

EARTHDAWN

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to FASA's
Earthdown Fantasy
Roleplaying Game**

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Arms and Services	3
A visit to the weaponsmith by Aaron Porter	
The Town of Woes	6
Earthdown fiction by Karen M. Branham	
Setting Up a Campaign	10
Suggestion on campaign creation by Richard Tomasso	
Songsmith	13
Earthdown fiction by Vicki Kirchoff-Martin	
Ithuriel's Archery	15
A selection of arrows by Mike Swiernik	
Blood Wood Magical Items	20
From the upcoming Blood Wood book by FASA	
Corrupt Spirits	25
A selection of nasties by Dan Allard	
Children of Jaspre	30
A collection of critters by various authors	
The Pointless Swords	42
A collection of swords by Graeme Lindsell	
Unpleasant Blood Charms	44
A couple of new blood charms by Graeme Lindsell	
The Wandering Swordsman	45
A new discipline by Sean Simmons	
Hammerstone	49
A town near the Tylon mountains by Jeremy Mettler	
Longhope's Legacy	54
A selection of new magic items by Roger Gaudreau	

Artwork

Jim Nielsen	Cover
Kevin Montanaro	7, 12, 24, 26, 28, 38, 47
Aaron Porter	3, 4, 22, 52
Jason Kerr	10, 16, 18

The Editor Speaks...

Greetings and welcome to the seventh issue of the Earthdawn Journal! Again, you may have noticed already, we are very late with this issue. Why, you might ask? Wellll... to have a magazine, one must have articles to put in said magazine and we didn't have enough articles! So **PLEASE** send us **ANYTHING** you have for Earthdawn that you want to see in print. I promise we will take a look at it and, if it is good enough, it will see print!

Note: If you compare this to EDJ #7, it is exactly the same. We don't have a stable of professional authors to whip stuff up for us for the EDJ. We rely on you, the reader, to send quality articles in to us for publication!

Rant mode on. We also have every intention of continuing to support Earthdawn with the Earthdawn Journal and don't particularly appreciate people sending in letters calling us thieves for taking their subscription money and not sending the magazine or threatening to report us to the BBB. This just pisses me off. I do this and our other magazines from my home. I have a job as a computer professional. I'm also not in it for the money. If I was, I wouldn't be doing this because I can make a lot more money working on computers in my spare time than working on these magazines. Well, rant mode off.

Kevin Knight

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Submissions: We are looking for good articles and illustrations for the Earthdawn Journal. When submitting manuscripts and artwork, enclose a stamped and self-addressed envelope with appropriate postage for the return of your items if you want them returned. We also would appreciate that article submissions be presented on IBM compatible diskettes along with hardcopy. Electronic submissions (the preferred method for articles) are received at our internet address.

How Are We Doing???

Please take the time to fill out the questionnaire located on the tear out piece in the middle of this book. Each respondent will have their name placed in a drawing for a free copy of next issue. A lucky three will receive free copies of the Earthdawn Journal Volume #8.

Responses from the Earthdawn Journal Volume #7:

Tesrae Ti'Serenmistishsa	3.94
On Dinganni Spiritualism	2.72
From the Library of Victoris Wiseman	3.63
Sarabrennos' Spellbook	3.78
Pattern Patter	3.11
The Protector of Kaer Tallin	3.61
And the Path Shall be Perilous	3.67
Brazt'ul-char	3.94
Truaga'ar	3.78
Outcasts	3.17
Artwork (Cover)	4.65
Artwork (Kevin Montanaro)	3.35
Artwork (Aaron Porter)	2.94
Artwork (John Bridegroom)	3.12
Overall Satisfaction	3.82

Free copies of Volume #8 were sent to Tom Trelenberg, Mark Mazella, and Gernot Hallmann. Congratulations!

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ARMS & SERVICES

BY AARON PORTER

"You sure ask a lot of questions, son. All I can tell ya is before you start runnin off to anywhere, you should stop at Firebreather's."

....
"You never heard of Firebreather's? He's the best forge in town. He's got just what ya need, and he'll know exactly what ta give ya. One warnin, though. You make sure you got plenty of time to spend there. Yah'see, Firebreather tends to get a bit long winded. He loves to talk. He'll go on for hours, but ya don't wanna interrupt him, that's bad manners no matter where yer from."

Overview:

A visit to the weaponsmith. It may be an everyday occurrence for some player's characters, and the judge must either be prepared, or spend valuable game time in making up prices for everything the player can imagine. This article gives the judge what she needs to maintain a constant price level in goods, and adds flavor to the visit for the player.

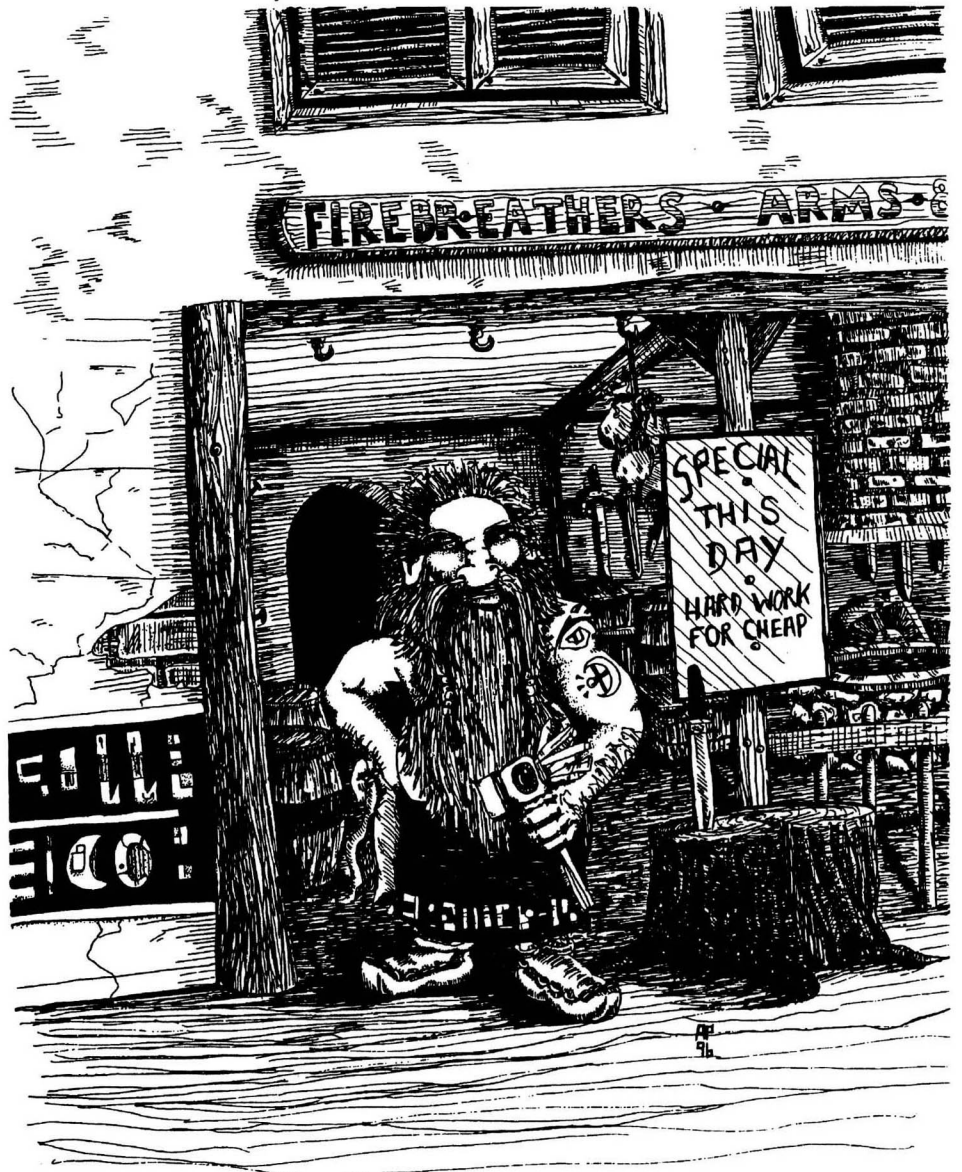
Firebreather's Arms & Services:

The dwarven weaponsmith, Firebreather, has grown a good reputation of selling quality work from his clean little workshop. His stock is never large, but what he doesn't have, he can get. The dwarf has a full line of normal weapons, armor, shields, horse shoes, nails, and all sorts of hand forged goodies. Firebreather's constantly busy with special orders, too, but he's always ready to take on another challenge.

Firebreather is not only known for his skill at the forge, but even more remarkable is his ability to talk. The dwarf's mouth never stops from the moment he greets someone until they're able to escape. He talks about the weather, local families, gossip, legendary people, politics, jokes, clients, travels he's been on or

heard about, philosophy, fashion, fads, everything and anything on the dwarf's mind seems to roll right off, and out of his mouth. He never really stops gabbing, but doesn't seem to take a stand on anything he says. It's rumored that he lost his last two assistants because he talked while he worked, when he ate, and even in his sleep.

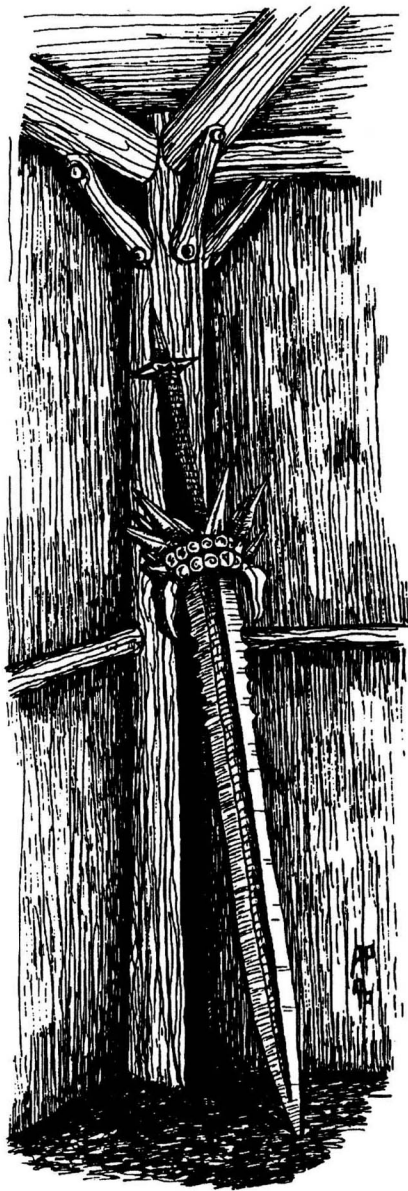
Some customers are irritated by this quirk, and don't



ever come back, but Firebreather only thinks he's being friendly. He blames the customers for not recognizing his quality work. Actually, the dwarf believes his ramblings to be helpful, revealing information that will aid, and inform his clients. Most people try and avoid a conversation with him, but Firebreather does have friends who have learned to put up with his babbling,

and some even find it endearing.

However much the dwarf may ramble, his work is excellent. He can take steel and iron, and turn it into a beautiful, sturdy, magnificent weapon. His love for his craft is expressed in every blade, every wedge, and every hinge he creates. He could easily charge a fortune for his work, but what good would it do if his creations just hung on the wall of his shop?



Firebreather's price is quite fair on his forged and reformed items. Some say they're down right cheap. His prices on normal equipment can be a bit high, but he gets no complaints. His work has become well respected in the community as that of quality.

"Me Usual Stock..."

Anyone looking for a specific normal melee weapon, missile weapon, throwing weapon, armor, or shield could find it here. The availability rating for most of these items is "Everyday" (-2: see ED p250), but certain less common items reach "Average" (0) to "Unusual" (+2) levels. At Firebreather's, None of the items listed above that are found on the Goods & Services tables will ever be higher than an "Unusual" level of availability.

The price for these items is a little higher than normal. Firebreather sells them 10% to 20% higher than the Goods & Services tables. This is not only because his quality is good, but also so he can maintain the availability of more rare items.

"Hey...How bout somethin' a bit more potent!"

The thread weapons, and thread armor listed in Earthdawn Companion may be found here. These

items are considered "Unusual" (+2) to "Very Rare" (+9) for availability. If the item is found to be unavailable, Firebreather may be able to find one and have it brought there. This is up to the judge on whether she wants the item available to the characters yet. It usually takes several weeks for Firebreather to find a specific item of this type. The price for these items will be very near the listed price in Earthdawn Companion.

Firebreather also keeps a number of weapons around that he has reformed and upgraded using his Forge Blade talent. These weapons will be from +1 to +3 on their damage step rating, and are of high quality and craftsmanship. The availability of these weapons depends on the bonus rate. The availability rating for a +1 weapon will be "Unusual" (+2), a +2 weapon will be "Rare" (+5), and a +3 weapon will be "Very Rare" (+9). The specific type of weapon requested can be anything listed on the Goods & Services tables, but the price varies for each item depending on the base cost of that particular weapon. A list of some example weapons, their bonuses, and suggested prices are as follows:

Melee Weapon	Damage Step (+1/ +2/ +3)	Price In Silver
Dagger	3, 4, 5	100, 300, 600
Dwarf Sword	4, 5, 6	110, 310, 610
Whip	4, 5, 6	110, 310, 610
Short Sword	5, 6, 7	116, 316, 616
Broad Sword	6, 7, 8	125, 325, 625
Troll Sword	7, 8, 9	150, 350, 650
2-Handed Sword	8, 9, 10	225, 425, 725
Hand-Axe	5, 6, 7	115, 315, 615
Battle Axe	7, 8, 9	135, 335, 635
Pole-Axe	9, 10, 11	250, 450, 750
Pole Arms	9, 10, 11	200-275, 400-475, 700-775
Lance	6, 7, 8	250, 450, 750
Spear	5, 6, 7	105, 305, 605
Trispear	6, 7, 8	125, 325, 625
Sap	2, 3, 4	100, 300, 600
Quater Staff	3, 4, 5	105, 305, 605
Club	4, 5, 6	100, 300, 600
Mace	5, 6, 7	120, 320, 620
Flail	6, 7, 8	135, 335, 635
Spiked Mace	7, 8, 9	140, 340, 640
Warhammer	8, 9, 10	225, 425, 725

Missile Weapon	Damage Step (+1/ +2/ +3)	Price In Silver
Blowgun	2, 3, 4	100, 300, 600
Sling	4, 5, 6	105, 305, 605
Troll Sling	5, 6, 7	115, 315, 615
Windling Bow	4, 5, 6	103, 303, 603
Short Bow	4, 5, 6	115, 315, 615
Longbow	5, 6, 7	160, 360, 660
Light Crossbow	5, 6, 7	150, 350, 650
Med Crossbow	6, 7, 8	200, 400, 700
Elven Warbow	6, 7, 8	300, 500, 800

Thrown Weapon	Damage Step (+1/ +2/ +3)	Price In Silver
Darts	2, 3, 4	100, 300, 600
Bola	4, 5, 6	110, 310, 610
Throwing Axe	4, 5, 6	125, 325, 625
Flight Dagger	3, 4, 5	125, 325, 625
Windling Spear	3, 4, 5	145, 345, 645
Hawk Hatchet	5, 6, 7	225, 425, 725

"Sure, I Could Do That..."

Firebreather is more than happy to take special requests. The dwarf can use his Forge Blade talent on weapons the client wishes to upgrade, or he can even create a weapon specifically for the client. Whatever the client wishes, review the description of Forge Blade (ED p107), and go over the special rules for creating weapons, armor and shields (Adept's Way p 138).

Firebreather works cheap. Instead of using the Forge Blade talent prices, use Firebreather's general price. He charges 50 silver multiplied by the Final Damage Step per week of work. At the end of every week he makes a Forge Blade test as stated in the Forge Blade talent.

For Example: Firebreather is asked to work on a normal broadsword. The broadsword is damage step 5, and the Final damage step will be 6. Firebreather will charge 300 silver per week (50silver X 6) for as long as it takes him to finish.

The price seems higher than the available weapons above, but special requests do take extra time and energy, and actually his price is much lower than the rules call for.

"That Shield Sure Took A Beatin..."

Firebreather will also repair weapons, shields, and armor. He can restore weapons and armor to almost new by using his forging skills. Use the process described under Damage to Weapons and Armor (ED Companion p117) Also, use the prices described their.

"That's a Lovely Sword Ya Got There..."

The dwarf may also buy some items, and sometimes accepts trade. He'll pay a fair price, close to his own usual prices, but because his prices tend to be low for exceptional items, sometimes he doesn't give the best deal around. It's often best to sell your stuff to someone else.

"This Weapon Has A Long Past..."

Firebreather may also give private consultation with anyone who has rare or historical weapons or armor. If the client wishes to know more about their item, Firebreather will request to keep the item for a week of study. The dwarf will use his Weapon History talent to find information for the character. Often the dwarf uncovers the Test Knowledge of the item, and may be able to instruct the client on how to uncover the Key Knowledge to tie threads. However, Firebreather's tendency to ramble may confuse more clients than help them. His information is always accurate, but is usually overwhelming and ambiguous.

The price for this consultation varies with each occasion, but if the dwarf uncovers the Test Knowledge (ED p270) required for an item, then he charges an amount of silver equal to the legend point value of that rank.

For Example: If a client were to bring Firebreather

Nioku's Bow (ED p281), he would charge 500 silver for the first test knowledge because the legend point cost for the first rank of the Bow is 500. The second bit of knowledge would cost 1300 silver (rank 3).

Firebreather charges this flat rate no matter how long it takes him to uncover the item's history.

Firebreather loves finding the long stories behind every item brought to him. He may even aid in finding rare information if asked and the story is good enough. However, his unwillingness to leave his shop may intercede any decision he makes.

FireBreather- Sixth Circle Dwarf Weaponsmith

Dex(15):6-1d10 Str(13):6-1d10 Tou(14):6-1d10
Per(16):7-1d12 Wil(13):6-1d10 Cha(10):5-1d8

Initiative: 4-1d6 Physical Defense: 8
No. of Attacks: see below Spell Defense: 8
Attack Step: 12-2d10 Social Defense: 6
Damage Step: (varies with weapon choice)
Armor: Ringmail: 6(or his choice)
Number of Spells: na Mystic Armor:1
Spellcasting: na Recovery Tests: 3-1d10
Effect: na

Death Rate: 72 Combat Move: 30
Wound Threshold: 10 Full Move: 60
Unconsciousness Rate: 58 Karma: 12-1d6

Equipment: Firebreather can get about anything from his shop, but his favorite weapon is a huge spiked mace (Damage Step 9) that he's been crafting in his "spare" time. He also carries around his tools in a large belt apron everywhere he goes.

Loot: Firebreather lives above his store and keeps all his money hidden around his place. He also has a stash buried in his basement. Normally he only carries enough money for whatever he has planned for that day.

Skills: Craftsman 6(12-2d10) (i.e. Forge/Repair Armor & Shields and other non-weapon forging), Legendary Weapons 3, Gossip 2, Weather Prediction 1, Politics 1, Legends and Heroes 1, Runic Carving 5

Talents:

I Avoid Blow 5(11-1d10+1d8); Forge Blade 6(13-1d12+1d10); Karma Ritual 6; Melee Weapons 6(12-2d10); Steel Thought 5(11-1d10+1d8); Weapon History 6(13-1d12+1d10)
II Durability 6(36/30); Haggle 6(11-1d10+1d8); Read/Write Languages 5(12/2d10)
Elvish,Human,Ork,Troll,T'skrang
III Abate Curse 5(12-2d10); Detect Weapon 6(13-1d12+1d10)
IV Speak Language 4(11-1d10+1d8) Elvish, Human, Obsidimen, T'skrang; Thread Weaving 6(13-1d12+1d10)
V Temper Self 6(12-2d10); Warp Missile 3(10-1d10+1d6)
VI Conceal Weapon 4(11-1d10+1d8); Spot Armor Flaw 3(10-1d10+1d6)

THE TOWN OF WOES

BY KAREN M. BRANHAM

Manon glanced over at his stocky, Ork companion and thought, not for the first time, that he and Grunt had been destined to become traveling adventurers. They had been born in the same nondescript village, Iliar. Their parents and most of the villagers had been sent to the grave by Ork scorchers. Without the tenuous hold of family, they had set out in search of high adventure. After all, according to the tales of the elder Iliar, there were hundreds of unexplored towns and villages dating back to a time before the Horrors had roamed the world. No one would notice if they took a little gold and saw some of what the world had to offer.

That had been the plan in the beginning. Search out some long-forgotten town and take all the loot they could carry. However, all the grand stories about adventure never mentioned just how much walking had to be done. Manon surveyed his road-worn clothes. The green of his shirt had been faded by weather and time, and there were noticeable holes growing in his breeches. The boots however, were in reasonable shape. Manon had just this morning relieved the fine footwear from an unfortunate would-be robber who had found Grunt's ax blade buried in his gullet. As for Grunt's appearance, well, no one would want to mess with the hulking Ork even if he didn't give off the foul odor of clothes unwashed since the last rain. Boy, it didn't rain often enough, Manon thought as he sniffed the air.

While there wasn't a hint of treasure-laden dwellings for miles and miles past Iliar, by the Passions, there were a lot of bandits and thieves. Manon tried unsuccessfully to remember the last time he and Grunt had slept for more than just a couple of hours. They had to keep watch over each other or fall victim to some other adventurer who wanted their equipment. Manon was surprised that their old sword and battle ax caught anyone's attention. They were a far cry from the majestic weapons the Iliar elders had described in their stories, but they had learned early on that stories by the firelight were one thing and life on the road was quite another. In the last four months they had roamed the countryside, winning battles through sheer determination at first and later, much later, winning by using battle-born common sense and honed combat skills.

Manon thought about the past and smiled. Despite it all, he couldn't imagine doing anything else. He was proud that they had survived their minor battles; and while they had yet to find prosperity or the fire-side immortality of great adventurers, he had felt the adrenaline rush of victory and knew in his heart that there would be no other life for him but one on the road.

"How much further to Ahmeria do you guess?" Manon asked.

"Should be there just before night-fall." Grunt said as he squinted at the sky. Grunt could always tell when the sun would fall. It was just one of his uncanny abilities. Manon could not recount a time when Grunt

had ever been lost. Thank the Passions! They would have been dead or worse long ago if Grunt got confused about which way to run or what tunnel to take when a fight went sour.

"Have we got money enough for food in town?" Manon never carried the money pouch. He was a good height and build for a human, but still nothing compared to the nearly full-grown Ork at his side. Best to let size intimidate any would-be thieves.

"Plenty of food," Grunt assured as he slowly counted out the coins. Grunt was no mathematician and got confused quickly. "Maybe," Grunt laughed as he dumped the coins back into the pouch.

They continued walking for another hour before they saw Ahmeria standing just off to the West. Manon had never seen a town so big. It must contain hundreds of people, he thought. He felt his excitement grow. Surely here they would meet other adventurers and hear wondrous tales of treasure pulled into the light of day from the cocoon of long-dead kaers.

As they approached the city, Manon studied the gate guards. They were outfitted in armor that had seen plenty of battles wounds and their weapons still shown traces of blood from a recent skirmish. Both men looked rough and ready to defend the gate against anything.

"State your business," the one on the right who was slightly taller boomed.

"We want no trouble, just food," Grunt snarled back. The growling of his stomach underlined the truth of his words. He patted it almost reassuringly as the smaller guard chuckled.

"Be off the streets before full dark or the ghouls will be the ones getting the food," the guard said with a nod as he gestured toward the inner city. Manon and Grunt had heard tales all along the road that ghouls roamed the streets in Ahmeria and were searching out new victims each night in a vain effort to satisfy an unquenchable bloodlust. He didn't look forward to meeting any of them, but adventurers needed good weapons, and they cost money. Slowly they entered the city.

Ahmeria looked like war swept through it nightly. Signs, faded and battered, littered mud-caked strips that passed for streets. People were scurrying in the pre-dusk light to pull in their wares from haphazardly arranged tables that might have been called a market place.

"Where's the nearest tavern?" Manon asked of a man hastily putting vegetables into a cart.

"Eryn's is just down there," he pointed down the emptying street to a dilapidated building on the corner. Before Manon could ask about the food, the shop keeper was packed and pulling his cart toward the city gates.

"Eryn's looks like our best chance to eat tonight, Grunt."

"Anything," he replied with a sour look as his stomach protested any kind of a delay with a groan. They hurried down the street.

Well, maybe someone would call it a tavern, but it was really more of a battered looking shell where a tavern might have been years ago. The tables that were

"It looks like you're open for business to me." Grunt's stomach let out a howl that startled the poor keeper for just a second before he laughed.

"All I have is some bread and cheese left over, but I'll sell it to you." At Manon's skeptical look, he continued, "Everything closes here at night, and I really don't have anything else for you to eat. Don't you know about the ghouls?"

"Yes, Grunt and I heard stories on the road about some coming out after dark."

"Yeah, they come every night now just as soon as it gets dark, and they don't leave until morning light. It's not right," he explained as he set out the food.

"You got a room around here we can " Blam! The door swung open with force and hit the wall behind it. Grunt's ax was unsheathed in a heartbeat. Manon turned pulling his sword to the ready.

"Jomlin!" screamed the man in the doorway. "Let's go!" The forgotten dwarf raised his head and blinked slowly at the intruder. "Drunk! You're stinking drunk!" Marching into the room, the intruder punched the dwarf in the face. Manon heard the unmistakable crunch of bones breaking. The man looked satisfied at his work and turned to the barkeep. "If he's dead throw him to the ghouls. If he wakes up, kill him," he said as he tossed the keeper a small pouch of coins. The stranger looked at Grunt and Manon while they sheathed their swords as if he just noticed them, but Manon felt sure that this man missed nothing. "Boys need some work? We just had an opening on the night watch."

"Sure," the ever-ready-for-a-challenge Grunt replied before Manon could. "What do you need us to do?"

"I need someone to help me rid the streets of the ghouls. Jomlin was doing a fair job 'til his brother lost his footing and was devoured by those crazies two nights ago. People call me Zentech." As Grunt and



still standing were ancient and pock-marked from the many lost wars with blades of all sorts. Broken tables were piled high next to a monstrous fireplace. Their wood crackled as if in protest as the flames devoured them. Patrons? Not really. There was one obviously drunken dwarf laying, maybe passed-out, on a table towards the fire. The bartender fingered the blade on his counter with open distrust written on his face.

"Can we get some food here?" Manon asked of the man.

"It's nearly dark, boy. We're closed," he grumbled.

Manon looked meaningfully at the dwarf as he said,

Zentech discussed specifics, Manon studied their new boss. He was taller than Manon and had dark black hair. His eyes showed no emotion about killing Jomlin. Obviously he had fought on many occasions, but he also had an air about him that Manon could not recognize. Maybe it was his clean dark blue clothes that made him appear so alien. Fighters weren't supposed to be that clean, were they?

"Deal," Grunt proclaimed with an outstretched hand.

"Deal. I'll be back in half an hour and we'll start cleansing these streets." As Zentech left, Manon and Grunt hurriedly ate their meager meal.

"Be careful and don't let them near you," advised Zentech as they walked down the deserted street. "Don't make the mistake of thinking you can handle more than two each. If you want to live to fight another night, don't get caught in the alleys. They can eat your flesh while you scream."

"Why are they so numerous?" Manon asked. Zentech shot him a quick look of disgust.

"I'm not paying you to ask questions. I'm paying you to kill ghouls. You two get these ten streets. Get to work." Zentech walked off into the night leaving them alone in the inky blackness with hours until dawn.

Manon and Grunt trudged up and down the streets. All the shops and houses had been boarded up recently making Manon feel like he was meandering through a ghost town. Still, these past few hours had been easy money. His heart leapt at the thought of a new blade at his command. "Remember any of the stories about ghouls, Grunt?" Manon asked quietly as he strained to see anything moving in the long shadows the torch light created. Grunt shook his head no and Manon continued. "They're supposed to have grey-green skin because they're rotting. It's said they don't eat food because they can only digest the flesh from their victims."

"Shhh_hear something." Grunt crept to the edge of the street they were walking towards and looked around the corner. "Three heading our way." He crunched down behind nearby boxes and motioned for Manon to take a spot a few feet away. Manon knew the plan instantly. Wait until the ghouls passed then jump them from behind. It seemed to take an eternity before he heard the shuffling of feet then finally they came into view.

