully fledged knights or templars when they grow up. The fear of disappointing their master, parents and siblings is often greater than the fear of the dangers they encounter.

Manner	Anxiously composed
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Weak
Traits	*Privileged*
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 15 (–5), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 13 (–3), **Vigilant** 7 (+3)	
Abilities	*Iron Fist* (novice), *Man-at-arms* (novice)
Weapons Strong	Sword 4
Armor	Chain Mail 4
Defense	–1 (shield)
Toughness	15 **Pain Threshold** 8
Equipment	None
Shadow	Gold in lighter and darker shades, like an unprocessed nugget (corruption: 0)
Tactics: Has no tactical training but tries to obey the commands of its master, constantly balancing between wanting to be noble and wanting to escape.	

Weapons and attributes

With this book, we have made an addition to the values describing various monsters and creatures. There is now an attribute, sometimes two, specified under Weapons, in order to clarify which value the creature uses when performing its main attacks. However, remember that all creatures may fall back on their *Accurate* value whenever they are forced to use tactics that do not correspond with their abilities.

Goblin, Chieftain

"You welcome, to the realm!"

Chieftains are often larger than the members of their flock, but above all, they are cunning enough to outmaneuver their competitors for power. They win their tribe's respect through a mix of lies, manipulation, and actual achievements, but may of course lose it as soon as a challenger tells better lies and performs more impressive feats.

Manner	Unduly fatherly
Race	Goblin (cultural being)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Pariah, Short-lived, Survival Instinct* (II)
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 16 (−6), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 13 (−3), **Quick** 11 (−1), **Resolute** 7 (+3), **Strong** 9 (+1), **Vigilant** 5 (+5)	
Abilities	*Exceptionally Cunning* (novice), *Leader* (adept)
Weapons Accurate	One-handed Weapon 4
Armor	2+2 (Leather armor and *Survival Instinct*)
Defense	+1
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 5
Shadow	Brown as rich forest soil (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The chieftain does not partake in the tribe's fighting, but stays in the background directing his subjects so that they first keep him safe, then go after targets with ranged weapons.

Goblin, Shaman

"I found our salvation in a dream sight."

The shaman is often near the chieftain in status and reverence, especially when they actually possess some form of mystical power. Regarding powers, shamans are usually thought to have the gift of fortune-telling, whether they do or not.

Manner	Thoughtfully silent
Race	Goblin (cultural being)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Pariah, Short-lived*
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 13 (−3), **Discreet** 11 (−1), **Persuasive** 10 (0), **Quick** 5 (+5), **Resolute** 15 (−5), **Strong** 9 (+1), **Vigilant** 7 (+3)	
Abilities	*Alchemy* (adept), *Ritualist* (novice: *Nature's Lullaby*), *Inherit Wound* (novice)
Weapons Accurate	Carved Wooden Staff 3 (blunt)
Armor	None
Defense	+5
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 5
Shadow	Emerald green, like moss covered in dew (corruption: 2)

Tactics: The shaman keeps its distance from the fight until someone needs help, with healing or antidotes.

Goblin, tribesman

"The Chieftain is our champion. Or so he says."

Ordinary tribal goblins – the young, the elderly, the berry and mushroom pickers, the weaklings, the pot-stirrers, and so on – tend to do their very best to avoid violent confrontations. However, if their chieftain or warriors call for a general conscription they will likely obey, too scared to protest.

Manner	Huddles, or flees in wild panic
Race	Goblin (cultural being)
Resistance	Weak
Traits	*Pariah, Short-lived*
Accurate 9 (+1), **Cunning** 11 (−1), **Discreet** 15 (−5), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 5 (+5), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 13 (−3)	
Abilities	None
Weapons Accurate	Unarmed 2
Armor	None
Defense	0
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 5
Shadow	Green-striped, like mossy woodlands beset with pale green weeds (corruption: 1)

Tactics: The tribal goblins fight as best they can, which is not very well. If not ordered to fight they will run away, as they have always done, and try to find a safer home somewhere else.

Goblin Warrior

"Die? No ... What!?"

The goblins who are chosen to serve as tribal warriors often have well-developed survival instincts. Otherwise, they are not that different from their brothers and sisters, except that they might be cockier and better fed.

Manner	In reality pretty scared
Race	Goblin (cultural being)
Resistance	Weak
Traits	*Pariah, Short-lived, Survival Instinct* (II)
Accurate 11 (–1), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 15 (–5), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 7 (+3),	
Abilities	None
Weapons Accurate	Spear 4, Bow 4
Armor	2+2 (Leather armor and *Survival Instinct*)
Defense	–1
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 5
Shadow	Moss-green and dark brown, like an overgrown tree stump (corruption: 1)
Tactics: Goblin warriors obey orders. They will try to utilize the extra movement and the extra protection gained by their *Survival Instinct*, to make the best possible use of their long weapons.	

Monster Hunter

"The vessels of darkness are my prey."

For centuries the people of Davokar have had to share their world with the gods and abominations of the forest. To protect the clans from these dangerous creatures, witches and chieftains have called for the training of heroic monster hunters, able to go up against all sorts of monstrosities.

Manner	Focused and effective
Race	Human (barbarian)
Resistance	Strong
Traits	*Bushcraft*
Accurate 5 (+5), **Cunning** 13 (–3), **Discreet** 9 (+1), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 11 (–1)	

Goblins in Forest and Towns

Even if goblins growing up in or in the vicinity of human settlements are described as wild and unkempt, there is a great difference between them and those still dwelling in the forest. While the former are characterized by a relaxed calm, the goblins of the wilds come off as anxious and watchful prey-animals – used to being bullied, or even hunted, by the beasts, trolls and spirit beings of the forest.

Abilities	*Beast Lore* (master: Abominations), *Feat of Strength* (adept), *Hunter's Instinct* (adept), *Iron Fist* (adept), *Man-at-arms* (adept), *Poisoner* (adept), *Polearm Mastery* (master), *Sixth sense* (novice), *Steadfast* (novice), *Strangler* (adept), *Trapper* (adept), *Witchsight* (novice)
Boons	*Pet (Battle-trained Jakaar)*
Weapons Strong/ Vigilant	Spear 7 (long), Longbow 4 (precise), +3 against Abominations, and poison 4 for 4 turns
Armor	Studded leather 4 (reinforced)
Defense	+2
Toughness	20 **Pain Threshold** 8
Equipment	Owl Mask (+1 *Vigilant*), Monster trophy, Snares, 1D4 Alchemical mines, Spore Bombs, 1D4 doses strong poison.
Shadow	Vigorously blood red with coagulated spots (Corruption: 2)
Tactics: The monster hunter prefers to use traps and strangling spores, but if it comes to melee combat the hunter keeps its prey at bay with the spear and hopes that the poison will do the trick.	

Village Witch

"Be faithful to your nature."

Few Ambrians realize that it is largely the witches who decide where barbarian settlements are built. They know which places are taboo and which must be defended, and they are constantly watching over the festering wounds of old Symbaroum.

Manner	Hides face and body language behind a mask and ritualistic gestures
Race	Human (barbarian)
Resistance	Challenging

Electing Keepers

Officially, it is the clan chieftains who appoints keepers, but there is hardly any doubt that the current Huldra has a say in the matter, and maybe even makes the decision. In any case, the elections usually never spark protests from a clan's members and other witches. Exceptions exist – times when ambitious, losing candidates have used their powers and allies to seek vengeance. But this is seldom heard of, and hopefully the darkening of Davokar will not change anything in this respect...

Traits	*Bushcraft, Contacts* (Witches)
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 13 (–3), **Discreet** 7 (+3), **Persuasive** 10 (0), **Quick** 9 (+1), **Resolute** 15 (–5), **Strong** 5 (+5), **Vigilant** 11 (–1)	
Abilities	*Alchemy* (adept), *Natural Warrior* (novice), *Ritualist* (adept: *Quick Growth, Turn Weather, Witch Circle*), *Shapeshift* (adept), *Witchcraft* (adept)
Weapons Accurate	Tusks 4 (in beast form)
Armor	Hide 2 (in beast form)
Defense	+1 (in beast form)
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 3
Equipment	Herbal Cure, Wild Chew, Bark Mask
Shadow	Dazzling green, as sunlit foliage (corruption: 0)
Tactics: The witches of barbarian settlements in the woods avoid combat if at all possible; if not, they assume the shape of a combative predator, often a wild boar or a jakaar.	

Wilderness Guide

"Do as I say if you want to live."

Ever since the arrival of the Queen's people to the Promised Land, numerous barbarians and goblins have made a career guiding Ambrian expeditions through the forest – a very dangerous, but potentially rewarding, job!

Manner	Gruff and impatient
Race	Human (barbarian) or Goblin
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Bushcraft (human)* *Pariah, Short-lived (goblin)*
Accurate 5 (+5), **Cunning** 13 (–3), **Discreet** 9 (+1), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 15 (–5)	
Abilities	*Beast Lore* (adept: beasts), *Marksman* (adept), *Medicus* (novice), *Rapid Fire* (novice), *Sixth Sense* (novice)
Boons/ Burdens	*Enduring March, Pathfinder*
Weapons Vigilant	Bow 5, +2 against Beasts
Armor	Leather 2
Defense	+2
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 5
Equipment	1D4 Herbal Cures, 1D4 doses moderate antidote
Shadow	Shimmering green like jade (corruption: 0)
Tactics: The Wilderness Guide tries to lead the group past any and all dangers, but if combat is unavoidable it trusts in its companions and stays in the background, shooting its bow or rushing to their aid with Herbal Cures.	

Witch, Keeper

"Nature serves those closest to her."

The most influential and enlightened witches in Davokar are chosen to serve as Keepers to the barbarian chieftains. However, one may wonder who serves who; many Ambrians firmly believe that the true power resides with the witches.

Manner	Weaves wisdom and warnings in rhyming chants
Race	Human (barbarian)
Resistance	Strong
Traits	*Bushcraft, Contacts* (Witches)
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 15 (–5), **Discreet** 7 (+3), **Persuasive** 10 (0), **Quick** 9 (+1), **Resolute** 15 (–5), **Strong** 5 (+5), **Vigilant** 11 (–1)	
Abilities	*Alchemy* (master), *Curse* (master), *Entangling Vines* (master), *Exceptionally Cunning* (adept), *Natural Warrior* (adept), *Nature's Embrace* (master), *Ritualist* (master: *Familiar, Nature's Lullaby, Necromancy, Quick Growth, Turn Weather, Witch Circle*), *Shapeshift* (master), *Witchcraft* (master)
Boons/ Burdens	*Green Thumb* (III)
Weapons Accurate	Bear claws 6/4, two attacks at the same target (in beast form)
Armor	Bear Skin 4 (in beast form)
Defense	+3 (in beast form)
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 3
Equipment	Elixir of Life, Witch Braid, Ritual Focus, Healing Spider
Shadow	Swaying dark green, like a stormy ocean of leaves (corruption: 0)
Tactics: Like other witches, the Keeper primarily uses mystical powers to keep the enemy at a distance. If melee combat is inevitable, the Keeper transforms into the shape of a battle beast, or flees in *Nature's Embrace* if the odds favor the enemy.	

People of the Queen

Archer

"Take aim!"

During the Great War, the regimental archers of Alberetor proved rather ineffective against the undead hordes of the Dark Lords. Many deserted, and even though much time has passed since then, rumors persist that archers in general are skittish and unreliable.

Manner	Patiently obedient
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Contacts* (Ambrian army)
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 11 (–1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 15 (–5), **Resolute** 7 (+3), **Strong** 9 (+1), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Marksman* (adept), *Quick Draw* (adept)
Boons/ Burdens	*Enduring March*
Weapons Accurate	Longbow 5 (precise) or Crossbow 6, Sword 4
Armor	Leather 2
Defense	–3
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 5
Equipment	24 arrows or bolts
Shadow	Dull gray, like brushed iron (corruption: 0)
Tactics: Attacks from a prepared elevated position, if at all possible, raining arrows or bolts down on enemies that don't seek shelter.	

Farmhand

"That's it!"

Back in Alberetor it was common for ordinary people to rebel against unjust taxes and miserable living conditions, and the same is becoming more and more true for Ambria. Sometimes the rebellion is led by a bailiff or some disillusioned knight, but usually the countryfolk rise up of their own accord.

Manner	Furious but terrified
Race	Human or Goblin
Resistance	Weak
Traits	*Contacts* (neighbors), *or Pariah and Short-lived*
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 11 (–1), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 5 (+5), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	None
Weapons Accurate	One-handed weapon 4, Bow 4
Armor	None
Defense	–3
Toughness	15 **Pain Threshold** 8
Equipment	1D6 ortegs, Chewable resin
Shadow	Pale green like dry meadow grass (corruption: 0)
Tactics: The farmhand starts by firing a round of arrows, and then rushes into battle with flailing weapons. If the battle is hard, they often flee or surrender.	

Horse

The horse is by far the most common mount in Ambria and Davokar alike, and it is also used to work the fields and pull wagons and carriages.

Race	Horse (beast)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Armored* (I), *Robust* (III)
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 10 (0), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 9 (+1)	
Abilities	None
Weapons Accurate	Hooves 6
Armor	Leathery hide 6
Defense	+1
Toughness	15 **Pain Threshold** 8
Shadow	Light brown with a tinge of copper (corruption: 0)
Tactics: Horses are easily frightened and often bolt at the first whiff of danger, no matter how much its rider screams and threatens.	

Horse, battle-trained

To use a horse in battle, for example with the Equestrian ability, one needs a well-trained steed – an animal that can actually be a challenging opponent in itself.

Rank and Abilities

To achieve a variation between the soldiers and guards that the player characters meet, small adjustments can go far. An infantry group leader may for instance be given the ability Leader (novice), while the star of the archer company can be given Arrow Jab or Trick Archery at novice level

Race	Horse (beast)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Armored* (I), *Robust* (III)
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 10 (0), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 9 (+1)	
Abilities	*Iron Fist* (adept), *Steadfast* (novice)
Weapons Accurate	Hooves 8
Armor	Leathery hide 6
Defense	+1
Toughness	15 **Pain Threshold** 8
Shadow	Light gray with a tinge of silver white steel (corruption: 0)
Tactics: The battle-trained horse obeys its rider's commands and defends itself with powerful kicks even if the rider is killed.	

Infantryman

"For Ambria!"

For the current generation of Ambrian soldiers, the war against the Dark Lords is nothing more than a story from the past. Instead, they are trained to do battle with barbarians, beasts and each other.

Manner	Stoically prepared
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Contacts* (Ambrian army)
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 7 (+3), **Persuasive** 9 (+1), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 5 (+5)	
Abilities	*Iron Fist* (novice), *Man-at-arms* (novice), *Shield Fighter* (adept)
Boons/ Burdens	*Enduring March*
Weapons Strong	Sword 5
Armor	Chain Mail 4
Defense	0 (shield)
Toughness	15 **Pain Threshold** 8
Equipment	1D4 shillings
Shadow	Shining gray, like brushed steel (corruption: 0)
Tactics: The foot-soldiers of Ambria form shield walls and other strict formations to protect their allies and officers.	

Officer

"Company! March!"

Most of Ambria's military officers are veterans from the war in Alberetor, burdened by memories of lost friends and crushing defeats. The barbarians and the forest of Davokar are child's play in comparison – nothing that will get in the way of the Queen's army.

Manner	Grimly dutiful
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Contacts* (Ambrian army)
Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 11 (–1), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 15 (–5), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 9 (+1)	
Abilities	*Dominate* (master), *Leader* (adept), *Man-at-arms* (adept), *Shield Fighter* (adept)
Boons/ Burdens	*Enduring March*, *Nightmares*
Weapons Persuasive	Sword 5
Armor	Chain Mail 4
Defense	–5 (shield)
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 5
Equipment	1D4 thaler
Shadow	Icy gray with deep gray gashes, like a scratched steel sword (corruption: 0)
Tactics: Directs his troops into battle, pointing out the enemies to focus on (+2 damage), then tries to subjugate their leaders.	

Pikeman

"Pikes at the ready!"

As it was in Alberetor, soldiers equipped with a combination of bucklers (small shields) and spears or halberds make up most of the duchies' regiments and garrisons.

Manner	Bored but loyal
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Contacts* (Ambrian army)
Accurate 15 (–5), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 10 (0), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 11 (–1), **Vigilant** 7 (+3)	
Abilities	*Acrobatics* (novice), *Man-at-arms* (adept), *Polearm Mastery* (adept)
Boons/ Burdens	*Enduring March*
Weapons Accurate	Halberd 5 (long)
Armor	Chain Mail 4
Defense	–4 (shield)
Toughness	11 **Pain Threshold** 6
Equipment	1D8 shillings
Shadow	Furrowed bright gray, like a well-used spearhead (corruption: 0)
Tactics: Raise their spears against the enemy and use their free attacks; then retreat with the help of *Acrobatics* and await a new opening (unless commanded differently).	

Pansar

"To the Queen! To glory!"

The Queen's guard is also the kingdom's elite unit of armored warriors. Exclusive to nobles and war heroes, this troop is a glorious and renowned military force.

Manner	Disciplined and loyal
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Strong
Traits	*Privileged*
Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 15 (–5), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 13 (–3), **Vigilant** 9 (+1)	
Abilities	*Bodyguard* (novice), *Dominate* (master), *Iron Fist* (adept), *Man-at-arms* (adept), *Polearm Mastery* (adept), *Two-handed Force* (adept), *Two-handed Finesse* (adept)
Boons/ Burdens	*Commanding Voice* (II), *Enduring March*
Weapons Persuasive	Two-handed Sword 8 (long)
Armor	Pansar Field Armor 6 (flexible, reinforced)
Defense	–1
Toughness	13 **Pain Threshold** 7
Equipment	1D20 thaler
Shadow	Scratched and dented silver, like a battered steel shield (corruption: 0)
Tactics: Challenges the strongest enemies on the battlefield, to keep them busy and earn the honor of battle.	

The Army's Decay

During the war against the Dark Lords, the Ambrians developed an impressive military force, both well-trained and disciplined, which made the invasion of the Promised Land a relatively simple task. But rumor has it that the peacetime of the past decade has transformed the culture in the realm's army; that the number of convictions for disobedience, desertion and undermining of the fighting spirit has multiplied. This does not bode well in light of the growing threat from the north ...

Agents of the Realm

The Queen's Spy presented here is of the type that acts in cities and larger settlements, within the borders of Ambria or infiltrating some foreign power. However, the Royal Sekretorium also has field agents, specialized on exploring and acting in less civilized territories. These often have a different profile when it comes to abilities and boons, similar to those of the Queen's Rangers and the explorers of Ordo Magica

TWO-HANDED FINESSE, ABILITY

Most people fighting with a two-handed weapon rely on its considerable weight, but there are also those who cultivate the ability to wield huge two-handed swords with great finesse. Those who possess this ability belong to that category, and can use the length of the weapon to combat all sorts of opponents.

Novice	**Passive.** In the hands of the novice, two-handed swords gain the quality Long and can therefore be used with the Polearm Mastery ability.
Adept	**Reaction.** After one successful *Defense* per turn, pass a *[Strong←Strong]* test to push enemies out of melee combat with the sword. The enemy takes 1D6 damage, is pushed back a couple of meters, and must once again face the quality Long.
Master	**Active.** The master's flowing strikes count as a chain of attacks against enemies within melee distance – if an enemy is hit, an attack is made against the next one, and so on until an attack fails.

Queen's Spy

"The end justifies the means."

The agents of the Royal Sekretorium are recruited from among House Kohinoor's most loyal allies. These spies are usually nobles with silver tongues and nimble fingers who can come and go as they please through every door and window in Ambria.

Manner	Arrogantly elegant
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Strong
Traits	*Privileged*
Accurate 9 (+1), **Cunning** 15 (–5), **Discreet** 11 (–1), **Persuasive** 13 (–3), **Quick** 7 (+3), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 5 (+5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Poisoner* (master), *Pyrotechnics* (master), *Strangler* (master), *Sword Saint* (master), *Tactician* (master)
Boons/ Burdens	*Con Artist* (II), *False Identity*, *Hideouts*
Weapons Cunning	Fencing Sword 6 (precise), Parrying Dagger 4 (balanced), and poison 4 for 4 turns
Armor	Concealed Armor 2 (concealed, flexible)
Defense	–6
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 3
Equipment	1D10+10 thaler, 1D6 doses Strong poison, 1D4 each of Spore Bombs, Smoke Bombs and Thunderballs
Shadow	Dark glossy gray, like a silver mirror in the shadows (corruption: 0)
Tactics: Starts off by throwing a Thunderball, Smoke Bomb or Spore Bomb to take down some of the enemies, then attacks with poisoned weapons.	

Sapper

"Three degrees to the left ..."

It is often said that if you want to burn down a fort, you summon the Panzer Alchemists of Agrella, but if you want to move mountains you turn to Her Majesty's Sappers Corps, 7th army, Yndarien. This is not far from the truth.

