



MODULARITY



THEME - THE SECRET OF ISLA DE MONOS | LORD BANE | RITUAL ROOM | SEVEN KINGS OF SHAMBHALA
CATAPHRACT ARCHETYPE | **DHAMPIR** CHARACTER RACE | **VOIDLANCER** EXPANDED MECHANICS

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From the Editor

Welcome everyone to the first issue of *Savage Insider Deluxe*. This issue is a special release as it pulls together all the non-extracted content from *Savage Insider Premium Issues # 1 - 5*. Throughout the course of those five issues, we released a lot of standalone releases (along with some upcoming ones) for purchase outside of the standard *Premium Issue* series. We did this for the purpose of presenting a low-cost alternate to those who wanted those specific pieces. This included the *Hastilion Expanse* campaign series for *Mercenary Breed* along with the *Nation Guide* supplements for *Faith & Demons: The Rising* and *Shadow Journal* series for *Shadowed Earth*. The *Ultimate Mass Battle Guide* was created and expanded along with an upcoming *Ultimate Fantasy Tavern Guide* from four Tavern Tales pieces. Because of all this, we're left with five issues that have a lot of content found elsewhere.

The decision was made to remedy this conundrum by pulling together all the remaining content into a single release, thus making the five *Premium Issues* obsolete. This way, instead of having the

five issues with duplicated content available elsewhere, we're going to have a single issue with no duplicated content. Thus the birth of *Savage Insider Deluxe Issue #1: Modularity*. Upon its release, the five *Premium Issues* will no longer be sold, but all the excellent in-game content is now available within these pages.

The title of this issue pretty much sums up what this culmination of content is about. Modularity should be a familiar aspect of *Savage Worlds* to its GMs and players. There are no shortage of mechanics in *Savage Worlds* that can be added or removed without breaking the system; that's where being a modular system comes from. To support that, this *Deluxe Issue*, and pretty much all of *Savage Insider*, presents a boat load of content that can be added to your existing adventures and campaigns, used to create your new ones, or replace some of the options you're currently using. The best part of it all: it won't break the game!

Thus, I present to you a large collection of various content spanning the genres and providing many, many hours of excellent gaming experiences for *Savage Worlds* and its many licensed settings.

The content within *Savage Insider Deluxe Issue #1: Modularity*, comes from the following *Savage Insider Premium* issues:

Issue #1

Racial Profiling: Dhampir

Auspicious Archetype: Hierophant

Issue #2

Auspicious Archetype: Cataphract

Random Encounter: Ritual Room

Great Adventure: Seven Kings of Shambhala

Issue #3

Surveyed: Lord Bane

Random Encounter: The Ossuary

Issue #4

Great Adventure: The Secret of Isla de Monos

Surveyed: Underhome

Issue #5

Expanded Mechanics: Voidlancer

Great Adventure: Community Service

Great Adventure: Flight of the Fancy

Racial Profiling: The Lokka

Auspicious Archetype: Engineer

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Hierophant

The type of priest known as the 'hierophant' comes from the days of ancient Greece. The hierophant fulfilled many roles in various religious endeavors – including dabbling in the occult. They are keepers of lore and nurturers of the arcane.

The hierophant is the one person within the hierarchy of an organized religion who is focused on unlocking the mysteries of ancient lore. Through continued studies of ancient scrolls and the stories passed down from generation to generation, the hierophant is able to interpret, theorize, or explain events which occurred many centuries ago.

By unlocking these ancient mysteries, a hierophant is sometimes able to decipher arcane texts that explain sacred or deadly rituals, and as the only one who truly understands them, the hierophant becomes the 'leader' of these rituals, instructing all participants before the ceremony begins.

All of this can lead to the religious flock viewing the hierophant with a certain skepticism as he rants about 'mystical revelations', 'failed prophecies', and 'knowledge the masses weren't meant to know'. On the other hand, the hierophant sometimes finds his views aren't met with such suspicion within occult circles.

As a result, it is not uncommon for a hierophant to turn to these cultists who are hungry for his occult raving and desire to learn about the unknown. The hierophant is welcomed with open arms and an enthusiastic audience as they

seek to recreate the mysteries they have unraveled.

Cultists often refer to their hierophant as the 'pope' of their religion. They clothe their sacred priest in garb fashioned after the popes of other religions and claim him to be the ultimate gatekeeper between themselves and the greater knowledge they seek.

Implements of the Hierophant

Hierophants are experts in the studies of esoteric knowledge and history. They are able to tap into arcane abilities dating back hundreds of years through the use of tomes, scrolls, and sacred implements. They are masters at interpreting archaic symbols, especially those used in talismans and ritual spells.

At any time, a hierophant will have in his possession at least one sacred implement used for rituals or ceremonies. Implements are used to tap into the arcane powers of their ancestors or those provided by demonic, spiritual, or other necromantic means. These implements come in many forms including necklaces, rings, gems, gauntlets, totems, or rods.

Divine Abandonment

Hierophants are usually priests before they delve into the darker mysteries of the unknown. They spend their early years learning about their chosen religion, and participate in its standard rituals and practices. Unlike most priests, however, at some point the hierophant is confronted by mysteries contained within the history of their religion and

Demonic Ceremony

The congregants are ushered through the doors into the room deemed appropriate as a holy sanctuary by the cult's hierophant, and the doors are closed and barred. Acting as High Priest, the hierophant begins the ceremony by uttering archaic words that invoke the most ancient of mysteries.

The hierophant continues the ceremony – an invitation and indoctrination to new members of the cult. He channels arcane powers, and the room takes on an ominous glow. Those unable to handle the supernatural power bathing the room become stricken with fear, either attempting to flee in terror or falling catatonic from the sheer enormity of that power.

Any remaining initiates watch while the hierophant taps into those extra-dimensional energies; faces and voices appear, seemingly from nowhere.

As the ceremony continues, the voices whisper into the ears of the initiates, unveiling the secrets of their true destinies. Those who cannot handle the demonic tones go mad and kill themselves. Those who still remain become imbued with the power of the occult and knowledge of ancient times.

No one has witnessed an initiation ceremony and survived without being a participant; and only the strongest of will have survived participation.

As the ceremony ends and the room grows dark, the hierophant returns to his quarters and continues his cryptic studies.

chooses to focus his efforts on unraveling those mysteries.

Not all hierophants completely abandon their priesthood, but they do abandon their studies of the divine to concentrate on the study of the arcane. This often leads them away from their religion and to a life of the occult. But whether the priest remains true to his religion or chooses a heretic cult, he is forever changed in his views of the divine.

Holy Investigators

Those hierophants that choose to remain dedicated to their religion cease their studies of the divine and instead focus on investigating 'arcane' events in their religion's history. These investigations

delve into the holy and the arcane with an eye toward explaining such occurrences in a manner beneficial to their religion – such as proving the existence of a saint or other major religious figure.

In the course of these studies, hierophants sometimes discover ancient ceremonies and rituals practiced by their distant ancestors. Such ceremonies aren't always a good thing and are often better left alone – some being so outdated they could be potentially detrimental to the religion should people become aware of their existence. The reasons vary, but typically boil down to shifts in religious, political or societal

views of what is considered 'right' or 'wrong'.

There is also the possibility of temptation: should a hierophant stumble upon a particularly potent, yet potentially deadly, ceremony, he may completely abandon his religion in the hope of obtaining 'ultimate' power.

Favorable Interpretations

Hierophants excel at learning from past mistakes. By studying this ancient history and lore, the hierophant is able to explore what conditions affected the successes or failures of their ancestors and how those outcomes affected the general populace. The hierophant is then able to preach to others about how actual events from the past shaped and molded their present day and how things would be different should those events have ended differently.

Through these types of studies, the hierophant is able to decipher what is favorable and what is detrimental to their religion or society by reflecting upon those events that happened so many centuries before. Additionally, the hierophant is able to act as a spiritual guide for those seeking his wisdom, tapping into the arcane knowledge acquired through his continual studies.

USING THE HIEROPHANT

The hierophant is not a fighter; he is a keeper of lore and a ritualist. Hierophants have dedicated part of their lives to studying religions, and, at some point, altered their path of studies to follow the arcane rather than the divine.

Hierophants are knowledgeable in at least one ancient language (that may still be used in present time). This knowledge allows them to research ancient texts and unravel the mysteries of the past. Through these studies, they are able to



decipher that which others could not. Hierophants apply this knowledge in multiple ways including presiding over arcane rituals and resurrecting old technologies and skills that had been abandoned long ago.

But Hierophants have a choice to make - they must choose whether their activities are for the good of the people or for the benefit of themselves.

Fantasy Campaigns

In a fantasy campaign, the hierophant serves as a purveyor of ancient lore within divine societies. Their knowledge puts them on the threshold of heresy, but the benefits of the knowledge they possess encourages a few mysterious patrons to help keep the mobs at bay. Many commoners look upon the hierophant as a possible witch or warlock, if his activities are exposed; however, more erudite persons realize he is far from a common spellcaster, as they witness his leadership as he continues the chain of passing down the secrets of the ancients from one generation of hierophants to another.

Adventurers traveling with a holy hierophant understand his ability to channel the esoteric powers of the divine to heal one's wounds or cure a disease. Traveling with an unholy hierophant, though, can be much more dangerous. They will learn quickly that the priest is a fanatic and will stop at nothing to acquire ancient lore, including making pacts with less-than-desirable individuals. However, they realize his passion and most see his ability as divination rather than witchcraft; although they do not know where the ability comes from.

Sci-Fi Campaigns

In a sci-fi campaign, especially space opera, the hierophant serves as the link between present time and knowledge lost through centuries of advancements and innovations. They have a deeper

understanding of arcane abilities and are often appalled by the use of destructive technology. The hierophant continues to practice their religion, while watching those around them crumble from a life of luxury due to these technological advancements that are supposed to make life better.

Many who travel with a hierophant understand very little about the priest and his abilities. They understand the inner-workings of a laser rifle, including how to dismantle one and put it back together in 30 seconds, but are in completely shock at the hierophant's ability to call upon unknown powers to heal the wounded or strike down the blasphemous.

Additionally, a hierophant in a sci-fi campaign could easily hide his cultic affiliations.

Horror Campaigns

In a horror campaign, the hierophant is the keeper secrets concerning ancient evils. They understand the bloodlines of the vampires and the affliction of lycanthropy. They know where the demons come from and how to banish (or summon) them.

The hierophant can truly shine in a horror campaign as one who studies the most obscure subjects and uses it against his quarries. While they are limited to the studies of ancient supernatural beings, most of the truly deadly creatures that the characters face are sure to fall into that category. And if not, they also know how to *find* the knowledge to combat younger creatures.

When facing down a pack of vampires, the hierophant is the first one to pull out his holy symbol and exploit the vampires' weaknesses.

Pulp Campaigns

In a pulp campaign, the hierophant is an artifact hunter, scouring the Earth

looking for implements to perform ancient rituals or searching for powerful artifacts which are said to grant otherworldly powers. They claim to seek the artifacts for their local museum or as a display within the walls of their church. However, the hierophant often replaces the artifact with a fake and uses the holy symbol for selfish or malevolent purposes.

The hierophant is a bit of a backstabbing, unreliable ally in a pulp campaign. They seem devout on the surface while plotting behind your back. Hierophants tend to belong to altruistic and beneficial societies or organizations (such as a church), but often have ties to cults or secret societies, unbeknownst to all that consider him a friend. He can become the ultimate betrayer.

ARCHAIC DIVINE POWERS

Hierophants are able to tap into powers abandoned centuries ago. While these powers are divine in nature, such as those granted by a deity, they are so archaic that their very composition is dark and mysterious rather than holy.

Simply called Archaic Divine, trappings for these powers are associated with the stealing of life.

Hierophants worship ancient deities that ask for certain sacrifices to be made to appease them and utilize their powers. Common deities include the gods and goddesses of war, the afterlife, spirits, the sun, the moon, or darkness. Unlike traditional worship, these deities grant powers for what one thinks is good, but at a cost to those around them. To utilize an archaic divine power, one must first make a sacrifice.

Archaic divine is a trapping for offensive, defensive, manipulation, and healing. They apply to the following powers from the core rulebook and the *Fantasy Companion*:

AUSPICIOUS ARCHETYPE

armor, blast, bless/curse, bolt, boost/lower trait, burst, confusion, disguise, drain power points, divination, draining touch, fear, greater healing, growth/shrink, havoc, healing, jet, obscure, pummel, puppet, stun, succor, warrior's gift, zombie

Minor Effect: Upon a successful casting, the recipient must succeed on a Vigor roll or gain a level of Fatigue.

Major Effect: The spell's range is reduced to Touch. Upon a successful casting, the recipient must succeed on a Vigor roll or take a Wound in addition to any received from the power.

HIEROPHANT ARCHETYPE

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

Skills: Faith d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d6, Knowledge (Divine) d6, Persuasion d6



Charisma: -; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5; **Power Points:** 10

Hindrances: One Major, Two Minor

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Command, Linguist

Powers: healing, bolt

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Hierophants can make great NPCs when running an adventure utilizing cults, secret societies, or religions with extensive histories. Hierophants typically assume leadership roles and are commonly found within cults, acting as the chief priest. This type of role provides a formidable antagonist Wild Card when investigating a cult and helps create a defined leader for it.

Hierophant cult leaders are zealous practitioners of their religion and devout worshipers of their deities. They are the ones who lead all rituals and ceremonies including sacrifices made to appease the gods.

Jerome Varus

In the midst of small-town America, Jerome Varus was the child of two devout Christians. His parents raised him to be faithful as they attended church every Sunday, along with all church-sponsored events during the week. At the age of 16, Jerome fell in love with the daughter of a family friend, Naomi.

Jerome and Naomi were inseparable and attended mass together every Sunday and volunteered to lead or chaperone many of the events held for the younger children in the congregation. The two declared their love to be forever and vowed to never part.

After high school, Jerome and Naomi attended the nearby state college with studies focusing on Christianity. Jerome studied religious history while Naomi studied to become a teacher. They



JEROME VARUS

Jerome Varus is a religious scholar who turned his back on his faith due to the death of his wife and child.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (1); **Charisma:** +2

Skills: Faith d10, Fighting d6, Intimidation d10, Investigation d12, Knowledge (Arcana) d10, Knowledge (Divine) d10, Knowledge (Occult) d12, Knowledge (Religion) d10, Knowledge (Religious History) d12, Notice d10, Persuasion d10, Streetwise d10, Taunt d10

Hindrances: Arrogant (Major), Stubborn (Minor), Vengeful (Minor)

Edges: Arcane Resistance, Brave, Charismatic, Command, Command Presence, Fervor, Linguist, Natural Leader, Strong Willed

Powers: armor, blast, burst, disguise, divination, fear, pummel, puppet, zombie

Gear: Talisman (necklace, to focus powers)

Armor: Leather Jacket (Armor +1; torso, arms, and legs)

Weapons: Dagger (Damage: Str+d4)

graduated college together and married at the age of 23.

One year later, Jerome and Naomi discovered Naomi was pregnant. At the age of 24, Naomi gave birth to their daughter Alexis. Jerome was ecstatic and celebrated the birth of his child and the growth of their family with everyone, but the celebration was soon to come to an end.

Only two months later, tragedy struck as Naomi and Alexis were killed when their car was struck while driving down a country road. A drunk driver was



believed to be the culprit, but no one was ever caught, as the assailant had fled the scene, never to return. Jerome became guilt stricken for months, blaming his God for not protecting his wife and daughter.

With a new fervor aimed at the distrust of his former religion, Jerome turned to his college studies for answers. Within the pages of his many books he found references to rituals aimed at raising the dead or appeasing the gods to avoid tragedy. Jerome's passion for religion was ignited in the most horrendous way as he devoted his life to studying these rituals with the hope to one day bring his beloved Naomi and their daughter Alexis back home.

As the years went by, Jerome became more and more obsessed with occultism and the possible powers it could grant. He turned his back on the Christian religion and left his hometown to seek one of the cults spoken of within the books. Upon arriving in Mississippi, Jerome found what he was searching for in the arms of the Cult of the Bleeding Sun.

Now in his mid-40s and with his knowledge of religion and religious history, Jerome was given the title of hierophant and leads the Bleeding Sun cult.

Cult of the Bleeding Sun

The Cult of the Bleeding Sun is primarily located within remote areas of Mississippi. The cult worships an unnamed Mayan god who demands regular sacrificial offerings in return for the power he grants. While animal sacrifices grant minor abilities, major abilities can only be acquired by sacrificing humans.

The Cult of the Bleeding Sun was fractured and failing before Jerome Varus, their current hierophant, came along and solidified the cult's practices of worship. Prior to his appointment, the cult lacked an understanding of how to appease their deity. Jerome invoked their god for the others to see for the first time, and those who survived the encounter selected him as a true leader and appointed Jerome Hierophant.

Since Jerome's appointment, the cult has seen a steady increase in membership. The remoteness of their operations has allowed the cult to remain secret to those lacking occult knowledge, including local law enforcement and the FBI.

So far, Jerome has only allowed the sacrifice of "those who are lacking in moral fiber" - prostitutes, to be precise. He believes that their deaths offer atonement for their life of sin. Jerome leads all sacrificial ceremonies as he's the

only one who fully understands the proper rites and incantations. These sacrifices rejuvenate the attending cultists, giving them a more youthful appearance and reversing the natural damage of aging. The cult's oldest member is 65, but looks half his age.

The Cult of the Bleeding Sun and its deity believe that to be stronger in life and prosperous in the afterlife, one must be long-lived and amass enough power to sustain their life for eternity. While it is unknown how long one can sustain this rejuvenating youth, ancient texts preach of those who have lived to be over 200 years old.

To overcome the body's natural death and decay, the cult claims they must "make the sun bleed and bath in its rejuvenating energy."

The Cult of the Bleeding Sun is composed of three basic member "ranks". The hierophant is the leader and ritualist. He is the most knowledgeable in the occult. Cultists are the basic members that have spent at least one year within the cult, learning from the hierophant and being an active part of all rituals. Initiates have been member for less than a year and are under the direct tutelage of the hierophant or a partnered cultist.

CULTIST

Cultists are the basic minions of the Bleeding Sun. While only a cultist knows his real age, they all appear to appear as though they are in their mid-30s.

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

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Occult) d10, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Streetwise d8, Throwing d8

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty (Major), Loyal (Minor), Vengeful (Minor)

Edges: Brave, Liquid Courage

Armor: None

Weapons: Dagger (Damage: Str+d4)

INITIATE

Initiates are young cultists, recently inducted into its ranks.

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

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6, Throwing d6

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty (Major), Loyal (Minor), Vengeful (Minor)

Edges: Brave

Armor: None

Weapons: Club (Damage: Str+d4)

SAVAGE TALE

The hierophant is rarely encountered alone, especially if they are the head of a cult. Jerome Varus will only be encountered without his cultist and initiate minions during social encounters. He is most likely encountered during a ritual, surrounded by many of his cultist brethren.

The Moon Ritual

Canton is a mid-sized city in Madison County, Mississippi. As a part of the Jackson metropolitan area, it's busy with residents of all types. However, the city has recently come under the watchful eye of law enforcement after repeated reports of young women who have gone missing.

Ten women, between the ages of 18 and 25, have been reported as missing throughout the course of the past five years. The ten women are a mixture of race and heritage, but all of them were known to be promiscuous and possibly paid companions. Law enforcement has yet to find any leads; no bodies have been found and there are no credible eye witnesses. It's as if these women all just disappeared.

The Cult of the Bleeding Sun

The Cult of the Bleeding Sun is located just outside Canton, Mississippi, with most members living within Canton and the surrounding cities. They have become emboldened by their new hierophant leader, Jerome Varus, as he has demonstrated the true power that lies within the Mayan God they worship.

Hierophant Varus took the first victim at the beginning of the summer to perform the cult's first, full ritual to rejuvenate their bodies and give them a more youthful appearance. To perform the ritual, a human sacrifice must be made

with the most ideal candidate being an adult woman less than 30 years of age.

To avoid the eyes of law enforcement, Hierophant Varus carefully chose his sacrificial prey by selecting a woman that could easily be forgotten. He chose someone who had no family in Mississippi, didn't have a regular, full time job, didn't have children, and had few friends to speak of. His first victim was selected and sacrificed during the first full moon to appease the God of Afterlife. Subsequent rituals have been performed approximately every six months using a victim from a similar walk of life.



The Ritual

Those participating in the ritual are witness to a horrifying experience. The sacrificial victim is strapped to a simple wooden table within an extremely primitive ritual room. To avoid being caught, multiple ritual locations are used with some being completely abandoned or torn down if law enforcement becomes too aware of their presence. Some ritual rooms have been haphazardly constructed outdoors, without rooftops, only to be torn down the following day.

The sacrificial victim is laid flat upon her back and strapped tightly to the table. Her mouth is gagged and bound, to prevent anyone hearing her screams, although Hierophant Varus finds

euphoria in the screams of his victims. Led by Hierophant Varus, the cult chants several ancient words repeatedly while their hierophant performs the ceremony.

The room becomes bathed with an otherworldly darkness that twinkles like distant stars through one's peripheral vision. Whispers can be heard throughout the darkness as the cultists connect with the spirit of their deity and channel his energy. At the peak of the ritual, Hierophant Varus plunges a ritual dagger into the chest of the victim. As her soul is snatched by the spiritual mist, Hierophant Varus removes the victim's heart and allows her blood to bath the ritual table.

Each member of the cult must then place his hand in the victim's blood to receive

the gift from their deity. The life force of the young victim is turned into a rejuvenating experience as her blood boils under the touch of the cultists, reversing the natural damage caused by age. Wounds heal, bones strengthen, and diseases are expelled.

As the ritual ends, the spiritual mist lifts and the room becomes quiet. The victim's body is an empty shell, tossed to the denizens of the night for sustenance. The cultists emerge with youthful appearances and physiques. The room is thoroughly cleaned and the ritual table is burned. All evidence is methodically washed away.

Unless the characters can find the cult and save the latest victim, this will be her fate.



The Ossuary

The Ossuary is an adventure designed around The Ossuary battlemat, copyright and published by DramaScape with cartography by Simon Powell, used with permission. DramaScape's battlemats are available exclusively through DriveThruRPG. Use the following link to purchase The Ossuary battlemat from DramaScape at a discounted price (please note you must use the entire link to get the discount):

<http://rpg.drivethrustuff.com/index.php?discount=10431>

While no one knows it, the village of Bethsford lies within the shadow of a monster. Along the cliffs of the Green Sea an ancient temple stands proud on the rocky cliff. It is an empty structure from a forgotten time. Or at least it's supposed to be empty. The temple once offered religious services to the villagers and provided a resting place for their deceased. The land around Bethsford is rocky and rough, making cemeteries less than ideal as a resting place for eternity. Seeing a need to bury their dead, the monks of St. Benjamin built a large ossuary with church funds and moved all the village's religious services to the top of the cliff.

The temple and its ossuary were used for many decades, but the journey to the top of the cliff proved too difficult for many of the villagers. New monks did not come to replace the ones that were dying and new priests were hesitant to offer their services in a place so far away from the village. After almost 100 years, the ossuary of St. Benjamin was abandoned and left to stand alone on the top of the cliff.

Unbeknownst to the villagers of Bethsford, the ossuary was not to stay empty for long. In fact, the aura of death surrounding the ossuary and temple became quite the draw to a most foul being. The ossuary of St. Benjamin has become the playground for a vicious necromancer and his occult followers.

THE NECROMANCER

Stephan Redcliffe grew up on a relatively peaceful farm not too far from Bethsford. His family raised sheep and goats and his parents were the most loving a child can ask for. When Stephan was 12 years old, the farm was attacked by barbarians traveling through the hills looking for conquest. Seeing the tiny community as easy pickings, they sacked the small Redcliffe

farm, killing everyone except Stephan. Stephan was only spared because he was playing in the creek at the edge of the fields when the farm was attacked and hid amongst the rocks. He stared upon his family and their farm as the barbarians tore it apart. From that day, Stephan was left to fend for himself.

Instead of finding help from nearby Bethsford, Stephan panicked and ran towards the mountains. By nightfall, Stephan was too exhausted to be frightened any longer, so when he came upon a large cave with chanting emanating from within, he took a chance and went inside seeking shelter from the attack and following his curiosity. Stephan found a group of cultists worshipping their blasphemous deity. The cult's hierophant, Bartholomew Kentson, held the worshipers from attacking and approached Stephan, asking why and how he had stumbled upon the cave. Stephan was confused but muttered something about barbarians attacking his home and killing his family. Kentson allowed Stephan to crash into his arms, embracing the boy as he wept. From then on, Kentson took Stephan under his tutelage, grooming him to be the next hierophant of their dark cult. Kentson promised to raise Stephan as a man and provide him with the means of exacting revenge upon the barbarians that destroyed his family.

This was 120 years ago.

Stephan's training in the occult has provided him with extraordinary powers and near immortality. He continues to age, but his dark deities have slowed it to a snail's pace. Although Stephan is 132 years old, he looks to be in his 40s.

After his mentor died, Stephan decided to move his studies away from the drab cave, determined to find a place worthy of raising an army. He had grown up in Bethsford, and knew that ruins stood on the hills overlooking the town which would make an excellent base, however he didn't know anything about them. Stephan ventured into Bethsford and asked around about the buildings on the cliff. Most villagers didn't have any idea what the ruins were, but Stephan was able to find an old midwife who explained it was the temple of St. Benjamin, but it's been empty for decades now. Grabbing enough supplies to last him a week, Stephan made the trek up to the cliff where the temple stood.

Determined to explore the temple and make it his own, Stephan spent the next week exploring and making plans to repair the structure, without letting the villagers know. Stephan plays the part of a recluse, maintaining a “home” near his family’s ruined farm. Every couple of weeks, Stephan would wander into town from his home and buy supplies. What people don't know is that the little building that Stephan maintains is little more than a façade. Stephan made his true home in the ossuary, building an army that will vanquish the barbarians that took his family.

In the 120 years Stephan has spent studying the occult, he has become an extremely powerful necromancer with the backing of beings that lurk in the shadows. Throughout the past 6 months, he has occupied the ossuary with the intention of amassing an army of cultic beings to bear down upon the barbarians that destroyed his youth. What Stephan doesn't know is the barbarians were defeated almost 40 years ago in a battle with the Baron of Bethsford. If he knew this, his thirst for revenge may easily turn to a thirst for blood on anyone that gets in his way.

The ossuary only aids his plans by providing a wealth of willing servants.

GETTING THE CHARACTERS INVOLVED

There are a number of ways the PCs could be called upon to rid the land of Stephan or investigate the goings-on at the ossuary.

Hauntings

The village of Bethsford has experienced random hauntings in the past weeks. Those who still know of the ossuary and what it holds claim that the dead within are coming to life and seeking revenge upon their descendants. They call for heroes to rid them of the hauntings and request that the ossuary be cleansed of all evil.

Kidnapping

A woman from Bethsford was kidnapped late at night. The culprit, unknown to the villagers, is a stone gargoyle from the ossuary atop the cliff. While experimenting with animation powers and bringing the stone gargoyles to life, Stephan lost control of one as it flew down to Bethsford below. The kidnapped woman was dropped onto the grounds of the ossuary, killing her instantly. Stephan attempts to deflect any investigations before becoming hostile.



Strange Noises

The village of Bethsford has reported a series of strange, loud moaning noises coming from the ossuary atop the cliff. Supposedly abandoned, the villagers fear the ossuary has been invaded by demons or undead.

Rise of the Army

Stephan's cultic activities have gained the attention of the fiefs around him. His small undead army continues to grow and is sent on regular "training" missions where they attack neighboring militias in the hopes of killing the soldiers and harvesting the bodies.

THE OSSUARY

The ossuary is a large site which includes a church, collection of graveyards, a tower, and a tomb. These descriptions attach to the associated maps.

1. The Stone Stairs

The ossuary sits atop a large cliff, facing the Green Sea. The trail winds around the north and western faces of the ossuary leading to the stairs facing south. These stairs are only 30 feet from the face of the cliff to prevent easy invasion. During its construction, the land was regularly accosted by barbarians and the monks were wary.

2. Graveyards

Upon ascending the stairs, two graveyards, one on each side, sit silently. Each headstone marks the grave of a body ready for

reanimation. If necessary, Stephan can raise a single zombie or ghoul (depending on the level of the encounter) from each of these graves.

3. Central Landing

At the top of the stairs is a central landing guarded by a pair of statues. The statues are harmless (unless otherwise desired by the GM) and have yet to be animated by Stephan's cultic magic. To the west is a large tomb paired with a lone tree. Stephan interred his hierophant mentor Bartholomew Kentson within this tomb. Kentson is now a revenant waiting for the call from his new master Stephan.

To the east is a set of stone stairs leading to the church along with a raised landing (accessible from the church's basement) housing an empty sarcophagus.

A small set of stone stairs leads to the north landing, allowing access to the church's basement and the western tower.

4. North Landing

The north landing is small, but illuminated. There is a door east of the main stairs leading to the church's basement. Another set of stairs on the northern edge lead down to the burial pit and a set of stairs to the west lead up to the western tower. There are no walls preventing one from falling off the northern edge, and the ground is 30 feet down (3d6 damage).

5a. Western Tower – First Floor

The western tower has a single entrance on its eastern wall, leading to the north landing. The first floor of the tower is a preparation room with two wooden tables. The first wooden

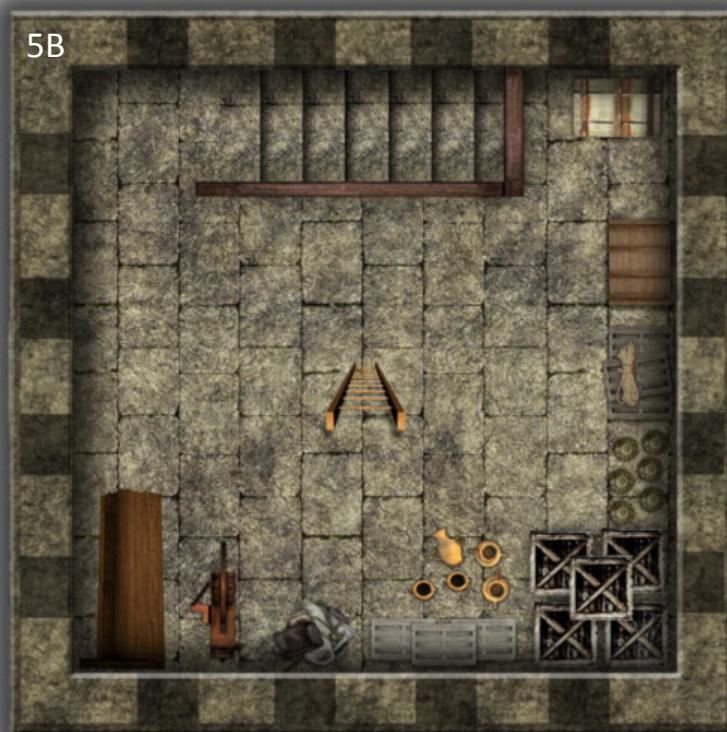


table is for prepping bodies for interring while the second holds the implements for interment. A small, cart-like table sits near the corner with additional tools.

The blood inside the first floor dried long ago. Stephan does not work on fresh bodies and most of his army consists of those who have exsanguinated long ago. This tower is rarely used, but can be home to any number of surprises for the curious PCs.

5b. Western Tower – Second Floor

The northern stairs on the first floor lead up to the second floor. There is very little in this room outside of a few supplies and crates for storage. A ladder sits in the center of the room allowing access to the roof of the western tower. The ossuary's undead guards would most likely be in the western tower, using the roof as their vantage point.

6. Burial Pit

The burial pit is a large pit filled with skeletal remains. While these skeletons cannot be animated due to their scattered bones, Stephan's magic has created a side-effect. The bone pit is now a swirling melee of spirits brought back by the necrotic power emanating from Stephan's reanimation powers. The spirits are confined to the bone pit until someone opens the door. Stephan knows nothing about these spirits and has never opened this door. If he did, the spirits would most likely attack him as well as whoever is with him.

The influx of the spirit realm into this bone pit has also attracted the attention of shades from realms of chaos. They stalk the depths of the bone pit, often feeding on the spirits that get near. The shades lurk within the shadows and are also confined to the bone pit until someone breaches the entrance. Unlike the spirits, they wait patiently outside of anyone's view (including the view of the spirits). Spirits do not know when one of their numbers has been taken by the shades.

If the door to the bone pit is opened, the spirits and the shades may also attack Stephan's undead minions.

7a. Church

The church is the main home of Stephan and his army and is accessible through the large stone stairs leading from the central landing via another set of stairs. The church has a pair of large stone doors leading into an entry with now-dry urns. Opposite the entrance is another pair of doors leading into the church. Two rows of pews line the walls, leading to a small lectern and large stained-glass window behind it. During the daytime, the sun shines through the window producing an image upon the floor.

To the left of the interior entrance, before the rows of pews, is a small door leading to a small room with the staircase leading to the church's basement. To the right, across from the lectern, is a door that leads to another landing with additional graveyards. To the left, adjacent to the lectern, is a door leading to a staircase leading up into the church's tower.



7b. Church Tower

The staircase leading to the church tower is in the shape of an “L”. These stairs lead to Stephan’s room, complete with bed, desk, shelves, and washtub. Stephan does most of his work at night and would most likely be encountered here during the day.

7c. Church Basement (Ossuary)

Following the stairs down from the church or through the door from the north landing leads to the church basement. The stairs from the church lead to a small landing with two doors. The eastern door leads into the skeleton holding room where numerous skeletons await the ossuary or the burial pit. The actual ossuary is a tomb where boxes of skeletal remains are kept. Because of the size of the building, only the most important bodies were actually put in the ossuary; the rest were placed in the burial pit. The far wall of the ossuary room opens to an extension of the skeleton holding area. This is part of Stephan’s army and any number of the skeletons can be or already are animated.

The south wall of the skeleton holding room has a door leading into a large room with many sarcophagi. This room holds Stephan’s skeletal guards including his four undead warriors (skeletal remains of great warriors). Stephan will only call upon his undead warriors when he feels his skeleton minions cannot

do the job. He does not want to waste his greatest warriors and plans to use them as captains in his undead army.

The western door, along with the door from the north landing, leads to a small chapel previously used solely by the monks of St. Benjamin. This was their private area for worship and includes eight pews, a lectern, and a small altar. A door on the south of this room leads to a small landing outside with an empty sarcophagus.

8. Additional Graveyards

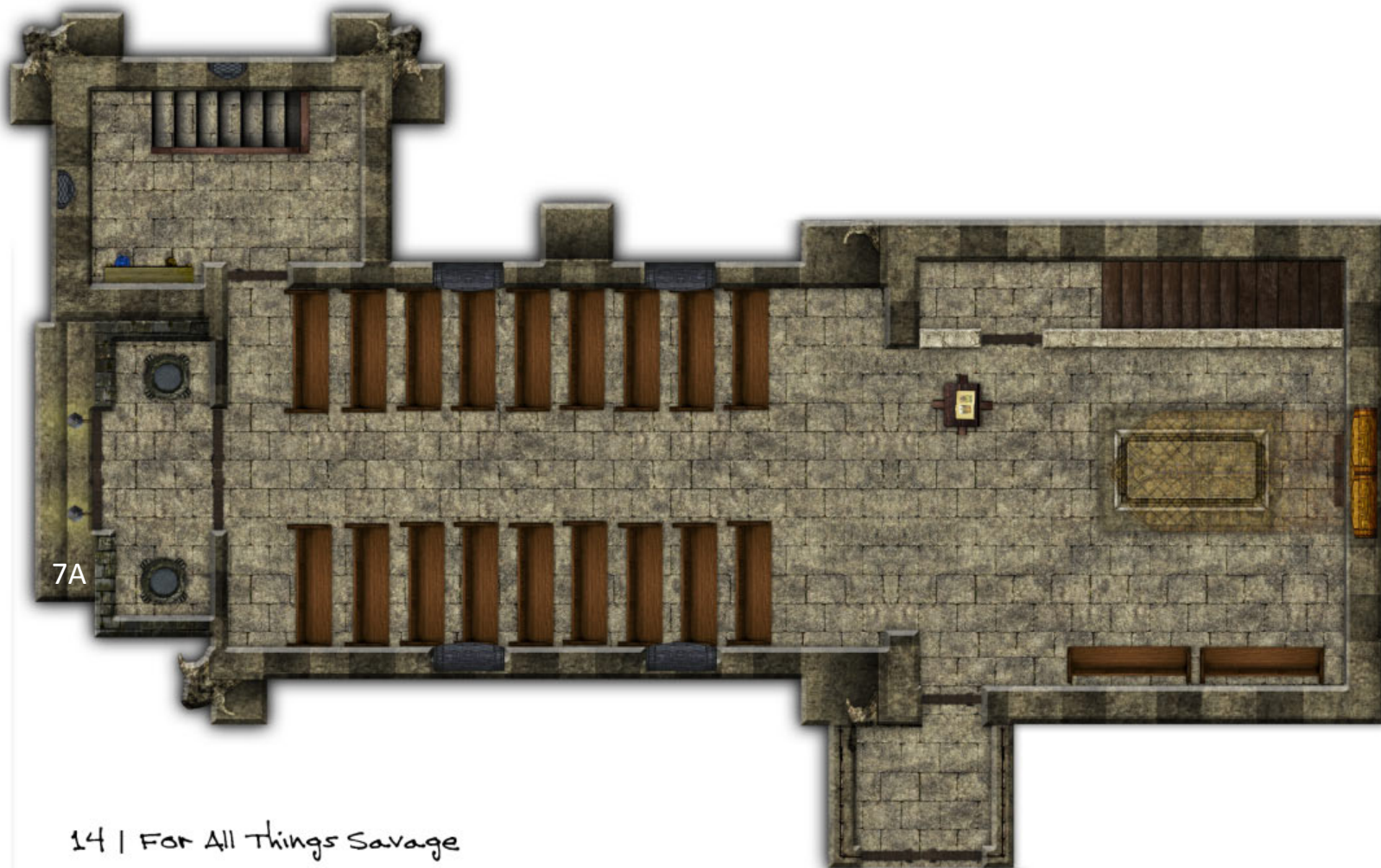
Following the door from the church leads to another set of graveyards. As before, these graveyards contain a body in each grave ready to be animated as a zombie or ghoul.

9. Gargoyles

Perched on the exterior of the church are seven gargoyles. Stephan has been working with animation spells to turn these gargoyle statues into real stone gargoyles. While all seven may be able to animate, adjust this number according to how well the PCs are doing and how sinister the GM wants to be.

BESTIARY

A number of beings exist in the ossuary. As the number of animated undead and gargoyles can easily be adjusted,



quantities are not provided so that the GM can scale the encounters as desired. Stephan Redcliffe and Bartholomew Kentson can be used as standalone villains for Novice level and coupled with other creatures for scaling up to Heroic level.



BARTHOLOMEW KENTSON

Bartholomew Kentson is Stephan's former mentor and hierophant. He has been interred and reanimated as a revenant.

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

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

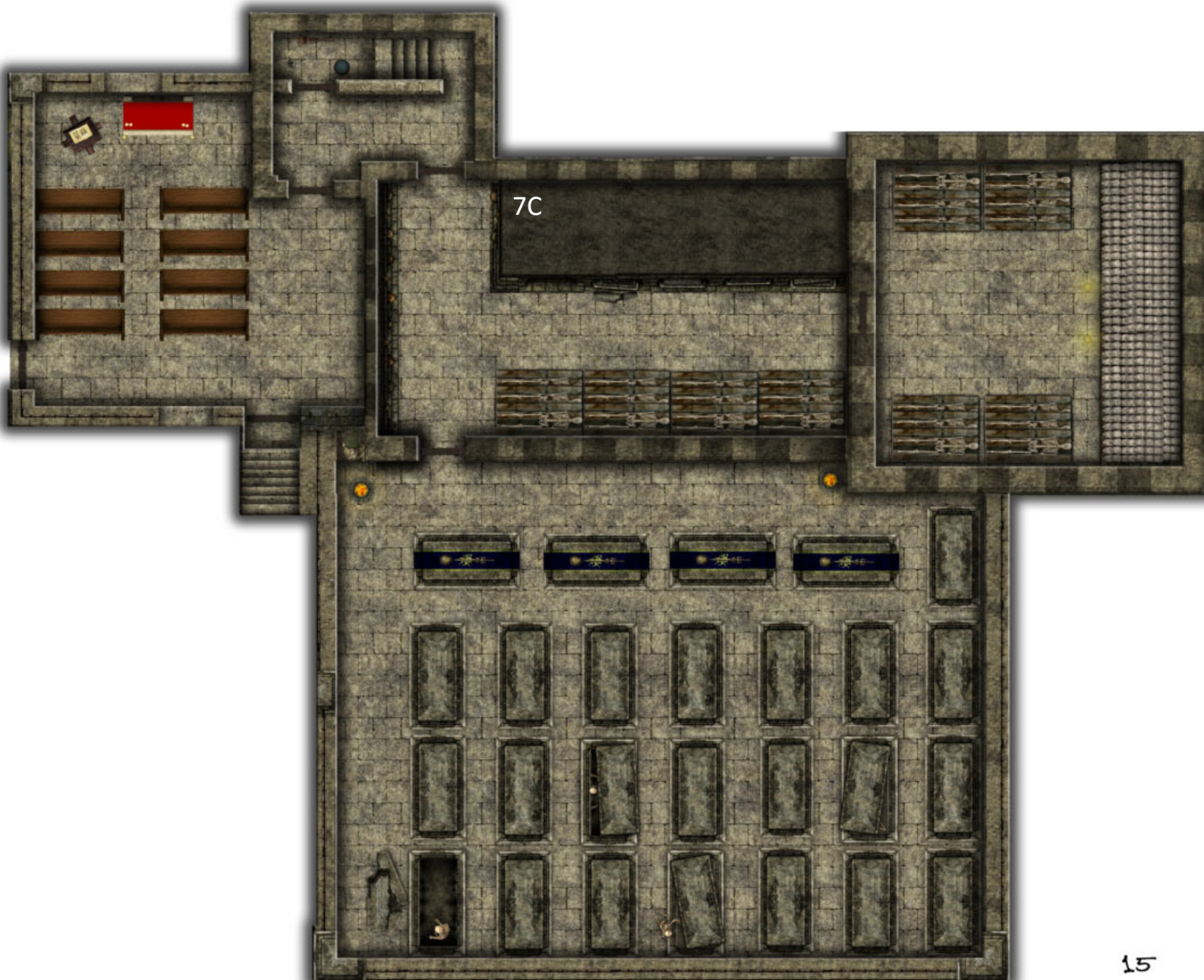
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Faith d10, Knowledge (Occult) d12, Notice d8

Armor: None

Weapons: Ritual Dagger (Str+d4+1)

Special Abilities:

- **Fast Regeneration:** Bartholomew is animated by a spell that allows him to heal during combat. He may attempt a natural healing roll every round unless his wound were caused by a magical attack.
- **Fear -2:** Undead hierophants are horrific to see.
- **Fearless:** Revenants are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Fervor:** Undead creatures in the command radius of Bartholomew receive a +1 bonus to their Fighting damage rolls.
- **Fleet-Footed:** Revenants roll d10s instead of d6s when running.
- **Natural Leader:** As a leader of the undead army, Bartholomew may share his bennies with any undead troops under his command.
- **Level Headed:** Bartholomew acts on the better of two cards.
- **Powers:** Bartholomew is a highly skilled hierophant with 30 Power Points and knows the



following spells with a darkness trapping: *armor, blast, blind, darksight, drain power points, havoc, puppet*

- **Scream:** Revenants may unleash a guttural, undead scream toward all opponents it can see within 6 in. Targets must make a successful Vigor roll or become Shaken. Revenants cannot perform melee attacks in the same round they scream.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; Called Shots do no extra damage.

GARGOYLE (STONE)

Stone gargoyles appear like statues when perching.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10 (4)

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

Armor: Stone Skin (All 4)

Weapons: Claws (Str+d6), Bite (Str+d4)

Special Abilities:

- **Fearless:** Gargoyles are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Flight:** Gargoyles fly at a rate of 8 in. with a Climb of 3 in. and may not run.

- **Statue:** Gargoyles gain a +2 to Stealth when blending in with gargoyle statues on buildings.

GHOUL

Ghouls are bloodthirsty undead who feast off their victims.

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

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

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

Armor: None

Weapons: Claws (Str+d4), Bite (Str+d4)

Special Abilities:

- **Blood Feast:** Ghouls feast off the blood of their victims, causing exsanguination. If a ghoul successfully wounds with a bite attack, the victim must make an immediate Vigor roll at -2 or suffer +1 Level of Fatigue.
- **Fear -1:** Bloodthirsty ghouls are terrifying to see.
- **Fearless:** Ghouls are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Infravision:** Ghouls halve penalties (rounded down) for poor lighting.
- **Tracking the Living:** Ghouls receive a +2 bonus to Notice and Tracking rolls against living targets.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; Called Shots do no extra damage.

SHADE

Shades are spirits that dwell within the shadows of the underworld, returning to the realm of man to haunt the living.

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

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Taunt d8, Spellcasting d8, Stealth d10, Throwing d8

Armor: None

Weapons: Thrown Objects (Improvised Weapons)



Special Abilities:

- **Ethereal:** Shades are immaterial and can only be harmed by magical attacks.
- **Fear:** Shades cause the shadows to play tricks on one's eyes, causing the mind to reel in pain.
- **Fearless:** Shades are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Powers:** Shades have 20 Power Points and know the following spells with a darkness trapping: *armor, blast, burst, fear, invisibility*
- **Shadows:** Shades are darkness incarnate, gaining a +2 to Stealth when hiding in the shadows.

SKELETON

Animated skeletons are the staple of Stephan's army.

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

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

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

Armor: None

Weapons: Short Sword (Str+d6) or Dagger (3/6/12; Str+d4), Claws (Str+d4)

Special Abilities:

- **Fearless:** Skeletons are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; Called Shots do no extra damage.

**SKELETON WARRIOR**

These skeleton warriors are the captains of the undead army.

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

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Throwing d8

Armor: None

Weapons: Long Sword (Str+d8), Claws (Str+d4)

Special Abilities:

- **Fearless:** Skeletons are immune to Fear and Intimidation.

- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; Called Shots do no extra damage.

**STEPHAN REDCLIFFE**

Stephan Redcliffe is a highly skilled necromancer, building an undead army to unleash against his enemies.

