



AGE OF AMBITION



Will to Power



Will to Power

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Introduction

In which is introduced a scenario that places Our Heroes between a secret society and an undead king

W*ill to Power* is a complete adventure for *Age of Ambition*. It contains enough action, exploration and mystery to cover between two and four sessions of play, with the possibility of an extended campaign as the party flexes its newfound temporal might.

Synopsis

The adventure begins when the party receives a mysterious ancient Yirdril burial urn from a dying man. Shortly thereafter, they're attacked by a secret society known as the Sentinels of the Ziggurat, who want to obtain the urn at all costs.

The urn contains part of the spirit of Den ur-Heil, an ancient king who seeks to return from beyond the grave and remake his empire. The Sentinels have sworn to prevent this, and they believe that the party are the prophesied "Harbingers" of the ancient king's return. Throughout the scenario they will repeatedly attack and attempt to thwart the heroes.

Meanwhile, driven by the mystery of the urn, the party meets with a professor who's an expert in the ancient Yirdril civilization. They sign on with his archeological expedition, and travel to a dig site, where his students have just unearthed Den ur-Heil's lost tomb.

Other Scenarios

Will to Power is an ideal follow-up to *Time Forgot* or even *Out of Shackles*.

If the party has already played through *Time Forgot*, they will already be in possession of the ancient burial urn that serves as the MacGuffin for this adventure. In addition, the Bellmoon Trading Company may even supply the expedition.

On the other hand, if the party has played through *Out of Shackles*, the Eye of Afar can be used in place of the burial urn, and the initial events of this scenario could be set in Alnamon, before the heroes make their way to Inushalon.

Unsealing and exploring the tomb, the party inadvertently reunites the two parts of Den ur-Heil's spirit, bringing about his corporeal return. He offers the heroes power as kings under his reign, and they have a difficult choice to make.

Yirdril Sands

In the back of this book is a chapter detailing the Yirdril Lands, a vast and varied region of petty warlords and squabbling city-states. It can be used as a source of inspiration for continuing adventures in the region.



Will to Power

In which Our Heroes are given a mysterious urn and deal with the complications that brings

In this scenario the party will join an archeological expedition, run afoul of an ancient secret society, investigate a forgotten tomb and be offered power beyond imagining. If they play their cards right, they may even be vaulted to a position of command in the oncoming battle for the future.

Shrame

This scenario begins with a dying man handing the party a mysterious burial urn and begging them to keep it safe. As written, this takes place in the city of Shrame, but the scene is easily moved to any port city the heroes happen to be in.

A Dying Request

As the heroes are walking down the street one night they hear a muffled moan coming from an alleyway. Upon investigating, they find an elderly human lying in a pool of blood. He is clearly dying and tightly grasping a small ceramic urn.

As the party approaches, he holds out the urn and says, "Please take it. Keep it safe. Find someone who knows what to do with it.

And for the love of Zuraic, don't let *them* get their hands on it."

He manages to hold onto life just long enough for one of the heroes to grab the urn or otherwise approach. Then, with a few bloody coughs, he goes slack and dies before the party's eyes.

- ✦ The man cannot be healed until the dagger is removed from his back and its poison excised from his system. Unfortunately, the heroes don't have time accomplish that before he perishes.
- ✦ Additionally, the urn prevents speaking with his spirit using either the Lore of Communication or Lore of Necromancy.

A Sudden Attack

No sooner do the heroes have the urn in their possession than a group of hooded figures melt out of the shadows, knives in hand. They waste no time with chatter and simply attempt to surround the party and attack.

- ✦ There are a number of attackers equal to the number of PCs. They are all Minions. Use the stats on the next page.
- ✦ The attackers fight to the death. If any are captured, each one has a poisoned pill hidden in her collar, and will not hesitate to swallow it.


Sentinel of the Ziggurat


Watcher (Common 3)

Ambition: Prepare for the Time of Darkness and prevent the Yirdril Desert civilization from rising.

Bonds: Sentinels of the Ziggurat (membership)

Str	Dex	Spd	End	Int	Per	Chr	Det
5	6	6	5	4	4	6	8
Atk	Def	Will	Arm	HP	Move	Size	Luck
5	5	7	2/1	10	5	0	5

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


Skills : Athletics, Deception, Shadows-style, Stealth

The Sentinels of the Ziggurat are an ancient secret society. They are self-appointed watchers, waiting for prophesied Time of Darkness, when the ancient Yirdril Desert civilization is said to rise from the grave. They have sworn to stop it.

Although they have always been an insular group, the Sentinels have grown more paranoid in the last century under the leadership of Master Hetchurl (see page 14). These days they trust no one outside of the society and strike first, before asking questions. Anyone else could be an agent, or one of the prophesied Harbingers of the fallen empire.


Aftermath


In the aftermath of the attack, anyone checking the bodies of the hooded figures finds that they appear to be fairly nondescript locals. The only distinguishing feature is that each one of them is wearing a bronze pendent with a ziggurat on one side and a stylized eye on the other.

 Researching the pendent is a downtime activity requiring an **Int/socialize-10** flip. On a success, the hero learns that the symbols belong to a secret society called the Sentinels of the Ziggurat, which is based out of Inushalon. With Margin 5 or better, she also hears the name Master Herchurl associated with the organization.

Examining the Urn

The urn is made from terracotta and the lid is tightly attached. A couple petroglyph-like symbols are scraped into the sides.

 A successful **Int/academics (history)-12** flip will identify the urn as belonging to the lost Yirdril Desert civilization, meaning that it is thousands of years old. Anything more specific will require an expert in that ancient culture.

 Viewing the urn through Second Sight will reveal a strong aura of necromancy, mixed with a smudge of communication and divination magic.

Already Have the MacGuffin?

If the party is already in possession of the ancient burial url from playing through *Time Forgot*, or if in possession of and using the Eye of Afar from *Out of Shackles* as the MacGuffin, skip this scene and begin the scenario with meeting Professor Filbur (see below).

Finding an Expert

Anyone asking around about the urn should make a **Chr/socialize-10** flip. On a success, the heroes will be pointed to Professor Filbur, an expert in such matters. On a failure, the party will still be pointed to the professor, but will need to pay a bribe of at least 2 bp.

If the heroes don't seek out an expert as the dying man requested, the Professor will instead seek them out, either to recruit them for his expedition, or because he heard that they were in possession an artifact from the ancient Yirdril Desert civilization.

Den ur-Heil's Burial Urn

The burial urn is a necromantic artifact intended to imprison one half the essence of Den ur-Heil, the penultimate king of the ancient Yirdril Desert civilization. For more on his downfall and final gambit, see page 9.

- ✦ Anyone dying while in contact with the urn has her spirit trapped inside it. This prevents her from being contacted after death using either the Lore of Necromancy or the Lore of Communication.
- ✦ The lid is stuck tight, but can be forced open with a successful **Str-10** flip. Opening it will reveal that the urn contains only a handful of dust. It also lets out the magical energy trapped inside. This energy is invisible unless a hero happens to be viewing the urn through Second Sight, in which case the burst of magical energy is so strong that she is blinded for the next 24 hours.
- ✦ Once opened, the enchantment on the urn will decay much more quickly, fading entirely over the next several years instead of the next several centuries.
- ✦ The urn is exceptionally resilient, but may still be smashed by a determined character. Doing so requires either a **Str-14** flip, some gunpowder or heavy machinery. If the urn is destroyed, the spirit of Den ur-Heil is freed and it gloms on to the nearest hero, coming along for the ride, despite the fact that the urn is no more.
- ✦ There's nothing preventing the heroes from getting rid of the urn. They could try to sell it or just toss it in the ocean. Den ur-Heil's spirit, however, has means of ensuring that it is found again. If the heroes try to sell it, most merchants will offer about 10 sp for the unusual piece. If they do, Professor Filbur—always on the lookout for archeological artifacts—will be quick to buy it from the merchant. If they throw the urn in the ocean or bury it, it won't be long before a sailor fishes it up or a farmer unearths it. One way or another, Den ur-Heil will find a way for the urn to accompany the expedition.

Meeting the Professor

Professor Filbur is currently in the city to purchase supplies and recruit workers for his ongoing archeological dig. He is staying at a waterfront hostel of fairly good repute. Setting up a meeting is as simple as showing up and asking around. Alternatively, one of the heroes may call upon a relevant Bond to arrange an introduction.

The professor will sit down in the hostel's common area, offer the heroes a drink and ask about their interest in speaking to him. If shown the urn, his eyes will grow wide and he will get very excited:

- ✦ “This is a Third Dynasty burial urn! Judging by the quality of the terracotta, this must have belonged to a king or other very important person. This is a remarkable find! Where did you dig it up?”
- ✦ “Oh, what's this? That's odd. This glyph on the side here usually is a warning or means danger of some sort. It's hard to tell exactly. They were a barely-literate civilization and what glyphs they did have weren't used consistently. The other glyph I don't recognize, but it's likely a personal symbol.”
- ✦ Professor Filbur knows nothing about the ziggurat pendants or the attackers.

Recruiting Pitch

The professor continues, “It’s funny you should come to me asking about this. I’m actually in the city buying supplies and recruiting for an archeological expedition up the Forsaken River. The goal of the expedition is to exhume one of the ancient cities of this very civilization. Since you fine folks seem to have some interest in the matter, how would you feel about signing on?” The players should be encouraged to accept the offer.

✦ Filbur offers pay of 30 bp a week, but is willing to negotiate up to 100 bp per week, especially if the heroes have relevant skills that may contribute to the success of the expedition.

