

THE JUSTICE OF KERIB SHAR

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BEASTS & BARBARIANS

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BEASTS BARBARIANS

A Sword and Sorcery Savage Worlds setting

By UMBERTO PIGNATELLI

HEROIC TALE THE JUSTICE OF KERIR SHAR

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"You can flee to the world's end, Jazimar, but for what you did to my son, I'll find you and rip your heart out!" Kerir Shar said.

The threats of a father are always to be taken seriously, the more so if he is one of the most powerful sorcerers in Syranthia.

But who is that strange merchant living in a remote village in the Verdant Belt, so far

away from civilization? And why does his blind daughter play such sad music?

Revenge, hate and the dangers of the mysterious Lush Jungle await you in this Heroic Tale.

Are you ready to endure the Justice of Kerir Shar?

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A NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS

CHARACTERS AND ENEMIES ARE DEFINED
IN THE TEXT AS FOLLOWS.

(E): EXTRA

(H): HENCHMAN

(RH): RIGHT HAND

(WC): WILD CARD

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *The Justice of Kerir Shar*, a Heroic Tale of the *Beasts & Barbarians* Savage Words setting.

To play this adventure you need a copy of the core rules of *Savage Worlds and Beasts & Barbarians Golden Edition*. This scenario is a tough one, and is designed for a party of four Veteran heroes (45-50 Experience Points is the optimal level), but it can easily be modified, following the *Golden Edition* instructions, for parties of different sizes and experience.

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

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

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

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

Otherwise, if you plan to run this adventure, read on, and learn of the Justice of Kerir Shar!

CHARACTER REQUIREMENTS

The adventure includes a hunt in the jungle and unraveling the plans of an evil sorcerer, so some Knowledge (Arcana) or Knowledge (Legends and Lore) could be useful. Having a sorcerer or a monk in the party will also be an advantage.

But remember that we are speaking of Sword and Sorcery, so a couple of good fighters are always handy.

All of the above are useful, but not essential, to run the scenario.

WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE

Three years ago, the city guards of Syranthia brought in front of the law a raven-haired man, accused of having killed an officer of the city guard. There were three judges, as tradition requires. Their names were Jazimar the Righteous, Vastro the Old and Talir the Mild. The eldest of them was Jazimar, famous for his severity.

The judges never questioned the prisoner, because the facts were clear and very serious. Unanimously, they condemned the stranger to death.

The prisoner was beheaded at dusk. But before the axe of the executioner could end his life, the convict spoke: "Fools! My father will avenge me! You'll face the wrath of Kerir Shar!"

A cold shiver run through the crowd watching the execution, as well as the judges: Kerir Shar was a powerful sorcerer, a man that even the Merchant

Princes of Syranthia dared not cross, who lived secluded in his palace in the Iron Mountains.

Then the head of the raven-haired man fell, cut off, a sardonic smile on his face.

A week later, Talir, the youngest judge, was found dead in his house: someone, or something, had literally ripped his heart from his chest. In his hand he held a red coin, like the ones the Syranthians put on the eyes and under the tongues of the dead to help them on their last journey into the afterlife.

Nobody checked, but Jazimar and Vastro, the remaining judges, recognized the coin as one of the three put on the raven-haired man's body, before burying him.

"Talir was a fool," Vastro said contemptuously. "He never wanted guards in his house. And look how he ended!"

And he doubled his personal escort.

But this wasn't enough: after another week, Judge Vastro, despite living locked in his palace, surrounded by guards, was found dead in his bath, his heart ripped out, and another red coin in his hand.

Nobody had heard a single cry.

Jazimar, the surviving judge, felt like a doomed man. There was only one thing he could do: flee, leaving Syranthia forever, to escape the vengeance of Kerir Shar. In the dead of night, he sneaked away from the city, taking with him his daughter Zimarra, his only family. Jazimar dropped his name; took a new one, a more common one, Jazim; and joined a caravan headed south, as far as possible from Syranthia and the wrath of Kerir Shar.

But, as the heroes will discover soon, the vengeance of a sorcerer has a long reach...

THE RED COIN

The heroes are in the far south of the Dominions, riding on the infamous Slave Route, used by Caldeian flesh merchants to take their wares to far Lhoban, to be acquired by the crimelords of Lhobanport. They traveled south because they heard there is turmoil among the various cities of the Verdant Belt, and hope to be hired as mercenaries, but so far they've had no luck. They've heard that there is a village called Kila nearby, and hope to find shelter for the night and some banana booze to drown their disappointment.

It is late afternoon, and the Route runs alongside the Lush Jungle, which drops heavy shadows on the path. You have heard disturbing stories of Pygmies and other threats coming out of the thick mangroves, and so you constantly keep a vigilant eye on the vegetation.

But in doing so, you don't pay much attention to the road, and this is why, taking a turn, you almost trample the man standing still in the middle of the path!

Ask the first hero in the order of march to make a Notice roll; if he is successful, he stops his horse without problems, if he fails, he must also make a Riding roll to avoid the man. In the case of failure he manages to dodge the man, but is unhorsed, suffering 2d6 damage.

The heroes will probably curse the man and may even want to beat him, but it is clear that he isn't well. He staggers, as if walking causes him an enormous strain, and grabs at the nearest adventurer.

“Take... this... to Jazim...” the man says, and puts something in your hand.

