

The Land  
Beyond the Mountains

TFT™ Adventure Supplement

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# The WARRIOR-LORDS of DAROK

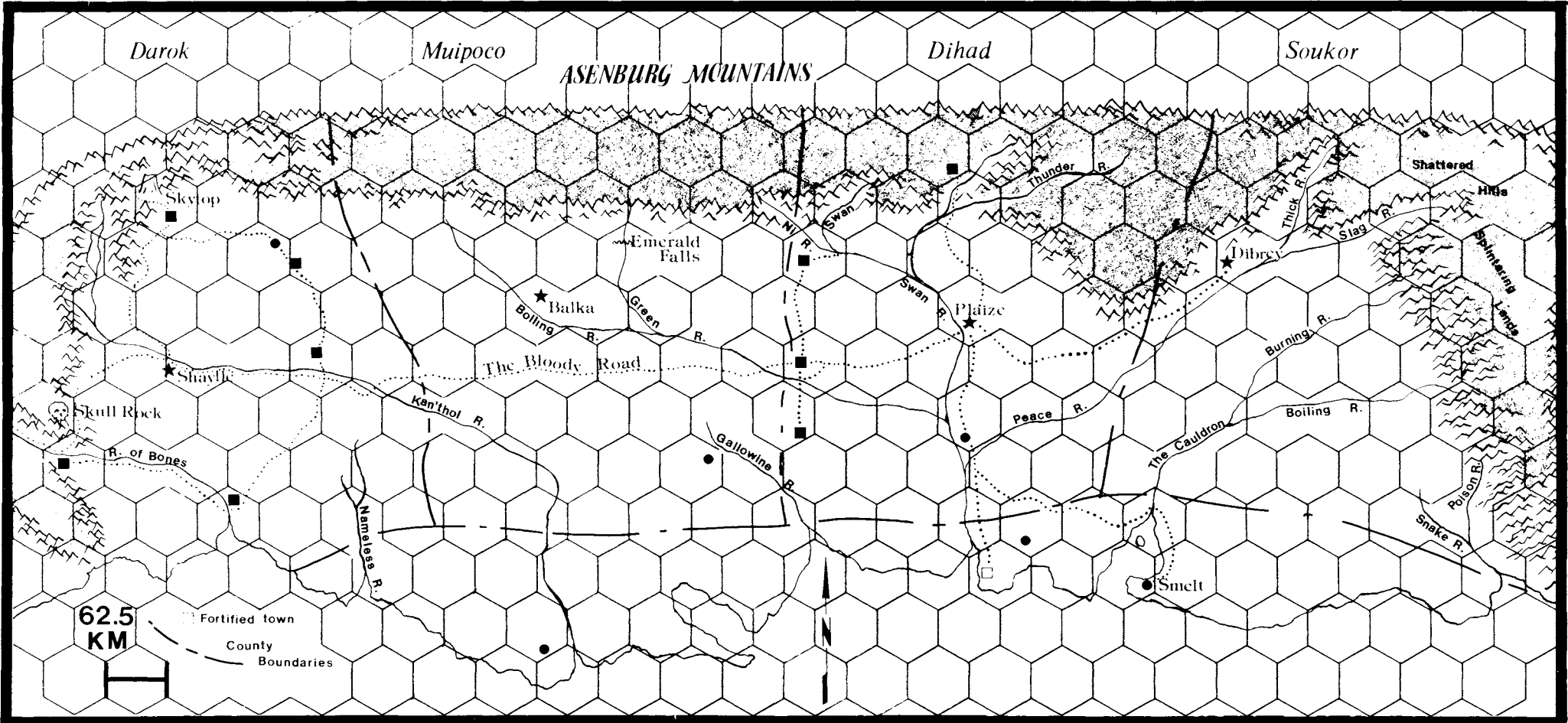


For the Fantasy Master

The Fantasy Trip™



# The Land Beyond the Mountains



# THE LAND BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS

PRESENTS

# WARRIOR LORDS OF DAROK

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to THE LAND BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS, the first in a series of campaign modules designed specifically for use with Metagaming's THE FANTASY TRIP (TFT) role playing system. Here lie rich deposits of gems and ore, and the buried relics of a forgotten Golden Age. Here are wizards and warriors aplenty, scheming to seize new territories for their liege lords or striving to keep the major trade roads through the Land safe and free for all. On these pages, you'll meet spies and scholars, raiders and traders, and many wondrous (and dangerous) beasts - in short, a myriad of opportunities for players to make (or lose) their fortunes, or attain positions of great political influence within a fast-changing, often unpredictable environment.

As can be seen from the map on the opposite page, THE LAND BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS is primarily comprised of four counties: Darok, Dihad, Muipoco, and Soukhor. Each of these provinces will be detailed in a separate volume; this book, and its companion Forest Lords of Dihad (available from Gamelords, Ltd.), are available now, with the volumes on Soukhor and Muipoco to be released later this year. Companion volumes detailing the life and denizens of the capital cities of each province will also be published; the modules dealing with Shaylle (the capital of Darok) and Plaize (the capital of Dihad) should be available from Metagaming and Gamelords in early summer. Each book is designed to stand as a separate entity, and contains all the basic information a Fantasy Master will need to use the area as a campaign locale, including: descriptions of the culture, political and military structure, and principal economic activities of the province; detailed profiles of major Non-Player Characters (NPCs); maps of significant population centers, accompanied by descriptions of the major personalities, landmarks, and business establishments in each; random encounter tables; and several introductory scenarios that can be used to familiarize the Fantasy Master and his players with the area. For best results, however, we recommend that these modules ultimately be used together, so that the campaign can take full advantage of the potential for interactions between the various power elites battling for control of the people and resources of the Land.

To utilize this campaign module effectively, a Fantasy Master must also own the basic materials that describe The Fantasy Trip role playing system: In the Labyrinth, a combat module (either Microgame #3 - Melee, or Advanced Melee), and a magic module (either Microgame #6 - Wizard, or Advanced Wizard). All the above products are available from Metagaming, or from most retail game stores. Certain portions of the above materials have been reproduced in this Campaign Module with the permission of Games Research Group Inc.

## WARRIOR LORDS OF DAROK

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## GENERAL BACKGROUND

### Terrain

THE LAND BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS (commonly referred to by its residents as the Land, and by many of its neighbors as the Vale of Blood) draws its name from the range of high craggy mountains that bound it to the north and west, known as the Asenborgs, or Hills of Ore. Travel (other than on foot) through these mountains is arduous and difficult, except at three passes (two natural and one apparently man-made) that breach the range. These passes have become busy junctions connecting the two major trade roads that pass through the Land. To the south lies the Bay of Sighs, an immense salt water body 700 km wide and almost 2000 km long, which is also a lesser source of mercantile activity. To the east, the borderlands of Soukhor deteriorate into a scarred and pitted badland that supports little vegetation; the territory further beyond is untamed tangled woodland filled with many varieties of fell beasts of prey. Thus, it can be seen readily that the Land is a relatively isolated island in the sea of Cidri's humanity, free from the sort of serious outside threat to its sovereignty that might put an end to the disputatious ways of its current rulers.

### History

The first settlers of THE LAND BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS were apparently Mnoen or pre-Mnoen, who arrived in the area about 2500-3000 years ago. Though few written records of their activities have survived, the scholars of Soukhor's College of Matter and Motion have determined that the settlers were all members of the family B'Orja, engaged in some sort of challenge or contest with a rival clan. They arrived here bearing marvelous machines to extract, and forge, and shape the rich resources of the hills near Soukhor, and were accompanied by strange otherworldly creatures trained to perform their bidding. They mined and worked the region at a fever pitch, and transported much of their plunder to other lands and continents of Cidri in grand flying craft of shining metal. They built a huge stone palace to provide for their creature comforts, and several gigantic metal obelisks atop huge platforms whose purpose is shrouded to the historians. And gradually, they transformed the once fertile land around Soukhor into a nearly barren wasteland of jagged deep chasms, sandy unfertile wastes, and streams festering with a hundred toxic poisons.

And then, one day . . . as suddenly as they had come - the settlers departed, leaving behind much of what they had brought or produced. The machines sat in their former work stations and gradually deteriorated into useless hulks (although some were buried by sand-storms, or were otherwise protected from the ravages of the elements, and still function to this day!). The palace crumbled into ruins, and most of the majestic platforms collapsed with the weight of years. The creatures too were left behind, and many died in the wasteland (as their oft-found skeletons attest); others made it to the woodlands to the east and survived, mutating into fell and savage creatures of terror.

The lands lay vacant again 'til 500 years ago, when a band of twenty legionnaires, led by Mikarth the Venturesome, set forth from the kingdom of Trevalia to the west to claim a fortune in gold whose location was supposedly foretold by a map in Mikarth's possession. Although the map ultimately proved spurious, the band found an equally great treasure of fertile unclaimed land, and returned home to raise a larger expedition of colonists to seize the opportunity. The seven score men and women who made the second journey built a small fortress near the site of the current city of Balka, and began their own much slower development of the Land. Mikarth's grandson, Muipicus, was the first to assume the title of Duke; he also undertook the building of the road that would eventually connect the thriving new province with the traders of Trevalia.

For 150 years the line of Mikarth held true, and the ducal title passed on to its eldest son. During these years, the area continued to flourish and new settlements sprouted across its face. Late in the period, prospectors in the hills north of Balka made the first big gem strikes, and commerce with Trevalia greatly expanded. Almost simultaneously, an expedition led by Kirsten Kalandai of the Duchy of Kel arrived on the scene, having finally succeeded in finding a route across the great desert that stretches for 700-2000 km along the southern borders of the Kingdom of Elyntia (Elyntia is briefly detailed in In the Labyrinth). When the trade road was extended through the rough-hewn steps that Kalandai had discovered blasted out of the mountainside (presumably by the pre-Mnoren, though no mention of this act has ever been found in their records), it seemed that nothing could disturb the prosperity of the Land.

Things, of course, are never what they seem, and it did not take long for trouble to rear its head. In year 174 of the province, the Land was ruled by Bruthe (known more commonly by the Soukhorean historians as "that cursed idiot"). This Duke had four sons, the eldest of whom were identical twins; being a weak and indecisive man, he put off making a decision on the question of succession - until on his deathbed, he shocked everyone by dividing the province into four counties, and giving each son a portion to rule. The solution, of course, satisfied no one, and within just months the twins Beremond and Boroour (who had been given the choicest territories of Muipoco and Dihad) were at war, each trying to reunite both provinces under his dominion. After a time, their younger brother Arrok got into the act as well, as he grew tired of his county's crops being raided by his supposed ally Beremond. Only Sukolor, the youngest son who inherited the ravaged remains of the pre-Mnoren settlement, was able to remain aloof from the struggle - for Sukolor reckoned correctly that he did not have the resources to wage an offensive war, and his brothers did not crave his apparently used-up lands. And so Sukolor and his people turned inward and began to delve in the ruins left by their predecessors, seeking to unlock the latter's secrets of power . . .

Matters have gone on in roughly the same manner to the present day. Although there are frequent periods of truce in which hostilities are confined to occasional border raids, the three provinces of Darok, Muipoco, and Dihad have been more or less continuously at war for all this time. The Muipocans, although placed in the unenviable position of being between their two foes, have had the greatest military success over the years. On several occasions, their armies have driven deep into Darok or Dihad, only to be forced to withdraw critical units from the attack force to respond to renewed attacks on their other border. Darok and Dihad have had their moments of glory, also, particularly at those rare junctures where they have been able to ally together and work out a coordinated plan of attack; yet here too, circumstances (often extremely curious circumstances) have intervened to prevent the killing stroke from being delivered. And all the while, Soukhor has carried on, slowly researching and rebuilding small portions of the lost technology buried within its realm, trading with (and occasionally technologically aiding) all three combatants, meanwhile professing its complete neutrality. The leaders of the other counties all acknowledge the influence that Soukhouri activities have on their policies, but none of them realize the full extent of Soukhor's control - or its commitment to keeping the situation between the various combatants in a permanent stalemated.

Of course, over the years, numerous other actors have appeared on the scene, and three of these groups now play important roles in the political and economic dynamics of the Land. The first to arrive were the mercenaries, brought from Trevalia to fight for Darok, who realized there was even more money to be made in selling themselves out as guards to the many trading caravans seeking to travel through these battle-tossed lands. Today there are nearly 800 mounted and Centauri mercenaries who rotate between two sturdy citadels that stand at either end of Muipicus' trade highway, now known in common parlance as the Bloody Road, and hundreds of others in the service of Darok, Dihad, and Muipoco. Then came the dwarves, down from the city of Rubydelve in Elyntia, lured by the stories of fabulous deposits of gems being unearthed in the Hills of Ore. They have based themselves at Khuz, an immense cavern complex (though a humble and unfinished city by dwarven standards) in the midst of the Hills, and maintain an uneasy truce with the other prospectors in that area - though bloody arguments over claim rights are by no means uncommon. The most recent - but by no means the least - arrivals were Reptile Men, who came out of the eastern wastelands 40 years ago seeking conquest. They stormed the Soukhori city of Interris, only to be decimated by the careful marshalling of the limited high-tech arsenal of the humans. The Soukhori showed mercy to the survivors, who became staunch allies of the throne - and a source of continuing concern to the other three rulers.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now the future awaits, and it is up to you, the Fantasy Masters and the players, to shape it as you will. Perhaps you will be the one to reunite the sons of Mikarth under one ruler - or to amass a fortune adventuring under hill or over sea. Perhaps too, you will fall victim to one of the many schemes perpetrated by Darok's High Priestess Aleth-aan, or the nefarious Emil Jaggoh, Councillor of Dihad - or wind up in just another soldier's unmarked grave. Whatever be your fate, we hope your days in **THE LAND BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS** bring you great enjoyment - and remember, this is only the beginning!!

## USING THE BOOK

In using the materials in this series, the FM will need to acquaint himself with a few standard abbreviations and dice conventions that will be used throughout. 1D, 2D, 3D, etc., indicate the number of six-sided dice to be rolled in a given situation. Similarly, 3/ST, 4/DX, 5/IQ, etc., indicate the number of dice that are to be rolled in making a saving roll (SR) against the specified attribute.

In many of the scenarios and encounters given in the book, the FM will be told to use the Random Tables for Fighter, Wizard, or Thief; these tables will be found at the back of the volume, on the last two pages. Here are presented many readily used minor characters with their attributes, weapons, armor, and talents or spells spelled out for fast reference. Treasure factor (as explained below) is also given, and notes provide a bit of differentiation for many of these people for the various encounters in which they will be involved.

Most of the major non-player characters (NPCs) presented in these books will be summarized in a common format, as shown below:

Drang (the Delirious) ST 14 DX 13(11) IQ 12 MA 8  
**WEAPONS:** Morningstar (2+2)\*, Light Crossbow (2),  
 2-Handed Sword (3-1)†  
**ARMOR:** Leather, Sm.Shield (+warrior, -4 hits)  
**TALENTS:** Warrior, Expert Horsemanship, Dwarvish  
**SPELLS:** blur  
**SPECIAL POSS.:** Magical weapon (+1 damage), Riding  
 horse, pouch of 6 Berserker mushrooms,  
Stone Flesh ring; TF=3

The top line of the character description indicates the character's attributes and movement allowance (numbers in parentheses are a character's adjDX when armored). The next line lists all **WEAPONS** carried by the person, with the damage done by each noted in parentheses. Any weapons marked with an "\*" are magically enhanced in some way, while a "†" is used to note weapons for which a character does not know the appropriate Weapon Talent (resulting in a -4 DX adjustment when it is used in combat); if the weapon is bracketed, "[ ]", the character carries it on occasion, rather than always. The **ARMOR** line describes all shields and armor which are being worn by a character, and lists any bonuses to damage absorption received from Warrior or Veteran talents. As above, magical armor is noted by a \*. The **TALENTS** line lists the various skills the character possesses, and any additional Languages the character has learned. To conserve space, two types of Talents are not listed on this line:

- 1) Weapon Talents for which representative weapons are already listed on the **WEAPONS** line (e.g., Drang's Ax/Mace and Crossbow Talents need not be listed because he carries a morningstar and light crossbow; conversely, a Pole Weapons Talent would be listed if he had it, because he currently carries no weapon of that type), and
- 2) prerequisite talents that are superceded by other listed skills (thus, if the character is an Expert Horseman or Naturalist, or a Master Thief or Bard, the lower level talent in each field would not be listed).

FM's should note, however, that the costs of learning known but unlisted talents have been accounted for during character construction.

All magical spells (**SPELLS** line) and artifacts are designated as arcane by means of an underline. The **SPECIAL POSS(ESSIONS)** line lists all magical weapons,

armor and artifacts, and any other out-of-the-ordinary items that a character currently owns; not all of these possessions will necessarily be on his person when he is encountered. This line will also indicate a TF, or treasure factor, for each character; these TF values are used to describe the size of the purse currently carried by the character, based on the table below.

### TREASURE FACTORS

| TF | Size of Purse | Significant Treasures (roll 2D) |
|----|---------------|---------------------------------|
| 0  | 0             |                                 |
| 1  | 1D            |                                 |
| 2  | 3D            |                                 |
| 3  | 5D            | 12 = 1                          |
| 4  | 1Dx10         | 11-12 = 1                       |
| 5  | 3Dx10         | 10-11 = 1, 12 = 2               |
| 6  | 3Dx25         | 10-11 = 1, 12 = 2               |
| 7  | 3Dx50         | 9-11 = 1, 12 = 2                |
| 8  | 5Dx50         | 8-10 = 1, 11-12 = 2             |
| 9  | 3Dx100        | 8-10 = 1, 11-12 = 2             |
| 10 | 3Dx250        | 8-10 = 1, 11 = 2, 12 = 3        |
| 11 | 1Dx1000       | 7-10 = 1, 11 = 2, 12 = 3        |
| 12 | 2Dx1000       | 6-9 = 1, 10-11 = 2, 12 = 3      |

(A "significant treasure" represents some object of greater than \$50 value - an item of jewelry, metalwork, leather, glass, etc., or any other natural or manmade substance that the FM chooses; this item need not be easy to move or carry. The actual value of the treasure is up to individual FMs, but should often be equal to or greater than the base value of the character's normal purse).

Shops and residences detailed in this volume are also assigned a base treasure factor. In addition, the building descriptions will indicate whatever types of protection against theft that the establishment uses or possesses:

"G" indicates the number of guards present during off-hours, if any; these guards are taken from the Random Fighter Table (see below). If the guard listing is marked with a \*, one of the guards is a mage.

"T" indicates the number of traps protecting the building; each trap is then further described as to complexity, location, and type. Slashed number pairs (4/3) indicates the number of dice that should be rolled by any players attempting to Detect/Remove each trap; second letter-number pairs identify the location and type of trap being employed, based on the following key:

#### Location

- E = Trap is on exterior door or windows
- I = Trap is in the building interior, near the place where the treasure is usually kept
- C = Trap is on the treasure itself, or the container (chest, case, shelf) which is holding it

#### Type of Trap

- 1 = Alarm
- 2 = Arrow or crossbow bolt
- 3 = Sleep or Freeze gas
- 4 = Contact poison (2D)
- 5 = Blade (4/DX to dodge, or 2D damage)
- 6 = Blast (4D)

Example:

Grundy's Leather Shop TF=7, G1, T2 (5/4 E1, 4/3 C5)

The shop has a basic treasure factor of 7 (3Dx50 in cash and trade goods, with some chance of a great treasure), one non-mage guard, and two traps. The traps are identified as an Alarm (on the shop's front door), and a Blade trap (on the cabinet wherein the cash receipts are kept).

# THE COUNTY OF DAROK

## GEOGRAPHY

Darok, the westernmost of the four provinces that comprise the Land Beyond the Mountains, is primarily a temperate grassland, not unlike the American Great Plains or the savannahs of Africa. The county is rather sparsely populated with human settlements, but rich in animal life - herds of wild horses, antelopes, bison and elk; larger beasts like mammoths and elephants, and members of the big cat family; and an abundance of exotic flying creatures like rocs, pegasi, and giant condors. The Darokan plains are also rich in water resources, in the form of subsurface streams and, in the rockriven uplands, several clear mountain lakes; one major river, the Kan'thol, also slices diagonally across Darok, paralleling the Bloody Road as that trade route wends through the center of the province, and then flowing placidly southeastward into Muipoco.

The human populations of the province are heavily concentrated in the vicinity of the seven large fortified strongholds that represent the last line of the county's defense. The largest of these castle strongholds is Shaylle, whose stark twin towers stand within the walled capital city that also bears its name. Shaylle Castle houses the current Commander of the Darokan armies, the sovereign lord of Darok; the outer city is notable for its large open-air trade bazaar, and for the High Temple of the cult of Akhora that stands there. These landmarks, and other portions of the capital city, will be detailed in Soldier City - Shaylle, available in early summer.

The other six "Freeholds" are called (from south to north) Feld, Tharn, Dionne, Gneiss, Grimditch, and Vale. Each Hold consists of the castle and its local environs, and 3-5 neighboring villages that are allied economically to the castle and under the protection and law of its Lord. The roads which connect the Holds with one another and with Shaylle are often little more than roughly beaten-down trails, ill-suited to wagon travel; nonetheless, the dominant terrain is flat enough that most traffic can safely traverse this crude network without too many costly delays.

Three other segments of the Darokan terrain are also well known in the tales of most of the village loremasters. The foremost of these is Skull Rock, the tall natural rock formation seemingly graven in the shape of a man's stern countenance, and said to be a manifestation of Akhora, the Prince of War and Fire. In the twisting complex of caves and crawlways that lie beneath the Rock, the priests and adherents of Akhora make sacrificial offerings and practice their rites of invocation. Some of the loremasters' legends claim that the God himself, in the form of a vengeful spectre, sometimes walks these underground corridors, planning his conquest - while others contend that a golden treasure trove worthy of the Prince of Fire lies hidden deep within the complex, awaiting his triumphant rebirth. Whatever the truth of these latter tales be, few non-members of the Cult ever venture near Skull Rock - and fewer still return to tell their tale.

The second landmark, Skytop, lies at the north-western edge of the Darokan frontier, not far from Vale Castle (the northernmost Freehold). Many of that Hold's most daring men scale this dark and treacherous crag, braving stiff unnatural winds and storms, in hopes of finding the aeries of the pegasi and rocs that reside here and luring one of these creatures into their

service. The few who succeed and become skyriders join an elite group of winged warriors whose maneuverability and speed make them formidable foes against both arcane and natural forces. Like the journey to Skull Rock, the way to Skytop is not a pilgrimage to be taken lightly; only about one in five succeed in "impressing" one of the Winged Ones, and many die, falling victim to the un pitying forces of nature that assail them en route or slaughtered by the very beasts they hope to ensnare.

The third area of note is a seemingly normal and undistinguished stretch of lowland that follows the path of an underground tributary of the Kan'thol. This region is known to Darokans as the Plains of the Stallions, for it is here that large herds of wild horses roam free, feasting on the fertile grasses that grow above the buried streambed. A scattered segment of the population makes its livelihood by capturing and breaking these wild stallions. The horsebreakers lead a nomadic existence, tied to no clan or Hold; their lifestyle is outlined in greater detail later in this book, in the section called The Plains of Darok.