Professor Filbenyaga “Filbur” Narlir

Human, Professor (Gentle 4)

Ambition: Be renowned and admired for his wealth of knowledge.

Influence: Ancient Yirdril Expert (reputation)

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

Staff: +7 vs. Defense (6/5/4/3/2 sm). Parry 4.

Skills 🎓: Academics (geography, history), Expression, Investigate, Language (Standard, Yirdril), Socialize, Tradecraft (archeologist)

Traits: Eidetic Memory

Filbenyaga Narlir—although everyone just calls him Professor Filbur—is an aging academic from the University of Glimgildral. He is a historian and archeologist, and one of the world’s leading experts on the Yirdril Desert civilization.

Professor Filbur is short, with glasses, a receding hairline and crumpled clothing. He is easily distracted by matters relating to his specialty and often gets very excited.

Currently the professor is in the midst of an archeological expedition. Earlier in the year, he traveled up the Forsaken River with a group of workers and students, and established a dig site where he believes they will uncover an ancient city. Realizing that more supplies and workers are going to be required, he has since made his way to Shrame to recruit and make purchases.

Downtime

Professor Filbur has chartered a ship to take the new recruits and supplies to Inushalon, and from there up the Forsaken River to the dig site. The ship, however, won’t be leaving for several days, as the professor needs to finish his business in the city.

The heroes will be put to work for part of each day, but they will also have a substantial amount of free time. The GM should call for a downtime, representing the last few days in port and first few days of the journey. There is enough time for each hero to get a single downtime action.

Several events, however, will interrupt the downtime. Resolve these between downtime actions. (Remember, researching the ziggurat pendants requires a downtime action.)

Fitful Dreams

Although the spirit of Den ur-Heil is still trapped in the urn, the artifact’s protections are fading and it is able to reach out to the party. While sleeping at night, one of the heroes has a strange dream. Pick the character who would be the most interested in chasing after dreams or the one who has been carrying the urn.

In the dream, the character is looking out over a desert valley, with a river winding through it and the top of a stair-stepped sandstone pyramid sticking up out a dune. The character feels drawn to the pyramid, an almost

magnetic attraction. And as she begins to walk in that direction, a raspy voice says “Here lies true power.” She then wakes up in a cold sweat.

The vision is of the upper Forsaken River valley. Following this vision is one possible means of getting the adventure back on track if the party refused Professor Filbur’s offer.

Attack in the Night

The last night that the heroes are in port they will again be attacked by the Sentinels of the Ziggurat. It will begin after dark, while the party is making its way back to their lodgings.

✦ Anyone keeping alert may make a single **Per/awareness-10** flip to notice that that they are being followed.

✦ There are a number of sentinels equal to the number of PCs, plus the cell leader. The cell leader is a Villain, the rest are Minions. Use the Sentinel of the Ziggurat stats on page 6.

✦ They will attempt to ambush the heroes, if possible. Otherwise, they will wait for a good moment and attack. If they don’t have the advantage of surprise, as they rush into battle, the cell leader will yell: “The Time of Darkness is not a new beginning! What has fallen shall not rise again!”

✦ As before, they will all fight to the death, and all wear ziggurat pendants. If any are captured, they will yell the phrase written above before biting into a poisoned pill.

Den ur-Heil’s Final Gambit

Den ur-Heil was the penultimate king of the ancient Yirdril Desert civilization. Kalid magic was still in its early days during his reign, and more so than any king before him, he delved into its arcane potential. He became obsessed with immortality, and the idea of using magic to extend his lifespan. Speaking with the best priests and mages his empire had to offer, he commanded them to find the secret to life eternal.

They never found the key to immortality, but they did discover what would eventually become the Lore of Necromancy—a sort of false life that could be coaxed into a corpse, animating it with a disembodied spirit. But to Den ur-Heil this wasn’t good enough, and he began to experiment with using sacrifices to focus and enhance the magic stolen from kalids. In doing so, he delved into mystic possibilities where other feared to tread.

Meanwhile, taken with his arcane obsessions, Den ur-Heil neglected the temporal aspects of his rule. The kingdom suffered and a famine threatened to wipe out many of his people. The priests became disgruntled, and together with his granddaughter, Koz ur-Zuul, they plotted an overthrow of his reign.

However, by the time Koz ur-Zuul and the priests finally made their move, Den ur-Heil had grown wise to their plans. Unable to stop their coup, he nevertheless enacted a desperate final gambit. Gathering together his most loyal followers, he led a necromantic ritual which ensured that he would linger as one of the undead and return one day to assume his throne. His followers, meanwhile, hid the most powerful artifacts of the empire in secret caches, and then joined him in the ritual, sacrificing themselves and tying their undead return to his.

Disturbed by the depths to which her grandfather would sink, when Koz ur-Zuul took the throne, she had Den ur-Heil’s essence severed into three parts and scattered to the far corners of the empire so that he could never return again.

Voyage by Sea

Professor Filbur has chartered a small ship, the Blackpool, to transport the party, other hired workers and the expedition's supplies to Inushalon. If everything goes as planned, the voyage will take just over a week. During this time, the party will be free to do as they please, so long as they don't get in the way of the ship's crew.

As the aforementioned downtime overlaps with the first part of the voyage, the following events may continue to be interspersed between downtime actions, or may occur shortly after the downtime comes to a close.

Other Hirelings

On the Blackpool are a number of other people who have been hired for the archeological expedition. They might be workers, students or collaborating scholars. This is a great way to include the party's Bonds in the adventure!

Pirates!

A few days after the Blackpool leaves Shrame, a sailor in the crow's nest suddenly starts yelling, "Pirates!" followed by the captain shouting, "All hands on deck!"

Anyone looking in the direction the sailor is pointing sees that there is a ship changing course to give chase. As the heroes watch, the ship hoists up a flag bearing the symbol of a skull with a set of shackles underneath.

As the pirate ship closes in for the attack, one of the crew whispers to the party. "This is the Skull and Shackles. They're a pirate fleet allied

with that rogue admiral in Cebu. Moolough the Butcher, I think he's called. They've got a cruel reputation. This is not good." No sooner does she say this than grapples hook the deck of the Blackpool.

- ✦ The pirate attack is a good candidate to play out using the Quick Combat rules (see *Campaign Options*, page 6).
- ✦ Otherwise, the attack can be run using the combat system. The party faces a number of pirates equal to the number of PCs, plus one. Use the Pirate stats found on page 291 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook.
- ✦ Whichever system is chosen, focus on the party's actions amidst the larger battle. By the time the heroes have bested their foes, the pirate ship will have been driven off and begun a retreat.

The Voice Speaks

Shortly before the ship docks in Inushalon, one of the heroes experiences a phantom voice. It is the raspy voice of Den ur-Heil, reaching out from the urn. If the character who experienced the earlier dream appears particularly compelled by it, Den ur-Heil will speak to her again. Otherwise, he tries his luck with a different character.

The hero hears the voice at some point while she is awake and alone. It asks a simple question: "What do you want?" Depending on the answer the character gives, if any, she may then experience a brief vision of power, wealth or prestige, followed by a vision of a stone ziggurat and mustered spear-wielding armies. Once the vision ends, there is no further contact, as for the moment Den ur-Heil has expended what energy he can muster.

Inushalon

Inushalon is a city of sweeping but aging architecture, and once grand manors that are beginning to crumble. As the Blackpool approaches the port, the spiraling towers of the old palace can be seen sticking up above the city.

As the ship anchors in the bay, Professor Filbur informs the party that they're going to be in the city for a few days. He needs time to arrange the last of the supplies, and the crew needs time to outfit the ship for its trip up the river. This means that the heroes will have a couple days to do as they please before the expedition departs.

✦ For more on Inushalon, see page 27.

Tracking the Sentinels

By the time the party arrives in port, they will have likely already learned that the ziggurat pendants belong to a secret society known as the Sentinels of the Ziggurat, and furthermore, that this society is based out of Inushalon. Hopefully the players will jump at the chance to investigate further.

If they don't think to investigate, or if the party hasn't yet learned the origin of the pendants, it's time to gently nudge them in that direction. There are a couple ways to go about doing this. Both are described below.

Visible Symbol

While traveling through the city, the heroes pass a graveyard and one of them spots the same ziggurat symbol featured on the pendants, except that it's engraved on an old tombstone. The name on the stone has worn away with the centuries, but the epitaph is still legible. It reads: "Loyal Sentinel. What has fallen shall not rise again."

Sentinel Attack!

After a day or so in the city, word of the party's presence reaches the ears of the Sentinels, who send out another group of watchers to attack the heroes and retrieve the urn.

✦ As the party has already fought the Sentinels twice, this attack may be played out using the Quick Combat rules (see *Campaign Options*, page 6).

✦ Otherwise, use the Sentinel of the Ziggurat stats on page 6. There are a number equal to twice the number of PCs. All are Minions.

Investigation

Asking around about the Sentinels, either by name or by showing a pendant, calls for a **Chr/investigate-10** flip. Regardless of success or failure, the party will be pointed at Master Hetchurl's manor and told that he seems to be the leader of that group. On a failure, however, the party's inquiries will also catch the attention of a Sentinel informant, who scampers off to warn them about the heroes; when the party heads to Master Hetchurl's manor, the Sentinels will be ready.