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

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (Occult) d10, Spellcasting d10,

Armor: Cloth Armor (Arms, Legs, Torso +1)

Weapons: Staff (Str+d4; Reach 1, Parry +1, 2 hands)

Special Abilities:

- **Necromancer:** Stephan is immune to Fear and Intimidation from undead creatures.
- **Powers:** Stephan has 40 Power Points and knows the following spells with a necromantic trapping: *armor, blind, bolt, damage field, deflection, fear, summon ally, zombie*

TRAPPED SPIRIT

These trapped spirits have been brought back due to Stephan's reanimation powers.

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

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Throwing d6

Armor: None

Weapons: Thrown Objects (Improvised Weapons)

Special Abilities:

- **Ethereal:** Trapped spirits are immaterial and can only be harmed by magical attacks.
- **Neutral:** Trapped spirits are neither good nor bad and attack anyone around them out of fear. Upon being freed

from the burial pit, they begin to panic and everyone becomes a target.

ZOMBIE

Zombies are reanimated bodies from the graves. They are not shambling corpses but rather able-bodied, undead soldiers.

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

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6

Armor: None

Weapons: Claws (Str+d4)

Special Abilities:

- **Fearless:** Zombies are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; Called Shots do no extra damage, except to the head.
- **Weakness (Head):** Shots to a zombie's head receive a +2 bonus to damage.





The Secret of Isla de Monos

Treasure hunting is fun in the Caribbean, but beware of Voodoo curses!

Many thanks to: Ron Gilbert, Dave Grossman and Tim Schafer for the inspiration.

THE TRUTH BEHIND IT ALL (SPOILER)

Years ago, five among the most (in)famous pirates (Guy Treetimber, Jack Spadger, Katy Smallsie, Norman Rottentooth, and Michael Marsh) succeeded, after many adventures, in locating the hiding place of the immense treasure of the French pirate LeChic on Isla de Monos.

Using Michael's "Lucifer's Lullaby" (and their magical weapons) they easily defeated LeChic's skeleton haunting the treasure hoard to get to the loot. Too bad the nasty pirate had cursed his treasure: the five bold heroes' bodies turned into little golden statues while their souls were damned to become

five giant monkeys who would forever stand guard to the cave where the treasure was hidden.

The five pirates' mission was covered by absolute secrecy (of course, not to divide the treasure with others). That's why everyone thought the five adventurers were lost at sea. Is that the end? Of course not! Thanks to his nasty Voodoo powers and the life energy provided by the five unwary pirates, after years of quiescence, the greedy LeChic came to "life" again as a ghost.

Seeking to come back to life again, LeChic needs to absorb more life energy. Using the statues, LeChic casts a terrible Voodoo curse that affects the nearest people who had the same birthdate as the five pirates. In a curious coincidence, the PCs are the "unlucky ones". LeChic is sure the PCs will find their way to Isla de Monos, enter the treasure room, and finally provide him the life force he needs to come back to life again...

He must only be patient and wait. Soon the mighty pirate LeChic will sail again over the oceans!

THE VODOO CURSES

The Curse cast by the pirate LeChic has four different “aspects,” each one striking a different PC. If more PCs are in play, the same “aspect” strikes more than once. For the adventure to go well, there **MUST** be at least one character struck by the “Matusalem” curse AND at least one character struck by the “Gorilla” curse. All other aspects are freely usable at GM’s discretion.

1. **Aspect #1: The Gender Bender.** The PC becomes of the opposite sex. He looks like his former self (hair color, eye color, nose shape etc.), but he/she will clearly be of the opposite sex, looking better than before! If he didn’t already have it, the character gains the Attractive Edge. As soon as he/she becomes aware of the curse, he/she gains the special Hindrance: “Gender Bender curse”.

- **To improve fun:** Use this curse on the ugliest/most unpleasant character.

2. **Aspect #2: The Gorilla.** The PC transforms into a huge, hairy Gorilla. He is unable to speak human languages, but still understands them. He maintains his writing abilities. If not better, he will gain the following traits: Strength d12+4, Vigor d12, and Fighting d8. He also gains these Special Abilities: Gorilla Punch (Str+d6) and Size +2 (he can stand up to 8’ tall and weighs over 1000 pounds) As soon as he becomes aware of the curse, he gains the special Hindrance: “Gorilla Curse”.

- **To improve fun:** Avoid using this curse on spellcasters. If possible, use it on the weakest member.

3. **Aspect #3: Matusalem.** The PC suddenly becomes VERY old (about 60-70 years old) and continues to age at an alarming rate. Each passing day he grows 1 year older. His Pace is reduced by 2 and his Vigor and Strength dice drop to d4. Should he have any Charisma-related Edges, he immediately loses them. On the good side, he is imbued by a sharp, witty tongue gaining the ability Taunt at d10 if not already better. As soon as he becomes aware of the curse, he gains the special Hindrance: “Matusalem Curse”.

- **To improve fun:** If possible, use this curse on the group’s strongest melee fighter.

4. **Aspect #4: The Undead.** The PC becomes a zombie. Should he have any Charisma-related Edges, he immediately loses them. Special Abilities: Fearless (he

is immune to Fear and Intimidation) and Undead (+2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no extra damage; immune to disease, poison or booze effects). As soon as he becomes aware of the curse, he gains the special Hindrance: “Undead Curse”.

- **To improve fun:** Use this curse on the group’s “face”.

THE HOOK

Wherever they may be on one sad day, the PCs wake up “different”. One has changed sex, another is a gorilla, someone else is very, very old, and there’s a zombie around. There’s no way to go back to their former selves, they clearly need an expert’s help. With an easy Streetwise roll (+2), they come to know that the only person that can probably help is Voodoo Lady, located on a tiny island called “Scuffle Island”.

The PCs can either own a ship or they can buy passage to the Island. Whatever their choice is, after a one-day cruise they arrive on Scuffle Island’s village where, with another very easy Streetwise roll (+4), they know that Voodoo Lady lives in a dark swamp not far from the village. GMs should guide the characters there quickly, stressing the need to find a solution to their problems as soon as possible.

ADVENTURE STARTS – THE SWAMP

Scuffle Island, a true pearl of the Caribbean islands, hides a dark heart. A bleak place, awash in mud, where poisonous snakes slither in the silt. Only he who is equipped with incredible courage (or the right dose of madness) may have the strength to sit in a dark boat-shaped coffin and row unconsciously to the heart of the swamp, chasing the mad hope to meet the one who knows everything: Voodoo Lady.

Despite warnings, even today some crazy wanderers have endangered their lives and arrived in the heart of the swamp: a skull-shaped dwelling where the Queen of Voodoo lives. What fate will await them inside? What prompted them to risk so much? Will they be able to return, or will their soul be devoured by the black candle’s fire? Voodoo power is huge, but the sacrifices it requires are no different...

PART 1: THE VODOO RITUAL

After a terrifying journey aboard a rickety coffin-shaped boat, you finally come to the heart of Scuffle Island's rotten swamp: the skull-shaped pile dwelling where Voodoo Lady lives! You are now inside it, in a large, vaguely circular room. The walls around you are covered with shelves full of disgusting flasks and lit black candles, giving the place an even more ominous look. A parrot next to a big locked wooden door repeats the same phrase: "Braaak! Voodoo Lady is busy! Braaak! She will receive you as soon as possible! Braaak! Wait here!" Each one of you sees unknown faces all around. Waiting in this sinister place becomes increasingly unnerving.

The PCs are sitting in Voodoo Lady's (henceforth called VL) waiting room. Around them sit other "strange" individuals (at the GMs discretion). Allow them five minutes to "socialize." Any attempt to approach the door alarms the parrot, which urges everyone to wait and NOT touch the door. If anyone wants to inspect out the jars and/or the flasks, they contain the worst nightmares their imagination can dream of. Anyone who wants to hurt the parrot or still touches the door "without permission" must make a Spirit roll with a (-6) penalty. Failure indicates the character stands still, speechless and motionless, until VL calls everyone in.

Suddenly, a deep and eerily sensual voice echoes in the room: "Come in, guests... It's your time." The big door slowly opens before you, revealing a room as dark as a deep abyss in the middle of the night. Altogether, you enter the room with awe, fearing to sink into an endless nothingness. Its interior is unnaturally dark, and the only visible figure in a surreal distance is a black woman seated on a gloomy throne of bones. Her age is undeterminable and her Junoesque presence inspires awe and reverence.

Before her, a large cauldron seems to boil without any fire. As soon as you have entered the room, the door suddenly closes behind you, startling everyone. Fear starts to tighten a frosty grip around your hearts. Slowly, the black lady opens her eyes, which are completely white and without pupils. "Welcome." she says, showing an enviable smile made of golden teeth, "It's time to introduce ourselves. People call me Voodoo Lady. And you, who might you be?"

VL actually already knows who they are, but asks everyone to introduce themselves anyway and explain why they came to see her. Each of the PCs is free to say what they want, but any

attempt to lie about "important parts" is immediately thwarted by VL's cold glances. After everyone has introduced themselves and has clearly explained their problems, read on:

The Junoesque matron smiles. "Although your looks seem so different," she says, "your problems are actually very similar. Each of you has been CURSED! And the curse that rests on your heads is very powerful." The Voodoo Lady remains silent for a minute, leaving you to struggle with despair. (This is the perfect time to add the "cursed" Hindrance to each character's sheet.)

"BUT!" she shouts, startling you, "She who knows the arcane Voodoo ways like I do that have a solution for you."

After someone has asked what the solution is, read on:

"You want to know what the solution is, don't you?" Her golden grin becomes more and more evil "Are you ready to sacrifice something precious to save yourself? You know, Voodoo works this way: the more severe the problem is the greater the sacrifice it requires. And since you all came here at the same time, you'll have to answer unanimously. Either each one of you will be saved, or each one of you will remain damned."

Let doubt haunt the players. Once they ALL agree to sacrifice something dear to them, read the following:

"Well," the Voodoo Lady says grimly "if that's what you want. Come closer to the cauldron, and get ready for the ritual" The formless, greenish liquid in the cauldron begins to bubble.

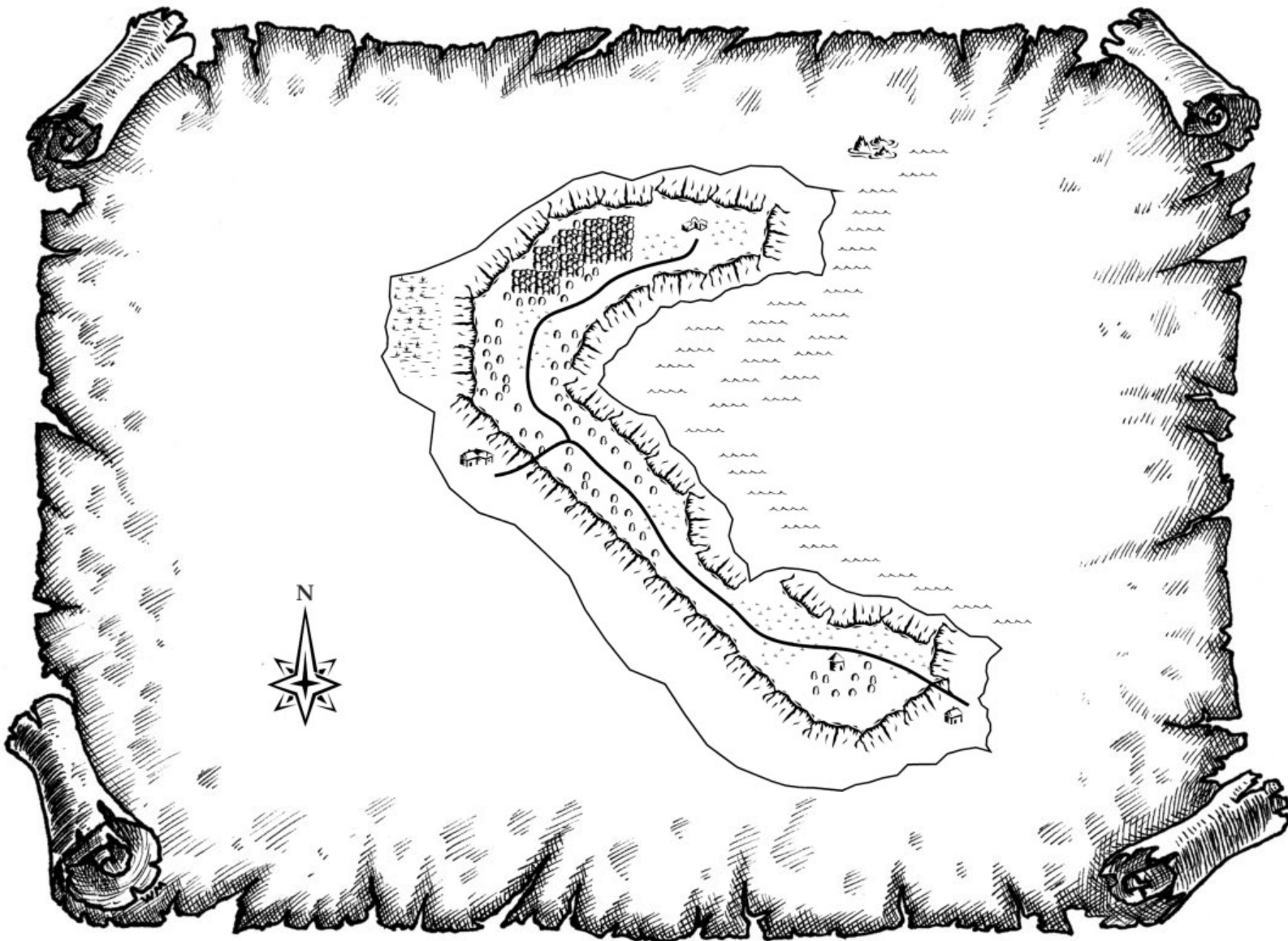
"Now," Voodoo Lady says, "each of you throw one hundred gold pieces into the cauldron."

Obviously, each PC has to pay 100 gold pieces. VL won't reveal anything more until they have paid the full fee.

After that, each one is asked to throw into the cauldron (one item at a time):

- Something from their head (a hair is great, but a hat will also do).
- Something from their dress (any garment at their disposal).
- A body fluid (blood, sputum, whatever they prefer).
- A shiny lava crystal.

Of course, none of the PCs have a "shiny lava crystal". When the PCs have explained their problem to VL, read the following.



Suddenly, the cauldron increases its boiling until you see a huge rattlesnake's head emerge from the formless liquid. Blocked by terror, you stand still while the huge snake rises before you, opening wide its jaws dripping green venom. While his head sways with hypnotic rhythm, you hear the Voodoo Lady's voice yelling. "The island shaped like a bird of prey! Surrounded by green water and blue-green algae! On the slopes of the mountain from which earth's red blood bubbles! That's where you'll find the solution to your problems!"

While these words echo in your ears, you see the huge serpent being swallowed up in the cauldron. Slowly, the disgusting green liquid stops boiling.

Now the PCs know there is an island somewhere where they can find the final ingredient they seek. Unfortunately, no matter how hard they try, no one among them has the slightest clue about this island's name or location. VL doesn't know either, and advises them to go to the Scum Bar down in the village,

where the seasoned sea dogs go to drink. At least one of them should know more about this island. The Voodoo ritual is to be considered in "stand-by mode" and can be completed only when each PC brings back the last ingredient. Of course, VL never gives their money back.

At this point, there is nothing left to do but go to the Scum Bar. The PCs board the "Grave-Boat" and reach the shore of the marsh among insects, bats, and stinking mud. When they do, give them Scuffle Island's map. The PCs are free to go wherever they choose, but if they follow VL's directions, they go straight to Scuffle Village, where they can find the Scum Bar.

PART 2: SCUFFLE ISLAND

Location #1: Scuffle Village

You reach Scuffle Village. More than a town, it looks like a bunch of houses built haphazardly. The only place you see even from a distance is a big club with a huge neon sign that reads "Scum Bar".

The village has only three noteworthy places, which can be accessed in the following order **ONLY** if the PCs meet the necessary prerequisites.

1. **The Scum Bar** (where the PCs should go immediately after meeting with the Voodoo Lady. It's the first place accessible in the village and doesn't need prerequisites to be available.)
2. **Holly the cartographer:** The PCs are only able to reach this place after they learn about Isla de Monos in the Scum Bar.
3. **The Wheel of Fortune:** It is in a dark alley behind Holly's house. The PCs are only able to reach this location after Holly mentions it.

The Scum Bar

As you enter the bar, the chaotic atmosphere of the place assaults you. In a thick blanket of smoke, you can barely distinguish dozens of tables where the pirates of the worst kind throw dice, compete in arm wrestling, indulge in shady activities, and have fun in every other way conceivable. In the chaotic and noisy multitude, the only figure that stands out for its seraphic impassivity is the innkeeper. From behind the counter, he constantly cleans jars with spits and, with the eye of someone who knows a lot, checks that everything is under his control.

As soon as the PCs enter the bar, let them make a Notice roll. Success shows that on the wall there's a poster advertising the "World Famous Bucatini Bros Circus" (which they can reach by going to **Location #2: The Tent**). Besides this, the posters promises a "10,000 gold pieces reward for the brave!" but doesn't specify anything more.

The place is full of noisy people engaged in drinking, burping, playing dice, or arm wrestling. Asking the patrons instead of the innkeeper proves a waste of time. They all claim to be great sailors, but, if asked, none of them is able to give useful information either about the island or the circus.

The Innkeeper

If questioned, the innkeeper clearly states he does not trust people who do not drink and continues to respond this way until someone decides to order a drink. The house offers three types of grog: Bloody Mary (red), Blue Whale (blue) and Golden Apple (yellow). Every drink costs 5 Silver Pieces. Additionally, the landlord, standing near the innkeeper, does not respond to any question until at least one of the PCs drinks all the grog in the mug.

The drinks are full of alcohol and taste horrible. Whoever wants to drink it all in one go (except for "The Undead", who is immune to alcohol) needs to make a successful Vigor roll or pass out drunk for ten minutes. If a character decides to sip it slowly, no roll is needed. If each PC orders a drink, or if they bribe the innkeeper with at least 2 gold pieces, the landlord "melts" and, if questioned properly, advises them to ask Malcomb Seepgood, who knows every island in the Caribbean. The innkeeper shows them where Malcomb is seated, in the middle of a drinking contest. If asked about the circus, the innkeeper says the two Bucatini brothers are crazy: it's better to stay away from them.

In any other case, the innkeeper looks with suspicion upon PCs who have not ordered a drink and, if asked, replies that he "probably knows something" but doesn't yet trust the PCs.

You approach a table in the center of the room, around which dozens of shady characters yelling, betting and giggling are crowded. Elbowing a little, you see a table where two beefy men are draining a mug of grog. Dozens of jars are placed in bulk on the table and around it. The two drain the bowl and stare in each other's eyes. Silence falls. Suddenly, one of them falls to the ground unconscious and from the crowd rise shouts of approval and contempt. The man left standing laughs. "So, is there anyone left who wants to challenge the good old Malcomb?"

Malcomb Seepgood

Malcomb does not want to quit the competition for any reason: he challenges the PCs instead. What is at stake is that the loser pays for the winner's drink (and his own, of course). If the PCs refuse to challenge him, other challengers come forward and Malcomb always wins. This could go on indefinitely: soon the PCs understand that the only way to talk with Malcomb is to beat him at the drinking contest. The easiest way to win is making "The Undead" challenge Malcomb: the undead wins without efforts and without making any rolls. If any other PC challenges Malcomb, follow these directions:

- In order to beat Malcomb, the PC needs to make 3 successful Vigor rolls. The first one without penalties (+0), the second one with a (-2) penalty, and the third one with a (-4) penalty. Failing just one of them means defeat: the PC passes out drunk for ten minutes and must pay for his and Malcomb's drinks.
- If available, the spell "Boost/Lower Trait" can be very useful. If cast on the challenger, it can really help him. On the other hand, if cast on Malcomb, it allows the PC to win after only two rolls instead of three.

- If no one among the PCs is able to beat Malcomb, when they recover from the fumes of alcohol, they attend the scene where an NPC challenger wins. Once Malcomb faints, he talks about Isla de Monos in his slumber (read the narrative part).

If the PCs manage to beat Malcomb, the latter passes out from drunkenness. When he comes to his senses and is asked about Island de Monos, read the narrative part. He doesn't know anything about the circus.

Deep in his alcoholic slumber, Malcomb first babbles nonsense words and then is able to put together a meaningful sentence: "The island ... A form of predatory bird ... With green water and blue-green algae... With the active volcano and... It's ... Isla de Monos!"

As soon as Malcomb pronounces that name, the bar falls silent. One by one, the patrons leave the room, as if a fire had broken out inside. In no time at all, the Scum Bar is empty.

The PCs find themselves alone in the tavern while the innkeeper continues cleaning the glasses, the landlord looks on, and Malcomb is on the ground snoring. If they ask the landlord, they find out that Isla de Monos is a cursed island, but no one is willing to accompany them. Even if the PCs decide not to talk to the landlord before they get out of the bar, he advises them that if they must go to that accursed island, they must obtain a nautical map and ship to get there. If they didn't notice the Circus poster earlier, let the PCs make a Notice roll now with a (+2) bonus.

If the PCs ask the innkeeper (or if they make a successful Streetwise roll) they learn that the best cartographer on the island is named Holly and his house is very close to the Scum Bar (from now on, they can reach its location). For what concerns buying a ship, the innkeeper (or another successful Streetwise roll) tells them that Stanislaw is the man (which can be reached using the map on the **Location #3: The Ship Seller**).

Holly the cartographer

(Available only after learning about Isla de Monos)

The directions lead you to a modest house with the door open. Inside, you see a big studio covered with maps and nautical charts. Bent over a big wooden table is a little man, now advanced in years, which once had carrot-colored hair now graying with age. As soon as he notices [and particularly the PC with Matusalem curse], he rolls his eyes and his small little monocle falls from his nose.

Holly mistakes the PC with Matusalem curse for an old friend of his and is very happy to see him again. PCs are totally free to manage the misunderstanding as they see fit. If asked for a map to reach Isla de Monos, Holly answers that at the moment, he does not have any, but would be glad to draw one. In return he asks the PCs to win for him the Caribbean cruise offered as a prize from the Wheel of Fortune behind his house (the PCs can now access this location). In all these years, he never took a vacation, and believes that now is the right time. Obviously, there is no way to convince Holly to give the map for free or in exchange for anything else.

If properly asked, Holly shares his knowledge:

- Holly has no idea what's on the island; he only knows that it was once the den of the now-defeated French pirate LeChic.
- He never saw a "Shiny Lava Crystal", but presumes that near a volcano some could be found.
- About LeChic, Holly only knows that it was a serious problem for cargo ships until about twenty years ago. Now, it is a solved problem.
- Nobody wants to go to Isla de Monos, even Holly! It's bad luck just mentioning it.
- Stanislaw is the only and most famous ship seller on Scuffle Island, but is a big cheater.
- The Bucatini Brothers circus is really fun and collects all the crazy oddities of the island. He does not know other details about the prize in gold coins.
- The Wheel of Fortune: Many times Holly has tried to win the Cruise, but never succeeded. According to him, there is something shady going on below, but he never understood what!

As soon as the PCs return to Holly with the "Cruise Voucher", he presents them with the nautical chart to Isla de Monos. No matter how hard they try, Holly will never go to Isla de Monos. If they already own a ship (whether they bought it from Stanislaw or it was already their property), they may depart anytime (read **Part #3: Isla de Monos**). If they don't, now they know how to reach the island, but still need a ship.

The Wheel of Fortune

(Available only after speaking with Holly)

Behind Holly's house runs a small alley at the end of which sits a large "Wheel of Fortune". Next to it you see a man dressed in an elegant tuxedo covered in shiny sequins. As you approach, he shouts "Come on,

gentlemen! Try your luck! Just one copper coin to retrieve one of our fantastic prizes today: a rich candy package, a wonderful "Banana Picker," or a fabulous cruise in the Caribbean! Do not miss this wonderful opportunity."

The rules are very simple: each player can bet one copper coin on any number from 1 to 90, and in accordance with the rules of the game, each of them must choose a different number on which to focus. If the wheel stops on the chosen number, the player wins and chooses which prize to collect. Of course, they will lose. Should they try anything that may affect the functioning of the wheel, the "Penguin" (yes, that's his stage name) stops everything, scolds the unfair player, and begins a new round. A successful Smarts roll shows that "something's not as it seems," but nothing else. After losing 2 times or after they have wasted at least 5 minutes without a point in a vain attempt to discover the trick, read the following:

Trotting, a little, fat, pimpled girl approaches. The "Penguin" greets her. "Hello Candy! Did you come to play?"

The little girl replies. "Hello to you, Penguin! I'm here to bet this coin on number 17."

The girl is called Candy Sweet and doesn't want to talk to the PCs, because her mother always tells her not to talk to strangers. Incredibly enough, Candy wins the round and chooses the candy package as her prize. If the PCs ask why she did not choose the cruise, she answers that her mother never lets her go alone. Besides, she doesn't know what to do with a Banana Picker.

After winning, Candy empties the whole candy package in a single shot and tells the "Penguin" to get another ready, cause she'll be back soon to win again.

If the PCs want to do something harmful to Candy, they have to first make a Spirit roll with a (-6) penalty, else they could not even think to harm such a helpless creature. Should they succeed, Candy immediately weeps and explains exactly how to get a winning number from the Wheel of Fortune (read further: **Behind the Scenes**). As soon as they let her go, she runs away, never to come back.

If they don't try anything harmful, Candy goes happily away. If the PCs decide to follow her, go to **Behind the Scenes**. Otherwise, Candy shows up every two rounds, repeating the entire scene from the start.

Behind the Scenes

Little Candy happily trots up to an alley just behind the one in which there is the "Wheel of Fortune". It's a dark place, not

suitable for a child, but she enters it with confidence until she stands in front of a huge locked door, right at the end of the alley.

If the PCs want to follow her unnoticed, they have to make a Stealth roll or else Candy won't feel at ease: she knocks desperately at the door and in no time gets in, without showing any secret. She shows up later at the Wheel of Fortune. Otherwise, if the Stealth roll is successful, read on:

Without noticing the spying PCs, Candy knocks at the door. A little window opens on the huge door and a deep voice asks, "Who are you?"

Candy answers, "La Grande sends me."

The voice inside says, "Okay, password." From the window comes out a hand (mimic this scene to the PCs). If this is 5 [asks the voice while the hand shows three fingers], how much is this? [asks the same voice while the same hand this time shows only one finger].

Candy promptly answers, "3!"

"Great!" says the voice. "Here's written the next winning number." [the arm hands a note to Candy].

"Thanks." answers Candy. "Anyway, I changed my mind. Enough candies for today. Let me in." The door opens with a big roar. Candy swiftly sneaks inside and the door closes again with very strong clangs. Silence returns to the alley.

The PCs should understand that the only way to win at the Wheel of Fortune is to get the "lucky" number from the mysterious presence behind the door. The solution to the "password" is always the number of fingers the hand shows the very first time. The riddle can be solved only with at least one Raise on a Smarts roll, that can be repeated every two password failures.

He who knocks at the door must pass the following "verifications":

- 1st question: Who are you? (It should be answered: "La Grande sends me.")
- When one of the PCs knocks at the door, the voice tells the PC that he hasn't seen him before, so, for safety reasons, he would have to answer the password correctly three times instead of one (and so he does, changing the answer every time).
- If a wrong answer is provided (no matter to what question), the window will be closed. If they knock again, they hear a different "voice", starting all over

again. Once a correct answer is provided three times, they receive the winning number: 69. If the PC asks to get in, the voice refuses.

The PCs should go back to the Wheel of Fortune, bet 1 copper coin on number 69 and win. Should they choose the candy bag for their prize, the Penguin sadly answers that there are no more left. Should they ask for the wonderful "Banana Picker", the Penguin says that a few minutes ago a pair of lucky winners won it. Sorry, only the Caribbean Cruise is left.

After the PCs have collected the "Cruise Voucher", the penguin begins to remove the wheel and leave. Later in the game, should the PCs wish to go back to the alley, they don't find anything there. Should they try to knock on the huge door again, nobody answers.

Location #2: The Tent

In the middle of a clearing stands a huge tent with red and white stripes. A big neon sign reads "Bucatini Brothers: A circus for all ages!"

If the PCs decide to go inside, read the following:

In the middle of the enormous tent you see many large wooden platforms around a central square where some people are standing around a cannon. As you approach, the cannon fires and a shouting guy is catapulted out of the tent, while another guy runs hastily away in the vain hope of rescuing the former. Only two guys remain near the big cannon: they are very similarly dressed and are in the middle of a loud quarrel.

The two weird guys are the circus's owners: Mario and Luigi Bucatini (a.k.a. "The Bucatini Brothers, henceforth called B.B."). They are short, bald and have huge mustaches. They keep on quarreling until someone stops them. If asked, here's what they know:

- Isla de Monos? Never heard about it!
- LeChic? Once upon a time, he was a serious menace; now he's no more.
- Do you need a ship? Go ask Stanislaw!
- Are you brave? We have a big challenge for you (read further).

After chatting a little (or as soon as the PCs ask about the cannon or the "reward for the brave"), the brothers challenge the PCs to test their skills with their "new attraction": The Human Cannon! One of the characters has to "aim" while a second is the "bullet." The goal is to let the "human bullet" land

exactly in the huge tub full of water placed at about 500 yards from the cannon. Each try costs 1 gold piece but, should they succeed, they would win 10,000 gold pieces. The PCs are free to undergo this "mad experiment", but soon they realize that's the only way to make quick money on Scuffle Island.

If the PCs agree (and pay!), Mario explains the rules:

1. Choose 2 characters: one will be the "Cannon handler," the other will be the "Human Bullet".
2. Based on the Human Bullet size, the Cannon Handler must decide how much black powder to use.
3. After that, the Cannon Handler must decide the exact angle of fire.
4. You're ready! Shoot!

As anyone could tell, it's a desperate situation. They can approach it as "Fair Players" or with "Dirty Tricks".

Fair Players

If the PCs decide to "play fair", they need to make a Smarts roll. Should the PCs have some special knowledge that would fit the challenge, now is the time to use it.

- Should he score 1 Raise or more, the lucky "Human Bullet" lands precisely in the tub (and, incredibly enough, he's still in one piece). They've won the challenge.
- With a success, the Human Bullet lands near the tub (he is Shaken). Better luck next time.
- Should he fail, the Human Bullet lands very far from the tub (he is Shaken and suffers one Wound, ignoring armor).
- With a critical failure, the Human Bullet flies far away from the tent. He must make a successful Agility roll to fall the best way he can (in that case, he is Shaken and suffers a wound, ignoring armor). Otherwise, he is Shaken and suffers two wounds.

If the "Cannon Handler" doesn't change, he gains a +1 to the Smarts roll after each failure. Should the healing need arise, a successful Streetwise roll informs the PCs that Voodoo Lady could be of help (many say she could even raise dead people). They can reach VL again by going to **Location #4: The Swamp**.

Dirty Tricks

If the PCs choose the "unfair" side, many options can be available:

- Should they decide to use magic, any appropriate spell can turn this “mission impossible” into an easy victory (for example, the *fly* spell).
- Should they try anything else, the B.B. encourages creativity as long as it adds more pathos to the show. (At the GMs discretion, any trick or gadget that grants from a +1 to a +4 bonus on the Smarts roll.)

As soon as they succeed, the B.B. hands them their reward: 10,000 gold pieces. No matter how hard the PCs try, no more money can be made from this challenge.

Location #3: The Ship Seller

You come to a huge pier with dozens of docked ships; thousands of tawdry Christmas-like lights shine all around. A tall man in a long blue coat covered with red spots and a huge sombrero approaches you. His smile never decreases. With a soft voice and gesturing so much that gives you headache, he welcomes you. “Welcome to Stanislaw Junior’s previously-used-ships-store! If you look for a ship, this is the place. We definitely have the best on the marketplace. Why go far when Stanislaw is the best? Sit back and make your choice! You won’t find better prices on the island. I knew you would say yes! Follow me, and now I show you my wonderland!”

If the PCs own a ship already or came here without knowing they need a ship, Stanislaw Junior (henceforth called S.J.) doesn’t bother them too much, is kind, and tells them to come back when they really need a ship.

If, on the other hand, the PCs came here to buy a ship, S.J. sticks to them. The merchant incessantly praises his wonderful ships and their high-standard quality, gesturing like an epileptic. He could go on for hours, lost in his own conversation until someone does not “carry-him-down-to-earth” and ask to actually show them his ships for sale (read **Let’s Get to Business**).

If asked about topics different from ships, here’s what he knows:

- **Scum Bar:** It’s in Scuffle Village. They won’t miss it.
- **The Bucatini Brother’s Circus:** He doesn’t even know there’s a circus on the island.
- **Isla de Monos:** Never heard of it. Better ask someone at Scum Bar.

Let’s Get to Business

When it gets to “serious money matters,” S.J. shows them the following ships in the following order. He doesn’t show them another ship until they all agree to do so. On the contrary,

should the PCs have lots of money and wish to buy a ship different from the Drunken Monkey, go to **Money Power** and do the deal. Have fun dealing with S.J.

1. **The Monkey Emperor:** a wonderful galleon with four bridges and six masts, finished in gold and fully equipped with silk rope. Today we’ve got a special offer: it’s yours for one hundred million gold pieces only!
2. **The Monkey Princess:** a refined galleon with two bridges and four masts, silver finished and cordage in braided jute. You can call it yours for one million gold pieces!
3. **The Monkey Lord:** a stylish caravel with two masts, brass fittings and equipped with all the options. I still can’t believe I’m giving it away for just 100,000 gold pieces!

At this point, should the PCs ask for something cheaper, read the following:

“I see,” Stanislaw says. “You are adventurous people looking for a special offer. The good Stanislaw Junior has just what you need!” He leads you to a faraway pier and says, “Here’s the Drunken Monkey! A simple ship without frills, but safe and superlatively equipped as befits you: seafarers and adventurers! You can call it yours for the modest sum of 20,000 gold pieces!”

The ship looks a LOT used and would need a good renovation. However, it looks like it won’t sink at the first storm. This is the cheapest ship. If the PCs say the price is still too high for them, S.J. replies:

“I can assure you, the Drunken Monkey is the vessel for you! Where else can you find a ship with a full automatic hawser-coiler? Cutting edge technology for sailors’ comfort! That alone is worth 1,000 gold pieces! Not all ships have it, but I’m sure that refined adventurers like you DO appreciate options.”

Stanislaw repeats this phrase ad nauseam until the PCs understand they can’t use the ship without this seemingly indispensable gadget. If they ask to remove it, Stanislaw, reluctantly, takes it away from the ship and lowers the price accordingly. After that, S.J. discusses, one at a time, all the other options for the Drunken Monkey:

- Wipers on each porthole: 2000 gold pieces
- Anchor’s fully automated safety system: 1500 gold pieces
- Sails in tear resistant fabric: 1500 gold pieces
- Color changing figurehead: 1000 gold pieces



If they give up all options, the price of the Drunken Monkey drops to 13,000 gold pieces.

At this point, S.J. asks them if they actually have the money to buy the ship and insists on them showing him the gold. If the PCs have at least 10,000 gold pieces and show them to S.J., the deal goes on (read **Money Power**). Otherwise, Stanislaw tells them: “No money, no deal!” and asks them to come back when they really have enough money to buy the ship.

Money Power

If the PCs DO have at least 10,000 gold pieces, S.J. gladly discusses the deal. The only way to convince S.J. to sell the Drunken Monkey at around 10,000 gold pieces is by obtaining at least a Raise on a Persuasion roll. If the PC succeeds, read **Ship Owners**. Otherwise, S.J. tells them to come back with more money and dismisses them.

Before the PCs can get away, S.J. calls them hastily back, saying that he’s willing to make a better offer: 11,500 gold pieces. As before, one raise needs to be achieved on a Persuasion roll in order to buy the ship for 10,000 gold pieces. As before, if the PC succeeds, read **Ship Owners**. Otherwise, S.J. tells them to come back with more money and dismisses them.

Again, before the PCs can get away, S.J. calls them hastily back, saying that his grandfather would curse him, should any customer leave his shop unsatisfied. This is the last offer: 11,000 gold pieces. This time, only a success on a Persuasion roll is needed to buy the ship for 10,000 gold pieces. As before, if the PC succeeds, read **Ship Owners**. Otherwise, S.J. makes

them sign a “Bill of Exchange” for the remaining 1,000 gold pieces. After that, read **Ship Owners**.

Ship Owners

Finally, the PCs can call the Drunken Monkey (or another ship) theirs. S.J. provides them with the ship, one-month food supplies and a ten-sailor crew. If they already obtained Holly’s Map to Isla de Monos, the PCs are ready to depart (read **Part 3: Isla de Monos**). If they don’t, now they have a ship, but they still need directions.

Location #4 – The Swamp

Theoretically, the PCs should need to visit Voodoo Lady again only if they got hurt and need healing. In that case, here’s the Voodoo Lady’s price list (always remember: Voodoo helps, but never for free):

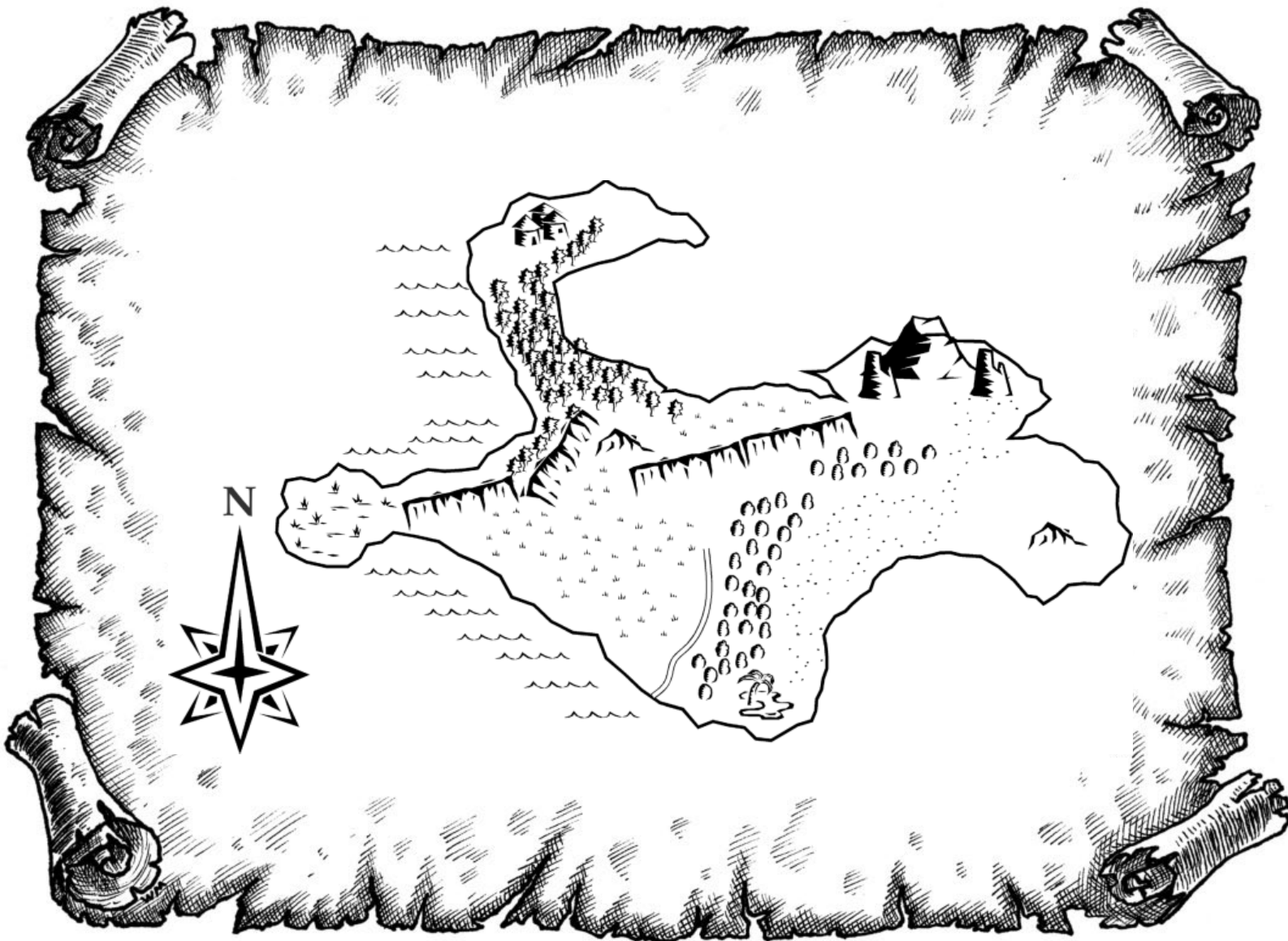
HEALING SCORPION STING

It’s a disgusting potion that contains a real scorpion sting. Can heal all wounds immediately, but it’s useless on Incapacitated characters. It costs 100 gold pieces, but V.L. could be persuaded (with one raise on a Persuasion Roll) to sell it at 40.

REVITALIZING SPIDER WEB

It’s a very big blanket entirely made from spider webs. When an Incapacitated character is wrapped in it, he wakes up fully healed after d4 hours. It costs 150 gold pieces, but V.L. can be persuaded (with one raise on a Persuasion Roll) to sell it at 50.

Should the party be broke, V.L. (with a successful Persuasion roll) could use the money they previously gave her during the ritual as a payment advance. V.L. expects them to pay back



twice the money she's lending them, but could be persuaded (with one raise on a Persuasion Roll) to accept 150% interest instead of 200%.

PART 3: ISLA DE MONOS

You leave Scuffle Island and set sail towards Isla de Monos. After a few days of smooth sailing, you spot a bird-of-prey-shaped island surrounded by green water and blue-green algae... It's Isla de Monos, at last! You're all eager to end your curses. You leave the Drunken Monkey surely anchored, get on the boats with some sailors, and reach Isla de Monos rowing.

Give the PCs the Isla de Monos Map.

Location #1: The Beach

Isla de Monos welcomes your crew (a total of 10 people) with a white sand beach. A few yards away, lush tropical vegetation forms a dense jungle. In the

distance, a volcano lazily puffs. Suddenly, something horrific draws your attention: ten empty skulls are impaled on spears around a big banana tree.

A Common Knowledge roll reveals that surely the island is inhabited and this tribe probably doesn't like people getting close to the tree. A Notice roll doesn't provide any further clues, but a raise shows that, hidden very well in the forest, many tribesmen are watching. The tribesmen remain hidden away if no one tries to pick up bananas. They attack immediately if anyone passes through the circle of spears around their sacred banana tree.

➤ Tribal Warriors (10)

After the heroes defeat their opponents, all the other tribal warriors flee, allowing anyone to approach the banana tree and pick up plenty of bananas.

The only safe way out from the beach (if you don't want to go back to the ship) is climbing up the volcano. The jungle seems to be extremely dangerous; no sailor wants to go in there,

especially after they've fought against the tribesmen. Should the PCs try to adventure alone in the jungle, they need to make a Survival roll.

- If they score one Raise or more, they won't get lost and arrive in sight of the tribesmen's village hidden in the deep jungle. More than 100 tribesmen live there; attacking it would be a suicide.
- Otherwise they immediately get lost. A successful Smarts roll brings them back to the shore after one hour of wandering. Should they fail, they can roll again after another hour of wandering.

Location #2: The Volcano

You climb along the winding jungle path. The terrain becomes increasingly hot and lava rocks emerge from the earth. After a few minutes, you spot a large cave that seems to penetrate deep into the volcano's bowels. A strange red light glows, pulsating from inside the cave. Suddenly, five weird-looking monkeys emerge from the deep jungle and stand in front of you, yelling and behaving strangely.

The five "monkeys" look like this:

- The first one is wearing a blue pirate jacket and has a kind of "ponytail" hairstyle. He keeps his eyes closed. (He is actually Guy Treelog in monkey form.)
- The second one has a triangular hat and is quite toothless. (He's Norman Rottentooth.)
- The third has a curious dreadlock hairstyle and gestures nervously. (He's Jack Spadger.)
- The fourth is incredibly thin, almost skeletal (He's Michael Marsh.)
- The fifth has the sweetest traits among all of them, seeming almost human. (She's Katy Smallsie.)

A successful Notice roll (that can be repeated every time the crew tries to approach the cave) reveals that on the ground are small ritual bowls with dried banana peels in them. A successful Knowledge (Arcana) roll reveals that the five monkeys are not common monkeys and seem to be cursed.

The PCs probably speak with these "weird monkeys" via whoever has The Gorilla curse (who's the only one who actually understands their language). The best way to play this scene is writing on paper what the monkeys say and pass the sheet to that player, who should in turn explain it to his friends the best way he can, mimicking and gesturing!

The first monkey shouts: "Go away if you value your life!" They won't let anyone in (unless they receive enough bananas, but they won't ask first).

The sailors are very superstitious and, as soon as they see the weird monkeys, are frightened and run back to the beach. Only a raise on a Persuasion roll calms them enough to stand still, trembling. The sailors do not attack the weird monkeys.

Besides this, here's what the monkeys (if properly asked) tell:

- They've been standing guard to the cave's entrance for so long they don't even remember their own names.
- They won't let anyone in. Not for any reason.
- They do like bananas. Unfortunately, they cannot leave the cave to pick them. They're eagerly waiting for the bananas to ripen again; it is almost a year since they've eaten one. They would really be grateful if the PCs would fetch them at least five.
- They don't know what a "Crystal" is.
- They don't know anyone named LeChic.
- They're sorry, but they cannot remove the curses they already bestowed.

When the five monkeys receive at least five bananas, they start eating them, paying no attention to anything else (read **We Love Bananas**).

Until the red light stops glowing, an invisible force field prevents anyone from entering the cave. Should the PCs try to harm the monkeys (the sailors will never do that) or try to get into the cave without their permission, they receive a bitter surprise. All five monkeys are immune to any kind of damage and spells. They simply reply by launching terrifying curses on all PCs that wanted to take part in the fray or tried to get in the cave without permission, as follows:

- **After the 1st attack/attempt to get in:** The Toothless Curse. Anyone who fails a Spirit roll with a (-2) penalty immediately loses the sense of taste.
- **After the 2nd attack/attempt:** The Sweetest Curse. Anyone who fails a Spirit roll with a (-2) penalty immediately loses the sense of smell.
- **After the 3rd attack/attempt:** The Bony Curse. Anyone who fails a Spirit roll with a (-2) penalty immediately loses the sense of touch. Any Agility-based action suffers a (-2) penalty.
- **After the 4th attack:** Do it all over again.