Then he falls down. You quickly check him. He is dead.

The dead man is black-skinned and well-built. He wears a loincloth, although a silken one, and his battered appearance, like the tracks coming from the thick of the plants, reveals that he has probably had a hard time in the jungle.

The man has no apparent wounds, except for six punctures, similar to insect bites, around the heart (he met the Servant of the Purple Heart, see later). With a Healing roll the characters understand the bites aren't the cause of death, at least not directly; the poor sod died of fever. With a raise, the healer also discovers that the “bites” don't belong to any insect he knows. Maybe they aren't insect bites at all?

The Red Coin. The object the heroes received is a coin, probably of bronze, even if it has a peculiar reddish color. With a Common Knowledge roll, the heroes recognize it as Syranthian (no need to roll for characters coming from that land), but the color is very different from any coin they have ever seen. If the coin is recognized, the adventurers can also make a Knowledge (Religion) (-2) roll, with a success they remember something more: these coins are called Blood Coins and have a religious significance, they are put on the eyes and under the tongues of the dead to help them pay the toll to enter the afterlife.

But how did a Syranthian funerary coin end up here, hundreds of miles from Syranthia?

THE PELT MERCHANT

The heroes cannot do much more for the dead man, except burying him, if they want to, and going on their way.

You reach the village of Kila at dusk. It is as you imagined: a dozen wooden huts, with roofs of palm leaves. Only one of them seems a little more refined: it is a real, two-storey house, made of stone.

Despite its size, there is a sentinel at the village entrance, leaning lazily on a spear. He seems surprised to see a foreigner there, so he asks: “What brings you to Kila, guro (a local word for stranger)?”

Unless the heroes say something very weird, the sentinel shrugs and lets them enter the town. The man, who is friendly and chatty, is called Ula. The heroes will probably ask if there is an inn in the village, but Ula laughs and says no, there isn't. If they ask what is the stone building he answers.

“Oh, that's the house of Master Jazim, the pelt merchant. He is a guro, like you, and a very rich one! He buys pelts from all the hunters of the region!”

If the party describes the dead man, Ula recognizes the poor sod as Gora, Master Jazim's servant.

Sooner or later, the party will visit the house of the merchant.

The door is guarded by a burly fellow, a Caldeian swordsman by his appearance, but from inside comes the liquid music of a harp.

The sentinel, close-mouthed, stares at the party but lets them pass unhindered.

You enter a comfortable hall, with a low ceiling and a number of finely carved wooden columns. Sitting on a large chair, in front of a table, there is a middle-aged man, still vigorous, examining a number of pelts. At his feet, a young blonde woman intently plays a harp, with lovely abandon. You notice a strong resemblance to the merchant, she must be a relative.

Behind the merchant stand a couple of guards, and another two wander about the room, discreetly.

The merchant, Master Jazim, raises his eyes at your arrival, and watches you with suspicion: "Hail, strangers, what brings you to my humble house?"

Jazim the merchant seems quite nervous; he behaves politely, like a well-mannered man, but the situation changes abruptly when the heroes show him the red coin.

A horrified expression appears on the merchant's face; he lets the coin fall, as if it burns him, and shouts: "No! No! It cannot be! You could not have found me! Men! Kill these assassins!"

The girl at his feet shakes her head, scared, and you suddenly realize she is blind. But this is the least of your problems: the guards have unsheathed their swords and attack you!

The battle is staged in the merchant's main hall, a location 12" by 12" with a big 2" wide door on the southern wall (where the party entered) and another one, 1" wide, on the northern wall. The ceiling is supported by six wooden columns (1" by 1" wide) and in the room there are several useful props (the table where the merchant stood, the pelts and the girl's harp).

When the characters attack, ask the players if they are using lethal attacks or not. The guards, rugged soldiers, attack to kill, without pity.

The characters can try to persuade Jazim that this is an error, even during the fight, making Persuasion rolls (at -4 if they are using lethal violence on the guards). Whenever they get three or more successes (raises count as extra successes), Zimarra, the girl, is persuaded, and shouts to the guards to stop.

(E) Caldeian Swordsman (1 per Hero).
See page 19.

THE MERCHANT'S TALE

The following text supposes the characters defeated the guards (who are wounded and knocked out, but not dead).

Jazim, the merchant, stands with his back to the wall, the girl behind him, and his sword drawn. He stares at you with fear. "You will not have me easily, minions of Kerir Shar! I will die with a blade in my hand!"

It is obvious that there must be some kind of misunderstanding.

"So, you aren't in the service of the Master of the Black Amulet?" Jazim says, still not convinced. "Forgive me, but when I saw that cursed coin I thought my end had finally come."

In the meantime the guards, wounded, rise up, and he orders them to clean the mess and bring some wine for his guests.

Surely the characters will be curious about what the merchant is saying. The man is still hesitant, but then the girl intervenes.

"Father, I feel you can trust these men," she says.

"This is Zimarra, my daughter," Jazim says "She is blind, but she sees the souls of men clearly. If she says you can be trusted, you can. And I have been brooding over this story too long, I must tell it to someone, or I'll go mad."

From behind a cup of wine, Jazim starts his tale.

"My name wasn't always Jazim, and I have never been a merchant. Three years ago, I was Jazimar of Syranthia, and I was a judge."

