



SPRING 2012

# ELDER TUNNELS



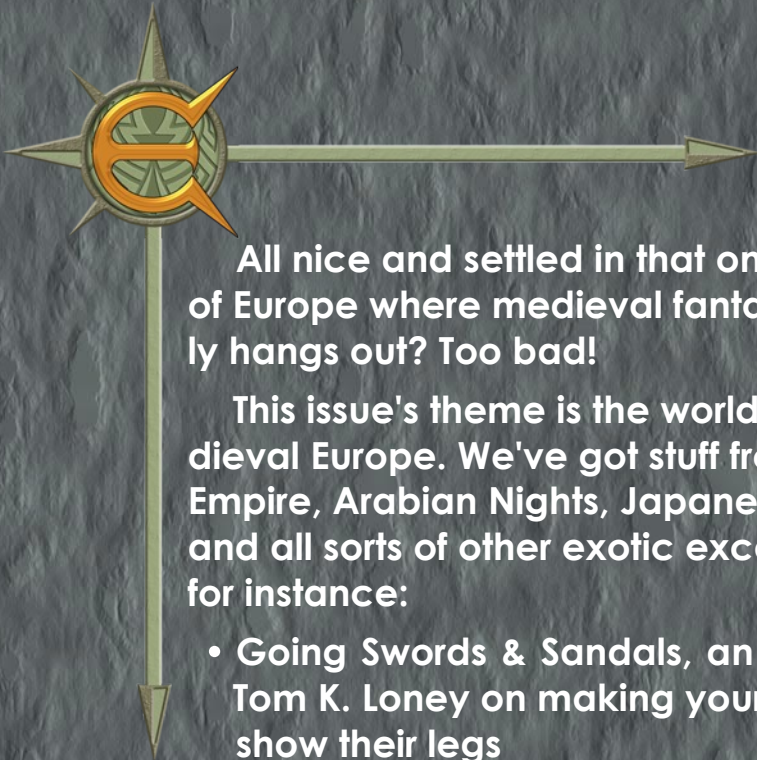
## INSIDE:

GAMING ARTICLES

SOLO BY BRIAN PENN

GM ADVENTURE BY JERRY TELEHA





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All nice and settled in that one little corner of Europe where medieval fantasy traditionally hangs out? Too bad!

This issue's theme is the world beyond Medieval Europe. We've got stuff from the Incan Empire, Arabian Nights, Japanese folklore, and all sorts of other exotic excellence. Like, for instance:

- **Going Swords & Sandals**, an article by Tom K. Loney on making your swordsmen show their legs
- **Into the Wyrd**, a Peakvale update for GM's, providing a ready excuse to send your players abroad, by Scott Malthouse
- **Dangers of Bakemono Forest**, an oriental-style solo by Brian Penn
- **The Story's the Thing**, an article by Michael Eidson
- **The Inca Empire**, an article by Trevor Hudgins
- **Days and Nights in Baru-Kesh**, an Arabian Nights-inspired GM adventure by Jerry Teleha



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# ELDER TUNNELS

SPRING 2012

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**“We can act like we come from out of this world,  
leave the real one far behind!”**

**– Men Without Hats, “Safety Dance”**

**W**elcome to the spring 2012 *Elder Tunnels*. This issue invites you to step outside your little world and try something different. Very different, in fact. How about fantasy that is not based on the usual medieval European history and myth? That is just what this issue provides.

Michael Eidson takes us on a journey not only in space and time but in mind as well: back to the early days of role-playing and then on to its future, showing us that no matter the system in use, **The Story's the Thing**.

Scott Malthouse shows us in **Into the Wyrd** that just because a setting is fantasy based on Europe doesn't mean it has to be medieval. He shows us the world of Peakvale, a reflection of contemporary British politics in Tunnels & Trolls garb. Gives us a look behind the curtain to show us the world creation process and give us a glimpse of other projects as well.

Jerry Teleha invites us to spend some **Days and Nights in Baru-Kesh**, a brief but well-rounded GM adventure. This story promises not to take the full 1001 nights that its inspiration took to play out, but rather to provide an afternoon of diversion. Beware of the ghul, a new monster introduced here...

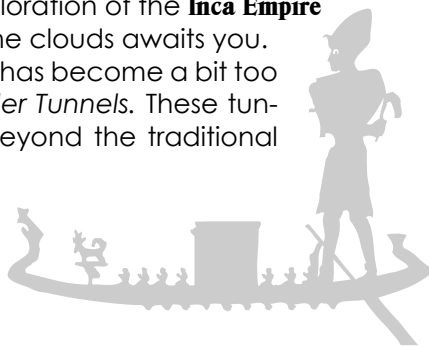
The **Dangers of Bakemono Forest** are many. This solo will test the mettle of any adventurer. It includes special rules for generating local characters but will also accommodate existing characters. Goblins, spiders, and badgers are only a few of the creatures lying in wait in this Japanese-inspired adventure. It will test your skill, your wisdom and your honor. Not everything is as it seems in this forest.

Tom K. Loney, no stranger to these pages, is **Going Swords and Sandals with Bronze-Age Bros and Babes in T&T**. Here he offers thoughts on how to have a truly epic adventure, one to rival the Olympians themselves. Thoughts on how to adapt standard T&T character Kindreds and Types to suit the roles of myth and legend. Pour out a libation to the dice gods and release the kraken!

Lastly, Trevor Hudgins takes us about as far from medieval Europe as we can go while still remaining on Earth in the late Middle Ages. He offers us a whole New World with an exploration of the **Inca Empire** for T&T. The land of llamas and cities in the clouds awaits you.

So, if the same old, same old is feeling has become a bit too stale, try adding some freshness with *Elder Tunnels*. These tunnels reach to many places, some far beyond the traditional realms of elves and wizards.

– *David Crowell*, writing to you  
from H'rrothgarr's Hovel



# Going Swords & Sandals

*Bronze Age Bros & Babes in T&T*



by Tom K. Loney





It always surprises me when someone who plays T&T wants to do some sword and sorcery in, say, Rome, Sparta, or Hattusa, thinks that a whole major game system must be developed. What would surprise many folks, including many T&T-heads, is that working in the ancient world is easy for the T&T adventure gamer. Maybe even easier than using most of other "pseudo-medieval" FRPSs out there.

The roles that player characters have assumed in ancient-world games very much resemble the Types (Warrior, Wizard, and Rogue) of Our Game. Doses of worldly knowledge are mixed into religious themes, implying a magical element around everyone, making Wizards a frequent occurrence. And while those on the other side of the tracks can learn tidbits of knowledge and mystical stuff, they still have to get by on wits or, failing that, weapons: these would be called Rogues. And there are more than a few Warriors around who have demonstrated that armor can show plenty of flesh yet still be used better than most others.

Many people who know T&T often bemoan the lack of a "priest class." One of the characteristics of the multi-religion landscape of the Bronze and Iron Ages was the proliferation of the title of priest or cleric by people from all walks of life. While scholars and philosophers were often considered holy figures, so were those of practical professions, like physicians, bankers, lawyers, and butchers. And leaders moving back and forth between the military and the realm of aristocratic politics, like Julius Caesar, often were priests themselves. More practically, something considered to be a venerable holy gathering between the clerics of Hermes and the priests Dagon, say, would essentially be a meeting of merchants and fishermen to arrange distribution contracts. A Warrior-Wizard acting as a paladin of Zeus walking around looking for the witches of Ba'al and vampires of Anubis in Tyre, Phoenicia, works easier than in East Anglia in the Dark Ages. This approach isn't the same use as a "healer class" to support the "tanker" and "artillery" PCs of other games, but it does provide plenty of atmosphere and grounds for intrigue between differing cults and secret religious orders.

Now, T&T is about mega-amounts of rare kindred running around all over the place. One finds many more humanoids and intelligent non-humans in the Greek and Egyptian myths than one does in, say, works like *King Arthur* or *Ivanhoe*. Even the sagas of Siegfried and Beowulf only mention a few kinds of non-humans, and they're all monsters pretty



much meant for slaying only. Here are some fairly common “demi-humans” who reoccur in the fables and myths of the ancient world (I’m leaving out centaurs, which are actually in the T&T rules book):

Instead of the elf, try a dryad. Essentially an elf, using the statistics for an elf in the T&T rules book, a dryad is female and always either of the Wizard or Citizen class. Dryad Citizens are called nymphs, and, regardless of their actual personalities and moral characters, they tend to be seen as not much else than forest-frolicking bimbos. More thoughtful males of the world do consider the nymph capable of filling their goblets with wine or ambrosia. The Wizard dryad, though, is generally respected, if not feared, by the rest of the world. Many work their way up in the cults of the cultures around them and are accomplished sorceresses. Often they are announced as the “voice” of a certain goddess and are assumed to have that deity’s ear. Many a great hero, NPC, or player character is sired by a god with a nymph, err, a younger dryad.

While one can always place dwarves anywhere, as gamers often do, I’d suggest giving satyrs the stats of a dwarf. These goat-legged manly men share a lot in common with the dwarves of Tolkien. They like

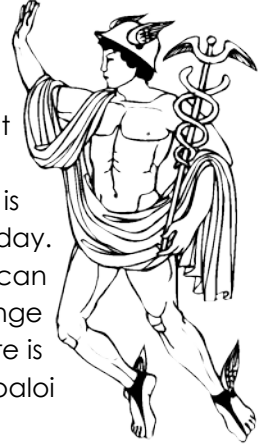


to drink and were known to take up arms and invade the wilderlands at the edges of the Known World, like Pan and his armies did when they marched on India to later inspire Alexander the Great. And no one has ever seen a female satyr, much like the mysterious feminine dwarf of long gamer discussion.

Need some hairy-footed and small, village-dwelling diminutive humans to feel like you’re playing a true fantasy adventure? Take the stats for the hobb from the

rules book and apply it to the troglodyte. Hanno, the Carthaginian sailor-explorer, encountered a shy species of "cave men who run faster than horses." And they are noted for their large feet at that.

The Greek and Anatolian *kobalos*, or kobald, is very much what we would call a leprechaun today. However, it can change shape as readily as it can Wink-Wing away from others. Its aspect can change whether it lives in a family's home or a mine. There is a lot of stuff to work on with regard to these kobaloi for the whimsical GM.



So, are you ever in a mood for the fantasy campaign that J. R. R. Tolkien didn't write? I mean, like, even deviating beyond Terry Brooks? But you don't have the time to fully flesh out an Edgar Rice Burroughs setting with its apes and four-armed martians? Well, how about an historical setting? I'd recommend jumping into the Bronze Age.



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## **Tunnels & Trolls rulebook: the latest edition is now available... in French!**

Yes, you heard right. After years of work on an ancient tome lit by the flickering flame of a will o' wisp, the latest edition of the famous role-playing game has finally been published. Even if you can't read French, you'll love the beautiful old and new illustrations by Liz Danforth and the fantastic layout by Steve Crompton!

If you actually can read French, you will see that this edition includes not only the content of the 7<sup>th</sup> edition, but also part of the 5.5 version of the rulebook, as well as several clarifications and explanations by Ken St. Andre.

The French edition can be bought through Lulu: <http://www.lulu.com/shop/patrice-geille-and-ken-st-andre/tunnels-%26-trolls/paperback/product-18928296.html>. See also the French T&T website with clickable links to Lulu: <http://tunnels-et-trolls.eu>.



*Into*  
*the*  
*Wyrd*

*Delving into the World  
of Peakvale & Beyond*

**by Scott Malthouse**

Author Scott Malthouse of the *Trollish Delver* blog has been working on a number of fantastic projects for the T&T gaming community and beyond. We wanted to know more about them, and we thought you would too, so we asked him to send us the following update.

Last night I walked through the grand City of Dhezereth, mingling with the dwarves. I wrenched up a great stone monument to Gristlegrim, meticulously crafted the Hammerlon Palace, inhabited the secret mountain chambers with grey goblins, and observed from the arena the violent game of Grokken I'd just made up the rules for. Dhezereth is just one location in Peakvale, a campaign setting I've created for Tunnels & Trolls.

At the heart of Peakvale lies Thornguard, the capital city of this bizarre country and its ruler, King Hobbletoe. Hobbletoe is a ruthless ruler, hated by some, yet beloved by others. I wanted Peakvale to reflect the current state of politics in the United Kingdom but in a fantasy caricature, much like Judge Dredd did with the reign of Margaret Thatcher. Being relatively political-minded, I decided that Peakvale would be a living, breathing place that changes depending on the real-life political Zeitgeist.

Aesthetically, Peakvale mirrors the old English countryside with its rolling green fields and hedgerows, but it retains that certain eerie, mystical quality inherent in the country's woods, meadows, and bogs.

Politically, we see Peakvale under the rule of a very conservative monarch who cast out the urooks into the hinterlands known as the Greyhavens, a place forbidden to the people of Peakvale. No, I don't believe that the current Prime Minister is racist, but this action represents an exaggeration of the Conservative party's mindset.

This forced urook exile will play a large part in the stories of Peakvale, as some rebels remain in the country as illegal trespassers while the majority have made their home in the bleak Grayhavens, forming tribes. In the adventure *It Came from Beyond the Stars!*, the players were taken deep into this foreboding place and witnessed both the peaceful and the wrathful nature of the urooks. Players were shown differing attitudes towards the kindred, from sympathetic to downright fascist.

While vengeful, raiding urooks pose a problem for the King, there is something even more pressing that keeps the Peakvale Guard on their toes: the Wyrd.



