



# AGE OF AMBITION



Out of Shackles





# Out of Shackles

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# Introduction

In which the gentle reader is introduced to a scenario that pits Our Heroes against the institution of slavery

Contained herein is a complete adventure for *Age of Ambition*. It should be enough material to cover somewhere between two and four sessions of play, depending on the pacing set by the GM and the interests of the players.

*Out of Shackles* is also a great scenario for kicking off a new *Age of Ambition* campaign. When it begins, the heroes are captives in the belly of a slave ship, allowing them to come from all walks of life and effectively introducing the heroes to each other.

If making player characters specifically for this adventure, it would be beneficial to let the players know during character creation that when coming up with new Bonds, it would be best for the bonded NPCs to either have been captured alongside the heroes, or to have some reason to travel to, or live in, the city of Alnamon. This makes incorporating each hero's Bonds easier for the GM, and makes calling on those Bonds more relevant for the players.

vessel is in the midst of a storm and under attack by a deadly sea monster. The heroes can lead their fellow slaves in seizing the ship, defeating its captain and driving the sea monster off.

In the aftermath of taking the ship, the party discovers their their next predicament is making it back to a port before the vessel runs out of food and water. Thankfully, charts are discovered that lead them to the port of Alnamon, with a possible stop along the way to retrieve a cache of buried supplies.

Their troubles are still not over when the ship arrives in port, however, as the ex-slaves may be found guilty of piracy. Soon an opportunity presents itself, allowing the party to either perform a job for the Satrap's harem, and thereby obtain a pardon, or to escape with a group of criminals into the sewers.

By the time the scenario ends, the heroes will be free and will have made important contacts in the city of Alnamon.

## Synopsis

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The scenario begins with the heroes as captives in the belly of a slave ship. Shortly afterward, they are presented with the opportunity to escape and storm the deck of the ship. Upon arriving on deck, they discover that the

## Muno'che

In the back of this book is a chapter detailing the kingdom of Muno'che, where much of the adventure takes place. This chapter can be used to flesh out the included scenario and as a source of background information for continuing adventures in the region.







# Out of Shackles

In which Our Heroes escape from bondage, seize a ship, voyage to Alnamon and begin a new life

In this scenario the party will escape their captivity in the belly of a slave ship. They'll make their way to the port of Alnamon and there encounter just how unjust the institution of slavery can be. With any luck, they'll rid the city of some dangerous criminals, obtain a pardon and begin new lives for themselves

## Belly of the Beast

This scenario begins with the party in chains. They are in the hold of the Maoh's Embrace, a slave ship that plies the waters of the Quaris Ocean, and which is bound for the slave markets of Licad.

Some days or weeks ago, each of the heroes was captured by the slavers and stuffed into the hold alongside rows of other unfortunate victims. All told, there are just over 60 slaves in the belly of the ship. Each of the heroes is lined up in rows and chained uncomfortably to the interior of the hold. Their hands are manacled and each one is locked.

The only equipment the party has on them are some ragged clothes (their other possessions are stored in the captain's cabin, see page 10). It's impossible to tell exactly how much time has passed, but today the ship is rocking back and forth rather fiercely.

## An Unwanted Visit

As the scenario begins, Nazif—one of the slavers in the ship's crew—descends the ladder into the hold and begins to taunt the captives. He is a bully and thug who is thrilled by his feeling of power over the slaves.

Have Nazif say a few cruel words and give the players a chance to get into character. As he does this, the slaver rolls a toothpick back and forth in his mouth, grinning wickedly.

After the players have had a moment to respond, Nazif gets a gleam in his eye and suddenly seizes a nearby NPC by the face. He then reaches into the slave's mouth, and with a bit of effort, pries out a gold tooth. "Lookie what we have here," he says.

- ✦ Nazif uses the Pirate stats on page 291 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook.
- ✦ Since the party is bound, there's little they can do at this point other than talk and struggle against their bonds. Fortunately, they're about to have the opportunity to escape.

## All Hands on Deck!

A moment or two after Nazif pries out the tooth, the ship suddenly and unexpectedly rocks sideways. The slaver is slammed into the wall of the hold, while the toothpick formerly



held in his mouth rolls across the floor to the feet of one of the heroes. Pick the character most likely to be able to pick a lock.

Nazif quickly rights himself, but this is shortly followed by the sound of “All hands on deck!” being bellowed from above. With one last sneer at the captives, the slaver climbs the ladder and disappears through the hatch.

## The Escape

Nazif is gone and one of the heroes has a toothpick. Hopefully the players will pick up on the cue that this is their chance to escape. If they don’t immediately come to this realization, one of the other slaves will suggest it.

### Picking the Lock

With some effort, the character with the toothpick can grab hold of it and use it to pick the lock on the shackles binding her hands. Doing this requires a successful **Dex/thievery-10** flip. On a failure, she accidentally drops the toothpick and it rolls to another player character who can attempt the same thing.

If two characters fail, their escape attempt is interrupted by a sudden bang on the outside of the hull, like the ship hitting something large. This cracks one of the timbers, allowing the chain to pull free of where it’s bolted to the wall. With the chain free, the slaves can stand up and move about, pressing forward with their escape, even if their wrists are still bound.

### Gathering the Slaves

As soon as a hero is free, the other slaves will beg to be released from their chains as well. Feel free to call for one more **Dex/thievery-10** flip to go down the rows, unlocking the shackles from all of the slaves. On a failure, the character can still unlock the other slaves, but doing so will take more time than expected,

allowing the party’s escape attempt to be interrupted by Iago (see Iago Speaks below).

As the slaves are freed, they mill about, stretching their limbs and excited to no longer be chained to the hull. The ship, meanwhile, continues to rock back and forth fiercely, occasionally lurching to the side, causing freed slaves to tumble into each other. While enthusiastic, the slaves at this point lack clear direction.

A character looking to organize the escape attempt may make a **Chr/persuade-10** flip while saying a few words. On a success, she manages to organize the slaves, directing them to keep quiet, help free others or arm themselves with lengths of chain.

### Iago Speaks

One of the other slaves is a man named Iago Golzar. He is a charismatic conman who sees the escape attempt as his opportunity to take charge of both the slaves and the ship. As soon as he is freed, he will thank whoever unlocked his bonds and then make a short speech, attempting to rally the slaves and storm the deck.

- ☞ “My friends, this is the moment of truth. Do we die as animals or do we live as free people? We have but one chance before us. One chance to take this ship from the monsters who have enslaved us and to seize back our lives! Are you with me?”
- ☞ Despite the fire in his rallying speech, Iago will ensure that he’s not among the first to storm the deck. In his mind, if anyone is going to die for his freedom, it should be anyone but him. If and when the slaves charge the deck, make sure to point out how Iago is holding back and letting others do the dangerous work. This will help signal to the players that Iago isn’t entirely sincere and may have ulterior motives.



## Iago Golzar

Human, Scoundrel (Common 3)

**Ambition:** Take charge of the slave revolt.

**Bonds:** Modin (membership)

| Str | Dex | Spd  | End | Int | Per  | Chr  | Det  |
|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|------|------|------|
| 5   | 7   | 6    | 4   | 6   | 5    | 7    | 5    |
| Atk | Def | Will | Arm | HP  | Move | Size | Luck |
| 6   | 5   | 6    | 0/0 | 9   | 5    | 0    | 6    |

**Sword\*:** +6 vs. Defense (9/8/7/6/5 cut). Parry 4.

**Skills** Ⓢ: Persuade, Stealth, Streetwise, Tactician-style

\* Iago doesn't begin with a sword, but will quickly arm himself after the slaves storm the deck of the ship.

Iago Golzar is a charismatic scoundrel and conman with a lust for power and a knack for getting other people to do his dirty work. He was picked up by the slavers during a raid on a merchant ship while transporting a lunar magic artifact known as the Eye of Afar (see page 23). Originally from Gail, Iago is also a minor affiliate of the Modin crime syndicate.

## Replacing Iago

Iago is intended to be persistent minor antagonist and foil to the characters in their efforts to organize and lead the slaves. If one of the party has a Rival or even a minor Enemy who is scheming and charismatic, that character would be an ideal substitute for Iago.



## Half a Slaver

As the party heads to the ladder to leave the belly of the ship behind, the hatch is thrown open and Nazif comes tumbling down. For a split second they're able to see pouring rain and flashes of lighting. The cries of the crew can be heard coming from above. When the party looks down, Nazif can be seen, sprawled out on the floor. His body is missing from the waist down, but he still clutches a sword in one hand.

- ✦ Nazif is barely conscious and will die very soon. This is obvious to anyone viewing him, but an **Int/medicine-8** flip will confirm it.
- ✦ A **Per/medicine-10** or **Per/investigate-10** flip will reveal that it looks like his lower half has been torn away, as if by sharp teeth. Some of the flesh is also melting, likely caused by acid or something caustic.
- ✦ He can be briefly woken up and made to talk with a successful **Det/persuade-10** flip. However, he doesn't do much but utter "Sea monster..."
- ✦ Characters will likely want to purloin his sword (see the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook, page 140).