Characters coming from Syranthia can make a Common Knowledge roll to remember this person, his famous severity, and that he was called the Righteous.

"Yes, that was me. Then one day, the guards brought in front of my court a man, a raven-haired stranger, who had murdered an officer of the city watch. The man refused to speak, and we, I and my fellow judges Vastro and Talir, condemned him to the harshest punishment, death."

In Syranthia, courts have three judges.

"The prisoner was beheaded at dawn the next day," the merchant continues. "But before the executioner's axe could end his life, the prisoner spoke: 'Fools! My father will avenge me! You'll face the wrath of Kerir Shar!'"

"A cold shiver run through the crowd watching the execution, and through me," Jazimar continues. "Kerir Shar was a powerful sorcerer, a man that even the Merchant Princes of Syranthia dared not cross, who lived secluded in his

palace in the Iron Mountains. Then the head of the raven-haired man fell, cut off, a sardonic smile on his face."

The merchant stops to fill his goblet with wine.

"A week later, Talir, the youngest judge, was found dead in his house: someone, or something, had literally ripped his heart from his chest. In his hand he held a red coin. We Syranthians put these coins on the eyes and under the tongues of the dead to help them in their last journey to the afterlife and we, the judges, put them on the body of the stranger, before having him buried.

Vastro, my fellow judge, wasn't a man who was easily scared. He doubled his personal escort, as I did. But after another week, Judge Vastro, despite living locked in his palace, surrounded by guards, was found dead in his bath, his heart ripped out, and another red coin in his hand.

It was Kerir Shar's vengeance. And what could I do?

I took my daughter, my only family, and we left Syranthia, on a caravan headed south. We traveled as far as we could. There, Jazimar the Judge become Jazim the Merchant, and I thought we were safe, that we had escaped Kerir's Shar vengeance. But we didn't. Look at this coin. This is for me! The sorcerer is waiting, because tonight will be exactly three years from the death of his son. And now I am even without guards!"

Jazimar is true, at least in part: his guards are too beaten off to be of any use, but then Zimarra intervenes.

“Father, hire these men! They are better than the Caldeians! They can protect us, I feel it!”

The former judge trusts his daughter, and asks the heroes (also as a partial compensation for having had them attacked) to be his guards, at least for the next few days. He offers a tidy sum (300 Moons each), and Zimarra looks very pretty...

What about Gora: If the heroes ask what Gora was doing in the jungle, Jazimar says he was his factotum, visiting the local hunters to buy their pelts. He doesn't know exactly where he was.

A LONG VIGIL

Jazimar is convinced that Kerir Shar will strike tonight, so he wants the heroes to stand guard. The party and the former Judge stay in the living room, a comfortable hall with closed shutters, while the other guards patrol the rest of the house, including Zimarra's room.

Before Nightfall. Ask the heroes what they want to do. They are allowed access to the whole house, and they are given plenty of food and drink.

Heroes drinking and eating recover from any fatigue and/or Wounds suffered, but they are a little drowsy (-2 to their first Spirit roll during the night).

Characters wandering in the house can make a Notice (-2) roll, but only if they are literate. In the case of success they spot strange books in the judge's library. With a Knowledge (Arcana) roll, the adventurer recognizes them as scrolls of arcane lore, concerning demon summoning and a

mysterious artifact called the Purple Heart.

If the hero asks the judge about them, he shrugs, and says he bought them from an itinerant peddler, as a curio. He is obviously lying.

The Night. When all is ready, go on with the following.

The hours pass and nothing happens. You yawn and stretch, trying to stay awake. Your employer has finally fallen into an agitated sleep, and now shakes on a couch, the victim of some bad dream.

Suddenly, you hear a whisper.

“Jazimar... Jazimar...”

Even if the adventurers look around, they cannot determine the source of the voice. It seems to come from very far away.

Jazimar opens his eyes, terrified.

“Jazimar... the time has come...” the voice goes on. “For you... to pay!”

Suddenly something very big and strong starts beating on the shutters.

“Stop him! Stop him!” the former judge shouts.

Ask the party to make a Fear Test. Anyone who fails is Shaken and cannot act till the shutters break (see below). If a hero is courageous enough to open one of the shutters, he should be rewarded with a Bennie. When he does so, he discovers that there is actually nothing pushing against the shutters. (It is the effect of Kerir Shar's *legerdemain* Power).

If the heroes hesitate, the beating continues, till the shutters break, showering a hail of wooden shards into the room (any person in the room must roll on Agility, -2 if they are Shaken, to avoid suffering 2d6 damage). Then, the effect ends and a crash and a cry is heard coming from the upper floor!

"Zimarra!" Jazimar shouts, suddenly realizing his daughter is upstairs.

A terrible laugh echoes in the room.

"A daughter for a son, Jazimar! A fair trade, don't you think?" The voice mocks.

"You devil!" the former judge curses, and with another evil laugh the voice fades away.

When the heroes run upstairs, to the girl's room, they find it wrecked.

Zimarra's room seems to have been devastated by a tornado. Someone, or something, broke the shutters and stormed inside. The Caldeian guards fought valiantly, but they are all dead, their hearts torn from their chests.

All except one, who lies on the ground, in a pool of his own blood, and feebly tries to speak.

"We tried... we tried..." he whispers "... but it took her..."