The three were horrific. Their flesh was like ash and their eyes seemed impossibly wide as if they too were shocked at their recent deeds. Fresh blood dripped from one's fingertips while another had a piece of meat hanging from the front of its tattered clothing. Manon felt the familiar battle-induced adrenaline start pumping through his veins.

"Ahhhhh!" Grunt screamed as he jumped from his hiding place and wielded his great ax with such force that he cleaved the arm off one of the ghouls. Manon sprang from his spot and gutted a second ghoul with a slash from his sword. The undamaged ghoul spun around, disorientated by the attack, but ready for another meal. It lunged at Manon, but Grunt interrupted the blow by severing the ghouls spinal cord as his ax ripped the beast nearly in half. Still the mangled bodies tried to creep forward.

Manon swung with all his might and partially decapitated his original target. It fell to the ground. "Take their heads off," he hissed at Grunt as he bent to finish the job. As a last act, the ghoul at Manon's feet dug its talons into to the flesh of Manon's unprotected leg. Grunt made short order of the one-armed ghoul, and spun swinging his ax hard enough to send the last ghoul back to the grave.

"You all right?" Grunt asked as he cleaned his ax on the tattered clothing of the ghouls. Pulling a strip for Manon to use as a make-shift bandage.

Looking up, Manon exclaimed, "I can't handle them!" Grunt turned to see four new ghouls coming

down the street.

"This way!" Grunt dashed down a side street nearly running headlong into two ghouls who were feeding off the carcass of what might have been a fellow night patrolman. He skidded to a stop and jerked Manon into an alley. They rushed to get away, but it seemed as if every corner held another ghoul. How could there be so many?

It didn't take too long before Manon's weakened leg gave way on a sharp incline. The ghouls were gaining. Grunt couldn't leave his friend to fend for himself. Frantically he looked for a way to help. His eyes hit upon a street torch glittering as it burnt away the night. That should slow them down! Grabbing the torch he raced back down to Manon who had been forced to turn and fight. Grunt slammed into the lead ghoul, and jammed the burning torch into the ghoul's stomach setting the tattered rags it wore ablaze. "Get clear!" Grunt shouted to Manon as he turned to condemn the remaining ghouls to the bite of the hungry flames.

The stench of burning flesh followed Manon as he half walked and half crawled up the street trying desperately to keep his meager dinner in his belly. By mutual consent, they stopped at the crest of the hill turning to see that no dying ghoul happen to set any of the buildings on fire. For all his days, he knew he would carry the sight of flesh bubbling from the ghouls' bodies as they were burnt to cinders. For him it seemed like an eternity before the light from the flames winked out.

"You always hear in the stories that ghouls just keep coming, but I never saw anything like that before," Manon mumbled.

"That was really bad," Grunt agreed as he helped Manon over to some nearby crates so they could rest and assess their wounds. Grunt had some minor scratches, but they would heal quickly. Manon had a deep gash, and he had lost a lot of blood, but the bandaged looked like it was holding.

Manon surveyed the street and found they were in a better section of town than before. The streets were fairly well maintained. Shops had glass windows with fancy signs. To his left there were elaborate homes, and he realized that a light shown brightly from one that was set slightly apart from the bunch. "Look, someone's up."

"Sunrise is in about three hours. Wonder what they're doing down there?" Grunt and Manon curious as ever got up and walked slowly towards the house. Manon wondered about the finery that would adorn such a place. As they drew close to the window, Manon saw Zentech sitting at a fine wood table with another, older man.

"Maybe we should go in and tell them about the patrolman who died," Manon suggested.

"Let's see what they're talking about first," Grunt said as he surveyed the room. Bookshelves contained huge, leather-bound books and gruesome skulls. Fine pictures graced the walls. The most unnerving thing about the scene was the strangers compulsive rubbing of a skull he held close to his chest.

"Lumire, call off a few of these ghouls. There must be twenty or thirty out there. We have covered our tracks. The townspeople are afraid, and they haven't

questioned a single 'attack' since you summoned the cursed things," said Zentech.

"I'll thin them out some, but all you need to do is keep them busy for a few more hours. I've almost finished threading the spell. These last blood donors you've brought should do the trick." Manon and Grunt watched the gnarled man's face attempt a smile.

"Are you sure you can get control of the Horror?" Zentech voice dropped nearly to a whisper.

"When the spell is complete, I'll pull him through and enslave him."

"You better be right about this," hissed Zentech.

"Don't doubt me, fool," came the stern retort. "You know nothing about the awesome power of blood magic. Nezera here," he declared as he stroked the skull, "has shown me the way to control that Horror! We'll control an empire the likes of which Thera has yet to find in its dreams." Zentech smiled a truly horrific grin and the long-dead eyes of Nezera, as if in consent, glowed blood red. Manon couldn't suppress a gasp. Zentech's turned and pinned them with his stare.

"We can't let them get away," he called to the magician as he pulled his sword. Manon and Grunt sprang to their feet, but before they could move more than a few feet, Manon felt something akin to a great hand capture him and squeeze until he felt sure his eyes were in danger of popping from their sockets. He couldn't move an inch. Out of the corner of his eye he saw Grunt frozen in his tracks. Zentech laughed. "Two more volunteers to fire the magic?"

"Bring them inside."

This just wasn't happening, Manon told himself. He wasn't tied to the wall watching an obviously insane nethermancer prepare to summon a Horror. Glancing about the chamber, he noted one of the other 'volunteers' look of shock at this twist of the Passions, or maybe that look was numbness from watching an unlucky sole be strapped to a stone alter and cut with a dagger over and over so that the blood could flow out quickly and be used to help thread Lumire's spell.

"Blood to spare," chuckled Lumire. Just then, Zentech came down the staircase.

"This is messy business," complained Zentech as he cast the dead body off the stone slab and into a shadowy corner to join a score of others.

Lumire just laughed as he stepped to the far end of the room where a geometric shape had been drawn onto the floor surrounded by a trough of congealing blood. "The rewards are well worth this hardship." He sprinkled the fresh blood around the edges of the symbol as he chanted some archaic spell. The floor grew black as the air began to shimmer and flow. Grunt was the first to make out the sinister shadow of the Horror and jerked with renewed vigor at his bonds.

"I summon thee to do my bidding," spewed Lumire as the Horror slowly grew into a monstrous shape. The only response was a howl of laughter.

"What's wrong?" Zentech screamed into the din. "Why is it laughing?" Lumire couldn't or wouldn't answer. The wind created by the rift was screeching through the chamber. Debris was kicked into the air. Lumire screamed!

Before Zentech could do more than draw his sword,

the Horror had sucked all the life from the magician, leaving a withered husk to shatter and spray dust about the room. As for his second victim, the Horror lashed with an appendage and cut deep chunks of flesh from Zentech. It seemed to take pleasure in every scream.

Zentech swung his sword in a vain attempt to end the suffering, and Grunt took a blow across his chest, cutting the rope and a fair amount of skin, but the pain was nothing compared to his relief at being freed. He grabbed the dagger from the stone slab and ripped at Manon's ropes. There was no time to lose as they ran for the stairs. Screams dogged their every step.

The house was being sucked down. Beams were shattering. The floor swayed under the pressure. Grunt and Manon plowed through the door to the main house as pictures were flung from the walls. Books bounced off the shelves as if they had a life of their own. Grunt raced to the door and practically ripped it from its hinges, then Manon spotted their weapons laying in a heap near the door. He snatched them and flung himself out after Grunt just as the house collapsed under the strain.

They ran blindly into the pre-dawn streets. They didn't stop until their bodies quit obeying the commands sent out by fear struck brains.

They were outside the city with the sun coming up before either could utter a word. "It's loose in the city," Manon managed to gasp out.

"No, it's buried under all that house." Grunt whispered. "Nothing would block the screams of the Ahmerians if that thing were loose in town. What could we do, if it were loose? It was just too powerful."

"By the Passion, it was so big! I never believed I'd see a real one. I always knew we'd fight robbers and the like, but nothing like that."

"Let's head north towards the river. Maybe some time aboard ship while we heal up? We still don't have any money and our equipment is all the worse for wear." Grunt looked down at his hand. A slow smile grew on his face when he saw the dagger. "This should bring a fair price." He laughed.

Manon smiled, but remained silent as they turned North and headed on to another adventure. Something had changed in him. His wide-eyed innocence had been shaken in the night. No man was meant to look upon a Horror and live, but somehow he and Grunt had cheated Death. The feeling that he was living on borrowed time chased him as Ahmeria slowly faded with the distance behind them.

SETTING UP A CAMPAIGN

BY RICHARD TOMASSO

How else can a campaign be started besides the usual "we all run into each other at a tavern" or "we all answered the same call for help?" Given the range of political factions, races, geography, and everything else in Barsaive, there are many possibilities for how to start a campaign and what the central theme or driving element of the campaign will be. This article is a brainstorming of a few of them.

Some of these can also be integrated later to change the direction or focus of the game, either as a change of pace or just to mess with the characters' lives. Or they can be used to reveal what's really been going on all along (players just love that).

GROUP MAKEUP

Who and what the characters are. For those groups that want the characters to be a "team" or a "group" of some kind beyond a generic band of adventurers.

RENEGADE THERANS

This can take on two forms: either Theran ex-patriots who don't support Theran rule anymore or are unhappy about something in the island, or a mutinous military unit. The ex-patriots could likely go on about their adventuring as most other groups would, but would have different encounters when it came to politics. They could be useful as informants for Throal or the Sky Raiders, provided they could prove their breaking with the Theran line. Depending on their positions and duties within the Theran empire, they could also be useful to anti-slaver groups or magicians and historians of various sorts. The deserting soldiers could end up as mercenaries, or try to join up with Throal's forces. They would likely be wanted men, and if they were of any renown they would be recognized in areas of Theran influence. If they were from a garrison guarding a Theran outpost, the Sky Raiders would likely find them valuable.

ESCAPED SLAVES

This would be a great way to start out the characters with nothing. It may even be possible to link this in with the previous option. You'd likely have very few, if any, magicians in a group like this, since the Therans probably wouldn't tolerate any spell casting from the slave pens. Perhaps this group will commit itself to freeing other slaves or to spreading anti-Theran propaganda. If they were taken from the same area, then the return trip home would make an excellent subplot.

ESCAPED PRISONERS

Much like the above, except it's more likely that the characters will be hunted down, especially if their convictions were for serious crimes. The main problem with this option is that the characters may not have

much of a reason to stick together unless there is some other force at work such as a false conviction, or they were part of a gang of thieves or raiders before being incarcerated.

MERCENARY OR MILITARY UNIT

An old stand-by, but a viable option nonetheless. A Throal or Sky Raider unit would have plenty to do. Another option would be to play the role of a group like the Grim Legion or a band of Ork Scorchers.

A mercenary unit would likely get to see more of Barsaive. A military unit may end up doing the same



thing all the time. Then again, if they have some unique or powerful abilities, or are some type of special forces unit, they may be hired/assigned to take on the jobs the local forces don't want or can't handle.

SPIES

How does eaves-dropping on Theran or Sky-Raider plans sound? The characters could be operatives or informants working for Throal in Sky Point to find out what the Therans are up to, or serving as an early-warning system for a Theran attack, or to make sure the Sky Raiders don't get too greedy. They could also be spying on the mysterious rulers of Iopos, or trying to keep tabs on the movements of the players within Kratas. There's also the whole range of political angles to be played. Not exactly James Bond, but the high level of magic and the numerous races and cultures interacting could make for a very interesting

campaign. For a novel twist, try reversing roles. That is, have the characters be spies in Throal working for someone else.

HOW THINGS GOT STARTED

A good lead on what they do, and why they do it. A good bet on what the first adventures will cover.

ON THE RUN

The characters are accused of a crime they didn't commit, or did commit but don't feel they should be punished for it. The crime could range from freeing slaves, desecrating a temple, or killing a local adept in a duel and failing to realize that the locals wouldn't appreciate the outcome.

The characters are on the run and must stick together for survival. They have to learn to trust each other since they all know what happened and can't spill the beans without endangering the whole group. If they were falsely accused, then they need to find the real culprit so they can clear their names and get on with their lives. After a while, the heat will probably die down, but the events that got things going can become a recurring subplot, likely emerging at very inconvenient times. Depending on what they did, the characters may make some new friends that they probably would not have met otherwise, as well as a few enemies.

CURIOSITY

If the characters are all young, they could go out on their first adventure to a nearby "forbidden place" and end up being hurled into a series of adventures that prevent them from returning home or force them to group up very fast. The basic premise is that the characters get in over their heads and end up starting their careers sooner than they expected.

DISASTER

Something terrible happened. It could be an earthquake, shipwreck, shipcrash, flood, or invasion. The characters have to act quickly in order to survive. It may be that some of their abilities manifested during the disaster. The stress of the situation giving their magic that last little push it needed to awaken.

SAME KAER

This is an option all groups should seriously consider. It solves some immediate problems. One, all the characters are in one place. Two, they likely know each other and may even be good friends. Three, it's easier to establish some background for the campaign and the group since everyone is working on building up the same area. Four, the GM can keep the scale of the campaign smaller for a while, until the characters get more powerful and start expanding their area of influence.

There are a few disadvantages. The racial and discipline selection may be limited, especially if the kaer hasn't been open very long or is still closed. Some of the variety in character backgrounds you may be used to in other campaigns may be lacking.

Starting a game in an unopened kaer, especially

when the characters end up being the central figures in its opening, either as a test exploration, or as a driving force to get out, can provide great opportunity for the characters to bond and build up a powerful base of common experience.

BACKGROUND SUBPLOTS AND MOTIVATIONS

Not everyone adventures for the same reasons. Individuals within a group may have different reasons for being out in the world risking life and limb. Very often this is closely tied in with any major subplot the character has going. While these usually focus on individual characters, they can be incorporated into the group as well.

DESTINY

Personally, I am wary of this one, since I usually find it to be very artificial and forced. It's one of those things that tends to work better in a novel than in a game.

One or more of the characters has a destiny to do something important (save the world, kill Verjigorm, slay a dragon that's been ravaging the countryside for centuries, etc) or to be at a certain place at a certain time and the outcome is dependent on the character's will, ethics, endurance, or whatever. The character can either know he has a destiny or not. The only difference being in some role-playing opportunities and possibly that the character knows he won't die until the situation occurs unless he does something really stupid. This can be good or bad, regardless of the role-playing ability of the player.

The trick is to not make the character with the destiny take over the whole story, unless that is how the group wants to run the campaign. The other trick is to come up with a good destiny and to gear events so fate does have its way without making it look that way.

LEGACY/HERITAGE

Similar to destiny, but the characters are continuing a journey started by someone else. This can range from taking an item from a dying hero, to living out a family tradition.

FIRSTBORN

The characters are the first generation to be born outside the kaer. Perhaps the community has placed some special significance on their lives and given them subtle pressure to restore some past glory.

This element could likely be part of another campaign element, but I think keeping in mind the significance of being the first generation in three or four hundred years to be born under an open sky and not underground could add something to a campaign.

SEEKER

The character is looking for something or someone in particular. You can use the quest for the Holy Grail or the search for the Fountain of Youth as a model.

The character may never find what he is looking for. This can be either up to the GM or the player/group. The point is the honesty of the quest, and the belief that

the quest is worth the work of a lifetime.

APPRENTICESHIP

It makes sense for several of the disciplines and cultures to have a testing period for new adepts. This could be the standard "go forth for a year and a day"

consequences.

DISCOVERY

The characters are out to find something or somewhere new. It doesn't matter what. This is different from seeker or exploration in that they aren't going to a specific place and may not be looking for a specific item.

WHAT ARE THEY DOING

Related to the subplots, but probably starting later in the game, and by default will involve the whole group.

EXPLORATION

The characters either are explorers or are hired by an explorer as extra help or for defense. This group could either explore a less well-known area of Barsaive, or roam all over the map looking for lost kaers, lost treasures, ruins, pre-Scourge landmarks, etc.

The characters might be working on assignment to complete a section of the Explorers' Guide to Barsaive for the Great Library of Throal. Or they could be hired by the Therans to survey the province (perhaps without their knowledge).

OPEN UP

Perhaps a later development, but something to think about from early on. The party could be assigned to discover kaers, open them, and make contact, welcoming the inhabitants to the post-Scourge world. This plotline can incorporate exploration, mystery, politics, Horrors, xenophobia, military, diplomacy, straight role-playing, and just about anything else. I suppose it would be possible for the characters to do this on their own, but it would be much easier with sponsorship, particularly from a major government. This could lead to some long-lasting subplots and springboards to future mysteries and adventures.

As you can see, there is a lot to do in Barsaive, and a lot of different ways to do it. FASA has provided us with a wonderfully detailed background for Earthdawn, use it any way you can.



journey, or just a directive to go out and do something really heroic and come back alive to tell the tale and to prove that you are worthy of the honor of being an adept.

SO YOU WANT TO BE A LEGEND

The characters are going to everything they can to convince the world that are made of the right stuff.

They probably have a desire to become Lightbearers or members of a similarly legendary force. This could take on a form of arrogance or egoism. They may end up ignoring the little things or constantly take on bigger and tougher challenges, with all the necessary

SONGSMITH

BY VICKI KIRCHOFF-MARTIN

*"Down, down, down underground,
In the hearts of our Kaers, we gathered around.
To listen to tales of the heroes of old,
The desperate, the daring, the brave and the bold."*

"Not that old song again."

The villager's whining voice made Gala stop playing and listen. That 'old song' was one of the village favorites, or had been the last time she'd passed through. Glancing around at her audience, she could tell that it was no longer.

She brushed a stray wisp of red-gold hair out of her face and made eye contact with the one who had spoken. "Well then, what would you like to hear?"

"We're tired of old songs of old Kaers and old heroes," the bold villager replied. "We want a song about now."

She sighed. Troubadours like herself were vital to the exchange of news from village to village but they were also historians. Their songs kept Barsaive's history alive. Those were the songs she loved to sing and to play, not the boring gossip songs she had to learn in every new town. "A song about now," she said half to herself.

Her fingers absently stroked the strings on her lute. "A song about now..."

Sad notes floated from the instrument as Gala's grey eyes stared off. The tune drifted, seemingly mourning something or someone. The villagers sat spellbound by the music.

When Gala's eyes regained their focus, the music stopped. "Sorry, lost in thought for a moment. I don't know that I have a song for what you want, but I might have a tale."

The villagers crept closer. She smiled, though there was a sadness in her eyes. "I'll tell you a tale of someone of now, though I don't know that you would call her a hero yet. Still, who knows what her destiny might be?"

Her voice strengthened to be heard over the crowd. "I'll tell you the tale of a Horror and how one person escaped its deadly powers and its deadly mark."

Not a noise could be heard as she paused, wondering if the memory might still be too fresh. "Now, to begin..."

A troubadour travels much of Barsaive. It is our calling and what we enjoy. The troubadour of this story chanced upon a village south of the Serpent river called Alusian. It was a village not unlike this one. Its people were a mix of races. There were elves, orks, trolls, humans, dwarves, several windlings and even an obsidiman or two. Bordering the river, it was a trading town and many were the merchants who plied their trade in Alusian.

This troubadour was singing songs near the marketplace when a party of adventurers stopped to listen to a tale of legends of gold. She could see their interest and they stopped her after to inquire if she

knew any more. They spoke for a time and were pleased with what they heard.

The one that most caught their interest was one she had only recently learned about an old Kaer not too far from Alusian, one in which the inhabitants were all slain one by one by a Horror that had infiltrated their haven before they had closed themselves in. The same magics that would have kept the Horrors out, kept the poor folk inside. It was said to have been opened some years ago, but that the party who discovered it had all been found dead or mad within a year and a day.

The leader of the group, a dashing, fair haired elf named Thien bade her tell them all she knew about the place. He even convinced her to accompany them on their quest for the treasure. He must have put some enchantment upon her for she was no fool and what they wanted to do seemed the height of folly. Of course, it might also have been the pale green eyes and fine form of the elf that convinced her.

And so they rode. She sang travelling songs and enjoyed being in Thien's company. His companions were three: Argus, a red-headed ork man with scars on every visible part of his body and an ill-tempered thundra mount (not that they come in any other temperament); Cythia, an elf woman who wore more weapons than one could count on one hand; and Lysander, a human man in the arcane robes of a sorcerer.

Thien and his folk were searching for fame and adventure. They told her many tales of their daring and she thought she might work on a song or two about them, but, at the time, she was much more interested in working her charms on the elf. After all, he was fair to look at and well spoken. I am not sure to this day whether or not he had enspelled her, but still, he was very pleasant company.

They reached the old Kaer just before dark and camped well out of sight of it. Thien set watches and they went to sleep.

They awoke to screaming. The troubadour stumbled to her feet and snatched her sword from its sheath. The others stood around her. The only one missing was Lysander. They heard the scream again and she told me that nothing has ever chilled her blood like that sound. If I could recreate it here, you would know what I mean, but it is like no other. It is the sound of death in excruciating agony.

Cythia cursed and struggled into her armor, the rest of them followed her example. Argus whistled sharply and his mount snorted and stopped by his side.

Thien bade no one move out of the fire's light, so they all stood together in a close circle around it, as if the circle of light was a shield that whatever lurked there in the darkness could not penetrate. It was not that they did not care what had happened to Lysander, it was that not one of them had a doubt that he was well beyond needing their aid.

She stood between Thien and Argus, shaking in her boots. Though she knew which end of a sword to hold, she was no warrior and was fairly sure that what waited for them out there in the dark was the Horror of the Kaer. Her heart beat like the war drums of the Crystal raiders, her mouth was as dry as the Wastes. She felt for her lute and tried to think of some inspirational tune, but felt as though her talent had fled and was encouraging her to follow.

Then Thien moved out toward the darkness. His sword arm was down and he moved as though in a trance. She tugged at Argus and pointed. The ork lunged at his leader and bore him to the ground. Cythia leapt on the two of them and together they pulled Thien back from the edge.

Slowly, a tune crept into the troubadour's mind, weaving its way through her thoughts as a snake through the tall grass. She began to hum and then to sing, taking heart from her own music as her companions struggled on the ground at her feet.

She did not know what song it was that she sang or if it was even a song that she knew for in those moments all she remembered is what she saw.

Cythia and Argus helped Thien to his feet, the ork keeping strong hold of his wrist as he struggled to leave the clearing. There was still something not right about his eyes. She watched them grow colder and colder until he turned and thrust his blade into the ork's side.

Argus howled and Cythia sprang, kicking Thien away from his victim. She landed on top of him and struck his face with her fists while he laughed like a man who had none of his wits about him.

And so it was that it was she who first saw the thing as it crept into the light. She, who still sang as Thien and Cythia struggled and Argus bled out his life on the ground. She who could no more move from where she was or warn them as it came into the light.

It was taller than any troll and stood on three legs. It had a reptilian tail that lashed back and forth as if it meant to take down the trees all around it. Its body sprouted from the joining of the legs and tail and had two scaled arms with claws as long as my longest finger. Green slime dripped from its slavering maw as it's many faceted eyes scanned the clearing.

She knew death, my friends. She knew it then as it stared into her eyes and stopped her voice. She knew that this thing was going to kill her as surely and as painfully as it had slain Lysander and that there was nothing she could do to stop it. That is death, that is the fear that makes infants of us all.

She could not move, could not utter a word as it grabbed Cythia by her head and pulled her free of Thien. She could not even avert her eyes as it crushed her skull like a melon and dropped her lifeless body beside the still bleeding Argus. The ork thrust forward with his axe, but the Horror stepped easily aside. It glared at him and she watched as he turned the axe on himself and struck himself with it until he no longer had the strength to wield it. Even then, he pulled out a dagger and continued his assault.

She could feel tears streaming down her cheeks, unable to move her head or close my eyes as she watched a man brutally murder himself while the Horror looked on, a grin of satisfaction splitting its

huge mouth.

She was praying that it kill her quickly when it turned those huge eyes on her. 'You are a songsmith,' said a voice from her own skull. 'You tell tales of valor and glory.'

She could not have answered if she'd wanted to. Her body was frozen and her voice had fled.

'I would like you to sing me a song.'

Her mouth opened and closed, but not a word came forth. She stood, shaking in the presence of the Horror, unable to utter a word to save her own miserable life. It chuckled. 'Lost your tongue, have you? Well, then, I will allow you to leave. In a year, I want you to return to me with a song of my power and cruelty and the riches of this Kaer. I want a song that will inspire more such fools to come here to their deaths.'

She knew then that he would mark her and feared that Horror mark would steal away her art and creativity. She could not bear to live without her songs. She struggled hard against my own paralysis to tell it so.

'True,' it said although she had not spoken a word. 'I had not thought of that. However, if I do not mark you, I must have some way to assure your return.'

The silence seemed to last an eternity as she glimpsed a hope of coming away with my skin intact. 'You will return here in a year, young songsmith. On that day, you will sing me your song. If I am pleased, you may go free for another year. If I am not pleased, I will cut out your tongue and you will never sing again. However, if you do not return, I will find that town on the river, and kill every child there.'

Its grin widened. 'So, I shall see you in a year, songsmith.'

With that, it turned away and shambled back into the darkness.

It was a long time before she could move again. Her breeches were cold and wet, but she had no desire to change them. She did stop to dig shallow graves for the others. While she was doing so, she noticed that Thien was still alive. He rolled on the ground, clawing at his eyes and laughing to himself, his fair face so disfigured that he more resembled the Horror than the elf. There was no light in those eyes, no life, so with trembling hands and tear filled eyes, she slit his throat and buried him with his companions."

Gala could feel that her eyes were filled with tears as she ended the tale. Her audience was silent, many of them wet eyed as well. The bold villager spoke up. "And what will she do now?"

"Write songs," Gala said. "And sing them. She can only hope to dissuade foolish adventurers from repeating Thien's folly. Either that, or become more foolish herself and seek out others to help her kill it. Either way, she must return in a year to fulfill her part of the bargain."

She struck a chord on the lute. "But now, for a more cheerful piece."

The tune carried throughout the village.

ITHURIEL'S ARCHERY

BY MIKE SWERNIK

"Look around the place. Ask questions, because I don't think you've seen most of these before. Some I made, some I found, and most of them have interesting stories. And don't touch anything. No, not even that...I told you so."

--Ithuriel Thionn, Elven Archer, selling some of his wares to an overcurious browser.

Specialty Arrows

All Adepts in Barsaive attempt to enhance their abilities through the use of magical equipment. Archers are no exception to this rule. The following is a far-from-complete listing of arrows that Archers use, both normal and magical.

The listing is broken up into two sections: one describing arrow shafts, and the other arrow heads. The player and the GM can put these two arrow components together in virtually any combination to achieve the desired effect.

Following these two sections is a more detailed section describing special rules for arrow manufacture as well as for the two special magical items, the Threaded Quiver and Threaded Arrows. All of these specialty arrows can also be made as crossbow bolts, unless otherwise stated. Variations of each of these arrows exist for each variety of bow or crossbow, although finding the right kind and size of arrow might be exceedingly difficult. Most Archers make these arrows themselves.

The Cost of the items are listed as "Cost to Purchase /Cost to Make." In most cases, the cost is shown as a multiplier to the normal cost, assuming the normal cost for a head or shaft is half that for a complete arrow, as listed in the rulebook in the Missile Weapons Cost Table. In some cases, the actual cost for the component's construction is shown in silver pieces. These costs are per item, i.e. one head or shaft.

Range modifications exist for some of these shafts and heads. These are shown as the modifications to short, medium, and long range in the following format, short/medium/long. For instance, +10/-10/-30 would be interpreted to mean the short range is increased by 10 yards, the medium range is shortened by 10, and the long range is shortened by 30. These modifications are made to the farthest distance of that weapon's range. For example, a longbow firing an arrow with the above range modifications (normal ranges for a longbow are 2-40/41-100/101-220) would have the final range of 2-50/51-90/91-190. The modifications imparted by heads and shafts are cumulative.

Heads

The heads, or tips, of arrows and bolts are typically made of stone or metal. There are many different styles of heads, depending on the person designing them, but these are some of the more common and interesting heads that archers use. Combinations of some of these heads can be made at the GM's discretion, e.g. crystal armor-piercing tips.

