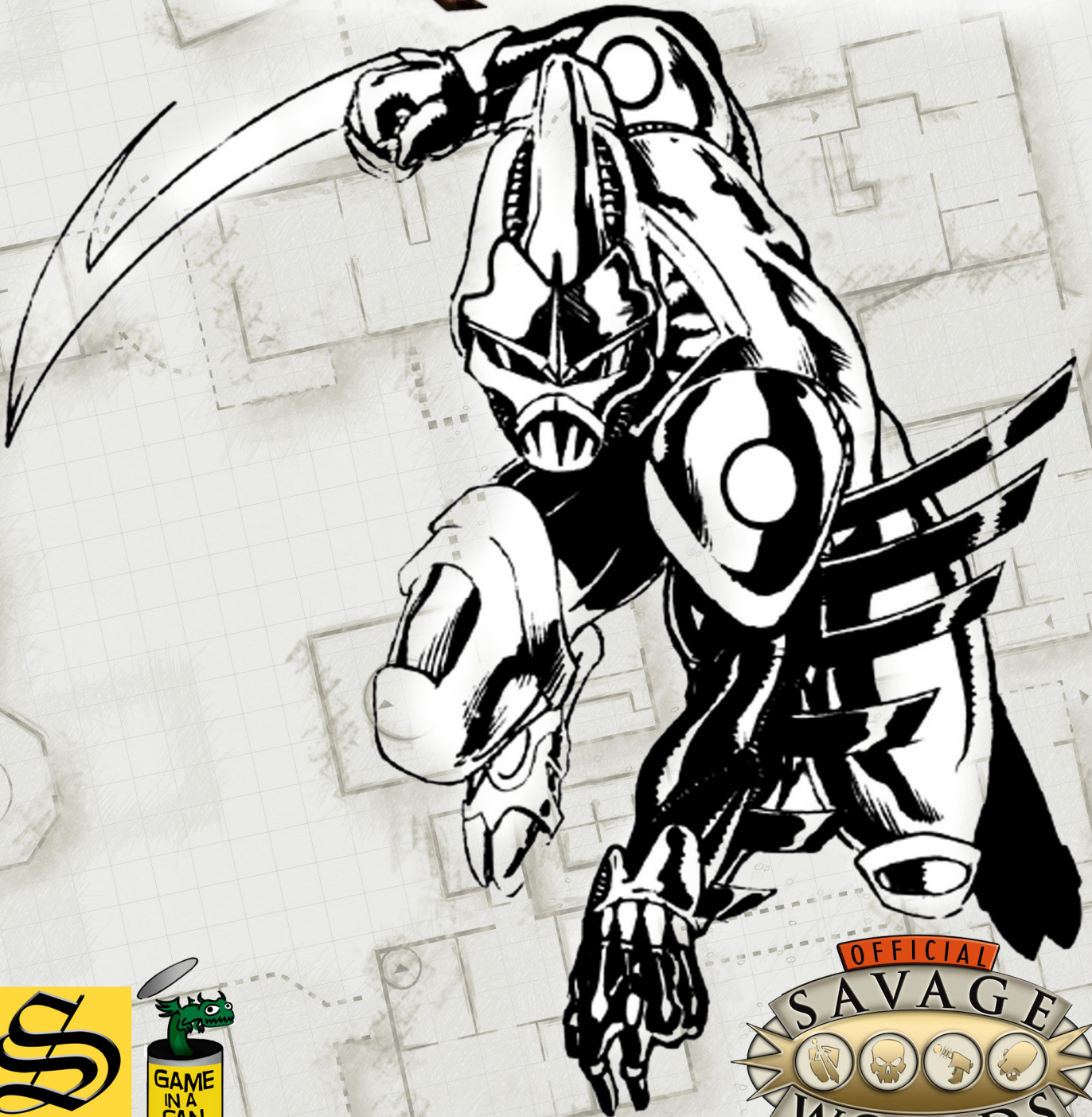




BURNING BRIDGES



BURNING BRIDGES



GAME IN A CAN

Burning Bridges is a Game-in-a-Can scenario presented by Storyweaver Productions, and is an excellent way to start gaming in the world of Hael. The characters and events that unfold here are centred around the efforts of a Daeorc noble attempting to prevent a major war, and the attacks of an assassin who is trying to start it. This module also details the central section of the 'High-Bridge' that links northern and southern halves of the Imperial city of Crossplains, and in fact the northern and southern continents of Hael.

Adventure requires the 'Hael' rule-book, and the Savage Worlds core rules in order to play.



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PROLOGUE

Lord Dreka shifted uncomfortably in the saddle of his horse as the water churned fifty meters below. 'Daeorcs were never meant for the water,' he intoned to his squire Akah.

'Lord, it's the place where the seas join. The Sea-of-Stars and the Western Ocean meet in this canyon. They say the waves can touch the the High-Bridge when they come together.' Akah could not fail to convey his enthusiasm as he related what he knew of the fabulous spectacle.