The five monkeys only react to PCs' eventual attacks. If the PCs stop attacking, they won't hold any grudges and easily talk. There's no way to remove the curses (at least for now...)

We Love Bananas

If the monkeys receive at least one banana each, they immediately start eating pay no attention to anything else. At the same time, the red light stops glowing. This is a perfect moment to sneak into the cave, and there's no need to make rolls. No one among the superstitious sailors enter the cave (as long as the five monkeys are around). They return to the beach and wait for the PCs there. If the PCs waste too much time trying to force the sailors, the monkeys finish their bananas and the red light starts glowing again. The only way to pass through is to bring them more bananas.

Once the PCs sneak into the cave, go to **Location #3: The Treasure Cave**.

Location #3: The Treasure Cave

You leave behind the frightened sailors with the five monkeys happily munching their bananas and move deeper into the tunnel. The air becomes warmer as a faint reddish glow in the distance seems to indicate the end of the dark passageway. Finally, you come upon a large cave in the center of which stands a huge pyramid of gold. Jewels of every shape embellish it, making this precious heap's value beyond reckoning. At the gold and diamond mountain's top sits a large throne where a skeleton dressed with pirate-style clothes is seated. His bones bleached by time contrast with the countless jewels' splendor.

Five Golden Statuettes: As soon as they enter the cave, allow the PCs to make a Notice roll (should everyone fail, they can repeat the roll after five minutes of gameplay). With a success they find five golden statuettes (about five inches tall) placed on the floor near the tunnel entrance. With a Raise they also find ten shiny lava crystals. The five statuettes are exact reproductions of five unknown people, precise in every detail. A raise indicates the statuettes' location and pose (they are all placed in a line: the golden pyramid on their backs and faced towards the tunnel) make a perfect "sneaky exit" scene.

However, a Knowledge (Arcana) roll reveals the statuettes are heavily cursed. The PCs can do whatever they want with the statues (pick them up, leave them there). No matter how hard they try, the statues wouldn't break. If the PCs decide not to touch the treasure and go away immediately, read **The Ghost Arrives**.

The Huge Treasure Hoard

It's really huge. A Common Knowledge roll reveals its value to be around 6,000,000 gold pieces. If a magic user wishes to "look for problems" in the treasure hoard, let him make a Knowledge (Arcana) roll. A success reveals there is "something problematic in the room". He is unable to assess whether the treasure is the problem or not. (Actually, the treasure is cursed [if you want to know more, read **The Treasure's Curse**]).

Anyone can freely pick up valuables from the huge pile, nothing happens. If all the PCs pick up something from the treasure and wish to leave the cave, read **Ending #1: LeChic's Rebirth**. The skeleton is too far away to provide clues from the ground. If someone wishes to climb the treasure hoard, read **The Ghost Arrives**. The same thing happens if at least one PC wishes to leave the cave without taking anything from the treasure hoard.

The Cave

The cave has a vaguely circular shape; its diameter is about 45 yards. It's 35 yards tall and from an opening in the ceiling comes a red glowing light. The only noteworthy things are the treasure hoard with the skeleton on top and the five statuettes. If the PCs wish to "look around searching for the shiny lava crystals" and they didn't notice the statuettes earlier, a successful Notice roll reveals them now.

The Shiny Lava Crystals

If the PCs look for them, a successful Notice roll reveals a pile of glowing red crystal-like rocks (a Raise reveals the five golden statuettes too). A successful Common Knowledge roll identifies them as the long sought shiny lava crystal. There are ten of them. If the PCs wish to leave the cave without taking anything from the treasure hoard, read **The Ghost Arrives**.

Note for Game Masters

LeChic's ghost (invisible) is also in the cave. The only vague hint about it is a Knowledge (Arcana) successful roll, which detects "something problematic." The ghost hopes the PCs would be as foolish as the five adventurers before them, so he waits until they pick up the treasure and leave the room. In that case, the treasure's curse turns them all into golden statuettes and he achieves his goal with very little effort. Should they try something different (like climbing the hoard to reach his precious skeleton or leaving the room without treasure) he is forced to reveal himself and deal with them personally. He now has all he needs to return to life, he won't let his precious "ingredients" leave.

The Ghost Arrives

Suddenly, the tunnel's entrance disappears. A dreadful laughter echoes in the cave. You turn around and see an ethereal figure floating in the air. It looks like a

pirate with a fiery beard and eye sockets as dark as night. "Welcome to your worst nightmare," it says, outlining a smile.

All PCs must make a Fear -2 roll.

PCs with the Undead curse (who are immune to Fear) must make a Spirit roll with a (-4) penalty instead; else they come under the ghost's direct control. In that case, LeChic orders them to stay still and watch. During this scene, there are no exits available from the room.

If anyone was climbing the hoard, the ghost immediately bestows his Golden Curse on them. If the one climbing the pile was the PC with the Matusalem curse, the ghost knocks him down and curses all others instead. If the PCs attack the ghost, they discover it's immune to normal weapons. If nobody casts spells on the ghost or attacks him with magical weapons, LeChic doesn't reply to attacks, he only laughs and taunts them.

After humiliating the PCs for a while, LeChic starts bestowing his fearsome Golden Curse. He goes on like this until everyone but "Matusalem" is turned into a golden statuette. When everyone but the Matusalem cursed PC is turned to statuettes, read **The Duel**.

The Golden Curse

LeChic can target one PC a time (he starts with the one he thinks is the most bothersome). The unlucky fellow must make a Vigor roll with a (-4) penalty. If he succeeds, he can act normally. If the roll fails, the PC slowly, but inexorably, turns into a golden statuette.

The Duel

In the sparkling treasure room, many golden statuettes observe the scene of the Matusalem cursed PC and the ghostly LeChic facing each other. The ghost pirate grins, looking forward to his easy victory.

"Ya know," he says, rummaging in the pile of jewels, "after all, I am an honorable pirate and as such I challenge you to a fair duel. After all, one should respect the elderly, am I correct?"



Laughing, LeChic pulls a jeweled sword from the treasure pile and throws it at the PC feet.

"And now defend yourself!" LeChic says, unsheathing a time-worn rusty blade while his beard's flames shine brighter. "My sword is famous all over the Caribbean!"

The sword is a Magical Rapier that can actually damage the ghost. This is a mischievous move since the Magical Rapier belongs to the treasure. Exiting the room with it turns the wielder into a golden statuette. But now, LeChic is a formidable opponent. The only way old "Matusalem" can defeat him is guessing the right comeback to each of his taunts.

Initiative: LeChic is a real gentleman and allows his opponent strike first.

Taunts: LeChic starts the duel taunting "Matusalem" with the first one of his famous battle taunts ("My sword is famous all over the Caribbean!"). The player can guess by himself an appropriate comeback (in this case, award him a Bennie) or by making a successful Taunt roll.

- If the PC replies correctly, LeChic suffers a special "Shocked" status. He is so angry that someone could reply to his taunt, that he is unable to attack or defend himself. Any attack directed toward LeChic (with a magical weapon) automatically hits and causes one Wound. This Shocked status goes on until LeChic is actually hit. Once hit, LeChic immediately recovers from the Shocked status, recovers all his fighting abilities, and uses the next taunt inline.
- If the correct comeback isn't provided, the combat round goes on normally. If LeChic hits the PC, he always "holds" his blows, causing the least damage possible, to lengthen his opponent's sufferings. LeChic repeats the same taunt at the beginning of each round until the PC guesses the right comeback (in that case, he'll use the next one on the following round) or until "Matusalem" is defeated (in that case, read **Ending #1: LeChic's Rebirth**).

These are LeChic's taunts. He uses them in this exact order:

- **1st Taunt:** "My sword is famous all over the Caribbean!"
- **Comeback:** "Yeah, too bad no one's ever heard of YOU."

After the first wound:

- **2nd Taunt:** "My last fight ended with my hands covered with blood."

- **Comeback:** “I hope now you've learned to stop picking your nose.”

After the second wound:

- **3rd Taunt:** “Soon you'll be wearing my sword like a shish kebab!”
- **Comeback:** “First you better stop waiving it like a feather duster.”

After the third wound:

- **4th Taunt:** “People fall at my feet when they see me coming!”
- **Comeback:** Even BEFORE they smell your breath?

If LeChic is wounded for the fourth time, read **Ghostbuster**.

Ghostbuster

After your sharp tongue caught him off guard for the fourth time, your blade pierces once again the ghost's ethereal form where his chest once was. LeChic's expression turns to black terror when his rusty blade falls from his hands...

“Nooooooooooooooooo!” the specter screams, falling prey to violent anger mixed with fear. “You cannot beat me! What a shame, defeated by an old geezer! No waaaayyyyy!”

With an ear-piercing scream, a huge cloud of dust rises, and while his voice becomes more distant, LeChic's shape slowly disappears.

Finally, an eerie silence controls the room. As if by magic, the access to the tunnel from which you came has reappeared. One by one, all the little golden statuettes turn back to their original human form.

Each PC (although he was a statuette) witnessed everything that happened. The five unknown statuettes go back to normal as well. It's time for the PCs to meet the five (in)famous pirates, happy to be back to normality, as they immediately introduce themselves. A successful Common Knowledge roll provides the following:

1. Those five as very famous local pirates; people not to mess with if one wants to come back home alive.
2. Last info about them was that they were “missing in action” or lost at sea. They should be dead for good.

The five pirates are very friendly and grateful unless anyone thinks about getting the treasure. In that case, they become aggressive and tell the PCs that the treasure is theirs. If the PCs are not wise enough, their lives are in great danger.

If asked, and not upset, here's what the five can provide:

- Years before, they all organized a secret expedition to find this huge treasure. They came here in Jack Spadger's ship, the Shining Pearl, which is anchored on the other side of the island. Nobody should have known about their expedition, and nobody actually did.
- When they found this cave, LeChic's skeleton attacked them. After a fierce battle (they don't mention Michael's special power) they finally defeated it. The last thing they remember is that they started collecting money and were about to exit the cave loaded with treasure.
- They didn't hear or see anyone cursing them (this info is very useful to begin suspecting the treasure). They remember becoming strange monkeys forced to guard the cave's entrance.
- They have no idea how much time has passed since then.
- They are not quite sure that LeChic is totally defeated. First as a skeleton, now as a ghost. That spiteful pirate keeps coming back every time.
- They are grateful to the PCs, but don't let them have the treasure. They kindly ask the PCs to leave first, but quickly unsheathe blades if need arises.

After a few minutes talk, the PCs' sailors enter the cave. The five strange monkeys disappeared, so the sailors overcame their fears and joined the PCs. At this point, a very important decision must be made. If the PCs decide to leave the cave without the treasure, read **Ending #2: Poor but Alive**. If they decide to go for the treasure, they must be very careful not to upset the five Pirates. If the PCs wish to make a deal, a Persuasion roll must be made.

- With two Raises, the Pirates agree to share half the treasure with them.
- With one Raise, the Pirates agree to share 30% of the treasure with them
- With only a Success, the pirates agree to share 10% of the treasure with them.

Things can go this way:

- Should the PCs manage to make a deal with the five Pirates, go to **It's a Deal**.
- Should they upset the Pirates, the latter fight to the death to defend “their” treasure. Read **Ending #4: Lucifer's Lullaby**.

- At any time, the PCs can change their mind and decide to go away with the crystals, but without the treasure. Read **Ending #2: Poor but Alive**.

It's a Deal

You manage to make a deal. The five pirates sheathe their weapons and you all shake hands.

If a spellcaster is in the group, let him make a Knowledge (Arcana) roll. A success still leads on that "something is wrong" in the cave (but he isn't quite sure where the problem is), increasing the suspects on the treasure hoard. The pirates do not get away without the treasure and are determined to do anything they can to find a way to get it. Since they suspect the treasure is cursed, they wait for the PCs to find a solution and wait for them to make the first move.

The Treasure's Curse

The treasure is cursed. Its curse works like this: anyone who takes anything from the treasure (like gold coins, gems or the Magic Rapier) and tries to exit the cave is immediately turned into a golden statuette. If all the PCs and the pirates do it, read **Ending #1: LeChic's Rebirth**. When someone is turned into a statuette, everything that belonged to the treasure hoard is dropped immediately on the floor and magically returns to its former place in the golden pyramid. If someone else takes the golden statuette outside the volcano, it immediately turns back to its former self. Obviously, the curse works an endless number of times on the same person. The only way to lift the curse (if the PCs figure it out) is to take the throne outside the volcano.

The Huge Cursed Treasure

As stated before, anyone can freely pick up valuables from the huge pile, nothing happens. If all the PCs take something from the treasure and wish to leave the cave, read **Ending #1: LeChic's Rebirth**.

The skeleton is too far away to gather additional clues from the ground. If someone wishes to climb the treasure hoard, a successful Climbing roll is sufficient. The skinny dead man is very well preserved; a Common Knowledge roll reveals that he should have died around ten years ago. He holds a parchment in his hands. If the PCs wish to read it, give the following as a handout.

*After countless robberies and strife,
From the shining sun from now I'll be away.
I sit on this throne and deny my own life,
By my side all this gold forever will stay.*

If a spellcaster is in the group, let him make a Knowledge (Arcana) roll.

- With a success, he realizes this is the curse haunting the treasure. No valuables can leave the cave without the owner's permission. Anyone who sits on the throne while this magic formula is read aloud becomes the treasure's rightful owner.
- With a raise, he also realizes that whoever sits on the throne dies.
- With two raises, he finds a possible solution: take the throne outside into the sunlight.

Sadly enough, there's no way to remove the curse magically. After that, if there are no spellcaster's in the group, let everyone make a Smarts roll. Whoever scores at least one raise comes up with the idea: "What if we take the Throne outside?"

Sitting on the Throne

The skeleton remains seated on the throne, no matter what. If anyone removes its bones, after a while they magically return to their previous position. Nobody among the NPCs sit on the throne spontaneously (neither the five Pirates nor the sailors). Just sitting on it doesn't accomplish anything. Anyone who sits on the throne (spontaneously or not) while the ritual is performed must make an immediate Spirit roll.

- Any result other than two or more raises results in the immediate death of the character. The character becomes incapacitated, turns into a skeleton, and the curse remains. The old skeleton is replaced by the new unlucky one. After this happens, every survivor makes a Smarts roll. Whoever scores at least one raise comes up with the idea "What if we take the Throne outside?"
- If the result is two or more raises, nothing happens. If a spellcaster is in the group and makes a successful Knowledge (Arcana) roll, he no longer detects the curse. The curse has been lifted and the treasure can be carried away freely by anyone. Read **Ending #3: Filthy Rich People**.
- Whoever carries The Undead curse has a better chance (but he doesn't know until actually trying). Should he sit on the throne, he needs only to score a single Success on the Spirit roll to lift the curse, else he suffers the same tragic destiny described before.

Taking the Throne Outside

At least two people are needed to lift the heavy throne. After each one makes a successful Strength roll (modified with a +1 for every additional character who helps), they are able to lift the throne. There are some golden coins left on the throne. Only a successful Notice roll detects them, otherwise the wielders of the throne turn into statuettes before exiting the

room. As soon as that happens, the throne and all treasure immediately return to their former place.

If all PCS were holding the throne without noticing the coins, read **Ending #1: LeChic's Rebirth**. If they remove all the treasure from the throne, they are able to exit the room. The curse is still active until the throne exits the tunnel and the PCs can breathe fresh air. Only then is the curse lifted. The skeleton turns into dust and the setting sun turns the throne into a funeral pyre. Read **Ending #3: Filthy Rich People**.

ENDINGS

Ending #1: LeChic's Rebirth

Something's wrong. Your movements become numb and a golden color slowly covers your body. You feel smaller and smaller. Powerless, you attend to your transformation into golden statuettes while a diabolical laughter echoes in your ears. Thanks to your life energy, the most terrible threat of all times rides the waves again: the pirate LeChic. But this is another story.

Ending #2: Poor but Alive

Finally, you come out of the cave and breathe fresh air. It hurts the heart to leave the treasure back there, but it's probably better that way. Hastily, you go back to your ship and set sail towards Scuffle Island.

(Read **Epilogue**.)

Ending #3: Filthy Rich People

The curse is finally lifted and the treasure is yours to take. A party spontaneously begins. Some of you dive into the golden pyramid, others begin counting money while yet others begin searching the pyramid for ancient artifacts.

While you party happily with the sailors and the pirates, you hear Michael playing a soothing song on his guitar. Suddenly, you start feeling very tired. Your limbs become heavy, making movement very difficult. You hear the pirates laughing as you fall asleep on the ground, dropping your weapons. Before drowning into a deep slumber, you hear the pirates saying together, "Nighty-night!"

You wake up in the cave with a bad headache. After twenty long minutes, you realize that nobody's there but you. The huge pyramid is nowhere to be seen! You see a letter on the floor, which reads:

Ahoy Savors!

Thank you again for helping us out. We all know you are in a hurry, so we decided to lighten your ship so you can sail faster! Don't waste precious time chasing us. Your families await you at home!

See you,

Guy

Jack

Katy

Michael

Norman

Cursing the five pirates, you all agree to get your revenge, after lifting your curses. You immediately set sail to Scuffle Island.

(Read **Epilogue**.)

Ending #4: Lucifer's Lullaby

The pirates are very upset and attack you. While a fierce battle rages in front of the golden pyramid, you hear a guitar playing. It's Michael, protected by Jack and Katy, playing his guitar. Suddenly, you start feeling very tired. Your limbs become tired, making movement very difficult. You hear the pirates laughing as you fall onto the ground, dropping your weapons. The last thing you see is a blade's tip on your throat. Then your eyes close never to open again.

EPILOGUE

You are finally in the gloomy Voodoo Lady's hut. Thanks to the final ingredients, the Voodoo Ritual can be performed to the end and each one of you returns to be as "normal" as before. Catching a deep breath, you sit down and tell the Voodoo Lady about your adventures.

"Now I understand," the Voodoo Lady says in a deep voice after hearing the story. "I know those pirates too well. I think LeChic, in need for more life energy to come back to life, bestowed on their statuettes the dreadful Birthday curse that affects people who were born on the same day as the target was. Being born on Captain Storm's or Lady Mercy's same date... What bad luck! Moreover, when Voodoo links two people, they will be linked for eternity."

You're still wondering about being linked to the (in)famous pirates when the Voodoo Lady asks, "So, did you learn anything from it all?"

"Of course we did", you say and, after some knowing looks, you add, "Only in Savage Insider Premium can you find the best RPG adventures!"

Laughing heartily, you can finally call it a day.

At least until your "Voodoo link" causes more trouble!

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS



THE GHOST PIRATE LeCHIC

A long time ago, LeChic was a dreadful pirate who ruled the seas with his greedy crew and his most feared Voodoo powers. After collecting one of the greatest treasure hoards, he mysteriously disappeared. Rumors say that he killed everyone in his crew and retired somewhere to enjoy his treasure alone.

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

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 11; **Toughness:** 8

Skills: Boating d12+2, Fighting d12+2, Intimidate d10+1, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Streetwise d8+1, Throwing d8

Hindrances: Arrogant, Mean, Vengeful, Wanted

Edges: Arcane Background (Voodoo), Block, Brawny, Danger Sense, First Strike, Mighty Blow, Quick Draw, Sweep, Weapon Master

Armor: None

Weapons: Rusty ethereal Cutlass (Str +d6)

Special Abilities:

- **Ethereal:** LeChic is immaterial and can only be harmed by magical attacks.
- **Fear -2:** LeChic causes Fear checks at -2 when he lets himself be seen.
- **Golden Curse** (see text)
- **Birthday Curse** (see text)

SAILOR

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

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

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Notice d4, Shooting d4, Stealth d4, Swimming d6

Armor: None

Weapons: Knife (Str +d4)

TRIBAL WARRIOR

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

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

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6

Hindrances: Loyal

Armor: None

Weapons: Spear (Str +d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1; requires 2 hands) and bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6)

The (In)famous Pirates



MICHAEL MARSH (A.K.A. THE DEVIL'S PICK)

Michael was the lead guitarist of the famous Mönkey Crëw rock band. One day he bought from a Voodoo witch his "Inferno" guitar and he discovered that, when playing the guitar, his greatest hits made people fall asleep. He quit the band and joined Lady Mercy's crew to become rich from a pirate's life. He's the crucial man in the expedition: thanks to his lullaby, LeChic was defeated with ease.

Attr: Agility d10, Smarts d10, Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Charisma: +3; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 7

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d12, Knowledge (Music) d12, Intimidate d12, Notice d10, Persuasion d10, Shooting d8, Streetwise d6

Hindrances: Curious, Greedy (major)

Edges: Alertness, Block, Charismatic, Fervor, Frenzy, Tough as Nails

Equipment: Magic "Inferno" Guitar, Mönkey Crëw T-Shirt, Skulls & Crossbones magic earrings

Armor: None

Weapons: Magic Rapier (Str+d6, +1 parry)

Special Abilities:

- **Lucifer's Lullaby:** When Michael plays this special song on his Magic Guitar, whoever listens to it (even Undead) falls immediately asleep for 24 hours. To resist this spell one must wear special magical earrings or score 2 Raises on a Spirit roll. The roll must be repeated every round the song is played. Covering ears with hands provides a +2 to the roll.



NORMAN ROTTENTOOOTH (A.K.A. THE TEACHER)

Norman was a philosophy teacher until the day his university was plundered and razed by pirates. From that day on, he devoted himself to piracy, hoping to gain enough money to build his own university. He was the one who came up with the idea of creating special earrings to resist Michael's lullaby.

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

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

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d4, Knowledge (History) d12, Knowledge (Geography) d10, Knowledge (Philosophy) d12, Investigation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Shooting d6, Streetwise d10, Taunt d6

Hindrances: Pacifist (Minor), Greedy (Major)

Edges: Charismatic, Scholar (+2 to Philosophy and History Knowledge skills), Strong Willed

Equipment: Owl's Magic Earrings

Armor: None

Weapons: Magic Rapier (d6+d4, +1 Parry)



KATY SMALLSIZE (A.K.A. LADY MERCY)

She's probably the meanest woman in the world. She has no mercy for anyone and plunders every ship in sight. She's the real planner behind Isla de Monos expedition. She's fully determined to get LeChic's treasure and will do anything to achieve her goal.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d12, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Charisma: +6; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Boating d12+1, Fighting d10, Intimidate d8+1, Lockpicking d18, Notice d10, Persuasion d12+2, Shooting d8, Stealth d10, Streetwise d10+1,

Hindrances: Curious, Vengeful (Major), Greedy (Major)

Edges: Ambidextrous, Acrobat, Charismatic, Combat Reflexes, Florentine, Great Luck, Improved Dodge, Level Headed, Quick, Quick Draw, Steady Hands, Strong Willed, Thief, Two Fisted, Very Attractive

Equipment: Large magic Earrings

Armor: None

Weapons: 2 Magic daggers (d6+d4), flintlock pistol (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 2d6+1), shot & powder (20)



JACK SPADGER (A.K.A. CAPTAIN STORM)

Among pirates, he's very famous for his boating skills and for never changing route to avoid a storm. His ship "The Shining Pearl," is probably one of the fastest. His navigations skills were very useful for reaching Isla de Monos. He doesn't care much about the treasure. He's looking for the "perfect storm" and will go on adventuring until he actually finds it.

Attr: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d12, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Charisma: +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 10; **Toughness:** 6

Skills: Boating d12+1, Fighting d10, Intimidate d8+1, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Shooting d8, Streetwise d12+1, Taunt d10

Hindrances: Wanted (Minor), Greedy (major)

Edges: Acrobat, Block, Fervor, Improved Dodge, Inspire, Level Headed, Steady Hands, Very Attractive

Equipment: Diamond Magic Earrings

Armor: None

Weapons: Magic Rapier (2d6, +1 Parry), dagger (d6+d4), flintlock pistol (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 2d6+1), shot & powder (20)



GUY TREETIMBER (A.K.A. CAPTAIN BRAGGART)

His nickname tells it all. He talks big and most of his "so called" adventures are actually fakes. Nevertheless he had an important role in the expedition, since nobody claims to know the pirate LeChic better than he does.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 7

Skills: Boating d12+2, Fighting d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Shooting d8, Streetwise d10, Taunt d10

Hindrances: Arrogant, Greedy (major)

Edges: Improved Block, Improved Level Headed, Improved Nerves of Steel, Strong Willed, Steady Hands

Equipment: Monkey Head Magic Earrings

Armor: None

Weapons: Magic Rapier (d4+d6 +1 parry), dagger (2d4), flintlock pistol (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 2d6+1), shot & powder (20)



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Lord Bane

The Castle of the Mountain is situated atop a large hill with a commanding view of the surrounding countryside. Accessible by a long, well-maintained switchback, it is a formidable place to look upon. The castle derives its name from the fact that it is constructed of stone, a rarity in this land. The Mountain, as it is normally called, is constructed of a local, grey rock and shows the scars of numerous assaults. The outer wall protects a large central keep.

The territory under the sway of The Mountain has hot summers and cold winters. The land is good for growing, enough to support The City under the Mountain, Undermount, as well as numerous smaller towns and villages. Most of the roads are dirt and become difficult to traverse in harsh weather. The main roads, those left over from the Romans, are stone and relatively undamaged, allowing for limited travel during the winter. The people of the region do their best to maintain the technology they received from Rome, but the collapse of the Roman Empire has sent the lands into some technological decline.

The people of Undermount and the surrounding villages live simple lives. Most are farmers or practice some kind of craft. There is an educated demographic that provides the necessary bureaucracy to support the city and keep the kingdom united. Most townsfolk practice some form of Christianity, although earlier, pagan beliefs are making a resurgence. Adherents to these

older beliefs either blend them with Christianity or practice them in secret.

THE CITY UNDER THE MOUNTAIN

Undermount, as it is known, is unusual in that it is large enough to be a city. It was founded before The Mountain was built; part of the city had to be cleared away from the space where The Mountain now stands. This clearing forced newer buildings to be constructed elsewhere, which allowed a certain amount of city planning to occur. As a result, unlike many centers of human habitation, there is an inkling of order in the layout of the city.

The oldest sections of the city are built in the expected, haphazard fashion. Buildings were placed where convenient and roads meander like lazy rivers. The pace of life in the older quarter of the city reflects this. People take their time relative to the citizens living farther away from the castle. Because of its proximity to the center of power, the old quarter is inhabited by many of Undermount's wealthier citizens.

In contrast, the more ordered, newer sections of the city run at a faster pace. There are few citizens that have much leisure time, in contrast to the inhabitants of the old quarter. They spend much of their time working, usually as craftsmen or laborers but occasionally as scribes.

Points of Interest

1. Géza's Smithy

Géza is a large man with a powerful upper body. One of the most successful smiths in the city, he is well-known for his well-made weapons. Unlike many smiths of similar quality, he makes few efforts to adorn his weapons with unnecessary embellishment. Those lucky enough to afford his work find themselves with a humble, but highly effective, blade. While he appears to be happy, the truth is somewhat different. Géza is desperate to escape from the kingdom. He is tired of making swords and is afraid that the war will eventually reach Undermount. He worries for his family, his wife and four daughters, and seeks a way to escape with his entire family.

Géza's smithy is located on the edge of the old quarter of the city, giving him access to customers from a wide range of classes. He has taken several apprentices to do the less-skilled tasks, fixing farm implements for example, freeing him up for more difficult work that brings more money. Consequently, he has one of the largest workshops in the city. There are several small forges as well as two large ones. The larger ones are reserved for Géza and his senior apprentice Janos, who he has recently begun to instruct in the art of sword making.

2. Customs House

Entering into the city proper requires passing through the customs house, a large building just inside the city walls. It is staffed by several members of the town guard, supplemented by a squad of



skeletal troops. It is attached to a very large warehouse used for inspecting goods, and quietly accepting bribes.

Zoltan is the officer in charge of customs. He is a shrewd man with a drooping mustache that he pulls on frequently. He joined the city guard as a young man, quickly becoming bored with the endless patrols. When the opportunity arrived, he took a post at the customs house, and was eventually promoted to head customs officer. Zoltan does his job well enough, ensuring that the Mountain gets its taxes and trade is not disrupted. He is not above adding on a “processing fee” or “foreigner entry pass” fee however, if

he thinks he can get away with it. In addition to the normal city uniform, he has a small medallion that allows him to control the skeletons assigned to the customs house, although its power can be overridden by the Necromancer, Lord Bane, or the vampires.

In addition to the skeletal troops, there are several city guards stationed at the customs house. They are generally competent and efficient, although they are as likely as Zoltan to find some convenience fee to add onto any other taxes owed. Only rarely do they actively engage in theft in the course of their duties. Recently however, one of the

guards stole a necklace of particular importance to one of the more influential citizens in town who is anxious to get it back.

The merchant who had been responsible for transporting the necklace was killed in a rather public and gruesome fashion, making the guard reluctant to return it. The necklace in question is composed of a gold chain studded with rubies, a relic of a bygone time. What makes the necklace exceptional though is that it allows the owner to control the undead and demons in close proximity to the wearer. The guard is unaware of this property. If the necklace were to be in

possession of someone hoping to overthrow Bane it would negate many of his strongest allies. Only the original owner is aware of the necklace's power, which he learned about in an old tome in the church library.

3. Church of St. Janos

The Church of St. Janos is well used and well kept. Over ninety percent of the inhabitants practice Christianity. Unlike many parts of Europe, they all practice the same kind, meaning there is little religious strife relative to many other cities. Because of the size of Undermount there are numerous churches, although the Church of St. Janos is the largest and most ornate.

It was the original church and is located deep within the old quarter of the city. It began as nothing more than a small chapel near the top of the hill. It was torn

down when the Mountain was built and a new, larger place of worship was constructed where the current Church of St. Janos stands, using much of the original building material from the old church. It has a large, gilded dome topped by a copula as well as a large bell tower that rings out the hour as well as various important religious times, such as the beginning of services. All the other churches in Undermount take their lead from these bells, so the call to worship and the hour tend to ripple down from the old quarter, gradually reaching the newer parts of the city. The inside contains rows of pews for the worshipers, all facing a large altar holding several icons. The two most important are of Christ and St. Janos. The rest are minor religious figures specific to the city or minor saints.

Father Laszlo is the head priest at St. Janos, and is the de facto leader of all the churches. He is an aging man who spends much of his time ensconced in his private quarters preparing his soul for the afterlife. He is unaware of the exact nature of Lord Bane, but has some suspicions, on account of the undead under his employ. Father Laszlo regrets that he hasn't been able to do more than tell his flock to lead a goodly life, but he fears the cost of opposing the Mountain would be too great. He hopes God can forgive him for what he considers his greatest failing. If a group were to openly oppose Lord Bane, Father Laszlo would give them whatever clandestine aid he can, and if it looked like they had a chance to succeed he would mobilize the church to support them as best they



could. He is currently unaware of Katalin's resistance movement.

Laszlo's hair is long gone, leaving him with a smooth scalp, possessing numerous age spots. He still has a strong set of teeth though, that he regularly shows off with his frequent smiles, although those who look closely can see a deep sadness hidden away in his eyes. Laszlo's height has been diminished somewhat by a stoop he acquired midway through his life from many hours spent in study, but his limbs are still strong and he is able to go about his duties unassisted.

4. Circle in the Forest

The Circle in the Forest was once a place sacred to the pagan inhabitants of the region. Its location was kept secret from the Christian conquerors of the land for many years, until the Necromancer found it. After finding the Circle in the Forest he bent its supernatural energies to his own end, ultimately corrupting them.

The location has been forgotten by the few remaining pagans in Undermount and the surrounding villages and is now used exclusively by the Necromancer and the Tutor. A small altar is used for performing dark magics and a secret cache of magical items is buried at its foot. The Necromancer and the Tutor use this place to store items they prefer to keep hidden from Lord Bane. Lord Bane would be very interested in seeing these items were he to find out about them. Several of the items held here are powerful weapons for destroying undead.

The altar allows both the Necromancer and the Tutor access to far greater power than they would have otherwise. As such, were they to lose it to destruction, it would cripple them greatly. If the Circle itself were not destroyed they would eventually be able to reestablish their control over the energies there, though

at great expense. As a result, it is well protected by skeletal troops of a more powerful variety; all controlled by either the Necromancer or the Tutor.

One resident of Undermount knows the location of the Circle, a boy who stumbled upon it one day while wandering through the woods. It was through happenstance that he wasn't found and killed by the undead guardians of the place. He's mentioned it to his mother who hasn't given it a second thought, assuming it's just something out of his imagination or a story he heard from his grandfather about the old religion of the region. If word of what he'd found got back to the Mountain, it could go poorly for the boy and create a rift between Lord Bane and the Necromancer and the Tutor.

5. Red Dragon Inn/Blue Dragon Inn

The Dragon Inns are two successful inns run by Katalin Coin. She inherited them from her father who bought the Red Dragon, which is situated in the old quarter, after retiring from being a merchant. It was so successful that he opened a second inn on the outskirts of town. Both inns are famous for their quality of service, despite serving two different segments of the population. The Red Dragon is frequented by wealthy travelers, mostly merchants, or those who have business at the Mountain. The clientele of the Blue Dragon are much more modest, farmers and poorer travelers. It is also a popular drinking spot, famous for its beer, and people gather there to share the latest gossip.

Both inns are decorated thematically. The hearth of the Red Dragon is carved to resemble a dragon breathing the fire within. The elegant chairs have clawed feet and the windows are hung with red drapes. The Blue Dragon has a mural on one wall depicting a great battle between a blue dragon and a knight mounted on a

white horse. In the background is a small fort surrounded by a hamlet, all sitting atop a hill. The knight, clad in full chainmail, something most of the residents of the town have never seen in person, is bearing down on the dragon, sword drawn, shield upraised. The two are battling at the entrance to a dark forest. The dragon has reared up in preparation to receive the knight's charge, exposing his scaly, yellow belly.

Katalin is in her mid-twenties. She has a severe look from the late hours required to run her inns, but is always cheerful and possesses a charming personality. She loves conversing with her patrons at either inn and often provides drinks on the house. Typically she can be found behind the bar wearing a stylish, but functional, outfit. It's usually a little beer stained, but she doesn't seem to care and no one seems to notice. After working at the inn during the day she keeps the books at night, at least that's what her patrons think. She does keep the books for the inns, but that isn't what keeps her up late into the night.

The true reason Katalin looks so haggard is because she is the leader of a resistance movement hoping to replace Lord Bane with a different lord, one that is at least human. They conduct all their business at night and Katalin loses much sleep as a result. The majority of the movement works at the two inns, which are both natural conduits for information. The Red Dragon allows her to keep tabs on the goings on in the Mountain while the Blue Dragon allows her to gather information from the common people.

Mark the Seneschal is unaware of Katalin and her group, but would be very interested in hearing about them, possibly to help them overthrow Bane and get himself installed as the lord of the Mountain. However, if he felt it would advance his cause to have them

eliminated, he would not hesitate to hand them over to Lord Bane.

If Katalin hears about someone hoping to diminish Bane's power she wouldn't hesitate to try and recruit them. She would love to tell Farther Laszlo about her group, but worries that would expose everyone to too much risk if he were interrogated by Mark, who is often at odds with the church.

IMPORTANT PERSONAGES

Lord Bane

Lord Bane used to be a man named András Stone, the heir to The Mountain. His family ruled the land for many generations, becoming quite prosperous from the gold deposits in the surrounding hills. András was doted on by his parents. He grew into an arrogant young man, used to having things his way. This all changed when he met Piroska, the daughter of an equally powerful family from a neighboring fiefdom. His every effort to convince his parents to arrange a marriage with her was met with refusal. His parents refused to join their family with one practicing a false pagan religion.

After numerous refusals András stormed away from his parents in a rage and flew into the castle's chapel. He threw himself to his knees in front of the altar and prayed with all his might for God to intercede and give him Piroska. His prayers to God went unanswered. In disgust he cursed his parents and God and stalked out of the chapel with thunderous boot steps.

Despite the late hour András had his black horse saddled and rode off into the night. He left the trail several miles outside of the village, pushing into the dark forest. He thrashed around for several hours, working off his wrath. Eventually he tired both himself and his



horse out and was forced to rest. Finding himself in a small glade with a pond, he tied off his horse and stretched his legs. As dawn began to peek over the horizon, he could see more details of the glade. The trees were tall and straight, like fence posts. Evidently there was only one spot in the glade with sufficient room for someone to enter and he happened to have found it.

Something glittered in the grass on the far side of the glade. Curious that there should be something sparkling so far out in the forest, András went to see what it could be. He knelt down in the dirt to examine what appeared at first to be a metal arm, but upon closer inspection turned out to be a majestic piece of armor. The arm was half buried in the dirt and as András unearthed it he realized there was an entire set of armor buried in the undergrowth.

After András pulled it fully from the ground, he could only stare at it in amazement. The armor was made entirely of an unknown, almost mystical material and showed no signs of deterioration. It covered the skeleton within so completely that András didn't discover the suit's former owner until he picked up the helmet and a skull fell out, making András jump. He kicked the skull aside and rolled the suit over, rattling the bones inside. The chest piece was covered in whorls etched into the material that coalesced into a rose. András also found the reason for the previous owner's death. As he rolled the suit over, he could see a matching sword buried part way into the bowels of the armor.

András could see the sword was of the same quality as the armor after he held it up in the morning light. The grip was wrapped in black leather. The worn grooves fit András hand perfectly and the sword moved without effort as he made a few experimental cuts.

András quickly pulled the skeleton from the armor, abandoning it where it fell, finding that the padded layer had managed to survive the elements. He was excited by such an amazing find and suddenly quite tired, his anger having been spent. He packed the armor as best he could onto his horse and prepared to return to The Mountain. His return journey was uneventful.

After the armor had been cleaned it was magnificent to behold. The strange material gleamed in the sun, both majestic and fierce. When András donned the armor he felt infused with might. A feeling of invincibility overcame him and he knew that if he couldn't attain Piroska through marriage then he would attain her through conquest.

The first step was to eliminate his parents. The realization that András wasn't shocked at the thought was more

shocking than the idea itself. Once he was lord he could find some pretense for war, conquer the lands of Piroska's family and take her as his wife.

After some planning, András successfully murdered his parents, warred with his neighbors and ultimately penetrated their fortress. All while being protected by his majestic armor, wielding his unyielding sword. After breaching the gates, his army began laying waste to the defenders, eventually pushing them back to the inner keep. András confronted Piroska and her family in their great hall. He had just cut down both of her parents and was preparing to claim her for himself when he caught a whiff of smoke in the air.

Someone had started a fire in the wooden structure and it was rapidly turning into an inferno. András grabbed Piroska and tried to drag her out. She resisted though, and they made little progress as the fire began creeping up on them. As András struggled to save his prize, Piroska struggled to escape. They were in one of the outermost chambers of the fortress when the blazing ceiling collapsed with a fiery roar, burying both of them beneath burning debris.

A heavy rain eventually extinguished the fire, but there were few survivors. Two men, one from each camp, claimed to see András and Piroska get crushed by the collapsing roof, but no one was able to find their bodies, or András' fabled armor.

A month passed during which time the two kingdoms reconciled, ceasing what became known as The Lover's War. New men came into power and recognized that András' lust was the true cause of the war. Relations quickly normalized and people did their best to forget about what had happened. That all changed during the following full moon.

The few people who witnessed it reported that as the moonlight fell on the ruins of the old fort, they could see the silhouette of the undamaged fort shimmering into phantasmal being. The next day, the fort was once again sitting atop the hill, retaining its spectral appearance. The body of the new lord of the land was staked out in front of the fortress, his face a dead mask of terror. The residents of the land found their city patrolled by spirit soldiers. Some were clearly recognizable as men who had fallen during the final battle while others were too deformed to be identified.

Morning dawned over the City Below the Mountain as usual, but for those who worked in the keep their morning was anything but normal. They found the bodies of all the inhabitants strewn about the field, their eyes open in terror and their bowels opened from a vicious stab wound. They found the gates barred and the battlements manned by skeletal warriors. The body of the new lord of the castle was never found, although on some nights hoarse screams issue from the castle for hours at a time.

After the fire, András was changed. He awoke deep in the cellars of The Mountain, still wearing his armor. Where it had once appeared brilliant, it now was charred by the fire. The clasps of his armor had fused shut, leaving him encased inside, like a mobile tomb. Those who have seen him say that when you look into the visor of his helm all you can see are two points of light, burning coals of hatred that now serve as his eyes. He still lusts after his lost Piroska, but it is coupled with a need to crush her family's kingdom beneath his metal shod foot. András, now called Lord Bane, has developed a cruelly regal demeanor, but is occasionally possessed by fits of rage at the survival of the neighboring kingdom or bouts of melancholy over the loss of Piroska.

The lives of the folk living under The Mountain have eased. Their tax burden is lighter and they are left to their own devices as long as taxes are paid. Justice is swift and public; criminals are hauled into the town square by skeletal minions and executed in a horrible fashion, their corpses left to rot hanging from posts placed there for this purpose. The citizenry find themselves conscripted to fight in the perpetual war between their own Lord Bane and the forces of Lady Death, both spectral and human. Those who try to escape conscription are harshly punished and those who excel are richly rewarded, the most successful soldiers being given positions within The Mountain.

Since his reawakening, Lord Bane has found his combat abilities enhanced. He no longer suffers from fatigue and is unnaturally quick, even in his armor. Despite his supernatural powers, Lord Bane has conquered little new territory.

Between his human armies and the unnatural monsters at his command, he could easily conquer the majority of his neighbors. However, his unearthly eyes are set upon the lands of Lady Death; he still wishes to end her rule and have her for himself.

Allies

The Necromancer

The Necromancer's appearance makes him hard to place. He has black hair and strange facial features, but his eyes are vibrant blue. He has pale skin offset by crimson lips that hide white teeth. His strange accent and knowledge of many tongues further clouds his origins. If pressed on the matter, he becomes reticent, and if pressed too hard he gets angry. He has come into the service of Lord Bane recently. In exchange for magical aid in the endless war, Lord Bane is supporting The Necromancer's quest for arcane knowledge.

The Demonic Tutor

The Demonic Tutor resembles a man, but with two curved horns snaking out from the back of his head. He is hairless and solidly built, although not large. Instead of white and colored eyes, nothing but yellow look out of the narrow slits on either side of his hawkish nose. Situated at the center of his head is a star set within a circle glowing with unholy fire. Merely gazing upon it makes one dizzy with revulsion. Before his bare chest he holds a thick, dark book with bizarre and profane writing etched upon the cover. Forbidden to actively participate in events on Earth, he acts as an advisor to Lord Bane and a teacher to The Necromancer. The Demonic Tutor hopes to eventually use both as pawns against demonic enemies of his own.

His contributions to Lord Bane have been invaluable over the years, allowing arts lost in other parts of Europe to flourish in Undermount. Most of these arts focus on



LORD BANE

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

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (3)

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Stealth d8, Taunt d6

Armor: Majestic Armor (All 3)

Weapons: Majestic Long Sword (Str+d8+2, AP 1)

Special Abilities:

- **Command:** Lord Bane's minions within his command radius add +1 to their Spirit rolls to recover from being Shaken.
- **Empty:** Lord Bane is a soulless, empty shell. While not quite undead, he is not affected by worldly things. Lord Bane is immune to poison and disease and the effects of Fatigue.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Fleet-Footed:** Lord Bane rolls d10s when running instead of d6s.



THE NECROMANCER

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Invocation d10, Knowledge (Occult) d10, Notice d8, Taunt d6

Armor: Cloth (All 1 [except head] vs. Str+d4 weapons or less)

Weapons: Dagger (Str+d4)

Implement: +1 Staff (+d4 damage)

Special Abilities:

- **Necromancer:** Immune to Fear from creatures with the Undead or Demon trait.
- **Powers:** The Necromancer has 30 Power Points and knows the following spells with a necrotic trapping: *armor, bolt, boost/lower trait, confusion, puppet, zombie*



THE DEMONIC TUTOR

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Invocation d12, Knowledge (Battle) d10, Notice d8, Taunt d10

Armor: Thick Skin (All 2)

Weapons: Claws (Str+d6)

Special Abilities:

- **Brawny:** Can carry 8 times his Strength in pounds instead of the usual 5 times.
- **Demon:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; Immune to poison and disease; Half-damage from non-magical attacks.
- **Fear -2:** Gazing upon The Demonic Tutor is a terrifying sight.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.

warfare, such as advanced metalworking techniques while other arts have improved trade and food preservation techniques. The secrets the Tutor has shared with Lord Bane have ensured the land is unusually prosperous for its location.

Mark the Seneschal

Mark serves as Lord Bane's buffer from the townspeople. He handles all the administrative tasks necessary to keep the country united, leaving Lord Bane free to brood and plan his takeover of Lady Death's lands. A consummate administrator, he does an excellent job of managing the day to day business of the land. Lord Bane recruited him into his services with the promise of power. Mark is as ruthless as he is efficient, effectively dealing with problems before they become a thorn in his lord's side.

Thus far, his duties have required that he remain human in order to interact with the world outside The Mountain. He is

tall but unthreatening. His fetching manner of dress is designed to put people at ease and facilitate his duties as an administrator. He is often the first person of importance that guests will meet from the castle or the city. If anyone begins getting too curious about the nature of Lord Bane, Mark ensures they are properly dealt with.

Minions

Skeletal Troops

The City Under the Mountain, as well as the fortress itself, is defended by skeletal troops dressed in the livery of Lord Bane. They are protected by leather armor and wield spears and short swords. The most powerful date back to The Lover's War, but their numbers are supplemented by newer skeletons created by the Necromancer when more bodies come available.

Vampire Officers

After taking The Necromancer into his services, Lord Bane commanded him to create officers capable of leading both his human and undead legions into battle. The result was the creation of the vampires. They are human enough in appearance that they are able to escape casual notice when mingling with humans, but their otherworldly origins allow them to lead the undead. Unlike many other vampires, those serving under Lord Bane can walk in the light of day, although their powers are considerably reduced, almost down to those of a regular human.

The vampires in service of Lord Bane are robust, despite their pale appearance, with dark eyes and dark hair. They typically clothe themselves in black, going as far to wrap up their heads in scarves, partly to protect themselves from daylight, but also to make their inhuman nature even harder to detect.

