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# Visitations of Glory

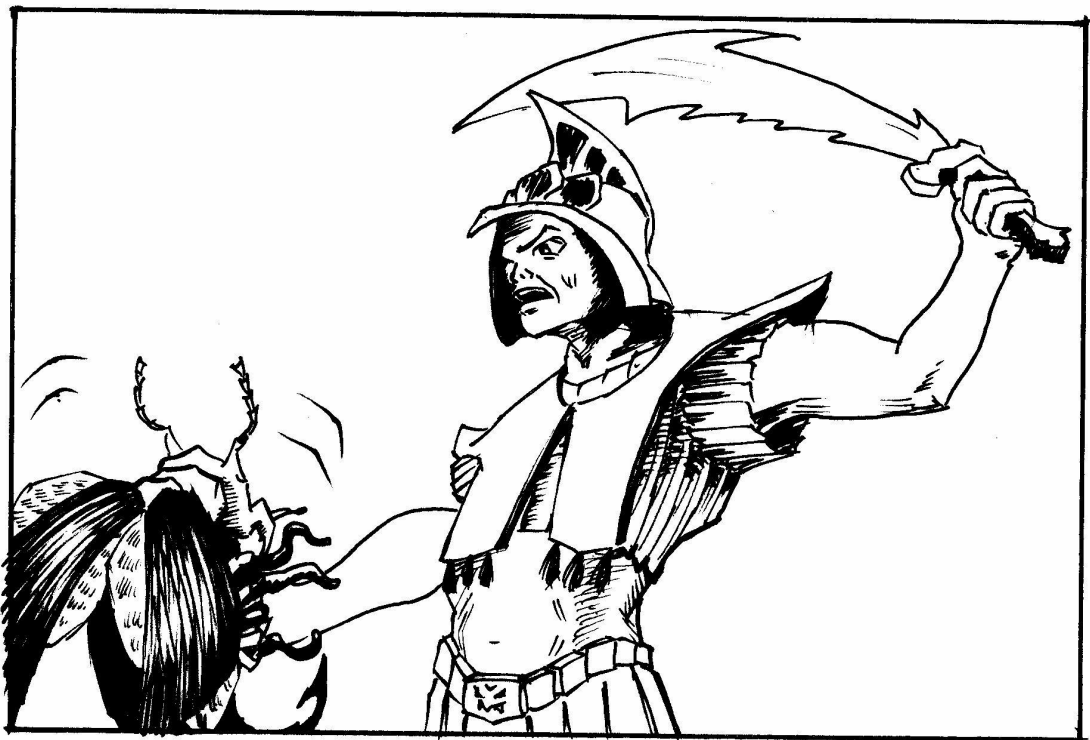
A Tékumel APA

Issue One

Visitations of Glory, Issue One, Spring 2001

This issue's contributions

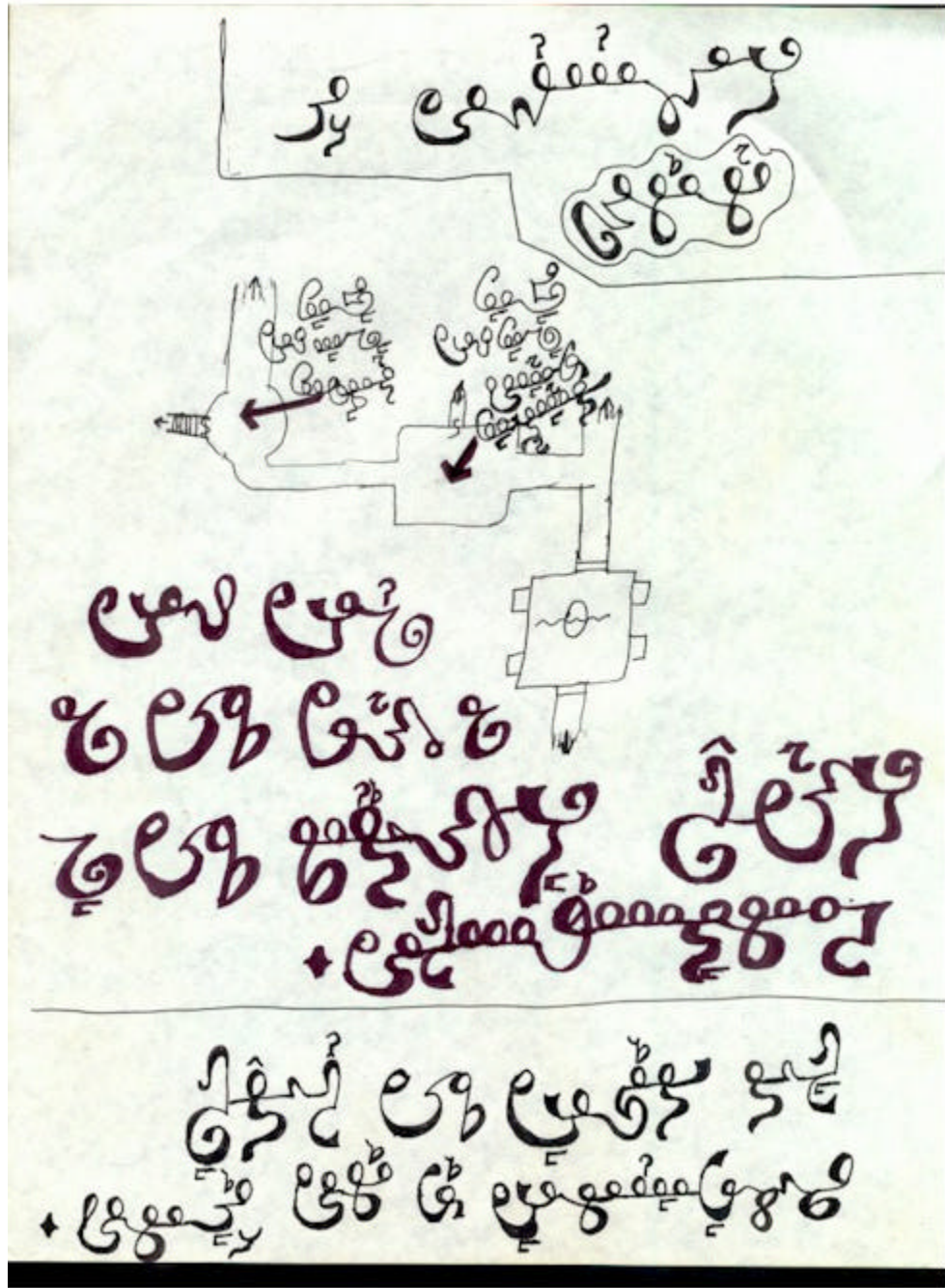
- Floyd Brigdon – A map of a small portion of the Jakalla underworld (the translation is found at the back of this issue)
- Krista Donnelly – “A Dark and Stormy Night”
- Robert Dushay – “Perception of the Energies”
- Malcolm Heath – “The Faultless Contemplation of Decay”
- Brad Johnson – “The Wealth of Meshmúra”
- Dave Sutherland III - Illustration of the 18<sup>th</sup> Imperial Tsolyani Unit (medium), Legion of the Lord of Red Devestation
- Steven Woodcock – Cover Illustration, Illustrations on table of contents and on the “Next Issue” page



(Illustration by Steven Woodcock)

The contents of this issue are copyrighted by the individual authors and artists who created them, all of whom acknowledge that none of this would have been possible without Professor M.A.R. Barker, the creator of Tékumel. Chegúkh, Professor. We are in your debt. -- FEB

A map of a portion of the Jakalla underworld (translation at the end of this issue)



## **A Dark and Stormy Night** by Krista Donnelly

### *Author's Introduction*

I owe inspiration and much of the presentation format to Bob Dushay's excellent scenarios "A Matter of Honor" and "Against the Grain," both of which I was privileged to play in the Tekumel Track at Ucon. I also owe thanks to David Aitken, Joe Pizzirusso, Jim Fetzner, Michael Trout and Rakesh Malik for a very entertaining playtest session.

### *Referee's Introduction*

This adventure is set in a villa by the Sákbe road between Chéne Hó and Tumíssa, where the Nátlá river bisects the Sákbe road, necessitating a ferry crossing. It is the 18<sup>th</sup> of Shápru, the middle of the rainy season. The year is 2357 A.S., late in Hirkáne's reign, and the war with Yán Kór has just turned hot with the Battle of the Átkolel Heights occurring several months earlier.

The characters are divided into two groups: the travelling party and the villa party. The introduction will bring the travelling party to the villa, which has just been threatened by a group of deserters. Each character has individual, secret goals. This information should be passed on to the appropriate players, and not shared unless the player chooses to divulge it. Many of these goals contradict each other to some extent, adding to the tension in the scenario.

The scenario is set up for 7 PCs, but can be run with as few as 4. Turning the two assistants and then Mnéktu into NPCs does the least damage to the dynamics of the plot. If there are more than 8 players, it's possible to turn Túrísan, the spokesman for Peaceful Water, into a PC, but after that, roles are limited.

