



BEASTS & BARBARIANS

STEEL EDITION

THE EYE OF XALATH

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A Sword and Sorcery Savage Worlds Adventure for Beasts & Barbarians for a party of 1-6 Seasoned characters.

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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:

SEPC: Beasts & Barbarians Steel Edition Player Guide

SECM: Beasts & Barbarians Steel Edition Game Master Guide

TLD: Tricarnia, Land of Demons

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Human sacrifices are always a messy thing, especially if you are the chosen victim!

Trapped in a very dangerous situation in Tricarnia, the Land of Demons, you'll have to make a flight in the dark to keep your neck away from the blood-hungry blade of a beautiful Tricarnian princess with nothing to lose except her soul.

But this is only the beginning of the story, because, on the wings of the night, you'll have to face the threats of one of the most mysterious places of the Dominions, the fabled Xalath, from which nobody emerges alive and sane.

Are you ready to face the adventure?

Special Book of Lore Expansion: The Xalath, the Labyrinth of Alath, an enormous maze in the very heart of Tricarnia, full of mysteries and dangers!

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *The Eye of Xalath*, a scenario for the *Beasts & Barbarians* Savage Worlds setting.

To play this scenario you need a copy of the Savage Worlds core rules and both *Beasts & Barbarians* Steel Edition books (SEPG and SEGM).

This scenario is for a party of one to six Seasoned heroes, but it can easily be modified, following the instructions in the SEGM, for parties of different sizes and experience.

You can play it with characters of your own, or using the *Heroes of the Dominions* pre-generated adventurers (available from the same store where you found this product).

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 only.

Otherwise, if you plan to run this adventure, go on, and prepare to face the threats of the Eye of Xalath!

CHARACTER REQUIREMENTS

This scenario presents a number of very different situations, so numerous skills are useful.

In particular a character (one is enough) with a good Riding skill will have a chance to shine during an important chase sequence, likewise a hero versed in Knowledge (Arcana) can receive additional hints which could save the party's skins on several occasions.

There will also be a goodly amount of hiking, exploring and wandering in a hostile environment, so Survival, Tracking and Climbing could be your adventurers' best friends.

As usually happens in the Dominions, fights will be common, so a warrior or two are more than welcome in the party.

However, although all the skills above are useful, they are not essential to complete the adventure with success.

Important Belongings: The adventurers begins the story as prisoners, so they are stripped of their equipment, especially weapons and armor. Very small items, like lockpicks, jewels and similar things can pass unnoticed (at the GM's discretion). If the GM feels generous, the most important and valuable of them can be found in Lizard's possession during the third and fourth part of the scenario (he found them in the Tower of the Moon and picked them up).

BACKGROUND

North of Nal Taraska, a Tricarnian citadel in the shadows of the Brokenchain Mountains, there is a mysterious location called the Xalath, which means "the Labyrinth of Alath" in Tricarnian.

It is an enormous maze, made of deep channels, rooms and clearings connected by a series of passages so convoluted and full of dead ends, that getting lost among them is very easy.

The labyrinth extends southward from the base of the Brokenchain Mountains and its real dimensions are unknown, as is its origin: some say it was built by a mad Priest Prince of the past, others consider it a remnant of the Keronian Empire, but there are even stranger rumors (see the Book of Lore).

Whatever the truth, the Xalath is a place full of dangers, because it is inhabited by weird creatures that can be found in no other place in the Dominions, but it also hoards great treasures and secrets.

And, as you certainly know, greed has driven more than one man to perdition.

Some weeks ago the Prince of Nal Taraska sent an expedition to map the Xalath, a large group of men led by his firstborn, Prince Tarakos.

But of the whole expedition only one man returned, Tarakos himself, mad and raving from a fever and his wounds.

He staggered into the throne room, holding something to his chest, and fell at the feet of his father.

"Highness... I bring you... unimaginable power," he said, in front of the whole court.

And then he died.

The thing Tarakos held fell to the ground with a noisy sound. It was an ancient dagger, made of gold, with a triangular-shaped eye carved on the hilt, which seemed to stare with malevolence at the startled courtiers.

What Really Happened in the Xalath. Takaros and his men met the Xalathi in the labyrinth, the servants of Alathur, a powerful demon. The Tricornian prince took from them their most prized treasure: an unholy dagger which could be used to physically summon their master to the Dominions.

For several centuries Alathur, the Lord of the Eyes, has been waiting for the right moment to enter our world, but so far he hasn't managed to do so, because this requires very particular circumstances.

A sacrifice must be performed in the labyrinth, on the night of a full moon, and with a very particular victim: a person of pure Tricornian blood, who could host the demon's soul, but with no magical power at all, which could be used to drive him off.

And, in the throne room of Nal Taraska the Blade of Alathur, for the first time in centuries, sensed a creature meeting exactly those requirements.

The Desperate Princess. The lord of Nal Taraska has three offspring. We already spoke of the eldest, Tarakos, who died as a hero retrieving the dagger; he was the first.

Princess Takeria is the second. She is very beautiful, but it is no secret she is considered damaged goods: unlike her brothers, she was born with no magical power, which brings shame on the whole family and makes her worthless even as a bride for a dynastic marriage because no Tricornian Prince would marry her.

The only things that stopped her brothers killing her were the fact she isn't the first in the line of succession, and that her father has a fondness for her.

But now that Tarakos is dead, the third brother, Askor, who is ruthless as a snake, has decided to risk the rage of his father and kill sweet little Takeria, the only thing standing between him and the throne of Nal Taraska.

Takeria has always been very aware she is living on borrowed time, but when she saw the golden dagger, she suddenly remembered something she read in an old book, where it speaks of the Blade of Alathur, which can give great powers, if used to perform a human sacrifice in honor of the Lord of Eyes, Alathur.

So, taking great risks, she crept into her father's rooms and stole the dagger.

Now she only needs someone to sacrifice: she cannot use the slaves of the family, that is too dangerous, so she ordered her most trusted servant, a hunchback called Tyvak, to find her someone to butcher on the altar tonight.

GETTING THE HEROES INVOLVED

Tyvak has already found the right people: the bodyguards of a Jalizaran merchant who stopped in the citadel tonight to sell his worthless wares.

So armed with an open smile and a bottle of spiked wine he went into the foreigners' quarters to offer them a lucrative job...

PART 1: THE SACRIFICE

A RUDE AWAKENING

The first thing you become aware of is the acrid smell of firewood in the braziers. Then, the fact you are bound, lying on your back, legs and arms spread, like a pig which is going to be gutted. And then your head, which thumps as if beaten by the hammer of Hulian himself.

Eu's tits, you know you should have not accepted the wine from that hunchback Tricornian servant...

"You brought me foreign victims?" asks a female voice nearby, stressing the word "foreign".

"My lady, I could not find anything better in so short a time, I am pretty sure the demon will like their blood as well as that of any son of a Tricornian pig."

The apologizing voice belongs to Tyvak, that son of a dog who lured you in a tavern in Nal Taraska, the Tricornian citadel where the Jalizaran caravan you were guarding stopped this morning.

"Humph!" the female voice snorts, unimpressed.

You raise your head as best your awkward position allows and assess the situation. It isn't good. It isn't good at all. You are inside a circular building, probably a tower, bound on a large, circular altar, each of you like one petal of a flower.

In front of you there is an old hunchback, with a massive book under his arm, and a taller, cloaked figure nearby.

"Well, let's go," the cloaked figure says. "We don't have much time. Open the book and let's start."

The figure drops the cloak to reveal a gorgeous, very young woman, with the pale skin and black silken hair of true Tricornian nobility.

She is dressed in a skimpy bejeweled bikini, but it isn't her luscious body which holds your attention now: it is the big, sharp, golden dagger she holds!

"As you wish, Princess Takeria," the slave says, then bows and opens the book.

The heroes are bound and helpless, stripped of all their gear (see above) and it is clear Princess Takeria is going to kill them. The players can try to speak with her, to buy time and discover what is going to happen. Takeria isn't particularly secretive, she knows the heroes are going to die, but she doesn't have much time, so she keeps the chat short.

Getting Free. The heroes are held by sacrificial ropes, which, luckily for them, are slightly rotten. To break free, each hero must succeed at a Dramatic Task based on Strength. When they gather four successes and/or raises, they are free. To make the scene more climatic, make them roll once every time Takeria says a part of the invocation (see below).

The Chosen Victim. Takeria picks a random character as the first victim, although she is going to sacrifice all of them. If, at the end of the invocation, the victim isn't free, she stabs him with the dagger, but as this is the first time she has made a sacrifice, she makes a mess of it, wounding the victim (who takes a non-soakable Wound) and cutting him free of one of his ropes!

"I think I'll start with that one," the Princess says (pointing toward a character).

"Keep the book open, so I can read the invocation," the Princess says to the slave, while she raises the dagger high. You notice now it is a very peculiar weapon, with an eye engraved on the hilt. Ketu's balls! The eye blinked!

"Alathur, Lord of the Eyes! I, Takeria of Nal Taraska, offer you these lives to give me what I need more!"

"Klaatu..." she begins.

"Veratha..." she continues.

"Nikto!" the dagger falls toward the chest of your friend!

By this point, probably one of the heroes will be free. All characters with a hand free are considered in grappling distance of the princess, who, due to the concentration required by the ritual, is automatically Surprised.

Tyvak will feebly try to defend his mistress, but he won't be a problem for the party.

Once a character gets the dagger (the only weapon in the room), he can free all his companions in a round.

At the end of the scene, the party should be free, with the golden dagger in their possession and the Princess and her slave overpowered.

But the real trouble is yet to begin.

(WC) Princess Takeria (1). See page 34.

(E) Tyvak. This frail, old slave has d4 in Vigor and Strength and d6 in all other Traits, plus the Elderly and Ugly Hindrances. He has no combat skill at all but he is ready to use the Fanatics Setting Rule to protect Takeria.

ENTER THE LIZARD

Now you are free and with no mad woman trying to butcher you, you can spare a look for the room. You are in a tower, probably on a high floor. Four big braziers burn near the altar. There are two ways out, a stairway going down to the south and another going up to the north.

At that very moment, from the stairs going down, out comes a group of soldiers: they have black insect-like armor and tiny long arms and legs which make them look like mantises. They must belong to some weird caste of Tricarnian slave warriors.

Their leader is a bald, bare-chested man with cold eyes, armed with a long chain-like whip made of interlocked bones.

When he speaks, he does so in the soft tones of the eunuchs. "Well, Lady Takeria, you've made a real mess with those slaves and the Blade of Alath, haven't you?"

The Princess, in your power, frowns and says "Lizard, I never thought I'd be happy to see you. Yes, I stole the dagger from my father. Now, kill these slaves and take me to him. I am his favorite daughter, I am pretty sure the punishment won't be too harsh. And I'll reward you"

"My lady," the eunuch answers with a cold smile. "You are unfortunate. Tonight I am not working for your father, but for your brother Askor. And he wants the dagger, the book, and you dead. Kill them all!"

With a clicking of their tongues, the mantis-soldiers advance toward you.

The heroes are unarmed, and their only potential hostage is worthless. Their only chance to survive is escaping up the north stairs.

If they decide to fight (you should discourage this), the battlefield is a circle 14" in diameter, with the 2" wide altar in the middle, and two 2" wide exit stairs at 12 o'clock (north exit) and 6 o'clock (south exit). Place the heroes within 2" of the altar, and the opposition within 2" of the southern exit (a number of opponents will be on the stairs).

The heroes automatically have the initiative and they can slow down the attackers by toppling over one or more braziers (see below).

If someone attacks Takeria, and Tyvak her slave is still alive, he will sacrifice himself to save her.

(WC) Lizard the Eunuch (1). See page 33.

(E) Takazis Slave Warriors (2 per Hero +2). See page 37.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

- **Brazier:** A brazier is 2" wide on the battlefield and can be toppled over with a Strength roll, creating a MBT template area of difficult ground which also deals 2d6 damage to everybody walking over it.

- **Reinforcements:** Every even round, another 1d4 Takazis Slave Warriors arrive from the southern exit.

FLIGHT IN THE DARK

The heroes run for the stairs; luckily for them there is a door which can be barred behind them, but it won't hold for long. At this point they should have with them at least the golden dagger and the princess, while they might or might not have the book the girl was using to perform the ritual (see sidebar).

The stairs lead to the top of the tower. You are finally outside, the fresh air of the night relieves you after the acrid smells of the tower, but you are trapped, there is no way out. You frantically look around. On a balcony an enormous bat stares at you with yellow eyes, munching something... by the gods... it is a human body!

It is a shadow bat, one of the beasts the Tricornian lords ride in battle and to carry messages.

The beast is saddled and ready to fly. With a flash of its tongue it gulps down its meal.

The shadow bat is large enough to carry all the party and Princess Takeria, but will the beast accept non-Tricornian riders? And are the heroes ready to fly?

During this scene the party will find out.