## INFINITE POSSIBILITIES

I wanted to add extra dimensions, literally, to the political turmoil intrinsic to Peakvale. Infinite dimensions, to be precise. I've always loved that in the T&T mythology kindreds and monsters all originated from other worlds, landing in Trollworld through dimensional gates. In



Joe Calkins

Peakvale, Lake Bloodmoon is the site of such a gate, but this one is in constant flux, linking to new universes on an almost daily basis. It is known as the Wyrd. The fun that stems from this aspect is twofold. Firstly, the GM will never run out of threats for her campaign. Literally anything can wander out of the gate into Peakvale and wreak havoc on the population, from singular monsters to full-blown invading armies. Secondly, players can seek adventure in infinite worlds, from lands ruled by machines to underwater cities inhabited by sword-wielding dinosaurs. Creating a reasonably-priced World Key allows delvers to travel to a specific dimension while retaining the ability to return to Peakvale.

## THE GAME'S THE THING

At this moment I'm penning the latest addition to the Peakvale saga, an adventure that will take the players into the Wyrd itself. There are very few things I draw more pleasure from than getting adventures out there for people to play, and by setting up Trollish Delver Games, I have a platform from which to do that.

TDG was born out of the Trollish Delver blog, which I've been running for a few years and is going stronger than ever. At a point when I realised that there wasn't much new material being released for T&T, I wanted to get something out there for people to play, so I wrote the GM adventure *Forest of the Treelords* and the solo *Depths of the Devil-mancer* in relatively quick succession, releasing them on Lulu under the banner Trollish Delver Games. I was happy with the interest the adventures garnered and hoped that people were enjoying them as much as I loved writing them.

I'm lucky enough to have some wonderful friends at Peryton Publishing, like Tom K. Loney, who saw my work and wanted to work with me to publish a series of T&T GM adventures. There's a real lack of regular adventures for the game, and I was thrilled to be given the chance to work with a great publisher\* on a system that I love, so I set to work on my first Peryton/TDG adventure, *It Came from Beyond the Stars!*, which was released in December 2011.

At the beginning of 2012, I set down some plans for what I anticipate will be a very productive year for TDG. My partnership with Peryton will continue in the adventures that Tom and I will create, and I am ever faithful to writing in *Elder Tunnels* whenever I get the chance. I'll also be writing my first mega-solo, which will be released during the summer along with *The Delver's Guide to Peakvale*, which, as can be inferred, will contain everything you need to create your own adventures in Peakvale.

Outside of T&T, I released my *Unbelievably Simple Role-playing* system through RPGnow and Lulu; it will form the basis of all of my future games. I'm currently drafting up the first of those games, *Derring-Do!*, in which the players take on the roles of early 1900s pulp action heroes along the lines of The Shadow and Green Hornet. *USR* will also be the engine for my solo gamebook series *DemonLord*, which will be coming out sometime this year.

The past year has been incredibly exciting, and without the support of Ken St. Andre, Peryton, and the RPG community I would have never been able to do any of this.

Tonight I will return to plant the seeds of adventure for cunning delvers like yourselves to forge your own legend in Peakvale.

\* Publisher's note: We paid "Malty" in fine malted beverages to say that.

Dangers  
of  
Bakemono Forest

**An introductory solo to the Southern Foot of the Dragon**



by Brian Penn

The trade empire of Sonan le controls the entire peninsula of the Southern Foot of the Dragon. Its hereditary ruler, the Tenno, dominates trade within the surrounding seas from the Sea of Bold Endeavors to the Lands of the Naga. His power comes from his armed merchant fleets captained by loyal samurai and manned by marines.

Kitaka district is the northernmost land controlled by the Tenno. There, Bakemono Forest guards access by land to Sonan le. Within the forest live giant spiders, goblins, shape-shifters, and giant centipedes. These old-growth woods alone hamper easy travel with their great trees' exposed, gnarled roots interspersed with irregular areas of thick undergrowth. The dangers within stop even northern trade from entering Sonan le.

Fate has brought you to the edge of Bakemono Forest. Within, you will encounter the clans of Bakemono. They owe loose allegiance to the Tenno through arcane treaties and compacts. The Laws of the Tenno reach into the deepest parts of Bakemono. Clan members will always obey the laws listed in the sidebar.

**Laws of the Tenno**

- \* Clan warfare is outlawed.
- \* Killing intelligent life is murder.
- \* Taking another's belongings without accepted compensation is theft.
- \* Combat as a contest is permitted. The weaker opponent must surrender when defeat becomes inevitable.

To learn more, choose from the following:

- \* Your character was born and raised among the Kikori (woodcutters) of the cultivated woods of Miana Po (Pole Tree) Forest. Go to **53** to make your character.
- \* Your character was born and raised in Port Nanaj (Little Shark) as a member of the famed Shark Clan, the principal shipwrights of the Tenno. Go to **36**.
- \* Your character is a foreigner to the Kitaka district of Sonan le. Go to **44**.

**1** You slay the giant spider. From its body you may collect what remains of the spider's venom. Make an SR on Dx at the highest level you can. The level of success is the number of ingestible doses of spider venom you recover. Boiled down, the venom becomes quality blade venom with a number of applications equal to half the doses recovered. As a

reminder, one combat round after being poisoned, the victim is at half effectiveness. Two combat rounds later, the victim is paralyzed. The paralysis wears off five combat rounds later. Of course, any victim larger than a human is unlikely to be affected.

Continue your adventures at **23**.

**2** "Well, well, well. The weak little foreigner likes to make trouble." The offensive statement rings out loud and certain from behind. A four-foot tall goblin strolls toward you, unsheathing his matte, sickle-blade irku sipo (falcata) sword.

This Clan Watcher has an MR of 20 and an additional 3d6+1 sword, which is poisoned with spider venom. He will accept your surrender at any time. If your success begins to appear guaranteed, he will himself surrender.

- \* If you defeat the Clan Watcher without killing him, go to **40**.
- \* If he is killed, his death will rouse the clan. Make a 2nd lvl SR Sp to run off to **23**. If you fail your saving roll, the goblins overpower you, strip away your gear, bind you, and carry you off to stand trial before "Tenno's Judge" at **39**.
- \* Those defeated by the goblin may wander north to **23** or west to **35**. East leads to **7**.

**3** At no point is the path wider than three feet. You walk on top of the only remaining wall of Storm River. A fight along this wall would pitch the fighter into the deadly river rapids below. This path is a **SECRET** of Bakemono Forest. From here you may go north to **35** or south to **6**.

**4<sup>M</sup>** The trees grow further apart in this part of the woods. More sunlight illuminates the way. The ground rises and dips more gently than in other areas. Sections of ground rise in gentle mounds.

To proceed, you may go northeast along a curving trail to **47**, travel south to **15**, walk southwest to **10**, or wander further north to **23**.

**5** Studying the trees for a while, you realize your find! These trees are ironthorn trees: trees believed to be native only to Guri Pol (Weathered Tree) Forest. You have found a **SECRET** of Bakemono Forest. You may abandon your quest here, as this important knowledge will forgive any failure, but you will have to bring proof back to your clan.

You have two options:

1. If you have an axe, you may attempt to chop down a small tree. Average your Strength, Dexterity, Luck, and Constitution. This



number is your tree cutting MR. Pit this MR, plus damage from a single axe, against the tree's natural MR of 30. If you lose, you have failed to bring down the tree; reduce your Strength by 1d6 due to exhaustion. If you "defeat" the tree, this means you have successfully cut it down. It weighs 1,000 wu.

2. You may attempt to take a cutting from the tree to transplant. Make a 5th lvl SR In to create a viable cutting. A cutting is easier to transport, weighing only 10 wu.

Take your findings with you and find the way out of Bakemono Forest. You may go west to **43**, south through a narrow path between jumbled boulders to **47**, or southwest to **54**.

**6<sup>M</sup>** This point is an impressive triangle. On one side, the gentle Nomo Lu (Gentle Cow) River flows toward Port Nanaj (Little Shark) and the Sea of Bold Endeavors. On the other is the turbulent Storm River, a dangerous rapids even when the water is low. The third side of this triangle is Bakemono Forest itself. It is possible to feel as though you sit at the center of the world here. The sound of running water is both deafening and tranquil. Bakemono Forest almost feels welcoming.

There is only one direction to go from here, and that is uphill and deeper into Bakemono Forest to **57**.

**7<sup>M</sup>** The buzz of people deep in negotiations announces the presence of the goblin market. Reaching the top of a steep rise, you see colorful booths and cloth-covered tables crammed in between the trees. The place hums with activity. At least a dozen humans, shape-shifters, and goblins check out the offered goods and services. People are here on business and have no time for idle chit-chat. Ramshackle structures are scattered about the area.

Your choices are simple: purchase something or continue on.

- \* To examine exotic foodstuffs of Bakemono, such as wild rice, small barrels of acorn lager, a giant spider egg, Kikori day-bread, bottles of nutrient-rich mud, smelly underarm cheese, roasted squash seeds, goblin ghost-liquor, shark jerky, and sea salts, go to **21** for prices and descriptions.
- \* To examine goblin-silk offerings like rope, padded silk suits, silk kimonos, or just bolts of silk, go to **55** for prices and descriptions.
- \* To examine items of war including traditional goblin blades and war masks, go to **13** for prices and descriptions.
- \* Descriptions and prices for any other miscellaneous products can be found at **37**.



- \* Northeast leads you to **45**.
- \* Northwest leads you to **57**.
- \* West takes you deeper into goblin territory at **2**.

**8** Sitting on top of the boulder, a safe distance away, you find yourself telling the older man the unvarnished truth of your time in the forest.

- \* If you ever killed anything within Bakemono Forest, go to **17**.
- \* Are you carrying anything you found in the woods? (Don't include anything you purchased.) If so, go to **42**.
- \* If neither of the above applies to you, go to **33**.

**9** Her thoughts have probed deep and discovered your possession of the giant spider's egg. **\*\*You have taste not to eat our young. Will you trade for my unborn clanswoman?\***

If yes, go to **48**. If no, go to **41**.

**10** You encounter a Takuni (Raccoon Dog) clansman heading home after a successful day. He carries a large, heavy sack over his shoulder. He hails you a good day and issues a playful challenge. The choice is yours whether to yield or fight.

Fighting off-hand with a heavy load, he has an effective MR of 10 before yielding.

If he yields, he will invite you back to his burrow at **59**. If you yield or decline his invitation, continue on to **23**.

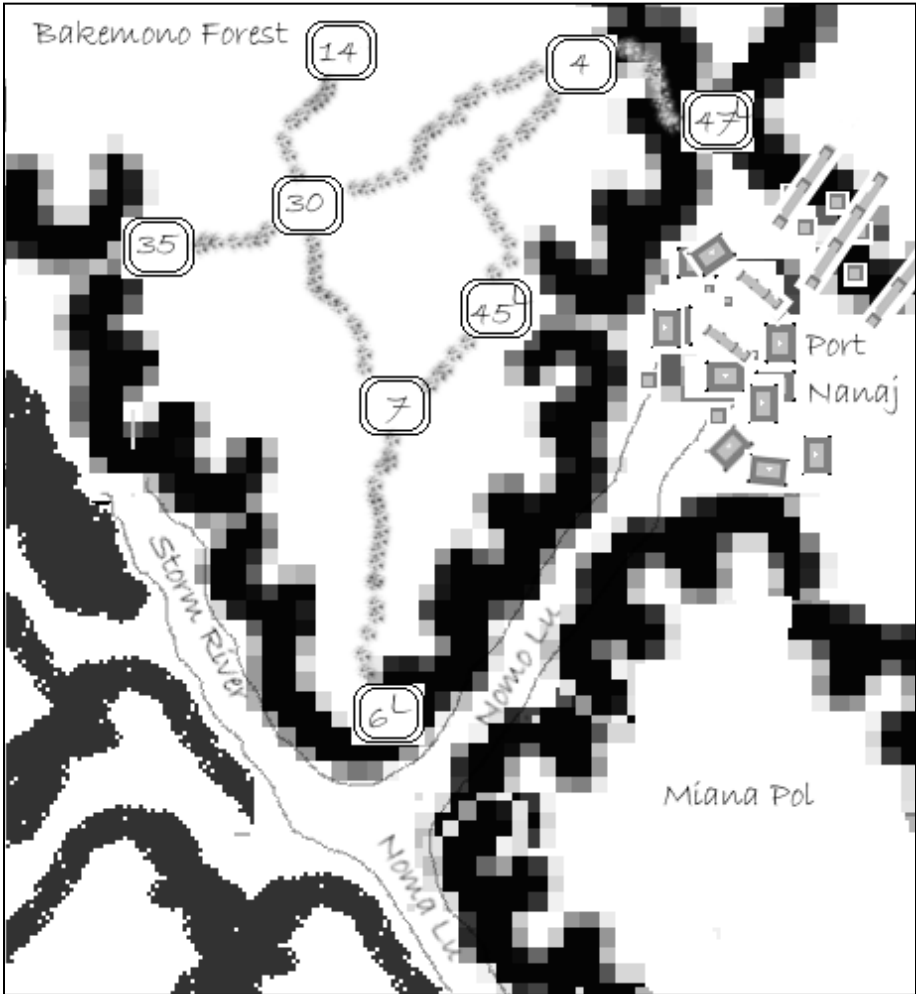
**11** A major part of the Kikori life is the rolling of logs into the Nomo Lu (Little Cow) River. Logs are bundled together with rope into temporary rafts. One or two Kikori ride the logs downriver to Port Nanaj (Little Shark). Their job is to pole the lead log bundle. Their pole blades are fixed to the top of a river pole and are used to keep the logs moving.