### *Villa Party Characters*

1. **Ngáya hiFésrengala**, Daughter of Mígor, Golden Sheaf, Avánthe

5' 2", slender, HBS: 72	<u>Body Damage</u>
Strength: 72	Head 6
Dexterity: 107	Each arm 5
Intelligence: 14	Torso 9
Comeliness: 37	Abdomen 6
Charisma: 44	Each leg 6

### Skills

Etiquette 1	Music 1	Entertaining 5	Home Decoration 3	Sewing 5
Grammar 1	Reading 1	Cosmetics 7	Shopping 7	

You were never fond of your father. While your older brother Chúrisan was still alive (he drowned in the river two years ago), your father ignored you (as he had the children of his concubines previously) and doted on him. The attention he has shown to you lately is too little, too late. You also dislike this rural locale. Many times you have watched the passing parade on the Sákbe road and wished you could join them. (And, frankly, ever since your brother drowned, the river's given you the creeps. He was a good swimmer.)

You've never really known what to do about your predicament. Then, three weeks ago Kotáru, the new overseer, arrived. Kotáru is all you could dream of in a man – tall, moody, and handsome with a somewhat mysterious past. (You have steadfastly refused to listen to any of the servants' rumors about why he's exiled out here.) He seems to return your interest, and you already have a sexual relationship established.

However, everything is about to be ruined. The local fief-holder, Visán hiZhemré, provincial and boring, was just here to visit. From all the odd comments your father dropped, you realize he's about to marry you off. You'd about resigned yourself to being a good clan girl until you met your prospective husband.

Now you've hatched a far better plan. You know your father keeps a strong box with many káitars in a secret place in his bedroom, and you know where the key is kept. You can steal the money and run away with Kotáru to live in Yán Kór, where women are properly appreciated. You'd better do it soon though. With his health failing, how quickly will your father push the inevitable wedding?

#### Goals

1. Steal the money.
2. Run away with Kotáru.

#### Additional Information

1. Your father does not own the villa or the immediate surrounding land. Instead he purchased a lease "in perpetuity" to the villa, the surrounding land and the ferry concession from the ruling Zhemré family. You can only inherit the lease if you remain non-Aridáni.
2. Your father keeps his money in a chest which is locked away in a hidden compartment in his bedroom. The key to the compartment is itself hidden. You press on a certain flower in a wooden mural carved in his bedroom wall and a spring releases a small drawer. Then, in another part of the mural, you push aside a leaf to reveal a keyhole. This opens up to reveal a small cavity in the wall where the chest resides.
2. Your father's health started failing about two months ago.
3. You know of a secret room within the villa that no one else does (you discovered it while playing as a child). It is reached by manipulating carvings on the mural in your room. A small door opens into a narrow passage (see map) and ends with a

trap door in the floor leading down into a damp, muddy tunnel. You have never explored the tunnel.

4. In your room, you have a stash of 89 káitars.

GM Note: The tunnel meanders for several hundred feet and ends with a ladder leading up to a trapdoor. This opens with difficulty (roll vs. strength), due to dirt and roots above it, into the middle of an overgrown thicket in the forest along the river's edge.

2. **Kotáru hiVraisúna**, Sword-fighter/Overseer, Golden Sheaf, Avánthe

6', medium build, HBS: 122	<u>Body Damage</u>
Strength: 69	Head 8
Dexterity: 74	Each arm 7
Intelligence: 68	Torso 12
Comeliness: 36	Abdomen 10
Charisma: 89	Each leg 8

#### Skills

Brawling 6	HBS: 152	Damage Table: A
Long Sword 12	HBS: 182	Damage Table: D

Reading 1	Archery 4	Shield 1
Hunting 5	Dagger/knife-fighting 5	Drugs & narcotics 6

You have always lived the good life. Studies bored you, and you got out of them early by proving very proficient at sword fighting. You even managed to get the clan to sponsor you for several years at The Hall of Heroes academy in Khirgár. You weren't sure what the clan expected you to do for a living, but you knew you would not tolerate the discipline and tedium of a legionary's life. You found yourself growing fond of visiting the priestesses of Dlamélish and Hrihayál, enjoying both the sex and the drugs that often accompanied it. Since you received too little spending money from your clan and family, you took to fighting in the Hirilákta arena.

Perhaps your successes there turned your head. Perhaps you resented the easier life of those in more noble clans. No matter how it started, it ended when the high status prig insulted you in front of the laughing Dlamélish priestess, and you challenged him to a duel and fought it then and there. You won, of course.

Unfortunately, you were supposed to give him the chance to get a champion to fight in his stead. Since you were insulted, you escaped the 'high ride.' But the clan is insisting you pay back the shámtla (5,000 káitars) that they had to pay on your behalf. The elders are insisting so much that they have sent out to this godforsaken place in the back of the beyond where you are only earning 35 káitars a month. It will take you years to pay off your debt to the clan.

The only thing making your stay here palatable is Ngáya, the daughter of the owner. She's a romantic fool, and certainly no Dlamélish priestess, but at least she's free with her favors. You want a way out of here, but not with her. You know that her stubborn willfulness will only cause problems for you in the future.

### Goals

1. Get away from this place somehow.
2. Do not get tied down by Ngáya.
3. Wow someone with your sword-fighting prowess.

### Additional Information

1. You are the overseer of the estate. Basically, you're responsible for everything outside of the house itself, including overseeing Mígor's interest in the ferry operation. You are not good at your job (and you don't care to be).
2. A proverb you might use in anger: "A poor man must ever bow to his inferiors."
3. You possess 54 káitars.

3. **Mnéktu hiFésrengala**, Merchant brother of Mígor, Golden Sheaf, Avánthe

5' 4", heavy, HBS: 46

Strength: 17

Dexterity: 20

Intelligence: 77

Comeliness: 13

Charisma: 84

### Body Damage

Head 5

Each arm 4

Torso 8

Abdomen 6

Each leg 5

### Skills

Reading 1      History (Tsolyanu) 1

Merchant 13 (Pharmaceuticals)

Etiquette 4      Music 7

You are also a merchant, like your brother Mígor, but you sell out of the clanhouse in Purússa (a Sákbe road village). You're doing well enough, but you'll never earn the káitars Mígor did with his caravans to Mu'ugalavyá. And now he is living fat off the concessions from the ferry operation while you still deal with customers on a daily basis. You would dearly love to get your hands on his villa and his ferry operation concession. However, this is just not possible. When the ruling Zhemré family leased the villa and ferry concession "in perpetuity" to Mígor twelve years ago, the terms were very strict. Only a direct descendant of Mígor's could inherit the lease, and any female inheritor must not be Aridáni. Otherwise, the lease reverts back to the Zhemré family.

You are a clever man, however. You have contacted the steward of the household, hapless Adlár hiSorúna, and proposed a scheme to him. If Mígor dies while his daughter is unmarried, you, as another father to Ngáya, will decide who the daughter marries. If Adlár will poison Mígor, you have promised Ngáya's hand to him. In return, Adlár will

kick back 10% of the ferry proceeds to you. At least, that is how you have explained it to Adlár. You plan to use the murder to blackmail him and take far more than 10%.

Since the murder must be undetected, the two of you decided upon arsenic poisoning which could easily masquerade as a health problem. So for the last two months, Adlár has been adding gradually increasing amounts of arsenic to Mígor's wine. Since he doubles as the house priest, he has "fruitlessly" tried both Healing and Alleviation on Mígor. You had planned for at least one month further of "failing health," but your hand has been forced by the recent visit of Lord Visán hiZhemré to Mígor and Ngáya. You both fear that the ailing Mígor has matchmaking on his mind.

You just arrived at the villa this morning, ostensibly in order to check up on your brother, but in reality you intend to make sure that Adlár finishes him off immediately, before any marriage between Ngáya and Lord Visán can be announced. (You have brought extra arsenic with you to make certain the deed is done.)

### Goals

1. Make sure Adlár poisons Mígor tonight.
2. Make sure nothing untoward happens to Adlár and Ngáya, so the happy couple can be married off and safely under your thumb.
3. Make sure nothing happens to impend the earning potential of the ferry operation.

### Additional Information

1. Ngáya knows nothing of your plans with regard to Adlár.
2. On this quick trip, you brought only 20 káitars with you.
4. **Adlár hiSorúna**, Steward and House Priest, Golden Sheaf, Chiténg

5' 5", medium build, HBS: 68

Strength: 58

Dexterity: 59

Intelligence: 87

Comeliness: 35

Charisma: 08

Psychic Ability: 80

Psychic Reservoir: 73

### Body Damage

Head 7

Each arm 6

Torso 10

Abdomen 8

Each leg 7

### Skills

Reading 2      Calligraphy 5      Administrator 9      Duties of Temple Admin 8

Grammar 1      Mathematics 7      Dogma & rituals 9      Record-keeping 8

You are a 3<sup>rd</sup> Circle lay priest of Chiténg. Yours is one of the lower lineages within Golden Sheaf, and your resentment toward your uppity clan-brothers manifested itself as a rebellion against the Stability gods generally worshipped by your clan. You entered the local Monastery of Lord Chiténg, and talent and hard work won you through to 3<sup>rd</sup> Circle.



As you were repeatedly rejected for 4<sup>th</sup>, you realized you could rise no higher without clan or family inducements to back you.

Just as you left the monastery to become a lay priest, you heard through the clan grapevine that a local successful clan businessman, Mígor hiFésrengala, was looking for someone who could double as a steward and a house priest. Though he worshipped Avánthe and seemed quite interested in Belkhánu, he accepted you.

That was four years ago. You didn't know much about running a household when you started, but again through hard work and talent, you succeeded. Unfortunately, the pattern of your life is repeating itself. Mígor doesn't seem to value you much, and you know he's sent off a suspicious number of letters to the temple of Belkhánu in both Tumíssa and Chéne Hó.

