

# BEASTS & BARBARIANS

STEEL EDITION



UMBERTO  
PIGNATELLI



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GRAMMEL

GAME MASTER'S GUIDE

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SPECIAL UMBERTO'S THANKS: MK, Marta, Nora, Lia and Corinna.

AND A VERY SPECIAL DEDICATION IREK TO: my wife Dagmara and our beloved children (Felicia, Naomi, Anika, Timothy)

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SECRETS OF THE DOMINIONS . . . . .	7
RUNNING BEASTS ET BARBARIANS . . . . .	29
CHARACTER TALES . . . . .	38
NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES . . . . .	40
RELICS . . . . .	43
MALADIES AND POISONS . . . . .	48
ADVENTURE GENERATOR . . . . .	51
PLOT . . . . .	52
PRESENTATION . . . . .	56
MONSTERS OF THE DOMINIONS . . . . .	71
DENIZENS OF THE DOMINIONS . . . . .	91
THE DAUGHTER OF THE GOLDEN SCORPION . . . . .	132
CREATURES AND NPCs . . . . .	139

## ABOUT THIS BOOK

Welcome to *Beasts & Barbarians*, Gravel's setting of sword and sorcery! In this book, the **Game Master Guide**, you'll find all you need to run a game in the Dread Sea Dominions, a world of gritty heroism and savagery, where a man lives or dies by his sword and his wits! Among these pages, you will find ancient civilizations, long forgotten sorceries, and twisted tales to make the Dominions come alive for your players!

## FIVE YEARS LATER...

When I designed *Beasts & Barbarians* I intended, from the beginning, to make the setting alive and kicking, like a screaming barbarian in battle.

Five years have passed since the previous edition of the game, the Golden Edition, and many adventures have happened during this time, both in official published scenarios and in the awesome stories played at your tables.

When we decided to publish a new edition, extending the timeline was only natural.

So the question is, what has happened in the Dominions in the last five years?

A lot of things, my friends, a lot of things, good and bad in equal part, and ripe for adventure, of course.

Are you sure you want to discover them?

If the answer is yes, well, grab your sword and turn the page!

## A NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS:

To save space, several abbreviations are used in this book to refer to other books of the *Beasts & Barbarians* Steel Edition line:

SEPC = Steel Edition Player Guide

SEGM = Steel Edition Game Master Guide

*Zandorra opened her eyes, waking up immediately, as only animals and long-time friends with danger do.*

*She could still feel in her mouth the sweet taste of the wine she'd drunk at the tavern of the Blind Lady...*

*Too sweet, she should have imagined it was a trap...*

*She looked around. She was in a dark, low-ceilinged room, surrounded by a colonnade, lying on a stone slab. The only source of light was a brazier nearby, a heavy bronze thing of unknown make, full of red embers.*

*Cautiously, the woman raised her head, letting her eyes adjust to the darkness.*

*The cold, moist stone on her naked skin made her shiver. She quickly checked herself, and nobody could see the grimace of disappointment on her face. Her armor was gone, and now she was*



*clad in a silky, evanescent bikini, encrusted with pearls, which left very little to the imagination. It was incongruous on her strong, lean body, marked by the scars of battle. Zandorra was an Amazon of Ascaia, a proud warrior-woman, more at her ease with armor next to her skin and a sword in her hand.*

*Speaking of which... where had her weapons gone?*

*She ran a hand through her hair, feeling it clean, trimmed... and perfumed, with a slightly repellent essence.*

*She shivered with disgust, imagining pale, unknown hands touching her unconscious body.*

*"You smelled of tar and ships," a rasping voice said, from the darkness behind her. "And I don't like those smells."*

*Zandorra quickly turned around, seeing the person speaking to her for the first time.*

*He was tall, and shrouded in a dark robe, his face hidden by the deep shadows of his hood. The only thing the Amazon saw clearly was the strange ring on his left hand. It shimmered in the darkness, like the scales of a Red Desert serpent under the sun.*

*"Where are I am?" the Amazon said. "And who are you?"*

*"Wrong question, my dear lady. Wrong question," the cloaked figure answered, a hint of amusement in his voice. "The right one is not where am I, but why am I here?"*

*With a slow movement, the man removed his hood.*

*"Mother Eui!" Zandorra cursed, her hand going to her side, looking for a sword that wasn't there.*

*"Your puny little goddess isn't involved in this," the man continued. If he could still be called a man. The skin of his face was gray and crispy, like that of a long-dead corpse, one eye socket empty and oozing with pus, while the other shimmered with black malevolence.*

*"Time," he said. "Time and age did this to Sorakor Kar, who walked the Dominions when your ancestors were only naked monkeys."*

*Zandorra remembered the name from childhood tales. The darkest ones.*

*"It cannot be," she said "Sorakor Kar, sorcerer of Tricarnia, died two thousand years ago!*

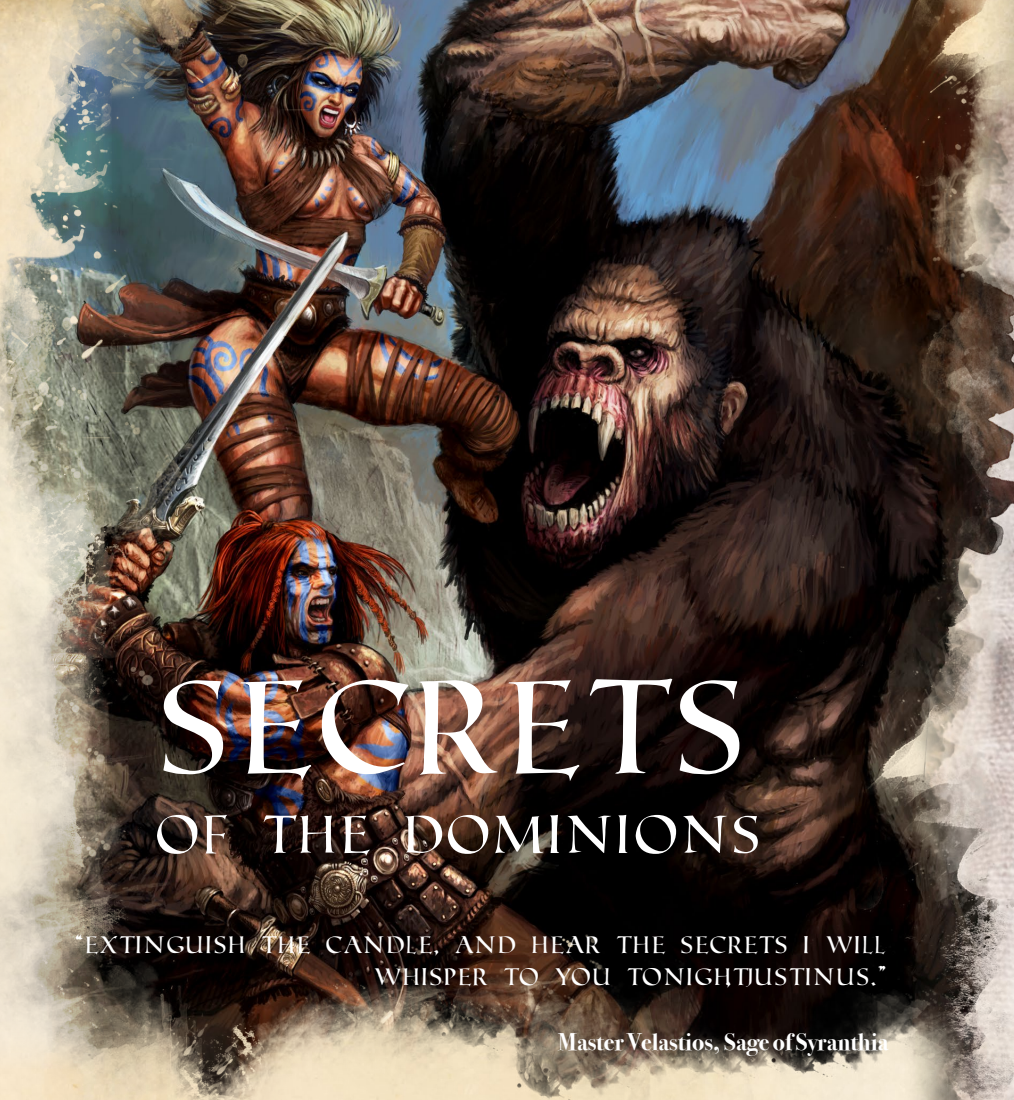
*The laughter of the warlock echoed in the tomb. "Yes, I died. Dozens of times. But I always returned. Young and strong again. And today YOU will give me the strength I need!"*

*Quick as a snake the rotten creature raised a hand, moving his ring in circles, capturing the eyes of the Amazon, who suddenly could not move, paralyzed by an unknown force.*

*"And now, my sweet lady, you'll taste the lips of old Keron..." The sorcerer said, breathing heavily, his devastated face approaching Zandorra's lips, seeking an obscene kiss.*

*The Amazon, in the meantime, frantically tried to break the spell. "The brazier," she thought. "The brazier! If I can only reach it..."*

*A crash and a terrible howl broke the silence of the night.*



# SECRETS OF THE DOMINIONS

“EXTINGUISH THE CANDLE, AND HEAR THE SECRETS I WILL WHISPER TO YOU TONIGHT JUSTINUS.”

Master Velastios, Sage of Syranthia

The Dominions are a strange and dangerous place, filled with adventure. In this chapter, for each Dominion you'll find a plot hook, an interesting event or place linked to that region, which can be used to develop your own adventures. Note that they are deliberately very vague, and in the form of rumors or tales, so that you, the GM, can decide if they are fully true, partially true, or totally false. As always, a lot is missing, so that you can fill the gaps in your own way, to make the Dominions totally yours.

**Dominion Events.** Each area also has a Dominion Event idea, which can be used in the After the Adventure Phase (or in other ways, see sidebar). They can be good or bad, depending on the card color (red for good and black for bad) and should be used only once, but the GM is free to create other ones or to use them as the basis for a scenario.

## GM'S TIP: MORE ABOUT DOMINION EVENTS

You'll notice that Dominion Events are slightly more detailed than the other After the Adventure Events. This is deliberate, each of them is solidly rooted in the theme of the Dominion they refer to. Many of them include detailed rules of some sort, often with a permanent effect. Depending on your style of play, you can use them as they are, ignore the rules or tweak them to fit your needs.

Whatever you decide, remember that Dominion Events are plot-heavy, many of them changing the player character in a major way.

Additional Dominion Events will be released in future installments of *Beasts & Barbarians*, but, as always, feel free to create additional ones yourself!

**Alternate Uses.** Dominion Events are one of the major additions to the setting in the Steel Edition. Apart from using them in the After the Adventure Phase, they can be used in several other ways:

- ❖ As additional plot hooks for adventures.
- ❖ As material for Interludes (in case you, the GM, let the players read this part of the book).
- ❖ As ideas for heroes' backgrounds during player character creation.

## ASCAIA, THE AMAZONS' ISLAND

**Etu's Voice.** It's no surprise that the cult of Mother Goddess, Etu, is the most important one in Ascaia. The Houses of Labor, where all births happen, are actually temples of the Goddess and the Reverend Mother, the highest priestess of the cult, has for centuries been a counsellor to the crown. There are rumors that the Mother Goddess herself visited the island, blessing it. Under the island, in fact, there is a huge cavern of white stone, where a strange echo continues to resound, even after many centuries. It is the voice of the Goddess herself, speaking in the language of the gods. Stories say that a woman in great need of advice will receive it on hearing this voice, while a man will go hopelessly mad. Nobody knows where the entrance to the House of Etu, as this place is called, is – except maybe the head of the Cult. Many people have looked for it, but not for religious reasons: the same stories say that Queens of the past amassed a huge treasure there. Could this be true?

**Event – The Mating Season.** This event is only suitable for male characters. The hero is captured somehow by a bunch of Amazons who keep him for a while for reproductive purposes. If the card drawn is red, the experience is good; the hero is not a real slave, more a pampered guest and the benefits of the job are, well... interesting. The hero gains a Bennie at the beginning of the next scenario, and +2 Charisma toward all Amazons for the rest of his career. If the card drawn is black, the hero is indentured in a vile sort of slavery. When he manages to escape he suffers -2 to Vigor rolls for the next session, and probably develops a grudge of some sort towards the warrior women of Ascaia (how this is expressed is left to the player). In addition, after this event the GM secretly draws a card from the Action Deck. With a face card the “entertainment” bore fruit and a child (or children) will be born. How this will affect the game is left up to the GM. This event can also be used in places other than Ascaia, wherever a group of Amazons is consistently present.



## THE BORDERLANDS

**A Fragile Peace.** In the last few years, there has been a truce of sorts between the Borderlands and the Northlanders. This is because Commander Ascanius, the ruler of Fort Miscenium, one of the biggest on the border, married Gwynned, the daughter of an important Northlander clan chief beyond the border. From that moment on, the situation on the border calmed down, and the first, hesitant steps toward peace are being made. But it is still a very delicate time, and any misstep by either side could lead to a war of epic proportions. But nobody wants that, do they?

**Event – Defending the Border.** The hero is involved, willingly or not, in the defense of the border; maybe enlisted by a local lord, or forced by circumstances to defend a fort to save his life. If the card drawn is red he fought with honor, and he managed to grab some loot too. He can acquire a free item costing 100 Moons/Rank, which must belong to a fallen enemy (this can lead to trouble in the future). If the card drawn is black, the adventurer managed to save his skin, but suffered a nasty wound. He begins the next session with a Wound, which can only be healed by natural means, with a (-2) to the Vigor roll. Once the wound is healed, the character receives a Benny. The exact nature of his enemies is left to the GM, to be agreed with the player.

## THE CAIRNLANDS

**The Grayhorn.** One year ago, in the market plaza of Felantium, Tombwolf, an infamous Cairnlander marauder chief, responsible for months of pillaging, killing and rape, was sentenced to death in front of the Count and the population. For such crimes, the condemned is tied and dismembered by two bulls walking in different directions. But before being reduced to a bloody pulp, Tombwolf shouted: “I die today, but I’ll return, thousands of us will return! I saw the Grayhorn! And it will blow soon!”

At these words, the crowd murmured, and even the Count grew pale and marked himself with the sign of Hulian. The Grayhorn is a legend widespread throughout the north: it is an ancient hunting horn, made by inhuman hands when the world was young. Whoever blows it will make the Ancestors rise from their tombs, and fight again at his orders. It is a story that periodically spreads through the north, but nobody has ever found or seen this mysterious artifact. But is it just a coincidence that in recent months many caravans crossing the Cairnlands have disappeared? And what about those strange, shrouded riders who appear on the borders of the land of the Cairns, at dusk, when the fog rises, like the scouts of some inhuman army, only to disappear at dawn?

**Event – Riddling with Death.** The hero, while crossing the Cairnlands at night, has a strange meeting with a powerful Ancestor or ghost of some sort, which forces him to play riddles with it, with the adventurer’s very life as the stake! If the card drawn is red, the character manages to solve the riddle and continues on his way. This deed is so important that the character can immediately raise the lower of his Spirit or his Smarts by one die step, but he begins the next scenario with one Benny less. If the card is black, the hero could not find the right answer and manages to escape, but not before the foul creature touched him with grave-cold hands, making him lose a die step in Vigor (if he already has d4, he gains the Elderly Hindrance, if he already has both, he dies). Characters with the Sage Edge can draw an additional card and use the better color.

## CALDEIA

**The War of the Chain.** Slaves are the second most traded commodity in Caldeia. Raiding parties depart monthly from Caldeian settlements and venture deep into the Savannah to raid the black tribes, capturing large groups of slaves who are then dragged in chains to Caldeia and sent to the plantations or sold to foreigners.

Many of the slaves in the northern kingdoms and Tricarnia come from here. Raids into the Savannah are not the only method the Caldeians use to capture slaves; caravans of slavers periodically travel the infamous Slave Route, a road that goes from Caldeia, across the Verdant Belt, to the far mountains of Lhoban. Along the way, the slavers trade with the Ivory Savannah Tribes and the barbaric dominions of the Verdant Belt, bartering cheap weapons and Khav for slaves. These slaves are often members of the same population they are bought from, taken prisoner during bloody feuds between clans. The Caldeian slavers make sure they support different tribes, even rival ones, so that no unity can be achieved among the Ivory Savannah Tribes.

In the last few years, there have been attacks on the least-protected Khav plantations, causing heavy economic damage to Caldeia. The raiders are Ivory Savannah tribal warriors and mercenaries from the north. They also free slaves and conduct guerrilla attacks on Caldeian soil. These raids evolved into the current War of the Chain, which finally revealed the true enemies of Caldeia: the White King and the Savannah Tribes he has gathered around his banner.

**Event - A Vicious Habit.** The character got involved with Khav. How and why this happened is left to the player; maybe due to the loss of a loved one, to ease the pain of wounds or out of simple boredom. If the card drawn is red the hero managed to overcome his addiction in the end, and now is a lot wiser where drugs are concerned. He permanently gains +1 to Vigor rolls to resist to any type of toxic Lotus, but begins the next scenario with a level of Fatigue (which wears off after a week). If the card is black, the situation is far worse, and the character permanently gains the Habit (Khav) Hindrance. Characters with Lotuscrafter skills are well-aware of the risk of drugs, so they can draw another card, and use the most favorable color.

## THE CALEDLANDS

**Barges of the Dead.** The people living on the banks of the Godaxe River sometimes see crude canoes coming down the river, carrying a bundle of animal skins. If you are curious (or mad) enough to stop the canoe and open the bundle, you'll discover the body of a dead Caled, a chief or a druid, painted for war and with a perfectly round black opal upon their brow. These bodies, if left alone, will reach the Drowned King Sea, where they disappear forever.

Nobody knows why some Caleds are buried in this way, but there are rumors that robbing the corpses of their gems isn't a wise thing to do; the burglars, for one reason or



another, never survive long, but surely this is only a story, told by mothers to scare their children.

What really troubles the dreams of greedy people is the thought that somewhere in the Caledlands there must be a place full of these strange jewels, just waiting for a daring man to find it...

**Event – The Chosen One!** As mentioned above, Caleds are known to leave their woods periodically and go marauding in nearby lands looking for a specific person to take back to their land for unknown reasons. They are very skilled at this, and the player character had the misfortune of being one of their victims; but being a hero, he managed to escape, after a period of imprisonment. If the card drawn is red, he leaves unarmed and he even learns something: the character gains knowledge of the Caled language, including their drum code (see SEPC). If the card is black, the hero finally manages to slip away from his kidnappers, but not before being prepared for their unholy rituals. The character now has a Caled tattoo somewhere on his body, which makes him very sensitive to Caled magic (spells and powers of Caled origin receive a +2 bonus against him).

## THE CANNIBAL ISLANDS

**Lost Pages of Sorcery.** Stories say that, centuries ago, a forbidden tome of black magic, probably one of the most dangerous grimoires of the Dominions, disappeared from the library of the City of Princes in Tricarnia, a fake copy left in its place. It is called the Black Book of Keron, and this is a name even the most powerful warlocks whisper in a low voice, fearing to call evil forces down upon themselves. Over the centuries, several copies of this book have appeared around the Dominions, but they have always eventually been revealed as fakes. Recently, a feverish Sage of Syranthia, recovered by a Corsair vessel after a shipwreck, babbled that the Book of Keron, the real one, is hidden in the Tower Which Was No More, protected by the Guardian Who Cannot See. Nobody knows if the woman told the truth or not, because she died the same night she was rescued; but the strange amulet she held in her hand, even in death, was surely of Tricarnian origin.

**Event – Lotus of the Islands.** The character, for some reason, wanders alone for a while on one of the Cannibal Islands, which appear devoid of human life but are rich in plants never seen on the continent. During his peregrinations he finds some weird flowers or another type of Lotus, very powerful. He picks them up, and they count as three doses of a random Lotus concoction (decided by the GM). If the character is a Lotusmaster, the plant also grants him knowledge of a new trapping of his choice for a Power he already knows. But the island isn't empty as it appears; it is the home of a tribe of cannibals who chase the adventurer to eat him! If the card drawn is red, the hero deftly manages to escape the pursuers and get out of harm's way. If it is black, the escape is successful, but the hero loses two items of his Gear (one decided by the player and one by the GM).

## EKUL

**Raiders of the Black Flame.** Some months ago a new band of pillagers appeared in western Ekul. Shrouded in black caftans concealing their faces, and riding black horses with eyes red as fire, they came down from the Iron Mountains to steal, pillage and kidnap young girls.

The Mountaineers, as the barbaric tribes living in the rocky peaks west of Ekul are called, have never been very peaceful, and have always refused the authority of Zandor, and of King Eku. But these new raiders seem to be something more than simple bandits; first, they appear and disappear in a totally unnatural way, and second, they speak with a strange guttural accent, so they probably don't belong to the mountain clans. Vazara, a young woman who survived an incursion of these devils by hiding in the water well of her village, overheard one of them saying: "These sheep will feed

## THE CURSED CITY OF COLLANA

Collana, once the gem of Zandor, was the center of trade between the western dominions and the Far East. It was also the first city to face the might of the Valk hordes. They not only crushed, burned and razed it, but the Valkyria did something there – an unholy rite of tremendous power that summoned a legion of demons. Yet, when such a terrible force is awakened, it cannot be controlled, so the Valk were forced to leave Collana in the hands of demons. Some years ago, when Eku became king, several Lhoban monks, experts in battling these evil abominations, asked permission to try and stop the demons from expanding further. King Eku complied gladly, and for years the monks did their best to control Collana; but they are definitely losing their battle. Year after year, the evil things dwelling in the city multiply and grow stronger and, at night, strange terrors infest the roads and grasslands of the kingdom.

Immediately after the king's death, the creatures made a major attack, and a great number of the monks tasked with protecting the kingdom from such an evil were killed.

Who will protect the kingdom from that threat now?

## GAME MASTER'S GUIDE

the Black Flame well! She will burn strong again!”

Apparently nobody knows what this mysterious flame is, but when this phrase was reported to the monks guarding Queen Yasmine, they suddenly became very pale and sent an envoy to Teluk'Ammar, a city in southern Ekul.

**Event – Ride or Die.** The hero, for some reason, was left severely wounded in the northern Ekulian grasslands, doomed to die. Luckily, a party of Valk warriors found him, but this doesn't necessarily mean safety. For the steppe nomads, a man is worth saving only if he can still ride. If the card drawn is red, the character gathered all his strength and managed to stay in the saddle of a pony till he reached the Valk camp and his wounds were tended. He remained several months with the Valk, and gains Riding d6, or raises it by one die step (whichever is better). If the card drawn is black, the hero didn't manage to ride, and the Valk, despising him, bound him and dragged him behind a horse for several miles, before leaving him for dead. The adventurer survived, but is horribly scarred. He permanently gains the Hard to Kill Edge, but also receives the Ugly Hindrance (if already has it, he suffers an additional -2 to Charisma), and probably also develops a terrible hatred for Valk.

## FABERTERRA

**Conspiracies at the Palace.** The birth of the Imperial Twins (about which there are some rumors given the age of the Emperor, who today is seventy-five) apparently gave some stability to the Empire, but in reality it only made hidden enemies emerge. In the last few months there has been a murder attempt on them in the nursery, made by a member of the Seventh Phalanx itself, the imperial guard, and from that moment on Empress Telara only trusts Aska, the rough Northlander slave-woman who saved her two sons by killing the assassin with her bare hands.

But what really troubles Emperor Domestan is discovering who is behind the murder attempt: investigations by his spymaster reveal the assassin only recently joined the Phalanx, and he was from Jalizar. This could point the finger towards Daalaro, the Jalizaran Envoy, but it could also be a red herring. What is certain is that he was employing a dagger of Tricarnian bronze, a very uncommon weapon, but was paid in freshly-minted Syranthian coins. Obviously both the Tricarnian ambassador, Prince Valdokar, and the Syranthian Consul in Faberterra, Master Merchant Domarkos, vehemently declared their innocence. What is sure is that there is a still-unknown, very dangerous enemy in the very heart of the Empire, someone above suspicion, and who it is must be uncovered soon.

**Event – A Night in the Catacombs.** One night, the adventurer is wandering the streets of Faberterra and hears the sounds of fighting in a side alley. Curious, he investigates, only to see a lone

man, with a glint of metal in his hands, fighting against four red-robed cultists. Obviously the hero jumps in, defending the lone man. It isn't a difficult fight and afterwards the man reveals himself as a Smith Priest of Hulian, fighting against Tricarnian demon worshippers! But at this point another band of cultists arrives on the scene, and the adventurer and his new friend must escape to the old Catacombs under Faberterra. If the card drawn is red, the hero and the Priest manage to escape. The man, who doesn't reveal his name, teaches the adventurer the secret sign of the cult, used by Hulianites to identify each other. If the card drawn is black, the escape into the Catacombs ends badly: the Smith Priest is killed by the cultists, who clearly see the hero's face. From this moment on the adventurer has a new, powerful Enemy...

## THE FALLEN REALM OF KERON

**Flowers of Death.** In the Fallen Realm it rarely rains, but sometimes, no more than once every fifty years, dark, thick clouds, born from the fissures of the wounded earth and the hidden valleys, gather and release a dense, oily rain over the ruins. In these rare cases, over the next days a marvelous event happens: tall, grayish stems, with black buds, grow up in a single night, and for few hours Keron is covered in flowers. But they don't last long; after a day of sun, they die, and crumble into a thin, chalky dust. When the wind rises this dust is blown away, reaching the Red Desert or even the Independent Cities. Where the dust falls, the soil becomes barren for years, and the beasts or people touched by it grow sick and die, if they are lucky; otherwise they develop horrible mutations, both of the mind and the body. Such is the nature of the dreaded Flowers of Keron.

**Event – the Forbidden Tomb.** The hero, stranded during a sandstorm with Cartos, a Red Desert guide (or another NPC decided by the GM) takes shelter in an ancient Keronian ruin. It is a gloomy place, and the two wanderers, looking for water, stumble into a sealed tomb, which they open, looking for treasure. In the tomb they find a room full of gold and riches, in the middle of which there is an ancient Priest Prince, covered in jewels. The greedy Cartos touches the body and the evil creature wakes up, saying in a terrible voice: "Who are you, puny mortals, to disturb the sleep of Korar Shar?" And he strangles Cartos on the spot, before turning towards the hero!

If the card drawn is red, the adventurer manages to grab an item from the treasure (a ring, a book, a staff or something similar: it is a Relic, decided by the GM) and escape from the tomb, closing it behind him, the screams of the undead sorcerer fading in the darkness. If the card drawn is black, the hero escapes, but without taking any loot.

This event is ripe with consequences; in the next few months Korar Shar raises an army of Black Nomads and foul Keronian creatures, with the goal of conquering the southern Dominions (and getting back his Relic, which is the only item capable of permanently killing him, of course).

## THE FINGER ISLANDS AND THE COVE

**Pygmies of the Islands.** As everybody knows, far south in the Lush Jungle dwell the Pygmies, a diminutive race of treacherous forest dwellers, isolationistic and xenophobic. What few people know is that a colony of Pygmies exists in the Finger Islands too. Some stories say they are the descendants of the survivors of a Caldeian slaver's shipwreck, while others say they have always lived in this place. The only certain thing is that the Finger Pygmies (as they are called) are almost as dangerous as their Lush Jungle counterparts. Many clans have returned to the old tradition they followed when they were slaves of Keron, and now infest the ancestral ruins which dot the islands like gray-skinned rats.

**Event – Calatua's Tattoo.** One night, blind drunk, the hero is wandering around the Cove, when he stumbles on a strange tattoo parlor, run by a Finger Island witch called Calatua, who everybody fears.

But alcohol makes the hero bold and he insistently asks for a tattoo from her. When the hero wakes up the morning after, he has a new and very unusual tattoo (decided by the GM). Like all Calatua's tattoos, there is a touch of magic in it. If the card drawn was red Calatua's Tattoo will protect the hero, granting him the Luck Edge (or the improved version if he already has it), while if it is black the tattoo is imbued with a subtle curse, giving him the Bad Luck Hindrance (if the hero already has this, he now starts each session with two Bennies less).

Only Calatua can remove the tattoo, but rumors say that her parlor can be found only once in a lifetime, unless she wants you to find her...

## GIS, FREE CITY OF THE ALCHEMISTS

**The Golden Stalker.** Since the Forbidden Quarter of Gis was created (see SEGM), the people of Gis are never safe when they walk around by night. Firstly because the Forbidden Quarter's Guards strictly enforce the curfew in the areas near the Forbidden Quarter, secondly because people seem to disappear without trace if they wander too close to it. People whisper of a strange creature, a ghost made of gold, which kidnaps people and drags them into the Forbidden Quarter. So far, no-one has had a clear sight of it, but if you look at the traces it leaves, it is surely no ordinary person; it is very heavy, heavy enough to leave one-inch-deep footprints in the ground. This detail, which was somehow let slip by the guards, has created wild stories, all regarding the fabulous Park of Living Statues, a place where the First Alchemist of Gis used to keep her lovers, preserving them in stone and gold forever. But, as everybody knows, the palace of the First was destroyed in the Fire of Gis... wasn't it?

**Event – a Year and a Day.** The character, for some reason, becomes the servant of a powerful mage of Gis for the customary period, a year and a day. During this time, he sees and learns a number of strange, marvelous things. Literate characters can gain two die steps in Knowledge (Arcana), or one die step in an arcane skill they already know (Lotusmastery or Sorcery), or a new Power. Illiterate characters only receive a die step in Knowledge (Arcana). On the down side, the character's adventuring skills get rusty, so the GM selects one of the hero's skills per Rank and puts a dot near them on the character's sheet. Until the player spends a Bennie on them, they don't benefit from the Wild Die. At this point check the card color: if it is red, the hero and his mentor part on good terms, if it is black, something about their relationship was negative (maybe the hero was a slave, or tried to steal from the master or something similar) and from this moment on the adventurer gains a new Enemy (Minor). Note that since this event is quite powerful, the GM can ask the player to make his hero skip a scenario and use a replacement adventurer, to simulate the "year and a day" off adventuring.

## THE INDEPENDENT CITIES

**The Caravan of Tears.** After the liberation of Quollaba, the City of Gems is flourishing again under the wise rule of the new Queen, Zamira. It is so rich that every year, at the beginning of the autumn, a large caravan departs from Quollaba, visiting many other Independent Cities and ending in Hillias, where the marvelous gems of Quollaba, the famous Tears, are sold. The Caravan of Tears, as is called, is becoming more important every year, and this has caused a dispute with Korr of Teyerana and the Caldeians, because during the previous reign of Quollaba, Zanator the

Tyrant always sold the gems to them. Last year, in fact, the Caravan of Tears was attacked by unknown bandits, and never reached Hillias. This was a very hard blow to the economy of Quollaba, and one that could undermine the stability of Zamira's power. So this time, the Queen Zamira doesn't want to take any chances: she is organizing a strong fighting force to protect the caravan, hiring the best swords she can find in the region. The pay is good, but, as always, the risks are high...

**Event - "I Served Under You..."** This event is only appropriate for a hero with a fighter background. The adventurer enlisted in the army of some Independent City and, given his skills and wits, quickly climbed the ranks, ending in command of a unit of men. In game terms, the character gains a Leadership Edge of his choice, if he meets the requirements; otherwise he gets a die step in Knowledge (Battle).

But in the end, a military life wasn't for the hero, who resigned. The color of the card tells how: if it is red, he was honorably discharged, and can leave with a purse full of Moons (50/Rank is a suitable sum, to be added to his Savings) and, if he returns to the area, he will be welcome. With a black card, the outcome wasn't good at all: maybe he was found in the princess's bed, pissed off an important personality or something similar. The character only manages to escape with his gear, losing all his money (Savings included!) but with a good horse under him. If he ever goes back, he'll suffer the Wanted Hindrance (Major).



## THE IRON MOUNTAINS

**The Iskondor.** One of the most majestic engineering works of the Iron Empire, and a marvel of the world, like the Guardian of Askerios or the Great Library of Syranthia, the Iskondor is a tunnel passing under the Northern Range of the Iron Mountains, going more or less from Felantium to Northern Zandor. Built by the will of Empress Iskara, wife of Domestan IV the Dreamer, it was started in 2027 AF and required thousands of slaves and thirty years of work to be completed. At each end of the tunnel there are fortresses, surveying the massive steel-reinforced gates protecting the access to the underground passage; they are called, simply, South Guard and North Guard. Through these, merchants could once reach Zandor after a few days of marching. The tunnel exploited the network of old mines present in the mountains and there was even an underground outpost at the halfway point, called Iskara's Rest. The Iskondor was extensively used and did a lot for commerce, but all good things come to an end; in 2451 AF, at the height of the Valk invasions, the Iskondor represented a threat to the security of the Empire, because if captured by the barbarians it would have allowed them to swarm into Faberterra. So, when the Imperial Phalanxes left Jalizar during the Shameful Retreat, they were the last to pass through the Iskondor and the passage was sealed behind them.

Because it was impossible to destroy such a work in a few days, Emperor Domestan XII asked Thurna Dhull, a powerful Tricarnian sorcerer attending his court, to do something to make the

Iskondor impassable. The warlock bowed and obeyed: he reached the Iskondor in few hours using unknown means and then, after the last phalanx soldier had passed, he entered the Iskondor and stayed inside for three days and three nights.

Witnesses say that the sky went dark over the Iron Mountains and horrible screams were heard coming from the ancient tunnel while the warlock performed his forbidden rituals. "It is done," the dark sorcerer reported to the Emperor, and from that day on the Iskondor was a haunted place. A few months later a large Valk war host entered it, but they never came out. This was solid proof that Thurna Dull's magic worked. Over the years the Iskondor was forgotten, the two fortresses lie abandoned, and nobody knows what really happened, or is happening, under the mountains. It must be said that if today someone were to reopen the tunnel he would do a great service to the Empire. There are wild rumors on this topic. Some say that the Iskondor must not be opened otherwise the things inside will swarm out. Others say that the curse on the tunnel won't end till the death of the sorcerer who cast it, and given that warlocks live hundreds of years, you can bet that Thurna Dull is still alive, even if nobody knows where he is. The last story, the most widespread, is that there is an alternative route to the Iskondor, passing through the tunnels of an abandoned mine, but nobody really knows where it is...

**Event – the Ravings of a Madman.** The character, with a bad head wound, is captured by a tribe of wild Nandals. Usually they kill men (and reserve a worse fate for women) but the character is still dizzy from the head wound and raves, which impresses the Nandals, who think him a prophet of some sort. After recovering his wits, the hero takes care to continue playing a madman; he is kept in captivity by the tribe for a long season and finally, at the beginning of spring, when snow melts, he manages to escape. If the card drawn is red, the hero escapes with half his Gear (player's choice of which items), but he also gains a die step in Persuasion because he convinced the Nandals he was insane for a whole season. If the card is black, the adventurer manages to escape, but only with the clothes on his back and a single item of his choice. In both cases the hero learns a little of the Nandals' tongue, and can now speak it.

## THE ISLANDS OF THE MAIMED ONES

**The Penal Colony of Khoravis.** Recently a new settlement was made in the Islands of the Maimed Ones. It is a penal colony created and run by the infamous Syranthian noble Cathroas Val, who buys convicts from the jails of Kyros and Syranthia at low prices and is using them to dig a new mine there. The penal colony is a terrible place for several reasons: first it is run by the worst scum of the Dread Sea Dominions, ruthless mercenaries who keep the prisoners under control with violence and terror; second, the mine is a dark and dangerous place, inhabited by all sorts of evil beasts, and not a day passes but a convict dies or disappears in the tunnels. But even more than the guards, the convicts fear the creepy Tricornian sorcerer Orekor, who is always at Cathroas' side, and personally instructs the guards where they must dig. This raises another important question. Officially the mine was set up to dig iron ore, but so far the revenues have been very low, so people are starting to suspect it isn't metal Cathroas and his Tricornian associate are looking for, but something much more precious... and potentially dangerous. The presence of strangers has stirred up the barbarians of the islands, who sooner or later will try something against them. All the prerequisites for a big massacre in the colony are in place, and soon...

**Event – the Water of the Maimed Ones.** The hero stumbles on a strange spring of water in the depths of one of the islands. All around it there are carvings, crude statues and idols, because it is a holy place for the savage barbarians dwelling there. Even stranger, the water is warm, so that it



is surrounded by a faint cloud of steam. For some reason (maybe he is very thirsty, or is forced by someone), the adventurer drinks the water. The liquid comes from the very depths of the islands, and it will have very weird effects on the character. First he is feverish for three days, then when he wakes up, check the card's color: if it is red, his body reacted to the strange effect of the water in a positive way. The character permanently gains +2 to Vigor rolls to resist Fatigue, and opposed rolls against Powers and effects with shape-changing trappings. If the card drawn is black, it's bad news: he develops a minor but horrid mutation of some sort (for example he grows a sixth finger on his hand, or something similar), causing the Ugly Hindrance (at GM's decision, the mutation can be small enough that it can be concealed, so the penalty applies only when it is openly shown or discovered). This is the danger of drinking the Water of the Maimed Ones.

## THE IVORY SAVANNAH

**Shakara of the Lions.** There are stories that, deep in the Savannah, in the middle of the Plain of Lions, there is an ancient city, with walls made of alabaster and towers shimmering in gold, which is populated by a race of fierce warrior women. The stories say it was a normal place, ruled by men, till one day a warrior woman from the North, the amazon called Shakara, entered the city, and taught the women how to rebel and to fight.

In truth almost everything about Shakara is a mystery, because the Plain of Lions, surrounding the city, is very dangerous, populated by a large number of these very ferocious savannah hunters. The only ones capable of dealing with them are the amazons of Shakara themselves, who if the stories are true, have learned how to tame and use them as mounts. Shakara officially ignores the authority of the White King, like that of any man, but given that they are isolationists the women are being left to themselves for now. Another mystery about the amazons is how they reproduce: apparently they don't take slaves or male prisoners of any sort.

**Event – Hunting the Buffalo.** The hero passes some time, maybe a season, with a Savannah tribe, hunting buffalo. If the card drawn is red, the experience teaches the adventurer a lot, and he permanently raises his Stealth or Survival skill (player's choice) by one die step. If the card drawn is black, he learns the same tricks as above, but during a hunt, he is severely wounded by a buffalo, which leaves him with an ugly scar and a constant limp (the hero receives the *Lame Hindrance*). In both cases the hero receives, as a reward for his deeds, a tribal shield, plus, at the GM's discretion, he is considered a friend of the tribe he joined in the hunt.

## JALIZAR, CITY OF THIEVES

**The Strongbox of the *Lo Phen*.** One night, a week ago, the *Lo Phen*, a junk from far Lhoban, moored at the docks of the City of Thieves. This isn't uncommon, as ships from all over the Dominions arrive in Jalizar.

What it is strange, it is that the crew was composed entirely of monks, and that two of them were black dressed guys with blindfolded eyes, those the Lhobanese call *Blindseekers*. Neither the crew nor the *Blindseekers* went ashore, waiting for dawn.

At first light, a conspicuous group of guards from the Jan Tong, the Lhobanese crime gang ruling over the Brass Lanterns quarter, went to the ship, to meet their comrades, but they found all the crew killed, including three of the four *Blindseekers*, while the fourth wasn't present.

But what really made the heads of the Jan Tong mad was the fact that the cargo of the ship was missing. Rumors say that it was a single stone strongbox, the size of a large coffin, sealed with silver-

inlaid sigils.

Accusations were thrown, and the first suspect was obviously the Thieves Guild, which vehemently denied having anything to do with the theft. The situation between the two crime groups, the Jan Tong and the Thieves' Guild, is getting quite tense, but yesterday morning the mysterious crate was found, in a warehouse in the Rats' Nest. The coffin was open, and sprawled around it were the bodies of five notorious members of the Assassins' Guild.

The strongbox was, obviously, empty, but a strange smell came from it.

**Event - Running with a White Mouse.** Theft is one of the most profitable businesses in Jalizar, and it is under the control of the Thieves' Guilds, which take a big cut of their associates' earnings. But there are thieves working independently, and they are called White Mice to distinguish them from the guildsmen. Criminals twice over, White Mice are hunted by the Copper Helms, the city guard (because they have no protection), and by the Thieves' Guild (which doesn't like competition). The hero, thanks to a friend or a lover who is a White Mouse, has become a White Mouse himself, passing the last few months jumping over the rooftops of Jalizar, breaking into rich houses and doing a lot of very dangerous, but very profitable, things. But like everything in life, luck comes to an end sooner or later, so the adventurer decides to go for one last big theft before quitting. Check the card's color.

If it is red, the hero and his friend manage to carry out one last, spectacular theft, but after grabbing the loot, the hero's friend betrays him, disappearing with all the loot! The adventurer emerges from this story wiser, and gains the Acrobat Edge (if he meets the requisites) or can raise his Lock-picking or Streetwise skill (player's choice) by one die step.

If the card is black, the theft ends badly, very badly: the hero's friend is killed (or imprisoned or something worse), and the hero barely manages to escape. He has with him part of the loot (200 Moons/Rank) but now he has gained a powerful Enemy (Major) in the City of Thieves.

## KYROS

**They Hunt in the Dark.** War is terrible, and leaves a trail of bodies behind it: children, the elderly and women are the victims of whom nobody ever speaks, but losses among them are far more numerous than the soldiers who fall in battle. The wanderer crossing the kingdom will find the ghastly sight of entire fortified farming villages, depopulated and reduced to abandoned ruins, where only crows dwell. But there is something wrong about this; there are too many abandoned settlements, it isn't possible that all these people were killed by war and famine.

And, more importantly, where are the bodies? There are no tombs, either.

Rumors say that something much darker than war is at work in southern Kyros; something that prays on the weak during the night, dragging them away from their homes and taking them south, to the ancient city of Julaya, officially abandoned for many years, but in truth ruled by the enigmatic Mistress of the Dancing Shadows – a black woman of unnatural beauty, whom no-one has ever seen in person.