Non-magical

Armor-piercing

Cost: Normal/Normal

These heads are very long and narrow, and forged of metal, designed to pierce armor of all types. An armor-defeating blow is dealt with a Good success on the Attack roll. There is a -2 Step penalty to the Damage roll, and, although the range remains the same, their ability to pierce armor at Long range returns to that of a normal arrow (Excellent success required).

"These go in easy. That's good if you're not on the receiving end. If you are, the only good thing is that they come out just as easy - no fins or extra stuff to rip or anything. Makes them easier for you to retrieve, too." --I.T.

Broad Tip

Cost: Normal/Normal

These arrows have especially broad tips for causing extra damage against unarmored opponents. An Excellent success is required for an armor-defeating hit, and the range penalties are 0/-10/-20. There is a +1 bonus to the Damage Step. These tips cannot be used with crossbow bolts.

"I've got dozens of designs for these. Leaf-shaped, gem-shaped, eye-shaped, you name it. But they all do the same thing." --I.T.

Flamer

Cost: 2X/Normal

The flamer head is specially designed to burn very hot when lit. It consists of a metal tip and core, with pieces of flammable wood forming the edges. The tip can be easily lit on fire, and gets a +1 bonus to the Damage test when so lit.

"I design the metal core of mine so that they work like armor-piercers after the wooden fins have burnt off. That way, they're still useful after you've used them once. Plus, the wood I use can absorb blood if I don't light it. It comes handy for getting blood from creatures that don't necessarily want their blood sampled, if you know what I mean..." --I.T.

Ricochet

Cost: 4X/Normal

These tips are conical in shape, designed to be uniform all the way around to minimize random scatter. They can be used to make ricochet shots off of hard surfaces by individuals without the Bank Shot Talent (ED p. 98). Only one bank is possible when used in this manner. The Attack Step suffers a -2 penalty, and the Damage Step a -1 penalty. When used by someone with the Bank Shot Talent, there is an Attack Step bonus of +1, but the Damage Step penalty remains -1. They can bank the shot as many times as their Bank Shot Talent allows.

"My best use of one of these was to bank a shot off a scorcher's shield and hit his companion in the back. The first one felt so bad at the "accident" that he paused momentarily. That's when I pulled out the used flamers I had..." --I.T.

Vial

Cost: 10X/5X

These heads are specially designed to carry a small amount of material and break on impact, delivering the material to the surface of the target. Typically carried materials include acid, contact poison, dye, and any other liquid or powder that the archer might desire. The range modifiers of this type of head are -10/-20/-30, due to the unbalancing effect on the arrow. The Damage Step is reduced to 1 with this type of head. One typical use of this type of tip would be an Archer using a Called Shot to hit a lock with acid, allowing companions access to the chamber beyond.

"I sell some really useful acid, right from the basilisk's back, so to speak. Useful for any situation, chains, doors, trees, an annoying enemy, and now and then just for fun..." --I.T.

Magical

Crystal

Cost: 50 sp/50 sp

These tips are made of living crystal, and must be reenchanted yearly at a cost of 10 sp each, or they lose their bonus. These tips give a +2 bonus to the Damage Step.

"I bought these from a sky raider Archer, one of the best shots I've ever seen. We have a little arrangement now, so I can get as many as you want to carry out the door." --I.T.

Elemental

Cost: Special

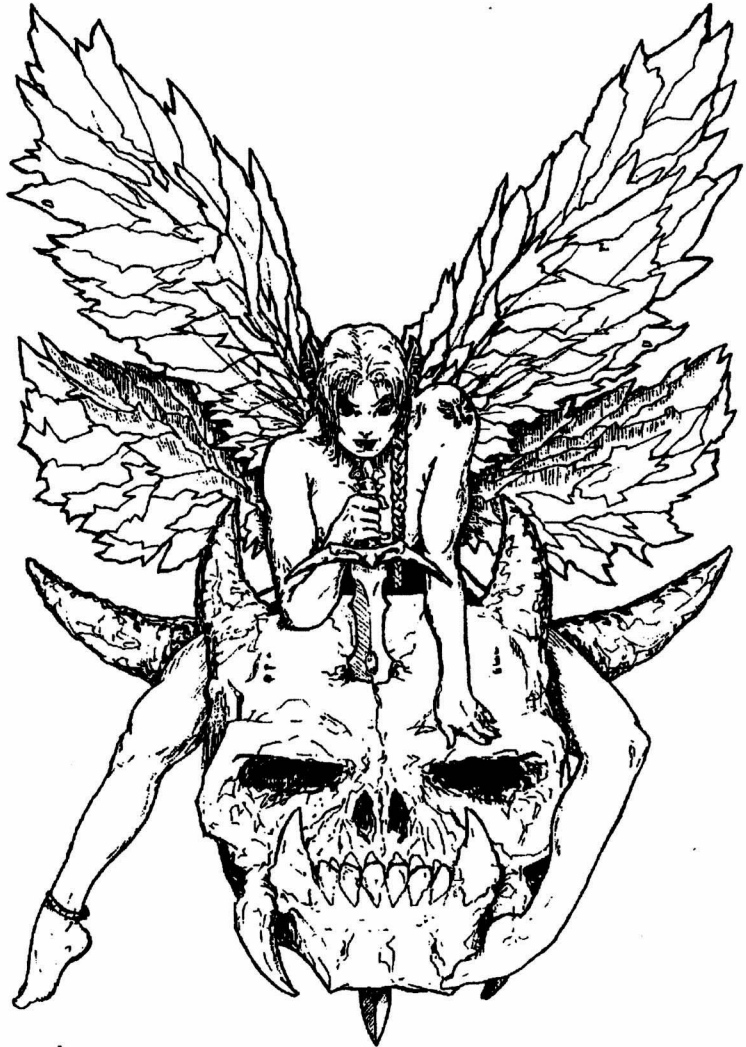
These tips are very expensive and rare in the extreme. They cost twice what an elemental coin of the same type costs, as they are often forged directly from these coins when made. The attributes of the heads depend on the type of element they are forged from.

Air - The range modifiers are +20/+40/+60. Cost

2,000 sp.

Earth - There is a +1 bonus to the Damage Step. There are additional abilities when combined with the Elemental Earth shaft (see below). Cost 200 sp.

Fire - Functions like the Flamer head above, except with a +2 bonus to the Damage Step. These heads require special orichalcum-lined containers to prevent fires. Cost 2,000 sp.



Water - These tips are rarely used by Archers. There are additional abilities when combined with the Elemental Water shaft (see below). Cost 200 sp.

Wood - These tips are very rarely made or used, and often only for very specific purposes. (e.g. ritual magic) Statistics for their use would depend on the specifics of the situation, and so are not provided.

"These are the best around. The water and Earth ones are useful, and nobody can deny the Air ones. But the Fire ones are the most fun. Sure they're dangerous, but I just keep praying my Quiver doesn't mix these and my blood tips up. No, that can't happen...forget I said it." --I.T.

Blood Magic

Cost: 100 sp/200 sp

These tips are magically powered by the Archer's

blood. They are made with metal fins attached to a living crystal core. In contrast to blood charms, blood arrows are empowered just before use, and cause 2 points of blood magic damage that can be healed after the arrow is fired. The Archer draws the blood arrow, uses the tip to cut the forearm and draw blood, which is absorbed into the crystal core of the tip, and then fires the arrow as normal. It does not take any extra time to empower the blood magic tip. The blood tip gives a +2 bonus on the Damage Step if the Attack Test is successful. This bonus only applies for the shot that is made immediately after empowering the tip, any following shots must be empowered in the same manner. Firing the tip without empowering it does not result in any adverse effects, instead the tip does normal damage.

"These are some of the prettiest tips I own. Useful too. The only bad thing is, look here, see all these scars? You can tell anyone who uses them a mile away, just look at their forearm." --I.T.

Shafts

Non-magical

Curving

Cost: 2X/Normal

The shaft is fletched to fly in an curving arc, allowing for certain trick shots. The degree of curvature is dependent on the fletching, and can range from very slight to a full 90-degree turn. The degree of curvature is set at the time the arrow is created. Due to the nature of the fletching, the arrow can curve in two opposite directions, depending on how the Archer nocks the arrow. For example, a typical arrow might be fletched to curve to either the right or left, and the Archer would simply flip the arrow around to make it curve in the opposite direction. These arrows do not spin during flight like normal arrows, and so their range is reduced significantly (-20/-40/-60). The Attack Step is given a -1 penalty when using this type of arrow, due to the changes in flight characteristics.

"These are fun, and they confuse the enemy quite a bit. For me, though, I'd rather use the ricochet tips - more accurate. Just a personal thing." --I.T.

Flamer

Cost: 2X/2X

This shaft is made of special wood, designed to burn well when exposed to flame. These are often combined with Flamer heads and designed so that the burning head of the arrow catches the shaft on fire during flight. Flammable objects hit by a flamer shaft have more time to catch fire, and damage from such a shaft, if not removed, is prolonged. Every round for 10 rounds after a successful hit, the arrow causes Step 4 damage to the target.

"These are useful for those special occasions when you have to burn somebody out. I usually keep a couple around, just in case. You want that many? Might I ask what for...?" --I.T.

Flight

Cost: Normal/Normal

These shafts are longer and lighter, and are designed to fly greater distances. They have a -1 penalty to the Damage Step due to their light weight, and their range modifiers are +10/+20/+30.

"These are fun to take out those confident Therans, who sit just outside what they think is your bow range and watch. And if you put the Fire tip on, they're even more fun. Have I shown you those yet?" --I.T.

Prestressed

Cost: Normal/Normal

These arrows are designed to break upon impact. They are often used during sieges where the attackers want to prevent the enemy from reusing their arrows. Any normal arrow can be changed into one of this type in one round by an Archer with a successful Half-Magic test against a Difficulty of 6.

"These are pretty easy to make. Well, for me they are. I've already made these, and I'll give them to you cheap." --I.T.

String

Cost: 5X/2X

The string shaft is hollow, and contains packed string, usually hair from some creature magically joined end to end and painted red. As the arrow flies from the bow, the string spools out behind it (assuming the Archer tied it down before firing) to a maximum distance of 100 yards. Two varieties exist, one where the string remains attached to the shaft at the end of flight, bringing the arrow to a halt, the other where the arrow continues to fly and leaves the string behind. There is a -1 penalty to the Damage Step, and the range modifiers are -10/-20/-30 due to the extra drag.

"Never used one, but that's probably because I'm not very creative. I'm sure they have uses, just haven't figured one out yet." --I.T.

Whistler

Cost: 5X/Normal

This shaft is carved to let out a low whistling sound when shot from a bow. They are often used to signal attacks. Depending on the way the shaft is cut, the sound can range from a high-pitched whistle to a low moan. In no case will the sound be loud enough to sound over pitched melee unless it flies very close by.

"I love to play with these. Scared off many a superstitious villager with one of these. It's none of your business why I had to scare off villagers. Have I shown you the Fire tips yet...?" --I.T.

Magical

Elemental

Cost: Special

These shafts, like their corresponding heads, are rare, and cost even more to make. They are usually only

found in treasure troves from the pre-Scourge era or possessed by palatial guards. They cost three times their corresponding elemental coin value, and are remarkably thinner than a normal shaft due to their increased strength. Their attributes are dependent on the type of element they are forged from. All of the shafts are unbreakable short of magical means.

Air - The range modifiers are +20/+40/+60. Cost 3,000 sp.

Earth - None. When combined with Elemental Earth tip, can pierce stone and earth as if it doesn't exist. Cost 300 sp.

Fire - Works like the Flamer shaft, but the damage will last forever. These require special containers to hold, and also modifications to the bow or crossbow firing them. Orichalcum is used to line all of the surfaces these arrows come into contact with, and the nock of the shaft is covered with orichalcum. Cost 3,500 sp.

Water - None. When combined with Elemental Water tip, can be used underwater as effectively as in the air, with no range penalties. Cost 300 sp.

Wood - This type of shaft is extremely rare, since True Wood is so difficult to acquire. Any shafts of this type are made for specific purposes (e.g. ritual magic).

"This Fire shaft I retrieved from a tree as it burst into flames. It was shot at me when I was scouting out a Theran ruin we believed was empty. I took it as a warning, but I couldn't leave the arrow, not one that interesting. I used some orichalcum gloves I had (don't ask, long story) to pull it out, and then I ran. Never had the urge to go back again, but I could get you the map there, for a fair price..." --I.T.

Levitating

Cost: 20X/20X

This arrow is unaffected by gravity, and flies in a straight line after being fired. It still suffers the range Attack modifiers as normal, but Long range is extended for a great distance, usually equal to several miles, before the bolt ceases forward movement. After it stops moving, it slowly drifts towards the ground over a period of several hours. They also enable Archers to fire their weapons in narrow spaces, like corridors, for long ranges without having to worry about the arc of normal arrows. These arrows are crafted with the use of a Named Spell of Levitation made permanent on the arrows, and so are very rare as the wizard must spend Legend Points to create them (see Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets, p.36).

"This shaft's uses are limited only by your imagination. Again, mine's pretty poor, so I've only used one, but it did the job!" --I.T.

Manufacture

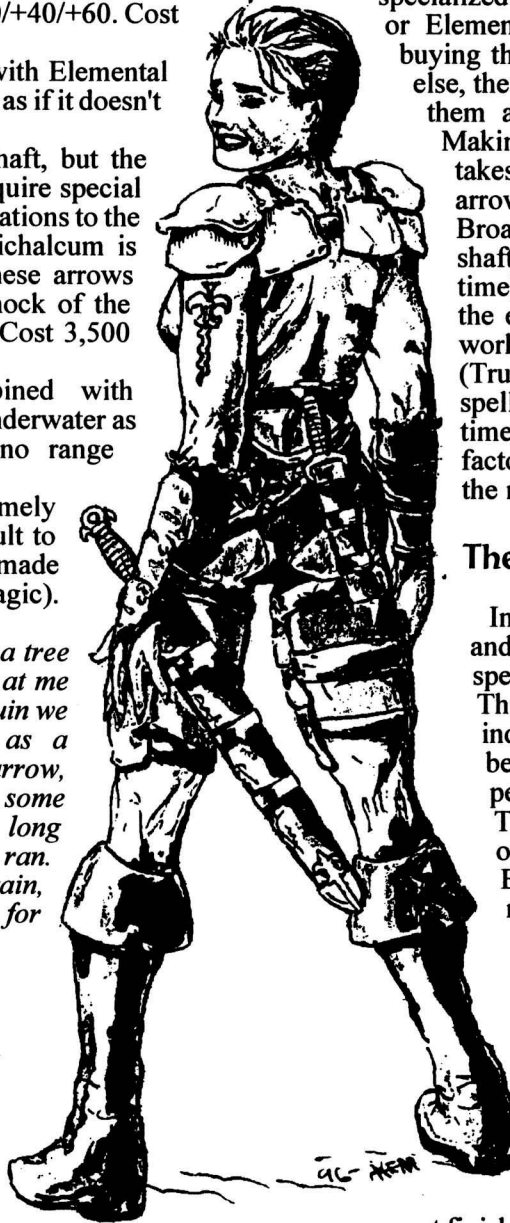
These shafts and heads can all be made by an Archer using the Half-Magic rules given in the *Adept's Way* (p. 114), with the exception of the magical arrows, which need to be created with the assistance of more specialized Adepts (Weaponsmiths, Wizards, or Elementalists). The costs given are for buying the shafts and heads from someone else, the costs for an Archer manufacturing them are based on the materials used.

Making non-magical shafts and heads takes twice as long as making normal arrows (except for Armor-piercing and Broad tips, and Flight and Curving shafts, which take the usual amount of time). Making magical arrows requires the efforts of someone who is able to work with the materials in question (True Elements or crystal) or cast the spells required (Levitation), and so the time for construction depends on other factors, but is no less than four times the normal amount of time.

The Threaded Quiver

In addition to manufacturing arrows and bolts, Archers can manufacture a special magical item called the Threaded Quiver. Many Archers individualize their Quiver, which can be made of any material, by adding personalized designs to the surface. The Quiver is also often lined with orichalcum in order to hold Elemental Fire, and can have multiple compartments to hold different arrows.

The creation of the Quiver takes the Archer three Circles, and specific tasks must be performed at each Circle in order to continue the creation of the Quiver. The Archer can not begin to create a Quiver before Second Circle, and so can not finish creation of the Quiver until Fourth Circle at the earliest. The first task the Archer must perform is the acquisition of the materials. The materials used should be very fine, such as expensive leather, espagra skin, or other hard-to-acquire materials, including the orichalcum that might be needed to line the Quiver. The second task is the manufacture of the Threaded Quiver. The time required for this task depends on the complexity and intricacy of its design, but should take no less than a week of time. Both of the first two steps require the Archer to make a Perception-based Half-Magic Test against a Difficulty Number of 12 to succeed. The third step is the weaving of a Thread to the Quiver. Using the Thread Weaving Talent, the Archer weaves a



Thread at Rank 1 to the Threaded Quiver, thereby enchanting it with its unique powers (see below). It can then also be used to create Threaded Arrows (see below).

The Quiver grants the Archer several unique and useful abilities. The Quiver can, upon request, "offer up" an arrow or bolt to the Archer. The Archer simply has to think of the desired arrow, and then, reaching for it in the quiver, will retrieve the arrow. This is useful for Archers who use many different types of arrows, often specialty ones, as described above, or when using the Quick Shot Talent. Also, the quiver can hold more arrows or bolts than its size might indicate. Although the exact number is left up to the GM, the Quiver typically holds twice the number of arrows or bolts a regular quiver of the same size would hold, and cuts the weight of these arrows in half. Note that only arrows and bolts receive this weight reduction, anything else placed in the quiver will weigh normal. In addition to all this, the Quiver has more abilities when used to make Threaded Arrows.

"I made my Quiver from Invae skin. I know that sounds disgusting, but I spent most of the time during the beginning stages of the Quiver fighting those cursed spirits that I thought it would be appropriate. Made the quiver very resistant to injury, let me tell you. Yes, spirits, not Horrors. Who's the expert here? Let me tell you a story..." --I.T.

Threaded Arrows

The Archer, through the Threaded Quiver, can create Threaded Arrows. Any arrows can become Threaded Arrows, although most Archers will use either magical arrows or personally created arrows. To make a Threaded Arrow, the Archer must place the arrow in the Threaded Quiver, which already has a Thread woven to it. The Archer then calls for the arrow, pulls it from the Quiver, and fires it at the target. This target is usually ceremonial, but can be anything. The Archer then retrieves the arrow, which is now capable of being magically connected to the Quiver. At any time after this ceremony, the Archer can choose to raise the Rank of the Thread woven to the Threaded Quiver. Doing so magically links up to three arrows, now called Threaded Arrows, to the Threaded Quiver, in essence making them one magical item. The Arrows' and the Quiver's Patterns fuse together, and the Archer has a Thread woven to this new Pattern. Since each Rank after the first in the Thread woven to the Threaded Quiver can support three arrows, an Archer with one Thread of Rank 6 woven to the Threaded Quiver can link the Quiver to fifteen Threaded Arrows (three for each Rank after the first). The number of arrows linked in this way is determined when the Rank in the Thread is acquired, with a maximum of three.

Threaded Arrows are useful in several ways. They can be called back to the Quiver using an ability similar to the Call Arrow Talent (ED, p. 100), except that all Threaded Arrows are returned within the round. No

roll needs to be made. Also, Threaded Arrows receive a +1 bonus to any Talent Step involving the firing of the Arrow, e.g. Called Shot, Missile Weapons, Bank Shot, True Shot, but not to Talents where the Arrow isn't actually fired (Stopping Aim, Mystic Aim). Direction Arrow does not receive such a bonus. The Flame Arrow Talent is typically not used on Threaded Arrows, as it destroys them, but if it is, it also does not receive the bonus. Threaded Arrows also get a +1 bonus to the Damage Step when they strike.

Most Archers work very hard to create a set of Threaded Arrows, linked to their Threaded Quiver. The Arrows are typically manufactured by the Archer, and have been personalized to suit the Archer's tastes. The Arrows and Quiver provide the Archer with many advantages, but are also the Archer's weak spot. Many Archers have the quiver as one of their Pattern Items, usually at least a Minor one, and they must wait a year and a day after the loss or destruction of a Threaded Quiver to begin construction on a new one. The Quiver and Arrows provide none of the normal benefits for anyone other than the Archer who created them, nor can they ever be made to, but possessing them provides a distinct advantage over the Archer. Most Archers will go to great lengths to recover their Threaded Quivers and Arrows, for obvious reasons.

"I spent the better part of a week once trying to get back one of my Threaded Arrows. The Quiver couldn't call it, and it turned out to have fallen into a zone where magic simply failed to function. Don't ask me to explain. Our wizard couldn't figure it out. You don't believe me again? Let me tell you a little something about the Western Catacombs. Yes, in Parlainth..." --I.T.

BLOOD WOOD

MAGICAL ITEMS

MAGICAL AND TREASURE ITEMS

The following section describes magical items and treasures that characters might find (or even purchase) while adventuring in and around the Blood Wood. These items range from common magical items similar to blood charms (pp. 258 - 259, ED) and espagra scale cloaks (p. 257, ED) to powerful unique treasures similar to Purifier (pp. 282 - 283, ED) or the Mask of Oltion (p. 280, ED). All of the common magical items, as well as the thread items, are crafted by the Blood Warders.

COMMON MAGICAL ITEMS

The following common magical items are all available for sale in the Blood Wood. Many of these items might also be found in elsewhere in Barsaive due to the black market trade which flows down the Mothingale River. The costs listed are those found in the Blood Wood. If these items are found outside of the Blood Wood, they should cost at least twice the listed amount, if not 3 to 4 times the cost listed.

BLOOD KARMA (BLOOD CHARM)

Made of a small diamond in the center of an intricate weave of gold, silver and copper wire, blood karma charms cause their wearer 1 permanent point of damage that can never be healed, even after the charm is used. In addition, the wearer must spend 1 point of Karma when attaching the charm, to attune it to his own Karma. When used, the charm allows the wearer to spend multiple Karma points on a single test, at a cost of 1 point of damage per Karma point spent. The character may continue to add additional Karma dice, one at a time, to the test in question until he has either achieved an Average success in the action he is attempting, runs out of Karma, decides to stop. The damage caused by use of the charm cannot be healed for a year and a day. Karma Charms can only be used once, and cannot be recharged. Once used, the diamond in the charm cracks and turns a dusty black color, and it may never be reused.

Cost: 1,000 silver pieces

Creation Difficulty: 17

CHAIR OF COMFORT

These wooden chairs may be crafted in any shape or style, but they are always possessed of the grace and beauty characteristic of elven crafts. True Wood is used in their construction, and gives them exceptional strength while also giving them a springy quality as comfortable as cloth cushions. Additionally, these chairs molds themselves to the shape of the person sitting in them, so that the experience is never an unpleasant one. The chairs also have the unique

property of allowing blood elven thorns to pass sink into them without causing injury or pain to the blood elf or damaging the chair in any way. Chairs of this type that are large enough for trolls or obsidimen are, however, exceedingly rare.

Cost: 300 sp (the list price is for normal sized chairs; troll/obsidimen sized chairs cost at least 350 sp)

HUNTSMAN'S BOOTS

An improved version of Dry Boots (p.70, Earthdawn Companion), these are leather boots designed to be the perfect footwear for a huntsman who spends extended periods of time in the forest. Woven with kernels of True Air and True Water, these boots keep the wearer's feet both warm and dry, and they add a springiness to his step that makes a long day of hunting feel less tiring. A character wearing a pair of these boots can walk up to 30 miles a day instead of the standard 25 (see Travel, pp. 212 - 213, ED).

Cost: 350 sp

OAK-LEAF CLOAK

These cloaks are woven of leaves harvested from blood oak trees common to the Blood Wood. They provide a measure of protection from cold and rain, though they are primarily used to camouflage those elves who need to move about the Blood Wood unobserved. When in a wooded outdoors setting, the cloak aids the wearer by blending in with the wearer's surroundings. This provides a +2 step bonus to his Dexterity or appropriate talent tests for remaining hidden. Within the Blood Wood, this bonus is +3 steps, and when the character is actually hiding in or next to a blood oak tree, the bonus is +5 steps.

For three months of the year, the leaves of the cloak turn a bright crimson, just as the leaves of the blood oak do. During this time the cloak is only effective when the character hides within the branches of a blood oak tree, but is effectively useless for stealth in other situations. The character gains the normal +5 step bonus when hiding in or near a blood oak tree, but gains no bonus of any other kind.

Cost: 400 sp

THREAD ITEMS AND WEAPONS

The following thread weapons are similar to those described in the Earthdawn Companion. All of these weapons are crafted by the Blood Warders and are predominately used by Exolashers and Wardens, though other blood elves, especially those of the Talshara ranelle have been know to use them. Most of these items can be used without threads woven to them, but their effectiveness is greatly reduced in this case.

ARROWS OF THE THUNDERCLOUD

Maximum Threads: 2

Spell Defense: 15

Though referred to as Arrows of the Thundercloud, this item is really a combination of a magical quiver and the elven warbow arrows placed within it. The quivers are crafted of dark blue leather edged in silver, and it is to the quiver that the thread is woven when using this item. The arrows used with this quiver are specially made, and have pure white fletching and heads crafted of crystal, within which streaks of silvery light flare up from time to time. Until placed in the quiver, the arrows are normal in every way. Each quiver can hold, and empower up to eight arrows at one time. When fired from a bow, the arrows are consumed. New arrows cost 5 sp each, and must be kept in a quiver for at least 24 hours before gaining the thread rank effects described below. Note that normal warbow arrows do not gain these benefits.

Without a thread attached to the quiver, the arrows in this quiver have normal Damage and Range for Elven Warbow arrows (p. 253, ED).

Thread Ranks

Rank 1 **Cost:** 200

Key Knowledge: The character must know the Name of the quiver.

Effect: When fired, the arrow transforms into a jagged bolt of lightning. This gives the arrows a Damage Step of STR +8. The arrow is consumed in the transformation.

Rank 2 **Cost:** 300

Effect: The arrows do STR + 9 damage. In addition, when the arrow strikes its target, in addition to the extra damage (see Rank One), it also produces a loud thunderclap that can stun creatures in the area. The wielder makes a test using the talent or skill used to fire the bow and compares the result to the Spell Defense of each creature or character within 10 yards of the arrow's target. If this test is successful, the character or creature is stunned for a number of combat rounds equal to the thread rank. During this time, any and all tests made suffer a -1 step penalty. The primary target is automatically affected, and suffers a -3 step penalty for the same duration.

Rank 3 **Cost:** 500

Effect: The arrows do STR + 10 damage. In addition, for a cost of 3 points of Strain, the wielder can gain a + 3 step bonus to his Missile Weapon step when firing the arrows. This bonus does not apply to the stun test (see Rank Two).

THORN BOW

Maximum Threads: 2

Spell Defense: 12

Thorn bows are magical elven warbows whose shafts are built of wood that sprouts thorns similar to those that the blood elves themselves bear. These weapons are crafted by Queen Alachia's Blood Warders for use by her elite archers among the exolahsers. Each of these bows was crafted originally for a specific

member of the exolahsers, and have been passed down through the ranks over the years. There are a total of 25 of these bows in all the Blood Wood. These bows are very rare, and exolahsers have been known to go to extreme lengths to protect them. Note that many wielders of Arrows of the Thundercloud use Thorn bows. In this case, the arrows do damage based on the type of arrow used.

Thread Ranks

Rank 1 **Cost:** 200

Key Knowledge: The character must know the Name of the bow.

Effect: Arrows shot from the bow do STR + 6 Damage.

Rank 2 **Cost:** 300

Effect: Arrows fired from the bow do STR + 7 Damage. The bow's range increases to 50/225/350 yards.

Rank 3 **Cost:** 500

Key Knowledge: The character must know the Name of the elf for whom the bow was originally crafted.

Effect: All arrows shot from the bow sprout backward-pointing thorns while in flight, causing STR+8 Damage. In addition, on an Armor-Defeating hit (an Excellent or better success), the arrow becomes lodged in the target. Pulling the arrow free of the target causes an additional Step 4 damage. No armor protects against this damage.