Hetchurl's Manor

Master Gamba Hetchurl lives in a walled compound in what was once the noble district of the city. The boulevards here are wide, but marked by potholes and occasional debris. The neighborhood consists of crumbling manors, half of them vacant and the others inhabited only by a few servants the noble families left behind to tend their estates. Only Master Hetchurl's manor is in good repair.

Setting In

Surrounding the manor is a 10 ft. (3 m) stone wall. The wall has a large gate in the front, manned by two gatekeepers. A small servant's

The Sentinels Forewarned

If the Sentinels know to expect the party, the gatekeepers will let them in after a token show of hesitation. Make a **Per/empathy-10** flip to notice that something is suspicious about how easily the guards give in.

After the party is inside the wall, the gatekeepers will close the gate and attack them from behind. Meanwhile, the guard dogs will be let loose and several more guards will pour out of the manor, attacking the party from all sides.

If the Sentinels have been warned and the party is instead sneaking inside, treat the gatekeepers and other staff as active guards, otherwise they are passive guards (see the Stealth rules on page 276 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook).

gate also exists in the back of the property, but it is rusted shut from years of disuse.

The gatekeepers don't let just anyone in to the compound. Being invited in requires either an invitation from Master Hetchurl or a letter of introduction from a respectable third party. This is a great opportunity to call upon a Bond to acquire an appropriate letter.

✦ Climbing the wall is easy enough with some effort, but slipping over it without being noticed is more difficult; doing so requires a **Str/stealth-10** flip.

✦ The back gate isn't easily visible without carefully examining the property from all angles. Noticing the gate requires a **Per/thievery-10** flip. Because it's so rusted, it's also nearly impossible to pick, but might be broken open. This requires either a **Dex/thievery-16** or **Str/thievery-8** flip.

✦ The gatekeepers are both members of the Sentinels. Use the Sentinels of the Ziggurat stats on page 6.

The Courtyard

The courtyard consists of a well-tended lawn, with a small gazebo and vegetable garden behind the manor. Other than the gazebo, however, there is little cover, which makes sneaking across the courtyard difficult.

Several guard dogs can be found in the yard as well. They bark at, or attack, anything out of the ordinary. If the party is invited into the manor, the gatekeepers will first chain up the dogs before escorting the party inside.

✦ Sneaking across the courtyard requires a **Spd/stealth-10** flip. Failure alerts the dogs.

✦ There are a number of dogs equal to the number of PCs. Use the Dog stats found on page 9 of the *Bestiary* or the Small Animal stats found on page 294 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook.

The Parlor

The front door to the manor leads into a parlor with an overhanging mezzanine, accessed by a grand staircase. On each side of the staircase is a short hallway leading to the kitchen and dining room on the right, and the bedrooms and stairs to the basement on the left. A doorman waits just inside the parlor.

✦ The doorman is one of the Sentinels. Use the Sentinels of the Ziggurat stats on page 6.

The Mezzanine

The mezzanine overlooking the parlor leads to Master Hetchurl's office, as well as a several servant's room. Loitering just inside one of the rooms is an elderly true elf butler.

- ✚ If the party has been invited into the manor, one of the gatekeepers will lead the heroes to him, and he will attend to them while they wait for Master Hetchurl.
- ✚ On the other hand, if the alarm is raised, he will grab an arquebus, which hangs on the wall nearby, light the match cord, and take a shot at the heroes. Unfortunately, the kickback of firearm is too much for his aging arms, and it will send him toppling down the stairs.
- ✚ The butler is not technically a member of the Sentinels, but he's worked for Master Hetchurl for so long that he might as well be. Use the Commoner stats on page 289 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook, but he wields an arquebus (8/7/6/5/4 pi). He also carries a key to the basement.
- ✚ The liquor he offers the heroes is poisoned with a mild paralytic. It should kick in right as the party is wising up to his monologue. Have anyone who imbibed the spirits make an **End-14** flip. On a failure, the hero gains a Disabled consequence. When Master Hetchurl sees a character struggling with the paralysis, he will give a sinister laugh.
- ✚ If threatened, Master Hetchurl calls for his personal guards, who come running from the servant's room next door and appear during the first round of combat. Use the Sentinel of the Ziggurat stats on page 6. There are a number of guards equal to the number of PCs, plus any who survived the earlier attack in Inushalon.
- ✚ One of the portraits hides a secret passage that leads to the pantry in the kitchen. If the room is searched, it can be located with a successful **Per/investigate-12** flip. If attacked, Master Hetchurl will flee down this passage and out the kitchen's back door. Try to have him escape this encounter, using his **Vanish** trait; the adventure will be much more dramatic if he shows up again upriver (see page 18).

Master Hetchurl's Office

These days Master Hetchurl spends much of his time in his office, orchestrating the activities of the Sentinels of the Ziggurat as they prepare for the Time of Darkness. Recently he's been planning for a trip up the Forsaken River, as he has received word of Professor Filbur's dig site there.

The office is a lavishly decorated room, with a sizable mahogany desk, expensive carpets and several large chairs. An open window overlooks the courtyard and portraits of former High Pyramidions of the Sentinels hang on the walls.

- ✚ If the heroes make their way to Master Hetchurl's office by invitation, he will invite them to sit down and offer them a drink. He will then say that he's so happy that they came. In fact, he's been looking for them! Now fate has dropped them right in his lap. He'll give an evil smile and then perhaps continue to monologue for a bit until a sense of dread gets through to the players.
- ✚ The desk is both locked and trapped. Master Hetchurl has the key, but the lock can be picked with a successful **Dex/thievery-12** flip. Failure triggers a needle trap, which pricks the thief's hand with a poisoned needle containing a dose of Bonita (see the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook, page 274).
- ✚ Inside the desk are bills of sale outfitting a boat for a trip up the river, sketches of each of the heroes, written descriptions of two ancient vases from the Yirdril Desert civilization, three signed affidavits documenting various infidelities committed by Mad Prince Koska of Inushalon, a key to the basement and a number of gold pieces equal to the number of PCs.

Master Gamba Hetchurl

High Elf, High Pyramidion (Noble 2)

Ambition: Extend his network of influence throughout the Yirdril Lands, and become the power behind the region's many thrones.

Bonds: Sentinels of the Ziggurat (membership)

Influence: Influential Aristocrat (reputation)

Str	Dex	Spd	End	Int	Per	Chr	Det
5	4	6	5	7	6	6	6
Atk	Def	Will	Arm	HP	Move	Size	Luck
5	6	6	2/1	20	5	0	6

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

Skills 🍀: Academics (politics), Awareness, Deception, Empathy, Language (Standard), Tactician-style

Sacrifice for Me!: If Master Hetchurl is attacked and has an ally within 1 yd., as a free reaction he may redirect the attack to the ally.

Vanish: If Master Hetchurl begins his turn outside any of the heroes' lines of sight, he somehow slips away, even if that means apparently vanishing into thin air.

Villain: See the core rulebook, page 287.

Master Gamba Hetchurl has been the leader of the Sentinels of the Ziggurat for over a century. He's been entrusted with continuing the organization's sacred duty of waiting for the Time of Darkness and preventing the return of the Yirdril Desert civilization. Unfortunately, he's more interested in pursuing his own political aspirations than in thwarting the rise of an ancient empire.

In the last decade, Hetchurl has become the power behind the throne in Inushalon, particularly as Prince Koska has slipped further into madness. He is one of the Prince's most ardent supporters in part because having a weak and erratic ruler affords him the opportunity to scheme as he pleases. Hetchurl even dreams of spreading his influence to the other cities of the Yirdril Lands.

Unfortunately for his political aspirations, recent portents indicate that the Time of Darkness is

almost at hand. This means that Hetchurl must deal with the ancient prophecies, or risk losing everything he has worked for. Towards this end, he aims to eliminate the party and steal the burial urn. Ostensibly this is to contain the spirit of Den ur-Heil, thus preventing the ancient Yirdril empire's rise, but in truth Hetchurl has considered making a pact with the undead king—one that would secure his political aspirations as a vassal of the empire.

Hetchurl has not aged well for an elf. Although he has a strong force of personality, he is almost always hunched over these days and has thin, limp hair. When he speaks, his breathing is labored and he has a somewhat creepy stutter. Nevertheless, he is still surprisingly nimble and wields a sword like an elf half his age.

Elsewhere in the Manor

As this is a functional manor house, the kitchen, dining room, bedrooms, servant's rooms and stable all have the usual accommodations. Feel free to note any mundane contents that the heroes encounter. Nothing in these rooms is out of the ordinary, aside from a large ziggurat symbol mounted on the wall of the dining room.

The manor contains little of extraordinary value aside from what can be found in Master Hetchurl's office (see page 13). If the party starts looting silverware and the like, they may do so, but most of it can be traced back to Hetchurl's estate, and selling it will raise more questions than they might prefer. Calling upon a Bond with a fence or similar is required to safely offload looted goods.

✂ Most *objets d'art* the party might grab sell to a fence for about 1 sp each.

✂ A cook works in the kitchen and a stable boy tends to a pair of horses in the stables. Both are recent hires with little knowledge of the Sentinels. They will attempt to flee

if confronted. Use the Commoner stats found on page 289 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook.

