

BEASTS & BARBARIANS

HEROIC TALES



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CRAMEL

ENYIA'S SONG



Enyia's Song

*A Sword and Sorcery Savage Worlds Heroic Tale for Beasts and Barbarians
for a party of four Seasoned characters.*

By Umberto Pignatelli

A NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS

To save space, several abbreviations are used in this book to refer to other books of the *Beasts & Barbarians* line. They are listed below:

SEPG: Steel Edition Player Guide
SEGM: Steel Edition Game Master Guide
JCT: Jalizar, City of Thieves

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WHO IS THE MYSTERIOUS GIRL LOCKED IN THE FORTRESS
OF LORD VORAKOR THE HUNTER? AND WHY IS EVERY
MAN ENTHRALLED BY THE HEARTBREAKING SOUND OF HER
SONGS?

POWERFUL LORDS, BREAKING IN AND OUT TRICARNIAN
MAGIC AND A CREATURE OLD AS TIME ITSELF AWAIT THE
HEROES IN THIS SCENARIO!

DO YOU DARE TO FACE THE RAGE OF ONE OF THE BEST
HUNTERS OF THE DOMINIONS FOR A BAG FULL OF MONEY?



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Enyia's Song*, a heroic tale of the *Beasts & Barbarians* Savage Worlds setting.

To play this scenario you need a copy of the core rules of Savage Worlds, *SEPC* and *SEGM*.

This scenario is for a party four Seasoned heroes, with some experience (30-35 Experience Points is the optimal level), but it can easily be modified, following the Steel Edition instructions, for parties of different size and experience.

Due its nature the adventure is also suitable for running at a convention (using a standard four hour slot) and to be played by a solitary hero (see Lone Wolf rules, *SEGM*).

You can play it with characters of your own, or download for free a party of pre-generated heroes from the same store where you found this product, or customize the archetypes found in the *Archetypes of the Dominions and Jalizar* free supplement.

If you haven't got gaming terrain at your disposal, you will also find gaming stones and several copies of Burst Templates handy, to represent specific terrain features in fights.

Parts in italics are intended to be read aloud or paraphrased by the Game Master to the players.

Now, if you intend to play this scenario, stop here: the following sections are reserved for the Game Master.

Otherwise, if you plan to run this adventure, go on, and prepare to unravel the secret of the Girl Who Sings!

CHARACTER REQUIREMENTS

This scenario requires sneaking unnoticed into a heavily protected place, for this reason the party should include a character with decent Stealth, Lockpicking and Climbing skills.

After this they'll have to leave in a variety of ways, so characters with the Boating, Riding and Swimming skills will find a way to shine.

As always, combat being common in the Dread Sea Dominions, a warrior or two will be useful in several situations.

Finally having a character with some Knowledge (Arcana) or the ability to read High Tricornian will give the party some extra information to better enjoy the plot.

Although all the skills above are useful, they are not mandatory.

Horses: Good mounts are essential for the mission; if the heroes don't have them, assume that Baron Vero, their patron, gave each party member a horse before the adventure's start.

BACKGROUND

The region of the delta of the Elephant River is a swampy land, rich in river and sea life, but also a bloody place because it has always been contested between Tricornia and the Borderlands.

There is a story in the delta region about a girl who loved the sea and the river so much she asked the River Mother, an ancient local deity, to be part of it forever. The girl had such a beautiful voice that the goddess, impressed, answered her plea, and transformed her into a creature half-fish and half-girl, which people call Sirenica, which in the ancient tongue of the swamp people means "girl-who-sings".

Sirenica, the legend says, lives at the mouth of the river. She loves, and in return is loved by, every beast of the swamp, big or small, predator or prey, and swims in the warm, brown waters of the ponds and marshes of the river delta.

During summer nights, when the moon shines on the swamp, travelers can hear Sirenica's song in the whispering of the wind.

The legend is very old, and though some swear they have caught a glimpse of her, nobody truly believed in the existence of this strange creature.

Until recently.

Lord Vorakor is a Borderlands noble ruling over Tal Vorak, a small fortified town south of the river delta, on the edge of the swamps.

His blood is Tricornian, but his ancestors always fought on Faberterra's side. Lord Vorakor isn't an easy man: haughty and willful, he has a great passion for hunting. His fortress is full of kennels to host his strange hunting beasts and his trophy room is impressive.

Months ago, during a hunting expedition in the swamps, looking for swamp uros, he heard a strange singing, and curious, followed it.

Then he saw a beautiful woman with long red hair swimming naked in the water, and his heart was lost. He tried approaching her but the girl, fearful, swam away and, shocked, he saw she had a carp's tail in place of human legs!

From that day Vorakor had no other thought in mind than finding and capturing the half-fish girl. He studied the old tomes in his father's library and discovered that the magic changing the shape of the girl isn't permanent, and can be cancelled by contact with the most precious of metals, which confounds every sorcery: steel. In his family coffers Vorakor found what he needed, a couple of mysterious slave bracelets of Tricornian fabrication, made of steel. This is weird, because actually Tricornians should not know how to make steel.

With the aid of his most trusted men, the noble prepared an ambush: his beaters, leading a pack of hunting dogs, drove Sirenica into a channel where a large net was prepared. The girl fell into the trap, crying and screaming. Vorakor himself took her from the net and placed the braces on her thin wrists. When the items closed Sirenica wasn't a half-fish anymore, but fully a girl, a very beautiful and frightened one.

Vorakor brought the girl to his fortress, dressed with a cloak because he didn't want anyone to see her beauty apart from him, and covered her in silk and jewels, trying to win her heart.

But the girl refuses him, she only wants to be released and go back to the swamp and the river.

Angry and tired, Vorakor wasn't a man to give up: he locked the girl in the tallest tower of the fortress. He hopes that solitude will finally soften her. But so far that hasn't happened: Sirenica lies all day in her room, weeping, and at dusk, when the wind brings the salt-smelling air of the nearby swamp over the rocks, she sings a heart-breaking song.

Night after night, in the solitude of her heart the girl silently asks the River Mother to free her, and maybe her prayers have been heard...

TO STEAL A WOMAN OR TO FREE HER?

The last echoes of the strange chant fade away in the fresh breeze of the evening. You, like the other customers of the Red Bricks Tavern, start talking again.

"I have never heard a woman singing in such a way. She... touches your heart." A bearded Northlander merchant is the first to break the silence, his words directed to the serving girl. "So you say that she never leaves that tower?" he asks.

"Never," the girl whispers, looking uneasily toward the fortress of Lord Vorakor, the ruler of the town. "Our lord keeps her prisoner. He wants to marry her."

"And she refuses him?" the bearded man continues, puzzled. "Is she noble born?"

"I don't know. Lord Vorakor brought her here, covered in a cloak so that nobody could see her, two moons ago. And since that night, at dusk each day she sings that wordless song you have heard."

Then, raising her tone she asks: "So, more ale, bearded man?"

From your table in the vine-covered patio of the inn, you can clearly see the tall tower of the fortress, and the solitary window where the mysterious singing girl is kept. She is the reason for your presence in Tal Vorak, this small place on the edge of the Borderlands.

Ten days ago a rich noble with his retinue, Baron Vero of Trelascium, passed through the town and heard the strange song coming from the fortress of Lord Vorakor. He was intrigued by her: even if nobody has ever seen the girl, people swear that she is incredibly beautiful.

Well, she can be beautiful as a goddess or ugly as a witch, you don't care; you will be paid two thousand Moons by Baron Vero if you snatch her and bring her to his castle in the Borderlands.

And you have every intention of getting that money.

The heroes arrived in town just this evening, acting as simple travelers, with a clear mission: free the strange singing girl who is becoming so famous in the region, and take her to their patron, a fat noble of the north.

Naturally, all of this must be done under the nose of Lord Vorakor, ruler of the town, and his guards. They have some time to visit the town (see Appendix, in particular Vaan the Tanner can be really helpful) and to gather some information (see Hearing Rumors), but they already know the most important fact: Lord Vorakor left the fortress this morning with most of his retinue to do some hunting, and will be away for at least a day.

This means that tonight is the perfect moment to snatch the girl.

HEARING RUMORS

Each hero is allowed a Persuasion (-2) or Streetwise roll while standing in the Inn. He can add +1 to the roll per +10 Moons (up to +4) he wants to spend in tips. Then, for each success and raise he gets one of the Rumors described below; some of them are true and others false. Each player hears different rumors, so simply start by revealing the first gossip and go on to the next till you exhaust them.

Rumor 1. "Lord Vorakor is totally mad about that girl. An unmarried man in his fifties, although he looks younger, he has a single passion: hunting. His own people call him the Hunter Lord." (*True*)

Rumor 2. "Lord Vorakor is of Tricarnian origin, even if his ancestors fought on Faberterra's side. He is a sorcerer." (*Mixed*)

Rumor 3. "The singing girl is a fat, ugly crone, but her family is very rich. The Lord is trying to get his hands on her dowry." (*False*)

Rumor 4. "The singing girl is a fae that Lord Vorakor caught in the swamp. Hear me, my friend, he'll get nothing good from her." (*False*)

Rumor 5. "Brenno, the night watchman at the city gate, has a soft spot for good wine." (*True*)

Rumor 6. "Nobody is allowed to enter the fortress, apart from the farmers bringing in groceries and my cousin Winno who drives in a cart of hay each day to feed the beasts inside." (*True*)

Rumor 7. "The fortress of Lord Vorakor is full of exotic beasts he uses for hunting; hounds and hawks are just the commonest ones. At night they are set free to act as guards." (*False*)

Rumor 8. "Lord Vorakor doesn't trust anybody where the singing girl is involved, apart from Halvok, his personal bodyguard. He is a Tricarnian slave eunuch, big as a house and incredibly faithful." (*True*)

INTRUDERS IN TAL VORAK

The fortress is a sturdy looking palace with a sole entrance, a gate protected by a portcullis. For the scope of this adventure a full description of the palace isn't necessary, so it is only briefly sketched, with some extra details about areas that are more important to the story. No map is given of the palace, instead the description for each location explains to which others it is connected.

Then a series of possible plans are outlined that the heroes can use to get inside. As always the players are encouraged to devise their own way, but these should be a good starting point for the GM to foresee the actions of the party.

THE ALARM

The scenario supposes the party uses some stealth in their snatching mission and the biggest risk is of alerting the sentinels, causing a general alarm in the fortress. This is handled in an abstract way. Certain actions (described in the locations and scenes below) give the party one or more Alarm Tokens. In addition any time a character is involved in combat, unless the fight is absolutely silent (GM's decision), an Alarm Token is given per round of combat.