Rank 4 **Cost:** 800

Effect: The wielder gains +1 step to his Missile Weapons talent or skill. The bow's range increases to 60/250/400 yards.

Rank 5 **Cost:** 1300

Key Knowledge: The character must know the Name of the Warder who created the bow, and the date upon which it was given to the Archer who first bore it.

Effect: For the cost of 2 strain, the character may draw one of the thorns from the shaft of the bow. It will elongate into a full-sized arrow, which may be fired normally. This arrow benefits from all other powers of the Thorn Bow. Each bow may create up to 10 of these arrows per day.

THORN MEN SPEARS

Maximum Threads: 1

Spell Defense: 13

These are the spears wielded by the thorn men which guard the Blood Wood. They are normal spears in size and shape, though they sprout thorns up and down their length. When wielded by thorn men, these spears do the damage listed under Rank 4. When used by an adept, the damage is based on the rank of the thread woven. These spears are created by the same ritual used to create thorn men. They cannot be purchased, and can only be obtained by slaying a thorn man. Over the years, a number of these spears have been acquired by members of the exolahsers and Warders, who use

them as thread weapons.

Thread Ranks

Rank 1 **Cost: 200**

Key Knowledge: The character must know the Name of the spear.

Effect: The spear does STR + 4 damage when wielded in combat.

Rank 2 **Cost: 300**

Effect: The spear does STR + 5 damage when wielded in combat.

Rank 3 **Cost: 500**

Effect: The spear does STR + 6 damage when wielded in combat.

Rank 4 **Cost: 800**

Effect: The spear does STR + 7 damage when wielded in combat.

THORN SWORD

Maximum Threads: 2

Spell Defense: 13

These swords are crafted of wood woven with True Wood, True Earth and True Water. They are incredibly light and flexible magical weapons, used primarily by Queen Alachia's exolashers and the Wardens. Though very unusual, in certain rare instances, the Queen has awarded one of these blades to a particularly favored hero from outside the Blood Wood. The sword possesses a basket hilt woven of living thorn vines that flower with miniature rose blossoms throughout the year. Without a thread attached, these swords are as normal broad swords, and do STR + 5 damage.

Thread Ranks

Rank 1 **Cost: 200**

Key Knowledge: The character must know the Name of the sword.

Effect: The wooden sword is as effective as a broad sword in combat, but does STR + 6 Damage.

Rank 2 **Cost: 300**

Effect: The sword does STR + 7 Damage.

Rank 3 **Cost: 500**

Key Knowledge: The character must learn the Name of the rosebush from which the vine that forms the basket hilt of his sword was taken.

Effect: The character may call upon the essence of the thorns to protect him. For the cost of 2 strain, the character can add +2 steps to his Avoid Blow or Riposte talent (his choice), for a number of rounds equal to the thread rank. If the wielder has neither of these talents, he gains one (again, his choice) at Rank 2.

Rank 4 **Cost: 800**

Effect: The sword does STR + 8 Damage. The character gains +3 to his Avoid Blow or Riposte talent when calling upon the essence of the thorns.

Rank 5 **Cost: 1300**

Deed: The character must take a cutting from the vine that forms the basket hilt of his sword and plant it in the gardens of the palace of Queen Alachia. Once



it is planted, the character must Name it, taking 2 points of blood magic damage which cannot be healed for a year and a day. The cutting will immediately bloom, growing a single rose. This deed is worth 2,100 Legend Points.

Effect: The sword causes bleeding wounds in combat. When the wielder Wounds a target using the sword, that target suffers 2 points of damage per round until special care is taken to bind the wound. See the Earthdawn Companion for more information about bleeding wounds.

LEGENDARY TREASURE ITEMS

The following two items are both unique treasures, and are spoken of in legends told in the Blood Wood.

BLOOD QUILL OF MORALAR

Maximum Threads: 1

Spell Defense: 19

The Blood Warler Moralar, a Nethermancer adept, crafted this quill from a tail feather of his first blood raven familiar in the years just following the Scourge. Originally intended as nothing more than a memento by which to remember the bird, Moralar found that the quill somehow possessed the bird's intelligence, and that he could communicate, in a limited fashion, with the dead bird's spirit. The quill is a long, lustrous black feather, and any writing performed with it is always deep red, whatever the color of the ink used. Moralar died shortly after the Scourge, and the quill was somehow lost. Rumors insist that the quill is among Queen Alachia's collection of pattern items, but if this is true, she has offered no confirmation. In fact, she has tasked the Blood Warler Takaris with finding the quill, giving support to the theory that the quill remains unclaimed.

Rank 1 **Cost:** 300

Key Knowledge: The character must learn the name of the Quill.

Effect: Add +1 to the character's Spell Defense and Mystic Armor ratings.

Rank 2 **Cost:** 500

Effect: For the cost of 1 Strain, the Quill will scribe as the character dictates for one hour. The handwriting is spidery and sharply slanting, but legible.

Rank 3 **Cost:** 800

Key Knowledge: The character must learn the name of the familiar whose tail feather was used to craft the Quill.

Effect: Once per day, for the cost of 2 strain, the character may ask the spirit of the dead familiar a question. This must be a fairly simple question, and one whose answer a living bird might be able to find. For example, the Quill's owner might ask how many men were camped in the next valley, as a living bird would be able to fly to that valley and count them. After an amount of time appropriate to the difficulty of the question, the Quill writes the answer.

Rank 4 **Cost:** 1300

Effect: Add+2 to the character's Spell Defense Rating. In addition, the character may ask the spirit of the dead familiar two questions per day. Each question costs the character 2 points of Strain.

Rank 5 **Cost:** 2100

Key Knowledge: The familiar whose tail feather was used to craft the Quill was Moralar's first, and he never took another. The character must learn the reason that Moralar forswore any additional familiars.

Effect: The character may dip the Quill in the blood of a recently deceased person and make a Thread

Weaving test against the person's Spell Defense. If the test is successful, the Quill is attuned to that person's spirit. For the cost of 3 strain per question, the character may ask up to three questions of the deceased person. The spirit of the dead familiar acts as a messenger, carrying the questions to the person's spirit and returning with the answers, so the process is a fairly slow one. Once the familiar's spirit returns, the Quill will scribe the answer in its usual way. The magic of the Quill will overcome much of the normal reluctance of dead spirits, ensuring that some sort of answer will be returned. The caster may, however, have to search the answer carefully for the truth it contains. The attunement fades after either the 3rd question has been asked, or one hour has passed, whichever ever occurs sooner.

Rank 6 **Cost:** 3400

Deed: The character must swear blood oath never to take a familiar. This oath causes the character 1 point of permanent damage that may never be healed (see Blood Oaths, Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets). If the character ever breaks this oath and takes a familiar, he suffers a ritual scar that brands him an oathbreaker, causing a wound that cannot be healed for a year and a day, and all powers of the Quill immediately cease to function for him. The deed is worth 2100 Legend Points. Note that a character who already has a familiar may not perform this deed until his bond with his familiar is somehow broken.

Effect: Once per day, the owner of the Quill may summon forth the spirit of the dead familiar. This spirit is a Strength 3 Ally Spirit, which appears in Astral space in the form of a huge raven. The spirit will willingly serve the character for 1 service or up to 1 hour. No attempt to force the spirit into additional services will work, and this particular spirit may not be summoned in any other way. Use the following statistics for the spirit. See the Summoning section of Magic, A Manual of Mystic Secrets for a description of spirit powers and the nature of summoned spirits and the services they perform.

Strength 3 Ally Spirit

DEX: 8 STR: 9 TOU: 8
PER: 10 WIL: 8 CHA: 7

Initiative: 9 Physical Defense: 12
(15 when physically manifest)
Number of Attacks: 2 Spell Defense: 12
Attack: 9 Social Defense: 12
Damage: 12 Armor: 10
Number of Spells: 3 Mystic Armor: 5
Spellcasting: 12 Knockdown: 10
Effect: Varies by spell Recovery Tests: 4

Death Rating: 46 Combat Movement: 120
Wound Threshold: 13 Full Movement: 240
Unconsciousness Rating: 39

Karma Points: 20 Karma Step: 5

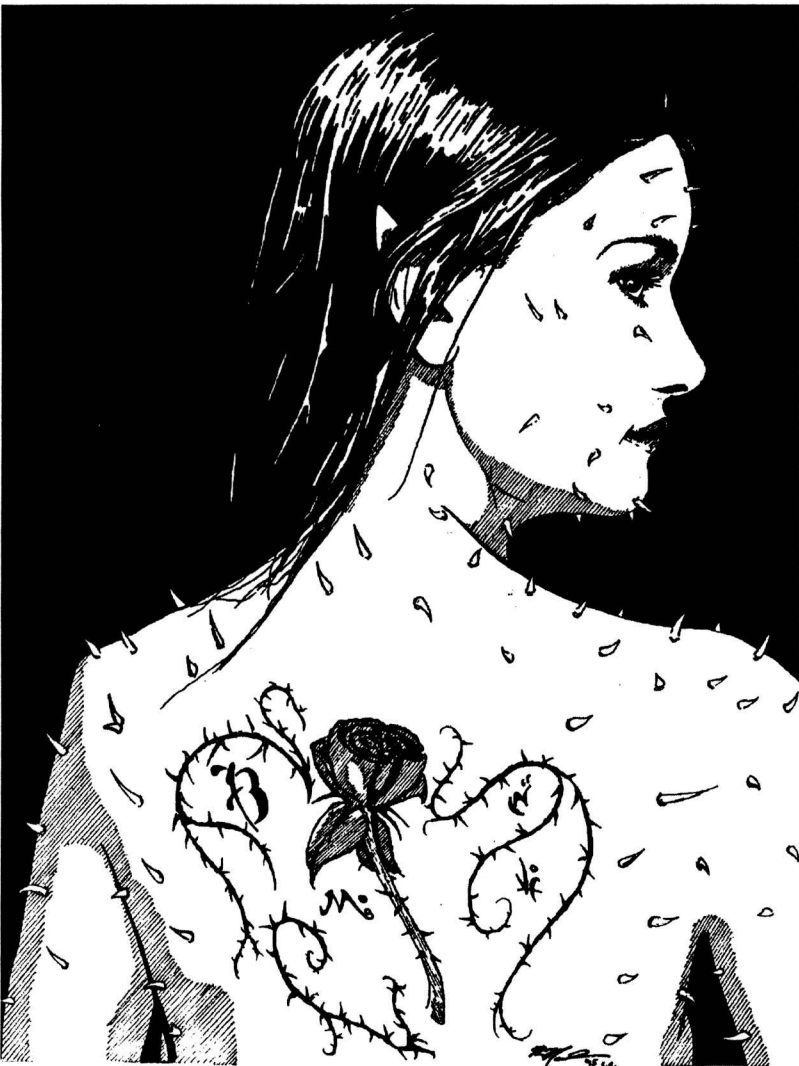
Powers: Aid Summoner, Astral Sight 13, Confusion 11, Empathic Sense 10, Evil Eye 11, Find 13, Manifest,

Spells (Circle 3 Nethermancer)

Legend Points: 450

Equipment: None

Loot: None



KELLIMAR'S ARMOR OF ROSE PETALS

Maximum Threads: 2

Spell Defense: 18

Originally conceived as a variation on fernweave armor, this armor, made entirely of red rose petals, was crafted for Kellimar, a warrior adept who was one of Queen Alachia's most trusted exolashers. Kellimar sacrificed his life to protect the Queen from a vicious Horror invasion shortly before the casting of the Ritual of Thorns. The Queen was saved, but Kellimar's body, and the armor he wore, were lost. The armor has never been recovered, but could easily be hidden or lost somewhere within the immense and dense tangle that is Blood Wood. The rose petals that make up the armor are sustained through the magic of the armor's creation, and do not require the special care that fernweave does. A character can gain no protection at all from the Kellimar's Armor of Rose Petals until he attaches a thread to it.

Rank 1 **Cost:** 300

Key Knowledge: The character must learn the Armor's name.

Effect: The armor provides an Armor Rating of 4 and a Mystic Armor Rating of 4.

Rank 2 **Cost:** 500

Effect: The armor provides an Armor Rating and Mystic Armor Rating of 5 each.

Rank 3 **Cost:** 800

Key Knowledge: The character must learn the circumstances of Kellimar's death.

Effect: The beauty of the armor dazzles characters who interact with the wearer, giving him a +2 step bonus to his Charisma step for all Interaction Tests (p. 237, ED). The character also adds +1 to his Social Defense.

Rank 4 **Cost:** 1300

Effect: The armor provides an Armor Rating and Mystic Armor Rating of 6 each. Also, the character adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Rank 5 **Cost:** 2100

Key Knowledge: The character must learn the name of the Horror that slew Kellimar.

Effect: When in combat with any Horror or Horror-construct, the Armor Rating and Mystic Armor Rating of the armor are 9 each, and the character adds +3 to his Spell Defense and Social Defense ratings.

Rank 6 **Cost:** 3400

Effect: The armor provides an Armor Rating and Mystic Armor Rating of 7 each, 10 each when fighting Horrors or Horror-constructs. In addition, Horrors or Horror-constructs must score an Extraordinary success on any attack tests to defeat the armor.

Rank 7 **Cost:** 5500

Deed: The character must track down and destroy the Horror that slew Kellimar. He must then bring proof of the Horror's destruction to Queen Alachia of Blood Wood, so that all of the Elven Court may learn that Kellimar was avenged. This deed is worth 3,400 Legend Points, in addition to any Legend Points earned in the battle against the Horror.

Effect: The character adds +2 to his Spell Defense and Social Defense ratings. The armor may only be defeated on an Extraordinary success, and Horrors or Horror-constructs cannot defeat it at all.

CORRUPT SPIRITS

BY DAN ALLARD

Introduction

Just as the Scourge caused many name-givers to lose a part of their humanity and become corrupt, so have many spirits succumbed to the influence of the Scourge. The spirits presented here represent several examples of spirits who have been affected, either physically, mentally, or both, by the corrupting powers of Horrors and the Scourge. GMs will need to have access to the *Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets* sourcebook for information on the various spirit powers utilized by these beings.

On Using Corrupt Spirits

Typically, a successful Summoning will conjure a healthy, normal spirit to follow the summoner's orders. However, there may be times when the GM will decide that the summoned spirit is less than ideal, particularly if the caster is summoning from a region of astrally corrupt space. All spirits presented here are still subject to powers affecting spirits, such as *Summoning Circle*, even though they may be otherwise uncontrollable using spells and half-magic.

Several of these spirits are permanently manifested for some reason, and may be met as one of any other monster encounters. Note that these might still respond to a summoning, though they cannot travel through Astral space to reach the summoning spellcaster.

It is possible that some of these spirits may be cured of their respective conditions or possibly dispelled back to their original planes; however, others accept their damaged mental and physical conditions or are too far gone to be helped.

Various Unnamed Spirits

The following spirits are not Named spirits, though several of these have names that others refer to them by. Any of these may be summoned using half-magic, though a few spirits require the summoner to be in a particular part of Barsaive for the summoning to be successful.

Wildriss'sinn

Strength 3 Air Spirit

DEX 11 STR 9 TOU 9
PER 7 WIL 10 CHA 7

Initiative: 14 Physical Defense: 17(22)
Number of Attacks: 3 Spell Defense: 12
Attack Step: 14 Social Defense: 12
Damage Step: 11 Armor: 7
Number of Spells: 3 Mystic Armor: 9

Spellcasting: 9 Knockdown: 9
Effect: See Below Recovery Test: 4

Death Rating: 50 Combat Move: 170
Wound Threshold: 14 Full Move: 320
Unconscious Rating: 43

Karma Step: 5 Karma Points: 20

Legend Pts: 4,800
Equip: None
Loot: None

Powers: *Aid Summoner*, *Astral Sight* 10, *Detect True Element*, *Engulf* 13, *Manifest*, *Manipulate Element*, *Share Knowledge*, *Spear* 12, *Enrage Element* 13, *Spells (Elementalist 3, Air only)*

Wildriss'sinn was corrupted by the scourge along with many other elemental spirits. He shows few outward signs of this corruption; his corruption manifests itself as a dangerous insanity. When summoned, Wildriss'sinn will behave as a normal air spirit, and will even attempt to be helpful beyond duties required of him. However, he is in constant danger of losing control; while under the control of a summoning spellcaster, Wildriss'sinn must make a Willpower test against a difficulty of 8 each round to keep his personality from changing. If he fails at any time, the Air Spirit will fly into a manic rage and assault any living beings within his sight. If he has not manifested himself before this time, he will use *Manifest* as his first action, and use *Engulf* and *Spear* to assault his new opponents. If Wildriss'sinn's death rating drops to critical levels, he will come to his wits and attempt to flee the combat.

Wildriss'sinn is aware of his damaged mental condition and will not normally speak of it with his summoners; however, he wishes to be cured of it and may ask for help if he suspects the summoner is powerful enough to help him. The cure for Wildriss'sinn may well form the basis for an adventure, although a party will not be likely to want to take Wildriss'sinn along, as he will continue to suffer from his dangerous insanity until cured.

The Reishhids

Strength 1 Water Spirits

DEX 9 STR 8 TOU 8
PER 8 WIL 8 CHA 7

Initiative: 12 Physical Defense: 13
Number of Attacks: 2 Spell Defense: 10
Attack Step: 11 Social Defense: 10
Damage: 12 Armor: 8

Number of Spells: 2 Mystic Armor: 6
 Spellcasting: 10 Knockdown: 8
 Effect: See Below Recovery Test: 4

Death Rating: 46 Combat Movement: 125
 Wound Threshold: 13 Full Movement: 250
 Unconscious Rating: 39

Karma Step: 4 Karma Points: 15

Legend Pts: 300
 Equip: None
 Loot: None

Powers: Astral Sight 9, Detect True Element, Engulf 9, Manifest (permanent), Manipulate Element, Spear 9

The Reissshids are a group of corrupt water spirits who appear to be trapped permanently upon the physical plane, wandering together from place to place along rivers and across seas. The Scourge has left these spirits almost mindless; now they only hunger to engulf and devour the living. Their behavior is similar to that of the Sirens of legend, but they have no vocal power of control over the living. Reports tell of these spirits traveling in groups of ten or more; GMs should adjust their numbers as he or she sees fit.

Reissshids take vaguely elven forms when they rise from the water, though their elven forms are somewhat wrathlike and non-corporeal. When Reissshids arrive, they will begin to make a low howling sound; this soon rises to a high pitched scream. The screaming has no real game effect, though anyone who is in hearing range will find it unnerving. The Reissshids will attempt to engulf shorebound name-givers in the form of a large wave; they will attack name-givers in boats by tearing up the boat out from under them. Each round that the Reissshids attack, they cause 2 points of damage to a wooden boat structure.

Reissshids do not typically attack boats that are moving faster than their own movement rate; they will give up an attack if a boat manages to reach a speed faster than they can travel. These water spirits will continue in their attack until at least half of their number are destroyed. Being mostly mindless, they are unaffected by fear causing spells or talents.

Legend has it that these spirits were forced into submission by a Horror, and became free again at the end of the Scourge. However, they had been altered in

such a way that they could not return of the Elemental Plane of Water. Adepts may wish to figure out a way to dispel these beings back to their own plane; to do it, they will certainly need to find out the name and nature of the Horror that enslaved them in the first place.



The Frozen

Strength 7 Water Spirit

DEX 9 STR 12 TOU 11
 PER 11 WIL 12 CHA 7

Initiative: 12 Physical Defense: 13
 Number of Attacks: 5 Spell Defense: 14

Attack Step: 11 Social Defense: 13
Damage Step: 15 Armor: 10
Number of Spells: 5 Mystic Armor: 6
Spellcasting: 10 Knockdown: 12
Effect: See Below Recovery Test: 4

Death Rating: 55 Combat Move: 125
Wound Threshold: 15 Full Move: 250
Unconscious Rating: 48

Karma Step: 8 Karma Points: 45

Legend Pts: 3,500
Equip: None
Loot: None

Powers: Astral Sight 18, Detect True Element, Engulf 19, Manifest (permanent), Manipulate Element, Spear 19, Enrage Element 19

The Frozen is a corrupt water spirit that dwells in the upper reaches of the Caucavic mountains, haunting what villages it comes across in its wanderings. The spirit appears to be completely mindless, and is often mistaken for a Horror; this is understandable, considering its horrific appearance. The Frozen is bound to the material plane and is unable to return to the plane of water.

The Frozen suffered long under the grip of the Horror Icebringer, serving its needs until near the end of the Scourge. Icebringer abandoned the spirit along with several others; the Frozen was the only one to survive the departure of the Horror. The form of the spirit had been changed over the years; once a normal water spirit, the Frozen is now a great beast of ice, resembling a pile of bones with great spikes of ice pointing out in all directions. At the center of the beast is a huge face of ice resembling that of a name-giver; the face has a permanently blank expression on it.

The Frozen is driven by conflicting desires; primarily, a seething anger moves the spirit to attack anything it encounters. On the other hand, it feels an instinct to return to its home plane; the sane part of its mind suspects it might be cured of its condition if it is able to return to the plane of water. A name-giver will have to make a Charisma test against the spirit's Willpower to convince it to keep from attacking if the name-giver offers to help return it to its home plane; certain Charisma based talents may be used for this test (e.g. First Impression). In the event that a name-giver is able to restore the Frozen from its mental and physical condition, the spirit will be likely to try and reward the name-giver in whatever way it can.

This spirit will only respond to a summoning if the summoning takes place in the colder reaches of the Caucavic mountains.

Liar

Strength 5 Ally Spirit

DEX 8 STR 9 TOU 11
PER 12 WIL 9 CHA 9

Initiative: 9 Physical Defense: 12 (15)
Number of Attacks: 3 Spell Defense: 12
Attack Step: 9 Social Defense: 13
Damage Step: 12 Armor: 9
Number of Spells: 4 Mystic Armor: 6
Spellcasting: 10 knockdown: 8
Effect: See Below Recovery Test: 4

Death Rating: 53 Combat Move: 120
Wound Threshold: 14 Full Move: 240
Unconscious Rating: 44

Karma Step: 8 Karma Points: 20

Legend Pts: 1,000
Equip: None
Loot: None

Powers: Aid Summoner, Astral Sight 17, Empathic Sense 14, Find 17, Taunt 14, Disguise Self 17, Lifesence 17, Manifest, Confusion 14, Spells (Nethermancer 5)

A particularly nefarious ally spirit, a being known as Liar has caused trouble for many spellcasters. While this spirit can be bound to perform certain physical tasks for a summoner, he has a fatal flaw relating to his information gathering abilities. Any time information is requested of this spirit, there is a good chance that he will invent a deliberate falsehood or half-truth; Liar invents such falsehoods to cause as much trouble and damage to the summoner as possible. This spirit is also perfectly capable of telling the truth when necessary, especially if a lie would get him into immediate trouble.

Liar has little interest in improving his damaged psyche; his corruption has become a fundamental part of him. In any case, Liar's falsehoods are rarely discovered until after he has been released by the summoner. He uses his Disguise Self spirit power to make himself appear as a different name-giver each time he manifests; in this way he tries to hide his identity between summonings.

Liar is, in fact, the spirit of a fallen questor of Myjnbruje; the questor died during the Scourge, betrayed by a Horror that offered him immortality in exchange for the lives of other name-givers. The questor's spirit lingered after his death and was further tormented and corrupted by astrally dwelling Horrors, until finally reaching its current corrupt state.

Named Spirits

The following spirits are Named and require the spellcaster to use the Summon talent to contact them.

Aash'ih'iar

Strength 6 Air Spirit

DEX 9 STR 11 TOU 11
PER 8 WIL 13 CHA 7

Initiative: 12 Physical Defense: 15(20)
 Number of Attacks: 4 Spell Defense: 15
 Attack Step: 12 Social Defense: 13
 Damage Step: 12 Armor: 7
 Number of Spells: 4 Mystic Armor: 8
 Spellcasting: 10 Knockdown: 8
 Effect: See Below Recovery Test: 4

Death Rating: 58 Combat Move: 150
 Wound Threshold: 14 Full Move: 300
 Unconscious Rating: 49

Karma Step: 8 Karma Points: 30

Legend Pts: 4,100
 Equip: None
 Loot: None

Powers: Aid Summoner, Astral Sight 14, Detect True Element, Engulf 19, Manifest, Manipulate Element, Spear 17



Theran legend tells of the kila called "Sword of Empire" which patrolled much of Vasgothia near the beginning of the Scourge. The kila fell under the attack

of airborne Horrors; as part of this attack, a Horror spent months invading the mind of one of the Air Spirits that held the kila afloat. Finally the Air Spirit's mind cracked, and the spirit proceeded to wrestle control from the Elementalists that held it in yoke. With the spirit free and much of the kila damaged, the ship could no longer support itself and crashed to its destruction on the ground below.

The spirit, named Aash'ih'iar, retained enough of its sanity to feel terrible remorse over its actions, and sought for a way to make up for the damage it had caused. Somehow it survived the long Scourge, now trapped on the physical plane, waiting for name-givers to help him in his mission. When the Scourge finally ended, Aash'ih'iar began searching for name-givers to kidnap and bring to the location where the kila was destroyed. Unfortunately, the spirit suffers severe amnesia whenever it reaches the location where the kila was disabled; this point happens to be over a mile in the air over a location in eastern Vasgothia. Any name-givers in Aash'ih'iar's grasp are quickly forgotten, and typically fall to their deaths. Once Aash'ih'iar realizes what he is done, he again feels terrible remorse, but is not quite sane enough to realize that he shouldn't do it again.

Simply dispelling Aash'ih'iar to his home plane is not likely to cure his mental condition, though it may remove the problem until he is inadvertently summoned again. Adventurers may find a more permanent solution in the ruins of the kila itself; if Aash'ih'iar could be convinced that his aid would help the ship fly again, his sanity might return enough to stop his destructive behavior. This will be a challenge, considering that pieces of "Sword of Empire" lie scattered for several miles around...

GMs should feel free to relocate Aash'ih'iar to a different site of their preference, possibly into Vivane or southern Barsaive.

Firemaw

Strength 9 Fire Spirit

DEX 10 STR 13 TOU 14
 PER 11 WIL 12 CHA 8

Initiative: 11 Physical Defense: 12(15)
 Number of Attacks: 6 Spell Defense: 16
 Attack Step: 12 Social Defense: 13
 Damage Step: 14 Armor: 8
 Number of Spells: 5 Mystic Armor: 5
 Spellcasting: 8 Knockdown: 10
 Effect: See Below Recovery Test: 4

Death Rating: 70 Combat Move: 130
 Wound Threshold: 15 Full Move: 260
 Unconsciousness Rating: 61

Karma Step: 9 Karma Points: 55

Legend Pts: 15,000
 Equip: None
 Loot: None

Powers: Astral Sight 20, Detect True Element, Engulf 21, Manifest (permanent), Manipulate Element, Share Knowledge, Spear 22, Enrage Element 21, Remove Element, Spells (Elementalist 9, Fire Only)

Firemaw is a spirit now permanently trapped on the material plane in Death's Sea. For reasons not fully understood, Firemaw is convinced that by devouring enough True Fire that he might be cured of his corruption and allowed to reenter the Plane of Fire. Firemaw is incorrect; because of the nature of his entrapment, the more True Fire he devours, the more strongly he is bound to the physical plane. Even after all this time he does not understand this fact, and it is very unlikely that he can be convinced of its truth.

Firemaw takes the form of a great whirlpool of fire rising out of the lava of Death's Sea. He preys upon passing air ships searching for Elemental Fire; he is smart enough to wait until an air ship has pulled an amount of True Fire out of the lava sea and attempt to take hold of the net itself. If possible he will attempt to knock out the entire air ship, devouring any True Fire he finds aboard the ship. Note that Firemaw is perfectly capable of devouring the free-floating True Fire in Death's Sea, but prefers the challenge of taking it from name-givers.

Word of Firemaw has been spreading steadily through the ranks of the miners of Death's Sea; it is said that when a large whirlpool begins to form in the lava below an airship, it is a sign that Firemaw is ready to strike. However, stories regarding the fire spirit typically become distorted on the retelling, often depicting him as some sort of Horror. As a result, those come to deal with the beast may not be prepared to deal properly with this powerful spirit.