Manner	Cool and calculated
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Contacts* (Ambrian Army)
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 15 (–5), **Discreet** 7 (+3), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 9 (+1)	
Abilities	*Alchemy* (adept), *Man-at-arms* (adept), *Siege Expert* (adept), *Two-handed Force* (novice)
Boons/ Burdens	*Enduring March*, *Pack-mule*
Weapons Accurate	Portable Firetube 6 (area cone, flaming) Firetube as Warhammer 6 (blood-letting, massive, unwieldy)
Armor	Double Chain Mail 5 (reinforced)
Defense	–1
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 5
Equipment	1D6 Firetube charges, 1D4+1 Alchemical Grenades, Field Smithy, 1D6 thaler.
Shadow	Glossy gray with reddish stains, like a steel plate with rust roses (corruption: 0)
Tactics: The sapper often keeps at a distance, fires the firetube and throws grenades. Only when in a tight spot is the firetube used as a warhammer.	

Townsfolk

Artisan

"My hammer can hit you, or the anvil. You choose!"

Each new settlement in Ambria's border regions relies on competent artisans. Hardened by the destruction of Alberetor and woven together in the newly formed guilds, these settlers are determined not to let the problems of the new world get in the way of their work.

Manner	Confident and steady
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Contacts* (guild)
Accurate 11 (–1), **Cunning** 13 (–3), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 9 (+1), **Quick** 7 (+3), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Blacksmith* (novice), *Hammer Rhythm* (adept), *Steadfast* (novice)
Boons/ Burdens	*Enterprise*
Weapons Accurate	Long-hammer 5 (bastard weapon, massive, unwieldy)
Armor	Studded leather 3 (reinforced)
Defense	+5
Toughness	15 **Pain Threshold** 8
Equipment	Field Smithy, 1D10 shillings
Shadow	Hammered and dented bronze (corruption: 0)
Tactics: The muscular Artisan focuses on enemies with shields, to make use of the crushing hammer technique.	

Drug Peddler

"The first dose is free."

Despite attempts to organize Ambria's craftsmen into guilds, the alchemical practices have proven particularly difficult to control. Unscrupulous drug peddlers are purchasing elixirs from witches, sorcerers, and greedy Adepts of the Order, to be sold on the black market.

Manner	Timid, sly
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Contacts* (criminals)
Accurate 9 (+1), **Cunning** 15 (–5), **Discreet** 11 (–1), **Persuasive** 13 (–3), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 7 (+3), **Strong** 5 (+5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Alchemy* (novice), *Poisoner* (novice), *Strangler* (adept)
Boons/ Burdens	*Con Artist* (I), *Poison Resilient*
Weapons Accurate	Poisoned Stiletto 4 (deep impact), and poison 2 for 2 turns
Armor	None
Defense	0
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 3
Equipment	1D10 thaler, 1D4 doses each of Weak Poison, Wild Chew, Choking Spores, Drone Dew, Waybread, Herbal Cure, Concentrated Magic
Shadow	Stained steel with black scratches (corruption: 1)
Tactics: Throws Choking Spores at armored enemies and uses its poisoned dagger against those with less armor.	

Drunkard

"You... Come 'ere, I'll bust ya nose!"

Many older Ambrians are haunted by traumatic memories from the war and/or terrible failures in the new country; they often lose themselves in the bottle and use their fists to seek vengeance on the world that caused their pain.

Manner	Wobbles unsteadily and attacks without thought
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Contacts* (rabble)
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 5 (+5), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Berserker* (adept), *Cheap Shot* (novice), *Natural Warrior* (novice)
Boons/ Burdens	*Addiction*, *Nightmares*
Weapons Accurate	Fists and bottles 6
Armor	Leather Jacket 4

Defense	+7		
Toughness	15	**Pain Threshold**	8
Equipment	1D8 ortegs		
Shadow	Greenish bronze (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: Roars as a maniac and flails its fists wildly, without any regard for the safety of itself (or any bystanders).

Guard Dog

Unlike the increasingly common battle-trained jakaars, the regular guard dog is more focused on detecting and warning of threats than attacking the intruders. Practically every Ambrian who has something of value (a business, plantation, antiques, or a sum of thaler) keeps a trained guard dog, whether they are based in the countryside or in a larger settlement.

Race	Dog (beast)		
Resistance	Ordinary		
Traits	*Natural Weapon* (I)		
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 13 (–3), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 9 (+1), **Strong** 11 (–1), **Vigilant** 15 (–5)			
Abilities	*Bodyguard* (novice), *Iron Fist* (novice), *Natural Warrior* (adept)		
Weapons Strong	Bite 4, two attacks at the same target		
Armor	None		
Defense	0		
Toughness	11	**Pain Threshold**	6
Shadow	Grainy light brown, like dry soil or road dust (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: Guard dogs often work in pairs, helping each other to keep an eye on the area they are supposed to guard. When intruders show up, they initially bark, then try to keep the enemy busy until reinforcements arrive.

Innkeeper

"Easy now, before someone gets hurt."

The innkeepers of Ambria are used to anything. Throwing out drunkards and troublemakers is part of the job, as is creating antidotes or herbal cures for battered travelers.

They also make sure that at least one or two of their employees can back them up if necessary – waiters, dishwashers or stablehands. If values are needed for these, use Squire (page 129).

Manner	Welcoming		
Race	Human (Ambrian)		
Resistance	Ordinary		
Traits	*Contacts* (General)		
Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 11 (–1), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 15 (–5), **Quick** 9 (+1), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 13 (–3), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Alchemy* (novice), *Dominate* (adept), *Natural Warrior* (novice), *Wrestling* (adept)		
Boons/ Burdens	*Storyteller*		
Weapons Persuasive	Fists 3		
Armor	Leather Apron 2		
Defense	+3		
Toughness	13	**Pain Threshold**	7
Equipment	1D10 shillings		
Shadow	Glistening silver and copper (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: Cracks down on anyone who pulls a weapon; then starts the process of throwing the dregs out.

Medicus

"Lie still, and bite down hard."

Ambrian medical expertise is not yet controlled by a certain guild. The knowledge comes from various sources, with scholars, priests, alchemists, and barbers making up the nation's motley medical community.

Manner	Strict and determined		
Race	Human (Ambrian)		
Resistance	Ordinary		
Traits	*Contacts* (General)		
Accurate 9 (+1), **Cunning** 16 (–6), **Discreet** 7 (+3), **Persuasive** 11 (–1), **Quick** 5 (+5), **Resolute** 13 (–3), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Alchemy* (novice), *Beast Lore* (adept: Cultural Beings), *Bodyguard* (novice), *Exceptionally Cunning* (novice), *Loremaster* (novice), *Medicus* (adept)		
Weapons Accurate	Scalpel 4 (deep impact), +2 against Cultural Beings		
Armor	None		
Defense	+5		
Toughness	10	**Pain Threshold**	5

Equipment	1D6+1 Herbal Cures, 1D4 doses weak Antidote, Waybread
Shadow	Rosy gold, as a blazing sunset (corruption: 0)
Tactics: Protects any patients without regard for her own safety, no matter if they are drunkards or nobles.	

Noble Brat

"Don't you know who my mother is!?"

Whether in the streets of Yndaros, an army camp, or in some countryside village, it is said that a swanky young noble is never more than a stone's throw away.

Manner	Haughty, stubborn and puffed-up
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	Privileged
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 15 (–5), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 7 (+3), **Strong** 11 (–1), **Vigilant** 9 (+1),	
Abilities	*Dominate* (novice), *Loremaster* (novice), *Man-at-arms* (novice), *Twin Attack* (novice)
Boons/ Burdens	*Heirloom (parrying dagger)*
Weapons Persuasive	Fencing Sword 4 (precise), Parrying Dagger 4 (balanced, deep impacts)
Armor	Tailored leather armor 3 (flexible)
Defense	–2
Toughness	11 **Pain Threshold** 6
Equipment	1D10+10 thaler, Smelling salts
Shadow	Shimmering silver or gold (corruption: 0)
Tactics: Orders its companions to teach the adversary a lesson; then tries to flank an enemy, or retreat with head held high.	

Pickpocket

"Let me take the weight off your shoulders..."

Pickpockets are such a common element on the city streets that most Ambrians keep money and securities in their boots, gloves, hats, and undergarments – but sacrificing a few coins in a belt-pouch ensures that one does not get mugged in an alley.

Manner	Scouts discreetly for targets
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Contacts* (thieves' guild)
Accurate 11 (–1), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 15 (–5), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 9 (+1), **Strong** 7 (+3), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Backstab* (adept), *Feint* (adept)
Boons/ Burdens	*Dexterous* (II), *Double-tongue,*
Weapons Discreet	Stiletto 4 (deep impacts)
Armor	Tight leather 2
Defense	–1
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 4
Equipment	1D4–1 thaler, 1D6–1 shillings
Shadow	Silver blue as steel in moon light (corruption: 0)
Tactics: Does all it can to avoid combat. If it attacks, it does so from an *Advantage*; a pickpocket would rather flee than take any risks.	

Thug

"These are our streets!"

Law and order shines like the sun over the Ambrian kingdom, but where there is light, there is shadow. In the dark alleys and backstreets of the cities, the bored and ambitious scum of Ambria rules.

Manner	Bold in a group, but cowardly alone
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Contacts* (criminals)
Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 13 (–3), **Discreet** 11 (–1), **Persuasive** 9 (+1), **Quick** 15 (–5), **Resolute** 5 (+5), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Cheat Shot* (adept), *Knife Play* (adept)
Weapons Quick	Dagger 3 (short), two attacks at the same target
Armor	Leather 2
Defense	–3
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 5
Shadow	Red-striped, like scratched brass (corruption: 0)
Tactics: Only attacks if they outnumber the enemy, and focuses on lightly armored targets.	

Slumming nobles

In cities like Yndaros and Agrella, it is not unusual for highborn youngsters to mingle with the less fortunate – for the thrill of it, or simply because they want to get away from the etiquette and ceremonies required at gatherings of the nobles. Whatever the reason, these kinds of social excursions tend to end in brawls or tears, as someone in the company inevitably refuses to pretend they are equal to the uncultivated rabble.

Beasts & Monsters

THE FIVE HEADINGS in this chapter refer to different types of wilderness. However, it should be noted that the game world's bestial inhabitants tend to move between different hunting grounds. A creature that normally dwells in the Underworld could very well be forced to the surface, and beasts usually encountered in the region's waterways can sometimes be found on dry land, or crawling through the bogs of the forest.

Bright Davokar

Beamon

The black-furred bear creature known by the barbarians as the Beamon is a solitary soul that takes its dominance for granted. It certainly has many enemies, both beast and human. The beamon is prized by the barbarians for its meat, and for many northern clans its slaying is a coming-of-age rite. Any person who has successfully hunted a beamon is considered to be an adult, and those who manage to bring the beastly bear down single-handedly are regarded as fully-trained warriors.

Race	Predator (beast)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Armored* (II), *Natural Weapon* (II), *Robust* (II)
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 13 (–3), **Discreet** 7 (+3), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 9 (+1), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 11 (–1)	
Abilities	*Iron Fist* (master), *Natural Warrior* (adept)
Weapons Strong	Paws 12/7, two attacks at the same target
Armor	Thick fur 6
Defense	+3
Toughness	15 **Pain Threshold** 8
Shadow	Brown bordering on black, like newly oiled hides (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The Beamon relies on its strength and toughness, but is not stupid. If hopelessly outnumbered or facing stronger than expected resistance it will flee.

Blaze Bug

The swarming, flesh-eating insects known as Blaze Bugs or Blaze Beetles can seemingly be found anywhere in Davokar, including its brighter parts. Each bug is barely the size of a human palm, with a gleaming black shell patterned in gold that matches its shimmering wings.

Race	Winged Creatures (beast)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Armored* (I), *Deadly Breath* (II, lightning), *Swarm* (II)

Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 9 (+1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 15 (–5), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	None		
Weapons Accurate	Bite 2 (short), and Deadly Breath		
Armor	Shell 2, half damage according to *Swarm* II		
Defense	–5		
Toughness	10	**Pain Threshold**	5
Shadow	Grainy gray-brown, like dried clay (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: Blaze bugs rarely attack if their enemies number more than two, but they will defend their turf against larger groups – always blazing with wrath.

Blight-born Fairy

Small, crooked, naked creatures with glossy black eyes and long claws where their nails used to be. Their skin shows hints of thin fur, and they are all surrounded by a pungent, sulfuric odor.

Manner	Giggles, squints		
Race	Fairy (Spring elf)		
Resistance	Weak		
Traits	*Corrupting Attack* (I), *Long-lived, Natural Weapon* (I)		
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 15 (–5), **Persuasive** 9 (+1), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 7 (+3), **Strong** 5 (+5), **Vigilant** 11 (–1)			
Abilities	None		
Weapons	Claws 3 (short)		
Armor	None		
Defense	–3		
Toughness	10	**Pain Threshold**	3
Equipment	None		
Shadow	Black with greenish brown spots, like decaying leaves floating on a pond at night (thoroughly corrupt)		

Tactics: They do not attack until they outnumber the target two-to-one; then they wait for a situation where they can take the enemy by surprise to create *Advantage*.

Darak

Daraks are pack-living herbivores that normally roam the plains west of Davokar, but it is not uncommon for individual beasts to be ostracized from the herd. These solitary nomads tend to stay in the woods and are often extremely aggressive in defending their territory.

Race	Herbivore (beast)		
Resistance	Strong		
Traits	*Armored* (III), *Natural Weapon* (II), *Rampage* (III), *Robust* (III), *Sturdy* (I)		
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 9 (+1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Berserker* (master)		
Weapons Accurate	Horns 11		
Armor	Robust hide 10		
Defense	+4		
Toughness	23	**Pain Threshold**	8
Shadow	Pale greenish yellow, like dried hay (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: The Darak is too big and powerful to adopt some special tactics – it simply crushes as many enemies as possible on the way into melee, then continues to ram all that come close.

Ferber

The feisty Ferber lives in families of between four and ten individuals. What this mustelid lacks in size, it makes up for in speed and tremendous courage, but that is not why the barbarians avoid it like the plague. They do so because of the disease which all adult ferbers seem to carry, and that threatens to infect anyone they bite.

Race	Predator (beast)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Infectious* (II), *Natural Weapon* (II), *Swift* (I)
Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 5 (+5), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 9 (+1), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 13 (–3), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Iron Fist* (adept), *Natural Warrior* (adept), *Steadfast* (adept)
Weapons Strong	Claws 7, two attacks at the same target
Armor	None
Defense	–1
Toughness	15 **Pain Threshold** 8
Shadow	Light brown shifting towards darkish yellow (corruption: 0)

Tactics: Ferbers do not back down, no matter the strength of the opposition. They prefer to overwhelm targets with superior numbers, dividing themselves so that there are two ferbers facing each opponent.

Fey Beast

The fey beast is one of the most ferocious, unwavering predators in the region. In terms of physical shape and constitution, it resembles a jakaar or a large dog, but its gray or brown speckled fur is definitely feline. Like mare cats, the fey beast has a venomous gland right above its fangs, but while the mare cat's venom is lethal, the fey beast's will only paralyze the victim. And that is precisely what makes it such a fearsome predator: you can hardly spend a day in Thistle Hold without hearing stories of people who have been eaten, alive and conscious.

Race	Predator (beast)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Natural Weapon* (II), *Paralyzing Venom* (III)
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 7 (+3), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 15 (–5), **Strong** 11 (–1), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Steadfast* (adept)
Weapons Accurate	Bite 4
Armor	None
Defense	0
Toughness	11 **Pain Threshold** 6
Shadow	Brownish yellow, like the dry grass of a meadow (corruption: 0)

Tactics: Fey beasts hunt in packs, and would rather not attack unless they outnumber their prey by at least two-to-one. Together they hunt down the victims, and when all victims have been paralyzed, the feast begins.

Hornet

No one knows how many fortune hunters have fallen victim to the hornets of Davokar, but according to tales told in the taverns of Thistle Hold, these tenacious stingers are some of the forest's most effective killers. They are found everywhere, but seem to be particularly fond of the magnificent ruins of Symbaroum.

Race	Winged creature
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Piercing Attack* (I), *Poisonous* (II), *Swarm* (III), *Wings* (I)
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 15 (–5), **Resolute** 9 (+1), **Strong** 11 (–1), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	None
Weapons	Sting 0 (piercing 4)
Armor	Quarter of damage according to *Swarm* III
Defense	–5
Toughness	11 **Pain Threshold** 6
Shadow	Orange like the afternoon sun (corruption: 0)

Tactics: A swarm of hornets will instinctively defend their queen and nest; they have no survival instinct whatsoever and will keep attacking until their enemies run away or the swarm is destroyed.

Jakaar, battle-trained

Battle-trained beasts are quite common among the clans of the region, and none more so than the wolf-like jakaar. The barbarians have tamed these large canines for centuries, and in clan Odaiova it is more common than not for every family to train at least one jakaar to guard them at night and keep them company during the day.

Race	Predator (beast)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Armored* (I), *Natural Weapon* (II)
Accurate 11 (−1), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 13 (−3), **Resolute** 9 (+1), **Strong** 15 (−5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Bodyguard* (novice), *Iron Fist* (novice), *Natural Warrior* (adept)
Weapons Strong	Bite 5, two attacks at the same target
Armor	Wolf skin 2
Defense	−3
Toughness	15 **Pain Threshold** 8
Shadow	Lavish green (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The battle-trained jakaars obey the commands of their masters, often working as bodyguards that can also be sent to attack enemies equipped with ranged weapons or mystical powers.

Jakaar, wild

The jakaar is a canine, as prone to capturing its own prey as it is eating from cadavers left by other beasts.

Race	Predator (beast)
Resistance	Weak
Traits	*Armored* (I), *Natural weapon* (I)
Accurate 13 (−3), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 11 (−1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 15 (−5), **Resolute** 9 (+1), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	None
Weapons Accurate	Bite 3 (short)
Armor	Wolf skin 2
Defense	−5
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 5
Shadow	Green like spring grass (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The jakaars try to gain *Advantage* by flanking their prey.

Kelder

There are many rumors about the cedar tree known as the Kelder. It is true that they pierce the skin of their prey with fine mycelium strands, but they cannot put their victims to sleep, only render them paralyzed for a short while, then hold them using their roots.

Race	Flora
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Armored* (II), *Bloodlust** (II), *Observant*, *Paralyzing Venom* (III), *Piercing Attack* (I), *Slow*
Accurate 13 (−3), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 5 (+5), **Resolute** 11 (−1), **Strong** 15 (−5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	None
Weapons Accurate	Mycelial threads 0 (penetrating: 4)
Armor	Tough bark 3
Defense	+5
Toughness	15 **Pain Threshold** –
Shadow	Streaked and shiny dark green, like healthy pine needles (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The kelders inhabit the Davokar forest in groups comprising five to six individuals. They seek out what appear to be suitable resting sites and strike once any visiting prey have fallen asleep, taking them by *Surprise*.

* Retaining *[Strong←Strong]* instead of enthralling

Lostling

It is said that these lonesome spirit creatures have drifted through the Davokar region since long before the fall of Symbaroum, like tiny wisps of mist, constantly seeking new hosts through which they can relive the warmth and intimacy they so desperately desire.

Race	Spirit (undead)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Alternative Damage* (I), *Haunting* (I), *Spirit Form* (I), *Wings* (III)
Accurate 15 (−5), **Cunning** 5 (+5), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 9 (+1), **Quick** 7 (+3), **Resolute** 13 (−3), **Strong** 11 (−1), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	None
Weapons Accurate	Sweeping attack 3, damages *Strong*, ignores *Armor*
Armor	Half damage according to *Spirit Form* I
Defense	+3
Toughness	11 **Pain Threshold** –
Shadow	Liquid red with black dots, like a crushed jealous heart (thoroughly corrupt)

Tactics: Makes sweeping attacks that, when successful, allow it to pass through the target. It always chooses the biggest, strongest victim and tries to possess it as soon as an attack deals damage.

Varied Beasts

Did we miss a particular type of beast? Or would you like to expose the player characters to meetings with weaker or stronger variants of the creatures presented here? This is easily fixed, by adjusting which traits and abilities the creatures have, or the level of their already existing talents. In the third section of this book are both tools and guidelines for creating homemade beasts, undead and abominations.

According to clan Karohar it is neither the Huldra, nor the High Chieftain or some elf prince that rules Davokar, but a spirit called Arlheg – often appearing as a majestic, huge moose

Moose

The moose is a common sight in Bright Davokar, sometimes wandering alone, sometimes accompanied by last year's calves.

Race	Herbivore (beast)		
Resistance	Challenging		
Traits	*Natural Weapon* (II), *Robust* (II)		
Accurate 11 (–1), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 9 (+1), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Iron Fist* (adept), *Natural Warrior* (novice), *Equestrian* (adept)		
Weapons Strong	Horns 10, +3 if moving prior to the attack		
Armor	Robust hide 3		
Defense	0		
Toughness	15	**Pain Threshold**	8
Shadow	Bright green with red spots, as a Rowan crown full of berries (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: Maneuvers skillfully to avoid being caught in melee, staying constantly in motion while keeping its horns lowered towards the chest of its enemy.

Mosey Munk

The large, red-and-black patterned Mosey Munk seems to be a species of bear, but it has a venomous gland so powerful that it even serves as a weapon, in addition to the beast's fearsome jaws.