During daytime, three Alarm Tokens are enough to raise the alarm, during night time five are necessary.

Note that if the alarm isn't raised (see below) and no Alarm Token is gained for five minutes, the alarm level goes down naturally and an Alarm Token is removed every five minutes of quiet.

Alarm Raised! When the alarm is given, the sentinels storm out from the Main Palace. Each round draw a card from the Action Deck and check the table below. The sentinels arrive at the site of the alarm after 2d4+2 rounds.

In total there are 20 Men-At-Arms in the fortress, and two of them are Right Hands.

CARD	EFFECT
2-5	No guard arisen
6-9	2 Tal Vorak Men-At-Arms
10-J	4 Tal Vorak Men-At-Arms
K-Joker	4 Tal Vorak Men-At-Arms + a Right Hand Man-At-Arms

THE FORTRESS

1 ~ PORTCULLIS

The sole entrance of the fortress is a sturdy portcullis, which is guarded by day and by night. During daytime it is open and there are two watchmen on duty outside, while during night time it is closed and there is a single sentinel inside, who can see out through a spyhole. The gate is blocked from the inside by a bar (so no Lockpicking attempt is possible) and is quite sturdy (Toughness: 12).

(E) Tal Vorak Men-at-Arms (2)

Connected to: Courtyard.

2 ~ COURTYARD

This place is the central hub of the palace and to reach any other location the party must pass through it. During daytime there are always 1d4-1 persons there (minimum zero). For each of them draw a card from the Action Deck; black cards denote a Commoner (a servant of some sort), red ones a Man-At-Arms. The check must be made every three minutes. During night time there are fewer people (1d4-2), but it is much more likely they will be watchmen (draw a card as above for each person: Clubs are Commoners, any other suit Men-At-Arms). In the night the check must be made every five minutes. Note that during night time the courtyard is in the Dark lighting condition, except in front of the Main Palace where there is a burning lantern (projecting normal light in a LBT). Guards usually have a torch (produces light in a MBT).

(E) Tal Vorak Men-at-Arms (Variable)

(E) Commoner (Variable)

Connected to: All locations.

3 ~ STABLES

The stables of the fortress; there are a dozen horses and some mules there, plus a carriage. There is single stable hand there, the dim witted Obb (Smarts d4-2), he works there during the day and sleeps soundly in the hay during night time.

It is quite easy to find a hideout in the stable, under the hay or under a pile of dung (-2 to any Stealth roll and Charisma due the stink till the character cleans up). The real danger is that the

horses, smelling a strangers' scent, whinny. For each round of whinnying, the party gets an Alarm Token. This can be avoided with a Stealth or Riding (+2) roll.

Connected to: Courtyard.

4 ~ NORTHERN GARDEN

This garden has an easily climbable wall, accessible from outside (a simple Climbing roll is required) and hosts an orchard. Servants and guards stay clear of it for a reason; Lord Vorakor keeps a couple of exotic hunting beasts there - Black Emus.

They are nocturnal creatures, so if the party sneaks inside during daytime there is a good chance (1-3 on d6) they are sleeping, while during the night they are completely awake. They are very aggressive and attack, emitting high-pitched shrieks. As the fortress dwellers are quite accustomed to the beasts' wild cries, fighting with them only gives an Alarm Token every three rounds of combat. There are two possible ways out of the northern garden: one is the locked door leading to the courtyard (Lockpicking roll required to open), while the second is by reaching a small window on the second floor of the Singing Girl's Tower (it leads to the trophy room).

See Getting Inside the Fortress - Through the Garden

(E) Black Emu (2)

Connected to: Courtyard, Singing Girl's Tower

5 ~ KENNEL

The kennel occupies the entire southern wing of the fortress. It is a large, cavernous building, full of cages, where several types of dogs are kept, plus some trained Swamp Cats (as the party will discover later). Since at the moment Lord Vorakor is out hunting, only the cats and some of the dogs are there, and no kennel master (the kitchen servants bring in food for them on such days).

The dogs are noisy and savage, and bark incessantly whenever they see or smell any intruder, while the Swamp Cats are totally silent, but very alert. For each round passed in the kennel, the party automatically receives an Alarm Token. The cages are closed but can easily be opened from outside (one action required). There are two dogs in each cage.

It is very rare that someone is there: roll a d4-3 during daytime and a d6-5 during daytime to check how many servants are there.

(E) Hunting Dogs (5)

(E) Trained Swamp Cat (5)

Connected to: Courtyard.

6 ~ KITCHENS

This very busy place is directly connected with the courtyard and the main palace. Gitaros the Cook is a short, ill-tempered despot who runs his kitchen with the discipline of an Iron Empire sergeant. He has an assistant and two pot-scrubbers at his orders, but they are all present only during daytime and one hour before meals. During night time only Dero, one of the pot scrubbers, sleeps soundly near the fire. Gitaros is a suspicious man (Smarts d8) and not easily fooled, and he is ready to call guards (an Alarm Token per round of calling) at the first suspicion of intruders. From the kitchen Dero brings two trays of food thrice per day (at morning, midday and dusk) and leaves them in front of the Singing Girl's Tower, ready to be picked up by Halvok (if the party has the White Powder of Dreams, see page 34, they can use it to drug the eunuch). In addition, at dusk, he also brings two large buckets of steaming water, because the Girl loves bathing.

Connected to: Courtyard, Main Palace.

7 ~ MAIN PALACE

The Main Palace is a massive structure composed of many rooms. Going inside is practically suicide for the heroes, because guards and soldiers are everywhere. During daytime heroes must make a Stealth (-4) roll each round to avoid being spotted by someone, while by night it is a little easier (Stealth (-2)). In the case of failure they receive one Alarm Token. Men-At-Arms arrive in one round in the Main Palace.

Connected to: Courtyard.

8 ~ SINGING GIRL'S TOWER

This large tower is placed on the north wall of the fortress. It has three floors. On the ground floor there is a large unused room, on the second floor there is a trophy room full of embalmed animals, plus some old weapons (a bronze-tipped spear and a battle axe hanging from the wall, they break on a roll of 1 on the Fighting die). On the third floor there is the room where the Singing Girl is held. Her guardian, Halvok the Eunuch, passes all his days and nights sitting on the doorstep, smoking Lotus and sharpening his sword, which produces an unnerving sound.

There are three access points to the tower. They are:

Grated Window on the Third Floor. A large window, on the outside wall of the fortress, gives direct access to the Girl's room, but it is protected by a sturdy metal grate and requires a very good climber. See Getting Inside the Fortress – Difficult Climbing below.

Small Window on the Second Floor. A small window, reachable only from the Northern Garden, allows entrance to the trophy room. From that room, using the stair, the heroes can reach the top of the tower, but they have to face Halvok who rests outside the door. See Getting Inside the Fortress – Through the Garden below.

Door in the Courtyard on the Ground Floor. A locked door; Halvok has the key and he opens it only to pick up food (see Kitchens above) and the buckets of hot water for the Girl.

When the heroes finally manage to enter the room where the Singing Girl is kept, go on with The Prisoner scene.

Connected to: Courtyard.

GETTING INSIDE THE FORTRESS

Here are three possible ways to reach the tower where the Singing Girl is kept.

Difficult Climbing. The Tower of the Singing Girl can be climbed, but there is one very difficult point to pass, an almost inverted surface where the tower is a sort of offshoot of the main wall. It requires three Climbing rolls, respectively at -2, -4 and no modifier. Doing it during night time is quite safe (a sentinel passes under the tower a couple of times per night), while during daytime it is very risky; draw a card from the Action Deck per round, if a face card is dealt immediately give the party two Alarm Tokens, plus one per round, because a commoner spots the climber and starts shouting.

Once at the top, the problem is that the window is protected by a metal grate. It can be sawed off with a file (can be bought for 100 Moons or stolen from the local smith with an opposed Stealth roll) but this is a painfully long task and can be noisy. Cutting the bars is handled like a Dramatic Task, using Repair (+2) or Lockpicking or Strength (-2). Unlike normal Dramatic Tasks it ends when the characters have gathered five successes and/or raises. Each roll takes ten minutes. Every time a one is rolled on the skill die, regardless of the Wild Die, Halvok (inside) is allowed a Notice (-2) roll. The first time he makes the roll he becomes an Active sentinel, and from that moment on, make opposed rolls between Halvok's Notice and the hero's Dramatic Task's Skill each round. Note that

Halvok, having a devious mind, lets the hero finish his job and slip into the room, then rushes inside, attacking him by surprise (see The Prisoner below).

Otherwise the party can find a creative way to dislodge the grate, for example they can tie a rope to it and another hero, at ground level, can drag it out of the window with a horse.

If they managed to get their hands on the Green Lotus of Melting (see page 35) they can destroy the bars without any problem.

Very noisy solutions automatically grant four Alarm Tokens and alert Halvok.

Through the Garden. Another possible way to the Singing Girl's Tower consists of sneaking into the Northern Garden, defeating the Emus, and then climbing the tower from the northern wall to reach a small window on the second floor, in the trophy room. This requires a Climbing roll to scale the tower's northern side, a Strength roll to jump to the window, and an Agility roll to squeeze inside it (Small heroes don't need to roll, Brawny ones roll with -2 and Obese ones cannot pass through it).

From the Gate. This is the most dangerous but least violent way to sneak into the fortress. Watching the daily routine of the place and hearing gossip, the party sees that servants and farmers can enter and leave the fortress, usually directly to the stables or the kitchens, but only during daytime. A disguised hero can sneak inside to do some intelligence work (you can use the Disguise rules on *JCT* if you have it, otherwise simply use the hero's Persuasion opposed by the guards' Notice to pass unnoticed).

Intruders must soon leave because the guards keep count of who enters and no stranger is left in the castle when the portcullis closes at night time.

If the heroes are very quick and smart they can use a single occasion to sneak and stay inside; a farmer, Winno, brings a cart full of hay inside each day. The guards check the hay with spears, but they don't check under the cart so a hero can hang from it and reach the Stables. Getting to the cart unnoticed is an opposed roll between Winno's Notice d4 and the Stealth of the hero (+2 if he has a friend distracting the farmer). Once in the fortress the hero must conceal himself in the stables among the hay or the dung and be quiet till night time. Then he can reach the courtyard and then the prisoner's Tower. Winno fears Lord Vorakor too much to be bribed: if the heroes want his collaboration they must menace him (opposed Intimidation roll).