And he then passes out, his chest strangely punctured, as was Gora's.

There are several obvious tracks in the room, but the most obvious one is on the windowsill: the large, bloody footprint of some unknown creature.

IN THE JUNGLE

Jazimar cannot leave his only daughter in the hands of Kerir Shar. He runs into his room, and, with shaking hands, he tries to don his swordbelt, which he hasn't used in many years. When he speaks he looks almost feverish, but determined. "I hid like a coward for too long! Now it's time to act, to save my daughter!"

It is clear to the heroes that if they don't help him, Jazimar will only get himself killed. The scenario supposes that the party follows him.

The tracks of the creature which took Zimarra are clear, at least for a while, and go southward, headed into the jungle. They are very easy to follow, as if the creature actually *wanted* to be followed (and in fact it does). A character can understand this with a Tracking (-2) roll.

MAAPASA FLOWERS

The jungle around you is filled with ripe, sweet smells. The tracks of the mysterious kidnapper pass under the branches of a big tree, a sort of magnolia, laden with fist-sized rose buds. They are the cause of the intense smell.

This plant, as any character can discover with a Survival (-4) or Lotusmastery roll, is a Maapasa Tree (see sidebar). The tree itself isn't dangerous, but often its flowers are infested with a Lotus moss, the dangerous Lotus of Sweet Dreaming, which emits a strong hypnotic substance.

This is the case here. Any character passing under the tree must make a Vigor (-2) roll or suffer a level of Fatigue, which lasts till the next scene (Ruins of a Forgotten Past).

If the characters score a raise on the Lotusmastery or Survival roll, they not only spot the danger, but also learn another important fact: this Lotus has hypnotic effects only while on the plant. An hour after harvesting it decays and becomes a good remedy against pain (counts as the *healing* Power), plus it has another important use in the next part

of the scenario. The party can gather one dose of Lotus per character (but the harvester must roll on Vigor (+2) to avoid the effect above).

If the heroes avoid the plant, simply skip this encounter and go on with the next one.

HERO'S JOURNAL: THE LEGEND OF THE MAAPASA TREE

There is an ancient story in the savannah about the Maapasa Tree. Maapasa was a beautiful girl, of the tribe of the Gwarabi. Fair-legged and slim she was, and the god Ketu, spying her taking water from the Buffalo River, fell in love with the girl.

He took the shape of a bull buffalo, and full of desire, ran towards her. But Maapasa was scared and fled. She was quick and nimble, the best runner of her tribe, but even a gazelle cannot outpace a god. For three days and three nights she ran, with the buffalo god at her heels, till she reached the border of the Lush Jungle and collapsed on the ground exhausted.

As Ketu, frothing, came closer, Maapasa called a plea with her last breath – “Etu, mother goddess, please save me from the bull!”

The kind goddess Etu answered the prayer and transformed Maapasa into a tree, covered with sweet-smelling flowers.

When Ketu reached her, he could only low his disappointment at having been fooled.

Since that day the Maapasa Tree has been dedicated to maidens, and used to keep away buffaloes, which cannot stand the smell.

BLACK HUNTER

The jungle is silent there. No night bird sings, and there is a sensation of impending doom. You have the strong feeling you're being watched, but you can't see anything around you.

Unbeknownst to the party, there is a lethal predator ready to ambush them, a terrible black panther, which is on a tree limb ready to pounce on the adventurers! These

beasts often hunt in pairs so, if the party is numerous, they'll meet more than one.

(RH) Black Panther (1 per 3 Heroes).
See page 18.

MOON OF SACRIFICES

Suddenly, the thick canopy of trees over you opens, revealing the sky. Over your head the full moon shimmers with a blood-red light. Is this a bad omen?

In fact it is. Characters can make a Knowledge (Legends and Lore) or Knowledge (Religion) (-4) roll. With a success they remember that this red moon is called the Moon of Sacrifices, meaning it is a particularly dreaded moment, when the dark gods favor blood offerings.

If an adventurer acquires this knowledge, *all* damage rolls, both from the heroes and their adversaries, are made at +1 for the remainder of the adventure.

If a hero scored a raise, he receives +2 to damage rolls, but also +1 Armor (offsetting the bonus above).

EVIL CHANTS IN THE NIGHT

While you go on, you hear a faint sound in the cold air of the night, coming from the thick of the jungle. It is a chorus of inhuman voices, chanting an incomprehensible melody. For some reason your skin crawls at hearing these voices.

Characters can make a Knowledge (Arcana) (-2) roll. With a success they recognize the voices for what they are, a chorus of demons, which Kerir Shar summoned for his unholy rite (see final scene). Every hero must make a Spirit roll (+2), apart from those who recognized the voices, who roll without any modifiers. Adventurers failing the roll are considered Nauseated till they reach the ruins in the jungle (see next scene).

RUINS OF A FORGOTTEN PAST

Finally the jungle ends, revealing a ruined building, covered in vines.

"This place is full of ancient remnants, memories of a forgotten past," Jazimar whispers. "We must be cautious, I have a strange feeling about this place."

Jazimar is correct, this place was an old temple belonging to the ancient, unknown deities of the Pygmies, as any character can discover with a Knowledge (Ancient History) roll. Following the tracks of Zimarra's kidnapper there requires a Tracking roll; in the case of success, the party discovers it entered the ruins passing under a stone arch, which seems to lead into the heart of the ancient complex.