## HISTORY

Although at the moment of its creation, little distinguished the people of Darok from the inhabitants of the other three provinces of the Land, events soon conspired to push them onto a drastically different course of evolution. Arrok, the third son of Duke Bruthe, was a headstrong and reckless young man, who quickly took affront at his brother's raids on his lands and joined the battle for supremacy although his army lacked both numbers and experience. To make matters worse, Arrok was no strategist, and his first attacks were ill-conceived and (consequently) beaten back rather easily. Had Beremond of Muipoco not been occupied meeting the more potent assaults of his twin brother Borodur, Darok might well have fallen in those first tentative years.

Arrok's son Arlen tried to beef up the provincial defenses with foreign mercenaries, by bringing in companies of orcs and centauri from Trevalia, and axe and spear-wielding barbarians from Kel. Many of the mercenaries became permanent residents of Darok, and introduced their own lore and customs. The men of Kel brought with them a hatred of technology and a deep mistrust of progress, a legacy of the "high-tech" wars that had devastated their own homeland, and a religion called the Cult of Akhora, whose patron figure was a God of War and Fire who in his rebirth was ordained to trigger a cleansing holocaust and the beginning of a new order. Arlen saw the religion as a means of raising the morale of his then dispirited people, and endorsed the cult as the official sect of the province, allying Darok for good or ill with the cause of the war god.

The sons and grandsons of Arlen fed the war fever further, and added still more infusions of mercenary blood (although indeed by this time all three of the warring provinces were looking beyond their borders for replacement troops). Great warriors won the favor of the Court, and became privy to the innermost councils of government; those with healthy ambitions soon saw that a military career offered the best real chance for social advancement. At the urging of the powerful battle magicians of Akhora, who had given great service to the Darokan war effort and were now locked in a battle for supremacy over matters arcane with the more traditional practitioners of the wizardly art, Arlen II abruptly ordered a purge of all written material which "preached the heresies of progress, or distracted the mind from the critical battle at hand". This sudden edict caught many unawares, and much knowledge was consumed forever in the blaze of hundreds of bonfires; others fled, or fought bitterly with the powers at

their disposal (and indeed, some earned through shed blood a stay of the edict as it regarded their personal libraries, and held out as bastions of enlightenment for several generations). Even with these exceptions, however, the basic purpose of the purge had been achieved; for no organized influence now existed in Darok to pose an alternative to the twin commitments demanded by the state: commitment to the warrior's life, and to the precepts of the Cult.

Arlen II's great-grandson, Al-Thedon, died in battle at an early age, leaving no heir to the line of Mikarth (although in years subsequent, one of the great clans, the d'Arrek, would claim that its lineage traced back to an unrecognized bastard son of Al-Thedon's father Arlen IV). Many had aspirations of filling the power vacuum left by Al-Thedon's death, but almost all the aspirants soon realized that, if civil war erupted in a fight over succession, the Muipocans would be quite willing (and able) to use the unrest as a means of completing their own conquest of Darok. The leaders of the key families, consequently, came together in a remarkable council, to resolve the question of rule. After several days of heated, always loud and sometimes angry exchanges, it was finally agreed that the right of rule would be settled by dint of combat, a practice long accepted for the settlement of challenges to the leaders of mercenary companies. In the end, five great warriors vied for the position of Commander, while other key figures were convinced to accept lesser - but still very prestigious - roles as Lords of the various Freeholds, or as Ministers of assorted state functions. This compromise solution, in somewhat revised form, is still used to choose Darok's ruler to this day, as described below. And Darok, too, still survives - as a deliberately primitive warrior's paradise in an otherwise politically and economically sophisticated Land.

#### POLITICS

Darok today is a true warrior culture, and its leaders are still selected on the basis of their fighting prowess. The Commander of the Darokan army, and the Lords of the six Freeholds, are all chosen on the basis of challenge combat. Challenges may be issued once a year, at the time of the first full moon of spring. Any officer in the Darokan army has the right to challenge the incumbent Commander; any inhabitant of a Freehold has the right to challenge to be its Lord. If more than one challenger appears, the challengers first fight among themselves; the champion of that contest then faces the reigning leader in single combat.

At one time, challenge combats were fought to the death - this made for gripping drama each year, but also greatly diluted the ranks of quality leadership. Consequently, all challenges are now fought with one of the following types of weapons:

- 1) padded wooden poles resembling quarterstaves;
- 2) ybarri, a pair of leather thongs, each weighted at both ends with a small padded metal ball; or
- 3) blunted ceremonial knives, known as kronah, whose tips are coated with a Sleeping Potion.

The incumbent leader always chooses the weapon to be used in both the preliminary and final combats. The fighting takes place in a small rectangular area, roped off to about 20 x 12 m in size; and continues until one of the combatants concedes, dies, or is forced outside the bounds of the "ring". A Spell Shield is erected around the combat area by several of the Priests of Akhora; the Shield permits the operation of some kinds of magic spells and artifacts, and prevents the use of others, as described in the spell description in Advanced Wizard. Despite all these restrictions, the challenges have not been rendered completely non-fatal,

and about 10-20% end with one of the combatants dead. (The mechanics of the different forms of challenge combat are described in detail in a special section at the end of this introduction).

Because the risk of death remains quite real, challenges to the incumbent leadership are not made lightly. If the province is at peace and prospering, or if the affairs of war are going well, few would dare to challenge the Commander; similarly, a Lord who governs his people wisely and marshals his resources with care may reign for many years without opposition. Challenge is most frequently invoked in times of unrest (when the tides of battle are going badly, or when bandits or predatory beasts plague the livelihood of a Freehold's inhabitants), or upon the death of the incumbent. Since many of these deaths occur on the field of battle, every incumbent Commander and Lord has the recognized right to name a temporary successor to take over the former's position in the event of his untimely demise. The successor is accorded all the rights and powers due his office for the time of his service, but is subject to normal challenge at the next spring (in some cases, the successor may even voluntarily step down and let the other candidates do battle for the position).

The reign of the current Commander, Petros, of the family l'Kamal, provides an excellent example of how the challenge system works in practice. Petros won the mantle of Commander on his second attempt, deposing Savin k'Raag in the tenth year of the latter's rule. In each of his first three years in power, Petros was challenged by several warriors, as many believed his victory over Savin to be more a product of k'Raag's advancing years than of the upstart's true prowess. To their surprise, Petros proved to be a master of tactics with the ybarri, his weapon of choice, and the relative ease of his defenses dissuaded many from any further attempts. Yet despite Petros' obvious skills as a warrior, his record as Commander remained spotty, with as many failures as successes. Thus, in the 5th, 7th and 10th years of his command, Petros was challenged again, in each case by a single opponent hand-picked by a cadre of officers who collectively agreed that Darok would be better served by other leadership. In each case, Petros dispatched his foe readily (indeed, the last of the three challengers died mysteriously during the combat of a wound that appeared to be arcanelly inflicted, although Petros was not known to possess any artifact that could inflict such damage within the protection of the Spell Shield). For the last three years, therefore, Petros' opponents have chosen to wait, patiently watching for some sign of the dulling of his fighting prowess with advancing age. Due to the machinations of the High Priestess Aleth-aan, however, this may be a very long wait . . .

The Commander, the six Lords of the Freeholds, and two representatives of the High Priests of Akhora constitute the Council of Darok, the supreme (and, indeed, the only organized) decision-making body in the province. The Council meets during the two week period immediately following the Moon of Challenge. During this session, the Council sets the tithes that each Freehold must pay to support the province's armies, and the numbers of beasts from each Hold that will be required as offerings to Akhora. The Council may also debate and make changes to the credo, the Book of Laws used by the Lords to settle disputes and dispense justice (however, it should be noted that the Lords have broad and sweeping discretionary power to revise or interpret the credo as they see fit, which often means that the "law of the land" differs greatly in practice from Hold to Hold). During the Council session, most of the army "regulars" are temporarily discharged to assist in the planting of their Hold.

In principle, the rights of challenge offer any man with sufficient fighting skill the chance to become Lord or Commander, a perfect equality of opportunity. In practice, however, the magic-poor nature of the Darokan culture and the unique inheritance customs of a segment of its society have conspired to keep these positions of power more or less continuously in the hands of 9 or 10 clans, known collectively as the "Great Families" of Darok. The Great Families are close-knit clans which had the good fortune to secure and accumulate a cache of magical artifacts in the early years of the province's history, and the good sense to ensure that these artifacts would be passed down to the family member best able to use them. Not following the common custom of passing the family inheritance to the eldest son, these families resolved to bestow their tokens of lore and power on the person that passed the clan's "Ordeal of Passage". Each ordeal is somewhat unique, but all of them revolve around the completion of some sort of quest that is designed to amply test any candidate's fighting prowess and his will to survive and succeed. At times in their history, when no clan member could satisfy the challenges of the ordeal, the patriarchs of the Great Families would retain grand stewardship of the clan's inheritance for many years, letting the family's influence lie dormant during that period. At other times, a gifted young warrior born two years too late might live his entire life in the shadow of an older sibling who had passed the Ordeal, and never receive his own chance to earn the family legacy. Yet the stubborn adherence to tradition is precisely the quality that kept the Great Families strong, while other clans that split their magical wealth between worthy family members or tried to always have a representative in one of the seven seats of power squandered their legacies and passed from importance. In recent years two or three new clans have adopted the practices of the Great Families, and in so doing have begun to widen the circle of power - but many other families are beset by internal squabbling, or hidebound to the old traditions, and quickly lose whatever gains one of their clansmen may make.

#### RELIGION

Darok is unique among the counties of the Land in terms of the prominence of religion in its affairs of war and state. As noted, the Cult of the Fire God was introduced to Darok by the barbarian mercenaries of Kel, who were brought to aid in the county's defense during its early days, and who later emigrated permanently to the area. In the years that followed, the Cult became the official religion of Darok. Today, roughly 25-35% of the Darokan population could be considered true followers of Akhora; and upwards of 75% of the province's inhabitants know and practice the basic rituals of the faith. Most importantly, the bulk of the army's officers are Cult members, and only one of the Commanders that have ruled Darok over the past century has not been a faithful adherent. The tenets and practices of the Cult intrude little into the day to day lives of common citizens; nonetheless, the Cult has always exerted a subtle yet profound influence over the decisions made by the provincial leadership, and its power seems to be growing.

The god Akhora is said to be the exiled Prince of War and Fire, who was cast from the heavens by those unable to meet the high standards of his righteousness and fidelity to purpose. He is worshipped as an avenging angel, whose rebirth is supposed to cleanse the earth with the fires of his vengeance (from which only his true believers will be immune). He is viewed as power incarnate, drawing energy from the fire and blood of the sacrifices and rituals of desecration committed in his name. By participating in the rituals

and opening their minds to the uncontrollable forces released in such ceremonies, the priests and followers of Akhora are believed to become one with the god, and gain awareness of his purpose. Thus, a "true" adherent of Akhora "never has to say he's sorry", for his actions, however reprehensible or vile they may seem, can be said to be inspired by the god's divine vision, and part of his plan.

The religion professes only a handful of basic tenets:

- 1) a worship of one's own body as a holy vessel, and a consequent emphasis on physical fitness and the virtue of hard, honest physical labor;
- 2) a dislike of the written word, said to have been used by Akhora's blasphemers to achieve the god's expulsion from heaven;
- 3) an emphasis on the importance of keeping one's word of honor when it is given, and of keeping faith with those to whom loyalty has been promised; and
- 4) a definitive belief that the "Unbelievers" of the world are out to erase the wisdom and memory of the god Akhora from the earth, and that the only way to ensure his rebirth is to liberally spill the blood of his oppressors.

It is easy to see how such a faith could appeal to the leader of a beleaguered nation, and how the influence of the Cult keeps the war fires kindled to high flames in Darok, even during times of supposed truce.

The High priests of the Cult of Akhora maintain their permanent quarters in the temple complex at Shaylle. In practice, however, less than half of them are likely to be present there at any given time, with the remainder engaged in tending to Cult business about the countryside or traveling with key elements of the Darokan army. Most villages have a small shrine, administered by a mid-level priest. The High Priests are accustomed to deference, wherever they travel; their power over the local priesthood is immense.

The Cult's regular rituals and ceremonies rely heavily on fire (which accounts for the predilection with fire-related magic shared by its priests). At the end of the new moon, sacrifices are given "to feed the righteous light"; though animals are primarily used for these purposes, human sacrifices are neither unknown nor uncommon, particularly if the war effort is not going well, or if an overabundance of enemy prisoners are available. The most important Cult ritual, in fact, always involves a human victim, a virginal young girl chosen to be the "bride" of Akhora. This ceremony takes place at Skull Rock on Midsummer's Eve each year; the girl is sacrificed to celebrate Akhora's single-minded devotion to his former task, keeping the heavens safe, which left him no time for love or wife. Cult lore states that when Akhora comes to earth in fiery form to wreak his vengeance, he will choose a human female to be his bride and the mother to a new race of beings; and that "she-who-is-chosen", known also as the Dawnchild, will ascend to the heavens to rule the new order with Akhora. Rumors abound that the High Priest Aleth-aan, the first female High Priest in the Darokan Cult's history, is destined to be the Dawnchild; the lady, being well aware of the political benefits of these stories, does nothing to discourage such talk.

(FM's NOTE: Though the individual FM can make his own decision as to whether there is any real truth to the legends of Akhora, the authors recommend strongly against introducing an active god-figure into the day to day affairs of **THE LAND BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS**. Rather they suggest that FMs take one of three approaches:

- 1) treat the legends as totally false, endowing Cult members with no special powers, and making any of the apparent manifestations of the god's power or will the result of carefully staged effects prepared



by the High Priests;  
2) treat Akhora as real and potent, but involved with cults all over the vast world of Cidri, making intervention by him in any given Darokan situation extremely unlikely (1 in 1,000 - or worse); or  
3) treat the legends of Akhora as essentially false, but have the more intense rituals of the Cult being capable of making contact with the elemental forces of fire, allowing its practitioners to be at least occasionally able to draw on powers not usually found in the purely physical plane.)

MAGIC Unlike most regions of Cidri (and indeed, the other provinces of the Land Beyond the Mountains), magical items and information in Darok are not readily trafficked goods available to anyone with the gold to purchase them. The Wizard's Guild no longer has pre-eminence here; instead the priests and priestesses of Akhora control the practice of magic in the province with a stern hand. After the Purges of Alten II, almost all of the surviving texts on the arcane arts in Darok were placed in the possession of the cult. Those few volumes that remained in other hands were and are yet carefully hidden, and almost never utilized in public.

The Servants of Akhora are almost solely concerned with the "battle magic" applications of arcane power. Their magical researches have focused on harnessing the wild forces of nature (fire, storm, the beasts of land and air) into potent tools of war; their production of artifacts is limited to the enchantment of weapons and armor and the creation of items bearing offensive or defensive combat spells. As a result, some high level magical arts have fallen into disuse (Demonology, Gate Creation, Manipulation) and the secrets of the practice lost to the people of the province. Conversely, the High Priesthood's heavy use of Fire, Lightning, and

Blast spells has taught them many techniques of "mass enchantment" that enable a group of Priests to create a multi-die force that is greater than the sum of the energies contributed by each individual mage.

(FM's Note: This sort of magnification effect can be duplicated by other wizards, but the following conditions must be met:

- a) all participants must be intimately acquainted with each other's resonances by at least 12 months of close interaction with one another;
- b) all members of the group must give complete and total concentration to the effect being conjured - if any in the circle are disturbed in any way, the spell fails completely;
- c) all the mages involved must make the DX roll necessary to cast the spell; and
- d) the enchantment must be led by a wizard with an IQ of at least 15.)

The two- to three-score High Priests of Akhora constitute the only high level (>IQ 16) Magic Users operating "legally" in county of Darok. There are probably another half dozen or so renegade "great wizards" active in the area, some leading small bands of independent plainsmen or mountain bandits, one or two holding important - albeit concealed - positions in the courts of the ruling Lords. The local village priests of the religion are IQ 12-15 wizards with the same heavy concentration on Fire, Animal Control, and offensive combat magic. These local priests will have 1-3 young initiates (IQ 8-10) to provide Aid to their larger sorceries. Most of the priests and their acolytes have their eye turned toward Shaylle, and aspire to be chosen for the High Priesthood. The High Priests regularly visit the local temples, to monitor the talents of its members; during these visits, the priests are likely to downgrade the skills of their assistants, and both sides may plot elaborate schemes



to curry favor with their superiors (though the High Priests are rarely fooled by these machinations).

There is one additional class of magic users in Darok that operates separate from, but with the blessing and training of, the cult of Akhora. These men and women, known as the sharren, are low level (IQ 8-12 spells only) magic users trained by the High and low priests of Akhora to attend to the daily needs of their clansmen. A sharron(in) is taught the spells to perform magical acts of protection (Lock/Knock, Conceal, Wards) and detection (Reveal, Detect Life, Detect Enemies); very experienced sharren may also be taught formulas for producing modest Healing potions and poisons (since the activities traditionally performed by chemist and alchemist classes are also largely absent from Darok). The sharren are taught (falsely) that their powers can only be activated by concentration on some physical manifestation of the spell to be performed; almost all, consequently, use runes or hex signs as a focus during spellcasting, often leaving behind an indelible indication that magic has been performed (a Lock rune engraved in the wall above a Locked door, etc.). In exchange for the magical knowledge bestowed on them by the members of the priesthood, the sharren tithe 1/4 to 1/2 of their earnings to the temple that trained them, and are expected to aid in its defense if necessary. Outside of these restrictions, a sharron or sharronin is essentially a free agent, able to take on any task within his/her competence (including hiring on with a group of adventurers).

#### MILITARY

As noted above, military service is a primary mean by which able males (and, to a lesser extent, females) can gain status in Darokan society. Each of the freeholds maintains its own company, or fyrd, of troops in a state of battle readiness. Troop strengths vary from year to year, and between freeholds, but usually fall in the range of 300 - 1000 men per company. Each company is in turn split into three primary arms: 1) the Border Guard (about 15%-25% of the total troop strength) - well-trained, usually mounted units who are stationed along the northern and eastern boundaries of Darok and are designed to provide a first line of defense capable of locating an invading force and then quickly withdrawing, 2) the Regular Soldiery (60%-75% of troop strength) - the primary field units when pitched battle is joined, whether on Darokan or Muipocan soil, and 3) castle garrison forces, known as "Lord's Men" (the remaining 10%-15%) - special units charged with maintaining the general peace in the freehold, and the final defense of the Hold in the event of a siege.

Each arm of the service has its own advantages and disadvantages. The Border Guardsmen see some action almost every season, seeking out enemy scouts or raiding parties and performing similar missions themselves; its members tend to accumulate experience points (and, therefore, advanced skills and occasional plundered artifacts) quite rapidly -- IF they can stay alive. The regular army units are the traditional proving-ground for men looking to become officers, or to transfer to the Elite Guard of the Commander. In most years, the bulk of the regular units will be minimally used, providing ample opportunities for some short term local adventuring. In years when the war is active, the regulars will receive all the fighting experience they can handle - and then some. The Lord's Men are typically somewhat older fighting men, battle-hardened and still able, but less hungry for risk and glory than in their youth. The law enforcement duties of the garrison forces offer a pleasant sinecure to such individuals, for the Lord's Men are treated with respect by the bulk of the villagers of the Hold and

can often wield considerable influence in local affairs. The position provides comparatively few chances for easy experience, but may present some opportunities for economic advancement not available to other warriors.

## RESOLVING CHALLENGE COMBAT

It is extremely unlikely that any of the player characters, particularly in the early years of a campaign, will themselves seek to win dominion over Hold or County in challenge combat. Nonetheless, FMs may still wish to simulate these events as part of the continuing saga of their worlds, since a change of leaders could have a significant effect on the future of various characters. Each of the three challenge options is described below.

### A) QUARTERSTAFF

Each combatant must know either Pole weapons, or Quarterstaff, or fight at -2 to normal DX. Because the weapons are padded, all damage rolls are halved (round up) after armor absorption is subtracted from the initial total.

Example:

If a particular attack does 7 points of damage to a foe in leather, the actual damage suffered would be  $7 - 2 = 5 / 2 = 2.5$ , or 3 hits.

Each combat round (cr), the combatants have 4 attack options:

- 1) Make a **normal** quarterstaff attack (1+2);
- 2) **Parry** (foe must make 4/DX SK to hit; if foe misses, player may swing for normal damage at a -6 to own DX);
- 3) **Strike** at opponent's weapon (-4 to DX); if successful, foe must make 3/DX SR or drop weapon - if dropped, foe can do nothing but **Parry** next cr; 1D of damage is assessed to the foe's weapon - if a staff takes 15 points of damage, there is a 1 in 6 chance each cr that it will break;
- 4) Make a **sweeping** attack (-2 to DX), doing 1D damage; if the attack is successful, foe must make 3/DX SR or fall to ground.

At the end of each cr, the combatant inflicting the greater damage on his opponent has the option to push his foe back 1 hex and close. If neither of the two opponents has landed a successful blow in a cr, the foe with the higher ST rating may push back (unless the other fighter chose the **Parry** option on the last cr). Combat continues until one of the entrants is driven out of the Challenge Circle, or is beaten to death or into submission.

### B) YBARRI (Ball and thong)

Combatants must know either Ax/Mace (the ball part of the weapon can be used like a morningstar) or Bola, or fight at -2 to normal DX. The combatants may choose any of the following attack options each combat round:

- 1) **Straight** attack, using swinging ball (1+1, halved);
- 2) Attack with ball against opponent's **weapon**; the attack is made at a -4 to own DX; if successful, the attacker may either:
  - a) attempt to grab both weapons - requires a 4/ST saving roll; if unsuccessful, foe may make a 5/ST SR to grab both weapons himself, or a 3/ST SR to try to free and recover his own weapon;
  - b) attempt to garrote his foe (see option 5, except that it will require a 5/ST SR to initiate);

- c) attempt a straight attack at a +2 to DX (foe may automatically untangle if he chooses, or make his own attack at a -4 to DX);
- 3) **Parry and rush**, using the thong like a flexible staff; opponent must make 4/DX roll to hit; if successful with parry, rusher may make a 3/ST SR to force his foe back one hex;
  - 4) use the ybarri as a **bola**, in an attempt to tangle arms or legs, or to strike the head for damage;
  - 5) use the ybarri as a **garrote** to strangle; normal DX roll and 4/ST SR are both required to "hit"; if successful, foe will strangle after 3 cr if not released, taking 1 point of damage the first cr, and 3 points the second cr (armor absorption is not possible). Opponent may either continue attacking (at a -2 to DX), or attempt to push the thong away (4/ST if victim has superior ST, 5/ST if equal, 6/ST if inferior).

In this contest, the winner is the one who drops his opponent unconscious (or dead), or who drives him from the Circle (this usually happens only when one fighter succeeds in grabbing both ybarri). Strangling in the garroting option is usually not fatal, but will, if successful, always render one's foe unconscious. It is possible, however, to kill one's opponent by simply applying just a little more pressure than is necessary to render him unconscious.