THE PRISONER

The heroes, using one of the methods above, enter the Singing Girl's room.

The text below supposes that one or more party members sneak into the girl's room during night time through the grated window (as per a Difficult Climbing above), without alerting Halvok. Otherwise, change the text accordingly.

Finally you've made it. Slowly and cautiously you enter the girl's room. There is no light apart from the pale reflection of the moon, but it is enough for you to see by. There is some rich furniture in the room; surely the girl is being held prisoner, but this is a golden cage if you have ever seen one.

Then you spot her for the first time. Although there is a large bed in the room the girl fell asleep in a large bath-tub full of water, now cold. She is red haired, and her long hair mixes with the perfumed water lilies floating in the water.

She is incredibly beautiful, in a strange, almost inhuman way. Her arms lie out of the tub, and you see she wears a couple of engraved metal bracers; they aren't jewelry, but the infamous mark of slavery.

The girl, when woken up, is startled but doesn't speak, she understands the heroes are going to free her (or to take her away at least).

At this moment, Halvok, who is sitting on the other side of the door, hears something inside the room and goes in. If the party was noisy (see Difficult Climbing) he starts On Hold, otherwise he enters the room but must check for surprise.

The door of the room slams open and you see the biggest, fattest man you have ever seen standing in the doorway. He wears only a metal studded loincloth and a silk gilet, and from his shaved head hangs a single tress of black, oiled hair. The eyes over his long moustaches are bloodshot, and there is a faint smell of Khav around him.

"Well, well... what do we have there? Mouselings? Let's see if they are eager to meet Keyana!"

With an almost elegant move the massive eunuch unsheathes a long, heavy scimitar from his back. You can see that it is sharp as a razor and he uses it with deadly skill. Prepare to fight for your life!

The combat with Halvok is staged in the Singing Girl's room. It is a half circle, 6" in radius. It is occupied by assorted furniture, the most important pieces being the bed and the bath-tub (see below). The only two openings in the room are the 1" by 1" door leading to the stairs, and the 1" by 1" window facing the outside of the fortress. Place Halvok in the door, while the heroes are positioned within 3" of the window. The Singing Girl is currently in the bath-tub.

The fights end when Halvok is killed or disabled in some manner.

(WC) Halvok the Eunuch (1)

TERRAIN AND PROPS

- ❖ **Furniture:** In the room there are several props. First, a large bed (2" by 2" on the battlefield, Toughness: 10) with a canopy, which counts as Difficult Ground and can be pushed against the door to block it (for three rounds). Second the bath-tub, a sturdy bronze thing with tentacle shaped legs (Toughness: 14). It is full of soapy water and can be emptied on the floor to make it slippery (this counts as an Agility Trick, but the attacker uses Strength and rolls with +2). Finally there is an armoire with assorted clothes (Toughness: 7).
- ❖ **Calling for Help:** Halvok is Overconfident and this plus the drugs he consumes convince him he is invincible. For this reason he doesn't call for help, he wants to cut the intruders to pieces by himself. For this fight only, the heroes receive an Alarm Token only if someone is issued a Joker. Halvok understands he is in difficulty after suffering three Wounds, in this case he starts yelling for help (hand the players one Alarm Token per round of yelling).

GM'S TIP: MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE THE FORTRESS...

The first part of this adventure is a stealth mission, and such things work better (and are more realistic) if done by a small group of specialized heroes. This means that probably the group will split, with someone outside and someone inside the fortress.

The risk of this situation is that the players of the characters outside will get left out of the action. In truth, their role is important as that of the heroes inside; they must prepare the plan for leaving the city (see Escape from Tal Vorak) plus they have to face a series of possible complications. Choose one from the list below or draw a card from the Action Deck and check the suit. If a Joker is dealt draw two cards and combine the effects.

Clubs - Pesky Guard. There is an additional Man-at-Arms guarding the fortress, he constantly walks the external perimeter of the palace and stops in the worst place for the heroes' plan (for example, under the Tower of the Singing Girl if the party decided to use the Difficult Climbing plan).

Diamonds – Quarreling Men. It is a rough night at the inn. Almost every week two drunken men, cousins Val and Rolf, are thrown out of the inn because they are too rowdy and they continue shouting on their way home (they live in the same house). But tonight they stop near the Fortress and start a fistfight. Every two rounds of fighting an Alarm Token is issued, when they get at least three, five Men-At-Arms arrive from the fortress to arrest them and stay there for at least half an hour.

Hearts – Baying Dog. The heroes outside are probably in a position to see the fortress, and ready to help the characters inside. The best place is a narrow alley between two houses. Well, in the garden of one of the houses there is a dog which smells their odor and starts barking (every round of barking roll a d6, on a 1 they receive an Alarm Token). In addition if there are horses nearby, a Riding roll is necessary to stop them whinnying (additional Alarm Token, with a critical failure a horse gets loose).

Spades – Guards at the Gate. The commander of the guards knows that Brenno, the night watchman at the city gate (See Appendix), has a love for wine and easily falls asleep. So tonight he sent three Men-At-Arms to check on him. The guards found their comrade sleeping and are berating him...

ESCAPE FROM TAL VORAK

Once the heroes free the Singing Girl, they must leave town as fast as they can. Unless the party raised the alarm and must fight their way out of the fortress, the kidnapping isn't discovered until they walk out. At this point read the following part.

You have just left the fortress when you hear shouting from inside.

"Alarm! Alarm! The girl is missing!"

Crap. They discovered it sooner than you imagined. The town's gate isn't so far; you'd better get out of here quickly!

The town roads are deserted by night and the heroes can gallop freely to the town gate.

PASSING THE GATES

By night the gate is barred, and is watched by a lone sentry, Brenno, who is known to have a soft spot for wine. If the heroes planned their escape from the town carefully, Brenno is probably neutralized and the gate open, so they can leave Tal Vorak at full gallop (consider this zero rounds for the Chase Modifier below). If the heroes have to dispatch Brenno (or any other sentry at the gate) keep count of the rounds they need to do it, and add two rounds to open the gate.

(E) Brenno the Watchman (1). Use Man-At-Arms stats, add the Habit (Booze) Hindrance.

When the party finally manages to leave the town read the following part.

You have just passed the town's gate when you hear the sound of horses behind you: the Men-at-Arms of the fortress are behind you, weapons flashing in their hands! This is the moment to test your horses!

Now begins a Chase scene based on Riding. As the heroes have the advantage, they receive

a Chase Modifier to their roll which is equal to 4 minus the rounds they took to pass the gates. This bonus is added to their Chase rolls. So if the party used zero rounds to pass the gate, they receive the full +4, if they wasted six rounds, they suffer -2.

The Chase runs as normal; consider that the party must gallop down from the hill Tal Vorak is built on, using a snaking road, then they must take the large trade road going north. Complications can be holes in the ground, saddles not well fastened and so on. The moon is shimmering in the sky now, so the scene is in Dim lighting conditions.

The pursuers are divided into four groups; each group draws a different card. They are all armed with bows (Damage: 2d6, Range: 12/24/48) and shoot at the fugitives or the horses (they don't shoot at the fugitive riding with the Singing Girl), remember to take account of the Unstable Platform modifier.

The Chase lasts for three rounds, then something happens to drastically change the situation, go on with the next scene.

Unhorsed! A common tactic to stop an escaping horseman is shooting the mount. Being on a horse when it is wounded or Shaken is covered in the standard Savage Worlds rules (see SWD). The important thing in a Chase is that a dismounted character doesn't receive an Action Card anymore until he grabs another horse, being basically left at the mercy of the pursuers.

A character can turn back to grab an unhorsed friend. This requires a Riding roll: with a failure nothing is done, with a success the maneuver is successful and both the heroes are in the saddle, but in the next Chase round they don't receive Action Cards, with a raise not only is the unhorsed hero picked up but the rider also receives Action Cards normally in the next round. A horse carrying two people has a -2 to any subsequent Riding rolls (only one character rolls) due the additional weight on the mount. Turning back and saving a comrade is a heroic act, which should be rewarded with a Bennie.

(E) Men-At-Arms (20). Divided into four groups, each of five soldiers.

FROM THE FRYING PAN INTO THE FIRE!

You finally leave the snaking road leading off from Tal Vorak, now in front of you is the flat, large, commercial road, where you can spur your beasts at maximum speed. The Men-at-Arms are still behind you, but they are losing ground moment by moment.

The sensation of freedom is inebriating and you can already feel in your purse the jingle of the coins Baron Vero promised you...

Then you hear the sound of horses coming south on the road. Soon you can see them: it is a large party, almost twenty, with pack mules and dozens of dogs on their heels. You recognize the banner one of them is carrying: a rampant hawk on a blue field.

It is Lord Vorakor; the hunt was shorter than expected, and he is coming back early!

You are not the only ones to have seen the hunting party; behind you one of the pursuers shouts: "My lord, stop them! They took the girl!"

Suddenly the hunting party stops, as you do, frantically thinking what to do: you have enemies behind and in front of you.

"Loose the dogs!" snaps a hard voice, in a commanding tone. That must be Lord Vorakor.

The beasts, howling and baying, run at you like a hellish horde.

You must do something, and you must do it now!

Describe the situation to the players; they are caught between two fires, Lord Vorakor with

his hunters and hunting dogs coming from the north, the Men-at-Arms galloping from the south, leaving them two possible directions. Eastward, the terrain is rocky and impassable to the horses, while westward there is flat grassland for three hundred paces and then the swamp of the Elephant River delta begins.

The only viable choice is the last one: if the adventurers succeed in reaching the swamp, they can lose their pursuers among the reed beds and cane thickets. If no player finds this solution, the Singing Girl suggests it with a feeble voice – regardless of the intentions of the heroes she prefers to be in the adventurers’ hands than go back in Lord Vorakor’s golden cage.

Run Like Hell. Once the decision is taken, the second part of the Chase starts, with the party trying to reach the safety of the swamp. It is only three rounds long, but it is very dangerous. The party and their pursuers roll on Riding, while the hunting dogs use Agility. Note that only the fastest Men-at-Arms join the chase, the others are too far behind to be of any use.

The Chase Modifiers of the previous scene don’t apply anymore. From this moment on, divide the surviving Men-at-Arms into two groups, and do the same with the dogs, for a total of four groups of pursuers.

The dogs ignore the standard Chase Range Attack Table (see SWD), instead they use the table below.