## Waiting it Out

It's possible that the players will want to wait belowdecks for whatever is happening above deck to settle down. While no one is forcing them to storm the deck, Iago is having none of that. He will loudly declare that there is no better time than now to seize the ship, while the slavers are scattered and distracted. He will then rile up the other slaves and lead the charge, stopping just a moment to call the party out on their cowardice.



## Storming the Deck

As the party arrives on deck, the reason for the ship's incessant rocking quickly becomes apparent. A fierce storm rages overhead. Lightning flashes across the night sky. Waves pummel the ship, sending cascades of water over the vessel.

To the starboard side of the ship, the silhouette of a vast sea creature rises from the ocean. The crew can be seen running back and forth across the deck, adjusting the sails and desperately trying to load the ship's two cannons. Not far from the heroes, a panicked crewman throws himself overboard, only to be seized by a vast tentacle and pulled underwater. Seconds later blood floats to the surface.

If the heroes are the first to storm the deck, give them a moment to react before the other slaves come pouring out of the hold. If they're not first, the slaves will have already entered combat attacking the slavers by the time the heroes make it up.

Regardless of how the heroes react, once the slaves are on deck, they'll surge forward and attack their captors, egged on by Iago. This will quickly garner the attention of the slavers, some of whom will try to put down the revolt.

✦ If necessary, the slaves use the Commoner stats on page 289 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook, except that they begin unarmed. They are all Minions.

## The First Wave

It won't take long before the heroes find themselves under attack by the slavers who are intent on stopping the slave revolt.

✦ The heroes face a number of slavers equal to the number of PCs. Use the Pirate stats on page 291 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook. They are all Minions.

## Attacking the Sea Monster

Players may be tempted to attack the sea monster, but since it's well away from the side of the ship, there's little they can do to it without ranged weapons.

They could attempt to seize the cannons and use them against the creature, but taking the cannons provokes a fight with the crew, who aren't about to let the ship's best weapons fall into the hands of the revolting slaves.

Nevertheless, if the heroes persist on attacking the sea monster, its stats can be found on page 13.

- ✦ At the end of each round, take a moment to describe one or two of the other events happening around them. Slaves fight slavers, while the ship is tossed back and forth by the waves. Crewmen struggle to fire the cannons while the sea monster attacks. Screams and thunder punctuate the sound of rain. The captain can be heard in the distance bellowing orders.
- ✦ To spice things up, at the end of each round the GM may opt to have one of the Any Fight in a Storm events occur (see page 9).
- ✦ After the heroes fight the first wave of slavers, give them a moment to catch their breaths and loot the bodies. They'll likely need the swords they pick up in the coming fight.

## The Sea Monster Retreats

By the time the fight ends, the sea monster will have disappeared beneath the waves, giving the ship a moment of respite from its attack and allowing the slavers to focus on fighting the slaves.



## Captain and Crew

With the sea monster no longer an immediate concern, Captain Ahma—the vessel’s commanding officer—rallies his closest crew and makes his way across the deck, heading right for the heroes and the thickest fighting.

- ✦ Give the players a moment to respond or to otherwise prepare themselves. This is their last chance to arm themselves or to employ a clever plan before battle is joined.
- ✦ Captain Ahma’s stats are on page 10. He is a Villain.
- ✦ He commands a number of slavers equal to the number of PCs. Use the Pirate stats

on page 291 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook. They are all Minions.

- ✦ When the fight begins, the Captain will hang back, using his Tactician fighting style, or the Intimidate or Taunt actions (see the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook, page 169). He prefers to let the crew do the bulk of the fighting. Once half the crew are down, however, he’ll move in and engage the heroes directly.
- ✦ Try to make this fight exciting and dynamic. Have the captain say a few words every round to rally his crew or curse out the heroes. Save his Peg Leg Trick ability for when it will make a dramatic impact.

## Any Fight in a Storm

To make the fights on the deck of the Maoh’s Embrace more interesting, and to emphasize the chaos of the situation, the GM may opt to pick an entry or flip a card on the table below at the end of each round.

| Card     | Event  |
|----------|--|
| A – 2    | A wave crashes into the ship, sending a rush of water over the deck. Everyone must succeed at a <b>Dex/athletics-10</b> flip or gain a Prone consequence.                                |
| 3 – 4    | Somewhere on the ship a slaver falls overboard and can then be heard screaming as the sea monster pulls her under.   |
| 5 – 6    | A pair of slavers manage to untie the ship’s boat and drop it over the edge of the ship in an attempt to flee. If this result is chosen again, the sea monster instead crushes the boat. |
| 7 – 8    | The sea monster lashes out, raising a tentacle over the deck of the ship. It wraps around either a slaver or a revolting slave and drags her screaming over the edge of the deck.        |
| 9 – 10   | The crew manages to fire one of the ship’s cannons at the sea monster, which lets out a high-pitched screech. Acidic blood splashes the deck, causing it to briefly sizzle.              |
| J – Q    | A fellow slave shows up in the fight and aids the heroes. Use the Commoner stats on page 289 of the <i>Age of Ambition</i> core rulebook. She is a Minion.                               |
| K, Joker | Lightning strikes the ship’s mast, causing a crew member to fall from the crow’s nest. One of the sails catches fire and the thunder is deafening.                                       |



## Captain Ahma

High Orc, Captain (Gentle 4)

**Ambition:** Become rich on the spoils of people suffering.

**Bonds:** Crew (obligation)

| Str | Dex | Spd  | End | Int | Per  | Chr  | Det  |
|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|------|------|------|
| 5   | 6   | 5    | 5   | 5   | 6    | 6    | 5    |
| Atk | Def | Will | Arm | HP  | Move | Size | Luck |
| 5   | 5   | 5    | 0/0 | 10  | 5    | 0    | 6    |

**Dragon:** +5 🟢 vs. Defense (6/5/4/3/2 pi). Cone 9, Close, Firearm, Reload 10.

**Sword:** +5 🟢 vs. Defense (9/8/7/6/5 pi). Parry 4.

**Peg Leg Trick:** +5 vs. Defense (8/7/6/5/4 burn). Cone 9. The captain's peg leg contains a cleverly disguised socket for a lunar device and is enchanted to unleash a burst of flame when the device is activated and the leg is pointed at a foe. Ahma can perform this attack once before the energy in the device is expended and the leg needs to be re-enchanted.

**Skills** 🟢: Athletics, Awareness, Persuade, Streetwise, Tactics-style, Vehicles (watercraft)

**Villain:** See the core rulebook, page 287.

Captain Ahma is a merciless ex-pirate turned slaver. He commands the Maoh's Embrace through a mixture of fear and appeal to avarice. There is no depth to which he won't sink. Ahma lost his right leg in a fight a few years ago. Since then he's replaced it with a peg leg. He moves around well, despite the handicap.

## The Storm Passes

Once Captain Ahma and the officers are defeated, all resistance among the crew breaks. A few throw themselves over the railing and into the sea. Others are killed by vengeful slaves.

Within an hour the storm begins to break. There is no sign of the sea monster, and the slaves are in control of the vessel.

## Loot and Pillage

In the aftermath of the fighting, the slaves begin to pillage the ship. Food stores are broken open as the starving slaves eat their fill. The crew's personal possessions are plundered. Wounded slavers are cut open and thrown overboard.

- ❖ Heroes can attempt to stop some of the looting by making a **Det/persuade-10** flip. On a success, the looting is deterred momentarily in the immediate vicinity, but continues elsewhere on the ship.
- ❖ The party's former possessions can be found in the captain's cabin. Benevolent GMs might have these recovered automatically if the players decide to search for them. Otherwise, they can be located with a successful **Per/investigate-10** flip.
- ❖ Party members participating in looting the vessel might acquire a few new items. Pick a couple per character from the following list: a pair of boots, a dagger, an eye patch, a flask of suspect liquor, a stained sack, a sword, a piece of parchment with a child's drawing, a holy book of Linquad, five kalid parts, three candles, a piece of jerky, five lunar devices, a coil of rope.

## Wrath or Mercy

As the pillaging is coming to a close, one of the slaves will drag a captured sailor before the party. The sailor's name is Blair and they were found hiding near the aft of the ship. Blair is visibly terrified and has an injured leg that prevents them from moving faster than a slow hobble.

Blair begs not to be killed, claiming that they can be of use—after all, they know how to steer the ship. They can bring it safely to the nearest port if only the party will show mercy. The slave who captured Blair then looks at the heroes expectantly, awaiting their decision.



This is an excellent roleplaying opportunity! The party can decide whether to avenge themselves on the captured slaver or to show mercy. They might even make a show of it. Regardless of what they decide, however, in the future Iago will attempt to use their decision against them (see below).

✦ If necessary, Blair uses the Pirate stats on page 291 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook.

## Captain Iago?

Unless someone in the party steps in to fill the power vacuum, Iago will begin to position himself as the new captain. He'll move into the captain's cabin, convince a few of the slaves to serve as his muscle and begin directing the others as if he were in charge.

If one of the heroes does step up and assume command, Iago will begin to subtly undermine her authority. He will oppose whatever decision the heroes made involving Blair, spread rumors and attempt to make the party look like fools.

✦ If the power struggle between Iago and the heroes comes to a head, the conflict can be played out using the Social Challenge rules (see the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook, page 190).