#### C) KRONAH (ceremonial knives)

Each combatant must know Knife, or fight at a -2 to normal DX. When this particular option is selected, both opponents must fight unarmored. It is considered proper to wear a light and loose robe belted at the waist for this contest. The knives themselves are fairly short, broad blades, not unlike a main gauche in form; they are always dipped in a soporific just before the contest begins.



Each cr, each opponent selects a tactic: **Stab**, **Slash**, or **Parry**. These actions are cross referenced on the table below to yield appropriate DX adjustments for the two attacks (the upper number [in position, not value] refers to the tactic listed to the left, and the lower number to that on top; for instance, a parry against a stab would produce a DX adjustment of +1 for the parrier and of -2 for the stabber):

|             | Stab  | Slash | Parry |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Stab (1-2)  | 0/0   | -1/+1 | -2/+1 |
| Slash (1-3) | +1/-1 | 0/0   | -1/0  |
| Parry (1-4) | +1/-2 | 0/-1  | 0/0   |

If, after DX adjustments have been accounted for, a successful strike has been made, damage is then rolled as given in the parentheses for each tactic. Successful strikes (ones which cause damage to one's opponent) will inject the victim with one full dose of the soporific poison with which the blade tips and edges are coated; the victim receives a 3 die saving roll against current ST to cut poison damage in half. If a combatant takes 3 doses of the poison, he falls unconscious. The poison also slows the one receiving it, by MA -2 and DX -1 for each full dose received.

When this form of combat is used, the vanquished one is usually rendered unconscious; occasionally, though, deaths do occur, usually when a particularly effective stab is delivered to a thoroughly weakened opponent.

## MAJOR PERSONALITIES OF DAROK

### 1) The Ruling Family

Petros (I'Kama) ST 22 DX 17 IQ 10 MA 10

**WEAPONS:** Great Hammer (2+4)\*, Dagger (1-1)

**ARMOR:** Leather (+warrior, -3 hits)

**TALENTS:** Horsemanship, Charisma, Warrior, Tracking, Literacy, Orcish

**SPECIAL POSS.:** Symbols of office (see below), Blur ring, Amulet of Eyes-Behind, enchanted hammer, riding horse, TF=7

Petros is a husky, well-muscled man with jet-black hair and eyes, and a very dark complexion. He has been a particularly long-lived leader (13 years) who at 37 has shown no sign of slowing down (due to Aleth-aan's surreptitious applications of her cached Youth drug). His years of leadership have taught him the bare rudiments of diplomacy, but he still lapses easily into piques of anger and remains a crude foul-mouthed boor by any urbane standard. He has been hopelessly ensnared by the allures of the High Priestess Aleth-aan, and many of his current policies are of her making. He is a well-trained fighter, but at best a passable general, with little tactical or strategic vision. He is notoriously bloodthirsty, however, and well known for his cruelty to those unlucky enough to be taken captive.

As Commander, Petros wears a crown of thin, beaten silver, and a cloak of shimmering fur. The former is worth \$1200 and contains a Reverse Missiles spell; it is so highly notorious in Darok that it is literally unseizable here (although if you can smuggle it out into Muipoco, Count Kazimier might declare you a national hero). The latter item is also enchanted, but not embedded with any particular spell; in times of crisis, however, the complete concentration of three or more High Priests can imbue the cloak (and its wearer) with a limited power similar to Words of Command - anyone within earshot that makes a 3-die saving roll versus IQ will follow the actions of the Commander (and

Rally, Charge, or follow any similar military command that he himself performs). Petros may not wear these symbols of office when responding to a challenge; he may, however, use the other magic items listed, which are family heirlooms.

Random 9 or less - Shaylle castle;  
Locator: 10-14 - main body of Darokan army;  
15 or more - War council at any village

Magda ST 14 DX 15(14) IQ 9 MA 10

**WEAPONS**: Spear (1+1), Sling (1-2)  
**ARMOR**: Cloth (-1 hit)  
**TALENTS**: Thrown Weapons, Alertness, Climbing

Magda, Petros' wife, is a sinewy warrior woman well able to care for herself. She still marches - and fights - with the company of Shaylle, a fact that pleases Petros greatly (both because he respects her spirit, and because her absences give him opportunities to meet with Aleth-aan). She is aware that her husband's affections have somewhat cooled, but does not suspect the cause of these changes. Though she herself has no love of senseless violence, she will not intervene against her husband's bloodletting urges unless approached by someone with strong persuasive powers (and high charisma).

Random .10 or less - Shaylle castle;  
Locator: 11 or more - in the field with the company of Shaylle

Katzhai ST 10 DX 13 IQ 11 MA 10

**WEAPONS**: Dagger (1-1)  
**TALENTS**: Silent Movement, Thief, Mimic, Literacy, Recognize Value  
**SPECIAL POSS.**: 4 uses of weapon poison, TF=3

The younger brother of Petros is a surly, whining fellow of small stature - despised as a weakling by Petros, he is considered the bane of most of the inhabitants of Shaylle. Many consider him somewhat mad, given his masochistic tendency to insult others beyond their breaking point. His left arm was snattered beyond repair in a beating resulting from one of his voluble episodes, but this event seems only to make him more incorrigible than ever. Katzhai hates Darok's joyful primitivism with a passion, and longs to leave its borders forever. He is attempting to bankroll his departure by spying for Emil Jaggo of Dihad - and is also not above a bit of petty thievery if he thinks he won't be caught.

Random 10 or less - Shaylle castle;  
Locator: 11-13 - town of Shaylle;  
14-18 - incognito in another village

## 2) The Military Leaders

Grannyt (d'Rahim) ST 26 DX 14(13) IQ 9 MA 10

**WEAPONS**: Mace (2-1), Battleaxe (3)  
**ARMOR**: Leather, Lg. Shield (+ Warrior, -5 hits)  
**TALENTS**: Warrior, Acute Hearing, Horsemanship  
**SPECIAL POSS.**: Wolf Takkha (ST 12 DX 14 IQ 6 MA 12), Riding horse, TF=5

Grannyt is the Warder for the company of Tharn, a hulking bald-headed brute with small treetrunks for arms and legs. Grannyt is as subtle as an exploding bomb, a basic human tank. Under his leadership, the company of Tharn has become the shock troops of Darok, an iron-nerved unit willing to storm (often capable, surprisingly, of taking out, as well) almost any enemy position. Losses from the unit are often very heavy (as high as 50-80%), but because of the great renown and respect accorded the men of Tharn, good replacements are not hard to come by. Grannyt's favorite recreations are the three R's - Razing, Rape and Rum - and there have been few more awesome pillagers in the history of the semi-civilized world.

Grannyt raised the wolf Takkha from a pup after killing its mother in self-defense; the wolf is totally and absolutely loyal to him, and obeys his word alone. When in the wilderness, Grannyt allows the wolf to roam free and forage for itself; it wears a leather studded collar marked with a "G".

Random 7 or less - Tharn;  
Locator: 8-9 - Shaylle;  
10-18 with the main body of the army

Eisen (the Wisp) ST 15 DX 18 IQ 13 MA 10

**WEAPONS**: Spear (1+1), Thrown Spear (1), Long Bow (1+2)  
**TALENTS**: Silent Movement, Tactics, Naturalist, Woodsman, Running, Tracking  
**SPELLS**: Speed Movement  
**SPECIAL POSS.**: Potion of Invisibility (5 doses), TF=4

Eisen is the leader of Darok's most successful band of mountain raiders, a tall rail-thin blond known to his Muipocan foes as "The Wisp". Though totally unschooled, he is an instinctive master of guerrilla tactics; add two dice to any foe's normal chances of detecting an ambush set by Eisen or tracking his company's trail. He is totally uninterested in glory, and keeps out of the limelight whenever military affairs bring him to Shaylle. Eisen will often act as forward scout for his band, for casting his Speed Movement spell on himself gives him an MA of 24. He hoards his prized potion of Invisibility carefully, and will only use one dose (and one dose only) if his life is at stake.

Random 6 or less - Shaylle;  
Locator: 7-12 - in the Hills of Ore or around the Muipocan borderlands;  
13-14 - Ghee;  
15-18 - with the main body of the army

Savlak (t'Bur) ST 16 DX 14(13) IQ 12 MA 10

**WEAPONS**: Pike Ax (2+2), Javelin (1-1), Thrown Javelin (1-1)  
**ARMOR**: Cloth (and Ring of Stone Flesh, -5 hits)  
**TALENTS**: Recognize Value, Unarmed Combat I, Physicker, Climbing, Orcish  
**SPECIAL POSS.**: Ring of Stone Flesh, TF=6

The family t'Bur had a glorious heritage, and its warriors have often ruled Darok. Recent generations, however, have had to grow up without the fruits of that heritage, for the reigning head of the t'Bur clan was caught consorting with the enemy and executed 65 years ago, causing most of the family's magical treasures to be forfeited. Savlak t'Bur is a bitter young man who seeks to restore his family's greatness by the strength of his own hand. He is a taciturn, hot-tempered fellow with few friends among the officer corps, a man respected for his fighting prowess but tainted by his traitorous heritage. He is anxious to challenge Petros for command but fears the intervention of Aleth-aan; therefore he bides his time and waits for the proper moment.

Savlak's one acquired battle aid, the ring of Stone Flesh, is a less than perfect artifact. Savlak must expend 1 ST each turn to power the spell. There is also some chance (a roll of 14 or greater on 3 dice) that the ring will generate only a half strength (-2 hits per blow) aura of protection (this roll is not made until Savlak has been successfully struck by an opponent's blow).

Random 7 or less - Shaylle  
Locator: 8-10 - Gneiss  
11-13 - main body of Darokan army  
14 or more - foraging mission to one of the other Freeholds



Khyppe ST 13 DX 15(13) IQ 15 MA 8

**WEAPONS:** Spear (1+1), Dagger (1-1), Arquebus (3+3)

**ARMOR:** Leather (-2 hits)

**TALENTS:** Sex Appeal, Charisma, New Followers,  
Guns, Orcish, Dwarvish, Literacy

**SPECIAL POSS.:** None, TF=10

Khyppe is a rangy, balding man in his early forties, with a craggy and careworn face. His reflexes have begun to slow with the advance of age, but his value to Darok has never been related to his fighting prowess anyway. Khyppe's role is to provide the "grease" that keeps the province's fighting machine moving, by keeping the troops supplied with food and weapons and the egos of their often tempestuous leaders soothed. He plays many vitally important roles in the current political structure. As primary liaison to the mercenary units who fight for Darok, he alone among the Darokan hierarchy understands the military value of guns, and deals with the renegade wizard Caldor Dune to obtain the few weapons of this type they possess. It is Khyppe who often pays "unofficial" visits to the villages of Darok to ensure that the communities pay their appropriate tithes, and journeys to the Hills of Ore to foment unrest against Muipoco among the dwarves who have settled and mine there. He has great influence, but is never ostentatious in its use; thus he has no enemies among the mighties of the province, and many friends (including Petros, Grannyt, and Shak'heen). He has noted Aleth-aan's influence on Petros and, fearing her aggressiveness, has begun to keep a surreptitious eye on her; thus far, his efforts have escaped her notice and they remain on good terms.

Khyppe is accompanied on his frequent travels about the region by a cadre of 15-30 experienced fighters (12 + 30 in number, 34 + 10 attribute points each), and sometimes (roll of 9 or less on 3 dice) by a High Priest of Akhora. If attacked and seriously outnumbered, he will surrender if escape appears impossible - in fact, he has been captured twice, and ransomed back to Darok, by the troops of Muipoco (who too were fooled by Khyppe's unimpressive physique and demeanor).

Random 8 or less - Shaylle

Locator: 9-11 - diplomatic mission to one of the other Freeholds

12-13 - main body of Darokan army

14 or more - Hills of Ore

Shak'heen ST 20 DX 14 IQ 10 MA 10

**WEAPONS:** Morningstar (2+1), Dagger (1-1), Light Crossbow (2)

**ARMOR:** Large Shield (+ Warrior, -3 hits)

**TALENTS:** Warrior, Detect Traps, Human Tongue

**SPECIAL POSS.:** Set of 8 triangular Wards, TF=5

Shak'heen is an Orcish mercenary commander who has spent almost a decade in the service of Darok. He finds the warrior-dominated culture of the province appealing and has developed an uncommon loyalty to his employers. As a youth growing up in a large city, far to the west, Shak'heen eked out a living as a petty thief; today he tries to make up for his impoverished origins by affecting a very ostentatious lifestyle. His men are neither the best nor the worst of the mercenaries of Darok, but are well regarded because of Shak'heen's long associations with Petros and Khyppe and hardly ever draw really hazardous duty. Like his commander, Shak'heen and his men are easily capable of gratuitous violence and have committed many atrocities against the vanquished.

Shak'heen's set of Wards are his most prized possessions, and he ostentatiously surrounds his sleeping area with them every night. Unfortunately, anyone schooled in the arcane arts knows that these items must be activated with a Ward spell to function properly, a spell of which Shak'heen has no knowledge whatsoever.



Random 6 or less - Shaylle

Locator: 7-8 - scouting force near main Darokan army

9-15 - main body of Darokan army

16 or more - on border patrol

### 3) Religious Leaders

High Priestess Aleth-aan ST 17 DX 13 IQ 18 MA 10

**WEAPONS:** Dagger (1-1), Staff (1)

**TALENTS:** Sex Appeal, Charisma

**SPELLS:** Clumsiness, Persuasiveness, 7-Hex Fire, Fireball, Control Person, Sleep, Explosive Gem, Create/Destroy Elemental, Detection of Lies, Geas

**SPECIAL POSS.:** (see below), TF=6

Before Aleth-aan, no female had ever been a High Priest of Akhora - now, she is recognized by many as the highest of the high, perhaps the most powerful individual in the province. She is a woman of statuesque form, beautiful features and incredible magnetism, whose well-practiced allures are capable of putting almost any man (including Petros) under her sway. In her early years, Aleth-aan had to sleep her way to the top. She has since had all but one of those former lovers eliminated, and her thus far fruitless search for that last man is one of the few subjects that can crack her normally steely calm.

Rumors abound throughout Darok that Aleth-aan is the woman destined to be the Dawnchild, and her arrival signifies that victory is near. Aleth-aan does nothing to discourage these rumors, knowing their effect in cementing the loyalty of the common folk of the province. She craves power for power's sake, and seeks immortality above all - she has acquired a cache of a drug (possibly pre-Mnoren in origin) that greatly slows the aging process. She takes the drug about 3-4 times a

year, and has on two occasions surreptitiously fed some to Petros. The drug has a strange side effect - it will cause its consumers to enter an amnesiac state for a period of 24-48 hours during which they may literally do anything, without regard for their station or normal personality.

Aleth-aan will tend to rely on her Fire spell when engaged in offensive combat, and use control spells (Control Person, or Sleep if the former fails) if personally attacked. She will join with the other High Priests in the conjuring of "mass effect" spells, but will not use up more than half of her ST in such efforts.

Random 9 or less - Shaylle Temple  
Locator: 10,14 - travelling around Darokan countryside on Cult business  
11-13 - main body of Darokan army  
15 or more - Skull Rock

High Priest Faron-eld ST 18 DX 14 IQ 16 MA 10

WEAPONS: Long Bow (1+2)†  
ARMOR: Leather (-2 hits)  
TALENTS: Physicker, Literacy  
SPELLS: Lock/Knock, Aid, Dazzle, Reveal/Conceal, Magic Rainstorm, 7-Hex Fire, Detect Magic, Explosive Gem (1/ST), Hammertouch (1/ST), Summon Dragon, Drain Strength  
SPECIAL POSS.: Power Magnification Amulet, TF=5

Frail of frame, but possessing enormous psychic energies, Faron-eld is a uniquely dangerous weapon in the arsenal of the Priests of Akhora. His unique talent lies in his ability to conjure large-scale versions of the spells listed above, which grow in effectiveness beyond the normal confines of the enchantment. These additional effects are only produced in cases where Faron expends 8 or more ST points on a spell, and can be summarized as follows:

Hammertouch, Explosive Gem - Spells do 50% more dice of damage than normal, rounded down - thus a 10-ST Hammertouch would do 15 dice of damage to the object contacted, a 9-ST Explosive Gem would do 13 dice of damage. Explosive gems are assumed to do 2 dice of damage to adjacent hexes (and/or the people in them).

7-Hex Fire - An 8-ST version of this spell would represent a double effectiveness Fire spell (12-ST a triple effect spell, etc). For such a spell, the FM can either double the time duration that the fire lasts, double the area covered by the fire (to 14 hexes), or double the damage inflicted to those coming in contact with the blaze (4 hits for passing through a fire hex, 8 hits for standing and fighting in one).

Magic Rainstorm - Similar to the Fire spell above, in that additional 4-ST increments can be added to increase the size or duration of the Rainstorm. Storms of 12-ST or greater power are accompanied by high winds that slow the MA of people within the storm perimeter by 1/2.

Drain Strength - Because of Faron-eld's attunement with the forces of magical energy, and the power magnification amulet he possesses, he can recover 3 ST worth of usable power from every 5 ST drained (instead of the normal 1/5 ratio).

Each effort of this type takes a great deal out of Faron; after each, he must make a 4 die saving roll versus IQ - if he fails to save, he suffers psychic overload, and cannot attempt another enchantment of this type for at least seven days.

Due to his unique perspective, Faron's general nature is a good deal more cautious than that of his Priestly counterparts. He will listen before he acts, a trait rarely found in Darok; nonetheless, he is very loyal to Aleth-aan, and will tolerate no criticism of her.

Random 7 or less - Shaylle  
Locator: 8-13 - main body of Darokan army  
14-15 - on border patrol  
16 or more - traveling around province on Cult business

High Priest Ysan-ol ST 15 DX 14(13) IQ 14 MA 10

WEAPONS: Staff (1), Crystal Dagger (1-1)  
ARMOR: Cloth (-1 hit)  
TALENTS: Sex Appeal  
SPELLS: Illusion, Summon Wolf, Blur, Stone Flesh, Open Tunnel, Explosive Gem (1/ST), Sleep, Lightning (1), Trailtwister, Aid, Reverse Missiles  
SPECIAL POSS.: None, TF=6

A broad-shouldered, fair-complexioned male in his late twenties, Ysan-ol is a typical High Priest of the cult - brash, swaggering, and fairly uninterested in the hopes and needs of others. He is much smarter than his impetuous nature would indicate; he can be fooled once, but never twice, by a gambit, and should not be underestimated as a foe. Ysan-ol's back and neck are badly scarred from burns sustained in the misfire of a major enchantment. Nonetheless, he considers himself quite a ladies man, and will often try to make time with female travelers encountered in the streets of Shaylle - he does not take rejection kindly, to say the least . . .

Random 8 or less - Shaylle  
Locator: 9-11 - main body of Darokan army  
12-15 - travelling around province on Cult business  
16 or more - Skull Rock

High Priest Gallin-ibur ST 17 DX 16(14) IQ 20 MA 6

WEAPONS: Staff of Power (2)  
ARMOR: Leather (+ Belt of Stone Flesh, -6 hits)  
TALENTS: Physicker  
SPELLS: Confusion, Break Weapon, Aid, Detect Magic, Analyze Magic, Lock/Knock, Summon Bear, Drain Strength, 4-Hex Illusion, Megahex Sleep, Wizard's Wrath (1+1/ST), Staff of Power, Lesser Magic Item Creation, Pentagram, Explosive Gem (1/ST), Dissolve Enchantment  
SPECIAL POSS.: Belt of Stone Flesh, Ring of Fireproofing, Rod of Maintain Illusion, TF=9

Gallin-ibur is the eldest of the current High Priests, a slender man in his early fifties with thinning white hair and a long wispy beard. He is a battle-tested veteran, still able in the field despite a slight limp; these days, however, he spends much of his time at the Great Temple in Shaylle, where he (along with High Priest Rykel-oor, who knows the Weapon/Armor Enchantment spell) produces the bulk of the magical artifacts created in Darok. Gallin has always been bull-headed, and his advancing years have made him even more set in his ways and certain that only he knows the "right" way to get things done. His outbursts of temper on occasions when he feels slighted are legend, and (given his necromantic powers) quite dangerous. Aleth-aan has learned quickly to defer to his pronouncements and plans in public, and then use her persuasive powers to change things around to her liking behind the scenes.

Gallin has also become quite forgetful; when encountered, there is always a chance (7 or less on 3D) that he has forgotten to do one or more of his special possessions (greatly increasing his vulnerability).

Random 11 or less - Shaylle Temple  
Locator: 12-14 - main body of Darokan army  
15 - Skull Rock  
16 or more - visiting temples in one of the various Holds

# THE VILLAGE OF GHEE

## General Description

Ghee is a village with a population of about 350, located in the northern hills of Darok about 40 km from the disputed border. Although it is close to the center of conflict and has actually been the scene of fighting on two previous occasions, in most respects Ghee is interchangeable with any of a dozen other villages throughout Darok. Life in towns such as these is simple and rugged, with few frills or creature comforts available - most of the inhabitants live at subsistence level and aspire to little more than their continued survival. Those who do have dreams of greatness almost inevitably make the journey to Shaylle to try and become warriors or priests of Akhora, leaving their drab homesteads behind until the winter storms bring an end to campaigning.