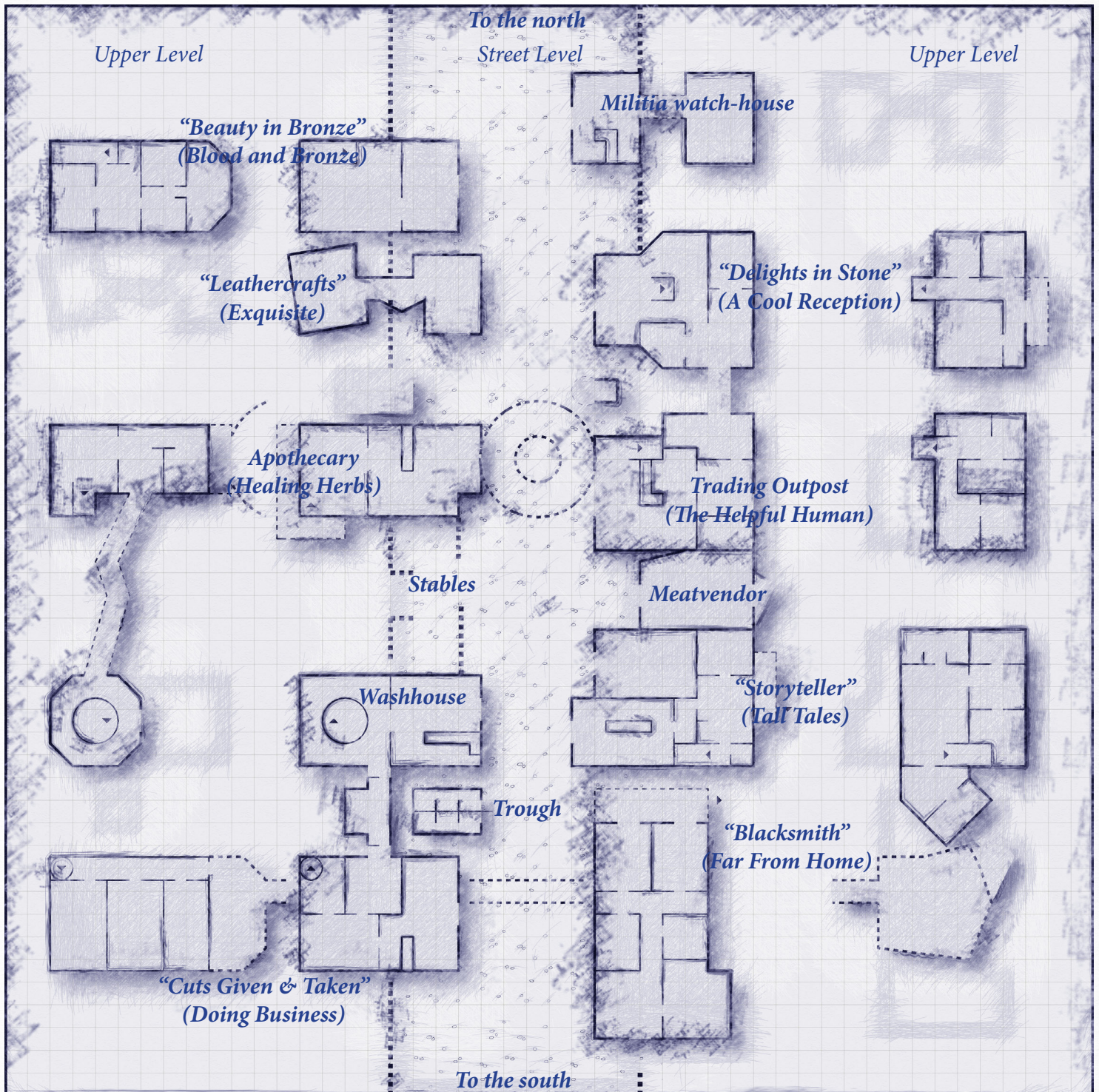
Dreka found his squire's commentary unsettling, but was determined not to show it. Aside from the fact that the squire was just a boy, he was half-human, and the Lord's pride would not stand him to be seen as scared when a Daeman stood tall.

As well as being a conduit for north-south commerce within the city of Crossplains, and between the Daeorc Dominion and Yaena Empire, this bridge was a commercial district in its own right, and obviously home to many more dwellers than must have originally been planned. The 'official' stores and offices that lined the sides of the bridge all had ramshackle structures attached, some perched precariously over the edge of the bridge itself and seeming in immanent danger of plunging into the water and drowning. Everywhere Lord Dreka looked was a 'shock' of exotic southern architecture and colours!

'Finding our Yaena contact in this mess is not going to be easy...'



MAP OF THE HIGH BRIDGE AT CROSSPLAINS



GMs and players should note that not only locations with (parentheses) listed on the map are detailed in the adventure.

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BLOOD AND BRONZE

THE BRONZESMITH'S SHOP

"The sign above the door says 'Beauty in Bronze' in both Yaenic and Ardek stylised letters. A young Daeman peering worriedly from the mostly shut door is a dead giveaway that something is wrong. When he sees you he reluctantly leaves the shop and approaches, almost pleading, "Please sirs... are you friends of the Dominion? We need help... someone has been attacked... my master... please help me...."

Hiding in the shop and home of Y'ri the Yaena Bronzesmith, the Daeman boy is a squire by the name of Akah, and his master is Lord Dreka, a noble Daeorc hailing from one of the oldest families in Blackrock, the capital of the Dominion. Dreka is on a personal mission to make contact with an Imperial merchant who has proposed to sell him important information regarding the plans of the Nuclarine. Because Lord Dreka suspects that Duke Rhus Takari would forbid such an exchange, as a war would cement his position as the new Sovereign, Dreka has acted alone and is without allies in Crossplains.

When the assassin attacked, they used a Nuclarine 'spinner' which, during its one and only attack-run sliced a deep, bleeding slash into Lord Dreka which prevents him from moving, before burning out when it got stuck in a thick bronze urn where it now lies! Even with magical or Call-en healing Dreka will consider it dangerous to keep moving around - better his would-be assassin believes him dead. So he needs allies, especially since his squire is a Daeman, and the Yaena are notorious for their dislike of cross-breeds...

PLOTS

- Lord Dreka was informed via an anonymous scroll to come to the centre of the High-Bridge, and that his contact would recognise him on sight - but now Dreka feels it is unsafe to walk around. He needs the PCs to question all the merchants on this part of the bridge and determine if any hold sympathies with the Dominion, or have strong anti-war motivations. If they find anyone who fits this description they should approach them and try to discover if they were waiting for Lord Dreka, and if so persuade them to come to the Bronzesmith's shop. Of course, anyone crazy enough to want to hunt down a Nuclarine assassin is also welcome to share Dreka's problems!
- The Bronze merchant is a Yaena artisan named Y'ri who has remained quiet and helpful up until now mostly out of shock at what has happened. Once he sees that Lord Dreka carries weight in the north, Y'ri will demand that he be compensated for his troubles in coin (which Dreka will grudgingly hand over to keep him quiet) but after a while Y'ri will demand that Dreka be removed as he fears he will earn a reputation as a Dominion sympathiser. Eventually the Y'ri will take his message to the street and cause quite a stir, which may attract the attention of Lord Dreka's contact, but make it difficult for a discreet meeting.