Mígor's daughter, Ngáya, is beautiful, if a tad willful, but she's never given you a second glance – certainly nothing like the eyes she's been making at the overseer, Kotáru, who arrived just three weeks ago. So when Mnéktu hiFésrengala, the brother of your employer, approached you two months ago with a plan, you listened. Like all good plans, it's simple. You will poison Mígor by adding arsenic to his wine, but you will do it slowly, in ever increasing amounts, so that it looks like a health problem. As the house priest, he will rely on you for medical attention. When he dies, Mnéktu will arrange your marriage to the Ngáya, and you'll take over Mígor's affairs, his lease "in perpetuity" to the villa and his share of the ferry operation concessions. In return, you'll give Mnéktu 10% off the top of all proceeds. It's not a perfect plan, and you realize that you're bearing the brunt of the risk, but it looks like your best bet.

Now the timetable has been sped up. Mígor has apparently been prompted by his failing health to be more cognizant of his duties. Recently, Lord Visán hiZhemré, the local fief-holder who leased the villa and ferry concessions to Mígor in the first place, came for a visit. A marriage announcement is obviously imminent. On receiving this news, Mnéktu came down as soon as he could, arriving this morning. It looks like Mígor needs to take a sudden turn for the worse.

### Goals

1. Poison Mígor without being caught.
2. Secure a written promise of marriage to Ngáya from Mnéktu
3. Make sure nothing happens to the villa or ferry operations

### Additional Information

1. Traditionally, as steward you retrieve and serve the wine and powders at meals. Other servants bring in the rest of the food.
2. You've managed to save out of your meager wages 180 káitars.

### Spells

- |                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Alleviation (Ritual) U2       | [Cost: 35 points]             |
| Ascertainment (Psychic) U1-U4 | [Cost: U1: 30, U2: 40 points] |

Elicitation (Psychic) U1-U4,U6	[Cost: U1: 30, U2: 40, U3: 50, U4: 60, U6: 90]
Far-Seeing (Ritual) G1, G2	[Cost: G1: 35 points, G2: 45 points]
Healing (Ritual) U1	[Cost: 35 points]
The Radiant Gaze (Ritual) G3	[Cost: 55 points]

You have 240 psychic power points. To successfully cast an unopposed spell, you need 50 or under on a d100 roll. To successfully cast a combat spell, you need 35 or under on a d100 roll. Targets of combat spells do receive a saving throw. Psychic points are used up even if the spell was not successful.

GM Note: I recommend altering Radiant Gaze: remove the automatic death provision for those in its area of effect who fail their saving throw. Instead, have it ignite a fire (use Damage Table B). Otherwise, this spell is far too powerful.

### *Travelling Party Characters*

1. **Gayán hiSsánkoral**, 8<sup>th</sup> Circle Bureaucrat in Palace of the Realm, Standing Stone, Hnalla

5' 5", medium, HBS: 93

Strength: 66

Dexterity: 92

Intelligence: 94

Comeliness: 45

Charisma: 78

#### Body Damage

Head 8

Each arm 7

Torso 12

Abdomen 10

Each leg 8

#### Skills

Reading 1

Hymns 6

Supervision of lands & properties 17

Grammar 1

Mathematics 9

Lawyer 15

Etiquette 10

Debates, speeches 8

Record keeping & accounting 15

Botanist 4

Fine Wines 6

Political/sectarian relations 5

You are an 8<sup>th</sup> Circle bureaucrat within the Palace of the Realm, a not inconsiderable feat for someone your age (25), especially since you only belong to a high medium-status clan. You have slowly but surely worked your way up. Your last assignment was as a rural fief-holder (Lumèharétokoi) for the Palace over a small group of villages just southeast of the Átkolel Heights. Your success there led you to be summoned to Chéne Hó, with your assistant Srúdhál, where you were presented with a large promotion. You are to proceed with all haste to Tumíssa where you will be assigned a large and important fief to run for the Palace. You can sense that the 9<sup>th</sup> Circle is just within your grasp, and that if you do well here, you will soon be given an even higher administrative post in Tumíssa. Indeed, your mind speculates as you toss on your mat each night: if you make someone look good enough, you may even gain a powerful patron. Perhaps you will end your career in Avanthár!

However, you do have a few small problems to deal with first. Chief among them is the assistant foisted on you in Chéne Hó. Nirún hiRi'inyússa is from a higher status clan than you are (Jade Diadem), he's 18 and already 3<sup>rd</sup> Circle. You are certain that this is his first assignment, and clan inducements bought him his rank. He looks extremely unpromising, to say the least. Despite his ostensibly higher position, you will have to rely on your other assistant, Srúdhál. You know that you must look out for him (else risk making your superior lose face before Jade Diadem), but you secretly wish he would do something so dreadful that even Jade Diadem would accept a decision to oust him in favor of the hard-working Srúdhál.

### Goals

1. Do not be delayed on your way to Tumíssa.
2. Don't let anything happen that will besmirch your reputation.
3. Protect Nirún from physical harm.
4. Reverse Srúdhál and Nirún's positions (but keep in mind goal #2)

### Additional information

1. The Palace entrusted you with 50 káitars for any unexpected expenses on the road.
2. Most of your assets are kept by your clan. You are carrying 30 káitars with you for any personal expenses on the trip.

2. **Nirún hiRi'inyússa**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Circle Bureaucrat in the Palace of the Realm, Jade Diadem, Dlamélish

5' 3", medium, HBS: 54

Strength: 79

Dexterity: 05

Intelligence: 73

Comeliness: 44

Charisma: 93

### Body Damage

Head 5

Each arm 4

Torso 8

Abdomen 6

Each leg 5

### Skills

Reading 1

Mathematics 1

Obscene jokes 14

Drugs, narcotics 3

Grammar 1

Etiquette 1

Bisexuality 10

Visiting, gossip 7

History (Tsolyanu) 1

Gourmet foods 10

Nymphomania 12

Puppetry (spectator) 3

The favorite son of an elder, you have never had to worry about anything. You did fair in your studies until your father gave you a concubine as a Name Day present. Then you discovered where your true interest in life lay. You enthusiastically threw yourself into the traditional Dlamélish worship of your clan. So enthusiastically, in fact, that it was suggested to you to join the priesthood. You considered it, but realized it would entail many less pleasant aspects --learning dogmas, performing rituals, entertaining partners that you didn't care for. You spent some time as an acolyte before expressing your feelings and quitting.

Your father immediately set to work finding you another profession. To your disgust, he foolishly chose the Palace of the Realm. When you began expressing your opposition, he quickly reassured you that you would start as 3<sup>rd</sup> Circle and have an assistant to do the demeaning work for you. Seeing that he would not be swayed, you gave up your protests.

Waiting in Chéne Hó for Gayán, the 8<sup>th</sup> Circle rural fief-holder whom you are supposed to serve, was not too bad. You managed to share the bed of a 1<sup>st</sup> Circle functionary while you were there. Gayán looks like a fool, however, spouting nonsense about nobly serving the Imperium. Worse, it looks like he doesn't understand the nature of your arrangement. Your assistant, the First Moon girl (Srúdhál), is pretty enough and hard-working, though she's proving more resistant to your charms than you expected. But maybe she's just waiting for the right moment. After all, she wouldn't be carrying that bottle of Másh brandy to drink all by herself.

### Goals

1. Have an assignation with someone
2. Do no work for Gayán
3. Consume Srúdhál's bottle of Másh brandy

### Additional Information

1. You own The Eye of Being an Unimpeachable Shield Against Fear, a gift from your father. He has said it will protect you and a few friends if you are attacked. You don't know how many times it can be used.
2. Your father also gifted you with 100 káitars to tide you over until you start receiving your salary.

GM Note: This eye provides immunity from all edged or blunt weapons. Its effects last for 20 combat rounds and as many as four beings (roll d4) can be protected. It has no power against spells, Eyes, or other magical devices. Nirún does not know any of these specifics.

3. **Srúdhál hiMriyén**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Circle Bureaucrat in Palace of the Realm, First Moon, Dilinala

5' 4", medium, HBS: 46

Strength: 35

Dexterity: 61

Intelligence: 64

Comeliness: 42

Charisma: 62

### Body Damage

Head 4

Each arm 3

Torso 7

Abdomen 5

Each leg 5

### Skills

Reading 2

Calligraphy 4

Lawyer 5

Supervision of land 2

Grammar 1

Etiquette 4

Record-keeping 9

Debates & speeches 1

"The Gods will answer it for you!" your grandmother always used to say when you asked her inconvenient questions about why so many other clanhouses were bigger than yours, and why you didn't have a personal slave trailing you like you saw with the other children in the marketplace. You didn't actually need the gods, however, to divine the answer. Soon you were clever enough to know when to keep your mouth shut.

You started working for the Palace of the Realm when you were 15. That was six years ago, and you are now only 2<sup>nd</sup> Circle. Fortunately, for the last year and a half you have been working for Gayán hissánkoral. He is that rare creature: an honest, fair and hard-working man. And though his status is higher than your own, it is not awkwardly so. You have attached yourself to him in the hopes that he will regard himself as your patron, and that your Skein will be woven as his is woven.