The Basement

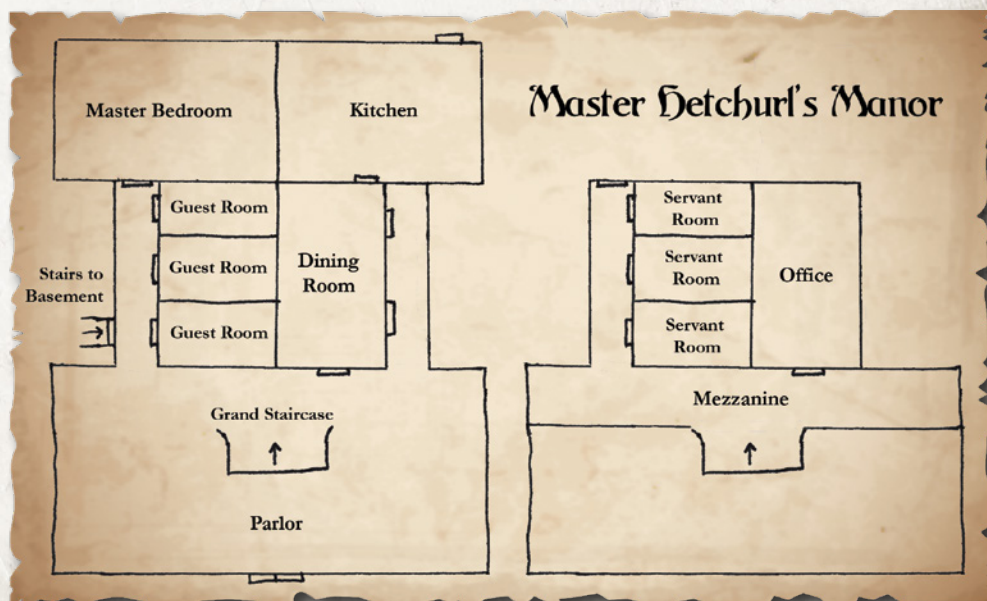
The manor's basement serves as the local meeting hall for the Sentinels of the Ziggurat. It is locked, except when meetings are in session or when a servant is heading downstairs to retrieve a bottle of wine from the wine cellar. One copy of the key can be found in Master Hetchurl's desk and the other is carried by the manor's butler (see page 12).

The basement consists of a small landing area with a door to the left and right. The lefthand door leads to a well-stocked wine cellar, while the righthand door is marked by a ziggurat symbol painted on it and leads to the Sentinel's meeting chamber.

Written on the meeting chamber's wall in standard is: "The Time of Darkness is not a new beginning. What has fallen shall not rise again." Below that are a number of Yirdril glyphs that can only be read by someone with **Language (Yirdril)**. They read: "In the final

days of the old empire the sun set and did not rise for half a score turns. King Den ur-Heil, who long sought immortality, delighted at the rising of the dead. With consultation of the royal astronomers, he declared this Time of Darkness would come again. And with it his empire would also rise."

- ✦ Picking the basement lock requires success on a **Dex/thievery-10** flip.
- ✦ The basement is protected by arcane wards that detect the presence of primitive kalid magic, such as that of the burial urn carried by the party. Bringing it down the basement stairs will both set off an alarm bell and the party will be targeted by a field of necromantic energy emitted by the wards: All characters on the stairs at the moment the wards are triggered should make a **Det-10** flip. On a failure, each affected character gains a Stun consequence and takes Margin damage.
- ✦ In addition to the inscriptions noted above, the ritual chamber contains several wicked-looking daggers, a ziggurat pendent, an assortment of candles and a broken clay urn similar from the one the heroes carry.



Up the River

After two days in Inushalon, Professor Filbur will gather the party and inform them that it's time to head upriver. The last of the supplies have been loaded onto the ship, and the expedition's other hirelings are on their way.

This isn't the best time of year to be traveling the river, however. The wet season has passed, and the river's flow is running lower than normal. This means that the ship will face extra difficulties as it makes its way upstream. The crew will have to be careful not to become stuck on a sandbar or damage the ship by scraping it against the rocks. The professor asks the party to help out by keeping alert during the voyage.

✦ Use the Travel rules found on page 276 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook, except that the flip will be **Per/naturalist** or **Per/vehicles (watercraft)**, since the party is being asked to keep alert for hazards, rather than steer the vessel. The TN of each flip will vary with the legs of the journey.

✦ The legs of the journey are: Inushalon and nearby farmlands (TN 8), further up the river (TN 10) and shallower headwaters (TN 12).

Events up the River

It will take about a week of travel for the Blackpool to reach the professor's dig site. Between each leg of the journey run one of the events below.

Pursuers

During an unusually straight stretch of river, have one of the heroes on the deck make a **Per/awareness-10** flip. Regardless of success or failure, the hero notices another ship, far off in the distance, following the Blackpool. On a success, she may even recognize one of the

figures on the ship's deck: Master Hetchurl. It appears that the expedition is being followed.

If informed of this, the Professor simply shrugs and insists on continuing the journey upriver. Better to put as much distance as possible between the expedition and any pursuit, he reasons.

Sandbar

After the first failed flip of the Travel extended action, the ship becomes stuck on a sandbar. Workers—including any heroes of the Common strata—will need to climb out and help dig the vessel free of the mud.

✦ Digging the ship out of the mud requires an **End/athletics-10** flip. On a failure, the character takes the Margin in fatigue.

The Voice Speaks Again

By the second half of the journey upriver, the spirit of Den ur-Heil has once again gathered enough power to speak with the party. If any of the heroes it spoke with before showed interest, it will speak with that hero again, otherwise it will try its luck with another.

As the chosen character is napping in the hold, the voice will speak to her in a raspy whisper: "You draw ever nearer. Be welcomed into my tomb, oh Harbinger. Reunite and free me. And the world shall be yours for the taking."

This time, as the warding on the urn slowly fades, the voice has strength to answer one question. If the hero shows any interest, or engages with it at all, it will answer the first question it is asked and then fade away.

The Dig Site

At last, the Blackpool arrives at Professor Filbur's archeological site. A dozen tents can be seen lined up a score yards from the riverbank. Just beyond the tents, workers mill

about in front of a sizable pit. Sticking up from the pit is the top of a stair-stepped stone pyramid—a ziggurat.

Meet Bidemi and Akanni

As the vessel nears the dig site, two figures split off from the workers and go to meet the ship. Both are true elven women dressed in wide-brimmed hats that provide plenty of shade from the sun. Professor Filbur waves at the pair and introduces them to the heroes, “These are my students, Bidemi and Akanni. They have been overseeing the dig while I was away purchasing more supplies.”

As the ship pulls up along the bank, Bidemi shouts, “You’re just in time! We found the entrance to the ziggurat! They should be done excavating it by tomorrow.”

With that, the professor practically leaps overboard and rushes off to see the dig, leaving the heroes to gather up their belongings and head to camp. Both students are more than happy to talk with the party along the way, as they’ve spent the past month with no one to talk to other than the laborers.

✦ They’ll ask the heroes about their interest in archeology. They’ll also be more than happy to talk about the dig’s progress or answer any questions the party has about the ancient Yirdril Desert civilization.

✦ Bidemi and Akanni both use the Scholar stats found on page 292 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook.

Joining the Camp

The camp is the temporary home of ten laborers, plus Professor Filbur’s two students. It consists of a fire pit and dozen tents, each sealed tightly during the day to prevent the accumulation of unwanted sand.

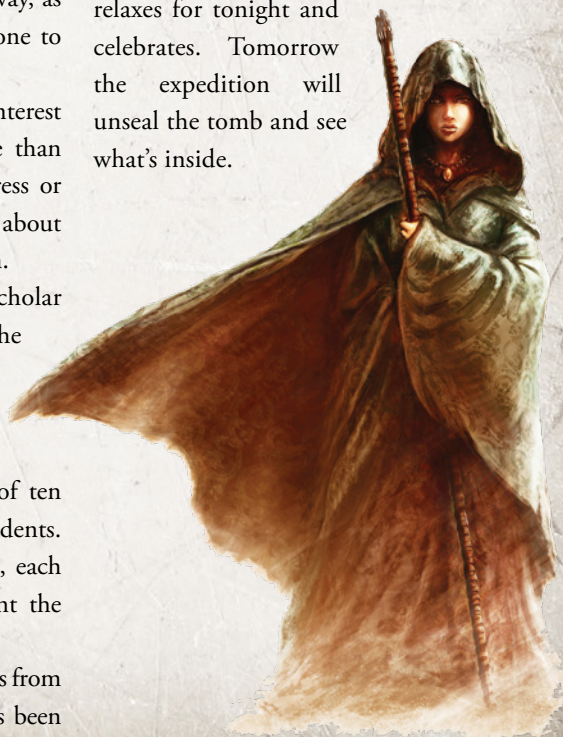
The edge of the camp is just a few paces from the ongoing excavation. An open pit has been

Deja Vu

Heroes who have been in communication with Den ur-Heil’s spirit may recognize the ziggurat and the surrounding valley as the one from their visions, albeit buried and left to the elements for thousands of years.

dug into the desert ground, roughly seven yards across by ten yards wide. Sticking up from the pit is the edge of a truly ancient stone ziggurat. In one corner, a half dozen laborers work making the pit deeper. Upon closer inspection, a sealed arch, perhaps indicating a portal into the ziggurat, is visible behind the workers.

The party is free to mill about or set up their own tents. If they didn’t bring camping equipment, the professor purchased extras, and will share them with the party once he’s done examining the ziggurat. Regardless, he suggests that everyone relaxes for tonight and celebrates. Tomorrow the expedition will unseal the tomb and see what’s inside.



The Tomb of Den ur-Heil

The next morning Professor Filbur, Bidemi and Akanni all rise at dawn and quickly head to the excavated entryway. There they loiter for the next hour, deciphering the script on the stone door and eating the breakfast brought to them by the workers.