RUMOURS

Public-knowledge: The Empire has announced that the Nuclarine have started providing powerful new weapons to elite Imperial troops and agents.

Public-knowledge: It is widely debated in Crossplains whether the new Sovereign Duke Takari is marshaling an army of untamed barbarians in Glowbane, to invade the Empire unless the Emperor revokes the treaty with the Nuclarine.

AKAH

Daeman, Novice

Aspiring, Criminal

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8,

Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigour d6

Skills: Fighting d4,

Language(Ardek) d8, Knowledge

(Heraldry) d6, Stealth d6,

Streetwise d4, Notice d4

Charisma 0, Pace 6

Parry 2, Toughness 5

Special abilities

◆ **Darkvision**

◆ **Outsider (Minor)**

Gear: Dagger. Pen and parchment.

Riding pony.

Notes: Akah is clever and resourceful and well placed to aide the heroes if they give him instructions, although he will only leave his master if Dreka orders him to do so.

A COOL RECEPTION

THE CERAMICS SHOP

"Beautiful ceramic vases are artfully scattered around the front of a shop with a sign proclaiming 'Delights in Stone' in Yaenic script. The artisan can be seen inside working on his latest masterpiece. He ignores stares and comments from untamed passers-by, but nods in appreciation to any Yaena who comment on his work. A young Yaena girl stands at the back of the shop concentrating on the books of order and sale, and sorting out Cuts stamped with Choki into different piles."

The artisan is Master Surao, a well respected ceramics craftsman and a noted patriot of the Empire. His daughter looks after the business and accounts ever since her mother Kora was killed - she died when a caravan of porcelain she was taking to Glowbane was attacked by Halfling raiders. Ever since then Master Surao has been scathing of any untamed who approach him.

Surao's daughter, Kira, has followed in her father's prejudices. While Surao will be disdainful of the untamed, if they have money then Kira will appear to befriend them in order to sell them over-priced ceramics and possibly later accuse them of theft! If and when she is called out as a fraud by an unlucky customer, she is skilled at acting the innocent and in turn will accuse them of falsifying records. As an expert of the account books, Cuts, and Choki, she can easily cover her tracks from investigation. The only untamed on the whole bridge that Kira can tolerate is Mithro the Kirene apothecary, because he gives her and Surao free herbs and poultices when they are not well, but she still refuses to do business with him.

PLOTS

- While it is true that Master Surao is disdainful of the human and his 'trading outpost' next door, his daughter Kira is determined to get the offending untamed kicked off the bridge. For this she will offer the equivalent of 200 Gluts in terms of a Cut made under the shop's name, and she can also put in a good word with Keila at leather-craft shop to arrange for a set of Yaena leather clothing to be tailored for one person. The only problem is that if her father were to find out about her crusade he would be quite upset (not so much with the treatment of the human as with her going behind his back) and the whole deal would be off.
- If the PCs are amenable to the idea, Kira will up the ante to having the human trader killed, his body to be left on the road for all other humans to see and spread the word that they are not welcome on the bridge. For this she would stamp a Cut the equivalent of 500 Gluts, and enough influence with the Leathercrafter for a full set of Yaena battle armour (although this offer does not extend to cover an untamed recipient).

RUMOURS

Kira: A Daeorc from the north was attacked by a Human assassin and is now holed up in the Bronze-merchant's shop, too injured to be moved. Apparently the Human used some kind of strange weapon or poison.

Public-knowledge: Untamed raiders have been attacking Imperial forces around Tenderfoot Spring and the southern desert. This is in retaliation for the signing of the Nuclarine Treaty [Kira: 'Which is a great thing for the Empire!']

KIRA

Yaena, Novice

Aspiring, Professional

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8,

Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigour d4

Skills: Healing d4, Intimidate

d6, Knowledge(Accounts) d10,

Language(Yaenic) d8, Notice d6,

Streetwise d6, Persuade d6, Taunt d6

Charisma 0, Pace 6

Parry 2, Toughness 4

Special abilities

◆ **Darkvision**

◆ **Sense of smell**

◆ **Derogatory** (Minor)

Gear: Account books

Notes: Kira will befriend other Yaena,

but be overly curious if they appear to be consorting with the untamed.

She is pretty for a Yaena, and well

liked on the bridge, and she plays

upon her innocent appearance when

she gets into trouble.

EXQUISITE

THE LEATHER WORK SHOP

"The smells of hot beeswax and raw leather emanate from a shop with the sign above the door extolling 'Leathercrafts' in bold and colourful Yaenic letters made from cured animal hides.

Straeder saddles, Haeger bridles, vambraces, scabbards for blades, as well as beautiful ornamental pieces are all on display and visible through the windows. At the back of the shop a comely Yaena craftswoman sits behind her workbench, intent of some intricate stitching she is finishing off. She whistles as she works, a gentle but complicated Yaenic tune recently made popular by storytellers and other performers."

The craftswoman is Mistress Keila. She is well known across the bridge and into Crossplains on both sides as having an eye for detail and the ability to craft the most complicated items that can be made with leather. Unfortunately she enjoys the pleasure of the Storytellers a little too much, and nearly drove herself broke wasting her time and gifts on one such teller of tales. He led her a merry chase, before breaking her heart and telling her he was bored of her and failing to return her gifts. Keila was forced to sell her large house and shop on the southern shores and move to the cheaper rental of the bridge. She longs to return to the southern shore and is now working hard to get there.

Like many Yaena artisans she is cautious about trading to Daeorcs, and outright refuses to trade with the untamed.

PLOTS

- Keila is not yet fully over her infatuation with handsome young performers and paying them for private performances, and the local storyteller Kwa'rool has recently apprenticed his son by the name of Tyr'rool. Keila does not have enough money left to pay for a private performance, and is now too worried about going broke to entertain the idea of an audience. However, if someone could persuade, or learn what would persuade young Tyr'rool to put on a private performance, she would waiver her restrictions about trading with the untamed, and offer any Daeroc or fellow Yaena a steep discount on anything they wanted from her shop, or any other reasonable favour.
- As part of solving her debt problems, Keila transferred a lot of her debt to the local Lending House located nearby on the bridge. Since all Yaena financial records (Cuts) are written on paper, and sometimes leather, they are easily damaged by fire! If someone who she felt understood what it meant to live in debt/servitude could be trusted with destroying the record of her debt she would be forever grateful...