Hunting Dogs Range Table

CARD DEALT	EFFECT
2-8	Out of Range
9-10	Marginal Melee Range. Only one third of the pack (rounded down) can attack the heroes.
J-Q	Partial Melee Range. Only half of the pack (rounded down) can attack the heroes.
K-Joker	Melee Range. The whole pack can attack the heroes.

During this scene ignore the normal complication rules, instead each round something scripted happens, depending on the ground type the chase is crossing.

Round 1 – Grassy Ground. This area is flat but with very tall grass. Riders roll with +2, while dogs roll with -2.

Round 2 – Marshes. The grassland turns into mud; horses, being very heavy, are disadvantaged. This round the chase skill for riders is Notice instead of Riding. If a character rolls 1 on the Notice die, regardless of the Riding die, the horse trips in the mud and the character is unhorsed (see above).

Round 3 – First Canes. It is almost over; the party is in the thick of the canes now. They are considered in Medium Cover (-2) and can use the better of Stealth or Riding as their Chase skill.

At the end of the third round, if the heroes survive, they reach the swamp and can disappear into it.

(E) Men-At-Arms (10). Divided into two groups.

(E) Hunting Dogs (12). Divided into two packs.

IN THE SWAMP

You are temporarily safe among the cane thickets, catching your breath. Thank the gods a cloud covers the moon, reducing visibility for the pursuers, and the smelly water of the marsh messes up the dogs' sense of smell.

But you know this is only temporary; Lord Vorakor is a master hunter, and he surely won't give up his quarry easily. Probably at first light he will organize a large scale hunt. You must cross the swamp as soon as possible.

The heroes are now in a swampy area, which is a mix of small islets of muddy land and watercourses. The water isn't very deep, usually, but it is very tiring crossing it on foot. The horses which saved their lives before are now a hindrance; they stumble continuously and risk falling down at every step, and the best thing the heroes can do is leave them.

After an hour of marching, the party must make a roll using the better die of Survival or Vigor (characters with the Savage or Woodsman Edges roll with +2), in the case of failure they suffer a level of Fatigue.

It is clear that they must find an alternative means of transport; in addition, without a guide, it is very likely they will get lost or finish up in some dead end.

Luckily, after a while they see a faint light in the night, not far away.

The best thing they can do is go towards it.

RAMSHACKLE'S PLACE

It is still several hours before sunrise. Following the light, you have the first stroke of luck of this cursed night. You find a hut, in really bad shape, built on poles, with a barge tied to one of them. The light you saw before is the flicker from a fire, probably a brazier or a chimney, burning inside.

There is nobody in sight, so the party can easily steal the barge and leave. But they have no guide and, more important, almost no food and water: in the original plan they were supposed to travel very light to use the speed of the horses and there were plenty of inns on the road they originally wanted to take.

If the party enters the hut they find a shabby place, smelling of sweat and smoked fish. There is a single dweller; a fisherman called Ramshackle, who at the moment is soundly asleep. The name is really appropriate; Ramshackle is skinny, dirty, pox-marked and with a single, yellow tooth in his mouth. If woken up, the poor fisherman is scared by the heroes, and scared as hell when he discovers who is pursuing them!

But he is also a greedy man and, for the right price (50 Moons are enough for his standard of living), he can be persuaded to take them out of the swamp, on the other side of the Elephant River. He can also be convinced by a sharp blade at his neck, but in this case the party cannot expect much loyalty from him.

In the hut there is also enough smoked fish and water to sustain the group during the trip.

At first light the heroes and their reluctant guide are on board the barge, rowing toward safety. Ramshackle expects crossing the swamp will be a three-day trip, unless Lord Vorakor finds the party and skins them alive first, of course.

ENYIA, THE SINGING GIRL

Speaking with the Girl. Since the last few hours have been very busy, probably the party has paid little attention to the girl they are carrying till now. As explained before, the maiden is very beautiful, but also close-mouthed. She constantly watches her captors, like a trapped beast, and speaks only if questioned. She only asks the party where are they taking her, and after their response she stays quiet.

Here follow some typical questions the party could ask, and the probable answers. They can be used as a base by the GM to role-play the Singing Girl.

Q: What is your name?

A: Call me Enyia. (*This is short for Sirenyia, her real name*)

Q: Where are you from?

A: From the river and the swamp. (*If questioned about her house or similar, she shrugs*)

Q: Do you have a family?

A: They've been dead a long time.

Q: How did you sing like that?

A: I don't know, I always have.

Q: What would you like to do, if you were free?

A: Go back to the swamp! (A light of hope flickers in her eyes)

The Irons of a Slave. Enyia wears a light tunic and she seems content to walk bare-footed. The only other things she wears are the strange metal bracers. She has signs of scratches on her arms, because she tried, unsuccessfully, to remove them. The bracers vaguely resemble coiled snakes, and are made of black steel. There is no apparent way to open them: they are impervious to any type of lockpicking, bashing them causes no visible effect and nothing short of cutting the girl's arms will remove them. They hide a subtle, spidery inscription (Notice roll to spot it); the words are in Tricarnian, but the alphabet is the Imperial one. A character knowing both languages, or a hero making a successful Knowledge (Ancana) roll, can decipher it. The inscription says: "Demon or god, mortal or not, only blood and death can pry me open." These bracers are an ancient artifact made to contain, and partially deprive of their powers, demons and other supernatural beings. They are very powerful, but have a dark side effect: they can be opened only by the death of the wearer, which, in the case of a demon, means the creature returns to the supernatural place in which he belongs.

Ramshackle's Behavior. The fisherman, being a native of the swamp, knows the stories of Sirenyia, the mythical creature living in the river. When he first meets the girl he doesn't recognize her, but scene by scene (first with the crocodiles and then with the King of the Swamp) he realizes who Enyia really is and his attitude passes from awe to real fear.

“LIKE A FISH”

It is midday, and the cold of the night is forgotten: the sun is hot and unforgiving now, releasing all sorts of smells from the murky waters, and hordes of mosquitos, of course, which feast on your blood. You constantly look back, checking for pursuers and you see nobody; this doesn't mean they aren't there, hot on your tracks.

“By tonight we'll reach a safe place,” Ramshackle says. “A broken tower nobody knows. If we manage to stave off the hunters till dusk we'll be safe.”

When it happens, it is totally unexpected: Enyia, apparently dozing, suddenly throws herself in the water! She swims like a fish! Before you can react she is several yards away from the barge.

“Foolish girl!” Ramshackle curses. “She throws herself in death's mouth!”

From a nearby islet you see several wooden trunks suddenly taking life. They are crocodiles, which were sleeping in the sun, and now see an unexpected lunch swimming toward them!

If the heroes want to preserve their investment, they must take the girl back before she disappears among the canes or, even worse, is eaten alive.

The battlefield is a square 18” by 18” and it is all deep water (see Water Movement below). The only exceptions are a 1” by 18” area on the eastern border, which is the islet where the crocodiles are sleeping, and some patches of land (see below). Place the heroes on Ramshackle's barge (2” wide and 4” long) in the middle of the battleground. The barge is heading northward.

The crocodiles are placed on the eastern islet (scattered at GM's discretion) while Enyia is already in water, 4” away from the barge, moving eastward.

The crocodiles' tactics consist of swimming as fast as they can toward the girl. When they are near enough to attack her, they feel her true nature and, confused, start swimming around her, not



knowing what to do.

If a hero arrives within 3" from the beasts, they switch targets and attack the unlucky character. Enyia, meanwhile, is worried by the reaction of the beasts and stops in place, unsure what to do. When more than half of the crocodiles are dead, go on with the next scene.

(E) Crocodile (1 per 2 heroes)

(WC) Enyia

(E) Ramshackle. Use Commoner stats adding Survival d6 and Boating d6.

TERRAIN AND SPECIAL RULES

- ❖ **Ramshackle's Barge:** Fighting on a barge can be awkward: if a hero rolls 1 on the Fighting die, regardless of the Wild Die, he falls in the water.
- ❖ **Patches of Land:** There are several dots of land in the battleground. They are from 1" by 1" to 2" by 2" large and are considered normal ground. Place up to four of them on the battlefield.
- ❖ **Water Movement:** The main feature of this combat is moving in water. Both the Crocodiles and Enyia are fast swimmers (Pace 5 and 6), while the heroes probably aren't. To give them an extra boost consider the following; first, a character can jump from the barge directly into the water (this counts as a jump from a dead stop: basic distance is 1" plus 1" per success and raise in Strength rolls), secondly, differently from the normal rules, as Enyia is in dire danger a hero can try to swim faster, making a Swimming or Vigor (-2) roll. For each success and raise he adds 1" to his swimming movement (half his Swimming die, see SWD page 65). Characters trying to swim faster at the end of the scene must roll Vigor or be Fatigued till the end of the next scene.

RAMSHACKLE'S BARGE

A small, flat barge, adapted to navigation in shallow waters.

ACC/TOP SPEED: 4/4

TOUGHNESS: 7

CREW: 1+6

Pole Propelled: This boat is moved using long poles (Reach: 3, Str+d4, 2 hands, Improvised weapons). This means that accelerating and maintaining speed isn't automatic: each round the speed of the boat drops to zero but the crew (up to four persons) can actively pole, making a Strength or Boating (+2) roll. For each success and raise, the boat accelerates by 1" (up to its Top Speed). Turning, as per the Turning Template, costs 1" extra movement (tight turns are impossible).

NIGHT AT THE BROKEN TOWER

The surviving crocodiles decide that you are too dangerous a prey and, with a last roar, turn and swim away. Enyia stares at you with cold fury, but doesn't resist being carried back to the barge.

If questioned on what she intended to do, the Singing Girl simply she says she wanted to "go home" and falls into a tight-mouthed silence. Then the trip continues without other problems.

Ramshackle knows the swamp very well, and he takes paths that you cannot even see. He complains a lot too, because he hates being put in the current situation, but this doesn't prevent him to poling the barge at an acceptable pace.

Finally at dusk you reach an island large enough to stop and make a camp. There are some ruins on it, overgrown by vines and other swamp plants.

"It is the Broken Tower," Ramshackle says "We are halfway. If the Gods favor us, tomorrow we will reach the other side of the swamp, and you'll go your way and I mine."

Unluckily for him, the Gods aren't on the party's side tonight.

The party should feel quite secure now, because they've seen no sign of pursuers till now.

You are quite tired after the past night and day and you welcome the poor lodging that can be found in the ruins: a soft spot on the ground to rest your bones and a morsel of bread with some salted fish and a skin of sour wine.

"A hot meal would be better for all of us," Ramshackle grumbles "But the smoke would be visible from miles away."