Firemaw can only devour a certain amount of True Fire each day before he becomes sated; this amount is typically 10 to 20 kernels worth. Though the True Fire he consumes serves to bind him more fully to the material plane, it also slowly increases his power; as a result, his Spirit Strength rating (not his Strength attribute) increases by one for every ten years that he survives. It is unknown whether his strength has any upper bound.

Nylarthant

Strength 15 Ally Spirit

DEX 12 STR 13 TOU 13
PER 14 WIL 13 CHA 12

Initiative: 12 Physical Defense: 12 (15)
Number of Attacks: 5 Spell Defense: 17
Attack Step: 13 Social Defense: 18
Damage Step: 16 Armor: 10
Number of Spells: 5 Mystic Armor: 8
Spellcasting: 13 Knockdown: 8
Effect: See Below Recovery Test: 4

Death Rating: 100 Combat Move: 120
Wound Threshold: 20 Full Move: 240
Unconsciousness Rating: 89

Karma Step: 14

Karma Points: 60

Legend Pts: 25,000

Equip: None

Loot: None

Powers: Aid Summoner, Astral Portal, Astral Sight 29, Empathic Sense 27, Find 29, Haggle 27, Taunt 27, Disguise Self 29, Lifesense 29, Manifest, Confusion 28, Evil Eye 28, Possession 28, Temperature, Detect Trap 29, Detect Weapon 29, Spells (Nethermancer 8, Illusionist 9)

Nylarthant is an ancient being, one who's beginnings can be traced back to a peak in the magic cycle more than 2,000 years before the Scourge. It was during this earlier magical peak that Nylarthant's psyche was damaged permanently. The spirit became active again in Barsaive some time before the Scourge; he had grown in power significantly, and rode out the Scourge without serious difficulty.

While Nylarthant is certainly corrupt in his own way, he maintains his sanity and self-control, unlike many other corrupt spirits. His existence is rumored among many name-givers, but very few know any real facts about him. Those few who have studied this being believe that he has made a number of pacts with powerful Horrors, but the nature of these pacts is a matter of speculation.

Rumors have it that Nylarthant is allied with the Broker arm of the Hand of Corruption; it is believed that they know his Truename and summon him when they need information or help regarding matters of the spirit world. Nylarthant has been known on occasion to capture lesser spirits and deliver them to name-giver spellcasters in return for favors or even artifacts. Although Nylarthant may be allied with the Hand, the spirit has his own agenda and is slowly attempting to build up a power base of other spirits and name-giver contacts. Before the Scourge, Nylarthant even made headway in building up a name-giver cult around him, but the cult was dispersed with the arrival of the Horrors.

Nylarthant relies mostly on his spellcasting abilities and spirit powers when dealing with confrontation. He is particularly displeased with being summoned by anyone who he has not had previous dealings with. When Nylarthant physically manifests, he resembles a bloated humanoid with tremendous oversized tentacles that seem to wave about randomly. His body is completely black, though he is also somewhat hazy looking even when physically manifested.

Nylarthant is obviously quite a powerful being, on the same scale of some of the more powerful Horrors. For this reason, it is suggested that he be used as a long-term enemy rather than a one shot encounter.

CHILDREN OF JASPREE

Ojovi

by Andrew Ragland

In the course of my travels, I have found confirmation of many of the theories proposed by scholars of plant and animal life. One of the most basic theories put forth by myself and my learned colleagues is that nothing exists without a predator. Even a beast as dangerous and unpleasant as the stinger must have something larger and more dangerous to keep its population in check -- in this specific case, the cave crab. Upon recording the azontu, the spiny mouse that inhabits the forests and jungles of northern and western Barsaive, I immediately began a search for its predator. Oddly enough, I found it, not in the wild, but in a tavern in a small village in the foothills of the Dragon Mountains.

The azontu, like most small rodents, adapts well to the presence of Name-givers. In the village of Orserolam, the spiny mouse had become a considerable pest. Normal mice could be dealt with by keeping domesticated cats or ferrets. The azontu's formidable defenses, however, preclude such approaches, as even domesticated predators are intelligent enough to realize that the azontu is not prey after the first unsuccessful encounter. Faced with numerous injured pets, horses with ankles damaged from encountering azontus in the straw of their stalls, and children with quills in their feet from playing at the edge of the woods, the residents sought a new solution. Employing methods similar to my own, the people of the village observed the wildlife in the surrounding area, and discovered a bird that feeds on the azontu. Obtaining its eggs, they raised a few chicks in captivity, and succeeded in domesticating the ojovi, or tailor-bird.

In the wild, the ojovi dines upon small rodents, with a particular liking for the spiny mouse. Its long, narrow beak allows it to make a stabbing attack, much like the pencarrig. The tiny crossing hooks at the end of its bill work like tweezers or pliers, allowing the bird to safely pluck the spines from its meal. Interestingly, the ojovi uses the spines to stitch together its nest. During the mating season, the ojovi carefully preserves the spines of the azontu, and like a tailor sews together large, broad leaves into a sort of basket. It then weaves vines and spines together to make ropes, and suspends the basket well below a large branch on three strands. While vulnerable to high winds, the hanging nest is very difficult for predators to reach, providing a safer haven for the female and her eggs than a standard nest. Some of the spines are left point-out when the leaves are sewn, so that even if a predator does reach the nest, it finds a formidable, prickly barrier between itself and the potential meal inside.

In domestication, the ojovi continues its habit of sewing its nests. Name-givers who keep the birds

provide leaf-shaped bits of cloth or thin leather for the birds, and encourage them to nest in the rafters of the barns and tool sheds, and in the branches of the fruit orchards. Representing no threat to Namne-givers unless their nests are disturbed, an easy lesson to pass on to children, the domesticated ojovi keeps down the azontu population, and makes it safer to walk through high grass or loose hay. The villagers supplement their birds' diet with bits of raw meat and berries, to keep them from straying too far afield in search of sustenance and possibly returning to the wild. As well, all newly hatched chicks are handled frequently, to accustom them to Name-giver contact. I have observed several female children going about their chores with a sewn cloth bag hanging about their neck, an infant bird poking its head out occasionally. I am told that birds that are carried about in this fashion while infants show less tendency to return to the wild as adults.

DEX 11 STR 2 TOU 3
PER 6 WIL 4 CHA 5

Initiative: 13 Physical Defense: 14
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 8
Attack: 10 Social Defense: 7
Damage: 4 Armor: 0
Number of Spells: 0 Mystic Armor: 2
Spellcasting: 0 Knockdown: 5
Effect: 0 Recovery Tests: 1

Death Rating: 24 Combat Movement: 110
Wound Threshold: 5 Full Movement: 220
Unconsciousness Rating: 15

Legend Points: 200
Equipment: none
Loot: none

Notes: To keep an ojovi as a pet, the bird must have been raised from an egg. If sufficient effort is put into the raising (a CHA test against the bird's Social Defense once a week for the first four months with a Good success required, if not roleplayed), then the bird will bond with its owner and further tests are only required if the bird is left hungry or otherwise mistreated. To bond with an adult domesticated ojovi, a CHA test must be made against the bird's Social Defense, requiring an Excellent success initially, and a Good success once per day for the following week. As well, the bird must be fed and groomed properly each day, and carried with its new owner constantly for the duration of the bonding period. After that, a CHA test must be made once per week for the next two months, with an Average success required. Again, if the bird is mistreated, it will leave. Training an ojovi to attack on command requires the Animal Training skill or Animal Bond Talent.

Adventure Hook:

A tavern that the adepts frequent is beset with azontus. Both of their cats are refusing to hunt anything, since they both took quills in the face. They're losing money paying for the injuries caused by the spiny mice. As well, their reputation is suffering. They've heard of a village that has domesticated some bird or other to deal with the pests. The innkeeper will give the adepts a break on their bill if they'll travel to Orserolam and bring back some of these azontu predators.

Linfait

by Andrew Ragland

The Mist Swamps have produced some of the stranger creatures that I have catalogued. While the isolation of the swamps from the surrounding lands have prevented an influx of new species, a startling variety of flora and fauna have arisen within the fog-shrouded environs. From my studies, the influence of the Horrors is obvious in the distortion of the swamp's living beings. This will be the second creature I have catalogued to show direct Horror intervention, where the pre-Scourge form is known and enough common features exist between the old and new forms to link the two.

The linfait, to use its pre-Scourge name, was a large frog with a unique membrane that stretched between its legs, giving it greater speed and maneuverability in the water. By extending its limbs, the frog could spin while in motion, make abrupt turns, or come to a sudden halt. The membranes also gave its strokes greater thrust, allowing it to achieve higher speeds than more common frogs. Before the Scourge, the linfait was rapidly crowding out the membraneless frogs in the swamps.

During the Scourge, the linfait tripled in size, now growing easily as large as a housecat. Venomous claws developed on its forelegs, and spurs on the hind ones. Its membranes lengthened, the point of connection moving from the second joint of each limb out to the third. With no offense intended for comparing such a dangerous and unpleasant beast to a Name-giver, the membranes give the linfait somewhat of the appearance of a k'stulaami t'skrang, appropriate in light of its new-found abilities.

Migrating from the waters of the swamp to the trees surrounding the pools, the linfait now hunts larger prey to sustain its increased size. Among its favorite meals are the large, brightly-colored birds that hunt for insects around the borders of the swamp pools. The linfait climbs to the top of a tree nearby and waits. When a potential meal comes into view, the frog launches itself from the treetop, spreads its membranes and glides down silent as an owl. It only has one chance at a successful strike, as it cannot truly fly, but if it does make contact, its prey is immediately wrapped up in the frog's gliding membranes and struck with both sets of claws and venomous fangs. Between the three poisoned attacks and being caught between the frog and the ground in the ensuing hard landing, the prey has very little chance of escape.

What threat does this bring to bear upon Name-givers? The answer should be patently obvious. The larger of our races have little to fear, as the linfait will not drop upon a creature it cannot bear to the ground, and will only claw or bite if its territory is strenuously transgressed. Windlings, however, are in mortal danger from this creature, as it cannot tell the difference between them and the insect-eating birds that it prefers for its meals. Subdued coloration seems to help avoid linfait attack, although convincing a windling to tone down his or her appearance may be difficult. The best advice that I can give is to keep your windling companions on your shoulder while in the Mist Swamps, and do not send them up to scout the terrain unless you are well away from the treeline.

DEX 6 STR 4 TOU 4
PER 3 WIL 4 CHA 3

Initiative: 8 Physical Defense: 8
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 6
Attack: 9 Social Defense: 4
Damage: 8 Armor: 2
Number of Spells: 1 Mystic Armor: 3
Spellcasting: 12 Knockdown: 7
Effect: 14 (paralyzing toxin)
Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 28 Combat Movement: 35 / 50
Wound Threshold: 7 Full Movement: 70 / 100
Unconsciousness Rating: 19

Legend Points: 105
Equipment: none
Loot: none

Notes: The linfait can only make minor course corrections while airborne, no more than a forty-five degree turn, and cannot truly fly, only glide, so its air movement is limited.

Adventure Hook:

A healer believes that the linfait's poison could be used in conjunction with other drugs to help Name-givers through difficult treatments. She needs a large quantity of the venom for her experiments. How the adepts find and capture the frogs is up to them, but she wants the linfaits brought back alive.

Tepnidhu

by Andrew Ragland

Some of the creatures currently inhabiting Barsaive are so similar to their pre-Scourge antecedents that they are instantly recognized. Others can be traced to pre-Scourge ancestors through some commonalities of feature. Horror constructs can be ignored for most classification purposes, being considered separately from all other creatures. Every so often, however, an animal is encountered that is obviously not a Horror construct, that bears no taint of corruption, but that is so radically different from all other beasts of its environment that the field researcher is left scratching

his head in puzzlement, wondering how such a creature could have come to be.

The tepnidhu is one of these. It grazes the hills and mountains, but has neither horns nor hooves like the other grazing beasts. It feeds on insects as well as grains, leaves and berries, making it more like the tonduy or bat, but travels in large groups like the mountain goat. It has ten legs, in five pairs down its low, narrow body, giving it amazing speed and maneuverability, and a stinger that bobs from either end, giving it more of the appearance of a caterpillar, but it bears its young alive and suckles them, putting it quite apart from insects. Traveling in groups ranging in size from a handful to dozens, it has a social structure very much like the other grazing plant-eaters of the hills and mountains, with notable differences during the breeding season as described further in this record. With most animals, the male is the larger and stronger, and the female smaller, swifter and more agile, but with the tepnidhu the reverse is true. I find myself quite perplexed by this beast and at a loss to explain either its origin or its presence. Nonetheless, it inhabits the hill and mountains of southern Barsaive, and is slowly migrating north. The next ten years should see tepnidhu packs (I cannot bring myself to call them herds, despite their being a group of grazing mammals) in the foothills of the Throal Mountains.

I do not see this causing a great deal of trouble, as long as the tepnidhu and the Name-givers of the area do not intersect. If there are disagreements over territory, however, and I am quite certain that there will be, trouble will almost certainly result. The fore and aft stingers have different venoms, with the latter being substantially more virulent than the former. While a sting from behind will cripple the average Name-giver with intense pain and debilitation that lasts for several days, a sting from the tepnidhu's head can easily slay anyone smaller than a troll. Beyond the immediate physical hazard, though, are farther-reaching concerns dealing with competition. Tepnidhu are very efficient feeders. They can strip an area of all low-lying forage in a very short time. While this does not cause undue difficulties in the wild, deer and other large herbivores being able to forage in high branches and small herbivores such as mice gleaning the fallen grains and seeds left by the tepnidhu pack, domesticated animals are more dependent upon easily-accessible fodder. Shepherds and goat-keepers are going to have to learn to deal with tepnidhu as competitors in their pasturage. The nomadic human tribes living in the upper reaches of the Throal and Caucavic Mountains, who move their herds from one region to another as forage is depleted, will suffer from the introduction of this new grazing animal.

Its defensive behavior does help explain the size, speed and ferocity of the predators ranging the hills and mountains. Beasts that hunt must be able to overmatch their prey, but not be so much larger that they starve for lack of prey. When a predator is noted by the scout males at the edge of the grazing pack, the tepnidhu form a shield wall around their young, with an outer ring of females to engage the threat directly, and an inner ring of the longer and more agile males that act as spearmen, whipping their forward stingers down on

the enemy from behind the females. Only the most determined and savage of predators will gain a meal once the pack has prepared for the onslaught. Strays are of course picked off by smaller, swift predators that can make their kill before the lone tepnidhu can bring its stingers into action, and make away with their meal before the pack can respond.

Large, savage predators are also a necessity given the tepnidhu's high birth rate. The average litter consists of five or six young. Females den during pregnancy and birthing, burrowing into the soil or making use of small caves, and the males harvest grains, leaves and berries for them, as well as catching the occasional large insect. Harems of males attend the pregnant females, to carry enough food. As can be expected, the pack does not change feeding grounds for the breeding season. Locating good pasturage for the months it takes to raise the next generation occupies a lot of time beforehand. Tepnidhu packs will quite gladly evict present occupants if they find land to their liking, again employing the group tactics that so resemble the behavior of Name-givers. This behavior is quite likely to bring them into conflict with nomadic tribes that either have or are seeking good pasturage for their herds.

Once again, I find myself puzzling over the origins of this creature. It has five pairs of legs, which no other warm-blooded creature does. It has stingers at both ends, which I have not seen in insects, although it is well known that the Scourge brought about an increase in venomous creatures. Shaggy brown fur covers the creatures and hangs down to their feet, blending them well into the depths of the high grass. I begin to wonder if a nethermancer, attempting to contact another world, has accidentally unleashed a new threat upon our own. Whatever the source of the tepnidhu, it is here, and we must learn to coexist with it.

DEX 9	STR 4	TOU 5
PER 4	WIL 4	CHA 4

Initiative: 12	Physical Defense: 12
Number of Attacks: 1	Spell Defense: 5
Attack: 11	Social Defense: 5
Damage: 6	Armor: 3
Number of Spells: 1	Mystic Armor: 2
Spellcasting: 11	Knockdown: 8
Effect: 12 (fore, debilitating), 15 (aft, death)	Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 32	Combat Movement: 65
Wound Threshold: 8	Full Movement: 130
Unconsciousness Rating: 24	

Legend Points: 155
Equipment: none
Loot: Pelt with 25 silver each for making cold-weather clothing; venom sacs worth 75 and 100 sp for fore and aft respectively

Notes: The aft stinger is normally used only when the tepnidhu is being pursued. Tepnidhu get a +2 spell bonus against cold and cold-based attacks. Their fur sheds ice and frost and is used by Name-givers who

live high in the mountains for lining hoods and hats. The fore stingers secrete enough venom for three attacks before running dry, while the aft carries enough for only two stings. Removing the venom sacs without rupturing them requires a DEX test against a 12.

Adventure Hook:

One of the adepts receives a message from home. Tepnidhu packs are encroaching on the grazing lands. If the tepnidhu aren't slain or driven off, the village may well starve in the coming cold season. Already four dogs and a shepherd have died trying to protect their pastures. The message begs the adept to come home and help resolve the threat.

Edex

by Andrew Ragland

If there is one thing that the Scourge has taught the Name-givers of Barsaive, it is that danger cannot be determined by physical size. Mindslugs are only as large as a troll's fist, and yet they can swiftly devour the brain of a Name-giver.

The predators of the wetlands have also learned this lesson, the hard way. The swamps and marshes are home to an abundance of plant and insect eaters, serving up a buffet for the discerning meat eater. However, stepping up to the board may cost more than silver. Some of the meals bite back, some savagely.

On first impression, the edex is little different from a host of other small lizards that inhabit the grasses at the edge of the freshwater marshes. About the length of an elf's foot, with a tail again as long, light brown above and dark green below, with a single bright blue dot on the back of the head, edexes spend their days foraging for seeds and grains, and sunning themselves on the occasional rock. They mate in the spring, lay eggs, and hatch out a half dozen young every year, most of which will not survive to adulthood. Such is the way of life for small lizards.

The primary difference between the edex and its cousins lies in its defenses. To avoid becoming a snack for the predators of the swamps, the edex has learned to make optimum use of its less than formidable weaponry. Possessed of a toxin that causes paralysis, the edex's bite can halt a linfait in its tracks. However, larger predators, such as the vofog, may require two or three bites, and larger still many bites before enough of the venom has been injected to do any good. Your average lizard's poison sacs are going to run dry after the second go. Thus, the edex has developed small unit tactics.

Working with the precision of a squad of woodsmen defending an elven stronghold, a covey of edexes will surround a large predator moving into their territory. While one or two show themselves ahead of the predator to distract it, others rush in from behind, snapping at the predator's legs. When the predator whirls to face the threat, the decoys charge in and make their attacks. Each bite is delivered by a lizard with a full load of venom. Within a few breaths, the predator lies helpless, and the edex covey relocates to a safer grazing area.

The edex sees no difference between a pencarrig and a Name-giver, in terms of threat. Travelers through the wetlands should be wary of lizards. If one seems to be trying to get your attention, look behind you. While the edex's venom is not deadly, even in large doses, lying paralyzed in the swamp can be detrimental to your health.

DEX 6 STR 3 TOU 3
PER 3 WIL 3 CHA 2

Initiative: 8 Physical Defense: 8
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 4
Attack: 12 Social Defense: 3
Damage: 4 Armor: 0
Number of Spells: 1 Mystic Armor: 0
Spellcasting: 7 Knockdown: 4
Effect: 9, Paralysis Recovery Tests: 1

Death Rating: 20 Combat Movement: 33
Wound Threshold: 4 Full Movement: 65
Unconsciousness Rating: 11

Legend Points: 70

Equipment: None

Loot: Edex venom is worth 30 sp per dose. Venom can be extracted from a live lizard with a Creature Lore test against a 6, or a DEX test against a 10. The venom sacs are small and fragile, and require a DEX test against an 11 to remove without damage. The average lizard carries two doses.

Notes: Any attack that does damage will include venom. Each lizard carries only enough venom for two attacks. Once a lizard has exhausted its venom, it will hang back, only attacking again if its covey mates are in trouble. A covey will normally consist of six to twelve lizards, and may drop to three or four in the depths of the rainy season, but may have as many as thirty or forty during the height of the growing season.

Gudrisn

by Andrew Ragland

Travel across the plains is dangerous enough when considering surface hazards. Scorcher tribes, large carnivores, predatory birds, long stretches of open plain without immediately accessible water and unpredictable monsoon rains give even the most experienced caravan runners pause. Hazards under the ground are another consideration entirely. Scholars and adepts who have put in the proper research will be familiar with my record

regarding the turfcutter beetle. Unfortunately, it's not the only underground predator out on the prairie. On the other hand, it too has its dangers to face.

Nothing exists without something to feed upon it. The turfcutter beetle's grubs frequently fall prey to the gudrisn, a mole the size of a felux. Squat and powerful, the gudrisn's thick grey fur keeps dirt from matting next to its skin, as well as providing protection from the ends of roots and other underground projections. Its powerful claws can shear through hardpan as easily

as sand, and cause terrible wounds to its enemies. Considering the size of the southwestern plains, a beast this size is needed also to aerate the soil, keep the roots of the grasses from matting, and hold down the populations of other large insects, snakes and small burrowing mammals.

The problem with the gudrisn, however, is that it's large. It's very large. The tunnels it makes are big enough for a dwarf to nearly walk through upright. When these tunnels come near the surface, they pose a terrific hazard. Stepping into a normal mole run can snap the ankle of a horse. Dropping into a gudrisn run plunges the average horse into the ground up to its chest, possibly breaking all of its legs. Wagons have had their axles smashed, even their frames demolished, by encounters with gudrisn tunnels. Experienced caravan guides can spot the ridges that indicate a gudrisn run from a distance, and guide their beasts and wagons around it. Inexperienced travellers, however, may have extreme difficulties should they wander into the territory of a gudrisn. Falling into one of its runs is bad enough. Dropping in on top of a gudrisn is a formula for trouble, as they do not like unexpected visitors and fight savagely. Being subterranean creatures, gudrisn are virtually blind, locating their prey and enemies by sound and smell, so they suffer no disadvantage from fighting in total darkness. Most Name-givers do not enjoy this advantage.

My best recommendation is to watch for ridges in the soil and avoid the area. Failing that, be prepared for a savage fight underground. Very loud noises or strong odors may disorient the creature, considering its dependence on hearing and smell, but I have not sought out the opportunity to test this theory.

DEX 7	STR 12	TOU 9
PER 4	WIL 7	CHA 4

Initiative: 9	Physical Defense: 9
Number of Attacks: 2	Spell Defense: 5
Attack: 10	Social Defense: 8
Damage: 15	Armor: 6
Number of Spells: 0	Mystic Armor: 0
Spellcasting: 0	Knockdown: 14
Effect: 0	Recovery Tests: 4

Death Rating: 48	Combat Movement: 33
Wound Threshold: 14	Full Movement: 65
Unconsciousness Rating: 41	

Legend Points: 120
Equipment: none
Loot: none

Notes: The gudrisn does not suffer any penalties for vision impairment. Name-givers who do not have Heat Sight fighting a gudrisn in its tunnel take penalties for partial or total darkness, depending on whether or not the top of the tunnel is open to the sky. As well, any Name-giver larger than a dwarf takes Difficult Terrain modifiers in a gudrisn tunnel. Spotting a gudrisn tunnel from above ground requires an Average or better success on a PER test against a 13, or a Caravan Guide or similar skill/talent test against a 9. Falling into a run

causes step 7 damage to Name-givers, animals and vehicles, reduced by physical armor. The drop being unexpected and short, DEX tests and other means of reducing falling damage do not apply. Whether or not sound or smell based attacks interfere with the gudrisn's abilities to locate its enemies is up to the GM.

Adventure Hook:

The adepts are hired to find a caravan that is overdue. Thanks to a population surge in large insects, several gudrisns have converged on the caravan route, and two of the wagons have fallen into the tunnels. Reaching the caravan will require travelling through an area riddled with tunnels. Getting the caravan out of the area will be difficult. Not only are two wagons damaged, one is partially down in a tunnel and a gudrisn has made its nest under the wagon.

P'Zoul by Andrew Ragland

These past few weeks have presented me with more conundrums and confusion than the last several years of my life. Creatures that defy classification, whose origins are shrouded in mystery, and whose very nature cannot be determined with any degree of ease parade themselves by me like the dreams of a madman. Were I not staying at a most reputable inn with a Guild mark clearly displayed upon the door, I might think that someone had slipped dreamgrass into my food. This latest has me wondering if Jaspree is testing me.

The one person I've been able to find who seems to know much about these creatures, an elderly and possibly slightly mad t'skrang, calls them p'zoul, a derivation of the t'skrang word for stomach. Certainly, that seems apt, considering that the beasts are little more than that, a stomach with teeth, eyes and legs. They resemble gnashers far too much for my comfort, but do not seem to be Horror constructs. When examined astrally, there is no taint of corruption about them. I have observed young clustering about the adults.

Not as blocky as a gnasher, the p'zoul has no upper limbs, basically being a somewhat oblate sphere with a pair of short, sturdy legs on the bottom and a pair of froglike, bulbous eyes on the top, the center being split across by a large, toothy mouth. Like a gnasher, its hide is thick and warty, a dull grey-green in color and tough enough to turn aside small blades. They spend a good deal of their time eating, preferring live meals but in a pinch devouring anything that's not earth or stone. P'zoul can chew through full-grown trees, devour cattle in two or three bites, and put away a frightening amount of small game. They seem to be able to eat far more than their stomachs should hold; where exactly the excess volume goes, I have no idea. Cutting up a dead specimen is not an option. P'zoul collapse and shrivel to a small, blackened lump within a candlemark of death, digesting themselves from the inside out. Opening a living specimen is a very unattractive proposition. For one thing, I have marked reservations about killing an animal in order to study it. I feel that such an act would defeat my purpose, and imperil my

relationship with my Passion. For another, I observed a farmer attempting to drive off a p'zoul from his fields. When his pitchfork impaled the beast, acid spurted from the wounds, dissolving the farmer's improvised weapon, scorching the ground and very nearly doing away with the farmer. The p'zoul, on the other hand, did not seem to take any damage from its own digestive juices, a logical enough development and similar to venomous creatures being immune to their own poison. Having not found an instrument that a p'zoul could not successfully eat, I cannot recommend that anyone attempt to examine these creatures invasively.

My source told me of a t'skrang family that was able to tame a p'zoul taken in as a pup. Granted, they had difficulties with it eating the furniture until they got it properly trained, but it made an amazingly effective guard animal. Intruders simply vanished into its maw. Only one member of the family was really able to control the beast properly, and when he left the foundation, the p'zoul went with him. Apparently, like dogs, they form attachments to single Name-givers and do not switch loyalties. Another tale, however, should be considered as a caution to anyone attempting to repeat this feat. Apparently there is a variant of the p'zoul, jet black in color, that lives in the deep caverns under the Throal Mountains. Packs of these black p'zoul have descended upon Pale One villages, and within a matter of a candlemark eaten everything and everyone that did not immediately flee. From the tale, the black p'zoul is more resistant to sorcerous attack, and more vicious in close combat than its less aggressive surface-dwelling cousin. This does not mean, however, that the more placid grey p'zoul is any safer as a pet.

Reproductive methods remain a mystery. I have no idea how the beasts mate, or even if they have genders as we understand them. Likewise, gestation period and birth method are a puzzle, although I suspect live birth, as no evidence of nesting has been found. The reader should of course keep in mind that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. In the field, no more than three young have been observed around any particular adult at a time. Assuming that p'zoul conform to the usual behavior of the young staying close by the birth parent, we can further assume that the average litter consists of two young. All of this may very well break down under further investigation, as there are far too many assumptions here for my comfort.

I would be very interested in meeting with anyone else who has studied these creatures, to compare notes. Perhaps if we could determine more about them, their origins and their place in the world, we would gain much more understanding of an environment that yet remains a dense and complicated puzzle. The more I see of the world, the less I am certain of my understanding of it.