## The Long Voyage

The slave revolt leaves either the heroes or Iago in command of the Maoh's Embrace, but not without complications. They're on a ship with no land in sight and most, or all, of the crew is dead.

Having been chained in the hold for an indefinite period of time, the heroes won't know where they are, won't necessarily know where they're going and may be lacking the skills to get there.

To make matters worse, when the slaves plundered the ship's food stores, they ate their fill, but now the ship is running dangerously low on food and water. Captain Ahma was fine with allowing some of the slaves to perish of starvation or dehydration en route, and he was stingy even with the crew. Now with the slaves freed, there simply isn't enough to go around.

Clearly the heroes need a plan.

## Navigation

As the party is beginning to formulate a plan, or if the players need a prompt to come up with one, a slave presents them with a set of charts that were looted from the captain's cabin. These charts detail a route to the city of Alnamon, the only port near the ship's current position.

## The Maoh's Embrace

The Maoh's Embrace is an aging double-masted caravel that is 65 ft. (20 m) in length. It normally requires a crew of 20 sailors. The ship has been plying the waters of the Quaris Ocean for over half a century. The underside is crusted with barnacles and the inside reeks terribly from the vessel's years in the slave trade. Before Captain Ahma took command, the ship served briefly as a pirate vessel, and before that it was used to ferry troops during Muno'che secession.

Unless they were lost during the fight with the sea monster, the ship is armed with two cannons, both affixed to the starboard side of the vessel.

✦ Firing the cannons requires an **Attack** flip (16/15/14/13/12 pi); Range Per x10, Reload 20.



- ✦ The ship's astrolabe can be used to determine the location of the vessel by succeeding at an **Int/academics (navigation)-10** flip, or the location can be learned by reading the stars and succeeding at a **Per/survival-12** flip.
- ✦ The ship's low supply of food means that making it to a nearby port is critical.

## Sailing the Ship

If one of the heroes has taken charge of steering the ship, use the Travel rules to handle the voyage to Alnamon (see the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook, page 276). The journey should be broken up into three legs, with the party having a chance to go after the hidden stash at the end of the first leg (see below), encountering the sea monster again after the second leg (see page 13) and making it to Alnamon at the end of the third (see page 14).

If Blair has been left to steer the vessel, skip the travel rules and simply have the party encounter the aforementioned events along the way.

Regardless of who is steering the ship, any leg of the journey where the characters are suffering from a lack of food, water or exposure to the elements forces everyone to make an **End-10** flip. On a failure, the character takes the Margin in fatigue.

## Hidden Stash

Near the end of the first leg, the party will have the opportunity to recover a cache of critical supplies. It includes preserved food, water, rum and bandages. The cache is located on a small and otherwise unremarkable volcanic island in the Outer Centuah Isles, not far out of the way of the ship's current route.

If the party decided to spare Blair's life, the sailor will approach the heroes as the ship nears the island. Blair says that to prove their good intentions, they will tell the heroes where to

locate a hidden cache of preserved food and other equipment.

On the other hand, if Blair was killed, the party will instead learn of the cache from a chart found among Captain Ahma's possessions. The chart includes a map of the island, with the cache marked and labeled as "Food and Equipment Cache."

If one of the heroes is steering the ship and failed the flip for the first leg of the Travel extended action, the vessel may even be temporarily stuck in shallow water near the island—at least until the next high tide lifts it up.

## Getting Ashore

Since the Maoh's Embrace lost its ship's boat during the fight with the sea monster, the vessel will need to anchor nearby and anyone going ashore will need to swim.

- ✦ Make a **Str/athletics-10** flip to swim ashore. Anyone failing begins to drown (see page 271 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook).

## Dangers on the Island

As the heroes explore the island they might encounter some of the dangers that it has to offer. The GM can pick from the hazards below:

- ✦ The undergrowth in the interior of the island is the habitat of several Vine Trappers (see the *Bestiary*, page 27). The party encounters a number equal to half the number of PCs (round up).
- ✦ The center of the island contains a low caldera that slowly oozes lava in a thin rivulet that runs all the way to the sea. The heroes may need to cross this stream of lava to reach the cache. Doing so exposes them to extreme heat (see the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook, page 276). It may require a **Str/athletics-10** flip to jump over the stream without falling in.



☞ A fire elemental lives in the caldera at the center of the island. It has been bored for years and is willing to strike a deal with characters who are able to speak with it using either the **Lore of Communication** or the **Lore of Fire**. See the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook, page 299.

## Locating the Stash

Locating the hidden stash requires either a chart or Blair's directions, in addition to a successful **Per/survival-10** flip. Failure results in lost time and encountering one of the dangerous on the island (see above).

Once the appropriate spot is located, the party will need to dig. Unearthing the cache requires an **End/athletics-10** flip. On a failure, the cache is still unearthed but the character suffers the Margin in fatigue.

The stash contains consists of 10 sealed barrels: 5 water barrels, 3 barrels with preserved meat, 1 barrel of rum and 1 with bandages.

The supplies in the cache are enough so that passengers on the ship don't need to flip for a lack of food and water on the next two legs of the journey (see page 12).

## Return of the Sea Monster

A day after the ship leaves or passes by the island, the sea monster will be spotted trailing after the vessel. If any of the heroes are keeping watch, have them make a **Per/awareness-10** flip to be the first to notice the monster's approach. On a failure, someone else will spot it, but not until it's almost upon the ship.

☞ If Blair is alive, they will offer a bit of insight: "Sea monsters, aye... Once they get a taste for sailor flesh they don't soon forget it. They hunger for it."

☞ Once the monster gets close to the vessel, the party will be able to see that the beast is still injured from its attack the previous day.

☞ The heroes can drive the creature off by either appeasing it or hitting it with one of the ship's cannons. Appeasing the monster requires tossing all three barrels of meat, or at least three people, overboard.

☞ If the heroes press a fight with the Sea Monster, its stats are below. It begins the fight at half HP and retreats if it takes a Grave Wound. Be warned that a determined sea monster may obliterate the party, so play it as cautious and flighty.

### Sea Monster

| Str | Dex | Spd  | End | Int | Per  | Chr  | Det  |
|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|------|------|------|
| 15  | 9   | 7    | 9   | 2   | 5    | 8    | 4    |
| Atk | Def | Will | Arm | HP  | Move | Size | Luck |
| 2   | 3   | 6    | 4/2 | 72  | 11   | +3   | 5    |

**Tentacle:** +2 ☺☺ vs. Defense (12/11/10/9/8 sm).

Reach 6. Since the sea monster must keep its body in the water, attacking targets on the deck of a ship is awkward. These attacks lose a ☺ and are made for half damage.

♥♦: The target is grappled and the sea monster gains 6 Control points. If the target is in water, she must also make an **End-10** flip to avoid drowning, gaining her Margin of failure in fatigue.

**Aquatic:** See the core rulebook, page 284.

**Bestial:** See the core rulebook, page 284.

**Many Tentacles:** The sea monster has six tentacles.

Each turn, it gains 4 AP and may perform up to two attacks. Its tentacles may be targeted with a Called Shot. Doing at least 6 cutting damage severs a tentacle.

The sea monster looks something like a great whale with a lamprey's mouth and a set of six long tentacles ringing its head. Its hide is a dark blue and its eyes shine with a hungry light.



# Port of Call

The Maoh's Embrace arrives near Alnamon at night. As the ship approaches, the city lights can be seen twinkling on the horizon.

- ✦ A successful **Int/academics (geography)-10** or **Int/vehicles (watercraft)-10** flip will let the heroes know that Alnamon is a deep port, which is a rarity this close to the Gulf of Cad. This means that the ship can sail right up to the pier and anchor there, rather than anchoring offshore and taking a boat in.
- ✦ Alternatively, if Blair is alive, they will supply this information.

## Blair's Exit

If Blair is alive, as soon as the Maoh's Embrace drops its anchor, they will attempt to flee the ship. If the party has replaced the ship's boat with a makeshift raft or similar vessel, they will purloin it and slip over the side. If not, they'll jump over the edge and attempt to swim.

- ✦ Call for a **Per/awareness-10** flip to notice Blair's absence. On a success, the party catches Blair just before they go over the side. On a failure, the heroes won't notice until they hear the splash of Blair hitting the water and struggling to paddle or swim.
- ✦ If the party stops Blair, either on the ship or in the water, the sailor will admit defeat and say, "I don't think docking here is going to be simple. The Maoh's Embrace is a known slave ship. People will have questions, and I don't want to swing from the gallows."
- ✦ Once again, the heroes can decide what to do with Blair.

## Greeting Party

The pier is nearly empty tonight, aside from a few rats. As the gangplank is lowered,

this gets the attention of Raji the Dockmaster, who grabs a lantern, summons the night guards and goes out to meet the new arrivals. As he approaches the ship, his eyes go wide with recognition and he tells the guards to be on alert—apparently the Maoh's Embrace has a reputation. "Declare your intentions," he yells.

Let the heroes begin to explain the situation. Iago, however, will interrupt them about halfway through, saying that he led the party in fighting off the slavers and seizing the ship. If given the chance, he'll even go on about how the party—through his expert direction—struck down Captain Ahma and threw the slaver overboard for the sea monster.