Once the party approaches, the Professor will turn to them and say, "Ah! You're just in time for the unsealing. This is really quite exciting! Bidemi has just finished her translation of the text on the door, and it confirms my hypothesis that this is a tomb. And not just any tomb, mind you! This is the tomb of King Den ur-Heil, the penultimate ruler of the ancient Yirdril empire! In fact, these other glyphs around the door are a sort of warning not to breach the tomb or 'unite the severed spirit of the dead king' whatever that means. It's fascinating! Grab the crowbar; let's open it up!"

Opening the tomb requires a **Str-10** flip. Failure results in the character taking the Margin in fatigue. As the stone door is pried open, the sealed chamber lets out a hiss and a chill goes down the spines of all nearby characters.

Machinations of the Sentinels

Over the course of the night, the boat carrying the Sentinels of the Ziggurat lands a mile (1.6 km) downstream of dig site. They quickly set up a small camp, and just before dawn start scouting the area.

Heroes who rise early or stand watch just before dawn have a chance of noticing the Sentinel scouts, but only if they're explicitly looking downriver. The scouts do not

approach the work camp. Spotting them requires a **Per/awareness-10** flip, made with a **☉** for darkness.

- ☞ There are a number of sentinels equal to twice the number of PCs. Use the Sentinel of the Ziggurat stats on page 6. All are Minions.
- ☞ Master Hetchurl accompanies them. His stats are on page 14.

Sentinel Attack

Shortly after the heroes enter the tomb, the Sentinels will approach the work camp and attack, taking as many hostages as they can. Unless the heroes leave the tomb during their exploration, this attack is likely to be over by the time they emerge.

Captured workers will be bound and gathered in one of the tents, under the watchful eye of two of the sentinels. The camp will also be thoroughly searched. If the party left the urn behind, it will quickly be recovered, and Master Hetchurl will take possession of it.

If the heroes do emerge from the tomb early and get involved in the attack, modify the description of the Final Confrontation.

Into the Tomb

Some of the Sentinels will remain to guard the camp, while others will enter the tomb, led by Master Hetchurl. These will keep their distance, waiting for the party to deal with any traps or other defenses before moving forward. They will confront the party once one of three things happens:

- ☞ The heroes start to leave the tomb.
- ☞ The party rests for more than an hour.
- ☞ The seal on the burial room is broken.

Final Confrontation

So far the party has foiled every attempt the Sentinels have made to eliminate them and capture the urn. Master Hetchurl plans for

things to go differently this time. Not only will he be directing the assault personally, but he also hopes to confront the heroes while they are injured from exploring the tomb.

When Hetchurl deems that it is finally time to confront the party, his minions will approach en masse. He and the Sentinels make no attempt at stealth; rather, he aims to intimidate. They stroll confidently forward, weapons drawn. Master Hetchurl speaks, “I... I must commend you for your persistence, but... but your lives ends here. It... it seems only fitting that you should perish in the final resting place of... of your dark master. Heh... heh...”

- ✦ There are a number of sentinels equal to the number of PCs. Use the Sentinel of the Ziggurat stats on page 6.
- ✦ Master Hetchurl accompanies them. His stats are on page 14.
- ✦ He carries with him six fine quality potions of Heal. Drinking one heals the imbiber for 5 HP, but a character may only benefit once per set of wounds (see the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook, page 148). Try to leave a few for the heroes to loot after the fight. They may need them before confronting Den ur-Heil. Note that the potions begin to spoil during the next downtime.
- ✦ This fight Hetchurl will not make use of his **Vanish** ability, but will liberally use **Sacrifice for Me!** to keep himself alive. He will also begin by using the Coordinate maneuver of **Tactician-style** to boost his minions, who will then expend the Bolstered consequence next round to gain **+** to their collective Defense flip (see page 98 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook).

Exploring the Tomb

If the heroes don't move to immediately enter the tomb, the Professor and his students waste no time lighting a torch and pushing

their way in. Inside the air is slightly cold, stale and the torch casts shadows that almost seem to move of their own accord.

Let the heroes explore the tomb as the players see fit, but remind them of the presence of the academics occasionally. Maybe one of the students comments on something they find, or maybe the Professor gets in trouble by activating a trap or opening a chamber with enemies.

- ✦ Remember, if the heroes leave the Professor and his students behind, they will need their own light source, as the tomb is pitch black.

Antechamber

The antechamber is a small, square room with a shelf along the back wall and a door to either side. The walls are covered with ancient Yirdril glyphs, and two obsidian blades lie shattered just inside the entryway.

- ✦ Deciphering the glyphs requires a successful **Int/language (Yirdril)-10** flip and takes an hour. They tell the story of Den ur-Heil's fall and final gambit (see page 9).
- ✦ Examining the shattered obsidian blades and succeeding on an **Int/thievery-12** flip allows a character to conclude that the entryway was once trapped, but whatever mechanism that once held the blades has decayed to dust over the millennia.
- ✦ The stone shelf holds several unadorned clay pots, but whatever they once held is now little more than dust. (They once held large numbers of kalid parts, which were used to power the tomb's magical defenses.)

Vault of Beetles

The stone door to the right swings inward with little difficulty. It leads to a small chamber containing one of the tomb's few functional arcane defenses. The moment the door is opened, a swarm of small metallic beetles pours out and attacks whomever is in the entry

chamber. These tiny creatures are constructs designed to guard the tomb from interlopers.

- ✦ If the party avoids opening the vault when initially passing through the antechamber, Professor Filbur will open it shortly before the heroes reach the Tomb Guardians. He'll then let out a loud scream and flee.
- ✦ There are a number of beetle swarms equal to half the number of PCs (round up).
- ✦ If the party defeats the beetles and looks into the room afterward, it contains nothing other than thousands of additional beetles that are inanimate. A successful **Int/academics (kalid magic)-10** flip allows a hero to conclude that the enchantment on the beetles must have failed over the millennia. In fact, the swarm the heroes fought was a little less than a tenth of their original number.

Copper Beetle Swarm

Str	Dex	Spd	End	Int	Per	Chr	Det
2	6	5	6	1	6	5	5
Atk	Def	Will	Arm	HP	Move	Size	Luck
6	5	5	0/0	11	5	0	5

Mandibles: +6 ⚡ vs. Defense (6/5/4/3/2 cut).

- ♥♦: One of the beetles burrows into the target's flesh and crawls around under her skin. She gains a Bleeding consequence that can only be removed by digging the beetle out with a sharp blade. Doing this deals 1 cutting damage and requires a successful **Spd/medicine-10** flip.

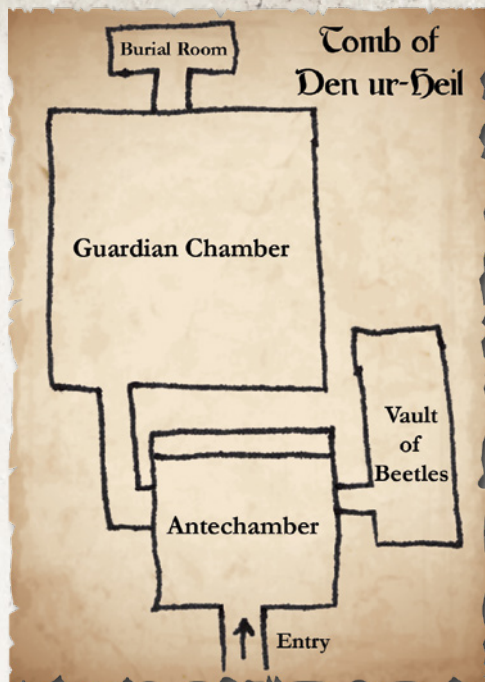
Bestial: See the core rulebook, page 284.

Construct: See the core rulebook, page 285.

Engulf: At the beginning of its turn, all adjacent creatures gain a Hindered consequence.

Swarm: See the core rulebook, page 287.

These small copper constructs are designed to look like beetles. They are surprisingly quick and can burrow into exposed flesh.



Guardian Chamber

The left door leads to a hallway and then down to a large room filled with skeletons lined up in neat rows. There are almost 50 skeletons in the room, each holding a copper and stone spear. The skeletons are ancient undead guardians, intended as a last line of defense for the burial chamber.

Only a few skeletons are still active, however. The magic animating most of them has long since unraveled. The few active skeletons attack as soon as the party enters the room.

- ✦ Use the **Skeleton** stats on page 305 of the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook. There are a number equal to the number of PCs.
- ✦ In the middle of the room is the remains of an ancient pit trap. The slate which once served to conceal the trap, however, fell apart a thousand years ago and now lies at the bottom of the pit. Jumping over the pit requires a successful **Str/athletics-10** flip.

Breaking the Seal

At the back of the guardian chamber is an elaborate arch, which serves as an entryway to Den ur-Heil's burial room. The arch is sealed by a stone door with a single glyph. Anyone with the **Language (Yirdril)** skill automatically recognizes this glyph as "Forbidden."

As the party approaches the door, the spirit of Den ur-Heil musters up the energy to once again speak. This time the voice is heard audibly by the entire party: "Quickly! Through the doorway, oh Harbingers. Enter my tomb and unite my spirit. Free me from this wretched exile and the world shall be yours for the taking."

- ✦ If the party hasn't yet confronted Master Hetchurl and the Sentinels since exploring the tomb, they will approach and attempt to eliminate the heroes (see page 18).
- ✦ Unsealing the burial room requires moving the heavy stone door. This necessitates a **Str-12** flip; failure results in taking the Margin in fatigue.
- ✦ If the heroes decide not to enter the burial chamber, either the Professor or his students will later approach the door and unseal it.