The people of Ghee are primarily herders, tending their flocks of goats and sheep on the rock-riven hillsides surrounding the village. Although each family unit owns and cares for its own flock, much of the herding activity is a cooperative effort among a number of these families. When there are problems (such as sick beasts, disputes over possession of a particularly good grazing area, etc.), the herders often turn to the man called Silas (see below), known throughout Ghee as "The Herdmaster", for judgment and advice. The hills are also the source of extensive clay deposits, which are used in producing the village's other major trade

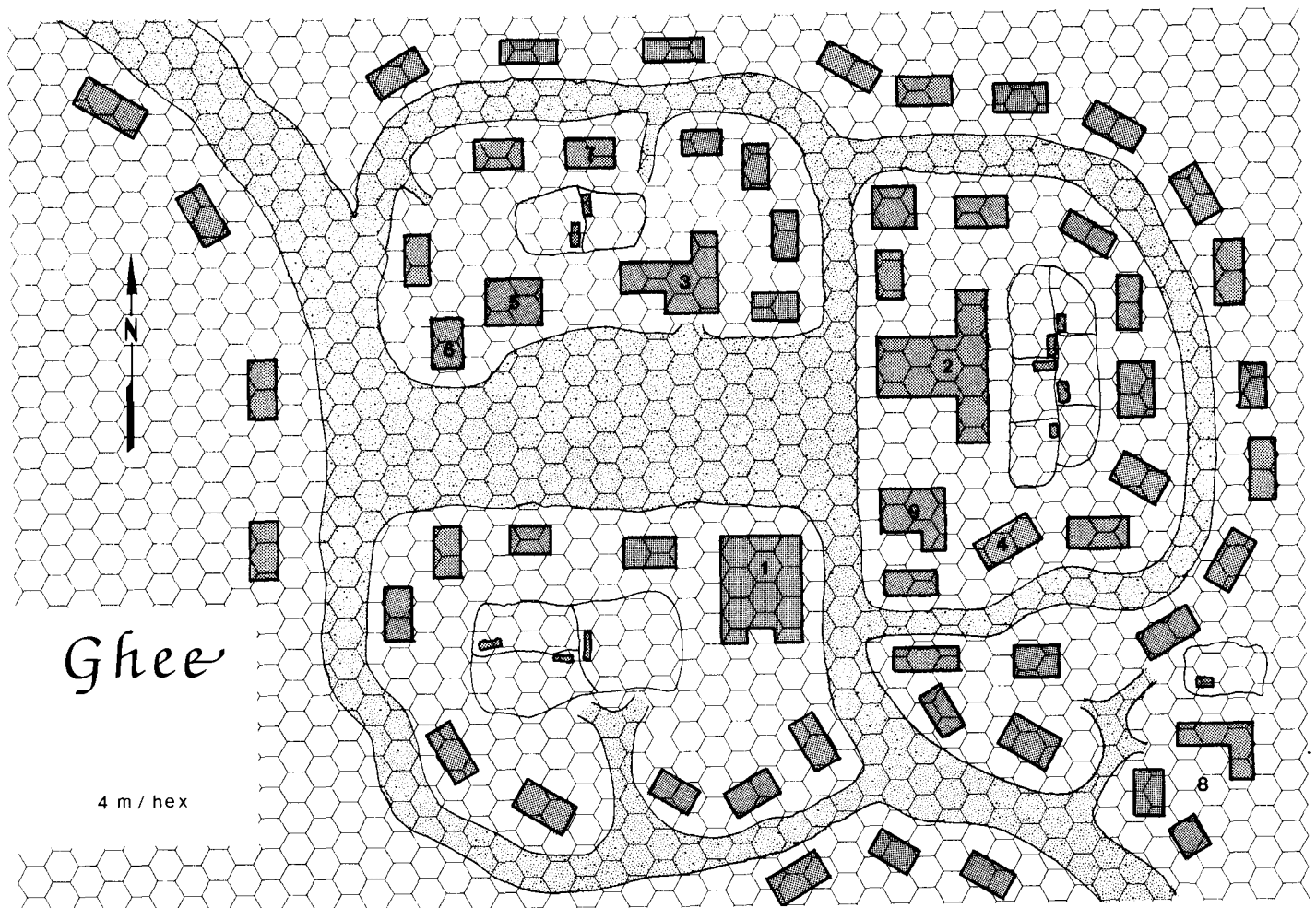
good, pottery. Almost all the houses and shops of Ghee are made of these same clays; indeed, there are but two stone structures in the entire village (the Council House, and the Shrine to Akhora), and both are now used mainly for ceremonial purposes.

Trade with neighboring communities is usually conducted on a pure barter basis. Money comes into Ghee in two ways:

- 1) from mercenaries, warriors or provincial officers who pass through the village, and
- 2) from the infrequent caravans of Gheemen who travel to Shaylle to trade their goods in the open air Bazaar.

The villagers of Ghee are, as a rule, quite miserable bargainers with little concept of the monetary value of goods; the only factor preventing them from being robbed blind by foreign traders is the latter's awareness that a Darokan who believes he has been offered an unfair price is likely to show displeasure by smashing his fellow bargainer upside the head with a small ax. Even so, a villager can expect to get only 50-75% [45+(106x5)] of normal value for his goods when trading with a non-villager.

Ghee has no elected or appointed officials except for a Shirriff, responsible for general peacekeeping and the training of the local militia. This post is held currently by Rannyx, an ex-mercenary; when Petros, his lieutenants, or the local lord and his Men, come to town, Rannyx acts as the village's representative for bargaining. The local priest of Akhora also has great influence among the villagers, even though he does not always have Ghee's best interests at heart.



### Landmarks of Ghee

1) The Shrine of Akhora - Ghee's "shrine" to the fiery warrior god is a very simple 3-room stone structure, consisting of a rough-hewn meeting room with a large stone altar, a small room used for "private consultations", and living quarters for Gastrad, Ghee's Priest. The meeting room is brightly lit day and night with lamps and flaming torches, and decorated with huge, crude clay icons of Akhora. A sacrificial pit, showing the signs of regular use, lies behind the Shrine. This Shrine, as do several other backwater temples to Akhora, does possess one interesting artifact - a small lamp, kept in the private meeting chamber, enchanted with a Detection of Lies spell; when an untruth is told while the lamp is activated, it bursts into flame. Gastrad uses the lamp primarily for theatrical purposes, to keep his patrons in awe of Akhora's power - it is a tawdry but effective device.

Gastrad ST 13 DX 13(12) IQ 12 MA 8

**WEAPONS:** Dagger (1-1), Staff (1)

**ARMOR:** Cloth (-1 hit)

**TALENTS:** Literacy

**SPELLS:** Drop Weapon, Illusion, Summon Myrmidon, 3-Hex Fire, Confusion, Staff to Snake, Dazzle, Reveal/Conceal, Reverse Missiles

**SPECIAL POSS.:** TF=4

Gastrad is a small, mean-spirited man, who wields his power over these simple folk unjudiciously, and primarily to please himself. He has a very theatrical air about him, and often uses his spells to grab people's attention, almost like a side-show magician doing parlor tricks. Twice yearly, Gastrad makes a pilgrimage to Shaylle, accompanied by 6-24 penitents seeking to be "cleansed". While there, he will toady up to the high temple officials to try and curry favor, but the High Priests know him for what he is. Nonetheless, he still entertains great hopes of being summoned to Shaylle to serve at the Great Temple, and is always telling strangers that his departure is imminent and his influence is great (his hand out for a donation all the while).

Trundy ST 14 DX 11 IQ 10 MA 10

**WEAPONS:** Spear (1+1)†, Staff (1)

**SPELLS:** Aid, Fire, Magic Fist, Image, Summon Myrmidon, Lock/Knock, Reveal Magic

Trundy, Gastrad's Acolyte, is a tall gangly lad, still eager to perform great service for Akhora. He has begun to grow disillusioned with Gastrad, who has taught him few spells and is primarily interested in using him as a power battery and "gofer". He has very few possessions (TF=0), and sleeps in a straw pallet in the meeting room.

2) The Council House/Gaol - A long T-shaped structure of stone, located right in the center of the village. The base of the T is comprised of one large chamber capable of holding the entire population of the village, used when visiting leaders want to address the villagers. The Shirriff of Ghee may also call for a Council of the entire village in times of community danger (e.g., large wolfpacks terrorizing the flocks, the approach of enemy forces) - in practice, such Councils are quite rare and are the stuff of oft told barroom tales. The left wing once contained relatively well-furnished bedchambers for visitors; these rooms were sacked and burned by Muipocan mercenaries, and never restored. The right wing contains two less well-appointed bedrooms, still in use, and the little 3 cell gaol. FMs should treat the Gaol as virtually a cinch to break out of for any prisoner who has any confederates on the outside.

Rannyx "The Ox" ST 19 DX 14(11) IQ 9 MA 6

**WEAPONS:** Battle Axe (3), Spear (1+1)

**ARMOR:** Fine Plate (+Warrior, -7 hits)

**TALENTS:** Swimming, Alertness, Warrior

**SPECIAL POSS.:** Amulet of Non-drunkness (75% effective) TF=2

Rannyx, Shirriff of Ghee, is a great bear of a man, a former mercenary who fell in love with a girl of the village while passing through, and returned to marry her at the end of that campaign year (his wife Taree still works as the barmaid at the Root Cellar - see #3 below). He has the only sort of decent armor in the village, a plundered set of fine plate - and is still unquestionably the best fighter in the village, even with the onset of a middle-aged paunch. In discharging his peacekeeping duties, Rannyx is most likely to settle disputes by having the opponents "fight it out" under controlled circumstances. He is quite aware that he is not overly bright, and normally is quite willing to listen to and adopt the suggestions of others (like Silas) whom he considers smart; however, he can be very stubborn and unyielding if he thinks someone is insulting his wits.

3) The Root Cellar - Ghee's one poor excuse for a tavern/eatery/inn. Many people swear that you've never tasted truly bad liquor until you've had Darokan ale - but it's really not so terrible once you learn to close your eyes when you drink. The food is plain but filling, and the gossip for the most part immensely boring - but if you're staying in Ghee, it's the only game in town. Since few people do stay on, Brakke's two guest rooms tend to be rather dusty and cobwebbed - however, if you're willing to pay him enough hard cash, he'll move his own family into those rooms and let you have his quarters in the back.

Brakke ST 12 DX 12 IQ 10 MA 10

**TALENTS:** Animal Handler, Recognize Value, Bard, Brewer

Brakke is an amiable, though lazy, fellow with sandy brown hair and eyes. Given the low volume of business passing thru the tavern, the family (wife, 2 boys and a girl) must also keep a flock to eke out its living - these multiple businesses provide Brakke with a ready-made excuse for avoiding work ("I'd really like to get that for you, sir, but I must go up to the hills and check the flock", and vice versa). He will on occasion, if sufficiently goaded, take down the worn squeezebox that hangs on the wall in the tavern and play - moments that pass as high entertainment in this town.

Taree ST 11 DX 12 IQ 10 MA 10

**WEAPONS:** 2 Daggers (1-1)

**ARMOR:** None

**TALENTS:** Sex Appeal, Thrown Weapons, Silent Movement, Diplomacy

Rannyx' wife, Taree is a very tall dark-haired woman, still fair of face. She is normally not averse to a bit of good-natured flirting, but woe be the man who makes advances when she is not in the mood, once Rannyx hears of it. Taree has had good fortune in the past in using her wiles and persuasiveness to calm angry guests in a brawling mood and will not hesitate to try such an approach if the atmosphere in the Cellar turns nasty.

Draconus (the Bald) ST 10 DX 9 IQ 9 MA 6

The oldest resident of Ghee, Draconus is a frequent bystander at the Cellar. He is now mostly blinded by cataracts, but still hearty-voiced for those willing to buy a mug of ale to hear his stories.



Draconus is old enough to remember the last occasion when Muipocan troops reached Ghee and forced evacuation of the village. He claims to have spied on the passing troops and overheard them talk about a cache of plunder they had hidden in the area; these troops were later slaughtered almost to a man by the main body of the Darokan army. No one has ever found this treasure, and the locals now declaim his tale as nonsense . . . (the truth of the tale can be found in the scenario, "The Treasure of Ziero Mhaddray", and the extent of the clues that Draconus can still remember will provide an interesting time for all.)

4) Shop of Trebok - Trebok (nicknamed "the Mender") is a potter by trade, but in practice spends much of his time fixing various tools, weapons, and other items of clay, wood, of metal. Frequently, Trebok will ask for no payment for his services except the customer's promise to perform some unspecified favor ("something commensurate with the difficulty of my own task") for him at a future date. Trebok works in absolute privacy, using long forgotten lore to perform his repairs; although he knows the Repair spell, he is seldom forced to call upon it. In most cases, the favors asked by Trebok are easily accomplished - e.g., bringing him a small sack full of berries that grow in some special location in the hills. On rare occasions, Trebok may demand the fulfillment of a fairly difficult quest, in order to obtain certain materials necessary for his work.

Trebok ST 9 DX 14 IQ 12 MA 4

**TALENTS:** Potter, Business Sense, Elvish, Expert Naturalist  
**SPELLS:** Repair  
**SPECIAL POSS.:** Magic Fist Ring, TF=4

Trebok is a hefty fellow, with long supple fingers and thick dark hair and beard. His left leg is badly crippled, and he can move about only with the aid of a heavy oaken staff. He is very gruff and mysterious. He was given the ring enchanted with the Magic Fist spell (1-2 damage per ST point expended on the spell) by a High Priest of Akhora to whom he gave valuable aid; he will readily use this spell against anyone he suspects of "spying" on his activities.

5) Shop of Drasha Zerbayne - Drasha (ST 10 DX 15 IQ 9 MA 10) is the most skilled craftsman in the community, and his pottery consistently brings in the highest prices in trade (provided that Drasha himself, who is a horrible bargainer, does not do the selling). Beyond this skill, Master Zerbayne is an exceptionally unremarkable fellow, as dull as he is good-natured. He, his wife, and six children (all boys), live in the rear of the shop. The eldest of his offspring, Desha (ST 10 DX 12 IQ 10 MA 10, Missile Weapons, Tracking, Climbing), has proven quite adept with the long bow and as a hunter and tracker, and is likely to go off to seek his fortune soon (FM's Note: perhaps with the next adventuring party to pass through Ghee?).

6) House of Melledi, the Healer - Melledi, an extremely petite middle-aged woman with a solicitous manner, is a traditional-style early medieval healer, whose limited pharmacological know-how has been drawn from old wives' tales, legends, and a lifetime of very unscientific animal experimentation. She has Physicker skills, but her serums and balms are as likely to hurt as help. If one of her "cures" is taken, roll 4 dice - on a 10 or less, they will heal 2 hits of damage; on 17 or more, they inflict 2 points of additional damage. She keeps several small cages filled with animals in her cottage for use in her "experiments"; anyone visiting Melledi several times over a period of weeks should begin to notice the high turnover rate in these cages.

Melledi ST 13 DX 10 IQ 11 MA 8

**TALENTS:** Naturalist, Physicker, Charisma, Animal Handler  
**SPECIAL POSS.:** Various Poisons  
Melledi relies on ingestible poisons for her protection - these are about as reliable as her cures (roll 3 dice; on 8 or less, they do 3 dice of damage - otherwise, no effect).

7) House of Silas ("the Herdmaster")

Silas ST 13 DX 13 IQ 11 MA 10

**WEAPONS:** Bare Hands only  
**TALENTS:** Animal Handling, Vet, Unarmed Combat I, Detection of Lies, Charisma

As described earlier, Silas is viewed by all as the unofficial leader of the herdsmen. He is small and wiry, with rather homely features, but is respected by all for his fairness and great skill with the beasts. Silas is a thoughtful man, not given to hasty judgments; in a less warlike culture he might well be the village chieftain. As it is, however, Silas' distaste for violence makes him an outsider when the leaders of Hold and province visit Ghee. Rannyx and Silas, however, get along very well, and the Shirriff is often influenced by the latter's wisdom.

8) Wheelwright, Stables - The property of Mendai and his daughter Kerissian lies at the outskirts of the village. Mendai keeps the few wagons of the village roadworthy; but this keeps him busy only in the days just before a major trade caravan departs. Mendai and Kerissian also breed and break horses and have a medium-sized corral and stable. The horses raised here are bred for work and haulage, not as riding or war animals; but they are serviceable nags with good stamina. At any time, there will be 2D6-3 horses available for sale.

Mendai ST 14 DX 13(12) IQ 11 MA 10

**WEAPONS:** Whip (1-1), Lasso (1+2, or tangle), Small Ax (1+2)  
**ARMOR:** Cloth (-1 hit)  
**TALENTS:** Animal Handler, Driver, Expert Horsemanship  
**SPECIAL POSS.:** Riding horse

Mendai, a widower of forty, has traveled Darok extensively as a warrior and a wagonmaster, and knows a great deal of lore and incidental information about the terrain surrounding Ghee. He will pass on his knowledge freely to those he respects (and he respects those who understand honor, and treat their fellow men with deference). He cares little about money, although he has a small hoard saved to give to his daughter when and if she marries (TF=5). His loves are his daughter, and his work; his own horse Firefly is excellently trained, but will only respond to Mandai's commands. (Player characters with thoughts of horse thievery may thus be in for an unpleasant surprise.)

Kerissian ST 10 DX 13(11) IQ 10 MA 10

**WEAPONS:** Sling (1-2), Whip (1-1)  
**ARMOR:** Leather (-2 hits)  
**TALENTS:** Driver, Wheelwright, Horsemanship, Animal Handler, Literacy  
**SPECIAL POSS.:** Riding horse

Kerissian is a rail-thin girl of sixteen with long dark hair, a sarcastic wit, and a spirit as brash as any male in Ghee. She has taken on her father's old duties, accompanying the caravans to Shaylle to provide emergency wagon repair services as needed. Though all the merchants joke with her crudely about sex, they in fact keep a watchful eye on her (for Kerissian is still

Daddy's girl and extremely innocent about matters of the heart). On her last trip to Shaylle, Kerissian caught a glimpse of Aleth-aan and was awed by the latter's imposing, majestic presence - since that time, she has tried to improve her own appearance, and begun to become aware of her own potential influence over men.



9) Gorilla Joe's General Store - The store, named for the large stuffed ape that stands inside its entrance, sells feed and tools and a host of odd items both useful and valueless. Even Embree the proprietor often does not know all the contents of his store, for various items are indiscriminately mixed together on long wooden shelves or in large bins. An adventurer seeking supplies can find most of what he needs here, but may have to spend a few hours searching for these items. The quality of goods purchased here is fair to mediocre, although Embree promises to replace any defective merchandise at no cost to the buyer (admittedly, this is small consolation for the fellow rappelling his way down a cliff face when the rope breaks, but . . .).

Embree ST 13 DX 13 IQ 10 MA 10

**WEAPONS:** Dagger (1-1), Small Ax (1+2)

**TALENTS:** Recognize Value, Acute Hearing, Swimming/Diving, Dwarvish

**SPECIAL POSS.:** Pouch of fake gems (20)

The proprietor of Gorilla Joe's is known as the best bargainer in Ghee; unfortunately, this is known as damning with faint praise. Embree will usually get a somewhat better price for goods than his compatriots - he sells at 45% + (2D6 X 5%) of normal value. Due to this distinction, Embree serves as spokesman for the caravans that go to Shaylle - he has of late missed some of these journeys, however, because of failing health (a chronic shortness of breath that his frequent visits to Melledi have, unsurprisingly, not cured).

As noted, Embree has a pouch filled with a number of reasonably good fake gems in his possession - unfortunately, he obtained them recently as payment for a large order of supplies. Embree is looking to unload these "gems" on some unsuspecting soul, and also for the purveyor of this trade - one Lekkevic "Lucky" Braun, a foreigner to Darok who said he was bound for Dihad. Thus far, he is unsuccessful in both endeavors.

SCENARIO:

## THE TREASURE OF ZIERO MHADDRAY

One of the most frequent patrons at the local tavern in Ghee is old Draconus. Draconus is definitely old - he claims to have been an army scout the last time the Muipocans got as far as Ghee, and that was at least 40 years ago. The problem is that Draconus is a drunk (he'll swill down anything that has any trace of alcohol in it), and he's also obnoxious, personally and physically (it must be nearly that same 40 years since he's had a bath!). The old man will cheerfully bend the ear of anyone willing to listen to him with his stories of the war he was in (now about six wars back), and particularly the story of the buried treasure. Few of the people who have lived in Ghee over the past four decades have paid much attention to his tale about a group of Muipocans he spied on, who had just buried a cache of treasure, particularly since no one has ever been able to find the location of the lost cache; nowadays, the old drunk and his treasure are regarded as an old drunk and his treasure - few pay either any attention.

But, lo and behold! Draconus story is true! When he was in the army 40 years ago, he crept up on a squad of enemy soldiers who had apparently gotten separated from their company, and overheard them working up a map for the site in which they had buried a treasure. The treasure consisted of a chest of golden and silver coins with some gems and pieces of jewelry that they had looted from a merchant out on the Bloody Road. Some of the soldiers were chuckling about the look of pure indignation on the man's face when they had killed him, and the rest of the group of twelve were checking back over the route that had brought them there from the burial place. Draconus remembers quite vividly all of the directions (except for the last little bit, when he had to stifle an impending sneeze and missed hearing it - however, he doesn't remember not hearing the last part). Shortly afterward, the squad was surrounded by the Darokans, and butchered, save for one who escaped by feigning death - leaving Draconus the only other person who knew about the treasure. For years, he tried to find it, but was never successful; later, when he tried to tell his story to others to get some help, they, too, were unable to find the site. Soon, Draconus and his treasure became a laughingstock.

The old man doesn't mind being laughed at, nor does he mind his treasure being made fun of, but he does want to get something out of all the amusement he's providing for others. He can, and will, give all the clues to anyone who shows the least interest in his story, but he likes to be coaxed a bit - by his favorite method, a mug or two of the fiery concoction favored in the village.

Early on he will tell how "yeh ztaht fum Lookout Rock, and yeh gaw eazd, nah, min' yeh, doo eazd, 'bout fahr kilometer. Thar yeh'll fin' ole howz, zdone howz, crumblin' way even then." A faraway look will appear in the old man's eyes, and he will let his voice slide off for a moment, then whisper wistfully, "Zhor meks a man a mite thurzdy, tellin' a tale lak thiz. Mah throad'z gettin' awrful dry 'n' mahtee zkratchy on me." When someone finally procures him a drink, he'll drain it, and happily continue; if no free drink appears to be forthcoming, he will try one more clue, then lose interest and wander away - there's no profit in being laughed at while dry. "Nah yeh gaw zout'eazd fum t'ole zdone howz mebbe haffa kilometer till yeh get to the Needle Zpire. Godda climb Zpire t'zee." This is the last bit of free information (or relatively free; the players may already have a drink invested and ingested) any group will get; from this point, all clues come on a 1 per drink minimum basis.