The arch is decorated with vaguely humanoid shapes, which cause a vague sense of uneasiness. This isn't the only way into the temple: the heroes can climb a broken wall (with a Climbing roll – in case of failure the character creates a small collapse which makes enough noise to draw the Winged Furies below) and sneak inside. If the heroes enter from the arch, play the **Furies of Wings and Claws** scene below, otherwise go directly to **The Carvings**.

FURIES OF WINGS AND CLAWS

You cautiously pass under the stone arch, sneaking into the old building. Suddenly you hear a shrieking sound, like hundreds of stones grinding over metal. Before you can react, you see a horde of small, black creatures in the darkness, flying toward you, cruel beaks open and razor-sharp talons ready to tear away your flesh!

"Demons!" Jazimar shouts.

These foul creatures are lesser undead demons, summoned by Kerir Shar to guard this place on this particular night. They attack with reckless abandon,

without paying any attention to their safety. When they die their green, acidic blood quickly consumes their bodies, leaving only a disgusting puddle behind.

The battleground is a corridor 18" long and 3" wide on the north-south axis. There are a couple of openings, one on the eastern and the other on the western side, 1" wide. They lead to small 6" by 6" rooms which the party can use as refuge or secure positions to better defend themselves. The party begins the fight in the middle of the corridor, more or less. Remember that, as flyers, the leading Winged Furies can easily pass over the front members of the group to engage the ones behind, leaving space for their comrades in the rear ranks.

After defeating the Winged Furies, the party reaches **The Carvings** room.

(E) Winged Fury (2 per Hero). See page 21.

THE CARVINGS

You enter a room which is still well-preserved. On the walls there are ancient carvings, covered in dust and cobwebs.

And dust also abounds on the floor, where you can clearly see a set of tracks.

"It passed through here!" Jazimar whispers. "Let's go!" – and he presses on.

"My daughter is near, I feel it."

If the heroes go on, skip this scene and go directly to **Unnatural Smoke** below. If they spend some time examining the carvings, they can discover some interesting facts, useful in the next parts of the adventure.

First Carving – The Jungle People. In this carving there are several small people (Pygmies?), entering a huge palace (which could be this temple), at whose doors are tall, cloaked creatures, with animal masks (or maybe they are animal heads?).

Second Carving – The Four Vases. There is a large room in this carving, with four large, flower-shaped vases. The Pygmies cover their faces with things that look like Maapasa Flowers (see above).

Third Carving – The Abyss of Sacrifice. The Pigmies, guarded by another cloaked animal-headed figure, enter in a room, divided in two by a crevasse, and jump into it!

UNNATURAL SMOKE

This oval shaped room is roofless, probably the ceiling collapsed hundreds of years ago, as did the columns supporting it. The only things miraculously untouched by the devastation of time are four peculiarly shaped vases, or maybe statues, which resemble enormous flower buds. There are four of them, evenly spread about the room.

On the opposite side of the hall there is a passage, from which comes a feeble, sickly light.

The strange "vases" are in fact an ancient sorcerous trap of the temple. They are usually inactive, but Kerir Shar knows how wake their power.

When the party crosses the room, a disembodied voice is heard (the same one they heard at Jazimar's house), this time whispering foul sorcery!

Suddenly the strange vases exude a thick black smoke, which crawls across

the ground toward the party! Heroes inhaling this foul substance must make a Vigor (-2) roll every round or suffer 2d8 damage from bleeding of the internal mucus membranes (armor doesn't protect and Loincloth Hero Edge doesn't apply). For every round the heroes pass in the room, the penalty increases by 1 (up to a maximum of -4).

There are several ways to deal with this danger.

The first one is covering the mouth and nose with a dose of Maapasa Flowers (as suggested in **The Carvings** above). They automatically protect wearers from the supernatural poison.

The second one is smashing the vases: each vase has Toughness 5, but they are at least 8" from each other. A smashed vase explodes, emitting a puff of a very dense cloud of acidic substance, dealing 3d6 damage in a MBT. For each vase destroyed, the heroes receive +1 to the Vigor roll above. When all the vases are destroyed, the threat ends.

The third way to avoid the danger is running, as fast as they can, to reach the opposite side of the room. This is a Dramatic Task, based on Agility (-2); Fleet Footed heroes ignore the penalty. The heroes automatically gain one advancement token per round, plus one per success and raise on the Agility roll. When they have scored five or more successes, they reach the passage (and begin the next scene).

When the party manages, in one way or another, to reach the feebly lit passage, go on with the final scene of the adventure.

THE SACRIFICE

When you enter the passage, the first thing you notice is that the air is noticeably colder there. Then you see it: a large room, broken in two by a large natural rift, like a wound inflicted on the earth. You have the sudden realization that the fissure was there before the building, and that the temple was built around it. There is something in the fissure, a swirling darkness which cannot be the natural obscurity of the night. The more you stare into it, the more you hear again the strange chants you heard before tonight.

"Impressive, isn't it?" There is a person standing near the fissure, watching the darkness as if enthralled by it. A tall, gaunt figure, dressed in a long red robe. He has thin, long-nailed hands, which hold something, a sort of amulet.

You know who he must be, even before Jazimar speaks: "Kerir Shar!"