If any of the heroes say anything to contradict Iago, or even give him a mean look, he'll storm off, heading back to the ship, but not before the Raji the Dockmaster has heard enough to decide what to do with the party.

"Please follow me," Raji will say to the heroes. "Guards, make sure no one else comes off that ship!" He will then lead the heroes to the dockhouse.

- ✦ Raji uses the Merchant stats on page 290 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook.
- ✦ The guards use the Sellsword stats on page 292 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook. There are a number equal to twice the number of PCs.

## Legal Peculiarities

Raji will bring the party into the dockhouse and lead them to a jail cell in one corner of the building. He'll then open the door and gesture for the party to go in.

Once the party is secured in the cell, or if prompted to explain before they enter, he will offer his thoughts on the matter:

- ✦ "You have my sympathies, but this sounds like a legal matter that will need to be detangled, and that's above my pay grade.



That's something for the Clerk Magister to deal with, and she isn't here on account of it being the middle of the night. So you're going to have to stay in this cell and I'll have her deal with this matter in the morning."

- ✦ "Do you know what you call it's called when you attack a ship and take it over? That's called piracy. And do you know what it's called when you do this to known slavers or pirates? Unless you can produce a letter of marque, it's still called piracy."
- ✦ "Look, I'm not saying your situation isn't sympathetic. I'm saying that examining all the legal peculiarities, or petitioning the Satrap for the pardon, is above my pay grade. My job is simply to hold you until the Clerk Magister gets here in the morning."
- ✦ "So please, go into the cell and I'll be happy to testify that you cooperated and whatnot."

## Night Behind Bars

The cell the party finds themselves in is small, but fairly clean. It's got two sleeping pads, a bucket of fresh water and a bucket for waste. If the heroes entered the cell without making a fuss, Raji the Dockmaster will even

wander off after an hour or so to bring them some flatbread to eat. Most of the night he stays within eyesight of the cell, at the far end of the dockhouse.

## Dirka's Offer

Next to the cell the heroes are in is another one. In it is a smuggler and sometimes thief named Dirka. She was picked up earlier in the night for trying to move goods into the city without paying the port taxes.

Once Raji the Dockmaster heads to the far side of the dockhouse, Dirka will begin to speak with the party:

- ✦ "So I heard you're in for piracy..."
- ✦ "You seem like the sort who doesn't want to just sit here and wait for the wheels of authority to turn. If you're interested, I have friends with connections who are busting me out of here tomorrow night. I could take you along, but you've got to be willing to do a little work for me once you get out..."
- ✦ Characters who want to know more can press for additional information, but Dirka is reluctant to say anything else. With a successful **Chr/socialize-12** flip,

## Making a Break for It

It's possible that at some point the heroes will decide that dealing with the dock authorities isn't worth it and they will simply make a break for it, attempting to run and hide somewhere in the city. This is a good time to call for a Chase (see *Campaign Options*, page 8).

- ✦ Draw a track of 7 boxes. Place the guards in the first box.
- ✦ Start the heroes two boxes ahead of the guards chasing them, or three boxes ahead if they came up with a particularly good plan to slip away.
- ✦ The guards start with two boon tokens, not because of their movement, but because this is their home turf and they know the lay of the land.
- ✦ The party is caught if the guards catch up with them. They escape if they make it to the end of the track before the guards catch up.
- ✦ If the party is caught, skip to them being thrown into a jail cell for the night (see *Legal Peculiarities*). If they escape, then they find refuge in the Tunnels (see page 19).



however, she will reveal that she's affiliated with the Modin (see the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook, page 232) and that she's likely asking them to do some dirty work on that organization's behalf.

✦ The heroes are free to accept her offer, turn her down or wait and decide later. Whatever they decide, Dirka will nod and attempt to get back to sleep.

✦ Dirka uses the Ne'er-do-well stats on page 291 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook.

## Fight in the Night

Just before dawn, the heroes hear a ruckus coming from the pier and then the sounds of fighting. These sounds are short-lived, however, as a few minutes later the dock guards march six ex-slaves into the dockhouse. They are then placed in the same cell as Dirka. The party will recognize all six from the Maoh's Embrace.

After being thrown unceremoniously into the cell, the six will sit up, examine their injuries and converse with the party:

✦ After the heroes were taken to the dockhouse, rumors about what happened to them began to spread on the ship, and none of the ex-slaves were allowed to leave. Guards were posted to prevent that.

✦ Iago made an angry speech and got everyone riled up, then directed a charge to try to rush the guards.

✦ There was a short fight, but the ex-slaves were outmatched. Several were injured and one guard was badly wounded.

✦ During the fighting, Iago managed to slip away into the city. He didn't even help fight.

## Watch Sergeant Reza

Some time after the fight, the cells are approached by a large guard with a scar across one cheek. He glares at the slaves and says in a low tone, "Slave scum like you are all the same.

You're never leaving Alnamon alive. I'm going to see that each one of you dies alone and painful. It's a promise." He then saunters off.

✦ Watch Sergeant Reza's stats are on page 22.

## A New Day

The next day dawns bright and earlier than many of the heroes may like, the light filtered in through a small barred window.

Raji the Dockmaster begins to leave just after dawn—his shift at the pier having ended—but just as he's about to take off, a small delegation arrives and asks to speak with the prisoners from the Maoh's Embrace.

## A Distinguished Visitor

The delegation consists of two burly and well-equipped guards, dressed in almost decadently embroidered uniforms and gilded armor. It's led by a short but striking woman dressed in fine silks and a translucent veil. Once brought to the party's cell she wastes no time getting down to business:

✦ "I am Concubine Behnaz. I have heard word of what you reported to the dockmaster last night, and your case has piqued my interest. I will be stepping in, in place of the Clerk Magister."

✦ "I understand that you have committed an act of piracy in seizing the Maoh's Embrace from the late Captain Ahma. I have also been led to believe that you are interested in a pardon from the Satrap. What do you have to say for yourself?"

✦ She then gives the party a chance to respond.

## The Pardon Offer

Once the party has had some time to respond, explain or ask any questions they may have, Behnaz makes her offer:



- ✦ “Beneath the city is a network of ancient tunnels. Most of them are flooded, but a few are not. A group of criminals calling themselves the Modin use these tunnels for smuggling and other illicit operations.”
- ✦ “We’ve been trying to drive the criminals out for months now, but so far they’ve always been one step ahead of us. The conclusion I’ve reached is that they must have an informant in the city’s halls of power—someone who tips them off every time we prepare for a raid.”
- ✦ “I want to catch the informant unaware. That’s why I am offering this task to you. I don’t want the Modin to have time to clear out. And if what I have heard is true, you have proven yourselves capable. After all, I am sure that seizing the Maoh’s Embrace was no simple feat.”
- ✦ “The Modin leader who commands the tunnels calls himself the Dagger. Bring him to me—dead or alive, I don’t care. Do this for me and I will see that the Satrap grants you a pardon, and that your service to the city does not go unrewarded.”

## Accepting or Rejecting the Offer

The party can choose whether to reject or accept Behnaz’s offer. If they accept, she gestures for Raji the Dockmaster to release them. She’ll see that any confiscated possessions are returned to the heroes, then she and her bodyguards will lead the party to the nearest major sewer entrance (see page 19).

On the other hand, if the party turns down the concubine’s offer, she will look genuinely surprised. “Very well. That is your decision to make. I wish you luck in your upcoming trial.” She’ll then nod and take her leave.

- ✦ Concubine Behnaz’s stats are on the right.
- ✦ Her bodyguards use the Expert Sellsword stats found on page 8 of the *Bestiary*.

### Concubine Behnaz

Human, Concubine of the Satrap (Noble 1)

**Ambition:** Keep in check the power of the Satrap and the special interests in the city who would exert their influence over him.

**Bonds:** First Wife Zahira (patron)

| Str | Dex | Spd  | End | Int | Per  | Chr  | Det  |
|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|------|------|------|
| 5   | 7   | 7    | 5   | 7   | 6    | 7    | 5    |
| Atk | Def | Will | Arm | HP  | Move | Size | Luck |
| 6   | 6   | 6    | 0/0 | 10  | 6    | 0    | 6    |

**Dagger:** +7 + vs. Defense (8/7/6/5/4 pi). Close.

**Skills:** + Athletics, Deception, Empathy, Expression, Tradecraft (spymaster)

The Satrap’s harem is the power behind the throne in Alnamon, and Concubine Behnaz is its unofficial spymaster. Little goes on in the city without her eventually becoming aware of it. As a former slave herself, she also has a soft spot for escapees.

## Breakout

If the heroes turn down the concubine’s offer, or otherwise find themselves in the dockhouse cell the following night, Dika’s “friends” come to bust her out. If the party has accepted her offer, she’ll see that they’re busted out alongside her.

The breakout is surprisingly simple. A man walks in holding a key, he unlocks the cell doors and gestures for Dirka to quietly follow. The man is a Modin agent. Tonight a different and more corrupt dockmaster is on duty. She’s been paid to look the other way while the breakout happens. Unless the heroes do anything to draw attention to themselves, they’ll slip away without incident.

## Into the Tunnels

From the dockhouse, the party will be led down an alleyway, across an empty street and



then eventually to a sewer grate. “Don’t worry,” Dirka says, “It’s not actually a sewer, just an entrance to the tunnels.” She then slips in, expecting the heroes to follow.