Race	Predator (beast)		
Resistance	Ordinary		
Traits	*Harmful Aura* (II, acidic), *Natural Weapon* (II), *Robust* (II)		
Accurate 15 (–5), **Cunning** 5 (+5), **Discreet** 7 (+3), **Persuasive** 9 (+1), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 13 (–3), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	None		
Weapons Accurate	Bite 7, and *Harmful Aura*		
Armor	Thick fur 3		
Defense	+3		
Toughness	13	**Pain Threshold**	7
Shadow	A bone-white crawling swarm, like a cluster of wriggling maggots (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: Runs straight into melee where it, with its awful stench and powerful bite, takes on the most threatening enemy.

Dark Davokar

Blight Worm

The abomination known to the barbarian clans as the Blight Worm resembles the kanaran in many ways, but with one clear difference – the front part of the body is split, with two heads at its end. Almost all reports speak of individual specimens, but wilder rumors suggest that some expeditions have been so unfortunate as to disturb coiling, writhing snake pits full of these abominable creatures.

Race	Abomination
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Armored* (I), *Corruption Hoarder* (I), *Crushing Embrace* (I), *Many-headed* (I), *Natural Weapon* (II)
Accurate 15 (–5), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 9 (+1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 16 (–6), **Vigilant** 7 (+3)	
Abilities	*Exceptionally Accurate* (adept), *Exceptionally Strong* (novice)
Weapons Accurate	Bite 4
Armor	Snake scales 2
Defense	–1
Toughness	16 **Pain Threshold** 8
Shadow	Pulsating, glittering blue-green (thoroughly corrupt)

Tactics: The Blight Worm favors attacking lone, preferably sleeping victims, and if possible, targets blighted by permanent corruption. When it succeeds in hurting a target, it encircles the prey and one of the heads initiates a *Crushing Embrace* while the other continues to bite.

Blood Cat

Like mare cats, the Blood Cat is furless, but with skin in shades of orange and purple, and with yellow eyes that always seem to be wide open. It only wants the blood of its prey, which is why it always comes with one or more followers in tow – servile minions, often jakaars or mare cats, who contribute to the hunt and are later allowed to feast on the bloodless carcass.

Race	Predator (beast)
Resistance	Strong
Traits	*Bloodlust* (I), *Companions* (III, three Mare Cats), *Natural Weapon* (II), *Night Perception*, *Robust* (I)
Accurate 5 (+5), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 13 (–3), **Persuasive** 9 (+1), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 15 (–5), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 7 (+3)	
Abilities	*Acrobatics* (master), *Feint* (master), *Natural Warrior* (master)
Weapons Discreet	Claws 10/8, two attacks at the same target
Armor	Tough skin 2
Defense	–1
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 5
Shadow	Pulsating blood red (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The Blood Cat uses its acrobatic ability and its unpredictable movements in close combat, but has difficulty controlling its thirst: as soon as it encounters a single enemy in melee, it tries to enthrall it and bite its neck.

Crypt Lord

They are called Crypt Lords, the mummified creatures that Ambrian explorers sometimes come across on their expeditions. Survivors from such encounters describe them as dehydrated, embalmed corpses dressed in rags or armor whose dilapidated splendor suggests that the owner once was very wealthy.

Race	Undead
Resistance	Strong
Traits	*Armored* (III), *Gravely Cold* (I), *Undead* (III)
Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 5 (+5), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 15 (–5), **Quick** 9 (+1), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 13 (–3), **Vigilant** 11 (–1)	
Abilities	*Dominate* (master), *Iron Fist* (master), *Man-at-arms* (novice), *Recovery* (master), *Two-handed Force* (master)
Weapons Persuasive	Bastard Sword 10 (precise)
Armor	Mummified Skin 5, half damage according to *Undead* III
Defense	+1
Toughness	13 **Pain Threshold** –
Shadow	Flaking black, like layer upon layer of burnt paper (thoroughly corrupt)

Tactics: Starts by trying to dominate/subjugate the most dangerous looking enemy that has not been affected by its *Gravely Cold* trait. Then it attacks its enemies in the order of descending size.

The Realm of the Crypt Lord

The crypt lords who are awakened by careless treasure hunters or taboo-breaking barbarians are seldom satisfied spending their (un)life alone. Instead, they often try to rebuild their realm, but this time inhabited by dragouls and other obedient slaves. Such a crypt lord probably has (or is quick to learn) the ability Ritualist, and more precisely the rituals Enslave, Possess and Raise Undead.

Fray Spider

Brownish-gray and covered with thick, short hairs, these large spider monsters lack the ability to spin webs. Instead, they catch their prey like most four-legged predators: with speed, strength, and cunning.

Race	Spider (beast)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Armored* (III), *Natural Weapon* (II), *Poisonous* (II)
Accurate 15 (–5), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 9 (+1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 11 (–1), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Acrobatics* (novice), *Natural Warrior* (master)
Boons/Burdens	*Fleet-footed*
Weapons Accurate	Bite 8, two attacks at the same target and poison 3 for 3 turns
Armor	Chitin shields 4
Defense	–3
Toughness	11 **Pain Threshold** 6
Shadow	Dark brown with streaks of gray, like a speckled mountain wall (corruption: 1)

Tactics: Against stronger prey well-suited for melee combat, the fray spider will begin with a quick poison attack and then keep its distance while the poison weakens the victim. Against weaker enemies, and those with ranged weapons, it relies on its powerful bite and thick shell.

Hunger Wolf

The huge hunger wolves are some of the most fabled beasts in the Davokar region. They are visually similar to jakaars, but can grow as big as ponies and are as impressively flexible as mare cats. Luckily, they rarely hunt in packs, but prefer to go at it alone or in pairs – something human fortune hunters should be very grateful for.

Race	Predator (beast)
Resistance	Strong
Traits	*Armored* (III), *Natural Weapon* (III), *Robust* (I)
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 5 (+5), **Discreet** 13 (–3), **Persuasive** 9 (+1), **Quick** 15 (–5), **Resolute** 7 (+3), **Strong** 11 (–1), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Acrobatics* (master), *Feint* (adept), *Natural Warrior* (master)
Weapons Discreet	Bite 10/8, two attacks at the same target
Armor	Wolf skin 7
Defense	–3
Toughness	11 **Pain Threshold** 6
Shadow	Pale greenish yellow, like last year's grass in a forest clearing (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The Hunger Wolf trusts in its cleverness and speed, and does not hesitate to attack larger groups of opponents. Should it be badly hurt, it uses its acrobatic ability to flee and lick its wounds. But the Hunger Wolf does not forget, and will definitely seek vengeance.

Hunting Spider

Hunting spiders are roughly the size of a large dog, with glossy, black, hairless bodies and long, thin legs.

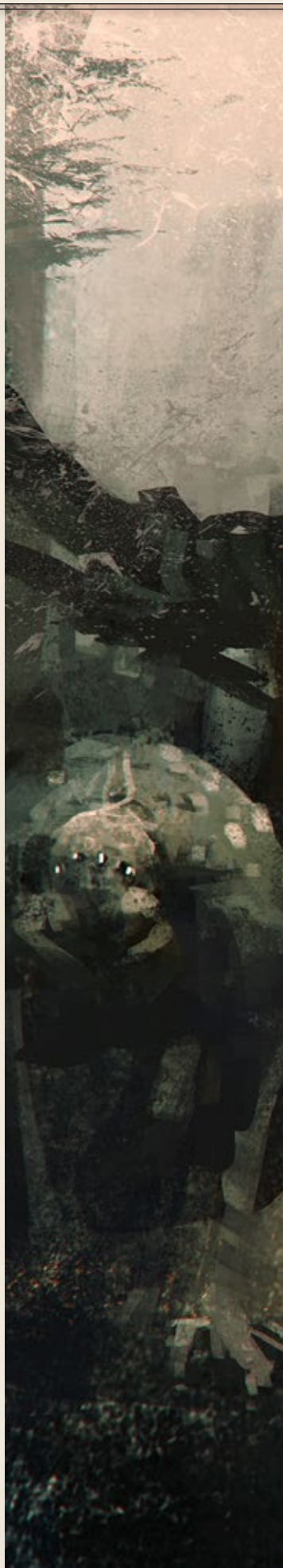
Race	Spider (beast)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Natural Weapon* (I), *Poisonous* (I), *Web* (II)
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 11 (–1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 15 (–5), **Resolute** 7 (+3), **Strong** 9 (+1), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Acrobatics* (adept)
Boons/Burdens	*Fleet-footed*
Weapons Accurate	Bite 3 and poison 2 for 2 turns
Armor	None
Defense	–5
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 5
Equipment	None
Shadow	Bluish gray, like the beard lichens of the forest (corruption: 2)

Tactics: The hunting spiders use their sticky web to entangle their prey. With that done, they proceed to flank and kill one victim at a time.

Killer Shrub

Fortune hunters who venture all the way into Dark Davokar will soon learn to fear the flesh-eating bush known as the Wriggle Twigs or the Killer Shrub. The bush cannot move, but its branches are like nimble tentacles, long enough for it to pull in and ensnare nearby prey.

Race	Flora
Resistance	Challenging



It is said that the spider beasts of Davokar are descendants of the Spider King's warriors. Indeed, they are often seen in the company of arachs, but they can also be encountered without such cultivated companions.

Traits	*Crushing Embrace* (III), *Grappling Tongue*, *Natural Weapon* (II), *Robust* (II)		
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 9 (+1)			
Abilities	*Iron Fist* (adept)		
Weapons Strong	Thorny Branches 9		
Armor	Bark 3		
Defense	+2		
Toughness	15	**Pain Threshold**	–
Shadow	Glossy greenish brown, like leathery bark (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: If some prey-animal passes within melee range, the shrub tries to envelop it in a crushing embrace, otherwise it sends out its grappling vines to pull the mouth-watering target close. Should it be attacked from a distance, it can retaliate as long as the target is within the distance of two movement actions (see *Grappling Tongue*).

Shelob

The Shelobs, mothers of Davokar's spider creatures, vary in appearance, but their bodies are often the size of an ogre, with long, jointed legs. Normally their compound eyes are about a meter from the ground, but the long legs enable them to rise up and look down on even the tallest of sturdy adventurers.

Race	Spider (beast)		
Resistance	Strong		
Traits	*Armored* (III), *Natural Weapon* (II), *Poisonous* (III), *Poison Spit* (III), *Robust* (I), *Web* (III)		
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 15 (–5), **Discreet** 11 (–1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 7 (+3), **Strong** 9 (+1), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Acrobatics* (master)		
Boons/Burdens	*Fleet-footed*		
Weapons Accurate	Bite 6 and poison 4 for 4 turns		
Armor	Carapace plates 6		
Defense	–1		
Toughness	10	**Pain Threshold**	5
Equipment	None		
Shadow	Sparkling white like sunlit snow (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: The Shelob lets her children do the fighting, while supporting them with poisonous spits.

The Black Plague Termites

The red and black, thumb-length termites attack trees, both living and dead, leaving them hollow. And they are said to corrupt everything they touch – the trees they devour, the ground they tread upon, and the earth in which they nest.

Race	Abomination		
Resistance	Ordinary		
Traits	*Armored* (I), *Corrupting Attack* (I), *Swarm* (II)		
Accurate 11 (–1), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 15 (–5), **Strong** 9 (+1), **Vigilant** 5 (+5)			
Abilities	*Natural Warrior* (adept)		
Boons/Burdens	*Slow*		
Weapons	Mandibles 4 (deep impact), two attacks per turn plus 1D4 temporary corruption		
Armor	Chitin shell 2		
Defense	–3		
Toughness	10	**Pain Threshold**	5
Shadow	Glossy black like soaked charcoal (thoroughly corrupt)		
Tactics: A swarm of termites will instinctively defend their queen and nest; they have no survival instinct and will keep attacking until their enemies flee or the swarm is destroyed.			

Wraith

Black, shadow-like figures drifting around alone or in groups. They are drawn to living creatures like flies to rotting meat. They seek affection, sympathy, help, or just someone willing to listen, without realizing that their desperate touch is lethal for the living.

Race	Spirit (undead)		
Resistance	Ordinary		
Traits	*Alternative Damage* (II, *Strong*), *Spirit Form* (II)		
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 11 (–1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 15 (–5), **Strong** 9 (+1), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	None		
Weapons Accurate	Touch of death 4 (ignores *Armor*, damages *Strong*)		
Armor	Half damage according to *Spirit Form* II		
Defense	0		
Toughness	10	**Pain Threshold**	–
Shadow	Glossy black, like oil (thoroughly corrupt)		
Tactics: The wraiths attack people at random. There is a 50% chance that an individual wraith will flee if the damage sustained exceeds half of its *Toughness* value.			

Lakes & Rivers

Drilling Leech

The finned Drilling Leech, half-blind but poisonous, is as big as a cat and surprisingly agile in the water. Moving in clusters, they attach themselves to the hull of boats and eat their way through, hoping that the crew will fall into the water. While chewing on the planks, the leeches will not let go, even if they are attacked, but then they must first be detected. With a successful *[Vigilant –5]* test, whoever steers the ship notices that something feels wrong, as if the vessel pulls in a certain direction.

Race	Amphibian (beast)		
Resistance	Ordinary		
Traits	*Armored* (I), *Amphibian*, *Natural Weapon* (I), *Poisonous* (II)		
Accurate 11 (–1), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 13 (–3), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 15 (–5), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 9 (+1), **Vigilant** 5 (+5),			
Abilities	*Acrobatics* (novice)		
Weapons Accurate	Bite 3, and poison 3 for 3 turns		
Armor	Slimy skin 2		
Defense	–5		
Toughness	10	**Pain Threshold**	5
Shadow	Glossy brownish yellow, like its slimy skin (corruption: 0)		
Tactics: Once the prey is in the water, the leech attacks in an attempt to poison it. When this is done it retreats and waits for the poison to act.			

Garoug

The giant bear known as the Garoug can mainly be found on the islands of Lake Veloma, or hunting in its waters. Its bluish white fur befits a predator of such icy temperament – its piercing gaze is enough to make even the bravest wizard flee. If its enemies insist on fighting, the Garoug will not back down;

Water combat

Fighting and defending oneself in or under water is much harder than on dry land. Guidelines for how to handle such events are found on page 165 in this book.

if needs be, the great bear will die protecting its cubs and/or mate!

Race	Predator (beast)
Resistance	Strong
Traits	*Armored* (III), *Natural Weapon* (II), *Robust* (III)
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 5 (+5), **Persuasive** 15 (–5), **Quick** 7 (+3), **Resolute** 9 (+1), **Strong** 13 (–3), **Vigilant** 11 (–1)	
Abilities	*Dominate* (master), *Iron Fist* (master), *Natural Warrior* (master)
Weapons	Bite 16/10, two attacks at the same target
Armor	Bear pelt 8
Defense	+7
Toughness	13 **Pain Threshold** 7
Shadow	Bluish white, like mid-winter ice (corruption: 0)

Tactics: Initially the Garoug tries to scare the enemy or hunter away with its imposing appearance. If this fails, it targets the largest of its enemies, and attacks while trying to instill doubt in the victim's mind.

Hammer Eel

Fortunately, the immense hammer eel is a rare sight in the rivers of Ambria and Davokar; such a creature prefers larger lakes like the Volgoma. Usually it preys on other amphibians, but if one grows really big, and really hungry, it may also attack seafarers by launching through the water, grabbing them with its short but strong grippers, and pulling them below the surface.

Race	Amphibian (beast)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Amphibian*, *Armored* (II), *Natural Weapon* (II), *Prehensile Claws* (I), *Robust* (II), *Sturdy* (II), *Swimmer** (II)
Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 11 (–1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 15 (–5), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 13 (–3), **Vigilant** 9 (+1),	
Abilities	*Iron Fist* (adept)
Weapons Strong	Bite 9
Armor	Scaly skin
Defense	–2
Toughness	26 **Pain Threshold** 7
Shadow	Glittering, rough silver blue, like water colored velvet (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The eel can choose between trying to grip and pull the victim into the water, or attacking directly with its shark-like jaws.

* Works as *Tunneler*

Nipper

The Nipper is a smaller type of clawed river hunter that often hunts in pairs or groups of up to five individuals. Even if it cannot be compared to its more famous relative regarding size, slyness or culinary potential, the Nipper has been the death of many a river roamer.

Race	Amphibian (beast)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Amphibian*, *Armored* (II), *Natural Weapon* (I), *Prehensile Claws* (I)
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 15 (–5), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 9 (+1), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 11 (–1), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	None
Weapons Accurate	Claws 3 (short)
Armor	Chitin shields 3
Defense	+1
Toughness	11 **Pain Threshold** 6
Shadow	Spotted reddish brown, like a cooked crustacean shell (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The Nippers use their belly-claws to hold onto and move around on deck, land or a bridge. They coordinate their attacks to gain *Advantage*, and then grip and slowly gnaw their victims to death.

Skullan

The large, dark green patterned and warty toad creature known as the Skullan may not be as impressive as a fully grown King Toad, but nevertheless, its paralyzing poison makes it a monster to fear.

Race	Amphibian (beast)
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Amphibian*, *Grappling Tongue*, *Natural Weapon* (II), *Paralyzing Venom* (III), *Robust* (I)
Accurate 5 (+5), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 15 (–5), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 9 (+1), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 13 (–3), **Vigilant** 11 (–1)	

Abilities	None
Weapons Accurate	Bite 6, and paralyzing venom
Armor	Warty skin 2
Defense	+3
Toughness	13 **Pain Threshold** 7
Shadow	Tumbling blue and white, like the currents in a rocky rapid (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The Skullan uses its tongue to pull targets from passing vessels; once the victim is paralyzed, the feast can commence!

Vapaya

Ambrian parents who worry about their children playing near water often warn them about the Vapaya. But this carnivorous fish actually prefers to stalk vessels on the region's rivers, especially pirate ships, since their attacks always involve one or two unfortunate souls falling overboard.

Race	Amphibian (beast)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Amphibian*, *Natural Weapon* (II), *Swift* (II), *Swarm* (III)
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 9 (+1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 7 (+3)	
Abilities	*Berserker* (novice), *Natural Warrior* (novice)
Weapons Accurate	Bite 8
Armor	Quarter of damage according to *Swarm* III
Defense	+5
Toughness	15 **Pain Threshold** 8
Shadow	Striped and glossy red-green-yellow, like patterned fish scales (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The Vapaya swarm around one victim at a time, biting and biting until it is dead.

The Mountains

Brimstone Oak

These trees are related to the Iron Oaks and Kelders of Davokar, but coexist with a kind of fungus that generates sulfur and phosphor. Thanks to this symbiosis, the brimstone oak emits waves of heat that attract living animals. The same heat source can be used to produce fiery cascades which kill prey and give it a crispy surface.

Race	Flora
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Deadly Breath* (II), *Harmful Aura* (I), *Robust* (II), *Root Wall* (III)
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 9 (+1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	None
Weapons Accurate	Flaying Branches 5
Armor	Bark 3
Defense	+3
Toughness	15 **Pain Threshold** –
Shadow	Streaky brown-red, as bark basking in the glow from flaming embers (corruption: 0)

Tactics: Uses its root wall to trap targets; then tries to kill them with its smoldering hot cascades.

Crystal Flies

These silver white insects form colonies that look like masses of snow, attacking passing creatures in order to lay eggs in their warm bodies.

Race	Winged creatures (beast)
Resistance	Weak
Traits	*Swarm* (I), *Wings* (I)
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 11 (–1), **Discreet** 13 (–3), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 15 (–5), **Resolute** 7 (+3), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 9 (+1)	
Abilities	*Strangler* (novice)
Weapons Accurate	Bite 2, Strangling 3
Armor	Half damage according to *Swarm* II
Defense	–5
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 5
Shadow	Whirling white, like a biting snowstorm (corruption: 0)

Tactics: Focuses on the closest warm-blooded creature and tries to force its way down its throat, nose and ears.

Kotka

The mighty kokta is one of the most feared predators in the Titans. It has thick winter fur of yellowish

white with streaks of black across the back, terrible fangs, and great claws that can tear even the toughest ogre skin to shreds.

Race	Predator (beast)		
Resistance	Ordinary		
Traits	*Armored* (I), *Natural Weapon* (II), *Robust* (I)		
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 7 (+3), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 9 (+1), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Natural Warrior* (adept)		
Weapons Accurate	Claws 7, two attacks at the same target		
Armor	Thick hide 4		
Defense	+1		
Toughness	15	**Pain Threshold**	8
Equipment	None		
Shadow	Bright green like the leaves of a birch (Corruption: 0)		
Tactics: Kotkas tend to hunt in pairs or groups of three adults; they usually sneak up on herds of prey and work together to isolate a single target. They do the same when facing a group of enemies – they focus on one target at a time, trying to gain an *Advantage* through flanking movements. Naturally, they will attack the largest, most tough-looking opponent first.			

Mountain Troll

The relatively small, yet very resilient trolls inhabiting the Titans and the Ravens are thought to belong to a different breed than those roaming the lowlands. When the Ambrians first came to the Promised Land, they caused a lot of grief, and after a number of caravan attacks Queen Korinthia offered a standing reward of 15 shillings for each mountain troll's head.