Your greatest success is that he requested you to accompany him to his new assignment outside Tumíssa. But this victory was short-lived. In Chéne Hó he was assigned another assistant, a 3<sup>rd</sup> Circle high clan idiot (Nirún hiri'inyússa). Not only does he out-rank you, he seems to think you are there merely to serve his every whim as if you were a slave! You have concealed your fury (successfully, you think), but are simply biding your time. You have promised yourself that you will make him appear so bad that he will be forced out of the position that's rightfully yours. Then in Tumíssa you will drink a toast with your clan-sister from the bottle of Másh brandy that you are bringing her as a present.

### Goals

1. Discredit the 1<sup>st</sup> assistant and gain his position
2. Be publicly praised by Gayán
3. Do not do anything that Nirún tells you to do

### Additional Information

1. You carry 25 káitars in cash with you to your new job.

### *Major NPCs*

1. **Mígor hiFésrengala**, Owner of the villa, Golden Sheaf, Belkhánu

### Background

When Mígor was younger, he ran caravans to Mu'ugalavyá and was highly successful. He had only one wife but by the time he stopped running caravans, he had picked up four concubines from the surrounding villages. (His home village is Purússa, along the Sákbe road). He was able to settle down when he purchased the lease "in perpetuity" for the villa, the immediate surrounding land, and the ferry concession 12 years ago from the Zhemrés family. The Zhemrés are the local fief-holders, but the lord needed cash as his eldest son, Visán, had slept with the wife of a high official in the Temple of Thúmis in Chéne Hó and the husband demanded a large shámtna which the clan refused to pay. (The lord has since died and Visán is now the local fief-holder.)

The lease specifies that it can only be inherited by Mígor's direct descendants: sons or non-Aridáni daughters. Otherwise, it reverts back to the Zhemré family. The terms are intentionally strict as the Zhemré family eventually wants back what they were forced to sell.

Mígor had one son (by his wife), but he drowned in the river two years ago. Now, only a daughter, Ngáya, remains.

When Mígor's wife died five years ago, he got religion and pensioned off the concubines (and their children). Previously an Avánthe worshipper, he is now much more interested in Belkhánu. He has not been able to find a Belkhánu lay priest to join his household, so he settled for Adlár, a Chiténg lay priest from his own Golden Sheaf clan, who used to be at the local monastery.

Mígor's health began failing two months ago, and he has become even more religious of late. Conscious of his unfulfilled duties, he intends to marry off his daughter before he dies. In preparation for the event, he had Visán visit last week so he could meet Ngáya. He thinks it went well.

#### Attitude

Mígor is a tight-fisted, self-centered person. He respects only status and power. Consequently, he treats Adlár very poorly, ordering him around, treating him with barely concealed contempt. He will show a clear preference for Kotáru, the flashy newcomer with a better lineage than Adlár. He is condescending toward Mnéktu, his less successful brother, and refuses to take Ngáya seriously. With his health failing, he is concentrating on one last social coup: getting Lord Visán to marry Ngáya (as he is likely to do in order to regain the lease).

Mígor is very ill from sub-acute arsenic poisoning. (He suspects nothing.) He is constantly in pain, making it difficult for him to think clearly. But he is loathe to give up any of the reigns of power and will try to direct events as long as possible.

## 2. **The Deserters**

The soldiers are deserters from the Legion of the Givers of Sorrow (8<sup>th</sup> Imperial Heavy Infantry). They took part in the initial battle on the Átkolel Heights, having been posted there from Butrús to guard against a Yán Kóryani invasion. Except for the tirrikámu, they are recent recruits, ill-equipped. Many of their comrades died in the fighting. The tirrikámu bitterly blames the losses on the fanaticism of their general, Lord Korikada hiKurushma (High Priest of Chiténg at Butrús), and when the order came to march north of Chéne Hó to engage the Yán Kóryani, this semétl simply marched in the other direction.

They have been hiding out in the nearby forest for a number of days. The tirrikámu conceived his plan as they were cursing the rain. Once the river floods and the Sákbe guards can't come easily, they will go and demand a large sum of money from the villa at

the river crossing. They have prepared a battering ram if the owner should prove recalcitrant. Then, they will get away on the two rafts that they have constructed. They will go down the Náttla river to where it joins the Turin river (This is not without risk as they will have to pass the Sákbe road again. It will have to be done in the dark of night.) and then go up the Turin river into the Chákan forest.

They would prefer to get the money and run. Their escape route (and identities) are supposed to remain a secret. Despite the tirrikámu's threats, they are basically honorable and will not slaughter the inhabitants. In fact, if everything goes their way, they will not kill anyone. After all, murderers are much more likely to be pursued than simple robbers.

If Kotáru tries to join them, they will accept him only if he brings a substantial sum (at least 400 káitars) with him.

### **Tirrikámu Kágesh hiNezár, Red Sky, Chiténg**

5' 7", heavy build, HBS: 86

#### Body Damage

Strength: 79

Head: 8

Dexterity: 77

Each arm: 7

Intelligence: 34

Torso: 12

Comeliness: 76

Abdomen: 10

Charisma: 92

Each leg: 8

#### Skills:

Drills 7, Formations 6, Field Tactics 7

Spear 8                      HBS: 146      Damage Table B

Short Sword 12            HBS: 166      Damage Table C

Tirrikámu Kágesh is very charismatic and has the soldiers mostly under his sway. In his presence, everyone will follow him completely. Apart from him, the others' will and courage may waver.

### **Full seméti (20 soldiers)**

Eye of Flame, 14 worship Chiténg, 6 worship Vimúhla

HBS: 70

Skills: Drills 5, Formations 4, Field Tactics 5

Spear 5                      HBS: 109      Damage Table B

Short Sword 10            HBS: 134      Damage Table C

Head: 7, Each arm: 6, Torso: 10, Abdomen: 8, Each leg: 7

They wear round spiked helmets, elaborate breastplates and vambraces. They carry oval shields, long spears and short chopping swords.

### 3. **Villa Inhabitants**

Besides the player characters, there are 43 people living at the villa. All have an HBS of 50. Any may have 1-10 levels of the Brawling skill, roll for as needed.

Chef and his wife, the maid – Granite Lintel  
2 kitchen assistants (a boy and a girl, the chef's children)  
20 porters/general laborers – 17 from Red Moon, 3 from Flat Rock

All of the above are servants under Mígor's control. The wives and children of the laborers live in the surrounding villages. None but the chef has specialized skills. They perform whatever job needs done at the moment, including serving as palanquin bearers. No one has any military training.

15 members of Peaceful Water also live here. Their clan is low status, but they do not answer to Mígor. Rather, they have worked out an agreement with him. They have the sole right to run the ferry but he owns the land on either side of the river and thus has the right to collect a percentage (30%) from them. In return, he provides them with food and shelter within the villa.

Túrisan, the local leader, is extremely unhappy with the latest developments. He will resist any attempts to put his people in dangerous situations, but will accede if the gravity of the situation is properly stressed.

1 Fair collector (Túrisan, local elder)  
2 Guards (no weapons, Brawling 10, HBS: 110 Damage Table A)  
1 Head of maintenance  
4 Maintenance apprentices  
6 Ferrymen

The ferrymen are strong, but only the guards have any experience with fighting.

### 4. **Palanquin Bearers**

There are 16 in all. Eight will be exhausted from carrying the palanquin and will not be able to do anything significant this evening. The other eight will only participate in any dangerous actions if they are forced to. They will need constant watching and cajoling to keep them at any hazardous task which is set to them. (HBS: 50)

### 5. **Sákbe Road Guard detachment**

It will take great provocation for these shiftless wonders to try to come to anyone's rescue. If they are convinced, their kási will send 10-20 men. They do have a boat but



they are not proficient at using it. If they attempt to cross the river, there is only a 35% chance that they will not capsize the boat (and in that instance, they will all certainly drown).

They need to receive two calls to action before they will bestir themselves. If the kuni falcon is sent to them, this will not be enough (they can easily claim later that the message was unclear or never received) but it will count as one attempt. One unlucky soul will also be sent out into a location where he can keep a watch on the villa (15% chance he will fall asleep or wander off somewhere else to find some shelter). He will have no greater than a 30% chance of noticing any particular action, if he is looking.

They will not hear any of the activity, even if combat breaks out or the battering ram is employed. If combat occurs next to the Sákbe road, and thus within their line of sight, they have a 30% chance of noticing it. If a fire manages to be lit, their chance of noticing it depends on the size and duration of the fire.

All have HBS of 60, Drills 1, Formations 1, Field Tactics 1

Short Sword 3      HBS: 78      Damage Table C

### *Travelling Party Introduction*

Four days ago, you were all assembled in Chéne Hó and given your new assignment in a fief outside of Tumíssa. Instructed to proceed with all haste to your destination, you set off immediately. Gayán, as Lumèharétokoi, has been provided by the Palace of the Realm with a litter with eight bearers (and a relief shift of eight more trotting alongside). His two assistants walk. The trip normally takes about two weeks.

You are travelling along the second level of the Sákbe road. The journey is miserable. It's the 18<sup>th</sup> of Shápru, the height of the rainy season. The rain pours down without letup, soaking everyone walking to the bone. Even Gayán cannot stay completely dry within his litter. As few others are foolish enough to travel at this time of the year, you scarcely meet anyone on your trip. There is little scenery to distract you either. The Sákbe road rises up on the west, your right, to its final third level. To the east stretch soggy, muddy fields, dotted by the occasional village.

You have spent each night bedded down in an empty Sákbe watch tower. Although shielded from the incessant rain, you are still cold and damp. This morning Gayán happened to look through the tower's windows out to the west and noted to his dismay that the Nátla river, which runs parallel to the Sákbe road at this point, but will soon curve to the east and cross it, has flooded. Indeed, water is lapping almost up to the edge of the road itself. This does not bode well for your rapid progress.