RUMOURS

Keila: The Daeorc Swordsmith in the nearby shop acts suspiciously and is probably a spy for the Dominion!

Public: The number of Yaena ordering leather clothing and armour has risen dramatically of late, as locals fear and invasion from the Dominion, and perhaps even betrayal by the Nuclarine.

KEILA

Yaena, Seasoned

Aspring, Professional

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

Skills: Healing d4,

Knowledge(Leathercraft)

d10, Language(Yaenic) d8,

Language(Ardek) d4, Notice d6,

Persuasion d6, Taunt d6

Charisma 2, Pace 6

Parry 2, Toughness 4

Special abilities

◆ **Darkvision**

◆ **Sense of smell**

◆ **Ambitious** (Minor)

◆ **Charismatic**

Gear: Leather-crafting tools.

Notes: Keila is a pacifist who tries to avoid bloodshed at any cost.

She is charismatic, easily finds (and loses) friends, and would much rather be entertained than protected or lectured to.

THE HELPFUL HUMAN

A TRADING OUTPOST

"There is no sign outside this 'shop', but you can immediately tell what it is without having to ask - a trading outpost from the untamed lands. Such shops spring up whenever a outsider brings in new or seasonal items that capture the public imagination, and fade away just as quickly. The trader is a human, better dressed in the Daeorc style and more cleaned up than usual, with a cunning smile he hopes will entice passers by to part ways with their money."

The trader's name is Guerin, and he is Call-en. Several years ago he was a wanderer between Crossplains and Farrow, occasionally resorting to raiding when food ran low. That was how he first met Professor Grumin Tarsh of the Blackrock Academy (see Welcome to Hael), who took Guerin's word to be his guide and guard. After a year of travelling together Guerin learned that Professor Tarsh was an unusual Daeorc in that he did not judge the untamed as a group, but let each individual stand on their own merits. When their travels ended, Guerin accepted Professor Tarsh's offer to spy for him in the guise of a wandering trader. Guerin has been on the bridge before, sometimes scouting out Warpack numbers and manoeuvres, and this time looking for any evidence of the Nuclarine. Should he encounter a Nuclarine, he has a weapon from Professor Tarsh that he hopes will prove that they are vulnerable - a Lightning Rod!

Currently, Guerin is barely accepted; tolerated on the bridge, although business is slow.

PLOTS

- ◆ Guerin will question the players about the Nuclarine, and whether they have seen any strange technology. He will offer to buy anything the players can locate at a handsome markup, suggesting he has had requests for 'several prominent' persons.
- ◆ Guerin is finding it hard to fit in amongst the Yaena, more-so now that tensions have risen substantially. He knows that Kira (from the ceramics shop) is his most vocal antagonist. He has amassed a considerable wealth as part of his cover as a trader, and is prepared to use this to bribe other vendors to support him and win favours, but needs a go-between they will trust.
- ◆ Guerin has identified Tyr'rool, the son of the local storyteller as having come of age to train with the Warpacks. If there are serious moves to militarise the south Tyr'rool should be getting called up soon. Guerin would like to know if "any of the other traders are having difficulties keeping workers."
- ◆ Should the Nuclarine assassin (see later) openly attack the PCs, Lord Dreka, or his Yaena contact, then Guerin will deploy the Lightning Rod that was given to him - he has trained just well enough to use it.

RUMOURS

Guerin: The nearby leather-crafter makes amazing Yaena clothes and armour, but they are expensive and she would never deal with a human.

Guerin: Reports from the south indicate that the Nuclarine have consolidated near Tenderfoot Spring, where they are gathering all the slaves the Empire has given them.

Guerin: Duke Takari, the new Sovereign of the Dominion, is currently being opposed in private by many of the noble Blackrock families for his aggressive new stance towards the south.

Public: The Empire has announced that the Nuclarine have started providing powerful new weapons to elite Imperial troops and agents.

GUERIN

Human, Veteran

Outsider, Explorer

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

Skills: Call-en d8, Fighting d8, Language(Ardek) d4, Language(Yaenic) d4, Language(Human) d6, Notice d6, Riding d4, Survival d6

Charisma 0, **Pace** 6

Parry 6, **Toughness** 6

Special abilities

- ◆ **Arcane** Background (Call-en)
- ◆ **Danger** sense
- ◆ **Outsider** (Minor)
- ◆ **Power** Points: 10

Powers

Clash, Projecting, Speaking

Gear: Lightning rod. Sword. Horse.

Notes: Guerin is loyal to Professor Tarsh and has joined in his ideals of trying to prevent war between the Dominion and the Empire. Otherwise, he plays the role of an 'untrustworthy human' very well.

TALL TALES

THE STORYTELLER DEN

"Wind-chimes create a beautiful splash of sound as you pass the shop, or 'lair', of a local Storyteller. It takes a moment to realise that the tinkling from the chimes is not random, but follows the pattern of a classic Yaena tune you have heard somewhere before.

An aging Yaena sits on a pile of velvet cushions inside the shop, which is more like a parlour, composing a new work on a twelve-stringed instrument you have never seen before. He pauses to smile and bow his head to anyone who stops to observe. Behind him in the shadows of the shop a younger Yaena with similar markings, probably his son, practises an exotic dance with obvious martial applications, occasionally halting to write down notes."

Kaw'rool-the-elder has run his storytelling business on the bridge for decades. Everyone expects that his son Tyr'rool will follow in his footsteps. Being located mid-way on the bridge they get performance requests from both the northern and southern shores of Crossplains. The son, Tyr'rool, is coming into his own as a storyteller and has started to attract new clientele, especially amongst the ladies of Crossplains, Daeorc and Yaena alike. Both father and son are more accepting of the untamed than most Yaena, although they have none as clients and would reject requests from such. They are also a lot more tolerant of Daeman cross-breeds, but are an exception in this regard. At the moment the shop is more subdued as usual, because Tyr'rool has been conscripted to report to the local Warpack dens for training with the month. He is toying with the idea of refusing, but no one is sure of what the consequences would be, as conscription is unknown in living memory.