Race	Troll (cultural being)		
Resistance	Challenging		
Traits	*Armored* (III), *Natural Weapon* (II), *Regeneration* (III)		
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 7 (+3), **Persuasive** 9 (+1), **Quick** 5 (+5), **Resolute** 11 (–1), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Berserker* (adept), *Natural Warrior* (adept)		
Weapons Accurate	Fists 8, two attacks at the same target		
Armor	Stony skin 6, and regenerates 4 *Toughness* per turn (except fire/acid damage)		
Defense	+5		
Toughness	15	**Pain Threshold**	8
Shadow	Blueish white, like the water from a melting glacier (corruption: 0)		
Tactics: Rushes into battle and strikes down as many enemies as possible.			

Stone Boar Armor

Leather armor made from stone boar hide always has +1 to *Armor*. In other words, if given the Reinforced quality (e.g. fitted with studs), it has a total *Armor* value of 1D4+2.

Rock Buck

The Titans and Ravens are home to this enormous and malicious breed of mountain goat. They patrol their territories and furiously defend their mountain passes.

Race	Herbivore (beast)		
Resistance	Challenging		
Traits	*Armored* (II), *Natural Weapon* (II), *Robust* (I), *Wrecker* (II)		
Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 11 (–1), **Discreet** 9 (+1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Berserker* (novice), *Iron Fist* (novice)		
Weapons Strong	Horns 9		
Armor	Thick hide 5		
Defense	+7		
Toughness	15	**Pain Threshold**	8
Shadow	Whirling gray-white, like snow in squalls (corruption: 0)		
Tactics: Challenges the largest of its opponents and tries to knock it to the ground.			

Snow Wraith

No one knows how many caravans lie buried beneath the snow of the Titans, swallowed by avalanches and landslides. What is known, however, is that the travelers rarely remain where they fell – a fact that often provides later caravans with unpleasant surprises.

Race	Undead		
Resistance	Ordinary		
Traits	*Armored* (I), *Deadly Breath* (I), *Gravely Cold* (II), *Undead* (I)		
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 7 (+3), **Resolute** 15 (–5), **Strong** 11 (–1), **Vigilant** 9 (+1)			

Abilities	None		
Weapons Accurate	Ice Nails 2, and *Gravely Cold*		
Armor	Frozen skin 2		
Defense	+3		
Toughness	11	**Pain Threshold**	–
Shadow	Fractured blue ice bobbing on a pitch-black lake (thoroughly corrupt)		

Tactics: Attack in packs and let their icy breath sweep over the paralyzed victims.

Stone Boar

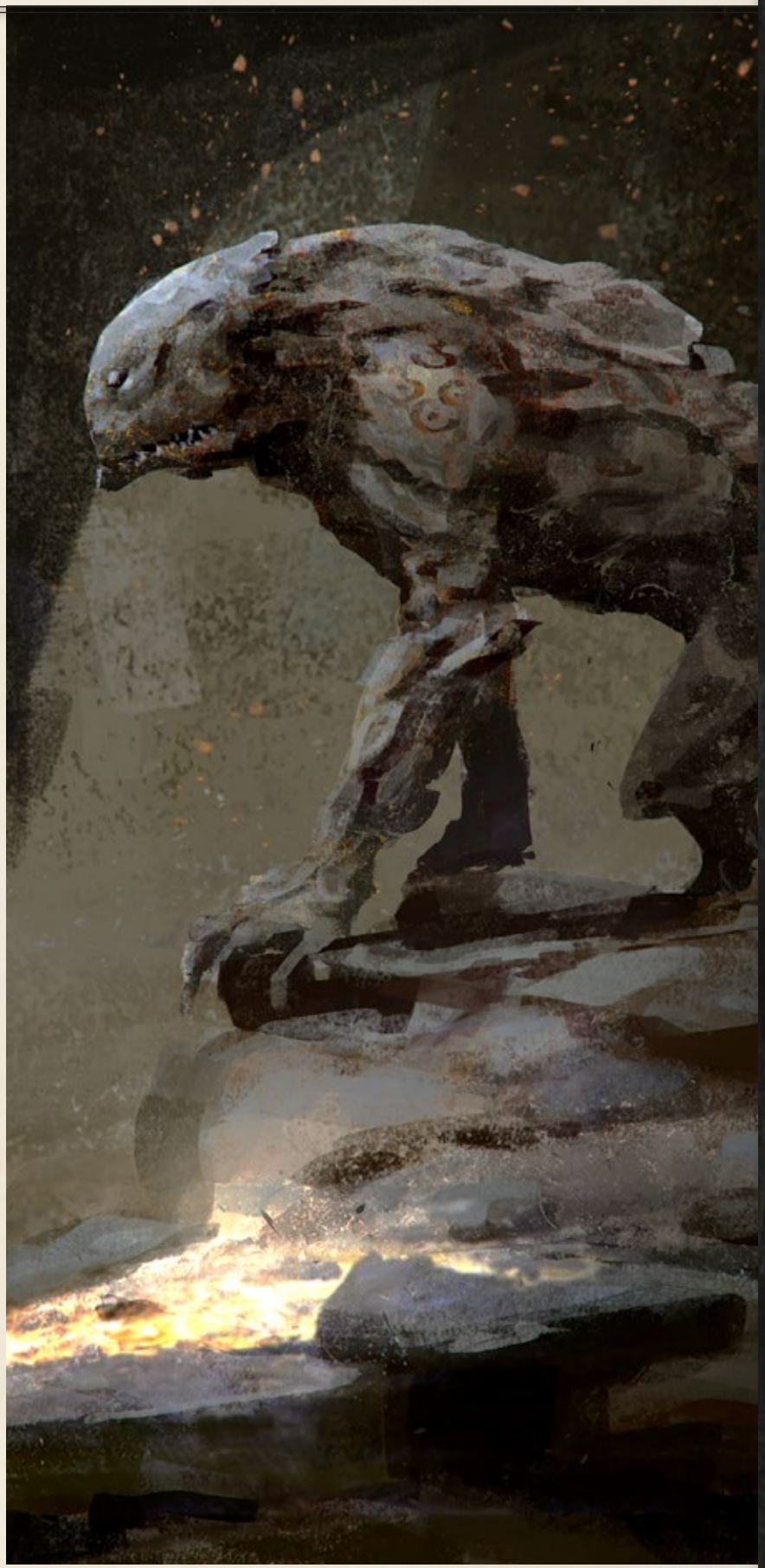
This huge, ravenous beast is called the stone boar even if it has no resemblance to other tame or wild boars. If it weren't for its sturdy, leathery hide (in high demand among Ambria's makers of fashionable leather armor), all would probably rather turn and run before risking a bloody confrontation. But as it is, any stone boars in either the Ravens or the Titans have to put up with being hunted by Ambrian monster hunters.

Race	Predator (beast)		
Resistance	Strong		
Traits	*Armored* (III), *Natural Weapon* (II), *Rampage* (II), *Robust* (II), *Sturdy* (II), *Wrecker* (III)		
Accurate 5 (+5), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 10 (0), **Resolute** 13 (–3), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 11 (–1)			
Abilities	*Iron Fist* (adept)		
Weapons Strong	Head butt 9 (wrecking)		
Armor	Robust hide 7		
Defense	+3		
Toughness	30	**Pain Threshold**	8
Shadow	Cracked grayish black, like its own skin in close-up (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: With few exceptions, the Stone Boars live and hunt in pairs. They use their crushing *Rampage* as much as possible, and are not afraid to suffer free attacks to break melee and make a new charge.

Wraith Owl

The wraith owl was named for its plumage, which remains bright white throughout the year, except for the brown or black circles around its eyes and the similarly colored tips of its feathers. They



usually make their nests in the Ravens, but some have also settled in the ruins of Davokar, high up in broken towers or other places where they have a clear view of creatures moving around below.

Race	Winged creature
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Natural Weapon* (III), *Robust* (I), *Wings* (III)
Accurate 15 (–5), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 11 (–1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 9 (+1), **Strong** 7 (+3), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Natural Warrior* (adept)
Boons/ Burdens	*Fleet-footed*
Weapons	Talons 8/6 (long), two attacks at the same target (free attack: one attack, 5 damage)
Armor	Robust feathers 2
Defense	–1
Toughness	10 **Pain Threshold** 4
Equipment	None, but collects objects, which is why their nests contain trinkets and jewelry worth 1D100 thaler.
Shadow	As bright white as its plumage (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The wraith owl watches its surroundings from elevated positions. Having spotted its prey, it relies on its exceptional flying skills to launch sweeping attacks without putting itself at risk. If the victim does not have a long weapon at his/her disposal, the wraith owl also gets a free attack each turn. If there is a danger of being caught in melee combat, the owl will choose another target or simply not attack until the situation has improved.

The Wraith Owl's Treasures

Despite it being a tough opponent, there are several companies of treasure hunters who willingly seek out wraith owls and specialize in fighting them with ranged weapons and reactive counter-attacks. The reason for this is that the owls always bring their prey back to the nest, meaning that lots of precious objects from previous victims can be found both inside and on the ground below – coin, equipment and items plundered from the forest ruins.

The Underworld

Cave Ray

A recurrent story from subterranean expeditions tells of large, flat-bodied amphibians stalking the dark waters of the Underworld. They prey on the blind carp and vearons sharing their habitat, as well as on others who come near.

Race	Amphibian (beast)
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	*Amphibian*
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick**15 (–5), **Resolute** 7 (+3), **Strong** 11 (–1), **Vigilant** 10 (0)	
Abilities	*Acrobatics* (adept), *Wrestling* (novice)
Weapons Accurate	Bite 2
Armor	None
Defense	–5
Toughness	11 **Pain Threshold** 6
Shadow	Deep blue shifting towards warm orange (corruption: 0)

Tactics: The Cave Ray jumps up to wrap itself around the prey and throw it into the water. When it is submerged, the ray tries to hold onto it until it drowns.

Chasm Stag

From the still pools of blighted sludge which sometimes come bubbling up through the cracks of the Underworld, the insectoid Chasm Stag is born – the size of a fox, but covered in a hard shell and as ravenous as other abominations. They often move in groups of three to five individuals, but even a single beetle can cause great problems, as the Intruder Daemons of the Yonderworld seem to find them valuable and worth protecting.

Race	Abomination
Resistance	Challenging
Traits	*Armored* (III), *Carapace* (II), *Piercing Attack* (I), *Poisonous* (II), *Summoner* (III)

Accurate 11 (–1), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 15 (–5), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 9 (+1), **Resolute** 13 (–3), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 7 (+3)			
Abilities	None		
Weapons Accurate	Bite 0 (piercing: 4), and poison 2 for 2 turns		
Armor	Shell 4		
Defense	+1		
Toughness	10	**Pain Threshold**	5
Shadow	Fractured glossy black, like a cracked backplate (thoroughly corrupt)		
Tactics: Dashes silently towards the weakest targets aiming to poison them, and counts on the Intruder daemons to come to their aid if the prey proves to be tougher than expected. As soon as the poison takes effect, they start moving around to double the effect of their protection.			

Orahaug

There have been numerous attempts to catch one of these massive worms alive, in the hope of extracting the extremely corrosive secretion they use to dig through earth and stone. Perhaps the two ongoing attempts at breeding Orahaugs will turn out well, but there is of course a risk that the beasts will get loose, attacking innocent people and cattle...

Race	Worm (beast)		
Resistance	Challenging		
Traits	*Armored* (II), *Acidic Attack* (III), *Acidic Blood* (III), *Carapace* (I), *Sturdy* (II), *Tunneler* (II)		
Accurate 13 (–3), **Cunning** 9 (+1), **Discreet** 7 (+3), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	None		
Weapons Accurate	Bite 2 (short), and acid 5 for 5 turns		
Armor	Though skin 3		
Defense	–1		
Toughness	30	**Pain Threshold**	8
Shadow	Sickly bubbling green (corruption: 2)		
Tactics: Attacks targets that touch the ground or rock walls. Tunnels and curls up to avoid being damaged.			

Pale Crawler

When a wild and confused ogre cannot find its way to civilization, it sometimes ends up in the Underworld. Among the excrement of trolls and goblins, in corrupting environments that distort their bodies beyond recognition, these desperate creatures climb and crawl on their long, spider-like limbs.

Race	Troll (cultural being)		
Resistance	Ordinary		
Traits	*Death Struggle* (I), *Mystical Resistance* (II), *Robust* (I)		
Accurate 9 (+1), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 11 (–1), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 15 (–5), **Resolute** 7 (+3), **Strong** 13 (–3), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Acrobatics* (novice), *Natural Warrior* (novice)		
Weapons Accurate	Bite 5		
Armor	Tough skin 2		
Defense	–3		
Toughness	13	**Pain Threshold**	7
Shadow	Grayish lilac, like a dried violet (corruption: 2)		
Tactics: The Pale Crawlers are known to surround their prey in the darkness and attack in a group from all directions at once. If the battle proves tough, they retreat after trying to steal as many items as possible.			

Raskaal

Reports from the larger cave complexes of the Underworld state that these are often inhabited by pale bats that can grow very large and are known to Odavs and Karits as Raskaals. These flying creatures are big enough to grab and carry off both ogres and trolls.

Race	Winged Creatures (beast)		
Resistance	Challenging		
Traits	*Bloodlust* (II), *Night Perception*, *Prehensile Claws* (II), *Robust* (I), *Wings* (III)		
Accurate 9 (+1), **Cunning** 7 (+3), **Discreet** 10 (0), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 15 (–5), **Resolute** 10 (0), **Strong** 15 (–5), **Vigilant** 11 (–1)			
Abilities	*Exceptionally Strong* (adept), *Iron Fist* (adept)		
Weapons Strong	Grappling claws 6/4, two attacks at the same target		
Armor	Rough skin 2		
Defense	–3		
Toughness	15	**Pain Threshold**	8

Whenever a vearon is sighted above ground, the news spreads quickly among the local hunters – the amount of meat and skin is considerable relative to the risk and effort required!

Shadow	Pale yellow, like an aged burial shroud (corruption: 3)

Tactics: Picks off one target at a time, lifts them into the air and takes them to a secluded area to drain them of blood.

The Wily

The origin of these vaguely elf-like humanoids prowling naked through the underworld, and for how long they have been there, is a much debated topic among scholars. They might be a failed Symbarian experiment, or members of the Iron Pact who were corrupted and distorted in the war against Symbar. What is clear is that they display a terrible hunger for corruption, and seem able to sense when someone is using mystical powers or artifacts in the Underworld.

Race	Abomination		
Resistance	Challenging		
Traits	*Corruption Hoarder* (I), *Corruption Sensitive* (I), *Enthrall* (III), *Mystical Resistance* (I), *Swift* (I)		
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 5 (+5), **Discreet** 11 (–1), **Persuasive** 7 (+3), **Quick** 13 (–3), **Resolute** 15 (–5), **Strong** 10 (0), **Vigilant** 9 (+1)			
Abilities	*Acrobatics* (novice), *Natural Warrior* (adept)		
Weapons Accurate	Claws 3 (short), two attacks at the same target		
Armor	None		
Defense	–3		
Toughness	10	**Pain Threshold**	5
Shadow	Pulsating purple with blackened capillaries (thoroughly corrupt)		

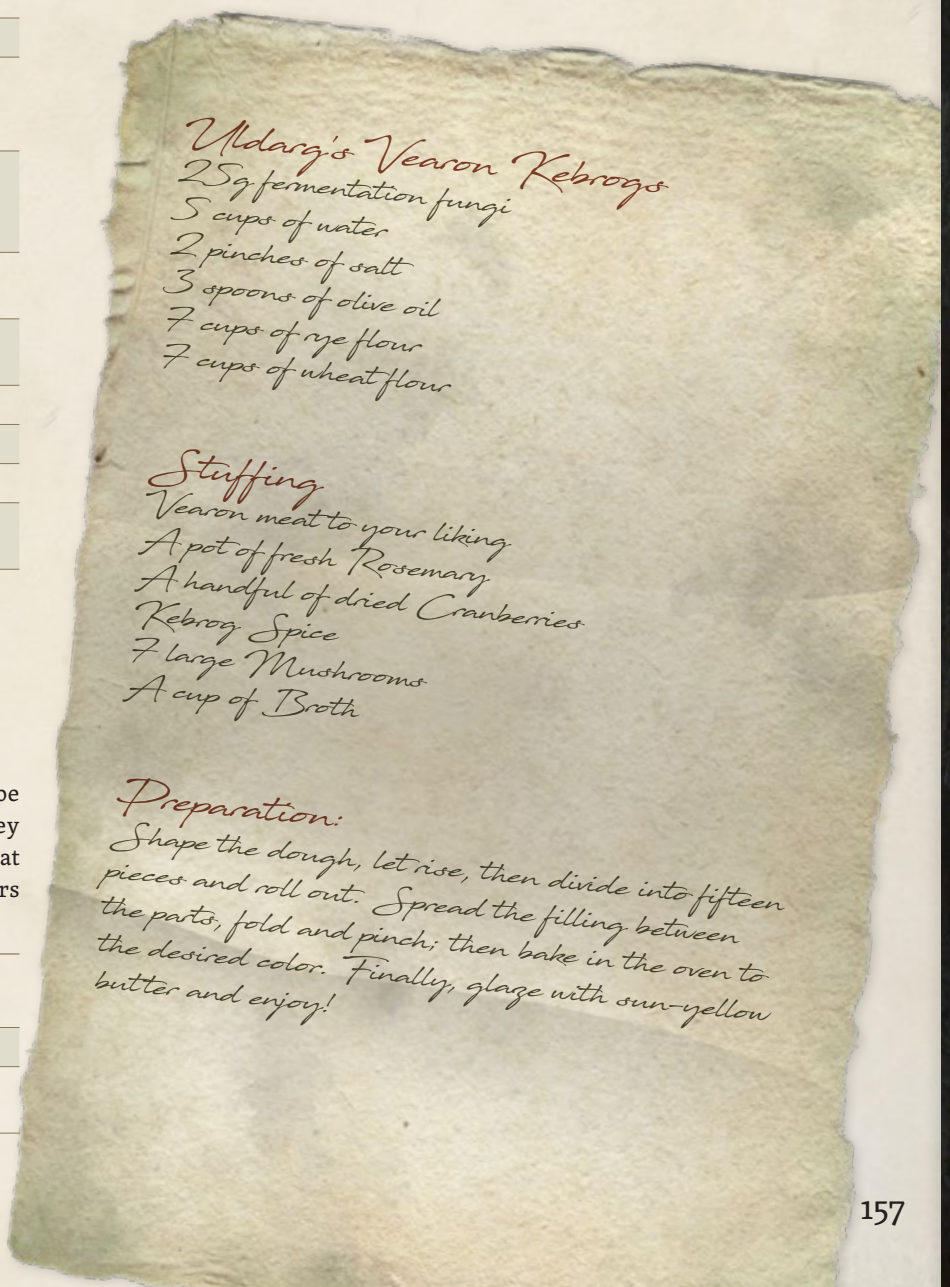
Tactics: Are attracted to people using mystical powers or artifacts, and wait for an opportunity to enthrall them with their hypnotic gaze and then drink their corruption.

Vearon

Vearons are cave-dwelling reptiles that can be encountered anywhere in the Underworld. They have no eyes, are covered in milky white scales that darken with age, and can grow up to five meters long from snout to tail.

Race	Predator (beast)		
Resistance	Ordinary		
Traits	*Armored* (II), *Night Perception*, *Robust* (II)		
Accurate 10 (0), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 15 (–5), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 7 (+3), **Strong** 13 (–3), **Vigilant** 9 (+1)			
Abilities	None		
Weapons Accurate	Claws 5 (short)		
Armor	Lizard scales 6		
Defense	+2		
Toughness	13	**Pain Threshold**	7
Shadow	Gray-striped, like bedrock crossed by black veins (corruption: 1)		

Tactics: The vearons sneak up on their prey, preferably in a group to be able to gain flanking *Advantage*. If any opponent carries a light source which emits heat, he will be their primary target.



here man excels in the capacity to develop intellect, reason, and strategic thinking, the hordes of the Eternal Night are vastly inferior. Indeed, such dark beings are born utterly incapable of ever acquiring the qualities which characterize the cultivated human, bestowed upon the members of our noble race by Prios, the One.

Instead, the beasts of darkness are filled with hunger, fire and an urge to do evil. They care neither about their own predicament, nor that of their surroundings; their only aim and purpose is to satiate lusts and satisfy desires. This is true regardless of size, shape or posture – three properties which may vary between creatures of an otherwise similar nature.

Indeed, chastisement combined with measured rewards may by the grace of Prios compel the jakaar, the goblin, and the bestiaal to temporarily resist the tyranny of their desires. But this must never be seen as anything but a passing victory over the night, just as the dangers of misinterpretation must never be underestimated. A single mistake may well cause the credulous to be devoured, crushed, corrupted, ensnared, bewitched, or burned into smoldering ashes.

– Excerpt from Hordes of the Eternal Night, Father Almagast

SECTION 3:

RULES & GUIDELINES

Introduction

ALL THE BEASTS, undead and abominations that the player characters may encounter in *Symbaroum's* game world are distinguished by the category they belong to and what monstrous traits they have – characteristics that only in the rarest occasions are associated with humans and other cultural beings. The attributes and abilities are the same for everyone, but it is only Ambria's and Davokar's most dreaded creatures that can tunnel through the ground, spew cascades of fire, acid or purest corruption, or that are so enormous they can swallow a player character full and whole, with weapons drawn.