P'Zoul (Grey)

DEX 9 STR 14 TOU 13
PER 3 WIL 7 CHA 3

Initiative: 12 Physical Defense: 12
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 6

Attack: 13 Social Defense: 6
Damage: 19 Armor: 10
Number of Spells: 0 Mystic Armor: 7
Spellcasting: 0 Knockdown: 19
Effect: 0 Recovery Tests: 6
Death Rating: 64 Combat Movement: 65
Wound Threshold: 19 Full Movement: 130
Unconsciousness Rating: 57

Legend Points: 300
Equipment: none
Loot: none

Notes: P'zoul get a 4-step bonus against Charisma or Charisma-based tests, to represent the stubborn nature of the beasts. To bond with or train one requires an Excellent success. Once a p'zoul has bonded with a Name-giver, it will not obey or give its loyalty to any other, pining away to its death if abandoned or its master dies.

P'Zoul (black)

DEX 11 STR 16 TOU 15
PER 5 WIL 9 CHA 5

Initiative: 14 Physical Defense: 14
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 9
Attack: 15 Social Defense: 9
Damage: 21 Armor: 12
Number of Spells: 0 Mystic Armor: 10
Spellcasting: 0 Knockdown: 21
Effect: 0 Recovery Tests: 7

Death Rating: 72 Combat Movement: 100
Wound Threshold: 21 Full Movement: 200
Unconsciousness Rating: 65

Legend Points: 900
Equipment: none
Loot: none

Notes: Black p'zoul get a 6-step bonus against Charisma and Charisma-based attacks. They do not bond with Name-givers the way their grey cousins do, immediately attacking anyone foolish enough to try and train them. They're normally found in packs of 7 to 12, and do not leave the caverns under the Throal Mountains. Light-based attacks do double damage against black p'zoul.

Oxetat

by Andrew Ragland

Sadly, I have found yet another example of the corruption brought to our world by the Horrors. Before the Scourge, the oxetat was a small mammal that lived in colonies in the southwestern plains, feeding on grains and insects. Oxetat colonies had a rudimentary social structure. Some scholars, although I was not among them, put forth the opinion that given sufficient time they might develop enough intelligence to become Name-givers. This has not happened, not that I expected it to, and seems most unlikely now.

While the oxetat has increased in size and intelligence, it has also turned savage, gaining the cunning of a vicious predator. They still live in colonies, but no longer get along with each other quite so well. While they still feed on insects, small rodents and reptiles such as snakes and mice, vegetation no longer comprises part of their diet. Oxetat hunter bands have been observed to bring down much larger animals, using primitive traps and group tactics. Their fur has gone from a light sandy brown to a darker earth tone, their fangs and claws have increased in size disproportionately to the rest of their form, and the females now have poisonous spurs on their forelimbs, used to protect their young from predators and from each other.

I spent the better part of a month observing an oxetat colony four days' ride south of Kratas. Their colony divides itself into castes of hunters, protectors, and childbearers, much like any primitive society. However, the various factions are likely to turn on each other for no reason whatsoever, the creatures having nasty tempers and a thirst for blood. Savage battles occur without warning both around the entrances and down in the tunnels of their burrows, with the dead frequently eaten by the survivors. I suppose we Name-givers should count ourselves fortunate that the oxetats keep their own population down, but I cannot help but be saddened by the corruption of what was once a promising species. Some of the joy has gone out of the world, as watching an oxetat colony is no longer amusing, but disturbing.

In build, the oxetat is long and lean, as befits a burrowing mammal. Its snout is rounded, with a smooth curve in profile from the top of the skull to the base of the neck. Its forepaws are nearly hand-like, but with long, curving talons. The females have their spurs where the base of the wrist would be. Overall, the oxetat is about the size of a large dog. Unlike many burrowing animals, the oxetat can see quite well in broad daylight, and is active at all hours. It frequently pauses to stand erect, surveying the lands around it for possible threats -- or meals.

Hunter bands depart to forage at irregular intervals. When large herbivores are in the area, the hunter packs will fan out ahead of the herd, digging tunnels for their prey to fall into and shallow burrows in which to lie in wait. Once their prey has been crippled by dropping into the trap, the hunter band swarms out, tearing open their prey, then darting away, using hit and run tactics until the herbivore bleeds to death. The typical hunter pack consists of eight to twelve oxetats, enough to bring down anything smaller than an elephant.

Protectors range out from the burrow entrances, searching for potential enemies, but always staying within sight of their homes. Anything moving within their territory is immediately attacked, no matter how large or dangerous. The battle-cry of a protector engaging an enemy summons additional protectors, much in the manner of blood monkeys. Even the largest and most savage of predators find an oxetat warren too difficult of a target.

The childbearers, all females, spend most of their time underground, in the interconnecting burrows that make up the warren. When they do not have young to raise, they spend their time excavating new tunnels, or battling each other to see who will mate with the strongest of the hunters and protectors. When a female comes into heat, the males will fight each other at the entrance to her burrow, with the survivor entering the burrow to mate. Even after bearing young, the females will continue to battle each other, with the lives of their pups at stake. A female who is unable to protect her pups from another female would weaken the population, and so again the strongest and most savage prevail.

Oxetat warrens can be seen from a good distance away, by the grouping of protectors standing erect to observe their territory. A wise Name-giver will avoid the area. When not possible, or when a new warren is being set up too close to

existing Name-giver habitation, the services of an elemental make dealing with the threat much easier. Summoning an earth elemental to collapse the warrens, or lobbing fire from a distance, are much safer ways of eliminating oxetat warrens than direct confrontation.

Hunting parties tend to attack...

DEX 7 STR 5 TOU 5
PER 5 WIL 6 CHA 5

Initiative: 9 Physical Defense: 10
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 7
Attack: 10 Social Defense: 7
Damage: 8 Armor: 2
Number of Spells: 1 (females only)
Mystic Armor: 2
Spellcasting: 8 Knockdown: 8
Effect: 10 Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 32 Combat Movement: 45
Wound Threshold: 8 Full Movement: 90
Unconsciousness Rating: 24

Legend Points: 85 males, 105 females
Equipment: none
Loot: Any small bright shiny objects taken from victims, ranging from coins to buttons

Notes: Hunting parties tend to attack with one member the first round, half the second and the other half the third. On any given round, half the party will rush in to attack, while the other half will run away to get out of range of retaliation from the last round. Protectors attack singly in the first round, with 1d6 more showing up each round for a minimum of 6 rounds. Females of the childbearing caste only attack if the warren is invaded. Non-childbearing females, either infertile, too young or old, comprise 25% of the protectors and hunters castes. Female venom is of the debilitating variety, taking effect the round after the strike.

Gwelp by Eric Campeau

" - I'm looking, I'm looking! There is nothing there!
- ... look up !!"

Moonar, Dwarf Beasmaster, to his Illusionist companion.

We had just found the entrance to kaer Estanagoor in the Delaris mountains. We were nervous for we did not know what to expect. We were also excited for this was supposed to be the resting place of the famed weapon we had been looking for along our last year of travel.

So, like the true Heroes we were, we put our fears aside and entered the maze of tunnels and caves that was said to lead to kaer Estanagoor. After a day of finding and fighting our way through those tunnels, our scout adept, Yali sensed another presence in the high tunnels we were traveling. We knew to trust Yali's warning, so we searched for the disquieting source. Some minutes into our search I heard Niogita, our ork Archer, scream. Turning to look, I found my friend caught in the jaw of what I came to know to be a Gwelp. A 300 pound panther like creature, covered with black scales was hanging from the ceiling by its hind legs, with its jaw in Niogita's shoulder. By the time we reacted, it had dropped its hind legs to the ground and was hacking at our archer with its talon like claws. We ran to her, but she was already being ripped apart. She could not seem to free herself from the clutches of the beast. As we were about to give our friend a hand, three more came out of the shadows.

You see these three scars on my ribs? Nasty hey! Talons as sharp as the finest elven blade! I never thought I would make it out of there alive. It is kind of a sweet-sour feeling to be the lone soul to make it ... So when traveling in large tunels, always keep an eye up.

RULES

The Gwelp is a panther-like creature covered with black scales. Instead of paws it has talons used to crawl along the walls and ceilings of rocky caves. Those talons leave tracks in the rock that can be recognized and followed.

Gwelp are social like wolves and hunt in packs of 3-6. They usually engage combat by a bite attack while hanging off the ceiling from their hind legs causing surprise. In combat they like to bite and hold (CoB p.112) while using their second attack each round to hack at their prey.

Some rarer versions of these creatures are silver or gray, forcing them to live outside in the snowy peaks. These outcast find others and form packs.

DEX 8 STR 9 TOU 7
PER 8 WIL 6 CHA 7

Initiative: 7 Physical Defense: 10
Number of attacks: 2 Spell Defense: 9
Attack: 12 Social Defense: 9
Damage: Armor: 6

Bite (12) Mystic Armor: 3
Talon (14) Knockdown: 10
Number of Spells: NA Recovery test: 3
Spellcasting: NA
Effect: NA

Death Rating: 55 Combat Movement: 45
Wound Threshold: 11 Full Movement: 90
Unconscious Rating: 44

Legend Point: 190

Loot: Talons worth D6 x 10 silver pieces. These count as treasure worth Legend Points.

ADVENTURE HOOK

A rich nobleman from Travar has heard of a pack of silver Gwelps found in the Dragon Mountains. Being the exotic collectionner he is; he would like to have a specimen. Being silver they do not live in caves, their change in color forcing them to live outside in the icy peaks for camouflage. That makes them nonetheless very fierce opponents. Before you accept his offer, he clearly states: "I want a live one."

Scyther by Victor M. Mariotte

Indigenous to mountain or cavernous enviornments, Scythers are the result of an experiment gone horribly awry. This creature is the product of combining a crayfish and a scorpion together through magic and a little Horror tainting.

The culprits in the merger of this creature are Donas H'Lesh, an Elven Wizard living in Kaer Juxor near the Delaris Mountains and a Horror by the name of Galamesh. Unknown to Donas, this bloatform Horror used an underground river as part of its hunting grounds. That river ran into the Kaer and is the one that Donas had been using to gather crayfish for his experiment. The Horror discovered what Donas was doing and decided that he should help. Galamesh slowly started to taint the river thus tainting the crayfish.

Donas still had no idea of what the Horror was doing and continued his experiment. He used the common cave scorpion as the second half of the project and was eventually successful in combining the two. After Donas successfully combined the two creatures, he placed it in a bird cage and wen to sleep. He never woke.

The new creation had grown overnight and burst from its confines. The Scyther killed Donas and his people as well. It is rumored that a group of adventurers opened the Kaer some years later allowing the Scyther free reign on the world.

DEX 12 STR 6 TOU 10
PER 5 WIL 6 CHA 3

Initiative:13 Physical Defense:16
Number of Attacks:2 Spell Defense:7
Attack: Pinchers:13 Social Defense:4
Tail:14 Armor:12

Damage: Pinchers:10
Tail:9
Number of Spells:(1)
Spellcasting: 9
Effect: 16

Death Rating:62
Wound Threshold:16
Unconsciousness Rating:53

Legend Points:1,000
Equipment:None

Loot: Their hardened shell, if rescued intact or with very little damage, is valued by a worker of armor. Usual fetching price is 3d10x10 silver pieces. This object is worth legend points.

Game Mechanics:

Scythers measure 5 1/2 - 7 feet in length and the body is 2 feet in height yet the tail has a reach of 6 feet. It appears to be a cross of a crayfish or lobster and a scorpion. Reddish-gray in color, the body and tail resemble a scorpions while the head and claws/pinchers are the look of a crayfish/lobster. In combat it has a few different options. It can slice at an opponent with its' claws closed operating like a scythe (hence the name) or it can grab a foe with its' limb on a good success or better on an attack roll doing crushing damage (8/2d6) which ignores shield armor bonus (unless the PC makes a dexterity check versus the creatures attack roll) as well as halving physical armor benefits. As well as attacking with it's claws, it can also strike with its' tail (no poison involved).

These three attack modes can be mixed in any combination in the same round (Remember that although these three attacks can be combined, scythers still only receive two physical attacks a around). Also, once a round by bypassing its physical attacks, a scyther can emit a navy blue stream of poison from its tail with a range of 30 yards. It makes a spellcasting test versus the spell defense of its target. If successful, the poison affects the character for three rounds doing the effect dice in damage (mystic armor protects) or

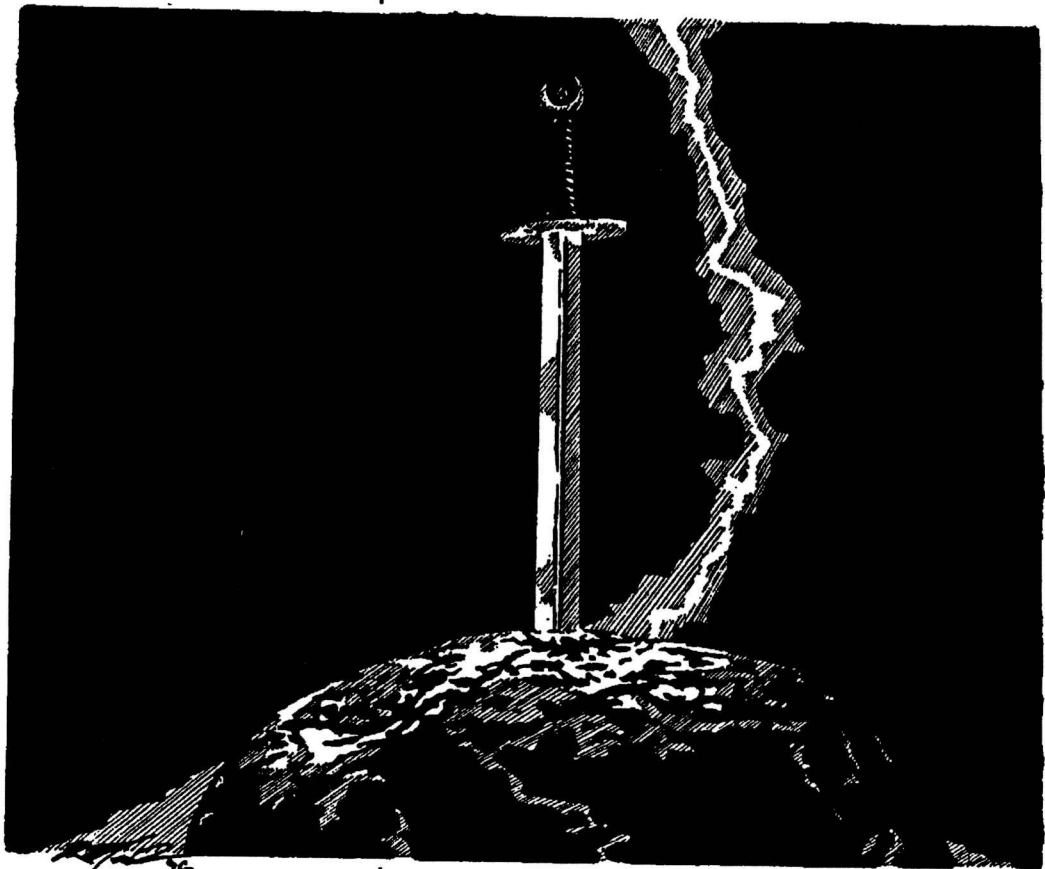
until a toughness (or related) resistance test versus the result of the spellcasting test is made. This takes an action.

The Craj'rys by Eric Campeau

"Nice little puppy ... now put my obsidimen friend down."

Gryk'mon of the Dawn Walkers

I recently had a nice talk with my friend Thysmar Fireheart, Troll Elementalist from the Stone Claw moot in the low lands of the Tylon mountains. He told me that he was just returning from a research adventure with his group. They went in the foot hills of the Tylon mountain to look into the sightings of creatures that he had heard about since his childhood. After some research, all he could find is that these stony canines that he was looking for where called Craj'rys but no



one had much more information except the sightings of their defeated oponents. After telling me this he had my full attention. So I got my quill and some paper and wrote down his discoveries for our Great Library.

After studying them fo a while Thysmar figured that they where kind of a canine version of an Obsidiman, with a few differences. They don't come exclusively from an Earth Elemental, so they come from something that resembles the Liferock of the Obsidiman. These creature are actually "born" in a "Craj Cave". This cave is a very special place. What I mean is that it is a cave

where all elements have a place and are comfortable. The one Thysmar had a chance to look at while defending his life with all his efforts and those of his companions kind of looked like this: a spacious cave filled with an underground lake, an island in its center, with trees and bushes on one end of the island, and above the ring of water is a floating campfires. But this is only one, if other exist they could probably take any shape and form as long as the elements are all present and not conflicting. Five times a year, a rocky "egg" comes out of the portion of earth on the cave ground. Each time a different elemental joins with a portion of elemental earth to create the new Craj'ahn.

A Craj'ahn is the name for a "baby" Craj'rys. With their 4 feet tall at the shoulders, 2 feet wide and 6 feet long of rocky skin, these "babies" are quite impressive. And remembering Thysmar's face when he was just talking about their great big wide jaw and their destructive rocky mane that goes down to the middle of their back, I certainly wish I never get to meet a live one. Contrary to Obsidiman who learn about the world in the comfort of their Liferock, the Craj'rys learn about the world through their Craj'ahn state.

Now when this Craj'ahn is "born" it has none of the characteristics of the peticular elemental that lent it's essence to life since it is mostly made of elemental earth. So this young spends most of it's time playing. It has a very playfull attitude but at 900 and some pounds, games can become lethal. When time passes, the Craj'ahn gets older and the elemental that formed him becomes a greater part of what he is and he can feel it more. Every time a year and a day passes since it's coming to life the Craj'ahn lives what is called "ago'rim" that means the rock movement in Troll. A year and a day after an ago'rim there is another ago'rim. Each time this happens the Craj'ahn goes through a "transformation". It's body and mind start to feel more of their elemental. For example at his first ago'rim a Craj'ahn formed with a fire elemental might have his tail turn red. At it's second, its mane could go red. At the third, its mind could get stronger, ... fourth it could get a bit bigger ... fifth it could get more of an agressive attitude ... each time a ago'rim comes up the Craj'ahn spend a whole day in pain from the transformations. It howls (which sounds more like a rock slide than a wolf howl) all day and depending on the age, either jumps around in pain (young) or sits (9th Craj'ahn) and suffers silently. At their tenth ago'rim (10 years and 10 days after their coming to life) they go through "ago'rimer" (Earthquake in Troll) this is the most painfull ago'rim but at this stage most Craj'ahn simply sit through it (except the one from the air elemental who jumps around like crazy) and take the pain with honor. All they do is howl. This one last for two whole days. They don't eat or sleep during this time. After this time, the Craj'ahn is a Craj'rys gaining abilities offered by it's elemental.

If I mentionned that meeting the youngs might be frightfull, their elders are none the better. With a height of 4,5 feet, 2,5 feet wide and 7 feet long they are simply huge. By this time their mane is longer, touching their tail and both, mane and tail, are a different color. Their young have been seen as guard dogs for Ogres and other creatures with that kind of strength but the

Craj'rys are much harder to control and they seem to have lost the will to play (well almost all of them anyway.)

{As a general note a Craj'rys mane has the appearance of boken rock and it is very hard. It can also use it to do a charge attack although it might only do it for the first attack (In game terms: add the Craj'rys or Craj'ahn's strenght to the Mane damage test). Some types are more prone to engage combat this way (Craj'ahn, wood, fire & [if they feel like it] air)}

A little note on the different variations of this creature.

When Craj'ahns are young, they love to play. They are often used by larger more intelligent and very powerfull (Ex.: Ogres. these babies are strong and a handfull) creatures as watchdogs. The way this is achieved is by showing them games that protect and kill. (1 out of 8 times they attack for the fun of it)

The Craj'rys of water's mane and tail are mixed with white and blue colors. It seems to have become very sneaky and loves to surprise. In combat it will come in slow, do a quick attack and like a wave, pull back (split movement). It's elemental gave it an ability of frost breath and the Protective River spell making it more difficult to hit.

The Craj'rys of Air's mane and tail are mixed white and tranparent colors. Contrary to the other Craj'rys this one has not abandoned playing games. Actually it likes playing games so much now that it makes them incontrollable.

In combat they are completely unpredictable, they jump around everywhere and love to use their tail to knockdown their "playmates" so they can jump on them to bite and slash them. It only wants to play. It's elemental gave it agility and the spell Tumbling Wind which alows it to knockdown his "playmates" using it's tail.

The Craj'rys of Earth's mane and tail are mixed black, ocre and brown colors. It has larger chest than the other types of craj'rys which makes it even more impressive, especially with it's confident attitude. In combat it will come in slow, do direct attacks with honor and never back away. It's elemental gave it strengh and the spell Shaking Earth which acts like a small earthquake throwing everything around him off balance.

The Craj'rys of Wood's mane and tail are brown. It is a very calm creature, that shows no emotions what so ever and normally has a very defensive attitde when faced with a fight. It loves giving ground to increase it's physical defense. It's elemental gave it toughness and the ability to Wood Heal which allow it to heal itself at anytime.

The Craj'rys of Fire's mane and tail have an uncanny resemblance to fire: color and "texture" (i.e. it flows like fire). It is probably the most dangerous of them all. It seems to love the fury of a combat (some people that Thysmar met actually think that they are the incarnation on Thystonius). It is a very dangerous looking creature. It doesn't stop growling very often and this growling actually sound as if there were fire sparks in it. In combat it fights with fury, charges and never stops until it has won. It's elemental gave it a lot of influence including the spell Fire Sphere creates a wave that explodes in a spherical shape from the

Craj'rys. This ability seems to only come out when there are multiple attackers around it. This Craj'rys also has fire emanating from its breath, mane and tail. I would not want the reader to think that it belches fire. No no no, fire just radiates from it.

CRAJ'AHN

DEX 6 STR 10 TOU 8
 PER 5 WIL 6 CHA 7

Initiative: 4 Physical Defense: 8
 Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 7
 Attack Step: 9 Social Defense: 9
 Damage Step: 12 Claws/ 13 Bite/ 15 Mane
 Physical Armor: 7
 Number of Spells: none Mystic Armor: 4
 Spellcasting: none Knockdown: 11
 Effect: none Recovery Tests: 3

Death Rating: 50 Combat Movement: 30
 Wound Threshold: 12 Full Movement: 60
 Uncousious Rating: 40

Legend Points: 115
 Equipement: none
 Loot: Mane worth 1D10 x 10sp which count toward legend points.

CRAJ'RY'S OF WATER

DEX 7 STR 11 TOU 9
 PER 7 WIL 7 CHA 7

Initiative: 4 Physical Defense: 9(13)
 Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 9
 Attack Step: 10 Social Defense: 10
 Damage Step: 12 Claw/ 17 Mane 15 + D10 (frost)
 Physical Armor: 9
 Number of Spells: 1 Mystic Armor: 5
 Spellcasting: 8 Knockdown: 13
 Effect: Protective River Recovery Tests: 4

When the spellcasting is succesfull over a difficulty of 7 it creates a layer of water that runs with some fury on the Craj'rys skin. This raging flow seems to emanate from its mane but it doesn't wet the ground. This raging river-like water has for effet to deflect attacks. Add +4 physical defense directed at the Craj'rys for a duration of 6 rounds.

Death Rating: 60 Combat Move: 28
 Wound Threshold: 13 Full Move: 56
 Uncousious Rating: 48
 Legend Points: 260
 Equipement: none
 Loot: Mane contains part of the element so its worth 2D6 x 10 sp which count toward legend points.

CRAJ'RY'S OF AIR

DEX 10 STR 11 TOU 9
 PER 7 WIL 7 CHA 7

Initiative: 7 Physical Defense: 12
 No. of Attacks: 1(2) Spell Defense: 9
 Attack Step: 13 Social Defense: 10
 Damage Step: 12 Claw/ 15 Bite/ Mane 17
 Physical Armor: 9
 Number of Spells: (1) Mystic Armor: 5
 Spellcating: 12 Knockdown: 13
 Effect: Tumbling Wind Recovery Tests: 4

The Craj'rys swings its tail at the "playmate" behind it. Do a spellcasting against the target's spell defense. On an average success the target falls taking 5 steps of damage. For each level of success over average another "playmate" in a 3 yards radius from the original target will also fall. If there is more than one "playmate" it will always try to knock one down and do an attack in one round. This spell can be resisted by a strenght test against the result of the spellcasting. If the Craj'rys lands on you, you can either make a strenght test against 20 to throw it off or have someone knock it down. Naturally you are considered knocked-down but you also harried while it is on you.

Death Rating: 60 Combat Movement: 45
 Wound Threshold: 13 Full Movement: 90
 Uncousious Rating: 48

Legend Points: 340
 Equipement: none
 Loot: Mane contains part of the element so its worth 2D6 x 10 sp which count toward legend points.

CRAJ'RY'S OF EARTH

DEX 7 STR 14 TOU 9
 PER 7 WIL 7 CHA 8

Initiative: 4 Physical Defense: 9
 Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 9
 Attack Step: 10 Social Defense: 11
 Damage Step: 15 Claw/ 18 Bite/ 20 Mane
 Physical Armor: 9
 Number of Spells: 1 Mystic Armor: 5
 Spellcating: 13 Knockdown: 16
 Effect: Shaking Earth Recovery Tests: 4

It pounds the ground with its fore paws, trying to create an small earthquake. Make a spellcasting test and compare it to the strenght of any one touching the ground withing a range of 40 yards of the Craj'rys. Any one with a strenght lower than the spellcasting test is thrown off balance. All affected targets loose 4 steps on all test BASED on strenght or dexterity only (i.e. Talents too!) for 4 rounds if the Craj'rys reeps on walking. (After the initial pound, just the walking keeps it going for another 3 rounds)

Death Rating: 60 Combat Movement: 28
Wound Threshold: 13 Full Movement: 56
Uncousious Rating: 48

LP: 380
Equipement: none
Loot: Mane contains part of the element so its worth
2D6 x 10 sp which count toward legend points.

CRAJ'RY'S OF WOOD

DEX 7 STR 11 TOU 12
PER: 7 WIL 7 CHA 7

Initiative: 4 Physical Defense: 9
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 9
Attack Step: 10 Social Defense: 10
Damage Step: 12 Claw/ 15 Bite/ 17 Mane
 Physical Armor: 11
Number of Spells: none Mystic Armor: 6
Spellcasting: none Knockdown: 13
Effect: none Recovery Tests: 5
Power: 12 Wood Heal

It allows it to do a Wood Heal test in exchange for an AVAILABLE recovery test (i.e max 5 times a day) instead of it's normal attack for that round. It must take a bite out of some wood to use this power. As soon as it goes over 30 damage points it will try do use it if wood is available otherwise it might try to escape.

Death Rating: 80 Combat Movement: 28
Wound Threshold: 15 Full Movement: 56
Uncousious Rating: 65

LP: 410
Equipement: none
Loot: Mane contains part of the element so its worth
2D6 x 10 sp which count toward legend points.

CRAJ'RY'S OF FIRE

DEX 8 STR 12 TOU 10
PER 8 WIL 9 CHA 8

Initiative: 5 Physical Defense: 10
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 10
Attack: 10 Social Defense: 11
Damage Step: 13 Claw, 16 + D10 (Fire) Bite, 18 +
D10 (Fire) Mane, 7 + D10 (Fire) Tail
 Physical Armor: 9 (12)
Number of Spells: 1 Mystic Armor: 6
Spellcasting: 10 Knockdown: 14
Effect: Fire Sphere Recovery Tests: 4

Make a spellcasting test and compare to the spell defense of anyone in a 15 yards radius from the Craj'rys. This generates a fire wave that has the Craj'rys for center and extends 15 yards in all directions causing 14 steps of fire damage on each affected being in that area. (Note. 15 yards up & down too). It will only cast it when there is 3 or more targets in this area on his initiative. It does not have to be decalred at the begining of the round since it does not see the difference between this attack and it's other type of attacks. For the Craj'rys this is just another attack.

Death Rating: 70 Combat Movement: 35
Wound Threshold: 14 Full Movement: 70
Uncousious Rating: 57

LP: 540
Equipement: none
Loot: Mane contains part of the element so its worth
2D6 x 10sp which count toward legend points.