"Yes, Kerir Shar," the robed man says, turning. "It is a perfect night, this. And this is a perfect place. Do you feel the power of this place, on this particular night? The Moon of Sacrifices is shimmering over us!"

"Where is my daughter?" Jazimar says. He is scared, you can tell, but determined.

"She is fine. For now." The sorcerer points a hand toward a nearby column, and you see Zimarra chained to it. She is battered, but alive.

"What do you want from her? I am the one you want!" Jazimar says.

The sorcerer laughs, a sound like rustling leaves. "You took my son, I take your daughter. That's justice, isn't it?"

Jazimar freezes on the place, as understands the irony of the situation.

"And on this night and in this place, the life of a daughter can give back a son!" Kerir Shar continues. He raises the strange amulet he holds and says "Dark powers of this place! I offer you this girl, in exchange for Erik Shar, my son!"

At his words, the darkness in the rift starts moving, as if animated by unholy life! This is the moment for you to act!

The battlefield is a big room, 18" by 18" with a single 3" wide entrance to the south, where the heroes came in.

It is crossed by an irregular fissure, 4" wide, which runs across the entire room, roughly from south-west to north-east.

Zimarra is chained to a massive 2" by 2" pillar, in the northeast part of the room, within 3" of the fissure. The whole area north of the pillar is shrouded in darkness and it hosts the Servant of the Purple Heart (see below).

Both Kerir Shar and the heroes are on the same side of the fissure (the eastern one). The adventurers begin within 2" of the entrance, while the evil magician is roughly in the center of the room.

During this fight Kerir Shar is busy performing a ritual which will bring his son back from the kingdom of death, in exchange for Zimarra's soul (see below). The heroes must stop him.

It seems a simple task, but it isn't; concealed in the dark behind Zimarra's pillar is the Servant of the Purple Heart, the personal demon of Kerir. It is On Hold, ready to intervene when a party member approaches its dark master.

When Kerir Shar dies, the Servant (if still alive) freezes, as if paralyzed. The new master of the Purple Heart (see next scene) will control it.

This fight is hard, but not extreme; in fact, it isn't the *real* end of the scenario, as the party will discover.

(WC) Kerir Shar, Master of the Purple Heart. See page 19.

(WC) Servant of the Purple Heart. See page 21.

TERRAIN, PROPS AND SPECIAL RULES

- **Assorted Debris:** Place assorted piles of debris, broken columns and so on in the room. Depending on their

size, they can grant cover, furnish an Improvised Weapon (like a piece of pillar) or be difficult to pass. Place at least four of them on the battlefield: two Small, one Medium and one Large.

DEBRIS TABLE

Size	Tabletop Size'	Cover'	Terrain Type'	Improvised Weapon
Small'	1" by 1"	Light'	No"	Small (Str+d4)
Medium'	2" by 2"	Medium	Difficult'	Medium (Str+d6)
Large'	3" by 3"	Heavy'	Impassable'	Large (Str+d8)

- **Freeing Zimarra:** The chains binding Zimarra are quite sturdy: they have Toughness 6, but can also be untied with three successes and/or raises on Agility or Lockpicking (+2) rolls. Freeing the girl is an heroic act which should be rewarded with a Bennie.
- **The Ritual:** Kerir Shar's main interest in this scene is performing the spell which will return his son from the kingdom of death. Each round he isn't directly threatened, he chants (a full round action) acquiring a Dark Ritual Token. If he manages to obtain five tokens, the ritual is successful. The action stops, as do Zimarra's cries of pain, and when the light returns, chained to the column is a young man, Erik Shar (who is Exhausted and doesn't join the fight). If this dire event happens, it means the party failed: they immediately lose a Bennie, while Kerir Shar and his Servant gain one.

Kerir Shar, the foul mage, lies dead at your feet. Finally Jazimar's nightmare will end. As you fumble with the chains coiled around the girl to free her, you hear a feeble voice speaking.

"So, Jazimar... in the end... you won..." it is Kerir Shar speaking; that demon of a man still has some life in him!

"Shut up!" the former judge says.

"Do... they know the truth... how you and your friends, your covenant of petty magicians, framed my son... all to obtain my amulet? The Purple Heart?"

"No! They don't know! And it doesn't matter now! I have it! It is mine!" You turn, and see that the judge, ignoring his daughter, picks up the strange amulet that was in the hands of the sorcerer till a few moments ago.

But Kerir Shar cannot answer Jazimar. He is dead.

THE REAL ENEMY

The following text is written assuming that Zimarra wasn't freed during the fight above. If that happened, change it accordingly.

"You helped me, but you know too much! I have the power now, and you must die! Nobody must know that I have the Purple Heart!"

Your former friend raises the amulet high, and black, scaled things crawl out from the fissure in the ground.

It seems that you haven't finished fighting yet tonight.

This is the final scene of the adventure, where the real villain of the scenario is revealed! Jazimar reveals his true colors: he and his fellow judges, petty practitioners of minor sorceries, abused their position to force Kerir Shar to give them his powerful amulet. But mages, especially very powerful ones, don't think like ordinary mortals, and Kerir preferred losing his son to losing his power.

Who is the more wicked of the two?

This doesn't matter at the moment. What is really important is that from the crevasse dozens of Winged Furies (like those encountered at the entrance of the temple) are crawling, ready to slaughter the party!