**Event - the Blessing of Etu.** This Event is suitable only for male heroes who were in Kyros in their past (if the player agrees this can be a fact added to his character's background). The character, when in a city or other settlement, is approached by two figures, a tall, emaciated one, shrouded in a dirty cloak, and a boy (or girl) of young age. The cloaked figure removes her hood, revealing a once-beautiful woman, aged by sickness and famine. She is Tarala (or another suitable NPC), a former lover of the hero, who left her years ago.

"My long-lost love," she says, coughing: "This is Arthos... your son."

This is a shocking revelation, which should be role-played in some way. Regardless of what the adventurer does, Tarala will die in a few days, leaving the boy in the hero's care, because he has no other living relatives. If the card drawn is red the young Arthos is a good lad, resourceful and willing; consider him a Sidekick of the hero, with the Young Hindrance. If it is black, Arthos is a troublemaker, lazy or there is some other dark aspect to him; he must be considered as a Dependent Hindrance (see SEPC) for his father. Look also at the suit of the card: if it is a heart or spade, Arthos really is the character's son, otherwise he isn't.

## THE LAND OF THE IDOLS

**Stone Town and the Stone Trail.** Due to the terrible war burning in Kyros, a number of people fled, looking for a safe place. Many of them met a terrible end in the Savannah, but a number crossed the borders of the Land of Idols and, strangely, nothing happened to them. In a few months they had founded a small settlement among the ruins, which is simply called Stone Town because of the strange shapes of the fallen idols and rocks of which it is made. Stone Town has no real government, but it is more or less run by Charos, a hulking man covered in scars, a gladiator who escaped from the fall of Azagara (a city in the south of Kyros) years ago, and Sister Histara, a one-eyed woman who claims to have been a priestess of Etu, even though she has never been seen praying.

Some months ago an important event happened in Stone Town. In the morning a Stilite, a very ancient monk, was found on a pillar. He spoke, in Syranthian: "Your days here are numbered. Leave now, while you can." His counsel was ignored, and the morning after the monk wasn't there anymore. People actually laugh at the story, but always with a bit of tension. Nevertheless, so far, nothing bad has really happened.

A few daring merchants are now trying to reach Lhoban crossing the Land of Idols, using Stone Town as a stopover, and it seems to be working. The new route, simply called the Stone Trail, isn't used much yet, but with the turmoil in Kenaton, it could become profitable.

**Event – the Wisdom of the Stylites.** The character decided, for some reason, to abandon mundane life for a while and become the Chela (the Lhobanese word for "disciple") of a Stylite. He abandoned all his gear, shaved his head, and stood at the foot of a column for a while, meditating and hearing the wise words of the holy man. If the card drawn is red, by the end of this period the character has managed to grasp some bits of wisdom and focus. If he has an Arcane Background, he gains the Power Points Edge for free, otherwise he raises Spirit by one die step. If the card is black, this period only worsens the doubts and inner fears of the disciple, because every night, he is forced to fight against the horrors attacking his master's pillar. He permanently gains the Yellow Hindrance. In both cases, the hero loses all his Gear, Savings included, and can only keep one item (of his choice).

## LHOBAN

**Salt, Blood and Iron.** Recently, there have been great discoveries in the Mountains of Lhoban: rich veins of iron and salt, both red as blood. Strangely, the first discovery happened a few weeks after the passage of the Sword of Hulian. Till today, the greatest export of Lhoban was wool, but with this latest discovery a new enterprise was born; the newly-found salt and iron are extremely good, and this attracted the interest of the merchant lords of Lhobanport, who quickly built a number of mines, which require a lot of manpower. They pay but a few coins, very few, but even this is much more than many herders gain in a full year of working with the yaks, so many of them have



abandoned their old way of life to work as miners. Today a number of boomtowns, populated by drunken miners, women of ill-repute and drinking holes are springing up, and many herds and small villages lie abandoned. This is having a very serious effect on the life of the mountain people; the Moons paid by the merchant lords aren't food, which is growing scarce now that the fields have been abandoned, and the specter of famine is hovering over the region, although people have much more money in their purses.

Lon Pah, one the most respected abbots of the mountains, recently sent an embassy to Lhobanport, saying: "Stop desecrating the holy ground of Lhoban immediately. You are starving your own people and angering the mountains themselves. Their vengeance will

strike soon, and your gold and silver won't protect you."

The merchant princes ignored these words; now that there is no Enlightened One anymore, they fear the monk caste much less than before. Nevertheless, they are starting to import slaves from Caldeia, because they are cheaper than the local manpower, and more easily controlled. If something doesn't change soon, in the next few centuries Lhobanport could become another Caldeia or Tricarnia...

**Event – the Flower of Arkasha.** The hero gets lost in the Mountains of Lhoban during a snow storm, and wanders, freezing and on the verge of death, for several days. Then, he finds shelter in a grotto made of pure ice. In the light of a torch he sees one of the marvels of the Dominions, the pale flower of Arkasha. This legendary Lotus owes its name to Princess Arkasha, who fled into the Mountains to escape the lust of the winged demon Haakon. She died in the ice, but from her bones a pale flower blossomed, the Lotus of Arkasha. The hero was incredibly lucky to find this plant, but first check the card color. If it is red, the adventurer takes a single dose of the Lotus without any problems, but if it is black, the cold he suffered exacts a terrible toll on him: at the player's discretion, his nose is destroyed by frost (and the hero gains the Ugly Hindrance) or frostbite costs him some fingers (and the hero suffers from the All Thumbs Hindrance) or, if he has one, his henchman dies in the snow. As a partial compensation, the character obtains two doses of the Flower of Arkasha (see sidebar).

## THE LUSH JUNGLE

**The Lord of Heads and Maggots.** There are rumors that on an islet somewhere in the Anaconda River, in the depths of an old temple, dwells Xarar Ikar, a half-Pygmy, half-Ivory Savannah tribesman. His name, which is feared by the Pygmies themselves, means Lord of the Heads, because that is what Xarar really is. A headhunter and man of power, Xarar knows the ancient, forbidden spells to make the severed heads of dead people speak to him, and many are the mysteries he has learnt from these crumbled lips, secrets of life and secrets of death. There are whispers that more than one man, princes and kings included, has asked for Xarar's services, and more than one man suffered a terrible fate, because the Lord of the Heads always asks for a price, and a dark one. Xarar isn't a man like other men; stories say he is centuries old, and occasionally gets fond of acquiring new heads. Nowadays, he rarely gets them by himself, because he has a number of dark followers at his service, the most dangerous ones being a tribe of Pygmies called the Gikaraluka, which in their tongue means "maggots", who consider him a god and are ready to obey his orders.

**Event – the Fever Spirit.** One of the most insidious dangers of the jungle is fever; dozens of types of these illness exist, many of them don't even have a name, and they are often deadly. Pygmies believe that fevers are powerful spirits, in certain cases good, in others evil, which sometimes "visit" the body of a mortal. The hero got one of them, and spent several days delirious and sweating, but managed to survive somehow. If the card drawn is red, there is something true in the Pygmies' stories, and the character visited by the fever experienced strange visions of a forgotten past, granting him inexplicable knowledge. In game terms, he benefits from the Sage Edge (ignoring prerequisites), which he can use five times, then it disappears. If the card is black, the fever simply left him very, very weak. His Vigor die is reduced by one die step for the next session.

## HERO'S JOURNAL: THE FLOWER OF ARKASHA

This mythical plant can cure any wound, and even call back one of the fallen from the dark lands of death, if used within the Golden Hour. At the GM's discretion, certain illnesses (those that are useful for the plot) cannot be cured by the Flower of Arkasha. This plant is almost unique and of inestimable value; probably a good price for it would be 10000 Moons.

## NORTHEIM

**The Graveyard of the Giants.** There is a vale, deep in Northeim, which is always shrouded in a thick fog. The few people who visited it and came back alive say that there is a forest of dead trees in it, black as the fingers of a witch, but that isn't its scariest feature: scattered on the ground all around the vale there are the remnants of old bones and ancient weapons of titanic size, belonging to a race of giants. According to the old tales, the Giants, as they are called, were a strong clan of the past, blessed by the Lord of Thunder, but in days of yore two brothers, Arthor and Berral, lords of the land, fought for Wynna, a woman who, the skalds tell, "had braids blonde as gold and a voice sweeter than the sound of a harp".

Their rivalry dragged the whole clan into a feud, which ended in the extinction of the race. Somewhere in the vale there must still be their ancestral castle, where all the riches of the Giants lie, and if the skalds' tales are true, Wynna still waits for one of her suitors to come back to her. So far, nobody has managed to find it.

**Event - Kronn's Forge.** The hero is trapped by winter weather in a solitary farmstead in the Northlands. It belongs to Kronn, a close-mouthed, lame smith, one of the best in the region, who was trained many years ago in the Monastery of the Hammer. If the card drawn is red, the hero and Kronn get acquainted, and the adventurer passes the whole winter with him, hearing his old stories and helping him in the forge. If the character meets the requisites, he gains the Smith Edge, otherwise he receives two die steps in Knowledge (Legends and Lore), up to a maximum of d8. If the card drawn is black, the adventurer arrives at Kronn's home when the old man is out, and starts rummaging through his stuff. When Kronn returns, he finds the adventurer with his best sword in hand, takes him for a thief, and attacks the character! In the fight the adventurer accidentally kills the smith, and must flee because Kronn's seven grandsons are looking for his head (he gains the Enemy (Major) Hindrance), but he can keep Kronn's sword (or another suitable weapon): it is incredibly sharp and grants +2 to damage rolls.

## THE RED DESERT

**The Lighthouse in the Desert.** Many are the real dangers in the Red Desert, without the need to create new, imaginary ones; still, the desert nomads swear this story is true, so we retell it as it is heard around their campfires.

Sometimes, during moonless nights in the desert, you might hear an unnatural, swishing sound and then see a blue light on the horizon, coming from a faraway tower. When this happens the wise man turns his horse and rides away as fast as he can, because he is seeing the dreaded Lighthouse of Tel Vashra, which in ancient times, before the fall of the Dread Star, helped ships to find a safe heaven. Yes, ships, you heard right, because, according to this story, Tel Vashra was on the coast, millennia ago, and the sound you heard before was that of the waves. But today the Lighthouse of the Desert isn't a sign of protection anymore: the fools who follow its light disappear forever.

**Event - the Dance of the Seven Veils.** This event is different depending on whether the character is male or female, but both of them involve the harem of the powerful Blue Clan lord, Hasharo.

A female heroine is captured by the men of the desert, who sell her to the clan lord, who is known to live in a fortified oasis, with a lot of guards and a dozen beautiful concubines. The heroine is forced to become one of them, and she is harshly taught the Dance of the Seven Veils, to appease the fat's man appetite. In the end the adventuress manages to escape from the hands of the lustful lord, but how she manages to do it depends on the card's color. If it is red the heroine escapes without problems, and she also gains the Temptress Edge (the teachings of the harem girls weren't so useless after all), if the card is black the adventuress has to kill a number of guards and maim Hasharo a little (only a little!), but now she has a powerful Enemy (Major) in the Red Desert, who will do anything he can to get her back.

For a male hero the situation is different: he was hired to rescue Valala, one of the girls in Hasharo's harem, but this isn't an easy job. He sneaked inside and even managed to spy upon a Dance of the Seven Veils but the mission ends badly. If the card drawn is red, he was dogged by misfortune: the rope used to scale the harem's walls broke, the guards were in the wrong place at the wrong time and so on. He curses so much on this mission that he permanently gains a die step in Taunt. If the card drawn is black, the situation is even worse, because Valala doesn't want to be rescued and alerts



the guard herself! The adventurer manages to escape but he is so grumpy that he gains the Mean Hindrance for the next two sessions. Oh, and he gets no reward!

## SYRANTHIA

**A Snake in the Shadows.** There is a new hidden, threat in Syranthia; it crept in from Kyros a couple of years ago, and has a name, though only the sages know it: Caudru.

The Caudru are a race of intelligent snake people, very ancient, and very rare. They can assume human form, and can easily mix with mankind. In antiquity they were a servant race of the Keronians, which used them as pleasure slaves and concubines. A Caudru's bite, in fact, is poisonous, but in small doses, the poison gives great pleasure, and causes a deep dependency. Nobody knows how and why the Caudru finally came out of hiding, but they are spinning a web of servants, and of their own kind, in all ranks of Syranthian society, and they have probably already infiltrated the government, the cult of Etu and the Great Library of Syranthia.

**Event – the Taster.** The character was hired for a very easy task, to be the bodyguard of a rich (and very fearful) merchant, Master Aro, who is convinced he is the target of an assassination attempt by a rival, Master Valantio. Master Aro doesn't leave his house (so great is his fear), so the main task of the adventurer is tasting the merchant's food, to prevent him being poisoned. If the card drawn is a diamond, no poisoning attempt is made, and the hero gains his pay at the end of the month (50 Moons/Rank). If it is a heart, an assassination attempt is made (actually the culprit is

Aro's son), but the hero manages to stop it, and he is paid a huge sum by the merchant (200 Moons/Rank). If it is a spade there is no assassination attempt, but the hero gorges himself with food for a month, receiving the Obese Hindrance (for the next two sessions), and is dismissed unpaid by the dissatisfied merchant. If it is a club, there is a poisoning attempt (by the rival merchant, Valantio), and the hero suffers from it: he starts the next scenario sickly (reduce his Vigor by one die step for the next two sessions) but he permanently gains +1 to Vigor rolls to resist poisons.

## TRICARNIA

**The Red Plague.** Tricarnia has never been a very healthy place. The rice fields, actually little more than swamps, bring illnesses, and amassing a great number of slaves in the same place always brings the risk of pestilence. But nothing is as virulent and dangerous as the Red Plague.

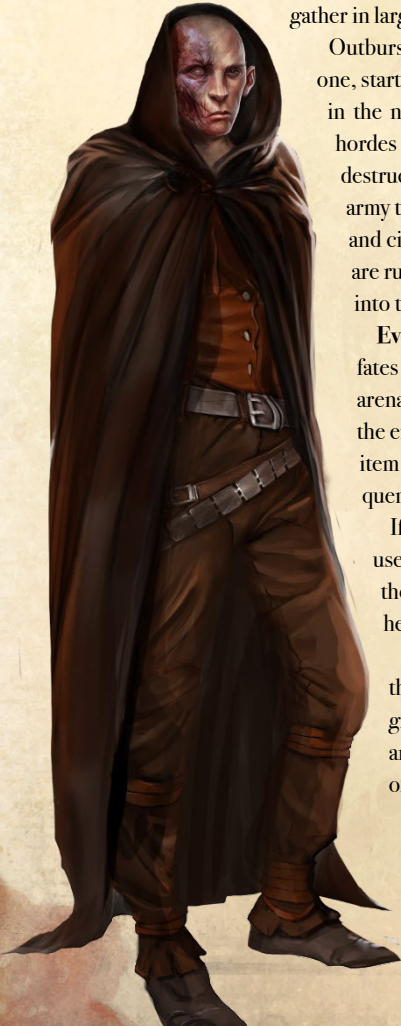
Stories say that the first Red Plague was summoned many centuries by Hordanas, the greatest queen of Tricarnia, to wipe out her hated enemies, the Princesses of Nal Hamar. This malady manifests in terrible pustules which blow off in a mass of infected blood. Even if the victim survives, he is transformed into a Red Touched, an unfortunate being who slowly rots away over the years that he still has to live. In many cases the malady hits the mind of the victim before the body, making him mad and vicious. These Red Bringers, as they are called, gather in large hordes bringing damage and ruin across the land.

Outbursts of Red Plague periodically appear in Tricarnia, but the last one, starting only two years ago, is of epic proportions: it seems it started in the north, near the ruins of Nal Hamar, and today three different hordes of bloodthirsty Red Bringers are roaming the land, bringing destruction and mayhem. The High Prince himself is employing his army to stop them, but his slave soldiers are not enough: many Princes and cities are on their own, fighting to protect their land, while there are rumors that at least one of the hordes of Red Bringers has crossed into the Borderlands.

**Event - in the Arena!** The adventurer suffered one of the worst fates possible in Tricarnia: he was made a slave and thrown into the arena, to fight and die for the amusement of the Priest Princes! In the end he managed to escape (losing all his Gear apart from a single item of his choice), but the experience wasn't without other consequences.

If the card drawn is red, the hero actually learned a number of useful things about fighting, although in the harshest way: he gains the Former Gladiator Edge, if he has the prerequisites, otherwise he can raise his Fighting skill by one die step.

If the card drawn is black, the hero managed to escape, but there is now a strange device on his neck: a bronze collar, engraved with sorcerous runes, which he can't manage to remove in any way. Apart from branding him as a slave, it is a dangerous item of power, an Enslaving Collar (see page 48).





## HERO'S JOURNAL: THE NATURE OF THE RED PLAGUE

Stories say that the Red Plague was caused by Hordanas, the Daughter of Hordan, the most infamous queen of Tricarnia, who placed a terrible curse on her own blood and spilled it into the swamp's waters.

This explanation is contested: recently Fildago, a Sage of the Library of Syranthia, proposed that the real cause of the Plague could be totally different: his theory is that the Red Plague is a minuscule Lotus spore, called the Red Lotus of Death, which exists naturally in the air, but takes root only in certain conditions. When this happens, the plant infests whatever is available: beasts, plants, men, even stones and soil.

According to Fildago, discovering what conditions activate the spores is the key to curing the illness. Fildago's theories were rejected as gibberish by the other sages of the Great Library of Syranthia, but instead of convincing him to desist, this made him more determined to pursue his research.

Unluckily Fildago disappeared many years ago; he embarked on a ship bound from Kenaton to Caldeia, a vessel that never arrived at its destination.

Recently, the massive new outburst of pestilence has caused new rumors to spread about its nature.

Some say the malady is the will of Hordan, and is a manifestation of her displeasure with the current High Prince, Ivakor, considered by many to be too weak and melancholic, while others say it is an effect of the passage of the damned Sword of Hulian across the sky, and a few say it is all a plot by the sinister cult of Baachaga, which is finally ready to seize power in Tricarnia.

But the most disturbing rumor is that in the weeks before the start of the plague, in the ruined tower of Tel Askora, the ancient citadel of Caldaios the Cruel before he fled from Tricarnia to found Caldeia, strange lights were seen alight for the first time in five hundred years...

## THE TROLL MOUNTAINS

**The Pale Damsel.** A lone hunter or traveler may stumble into a very unusual meeting, among the cold mountains: one with a pale young girl, with eyes blue as mountain lakes and hair the same color as the snow. Despite the terrible weather, Vatali, for that is her name, is dressed only in a thin dress of unknown fabric, but she doesn't seem to suffer from the cold. Vatali usually asks the traveler for help, and tries to lead him away from the path.

She must not be followed, because Vatali isn't what she seems: Old Cairnlander men say she is the daughter of the Troll King, who lures people to her father's realm. There, the ugly beast devours the liver of the unfortunate one, because he always needs a new one to continue living. Northlander Skalds, instead, say that Vatali is a Gara Onaga, the Northlander word for the spirits of the land, exiled from the Northlands many centuries ago, and that she lures mortals into her underground realm for a night of passion and love. The problem is that, at dawn, the unfortunate lover will discover that a century has passed in the mortal world.

The truth is that nobody really knows who or what Vatali is, but what is certain is that she fears only two things: fire and salt. If you ever cross paths with her, make her an offer of these two things and your life will be spared, or, at least so the legend says.

**Event - Hunting in the Troll Mountains.** The hero knows it was a bad idea, but nevertheless he got involved in a dangerous expedition in the Troll Mountains. Maybe there is some serious

reason to do it, like rescuing a kidnapped person, or maybe it is only a foolish show of courage. Whatever the reason, in for a penny, in for a pound, as the saying goes, and the hero managed somehow to save his skin. If the card drawn was red, he also learnt a couple of things about hunting and survival. The character can raise his Tracking or Survival skill (player's choice) by one die step. If the card is black, the hero had a very bad encounter with a Troll or another scary beast, and was wounded. He killed the creature, but now he has a limp for the rest of his life (he receives the *Lame Hindrance*).

## VALKHEIM

**The Wandering City.** Valk don't build cities. They usually wander the steppes and grasslands, following the herds, their homes being the yurt, a tent made of wool or cured horsehide, which can be set up or torn down in a few hours. Clans aren't very big, not more than twenty or thirty yurts, except during wars when the clans gather for battle.

For this reason, Govarak, the Wandering City, is an incredible thing to see: made of hundreds and hundreds of yurts, this enormous encampment is composed of the followers of Deserjaas. At the center of it there is a temple, made of tents, where the new lord of the Valk worships his evil patron, Sha-Mekri. At night strange lights and terrible howls come from it, and when that happens, it means Deserjaas and his Valkyria are performing their unholy rites. Even the strongest warrior shivers then.

The Wandering City moves quite slowly, but constantly: the herds necessary to sustain it literally consume the land where they pass and it cannot stay more than a few days in the same place. One day, if it is the will of Sha-Mekri, the Govarak will reach Faberterra, and that day will be the end of the Iron Empire.

**Event - Taming the Wild Stallion.** Valk ride small ponies of the steppe, but they aren't the only horses living on the wild plains of Valkheim: another race of larger wild horses exists, probably created by interbreeding between Valk ponies and local horses. These beasts, while not as tough as the Valk ponies, are strong and fast, but also wild and ill-tempered. The hero has the chance to find, capture and break one of these beasts. If the card drawn is red, the adventurer obtains a riding horse of excellent quality, with +2 Pace and Vigor raised by one die step, which is a *Right Hand*. If the card is black the adventurer gets the horse, but he also has a band of Valk warriors (a minor *Enemy*) at his heels, who want to steal it.

## THE VALK STEPPE

This land is only the first, little chunk of the Far East, where whole hordes of Valk clans and other strange populations live. Very little is known about them.

## THE VERDANT BELT

**The Long Hand of Caldeia.** Recently, due to the War of the Chain between Caldeia and the White King, the sons of Caldaios have subtly changed their politics in the Verdant Belt, in an attempt to get more and more tribes on their side. They have done this in two ways.

First, they augmented the quantity and value of their gifts to the local lords, mainly weapons and Khav, to make them stronger in battle, but also to make them dependent on Caldeia's drugs.

Second, they are trying to plant a Caldeian counsellor near each of the most important rulers,

usually a military officer or, in certain cases, a priest, to keep them under control.

The reason for this change is evident: Caldeia is plotting to use the Verdant Belt tribes against the Ivory Savannah clans and their ruler, the White King.

Luckily, not every chief of the Belt is falling into Caldeia's trap, but a number of them have, the most important being Ulemu the Great, King and Wise Hand of the Lemutu People, who controls a big fortified village directly on the Slave Route.

The White King is aware of this tactic, and is sending envoys to secure the fidelity, or at least the neutrality, of the remaining clans, with the result that the Verdant Belt is splitting in two, and soon the green fields and plains will be red with the blood of its own sons.

**Event – the Champion.** One of the customs typical of the Verdant Belt is the tradition of champions' duels. These fights, usually to the death, are used to settle problems and disputes between individuals and clans. Although they appear bloodthirsty to strangers, in truth they spare a number of lives, because these duels are made, in certain cases, in place of wars, and the outcome of these combats are considered holy and inviolable. Tradition allows people to hire a champion to fight in their place, and this is what happened to the hero; he was hired to fight as champion of the Zanambi village against the champion of the Valari village. The two villages have quarreled for years over the possession of a water spring. If the card drawn is red, the character managed to win the duel and dispatch the opponent's champion: he is rewarded handsomely (100 Moons/Rank and a beautiful slave of the GM's choice) and now receives +1 Charisma in the Verdant Belt, due to his reputation as a champion.

If the card drawn is black, the hero couldn't resist cheating: he made a pact with the opposing champion, who "killed" him in a staged combat, and handsomely rewarded the character with 200 Moons/Rank. The bad news is that the Zanambi tribesmen discovered the ruse, and to exact vengeance on the hero had Oba the witch (a very powerful shaman) cursed him. The curse can take many forms, but two are suggested. If the card drawn is spades, the hero starts developing a chronic illness (as per the Anemic Hindrance), while if it is a club, the hero is hit by misfortune, as per the Bad Luck Hindrance. Finding a way to lift the curse requires first finding Oba and then persuading her in some way...

## ZANDOR

**The Lost City of Zand.** The very name of Zandor derives from Zand, which was a city built somewhere in the region, and ruled by the legendary Mages of Zand, beings so powerful that they rivaled the sorcerers of ancient Keron. Rumors say that the last Mage of Zand was the real person who founded the city of Gis, but this is unconfirmed, as is the story that they were destroyed by the gods because they were too powerful.

Although many people doubt the existence of Zand there are a number of signs dotting Zandor hinting that Zand really existed, though perhaps not in the form people believe in today: for example, many ancient buildings and stones are marked with a strange carving representing an hourglass, which is the symbol of Zand (in ancient Zandorian, Zand means "time").

Over the centuries many people have looked for Zand, but if anyone managed to find it, he never said so: legends say it is a place filled with mysteries and dangers, holding "a weapon capable of making a man emperor and god", whatever this might mean.

**Event – a Wolf Among Wolves.** One of the greatest plagues of Zandor is banditry. Groups of brigands and highwaymen infest the land, preying on anyone weaker than them. Many of these rough fellows are simply the survivors of some fallen city destroyed by Valk, but this doesn't make

them less mean. For some reason, the hero joined a band of bandits for a while. Maybe he did this willingly, or by chance (for example he was captured and had to join the band), but whatever happened, he quickly rose through the ranks, becoming the commander. The adventurer gains the Command Edge. In the end the hero leaves the band, returning to his old life, but how this happens depends on the color of the card drawn.

If it is red the hero leaves the band on amicable terms, under the command of a trusted ally. When in Zandor, the character gains the Connections Edge with his former comrades.

If the card drawn is black the character was deposed by an envious lieutenant, who stabbed him in the back and left him for dead. The character loses all his Gear (except for a single item of his choice), and begins the next game with two Wounds (one of them still within the Golden Hour, the second not) and a strong urge for revenge...



An illustration showing two men in a stone archway. The man on the left is smiling broadly, wearing a fur-trimmed coat and holding a lute. The man on the right is looking at him with a serious expression, holding a scroll. The scene is framed by a rough, torn paper edge.

# RUNNING BEASTS & BARBARIANS

"AND NOW, DIRTY FEET, TELL ME WHERE  
THE GOLD IS HIDDEN AND MAYBE I'LL  
GRANT YOU THE DEATH OF THE LAMB."

- Kumal the Smiling, Valk rider, being merciful

This chapter and the following ones contain hints and tips for the Game Master on how to run *Beasts & Barbarians*. Players should stop reading now, lest the gods strike them blind!

## SETTING THE MOOD

*Beasts & Barbarians* is explicitly a sword and sorcery setting, quite different from the usual high fantasy worlds.

Here are the key themes of this world.

### PULP

Bare-chested heroes fighting ugly, multi-eyed monsters! *Beasts & Barbarians* is a setting that falls squarely into the pulp genre, complete with larger than life heroes. It should be visual and

colorful.

## HEROIC

Pulp worlds and characters tend to be magnificent, encountering great dangers and equally great rewards. So the heroes don't explore a small goblin cave to find 12 copper coins. Instead, they venture through an ancient, moss-covered temple, where frog-shaped worshippers of a forgotten god guard a gold idol big enough to pay the ransom of a king! It can be worth ten thousand Moons, but it really doesn't matter: the characters will spend most of their money on booze, so there is no need to be stingy.

## GRITTY

*Beasts & Barbarians* is a harsh world. So, don't be soft on your heroes: slavery, treachery and being stripped of everything are common occurrences.

## FEARFUL MAGIC

*Beasts & Barbarians* isn't a world where you buy a magical sword from the local smith. Magic is present, but it is hidden, rarely fully understood, and most importantly, it cannot be trusted. Even a skilled sorcerer should feel shivers down his spine as he summons an otherworldly creature.

## NOT JUST COMBAT: CHASES

Fighting monsters is important in sword and sorcery, but it must not be abused. There are a lot of other interesting things to do, while remaining focused on the action. Think of action movies: the actual fighting scenes are only a small part of the story, but the heroes are pursued by enemies, risking their lives running at breakneck speed across unstable bridges, trying to get away from impossible-to-beat creatures, or chasing elusive acrobat thieves across the city's rooftops. *Savage Worlds* has an excellent Chase system. Use it to spice up a scene and give your players an adrenaline rush.

## NOT JUST COMBAT: EXPLORATION

Many places the heroes will visit are extremely dangerous: temples full of traps, deep jungles, merciless deserts, haunted forests, and so on. Exploring and understanding them is fun for many players and sometimes finding water and food in a desolate place or avoiding a lethal trap with skill and brains is more rewarding than bashing monsters with swords.

## NOT JUST COMBAT: INTERACTION

The world doesn't only include people who kill and people who sell weapons. The heroes should meet at least one interesting personality in each adventure. And remember, these characters have motivations and feelings. For example, a prince who hires the heroes to stop a bandit lord will not be happy at all if, when the group comes back with the severed head of the outlaw, he discovers that the bandit chief is in truth his son, bewitched by evil magic. He might condemn the heroes to death, creating an unsuspected twist in the adventure. Swords and sorcery personalities tend to be larger than life: an evil tyrant is extremely evil, a charming courtesan is incredibly fascinating, a vengeful warrior is obsessively vindictive. In addition, don't forget the characters' background: sometimes meeting an NPC from the hero's past can add a lot to the story. Similarly, don't forget to use the NPCs the players create during the After the Adventure phase and, if you think your players are responsible enough, give them some control over their NPCs.

## COMBAT! COMBAT! COMBAT!

When combat breaks out, it must be interesting. Even if you don't use miniatures (though we suggest you do), try to put a twist in every fight. No combat should happen in an empty, colorless space. Let the players invent cool props for tricks, but try to always include in the scene something to inspire them. For example, a fight in a jungle ruin will have vines which the characters can use to jump and half broken columns that they can let fall onto their opponents, and so on. Try to be open to the players' ideas and don't be shy with Bennies, if it helps to keep the game cinematic. Also remember that not every combat must be won, and not all victories come from pure strength in battle. Some monsters have immunities the heroes must discover, or must be tricked in some way to be overcome.

## MINIMALIST

The scenario doesn't necessarily have to involve saving a kingdom or destroying a powerful demon. Some good stories have a very humble beginning and setting and are very limited in space and time.

Imagine the heroes stopping at an inn in a remote area. One of them chats with a boy, the local stable hand. During supper, a terrible scream is heard coming from the stable. The innkeeper, customers and heroes run to the stable and find that some rotten planks have broken, revealing an old well into which the young boy has fallen. Nobody knew it was there. The boy is wounded, but still alive.

The heroes are about to fetch their ropes to save him when the lad screams in terror! What is happening below, in the darkness?

## VARIETY

There is nothing more boring than replaying the same adventure over and over again. If the last scenario was a fight to defend a village from Valk raiders, don't propose a second battle adventure, unless there is a strong hook leading to it, but try something different. So, for example, if the Valk raiders were successfully driven out, start the next adventure with the heroes as prisoners of a Valk warlord, who ambushed them as they were leaving the village. To punish them for interfering with his campaign, the evil warlord leaves the party chained and stripped of all their equipment in an old ruin by the sea, which is flooded by the tide every day. Then, with an evil laugh he bids them farewell and leads his horde to the village, to finally destroy it. The heroes must free themselves before the tide rises and run back as fast as possible to save the village once again.

Also, if you feel the players are annoyed by the Savings rule, allow them to keep all the money after an adventure and propose an unusual purchase, such as a merchant ship or a remote estate, totally changing the mood of the campaign. Whatever you do, try to be unpredictable.

## GROUP SIZE

The best number of players to play a RPG is usually between four and six players plus a Game Master, and four is often seen as the "perfect" number. If you play the scenarios proposed in the future installments of this series, you'll find they are designed for a group of four characters, but easily scalable for bigger or smaller groups, because the number of opponents is usually presented in the "X bandits per hero" format, where X is a number. Nonetheless, very small groups require a little more tweaking, detailed below.

## THE HEROIC DUO

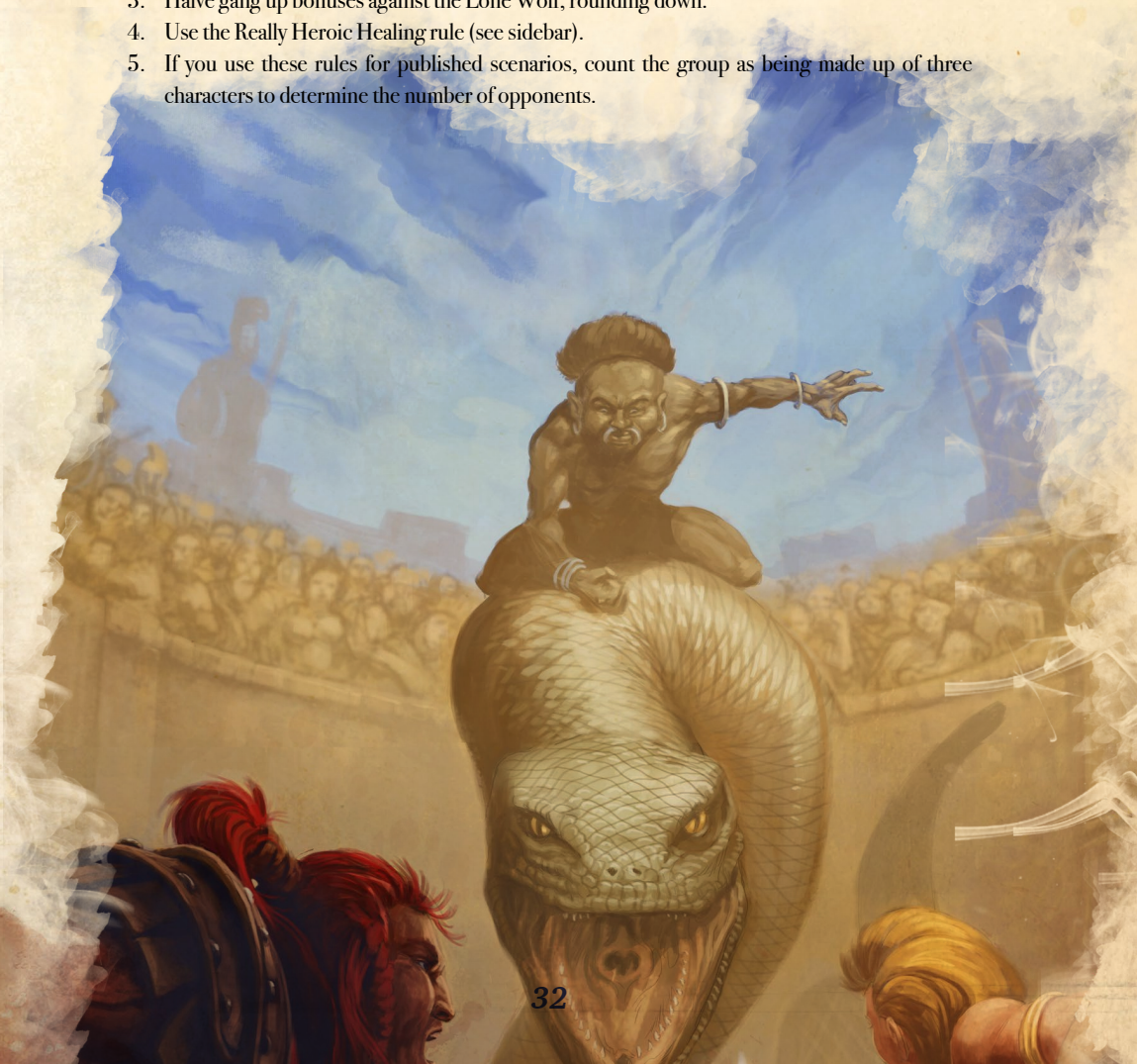
Sword and sorcery works very well with only two player characters. To keep the game balanced but heroic at the same time, if your group includes only two heroes, you might consider doing the following:

1. Start the heroes with 10 extra Experience Points (usually 30 Experience Points).
2. Let heroes automatically benefit from the Common Bond Edge.
3. Use the Heroic Healing rule (see sidebar).
4. If you use these rules for published scenarios, count the group as being made up of four characters to determine the number of opponents.

## THE LONE WOLF

The lone barbarian hero is a staple of many heroic fantasy stories. So, a Game Master and a single player can play a satisfying game even in a one-to-one situation, with the following rule changes:

1. The Lone Wolf begins his career with 20 extra Experience Points (usually 40 Experience Points).
2. The Lone Wolf starts each session with an additional Bennie.
3. Halve gang up bonuses against the Lone Wolf, rounding down.
4. Use the Really Heroic Healing rule (see sidebar).
5. If you use these rules for published scenarios, count the group as being made up of three characters to determine the number of opponents.





## ALTERNATIVE HEALING RULES

The following Healing rules should be used only in really cinematic games or when the group is very small.

**Heroic Healing.** After a fight, each hero is allowed an unmodified Vigor roll. With a success, he recovers a Wound (or a Fatigue level, player's choice), two with a raise. This represents the character "shrugging off" wounds and is in addition to the normal Healing rolls.

**Really Heroic Healing.** Like Heroic Healing, but the character automatically recovers one Wound with a failure, two with a success, and three with a Raise. Only with a critical failure does he recover no wounds.

## HEROIC INCAPACITATION

Heroes of sword and sorcery are rarely maimed and are usually back on their feet really quickly. So, for a more pulpy game, apply the following modifications to the incapacitation rules. What follows is only meant for Wild Cards.

**Injuries are Never Permanent.** Broken bones are back in shape after each adventure unless a player willingly accepts a permanent injury. In this case, as compensation he gains a free Edge at the start of the new adventure, if he justifies it story-wise.

**Faster Natural Healing.** Cut all natural healing times by half. So a hero makes a natural healing roll after two days. If you apply this rule, remember to apply the effects of related Edges: so for example, under this rule a character with Ghoulblood (natural healing after two days) rolls every day.

## EXTREME ACTIONS

In the Dread Sea Dominions, heroes die with a sword in their hand and a curse on their lips. When a hero is Incapacitated, make the usual Vigor roll and apply the results as normal, then the player can choose one of following options. Given the power of these options each player can only use them once per session.

### AVENGE ME, MY FRIEND(S)!

The hero can distribute all his Bennies (minimum one) to his allies within his Command Radius.

### WITH MY LAST BREATH

Even if the hero should be dead, the sheer force of his will allows him to act as normal for another round, ignoring all the wound penalties. At the end of that round he automatically passes out, as for failing a Vigor roll on the Incapacitation table, or dies (if the previous roll indicated such a destiny).

### THE CURSE OF A DYING MAN

Any hero with an Arcane Background can throw a terrible curse on his opponent before going down. Unless the GM states otherwise, it is a lower Trait spell, cast using the Spirit score of the incapacitated hero as the Arcane Skill. If the hero is actually dying, he receives +4 to the Spirit roll, and the curse is permanent. Each hero can only use this option once each Rank.

## SILLY CAMPAIGN EDGES

The following are example Edges only used in Humorous Games. There is no need for a full plethora of silly Edges; a couple are usually enough to set the mood of a campaign.

### BARBARIAN BELCH (COMBAT EDGE)

**Prerequisite:** Novice, Vigor d8+

Many barbarians have a soft spot for alcohol, but this hero is a true professional at swallowing enormous quantities of booze. This causes him some digestive problems, but also grants him a powerful belch, very similar in sound and intensity to the love call of the Norheim elk. As an action, the hero can belch at a nearby enemy, stunning him with the powerful fumes of his alcoholic belly. This is an opposed Vigor roll, and if the hero wins the enemy is Shaken.

The hero has +2 to the roll if he drank at least a tankard of alcohol in the last ten minutes.

### RUNNING IN HIGH HEELS (COMBAT EDGE)

**Prerequisite:** Novice, Agility d8+, Charisma 1+

This Edge is the female warriors' favorite, since they always want to look their best. And what looks better than exploring dangerous ruins in high heels? The character gains +1 Pace and +1 to the running die but, if she rolls a 1 or 2 on the running die, she trips and falls. In addition, she can make nasty kick attacks dealing Str+d4 damage.

## TWEAKING THE SETTING

If played “out-of-the-box,” *Beasts & Barbarians* is a dark sword and sorcery world, with low magic. If you want, you can tweak the setting to fit your party's taste and gaming style. Here are several examples of how to tweak the setting.

### THE LAW OF THE SWORD

This is the “hardcore” mode of *Beasts & Barbarians* for players who like a hard game and dark, pseudo-horror stories. The main difference is magic. No player character is allowed to take an Arcane Background and the mere sight of magic – good as well as evil – is so strange and alien that the heroes must make a Fear roll every time they witness a spell or other supernatural act.



## HUMOROUS GAME

This is the most lighthearted type of gameplay. It is mostly a question of setting and general attitude: evil characters aren't that evil or, if they are, they have very stupid reasons for being so. The Imperials are lazy and snobbish, while the barbarians are rowdy fellows who only want to drink a lot and mix with women of ill repute. The Amazons are hysterical ladies and the wizards are lecherous old coots.

With these small modifications you can play the game as it is, or you might consider adding a couple of "silly" Edges that set the mood of the campaign, like the ones listed in the sidebar.

## ROMANTICISM

First, a word of advice: romantic doesn't automatically mean either love and sex or turning your adventures into soap operas. Adding a romantic element to your game means that emotions (all of them: hate, love, vengeance, etc.) have a place in the game which is just as important as actions. This is another trope of the sword and sorcery genre: heroes are as grandiose in their emotions as they are in their deeds. The following tweaks allow you to add a romantic theme to the game.

**Flamboyant and Roguish.** In romance, words that show feelings of some sort have a great impact on people. You can simulate this during combats by giving more emphasis to Tests of Will. If a player role-plays a Test of Will in a flamboyant and roguish manner (for Taunt he invents insults to put into his character's mouth, for Intimidation he role-plays the scene) and wins with a raise, the Test of Will doesn't count as an action and the character can immediately perform another action without any multi-action penalty.

**Oaths.** In a romantic game, oaths have a very real effect. Once per adventure, a hero can speak an oath of some type, then he makes a Spirit roll. In the case of success, he immediately gains an Oath Benny, plus one for each raise. The Oath Bennies are carried over into later sessions, but expire at the end of the adventure. Oaths must be clearly worded, like: "I swear to do this". If the hero wants, he can add one or more penalties in case of oath breaking, each granting +2 to the roll.