Once in the tunnels, the Modin agent produces a set of blindfolds, but it’s Dirka who speaks, “You need to put these on. The hideaway we’re going to is secret.” If the party puts on the blindfolds, they’re led in a maze-like route through the tunnels. If they decline, both Dirka and the agent will insist.

✦ Dirka and the nameless Modin agent both use the Ne’er-do-well stats on page 291 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook.

## Meeting the Dagger

Eventually the party will be led to the Dagger’s secret hideout in the tunnels. When their blindfolds are removed, they’ll be standing in a 24 ft. by 24 ft. (7m x 7m) square chamber with a vaulted ceiling. The room is lit by a series of torches. The walls of the room are made out of a strange green substance that only vaguely resembles stone.

A large table stands in the center of the room with an orc nonchalantly leaning against it. He speaks:

✦ “You must be Dirka’s new recruits. Welcome to the Modin. They call me the Dagger. These are my tunnels. They are my kingdom.”

✦ “You have benefited from one of our many services: that is, being freed from your jail cell. You’re welcome. But it is time you pay for that service.”

✦ “Dirka tells me that you seized a slave ship, the Maoh’s Embrace, from its captain. Is that true?” He waits for the heroes to respond. “Then the task you will perform as payment should be child’s play.”

✦ “These tunnels are not a sewer system. The scholars in the library—somewhere up above us—say they’re ancient. We don’t even know who built them or why. But what we do know is that they make an excellent smuggling route into and out of the city. Unfortunately, some of the tunnels have not aged very well. And every year a few more get flooded. After the rains last week, that includes our main route.”

✦ “So your task, in payment, is to explore some of the lesser known side tunnels and map us a new route out of the city.”

## Accept or Decline

The party may try to decline the Dagger’s offer, but he refuses to take no for an answer. In fact, he is more than willing to insist at knife-point.

✦ If the party accepts, the Modin agent will hold out a large piece of parchment, an oiled

## Going to Trial

In the unlikely event that the heroes turn down both Behnaz’s offer of a pardon and Dirka’s chance at escape, they will be held for three days and then brought before a magistrate for trial.

Run the trial using the Social Challenge rules (see the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook, page 190). The opposition in the trial will be a slick lawyer paid for by a number of prominent slave owners in the city—they don’t want the heroes’ case setting a precedent. Failure means being convicted of piracy and sentenced to death by hanging. Success means being found not guilty and then getting released into the city. Feel free to come up with variations for partial success or failure, such as being found guilty of a lesser charge or being given a lighter sentence.



and sealed scroll case, a charcoal stick and a lantern. If they refuse, they're in for a fight.

- ✦ The Dagger's stats are found on page 21.
- ✦ Dirka and the Modin agent both fight to protect the Dagger. Use the Ne'er-do-well stats on page 291 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook.
- ✦ At the beginning of the second round, a number of additional Modin ne'er-do-wells come running into the room, summoned by the sound of combat. There are a number equal to twice the number of PCs. These ne'er-do-wells are Minions.

## Alnamon

Alnamon is the largest port in the nation of Muno'che. It is a city of sandstone buildings, exotic wares and open-air markets.

- ✦ For more on Alnamon, see page 27.

## Encounters in Alnamon

Heroes might encounter either of the following events while wandering the city.

### Agitator

An agitator stands on the street corner, shouting about how the Satrap is weak, a pawn of his harem and a slave to his addictions. Pretty soon a couple of city guards show up and begin to hassle the agitator. Will the party get involved?

### Red Eyes

While traveling the streets at night, one of the heroes spots a set of glowing red eyes in an alleyway. Upon closer inspection, whatever possessed the glowing red eyes is gone, leaving only a couple small drops of blood behind.

## The Tunnels

Eventually the party will find themselves in the tunnels. It could be because they've taken Concubine Behnaz's offer and are hunting the Dagger; it could be because they're mapping side passages for the Modin; or maybe they simply fled the docks and found refuge there.

The heroes may have been told that the tunnels aren't sewers, and that's true, but the distinction is more academic than practical. The tunnels are part of the ruins of an ancient civilization that lived here long before the nation of Muno'che was founded. But they're also where the current inhabitants dump their waste and where rainwater goes when it washes out of the streets.

The oldest tunnels are constructed out of a strange, shimmering green substance that only somewhat resembles stone. Its nature is a mystery, and if the tunnels were better known, it might become the subject of alchemical research or arcane study. Whatever the green building material is, it is both impressively durable and resilient to magic. Where it's used in construction, ancient glyphs can sometimes be seen etched into the material.

Over the centuries the tunnels, and the city above, have been slowly sinking into the swampy ground. This has led many of the passages to flood and others to fill with silt. Every time a large storm hits Alnamon, it seems a little bit more is lost to the rising waters.

## Exploring the Tunnels

The tunnels beneath Alnamon are vast, labyrinthine and in a poor state of repair. They stretch out, twist and fork seemingly at random. Here and there passages have collapsed, blocking further progress. In other places they have filled



with murky water and refuse. It would be easy to get turned around and lost.

Rather than having the players go through the tedious task of exploring the tunnels passage by passage, the GM should call for an extended action to represent the party's progress. Searching the tunnels is an extended **Per/survival-10** (Tally 15, 8 hours) action. Characters mapping the tunnels can alternatively substitute in **Tradecraft** (cartographer).

To make matters more interesting, every interval the GM should pick or randomly choose one of the encounters below.

## Encounters in the Tunnels

Heroes might encounter any of the following events while exploring the tunnels.

### Explosive Gas

The decomposition of refuse in the tunnels sometimes results in flammable gas. Usually the gas leaks away, but occasionally it collects in a pocket, waiting to be ignited. Have the heroes in front of the group make an **Int/awareness-10** flip to smell the gas as they approach and to realize what the smell means. On a success, they can avoid the gas by taking a different tunnel or extinguishing their lantern. On a failure, however, the lantern ignites the gas, dealing everyone caught in the blast 5 burning damage.

### Slime

All manner of trash and other refuse washes into the tunnels, and that attracts scavengers which feed on the garbage. Have the heroes make a **Per/awareness-10** flip. On a failure, they don't notice the slime clinging to the ceiling. It drops down on them as they pass by.

☞ Use the stats on page 26 of the *Bestiary*.

### Sparkles in the Dark

As the party is heading through the tunnels, one of the heroes spots a fist-sized hole in the rock with something shiny deep inside it. If a character reaches into the hole, something clamps down around her arm. A **Str-10** flip is necessary to pull her arm free; failure still frees her arm, but results in 3 damage. Looking in afterward give no indication of what happened.

### Red Eyes

Down a side passage one of the heroes spots a pair of glowing red eyes. If the party approaches, whatever it was is gone, but tracks have been left in the muck. With a successful **Per/survival-10** flip, the tracks can be followed to the lair of a wretched creature that is hunched over and lapping at a bowl of blood. Except for the glowing red eyes, it appears to be human. It doesn't speak and only fights if cornered.

☞ Use the Vampire Spawn stats found on page 307 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook.

### Iago Returns

Since his escape into the city, Iago has been trying to make contact with the local chapter of the Modin. He's heard rumors that they lair in the tunnels, so he has come to the tunnels himself to try and find them. He's brought two of the former slaves that escaped with him and who he's convinced to serve as his own personal enforcers.

How this encounter goes largely depends on how the party and Iago have interacted in the past. Are the heroes looking for bloody payback? Do they have a chilly, but civil relationship? This could involve anything from simple roleplaying, to a social challenge to combat.

☞ Iago's stats are on page 7.

☞ His enforcers use the Bodyguard stats in the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook, page 288.



## Boss Fight

Characters who are in the tunnels to search for the Dagger should eventually discover his secret hideout and confront him. On the other hand, characters who are in the tunnels working for the Dagger should eventually encounter Watch Sergeant Reza, who has been tasked with hunting down the party since they escaped their confinement. Either of these serves as the climactic fight of the scenario.

Finally, characters who simply fled to the sewers could encounter either or both—the Dagger doesn't want the location of his hideout discovered and Watch Sergeant Reza still has been dispatched to hunt them down.

Have the party encounter the appropriate boss fight once the extended action for exploring the tunnels has been completed.

## The Dagger's Hideout

The Dagger's current hideout is in a vaulted chamber located deep in the tunnels. It is richly decorated with a table in the center and numerous wooden chairs throughout, upon which are seated the Dagger's close associates. The walls are a shimmering green substance covered with barely visible glyphs. Torchlight illuminates the room. The Dagger considers the tunnels his kingdom and this room is where he holds court.

- ✦ Two sentries stand guard outside the chamber, but they are not particularly vigilant. They are considered inactive guards. Use the Ne'er-do-well stats on page 291 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook.
- ✦ The party may try talking their way in, but they'll need to either call upon a Modin-affiliated Bond, have some evidence of Modin membership to show (possibly stolen from Dirka or Iago) or succeed on a **Chr/deception-12** flip.

✦ The Dagger is currently in the chamber discussing business with his close confidants. His stats are below.