If the adventurers don't think to take the bat, Takeria herself will suggest it (she prefers being held captive by the party to being killed by Lizard).

Gear. Near the beast's stake there is a Rider Lance, a very long spear used in aerial combat. On the saddle there are a Rider Whip, a bow, a quiver with 20 arrows, a saddle bag containing dry meat and a Black Lotus Crystal (see sidebar). The new weapons are described in the Appendix.

You take off on the bat just in time, before the mantis soldiers storm the tower.

"Kill them! Kill them all!" Lizard shouts, but his words are lost as the powerful wings of the beast take you into the sky.

Being on saddle of the bat doesn't mean the party is safe. It's just the opposite; the bat isn't at all happy to be ridden by strangers and tries everything to unseat them, flying wildly and with the risk of crashing against the many tall towers and buildings of the citadel.

Breaking the Mount. Run this scene as a Dramatic Task, only three rounds long, based on the Riding of the person who is actually at the reins of the beast (called the Rider from now on), -2 if he has never ridden a flying beast. The other characters can help him with cooperative rolls on Notice ("Turn right! Turn right! There's a tower in front of us!") or Spirit (-2) (they simply pray to their god for safety, +2 for the Priest Edge). At the end of the Chase, subtract 4 from the number of successes/raises the rider scored, this represents the Handling modifier of the bat in the second part of the scene, which may be positive (see below).

If the rider scores 1 on the Riding die, regardless of the Wild Die, a complication of some sort happens: randomly select a hero and ask him to make a Fear Check (-2) or to make an Agility roll to avoid falling out of the saddle (use the Cliffhanger setting rules from SEPG in this case).

After three rounds continue to read.

*Finally the damned beast calms down. Now you need only find a way to persuade it to land and...
“Oh no!” Takeria shouts. “They sent the Black Riders!”*

You turn back and see a small flock of three giant bats on your heels. Each of them carries a black armored warrior, armed with a long spear, which he points toward you with the cold determination of a shark.

It seems your bad night isn't over yet.

Death in the Skies! The second part of the scene is a Chase. Note the Riders try to kill the characters, but not their mount, if possible, because they were ordered to retrieve the dagger and the girl alive.

Use the normal Chase rules; each Rider receives a separate Action Card, while the heroes' bat moves on the Rider's turn, but each of them can make a separate action using the weapons they have or do other things (for example aiding the Rider with cooperative Riding rolls).

The Rider adds or subtracts the Handling Modifier he scored before to all his Riding rolls.

The Chase lasts until all the enemies are dispatched.

Possible Complications. A cloud covers the moon causing a momentary visibility problem, flying through a low-altitude cloud, the Chase brings a bat too near the ground, the saddle or tack of the mount comes loose or is cut away.

(WC) Heroes' Shadow Bat (1). See Shadow Bat on page 45.

(E) Black Rider (3). Each Rider is mounted on a Shadow Bat. See page 32 for the Rider and page 35 for the Shadow Bat stats.



LOTUS CRYSTAL (NEW LOTUSMASTERY TRAPPING)

This particular way to use Lotus was devised by the alchemists of Gis but was stolen and copied by Tricarnian Lotusmasters. It consists of making a “precipitate”, a solid lotus concoction, usually similar to a glass-like stone, with a glyph engraved on it. The crystal holds a power which is released by rubbing the glyph and shouting the name of the symbol aloud within 1-4 rounds. Various powers are stored in these crystals, usually offensive ones. These crystals can be thrown like normal stones (range 3/6/12), or used as ammunition for a sling. The Power Points cost to create them is unaltered, but it can only be spent if using Refined Lotus, and only Lotusmasters native to Gis or Tricarnia know the technique.

With a Knowledge (Arcana) roll a hero can understand how this item works, while with a raise the exact meaning of the glyph (and its pronunciation) is discovered. A Lotusmaster automatically knows how this item works, and understands how to use it with a success on Lotusmastery.

Usually these items are made with Arcane Skill d10, and are worth 200 Moons/Power Point.

The Black Crystal. It contains a 3d6 Damage, LBT *blast* Power.

PART 2: FALLEN HOPES

A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS

After defeating their pursuers, the heroes finally have some time to catch their breath. The bat flies through the night in a precise direction, and there is no way to make it land. The moon is covered by clouds so the party is basically traveling in darkness.

During the flight they have time to talk with Takeria. The princess is very haughty but understands her situation and has no problem revealing the past events that led to her theft of the dagger and the attempted sacrifice (see Narrative Technique sidebar if you want a more elaborate solution to convey this info to the players).

The girl, although trying to hide it, is very scared now because she knows she cannot go back to her old life.

At dawn the heroes can finally see where they are headed.

The first rays of the sun gently dissipate the clouds, and you understand your mount flew northwards all night. In front of you are the first foothills of the Brokenchain Mountains. This isn't too bad for you: beyond the mountains are the camps of the escaped slaves, who could surely give you some help, especially if you have a precious Tricarnian hostage to exchange.

“Look under you!” Takeria says. “This is the Xalath!”

The girl is right: under you there is a large labyrinth of passages, channels and ruins, connected in a pattern which seems directed by the dream of a madman.

It is very large, filling most of the plain up to the beginning of the mountains, and luckily you are

flying over it, because you can only imagine what might lurk in such a place.

Give the players some time to do some role play and decide what to do, before going on.

There is something strange about your mount. The bat, which flew tirelessly all night, is slowing down at an alarming rate. Probably it doesn't much like the daylight, but that alone cannot justify its behavior.

Only now do you notice the beast is dripping blood from its neck: an arrow is stuck in it, probably it was hit during the aerial fight.

The mighty animal beats its wings, slowly, another couple of times before stopping and plummeting down.

Brace yourself!

The Rider can make a Riding roll to control the fall as best as he can, in the case of a success all the group receive +2 to the subsequent roll.

All the heroes make an Agility roll, in the case of failure they suffer 2d6 damage, in addition to being Shaken.

After rolling, continue reading.

The rich smell of decomposing vegetation fills your nostrils.

Some god must be watching over you today, because you crashed on something soft, a large tangle of vines. They acted like a sort of verdant cushion saving you from certain death. Your mount wasn't so lucky and it lies just outside the plants.

You check yourselves, and you are all alive, while the princess lies not far away, passed out.

You need only manage to free yourself from the vines which, you now notice, are keeping you trapped!

Heroes declaring they are trying to free themselves make a Strength roll. For each success and raise they get +1 to the Blocked by Vines roll below.

Then continue reading.

While you struggle to get free, you look around discovering you are in a sort of large bowl in the ground. From a passage, out come a group of very tall humanoids. Dressed only in loincloths, they could look like men apart from their gray skin and the strange hoods covering their heads.

They stop not far away from you, conferring. Then they step toward you, staring from under their hoods.

The heroes are trapped, but they can try speaking with the newcomers. The Xalathi (as these creatures are called) ignore them. They are interested only in two things.

Two hooded ones quickly free the body of Takeria by cutting away the vine, and pick up the unconscious girl.

Then the tallest of the group, a giant at least seven feet tall, crouches near you (the character which has the golden dagger, the Blade of Alathur) and deftly takes it from your belt with reverent hands.

This man is Talak, the chief of the Xalathi.

The creature raises up the blade, and as if following an unspoken order, he and all the others lower their hoods, revealing squat, rough faces, perfectly human, except for a single element: a third eye in the middle of the forehead, very similar to the one carved on the dagger's hilt!

"ALATHUR!" the giant chants.

"ALATHUR!" answer the others, with reverence.

Then, taking the girl and the dagger, they go away, leaving you trapped!

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE: FLASHBACK

Instead of simply narrating for the players what happened in the citadel before their involvement (see Background before) you can play a small flashback sequence during the night flight, where the heroes see the arrival of Tarakos, the first appearance of the golden dagger and so on. Maybe they were part of the crowd in the throne room when the event happened or something similar. Obviously the second part, Takeria stealing the dagger, must be retold by the girl.

MORE ABOUT ALATHUR

Alathur is the Lord of Eyes, a powerful demon at the service of Demon Lord Tirain, the Master of Cages. Alathur is a guardian at heart, his enormous eye capable of staring, emotionless, for millennia at a single thing. But Alathur's stare is more than this: it is malevolent and consuming. Legend says that a mortal caught in the stare of Alathur will have his mind and soul destroyed. Alathur doesn't usually assume a physical form, but he is known to physically alter the bodies of his followers, blessing them with a third eye, called the Eye of Alathur.

There are stories that Alathur betrayed his master, Tirain, and for this reason was imprisoned in eternal pain, but this rumor is totally unconfirmed.

FLOWERS OF HUNGER

Let the heroes talk and curse the Xalathi for abandoning them for awhile, before going on.

While you are cursing these damned monsters you hear something stirring among the vines, from the heart of the plant. You turn only to see something crawling among the vegetation. There are two sort of... flowers, big as horses, moved by thick stems. The flowers advance toward you, and open in unison, revealing twin mouths full of teeth! These plants are going to eat you!

The battlefield is an area 24" by 24", roughly square shaped. The northern 16" by 16" are occupied by the vines, where the heroes start, trapped, while the southern 8" by 24" is clear ground. Scatter them 2" away from each other.

The Man-Eating Flowers are placed in the middle of the vines and move toward the heroes. The tendrils on which they grow have limited extension and allow them to move only on the vines and 4" away from them.

The Man-Eating Flowers continue to fight until destroyed or until the heroes leave the battlefield (the flowers cannot go outside it).

(H) Man-Eating Flower (2). See page 32.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

- **Bat Carcass:** The heroes' mount lies on the battlefield, dead. It is 4" by 8", and too big to be entangled by the vines in a short time. Place it partially overlapping the vines. It counts as clear ground.

- **Entangled by the Vines:** The heroes start the scene as if totally restrained by the *entangle*

Power. Each round they can try to break free, as per the normal rules. The vines have arcane skill d8. The tangle of vines can use the Power again during the fight, but only on the vines' area, with 6 Power Points, acting on the Man-Eating Flowers' turn.

- **Vines:** The vines count as Difficult Ground for everybody apart from the Man-Eating Flowers.

WHAT NOW?

After defeating or escaping from the Man-Eating Flowers the heroes are finally on their own, and must decide what to do now. There are basically two courses of action they can take.

The first is trying to track down the three-eyed monsters who kidnapped the princess and stole the golden dagger (the only treasure they have found during this adventure).

The second is to forget about princesses and daggers, and find a way out of there. The nearest safe locations to the Xalath from the point where they crashed are the Brokenchain Mountains, from where they can leave Tricarnia and reach the escaped slaves' camps beyond the mountains. In this case you'll find several ways to add a climax to the scenario in The Way Out sidebar on page 29.

Regardless of their choice, the party must go in roughly the same direction, northward. When they decide to do so, go on with the next part, Into the Labyrinth.

GETTING EQUIPMENT

The heroes are on the run at the beginning of the scenario and have little equipment. Probably they have what they found on the bat, but nothing more, so they must improvise. Below you'll find several examples of what they can do.

Food and Water. The heroes' last meal was the evening before, so they are starting to be hungry. The bat's saddle contains enough cured meat to sustain the party for a day, then they must provide for themselves, but they don't have any water. Use the standard Hunger and Thirst rules.

Improvised Weapons. In the Xalath there are trees, stones and almost anything else you can find in a natural environment. With a Notice or Survival (+2) roll the characters can easily find Improvised Weapons of any size they want, usually branches, stones or similar things. If they want to craft something more elaborate (a stone axe, a spear, a crude sling) they can try to do that, working on an Improvised Weapon and making a Survival (-2) or Repair roll. With a success they manage to put together a weapon which breaks on a 1 on the Skill die when attacking, regardless of the result of the Wild Die, while with a raise they manage to craft a normal quality weapon. Crafting an item requires 1d4 hours.

The Book. The Xalathi took the girl and the dagger, but they didn't pick up the grimoire the princess was using during the ritual. This contains useful info for the players. See the Ancient Relics sidebar.

Restocking Lotus. A Lotusmaster can try to find some supplies in the Xalath as per the Improvising a Lotus Bag Rule from SEPC. As the labyrinth is rich in exotic, but dangerous, plants, he rolls at +2, but if he rolls a 1 on the Skill die, regardless of the Wild Die, the GM is free to have one of his Powers misfire during the remainder of the adventure, because the character picked the wrong plant.

ANCIENT RELICS

BLADE OF ALATHUR

This ancient golden blade is a sacrificial dagger (see SEPC), but also contains a small bit of the demon Alathur's soul. It can grant one free Bennie per session to the person owning it, but it is the Blade (the GM) which decides when to grant it and on what roll, usually to further the demon's agenda. It is considered a magical weapon.

BOOK OF ZAMIKAR

Like many Tricarnian sorcery books, this tome is made of human skin, and bound with the scales of some unknown beast. It is stained in many places, and written in Tricarnian, so only a character knowing that tongue can read it. If he does he can gather some useful info with a roll on Knowledge (Arcana) or Smarts (-2).