The description of these creatures has been brought to you by Light Worker, Scribe of the Great Library of Throal

Check out our web page at
[http://members.aol.com/
swrdknight!!!](http://members.aol.com/swrdknight!!!)

THE POINTLESS SWORDS

BY GRAEME LINDSELL

The Pointless Swords are a group of magical swords created before the Scourge. Their name derives from their unusual design and their creator's sense of humour. These broadswords have a single-edged straight blade with a square, blunt tip: essentially these weapons are long straight razors. The metal of the blade is silvery and unscratchable, with a dull finish; the alloy that comprises them is a mixture of all of the true elements, orichalcum and more mundane metals.

These weapons were created before the Orichalcum Wars by the weaponsmith and elementalist Devrian, of the ancient human nation of Landis. Each of these broadswords was created as part of Devrian's search for his Heartblade, and their design reflects his philosophy that the essence of a sword is derived from its edge rather than the point. The Pointless Swords were his attempt to make the perfect edge: debate continues within the society of weaponsmiths as to whether he succeeded.

He made at least 10 of these swords over the last two decades of his life, finally forging his Heartblade at the age of 70. Those that did not attain the perfection he demanded he completed, but then disposed of, usually giving them to friends, as he refused to use a weapon that he found imperfect. Devrian labelled them "Pointless" because they failed in their function - to serve as his Heartblade - and his enemies used the name to denigrate his ideas. Devrian did not include his Heartblade amongst the Pointless Swords, as he believed it succeeded, but it has been grouped with them by most historians.

As they were a series of experiments, the Pointless Swords are of varying power, and have been graded as being of Lesser, Greater or Mighty status by later students of magical weapons. Devrian named each of the Pointless Swords after the order in which they were made and some failing in himself which he believed made this sword a failure. Five of the Swords are named in later legend: Third Anger (Lesser), Fourth Pride (Greater), Seventh Greed (Lesser), Ninth Pride (Mighty) and Tenth Fear (Greater). The Name of Devrian's Heartblade is unknown, but Tark Bonehead, an orkish scholar of the weapons, has claimed that it's Named "Devrian's Heartblade".

After he forged his Heartblade, Devrian resigned his position as Master of the Royal Forge of Landis, and announced that he intended to find and slay a Horror that had for many years been haunting the dreams of the nobles of the court, including his own family. Devrian took his Heartblade with him on this quest, from which he never returned, though the Horror-tainted nightmares ceased several months after he left.

After his death, Devrian's creations came to be most popular with the swordmasters and warriors of the orkish nation of Cara Fahd, - who employed a combat style that emphasized the edge - while the elves of Wyrn Wood, who favoured a thrusting style of swordplay, disparaged the weapons and the philosophy

behind them. Ironically, Cara Fahd and Landis were mortal enemies during the Orichalcum Wars, and most of the swords came into the hands of orks as spoils of war.

The stories of elvish and orkish troubadours have followed this pattern. In an elvish story the wielder of a Pointless Sword is usually doomed to a pointless death, complete with a final edifying warning on the dangers of ignoring the True Name of an item. Ork storytellers like to point out that it is the style of the death and the manner in which it is approached, rather than the circumstances, that make it significant. Devrian himself often appears in the legends of the orks, usually to advise the hero and pour scorn on the effete ideas of elvish warriors, though the genuine stories of his life are popular as well.

Notes for the GM: All of the Pointless swords are Size 3, and Devrian Forged all of them to some degree during construction. The Mighty blades are forged to STR+10 damage, the maximum allowable for a STR+5 broadsword, the Greater to STR+9 or STR+8, the Lesser to STR+6 or STR+7.

The maximum thread rank an adept can weave to one of these blades is set by the grade: the Lesser Pointless Swords to Rank 5, the Greater to Rank 7, the Mighty blades to Rank 9.

The Pointless Swords are well known, and a swordmaster or weaponsmith could be given most of the history above with a half magic test against a difficulty of 8: an excellent or better result should allow them to recall all of it.

The Key Knowledges are obviously more difficult to find: the Name of a Blade might be found by consulting Tark Bonehead's "A History of the Elder Blades", which can be found in the Library of Throal. This describes the five famous blades and makes some guesses as to the Names and provenance of the others. From this work a reader would find that much of this information came from a biography of Devrian written after his death by his daughter Kata. Tracking down this volume should be far more difficult, as it contains the Names of all the blades, their composition and their type; Tark did not own a complete copy. Finding this work, and completing the deeds required by the later Ranks, is hampered by the fact that Landis was located in the south-west of Barsaive, and this area is now either under Theran control or subject to frequent raids. Additionally, the key knowledges of the blades have altered as a result of their use by later heroes, and the effect of these new legends upon their patterns. The Rank 7 Deed and Key Knowledge of Ninth Pride was changed by the actions of its last famous wielder, and the rest of the swords, at least the famous ones, may also have been altered in this manner.

Two of the Pointless Swords are described here, Ninth Pride and Third Anger. While the properties vary from sword to sword, all of them have the ability to

add Karma to actions performed using the weapon, as this was the central special power Devrian was seeking to instill in these blades.

Ninth Pride (A Mighty Pointless Sword)

Spell Defense: 19

Threads: 2

Size 3 Broadsword, Forged to Str+10 Damage.

Ninth Pride is the most famous of the Pointless Swords, and was used by many heroes before and after the Scourge. The last known wielder was Erkelg Bloodletter, a troll mercenary Cavalryman who fought the Therans during the siege of Throal. He claimed that the spirit of Devrian had appeared to him by the side of the road one day, seemingly an ordinary human smith. When Erkelg asked this smith to sharpen his sword, the spirit placed it on the anvil and proceeded to break off the tip of the blade. Handing this back to the infuriated troll, the smith directed him to seek the wreck of a crashed airship nearby, where he would find a similar but better weapon; and then vanished. Realising what had happened, Erkelg located the wreck, slew the horror that had overwhelmed the crew, and found Ninth Pride.

Erkelg died, holding this blade, while making a solo attack against a force of 900 Theran raiders after all the rest of his regiment had fled. He thus gave the elves another example of a pointless death, and the orks an excellent role-model.

Rank 1 Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the Blade

Effect: Damage = STR + 11. Physical Defense +1.

Rank 2 Cost: 500

Effect: Physical Defense +2.

Rank 3 Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must determine what type of Pointless Sword he or she owns: whether the sword is Lesser, Greater or Mighty.

Effect: Damage = STR + 12.

Rank 4 Cost: 1300

Effect: Damage = STR + 13.

Rank 5 Cost: 2100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover what mixture of true elements, orichalcum and common metals Devrian alloyed in this blade.

Effect: The wielder may spend a point of Karma on any test made using the sword, including Attack and Damage tests.

Rank 6 Cost: 3400

Effect: Damage = STR + 14. Physical Defense +3

Rank 7 Cost: 5500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must take an oath that he will never dishonour the sword by fleeing a battle

which he began. This oath is sealed with blood magic, causing the wielder 3 points of permanent damage. Breaking this pledge will have the same result as breaking a blood oath; in addition the powers of the sword will never again function for the forsworn wielder.

Effect: The Sword inflicts an automatic Wound if it causes any damage after armor is subtracted, in addition to any Wound that may result from the damage it inflicts.

Rank 8 Cost: 8900

Effect: Damage = STR +15. Physical Defense +4

Rank 9 Cost: 14400

Deed: The wielder must discover at which Forge Devrian made this sword, travel there and construct a memorial to the weaponsmiths that worked there. This deed is worth 2,100 legend points.

Effect: The wielder may spend a second point of Karma on any test made using the sword, including Attack and Damage tests.

Third Anger (A Lesser Pointless Sword)

Spell Defense: 17

Threads: 2

Size 3 Broadsword, Forged to Str+7 Damage.

The history of this sword is a tale of berserkers, brutal raiders and other bloodthirsty killers, all of whom came to early and violent deaths. It is now being used by Iltheen the Impolite, an Elvish bandit whose band has been attacking merchant caravans near Travar for the past two years, and who is reputed to sell to the Therans any captives resulting from his attacks.

Rank 1 Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the Blade

Effect: Damage = STR + 8.

Rank 2 Cost: 300

Effect: Physical Defense +1.

Rank 3 Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must determine what type of Pointless Sword he or she owns: whether the sword is Lesser, Greater or Mighty.

Effect: Damage = STR + 9.

Rank 4 Cost: 800

Effect: Damage = STR + 10. Physical Defense +2

Rank 5 Cost: 1300

Deed: The wielder must slay in single combat an adept of a martial Discipline at least one Circle higher than the wielder's current Circle. This deed is worth 1300 Legend Points, in addition to those gained for defeating the adept.

Effect: The wielder may spend a point of Karma on any test made using the sword, including Attack and Damage tests.

UNPLEASANT BLOOD

CHARMS

BY GRAEME LINDSELL

These charms are not intended to be used by players; instead, they are meant as background, to demonstrate some of the "dark side" of blood charms, to show to players one of the reasons for their unpopularity in much of Barsaive, and to have at least some charms that are of no use to adventurers.

Bind Will

This charm is a creation of the Therans, and was developed to break the wills of unruly but valuable slaves. Its effect is to suppress the free will of the person who is forced to wear it: once attached and activated, the victim will have their Social defense reduced by 5, and will have to make a Willpower test against a target number of 10 in order to disobey an command. The Bind Will charm inflicts 2 points of permanent damage on the wearer.

As all blood charms take 24 hours to take effect, the victim is usually kept bound for this period. Once released, they can try to remove the Bind Will charm, but the charm's suppression of their will makes this difficult - to remove the charm requires a Willpower or Willforce test against a target number of 15, and may only be attempted once per week. Eventually the charm breaks the will of the victim: after every three attempts to remove the charm, increase the required success level needed to remove it, until an extraordinary success level is required to remove the charm.

As with other blood charms, the charm is destroyed after a year and a day of use, but most Namegivers who have worn a Bind Will charm for 12 months will undergo a permanent change in personality, and will need no charm to accept themselves as a slave.

Simply possessing one of these charms is a criminal offence in Throal; using one is a capital crime. Oddly, the Cult of Dis also disapproves of these charms, because they believe it removes the achievement of breaking another's will.

The charm consists of a chain of interlinked iron and lead rings; at either ends of the chain are barbed hooks that inflict the damage required by the charm.

Cost: 250 in the Theran Empire, usually 1000+ in most of Barsaive

Creation Difficulty: 13

Drug Charms

These charms are a diverse group, created by filling a hollow charm with a drug while it is being constructed. Once attached, the charm induces a

permanent state similar to that caused by whatever drug was used in its creation. A drug charm usually has no other effect, and inflicts 2 points of permanent damage on the wearer.

In Throal, the most common drug charms are made using alcoholic drinks of some sort; rarer ones are based on opium. The alcohol blood charms create a mild state of drunkenness, the opiate charms a mild anaesthesia. Many more drug charms exist, especially in the Empire. Game-masters should be wary of creating beneficial drug charms without side effects.

These charms are unpopular with the authorities in most areas: wearing one is a sure sign of addiction, and permanently drunk or high Namegivers are rarely welcome. In Thera, to wear one is a sign of inadequacy, as one is rendering oneself less capable of commanding magic and slaves, and is a social faux pas - a Theran should be able to afford the real drug! Some healers may use an opiate charm as a permanent anaesthetic, for patients who are dying or in permanent pain, but even this use is frowned on by most people. Even with this opposition, there is a market for these charms almost everywhere.

The charm consists of a hollow piece of transparent crystal, within which a solution containing the drug has been sealed. This solution enters the user's blood stream when first attached; from then on the charm is filled by the user's blood. Drug charms are one of the easiest blood charms to make, and are, at best, a disreputable source of income for those who can produce them.

Cost: Varies depending on drug used and legality, but at least 100 silver pieces.

Creation Difficulty: 9

THE WANDERING SWORDSMAN

BY SHIN

The Wandering Swordsman is a warrior who sees the study of the blade and personal combat as a model for the study of life. Wandering Swordsmen wander the land in a life-long search for inner enlightenment in the Way which encompasses not just their unique style of combat, but the Way of all the interactions that exist in the universe.

Important Attributes: Dexterity and Willpower

Racial Restrictions: None

Karma Ritual: The swordsman finds a quiet place, preferably in a natural setting (In the wilderness or a garden). There she sits for roughly half an hour of deep, undisturbed meditation, where she finds her center, reattunes to the spirits of nature around her, and goes over in her mind recent events and what they have to teach her.

Artisan Skills: Weapon Rune Carving, Sculpture, Wood Carving

FIRST CIRCLE

Talents

- Karma Ritual
- Maneuver *
- Melee Weapons *
- Steel Thought *
- Weapon History *
- Wound Balance

SECOND CIRCLE

Talents

- Anticipate Blow *
- Durability (6/5)
- Parry *

THIRD CIRCLE

Talents

- Meditation
- Tiger Spring

FOURTH CIRCLE

Karma: The Swordsman may spend a Karma Point on any action using Willpower only.

Talents

- Resist Taunt
- Thread Weaving *

FIFTH CIRCLE

Karma: The swordsman may spend a Karma Point to increase the damage of any attack made with a sword.

Talents

- Temper Self
- Yado *

SIXTH CIRCLE

Spell Defense: Increase the Swordsman's Spell Defense by 1.

Talents

- Momentum Attack
- Steely Stare

SEVENTH CIRCLE

Social Defense: Increase the Swordsman's Social Defense by 1.

Talents

- Second Attack *
- Life Check

EIGHTH CIRCLE

Physical Defense: Increase the Swordsman's Physical Defense by 1.

Talents

- Lion Heart
- Spirit Strike *

NINTH CIRCLE

Initiative: Increase the Swordsman's Initiative dice by 1 step.

Karma: The Swordsman may spend a Karma Point to increase the damage of any attack made with a melee weapon.

Talents

- Called Shot *
- Critical Hit
- Metal Ward

TENTH CIRCLE

Recovery Test: The Swordsman gains 1 additional Recovery Test per day.

Spell Defense: Increase the Swordsman's Spell Defense by 1.

Talents

- Quickblade
- Whirlwind *

ELEVENTH CIRCLE

Initiative: Increase the Swordsman's Initiative dice by 1 step.

Physical Defense: Increase the Swordsman's Physical Defense by 1.

Talents

- Lion Spirit
- Shield Beater *

TWELFTH CIRCLE

Initiative: Increase the Swordsman's Initiative dice by 1 step.

Karma: Increase the Swordsman's Maximum Karma Points by 25.

Talents

Defense
Spot Armor Flaw *

ROLE-PLAYING HINTS

The Wandering Swordsman is a character driven to seek out perfection of form and spirit. Wandering Swordsmen generally spend their entire life attempting to master a form of personal combat to a level of perfection that far exceeds what most people would consider sane. Yet, the path each swordsman takes to reach that point is different, and how they interact with those they meet along the way depends on each individual swordsman and how they came to be a member of this discipline. Some swordsmen, often those who were carefully tutored from childhood by an aging swordsman eager to see his knowledge and art carried on, can be extremely serious and somber. Others, often those who came into the discipline spontaneously in a desperate moment can be very loose and flippant in their general demeanor. All swordsmen, however, take personal combat, particularly a personal challenge or duel, very seriously, and all swordsmen seek to perfect their art.

At their core, swordsmen are driven by a compulsion to wander. Each possesses an intense belief that somewhere out there exists another lesson to be learned, another swordsman to be challenged, each with another piece to the puzzle of the Way which they follow. To the swordsmen, every aspect of life can be understood as an aspect of the Way, an aspect of the conflict between two name-givers in personal combat. The Way comprises not simply the physical skills of combat, but the mental aspects of understanding one's opponent, the terrain, the elements and spirits around you, even one's self, so as to be able to clearly see the path from where you stand now to where you wish to be.

Discipline Violations

The Wandering Swordsman spends her entire life on a quest to perfect her understanding of the Way. Should a Wandering Swordsman ever turn down or pass up an opportunity to gain new insight into her own abilities, or test herself against or receive a lesson from someone with a greater understanding of the Way than her own, she will be overcome by a sense of lost opportunity. Furthermore, this failure can cause the swordsmen to lose her sense of purpose and her spirit to travel, and this can trigger a talent crisis.

A swordsman who has lost her way, can attempt to regain it by seeking to rediscover her vision and insight. Typically, a swordsman faced with this dilemma will exile themselves from external contamination and hermit themselves in a distant mountain range or other remote location. There, the swordsman will attempt to reattune themselves to the world around them and regain their sight and purpose.

Many swordsmen also form bonds with their swords, as an extension of themselves and their will. Such swordsmen can find themselves in crisis with their

discipline should they lose their sword or break it somehow. Once lost, such swordsmen can think of nothing else but recovering their lost sword. If broken, often times, the spirit of the swordsmen breaks with it, and the swordsman retires defeated. Occasionally, however, a swordsman whose sword is broken can regain her sense of purpose and direction by reattuning herself to the world around her, in a similar fashion as described above.

Finally, the Way which swordsmen follow embodies a style of combat reliant on speed and skill. Although all swordsmen understand the relative advantages of various weapons and armor, swordsmen espouse the use of the hand and a half sword while wearing minimal armor. Swordsmen who become too dependent on armor to protect in combat begin to lose sight of their goal. The armor acts almost as a drain or crutch allowing them to become lax. Similarly, swordsmen view swords, and more specifically the hand and a half sword, as the perfect weapon, more capable than any other to act as a vessel for the wielder's skill. Other weapons simply do not allow the combatant enough refinement and control to allow her to reach perfection. Swordsmen who vary from these ideals may find themselves in conflict with their discipline.

MULTIPLE DISCIPLINE

COMBINATIONS

Wandering Swordsmen do not ever study another discipline. Any such distraction would only detract from the purity of their art. Those of other disciplines who come to see life through the eyes of a wandering swordsman, abandon their old discipline in favor of the purity of The Way.

SPECIAL RULES

Special rules for the wandering swordsmen include uses of half-magic, rituals of advancement within the discipline, and the uses of versatility by members of this discipline.

Using Half-Magic

Swordsmen can make half-magic tests to repair or maintain their weapons, to know or recognize a famous sword or swordsman, or to recognize a particular sword fighting style.

Rituals of Advancement

Swordsmen do not train to advance in circles as do other adepts. For the swordsmen, their life is their training. Instead, each swordsmen must learn a number of essential lessons between each circle of advancement as the circle she wishes to attain. So before a swordsman could advance to third circle, she would need to have received three important lessons or insights (whether through instruction, by coincidental observation, or in a duel) since she attained second circle. The gamemaster should be careful to inform the character when they have achieved each new insight.

Humans and Versatility

The overriding theme of the Wandering Swordsmen is perfection of combat form (both mind and body). As such, human practitioners of this discipline do not learn talents from other disciplines that are used in combat. To do so would constitute an abandonment of the Way which the swordsman seeks to master. Those swordsmen who do versatility talents from other disciplines tend to pick up talents which intrigue them or help them in their quest for understanding. A few common examples are Speak Language and Astral Sight.

NEW TALENTS

PARRY

Step Number: Rank + Dexterity Step

Action: No

Skill Use: Yes

Requires Karma: No

Strain: 1

Discipline Talent Use: Wandering Swordsman

Parry works in many respects like Riposte, with the major exception being that no counter attack ensues. A swordsman can parry any one melee or hand to hand attack directed at him in any particular turn of combat. The character first makes a Parry Test against the Attack Test of the attacker. If the Parry result is higher than the Attack Test result, the attack has been successfully parried. A successful parry will absorb the result of a Block Test (Str + Parry Rank + 5 steps) worth of damage. This amount is subtracted from the damage done by the attacker. If any damage remains (i.e. if the result is greater than 0), the attack has powered through the parry and hit the parrying character. In such cases, the remaining damage is assigned to the parrying character as normal (armor, etc. still applies). You cannot parry and riposte in the same round, the styles used for each of those talents are too different. Swordsman may spend karma on either test involved in



the parry (or both).

MEDITATION

Step Number: Rank + Willpower Step

Action: Yes

Skill Use: Yes

Requires Karma: No

Strain: None

Discipline Talent Use: None

A character who has meditation may meditate instead of sleeping. A character who meditates in this fashion requires less sleep than normal. A meditating character is considered fully rested after he has meditated for 8 minus half his rank (round up) hours. Further, a meditating character is not completely unaware of his surroundings. A character who is meditating makes a Meditation Test in place of any Perception Test he might normally make. The difficulty for any such test would be the same as normal. If the character is using meditation to rest, the success level of any Meditation Test made is reduced by one degree. Note that a character who is in a meditative state but not resting his mind is actually more "alert" (or in-tune) with his surroundings than he would be normally. It takes a few minutes for a Swordsman to find his center and enter the meditative state.

Marina, an elven Wandering Swordsman, rests for the night against the trunk of a tree. Traveling alone, she enters a meditative state, attuning herself to her surroundings while her body recharges. Marina has rank 5 meditation. It will take Marina five hours of meditation ($8 \text{ hours} - ((\text{rank } 5 * 0.5) \text{ round up}) = 5$) before her body will be fully refreshed as if she had slept for the night. While she is meditating, a young traveler sneaks into her camp and attempts to steal some food from her pack. The gamemaster has Marina make a Meditation test against the result of the would-be thieves silent walk test result of a 9. Marina rolls a 14 on her Meditation Test, yielding a good success. Because Marina is meditating in lieu of sleep, however, her success level is reduced one degree to a normal success.

YADO

Step Number: Rank + Dexterity Step

Action: Yes

Skill Use: No

Requires Karma: No

Strain: 1

Discipline Talent Use: Wandering Swordsman

The Yado talent allows a character to deflect missile and thrown weapons directed against him. In order to deflect a missile or thrown weapon, the Swordsman must be able to sense it and be facing it (within a roughly 120 degree forward facing arc). The yadoing character then makes a Yado Test against the Attack Test result of the attacker. If the Yado Test result is higher than the Attack Test result, the yadoing character has successfully deflected the weapon. A Swordsman can Yado a number of missiles up to his rank in Yado in a particular round. A separate Yado Test must be made against each missile. Failure to deflect any particular missile in a round does not affect the yadoing character's ability to deflect further missiles. In order to yado any particular missile or

thrown weapon, the yadoing character must have a higher initiative than the attacker. Note that for purposes of True Shot, the Yado Test result (providing it is higher than the yadoing character's physical defense) becomes the difficulty target of the True Shot Test.

Taliir of the Stony Steppes is attempting to charge three archers hiding behind nearby rocks along the side of the trail his party has been traveling along. As he attempts to close the intervening distance the archers all fire at him. Taliir decides to attempt to yado the arrows out his way and thereby avoid risking being knocked down or injured. Taliir possesses rank 4 Yado Talent. He is therefore able to attempt to yado all three missiles being fired at him. The first missile misses. The second missile hits with an Attack Test result of 14. Taliir then makes a test using his Yado Talent step of 12 (8 step Dexterity and 4 ranks of Yado), rolling exactly a 14, successfully knocking the arrow out of the sky. The third arrow also hits with an Attack Test result of 11. Again, Taliir makes a Yado Test, rolling a 13. Another successful deflection. This archer, however, is an adept using the True Shot Talent, and therefore is allowed to continue to spend karma to improve her Attack Test result. Her final Attack Test result is a 15. A successful hit.

NOTES FROM THE AUTHOR

The idea behind the discipline is the quiet, solitary swordsman who wanders the world seeking out masters of the art of swordsmanship from whom he can gain new insights. In some respects the mentality of the discipline is somewhat similar to the blademaster aspect of the Swordmaster. That class specialization of the Swordmaster, however, does not really encompass all that it means to be a Wandering Swordsman, and falls terribly short of representing their approach both to life and combat as the ultimate analogy of life. An excellent source of insight as to the nature of this discipline can be gained if you think about any Samurai movie you may have seen.

Also, for anyone who does not quite feel like they understand certain aspects of the discipline, I would recommend reading "Miyamoto Musashi", an excellent book about the life of the famous Japanese Swordsman, and a great source of ideas for insights, challenges and personalities common among practitioners of this discipline.

HAMMERSTONE

BY JEREMY METTLER

This quickly growing town of some 6,000 residence is located at the southwestern base of the Tylon mountains. Hammerstone is a well kept and orderly town whose inhabitants are friendly and self-reliant. The citizens of the town are a mixture of dwarf, human, and ork that work the local trade going to Kratas or the silver mines in the nearby mountains. Elves and obsidiman are occasionally seen among the populace, but trolls, t'skrang, and windlings are very rare.

The dwarven established government is well structured and well run. A large town watch that patrols the town and neighboring area (one day ride radius) is maintained. The town has many cosmetic laws that require its citizens to maintain a certain level of upkeep to their properties and persons making the town very pleasant looking. Accurate and fare tax rolls are kept and elections, open to property owning citizens, are held for government officials. Government meetings are open to the public, and citizens are sometimes allowed to speak. Any major policy or law change is always decided by a vote of the public. The government sustains itself through various means, but the main source of income is taxes. The town collects taxes based on a property tax, but their main source of tax revenue comes from taxes collected from the road.

The people and government of Hammerstone engineered and built a road that runs between Hammerstone and Kratas along the base of the Tylon mountains. This allows the hundreds of villages in the valley south of Hammerstone quick, easy and protected travel to the markets in Kratas. Patrols from the town ride the length of the road making it safer for travelers and making sure all who use the road have paid the road tax.

With the increasing strength of Hammerstone have come many new challenges. Ork scorchers from the valley north of the Liaj and Sky Raiders from the Twilight mountains have begun to prey on the area and villages surrounding the town. Although they have not attacked Hammerstone itself the town has felt the economic impact of these attacks.

Another threat to the town is from Kratas. Several of the various ruling gangs and factions in Kratas wish to gain control of the town and put it under their direct control. The criminal elements in Kratas enjoy the use of the road by have become angered at the harassing nature of the patrols from Hammerstone, who make them pay to use the road. Many in Kratas dream of the day that Hammerstone falls under the control of Kratas or is just wiped from existence; just as long as they leave the road most do not care which happens.

Hammerstone lies 6 days riding or 10 days walk from Kratas.

History

Hammerstone was founded around the year 1426TH when several opportunistic dwarven families from

Kratas came to the area because of reports of silver finds. The reports were accurate, and the dwarves settled down in a make shift camp and began mining the nearby mountain. The dwarves never planning to stay permanently, only long enough to amass a fortune and return to Kratas, did not create the mountain dwellings that dwarves are accustomed to building in the mountains and mines.

As word of the dwarves success traveled, orks, humans, and more dwarves from Kratas and nearby areas began to arrive and they also settled down in the camp. The small camp quickly grew and several years later it was a small town that resembled a miniature version of Kratas.

Almost three decades after its founding, Hammerstone found itself in the middle of the Theran War. The town, used as a jump off point by Throal to battle Theran forces in Ustrect and Liaj, swelled in numbers. Toward the end of the war the focus of Throal strategy changed and Hammerstone was no longer used by Throal forces. The town quickly diminished insize, until the war came to an end.

One of the Throlic armies, lead by General Peiron, a dwarf cavalryman adept, had been formed in the first year of the war. Peiron's Guard as it was known, spent the entire war in the lands between the Tylon mountains and the Twilight peaks. The army passed through Hammerstone many times and General Peiron became fond of the town. When the war ended Peiron disbanded his army, and then he and his family plus many of his senior staff and soldiers all settled in Hammerstone.

Peiron and the one hundred people he brought with him found post war Hammerstone a filthy, rotten, cesspool for thieves and claim jumpers. Within a year Peiron and his people wrestled control of the town from the thugs that ran it, and immediately after a small war between the criminal elements and Peiron broke out. All the criminal rackets, gangs, and guilds were defeated and run out of town by Peiron and the honest townsfolk. This period is now referred to by the townsfolk as "The Cleansing".

It was Peiron's leadership that made Hammerstone what it is today. Peiron and the former members of his staff organized the town and its government; they established all the current laws and regulations, including the tax system and election system. Several years after "The Cleansing" in an effort to increase trade to the city, the former head field engineer of Peiron's Guard built the road. Even though it was a difficult task it has already begun to pay off for the town.

The Town

There are six main areas to Hammerstone each officially known as a district. The six districts are: the White district, the Green district, the Market district,

the Old district, the Merchant district, and the Plaza district.