During supper you keep a close eye on Enyia. She hasn't tried anything after this afternoon, but better to stay on the safe side.

After she eats her meager rations she starts singing again, in a low humming tone.

"Keep her quiet!" Ramshackle shouts "There could be pursuers nearby, and in any case there are things in this swamp it is better not to stir up!"

He is right, but the damage is already done, as the heroes will soon discover; Enyia's music travels far, far away, calling for help, and something big and scaly, sleeping on the bottom of a murky pond, slowly wakes up to answer her call...

HUNTER'S NIGHT

Even if the heroes think they shook off their pursuers, they never did.

Lord Vorakor simply took some time to prepare himself for a swamp hunt. He left the dogs at the fortress and took out of the cages the best hunting beasts for this job: a pack of Swamp Cats, a breed coming directly from Tricarnia, which he trained personally.

Using these beasts and his skill as tracker the Hunter Lord and his men are now very close to the Tower.

While the party is eating among the ruins, they are concealed among the foliage, five hundred yards away, spying on them. Characters with the Danger Sense Edge can make a Spirit roll now, in the case of success they won't be surprised in the following scene, as they feel there is something bad in the air.

The hunters wait till night time to strike, and when they do they are very efficient.

Vorakor's main objective is getting the girl back, but he is also curious to know who the heroes are and why they kidnapped her (he has some suspicions), so he wants to take them alive.

The Broken Tower Island. The battlefield is a roughly almond-shaped small island, 15" long and 9" wide at the point of maximum width, with the long axis running north-south, entirely surrounded by water. In the central part of the island are the remnants of a tower, a crumbled wall creating a rectangle 10" by 8" (see below). The characters' camp is placed within the tower's perimeter, while the barge is moored on the south side.

The heroes, apart from any sentinels, are sleeping, when the attack comes. Lord Vorakor first unleashes the Swamp Cats to attack the sentinels. They come swimming from south, using Stealth, in a rough V shaped formation (each Cat is at least 3" away from the other). Sentinels are considered inactive unless they have the Danger Sense Edge and they used it successfully earlier.

After three rounds of combat with the beasts, Lord Vorakor and his men arrive. They come on two barges, one (with Vorakor) from the east, and the other from the west. Vorakor and half of the hunters are using ranged weapons (bows and the Lord's crossbow) and move to the top of the crumbled wall (see below) to keep the characters under aim, while the others move into melee range, spears ready to strike.

But before attacking the Hunter Lord decides to parley, go on with the next scene.

(WC) Lord Vorakor

(E) Trained Hunting Cats (1 per two heroes + 1)

(E) Tal Vorak Hunter (2 per hero)

(E) Ramshackle. Use Commoner stats adding Survival d6 and Boating d6.

TERRAINS AND PROPS

- ❖ **Crumbled Walls:** The only remnants of the building on the island are a wall, 1" wide on the battleground and six feet tall. It counts as Difficult Ground and can be climbed on with a Climbing roll. The wall is broken in many areas. Place at least five breaches from 1" to 3" wide, on the various sections of the perimeter.
- ❖ **Starry Night:** The stars are like jewels in the navel of Etu tonight, so the scene is in Dim Light.

THE DRAGON

The hunters are keeping you under the aim of their bows, but they don't shoot. A man dressed in a silver and black doublet, armed with a strange bow, speaks to you in a hard voice. You recognize him: he is Lord Vorakor.

"Now, my lords, you'll explain who sent you to rob me. You'll speak now, otherwise you'll die."

The heroes now should explain themselves to avoid being reduced to pincushions; this is a good moment for some role play. But whatever their answers something is going to happen.

"Well, as you have seen, nobody can keep me away from what is mine. And as for you..."

You'll never know what Lord Vorakor wanted to say, because from the water behind the Lord something enormous emerges. It is a long serpentine neck ending in a reptilian head covered with swamp plants and vines. Its yellowish eyes burn with animal anger... and hunger...

"The dragon!" Ramshackle yells, eyes wide from panic. "The swamp dragon!"

The beast roars terribly, opens a mouth large enough to swallow a man and attacks!

Place the dragon in the water near the island, 6" away from Lord Vorakor. The confrontation now takes on a different aspect: the heroes and Lord Vorakor's men must cooperate if they want to survive. The Hunter Lord's troops aren't allies, so are controlled by the GM.

The Swamp Dragon's tactics are very straightforward: the beast uses its Roar ability to scare its opponents and then moves onto solid ground, sweeping with its claws and using its Swallow attack against Extras, while it simply bites Wild Cards. The fight ends when the creature is killed.

(E) Swamp Dragon. It is a Henchman.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

- ❖ **Ancestral Fear:** The hunters are so scared by the Swamp Dragon that, if they fail a Fear check they run away from the fight and are never seen again.
- ❖ **Reaching the Head:** The weak points of the Swamp Dragon are the eyes and the palate, but the creature, risen up, is 5" tall on the battlefield, making it out of range of many melee attacks. This means that to reach the soft spots a hero must climb up it! This is an Agility or Climbing (+2) roll. For each success and raise the heroic warrior climbs 1" up the monster's body. When a PC is attached to the Dragon, the creature will try to shake him off, using an action: this is an opposed roll between the monster's Strength (-4) and the character's Agility (+2). If the hero loses the roll he is thrown 1d6" in a random direction, suffers 2d6 damage and is automatically Shaken. Getting on the head is a really heroic action, and the first character doing it should be rewarded with a Bennie.

"MOTHER, HEAR MY PRAYER"

"I OFFER DOUBLE"

With a last mighty roar, the dragon falls down on the ground, finally dead.

"Hulian's balls! You killed it!" Ramshackle says, amazed.

"It was the girl! She called it!" the scrawny fisherman says.

"The girl. Where is she?" asks Vorakor, who lies against a wall, catching his breath.

Good question. She is gone. While you were busy fighting for your life, she slipped away. But that isn't your main problem: after all the Hunter Lord was going to skin you alive before all this mess started.

"Truce." The Tricarnian lord raises a hand. "She is gone. You don't have her, I don't have her. How much does your employer pay you?"

Whatever the answer of the party is, Lord Vorakor answers without a flinch.

"I offer you double. Help me find her."

Vorakor isn't a fool. He probably lost a good part of his men during the battle and he knows that without backup his chances of retrieving Enyia are thin. Money isn't a problem for him, and he looks sincere.

The plot supposes that the heroes accept the pact, whether they want to keep their word or not is left to them, but in the end it won't change much.

Once the deal is done, go on with the following part.

You and your new ally quickly scout the island looking for tracks. Vorakor's eyes are very keen, even under torchlight.

"She left the island heading westward," he says, pointing out some naked footprints in the mud.

She hasn't got a barge, but you have seen how well she swims. If no beast devours her, she could get a big lead on you.

The stars are going down and the sun will rise in a couple of hours.

"No point in following her in darkness," the Hunter Lord says. "Let's get a couple of hours' sleep. We'll pick up the trail at first light. We will be rested and she will be exhausted. She cannot escape us."

You see a flicker of pleasure in the man's eyes: hunting is his real love.

ON ENYIA'S TRACKS

As promised, when the sun's fingers touch the sky you and your new ally pick up the barges and start the hunt.

Vorakor positions himself on the prow of Ramshackle's boat and guides you unerringly on the tracks of the escaping girl. He is really an incredible tracker: he reads bent canes, tracks in the mud and other signs like an open book.

Around midday the barges enter a zone where the water is really shallow.

"The barges are impractical from this point on," the Hunter Lord says. "Let's leave them and go on foot."

This part of swamp is much wilder than you have seen before. Trees are older and bigger, deformed like old crones, moss and vegetation are riper and you have the constant feeling of being watched by not exactly friendly presences.

"I've never seen this place before," Ramshackle whispers, in an edgy tone.

This part of the swamp is under the influence of the River Mother. Here follow two encounters the party can have (at GM's discretion) before finding the flooded temple in the next scene.

THE THREE~LEGGED IBIS

You are walking on the border of a thick reed bed, surrounded by some unsavory fog. Suddenly you see a creature standing still in the water. It is a gray ibis, the biggest one you have ever seen. As these birds often do, it is standing perfectly still on one leg, looking for some fish. With deliberate slowness it puts down a second leg into water and then, it cannot be a trick of your eyes, a third one!

"The three-legged ibis!" Ramshackle curses "Bad luck is upon us!"

The creature, as stirred by the fisherman's words, turns toward you, revealing two red eyes and a third one in the middle of its forehead.

"It is watching us with its evil eye!"

Ask the players what they are going to do. If they do nothing, it watches them intently with its cursed eyes. Each Wild Card present must make a Spirit roll or lose a Bennie (Lord Vorakor included). Then the bird goes away. If they attack the beast (only possible with a ranged weapon: it is 12" away, Toughness: 3) and miss it flies away, stirred, and the heroes are safe. If the beast is hit and killed it drops down in the water, dead. When the character goes looking for it the body cannot be found anywhere, but the killer obtains a Bennie.

Duel of Wills. Another option is viable, but only for a character with the Impressive Aura Edge (or the Improved version). The sorcerer can try to entrap the stare of the magical creature and by beating it he can gain great powers. For three rounds, the warlock makes a Sorcery or Spirit roll (player's choice) and counts his successes and raises. The beast does the same, rolling on Spirit (d10). At this point calculate the difference and check the table below.

Ibis Duel of Wills Table

MARGIN OF VICTORY	RESULT
-3	<i>Soul crushed and eaten!</i> The beast snatches part of the soul of the mage! The sorcerer permanently loses a die step in Spirit. In addition, if the ibis is killed, he also loses a Vigor die step.
From -2 to -1	<i>Lost to the beast!</i> The ibis sees into the depths of the sorcerer's soul, leaving him feeling naked and violated. He loses a Bennie and his Spirit die is reduced by one die step for the remainder of the scenario.
Tie	<i>Equilibrium.</i> The will of the sorcerer and that of the beast are perfectly balanced. The ibis stands still, but doesn't harm the sorcerer and his friends in any manner.
1	<i>"I saw your soul!"</i> The warlock won the will confrontation with the beast and got a brief glimpse of its soul. He gains a Bennie and the bird flies away.
2	<i>"I know your true name!"</i> The duel of wills was far deeper than it seemed. The hero discovers the true name of the creature, gaining part of its power. He receives a Bennie and, for the remainder of the adventure, he receives 5 additional Power Points (which are lost after use).
3	<i>"The Third Eye"</i> The sorcerer wins the conflict and steals from the ibis its most precious possession: its third eye. Naturally the character doesn't obtain a physical third eye but a spiritual version of it. In game terms he permanently gains +1 to Intimidation rolls due to the capability of "seeing" the soul of his opponent. If he wins the Intimidation roll with a raise, he also recovers a Power Point.