THIS THIRD SECTION of the *Symbaroum* Monster Codex provides the rules needed to put the monsters and adversaries of previous sections into play. The content complements and builds on the corresponding sections in the *Symbaroum Core Rulebook*, which must therefore be on hand in order to make full use of all this codex's creatures.

Section III also includes guidelines which the Game Master may use as inspiration when designing unique gaming experiences in the world of *Symbaroum*. Never forget that it is you and your friends who decide how the material should be used: if you think something is lacking, feel free to add it; if there is something you dislike, adjust or remove it.

The first chapter of this section corresponds to chapter 22 in the *Core Rulebook*, and covers the descriptions of a few new, and the expansion of already existing, monster categories. Adding to this, it describes the rules for no less than thirty-seven monstrous traits – most of them brand new and introduced in this book, some imported from previous supplements, as for instance the episodes in the *Chronicle of the Throne of Thorns*.

Then follows a chapter with guidelines for creating your own creatures, and another with suggestions on what to consider when designing combat challenges appropriate for the characters of your particular gaming group. This content should be viewed as nothing but guidelines, not as rules, and the Game Master is welcome to take what is written with a pinch of salt. On the other hand, the guidelines reflect how we at Team Järnringen reason when designing new creatures and challenges, so it may be a good idea to at least browse the material before getting creative.

Section III, and hence this Monster Codex, concludes with two shorter chapters, the first of which offers suggestions on how to use the *Symbaroum* Monster Codex as a basis for epic monster hunts, or Monster Chronicles, as we call them. And finally, whether you like it or not, at the very end of the book we introduce a hotly debated bonus creature.

According to horror stories told among the clanfolks, Death Princes who were freed hundreds of years ago as their masters died battling the Iron Pact are still roaming the woods.

Monsters

THIS MONSTER CODEX does not only introduce two additional monster categories, but also features updated versions of those previously described in other books. To avoid players having to keep track of two different descriptions of, say, Cultural Beings and Undead, this chapter includes comprehensive standalone accounts of all six categories.

AS FOR THE subsequent monstrous traits, those mentioned in the *Core Rulebook* will not be repeated here, but we did include traits from previously published adventures and campaign modules. The new additions consist mainly of traits which are needed to portray the creatures in Section I, but they will also let you create homebrew monstrosities that are bigger, more dangerous, and more tactically challenging than anything previously encountered in the murky halls of Davokar.

Monster Categories

WITH THE CREATURES introduced in Section I, four monster categories have become six: Beasts, Phenomena, Flora, Cultural Beings, Undead, and Abominations. Categories are not only an attempt to classify creatures according to type and habitat; they are also relevant to *Symbaroum's* rules system. Above all, they say something about which monstrous traits usually go hand in hand, but there are also abilities, powers, and other kinds of mechanics related to the categories below.

ABOMINATIONS

The Abomination category covers all the thoroughly corrupted blight beasts, daemons, and creatures terrorizing the Davokar region. Particularly sensitive creatures – such as children and animals – react with instinctive dislike towards abominations, even if they appear mundane. Others can make a *[Vigilant←Discreet]* test to notice the reaction of said children or animals.

Also, note that blight-stricken and thoroughly corrupted creatures recognize each other's darkness and will normally not attack one another. A Blight-marked person can use *Persuasive* to affect an abomination's behavior, for instance making it leave the individual and his/her fellow travelers alone.

Creatures in the Abomination category have monstrous traits like *Acidic Attack, Acidic Blood, Armored, Avenging Successor, Bloodlust, Carapace, Colossal, Companions, Corrupting Attack, Corruption Hoarder, Crushing Embrace, Deadly Breath, Death Struggle, Devour, Harmful Aura, Infestation, Infectious, Invisible, Natural Weapon, Many-headed, Metamorphosis, Mystical Resistance, Prehensile Claws, Rampage, Regeneration, Robust, Sturdy, Summoner, Tunneler* and *Wrecker,*

All abominations (including summoned daemons) share many common features with the undead. They do not sleep, starve, or thirst; they cannot drown, are not affected by conventional

poisons, cannot contract ordinary diseases, and are not touched by corruption. Holy and healing mystical powers are harmful to them, while unholy energies heal their wounds, and they can see in complete darkness (unless actively blinded). Unlike the undead, Abominations have a *Pain Threshold*.

BEASTS

Beasts are closely connected to the wild and untamed nature, be it in the form of the forest of Davokar, the valleys of the Ravens, or the courses of the rivers. The category covers wild animals (both predators and herbivores) as well as tamed and human-trained ones. Cunning creatures like lindworms and spider monsters are also included in the Beast category – while they have an intellect close to that of cultural beings, they are still fundamentally driven by instinct.

Beasts have monstrous traits like *Amphibian, Armored, Carapace, Companions, Colossal, Crushing Embrace, Deadly Breath, Death Struggle, Devour, Enthrall, Grappling Tongue, Infectious, Many-headed, Natural Weapon, Observant, Paralyzing Venom, Piercing Attack, Prehensile Claws, Poisonous, Rampage, Regeneration, Robust, Sturdy, Swift, Tunneler, Wings* and *Wrecker,*

All beasts have the *Bushcraft* trait. Most of them can also see in low-light conditions, which means that they are not dependent on light sources in dimly lit areas. However, in pitch black darkness they are as helpless as everyone else. Note that witches' familiars also count as Beasts.

CULTURAL BEINGS

The Cultural Beings category includes the world's more or less intelligent, community-building creatures – such as humans, elves, bestiaals, changelings, ogres, goblins, darklings, and trolls. They have few features in common, other than that they organize themselves socially and develop different cultures depending on where they are located.

Cultural beings can have monstrous traits, but if so they are linked to the race rather than the category. Normally, members of this category have abilities, powers and boons, just like player characters.

FLORA

Deadly flora is mentioned in many expedition chronicles. Barbarians and witches are well aware of the threats which grow and blossom, and as more and more treasure hunters venture deeper into Davokar, these horrors are becoming increasingly evident to Ambrians as well.

The creatures included in the Flora category have monstrous traits like *Armored, Colossal, Corrupting Attack, Crushing Embrace, Enthrall, Grappling Tongue, Infectious, Natural Weapon, Many-headed, Mystical Resistance, Paralyzing Poison, Piercing Attack, Regeneration, Robust, Root Wall* and *Sturdy*.

One thing all Flora have in common is that they lack a *Pain Threshold*. Furthermore, they do not sleep, are not affected by conventional poisons, and cannot contract ordinary diseases.

PHENOMENA

The term Phenomena is used to describe a large number of beings which scholars find hard to classify in any other way. In many cases it can actually be difficult to determine whether they are beings at all, and not a hateful place or a climate condition; indeed, the strangest of these occurrences are best described as poisonous and contagious states of mind, rather than physical phenomena.

As for monstrous traits, Phenomena can display a wide range of seemingly incompatible abilities and traits. Technically, this means that player characters (and others) cannot pick Phenomena as their *Beast Lore* specialization; the rules are too few and the exceptions too many even for experts to have practical use of their knowledge.

UNDEAD

The Undead category covers both spirits and walking corpses. Spirits are creatures without physical bodies, while walking corpses are dead bodies possessed by a living spirit.

Spirits have monstrous traits such as *Alternative Damage, Deadly Breath, Enthrall, Harmful Aura, Haunting, Invisibility, Manifestation, Spirit Form, Summoner* and *Terrify*, while walking corpses have the *Undead* trait in addition to traits like *Bloodlust, Corruption Hoarder, Gravely Cold, Infectious* or the necromantic power *Spirit Walk* (see the *Advanced Player's Guide*, page 84).

All undead have some features in common. They do not sleep, starve, or thirst; they cannot drown, are not affected by conventional poisons, and cannot contract ordinary diseases – nor can they be touched by corruption, since they are already thoroughly corrupt. Moreover, holy and healing mystical powers are harmful to the undead creature, while unholy energies heal its wounds. All undead can see in complete darkness, but they see as little as everyone else if they are actively blinded. And finally, the undead do not have a *Pain Threshold*.

Note that the patron saints of theurgs are to be regarded as undead, for though they are sent by Prios or summoned by a theurg, they are spirits of fallen saints and share the characteristics of undead spirits – corruption excluded, of course.

Monstrous Traits

MONSTROUS TRAITS REPRESENT the extraordinary talents and abilities of different types of creatures. Some of them can be developed with training and experience, but in most cases they are characteristics which are shared by all members of a race or species.

With few exceptions, the monstrous traits come in three levels (I, II, III), and they are always described from a non-player character's perspective. If ever a player character should acquire or develop a monstrous trait it is up to the gaming group to rephrase the description, just like abilities are rephrased when they are used by non-player characters.

AMPHIBIAN

The creature is built for a life in and out of water, and can extract oxygen from both water and air. The creature has no negative effects from fighting in water and does not suffer damage from doing so (see Combat in Water to the right).

AVENGING SUCCESSOR

The one who kills a creature with this trait is immediately exposed to its vengeance, in the form of one or more other creatures. The type of avenger depends on the creature with the trait; the level of the trait only defines how many and how dangerous the avenging creatures are, not their exact nature.

Table 5: Monstrous traits

TRAIT	FIND IT IN...		
Acidic Attack	Core Rulebook	Life Sense	Monster Codex
Acidic Blood	Core Rulebook	Manifestation	Core Rulebook
Alternative Damage	Core Rulebook	Many-headed	Monster Codex
Amphibian	Monster Codex	Metamorphosis	Monster Codex
Armored	Core Rulebook	Mystical Resistance	Monster Codex
Avenging Successor	Monster Codex	Natural Weapon	Core Rulebook
Bloodlust	Monster Codex	Night Perception	Monster Codex
Carapace	Monster Codex	Observant	Monster Codex
Collective Power	Monster Codex	Paralyzing Venom	Monster Codex
Colossal	Monster Codex	Piercing Attack	Monster Codex
Companions	Monster Codex	Poisonous	Core Rulebook
Corrupting Attack	Core Rulebook	Poison Spit	Core Rulebook
Corruption Hoarder	Monster Codex	Prehensile Claws	Monster Codex
Corruption Sensitive	Monster Codex	Rampage	Monster Codex
Crushing Embrace	Monster Codex	Regeneration	Core Rulebook
Deadly Breath	Monster Codex	Robust	Core Rulebook
Death Struggle	Monster Codex	Root Wall	Monster Codex
Devour	Monster Codex	Spirit form	Core Rulebook
Diminutive	Monster Codex	Sturdy	Monster Codex
Enthrall	Core Rulebook	Summoner	Monster Codex
Free Spirit	Monster Codex	Swarm	Core Rulebook
Grappling Tongue	Monster Codex	Swift	Monster Codex
Gravely Cold	Core Rulebook	Terrify	Core Rulebook
Harmful Aura	Monster Codex	Tunneler	Monster Codex
Haunting	Monster Codex	Undead	Core Rulebook
Infectious	Monster Codex	Web	Core Rulebook
Infestation	Monster Codex	Wings	Core Rulebook
Invisibility	Monster Codex	Wrecker	Monster Codex

The Ritual Flesh Craft

Some of the traits which are introduced in this book can be sculpted with the ritual *Flesh Craft* (see the *Advanced Player's Guide*, page 91). The following traits are now covered by the ritual: *Amphibian, Armored, Carapace, Corrupting Attack, Grappling Tongue, Natural Weapon, Poisonous, Poison Spit, Regeneration, Robust, Tunneler* and *Wings*.

Normally, the avenging creatures are of the same breed as the being who has the trait, but this is not a requirement as long as the combination makes sense. The only restriction is that only thoroughly corrupt creatures can have other thoroughly corrupted beasts as avengers.

Note that a creature needs to be of at least Challenging resistance to be able to have the trait *Avenging Successor*.

I **Action:** Reaction. At the moment of death, one creature is detached or manifested to avenge the creature with the trait. The avenger's level of resistance is two steps lower than that of the deceased.
II **Action:** Reaction. As I, but two creatures are detached or manifested.
III **Action:** Reaction. As I, but three creatures are detached or manifested.

BLOODLUST

The creature thirsts for warm blood, and with its gaze it can put its victim into a trance before feasting on its life-giving juices.

I **Action:** Active. The creature may charm *[Resolute←Resolute]* and bite its victim in a single Combat Action. The bloodsucker then slurps blood, 2 *Toughness* per turn, ignoring armor. It takes a *[Resolute←Resolute]* each turn to maintain the trance. Damaging the bloodsucking creature can also break the trance, *[Resolute –Damage]*.
II **Action:** Active. As I, but the bloodsucking creature also heals as much *Toughness* as it draws from the victim.
III **Action:** Active. As II, but damage and healing is 3 *Toughness* per turn. Also, the victim itself cannot break the trance; someone else has to attack and damage the bloodsucker for the control to be lost, *[Resolute –Damage]*.

CARAPACE

Under special circumstances, the natural armor of the creature gives it the option to double its armor value – when and to what extent is decided by the level of the trait.

Note that a creature needs to have at least level I in *Armored* to have the trait *Carapace*.

I **Action:** Passive. At any time, the creature can hunker down and curl up under its carapace – the armor value of its natural armor is doubled, but it cannot perform any active actions during the turn.
II **Action:** Passive. The creature is protected by its carapace when moving, but is exposed as soon as it performs an active action. This gives the creature double the effect of its natural armor if it does nothing other than move during the turn, and against free attacks triggered when it passes enemies, moves into melee range or retreats from melee.
III **Action:** Reaction. The creature can use its carapace reactively against all attacks. When hit by an attack, the attacker rolls a new success test; if the second test fails, the attack still hits but the creature manages to make use of its carapace, doubling the protection from its natural armor against that particular attack.

Combat in Water

Fighting while wading, with arms and head above water, gives a second chance to fail all success tests.

Fighting while swimming, submerged and with no contact with the seabed, gives a second chance to fail all success tests and halves the damage dealt with all physical attacks, including fire based mystical powers. Also, a creature fighting while submerged in water must roll a test against *Strong* each turn; a failure gives one point in *Toughness* damage because of the straining effort and oxygen deficiency.

Creatures with the trait *Amphibian* suffer no negative effects from fighting in water. Undead beings have a second chance to fail all success tests, but do not suffer any damage from being submerged.

COLLECTIVE POWER

The collective gains mystical powers when enough members are gathered closely together; the more members, the mightier their collective power, up to a certain limit (see Table 6 on page 166).

The collective can perform one mystical power per turn, in addition to the actions of its individual members. If differences exist, this action is activated on the highest individual initiative of the collective. The power works as usual, but its collective origin makes it harder for the enemy to break the concentration of the caster – three of the collective's members has to lose concentration during the same turn for it to have an effect on the ongoing power.

COLOSSAL

There are creatures that grow to such immense proportions that their sheer size gives them the upper hand, albeit at the cost of a notable slowness in movements and reflexes. Surviving a combat encounter with such a monstrosity calls for as much luck as proficiency and, when it comes to the most massive beasts, also weapons with extraordinary qualities.

Colossal requires the creature to have level III in the trait *Robust*.

Table 6: Collective powers

COLLECTIVE SIZE	# OF POWERS	POWER LEVEL	SUGGESTED POWERS
1–3	0	None	-
4–6	1	Novice	*Bend Will* or *Curse*
7–10	1	Adept	*Bend Will* or *Curse*
11–20	2	Adept	*Bend Will* or *Curse*
21+	2	Master	*Bend Will* or *Curse*

I **Action:** Passive. When the creature attacks, both actions are spent; hence, it cannot move and attack during the same turn. In return, the attacks of the creature hit with a force that normal armor can hardly withstand – the target rolls twice for *Armor* and the lowest outcome stands.

II **Action:** Passive. As I, but the massive body of the creature makes it unable to perform reactive actions (such as *Defense* tests) while it is moving. On the other hand, the creature's reach and size are such that its enemies have a hard time parrying or avoiding the attacks – the target has two chances to fail when rolling for *Defense* .

III **Action:** Passive. As II, with the addition that the enormous bulk of the creature cannot be harmed by ordinary weapons or projectiles. The creature can only be damaged by mystical weapons or powers.

COMPANIONS

The creature is never alone, never encountered without its companions in tow. The trait does not decide who the companions are, only how many and how strong they are. The companions may be the creature's offspring, loyal servants or whatever seems suitable.

Note that a creature needs to be of at least Challenging resistance to be able to have the trait *Companions*.

I **Action:** Passive. The creature has one companion, with a resistance level two steps lower than the creature.

II **Action:** Passive. As I, but the creature has two companions.

III **Action:** Passive. As I, but the creature has three companions.

CORRUPTION HOARDER

The creature is able to accumulate corruption and use it for a series of special actions. The corruption hoarder may at most accumulate *Resolute*/2 (rounded up) points of corruption for use in this way. Collected corruption dissipates at a rate of one point per day; a corruption hoarder depleted of accumulated corruption is driven by a deep hunger for more.

Only thoroughly corrupt creatures can have the trait *Corruption Hoarder*.

I **Action:** Active. The creature can steal corruption from a tainted victim, by eating its flesh or drinking its blood. The victim has to be compliant – unconscious, bound, drugged or otherwise unable to put up a fight. The victim suffers 4 points of damage each turn (ignoring *Armor*) while the corruption hoarder accumulates 2 points of permanent corruption that consequently are removed from the victim. As a reactive action, the creature may spend one point of accumulated corruption per turn, on one of the following:
– Give an enemy a second chance to fail a roll to avoid being affected by one of the corruption hoarder's abilities, powers or traits
– Give an enemy a second chance to fail a *Defense* roll against one of the corruption hoarder's attacks
– Give an enemy a second chance to fail with an attack against the corruption hoarder
– Force an enemy to make a second effect roll and accept the lower outcome

II **Action:** Passive. As I, but the natural weapons of the creature drain corruption from the target. As soon as the creature deals damage, the victim also loses 2 points of permanent corruption. As reactive actions, the creature may spend up to two points of accumulated corruption per turn, on the effects listed at level I.

III **Action:** Passive. As II, but the creature may as reactive actions spend any amount of accumulated corruption per turn, on the effects listed at level I.

CORRUPTION SENSITIVE

The creature is blessed with a sensory organ through which it can detect nearby outbreaks of corruption. This ability most likely emerged as a warning system, but many witch hunters would probably give their left eye for the advantage such a sense would confer in the hunt for heretics and cultists.

Mystical weapons

For a weapon to count as mystical, it has to be an artifact which can deal damage – in other words, an item which can be bound to a specific individual and which may be used when attacking. Such an artifact is counted as a mystical weapon even if the one wielding it has not been bound to it..

I **Action:** Reaction. With a successful *Vigilant* test the creature can detect nearby outbreaks of corruption (roughly five hundred meters in all directions, if more exact distances are called for). Minor outbreaks (1 point of temporary corruption) cannot be detected; at 2 points, *Vigilant* is modified with –5; at 3 points with ±0; at 4 points or more with +5. If the test succeeds, the creature senses the outbreak and the general direction in which it occurred.

II **Action:** Reaction. As I, but the creature can pinpoint exactly where the outbreak occurred, thanks to residual energies.

III **Action:** Reaction. As II, but the creature can also track the source of the outbreak for one day, through the ethereal tracks it leaves behind.

CRUSHING EMBRACE

The creature's natural weapons allow it to grip, hold on to and crush its enemies.

I **Action:** Reaction. When the creature deals damage with its natural weapon, it may try to take hold of the enemy. To avoid being caught, the target must successfully roll a *[Quick←Accurate]* test. If the target fails it must succeed with a *[Strong←Strong]* test to get loose, or suffer 2 damage each turn as the grip tightens (ignoring *Armor*). A gripped target may not act, but the creature also loses one combat action per turn and gripped victim.

II **Action:** Reaction. As I, but the damage is 3 per turn.

III **Action:** Reaction. As I, but the damage is 4 per turn.

DEADLY BREATH

The creature has the ability to spew forth a harmful cascade, so powerful that it can obliterate enemies or at least damage them severely. The breath can consist of fire, cold, acid or lightning.

Together with the trait *Alternative Damage* the cascade affects the chosen Attribute instead of *Toughness*, but only if the creature has *Alternative Damage* to at least the same level as *Deadly Breath*. The cascade can also be corrupting or poisonous instead, if the creature has the traits *Corrupting Attack* or *Poisonous* to the same level or higher.

I **Action:** Active. The creature blows a cascade towards one target. If the target succeeds with a *[Quick←Accurate]* test, the damage is 3; if the test fails, the damage is 6.

II **Action:** Active. The creature exhales a continuous cascade. Should the first target succeed with a *[Quick←Accurate]* test, the damage is 3; if the test fails, the damage is 6. If the target fails, the creature may redirect the cascade towards another target, and so on until a target succeeds with the *[Quick←Accurate]* test.

III **Action:** Active. The creature spews forth a veritable storm. As II, but even if one target succeeds with the *[Quick←Accurate]* test, the chain continues and is not broken until a second target succeeds.

DEATH STRUGGLE

When the creature dies, its accumulated wrath is unleashed in attacks against those unlucky enough to be within reach. From level II, the *Death Struggle* attacks count as normal combat actions and can make use of active abilities, powers and traits.

I **Action:** Reaction. The creature's death struggle lets it perform a free attack against an enemy within melee range, as a reaction to the attack that killed it.