Your friend Razor hands you a thin wooden map of Bakemono Forest (wt 5).

### The map of Bakemono Forest

is a sure guide. While carrying the map, you may travel directly from your current location (current section of this adventure) to an adjacent, connected location (look at the map and move to the adventure section that has the same number as the location in question).

Paragraphs that correspond with map locations are marked <sup>M</sup>. You will not be reminded during the solo to use the map, but you are nevertheless allowed to use it to move to an adjacent or connected area by skipping to the corresponding section of text.



Brian Penn

You have been planning a trip into the Bakemono Forest since finding the map among your late uncle's possessions. This map may help you discover new secrets of Bakemono and a path to higher honor for you within the clan. You will collect 100 AP for each **SECRET** you find within Bakemono Forest.

Razor points to three spots on the map marked with an **L**. "Here are the best landing points. The first one is the best for us, out of sight from prying eyes. But the second puts you on the main trade path between the goblin market and the Takuni (Raccoon Dog) Clan. The third landing point is just past Port Nanaj (Little Shark). I have a friend with a boat who can take you to that landing point."

You understand Razor's concerns. Clans are terribly concerned about their positions in relation to each other. The very act of entering Bakemono Forest is an act challenging the status quo.

After a long ride down the river, you choose your landing site. Enter Bakemono Forest at the corresponding numbered paragraph.

**12** The surrounding trees reach over the edge of a long and wide groove filled with four-foot-tall purple thistles. A giant centipede emerges from the far edge of the forest. It rears up as if looking for something and glides down through the thistles directly toward you. You are facing a well-fed centipede with an MR of 80. Good luck!

To leave Thistle Grove, go to **23**.

**13** The goblin merchants are very pleased to show off their wares. The asking price is where they all start. Either pay the asking price or negotiate by making a Charisma saving roll. Pick the level at which you wish to make the saving roll. Fail the saving roll and the price goes up 5 sp.

Item	Description	Asking Price	Negotiated Price
Irku Sipo (fal-cate) Sword	17" metal sickle-blade, damage 3d6+1, SN 8, DN 6, wt 30	8 gp	65 sp
Irku Nopo (wooden fal-cate) Sword	17" Ironthorn sickle-blade, damage 2d6+3, SN 6, DN 6, wt 15	4 gp	25 sp
Iron Goblin War Mask	Terrifying faceplate crafted to appear as a demonic version of a fox, badger, cat, snake, or human. (2 hits, SN 1, wt 64, +5 to intimidation saving rolls)	8 gp	65 sp
Ironthorn Goblin Raider Mask	Matte-finish faceplate crafted to appear like a particular creature. Available masks: fox, raccoon dog, featureless, cat, snake, or human. (1 hit taken, SN -, wt 32, +5 to concealment SRs)	4 gp	25 sp
Spider Venom	This blade venom causes temporary paralysis. After one combat round, any creature hit with it is at half effectiveness. Two combat rounds later, the creature cannot move. Effects wear off after five combat rounds. (3 applications, wt 1)	15 gp	12 gp

Make the saving roll and the price goes down 5 sp per level of the saving roll. The price will never go below the amount in the Negotiated Price column.

When you are finished shopping, return to **7**.

**14<sup>M</sup>** Walking around a particularly large tree trunk, you encounter an unarmed older man dressed in a traditional Onnakim (Beloved Sea) kimono sitting atop a large boulder. Another boulder lies nearby. "Come and tell me of your adventures," the man says, inviting you to sit atop the other boulder.

To climb atop the empty boulder and talk with the older man, go to **8**.

Of course, you may instead avoid the strange man and continue along without harm: go east to **25**, south to **30**, or southwest to **35**.

**15** Traveling deeper into Bakemono Forest always presents its own risks. The dark woods are not inviting.

Make a 2nd lvl SR Lk. Success leads you to **27**. Fail the roll and go to **23**.

**16** Soft weeping persists as you hike through the woods. The source of such sadness eludes you. The sounds move like a specter.

Make a 2nd lvl SR Lk. Success leads you to **54**. Fail the saving roll and go to **51**.

**17** The man listens without judgment. At the end of your story he pronounces, "Then you are Darkheart—Follower of the Old Ways." You realize he has given you a name by which all denizens of Bakemono Forest already know you. All those within Bakemono Forest gain +10 MR/Adds when fighting you.

Go south to **30** or southwest to **35**.

**18** Instinct has already caused you to half-draw your weapon. You may fight the faceless woman, who has an MR 30, or you may flee to **31**.

If she defeats you, the bandit takes all of your coins. If you win and search her pack, you will find an additional  $4d6 \times 5$  sp.

From here, traveling north takes you to **4**; south leads you to **45**.

**19** \*\*It is an honor to meet you, Shin-



Joe Calkins

ing Path. Not all who visit our woods respect the new ways of the Onnakim (Beloved Sea) Clan. Our Tenno must be pleased.\*\*

You talk for hours, learning much about the giant spiders of Bakemono Forest. They treasure their privacy, and ask for you to help preserve the giant spider mystique.

You work out the following deal: Each year, you will return (at paragraph **58**) to renew your vow of silence. At that time, the giant spiders will provide 100 cubic yards of woven spider silk for your use. In the human markets, that much silk will produce 10,000 gp in profit each year. You will be fabulously wealthy, assuming you maintain your annual pilgrimage here, although a good clansman would donate 90% to the clan.

Confident of your future, you follow the giant spider's directions to **57**.

**20** "Mom! Daad! I'm home!" The little girl's squeals of delight fade as she takes in the age of the ruins. "That's right. We all died. I forgot." She turns to you with understanding in her eyes and within a single blink disappears.

You remember the girl telling you about her home during your travels together. This settlement sounded like a nice place. There is no evidence of why it was destroyed. Still, you look around for the landmarks she spoke of. Eventually you find her hidden cache, a flagstone under which she hid from her parents and siblings. Next to the girl's skeleton you find a little stuffed doll. This girl's doll is a **SECRET** of Bakemono Forest. Ancient, lost magic is bound within.

As long as the doll is in your possession, you may declare a "do over." A "do over" negates the last action you took, allowing you to try it again or change your mind. The price of each "do over" is all of your accumulated AP.

Return to **35**.

**21** The goblin merchants are very pleased to show off their wares. The asking price on the chart below is where they all start. Either pay the asking price or negotiate by making a Charisma saving roll. Pick at what level you wish to make the saving roll. Fail the saving roll and the price goes up 5 sp. Make the saving roll and the price goes down 5 sp per level of the saving roll. The price will never go below the amount in the



chart's Negotiated Price column. When you are finished shopping, return to 7.

Item	Description	Asking Price	Negotiated Price
Wild rice	Comes in a nice burlap sack. Sold by the pound. (wt 10)	15 cp	1 sp
Small barrels of acorn lager	This rich, nutty lager may be used as a meal substitute. Reduce In and Dx by 1d6 and increase Lk and Con by the same amount. (The Con increase affects damage but not SRs.) Small barrels provide 10 draughts of lager. (wt 100)	3 gp	2 gp
A giant spider egg	Only one giant spider egg, a local delicacy, is in stock. Purchasing one shows worldliness. Cooking it ruins the benefits. Gobble it down fast without thinking (make a 2nd lvl SR In to keep it down). A failed SR halves your Con and St through the next adventure. A successful SR permanently increases your Con and St by 1d6 each.	5 gp	25 sp
Kikori day-bread	Day-bread. Stores for weeks. Sold by the meal. (wt 15)	5 cp	3 cp
Bottles of nutrient rich mud	Wondrous source of vitamins. Drink it down fast (make a 1st lvl SR Con to keep it down). A failed SR does 1d6 damage to Con and dispels Mind Pox. With a success, count this as a meal and reduce the AP cost to raise a single attribute point by 1d6 × 10%. (wt 10)	3 gp	25 sp
Smelly under-arm cheese	Strong smelling and tastes like fungus from the darkest, dankest reaches, but when rubbed on a wound, this cheese heals 2d6 Con and reduces Ch by 1d6 for same number of days. (wt 5)	5 gp	4 gp
Roasted squash seeds	A very tasty snack. Eat a handful of roasted squash seeds every day for a year and increase Con by +2. Sold by the handful. (wt 1)	3 sp	8 cp
Goblin ghost-liquor	Goes down smooth and easy. Consumers claim to half breathe in this liquor. For the next 1d6 hours after ingestion, you may go berserk at will and automatically fail all In saving rolls. Increase Lk and Con by 1d6 and reduce Dx and Ch by 1d6 for the duration. Sold by the clay bottle, with 3 drinks in each bottle. (wt 15)	5 sp	3 sp
Shark jerky	A day's worth of shark jerky straight from Port Nanaj. (wt 10)	4 cp	3 cp
Sea salt	"Lightweight gold," says the merchant. "Tastes great as well!" Tasty salt, lighter than its value in gold. Sold in 1 wt unit increments.	5 gp	4 gp



**22** This Mujina (Badger) is working a well-tended garden. He heartily greets his Takuni (Raccoon Dog) friend. Introductions are made, and you listen to them chatter on for some time trading news, gardening tips, and plans.

The Mujina lets you in on a **SECRET**. Most of the ghosts of Bakemono are really Mujina-pranksters. Of all the shape-shifters, Mujina seem to enjoy challenging perceptions the most. This knowledge gives you confidence in yourself.

You earn the Talent *Understanding*. *Understanding* may be used in any situation in which understanding the reality of the situation helps cope with the event.

The day is quickly fading. Say goodbye to your hosts and wander to **24**.

**23** You reach a spot where ancient roots form natural retaining walls, holding back the packed earth. Climbing up and jumping down makes for hard work on the knees. Taking easy paths formed from the roots leads to adventure.

Roll 1d6 to determine your personal adventure:

- 1** Go to **12**
- 2** Go to **26**
- 3** Go to **50**
- 4** Go to **57**
- 5** Go to **14**
- 6** Go to **27**

**24** The forest crowds in here. Darkness looms, as little sunlight makes it through the canopy.

You might encounter a giant centipede with an MR of  $(1d6-3) \times 10$ :

- \* A negative MR means you do not encounter a giant centipede.
- \* Roll an MR of 0 and find the dissected carcass of a long-dead centipede. The shell pieces are remarkably well preserved. With a successful Dx roll, you can fashion the usable remains into a crude lightweight buckler. The buckler takes a number of hits equal to the level of success minus one. It weighs the level of success times 15 wu. Example: If you make a 2nd lvl SR Dx, you have crafted a centipede buckler worth 1 hit taken and with a weight of 15 wu.
- \* A positive MR indicates a real life giant centipede that wants to eat you!

If you survive, you may continue north to **25** or south to **57**.



**25** Traveling the deep woods is dangerous for the unprepared. Make an SR on Lk:

- \* Miss the saving roll and go to **26**.
- \* Make a 1st lvl SR and you are surprised by a giant centipede with an MR of 20. Halve your combat hit point total in the first round due to surprise. After the combat is over, you may go northeast to **4** or southwest to **30**.
- \* Make a 2nd lvl SR and go to **23**.
- \* Make an SR of 3rd lvl or higher and nothing special happens: go northeast to **4** or southwest to **30**.

**26** The path you chose widens into a nice flat area. Old, fallen leaves crunch underfoot. Without warning a giant spider appears, grabs you, and pulls you under his forest-floor trap door.

Halve your combat hit point total for the first combat due to surprise. The giant spider has an MR of 30. The spider's bite will inject venom into your wound: one combat round after being wounded you will be at half effectiveness; in two combat rounds you will be unable to move. Once you are unable to fight, he'll bundle you up; go to **38**.

If he appears to be losing, the giant spider will dart out of his trap and scurry off into the deep forest.

If you survive, you'll find  $3d6 \times 10$  sp worth of goods, coins, and maybe one jewel among the dissected remains of past prey. Escape to **23**.

**27** You encounter a Takuni (Raccoon Dog) clansman heading home from a successful day. He carries a large, heavy sack over his shoulder. He hails you a good day and issues a playful challenge. The choice is yours whether to yield or fight.

Fighting off-hand with a heavy load, he has an effective MR 10 before yielding.

If you yield, continue on to **16**.

If he yields, he will invite you back to his burrow. If you decline his invitation, continue on to **16**. If you politely accept, you find his burrow a cozy, warm place. Furs line the floor. Walls are formed from packed earth. You see foodstuffs piled along the walls: sacks of rice, small barrels of acorn lager, and a giant spider egg.

Your host offers hot tea and roasted centipede. Putting food and drink before you, he settles down, plopping his sack at his feet. You have a great conversation; gain  $2d6 \times 5$  AP. As the conversation dies down, he licks his lips and offers you a trade: all of your exotic foreigners' food in exchange for one item from his stores.

Make a note of your trade (if any).

Item	Description
Wild rice	A burlap sack holds a pound of wild rice.
Small barrel of acorn lager	This rich, nutty lager may be used as a meal substitute. Reduce In and Dx by 1d6 and increase Lk and Con by the same amount. (The Con increase affects damage but not saving rolls.) Small barrels provide 10 draughts of lager. (wt 100)
A giant spider egg	A local delicacy. Cooking it ruins the benefits. Gobble it down fast without thinking (make a 2nd lvl SR In to keep it down). A failed saving roll halves your Con and St for the next adventure. A successful saving roll permanently increases your Con and St by 1d6 each.