THE THREE~LEGGED IBIS

This strange creature is more a spirit than an animal and exists in a sort of gray zone. Its presence in this scenario is caused by the power of the Singing Girl and her impending fate (see below). In fact the Three-Legged Ibis is a psychopomp, a creature which accompanies the spirits of the dead to the afterlife, and it appears when someone is going to die.

The Three-Legged Ibis can return later in the campaign, especially in these two cases:

Retrieve my Soul! If a sorcerer character tried to out-will the beast and had his soul crushed and eaten, he can look for it. If he manages to find the beast he can try to speak to it and bargain for a quest of some type to get his soul back, but remember that the ibis always appears in swamps and where people are going to die...

You Thief! If a sorcerer stole the beast's third eye, the animal will sooner or later cross his path, trying to win back it. Although there is only an empty eye socket in its forehead it is still a powerful and savvy creature: it knows that if the thief dies and it is nearby, the eye will magically return to its rightful owner and the bird knows lots of way to put its enemies in danger, for example luring them through one of the invisible doors leading to the Realm of Death...

THE SINGING WILLOWS

You are making your way in the shallow water, when suddenly you hear something. First very feeble, then more audible. It is a wordless, humming sound. You look in the direction of the source of the sound: it is a small wood of weeping willows, half-submerged by water, two hundred paces away from your current position.

"It is her! The Singing Girl!" Ramshackle says.

The song isn't made by Enyia, but is only caused by the wind passing through the long branches of the willows. These plants are hundreds of years old, they are also sons of the River Mother, and they are trying to lure the party away from their quarry.

There is some magic in their song: characters hearing it must make a Spirit roll opposed by that of the plants (d10). In the case of failure they feel the uncontrollable compulsion to run toward the willows.

In truth they are running toward their death: the flat, watery land in front of the willows is treacherous quicksand! Heroes are allowed a last Notice (-4) roll to understand there is something strange in the ground and stop, otherwise they run directly into the thick of the danger.

When this happens the song of the willows changes subtly, assuming a mocking tone, and then disappears forever.

In the meantime, characters caught in the mire go down by one third of their height each round, unless they stay perfectly still (and make an Agility roll).

When they are totally submerged they must make a Vigor roll per round or suffer a level of Fatigue due to suffocation, which can lead to a horrible death.

Friends outside the quicksand can help trapped heroes with a rope or a long branch (which breaks on 1 on the Strength die, see below). In this case they must make a Strength (-2) roll which can be cooperative between the helper and the entrapped hero. For each success and raise a submerged hero emerges by one third of his height. When he has totally emerged another success is necessary to drag him onto safe ground.

If a lone hero is entrapped alone in the quicksand, things are worse; first he must have a rope (or improvise one with some cloth and a belt), then he must anchor the rope on a root or something similar (Throwing roll), then he must pull himself to safety (with Strength roll as above, but the penalty is -4).

Once the heroes are free of the quicksand they can explore the willow wood, but there is nothing to be found there.

THE FLOODED TEMPLE

Enyia's tracks suddenly disappear in a large clearing; the water is knee-deep now and even the trained eye of Lord Vorakor cannot find them anymore.

The Hunter Lord raises the eyes and stares around like a bird of prey, then his stark face relaxes in an ample smile. In the eastern part of the clearing there is a half-sunken stone building. Collapsed under its own weight it lies inclined on one side like a dead fish.

"She is there, I feel it," your new employer says. "And she is trapped."

Lord Vorakor cautiously advances toward the building and the heroes should do the same. Once they get near they understand it was a sort of temple made of huge blocks of stone. It feels very imposing and very old. Mosses and assorted swamp plants cover it with a thick greenish carpet and it is impossible to understand to what god it was dedicated. Even Ramshackle hasn't got a clue about it.

There is no apparent entrance, but the slow water flow helps the party discover it: behind a thick curtain of vines there is a stone stair going down into the depths of the building.

A small rivulet of water flows down the middle of the stairs and makes the passage slippery. Inside, it is dark and damp, but Lord Vorakor's men (or the Hunter Lord himself) take out a couple of tar-covered torches.

The stair goes down for many steps, at least thirty, and leads to a half-flooded room, where the water is waist-deep. There are old carvings and paintings on the walls and pieces of old columns lie scattered around. You hear croaking coming from the darker corners and some little beasts jump into the water at your passage.

Frogs, and there are a lot of them.

A passage, flooded like this room, leads deeper into the temple.

Let the heroes make a Smarts roll. With a success they understand that despite the general abandonment of this place, someone has cleverly placed the column pieces to make a sort of dry causeway crossing the room and leading into the passage. The inscriptions are too old to be fully understood but with a Knowledge (History) or (Legends and Lore) roll they can be dated as belonging to the Keronian era (so before the Dread Star's Fall).

The flooded passage is only the antechamber of a much bigger room: it is a sort of underground lake, the vault held up by tall columns. Brown, musty water covers everything, apart from the stepping stones you are walking on. Frogs croak all around and enormous water lilies, large as cart wheels, float all around, filling the room with an intense perfume.

Characters coming from Lhoban or who have travelled in the Brown Sea region recognize these plants as very similar to the giant specimens typical of the southeast of that sea.

The room is covered in shadows but on the opposite side of the room you can see a large statue, whose shape can be only dimly discerned. There is a person at its feet, weeping and speaking at the same time.

"Oh Mother, please free me from these chains! Let me return to what I was before!"

You cannot mistake the voice - it is Enyia!

THE MOTHER OF THE RIVER

This ancient deity dates to the Keronian era. Nobody truly knows her origin or her true name, but the people living around the Elephant River simply call her “Mother”. She is represented in many ways, but the most typical one is the hybrid form of a woman with fish tail, large breasts and a disturbing frog-like head.

The Mother is an alien creature, following her own rules; she can be a harsh mistress or a merciful mother. Her main area of interest is protecting living beings, especially beasts and plants living around the river, which worship her in their own way.

She is a mistress of shapes and legends says she can give a person the form corresponding to his true nature, which makes her even more feared, because the people who can face their real selves are very few.

The Mother is intimately connected to the Elephant River; when the watercourse is strong and full of water (usually in spring) the goddess is strong and powerful. When the waters are low and putrid, the air still and full of mosquitoes, the Mother is feeble and slumbering.

Rumors say that in ancient times she was given human sacrifices: a young baby, a maiden girl and an old crone were brought to her temple and drowned in the underground lake under it. It was a great sacrifice, but worthwhile to protect the rest of the land from floods.

Today nobody knows where the temple of the Mother of the River really is; that memory was lost over the ages, as the swamp constantly changes. People say that the goddess caused this, for some reason she shuns mankind and wants to be left alone.

THE GIFTS OF THE MOTHER

Vorakor, hearing the voice of his prey, moves quickly and silently as a hunting cat, using the stone causeway to cross the lake and reach his quarry.

“Stop!” he says, pointing the crossbow. “Your escape is over! Now I’ll bring you back home, where you’ll marry me!” The eyes of the Hunting Lord are shimmering with contrasting feelings: lust, satisfaction... even hate.

Enyia turns round like a trapped beast, startled.

“I won’t come back! You are a monster! You put these chains on me and transformed me into this... thing!” The girl points at herself with an expression of disgust.

The frogs of the room start croaking, as if echoing the girl’s words.

“Your prayers won’t stop me! Men, bring her to me!”

The Hunter Lord barks orders at the heroes, keeping the crossbow aimed on the girl. Ask each player what his character is going to do. Then, before they act, go on with the following.

The girl is standing in the shadow of the big statue, which now can be clearly seen: it isn’t fully human, it has the lower body of a fish, a woman’s torso, webbed hands and a frog’s head. Ramshackle, near you, whispers words of awe: “She is the Mother of the River, mistress of all the things who swim, walk and fly in the swamp! I heard of her from my grandfather, but I always thought she was a legend!”

The goddess is made of stone, but you acutely feel her eyes upon you!

The goddess isn’t happy about the party menacing her daughter and is going to show her discontent.

Suddenly you feel very strange. First your hands start itching. You look at them and notice a horrible thing: a webbed membrane is appearing across your fingers! But that isn’t all: your arms are becoming longer and thinner and, by the gods, what is that rubbery green skin covering them? Then you fall down; your legs end in webbed feet and aren’t made for standing... You are shapeshifting into frogs!

“Now you understand what it means to be what you don’t want to be!” Enyia shouts, vengeful.

In truth what seems to be happening isn’t real; the perfumed water lilies of the grotto emit a particular hallucinogenic Lotus which is giving these weird sensations to the humans in the room. Luckily the effect is short-lasting, but it can leave the character hindered.

You endure terrible moments while you experience your own body shifting and changing as if made of wax, and you aren’t the only ones: Vorakor’s men and Ramshackle are on the ground, shaking and changing, full of pain. Only the Hunter Lord is standing: his body is suffering the same mutation you are passing, but somehow he manages to resist it.

Then, unwillingly, one of his deformed fingers pulls the trigger of the crossbow and the bolt strikes Enya in the chest.

Incredulous, the Singing Girl brings her hands to her chest, and when her own blood touches the bracers they open and fall to the ground, clanging.

The maiden falls into the water and when she touches it an incredible transformation happens: her legs join and become a long fishtail. She is a siren!

But she still has a bolt stuck in her chest and isn’t moving.

“No!” shouts Vorakor, totally out of his mind. “No!”

And at this moment the sorcery twisting your body suddenly ends.

Let each player make, in sequence, a Vigor, a Spirit and a Smarts roll, each of them at -2, sum up the successes and raises and check the table below to see how well they manage to resist the intoxication and how they’ll start the next scene.

If the player declared earlier that his hero was going to grab Enyia, he rolls with another -2. Characters with the Poisoner Edge or with arcane Powers with an illusionary trapping roll with +2.