The White district is a residential area just north of the Plaza district. This is where the town's wealthiest citizens live. All of the houses are grandiose with giant lawns separating them and walls marking their boundaries. A few years ago crime began to increase in this area and the residents of the White district wanted first rights to watch patrols. Their request was denied by the town council; so the residents pulled together a large sum of money and hired a local mercenary force known as the Sentinals to act as the district's personal watch. Although the city watch still patrols the area and has jurisdiction, it's the Sentinals that have managed to decrease the area's crime rate to almost zero.

The White district is also where construction of the town's defensive wall has begun. Only about three hundred yards have been completed so far, but it will eventually encompass the White, Plaza, and Market districts and part of the Green district.

The Green district, located west of the Plaza district is mostly a residential area. The people that live here make up most of the town's middle class. This district's buildings are well ordered and almost uniform. The people here take pride in the superior cleanliness of their district.

South of the Plaza district is the Market district. The main feature of this area is the Mall, a large open paved area where farmers and others from the nearby villages and surrounding areas come to set up stands and booths to sell their goods. The mall is about 200 yards north to south and about 80 yards east to west.

The rest of the district is made up of small businesses such as dry goods shops, groceries, farm equipment shops, and other business that supply the needs of the area's local villages. A large unpaved road known as the Farmer's Road runs from the Mall south out of the town and into the valley.

Northeast of the White district is the area known as the Old district. A mostly residential area it is the oldest portion of the town. The north part of this district is populated by the town's silver miners and the upper lower class. A large unpaved road known as the Miner's Road runs from here out of the city and into the Tylon mountains.

The southern part of this district which borders the eastern side of the Plaza is where the town's lowest lower class reside. Even though this area is unorganized and the buildings in it are usually small shacks, it still reflects the town's good upkeep and cleanliness.

The Merchant district resides on the eastern side of the market district and is a combination of a middle class residential area and business area. Artisan shops are the primary business in this district. Armorers, brewers, cobblers, physicians, jewelers, masons, smithies, tanners and many more can all be found here, including all manner of inns and taverns. Most live in their shops but there are many town houses where the upper middle class, successful artisans and merchants live.

The Plaza district, the smallest of all the districts, lies at the center of the town. It is here that all the

government buildings, guild headquarters, parks, and plazas. At the center of the district is the Circle plaza, a large circular area with a fountain in the middle. The fountain bears a statue of General Peiron. The plaza is surrounded by the most important government buildings, including the Council Hall, Judicial Hall, and Administration Hall.

The Road

The road running from Hammerstone to Kratas was originally begun by the Throalic military during the Theran War, but was abandoned after a few years. It was small and not very wide and did not go but half the way to Kratas. After "The Cleansing" Perion ordered the road to be completed and expanded.

The road was completed just under a decade ago and is already seeing extensive use. It begins at the Mall and runs through the center of the Market and Merchant districts to a keep on the eastern boarder of the town. The Keep is a town watch sub headquarters where they collect the road tax from all who enter and leave the town on the road.

The road then runs along the base of the Tylon mountains until it ends just outside of Kratas. Hammerstone maintains several roadside inns and watch sub headquarters along the length of the road for use by travelers and patrols alike. The trip from Hammerstone to Kratas, a dangerous trip which would take villagers 11 days walking, now is a much safer trip that only takes about 8 days walking.

The road tax is 2 silver pieces per head (this includes any animal that is not caged up); anyone who uses the road must pay the tax. Most pay at the town and then are given a certificate that states they have paid. The Hammerstone watch patrols the road and checks travelers for certificates. If they do not have one, then they pay the patrol and receive a certificate from them. If they refuse to pay the traveler is taken into custody and held in Hammerstone until the road tax is paid.

The Government

The town government is organized into a council system. The council is made up of thirteen people, two property owning residents from each district and a mayor who is elected by the town as a whole. The mayor is the agenda setter for the council and makes sure council and public meetings are carried out according to the law. The mayor also appoints the head of each administrative office and acts as ceremonial leader of the town. The council approves all administrative decisions and appoints the magistrates and the watch captain. The mayor and council members terms are six years long with no term limit. Elections are staggered so only two council members are up for election on any given year.

The two other parts of the government are the administrative and judicial parts. The Administrative Hall conducts the daily business of the town. This includes the Tax office, the Public Works office, the Commerce office, etc. The Judicial Hall maintains the law and order in the town. This includes the magistrates offices, judicial courts, penitentiary system, and watch headquarters.

There are three political parties in Hammerstone, the Preservation party, the Expansionist party, and the Tolerance party. The Preservation party, by far the largest party in the town with six council seats and the Mayor's office, is dedicated to keeping Hammerstone a sovereign entity and to preserve the values and beliefs of General Peiron. The Expansionist party is the second largest political party with three council seats. They believe that Hammerstone is destined for great things and that it should begin making its place in Barsaive. They want to place the nearby villages around Hammerstone, who depend on the town for their survival under the town's rule. Lately the Expansionists have become stagnant and the party has become divided in its interpretations of their beliefs, almost nullifying their effectiveness. Finally the Tolerance party is the smallest with only one council seat. They believe that Hammerstone is not ready for any confrontations with outside forces and that they must seek aid to protect their future. They wish to have Hammerstone be annexed by Kratas for protection purposes. There are also two independent council members who tend to vote with groups such as guilds and unions.

The People

The first census in the history of Hammerstone was conducted last year by the Tax office. The census found that approximately 6,300 people live in Hammerstone with about 2,800 are dwarves, 1,800 orks, 1,300 humans, and 300 elves. Of these 54% are citizens, that is a member of a family who owns a least one property and paying property taxes. The rest are squatters, renting a property or legally living on someone else's property, or transients.

The people who live in Hammerstone all tend to be below average in height, and the architecture reflects this (probably the reason why trolls don't often come to this town). They are all of good temperament and very friendly. The people of this town are hardworking and self-reliant. They believe that every person is responsible for themselves and that it is wrong to expect from someone what you can't give to them. These attitudes and beliefs are what has united the people of Hammerstone and made it a safe and cohesive community.

Important People

Onora Rian

DEX 5 STR 6 TOU 6
PER 7 WIL 5 CHA 6

The mayor of Hammerstone is a native of the town and the daughter of a wealthy merchant. Onora is a tall dwarven woman with a large stature. She has long black hair that she keeps braided and bushy sideburns grace her face. She has a keen intellect and is very observant. She is very eloquent, a natural orator, with a large vocabulary. She likes talking about all of the latest philosophical subjects, but frowns on small talk as useless ranting.

Onora took to politics at an early age. She was a

young woman when General Peiron came to Hammerstone. Though her influence and assets were small she joined Peiron's cause during "The Cleansing" and quickly became one of his greatest allies. After his death nine years ago she was elected to replace him as mayor.

She is the leader and greatest member of the Preservation party. She recognizes that Hammerstone has the potential to be a great city, but must be able to keep it united if it is going to overcome its future challenges.

Onora is in a position of great influence, so she often finds herself hiring local adepts to act as scouts and information gatherers, so she can make the most informed decisions possible. When talking with her, most notice her eagerness and attentiveness when listening to their opinions and her nonjudgmental attitude.

Druas Nels

DEX 5 STR 5 TOU 4
PER 5 WIL 5 CHA 6

A council member that is one of the representatives from the Green district and Onora's greatest opponent in the Tolerance party. A young (about 29) human about 5' 4" in height with brown hair and blue eyes. He is highly intelligent and Onora's equal in oratory and debating skills. He tends to be sickly and has glassy wide eyes that most consider unsettling. He is a very friendly person that is easy to get along with, but when speaking of government or debating, he uses scare mongering to make his point playing on people's fears and uncertainties.

Druas has succumb to the greedy ways of his friends in Kratas and believes that the only way Hammerstone will survive its future is to become a protectorate of Kratas. Druas has many important contacts in Kratas, he has also amassed a small fortune there and in Hammerstone.

Aubert Ruusu

DEX 5 STR 7 TOU 5
PER 5 WIL 5 CHA 4

This council member is the leader of the Expansionist party and an adept of the Weaponsmith discipline, he represents the Merchant district. He is a dwarf of average height and medium build, but is very strong. He has reached 8th circle in his discipline and has excelled at forging blades (rank 11) and is an expert fighter (Melee Weapons Rank 9).

Although he is their official leader, he has fallen in disfavor with his party. He has had an inability to push the Expansionist agenda in official meetings. Secretly, the reason for this is he has fallen in love with Onora, though she does not know this, and he does not want to anger her by opposing her. Outside of official areas he rarely talks about politics, he would rather talk of lighter things or hear a good tale. Most people notice that Aubert seems to care little about politics, until they see him in an official function, when he can be very zealous.

Aubert, a former adventurer, has a rather large collection of magical weapons, which he uses to inspire his own creations. He has expert knowledge of legendary weapons, which he uses to inspire his own creations. He has expert knowledge of legendary and magical weapons.

Torht Rand

DEX 5 STR 5 TOU 4
PER 5 WIL 6 CHA 4

One of the wealthiest merchants in the town owning several businesses, including an inn and two taverns. He is an ork, 5' 11" in height and is frail by ork standards. He is a capable business man with great determination. He is a well groomed and well dressed individual.

Torht is a secret member of the Lightbearers. Although he is not a Lightbearer in the traditional sense, he has turned over his resources for use by the organization. He uses his businesses as safe houses and information gathering and exchange locations for the agents of the organization.

Torht is a private person, not often does he go out and socialize. When he does he is a very blunt person and speaks his mind. He has many contacts in Throal, Kratas, and Vivane, plus he personally knows one of the Swords of Light. At his disposal is a small army of agents and adepts to do his business and assist the Lightbearers, although they usually don't know they are doing this when he sends them on a mission.

Engres Colby

DEX 7 STR 5 TOU 5
PER 5 WIL 5 CHA 7

A thief adept who moved here from Kratas about three years ago and now lives in the Old district. He is a human about 5' 9" with noble and handsome looks. He is seventh circle and is most proficient in the clandestine talents (Silent Walk rank 8) and is skilled in Evidence Analysis. He is a suave speaker and he always says as little as possible, never volunteering information. He is noticeable by his cool and calm demeanor and how he always seems in control of a situation.

Engres is an agent of Garlthik One-Eye sent here as a spy to determine the threat to Kratas posed by Hammerstone. He has bribed and blackmailed many minor government officials into giving him information and could probably get more from them if he wanted.

Slean Esma

DEX 7 STR 6 TOU 5
PER 5 WIL 4 CHA 6

Hammerstone's watch captain and is an adept of the swordmaster discipline. He is an ork about 6' in height who is nimble and strong. When he talks he speaks slowly and clearly with as little words as possible. Although he is a man of few words, he is a good listener and entertains any complaints and suggestions his office gets.

This bladesman has obtained ninth level and is also a skilled investigator.

He is a adamant Preservationist who wishes to keep the town ideals enforced. He places a lot of infuses on enforcing the town's cosmetic laws. He believes the watch should set examples for the public. He requires all of his watch to be well groomed and clean when they go on duty.

Slean has many allies in the town and knows most everything that goes on. He knows about both Torht Rand's and Engres Colby's operations and activities but not who they work for.

Audrey Mayda

DEX 5 STR 5
TOU 5 PER 5
WIL 5 CHA 6

A questor of Lochost and an activist against the growing power of Hammerstone. She is a very attractive and charismatic human, 5' 4" in height.

She is not an orator but is an expert at talking to people on a one-on one bases, she is skilled in Conversation (rank 7) and Speak Language (rank 5).

She finds it easy to talk to anyone, and has a soothing comforting voice.

She feels it is her duty to protect the freedom of the villages that surround Hammerstone. She protests gatherings and meetings of the Expansionist party and frequently harasses the other council members. She can also be found in many of the villages trying to convince the villagers that they must live without Hammerstone. Audrey is familiar with life in all of the villages in the area and how they interact with each other, she has many contacts and friends (not to mention enemies) in each one.

Important Places

Caravan Center- A large open air building next to the Gate Keep. Here is where travelers going on the road can find information on when the next merchant



caravans are scheduled to leave. They can also sign up and pay for a place in the caravan, which then entitles them to protection from the caravans hired guards. Merchants can also leave their wagons, carts, and animals in the protection of the center, for a fee.

Circle Plaza- A large circular plaza at the very center of the town. In addition to the Council Hall, Judicial Hall, and the Administration Hall, many other important buildings can be found here. The Guild House, the headquarters for Hammerstone's merchant guild lies next to the Council Hall. Elmer Collage is a three story building opposite of the Council Hall. It is a highly exclusive institute of learning, only accepting 10 candidates a year for a five year curriculum. The education is above average, employing the best sages in the valley. Also on the circle is a small ritzy weekend theater called Montgomery's Stage and various office buildings rented out to numerous groups.

Convention Hall- Found in the market district at the north end of the Mall. It is a building with various banquet rooms rented out on a temporary bases to the smaller guilds and organizations who do not have a permanent headquarters. Every harvest season the rooms rent out quickly by the numerous husbandry guilds found in the area.

Gate Keep- The official eastern exit/entrance to the city and the building where travelers pay for the right to use the Hammerstone-Kratas road. The watch assigned to this location are solely responsible for patrolling and keeping the road safe and maintaining and administrating the road side inns. Patrols leave daily from here.

The Emporium- A large warehouse in the Merchant district owned by a consortium of magicians. Here the magicians create and sell unique and common magical items and provide a forum for the local mages together. They have thousands of common items at a reasonable price, ten to twenty percent lower than average.

Silver Piece Inn- Found in the Merchant district and is owned by Tort Rand. It is a quaint middle class establishment with fare prices and good service. It is a safe, quiet, and respectable place to stay for the night. Secretly it is also a safe house for the Lightbearers. It makes use of an access to the tunnels to fairy in and out agents in hiding.

The Tunnels- During the war the Throlic generals began building the road and to a lesser extent began building a sewage system to help improve the town. Like the road, the sewage system was abandoned. Over the years it has been covered up and forgotten. Very few people still know it exists and there are only a few usable entrances left. The tunnels, as it is now referred to, consist of about twenty passage ways that crisscross the town in perpendicular paths to one another, forming a kind of grid. Each tunnel is about ten feet underground with a eight foot height and six foot width.

Adventure Ideas

Hammerstone is a perfect place to introduce characters to a low level political campaign. It has many different elements that might make intriguing adventures. Here are some possible ideas:

Idea #1: The attacks by Raiders on the surrounding villages has steadily increased in frequency over the last few months and has begun to significantly affect Hammerstone's economy. The players are asked by Rian to rally and coordinate the villages against the Raiders, but the Expansionist party sees this as an opportunity to expand their power by placing mercenaries in the villages. Now the players must decide which is the greater good, Rian and the Preservationists, who want to teach the villages to defend themselves or the Expansionist who wish to use city resources to protect them. All this while trying to stop the Raiders.

Idea #2: A group of Diganni make camp next to the town. They begin to make a mess and become a general nuisance. On behalf of the council the players are asked to tell the Diganni to leave. When the players talk to the Diganni they refuse to leave. The Diganni are actually being lead by several Lightbearers who are in contact with Tort Rand. Recent actions by these Lightbearers have accidentally released a Horror, which is now traveling toward the town. They have come to intercept it and warn Rand. When the players report the Diganni refusal to leave the town decides to vote on having them forcefully removed. One of the Lightbearers approaches the players and confides in them. The players must now convince the council to let the Diganni stay for a few more days without compromising the Lighbearers security or letting anyone know this is a Lightbearer operation.

LONGHOPE'S LEGACY

BY ROGER GAUDREAU

The following four items were recovered from the remains of Kaer Longhope -- a dwarven kaer in the Thunder Mountains -- by the Circle of Amber, a group of heroes based in Urupa. Though not yet of legendary status at the time, the heroes entered the kaer, outsmarted the Horror which lived within, and escaped with eight volumes detailing the kaer's history and the four magical items described below. The volumes are now at the Great Library of Throal, and they contain all the information necessary to use these treasures. None of these items are of great power, but they may be put to profound use.

Shortly after depositing the eight tomes with the Great Library, the Circle of Amber undertook an adventure into the heart of the Servos Jungle. No word came from them for over a year, but rumor has it that a non-adept porter who accompanied them recently appeared in a village on the edge of the jungle. This man was apparently severely wounded and in the grip of delirium brought on by some unknown fever. Before he died, he is said to have revealed that the Circle of Amber fell prey to a powerful Horror deep within the jungle. If these rumors are true, then these items may find their way back into circulation among the heroes of Barsaive. May they be instrumental in avenging the deaths of those who first restored them to the light of day.

Berenford's Key

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: This ring is a simple, thick silver band set with a square-cut sapphire. The sapphire is carved with a stylized half-sunburst. Whenever a power of the ring is used, the stone glows with a pale blue light.

KNOWN HISTORY: This ring was the symbol of the Berenford family of Kaer Longhope, the family who generally kept the kaer's lore and history. Late in the kaer's history, it was under assault by a particularly dangerous Horror Named Thrazgolkenbar. This Horror had begun to unravel the patches that the kaer had placed upon those Wards which had been left weakened by previous assaults, and the kaer's inhabitants were unable to repel it. Frantically looking for any information about the creature, Althic Berenford, then the leading scholar of the kaer, tore apart his library in search of any clue to the beast's weaknesses. When he was about to resign any hope of finding a useful scrap, the ring suddenly glowed and the information leaped to Althic's mind. He fled his library to seek the place where the fighting was taking place. There he told everyone who could hear him what he knew of the Horror's weakness. Armed with this knowledge, the kaer drove the Horror away and shored up the Wards once more.

STATISTICS

Maximum threads: 1

Spell Defense: 14

Rank 1 **Cost:** 200

Key Knowledge: The wearer must know that the ring's name is Berenford's Key.

Effect: The wearer gains +2 steps on all Perception-only and Knowledge skill tests.

Rank 2 **Cost:** 300

Effect: The wearer's increased ability to perceive truth makes it more difficult to deceive him. The wearer gains +1 to his Social Defense, adds +1 step to all attempts to disbelieve illusions, and the Sensing Difficulty of all illusions he encounters is reduced by 2.

Rank 3 **Cost:** 500

Key Knowledge: The wearer must know the name of the Horror whose assault inspired the discovery of the ring's powers. (Thrazgolkenbar)

Effect: The wearer gains +2 steps to his Item History talent. If the wearer does not already have the talent, he may advance it as though it were a 5th circle talent to a maximum rank equal to the rank of the thread attached to the ring. In this latter case, if the character's thread to the item is ever destroyed or displaced, the talent and any legend points used to advance it are lost.

Rank 4 **Cost:** 800

Deed: The wearer must perform research into the weakness of an enemy and somehow make use of the knowledge to defeat him/it. When the foe is defeated, the wearer gains 800 legend points in addition to the usual legend point award.

Effect: "Knowledge Seek." The wearer may use this power to gain knowledge about a person, place, item, or creature. The wearer makes a Perception test against the Spell Defense of the target. On an Average success, the wearer gains some small tidbit of useful information, and all further tests (of any kind) against that target are at a +1 step bonus. A Good, Excellent, or Extraordinary success on this test grants a +2, +3, or +4 step bonus, respectively. The wearer may communicate this information to others, but as the insight is second-hand, reduce the step bonus for all characters other than the wearer by 1 level. This power may not be attempted more often than once per month against any specific target. Multiple successes over time are not cumulative, though the wearer may make use of the most useful information he has gained.

Corbin's Girdle of Steadfastness

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: This belt is crafted of a thick strip of a dark reddish leather, the golden buckle carved in the shape of a shield. The shield is

bisected by a diagonal line, and there are three stars in the upper field.

KNOWN HISTORY: This belt was the symbol of the Stoutheart family of Kaer Longhope, the family who oversaw the training and maintenance of the kaer's militia. At a time when there were more breaches in the Wards than properly protected areas, Corbin Stoutheart stood with several other men facing the onslaught of a horrid, squealing, tentacled nightmare. Many of the kaer's defenders fled with unreasoning terror at the sight of the thing, but Corbin reflexively rubbed his fingertips across the buckle of his belt and silently invoked the name of his grandfather, a man known for his bravery. With that, the fear that had nearly gripped him washed away, and he found himself able to fight. Laughing in the face of the onrushing monster, he charged forward to meet it. Three men--Thadren, Eledar, and Marrat--heard Corbin laughing and turned to see what was happening. When they saw him fighting, they overcame their own fear and joined in the fight. Together, the four men were victorious and slew the Horror.

STATISTICS

Maximum Threads: 2

Spell Defense: 10

Rank 1 **Cost:** 100

Key Knowledge: The wearer must know that the belt's name is Corbin's Girdle of Steadfastness.

Effect: The wearer becomes harder to intimidate and gains +1 Social Defense against any attempts to intimidate him.

Rank 2 **Cost:** 200

Effect: The wearer gains +3 steps to all Willpower tests to resist or throw off magical effects intended to cause fear or intimidation.

Rank 3 **Cost:** 300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must know the names of the three men Corbin inspired to overcome their fear and fight the Horror. (Thadren, Eledar, and Marrat)

Effect: The wearer gains +2 steps to his Heartening Laugh talent. If the wearer does not already have the talent, he may advance it as though it were a 5th circle talent to a maximum rank equal to the rank of the thread attached to the belt. In this latter case, if the character's thread to the item is ever destroyed or displaced, the talent and any legend points used to advance it are lost.

Rank 4 **Cost:** 500

Deed: The wearer must, alone or as part of a group, put an end to a creature or group of creatures that is terrorizing a community. This may be anything from a Horror to a group of bandits. The wearer must then mingle some of his own blood with some blood of the defeated creature(s) on the edge of a knife and burn away the mingled blood while vowing to keep alive the memory of Corbin Stoutheart. This deed is worth 800 legend points.

Effect: "Psychic Fortress." The wearer may surround his mind with magical protective walls which make him completely immune to fear. Use of this power costs cumulative Strain per combat round, costing 1 Strain in the first round, 2 in the second, and so on. This power may not be activated if the wearer is under the influence of a fear effect, and each use causes 1 point of blood magic damage that may not be healed for a number of years equal to the number of minutes the power was active (minimum 1).

Mandwhin's Heartening Banner

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: This sash is woven of dark blue and gold cloth in a checkered pattern and has three black stripes running along its length. No knife or edge seems capable of cutting the sash, though it provides no armor-like protection.

KNOWN HISTORY: The sash was the symbol of the Mandwhin family, who were the entertainers and storytellers of Kaer Longhope. Theirs was the responsibility for keeping spirits high and keeping the inhabitants confident that they would emerge from the kaer when the Scourge was done. In the darkest hour of the kaer's history, when no more than a quarter of the population still lived and the Horrors were about to descend upon the remainder and eliminate the kaer, Olavara Mandwhin gathered all of the kaer's remaining defenders and spoke to them at length about past heroes of the kaer, men and women who had spilled their blood to fend off the foul creatures of the netherworlds. Her words penetrated even the most despairing of hearts and lifted up even the lowest of spirits. She led the remaining inhabitants of the kaer in a daring strike against the Horrors that had overtaken the kaer's upper caverns, exterminating them all. Olavara died in the fighting, and 80% of the remaining inhabitants were slain as well, but the remnant sang of their bravery as they sealed away forever the treasures and history of the kaer before returning to the surface to slay as many Horrors as they could with the last of their strength.

STATISTICS

Maximum Threads: 2

Spell Defense: 11

Rank 1 **Cost:** 100

Key Knowledge: The wearer must know that the sash's name is Mandwhin's Heartening Banner.

Effect: The wearer becomes more persuasive, gaining +2 steps to all Charisma-only tests.

Rank 2 **Cost:** 200

Effect: The wearer gains +2 steps to his Emotion Song. If the wearer does not already have the talent, he may advance it as though it were a 5th circle talent to a maximum rank equal to the rank of the thread attached to the sash. In the latter case, if the character's thread to the item is ever destroyed or displaced, the talent and any legend points used to advance it are lost.

Rank 3 **Cost: 300**

Key Knowledge: The wearer must know the name of the last Mandwhin to wear the sash and the circumstances of that individual's death.

Effect: "Inspire." By suffering one point of Strain and speaking with a character for at least one minute, telling him of his bravery and strength, the wearer will fill a character with such self-confidence and belief in his own abilities that the character gains +1 step to all tests. This power lasts for 1 minute per rank of the thread attached to the sash. The wearer may use this power on himself. The wearer may affect more than one person with this power, for a cumulative cost in Strain added for each person beyond the first (thus, 1 person costs 1 Strain, 2 people costs 3, 3 people costs 6, etc.).

Rank 4 **Cost: 500**

Deed: The wearer must tell a story to inspire a group of characters about to battle a dangerous foe. The story must include examples of bravery from each person in the group. If the characters are victorious, then the Deed is successful and the character gains 800 legend points.

Effect: "Instill Purpose." By spending at least ten minutes speaking with a group and telling them inspiring stories, the wearer may instill in them such a strong sense of purpose and righteousness that they find the strength to fight beyond the normal limits of their strength. All characters who willingly listen to the wearer's stories may fight and take normal actions while they would normally be unconscious, though they fall over dead when their current damage equals or exceeds their Death Rating. This power lasts for one hour from the end of the wearer's tale(s).

Maranok's Healthful Charm

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: This amulet is seemingly crafted of pewter and hangs on a thick leather cord. It is crafted in the shape of two snakes intertwined around a point-down sword. The heads of the snakes face each other across the sword's pommel, and their eyes are ruby chips. Whenever one of the amulet's powers is used, the ruby chips glow softly.

KNOWN HISTORY: This amulet was the symbol of the Maranok family of Kaer Longhope, the family who generally cared for the sick of the kaer and administered to the well-being of all of the inhabitants. It was revealed to have healing powers during one of many Horror attacks on the kaer when Elwhin Maranok, then the matron of the family, led her two daughters into the thick of a huge battle to save her husband Tamadur and her three sons, who had been knocked unconscious in the fighting. Unable to carry them out, she desperately wished that she could give to them of her own strength. The amulet began to glow, and Elwhin felt some of her health and strength flowing out to her husband. Before the magic could fade, she touched each of her sons, and all four men were suddenly conscious and able to retreat from the battle, though still sorely wounded.

STATISTICS

Maximum Threads: 3

Spell Defense: 9

Rank 1 **Cost: 100**

Key Knowledge: The wearer must know that the amulet's name is Maranok's Healthful Charm.

Effect: The wearer gains an extra Recovery Test per day.

Rank 2 **Cost: 200**

Effect: "Improve Recovery." By concentrating for 1 minute and taking 2 points of Strain, the wearer may improve 1 Recovery Test for any character other than himself by a number of steps equal to the rank of the thread attached to the amulet. The wearer's own Recovery Step is improved by 1.

Rank 3 **Cost: 300**

Key Knowledge: The wearer must know the name of the first person to use the amulet's powers, the name of the first person it was used on, and the circumstances surrounding the use.

Effect: "Grant Recovery." By concentrating for 1 minute and taking 1 point of Strain, the wearer may sacrifice a Recovery Test to grant it to another character. Use the wearer's Recovery Step for this test.

Rank 4 **Cost: 500**

Effect: "Wound Ease." By concentrating for 1 minute, the wearer may sacrifice a Recovery Test to heal one wound for any character other than himself. The wearer may not use this power if he suffers from any wounds.

Rank 5 **Cost: 800**

Deed: The wearer must voluntarily risk his own life to save a fallen comrade or loved-one from a life-threatening situation. Afterward, the wearer must explain to the person he saved the story of Elwhin Maranok and then vow to keep her memory alive. This deed is worth 800 legend points.

Effect: The wearer gains a special version of the Blood Share talent at rank 1. This talent differs from the cavalryman talent of the same name in two ways. First, use of this talent is not restricted to the character's mount and may affect any character. Second, the character may use this talent only to take damage upon himself to heal others; he may never transfer his own damage to another character. An adept who already possesses the Blood Share talent treats the one granted by the amulet as a separate talent, which he may advance as though it were a 5th circle talent to a maximum rank equal to the thread rank attached to the amulet. If the character's thread to the item is ever destroyed or displaced, the talent and any legend points used to advance it are lost.

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