When you are ready, continue on to **4**.

**28** Weddings are a time of great celebration among the clan. The week-long party culminates in the great wedding feast. You have the responsibility to go hunting for the central dish, a giant centipede. The size of a centipede that is brought home translates into real material benefit. Everyone who eats of a centipede is expected to present a gift to the hunter. (In game terms, your character earns the centipede's MR × 10 gp in gifts, coins, and jewels.) At the same time, becoming a centipede's meal brings agonizing death and also shame to your parents.

The only place for a centipede hunt is within Bakemono Forest. You know a little about the place. The trade path from the port into the forest splits into two trails. The southeast path leads to the goblin clan known as Rasbono (Bone Traders) and their goblin markets. Nearly anything can be purchased at the goblin markets for a price. The north way leads through Takuni (Raccoon Dog) Clan territory and into centipede hunting grounds.

As you enter the thick forest, the brightly lit day turns to gloom. You make good time along the trade path. Before long, you encounter a fork in the path. You may go southeast to **7** or north to **15**.

**29** The thought **\*\*I surrender!\*\*** strikes your mind. At the same moment, the giant spider pulls away and kneels before you. You have discovered a big **SECRET** of Bakemono Forest. The giant spiders are sentient, thinking creatures, and therefore citizens of Sonan Ie. You may continue to fight and kill her at **1**. Or you may accept her surrender and continue your travels at **23**.

**30<sup>M</sup>** You have found a safe place to rest. A large boulder sits exposed



in the middle of ancient trees. This boulder is large enough to sit atop. The distant canopy forms a ceiling overhead. You take a break from the long journey. Eat a meal. If you do not have enough food for a meal, take 1d6-1 Spite Damage to Con from exhaustion and malnutrition.

Go north to **23**, northeast to **25**, south to **57**, or south by southwest to **35**.

**31** A goblin's body slams into you from above. Surprised, you get only half your combat hit point total this turn. The goblin has an MR of 20. If he defeats you, he will steal all of your coins. If you defeat him, you may take  $3d6 \times 5$  sp. If you kill him and search the surroundings, you find another  $3d6 \times 5$  sp in a hollow log.

From here, north takes you to **4**, or south leads you to **45**.

**32** She speaks to your mind: **\*\*An intelligent action? I am happily surprised. Perhaps your kind finally grow wiser?\*** You have discovered a big **SECRET** of Bakemono Forest. The giant spiders are sentient, thinking creatures, and therefore citizens of Sonan le. Although it is strange talking through your thoughts, you tentatively start a conversation.

- \* If you have eaten a giant spider egg, go to **41**.
- \* If you possess a giant spider egg, go to **9**.
- \* Otherwise, you learn a great deal about life in the forest from the giant spider. Talking with her earns you 150 AP, after which she'll direct you to **23**.

**33** The man listens carefully to your tales. He probes parts of your story. He questions your actions and decisions. Gain 100 AP. At the end of your story he pronounces, "Then you are Shining Path—Way of the Future." You realize he has given you a name which all denizens of Bakemono Forest already know you. From now on, reduce by 10 the MR and Adds of any beings who fight you within Bakemono Forest. You also gain +5 to all saving rolls you make in the course of interacting with the denizens of Bakemono Forest.

Where you go from here is your choice: go north to **58**, east to **25**, south to **30**, or southwest to **35**.

**34** "Auntie!" the little girl exclaims, running up to the giant spider. Transforming into a spider herself, the little girl climbs up her aunt onto her back. You have discovered a key **SECRET** of Bakemono Forest. The giant spiders are sentient, thinking creatures, and therefore citizens of Sonan le.

The giant spider is ecstatic to see her lost kin. Her gratitude toward you emanates in waves of love. **\*\*Come, Great One, you are always welcomed here.\*\***

She guides you deeper into Bakemono Forest to a web-formed "village." You are introduced to the clan elders and forgiven old crimes. Protecting the young of giant spiders is an honored position within the Spider Clans. You are named "Spirit Helper." You realize this is a name all denizens of Bakemono Forest honor. Giant spiders might test themselves against you, but none of Bakemono Forest will ever attempt to kill you. If you are defeated by a giant spider, you will recover at **30** with all of your possessions.

Now you may ask for one of two boons:

1. To ask for a small present, go to **48**. Note: this present you can never lose. The giant spiders of Bakemono Forest will always be willing to replace it.
2. You may instead ask for a lifetime commitment from the giant spiders: go to **19**.

**35<sup>M</sup>** The forest opens up here to Storm River. The Susa-No-O Mountains rise steeply from the far river bank. No vessels can safely travel the rapids of Storm River. There is evidence a small settlement once sat here. Wood poles rise up from the ground like the ribcage of a giant skeleton. Soft grass grows throughout the entire meadow.

- \* If a little girl is traveling with you, go to **20**.
- \* If you make a 3rd lvl SR Lk, you may go to **56**.
- \* Otherwise, there are only two ways to travel: east to **30** or south to **2**.

**36** The Shark Clan tattoos all adults with the family shark on the right forearm. Being ousted from the clan is especially painful, as the tattoo must also be carved off. This is the dominant clan of the northern district. They are the principal shipbuilders of the Tenno.

Roll up a beginning human character. Pick your Type as normal.

### **Recommended Talents**

- \* **Nanaj Naval Engineering (Dx, In, Con)**  
Build and maintain all kinds of ships and boats. Process logs into ship-quality lumber. This includes combat training with a throwing axe. Nanaj vessels are catamaran/trimaran-style with dagger boards (i.e., faster than traditional vessels). Low-wind situations are offset by a shipboard wind wizard.
- \* **Sailing (Dx, In, Lk)**  
Handle rigging, rudder, and keel to manage the force of wind on the sails. This includes climbing rigging, sail repair, and knot tying.



Instead of rolling for gold, you start with the following equipment:

- \* Conical straw hat, half-coat, divided skirt, and sandals
- \* 3 throwing knives (4" blade, damage 1d6+2, SN 1, DN 1/3, thrown range Str × 0.83 in yards, wt 4 each)
- \* 2 throwing axes (30" long, damage 2d6+4, SN 7, DN 8/16, thrown range Str × 1.25 in yards, wt 20 each)
- \* A compass with neck chain (wt 1)
- \* A satchel with spare clothes, a day's provisions, and 3d6 (TARO) gp (total wt 40)

Go to **28** to begin the adventure.

### Shark Fighting Style



A Shark Clan member trains in using two weapons simultaneously. A throwing axe in a member's primary hand with a throwing knife in the off hand allows that clan member to close into hand-to-hand combat. The exceptionally gifted (Str 14+, Dx 16+) may wield a throwing axe in each hand.

**37** The goblin merchants are very pleased to show off their wares. The asking price is where they all start. Either pay the asking price or negotiate by making a Charisma saving roll. Pick at what level you wish to make the saving roll. Fail the saving roll and the price goes up 5 sp. Make the saving roll and the price goes down 5 sp per level of the saving roll. The price will never go below that listed in the Negotiated Price column.

Item	Description	Asking Price	Negotiated Price
Sealed Glass Lamps	A nice little 4" globe with a loop of silk by which to hang the lamp. Shake it vigorously for 1 minute to get a candle-worth of light for 1 minute. Vigorous shaking costs 1 Str. These lamps float in water. (wt 5)	8 gp	65 sp
Bone Fish Lures	Intricate fishhooks that make superior lures. Add +5 to any fishing saving roll. A failed roll results in losing the lure. (wt -)	1 sp	7 cp
Paring Knife	Very small 2" serrated blade with decorated bone handle, good for food preparation. Get a +2 bonus to any saving roll for precise cuts. May be used in combat for +2 to your unarmed saving roll. (wt 2)	3 sp	2 sp

*(Continued from previous page)*

Item	Description	Asking Price	Negotiated Price
Scalpel	Tiny 1" straight alloy blade, perfect for surgery. Adds +3 to any surgical saving roll. In a pinch, it could be used as a weapon: +1 damage in unarmed combat. Loses all benefits if used to cut anything not living. (wt 1)	1 gp	7 sp
Tinderbox	Nice little tinderbox for lighting fires. (wt 1)	8 cp	5 cp
Starter Paper	Exciting tiny 1/4" piece of paper. Friction causes it to ignite. The mini-flame can only ignite easily flammable items. (wt -)	1 sp	5 cp
Hair Ointment	Grow hair on any living creature; just rub on to apply. A wax-sealed, clay jar provides enough ointment to grow 2 cubic feet of hair. Causes hives: lose 1d6 Dx due to itching and inflammation; recover 1 point a day. (wt 5)	1 gp	6 sp
Emctwo Oil	When you work out the dosage, this is a great way to lose weight or increase muscle mass. This oil is the key to the relationship between kremm, muscles, and fat. (wt 1)	10 gp	50 gp

When you are finished shopping, return to **7**.

**38** Stripped of everything you own, you are trussed up in spider webbing and hung in the larder for later. Your only chance to escape relies on your wits, will, and dexterity. Make a 2nd lvl SR on the average of your Dx, In, and Lk to escape, without equipment, to **30**.

Fail the saving roll, and the spider returns in the pitch black. You feel its fangs punch deep into your abdomen as it drinks out your life.

**39** The goblins somberly march through the woods. You are bound tight with silk rope to a pole carried between two large goblins. Your limbs are going numb. After some time in the dark woods, they reach a broad, shallow groove free of trees. The entire shallow is filled with tall, four-foot purple thistles. The sun sets behind the assembled crowd.

"You murdered our watcher. Witnesses saw it all!" A cry of assent comes forth from the entire crowd. "Whether you live or die is between you and the Judge." With those few words, the two goblins holding you swing your pole back and forth and let go. Still bound to a pole, you fly through the air, crashing through thistles. Take 1d6 Spite Damage to

Con. Your equipment likewise sails through the air, landing scattered among the plants. The goblins leave you to their judge.

You have enough time to make three saving rolls to attempt the following before proceeding to **12**:

1. Untie yourself with a successful 1st lvl SR Dx. (Take 1 Spite Damage to Con from rolling around in the thistles.)

You cannot do any of the following until untied. Now for some good news: the goblins used 10' of good, green-dyed silk rope to tie you up!

2. Find your stuff with an SR on Lk. The level of success is the number of randomly chosen items you find.
3. Prepare to ambush the Judge with a 3rd lvl SR In. Go to **12** and halve the Judge's first round hit point total.
4. Run away with a 1st lvl SR Sp. Success and you can skip the first paragraph of **12**.

**40** "Good contest; your strength is honored here." He offers you cold tea and cold cuts back at his one-room, ramshackle home. You trade pleasantries while the goblin tends your injuries. Once finished with your wounds, he cleans his blade and applies a new coat of spider venom.

You heal 1d6 Con if needed and recover all Wiz and St during your visit. From here you may wander north to **23**, west to **35**, or east to **7**.

**41** This spider has an MR of 50.

If she does any damage to you, then she also injects her venom. The first combat round after being wounded, you will be at half effectiveness. After two combat rounds, you will be paralyzed and trussed up at **38**.

If the spider is losing, she will yield at **29**.

**42** The man listens carefully to your tales. He asks pointed questions that make you think about your actions. Gain 50 AP. At the end of your story he pronounces, "Then you are Wildwood—What You Find Is Yours." You realize he has given you a name by which all denizens of Bakemono Forest already know you. You have a penalty of -5 to all saving rolls for interacting with the denizens of Bakemono Forest.

Go east to **25** or south to **30**.

**43** You encounter a Takuni (Raccoon Dog) clansman heading home from a successful day. He carries a large, heavy sack over his shoulder.



One of two actions will happen here:

1. If you are traveling with a small girl, the girl squeals, and the Takuni runs forward and scoops her up. "Daughter!! Where have you been? Your mother will be very cross...but I am very happy to see you safe." He insists on your coming back to his burrow. He is very pleased to learn how you cared for his little one. Continue at **60**.
2. If you are alone, he hails you a good day and issues a playful challenge. The choice is yours whether to yield or fight:
  - \* If you yield, continue on to **50**.
  - \* If you accept his challenge: Fighting off-hand with a heavy load, he has an effective MR of 10 before yielding. If he yields, he will invite you back to his burrow. If you decline his invitation, continue on to **50**. If you politely accept the invitation, continue at **60**.

**44** You are a foreigner to Kitaka district. In this district, you are without clan support. As throughout the rest of Sonan Ie, those without clan share the same societal position as convicted criminals.

Staying out late always ends in a fight. Constant bruises and minor cuts healing have become ordinary, day-to-day expectations.

Make an SR Lk at your level. Failure causes you Con damage equal to the SR die roll from tonight's spar.

Success takes you to **46**.

Keep rolling Lk SRs until you succeed or give up and leave Kitaka district. If your Con is reduced to 0 or below, you die alone in the streets of a foreign district.

*You may bring* an existing character into this adventure. *The Dangers of Bakemono Forest* is constructed to challenge characters with +10 Adds and with weapons doing no more than 4 dice damage.

To take someone tougher into Bakemono Forest, double all saving roll levels and the MR or Adds of any opponents for every additional +10 Adds the character possesses or +4 dice damage of their weapons.

The spiritual balance within Bakemono Forest adjusts to handle all kinds of foreigners.