A success gets the basic info, while every raise gets one additional item of the GM's choice. Note that a character can delve into the book multiple times, spending 1 hour each time he does so. Each item of info is written on a Handout (see page xxx) which the GM should print and give to the players.

PART 3: IN THE LABYRINTH

Sooner or later, the heroes must venture into the Xalath, either to track down the princess and her kidnappers or simply to get away. The situation is handled in an abstract way: every Advancement round, the party makes a cooperative Advancement Roll (see below). For each success and raise, they get an Advancement Token, up to two per roll.

They need 8 Tokens to reach the Xalathi (in this case go to Part 4) or 12 Tokens to reach the exit of the labyrinth (in this case go directly to the End).

Scenes: After rolling, draw a card from the Action Deck and play the scene described below. If you have already played that scene, check the Redraw entry. Unless noted otherwise, each location has a way in (where the party comes in) and a way out (usually on the opposite side).

Advancement Roll: if the party is chasing the princess, the Advancement Skill is Tracking. If they are trying to leave the Xalath, they roll on Survival (-4) or Smarts (-2).

Advancement Round Duration: one hour.

Getting Lost: if the lead hero rolls a 1 on the Trait die, regardless of the Wild Die, he gets lost and immediately loses 2 Advancement Tokens.

Navigation Expedients: there are plenty of ways to help in navigating labyrinths, from leaving pebbles behind to marking crossroads and so on. If the group thinks of a reasonable one, feel free to grant them a +1 or +2 bonus to the Advancement roll.

Split the Party: the heroes may get separated. In this case, from that moment on, consider them as two separate groups, gathering Advancement Tokens independently. If they actively seek to reunite, both groups make a Smarts (-4) or Tracking (-2) roll. If both groups achieve success, they find their comrades. They can also find their friends by chance if they explore the same location in the same Advancement Round.

The Xalath is a place full of mysteries and with a particular ecology. We strongly suggest, before playing this scene, that the GM reads the Book of Lore for this scenario, to gain extra info useful in describing the scene to the players.

DEUCE ~ POOL OF SAND

You arrive in a large basin, where once an arena or other similar place probably stood, but now it is all flooded with a thick layer of very thin, dust-like, sand, which continues to flow in from a crack in the basin's wall, and disappears in a small sinkhole in the middle of the area.

Several columns emerge from the sand. One in particular has a skeleton chained to it by one hand. You can still see fragments of his red shirt, while the light of the sun shimmers on something metallic worn on his free arm.

The only exit from this place is on the opposite side of the basin. If the party goes back they lose two Advancement Tokens and cannot gain any new ones during this round.

Crossing the Basin. There are basically two ways to do this. The straightforward one is walking into it. This is potentially very deadly, because, after a dozen yards, it becomes quicksand. Every character in it automatically sinks down by a third of his height each round, unless he makes an Agility (-2) roll to stay afloat and Stirs the Sand. When he is fully submerged, he starts drowning. The hero can be saved by his friends with a cooperative Strength (-2) roll, but only if they have a suitable item to grapple him with. Each success and raise makes him emerge by one third. A fully emerged character is safe.

The second way consists of jumping from column to column, which requires three Agility rolls (Acrobat applies) to reach the exit of the basin. By adding a fourth Agility (-2) roll in the middle, a hero can also reach the Monk Skeleton (see below). Failing the roll means the character falls in the sand for no damage, but now he is in the quicksand – see above.

Having a rope helps both in saving a friend and jumping over the columns, granting +1 to the roll.

Monk Skeleton. The person hanging from the pillar was Wa Shu, a Lhoban demon hunter who was captured and doomed to die many years ago. He still wears his prayer beads, the Secret of Wa Shu (see sidebar), a precious relic which can be quite useful.

If a Lhobanese character frees the body from the chain without damaging the corpse (the chains can be broken with a Strength (-2) roll, they have Toughness 9) and gives the proper burial the next time he sleeps he will have a vision of Wa Shu, thanking him (this grants a permanent additional Power Point) and revealing he is going to reincarnate again and that in the new incarnation he will meet the hero (this can lead to an interesting future adventure).

Stir the Sand. The dust-like sand of the basin hides another terror: a swarm of sand eels, dangerous snake-like predators lurking in the sand, which attack everybody stirring the sand. For each round someone is in the sand, make a group Notice roll for the eels. If they succeed, they start moving toward the nearest hero. The sand basin is roughly oval, 24" wide on the east-west axis and 36" wide on the north-south one. The eels begin at 2d6+6" away from their prey.

The columns are 1" by 1" wide and while on top of them, the heroes are safe. Place other three 3" by 3" small islets of solid ground wherever you want. The eels flee when half of them are killed.

(E) Sand Eel (1 per hero). See page 35.

THE SECRET OF WA SHU

Wa Shu was a Lhobanese monk, a demon hunter of a certain renown. He mysteriously disappeared twenty years ago; he found his doom in the Xalathi, while trying to find the Blade of Alathur and to defeat Alathur. Wa Shu's trademark weapon was a set of prayer beads made of steel links he crafted with the fragments of a sword consecrated to Hulian.

The weapon counts as Iron Fists, made of steel (AP 2). Wa Shu was famous because he knew a special technique to hurt demons. His weapon is bound so the links create a powerful symbol of exorcism. A monk character seeing the Secret, still on the body of its owner, can understand and replicate it when using the Secret with a Knowledge (Religion) (-2) roll, +2 if he has the Demon Hunter Edge.

If the Secret is properly bound, every time the user hits a demon with a raise, the creature suffers a cumulative -1 to Toughness till the end of the scene.

THREE ~ TRAP!

You are walking in a corridor when...

The heroes stumble into one of the many traps hidden in the labyrinth. The first hero in the order of march is allowed a Notice (-2) roll to spot it, +2 if he has the Thief, Treasure Hunter or Danger Sense Edge. In the case of success he spots something weird in the flooring of the passage where he is walking.

In case of failure, he triggers the trap, and only an Agility (-4) roll prevents him falling down a pit 15 feet deep with cruel metal spikes on the bottom, suffering 2d6+4 damage. The pit cover automatically closes 2d4 rounds after being triggered. The walls inside are perfectly smooth, so climbing out isn't easy (-4 without proper climbing gear). If the card drawn was a club, the blades are shattered (the pit deals only 2d6 damage), if it is a diamond it hosts an unfortunate victim, the skeleton of a warrior of the past armed with a stone-headed mace (Str+d6, AP 2).

FOUR ~ Gaping Wound

You hear a gurgling sound, followed by a strange, metallic smell. In front of you, a small stream of reddish water comes out of a fissure in the wall, which creates a blood-like pool in the middle of the passage, before sinking into the ground. It looks like a gaping wound, but it looks fresh and your mouth is very dry...

The water is actually drinkable. The color is only given by some traces of iron, which don't make it dangerous. The heroes can discover this by practical experience (i.e. by drinking it) or with a Survival roll. Characters drinking it make an immediate Vigor roll, with a success they recover a level of Fatigue.

Clean Spring. As this place is a source of drinkable water, there is a good chance animals are there. If the card drawn is a heart, a 1d4 blue-winged birds are there. Each of them, if taken down by a ranged weapon (-2 to hit), can give enough fresh meat for a two persons. If the card drawn is a club, a small pack of Xarts (see The Survivor below) or another beast of the labyrinth of the GM's choice is present. Make this check every time the party visit this location.

(E) Xart (1 per hero). See page 38.

FIVE ~ THE MEAT GRINDER

You turn right and the corridor you enter is definitely different. The stone walls are polished, and

the passage is perfectly straight. It looks normal, apart from the strange stains on the walls. You can see, in the distance, it bends right.

Unbeknownst to the party, they have entered a deadly trap, and the stains on the wall are from the blood of the previous victims. The corridor is 12" long and 3" wide on the battlefield, and the right turn is a dead end, where death awaits them, but the group doesn't know this yet.

The trap triggers after five yards, when the heroes move over a very large pressure plate, which can be detected only with a Notice (-2) roll (Thief and Treasure Hunter Edges apply). If the heroes turn back they are safe, but they don't get any Advancement Tokens.

If they step on the plate, the trap activates: the wall behind the heroes, a solid block of stone, 3" by 3", from this point on called the Meat Grinder, starts moving toward the heroes. After one round, the Meat Grinder passes over the corridor's entrance, after three it reaches the end of the corridor and turns right, where there is another space 3" by 3", with no apparent exits (see picture to understand the Meat Grinder's path).

Characters smashed by the Meat Grinder suffer 4d6 damage, AP 5, per round.

Ways Out. The heroes have exactly four rounds to find a way out of this death trap. The most straightforward one is Climbing over the walls, but remember they are very smooth (-4 to the roll) and at least two successes and/or raises are necessary to climb them. Cunning heroes can try to block the stone block, but they need an adequate tool, for example a pole or a long, metallic bar (like a sword) and a successful Repair (-2) or Smarts (-4) roll. With a success they manage to block the grinder for one round, two with a raise, and they permanently block it with two raises.

The secret to escaping this trap is concealed in the wall at the end of the bend (see "S" on picture), and it is a small secret door, only one yard high, which opens onto a narrow passage which leads away from this place.

Other creative ideas can be found by the players, let them unleash their imaginations, but keep the action fast, furious and fun: hand Action Cards to the heroes and don't give them more than 30 seconds each, in real time, to think and declare their actions.

The Meat Grinder resets after 2d6 minutes.

SIX ~ PINK FOG

Your footsteps make a strange sound, now. Maybe it is the flooring, which now looks like coral, or the strange pinkish fog which is sneaking between your legs. Now you're paying attention to it, the walls also seem made of the same material, as if they emerged from some forgotten sea. And the smell... is acrid, like seaweed left to rot under the sun.

Unless the heroes declare they are retreating immediately, the "fog" quickly engulfs them. It is the source of the smell and very dangerous. With a Lotusmastery roll, a character recognizes it as spores of some unknown Lotus. With a raise he recognizes it is being produced by the coral itself. The pink fog, as well as worsening the Lighting condition by 1 per round (up to -4 after four rounds), causes disorientation to whoever breathes it. Every character doing so must make a Vigor (-2) roll, +2 if the hero protects himself in some suitable way (for example with a damp cloth over the nose and mouth). Characters failing the roll stumble away, and get separated from the group, while characters succeeding manage to leave the fog stunned but not disoriented (a level of Fatigue lasting for one hour). Making the roll with a raise prevents the Fatigue.

For the sake of simplicity, all the separated heroes, except any Terrorized ones (see below), stick together.

Unless at least half of the group scores a raise, the party doesn't get any Advancement Tokens during this Advancement Round.

Pink Terror! A character rolling 1 on the Vigor roll is so intoxicated that he sees an enormous, amorphous creature in the fog, and runs away, terrorized. He makes a Fear roll (-2) and flees in fear for 1d4 rounds, getting separated from the group. In truth the vision the poor sod has isn't totally a drug-induced illusion: for a moment he had a glimpse of the real nature of the pink fog, which is actually a living being! The hero acquires the capability to see magic for the remainder of the adventure, although if he suffers -1 to all Fear rolls. And don't call him a loony!

SEVEN ~ NEST OF EGGS

Your path is a dead end, a stone corridor with something disgusting on the walls. A yellowish slimy substance, dotted with round stones, slightly bigger than a human head and striped in orange and grey.

What in the name of the gods could these things be?

The "things," as any character can understand with a Smarts roll, are eggs. Characters coming from a desert land recognize them with no need to roll, because they are very similar to desert ants' eggs.

They were laid by the Clacker (see The Clacker below) and are harmless. In truth, they can even be useful, because they are highly nutritious (a Survival roll can give some clue of this, but only if a player explicitly asks about it). In game terms every character eating the green innards of an egg automatically recovers one level of Fatigue.

The substance is also curative (Healing roll required): a character smearing it over a Wound can immediately make a natural healing roll at +2 ten minutes after the application. There are 10 eggs there, each of them weighing 6 pounds (mainly for the shell).

Note that being smeared with the eggs' contents automatically makes the Clacker go berserk (see below).

EIGHT ~ THE QUARRY

You hear a growling sound, followed by a muffled cry of pain. You turn the corner and see a corridor where a lone man, a Tricarnian warrior from his attire, is fighting for his life against a pack of dog-sized creatures. Covered in jet-black scales, they look like felines, and attack the poor man ferociously; hit by a vicious bite on the calf, he falls down.

Falling, he sees you and cries "Help!" before being swarmed by the vicious predators.

The heroes have a few heartbeats to save the man. If no player says immediately he is going to help him, describe his cruel death as the Xarts, for this is the name of these creatures, eat him alive. The animals will be busy for at least three rounds eating their prey before attacking the party.

If the heroes intervene immediately, the beasts are automatically surprised. The fight begins at 1d6+6" range. The fallen man (use Takazis Slave Warrior Profile, raising Vigor by two die steps) is Shaken. The creatures fight till half of them are killed, then they flee.