Late in the afternoon, you reach the intersection of the Nátla river with the Sákbe road. Bearing out your foreboding, the ferries are not running. The river is a raging torrent. You can just make out that a ferry has been pulled out of the water and lashed to a

makeshift dock. Though normally it would no doubt be far out of reach of the water, it now looks dangerously near. On the opposite side of the river, you can see a Sákbe road tower, large enough to perhaps include a small garrison. On this side, however, there is simply a large villa complex off a stone's throw to the east. The villa looks surprisingly well fortified until you remember the history of Mu'ugalavyáni invasions in this region.

As you approach to find a place to spend the night, you see a body lying in a pool of blood and water on the path leading out from the villa.

### *Villa Party Introduction*

You live in a villa which belongs to Mígor hiFésrengala, situated where the Sákbe road from Chéne Hó to Tumíssa is crossed by the Nátla river. The main business in this little backwater is ferrying travellers across the river, and putting up some of the better ones for the night. The local transportation clan, Peaceful Water, runs the ferries. Mígor provides them food and shelter and collects his percentage for allowing them to work on land that he owns. He owns this land, and the right to collect a percentage, due to an advantageous business deal made years ago with the local hereditary fief-holder, the Zhemré family. Usually nothing much happens here. The Sákbe road guard complement who live in the watch tower across the river are fat and lazy. They must offer up thanks every day to their deities that they're not in the legions now being sent north to deal with the Yán Kóryani.

Business has been very slow for the last few weeks. It's been a legendary rainy season, and most travellers have chosen to postpone their business. Lately, everyone has started to eye the river uneasily as it began to rise. Yesterday, Mígor and Túrisan, the local head of Peaceful Water, conferred and decided to draw the ferry to dock on higher ground until the river dropped. The decision was almost made too late, as the ferry was nearly ripped out of the laborers' grasp and hurtled downstream. Finally, cursing, wet and muddy, the Peaceful Water clan members managed to secure it. All have retreated within the villa's walls, and watch anxiously as the water continues to inch its way up.

All such worries were banished from your minds late this afternoon when out of the lengthening shadows stepped a group of soldiers. They carried no banner but many weapons. One stepped before the others and demanded to speak with the lord of the villa. When Mígor hobbled up to gate, the soldier commenced making threats.

"I know you are rich. I know you keep a stash of káitars hidden away. You have 9 kiren [4.5 hours] to decide whether you will give it all up to me or whether we break down your gates and slaughter every living soul within. If you hand over less than 1,000 káitars, we will know you are cheating us and you will all die!"

Adding other threats and imprecations, the man and his companions withdrew. Not long after they left, Mígor sent one of the servants out of the villa's walls to run down to the river's edge and try to attract the attention of the Sákbe road guard. He made it but 50 paces when two men sprang out from the trees and slew him before your eyes.

As you wait, hoping Mígor will not be stingy, a servant keeping watch on the wall lets out a cry. A palanquin, with many men surrounding it, has descended from the Sákbe road and is making its way towards you.

### *Timeline for the Night*

There are sufficient funds to satisfy the soldiers, if they are handed over. Mígor keeps his money in a chest which is locked away in a hidden compartment in his bedroom. The key to the compartment is itself hidden. One presses on a certain flower in a wooden mural carved in his bedroom wall and a spring releases a small drawer. Then, in another part of the mural, you push aside a leaf to reveal a keyhole. This opens up to reveal a small cavity in the wall where the chest resides. The chest itself is opened by a key carried by Mígor. Besides Mígor, only Ngáya knows of this.

Mígor likes to keep enough cash to cover at least 6 months expenses on hand. This means that the chest will contain 1,200 káitars, 400 hlash and 400 qirgals. It is 12" long, 6" wide, 6" deep and weighs just over 20 lbs. The weight will be reduced considerably if the hlash and qirgals are removed.

**4:30** The tirrikámu and his men make their demands, as stated in the villa introduction. They retreat into the surrounding woods, and split up.

1. Five are maintaining a line of sight with the Sákbe road tower. If the guards start behaving suspiciously, they will send a runner, sounding the alarm.
2. Two others are by the rafts, keeping watch over them. They will not leave unless specifically summoned by the tirrikámu.
3. Three are keeping watch on the villa, making sure no one leaves. On the other hand, they will let anyone enter who wants to.
4. The other ten and the tirrikámu are making final preparations on the battering ram. They are not far from the villa watchers and can respond to vocal alarms in several combat rounds.

After the demand, Mígor is fully ready to hand over the money, though he will not let this be known. But, he will not retrieve it or tell anyone where it is until just before the deadline as he is racking his brains to figure out a way to avoid the loss if he can. He is having a hard time thinking clearly since he is suffering from sub-acute arsenic poisoning. He is constantly nauseous, has pain in his extremities, the skin of his palms and soles has thickened and roughened, and there's an unusual raindrop-shaped depigmentation over his torso.

All NPCs will overestimate how many soldiers they saw, guessing 50 or 100.

**4:45** Mígor sends the servant out, who is killed by the watching soldiers.

**5:00** The travelling party arrives, as per the introductions.

Mígor is a proud man. He lets in the party, even if he is not sure whether they can aid him or not, in order to keep up appearances. He will greet them, explain the situation, and apologize. He'll assign them rooms and offer to let them rest up until dinner. If anyone expresses a concern about defense, he'll remind them of their total armory of 2 hunting bows, a spear and one old chlen-hide sword down in the cellar (and lack of any trained military personnel).

**6:00** Dinner is served in the main hall. Mígor is obviously making a special effort to attend. He will command Adlár to go and choose his best wine to serve to his guests. At the dinner's end, he will have Adlár serve powders (narcotics) to any who wish them.

Peaceful Water and the servants will each eat separately in their own rooms. All others will eat in the main dining hall, sitting crosslegged on mats piled to an appropriate height. Serving dishes are set on low tables in the middle of the group, and each eats from an individual plate.

The wines offered are an Ndalú wine (an excellent red wine) and a Dlel wine (a dark purple wine).

Four powders are offered:

Chumaz, bluish-white, heightens perceptions, acts as an aphrodisiac

Osi, a thick greyish mucus-like substance, reduces tensions, arouses libido

Drarsha, a clear crystalline substance, causes amusing visions and distortions of time sense

Nto, a fine white dust, volubility and giddy joy

The effects last for 1-2 hours.

**7:00** If Mígor was poisoned at dinner, he will collapse from a seizure: muscle spasms, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, and a garlic odor to his breath. He will still refuse to reveal the location of the money, insisting on waiting until the deadline.

At this time, the three soldiers (Hóru, Sánjesh, Shémek) assigned to watch the villa will approach the gate and ask to defect. They will explain that they have had second thoughts about the wisdom of their desertion from their legion, and the likelihood of actually pulling off the robbery and getting away successfully. As an earnest of their good faith, they'll reveal that there are 17 other men plus the tirrikámu and that they have a battering ram.

If the soldiers are let in and treated well, they will also reveal the rafts and the escape route itself. The more they are distrusted and insulted, the more likely they will be to turn against the PCs if a battle starts going against them.

If they're refused entrance, they'll return to their guard posts with their comrades none the wiser. However, they'll be much more likely to kill if given the chance later.

**7:30** A kuni falcon arrives with the cryptic message, "Come soon." If feed and cajoled, the bird will stay but will only repeat its message, adding "Master said come soon." The bird is merely repeating what it was told and cannot explicate whether this is a request for someone to go somewhere or an announcement of an impending arrival.

The kuni falcon belongs to Lord Visán, as Mígor, Adlár or Ngáya can figure out. In his idiosyncratic way, Visán is announcing his attention to visit again soon to finalize the marriage agreement. "Soon" is not soon enough to help the villa inhabitants. However, if anyone thinks of it, it is possible to send the bird to the Sákbe road tower with a four word or less message.

Also, at this time if the previous soldiers have successfully deserted to the villa, their desertion will now be discovered. Three more soldiers will be taken from the nearly completed battering ram to take up watch. When the tirrikámu comes to collect the money, he will also ask for these traitors to be delivered over to him, bound. Only under the direst circumstances will they leave while these three (who can positively identify them) are still alive.

**8:00** If Mígor has been poisoned this evening, he will now die before revealing the location of the money.

The leading Peaceful Water member, Túrisan, will start making increasingly agitated demands to know what will be done to insure their safety.

**8:30** Unless a clear plan is presented to them, Peaceful Water will panic. They will try to fling open the gate and make a break for the ferry. The laborers and the palanquin bearers will also flee if the gate is opened, but they will run for the Sákbe road.

The soldiers keeping watch will raise the alarm and rush in to give battle, concentrating on chasing those going for the road. The alarm will draw those watching the Sákbe road tower and working on the battering ram. Two will join in the chase. The rest will make a concerted rush for the gate before it is closed and barred again.

**9:00** Tirrikámu Kágesh and all his men will appear and demand the 1,000 káitars (and anyone who has successfully deserted to the villa). If their demands aren't met, they will bring out the battering ram and begin work.

### **The Siege**

The gate is strong but old; the soldiers are strong but inexperienced. In the first hour, there is a 5% they will succeed (check for every 15 minutes of uninterrupted battering). For each hour that has at least 30 minutes of uninterrupted battering, add another 5% to the base chance (while continuing to check for every 15 minutes of activity). Thus, from 9 to 10, there's a 5% chance, from 10 to 11, 10%, from 11 to 12, 15% and so on.