✦ In the chamber are a number of additional Modin ne'er-do-wells equal to twice the number of PCs. These ne'er-do-wells are Minions. If the party starts a fight outside the chamber, two of them will exit to join the fray at the start of each round, beginning with the second round.

✦ If Dirka has had time to escape her cell, she may show up here, but not until after the fight. Use the Ne'er-do-well stats on page 291 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook.

### The Dagger

Orc, Ringleader (Gentle 3)

**Ambition:** Become powerful enough to lead an independent criminal empire.

**Bonds:** Modin (membership)

| Str | Dex | Spd  | End | Int | Per  | Chr  | Det  |
|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|------|------|------|
| 6   | 7   | 6    | 5   | 6   | 5    | 6    | 5    |
| Atk | Def | Will | Arm | HP  | Move | Size | Luck |
| 6   | 5   | 5    | 4/2 | 22  | 4*   | 0    | 6    |

**Mace:** +6 🟢 vs. Defense (9/8/7/6/5 sm). Close.

**Dagger:** +6 🟢 vs. Defense (8/7/6/5/4 pi). Close.

**Skills** 🟢: Deception, Empathy, Shadows-style, Stealth, Streetwise, Thievery

**Villain:** See the core rulebook, page 287.

Although the Dagger is originally from Alnamon, he spent most of his adult life in the Yirdril Lands, where he was initiated into the Modin crime syndicate and climbed the ranks. During this time he made a number of enemies in the syndicate. Two years ago, he was sent to his native Alnamon to lead a new Modin chapter in the city. Although this was ostensibly a promotion, it was also a way for his enemies to send him far away. The Dagger doesn't mind; he has grand ambitions of one day ruling over his own criminal empire.



## Watch Sergeant Reza's Patrol

After the party escaped from the dockhouse jail, Watch Sergeant Reza and his deputies were dispatched to hunt them down and bring them back into custody. In fact, Reza volunteered for the job, both because he bears a personal grudge against the slaves for harming one of his fellow guards during the ill-fated attempt to flee the ship in the night, and because Reza bears a petty animosity for anybody he believes to be below him in social status.

- ✦ Reza's patrol consists of a number of guards equal to the number of PCs. Use the City Watch stats in the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook, page 289.
- ✦ Watch Sergeant Reza's stats are below.
- ✦ To make the fight memorable, try to come up with a line or two of dialog for Reza to say on his turn every round.

### Watch Sergeant Reza

Human, Watch Sergeant (Common 4)

**Ambition:** Revel in casual cruelty.

**Bonds:** City Watch (patron)

| Str | Dex | Spd  | End | Int | Per  | Chr  | Det  |
|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|------|------|------|
| 5   | 6   | 6    | 5   | 5   | 6    | 5    | 5    |
| Atk | Def | Will | Arm | HP  | Move | Size | Luck |
| 5   | 6   | 5    | 4/2 | 20  | 4*   | 0    | 5    |

**Club:** +5 🟢 vs. Defense (7/6/5/4/3 sm). Parry 3.

**Sword:** +5 🟢 vs. Defense (9/8/7/6/5 cut). Parry 4.

**Skills** 🟢: Awareness, Empathy, Investigate, Streetwise

**Villain:** See the core rulebook, page 287.

Reza is just about the cruelest and most bigoted watchman the guard has to offer. He has a scar on one cheek and relishes the idea of catching the party alone in the sewer with no other witnesses. In fact, even if the party is working for Concubine Behnaz, he may gather a posse of off-duty watchmen and head into the sewers looking to hunt them down.

## Bringing Things to a Close

How things end depends on whom the party has sided with since their arrival in Alnamon and how well they have performed.

If the party brings the Dagger to Concubine Behnaz—dead or alive—she will have them stay as guests in the palace until she acquires for them the promised pardon. That entire process takes about a day. She'll also pay them the bounty that had been placed on the Dagger's head: 100 silver pesos. Finally, she'll say that she may have more work for them in the future.

On the other hand, if the party successfully mapped the tunnels for the Modin, the Dagger will offer them membership. If they accept, he'll also offer each hero a few pieces of stolen loot—discarded weapons, bloodied gambesons or small balls of Hogwa (see the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook, page 274). Heroes who refuse are blindfolded and led back to the surface, but will be watched closely by the Dagger's agents in the future.

Parties who simply escaped can begin a new life in the city or elsewhere, but they are still actively wanted in Alnamon.





## Further Adventures

The end of *Out of Shackles* doesn't have to be the end of your adventures in Alnamon. Below are a variety of plot hooks that follow up on loose threads introduced in this scenario.

- ✦ If the heroes obtained a pardon from the Satrap, it extends to all of the other slaves on the Maoh's Embrace. However, it doesn't find them homes or jobs in the city. If the party has allies or contacts among them, they may have work to do, helping them settle in Alnamon.
- ✦ On the other hand, if the heroes ran away or joined the Modin, the other slaves remain locked up at the docks, pending their trial. The heroes may want to break them out or somehow see that they are freed.
- ✦ While by the end of the adventure the heroes are free, they may want to work to abolish slavery in Alnamon completely. This will pit them against a variety of powerful interests in the city.
- ✦ If the heroes completed the job for Concubine Behnaz, as the harem's unofficial spymaster, she may have a great deal of work for them in the future. This might include anything from ferreting out the Modin informant she mentioned to infiltrating organizations that threaten the harem's power.
- ✦ In Alnamon, the Satrap's harem is the true power behind the throne. First Wife Zahira essentially runs city, while the Satrap is little more than a toothless figurehead too strung out on addictive substances to be of much use to anyone. What happens if the Satrap gathers himself together enough to act against the harem? And what happens if he approaches the party about becoming double agents—on the surface working for Concubine Behnaz, but in actuality working for him?
- ✦ Two encounters in this scenario confront the party with a glowing set of red eyes. Insistent heroes may track the red eyes back to a particularly feral vampire spawn. If the heroes bring this to the attention of Concubine Behnaz, she will insist very firmly, "There are no vampires in Alnamon." What does this mean? Is she covering up a state secret? Or do vampires pull the strings of the harem?
- ✦ When Iago was first captured by the slavers, he was transporting a mystic artifact known as the Eye of Afar. When the slaves stormed the ship, he secretly snuck into the captain's cabin and retrieved it. He had it on his person when he fled into the city. In truth, it was this artifact that attracted the sea monster to the ship, causing it to follow and attack. This artifact is also the reason that Captain Ahma was sailing to Alnamon: Someone here wants it badly and has offered to pay a lot of coin for it. What sinister plan is at work? Could it be related to the increasing encounters with red eyed vampires? It's only a matter of time until the artifact resurfaces.
- ✦ Just because the heroes may have been pardoned doesn't mean they get to legally keep the ship they were accused of pirating. The Maoh's Embrace might be an older vessel, but it is still a mighty prize. And it is currently without a captain. This means it falls into the city's custody. Is there something the heroes can do to reclaim the ship?
- ✦ The slaves may have been pardoned for seizing the Maoh's Embrace, but the ones who attacked the guards in the night have not been pardoned for that act. A trial is to take place. Will the heroes get involved?
- ✦ Someone is out for revenge against the party. It could be the Modin getting back for the capture of the Dagger, or it could be the associates of Watch Sergeant Reza.





Bandit's Maze

Reef of the Deep  
Reef Jungle

Mountains of the Reach  
Keetchazan Jungle

Outer-Centuan Isles

Keetcha Mountains  
Swamp  
Althamon

Alatar River

Jungle of the Reach  
Lake of the Reach  
Mumo'che

Mumo'che  
Mumo'che Jungle

Kapan River  
Kapantbor

Oglamon  
Oglamon Mountains  
Quake Caves

Zekbur

Gulf of Cad

Furmagla Forest  
Furmagla Mountains  
Furmagla River  
Zi R.  
Yarmok R.  
Balakh River

Furmagla

Centuan Isles

Forbidden Grove

Throught-point River  
Junhan

Luonch

Central Abyss

Gulf of the Deep

Alakah

Central Reef

Li



# Muno'che

## In which the newly independent nation of Muno'che is examined in greater detail

A generation ago the people of Muno'che rebelled against their overlords in the Licad empire and successfully won their independence, thereby restoring the old royal line to power. Today Muno'che is a land of rapid social change and new possibilities, as the fledgling kingdom begins to assert itself.

☞ **Capital:** Muno'che

☞ **Population:** 48.4 million

☞ **Demographics:** Dwarves (29%), Trolls (21%), Humans (19%), High Orcs (16%), Orcs (7%), Other Peoples (8%)

☞ **Government:** Monarchy

☞ **Languages:** Standard, Cad

## History

The history of Muno'che is a history of conquest. In ancient days the peninsula was divided into numerous tribes and city-states, mostly heavily influenced by the Oaan civilization and its successor states, far to the south.

In the centuries just prior to the Golden Age, these disparate groups coalesced into two expansionist empires: Keetcha, located in the southwestern regions of the peninsula, and Muno'che, located in the north and east. Between these two powers was a strip of land south of the Aktar River known as the Reach.

This contested land exchanged hands several times in the wars between the two empires.