II **Action:** Reaction. As I, but the attack is performed like a normal combat action.

III **Action:** Reaction. As II, but the creature may attack up to five enemies that it can reach without moving.

DEVOUR

The creature can swallow enemies and have them perish in its belly. Normally, only one victim at a time may be swallowed, but if the creature so wishes, it can use a free action to spew out a victim in order to make room for a new one.

Devour requires that the creature has level I or higher in the trait *Colossal*. The level in *Colossal* also determines how many victims may be simultaneously swallowed: three at level II, and a total of six at level III.

I **Action:** Active. When the creature deals damage with a bite, the target is retained until the following turn; it may act as usual but not move. Next turn, the creature can attempt to swallow the target. The target rolls a *[Strong←Strong]* test, where the trait *Robust* gives a +2 bonus per level, both for the creature and the target. If successful, the target manages to get free from the hold, but a failure means that the target is devoured and ends up in the creature's belly – a hazardous environment dealing 2 damage per turn, ignoring *Armor*.

II **Action:** Active. As I, but the bite only needs to hit (not deal damage) for the target to be retained. The attempt to swallow is made during the following turn.

The fate of the devoured

A player character who suffers the fate of being swallowed by some enormous beast cannot do much to escape – he or she cannot maneuver effectively enough to do any damage, cast mystical powers or defend itself from the hazardous environment. Instead, the allies of the unlucky one have to act with haste and decisiveness: the beast has to die, and then it takes two turns to cut it open and liberate the swallowed one, who then immediately stops taking damage. A successful *Cunning* test with *Bushcraft* or *Beast Lore* can reduce the time required to free the victim to one turn.

III **Action:** Reaction. As II, but the attempt to swallow is made as part of the initial attack – if the bite hits, the test to avoid being devoured is rolled immediately, the same turn.

DIMINUTIVE

The creature is so small, slender and pitiful that it arouses sympathy even in enemies. In short, it is difficult to see it as a credible threat, even when it is armed.

The effect of this is that enemies tend to choose other targets first; they must pass a *[Resolute←Discreet]* test to bring themselves to attack. The only exceptions are if the diminutive creature is the only possible target or if it shows that it actually can fight (that is, if it manages to deal damage to an enemy).

Diminutive is immediately thwarted if the creature makes use of any Ability or Power, or of some other trait.

FREE SPIRIT

The creature's spirit is detached from the fate of the world, and it is therefore immune to all forms of corruption. As a side effect, the creature cannot learn any mystical powers or rituals. However, it can use mystical artifacts without suffering from any corruption that might occur.

GRAPPLING TONGUE

The creature has a long tongue which can be used to attack and grapple targets which are within two movement actions away. The attack counts and deals damage as a bite, and if the target has at least one level lower than the creature in the trait *Robust*, the creature may try to pull the target into melee range. The target rolls a *[Strong←Strong]* test; if it fails, the target is pulled towards the creature which then can combine *Grappling Tongue* with other traits, such as *Devour* and *Crushing Embrace*.

HARMFUL AURA

The creature exudes harmful energies that each turn deal damage to everyone within melee range. Also, the creature leaves clear marks in its wake, in the form of a burnt, frozen or otherwise warped trail through the environment. Hence, all attempts to track the creature automatically succeed.

The aura can consist of fire, cold, acid or lightning. Together with the trait *Alternative Damage* the aura affects the chosen Attribute instead of *Toughness*, but only if the creature has *Alternative Damage* to at least the same level as *Harmful Aura*. The aura can also be corrupting or poisonous instead, if the creature has the traits *Corrupting Attack* or *Poisonous* to the same level or higher.

I **Action:** Passive. All who are within melee range of the creature suffer 2 points of damage each turn, ignoring *Armor*.
II **Action:** Passive. As I, but the damage is 3 per turn.
III **Action:** Passive. As I, but the damage is 4 per turn.

HAUNTING

The creature can invade the body of other beings, as if using the ritual *Possess* (see page 145 in the *Core Rulebook*), but without it taking as long. At higher levels, the possession is even reactive, aimed at the enemy who slays the creature.

Haunting requires at least level I in the trait *Spirit Form*.

I **Action:** Reaction. The creature can possess a target it touches, for instance after an attack which deals damage. The target has to roll a *[Resolute←Resolute] test*; if it fails the target becomes a slave to the creature's will and can be made to perform any action, except taking its own life. After one day, the target rolls a second test; if that too fails, the possession lasts for a whole week, after which a new test is made. Should this fail, the target is possessed for a month. And when that time has passed, a final test is made, with failure meaning that the possession becomes permanent. However, the possession may at any time be aborted by successful use of the ritual *Exorcism*.
II **Action:** Reaction. When the creature or the host it possesses reaches 0 in *Toughness*, the spirit lashes out and tries to possess the enemy who struck the killing blow. The attempt is made like on level I and if the attack affected an already possessed host, its body falls to the ground, unconscious and balancing on the brink of death for the rest of the scene.
III **Action:** Reaction. The creature can possess as on level I or II, but the duration is automatically permanent – until an Excorsism is performed or the spirit opts to leave the host for some reason.

INFECTIOUS

The creature carries a contagious disease and those harmed by its natural weapons are at risk of being infected. The higher the level of the trait, the worse the disease.

I **Action:** Reaction. All enemies suffering damage from the creature's natural weapons must pass a *Strong* test or be infected by a Weak disease.
II **Action:** Reaction. As I, but the disease is Moderate.
III **Action:** Reaction. As I, but the disease is *Strong*.

INFESTATION

Some parasitical creatures have the capacity to penetrate the body of a victim, or with claws or

Disease in Symbaroum

In the world of *Symbaroum* there are many sources of infection which can make people sick or give rise to devastating epidemics. Here follows guidelines on how to make diseases a challenging part of everyday life.

Exposure

When exposed to a contagion, irrespective of source, a *Strong* test is made; if it fails, the player character has been infected. The vigor of the disease (Weak, Moderate or Strong) has no effect on the risk of being infected but is of course important for the course of the disease.

Course

Diseases affect the attribute *Strong*, instead of Toughness, and they develop over days rather than turns. The effect of the disease depends on its vigor (see below), but what all have in common is that the sick individual must pass one or more *Strong* tests each day, or get worse.

What it takes to beat the sickness is also described below. If this happens the recovering individual regains his or her lost strength at a pace of one point per day. If an individual's *Strong* should ever reach o the sickly person dies – meaning that you can actually die from any disease, regardless of its vigor.

Weak disease: The infected rolls one *Strong* test each day; a failure means that the *Strong* value is temporarily reduced by one point. The disease is over and the infected starts to recover as soon as one day has passed without the *Strong* value being decreased.

Moderate disease: The infected rolls two *Strong* tests each day; each failure means that the *Strong* value is temporarily reduced by one point. The disease is over and the infected starts to recover as soon as two days have passed without the *Strong* value being decreased, after each other or at an interval.

Strong disease: Each day the *Strong* value of the infected is temporarily reduced by one point; moreover, the infected must also pass a *Strong* test to avoid temporarily losing yet another point in *Strong*. The disease is over and the infected starts to recover as soon as two days in a row have passed without the *Strong* value being decreased by more than one point.

Transmission and care

All who tend or in other ways come in contact with a sick person are at risk of being infected and must pass a *Strong* test as described above. However, those who have the *Medicus* ability may roll twice to avoid being infected, and may roll against *Cunning* instead of *Strong*.

Treatment of the sick in both Ambria and Davokar can be given by different people in different ways, as described below. Note that the various types of treatment can be combined – anyone offered care, medicine or mystical healing receives the benefits of them all before rolling their Strong tests.

Care: A person with the *Medicus* ability may roll a *Cunning* test to provide qualified care, which means that the patient may re-roll one *Strong* test each day. A novice can provide care for one patient at a time, an adept can care for three patients and a master medicus can care for up to ten patients simultaneously.

Medicine: A person skilled in *Alchemy* may use the ability in order to concoct medicine for a specific disease. The number of doses crafted is decided based on the vigor of the disease and the level in *Alchemy* (see Table 7). The effect of the medicine is that the patient may re-roll one *Strong* test per day.

Healing: Mystical healing works as a bonus for one of the daily *Strong* tests; the attribute value is increased by a bonus corresponding to the number of *Toughness* points which would have been healed. Mystical powers may only assist in one roll per day and have no effect on any temporarily lost *Strong* points as long as the sickness is ongoing. Once the sickness is over, healing powers heal lost *Strong* points as if they were *Toughness*.

Notorious diseases

The following diseases are widely talked about, and to a varying degree feared, in Ambria and Davokar:

Weak: Pale Soot, Bowel Reef, Swamp Whirl
Moderate: Bloody Flux, Stain Fever, Gut Plug
Strong: Ink Soot, Lung Fall, Belly Rot

Table 7: Alchemy and Medicine

Alchemy level	Vigor of the disease & number of doses
Novice	Weak: 1D4; Moderate: 1; Strong: 0
Adept	Weak: 2D4; Moderate: 1D4; Strong: 1
Master	Weak: 3D4; Moderate: 2D4; Strong: 1D4

stinger plant larvae inside an unwilling host. The impact of the parasite depends on the particular creature, while this trait decides how difficult it is to avoid being, or staying, infested.

I **Action:** Reaction. In order to infest the victim, the creature must deal damage with an attack. After this, it needs a whole turn to penetrate the body of the host, during which the victim or an ally can use a combat action to remove the parasite. Removal inflicts 1D8 damage on the host, or 1D4 with a successful *Cunning* test. To remove a parasite after it has penetrated the body requires a passed *Cunning* test with the *Medicus* ability; each attempt deals 1D10 damage, ignoring *Armor*.

II **Action:** Reaction. The parasite invades the host directly after an attack that deals damage. Removing it requires a passed *Cunning* test with the *Medicus* ability; each attempt deals 1D12 damage, ignoring *Armor*.

III **Action:** Reaction. As II, but each attempt to remove the parasite deals 1D20 damage to the victim, ignoring *Armor*.

INVISIBILITY

The creature can make itself invisible. Enemies can still use other senses besides sight to locate it. The creature makes sounds and leaves tracks, and it can be made partially visible by creatively using dust, sand, flour or similar means. Some elixirs, such as Ghost Candles (see page 153 in the *Core Rulebook*), counteract this trait, just as the mystical power *True Form* can make the creature observable.

I **Action:** Active. The creature can become invisible and hence impossible to hit with direct attacks. In order to attack with area effects, like alchemical grenades, the attacker must pass a test against *[Vigilant←Discreet]*; the same applies when trying to hit the creature with improvised weapons aimed at exposing it – sand, dust, flour or similar, making the creature partially visible for the rest of the scene. Attacking a partially visible creature first requires a *[Vigilant←Discreet]* test; if the test succeeds the attack can be made as usual.

II **Action:** Active. As I, but if the creature is made partially visible, this effect only lasts for one turn, after which the creature may act to become invisible again.

III **Action:** Free. The creature is invisible by default; it does not have to spend an active action to become invisible. Also, this means that it only becomes partially visible for one turn, if revealed as on level I; after this turn, it becomes invisible again without having to spend any actions.

LIFE SENSE

The creature has a supernatural sense which lets it perceive living beings (all but undead spirits). This makes the creature difficult to surprise, and at higher levels it can also be used actively to surprise others.

I **Action:** Passive. The creature picks up on tiny vibrations in the ground and air, and can perceive creatures from behind robust walls and closed doors, or through meter thick layers of soil. Anyone trying to avoid being detected must pass a test against *[Discreet←Vigilant]*.

II **Action:** Passive. As I, but the perception is so precise that the creature can attack those it detects through the barrier. If the wall, door, layer of soil or similar is thick, the creature has to have a monstrous trait which lets it pass through the barrier, such as *Spirit Form*, *Wrecker* or *Tunneler*.

III **Action:** Passive. At this level, the creature with the *Life Sense* can even use mystical powers against detected enemies in the vicinity, as if they were in its line of sight.

MANY-HEADED

The creature has multiple heads or limbs governed by separate brains/minds, and can use them independently of each other. Damage is suffered separately by each part, as if they were separate creatures, so they have to be taken out one by one. Only once all are eliminated does the creature die.

A drawback is that the traits *Armored* and *Robust* are weakened at the higher levels of *Many-headed*: such a massive and simultaneously limber body cannot fully utilize all its protection and strength in all directions at once.

I **Action:** Passive. The creature has two limbs or heads and may act with them separately; the creature has two combat actions per turn.

II **Action:** Passive. The creature has four limbs or heads and may act with them separately; the creature has four combat actions per turn. The traits *Armored* and *Robust* count as one level lower for the creature.

III **Action:** Passive. The creature has eight limbs or heads and may act with them separately; the creature has eight combat actions per turn. The traits *Armored* and *Robust* count as two levels lower for the creature.

METAMORPHOSIS

The creature has no fixed shape, adapting its form to its surroundings and the challenges it faces. The effect lasts until the creature opts to switch traits or it is targeted by the mystical power *True Form* – if

successful, this removes the traits provided by the *Metamorphosis*, until a new active action is spent on getting them back.

Through the process of adapting itself, the creature can take on a form giving it characteristics that correspond to one or more of the following traits: *Acidic Attack, Amphibian, Armored, Carapace, Deadly Breath, Diminutive, Grappling Tongue, Natural Weapon, Poisonous, Poison Spit, Prehensile Claws, Robust, Tunneler, Web, Wings*.

I **Action:** Active. The creature can adopt one of the listed traits, corresponding to level I.
II **Action:** Active. The creature can adopt two of the listed traits corresponding to level I, or one corresponding to level II.
III **Action:** Active. The creature can adopt two of the listed traits corresponding to level II, or one corresponding to level III.

MYSTICAL RESISTANCE

The creature has a natural resistance against the effects of mystical powers. Basically, it is more difficult to harm or affect by mystical means, and on higher levels there is also a risk that the energies directed against it are reflected to hit someone else.

I **Action:** Passive. All who try to affect or harm the creature with mystical powers must roll the success test twice and pass both times in order for the power to take effect.
II **Action:** Passive. As I, but if the success test fails, the power is redirected towards a randomly selected target within sight of the creature. Aside from the attacking mystic suffering from any temporary corruption, the reflected power works as if the creature knew it and had used it against the randomly selected target.
III **Action:** Passive. As II, but the resilient creature has such control that it may choose which target the power is reflected towards.

NIGHT PERCEPTION

The creature has been gifted with the ability to perceive its surroundings using sound waves – it emits sound pulses that bounce off nearby objects and return to the creature, which then forms a mental image of what its surroundings look like. Because of this, the creature can perceive beings and objects made invisible by powers or traits, and in other respects act as usual even in complete darkness.

OBSERVANT

The physical or supernatural senses of the creature give it a perfect view in all directions. This means that the creature cannot be flanked, or rather that those flanking it do not gain *Advantage* against the creature.

PARALYZING VENOM

The creature's claws, venomous bite or stinger has a paralyzing effect. At best, the victim is dazed by the venom; at worst, it is completely incapacitated and unable to protect itself from incoming attacks. The effect remains active until someone administers an antidote to the victim and passes a *Cunning* test.

I **Action:** Passive. For each attack that deals damage, the victim makes a *Strong* test. If the test is successful, the victim is dazed and has two chances to fail all success tests and reactive actions for one turn; if the test fails, the victim can only perform reactive actions, with two chances to fail.
II **Action:** Passive. As I, but if the victim fails the test, it can only perform reactive actions for the next 1D4 turns, with two chances to fail.
III **Action:** Passive. The target must pass a *[Strong –5]* test. If the test is successful, the victim can only perform reactive actions for the next 1D4 turns, with two chances to fail; if the test fails, the victim is completely paralyzed for 1D8 turns.

PIERCING ATTACK

The attack deals no normal damage. Instead, the damage value determines whether the attack manages to pierce the victim's *Armor*. If the armor value is equal to or higher than the damage value, the attack fails; if the armor value is lower, the victim suffers an effect such as poison or corruption, depending on what other traits the creature has.

I **Action:** Passive. The attack has a damage value of 4.
II **Action:** Passive. The attack has a damage value of 5.
III **Action:** Passive. The attack has a damage value of 6.

PREHENSILE CLAWS

The claws of the creature deal damage like unarmed attacks, and also give it a chance to grip and hold enemies – usually with the aim of dragging them towards its grinding jaws.

I **Action:** Active. The creature may perform two attacks against the same enemy, one with each claw. If both attacks hit, the creature may try to grip the target, which succeeds if the target fails a *[Strong←Strong]* test. A gripped target can act as usual other than being unable to move. The target is held during the turn it is gripped and then, if the target fails a *[Strong←Strong]* test, pulled towards the creature during the following turn. If the test is successful the enemy gets free.

II **Action:** Active. As I, but only one of the claw attacks needs to hit for the target to be gripped.

III **Action:** Active. If at least one claw hits, and the target fails a *[Strong←Strong]* test, the target is immediately pulled towards the creature. If the test is successful, the target is still gripped and a new attempt to pull it towards the creature may be made the following turn; the target cannot get free until the creature dies or chooses to let go.

RAMPAGE

The creature can use its body mass to crush, or at least push away, enemies in its path. The trait does not protect against Free Attacks caused by Long weapons or movements past prepared enemies.

Rampage requires at least the corresponding level of the *Robust* trait.

I **Action:** Movement. Everyone standing in the creature's path during the movement must pass a *[Strong←Strong]* test or take 2 damage (armor protects as usual) and be knocked down. The *Robust* trait adds +2 damage per level (+2, +4, +6), and the same bonus to *Strong*, both when using and trying to defend against *Rampage*. As soon as a victim passes its test, the crushing rampage stops. Enemies with the *Acrobatics* ability can choose to defend with *[Quick←Strong]* and thereby dodge, but if so, a successful test will not stop the *Rampage*.

II **Action:** Movement. As I, but deals 3 damage.

III **Action:** Movement. As I, but deals 4 damage.

ROOT WALL

The creature can extend its root system and have it shoot up from the ground to hinder enemy movement. At higher levels, the wall can also deal damage to those trying to pass it, or even grip and hold them.

I **Action:** Active. The creature raises its roots like a wall from the ground, wide enough for it to take two movement actions to get around it. The wall could also be used to block a cave or similar opening. The wall can be destroyed, according to the rules on Damage on Buildings in the *Advanced Player's Guide* (page 106). The root wall has *Toughness* 10, *Breakpoint* 5 and *Fortification value* 5. The root wall remains for an entire scene, unless it is destroyed or the creature opts to spend a new active action to move it. If destroyed, a new root wall cannot be raised until the next day.

II **Action:** Active. As I, but enemies that come close to the wall must pass a *[Quick←Accurate]* test or be hit by flaying branches, dealing 3 damage (ignoring *Armor*). The only way to avoid this is to spend another movement action when rounding the wall, a total of three, and hence bypass the wall at a safe distance.

III **Action:** Free. As II, but the flaying branches deal 5 damage. If they hit and if the target fails a *[Strong←Strong]* test, the target is also gripped until it passes a *[Strong←Strong]* test, or the wall is destroyed or moved. A gripped target is not attacked by flaying branches again until the moment when it succeeds in getting free.

STURDY

The monster possesses a remarkable vitality, possibly born out of a strong link to the forces of nature, or maybe stemming from a bottomless source of corruption. The creature's *Toughness* is higher than its *Strong* value would suggest, but its *Pain Threshold* is unaffected (based on *Strong*/2, as usual).

I **Action:** Passive. The creature's *Toughness* is based on its *Strong* × 1.5 (rounded up).

II **Action:** Passive. The creature's *Toughness* is based on its *Strong* × 2.

III **Action:** Passive. The creature's *Toughness* is based on its *Strong* × 3.

SUMMONER

The creature can summon reinforcements from the Yonderworld, reinforcements which disappear upon the summoner's death or at the end of the scene.

The reinforcements obey the orders of the summoner, but have to hear them being spoken or shouted – they are not controlled telepathically.

Only thoroughly corrupt creatures may be summoners; all others would immediately become blight born by the abhorrent tearing in the fabric of the world.

I **Action:** Active. Once per scene, the creature can make a successful test against *Resolute* to summon a daemonic Intruder.

II **Action:** Reaction. As I, but additionally, once per turn when the creature is hit by a hostile attack, it may make a test against *Resolute* – if successful,

Attacking Claws

It is possible to attack one or both of the creature's claws to try and stop its attacks, get free from its grip or rescue a gripped ally. If so, expect that the claw can withstand a fourth of the creature's full *Toughness* before it is rendered useless. If someone is gripped by the claw, all attacks except those with Short weapons must be made with extra care, modifying both the chance to hit and any damage dealt by –2. Weapons with the quality Short function as usual, without modifications.

a daemonic Intruder is immediately summoned to the location.

III **Action:** Free. Once per turn, the creature can roll a test against *Resolute* to summon a daemonic Intruder to the location. If successful, this replaces the reactive summoning of the adept level and the active summoning of the novice level. Should the free summoning of the master level fail, the creature can opt to activate the novice level effect, though only once per scene.