- **Forbidden:** The Demonic Tutor is forbidden from participating in events on Earth. He will defend against attacks, but is not able to retaliate.



MARK THE SENESCHAL

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

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6, Streetwise d8, Taunt d6

Armor: Leather (Arms, Legs, Torso +1)

Weapons: Short Sword (Str+d6)

Special Abilities:

- **Charismatic:** Mark the Seneschal is accustomed to dealing with the general public and gains a +2 bonus to all Persuasion rolls.
- **Strong Willed:** Mark the Seneschal knows how to use his voice and body language to unnerve his opponents and

gains a +2 bonus to all Intimidation and Taunt rolls as well as Spirit and Smarts rolls when resisting Test of Wills attacks.

SKELETAL TROOPS

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

Pace: 7; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9 (1)

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

Armor: Leather (All 1) and Round Shield (+1 Parry, +2 Armor vs. ranged shots that hit)

Weapons: Short Sword (Str+d6) or Throwing Spear (3/6/12; Str+d4)

Special Abilities:

- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage.



VAMPIRE OFFICERS

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10 (1)

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8

Armor: Leather (Arms, Legs, Torso +1)

Weapons: Claws (Str+d4)

Special Abilities:

- **Captain:** Vampire officers have the ability to summon and control Skeletal Troops. This requires an action and a Smarts roll at -2. If successful, 1d6 Skeletal Troops arrive in 1d6+2 rounds.
- **Charm:** Vampire officers can use the puppet power on the opposite sex using Smarts as their skill. They can cast and maintain the power indefinitely, but only on one target at a time.

The Deathknights

When Lord Bane awoke in his castle's cellar, he found himself surrounded by several of his most loyal and capable followers. They had been transformed, much like he had, into something different. They are sentient undead, capable of thinking for themselves, but slaves to Lord Bane's will. Unlike the vampires, they have no chance of passing for human and are limited to leading the undead or remaining in The Mountain. Their loyalty is as corrupt as their current form. Although they must do as Lord Bane commands, the Deathknights chafe under his iron rule and constantly look for ways to misinterpret his commands. Unable to betray him themselves, they hope someone will come along and destroy him, freeing them to pursue their own interests.

They wear the same leather and chain armor they did before the ill-fated campaign against Lady Death's lands, but

they are tattered, the result of many fights in the service of Lord Bane. They are skeletal in appearance, with pieces of rotting flesh occasionally sliding off, leaving gleaming bone exposed to the world.

Enemies

Lady Death

No longer is Piroska the weak girl who died in the fire. She looks much like she used to, a young, beautiful woman, with a few notable changes. Her body has become transparent and spectral, much like her fort. Her hair is kept in a state of wild disarray and she floats just above the ground. She can kill with her voice, able to produce a scream that turns men's hair white and freezes their hearts. Like Lord Bane, when she leads her armies, she leads from the front, a howling wind of death blowing through the ranks of her enemies.

Voivode István

István's family has been the traditional enemy of the Stones for a number of generations. Although he possesses no magical powers himself, his sister is a powerful enchantress who bolsters his human army with augmented arms and armor. This edge has allowed him to maintain a stalemate with Lord Bane. The borders of their two countries simply stare threateningly at each other.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

A Rock and a Hard Place

The players find themselves traveling along the river that divides the lands of Lord Bane from Lady Death. They can see a patrol of skeletons marching down the road towards them. Spectral troops suddenly materialize out of the ground and rush across the river, landing all along the road. The skeletons are quickly

- **Fear:** Vampire officers drive fear into their opponents once their true nature is determined.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Frenzy:** Vampire officers can make two attacks per round with a -2 penalty to each attack.
- **Invulnerability:** Vampire officers can only be harmed while in the sunlight. They may be Shaken by attacks otherwise, but never wounded.
- **Level Headed:** Vampire officers act on the better of two cards.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage.
- **Weakness (Holy Symbol):** Displaying a holy symbol holds the vampire officer at bay. If wishing to attack, he must first

succeed in an opposed Spirit test.

- **Weakness (Holy Water):** A vampire officer sprinkled with holy water is Fatigued. If immersed, he becomes Exhausted.
- **Weakness (Invitation Only):** Vampire officers cannot enter a private dwelling without being invited. They may enter public domains as they please.
- **Weakness (Sunlight):** Vampire officers can be wounded normally while in the sunlight.



DEATHKNIGHTS

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d12

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 11 (1)

Skills: Fighting d12, Intimidation d8, Notice d10, Shooting d10

Armor: Leather and Rusted Chainmail (All 1)

Weapons: Long Sword (Str+d8), Bony Hands (Str+d6)

Special Abilities:

- **Fear -2:** Seeing a deathknight is a truly terrifying experience.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Hardy:** Deathknights do not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.
- **Level Headed:** Vampire officers act on the better of two cards.
- **Orders:** Deathknights are bound to follow every command given to them by Lord Bane. Should he be killed, they gain free will over their actions.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage.

interested in taking prisoners than killing and will attempt to get the PCs to surrender so they can be interrogated by Lady Death.

If the PCs can convince Lady Death that they aren't working for Lord Bane, she will insist that they help her retrieve an item of importance from Lord Bane's lands. It is an iron scepter, the ancient symbol of rulership in her lands. She has been unable to locate it in the ruins of the fortress and suspects it was looted by one of Lord Bane's soldiers.

Lady Death offers the PCs a choice: They can help her and be rewarded or refuse to help her and be killed. If she finds out they leave Lord Bane's territory and don't bring the scepter to her, she will assume they have refused to help.

The scepter was looted by a man named Lajos Babich, a soldier of András. He has kept it in his home as a reminder of the war. He is now an old man who lives with his son's family. There are people around the city, mostly old, who remember Lajos bringing the scepter home as well as people who have heard stories of it being brought to Undermount.

Lord Bane would be very interested in possessing the scepter as well, were he to find out that it is in his domain. It provides the wielder limited influence over the environs in Lady Death's land, weather, etc. If he found the PCs had entered his lands to steal the scepter and return it to Lady Death, he would be rather upset. If they went to him directly however, he would be most appreciative.

Death Unleashed

After finally conquering the lands of Lady Death and taking her for his eternal bride, Lord Bane has turned his sights on the surrounding countryside. All the surrounding lands are at risk now that Lord Bane commands the forces of Lady Death. Several small communities have already fallen to the spectral and skeletal army. The rulers of the surrounding lands are clamoring for alliances and aid. All the lands are calling for mercenaries to aid them. Some lords have formed coalitions to oppose Lord Bane, some genuine, others with double crosses in mind. Others have turned to dark powers, hoping to fight fire with fire. Lord Bane has also put out a call to arms. His efforts have drawn many powerful fighters to his banner, hungry for plunder, and away from the banners of his enemies.



LADY DEATH

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

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

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

Armor: None

Weapons: Kinetic Dagger (treat as a Thrown weapon using Spirit as a skill; 3/6/12; Str+d4)

Special Abilities:

- **Command:** Those under Lady Death's command gain a +1 bonus to Spirit rolls to recover from being Shaken.
- **Death Scream:** Lady Death can produce a death scream using the Cone Template. Every target within this cone must make a Spirit roll at -2 or suffer its effects. Those who fail are immediately Shaken and gain a level of Fatigue, this can cause a wound. Lady Death cannot

attack with her kinetic dagger in the same round she uses her Death Scream.

- **Ethereal:** Lady Death is immaterial and can only be harmed by magical attacks.
- **Fear:** The spectral Lady Death is frightening to see.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.



VOIVODE ISTVÁN

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

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Knowledge (Battle) d10, Notice d10, Persuasion d8, Shooting d10, Throwing d8

Armor: Leather (All 1) and Round Shield (+1 Parry, +2 Armor vs. ranged shots that hit)

Weapons: Long Sword (Str+d8) and Long Bow (15/30/60; 2d6; RoF 1)

Special Abilities:

- **Command:** Voivode is a leader of men. Those under his command gain a +1 bonus to Spirit rolls to recover from being Shaken.
- **Command Presence:** Voivode's command radius is 10 in. instead of 5 in.
- **Fervor:** Voivode's leadership inspires his men. Those within his command radius gain a +1 bonus to all Fighting damage rolls.
- **Hold the Line!** Voivode's confidence strengthens his men. Those within his command radius gain a +1 bonus to Toughness.

The Lokka

Paranoia cripples societies and brings about the fall of empires. People born into a free and open world look down upon those who skulk in the shadows, overhearing private conversations and conspiracies before taking quick action to silence the speaker forever. Even a functioning culture never truly grants their leaders trust and confidence; there is always a pocket whispering theories of greed and corruption in the annals of power. These suspicious masses fear what they cannot see and suspect a spy around every corner. It's this fear that drove the lokka to the fringes.

There are few, if any, aware of how the lokka (pronounced *lowk-kha*) came to be, but many seem to know what they might be – dangerous and untrustworthy. The truth is far from the belief, but the belief is more powerful than any truth. They are natural shape-changers capable of assuming any humanoid form by mimicking skin tone, facial features, height, weight, and voice. These innate infiltrators have been cast out of polite company, driven out as exiles on civilized worlds, or act as fugitives in vicious lands. Scattered and leaderless, they exist in secret, walking amongst those who despise them without leaving any trace or revealing their real identity. There is a catch: this ability has come at the cost of genetic imperfections varying across each individual lokka. From blood disorders to learning disabilities to poor vision, every lokka must cope with one or more internal issues while eagerly avoiding detection from the outside world. If anyone is cursed, it is the lokka.

They are a seemingly pacifist species, though willing and able to retaliate and defend themselves when provoked or required. Satisfied to operate in the background, there are stories of lokkan warriors, politicians, and other influential figures using their abilities to acquire positions of power or to adventure in someone else's name. Others succumb to the stereotype and accept positions in infiltration and espionage like a fish to water.

The mystery of their origins remains as uncertain as their true appearance. None are certain where their name originates, though some explorers and scholars note connections to Norse mythology and a recollection of Odin and Loki's efforts to masquerade as mortal women. When not concealed under the guise of another race or individual, each lokka chooses their true form based on an assortment of features from across the many known races. One lokka's true form could have the elongated ears of an elf and the rich beard of a dwarf, while another could sport a spiked crest down their back and remain completely hairless. Some even change their true form over time as they become accustomed to certain features or select various features based on past events, badges of honor, or in dedication to a fallen ally. In their true form, many lokkan features are smoother than others, appearing as if the features are pushing against tight fitting skin.

Pale Ones

To make matters worse, certain lokka are regarded as inferior in the eyes of other lokka. Known as pale ones, these



unfortunate souls are born with whitened skin as part of their true form regardless of any other selected features. They are able to alter their skin pigmentation while shape-changing but not when in their true form. Though it is scientifically noted as one of their many genetic failings, many lokka believe these bastardized cousins were the cause of their troubles and that it was a pale one who made them outcasts everywhere they go. Pale ones are thus treated with disdain and anger to quell some of their brethren's bitterness and confusion at a fate they never requested.

RACIAL TEMPLATE

Physical doppelgangers of incredible potential, their natural ability to assume the appearance of any other species has come at a great price. All lokka are genetically inferior and suffer from some form of difficulty, be it physical or mental. Combined with their deep desire to remain undetected, they can be socially awkward as well, preferring to hide behind their false identities. Their true appearance varies between every

lokka as every one of them borrows their “common appearance” based on gathered traits and semblances from other known races. Over time, this appearance can change as individual lokka take a liking to certain features and incorporate them into their base visage, although most lokka are discovered appearing exactly like any generic, living, humanoid race or as a specific person.

- **Flawless Performance:** All lokka gain a +2 bonus to all deception-based Persuasion rolls. If they are attempting to use their Shapechange ability on a character after gaining the Outsider Hindrance (see **Outsiders in Hiding**), they temporarily lose this bonus.
- **Genetic Inferiority:** All lokka are cursed with inferiority and gain an extra Minor Hindrance without gaining any points in return.
- **Genetic Superiority:** Balancing out their Genetic Inferiority, the lokka are gifted with an exceptional attribute designating their lineage and varying levels of their Shapechange ability. All lokka start with one attribute (your choice) at d8 instead of d4.
- **Outsiders in Hiding:** If a lokka is revealed as its true self, it gains the Outsider Hindrance. Only when a lokka escapes detection and returns in a new form can this emotional baggage be removed. After completing this new deception, the lokka must succeed on a Persuasion roll before removing this Hindrance. If the lokka simply leaves the scene without returning, it must still succeed on a Persuasion roll and cannot try again until an hour has passed.

Extra Minor Hindrance

Common Minor Hindrances include Anemic, Bad Eyes, Delusional, Dyslexic*, Hard of Hearing, Hemophiliac*, Illiterate, Learning Disability*, Pain & Suffering*, Pale One*, Phobia, and Poor Memory*. An (*) asterisk indicates a new Hindrance presented herein.

Enhanced Attribute

A lokka’s superior Attribute typically indicates the types of races they mimic. A lokkan with superior Vigor will likely be discovered in the guise of a hearty and formidable race, like a dwarf, while another with superior Agility will assume the appearance of a lithe and nimble race like the half-folk.

Shapechanging

Once a shapechanging action is applied, the lokka chooses a single racial ability of the chosen race to use as her own. For all intents and purposes, the lokka appears as a member of the chosen race with unique and indistinct characteristics while the extra ability helps sell the deception.

If a lokka wishes to mimic a specific Wild Card or Extra or gain a racial ability

involving different forms of movement (i.e. flying), they must make physical contact with the original target's bare skin (possibly requiring a Stealth roll against an unsuspecting target) and make a Persuasion roll (with the +2 bonus from **Flawless Performance**). For every raise, they can duplicate an additional racial ability, Edge, or Minor Hindrance of their choice; with 2 raises they can gain a Major Hindrance. To use a copied Edge, the Lokka must meet all of its requirements.

When it comes to matters of copying races or individuals with distinguishing features based on Size, the lokka must have enough raises on their Persuasion roll to gain the abilities, Edges, or Hindrances defining all the aspects of the copied race or individual. For example, if you're attempting to assume the appearance of a small race, you must gain at least one raise to assume their Short racial ability.

For modern, futuristic, or science fiction settings, you must roll a raise to duplicate the exact fingerprints, iris, and other specific trace indicators of a specific person when attempting to deceive any high tech security devices.

- **Shapechange:** Lokka have the innate ability to change their appearance to match the generic features of a particular living humanoid race (such as humans) or the specific characteristics of a unique Wild Card or Extra. Whichever the case, the transformation requires a full round to complete as this ability physically changes their features to copy those of the chosen race or person – this is not an illusion. They can appear as any gender of that race,

regardless of their actual gender. All physical features of the lokka are subject to change, but this ability does not affect the lokka's clothing or any other worn or carried apparel. This race must be known to the lokka from previous exposure and observation or the transformation results in nothing more than cosmetic trickery and the lokka automatically fails any attempt to deceive a character with actual knowledge of the chosen race.

NEW HINDRANCES

The genetic issues common in the lokka are numerous, but these are some of the most common ones involving cognitive function and core tissue malfunction.

DYSLEXIC (MINOR)

The character has great difficulty reading languages they can normally speak. The words appear strangely jumbled and in strange, undecipherable symbols rather than the standard alphabet others know and recognize. As a result, he suffers a (-4) to all Smarts-related rolls when attempting to read written information. For example, attempting an Investigation roll to read a docket of shipping manifestations, he would suffer a (-4) penalty.

HEMOPHILIAC (MINOR OR MAJOR)

Some lokka are excessive bleeders when injured, which can lead to tragic circumstances in combat. As a Minor Hindrance, when Wounded, all Vigor and Healing rolls suffer a (-1) penalty. Additionally, allies making a Healing roll on the character suffer a (-1) penalty on top of the normal modifiers. As a Major Hindrance, the penalties are increased to (-2).

LEARNING DISABILITY (MINOR)

Through techniques involving concerted effort and practice, the character learns to overcome minor cognitive difficulties to gain new information, but it does require extra effort. All Smarts-related rolls suffer a (-1) penalty.

PAIN & SUFFERING (MINOR OR MAJOR)

Some lokka's joints and muscles are defective, though still functional, and cause extended incidences of pain and agony. As a Minor Hindrance, at the start of every week, the character must make a Vigor roll or suffer a (-1) penalty to all physical actions for the remainder of that day. The player should make the roll each

day until it is failed, after which they do not need to make a roll for another week. Successful Healing rolls can alleviate the pain for one hour. As a Major Hindrance, the character must make a Vigor roll every day or suffer the (-1) penalty.

POOR MEMORY (MINOR)

When the character tries to recall specific events from memory, they find it challenging and their memory is unreliable. When making a Knowledge or Common Knowledge roll, they must use the lower result of their Wild Die and skill or Attribute die.

PALE ONE (MINOR)

Some lokka's skin is born bleached, leaving their true form more alien than their cousins. Luckily, this does not carry over into their disguises and transformations, yet it ironically brings out poor reactions amongst other lokka. The hero suffers a (-1) penalty to Charisma.

NEW EDGES

The following Edges are available to lokkan characters, offering means to expand their Shapechange ability and efforts to infiltrate their way through life.

INSTANT SHAPECHANGE

Requirements: Seasoned, Lokka, Persuasion d8+

The character has learned to speed up the transformation process by accepting limitations. Instead of a full action, his Shapechange ability can be completed at the end of a successful Persuasion roll with a (-2) penalty. Additional effects due to Raises on this roll do not apply.

EXPERT SHAPECHANGE

Requirements: Veteran, Lokka, Instant Shapechange, Persuasion d10+

The character can now gain the benefits of raises when using their Instant Shapechange ability.

MENTAL LEECH

Requirements: Veteran, Lokka, at least 2 other Edges available only to lokka, Persuasion d10+

When the character successfully mimics a specific individual, he can spend two Persuasion raises to create a temporary telepathic link to the target individual. So long as he remains within the same location (i.e. a building, spaceship, or castle) as the original target, he has access to the target's memories and common knowledge until the connection is severed.

Additionally, he can spend a Benny to retain any of this information after the connection is broken. Any spells or technology used by the target individual to block telepathic connections automatically cause this Edge to fail.

PARTIAL SHAPECHANGE

Requirement: Seasoned, Lokka, Persuasion d8+

The character can use their Shapechange ability to make partial transformations of their body to match particular individuals known to the lokka, or simply alter a portion of their body generically.

QUICK TO ADAPT

Requirement: Novice, Lokka

Surviving for generations against persecution and hatred has made the lokka uniquely resilient. The character can spend a Benny to automatically succeed on any Smarts- or Spirit-related rolls while interacting with another character, including NPCs.

Novice characters can spend a Benny on a roll that doesn't have a penalty. Seasoned characters can spend a Benny to succeed on a roll with up to a (-1) penalty. Heroic characters can spend a Benny to succeed on a roll with up to a (-2) penalty.

WATCHING FROM THE SHADOWS

Requirement: Novice, Lokka

The lokka are a secretive lot and take great pride in their ability to masquerade as any unique person. Training and experience has taught the character to take their time and clearly observe a target individual.

If spending at least 10 minutes observing a target individual before shapechanging into their likeness, the character gains a +2 bonus to a single skill available to the target individual. This bonus remains in effect from when the lokka transforms into a copy of the target and lasts until he changes into someone else or fails a Persuasion roll while trying to maintain the cloned identity.

ROLE-PLAYING A LOKKAN CHARACTER

The lokka's time in exile has led to strange quirks and a serious lack of identity. Without a society of their own, the lokka turn to mimicking customs and practices discovered during their travels. Even their names are chosen from assorted tribes, families, lineages, and races, allowing them to mix and match into a cohesive whole. As their true name comes up as often as their true form, many lokka choose one of the names used when disguised as a member of that namesake's community. When they are able to admit their identities to others, lokkas can ask direct questions in an effort to understand the strange habits and traits they typically duplicate for the sake of blending in.

Until such trust is established with a select few, many lokka maintain a false persona and settle into a community or group. Keeping their secret locked tightly where none can discover it, these lokkan citizens remain the aloof or strange members of a community, such as the

jittery scholar with a stuttering problem or the blind soothsayer, while simultaneously dedicating their services and abilities to the service of their duped friends and allies. It is surprising how many strange and charitable people end up being a disguised lokka living within a settlement for decades.

Deceiving Your Fellow Players

When it comes to playing a member of this unfortunate race, there are two ways to look at it. You can express yourself as a lokkan adventurer, pilot, or mechwarrior from the very start as if it were simply any other race walking around with all the others. Or you can ask yourself "What good is it to play a shape-changer if everyone knows you're a shape-changer from the beginning?" Talk it over with your Game Master, but consider presenting your lokkan character as another race to the other players as well as their characters.

Half-Lokkans

Without proper understanding of the lokkan population, there's no telling how many half-lokkans walk around and what percentage are pure and or mixed. In most cases, the other half was never aware of the other parent's true identity until the child begins to show unusual abilities during their teenage years.

Unlike their lokkan parents, a half-lokkan's true form is an exact match to their other half's race, making a lokkan-human child appear human when born. For all intents and purposes, they are an ordinary member of the race capable of minor shapeshifting abilities.

- **Heritage:** A half-lokkan may either start with a free Edge of his choice (as a human), or a d6 in any single attribute.
- **Minor Shapechanging:** All half-lokkans have the ability to morph their physical bodies to

mimic other members of their remaining parentage. Therefore, a half-human, half-lokkan character can alter their appearance to look like any other human. They can appear as any gender of that race, regardless of their actual gender. All physical features of the half-lokkan are subject to change, but this ability does not affect the half-lokkan's clothing or any other worn or carried apparel.

- **Outsiders in Hiding:** If a half-lokkan is revealed as its true self, it gains the Outsider Hindrance. Only when a half-lokkan escapes detection and returns in a new form can this emotional baggage be removed. After completing this new deception, the half-lokkan must succeed on a Persuasion roll before removing this Hindrance. If the half-lokkan simply leaves the scene without returning, it must still succeed on a Persuasion roll and cannot try again until an hour has passed.

Fantasy Characters

Despite the frequency of magic and supernatural abilities in many fantasy settings, shape-changing is typically seen as the domain of many foul creatures and beings such as doppelgangers and demonic creatures tempting mortal souls to cross into darker territories. This assumption of natural shape-changers makes life difficult for lokkan characters and presents the most common type of discrimination experienced by the lokka on a regular basis.

The fantasy setting allows for many lokka to find their own path without resorting to constant masquerades, lies, and other necessary ruses, though it does take time to learn who to trust and who to avoid.

Half-Lokkan Shapechange

If a half-lokkan wishes to mimic a specific Wild Card or Extra, they must make physical contact with the original target's bare skin (possibly requiring a Stealth roll against an unsuspecting target) and make a Persuasion roll. Unlike their lokkan parents, a half-lokkan can attempt to copy these features by spending 10 minutes observing the target character without distraction and with access to enough physical detail (typically standing within 10 yards).

For modern, futuristic, or science fiction settings, you must roll a raise to duplicate the exact fingerprints, iris, and other specific trace indicators of a specific person when attempting to deceive any high tech security devices.

High magic settings may even find lokkan services in high demand, whether or not the lokka wants to participate or not. Typical archetypes best suited for lokkan characters include thieves, bandits, and rangers.

Modern Characters

Fitting into modern society can be tricky depending on how magic and the supernatural operate. For those mystical creatures working behind the scene disguised as powerful humans in a world that can't begin to suspect the dangers behind the curtain, lokkan characters can fare well and stand on equal footing with many other manifestations of secret monstrosity. If a setting embraces magic openly, then the lokka are no better off here than any other genre.

Corporate and international espionage create a slew of open doors for lokkan characters willing to embrace their situation and make a decent living plying their shape-changing abilities to

maximum effect. The right lokka at the right time may use their skills to blackmail their way into society or wealth, but such actions make them a bigger target than laying low and keeping a quiet profile.

Sci-Fi Characters

Refugees of a long-lost alien world, the lokka are scattered across countless worlds and systems desperately trying to avoid persecution and vengeance on a galactic scale. Disguising themselves as strange aliens unaccustomed to any of the setting's major races, they have greater access than most other genres as cultures and customs lock horns on a regular basis. Should things become too close for comfort, there's no better place to lie low than the vastness of space or retreating to a faraway planet and pretending to be a spice merchant on an orbiting moon until the heat dies down.

Lokkan characters have an interesting role to fill in sci-fi settings for the sheer fact that they have no home. No one knows which planet they originate from or how they came to be scattered across multiple worlds, just that they exist here and there. Tracking down a wanted lokka can be notoriously difficult as the grid becomes the vastness of space and it's doubled by the lokka's natural ability to become someone else. Bounty hunters have their hands full with targets like these, which is probably why so many lokka turn to this career. No one else would know how to avoid being found.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Even if your players pass on the opportunity to play a lokkan character, there are endless possibilities for them to appear throughout any setting as enigmatic figures pulling the strings behind the curtain, the lone assassin hot



JOSEPH "BRICK" MALONE

Joseph is a private investigator with Malone Investigations and crusader for persecuted creatures.

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

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Investigation d6, Persuasion d10, Shooting d8, Streetwise d6

Armor: None

Weapons: S&W [.44] (12/24/48; 2d6+1; RoF: 1; Shots: 6; AP 1, Revolver)

Racial Traits: Flawless

Transformation, Genetic Inferiority (Dyslexic), Genetic Superiority, Outsiders in Hiding, Shapechange

on the heroes' trail, or the unsuspecting ally appearing as countless people throughout the storyline and offering tips and advice to guide the heroes to a successful conclusion. As it is with the lokka, there's no end to the possibilities of lokkan NPCs in any *Savage Worlds* game.

Here are two samples of how lokkan characters can flesh out story angles and settings, from the dedicated investigations of Joseph "Brick" Malone to find and aid other hunted outcasts, to the plight of the Elemental Thief forced into servitude for her gifts and ancestry.

Joseph "Brick" Malone

The world may not know about the darkness lying under the surface, but I sure do. All the stories we heard as children about monsters lurking in the forests, fey creatures hiding bundles of gold and jewels, and black magic entrancing the gullible to complete the bidding of their dominant masters are more real than you could have known. They're a minority, make no mistake, and they pose no true threat to your lifestyle,

but that's not what the powers that be want you to think. Our existence is viewed as a threat to their omnipotence and as far as they're concerned, the only sure fire way to keep us at bay is to eliminate us altogether.

That's where I come in. They call me Brick on account of my physique, and because I'm as stubborn as one. It was my nickname in college, so yeah, I'm that Brick Malone. Played linebacker all the way up to the finals before a dislocated knee cap brought my career to an end. Shame I didn't have the smarts to carry me through any of my courses, but I did have a knack for tracking down people

and delivering important messages. It's just a shame it took me a five year stint in Folsom to learn there was an honest way to make a living. That's when I started Malone Investigations and became a private investigator.

Thing about my past is that it's not actually my past. The real Brick is long since dead, killed by a drug dealer with an itchy trigger finger and a serious need to keep Brick's nose out of his business. Me? I'm the guy who took over for Brick and returned the favor to that son of a bitch dealer in spades. The real Brick was a good friend, someone who took me in when the rest of the city tossed me on

my ass and left me to starve in a dank alleyway downtown. A lot of people counted on Brick for his hard work and efforts to bring justice to the downtrodden, and it'd be a damn shame to let those people down. So here I am, picking up right where my friend left off. It's been tricky at times. The real Brick was an avid reader and I can't read to save my life, so I just pick up a lot of books and sit there flipping pages in front of people. No one seems to have noticed yet. So far, so good.

Along the way, I learned I'm not alone in my problems. There's a massive conspiracy out there and people like me are hunted on a daily basis. Most of my kind prefer to keep a low profile and let trouble pass us by, but that's not how Brick would have handled things. He would have grabbed that trouble by the throat and told it to piss off somewhere else. That's what I'm doing because it's what he would have done if he were me. On the surface, I'm your tried and true private eye working cases and catching people in the act with my ability to take on different forms and pretend to be someone I'm not. In between paychecks, I fight for the rights of those like me and help get them some place safe. Or better yet, take the fight to the hunters and send them back in the same condition as that worthless drug dealer that took my friend from me.

The real question is who will pick up where I left off once I'm gone? There are forces at work here and they're larger than I originally expected. I could use a couple of helping hands to pull this off, so what do you say?

Tannis Firethrone
D'artagnian (a.k.a. The
Elemental Thief)

There are two groups of people when it comes to the one known as the Elemental Thief: Those who don't have a



clue who this is, and those who do. There are far more of the former and that works out perfect for this rogue, but the latter makes life difficult for this lokkan freelancer.

Starting out as a petty thief, Tannis kept to the streets and back alleys of many major cities across the kingdom, making great pains to avoid contact with others. Aside from being a lokka, she was also cursed as a pale one, a minority among outcasts marked by her ghost white skin. Betrayed by so many, she refused the company of others and made a meager living breaking into homes stealing food and supplies until she overheard a damning conversation that would forever change her life.

It turned out the old mill on the outskirts of town was the meeting place for a local thieves' guild and they were plotting against the merchant union's boss, a grimy and despicable fellow known only as the Earl. Spotting an opportunity to make a hefty profit, she tracked down the Earl at his office and walked in disguised as one of his bodyguards before dropping hints on a little secret overheard at a local tavern the night before. The only problem was she had

chosen the one bodyguard who had his tongue cut years earlier and the deception didn't work as planned. That didn't mean the Earl didn't appreciate the tip and immediately saw a role for the lokkan thief.

The real problem arose when the Earl started owing favors to other guilds and nefarious figures within some of the kingdom's major cities. Before Tannis knew what was going on, the Earl was lying dead in the sewers and others started asking favors from her. In return, they agreed not to turn her over to the purity squads – roaming patrols of overzealous knights and spellcasters eager to keep their nation free from non-humans. Backed into a corner, she agreed to continue poking into the drawers and safes of the kingdom's dangerous and corrupt.

Today, Tannis is a legend in the underworld. Gaining the nickname “the Elemental Thief” because she was as silent as air and fluid as water, her reputation has reached far and wide, but there's nothing she'd love more than to break free of her bond and make for the wild lands beyond any borders, a land where everyone produces for



TANNIS FIRETHRONE D'ARTAGNIAN

Master burglar and information peddler, this lokka is a wanted – and desperate – fugitive.

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

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Stealth d10, Survival d6

Armor: Leather Armor (Torso, arms, and legs +1)

Weapons: Dagger (d4+d4), short sword (d4+d6)

Racial Traits: Flawless

Transformation, Genetic Inferiority (Pale One), Genetic Superiority, Outsiders in Hiding, Shapechange

themselves. She is knee deep in secrets and truths with enough information to lock up every crime lord in sight, but the knights responsible for bringing these outlaws to justice consider outsiders like Tannis a sin greater than larceny or murder. All she needs now is a window of opportunity and the right set of hands to life her through.



Engineer

Engineering encompasses a wide array of careers, some of which have been around for as long as man and others that have been around for only a very short time. Whatever the exact nature of the field, they are men and women that deal in technical problems, math, physical sciences and ingenuity.

In the modern day, the field conjures images of people in suits behind desks, or occasionally out-of-place on a construction site in a hard hat. These images have some truth to them, but engineers also include most graduates from MIT and those that design computer games.

What does all this have to do with creating a role-playing character? After all, most campaigns aren't about the exciting world of the desk jockey, or the MIT grad designing the new GUI. They can, however, be the soldier from MIT who is vital to the black ops team's ability to bypass high level security, or the survivor in a post-apocalyptic game using his architectural knowledge to identify a structural support column just in time to bring the house down on the rampaging mutant Elvis impersonator. Or if he's an EOD specialist, he can probably rig that bridge to blow up behind you and keep the marauders off your back. Modern settings have plenty of room for engineering types.

In a fantasy game, that same kind of character might be the one who has the spatial awareness to note that the room you're in is too small for where it's in the floor plan, meaning there must be a secret door or wall around here

somewhere. They might be the one to fix your Excalibur when it breaks against the hide of some beast. They also might be the guy who brought the steam-powered grenade launcher to the fight with the dragon. The look and feel is very different, but the thought processes are similar to a modern engineer.

In a post-apocalyptic game, any kind of engineer is greatly desired. If he can fix your gun or make repairs to a vehicle when it breaks down in the middle of the desert, awesome. In the fast paced world of Cyberpunk, he's the guy that installs cyberware. He's the guy that tunes your ride to go that little bit faster so you leave all the other racers in the dust. In space, you're in trouble if you don't have someone on board your ship to fix the now broken oxygen producer, doesn't matter if that guy is furry or has a cool visor. The applications in science fiction are extensive.

MODERN ENGINEERS

The Combat Engineer

This Military Operation Specialty (MOS) can trace its history back to the infantryman called sappers. These teams would dig trenches at angles to avoid weapons fire from the walls, or around besieged walls. They would face the most enemy fire as they made room for allied gunners to move in and return fire; these trenches were vital to countering the cannon batteries on siege walls. It's clear that this tactic led to the trench warfare

of both world wars, which was when the Combat Engineer gained a name and a few more responsibilities.

American Combat Engineers came to exist in World War II. They took over for the Quartermaster Corps. Their duties included building air bases, sabotaging and building bridges, clearing explosives and cutting pathways for armor and convoys. These specialists were invaluable to the campaign to cross France into Germany. These men were important to moving armor across Italy and France using deployable bridges and their knowledge of topography to find the best route across land. Without these knowledgeable men, the Pacific campaign would have had a much harder time as they were the ones responsible for building the various airstrips on the Pacific islands. In all theaters they were tasked with handling explosives.

As time moved forward their toys have gotten better. In World War II they used metal detectors, Bangalore torpedoes and plastic explosives; in modern days they have robots that assist in the process and computers to help with complicated math. They also have fancy tools to help them out with those tricky explosive devices

Tools of the Trade

BANGALORE TORPEDO

This is a long tube meant to take out obstacles like barbed wire, additional tubes may be placed to extend the reach of the explosive and keep the user out of harm's way. They were most popular in World War I and II, but are still seen in

modern day as they are still effective at clearing barbed wire and the like.

They have an explosive charge on the end that does 3d8 damage in a Small Burst Template and requires a Knowledge (Demolitions) roll to activate. It requires an action to place a tube.

BOMB DISPOSAL SUIT

Armor +8, Covers all, Counts as heavy armor, Pace is reduced by 1 and Agility, Agility-based skills, and Notice rolls suffer a (-2) penalty

BOMB DISPOSAL ROBOT

Attr: Agility d4, Smarts d4(M), Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5(1)

Skills: Shooting d6

Equipment: "Pigstick" water jet disruptor (1/2/4; 2d4; disables electronic devices automatically)

Special Abilities:

- **Operated:** A Bomb Disposal Robot must be controlled via remote control by an operator. It takes the operator's action to control the robot (i.e. a Driving roll may be called for in specific situations like moving over obstacles). Use of the Pigstick uses the lower Shooting skill between the operator and the robot.

Computer Engineer

While it may not be the proper name for them, it conveys the right idea. These are programmers of code, and architects of virtual space. At any rate, these characters inevitably have a high skill in whatever your setting uses for computer use (Investigation, Knowledge (Computers), Hacking, etc.) and may even have Lockpicking or Repair. Whatever skill she uses, she's going to be the go-to person for reprogramming the security on that electronic lock or finding the password to gain access to the system.

This is the character that is probably in charge of getting in touch with HQ when things go sideways. They are also the type to guide UAVs.

Architect

These are the guys who spend about half their time drawing fancy blueprints and the other half ensuring that it gets done as it was envisioned. The diagrams they make are technical processes requiring math, an eye for detail, and creativity. It's perhaps one of the few fields that heavily combine a creative mind with a scientific spirit.

In the average *Savage Worlds* game, this will mostly be relegated to a background detail rather than a primary focus of the character throughout the adventure. Nonetheless, having a background here will likely help convince the GM to let the player make Notice or Smarts rolls for details of the building they are in. Whether those details are helpful or not is going to depend a lot on the player, the GM, and the player's level of creativity.

NEAR FUTURE AND POST-APOCALYPTIC ENGINEERS

Mechanic

These are the most likely engineers of the wasteland. While much of this will apply no matter the setting, there are fewer engineering archetypes in a wasteland/post-apocalyptic setting. Their skills are in high demand everywhere in the barren lands. Cars will be in high demand, but low availability. Anyone who can fix an engine or get a couple more miles out of that decrepit axel will surely be a welcome sight.

There are a number of ways to play this type of character. They range from the guy who knows machines backwards and forwards to the guy that fixes something

with his wrench and then uses it as a weapon. Either one works.

Tools of the Trade

With *Savage Worlds* being what it is, it is unlikely your character will need much beyond a toolkit as presented in the core rulebook to fulfill a mechanic's duties. Other options include: McGyver, Jack-of-all-trades, and Engineer (A stripped down version of the Weird Science "Mr Fix-it" edge)

ENGINEER

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d8+, Repair d8+

The character was born with a wrench (or laser welder or sonic screwdriver or quantum wrench) in his hand. He can fix anything. Because of his natural ability, he gains a +2 bonus to all Repair rolls and halves the time required to make the repair.

Hacker

As the world gets more advanced, so too do the thieves. This archetype best fits Cyberpunk and urban fantasy games, but it fits anywhere computers dominate. After all, any place that has computers to run things has people to fix them and people to break them. The more technology that exists, the more powerful hackers potentially are. In our day, they could reroute an air strike. In a few decades, and the right setting, they can reprogram the turrets to fire on the people that put them in place. Once man has reached the stars though, who's to say reprogramming an entire ship is out of the question for the greatest hackers in the universe?

Tools of the Trade

Hackers largely rely on Edges and setting specific gear for their work, so it is difficult to give too many exact mechanics. An example hacker Edge would almost certainly look like this:

HACKER

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d8+, Hacking/Tech Use/Knowledge (Computers)/Investigation d8+

Hackers are the movers and shakers in the shadows. They steal from the rich to give to the poor (namely “Poor me”), all without ever being noticed.

Characters with this edge gain a +2 bonus to their tech-related rolls.

FANTASY

Smiths

Smiths are generally burly fellows tirelessly working at a forge and anvil working metal scraps into something useable, though this doesn’t have to be the case. There are a number of examples in fiction of female smiths that

are better than their male counterparts. In all likelihood an adventurer is going to want to be a blacksmith as they are the ones that mold iron and steel into weapons and armor, though one could argue that there is room to be a gold or silversmith.

In a typical high fantasy setting with lots of magic and magical weapons, it’s not out of the question for a character to be an arcane blacksmith or holy blacksmith. Role-playing a blacksmith is going to rely on your character having regular access to a forge, if the campaign involves the heroes using a particular keep or town as a base of operations, for example.

Tools of the Trade

BLACKSMITH

Requirements: Novice, Strength d6+, Knowledge (Smithing) d8+, Repair d6+

Without cooks the army doesn’t march; without the blacksmith the army doesn’t fight. Blacksmiths forge weapons and armor from iron and steel, though this Edge generally applies to working any kind of metal.

With this Edge a character starts the game with a forge of some kind to call their own. Whether this is their personal forge, the forge of their master, or the army’s forge largely depends on the nature of the game. This provides two things: The smith counts as if he has the Rich Edge and gives them the responsibility of running a smith shop.

When using a forge, a character must have access to the materials required to make the desired item and succeed on a Repair roll. Weapons takes 2 hours per die type of damage and 1 iron ingot (thus a dagger takes 2 hours and 1 iron ingot while a great sword would take 10 hours and 5 iron ingots). Plate armor takes 4 hours and 2 ingots to make per section. A suit of chainmail takes 9 hours and 2 iron ingots to make. If the Repair roll is made with a raise, the time is cut in half

ARCANE BLACKSMITH

Requirements: Veteran, Arcane Background, Knowledge (Arcana) d8+, Knowledge (Smithing) d8+, Repair d8+

Arcane blacksmiths are a rare commodity outside the dwarven strongholds. It takes a truly great mind to learn both the secrets of the arcane and how to infuse metal with them. In ages past there were more of these, but in more recent years they have disappeared leaving their creations scattered throughout the lands in monster dens and chests.

If an arcane blacksmith has access to a forge, he or she may add the effects of one power to it. The smith must know



AUSPICIOUS ARCHETYPE

the power they are adding to the weapon. This process takes double the time it would take to create the item (see the Blacksmith Edge). The item inherently has 5 Power Points to activate the effect of the power as a free action with no roll. Adding additional Power Points to the weapon adds another hour to the process. The weapon's Power Points recharge at the normal rate of 1 per hour.

All weapon powers are restricted to the lesser effect of the power, and may not be cast as if with a raise. If a power has mechanics for increasing its base ability, they cannot be used in conjunction with the weapon. The GM has final say on what powers may be added to a weapon, but some logical ones include: *armor*, *boost/lower trait*, *damage field*, *darksight (helmets only)*, *fear*, *healing*, *light*, *smite*, or *quickness*.

This Edge could lead to more powerful Edges. Perhaps one that allows the user to gain the effects of a raise with an appropriate Trait roll, or one that allows a permanent effect at some cost to the maker (like permanently sacrificing Power Points to make the effect indefinite). This Edge is just to get things started.

Mad Scientists

Another engineer archetype that fits well in a high fantasy setting is the maker of high-tech gizmos. These are the items that do not belong in a fantasy game, but this particular fellow was born long ahead of his time, like Leonardo Da Vinci, and has figured out how to make a flying machine (the *fly* power) or perhaps discovered the intricate machining process necessary for a machine gun (the *bolt* power). At any rate, this character is either a pleasure to be around because

his gizmos make the world better or he is terrifying because at any moment his wondrous device may explode violently.

The Arcane Background (Weird Science) is in all its glory here. The key to playing this kind of character as an engineer is for him to be passionate about his work. Engineers are unique in the way they can mix creativity with science. This should be played up for the mad scientist. Bonus points for naming all of your devices something wild.

SCI-FI

Engineering Officer

These are the men and women in the engine room, keeping that engine going. Spaceships (whether large or small) need somebody to fix them. This ranges from the stalwart commander of the engineering team to the furry sidekick to

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ANCIENT WORLD



the dashing captain. On smaller vessels, they often pull double duty as pilot and mechanic. This is a position very dependent on the style of science fiction. An engineering officer is expected to know how the reversal of the ship's weapons' polarity could create a wavelength that can penetrate the space amoeba's outer barrier. This role utilizes a couple Knowledge skills, high Repair and a high level of skill in the relevant computer skill. Playing the lone mechanic on a rough and tumble ship may require some luck and some pluck. Situations often require some tinkering to get a square peg into a round hole, but you're the best and the rest of the crew is relying on you.

Playing the guy that stays behind in the ship while the mercenaries perform their jobs is a terrible character to play. Don't play that guy. It's not fun because you inevitably get eaten by robots or assimilated by space bees.

The point here is that you can play any kind of character in any setting.

SAMPLE NPCs

LT. GEORGE CYCLOPS

Engineering Officer

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

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

Charisma: 0

Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (Anti-matter Engines) d10, Notice d10, Repair d8, Shooting d6, Tech Use d10

Hindrances: Curious, Stubborn, Loyal

Edges: Engineer, Improved Level Headed, Jack-of-all-trades,

Equipment: Yellow Uniform, laser, diagnostic tools, Visor

ANGUS MCNEIL

Adventurer

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

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

Charisma: 0

Skills: Climbing d6, Driving d6, Fighting d6, Notice d12, Repair d10, Piloting d6, Shooting d6, Taunt d6

Hindrances: Heroic, Pacifist, Vow (Don't use guns)

Edges: Alertness, Jack-of-all-trades, Luck, Level Headed, McGyver, Scavenger

Equipment: Leather Jacket, civilian clothes, Swiss army knife

LEONARDO DA VINCI

Arcane Blacksmith

Attr: Agility d4, Smarts d12, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

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

Charisma: 0; **Power Points:** 20

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d12, Knowledge (Smithing) d8, Repair d12, Taunt d6, Spellcasting d10

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Hard of Hearing, Quirk (mumbles to self)

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Arcane Blacksmith, Wizard

Powers: Armor, Bolt, Boost/Lower Trait, Fly

KRYSTAL GAVINS

Starship Mechanic

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

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

Charisma: 2

Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (Spaceships) d8, Notice d6, Piloting d6 Repair d10

Hindrances: Clueless, Quirk (Optimistic), Big Mouth

Edges: Attractive, Elan, Engineer, Great Luck, McGyver

Equipment: Civilian clothes, tools





COMMUNITY SERVICE

GM'S NOTES

This is a scenario designed for Novice to Seasoned ranked warriors. It is designed to be slotted in between the end of one adventure and the beginning of another after the characters have broken the law or are presumed to have done so (rightfully or wrongfully). In a plot point campaign, this should provide a small diversion from the main storyline.

Community Service provides the GM with the chance to get his players into a novel situation. How they are dropped into this mess, I'll leave to your imagination. The crux of the matter comes after the PCs have been incarcerated and are left in their cells, wondering what their fate may be. Perhaps the least they are worried about is the loss of a hand. Maybe they are in an area notorious for even the most minor crime being punishable by death. A warrior with knowledge of the area has heard the rumors concerning the sense of justice the city has. This may sow a seed of paranoia and dread from the start, or it may fuel the notion that the PCs should escape from their cells as soon as possible!

If the PCs go for a jailbreak option, ensure they survive the attempt, though they may gain a few scrapes and bruises. Reward clever PCs with extra XP for trying or coming up with a good, if not great, escape plan. Refer to the stat block for the guards; they're all extras and shouldn't pose too much of a threat. The guards have been given order to not harm the PCs, although the PCs don't know this. Should any of the PCs be wounded, they will be given first aid. So what's going on?

Although the world lies under the mantle of darkness and the gods have abandoned it, there are still people not willing to bow and scrape to the forces of darkness. Liam Cole is one such man.

Liam's hometown is living in fear. Overlooking the town is a hill, upon which stands a once abandoned manor home. It now has a new occupant, Madame Darklock, who aims to enslave the locals. Using mercenaries and a knowledge of the dark arts, she's enforced her will on nearby towns. Liam is determined to save his home. However, he also knows that some of the townsfolk are either too frightened to resist, or have already sworn allegiance to Madame Darklock. Which means that he and men loyal to him are probably under surveillance.

Liam came to the conclusion that the best thing to do is use outsiders; people that could operate with some measure of anonymity. That's where the PCs come in.

By A.J. Preece

PRISON

Read or paraphrase the following:

You wake with dry mouths, and slightly sore heads. What happened last night? You can all remember celebrating your latest success at the Merry Jester inn and saying goodnight to each other as you prepared to head to bed. The rest is all a blank.