*Example: "May the Lord of Thunder blind me if I don't kill Dromak the Tricornian before sunset!" is a valid oath, with a breaking penalty (+2 to the Spirit roll). If the oath is broken, the character can expect to be hit by the One Eyed or Blind Hindrance.*

Oaths must not be taken lightly. If a hero doesn't manage to fulfill his oath in the current scenario, he starts the next adventure with one Benny less (as per the Bad Luck Hindrance). Moreover, the Game Master is free to inflict the chosen penalty on him "off screen". This situation lasts until the hero manages to fulfill the oath. So, be careful what you swear: gods and men despise oath-breakers.

**The Power of Love.** As said before, romance doesn't necessarily mean love and sex, but feelings and affection are among the driving forces of human life, so they can have a great impact on your game. A single rule (Crushes) and a new Hindrance (Thwarted Love) are enough to properly set the mood of an entire story.

**Crushes.** Sword and sorcery heroes are extreme in everything they do, and this also applies to their passions and feelings. Whenever a player draws a Heart during the After the Adventure Phase, the GM can decide to add to the other effects of the card the fact that the character suddenly falls in love with someone. The object of love can be either a NPC or a suitable PC. An enamored character receives +1 to all his Spirit rolls, as long as he is confident that his beloved returns his feelings, but he will soon fall into depression if despised or ignored, suffering -2 to all Spirit rolls. The initial attitude of the love interest is decided either by the GM or randomly with a roll on the Reactions Table, but it must change depending on the hero's behavior during the scenario. A crush must not be a way to punish or extol a character, but an additional hook for

## ROMANTIC HINDRANCES

As always, there is no need to have a whole plethora of Edges and Hindrances to add a specific mood to the setting. The Hindrance below is enough to define a Romantic game.

### THWARTED LOVE (MINOR)

The hero is in love with someone but, for some reason, their love is thwarted. The cause can be internal or external. In the first case, the hero's feelings aren't reciprocated and he spends his time nursing his broken heart. In the second case, the feelings are mutual but someone or something hinders the lovers; the girl's family, social conventions, or even a curse brought upon them by an evil sorcerer or an immaterial specter. Whatever the reason, the hero is very resentful of his destiny and, at any given moment, cannot have more than three Bennies.

### WARNING: TWEAKING ABUSE

You might be tempted to add lots of tweaking to your setting, for example to create a humorous, romantic game. While this is certainly possible, the Game Master must be careful not to exaggerate and to concentrate on few specific tweaks; otherwise the game will get too messy. Always remember one of Savage Worlds' key tenets: trim the fat.

good roleplaying. Constantly remind the player that his hero is in love!

Crushes are short-lived and tend to be quickly forgotten (after one scenario) or turn into stable relationships (the love interest becomes an NPC member of the campaign's cast). If the player really wants a complicated love story, he can replace one of his Hindrances with the Thwarted Love Hindrance described in the sidebar. In all cases, the Spirit modifications only apply to the next adventure after the Crush is discovered. To avoid turning the game into a soap opera, we suggest having only one hero involved in a Crush at any given time, although a cunning Game Master might devise a really good plot from two heroes both in love with the same NPC...

## CAMPAIGN TYPES

An important choice when designing campaigns for *Beasts & Barbarians* concerns the type of narrative structure you plan for your games.

Several approaches are possible, summarized in three main types, each with its advantages and disadvantages: Focused Campaign, Picaresque Tales, and Serials.

### FOCUSED CAMPAIGN

A Focused Campaign refers to a single, long story made up of several chapters (each being a different adventure). A typical campaign of this type has strong internal continuity, clear goals, and leaves little room for digressions.

**Advantages:** A Focused Campaign is a great way to tell a compelling story. If the GM does his job well, the party will be driven toward the final goal of the campaign.

**Disadvantages:** The biggest danger of a Focused Campaign is getting sidetracked. It is quite easy for the GM to create a good meta-plot covering the whole campaign, but things get complicated when the party begins to move away from the preset story. A Focused Campaign is based on concentrating on the main goal, which is why diversions should be avoided.

### PICARESQUE TALES

At the other end of the spectrum, Picaresque Tales are a series of totally disconnected adventures with a single common point. This can be a place (all the stories begin in the Headless Chicken Tavern in Jalizar), a person (all

the stories start with Merchant Lord Horatio the Bored assigning the heroes a new mission), or the main characters (all the stories tell of the deeds of the Elusive Four, the best thieves in Jalizar).

Picaresque Tales naturally tend to be of the roguish sort: gaining the favor of a lady, winning a particularly difficult bet, or the story of a lone wanderer who gets lost in the desert and finds an abandoned city.

**Advantages:** Great freedom in content and themes, as well as the chance to use some interesting narrative techniques (see sidebar). The heroes can explore the setting at their own pace. Many opportunities for roleplaying.

**Disadvantages:** The main problem of Picaresque Tales is the lack of focus. The heroes aren't really going anywhere, they have no ultimate goal, and this can get frustrating. The GM should also remember that Picaresque Tales require good improvisational skills, because the heroes often wander off the set path.

## GM TIPS: AVOIDING A SINGLE PROTAGONIST

The best way to design a Focused Campaign is to come up with a compelling story, as if you were writing the plot of a novel (or cannibalizing your favorite one). This can definitely work, but GMs must be aware of a very important fact: novels are based on the concept of a Protagonist. This isn't acceptable in a roleplaying game, in which all the players are the focus of the story, not a single individual. Whenever you can, make all the players main characters of the plot. If your campaign absolutely requires a Protagonist to complete the adventure, let him shine, but only at the very end, as the story reaches its climax. In other parts, try to build each section around one of the other heroes. Dedicating at least one adventure to each of them is usually the best. If all the players feel their characters are receiving enough attention, they will not resent the presence of a Protagonist.

## SERIAL

A Serial is a type of campaign similar in design to today's TV series. It includes elements of both the Focused Campaign and the Picaresque Tales. A Serial is a set of self-contained adventures, each with an internal, self-sufficient plot, but also with a common meta-plot, which slowly advances during the adventures and is usually resolved at the end.

Savage Worlds Plot Point Campaigns can be classified as Serials.

**Advantages:** A Serial has the advantages of both the Focused Campaign and the Picaresque Tales. It has a final goal (the meta-plot) but also leaves space for digressions and side quests.

**Disadvantages:** The greatest danger with a serial is losing sight of the meta-plot. Certain TV series introduce the meta-plot in the first episode, almost ignore it throughout the season, and then resolve it hurriedly in the last episode. This must be avoided. The best is to reveal a little of the meta-plot in each adventure, so that the players know that they are being rewarded for their efforts. Alternatively, during the design phase, choose several points at which the meta-plot advances.

# CHARACTER TALES

RPGs should tell the stories of the players' characters, including their pasts.

Often players spend a lot of effort creating interesting backstories for their adventurers, usually tales full of tragedy, orphans and dead families to be avenged, but often these ideas, despite being entertaining and adding something to the player's role-play, aren't considered in the main plot of the campaign, and are simply ignored.

Our idea, instead, is that the players' character background is an invaluable resource and the GM should use it in the campaign, but this requires a little preparation and advance thinking to create special scenarios (or altering existing ones, see sidebar), called Character Tales.

How do you do this? Continue reading to find out!

## THE RULE OF THREE

After the players create their heroes, before the game starts, take a serious look at their background, and try to understand what the player wants from his character. The best way to understand it is identifying the What, the Who and the Why of each adventurer.

If you feel more comfortable making the players get acquainted with their alter-ego first, you can wait a bit, but we suggest not more than a couple of sessions.

**The What.** What is the heroine looking for? Is she embarked on a quest of some type? An item, a person, or maybe the fulfillment of a desire, like taking revenge (in this case it overlaps a little with the Why)?

**The Who.** People, even characters with dead families, no living friends and cursed by the gods, will still have someone important in their life. It could be a friend, an enemy or even an ideal. If this isn't clear, ask the player, or even better, devise one yourself.

**The Why.** What is the reason why the hero doesn't live like a normal person but instead chose such a dangerous life? Is he moved by duty? Or by a feeling, like hate? Or is his life simply the fruit of coincidence? Identifying the Why gives you a powerful lever on the character.

After answering the three questions above, you should have all the info you need to the next step: designing the Character Tales for that PC.



## GM TIPS: TWEAKS AND BONDS

Realistically speaking, if you have a typical party of four characters, and try to strictly follow the suggested number of Character Tales, you end with twelve adventures dedicated to the party!

This is a very big number, and will slow the pace of any campaign.

For this reason, we suggest two tricks.

**Tweaks – Make it Personal.** A Character Tale doesn't have to be a stand-alone scenario, separated from the rest of the campaign (in fact, done that way, it can even be harmful to your game). You can simply tweak one of the planned adventures to make it a Character Tale: what if the nondescript evil sorcerer of the adventure you are playing is actually the hero's evil brother? Or the city the party is going to save from the cannibal attack is the one that exiled the adventurer years ago? Making the already-planned adventures personal for the heroes will make them more interesting to play.

**Bonds – Sharing Stories.** A Character Tale doesn't necessarily have to be focused on a single hero. If you manage to personally involve more player characters in the same story, for different reasons, the effect will be greatly magnified. For example, if the evil sorcerer (who is the brother of a hero) is going to sacrifice a woman to the dark gods to obtain unholy powers, what about if the damsel is the long-lost sister of another hero? In this way the players will be doubly interested in the scenario.

## GM TIPS: REWARDS AND FOCUSES

Character Tales should leave a mark on the hero, both in negative and positive ways. A good way to make these adventurers memorable is a customized reward: for example, a relic, a unique free Edge (like a slightly modified version of a standard one) or a Steel Benny.

In the same way, you can use Character Tales to add some flavor and unique background to an element of an adventure. If, for example, the characters are attacked by nondescript thugs in an adventure, after deciding they are assassins sent by the evil tyrant looking for a hero, you can work on this aspect, detailing the sect (for example giving them a special ability, a unique tattoo or something similar).

Whatever you decide, use Character Tales to make your game more personalized and custom-tailored to the stories of your gaming group.

## DESIGNING CHARACTER TALES

By this term we mean focused tales based on a hero's background, aimed at making the player feel his adventurer changes and evolves during the game.

How many adventures are necessary to achieve this goal?

It depends on the campaign's planned length.

For very short campaigns, we suggest one Character Tale per hero (the Resolution below), for medium length ones, two (the Crisis and the Resolution) and for long ones three (the Past Which Returns, the Crisis and the Resolution).

These scenarios should be designed as normal adventures, but the important thing is that their focus is actually the hero's background.

Typically, they are of three types and every hero should have one dedicated per each type.

**The Past Which Returns.** This first Character Tale is used to make the player remember his past is alive and kicking. This adventure is simply an intrusion of a character's past into the communal story of the group. It can be an enemy which finally finds him and sends hirelings, the hero being recognized (and this causing some type of trouble) or something similar. This adventure doesn't actually change the adventurer, but emphasizes the current situation.

**The Crisis.** The second tale should introduce a severe worsening or complication in the hero's background: the tyrant who stole the throne from the player character's family declares war on a nearby kingdom, the demon hunting the adventurer possesses a whole town causing terrible trouble, or something similar. This adventure aims to expand the character's backstory, taking it in an unsuspected direction. If possible, insert a twist into the initial idea the player had for his hero, to make it more entertaining.

**The Resolution.** The last of the Character Tales should resolve the character's background, in one way or another, changing it permanently. If he is fighting against the tyrant who stole his kingdom, he manages to defeat him, if he is looking for his lost brother he finds him, and so on. The Resolution is the climax of the character's current life and should have a lasting consequence in his existence: if the evil tyrant is defeated and the character restored as king, well, his life now dramatically changes: he has a kingdom to attend to, duties, responsibilities, and so on.

The descriptions given above are deliberately very generic, they describe only the narrative goal of the story. If you want, you can flesh them out with the Adventure Generator in the next chapter.

## AFTER THE CHARACTER TALES

Ending the "cycle" of the Character Tales doesn't automatically mean the adventuring career of the hero ended (even if it is a very good way to end a campaign): maybe after some months of pampered life he decides to leave his kingdom again, leaving a regent in charge, or simply the type of adventures changes, becoming more broad in scope.

If, once this point is reached, the campaign goes on, you can simply reiterate the process, creating another three Character Tales, thus giving the hero a new way to evolve.

# NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES

Making a good sword and sorcery scenario doesn't require overly complex plots, as you'll see in the next chapter. Even a fairly linear plot can be very interesting if you sell it well to your players. In this chapter you'll find several examples of narrative techniques you can use to give a different perspective to your game.

## TIMELINE FREEDOM

The ultimate goal of a *Beasts & Barbarians* scenario is telling a good story, so character advancement is only a minor concern. For this reason, it is perfectly acceptable to play adventures without following an orderly timeline. For example, one story can be about the heroes at the height of their career (Legendary), while the next is a tale about when they are still wet behind the ears (Novice). During character creation, let the players create several character sheets for their hero, one for each Rank. At the beginning of the adventure the GM informs the players about their Rank



for the current adventure and they play using the corresponding sheet. The drawback of this approach is that the characters are already “defined” (for advancements purposes) from the beginning, but you can tweak the Advancement Substitution setting rule, allowing the players to change one of the advances at the beginning of every adventure.

## FLASHBACKS

Simply start the adventure in the thick of things, or even towards the end if you prefer. Choose a climax point and run the story from there, giving the players very little information about what happened before (you can use a brief flashback). When the current scene is completed, you can start the adventure from the beginning, revealing the events that have led to the climax. When the two parts join, continue the story till the end.

## IN MEDIA RES

This technique can be considered a minor version of Flashbacks. Simply, begin the adventure when the story is already in the thick of action. If, for example, the adventure is focused on stealing a precious gem (which of course is wanted by many different people) from an ancient temple protected by cultists, instead of playing from the beginning (the party being contacted by a patron, casing the location, devising a plan and so on), start directly with the

## HANDLING DEATH IN THE PAST

Many narrative techniques (Flashbacks, Memories and Timeline Freedom among them) are based on the idea that the story is told from the future.

This type of adventure presents a problem: what to do if a hero dies in the past? Normally, he would not take part in the rest of the campaign. In this case, however, the player and the GM together must invent a story about how he miraculously saved his skin (for instance, the fatal blow didn't actually kill him, he was captured and enslaved), and the player starts the next adventure with half the allotted Bennies (rounded down).

Players should not abuse this rule to gain “plot immunity”.



adventurers in the hall where the gem is kept, with the heroes taking it, triggering the alarm which alerts all the temple guards...

Starting In Medias Res is a great way to start with a blast.

## MEMORIES

Heroes with amnesia are a classic feature of many stories. During the adventure, certain parts are marked as "Memories". Their purpose is to help the characters shed light on their own past, and this is why the Game Master should provide plenty of details. The Memories are usually triggered by a roll of some type. Encourage the players to tell their companions what they have just remembered while staying in character. Memories can be considered a kind of Interlude, and good performances should be rewarded with a Benny.

## ALTERNATE CHARACTERS

This particular narrative technique should be used at the beginning of a session (not necessarily the first of a scenario). The players begin the game playing a character which isn't their own, but one given by the GM, for a brief period of time (we recommend not more than an hour). At this point the players change back to their own characters and continue the story from where they were the last session.

The goal of this technique is making the players experience a different side of the scenario, which their ordinary characters cannot see. This must be done with an objective, for example giving the players (not the heroes) additional knowledge, or creating tension. It is a typical trick used in movies during the introduction or in interludes.

Here's a typical example.

### THE PALACE OF TEARS

*The players ended the last session directed to the mysterious Palace of Tears, a ruin in the Red Desert, from which nobody has ever returned.*

*Instead of beginning the new session with the party's arrival at the Palace, the players begin the new session in the roles of Sage Vateros and his porters, who arrived at the ruins years before to visit them. In the first half hour of the session, the group explores the Palace using these alternative characters, and plays the horrible death of Vateros and his underpowered minions (the GM must be careful not to reveal too much of what is killing them).*

*After this brief, gory scene, the players, taking their own characters, will be much more nervous about (and hooked by) what they might find in the Palace of Tears...*

**Avoiding Burdensome Preparation.** Because this part of the game will only keep you busy for a short time, it isn't necessary to invest a lot of time creating alternate characters for the heroes. You can take a profile from the Denizens of the Dominions chapter, or simply make them on the fly, for example using the Soldier profile of Savage Worlds, adding a couple of Edges and a skill or two. It isn't even necessary to give the character sheets to the players.

**Same Heroes, Different Point of View.** Another way to use the Alternate Characters is changing the context, placing their regular characters of the group in a situation which is unusual or where they aren't immediately recognizable. This can be done in various ways, which can be very rewarding to role-play. Here's an example...

### THE EXECUTION

*Zandorra the Amazon, a member of the party, was captured by the Corsairs of Caldeia and is going to be publicly executed in the palace of Caldeia. The scene opens with Zandorra being dragged*

*to the execution block by a number of guards and consigned to a burly, hooded headsman, who pushes the amazon's head onto the block. The headsman raises his big axe high ready to chop through Zandorra's neck... and instead smashes the guards' heads! At this point he throws away the hood, revealing himself as Shangor, Zandorra's friend, who has substituted himself for the real headsman. In the plaza, concealed among the crowd, are the other members of the party, who must now play through Zandorra's and Shangor's escape from the city...*

It is important, when using this technique, that the GM speaks in the third person, describing the scene from a neutral point of view, so that the players don't immediately understand their own heroes are the protagonists of the scene.

## RELICS

The world of *Beasts & Barbarians* isn't of the high-magic type, so true magical relics should be rare and precious. But, besides true magical items, a hero can find various minor objects, such as trusty swords, masterwork armor, and so on. Not every relic is magical – sometimes it is only a very peculiar object, and sometimes they aren't an item at all.

The players shouldn't find relics easily; ideally, a single relic for each rank of the hero is enough.

Remember, the real stars of *Beasts & Barbarians* are the heroes and their mighty muscles, not the shiny trinkets they wear! Some basic rules for relic creation...

**Relic Ideas.** You should start with a general idea of the item, and what its peculiarities are. Is it a sword, a book, a hat? Or something more complex and different like a castle or a piece of poetry?

Write a brief description of what it looks like and of its powers and background story.

### RELIC RULES

One or more of the following assets can be applied to a relic:

- ❖ **+2 on an Attribute or Skill roll**
- ❖ **+1 Parry or Toughness**
- ❖ **+2 Pace**
- ❖ **+2 Charisma**
- ❖ **+2 Armor Penetration**
- ❖ **+1 Damage**
- ❖ **One additional Edge**
- ❖ **One or more powers, with an Arcane Skill of d8 and 10 Power Points**
- ❖ **A single ability devised by the Game Master**

The listed assets are more or less equivalent, except the unique ability invented by the Game Master.

When creating a weak relic choose one asset, two for an average relic, three or more for a very powerful item.

Remember that *Savage Worlds* is a system based on low numbers, so a +2 modifier is a very good one, and +4 almost ensures automatic success, so it should be avoided. When you design relics, try to give them circumstantial bonuses (so they work only in certain cases) or give them several low bonuses in different fields.

**Twisted Relics.** Magic is inherently dark and evil. So, it is no surprise that, instead of granting advantages, some relics limit and hinder a character. You can push this concept further and decide

## GM TIPS: RELICS IN PLAY

Relics and special items in sword and sorcery should never be a simple asset for a character, granting them some mechanical bonus or penalty. They are interesting and useful to the game only if they add something to the story; a new option, an unsuspected twist or a motivation for a character to act.

Below you'll find some ideas on how a relic can influence the game:

- ❖ **Unique.** Each Relic should be unique with its own personality, purpose and backstory.
- ❖ **Twisted.** The Relic apparently grants an advantage, but in truth it slowly corrupts the user, changing how he sees and interacts with the world.
- ❖ **Highly Sought After.** Powerful individuals and factions are interested in the Relic, and they'll do whatever they can to have it.
- ❖ **Tool of Fate.** The Relic ended up in the hands of the wielder for a purpose; after fulfilling it, the item will pass into other hands, but the life of the character could be dramatically changed by having used it.

## TEMPORARY ITEMS

Non-permanent items are usually a good way to reward heroes. Lotus concoctions that heal or give the hero a temporary boost are OK, because they can be easily controlled by the Game Master. Also, the Game Master should consider giving the heroes a very powerful relic for a short time only.



that certain items (Twisted Relics) give the wielder a positive modifier in certain fields and a negative one in others.

## RELICS OF THE DOMINIONS

The following list contains some relics that you can use as ideas for your own devices, or roll against it when you need a quick item to be given to the heroes. Some of these objects are actually magical, others are simply remarkable. Others aren't items at all.

### RELICS LIST (ROLL A D20)

1. **Helm of Koramos.** This elegant metal helm is very ancient. It belonged to Koramos, a famous general who died in a terrible way, and now his spirit haunts this relic. The possessor constantly hears the general's voice whispering in his mind, providing advice and instructions. It grants the Knowledge (Battle) skill at d8, Command, and another Leadership Edge (Game

- Master's choice). But, in stressful situations, the possessor can be overwhelmed by the strength of the general's mind and experience flashbacks of Koramos' memories. Whenever the character is dealt a deuce from the Action Deck, he must make a Spirit (-2) roll or be Shaken. If he rolls a critical failure, the character is possessed by Koramos' ghost for the whole scene.
2. **Blood of Kalephon.** A legend says that a rider went from Kenaton to Kyros City in a single day to warn the king of an attack by the Ivory Savannah Tribes. The rider's name is forgotten, but not that of his incredible mount: Kalephon, the white horse of the Savannah. This horse (it cannot be a pony) has some of Kalephon's blood in its veins and gallops like the wind. It receives +2 Pace and its running die is increased by one step. In addition, the rider can spend Bennies for the horse, as per the Beast Bond Edge.
  3. **Blood Tear.** This strange, deep red crystal comes from the Red Desert. When held in the hand, in contact with bare skin, it seems to come alive and emanates a faint, red luminescence, as for the *light* Power. The strange glow lasts indefinitely while the crystal stays in contact with the skin. Every hour of use, a Vigor roll is required; in the case of failure, the individual holding it suffers a level of Fatigue.
  4. **Holy Quipus of Lhoban.** These old ropes full of minuscule knots were made with the hair of old, sage monks and are actually books, written in the strange secret language of Lhoban. They contain aphorisms, metaphors and religious teachings that are a point of meditation for monks. An Enlightened character, with Smarts d8+ and capable of reading them, gains the Rapid Recharge Edge when wearing these Quipus.
  5. **Mummified Scarab of Tsurak.** This small black insect is simply a dead, perfectly preserved scarab. Someone, probably the ancient Keronian sorcerer Tsurak, engraved on the carapace an Ancient Keronian symbol meaning "obedience". Any character reading it aloud with the right intonation (a Knowledge (Arcana) (-2) or Sorcery roll is required) animates this little beast, which falls under the control of the reader. The creature is animated by an intelligent spirit (Smarts d6) and understands any command in Ancient Keronian. This little creature is harmless (Toughness: 1, Size: -3, -4 to hit), but it can easily pass unnoticed (Stealth d12). It is used mainly for assassination and spying purposes: the creature can ingest a dose of a Lotus concoction and can vomit it, perfectly preserved, wherever it wants. In addition, if the controller is a sorcerer he can cast a spell upon the creature (at double cost) which is activated when a particular condition is met (for example: in presence of the king, when the assassin shoots an arrow). Until the spell is released, the mage doesn't recover the Power Points. The down side of these creatures is that the spirit dwelling in it is totally dedicated: it has no conception of time or space, and once an order is issued it cannot be cancelled in any manner.
  6. **Ilenya's Blade.** This Amazon Blade is very old and has many notches in its blade but it is one of the holiest relics of the Amazons, because it is the very weapon wielded by Ilenya, one of the first two Sister Queens during the rebellion and liberation of the island. The Blade was lost in 1540 AF, a date any Amazon knows well: it was the last attempt by the Iron Empire to retake Ascaia. In a savage battle on the cliffs of the island the attackers almost managed to conquer Ascaia; only a charge led by Ilenya herself won the day. The invaders were wiped out, apart from a few escaping survivors, but Ilenya fell on the battlefield and her Amazon Blade was stolen. Over the years it passed through many hands, despite all the efforts the Amazons made to find it. Rumors say that it is in some arena of the Dominions. The legend says that with such a blade Ascaia will never fall: in game terms it grants +2 to Morale rolls for all Amazons and +4 to all the Battle rolls of a general defending the Amazons' island.
  7. **Lucky Coin of Zand.** A very ancient coin which has passed through so many hands that is

- impossible to discern the engravings on it, but probably it was coined in the lost city of Zand. It isn't obviously a magical object, so a Spirit roll is required the first time a character puts her hands on it. If the roll is successful, the character perceives something particular in this object; otherwise she discards it as worthless junk. She receives an additional Benny as per the Luck Edge, which can be kept between adventures. When the Benny is spent, the money disappears.
8. **Imp's Mandible.** This scary jawbone, full of strange, sharp teeth, belongs to Xarigas, one of the most powerful Keronian Imps of the past. While in possession of this item, the character gains the Ancient Pact Edge, with double Power Points. Xarigas is said to have seen the fall of Keron and knows a lot about demonic hierarchies (he has Knowledge (Arcana) d10)).
  9. **Cup of Sacrifice.** This old cup of polished bronze belonged to an old Cairnlander priest. Once a month, the owner can spill some of his own blood into the cup and drink it as a sacrifice to the Ancestors. If he does so, he can use the *divination* Power, with Arcane Skill d10. The only cost of the spell is the spilling of blood, which causes a Wound that cannot be soaked and heals only with natural recovery. Stories say that if in this cup is filled with the blood of a princess during a full moon, it could open a door to the Kingdom of Aarasu, whatever that might mean.
  10. **Ancient Armor Plate.** This very old and sturdy metal plating, engraved with forgotten runes of power, can be added to an individual's armor with a Repair roll. The user of the armor can decide to add +4 to a single Soak roll. The decision can be taken after the roll is made. After one use, the armor plate breaks and becomes useless. Alternatively, a character with the Smith Edge, in place of Crafting, can use it (destroying the item) to make a suit of armor permanently gain +1 Armor (up to +4). This can be done even on +0 Armors (which can then still be used with the Loincloth Hero Edge).
  11. **Giaasa and Raasa.** These ebon-skinned twin sisters are the most prized bed-slaves of the arena. Mute from the birth, they are beautiful as a starry night in the desert, and satisfy any desire of their owner. Many stories are whispered about these ladies: despite looking no older than sixteen autumns, there are reports of their existence in various arenas from more than a century ago. Skilled in all the arts of the bedroom and of the massage, they can take care of a man (or a woman) in any way, especially if he (or she) is wounded. People have seen them tenderly licking the cuts and bruises of a wounded man and have seen his wounds miraculously close, but there are also stories of fine, strong men who die mysteriously when in their bed. When this happens the two girls disappear, to reappear months or years later in another slave market. In truth Giaasa and Raasa are the last descendants of a dying race of bloodsuckers. When licking wounds, they are actually feeding, developing a symbiotic relationship with their prey, who is healed by their saliva (this counts as the *healing* Power cast with Arcane Skill d10, 10 Power Points), but there is a serious drawback: if they roll a critical failure, the quantity of saliva in the quarry's blood is too high: it counts as a Lethal (-4) poison. Giaasa and Raasa are Right Hands, if necessary you can use the Damsel profile (see SEGM, page 104), replacing the Good Lungs Special Ability with the Mute Hindrance, and raising Persuasion to d12.
  12. **Tome of Forbidden Secrets.** This ancient book of lore contains magical knowledge (usually a single Power from the Arcane Background (Sorcery) list). A mage reading it risks his very soul, because the dusty pages hold secrets not intended for a human mind. He can do this between adventures, in place of Crafting. He must make a Fear (-2) roll. If successful, he is allowed a Smarts roll. If he succeeds in this roll too, he learns the Power contained in the book. If he fails either of the rolls, he can try again once he gains a new Rank.
  13. **Metal Scale Bikini.** Nobody knows who crafted this strange metal bikini but, although all barbarians say it is completely worthless, warrior women with Charisma 2+ wearing it gain +2

Armor, without renouncing the use of the Bikini Heroine Edge.

14. **The Catfish.** This old, ragged Chibbar, a small Jalizaran ship, still bears the stylized picture of a catfish painted on its hull in barely visible colors. The ship belonged to a famous smuggler, nicknamed the Catfish, and has survived many storms, chases, and battles. It grants the owner a Benny, which can be used only for Boating rolls or to Soak Wounds to the *Catfish*, as per the Helmsman Edge, with +4 to the roll. In addition, there is a hidden compartment (Notice roll to discover it, opposed by the shipwright's Stealth d10) which might contain (GM's decision) some precious but very dangerous cargo belonging to the previous owner of the vessel.
15. **Colorless Lotus of Past Dreams.** This transparent Lotus concoction is one of the most feared, as well as sought-after, potions in the entire world. It has the power of letting a person remember his past lives! The drinker falls into a strong lethargy that leaves him unconscious for three days, after which he wakes up and makes a Spirit roll. In the case of success, the past memories aid him by permanently increasing an Attribute by one step. In the case of failure, his mind is broken and he permanently loses a Spirit die step.
16. **Imperial Steel Sword.** This long sword, held in a battered scabbard, looks like a normal commander's sword like those issued to the officers of the Iron Phalanxes. In truth its blade is made of the strongest material civilized men know: steel! Probably this weapon is one of the famous Sister Blades, the last batch of steel weapons forged in Faberterra for the second Tricornian Wars, when the cult of Hulian was at its apogee, and they were given to important officers. In the turmoil of the war, these weapons suffered various fates. At least one of them, the short sword belonging to Emperor Domestan, was stolen by Empress Salkaria and probably destroyed or sent to Tricornia to be studied. A dagger was luckily picked up by a phalanx soldier who returned it to the temple of Hulian in Faberterra once and for all. The destiny of the other blades is unknown. They were of different sizes and types. They deal +2 damage with AP 2, and grant the Holy Warrior Edge to the user. Many people will kill for such a weapon.
17. **Zymandias' Flowers.** Zymandias was a famous Jalizaran poet who, many centuries ago, took his own life because his beloved, the Countess of the Black Tower, didn't return his affections. His love poems, called the Flowers, are considered masterpieces and this book, made of thin layers of engraved mother-of-pearl, is one of the originals. Studying it for a month grants the hero a free die step increase in Knowledge (Legends and Lore) or +1 Charisma (player's choice). But the book is cursed by Zymandias' desperate love. After studying it, the reader must make a Spirit (-4) roll or his dreams will be haunted by the vision of a pale, dark-haired lady, the Countess, and his soul will be overwhelmed by desperate love. In game terms, he is affected by the Thwarted Love (see page 104) and Bad Luck Hindrances. The only way to remove the curse is by finding all of Zymandias' Flowers and destroying them (four books in total). Alternatively, the hero will have to find where the Countess is buried and destroy her body.
18. **Maneater's Cloak.** This impressive cloak was fashioned from the hide of one of the foulest beasts in the Savannah: an old lion that, too old to chase gazelles, developed a taste for human flesh. The wearer gains +2 to Intimidation and Fear rolls while wearing it, but he also receives the Habit (Major) Hindrance of always craving human flesh. The Habit persists even while not wearing the cloak. The cloak must be destroyed and *banish* or *dispel* must be used on the character to free him from the curse.
19. **Snake Bracer.** This beautiful, ornamental bracer is made to resemble a coiled snake. Probably made by the Snake People, the Caudru, dark magic animates it and the bracer can turn into a Venomous Snake (see Savage Worlds core rules). This is treated as the *summon ally* Power, cast with an Arcane Skill of d8 and 10 Power Points. The snake is a Wild Card creature of

Novice Rank. A legend says that this bracer somehow always manages to kill its owner.

20. **Enslaving Collar.** This bronze slave collar is an artifact which was fairly common in ancient Keron. Luckily, today very few of them exist, and the greater part of them are located in Tricornia. These collars have no apparent lock, but any sorcerer who can read Ancient Keronian can put it on the neck of a victim and close it with a Sorcery roll at expense of one Power Point. When this happens, the sorcerer can control the collar's wearer (the Slave) as per the *puppet* Power, without paying any Power Point cost. The collar also has positive effects on the wearer: it makes the wearer more resistant and less prone to pain, granting him +1 Toughness and the Nerves of Steel Edge. Only the person who closed the collar can open it: if another one tries to break it (Toughness: 14) or force it open, the collar squeezes the Slave's neck, killing him. There are rumors that somewhere, ancient rituals exist which can free a slave from this terrible collar...

## MALADIES AND POISONS

This section describes some of the subtlest dangers of the Dominions, to be used as they are or as inspiration for your own creations. As always, maladies and poisons should be used to add something to the story, not simply as a way to crush the player characters.

### THE BLACK WHISPERER

This fat, black, worm, long as a finger, is usually found in the stomach of dead warthogs in the swamps of Tricornia. They are quite rare and harmless, unless you swallow one alive (a thing that you wouldn't do willingly). In this case the small beast, animated by a feeding frenzy, digs through the stomach wall of the victim, reaches the spine, and grabs it. From this moment on, the victim loses a Vigor die step and becomes a slave of the animal, which drives him to satisfy its basic needs (mainly eating a lot). The parasite is very dangerous over the long term, and the host must make a Vigor roll each week or lose another die step of Vigor. If this reduces it below d4, he dies. The only known way to remove the parasite is by a surgical intervention, which given the medical standards of the Dominions is quite risky; it requires a Healing (-4) roll and each point of failure causes a non-soakable Wound to the victim. Black Whisperers are nasty, but the greatest danger comes from the fact that certain Lotusmasters know a particular concoction (which is a trapping of the *puppet* Power), called the Onyx Lotus of the Worm. It works in this way: the worm is slightly injured, thrown into the potion and then recovered. At this point the Lotusmaster drinks the disgusting liquid, while the worm, still alive, is forced down the throat of the poor victim. The effect is that the victim, through the worm, is now under the permanent control of the Lotusmaster, until the parasite is removed...

### DAMSEL'S SKIN

This dangerous fungal parasite exists only in the Sewers of Jalizar. It is an Induction illness (transmission occurs by touching a person already affected by it), and manifests itself as a thin layer of pink fungus growing on the skin. It is considered a Long Term, Debilitating disease but, instead of being Fatigued, the victim loses a die step in both Spirit and Smarts and gains the Berserk Edge. If a 1 is rolled on the Vigor die, instead of being Incapacitated, the victim also suffers the effects of the Delusion (paranoid visions - Major) Hindrance.



## THE CULT OF THE STRANGLER

This dark cult of Lotusmasters is a well-kept secret. The temples of the Strangler are usually hidden in the jungle, or in graveyards, caverns, sewers, and similar places, and are present mainly in Kyros.

What is the Strangler?

This name can refer to two different things.

First, the Strangler is a particular poison made only by cult members. It is totally flavorless and there are many different ways of delivering it. The effects are always the same: the victim's throat swells and closes and he dies of suffocation in a few minutes, while his face turns blue. The interesting fact is that the "death" caused by the poison is not always permanent. In certain cases, from one to three days after his death, the victim awakens and says that all he can remember of his post-mortem experience is a tall man with a blue face.

This is the Strangler, the deity at the Threshold of Death.

The survivors are then contacted by other members of the cult, usually those who poisoned them, and are persuaded to join the sect, to serve the strange being they saw "on the other side". They become skilled Lotusmasters and poisoners, fanatically loyal to their dark divinity. Criminals, nobles and other shady figures often employ the Cult of the Strangler for their goals, as the cultists are always ready to use their skills on someone, in the hope of "awakening" a new follower.

The Stranglers are, for obvious reasons, very attentive to security and they always show themselves wearing a blue mask.



## THE STRANGLER POISON

This is a Lotus concoction imbued with the *poison* Power. It is very lethal (+4 to opposed rolls). A victim killed by the poison is allowed a Spirit roll. Then he draws a card from the Action Deck, plus two for each success and raise on the Spirit roll, up to a maximum of nine total cards. If a Joker is drawn it means that he "awakes" from death, reporting a vision of the Strangler. To determine the moment of the awakening, consider that each card drawn represents 8 hours. So if a character draws four cards and receives a Joker as his fourth card, it means he will come back from the dead after 32 hours. Only cult members know the recipe for the Strangler (consider it a particular trapping of the Power).

## RED PLAGUE

The Red Plague is probably one of the most feared maladies of the Dominions. A Vigor roll to avoid contagion is required in the following circumstances: breathing the Wind of Death (+2, one roll per hour, see sidebar), drinking or eating infected substances (-4) or being in contact, wounded or Shaken by a wounding effect by a sick person (0 for Shaken and being in contact, -1 per Wound

taken). If the roll fails, the character is ill and the malady begins. This is a Dramatic Task, based on Vigor (-4), rolling once per day. During this period the patient is feverish, covered in pustules and infectious. Check the table below for the effects.

**Red Plague Effects Table**

SUCSESSES	EFFECT
2 or less	<b>Atrocious Death.</b> The victim dies in excruciating pain.
3	<b>Red Bringer.</b> The victim recovers, but turns into a wretched creature, a Red Bringer (see page 122).
4	<b>Red-Touched.</b> The victim recovers, but suffers from the Red-Touched Hindrance. A life of suffering awaits him.
5	<b>Immunity.</b> The victim not only recovers, but becomes immune to the Red Plague!

**THE WIND OF DEATH**

It sometimes happens, luckily not more than once per year, that a strong wind blowing from the Broken-chain Mountains sweeps the ruins of Nal Hamar, a Tricarnian city which doesn't exist anymore, taking the polluted air away. When this happens, the people living around the fens say the Wind of Death is blowing, and they hide in their homes. After the wind ceases every lord sends his men out, armed with oil-soaked staves, looking for any patch of red they can find, to burn it. Despite this, outbreaks of Red Plague happen, not only in proximity to the fens, where the people are generally more attentive to the problem, but also in far-away countries, where the Red Plague is only a legend.



# ADVENTURE GENERATOR

“SO THIS IS THE FABULOUS GEM OF ISKARA, WHICH COST US SO MUCH TROUBLE TO FIND. NOW WE NEED ONLY TAKE IT FROM THE ALTAR...”

–Vaataro Lhan, Jalizaran Thief

Sometimes a GM might need inspiration for an adventure. The following pages introduce an Adventure Generator that will allow you to devise amazing swords and sorcery plots for the entertainment of your players in no time at all. You just need a deck of cards, a pencil and a piece of paper to jot down your story as it takes shape.

Are you ready? Then, let's go!

## DECK PHASE

Draw four cards from the deck. Place them next to each other in the order they are drawn. The suit and value of each card will create your adventure. More specifically, the suits will give you a plot, while the values will determine the presentation.

The plot is the raw structure of your story, basically “who does what”, while the presentation is the way in which you narrate it to your audience, the players. Remember that even a simple story can be very enjoyable if told in the right way, using the right techniques, and peppered with some nice twists. Take some notes during the process, so that no important pieces of the puzzle will be missing at the end.

Now, starting from the first card, the adventure's Setting, Adversary, Conflict and Reward will be determined.

## THE GOLDEN RULE

The most important rule you should remember when using an adventure generator is: “Stop whenever you want.”

The generator is only a tool to help you sharpen your ideas. See it as a gym where you can develop your creative muscles.

If you think you have devised a suitable plot only by considering the cards’ suits and not their values, that will do just fine and you can stop. If you think one of the cards “ruins” the plot, ignore it or draw another. The generator is also quite robust, allowing you to change the number and/or meaning of the cards without affecting the rest. If you want to create an adventure with Two Adversaries and no Reward, you can do that. You are in charge! Remember, the goal of the generator is to help YOU create an adventure. Use it, don’t let it use you, and feel free to experiment.

# PLOT

## FIRST CARD’S SUIT ~ SETTING

Pulp stories are heavily influenced by their location, and sword and sorcery ones are no exception. Deciding where to set the main part of your adventure is the first step. Remember that this is only the core setting; other locations can be added as needed. For each type of setting you will find a list of iconic locations particularly suited to sword and sorcery adventures in the Dread Sea Dominions.

**Spades – Urban.** The adventure is set in a city, town, or other civilized location. Remember that a city is a place where a large number of individuals live together, so there are rules, laws and guards. It is also a place of religion, since the main temples are usually in cities. Economy is another important element: most merchants live in cities. And, where riches abound, there are always plenty of shady individuals ready to take advantage of the situation. Finally, the city is the place of the common man, where artisans, laborers and slaves work side by side.

*Iconic Urban locations:* noble palaces, bazaars and marketplaces, temples and libraries, arenas and theatres, squares, large avenues and dark alleys, sewers and aqueducts, towers, prisons, city walls.

**Hearts – Countryside.** The adventure is still set in a civilized location but beyond the walls of a city. The heroes will move in a natural but not inherently dangerous environment, and their troubles will be caused by man rather than by nature. Remember that a countryside setting can easily turn into a Wilderlands setting if the heroes wander away from the civilized areas.

*Iconic Countryside locations:* farms, inns, roads, villages, fields, well-tended woods, navigable rivers, rural temples, encampments.

**Diamonds – Wilderlands.** The adventure is set in a hostile natural environment. The Dread Sea Dominions are mostly wild and untamed by man and all the unsafe areas are collectively known as “Wilderlands”. The heroes will come up against bad weather, the risk of getting lost, predators, barbarians, and an unforgiving nature. Depending on the adventure, the Game Master should feel free to add natural threats besides those posed by the Adversary (see second card). Note that a countryside or urban setting can easily become a Wilderlands setting under certain specific climatic conditions (for example: a city during a pestilence, a village during a tornado, and so on).

*Iconic Wilderlands locations:* sun scorched deserts, bayous and swamps, deep forests, insidious

jungles, mountain ranges, steppes, frozen lakes, areas hit by tornadoes, floods, or earthquakes.