PLOTS

- ◆ Kwa'rool is secretly looking for a reliable contact who could get his son into the north. He knows he can't trust any Yaena to assist in this, but would ask a Daeorc, and maybe even resort to asking a Daeman or untamed if he thought they would be reliable. Maybe someone trustworthy would approach the human trader anonymously for help on his behalf?
- ◆ Although he does not show it openly Tyr'rool is greatly upset by his conscription, and worries that his father will not be able to support himself if Tyr'rool is forced to go off to war. He believes that if there were a way for him to change identity he could stay near his father, working as something other than a storyteller. That would be an acceptable solution - but for it to work he will need to get a new personal Choki which is a topic he knows nothing about. Perhaps the Money Lender would be able to help? In return he has his life savings to offer (assorted monies, up to a maximum of 840 Gluts).

RUMOURS

Kwa'rool: Kira, the daughter of Master Surao the ceramics craftsman, has a personal vendetta against all the untamed because her mother was killed by Halfling raiders. She is now planning some kind of petty revenge out of anger against their human neighbour.

Tyr'rool: The local Kirene apothecary, Mithro, can brew a Wildherb potion that will convince anyone to do what you say, but it is incredibly expensive.

Public: The number of Yaena ordering leather clothing and armour has risen dramatically of late, as locals fear and invasion from the Dominion, and perhaps even betrayal by the Nuclarine.

Public: Kirene pirates have intensified their raiding of Imperial ships crossing the Sea of Stars, channeling more logistical supplies to go through Crossplains.

TYR ROOL

Yaena, Novice

Aspiring, Storyteller

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

Skills: Healing d4, Knowledge(Verse) d6, Language(Yaenic) d10, Perform d6, Taunt d6

Charisma 0, Pace 6

Parry 2, Toughness 6

Special abilities

- ◆ **Darkvision**
- ◆ **Sense of smell**
- ◆ **Ambitious** (Minor)

Gear: Trip-sword

Notes: Tyr'rool is torn between duty and his family. When his mother passed away he committed to do whatever it took to ensure that his father was cared for.

HEALING HERBS

THE KIRENE APOTHECARY

"The scent of fresh-picked flowers is unmistakable as you approach the shop with the apothecary's bowl hanging above the front door. The glass windows are all closed, which you guess is to help the plants that you can make out growing in the hanging baskets inside. The occasional flash of light coloured skin tells you that the owner is not Daeorc or Yaena, and even the brief sight of more than the usual number of arms tells you straight away that they are Kirene."

Mithro is a Kirene who fell out of favour with his tribe (the Airthcallers) due to his close-friendship with the wife of the clan leader. Kirene are usually quite open minded about such matters, but Mithro discovered too late that his clan chief was an exception to the rule!

Using his skill with Wildherbs, Mithro quickly gained clients on the bridge and from both sides of Crossplains. The only local he has any grievances with is Kira, the ceramic master's daughter, although he has managed to smooth things over by offering free medicine whenever he learns that they are ill. By and large, Kirene are less persecuted than either humans and Halflings, and Mithro's life is reasonably pleasant now.

PLOTS

- ♦ Mithro will keep whispering quiet prayers to Redpaw, the Yaena idol of healing he often contemplates. If asked what he is doing, or if he notices stares, he will explain that he is warding off an 'evil air spirit' he saw this morning hovering around the bridge [GM note: What he actually saw was the Nuclarine assassin prowling for Lord Dreka's contact, hidden by a cloaking-field].
- ♦ Mithro is running low on the ceramic pottery he needs to keep making his Wildherbs - if anyone asks him to concoct some he will agree, and then feign embarrassment that he can not... but, if someone were to talk to the ceramics maker on his behalf about getting some new equipment, he would even give that person a steep discount!
- ♦ Mithro will pay handsomely for any supplies of harvested Wildherbs - Yaslin, Buro, Naro, Teelish, Akris, anything! He has noticed that a small Teelish bush grows in a pot in the office of the Money-Lender. If Mithro himself were to ask to buy it the Lender would know it was important, but if someone could approach with an offer on his behalf... Mithro could repay them with some Wildherbs he has already prepared.

RUMOURS

Mithro: Kira, the daughter of Master Surao the ceramics craftsman, hates most other untamed with a vengeance, and from the way she discreetly asks about poisons she may be planning something drastic!

Mithro: The southern Kirene tribes are being called to war by the Head Druid all across the Empire, supposedly to try and escape eradication by the Nuclarine, who have begun to hunt them.

MITHRO

Kirene, Seasoned

Technocrat, Druid

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

Skills: Boating d4, Investigation d4, Knowledge(Wildherbs) d12, Language(Kirene) d6, Language(Yaenic) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Taunt d4

Charisma 0, Pace 6

Parry 2, Toughness 5

Special abilities

- ♦ **Darkvision**
- ♦ **Quadribrach**
- ♦ **Outsider** (Minor)

Gear: Apothecary tools. Sailing skiff in the eastern harbour.

Notes: Mithro has learned to be diplomatic and to stay out of the public gaze. He still lives in tune with nature, and longs for the wilderness after having lived in a city for so long.

FAR FROM HOME

THE DAEORC SWORDSMITH

"The high pitched ring of steel-on-steel rings out from this shop. A large Daeorc Swordsmith works over a small but smoky coal furnace that sits on layers of marble sandwiched between thin steel sheets. From the way he works you can tell that the small hammer he is using sits uncomfortably in his hands, and he is used to beating heavier pieces than just the small blades and knives he works on now. A few attempts at the Yaena style of weapons are on display - highly functional, but crude by comparison, and destined never to be popular in a place like Crossplains. The Swordsmith ignores all passers-by and onlookers as he works at each piece with such a furious intensity that it surprises you that he can produce anything delicate at all. Out the back of the shop you can hear the squawk and warble of caged birds that startle with each strike of the hammer!"