Burial Room

The final chamber in the tomb is a small rectangular vault. In the center of the room is an unadorned stone sarcophagus surrounded by numerous terracotta jars and urns. Unlike much of the rest of the tomb, this room doesn't contain decorations or other adornments.

As the party steps into the chamber the voice of Den ur-Heil's spirit continues to speak, "Come inside. Place the burial urn in the center of the chamber... Yes!"

A moment later, regardless of whether the heroes comply, a thick black smoke emits from both the urn and the sarcophagus. The smoke from both sources mingles in the center of the

chamber and coalesces into the form of a tall, undead true elf, with cracked paper-thin skin and sunken eye sockets whose pits glow with an eerie red light. This is the late King Den ur-Heil, risen from grave after almost 4,000 years!

- ✦ Den ur-Heil's second burial urn is located inside the sarcophagus, along with the ancient king's bodily remains.
- ✦ Scattered around the dessicated body are assorted gems worth roughly 1,500 bp.

A Grave Offer

Den ur-Heil speaks: "You have fulfilled your prophesied roles admirably, oh Harbingers. You have reunited two halves of my spirit and now I may once again walk this world in corporeal form. No longer am I shackled to those damnable urns."

"You have served me well, and I offer to you the chance to serve me still as kings. Four thousand years ago my empire was prepared for resurrection. Now it will rise from the grave and I will once again assume my rightful throne. But this is a new day, a new age, and I will need those who are familiar with its customs. That will be you, kings and ambassadors to the era. What say you? Swear fealty to me and we shall remake the world!"

The party now has a decision to make. Swear fealty to the undead king or reject his offer?



King Den ur-Heil

Undead High Elf, Arisen King (Noble 7)

Ambition: Raise his kingdom from the dead and reestablish his reign over the Yirdril Lands.

Str	Dex	Spd	End	Int	Per	Chr	Det
7	5	5	7	6	5	7	7
Atk	Def	Will	Arm	HP	Move	Size	Luck
5	5	7	4/4	28	6	0	6

Aura of Despair: +5 ☉ vs. Willpower. Targets all characters within 10 yards. The target falls to her knees, gaining a Fear and a Prone consequence.

Touch: +5 ☉ vs. Defense (8/7/6/5/4 tox). Ignores Armor. The hero is cursed. Damage dealt by this attack cannot be healed until the curse is lifted, usually by casting the Lore of Healing's Cure Malady spell (see the core rulebook, page 104).

♥♦: The target gains a Fear consequence and takes an extra 5 tox damage.

Lore of Harm: Den ur-Heil may cast any of the Lore of Harm spells without the need for a reagent, gaining ☉ to the casting flip. See the core rulebook, page 103.

Soul Urns: Den ur-Heil has three soul urns. He is never truly destroyed unless all three soul urns are also destroyed. When "killed," he begins to form anew near one of his remaining urns. Make a 10-Flip. The process takes that many days.

Undead: See the core rulebook, page 287.

Villain: See the core rulebook, page 287.

Den ur-Heil was the penultimate king of the ancient Yirdril empire. Four thousand years ago he was deposed, killed and his essence was split into three parts, which were then sealed into magical urns and sent to the far reaches of the kingdom. For more on Den ur-Heil's final gambit, see page 9.

When he finally takes corporeal form, Den ur-Heil appears to be a desiccated humanoid figure with glowing red eyes. More than anything, he wants to remake his ancient kingdom, but he may be out of his depth in this dynamic new era.

Rejecting the Offer

If attacked, Den ur-Heil will still attempt to make his offer during the first round of combat, all the while defending himself. If the heroes immediately relent, the offer still stands. Otherwise, if the combat goes to a second round, he is sufficiently displeased with the party that he will see them utterly destroyed.

If the party rejects Den ur-Heil's offer but does not move to attack, he will stare down at them with his glowing red eyes and say, "A pity... The world could have been yours for the taking as kings under my reign. Now you must stand aside and watch as my empire is resurrected. A new age has dawned this day. Soon my grasp will spread across the desert, the continent and the known world!"

If the heroes choose to turn around and walk away after that speech, that's their choice. For his part, Den ur-Heil is genuinely grateful to the heroes for their part in his undead resurrection. He will allow them to leave unharmed, and so long as they don't stand in the way of his conquests, he won't harm them in the future.

In fact, characters were were deferential or polite even gain Favor (King Den ur-Heil). All they'll have to do is look the other way while he raises his followers as the undead and conquerors neighboring cities.

But what sort of hero does that?

Accepting the Offer

If the party bends the knee and swears fealty to Den ur-Heil, he will say, "Yes... Thus begins a new era. Come, we have much work before us. Power lies hidden and is ours for the taking." He then leads them out into the desert where he knows of a buried cache of arcane artifacts.

Characters who continue to serve him gain whatever was in the cache, plus the title **Harbinger of the Yirdril Empire (Noble 1)**. Enjoy the campaign's new undead overlord!

The Sentinels React

As the party leaves the tomb, there are still a number of sentinels watching over the work camp. If the heroes have accepted Den ur-Heil's offer, the sentinels can sense his dark influence, and they flee into the desert so that they can regroup and strike again some day in the future when they've rebuilt their numbers.

On the other hand, if the heroes have defeated Den ur-Heil, the Sentinels will prostrate themselves before the party and beg forgiveness. If Master Hetchurl has likewise been defeated, they'll furthermore declare their allegiance to the heroes as the new leaders of their organization. Any hero interested in this role gains the title **Pyramidion (Noble 1)**. Regardless, heroes who are merciful and spare them gain **Favor (Sentinels of the Ziggurat)**.

The Coming War

Whatever choices the party made during the events of *Will to Power*, a war is coming and there are many more adventures to be had.

If the party accepted Den ur-Heil's offer, they will be tasked with locating stashes of ancient artifacts, helping raise his skeletal minions and consolidating temporal power, beginning with the overthrow of Mad Prince Koska of Inushalon.

Keep in mind, however, that Den ur-Heil is not all-powerful, nor is he acclimated to the modern world. He is from a society which had barely left the stone age. Much has changed in the world during his long absence, and there is much he does not understand. Gunpowder, mills, standing armies, lunar magic and advanced metallurgy will all be new to him.

Additionally, everyone he once knew is gone. He may be prone to fits of melancholy or rage. In fact, in spite of his arcane might, the

party may find that they need to step up and assume effective leadership more often than they might imagine.

Meanwhile, the Sentinels of the Ziggurat still exist in scattered cells throughout the Yirdril Lands. In fact, without Master Hetchurl's political ambitions to distract them, they may find their organization more effective than it has been in a long, long time. They may even discover new and unexpected allies among those who are fearful of the Yirdril Empire's rise to power.

On the other hand, if the party chose a different path and assumed leadership of the Sentinels, they will find themselves on the other side of this conflict. Although they may have destroyed Den ur-Heil's corporeal form and two of his soul urns, a third urn remains. His power has been diminished, but it is just a matter of time until Den ur-Heil finds a new Harbinger.

This could be Professor Filbur or one of his students, as they continue to explore the ruins at the dig site. Or it could be someone more remote, but with power—perhaps Mad Prince Koska, or the rogue admiral Moolough the Butcher, mentioned by the sailor during the journey to Inushalon (see page 10).

If leading the Sentinels, the party may lay claim Master Hetchurl's now vacant manor. They will need to seek out wayward cells, recruit to rebuild the society's numbers, and keep abreast of Den ur-Heil's growing power and minions. While the undead king may have arcane might on his side, the Sentinels are familiar with the modern world and are poised to make best use of its advancements.

Finally, if the party avoided siding with either Den ur-Heil or the Sentinels, they may find themselves caught in the middle of the conflict, just trying to help the modern world survive the echos of its past.



Shrame

Rasonic Ocean

Yirdril Lands

Lanstrin Continent

Glingildra

Eye Mountains
Erye River

Yirdril Desert

Slabslach Mountains
Slabslach Lake

Lanstrin Jungle

Zurros Marsh
Lake Zurros
Zildcam Islands
Sacred Isles

Raped Savanna

West Border River
Blue R.

Wardu

Rasonic Ocean

Grasslands

Gnin

Yirdril Lands

Bavain River

Bavain

Trigome

Kromer

Kreig

Kinnor

Lanstrin Jungle

Northern Forlaan Trench

Intel Marsh

Guild

Printel East Reef

Kreig Island

Horanz

Lorain

Althera Reef

Kolaan

Lahn Wildseas

Iriechi Reef

Cleboray

Kaan Mountains

Cyldain

Helix River

Kaan River

Gorhain

Keveshoun Mountains

Laluk Island

Tiif Forest

an Ocean

Shedelong

Helix Mts.

Melanoc

Helix Reef

Quaris Ocean

Southern Forlaan Trench

Haran Islands

Saloun

Horlan

Connector Caves

Tropic of P

Connector Caves

Yirdril Sands

In which the war-torn and turbulent region known as the Yirdril Sands is examined in greater detail

The Yirdril Lands are a vast and turbulent region of failed nations, roving bandits and abandoned villages. A generation ago, the lands were a patchwork of small, backward kingdoms, until a wave of revolutions toppled monarch after monarch. This destabilized the region, causing many to flee the chaos as refugees.