**Clubs – Ruins.** A ruin is a place with limited human presence. Naturally, this does not mean it is safe. Ruin settings are grouped under two main categories. A “background ruin” does not feature the presence of man but has many remnants of the past. Examples of this setting are the Fallen Kingdom of Keron, or the Land of Idols. “Dungeon ruins” are a totally different matter: they are enclosed spaces, full of monsters, traps and treasures, in which the heroes should be particularly wary.

*Iconic Ruins locations:* caverns, cemeteries, old temples, sunken ships, abandoned mines, haunted castles, Cairns.

**Joker – Weird.** A weird location means that the adventure unfolds in a very strange location, such as a magical prison, or it is entirely set in a dream one of the characters has. If you are short of ideas, you can always draw two additional cards and try to mix them. For example, if you draw a heart (Wilderlands) and a club (Ruins), you can decide that the adventure is set in a military camp located among the ruins of an old city.

## SECOND CARD’S SUIT ~ ADVERSARY

A sword and sorcery adventure needs a strong villain. This card tells you something about the nature and behavior of the heroes’ main enemy. This doesn’t have to mean the enemy is alone: depending on his nature, he can have a whole horde of minions and servants under his command. Remember that this card doesn’t tell you exactly who the adversary is but how he acts. For more specific examples, see the description of each type.

**Spades – Brute.** The adversary mainly relies on violence and sheer brute force. Subtlety and cunning aren’t his weapons of choice; he prefers a more direct approach. If he controls magic and the supernatural, he uses them in a coarse way. He is very likely to have an army of followers ready to obey him and he keeps them at bay through fear and threats. Brute adversaries tend to be physically very strong.

*Iconic Brute adversaries:* bandit and pirate lords, massive beasts and forgotten creatures, barbarian tribes, bloodthirsty shamans, stupid but incredibly strong monsters.

**Hearts – Schemer.** A schemer is someone who loves plotting. He will never step in directly, but will try to outwit and cheat the heroes. In many cases, the party won’t discover his identity until far into the scenario, and uncovering his plots will be the main focus of the story. This dangerous individual might even present himself as a friend. A Schemer often has hirelings and minions, whom he uses as pawns for his evil purposes.

*Iconic Schemer adversaries:* corrupted courtesan, treacherous counsellor, secret worshipper of evil forces, spy-master, lone serial killer.

**Diamonds – Powerful Lord.** A Powerful Lord is defined by the great resources available to him. He isn’t personally strong like a Brute or cunning like a Schemer, but he is charismatic, rich and socially prominent or has an army of followers under his command. A Powerful Lord is usually obsessed with power itself and will do anything to preserve or increase it. Minions and followers are very important to a Powerful Lord and their loyalty stems from various roots: fanaticism, duty, or even physical dependence.

*Iconic Powerful Lord adversaries:* power-hungry nobles, prophets or other religious figures, fallen heroes, leaders of demonic cults, generals, revolutionaries.

**Clubs – Abomination.** An Abomination threatens the heroes simply because he is too alien to follow the human way of life. He simply doesn’t understand (or doesn’t care about) morality, good

## A MATTER OF SCALE

You can use the Adventure Generator on very different scales: you can work with it to create the general outline of an entire campaign, a single scenario, or an additional session of an already existing campaign. All you have to do is change scale. While designing a campaign, you must consider a very long time span.

The Adversary of a campaign won't probably appear for quite some time. He might have a number of hirelings, some of them important and others much less so.

The Setting of the campaign will be broad, like a sort of background music which will permeate the various adventures, connecting them.

The same is true for the Plot, the Conflict and the Reward.

Conversely, when you are designing a single adventure of the campaign above, a hireling of the main Adversary might be the Adversary of the current adventure.

The creative process is the same but on a smaller scale. Your scenario will have its own Setting (although the campaign's Setting will still be present in the background) and a specific Adversary (with his own personality but connected to the main Adversary of the campaign).

The same will be true for the Conflict and the Reward.

or evil. Weirdness and fear are his main features. Some Abominations are driven by lust, hunger or needs so different from human ones that the heroes will never truly understand them. An encounter with an Abomination will always be a little scary.

*Iconic Abomination adversaries:* demons, undead creatures, age-old sorcerers, tyrants and rulers so detached from human life as to be emotionless.

**Joker - Special.** A Special opponent often has a peculiar background. He can be a reluctant enemy or someone who unwittingly does something evil (like a farmer who unleashes a curse upon himself and his village by finding a cursed relic). Otherwise, he can be a mix of the other categories. In this case, draw two additional cards and mix them. For example, if you draw a Spade (Brute) and a Club (Abomination), the opponent might be a powerful gladiator who was killed in the arena and has come back from the dead to murder innocent people and feed on their vital energy.

## THIRD CARD'S SUIT ~ CONFLICT

The previous cards provided the where and who of the scenario, while this card tells you about the reasons behind the Adversary's actions. Alternatively, you can use the card to determine the party's motive for challenging the Adversary. In this case, you need a particularly good hook (see Getting into the Action below).

**Spades - Passion.** The enemy is driven by a strong emotion. It might be hate, revenge, or even love. The target of his passion and the reasons for his feelings must be determined. Is the target a NPC or one of the heroes? A mix of passions can be good, too. For example, a villain in love with a non-player character is rejected and his love turns into hate, leading him to seek terrible revenge. A passion is usually stirred in the mind and does not concern physical objects (for the latter, see the Desire entry below).

*Iconic Passion conflict:* hate, love (reciprocated or not), honor, revenge, piety, desperation, lust, madness, justice.

**Hearts - Desire.** The reason behind the Adversary's (or the heroes') actions is the wish to obtain something, usually physical. The object of their desire depends on their nature. For example, a powerful sorcerer may covet a dark artifact, a despotic king may want to conquer a disputed land, an ugly demon may crave a pretty girl to eat or some human sacrifice.

*Iconic Desire conflict:* wealth, knowledge, powerful items, status, love interests.

**Diamonds - Survival.** The Adversary (or the party) is driven by the sheer need to survive. Note that survival has a very broad meaning; for instance, it might refer to preserving the status quo. The king's most trusted counsellor might decide to murder the pretty new queen, if he feels she is influencing her royal spouse too much. Similarly, a tribe of barbarians tormented by hunger may decide to assault a peaceful farming outpost. It most certainly isn't fair, but this is the unforgiving nature of the Dominions.

*Iconic Survival conflicts:* food, self-esteem, vital resources or necessary drugs, survival of the species, mating.

**Clubs - Nature.** Some creatures are inherently dangerous. Monsters, predators and even humans try to impose their will or harm the heroes simply because it is in their nature. A monster or an Abomination will do this out of instinct, but other motives may drive civilized humans. Why does a powerful prince with a harem full of gorgeous girls decide to kidnap a humble farmer's daughter? For no reason, except that he can, so he does. Sadly, evil needs no reason.

*Iconic Nature conflicts:* innate cruelty, curiosity, instinct, education, sense of superiority.

**Joker - Complex.** Sometimes, conflicts have very complex reasons or no reason at all. For example, the whole thing might be a misunderstanding and the heroes have been wronged or involved in it by mistake. You can also draw two cards and try mixing them. For example, if the Adversary is a corrupt Tricornian Prince, a Spade (Passion) and a Club (Nature) may mean that the lord is obsessed with perfect-looking girls, and he kidnaps them to embalm and preserve them forever.

## MATCHING CARDS

You can get additional help in the creative process if you find matching cards, i.e. two (or more) cards sharing the same suit or value. The presence of a match should make you concentrate more closely on the synergy created by the cards, and this will add flavor to your story.

If, for example, you draw a diamond for both the Setting (Wilderlands) and the Adversary (Powerful Lord) and you decide that the Adversary is the rebellious governor of a remote province of the Empire, you can devise a plot in which the Adversary has made a pact with the local cannibal clans and, in exchange for monthly human sacrifices, the man-eaters will submit to his authority.

## FOURTH CARD'S SUIT ~ REWARD

This card gives you an idea of what the heroes will gain if they manage to complete the adventure. Note that this is a double-edged sword: killing a powerful enemy or becoming extremely famous is not always a good thing.

**Note:** The Reward is purely optional. A Game Master should tailor the Reward of his stories based on the characteristics of the group. If no Reward is included, this card might provide an extra Setting for the adventure.

**Spades - Saving Your Skin.** Sometimes, the heroes have to be content with getting home in one piece and having a story to tell their grandchildren. Note that this might not satisfy certain players, in which case you can add a minor reward (see Wealth or Fame below) to make them happy.

*Iconic Saving Your Skin rewards:* bare survival, no gain and no loss, missed opportunity.

**Hearts - Wealth.** The party will receive a large amount of money, which they can spend in the

After the Adventure phase, precious items, or a permanent possession. Note that wealth often attracts unwanted attention.

*Iconic Wealth rewards:* money, jewels, ships, horses, castles, houses, slaves and servants, titles.

**Diamonds – Fame.** The heroes have become famous. Tales of their deeds have spread across the Dominions and their faces are recognized by the common people. But fame comes with its pros and cons. For instance, if the heroes are famed slayers of Cairnlanders, the Borderlands farmers will praise them but the Cainlanders will seek to eliminate them.

*Iconic Fame rewards:* monster slayer, great warrior, just man, fearsome pirate, wise sage, best thief in town.

**Clubs – Relationships.** The party doesn't earn any material wealth but the support of some influential individual or group. This might involve receiving a simple favor or a much more important and permanent relationship, like being adopted by a tribe, a blood pact or a marriage. However, remember that in gaining the friendship of a man you also gain his enemies.

*Iconic Relationship rewards:* love interests, favors, introductions at court, recommendations, high rank in the city guards or army, marriage proposals, blood pacts.

**Joker – Power or Mixed Blessing.** The heroes have the chance to put their hands on something very powerful, such as a magical item, or they learn some important information, such as the secret

location of a treasure. Otherwise, as above, you can draw two additional cards and mix them.

For example, a Spade (Saving Your Skin) and a Club (Relationship) can be combined to create the following story: at the end of the adventure the heroes kill the monster and, although its enchanted gold turns to dust, they manage to save a damsel in distress who, along with her gorgeous sisters, will show the party her gratitude.

## PRESENTATION

At this point, you should have a clear idea of what the structure of the adventure will be. Now, you need to consider the best way to tell your players the story. So, go back to each card and look at its value.





## THE IMPORTANCE OF FLAVORING

Once you have a basic plot, you should spend some time “flavoring” your adventure, i.e. rooting it in the Dread Sea Dominions environment. This basically means providing more background. Don’t underestimate the importance of details, like the names of the exotic beverages the heroes drink at the tavern or the description of the paintings they find in an ancient palace. Your players must think that everything their heroes see, hear and smell has a reason to exist. It is incredible how some minor details can add major realism to a story.

You can always use the background found in this book but, if you have some time, you might want to read an introductory anthropology text. The history of human civilizations will provide plenty of inspiration.

When you are defining the background and general “feel” of a *Beasts & Barbarians* scenario, the following list of keywords might help you get into the right mood:

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| ❖ Bronze Age                   | ❖ Law of the sword                       |
| ❖ Ignorance and superstition   | ❖ Exotic lands                           |
| ❖ Barbarians on the borders    | ❖ Drums in the savannah                  |
| ❖ Beautiful courtesans         | ❖ Demon-worshipping cults                |
| ❖ Decadent empires             | ❖ Sandals and bare breasts               |
| ❖ Sharp blades and strong arms | ❖ Elephants, tigers and dangerous beasts |
| ❖ Age-old civilizations        | ❖ Barbarians are brutes                  |
| ❖ Lotus plants and mutations   | ❖ Forgotten knowledge                    |
| ❖ Sweat and blood              | ❖ Barbarians are noble savages           |
| ❖ Slavery and wealth           | ❖ Merciless nature                       |

## FIRST CARD’S VALUE ~ GETTING INTO THE ACTION

The start of a story is the most crucial part, along with the end. Just think of how many books, comics, or movies you have put aside simply because the starting pages or scenes didn’t grab you. Hook your players from the very beginning and you’ll certainly enjoy a memorable game.

**Deuce – Mistaken Identity.** A classic in certain types of fiction, this beginning can be very funny if used in moderation. One or more members of the party are mistaken for someone else. This can be an advantage or a disadvantage. It is an advantage if the heroes are mistaken for powerful heroes, noblemen and so on; it is a disadvantage if they are believed to be villains. In both cases, the mistaken identity triggers the adventure.

**Three or Four – Wrong Place, Wrong Time.** A very common but good way to start an adventure. By pure chance, the heroes find themselves in a place where they get involved in something interesting (active role). Otherwise, fate throws them into an unexpected situation (passive role). In the first case, the heroes have to act to begin the adventure. For example, they witness a murder attempt, and the beginning of the adventure depends on their will to intervene. In the second case (passive role), they might be forced to react when attacked by a group of bandits on the road. Both approaches are good.

**Five to Seven – If the Pay is Good...** The party has been recruited to complete a mission. This classic beginning has many advantages. Firstly, you clearly have three key points to work on: the patron who commissioned the job, the mission to be completed, and the reward (the reason that leads the players to act). You should also decide if the adventure starts with the patron making the proposal, so the heroes are allowed to refuse, or if they have already accepted the job. The first

approach creates a freer but somewhat slower game; the second is more appropriate if you want to throw the players directly into the action.

**Eight or Nine – Lucky Break.** The heroes make a remarkable discovery and this triggers the adventure. For example, they find an ancient map or someone tells them an interesting story they want to check. You can also use rewards from a previous adventure to start a new story. For example, the heroes have recently acquired a precious idol made of gold. Then, they discover it is a fake, but where is the real idol?

**Ten – Reluctant Heroes.** The heroes are not keen on the adventure but they are forced to act by someone or something. Maybe they have been taken prisoners and must escape, or their ship has been wrecked and they must survive, or a devious patron has made them drink wine containing a slow poison and will give them the antidote only if they complete a certain quest for him. Whatever the situation, this type of hook introduces a double motivation: the party must both accomplish the main task and get out of their raw deal (for example, by getting revenge on the poisoner).

**Jack – Close and Personal.** Each hero has a long personal history, probably full of enemies, grievances, curses, and so on. Well, it is time to put this to good use in a story. The character you have chosen is the focus of the adventure and the other heroes will help him out of friendship, or because he pays or forces them. If you use this hook on a regular basis, try to choose a different hero each time.

**Queen – A Friend Is a Friend.** A friend or a patron of the party asks for help. He can be an NPC the heroes met in a previous adventure or some long-forgotten acquaintance. Alternatively, the heroes need something and a friend intervenes to help them, which leads to the start of the adventure.

**King – Race Against Time.** Whatever the goal of the scenario, the heroes have a deadline to achieve it otherwise something terrible happens, or alternatively they must resist a terrible threat for a certain amount of time: for example, they must hold out in a fort on the Borderlands, assaulted by Cairnlanders, until reinforcements arrive. Note that the concept of “limited time” can vary a lot, according to the scope of the adventure: if the group is locked up in the dreaded Prison of Jalizar, they have only one night to escape through the Sewers before facing execution. On the other side, if they were hired by a Kyrosian Princess to go into the Red Desert and find a particular crystal which can save her daughter from a rare poison, they can have only ninety days to accomplish the mission, before the girl dies. Remember that it is not necessary for the party to know exactly how much time they still have...

**Ace – “Do You Remember When...?”** This hook allows you to create a quick adventure as part of a bigger one. Something a party member sees or does triggers the memory of a past adventure, which is then played. This hook is great when you are in the middle of a campaign and, for some reason, many players miss a session. You can play the past story while keeping the main campaign on standby. As in the case above, the heroes cannot die in the past but can be imprisoned, robbed, or saved by someone, so that at the end of the adventure they are alive but receive no experience points.

**Joker – Weird.** The joker means something really weird, like an adventure within a dream (or nightmare) of one of the heroes or a situation in which the players play other characters, as you see in certain horror movies in which a group of people is killed by the monster before the real stars come into the story. Otherwise, you can always draw two cards and combine them. For example, with a Ten (Reluctant Heroes) and an Ace (Do You Remember When...?) you can have a story about a time, years ago, when the heroes were captured by pirates and eventually managed to escape.

## SECOND CARD'S VALUE ~ ATMOSPHERE

The value of the second card provides information on the mood of the game and general theme of the adventure.

**Deuce – Horror.** The general feel of the story is dark and spooky. You can achieve this by slightly altering the setting or by making the villain just a little bit scarier. Remember, subtlety is the best way to achieve a horror effect. For instance, a simple “find the kidnapped girl in the slums” plot can turn into a truly blood-chilling story if the slums are plagued by a terrible pestilence.

**Three or Four – Mystery.** A mystery of some sort is the main theme of the adventure. This can be achieved in two ways: the identity of a character (the patron, the villain) or the purpose of a mission is kept secret at the beginning of the scenario; otherwise, an element of the plot is not what it seems. In both cases, the purpose of the adventure is to unravel the mystery.

**Five to Seven – Journey.** In this classic setup, the heroes must travel from one place to another. There can be different reasons for the journey. The party might be escorting someone, have to deliver a message or be driven by a dream or vision. The journey itself, with its many dangers, is the theme of the adventure, and it can be either a physical journey or a metaphorical one.

**Eight or Nine – Hunt.** The heroes must pursue or find someone or something. Alternatively, they are pursued and must shake off their enemies. Examples of Hunts are the classic “quest” for a magical item, tracking down a dangerous bandit to collect a bounty, or shadowing an opponent to locate his secret lair. But remember, if the heroes are discovered, the hunters can easily become the hunted...

**Ten – Crime.** The adventure’s theme is a criminal action. The heroes are forced to do something outside the boundaries of the law, like committing treason, a theft, or a murder, or simply lying and cheating. This means that, besides fighting their enemies, they have to worry about guards and law enforcers. Alternatively, they can be on the side of good and they must stop a criminal of some sort.

**Jack – Defenders.** This situation gives the heroes a mainly passive role in the story. Don’t worry, it can be very entertaining! They must either defend something or prevent someone from doing something. They might be guards hired to protect a person or property, or they might be entrusted with defending an outpost or fortification from the enemy hordes. The defenders are sometimes doomed to fail, but this will only lead to a new twist in the adventure. For example, if they are asked to protect a precious artifact from theft, and the object is stolen, the story turns into a Hunt or Crime and the party will have to retrieve the stolen item.

**Queen – Romance.** Ah, love, mover of souls and shaker of empires! The story’s theme is the oldest and most basic in the universe: love. It can be passionate, pure, immortal, unreciprocated, true, or insincere. Remember that the worst things are done and the greatest sacrifices are made for love. The plot might involve a character’s personal life: one of the heroes falls in love with someone or an NPC is attracted to a party member. Or else, it can be the story of an impossible love, doomed to turn into tragedy.

**King – Intrigue.** Similar to a Mystery, the scenario’s theme is a web of deceit around the heroes. They must act with cunning, stealth and deviousness to unravel it, or just deal with the situation head-on. Alternatively, they might be unwilling pawns in the villain’s plan. Whatever the nature of the intrigue, remember: no one is telling the truth and no one should be trusted!

**Ace – Big Event.** The story is set during a very big event, or a part of it. This is an excellent way to make the players discover a little more about the world in which they are playing. First, the exact nature of the event must be determined: does the story happen during a natural catastrophe, like a flood or tornado? Is it set in the middle of a terrible war? Or is it about a happy occurrence, like a royal wedding? What is the heroes’ part in the event? Are they impotent spectators (say, during a

natural catastrophe) or does everything depend on their bravery (the royal bride has gone missing and the heroes must bring her back before the wedding)?

**Joker–Mixed.** The Joker indicates a major mood change, like a comical story during a more serious campaign, to ease the tension a little, or a serious story during a lighthearted campaign. Or it may be something even stranger, like the heroes losing their memory at the start of the story. Finally, you can also draw two cards and mix them. For example, if an Eight (Hunt) and a Queen (Romance) are drawn, the party may be hired to track down a reluctant bride who has run away with her lover.

## MAPPING OR NOT?

**Note:** in this context, by “maps” we mean “exploration maps”. Combat maps fall into the props category.

One of the most time-consuming activities during the preparation of a game is drawing exploration maps. We love maps, no kidding, but in certain cases there is simply no time, or no reason, to have a map.

Think about classic sword and sorcery fiction. The heroes often explore crumbling ruins and ancient palaces, full of strange shadows and monsters, and they constantly risk getting lost or falling into a ravine. However, the author never provides a detailed map of the locations, since a vague description increases the feeling of wonder and mystery, which would disappear if a complete map was available.

If you decide to use a map-less approach, you can adopt one of the two systems below.

**Locations as Encounters.** Simply ignore the mapping side but detail the encounters as you would do in an outdoor scenario. Put them in an order of your choice or connect each of them like the old choose-your-own adventure books did. For example, from location 1, the door to the right takes you to location 2, while the corridor leads to location 3 and so on.

**Abstract Navigation System.** This system is particularly useful when the heroes are trying to reach a specific location (for example, the main room of the unholy temple where a human sacrifice is about to start) and must do so in a limited time. First, choose an Advancement Trait, like Tracking if they are following a path or Smarts if they are navigating a labyrinth. Then, determine the duration of the exploration rounds in real world terms (i.e. five minutes, an hour, half a day and so on). For each exploration round, the party makes a Cooperative Trait roll on the Advancement Trait. For each success and raise, they receive an Advancement Token (usually, maximum 2 per round) and draw a card from the Action Deck. Each card value and/or suit is linked to a specific encounter/location the heroes must face. When they earn a suitable number of Advancement Tokens (usually between 8 and 16), they reach the “final” room. The duration of the rounds also helps you determine roughly how much time they have used for the exploration. This system is a little more complex than the previous one, but it has the advantage of providing a non-linear, virtually endless exploration system.

On the next page you'll find the Thing of the Tombs, an example of the Abstract Navigation System which can also be used as an independent one sheet.

**Using Tokens to Track Events.** The Token System can be used for a number of useful things during an adventure, for example to handle alarm levels of locations during stealth missions (each noisy thing the players do adds Tokens: at fixed thresholds certain events happen), or as a timing mechanism (when the fire in the palace starts, add a Fire Token for each Fire Token the players already have: if the total is 20 or more, the Valk tent city becomes a raging inferno). The possibilities are endless...

## THE THING OF THE TOMBS

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

*She seems quite sad. "Please forgive me," she says "but there is no other way. If we don't provide the Thing of the Tombs a sacrifice every full moon, it comes out, and takes our people."*

*You frantically look around, noticing the pale bones shimmering among the debris. Human bones.*

*"It is late afternoon now," says Tarro, Zalora's father. "The Thing won't wake up before dusk. You have time to say your last prayers, strangers. Good luck. May your death in the Tombs of Nar Takar be merciful."*

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

The whole scenario is run with the Abstract Navigation System.

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

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

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

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

## SCENES

**Duce – Rolling Death.** The characters are going up (if the card is red) or down (if it is black) a flight of stairs, when the first of them treads on a trapped step, which releases a huge stone cylinder from the top of the stairs, which rolls down, crushing everything on its path, heroes included! Consider this scene a Short (5 rounds) Chase, based on Agility. The stone cylinder is considered a Wild Card with Agility d<sub>4</sub> and Fighting d<sub>4</sub> the first round, and they each go up one die step per round up to d<sub>12</sub> at the fifth one. It can only hit at Short Range, dealing 3dX damage, where X is its Agility die step. Once a hero is hit, he is excluded from the Chase (the cylinder has rolled over him). Characters with the Fleet Footed Edge roll at +2.

**Three – The Gong.** The heroes enter in a large room, probably an old temple of some sort, where there are the remnants of a broken altar (probably due to an earthquake) and behind it, there is large bronze gong. Looking around the altar, an old sacrificial dagger can be found with a Notice (-2) roll, while a big bronze mallet (Str+dB, 2 hands, Improvised Weapon) lies nearby, obviously meant to ring the gong. If the party sounds the gong, apparently nothing happens, but they gain one Noise Token and, after 1d<sub>4</sub> rounds a group of 2d<sub>6</sub> Tomb Rats, huge ferocious beasts, arrive, attacking the party!

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

**Four – Blocked Passage.** The heroes' path is blocked by a huge stone boulder, fallen due to some ancient earthquake. The heroes must move it out of the way with a Strength (-4) roll, which can be cooperative. The roll can be attempted as many times as they want, but every failure causes a level of Fatigue to the adventurers (wears off in two Advancement rounds). If the roll is successful the path is cleared, but the group also receives

a Noise Token. If the party doesn't manage to move the stone they must go back, losing two Advancement Tokens.



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

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

**Seven – Vaako, the Dark Dweller.** As well as the Thing of the Tombs, the tomb is inhabited by **Vaako**, the sole survivor of the Tricarnian slaves of the city, now reduced to a feral beast. If the heroes have no Noise Tokens, the Dark Dweller is intent on hunting rats, and he must check for surprise; if he wins, he escapes, then he'll sneakily shadow the party. If the group has Noise Tokens the Dark Dweller is hidden in the shadows, ready to ambush the group (he particularly tries to kidnap any girl in the group). If wounded, he surrenders. He knows a lot about this place and can lead the party to the exit (+2 to every subsequent Advancement roll), or, if the party really insists, he leads them to the Den of the Thing. He will try to escape and betray the party at the first opportunity.

**(H) Vaako the Dark Dweller.** Use Twisted Servant, raising both Smarts and Stealth by one die step.

**Eight – Room of Carvings.** The walls of this room are carved with the inscriptions and decorations of a forgotten past. Examining them, a character who knows High Tricarnian (or who makes a Knowledge

(Legends and Lore) or (Arcana) (-2) roll, understands that this place was the prison of Takara, a Tricarnian princess, who was a normal woman transformed by a curse into a giant spider and sealed in the tombs. Princess Takara is actually the Thing of the Tombs! The GM is free to add extra details to the story. If the heroes learn this piece of knowledge they gain +2 to resist any Fear roll she causes.

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

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

**Jack – Sorcerous Torch.** The adventurers are exploring a corridor, when they see a pale light coming out from a side opening. Peering inside they see a small room where a strange torch is burning, hanging from the wall. The torch is made of unknown metal and emanates a bluish, cold light. It is a Keronian relic, and works as a normal torch, but lasts for a very long time (at least one thousand years). It can be snuffed out, but to be lit again requires a Sorcery roll and the expenditure of a Power Point. This artifact is worth one thousand Moons to the right people.

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

The girl is dressed as a Tricarnian ceremonial singer, in just a scanty, bejeweled bikini, and is very focused on the music. She ignores the party until someone enters the room and touches her. At this point she raises her eyes and the adventurer can see minuscule golden scales covering her face, causing a Spirit roll to avoid being Shaken from disgust. Then the girl disappears with a ghastly wail (she is the ghost of a Tricarnian servant with Caudru blood in her veins, see page 74), and the hero hears the noise of dozens of scaly creatures coming from the floor. Concealed by the fog, a number of poisonous snakes are surrounding him, ready to attack (consider them hidden, a Notice roll is required to spot them).

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

#### **(E) Poisonous Snakes (4 + 1 per hero)**

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

**Ace – Room of Creeping Things.** The heroes stumble on a black door decorated with disgusting symbols. If they manage to open it (Lockpicking or Strength (-2) roll), they find a round room, with a pedestal in the middle upon which lies a black stone amulet. The walls of the room are strange, they are filled with small holes, like the cells of a beehive. If someone touches the amulet, a horde of small black spiders comes out of the

fissures and attack the poor sod. The spiders cannot leave the room. The amulet is magical and confers the Holy Warrior Edge, but only against the Thing of the Tomb.

**(E) Black Spiders of Tricarnia (1 per 2 Heroes).** Use Swarm stats, adding a Venomous (+1) poison.

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

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

✂ **Thing of the Tombs. See below.**

**Redraws.** If the group draws a card they have already drawn again, they are retracing their steps. If the card drawn is red, they find a previously unnoticed corridor, gaining +2 to their next Advancement roll; if it is black, they got confused and suffer -2 to the same roll.

**The Gate.** When the heroes have accumulated 8 Advancement Tokens, they have finally reached the exit of the tomb; they are in a ruined room, but a massive stone gate, closed, prevents them from leaving. Opening it is a Dramatic Task based on Strength (-2). The gate opens when the party gathers at least five successes/raises. Each attempt is very noisy, and for each round of effort on the gate, the party receives one Noise Token; so it is quite probable the Thing of the Tomb arrives. If the party manages to open the gate and escape during daytime, the Thing backs off into the darkness and doesn't follow them. If the party kills it, the region will be freed from a real nightmare (but the adventurers could be more interested in taking vengeance on the villagers who threw them in the tombs...).

✂ **The Thing of the Tombs**

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

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

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

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

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

#### Special Abilities

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



## THIRD CARD'S VALUE ~ PLOT TWIST

The best plots are the ones that are difficult for your players to predict. Twists and unexpected events drastically change the adventure and make it more interesting and fun to play. Remember: twists are meant to astonish.

**Deuce – Catastrophe.** The villain's or the heroes' actions trigger a disaster of some type! Unlike the Big Event above, the Catastrophe Plot Twist doesn't exist at the start of the adventure and poses an additional threat.

**Three or Four – Change.** As the game is progressing, change the Setting, Atmosphere or Adversary (or even all of them)! This can have amazing effects on the outcome of the adventure. For example, let's take the "find the kidnapped girl in the slums" situation and apply a radical change to its Setting, Atmosphere and Adversary. While looking for clues in the slums, the heroes are drugged and wake up hours later in chains, on a foreign ship making for a faraway land. Naturally, the kidnapped girl is on the ship too and the heroes must first free themselves and then rescue her.

**Five to Seven – a Personal Matter.** The scenario is about a personal matter concerning one of the heroes. The Villain might be an old Enemy returning from the past or he has kidnapped, cursed, or killed a party member's relative or love interest. Whatever the reason, from now on, the story gets very personal.

**Eight or Nine – Nest of Snakes.** As they proceed through the adventure, the heroes discover that the situation is much worse than they expected. Maybe the Villain is only the servant of a more powerful evildoer or the conspiracy has branched out so far that even people beyond suspicion are part of it. The plot is so complex that the party will need some extra help, time, and luck to get out of their predicament.

**Ten – Helper.** Some unexpected help comes the heroes' way. Maybe the sweet damsel in distress they must save turns out to be a diehard Amazon warrior. Or the barbarians chasing the heroes, impressed by their courage in fighting the great evil in the forest, join the party's side for the final battle. Or else, an evil character turns good and befriends the heroes.

**Jack – Traitor.** An ally of the party turns out to be an enemy! Maybe he has been working for the Adversary all along, or the heroes have done something that changes his allegiance. Or, as in Ten above, the Traitor is actually betraying the bad guy, becoming a friend and Helper of the heroes. Alternatively, the Traitor has simply made a terrible mistake, like not locking the back door of the palace, and now wishes to put things right. Remember, be careful; a good traitor can become so important in your plot as to obscure the main villain.

**Queen – Things Aren't What They Seem.** The Setting, Adversary, a patron, an NPC or even the mission itself is not what it appears to be, and this has a serious impact on the story. Maybe the girl the party is going to rescue wasn't actually kidnapped, or the evil warlock is only a poor herdsman cursed by a relic, or the debauched nobleman who has been opposing the heroes throughout the adventure turns out to be a friend. Whatever your idea, this twist is based on the difference between appearance and reality.

**King – Repercussions.** The heroes' actions have major repercussions on the future of the campaign, or of the Dominions. These consequences can be positive or negative, but the party must live with them. If the group stops the dark ritual of a Nandal shaman, aimed at creating eternal winter in the northern lands, they might cause a terrible drought lasting for years. Or, if the anonymous Phalanx Officer the party has saved from Valk riders is the legitimate son of the Emperor, they can gain a powerful friend. Actions have consequences, and some of them are lifelong.

**Ace – Dilemma.** The adventure presents a moral choice of some type that the heroes must make.

If the heroes are hired by colonists to clear a ruined city of hideous monsters, but then they discover that the monsters are actually the original dwellers of the city, what is the right thing to do? Many dilemmas are of a very personal nature: if the evil warlock is a childhood friend or someone who once saved the hero's life, what will the hero do? It is up to the players to make their own decisions.

**Joker - Weird.** This card indicates a weird twist, like the party discovering they are working for an evil patron. Otherwise, you can draw two cards and mix their meanings. For example, a Deuce (Catastrophe) and a Four (Change) might mean that, by interrupting a dark ritual, the heroes free a powerful demon that sends the whole city back in time, to a few hours before the fall of the Dread Star.

## MANAGING YOUR RESOURCES

When you prepare a scenario, it is important to effectively manage your most important resource: time. The four most important (and time-consuming) activities when preparing a scenario are: devising the plot, flavoring the story, working out creatures' stats, and designing maps/making props. When you have little time, you must choose what to concentrate on, dedicating a certain amount of time to each aspect.

**Devising the Plot.** This is crucial. You should devote most of your time to this (50%).

**Flavoring the Story.** This aspect (see above) is also very important. It is the flesh and blood covering the bones of your plot. You should dedicate at least 25% of your time to this.

**Working out Creatures' Stats.** This is usually very easy in *Savage Worlds*. Don't waste too much time on it (10%), unless you are planning a very particular combat. Almost all creatures can be created by taking a monster from the bestiary in the core rules and altering a couple of stats.

**Designing Maps/Making Props.** Before starting to draw an elaborate map, ask yourself: will the players ever see it? Also, is a complete map of the current location really necessary, considering the heroes will visit only two or three places? If the answer is "no", avoid wasting time on maps nobody will see except you, use a map-less system (see above) and concentrate on other things. Props are a different matter: a good prop (which can also be a detailed combat map) can really enhance your game, but keep in mind that you need enough time for devising the plot and flavoring.

## FOURTH CARD'S VALUE ~ CLIMAX

The fourth and last card refers to another crucial part of the story: the main scene, the moment of maximum tension when the Game Master gives his narrative best. The players will probably forget the rest of the adventure but they will remember this part. It is also important to decide at which point to play the climax scene. If you are running a single session, the best moment is in the middle of the game, so that the party has time to complete it and can feel satisfied at the end. If you are playing a multi-session adventure, you might want to include a cliffhanger at the end of the session, to hook the players into the next game.

**Deuce - Sacrifice.** Someone, a hero or an NPC, is given the opportunity to sacrifice himself to save the day. For example, the princess offers herself to a demon to spare the life of a hero she loves. Or a character is given the chance to kill the mad king, at the cost of his own life. Remember, a sacrifice doesn't necessarily lead to a character's death but, when the players consider the

opportunity, they must believe it to be so. Even when a hero stands alone against a horde of barbarians, unexpected help may come just in time to save him.

**Three or Four – Unmasking.** The story climaxes when someone finally drops his mask or something incredible is revealed: the kind-hearted priest of the Divine Couple turns out to be the master of a sect of demon worshippers, or one of the heroes, who has always thought she was an orphan, discovers that she is the last heir of a powerful Tricornian prince, or an old witch tells the hero that he cannot marry the princess because she is his sister. Remember, the revelation must always be very dramatic.

**Five to Seven – Battle.** A combat, such as a man-to-man duel in the arena or the clash of two massive armies, is the high point of the story. The clash of blades or of opposed wills will resolve the scenario.

**Eight or Nine – Escape or Chase.** At a certain point in the story, the party must escape from a dangerous situation, such as the collapse of an underground temple in which the heroes have killed a powerful demon. Alternatively, a thief has just stolen a treasure from under the heroes' noses and they must chase him over the rooftops. Remember, the fact that the main villain is gone doesn't mean that the adventure is over.

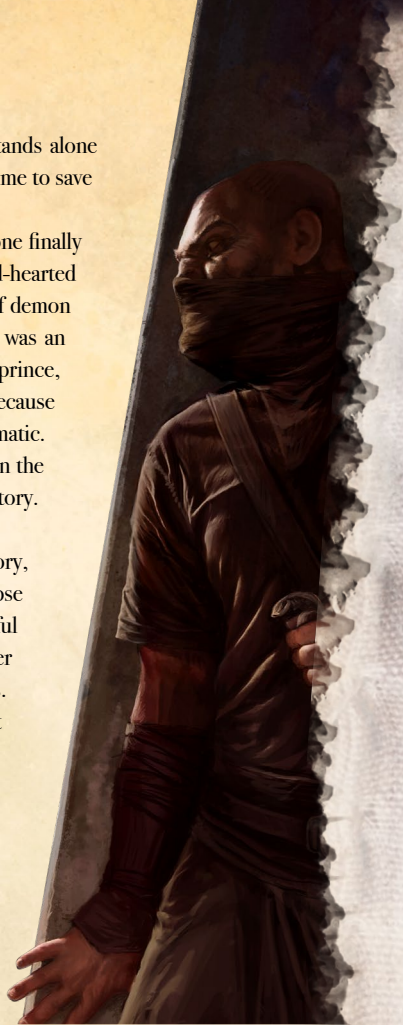
**Ten – Impending Doom.** The power of ineluctability, as in an ancient tragedy, characterizes the climax scene, and the heroes seem doomed to unavoidable failure. For example, the meaning of a grim prophecy is revealed or all the odds are against the party, making the situation desperate. But a strong arm, a powerful will and a good dose of luck can triumph even when all seems lost.

**Jack – Race Against Time.** The heroes have a limited amount of time to complete the adventure and must hurry!

Otherwise the Nandal horde will storm the city, or an ancient curse will kill the princess, or the poisoned wine the heroes have drunk will cripple or blind them for life. A Race Against Time can be on a small or larger scale. In the first case, the heroes have been bitten by a demon and they only have a few minutes before being turned into hideous abominations. The situation will be resolved in a single scene. In the second case, the heroes only have ten days before their immortal souls, trapped by a sorcerer inside an hourglass, trickle down like sand, causing their eternal death and damnation. The situation requires a whole adventure to solve.

**Queen – Rescue.** A hero feels truly lost without a damsel to rescue. The highest point of the scenario is a breathtaking scene in which someone is rescued or something is retrieved. For instance, the princess has been taken captive and is now bound to an altar. The party must free her before the big, ugly guardian wakes up and tries to eat the adventurers for lunch.

**King – Reinforcements.** When all seems lost, reinforcements come to the heroes' aid! They might be friends, trusted soldiers, or simply the cavalry. You can interpret this situation in the opposite way, too: when the heroes have almost defeated the villain, he receives fresh help, greatly reducing the party's chances of victory. When you introduce reinforcements, be careful not to shift the narrative focus from the heroes to the reinforcements. The players will feel left out if your NPCs (the reinforcements) solve the adventure instead of the heroes. The reinforcements should



be strong enough to provide substantial help but they must not overshadow the player characters. In addition, remember that, in *Savage Worlds*, Allies are usually controlled by the players, not the Game Master, which makes them feel more in control.

**Acc - Stand-Off.** A classic in action movies, a stand-off is a stalemate situation lasting until someone takes the initiative and the story explodes, with dramatic consequences. A typical stand-off happens when two groups are studying each other, weapons drawn, but nobody acts. Another example is when the bad guy holds someone hostage, which prevents the heroes from acting. Remember, the standoff is meant to be resolved: use it to reach the climax, and then let all hell break loose.

**Joker - Weird.** You can always try something very weird, or draw two cards and combine their indications into one climax scene. For example, an Eight (Escape or Chase) and a King (Reinforcements) can create a scene in which the heroes chase the Valk bandit who kidnapped the princess and finally corner him, but, as they are about to free the girl, a Valk horde arrives on the scene, making the heroes' task much harder.

### EIGHT REALLY FAST PLOTS

The generator requires some time to be used. Even an expert user will need at least half an hour to design a plot. But sometimes you have to devise an adventure in very little time. In this case, you can use the following suggestions. The plots are deliberately simple and short, so that you can add to them as you prefer.

- ❖ The heroes are lost in a very hostile environment (such as a desert), their provisions are dwindling and they are desperate. Suddenly, they spot an ancient city, where they can probably find water and food, but the place is inhabited by a debauched, dangerous race.
- ❖ A patron orders the heroes to steal a precious item from an evil sorcerer in a very well protected mansion. Additional twist: the heroes' patron turns out to be worse than the sorcerer and tries to con them.
- ❖ The heroes are imprisoned by a mad villain who has a major obsession (gladiatorial games, dangerous Lotus experiments, embalming beautiful girls...). They must escape from his den before it is too late.
- ❖ A hero or a close friend is accused of a crime (usually murder) that he didn't commit. The party has limited time to find the culprit.
- ❖ The party is hired to bring back a fugitive or to collect the bounty on the head of a powerful criminal. This will require a dangerous journey in a wild region.
- ❖ At the start of the adventure, the heroes are being chased by a large group of evil NPCs (Cairnlanders, Valk riders, or similar). They find shelter in an old ruin, a cave or other indoor environment which the pursuers dare not enter because it is the den of an ancient evil.
- ❖ While in a desert, the heroes bump into an NPC, often a beautiful girl. She asks for their help because the cruel local tyrant has done her some wrong. But, they soon realize the girl was a specter, a restless soul looking for vengeance. Then, they meet the tyrant who is harassing another one of his subjects. If they decide to fight the cruel lord, the specter will help them.
- ❖ A girl is kidnapped by a hideous creature. The party must save her.

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Now that you have used inspirations from the cards and devised a rough plot, you are almost finished. You just have to work out the creatures' stats (unless you want to do that on the fly) and add some details to the locations and background. Still unsure about how the whole thing works? Check the example below!