### **Successful Break-In**

Once inside, they will take higher status hostages to guide them to the káitars. If there's resistance, they'll kill the resisters. If a hostage is uncooperative, they'll kill him (except for Adlár, they respect his status as a Chiténg priest). If the money cannot be handed over: if the tirrikámu is still alive, he'll cut his losses by stripping what valuables he can find and leaving; if the tirrikámu is dead and they've sustained major losses, they'll go berserk and kill everyone they can (but won't chase those who run), then engage in some looting and flee. If their losses have been minor, they'll kill up to two people in frustration and then loot and leave.

### **Unsuccessful Break-In**

If they haven't broken into the villa by an hour before dawn, they will drop the battering ram and leave on the rafts.

### *The Servants Speak*

At appropriate moments, it can be fun to throw in some information that can be gleaned from talking to the servants (or that the servants may take on themselves to helpfully offer up.)

1. On Mígor's son's death: "Drowned in the river, 'e did. And 'im a good swimmer too. There's somethin' in the river."
2. On Mígor's failing health: "The gods are strikin' 'im down. Just not lan to worship one god and keep the priest of another."
3. On Adlár's lack of job security: "I been to the Temple of Belkhánu in Chéne Hó three times since the cold began. 'E couldn't change his mind in the summer, now could 'e?" The servant is illiterate, and doesn't know the contents of the letters.
4. On Kotáru's recent arrival and lack of competence: "Cha! I wouldna ask him if I were you."
5. On Ngáya's movements in the secret passage, the cook's boy will say: "Master Chúrisan didna go to the Blessed Isles. 'E's still around. I hear 'im sometimes."

### *Possible Outcomes*

The best possible outcome for the party as a whole (but not for several individuals) is to accept in the deserters and successfully resist the siege.

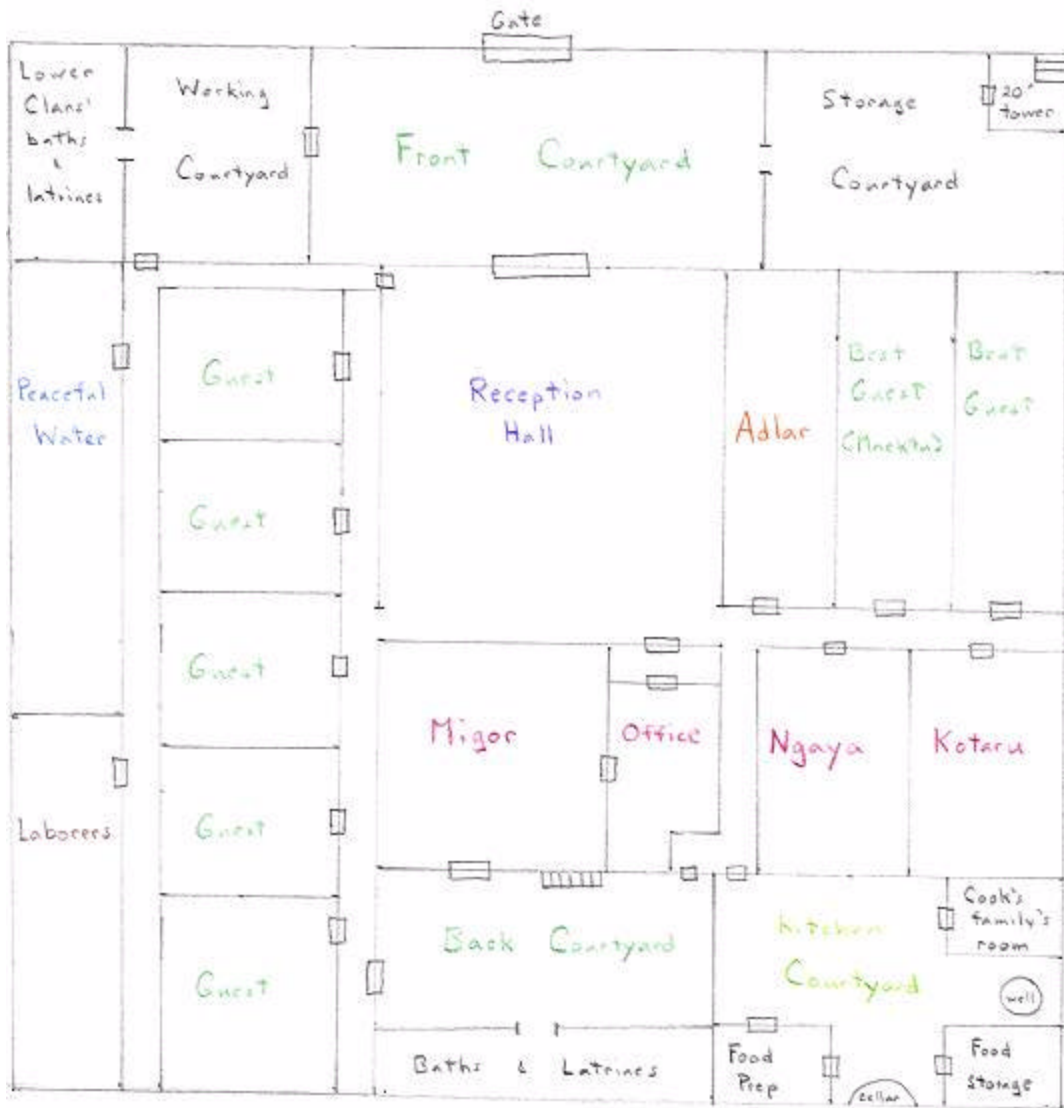
However, there are also a number of ways to achieve a peaceful outcome in which the soldiers receive their money and leave. If Adlár and Mnéktu don't poison Mígor and Ngáya doesn't steal his money, then Mígor can simply hand it over. If Mígor dies, Ngáya may still have mercy on the rest of the characters and sacrifice her goals for their greater good. The characters could appease the soldiers even without Mígor's money if they combine all their funds (total must be greater than 400 káitars) and offer that plus Nirún's Eye.

Alternately, since the soldiers still think of themselves as honorable, they will accept if Kotáru challenges Tirrikámu Kágesh to a duel. The deal they will strike is as follows: If Kotáru wins, they will leave without the money. However, if Kágesh wins, one person will be handed over to them to sacrifice to Chiténg. If Kotáru actually wins, they will try to talk him into a second duel. If this fails, one soldier will simply break and attack Kotáru anyway. The others will leave after this if there is no further provocation from the characters.

There is a faint chance that the Sákbe road guard will try to come to the rescue. If they do arrive, there will be a fight to death between the soldiers and the guard. If more than half the soldiers die in this battle, they will flee to the rafts and leave.

Gayán's reputation is considered besmirched if either of his assistants dies, or if there is a mass slaughter in the villa.

## The Villa of Pleasant Abode



The outer wall is made of thick stone, 15' high. The roof is flat slate. In the back courtyard, it can be accessed from an outside staircase.



# Perception of the Energies #1

A 'zine for the Visitations of Glory APA

By Robert A. Dushay  
March, 2001

WHEREIN OUR AUTHOR APPEARS, AND CONSIDERS COMBAT SYSTEMS FOR TEKUMEL RPGs.

**I INTRODUCE MYSELF:** Bob Dushay here. I'm an assistant professor of psychology at SUNY Morrisville College of Agriculture and Technology, in rural central New York State. I just started this job in January, after a checkered career of working for several non-profit research institutions, and a brief stint as an assistant professor at another college. I was born and raised in the suburbs of Syracuse, not far from here, but I haven't lived here in a long time. It's very strange to move back to your childhood's setting, especially when I had no intention to do it. For the record, I'm married, with one child and one cat. I haven't been here long enough to make gaming connections. I'm hoping to find a gaming group, and I'm really hoping to find a nice bunch who are interested in Tekumel.

**MY EXPERIENCE WITH TEKUMEL:** I've been RPG'ing since late 1975 or so, starting with the white box D&D set. I bought the original TSR EPT set around 1978. I had a mixed relationship with the game at first: I loved the detailed historical background and political machinations going on, but the odd language, the weird names for monsters, the blobby artwork all turned me off. There were things that made a huge impression on me from the beginning. I was an instant fan of the Shen (I loved the concept of demons in D&D, and playing a strong creature called "the demon warrior" really appealed to me). I liked Dave Sutherland's illustrations of the convoluted Tekumel blades. I was captivated by the background description of the world, because it referenced books that could be found in Tekumel's libraries. There were dungeons and cool settings described in the books that I wanted to visit, such as the ruins of Ssuganar. I even liked the example of play, where Ru'utlanesh fell on a hapless party.

I tried the game once or twice with my D&D group, but it was a total failure. In fairness, I was a middling DM, and EPT's dungeons were little different from D&D's dungeons. The monster names were funny to my players, and the background information (impalement was the only punishment for crime) put them off. The game collected dust in my collection, inspiring me to try to work in greater detail in my D&D world.

In college, I stumbled on the Zocchi sourcebook in an advertisement and I bought it. That's the point where I was hooked. The sourcebook detailed a fascinating society and gameworld, and I was determined to run a game there, and let other people explore this world if I couldn't do it myself.