For each drink Draconus gets to pour down his capacious gullet, there is a chance he will divulge another clue. Most of the time he will babble about his "heroic" deeds in the war, or his deceased wife, or how his children pay him no attention, etc. But, "thar's gold in them thar hills!", and Draconus knows where it is (almost); the only problem is to get the information

out of him. Use the table below to determine the chance for a good clue, based on the number of drinks Draconus has consumed (remember, FM, no more than one honest clue per drink):

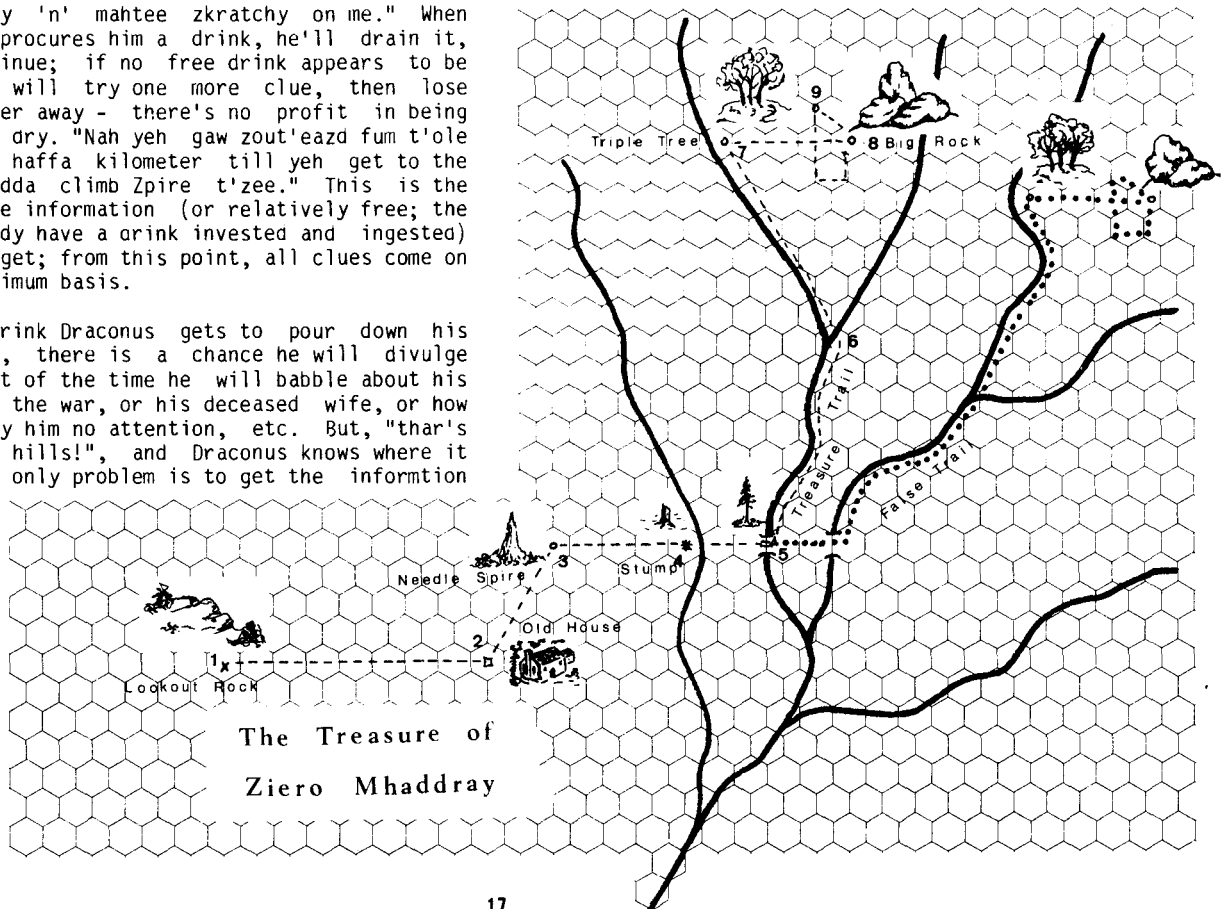
| Drink # | Honest Clue on  |
|---------|-----------------|
| 1 to 2  | 2 or more on 1D |
| 3 to 5  | 3 or more on 1D |
| 6 to 9  | 4 or more on 1D |
| 10 plus | 5 or more on 1D |

If Draconus is not going to give an honest clue, he will usually repeat one he has already given; on a 1 on 1D, he will give a misleading clue. Additionally, the distances given in the clues will almost always be off by a factor of 2 - either twice as far as they should be or half as far - and the distance will change on the repeats of the clues.

The full directions to the treasure should be followed on the map below; the verbal directions are given below. If Draconus is brought along, he gets a 3/IQ SR at each point of the treasure trail to remember the correct directions.

#### The Directions

- 1) Start at Lookout Rock.  
(This is the location where Draconus overheard the soldiers; the Rock is a common landmark in the area, and any Gheeman can direct a party to it).
- 2) Go due east 2km to the site of an old stone house.  
(Only the foundations of the old house are visible now; even in Draconus' youth, the house had been a crumbling wreck. It may be necessary for the party to search a bit to locate the ruin, particularly since they'll likely be looking either at 1km from the Rock or 4km.)
- 3) Go northeast 1km to Needle Spire; climb up the Spire and sight through the Needle's Eye.  
(The Spire is a slim 10m needle of rock, with a ledge about 3m from the top; when one stands on the



ledge and looks through the wind-created slit in the rock, one will look due east. The Needle is fairly easy to recognize, since it the only thing that looks to be anything like a needle for 25km around. The FM should require a 4/DX SR for those trying to climb the Spire, 3/DX for those with the Climbing talent.)

- 4) Go to the tallest pine one can see through the Eye of the Needle; it stands next to a stream, and is about 1km from the Spire.

(Forty years ago, there was a 40m pine next to the first stream one came to; it was blasted to pieces by lightning in a huge storm a few years ago - a fact of which Draconus is not cognizant - and is now only a 3m stump. Another pine, some 30m tall stands beside a parallel stream about half-a-km farther east - this is the pine which the group will see. If the group has figured out that Draconus gives bad measurements, they may locate the correct tree.)

- 5) Cross the stream, and go half-a-km to the next stream, which has a log bridge. Cross again.

(The tracks of the clues now begin to get a bit tangled. Half-a-km from the blasted tree is the now-tallest tree; it has a log bridge over the stream which runs next to it. Half-a-km further on is another stream with a log bridge over it. If the players think to look, the second bridge is very obviously less than 40 years old.)

- 6) Follow the stream up to its first joining.

(In both cases, this will be about one-and-a-half km.)

- 7) Cross and follow the northwest branch to the triple tree.

(Triple-trunked trees are not uncommon. There's one about 2km up from the branching of the correct stream, and another about one-and-a-half km upstream of the first. On the incorrect stream, the distances happen to be about the same.)

- 8) Go due east to the big rock.

(About 1km east of the first triple tree on the first parallel stream, there is a huge rock, some 30m tall and 40m across its base. Unmistakeably, it is the big rock. About 2km from the first triple tree up the wrong stream, is another huge rock, a memento of whatever carved the Land out of the mountains, which is also unmistakably the big rock.)

- 9) The rest of the directions are in the form of a slight riddle:

Stand at midmorning's tree.

Move fifty paces east of the third tree south.

(This is the part Draconus didn't hear.)

Fifty paces north shall you dig.

(Midmorning is approximately 9:00am; at that time, the big rock's shadow just happens to touch one particular old apple tree. As it happens, the third tree south is about 100m away from the shadowed one. The group will describe a neat spiral if they can figure out the puzzle.)

If the party should go to the wrong stream and follow the directions from there, when they reach the big rock on that path, they will find evidence of recent digging; there are a number of freshly turned piles of earth, particularly in and about the area which would be the correct site if the right trail had been followed. Gerenz Longhands, the only grandson of the only survivor of the group, has slipped into Darok with the idea of recovering the treasure he has heard his dotard grandfather speak of so many times. If the players arrive in this area, Gerenz will be hidden in the trees, having heard them coming a long way off; he will listen carefully, and, if the players appear to have information he does not possess, may shadow them at a respectable distance. Should the party later

discover the blasted tree and return to the right track, Gerenz will continue to watch them (hoping they will become discouraged and leave (a real possibility, since only Gerenz knows the last line of clue 9). If the group correctly notices the blasted tree, and takes the correct path, there is also a chance (9 or better on 2D) that Gerenz will notice their activity, and will begin to trail them (this chance should be adjusted up or down, depending on the amount of noise the party is making - a good argument carries!). If it should become apparent that the party really intends to stay for the duration, and dig up the entire area, young Gerenz will regretfully swallow his pride and treat with the group, offering to split 50-50 in exchange for the last clue (and looking thereafter for some way to relieve the party of their half).

Gerenz Longhands ST 11 DX 14(13) IQ 10 MA 8

WEAPONS: Rapier (1), Dagger (1-1)

ARMOR: Cloth (-1 hit)

TALENTS: Fencing, Acute Hearing, Bow, Horsemanship

Gerenz is a relatively young man, and has been hearing the story of the treasure his grandfather had helped to bury in Darok, and the ensuing narrow escape some 40 years back, since he was a small boy. Being a rather imaginative sort, his fancy was fired by the tale, and when he came of age (Gerenz is only 18), he skipped off to follow the trail and find the treasure. He followed his grandfather's instructions carefully, but the only thing he's found in all the holes he's dug so far has been all the dirt he took out of them. Gerenz is getting a little tired of digging, but he's sure the old man wasn't lying, and that chest just has to be around here somewhere. As it happens, the first hole he dug would have been in the right place, if he had found the right tree and stream combination.

Unfortunately for Gerenz (and for whoever else digs up the treasure chest), the treasure chest has a spectral guardian, of which no one is aware. Ziero Mhaddray, the merchant who was slain for his chest of coins and jewels, was so indignant when he was killed (because he needed the money the chest represented to him to save his ailing business in Trevalia) that he became a spectre. He has remained in the area (but not through choice - he seems to be bound to return to the chest and its contents), and will appear shortly if anyone digs up the chest. The first item a delver will reach if the party are digging in the proper place is a skeleton, all that remains of the body of Ziero. The soldiers didn't kill him right away, but dragged him along with them until it looked as if they had been surrounded and might possibly be captured; the squad knew they couldn't sneak through enemy lines with the likely-to-squall merchant on their hands, so the men simply killed him and buried him atop his own chest.

It is vitally important to Ziero to complete his trip, but he cannot move the chest himself, and needs help to do so. The spectre is not bloodthirsty; he will bargain with any who dig up the chest, even offering them a small portion of its contents if they will transport it, and his bones - he does know he's dead, but not how long - to Triyal, capital city of Trevalia, where he had his business (for the nonce, FMs are responsible for designing the remainder of that portion of this adventure themselves - "Trevalia" will be out when time permits). He has a power which might help enforce his request; spectres can Curse, with all the efficacy of the magic spell, and this curse affects anyone within the spectre's megahex. The spectre will always trail one particular person in a group, but will attempt to affect as many people of that group as possible with the Curse; spectres only trail and Curse if their requests are not acceded to.



Within the chest, which is secured with an L4 lock, there is approximately \$3,600 in coins and gems, and two pieces of well made jewelry - a tiara of silver and small diamonds (valued at \$4,800) and a collar made of golden squares linked together (valued at \$1,600). Only the coins and gems are likely to bring full immediate value; the jewelry would have to be sold, and there are not many people in Darok capable of buying pieces so expensive (and those who can, can afford to have the sellers "pacified"). Besides, there is the Curse of the spectre. Ziero is willing to give the party the \$3,600 in coins and gems, if they will deliver the two pieces of jewelry to Triyal; if they ignore him (after all, he appears to be a relatively harmless ghost), and simply take the loot, the spectre will trail the party and apply his Curse. If the party should split up, or split up the loot, Ziero Mhaddray will follow whichever person takes the tiara; until the tiara is in Triyal (and Ziero learns of the failure of his business, some 35 years ago, when he failed to return from the trip to Soukhor), the spectre will dog his trail, even appearing beside him on occasion.

Ziero Mhaddray IQ 15 MA 9

SPELLS: Mage Sight (no cost),  
Curse (3 point, no cost)

Ziero was a rather corpulent man in life, and still appears that way. Due to his size, he was rather slow moving. As a spectre, he has the power to Curse (to alter probability on the characters' die rolls) any characters within his megahex; he may affect any die roll unfavorably for any of the characters in range by as much as three points (changing a 15 to an 18 on a "to hit" roll, or a 3 to a 0 on a damage roll, etc.). He will use his power to make life miserable for the defaulting possessor of the tiara, if he does not at least attempt to deliver it to Ziero's old offices in Triyal.

### LIFE ON THE PLAINS

Although there are three Freeholds scattered across the grassy lowlands of Darok, the majority of the savannah is open plain, inhabited primarily by wildlife and traversed in many areas by the crudest of trails. Nonetheless, a variety of people also occupy these regions, operating in small bands that make their living by hunting, horsebreaking, or theft. Player characters may have been born and raised in such a life, choose one of these professions as a temporary source of employment, or encounter these inhabitants during their own journeys across the plains. This section describes the lifestyles of the plainsmen of Darok, suggests some ways to simulate the plying of their primary trade of horsebreaking, and describes a few introductory scenarios concerning these activities.

#### The Horsebreakers

The various groups engaged in horsebreaking are the most numerous inhabitants of the wild grasslands, and the most economically successful as well. The wild stallions of Darok are of generally good stock, strong and sturdy steeds suited to long hard travel; these beasts constitute one of the principal export goods of the county. The men and women who capture and tame the steeds are a strange mix of characters who often share little except the requisite skills of horsemanship and the desire to operate free from the restrictions of local government.

Most horsebreaking groups are extended family units of about 5 to 25 people, whose skills have been passed down through several generations. These families

tend to be very close-knit, and often look with extreme disfavor on their sons and daughters abandoning their traditional trade to pursue a military or adventurer's life. Considerably more rare, but sometimes very successful, are the teams of independent horsemen who band together without blood ties. These alliances are often formed at the Horse Market in Shaylle, or through chance meetings on the trail. These pairings, though generally based on mutual respect at the outset, are often volatile, and violent fallings-out between former partners are not at all uncommon.

About one-third of the plains clans establish some sort of permanent homestead or base of operations, to provide shelter in the winter months and a somewhat reliable place to stable and train their stock. The remainder lead a very nomadic existence, following the herds across the Plains, and living out of tents or temporary shelters. Occasionally, two or more groups may become involved in a dispute over rights to a particular territory, which can escalate into a serious blood feud that may jeopardize the lives of innocent travelers as well as the combatants. The authority of the Council of Shaylle means little out on the plains; and when squabbles between men break out, it is usually the justice of cold steel that carries the day.

### THE FINE ART OF HORSEBREAKING

Those players who wish to experience the joys and hardships of life on the range may try their hand at capturing and breaking horses, either alone or by joining up with an existing clan. At least half the party should have basic Horsemanship skills, and, if they are seeking to go it alone, at least one of the party should be an Expert Horseman (for the group to have any real chance of success).

One member of the party must be designated as the leader or "trail boss"; the trail boss is responsible for making saving rolls against his abilities when crisis situations develop along the trail. The trail boss should possess, ideally, the Expert Horsemanship, Woodsman, and Tactics talents. For every one of the above talents that he lacks, add one die to the normal saving roll requirements.

The size and skills of the overall party will also have some influence on its chances of success. The average horsebreaking party will consist of 6 to 8 men including the trail boss. A smaller party will find it difficult to maintain control of the herd, while larger parties will tend to move rather noisily (increasing chances of detection), and may often find their meager earnings split among too many hands to make the venture profitable. The table below indicates the effects of various party characteristics on the group's chances of being observed by a herd, and on the results of saving rolls made by the trail boss during the drive.

#### PARTY EFFECTS

| Party Characteristic              | Trail Boss Adjustment | Discovery Adjustment |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Party size - 3 or less            | +2D                   | -3                   |
| 4 or 5                            | +1D                   | -1                   |
| 6 to 8                            | 0                     | 0                    |
| 9 to 12                           | -1                    | +1                   |
| 13 to 16                          | -2                    | +2                   |
| 17 or more                        | -3                    | +4                   |
| Less than half party EXPERT       | +1D                   | +2                   |
| All of party EXPERT HORSEMEN      | -2                    | -1                   |
| More than half party know WHIP    | -1                    | 0                    |
| Average adjDX of party 14 or 15   | -1                    | 0                    |
| Average adjDX of party 16 or more | -2                    | 0                    |

The sections below describe the various phases of sighting, rounding up, and driving a wild herd, and provide a working example of these rules.

### Sighting

Sighting rolls are made on 3D. In normal savannah, 2 rolls may be made per day; 14 or greater is required to locate a "herd". On the Plains of Stallions, 3 rolls per day are permitted, and a 13 or greater is required to locate a herd. (FM's Note: if the searchers use an artifact or spell of Far Vision, sighting chances should be greatly increased.) If horses are sighted, the location and nature of the herd is then determined by the FM through a series of 3 die rolls. (Prudent FMs may wish to generate several herds using the procedures given before the play session begins, to maintain the flow of the adventure.)

A) Number of beasts. Roll 2D:

| Die Roll | Result        | # Represented |
|----------|---------------|---------------|
| 3-6      | Large Herd    | 20 + 5D*      |
| 7-11     | Small Herd    | 3D*           |
| 2, 12    | Lone Stallion | 1             |

\* - Double result if on the Plains of Stallions

B) Roll one die to determine the nature of the terrain in which the herd is found, and its current status:

- 1-3 Open ground - herd grazing.  
This is the normal circumstance under which beasts will be found (no effect on discovery rolls or trail boss saving rolls).
- 4 Open ground - herd moving.  
The presence of a moving target will reduce the effectiveness of the herders (+2 to all trail boss savings rolls; e.g., a rolled 13 would be treated as a 15).
- 5 High ground (ridge, hilltop) - grazing.  
The herd is gathered in an area that offers a good vantage of the surrounding terrain (+2 to discovery rolls, +1 to the first trail boss saving roll).
- 6 Watercourse (stream, pond) - watering/resting.  
The herd will tend to be more relaxed and not in a ready position to escape (-1 to discovery rolls, -2 to the first trail boss savings roll made).

C) Special characteristics. Like the trail boss in the herdsman's party, the wild herd will also possess a key figure, referred to as the "lead stallion". The lead stallion bosses the herd and coordinates its efforts; he is the most accomplished fighter (and usually the strongest horse) in the herd. If the lead stallion is brought down, captured or killed, the herders subtract one die from all subsequent savings rolls for that herd. If a large herd is encountered, roll two dice - on 7, there are additional experienced stallions (probably former lead stallions) present in the herd (+1 to discovery chances). If the herd is small, roll two dice - on a 2 or 3, there is currently no lead stallion in the herd; it is being temporarily led by a boss mare (-1 to discovery chances, and -2 to all trail boss saving rolls).

### Approach/Discovery

It is assumed, for simplicity's sake, that the herding party will be about 1/2 to 3/4 km away from the herd at the moment of sighting. From this point, the party must attempt to move into position around the herd without being prematurely spotted. FMs should have the trail boss describe in detail the manner in which the group's approach is being made, including the party's rate of speed and the allocation of forces along the various lines of approach. FMs should in turn clearly indicate to the trail boss the type of cover available to the party, if any, and (if asked by the trail boss) the direction of the prevailing winds in the area.

Once the method of approach has been determined, the FM makes a 3-die roll to determine if the herd "discovers" the party in time to make an attempt to flee from it. Since smell is the primary means by which identification is likely to occur, wind direction has the greatest influence on discovery chances. If the group is approaching from upwind of the herd, the base chance of discovery is a 14 or greater on 3D, if from downwind, 10 or greater. This base number is adjusted by the characteristics of the herd, herding party, and area terrain as indicated in the previous sections, and may also be further adjusted to take account of the following additional factors:

- 1) If the party is moving at a full gallop (MA 14 or more), add 2 to the die roll result.
- 2) If the party is "cautiously approaching" at less than half speed (MA less than 8), subtract 2 from the die roll result. (Note, however, that if this option is chosen, two [rather than one] discovery rolls are made, to reflect increased time taken on the approach, unless all members of the party possess silent movement skills and successfully make a 3/DX saving roll to utilize them.)
- 3) Subtract 1 from the die roll result if the party makes creative use of available cover, or should employ other noteworthy tactics (intelligent use of magical spells or artifacts, etc.).
- 4) If the method of approach will take more than 5 game minutes to set up, an additional discovery roll is made.

If the discovery roll is missed, the herdsman may begin to "drive" the herd to their destination (see below). If the discovery roll is made, the herd will attempt to flee. The trail boss must immediately make a 5/IQ saving roll (adjusted appropriately) to regain control of the herd, or some portion of the herd will immediately escape (roll 2D):

| Result | % of Herd Lost |
|--------|----------------|
| 2-4    | 25%            |
| 5-8    | 50%            |
| 9-10   | 75%            |
| 11-12  | All            |

If any of the herd remains after this procedure is completed, it may be driven toward safe refuge.

### The Drive

Once the herd has been successfully surrounded, the herdsman must attempt to drive the beasts to some kind of pre-established man-made corral enclosure (either temporary or permanent in nature), or seek out some natural terrain feature like a box canyon to similarly confine the herd. While moving in this fashion, a 3D roll is made every 1/2 km to determine the effectiveness of the herd:

| Result | Herd Movement |
|--------|---------------|
| 3-6    | Veers left    |
| 7-14   | On course     |
| 15-18  | Veers right   |

If the die roll indicates an off-course result, the trail boss must make a 4/IQ savings roll (appropriately adjusted) to maintain control of the herd. If this SR is successful, the drive continues unabated, on the original course; if unsuccessful, 2D horses (large herd) or 1D horses (small herd) escape. Thus it is easy to see that a long trail ride of 10 or more km can cause the ranks of a herd to decline seriously through gradual attrition.

### Example of Herding Rules

To illustrate the procedures outlined above, let us examine a typical herding venture undertaken by a band of 10 young plainsmen being led by Fewli Frikka. Fewli has an IQ of 14 and Expert Horsemanship and Woodsman skills, but no knowledge of Tactics; he adds one die to any saving rolls required because of this. With 11 party members, the group subtracts 1 from all saving roll results, but adds 1 to discovery rolls. Six of the party members are Expert Horsemen, only 2 have whip skills, and the group's average adjDX is 13; consequently, none of the special adjustments for group characteristics apply to this party.

About 4 km from their camp (where a temporary corral has been erected) Fewli and his fellow herders encounter a large herd of 40 horses grazing on high ground (+2 to discovery rolls, +1 to first saving roll made). Given his already significant disadvantages from the upwind side (+3 to discovery chances overall), Fewli decides to approach cautiously - subtracting 2 from the discovery roll, but requiring 2 rolls to be made. A 13 or greater is needed for the herd to "discover" the herders; the first roll is a 10, but the second roll is a 15, signalling discovery. Fewli must immediately make an IQ saving roll to attempt to cut off the herd's escape; when all appropriate adjustments are factored in (+1D, -1, +1), the saving roll is on 6D. Fewli rolls a 19, missing his IQ by a wide margin, so that a portion of the herd immediately escapes; the 2D roll comes up 7, indicating that 1/2 the herd is lost. The herdsman then begin to drive the 20 remaining horses toward camp.

The first 2-1/2 km are uneventful, but at the 6th checkpoint (3 km), the FM rolls a 16, indicating that the herd has veered off-course. Fewli again attempts a saving roll this time on 4D + 1D - 1, for 5D-1. (Note: the terrain adjustment for high ground applies only to the first saving roll attempted.) Although the odds are not in his favor, he succeeds, rolling an 11, and the herd is put back on track. A 1/2 km later, however, more problems erupt when the FM rolls a 6 (herd veers off-course left). The IQ savings roll is again on 5D-1; this time, however, Fewli is not so fortunate, and rolls a 22. On the missed savings roll, 2D more horses escape - a 9 is rolled, leaving 11 in the herd. It is this number that are driven into the corral later that afternoon, as the drive is completed without further mishap.

### After the Capture

Once a wild horse has been corralled, it must of course be broken if it is to be sold at market. Only Expert Horsemen can attempt to break horses. It takes 3 weeks on the average to break a horse to the point where it can be used as a riding steed that any competent Horseman can handle.

After 1 week of breaking, a horse will bear its trainer, and (75% chance) possibly others, without balking; however, it will still be very skittish, and easily spooked. In a crisis, the horse must make a 3/IQ roll, or it will rear; its rider must make either a) a 4/ST roll to regain control of the amount, or b) a 4/DX roll to stay on the horse as it bolts out of control for 2D turns (1 die less required on saving rolls if rider is an Expert Horseman). An Expert Horseman or an Animal Handler has an 80-90% chance of recognizing that a given beast has only had this minimal amount of training; a normal Horseman only about a 30% chance.

Of course, not all horses captured on the plains are average (Roll D6):

- 1 Particularly tractable, breaking takes only half quoted time.

2-4 Normal

5 Hard to handle; add 1 week to required breaking time.

6 Super-mean; player must make 5/DX saving roll each day until 7 days of training have been logged to even mount the horse; if thrown from beast, player takes 1-2 damage (no absorption by armor), and on a 6 (one die) suffers a broken arm. Note, however, that chances are good that such a beast, if successfully broken, will very likely turn out to be a good, premium mount for its purchaser.