You find yourselves not in a cheap and reasonably comfortable room, but in a cramped cell each wall not much wider than you are tall. The sunlight drifts in from a tiny barred window, set above a single bench-like bed that's secured to the wall. A bucket and some straw provide very basic toilet facilities, although there are two of you in each cell. Two people, one bunk bed, one chamber pot... that could be a problem, but that's the least of your worries.

It doesn't take long for the reality to sink in; this is a prison cell. A wall of bars shows you a wide corridor that runs parallel to the wall with the window, and on the other side of it are more cells containing the rest of your party. Torches light the corridor, and you can hear slightly raised voices in the distance. Upon standing you realize that you have been shackled at the ankles, but can stand and walk, and your hands are free.

Give the PCs time to establish that their comrades are well and unharmed. If they start discussing how to break out, remind them that to do this would mean having to raise their voices, so escape plans could be overheard. At this point, it may strike them as being a little convenient to be within ear shot of each other, if not in direct line of sight.

A few minutes are all it takes to realize they are shackled, relatively unharmed, and deprived of weaponry and personal effects. The PCs can discuss plans of action or perhaps now would be the time for them to make a demand to see the man in charge.

The PCs see the man in charge soon enough, and he isn't alone. The head gaoler is a dour, taciturn man, with a broad accent that marks him as coming from somewhere in the territories to the north. He has long, greasy, black hair and an unkempt beard adorns his chin. One eye regards the PCs openly while the other is covered by a leather eye patch. His chainmail, although dirty and a little rusty, still provides adequate protection. The blade he carries in his left hand is in a similar condition, but looks useful enough to inflict serious injury.

Read or paraphrase the following:

"Travelers, amongst all the things man values the most, surely freedom is the most precious. That is what I offer you, the chance to win your freedom in return

for helping the good people of this town gain their freedom from the shadow that hangs over us.

"Madame Darklock holds our town hostage. Her mercenaries enforce the law with brutality, which is why I had to get to you before her dogs did.

"Now your crimes are of a trivial nature, as far as I am concerned, but her punishment would be anything but. At the very least, you could lose a hand; the very worst punishment would see you hung. Maybe she'd have you breaking rocks until you dropped. It would all depend on her mood come the day of the trial. But I am willing to help you escape this place. Will you hear my conditions?"

If the characters decline, they'll have to devise a way of escape on their own. Cole will give them one chance to reconsider, but if not, this adventure is over for the characters.

If the characters give the affirmative, the gaoler looks up at his companion. "Are you sure about this Lord Cole?" he mutters. The other man merely nods and gestures for the cell doors to be opened.

The PCs may decide to rush Lord Cole and the chief gaoler, and although the chief gaoler is an experienced man, he is not a Wild Card; the same cannot be said for Lord Cole. Lord Cole, if attacked, calls for the PCs to stop and pleads with them, advising them that there are more guards a mere stone's throw away and they have no weapons.

The chief gaoler defends himself naturally, but the PCs may be surprised when they realize he is using the flat of his blade, rather than the edge. If more guards come to his aid, the chief gaoler yells, "Lord Cole wants them alive!" If they're subdued, they're locked back up, and left to calm down for a couple hours. Cole then returns with the chief gaoler and extra backup in the form of two other guards.

"Now perhaps this time common sense can prevail?" Cole says and again indicates that the cell doors be opened. If attacked a second time, they guards fight to kill.

- **Liam Cole**
- **Prison Guards:** Two per PC

Providing the PCs follow orders, they're taken upstairs to the chief gaoler's office. Cole and the head gaoler reunite the team with their gear, and tell them to sit around the circular table in the gaoler's office.

Once settled, Cole explains the situation.

Read or paraphrase the following:

My name is Liam Cole. Some time ago, I led a group of men on a covert raid on Madame Darklock's home. Everything went well until we broke into her inner sanctum and made a terrible discovery. When we

broke into the uppermost chambers of the tower at the heart of the house, we found the room was the lair of a lich. Instead of finding a cold and imposing woman, as displayed on local coinage. The attack was brutal, and many of my men died in just a few moments. I hate to admit it, but I was forced to retreat. I buried myself in books and discovered that a lich can be bested with something called cold iron, a very rare metal. The dwarves apparently know of this metal and have fashioned weapons from it to defeat creatures such as this.

Not far from the town, some three days travel there and back, is the ruin of what used to be a chapel dedicated to a deity worshiped by both men and dwarves in days gone by. The deity's symbol is an anvil in a ring of fire and a disembodied hand wielding a hammer. I read that in places such as these, weapons would be stored and given to the worshiping warriors in times of need. I believe a weapon made of cold iron lies in the ruins. I don't expect you to defeat the lich; however once you return with the weapon, if you decide to stand with me against the creature, I'd be more than grateful for the aid.

I believe the lich and Madame Darklock are one and the same person and Chances are it expects another attack, due to my continuous rebellion. She has been tolerant of minor actions so far, but is watching me and my loyal men. I'm confident that, for now, I've evaded Darklock's agents. We are known to Darklock, thus I need someone who can move freely without raising any suspicions; that's where you come in.

Do you object to traveling to the ruins, locating the weapon, and bringing it back to me? Any other treasures are of no concern to me and you may take whatever you want from there. Furthermore all charges against you will be dropped and you will be paid 10 GP each for your troubles."

Refusal means the PCs are thrown back into the cells and Cole leaves to find someone else. (Yes the PCs ARE being railroaded, but desperate times call for desperate measures.)

No doubt the party has questions; not the least of which should be where the chapel is they are looking for. Cole gestures to a servant who then places a crude map (not drawn to scale) on the table.

Read or paraphrase the following:

"The chapel lays a day and a half away, so three days there and back, barring incident. Be aware that wild animals roam the lands as well as other, unnatural things.

"We are also aware of a bandit problem in the area, although they usually only harass trade caravans rather than small groups of travelers. If the takings have been meager as of late, they may be tempted.

"The chapel is southwest of here, but being a dwarven place of worship, the main body of the building is underground. We don't know if anything or anyone has ventured inside the chapel and taken up residence, but be aware there may still be active wards, especially as you reach the center of the chapel. And don't forget to watch for traps.

"The cold iron will probably be in a secure place and well hidden, so please search thoroughly. Again, I must stress that we do not know what or who is inside the chapel. Good luck."

If the PCs refuse, the adventure ends unless the GM decides to strong arm them into cooperation, though this would be a last resort tactic. Keep in mind that Cole is starting to worry about his town and becoming desperate.

If the PCs accept the challenge, Cole allows them to study the map and take it. The map shows a well-defined path to follow that leads south and then west. It traverses open countryside and a stream flows alongside the road to the south before eventually cutting through some woods. As they're looking over the map a couple guards brings in food and drink for the PCs. Cole sits back in his chair and awaits further questions. Cole informs the PCs they will be given provisions and then let out via a secret passageway once night falls. The next morning he will relay a message that the PCs successfully escaped after overpowering the guards. The PCs have three hours before nightfall when they will be guided towards the underground passage.

DEPARTURE

The passage leads under a small cobbled courtyard and beyond the walls of the town. The exit is a carefully concealed hatch camouflaged by undergrowth and bracken. The night is clear and has an early hint of winter in the air. Frost covers the grass and sparkles under the light of a bright crescent moon. Somewhere in the distance, a wolf howls. The path the PCs are to use is visible. The undergrowth provides some cover but there is open space along the road.

Do not worry about the PCs being spotted by guards or patrols in the town. It's not a fortified town and is more like a large village. The PCs can get to the road in a matter of minutes and once the town has disappeared from sight, the risk of random encounters increases. With the world being what it is, undead roam freely day and night.

Roll a d6 every few minutes, with a 1 resulting in an Encounter (see the Random Encounter Table Below). Have the PCs make Notice rolls to build tension and play on their paranoia; maybe they'll hear the howling again. Make the PCs aware that every sound along the path is amplified thanks to the stillness of the night. Explain how the bright moon light may make them feel overly exposed, thus forcing them into cover and away from the sounds of the night.

Random Encounters Table

Roll a d10 to determine what the PCs encounter.

1-2	Skeletons: 2 per PC
3-4	Wolves: 1 per PC
5-6	Stalkers: 2 per PC
7-8	Gypsy Music
9-10	Zombies: 1 per PC

Provided the PCs survive all applicable encounters, they arrive at the dwarven shrine.

Pack of Wolves

Remember those howls? These wolves may be spotted moving alongside the road on a successful Notice roll. They do not engage the PCs unless provoked, but come close to any campsite for scraps of food. A fight is not necessary; especially if the PCs spot the wolves and leave scraps of food to keep them at bay.

Gypsy Music

Music can be heard coming from a nearby clearing. Gypsies have set up camp and offering the PCs a chance to relax and enjoy some decent food and drink. The gypsy camp can be used to sow seeds for later adventures.

The Shrine

The entrance to the shrine is partially obscured by undergrowth. The doors are fashioned from stone and covered

by moss and lichen. A faded holy symbol, hardly discernible, adorns the center of the door. A strange feeling hangs in the air, as if something ancient and powerful lingers within.

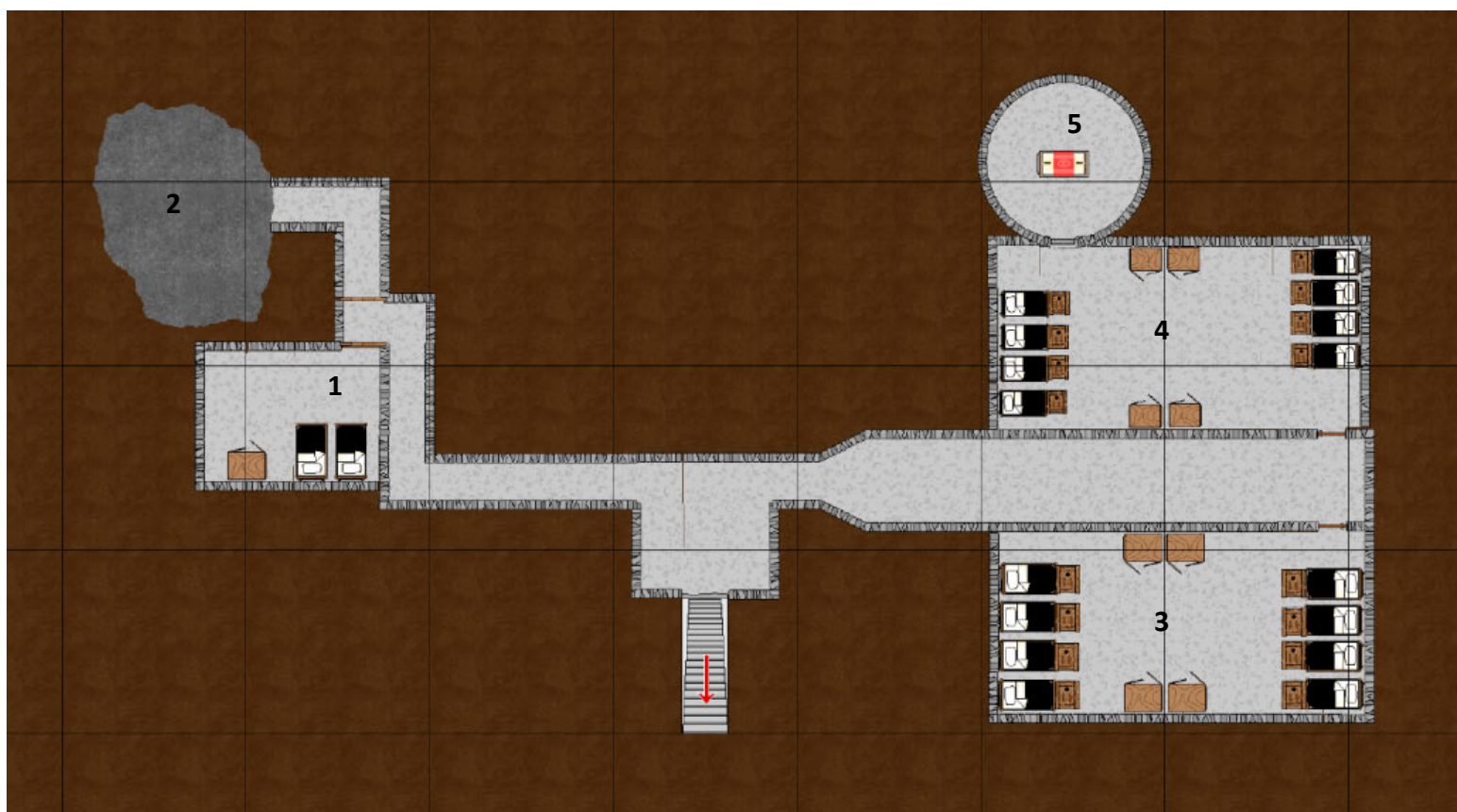
Two large handles are fastened to the door; both are required to turn at the same time to open the door. A cooperative Strength roll is required to push the doors open to gain access to the shrine. As the doors open, a blast of stale air, bearing a musty odor, washes over everyone carrying the sound of a mournful moan. The interior is dark, but as the doors open, crystals set in the walls at regular intervals begin to glow like candles.

A crystal can be pried from the wall and provides illumination in a Small Burst Template, but it's subtle enough to not blind someone with dark sight. Once removed from the shrine, they still function as a glow stone, but only for a limited time; roll a d6, and halve the result for duration in days. The crystals have no monetary value. To recharge them once removed from the shrine, the crystals must be kept in direct light, either from the moon or the sun, for 12 hours.

GOING UNDERGROUND

Once the doors are opened, the PCs find a narrow flight of steps descending into the gloom. They descend twenty feet and end at another stone door. This is a plain stone affair with no visible handle. A Notice or Smarts roll reveals, after examining the door, reveal that the door opens by applying pressure to the edge of the door. It opens by pivoting on a central point like a secret door disguised as a bookshelf.

Beyond the door, a twelve-foot wide passage is revealed. It



ends at a T intersection with the passages lead to the east and west. This is not a sprawling labyrinth, but presents enough challenges for a short adventure.

Western Corridor

After eighteen feet, the passage to the west turns sharply to the right. As the PCs enter this passage, it gets darker and a successful Notice roll detects a distant rustling sound. Additionally, two doors are visible, directly opposite each other; one on the north wall and one on the south wall.

1. Bed Chamber

The south door is slightly ajar and a musky odor emanates from within. This appears to have been a bed chamber with two moldy beds lying beside each other against the far wall. A rotting wardrobe occupies the west wall. The sheets and mattresses are covered in dust and filth. Two skeletal forms rest in the beds.

If the PCs look under the beds, they find a small personal trunk that belonged to one of the two deceased dwarves. The lock is rusty, but can be picked with a Lockpicking roll. Inside are various papers and a silver ring; a Common Knowledge roll appraises it at 5 gold. The papers have nothing of importance written on them.

In the wardrobe are decaying clothes. At least that's what one of the items looks like. A shroud, a predatory beast from the chaos realm, has got inside this tomb and is disguised itself as an article of decaying clothing. It attempts to leap and wrap itself around the body of anyone who disturbs it. Have any characters searching the wardrobe make a Notice roll vs the shroud's Stealth. If they fail, the Shroud gets the Drop on the character.

➤ **Shroud**

Party members can attack the shroud as normal. Once it has taken three Wounds, it attempts to flee back to the cover of darkness and await its next victim. Once the shroud is either killed or driven off, the wardrobe may be searched. At the bottom of the wardrobe is a pair of dwarven studded leather gauntlets.

➤ **Dwarven Studded Leather Gauntlets:** +1 to unarmed damage rolls.

2. Excavation Room

The north door opens into a filthy passageway as the scent of decay hangs heavily in the air. Bits of bone, rag, and other unsavory detritus litter the floor. PCs must make a Guts check to search through this fetid mess. A successful Notice roll allows the PCs to find a small leather scroll case. The passageway has a bend to the left.

As the PCs round the bend, they see light coming from crystals similar to those in the entrance. These crystals are much larger than those from before and cannot be removed from the walls. They illuminate a roughly hewn chamber that lacks the quality and high standards of dwarven excavations. There are signs

that work was started but came to an abrupt end.

A ten-foot long slab of stone rests in the middle of this chamber and at either end stands a candlestick. The candlesticks are five-feet high and the stubs of two blood-red candles are still visible. The air is oppressive. The slab is draped in a rotting black cloth with a large metal bowl lying upon it, stained with either rust or dried blood. Anyone making a Common Knowledge roll determines this room may be the site of an infernal ritual.

A loud rustling noise can be heard from above the PCs. If they look up, the PCs find a flock of blood-red eyed bats.

➤ **Vampire Bats:** Two swarms

There is a flock of vampire bats residing on the ceiling. They are, like the shroud, blood drinkers. They gained access to the chamber through a concealed air shaft that leads to the surface. They attack by biting and scratching their victims. Although they don't do much damage, and attempt to flee upon becoming Shaken, each time a victim is bitten, they gain +1 levels of Fatigue. Should anyone become Incapacitated, the bats descend as one onto the victim and it's up to the rest of the PCs to effect a rescue.

Once the fight is over, the PCs may pause for breath and on a successful Notice roll find thick black veins of ore running through the rock. The ore has an oily sheen when reflecting light. This is the cold iron ore the PCs are looking for. There is a limited supply, but it might be enough for Lord Cole to make a weapon.

Eastern Corridor

The eastern corridor is a high-ceilinged passageway wide enough for two people to walk side-by-side. It ends some twenty feet away in an apparent dead end. Motes of dust dance in the PCs' light, and a mournful moan can be heard in the air. Have the PCs make a Guts roll.

This passage has two doors opposite one another. One door is set in the southern wall while the other is set in the northern wall.

3. Human Bedroom

This door is stiff but offers little resistance to being opened. Inside are the rotting remains of several beds (eight in all, four aligned along the left and right hand walls), and it's clear that these beds are not made for dwarves. The door is roughly sixteen feet square.

The sheets and mattresses are filthy and dust lies undisturbed on the floor. There is furniture in here, a cupboard, and a box at the end of each bed. The boxes are not locked and contain well-preserved, pale blue robes and leather sandals. One to four silver coins lie underneath these items. Nothing else can be found in the boxes or underneath the beds. The cupboard is bare.

4. Dwarven Bedroom

Like the first room, this room has beds lined along the right and left hand walls, but these are smaller and are clearly suitable for

If the PCs can find someone learned in archaic dwarven languages (or if one of the PCs are), they can discern the following from the book:

“.....Cordswain is adamant that we proceed with the ceremony. I cannot see how we can deny him, but the order fills me with dread. He insists he has a vision of calamity befalling us and we must be prepared to defend our home and our beliefs; to the death if needs be. That I can understand, but what I do not understand is that the vow, in his words, should be strong enough to bind us even after we have drawn our final breath.”

After being read, book crumbles to dust.

dwarves to sleep in rather than humans. The room is the same size as the human quarters. The furnishings are the same as the other room, and again the air is musty and the blankets and mattresses are filthy. Boxes lie at the foot of the beds that contain well-preserved, pale blue robes and sandals. At the bottom of four of the boxes lies d4+1 copper coins. One also has a ceremonial knife in a sheath (treat as a normal dagger).

The cupboard is empty and there is nothing else to be found except a small, red leather bound book. The script is written in dwarven but the lettering has faded over time and is difficult to read. (It's also in an archaic dwarven language.)

An echo of the mournful wail can be heard again and if one of the PCs knows the archaic dwarven language, they recognize the wail as a single phrase: “Beyond the veil we stand.”

There are no other doors visible in this corridor.

5. Secret Room

Logic should dictate that there has to be another room, otherwise where would the ceremonies be performed? A Smarts roll leads on that there must be a concealed or secret door. A Notice roll with a (-1) penalty shows the PCs that the brickwork isn't quite right, and on closer inspection the edges of the door can be made out. Knocking on the wall also reveals the location of the door, due to the sudden change in tone as the PCs tap the stonework.

I Hear You Knocking

Was that an echo or did something tap in response? This could be an option for the GM to use to further unsettle the PCs. They may try to engage in conversation with whoever knocked back, and indeed ask to open the door. The silence that follows the initial contact is deafening.

The following occurs when the door is opened:

1: Open Sesame

The door's mechanism may be old and a little time worn, but it still works. A Cooperative Strength roll by at least two individuals gets the door moving, but very slowly. As it moves inwards, a gust of icy cold wind extinguishes all candles and

exposed lanterns. (If it's a bullseye or hooded lantern, the flame flutters and seems to be on the brink of extinguishing, but could stay lit.)

Anyone with Low Light Vision sees that something is moving in the darkness ahead.

2: We Can't Say You Weren't Warned

The PCs should now consider what to do before crossing the threshold. They could be in near pitch darkness (if they have a glow stone or two, ignore the darkness) and there seems to be something moving. If nobody has Low Light Vision, have the PCs make a Notice roll. They hear the shuffling of what sounds like feet along with a soft, unpleasant moaning. The smell of dampness and decay wafts over them; the moaning increases in intensity: “Beyond the veil we stand!” The PCs are not met with opposition or defiance UNTIL they cross the threshold.

3: Well We've Come This Far

The PCs may accurately surmise that this is the final obstacle. Once they have made up their mind to commit to crossing the threshold, events continue.

A single word is spoken, again in archaic dwarven. The word is “Light!” which overwhelms the PCs for the first round of battle. (Use the *obscure* spell, but the effects last for only the first round of combat.) The room is suddenly filled with light that emanates from a bluish white orb held aloft in the hands of an animated skeletal creature standing near what used to be an altar. The orb of light rises towards the ceiling and illuminates a horrible tableau.

By this light, the PCs can see they are now in what was once an ornately decorated ceremonial chamber. It's circular and roughly thirty feet in diameter. Tapestries line the walls, but are now faded and torn. The altar is fashioned out of white marble with two golden bowls lying upon it alongside two ornate, but slightly tarnished, silver candlesticks. The figure holding the light is humanoid and stands head and shoulders above the other shambling, moldering, animated dead that now attack the PCs with daggers and staves.

- **Cordswain, Zombie Lord**
- **Dwarf Zombies:** One per PC

It is unlikely that Cordswain uses magic unless he feels outnumbered or under considerable threat. Cordswain is quite content to sit out the first two rounds of combat, issuing orders to his dwarven troops. He engages any PC that comes close in hand-to-hand combat. He is armed with a mace that seems to have a strange oily sheen to it in the light provided by the orb above. The mace is the object that Cole wanted the PCs to find. If the encounter appears too easy, Cordswain can make additional dwarf zombies using his *zombie* power (corpses can be found virtually anywhere).

Once defeated all the dwarf zombies and Cordswain rot away, filling the air with a foul stench. Vigor rolls are required to avoid gagging and retching. A Common Knowledge roll identifies the mace for what it is and that they should grab it now.

Did the Earth Move For You?

Once the undead have rotted away, the mace falls to the floor. Softly at first, and then a little more vigorously, the whole place begins to shake as if being hit by an earthquake. The PCs have to get out before the shrine comes down around them, threatening to bury them alive. Have the PCs make Agility rolls every 2 minutes or so to avoid the debris. Gently enforce the idea that hanging around is NOT going to be good for their health. The PCs should make it out in one piece and make the journey back to Cole with the cold iron mace.

CONCLUSION

Liam Cole receives the mace and arranges for his assistant to pay the PCs the agreed upon sum. Cole has already stated that it's his mission to kill the lich is his responsibility, so the PCs will not be required to invade the lair. However, if they feel at a loose end, perhaps Cole has a plan for the PCs to cause a distraction nearby to draw away some of Darklock's mercenary forces from the house making his task easier. It's up to you, but Liam could make a useful contact for the PCs and indeed plant the seeds for future endeavors (should he survive).



TROUBLESHOOTING

If the PCs fail to find the secret door or simply ignore the secret room, the dwarven zombies and Cordswain are alerted to the presence of intruders and burst through the secret door to attack. This can be done either as the PCs are in that room or as they are attempting to leave.

NPC STATS



LIAM COLE

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

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Riding d8, Survival d8, Shooting d6

Armor: Chain Hauberk (All +2)

Weapons: Dagger (Str+d4), Short Sword (Str+d6)

Edges: Quick, Quickdraw

Hindrances: Heroic

PRISON GUARDS

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

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4, Riding d6

Armor: Leather (Torso +1)

Weapons: Short Sword (Str+d6)

SKELETONS (USE THE STATS FROM THE SAVAGE WORLDS CORE RULEBOOK)

WOLVES (USE THE STATS FROM THE SAVAGE WORLDS CORE RULEBOOK)

ZOMBIES (USE THE STATS FROM THE SAVAGE WORLDS CORE RULEBOOK)

STALKER (USE THE STATS FROM THE ANCIENT WORLD CORE SETTING GUIDE)



SHROUD

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

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d10

Armor: None

Weapons: None

Special Abilities:

- **Camouflage:** Shrouds are patient hunters and have learned how to disguise themselves as drapes, cloaks, and other types of clothing or fabric. If not actively moving, shrouds gain a +2 bonus to opposed Stealth rolls.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Unnatural Speed:** Shrouds move so quickly that their target's Parry incurs a (-1) penalty.
- **Vampiric:** Shrouds do not require normal food, but are instead blood drinkers. They wait until someone disturbs them before leaping upon their victim. The

shroud attempts to envelope its victim as a standard Fighting roll. If successful, the victim is considered to be enveloped and regular grapple rules apply on subsequent rounds. Each additional round a victim remains grappled, the shroud drinks their blood and the victim gains +1 level of Fatigue.

DWARF ZOMBIES

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

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8

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

Armor: None

Weapons: Dagger (3/6/12, Str+d4), Stave (Str+d4; Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 Hands)

Special Abilities:

- **Fear:** These dwarf zombies are heavily decomposed.
- **Fearless:** Immune to fear and intimidation
- **Undead:** +2 toughness; +2 to recover from being shaken; Called shots do no extra damage (except to the head)
- **Weakness (Head):** Shots to a zombie's head are +2 damage.



CORDSWAIN, ZOMBIE LORD

This once human priest is now commander of this army of undead dwarves.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Invocation d10, Knowledge (Chaos) d8, Notice d8

Armor: Bone (All +1)

Weapons: Cold Iron Mace (Str+d6; AP 1 vs Rigid Armour, +2 damage versus Undead)

Special Abilities:

- **Fear -1:** Cordswain is a horrific lord of the dwarven zombies.
- **Sorcerer:** Cordswain is a sorcerer with the ability to

tap into the undead powers of the chaos realm. He has 30 power points and knows the *havoc* and *zombie* powers. Any zombies the lord creates are permanent.

- **Stench of Death:** Cordswain reeks of death. The first time a PC gets within 3" of Cordswain, he must make a Vigor roll or become Shaken. Whether he succeeds or not, he becomes immune to the stench for 24 hours.
- **Undead:** +2 toughness; +2 to recover from being shaken; Called shots do no extra damage (except to the head)
- **Weakness (Head):** Shots to a zombie's head are +2 damage.

VAMPIRE BATS

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

Pace: 1; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Notice d8

Armor: None

Weapons: Bite (2d4)

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Vampire bats swarm their victims and inflict numerous tiny bites every round, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in Medium Burst Template. Damage is applied to the least armored location.
- **Bloodletting:** Each time a victim is Wounded (not just Shaken) by a vampire bats' bite, the bats drain some of the victims blood as they gain +1 levels of Fatigue in addition to normal damage.
- **Swarm:** Parry +2; Because the swarm is composed of dozens of smaller creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area-effect weapons work normally, and a character can flail his hands, shields, or gear and cause damage equal to his Strength each round.



Ritual Room

Deep in the woods lays a simple cabin. On the outside it appears ordinary. However, inside the house is another story.

The house is now the base for the followers of the Cult of the Smoking Soul. The cultists found the house several years ago and decided it was quite fitting, with its private cellar and reclusive location. There were no other dwellings for miles around; so there would be no one to hear the sounds from within the small house, and no one to suspect that the work of demons lies within the otherwise ordinary walls.

The Cult of the Smoking Soul came upon this cabin while searching the woods for a quiet place to perform their ritual. They had acquired an ancient tome that told of a great power, should someone recite its intricate incantation, but the ritual couldn't be properly performed if any interruptions occurred. Only the greatest concentration could manifest the demons of the abyss, and once the demon is manifested, its master must again focus all of his will to control it and harness the ultimate power of the dark.

The lone house within the woods made the absolute ideal location for their ritual, and to accommodate it, the cult dug out the cellar floor to create a stone ritual room underneath. The stone floor is ideal for painting the ritual circle, providing a conduit through which the demon will travel. Statues were brought in to better harness the power of the abyss, enhance the rituals' power and aid the adept in his efforts to control the demon. The ritual is scheduled to occur on the night of the next new moon, when abyssal signatures are strongest.

The Lone House

The lone house is a single-floor shack deep in the woods. It was used many years ago by a family that preferred the quiet surroundings of the forest and nearby bogs. The descendants of the family abandoned the house ten years ago due to its extreme remoteness and lack of use.

There is a single door leading into the house, onto the main floor. The main floor contains a single wall dividing the bedroom from the rest of the house. The main door opens into the house's living room with a kitchen and dining room attached directly on the right side. To the left is a door leading into the bedroom.

Along the wall of the kitchen is a door that leads into the cellar, used for storing food and wood. The floor of the cellar has been opened to make additional space below. A large ritual circle has been painted into the center of the stone-tiled floor and statues adorn its perimeter. Ladders placed on both sides of the opening allow access to and from the ritual room.

Ritual Night

The house is empty until the night of the new moon, when the ritual is to be performed. The entire cult has gathered to witness the ritual with their adept leading the summoning. Scattered about the cellar and the ritual room are a group of cultists all chanting in rhythm to the Adept's Incantation. After 3 rounds, a demon appears in the center of the ritual circle (the first round begins when the PCs enter the cabin). The adept is able to control the demon with his knowledge of demons and the occult.

Scaling the Encounter

This encounter is designed for 4-6 characters of any level. At Novice-level, there are two cultists per PC, one adept, and one demon. At each increase to the PC level, add an additional cultist per PC (thus at Seasoned-level, there are three cultists per PC, one adept, and one demon). If the adept is killed, the demon will continue whatever order it was given last.



SMOKING SOUL CULTIST

Smoking Soul is a small cult that wishes to draw power from the abyss by summoning a demon and using it as a conduit to the abyss.

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

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Knowledge (Demons) d4, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Notice d6, Taunt d6, Throwing d6

Armor: None

Weapons: Dagger (Str+d4, 3/6/12)

Special Abilities:

- **Danger Sense:** The cultist's paranoia has given them an interesting ability to sense danger.



SMOKING SOUL ADEPT

The Adept performs the Summoning.

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

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Knowledge (Demons) d8, Knowledge (Occult) d10, Notice d8, Taunt d6, Throwing d6

Armor: None

Weapons: Dagger (Str+d4, 3/6/12)

Special Abilities:

- **Beast Bond:** The adept can give commands to the summoned demon.
- **Danger Sense:** The cultist's paranoia has given them an interesting ability to sense danger.



SUMMONED DEMON

The summoned demon is under the control of the adept.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8

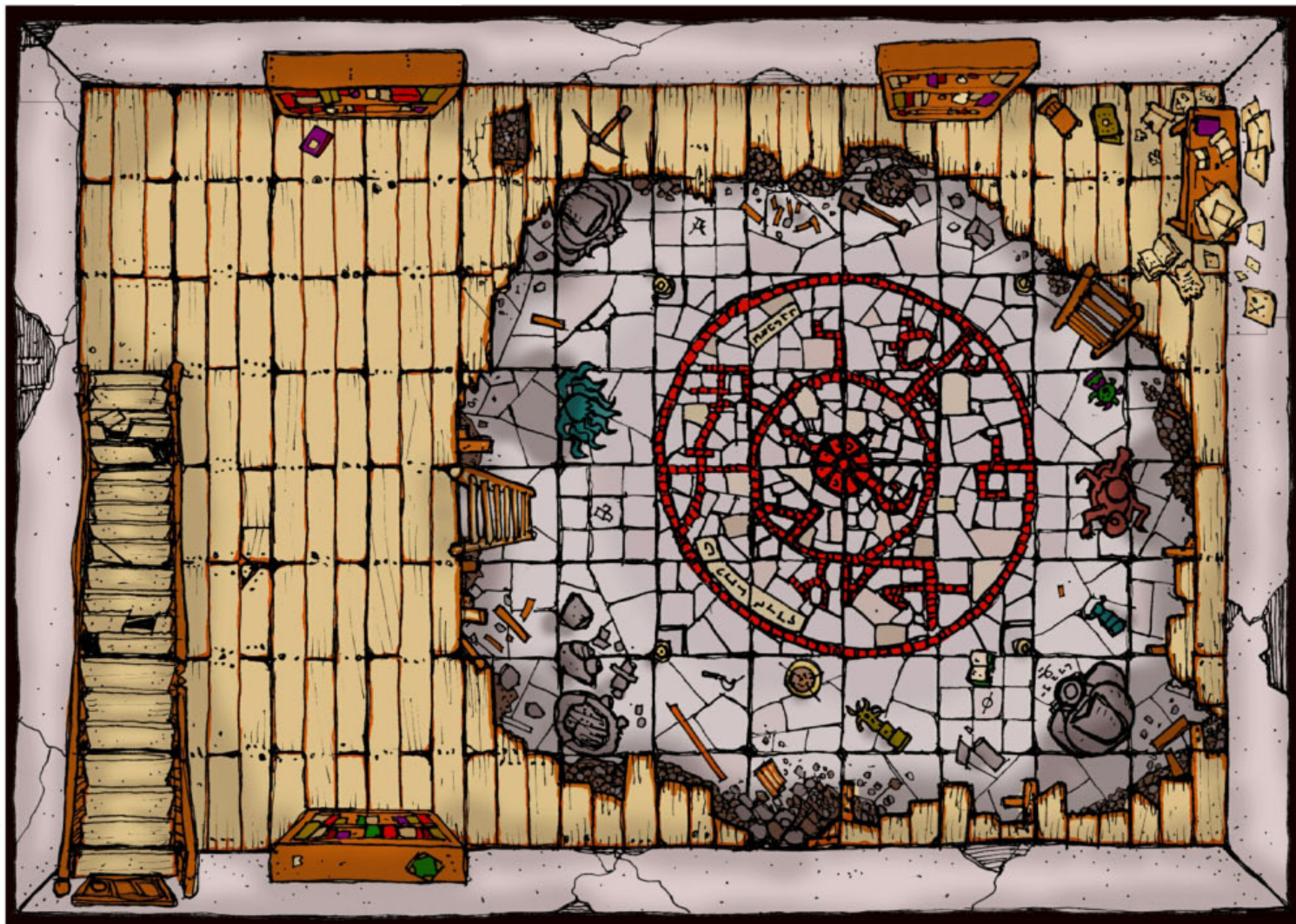
Armor: Thick Skin (All 2)

Weapons: Claws (Str+d6)

Special Abilities:

- **Demon:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; Immune to poison and disease; Half-damage from non-magical attacks.
- **Fear -2:** Demons are frightening creatures to see.
- **Size +2:** Summoned demons are quite large

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Dhampir

There are few races more mysterious than the Dhampir. Born of the blasphemous union of a vampire and a human, a Dhampir is a half-breed; a combination of the best and worst of both lineages. Typically, Dhampirs are the creation of a lustful vampire who finds a human woman sexually desirable; whether that woman be a trusting significant other or unwilling slave is of little recourse to the Dhampir.

The union of a female vampire and male human is a much rarer occurrence; surely such a union would result in the human being drained of life and soul before the wicked child is ever born.

A more likely situation lies in the life of the male vampire. Before becoming an undead being, the vampire may have had a wife. Early in his immortal life, the vampire returned to his home, still attracted to the woman and the life they once had. Wishing to continue his own lineage, regardless of how supernatural it is, the vampire impregnates his wife and flees, never to return.

A Dhampir child is born ignorant to their otherworldly abilities, as they have a strong connection to their human mothers and no interactions with their vampire fathers. Devoid of the horrific downfalls of being a vampire, the Dhampir is able to grow up rather normally, albeit with a pale complexion and a strong desire for red meat.

Upon reaching puberty, the Dhampir child begins to notice a difference between himself and the children he has called friends for many years. His dark black hair seems untamable and he lacks

a shadow. In his youth, the Dhampir didn't notice these types of things, but now that he's come of age, he begins to question his lineage.

Vampiric Lineage

Dhampirs are half vampire and carry many of their lineage's traits. Unlike full vampires, some of these traits do not manifest themselves in the same way; providing alterations to strengths and weaknesses.

Due to the mutation of the vampiric lineage, most Dhampirs don't realize their vampiric traits unless being raised by the vampire parent. Upon reaching the age of adulthood, the Dhampir becomes more aware of the differences in themselves versus their peers, while other bodily changes occur, bringing the vampiric lineage to their attention. Whether they embrace these traits as a gift or curse is often dependent upon whom they were raised by.

CHANGE FORM

Unlike full vampires, Dhampirs cannot shape-shift into a wolf or bat or turn into mist. The human side of them lacks this ability and becomes the dominate characteristic.

CHARM

Like full vampire, Dhampirs have an uncanny ability to charm the opposite sex. Instead of manifesting itself as the *puppet* power, this ability translates into a bonus to Persuasion.

CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT

Dhampirs retain the ability to summon and control wolves, but not rats. The



natural hunting abilities of the wolves correspond to the natural desires of the Dhampirs while the infestation desire of rats doesn't.

INVULNERABILITY

Dhampirs are able to be wounded through normal means; however they don't catch fire in the sun, are not affected by holy symbols or water, and can enter a private dwelling without being invited.

SUNLIGHT SENSITIVITY

Dhampirs do not die when hit by the rays of the sun. Instead, they have an extreme sensitivity to it that affects their vision without doing any permanent damage. As such, most Dhampirs prefer to live in dark areas or sleep during the day.

GREAT STRENGTH

Dhampirs have retained the supernatural strength and stamina given to them by their vampiric lineage. This has proven to be a great boon for Dhampirs who've become vampire hunters.

BLOODLUST

Dhampirs are still vampires and to sustain their immortal status, they must

drink blood to survive. Unlike vampires, Dhampirs do not need to drink the blood of humans to survive. Raw red meat or pig's blood act as sustenance to the Dhampir in the same fashion human blood does to the vampire.

ANTI-AGING

Vampires stop aging at the point of becoming a vampire and gaining immortality. Dhampirs are immortal upon birth, but their bodies must grow to a certain age. All Dhampirs stop aging after reaching the age of 25 when the body stops developing. Those who know a Dhampir's real age are typically frightened by the sight of one who appears to have stopped aging so many years before.

Motivations

A Dhampir's motivations in life are highly dependent upon who raised them and what type of external influences they had while growing up. Dhampirs that choose the life of an adventurer, warrior, or mercenary use their motivations as the driving force behind what type of path they choose.

Raised by Humans

Dhampirs who are raised by humans grow up thinking they too are humans with differences in their complexion. Upon learning of their true heritage, they either embrace the gift they have been given or lash out against the curse they received. Those who embrace the gift often become champions of the god or goddess they were raised to worship, knowing they have a natural ability to stand against the denizens of the night. Those who lash out against the curse become vampire hunters, vowing to track down every vampire they can, searching for the man that cursed them with such blasphemous abilities.

Raised by Vampires

Dhampirs who are raised by vampires are ingrained with hatred towards living

beings from a young age. They rise up to be leaders of vampire clans due to their natural resistance toward the sunlight whereas full vampires burn and become ash. Many of these clan leaders turn to sorcery to augment their abilities, becoming deadly necromancers vowing to enslave the world.

Abandoned at Birth

As a half-breed, some Dhampirs are abandoned by both parents and left to a family or church that knows nothing of the child's lineage. Abandoned Dhampirs rarely learn the truth of their heritage and grow to be great fighters, using their strength to strike fear into the enemies of those who raised them.

Dhampir Society

A fourth possibility remains that there is an entire society (or even planet) filled with Dhampirs. They act as a race of their own with individual motivations widely ranging between good and evil. This Dhampir society would be filled with all types of men and women who embrace their heritage and use it to its full potential.

CHARACTERS

On the surface, it may seem that Dhampir player characters have an advantage over other races. In certain situations, this may be true, but most advantages are balanced by a disadvantage. Use of the Dhampir race for player characters is at the discretion of the Game Master.

Racial Template

Bloodlust: Dhampirs must sustain their life by consuming blood or raw red meat once every 72 hours. For every 24 hours past the initial 72, the gain a level of Fatigue until they are Incapacitated; the day after that they perish.

Charm: Individuals of the opposite sex have a natural attraction toward the

Dhampirs. This alluring ability was inherited, in part, by their vampire ancestors. Gain a +2 bonus to all Persuasion rolls against the opposite sex.

Children of the Night: Dhampirs have the ability to summon and control wolves. This requires an action and a Smarts roll at (-2). If successful, 1d4 wolves come from the surrounding wilds in 1d6+2 rounds.

Great Strength: Dhampirs vampiric lineage provides additional strength from birth. Gain +1 die type to Strength.

Hunted: Choose a race or major society. The chosen group knows of the Dhampir's vampiric lineage and stops at nothing to hunt and kill him.

Low Light Vision: Dhampirs ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.



RACIAL PROFILING

Sunlight Sensitivity: Dhampirs do not burn in direct sunlight, but it does have a detrimental effect on their vision. When exposed to direct sunlight, Dhampirs receive a (-2) penalty to all attack rolls and sight-based Notice rolls. When exposed to extreme direct sunlight (such as a desert), that penalty increases to (-4).

Undead: +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no extra damage. No wound penalties.

Weakness (Healing): Dhampirs are undead and cannot be healed through magical means. If they are the recipient of the *healing* or *greater healing* spell, instead of removing wounds they take

additional wounds. Dhampirs may only heal naturally.

Fantasy Characters

Dhampirs fit quite naturally in fantasy settings as adventurers seeking to overcome their vampiric heritage or reclaim their family's name. They hold their vampiric desires at bay and support their fellow adventurers through strength and vitality.

As one that carries the vampire lineage, Dhampirs are often hunted simply because of their existence. Many mistake them for malevolent beings or associate them with the mass-murdering vampires they loathe. A Dhampir in a fantasy

setting may spend much of his time hiding from the hunters.

Sci-Fi Characters

With so many populated planets, there is bound to be one out there inhabited by vampiric races including the Dhampir. It could be a planet once inhabited by humans or human-like beings in addition to their vampire neighbors. Being unable to resist their sexual desires, the two races were bound to unite and form a new race, the Dhampir.

The native Dhampirs are unlike their fantasy counterparts and have adapted to a life living amongst their own kind. They do not hunt humans, but rather find sustenance only in animals. They see their abilities as naturally occurring and welcome outsiders, choosing diplomacy over violence. They become an integral part of a galactic society, mingling with a mixture of races possibly comparable to their own.

Modern Characters

Many modern settings view vampirism as a disease rather than a state of being. Those who are infected transform into the hated undead, stalking the living and simply trying to survive. Those who resist the transformation or are a product of a mother who has been infected may instead turn into a Dhampir or half-vampire. Instead of being treated like blood-sucking, soulless beings, they are accepted into society as champions of their kind and hunters of those who carry the disease.

Horror Characters

Vampires and Dhampirs have a natural home within horror settings. Both races could survive side-by-side or live as eternal enemies. Vampires are typically assigned the role of evil while Dhampirs could take the place of victims surviving the continued attacks of the undead.



Alternatively, the vampires could be the hunters while the Dhampirs are the hated species that forces its will upon a race that is vulnerable to that which the Dhampir is not (such as sunlight and holy water). The Dhampirs could enslave the vampires, using their weaknesses as powerful tools against them.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Dhampirs can make very powerful NPCs as they lack some of the weaknesses that regular vampires possess. However, they can be wounded with traditional means and thus have a new weakness to exploit.

Due to their sensitivity to sunlight, many Dhampir NPCs live in areas where the sun shines less often, in remote areas where they can remain safe during the day, or become more active once night arrives.

Elmeri Outila

Elmeri Outila was born to an unwed mother named Laila. Barely 20 years old, Laila was kidnapped by Otho Varus, a wicked vampire who loved to torment and enslave the humans in nearby villages. Laila soon became the victim of multi

ple rapes and was made to perform humiliating acts for her master. During the course of one of these rapes, Laila was impregnated by the vampire.

Several days after the impregnation, Otho's mansion was attacked by a band of vampire hunters. The vampire lay dead at the hands of his assailants and the few slaves that still lived were freed. Laila returned to her home village of Takar, ignorant to the fact that a half-breed baby was forming in her womb.

Three weeks later, Laila realized her predicament and calculated that the only possible father was the vampire who raped her. Fearing the repercussions of a half-vampiric child in a village with a known vampire hunter, Laila fled to the seaside city of Lathos where no one knew of her enslavement.

After reaching full term, Laila gave birth to a healthy baby boy who she named Elmeri. Those in the city who inquired of the whereabouts of Elmeri's father were told an extravagant tale of a brave warrior who fought many battles, only to fight his last battle merely weeks after conceiving his son. The townsfolk embraced Laila and Elmeri and vowed to assist her in raising the child as her story had fallen upon empathetic ears.

Years passed and Elmeri stood out from the other children. He looked like a human, but his strength and vitality seemed to overcome that which other children could not. This was an easy oversight while his sensitivity to light was not. Laila could not handle the pain it caused Elmeri to see the sunlight and wished to leave the coastal city for one in the deep forest.

Laila saw an opportunity after meeting a well-known warrior named Kadal the Proud at the local inn. She



ELMERI OUTILA

Elmeri is a fierce Dhampir vampire hunter.