Eventually, the forces of Muno'che pressed ever westward, capturing Alnamon, the Keetcha Empire's capital, and moving to consolidate power across the peninsula. The remnants of the Keetcha forces fled to the jungles in the west, and there managed to hold out for almost a decade before being conquered in a final climactic battle.

The Golden Age of Trystell was also the golden age of Muno'che. The ascendent empire built infrastructure, expanded trade and was recognized as one of the major powers of the era.

Unfortunately this prosperity didn't last. By the time the Dark Ages consumed Trystell, Muno'che had fallen into internal strife and factionalism. These conflicts were compounded when in 651, the Second Dynasty declared Linquad Orthodoxy the state religion and began a series of religious purges, particularly targeting the region's Crono sects. This situation continued to deteriorate and eventually led to short-lived civil war.

In 1012, Licad began its invasion, and over the next two decades it would conquer the entire kingdom, defeating the last pockets of Muno'che resistance just before the start of the Lunar Invasion.



Although Muno'che remained under Licad dominion throughout the Lunar Occupation, in practice it exercised some autonomy due to infighting between the Blaugh'ock governors. And while the Native Revolts later freed the region from Blaugh'ock rule, it didn't free the region from its Licad overlords.

Muno'che remained occupied, despite increasing resistance, up until the aftermath of the Licad-Grichom War. Licad's defeat in the war left the occupying empire weakened, and in 1497—21 years ago—the peoples of Muno'che rose up in rebellion and successfully seceded, declaring themselves independent and restoring the ancient Third Dynasty to the throne. A year later, the Linquad Orthodox churches in the region, the state religion, would similarly break away from their counterparts in Licad.

Today, after centuries of occupation, the newly re-founded kingdom of Muno'che is once again independent. Exactly how this fledgling nation will fare in this age of rapid change, however, has yet to be seen.

## Culture

As a nation, Muno'che is in the process of reinventing itself, and with that, many aspects of its culture. It is a highly stratified kingdom, both in terms of wealth disparity and in terms of social caste. And although many citizens might not want to admit it, after centuries of occupation, many aspects of the culture have been heavily influenced by Licad.

Like Licad, Muno'che is one of Trystell's two major slaveholding nations. In the past, slaves were often brought into the kingdom as part of politically organized enslavement expeditions, usually by raiding the islands in the Quaris Ocean or the Suethron Lands. Since the revolution, however, this practice has been

curtailed, and instead most slaves these days are purchased from pirates or independent slaver ships (and often these two groups overlap).

The kingdom contains of several distinct cultural groups. The Muno'che majority are found throughout the kingdom, but particularly dominate the south and east. Most of the humans and dwarves in the kingdom are part of this group, as are a spattering of other peoples. On the other hand, the Keetcha minority are most common in the west. It accounts for most of the kingdom's high orcs. Finally, several isolated troll tribes make their homes in the jungles of the northeast, and immigrants from Licad that moved to Muno'che during the occupation constitute two other groups.

In the distant past marriage in Muno'che was polygynous. The Licad invasion, however, forced different marriage patterns on the region and today marriage in Muno'che is fully polygamous in a way that is gender egalitarian, but not egalitarian when it comes to social status. This means that in practice one high status individual will often take multiple spouses or concubines, but the members of that individual's harem are not likewise free to do so. Queen Telaya has expressed some desire to reform this practice, but so far hasn't acted on it.

This is just one way in which wealth disparity and social stratification dominates Muno'che's culture. In recent years, these status differences have also been compounded by the growth of mills and foundries in the capital, leading to an influx of agitators calling for social change.

## Locations

The following important locations can be found in the kingdom of Muno'che.

**Aktar River:** This river has a strange reddish color, which is the byproduct of mining runoff and alchemical waste dumped into it by



the new mills that line the waterfront. Some say this makes the water unsafe to drink, but the mutant wetland fauna that now grow to unusual size and ferocity might disagree.

**Alakah:** This mighty fortress protects the northeastern reaches of Muno'che. It is built atop a mountain pass, where it has a wide view of the surrounding land. Alakah was critical to the rebellion during the Muno'che secession. While it is still strategically important, today Alakah is an outpost where overambitious military young officers are sent to distance them from the capital.

**Alnamon (Population 190,000):** An exotic city of spices and sandstone buildings, Alnamon hosts the largest open-air markets in the world. All manner of goods, from carpets to slaves, are sold here. This city is also known for its high-quality brothels. For more on Alnamon see the sidebar below.

**Forbidden Grove:** A region of jungle with a sinister reputation, the Forbidden Grove is said

to be a profane site used by naguals for blood sacrifice and tainted by their foul presence. It is avoided by all but the most foolhardy.

**Jungle of the Reach:** A dense jungle rife with bountiful natural resources, this woodland is a common destination for loggers, charcoal burners and herbalists gathering supplies. The jungle is also home to an unusual ecosystem with few large mammals. Instead, it is the domain of insects, including giant varieties of wasps, beetles and ants.

**Junhan (Population 1,000):** A semi-permanent trading encampment along the banks of the Through-point River, Junhan is a stopping point for both the local troll tribes and trappers heading deeper into the jungle. Some see it as the last point of civilization between the settled lands of Muno'che and the distant fortress of Alakah.

**Keetcha Mountains:** A short dry range, the rocks of the Keetcha Mountains have a reddish tint and are weathered in a way that

## Alnamon

Alnamon is the largest city in Muno'che, eclipsing even the kingdom's capital. In theory, the city is ruled by the great Satrap Arman, a royal appointee and distant cousin of Queen Telaya. In practice, the Satrap is little more than a spoiled and drug-addicted fool. The real power in the city lies with his harem.

Led by First Wife Zahira, the harem handles the day-to-day affairs of ruling Alnamon, in spite of the Satrap's incompetence and other powerful individuals in the city that would exploit the situation. It effectively has its own experts, advisors and even a spymaster. However, since First Wife Zahira officially only has dominion over the harem itself, if she needs a new expert, she recruits the individual by directing the Satrap to take her as a new concubine. Satrap Arman likes to brag that he has more wives, husbands and concubines than anyone else in the kingdom. In fact, he hasn't even met most of them! The harem even has its own security force in the form of its many eunuch guards. These guards are often seen escorting members of the harem across the city on quasi-official business.

Once, long ago, Alnamon was the capital of its own empire. The city is still the center of Muno'che's Keetcha minority. This creates some amount of tension, as neither the Satrap nor the First Wife are part of that minority.



leaves the peaks stair-stepped and flat on top. They frequently attract lightning strikes, despite a lack of precipitation, and in ancient days they were used for ritual executions.

**Keetchazan Jungle:** In the ancient Cad tongue, Keetchazan literally means “where Keetcha fell,” and in fact, this jungle is where the Keetcha empire was defeated by the armies of Muno'che just before the Golden Age. It is a dense woodland, dark and difficult to navigate, where rusted artifacts of the ancient war still linger in overgrown thickets.

**Lake of the Reach:** The Lake of the Reach is sometimes called the Heart of Muno'che. It is a massive body of fresh water that sits between the nation's three major rivers. As such, it is heavily trafficked; river and lake travel are central to trade in Muno'che.

**Mektor River:** A massive river that snakes from the Lake of the Reach to the Quaris Ocean, carrying with it an enormous amount of water. Riverboats travel up and down the Mektor, heading between Alnamon and the capital. In bad years, river pirates hide in the jungles that line the river's edge, often attacking boats after dark.

**Mountains of the Reach:** Ancient mines and quarries from the days of the old Keetcha and Muno'che empires dot these mountains, long tapped out and abandoned. In many places the mines have collapsed or filled with brackish water. In others, dangerous creatures have moved in and now lair in the old mines.

**Muno'che (Population 90,000):** Muno'che has twice been a capital city. Originally the city-state for which the nation is named, from here its ancient empire spread out across the peninsula. Later the capital moved to the fortress of Zirktar, but the city remained. During the Lunar Occupation, the Blaugh'ocks bombed much of the old city, but here and there ancient buildings still peek out from among all

the new construction. Today, Muno'che is at the forefront of many new industries—mills and foundries line the river and lakeshore, a symbol of the kingdom's newfound prosperity.

**Muno'che Jungle:** Even a populous nation like Muno'che has its wild places, and the Muno'che Jungle is about as wild as it gets. Here predators prowl the canopies and forest floors, while isolated troll tribes still maintain the old ways, deep in the jungle. There are even rumors of naguals that meet in the forest's northern reaches, conducting sinister blood rites and littering the ground with bones and sinew.

**Oglamon (Population 70,000):** Oglamon is the philosophical and religious center Muno'che. The state's orthodox Linquad sect is based out of this city, and the citizens here are far better educated than most. In addition to the royal seminary, the city also hosts two rival schools dedicated to the arts, sciences and natural philosophies.

**Oglamon Mountains:** These mountains are unstable and nearly on the brink of collapse. Almost daily, earthquakes shake the peaks, sending rockslides toppling down the mountainside. In ancient days, these mountains were full of mines—perhaps this was before all the seismic activity. Most of the mines have long since collapsed, but there have been reports of long-sealed ancient passages opened up by the quakes.