### PLOT EXAMPLE: THE CURSE OF THE GREAT BITER

*Sitting down with the Adventure Generator, I shuffle my deck of Action Cards and draw four, placing them in order on the table. They are: 1. Six of Clubs (Setting) 2. Ace of Hearts (Adversary) 3. Ten of Clubs (Conflict) 4. Eight of Diamonds (Reward) The player characters are currently in the Kyrosian city of Chalat on the Sword River, so the adventure I generate will have to tie into that area.*

*The first card is Clubs and gives me a setting of "Ruins." I like the idea of an ancient temple of some sort.*

*The second card is Hearts and gives me an adversary of "Schemer." I like the idea of a scheming, deceitful woman.*

*The third card is Clubs again and gives me a conflict of "Nature." Giving this some thought I decide it will either be the woman's greedy nature, or some natural beast. Perhaps I can use both! The woman's motivation will be her greed, so she is after a jewel of some sort. There will also be a monstrous animal in the adventure.*

*The fourth card is Diamonds and gives me a reward of "Fame." This is a tough one, but probably it will mean that the PC's only reward this time will be fame for their deeds.*

*For the fleshing out process, the first card is a six and gives me a hook of "Hired."*

*I decide that the woman will use her wiles to "hire" one or more of the party.*

*The second card is an ace and gives me an atmosphere of "Big Event." I like the idea of a big natural event and decide there will be an earthquake.*

*The third card is a Ten and gives me a twist of "Help." I decide that the earthquake will actually help the adventurers somehow.*

*The fourth and last card is an eight and tells me the climax will be an "Escape." The party will have to escape the crumbling temple as the earthquake topples it! Now we must put it all together and add some background texture to it.*

*Hadiya, a beautiful but greedy courtesan, is a love interest of one of the heroes. During a night of love, she artfully whispers in her lover's ear about an ancient temple of Lythros, the Crocodile God. "The cult practiced sacrifice and was driven out by the locals," she says, "And the temple was sealed. Some ships and fishermen vanished in the waters near the ruins, so people called it cursed and kept their distance. But the people also spoke of great riches left behind by the cult, particularly a legendary green gem called the Heart of the River, which is maculated like the skin of the Sword River alligators."*

*"Only those clever enough to avoid being ensnared by traps or killed by the evil creatures dwelling in the temple could make off with the riches," she says. But Hadiya tells her lover she's found another way into the temple. A wandering beggar who passed the temple a week ago, just after a large earth tremor, told her of how the tremor had caused a temple wall to collapse and created a hole! Hadiya continues to convince her lover and his friends to take her to the temple in search of the jewel. Inside the temple the party will have a few encounters with traps and some degenerate survivors of the cult, who have been living in the sealed temple for generations. In the depths of the temple is an*

underground pool with submerged tunnels that lead to a river within which lives an enormous crocodile - the Great Biter itself!

This is what has fed on fishermen and ships that get too close to the temple ruins. The pool hosts a small patch of rock in the middle where the altar of the temple stands and the precious gem, the Heart of the River, lies upon it. The party will have to find a way to cross the pool, and while doing so will discover a cleverly concealed bridge-like platform below the surface of the water. Possibly, in one of the previous encounters in the temple, they'll have found cryptic inscriptions hinting to "looking for the well-concealed way" or something similar.

While crossing the bridge, they will be attacked by the Great Biter which will try to drag the adventurers into deep water and devour them. At the end of the fight, the party manages to reach the altar in the center of the pool and grab the great jewel. At this point Hadiya pulls out a tube containing a powder of a very deadly Lotus poison, and gloats how she will kill the entire party with its deadly cloud and take the jewel for herself! Just then an earthquake will shake the complex and she will be crushed by a falling crocodile-headed statue.

The party will then perform a daring escape from the crumbling temple to the surface, with the ceilings collapsing all around them, walls cracking, and the lake waters rising as the river pours in. The party's only reward will be fame for ending "The Curse of the Great Biter."





# MONSTERS OF THE DOMINIONS

"IF IT BLEEDS, IT CAN DIE"  
- Northlander saying

This chapter presents some of the creatures players will find most interesting. It includes mounts, summonable beasts, and so on. It is not to be considered an extensive bestiary, but only a taste of the foul monsters one may encounter in *Beasts & Barbarians*!

## MODIFIED MONSTROUS ABILITIES

The Demon Monstrous Ability, introduced in the *Savage Worlds Fantasy Companion*, is slightly modified in the *Beasts & Barbarians* world, so it is reproduced below.

### DEMON

- **Demon:** Demons are immune to poison and disease. They have a +2 bonus to recovering from being Shaken.

## HERO'S JOURNAL: DEMON'S TRUE NAMES AND CHAIN NAMES

**True Name.** Demons are known in the Dread Sea Dominions by the names assigned to them by the sorcerers summoning them for the first time or by sages. These aren't the demons' true names. They are known as "mundane names" and mean nothing.

Instead, knowing a demon's true name gives a certain power over it. As a rule of thumb, knowing the real name of a demon grants the Arcane Resistance Edge against its powers, +2 to resisting Tests of Will made by that demon, and +2 to Sorcery rolls to summon it.

But this is only a general rule and the Game Master can grant other specific advantages for knowing the true names of very powerful demons.

Note that the true name refers to a single demon, not to the whole group it belongs to. So, for instance, knowing the true name of Xarigas the Keronian Imp gives no power over his brother, Turas the Keronian Imp. Discovering the true name of a demon might be the goal of an adventure or a small quest.

**Chain Name.** Demons are devious. They know that humans are always trying to find out their true names to control them. So they sometimes say strange words to cheat humans into believing they have let their true name slip. In truth, these words are oaths of submissions, called Chain Names. A person pronouncing a chain name in front of a demon is actually saying something like: "I am giving you my soul and body so that you can use it as you will."

A character saying a Chain Name to a demon must make a Spirit roll. If he fails, he suffers -2 to resisting Tests of Wills made by that demon and -2 to Sorcery rolls to summon it. In addition, if he rolls a critical failure, the demon enslaves him as per the *puppet* Power. The effect is permanent unless the demon is slain forever. Recognizing a Chain Name requires a Knowledge (Arcana) (-4) roll.

## ANCESTOR'S GHOST

These ethereal creatures are the ghosts of men and women who lived thousands of years ago. Sorcerers evoke them because they are free from the constraints of existence and can perceive the world in a way that living beings can't.

Ancestors' Ghosts are Veteran creatures for the purpose of the *summon ally* Power.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d12+2, Knowledge (specific era) d10, Notice d10, Stealth d12+2

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

### Special Abilities

- **Anchor:** Ancestors' Ghosts cannot leave the place that they haunt or, if summoned by a sorcerer, cannot go farther than 12" from their evoker.
- **Ethereal:** Ancestors' Ghosts are immaterial and can only be damaged by magic.
- **Ghost Powers:** An Ancestor's Ghost can use these powers, with Spirit as the Arcane Skill: *divination*, *detect arcana*, *darkness*, *fear*, and *telekinesis*. It has 15 Power Points and, when they run out, the ghost disappears.
- **Spirit Precognition:** An Ancestor's Ghost can perceive danger as per the Danger Sense Edge.





## BALKOTH

A Balkoth, or War Beast, is sort of cross between a lion and an enormous dog, with a long muzzle with a curved horn on it, like a rhinoceros, and small bone spikes protruding from its joints, in particular the elbows. Balkoths probably have a demonic origin, and were used in ancient Keron as the battle mounts of Priest Princes and great warriors. Some specimens survived and still exist today in Tricarnia, both wild and tamed. In truth the difference isn't that great: a Balkoth, regardless of whether it was raised in captivity or grew up free, is extremely ferocious (you cannot approach one in any manner, especially during the mating season) and attacks on sight. There are only two ways to break a Balkoth: the first one is wrestling the beast into submission, the second is enchanting it with a Balkoth Crystal, a particular stone which has a strange influence over the beast (see sidebar). Today probably less than one hundred trained Balkoth exist in Tricarnia, but owning and controlling one of these beasts makes a warrior a fearful force on the battlefield. Characters with the Beast Rider Edge can take a Balkoth as companion, but only if they also have sufficient Rank.

They are considered Heroic creatures for the purposes of the *summon ally* Power, but the caster must own a Balkoth Crystal, even if only a depleted one, to summon such a beast.

Balkoths are Henchmen.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Tracking d10

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9

## BALKOTH TAMING

Balkoth are extremely fierce beasts, and even if tamed, they only obey their master and recognize no other authority. There are basically two ways to break a Balkoth, described below.

**Force it to Submit.** This requires the would-be master to wrestle the beast in unarmed combat, one on one. The man must make non-lethal attacks, while the beast uses all its strength. If the tamer manages to inflict three Wounds, the Balkoth breaks and accepts him as its master for life. The only thing that can make a Balkoth betray its master is a Balkoth Crystal (see below). A Balkoth can only be tamed this way once in its life, and only before it reaches adulthood (three years).

**Balkoth Crystal.** These strange black crystals are found in the Red Desert or, very rarely, in the Brokenchain Mountains (the latter ones have a milky color). A free Balkoth seeing a Balkoth Crystal within 6", must make a Spirit (-4) roll or fall under the control of the crystal's owner, as per the *puppet* Power. The roll must be repeated every round, till the beast fails. The effect is permanent: in narrative terms the Balkoth's soul is trapped in the gem. A Balkoth Crystal can only store the soul of a single Balkoth, and, if the beast dies, the Crystal is considered depleted and cannot be used any more.

## Special Abilities

- **Bite or Claw:** Str+d6.
- **Demon Sniffing:** A Balkoth has a supernatural ability to find demons, even in a false shape. It can follow their scent with a Tracking roll and it can make an opposed roll, pitting its Notice (+4) versus the demon's Persuasion, to identify a disguised one. Balkoth hate demons.
- **Furious Growl:** A Balkoth can growl to scare enemies. This counts as an Intimidation roll, made against any enemy in a Medium Burst Template centered on the Balkoth.
- **Loyal Fighter:** A Balkoth used as a mount is also a fighting companion. Both it and the rider receive +1 to attack rolls as per the Gang Up modifier.
- **Pounce:** A Balkoth can pounce on an enemy to rend him with its sheer weight and razor-sharp claws. It can leap 1d6" to gain +4 to attack and damage rolls against an opponent. It suffers -2 to Parry till its next action however.
- **Size +3:** A Balkoth is smaller than a horse, but much sturdier. It can easily carry a fully-armored man and a passenger on its back.

## CAUDRU

Before the Keronian Empire, a strange race existed in the south of the world. Seemingly identical to men and women, these creatures have the ability to transform into monstrous snake hybrids.

There is no agreement among Sages about their true nature. Some say they were originally human and a strange disease made them acquire the ability to change shape, others say they are a completely separate race.

Whatever their origin, the Caudru, called Snake People by mankind, worshipped an ancient divinity, the Snake-That-Devours-The-World, Ulasha, and in its name built a small but powerful kingdom, enslaving the primitive populations in the region of the Sword River (present-day Kyros).

Caudru are a race born to rule, thanks to a specific power. In their monstrous form, they have snake heads in place of their hands. These heads host venom delivered through a bite. If wisely dosed, the venom causes an extreme wave of pleasure in humans, more addictive than any type of Lotus. In greater doses, the venom is deadly but the victim dies in total pleasure.

With the rise of the Keronian Empire, the Snake People's

kingdom was subjugated but not destroyed. Keronian sorcerers greatly valued their poisonous abilities and kept them as pleasure slaves and concubines.

With the fall of the Dread Star and the destruction of the Keronian Empire, the Snake People were free. But the climate change caused by the disaster killed most of them, and the rebellion of the other slaves, who always saw the Snake People as in league with their oppressors, forced them to conceal themselves among ordinary humans. Some migrated to faraway places, seeking power and importance wherever they could find it.

Schemers by nature, Snake People prefer to act from the shadows, enslaving and controlling without being noticed. However, these devious fiends face another major problem: their dwindling numbers have forced them to breed with humans, weakening their blood. In many pairings the child inherits no monstrous abilities or features.

A bloodline mingled with the Snake People is forever tainted, and, even after many generations, a true Snake can be born. These individuals are usually unaware of their nature and live a normal life. Finding and “awakening” these Sleeping Ones is a key task for the entire Awakened Snake race. They view it as the only way to ensure the survival of the species.

### SNAKE WOMAN

In their natural form Snake Women retain great, though slightly revolting, beauty.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Persuasion d10, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8

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

**Special Abilities:**

- **Charmer of Men:** Snake Women can manipulate men with subtlety and cunning, making them feel like gods or worms with the mere twitch of an eyelash. They have the *boost/lower trait* Power, only usable on men, and use Persuasion as their Arcane Skill. They have 8 Power Points to spend on this Power only. This effect doesn’t register as magic, but can be dispelled with the *dispel* Power.
- **Extraordinary Beauty:** Snake Women have a strange, alien comeliness, which is both revolting and attractive. They receive +4 to Charisma.
- **First Strike:** Once per turn the Snake Woman (if not Shaken) gets a free Fighting attack against a single foe who moves adjacent to her. This automatically interrupts the opponent’s action and does not cost the Snake Woman her action if she is on Hold or has not yet acted.
- **Hand Bite:** Str. The hand bite delivers a “pleasure poison”. Any target failing the Vigor roll experiences an incredible surge of pleasure (Shaken). The pleasure sensation lasts for several hours (but the Shaken effect is recovered as normal). This poison is very addictive and any victim must make a Spirit roll (–1 for each subsequent poisoning to a maximum of –4) or gain a Major Habit. The Snake People can also decide to deliver a larger dose of poison, which acts like a Head Bite.
- **Head Bite:** Str. The head bite of the Snake People delivers a vicious Lethal poison.
- **Snake Lords:** The Snake People have the Beast Master Edge, but only in relation to snakes. They are immune to all types of snake venom.
- **Vestigial Hands:** The hands of the Snake People aren’t very functional. They suffer –2 to any tasks requiring fine manipulation.

### SNAKE MAN

In their natural form Snake Men lose their legs but gain a serpentine tail and become exceptionally strong.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Persuasion d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8

**Special Abilities:**

- **Constrict:** If a Snake Man hits with a raise, he can choose to constrict the target in his coils. The round he constricts, and each round thereafter, he causes damage to his victim equal to Str+d6. The victim may attempt to break free by scoring a raise on an opposed Strength roll.
- **Fear:** Seeing a Snake Man causes a Fear check.
- **Hand Bite:** Str. The hand bite delivers a “pleasure poison”. Any target failing the Vigor roll experiences an incredible surge of pleasure (Shaken). The pleasure sensation lasts for several hours (but the Shaken effect is recovered as normal). This poison is very addictive and any victim must make a Spirit roll (–1 for each subsequent poisoning to a maximum of –4) or gain a Major Habit. The Snake People can also decide to deliver a larger dose of poison, which acts like a Head Bite.
- **Head Bite:** Str. The head bite of the Snake People delivers a vicious Lethal poison.
- **Size+1:** A male specimen of the Snake People is bigger than a human man.
- **Snake Lords:** The Snake People have the Beast Master Edge, but only in relation to snakes. They are immune to all types of snake venom.
- **Vestigial Hands:** The hands of the Snake People aren't very functional. They suffer –2 to any tasks requiring fine manipulation.

## LESSER SNAKE PEOPLE

Apart from the pure breed Snake Man, there is a caste of mixed blood, born over centuries of interbreeding. These creatures have more similarities with humans: their natural form is that of a man or a woman, with a slightly scaly skin and a massive serpentine head.

They worship their pure-breed brothers, who use them ruthlessly as minions and pawns in their evil games, as gods.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Persuasion d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

**Gear:** Bronze sword (Str+d8), dagger (Str+d4), light bronze armor (+1).

**Special Abilities:**

- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Head Bite:** Str. The head bite of the Lesser Snake People delivers a vicious Lethal poison.
- **Fear:** Seeing a Lesser Snake Man causes a Fear check.
- **Skin Changer:** One Lesser Snake Man in twenty has a strange power, he can change his appearance into that of any person he has seen and can imitate his mannerisms. To recognize the pretender as a Lesser Snake Man requires a Smarts roll opposed by the Skin Changer's Persuasion. Skin Changers are usually Wild Cards with Persuasion d12.

## HULIAN'S NAME AGAINST THE CAUDRU

Priests of Hulian are known for their fights against demons and the cruel sons of Hordan. But, in the long millennia of history, they also crossed paths with the Caudru, which are another great threat to mankind. They discovered the worshippers of the Snake-Which-Devours-the-World have a major weakness. They cannot stand the True Name of Hulian: if this is proclaimed by a Smith-Priest of Hulian, it forces any Caudru, of any type, present to make an opposed Spirit roll to avoid automatic transformation into its true form and being Shaken.

This effect applies only once per scene.

A priest of Hulian knows this weakness with a Common Knowledge roll (while he obviously knows the True Name of Hulian without any need to roll), but other characters must discover it during their adventures.

## ✠ DAUGHTER OF HORDAN

It sometimes happens that Hordan herself appears in the Dread Sea Dominions to answer the call of some very powerful sorcerer. When the evil Demon Lady arrives, she must be entertained. Giving her a proper mate, a man of great vigor and beauty, is the best way to appease her insatiable lust. If she is satisfied, before going away she leaves a gift for the sorcerer who called upon her: a large, green egg, warm and pulsating like a heart. If properly cared for and regularly smeared with human blood, the egg hatches after thirteen days. The creature emerging from the egg is a six-armed baby snake which will become a woman of terrible beauty, a Daughter of Hordan. These creatures are secretly venerated in the dark temples of Tricarnia because they have both human and demonic features. The newly born being grows into an adult in thirteen months. During this period, she has the intelligence of an animal because, despite her aspect, she lacks a soul.

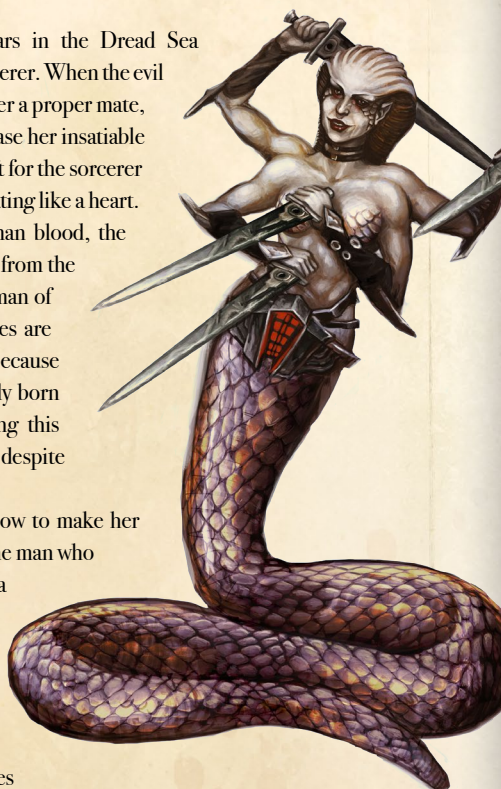
Yet, the devious Priest Princes of Tricarnia know how to make her blossom in all her glory. If a Daughter of Hordan kills the man who fathered her and devours his raw heart, she acquires a soul and human intelligence. Some sorcerers actually prefer to kill the father as soon as possible because an animal-like Daughter is a useful and faithful pet as long as she is properly nourished; while an intelligent one is cunning and seeks personal power. Indeed, there are tales of entire families of Priest Princes who became subjugated by one of these six-armed monstrosities.

**Note:** the following stats refer to an intelligent Daughter of Hordan. An animal-like Daughter has the same stats as an intelligent one except Smarts (A), and she is a Henchman rather than a Wild Card.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Stealth d6, Taunt d8

**Pace:** 7; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8



**Gear:** Six bronze long swords (Str+d8), bronze helm (+2, head only).

**Special Abilities**

- **Claws:** Str+d4, but intelligent Daughters use weapons.
- **Constrictor:** A Daughter adds +4 to Grapple attacks.
- **Demon:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; Immune to poison and disease.
- **Otherworldly Temptress:** This creature is born of lust and is aware of her mother's seduction skills. She can use the Temptress Edge, with 10 Power Points. Only intelligent Daughters have the wit to use this ability.
- **Six Arms:** A Daughter of Hordan has six arms, so she can make three attacks per round without any multi action penalty, or six attacks with a -2 penalty.
- **Size +2:** The body of a Daughter is only slightly bigger than that of a human but, including her snake tail, her total size is comparable to that of a horse.
- **Snake Body:** This creature crawls. She is quite fast, but cannot run.
- **Supernatural Beauty:** A Daughter of Hordan is gifted with supernatural beauty and no mortal woman can compete with her. She has Charisma +6.

**DEMONIC MASTIFF**

These impressive beasts are dog-like creatures. They are the size of a pony and have a cruel beak and a mane of black thorns. They come from another dimension and wise men say they are the hounds of a terrible race of demons. Demonic Mastiffs are incredible hunters and can track any type of prey tirelessly, so sorcerers evoke them when they have to find a fugitive or guard a place.

Demonic Mastiffs are Veteran creatures for the purpose of the *summon ally* Power.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Tracking d10

**Pace:** 7; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (1)

**Special Abilities**

- **Armor +1:** Thick hide.
- **Beak:** Str+d8. Their saliva is acidic, so this attack has AP 1.
- **Demon:** +2 to recovering from being Shaken; immune to poison and disease.
- **Mane of Thorns:** The Demonic Mastiff can shoot a volley of black spines. This is a ranged attack with Range 3/6/12, dealing 2d6 damage in a Small Burst Template, and uses Agility as the Shooting skill. The Mastiff can shoot up to three volleys each day.
- **Size +1:** Demonic Mastiffs are the size of a pony.
- **Supernatural Tracker:** The Demonic Mastiff ignores all Tracking penalties for bad light and old tracks.

 **DREAD STAR MATTER**

Some Tricarian sages believe Dread Star Matter came to the Dominions on the Dread Star, and its home is the cold, endless skies. Others tell the tale of a mad sorcerer who created it as an experiment. Whatever its origin, this creature is a mass of protoplasmic goo. It is almost mindless, but animated by insatiable hunger. It slowly crawls around, exploring its surroundings and enveloping any living matter it finds.

Dread Star Matter is virtually immortal and, as long as it finds enough food, it continues to grow.

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d4

**Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9

**Special Abilities**

- **Absorb:** If the Dread Star Matter hits with a raise, it absorbs its target! The victim is grappled and must win an opposed Strength (-4) roll to break free. While “inside” the Matter, he keeps suffering damage every round, as it eats its victim alive.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from Shaken. Immune to called shots, disease and poison. A construct ignores Wound Modifiers.
- **Fast Regeneration:** The Matter can make a natural healing roll each round, unless the damage is caused by its Weakness. This also works when the Matter is Incapacitated.
- **Pseudopods:** Str+d4. The creature can sprout one pseudopod plus one per point of Size. Each pseudopod has Reach equal to the Size of the creature. So, Dread Star Matter with Size +3 has four pseudopods, each with Reach 3. The creature can attack using all its pseudopods without any penalty.
- **Size +3:** A very big pile of trembling slime, with Size varying from zero to ten.
- **Weakness (variable):** Various subspecies of Dread Star Matter exist, each with a different weakness (see below). They suffer 2d8 damage per round when in contact with their weakness, and the damage inflicted ignores any Size bonus to Toughness.

**DREAD STAR MATTER WEAKNESSES**

Dread Star Matter is an alien organism, so it is hard to discover its weaknesses. To determine which substance represents the weakness of a given specimen, the Game Master can choose any substance she likes or draw a card from the Action deck and check the table below.

A Lotusmaster can analyze a Matter sample in a small laboratory or, even better, make a Lotusmastery (-4) roll, to discover its weakness. The necessary experiments require a full day’s work. In case of a very unusual type of Matter, a specific quest/adventure is required to discover its weakness.

**DREAD STAR MATTER WEAKNESS TABLE**

CARD	WEAKNESS
2-6	Fire
7-8	Salt water
9-10	Alcohol and spirits
J	Salt
K	Any acid
A	Cold
Joker	Draw two cards and combine them.

## FANGED APE

These giant creatures aren't native to this world, although today some of them live in the Lush Jungle and in various deep forests. They are the offspring of specimens that escaped from the control of sorcerers. They are big, grayish apes that are completely mute and have impressive fangs. They are very violent and magicians usually evoke them when they want to beat someone to death. Fanged

Apes are also excellent climbers. A Fanged Ape can move with impressive ability among trees and even along the roofs of buildings.

Fanged Apes are Heroic creatures for the purpose of the *summon ally* Power.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+3, Vigor d10

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

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

### Special Abilities

- **Fangs:** Str+d6.
- **Fists:** Str+d4. Fanged Apes usually attack by smashing their enemies with their massive fists. When they hit with a raise, it means they grab their opponent with both hands and give him a massive bite, gaining a free attack with Fangs.
- **Jungle Lord:** While among tree branches or on rooftops, the Fanged Ape can move as if on normal ground, as long as it has something to grab onto (at most 3" from one branch to the next).
- **Size +3:** Fanged Apes are 12 feet tall.

## FIGHTING BIRD

This name applies to several creatures: combat and hunting hawks, giant crows, fighting vultures, and all other small-sized birds used for hunting or war in the Dread Sea Dominions. They are sometimes evoked by sorcerers for defense, scouting, or delivering small packages. Fighting Birds evoked via the *summon ally* spell have Smarts d8 (A) and can speak a rudimentary language that only their evoker can understand.

Fighting Birds are Novice creatures for the purpose of the *summon ally* Power.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d10, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 2; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 3

### Special Abilities

- **Flight:** Fighting Birds fly at a Pace of 12 and have Climb 2.
- **In the Eyes!:** A fighting bird that scores a raise on a Fighting attack hits its target in the eyes. The target must make an Agility roll. In case of failure, he suffers the One Eye Hindrance. If he scores a 1 on the Agility die, regardless of the Wild Die, he is affected by the Blind Hindrance instead.
- **Size -2:** Fighting Birds are quite small.





- **Small:** Attack rolls against these creatures suffer a -2 due to their diminutive size.
- **Talons or Beak:** Str+d4.
- **Threaten:** Fighting Birds are trained to fly around enemies to hinder and distract them. This counts as an Agility Trick with a +2 modifier.

## GIANT SCORPION

This monstrosity is one of the most dangerous beasts of the Red Desert. As big as a pony, it can be found wandering among ancient ruins or hunting in the deep desert. It is very aggressive but luckily quite stupid. Its almost impenetrable armor and extremely lethal venom make it suitable prey only for the most skilled desert hunters.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d4

**Pace:** 7; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9 (3)

### Special Abilities

- **Armor +3:** Thick exoskeleton.
- **Poison (-2):** A Giant Scorpion's stinger delivers Lethal venom.
- **Size +1:** As big as a pony.
- **Stinger:** Str+d4, Reach 2.
- **Weakness (Eyes):** Called shots (-4) to the eyes are the only way to defeat its near-impenetrable armor.

## HEADLESS ZOMBIE

Ancient, forbidden tomes explain how to create these vicious undead creatures, but they are only second-hand reports because the true masters of this disgusting practice are the Pygmies who probably learned it from their Keronian lords during their time as slaves. A Headless Zombie acts exactly like a Zombie and despite its missing head, a Headless Zombie can perceive the surrounding environment much better than a normal Zombie by "smelling" it in a very peculiar and revolting way (see below). The head of the Zombie is kept by the sorcerer who has created it to control the undead slave. Headless Zombies can be created with particular (NPC only) versions of the zombie power.

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

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d6, Tracking d10

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

### Special Abilities

- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Clumsy:** A Headless Zombie is extremely uncoordinated. The Game Master cannot spend Bennies: on its rolls.
- **Head Control:** Any character with Arcane Background (Sorcery) who acquires the head of a headless Zombie can try an opposed roll between his own Sorcery and the Zombie's Spirit. If he wins, he takes control of the creature. In case of failure, he can try again after one day. In addition, a sorcerer controlling a Headless Zombie can use 1 Power Point to give the monster one of the following Edges: Berserk, Dodge, Fleet Footed, or Sweep. The Edge lasts for the duration of a fight. When bestowing the Edge, the sorcerer must be within 12" of the Zombie.
- **Smelling Through the Neck:** A Headless Zombie can inhale air through its neck and "smell" it. It is incredibly skilled and follows a scent trail as accurately as a bloodhound (hence, Tracking d10).
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; immune to poison, disease and called shots.

- **Weakness (Head):** Crushing the severed head of the Zombie (Toughness 3) immediately kills it, reducing it to a heap of rotting flesh.

## IDOL DANCER

The few travelers who dare pass through the Land of Idols tell stories of graceful shadows after dusk dancing among the statues of this desolate territory. They are called Idol Dancers and they are tall, naturally-armored creatures with strangely human faces. They use no tools and seem to lack any type of verbal communication, with the exception of bloodcurdling shrieks. Yet, they impale their victims on the idol statues and dance in a circle around them all night long before munching on them slowly as the sun rises.

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

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

### Special Abilities

- **Armor +2:** Thick exoskeleton.
- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Quick:** The Idol Dancers have extremely fast reflexes. They can discard any Action Card below 5 and draw another, but they cannot discard the latter.
- **Smell of Blood!:** Whenever an Idol Dancer is within 6" of fresh blood (a wounded character or a victim Shaken by a damaging effect), it gains the Frenzy Edge.
- **Speed of Lightning:** An Idol Dancer is capable of incredible bursts of speed. Once per combat, it can use the *speed* power, using Vigor as the Arcane Skill. The power only has standard duration and, when it ends, the creature must make a Vigor roll or be Fatigued.



## JATAKAL

The Jatakal is a demon summoned by the Valkyrie from the depths of hell. Its name means “demon steed” and it actually looks like a jet-black horse with fiery eyes and puffs of smoke spewing from its nostrils. Under its hair, the Jatakal’s flesh is made of fire, and it is so hot that nobody, not even a Valkyria, can ride it.

The Valk priestesses summon them before battles and unleash them on enemy armies to cause panic and destruction.

For the purposes of the *summon ally* power, a Jatakal is considered a Veteran creature.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d4

**Pace:** 10; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8

### Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Demon:** +2 to recovering from being Shaken; immune to poison and disease.
- **Fear:** The mere sight of a Jatakal causes a Fear check.
- **Fiery Death:** Whenever a Jatakal is Incapacitated, draw a card from the action deck. If it is red, the beast literally bursts into flame. Any target within a Large Burst Template centered on the Jatakal

must make an Agility roll or suffer 3d6 damage, and check if he has been set on fire.

- **Fire Breathing:** Jatakals breathe fire using a Cone Template. Every target within the cone makes an Agility roll at -2 to avoid the attack. Those who fail suffer 2d8 damage and must check if they have been set on fire. A Jatakal cannot attack with its bite and breathe fire in the same round.
- **Fleet Footed:** When running, Jatakals roll a d10 instead of a d6.
- **Size +2:** Jatakals are as big as horses, but a lot more skeletal.



## KERONIAN IMP

These small demons were kept as pets by great sorcerers of the Keronian Empire. After the fall of the Dread Star, the rituals to bind them to their masters were permanently lost, but they can still be summoned and controlled for a short time. Keronian Imps are servile and apparently respectful towards their master, but, in truth, they have twisted minds, and are ready to betray him as soon as the chance arises. They are perfect for spying purposes and they know a lot about magic and the old traditions of the Keronian Empire.

Keronian Imps are Novice creatures for the purpose of the *summon ally* Power.

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

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Knowledge (Ancient History) d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Taunt d10

**Pace:** 3; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

### Special Abilities

- **Demon:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; immune to poison and disease.
- **Flight:** Keronian Imps fly with leathery, bat-like wings at a rate of 6" with Climb 0.
- **Size -1:** Keronian Imps are quite small, the size of a cat.
- **Small:** Attack rolls against these creatures suffer -2 due their diminutive size.
- **Tail Stinger:** Str+d4.
- **Trying to Impress:** Keronian Imps always try to impress their masters with their awesome abilities. For this reason, they have the Helper Edge.

## LHOBAN ICE DEVIL

This big, furry humanoid might be mistaken for a bear at first glance, but it is actually more similar to a giant ape. Its fur is white and its hideous black face is crowned with two long horns. Its razor-sharp claws are its deadliest weapon; they are deep blue and contain venom that can literally freeze a man's heart (see sidebar). Luckily, these monsters are rare and solitary.

They live only in the most desolate mountains of Lhoban and never come below the snow line. They hide in the deep snow and suddenly jump up to ambush travelers, who they then kill and drag to their dens. They are carnivorous and not particularly picky about their food. The people of

Lhoban believe them to be wretched souls fallen from the Path of Enlightenment. This is because the Ice Devils are terrified of holy monks who sometimes hunt them to obtain the gift of Cold Vision bestowed by their venom (see sidebar).

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

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8

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

**Special Abilities**

- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Fear of Holy Men:** A Lhoban Ice Devil cannot attack a character with the Monk (Contemplative) Edge, unless the Monk attacks first.
- **Size +1:** A Lhoban Ice Devil is eight feet tall and weighs up to 300 pounds.
- **Snow Dweller:** A Lhoban Ice Devil's fur makes for perfect camouflage in the snow, granting it +2 to Stealth rolls in snowy environments. In addition, its large feet move effortlessly and it ignores Difficult Ground while on the snow.
- **Venom (-2):** The Ice Devil's claws can inject a Lethal venom which acts by lowering the victim's body temperature. If the victim survives, he might obtain the Gift of Cold Vision (see sidebar).

## THE GIFT OF COLD VISION

Lhoban healers say that the Ice Devil's venom is always lethal. It slowly freezes the blood until the victim's heart stops. Then, if he or she is strong enough, the victim's heart starts beating again, overcoming the cold and escaping the grasp of death. While their heart is frozen, some monks feel their soul leave their body for a brief moment and move to the next stage along the Path of Enlightenment. The body soon snatches the soul back but the monk retains strange "memories of the future". This is called Cold Vision. In gaming terms, a character with the Arcane Background (Enlightenment) who is Exhausted or Incapacitated by an Ice Devil's venom is allowed a Spirit (-4) roll. In the case of success, he gains the *divination* power and 20 Power Points which are used exclusively for *divination* and don't recharge. When the Points are used up, the monk loses the power. Despite the usefulness of this Power, very few monks dare hunt a Lhoban Ice Devil to experience Cold Vision.

## SHADOW BAT

Shadow Bats are huge beasts with a wingspan of twelve yards. They live in abandoned ruins and anywhere there is food (they are omnivores). Sorcerers sometimes evoke them as mounts. A Shadow Bat can travel up to one hundred miles per night but must rest in a dark place during the day. They can be evoked only outdoors and at night.

Shadow Bats are Heroic creatures for the purpose of the *summon ally* Power.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+3, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d6

**Pace:** 3; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8

**Special Abilities**

- **Bat Senses:** Shadow Bats ignore all Darkness penalties.



- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Flight:** Shadow Bats fly at a rate of 6", with Climb -1.
- **Size +2:** Shadow Bats are equivalent in size to a warhorse.
- **Spooky:** Characters seeing a Shadow Bat for the first time must make a Fear roll.
- **Weakness (Light and Sound):** Shadow Bats are very susceptible to strong sounds and flashes of light. They subtract 2 from opposed rolls against light or sound based attacks and have the same penalty to recover from Shaken effects caused by light or sound.

### ✂ SINGER DEMON

A totally alien creature, a Singer Demon resembles a giant scorpion, with a human face of incredible beauty and a strange, resonating stinger. Both sexes exist but males seem to be very rare. Unlike normal scorpions, Singer Demons' stingers are hollow and make a strange hypnotic sound when shaken, like a snake's rattle. Singer demons are highly intelligent and love being surrounded by a plethora of adoring slaves that double up as a tasty snack when they are bored. Sorcerers are rarely willing to evoke Singer Demons, because these creatures always try to remain in our world and subdue their evoker.

Singer Demons are Legendary creatures for the purpose of the *summon ally* Power.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d10, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Stealth d6

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

#### Special Abilities

- **Claws:** Str+d4
- **Demon:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; immune to poison and disease.
- **Rattle:** A Singer Demon's stinger rattles, making an enthralling sound. It counts as the *stun* Power and uses the Demon's Spirit as the Arcane Skill. The demon can use the rattle any time it isn't attacking with the Stinger.
- **Size +3:** Singer Demons are the size of a horse.
- **Sting:** Str+d6. The sting of a Singer Demon contains highly toxic poison. Any character who suffers a Wound from the stinger must make an opposed roll against the Demon's Spirit or be



controlled as per the *puppet* Power. The effect lasts until the Demon is banished or slain. A Singer Demon can control a number of creatures no higher than her Smarts die (so, usually ten). Extras who fail the Spirit roll aren't Incapacitated but only Shaken, and under the control of the Demon.

**Supernatural Beauty:** Singer Demons have extremely beautiful faces and voices. They have +4 Charisma.

- **Tricky Creature:** An evoked Singer Demon actually wants to stay in the Dread Sea Dominions, so she tries in every way to break free of her evoker's control. If evoked to perform a task for more than one day per Rank of the caster, she is allowed an opposed roll between her Spirit and the evoker's Arcane Skill to free herself immediately after being summoned. She makes the same roll when the evocation ends.

## SPIRIT OF THE BETRAYER

According to a belief shared by many cultures, from the Cairnlanders to the Ivory Savannah Tribes, a man who betrays and kills a friend cannot find his way to the afterlife when he dies until he has saved the life of another human to repay his debt. Such creatures actually exist and appear as grayish humanoids dressed in ragged clothes and armed with old weapons, bearing the insignia of forgotten realms. Sorcerers summon them as bodyguards.

Spirits of the Betrayer are Seasoned creatures for the purpose of the *summon ally* Power.

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

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 7

**Gear:** Short Sword (St+d6), Large Shield (+2 Parry, +2 Toughness vs. ranged attacks).

### Special Abilities

- **Guardian:** A Spirit of the Betrayer can intercept a blow aimed at a friend within 3". In this case, the Spirit suffers the damage instead of the original target. If the Spirit of the Betrayer suffers a Wound saving a friend, it is freed and disappears forever, the debt repaid.

- **Hovering Pace:** Spirits of the Betrayer don't really walk, rather they float over the ground. So, they are never hindered by difficult ground and



gain +2 to Stealth rolls.

- **Protector:** The Spirit of the Betrayer can use the Total Defense action to protect a friend within 3". The action works as normal, but the friend benefits from the Spirit's Parry, shield bonus included.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; immune to poison, disease and called shots.

## STEPPE PONY

An ugly, furry, but extremely resilient pony of the steppe. The favorite mount of Valk warriors.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d4, Notice d6

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

### Special Abilities

- **Fleet Footed:** Steppe Ponies roll a d8 instead of a d6 when running.
- **Kick:** Str.
- **Run All Day:** Steppe Ponies gain +2 to Vigor rolls to resist Fatigue.
- **Size +1:** Steppe Ponies are smaller than normal horses.

## SWAMP CAT

This beast, typically found in the swamps of Tricornia, resembles a cross between an otter and a puma. Big, brown, and slender, it loves water and is an excellent swimmer. It can swim very fast without causing so much as a ripple, and stay underwater for more than eight minutes. Its favorite hunting technique consists of diving into water, swimming underwater to the riverbank, and then jumping out to snatch a helpless duck or, occasionally, an unlucky rice field slave. Its jaw is strong enough to break a man's neck and once it bites, it rarely releases its prey. When not hungry, they are curious and playful beasts. Some Tricornian lords keep them as pets and enjoy unleashing them on fugitive slaves.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Swimming d10, Stealth d10

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

### Special Abilities

- **Aquatic:** A Swamp Cat can swim at a Pace of 6. It can also use Stealth while swimming without penalty.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Iron Jaw:** Whenever a Swamp Cat hits with a raise during a Fighting attack, this means it has locked its jaws on its prey and won't let go. In game terms, the victim is considered grappled and suffers Str+d6 bite damage every round, unless he manages to escape by winning an opposed Strength roll (on which the Cat has +4).

## TREE HORROR

Very few people have seen a Tree Horror and survived to tell the tale. These creatures are rotting trees with some vaguely human features. They are capable of movement and are driven by blind hatred for all living beings. They lurk in the thick, haunted forests of the Caledlands, and serve the Caled druids. According to ancient tales, only the druids know the exact ritual to create such abominations. It involves nailing several helpless people to the trunk of a tree, to awaken its soul and taint it forever.

Tree Horrors can be of various sizes, and the cost and requirements to awaken them depend on this feature (see sidebar).

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d4

**Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

**Special Abilities**

- **Armor +2:** Bark.
- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Lethargic:** These creatures aren't particularly quick. When a Tree Horror is dealt a deuce, it must stay still, skipping its turn. If Shaken, it can roll to recover.
- **Size +1:** A Tree Horror is bigger than a man.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recovering from being Shaken; immune to poison, disease and called shots.
- **Weakness (Fire):** Tree horrors are very vulnerable to flames, suffering +4 damage from fire-based attacks.

They always count as very flammable targets.





## TREE HORROR SIZE

Tree Horrors come in various sizes, as detailed in the table below. Tree Horrors are exclusively summoned by Caled druids. If a hero wishes to use the ritual to summon one through the *summon ally* Power, he must learn such a ritual during the adventure (he cannot know it right from the start).

**Tree Horror Size Table**

SIZE	SPECIAL ABILITIES	STRENGTH	TOUGHNESS	SUMMONING RANK
+1		d10	10 (2)	Novice
+2		d12	11 (2)	Seasoned
+4	Large	d12+2	12 (2)	Veteran
+6	Fear, Large	d12+4	14 (2)	Heroic
+8	Fear, Heavy Weapon, Huge	d12+6	16 (2)	Legendary

## TSA-GARA

In the language of the Azambi, a tribe of the Ivory Savannah, Tsa-Gara roughly means Whistling Swordsman. In fact, this big, dragonfly-like insect makes a remarkable sound with its wings, similar to the faint whistling of man, and uses its powerful sting with the dexterity of a master swordsman.

These beasts always hunt in groups and are capable of elaborate dances to disorient their enemy. They live in underground nests, whose entrances are cleverly concealed and hard to locate.

Tsa-Gara swarms can hunt as far as ten miles from their nests.

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

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d6

**Pace:** 1; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 4

### Special Abilities

- **Flight:** A Tsa-Gara flies at a Pace of 6 and a Climb -3.
- **Hunting Dance:** If two or more Tsa-Garas are attacking the same target, their coordination is so perfect that their Gang Up bonus increases by +1. The maximum +4 Gang Up bonus still applies.
- **Insect Reflexes:** Tsa-Garas are very quick when avoiding blows. While flying, they gain +1 Parry, and ranged attacks targeting them have -1.
- **Size - 1:** Tsa-Garas are as big as medium-sized dogs.
- **Stinger:** Str+d4.