✂ **Capital:** None

✂ **Population:** 19.6 million

✂ **Demographics:** Humans (20%), Handler Gnomes (15%), True Elves (15%), Hobgoblins (13%), Trolls (12%), Other Races (25%)

✂ **Government:** City-States, Tribal

✂ **Languages:** Standard, Grundz, Quaklonian

History

History begins with the Yirdril Desert civilization. It was the first great empire of the ancient world, at a time when bronze had yet to be cast. Joint tribes of minotaurs and high elves came together and built stone cities along the Forsaken River. They invented writing, discovered kalid magic and had a surprisingly complex calendar and understanding of the stars. They constructed the great ziggurats. And sometime around the year -2400, their civilization ceased to exist.

What caused it to disappear is one of the great mysteries of history. Scholars have many

theories, from pestilence, to increasing desertification, to arcane calamity. But what is known is that the empire collapsed and the region became a backwater of warring tribes and scattered villages for the next millennia.

The Golden Age barely touched the Yirdril Lands, but in 902, the Quaklonian Empire—at the height of its power and on the warpath—invaded and conquered much of the region.

The Quaklonians reigned over the territory for the next two centuries, treating it as a frontier to exploit for resources and occasionally settle. For the most part, the local tribes and cities continued on as before, except for paying tribute to the empire when required.

During the Lunar Occupation, the Blaugh'ocks broke up the Quaklonian Empire and the Yirdril Lands became a patchwork of small colonies. With the Native Revolts, these colonies became independent kingdoms, but they never achieved full stability. One by one, the patchwork of kingdoms began to fail, bolstered by a wave of revolutions that swept one monarch after another from power.

Today the Yirdril Lands are in turmoil. They are beset by bandits and warlords, warlike tribes and ambitious city-states—each trying to remake the region in its image.

Culture

The Yirdril Lands are a mixing pot of many different peoples and cultures. Humans are common along the western coast, and gradually give way to true elves in the east. Gnomes are numerous in the southern regions, with trolls and hobgoblins found throughout the center. Even in cities where one people are dominant, sizable minorities of the others exist.

Because of this, the Yirdril Lands don't so much have their own culture, as they have pillaged the cultures of the neighboring regions and jumbled them together into a haphazard morass of mutually-contradictory customs and practices. Here fine elven wines are used to chase trollish liquors, and gnomish inventions are wielded by human tribesmen. If the region can be said to have any defining practice, it's a tendency to always be armed and a distrust for any institution larger than the local city council.

Locations

The following important locations can be found in the Yirdril Lands.

Bavalin (Population 6,000): A rough and tumble trading outpost, Bavalin serves as the gateway to the Lanstrin Jungle's many riches. From here, wood and other natural resources are shipped to Horanz or even Esten. Only the town's docks and warehouses are on ground level; the rest of the city is built high in the treetops. This is due to the swampy ground at the river's mouth. The town's arboreal construction and remote location also make it a rare island of stability, unthreatened by the Yirdril Land's bandits and warlords.

Bavalin River: The Bavalin is a slow and muddy river that twists through the deep reaches of the Lanstrin Jungle. It serves as a

shipping channel for loggers, who float their wares downstream, and for trappers coming and going from the nearby trading outpost. Unfortunately, the river is also home to a species of carnivorous fish that can strip a person's flesh to bone in less than a minute.

Bingoro (Population 10,000): Bingoro is a tight-knit and fiercely independent city-state that revolted and established its independence from Glimgildral a century ago, just after the Native Revolts. It's an extremely traditional community, which the new mills and foundries found elsewhere have yet to penetrate. The settlement survives by trading timber and coal for goods that can't be manufactured locally. Some suggest that there are darker forces at work in Bingoro, and that once a year the local true elves sacrifice unsuspecting travelers to some unknown entity. They say this dark pact staves off the Elven Secret, allowing the elders of the city live longer and remember more than others of their kind.

Cydain (Population 5,000): Cydain is a growing encampment of warlike tribes that have rallied together under the banner of Jonas of Helix, an outcast Melanoc aristocrat. So far the tribes have been content with raiding the local countryside, but it is just a matter of time before Jonas' growing ambition sends them to attack Gail, Melanoc or even Horanz.

Elryc Mountains: A ragged, gray range of peaks, the Elryc Mountains jut up from the surrounding plains at an odd angle. The base of the mountains are dotted with coal mines and the peaks are home to numerous bird colonies, including nests of giant eagles. Legend has it that the great eagles of the Elrycs are ancient guardians, but the knowledge of exactly what they are guarding has been lost to time.

Elryc River: Although the Elryc River runs clear, its waters have a strange "ashy" taste. Because of this, some claim that it has medicinal properties, and tonics made from

the river water can occasionally be found for sale as far away as Rouh or Graundaur.

Forsaken River: This river was the center of the lost Yirdril Desert civilization, which once stretched across the Lanstrin continent. Half buried ruins of that ancient time are still occasionally discovered along the banks, particularly after a flood.

Gail (Population 20,000): Gail is the largest stop along the Old Helix road, which runs from Melanoc to Horanz. Once merely a cross-roads town, it has grown into a moderate-sized trading city, with a port and regular shipments of iron ore from the nearby Kaan Mountains. Unfortunately, this prosperity has attracted the attention of several bandit gangs, warlike tribes and Warlord Kattanz in Horanz. It is only a matter of time until the city is sacked or forced to pay tribute to a would-be conqueror.

Gnin (Population 50,000): Over the past century, the city of Gnin has faced not one, but two governmental collapses. Originally it was the capital of the short-lived Republic of Nissel, which fell apart eighty years ago, leaving a brutal power struggle in its wake. Following that, the Gnin dictatorship seized power. It, too, was torn down a decade ago in a bloody revolt. Despite this history of instability, however, the residents of Gnin still hold many of their old democratic ideals.

Helix Mountains: These mountains mark the southern border of the Yirdril Lands, and are home to a strategically important pass in which sits the city of Melanoc. A surprisingly rugged range, the mountains tower from coast to coast of the local isthmus. They are dotted with numerous small copper mines.

Helix River: This river was the center of the largest gold rush of the Lunar Occupation. It is said that in the last days of the occupation, the legendarily greedy Colonel Quant buried a stash of stolen gold somewhere along the

riverbank. As he was shortly thereafter killed in the Native Revolts, he never came back to claim it as intended. Occasionally treasure hunters still try to seek out Quant's lost gold.

Horanz (Population 170,000): The city of Horanz was once the capital of Helix, a kingdom which stretched from the southern edge of the Lanstrin Jungle to the Helix Mountains. A bit over a century ago, a bloody revolution swept through the city, toppling the monarchy and replacing it with a short-lived republic. Since the revolution, the once proud city has been in a prolonged state of decline. Nevertheless, it remains a great prize over which the scheming warlords of the Yirdril Lands fight. Warlord Kattanz is its current despot ruler.

Inushalon (Population 110,000): Once a regional capital for the Quaklonian Empire, Inushalon is now a shadow of its former self. The old imperial buildings are crumbling or in various states of disrepair, the nobility have left for their their estates along the riverbank, and Mad Prince Koska rules the city with an increasingly erratic hand. So far only the machinations of Master Hetchurl, a local aristocrat, and his secretive Sentinels of the Ziggurat have prevented the city from falling further into chaos.

Kaan Mountains: The Kaan Mountains are a range of long-dormant volcanoes, whose slopes have gradually eroded with the ages, allowing for comparatively easy navigation. The mountains contain numerous ancient lava tubes, and the highest peaks are snowcapped year-round. The ice from them is sometimes transported to Gail or Horanz and sold to keep food cool or for use in "iced" beverages.

Kaan River: The Kaan is a cold and fast-flowing river, fed by the snowmelt of the Kaan Mountains. Its waters are exceptionally clear, and the upper reaches are home to the infamous leaping leech, which is capable of jumping over 10 feet (3 m) out of the water.

Kinnor (Population 30,000): Kinnor was once the southernmost city of the short-lived Republic of Nissel. It was a haven of casinos, high class bordellos and drinking establishments that the rich and powerful traveled to in order to revel in vice. The double collapse of the Republic and later Gnin dictatorship, however, hit the city hard. While the casinos, bars and brothers still operate, today there is a paranoid air about the city. Any pretense of respectability has long since evaporated and everyone carries a weapon at hand.

Lake Zurros: Lake Zurros is a large, shallow endorheic lake with an astounding salinity. It never gets more than 10 feet (3 m) deep and the lake is home to two sets of islands: the Zildcam Islands, which are low lying grassy islands, and the Sacred Islands, which hang in the air, majestically suspended high above the waters. Legend has it that these floating islands are home to the god Zuraic.

Melanoc (Population 31,000): Just over forty years ago, Graundaur sponsored the foundation of a new settlement in the mountains north of its border with the Yirdril Lands. This was part of an attempt to claim that land for its own. While the new settlement was wildly successful, it rebelled against Graundauran rule a decade later and has since operated as an independent city-state.

Polopan: Constructed by the Blaugh'ocks in the early days of the invasion, Polopan is an old fortress that has sat largely abandoned since the Lunar Occupation. In recent years, however, the fortress has a new occupant. Krensch Deeb, an exiled former Melanoc councilman-turned-lich, has taken residence there. While he wants little more than seclusion and to regain the life he lost in a magical accident, his presence has attracted a growing number of undead. This has alarmed neighboring settlements, and it may only be a matter of time before they organize an attack.