**45<sup>m</sup>** Beams of light break through the thick, twisted branches overhead. Regular trade between the clans of Bakemono and Port Nanaj (Little Shark) form a well-packed path. The path twists and turns, avoiding the thickest exposed roots of the old-growth trees. In many spots, the path becomes almost stair-like where the traveler must climb over

roots. From here you have three options: go southwest to **7**, go north to **15**, or leave the dangers of Bakemono Forest behind you, collect any rewards you've earned, and return home.

**46** Tonight is a good night. Your young challenger gives way quickly. He limps back home, shamed at losing to a foreigner. You'll probably be arrested tomorrow for assault.

You jump as a voice behind you says, "I have been watching you." You turn to find a figure stepping out of the darkest shadows. He continues, "You know how to handle yourself. You are unafraid of new places. You are brave to travel without family. All honored traits within my clan." He bows formally to you and turns his back to return home. You recognize the clan-invitation, and follow him.

He leads you across a small footbridge, through nice garden, and to a large, elegant home without any apparent guards. Inside you are offered hot tea for the cold night. "The West Wind Clan consists principally of sail makers. We compete mightily against the East Wind Clan for business with the Shark Clan. Tragically, the Wind Clans are equals. Your efforts might change that balance. The goblin market of Bakemono Forest sells the finest silk. Such silk makes superior sails when we get enough quantity. Too little silk flows out from the goblin market. Find the source for goblin silk. Teach the West Wind Clan the secret. You'll be a hero and adopted into our clan."

The offer is genuine. A foreigner breaking laws brings shame to no one else, only misery to the foreigner. A hero of the clan gets protections from certain legal infractions.

Knowing a good opportunity, you accept the offer. Your host arranges for a small boat to take you up the coast to an out-of-the way beach. By early morning, you reach your destination and wade through uneven rocky shoals to a small beach: go to **47**.

**47<sup>m</sup>** Tall boulder formations isolate this little sandy beach from Bakemono Forest. To look out across the Sea of Bold Endeavors might make one feel small and insignificant. Sailing ships in the distance provide the only hint of civilization. Even at low tide, the waves crash hard against the beach. This beach does not welcome boats of any size.

The only way out is to climb up the rocks and enter Bakemono Forest. Make one saving roll from the options below:

1. Make a 3rd lvl SR Lk to find a small pass through the jumbled boulders. A successful roll takes you to **52**. A failed roll represents wasted time. Unfortunately, the giant centipede climbing down the rocks does not waste any time. Roll for the giant centipede's MR: 1d6 x 10. If you survive, you eventually find the pass to **52**.

2. Make an SR on St to climb up. A successful 1st lvl SR takes you to **23**. If you make a 3rd lvl SR St, your climb is rewarded at **52**. A failed SR does damage to your Con equal to the die roll, and your path takes you to **54**.

**48** In exchange for your giant spider egg, the giant spider will create for you the finest suit of quilted silk armor possible. This custom-tailored suit has the following attributes: 4 hits taken, SN 1, 90 wu.

Helping you put on your new outfit, the spider thanks you and directs you to **23**.

**49** A thought occurs to you. This is a bad place for a settlement. The river is too difficult to navigate for any settlement to locate here. Curiosity pulls you to the river's edge. You look upriver and then downriver. You examine the line of the mountains. You take note how high the river banks are along the forest edge. You also spy what is out of place. There is a narrow path leading downriver. Understanding becomes clear. The river was once a constructed channel with mortared walls. As the walls crumbled into the river, the river became clogged and rugged. All that is left of the walls is a narrow path downriver hugging the forest's edge.

Do you walk the narrow, three-foot path and go to **3**? Or do you return to **35** and make another decision?

**50** You climb over a large root system and lose your balance. After sliding down a steep embankment, you find yourself stuck in an old waterway channel. The ground is wet and muddy. This place could be dangerous in a rainstorm. Luck must be on your side. It has not rained for days.

You might encounter a giant centipede here. Make the highest saving roll on Luck you can.

- \* Fail the saving roll and encounter a giant centipede, MR 60
- \* Make a 1st lvl SR and encounter a giant centipede with MR 50
- \* Make a 2nd or 3rd lvl SR and encounter a giant centipede with MR 30
- \* Make a lvl 4+ SR and encounter a young giant centipede with MR 15.

Leave this area after you are done playing with bugs in the mud. Go southwest to **30** or northeast to **4**.

**51** Ahead along your path you spy the source of the crying. A woman is balled up weeping. You approach to ask why she cries. The woman looks up. She has no face: only smooth skin. Make a 2nd lvl SR Wiz to



steel yourself against the horror. If you succeed, go to **18**. If you fail, you turn back, fleeing from the horror to **31**.

**52** The woods seem a little thinner here. Fresh sea air whips through the trees from the east. The east side ends abruptly in a sharp cliff face. Far below, waves from the Sea of Bold Endeavors crash hard against the cliff. The south side drops off steeply; it appears this part of the land collapsed in the ancient past, leaving exposed boulders.

The strangeness of the area invites you to inspect the trees closer. These trees are a different variety than those in the rest of Bakemona Forest. Make a 3rd lvl SR In to identify the local trees at **5**.

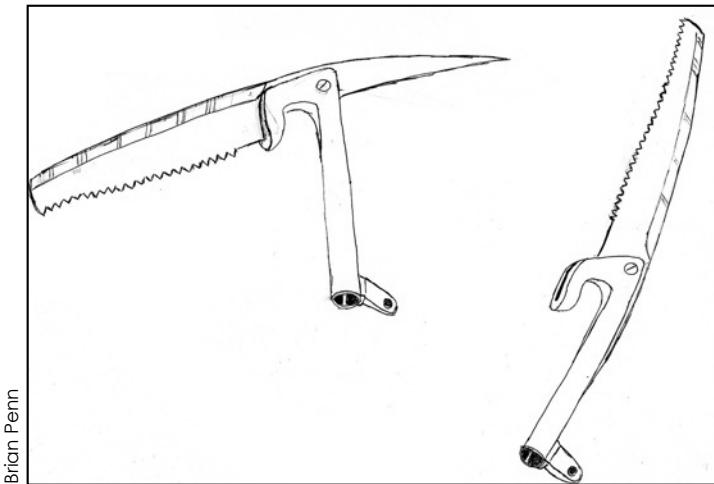
If you fail the saving roll, you decide these are just more trees. Go west to **43**, south through a narrow path between jumbled boulders to **47**, or southwest to **10**.

**53** Your minor clan is one of a handful within the Miana Po (Pole Tree) Forest. The clans of Miana Po make their living primarily by cutting down the tall and straight deciduous trees and sending them down the Nomo Lu (Little Cow) River to Port Nanaj (Little Shark).

Roll up a beginning human character. Pick your Type as normal.

**Recommended Talent: Kikori Woodcutting (St, Con, Dx)**

Cut and carve wood of all kinds. Fell trees. Prune trees and manage tree care. Ride logs on the river. Make simple rafts. *Kikori Woodcutting* also includes basic weapon training with the woodcutter's ax and the pole blade.



Pole blade

Instead of rolling for gold, you start with the following equipment:

- \* Undershirt, trousers, and sandals
- \* Woodcutter's ax (36" long, 3d6 damage, SN 10, DN 9, wt 36)
- \* Pole blade with 20' of silk rope (makes a good grappling hook for climbing and seconds as a weapon; 20" blade, 2d6+4 damage, SN 6, DN 5/15, thrown range St × 0.5 in yards, wt 38)
- \* Padded jacket (2 hits taken, SN - , wt 32)
- \* Wood bowl helm (2 hits taken, SN - , wt 32)
- \* Satchel with spare clothes, a day's provisions, and 3d6 (TARO) silver coins (total wt 40).

The Kikori clans have learned many secrets of Bakemono Forest and have built friendships with the Bakemono clans. This relationship permits your character to request a formal contest instead of traditional combat.

### **Formal Contests**

These contests are never to the death. If a killing blow is indicated by the dice, the contestant will stop before delivering the final blow and be declared the winner. In such a contest, reduce the MR or Combat Adds of any clan-people encountered in Bakemono Forest by 10 points. Any negative value means the encountered clan-person is a close friend of your clan and will concede the challenge in the spirit of friendship. Formal contests are a great way to start a friendship in Sonan le.

Go to **11** and begin the adventure.

**54** A sad weeping sound reaches your ears. Following the sound, you find a small girl crying. She seems so small and helpless in these dangerous woods. You approach carefully, calling out gently. She stiffens at the sound of your voice. She acts as if cornered. It takes some time for you to earn her trust.

Asking about her home causes the little girl to cry some more. She lets you comfort her. You ask again, and, between stuttered sobs, the little girl points toward home, deeper into Bakemono Forest. Eventually, she calms enough to agree to come with you. Very quickly you recognize the following behavior: The girl chats incessantly about her good home life. The moment she senses danger, she disappears into the forest. She'll always come back after the danger is gone. The benefit: you will



never be surprised while she travels with you. Disregard any penalty due to surprise. While the little girl is a poor guide to her home, she will know her home the moment you find it.

In the meantime, continue your adventures at **23**.

**55** The goblin merchants are very pleased to show off their wares. The asking price is where they all start. Either pay the asking price or negotiate by making an SR on Ch. Pick at what level you wish to make the saving roll. Fail and the price goes up 5 sp. Succeed and the price goes down 5 sp per SR lvl. The price will never go below that in the Negotiated Price column.

Item	Description	Asking Price	Negotiated Price
Silk Rope	Nice silk rope sold by the foot. (wt 1 per foot)	1 sp	8 cp
Suit of Quilted Silk Armor	The tailor will make adjustments for a good fit. (3 hits taken, wt 100)	4 gp	32 sp
Silk Kimonos	Traditional Tenno Court formalwear, any style. (wt 10)	10 gp	7 gp
Bolt of Silk	Silk bolts sold by the square yard. Any pattern or color desired. (wt 1 per sq yd)	3 gp	2 gp

When you are finished shopping, return to **7**.

**56** This seems like the perfect place to meditate. Crossing your legs, you sit and ponder the tranquility of the meadow contrasted by the crush of the river rapids. Regain any lost St and Wiz during your mediation.

You analyze the form of the rapids from an engineering perspective. Do you understand the mystery? Make a 3rd lvl SR In and go to **49**. Fail the SR and return to **35**.

**57** The way levels out here. The canopy overhead is near impenetrable. Very little light filters down to the forest floor.

Make a 2nd lvl SR Lk. Fail the SR and go to **31**. Make the SR and you might encounter a giant centipede with an MR of (1d6-2) x 10:

- \* A 0 or negative MR means you did not encounter a giant centipede.
- \* A positive MR indicates a real life giant centipede that wants to eat you!

To continue, travel deeper into the forest toward **30**, follow the sounds of activity to **7**, or walk where the forest thins to **6**.

**58** You are deep within Bakemono Forest now. You begin to miss the sounds of civilization. Your deep thoughts are rudely interrupted by the presence of a gigantic spider climbing down from an enormous tree.

What happens next depends on the following:

- \* If a little girl is accompanying you, go to **34**.
- \* If your name is Shining Path, go to **19**.

Otherwise:

- \* You may run away to **30**.
- \* You may attack the giant spider, which has an MR of 50, at **41**.
- \* You may wait for the giant spider to take the first action at **32**.



**59** The Takuni clansman's burrow is a cozy, warm place. Furs line the floor, and you see bottles and dried herbs piled in bookcases along the wall, which is formed from packed earth.

Your host offers hot tea and roasted centipede. Putting food and drink before you, he settles down, plopping his sack down at his feet. You have a great conversation; gain  $2d6 \times 5$  AP. As the conversation dies down, he licks his lips and offers you a trade: one piece of armor in exchange for one item from his selection.

Make a note of your trade (if any).

Item	Description
Bottles of nutrient-rich mud	A wondrous source of vitamins. Drink it down fast (make a 1st lvl SR Con to keep it down. A failed saving roll does $1d6$ damage to Constitution but dispels Mind Pox. With a success, count this as a meal and reduce the AP cost to raise a single attribute point by $1d6 \times 10\%$ . (wt 10)
Healing herb bundle	A nicely bound bundle of dried herbs. Pound some herbs into dust and mix with a little water or mud to form a fine poultice. Apply this poultice to a wound to remove all infection, prevent disease, and heal $3d6$ Con points. (wt 5)
Goblin ghost-liquor	Goes down smooth and easy. Consumers claim to half breathe in this liquor. For the next $1d6$ hours after ingestion, you may go berserk at will. Though you will automatically fail all Intelligence saving rolls during this period, you will also increase your Luck and Constitution by $1d6$ . Your Dx and Ch will decrease by $1d6$ for the duration. Sold by the clay bottle, with 3 drinks in each bottle. (wt 15)

When you are ready, continue on to **23**.

**60** You find that his burrow is a cozy, warm place. Furs line the floor, and the walls are formed from packed earth. You see a number of staffs leaning against one wall along with boxes of sticks and trinkets.

Your host offers hot tea and roasted centipede. Putting food and drink before you, he settles down, plopping his sack at his feet. You have a great conversation; gain  $2d6 \times 5$  AP. As the conversation dies down, he licks his lips and offers you a trade: one weapon or spell in exchange for one item from his collection. (Note: you will lose all knowledge of the traded spell.)

Make a note of your trade (if any).