Mwarn Thavic is a good blacksmith, but not much of a swordsmith. He was sent by the Daen 13th Legion out of Farrow, his Legion, to spy on troop movements crossing the bridge. The birds out the back are trained pigeons that will fly back to the Legion's Farrow barracks if released. As an artisan, Mwarn manages to turn only the slimmest of profits, and most of that comes from on-selling true Yaenic items at a mark-up, or his 'side project' of making horseshoes and building accessories like nails and hammers (Straeders do not need to be shod). Although technically a trainee smith, Mwarn has undergone full Legionnaire training, and can acquit himself well in a fight. Unfortunately for anyone trying to help Lord Dreka, the one thing Mwarn can't do is abandon his post or been seen to be colluding with a Daeorc noble, for fear of being accused of spying!

PLOTS

- ♦ Mwarn would use any excuse to get a look into the workshop of the Bronzesmith - he knows that his swordsmithing abilities are suspect, and that if he can't improve his Yaenic techniques he may endanger his cover. Of course, hearing that Lord Dreka is in need of his help is the last thing Mwarn wants - if forced he will panic, close up his shop, and yell at to be left alone!
- ♦ Mwarn believes the best way to get an accurate assessment of buying and selling in Crossplains is to get a look at the Money-Lender's books. He is sure that if he could look over the books he could tell straight away if the Empire was seriously increasing spending on their military and logistical operations. He will pretend that he wants the books stolen to erase a debt he has, but after reading the books he will turn on the unlucky thief and try to kill them or chase them off to cover his tracks - and return the books and ask for a reward, as a true citizen of the Empire would!

RUMOURS

Mwarn: The Empire has started conscription of key personnel, focusing on Storytellers to train with the Warpacks.

Public: Staeder Imperial Cavalry out of Furbrae crossed this bridge several days ago. Whether they returned south via another bridge or went north is unclear - but it could mean war is coming.

Public: Kirene pirates have intensified their raiding of Imperial ships crossing the Sea of Stars, channeling more logistical supplies to go through Crossplains.

MWARN

Daeorc, Seasoned

Underclass, Soldier

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Gambling d4, Knowledge(Blacksmith) d6, Language(Ardek) d6, Language(Yaenic) d4, Notice d6, Shooting d4, Survival d6

Charisma 0, Pace 6

Parry 5, Toughness 6

Special abilities

♦ **Darkvision**

♦ **Stubborn** (Minor)

Gear: Longsword, Crossbow, Pigeons!

Notes: Mwarn is not a hero, or a coward, but determined to fulfil his mission and retire on a pension outside Blackrock one day. He can offer aid and support if things get desperate for Dreka, but will refuse to willingly blow his cover.

DOING BUSINESS

THE MONEY LENDING HOUSE

"The smell of ink wafts out of the doorway of the Money-Lender's shop, so proclaimed by the Yaenic words 'Cuts given and taken' on the intricately-wrought, lace-iron doorway. Beyond barred windows an elderly Yaena with an unkempt mane sits behind a wide desk, scribbling and cross-referencing lines in his record books. A kettle of herbal tea boils away in the background, all but unnoticed by the Money-Lender until the subtle scent makes him sit up and take notice. A dozen book-cases line the walls, housing hundreds, if not thousand books of lending and borrowing."

Philios Yw'a led a prosperous life by virtue of his client's successes, until the Nuclarine came. Suddenly the Empire needed Cuts, Gluts, and anything else it could get to finance a massive logistical effort. Philos and many other lenders from Crossplains were summoned to Tenderfoot Spring to confer with an Imperial Storyteller and offer their best rates. Philios suspected that he would make a fortune. However, on the return journey he became lost and blundered into the site of the crashed Nuclarine ship! Realising that what he witnessed there would lead to a full scale war he was appalled, and took the drastic decision of contacting a Daeorc noble he had once done business with. Lord Dreka. At first Philios will deny all knowledge of visiting Daeorcs and will look upon anything to do with Lord Dreka with suspicion, until he can find an excuse to visit the Bronzesmith shop (**who is a client**) on his own. Unfortunately, doing so will attract the attention of the assassin, who was informed of the immanent contact with Lord Dreka, and immobilised Dreka to lure out the secret informer! **[GM note: we aren't revealing what Philios saw just yet! After reading this page immediately read the page regarding the 'Aloof Assassin']**

PLOTS

- Philios is as disparaging of the untamed as most other Yaena, and because he is expecting a Noble Daeorc to visit him, he will demand that any 'poverty-stricken savages' refrain from loitering outside his shop-front! He will not let such uncivilised peoples into his shop, even if they are accompanying friends! If forced to, he will holler for the local militia.
- Philios has most of the locals on the bridge as his customers, except the ceramics craftsman Master Surao (he does not count any untamed as potential customers). If someone could steal their Cuts from the past week of trading they would have liquidity problems and need to seek his help. Because of the way Cuts work he could not on-sell them, and be forced to dump them off the bridge, but in the long term the investment would pay off if it cost less than 700-800 Choki/Gluts.
- Philos is keen to woo some new clients from the southern shores who are coming tonight for dinner. From his gossip with Mistress Keila of the leather-craft shop, he has learned that she plans to pay for an audience with the local storyteller Kwa'rool (Not true, it was just a brief fancy!) Philios was hoping that no one else would make them an offer tonight so that he could hire then cheaply at the last minute. If anyone could see to it that Keila had a mishap that kept her 'inconvenienced' for the evening, Philios would recompense them for their troubles with a favour...

RUMOURS

Philios: The Empire has started providing odd-looking new weapons to Imperial troops, at least those on manoeuvres around Tenderfoot Spring.

Public: Duke Takari, the new Sovereign of the Dominion, is marshaling the Glowbane Legion to invade the Empire, unless the Emperor revokes the treaty with the Nuclarine.