## TWISTED SERVANT

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

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

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

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

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

**Gear:** Stone axe (Str+d8).

**Special Abilities**

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

## TSA-GARA BLADES

Tsa-Gara stingers are sharp, long and remarkably strong, despite being hollow.

The artisans of the Ivory Savannah treasure them and craft them into daggers, short swords or, rarely, long swords (only the bigger stingers, belonging to beasts of human size). In gaming terms, a Tsa-Gara blade weighs only 50% of the same blade in metal but breaks like iron.

They are Rare items and can only be found in the Ivory Savannah or the Verdant Belt. After killing a Tsa-Gara, a Survival roll is required to correctly remove and preserve its stinger, which is enough material to craft a blade of choice (a dagger with a success, a short sword with a raise or a long sword with two raises), without spending any additional money.

If the weapon is successfully crafted, it automatically has 50% of the normal weight and is considered iron for purposes of breaking.

If an Asset is scored, apart from the normal Assets, the crafter can also make a finely balanced weapon, which bestows +1 Parry. Tsa-Gara weapons can be sold for four times the price of a normal weapon.

## WAR BUFFALO

War buffalo are the most impressive battle mounts of the Dread Sea Dominions. Only the Buffalo Riders, brave warriors from the Ivory Savannah, are bold enough to ride them. The taming of a war buffalo starts with capturing a wild specimen when it is only a calf, and the process lasts for several years. War buffalo are extremely intelligent and loyal to their master. They let nobody else ride them and, when the master dies, the mount usually shares his fate. They are trained to fight and attack with their horns every round their riders do not perform a Trick maneuver (unless the rider has the Mounted Devil Edge, in this case they can attack even if he performed a Trick).

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+3, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d6

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

**Special Abilities**

- **Faithful Steeds:** War buffalo have the Loyal and Death Wish Hindrances toward their master. If their rider dies, they stop eating and let themselves starve to death in 1d10+10 days.
- **Gore:** War buffalo charge to gore their opponent. If they can move at least 6" before attacking, they add +4 to their damage total.
- **Horns:** Str+d6.
- **Size +3:** War buffalo are very large creatures.

## ZANDORIAN CARETAKER

Probably the biggest vulture in the Dread Sea Dominions, this impressive, black-feathered beast

has a maximum wingspan of six yards. It is a carrion eater, but if it cannot find dead animals, it is intelligent enough to kill its prey by taking them to its mountaintop nest and letting them starve. According to the Syranthian sages, the Caretakers have prevented the great evil lurking in the Cairnlands from swarming into Zandor and the northern Dominions, since they mostly feed on undead creatures. However, the savage Cairnlords hate these birds and love hunting them which has greatly reduced their numbers. Zandorian Caretakers can be trained and are very loyal to their masters because like many birds, their minds work by imprinting and they obey the first living being they see after hatching. A Zandorian Caretaker's egg can be sold for 1,500 Moons.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d8

**Pace:** 3; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

**Special Abilities**

- **Beak:** Str+d6.
- **Claws:** Str+d4. A Zandorian Caretaker kills its victims by holding them with both claws and smashing their heads with its mighty beak. If the Caretaker hits with raise using its Claws, it can immediately perform a free attack with its Beak.
- **Flight:** A Zandorian Caretaker flies at a Pace of 8, Climb -3.
- **Killer of the Undead:** A Zandorian Caretaker is a natural enemy of all undead creatures. It is immune to Fear caused by the undead and, when attacking a creature with the Undead Monstrous Ability, it has +2 to attack and damage rolls.
- **Low Light Vision:** This beast sees extremely well in the dark. It ignores Dim and Dark lighting modifiers.
- **Size +1:** Six-yard wingspan, capable of carrying a man off.

# DENIZENS OF THE DOMINIONS

Although the world of *Beasts & Barbarians* is populated by terrible and hideous monsters, humans actually pose the greatest threat to our valiant heroes. From slavers to pirates, from evil cultists to raiders, humans can be more dangerous than demons summoned from the pit of hell.

This chapter introduces 51 profiles of common (and not so common) human NPCs of the Dominions, which you can use in your adventures.

## CUSTOMIZATION

Each profile also includes additional tweaks, allowing you to use the same stats for different characters. Do you need a tavern wench or a princess? Use the Damsel profile and tweak it a little. The tweaks presented here are only examples, and the Game Master is encouraged to create his own customizations.

## AMAZON

While the Amazons of Ascaia are the only known culture of women warriors, individual women living an independent life do exist in the Dominions, and they can be easily depicted using the following profiles.



## AMAZON WARRIOR

A trained woman warrior from Ascaia, the Amazons' Island. It isn't uncommon for the Amazons to be hired as mercenaries, as they are known to be very skilled and absolutely loyal, so this profile can also be used for such characters.

**Customization:** Mariner (Boating d8), Mercenary Bodyguard (Notice d6), Archer (Trained Thrower (bow), Shooting d8), Healer (drop Fighting and Shooting to d4, add Healing d8 and Healer).

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

**Skills:** Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d4, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Throwing d6

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

**Hindrances:** Code of Honor (Amazons'), Loyal

**Edges:** Amazon, Combat Reflexes

**Gear:** Bronze long sword (Str+d8), light leather armor (+1), medium feathered helm (+2, only head), spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands), medium shield (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness vs. ranged weapons), bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6).

## AMAZON COMMANDER

A rugged warrior woman and veteran of many battles. She is very skilled both on and off the battlefield.

**Customization:** Hawk Ship Captain (Boating d8, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Quartermaster), Ascaian Noble (Knowledge (Battle) d6, Noble, add Amazon Blade to gear), Ascaian Mercenary Commander (Command, Hold the

Line!, Knowledge (Battle) d8), Wandering Warrior Woman (Trademark

Weapon (long sword), Bikini Heroine, One Hand and a Half, remove bronze armor and add bikini).

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Throwing d6

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

**Hindrances:** Code of Honor (Amazons'), Loyal

**Edges:** Amazon, Common Bond, Combat Reflexes, Nerves of Steel

**Gear:** Bronze long sword (Str+d8), medium bronze armor (+2), medium feathered helm (+2, only head), spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands), medium shield (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness vs. ranged weapons), bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6).

## ASSASSIN

Killing is both an art and a profession in certain parts of the Dread Sea Dominions. When political, commercial or religious issues cannot be solved with talks, bribes or simple intimidation, a dagger in the dark or a cup of poisoned wine are often used to settle the matter.

### THUG

The lowest of killers for hire, this individual can be found in the taverns or dark alleys of almost any city of the Dominions. He mostly kills to rob his victims but never refuses a request to dispatch someone, if a fat purse is involved in the transaction.

**Customization:** Criminal Gang Leader (Intimidation d8, Connections (Criminal Gang)), Ruffian (Persuasion d4, add club to Gear), Cult Thug (Combat Reflexes).

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

**Skills:** Climbing d4, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6, Throwing d6

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Greedy

**Edges:** None

**Gear:** Bronze short sword (Str+d6), bronze dagger (Str+d4).

**Special Abilities:**

- **Dark Alley Cat:** When in his own area (a city quarter, road or similar) an Extra Thug receives the Wild Die on Streetwise and Notice rolls. A Wild Card Thug has the Wild Die increased by one step (usually from d6 to d8).

### POISONER

This shady individual is the person you need if you are looking for very special and dangerous concoctions. For an extra fee, he can also deliver his poison to your chosen victim.

**Customization:** Master of Disguises (Persuasion d8, Stealth d10), Fallen Alchemist (Smarts d10, 8 Power Points).

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

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6, Throwing d6

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Greedy

**Edges:** Connections (crime), Lowlife, Poisoner

**Gear:** Bronze dagger (Str+d4), poisoner's glove (Str), poisoner's ring, blowpipe (Range 5/10/20, Damage by poison), various poisons (see below), 5 doses of refined Lotus.

**Special Abilities:**

- **Poison Resistance:** A wise poisoner takes small doses of the most common concoctions on a daily basis, to develop immunity. So, he has the Arcane Resistance Edge, limited to the *poison* power and natural venoms (like snakes').

- **Poisons:** A Poisoner can use the *poison* Power with Lotusmastery d8 and 6 Power Points. He usually carries the following concoctions, each costing him 2 Power Points per dose, but can produce different ones as needed: Amber Lotus of the Last Kiss (very fast injection poison), Colorless Lotus of Mercy (normal ingestion poison), Smoke Powder of Dreams (very fast nonlethal poison to be inhaled, costs 4 Power Points, -4 to the Lotusmastery roll).

## MASTER ASSASSIN

This faceless man skillfully wields his blade in the dark. He can be a royal executioner, silently delivering the king's judgement, or the vengeful hand of a secret cult, or just a very costly professional, like a senior member of the Assassins' Guild of Jalizar. Regardless of his background, he is extremely dangerous.

**Customization:** Strangler (Martial Arts, change Trademark Weapon to bare hands, Strength d10), Deadeye (Marksman, change Trademark Weapon to composite bow, Shooting d10, add composite bow to Gear).

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Lockpicking d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Stealth d10, Streetwise d8, Throwing d6, Tracking d6

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

**Hindrances:** Vow (always complete the mission)

**Edges:** Acrobat, Assassin, Lowlife, Thief, Trademark Weapon (dagger)

**Gear:** Razor-sharp iron dagger (Str+d4+1, AP 1), poisoner glove (Str), light leather armor (+1), lock picks, tiger's claws, silk rope, poisoner ring, two Lotus concoctions chosen from among: *lower Trait* (Agility, Strength, or Vigor), *poison*, *smite*, *slumber*.

**Special Abilities:**

- **Sinister Hand of Death:** A Master Assassin is a professional murderer, and if he gets the chance to strike, he rarely leaves his victim alive. By spending a Benny, he automatically gains the Drop.

## BANDIT

Bandits are a common plague in the Dominions. Hungry serfs, disbanded soldiers, slaves on the run, poachers, and other such individuals infest forests, hills and less traveled roads, ready to rob anyone that comes near them, pillage villages and farms, and generally take what they need to survive by force.

## BRIGAND

The most common bandits are highwaymen. They usually move in groups, know their surroundings well, and employ spies to scout for potential wealthy victims and approaching road guards or other similar dangers. In many lands there are bounties on brigands' heads.

**Customization:** Desert Robber (Riding d6, add pony or horse to gear), Poacher (Survival d8, Woodsman, always equipped with a bow), Rebel (replace short sword and small shield with spear and medium shield), Disbanded Soldier (replace light armor and small shield with medium bronze armor and medium shield).

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

**Skills:** Climbing d4, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

**Hindrances:** Poverty, Wanted

**Edges:** None

**Gear:** Bronze short sword (Str+d6) or club (Str+d4), small shield (+1 Parry) or bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6), light leather armor (+1).

**Special Abilities:**

- **Ambusher:** Brigands are masters at catching their victims off guard. If they have time to set an ambush and are in their territory, before the combat starts, draw a card from the Action Deck for

every ten Brigands in the band and put it aside. At the start of each round you can decide to discard the Action Card the Brigands draw and replace it with one of the cards set aside.

- **Bandit Chief:** One in ten Brigands is a rugged leader who keeps the band under control. He has Strength and Vigor d8, Fighting d8 and is usually better equipped, with medium bronze armor, a bronze battle axe, and a medium shield.



## BRIGAND LORD

Large groups of bandits, like the infamous Good Brothers infesting the Iron Route, are led by well-known leaders, who are at times even more powerful than nobles or governors. Some are vicious brutes capable only of instilling fear, others are cunning tacticians who can easily fool the armies of the civilized kingdoms.

**Customization:** Brutish Lord (drop Smarts and Spirit to d6, raise Strength and Vigor to d10, Brawny, Brute, Improved Sweep, drop Level Headed, replace medium shield and long sword with iron great axe), Former Soldier (Knowledge (Battle) d8, Command Presence, Tactician).

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6, Survival d8

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 9 (3)

**Hindrances:** Arrogant or Overconfident, Wanted

**Edges:** Block, Command, Improved Nerves of Steel, Level Headed, Natural Leader, Sweep

**Gear:** Iron long sword (Str+d8), medium shield (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness vs. ranged attacks), bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6), medium bronze armor (+3), horse.

**Special Abilities:**

- **Ambusher:** Brigands are masters at catching their victims off guard. If they have time to set an ambush and are in their territory, before the combat starts, draw a card from the Action Deck for every ten Brigands in the band and put it aside. At the start of each round you can decide to discard the Action Card the Brigands draw and replace it with one of the cards set aside.

## BARBARIAN OF THE NORTH

The lands of the North, including the Borderlands, Norheim and the Cairnlands, are populated by savage people. Despite being quite different from a cultural point of view, all of these rowdy warriors can be portrayed by using similar stats.

### BARBARIAN WARRIOR

The epitome of savagery, this wild, fur-clad warrior is the nightmare haunting the dreams of the rich and peaceful citizens of Faberterra. Barbarians tend to fight and behave in an individualistic way, lacking the military organization of the civilized races. They are very proud and accept only the strongest as their leaders.

**Customization:** Northlander Clan Warrior (Vigor d8, remove light leather armor), Cairnlander Raider (Intimidation and Riding d6, add Severed Head to Gear, remove Fear of Magic), Borderland Forts Archer (Shooting d8, Trained Thrower (bow), add medium bronze helm to Gear), Borderland Forts Infantryman (replace bronze battle axe with short bronze sword, and add medium bronze helm to Gear).

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

**Skills:** Climbing d4, Fighting d8, Intimidation d4, Notice d4, Riding d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d4,

Survival d4, Throwing d6

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

**Hindrances:** Fear of Magic (minor)

**Edges:** Brute

**Gear:** Bronze battle axe (Str+d8), medium shield (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness vs. ranged attacks), bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6), light leather armor (+1).

## ✠ CAIRNLANDER WARLORD

This rugged individual is either the Lord of a Cairn or he leads a band of Cairnlander warriors and

## CALED CLAN TATTOOS

Each Caled clan is characterized by a particular set of tattoos, which identifies them culturally. A complete set of tattoos can be given only to adult warriors, the Naked Spearmen, and only by the shamans, since the tattoos are imbued with the strong magic of the Caled forest. Here is a list of some of the most famous tattoos, with their effects:

**Howling Stars.** The Howling Stars clan has a particularly strong bond with wolves. Their tattoos grant the Beast Master Edge, and each Howling Star spearman has a wolf animal companion.

**Deepwater Trout.** The members of this clan are natural swimmers and it is said that a Deepwater Trout cannot drown. Their tattoos bestow the Aquatic Monstrous Ability with Pace 6".

**Bark Skins.** The Bark Skins believe that the sap of the ancient trees flows in their veins, and they feel no pain even when they are almost dead. When a Bark Skin is Incapacitated, he makes a Vigor roll. If successful, before becoming Incapacitated, he can act for an extra round without any penalty.

**Tree Cats.** Tree Cats can climb trees as gracefully as pumas. They can move along the branches as if they were on normal ground and make Climbing rolls only in extreme conditions.

**Narrow Shadows.** You cannot see a Narrow Shadow as long as he remains among the foliage of a Caled tree. While in the Caledlands forests, they have +4 to Stealth rolls.

## CALED BEAST KINGS

Caled Druids can summon a particular type of magical creature called a Beast King.

Despite looking very similar to normal animals, the Beast Kings represent an idealized and supernatural version of their species. As humans have kings and princes, so do animals.

In game terms, a Beast King has the same stats as a normal specimen, except as follows:

- ❖ It is a Wild Card
- ❖ It is larger: Size +1 (Toughness +1)
- ❖ Its Smarts is a step higher than that of a normal specimen and it is human rated (so, given that a wolf has Smarts d6 (A), the King of Wolves has Smarts d8)
- ❖ It can speak the Caled tongue
- ❖ It can use the *beast friend* Power, limited to animals of its race, with an Arcane Skill d10 and 15 Power Points.
- ❖ For the purpose of the *summon ally* Power, it is considered two Ranks higher (so, if a wolf is a Novice Rank creature, the King of Wolves is a Veteran Rank creature).



pillagers. Impressive to look at, he feels the might of his Ancestors is on his side.

**Customization:** Chief of Pillagers (Stealth d8, add horse to gear), Lord of the Cairn (Noble, Knowledge (Battle) d6, add scythed chariot with six goats (use mule stats from Savage Worlds) to Gear).

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

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Knowledge (Battle) d4, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Throwing d8

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

**Hindrances:** Arrogant, Greedy, Mean

**Edges:** Block, Dodge, Command, Iron Will, Nerves of Steel

**Gear:** Bronze long axe (Str+d8), medium shield (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness vs. ranged attacks), bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6), medium bone armor (+2).



## NORTHEIM HERO

The Northlanders are led into battle by strong warriors, capable of amazing feats of violence and ferocity, which are immortalized in song by bards and poets. The war leaders might also act as chiefs in times of peace, but many refuse this honor because they know that the skills that make a man a strong warrior are different from those that make a wise ruler.

**Customization:** Lone Wandering Warrior (replace Berserk with One Hand and a Half, replace great bronze axe with iron long sword and loincloth), Clan War Leader (replace Berserk with Command, add medium bronze armor to Gear).

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Knowledge, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d4, Throwing d8

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

**Hindrances:** Fear of Magic (minor), Overconfident

**Edges:** Berserk, Brawny, Brute, Loincloth Hero, Sweep

**Gear:** Great bronze axe (Str+d10, AP 1, Parry -1, 2 hands), bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6), medium bronze helm (+2, only helm).

## BARBARIAN OF THE SOUTH

To the learned people of Syranthia and Faberterra all those who cannot speak the Imperial tongue well are barbarians. This applies to both the northern people and the savage tribes dwelling in the Ivory Savannah and the Verdant Belt.

### IVORY SAVANNAH WARRIOR

A typical member of an Ivory Savannah or Verdant Belt tribe, this man is both a warrior and a hunter.

**Customization:** Verdant Belt Villager Warrior (replace Gear with war club or short bone sword and sling), Magombi Tribal Warrior (Throwing and Strength d8, Strong Arm).

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

**Skills:** Climbing d4, Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6, Tracking d4, Survival d6, Taunt d4

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

**Gear:** Spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands), tribal shield (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness vs. ranged

weapons, +1 to Intimidation, Taunt or Persuasion rolls), 5 javelins with atl-atl (Str+d4, Range 9/18/36, 1 action to reload).

**Special Abilities:**

- **Wise Warrior:** Every band of twelve or more warriors is usually led by an experienced warrior or hunter. He has Fighting and Survival d8, Smarts d6, and the Command Edge. He is a Wild Card.

**GAZELLE HUNTER**

Very few of these men still dwell in the Savannah today. Graceful and slender, they all belong to an almost forgotten tribe, the Shalimi. These people are born to run and can outpace a buffalo herd, if they must. They hunt with skill and stealth, but today most of them serve the White King, acting as heralds and messengers of his will to the Savannah Tribes.

**Customization:** Voice of the White King (Persuasion d8, Charismatic, replace gear with ivory Chakram (+1 damage, +1 Charisma toward Ivory Tribes, the symbol of his charge), Wild Card).

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d4, Fighting d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Throwing d8, Tracking d6, Survival d6  
**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** None

**Edges:** Fleet-Footed, Extraction, Savage

**Gear:** Spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach: 1, 2 hands), 4 bone Chakrams (Str+d4, Range 4/8/16, ignores 2 points of Cover modifier).

**Special Abilities:**

- **Born to Run:** A Gazelle Hunter can run almost an entire day without getting tired. He receives +2 to Vigor rolls to avoid Fatigue.

**BUFFALO RIDER**

Even the heavy soldiers of Kyros or the slavers of Caldeia tremble when this warrior approaches on his impressive mount, his face painted in war colors and the scalps of his fallen enemies hanging from his neck.

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

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Riding d8, Throwing d8, Tracking d6, Survival d4

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

**Hindrances:** None

**Edges:** Beast Rider (War Buffalo), Born in the Saddle, Dodge

**Gear:** Bronze tipped buffalo lance (Str+d8, AP 2 when charging, 2 hands when dismounted), short bone sword (Str+d6), 5 javelins (Str+d4, Range 6/12/24), light leather corselet (+1), tribal shield (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness vs. ranged weapons, +1 to Intimidation rolls).

**Special Abilities:**

- **Buffalo Charge:** The first time an Extra is charged by a Buffalo Rider, he must make a Spirit roll or be Panicked.

**CALED**

Caleds are a primitive people living exclusively in Caledlands, an uncharted woodland area. The sages say that they are the descendants of slaves who escaped from the Keronians when the Dread Star fell. They don't know how to work metal and are very xenophobic, leaving their homeland only

for war or on manhunts. Despite their poor technology, they are feared by all the civilized races thanks to the amazing feats of their naked spearmen and the great supernatural powers of their druids.

## NAKED SPEARMAN

The most feared warriors among the Caleds, these primitive men attack savagely, protected only by their own ferocity and some magical tattoos. The tattoos identify the various clans and are believed to bestow great power.

**Customization:** The clans place great emphasis on their tattoos (see sidebar). You can portray different tribes by choosing a tattoo for them, or by inventing a new one.

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

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Intimidation d8, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Throwing d6, Tracking d6

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** None

**Edges:** None

**Gear:** Stone tipped spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands, Range: 3/6/12), stone dagger (Str+d4).

### Special Abilities:

- **Clan Tattoo:** Choose a clan tattoo from among the ones in the sidebar, or create your own.
- **Naked Hero:** Every band of twelve or more Naked Spearmen is led by a hero, a powerful Wild Card warrior with Vigor d8, Fighting d10 and the Command Edge.
- **Naked Warrior:** As long as he wears no armor, a Naked Spearman has the Loincloth Hero Edge and can soak wounds even if he isn't a Wild Card (in this case, he rolls only the Vigor die, without the Wild Die). This ability doesn't work if the Spearman is under the effect of fear or has lost an Intimidation Test of Wills during this fight, since his gods shun cowards.

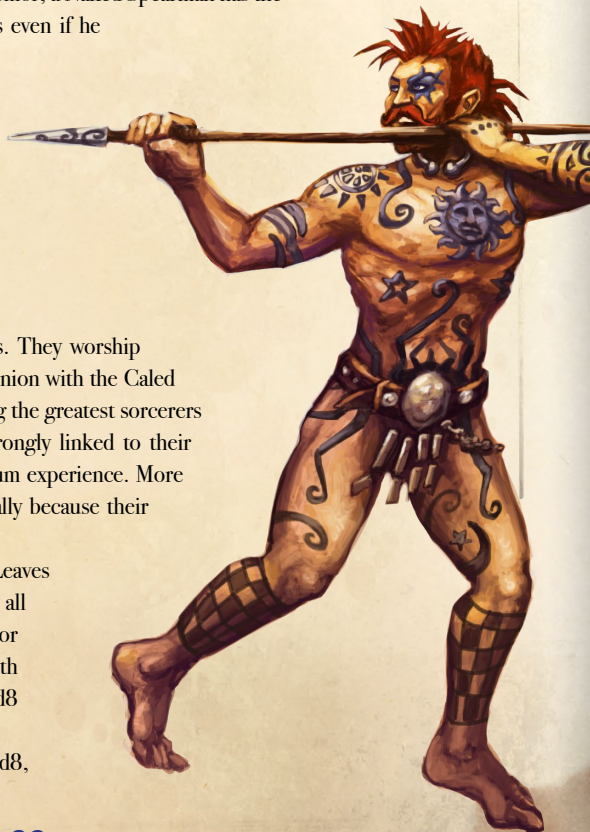


## DRUID

Druids are the priests of the Caled clans. They worship ancient, secret gods and are in deep communion with the Caled forest itself. Druids are believed to be among the greatest sorcerers in the Dominions, but their powers are strongly linked to their land. These stats represent a druid of medium experience. More powerful druids must be designed individually because their stats change greatly.

**Customization:** Master of the Dead Leaves (replace *beast friend* with *zombie*, give all powers a necromantic trapping), Warrior Druid (replace *entangle* and *beast friend* with *warrior's gift* and *armor*, raise Fighting to d8 and drop Sorcery to d8, equip with a spear).

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8,



Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Notice d6, Intimidation d10, Sorcery d10, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Tracking d6

**Cha:** -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty

**Edges:** Arcane Background (sorcery), New Powers, Power Points

**Powers [25 PP]:** *beast friend* (animal call), *boost/lower trait* (war paints/curses), *entangle* (animated branches), *shape change* (wolf, bear, hunting bird or snake), *summon ally* (Beast King, Tree Horror, medium swarm).

**Gear:** Stone dagger (Str+d4).

**Special Abilities:**

- **Call of the Wild:** While in the Caledlands, a druid's *beast friend* power only costs him half the normal Power Points.
- **The Forest has Deep Roots:** While in the Caledlands, a Druid can benefit from the Rapid Recharge Edge.



## CANNIBAL

The Dominions have rarely seen an age as dark as this, and appalling deeds are far too common. Cannibalism is one of them. Whether driven by religion or simple hunger, cannibals are wretched people, cursed by both men and gods. Many tribes of cannibals exist in the Dominions, but the most famous are the ebony-skinned populations of the Cannibal Islands, in the very south of the world. They periodically raid nearby lands to hunt their favorite quarry: man.

### CANNIBAL TRIBESMAN

A savage, barbaric man eater.

**Customization:** Brain Eater (see sidebar), Ritual Cannibal (use the Cultist profile adding the Cannibal Special Ability).

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

**Skills:** Boating d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

**Cha:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Mean

**Edges:** Combat Reflexes

**Gear:** War club (Str+d8) and small shield (+1 Parry) or bone tipped spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands), stone dagger (Str+d4), bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF: 1).

**Special Abilities:**

- **Cannibal:** A Cannibal files his teeth in order to tear off large chunks of meat. He can bite his opponent, dealing Str+d4 damage.

- **Scary:** A Cannibal is a frightful opponent, especially when he grins. He has +2 to Intimidation rolls.



## CANNIBAL TRIBE CHIEF

This horrible individual has grown large and muscular thanks to his hideous diet. He is never sated and always wants more!

**Customization:** Brain Eater (see sidebar), Ritual Cannibal Cult Lord (use the Cult Master profile adding the Cannibal Special Ability).

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Boating d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

**Cha:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

**Hindrances:** Mean

**Edges:** Brawny, Brute, Combat Reflexes, Hard to Kill

**Gear:** Bone great axe (Str+d10, AP 1, -1 Parry, 2 hands).

**Special Abilities:**

- **Cannibal:** A Cannibal files his teeth in order to tear off large chunks of meat. He can bite his opponent, dealing Str+d4 damage.
- **Scary:** A Cannibal is a frightful opponent, especially when he grins. He has +2 to Intimidation rolls.

## BRAIN EATERS

Each cannibal group has its favorite food. Some like the heart and liver, others prefer the fleshy limbs, but the worst are the brain eaters.

Despite its reputation as the seat of an individual's mind, the brain can host several dangerous parasites, which can cause a peculiar disease characterized by uncontrollable laughter. This is why the brain eaters are also called the Laughing Cannibals.

A Laughing Cannibal is subject to the following modifications:

- ❖ His Smarts drops by one die step (if already d4, it becomes d4 (A)).
- ❖ Each combat round, he can make a free Intimidation attempt, which doesn't count as an action.
- ❖ Since he shakes uncontrollably, he has -1 to all physical tasks.

## COMMONER

A common man or woman; the following stats can be tweaked to represent specific individuals. When necessary, roll on the Allies Personality Table to add some characterization.

**Customization:** Beggar (Persuasion d4, Streetwise d6), Merchant (Persuasion d6), Noble (add the Noble Edge), Scribe (literate), Smith (Repair, Strength d8).

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d4, Knowledge (one craft) d6, Notice d4

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** None

**Edges:** None



**Gear:** Bronze knife (Str+d4) or farming tool (Str+d6, Improvised Weapon).

## CULTIST

In dark, forgotten temples and in the palaces of depraved nobles, men gather to worship evil deities and to summon demons and other supernatural creatures. Their gods have many shapes but all Cultists share the same fanaticism.

## CULT MEMBER

This wild-eyed, crazy individual does most of the dirty work, such as kidnapping girls for sacrifice or immolating himself on suicide missions. Despite being quite unskilled, Cult Members usually assault the heroes in great numbers.

**Customization:** Cult Spy (Lockpicking d6, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6), Temple Guard (Strength and Vigor d8, Fighting d8, Brawny, replace short sword with long sword), Undercover Cultist (Persuasion d6), Wild-Eyed Cultist (Intimidation d8).

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

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (religion) d4, Stealth d6

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Delusional, Vow (he must abide by the tenets of his faith)

**Gear:** Dagger (Str+d4) or short sword (Str+d6).

**Special Abilities:**

- **Fanatical Group:** Cult Members gladly throw themselves into harm's way to save their Cult Master. While protecting their Master, they can use the Fanatics Setting Rule. In addition, they willingly submit to the Sacrifice Special Ability of the Cult Master.



## CULT MASTER

The real leader of a cult is the Master, an individual capable of making dozens or even hundreds of people worship demons and other abominations. A man doesn't need to be exceptionally pious, intelligent, or strong to become a Cult Master. What really matters is his magnetism, his ability to persuade others to follow the path of evil. Some Cult Masters are powerful sorcerers but, for the most part, they are only overconfident madmen meddling with Things Man Was Not Meant To Know.

**Customization:** Sorcerer Priest (Sorcery d10, Arcane Background (sorcery), New Power×2, Power Points×2, 20 Power Points, he can use the Unholy Gifts Ability with Sorcery and his own

## CULT RELICS

The Game Master can decide that some cultist groups possess tainted relics, strongly connected to the unholy creature venerated. As a rule of thumb, the rightful owner of the relic (usually the Cult Master) receives +2 Charisma toward other members of the cult. Many of these objects are only worthless junk made to impress the cultists, but some can have truly dangerous powers, and finding or destroying them can be the goal of an adventure.

Here are some examples of these evil objects:

**Jalimandra.** An age-old mummy whose bandages are inscribed with ancient Keronian prayers. In life, Jalimandra was a powerful sorcerer and he never truly died. If his bandages are soaked with the fresh blood of a sacrificial victim, the mummy whispers forgotten secrets to the ears of the worshipper. In gaming terms, Jalimandra can teach the worshipper any Sorcery Power the Game Master decides. However, the worshipper must make a Spirit (-4) roll to avoid acquiring the Delusional Hindrance. The summoners of Jalimandra are usually mad as hatters, but know 1d4 additional powers.

**Purple Flame of Gurdajos.** This flame-shaped dagger is made of a strange reddish metal and really looks like a living flame. It is said to have been crafted with a spike from the collar of the great demon Gurdajos. Once a month, if used to stab the dead body of a victim sacrificed to Gurdajos, it brings her back to life, her eyes filled with flame, as a loyal slave to the owner of the dagger. The zombie has the same stats as when she was alive, but her Smarts is one die step lower and she gains the Undead Monstrous Ability.

**Scourge of Nar Karion.** A two-foot-long horn, inlaid with gold, silver and tourmaline. It must be sounded next to a body of salt water by a person of noble blood. Then, the individual makes a Spirit (-4) roll. In the case of success, within 2d6 hours the Scourge, a Giant Water Snake, emerges from the water (use the Giant Worm stats from Savage Worlds core rules, replacing Burrow with the Aquatic Monstrous Ability; the Scourge is a Wild Card). If the Scourge eats the horn blower, it places itself under the Cult Master's control for an entire day. Otherwise, it attacks the cultists and then leaves. The horn owes its name to the fact that it was once used to destroy the coastal citadel of House Nar Karion of Tricarnia.

power points or fuel them with the Sacrifice Special Ability).

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Knowledge (Religion) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d12, Taunt d10

**Cha:** +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

**Hindrances:** Arrogant, Delusional, Overconfident, Vow (he must abide by the tenets of his faith)

**Edges:** Charismatic, Command, Command Presence, Fervor, Hold the Line!, Inspire, Iron Will

**Gear:** Sacrificial dagger (Str+d4), iron-tipped mace (Str+d6), medium bronze corselet concealed under ceremonial garments (+2), cult relic (+2 Charisma, see sidebar).

**Special Abilities:**

- **Inflame Souls:** The Cult Master's words can whip his followers into a religious frenzy. If he spends a full round speaking to them, he can make a Persuasion roll. In the case of success, all the Cult Members in a Medium Burst Template centered on the Cult Master acquire the Berserk Edge and automatically go berserk (with a raise, the Burst Template is Large). However, if the Cult Master goes down, all the berserk cultists must immediately make a Fear check or be Panicked.
- **Sacrifice:** The Cult Master doesn't usually have Power Points of his own, but he can temporarily acquire some by making a sacrifice. This can be done by delivering a fatal blow to a helpless victim or a willing Cult Member. The action requires a full round (no other actions allowed except chanting and praying). A slain Extra grants the Master 5 Power Points, while a Wild Card grants 15. These Power Points last for the current scene only and cannot be regained in any way.
- **Unholy Gifts:** The Cult Master receives powerful gifts from his demonic deities in exchange for his adoration. He can use *armor*, *barrier*, *bolt*, *fear*, *smite*, *summon ally* (Demonic Mastiff, Twisted Servant, Medium Swarm) with Spirit as his Arcane Skill. The required Power Points are generated by Sacrifice (see above). All these powers have the dark taint trapping.



## DAMSEL

You can use the Damsel stats to represent any non-fighting girl or woman involved in an adventure. Her role usually consists of being saved by the heroes, but she may turn out to be of great help. She screams a lot but never gets eaten by monsters (at least, if the heroes do their job).

**Customization:** Farm girl (Healing d6, Survival d6), Princess (Noble, Intimidate d6), Seductress (Persuasion d10, Very Attractive, Temptress (6 Power Points)) Tavern Wench or Courtesan (Streetwise d6, Fighting d6).

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d4, Healing d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d8

**Cha:** +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Damsel in Distress

**Edges:** Attractive

**Gear:** Bikini or fancy clothes.

**Special Abilities:**

- **Good Lungs:** A Damsel tends to scream a lot, especially when the bad, ugly monster is about to grab her! She has a very shrill voice and any Notice roll to find her receives a +2 bonus when she tries to attract attention, as long as she is within 12" of her targets. In addition, when facing certain monsters with very sensitive ears (Game Master's decision), her screams count as a Smarts Trick.



## GLADIATOR

These are bold warriors who daily risk their life in the arena are the heroes of the masses of Faberterra, Tricarnia and many other civilized and not-so-civilized people.

### COMMON GLADIATOR

This fighter is a professional but certainly not a star.

**Customization:** Skirmisher (Extraction, replace Gear with composite bow and bronze dagger), Retiarius (Two Fisted, replace bronze short sword and small shield with spear and war net), Syranthian Tusk Fighter (Martial Artist, replace Gear with Elephant Horns (iron fists)), Tricarnian Blind Mauler (Brawny, replace Gear with maul, medium half-body bronze armor, medium blind helm (-2 Notice rolls)).

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

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Healing d4, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Taunt d6, Throwing d6, Shooting d6  
Cha: 0; Pace: 6; Parry: 7; Toughness: 7 (1)

**Hindrances:** Arrogant

**Edges:** Combat Reflexes, Distract

**Gear:** Bronze short sword (Str+d6), gladiator armguard (+1 Parry, Str+d4), light half-body gladiator outfit (+1).

#### Special Abilities:

- **Gladiator:** If he succeeds in an Intimidation test against an adjacent opponent, he receives a free Fighting attack. This attack does not incur a multi-action penalty.
- **Stirring the Crowd:** Once per fight in the arena, the Gladiator can make an opposed Taunt roll, modified by his Charisma, to stir up the crowd. This counts as an action and the winner immediately receives a Benny.



### VETERAN GLADIATOR

This man or woman is one of the stars of the arena. He is both a deadly fighter and an idol of the people.

**Customization:** Skirmisher (Extraction, Fleet Footed, replace Gear with composite bow and bronze dagger), Retiarius (First Strike, Two Fisted, replace bronze short sword and small shield with spear and war net), Syranthian Tusk Fighter (add Improved Martial Artist, replace Gear with Elephant Horns (iron fists)), Tricarnian Blind Mauler (Brawny, Strength and Vigor d10, replace Gear with maul, medium half-body bronze armor, medium blind helm (-2 Notice rolls)).

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

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Healing d4, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Taunt d10, Throwing d6, Shooting d6  
Cha: +2; Pace: 6; Parry: 8; Toughness: 7 (1)

**Hindrances:** Arrogant

**Edges:** Combat Reflexes, Counterattack, Distract, Frenzy

**Gear:** Bronze short sword (Str+d6), gladiator armguard (+1 Parry, Str+d4), light half-body gladiator outfit (+1).

#### Special Abilities:

- **Gladiator:** If he succeeds in an Intimidation test against an adjacent opponent, he receives a free Fighting attack. This attack does not incur a multi-action penalty.
- **Famous:** The crowds adore him, he has +2 Charisma.
- **Stirring the Crowd:** Once per fight in the arena, the Gladiator can make an opposed Taunt roll, modified by his Charisma, to stir up the crowd. This counts as an action and the winner immediately receives a Benny.

## IRON PHALANX

It is no secret that the once mighty Iron Phalanxes, the military units that made it possible to create the Empire, are now a mere shadow of their former selves. Reduced to small numbers and mostly holding defensive positions, their training isn't as thorough as it used to be and their ranks are full of foreign barbarians, who don't know what it means to fight for the eternal glory of the Empire. Nevertheless, they are still a force to be respected and feared. Today, a typical Phalanx includes 300–600 Hoplites.

### HOPLITE

The standard infantryman of the Iron Phalanx. Protected by heavy armor and a large shield, he moves at a slow pace on the battlefield. He lacks speed but is certainly lethal.

**Customization:** Veteran Hoplite (add Block, Vigor and Fighting d8), Barbarian Troops (Vigor d8, remove the Phalanx Spirit Special Ability).

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

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Healing d4, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Throwing d6

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8 (3)

**Edges:** Hoplite Training

**Gear:** One-handed iron-tipped spear (Str+d6, Reach 1, Range 3/6/12), iron short sword (Str+d6), heavy iron armor (+3), large iron shield (+2 Parry, +2 Toughness vs. ranged attacks).

#### Special Abilities:

- **Phalanx Spirit:** In battle, a Hoplite raises his shield to protect not himself but the man to his left. In the same manner, he is protected by the comrade to his right. This requires absolute trust among the soldiers and grants the Phalanx the ability to fight as one. Every time a Hoplite rolls 1 on the Fighting die, regardless of the Wild Die, while having a Gang Up bonus from a fellow Hoplite, he can reroll the die.

- **Rank Fighter:** A Hoplite is trained to fight in very narrow spaces, so his maximum Gang Up bonus is +5 instead of +4.

- **Rank Leader:** One in twenty Hoplites is a Rank Leader, who gives orders and makes the Phalanx react. He has the Command and Command Presence Edges. The name derives from the fact that he is usually placed at the start or end of a Phalanx rank.



JUSTINUS OF SYRANTHIA

## THE HOPLITE'S PRAYER

"Hulian, god of steel and iron, give us a leader who knows where the sun will rise today". This is the common Hoplite prayer before a battle in which the men will have to fight under a thus far untested commander.

## PHALANX INSIGNIA

Every Phalanx has an Insignia, a special banner that is taken into battle. The Phalanx exists as long as it holds its Insignia. The oldest Phalanxes have iron or steel Insignia dating back to the Tricarnian Wars, while the Insignia of the newer Phalanxes are made of silver and gold, metals that are weaker, just like the Phalanxes of our day. Any Hoplite will give his life to protect the Insignia of his Phalanx, since its presence on the battlefield greatly increases the morale of the troops.

The Insignia bearer counts as having the Command Edge and a Command Radius of 30". If using the Mass Battle Rules, the presence of an Insignia gives +1 to Battle rolls and +2 to Morale rolls.

## HERO'S JOURNAL: THE LOST PHALANXES

The Iron Empire was victorious in many wars, but lost many battles too. Its Phalanxes were sent to very remote regions of the world, like the Red Desert, the Ivory Savannah, and the dangerous forests of the Caledlands. As time went on, many Phalanxes were lost and their tasks and destinations forgotten. All that is left are brief notes in old ledgers kept in the Imperial Palace of Faberterra. What might have happened to the soldiers and the Insignia?



## PHALANX OFFICER

This man is a high-ranking commander of the Iron Phalanxes. In the past only the best men reached this position and only after having shed their blood in many battles. Sadly, today this is no longer the case: advancements are often bought and a Phalanx Officer is rarely worthy of his name. Phalanxes retain some of their might only thanks to the Rank Leaders (see Hoplite above).

**Customization:** Veteran Officer (add Knowledge (Battle) d8, Leader of Men).

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

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d6, Knowledge (Battle) d4–d12 (see below), Persuasion d8, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Throwing d6

**Cha:** +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

**Edges:** Command, Noble

**Gear:** Iron long sword (St+d8), dagger (Str+d4), medium bronze armor (+2), medium bronze shield (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness vs. ranged attacks), horse.

### Special Abilities:

- **Variable Training:** A Phalanx Officer's skills must be proved in battle. Unless he is a Veteran Officer, the first time an officer is involved in a mass battle, the Game Master should draw a card from the Action Deck to determine the actual skills of a Phalanx Officer (see table below).

## OFFICER SKILL TABLE

CARD	OFFICER SKILL
2	Totally Inept. He bought his rank. He lacks Knowledge (Battle)
3-5	Green Officer. Knowledge (Battle) d4
6-8	Ordinary Officer. Knowledge (Battle) d6
9-10	Veteran Commander. Knowledge (Battle) d8
J-Q	Lucky Commander. Knowledge (Battle) d8, Luck, Natural Leader, Spirit d8
K-A	Old Fox. Knowledge (Battle) d10, Tactician, Leader of Men
Joker	Military Genius. Knowledge (Battle) d12.

## LOTUSMASTER



Those who study the arcane properties of the Lotus can be deadly and very adaptable opponents. They create potions that can embolden the most cowardly warriors and cure illnesses of all sorts, or destroy your body with subtle poison, while the Lotusmaster watches you twitch in pain with an amused smile. But the most dangerous are those who try to improve the nature of man in the name of their blind gods, progress and science.