INTRUDER			
Manner	Fiercely loyal		
Race	Abomination		
Resistance	Challenging		
Traits	*Armored* (III), *Natural Weapon* (III)		
Accurate 15 (–5), **Cunning** 10 (0), **Discreet** 13 (–3), **Persuasive** 5 (+5), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 7 (+3), **Strong** 9 (+1), **Vigilant** 10 (0)			
Abilities	*Natural Warrior* (adept)		
Weapons Accurate	Claws 6 (long), two attacks at the same target		
Armor	Tough daemon hide 4		
Defense	–1		
Toughness	10	**Pain Threshold**	5
Shadow	Like a black shadow against a deep blue backdrop (thoroughly corrupt)		

Tactics: The daemon obeys its master with lust and frenzy.

SWIFT

The creature is lightning fast, and can do extra attacks as part of its combat action. The initial attack may be an attack in melee, at range or with mystical powers, but the extra attacks cannot involve active abilities.

I **Action:** Reaction. When the creature hits with a combat action, it may immediately perform a free attack against an enemy within melee range, whether or not the first attack dealt any damage.

II **Action:** Reaction. As I, but if the initial attack deals damage, the creature may immediately perform two free attacks against enemies within melee range.

III **Action:** Reaction. When the creature performs an attack, it may also perform two free attacks against enemies within melee range, whether or not the first attack hits.

TUNNELER

The creature moves just as easily below the ground as on the surface, provided that the terrain is made of earth, sand, mud, gravel or similar material – solid rock forces the creature around, below or to the surface. Skilled tunnelers can use the underground to avoid enemy attacks, and the best tunnelers can create sinkholes under enemies, to be used as a weapon.

Even below ground, the creature has a feel for the direction and distance to known landmarks, but it cannot perceive what hides under the surface until it gets there.

I **Action:** Passive. The creature can move at half speed below ground, and hence avoid all free attacks that would otherwise be triggered when passing or closing in on an enemy.

II **Action:** Passive. The creature moves below ground at normal speed and with such agility that it can make part of its movement before and the rest after an attack. That way, the creature can appear to make an attack and then disappear, out of range from counter attacks. The only way to avoid the attacks of the tunneler is to sneak, *[Discreet←Vigilant]*, or move up on solid rock, a building or a tree.

III **Action:** Active. The creature can undermine a small area in order to create a sinkhole under an enemy group's feet. Up to five individuals standing next to each other can be caught by the trap; those who fail a test against *Quick* fall into the pit where the tunneler gets a free attack against each and every one of them. To get out of the hole requires a successful *Quick* test and a movement action; targets with the *Acrobatics* ability get a second chance to succeed.

WRECKER

The attacks of the creature are powerful enough to throw enemies to the ground. The mightiest of wreckers are even capable of acting as living battering rams, crushing gates, razing towers and toppling walls with their natural weapons.

I **Action:** Reaction. The creature's attacks can knock enemies that take damage prone. The target avoids the fall if it passes a *[Strong←Strong]* test, where each level in the *Robust* trait gives +2 on *Strong* for both attacker and defender.

II **Action:** Reaction. As I, but enemies that take damage are at risk of being thrown. If the target fails its test against *[Strong←Strong]*, he or she is thrown 1D6 meters back and suffers damage as if from a fall from the corresponding height. A thrown enemy lands flat on its back.

III **Action:** Passive. The brutal attacks of the creature gain the quality Wrecking (see page 118 in the *Advanced Player's guide*).

The Threat from Below

Note that creatures with level II or higher in *Tunneler* are very difficult to combat; as long as they are allowed to perform their tunneling attacks, they can only be harmed with reactions and free attacks. The expedition leader who fears that the journey may involve encounters with such monsters would do best to have at least one mystic equipped with Gwann Tincture (see page 53) along for the ride ...

The Creation of Monsters

CREATING ONE'S OWN MONSTERS can be very rewarding and enrich the game in many ways. Below is a guide for doing just that; a guide that highlights some of the things which are necessary for combat to flow smoothly in *Symbaroum* – that is, things the Game Master should plan out beforehand to avoid unnecessary flipping through books in the middle of a gaming session.

THE CREATION OF a monster is not that different from creating a player character, but since the Game Master must play multiple roles and the players usually just one (or two, depending on abilities and style of play), there are some things worth considering. The basic idea is of course that combat situations should be easy for the Game Master to handle, while at the same time being exciting for the players.

Before creating a new monster, you should think about what it will add to the game that the existing monsters cannot. Perhaps it can make an adventure more colorful and memorable? Or maybe it surprises the players with an unexpected combination of traits, abilities and tactics? But there is of course nothing wrong with designing fantastical beings that resemble those already described – creating monsters and watching the player characters desperately try to conquer them is for many one of the most entertaining parts of being a Game Master!

The Fundamentals

There are a few basic principles which should probably be taken into consideration before the monster creation begins. First and foremost: in order for a creature to work well in the game, it ought to have at least one weakness. It does not have to be completely obvious, but something the player characters will be able to figure out (through use of abilities or after repeated encounters) and which gives them an honest chance of actually defeating the beast. This Achilles heel can be rules-related, such as weakness to a certain ability, power or item, but it can also be social in nature – fear of

a certain phenomenon, loved ones it desperately wants to protect, or an urge which the player characters may try to satisfy in order to avoid a violent confrontation.

A second important principle is that passive abilities, powers and traits are always easier to keep track of than active and reactive ones. The effect of Passive actions can most often be seen in the secondary values written down beforehand (weapon damage, *Armor*, *Toughness*, and so on), which is why creatures can often have five or even ten such abilities or traits without adding complexity to the game.

With these principles in mind, the Game Master can comfortably begin the creation process, preferably by determining the creature's race, level of resistance, attributes, traits, and abilities.

RACE

The creature's race and what monster category it belongs to should be decided fairly early on – partly because it affects which traits might be appropriate, but also because player characters with the *Beast Lore* ability can choose to specialize in a certain category. This is either determined at the very start of the creation process, or a bit later, as a result of the traits it has been given.

RESISTANCE

The creature's resistance level is mainly an indicator of how much experience the creature has spent on traits and abilities. As Game Master, this is a good place to start when creating a monster, to establish the limits of its threat and complexity.

Table 8 presents six levels of resistance. In addition to those mentioned in the *Core Rulebook*, the Legendary level is introduced, which pertains to unique monstrosities that are particularly difficult to beat. Legendary creatures are always named individuals; there is no known example of a race whose entire population can offer such overwhelming resistance.

ATTRIBUTES

The attributes are best determined based on the role you have envisioned for the creature, and may be revised when traits and abilities have been chosen. The most important thing is probably to decide which attribute value should be the lowest and which should be the highest.

As with player characters, the Game Master distributes 80 points (min 5, max 15) among *Accurate*, *Cunning*, *Discreet*, *Persuasive*, *Quick*, *Resolute*, *Strong* and *Vigilant* – either freely or according to the template 5, 7, 9, 10, 10, 11, 13, 15.

Table 8: Resistance & Experience

RESISTANCE	EXPERIENCE	QUICK DISTRIBUTION
Weak	–	No Abilities
Ordinary	50	Adept × 1, Novice × 2
Challenging	150	Master × 2, Adept × 1
Strong	300	Master × 5
Mighty	600	Master × 10
Legendary	1200	Master × 20

The following are some things to keep in mind at this stage:

- *Accurate* is not very important if the creature has abilities that change which value is used for attacks.
- Generally speaking, a high *Accurate* value is only important for creatures with two types of attacks (usually one melee and one ranged).
- If the creature defends itself with an attribute other than *Quick*, there is no need for a high *Quick* value. But bear in mind that Initiative and abilities such as *Acrobatics* are based on *Quick*, which may justify a more nuanced choice.
- The primary attribute for melee monsters is often *Strong*, combined with the *Iron Fist* ability.
- *Persuasive* is typically a monster's lowest Attribute, provided that the creature in question does not have the *Dominate* or *Leader* ability.

TRAITS AND ABILITIES

The creature's power and tactics are governed by its traits, abilities and attributes. It is therefore wise to pick all of these at the same time, to get a nice and effective mix.

One important factor to bear in mind is that *Symbaroum's* combat encounters rarely last for more than five or six turns. For this reason, the creature should master one strategy, rather than being decent at multiple ones – chances are it will not have time to use more than one tactic. Extremely powerful enemies may wish to master an alternative strategy, one to fall back on, without weakening its primary tactic.

Also note that a larger number of traits and abilities means more work for the Game Master. Most can be calculated beforehand, but many traits offer both active and reactive opportunities, which immediately makes things more complicated. In other words, creatures with mostly passive traits

Table 9: Level and cost

LEVEL	COST	ACCUMULATED COST
Level I/novice	10	10
Level II/adept	20	30
Level III/master	30	60

combined with one or a few active/reactive ones are usually preferable.

Should it ever become relevant, it may also be good to know that the cost of acquiring or increasing traits with *Experience* points is the same as for abilities (see Table 9). This could be important if the player characters have a nemesis who, like them, develops from adventure to adventure.

Supplements

WHEN EVERYTHING FROM race to abilities have been established, it is time to calculate secondary properties and values for Weapons and *Armor*. This also serves as a kind of control point, where it becomes clear whether the creature's foundation yields the desired effect in terms of damage, chance to hit, and so on. Should the values calculated at this stage deviate in any way from the Game Master's vision, there may be reason to take a step back and give more thought to attributes, abilities, and such.

WEAPONS

The creature's weapon can be a natural weapon, an item of some kind, or an active trait. It is important that both the damage value and the number of attacks per turn are calculated correctly, as they can be affected by a number of different traits and abilities. It can be particularly tricky to differentiate between the respective effects of passive and active actions – passive effects are always taken into account, while only one active effect is allowed each turn.

Then there is the issue of the creature's chance to hit, which is usually the same as the value of a certain attribute. Which attribute is used depends on what abilities the creature has, according to Table 10.

Table 10: Attributes for attack

ABILITY	ATTRIBUTE	CONDITION
Dominate (novice)	Persuasive	Melee attacks
Feint (novice)	Discreet	Weapons with the Short or Precise qualities
Iron Fist (novice)	Strong	Melee attacks
Knife Play (novice)	Quick	Knifelike weapon with the Short quality
Leader (novice)	Persuasive	Mystical powers based on *Resolute*
Backstab (novice)	Discreet	Attacks with *Advantage*
Sixth Sense (novice)	Vigilant	Ranged attacks
Tactician (master)	Cunning	Anything but Heavy weapons

ARMOR

A creature's *Armor* value is decided by several traits and abilities, in addition to any actual armor it may wear. Note that the *Man-at-arms* ability affects all types of physical armor (including the *Armored* trait), but not protection that stems from mystical powers.

It may also be worth noting, attacks that ignore *Armor* bypass all *Armor*, regardless of its type, but abilities and traits which ignore Damage (for instance *Berserker* and *Robust*) still have an effect against such attacks.

DEFENSE

As with attacks, there are several abilities and traits that affect the creature's *Defense* value, especially in the sense that they determine which attribute is used for *Defense* tests (see Table 11). Also, note the effects of the *Robust* trait and the *Berserker* ability – *Robust* adds a negative modifier to *Defense* which increases with each level, while the novice level of *Berserker* sets the creature's base defense value to 5, regardless of its attributes and which of them (according to other abilities) should be used to calculate *Defense*.

TOUGHNESS/PAIN THRESHOLD

The creature's *Toughness* is normally the same as its *Strong* value (though never lower than 10), but there are abilities and traits which can modify the toughness value. Note that large creatures do not necessarily have higher *Toughness* than humans and smaller beasts. Their greater tolerance for physical violence is instead exemplified by traits like *Robust*, which allows them to ignore a number of damage points from each attack.

Table 11: Attributes for defense

ABILITY	DEFEND WITH
Feint (adept)	Discreet
Sixth Sense (adept)	Vigilant
Tactician (adept)	Cunning

Wrapping Up

FINALLY, IT IS time to add some color to the creature, providing it with an appropriate behavioral pattern, interesting possessions, a telling shadow, and some fundamental combat tactics suitable to its values and abilities.

MANNER

The creature's manner helps the Game Master portray the beast in a way that says something about its nature and makes it easier for players to differentiate between the creatures they run into.

Think about how the creature will be perceived when it is first encountered by the player characters. Does it snort or hiss, is it fawning or openly hostile? The manner is a large part of what makes an enemy memorable, so we would advise you to give it some thought.

EQUIPMENT

Aside from cultural beings like trolls, elves and arachs, most monsters the player characters encounter will hardly be carrying satchels full of valuables and interesting items. But you might want to give this some extra thought as well. If the creature has a lair nearby, it may contain loot from past prey. Or maybe it turns out that the monster has swallowed some remarkable item carried by a previous victim, or that a ring, dagger or belt buckle has gotten stuck between its teeth. The players (and their characters) would no doubt welcome such a discovery!

SHADOW

You need to consider how much permanent corruption your creation should have, and what its shadow should look like, so that player characters with the *Witchsight* ability can study it. You should also remember that some abilities interact with the creature's degree of corruption; for instance the *Sorcery* ability, which makes it possible to use a creature's own corruption as a weapon against it, until it becomes thoroughly corrupted.

Apart from the rules-related aspects, the shadow is a great way to describe the workings of the world – the struggle between the three primal powers of Wyrtha (naturally green, red, and sometimes white), Wielda (the metallic gold, silver, and copper of civilization), and Wratha (the brown, purple, and black of corruption) – so do not squander the opportunity!

TACTICS

Finally, it is worth noting a line or two about the creature's combat tactics, as a helpful reminder to oneself.

The creature's tactics result from its role in the game as well as its traits and abilities. Sometimes it can actually be easier to go in the other direction; to start with its role, then establish a tactic, and then pick traits and abilities that support such behavior.

The following tactics can generally be used, based on the four archetypes from which player characters are created (the hunter is introduced as a separate archetype in the *Advanced Player's Guide*, which also refines the thief archetype).

The hunter archetype: Keeps the player characters at a distance while launching ranged attacks.

The warrior archetype: Seeks to engage the player characters in melee combat.

The mystic archetype: Keeps the player characters at a distance, trying to bind them, damage them as a group, or help its allies.

The thief archetype: Moves around the battlefield in order to seize or create opportunities to attack with *Advantage*.

It is also possible to use a combination of these, where the creature starts out using one tactic and then shifts to another. However, this is mainly an option for more powerful creatures, as they have enough abilities to build a solid base and then complement it with an additional role.

The hunter archetype... can pick abilities and traits which bind the player characters so that they cannot enter melee combat.

The warrior archetype... can either acquire traits and abilities which bind enemies so that the warrior can enter melee combat, or complement with ranged abilities to be less predictable to the player characters.

The mystic archetype... should focus on strengthening any weaknesses it may have, which is why they often pick many of the same traits and abilities as hunters; the purpose is to stop the player characters from entering melee combat.

The thief archetype... usually benefits most from building on its main focus: mobility on the battlefield. Thieves might also want to strengthen one of their weakness, to increase their chances of survival.

Balanced Combat Resistance

INCLUDED IN THE SYMBAROUM *Core Rulebook* is a simple template for designing suitable challenges for a group of newly created player characters. Here follows a more detailed model on what the GM should keep in mind when designing combat challenges, based on the player characters' Competence Level and the intended Difficulty of the fight.

IT SHOULD BE evident that this text is not offering a mathematical formula, describing exactly how the Game Master must think when creating combat challenges. Things like your particular group's preferred style of gaming and how your players tend to spend their *Experience* must also be considered – groups that view combat as a joint tactical mind-game should be offered tougher challenges compared to groups who are playing for the drama; the same goes for groups who are looking to make optimum use of the rules rather than building their characters based on personality and... well, character.

This text ends with a list of pre-made challenges, built by considering three factors: Competence Level, Difficulty and Setting. These challenges can be taken and used during play or regarded as detailed examples of how this model for designing balanced combat resistance may be put into practice.

Competence Level

THE FIRST THING the GM should consider is the actual combat competence of the player characters as a group. Simply put, this can be estimated based on how much *Experience* they have gained, combined with the number of mystical artifacts they have acquired.

If the Game Master wants to be meticulous, he or she can choose to overlook any *Experience* spent on abilities, rituals, traits or boons which do not make the characters more effective in combat. But in doing so, remember that this model can never offer more than a rough estimate – in *Symbaroum*, combat

Table 12: Competence Level

COMPETENCE LEVEL	EXPERIENCE	# OF ADVENTURES	DESCRIPTION
Beginners (starting level)	50	0	Each character has abilities at the Novice level, some single ones at Adept.
Experienced	100	approx. 5	Each character has abilities at Adept level. The group has one or two artifacts, most have a weapon or armor with qualities.
Veterans	200	approx. 15	Each character has several abilities at Master level. All in the group have an artifact, and all their weapons and armor have qualities.
Heroes	300	approx. 25	Some group members have two or more artifacts, and all their weapons and armor have qualities

is not only about which and how many abilities a character has, but also the combination of abilities/powers/traits and how the players actually choose to use them.

BEGINNERS – LIMITED ADVENTURES

Beginners spend their time adventuring in smaller or more limited settings than those who are more experienced. The adventures take place in locations that are neither vast nor well-populated, and often distanced from where the real power of the game world resides – for example, in free settlements, isolated outposts at the borders of Davokar or at one of the many solitary inns or estates throughout Ambria.

If such an adventure is set in a town, it probably deals with gangs, important individuals or a certain district rather than the town as a whole. However, what this kind of adventure lacks in scope, it should compensate for by adding depth: problems do not affect anonymous groups, but named individuals, often ones already known by the player characters and deemed worthy of their sympathy and help. The enemies of the player characters are also linked to the area, likely connected to the powerful factions of the world without being very powerful themselves.

Beginners preferably deal with...

... threats against a solitary inn, farm or village in the countryside, alternately against individuals or a group in a town.
... enemies posing Weak or Ordinary resistance, or single Challenging ones.

EXPERIENCED – LOCAL ADVENTURES

Experienced characters experience local adventures. A local adventure is set in a town, a smaller county or a limited part of the woods. The enemies are linked to the area and are often members of the game world's major factions.

Experienced character seldom encounter the high level representatives of the factions or other powers in the area, since these are acting on a regional or national arena beyond the characters' reach. However, the outcome of local adventures can alter the power balance between factions at the adventure location.

Experienced characters preferably deal with...

... threats against towns, counties, baronies or the domain of a local barbarian chieftain.
... enemies posing Ordinary and Challenging resistance, or single Strong ones. Weak enemies come in packs, led by a more competent enemy.

VETERANS – REGIONAL ADVENTURES

Veterans engage in regional adventures, placing the player characters at the center of politics, war and epic mysteries. The opposition encountered is bigger, tougher and harder to beat. Maybe it is even impossible to defeat the enemy in a conventional way, at least if the player characters are alone?

Alliances, sometimes with what may have been local enemies, are what it takes to triumph! The characters encounter high ranking representatives of the involved factions, but never the true wielders of power.

Veterans preferably deal with...

... threats against duchies and whole barbarian clans.
... enemies posing Challenging and Strong resistance, or single Mighty ones. Weaker enemies come in hordes, twice as many as the player characters.

HEROES – GLOBAL ADVENTURES

Heroes deal with adventures on a global scale, traveling far and wide over continents in the hunt for allies, powerful weapons and an enemy which seems

impossible to vanquish. At this level, high politics is inescapable, and the player characters socialize with, and plot against, the highest leaders of Ambria, the barbarian clans and the Elves of Davokar.

Heroes preferably deal with...

... threats against realms, people or races, or the very metaphysical order of existence.
... enemies posing Strong or Mighty resistance, or single Legendary ones. If lesser enemies are encountered, such as Ordinary or Challenging, they are numerous beyond count.

Opposition and Experience

The level of resistance primarily states how much *Experience* the creature has spent on traits and abilities. As a GM, this is a good place to start when creating challenges, as a framework for the complexity and difficulty of the opposition. The different levels of resistance are listed in Table 8 on page 175.

Competence & Resistance

BASED ON THE average competence of the player characters, suitable opponents for a certain kind of combat can be decided. In this text we distinguish between Easy and Hard combat situations, but the Game Master may of course design challenges positioned somewhere in-between these two extremes.

EASY COMBAT

An easy combat challenge is one in which the player characters are expected to win. Such fights are often found early in the adventure, to introduce the enemy without risking an abrupt end to the story. If circumstances are against the characters (they are surprised or the enemy is resilient against the characters' main powers), an easy combat challenge can prove difficult, especially if the players do not cooperate and use their strengths effectively.

HARD COMBAT

A hard combat challenge is suitable as the final fight, and the outcome should be uncertain even if the odds favor the player characters. They must make use of their strengths and exploit the enemy's weaknesses to have any hope of prevailing. Failing this, they will likely perish.

Table 13: Competence Level and Resistance

LEVEL	EASY	HARD
Beginner	PC number of Weak enemies with an Ordinary leader	PC number of Ordinary enemies, or [PC+2] Weak ones, led by a Challenging enemy
Experienced	PC number of Ordinary enemies with a Challenging leader	PC number of Challenging enemies, or [PC+2] Ordinary ones, led by a Strong enemy
Veterans	PC number of Challenging enemies with a Strong leader	PC number of Strong enemies, or [PC×2] Weak ones, led by a Mighty enemy
Heroes	PC number of Strong enemies with a Mighty leader	PC number of Mighty enemies, or [PC×2] Ordinary ones, led by a Legendary enemy

BEGINNER:
Mostly adventures in Ambria, with shorter excursions into Bright Davokar.