My next attempts were awful. I was still a middlin' DM and I couldn't get a grip on how to run a Tekumel game. I collected everything I could get my hands on, tried writing a few adventures, but basically let it sit again. In graduate school, I managed to get a few of my sometime gaming buddies interested in it, and we tried a couple of games using the incomplete S&G rules. There were abuses, and the games didn't work well, but I was learning. Then I met an Englishman, Mark Daniels, who was living in New York City for a while. I hooked up with him through the [Alt.games.frp.tekumel](http://Alt.games.frp.tekumel) discussion

group. Mark showed me what a Tekumel game could be like, with the focus of the game entirely separated from dungeons and combat with monsters.

I went to the first RuneQuest convention, which featured a Tekumel mini-con, and I ran my first-ever convention game, “The Temple of Tlarnash.” It was a great game, helped by some awesome players. There was actually a shouting match between two players, in character, on theological points in Vimuhla-worship. The fanatical warrior priest immolated himself to save the party. This was behavior I’d never seen in an RPG before! I had to have more. When Mark had to return to England, I took over his group, and began an epic campaign across Salarvya that was never completed.

Tekumel has been my primary gameworld ever since. I dabble in Jorune and Everway, and I’m currently delving into Unknown Armies, but Tekumel is still my main game background.

Why do I love Tekumel? Because it’s different. Because it’s got depth and detail. Because it seems a real place, where events go on whether I keep up with it or not, and players are small cogs in big plots. Because I enjoy learning about new things (like the messages about massive heat pumps, or the silver butterfly that keeps She Who Must Not Be Named out of Tekumel prime’s plane). Because I’m still fascinated by the interplay among the races (what are the Shen up to now? How about the Pe Choi?). Because it’s baroque, with elaborate titles, histories, rituals, and practices. I know it’s trite, but Tekumel has as much depth and reality as Middle Earth did, and the fact that it’s a game, and I make my own, small contributions to the world really excites me.

**THOUGHTS ABOUT COMBAT SYSTEMS:** I’ve played Tekumel with all kinds of rules (EPT, GURPS, Tirikelu, S&G, Gardasiyal, OTE, and a couple of home-brew systems), and I’ve seen my general RPG style evolve over time from a strict “by the book” AD&D approach to a loose and casual Everway/OTE approach. I am less interested in detailed combat in RPGs than I used to be. My attitude as a referee is, “Let’s get this combat out of the way so we can get on to the plot and role playing.” Yet Tekumel is probably one of the better worlds to consider a super-detailed combat system. We have the highly individualized weapons of each of the legions, the combat styles of five major empires, not to mention a dozen minor states, sophisticated dueling schools with centuries of tradition, unarmed combat techniques, alien races with their own fighting styles, and magical adjustments to combat ability. This is completely ignoring the steel/chlen-hide situation, too. Patrick Brady has written some very thought-provoking articles on details of Tekumel’s weapons and combat styles: Seal of the Imperium #1 details the differences in sword design, and in an issue of The Eye of All-Seeing Wonder, he wrote an article detailing combat maneuvers for the different dueling schools using GURPS rules. Part of my refereeing heart cries out for the level of detail in combat that permits me to say to a player, “You know, his stance and the pattern of three barbs on the top edge of his sword says he’s a student of Srichaya’s school in Usenanu; that means trouble for you, as a student of G’chulak. He has an advantage in disarming attacks and the backswing; try to avoid getting too close.”

What should our rules support? How do we want to play? I confess, at first I thought Gardasiyal’s dual combat systems were cheesy. What kind of game would use different rules for a Quick Play and a complex Hit Point system? Wasn’t that an admission that the combat system didn’t work? And yet, I liked it. I could use the Quick Play system for fast, unimportant combats, and use the detail of the Hit Point system

when dealing with important opponents where combat was supposed to be dramatic and relevant. I'm no expert on combat, and I only used Gardasiyal for relatively inexperienced characters (HBS around 150 for the best of them), so I couldn't say how well the system(s) worked. The low percent chance to hit for the lower HBS combatants made combat a bit too slow, but at the same time, the crippling injuries caused by some hits (a solid hit to a limb or head could end the combat with a single blow) made it plenty fast. I definitely liked the idea that a lucky blow from a beginner could kill an experienced warrior—it made combat always a risk, and there would be no nonsense about a tenth level warrior fighting off an entire cohort.

In my Finger of Vimuhla game, I always expected to see the heroic Horu character do some serious single combat against a glorious opponent with full detail. I thought GURPS would be ideal for this situation. In the two times I've run the adventure, it never happened. Not only that, but even GURPS Lite seemed to slow the game down more than it needed to. The level of detail I needed to keep up with the rules was just overwhelming.

I have Joe's playtest rules, but time forbids reading them. I'm in the middle of character generation and haven't got to combat yet. My hunch is that combat will be fairly simple. Is there is a need for a super-detailed combat system? I can't imagine we could possibly cover all the variants: Patrick Brady's work is an excellent beginning, but I hardly think he could describe all the bonuses and options for every weapon illustrated in the books. Plus, the super-detailed system would seem to go against the GM's need to improvise details on the spot.

If I still wanted a super-detailed system, I could adapt Joe's rules to any of the detailed combat systems: Basic Role Playing, GURPS, the Fantasy Trip, or even Gardasiyal or S&G. Or, perhaps some Tekumel gear-head could devise a detailed combat system that would plug and play directly into Joe's rules. An alternative would be to arbitrarily drop in bonuses and penalties as needed: if the referee suddenly decides the opponent is from Srichaya's school, and this gives him an advantage over the PC, the referee can modify bonuses as desired and be prepared to be a lot more descriptive.

Thoughts and comments?

**YET ANOTHER RULES ADAPTATION:** I would bet Tekumel has more rules sets out there than any other setting: EPT, S&G, Gardasiyal, Tirikelu, Runequest/BRP, AD&D2 (adaptation by yours truly), plus notes on Torg and TFT. There are other systems that I've forgotten the names of.

I'm a busy man now, and I try to play in a diverse set of gameworlds. I want to have a generic set of rules that will allow me to focus on the background and the game for these different worlds and not have to worry about mechanics for each new game. I tried GURPS, since there were adaptations for both Jorune and Tekumel, but it didn't take. GURPS has some excellent points, but it's too complex for me. I don't feel I can take the time to master it, and I think it's just too nit-picky sometimes.

My most recent solution was Over the Edge (Jonathan Tweet and Robin Laws, published by Atlas Games). I bought OTE because so many people in Alarums & Excursions (A&E) endorsed it. (I hadn't known that was because so many of them were involved with it.) OTE was a revelation: an extraordinarily simple set of rules, highly adaptable. Combat and magic could move swiftly, and could be easily adapted to

different worlds. Jonathan Tweet refers to OTE as the WaRP (Wanton Role Playing) system, and said in A&E that he wanted it to be generic, used for worlds like Tekumel.

I've been working on my Tekumel OTE (or TOTE) system for about a year now. Joe Saul's new rules are due out in six months, and appear to make TOTE obsolete. But OTE (and TOTE) have one advantage over other game systems: their character generation system is one of the fastest, easiest, most descriptive I've ever seen, and has made NPC creation (and by extension, scenario design) much easier.

*Character design:* Start with a central trait, a broad description of the character's primary occupation/worldview. Add two side traits (somewhat narrower skills), and one flaw. Add somebody who's the most important person to that character, and a deep secret that she's desperate to keep hidden. (The latter two traits make sense when you remember OTE is a game about surreal conspiracies.) So, for example, I'll create a warrior-priest of Qon, member of a secret society that goes into the underworlds to beat up on Sarku Worshipers.

The other thing you have to consider is dice. OTE is a dice-pool sort of game. One of your traits is "superior," and you give it four dice. The other two are "good," with three dice. If you don't have a trait, the human norm is two dice.

### **Sakal hiDurodu**

*Central trait:* Warrior priest of Qon (sign: Big muscles, Qon tattoo). (Superior, 4 dice)

*Side trait:* Member of Brotherhood of the Amber Glow secret society (sign: Secret signal). (Good, 3 dice)

*Side trait:* Unfailing sense of direction (sign: Alert, notices landmarks). (Good, 3 dice)

*Flaw:* Absolutely humorless. (Sign: Never laughs at jokes).

*Most important person:* Sister, Anelhi hiDurodu, ritual priestess of Belkhanu.

*Secret:* Afraid of spiders. A big, noble warrior isn't supposed to be afraid of little bugs, even poisonous ones.

You can try to apply your traits to any situation. If Sakal is trying to impress a superior, he may hint at his Amber Glow membership to impress the Mriyan (Bishop). The referee determines a difficulty number (Say, 14), and Sakal's player rolls his Secret Society dice. If he fails to beat the 14, the attempt fails. Perhaps the Mriyan is not an Amber Glow initiate.

*Combat:* Basically, combat in OTE is easy: roll your offensive trait against your opponent's defensive trait. If you beat him, take the difference in scores, and apply a damage multiplier based on what weapon you were using (most melee weapons are x2 or x3). Armor subtracts from the damage after the multiplier. Notice that Sakal's only combat trait is being a warrior priest. As a referee, I'd rule that "warrior priest" applies to social situations, etc., and isn't exactly a combat skill, although it's related. Because it's not a dedicated combat skill, Sakal can use it offensively or defensively in each round, but not both. Without any other combat-related skills, if Sakal uses "Warrior priest" to attack, he must defend with only two dice; or, he can defend with "Warrior priest" and attack with two dice.