THE PURPLE HEART

This ancient artifact resembles a petrified heart, engraved with unknown symbols. Apparently it is made of purple stone but nobody really knows if it is just a rock or the unnaturally hard flesh of a demon. Sometimes, rarely, it seems to be beating.

Ruleswise, it grants great powers to the owner, if he has the Arcane Background (Sorcery) Edge.

First, the user ignores the penalty for maintained spells, but only for the summon ally Power.

Second, the summoning duration for any demon is doubled.

Third, if the character is of at least Veteran Rank, between adventures he can make a Smarts (-4) roll: on a success he automatically gains the summon ally (Servant of the Purple Heart) Power.

But this artifact takes a strong toll on the soul of the person using it: after each month of possession, whether it was used or not, the wielder must make a Spirit (-2) roll. In the case of failure he receives a Corruption Token. When he has three Corruptions tokens he receives a free Hindrance decided by the GM. These curses are permanent, even if the character loses or drops the amulet.

The combat occurs on the same battleground as above, with Jazimar (now using the Purple Heart) and a horde of demons at his orders, all against the party!

Note that this time, defeating the Judge makes all the demons summoned using the powers of the Purple Heart disappear.

(WC) Jazimar the Judge. See page xxx.

(WC) Servant of the Purple Heart. See page xxx.

(E) Winged Furies (3 per Hero). See page xxx.

TERRAIN, PROPS AND SPECIAL RULES

- **Horde of Furies:** The Winged Furies are summoned using the magical powers of the fissure (Jazimar doesn't need to cast a spell): they enter the battlefield, climbing out from the fissure, at the rate of one per hero each round.

THE END

Finally Jazimar falls, killed by your blows. On his face there is an expression of surprise, as if, in the end, he finally understood all the evil deriving from his cravings.

"Father!" Zimarra shouts, running to him.

The girl cannot see, but her hands pass over his face, gently, closing her father's eyes, as she weeps.

On the ground, shimmering in the moon, is the amulet, the Purple Heart. In the reddish light of the Moon of Sacrifices it seems to be beating, as if inhabited by a malevolent life-force.

While the night slowly turns to morning, somewhere, deep in the jungle, the birds start singing.

This scenario ends in a grim way. The heroes faced the worst aspect of the sorcery: not the dark powers themselves, but the depravation and corruption they can bring to the human soul.

REWARDS AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

There are no real rewards in this scenario, except one: the Purple Heart itself (see sidebar). It is a very powerful relic, especially in the hands of a skilled sorcerer, but it is highly sought. A hero taking it will draw the unwanted attention of some of the major magical powers of the Dominions... leading to some interesting adventures.

Characters not interested in the Heart could decide on the easiest solution: throwing it into the fissure (the bottom of which cannot be seen). By doing so they remove a great evil from the world, and they should be rewarded with a special Bennie, the Purple Heart Bennie, which is saved between sessions and adventures till it is spent (then it disappears forever).

The other thing the heroes have to think about is what to do with Zimarra. The girl is fatherless and blind, plus the party killed her father after all. Zimarra didn't know of her father's misdeeds, and is even more shocked than the adventurers. They can take her to some safe place (maybe return her to Syranthia) or even leave her there (a really unheroic act) to mourn her father; if they do so it is even possible that sweet Zimarra lays her hands on the Purple Heart (if the party simply discarded the item); and nobody knows what such an object can do to the mind of a grieving daughter...

CREATURES AND NPCs

BLACK PANTHER

A dangerous predator, black as the night and dangerous as a curved dagger. The people of the Verdant Belt believe these beasts are demons, due to their cruelty and supernatural stealth. This specimen is very big, as is often the case with beasts of the Lush Jungle.

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

Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d10.

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

Special Abilities

- **Bite or Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Low Light Vision:** Panthers ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **Night Hunter:** Black Panthers perfectly blend into darkness, gaining +2 to Stealth rolls in any dark environment.
- **Pounce:** A Panther often pounces on its prey to better bring its mass and claws to bear. It can leap 1d4" to gain a +4 to its attack and damage. However, its Parry is reduced by -2 until its next action when performing this maneuver.
- **Size +1:** This specimen weighs over 200 pounds.

CALDEIAN SWORDSMAN

This blade-for-hire usually escorts the slave caravans on the Slave Route, but doesn't shrink from selling his services to others. Rough and tough, moderately loyal and quite skilled.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d4

Charisma: +0; Pace: 6; Parry: 6; Toughness: 6 (1)

Gear: Caldeian bronze longsword (Str+d8), bronze dagger (Str+d4, Range: 3/6/12), light leather armor (+1).

Special Abilities

- **Caldeian Fencer:** In Caldeia swordplay is an art and this man is well-versed in it. Whenever he rolls a 1 on the Fighting die, he can reroll it for free, as if he had spent a Bennie, but must stick with the second result.

KERIR SHAR, MASTER OF THE PURPLE HEART

Kerir Shar is a tall, gaunt sorcerer of unknown race and origin. Rumors whisper he is over a hundred years old and that his life has been unnaturally prolonged by the Purple Heart, a relic he owns.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d10, Notice d8, Sorcery d12, Stealth d6.

Charisma: -1; Pace: 6; Parry: 6; Toughness: 5

Edges: Arcane Background (Sorcery), Improved Impressive Aura, Improved Level Headed, New Power (x2), Power Points (x3).