EXPERIENCED
Longer journeys in Bright Davokar, with short trips into Dark Davokar.

VETERANS
Routine presence in Bright Davokar, with most challenges found in Dark Davokar.

HEROES
Dark Davokar is still a challenge but a manageable one; the real tests are found in the thoroughly corrupt parts of the forest.

Competence & Setting

THE WORLD OF *Symbaroum* is full of threats, and even seemingly safe environments can present horrors and challenges. However, as a principle of design, the GM may do well to regard the world as characterized by a gradual transition from the relative safety of Ambria to the brutal dangers lurking within the blight-stricken depths of Davokar.

Even if the challenges of a specific adventure (be they Easy or Hard) can be graded based on the competence level of the characters, the setting should also influence the design. Sure, the player characters may encounter really tough challenges on Ambrian soil, but with help and shelter nearby, such single encounters are often manageable. The situation is very different inside the Forest of Davokar, where danger is always present and any characters that survive a challenge are more likely to encounter a new one than they are of finding a cozy inn or an accomplished healer.

The guidelines in the column to the left can be an inspiration when planning for the characters' deeper and deeper intrusions into Davokar.

Possible Encounters

BELOW IS A listing of possible encounters, designed on the basis of Competence Level and Setting as described in this text. These challenges can be used as they are, for quick access to suitable resistance, or regarded as examples meant to clarify how this model for balanced combat resistance is intended to work.

All creatures mentioned in the list are featured in the *Symbaroum Core Rulebook* or this monster codex. With the help of Table 13 Competence Level and Resistance, the GM may of course swap these for other monsters and adversaries – including homemade ones.

BEGINNERS

Mostly adventures in Ambria, with shorter excursions into Bright Davokar.

Easy combat in Ambria: PC number of Cult Followers + one Cult Leader
Easy combat in Bright Davokar: PC number of Robbers + one Robber Chief
Hard combat in Ambria: PC number of Village Warriors + one Guard Warrior
Hard combat in Bright Davokar: PC number of Spring Elves + one Late Summer Elf

EXPERIENCED

Longer journeys in Bright Davokar, with short trips into Dark Davokar.

Easy combat in Bright Davokar: PC number of Queen's Rangers + one Ranger Captain
Easy combat in Dark Davokar: PC number of Rage Trolls, Famished + one Rage Troll, Group-Living
Hard combat in Bright Davokar: PC number of Aboars + one Lindworm
Hard combat in Dark Davokar: PC number of Darkling, hunters + one Darkling, leader

VETERANS

Routine presence in Bright Davokar, with most challenges found in Dark Davokar.

Easy combat in Bright Davokar: PC number of Bestiaals + one Coloss
Easy combat in Dark Davokar: PC number of Necromages + one Cryptwalker
Hard combat in Bright Davokar: [PC×2] Jakaars + one Arch Troll
Hard combat in Dark Davokar: PC number of Ravenous Willow, young stranglers + one Ravenous Willow, older crusher

HEROES

Dark Davokar is still a challenge but a manageable one; the real tests are found in the thoroughly corrupt parts of the forest.

Easy combat in Dark Davokar: PC number of Skullbiter, crushers + one Skullbiter, queen
Easy combat in Black Davokar: PC number of World Serpents, tunneler + one World Serpent, wallower
Hard combat in Dark Davokar: [PC×2] Dragouls + one Legendary enemy
Hard combat in Black Davokar: PC number of Primal Blight Beasts + one Legendary enemy

Monster Chronicle

THE ARRAY OF NEW MONSTERS introduced in the Monster Codex will allow the Game Master to build an entire adventure chronicle or campaign centered around monster hunting. Since the players will also be facing these creatures for the very first time, each monster can become a mystery.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN occasionally letting the player characters encounter monsters during an ongoing campaign and creating a chronicle focused on precisely that is of course hard to define. To clarify the possibilities of such a chronicle, this text introduces three versions: Trophy Hunters, Monster Explorers, and Occult Problem Solvers. But first we present guidelines for how each monster hunt/adventure can be constructed, regardless of which version it concerns.

The Phases of Monster Hunting

THE HUNT FOR monsters, for whatever reason, can be structured as a form of goal-oriented gaming. As with expeditions into the wild or the establishment of an outpost, a monster hunt involves a number of predetermined phases, each of which can offer interesting challenges and roleplaying situations.

The exact content of the four phases below can be decided directly by the Game Master, or through the player characters' initiatives, depending on the preferred style of play. The most interesting approach is probably to let the players take the reins, while the Game Master reacts to their initiatives by turning them into interesting (and sufficiently exciting) challenges.

PREPARATIONS

How the player characters decide which prey to pursue can vary considerably. Perhaps they have strong opinions on the matter themselves? Perhaps they receive a specific request from some quest giver? In towns like Kastor and Thistle Hold, they may also seek out or spontaneously run into various hunters, explorers, and others who like to tell wild stories about their past exploits. This can be a valuable source of knowledge even if the prey has already been decided on – why chase after some half-wounded young toad beast if someone can point out the whereabouts of a fully grown, magnificent King Toad; why hunt for a Mocker "living" in some corruption-oozing blacklands when another is said to be haunting an easily accessible burial mound?

In any case, the search for helpful information will not likely end there. Perhaps there are individuals who have actually encountered the specific monster which the characters are hunting; perhaps there are written sources to consult, or legends to be heard. Whatever the characters decide to do, they must try to learn as much as possible about the strengths and weaknesses of the individual beast and the species as a whole. But such insights rarely come for free, and there might be others who seek the same exact information – which can

lead to everything from bidding wars to violent confrontations.

Finally, the characters must prepare for the journey itself. They must acquire an Explorer's License, the right equipment, and possibly a guide who is familiar with their destination. There will no doubt be maps for them to buy, from people claiming that their particular route is the fastest and safest way to the beast's habitat. But who should they trust, and how much are they prepared to pay? It is always safest to compensate the counterparty in the form of future shares (see page 185 in the *Core Rulebook*), but on the other hand, that means someone else will claim a large piece of the profit – often as much as 30–50%.

TRACKING

Journeys through Davokar are always dangerous, never uneventful. First the player characters must make their way to the area where the prey is supposed to be, and that alone can be challenging. Elven warbands, ardent rangers, and prowling packs of predators are always a threat. Or perhaps the player characters are in a race with one or more rival hunting parties, who seek to sabotage any competitors by attacking them in their camp, destroying their supplies, or running ahead to set nasty traps.

Once they have arrived, the real work begins. Some prey can be found in a specific location, such as a ruin, a cairn, a sinkhole, or a cave. In that case the place must be reconnoitered, the entrances located, and potential dangers identified – tasks which become particularly interesting if other hunting parties have also arrived in the area. Other prey are constantly on the move and must either be tracked or lured into a trap. The risk of such a hunt is that the prey may already have left for some other pasture or hunting ground, offering challenges the player characters might not be prepared for. Another risk is that the prey might realize it is being hunted, and set a trap or lay an ambush for the player characters...

THE CONFRONTATION

When playing a monster chronicle, the encounter with each individual prey should of course be a climax; preferably one that presents the group with new challenges and experiences. Try to create some variation between the adventures, in terms of setting and enemy strategies. Regarding the former, the great ruins of Davokar may seem like the obvious choice, but even that can become tiresome unless varied with overgrown valleys, open glades, wet marshes, or underground vaults. As for strategies, the traits presented in this section can be combined in lots of ways, which (combined with the chosen battlefield) forces the player characters to use the full range of their capabilities in order to triumph.

Also, it would not hurt if each confrontation offers at least one unpleasant surprise. If the player characters have carefully prepared and surveyed the area, the Game Master should of course reward them by not completely changing the circumstances. But the forest of Davokar is capricious, and its inhabitants unpredictable! Perhaps the prey has abilities they do not know about? Perhaps there are other threats nearby; threats that do not reveal themselves until the player characters attack? Even the weakest prey can be difficult to kill if it turns out to be protected by a so far invisible spirit, or if a corrupting fog suddenly floats in on imperceptible winds.

THE JOURNEY BACK

Regardless of whether the player characters return with a magnificent trophy or a living, captured monster, the journey back should transpire without any serious difficulty. Exceptions can be made, however, if only to maintain the suspense – a rival hunting party lies in ambush; a group of Iron Pact agents comes to avenge or free a captured prey; the stench of the trophy or noise of the captive attracts trolls, predators or swelling abominations. But otherwise we suggest that the real challenges present themselves on the characters' return to civilization.

At this point, any envious competitors become a serious problem, as do the Iron Sworn who (whatever the purpose of the hunt) view the characters' actions as a crime against creation. And unless they are hunting for entertainment, or to mount the trophy on their own wall, the characters will probably face other challenges as they finally deliver the captured/slain monster. A quest giver may very well refuse to pay the agreed price, or claim that the reward was paid in advance. Perhaps agents of the local ruler show up, asserting that the trophy or the living beast is "the property of the Queen" and demanding that it immediately be handed over to its "rightful owner"?

Types of Monster Hunting

YOU AND YOUR gaming group may come up with completely different variations on the theme, but based on the monsters featured in the section titled the Hordes of the Eternal Night, we have identified three potentially entertaining types of monster hunting. These are presented below, along with suggestions

Traps

Hunters wishing to catch their prey alive will need other things than spears and well-aimed projectiles. In the *Advanced Player's Guide* you will find rules for traps (pages 102 & 127) and elixirs (page 120) which can be very useful in this context.

on creatures that may be appropriate for each type, taken from this book and the *Core Rulebook*.

TROPHY HUNTER

Unlike in Alberetor, hunters are highly regarded in present-day Ambria, and most celebrated of them all are of course the monster hunters – the brave men and women who not only endure the wilderness of Davokar, but boldly seek out its most dangerous inhabitants. Slaying monsters brings fame and prestige to the hunting party, and can be a tremendous source of wealth in itself.

The player characters may pursue careers as trophy hunters for the sake of fame and status, or to make a fortune in order to finance some future project – a glorious expedition, perhaps, or a colony in the depths of Davokar. They become experts in tracking, killing, and collecting trophies from the most impressive and legendary beasts in the region; eventually they become invited to the balls and soirees of the nobles, where their trophy is the center piece of the table setting, and where they may recount their exploits to an astonished audience.

Table 14 lists a series of monsters with various levels of resistance and two separate columns for the approximate value of the trophies. According to the rule of monster trophies introduced in the *Advanced Player's Guide* (page 104), it is no easy thing to handle the slain beast correctly. Attempting to harvest a trophy requires a *Cunning* test, which renders a trophy in poor condition if successful and no trophy at all if failed. Procuring a trophy in good condition requires a successful *Cunning* test with the *Beast Lore* ability or the *Bushcraft* boon; if the test fails, a trophy in poor condition is harvested instead.

Table 14: Monster trophies

RESISTANCE	EXAMPLE	GOOD CONDITION	POOR CONDITION
Weak	Cave Ray, Jakaar	1 thaler	None
Ordinary	Baiagorn, Mare Cat, Marlit	10 thaler	1 thaler
Challenging	Aboar, Dragonfly, Managaal (spawn)	100 thaler	10 thaler
Strong	Lindworm, Coloss, World Serpent (tunneler)	500 thaler	50 thaler
Mighty	Arch Troll, Dragon, World Serpent (wallower)	1000 thaler	100 thaler
Legendary	Unique, legendary individuals	10000 thaler	1000 thaler

MONSTER EXPLORERS

Many people consider trophy hunting a barbaric activity and a waste of precious resources. There is great knowledge to be gained from examining the creatures of the region, which is not only important in understanding individual races and species, but also for students of alchemy, medicine, corruption and artifact crafting. Such endeavors may not attract as much attention from nobles and ordinary folk, but within organizations like Ordo Magica and the Twilight Friars they are valued very highly indeed.

The player characters may choose this path to further the advancement of knowledge in the region. If so, they will engage in all aspects of exploration: hunting and examining monsters, as well as recording and disseminating their insights and discoveries. They could also be acting on behalf of some high-ranking Master of the Order, in which case much of the follow-up will be handled by others.

Table 15 provides examples on a number of strange creatures with various levels of resistance, and states the price which scientifically inclined individuals or organizations might be willing to pay for a specimen. Obviously, the price varies depending on who shows interest in the trophy – on lower levels it will probably be adepts of Ordo Magica or Black Cloak monster experts, while mighty and legendary specimens might even spark the interest of the Queen herself. Note that the compensation for living creatures is significantly higher, partly because they are more valuable as objects of study, but also because they require much more effort from the hunter – dragging home the carcass of a blight-stricken aboar is certainly hard work, but not compared with transporting it alive from the depths of the forest.

OCCULT PROBLEM SOLVERS

All major settlements and towns located near Davokar are at risk from monster attacks – through their own fault or simply by a cruel twist of fate. Such places often have groups working full-time with advanced pest control, within the town walls. They are usually called in when the situation is more complicated than a howling beast rushing through the streets; in such cases the town watch and other people wielding fire and steel will soon be able to kill or drive the monster off. Rather, it is the more unclear situations that require the services

of more experienced personnel; situations that call for great problem-solving skills in addition to more forceful measures.

The player characters could be one such group of occult problem solvers, acting independently or within organizations such as the Queen's Rangers, the Sun Church, or the Iron Pact. They might have an office where people with serious problems can come for help, or perhaps they have a contact within their own faction acting as an intermediary between them and those in need. In any case, the player characters will probably have to do quite a bit of traveling, to other parts of Ambria as well as to afflicted outposts and settlements in Davokar.

The section titled the Hordes of the Eternal Night contains a number of creatures with various levels of resistance that may suit a group of occult problem solvers – Glints, Gwann, Nightmares, Mockers and Troll Shadows to name a few. In the *Core Rulebook* you can also find the Dragonfly, Necromage, cultists, and a few more creatures which may be of use.

The pay rate for dealing with various problems is hard to establish in advance – it depends on the quest giver's resources, the seriousness of the situation, and the player characters' reputation as problem solvers. Thus, it is up to the Game Master to make them an offer which may then be negotiated, and remember that thaler is not the only possible reward – valuable items, resources, information/leverage, or mystical artifacts are all viable alternatives

Table 15: Monsters for study

RESISTANCE	EXAMPLE	LIVING	DEAD
Weak	Crystal Flies, Troll Shadows	1 thaler	–
Ordinary	Skullbiter (hatchling), Arach (poisoner)	5 thaler	–
Challenging	Glint, Illgoblin, Nefarani	50 thaler	5 thaler
Strong	Arach (exalted), Gwann, Ravenous Willow (strangler)	500 thaler	50 thaler
Mighty	Skullbiter (queen), Primal Blight Beast	5000 thaler	500 thaler
Legendary	Unique, legendary individuals	50000 thaler	5000 thaler

Andrik

OF ALL THE WORLD'S CREATURES, the andrik is probably the most peculiar. These descendants of ordinary ducks were deformed by dark powers into a caricature of other cultural beings – a fact that has not escaped the other races, nor the andriks themselves. Whoever created andriks did so against the will of the world, and through their sorcery they expressed an abnormal disdain for higher laws, racial boundaries, and good taste. Andriks are generally well aware of how their kind is regarded by other races, and respond to the jeers – whether real or imaginary – with a bitter mix of arrogant pride, obstinate defiance, and a tearful victim mentality.

THE ANDRIKS FIRST appeared in Freetown, west of Alberetor. Whether they arrived by boat or were in fact created in the practically lawless city remains unclear. What is evident, however, is that they soon blended with the city's underclass and that they came to stay. From Freetown, the andriks spread along the coast, to the east as well as the west, in search of a more dignified life. And when Alberetor was evacuated, the andriks followed the humans to Ambria.

Most of Ambria's andriks spend their entire lives on the move, as solitary peddler families or several families working together as river merchants. The most famous are the Andrik Buccaneers who plague the waters of Ambria with their fast vessels. These web-footed raiders harbor ideas of andrik superiority, as they are the most recently evolved of all cultural beings and therefore – according to their pirate logic – the greatest. They have even assumed a new name for their kind: andrake. The andrake pirates are few, but extremely active, and feathered corsairs are priority targets for the Ambrian galleys hunting pirates on the kingdom's rivers. This has driven the andrakes to the outskirts of the realm. They have often sought refuge in remote harbors in the no-man's-land of southern Davokar, where dense vegetation and numerous tributaries provide excellent conditions for piracy.

ANDRIK TRAITS

Andriks have the *Diminutive*, *Pariah* and *Paws* traits. Many also have the *Provocative* trait, which is acquired like other abilities.

ANDRIK NAMES

Andriks have a lax attitude toward personal names, and usually give each other nicknames based on appearance, such as Big-mitts, One-eye, Grayfeather, Bareback, Shaggy, Shade, and Highplume. At least a few larger andrik families have completely abandoned the use of names in favor of a simpler numeral system, where numbers indicate the order of birth.

ANDRIKS AS ADVENTURERS

An andrik who leaves its family usually has compelling reasons for doing so. In many cases, the family is dead or the andrik was banished from the community for having committed some serious offense.

Andriks with a background in trade are often thieves, while those who grew up with pirates are usually warriors. There are no known examples of andrik mystics, nor any indications that they can learn to perform rituals. However, rumors speak of an andrik oracle in Freetown – a tale which has given its name to an inn in the town of Kastor: The Duck and Crystal.

Andrik Traits

PAWS, TRAIT/BURDEN
The creature has poorly developed hands, making it difficult to perform fine motor tasks such as lockpicking. Whenever a challenge requires hand dexterity, the creature has a second chance to fail.

PROVOCATIVE, TRAIT
The creature has a knack for provoking everyone it meets to such an extent that it can become useful as a distraction during combat. The trait requires no success test if the enemy is already consumed with rage (the *Berserker* ability); then it succeeds automatically. However, enemies with the *Steadfast* ability are allowed two attempts to regain their composure every turn.

Novis	**Free.** With a successful *[Resolute←Cunning]* test the creature can provoke an enemy beyond all reason. If successful, the creature has a second chance to pass all tests to avoid being affected by the enemy's actions (such as *Defense*). Only one enemy at a time can be fazed this way. The effect lasts for the rest of the scene without further tests, but if the creature wishes to provoke another enemy a new *[Resolute←Cunning]* test is required.
Gesäll	**Free.** Like I, but the enemy also becomes careless in its defense. If the *[Resolute←Cunning]* test succeeds, the creature has a second chance to pass all success tests against the enemy.
Mästare	**Active.** The creature is a master teaser, and can pass a *Cunning* test to throw an entire group of enemies off balance. If successful, all enemies start to seethe with reckless rage and the creature has two chances to succeed with defense, resisting influence, and attacks against all enemies for the duration of the scene.

April Fools!

Note that the Andrik initially was an April Fools' joke and that the creature doesn't play any role in other official products from Järnringen. Many love the creature in question, many love to hate it, so whether or not you want it to have a place in your particular game world is entirely up to you!

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The ruin appeared as a mirage,

when the Blight Mist finally dissolved during our breathless escape. The hunters slowed down behind us – neither the primal blight beast nor the chattering, clawing, corruption oozing swarmers wanted to leave the milky white depths of the fogbank.

We did not stop. Sunken and overgrown, the broken pyramid ahead was nearly devoured by Davokar, still its asymmetrical opening seemed like a gateway to safety and rest. We forced our way through the hanging vines, lowered ourselves down to the floor with ropes, and let the fear and corruption fade away; the blackened veins on Oleana's colorless cheeks paled as the look of panic slowly left her eyes.

Sunlight found its way through cracks up high and fell upon a mighty pillar at the center of the hall – made of naked gray stone with a surface chiseled in strange designs, hypnotic in their worn splendor. We walked about halfway towards its foot before Oleana grabbed my arm, and made me halt.

"Like blight beasts in mist," I thought, as they came into the light, slowly but surely surrounding us; almost human, naked, with their spider jaws twitching in hunger.

As Oleana pushed me towards the pillar, I knew I was going to die. Still, I climbed, the words of my father ringing in my ears: "In Davokar only one law applies: whatever may happen, never give up!"

The Symbaroum Monster Codex makes the settlements, woods and vales of the Davokar region more dangerous than ever before! More than a hundred creatures, monsters and abominations are crammed together between these covers – some of them well known, others only mentioned in legends and fairy tales; some unstoppably hungry, others open to negotiations; some presented in detail, others with only short descriptions. Combined with the guidelines on how to create creatures of your own, the content of this bestiary should provide material for hundreds of hours at the gaming table!

FEATURED CONTENT

- More than thirty fully described and illustrated creatures with the potential to be at the center of unique adventures and challenges in Symbaroum.
- A whole section consisting of short descriptions and stats of generic non-player characters, monsters, beasts and abominations.
- The new categories Flora and Phenomenon along with thirty-seven new monstrous traits, adding to the nineteen already in the Core Rulebook.
- Guidelines for the creation of your very own creatures and how to design balanced combat challenges.
- Suggestions on how to develop three types of adventure chronicles that put the bestiary's creatures in play: Trophy Hunters, Monster Explorers or Occult Problem Solvers.
- Note that this book requires access to the *Symbaroum Core Rulebook*, and that it does not come into its own without the content of the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

Symbaroum

Järnringen