Illusionary Lotus Effect Table

SUCCESSES	EFFECT
0	<i>My Arm!</i> Although the character finally understands he is only the victim of an illusion, he continues to see one of his arms (select randomly) as a frog’s leg, and he cannot use it properly. This counts as the One Arm Hindrance. The character is allowed a Spirit (-4) roll at the beginning of each round, to finish disbelieving and recover his physical functionality.
1	<i>Almost crazy!</i> The hero’s mind is almost driven mad by the shape-changing illusion. The hero begins the next scene with two levels of Fatigue. He recovers the first of them after two rounds of combat and the second one after four rounds (see next scene).
2	<i>Sweating and Swearing!</i> The character sees through the enchantment and manages to keep control of his body, but it is a strenuous task for him. He gains a level of Fatigue which wears off after two rounds of combat (as above).
3	<i>It is only an illusion!</i> The character manages to break the illusion. He starts the following scene without any penalty.
4	<i>My mind is stronger than your foul magic!</i> The character not only manages to shake off the effect of the enchantment, but he also gains a Bennie because the success makes him more self-confident.

VORAKOR’S MADNESS

The Hunter Lord turns toward you. His face is twisted with pain, hate, anger. “You!” he points a finger at you. “It’s all your fault! You stole her from me!”

But this isn’t your only problem; there is something stirring in the darker corners of the hall. First you spot only shapes, then you see them: giant frogs, large as ponies, swimming toward you. Probably all the noise you made disturbed them.

In the meantime, Lord Vorakor, totally mad, unsheathes his sword and charges you with reckless abandon.

"Men!" he orders his hunters "Kill them! Kill them all!"

His followers raise their weapons but are uncertain: you see they are divided between the desire to obey their master and fear of the hungry creatures swimming toward you.

This is the final battle of the scenario, where the party will be busy on two fronts. The battlefield is the entire room. It is 36" by 36" wide, with a 4" wide opening in the southern wall.

It is totally flooded (movement is only possible by swimming) apart from the stepping stones (5" wide) leading from the southern opening to the goddess' statue positioned on the northern wall.

All the humans begin the fight on the causeway, on solid ground: Vorakor is placed within 5" of the statue of the goddess, the heroes are from 5" to 10" from the statue, while Ramshackle and the surviving hunters are placed from 11" to 15" from the statue.

The giant frogs instead begin the combat in the water, 12" from the party, disposed in a rough circle.

Lord Vorakor is totally mad, and he is only looking for death: his only tactic is making Wild Attacks on the nearest opponent, without any care for personal safety.

The hunters initially are on Lord Vorakor's side (see below) but the characters can sway them to their side if they try. In any case, if they are given the choice of attacking one of the heroes or a frog, they choose the frog.

The giant frogs are hungry; they attack everyone, trying to use their leap attack to surprise opponents.

The fights end when Lord Vorakor and all the frogs are dead. At this point the surviving hunters surrender, and you can go to The End.

(WC) Lord Vorakor. During this fight only, add the Berserk Edge. The Edge is already activated.

(E) Tal Vorak Hunter (any survivors from previous scenes)

(E) Ramshackle. Use Commoner stats adding Survival and Boating d6.

(E) Giant Frogs (1 per Wild Card present on the scene + 1).

TERRAIN, PROPS AND SPECIAL RULES

❖ **Goddess' Statue:** The statue of the Mother of the River can be represented by a SBT and it is 4" tall on the battlefield. It can be climbed with a Climbing (+1) roll and can be pulled down with a mighty Strength (-4) roll. Ingenious heroes can climb it up, brace their feet against the wall and push it down, in this case only a Strength (-2) roll is required to make it fall. When it crashes down, the statue hits everybody in a 3" by 4" area, unless they make an Agility (-2) roll. Characters caught by it suffer 3d6 damage. In addition the statue is sacred to the frogs. When the statue shatters all the beasts stop to croak (they are Shaken). The hero pushing down the statue should be rewarded with a Bennie.

❖ **Causeway:** The causeway is made of pieces of stone, but there are frequent gaps between them. The causeway is 5" wide but is actually made of 2" by 2" tiles of solid ground divided by 1" wide of water. Characters can move from a tile to the other by jumping (it is a dead stop jump, see SWD page 65). Normally characters should not roll for a 1" jump, but as the stones are very slippery, they have to find a good landing point, this means that they must roll on Strength (+2) to make the leap safely. If they miss the roll they drop in the water, are automatically Shaken and must make an Agility roll (and use a full action) to climb up to solid ground again.

❖ **Hunters' Loyalty:** The hunters begin the fight siding for their Lord, but it is clear that he is now mad as a hatter, so they can be persuaded to switch sides, because only by

fighting alongside the party do they have a chance to survive. In game terms, as an action a character can try to speak to them; he makes a Persuasion roll, for each success and raise one of the hunters switches sides. If the hero doesn't have the Persuasion skill he must make a Reaction Roll: with a result of Friendly or better one hunter joins the heroes. Friendly hunters become allies controlled by the players. Obviously any persuasion attempt is negated if a character attacks a hunter during the current round.

THE END

The last monster falls down dead, as does Vorakor; the Hunter Lord has hunted his last. The only sound in the underground temple is the heavy breathing of the survivors, even the frogs, the smaller ones, are silent.

"There is nothing for us to do there," Ramshackle says "Let's go."

The surviving hunters of Vorakor, if present, pick up the body of their former master and leave. If the heroes go now, without checking the body of the Singing Girl, the scenario ends there. If they examine the body for a last time go on with the following part.

Before going away, you decide to take a last look at the body of the Singing Girl, the reason for all this carnage.

But... wait a moment... she is breathing, she is still alive!

Quickly you jump in the water. The girl, very weakly, whispers.

"Remove it."

She refers to the crossbow's bolt, which is still deeply fixed in her chest. Let the heroes make a Healing roll; with a success they understand that removing it will cause death - the bolt is the only thing stopping the blood loss.

But the girl insists.

"Please, remove it."

If the bolt is left where it is, nothing short of the *greater healing* Power can save Enyia, who will die in 1d4 hours.

If a courageous hero decides to help her, instead:

You seize the bolt, take a deep breath, and pull it out. Enyia screams, but only once, and a stream of red blood flows out. A lot of blood; it seems that all the water around you is red. Then something miraculous happens: the wound closes, as if it was never there.

"Did you think the River Mother would let me die after saving me?" the siren says, with a faint smile.

Then she deftly swims away.

"Do you still want to take me to your employer?" she asks, still with a faint smile on her red lips.

After all that has happened, the party probably won't do that. In addition it is very unlikely that Baron Vero wants a half-fish half-woman. If they try, Sirennyia laughs and swims away before they can grab her again.

"Thank you," the siren says simply, swimming off in the darkness.

As you leave the temple, you hear her singing again, a wordless song that speaks of freedom and joy.

The heroes get no reward this time, apart from the satisfaction of having done the right thing, at least in the end. For this reason they gain a Golden Bennie, the Siren's Bennie, which grants +2 if spent to resist any type of music-based or shapechanging power.

CREATURES AND NPCs

BLACK EMU

Black Emus are giant ground birds typical of the Ivory Savannah. Taller than a horse, they are omnivores. They are very aggressive, and capable of killing even leopards and lions with their vicious beaks and talons. Certain tribes train them as hunting and fighting beasts. They are very pricey in northern markets, especially when destined for the arenas.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6.

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

Special Abilities

- **Beak:** Str+d6, AP 2.
- **Fleet Footed:** Black Emus are natural runners, they roll d10 as running dice.
- **Size +2:** A Black Emu is seven feet tall.
- **Wild Kickers:** The legs of the Emu are as powerful as catapult arms and end in razor sharp talons. They can make two kicking attacks (Str+d4) per round without any multi-action penalty, but they cannot combine this with a Beak attack.

COMMONER

A common man or woman.

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d4, Knowledge (one craft) d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Edges: -.

Hindrances: -.

Gear: Normal clothes, tools of their trade (Str+d4, Improvised Weapon).

CROCODILE

This specimen is typical of the Elephant River delta. A little smaller than its southern counterparts, it is more resistant to low temperatures and is remarkably active even in a temperate climate such as that it lives in. Apparently sleepy, don't be fooled by its dozing; it is capable of killing bursts of speed.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Swimming d8

Pace: 3; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +2:** Thick skin.
- **Aquatic:** Pace 5.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Rollover:** Both gators and crocs are notorious for grasping their prey in their vice-like jaws and rolling over and over with their flailing victims in their mouth. If one of these large reptiles hits with a raise, it causes an extra 2d4 rollover damage to its prey in addition to its regular Strength damage.



ENYIA

This girl of indefinable age is gifted with a strange, alien beauty. She has long red hair, and green, almost blue eyes which resemble the color of the sea. There is a constant sadness in her stare, as if she is missing something very important. But the weirdest thing is her voice, which can sing wordless songs capable of stirring the soul of the hardest man.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d6, Survival d6, Stealth d6, Survival d8, Swimming d10.

Edges: Very Attractive, Woodsman (swamp only).

Hindrances: Damsel in Distress, Outsider.

Charisma: +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: Slave bracers.

Special Abilities

- **Aquatic:** Pace 6.
- **Spirit of the Swamp:** Although her true magic is blocked by the slave bracers (see below) Enyia still retains some powers. She can sing heart-breaking songs which affect both humans and swamp beasts; against both of them she can use Spirit in place of Persuasion. In addition no swamp beast will attack her.
- **Slave Bracers:** The Tricornian slave bracers she wears maintain her human form. Once they are removed (see page 11), Enyia returns to her true form, but this will likely happen only at the end of the scenario.

GIANT FROG

This enormous, bloated frog has roughly the mass of two men, but don't be fooled: it can move very fast if it wants to. It is an omnivore and, given its size, it isn't content with eating small insects. These specimens are so ferocious because they were disturbed in their territory.

Henchman: Giant Frogs are Henchmen

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6.

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (1)

Special Abilities

- **Aquatic:** Giant Frogs are excellent swimmers and move at a pace of 9 in water.
- **Armor +1:** Rubbery skin.
- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Leap:** These beasts are prodigious jumpers and can use their jump to perform surprise distance attacks. A Giant Frog can leap 2d6" of distance to make an attack with +4 attack and damage (Str+d4+4 in total). Its Parry is reduced by -2 until its next action, however.
- **Size +2:** Giant Frogs are really large.
- **Sticky Tongue:** Reach 2. Str. The main attack of these beasts is their tongues, thick as a wrestler's arm and much stronger. If the attack hits with a raise the victim is also considered Grappled and any roll to break free is made at -2.



HALVOK THE EUNUCH

This enormously fat man is a trained slave eunuch of Tricornia. The father of Lord Vorakor bought him twenty years ago to protect his son's life and he has never failed. Halvok is stubborn and

cruel to his enemies, but totally loyal to his master.