Most horsebreakers brand their stock with some kind of identifying mark, since horse-stealing is a not uncommon enterprise on the plains. Protection of their corrals and stock, of course, is the responsibility of the herders, leading to its own adventure opportunities (in the form of thieves, wild animals, or storms which might panic the stock).

## ENCOUNTERS AND SCENARIOS ON THE DAROKAN PLAINS

### Tarff the Red

Tarff is a renowned bandit leader who commands a band of about twenty thieves that operate in the lands around the Plains of the Stallions. (A number of other bands are loosely allied with Tarff, so he can summon together nearly a hundred men for a major assault, if need be). Tarff himself is a swarthy well-built man, with long jet-black hair tied back at the forehead by a red silk band. His eminence among the rabble is said to



be derived from possession of a silvery grey crystal which he calls the "Starstone", and with which he seems to be able to summon mighty forces.

In fact, Tarff is one of the high level renegade mages of the province; his "Starstone" is useless by itself (merely a coverup for his true abilities). None of his present followers know his secret, though one or two suspect it; rumors of his activities have begun to attract the notice of the High Priests of Akhora, however, which may provoke an investigation on their part in the near future.

If players encounter bandits in the area near the Plains, there is a 75% chance (roll 5-10 on 2D) that the men will be part of Tarff's band. If any players are taken prisoner, they will be brought before Tarff; if he takes a liking to them (normal reaction roll, taking into account any Talent adjustments the player possesses), he will offer them a chance to swear fealty and join his band. Because of his very real powers, Tarff is a bad employer to cross - but he offers his men a decent share of the spoils, and a better than average chance of survival in style out in this rough terrain. He likes men who show initiative, and who can come up with lucrative robbery ideas - provided that they clear their plans with him before proceeding.

Tarff ST 18 DX 16 IQ 22 MA 10

**WEAPONS:** Broadsword (2)\*

**ARMOR:** Leather (-2 hits)

**TALENTS:** Literacy, Horsemanship, Sex Appeal, Diplomacy

**SPELLS:** Magic Fist, Drop Weapon, Shock Shield, Clumsiness, Ward, Trailtwister, Lock/Knock, Sleep, Reverse Missiles, Persuasiveness, Reveal/Conceal, Spell Shield, Lesser Magic Item Creation, Weapon/Armor Enchantment, Stone Flesh

**SPECIAL POSS.:** The "Starstone", riding horse, ring of Stone Flesh, TF=8

#### The k'Ardryt Clan (The Trail Drive)

The players are approached (either in a saloon in one of the smaller conclaves in the southern part of Darok, or at one of the caravanerais along the trail) by a large well-tanned man. He will introduce himself as one Buyan k'Ardryt, and ask if the group, possibly, is seeking work. If the answer is affirmative, he will explain that he and his three sons have recently finished capturing, and breaking, a sizable herd, and have also purchased another herd from one of the other horseclans. The family seeks help in driving the horses north either to Shaylle or to the Bloody Road, where they can be sold to some of the merchants who travel along the highway. Buyan will provide food for the drive, and will pay the group \$10 a head for each horse that reaches the Bloody Road in decently salable condition. Currently there are some two hundred horses in the combined herds, which would mean a tidy profit for the group of \$2,000, depending on the success of the drive.

If the party accepts the offer of employment, Buyan will bring the group to the spot where the herd is currently corralled. There they will meet the three younger k'Ardryts: a dapper-looking, long limbed man with black hair named Adum; a very pleasant but equally slow giant named Hawz; and the youngest of the group, a slender young hellion with the handle of Liljo. It is quite obvious that none of the three had the same mother. No one else will be present at the camp; if asked, Buyan will say that some of the rival groups of horse-breakers hired their men away with promises of more money. He will not sound pleased about this circumstance, to say the least.

The drive will start as quickly as possible after the party reaches the corral. The second herd (about 100 head) will be found about 15 km up the trail, in a small ox canyon with a recently built high wood fence across the open end. Adum and Liljo will ride on ahead of the rest of the party; when the rest of the group arrives on the scene, there will be no other horsemen in evidence. Buyan will apparently leave a note for the other clan, tucking it under a rock near the still glowing campfire to keep it from blowing away. The drive will then begin in earnest, as Buyan will force all of the group to as hard a pace as he can without losing horses, and try to get about 25 km underway before dark.

This scenario can be readily handled in a number of different ways:

- 1.) the k'Ardryts are horse rustlers, who have stolen the first herd - and happen to be greedy enough to try for a second one along the way;
- 2.) this is a truly honest situation, and all is as it actually seems - the k'Ardryts own a large spread of land up in the hills, where they do capture and break horses for a living; and
- 3.) in view of #2, the players may decide to rustle the herd for themselves, in order to drive the horses to the Bloody Road or to Shaylle, and collect a good bit more than the \$10 a head offered by the k'Ardryts.

The FM must choose at the outset of the scenario between options 1 and 2, but should keep his choice obscure to the players by leaving the k'Ardryts' identity in doubt. Option 3 is entirely up to the players - it could work even if option 1 is the FM's choice.

Assuming that the drive will be begun in any case, the FM should roll for random encounters as indicated in the last section of this book. Some encounter results may affect the progress of the trail drive by causing stampedes among the herd or other unusual difficulties, as follows:

Big cats - if cats are encountered, there is a good chance (7 or better on 2D) that the horses will smell them and attempt to stampede away from the predators. The cats will attack the horse herd only if they are particularly hungry (5 or 6 on 1D); if they attack, there is no way to prevent a stampede - the horses will simply have to be rounded up again, or chased until they tire out, and 2D horses will have been lost forever.

Wild Horses - if wild horses are encountered, there is a chance (9 or better on 2D) that some portion of the herd (1D x 10%) will try to break away and join them (remember, the assembled herd is only half-tame yet itself).

Antelope/Bison - the horse herd will try to move in the same direction as the general flow of the other herd. It will require a 3/ST saving roll on the part of all in the party to prevent mingling of the herds (1D horses will be lost for each driver who misses this roll).

Poisonous Plant Life - if the party should roll the poisonous berry result, it is almost certain (5 or mor on 2D) that 1D x 10% of the herd will graze on these berries, and soon thereafter become violently ill. Only players with specialized Vet skills (the Expert Horsemanship talent does not count for this purpose) may attempt to give aid, making a 3/IQ SK to identify the symptoms. If successful, affected beasts can be treated, and the party will only lose a day of travel time; if none in the party can diagnose the symptoms, each affected animal has a 50/50 chance of survival.

Skyrider - if the rider swoops down on the herd, the herd will stampede if his beast is either a roc or a



griffon. If the rider has a pegasus, there will be no effect on the herd.

Snakes - horses have a deep hatred of snakes in general, and will usually attempt to trample into a red mush any serpents that cross their paths. There is a chance of a stampede in this encounter; roll 2D - if the roll exceeds the number of serpents plus 2, there is no problem (except for a few dead snakes); otherwise, the herd stampedes.

If the horses should stampede as the result of an encounter (or any other event, like a violent thunder storm or careless use of a gunpowder weapon), the drivers each may make an IQ saving roll to bring the rampaging beats back into line. This SR is 6/IQ for non-Horsemen, 4/IQ for Horsemen, and 3/IQ for Expert Horsemen. Each successful herder can bring 3D horses back into the fold; one (and one only) second try is allowed each herder. On a normal day, the herd can cover 25km (2 hexes on the province map); if the herd becomes disorganized for any reason, the party's rate of travel would drop to 1 hex per day.

If the players decide to swipe the herd from the k'Ardryts, they will need to prevent the latter from following; this will likely require heavy violence, as the k'Ardryts have long memories, and a strong sense of attachment to their property (legitimate or not). It may be possible to incapacitate all four of them at night, particularly if the attempt is made after four or five nights have passed, and the family has come to trust (at least a little) their hired hands. If any of the family is killed, the remainder will surely follow to seek revenge. If none of the k'Ardryts have been permanently injured, the family will follow on 6 or better on 2D, if the group were honest citizens of Darok, or a 10 or better on 2D if they were rustlers. If the players take all available mounts, it will delay the k'Ardryt clan for a few days, while they catch and break new horses. When the clan catches up to the players, they will use nighttime guerrilla tactics, and attempt to take the players alive, to turn them over to the authorities for a proper trial and suitable punishment (only if the family was honest in the first place; if the k'Ardryts were rustlers, the party is quite likely to wind up dead - it's not a good idea to cross thieves); should any of his family be killed, at any time when he is a witness, Hawz will immediately go berserk.

If the players do not attempt to rustle the herd themselves, and the k'Ardryts were rustlers, there are chances for much confusion and adventure: on 9 or better on 2D, there will be one or more parties of 1D + 4 herdsmen trailing them (the clan has rustled portions of 5 different herds - roll separately for the owners of each herd to be trailing); these posses will usually be comprised of men who are +1 or +2 on the Fighter table, and will all be at least Horsemen (8 or better on 2D = Expert Horseman). If these groups should catch up to the drive (roll of 6 on 1D on each day from the fourth to the seventh for each group chasing; roll of 5-6 on 1D on the eighth or later), they will likely use "frontier justice" (a length of rope and the nearest tall tree) on any they should capture; the FM has full discretion as to the chances of prospective hangmen believing protestations of innocence from the players, but it would be unreasonable to hang them all out of hand.

If the players successfully rustle the herd, they will have to complete the drive to have any chance to realize profit from it - the k'Ardryts have no treasure to speak of, other than the horses, and do not even possess a wagon (the food supplies for the drive are carried on half-a-dozen packhorses led by Hawz). If

less than half of the players' party is comprised of Expert Horsemen, each day the herd will suffer a steady attrition of 1D + 2 horses, unless the chosen leader of the drive makes a saving roll against IQ (8/IQ if the leader is a non-Horseman, 6/IQ if a Horseman, 4/IQ if an Expert Horseman). These losses are in addition to any that may be suffered from stampedes, etc. The leader of the drive should be designated by the players as soon as they separate from the k'Ardryts; while with the clan, Buyan is the drive leader.

Buyan k'Ardryt ST 12 DX 16 IQ 15 MA 10

WEAPONS: Horse bow (1), Whip (1-1), Lasso (\*)

TALENTS: Expert Horsemanship, Recognize Value, Assess Value (Animals), Tactics, Literacy, Missile Weapons

The patriarch of the k'Ardryt clan is tall and rangy, with silver hair and deep blue eyes; his adventures have carried him over much of the land in his 50-odd years, but he has always returned to the area where he was born and raised. He is the general for the clan, and is responsible for most of their success - whether as rustlers, or as honest horse-breakers. He is quite skilful with the whip (a 7 meter one hangs from his belt at all times), and can easily flick a pipe from a man's mouth without touching him - he prefers it to all other weapons for combat, but will use his bow for hunting or to bring down escaping foes that are out of range of his lash.

Hawz k'Ardryt ST 21 DX 13 IQ 9 MA 10

WEAPONS: Club (1+5, 2-handed 1+6) [Battle Axe (3)]

ARMOR: Leather (+Warrior, -3 hits)

TALENTS: Horsemanship, Animal Handler, Warrior, Silent Movement

A true bear of a man (he has so much sandy hair all over he actually resembles one), Hawz stands more than 2 meters tall, and weighs more than 150 kg. He is incredibly strong (he has been known to pick up the entire front or back end of the horse for shoeing, rather than just its leg), but is very slow mentally. Friendly, and almost childlike in his affection for people and animals, he is easily riled by cruelty or meanness. He and Adum spent some time in the Darokan army, and the big man is quite good with both of his preferred weapons.

Hawz berserks quite easily (but not voluntarily - failing a 2/IQ SR in any fight sends him into battle rage), but seems to drop out of the frenzy with equal facility when all enemies have been dispatched (2/IQ SR to come out). Because of his great strength, at any time he deals 9 or more points of damage on a blow (prior to armor deductions), his opponent must make a 3/current ST SR or fall down (if he does 8 or more hits in one blow after armor deductions, his opponent drops automatically). If any of his family are killed or even seriously injured in his presence, he will go berserk automatically, and has a 5/ST SR to burst any ropes or other light bonds placed on him.

Adum k'Ardryt ST 14 DX 14(12) IQ 14 MA 8

WEAPONS: Whip (1-1), Lasso (\*) [Rapier (1)]

ARMOR: Leather (+Warrior, -3 hits)

TALENTS: Warrior, Fencing, Literacy, Courtly Graces, Horsemanship, Sex Appeal

Here is the gentleman of the clan, a true ladies' man (who is extremely successful with his conquests). Tall, slender, with thick and wavy black hair, and a devil-may-care (but lopsided) grin, Adum seems to have no problem attracting any woman he desires; this causes problems occasionally, since the girls tend to flock to him, and ignore most of the other men - leading to a lot of brawls (jealousy raises its green-eyed head).

When he is going out on the town, Adum carries a fine rapier he acquired during his army stint, and will use it on any who corner him (he dislikes fisticuffs, and generally leaves the brawls to his brother Hawz).

Liljo k'Ardryt ST 10 DX 19(18) IQ 12 MA 10

**WEAPONS:** 7 Daggers (1-1), Whip (1-1), Lasso (\*)

**ARMOR:** Cloth (-1 hit)

**TALENTS:** Missile Weapons, Naturalist, Tracking, Recognize Value, Assess Value (Animals)

The youngest and smallest of the three brothers (his mother was a very tiny woman from one of the cities of Trevalia), Liljo is also the quickest; he has reddish hair and dark eyes, and is seemingly made of whipcord and steel. Exceptionally good with throwing knives, he makes and balances his own; when throwing his blades, he suffers a DX penalty of -1/megahex rather than the usual -1/hex. He always carries a fan of 7 knives in the back of his belt, and is capable of throwing up to 3 in a combat round. If any of the clan could be said to be particularly vengeful, it is Liljo.

### The Sting

(In the Random Encounters listed for the plains, the FM will find a Horse Thieves encounter; the first option of that encounter involves a small time sting for a few beasts, and occurs along a road or other travelway. This sting is more ambitious, and requires a bit of co-operation on the part of the players, in that they must be just a tad greedy.)

If the party should be in one of the villages of southern Darok, and makes known that they are looking for horses to buy (or have capital to spend), they will be contacted by a man, obviously a plainsman, who says he is acting for a group of allied horse-breakers who have gathered and broken a fairly substantial herd, some 200 in number. They are willing to sell the herd for a fairly low price per head, since it will save them the long drive up to Shaylle (the price might be as low as \$30 a head - an attractively low price); the herd, with however many horses the players want, can be gathered and delivered to a specified spot within about three days. If the players agree, the man will name a spot and time, and will ride out from the village.

Three days later, at the appointed spot, a sizable group of men will deliver a herd of the specified size. If the players question the large number of different brands on the animals' flanks, the head wrangler (the man who made them the offer in the first place) will introduce them to a number of different horse-breakers, such as Haskell Tabriz, Morgan the Lash, Tammany Hall, Begond Ironbender, Quirt from the Lake, etc., various owners of these different brands. Once the players have paid for the herd (the head wrangler will provide a bill of sale only if pointedly asked for one, and he will contrive to "forget" if not badgered for it), and taken possession, the men will ride off. The players' drive may start in earnest at this point (see the rules for trail drives in the previous sections).

Sometime in the first three days of the drive, a large body of riders will be spotted approaching the herd (the intimation might be that they are outlaws out to steal the players' herd). If the players accept a parlay with the group, they will notice that the riders are all hard-looking men, appear to be of long and hard experience on the plains, and seem to be very capable and well armed (there are approximately three times the number of riders as player characters). The riders will surround the players, and the leader of the group will inquire as to the players' intended destination, and ask oh so politely where they managed to acquire such a large herd, with so many different brands.

If the players had gotten a bill of sale from the head wrangler, and can produce it, there is a 75% chance (5-10 on 2D) that the leader of the posse will accept this as proof of the party's innocence (in the matter of horse-theft) - which will probably save the players' necks, but not their herd. The posse leader will introduce himself as Haskell Tabriz, and introduce a few of the more well known and prominent members of the posse: Tammany Hall, Morgan the Lash, Begond Ironbender, Quirt from the Lake, etc.; and point out the brands belonging to various other riders (these men will be +1, +2, or +3 on the Random Fighter table; roll 2D: 2-5, +1; 6-8, +2; 9-12, +3; the personalities who were named are all +4 on the table; treat all riders as Expert Horsemen). If the players surrender their herd with a minimum of fuss, Tabriz will tell them the name and probable location of the man who most likely stung them (the FM might wish to allow the players to seek revenge - and their money back! - but the FM himself is responsible for conducting such adventures; there are too many small villages on the broad southern plains of Darok!); if there is any argument, it is quite unlikely that any such help will be offered.

If the players cannot produce a bill of sale, and if their story is not convincing (particularly if the party offers any fight), there is likelihood that they will all be swinging from the nearest trees in short order (it's not easy to win when you're outnumbered 3:1). If there has been no attack or heavy argument by the players, Haskell Tabriz will insist on (and then enforce) taking them back to the nearest Freehold for trial by the Lord (FM's discretion as to outcome).

Should the players try to fight at the incident's start . . . ah well, they're only outnumbered 3:1 . . . some of them might even survive to be hung!

### We Wuz Robbed!

Should the players get into horse-breaking and -selling, the FM might wish to have a herd that they have accumulated and broken stolen from them. The theft might be accomplished by either direct assault (on a sleeping camp) or surreptitious removal of a few horses each night over a period of some days. The thieves will usually wait until the herd is worth stealing - at least 25 strong.

If the direct assault method is successfully used, the players will, of course, be left mount-, weapon-, and boot-less (and probably wounded if they have put up any fight); they will need to capture and break new mounts before beginning any pursuit (or at least make it into the nearest settlement - this could be an entire adventure in itself). If the group has conceived, and started, using a brand, there is a 25% chance (2-4 & 11-12 on 2D) that it will have become well known enough to be recognized in the various towns and villages through which the rustlers take the herd, allowing the players to trace the progress of the herd and its new owners. Trailing the herd would not be hard, especially if the herd is quite large, but the Tracking talent will be needed if the trail goes over rocky or hard ground.

The same sort of trailing will be appropriate if the theft was surreptitious, but it is now necessary to have the Tracking talent. If the stolen horses were led over hard ground or down a watercourse, it will require a 4/IQ SR (instead of 3/IQ); if they were led over any rocky paths, the SR is 5/IQ for those areas.

Once (and if) the players catch up with the horse thieves, justice is up to the captors.

## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN DAROK

Parties traveling across the countryside of Darok will have ample opportunities to encounter fellow travelers, beasts of the wild, or natural or manmade artifacts of interest. FM's can use the tables and descriptions presented below to simulate a sampling of these encounter possibilities.

For these purposes, the terrain of the country has been divided into four basic categories:

- 1) Plains/lowlands,
- 2) Mountains,
- 3) Major and minor roads, and
- 4) Freeholds.

The line of demarcation between the plains and the mountains is the line of hexes 5 units north of the Bloody Road. Freeholds refer to any map area within 2 hexes of a castle stronghold or associated village. To determine whether an encounter takes place on any given day, roll 2D and compare the result to the following chart:

### TERRAIN and ENCOUNTER CHANCES

| Terrain Type | Encounter on | # of rolls made |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Plains       | 8 or more    | 1/day           |
| Mountains    | 9 or more    | 1/day           |
| Roads        | 6 or more    | 2/day           |
| Freeholds    | 7 or more    | 2/day           |

If an encounter is indicated, roll 2D again and consult the tables below to determine the situation taking place:

| Die Roll | Plains               | Mountains            |
|----------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 2        | Caravanserai         | Snakes               |
| 3        | Mercenaries          | Dwarves              |
| 4        | Big Cats             | Enemy Raiding Party  |
| 5        | Horse Thieves        | Skyrider             |
| 6        | Snakes               | Army Patrol          |
| 7        | Wild Horses          | Skyrider Candidates  |
| 8        | Priests of Akhora    | Pilgrims             |
| 9        | Antelope/Bison       | Khyype               |
| 10       | Poisonous Plant Life | Priests of Akhora    |
| 11       | Enemy Raiding Party  | Cavern               |
| 12       | Skyrider             | Poisonous Plant Life |

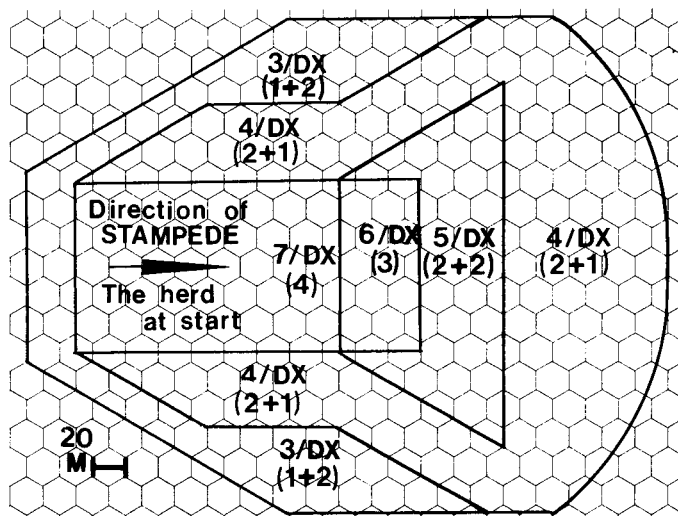
  

| Die Roll | Major Roads          | Freehold              |
|----------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 2        | Poisonous Plant Life | Villagers w/Grievance |
| 3        | Peasants             | Bandits               |
| 4        | Caravanserai         | Khyype                |
| 5        | Sharren              | Tourney               |
| 6        | Army Patrol          | Hunting Party         |
| 7        | Pilgrims             | Outriders             |
| 8        | Bandits              | Lord's Men            |
| 9        | Priests of Akhora    | Priests of Akhora     |
| 10       | Mercenaries          | Pilgrims              |
| 11       | Khyype               | Census Takers         |
| 12       | Trader Caravan       | Cavern                |

Descriptions of each of these encounters, in alphabetical order, are provided on the following pages. If the encounter rolled does not have multiple options, and has already been met by the players, the FM may wish to reroll the result on the appropriate table above.

**Antelope/Bison** - The players come upon a grazing herd of (roll D6) antelope (1-2) or bison (3-6). They may attempt to hunt among the herd if they wish. Anyone attempting to approach within 100 meters of an antelope herd must move at half normal speed or less to avoid detection; within 50 meters, a character may move only 1 or 2 hexes per turn and must make a DX saving roll to avoid arousing notice (3/UX for those who have - and declare themselves to be using - Silent Movement skills, 4/UX for all others). If aroused, the herd will quickly flee the area (MA = 16). A felled beast, if properly dressed and salted, will provide the equivalent of 2 days of rations for a party of six.