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

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8 (1); **Toughness:** 9 (1)

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Persuasion d8, Streetwise d8

Racial Traits: Bloodlust, Charm, Children of the Night, Great Strength, Hunted (Humans), Low Light Vision, Sunlight Sensitivity, Undead, Weakness (Healing)

Armor: Leather Armor (Torso, arms, and legs +1), Medium Shield (+1 Parry, +2 armor vs. ranged)

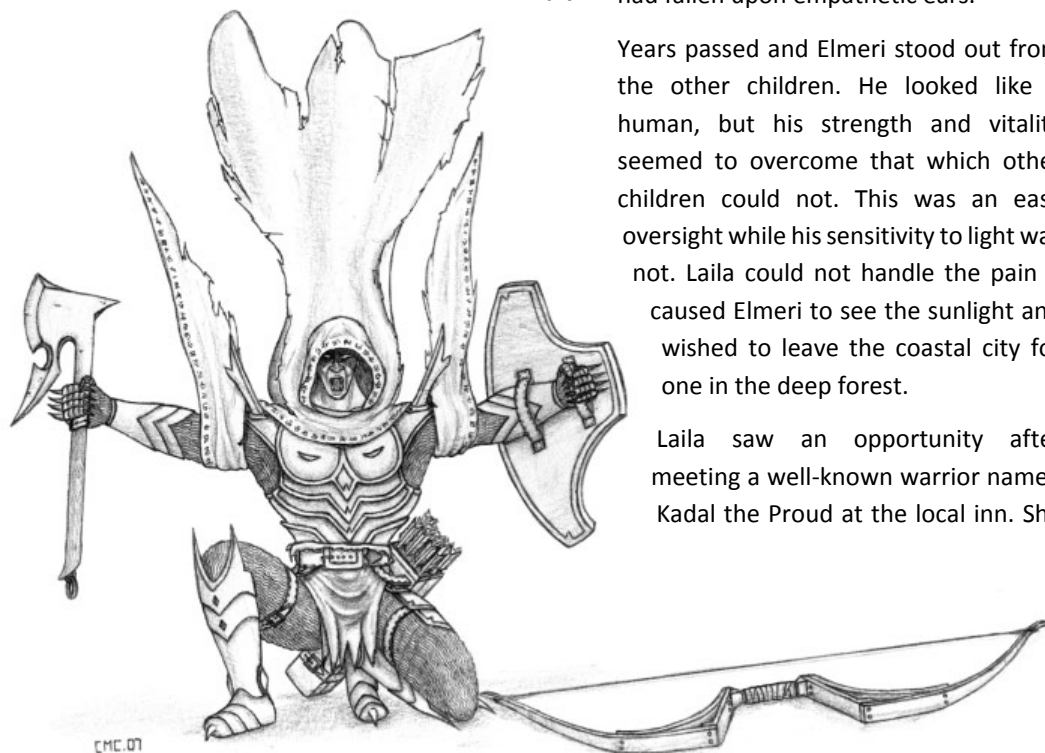
Weapons: Battle Axe (Str+d8), Long Bow (12/24/48, 2d6)

seduced Kadal and he quickly found lust in her eyes. Laila left with Elmeri to live as Kadal's concubine in his grand estate outside of the village Nalar, deep in the forest.

Elmeri was able to live a much more comfortable life, as the deep forest provided ample shade from the sunlight, freeing him from the vision problems he was having. Kadal saw great strength in the youthful Elmeri and raised him as his own son.

Kadal taught and trained Elmeri how to be a great hunter and warrior. Upon reaching the age of 16, Elmeri wished to leave Nalar and adventure alongside Kadal. Not wishing to hold secrets any longer from her son, Laila told Elmeri the truth about his biological father.

Anger burned in Elmeri's eyes as he listened to the tale of the vampire who raped his mother, producing a blasphemous Dhampir offspring. Wishing to avenge his mother's pain and suffering, he became a vampire hunter, scouring the land to rid the world of this supernatural evil.



Remy Guidry

New Orleans is known for its high concentration of vampires and Dhampirs. Dhampirs are the offspring of the malevolent vampires whose mothers are killed immediately after birth. While most vampires prefer to grow their bloodline with subservient vampire slaves and minions, those in New Orleans are growing a force of half-breeds that can withstand the sunlight. Vampires may rule the night, but Dhampirs rule the day.

The vampires and their Dhampir kin are locked in a never-ending battle with the human vampire hunters and their highly trained dire wolves. While allied together, the vampires and Dhampirs operate separately within clans. The most widely known Dhampir clan is the Guidry Clan headed by Remy Guidry.

Referring to himself as the Sun God, Remy leads a clan of twenty Dhampir against the vampire hunters. While avoiding the peak hours of sunlight, the Guidry Clan terrorizes the streets of New Orleans and surrounding cities after dawn and before dusk. Once the sun has set for the night, they return to their favorite locales to party the night away while their vampire allies take care of those foolish enough to venture out at night.

Being a large city, many residents of New Orleans never see one of the Dhampir or vampire clans. Those unlucky enough to come face-to-face with one of the Guidry Clan can expect to be beaten and drained. Fortunately for the victims, Dhampirs don't procreate through means of biting their victims and turning them into vampires. The only means they have to continue their race is to acquire a new member from a vampire producing a new half-breed or by procreation between clan members. The clan grows at an extremely slow pace, but with immortality comes great patience.

Dhampirs typically feed upon their victims for sustenance, but rarely do they kill the victim. They prefer to enslave the victim, set them free for another attack in subsequent years, or play with them as though they are a dog's chew toy. Dhampirs play with their victims through violent means such as driving past on their motorcycles and clubbing them or chasing them from the shadows, forcing the victim to panic and run.

Dhampirs in New Orleans, especially the Guidry Clan, are raised to be very malevolent and have a natural, burning hatred toward humans. They are taught that humans are inferior and should be treated as such, compared to their superior strength and abilities. While they combat the vampire-hunting



REMY GUIDRY

Remy is the leader of the Guidry Clan of Dhampirs.

Attr: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Persuasion d8, Streetwise d10, Taunt d8

Racial Traits: Bloodlust, Charm, Children of the Night, Great Strength, Hunted (Humans), Low Light Vision, Sunlight Sensitivity, Undead, Weakness (Healing)

Armor: None

Weapons: Club (Str+d4), S&W [.44](12/24/48, 2d6+1, RoF: 1, Shots: 6, AP 1, Revolver)





humans regularly, they secretly fear their uncanny ability to track and kill the vampires and Dhampirs. Unbeknownst to anyone outside of the vampire hunters, these humans are part of a society that has existed for hundreds of years and has intimate knowledge of how to eliminate the vampire and Dhampir threat.

SAVAGE TALE

Although Elmeri Outila is a highly trained vampire hunter, he often seeks the aid of others before encountering a powerful vampire known to be surrounded by minions and slaves. He enlists the aid of the player characters to hunt down Lord Telthos, a powerful vampire.

Mansion in the Mountains

Lord Telthos is a powerful vampire living in a large mansion in the remote foothills of the nearby mountain range. The mountains to the south of his mansion provide shade during most of the day, allowing his Dhampir minions to roam freely. The Telthos Estate is surrounded by thick woods of half-dead trees, continually filled with an ominous fog.

The carrion birds living in the surrounding woods are large and appear to be well-fed. Bones can be found scattered about, their flesh picked clean by the fat birds. These remains are the victims of the Dhampirs, while those who are brought to Lord Telthos are kept inside the mansion's dungeon-like catacombs.

Lord Telthos is known to kidnap and enslave those living near or in the mountain range. Women are raped and impregnated to give birth to his Dhampir children, while men are drained of blood to keep the vampire alive.

The Approach

Approaching the mansion is a fearful task. The forest becomes a darkened land with a thick fog that never lifts. The local shaman claims the fog is actually the souls of Telthos's victims, though most within the surrounding villages say it is simply due to the swamp land that has formed in that part of the forest; although no one knows why a swamp would form there.

Only deadly animals could live in this swamp-like forest. At any time, vampire hunters approaching the mansion could be accosted by rats, snakes, or wolves before even reaching the estate. Many do not make it to the estate, providing fresh meat for the animals, left-overs for the carrion birds, and possibly sustenance for the Dhampirs. Human (or humanoid) and animal remains can be found at least every 60 feet.

Minions

Before entering the Telthos Estate and ridding the world of the powerful vampire, the player characters and Elmeri must first overcome the vampiric minions, Lord Telthos's offspring.

For Novice-level adventures, there is one vampiric minion per character. For Seasoned-level adventures, there are three vampiric minions per two characters (rounded down). For Veteran-level adventures, there are two vampiric minions per character.

VAMPIRIC MINIONS

Lord Telthos's vampiric minions are actually his Dhampir offspring, the product of human women he keeps as slaves.

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

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Taunt d8

Armor: None

Weapons: Claws (Str+d4)

Special Abilities:

- **Dhampir:** See Racial Template on page xx.
- **Level Headed:** Vampiric minions act on the best of two cards.

Lord Telthos

Lord Telthos is a powerful, but young, vampire. He has survived for many decades, barely reaching the age of 100. He spends most of his time terrorizing his slaves or "raising" his offspring. Telthos expects his children to bring him new victims rather than kidnapping them himself. This has allowed him to survive. Using the **Vampire, Young** stats from the core rulebook, Lord Telthos is considered a Wild Card.



SEVEN KINGS OF SHAMBHALA

A low-Rank pulp adventure.

SHANGHAI - 1937

Some call it the Pearl of the Orient, others the Paris of the East. To some it is another Sodom, a blighted city of iniquity run by foreign powers. It is a city that will soon be caught up in war. Even now, among the shadows of the go-downs and taxi dancing clubs, agents of the great powers maneuver and plot while the world waits for war. It is August, and it is hot. In a few short days, the Japanese will invade. Just prior, the city will be bombed. World War Two knocks at the gates to the mysterious Orient. Pulp heroes will soon have an opportunity to answer.

The Seven Kings of Shambhala will take the group from the vice-laden streets of Shanghai to the Hollow World itself. The adventure may be played freely as a one-shot or developed into a larger campaign. Ideas for further play appear at the end, giving suggestions to GMs who wish to continue their adventures with the material contained herein.

A summary of events leading to the group's participation in this adventure follows. Each act is then broken down into three scenes, but the GM should feel free to run as far off track as is comfortable. Pulp is a wild genre, and anything that can be imagined probably appeared in one of the old magazines. If you like Indiana Jones, Conan the Barbarian and the days when two-fisted fighting won the day, this adventure is for you.

BACKGROUND

During the failing days of the Russian Empire, a secret expedition funded by Tsar Nicolas ventured into the great arctic exploration game with the rest of the world powers. This expedition was lost, or reasonably thought so. In fact, there was a single survivor, Arkady Roerich, a man of aristocratic stock who would soon be forced to flee his homeland with the rise of the Bolsheviks. What the expedition found, before they met an untimely end, was evidence of Viking explorations very much farther outside their known sphere of expansion. In fact, the group found a Viking longship deep within the Arctic Circle and

evidence on board that the Vikings had been as far reaching as China and Tibet. Sadly, before more could be made of this historic discovery, Russia fell into civil war. The Red Russians, the communists, now seemed poised to wrest control from the White Russian aristocracy. Roerich fled with his daughter to Shanghai, where many White Russians found refuge in a cast of expatriates forced to live as poor as peasantry they had once lorded over. Since 1917, Roerich has been exiled in Shanghai, a keeper of great secrets and great regret toward the world that ousted him.

Roerich's daughter, Irina, works as a taxi-dancer and sometime singer at some of the more respectable clubs in Shanghai. Yet, she has no station. She is an exile and, in some instances, a prostitute. Her ire grows with each sailor she must bed, and each foreign national she must entertain. She heard the tales of the days when her family ruled and is determined to reclaim what she believes is her rightful role. However, as an experienced courtesan, she keeps her motives held close and uses her feminine charm to get what she desires while those around her consistently underestimate her. For the purposes of this adventure, she plays the ingénue in distress, waiting for her opportunity to seize the wealth and power she believes waits at the end of her father's stories.

Her father, Arkady, still possesses artifacts from the original expeditions. Among them is a rubbing of a stone map carved with runes which Arkady and his daughter have, in the intervening years, deciphered. The original stone map is thought lost. In fact, it has fallen into the hands of Japanese agents.

Irina and her father believe that the map reveals the secret location of the lost Buddhist paradise known as Shambhala. What they do not know, and will not know until this very evening, is that other forces are interested in this secret city — powers that are willing to kill to get what they want.

The players enter the adventure after being contacted by Arkady Roerich. Their renown as seasoned men-of-fortune has led Arkady to the decision to hire them to lead an expedition to find the lost city. He and his daughter have saved enough money to offer the characters a retainer and offer to cut them in on the spoils should this prove necessary. While Arkady is true to his word, Irina has no intentions of splitting her fortune with anyone. For now, she plays the innocent daughter who believes her father's quest to be madness. Soon she reveals her true nature.

ACT: 1 SHANGHAI

Scene 1: The Great World

The Great World is a six story building that houses just about anything one could think of. It is at once an arcade, circus, and merchant district unto itself. The following description gives the tone of Great World Entertainment Complex of old Shanghai.

Six floors topped with a clock tower. The first floor a pavilion of gaming tables, strata of blue smoke, courtesans, magicians, would-be pick-pockets, slot machines, a magician swallowing scarves, and bird cages with plumed fauna in comic book four-color. Someone is doing a performance of a Lone Ranger radio play, crickets and mantises chirp in bamboo cages, pimps and mid-wives offer semi-related services, a man cries as a scribe writes a love letter to his lover, and ear wax extractors spelunk inside a man's head as he sits in a barber chair.

The party has been invited by Arkady Roerich to meet them in this very public venue. The chaos of the sights and sounds — monkeys, crickets in bamboo cages, sailors getting tattooed, jugglers, acrobats — all assault the senses. Roerich himself, a white haired man of about seventy, is waiting by a stall on the fourth floor which sells Chinese fortunes. When the adventurers meet with him, he is nervous, his voice edged with tension.

Roerich believes he is being followed, and he is right. In the crowd, waiting to pounce, is Eugene Pick, a sometimes actor and agent for the highest bidder. He is Ukrainian by birth, skinny and with the beady-eyed-weasel-look of Peter Lorre about him. His dream lies on the stage, but the espionage game pays his bills. Pick shoots Roerich, just as fireworks begin popping, from one of the stalls. The popping fireworks mask the gunshot, but perceptive characters can catch a glimpse of Pick heading for the stairs. If pursued, he goes up to the fifth floor where the Peking Opera and Theater [currently empty] should be. He attempts to use the catwalks and great silver movie screen moves to get away from the party. Play up the scenery. Pick doubles back down the Great World levels using the chaos and crowd as cover. At some point during the chase, air raid sirens sound. The war has come to Shanghai.

At an appropriately dramatic point, perhaps when the party chases Pick outside, a bomb lands squarely in front of the Great World. The devastation is massive. Hundreds of people are dead or injured. If Pick has not lost them yet, he does so now.

Roerich, breathing his last breath, begs the party to protect his daughter, Irina, and finish the expedition with her. He urges them to hurry. Tonight she is at the Cathay Hotel on the Bund. He grabs one of the character's arms with a bloody hand and stammers out his dying wishes. "Restore our name...."

If Pick is captured, he can be leaned on rather easily for information. He is, at heart, a coward. He knows only that he has been employed by Japanese agents to trail Roerich and to terminate him if at any time he came in range of the PCs. The

Japanese, led by Jenpei Ishii, a colonel in plain clothes, have dossiers on each of the characters. Even now, with Roerich dying, they are already attempting to snatch his daughter. The PCs are on the run again, toward the Whangpoo River and the Bund, the great street that borders it.

Scene 2: Cathay Hotel

The Cathay Hotel is a giant affair overlooking the Bund and the Whangpoo River. Across the river is Pudong, currently undeveloped. The hotel is owned by a prominent English businessman named Victor Sassoon. At the top, under a stained green glass pyramid, lies one of Shanghai's most exclusive clubs. Here, the war is something to dish about, to speculate on. The Japanese never attack the foreign settlements, or so the foreign rulers of this Pearl of the Orient assume. For now, they are correct. But in four short years this will cease to be the case. Today, their endless party continues; tuxedos, suits, and a band. Irina is a stunning figure in a tight black dress, sequins beaded against smooth thighs like the skin of a snake. She is dark haired, blue-eyed, and beautiful. She feigns an air of innocence but is a femme fatale.



EUGENE PICK

A man who will sell his services or country to the highest bidder. He fancies himself an actor and an important man. He is neither.

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

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Shooting d8

Weapon: .45 pistol (12/24/48; 2d6+1; RoF 1; Shots 7; AP 1, Semi-Auto)

Hindrances: Arrogant, Cowardly

Edges: Alertness



JINPEI ISHII

A loyal man to the Emperor and to Japan, Ishii will stop at nothing to secure the Empire's future.

Attr: Agility d8; Smarts d8; Strength d8; Spirit d10, Vigor d8

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Knowledge [Battle Tactics] d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Taunt d6

Weapons: .45 pistol (12/24/48; 2d6+1; RoF 1; Shots 7; AP 1, Semi-Auto), Katana (Str+d6+2; AP 2)

Hindrances: Loyal, Vow [Bushido]

Edges: Command, Strong Will, Hold the Line



IRINA ROERICH

Irina is Arkady's daughter. She will do whatever she must to get her family's position back. She is a black haired, green-eyed femme fatale.

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

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

Skills: Languages d10, Singing d10, Persuasion d12, Shooting d8, Taunt d8

Gear: A sexy sequin dress and a hidden Derringer (5/10/20; 2d6+1; RoF 1; Shots 2; AP 1)

Hindrances: Vengeful, Arrogant, Greedy

Edges: Attractive



When the players arrive, she is on stage singing. If the GM has access to the Temple of Doom soundtrack, "Anything Goes" would be perfect for this scene. Additionally, word of the bombing has begun to spread throughout the crowd.

Lying in wait are Chinese tong members who have been hired to snatch Irina on Ishii's orders. They wait until her set is done unless they spy the PCs first. In that case, one rushes the stage to grab Irina while another two attempt to block off the party's access to the stage. There are two thugs per three PCs (rounded down).

Regardless of rolls, Irina must escape the clutches of the tong. It is essential that she be free to move the characters to the later acts in the adventure. A clever GM can find some appropriately pulpy way of having her slip her captors should the players be failing. Perhaps her dress tears, and she is able to run, or the thugs run into a line of waiters carrying particularly heavy silver platters. In any event, the PCs end the scene with Irina.

Irina explains the background of the expedition mentioned in the introduction and reveals that she has possession of her father's diary which includes the map. She insists that the diary is what they are truly after. In fact, the Japanese have the stone original of the map, but they want Irina's diary as well. If pressed, she admits that her father was an old man, fixated on the days of the Tsars and that she believes all of this to be nonsense. Or did, before her father had dealings with some local Germans and this tong tried to capture her.

In fact, Irina knows a good deal more. She knows that both the Japanese and Gestapo are after the lost city her father's diary may hold the key to. She likewise knows that another entrance to said city may exist at the poles, though her father's notes on that are more limited. She does not share these notes with the characters at this time. She wants the treasure for herself and is willing to trade the party to either faction if she feels it will advance her cause. At this stage, though, she plays the ingénue, grateful to the strong, capable adventurers who have rescued her. Outside the hotel, more planes have been spotted, and some of the foreigners have begun to think of getting out of town. As such, when Irina convinces the PCs to help her flee the city via the airport a mass of traffic is what they find.

Scene 3: The Airport

The PCs may hail a cab or requisition a car. In either case, there is a car with Japanese intelligence agents waiting for Irina. They spot the PCs trying to smuggle her out and give chase. The adventurers must head to the airport and meet a man named John Hilarie who will fly them out. Appropriately dramatic events and obstacles may hassle the party on their way. All the

while, the Japanese are hot on their trail. Bullets fly, people dive out of the way, and a great big bomb tears apart Nanking Road, yet another dropped accidentally by Chinese planes attempting to defend the city.

The Japanese are armed with pistols and Tommy Guns. In reality, they might have Type 100 submachine guns, but for game purposes the difference in armament doesn't matter. Use the stats for Colt .45s and Thompson Sub-Machine Gun in the main rulebook. While the Japanese are more than willing to shoot the PCs, they need the girl intact. As such, they try to stop the car rather than kill anyone. For now.

Once at the airport, the PCs find that all flights have been grounded. But Hilarie, an American ace from the First World War, is willing to take off amidst the dogfight in the skies. He's a bit crazy, much like the PCs, for getting mixed up in all this. The GM may elect to make secret rolls for Hilarie's piloting, or one of the PCs may have enough skill in that area to help. The

CHINESE TONG THUG

The Chinese Tong report to the leader of The Green Gang of Shanghai and are currently employed by Japanese Colonel Ishii.

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

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Shooting d8

Weapons: .45 pistol (12/24/48; 2d6+1; RoF 1; Shots 7; AP 1, Semi-Auto), Knife (Str+d4)

Edges: Combat Reflexes

JAPANESE SOLDIER

Battle hardened troops who fought in the Sino-Soviet war. They are ready to die for the Emperor.

Attr: Agility d8; Smarts d6; Strength d6, Spirit d8, Vigor d8

Charisma: -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d8, Shooting d8

Weapons: Type 100 Submachine-gun (12/24/48; 2d6; RoF 3; Shots 28), Katana (Str+d6+2; AP 2)

Hindrances: Loyal, Bloodthirsty

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Dodge



JOHN HILARIE

Attr: Agility d12, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d8

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

Skills: Piloting d12, Shooting d10, Streetwise d10

Gear: .38 pistol (12/24/48; 2d6+1; RoF 1; Shots 6; AP 1, Revolver) and his plane, A Ford Trimotor.

Hindrances: Arrogant

Edges: Two-fisted

GERMAN SOLDIER

The German expedition contains a handful of basic German soldiers.

Attr: Agility d6; Smarts d6; Strength d6, Spirit d6, Vigor d8

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

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Shooting d6

Weapons: MP40 (12/24/48; 2d6; RoF 3; Shots 32)

Hindrances: Loyal

YETI

Yetis are large creatures that live in cold environments.

Attr: Agility d6; Smarts d6 (A); Strength d12, Spirit d8, Vigor d10

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

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

Armor: Thick hide (All 1)

Weapons: Claws (Str+d6)

Special Abilities:

- **Immunity (Cold):** Yetis suffer no damage from cold weather or additional damage from cold-based attacks.
- **Size +1:** Yetis are quite large creatures.
- **White Fur:** Yetis receive a +4 bonus to Stealth rolls while in a snowy environment.

Japanese on the ground attempt to stop them. Once in the air, the GM may elect to have the heroes escape, or may decide that the Japanese divert a Zero to go after them. If they cannot have Irina, she is better off dead. In this instance, assume Hilarie was smuggling arms into Shanghai for Chiang Kai-Shek and the nationalists. Crates in the back produce weaponry strong enough to take down a Zero, however unlikely that might seem. It is, after all, pulp. Nuke the fridge.

ACT 2: TIBET

Scene 1: The Monastery

Once the adventurers have escaped the airport and/or the Japanese Zero, there is little need to belabor their travel to Tibet. Indicate they have made landing on a snow-built runway and hiked to a monastery from which they pursue the map.

The monastery is centuries old. Prayer wheels turn with copper squeaks in the violent mountain wind. Multi-colored prayer flags snap tight. The edifice has stood watch over this mountain pass for centuries.

Inside, the PCs meet a Llama who can be convinced that the PCs are the good guys. Currently, two German officers from the

Ahnenerbe are staying in the monastery as well as part of a Nazi expedition to Tibet to find the roots of their supposed Aryan Race. The monk does not trust the Germans, and he trusts the Japanese even less. He tells the group that Japanese soldiers came through days ago, and the Germans took some interest in this. The Japanese also had a map made of stone, but their karma was not pure. He refers to them as Hungry Ghosts, ill-ready for the location and mysteries of Shambhala. When shown the map the PCs have, the monk smiles and tells them the pure of heart will be shown the way.

This is little help to the adventurers. However, they will find a boy called Rinpoche who helps guide them to where they are going. He has lived in the mountains his whole life. Recently, his parents sent him to the monastery. He likes foreigners and is eager to come along. With his help, the PCs can get part of the way to Shambhala. They find that getting all the way there requires a leap of faith.

It is up to the GM whether or not the German expedition poses any threat. If it does, the PCs need to keep the purpose of their stay at the monastery secret.

Scene 2: The Mountains

The group must venture deep into the Himalayas. It is freezing. Rough winds bite at them. They may have enlisted Sherpa guides to help carry their gear. If so, the Sherpas become more and more superstitious the deeper the party goes into the mountains. Eventually, they refuse to go any further, speaking of the Yeti who guard the way to Shambhala. The party has to go alone which means making some concessions to what they can carry. Rinpoche, being a brave lad, continues to accompany the party if they desire. It is up to the GM whether Hilarie comes along or waits for them at the monastery.

The GM may have the group make roles for survival and exertion as they climb ever upward. Appropriate skills should be used. In any event, the going should be described as hard. Late at night, when they are forced to make camp, the group hears such strange sounds as no animal has ever made. An ambush occurs; the fearsome Abominable Snowmen are real.

The Yeti attack the group out of sense of territoriality and defense – the Japanese expedition has already killed some. They are not men, yet not quite beasts, and fight with some intelligence. If enough are wounded, they retreat. There is at least one Yeti per PC. If avoiding combat, there can be more.

Statistics for the Abominable Snowmen can be found in Thrilling Tales, published by Adamant Entertainment. Need to create stat entry similar to that one.

If the PCs wish to track the Yeti, they come to a series of ice caves. Outside, they find stone cairns covering their dead and the trophies taken from the Japanese — a sword, a rifle, a canteen, etc. It should play as a sad scene, especially if the PCs have killed some of the Yeti.

Once this encounter has been dealt with, the party continues to struggle ahead. They become lost in a blizzard. Snow-blind and freezing, the group has a vision.

Scene 3: Shambhala

Read or paraphrase the following:

A bell peals. Is this real or has madness set in? In the whitest whiteness you have ever known stands a monk. His saffron robes are all that cover him in the biting wind, yet he seems to have no fear nor chill about him. He motions you toward him with a slow, gentle hand. It is impossible to guess his age. Even as you move toward him, he flits away as if the wind itself carries him on his journey.

This continues, the monk leading the PCs through the blizzard and to this mountain's peak. There they find the same monk they pursued; only he has been mummified for centuries. He sits in a lotus position atop a mountain shrine. A bell stirs silently in the wind, its ringer long since corroded. The monk sits overlooking a valley below. There, amidst a tangled jungle out of place in the frozen mountains, lay the ruins of Shambhala. Thick vines vein their way over ancient stone. Stairways and temples have fallen into the dense loam of the jungle. A giant archway covered in glyphs stands at one end, carved into the side of another mountain.

This is Shambhala, or what is left of it. In fact, Shambhala is but one name for the truth: The Hollow World is real, and this is one entrance. It is an entrance, though, that the Japanese are about to seal behind them. Beyond the archway is a cave that leads downward. Inside it, and on the ruined temples, the party spot painted murals depicting the city of Shambhala leading into the center of the earth. Other portals exist as well. One such portal is at the North Pole. The language is rough to the PCs, but they should be able to translate; Irina can if they are unable. She may yet need the party to help get her north. She may even show the PCs the section of the diary she believes relates to the northern entrance. The diary itself is in Russian and coded unless the GM wishes otherwise.

The diary gives coordinates of sorts to the Northern Pole entrance to the Agartha, the hollow world where the Seven Kings of Shambhala watch over a great treasure called Vril. Irina's eyes dance with the fire of greed as she reads this aloud.

Vril itself is a mythical power source that the pre-Nazi Thule Society believed in. In point of fact, it was the product of a science fiction writer's imagination, but this fact seems to have escaped the Thule Society,

The Japanese have left tracks behind them. They have also left demolitions. The PCs have to flee as the charges go off, sealing the entrance ahead of them. It is best they do not get to the Hollow World yet. However, if the GM wishes to allow them to charge forward with the path sealed behind them, then the adventure can skip the next act and move directly to the last.

If, however, the PCs run out the way they came, they have to find a route to the North Pole. Irina knows an old navy man who has a boat. He serves the Bolsheviks now only because he is old and weary. His real loyalty is to the dead Tsar and the Romanov family. Irina is sure he can help. The next stop is Valdivostok.

Note: Alternatively the Japanese may have left behind a detachment to murder the PCs so that they cannot follow the northern trail to Shambhala. If so, a small ambush of six men waits to spring upon the PCs. They detonate the charges anytime they feel necessary. Dying for the Emperor is a glorious thing.

Should the GM wish to throw the Germans into the mix, then they may be right behind the PCs, catching them in a deadly crossfire between two armies out to kill them. Pulp, at its pulpy best!

ACT 3: RUSSIA

Scene 1: Vladivostok

Again, the GM may feel free to gloss over the travel it takes to get to Vladivostok. Simply imagine the red line that Indy follows in his journeys and move on to the action. The city sits against the Pacific in northern Russia and is home to the fleet. The group is here to find Ivan Stugartsky, formerly of the Royal Navy, now a sodden drunk given to ranting about the good old days. What's more, Vladivostok is also home to the Eastern fleet. The Soviets are now in control and the hammer and sickle fly in the cold winds over each ship. The PCs have to be wary; as outsiders, they attract some attention.

A bed and breakfast can be found to stay at while preparations are made with Ivan. This point is a good place for Irina to betray the party. She may decide at this juncture that she can cut a deal with the Soviets. She gets her name restored and the Soviets get the location of Shambhala. This deal is just another one that she will break of course.

Alternatively, she may simply contact a member of Soviet Intelligence and offer to send a radio signal when the ship is at the right location. This is all dependent on how certain she is that she can get to Shambhala and wrestle the treasure away from the PCs. If she needs help, she enlists the Soviets now. If not, she waits to play her card until the climax.

At some point the PCs either leave with Irina in tow or take off in pursuit of her. If she is with the Soviets, she leaves on a naval vessel. If she is with the PCs, they all leave aboard the Volya. Ivan is a sure hand at the wheel. Renewed with purpose for the Motherland, he casts aside his vodka and gets a gleam in his eye.

Scene 2: Northern Passage

The journey by boat is hard. The captain insists the PCs serve as crew – no one aboard gets a free ride. It is cold, relentless work. The ship itself is older than its current naval counterparts, but she is sound. If the GM wishes, Irina may need to contact her conspirators by radio. She creeps out of her cabin late at night to do this, using her feminine charms on the radio officer. The PCs may have a chance of finding her out at this time.

However the scene with Irina unfolds, the PCs soon have a good deal more to contend with. As they near the location of this supposed entrance to Agartha, they meet only icebergs and freezing winds. Eventually, they come upon one great berg with something atop it. The PCs have to get into a dingy and row over to the ice. Upon it, partially entombed in ice, is a Viking longship. Is this the one from Roerich's diary? It is. Long dead Vikings, frozen into an unnatural state of preservation, still man the boat. An ancient vellum map, likewise preserved by the cold, appears to show the current location as the entrance, but nothing is here save ice. A rainbow bridge [The Northern Lights] points the way to Asgard [Agartha]. Should the GM wish to turn these adventures into a campaign, the map may show other entrances as well.

As the PCs ponder this, the ice begins to move around them. A Japanese submarine surfaces and Ishii gives an ultimatum to the Volya: surrender or be blown from the sea. Depending on how wild the GM wishes to get, the PCs may be allowed to get into the submarine and fight hand-to-hand to capture her. Alternatively, they may use the dingy to get back to the Volya. Either way, the portal to Agartha is about to reveal itself. As the two ships stand off, the sea itself begins to churn. Ice and boat alike begin to be taken by a powerful current. That current soon turns into a vortex, threatening to drown them all. In fact, the vortex itself sucks down everything that lies above and spits them out on the other side; the other side being another sea – one temperate and in the center of the Earth itself.

The longship, the sub, the Volya, and everything above are brought down into the center of the world. The crew of each is knocked and battered around but remains intact. What they see next is a vision that changes their lives.

ACT 4: THE HOLLOW EARTH

Scene 1: The Beach

The ships emerge from the surface world to find a hollow Earth around them. Atoma, the internal sun, shines day and night here. A clever character with some pseudoscience background may be able to infer from the way that shadows move very quickly here that the interior of this Earth is likewise spinning. So much so, that it creates its own gravity. This is why they have been sucked downward but now appear to be right side up. If the players get technical regarding the impossibility of this, explain Indy got chased by a giant boulder and Belloq's head exploded because the Ark had "the power of God or something" in it. If they still complain, smite them.

Before the group lies a beach, and on its shore are the intact specimens of hundreds of ships. Ships of all eras have been lost here: Roman Triremes, Phoenician Traders, Egyptian spirit boats, and English Man O' Wars. If it can be imagined, it is here. There is enough treasure in the holds of these great vessels to make anyone a king. Irina, if she is still here with the PCs, goes mad with avarice. The PCs may as well, if it weren't for the vast jungle lying before them from whose center springs a city made of green, translucent stone. More beautiful than any earthly treasure, the spires of this city gleam as emeralds, bathed in the eternal light of the inner sun.

Likewise, the Japanese sub has been sucked down with them. Also, if the GM wishes to include the Germans, one of their U-Boats is partially beached here as well. It is now a race to see who can get to Agartha first.

The Japanese and Germans may leave ambushes in their wake. The GM is free to conduct these as he or she wishes. If not, all parties may simply make haste for Agartha itself.

Scene 2: Agartha

The twisting emerald spires of this ancient city loom over the jungle around her. Indeed, the city itself seems to have grown from rock, as a geode might be, though more perfect than any geode, crystal, or diamond the surface has ever seen. Thick vines wrap round the bases of her majestic towers which seem to take in the sunlight like a living thing. A strange pulsing light can be found deep within the haunting facets of these temples and towers. Great murals show Seven Kings in Seven Thrones who have lorded over this city since time immemorial. They

also show the fall. The great city falls into decadence, into greed. Wars blight the center of the world as they do the surface. Nowhere can man escape himself. Towers are brought to the ground, and people slain. The world of Agarthia turns to barbarism. Their wars are fueled by Vril, a substance that seems to spring from the wells of this great city. Vril is green energy that powers craft unlike man has ever seen above. Vril corrupts the men who wield it for foul ends. They twist and bend over, becoming sub-human monsters until no murals remain. No friezes. No hand of man is left to tell the tale of Agarthia's final days.

Here, in the center of this vast city, is a temple of impossible proportions. It springs whole from the green gemstone around it, a single finger against the eternal sun. Inside, the PCs find that which they have sought: the Tomb of the Seven Kings. Except here, there is only one sarcophagus. Seven thrones of some metal unknown to the world surround the single burial box. In the center of the tomb is a great well. Bottomless in its darkness, a mechanical apparatus of the same metal as the thrones seals it. If the sarcophagus is disturbed, the seal breaks and the Vril held back therein bursts and floods the chamber, then the city. Then, the dead king appears. Use the stats for a Liche in the *Savage Worlds* main rulebook as Ahmet-Seph, the Great awakens!

When the PCs arrive, the Japanese or the Germans may already be opening the well. If not, Irina does. Mad for power, she springs upon the sarcophagus and attempts to open it. The seal above the well moves, releasing gasses so potent they nearly cause unconsciousness. This is followed by a great rumbling as the Vril wells up from the center of the world. All of the writing here, as elsewhere in Agarthia, is familiar yet incomprehensible.

Now the PCs witness the final moments of Agarthia. It may in fact be the last thing they ever see.

Scene 3: Escape from the Hollow World

The PCs now have to get out, and quickly. Unfortunately, they are not alone. The degenerate men who were once the citizens of this place still remain. In their savagery, they fall upon the PCs and other parties alike. These beast-men wreak the unholy vengeance of their city upon the surface dwellers. They have been corrupted by Vril. The party must fight through them as they attempt to get back to any one of the boats before city and jungle disappear forever in an unnatural storm of pure Vril.

Whichever boat the PCs choose, it becomes apparent that the shifting Vril is causing another maelstrom in the sea. The process that brought them here is reversing itself as the city sinks into the green energy storm. The Germans and Japanese fail to make it. Irina refuses to leave. All of them are consumed

DEGENERATE MEN OF AGARTHA

Attr: Agility d10, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d10, vigor d12

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

Skills: Fighting d10

Gear: None

Hindrances: Phobia (Fire)

Edges: Combat Reflexes

by the green energy, their skeletons flashed upon their flesh like an X-ray as the energy disintegrates them and the great city. The party barely gets out with their lives as the sea swells up, the ground produces quakes to rock mountains, and the underworld collapses upon itself just as the party is spit back out from whence they came.

Their boat comes to rest under another, familiar sun, a peaceful sea trafficked with ice, and remnants of the ancient ships thrust back unto the surface world. They are afloat in a ghost-port of history. Ragged sails of galleons two hundred years gone stir in the quiet wind. What was found has been lost — entombed amidst the horrible energy of that world. The PCs are alive. They may take what treasure they can from the boats around them and retire. Or, they may decide to explore the Hollow Earth again, for the map in Tibet showed other entrances, other chances to see what lies within this world, other chances for the Axis powers to delve deep into the world and bring what destroyed the interior to the war that hangs over the surface world.

NOTES ON FURTHER PLAY

As noted above, the GM can continue to use the Hollow Earth as a McGuffin for other adventures. Agarthia is but one city in a vast network of civilizations that lay within the world. Certainly, the Axis powers attempt another expedition into the center of the earth. What other mysteries might lurk there? Dinosaurs? Other ruined civilizations? The source of the Vril? Aliens? Who is to say? It is up to the GM whether this is a one-shot adventure or the start of a *Savage Worlds* campaign. There are more things under this heaven and Earth than are dreamt of in our philosophies.

Flight of the Fancy

This is a 'Black Powder Fantasy' adventure designed for Novice Rank characters. Note that – while other races exist – the characters in this adventure are all human, as they're by far the most dominant species in the Freeholds. While other races do have adventurers, most tend to stay with their own kind and in their own holds, where they feel safe and comfortable.

Although we've written the adventure using information from the upcoming setting, *Dragons of Avalon*, it should be usable in almost any setting with minimal tweaking (changing a couple of place names and putting the ships on the water, for example).

Ultimately, we encourage you to take it, make it your own, and – as always – have fun.

ABOARD THE *FANCY*

The adventure begins with the characters having arranged passage aboard a skyship called the *Fancy*, a merchant vessel designed to carry several passengers and a modest amount of cargo.

THE *FANCY*

Registry: Principality of Myridda

Acc/TS: 2/4; **Handling:** 0; **Climb:** -2

Toughness – Hull: 12(2); **Rig:** 16 (see note below)

Crew: 4+12; **Cargo:** 4

Notes

- Quarters consist of two deluxe single-occupant staterooms (one for the captain) and seven regular staterooms (either single or double occupancy). The ship also has a dining room and a lounge.
- Cargo can be loaded and unloaded from the air with a winch-and-tackle system.
- The ship has 4 cannons (two on each side) that fire ordinary shot.

The reasons the characters are aboard are unimportant (unless you're running this as part of a larger campaign). Depending on each character's back story, he could have been hired on as a deck hand or may simply have come aboard as a passenger seeking relatively comfortable transport.

On the other hand, characters wishing to have some idea of who's on board and what cargo the *Fancy* is carrying can do some poking around, although the crew (and Captain DeForest) gets annoyed if they get in the way.

About this Setting

Dragons of Avalon takes place in a world where most of the water is in the form of rivers and aquifers, and the land is largely covered in thick forests and the rugged mountains where most cities are built. In order for civilization to spread, the various races eventually had to learn to fly. Skyships are the 'everyman' solution for traveling, since they don't require one to do something like train a dragon, and they allow the transport of large amounts of cargo. Fortunately, the dwarven races proved to be proficient with alchemy, allowing for advanced forms of airships, and equally advanced weapons like cannons. Politically, the Freeholds could be compared roughly to the Holy Roman Empire after the Peace of Westphalia: A loose collection of minor kingdoms, principalities and duchies.

The Skyship's Rig

The 'rig' of a skyship refers not only to the ropes and sails used to steer and move the vessel, but also the bag (or bags) that provides lift. "Leksa" is a compound created by the dwarves – a mix of minerals that, when combined, create a vapor that not only rises, but can lift solid objects as well. Canisters beneath the bag are filled with the components of leksha, causing the bag to fill with the vapor and lift the skyship.

Most of the crew and passengers are easy to spot. Aside from the captain, there are three permanent crewmen (Corrin, Eagon and Rhys), and aside from the characters there are three other passengers. One is a merchant named Jonathan Harris ("... of the Harris Brothers Company"), and the other two are his wife and teenage daughter, Mona and Theresa respectively. Harris is along to keep track of his cargo, and is pretty annoyed he couldn't get a deluxe stateroom, while Mona is apparently along to keep track of her husband. Jonathan has one stateroom, while the ladies share another.

Any character succeeding at a Notice roll is aware there's another passenger occupying the ship's second deluxe stateroom. This passenger stays largely to themselves and never leaves the confines of the stateroom, although a crewman brings food regularly.

If the character made a Raise on the Notice roll, he catches a glimpse of the mystery passenger (who stays bundled in a hat



and cloak), is pretty sure it's a female, and the food delivered to her is on par with what the captain is eating.

Characters that succeed on a Streetwise roll can learn about the cargo. Aside from standard provisions, Master Harris has several tons of Myriddan Cotton he's transporting to Anterre. Truly suspicious characters can always sneak into the hold to check, but yep... That's what the cargo is. Truth be told, it's actually pretty valuable stuff, but most characters will probably be disappointed it isn't something more 'dramatic'.

Heading Out

You can play out the next couple of days however you want. Nothing exciting is going to happen, but some players might want to poke around or get into things, so feel free to let them.

The crew works in shifts, with DeForest and his mate, Rhys, manning the wheel while the other two make minor adjustments to the rig and keep a lookout. Meanwhile, Harris and his family take advantage of the ship's few amenities, with Jonathan doing his best to stay drunk (he hates flying) and flirting with any female he can (other than his wife or daughter). Mona keeps a hawk eye on her husband, and Theresa grows increasingly bored.

GREAT ADVENTURE

By Curtis and Sarah Lyon

Most characters may be more fascinated with the 'Mystery Passenger, and try to see or meet her. Let them try, role-play it out, and if they come up with an interesting plan, reward them – you can use the write-up on Countess Alicia for some ideas. Just remember she's a diplomatic envoy on a mission and won't easily let herself be distracted by nosy or amorous adventurers.

Pirate Attack!

On the third day of travel, things get exciting! Captain DeForest is at the wheel while Corrin tends the rig. The thick greenery of the Wilderwood passes lazily beneath the *Fancy*. Corrin suddenly yells, "Rig ho!" and the ship becomes a flurry of activity as everyone tries to ascertain who this other ship might be.

The Captain lets loose with an impressive string of profanity, and orders all of the passengers to secure themselves in their rooms. Anyone who asks what's going on (if none of the player characters do, Master Harris certainly does) is told the other ship looks to be pirates under the banner of the notorious Captain Morden. Theresa squeaks, Mona nearly faints, and Harris quickly ushers them into one of the staterooms, locking the door behind them.

At this point, the characters can make a couple of choices. If they're already signed on as crew members, they're of course expected to remain on deck to help; if they're simply passengers, they can go to their quarters as commanded by the Captain, or offer assistance. Granted, Captain DeForest wants his passengers to stay safe, but he's also short-handed should it come down to a fight. If they agree not to hold him responsible for any harm that might come while on deck, Captain DeForest agrees to let the characters hang around to help.

Now it comes down to a chase between the *Fancy* and the pirate's skyship, the *Blood Moon*. You can use the Chase rules straight out of *Savage Worlds Deluxe* for this.

THE BLOOD MOON

Registry: None (Captain Uriah Morden)

Acc/TS: 2/5; **Handling:** +1; **Climb:** -1

Toughness – Hull: 12(2); **Rig:** 16

Crew: 4+9; **Cargo:** 4

Notes

- Quarters consist of the Captain's stateroom and two regular staterooms (either single or double occupancy), and a bunk room for ten crew. The ship also has a galley.
- The ship has 4 cannons (two on each side) that fire ordinary shot.

The goal of the pirates is to cripple the *Fancy* by taking out her rig, and they'll act accordingly in combat. This doesn't mean they won't open up on the *Fancy's* hull if they're having trouble closing with the ship; they just want the cargo and passengers relatively intact.

If the *Blood Moon* can get close enough for a boarding action, she will. The pirates throw grapples, and as many as possible clamber to the *Fancy*, at least enough for the characters to have a fight on their hands (2 per Hero).

The Real Plan

The pirates aren't a mere coincidence, although Captain Morden is perfectly happy to take a prize. In reality, Rhys is a spy who's arranged this little encounter so he can abduct the Countess, both to stop her mission and to gain some ransom for his lord.

If the *Blood Moon* can't close with the *Fancy*, Rhys uses the chase as cover while he breaks into Alicia's stateroom, incapacitates her with a *slumber* spell, and carries her to one of the ship's boats in an attempt to flee to the pirate's ship. Otherwise, he waits for the boarding action to do the same – sans the ship's boat – and escapes to the *Blood Moon*.

The characters should have a chance to notice this and try to save the day, but it's up to them as to how they do it. Assuming they do? Well, what happens next is another story, and another adventure, no doubt.

NOTABLE CHARACTERS



CAPTAIN KELLY DEFORREST

"Aw, damn and blast! I'm a pilot, not a diplomat."

Captain DeForest is a longtime sky captain, and basically a good man. He does his best to do well by both crew and passengers... which means, while he sometimes gets drawn into situations beyond his control, he tends to give most people the benefit of the doubt. This can (and does) get him into trouble.

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

Charisma: 0, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 5, **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Skills: Boating d8, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Notice d8, Piloting d8, Shooting d4, Streetwise d6

Gear: Captain's clothing, leather coat (Armor +1), cutlass (Str+d6), knife (Str+d4), flintlock pistol (5/10/20; 2d6+1; 1 Shot), 5 ball and powder for pistol.

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Command, Ace

Falling

As one might expect, falling is a very real danger aboard a skyship, especially since it's not usually convenient to tie one's self to a mast or rail. A character who goes over the side of a ship has one chance to make an Agility roll to grab onto a line. If he fails the roll, he falls to the ground below – usually onto a lot of trees and rocks – and takes an average of 10d6 damage. Should he manage to survive, his troubles may just be starting since the forests are full of dangerous creatures and hostile tribes of centaurs, as an example. Many captains will just as soon let a crewman go than endanger his ship and the rest of the crew with a rescue mission.

CREW OF THE FANCY (CORRIN AND EAGAN)

These guys are typical sky sailors (if there is such a thing). Mostly they mind their own business and try to earn enough to enjoy the next port of call.

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

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

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Notice d4, Shooting d4

Gear: Common clothing, knife (Str+d4).

THE HARRIS FAMILY (JONATHAN, MONA AND THERESA)

Other than the obvious (Jonathan is a merchant, Theresa is a young, unmarried woman... that sort of thing), there isn't much that sets the Harris family apart from any of the other citizens of the Freeholds.