He uses many Lotus types and drugs but he isn't truly addicted to them (or at least so he thinks); in addition he has the unnerving habit of constantly sharpening his sword, a black iron blade made in the hellish forges of the City of Princes.

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Riding d4, Shooting d6, Throwing d6.

Edges: Loincloth Hero, Improved Nerves of Steel (due to the drugs), One Hand and Half, Trademark Weapon (Keyana).

Hindrances: Habit (Khav and sword sharpening), Loyal, Obese, Overconfident (Major).

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8

Gear: Keyana –sharpened iron scimitar (Str+d8 +1, AP: 1), studded loincloth, silk gilet, several shots of Khav, whetstone.

Special Abilities

- **Sharpening Habit:** Halvok spends at least two hours a day keeping the blade of his trusty sword sharp. If he cannot do this he feels bad and unnerved, and suffers -2 to all rolls. On the plus side after each sharpening session he must make a Smarts roll. If he scores at least a success his weapon gains +1 Damage and AP 1 till the end of the next combat.

HUNTING DOG

A large bloodhound, trained for hunting.

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



Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d10, Tracking d12.

Pace: 7; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Go for the Throat:** Whenever a Hunting Dog hits with a raise, it automatically hits the least armored location of the target.
- **Pack Beasts:** Hunting Dogs are specifically trained to assault prey in packs. They add half of their Gang Up bonus (rounded up) to damage rolls.
- **Size-1:** Dogs are relatively small.



LORD VORAKOR

There is something hawkish in the stark profile of this man. Fifty years old, he is lean as a leopard and seems much younger than he really is due to his pale complexion and his blonde, almost white hair, surely an effect of his Tricarnian blood. Vorakor is a controlled, calm man, but when he loses control his passionate temper comes out. Till some months ago his soul was only moved by one activity: hunting.

But since he first saw the Singing Girl he has been totally obsessed with her strange beauty and the desire to win her heart.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Notice d8, Riding d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Swimming d6, Throwing d6, Tracking d8.

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Edges: Dodge, Marksman, Noble, Trademark Weapon (Gis Crossbow), Woodsman.

Hindrances: Habit (compulsive hunting), Stubborn, Vengeful (minor).

Gear: Silver and black light leather armor (+1), Gis crossbow (Damage: 2d6+1, Range: 15/30/60, AP: 1, see below), iron hunting knife (Str+d4), bolt quiver (20 bolts).

Special Abilities

- **Gis Crossbow:** Crossbows are still largely unknown in the Dread Sea Dominions, even if ballistae are widespread war machines. This example is a prototype specifically made for Lord Vorakor by a master artisan of Gis from a blueprint by a Syranthian Sage. It is a piece of art and a deadly weapon at the same time: the designer included an ingenious lever allowing fast reloading. Using it isn't simple (until the user practices for at least a week with it he suffers -2 to shooting rolls and uses one action to reload it) and bolts must be custom made (a smith can make them with a Repair roll, each costing 5 Moons). Its market value is around 1000 Moons.

SWAMP DRAGON

This creature is far older than the swamp itself. Probably the last survivor of a forgotten race, it is basically a huge water snake with a couple of vestigial fins, which evolved into a sort of claws. It usually sleeps for very long periods at the bottom of muddy ponds in the Elephant River's swamps, only waking up once or twice a year to eat. The song of Enyia woke it up and forced it to respond her calling.

Henchman: The Swamp Dragon is only a Henchman, so it has no Bennies, but gains one every time it swallows an opponent (see below).

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8.

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 15 (2)

Special Abilities

- **Aquatic:** The Swamp Dragon is an excellent swimmer, it moves at Pace 6 in water.
- **Armor +2:** The Swamp Dragon's body is covered in scales, thick as the best armor smiths can make.
- **Bite:** Str+d6. Reach 4.
- **Claws:** Str+d4. Reach 2.
- **Fear -2:** The Swamp Dragon evokes ancestral terrors in mankind. Any character seeing it for the first time must make an immediate Fear check.
- **Improved Frenzy:** The Swamp Dragon can make a bite or swallow or roar and a claw attack in the same round without any penalty.
- **Large:** Attackers roll at +2 to melee and ranged attacks due its massive size.
- **Roar:** The Swamp Dragon can emit a powerful bellow, reducing opponents to trembling masses of goo. Place a LBT in any position in contact with the creature; characters hit by the template must make a Fear Check. After enduring the effects of the roar once, characters become jaded, and are then immune to it. The Swamp Dragon cannot roar and bite or swallow in the same round.
- **Size +6:** The Swamp Dragon is 60 feet long and its head is large enough to swallow a man in a single gulp. Like all snakes it can rise up using its powerful spine, reaching the impressive height of 30 feet (5" on the tabletop).
- **Swallow:** Reach 4. The Swamp Dragon can decide to swallow a target in a single bite! This is a Called Shot (-2), in case of success the victim is entrapped in the mouth of the beast and suffers 3d6 damage each round. If the Dragon kills a victim in this manner it immediately gains a Bennie. A trapped victim can be freed by winning an opposed Strength roll, prying open the jaws of the beast.
- **Weaknesses (Eyes and Palate):** This monstrosity has only two weak points: the eyes and the palate. Both of them can be reached with a Called Shot (-4). In case of success, the hit deals +4 damage and ignores both the Size and Armor modifier of the creature (Toughness: 7). Note that hitting the beast in such places in melee requires climbing up it in some manner (see Reaching the Head, page 20).

TAL VORAK HUNTER

A grizzled hunter, expert in finding the trail of any animal. He is quite good at killing the prey, but this is an honor usually left to Lord Vorakor himself. He is also good at skinning and gutting the quarries, of course.

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

Skills: Boating d4, Climbing d4, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6, Tracking d8.

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

Edges: Woodsman.

Hindrances: Loyal (Lord Vorakor).

Gear: Bronze-tipped spear (Str+d6, 2 hands, Reach 1, +1 Parry), bow (Damage: 2d6, Range: 12/24/48), bronze long knife (Str+d4+1), furs (+1).

TAL VORAK MAN-AT-ARMS

This burly fellow is strong and imposing. He has decent training and knows that disappointing Lord Vorakor can mean a nasty end; this makes him efficient.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Riding d4, Shooting d6, Throwing d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6/7; **Toughness:** 7(2)

Edges: Combat Reflexes.

Hindrances: Loyal (Lord Vorakor).

Gear: Bronze-tipped large-bladed spear (Str+d6, 2 hands, Reach 1, +1 Parry), bronze short sword (Str+d6), bronze medium half armor (+2, +1 if hit with a raise), bronze full helm (+2, 50% vs head attacks).

TRAINED SWAMP CAT

This beast, typically found in the swamps of Tricarnia, 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, 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 Tricarnian lords keep them as pets and enjoy unleashing them on fugitive slaves.

These specimens are specifically trained for hunting in packs.

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 any 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 onto 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 in which the Cat has +4.
- **Pack Beasts:** These Swamp Cats are specifically trained to assault prey in packs. They add half of their Gang Up bonus (rounded up) to damage rolls.

APPENDIX ~ PLACES OF INTEREST TAL VORAK

Government: Fiefdom (ruled by a noble Lord, who is subordinate to the Iron Empire)

Ruler: Lord Vorakor

Population: 400 in the town, 800 in farms within three days' travel by horse from the town

Military Forces: 25 Tal Vorak Men-At-Arms, 10 Tal Vorak Hunters

Religion: Divine Couple

Imports: Exotic hunting beasts for the lord, otherwise the place is self-sufficient.

Exports: Furs, salt, groceries.

General Description: Tal Vorak means more or less "elevated fortress" in Tricarnian, and

it describes the town quite well. It was a former Tricornian fort and this can be seen from the architecture; a central castle, surrounded by a small town with narrow streets, protected by tall wall and a sturdy gate. It can be reached through a gentle road snaking up the hill and from the top there is quite a view, which is only stopped by the mists of the northern swamp.

The lords of Tal Vorak have always fought on the side of the Empire and for this reason they maintained power through the years.

The town's main asset is its position; it is placed on the main commercial road going to the Borderlands, and the merchants passing through it pay a toll.

The most important places in the town are:

City Gate. There is a single entrance to the town, a massive wooden gate leading to the Borderlands road. During daytime it is monitored by two guards, who also exact tolls. During night time it is closed and isn't opened for any reason, but is guarded by Brenno the guard, who is notorious for his love of wine.

Fortress. See page 20.

Market Plaza. The very small plaza of the town, not far away from the lord's fortress. Farmers bring in groceries to sell once a week.

Red Bricks Inn. The only resting place in the town, this is a pleasant-looking inn with a large patio. The food is good and quite cheap and the beer savory. It is run by Toromas the Bald and his daughter Mia.

Vaan the Tanner. Placed in the scantiest corner of the town, the tanner's shop emits awful smells. Vaan himself is an unpleasant shabby person: a hunchback with a beaked nose and foul breath. In truth, Vaan is much more than he seems (see sidebar).

Temple of the Divine Couple. Tal Vorak follows the traditional Imperial cult, but it isn't very popular; the temple of the Divine Couple is in disarray and the priests are very old. There are rumours that Lord Vorakor, ruler of the town, still worships the ancient Tricornian deities.

The Forge of Myros. The sole smith in the town, Myros is a former Syranthian soldier, who loves to chat. He has few weapons on sale and produces mainly farming tools and horseshoes.

THE UNDERCOVER POISONER

Vaan the Tanner is actually Vanosius the Poisoner, a disgraced Lotusmaster who was forced to escape from Faberterra after a messed-up poisoning attempt which caused the death of an entire noble family plus their retinue. Characters that were in Faberterra in the last three months can recognize him with a Common Knowledge roll. If the roll scored a raise, they also know that there must be a price on his head in the Imperial capital (and this can lead to an interesting side adventure).

Vanosius continues to practice his art to gain some extra money, but only for selected customers of the underworld. On the door frame of his shop there are some scratches, one of which is the Thief Sign (see *JCT* page 67) meaning "*alchemist*" and the Alchemist Code symbol (see *SEPG*) meaning "*Master of Lotus*". If recognized, Vanosius hurries the heroes inside his shop and asks them what they want. If the need arises, use the Lotusmaster's stats (*SEGM*). Vanosius, apart from the standard concoctions he can sell (*poison* and *stun*), has a dose of the powerful Green Lotus of Melting (*barrier* Power, it melts every metal apart from steel and magical metals) and two doses of White Powder of Dreams (*slumber* Power). He sells them respectively for 300 and 200 moons (per dose).