Saving Tian. If the heroes kill the beasts or force them to flee, they can help the Tricarnian warrior. He has a deep, infected wound, and he is feverish. Tian, as the man is called, was one of the soldiers in the expedition led by Prince Tarakos. He escaped the temple of the Xarathi (see Part 4) with his master when the Prince took the dagger, but the two of them got separated. Tian has survived several weeks, alone, in the labyrinth, and learned a number of things about it. He is doomed to die in 2d4 hours, but if the heroes mercifully help him (with a Healing roll to sooth his wounds and with some water and food) he'll tell the party something about a random location of the labyrinth, plus he'll reveal to them that he and Prince Tarakos escaped from the Xarathi temple through a secret door, which can be found at the end of the southern colonnade of the temple, and

is opened by pressing a rose on a mosaic. This is info the party can use later, in Part 4. Tian is armed with a wide-bladed bronze-tipped spear (consider it a polearm: Str+d8, 2 hands, Reach 1).

(E) Xart (1 per hero). See page 38.

NINE ~ ALTAR OF ALATHUR

This passage leads to a short flight of stairs, going up. You reach a small triangular room, in the middle of which lies an altar of black stone, upon which is engraved an open eye. This is nothing new to you: it is the same eye you have seen engraved on Tikara's dagger. The stone's altar is porous, and smeared in an oily substance you clearly recognize. It is blood.

Every character with the Sorcery or the Enlightenment Arcane Background or the Priest Edge feels this place is ripe with supernatural energy, and not a positive one. Carved on the altar there is an inscription in ancient Keronian saying: "Blood and Hearts for the All Seeing Lord of the Eyes".

Performing a Sacrifice. A character performing a blood sacrifice on the altar or putting a raw heart on it is filled by the dark energy of Alathur. If he has spent any Bennies, he returns to his maximum, plus an extra one. If he is a sorcerer, he receives +2 to all Sorcery rolls till he faces the Lord of the Eyes in the final part of the scenario, where he suffers -1 instead. If a character puts on the Amulet of the Eye found in Zamikar's stash above while offering the sacrifice, it charges with magical energy. Until the end of the adventure, it grants the wearer the Arcane Resistance Edge, including against Alathur himself.

Destroying the Altar. The altar has Toughness 8 and can be destroyed by a mace, a hammer or other similar weapons. If struck with a steel weapon, it suffers double damage. Destroying the altar immediately makes the Xalathi alert sentinels in part 4 (they actually feel the destruction), but Alathur will be weaker: reduce all its Attributes by one die step. Priests of Hulian or monks doing this should be rewarded with a Benny too.

TEN ~ WOOD OF SECRETS

You enter a large area, choked with plants. It looks like a piece of jungle dragged from somewhere in the south and brought there, even if made of unknown plants with very colorful heart-shaped leaves, small red flowers and long vines. It is warm and damp, although lacking the customary sounds of the woodlands. There are no birds chirping and there isn't even the buzz of insects. Apart from this, it looks a peaceful place, one suitable to rest in. Someone before you must have had the same idea, because you see the remnants of a campfire, stones roughly amassed in a circle.

This place is a lot more than it seems.

The fireplace seems unused for at least a week, but there are still some plants nearby.

The plants, although not edible, can be useful for resourceful heroes: the vines can be cut and tied together to craft a makeshift rope (Repair (+2) or Survival (+1) roll), while the branches are sturdy enough to be used for spears, clubs, poles, and even crude arrows.

Randomly pick one of the heroes wandering in the thick of the plants and ask him for a Notice (-2) roll. If successful, the character spots something in the undergrowth: it is a bleached human femur, with a piece of cloth. From this point on, every character in the plants can find some bone, with a Notice roll; there are the bones of at least five persons. With a raise one character finds a rotting humanoid hand, still with some flesh attached on the six fingers. It causes a Spirit roll to avoid being Nauseated, but every odd finger wears a ring of unknown material, each worth 200 Moons, double that if sold to an alchemist or a sorcerer.

The cause of death of the corpses is unknown, they have no apparent wounds.

The Secret of the Wood. There is silent killer in the wood, and it is the plants themselves. The

flowers are infested by a particular fungus, the Lotus of Eternal Dreams, which has a subtle effect. If someone is sleeping, it makes his slumber so deep that it becomes a coma, and then leads to death from starvation. The dead bodies are an excellent fertilizer for the plants. Characters on guard duty must roll on Vigor (-2) to avoid falling asleep, while characters sleeping for two or more hours have inhaled enough Lotus that they won't wake up naturally. A hero who falls victim to the effects of the Lotus must be taken away from this place and will wake up naturally after 1d4 hours. If all the heroes fall prey to the Lotus they still have one chance to escape: make them live through a horrible collective nightmare where the plants animate and attack them. Run this as a cooperative Spirit (-4) Dramatic Task. In the case of success one of the heroes wakes up screaming and Exhausted, but can drag the others away.

A Lotusmaster specifically examining the flowers can recognize their nature with a Lotuscstasy (-2) roll. With a raise he also manages to get some samples, which count as two points of Refined Lotus, which grants +2 to Lotuscstasy opposed rolls if used in sleep based concoctions.

JACK ~ BRIDGE OF TERROR

You are in front of a large chasm, severing the labyrinth in two. You stare into it, but your sight is defied by clouds of gray smoke in which bird-like shapes fly wildly. The chasm is crossed by a stone bridge, a massive thing, which is divided in two parts, one per side, currently raised. A pillar, upon which the two halves of the bridge rest when they are lowered, rises from the center of the abyss. Two tall stone pillars mark the access to the bridge.

You have heard of similar marvels, but only in the heart of the Iron Empire, built by the cunning of the sages.

The chasm blocks the path, if the heroes don't find a way to cross it they must go back. They lose two Advancement Tokens this round and cannot gain any others.

If the group are following the tracks of the Xalathi they notice these end at the base of bridge: they have an Amulet of the Eye and used it to lower the bridge (see below).

There are several ways to cross the bridge: the first one consists of examining the pillars at the entrance to it. One of them has an engraving, of triangular shape, which has the same size as the Amulet of the Eye. Putting this inside the engraving makes the bridge rumble and lower itself. It remains down for five minutes, then goes up again.

If the party has no amulet or can't figure how to use it, they can cross the hard way, using a rope to get to the central pillar (Throwing roll) and then crossing it with the force of their arms. A Strength (-2) roll is required to avoid taking a level of Fatigue for one hour, while with a critical failure the poor sod falls screaming into the abyss to a fate left to the mercy of the GM. Once on the pillar they must follow the same procedure to reach the other side of the chasm.

On the tabletop both halves of the bridge are 12" long and 2" wide, while the central pillar is 2" by 2" for a total length of 26".

Birds of Prey! The real dangers of the bridge are the beasts dwelling in the vapors. They are very hungry, crow-like birds of prey and attack the party once the heroes are on the bridge. They aren't very dangerous, but a hero shaken by their attacks who is on the edge of the bridge must roll against Agility to avoid falling off.

(E) Aari (1 flock per 2 heroes). See page 31.

QUEEN ~ THE CLACKER!

You hear a clacking sound, like that of something hard beating rhythmically on the stone flooring. At first you don't understand where it's coming from, then from a fissure in the wall the head of an

ant-like creature appears, big as that of a full grown lion.

The creature stares at you with multi-faceted eyes for a couple of heartbeats, before emerging entirely from the fissure and running toward you, with a furious clacking of its sword-thick claws.

Its intention is clear: to eat you!

The Clacker isn't an opponent the characters can defeat. Given its Heavy Armor chitin shell, the group simply haven't the means to dispatch it at the moment, so they basically have two ways to handle it.

The first one is blinding it, in this case the creature will wander aimlessly and then will move away.

The second one is escaping by starting a Short (5 rounds) Chase in the labyrinth, based on Agility. The beast can only attack when in melee, obviously.

Several types of complications are possible, but two are worth noting.

With a Major complication from any character, the group (starting with the heroes which have yet to act) stumbles into another location (draw a card).

With a Disaster, if the character concerned fails a Smarts (-4) roll, he gets separated from his friends (see above, Split the Group).

The Chase ends with the party running into a passage too narrow for the Clacker to fit into.

If the heroes encounter the Clacker (and only in this case), there is a chance the monster will show up in the final battle (see below).

The Smell of My Children. If a character is smeared with the eggs of the Clacker (see Nest of Eggs above), the beast is enraged and receives +2 to all Trait rolls against the party, but suffers -2 to Parry. It also chases the group for two extra rounds.

(WC) Clacker (1). See page 33.

KING ~ LIZARD'S CAMP

Note: run this scene only if at least four Advancement rounds have occurred, otherwise simply ignore it and play a Redraw.

This stone basin is a good spot to camp: there is a small pond of water in the middle, and it is for this reason the Tricarnians chose it as their base. They put up a couple of tents and started a little fire, while a group of them watch over the three giant bats resting on the far side of the basin. You recognize the soldiers; they are thin and mantis-like, like the ones who tried to kill you in the tower the night before. What are they doing here?

This place is the base of Lizard, who arrived here at the first light of dawn, and is now exploring the labyrinth looking for the golden dagger, Takeria, and the party (in that order). The full force of the eunuch is 18 warriors (the maximum capacity of the three bats), and at the moment half of them are at the camp, while two parties are exploring (see Redraws). There are always three guards watching the camp: one at each of the two exits, and one patrolling the perimeter and periodically checking the bats.

If the card drawn is a heart, Lizard is away with one of the scouting parties, otherwise he is in one of the tents, planning what to do.

The scene supposes the heroes approach the camp cautiously, otherwise they can be captured by the soldiers. In this case, Lizard, who is having serious trouble finding the dagger, offers them a deal (see Lizard Makes a Deal sidebar).

The Prisoner. If the party watches the camp for at least one hour, a scouting party comes back, bringing Zuur, a Xalathi prisoner with them. After one hour they begin torturing him (he screams a lot) but, after another hour, the Xalathi dies without revealing anything. If the heroes free him, Zuur can be persuaded to lead them to the Temple (no need to check for encounters anymore).

Fly Away. The giant bats represent an easy way out of the scenario, if the heroes manage to grab them. It isn't very heroic, but it can mean safety if the situation turns ugly.

(E) Takazis Slave Warriors (9). See page 37.

(WC) Lizard (1). See page 33.

ACE ~ FINGER OF STONE

A thin, partially crumbled stone tower. It is very tall and bony, like a skeletal finger raised in the sky. The tower's base is surrounded by thick bushes of unsavory-looking giant nettles, with flowers big as a giant's hands and red as the hearts on the altar of a Tricarnian temple.

The nettles surrounding the tower are totally harmless, as can be discovered with a Survival roll or by practical experience. Climbing the tower can be dangerous though, because it is in very bad condition. Any character with the Brawny Edge or Obese Hindrance must draw a card from the Action Deck whenever they reach one of the three upper floors of the building.

If the card drawn is a club, the unfortunate hero falls through the flooring suffering 1d6 damage per floor (so 1d6 from the first, 2d6 from the second and 3d6 from the third). From the top of the tower the characters can scout the area around them. Have them make a group Notice roll, for each success and raise they gain +1 to the next Advancement Roll or can identify a random location (in this case draw a card, look at the scene and give a description of the place as seen from a distance).

Zamikar's Supply Stash. On the second floor of the tower, behind a stone marked with the symbol of Hordan, there is the stash Zamikar the Sorcerer hid (see Handouts). The party can discover it only if they read the corresponding note in the Book of Zamikar, or if they use the *detect arcana* Power (or another similar ability to see magic), which reveals a faint glow on the rune. The stone can be easily removed, and in the cavity behind it several things can be found: a stone amulet representing the Eye of Alathur (it is called the Amulet of the Eye), a coil of rope with a hook, a couple of empty but still serviceable water skins and some dried meat covered in mold (it is toxic; everybody foolish enough to eat it must make a Vigor (-4) roll or suffer one level of Fatigue till the end of Part 3 of the scenario).

JOKER ~ GATE TO THE UNKNOWN

The passage leads to a room of a weird triangular shape. The entrance you are walking in through is placed in the exact center of the base. The room isn't very large, the walls are made of a green-veined stone, and there is a single way out, a massive stone gate in the middle of the apex of the triangle. The gate is closed and covered in engravings.

This place is very dangerous, probably the most dangerous one in all the labyrinth. The gate has no key, but there are three stone disks, arranged in a triangle, which can be rotated, like the knobs of a safe.

On each of disk are engraved three symbols, also placed roughly in a triangle.

First disk: sun, scorpion, claw.

Second disk: snake, hand, moon.

Third disk: eye, star, lion.

On the gate there is an inscription, in High Tricarnian (which can also be understood with a Knowledge (Arcana) roll which says:

*"Beware Mortal, Because the Three Lords of the Sky, Together,
Will Open the Gate to the Unknown."*

The riddle is easy to understand: the three lords of the sky are respectively the sun, the moon and the star, each of them represented on one of the three disks. If the disks are rotated so that

sun, moon and star symbols (which are on three different disks) touch each other, the gate opens, without being touched.