Item	Description
Fire Lamp	A staff ordinaire with a sealed square magic lamp attached to the tip by a bronze ring. The eternal flame within the magic lamp provides light equal to a candle. Casting fire or light spells costs 1 less Wiz, in addition to traditional benefits. (wt 100)
Heavy Oak	A staff ordinaire crafted from Ironthorn, topped with a perched eagle and designed to be a sturdy quarterstaff (2d6+2 damage). Casting earth or plant spells costs 1 less Wiz, in addition to traditional benefits. (wt 100)
Acorn Wand	A wizard's magic wand with an acorn motif. A slight flow of fresh air permanently emanates from the wand. Casting wind or breathing spells costs 1 less Wiz, in addition to traditional benefits. (wt 5)
Serpentine Wand	This wavy magic wand has unique powers over water and snakes. Casting water spells or spells on snakes costs 1 less Wiz, in addition to traditional benefits. (wt 5)
Pick a charm	Each charm holds a single casting of a single spell. The charm will be appropriate for the spell (ex: a key for a Knock, Knock spell, a lightning bolt for Take That You Fiend!) This Takuni will only trade charms holding spells at your level or below. Anyone touching the charm can cast the spell held within by paying the casting cost. (wt - )

Your host accepts your trade and mentions an appointment with a friend. If you brought his daughter home, he invites you along to meet the Mujina (Badger) friend: go to **22**. Otherwise, continue on to **4**.

**NOW OPEN FOR BUSINESS!**

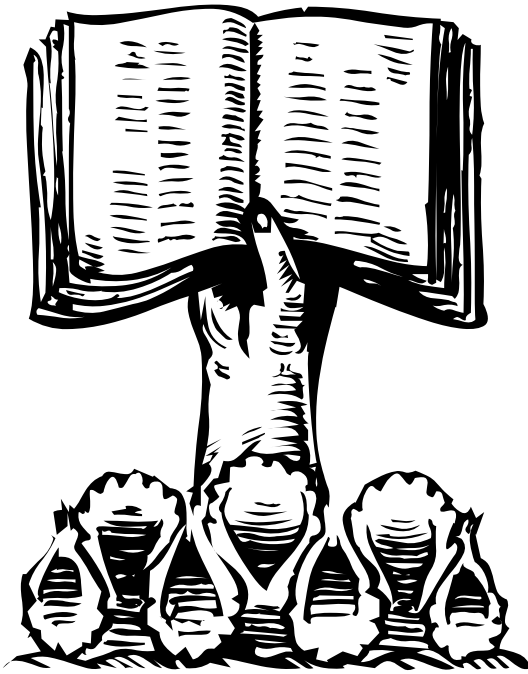
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# The Story's the Thing



by Michael K. Eidson

I started playing Tunnels & Trolls as a teenager in the mid-'70s. I had never played any other role-playing game, and didn't even know another one existed. I stumbled onto T&T quite by accident, having first discovered Starweb from advertising in a science fiction magazine, which led to the acquiring of Flying Buffalo Inc. brochures. In the brochures I found the description of this new game involving wizards, warriors, rogues, elves, dwarves, and trolls. Being as much a fan of fantasy fiction as of science fiction, I was so intrigued by the description of the game that I was compelled to set aside enough of my meager wages to order a copy. I was excited to seal the envelope that contained my order, and even more excited when I received in the mail a package emblazoned on one corner with the small image of a buffalo in a biplane. Opening the package and reading the rules of this wondrous game made my imagination go wild, and the glorious artwork sparked the imagination even more.

After reading the rules, I eagerly created my first character and played Buffalo Castle. Then I tried my hand at running Trollstone Caverns for some friends and family members. I was hooked, and quickly set to the task of mapping and keying my own dungeon adventure. I couldn't wait to run a scenario in a game world of my own creation.

My players loved the game and the dungeon I created. It didn't matter that what I created was effectively a dungeon crawl and there was little story behind it. It didn't matter that I wasn't running an adventure set in some official game setting. It didn't matter that the spell names were a bit corny; in fact, we thought they were clever. The spells we invented had names just as clever as any in the spell book; we prided ourselves on coming up with clever spell names.

It was all new to us, and we knew nothing else. As I continued expanding my dungeon deeper and deeper (eventually to ten levels, a nice round number), I integrated a background story and gave personalities and motivations to NPCs. I did this without anyone prompting me to do so; it was a natural evolution of the game. All we needed were the basic rules and the boost in the right direction that Buffalo Castle and Trollstone Caverns had provided. Our imaginations happily took it from there.

Then it came time for me to go to college, where I introduced some college buddies to Tunnels & Trolls. The college allowed us to meet in a designated room, where students who wanted to play role-playing games were allowed to congregate on designated nights at designated times. Multiple gaming groups met in the same room, which was

large enough for several tables, but still small enough for us to overhear each other. So I learned of other role-playing games, and I listened to what went on with them, and they sounded interesting in many ways, but awfully restrictive in others. I preferred my T&T.

My college games went smoothly until I was hit with something entirely unexpected. Back home, my players had never really cared about the solo adventures; they wanted a GM who could remember and interpret the rules for them. In all my games up to that point, at home and at college, I tried to carefully craft adventures and give out rewards so as to keep the game balanced: challenging without being too deadly. I had a process that worked rather well—until one of my players sabotaged me.

One of the college players borrowed the Deathtrap Equalizer Dungeon solo adventure. I figured he would roll up new characters to take through the solo. I never suspected he would even dream of taking his campaign character into the solo without asking me if it was okay. But that's what he did, and the character supposedly survived a Lion Trip. The player had applied all of the changes to the character sheet already, and hadn't kept track of what the original character sheet looked like. So I had a dilemma: did I make the player retire his character from my GM-moderated game, or allow him to continue playing the character, with the enhancements he'd earned in the solo?

I was just so stunned by what the player had done, I couldn't think straight, and I allowed him to continue playing the character in my GM-moderated game. Well, you know where that led. Everyone else wanted to borrow that solo. I had to let them, to be fair, I thought. So what was the immediate result? My carefully crafted GM adventures were no longer a challenge to the player characters.

I compensated by tacking a zero onto all the MRs of monsters and the attributes of all NPCs, and bumping up the levels of all saving rolls. This made the game more challenging for the players than if I'd left them as I initially designed them, but the result was not as well-crafted as I liked my adventures to be. I felt the time and effort I'd spent on careful crafting had been a huge waste.

The game the players wanted to play was not the game I had planned to run. I changed my plans, and went with the flow. I gave the players what they wanted. They wanted enchantments and potions that gave them additional multipliers to their attributes, so they found them. I continued to bump up the monster ratings and saving roll levels. It felt like pure chaos at times, but the players were having fun. So what

if attributes climbed into the thousands or tens of thousands? Attributes were varied but so high that saving rolls didn't mean much most of the time; rolling a five or better meant success and rolling four or less meant failure. (These were 5th edition rules.)

I recently looked at the notes for that campaign, and saw where I'd kept adding zeroes at the ends of the attributes. One of the NPCs had final attribute scores in the millions. No one was meant to kill that NPC. Yeah, I hear your snickering and your snide remarks, and I can't say I don't deserve them. Did someone say Monty Haul?

The challenges in the game changed from combats to mysteries. I forced the players to figure out these mysteries, allowing saving rolls on Intelligence to allow the PCs to come up with bits of knowledge helpful in solving the mysteries, but not to outright solve them. Encounters became more important for the information the PCs could gain than for the potential of earning Adventure Points. I could almost have simply done away with the rules system. Suddenly, the players weren't playing the game of attribute acquisition, because that game had become meaningless. Perhaps some of them would have rather continued to play the Monty Haul game, but I felt that everyone was enjoying solving the mysteries too. At the time I didn't realize exactly what I was doing, and didn't think of what I was doing as creating mysteries; I was just doing what I thought was necessary to keep the game challenging.

Eventually, we all wanted to return to a game with lower numbers, where dice rolls higher than five could have some consequence. Some of the players asked about trying another role-playing game system. I wanted to continue with T&T, but more and more of the players kept clamoring to convert to this other game, and I finally had to give in or lose my players. So I had to map existing attributes on a scale of 1 to infinity to new attributes on a scale of 3 to 25. It wasn't a linear conversion. We converted our PCs and NPCs, and started playing by the same rules as the majority of gamers in the room. That was an experience. I won't go into details.

Since then, I've run campaigns and one-offs in a variety of role-playing game systems. While I didn't let players walk over me again as the one had who ran his campaign character through DED without my permission, I never learned the lesson that a GM should prevent players from gaining what they needed to shape their characters according to their own visions. In my longer campaigns, I continued to dole out—in small, controlled doses—the enchantments and potions and other magical items that enhanced the abilities the characters loved to use.

Still, I always paid attention to the story of the game, because that for me had become the most interesting part. It didn't matter much about the numbers or which set of rules we used, as long as they didn't get in the way of my telling my story.

Most of the players also wanted to enjoy the unfolding story and to feel they were contributing to it through the choices they made for their characters. I've been on that side of the GM shield, too. I've been guilty of customizing characters (some might call it min-maxing) so they fit my vision for them as closely as possible from the start. The GMs of some of those games didn't appreciate it, because they tried very hard to kill off such characters, reveling when it happened. These GMs often had their stories they wanted to tell, and my overpowered characters weren't playing along. But I was having a blast, because my character was enabling a story that I enjoyed, even if the GM didn't.

In the final analysis, for everyone to have fun, everyone had to feel they were contributing to the unfolding story. If someone was hogging the spotlight, whether a player or the GM, that person had to take a moment to consider how to participate but not be the main attraction. The others in the group would hound them ceaselessly otherwise.

Now my gaming is primarily limited to solo play. I still care mostly about the story that can be told with my characters and the solo adventures I take them on. I don't have much patience for repetition, so if I take a character into a solo adventure and experience one story with him or her, I don't much want to take another character into the same solo adventure and experience the exact same story with that character. If I'm forced into repetition, I'll often just skip creating characters and start reading through the adventure, choosing the options I want without regard for attributes or dice rolls.

I'll read GM-moderated adventures and imagine what my characters would do without actually playing them, because right now I don't have a gaming group and I have no time or particular desire to look for one, and I wouldn't be able to participate much if I did find one.

It's the story that I love, and it will always be the most important thing for me in my role-playing gaming. The rules be dashed.

So I like rules-light systems. They give structure to the game, without getting in the way of the story. Very few systems have solo adventures still actively being published for them, so that's why I'm almost exclusively now a fan of Tunnels & Trolls and few other role-playing games. The T&T rules still give that needed structure. For the most part they don't get in the way of the story. But most importantly, the Tunnels & Trolls rules

system has an active fan base that regularly produces quality adventures and supplementary materials. You'll find some of those adventures and supplements right here in *Elder Tunnels*.

And that's no April Fools' joke.\*

*\*Editor's note: This issue was supposed to be published on April Fools' Day. And then on Friday the 13th. Several computer crashes, three reimagings, a massive slowdown, more crashes, a lot of thumb twiddling, a loaner, and a loss of numerous files later, I have finally been able to recover and install enough files, fonts, and publishing software to finish the issue. Clearly April 1 was just fooling, and Friday the 13th cast its inauspicious shadow over the preceding days, as it is now well past both dates. My apologies to the authors, artists, and sponsors.*



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# **The Inca Empire**

## **in Real Life & in Your Game**

**by Trevor Hudgins**

**I**n the thirteenth century, the Incas, an Andean culture, lived in the South American region known as Cuzco, which is in modern-day Peru. The Incas expanded their growing civilization through methods spanning the range from peaceful assimilation to violent conquest. They created an empire that, by the early sixteenth century, incorporated a large portion of the western continent—from modern-day southern coastal Colombia through southern Chile—with the Andean mountains at its heart.

Inca religion was complex and polytheistic. Though conquered peoples were required to accept the central Inca religion, they were generally allowed to worship their ancestral gods, and their mythologies and histories were sometimes incorporated into the empire's traditions. In addition, children of conquered rulers were brought to the capital to learn governmental procedures and then returned to their native area to serve as administrators. Such assimilation methods went a long way in helping the empire incorporate a wide variety of neighboring cultures into the fold.





However, assimilation was not always achieved so peacefully. Some researchers contend that children of local rulers were often sacrificed as a way for the Incas to spread fear into the populations under their governance.

The Incas and other Andean cultures passed on important administrative, historical, religious, and other information both orally and via records made using a system of knotted strings, called *quipus*, made from llama hair, alpaca hair, or cotton. It was believed that inherited quipus, stories, religious practices, and regulations were passed down from previous generations dating as far back as the Ayar, their mythical proto-human ancestors.

In addition to revering their Ayar progenitors, the Incas worshipped an extensive pantheon. The heavenly beings held in the highest esteem included:

<b>Viracocha/Pachacamac</b>	father of everything
<b>Apu Illapu</b>	rain god
<b>Ayar Cachi</b>	volcanic and earthquake god
<b>Illapa</b>	storm and water goddess
<b>Inti</b>	patron god of the sun and the holy city of Cuzco
<b>Kuychi</b>	fertility and rainbow god
<b>Mama Kilya</b>	wife of Inti; the moon mother
<b>Mama Occlo</b>	goddess of wisdom, weaving, construction, and women
<b>Manco Cápac</b>	god of weaponry, cooperation, courage, agriculture, resources, and religion; sent to earth as first king of the Incas
<b>Pachamama</b>	wife of Viracocha; goddess of earth, brewing, cocoa, and prayer
<b>Qochamama</b>	goddess of the sea
<b>Sachamama</b>	goddess of trees and serpents
<b>Yakumama</b>	goddess of water and water serpents

These divine beings were believed to inhabit three locations: *Cay Pacha*, the reality that is all around us from the smallest insect to the most ancient tree; *Hanan Pacha*, the heavens above; and *Uku Pacha*, the world below the Earth's surface.