### LOTUSMASTER

These stats refer to an average Lotusmaster, a man or woman trained in the use of the Lotus but with no specialization in a specific field. When creating a Lotusmaster, it is strongly advised to choose a Customization from those listed below or to create a new one.

**Customization:** Alchemist's Apprentice (Lotusmastery d10, Chemical Tradition, add *blast* (Dragon Breath of Gis) to powers), Artillerist (Knowledge (Demolitions) d8, Repair d6, replace *poison* and *boost/lower trait* with *blast* and *burst*, all his damaging powers are Heavy Weapons), Enslaver of Minds (Persuasion d10, replace Powers with *boost/lower trait* (Spirit and Smarts only), *fear*, *puppet*, *slumber*), Healer (Healing d8, Healer, replace Powers with *boost/lower trait* (Vigor and Healing only), *healing*, *dispel*, *succor*), Guardian (Notice d8, Alertness, replace Powers with *barrier*, *detect/conceal arcana*, *dispel*, *invisibility*).

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

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Healing d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Lotusmastery d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Stealth d4, Throwing d6

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Cautious

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Lotusmastery), Lotus Reserve, New Power, Power Points

**Powers [15 PP]:** *barrier* (Red Lotus of the Burning Wall), *boost/lower trait* (various Lotus concoctions), *poison* (various poisons), *stun* (Gray Lotus of the Stony Limbs)

**Gear:** Dagger (Str+d4), Lotusmaster's bag, healer's kit, 5 doses of Refined Lotus.

**Special Abilities:**

- **Well Stocked:** A non-player Lotusmaster generally has more time to study than a wandering adventurer, so he can use the Lotus Reserve Edge twice per session.



## WICKED MAN OF SCIENCE

This powerful Lotusmaster has devoted his knowledge and intelligence to testing new Lotus concoctions on the best available guinea pigs: men! The death of innocents might, or might not, weigh on his conscience, but he obstinately perseveres in the name of science.

**Customization:** Gray Eminence Behind the Throne (add Persuasion d10, Connections (Nobles, Crime), Noble, add *puppet* to Powers).

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Healing d10, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d10, Knowledge (Medicine) d10, Lotusmastery d12, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Stealth d8, Taunt d8, Throwing d10

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Lotusmastery), Improved Level Headed, Lotus Reserve, New Power×2, Power Points×2, Rich

**Powers [25 PP]:** *barrier* (Red Lotus of the Burning Wall), *boost/lower trait* (various Lotus concoctions), *burst* (Everlasting Lotus of the Burning Phoenix), *poison* (various poisons), *stun* (Gray Lotus of the Stony Limbs), *warrior's gift* (various drugs of bestial warriors), *zombie* (Opaque Lotus of Awakening).

**Gear:** Short sword (Str+d6), poisoned dagger (Str+d4, coated with a *poison* Lotus concoction), poisoner's glove (Str), medium bronze corselet (+2) concealed under robes, Lotusmaster's bag, healer's kit, poisoner's ring, 10 doses of refined Lotus.

**Special Abilities:**

- **Abominable Creatures of the Lotus:** A Wicked Man of Science usually has a number of abominable servants at his service. These wretched creatures have been horribly mutated by his experiments (see sidebar). At least one of them is a Henchman, fanatically loyal to his master.
- **Well Stocked:** A Wicked Man of Science generally has more time to study than a wandering adventurer, so he can use the Lotus Reserve Edge twice per session. In addition, given his resources, he can use the Edge to create any concoction from the Lotusmastery Powers List, including the ones he doesn't know.

## ABOMINABLE CREATURES OF THE LOTUS

A Wicked Man of Science has no problem with twisting and torturing men and beasts for his evil purposes. These poor creatures are so subdued that they obey him in every way. If you need a quick way to portray these creatures, you can use the Twisted Servant stats (see SEPG).

If you want something more elaborate, choose a basic creature profile (usually a human or an animal). Draw a card from the Action Deck (two if you want a really nasty creature) and find out which terrible mutation the creature has undergone. Unless the entry says otherwise, the creature also has the Ugly hindrance.

### TWISTED LOTUS EFFECTS TABLE

CARD	EFFECT
2	<b>Giant!</b> The poor creature has grown beyond measure. Every time this card is drawn, the creature receives Size +3. Add the Large, Huge and Gargantuan Special Abilities if necessary.
3	<b>Secret of Immortality!</b> The Lotusmaster has made it! This creature is virtually immortal, having the Regeneration (fast) Monstrous Ability, but luckily it cannot regenerate wounds caused by fire, steel or some other means devised by the GM.
4	<b>Gills!</b> This creature has developed gills and can survive in water. It has the Aquatic Monstrous Ability (same Pace in water as when moving on the ground) and an extra Vigor die step.
5	<b>Thick Hide.</b> Every time this card is dealt, the skin of the creature becomes thicker, harder or grows more scales, gaining +1 Armor.
6	<b>Patchwork!</b> This creature is the result of a weird experiment, made by combining the severed parts of different beings and brought to life thanks to powerful Lotus concoctions. It has the Construct Monstrous Ability.
7	<b>Wall Crawler!</b> This abomination has sprouted suckers or similar organs and can easily move on walls and vertical surfaces. It has the Wall Walker Special Ability.
8	<b>Fangs and Claws!</b> The poor being has razor sharp fangs and/or claws. It gains a natural attack causing Str+d4, and the damage goes up a die step (i.e. Str+d6, Str+d8...) every additional time this card is drawn.
9	<b>Fast!</b> The creature runs very fast and is blessed with excellent reflexes. It has the Fleet-Footed and Quick Edges.
10	<b>Uh... Terrible!</b> This creature is the Lotusmaster's greatest failure. It is so hideous and revolting it causes Fear. Any additional time this card is dealt, the Fear check modifier decreases by -2.
J	<b>Wings!</b> This creature has developed wings! It has the Flight special ability with the same Pace as when moving on the ground, and Climb 0.
Q	<b>Supernatural Intellect!</b> The brain of this creature has been enhanced and its Smarts is raised by two die steps. So, the being has become aware of what the Lotusmaster has done to it. If a red card is dealt, it has the Vengeful Hindrance and is ready to betray its maker as soon as it gets the chance!
K	<b>Death Defeated!</b> The Lotusmaster managed to defeat his greatest opponent, death itself. This being was brought back to life, although it isn't quite the same as before. It gains the Undead Monstrous Ability.
A	<b>Incredible Beauty!</b> The Lotusmaster made this creature beautiful. It doesn't have the Ugly Hindrance, is supernaturally Attractive (Charisma +6) and can use the <i>puppet</i> Power on members of the opposite sex with arcane ability d10 and 10 Power Points.
Joker	<b>Deranged Creature!</b> Draw another two cards and apply both results.

# MONK

The lonely figure of a wandering monk can sometimes be seen even in remote lands far from Lhoban. Not all monks are Jademen, because the doctrine of Enlightenment has slowly spread throughout the Dominions.

Some monks are kind and humble but others follow twisted beliefs and are heralds of an ancient evil.

## WANDERING MONK

A typical travelling monk. The same stats can be used for an Enlightened monk or for a Seeker of the Black Light.

**Customization:** Cela (add Young Hindrance, drop Spirit, Agility and Enlightenment by one die step, see sidebar), Corrupt Evil Monk (add Persuasion d10, replace Enlightenment with Obscurement, add a pain trapping to all his Powers), Philosopher (Spirit d10, add Philosopher, replace Monk (Militant) with Monk (Contemplative)), Temple Guard (replace gear with medium bronze armor and moon blade).

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

**Skills:** Climbing d4, Fighting d8, Healing d6, Enlightenment d8, Knowledge (Religion) d6, Notice d6, Survival d4

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Poor, Vow (religious tenets)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Path of Enlightenment), Martial Arts, Monk (Militant), New Power

**Powers [15 PP]:** *Boost trait* (moves of many beasts), *smite* (perception of the enemy's weak spot).

**Gear:** Three-piece rod (Str+d6, ignores shield Parry and cover bonus) or staff (Str+d4, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands) or reinforced prayer beads (count as iron fists: +1 unarmed damage).



## DEMON HUNTER

A veteran in dealing with demons, this man has forged his own will and body into lethal weapons against the many abominations infesting the Dominions.

**Customization:** Head of a Small Temple (add Persuasion d8, Charismatic, Philosopher), Murderer of the Black Light (add Stealth d10, replace Enlightenment with Obscurement and Demon Hunter with Assassin, add Soul Eater).

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Healing d8, Enlightenment d10, Knowledge (Religion) d6, Notice d8, Survival d4

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

**Hindrances:** Death Wish, Heroic, Vow (religious tenets)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Path of Enlightenment), Block, Brave, Demon Hunter, Martial Arts, Monk (militant), New Power×2, Power Points

**Powers [20 PP]:** *Boost trait* (moves of many beasts), *deflection* (reading opponent's intentions), *smite* (perception of the enemy's weak spot).

**Gear:** Moon blade (Str+d8), medium bronze half-body armor (+2).

## MONK MASTERS AND CELA

Many monks, especially militant ones, spend most of their lives travelling, because the doctrine of Enlightenment says that a man must find himself in the world. So, the more experienced monks (Wild Cards) often wander with one or more (up to five) inexperienced boys or girls under their tutelage. These young individuals are called Cela, which in the language of Lhoban means "disciple", and their level of experience may vary greatly. The Cela of a grizzled Demon Hunter can be a fully trained monk (use the standard Wandering Monk stats), while the disciple of a Wandering Monk is, in most cases, just a common boy or a girl (use the Cela customization).

## NANDAL

Nandal is a Norheim word meaning “mute”, because these primitive cavemen are incapable of human speech, given the particular shape of their throats. When communicating among themselves, they use a mixture of grunts and gestures. They dwell in caves in the North but sometimes wander south, looking for food, mates, or simply warmer climates. This is why a surprisingly large number of Nandal colonies are found in the Iron Mountains. Nandals are fierce and bloodthirsty.

### NANDAL TRIBESMAN

An average caveman, with a prominent jaw and small, sunken eyes.

**Customization:** Dog Master (Beastmaster, has d4 Nandal dogs with him, see sidebar), Fire Bringer (add flaming branch (Str+d4, +2 fire damage, chance of target catching fire) to gear, see sidebar), Tracker (Tracking d8).

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

**Skills:** Climbing d4, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6, Tracking d4

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8 (1)

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Ugly

**Edges:** Brute

**Gear:** Reinforced stone war club (Str+d8), stones (Range 3/6/12, Damage str+d4), thick furs (+1).

#### Special Abilities:

- **Grunting Brutes:** Nandals grunt as one to get psyched up for a fight. At the beginning of a combat and before any Action Cards are dealt, a group of Nandals acting on the same Action Card makes a group Spirit roll. For each success and raise, the group receives one Nandal Fury Token. At the start of each round the Game Master can use one of these tokens to let the whole group gain +2 on Intimidation, Fighting or damage rolls for the current round. Only a single token can be used each round for each group.
- **Size +1:** Nandals are bigger than men.



### NANDAL ALPHA MALE

A bigger, rougher and more savage specimen, usually the chief of a clan.

**Customization:** Fire Touched (causes Fear, Arcane Resistance only versus fire based Powers, see sidebar), Pillager (replace Gear with medium bronze half-body armor, medium shield, bronze battle axe).

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Climbing d4, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6, Tracking d4

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (1)

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Ugly

**Edges:** Brute, Frenzy, Improved Sweep

**Gear:** Reinforced stone war club (Str+d8), stones (Range 3/6/12, Damage str+d4), thick furs (+1).

#### Special Abilities:

- **Chief of the Brutes:** A Nandal Alpha Male can use the Grunting Brutes Ability (see Nandal) using the Nandal Fury Tokens of a Nandal group within 12". A Token used in this way only affects the Alpha Male.
- **Size +2:** Nandals are bigger than men. The Alpha Male is even bigger.



## FRIENDS OF THE CAVE PEOPLE

Nandals are primitive men, the equivalent of the real-world Neanderthals. They are slowly becoming more human and have recently discovered how to tame dogs and the secret of fire.

**Nandal Dogs.** These beasts are ugly creatures, used by the Nandals in hunting and war. Their relationship with the Nandals is stronger than that between civilized men and domestic dogs. Use the Dog/Wolf profile adding the Loyal and Ugly Hindrances.

**The Secret of Fire.** Fire fascinates the Nandals. It keeps them warm during the cold nights, turns raw meat into good food and keeps the terrors lurking in the darkness at bay. They consider it magical, so some of them use it in combat. They are the Fire Bringers, seen as something in between holy people and madmen. The craziest of them all are the Fire Touched, muscular warriors who throw themselves into fire to prove that nothing can scare them. If they survive, their scarred skin becomes so thick that even the hottest flame causes them no pain.

## NANDAL CLANS' SPECIAL ABILITIES

Nandals are as different from clan to clan as civilized men are from one race to the other. To personalize them and make them interesting opponents, it is recommended to give them a Clan Ability.

Some examples are listed below and the Game Master is encouraged to devise his own. Note that all underground clans should have the Cavern Dweller Ability in addition to another.

**Beast Friend.** This clan lives in close contact with beasts. It has one or more animals, which obey its orders. The commonest are a pack of wolves or Nandal Dogs (1 per two Nandals in the tribe), mountain cats (1 per 10 Nandals in the tribe), Henchmen, use Lion stats from Savage Worlds core rules, they deal Str+d8 damage with their saber-like teeth, but have only Size+1) or a single cave bear (Wild Card, use Bear stats from Savage Worlds core rules, raise Size to +3 and add the Hardy Special Ability).

**Cannibal.** This tribe has the hideous habit of eating men. They file their teeth (which are considered a Str+d4 weapon).

**Cavern Dweller.** This clan lives underground. Its members are pale skinned and have white hair. They see very well in darkness (as per the Low Light Vision Special Ability), but daylight causes them discomfort (they suffer -1 to all trait rolls).

**Feral Hunter.** This tribe is made up of excellent hunters, and they are gifted with a superhuman sense of smell. They have Notice, Stealth and Tracking at d8.

**Madweed Eater.** This clan eats the feared Madweed, the herb which causes folly. They have frothing mouths, wild eyes, and are totally mad. They gain the Berserk Edge and the Bloodthirsty Hindrance. In addition, whenever they draw a Deuce or Three from the Action Deck one of them, chosen randomly, succumbs to madness: if the card drawn is red he freezes, caught in visions (consider him to be Shaken), if it is black he attacks the nearest enemy.

**Scarred.** This clan burn themselves terribly with fire to show their courage. They are really horrible, cause Fear the first time they are seen and receive +1 to Intimidation rolls.

**Scavengers.** This clan has raided civilized men and learned to use their tools and weapons. They are fitted with crude medium armor (+2), shields and bronze battle axes. These items are in very poor shape, corroded and badly maintained, and are considered as weak as bone for breaking purposes.

**Spirit of the Clan.** The members of this tribe are mute. They communicate only through a sort of short-range telepathy. They all have the Common Bond Edge (this means that all the Wild Cards' Bennies are shared by the tribe). In addition they have mental powers, created by their strange link. Choose two Powers from: *beast friend, boost/lower trait, fear, mind reading, telekinesis* and *stun*. They have an arcane skill of d4, plus one die step per 15 Nandals in the tribe. They also have 5 Power Points plus another five per 15 Nandals in the tribe. So a tribe of 30 Nandals has Arcane Skill d8 and 15 Power Points. Any member of the tribe can use the powers, but no more than a single Power can be used each round. The Nandals must be within five miles of one another to be part of the collective mind of the tribe.



**Stone Claw.** As a rite of passage to the adulthood, the males of this clan have to severely hammer their left hand against a particular rock at the bottom of a holy cave, perhaps even causing fractures and broken fingers (-2 to fine manipulation tasks left-handed), on the plus side the hand is so hard and calloused that it is considered a natural weapon dealing  $\text{Str} + d_4$  damage.

**Tainted Weapons.** These barbarians know that smearing their weapons with dung makes them vicious: wounds turn black and suppurate, and their enemies die like flies. They are usually armed with stone-tipped spears, hatchets and daggers made of bone or stone. Enemies wounded by a tainted weapon suffer -2 to any Healing roll (apart from magical healing), in addition any character suffering such a wound must make a Vigor (-2) roll or die in 2d6 days from septicemia. The only way to avoid this is by cutting away the infected flesh (with a Healing (-4) roll, in the case of failure the patient suffers a non-soakable Wound, two if the healer rolled 1 or less). Tainted weapons are only used for war, never for hunting.

## PIRATE

A Pirate can be an ex-slave or simply a greedy sailor who has embraced a life of plundering.

### PIRATE CREWMEMBER

Regardless of their past, these men are now the scourge of the sea.

**Customization:** Brown Sea Pirate (add spear and sling to Gear), Caldeian Corsair (add Caldeian Fencer Edge, replace Code of Honor (Pirates') with Code of Honor (Corsairs'), remove Mean), Dread Sea Pirate (add bow to Gear), Helmsman (Boating d8, Quartermaster Edge, Man at the Helm Special Ability, see below), Escaped Slave Crewmember (Strength and Vigor d8).

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

**Skills:** Boating d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d4, Stealth d4, Throwing d6

**Cha:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Code of Honor (Pirates'), Mean

**Gear:** Bronze short sword (Str+d6) or boarding axe (Str+d6), dagger (Str+d4, Range 3/6/12).

**Special Abilities:**

- **Born on Deck:** These men are skilled at risking their lives while boarding enemy ships. They receive +1 to Tricks while fighting aboard a ship.
- **Man at the Helm:** Only for the Helmsman. He has a single Benny which can be used only for ship-related tasks (boating rolls and soaking ship wounds as per the Quartermaster Edge).



### PIRATE CAPTAIN

Only the toughest scum can keep a crew of pirates at bay and this man certainly knows how.

**Customization:** Corsair Captain (add Caldeian Fencer, Hold the Line! and Counterattack Edges, replace Code of Honor (Pirates') with Code of Honor (Corsairs'), remove Mean)

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

**Skills:** Boating d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4, Throwing d6

**Cha:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

**Hindrances:** Code of Honor (Pirates'), Mean

**Edges:** Ambidexterity, Command, Two Fisted

**Gear:** Iron long sword (Str+d8), dagger (Str+d4, Range 3/6/12), light leather armor (+1).

**Special Abilities:**

- **Born on Deck:** Like his men, he is skilled at risking his life while boarding enemy ships. He receives +1 to Tricks while fighting aboard a ship.

## PYGMY

These very short jungle dwellers are isolationist and xenophobic. They hate trespassers and will do everything in their power to dispatch any stranger foolish enough to venture into their wet, dark lands.

Sometimes Pygmies leave the protection of their trees to attack travelers and raid villages in the Verdant Belt. They steal and murder but mainly they take slaves, especially beautiful, fair-skinned girls. Nobody knows the fate of these poor souls, but many believe that they are sacrificed to ancient gods in crumbling temples deep in the jungle.

## HUNTER

The commonest Pygmy found in the Lush Jungle is a hunter, a skilled woodsman and tracker. Despite his small stature, he is bold, cunning and fierce—in a pygmy way, of course. Pygmies don't fight in the open, they prefer a stealthy poison dart shot from the thick of the foliage, a trap concealed in the ground, and so on.

Killing without being seen is the pygmy way of being brave, and this is why the civilized races say that a coward is “as bold as a Pygmy”.

But don't be fooled, the Pygmies are dangerous.

**Customization:** Bird Imitator (Taunt d10), Healer (he can use the *dispel* power, but only against the *poison* power, with Survival as the Arcane Skill and 5 Power Points), Poison Savvy (Survival d12), Sentinel (Notice d8, Alertness), Spider Friend (Beastmaster, with a Giant Spider animal companion).

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

**Skills:** Climbing d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d10, Survival d8, Throwing d8

**Cha:** -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Small

**Edges:** Woodsman

**Gear:** Poisoned bone dagger (Str+d4, see poison master below), pygmy blowpipe (see poison master below, Range 7/14/28, see sidebar), stone hatchet (Str+d6).

### Special Abilities:

- **Jungle Dweller:** Pygmies are excellent tree climbers. They can squeeze past gnarled roots and run through the dense undergrowth which carpets the jungle floor with perfect ease. So, they ignore Difficult Ground while in the jungle.
- **Poison Master:** Pygmies are known for their dangerous poisons. In game terms, while in the jungle, they can use the *poison* power with 5 Power Points and Survival as the Arcane Skill. In addition, both their daggers and blowpipes are coated with a Very Fast Injection *poison* (no Power Points required), which can either be lethal or only cause Fatigue.

## TRAPPER

It is no secret that Pygmies are fond of spiders. In particular, they love their ability to lure prey into their complex, invisible webs, and then eat them at leisure. A Pygmy Trapper's philosophy is being just like that. He loves luring his victims into traps and pits and, once they are captured and incapacitated, he finishes them.

**Customization:** Bird Imitator (Taunt d10), Trap Master (Survival d12), False Bait (Extraction, Fleet Footed, Taunt d6), Sentinel (Notice d8, Alertness), Spider Friend (Beastmaster, with a Giant Spider animal companion).

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

**Skills:** Climbing d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d10, Survival d8, Throwing d8

**Cha:** -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Small

**Edges:** Woodsman

**Gear:** Bone dagger (Str+d4), sling (Str+d4, Range 4/8/16), stone hatchet (Str+d6) or bone-tipped spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, 2 hands, Reach 1).

### Special Abilities:

- **Jungle Dweller:** Pygmies are excellent tree climbers. They can squeeze past gnarled roots and run through the dense undergrowth which carpets the jungle floor with perfect ease. So, they ignore Difficult Ground while in the jungle.

- **Trap Master:** When a fight occurs in an area of the jungle that the Trapper knows well (like an ambush site or deep in pygmy territory), the Game Master secretly places up to three traps onto the battlefield. The traps can be devised by the Game Master or chosen at random (see sidebar). Each trap has the size of a Small Burst Template and can be spotted by winning an opposed roll between the Trapper's Survival and the opponent's Notice. It is possible to trade a bigger trap for a number of smaller ones (MBT = 2 SBT, LBT = 3 SBT).



## MASKED WARRIOR

Very little is known about the Pygmies' gods, but the Masked Warriors must be somewhat connected to religion – or so the scholars say. Sometimes, among the other warriors, you can see one wearing a large, impressive mask. He is a Masked Warrior, a sort of paragon and a very charismatic figure for the whole tribe. But there is more to this custom: the masks are considered magical, as they represent heroes from the past. When he wears such a mask, a Pygmy somehow turns into the mythological figure the mask represents, and is capable of incredible feats. No one knows if the masks truly affect the warriors or if it is just a matter of auto-suggestion. Whatever the truth, beware: a Masked Warrior is a dangerous opponent!

**Customization:** See Pygmy Masks sidebar.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d10, Survival d8, Throwing d8

**Cha:** -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Small

**Edges:** Command, Luck, Woodsman

**Gear:** Pygmy holy mask (+3, head only) and related equipment.

**Special Abilities:**

- **Jungle Dweller:** Pygmies are excellent tree climbers. They can squeeze past gnarled roots and run through the dense undergrowth which carpets the jungle floor with perfect ease. So, they ignore Difficult Ground while in the jungle.

- **Masked Warrior:** Choose a Mask from the sidebar.



## PAINTED SHAMAN

These men are powerful sorcerers and intermediaries between the tribe and its ancient, mysterious deities. They often paint their faces and dress their long hair in a strange way to look even more impressive and fearsome.

**Customization:** Headhunter (add *zombie* to Powers, always in the company of 2d6 headless zombies), Leader of the Tribe (add Command and Hold the Line!).

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

**Skills:** Climbing d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d6, Notice d8, Stealth d10, Sorcery d8, Survival d8, Throwing d8

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Small, Vow (religious tenets)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Sorcery), Improved Impressive Aura, New Power, Power Points, Woodsman

**Powers [25 PP]:** *Beast friend* (strange prayers and dances), *bolt* (throws poisonous spiders), *fear* (curses), *poison* (venomous gases and fogs), *summon ally* (giant spider, medium swarm, alligator)

**Gear:** Skull scepter (Str+d4, delivers touch attack like a Sorcerer's staff), curious headgear (+1).

**Special Abilities:**

- **Ancient Sorcerer:** Pygmy Shamans worship unknown gods, so they can use a wider range of powers than traditional sorcerers (choosing from both the Lotu mastery and Sorcery lists).
- **Jungle Dweller:** Pygmies are excellent tree climbers. They can squeeze past gnarled roots and run through the dense undergrowth which carpets the jungle floor with perfect ease. So, they ignore Difficult Ground while in the jungle.

**PYGMY BLOWPIPES**

Pygmies use sturdier versions of the traditional blowguns that are at least four yards long. These weapons require great lung capacity (Vigor d8 required), but have an increased Range (7/14/28). They aren't usually sold.

**PYGMY TRAPS**

Whenever the Game Master needs a pygmy trap, she can draw a card from the Action Deck and check the table below. Note that Trap Skill refers to the skill of the trapper (usually his Survival die), while Trap Size refers to its area of effect, i.e. Small, Medium or Large Burst Template. Typically, traps are spotted by winning an opposed roll between the trapper's Trap Skill and the victim's Notice.

**Spades - Pit.** A deep pit (at least four yards deep) concealed by moss or dead leaves, as big as the template of the Trap Size. Any victim failing the opposed Notice roll must make an Agility (-4) roll or fall in. He is automatically Shaken. If a face card is drawn, there are spikes at the bottom of the trap that cause 2d6 damage. Escaping the pit requires a Climbing roll.

**Hearts - Slashing Branch.** This trap uses branches or ropes and, when triggered, it targets a single victim. Stepping onto it (failing the opposed Notice roll) triggers the effect. If the card isn't a face card, the trap consists of a loop of rope that closes around the victim's ankle and hangs him upside down. He is automatically Shaken and must make an Agility (-4) roll to break free. While in this awkward position, he suffers -2 to Parry and any skill roll, and cannot move. Any friend can simply cut the rope with a single action. If the card is a face card, the trap is totally different. When the victim steps onto the trigger, a branch suddenly slashes up, throwing one dart per Trap Size (max 3 darts) at the victim. The darts are shot at Short Range with Throwing equal to the Trap Skill and deal 2d6 damage.

**Diamonds - Beehive.** A simple but very nasty trap! The devious Trapper has



concealed a hive or nest (of bees, scorpions or similar) in the ground! Stepping onto it (failing the Notice roll) enrages the beasts, which emerge and attack! They are a Swarm of size equal to the Trap Size.

**Clubs – Falling Objects.** The Trapper has concealed something dangerous among the branches of a tree. If a victim triggers the trap (failing the opposed Notice roll), rocks, logs and other heavy objects rain onto him. Any target caught in the Burst Template must make an Agility (-2) roll to avoid suffering 2d8 damage (3d6 if the card dealt is a face card). The Game Master can also decide that the falling object is a net. In this case, it causes no damage but the targets fall under the effect of the *entangle* power.

**Joker – Really Nasty Trap!** This trap is truly devilish! Draw another card, check this table again, and the trap deals +2 damage and has +2 to opposed rolls.

## PYGMY HOLY MASKS

Pygmy holy masks are powerful items. Each is unique but they have some common features. They are incredibly sturdy (Toughness 9) but, if broken, the Masked Warrior must immediately make a Fear Check (-4). In addition, they are cursed. If a non-pygmy character acquires one and doesn't destroy it or give it back to its owner within a week, he acquires the Bad Luck Hindrance. On the plus side, each mask (with some exceptions) grants its rightful wearer (so, it works only for Pygmies) two Edges (or a Monstrous Ability) and an Attribute raise, as in the examples below. Mask wearers are also traditionally equipped with some specific gear. Many other Holy Masks exist, but the following are the most common.

**Baj-Baj (black spider).** Wall Crawler, Poison Master Special Ability (as Pygmy Hunter), Survival dro. *Gear:* Poisoned bone short sword (Str+d6, see poison master).

**Chagawaba (grinning monkey).** Acrobat, Distract, Taunt dro. *Gear:* Club (Str+d4), throwing stones (Str+d4, Range 3/6/12).

**Dugga-Dugga (thunder in the forest).** Can use the *pumme*/Power, with 10 Power Points, using Vigor as the Arcane Skill, Strength dro, Vigor dro. *Gear:* Bone war club (Str+d8), shield (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness vs. ranged attacks).

**Jagon (weeping slave).** Healer, Pacifism (major) Hindrance, Healing dro. *Gear:* Healer's kit.

**Kataruh (tiger's brother).** Beast Master, Beast Friend, Riding dro. Has a Tiger (use Lion stats) animal companion. *Gear:* Bone short sword (Str+d6), small shield (+1 Parry).

**Lam Nam (dancing snake).** Counterstrike, Improved First Strike, Fighting dro. *Gear:* Spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands).

**Nalinaku (dead baby).** Iron Will, Cause Fear, Spirit dro. *Gear:* Two-handed bone meat cleaver (Str+d8).

**Rakateru (silent hunter).** Marksman, Poison Master Special Ability (as Pygmy Hunter), Shooting dro. *Gear:* Poisoned dagger (Str+d4, see poison master), pygmy blowpipe (see poison master, Range 7/14/28, see sidebar).

**Socha (weeping woman).** Amazon, Improved Frenzy, Fighting dro. *Gear:* Staff (Str+d4, +1 Parry, 2 hands, Reach 1).

**Tulamulu (angry lizard).** Improved Sweep, Nerves of Steel, Strength dro. *Gear:* Stone battle axe (Str+d8), small shield (+1 Parry).

**Za Zanga (bitten by a tarantula).** Ambidexterity, Two Fisted, Intimidation dro. *Gear:* Twin bone hatchets (Str+d6), light human bone armor (+1)

## PRIEST

Priests can be very different from one another, depending on their faith and personal attitude.

### GENERIC PRIEST

This man or woman is a devoted worshipper of the gods.

**Customization:** Friar Priest of the Divine Couple (Persuasion d8), Handmaiden of Etu (Attractive, Temptress, Persuasion d8), Midwife of Etu (Healing d8), Priestess of Hordan (Attractive, Bloodthirsty, Arcane Background (Sorcery), Powers [10 PP]: *boost/lower trait, fear*).

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

**Skills:** Fighting d4, Healing d6, Knowledge (Religion) d8, Investigation d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d6

**Cha:** +2; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Vow (tenets of his/her faith)

**Edges:** Charismatic, Priest

**Gear:** Staff (Str+d4, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands), robes

**Special Abilities:**

- **Curse of the Gods:** A non-player priest character can invoke a curse upon someone. To do so, the priest must make an opposed Spirit roll, applying -2 to his roll. If he wins, the target of the curse is affected by the Bad Luck Hindrance or the *lower trait* power (GM's choice) until the end of the scenario. If he scores a raise, the curse is permanent, until the priest lifts it or the player atones in some way. The Game Master should use this ability only when strictly appropriate. It is never wise to anger a servant of the gods...



### BURNED HAND OF TOSAR

Tosar was an ancient Smith Priest of Hulian, since raised to semi-divine status, who fought and found martyrdom in the arena in the first years of the Iron Empire. Protector of the gladiators, he is also a god of freedom and independence, and his worshippers actively work to free slaves. For this reason, the cult of Tosar is outlawed in almost all the Dominions.

The Burned Hands are the strongest and most devoted members of the cult. Their faith is so strong that they have decided to endure the Ritual of Burning to receive the Burned Hand of Tosar, at once the blessing and the curse of their god. The Burned Hands are very few and as well as being devoted to freeing slaves, they fight against the supernatural threats of the Dominions, in particular against the servants of Hordan. Occasionally they work with the Smith Priests.

**Customization:** Learned Priest (add Knowledge (Arcana) d8, the Scholar and Sage Edges), Martyrdom-Seeking Priest (add the Great Luck and Elan Edges, raise Fighting to d10, add the Death Wish Hindrance, replace gear with long iron sword and gladiator armguard).

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Healing d8, Knowledge (Religion) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Streetwise d8, Stealth d8, Throwing d8.

**Charisma:** +1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8(1)

**Edges:** Brave, Burned Hand of Tosar, Connections (Tosar's followers), Lowlife, Improved Nerves of Steel, Priest, Secrets of Hulian.

**Hindrances:** Outlaw, Ugly (scarred hand), Vow (Tenets of Faith).

**Gear:** Bronze short sword (Str+d6), light bronze armor with the Mark of Tosar (+1), long leather gauntlets.



**Special Abilities**

• **Mark of Tosar:** Tosar of the Burned Hand (see SEPC) was a Smith Priest of Hulian, and his disciples today still hide in the pits among the gladiators and the slaves. But even in the arena, they remember their holy task of destroying the hated sons of Hordan. The Burned Hands know how to place a particular version of the Mark of the Smith on armor and shields. Unlike the mark of the Smith God (see below), Tosar's sign is invisible (but can still be found with the *detect arcana* Power). In game terms, when a character wearing a piece of armor or a shield marked by Tosar is hit in melee by a creature with the Demon or Undead Monstrous Ability, whether he is wounded or not, the attacker must immediately make a Spirit roll: in case of failure he suffers 2d10 damage. The damage dice drop by one die step after each use. When they go below 2d4 the Mark wears off.

• **Secret Tongue of Tosar:** Priests of Tosar have a code of hand gestures to pass messages without being noticed. The code cannot be understood if not taught, but an alert eye might notice the gestures. In game terms, this is an opposed roll between the talker's Stealth and the witnesses' Notice. Note that only characters actively looking for something (active sentinels) can spot something.

**WANDERING SMITH PRIEST**

This man or woman is quite different from the typical priests you find in temples, chanting prayers and bowing in front of altars. He is a secret follower of Hulian, Lord of Fire and Smith of Words. He is forced to wander through the Dominions, hiding his faith from the world to avoid Imperial persecution, but this doesn't prevent him from continuing his lone and silent fight against the cruel sons of Hordan and other demons.

**Customization:** Former Smith (Strength d10, Smith Edge), Wise Man (Strength d6, Spirit d10, Knowledge (Arcana) and (Religion) d10, replace Improved Nerves of Steel and Improved Frenzy with Scholar and Sage, replace steel long sword with Steel Book amulet)

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Healing d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Knowledge (Religion) d8, Intimidation d6, Investigation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Repair d6, Shooting d8

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

**Hindrances:** Vow (religious tenets), Wanted

**Edges:** Brave, Elan, Improved Frenzy, Improved Nerves of Steel, Priest, Secrets of Hulian

**Gear:** Long sword with a Mark of the Smith (Str+d8, AP 2), bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6), 1d6 steel tipped arrows (AP 2), medium bronze armor (+2), medium bronze shield (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness vs. ranged attacks).

**Special Abilities**

• **Mark of the Smith:** The Smith Priests of Hulian know how to put a flame-shaped mark on weapons made to fight evil, which blesses them with the power of Hulian. These weapons grant the Holy Warrior and Champion Edges to the wielder. But Hulian can't leave such power in mortal hands for long: if the weapon is used against a demon, the Mark wears off at the end of the adventure.

Red Plague sometimes infects animals, at least those of certain species. The Sages of Syranthia have so far noticed that the following beasts are affected, but probably there are others too: bears, dogs and wolves (canines in general), badgers and raccoons, boars and pigs, and wolverines.

Rules-wise, you can make an animal a Red Bringer with the following modifications.

+ Raise Strength and Vigor by one die step.

+ Drop Smarts by one die step (minimum d4).

+ Add the Contagion and Pain Immunity Monstrous Abilities (see Red Ravager's stats).

## GM'S TIP: PLAYER CHARACTERS AND MARKS

Marks of Hulian and Tosar are excellent weapons against demons, but they should not be used as rewards that the Smith Priests give to the heroes, rather as instruments that the cult of Hulian reluctantly grants the heroes to make them capable of confronting a great evil.

In the same spirit, player characters, even priests of Hulian and Tosar, should not know how to craft Marks of the Smith and Marks of Tosar themselves, because this is very powerful knowledge, jealously guarded, and would seriously unbalance the game.

If you want to put this knowledge in the hands of the players, you can allow a Priest of Hulian to create a Mark, using the Crafting rules, but we strongly suggest enforcing one or more of the Limitations described in the next paragraph.

### MARKS CRAFTING TABLE

ITEM	SKILL	COST	REQUIRE- MENT	TYPICAL ASSET
Mark of Hulian	Knowledge (Religion)	300 Moons	Smithy (-4)	Lasts for an additional scenario
Mark of Tosar	Knowledge (Religion)	300 Moons	Smithy (-4)	The first time the Mark wears off, it is automatically restored at full power.

### LIMITATION

- ❖ **Getting the Knowledge.** The greatest power of the Cult of Hulian is their lore, and it is largely lost. Only a few Smith Priests know the secret of crafting the Marks and the players should have done something very important for the Cult to be granted such knowledge. Another, optional source of the knowledge on how to craft a Mark is the Steel Book of Hulian, the holiest tome of the cult, which was split and dispersed centuries ago to avoid it falling into Tricarnian hands. To acquire such knowledge through the book, the heroes should find and put together a number of pieces of the old tome...
- ❖ **Great Cost.** Crafting a Mark should require the expense of a Benny, which isn't recovered until the Mark expires (the character permanently has one Benny less).
- ❖ **Special Occasion.** A Mark can be crafted only during special days of the year (solstices, Hulian's holy days, lunar eclipses). In game terms this means not more than once every four scenarios.

## RED BRINGER

The Red Plague is an age old malady distributed sparsely in the Dominions. Tricarnians think it was created by the foul magic of Hordanas, their most important and infamous queen, but this is debatable. What is certain is that the plague periodically strikes and then disappears, sometimes for many years, letting people think it was finally defeated.

It hits people and, rarely, beasts. The lucky ones die, suffering for a few days. Others survive after a fashion, slowly rotting and consumed by the malady. They are called the Red-Touched, and are shunned in most of the Dominions. But the most unfortunate souls are those that contract it and, though not killed, are devoured, mind before body, and become terrible monsters tormented

by continuous pain, which can only find comfort in killing and eating the raw flesh of other people, or, when this is not possible, infecting them with their tainted touch. These creatures, because they cannot be considered human anymore, are called the Red Bringers.

## RED RAVAGER

A man or woman infected and maddened by the Red Plague. His body is more or less functional, even if horrible to see, but his mind is totally deranged and reduced to an animal state. Red Ravagers are surprisingly strong, a side effect of their illness.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6

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

**Gear:** Bronze sword or axe (Str+d8) or medium improvised weapon (Str+d6, -1 to Fighting rolls), rags.

### Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Contagion:** A character Shaken by a wounding effect or actually wounded by a Red Ravager has a good chance of being infected by the Red Plague (see SEGM page 49). The Vigor roll to check contagion is made with +2 if the character was wounded by a weapon. It must also be made, without any modifier, if a character suffers a critical failure on a Fighting roll against a Red Ravager, which means he clumsily entered into contact with tainted bodily fluids.
- **Fear:** Seeing a Red Ravager is a nightmarish experience at best. It causes a Fear check.
- **Frenzy:** Red Ravagers may make two attacks per round without any penalty, but one of them must be a Bite.
- **Pain Immunity:** Red Ravagers don't feel pain anymore and recover almost instantly from shock. They receive +2 to rolls to recover from Shaken.



## RED LORD

Sometimes, a Red Bringer manages to temporarily overcome the malady somewhat, maintaining a certain intelligence, despite being completely mad. These individuals are usually very strong physically, and lead the groups of Ravagers.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d6

**Pace:** 7; Parry: 6; Toughness: 8 (1)

**Gear:** Bronze sword or axe (Str+d8), patchwork armor (+1).

### Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Contagion:** A character Shaken by a wounding effect or actually wounded by a Red Lord has a good chance of being infected by the Red Plague (see page 49). The Vigor roll to check contagion is made with +2 if the character was wounded by a weapon. It must also be made, without any modifier, if a character suffers a critical failure on a Fighting roll against a Red Lord, this means he clumsily entered into contact with tainted bodily fluids.
- **Fear -2:** Seeing a Red Lord is terrible. It causes a Fear (-2) check.
- **Frenzy:** Red Lords may make two attacks per round without any penalty, but one of them must be a Bite.
- **Pain Immunity:** Red Lords don't feel pain anymore and recover almost instantly from shock. They receive +2 to rolls to recover from Shaken. In addition they can ignore up to two points of

Wound penalties, as per the Improved Nerves of Steel Edge.

- **Pack Leader:** Red Ravagers instinctively obey Red Lords. A Red Lord has the Command Edge (with 10" of command radius), but only toward Red Bringers.

## SAGE

Sages and learned men are all that stands between civilization and knowledge, and their complete destruction. Whenever a hero needs to check a legend, find a clue, or something similar, a sage is the right person to turn to.

**Customization:** Inventor (Knowledge (Engineering) d10, Repair d10), Physician (Healing d10, Knowledge (Medicine) d10, Healer).

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d4

**Skills:** Fighting d4, Knowledge (any two fields) d10, Investigation d10, Persuasion d6, Notice d6, Taunt d4

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4

**Hindrances:** Big Mouth, Elderly

**Edges:** Sage, Scholar

**Gear:** Robes, writing implements, tools of the trade.

## SORCERER

In this decaying age, practicing the dark arts is seen as an easy way to achieve personal goals: power, pleasure, riches, respect. But meddling with Things Man Was Not Meant To Know always has a price. Sorcery, like many other aspects of life and culture, is deeply rooted in the traditions of the various races, so a Caldeian sorcerer is very different from a Dancing Witch of the Ivory Savannah or a Death Speaker of the Cairnlands. Specific sorcerer profiles (such as Valkyrie, Caled Shaman and Tricornian Priest Prince) are detailed in other sections and the list below completes the overview.

## WARLOCK

A generic individual practicing the dark arts. Although not a real master of sorcery, he is feared and respected by many people and can be a tough opponent.

**Customization:** Cairnlander Death Speaker (replace Powers with: *armor* (wailing specters), *summon ally* (Ancestor's Ghost, Spirit of the Betrayer), *zombie*), Dancing Witch of the Ivory Savannah (replace Impressive Aura with Dancing Witch, Agility d8, replace Powers with: *boost/lower trait* (dance of blessing/cursing), *puppet* (charming dance), *stun* (hypnotic dance of the savannah snake)), Gis Soothsayer (Knowledge (Arcana) d10, replace powers with: *detect/conceal arcana* (truesight), *divination* (sees the future in the stars), *summon ally* (Ancestor's Ghost, Keronian Imp).