**Quake Caves:** The land between the Oglamon Mountains and the Tripoint Crests is one of the most tectonically active regions in the world. Earthquakes shake the land almost daily, and recently the quakes have unearthed an expansive series of caverns. Objects found in the caverns show that they were explored by Blaugh'ock forces during the occupation. Why the Blaugh'ocks collapsed the cavern entrances before retreating none can say. But they've been buried for over a century. Until now...



## Beneath the Quake Caves

The earthquakes experienced near the Quake Caves aren't entirely natural; they are the product of *something* deep underground slowly beginning to dig its way up.

The truth is that during the Lunar Occupation, Muno'che was put under the direct rule of a Lieutenant Governor with proclivities for the arcane. During her reign, she enslaved many elementals to do her bidding, including the titanic one currently digging upward.

**Reef Jungle:** A dense woodland atop a saltwater swamp, the Reef Jungle is crisscrossed with miles upon miles of mangroves. Here and there, at higher points of land, ancient ruins constructed of stone and a mysterious shimmering green substance can be found, the remnants of an age predating even the ancient Keetcha and Muno'che empires. One day the rediscovery of this mysterious green substance may lead to modern alchemical breakthroughs.

**Through-point River:** The northeastern reaches of Muno'che are almost devoid of roads, leaving the Through-point River as the primary means of navigating the region. This makes the river a major shipping channel, despite the

treacherous floodwaters that sometimes sweep down from the mountains. During these floods, the river runs a milky white color and is caustic to the touch. Experienced rivermen know to avoid the river when this happens, waiting until it runs clear once again.

**Zelkur (Population 9,000):** Southeastern Muno'che is the breadbasket of the kingdom, and Zelkur is Muno'che's biggest port on the Gulf of Cad. It was constructed during the Licad occupation, intended as a gateway for shipping grain back to the homeland. Today the city is home to a Muno'che naval base.

**Ziraktar:** These ruins are what remains of an ancient fortress—the fortification from which the old Muno'che royal line ruled their empire. In its final days, the imperial staff were said to have hidden the treasures of the palace in underground vaults. Most of these were plundered by adventurers centuries ago, but rumors persist of undiscovered treasures.

## Settlement Table

The following table is intended for use with the Trading system (see *Campaign Options*, page 23). It shows which goods are most commonly available and which are in demand for the major settlements of Muno'che.

| Settlement | Type       | Available Goods                                 | Demanded Goods                                     |
|------------|------------|---|--|
| Alakah     | Fort       | Wood  | Armor, Grain, Weapons                              |
| Alnamon    | Metropolis | Coffee, Delicacies, Drugs, Dye, Silk, Spices    | Clockwork, Gems, Lunar Devices, Slaves, Tea, Wine  |
| Junhan     | Camp       | Charcoal, Hides, Wood                           | Glassworks, Liquor, Tools                          |
| Muno'che   | City       | Books, Gunpowder, Leather, Machinery, Metalwork | Chemicals, Iron Ingots, Paper, Tin Ingots, Weapons |
| Oglamon    | City       | Cheese, Books, Metalwork, Pottery, Wool         | Gems, Glassworks, Kalid Parts, Paper, Wine         |
| Zelkur     | Town       | Grain, Oil, Preserves, Salt                     | Canvas, Gunpowder, Slaves, Wood                    |



## Muno'che Origin Tables

Characters from the nation of Muno'che may use the tables below during the Origin step of character creation (see the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook, page 25). All page references in the tables refer to the core rulebook.

### Peoples Table

The table below represents the various peoples of Muno'che and their relative populations. It replaces the Peoples table found in the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook. Flip a card or pick a People from the table.

| Card     | People                             | Page |
|----------|------------------------------------|------|
| A – 3    | Human                              | 45   |
| 4 – 7    | Dwarf                              | 37   |
| 8        | Orc                                | 51   |
| 9 – 10   | High Orc                           | 49   |
| J – Q    | Troll                              | 52   |
| K, Joker | Flip on the standard Peoples table | 25   |

### Religions Table

The table below represents the major religions of Muno'che. It replaces the Religions table found in the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook. Flip a card or pick a religion from the table below.

| Card   | Religion                             | Page |
|--------|--------------------------------------|------|
| A – 7  | Linquad, Muno'che                    | 224  |
| 8 – 10 | Linquad, Reformed                    | 224  |
| J      | Cela                                 | 225  |
| Q      | The True One                         | 225  |
| K      | Non-Religious                        | 227  |
| Joker  | Flip on the standard Religions table | 25   |

### Foundational Events Table

The Foundational Events table below is for characters from the kingdom of Muno'che. It replaces the Foundational Events table in the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook and represents the most influential event that occurred during your character's childhood or adolescence.

Flip a card on the table below.

| Card | Foundational Event   | Page            | Box |
|------|--|-----------------|-----|
| A    | <b>Conscripted:</b> You were conscripted to serve in the Muno'che State Army. Gain a rank of <b>Fencer-style</b> , a sword, an arquebus and <b>+</b> to your first advancement flip in the Sellsword career. Flip a card. If it's a club, flip on the Injury table.          | 91<br>140<br>20 | ✓   |
| 2    | <b>Oglamon Education:</b> You were enrolled in a prestigious boarding school in Oglamon. Gain a rank of <b>Academics (pick field)</b> and <b>Language (Cad)</b> .  | 84              | ✓   |
| 3    | <b>Cabin Child:</b> You served as a cabin boy on a merchant vessel based out of Alnamon, running errands for the captain and helping the ship's cook. Gain a rank of <b>Vehicles (watercraft)</b> and <b>Tradecraft (cooking)</b> .  | 86              | ✓   |
| 4    | <b>Economic Promise:</b> These are good economic times in Muno'che and you made your way to the capital to partake in the new economy. Gain a rank of <b>Tradecraft (pick trade)</b> , <b>Intuition</b> and <b>+</b> to your first advancement flip in the Tradesman career. | 86<br>124<br>78 | ✓   |



| Card  | Foundational Event   | Page             | Box |
|-------|--|------------------|-----|
| 5     | <b>Inquisition:</b> Your family was investigated by the Inquisition for possible disloyalty. Choose:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Your family was imprisoned and you never saw them again. You were left to fend for yourself on the street. Gain a rank of <b>Streetwise</b>.</li> <li>☞ They were found loyal enough, as you were made to lie to cover up anything too bad. Gain a rank of <b>Deception</b>.</li> </ul> | 85<br>84         | ✓   |
| 6     | <b>Collaborator Parents:</b> Your parents collaborated with Licad officials during the occupation. Choose:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ They were caught, executed and you were sold into slavery. You must make your first attempt in the Captive career.</li> <li>☞ They kept their loyalties secret. Gain <b>Contact (Licad loyalists)</b>.</li> </ul>   | 58<br>122        |     |
| 7     | <b>Wrong Crowd:</b> You fell in with a bad crowd for a time. When they wanted break into a local merchant shop and steal valuables, you were faced with a choice. Choose:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ You ratted them out. Gain <b>Enemy (old gang)</b>.</li> <li>☞ You went along with the robbery and the sleeping merchant ended up getting killed. Gain <b>Wanted (murder)</b>.</li> </ul>                           | 130<br>133       |     |
| 8     | <b>Arraigned Marriage:</b> Your family and the family of your spouse arranged your marriage when you were both very young. Gain your choice of <b>Ally (spouse)</b> or <b>Rival (spouse)</b> .   | 121<br>132       |     |
| 9     | <b>Tribal Childhood:</b> You grew up among the isolated jungle tribes in north-eastern Muno'che. Gain a rank of <b>Survival</b> , <b>Membership (tribe)</b> and ⊕ to your first advancement flip in the Pioneer career.  | 85<br>125<br>72  | ✓   |
| 10    | <b>Mage Apprentice:</b> You were apprenticed to an experienced mage in Alnamon. Gain <b>Mystic Affinity (pick tradition)</b> , <b>Contact (master mage)</b> and ⊕ to your first advancement flip in the Mage career.   | 125<br>122<br>66 | ✓   |
| J     | <b>Heir to a Fallen Culture:</b> You are descended from the people of the ancient Keetcha Empire, a minority which is particularly prominent in western Mun'che. You grew up hearing stories of this ancient past. Gain a rank of <b>Academics (history)</b> and <b>Language (Cad)</b> .   | 84               | ✓   |
| Q     | <b>Seminary:</b> You studied at the Royal Seminary in Oglamon. Gain a rank of <b>Academics (theology)</b> , <b>Language (Standard)</b> and ⊕ to your first advancement flip in the Missionary career.  | 84<br>68         | ✓   |
| K     | <b>Child of the Revolution:</b> You were forced to take up arms from an early age. Having your childhood robbed from you left you emotionally scarred, but not without combat experience. Gain <b>Combat Reflexes</b> and flip on the Madness table.   | 122<br>21        | ✓   |
| Joker | <b>Flip Twice:</b> Flip twice more on this table and take both results.  | —                |     |



When the heroes lead a rebellion on a slave ship they find themselves beset by challenges, from scheming ne'er-do-wells and ex-pirates, to the raw elements and other hazards of the sea. Even when the ship makes it to port, the heroes will discover just how unjust the institution of slavery can be.

*Out of Shackles* is a beginning adventure supplement for *Age of Ambition*. It features a slave rebellion scenario, and is designed to run between two and four gaming sessions.