Through their knotted-string and oral traditions, the Incas maintained and transmitted beliefs concerning the afterworld and reincarnation

both among their established peoples and those they had more recently brought into the fold.

Unlike the fiery Christian Hell, the Incan realm of the dead was filled with flower-covered fields and snowcapped mountains. Cremation was not allowed, because it was believed that incineration of human bodies made souls, or *camaquen*, evaporate, barring them from passage into the afterworld. Travel through this realm was necessary for reincarnation. It was believed that those journeying through the afterworld were aided by a large and intelligent black dog capable of seeing within the darkest of nights.

The Incas' most widespread origin story explained that Andean tribes had emerged in their lands at natural places of sacred power—caves, springs, etc.—called *pacarinas*. They believed that they were descendants of the Sun and the Moon.

Using the expanding Inca Empire and its religious belief system as inspiration, what sort of kindred culture could be developed within the Tunnels & Trolls role-playing game? One choice would be to use a warlike, humanoid kindred such as ogres or trolls to represent the ruling class in charge of an expanding tyrannical empire. A predominance of warrior types should figure in this civilization. Or you may wish to develop your own kindred type, taking into consideration the basic traits and views of Inca culture.

The medusa are a kindred with a largely unknown society and culture. The horrid offspring of another monstrous kin, the naga, they exhibit an unsettling duality. Though supremely exotic in appearance and agile in movement, they terrify their victims and can petrify them with a single bite or touch. In other words, they appear as Adonis or Cleopatra in form, which allows them to lure their targets close enough to turn them into stone.

The mysterious and cursed nature of the medusa make them interesting candidates as members of a culture inspired by Inca religion, with a few twists added. For instance, where the Incas believed they were descended from the Moon and the Sun, the medusa could be said to claim descent from deities of Earth and Water. Perhaps a divine naga goddess could be credited with creating their culture and directing their efforts toward conquest and expansion. To amp up the conflict for the game, religious ceremonies could regularly require the sacrifice of any humanoid creature who has been taken as a prisoner or a slave.

The medusa are believed to have a connection with water and the wooded areas that surround the banks of rivers, lakes, and other such

watery regions. These aqueous environments should be taken into consideration in developing the culture's cosmology and religion. For this civilization, the three environs that make up the homes of their deities could be Water, Deep Water, and Sky. Deep Water as a divine location is dark and airless, a type of hell from which spiritual energy cannot return to grace a new physical form, whether as another medusa or as a tree. Water is the mortal realm upon which everything lives and from which the gods and goddesses watch and listen for praise. Sky is looked upon as the afterlife; it offers the greatest rewards for moral behavior and acts of excellence favored by the culture's religious beliefs and laws.

Where the Incas believed in an afterlife of flower-covered fields and snow-covered mountains, the cousins of the naga should have a similar belief in the afterworld, altered to match their own cultural and religious systems. Perhaps their spiritual forms would need to swim through a brilliantly illuminated river that they had known as children. Through this aquatic journey, they would meet their previously deceased family members, friends, and ancestors, as well as their greatest fears and the foes that they had slain. In this environment of traveling dead, their sole battle companion might be a large white shark that can speak, offering them advice and forgiveness for their past transgressions. At the end of this expedition, the deceased medusa might enter an ocean that is a sparkling blue, strewn with the finest multi-colored kelp.

The medusa also should use similar methods for passing on important information and historical traditions: a mix of stories transmitted orally and information recorded via dried kelp and vines tied into braids, for instance. Like those of the Incas, their oral traditions would spread throughout their civilization, becoming adapted in each location to incorporate its local war heroes, honored dead, and greatest battles.

Perhaps the heroes, battles, and honored dead of your next T&T game will become part of this historical tradition.

As you can see, a real-world culture such as the Incas can serve as an excellent springboard for imagining the civilization of a Tunnels & Trolls kindred, and as particularly rich source material for the development of a long-term campaign setting.

# Days & Nights *in*



*Baru-Kesh*

by Jerry Teleha

## INTRODUCTION

I believe in providing various options to the players when running an ongoing campaign. While there will always be times when one has a pre-determined adventure or scenario to run, I love to give the players the opportunity to explore widely and be free to choose from among many courses of action. That is why I have grown to love running city adventures: the possibilities can be endless for the imaginative GM.

This GM adventure could be used as a brief interlude for traveling characters or as the start of an ongoing city campaign spanning multiple sessions. It is designed for use with *Tunnels & Trolls* 7.5 and for up to six characters of levels 1–3. Higher character levels can be accommodated easily by adjusting monster ratings or challenges presented. This being a fantasy take on an Arabian culture, common non-human kindred will seem out of place, but will not be entirely unaccepted. Other kindred may be played, but NPCs may treat them as outsiders or with fear or distrust.

## THE CITY BARU-KESH

Baru-Kesh is a heavily populated port city. The city is located in a very warm climate, and the port is open year round. Extreme wealth exists alongside equally extreme poverty. Most affluent homes are gated and contain beautiful, well-kept gardens and courtyards. Men wear long robes with sandals and turbans, and more often than not have long beards. Women of noble birth are often veiled, especially young maidens yet to be married. Wealthy men and women may travel in the city in litters bedecked with cushions and scented with perfumes, accompanied by their slaves and eunuchs.

The lower classes are a more prevalent sight. Beggars sporting weathered and worn clothing line the streets. Many working men leave the city every morning to fish, gather shellfish, or cut wood to sell in the market. Others offer their services as porters, carrying large baskets in which they transport market goods bought by those who can afford to pay for their service.

The market, or bazaar, is well-known as a place for finding almost anything you may be looking for, including spices, exotic weapons, furniture, jewelry, cloth, rugs, and all manner of foodstuffs. The smells of these items mix with those of the cooked meats and breads available for purchase in numerous stalls.

Animals are another common sight in the streets of Baru-Kesh. Chickens, goats, lambs, and other livestock are constantly being transported to the market or slaughterhouse. Dogs, cats, and even small monkeys may be seen as well, either as pets or roaming wild. Dogs congregate

around shops and stalls that sell meats and breads, begging for scraps from the cooks. Horses and camels are also be a common sight.

## LAW AND ORDER

In the streets of Baru-Kesh, enforcement of law can be very subjective. Men and women of higher station often get away with infractions for which those of a lower class would be punished. There is a presence of armed guards in the city, but it is not at all consistent. If an adventuring group acts in a way that could attract the attention of a guard, have the player make a 2nd lvl SR Lk. On a failed roll, guards will question the characters and may or may not (at the discretion of the GM) attempt to apprehend them. Keep in mind that the city streets are crowded, and the PCs are outsiders. If an act of violence is performed where many can see it, the guards may not notice, but others definitely will and may try to draw the guards' attention.

### **Baru-Kesh Guardsman**

#### **2nd level Warrior**

MR 40

Con 22

Combat Adds: +20

Weapon: Pilum, 5d6+20, or scimitar, 4d6+20

Armor: Heavy cloth, 2 pts

Standard patrols roam about in groups of two or three. If the group decides it is a good idea to confront guards openly in the middle of a crowded street, the situation will escalate quickly, with more guards arriving in short order to deal with the affront. (Increase the MR if needed to represent a high-ranking member of the guard who leads a larger force.)

If, by chance, any group members find themselves imprisoned, the group will be approached by a man named Zeeks, who is in the employ of Vizier Draban Al-Faad. He will offer the party a deal: if they surrender their gold, they will be permitted to leave without further punishment, provided they agree never to return to Baru-Kesh.

## ENCOUNTERS

*Each entry is numbered so that the GM may randomly determine the encounter if he or she wishes.*

### **1. The Persistent Porter**

Upon entering the market, the party is approached by a young man carrying a large basket on his head. He has a long, black beard and is



wearing worn but well-kept clothing. He asks the party to hire him to carry anything they might like to buy while they are shopping in the market. He will not take "no" for an answer. Following the party, he asks them where they have been and where they are going, and even offers to help them find what they are looking for, since he has lived in the city his entire life.

If the party hires the porter, it will prove to be to their advantage economically. He will direct the PCs to merchants who sell common items for 10 to 15% less than the going rate listed in the T&T rulebook. He will tell the party his fee is 5 gp.

Talking to the porter will also yield some information, because he is quite the talkative type. Roll a d6 if you want to randomly determine which bit of information he offers.

- 1-2** Don't trust anything that Drake the Alchemist sells (Encounter 3)
- 3-4** One of the Sultan's men, Zeeks, is looking for men to deal with bandits
- 5-6** Hazan sells magical brooches (Encounter 4)

Even if the party does not hire the porter, he continues to follow them. If they make a purchase, he will jump between them and attempt to intercept the item. A 2nd lvl SR Sp will effectively prevent the porter's attempt, and he will finally be on his way. If the party fails the roll, the porter quotes his fee of 5 gp and continues to follow them.

If by chance any PCs raise a hand to strike the porter, he will immediately drop to his knees and beg forgiveness. He will say, "For all that is holy, please spare my miserable life. I only meant to feed my family." Feel free to pile on as much over-the-top behavior as you like. If the attack is pressed, he will be easily dispatched and has no weapons. On his person he has a pouch of money with about 8 gp and his porter's basket.

AP: 100 points can be given for each bit of information obtained from the porter; AP can also be awarded for dealing with the man's antics and not outright killing him.

## **2. The Determined Dog**

As the group walks through the market, they come across a meat seller whose door is surrounded by all manner of dogs barking and begging for scraps. One mangy black dog sees the group and begins to follow them around.

If anyone in the group interacts with the dog, the animal will appear to understand fully what is being said. He will react to any questions or orders that the party gives. Ask any player character interacting with

the dog to roll a skill check, and then ask for her character sheet. If she succeeds on a 3rd lvl SR Wiz, the dog's Kremm aura will make it apparent to her that the dog has been magically altered. You could also ask all the players to roll a 3rd lvl SR Wiz after some time interacting with the dog. (Adjust the SR if needed for a lower level party.)

If the dog is attacked or an attempt is made to drive him away, he will dip his head to the ground and put his front legs forward in an attempt to submit in front of any character he believes he has befriended or perceives as the leader. The dog will continue to follow the party and will wait outside buildings if the group leaves the street.

Questioning shopkeepers or even beggars will yield information about how the dog may in fact be a man who has been changed into a dog by a genius (djinn) or an enchantress. A 2nd lvl SR Lk will point the group toward a baker whose daughter is known to be an enchantress. The baker will invite the group into his home; if they accept and enter, he will offer them pleasantries and wine. His daughter, Amara, will appear and talk to the group; she will agree that this dog is not what he seems. She will dip her hand in a vessel of water and, sprinkling the water on the dog's head, say, "If born a dog, remain a dog; but if born a man, by virtue of this water, resume your proper form!"

At once, the dog will disappear and a man will materialize in its place, volubly professing his eternal gratefulness and thanking the gods that he has been delivered from his unjust imprisonment. He tells the characters that his name is Sidi-Hassad and that he is a wealthy merchant who was transformed into a dog by his deceitful new wife. He invites the characters to visit his home at any time in the future to receive his graces and benefits as a host, but indicates that first, he must deal with his wife.

If the group lingers, they will find out that Amara plans to give him a potion that he can in turn use to turn his wife into a horse or a goat.

AP: 300 points may be awarded for helping Sidi-Hassad regain his true form.

### 3. The Addled Alchemist

In this market is one merchant who stands out among the rest; he is clearly another outsider from the same lands from which the group hails. He is a human Wizard named Drake.

#### **Drake the Alchemist**

##### **2nd level Wizard**

MR 20

In 23 Con 16

Lk 16 Wiz 20





*Combat Adds:* +10

*Weapon:* Kris, 2d6+13, prevents bearer and those within 5 feet of him from casting spells

*Armor:* Heavy cloth, 1 pt

*Spells:* All basic 1st-level spells

*Magic Item:* 3 doses of Potion of Hidey Hole, 3rd lvl SR Lk, turns the imbiber invisible for 10 combat turns

Drake runs a small stand and sells various potions. The issue with Drake's potions is that they are less likely to work than normal ones, but also more potent. A standard potion requires only a 1st lvl SR Lk; Drake's potions require a 3rd lvl SR Lk. This is information that Drake will not provide to the group. He will, however, profess that his potions are of the finest quality (partially true), and that they are potions a delver may depend upon entirely (more than likely not true).

### **Drake's Potions for Sale**

- \* **Healing** (30 gp, 10 doses available): 1 dose heals 1d6+6 hits
- \* **Constitution** (100 gp, 4 available): 1 dose increases Con by 1d6+2 permanently
- \* **Invulnerable** (50 gp, 3 available): 1 dose prevents all damage from physical attacks for 1d6+2 combat turns
- \* **Mana** (20 gp, 12 available): 1 dose regenerates 2d6+6 Wiz points
- \* **Wizardry** (120 gp, 2 available): 1 dose increases Wiz by 1d6+2 permanently

There will be a 50% chance that Drake will no longer be in the city on any given day after he has sold potions to anyone in the group. He has learned to pack up and leave when the time is right. He carries a kris, which prevents him and anyone within 5 feet of him from being able to cast a spell. He also has a Hidey Hole potion readily accessible in case he needs to make a quick getaway from an unhappy customer. This potion is the same as any other that he has made, requiring a 3rd lvl SR Lk to work as expected. He will be more than willing to leave behind his products in order to escape a tight situation and live to see another day.