Herds of bison are less observant (reduce range requirements for cautious movement to 50 and 25 meters, respectively); however, if roused, they can also pose a definite threat to the party's well-being if they panic and stampede. If roused by player movement, there is a 50% chance that the herd will stampede; there is also a 1 in 6 chance of a stampede starting every time a gun is fired (or any other loud unnatural noise is made). A stampeding herd will charge in one of two directions (roll D6): 1-4 - in the direction it is predominantly facing, or 5-6 in the direction immediately opposite from the cause of the disturbance. In either event, the diagram below illustrates the various saving rolls required for characters caught in the vicinity of a stampede to avoid injury, and the amounts of damage sustained by those who fail their saves. These saving rolls are required to be made each combat round that the layers are in the designated areas of the diagram relevant to the herd; however, number of dice rolled drop by one each successive combat round (i.e., the 7/UX SR for being in the herd drops to 6/UX on the second round, 5/UX on the third, etc.).



Characters on horseback at the time of the stampede roll 1 less die on their saving roll (2 less dice if Expert Horsemen); the saving roll is made against the horse's DX rather than the player's own DX. If the save is failed, both rider and horse sustain the damage indicated. A felled bison, properly prepared and salted, can provide rations for 1 week for a party of six; if any in the party know Tanning as well, the skin may also be removed for sale.

Army Patrol - The party is suddenly ordered to halt by a voice that emanates from the nearest good point of cover. A patrol of twelve Darokans from the nearest Freehold is positioned there; with bows trained, they demand that the party approach for questioning. There have been reports of enemy activity in this area, so that the scouts are in no mood to play around. They know the surrounding 7 hex area and its inhabitants very well, and cannot be easily fooled if the party lies about its identity or business in the area. Unless the players have spouted some particularly suspicious tale or drawn weapons and attacked, the patrol will probably let the party go after a few moments of questioning. They will in all likelihood, however, strongly discourage the party from "adventuring in a war zone", and suggest it go back in the direction it came. The patrol will not follow the party to see if its suggestion is obeyed, but will be considerably harsher in its dealings with the group if it encounters them a second time.

Bandits (roll D6):

1-2) The party walks directly into an ambush - three bowmen (+1 on the Thief table) in nearby cover, with two close-range fighters (+0 on Fighter table) placed slightly ahead. Players with Alertness or Acute Hearing talents receive their normal saving rolls to detect the ambush in time. If successful, the thieves will tie up and abandon their victims by the roadside, unless one or more of them appear (by dress or verbal claims of wealth and station) to be ransomable, in which case they will be taken captive by the group.

3) The group described above springs its ambush, but seeks to parley with the party rather than relieve it of its wealth. The leader of the bandit group has been captured and is being held in the dungeons of the nearest castle, where he is to be executed in 72 hours time. The members of the gang are all known (though two of them have Disguise talents), and hence require outside help if they are to get within and rescue their leader. They will offer a share of their cached loot for this assistance (and will pay up if the players keep their end of the bargain, and the rescue is successful). If the players refuse, the bandits will flee, firing on the party once they get out of close range.

4-5) A motley crew of 4 thieves (-2 on Thief table), poorly armed, and disguised (equally poorly) as army scouts. They will panic readily if things do not go smoothly, and sue for mercy if more than half have been wounded and no escape route appears readily available.

6) A group of five brigands, all Expert Horsemen, emerge from cover and make a direct assault on the party. What they lack in subtlety they make up for in ferocity. They all have ST 13 DX 15 IQ 11, and carry 2 spears and a belt knife. They may fight as berserkers if they choose; thus if the party has thoughts of surrendering, it had best do so quickly, for such niceties tend to fall by the wayside in the midst of battle frenzy.

Big Cats - The party comes upon one or more of the large feline species indigenous to the Darokan plains (roll D6):

1-2) Lions. The players pass near a section of sparse, scrubby undergrowth. If any have the Acute Hearing talent, they will note the presence of creatures in this shady stretch of land. Otherwise, any character entering this undergrowth is likely to stumble upon one or more of a small (10-12) pride of lions resting here. The beasts will not be pleased by the intrusion, and will move to defend their turf; the players can still avoid combat if they

withdraw quickly; if they stand and fight, they will have to face all the pride within 5 combat rounds.

3-4) Sabertooth. A good-sized sabertooth (ST 35) pounces at the party from the nearby underbrush; party members with Alertness, Acute Hearing, or Expert Naturalist talents receive saving rolls to anticipate the attack; all others are Surprised for one combat round. The tiger will go after one of the party's horses or mules on its initial attack rather than a party member; the target beast will panic immediately and attempt to bolt (Expert Horseman receives a 4/DX saving roll to keep the beast under control, a Horseman a 5/DX saving roll; if this fails, the rider must make a second saving roll - 3/DX and 5/DX respectively - to avoid being thrown). If seriously wounded (more than 1/2 damage), the beast will attempt to flee.

5-6) Leopards. The party can see a pair of leopards eyeing them warily from a stretch of tall grasses about 50-75 m away. If the party outnumbers the beasts by more than 2:1, and approach no closer (skirting around to one side when they pass), the leopards will not attack. If combat is joined, the beasts have ST 16 DX 15 IQ 6 MA 14; 2-1 damage with paws in normal combat, 2+2 in HTH.

Cavern - A small rectangular cave opening can be seen at the base of a nearby rocky knoll. The cave extends back about 15 feet, then narrows to a very shallow crawl space (only a reasonably thin, unarmored man or woman can fit through this opening). On the other side is a second small, very damp cave, fed by an underground pool; its walls are covered with Berserker mushrooms, and there are 1D6 + 1 Green Slimes present. There is also a small niche in the rear wall of the first cavern (5/IQ to notice); an apparently empty leather pouch lies within. If a small amount of food or pipeweed is placed within and left for 6 hours, the pouch will become full, and remain so as long as some of the material remains inside. The spell will work only one time; thus the pouch cannot be emptied and then reused.

Caravanserai - The party comes upon a watering hole and tented rest area not marked on any map. Although the three men and women who attend to their horses and personal needs are polite and helpful, they seem somewhat distracted and strange to the discreet observer. The area's evident proprietor, a corpulent bulbous-nosed fellow named Zam-adh, is more talkative, and always seems to be whittling on one or another piece of very dark, deep-reddish wood (recognizable to an Expert Naturalist, if he makes his IQ saving roll, as Soul's Root, a very rare form of softwood tree). When carved into a likeness of a man or woman present, by the hands of a truly great carver like Zam-adh, the wood image can be used to draw the latter under the carver's mental sway, acting as a very deep Control Person spell. His researches into this little known bane were ridiculed as "old wives tales", but have already delivered him his three helpers; he now grandiosely schemes his revenge on all who do not give him his due respect.

If the players stay the night, and have in any way insulted their host (not a difficult task, given the latter's years of built-up resentment), there is a 75% chance (5-10 or more on 2D) that he will have completed puppets of each of the party members by morning (5/IQ saving roll to avoid the charm, new saving rolls as if under a Control spell). In addition, Zam-adh will find that there are limits to the number of beings he can actively control at once; if giving commands to more than 2 people at once, the victims may try to resist the command (3/IQ saving roll; subtract 1 from die roll result for each successful prior challenge, add 1 for each failure). The victims are automatically released

from the charm if the puppet is destroyed, but will take 1 die of damage from the destruction of the deep link.

Census Takers - A very mixed group, including both horsemen and footmen, as well as a pair of middle-aged men bearing the emblem of the local Lord, will hail the party and approach if its members do not appear to be locals. One of the Lord's Men will ask the party if they'd be interested in earning 25 silvers each for a simple day's work. He says that the group is engaged in assembling the rolls of the some of the local villages, and need additional men to help with this polling. Any resident of Darok receives a 3/IQ saving roll; if it is successful, he will know that the real purpose of the "census" is to identify young unmarried maidens who are eligible for the autumnal sacrifice to Akhora. If the party accepts the job, they are likely to encounter at least one father who will answer the door with weapon drawn, willing to fight to the death to protect his daughter's identity. If, after this encounter, they lose their desire for the job, they had best keep clear of the Lord's Men who hired them, or they are likely to be clapped in irons for a month or so.

Dwarves - A group of 3D6 + 3 residents from the dwarven enclave of Rhuz are bound for the nearest castle, to seek aid from the lord of the Hold in repelling a Muipocan raiding force that is moving through the disputed lands of the Hills of Ore, lending aid to the Muipocan miners in an attempt to force favorable settlement of two long and bitter claim disputes over rich veins of gems. The "embassy's" leader is Gidri (ST 16 DX 15(12) IQ 12; Battleaxe, Small Hammer; Chain + Warrior, -4 hits; Warrior, Naturalist, Woodsman, Ax/Mace, Acute Hearing, Diplomacy, Common), a middle aged woodsman high in the enclave's councils, whose temper is a bit less fiery than some of his kindred and who is well versed in wilderness skills. Treat the remainder of the party as +1 on the Fighter table, all bearing ax/mace weapons of some type; 50% of the men will be in chain armor. The dwarves will take little notice of the players' party unless one or more of its members speak dwarven, or the party asserts that it has influence with the local Lord.

Horse Thieves - The party encounters a group of eight plainsmen who make their living by practicing the age-old profession of horse theft. The encounter will differ, depending on whether the players' party is already mounted:

1) If one or more members of the party happen to be travelling on foot, the plainsmen will be seen to be herding along several horses beside their own. Two of the plainsmen will approach the party, and offer to sell them one or more of these horses at a very reasonable rate (about 60-80% of normal price). The horses being offered for sale are stolen, and still bear the mark of a crossed H on their hindquarters (the brand of Haskell Tabriz, a horsebreaker who works the territories nearby, and is quite well known). If Haskell, or any of his associates see a player riding one of these beasts (a quite likely occurrence if the party remains in the area for a day or more), he will be accused as one of the thieves - and his mates are unlikely to have more than 24 hours to prove his innocence, or break him out of the local jail.

2) If all in the party are on horseback, the plainsmen will hail them from a distance, and approach to exchange greetings. If the thieves believe themselves to have the superior force, they will take their leave after attempting to learn the party's destination, and ride hard to set up an ambush on the trail ahead. The thieves want to capture the horses in good condition, so they will

seek to convince the party to surrender upon springing the ambush - anyone who does so will forfeit his horse and purse, but be allowed to keep his weapon and his life. The thieves are +1 on the Thief table.

Hunting Party - The party sees a large group of 3D6 x 5 horsemen (both men and women), along with a number of hunting dogs, gathered in loosely knit groups around a canopied pavilion that stands in an open greensward. Today is a local Feast Day, and in its honor the Lord of the Freehold is sponsoring a boar hunt, with the slayer(s) of the boar to receive an honored place at the Lord's own table during the banquet to follow in town at nightfall. The affair is being presided over by Vilonz, one of the Lord's functionaries who takes his ceremonial responsibilities very seriously (and will not appreciate any disturbance that interferes with his plans). The Lord is not present, but his eldest child is participating in the hunt. The hunt is open to anyone, including the players; however, any who are not residents of the local Hold will surely be viewed as "interlopers", receiving a frosty reception and little aid from the other huntsmen. If the players decide to participate, or to observe the hunt, roll D6:

1-4) events unfold normally; FM's should determine whether any of the players will have a chance to land the boar, based on their Tracking, Horsemanship and other relevant skills (and remembering that several of the other hunters will have a great deal of experience and ability at this sort of endeavor).

On a 5 or 6, some unusual event occurs:

5) An "unchosen" son of the s'Paar family, Gorath (ST 14 DX 12(10) IQ 10; Spear, Spear Thrower, Long Bow; Leather (+ Warrior, -3 hits); Horsemanship, Sex Appeal, Tracking), is one of the huntsmen. Hungry for advancement, he has decided that he must win today's competition, and has taken steps to ensure his victory. Gorath has hired a group of 4 men to join the hunt and stay near the action, attempting to disrupt any who seem too "hot" on the trail. The players may, if they are tracking boar successfully, encounter these ruffians under less than pleasant circumstances.

6) An assassin (ST 11 DX 16(15) IQ 12; Knife, Nunchuks, Long Bow; Cloth (-1 hit); 3 molotails; Silent Movement, Spying, Tracking, Thief) lurks in the woods, contracted to take the life of the Lord's son/daughter. The assassin will make his attempt, using a poisoned arrow, during mid-hunt; the players may be in a position to thwart his attempt, or to be unjustly accused of being involved in the plot. If threatened with capture, the assassin will poison himself - his personal effects will reveal no clues as to employer (though the FM may wish to determine the parties responsible, and set the players on their trail as a further adventure).

Khypppe - The party encounters Khypppe, the Darokan army's chief supply officer (see description in the Major Personalities section earlier in this book). On a 9 or more on 2D, he will be traveling alone; otherwise, he will be accompanied by the support troops listed in his description. If encountered within 8 hexes of the northern border, he will be headed for Rhuz, to attempt to stir up the dwarven populations against the encroaching settlements of Muipocan miners; otherwise, he will be journeying either to (1-3 on D6) or from (4-6) the nearest village, seeking auxiliary supplies for a sizable Darokan force encamped in the area. If traveling alone, Khypppe will (unless the party appear to be Darokan troops) conceal his true identity, and assume the guise of a wandering wheelwright; he may accept an offer to travel with the players' party if his Reaction Roll is favorable. If accompanied by his mounted escort, and coming from a village, the group



will be heavily laden with supplies, and very cautious of strangers. Khyppe will always be interested in news from abroad, and may voluntarily offer payment for particularly worthwhile bits of intelligence; he himself has the ability to speak in an apparently straightforward manner, yet reveal very little of his purposes or knowledge.

Lord's Men - Seven members of the local Lord's personal guard dressed in leather armor with armbands bearing the family emblem, approach rapidly on horseback, giving no sign or greeting. As they draw within 25 m (or if the party at any time attempts to flee during their approach), they will draw their arms (mostly spears, with 2 battleaxemen at the head and rear of the formation) and call for the party to halt. The group has been sent out to find and apprehend a fugitive thought to have set fire to the castle's stables; for some obscure reason, they have decided that one of the party members is their man. Unless he and his colleagues can truly supply an airtight story, the men will try to seize the supposed arsonist. If taken and left to stand before the Lord's Tribunal, the character's chances of having his innocence recognized are twofold: slim and none. Alternatively, trying to spring the captive from the castle's dungeons is likely to be no mean feat either, for these nether domains are guarded well by both rabidly loyal (albeit not overly bright) sentries and a constantly hungry pair of sabertooths. There is, however, information to be had (for a price) in the tavern in the nearest village that would enable the party to identify and locate the real arsonist.

Mercenaries - If this encounter is rolled anywhere within a 12 hex radius of Outpost Orange, roll a D6 - on a 5 or 6, the party will first encounter a merchant caravan, traveling aboard three badly battle-scarred wagons. A seedy-looking gentleman will act as the group's spokesman, and approach the players with a tale of woe about having had to fight off a band of thieves; he will attempt to convince the players to buy a portion of their cargo at a very low rate, so that the caravan can afford to make necessary repairs to the wagons. Cautious players may notice that the fellow's story contains several inconsistencies; others may well be attracted by the opportunity to get something for virtually nothing.

Whether or not this first encounter occurs, on mid-afternoon of the same day the party will meet a group of 10 centaur warriors in full leather armor, armed with Halberd and Bow, each with ST 12 + 1D6, adjDX 10 + 1D6, IQ 11. The centaurs are seeking the group of bandits that two days ago attacked and seized a merchant caravan guarded by some of their mates (all of whom were killed save one, who escaped though wounded and made it back to the outpost to tell the tale). The bandits they seek are of course now masquerading as the merchant group described above. If the players have bought goods from that group and they are visibly displayed when the mercenaries approach, the centaurs will demand that the party surrender and come to the outpost for questioning. Fighting this bunch, or attempting flight, is likely to be a messy form of suicide - however, if the party goes along without resistance, the surviving guard will clear them of any participation in the robbery.

If not in the aforementioned area, the players will encounter a quartet of human mercenaries (+2 on the Fighter table), returning to the Guild Hall in Shaylle after completing a recent job. They are available for hire, but since they have not yet spent the money they earned from the last duty, they will require above average pay (a bonus of 1D6 x 10% over normal wages) to pique their interest. They each carry the equivalent of one month's wages in their pockets.

Outriders - A group of five horsemen, comprised of a young Lord and four men-at-arms. They approach the party with weapons undrawn, making appropriate hailing gestures and obviously seeking to parley. The subject of their interest is:

1-4) They are attempting to get aid for the family patriarch and Master of the castle, who has been stricken by a sudden and grave illness that has left him fevered and raving. The Master's Healer is off with the army, and cannot be quickly reached; the riders are searching for a Master Physicker to give them aid. If the party contains such an individual and goes to the castle, the healer will almost certainly (2 or above on 1 die) be able to diagnose the illness as the effects of a subtle systemic poison that will bring total insanity (and eventual death) if not treated by either the Universal Antidote or with the crushed berries of the dursha plant (a foreign species likely to be found for sale only in the bazaar at Shaylle). The Master possesses a large box enchanted with the Little Death spell, which could be used to sustain him until the party can journey to Shaylle to acquire the needed materials; he will fight against such a plan due to his half-crazed state, however, and some of his retainers may support him if the party cannot persuasively present its case (Reaction Roll at -1, all normal talent bonuses apply). If the party does not contain a Master Physicker, there is a 2 in 6 chance that they will encounter such a fellow in their travels during the next 36 hours.

5-6) The riders are out to warn the villagers under the local Lord's dominion that a marauding band of strange creatures have been sighted wandering the area, killing livestock and kidnapping human children. The creatures are in fact a group of 12-18 were-creatures.

Peasants - The players come upon a group of 3D peasants on their way to the Bazaar in Shaylle. Most of the group is on foot, with 2-3 riding serviceable nags. The goods they carry to trade at the Bazaar are (roll D6; if items marked with an asterisk are indicated, the group also has a small freight wagon pulled by two oxen.)

- 1 - Livestock (sheep, goats)
- 2 - Animal by-products (wool, hides) \*
- 3 - Pottery \*
- 4 - Cloth/ leather goods
- 5 - Livestock and pottery \*
- 6 - Horses

Player characters may trade with the peasants if they wish (FMs should remember that peasants make very bad haglers, likely to settle for a good bit less than a fair price). The peasants will know little information about what is going on in the area. Roll a second D6 to see if there is anything notable about the group:

1-3) Nothing unusual.

4) The peasants have just (within the last 12 hours) been waylaid and robbed by highway brigands. All their horses and cargo, save a few rations, have been stolen. They will approach the party abjectly, and in a clamor of voices start begging for help. The brigands are still stationed down the trail about 3-5 km, but will depart at nightfall and not return.

5) One of the peasants, a young girl of barely fourteen, is said to have the "second sight". She will tell the fortunes of the party members if they wish (price 1-2 coppers). She will predict (roll D6):

- |                    |                             |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 - a love affair  | 4 - an offer of employment  |
| 2 - a long journey | 5 - a meeting with nobility |
| 3 - a betrayal     | 6 - a dangerous combat      |

(There is a 75% chance (9 or more on 3D6) that these predictions will come to pass within a week - FM's discretion as to outcome, although most of these predictions could be handled by various random encounters.)

6) The party's wagon is very heavily laden for a group of this size. If this is commented upon, the group will attribute their fortune to their leader's "good luck charm", a bluish-purple stone that he wears around his neck. He will not sell the stone for any price. The stone is actually enchanted with two spells - Charm Person and Control Weather - but the peasant does not know this and cannot use its powers consciously (it is more the case that he looks at a potential buyer, and says to himself "I hope he likes our goods", subconsciously activating the magic).

Pilgrims - A group of 4D6 adherents of Akhora, making their way to Skull Rock. They bring two animals to sacrifice to the god, and are accompanied by the village priest and his two acolytes. The group moves quite silently, and will make no effort to hail the players' party. If the group is approached, the pilgrims will initially keep silence, and let the priest speak for them. If the party is properly reverential, and/or offers alms to the priest, he and his followers will converse with them freely; roll D6:

1-3) Nothing unusual, the pilgrims pass on the usual gossip from the places they have most recently been.

4) All but the priest remain silent, and he makes a strong pitch for the players to contribute some sort of service to the pilgrimage (implying bad omens will follow them if they decline).

5) One of the pilgrims tells of having a vision of a fiery eminence, a supernatural minion of Akhora, rising in the crags near Skytop to lend its great destructive force to the Darokan cause (FM's discretion as to the truth of the vision; if true, treat the creature as an immense Fire Elemental, with somewhat magnified powers and possibly some additional destructive Spellcasting potential - Dazzle, Spell Shield, etc.).

6) In the last village the group passed through, several of the pilgrims heard a rumor that some High Priests of Akhora were to arrive there shortly to perform some sort of highly secret ceremony (though the group's priest will try to hush the story up, it is a true tale; the group will arrive in that village in 72 hours, bearing a magical artifact containing great offensive power to be used in the ritual).

Priests of Akhora - The party encounters one of the following groups of High Priests of the cult (roll D6):

1) Three High Priests (treat as wizards #6 - #8 from the Random Wizard Table) are traveling in two horse-drawn closed wagons, in the company of two drivers (-2 on Fighter table, only fight in self-defense) and three men-at-arms from the Commander's elite guard (+3 on Fighter table). One of the wagons bears a large supply of wood, and a caged large condor whose cries are heard occasionally. The three priests will say nothing of their purpose to any who inquire, and strongly intimate that the players stay out of their affairs. If they believe themselves being followed, they will attack their pursuers (with surprise if possible). The fighters will each act to protect (as much as humanly possible) one of the priests, should close range combat ensue.

2-4) Two Priests, on foot. They are journeying to the nearest village to collect tithes, and review the efforts of the local priesthood. If hailed, they will be cordial but aloof, answering simple inquiries (directions, availability of a given

service nearby, etc.) yet volunteering nothing. They bear little of value.

5-6) Four Priests, on foot. They will hail an approaching party in an open and friendly manner, actively soliciting any information the latter might have about the activities or whereabouts of High Priest Boren t'Razell, who is off on an unsanctioned quest to find a legendary artifact of demon summoning (**Note:** Boren's quest is fully detailed in the upcoming book, Soldier City - Shaylle). If the players appear reticent to talk or evasive in their answers, the Priests will attempt to use Telepathy to gain the truth; if they determine that the players were lying, their wrath is likely to be severe! If the players can provide useful information, and a favorable Reaction Roll is made, the Priests may give them money or a promise of later aid. If the players indicate a willingness to help out further, the Priests will refuse any offer to join company with them, but will indicate that they should bring any further information they obtain to the nearest castle, where one of their associates may be found who will provide a suitable monetary reward.

Poisonous Plant Life - The party comes upon some local flora with poisonous properties (roll D6 and consult below). If there are Naturalists or Expert Naturalists in the group, they receive 3 die saving rolls versus IQ to observe and correctly perceive the nature of the plant life present.

1-2) Late in the afternoon, the party comes upon an apparently perfect campsite, with a good vantage of the surrounding area and some waist high cover. Unfortunately, the area is also rife with poison ivy. All players who spend the night here must roll a D6 - on a 3 or above, they contract a case of poison ivy that will take 3D6 days to subside (a Physicker can reduce healing time by 1/3, a Master Physicker by 1/2). While ailing, the character acts at a -1 to DX due to general discomfort; Charisma and Sex Appeal also suffer when one is constantly digging and scratching at himself.