Sucked into the Unknown! This gate is one of the traps set by Tirain, the demon lord and jailer of Alathur. Inside the gate there is only a green light, which sucks the heroes inside it as if something incredibly strong were trying to blow the party in.

The room is a triangle, with two short sides 7" long, with the gate, 2" wide, on the apex. Ask each player where his character is, or randomly place each hero in the room. The character opening it must be not more than 2" away from it. At this point deal Action Cards as during a normal fight. During his action each hero must make a Strength roll, at -4 if he is within 2" of the gate, -2 if he is 3" to 5" away, and with no modifier if he is 6" or more away. With a success he doesn't move, with a raise he can move 1" away if he wants, while with a failure he is dragged 1" toward the gate, 2" if he scored 1 or less. A hero who is going to enter the gate can try to cling desperately to the door with a Strength (-4) roll, but if he fails he is dragged inside.

The gate remains open for 5 rounds, but heroes near the door can try to accelerate the closing process, with a Strength (-4) roll. Each success and raise counts as one less round of duration, but if the hero fails he is dragged toward the gate as above.

As mass is very important in this situation, the Brawny Edge or the Obese Hindrance grant +2 to the roll.

What happens if some, or all of the heroes are dragged inside the gate before it closes? Well, they are in another dimension, one of the many Cages of Tirain (for example the Green World of the adventure of the same name) and this can lead to a new and interesting scenario...

LIZARD MAKES A DEAL

In the third part of the scenario, Lizard has one main goal: find the golden dagger. And he is ready to join forces with the party to achieve it. He also wants to get Princess Takeria, but this is only a secondary goal. Once he gets the dagger, if he'll gain an advantage by betraying the heroes, he'll do it, otherwise he will keep his promise. If you can't decide what he is going to do, roll on the Reaction table, with +2 if Lizard has Princess Takeria in his hands (or if the girl has died). With a Friendly reaction or better he'll let them go, otherwise the eunuch will try to double-cross them.

If Lizard follows the heroes, he does so in the company of a chosen guard of four soldiers.

If things go south with the enforcer, you could decide to let him survive, making him an excellent recurring enemy for the party.

REDRAWS

If a card already drawn is picked you can run one of the following scenes, in order. After the last one, nothing happens on further redraws.

FIRST REDRAW ~ ROTTEN EYE

When this scene happens, select a random character and ask him to make a Notice (-4) roll. If he fails, after the next scene, pick another random hero and do the same thing again until someone makes the roll.

With a success the character spots someone who is shadowing them. He is a small, elusive



figure, who tries to escape. If approached with caution, or cornered, the person agrees to talk. He is a Pygmy, of indefinable age, with an old brand of slavery on his neck. He is called Rotten Eye and is an escaped slave who found a hideout in the Xalath. Rotten Eye, so called from the constantly festering wound under his right eye, hasn't got much going on upstairs: years of solitude and the dangers of the labyrinth have reduced him almost to savagery. Rotten Eye is eager for food and can be convinced to cooperate if fed. Note that he isn't against cannibalism and if he sees the party as weak he'll try to lure them into a trap to kill them and feast upon their carcasses.

If bargained with, Rotten Eye can lead the party for two encounters (he has very good survival instincts), otherwise he can give the party some useful suggestions; in particular he tells them "Do not open the door! Never! The door is bad!" He is referring to the Gate to the Unknown. He can also give some other cryptic warning about another place of the GM's choice.

(RH) Rotten Eye. See page 34.

SECOND REDRAW ~ WARRIORS

Apart from Rotten Eye, there are at least two other parties inside the maze. If the card drawn is a black 2-10, the players meet a hunting party of Xalathi, if it is a red 2-10, they stumble into a group of Tricarnian Warriors, dispatched from Lizard's camp (see King above) to look for the heroes. Check for surprise as normal. If the card drawn is a face card, they meet both the groups, who are actually fighting each other at the time.

If the card is a Joker, the encounter is as for a face card above, but the group of Tricarnians is led by Lizard himself (see Lizard Makes a Deal sidebar).

(E) Xalathi (1 per Hero). See page 37.

(E) Takazis Slave Warriors (1 per Hero +1). See page 37.

THIRD REDRAW ~ STORM

The sky over the labyrinth darkens and thunders. After few moments it starts raining: a cold, unforgiving rain coming directly from the Brokenchain Mountains, which hits you as hard as falling stones.

The rain lasts for a whole Advancement Round. If the party finds suitable cover nothing happens to them, if they continue moving through the rain, draw another card immediately, and run the scene in the rain (Dark visibility condition), and in addition every character must make a Vigor roll at the end of the scene to avoid getting the flu (a level of Fatigue till the end of the scenario).

Tracks and Rains. Note that if the party is following the tracks of the Xalathi, from this moment on they will suffer -2 to the roll, as they have been washed away.

PART 4: THE BLADE OF ALATHUR

The following part supposes the heroes track down the Xalathi, if they preferred to escape the Xalath, go to the Leaving the Labyrinth section.

You understand your hunt has finally ended when you hear the echoes of the chants. In front of you stands a large clearing, where a partially ruined building stands. Tall and with massive columns, it looks like a temple. The front gate of the temple is guarded by a patrol of four hooded humanoids, the same ones who kidnapped Takeria, but, judging by the sounds coming from inside, there must be many others in the building.

There are basically three ways for the heroes to get into the temple: by the front gate, through the ceiling or through a secret door.

Front Gate. This is the most straightforward way. The heroes start 18" from the temple, and there is a good amount of Light (-1) and Medium (-2) cover which can help them reach the guards unnoticed (boulders, bushes and so on) by making the proper Stealth rolls.

If the heroes manage to dispatch all of the guards in a single round, they can enter the temple unseen (see Unnoticed below), otherwise the Alarm is given (see the Alarm).

(E) Xalathi (4). See page 37.

Ceiling. The ceiling of the temple is in very bad shape and there are plenty of holes in it through which the heroes can pass. To pass through the ceiling the heroes must first make a Stealth (+1) roll to reach the back of the temple, then a Climbing roll to reach the top and then an Agility one to get on the rafters of the ceiling. At this point they will be inside. The problem is that the rafters are very old, and each character must draw a card from the Action Deck; if it is a club, the rafter breaks under his weight, and the hero falls into the main hall of the temple (see below), with the same effects as giving the Alarm. Characters with the Brawny Edge or the Obese Hindrance draw three cards.

Secret Passage. If the heroes talked to Tian, they know of the secret passage at the end of the southern colonnade. Reaching it requires a simple Stealth (+2) roll to avoid getting the guards' attention, plus a Notice roll (Thief and Treasure Hunter Edges apply). The passage leads to a small service room connected to the main hall of the temple. Every ten minutes the heroes pass there, draw a card from the Action Deck, a club face card means a servant (use Xalathi profile) enters the room on some errand.

THE ALARM

If the alarm is raised, a troop of 1d6 Xalathi storms in few rounds later, up the total below. The last to arrive is Talak, the Xalathi leader. The Xalathi want to capture the heroes alive, so they make subdual attacks (which wear off at the end of the scene) or try to make them surrender.

If the heroes are taken, go on with the Captured section below.

(E) Xalathi (3 per hero). See page 37.

(WC) Talak of the Xalathi (1). See page 37.

THE SACRIFICE... AGAIN!

The temple of the Xalathi is not as you imagined it. It is abig, unique hall, surrounded by tall columns and infested by patches of oversized fungi. Several bone fires bring light to the room, projecting monstrous shapes on the walls. A couple of drummers beat a furious rhythm on their instruments, while a number of three-eyed humanoids dance wildly to their beat.

At the end of the room there is a massive decoration on the wall representing the all-too-familiar Eye of Alathur, which stares at you with malevolence. On a raised dais under the decoration sits Takeria, dressed in barbaric plumes and jewels, revered as a queen by the savages!

At her side, near an altar, immobile as stone, stands the tall barbarian who took her away, the golden dagger at his belt.

Captured. If the heroes were taken by the Xalathi, they are roughly dragged in front of Takeria, who smirks evilly.

"You are stubborn, aren't you? Risking all this danger for what? To save me?" the Tricarnian princess laughs.

"Well, I saved myself. As you see, these people know my worth and made me their queen... and their goddess."

The tall man leans to whisper in the ears of Takeria, whose smile widens even more.

"Talek here has a marvelous idea. It is dark now, why not continue what was interrupted last night? Alathur needs blood, and I need his blessing!"

The girl points toward the character who was the Chosen Victim before and orders him to be dragged to the altar, guarded by two Xalathi.

Then Takeria rises from the throne with the elegance of a cat, raises the golden dagger high above her head and chants.

"Alathur, Lord of the Eyes! I, Takeria of Nal Taraska, offer you these lives to give me what I need more!"

"Klaatu..." she begins.

"Veratha..." she continues.

"Nikto!" The girl lowers the dagger, but something weird happens, her hand, as if guided by an unknown force, changes path and moves toward the very chest of Takeria herself, while the Xalathi watch her ecstatically!

The heroes, who were restrained by the Xalathi till now, can use this occasion to act. Go to the final scene of this adventure, Alathur Comes!

Unnoticed. If the party manages to sneak in unnoticed, they can see what happens inside the throne room from a different point of view.

Suddenly, the drummers stop their music.

Takeria, puzzled, stares to the man at her side.

"Well? Well, why did he stop?" the girl asks "I didn't give any such order. I am your queen, obey me or I'll have you flogged!"

"The time is come, little flower." The tall man with the dagger at his belt says, in a deep, booming voice.

"The time for what?" Takeria asks.

"The time for Alathur to return, and for you to die!"

Without warning, the big man drags the girl from the throne, and throws her on the altar, then he raises the dagger high, the golden blade shimmering in the light of the fires, and chants.

"Klaatu... Veratha..."

"No! Stop!" Takeria shouts.

If you want to intervene, now is the time!

ALATHUR COMES!

This is the final scene of the adventure, where all the chickens come home to roost and where Alathur could come again.

The battlefield is the main hall of the temple, 18" by 24", with the long side on the north-south axis. Place the dais (6" by 4") with the altar on it (1" by 2") within 4" of the northern wall, while on the opposite side is the main entrance of the temple, a gate 4" wide.

The two sides of the room hosts a line of columns, three of which are heavily damaged (see below). Concealed behind one of the columns on the eastern colonnade there is the 1" door leading to the service room where the secret passage stood.

Takeria and Talak begin within 1" of the altar, while the rest of the Xalathi are placed in the room, at least 4" away from the dais and from the southern gate.

The position of the heroes depends on how they entered the scene. If they were captured (see Captured Heroes below) they start within 1" of the altar. If they were in the service room they are still within it. If they were on the rafters they can begin the scene wherever they want, but remember they are on the rafters!

The scene goes on till Alathur is summoned (see Alathur's Return below), at this point go on with Stabbed to Life!

(WC) Princess Takeria. See page 34.

(WC) Talak of the Xalathi (1). See page 37.

(E) Xalathi (3 per hero). See page 34.

TERRAIN AND PROPS

- **Alathur's Return:** However the heroes became involved in the scene, the dagger is now either being moved by an unknown force (Strength d10) or in the hands of Talak (Strength d10, Wild Die). The dagger or its holder are trying to stab Takeria (Strength d4) in the heart, and to achieve this they must win an opposed Strength roll with a raise (given the girl's panic). If the dagger or Talak rolls a 1 on the Strength die, the dagger evilly turns toward Talak and stabs him! When this happens, go to Stabbed to Life.

- **Bone Fire:** Bone fires are 2" wide and count as Difficult ground, plus dealing 2d4 damage to whoever steps into them. Place up to two on the battlefield. Desperate heroes can take a piece of flaming material from the bone fire; consider it a Small Improvised Weapon which can set the enemy afire as per the standard Savage Worlds rules.

- **Captured Heroes:** If the heroes are captured, they are unarmed, and there are two Xalathi within 2" from them. These guards are automatically Surprised. The heroes' stuff is piled in a heap, 2d4" away from a random hero.

- **Columns:** Each colonnade has twelve columns, each of them 2" wide. They count as Heavy (-4) Cover. Three columns are damaged, this means they are not connected to the ceiling and can be toppled over with a Strength (-4) roll, which can be cooperative. A toppled column falls on a 2" by 6" area, and deals 3d6 damage, counting as a Heavy Weapon, to every target which fails an Agility (-4) roll to get out of harm's way.

• **On the Rafters:** The rafters are a sort of grid of wooden beams, 1" wide, crossing all over the room, in squares of 6" by 6" (each square border being a rafter). They are at Low altitude (see Fast Falling Setting rules from SEPC) from the ground and have Toughness 7. Characters wounded or Shaken while on them must roll vs Agility to avoid falling down. Getting down from the rafters can be done with a jump (an Agility roll to suffer half falling damage, no damage with a raise) or, using a whole round, with a rope.