Hindrances: Ugly, Vengeful.

Gear: Robe, horned headgear (+1, head only), Purple Heart (see page xxx).

Powers [25 PP]: *armor* (paralyzing ward – grants no Armor bonus but any character hitting him in melee must roll Vigor or be Shaken), *bolt* (black energy dart), *deflection* (I am not here!), *legerdemain* (disembodied voice – extends his voice as well as his touch, range is expressed in miles), *stun* (forbidden word of power), *summon ally* (demonic mastiff, keronian imp, winged furies, Servant of the Purple Heart, swarm).

Special Abilities

- **Claws:** Str+d4. The constant use of black magic has twisted the body of Kerir Shar. His sharp claws are only one of his body mutations.

JAZIMAR THE JUDGE

Jazimar the Righteous was a Judge of the court of Syranthia. Known for his stern personality, nobody suspected he was, with

his two colleagues, a petty practitioner of magic. After framing and sentencing to death Erik Shar, the son of the powerful sorcerer Kerir Shar, he had to escape from Syranthia.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Sorcery d4.

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Edges: Level Headed.

Hindrances: Greedy.

Gear: Syranthian scimitar (Str+d6), bronze dagger (Str+d4).

Special Abilities

- **Amulet Student:** When Jazimar acquires the Purple Heart Amulet, given the study he dedicated to it (thanks to the books he has at home) he immediately raises his Sorcery to d8, gains 20 Power Points and the following Powers: bolt (black energy dart), deflection (shroud of shadows), entangle (paralyzing chant).
- **Magical Dabbler:** Although not a sorcerer, Jazimar has some magical training. He knows the boost/lower trait Power (dark prayer) and has 5 Power Points. He doesn't roll a Wild Die when activating a Power.



SERVANT OF THE PURPLE HEART

This demon is intimately connected to the artifact called the Purple Heart and can only be summoned by using it. In addition to the amulet, summoning the Servant also requires a fresh corpse, from which it rips away the head.

The demon is vaguely humanoid, with a huge frog-like head. Inside the mouth there is always the torn-off head, connected

by the tongue of the beast to the rest of its body. Although there are vestigial eyes on the demon's own frog-like head, the eyes of the torn-off head are the only ones that really work, so the creature usually goes around with its mouth open to see around. It has very thin arms, ending in six-fingered hands, each of them tipped with needle-like claws. They are mildly poisonous, plus the monster uses them with deadly accuracy to rip the hearts out of its victims.

During this scenario, the Servant has the head of Gora (Jazimar's servant) which Kerir Shar uses to summon it during the night.

This creature is considered of Heroic Rank for the purposes of the summon ally Power. In addition the summoner must have the Amulet of the Purple Heart.

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Notice d8, Stealth d8.

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

Special Abilities

- **Demon:** Demons are immune to poison and disease. They have a +2 bonus to recovering from being Shaken.
- **Fear:** Seeing the Servant, for the first time, requires a Fear check, at -2 if it is using the head of someone the character knew.
- **Regeneration:** The Servant is allowed a Vigor roll each round to recover a Wound, except those caused by one of its Weaknesses (see below).
- **Weakness (Fire, Steel and Purple Heart):** The Servant cannot regenerate damage caused by fire or steel. In addition if its summoner loses the Purple Heart it freezes on the spot.

- **Six-Fingered Claws:** Str+d6. If the character is hit with a raise, it means that the Servant managed to fix its claws in the chest of the victim, near the heart. On the next action the monster and the victim must make an opposed Strength roll (the Servant rolls with +2). If the demon wins, the victim suffers a Wound, plus another one for each success and raise. Rolls to soak these Wounds are made at -2. If the victim dies, her heart is ripped out of her rib cage. A character caught in this attack can break free by spending an action and winning an opposed Strength roll.
- **Size +1:** The Servant of the Purple Heart is bigger than a man.

WINGED FURY

The real name of this demonic breed is “Xalezika”, a Keronian word meaning “fury of blood”. The ancient Keronians made a pact with them, which even today forces them to obey the sorcerers of the Dominions. These small devils, similar to a cross between a hawk and a lizard, have scaly wings, cruel beaks and sharp talons. They exist in various shapes and hues and are famous for their ferocity and the terrible shrieks their inhuman throats can emit.

The ones found in this scenario are jet black, and look as if made of obsidian.

They are considered Novice creatures for the purpose of the *summon ally* Power. If the summoner has Keronian blood in the veins (for example, if he is a Tricornian) he summons an additional Fury for free.

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

Skills: Fighting d6

Pace: 3; Parry: 5; Toughness: 4

Special Abilities

- **Claws and Talons:** Str+d4.
- **Demon:** Demons are immune to poison and disease. They have a +2 bonus to recovering from being Shaken.
- **Flying:** Winged Furies fly at a rate of 6” and with Climb -1.
- **Size -1:** Winged Furies are quite small, the size of a dog, but very ferocious
- **Unholy Cry:** Winged Furies emit a terrible cry, which evokes an ancestral, paralyzing fear in mankind (an atavistic memory of when the Keronians used these beasts as hounds to hunt men). The first time a flock of these beasts is met, the characters must make a Fear check, -1 per four beasts in the flock (up to -4).