3-4) The players go past a number of bushes full of luscious-looking, ripe purple berries. Small birds can be seen nibbling at these fruits; nonetheless, they are poisonous to humans and their kindred, and will give anyone who eats them rather violent stomach pains (the pains will begin about 1 hour after the berries are consumed, and last for 3 hours for each berry eaten). While ill, a character will be at DX -4, and incapable of more than sporadic movement.

5-6) The players' trail wends near a tangled patch of brambles; a glint of metal shines in its midst. Should anyone attempt to advance through the briars to retrieve the object within, it will take him 4 combat rounds to get in and out, and he must successfully make a 3/DX saving roll to pick up the object (which is a silver dagger with elaborate runes carved in its handle, worth about 20 times the price of a normal blade of its type, and enchanted with a Shadow spell). For each combat round spent in the brambles, the player will take 1-2 damage from the poisonous thorns that surround him; if the player is wearing leather or heavier armor, however, he takes no damage at all each turn, unless he fails a 3/DX saving roll (indicating a careless brush of exposed flesh against the thorns).

Sharren - The players meet a husband and wife team of sharren, the low-level "rune magicians" of Darokan society. Roll D6: on a 1-4, they are on their way to a pre-arranged job in the nearest village, but will be glad to accompany the players that far if the party seems friendly; on a 5-6, they have just completed such

a task, and are in the market for new employment (perhaps as hirelings to the players' party). The husband, Xyloll, is ST 13 DX 13 IQ 11; he knows the spells Drop Weapon, Detect Magic, Aid, Detect Enemies, Lock/Knock, Control Animal, Fire, and Reveal/Conceal. He also has the skills of Knife, Literacy, and Driver. His wife Faanzene has ST 11 DX 15(14) IQ 12 and cloth armor; her spells are Magic Fist, Detect/Reveal Magic, Analyze Magic, Detect Life, Reveal/Conceal, Lock/Knock, Fire, and Repair, and her talents are Literacy and Recognize Value.

There is also a chance (6 on D6), regardless of current destination, that this pair has decided to rebel against the heavy restrictions placed on their knowledge by the Priests of Akhora, and have in their possession an illicitly acquired book containing 1D6 IQ 13-15 spells (FM's choice). If the couple has indeed gone "renegade", it will not be long before one or more of the High Priests get on their trail, and that of any who befriend them.

Skyrider Candidates - The players encounter a party of four robust young men, +1 on the Fighter table, making their way to Skytop to attempt to become skyriders. The quartet are quite full of themselves, bragging and just a bit feisty - if they have an unfavorable reaction to the party, they are likely to start a fight. All four are armed with pole weapon, knife and bow, and bear a number of home-made talismans designed to enhance their appeal to the Winged Ones they seek to impress. Though most such charms are of dubious efficacy, there is a 1 in 12 chance (11 or better on 2D) that any particular one will actually have a useful effect (reducing by one the number of dice required for any Monster Follower roll made on Skytop). There is nothing the party can do or offer that would lure these hopeful fliers from their intended destination.

Skyrider - A skyrider, mounted on a (1-3) roc, (4-5) griffon, or (6) pegasus, flies into view; his reaction will depend on the outward garb and appearance of the party. If the group appear to be non-Darokan, he will dip down and call out for them to state their business in the area; if they refuse (or draw arms), he will fly off - unless the party promptly hides out and manages to cover its tracks extremely well, they will be met by a wary and determined army patrol (double the size of the one described in the random encounter above) within 1D hours. If the party gives an acceptable account of its presence, the rider will request one of the party to come and present this tale to his leaders, encamped about 3-5 km away. He will take the "volunteer" astride his flying creature, and depart; unless the player does something really bizarre or offensive while in the company of the riders, he will be returned shortly and the party will be allowed to proceed without further incident.

If the party appears to be Darokan, one of the following events will occur (roll D6):

1-3) The rider will dismount, and send his beast off to forage for food. He will be congenial with the party, but evasive about his purpose in the area. If the encounter takes place within 2 MH of a village, there is a good chance that the rider's Winged One will prey on someone's herd animals, making their owner a rather implacable enemy of the Rider and any who accompany him.

4-5) The rider, seeing a ready-made audience, will show off a few feats of derring-do (power dives, wing rolls, etc.) - and then set down, expecting a deferential welcome and a clamor for an encore. He will be friendly (though not particularly useful) if treated as expected; if snubbed, however, he will likely fly off in a huff (and the group will have made a potent enemy, who may get out of his way to hinder their future activities).

6) The rider will fly near the group, and drop a stone with a parchment tied around it. The parchment will bear a message for the commander of a nearby unit, and a crude map indicating the location of the unit. Delivering the message (which is in an easily broken letter substitution code) will likely gain the players some small monetary reward, or, at the very least, some information about goings-on in the area. The message provides important news about enemy troop movements in the region; if undelivered, these forces are likely to be roaming uncontested through the area for several days, and are quite likely to make life miserable for the players if they are encountered.

Snakes - The players enter the nesting area of a small group of poisonous snakes. The leading rank of the party must make a 4/DX saving roll (3/DX if naturalist, 2/DX if Woodsman or Expert Naturalist) to avoid stepping right into a snake's strike (+3 to hit). In addition to these creatures, there are 10-12 others within 5 MH of the party. Each snake has ST 8 DX 12 IQ 4 MA 6; bite does 1-1 damage and player must a 3 die saving roll against current strength or take 1-2 damage from poison. Each injected dose of venom also reduces character DX and MA by 1 for a period of 24 hours. The snakes (other than the ones disturbed by those in the first rank) will only attack if the players are in the same or adjacent MH; they will pursue a fleeing foe for 1 combat round, then stop.



Tourney - The players see a steady stream of locals, some clad in battle dress, others in bright and festive costumes, heading east along a well-worn path. If their route is followed, the party will shortly come upon a large clearing, teeming with activity, and generously festooned with banners, pavilions, and other signs of celebration. The Lord of the Hold hosts a tourney this day, with contests in mounted combat (contested too enthusiastically and unchivalrously to be properly called jousting), archery, wrestling and running, and group events like tug of war. There will also be several wandering vendors hawking food and trinkets, fortune tellers and carnival games of chance, and exhibitions of various crafts. The players may mingle freely in these festivities, and at FM's discretion, take part in some of the events. This encounter is intended to be neither one of evil portent or of cataclysmic opportunity, but rather, a fairly easy way for the players to meet new companions or learn the latest local rumors. (Of course, it would not be unheard of for our heroes to also stumble across the path of the village pickpocket, or a besotted local spoiling for a fight).

Villagers with Grievance - A group of 5-8 peasants in mud-stained garb are traveling on foot toward the Keep of their Lord. They seek aid in rebuilding their village, which has just been virtually leveled by a violent storm (possibly of arcane origin?). They will talk freely of their plight to anyone. If any character in the players' party has the Architect/Builder talent, or Carpentry, his services will be in great demand. If said player speaks up immediately about his skills and offers to help, 2 of the peasants will break from the group and immediately escort the party back to their village. The party will be fed and housed (poorly) for the 2-3 weeks the repairs will take, thanked profusely - and get no other tangible gain for their efforts. If, however, the players accompany the peasants to the castle and then reveal their talents, they will be sent

to the village along with other men of the Hold, at the behest of the local Lord, and will be rewarded handsomely for their service upon their return.

Wild Horses - The party comes upon a herd of D6 x D6 wild horses (FMs should double the size of the herd if this encounter takes place on the Plains of Stallions). The party may attempt to capture single beasts or the entire herd, using the rules outlined in the Life on the Plains section of this book. Roll 1D to determine the precise nature of the herd's location (making adjustments to die rolls as indicated in the rules for Horsebreaking):

- 1-4) open
- 5) small streamlet
- 6) rocky butte

**RANDOM FIGHTER TABLE for DAROK**  
(roll 2D and make appropriate adjustments)

| Die Character Attributes |    |         |    |    |                                 |                         |   | Treasure |
|--------------------------|----|---------|----|----|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---|----------|
| Roll                     | ST | DX(adj) | IQ | MA | Weapons                         | Armor(# hits)           | Talents/Spells*                                   | Factor   |
| 0                        | 10 | 10      | 9  | 12 | Club(1), Small Bow              | None (0)                | Running   | TF=1     |
| 1                        | 11 | 11(10)  | 9  | 10 | Spear(1)                        | Sm. Shield (-1)         | Alertness, Horsemanship                           | TF=0     |
| 2                        | 12 | 10(9)   | 10 | 10 | Spear(1+1), Dagger              | Cloth (-1)              | Acute Hearing, Thrown Weapons                     | TF=1     |
| 3                        | 11 | 12      | 10 | 12 | Mace                            | None (0)                | Alertness, Running                                | TF=2     |
| 4                        | 13 | 12(11)  | 9  | 10 | Halberd, Dagger                 | Cloth (-1)              | Horsemanship, Silent Movement                     | TF=3     |
| 5                        | 12 | 14(12)  | 10 | 8  | Spear(1+1), Light Crossbow      | Leather (-2)            | Missile Weapons, Alertness                        | TF=0     |
| 6                        | 13 | 13      | 11 | 10 | Club(1+2)                       | Sm. Shield (-1)         | Monster Followers I, Unarmed Combat, Engineer (a) | TF=2     |
| 7                        | 14 | 15(13)  | 9  | 8  | Great hammer, Bola              | Leather (-3)            | Warrior, Horsemanship                             | TF=1     |
| 8                        | 16 | 13      | 11 | 10 | 2 Morningstars                  | None (-1)               | Warrior, Two Weapons, Unarmed Combat I            | TF=3     |
| 9                        | 15 | 16(14)  | 10 | 8  | PikeAxe, Spear(1+1) (+ Thrower) | Leather (-2)            | Thrown Weapons, Naturalist                        | TF=1     |
| 10                       | 18 | 15(14)  | 9  | 10 | Club(1+4), Light Crossbow       | Leather (-6) Lg. Shield | Veteran, Alertness                                | TF=4     |
| 11                       | 16 | 16(15)  | 12 | 10 | Spear(1+1), Q'staff             | Cloth (-1)              | Expert Horsemanship, Monster Followers II         | TF=2 (b) |
| 12                       | 14 | 17(16)  | 14 | 10 | Halberd, Small Bow (c)          | Cloth (-1)              | Unarmed Combat III, Physicker, Alertness          | TF=4     |
| 13                       | 18 | 16(14)  | 13 | 8  | PikeAxe (d)                     | Chain (-4)              | Warrior, Strategist, New Followers                | TF=6     |
| 14                       | 18 | 19(18)  | 12 | 10 | Mace, Longbow                   | Leather (-4) Lg. Shield | Expert Naturalist, Silent Movement                | TF=3 (e) |
| 15                       | 24 | 17(14)  | 11 | 8  | BattleAxe, Club(1+6)            | Half-Plate (-7)         | Tactics, Veteran, Horsemanship, Orcish            | TF=4 (f) |

- (a) - 1 in 6 chance of one Monster follower
- (b) - 1 in 6 chance of Winged One follower; if not, 4 in 6 chance of normal Monster follower
- (c) - 1 in 6 chance of 2D enchanted arrows, +1 to DX; 3 in 6 chance of 1D enchanted arrows
- (d) - 1 in 6 chance pikeaxe enchanted with Flaming Weapon spell; if not, 2 in 6 chance pikeaxe enchanted to +1 DX, +1 damage

- (e) - 3 in 6 chance armor enchanted to absorb 1 extra hit
- (f) - 2 in 6 chance battleaxe enchanted with Flaming Weapon spell; if not, 4 in 6 chance battleaxe enchanted to +1 DX, +1 damage

**RANDOM WIZARD TABLE for DAROK**  
(roll 1D and make appropriate adjustments)

| Die Character Attributes |    |         |    |    |                |                |   | Treasure Factor |
|--------------------------|----|---------|----|----|----------------|----------------|---|-----------------|
| Roll                     | ST | DX(adj) | IQ | MA | Weapons*       | Armor          | Spells  |                 |
| 0                        | 10 | 11      | 9  | 10 | None           | None           | <u>Fire, Slow Movement, Clumsiness, Blur</u>  | TF=1            |
| 1                        | 11 | 11      | 10 | 10 | Dagger         | None           | <u>Magic Fist, Dazzle, Fire, Darkness</u>   | TF=0            |
| 2                        | 12 | 13(12)  | 10 | 10 | Q'staff        | Cloth          | <u>Magic Fist, Fire, Confusion, Drop Weapon, Summon Wolf</u>  | TF=2            |
| 3                        | 14 | 12(10)  | 11 | 8  | Dagger         | Leather        | <u>Sleep, Fire, Dazzle, Darkness, Wall, Illusion</u>  | TF=1            |
| 4                        | 12 | 14      | 12 | 10 | Longbow        | None           | <u>Magic Rainstorm, 3-Hex Fire, Fireball, Shock Shield, Summon Wolf, Blur</u>   | TF=3<br>(c)     |
| 5                        | 14 | 13      | 13 | 10 | Q'staff        | None           | <u>3-Hex Fire, Illusion, Fireproofing, 3-Hex Shadow, Clumsiness, Magic Fist, Rope</u>                                       | TF=2<br>(c)     |
| 6                        | 13 | 16(14)  | 14 | 8  | Dagger         | Leather        | <u>Spell Shield, Summon Wolf, 4-Hex Illusion, 3-Hex Fire, Fireball, Avert, Confusion</u>                                    | TF=3            |
| 7                        | 16 | 14      | 16 | 10 | Dagger         | None<br>(a)    | <u>7-Hex Fire, Lightning, Reversed Missiles, Explosive Gem, Control Person, Mage Sight, Destroy Creation, Megahex Sleep</u> | TF=4<br>(d,e)   |
| 8                        | 18 | 15(13)  | 17 | 8  | Light Crossbow | Leather<br>(b) | <u>Geas, Explosive Gem, Summon Wolf, Summon Small Dragon, Confusion, 7-Hex Fire, Fireproofing, Fireball, Dazzle</u>         | TF=5<br>(d,f)   |

\* **Note:** All wizards are assumed to carry a Staff; wizard #8 carries a Staff of Power. The daggers carried by wizards #1, #3, and #6 are made of copper; wizard #7's dagger is made of silver.

(a) - 1 in 6 chance of having a ring of Stone Flesh

(b) - 3 in 6 chance of having enchanted armor (+2 to damage absorption)

(c) - 1 in 6 chance of having one IQ 8-9 magic item

(d) - 2 in 6 chance of having 1 4-die Explosive Gem available for use

(e) - 2 in 6 chance of having one IQ 8-10 magic item; 1 in 6 chance of having one IQ 11-12 magic item

(f) - 3 in 6 chance of having one IQ 8-10 magic item; 2 in 6 chance of having one IQ 11-13 magic item; 1 in 6 chance of having Serpent Torc or Gem of Giant Summoning

**RANDOM THIEF TABLE for DAROK**  
(roll 1D and make appropriate adjustments)

| Die Character Attributes |    |         |    |    |                    |         | Treasure Factor                                   |      |
|--------------------------|----|---------|----|----|--------------------|---------|---|------|
| Roll                     | ST | DX(adj) | IQ | MA | Weapons            | Armor   | Talents/Spells*                                   |      |
| 0                        | 9  | 11      | 9  | 12 | Dagger             | None    | Running, Sex Appeal                               | TF=0 |
| 1                        | 11 | 11      | 9  | 10 | Spear(1+1), Dagger | None    | Silent Movement                                   | TF=1 |
| 2                        | 10 | 13      | 10 | 10 | Club(1), Horse Bow | None    | Remove Traps, Alertness                           | TF=2 |
| 3                        | 9  | 16(15)  | 10 | 10 | Dagger, Short Bow  | Cloth   | Silent Movement, Acrobatics                       | TF=1 |
| 4                        | 11 | 14      | 12 | 10 | Small Ax, Dagger   | None    | Detect Traps, Acute hearing                       | TF=3 |
| 5                        | 12 | 16(15)  | 11 | 10 | Short Bow, Mace    | Cloth   | Bard, Silent Movement, <u>Dazzle*</u>             | TF=2 |
| 6                        | 12 | 15(14)  | 14 | 10 | Dagger, Small Ax   | Cloth   | Spying  | TF=1 |
| 7                        | 15 | 17(15)  | 11 | 8  | Hammer, Q'staff    | Leather | Priest, Sex Appeal, Remove Traps                  | TF=4 |
| 8                        | 12 | 20      | 15 | 10 | 7 Daggers          | None    | Ventriloquist, Thrown Weapons, Unarmed Combat III | TF=2 |

**Note:** All but Thieves #0, #1, and #3 have the Thief talent; Thieves #6 and #8 are Master Thieves



## A BUYER'S GUIDE TO THE FANTASY TRIP GAME SYSTEM

**THE FANTASY TRIP™** is a system of fantasy role-playing games. A role-playing game is an organized form of make-believe. You assume the role of a character and verbally act out and direct that character on an adventure. Your character is a unique combination of attributes, talents, spells and the personality you give him. He lives and acts in the world of Cidri, a fantastic place of adventure.

**MODULAR DESIGN:** TFT™ lets you combine inexpensive rule modules into a fantasy game as simple or complex as you choose. All TFT™ modules are fully compatible. Rules don't change as you advance, they expand and add to what you've already learned. That's the way that makes sense and saves.

**STARTING MODULES:** TFT™ starts with two easy to learn, fast playing game modules. TFT: **MELEE™** and TFT: **WIZARD™**, **MICROGAME®s** #3 and #6, explain how heroes engage in combat with archaic weapons and how wizards get and use magic spells. The two games are stand-alone and may be played separately or together. Start with these two games and then try a **MICROQUEST®**. You're on your way to adventure the sensible way.

**SOLITAIRE PLAYABILITY:** TFT™ may be played solitaire with the TFT™ **MICROQUEST®** adventures. **MICROQUEST®s** are programmed fantasy adventures designed with numbered paragraphs. General rules describe how to conduct the adventure. Then, you make decisions for your character and move them through the paragraphs as the action develops. **MICROQUEST®s** may also be played by a group or led by a Fantasy Master. TFT: **MELEE™** and TFT: **WIZARD™** are required to play most **MICROQUEST®s**.

**FANTASY MASTERING:** Once you've played some **MICROQUEST®s** you're ready to be a Fantasy Master. A Fantasy Master serves as a moderator for a group of gamers going on an adventure. **TFT: IN THE LABYRINTH™** is the Fantasy Masters' guide. It tells you how to create labyrinths and towns and how to people (or monster) your areas. It contains all the rules you need to conduct your friends on adventures with you as Fantasy Master. And, if you have no idea what it's all about, read the play example at the bottom of page 47 of **IN THE LABYRINTH™**.

**PLAY AIDS:** There are two companion play-aids for Fantasy Masters who use **IN THE LABYRINTH**. **THE FANTASY MASTERS' CODEX™** is a computer generated reference guide and index of TFT™ materials. It contains exhaustive lists of everything in TFT™. For example, magic spells are listed alphabetically, by class and by IQ cost. **THE FANTASY MASTER'S SCREEN™** is used to hide material from players. It also contains table summaries of most die-roll adjustments and values for many common items. A very handy and useful play reference.

**ADVENTURE SUPPLEMENTS:** When you start Fantasy Mastering you may wish to use prepared material rather than make-up your own. TFT™ Adventure Supplements may include maps, towns, countryside, encounters, people, monsters, treasure and instructions. They provide a setting, plus some already made-up situations, for a Fantasy Master to use and further develop. Available titles include, **TOLLENKAR'S LAIR™**, **WARRIOR LORDS OF DAROK™** and **FOREST LORDS OF DIHAD™** with many other adventures in the works.

**ADVANCED RULES:** There are two advanced rule modules for those who want more complex magic or combat rules or who want to provide more background for continuing campaign characters. **TFT: ADVANCED MELEE™** extends the basic rules of TFT: **MELEE™** and adds material useful for hero characters. **TFT: ADVANCED WIZARD™** extends the basic magic rules of TFT: **WIZARD™** with descriptions of how wizards live on Cidri. They are useful sources for Fantasy Masters even if you decide not to implement all the added rules. And, they are fully compatible with the basic modules, nothing changes.

**MAGAZINE SUPPORT:** Metagaming publishes a bi-monthly magazine, **INTERPLAY: The Metagamer Dialogues**. It has a variety of TFT™ articles, a contest, a Q&A column and more. It's just the thing to help keep your TFT™ alive and expanding.

**FANTASY MASTERS' GUILD:** Also available is an association of Fantasy Masters sponsored by Metagaming and run by TFT™ gamers. As a member of the Guild you get a chance to see TFT™ as it develops and get the latest information and data.

**PHILOSOPHY: THE FANTASY TRIP™** is an excellent example of Metagaming's design philosophy. We stress playability and fun above all. Our games are for the more serious gamer who wants his gaming to hang together with minimal inconsistency, dis-organization and confusion. Our simple goal is to give you the best play we can for dollar.

**SUMMARY: THE FANTASY TRIP™** gives you fantasy with inexpensive game modules. You add rules as you choose. You can play solitaire, in groups or with a game moderating Fantasy Master. The way to start is with **TFT: MELEE™** and/or **TFT: WIZARD™**. Then, try a **MICROQUEST®** adventure. You'll be surprised at how smoothly it goes when you can learn a bit at a time. (Especially if you started with the big name competition.)

Metagaming

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# The Fantasy Trip™

## A WARRIOR'S PARADISE

The Province of Darok is no place for a refined, urbane sophisticate. It's a primitive paradise, where brute strength and fighting prowess are viewed as the true measure of a man. A place where a bold and fearless warrior can gain great influence or prestige, or even enter the test of challenge combat to become commander of all Darok. Darok welcomes the brave, cowards begone!

Although warriors rule the province, there are many other exciting groups of characters to be encountered in Darok. There's the cult of Akhora, the worshippers of the god of war and fire who control the practice of magic in the province. It's even whispered that the seductive Akhoran High Priestess Aleth-aan has enchanted the king. Or, you might meet the rugged clansmen of the plains, who make their living by capturing and breaking the wild horses found there. In this book players can journey to fabled Skytop, to find and tame one of the great winged steeds that reside there -- join a trail drive across the Plains of the Stallions -- or hunt for buried treasure in the war-torn borderland.

**WARRIOR LORDS OF DAROK** is part of **THE LAND BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS**, a complete campaign universe for use with **THE FANTASY TRIP** being jointly developed and published by Metagaming Concepts Inc. and Gamelords Ltd. Each campaign pack in the series is designed to stand alone as an independent set of encounters and scenarios to test the mettle of any experienced TFT adventurer. Combined with the other releases in the series, these adventure supplements will form a vast and changing mosaic of a world in the midst of a chaotic struggle for survival, where riches and power await the adventurer who is both wise and brave.

**PLAYABILITY:** For 2-8 intermediate or advanced level players and a moderately experienced Fantasy Master.

**COMPONENTS:** 32 page rules booklet with 17x11 full color map.

**REQUIRES:** In addition to this book you must have **THE FANTASY TRIP** booklets **IN THE LABYRINTH**, plus either the **ADVANCED MELEE** and **ADVANCED WIZARD** booklets or the **MICROGAMES MELEE** and **WIZARD** to play this adventure.

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