• **Party Crashers:** If the heroes aren't in the company of Lizard or have previously wounded the Clacker, from the second round on, draw a card from the Action Deck each turn. If it is a club, Lizard arrives with his men, joining the fight (he is only interested in the dagger and Takeria); or the Clacker storms in, looking for the people who wounded it. Only one of the two encounters happens (Lizard has priority).

STABBED TO LIFE!

The following text supposes Takeria is stabbed by the golden dagger, if Talak is the victim, change it accordingly.

The golden blade, as if driven by an unknown hand, buries itself in the chest of the girl, right in her heart, till only the grotesque handle sticks out from under her breasts.

Takeria's eyes widen, while she whispers "Please... no..."

Then her body shakes uncontrollably, and the ground starts doing the same.

The girl wails and falls down, while the Xalathi shout ecstatically "Alathur! Alathur! Alathur!"

Something weird is happening to the Tricarnian Princess: an enormous, bulbous eye opens on her forehead, and a mane of long tentacles grows from her neck.

The girl's body rises, now clearly possessed by Alathur. In a deep, inhuman voice, Alathur says "Finally free."

Then stares at you and adds "Hungry."

All the heroes and their allies must make a Fear check, while all the Xalathi are automatically Shaken, in awe.

Alathur walks in the Dominions now, and it is eager to savour them. The demon attacks the party first.

There are several ways to defeat him, considering that Alathur is a demon. If the heroes found the Secret of Wa Shu they have a weapon to damage it.

Otherwise they must use the environment creatively, making the pillars fall on the monster, luring the Clacker into attacking it, using the bone fires and the flaming logs on it, or, if they are very brave, removing the dagger from the heart of the host (see Alathur description).

When the party manages to defeat Alathur, go to The End.

(WC) Alathur. See page 31.

THE WAY OUT

There is a good chance the heroes decide to go on their way and leave Takeria and the dagger to their own devices. This is entirely reasonable on their part. If this happens, their exploration of the labyrinth is focused on finding the exit and reaching the Brokenchain Mountains.

This type of conclusion can be somewhat anti-climactic, but in this sidebar you'll find some ideas that you can flesh out to make it interesting.

Lizard is Waiting. The heroes reach a perimeter wall of the labyrinth, which they can climb to safety. But the eunuch with his men are keeping an eye on this zone from above, from the backs of their bats, and plummet from the sky upon the party. The heroes must run through an open area before reaching the safety of a ravine in the mountains. You can run the scene as a chase.

The Clacker on Their Heels. When the party arrive near the exit, a fissure in the wall of the labyrinth, they find the Clacker guarding it! The party must find a way to distract or kill it to reach safety.

The Army of the Eye. Use this option only if the party lose a lot of time in the labyrinth (at least a day). In this case during the night they see a terrible lightning storm (after Alathur takes full possession of Takeria). The morning after, a large warband of Xalathi, led by Alathur in its full glory, marches toward the northern gate of the labyrinth. Are they heading toward a specific place or are they simply looking for the heroes for some unknown reason?

THE END

The following text supposes the heroes remove the dagger from Takeria's chest and that Lizard is with them. Otherwise, change or reword it accordingly.

You drag the ensorcelled blade from the chest of the girl, who cries out, eyes wide from an unimaginable fear.

Her hands go her chest, desperately trying to hold in the blood from what you know is a mortal wound.

But wait a moment - there is no blood between Takeria's lovely breasts, no sign of a wound at all.

"What... what happened?" she whispers, before fainting.

Good question.

The dagger in your hand, which has cost so many lives, crumbles and falls to the ground, reduced to a fine dust.

In the same moment the few Xalathi still alive cry in pain, weeping blood from their unnatural third eyes.

"This happens when a god dies," the eunuch says, in a soft voice.

But it doesn't end there: the walls of the temple start trembling, and you run away before it collapses, taking the unconscious princess with you.

The heroes have destroyed the dagger, eliminating a great danger from the Dominions, but, as often happens, their actions pass unnoticed.

If they are on amicable terms with Lizard, the eunuch will let them go with Takeria, he might even let them take a shadow bat to fly away from Tricarnia.

Once outside, the heroes are on their own. They are probably under-equipped and penniless, but if they have a Tricarnian Princess as a hostage, surely they can devise something interesting.

Otherwise they must still escape the labyrinth, with all the risks this implies...

HANDOUTS

HANDOUT #1

“I, Zamikar of Nal Taraska, after exploring the labyrinth for seven moons, finally discovered the truth: the Xalath is a piece of another [...], dragged into this world by the Demon Lord Tirain to entrap his servant Alathur, Lord of the Eyes, to punish him for [...].

“Alathur’s spirit is trapped in an ancient golden dagger, which must be hidden somewhere there. If used to perform a human sacrifice it will grant the bearer enormous powers...”

HANDOUT #2

“I located where the Xalathi, the followers of the Lord of the Eyes, dwell. In an ancient temple in the heart of the Labyrinth. I must sneak inside and find the dagger. I don’t know if I’ll be able to do that. In any case, I hid some important things in the old Keronian Tower, on the second floor, behind the stone marked with the Hordan rune. May the Queen of Darkness protect me.”

HANDOUT #3

“What a fool I was! The labyrinth is alive! A growing thing! And the dagger is A TRAP! ALATHUR MUST NOT BE FREED!! [*blood stains - the diary ends there*]”

CREATURES AND NPCS

AARI

The Aari are a sort of crows, with a third eye on their foreheads. They come from another world, and were slowly corrupted by Alathur.

Swarm: Swarms are treated just like a creature. Swarms cover an area equal to a Medium Burst Template and attack everyone within it every round. When a Swarm is wounded, its size decreases to a Small Burst Template (see the Split Special Ability for smaller Swarms). A further hit disperses it.

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

Skills: Notice d6.

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities

- **Flight:** Aari swarms fly at a Pace of 10 and have Climb -1.
- **Split:** This flock is clever enough to split into two smaller flocks (Small Burst Templates) should its foes split up. The Toughness of the smaller flocks is lowered by -2 (to 5 each) and their Agility is lowered by a die step.
- **Storm of Claws:** An Aari flock inflicts hundreds of tiny scratches every round, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template. Damage is applied to the least armored location (victims in completely sealed suits are immune). In addition, as these beasts are very fierce and naturally tend to target the eyes and other vital spots, they automatically perform an Agility Trick on targets caught in the template.
- **Swarm:** Parry +2; since the flock includes dozens of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons only deal half damage. Area-effect weapons work normally.



ALATHUR

The Lord of the Eyes is a very ancient creature, a servant of Tirain, Master of Cages, who he betrayed millennia ago. Alathur isn't very smart: he is basically a sentinel and what he does best is watching. His stare, obviously, isn't one a mortal can easily sustain.

Alathur is eager to savor the taste of a mortal body now, and is very, very hungry. The Lord of the Eyes can walk in the Dominions only by possessing a host, which must be stabbed with his Blade and which must meet very special requirements: it must be of Tricarnian origin and without any magical power.

Alathur can be summoned only through his Blade.

Chosen Host: the perfect host for Alathur is Princess Takeria. If he is forced to take over Talak or another character, reduce the demon's Spirit by one die step and halve his Power Points.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d10, Tracking d10

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

Special Abilities

- **Dagger in the Chest:** Alathur can be exorcized by removing the Blade of the Eye from the body of the host. To do so, first the dagger must be grabbed with a grapple attack. Then the dagger must be removed, overpowering the physical or spiritual strength of the demon. In game terms, the character chooses if rolling on Strength or Spirit and then makes an opposed roll with Alathur. For each success and raise the character gains an Extraction Token. When he gets six or more of them,

the Blade of the Eye is removed and the host is freed.

- **Demon:** +2 to recovering from being Shaken; Immune to poison and disease.
- **Invulnerability:** Alathur can be Shaken, but not wounded, by anything which isn't connected to his Weakness.
- **Lord of the Eyes:** The third eye of Alathur is a threat to any mortal caught in its stare. It has the following Powers *burst* (consume the soul), *fear* (unravel deepest fears), *stun* (see the void), which affect every target in a cone template. Alathur has 30 Power Points and uses Spirit as its arcane skill. The third eye can be hit with a Called Shot (-4) and has Toughness 4. Beating the eye's Toughness is enough to destroy it but unless the damage is done by something linked to Alathur's Weaknesses, it will regrow in two rounds.
- **Manc of Tentacles:** Str+d4, Reach 3. Alathur's neck is surrounded by four tentacles. Alathur can attack each round with all his tentacles without any multi-action penalty but he cannot use his Lord of the Eyes Special Ability in the same round. The tentacles have Toughness 6 and can be severed if they are hit with a Called Shot (-2) and wounded, but they regrow at the end of the round unless they are cut with something linked to Alathur's Weaknesses.
- **Weaknesses:** Alathur is a demon and is vulnerable to steel and to fire. In addition, being a host in a mortal body, Heavy Weapons can damage him normally (in this case the body, if freed from the demon, will be destroyed). Alathur can also be exorcized by removing the dagger planted in the heart of the victim (see Dagger in the Chest above).

BLACK RIDER

The Black Riders of Nal Taraska are an elite group of chosen warriors, who ride Shadow Bats in battle and patrol the Brokenchain Mountains looking for escaped slaves. They are feared even by the other slaves.

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

Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d4, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Survival d4, Throwing d6.

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

Edges: Beast Rider, Steady Hands.

Hindrances: Loyal (their beast).

Gear: Bronze long sword (Str+d8), rider lance (Str+d10, AP 2 when charging, Reach 2, see notes), rider whip (Str+d4, Reach 4, see notes), medium bronze shield (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness vs ranged attacks), medium bronze armor (+2), Shadow Bat (see page 35).

Special Abilities

- **Lord of the Beast:** Whenever in the saddle of his mighty mount, a Black Rider obtains +1 to Charisma and to Intimidation rolls, due his position of obvious power.

MAN-EATING FLOWER

These enormous flowers are the mouths and feeding apparatus of an alien plant brought to the Dominions by the magic of the Xalath. They are mindless on their own, because the brain of the plant guiding them dwells deep in the ground, in the roots of the plant.

Man-Eating Flowers are Henchmen.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+2, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6

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

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str.
- **Crawling:** Man-Eating Flowers cannot run.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no extra damage; does not suffer from disease or poison.
- **Swallow:** If a Man-Eating Flower hits with a raise, it swallows its victim completely, if it is Size +2 or less. A swallowed victim doesn't suffer from the bite damage, but she is dealt 2d4 acid damage each round by the digestive juices of the creature until she breaks free. Freeing a swallowed creature requires winning an opposed Strength roll with the plant, at -4 if the person trying is inside the plant.
- **Size +3:** Man-Eating Flowers are big enough to swallow a man.
- **Weakness (Flower Articulation):** The flower's articulation is the point where the corolla joins with the stem. A called shot (-4) here with a cutting weapon deals double damage to the plant.
- **Weakness (Stamen):** The flower's stamen is very enervated. It can be hit with a Called Shot (-2) and only has Toughness 3. Any damage exceeding the Toughness destroys it and makes the creature Shaken, plus causing it a permanent -2 to all Trait rolls.



CLACKER

This creature was originally a simple ant, mutated and abnormally grown by some weird Lotus it ate in the labyrinth. The new size has a lot of advantages, but also makes the beast permanently hungry. It owes its name to the trademark clacking sound it makes when its claws walk on the stone flooring of the labyrinth.

Golden Bennie of the Clacker: Defeating this monster grants the hero delivering the killing blow this special Golden Bennie which, if used to reroll damage against bigger-than-human enemies, gives a damage bonus equal to double the Size modifier of the monster (so if used against a Size +5 creature, it grants +10 to the damage roll).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+2, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9

Special Abilities

- **Armor +3:** Chitin shell.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Heavy Armor:** The thick shell of the Clacker makes it impervious to anything short of a Heavy Weapon. The only noticeable exception lies in its Weakness.
- **Large:** Attack rolls against the Clacker are made at +2 due to its imposing size.
- **Size +4:** The Clacker is as big as a rhino, and at least as dangerous.
- **Weakness (Eyes):** The eyes of the Clacker are as big as a human head (-4 to hit) and resemble big crystal-covered hemispheres. Each of them has Toughness 5. Destroying one, as well as Shaking the beast, gives it -2 to all Trait rolls involving sight, while destroying both makes it blind (see Savage Worlds core rules).



LIZARD

Lizard isn't your typical eunuch. Strong, fit and muscular, he is completely bald. The only thing revealing his condition is his soft, alto voice. He owes his name to his eyes, cold and heartless as those of a reptile. Lizard's race is unknown, he is a mix of the many races from which the Sons of Keron take their slaves. Gifted with a knack for sorcery, Lizard carved out a special position for himself in the hierarchy of Nal Taraska. Officially a servant of the Priest Prince, he is more or less a

mercenary, working for whoever pays him best. At the moment he is working for the youngest son of the Prince, Askor, but the true loyalty of Lizard is to one person: himself.