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

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Sorcery d8, Stealth d4, Streetwise d4, Taunt d4

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Arrogant, Greedy

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Sorcery), Impressive Aura, New Powers, Power Points

**Powers [15 PP]:** *Bolt* (tendrils of darkness), *boost/lower trait* (corrupt), *deflection* (I am not

there!), *summon ally* (Keronian Imp, Twisted Servant)

**Gear:** Dagger (Str+d4), robes.



## SORCERER

A powerful practitioner of black magic, who has spent much time studying arcane tomes and learning forbidden secrets from creatures not of this world. Some sorcerers have one or more apprentices (use the Warlock entry).

**Customization:** Immortal Beauty (Habit (Major, drinking virgin's blood), Very Attractive, Charismatic, Temptress, with a Binding Ritual she has permanently raised her Persuasion to d12), Master Summoner (add Bear, Giant Spider, Jatakal, Singer Demon, Tiger to summonable allies).

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Knowledge (Arcana) d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Sorcery d12, Stealth d8, Streetwise d8, Taunt d6

**Cha:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

**Hindrances:** Cautious, Greedy

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Sorcery), Improved Impressive Aura, New Powers, Power Points, Rapid Recharge, Binding Ritual, Soul Drain

**Powers [30 PP]:** *armor* (invisible shield), *bolt* (tendrils of darkness), *boost/lower trait* (corrupt), *deflection* (I am not there!), *invisibility* (You can't see me!), *puppet* (Your mind is mine!), *summon ally* (Keronian Imp, Twisted Servant, medium swarm, Fanged Ape, Shadow Bat, Spirit of the Betrayer).

**Gear:** Sorcerer's staff (Str+d4, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands), bone ritual dagger (+1), ensorcelled robes (+1), two Lotus concoctions chosen from among: *boost/lower trait*, *obscure*, *stun*.

**Special Abilities:**

- **Binding Ritual:** The Sorcerer has permanently bound a Wild Card Twisted Servant to his will. This individual acts as the Sorcerer's personal servant and bodyguard.
- **Corrupted by Magic:** The body and soul of the Sorcerer have become tainted by his prolonged use of evil magic. Now he has dark, elongated claws (+1 unarmed damage), and his body always smells of decay. He suffers -2 to Charisma.

## JALKA MAIDENS

A Valkyria often chooses to summon a Jatakal, a sort of demonic steed (see SEGM page 82). A Jatakal can mate with a mare and a partly supernatural creature is born, a Jalka (see below). Very similar to horses, the Jalka are fearsome creatures. Only a young Valkyria maiden can tame and ride a Jalka, and then she usually leaves her clan and wanders alone in the steppe, living only in the company of her demonic steed and other evil creatures. Jalka Maidens are much feared and respected, even by other Valkyria.

## JALKA

A Jalka is an abomination born of a demonic steed and a mare. It has the same stats as a Henchman warhorse, plus the Demon Special Ability. It feeds on meat, has razor-sharp teeth (Str+d6) and causes Fear the first time it is seen. It can be ridden only by a Jalka Maiden.

## THIEF

Criminals thrive in the wealthy cities of the Empire. Burglars, roof rats, pickpockets, and money forgers are just some of the shady individuals who earn a living by stealing the fat purses of

merchants or by robbing temples and noble palaces. Some of them work alone, while others gather in small bands or even well-organized structured guilds, like the famous Thieves' Guilds of Jalizar.

## THIEF

Despite his skills and experience, this character is considered a small-time crook, but this doesn't mean he isn't devious and dangerous.

**Customization:** Acrobat Thief (Agility d10, Climbing d8, Acrobat, Treasure Hunter, add tiger claws to Gear), Guild Thief (Enemy (Rival Guilds), Connections (Guild), add bronze short sword to gear), Fence (Streetwise d10, Connections (crime)), Lock Breaker (Lockpicking d10, Repair d6, Treasure Hunter), Pickpocket (Watch Your Back!, Stealth d10), Swindler (Persuasion d10), Spy (Charismatic, Danger Sense, Persuasion d8).

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

**Skills:** Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Gambling d4, Intimidation d4, Lockpicking d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6, Shooting d6, Taunt d4, Throwing d6

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

**Hindrances:** Greedy

**Edges:** Lowlife, Thief

**Gear:** Dagger (Str+d4), sling (Str+d4, Range 4/8/16), light half-body leather armor (+1), lockpicks.

**Special Abilities:**

- **Dark Alley Cat:** When in his own area (a city quarter, road or similar) an Extra Thief receives a Wild Die on Streetwise and Notice rolls. A Wild Card Thief has his Wild Die increased by one step (usually from d6 to d8).



## MASTER THIEF

This character is one of the best criminals in the city. He can be a highly skilled roof rat, capable of sneaking into the lord's palace without alerting a single guard, or a high-ranking member of a thieves' guild, or he can work as spymaster for some important ruler.

**Customization:** High-Ranking Guild Thief (Fighting and Throwing d10, Improved Block, Noble, replace bronze short sword with iron long sword), Professional Burglar (Overconfident, Acrobat, Danger Sense, Treasure Hunter, add tiger's claws, silk rope and a *slumber* Lotus concoction to Gear), Spymaster (Streetwise d12+2, Connections (any three), Rich).

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Gambling d6, Intimidation d6, Lockpicking d8, Notice d10, Persuasion d8, Stealth d10, Streetwise d10, Shooting d8, Taunt d4, Throwing d8

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

**Hindrances:** Greedy

**Edges:** Block, Connections (crime), First Strike, Improved Level-Headed, Improved Dodge, Lowlife, Thief

**Gear:** Parrying dagger (Str+d4, +1 Parry, usually used offhand), short sword (Str+d6), sling (Str+d4, Range 4/8/16), light leather armor (+1), lockpicks.

**Special Abilities:**

- **Dark Alley Lord:** When in his own city, a Master Thief has his Wild Die increased by two steps (usually from d6 to d10) on Streetwise and Notice rolls.

# TRICARNIAN

The dwellers of foggy Tricarnia are a mix of very different people. There are large masses of slaves, both born in Tricarnia and brought from abroad, and a small elite of Priest Princes.

## SLAVE SOLDIER

The bulk of the Tricarnian army and guard corps is made up of slaves. A mix of drugs, conditioning, and training keeps them docile, under the control of eunuch overseers. Priest Princes see the rest of humanity, their slaves included, as little more than cattle, so they have adopted special breeding procedures to create very specific slave castes (see sidebar).

The following profile refers to an average slave soldier, while the customization specs can be used for members of specific castes.

**Customization:** Iron Stinger (replace Gear with large shield, spear, and light leather armor), Mastiff (Loyal, Obese, Vigor and Strength d10, raise Fighting to d8, replace Gear with bronze long sword and medium shield).

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d6  
**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Throwing d6

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

**Hindrances:** Habit (slavemush)

**Edges:** Combat Reflexes

**Gear:** Bronze plated mace (Str+d6) and small shield (+1 Parry) or war sling (Range 8/16/32, Damage Str+d4) and bronze dagger (Str+d4), light leather half-body armor (+1).

**Special Abilities:**

- **Drugged Mind:** A Slave Soldier's daily diet consists of a mix of rice and meat or fish, the slavemush, spiced with Khav and other particular types of Lotus that make him very obedient. However, if he can't get any drugged food for a week, he becomes riotous, very jumpy and wild, receiving -2 to Fear checks, as per the Yellow Hindrance.
- **Weak Morale:** Tricarnian Slave Soldiers aren't famous for their courage in battle. Every time a group of Extra Slave Soldiers is dealt a deuce as Action Card but they do not have a clear advantage (e.g., they don't outnumber their opponents) or aren't within the Command Radius of an Eunuch Overseer, they must make a group Spirit roll or flee.

## EUNUCH OVERSEER

The eunuch officers of the Tricarnian armies are referred to simply as Overseers, so that they don't think of themselves as above their actual status. They wear impressive helmets and carry long whips to keep the Slave Soldiers at bay. There is usually at least one overseer for every twenty Slave Soldiers.



Eunuch Overseers are usually Henchmen or Right Hands.

**Customization:** Gorgon Helm (Command Presence), Manticore Helm (Strength d10, Sweep, replace whip and battle axe with iron maul), Vulture Helm (Shooting d10, Marksman, replace bow with composite bow).

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

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Throwing d6

**Cha:** -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Loyal

**Edges:** Command, Frenzy

**Gear:** Bronze battle axe (Str+d8), long whip (Str+1, Reach 5), bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6), monster-shaped helm (+3), light leather armor (+1)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Fight or Die! Eunuch Overseers are the real backbone of the Tricornian army:** they make the slaves obey in no time. In combat, they can use an Intimidation roll within their Command Radius to stop soldiers from trying to flee. The roll is at +4 if they have killed a friendly unit during the battle.
- **Taste the Whip!:** A Eunuch Overseer can use his whip for a called shot (-2) targeting a friendly Slave Soldier to make him fight with more vigor. If the target is hit, he doesn't suffer any damage but receives +1 to his attack rolls for the rest of the fight.



## PRIEST PRINCE

The title identifies a generic Tricornian noble. It refers to a Priest Prince of average power, quite skilled in sorcery and extremely wealthy. Priest Princes are usually accompanied by a dozen slaves at least.

**Customization:** Astrologer Prince (Sorcery d12, New Power, Power Points×2, add *divination* to Powers), Lotusmaster Prince (remove Binding Ritual and the Demonic Guard Special Ability, replace Arcane Background (Sorcery) and Sorcery d10 with Arcane Background (Lotusmastery) and Lotusmastery d10, Powers [25 PP]: *boost/lower trait, burst, dispel, poison, puppet, zombie*).

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Knowledge (Religion) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Sorcery d10

**Cha:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

**Hindrances:** Arrogant, Bloodthirsty, Quirk (hedonism)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Sorcery), Attractive, Binding Ritual, New Power, Noble, Power Points

**Powers [15 PP]:** *armor* (word of protection), *bolt* (unleash the hungry spirits!), *stun* (secret name of Hordan), *summon ally* (Keronian Imp, Spirit of the Betrayer, Shadow Bat, Demonic Mastiff).

**Gear:** Ensorcelled bronze long sword (Str+d8, AP 2), medium bronze armor (+2), poisoner's ring, three assorted Lotus concoctions.

**Special Abilities:**

- **Demonic Guard:** A Priest Prince usually keeps a permanently summoned demon under the effects of the Binding Ritual Edge as a pet or bodyguard. The most common Demonic Guards are Keronian Imps, Spirits of the Betrayer, Shadow Bats or Demonic Mastiffs.



## TRICARNIAN WARRIOR SLAVE CASTES

The practice of selective breeding among Tricornian slaves has led to the creation of various physical models, formalized in the concept of caste. A slave belonging to a certain caste is selected at birth and undergoes specific training. The commonest castes are described below.

**Iron Stingers.** The Tricornians were impressed by the Iron Phalanxes of the Empire and tried to imitate their way of fighting with their own slave troops. They are called Iron Stingers, due to their pointed helmets, but they are only a poor shadow of the Iron Phalanxes. Equipped with light armor, they rely more on numbers than on skill.

**Mastiffs.** These slaves are enormous mountains of flesh. Extremely strong and apparently imperturbable, they are capable of violent outbursts. The Priest Princes use them as personal bodyguards or shock troops.

**Overseers.** They are a particular type of eunuch slaves whose task is to lead Tricornian troops into battle. They are taken from all castes, and because of their “charge”, they are more concentrated on war than on other things. Each overseer is ruthless and feared by the other slaves, because they won't hesitate to kill or mutilate a fellow soldier to have their orders executed. Overseers wear impressive helmets, a symbol of their caste.

## VALK

These short, bowlegged nomads started invading the civilized lands less than two centuries ago and are the main cause of the decline of the Iron Empire. The following profiles describe their most famous and dangerous fighters, the Riders and the Valkyria.

### VALK RIDER

The typical clan member of a Valk tribe is both a herdsman and a mounted warrior.

**Customization:** Scout (add Stealth d8, Woodsman), Warlord's Personal Guard (Fighting d10, Block, Frenzy).

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

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d4, Intimidation d6, Shooting d10, Riding d10, Survival d6

**Cha:** -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Greedy

**Edges:** Born in the Saddle, Mounted Devil, Steady Hands



**Gear:** Bronze short sword (Str+d6), bronze dagger (Str+d4), Valk composite bow (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6+1, AP 1), boiled leather armor (+1), steppe pony.

**Special Abilities:**

- **Hit and Run:** A Valk Rider is trained to fight from horseback from youth. For this reason, he is particularly adept in hit and run tactics. While mounted, he gains the Extraction Edge, or, if he already has it, he gains the Improved version.



**VALKYRIA**

Valk hold women in very low esteem, except the Valkyria. These blonde warrior-priestesses are the leaders of a Valk horde. The strength of their visions and their incredible powers make even the strongest warriors tremble.

**Customization:** Bringer of War (Knowledge (Battle) d6, add Terror of Foes and another Command Edge), Jalka Maiden (raise Fighting to d8, replace sorcerer's staff with spear and shield and pony with Jalka, see sidebar), Old Crone (Elderly, Ugly, remove the Attractive Edge, add two powers and Power Points×2), Valaska (Fighting d10, Vigor d8, Common Bond, Terror of Foes).

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

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d8, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Sorcery d10, Riding d10

**Cha:** +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Vow (Valk religious tenets)

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Sorcery), Attractive, Born in the Saddle, Charismatic, Command, Fervor, New Power, Power Points

**Powers [20 PP]:** *bolt* (invisible strangling force), *deflection* (demonic wind), *fear* (hideous laughter), *summon ally* (Demonic Mastiff, Fighting Bird, Jatakal).

**Gear:** Sorcerer's Staff (Str+d4, +1 Parry, 2 hands, Reach 1, deliver touch), bone dagger (Str+d4), boiled leather armor (+1), steppe pony.

**Special Abilities:**

- **Living Banners:** Very few Valk warlords use insignia on the battlefield. A band of warriors usually gathers around a Valkyria, her long blonde mane acting as a banner. The Command Radius of a Valkyria is 15" when she is on horseback. For this reason, a Valkyria is sometimes referred to as a "Living Banner".

- **Visions:** Valkyria are famous for having visions. By spending a Benny, and making a Sorcery (-4) roll, they can use the *divination* Power without spending any Power Points. A human (or horse) sacrifice reduces the penalty by two. Every further use of this ability in the same lunar month causes an additional -2 to the roll. A Valkyria failing the Sorcery roll is Exhausted. Critical failures also require a roll on the Sorcery Critical Failures Table.

## WARRIOR

This catch-all profile can be used any time you need a combatant type NPC not falling in other categories.

### SOLDIER

A warrior with average experience and gear.

**Customization:** Archer/Slinger (Shooting d8, Trained Thrower (bow/sling), add bow or sling to Gear) Cavalry (Riding d6, add horse to gear), City Watch (Notice d6, Streetwise d6),

Levy Trooper (Intimidation, Shooting and Throwing d4, replace bronze short sword and light leather armor with spear), Mercenary (Intimidation d8, Greedy).

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

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Throwing d6

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

**Hindrances:** None

**Edges:** None

**Gear:** Bronze short sword (Str+d6), small shield (+1 Parry), light leather armor (+1).

### EXPERIENCED SOLDIER

A very skilled warrior, a professional in his field.

**Customization:** Heavy Caldeian Bowman (Trained Thrower (bow), Shooting d10, add bow to Gear), Syranthian Cataphract (Riding d8, add bow, spear and horse to gear), Noble's Bodyguard (Fighting d10, Alertness), Veteran Mercenary Troop (Block, Greedy).

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

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Throwing d6

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

**Hindrances:** None

**Edges:** Combat Reflexes

**Gear:** Bronze long sword (Str+d8), medium shield (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness vs. ranged attacks), medium bronze armor (+2).



The illustration depicts a woman with a blue cape and a bikini-like outfit embracing a large, orange scorpion. The scorpion is positioned in the center, with its pincers raised. The background consists of dark, rocky terrain with some sparse vegetation. The overall style is reminiscent of a comic book or pulp magazine illustration.

# THE DAUGHTER OF THE GOLDEN SCORPION

“FEAR THE KISS OF THE SCORPION  
AND THE EMBRACE OF THE SPIDER”

- Ancient Nomad Saying

## WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE

Long ago, for reasons not even they remember, Uru-Mjek, Queen of Spiders, and Ak-Arep, King of Scorpions, fought a bitter war. Even today, their kind despise each other.

In the end Uru-Mjek was victorious; the Queen of Spiders trapped Ak-Arep in a prison in the depths of the Red Desert and stole his heart.

This is the legend, as it is told around the campfires in the Red Desert.

The Heart has always been in possession of the Cult of Uru-Mjek, a dark sect which has its base in the Temple of the Many Legs, in the quarter of Forbidden Pleasures in the Independent City of Hillias.

At least until tonight, when Shirbaza, the last surviving member of the cult of Ak-Arep, who had infiltrated the cult as a holy dancer, decided it was the right moment to carry out the plan she had

prepared over the last two years, during which she endured the lascivious caresses of Millakos, head of the Spider Queen's cult. A few minutes before this scenario starts, she murdered the fat priest, stole the Heart from the cult's treasures and escaped, but at the door of the temple, she was discovered and had to run, while the cultists, led by the second in command Kelor Vas, are on her heels – hoping to avenge their master with her blood and retrieve the stolen relic...

## THE NIGHT OF THE FLASHING DAGGERS

*It was a long night, full of wine and fine girls, in the Quarter of Forbidden Pleasures, the most dangerous part of Hillias, a place populated by scoundrels, rogues and shady characters. In other words, by people like you.*

*It was fun while the gold in your purses lasted, then you were forced to leave the tavern. You are on the streets now, looking for a cheap place to stay for the night, when you hear a feminine cry from the dark alley in front of you.*

*A girl, a splendid-looking one, dressed in a flimsy bikini of silver and gems, is being attacked by a number of hooded fellows, armed with strangely shimmering daggers!*

*When she sees you, hope flickers in the desperate girl's eyes. "Please, help me!" she cries.*

The girl is Shirbaza, and she is about to be attacked by the Cultists of Uru-Mjek. The scenario supposes the heroes join the fight to save her (otherwise the cultists attack them to eliminate witnesses).

The cultists fight to the last man; at this point, from the far end of the road, another Cultist who remained concealed in the shadows all through the fight, says:

*"Fools! The rage of the Spider Queen will strike you, too!"*

And he runs away down a back alley. The heroes have only time to see a glimpse of his bald head. He is Kelor Vas, second in command of the cult, who is going to call reinforcements from the Temple of the Many Legs (which is quite near).

**(E) Cultist of Uru-Mjek (1 per Hero).** Use the Cult Member profile, they are armed with Spider Daggers (see sidebar). See page 102.

**(WC) Shirbaza (1).** See page 139.

### HERO'S JOURNAL: SPIDER DAGGERS AND OTHER TRAPPINGS

The cultists of Uru-Mjek are all male, with shaved heads, and dress in black, hooded tunics, shorter for the lower ranks and longer and more elaborate for important members, who also wear a big silver amulet engraved with a spider.

But the true trademark of the Urumites, as are they called, is the Spider Dagger, a thin-bladed, curved dagger with a silvery blade. These weapons are treated with the saliva of special spiders which make them very sharp (+1 damage) and hard (harder than iron for breaking purposes). These blades require constant applications of saliva to maintain their shape and if not treated, they turn into normal bronze blades after two adventures. Wearing such a weapon openly identifies you as an Urumite.

## “GET AWAY FROM THERE!”

*When the fights end, the girl looks at you breathing heavily. She is very beautiful, even if strangely dressed, in an outfit covered with gems which vaguely resembles the shape of a spider. She is unarmed, but holds an object in her hands, a stone oddly shaped to resemble a heart.*

*“Thank you, strangers! The members of the Spider Cult would have killed me!”*

If the heroes ask why, she answers candidly, showing the stone she holds.

*“Because I stole the Heart of Ak-Arep from them.”*

Further explanations must be delayed, because Kelor Vas has returned with a number of cultists, who are running toward the party. The heroes (and Shirbaza) must flee or meet a very bad end!

Kelor Vas stays out of the fight, commanding his minions from the rear.

This is a standard length Chase (5 rounds) based on Agility, pitting each hero against a group of Cultists (each group is made up of 3 Cultists). For simplicity, consider Shirbaza “attached” to one of the heroes. Each round, a scripted event happens, as shown in the table below.

**(E) Cultist of Uru-Mjek (3 per Hero).** Use the Cult Member profile, they are armed with Spider Daggers (see sidebar), half of them also have spears and bows (Shooting d6). See page 102.

### ESCAPE TABLE

CHASE ROUND	SCENE
1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>Dark Alleys!</i> Nothing changes except that the lighting condition is Dark (-2).
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>Crossing the Rough Lady Tavern!</i> The heroes pass through a crowded tavern, full of rough customers! Use Persuasion or Intimidation as the Chase skill, if a 1 is rolled on the skill die, a customer picks a fight! (Fighting d8, Strength d8).
3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>Slippery Stairs!</i> You can decide to run up these, taking up to +4 on the Chase roll, but you must make an Agility roll with a penalty equal to the Chase bonus (e.g. +4 means -4) to avoid tripping for 2d6 damage.
4 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Guard Patrol!</i> You stumble into the city guards. With a Persuasion (-2) roll or by paying 50 Moons they can be convinced to stop a group of cultists (or two with a raise)
5 <sup>th</sup>	On the docks! See below.

*Your run through the alleys of Hillias ends on a terrace overlooking the Hilya, the river crossing the city. Damn! You forgot there is no bridge here, you are cornered!*

*The cultists arrive, surrounding you.*

*“You’ll die here!” smiles the bald cultist leader.*

*But at this moment a large flat barge passes below you on the river, loaded with precious palm wood to be sold in Kyros.*

*This is your last chance!*

Obviously, the heroes must jump on the barge. This is an Agility roll, in the case of failure the character falls in the water, but he can be retrieved by his friends.

No cultist dares the jump, and the adventurers leave the city pursued by the bellowed curses of Kelor Vas.

### SHIRBAZA’S TALE

While aboard the barge, Shirbaza tells her story.

*“I am not ashamed to admit it: two years ago I intentionally sold myself as a slave to Millakos, that fat pig leading the cult of Uru-Mjek, the Spider Queen. For two years I danced in the temple*

*by day and endured his disgusting caresses by night. All to gain his trust and steal this: the Heart of Ak-Arep, the Scorpion God."*

*"My mother was the last follower of Ak-Arep, and I promised her on her death bed I would retrieve it from the hands of the hated sons of Uru-Mjek, who mutilated and trapped her god centuries ago. But I also did it for me, because the Heart of Ak-Arep is the key to the lost treasure of the cult. The biggest treasure you can imagine!" she says with shimmering eyes, before continuing.*

*"I want it, I earned it, but I cannot do it alone: the trip to the Tomb of the Scorpion, where the treasure lies, is full of dangers, and I need help. Will you join me for a share of the loot?"*

Shirbaza's story is a mixture of truth and lies, but any character succeeding at a Knowledge (Religion) or Knowledge (Arcana) (-2) roll can remember pieces of the legend about the bitter enmity of the two ancient cults. Characters with the Treasure Hunter Edge can roll on Common Knowledge too, to have heard rumors of the fabulous treasure of the Scorpion God, whose real nature is unknown.

Shirbaza does her best to play the role of the weak, needy girl, ready to flirt with the strongest-looking party member.

## TRAVELLING TO THE TOMB OF THE SCORPION

The barge leaves the heroes in a nameless village on the border of Kyros. There they can buy horses (if they have no money, Shirbaza sells the gems from her holy dancer attire to pay for them) and they set off for the Red Desert, where the mysterious Tomb of the Scorpion lies, buried under millennia-old sand.

Shirbaza's has only her mother's words to lead her:

*"Five days' travel south of Hillias, beyond the stone trees, look for the great stinger that stings the sky: there Ak-Arep sleeps."*

It is quite sibylline, indeed. Travel in the desert is dangerous, and below are several encounters for the party; you can add others if you want to make the scenario longer.

**The Storm of Ghosts.** The Red Desert is famous for its crystals, strange formations born in a forgotten past. The area the heroes are crossing is covered by a thick layer of pieces of crystal fragments, which shimmer under the sunlight, forcing the characters to cover their eyes to avoid being blinded. The problem is that after two days a wind rises, a real sandstorm, which in this area raises a cloud of razor-sharp shards! The party must find shelter as soon as possible, scoring three successes/raises on Survival (-2) rolls, which can be cooperative. They can roll every 10 minutes. For each 10 minutes they spend in the storm, they suffer 2d6 damage. Eventually they find a big rock to huddle behind, spending two full days and nights there before the storm dies down. There is not much the party can do while there, but they can recount stories (you can play an Interlude). The crystal storm is a very eerie event, as the stone pieces are charged with strange energies. Pick a random hero; during his turn on watch that night the chosen adventurer sees something connected to his Interlude in the storm (a Spirit roll is necessary to avoid being lured into the storm, in this case his friends should stop or find him before it is too late; otherwise he suffers damage from shards as above).

**The Hidden Oasis.** The forced stop caused by the storm greatly drained the heroes' provisions, especially water, and now they are in serious need. Luckily after half a day of riding, they come in sight of a small oasis. It is a peaceful group of trees, surrounding a small pool of blue water. The Oasis is inhabited by a crazy hermit, a former Red Nomad, called Mud Face (for his habit of

splashing his face with mud). He stays hidden in the trees and tries to scare the party away with terrible howls (Intimidation d10). Mud Face, if found, is harmless and can be talked with, even if he is mad as a hatter. His only companion is a dead bird, Greenfeather, which he uses as a talking puppet to interact with others.

Mud Face (his real name is Kabir) and his brothers, Afer and Tasim, ventured into this part of the desert looking for the fabled Tomb of the Scorpion God, but while Afer and Tasim met a tragic fate (see later), Mud Face went mad and took refuge in the oasis. If asked what lurks in the lands to the south he says:

*"South there is only death, where the spider people dwell; my two brothers, Afer and Tasim, went there for the treasure and never come back, only I and Greenfeather still live!"* (mad laughter)

**The Spider People.** The last leg of the travel crosses a rocky plain filled with thin pillars of stone, a sort of petrified forest. During the trip, the party hears howls in distance, with a Survival roll they understand these don't belong to any known animals. They are the calls of the Spider People, barbaric nomads dwelling in the petrified pinnacles. They are the descendants of the old guardians of the Tomb of the Scorpion King, sworn followers of the Spider Queen, Uru-Mjek. They arrive jumping over the top of the pinnacles, which are 9" to 12" tall and are very difficult to climb (-2 to Climbing rolls). The nomads are unnaturally agile climbers, and attack the party with shrieking war cries, throwing javelins and pushing pillars over on the party. They can do this with a Strength roll, and any character in the path of a falling pillar must make an Agility (-2) roll or suffer 2d8 damage.

Due to their numbers, the party should avoid them; use a Chase of standard length (5 rounds) pitting their Riding against the nomads' Agility. During the Chase the nomads can push pillars over with a Strength roll, which can hit (as above) any hero acting on a card of the same color, ignoring range.

**(E) Spider Nomad (2 per Hero +2).** See page 139.

The Chase ends when the party reaches a large clearing in the petrified forest, where a single, very tall stone pillar stands; the Spider People don't dare go near it.

The pillar has an odd shape, with a crooked point, resembling a scorpion's tail.

As Shirbaza's mother said, *"look for the great stinger that stings the sky"*.

The tomb of Ak-Arep must be near.

## THE GREAT STINGER THAT STINGS THE SKY

At the base of the pillar there is a stone door, engraved with figures of spiders fighting against scorpions. The door is partially ajar.

**Death on the Stairs.** Inside are stone stairs going down. At mid-stair there is the skeleton of a nomad, long dead (he is Afer, one of the brothers of the mad hermit). His red caftan is punctured in many places: he was killed by a trap, a set of metal spikes protruding from the wall, which triggers if someone steps on a particular step (the one before the corpse). The trap deals 3d8 damage, AP 2, to whoever triggers it. The holes in the wall hosting the spikes can be spotted with a Notice (-2) roll, but only if a player says he is inspecting it; likewise the pressure plate. Once they strike, the spikes retract immediately. The nomad has nothing interesting on his body.

**The Tomb of the Scorpion.** The stair leads to a large cavern, partially natural and partially artificial, flanked by two lines of half-destroyed columns. There is also a natural passage at the far end, leading deeper underground.

In the center of the cavern is something to make the heart of every plunderer beat faster: a horse-



sized statue of a giant scorpion, complete in every detail, including a very sharp-looking stinger, and made of pure gold! The statue has a hole in its chest, the exact size and shape of the Heart of Ak-Arep.

At the feet of the statue lies the skeleton of a second nomad (Tasim). The corpse has no wounds (he died from a massive dose of the Golden Lotus of Death, see below). He still has on his body a short curved sword, made of bronze, a set of lockpicks, and two Kullah (his own and Afer's).

Caution requires checking the statue before doing anything, but at that very moment, a sound is heard from the stairs and Kelor Vas and a number of cultists arrive, led by a couple of spider nomads.

*"How did you get here so fast?" Shirbaza curses.*

*"The Spider has many legs and many friends," Kelor Vas smirks, evilly. "The good nomads here are followers of Uru-Mjek too, the guardians of this tomb." The cultist raises a spider-shaped amulet high, and the nomads bow. "They led us here, to prevent your planned desecration," he ends, in a solemn tone.*

*But Shirbaza cannot be stopped so easily: with a quick move, she reaches the statue and places the heart in the hole! Suddenly a click is heard, and the stinger flips forward like a small catapult, releasing a dusty golden power into the air throughout room, while it resonates with a silvery tinkling!*

The powder is the Golden Lotus of Death, a very strong poison made by mixing exotic lotus with an extract of scorpion poison. Luckily its potency weakened over the centuries and now it only causes temporary paralysis.

Everyone in the room, including the heroes, falls to the ground, except Shirbaza, who is immune due to the Heart (see her profile), and stands laughing evilly.

*"Ak-Arep, Lord of Scorpions, you are free! Come to your priestess, and savor the sacrifice I brought you!"*

*From the entrance at the end of the cavern, you hear a scuttling sound.*



## THE RETURN OF AK~AREP

From the passage comes a beast, a scorpion large as a horse, his chitin shell black as death, and with a stinger big as a man's head, dripping poison!

All the characters must make a Fear check; luckily they cannot flee because they are paralyzed.

The beast, whether it is really Ak-Arep or not, obeys Shirbaza and it methodically kills people in the room, starting with the spider nomads, then the cultists, then Kelor Vas, and finally the heroes (consider this a Finishing Move), stinging them to death!

**Recovering from the Poison.** Meanwhile the heroes must free themselves from the deadly

effects of the poison. This is a special Dramatic Task, based on Vigor (-2). For each success and raise, they obtain one Recovery Token – see the table below for effects. After four rounds they roll without penalty, and after six they roll at +2. Roll for Kelor Vas, but not for the Extras (1d4 of them, if still alive, recover when the last hero has recovered). Fatigue from the poison (see table) doesn't apply to these rolls.

## POISON RECOVERY TABLE

RECOVERY TOKENS	EFFECT
0-2	<i>Paralyzed!</i> The character is helpless (Parry 2) and cannot do anything
3	<i>Starts Moving!</i> The character has two levels of Fatigue, but can move
4	<i>Feeling numb!</i> The hero's body painfully wakes up, but he is still Fatigued.
5+	<i>Recovered!</i> The hero is fine and ready to fight!

Once the characters are free of the poison they must fight Ak-Arep and Shirbaza, with the help of Kelor Vas. It isn't an easy fight; it occurs in the temple (24" long by 12" wide), but there are several elements the party can use to their advantage (see below).

**(WC) Scorpion King (1).** See page 139.

**(WC) Shirbaza (1).** See page 139.

**(WC) Kelor Vas (1).** Use the Cult Member profile, raising all attributes by one die step and adding the Priest and Command Edges. He is armed with a Spider Dagger (see sidebar). See page 102.

**(E) Spider Nomad (2).** See page 139.

**(E) Cultist of Uru-Mjek (1 per Hero).** Use the Cult Member profile, they are armed with Spider Daggers (see sidebar). See page 102.

## TERRAIN AND PROPS

- **Crumbling Columns.** Each column (there are six of them) is 2" wide and can be pushed over with a Strength (-4) roll, which can be cooperative. A target hit by a falling column must roll Agility (-4) or suffer 3d6 damage, AP 2. It is a Heavy Weapon.

- **Ak-Arep's Statue.** The statue is 4" by 2" on the battleground, it is considered Medium Cover. The stinger (now devoid of Lotus) is very sharp and counts as a Heavy Weapon dealing 2d10 damage. Ak-Arep can be lured into impaling himself on the stinger by winning a Smarts-based Test of Will with a raise.

## THE END

The following text supposes the heroes manage to defeat Shirbaza and drive off Ak-Arep thanks to the Heart, otherwise reword it as necessary.

*When Shirbaza falls, with a last curse on her red lips, you raise the Heart of the Scorpion high, and the beast, slowly, starts to retreat toward the passage it came from, till at last he disappears again into the depths where he belongs.*

The heroes have survived, but this adventure still end in a bad surprise for them: the golden scorpion statue is made of bronze, painted gold, and it is almost worthless! But, if they managed to save Kelor Vas, and give him back the Heart, the cultist grudgingly thanks them, and rewards them with a bag of 500 Moons, after a solemn promise they won't meddle in the cult's affairs anymore. If

they keep the Heart for themselves (it can be sold for up to 1500 Moons to the right customer, like a sorcerer or similar), they gain the enmity of the cult of Uru-Mjek, which sooner or later will take its revenge...

# CREATURES AND NPCs

## SCORPION KING

Nobody knows if this beast is really the incarnation of Ak-Arep, but it is surely an impressive creature, born in a forgotten era.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d4

**Pace:** 7; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 12 (3)

### Special Abilities

- **Armor +3:** Thick exoskeleton.
- **Heavy Armor:** The Scorpion King's chitin is so thick that only a Heavy Weapon can damage it.
- **Poison (-2):** The Scorpion King's stinger delivers a Lethal venom (+1 to the Vigor roll).
- **Size +3:** As big as a horse.
- **Stinger:** Str+d6, Reach 2.
- **Weakness (Eyes):** Called shots (-4) to the eyes are the only way to defeat its impenetrable armor, totally bypassing it and the Size bonus (actual Toughness: 6).

## SHIRBAZA

This raven-haired, red-lipped beauty pretends to be a young lady in distress, but in truth she is a calculating schemer and the last living worshipper of Ak-Arep, the Scorpion God.

She has a small scorpion-shaped tattoo behind her right earlobe.

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

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Riding d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6

**Charisma:** +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Edges:** Attractive, Poisoner, Temptress

**Hindrances:** Damsel in Distress (see below)

**Gear:** Jeweled holy dancer attire, dagger disguised as a hairpin (Str+d4, poisoned)

### Special Abilities

- **Heart of Ak-Arep:** This relic grants the holder immunity to scorpion-based poisons, and can cure any such poison with a touch. In addition it allows the wielder to control scorpions of any type and size. As a drawback, if the owner loses the Heart, she is immediately attacked by any previously subjugated scorpion. Kelor Vas knows all the powers of the Heart, except the last one.
- **Lotus of the Scorpion:** Using the Poisoner Edge, Shirbaza can only create a lethal, Very Fast concoction, the Lotus of the Scorpion. She has 6 Power Points available for this.

- **Pretender Damsel:** Shirbaza has overcome all the penalties of the Damsel in Distress Hindrance, but she still pretends to be frail and weak to manipulate men.

## SPIDER NOMAD

This twisted human is the deranged offspring of ancient, nomadic worshippers of the Spider Queen, who after centuries living in the petrified forest developed unnatural long arms and legs, excellent for climbing and jumping. Many of them paint their faces with scary spider shapes.

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

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d8

**Cha:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Fear of Magic

**Edges:** -.

**Gear:** Stone hand axe (Str+d6), bone-tipped javelins x3 (Str+d4, Range: 6/12/24), ragged cloak (+1).

**Special Abilities:**

- **Jumper:** Thanks to their powerful legs, spider nomads can jump twice the normal distance (2" plus 2" with a successful Strength roll).
- **Wall Walker:** Spider Nomads can walk on almost inverted surfaces at full Pace without any need to roll Climbing.



## INDEX

### A

ALTERNATE  
CHARACTERS | 42  
ASCAIA | 6, 8, 45, 91-92

### B

BEAST KINGS,  
CALED | 96  
BORDERLANDS | 9, 24,  
56, 58, 95

### C

CAIRNLANDS | 9, 91, 95,  
124  
CALDEIA | 10, 20, 25-27,  
42, 98  
CALED CLAN  
TATTOOS | 96  
CALEDLANDS | 10-11, 87  
96, 98, 100, 107,  
CAMPAIGN TYPES | 36,  
CANNIBAL ISLANDS | 11,  
100  
CHARACTER TALES | 38-  
40  
CHARACTER TALES,  
DESIGNING | 39  
COLLANA, CURSED CITY  
OF | 12  
CULT RELICS | 103

### D

DEATH IN THE PAST  
HANDLING | 41  
DOMINION  
EVENTS | 7-8,

### E

EKUL | 11-12  
EXECUTION | 42  
EXTREME ACTIONS | 33

### F

FABERTERRA | 12-13, 15,  
26, 47, 95, 97, 105, 107,  
FINGER ISLANDS | 13  
FLASHBACKS | 41  
FOCUSED  
CAMPAIGN | 36-37

### G

GIS | 14, 27, 108, 124,  
GREAT BITER, CURSE OF  
THE | 69-70  
GROUP SIZE | 31

### H

HEALING RULES,  
ALTERNATIVE | 33  
HEROIC DUO | 32  
HUMOROUS GAME | 35

### I

INDEPENDENT  
CITIES | 13-14  
IN MEDIA RES | 41  
IRON MOUNTAINS | 11,  
15-16, 112  
ISLANDS OF THE  
MAIMED ONES | 16  
IVORY SAVANNAH | 10,  
17, 21, 27, 45, 86, 89-90,  
97, 107, 124

### J

JALIZAR, CITY OF  
THIEVES | 17

### K

KERON, FALLEN REALM  
OF KYROS | 16, 18-19, 23,  
45, 49, 74, 98, 134-135

### L

LAND OF THE IDOLS | 19  
LAW OF THE  
SWORD | 34  
LHOBAN | 10, 12, 17, 19-  
20, 45, 83-84, 111  
LONE WOLF | 32  
LUSH JUNGLE | 13, 21,  
80, 116

### M

MANAGING YOUR  
RESOURCES | 66  
MAPPING OR NOT? | 60  
MEMORIES | 41-42  
MOOD, SETTING  
THE | 29-30

### N

NORTHEIM | 21, 34, 95,  
97, 112

### P

PHALANX INSIGNIA | 107  
PICARESQUE TALES | 36-  
37  
PYGMY HOLY  
MASKS | 119

PYGMY TRAPS | 118

### R

REALLY FAST PLOTS | 68  
RED DESERT | 6, 13, 22,  
42, 45, 58, 74, 81, 107,  
132, 135  
RED PLAGUE | 24-25,  
49-50, 121-123  
RELIC RULES | 43  
RELICS IN PLAY | 44  
RELICS LIST | 44  
RELICS OF THE  
DOMINIONS | 44  
REWARDS AND  
FOCUSES | 39  
ROMANTIC  
HINDRANCES | 36  
ROMANTICISM | 35  
RULE OF THREE | 38

### S

SERIAL CAMPAIGN | 37  
SILLY CAMPAIGN  
EDGES | 34  
SINGLE PROTAGONIST  
AVOIDING | 37  
SYRANTHIA | 7, 11, 15-16,  
23, 25, 97, 106, 121

### T

THING OF THE  
TOMBS | 60-64,  
TIMELINE  
FREEDOM | 40-41,  
TRICARNIA | 6, 10-11, 20,  
24-25, 47-48, 64, 73,  
77, 87, 103, 105, 127  
TROLL MOUNTAINS | 25  
TSA-GARA BLADES | 90  
TWEAKING THE  
SETTING | 34-36  
TWEAKS AND  
BONDS | 39

### V

VALKHEIM | 26  
VALK STEPPE | 26  
VERDANT BELT | 10, 26-  
27, 90, 97, 115

### Z

ZANDOR | 11-12, 15, 27-  
28, 91



# BEASTS AND BARBARIANS

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

WOUNDS    INC    FATIGUE  
**-1 -2 -3    X    -2 -1**

CONCEPT: \_\_\_\_\_

PERMANENT INJURES

RANK: \_\_\_\_\_ XP: \_\_\_\_\_

AGILITY					SMARTS					SPIRIT					STRENGTH					VIGOR				
4	6	8	10	12	4	6	8	10	12	4	6	8	10	12	4	6	8	10	12	4	6	8	10	12
BOATING	□□□□	GAMBLING	□□□□	PERSUASION	□□□□	CLIMBING	□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□	
DRIVING	□□□□	HEALING	□□□□	INTIMIDATION	□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□	
FIGHTING	□□□□	INVESTIGATION	□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□	
LOCKPICKING	□□□□	NOTICE	□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□	
RIDING	□□□□	REPAIR	□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□	
SHOOTING	□□□□	STREETWISE	□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□	
STEALTH	□□□□	SURVIVAL	□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□	
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THROWING	□□□□	TRACKING	□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□		□□□□	
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PACE	PARRY	TOUGHNESS	CHARISMA

WEAPON	RANGE	ROF	DAMAGE	AP	WT	NOTES
EDGES						

ARMOR	AREA PROTECTED	PROTECTION	WEIGHT	NOTES

HINDRANCES	POWERS	COST/MOD.	RANGE	DMG/EFFECT	DURATION

EQUIPMENT

SAVINGS