His carries all of his potions with him in a leather case as he travels to and from the market. If the characters decide to follow him instead of confronting him directly, they will find that he is lodging on the second floor of a merchant's shop. An external staircase leads up to the suite he is renting.

AP: 100 points may be awarded for dealing with Drake, or 200 points if the player characters purposely refrain from killing him.

#### 4. The Jaded Jeweler

The group passes by a stall where an older, long-bearded man is selling jewelry. Behind him stand two very large and muscular men with large scimitars at their waists. Hazan's products are for the most part unremarkable and of standard quality. If the group approaches, he will offer to them the few fine items he does have. However, they come at a price that is worthy of their exquisite craftsmanship.

##### Hazan's Brooches

- \* Emerald Spider (300 gp): Increases St by 5 when worn
- \* Sapphire Ladybug (200 gp): Increases Lk by 5 when worn
- \* Bloodstone Beetle (200 gp): Increases Sp by 5 when worn

Hazan is happy to do business with the group, and he will be eager to haggle, bringing the price down by as much as 20%. He has a third henchman who remains unseen in the crowd and keeps an eye on his customers. When Hazan gives a signal, the man will follow any purchasers of the brooches. If someone from the party decides to look back, ask for a 3rd lvl SR Lk. If successful, the character will notice that the two guards are now absent from Hazan's jewelry stand.

The third henchman will round up additional accomplices: two corrupt members of the city guard. The guards will call out to the group and order them to stop, after which they will attempt to force them into a nearby alley, where the two bodyguards are waiting.

If the group resists in the street, the two guards will ask if they really want to go to jail today and will direct them again at swordpoint to the alley.

If they enter the alley, they will be asked to turn over the brooches and all their money. If they comply, they will be escorted out of the city. No additional consequences will occur as long as they do not come back.

##### Large Bodyguard

###### 3rd level Warrior

MR 80

St 32      Con 30

Combat Adds: +40

Weapon: Large scimitar, 9d6+40

Armor: Heavy cloth, 2 pts

##### Corrupt City Guardsman

###### 2nd level Warrior

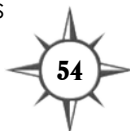
MR 40

Con 22

Combat Adds: +20

Weapon: Pilum, 5d6+20

Armor: Heavy cloth, 2 pts



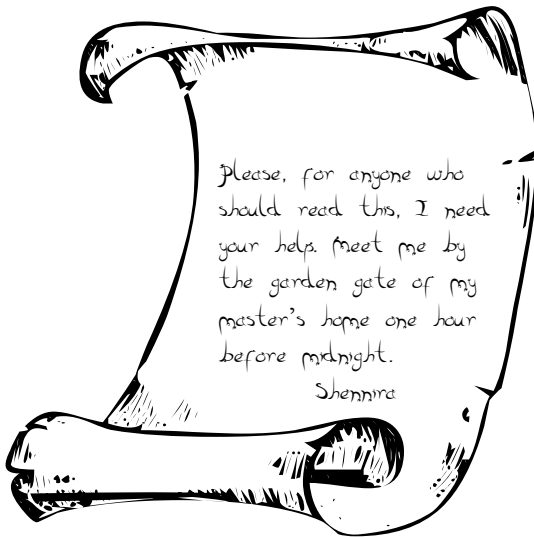
In group combat, the two city guards and two bodyguards present a combined combat value of  $28d6+120$ . If the delving party is smaller than optimal, omit one of the bodyguards. Two city guards and one bodyguard present a combined combat value of  $19d6+80$ .

If the delvers survive, they can play things a few different ways. They can return and confront Hazan, who will more than likely be hastily packing up his wares for the night. Depending on who they know from other encounters, they could report the crooked merchant to an authority they trust, who would move to take Hazan into custody.

AP: Each of the bodyguards is worth 100 AP if defeated; each of the guards is worth 50 AP. If Hazan is somehow turned in to the authorities, offer up another 200 AP for ridding the city of a thief and murderer.

### 5. The Ghul in the Graveyard

Walking past a large household framed by 10-foot-high walls, the group is startled by a rock landing in front of them. Attached to the rock is a piece of parchment. The following note is scrawled on the parchment in very fine handwriting:



If the adventurers show up at the garden gate at the requested time, they will meet there a beautiful, dark-haired woman in a sheer and flowing gown. Intoxicatingly perfumed, Shennira wears a jade and gold necklace around her neck. After looking around the alley to confirm that no one is watching, she will admit the group into the gated garden. She will explain that she and her sister are both slaves to Vizier Draban Al-Faad, though that is not her concern, as he is a good master.

Shennira relates that her sister has taken on a lover, whom she meets in the graveyard at midnight, for he is a married man. Her sister has been gone for a few days, while she normally returns home after her clandestine meetings. If her sister is not back in the morning, her master will punish her severely, but Shennira is also concerned because she fears something may have happened to her. Ghilan (*ghilan* is the plural of *ghul*) are known to frequent graveyards, eating the flesh of the recently buried.

For the safe return of her sister, Shennira will offer the group her jeweled necklace, which is valued at over 1,000 gp. If that is not enough, she will offer other pieces of jewelry that her master has given her; these may be worth as much as 2,000 gp. She may mention that her sister wears a necklace similar to her own.

Although her plight seems compelling, in reality both Shennira and her sister are ghilan (*ghul*), having killed the human sisters and taken on their identities. In the time that it takes the party to reach the graveyard, Shennira will shift into the form of a hyena and speed ahead to meet her "sister," who is in the graveyard, hiding behind a crypt. If the party decides to leave someone behind to keep an eye on Shennira, that character will see a hyena appear at the top of the wall, leap down into the street, and head off toward the graveyard.

As they approach the crypt described by Shennira, the group will hear crying—a lamentation by the sister that her lover has told her he no longer wants to see her, or some other such story to serve as a ploy to lure the group close.

The ghilan will attack by surprise if possible. If two ghilan (22d6+100) seems too much for the group, reduce the MR value for each.

**New Monster: Ghul**

MR 100 (11d6+50)

Wiz 30

St 40

Con 100

*Special Abilities:* Sharp Claws, Fangs, Shape Shifting

*Special Damage:* 3/Fangs

*Special Hindrance:* Flesh Frenzy

A ghul is a magical creature believed to be a type of genius or jinn. Its natural state is that of a humanoid male or female with demonic features including long, sharp claws and elongated fangs. Ghilan prefer to feed on human flesh and thus tend to be nocturnal, living in and around graveyards or other desolate areas. Ghilan will dig up freshly buried graves if fresh meat is not

readily available. They can shape shift freely into the form of a hyena or of any person that they have previously eaten. While they are thought to be unintelligent, they are quite adept at using their shape-shifting powers to blend into society.

As its primary attack, a ghul uses its sharp claws, which can rip through almost any soft armor. When it is able to effectively grasp its prey, a ghul will then rend the victim's exposed flesh with its gruesome fangs. Its high Wiz score provides additional defense due to kremm resistance.

- \* **Sharp Claws:** Any soft armor worn by an adversary absorbs only half its usual number of hits when struck by this attack.
- \* **Fangs:** A ghul is able to sink its fangs into and rend the exposed flesh of its target upon a Spite 3. All the 6s rolled should be applied to a single target, bypassing armor. Apply the rest of the damage rolled according to the normal T&T combat rules. The total damage should still be used to determine which side wins the combat round.
- \* **Flesh Frenzy:** A ghul that is able to successfully sink its fangs into a target will be momentarily distracted as it tastes the fresh blood of its victim. When this occurs, the ghul contributes only half of its normal combat dice for the following round.

The ghilan will fight to the death. If they are killed, the delvers will find inside the crypt the decomposed and mostly eaten bodies of the two sisters, along with those of another man and, apparently, his family; these are the owners of the crypt. The "sister" will be wearing a necklace that matches Shennira's.

If, by chance, the group takes no part in this and watches secretly from afar, they will see the two ghilan wait and eventually come together, appear to talk, and then go to a recently dug grave, digging out and consuming its contents instead of their intended victims.

AP: Each defeated ghul is worth 150 points. If, afterward, the group decides to approach the vizier with the story of the ghilan and the fate of his two slaves, another 200 points may be awarded. The vizier will allow the group to keep the two jade and gold necklaces, valued at 1,000 gp each, as well as to enjoy the privileges of being a guest in his home. He will encourage them to relax and regain their strength and health. Having the vizier as a contact should prove beneficial to the delvers during future jobs.

### 6. The Perilous Pit

On one end of the bazaar is a round, 20-foot-deep pit. Built in the ground on both sides are stairs by which combatants may enter or



depart. On most days, the pit is not in use, though often one or more city officials are present to take down the names of those who would like to fight in the next scheduled event.

The characters approach the pit on a day when fights are in progress. If they spend time observing, they will see a series of matches, usually pitting outmatched men in rags facing off against well-armored mercenaries. Occasionally, both combatants are well armed. If one yields to the other, or if one is killed, the winner will claim all of the loser's weapons and armor as well as any prize money, which is awarded in accordance with the provisions of a signed contract.

The highlight of the day is a match in which a large minotaur fights four convicts at the same time. This is not much of a challenge for the minotaur; he overwhelms his opponents with his brute strength, head butting one unfortunate man and goring another with his horns. He then charges the other two, who are frantically trying to claw up a wall in a desperate attempt to escape the beast. The monster almost rips one man in half in his rage.

If they ask around or happen to overhear any nearby audience members, the characters will learn that anyone may sign up to fight other challengers or men from the dungeons who are sentenced to die. These men are given the option to fight to the death in an attempt to win their freedom. Most of those who fight are trained and supported by the wealthy merchants and nobles of the city. These fighters tend to be slaves and eunuchs who fight strictly because they have been trained to and are ordered to. Others are mercenaries and delvers fighting for gold and the winner's right to claim a prize. Those who survive gain some level of fame and admiration, but most of those who have a choice realize that it is only a matter of time before they are matched with someone they cannot hope to beat.

In this milieu, all manner of betting is going on. Odds will be given for combatants who are clearly underdogs. Every once in a while there may be a prisoner who, though underequipped, is a capable fighter who might just surprise those betting against him and earn his freedom.

The next scheduled events will occur in the near future (at the GM's discretion), and there are still some openings available.

- \* Earn 50 gp to fight a convicted prisoner (20 Combat Adds less than the character; no armor)
- \* Earn 50 gp to fight against another mercenary or sponsored fighter (10 Combat Adds less than the character; good equipment), and the winner is allowed to take all possessions that the defeated combatant brought into the pit

- \* The current offer to fight the minotaur is 2,000 gp for a single combatant or 1,000 gp each for two

The minotaur is a formidable opponent. The GM should feel free to reduce its MR if desired in order to present opposing characters with a more even match.

### **New Monster: Minotaur (True)**

MR 200 (21d6+100)

Wiz 30

St 40

Con 200

*Armor:* Natural hide (4 pts)

*Special Abilities:* Gore, Bull Rush

*Special Damage:* 3/Gore

*Special Hindrance:* Fondness for Flesh, Lust

In combat, minotaurs are relentless, whipping themselves into a battle fury. Minotaurs will almost always fight to the death, never giving quarter unless knocked unconscious. If given the opportunity, a minotaur will "bull rush," or charge into, the opponent it deems its biggest threat at the start of melee. It will also use its head and horns to gore opponents in combat.

- \* **Gore:** When a Gore occurs (Spite 3), this means the minotaur has pierced the armor and flesh of an opponent with one of its horns. If three sixes are rolled, one opponent is considered to be gored. If six sixes are rolled, then two different opponents are gored, unless there is only one opponent, in which case he would take all the special attacks. As with normal T&T rules, who takes the damage from a Gore can be determined by the delvers after damage from the round has been determined. Then, roll on the table below to determine Spite Damage.

**1-3** Knocked Back: 5 damage, 2nd lvl SR Dx for opponent to stay on his or her feet

**4-5** Armor Punctured: 8 damage, body armor (if worn) damaged by puncture and reduced by 2 hits

**6** Head Butt: 10 damage, 3rd lvl SR Con to stay conscious

- \* **Bull Rush:** In the first round of combat, the minotaur will choose one opponent upon whom to concentrate its attack, a furious charge resulting in a Bull Rush. If the melee round is won by the minotaur, all damage and Spite affects will be applied to this single opponent. If the minotaur has been surprised, then Bull

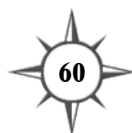


Rush should not be used unless the minotaur is attacked in the surprise round by missiles or spells. If there is ground to cover before the minotaur joins melee, then Bull Rush may be utilized.

- \* **Fondness for Flesh:** Minotaurs are carnivores, and they have a taste for human flesh as a part of their ancestry. A group of minotaurs with numbers in their favor will attack on sight any party consisting of humans or elves.
- \* **Lust:** Females are a minotaur's weakness. If possible, a minotaur will go out of his way to avoid killing a human or human-looking female because he would like to make her his mate. Damage that is distributed in combat should not be applied to human or elf females unless they are the only opponents left for the minotaur to fight.

### **AUTHOR'S NOTE**

I started with some basic ideas that I had running around in my head, and then I turned to some source material for additional inspiration. *The Arabian Nights*, or *1001 Arabian Nights*, are translated collections of myths and stories that originated in India and the Middle East. In many cases, the stories involve deceitful geniuses (jinn), enchantresses who like to turn men into animals, and moral tales where the pious will in the end be rewarded and the wicked will be punished.





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