PHILIOS

Yaena, Seasoned

Aspiring, Merchant

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

Skills: Healing d4, Knowledge(Money-lending) d10, Language(Yaena) d6, Persuasion d6, Streetwise d4, Taunt d6

Charisma 0, Pace 6

Parry 2, Toughness 5

Special abilities

- Darkvision
- Sense of smell
- Derogatory (Minor)

Gear: Dagger. Quills and record books.

Notes: Philios is scared but driven to tell the Dominion what he saw at the Nuclarine ship. He will at first be suspicious of anyone claiming to represent Lord Dreka, and will think of excuses to visit the Bronzesmith to see for himself.

ABOVE IT ALL

THE ALOOF ASSASSIN

"He looked more like a being forged from steel than born from a womb... covered head to toe in shining metal made with lethal angles, and wielding murderous weapons that cut leather and hide like water... the memory of their slaughter still taints my nightmares, and makes bad dreams a welcome relief... and now I live looking over my shoulder... why was I so unlucky as to survive?" - the sole-survivor of a Nuclarine attack."

Imperial spies intercepted the cryptic and anonymous message from the Philios the Money-Lender to Lord Dreka, and passed the knowledge on to the Nuclarine who assured them that they would take care of the matter.

By stealthily disabling Lord Dreka the Nuclarine assassin has set the perfect trap to lure out Lord Dreka's informer, and refrained from antagonising the Dominion by killing one of their Nobles. The Nuclarine assassin used a Spinner in a precision attack to disable the Lord, and has since prowled the bridge under the cover of a 'cloaking-field'. The only local lucky enough to even catch a glimpse of it was Mithro, the Kirene apothecary, who believes he saw an 'evil spirit of the air'.

The Nuclarine will wait and see who approaches the Bronzsmith's shop, and use its incredibly sensitive (but short ranged on Hael) hearing to eavesdrop on what is said. If need be it will blast a hole of the wall of the building and kill the spy with a Nuclarine Guard (see Welcome to Hael). It will then begin methodically stalking and killing anyone else who was present except for Lord Dreka, who is safe for now because of his political connections.

As the GM you should play up the cloaking ability of the Nuclarine - even a Druid hiding using Glamour will not be able to see the Nuclarine, and the first target to break cover will be in deep trouble!

Weakness: The sheer weight of the Nuclarine is its weakness, and it is too heavy to be supported on any of the rooves, or the floors in the rear structures of buildings not directly on top of the bridge. Doing so will cause it to fall through - either through the roof, or all the way through the floor into the water! It is aware of this weakness, but it can still be tricked into going where it shouldn't.

NOTES

- ◆ When Nuclarine take damage they recover 1 Wound per round, no matter how many Wounds they have received. At this point in the story of Hael there is no known way to destroy one permanently. The self-repair of the Nuclarine occurs even down on the molecular-level, and the GM should make it obvious that this is happening to any characters standing around!
- ◆ There is a great deal more to Nuclarine than is listed here, but in a nutshell they are unstoppable - but they are heavy! However, even if a Nuclarine fell through the bridge (or was Telekinesed over the edge!) they have an unlimited 'Environmental Protection' Power, and eventually they would climb out of the ocean.
- ◆ Another weakness of the Nuclarine is the magic of Hael - it limits the range, if not the raw power, of their technology. As for what is inside a Nuclarine's armoured suit, that is another story...

RUMOURS

Public: The Nuclarine butchered the first Imperial Warpacks that attacked them, without taking a single loss. They may be un-defeatable in battle.

Public: There are rumours that a Nuclarine will stop attacking if offered a living sacrifice of some kind.

NUCLARINE

Assassin

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d4, Strength d12, Vigour d12

Skills: Fighting d8, Language(any) d10, Knowledge(any) d10, Shooting d8, Stealth d4/d12+2, Notice d6

Charisma 0, Pace 6

Parry 2, Toughness 8*

Special abilities

Nuclarine*

Gear: Nuclarine Guard

Notes: See left.

AFTERMATH

WHERE TO NEXT

This starting Game-in-a-Can is offered as a way to experience a microcosm of the peoples and the problems of life on Hael, and an easy way to kick-start your campaign.

The Nuclarine Assassin

One opportunity for which there are several outlets is that the PCs end up working for or with Professor Grumin Trash, the leading Daeorc explorer (spy?) and academic of the Dominion. The human trader Guerin could certainly lead them that direction.

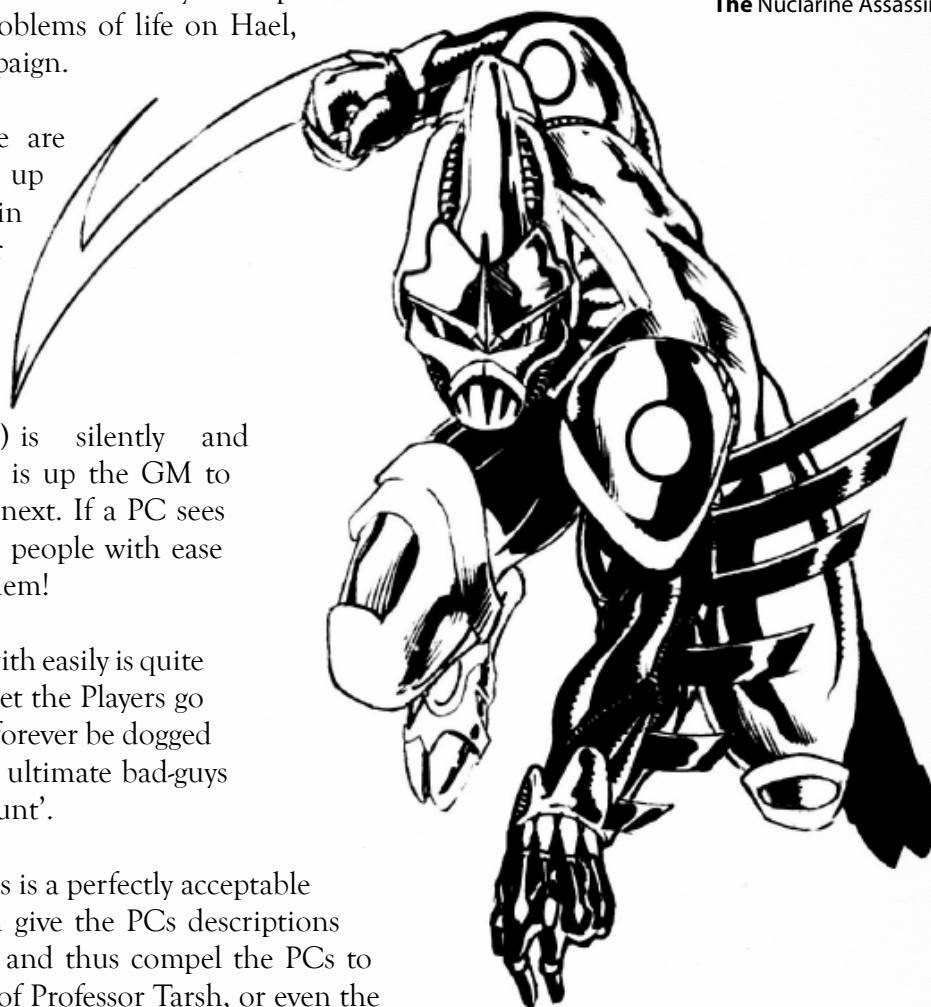
Once the Yaena informant (Philios) is silently and coldly dispatched by the Nuclarine it is up the GM to instill the fear that the PCs might be next. If a PC sees this indestructible assassin taking out people with ease and still decides to attack it, just kill them!