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d6, Healing d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Riding d6, Sorcery d8, Stealth d8, Streetwise d8

Cha: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: -.

Edges: Arcane Background (Sorcery), Command, New Power, Loincloth Hero, Power Points, Trademark Weapon (bone whip)

Powers [15 PP]: *armor* (glyph of warding), *deflection* (supernatural reflexes), *smite* (animate whip – gains Reach 6, ignore Parry bonus of shields)

Gear: Lizard's bone whip (Str+d4, Reach 2, see Powers), twin bronze daggers (Str+d4, Range: 3/6/12, ROF: 1).

Special Abilities:

- **Taste the Whip!** Lizard can use his whip for a called shot (-2) targeting a friendly Slave Soldier to make him fight with more vigor. If the target is hit, he doesn't suffer any damage but receives +1 to his attack rolls for the rest of the fight.



PRINCESS TAKERIA

Princess Takeria is a gorgeous girl with pale long limbs and a mane of black silken hair. She looks very young, because she is very young: only twenty years old, which is a puppy for a pure-blooded Tricarnian noble such as she. Takeria has a flaw: she is totally ungifted in the magical arts, making her the black sheep of the family. The only thing keeping her alive is that her father, the Priest Prince of Nal Taraska, has a fondness for her, but Takeria knows she is living on borrowed time and must find some way to repair her faulty condition.

On the personal side, Takeria is as ruthless and remorseless as any Tricarnian, but years of staying in her father's goodwill has taught her to be absolutely adorable if she wants, especially to persons in positions of power over her.

She despises (and fears) her younger brother Askor, who now wants to kill her to become the sole heir of Nal Taraska.

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Healing d4, Knowledge (Arcana) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8

Cha: +8; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Damsel in Distress, Enemy (Askor)

Edges: Noble, Very Attractive

Gear: Jeweled Bikini.

Special Abilities:

- **Good Lungs:** Takeria tends to scream a lot, especially when the bad, ugly monster is about to grab her! She has a very shrill voice and any Notice roll to hear or locate her receives a +2 bonus, as long as she is within 12" of her targets. In addition, when facing certain monsters with very sensitive ears (Game Master's decision), her screams count as a Smarts Trick.

ROTTEN EYE

Many, many years ago Rotten Eye had another name and hunted free in the far Lush Jungle. He had a brother too. Then the bad men caught them, took them away in a big, stinking barge and they started a life of slavery, fishing out giant leeches for the Pale Lords. But no cage can hold a Pygmy for long and

Rotten Eye escaped, evading the bloodhounds and the guards, till he ended up in this strange place. He isn't home, but at least he is free.

Rotten Eye is a Right Hand.

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d10, Survival d8, Throwing d8

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Delusional (speaks to his dead brother), Small, Ugly

Edges: Woodsman

Gear: Bone dagger (Str+d4), Rotten Eye's sling (Str+d6, Range: 6/12/24), necklace of embalmed Xalathi eyes.

Special Abilities:

- **Labyrinth Survivor:** Rotten Eye knows a lot about the labyrinth. Every time he enters a location in it, make a Smarts roll. With a success he knows something about it.

SAND EEL

These creatures are insects, but their serpentine shape and the environment where they dwell contribute to the name. Sand Eels "swim" under the sand and their breathing apparatus filters out even the finest dust. They are carnivorous and capable of making jumps out of the sand, using their burrowing ability to catch prey in flight (especially birds).

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 2; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Burrow:** Sand Eels "swim" under sand at Pace 6 with the normal Burrowing rules (see Savage Worlds core rules).

SHADOW BAT

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

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

These specimens belong to a special breed, and are much bigger than normal.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+3, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6

Pace: 3; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 11

Special Abilities

- **Bat Sight:** Shadow Bats ignore all Darkness penalties.
- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Flight:** Shadow Bats fly at a rate of 6", with Climb -1.
- **Large:** Attacks against Shadow Bats receive +2 due to the size of the creatures.
- **Size +4:** Shadow Bats are usually equivalent in size to a warhorse, but these specimens are much bigger.
- **Spooky:** Characters seeing a Shadow Bat for the first time must make a Fear roll.



- **Weakness (Light and Sound):** Shadow Bats are very susceptible to strong sounds and flashes of light. They subtract 2 from opposed rolls against light or sound based attacks and have the same penalty to recover from Shaken effects caused by light or sound.



TALAK OF THE XALATHI

Talak is the biggest and strongest of the Xalathi. His physical power is matched only by his faith and devotion to the Lord of the Eyes.

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: -1; Pace: 6; Parry: 7; Toughness: 7

Edges: Command, Elan, Priest, Improved Sweep

Gear: Stone battle axe (Str+d8), Blade of Alathur (Str+d4, see sidebar on page 14), hood.

Special Abilities

- **Eye of Alathur:** The third eye in the forehead of the Xalathi is a gift of Alathur. They can see through any magic or illusion (they can use the detect arcana Power at will, using Spirit as the arcane skill) but full, direct sunlight isn't good for it (consider this Dim light unless the Xalathi is wearing his hood).
- **Size +1:** Xalathi are bigger than humans and notably stronger.
- **Servant of Alathur:** Xalathi are totally faithful to Alathur and will give their lives for their demon god. They use the Fanatics Setting Rule to protect the avatar of Alathur, if present.
- **Ugly:** The third eye in the Xalathi's head makes them quite horrible, causing -2 to Charisma.

TAKAZIS SLAVE WARRIOR

This slave belongs to one of the Lotus Castes of Tricornia, and both his body and his mind were twisted by Lotus. Takazis are one of the slave castes typical of Nal Taraska, and were selected and bred to look like mantises, creatures the lord of this city find particularly interesting. For this reason they are very tall and thin, unnaturally fast and with bulging eyes. In addition they don't speak normally (although they understand Tricornian and Imperial), because their tongues are modified during childhood and make them capable of speaking only with a series of glottal sounds.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Throwing d6

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

Edges: Quick.

Hindrances: Habit (Slavemush), Loyal, Mute.

Gear: Bronze-tipped spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands), bronze dagger (Str+d4), black chitin armor (+2), black chitin helm (+2), bow (Damage: 2d6, Range: 12/24/48, ROF: 1).

Special Abilities

- **Drugged Mind:** A slave's daily diet consists of a mix of rice and meat or fish, the slavemush, spiced with Khav and other particular types of Lotus that make him very obedient. However, if he can't get any drugged food for a week, he becomes very jumpy, receiving -2 to Fear checks, as per the Yellow Hindrance.

XALATHI

These primitive men were captured by the labyrinth centuries ago and became the servants of Alathur. The Lord of the Eyes mutated them, giving them a third, fully functional eye in their foreheads. Xalathi exist only to serve Alathur.



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

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Gear: Wide-bladed stone-tipped spear (Str+d8, 2 hands, Reach 1), stone dagger (Str+d4), sling (Str+d4, Range: 4/8/16), hood.

Special Abilities

- **Eye of Alathur:** The third eye in the foreheads of the Xalathi is a gift of Alathur. They can see through any magic or illusion (they can use the detect arcana Power at will, using Spirit as arcane skill) but full, direct sunlight isn't good for it (consider this Dim light unless the Xalathi is wearing his hood).

- **Size +1:** Xalathi are bigger than humans and notably stronger.

- **Servant of Alathur:** Xalathi are totally faithful to Alathur and will give their lives for their demon god. They use the Fanatics Setting Rule to protect the avatar of Alathur, if present.

- **Ugly:** The third eye in the Xalathi's head makes them quite horrible, causing -2 to Charisma.

XART

Xarts are beasts which came from another dimension, brought to the Dominions by accident during one of the many expansions of the labyrinth.

They are small quadrupeds, with the physical structure of lynxes, but covered in scales. In truth they are reptilians, with a strong pack mentality which makes them excellent hunters.

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

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

Pace: 2; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 4

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d6.

- **Quick:** Xarts are very fast. They may discard Action Cards of 5 or lower and draw another. They must keep the replacement card, however.

- **Size -1:** Xarts are roughly the size of dogs.

- **Poisonous Claws:** Str+d4. A character Shaken or wounded by a Xart's claws must make a Vigor roll or suffer the effect of a mild Poison, which causes a level of Fatigue for a day.

APPENDIX ~ TRICARNIAN RIDER GEAR

In Tricarnia the art of riding giant beasts in war and for other purposes, for example scouting and spying, is well developed, and so over the centuries the Sons of Keron developed special gear and techniques. Some of them (which the heroes will find in this adventure) are described in this chapter.

Tricarnian Rider Weapons Table

TYPE	DAMAGE	WEIGHT	COST	NOTES
Exotic Weapons Table				
Rider Whip	Str+d4	4	200	Reach 4, see notes
Polcarm				
Rider Lance	Str+d10	12	400	AP 2, Reach 2, usable only while riding a Large creature

Rider Lance. This massive lance is used only on war beasts of huge dimensions (Shadow Bats, Yalaruka and similar). The handle must be placed in a particular hook on the harness to allow the rider to use it, employing all the force of his mount. Otherwise, if you are very strong (Strength d10+), you can brace it with two hands. It can only be used in the saddle, but if in dire need you can break the shaft (with a Strength roll) to obtain a normal-length spear.

Rider Whip. This very long rope-like whip was devised to help riders control their beasts. If used in that way, it gives +1 to all Riding rolls, but if the rider rolls a 1 on the skill die, regardless of the Wild Die, the beast rebels. It is also used in combat, mainly to make grappling rolls at a distance. Attacks at more than Reach 2 suffer -2 to the Fighting roll. With a success, the grappler uses the higher of his Strength or his mount's.

BOOK OF LORE: THE LABYRINTH OF ALATH

"Xalath Athur Xalath Var!"

- Ancient Invocation from the Book of Keron

A FISSURE IN THE WORLD

Of the many strange places in the Dominions, few are stranger than the Xalath, the Labyrinth of Alath.

This weird formation is located in the north-east of Tricarnia, bordering the southern outskirts of the Brokenchain Mountains. The best way to appreciate the true form and size of this geographic feature is from above, staring at it from the top of the mountains.

In this case the traveler will see beneath his eye a network of passages, basins, and roof-less corridors as if someone had carved them in the ground with a knife.

Despite their chaotic appearance, the pattern of the passages has something regular about it, a geometric perfection like the web of a spider or the stains on the wings of a moth.

Is this place natural or artificial? It is very difficult to understand; much of the Xalath is made of natural passages, but sometimes you can find artificial structures, mostly ruins, perfectly integrated into the labyrinth.

The few who came back alive from that cursed place report that the greater part of these buildings are different from any seen elsewhere in the Dominions, as if they came from another world, and that they are in a state of abandonment.

So, what can the origin and the truth of that place be? There is no sure answer to this question, but you can find several reasonable theories in the sidebar.

ORIGIN OF THE XALATH: THE THEORIES

An Ancient Keronian Ruin. The most realistic and concrete theory on the origin of the Xalath is that the labyrinth is in truth part of a larger complex, probably a citadel, a fortress or an observatory-temple, built during the apogee of the Empire of Keron and then forgotten and abandoned. The labyrinthine appearance probably has some mystical purpose, as it is known that Tricarnian buildings are made following precise patterns to magnify supernatural energies. Or, another option which should not be discounted, the labyrinth is a sign for alien minds dwelling in the skies which can use it to pinpoint the location of Keron.

The Fall of the Dread Star drastically changed the landscape and for many centuries the areas around the labyrinth were submerged by water. When these disappeared, the marvels of engineering and craft were reduced to a mass of ruins. According to this theory the purple storms are due to the wild magical energies caused by the broken patterns of the labyrinth. The Xalath obviously doesn't grow; this is only a wild rumor.

A Rift to Other Dimensions. A wild idea if ever there was one; some believe the Xalath isn't part of the Dominions at all, but is instead a permanent rift to another

dimension, a sort of gaping mouth which periodically takes things and places from other worlds and adds them organically to the labyrinth. The purple storms, in this case, are the signs of approaching change, and maybe the agents of it. Followers of this theory obviously recognize the Xalath is growing, but they don't have an explanation for how and why this happens. The structure of the labyrinth, in fact, makes you think that there is an intelligence of some sort guiding the expansion of the place, and, in a limited way, guiding the minds of the creatures dwelling inside. Note that over many centuries the monsters have never escaped to wander about the lands nearby.

A Demon Lord's Playground. Since this is Tricarnia, another very logical supposition is that the Xalath is the creation of a demon of some sort. And it must be a powerful and clever one, with a love of traps, labyrinths and general deviousness. And who is more apt than Tirain, Lord of Cages? Sorcerers interrogating the otherworld have heard whispers that the Xalath is a prison for Alathur, a servant of the Lord of Cages trapped in it for betraying its master. This is probably true (as this scenario testifies), but are we sure that Alathur is the real reason for the existence of the labyrinth?