Rycel Savanna: This vast grassland consists of low sweeping plains, broken only by the occasional river or range of hills. It is home to vast herds of grazing animals, prides of lions and the occasional chimera. The local troll and human tribes are largely peaceful, although they clash occasionally with prospectors near Bingoro or the more militant pilgrims near Lake Zurros.

Sacred Isles: The Sacred Isles are a series of enormous plateau-topped rocks that hang suspended in the air roughly 1000 ft. (300 m) above Lake Zurros. Legend has it that these floating islands are home to the god Zuraic, and religious pilgrims from across the world make their way to the western shores of Lake Zurros to see the magnificent sight. As the islands are sacred, the faithful of Zuraic tolerate no trespassing on them.

Shrame (Population 70,000): Once a distant outpost of the Quaklon Empire, Shrame is now a city known for dealing in cheap and shoddy magical goods. It's lunar sticks and poor quality artifacts find their way to markets as far away as Grichom and Munu'che. Most of the arcane goods are produced in conjunction with the city's oversized lunar foundry.

Traft (Population 90,000): Sometimes called "the most corrupt city in the world," Traft is more-or-less openly run by a group of organized crime bosses masquerading as a city council. Although these bosses are obsessively rivals, they cooperate to varying degrees, and each owes fealty to the Modin crime syndicate. The youngest boss is Lale Garmut, who has just inherited her father's criminal empire, and who has plans to upset the balance of power in the city.

Wandu (Population 2,000): Wandu is a prominent camp and trading outpost used by both the jungle tribes and trappers who venture into the region. For the last decade it's been overseen by the charismatic Chief Hendel. Unfortunately, the chief is not who he once was. Unknown to even the tribe's other elders,

he has fallen under the sway of a mysterious woman known as Kimba. She plans to use his influence to foment war, raiding other tribes and settlements, from Balavin to Bingoro.

Yirdril Desert: A vast expanse of burning sunlight, sand dunes and scrub, the Yirdril Desert has one of the harshest climates on Trystell. The region is home to only a few isolated tribes and desert beasts, such as the giant scorpion. Scholars in Glimgildral claim that it wasn't always a desert, and that something, long ago, must have changed to make the region more arid.

Zildcam Islands: Overshadowed by the Sacred Isles, the Zildcam Islands are flat, grassy expanses rising from the waters of Lake Zurros. Although they seem fairly mundane at first glance, a group from the University of Glimgil-

dral believe that they're actually mounds covering the ruins of an earlier civilization. So far Zuraician zealots have prevented these scholars from digging into the islands to test the hypothesis.

Zurros Marsh: This seasonal marsh is flooded during the wet season, and blooms shortly thereafter. During this time it is abuzz with wildlife, including the giant quake frog. During the dry season, the marsh is frequented by Zuraician pilgrims, heading to or from Lake Zurros. These pilgrims sometimes find themselves trapped in the mud or beset upon by bandits.

Settlement Table

This table is intended for use with the Trading system (see *Campaign Options*, page 23).

Settlement	Type	Available Goods	Demanded Goods
Bavalin	Town	Charcoal, Delicacies, Hides, Wood	Beasts of Burden, Liquor, Metalwork, Tools
Bingoro	Town	Cheese, Coal, Wood, Grain	Dye, Leather, Metalwork, Tools
Cydain	Camp	—	Liquor, Livestock, Weapons
Gail	City	Cheese, Delicacies, Iron Ingots, Mead, Wool	Drugs, Gems, Metalwork, Tin Ingots, Weapons
Gnin	City	Books, Cheese, Grain, Oil, Pottery	Coffee, Drugs, Gems, Kalid Parts, Wine
Horanz	Metropolis	Books, Canvas, Cheese, Grain, Paper, Preserves	Beasts of Burden, Coffee, Dye, Silk, Spices, Tools
Inushalon	Metropolis	Cotton, Delicacies, Glassworks, Grain, Oil, Pottery	Chemicals, Gunpowder, Paper, Silk, Spices, Tea
Kinnor	City	Charcoal, Delicacies, Oil, Preserves, Wood	Drugs, Gems, Liquor, Silk, Wine
Melanoc	City	Cheese, Clockwork, Iron Ingots, Paper, Preserves	Coffee, Gems, Silk, Tea, Tin Ingots
Polopan	Fort	—	Kalid Parts, Metalwork, Tools
Shrame	City	Armor, Clockwork, Glassworks, Lunar Devices, Machinery	Chemicals, Gems, Metalwork, Salt, Tin Ingots
Traft	City	Coal, Iron Ingots, Oil, Pottery, Preserves	Ale, Drugs, Gems, Liquor, Weapons
Wandu	Camp	Charcoal, Hides, Wood	Beasts of Burden, Salt, Tools

Yirdril Sands

Origin Tables

Characters from the Yirdril Lands 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 the Yirdril Lands. 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 – 5	Handler Gnome	43
6 – 7	True Elf	40
8 – 9♠♥	Hobgoblin	50
9♣ – 10	Troll	52
J – K, Joker	Flip on the standard Peoples table	25

Religions Table

The table below presents the major religions of the Yirdril Lands. It replaces the Religions table found in the core rulebook.

Card	Religion	Page
A – 3	Zuraic, Orthodox	225
4 – 5	Zuraic, Reformed	225
6 – 8	Crono	221
9	Non-Religious	227
10 – Q	Eios	222
K♠	Garmeck	223
K♥	Io	223
K♦	Urgoch	223
K♣	Wazrath	223
Joker	Flip on the standard Religions table	25

Foundational Events Table

The Foundational Events table below is for characters from the Yirdril Lands. It replaces the Foundational Events table in the *Age of Ambition* core rulebook.

Card	Foundational Event	Page	Box
A	Quaklonian Speaker: Your parents saw fit to teach you the old Quaklon language. Gain a rank of Language (Quaklonian) and Academics (history) .	84	✓
2	Poet or Spy: You helped pass codes to the resistance during the Gnin dictatorship, disguising directives as particularly bad poetry. Gain a rank of Academics (cryptography or poetry) and Language (Standard) .	84	✓
3	Enlightenment Values: Before it collapsed, your parents were true believers in the Republic of Nissel, and saw that you were well educated in the law and enlightened values. Gain a rank of Academics (law) , a rank of Language (Standard) and 🎲 to your first advancement flip in the Agitator career.	84 56	✓
4	Founding Family: Your family took part in founding the city of Melanoc, and they are still well-connected there. Gain Contact (Melanoc aristocrat) and the Gentle 1 status.	122 186	

Card	Foundational Event	Page	Box
5	Tragedy & Family: Your family was attacked and killed by a warlike tribe near Cydain. However, another tribe found you in the wilderness and adopted you. Gain a rank of Survival and Enemy (warlike tribe) .	85 130	✓
6	Helix Nobility: Your family comes from one of the old noble lines of Helix, and they still maintain an estate near the city of Horanz. Gain Contact (noble family) . You also gain the title Lord (Noble 1) , although this is largely a courtesy title, as Helix no longer exists and the nobility are no longer in power.	122 186	
7	Discovered Corpse: While in the rough and tumble outpost of Bavalin, you found a body that had fallen from one of the treetop structures. Choose:	125	✓
	☞ You reported it to the authorities. Gain Reputation (honesty) and Common Sense .	122	
	☞ You looted the body and stole its valuables. Gain 200 bp and a rank of the Thievery skill.	135 85	
8	Dark Offer: While visiting the trading outpost of Wandu, you watched one of the locals walk into the jungle and change shape into that of a large beast. You were caught watching and she offered a choice; join her in making a dark sacrifice to Yitch or die where you stood. Choose:		
	☞ You refused and barely escaped with your life. Gain Enemy (devotees of Yitch) and flip on the Injury table.	130 20	
	☞ You accepted her offer. Perhaps you lost a soul? Flip on the Madness table. She may come for you again one day; gain Favor (devotees of Yitch) .	21 123	
9	Casino Visit: You snuck into a casino in Kinnor and participated in a high-stakes gambling match. Flip a card. If it's red, gain 200 bp. Otherwise, lose 200 bp. Either way, gain a rank of Stealth .	135 85	✓
10	Cheap Artifact: You purchased a cheap magical amulet manufactured in Shrame. Unfortunately it stopped with the very next week and you never got your money back. Lose 100 bp, but gain a broken amulet. You also learned to be more discerning. Gain Common Sense and Academics (lunar magic) .	135 122 84	✓
J	Vigilante: Your parents were killed in a dingy alleyway by one of the gangs that rule the city of Traft. After that, you swore vengeance on all criminals. Gain a mask and Secret Identity (masked vigilante) [Chr 5].	126	✓
Q	Conscripted: You were conscripted, possibly against your will, by one of the local warlords. Gain a rank of Pikeman-style and ⊕ to your first advancement flip in the Sellsword career. Flip a card. If it's a club, flip on the Injury table.	94 76 20	✓
K	Holy Pilgrimage: As a child, your parents brought you with them as they made a holy pilgrimage through the wilderness to Lake Zurros and the Sacred Isles. What you saw there moved you deeply. Gain a rank of Survival and ⊕ to your first advancement flip in the Missionary career.	85 68	✓
Joker	Flip Twice: Flip twice more on this table and take both results.	—	

When a dying man gives the party a mysterious urn, they are thrust into the conflict between an ancient secret society and an undead king. Can the heroes best their enigmatic assailants and unravel the mysteries of a lost empire, or will they too become a footnote in history?

Will to Power is an intermediate adventure supplement for *Age of Ambition*. It features an archeological expedition scenario, and is designed to run between two and four gaming sessions.