Allowing the Nuclarine to be dealt with easily is quite plainly not part of this setting. If you let the Players go down this path then you as a GM will forever be dogged to the fact that your Players think the ultimate bad-guys in Hael can be killed by a 'level one grunt'.

If the PCs escape with their lives this is a perfectly acceptable option - if need be the Nuclarine can give the PCs descriptions to the Imperial Warpacks in the area and thus compel the PCs to seek shelter in the Dominion as allies of Professor Tarsh, or even the untamed, which could be the a good way to start a campaign. Or it could stalk them!

If the PCs try to take advantage of the Nuclarine's weight as a weakness then encourage it. Clever play should be rewarded. If the PCs try to negotiate with the Nuclarine they will effectively be ignored (as proof, when was the last time you paid attention to a microbe on your skin demanding that you stop disrupting its life by walking around, breathing, etc?). If you have not done so already you should read the section in the Hael core rules on 'Running Hael Campaigns' and determine from the outcome of this adventure where to go from there.

And stay tuned to the Storyweaver website and Facebook group for further adventures in Hael...



CHEAT SHEET

COLLECTED NPC STATS

AKAH	KIRA	KEILA	GUERIN
<p>Daeman, Novice Aspiring, Criminal Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigour d6 Skills: Fighting d4, Language(Ardek) d8, Knowledge (Heraldry) d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d4, Notice d4 Charisma 0, Pace 6 Parry 2, Toughness 5</p> <p>Special abilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Darkvision Outsider (Minor) <p>Gear: Dagger. Pen and parchment. Riding pony.</p>	<p>Yaena, Novice Aspiring, Profesional Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigour d4 Skills: Healing d4, Intimidate d6, Knowledge(Accounts) d10, Language(Yaenic) d8, Notice d6, Streetwise d6, Persuade d6, Taunt d6 Charisma 0, Pace 6 Parry 2, Toughness 4</p> <p>Special abilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Darkvision Sense of smell Derogatory (Minor) <p>Gear: Account books</p>	<p>Yaena, Seasoned Aspring, Professional Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigour d4 Skills: Healing d4, Knowledge(Leathercraft) d10, Language(Yaenic) d8, Language(Ardek) d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Taunt d6 Charisma 2, Pace 6 Parry 2, Toughness 4</p> <p>Special abilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Darkvision Sense of smell Ambitious (Minor) Charismatic <p>Gear: Leather-crafting tools.</p>	<p>Human, Veteran Outsider, Explorer Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigour d8 Skills: Call-en d8, Fighting d8, Language(Ardek) d4, Language(Yaenic) d4, Language(Human) d6, Notice d6, Riding d4, Survival d6 Charisma 0, Pace 6 Parry 6, Toughness 6</p> <p>Special abilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arcane Background (Call-en) Danger sense Outsider (Minor) Power Points: 10 <p>Powers</p> <p>Clash, Projecting, Speaking Gear: Lightning rod. Sword. Horse.</p>
TYR ROOL	MITHRO	MWARN	PHILIOS
<p>Yaena, Novice Aspiring, Storyteller Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigour d8 Skills: Healing d4, Knowledge(Verse) d6, Language(Yaenic) d10, Perform d6, Taunt d6 Charisma 0, Pace 6 Parry 2, Toughness 6</p> <p>Special abilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Darkvision Sense of smell Ambitious (Minor) <p>Gear: Trip-sword</p>	<p>Kirene, Seasoned Technocrat, Druid Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigour d6 Skills: Boating d4, Investigation d4, Knowledge(Wildherbs) d12, Language(Kirene) d6, Language(Yaenic) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Taunt d4 Charisma 0, Pace 6 Parry 2, Toughness 5</p> <p>Special abilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Darkvision Quadribrach Outsider (Minor) <p>Gear: Apothecary tools. Sailing skiff in the eastern harbour.</p>	<p>Daeorc, Seasoned Underclass, Soldier Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigour d8 Skills: Fighting d6, Gambling d4, Knowledge(Blacksmith) d6, Language(Ardek) d6, Language(Yaenic) d4, Notice d6, Shooting d4, Survival d6 Charisma 0, Pace 6 Parry 5, Toughness 6</p> <p>Special abilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Darkvision Stubborn (Minor) <p>Gear: Longsword, Crossbow, Pigeons!</p>	<p>Yaena, Seasoned Aspiring, Merchant Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigour d6 Skills: Healing d4, Knowledge(Money-lending) d10, Language(Yaena) d6, Persuasion d6, Streetwise d4, Taunt d6 Charisma 0, Pace 6 Parry 2, Toughness 5</p> <p>Special abilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Darkvision Sense of smell Derogatory (Minor) <p>Gear: Dagger. Quills and record books.</p>



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