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

Charisma: 0, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 2, **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Notice d6, Shooting d4, Streetwise d6

Gear: Fine clothing, jewelry.



COUNTRESS ALICIA FITZROLAND

"I'll tell you what... Go look for one or two wits, and come back to talk to me when you've actually got some."

Alicia is young, but cunning and loyal. She serves King Morgan of Alban, and is taking a letter to the Princess of Anterre proposing a marriage between her and Morgan's oldest son, Derick. Alicia knows this mission is supposed to be secret for the time being, and she knows there are those who'd like to stop it from being completed.

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

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Intimidation d10+2, Investigation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d10+4, Shooting d6, Streetwise d10+4, Taunt d6+2

Gear: Fine clothing, jewelry, flintlock pistol (5/10/20; 2d6+1; 1 Shot), 2 ball and powder for pistol, sealed message.

Hindrances: Loyal, Pacifist (Minor)

Edges: Attractive, Connections, Noble, Strong Willed



CAPTAIN URIAH MORDEN

"Lash him to the keel and let him dangle in the greenery for a while."

Captain Morden has a nasty reputation – even among captains known to have nasty reputations. But he's a mercenary at heart, and so he was more than willing to take Rhys's coin to have a go at the Fancy. Once the ship is his, he'll have no problem 'playing' with any crew and passengers who decline to join his crew.

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

Charisma: -6, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 8, **Toughness:** 9(1)

Skills: Boating d8, Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Piloting d10, Shooting d8, Taunt d8

Gear: Captain's clothing, leather coat (Armor +1), cutlass (Str+d6), 2 flintlock pistols (5/10/20; 2d6+1; 1 Shot), 10 ball and powder for pistols.

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Greedy, Mean

Edges: Block, Brawny, Command, Counterattack, First Strike, Frenzy

CREW OF THE BLOOD MOON (12 PIRATES)

These are the few, the not-so-proud, the ones who've proven themselves and managed to survive under Captain Morden. There's probably not a good apple in the lot.

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

Charisma: -2, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 5, **Toughness:** 5

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Gear: Common clothing, cutlass (Str+d6), knife (Str+d4)

Hindrances: Greedy, Mean

Further Adventures

Obviously this doesn't have to be the end of the line if the players want to continue. Alicia still has to get her message delivered, even if the *Fancy* arrives in Anterre. Maybe she'd like to hire the characters if they've proven themselves to be competent. For that matter, maybe Master Harris would like to hire the characters – either to protect his wares or his daughter (who has maybe taken a shine to one of the heroic characters). If Captain Morden or Rhys escaped, they'll surely want some payback. And what exactly is Duke Eleazar's plan? Surely he won't stop at simply trying to kidnap a single messenger. As they say in the Freeholds: "The sky's the limit."



RHYS, THE MATE

"Aye... That is quite an interesting coincidence."

Rhys is a new crewman who came aboard at the last minute when Captain DeForest's usual mate, Beck, fell ill ("Likely to food poisoning," Rhys explained when he gave the Captain his letter of introduction from Beck). In actuality, Rhys is a spy for Duke Eleazar of Montenegro. The duke has his own political agenda that requires Alban to remain unstable, so it's Rhys's job to intercept King Morgan's messenger and return her to Eleazar.

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

Charisma: 0, **Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 5, **Toughness:** 6(1)

Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6+2, Fighting d6, Lockpicking d8+2, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Piloting d6, Shooting d6, Spellcasting d8, Stealth d6+2, Streetwise d8

Gear: Common clothing, leather jerkin (Armor +1, torso only), knife (Str+d4), flintlock pistol (5/10/20; 2d6+1; 1 Shot), 2 ball and powder for pistol, lockpicks.

Hindrances: Cautious

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Connections, Thief

Power Points: 10 (8 after casting slumber)

Powers: deflection, disguise, slumber



Cataphract

A cataphract was historically a heavily armored warrior on horseback, draped from head to toe in scale armor or chainmail. These elite warriors served as shock troops, driving the combat directly into the face of the enemy. Equipped with lances, the cataphract would charge into the enemy lines taking out as many soldiers as possible.

While the term cataphract usually refers to ancient mounted warriors, this type of individual can be seen throughout all of history, regardless of what they are called. Cataphracts are equipped to deliver brutal punishment in close-quarters, since they would bear the burden of leading a charge against an opposing force. As time went on, these warriors saw the incorporation of other weapons such as the mace and battle axe. Regardless of how the times equipped these warriors, they have one thing in common: they are always on the front line.

Prestige

Cataphracts are more than your simple heavy cavalry; they are warriors of great prestige. Many of them were nobles or from the ruling elite while many others were highly trained and highly respected veteran warriors who had stood the test of time through battle after battle. Donning armor and mounting a horse while carrying a lance may make one a heavy cavalryman, but it does not make them a cataphract.

One must have extreme courage and willpower to carry the moniker of cataphract. They must prove their worth

through countless battles and face down the fiercest foes. They must lead the charge and overcome the odds. They must find the weak points within the lines of their enemy and exploit them. For even when a cataphract is outnumbered 4-to-1, they come out victorious. To be labeled as a cataphract is a true honor indeed.

Elite Formation

Cataphracts may be low in number, but they are the elite warriors of the applicable leader, be it a king, emperor, or general. They ride in formation toward the enemy infantry line in the hopes of breaking and scattering them. They don't attempt to become solitary heroes, as their strength in formation is as necessary as the armor they wear and the weapons they carry.

Cataphracts use strategic attacks for efficiency and effectiveness. They charge directly into battle with lance in hand and follow-up with their smaller weapons, swords or maces, for the ensuing melee. Backed by ranged support, the cataphracts use frontal assaults and combined movement to pin down their enemy, break their frontline, and leave them vulnerable to the supporting warriors who inevitably deal the final blows. By utilizing these strategies and formations, a small force can easily overcome the odds of a larger, poorly formed army.

Homage

The term cataphract died in medieval times when black powder became prevalent and the armor worn by these

elite warriors became obsolete. However, the principal of the cataphract lives on through various terms and implementations that all boil down to one factor: shock troops. While "shock trooper" is a generic term, it is in essence a tribute to the cataphracts of old. These heroes would lead the charge, wade through the throngs of enemies, and bring the battle face-to-face. They are the ones who break down the doors and charge in with weapons at the ready. While they may not be actual cataphracts, they are equivalent in purpose and can share the honorable moniker.

While they may not ride into battle mounted on a well-armored horse, these new-age cataphracts choose other mounts or use their own legs to propel them into the fray. Their armor keeps them protected from the weapons of the enemy and their own weapons are designed to strike hard and fast. They are there to break apart the enemy lines and force their opponents to scatter. Homage indeed, for these warriors are as elite as ever and never back down in the face of danger.

Influence

Their bravery and prestige can be felt for centuries after their name died off. The ranks of knights and paladins find their influence from that of the cataphract. Continuing on through the ages you will find the same basic principles throughout the ranks of marines, SWAT, and even colonial forces. The general idea of an assault force designed to break the spirit

of the enemy lives on throughout the centuries.

Regardless of name, the term cataphract resides at the base of it all. Those tasked with controlling riots or combating terrorists use similar tactics. Instead of riding an armored horse, many of these shock troopers find themselves inserted directly into battle in numerous ways, be it via motorcycle, helicopter, or parachute. The original tactics of the cataphract heavily influences modern combat situations, and their function may never die.

USING THE CATAPHRACT

The cataphract is a fierce warrior, designed to take the action directly into the face of the enemy. They need to be proficient in hand-to-hand fighting or

close-quarters ranged attacks (genre dependent). They are elite warriors who can dodge and parry as well as thrust and slash or move and shoot.

Cataphracts need to be strong to handle the armor they wear for protection. Frontal assaults are only as good as the warriors performing them, and those warriors must be able to withstand the attacks being dealt by the opposition. While armor and shields are the preferred method, the cataphract must be able to carry these items without becoming burdened by their weight.

Cataphracts must be properly equipped for their frontal assault and the ensuing melee. They use charging weapons, such as lances, for their first strike and smaller weapons, such as swords or maces, for the follow-up strike. Their goal is to break and soften the ranks of the enemy to make them vulnerable to the oncoming attack from the remaining soldiers.



Fantasy Campaigns

Cataphracts have an obvious use within fantasy and historical campaigns. In battles where the opponent outnumbers the protagonists, the cataphract charges in to disrupt the enemy's formation and allow his allies to deal the crushing blows. They can draw the attention of the enemy away from the ranger prepping his bow or the wizard preparing his bolt. These cataphracts should be equipped with solid armor and just the right weapons to allow for quick attacks that deal a good amount of punishment.

Those who travel with the cataphract rely on him for the initial assault. Many heroes are built for ranged attacks or hit-and-run, but frontal assaults cause them a lot of difficulty. Their cataphract ally will hopefully soak much of the punishment from the enemy so that others can come in quietly and provide the killing attack. It is not uncommon for a cataphract to be allied with a mage, bowman, and cleric for support. These three types of heroes are not trained for frontal assaults and need the cataphract to wade in and distract the enemy while they make strong attacks from a distance. However, he is only as good as his supporting allies, and while he can break the enemy's ranks, he still needs allies to follow-up with pin-pointed attacks.

Modern Campaigns

The cataphract does not exist in name within modern times, but their basic principles do. During warfare, the military may drop troops from a helicopter directly into the face of enemy, firing their assault rifles during their descent or the troops may parachute in, ready to assault the enemy lines from behind. In non-military situations, a SWAT team assaults the hideouts of drug gangs and weapons dealers, using assault rifles and Kevlar instead of lance and chainmail.

The modern-day cataphract is a brave individual that meets the opposition head-on, typically armed with weapons designed as a way to breach the enemy lines and disrupt their activities, like assault rifles or pistols. Their maneuvers rely on group tactics and they never attack without a proper plan.

Allies with modern-day cataphracts will find that their companion is the type of hero who kicks down the door and is the first one to enter a dangerous situation to surprise and attack the opposition. Despite their prowess in battle, they rely upon their allies to remove any threats from behind or ones that take shelter as they move through the enemy's zone and create as much disruption as possible. Many times their goal is to force the enemy to surrender or hide in hopes that their weapons can be taken away before they get a chance to fire back.

Horror Campaigns

A cataphract, either by name or design, within a horror campaign may result in some fearful moments. While the team is investigating their target or hunting down their quarry, the cataphract is ready to leap into action. Once a plan has been made and a location deciphered, the cataphract is the first to enter and many times the first to feel the effects of the terror that resides inside.

To avoid losing their ally to the effects of fear, cataphracts in a horror setting need to have an iron-clad resolve and be quick on their feet. Should the frontal assault be made on an elder god, the cataphract may wish to run as quickly as possible out of the room, though. In a horror campaign, outfitting your character with the right skills and abilities can be just as important as giving them the right equipment. Cataphracts within horror campaigns that are sanity-based should ensure they have the right abilities to withstand seeing the creatures that

cause such horrendous fear, like the Brave Edge and a high Guts skill.

Allies within a horror-based setting may start to believe the cataphract is a suicidal maniac. The hero's (or investigator's) gung-ho attitude may get him into trouble more than it saves the day. The cataphract's team may find him a bit of a burden, but still rely upon him to assess a situation first-hand and relay the necessary fight or flight information back to the rest of the team. In essence, the cataphract is a necessary annoyance that can save the rest of the team from imminent destruction.

Sci-Fi Campaigns

Military sci-fi campaigns are very similar to modern-day warfare or action, albeit in the near or far future possibly fighting against alien beings. This style of cataphract is a definite shock trooper who often traverses the unknown. Whether exploring the corridors of an alien or abandoned ship or being called in as part of a raid for a known illegal

organization that is ready to be taken down, the cataphract is always the spear's point of the operation.

Cataphracts are hunters as much as they are elite warriors in sci-fi and ensure the safety of those within their team. Because of this, cataphracts are often sent in to situations that common soldiers wouldn't be able to handle, and groups associated with a Cataphract often become Special Operations teams. Regardless of where they find themselves, these sci-fi cataphracts are always at the front of the line with gun in hand.

Allies in a sci-fi campaign will often trail the cataphract as he leads the party through possibly dangerous facilities, spaceships, or whatever. The cataphract is the ultimate point-person, walking with purpose and keeping a keen eye on every surface of his surroundings.

CHARACTERS

Cataphracts make excellent templates for player characters that are designed for frontal assaults and general disruption. With the right distribution of points between Attributes and Skills and equipping them with just the right weapons, the cataphract can be a major contributor to every battle. They draw the attention of the enemy away from ranged-equipped allies and disrupt the enemy's formation by storming into the middle.

CATAPHRACT ARCHETYPE

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

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Riding d6, +5 additional skill points



Hindrances: Heroic (Major), Loyal (Minor), +1 additional minor Hindrance
Edges: Brave, +1 additional Edge

New Hindrances

Here is a selection of new Hindrances that match the flavor of the cataphract.

FRONT ASSAULT (MINOR)

The hero is known for rushing directly into the face of the enemy while her allies are ready to support.

Given the choice of fight or flight, the hero always rushes directly in to fight first and give her allies the chance of either reinforcing the attack or fleeing from imminent danger.

POINT-PERSON (MINOR)

Some heroes assume the role of hunter and defender by ensuring their allies are safely behind them.

Given the opportunity, the hero always takes the lead position while traversing corridors, dungeons, and the like.

New Edges

Here is a selection of new Edges that match the flavor of the cataphract.

AERIAL ASSAULT

Requirements: Novice, Agility d6+, Shooting d8+

The hero is able to descend a rope or parachute with guns blazing at sighted enemy targets.

While performing an aerial assault, the hero receives a +1 bonus to Shooting and Damage rolls while she is descending and still at a higher elevation than her target. Upon reaching an elevation lower than or equal to the target, this bonus is lost.

MOUNTED CHARGE

Requirements: Novice, Agility d6+, Fighting d8+, Riding d8+

The hero is skilled in charging into the enemy lines to break their formation.

While riding a mount, the hero receives a +1 bonus to Fighting rolls when charging her target, moving a minimum of 6 in.

QUICK BREACH

Requirements: Seasoned, Agility d8+, Fighting, Throwing or Shooting d8+

Soldiers and SWAT are trained to quickly breach a facility to surprise the enemy inside.

Upon gaining Surprise against a foe, the hero may spend a Benny to give himself the Drop.

TAKE THE LEAD

Requirements: Seasoned, Wild Card, Agility d8+

The hero is a natural protector of her allies. Instead of allowing them to suffer the first blow, she charges forward to draw the attention of the enemy.

The hero may trade Initiative cards with a single willing Player each Round.

Non-Player Characters

Cataphracts can be NPCs as part of an oppositional force or a competing group (such as two bands of mercenaries tracking down the same criminal organization). When used against the PCs, the cataphract is the one leading the charge against the PCs or jumping into the midst of their group to disrupt their current activity.

Cataphracts can also be used as leaders for gangs or reckless cults. They are the ones leading the pack into town to rob, to loot or to cause wanton destruction.

William "Butch" Ferror

William Ferror grew up in a relatively simple life in the Pacific Northwest. His parents, Susan and Thomas, were relatively poor, but had just enough to support themselves and their only child. Though the family was filled with love and kindness, the world around them was not.

When William was 12 years old, his parents were brutally murdered during the robbery of their small home. The family had very little in terms of luxury items, but a recent purchase of a nice television drew the attention of a pair of



WILLIAM "BUTCH" FERROR

Butch Ferror is one of the leaders of the Demon's Breath motorcycle gang.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Repair d6, Riding d10, Shooting d8, Taunt d6

Vehicle: Motorcycle (Harley Davidson)

Armor: None

Weapons: Flail (Str+d6, Ignores Shield Parry and Cover bonus), Double-Barrel Shotgun (4/8/12; 1-3d6; RoF 1-2; Shots 2)

Special Abilities:

- **Nerves of Steel:** Ignores 1 point of wound penalties.
- **Steady Hands:** Ignores penalties for attacking from his motorcycle.

nearby thugs. The thugs broke into the house, but were met by resistance when Thomas Ferror woke up and fought back. William was asleep down the hall while his parents were beaten simply for protecting the one luxury they were able to afford.

William was sent off to live in foster homes until the age of 16, when he ran away to live on the streets. The foster families were not kind to William, as he found himself the frequent victim of abuse and neglect. After gaining the courage to leave, William was "adopted" by a motorcycle gang known as the Demon's Breath.

Nicknaming William "Butch" because of his odd hairdo (and no one who wants to live will call him anything else), the Demon's Breath gang taught him how to survive on the streets and, more importantly, how to drive a motorcycle.

Demon's Breath was always known for their drug and weapons trafficking, but police were never able to prove their involvement or were simply too scared to get involved. As Butch aged, he became a more integral part of the gang and eventually took over as one of its leaders.

Currently in his early-30s, Butch is considered the "point man" of the Demon's Breath gang, leading the motorcycle pack as they travel to their next job or charge into the opposition, should the need arise. He is a fearless man who fashions his assaults after the cataphracts of ancient times, equipped with a flail and shotgun for charging and close encounters.

Butch will never be known as an intelligent man and leaves the planning and strategy to others. Instead, he uses his brutal strength and overconfidence to charge in head-first to disrupt his opponents before they get a chance to react. He is known for achieving first blood often and has put down many enemies before they even get a chance to react.

Demon's Breath

Demon's Breath is a notorious motorcycle gang along the United States' west coast. While primarily active within the Pacific Northwest (Idaho, Oregon, and Washington), they go as far south as California when trafficking drugs and weapons, and are known to prefer dealing methamphetamines.

Demon's Breath grew out of a small group of motorcycle enthusiasts who needed money to purchase their Harleys. Since they already would buy drugs, they figured selling wouldn't be too difficult and they began trafficking between the southwest and northwest regions of the United States. Originally dabbling in smaller "business", they quickly became one of the most popular traffickers in the area and grew in name and reputation.

Unfortunately for the government agencies, the Demon's Breath group was extremely difficult to follow and locate due to their ability to blend in with the general populace of motorcycle enthusiasts and their ability to pay off and intimidate the right people. This allowed the gang to dodge government inquiries and continue their antics.

After thirty years of trafficking, the Demon's Breath gang moved on to weapons. This gave them the additional strength they needed to shakedown crooked cops and keep the government even further away from their affairs. With forty years under their belt, the gang has become the most powerful gang of its type in the Pacific Northwest, driving fear into most government agents, since they know what happens to those who tangle with the Demon's Breath gang.

With the growth of their leader, Butch Ferrer, Demon's Breath has taken to robbing delivery trucks on the highways and county roads, as far away from witnesses as possible. They are a strategic bunch who take full advantage of the long stretches of road far outside of town to replenish their "supply".

DEMON'S BREATH GANG MEMBER

The Demon's Breath gang is made-up of dozens of criminals willing to rob and kill for the benefit of the gang.

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

Charisma: -; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5;

Toughness: 5

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Repair d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Taunt d6

Vehicle: Motorcycle (Harley Davidson)

Armor: None

Weapons: Knife (Str+d4), Double-Barrel Shotgun (4/8/12; 1-3d6; RoF 1-2; Shots 2) or S&W (12/24/48; 2d6+1; RoF 1; Shots 6; AP 1; Revolver)

Special Abilities:

- **Steady Hands:** Ignores penalties for attacking from a motorcycle.

DEMON'S BREATH GANG INITIATE

Initiates are the newly inducted members of the Demon's Breath Gang.

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

Charisma: -; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5;

Toughness: 5

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4, Repair d4, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Taunt d4

Vehicle: Motorcycle (Harley Davidson)

Armor: None

Weapons: Knife (Str+d4), Double-Barrel Shotgun (4/8/12; 1-3d6; RoF 1-2; Shots 2)

Special Abilities:

- **Steady Hands:** Ignores penalties for attacking from a motorcycle.

SAVAGE TALE

The cataphract is only as good as his allies. Alone, the cataphract is too head-strong and would eventually be overwhelmed during their frontal assault. By drawing the attention of the enemy, the cataphract's allies are able to make the killing attacks on their now softened targets. Without those allies, the cataphract is just another victim of overwhelming heroism.

Highway Robbery

Seattle is a large city within the state of Washington, but the land east of the mountains is wide-open and sparsely populated. Deliveries by truck travel the many roads there on their way to Seattle or vice versa. These relatively quiet areas are known to be the home of the Demon's Breath motorcycle gang.

The trucking company, Northwest Delivery, has been the victim of a series of robberies during the past year. While insurance has covered everything lost

and none of the truck drivers have been injured, the company is losing business due to its reputation of attracting the gang (although no one within the company knows who is robbing them).

Demon's Breath

The Demon's Breath motorcycle gang has a series of holdings within the Tri-Cities area in southeast Washington. They regularly patrol the roads east and southeast of Seattle for delivery trucks carrying goods that are worth stealing and either keeping or reselling. They have attacked trucks from Northwest Delivery four times in the past year simply due to the contents they carried. The gang has no preference for who they rob; they are simply concerned about what is inside.

Butch Ferror has been leading the Demon's Breath gang in these assaults against the trucking company by puncturing the trailer's tires with his shotgun and running the truck off the road. He continually circles the truck as it rests, keeping the driver inside, who is hopefully fearing for his life. While Butch has yet to kill any of these drivers, he is not afraid to do so should they engage the gang during the robbery.

Authorities seeking to trace down the Demon's Breath gang have become the victims of assaults on their vehicles by Butch and his cohorts. Again, the victims have managed to stay inside their vehicles as Butch circles around to drive fear into them.

The Highway Theft

Butch Ferror and his fellow gang members are along out State Highway 395 to chase down their latest score, a truck on its way to Spokane. Little does he know, this truck is being monitored by authorities and a strike force has been assembled to bring the gang down (although the authorities don't fully understand who the gang is).

Somewhere along State Highway 395, Butch and the Demon's Breath gang reach the truck knowing (or at least have been lead to believe) it is filled with electronics and sporting goods, both of which are prime stock on the black market. Using their regular attack method, Butch shoots out the tires on the semi's trailer, either while it is moving or just before it leaves from a stop, forcing it to the side of the road.

While Butch is circling the semi to force the driver to stay inside, the driver signals the strike force that move in to attack. When Butch sees the trap, he immediately calls the other members to follow him as he leads a frontal assault at the oncoming strike force.

Faith & Demons: The Rising

To place this encounter within **FAITH & DEMONS: THE RISING** or other fantasy setting,s Demon's Breath is instead a thieves' guild attempting to rob a caravan of supplies destined for Kiev. Butch Ferror and the other members are riding

horses and equipped with appropriate weapons.

Mercenary Breed

To place this encounter within **MERCENARY BREED** or other sci-fi settings, Demon's Breath has robbed a truck carrying goods for the mercenaries' corporation at least twice and sent the mercenary force to address the issue. Butch Ferror and the other members are riding hover-bikes, equipped with appropriate weapons, and wearing some type of light, leather armor.

Judgment Day

To place this encounter within Judgment Day or other modern horror settings, Demon's Breath could be smuggling something supernatural or the gang could actually be shapeshifters.





VOIDLANCER

These rules present an alternate system to simulate star ship combat in *Savage Worlds*. They are designed to be layered atop an existing setting and make no assumptions about that setting, other than the existence of star ship combat. *Voidlancer* represents a more cinematic approach toward space combat rather than a scientifically accurate one. Although there are a number of science fiction settings available for *Savage Worlds* with their own space combat resolution systems, *Voidlancer* is intended to be used as a lightweight, fast-paced replacement, or as standalone rules for your own home-brewed setting.

These rules are not meant for use with miniatures, and we recommend going to the miniature combat rules in the core *Savage Worlds* book if you wish to use a grid.

CREATING STARSHIPS

The first step in space combat is to decide the type of ship being built or utilized. This decision should fall in line with the design aesthetics of the setting and what desires the craft is fulfilling.

Choose a Starship Class

There are four classifications for starships. Start by choosing the size of the vessel you wish to construct.

- **Class One:** Small Craft (fighters, scout ships, shuttle craft) - Class One starships receive a +2 bonus to all Navigation rolls. This represents their superior maneuverability.
- **Class Two:** Medium Craft (freighters, medium transports, military cruisers) - Class Two ships receive a +1 bonus to all Navigation rolls.
- **Class Three:** Large Craft (large transports, military carriers) - Class Three ships receive a +1 bonus to all Hull rolls.
- **Class Four:** Huge Craft (generation ships, city ships) - Class Four ships receive a +2 bonus to all Hull rolls. This represents their hardier construction.

Allocate Starship System Points

Once you have selected the size of the vessel, distribute points among the Starship Systems to represent the desired capabilities of the craft. These Starship Systems act as defining Attributes for every starship instead of the standard character Attributes. Each starship system starts at a d4 and you have 4 points to distribute between them; raising from a d4 to a d6, for example, costs 1 point.

- **Engines:** The ships propulsion system.
- **Hull:** The main structural composition of a ship.
- **Weapons:** The offensive capabilities of the ship.
- **Navigation:** The flight controls and NAV computer

Trappings and Starship Design

Now that you have the simple mechanical decisions made, it's time to personalize your ship and add some personality.

Trappings are a great way to customize your starship. Though two ships may both have Weapons d6, they aren't necessarily equipped with the same weapons. One vessel may be equipped with plasma missiles while another has a sophisticated beam weapon. Deciding which type of weapons your ship is equipped with has no mechanical effect, but does provide a great way to personalize the craft. Trappings can be applied to all or none of the systems depending on how stylized you want your starship to be.

You can also make decisions about what the starship looks like and whether or not you are going to name it.

EXAMPLE SHIP

THE HYPHELION

Class Two Freighter

The Hyphelion is a sleek freighter with a hull design often associated with Class One fighters. The visual aesthetics, however, are where the similarities end. The Hyphelion was built from the ground up to be a nimble cargo vessel. What it lacks in offensive capabilities is more than made up for in stellar flight control. This ship was born to run.

Engines d6 – Luxamos Systems Omnipoint Fusion Core

Hull d6 – Entropy Incorporated Fiber Resin Shell

Weapons d4 – Single Cell Lazon Emitter (fires blood red laser blasts)

Navigation d8+1

ADVANCEMENT

Starship Systems may be upgraded by one die type by spending 5 experience points. These experience points can come from a single character or may be contributed and pooled by multiple

A Note on Crew Size

Class One ships have a maximum crew capacity of two. This has a dramatic effect on skill rolls during combat. Class Two, Three and Four ships have no maximum crew restrictions. Class Three and Four ships, however, have a minimum crew size of four, though normally there are many more crew members than that.

characters. It is also appropriate to have a monetary cost associated with the upgrade, though the exact amount is left to the GM's discretion based on the setting and circumstances, although a rough estimate is 1,000 times the die-type that the ship's being upgraded to. No Starship System can be upgraded higher than d12.

Example: *The five player characters who crew the Hyphelion have decided to improve the Weapons rating of their ship. The GM tells them that improving Weapons from d4 to d6 requires 5 experience points and 600,000 credits (100 credits equals \$1 in the Savage Worlds core book in this setting). Each player contributes 1 experience point and the monetary cost is covered by only two of the five characters (the others are bad at cards).*

THE CREW

Combat in *Voidlancer* is designed to take advantage of the character's skills and give them opportunities to participate in ship to ship combat. The characters are not sitting idly aboard their starship during combat! The following skills are modified by the listed Starship Systems during ship to ship combat:

Active Skills

- **Piloting** – The character's Piloting is rolled cooperatively with the ship's Navigation and Engines.
- **Shooting** – The character's Shooting is rolled cooperatively with the ship's Weapons.

Passive Skills

- **Healing** – The character's Healing is rolled to heal injured crew.
- **Repair** – The character's Repair is rolled to fix the degradation of Starship Systems.

Voidlancer works best if these skills are evenly distributed between the player characters. Each character is only permitted one skill roll per round (although more than one character can assist each system with a cooperative roll), so it's important to think strategically and make sure the characters are assigned to tasks beneficial to the ship. See **Combat!** for

more details on how these skill rolls work during ship to ship battles.

COMBAT!

Voidlancer combat rules are meant to be fast and easy to manage with minimal bookkeeping. They are slightly abstract in nature, but are designed to offer every player at the table an opportunity to participate. It is important to note that these combat mechanics are different than those in the core *Savage Worlds* rules. While this might introduce a learning curve in the beginning, the system is very easy to learn and is built upon the familiar framework presented in the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook, such as the use of cooperative rolls.

Action Sequence

To begin the combat action sequence, one card is drawn for Initiative for each starship in the conflict, using the standard *Savage Worlds* playing cards. Starships act according to their Class, and then according to their Initiative card. Class One starships go first, Class Two second, followed by Class Three and Four. Starships of the same class use their Initiative card to determine their order. A ship that draws a Joker may choose to go at any time during that combat round regardless of its Class. Additionally, that ship may elect to immediately leave combat

and flee as the Joker ensures they get away without Navigation rolls.

After Initiative is drawn, the first ship declares its action:

- **Attack:** Cooperative roll of Shooting and Weapons.
- **Flee:** Cooperative roll of Piloting and Navigation.
- **Communication:** Hail the other vessel.

Skill Checks and System Modifiers

There are four applicable character skills used during starship combat, as noted above: Piloting, Shooting, Healing, and Repairing.

Active skills are used in conjunction with their corresponding Starship System as a cooperative roll including the character and the ship (the character is treated as the lead character while the Starship System is treated as the companion). Piloting is modified by Navigation or Engines and Shooting is modified by Weapons (an attack).

Passive Skills are used at the end of the turn. Healing is used to give medical assistance to injured characters due to an attack and Repair is used to fix damaged Starship Systems.

A character may only use one skill per round as an action, as opposed to a reaction. If, for example, a character uses Shooting early in the round to launch an attack, he may not use



Healing later in that same round. Whichever character is using their active skill should also roll the cooperative Starship System die for the outcome, when applicable. Passive skills have no cooperative Starship System. Reactions to an attack, such as a character making a Piloting roll to evade, do not count as a use of an active skill on that turn.

Example: *The Hyphelion has drawn a lower initiative card than an enemy ship of the same class and goes second. The enemy ship attacks and the Hyphelion attempts an evasive maneuver to avoid the attack. The PC in the Hyphelion makes a Piloting roll along with his ship's Navigation and successfully avoids the attack. Now it's the Hyphelion's turn, and the PC can still make a Piloting roll to act this round. Using a skill to defend does not count against the one skill check per round limit.*

Attack

Shooting rolls are treated as standard Shooting rolls along with a cooperative Weapons roll. Each success and raise on the Weapons die adds 1 to the Shooting roll. If no character onboard the ship has the Shooting skill, the roll is made as a standard unskilled roll.

Once the attack is made, the defending ship has a few options: The ship may use its Hull to absorb the attack by making a Hull roll with the Wild Die and no cooperative skill, attempt to evade the salvo by making a Piloting and Navigation roll, or initiate an engine flare by making a Piloting and Engines roll. These are treated as Opposed Rolls.

If the attack hits, the defending ship takes damage (see below).

Damage

Every time a Starship System is unsuccessfully used to defend, it is reduced by one die type. If the defense is successful, then no damage is sustained and the Starship System's die stays the same. Once a system is reduced below d4, it is no longer functional. This has very dire consequences for the ship and crew. There are three systems available to defend against an attack.

- **Engines:** The ship can attempt an engine flare to suddenly shift its position in an attempt to evade weapons fire. This is a cooperative roll used with the character's Piloting skill.
- Destruction of this Starship System leaves the ship dead in space with no propulsion.
- **Navigation:** The ship can attempt an evasive maneuver to avoid weapons fire. This is a cooperative roll used with the character's Piloting skill.

The Wild Die

Any time a Wild Card ship makes a Starship System roll, it also rolls the Wild Die, which still Ace as normal. Each Starship System success and raise adds 1 to the skill die's total. Extra Ships get no Wild Die and no cooperative skill roll; they must rely solely on the Starship System roll.

- Destruction of this Starship System leaves the ship unable to steer or plot courses.
- **Hull:** The ship can attempt to absorb the enemy weapons fire with its hull. This is not a cooperative roll and relies solely on the Starship System.
- Destruction of this system means the ship is destroyed.

Once Hull has been reduced below d4, the ship is obliterated.

Any time a Starship System has been reduced below d4, it's necessary to land and make repairs. If the Starship System is at least d4, the crew can attempt a Repair roll to raise the Starship System by one die type per round (to its maximum die type as dictated during creation or advancement). If the ship isn't currently engaged in combat, success on the Repair roll means the Starship System is fully restored. During combat, each successful Repair roll increases the Starship System by one die type (to a maximum of its starting die type).

Damage also has an effect on the crew. Each time a Starship System is reduced below d4, the character that made the defending cooperative skill roll must also make a Test of Resolution. If none of the player characters made the skill roll or the Hull Starship System was used, all players draw a card from the playing deck; the player who draws the lowest card must make the required Test of Resolution. See **Healing and Repair** for more information.

Example: *The Hyphelion wins initiative and decides to attack the enemy ship. Both ships are Class Two. The PC in the Hyphelion makes a Shooting (d6) roll. He rolls a 3 on his Shooting die and a 3 on his Wild Die. He then makes a Weapons roll resulting in an 8. The Starship System die adds 1 to the Shooting roll for each success and subsequent raise. Because an 8 was rolled the die Aces! The Hyphelion rolls the Weapons die again and gets a 3. Because there was one success plus one raise, he adds 2 to the Shooting roll giving him a total of 5.*

The defending ship (Wild Card) decides to try an evasive maneuver and makes a Piloting roll (d6). He also rolls his Navigation die (d6). He rolls 4 on his Piloting die and 2 on his

Test of Resolution

During starship combat, all members of the crew must compose themselves professionally and strengthen their willpower in the event they are attacked or incur or are damaged by a retaliation attack. The most resolute characters never turn away from their adversary, even in the direst situations.

Whenever a starship Starship System is reduced below d4, the character that performed the failing defensive maneuver must test their resolution to hold themselves together. This is a simple roll of either Smarts or Spirit, whichever is higher, to avoid the mental ramifications of the starship being damaged within the vacuum of space.

The first time a character makes a Test of Resolution, no penalties apply. However, each subsequent Test of Resolution made by that same character during the same combat encounter incurs a cumulative (-1) penalty. Thus, if a character is forced to make three Test of Resolution rolls, the third roll incurs a (-2) penalty.

Failure of a Test of Resolution results in the character being Shaken. Subsequent Shaken results cause mental fatigue or psychological panic, and the character gains +1 level of Fatigue. Should the character become Incapacitated due to Fatigue, he faints from mental anguish and can no longer participate in the combat. The character may make a Spirit roll once per minute to regain his composure. However, upon success he is still Exhausted until the combat has ended. Once the combat has ended, the character regains a level of Fatigue every ten minutes.

Wild Die. He then rolls his Navigation die and rolls a 3. The Navigation roll didn't beat the Target Number of 4 and thus adds no bonus to the Piloting roll. His total is 4.

The Hyphelion rolls higher and lands a shot across his adversary's hull! Because the defending ship used the Navigation Starship System to evade the attack, the damage comes from that system.

Any time an attack is successful, the defending system used is reduced by **ONE DIE TYPE**. The defending ship now has Navigation d4.

Alternate example: *Let's say the Hyphelion made the exact same attack with the same result.*

This time the defending ship decides to absorb the attack with its Hull. It makes a Hull roll resulting in 4 for Hull and a 7 for the Wild Die (due to an Ace). The roll is higher than the Hyphelion's attack roll of 5 and the shot is successfully absorbed by the Hull!

In this case, there is no damage and the turn goes to the next ship with initiative. If the defending ship had rolled a 4, it would have again suffered a hit. This time, however, the damage would have impacted the Hull Starship System, reducing it from d6 to d4.

Note: Anytime there is a tie, the attacking ship always wins per the standard Opposed Roll rules.

Fleeing

A ship may attempt to flee on its turn by making a cooperative Piloting and Navigation roll. As before, each Navigation success



and raise adds 1 to the Piloting roll. If the other ship wants to give chase, the pursuing ship makes an Opposed Roll of the same type. The pursuing ship must meet or exceed the fleeing ship's roll to prevent it from fleeing. If the fleeing ship rolls higher, it successfully moves one "space" away from its pursuer, giving both sides -2 to Shooting and Weapons rolls (the actual distance is at the GM's discretion). If the pursuing ship rolls equal to or higher, no lead is gained and the round continues as normal. The pursuer may attempt to 'Close the Gap' by making a cooperative Piloting and Navigation roll to put them back in the same "space". A fleeing ship escapes once it's two "spaces" away from its pursuer.

Example: *The Hyphelion runs across a Class Three military carrier that takes notice of the Hyphelion and attempts to disable it with weapons fire. Initiative is drawn and no Jokers are dealt. Since the Hyphelion is a Class Two ship, it goes first. The only way the carrier could have gone first is if it had drawn a Joker since it's a Class Three ship.*

The Hyphelion attempts to flee, so the character makes a Piloting roll (d8). She rolls a 6 on the Piloting die and a 5 on the Wild Die. The ship's Navigation die is a d8+2 and rolls an 8, which Aces, with a 3 coming up on the additional roll. The 2 raises on the Navigation System roll (with the addition of the +2 bonus for Class Two Navigation) add 3 to the Piloting roll for a total of 9!

The military carrier makes a Piloting roll (d6) and rolls a 4 on Piloting and a 3 on the Wild Die. Navigation (d8) is then rolled with a result of 2, which adds nothing to the Piloting roll. The Hyphelion wins this exchange.

Now it's the military carrier's turn. It decides to fire upon the Hyphelion. It makes a Shooting roll (d8) with a result of 7 and rolls a 5 on the Wild Die, minus 2 for the distance is 5. He then makes a Weapons roll and gets a 3, minus 2 for the distance is 1. Again, 1 is below the TN of 4 and thus adds nothing to the Shooting roll. The carrier's total is 5. It misses!

Both ships re-draw for initiative and no Jokers are dealt, so the Hyphelion acts first again. It again attempts to flee. This time the character rolls a 5 on Piloting and a 2 on the Wild Die. His Navigation roll is an 8 (+2) so he rerolls for the Ace and rolls a 3. He then adds his +3 cooperative roll modifier for a final Piloting roll of 8.

The military carrier rolls again and gets a 7 after all rolls are figured. The Hyphelion wins. Because the Hyphelion was able to secure two consecutive rounds of fleeing successes, it is able to escape unharmed.

There will be times when a ship is engaged with multiple adversaries. In this case each ship interested in pursuing the

fleeing ship would make a roll to attempt to follow. It's possible for a ship to successfully flee from one ship and be unable to shake off another.

Hailing

A ship may attempt communications by hailing another ship on their turn. When hailing another ship, one player character should be chosen to act as the emissary for their vessel. Opponent ships will always have the NPC with the Piloting skill act as their liaison. If the NPC ship has crew members who have not been detailed, use a d6 for their Traits. These encounters should be treated like all other role-playing situations and may include Tests of Will, Persuasion rolls, or be treated as a Dramatic Task. As per the *Savage Worlds* core rules, any character or NPC who fails their roll against a Taunt or Intimidation attempt will be Shaken. They will be unable to act until they are Unshaken and cannot use their skills cooperatively with any Starship System rolls. Additionally, remember to take into account the attitude of the NPCs – Hostile NPCs inflict -4 to any of the PCs Persuasion rolls!

NPC Extra Ships don't get crew rolls to add to their Starship System rolls. In the event the player character ship chooses to hail an Extra Ship, use a d6 with no Wild Die for Intimidation and Taunt attempts. An Extra Ship that fails a Taunt or Intimidation roll incurs a (-2) penalty to their Starship System rolls. See **Wild card Ships and Extra Ships** for more information.

Healing and Repair

At the end of each round, after all other combat actions have been resolved, any character who has not yet acted in conjunction with the ship may do so now. Player characters with the Healing or Repair skills may attempt to heal injured crew mates or repair damaged Starship Systems. If a Starship System has been reduced below d4, it cannot be repaired until the next time it lands. If there are multiple characters with the Repair skill, each one may make an attempt to repair the damaged Starship Systems. Once all characters have acted, it's time to draw initiative for the next round.

WILD CARD AND EXTRA STARSHIPS

All of the examples given above assume that one ship is manned by player characters and the other is a Wild Card Ship manned by NPCs. To make bookkeeping easier, GMs can have Wild Card Ships make their Starship System rolls and use a d6 across the board for all character skill rolls. If the GM wishes,

EXPANDED MECHANICS

however, he can flesh out an entire NPC Wild Card crew and use the appropriate skills just like the player characters' ship.

Extra Ships work exactly like Wild Card Ships except they don't get the additional Wild Die on their Starship System rolls; the GM only rolls the Starship System die. They also don't get additional skill rolls for crew members to make repairs or heal the crew. Extra Ships are significantly weaker, but there are a number of useful ways to utilize them. They can be civilian ship targets for a pirate crew of player characters to hunt, or even be pirates themselves that attack in high numbers.

ADDITIONAL RULES

These rules cover other aspects of game play. They are optional and intended to add fun to combat.

Boarding

A ship's crew can attempt to board another ship as long as the target vessel has had its Engines reduced below d4, leaving it Incapacitated. To board, the player characters simply announce that they are boarding for their turn this round.

An Incapacitated ship can still fire its weapons and continues to draw Initiative cards each round. Once it has been boarded, however, ship to ship combat ends and standard combat rules take over while aboard the vessel.

Collisions

There are a couple of situations where a ship might collide with another ship or object. There are different methods to resolve the resulting damage depending on the nature of the collision.

RANDOM STARSHIP SYSTEM DAMAGE

Use the following chart to determine random damage to the given Starship System.

1	Engines
2	Shields
3	Weapons
4	Navigation

Asteroids

Ships that enter dense asteroid fields must make a Piloting and Navigation roll; standard Navigation modifiers apply. Failure results in the ship losing one die from a random Starship System determined by rolling a d4 and consulting the chart below. Class Three and Four ships cannot navigate dense asteroid fields and automatically lose one Starship System die type each round.

In addition to damaging the ship, collisions can injure the crew. Every time a Starship System is reduced below d4, every player character crew member must make a Test of Resolution.

Ship to Ship Collisions

Ship to ship collisions occur when one ship is intentionally attempting to ram another. NAV systems are sophisticated enough to prevent accidental mid-space collisions.

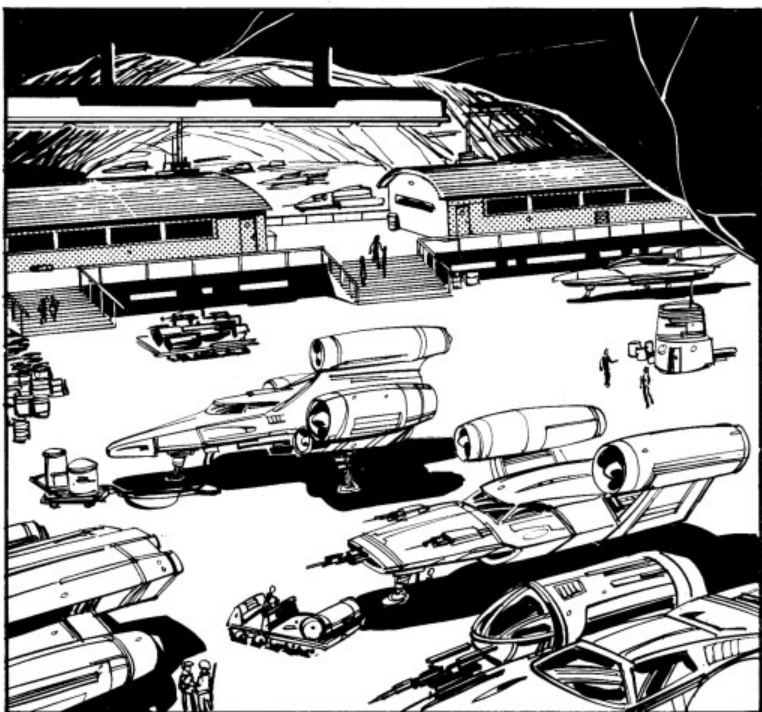
When one ship tries to ram another of the same Class, it must do so as its standard attack. Both ships make an Opposed Piloting and Navigation roll. If the defending ship rolls higher, they safely avoid the collision. If the attacking ship rolls equal to or higher, it successfully rams the target vessel. In the event of a successful collision, both ships reduce one randomly chosen Starship System by one die type.

Just like asteroid collisions, crew members must make a Test of Resolution every time a Starship System is reduced below d4.

If the ships are of different Classes, the higher Class ship makes a Hull roll after the Opposed Piloting and Navigation rolls are made. Success means it takes no damage while failure means it rolls on the chart to determine which Starship System is damaged.

AUXILIARY SYSTEMS

These systems are optional ship add-ons. At least one point must be spent to acquire them. Keep in mind that adding these systems does not change the initial available points for ship construction, thus you will have fewer points to spend on primary Starship Systems. These systems are not included in



the collision damage chart. Auxiliary systems are not a part of determining damage or the effects of.

Tractor Beam

Tractor beams are powerful field generators that disable a target ship's propulsion systems and draw it into a hangar bay. Only Class Three and Four ships can equip a tractor beam and they may not be used on other Class Three and Four vessels.

Using the tractor beam works exactly like a normal attack roll. The acting ship makes a cooperative Shooting and Tractor Beam roll. The defending ship can choose to defend by attempting an evasive maneuver or initiating an engine flare. If the defending ship fails, it is caught in the beam and begins to be drawn into the hangar. At this point, ship to ship combat ends. Once a ship has ensnared another in its tractor beam, it cannot act again until the target vessel has been taken into its hangar. The defending ship may make an additional evasive maneuver or engine flare attempt to break free on its next turn. Failure means it remains captured while success means it escapes the beam. At this point, it is necessary for the attacking ship to start the process again if it is so inclined.

Systems Scanner

A systems scanner provides information about another ship including class, system information, and cargo. The systems scanner, like the tractor beam, works like a normal attack roll. The acting ship makes a cooperative Shooting and Systems Scanner roll. The defending ship makes a cooperative Piloting and Navigation roll to evade the scan. Success provides the scanning ship with the target ship's class and full system stats. If the ships are engaged in combat, the scan counts as an action that turn. Ships always have a chance to defend against a scan and always know when they've been scanned. Unauthorized scans are seen as hostile, so the ship running the systems scanner should expect retaliation.