The Real Truth. I am very sorry, gentle reader, but the real truth of the origin and nature of the Xalath is unknown even to me; it is probably a mixture of all the theories above. Feel free, as a GM, to find your own answer to this question!

THE PURPLE STORMS

One of the most mysterious and disturbing factors of the Xalath are the purple storms.

At random, the skies over the labyrinth darken with violet clouds, and a lightning storm appears over the labyrinth, for a duration that can vary from a few minutes to many hours.

At these times the way in or out of the labyrinth is blocked, because the violence of the lightning strikes prevents anyone from moving.

When the storm ends, the labyrinth is changed, its boundaries extended, sometimes only by a few feet, at other times by hundreds of yards.

At least, this is what the soldiers of Nal Taraska on guard duty around the borders of the labyrinth swear.

Interesting, and terrifying, isn't it?

GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

The geography of the Xalath isn't easy to describe, given its mutating nature (if this is true), but there are some fixed aspects you must take into consideration.

One Entrance and one Exit. Whatever shape and size the labyrinth assumes, there is always one entrance in the south side, toward Tricarnia, and one on the north side, toward the Brokenchain Mountains. These accesses are always a couple of ancient gates, without any doors, carved with runes of Keronian origin.

Other ways in and out may be present, but they are subject to change.

The River. The Labyrinth is crossed by a river which originates in a mass of ruins in the northwest part of the Xalath, snakes across it, and disappears in a fissure in the ground. While the course of the river can change, its approximate origin and end are fixed. Other rivers and channels can

sometimes appear, of various types. For example sometimes channels pumping out sand appear.

Artificial and Natural Mixed Together. The labyrinth seamlessly mixes natural elements, such as channels, clearings, basins, crevasses and grottoes, with artificial ones, like corridors, bridges, and ruins of every kind. Whatever their nature, they are always connected to other locations, creating a network difficult to navigate.

Surface and Underground. The labyrinth is largely above ground. In fact, from the mountains or another high point of view, you can see the complex pattern of passages composing it, but there are rumors that under it there is maze of corridors and passages, totally unexplored. Who can say where they lead?

ECOLOGY

HUNGRY VEGETABLES

The labyrinth is ripe with vegetation, the greater part of it of alien and unknown origin. Even plain-looking plants, like the Labyrinth Apples which can be found in certain orchards of the Xalath, are extremely poisonous if eaten.

In particular, whoever made the labyrinth was fond of carnivorous plants, because they can be found in various sizes and types, which makes some think that there is some sort of mind behind them (see the Lord of the Vines below).

The most common one is the Green Giant, a mass of fist-sized vines, with flowers big enough to swallow a horse. This is very dangerous and can get quite big, covering an area of several hundreds of square feet. The smaller vines entangle the poor victims passing through them, keeping them restrained while the flowers slowly move to reach and devour them. The mind of the plant is planted deep in the ground, at least three feet down, and resembles a potato-like brain. Killing it destroys every function in the plant, which dies in a few days. Another way to destroy this abomination is fire: if you recognize the multi-colored heart-shaped leaves of the Green Giant you can easily throw something flammable on it, like straw or dry wood, set it alight and enjoy the show.

A very different business are the Root Spiders. These creatures actually look like cat-sized spiders, made of roots and other vegetable parts. Unlike real spiders they have a number of legs varying from seven to twelve, and a long stinger they use to inject a paralyzing venom into the victim. Root Spiders have a symbiotic relationship with Spider Trees, plants looking like miniature baobabs. Root Spiders pass much of their time hanging from Spider Trees like oversized fruits, planting their stingers in the bark of the tree and sucking sap from it. When potential prey passes nearby they kill it, and drag it near the Spider Tree which sucks away the decomposing flesh with its roots.

In certain areas of the labyrinth there are Root Spiders big as ponies, rumors say, but there aren't any confirmed sightings.

Apart from the plants above (and there are many others of which we could speak), there is a great quantity of Lotus specimens in the Xalath.

The Sawdust Lotus is probably the most dangerous one. A fine yellow powder, resembling saffron, it grows on violet flowers and it is very volatile. When, dragged by the wind, it touches flesh, it infests it, creating hard-crusting yellow pustules, totally painless, which expand rapidly in the most humid parts of the body (neck, armpits and so on). After few days the pustules crumble into a fine sawdust-like powder, taking away a good chunk of flesh. Then pustules appear again and the cycle restarts. If not cauterized with fire, Sawdust Lotus can actually reduce a man to dust.

Luckily not every type of Lotus found in the labyrinth is dangerous. Inside the passages, for

example, can be found the Kingfisher Lotus, a particular type of bamboo, which grows only in water. The particularity of this plant is that it produces small quantities of an amber-colored sap, which has the property of curing melancholy of every type, at least while its effect lasts. As a comparison, the sensations given by this drug are fifty times more intense than any Khav.

Another very unusual Lotus found in the Labyrinth is the Crystal Lotus. This plant looks exactly like a crystal of quartz, of various colors (light yellow being the commonest), but in truth it is a fungus growing on some very large droppings left by a mysterious beast. The effects of the Crystal Lotus aren't well studied, but there are rumors it can be used to solidify gases in crystalline formations.

CREATURES FROM NOWHERE

Many creatures dwell in the Xalath. They belong to two different categories: creatures mutated by the effects of weird Lotus growing in the labyrinth and beasts never seen in the Dominions, probably coming from other worlds.

To the first group belong, for example, a number of insects grown to impressive size, like the legendary Clacker (see this adventure) or the less famous but more common Imperial Bug, a thick-shelled, twelve-legged beast, big as a dog, which lurks in the shady areas of the maze. This creature is omnivorous in the true sense of the word, and always very hungry.

Another creature mutated from the Lotus present in the labyrinth is the Maze Snapper, which is very similar to the bipedal raptors found in the ruined lands of Keron or, sometimes, kept in the arenas of the Tricarnian lords. A Snapper is basically a small dinosaur with semi-erect posture, very developed upper appendages (we may almost consider them hands) and a terrible bite. Probably some of them escaped from the pits of nearby Nal Taraska and found a suitable environment here. In the labyrinth the beasts mutated: their body became taller but leaner, gaining in quickness while losing something in strength. They also changed the pigmentation of their skin, and are almost always milky white, instead of the customary jet black.

Regarding the animals belonging to the second group, there are a number of them, and every time the purple storms appear something new comes in.

The Gulibaza, for example, is very long snake, up to fifteen yards long. This colorfully-striped creature has a curious mane of stingers around the neck and its customary attack consists of shooting a volley of them at its prey (up to a dozen yards away). The stingers are filled with a paralyzing venom which gives the Gulibaza all the time it needs to swallow the victim. During the digestion process the Gulibaza is sleepy, almost catatonic, and usually no threat.

One of the weirdest creatures found in the labyrinth is the Blinder. Very similar to a bear of Norheim in size and ferocity, this ursine creature has no eyes. Instead, on the front of its head it has a series of fleshy plates which it uses as a sensory organ.

Blinders are known to be vicious hunters as they are very quiet and need no light to hunt. They like to kill their victims and bury them somewhere, returning days later to eat them when the meat is ripe.

GM'S TIP: OTHER PLACES OR OTHER TIMES?

Populating the labyrinth with creatures and locations from other dimensions is cool, but what about taking them from other times of the Dominions?

What about a living Prince of Keron?

Or someone who actually knew Emperor Domestan or Dhaar?

Or including in the labyrinth one of the ancient cities of the Cairnlanders' ancestors?

The possibilities are endless...

LOCATIONS AND CHARACTERS

The Xalath is a place full of life and mystery, where many strange creatures and places are found. It is impossible, in the short space available, to describe all of them. In this section you'll find several characters and places you can use to create your own plots in the Labyrinth.

Crying Girl. Many have witnessed the crying girl, a young woman pinned to the ground with a rune-carved spear. Why has nobody tried to free her? The question has no answer but this story has been circulating for a dozen years. There is something very dark about this tale.

Lord of the Vines. There are rumors of a mysterious Lotusmaster dwelling in a moss-covered tower in an area of the labyrinth called Rottenleaf, heavily infested by plants. It seems that the majority of the mutated plants in the Xalath were created by him. Nobody knows if he is human or not, but there are rumors he wears a mask of polished wood, very similar to that of the Master Alchemists of Gis.

Pool of Rebirth. One of the few to emerge alive from the Xalath, an escaped slave, reports a very disturbing experience he had. He spied some frog-faced beings throwing the dead body of a man in a pool of slimy grayish liquid. After some bubbling and gurgling, another frog-faced creature emerged from the pool!

The Stone Archer. There is large statue somewhere in the Xalath, representing an amazon warrior with a bow and a helm. The statue is perfectly still, but more than one creature has been found dead nearby, its heart pierced by a stone arrow.

The Chain Maker. Years ago the imperial agents tracked down Toras, one of the few Smith Priests of Hulian who still knew some of the ancient secrets. The warrior smith escaped the hounds by fleeing into the Xalath, from whence he never came out. Rumors say Toras knows how to craft a chain capable of enslaving a demon and probably he is making one somewhere in the labyrinth.

The Tomb of Pranikos. Priest Prince Pranikos, one of the most famous astrologers of the last three centuries, made his slaves bury him in a tomb somewhere in the labyrinth, in the "place where everything connects with everything". Nobody knows what this means, but it is certain Pranikos was buried with many treasures, including a vial of the precious Waters of Eternity, a substance which old Tricarnians used to put themselves into a centuries-long sleep.

The Queen of Syranthia. Ten years ago the *Queen of Syranthia*, a ship full of gold destined to hire a mercenary army in the Independent Cities, mysteriously disappeared. The figurine of the ship, a blonde-headed woman with a branch in her hands, cannot be mistaken. And how could that figure now be the idol of a band of frog-faced creatures?

Vermin Town. Somewhere in the labyrinth there is a group of ramshackle houses where a band of desperate people dwells. They are outcasts of society who found shelter there. They are led by a tyrannical former soldier called Snake Head and his bodyguards, who keep a semblance of law in the small settlement. Vermin Town is a rather peaceful place to rest if you mind your own business.

XALATH LOCATION GENERATOR

Creating an interesting Location for the Labyrinth can be difficult. If you are stuck, you can always get an idea by rolling a d20 three times and checking the table below.

This generator gives you a rough idea of what a place is and its use in the story. As always with random generators, don't feel constrained by the results, and feel free to use only one or two results, or even totally ignore them, to create the perfect scenario for your group.

D20	FIRST QUALIFIER	LOCATION	SECOND QUALIFIER
1	Moss Covered...	...Temple...	...Which Hides a Secret.
2	Heavily Guarded...	...Corridor...	...Raided a Long Time Ago.
3	Cursed...	...Building* ...	...Filled with Skeletons.
4	Burned Down...	...Well...	...Which isn't What it Seems.
5	Trapped...	...Tower...	...With a Big Monster.
6	Haunted...	...Bridge...	...Where Nobody Goes.
7	Secure...	...Pond...	...Which Will Trap You Inside!
8	Gloomy...	...Column...	...With a Precious Treasure.
9	Petrified...	...Forest...	...Coming from the Past/Future/Another Place.
10	Insect Infested...	...Hamlet...	...Submerged in Water.
11	Foul-Smelling...	...Catacomb...	...Which Could Split the Party.
12	Rune Covered...	...Vehicle** ...	...Where there is Something Everybody Wants.
13	Enchanted...	...Cavern...	...Ruled by a Petty Tyrant.
14	Illusionary...	...Gate...	...Where Peaceful Creatures Dwell.
15	Holy/Unholy...	...Pit...	...Which is Difficult to Navigate.
16	Long Time Abandoned...	...Tomb...	...With a Hostile Environment.
17	Impassable...	...Plaza...	...With a Serious Lotus Infestation.
18	Secretly Hidden...	...Fissure...	...Where there is Something Trapped.
19	Crowded...	...Nest...	...Which Leads to Safety.
20	Dark...	... Encampment...	...Which Leads to Another World.

Notes: (*) This can be a public building like a library, baths, prison or a private one like a house, a villa or a shop

(***) A carriage, ship, boat or something even weirder

USING THE LABYRINTH IN PLAY

Finally, a word of advice.

The Xalath is basically an enormous dungeon, with a mysterious past and probably connected to other dimensions.

It can give you ideas and opportunities for whole campaigns, but you must be careful how you use it.

The most straightforward way to do so is using it for dungeon crawls, with the heroes exploring and mapping every part of it.

You can easily do that, there are even lots of random maps generators if you want, but this makes it easy to slip away from the mood of sword and sorcery and fall into a pure dungeon crawling game, which isn't what *Beasts and Barbarians* is supposed to be.

So, our suggestion is to use the Xalath for plot-oriented adventures, like the one in this booklet, where exploration is important, but not the focus of the game.

Remember the main features of the Xalath are the mystery and the fact it is constantly changing. Accurate mapping and precise exploration of this place could quickly spoil the interest of the party.