FTL and Warp Drives

If FTL and warp capabilities are part of your setting, feel free to include the information alongside other Starship Systems. Mechanically, ships with these capabilities have no effect on the rules, although there may be an in-game monetary expense associated with equipping a warp drive. Furthermore, the GM might limit which ship classes have access to this equipment.

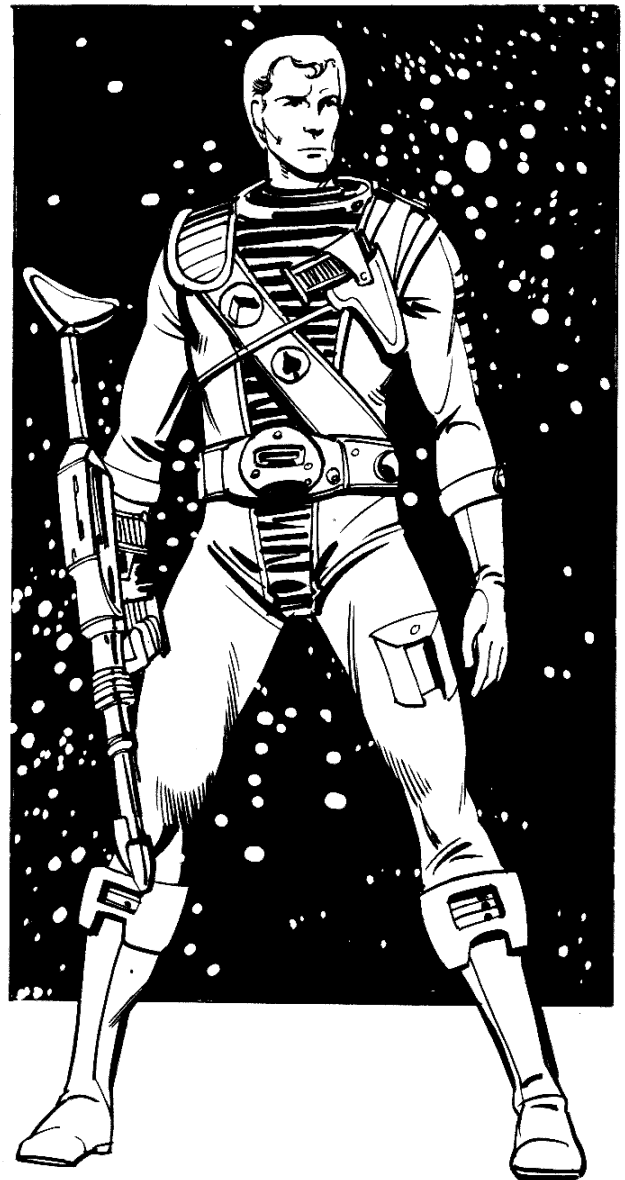
Escape Pods

Like FTL and warp drives, escape pods have no mechanical effect on the *Voidlancer* rules. If you wish to include them on your ship, consult the GM to make sure it's okay. There may be an in-game monetary expense associated with equipping

escape pods. Furthermore, the GM might limit which ship classes have access to this equipment.

CREW COMPOSITION

If you are playing a science fiction game that features a lot of starship combat, creating a crew of player characters with balanced jobs on the ship can benefit the whole group. A good start is to have the player characters specialize in different complimentary areas. Having a player character specializing in Piloting, one proficient with Shooting, one with the Repair skill, and another with Healing is a great way to ensure everyone has something to do during ship to ship combat. That's not to say you can't have characters with redundant skills. In fact, it's always a good idea to cross pollinate the roles a bit to make sure your group always has a Plan B.



If you happen to have a player character who doesn't contribute much to the core jobs of the ship, be sure to get them involved in other areas and allow them to make some of the non-skill related rolls.

Starship Crew Archetypes

These characters are presented as example Archetypes to show how various Skills and areas of expertise may be distributed amongst a ship's crew.

CAPTAIN

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

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Persuasion d6, Piloting d8, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6, +3 additional skill points

Hindrances: One Major, Two Minor

Edges: Ace, Command

WEAPONS OFFICER

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

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d10, +4 additional skill points

Hindrances: One Major, Two Minor

Edges: Nerves of Steel, Steady Hands

MEDICAL OFFICER

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

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Healing d8+2, Investigation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, +2 additional skill points

Hindrances: One Major, Two Minor

Edges: Healer

SYSTEMS ENGINEER

Attr: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d8, Piloting d4, Repair d10, Shooting d4, +5 additional skill points

Hindrances: One Major, Two Minor

Edges: McGyver, Jack of All Trades

FINAL THOUGHTS

Remember that classes are an important part of *Voidlancer*. Two Class Three ships doing battle is an epic encounter between capital ships. Combat between Class One ships is like a knife fight in a dark alley, fast and deadly. Even though the rules are abstract, describe the encounters between ships in a dramatic, cinematic fashion. Don't just say "He rolled higher with his Navigation roll," explain what happens in exciting terms.

Trappings can be a big part of game. Be sure to use them to good effect with *Voidlancer*. The system is open enough to allow you to create almost any type of ship imaginable. Encourage players to be creative when they are building ships and add some personal touches.

SAMPLE STARSHIPS

GFS VANQUISHER

Class Three Galactic Federation Carrier

The GFS Vanquisher is the right hand of doom in the Federation fleet. It's an intimidating vessel lacking any semblance of aerodynamic proportions. When the Vanquisher shows up, the opposition tends to quietly flee in the opposite direction.

Engines d6

Hull d6+1

Weapons d6 – Federation Annihilator Torpedoes

Navigation d4 – Merigo Systems Flight Computer

Tractor Beam d4

THE POPULLION

Class Four Colonist Transport

The Popullion is a massive colonist ship built to transport Thousands of families across space to newly established planetary settlements. Once it reaches its destination the ship is



designed to descend safely through the atmosphere and land. Once grounded it serves as a readymade base for its occupants and cannot be flown again.

Engines d6

Hull d8+2 – Starmdor Barritron Banded Exterior

Weapons d4

Navigation d6

VULCAN'S ARK

Class Three Mining Platform

The Vulcan's Ark is a mining vessel designed for deep space operations far from planetary support services. The Ark is equipped with an ore refinery and houses several hundred miners and support systems workers. Some mining platform ships will be stationed near rich asteroid fields for so long that they turn up on star charts as static fixtures in trade routes.

Engines d6 – Valos Aerodyne Enercore Drive

Hull d8+1

Weapons d4

Navigation d6

THE CUMULUS

Class Two Passenger Transport Ship

The Cumulus is a luxury passenger transport that touts safety and comfort. Structurally, the ship consists of multiple oval shaped pods fused together. This construction gives it the cloud-like shape from which its name is inspired. Seats aboard this ship are not cheap. Given that it can comfortably transport up to 200 passengers, the Cumulus is a very profitable vessel.

Engines d4 – Manfeld Elevations Duster Drive

Hull d8 – Mantius Impeneshell

Weapons d4

Navigation d8+1

MANTA VADUS

Class Two Combat Vessel

The Manta Vadus is a destroyer designed as a combat support vessel for space stations. Its weapons system uses metal projectiles to tear through the hulls of enemy ships. The Vadus is a capable ship, but it truly shines when supported by a pair of Class One fighters.

Engines d6

Hull d6

Weapons d8 – Subarc Metalcore Projectiles

Navigation d4+1

THE TORN HOPE

Class One Fighter

The Torn Hope is a dagger in the hand of the void. It is the definition of single purpose fighter craft. The cockpit is designed to wrap around two crew members like a sheath fits around a knife. The exterior of the craft exhibits a needle like profile with a serrated look toward the nose.

Engines d4

Hull d4

Weapons d8 – Volternous Manufacturing Necritic Beam

Navigation d8+2 – Gallilarian Gyropositioning Systems

AMBER EDGE

Class One Police Patrol Ship

The Amber Edge is a two-person police ship designed for short range patrol missions. This type of ship is commonly deployed in or around planets with heavy trade traffic to combat the trading of contraband items. Ironically, these ships are also popular with criminals who use them for short range smuggling operations.

Engines d4

Hull d6

Weapons d6

Navigation d6+2

Systems Scanner d4 – Deepscan Mark IV Information Retrieval System

THE CANARY

Class One Mining Skiff

The Canary is a mining vessel built to navigate dense asteroid fields and extract raw ore from the mineral rich space rocks. The NAV systems on the Canary are hypersensitive to the manipulations of the pilot and designed to make the ship easy to maneuver in less than ideal conditions. Normal shield systems cause interference with the ships navigational computer so the Canary is equipped with a special low profile shield that offers less protection as a trade-off for the greater maneuverability.

Engines d6

Shields d4

Weapons d4

Navigation d10+2

By Lawrence Grabowski
with Aaron T. Huss

Underhome

UNDERHOME

An abandoned dwarven city, Underhome is completely submerged. A poorly placed mining shaft tapped an underwater lake that flooded the city, forcing the inhabitants to suddenly flee, leaving most of their wealth behind. The majority of their crafts remain intact, since they were made out of metal or stone. Underhome contains technology and knowledge lost to the remaining inhabitants of the world. It's not inaccessible however; if one can dodge the aquatic predators that have since moved in, the city can be pillaged. Underhome was known among the dwarves for their production of everyday metal goods, cookware, knives, etc. and as such, goods of that nature tend to be both numerous and of high quality.

Mysterious City

With the flooding of Underhome, the dwarves fled through a new tunnel that turned out to be equally ill-fated. Unbeknownst to them, the tunnel led to the remains of a drow city destroyed by the gods. When they first entered, the city was a quiet ruin. That changed when the dwarves crossed the divine warding; they were assaulted by a screaming cacophony, bringing them to their knees, hands clutching their heads. The bloodline spirits used the dwarves' vulnerability to possess the entire clan.

The minds of the dwarves were quickly subdued by the spirits. As the spirits gained control over the dwarves, they began to change physically. Their skin turned charcoal and their hair white.

Their eyes began to glow red, the desire for vengeance evident in their unblinking stare. The stocky, stony forms of the dwarves were twisted and became ungainly in appearance, but the power of the spirits made them unusually agile.

The spirits were at first elated that they had been freed. That feeling fled when they discovered the only way to the surface was blocked by water. Unsure if their new bodies would survive being submerged for an extended period of time, and no spirit willing to be the first to try, they remained in the ruins of the drow city. The spirits languished there for many years, their rage doubled by release that proved to be false.

However, the bloodline spirits of the drow have recently been given a new hope. The people of Hill Home recently sank a mining shaft that breached the cavern of the drow city. Unfortunately, the intervening years allowed the divine warding to reform, trapping the spirits and their degrading bodies once again in their city. Now they sit and wait hungrily for someone to cross the divine ward so they can fall upon the world and slay their descendants.

HILL HOME

Hill Home is a small human mining community sitting on the border of the intersection between human, dwarven, and drow lands. The hills surrounding the town are dotted with entrances to a variety of mines. The inhabitants are generally friendly and more cosmopolitan than the size of their town

would suggest. Dealers from various parts of the world come to the town to buy ore, giving the people of the town at least a passing familiarity with the different races of the world.

A recently excavated mineshaft broke into a large cavern; preliminary exploration yielded little more than the cavern seeming stable. After a series of foreboding experiences, strange noises and smells, people started to give the shaft a wide berth.

Easthill Mine

Easthill Mine is one of the larger mines in the region. It yields a steady supply of iron ore that shows no sign of stopping. As a result, the shaft leading to the cavern has been abandoned. No one is sure how safe it is and they are unwilling to risk death for the ore there when other shafts are equally prosperous. Furthermore, people passing by the shaft have said a bad wind blows up from it, carrying angry voices and the stink of death. The mine foreman had a crude seal placed over the entrance to the shaft, more to denote how it is off limits than to actually keep anyone in or out of the shaft.

Cassandra's House

A small cottage sits a little ways outside of Hill Home and off the main road; this is where Cassandra lives. The interior of the cottage is neat. It's divided into sections for various daily tasks, cooking, sewing etc. Nothing seems amiss.

That is until you move her bed and brush away the layer of dirt over a small trapdoor covering a narrow tunnel leading to a cramped chamber



underneath the house. The small, artificial cave is covered with runes painful to look at. On one side is a rack with various instruments of her craft. In the middle of the room is a circle scribed in the ashes of her family. A small candle burns with an eternal green flame, her contact with the demon she entered the compact with.

HIGHTOWER

Hightower is a bustling city. It acts as a conduit for much of the trade coming out of the mountains, being as it's where the hills meet the plains. There are numerous

tradesmen practicing crafts related to the shaping of metal, smiths proficient in using all the ores that come out of the hills set behind Hightower, and tradesmen of lower skill who simply take and convert the stream of ore coming into the city through the Hill Gate into bars or ingots for easier transportation. After being smelted, the various metals either pass through the shops of the various smiths or are given over to the wagons of the merchants that assemble near the Dust Gate, on the plains side of the city. Most of the metal goods produced by the smiths end up in the

wagons of the merchants or are dispersed throughout the lands.

The food from the lands around Hightower takes the opposite route. Trade goods enter the city by way of the Dust Gate, pass through the various shops or tradesmen that occupy the space between the two, large gates, and ultimately are loaded onto wagons headed back up to the mountains.

Hightower is about two days' travel from Hill Home on the surface. Underground, the trip is much shorter. In fact there is a tunnel that runs from a remote part of the Hightower sewer to the mysterious

drow city. Knowledge of the tunnel's existence is recent. Several criminals were excavating in the sewer, hoping to tunnel under one of the goldsmith's safe rooms to rob him. Instead, they found themselves in a smooth tunnel leading off into the darkness.

Their interest was piqued by the tunnel and the rough men decided to follow it. The smoothness showed no signs of being worked by a pick. They crept down the passage, lanterns held protectively before them, before eventually coming upon a large cavern, its end swallowed up by a darkness their light could not penetrate. They looked at each other with a grin, legends of the treasures of lost civilizations hot on their mind. As one, they descended from where the tunnel spat them out and made their way towards the center of the city, which is where they broke the divine warding. They didn't have time to scream before they were possessed by the spirits.

1. Madam Okrua's Curio

The curio is a small shop run by a stooped old woman trading in all manner of oddities. There is talk that if she doesn't have a rare item, one merely needs to

wait, for it will pass through her shop eventually. And if that fails, she is said to have contacts throughout the lands and can get her hands on the rarest of items in a timely fashion, for a price. The menagerie of items clutters the shelves, seemingly at random, but Okrua always knows where her stock is.

2. Otto's Bakery

Run by a jovial, pudgy baker, Otto's supplies most of the bread to the neighborhood, and everyone speaks highly of his skills. His shop is situated right next to Okrua's and they appear to be the best of friends. Each morning Otto sends one of his assistants to the old woman's shop with a loaf of bread, hot from the oven, which she accepts with a broken-toothed smile.

3. The Sour Sow

The Sour Sow is a bar where Madam Okrua meets with her associates. It is most famous as the place where the celebration is held after a new trader has the wool pulled over his eyes by Okrua. Traders traveling in either direction stop at the Sow and to spend time looking at people other than the ones they just made the journey to Hightower with.

4. The Crossroads

The Crossroads is a trading post owned and run by Brenda Wormwood, which she inherited after her father passed away. It is the best (and only) trading post in the town. Miners and traders frequent The Crossroads regularly for supplies.

5. Trader's Plaza

A large plaza sits near the Dust Gate where traders meet to perform their daily business. All types of products and services are exchanged here with bartering being the preferred method of exchange.

IMPORTANT PERSONS

Corrupt Dwarves

The former inhabitants of Underhome have been changed by their possession. Their bodies have slowly decayed during their confinement. While they don't resemble typical undead in the slightest, they have acquired a gaunt, haggard look atypical of dwarves. This hasn't affected their physical capabilities however.





Possession by the spirits of the drow has augmented their strength and speed, making them terrors in battle.

Aside from the physical changes previously mentioned, they are now wholly under the control of the bloodline spirits. They constantly think about killing their descendants and freeing themselves from their damnation. Despite this obsession, their years of imprisonment have taught them a rudimentary patience and a limited ability to work together. As such, they do not immediately charge out of the city once the divine warding is broken.

Thieves

The thieves who entered the drow city, now possessed by the bloodline spirits, have returned to the sewers via the tunnel they discovered. The spirits are content to stalk the fetid waterways of Hightower for the moment, but soon they will venture forth in search of their

descendants in the city above. They find themselves curiously drawn in the direction of Otto's bakery, although they are unsure why. Otto is ignorant of the spirits being drawn towards his gruesome basement. Were he to meet with them, he would be eager to bargain his services and aid in exchange for their powers.

Arthur Ironhands

Arthur was one of the men excavating the new shaft when they accidentally broke through to the cavern. The other two men fell to their deaths when the ground beneath them gave out, but Arthur was able to save himself. He got a rope to enter the cavern, but was unable to recover his companions' bodies. He was, however, able to see part of the remains of the city, although he has kept its existence to himself thus far.

By the light of his torch Arthur was able to see the tiers of the ruined city. The

flickering torch made it impossible to see if anything was moving in the shadows, although he swore he was being watched. After briefly looking for the bodies of his friends, he returned to the mine and reported his find. No one has descended into that shaft since. Despite appearing sound, no miner is willing to risk a journey down into the cavern.

Jasper Plume

The mayor of Hill Home, Jasper was elected when the previous mayor stepped down for health reasons. The townspeople call him Plume because he is one of the few people able to read and write with any fluency. His schooling, charisma, and openness to the advice of others netted him his current position.

He has black hair and a stoop from days spent hunched over books. He also has one of the largest libraries in the region. It isn't large by the standards of the more learned scholars, but it is big enough that people occasionally travel to Hill Home to gain access to his books. He appears in public generally garbed in faded finery inherited from the previous mayor.

He does his best to keep the town's best interests at heart. As a result, he is well-liked by the inhabitants of Hill Home. The stress of balancing the needs of the competing interests of the town has aged him prematurely; his hair is beginning to turn gray.

Brenda Wormwood

The owner of the trading post, Brenda supplies most of the miners with their tools and her establishment, The Crossroads, is the hub for all goods moving in and out of Hill Home.

Brenda is a young woman with brown hair and brown eyes. The success of her business has allowed her to become pleasantly plump. Her weight gain has been tempered by the time she spends on her feet doing the daily labors of running her shop, leaving her an

attractive mix of soft and fit. She typically dresses practically rather than fashionably. Despite her success, she doesn't have the resources to waste on impractical clothing. Young men have begun to frequent the shop with increased regularity, now that enough time has passed since the death of her father, in hopes of catching her eye.

Brenda inherited The Crossroads when her father passed away. Her bright personality and friendly demeanor has ensured that she is on good terms with the majority of the community, particularly the miners and the traders. After her father passed, a merchant first tried to buy her out of her shop at an insultingly low price. When that failed he opened another trading post in an effort to run her out of business. However, the community stood beside their young shopkeeper and few people even set foot in the other merchant's

establishment. He was quickly forced to move on or face complete financial ruin.

The untimely death of her father and the predatory mercantile assault on her business has caused most of the adults of Hill Home to think of Brenda as their own child. Scarcely a day goes by where she doesn't get an invite to dinner or someone's mother stopping by just to check in on their brown-haired shop keeper.

Cassandra the Seamstress

Cassandra is a middle-aged woman living alone. Her hair is streaked with white and her eyes are ringed with age lines. She moves like someone beyond her years, slowly making her way around her small house or to and from the town center. Despite her infirmity, she speaks with a strong voice and many find themselves swayed by her assertive tone.

She moved to Hill Home recently and as such little is known about her. The only

widely known fact is that she lost her husband and sons in an accident of some kind and moved to Hill Home to forget. Because of this, the residents ask little about her past, respecting her privacy.

It's all a lie. Cassandra moved to Hill Home on a quest for dark power. After deciphering an ancient scroll, she determined there was a drow city somewhere in the region. She hopes to make contact with the bloodline spirits and help them discover the location of their descendants, in exchange for magical power.

She has attained a small amount of magical power already, a minor deal with a demon that involved the sacrifice of her husband and children. It has given her the ability to compel people with her voice and speak with the bloodline spirits.

Smiling Grim

Grim is the town blacksmith. His given name is Grim, but he is unusually merry.

CORRUPT DWARVES

Corrupt dwarves are former inhabitants of Underhome now possessed by drow bloodline spirits.

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

Pace: 7; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (1)

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Throwing d8

Armor: Decrepit Leather (All +1 vs. Str+d4 or less weapons)

Weapons: Battle Axe (Str+d8)

Special Abilities:

- **Fear:** Due to their unnatural appearance, corrupt dwarves are frightening to see in the light.
- **Low Light Vision:** Corrupt dwarves ignore penalties for dim and dark lighting.
- **Plagued:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken.

PLAGUED THIEVES

The plagued thieves are humans that entered the drow city and became possessed by the bloodline spirits.

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

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 10 (1)

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d10, Throwing d10

Armor: Leather (All 1)

Weapons: Dagger (Str+d4; 3/6/12), Dagger (Str+d4; 3/6/12)

Special Abilities:

- **Fear:** Being possessed by spirits has misshapen their bodies, making them frightening to see.
- **Plagued:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken.
- **Size +1:** Possession of these humans increased their size.



ARTHUR IRONHANDS

Arthur Ironhands is a human miner from Hill Home.

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

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (Metals) d8, Notice d6+2

Armor: None

Weapons: Pick-axe (Str+d6)

Hindrances: Cautious (Minor), Pacifist (Minor)

Edges: Alertness, Luck

Calling him Smiling seemed the logical choice. He smells of soot and smelting, no matter how often he bathes. His lightly-tanned skin is covered with burns, but he hardly notices the sparks that fly when he is forging. Before moving to Hill Home, he was a road smith for a small mercenary army. As such, he is capable of forging weapons as well as tools and can provide the PCs with limited repairs to any gear they have. If they are going to spend some time in Hill Home, he can also give them a good deal on well-made weapons, but he has to make them since he doesn't keep any in stock. If the PCs descend to explore the cavern or Underhome, Grim will ask them to look out for any smithies. If they can bring him back exotic ores, he can offer appropriate compensation.

Madam Okrua

Madam Okrua is the owner of a curio shop on the fringes of the large plaza where the traders gather, near the Dust

Gate. She is well-known as a trader of oddities and merchants often bring strange and wondrous objects they have acquired prior to arriving at Hightower.

Madam Okrua is an old woman with a wrinkled face. Her gait is slow as she moves around her shop, and matches her stoop. Her fingers are long and spindly; they are as aged as her face, but can still caress a new curiosity without shaking. She hides her hair, and much of her form, in shawls and billowy garments of varied colors.

Okrua smiles easily. She has a sharp wit despite her age and is known for being a cunning haggler. She never forgets a face and always assumes the role of a doddering old lady when someone new comes to haggle with her, invariably leading them to believe her reputation is overblown, or a joke. Invariably these traders end up being fleeced by the old woman. She spends some of the proceeds at the local tavern, where many

of her best customers drink, ensuring they send new traders her way with great frequency. After the shock of their experience wears off, most traders find themselves friends with Okrua, ensuring her network of traders grows steadily. The celebration of adding a new member to what the traders consider something of a brotherhood tends to get raucous, but Okrua is never seen drinking anything stronger than tea.

Otto

Otto is the neighborhood baker. He is a portly man who smiles easily. No matter what he wears, it always appears white, stained by the flour that permeates his establishment. He occasionally takes in orphans off the street and teaches them his trade, meaning he always has plenty of help around the shop and the street urchins consider him one of their own.



JASPER PLUME

Jasper Plume is the mayor of Hill Home.

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

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

Toughness: 5

Skills: Fighting d4, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Politics) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Streetwise d8

Armor: None

Weapons: Dagger (Str+d4)

Hindrances: Doubting Thomas (Minor), Loyal (Minor)

Edges: Charismatic



BRENDA WORMWOOD

Brenda Wormwood is the owner of The Crossroads trading post.

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

Charisma: 4; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 2;

Toughness: 5

Skills: Notice d8, Persuasion d6

Armor: None

Weapons: None

Hindrances: Loyal (Minor), Pacifist (Minor)

Edges: Attractive, Charismatic



CASSANDRA THE SEAMSTRESS

Cassandra is a practicing shaman that wishes to tap into the bloodline spirits for more power.

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

Charisma: -; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5;

Toughness: 6 (1)

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Invocation d8, Knowledge (Ethereal) d8, Notice d6, Taunt d6

Armor: Leather (All 1)

Weapons: Dagger (Str+d4)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty (Major), Greedy (Minor), Vow [Demonic Pact] (Minor)

Edges: Arcane Background (Spirits), Shaman

Powers: *confusion, disguise*

Constable Darin

Darin is a hard man among hard men, some might even say cruel. Through dedication, loyalty, and competence, he has achieved a position of some standing among the High Guard. Darin is distrustful of the outside world, having spent his entire life within Hightower, practically raised among the guard. Consequently, he doesn't like Madam Okrua one bit. He also doesn't like the street urchins seemingly always underfoot, the result of having a steady stream of mercenaries and camp followers moving through the city. He therefore has little love for Otto, who he feels exacerbates the problem by feeding them.

Scar

The halfling chief gets his name from the long scar running down his face. "The aftermath of a disagreement" he tells people when they ask. Like all halflings, he is of small stature. Despite his size,

one could describe him as burley. He is famous for his physical strength among halflings, as well as his acumen. As the leader of the tribe it is his responsibility to deal with the strange, violent attack perpetuated by the dark dwarves and lowly looking humans.

His people have decided to take revenge by raiding the human and dwarven caravans on the road to Hightower until his tribe feels adequate recompense is made. Scar coordinates the raids and takes part in as many as he can. He doesn't act out of malice towards the humans, although he is hawkish; he simply doesn't feel his people will receive compensation unless they take it by force.

Urchins "The Lads"

The urchins of Hightower can be found all over the city. They live by their wits, stealing food and selling information. For those that can earn their good will, through coin or deed, they can be a valuable source of information. The head

of the group is Guppy Figgins, an adolescent who was raised on the streets. He has a steely look in his eye that inspires the other urchins to follow him. He is never seen about without his signature hat, a black cap, which he wears cocked roguishly to one side, with a peak that somehow he manages to keep at an arrow point despite his rough and tumble life.

Guppy has given the street lads a level of organization that was previously unknown. Prior to his leadership, the lads feuded among themselves and lived miserable and generally short lives. Guppy has united them into one outfit and turned them towards improving their own situation the best they can. Under his direction they have become better thieves, improving their lot in life considerably. The largest jump in their standard of living however, has come from their large network of informants. They Lads can be found on every



SMILING GRIM

Smiling Grim is the town smith.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit

d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

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

Toughness: 8 (2)

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Knowledge (Metals) d8, Notice d6, Repair d8

Armor: Scale (Torso, Arms, Legs 2)

Weapons: Long Sword (Str+d8), War Hammer (Str+d6; AP 1 vs. rigid armor)

Hindrances: Code of Honor (Major), Doubting Thomas (Minor)

Edges: Counterattack, Luck



MADAM OKRUA

Madam Okrua is the owner of Madam Okrua's Curio located near the Dust Gate.

Attr: Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Charisma: 2; **Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 2;

Toughness: 4

Skills: Investigation d6, Knowledge (Antiquities) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Streetwise d8

Armor: None

Weapons: Dagger (Str+d4)

Hindrances: Curious (Major), Elderly (Major), Loyal (Minor)

Edges: Charismatic, Connection [Traders], Luck



OTTO

Otto is the town's friendly baker.

Attr: Agility d4, Smarts d6, Spirit

d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Charisma: -; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4;

Toughness: 5

Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (Baking) d10, Knowledge (Demons) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d4

Armor: None

Weapons: Club (Str+d4)

Hindrances: All Thumbs (Minor), Doubting Thomas (Minor)

Edges: Connections [Urchins]

intersection in the city, peeking in windows, and padding across rooftops. Anywhere they can't get into, they probably know someone who can; either for coin or because the Lads know something that someone wants to keep secret.

The Constabulary

The constant flux of goods moving into or out of Hightower means that theft is always a risk. To counter this, the merchants and tradesmen hire lots of guards. The hardened men who guard the caravans and safe rooms are ready to fight at the least provocation. Consequently, Hightower deals with an unusually high amount of both theft and public brawling. To combat this, they have a strong town guard. Unlike many guards, which are prone to corruption and graft, the men of the High Guard are especially honest. They are assigned to patrol the neighborhoods they grew up in or inhabit, giving them a special interest

in seeing law and order maintained. They patrol the streets in groups of three to four, armed with clubs, a mancatcher, and a sword, for the especially rowdy.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

Exploring the Cavern

Jasper Plume has decided it's time to investigate the cavern discovered by Arthur Ironhands in Easthill to ensure there are no dangers lurking in the darkness. However, no one is willing to descend into the mysterious cavern. To that end, Jasper has put out the call for spelunkers and explorers of a daring nature to survey the cavern. The town provides room and board for any party during their exploration of the cavern.

Anyone interested learns all necessary information from Brenda. Her shop is the source for much of the news and gossip in town, more so than the town tavern,

the Sour Sow. She directs the PCs to the mayor, who negotiates the terms of all agreement between the town and the PCs. Brenda also directs the PCs to Arthur, who gives them some basic information about the cavern.

The interior of the cavern is dark, illuminated only by what the PCs bring with them. The landing below the hole in the mineshaft is a fatal fall, and with a little searching the PCs find the bodies of the men who fell through the hole. Torches reveal little of the cavern beyond the landing, casting their flickering light futilely into the darkness. Carved facades of the city beyond can occasionally be made out in the darkness.

Exploration of the cavern reveals the ruins of the drow city. It is largely intact, enough that individual rooms remain stable, if in half-decayed disarray. During the beginning of the adventure the corrupt dwarves remain hidden, observing the PCs from the shadows until



CONSTABLE DARIN

Constable Darin is the head of the town's guard.

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

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7;

Toughness: 7 (1)

Skills: Fighting d8, Investigation d8, Notice d8+2, Shooting d8, Streetwise d8, Throwing d6

Armor: Leather (Torso, Arms, Legs 1)

Weapons: Club (Str+d4), Long Sword (Str+d8), Crossbow (15/30/60; 2d6; AP 2, 1 action to reload)

Hindrances: Cautious (Minor), Mean (Minor)

Edges: Alertness, Block, Quick



SCAR

Scar is a halffling chief, leading raids upon unsuspecting travelers out of revenge.

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

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7;

Toughness: 7 (1)

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Shooting d6

Armor: Leather (Torso, Arms, Legs 1)

Weapons: Dagger (Str+d4)

Hindrances: Heroic (Major), Mean (Minor), Vengeful (Minor)

Edges: Brawny, Command, Command Presence, Hold the Line!

Racial: Parry +1, Size -1

URCHINS

Urchins are adolescent thieves running rampant throughout Hightower.

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

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 3

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Lockpicking d6, Notice d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8

Armor: None

Weapons: Dagger (Str+d4)

Special Abilities:

- **Size -1:** Urchins are adolescents and smaller than their adult counterparts.

the PCs break the divine ward surrounding the city proper. Occasional hints of their presence include strange noises in the darkness and glowing red dots seen out of the corner of a PC's eye.

After the PCs have had some time to explore, the corrupt dwarves ambush them. If there is a drow among the group the spirits focus their efforts on that PC. Otherwise, they simply attack the weakest looking PC until they are defeated. After this initial encounter, the surveillance of the dwarves is much more overt, gleaming red eyes casting their vengeful gaze at the PCs from beyond the torchlight.

After their initial attack on the PCs, the spirits are content to watch them explore. The city of the drow is rich with ancient artifacts, ranging from interesting trinkets to lost technology. The ancient shops of craftsmen contain machinery unknown to the world above and vast quantities of goods in various stages of production can be found throughout. There are also libraries containing forgotten texts full of incomprehensible writings on mysterious topics. Dropping a McGuffin in the drow city is quite easy, since the PCs can literally stumble over it during their torch-lit expedition.

From here, the adventure can go in a number of directions. If there is a drow PC, perhaps the spirits erupt from the mining tunnels and assault the town, eager to find their descendants and be done with their curse. Maybe they are content to allow the PCs to explore their city, occasionally attacking them when their murderous urges get the better of them. That being the case, the adventure can be an exploration of a pre-apocalypse city. This allows for a great deal of light to be shed on the history of the setting. The PCs can also discover whatever McGuffin is needed for the

campaign, perhaps a scroll, relic item, or piece of technology.

Corrupt Dwarf Eruption

This adventure seed begins the evening Arthur Ironhands discovers the cavern. The PCs are in town, for whatever reason, at the inn when Arthur enters. He relates the deaths of his fellow miners and the details of the cavern below. The curiosity of the villagers is piqued, but most think it's just another mining accident; that all changes at midnight.

The town is awoken by the frantic clanging of the watch bell. As people emerge sleepily from their beds, they see eerie red dots descending from the Easthill mine. When the dots reach the light of the town the people find the red glow comes from dark-skinned, misshapen dwarves. Without preamble the dwarves begin slaughtering the townsfolk, who must mount a hasty defense. The PCs must help the townsfolk repel the invaders, who melt back into the darkness as the sky begins to lighten.

Day brings few clues as to the reason for the attack. Among the piles of dead townspeople are the corpses of several of the misshapen dwarves. One way or another, it is decided that the dwarves probably came from the Easthill mine and an expedition should be made there to determine their point of origin. Jasper offers the PCs something appropriate to get them to go to the mine and explore it.

Not long after the PCs enter the darkness of the mine, they are again assaulted by the dwarves. The dwarves are coming from the new tunnel with the shaft leading into the cavern. Once the PCs determine this, they can begin to clear the mine and work their way back to the source; the cavern. A look into the hole reveals darkness lit only by the glow of uncountable red eyes. During the day, the dwarves stay relatively inactive,

CONSTABULARY

The constabulary of the High Guard ensures Hightower is a relatively safe place to live.

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

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Streetwise d6

Armor: None

Weapons: Club (Str+d4), Short Sword (Str+d6)

Special Abilities:

- **Alertness:** The constabulary is always on the look-out for ruffians in their city, providing them with a +2 bonus to Notice rolls.

allowing the PCs to report their findings to Jasper, who suggests sealing the cave.

Doing so will take some time. Before they are able to seal it, night falls and the dwarves again begin to make their way up from the cavern, forcing the PCs to fight and defend the workers preparing to collapse the cave. When they hear the signal, they must get out of the shaft quickly, lest they be left on the wrong side or it collapse on them. If they leave too early though, some of the dwarves might escape.

For bonus points, have the first collapse fail, let the PCs hold the dwarves all night, then have Jasper decide to collapse the whole mine. Let that go on into the night, and have the dwarves assault the entrance while they are finishing the preparations to collapse it.

Or even better, have the dwarves offer the PCs something in exchange for their

help: knowledge, power, the return of a loved one, anything to get them to let the spirits free to find their descendants.

Exploring Underhome

If the PCs can find a way past the spirits, locate the tunnel leading to Underhome, and find a way to breath underwater, they can have access to the dwarven city. The inhabitants abandoned everything they couldn't carry, meaning the city is full of valuable material goods, ranging from weapons and armor designed to withstand corrosion to rare scrolls illuminating dwarven technology kept secret from the other races. Jasper in particular will be interested in any written documents the PCs can bring back with them.

After their first trip to Underhome, the PCs encounter a dwarf in Hill Home, Borris Goldhelm, a trader who was away when the disaster struck. He rewards the

PCs handsomely if they seek out his family heirlooms; a golden helmet and an ornate chest containing elaborate dinnerware.

Cassandra

Cassandra is in the midst of preparing another deal with the demon who granted her initial magical power. She is currently seeking victims to sacrifice to the demon. For the purposes of facilitating a new bargain, the demon has gifted her with unnatural strength and stealth, allowing her to abduct unsuspecting townsfolk in the night.

The arrival of the PCs can go a number of ways. They can be viewed with suspicion, as the cause of the disappearances. This being the case, maybe Jasper has a text they want to look at. If they could find the cause of the disappearances, it would definitely change the town's attitude. Alternatively, they could be hired to

actually solve the mystery of the disappearances. A suitable investigation might end with them tearing open the trapdoor only to be nauseated by the odor that springs forth. When they descend into the small chamber, they are greeted by the sight of all of Cassandra's victims, packed into the little available space, bound and weakened. Saving the victims might be the end of it, until Cassandra appears down the road, seeking revenge.

Or the demon could appear out of the green candle flame. Bonus points for having him possess each body, forcing the PCs to kill or maim the townsfolk as the demon jumps from body to body.

The Descendant

Perhaps the descendants of the bloodline spirits have been wiped out to a single man, who happens to live in Hill Home. The night after the divine warding is

FAITH & DEMONS
THE RISING
Historical dark fantasy mythology
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*Grab your sword or axe and harness
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broken, the corrupt dwarves come pouring forth from the mine and begin assaulting the town. There are losses on both sides and it looks like the spirits are going to win. When their dwarf host is killed, they inhabit the bodies of some of the weaker townsfolk. Suddenly though, they pull back to the edges of the town. After about thirty minutes of eerie silence, a single dwarf comes forward asking for parley.

The spirits can sense their last descendant is within the town, a drow named Trizzid. They say they will spare the town if he is brought forward to be killed by the spirits. Otherwise, they vow to destroy the town in their quest to find Trizzid. Giving the townspeople one hour to decide, the dwarves fade back into the darkness. The only sign of their presence is the glow from their eyes beyond the town's lights.

Some of the townsfolk support handing over Trizzid, who is hiding somewhere in the town. Cassandra and Brenda don't want to hand him over, claiming the dwarves will just destroy the town anyway. Brenda acts from genuine belief. Cassandra has an ulterior motive; she wants to capture the drow then exchange him for powers the spirits can grant her before they disappear.

Jasper is reluctantly in favor of handing Trizzid over. He genuinely believes the dwarves will leave Hill Home alone if they give up the drow. The townsfolk fall roughly equally into either camp. If the PCs want to give up the drow and they are aware of Cassandra's associations, finding a way to expose her during the debate would be helpful for their cause.

If the PCs convince the town to give up the drow, they need to find him before their hour is up. If they decide to stand against the dwarves, Trizzid is the first to flee from the conflict. If, or when, the dwarves discover this, they abandon the town and pursue him, leaving the

townsfolk to put their lives back together the best they are able.

Trizzid

Trizzid is a drow who recently arrived in town. He is ignorant of the fact that he is a descendant of the spirits in the cavern, but is unknowingly drawn to the lands around Hill Home. He has expressed to several of the townsfolk that he feels more comfortable in the low hills than he has felt anywhere else he has had cause to live. Trizzid is a gem cutter, and hopes to take advantage of the mines, which have been known to produce gems from time to time. Unlike the majority of his race, Trizzid is neither hot-tempered nor quick to act. He exhibits a high degree of patience and tends to think things through. Not fleeing from the dwarves though, he makes tracks as soon as it looks like they are going to make good on their threat to burn down the town.

Trizzid is short for a drow and has delicate fingers and bright eyes. Around town he can be seen wearing a cloak, usually with the hood pulled up. In his home and shop, which are next to Brenda's, he wears the tools of his trade. To protect his eyes, he keeps the shop relatively dark, except for the display cases.

News Travels Fast

Before the PCs, or anyone else, can get down into the cavern and break the divine warding, word of the discovery makes it to the surrounding regions. Explorers, treasure hunters, perhaps even an army, arrive in an attempt to get a share of the treasure everyone is sure is waiting below and ripe for the taking. Unfortunately, some of the people have darker motives. They are hoping to take advantage of the cavern, whether to rob the town and explorers, or to engage in some sort of evil bargain with the spirits.

The Baker, the Old Woman, and the Constable

Constable Darin doesn't like Madam Okrua. He never has, and recent events have led him to believe she might be a shaman, or worse. Reports of strange happenings near her shop have led him to suspect that some of the objects in her shop harbor the power of dark magic. He has posted guards to watch her shop around the clock, but thus far they have found nothing when they peek in her windows late at night.

Darin is frustrated; the reports of strange instances are increasing but he is unable to find anything linking Okrua to the happenings. Little does he know he is looking in the wrong place.

The strange happenings are really occurring at Otto's bakery. Unbeknownst to everyone but Okrua, Otto is researching things best left alone. He and Okrua feign friendship for the populace, but each would love to see the other destroyed. To date, Otto hasn't managed anything as grand as summoning a demon; he has been limited to cantrips and runic enchantments. He has been recruiting apprentices from among the street children of Hightower, allegedly to teach them his trade and improve their lot in life. No one questions, so far, when they vanish, assuming they left the city in search of somewhere to pursue their new trade. The reality is quite different.

Otto has been sacrificing the children he takes in, attempting to unlock the secrets to summoning a demon. The bodies of the children are cast into a tunnel he discovered while excavating a place to bury them. This tunnel happens to be the same one discovered by the would-be gold thieves.

Okrua is aware of the actions being taken by Otto, but lacks the power to stop him. She has been mobilizing her network in hopes of finding an item or individual

that might bring Otto's activities to a stop. She has heard of an item that might serve her purpose and set one of her associates about acquiring it, but it will require special transport to reach her, unmolested by any nefarious associates of Otto.

The clandestine duel between Otto and Okrua continues under the nose of the constable. If solid evidence of Otto's actions could be presented to him, he would be swift to act in defense of his precious city.

Halfling Invasion

The thieves, possessed by bloodline spirits, have lured other members of Hightower's underclass into the sewers to be possessed. Having failed to find any of their descendants among the

inhabitants of Hightower, they made their way into the countryside, searching.

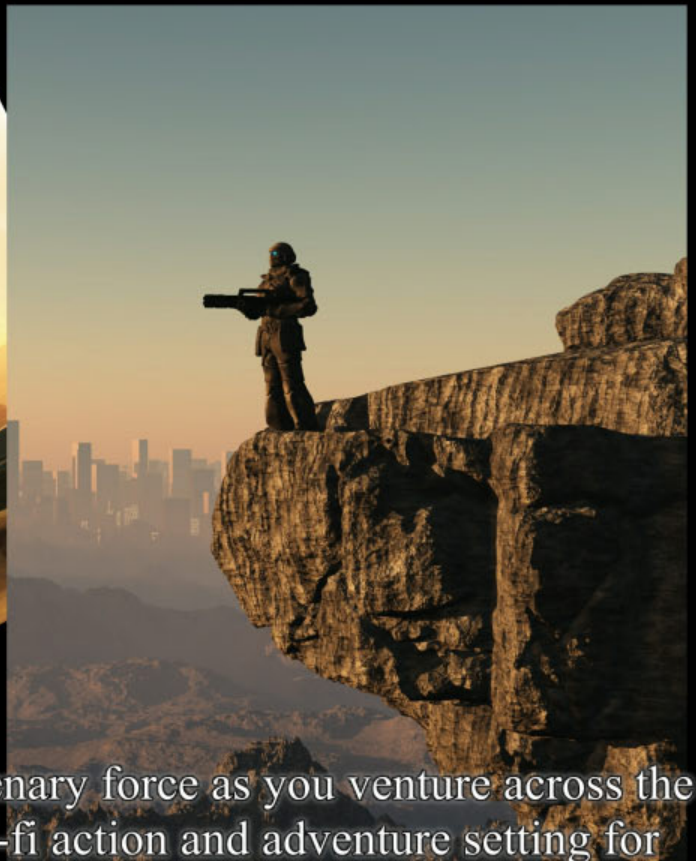
Eventually they came upon a camp of halflings. The bloodline spirits fell upon the halflings, slaying or possessing them. After gathering a few halflings into their numbers, the spirits withdrew and now continue looking for their descendants.

The halflings are also looking for something: revenge. They have begun to raid caravans traveling to and from Hightower. There are murmurs of the attacks making their way through the traders and some of them are reluctant to make the journey, despite the loss of profits.

Trade season is nearing and the rulers cannot have it disrupted by a pack of angry halflings. The High Guard has had

poor luck tracking the halflings down, accustomed to city life as they are. The lord of Hightower has put out a call for adventurers to track down the diminutive harriers. The influx of armed men into Hightower has increased the need for the High Guard considerably, making the city leaders more loath to send them into the wilderness.

The halfling problem can be resolved in a variety of ways. The halflings are not acting out of malice, but misunderstanding. Someone might be able to reason with them, if they could be found and communicated with. Alternatively, the whole tribe can simply be wiped out. The lord of Hightower doesn't care; he just wants the trade to flow.



Join the mercenary force as you venture across the stars in a sci-fi action and adventure setting for Savage Worlds, available from Mystical Throne Entertainment

Savage Insider Premium contained a wealth of *Savage Worlds* content spanning the genres with much of it useful across multiple settings. During the course of publishing the five issues, a lot of content was extracted and released as standalone products for specific settings, such as *Mercenary Breed* and *Faith & Demons: The Rising*. This resulted in a lot of duplicated content.

To remedy this, Mystical Throne Entertainment has decided to compile all non-extracted content from *Savage Insider Premium Issues #1 - 5* into a single offering. Thus, we bring to you the first *Savage Insider Deluxe* issue, filled with the remaining compiled content from *Savage Insider Premium Issues #1 - 5* in a single release. The content herein is primarily setting agnostic and can be utilized across multiple settings or within your own homebrew.

Savage Insider Deluxe Issue #1: Modularity contains a wealth of content covering fantasy, sci-fi, and horror. The modular design of *Savage Worlds* means you can add new mechanics, ignore existing ones, or modify ones to your liking without breaking the system. We embrace this concept in all of our *Savage Insider* releases and especially exploit that herein.

Savage Insider Deluxe Issue #1: Modularity includes:

Auspicious Archetypes:

- Cataphract - A shock trooper archetype great for breaking shield walls
- Engineer - When you need a smith or mechanic, look toward your engineer.
- Hierophant - As cultic priests, hierophants are knowledged in the ways of the occult.

Expanded Mechanics:

- Voidlancer - A new look at ship-to-ship space combat with an emphasis on cinematic.

Great Adventures:

- Community Service - A dark fantasy delve into an abandoned underground temple for *Ancient World*.
- Flight of the Fancy - A black powder fantasy adventure with a peek at *Dragons of Avalon*.
- Seven Kings of Shambhala - A pulp action adventure into the depths of the Hollow Earth.
- The Secret of Isla de Monos - A pirate adventure out to an island of secrets.

Racial Profiling:

- Dhampir - Rule the night with this half-vampire race.
- The Lokka - Deceive the masses using this shapeshifting race.

Surveyed:

- Lord Bane - Enter the domain of Lord Bane and all its chaos.
- Underhome - Careful of this village and its secrets.