From my limited experience, OTE is close to exactly what I'm looking for in an RPG at the moment. There's great characterization, fast character creation, considerable incentive for players and referees to improvise, and a simple, fast-moving combat system that provides a decent feel without getting bogged down in details. Best of all, the rules

are simple enough that I can play once a year without feeling like I have to study it each time.

Because OTE is a modern setting game, and is combat mechanics-light, there are few details on weapons or armor. Basic melee weapons are the same regardless of which world you're one; most weapons will do the sword or battle-axe x3 damage. Armor on Tekumel, for all the variety, can probably be boiled down to S&G's three levels of protection: light, medium, and heavy.

Where I'm running into trouble is my Jorune adaptation. As I said above, one of the requirements for using OTE for different game worlds is that the rules should work across the settings I'm interested in. Jorune has a wider range of armor types than are commonly encountered on Tekumel (if less variety), and I was in the midst of trying to work out the underlying system to both worlds when I changed jobs and my free time disappeared. I will continue to poke at this problem.

I do have a workable magic system for TOTE, but I think I will reserve discussion of that for a future submission.

END



(Illustration by DCSIII)

## The Faultless Contemplation of Decay

a discussion of the fear of death and dissolution

by

Héjesh hiKolúmra

translated and transcribed by Malcolm Heath, with commentary.

*Héjesh hiKolúmra is a mid-level teaching priest of Sárku in Bey Sü, and on my last visit there, consented to allow me to interview him. He proved to be a most gracious man, and revealed to me the basic methodology used by his temple to train students and junior priests to convert their natural aversion to death and decay to the awe and reverence exhorted by his temple. He himself cast our conversation into the form of this essay. The translation has been done in a free, rather than literal, style, and many of the graceful conventions of the Tsolyani have been left out. The translator asks his readers pardon, and thanks Hejesh hiKolumra for his time and attention.*

Many people can accept that Lord Sárku rules the grave, and matters pertaining to the body after death; they can even understand conceptually the most holy mysteries of the continuance of the mind in the body after the passing of the spirit-soul. But when it comes to the comfort members of my priesthood exhibit in dealing with corpses, or when they hear of our ease when attending the putrescent remains of the departed, they quail with disgust and fright.

How then is it, you ask, that the members of our clergy avoid this?

Well, noble foreigner, it is not so deep a thing that I cannot tell you. We do not avoid it; we embrace it.

It is natural that all humans, indeed, all creatures with sentience, feel at once fear of the dead of their own kind, and disgust at the dissolution of their bodies. To see life flee, and the worm take its share is a hard thing, and goes against much of what we know as living beings.

There is also an instinctual reaction against the smells and sights associated with the decay of the body. This is natural as well.

However, my Lord teaches that in the infinite flow of time, the state of living is but a short thing, and death is as forever as may be. Given this, should we not come to terms with death and decay? Indeed, we must, if we are to say we have control of ourselves.

There are many levels of this, of course. There are few even in this temple who can state that they are fearless before some of the manifestations of death that one may encounter. But with the help of the great Worm, and devotion to His mysteries, all these fears may be overcome.

The first lesson that we give to the acolyte is that of the **Contemplation of One's Own Demise**. The student sits in a cold and darkened chamber and is told to think on his mortality.

It does not matter in particular in what way he envisions the means of his death; the moment of death is of no importance to us. It is merely a gateway to greater knowledge.

There, he is encouraged to think about his death, the preparation of his body for burial, the weeping of his family, the sorrow and lamentation of his friends and loved ones, in as much detail as he can muster. The teacher will of course guide and encourage him in this process.

Indeed, this is a practice many could benefit from; since we all will die, should we not all be ready when the time comes?

But imagining oneself to be dead and focusing on the reactions of the living are but the first steps that the student takes. There are many more lessons to test and strengthen the student's resolve.

To overcome our natural aversion to the sensory experience of decay, our acolytes assist with the preparation of the bodies of our departed faithful, and so gain experience with the remains of the dead. Experience, as we can all surely agree, is the surest tonic against fear. We make sure here at the temple that all our young clergy have the chance to experience this.

Furthermore, some of our departed brethren are honored for many years after their departure from life, and the students attend these vigils, within the tombs of the honored ones, keeping watch for many nights, in the darkness. There in the stillness of the sepulcher, they can experience the reality of the tomb, at least as clearly as the still-living can, and can experience more closely the various states which the body transurses on its way to final dissolution. This practice we call the **Honoring of the Spiraling Down to Dust**.

It is important to remember that each acolyte will have an easier time with some practices and a harder time with others. I have described some of the basic rituals. For some students, this is not enough, and remedial work is needed. We have a special practice known as the **Vigil of the Attendance to Decay**, which is often just the thing to help the student over their difficulty.

It involves a vigil of some days, aided by special medicines that allow the student great clarity and obviate the need for sleep, so that they can observe a fresh corpse as it makes its way from a being that could almost be thought of as merely sleeping to what no one could mistake for anything other than a body in advanced decay. We have found this most efficacious. Indeed, many of the students who make this vigil are transformed from remedial cases to outstanding students by the experience.

Depending on what specialization the student is being trained for, there are yet still other practices that are common. For example, those who are being trained in the rigors of spell casting, and the attendant need for mental control and power are often allowed to undertake the **Night of Perceiving the Horizon of Death**, which involves the student being immobilized in a trance, symbolically embalmed, interred in a grave prepared for the purpose, and fully entombed, for at least a day. For the more powerful minds, even longer periods serve to put an especially sharp edge on their clarity of thought, and many of our most powerful and skilled sorcerers have said that this ritual is one that they hark back to in times of need, calling upon the memory for strength. Some even observe the rite over and over again over the course of their careers; it reinvigorates them.

Finally, there are within our temple true devotees who wish to come as close to the reality of the Tomb as possible; for them we have the **Ritual of the Transition to the Eternal**, in which the practitioner is immured for a number of days with a corpse, tied immobile with the same cerements, literally bound to the object of the ritual, the better to undertake the contemplation of the sacred transition from merely living to ever-living in the holy Mystery of the Tomb.

Of course, not all our acolytes get to such advanced practices, and I am not at liberty to reveal the more sacred practices of the temple to outsiders.

It is my humble prayer that this essay will bring glory to the Worm, and elucidate the might of his Teachings.

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### Translator's commentary

So often, of all the Gods of Tsolyanu, Lord Sárku is seen as a terrible, chilling god, and His followers are often cast as enemies to player characters. The recent political situation aside, it is wise for us to remember that there are hundreds of thousands of worshippers of the Worm in Tsolyanu, and most of them are as friendly, easy to get along with, and generally honorable as one could wish. The central tenet of Sárku's faith is that it is possible to live forever, albeit in changed form. Abstracted from the less pleasant aspects of being undead, is this not a desire that humans have had since time began? To be able to continue, with full mental and physical faculties, past the arbitrary limit set by the end of life, to continue to be with loved ones, to see one's departed family and friends, to be able to have the additional time to complete a "life's work" or some other project; all these things are very attractive to many.

Furthermore, this essay emphasizes another aspect of Sárku's faith that is often overlooked; the discipline of the mind. It is with the continuation of the mind and the body that immortality can be achieved, and while the body can be magically sustained after life departs, the mind must be kept strong and supple. Far from being mindless, Sárku's undead (at least at the higher levels) are as fully cogent as they were in life, if not even more so, for the lack of distraction. No more hunger, no more pain; the spirit-soul has departed, and so a clarity and purity of mind is achieved that the living can only dream of.

This also gives us insight into why there is a general ban on the use of undead forces in war. The undead do not operate with the same mental set as do the living, and thus have a different set of criteria for judging what is noble or ignoble action. That the undead are completely devoted to Sárku cannot be questioned; even the temple of Ksárul admits that the undead it creates are animated by means of power from one of Sárku's planes, and thus belong to him. This goes a long way towards explaining, if not excusing, some of the excesses and atrocities that undead troops have committed in battle. If, in a quite literal way, your god sustained your second life, would you be hesitant to give the sacrifices demanded, or would you instead leapt to the opportunity with gladness and rejoicing?

While I doubt that any amount of explication can turn Sárku's image around, keeping the motivations exposed in the above essay in mind will only help us play members of the Worm Lord's temple better.



The Wealth of Meshmúra  
By Brad Johnson

Hríthik hiFeshengáru of the Green Opal Clan was an incorrigible gambler. He spent all of his free time and money in the pursuit of winning that one great elusive prize. A true follower of the teachings of Meshmúra of the Divergent Skeins, an Aspect of Dlamélish, he was a constant visitor at the wagering tables in the low clan gaming houses of Usenánu. His passion would often cause him run a debt, usually to a clan brother, sometimes to a moneylender but he would then work extra time tending the lisútl plants to earn the money to pay them back.

Shortly before the Intercalary Days a message came from the clanhouse in Jakálla requesting a shipment of roots to supplement the poor harvest down south. Due to the shortage there was great profit to be made due to the seasonal demand. Hríthik was chosen to accompany the cargo to the Great City of the Green-eyed Lady of Fleshly Joys. Such an honor sent him to the Temple to thank the Goddess. Upon arriving at the Shrine of Meshmúra he presented the last of his personal wealth in the form of tikánta blossoms before her visage. Even though he still owed a substantial sum to the Golden Lintel Clan he felt this sacrifice was more fitting. Besides with his share of the profits he could pay off the debt and still have some left over. The nubile priestess led him through the sacrificial ceremony and he prayed for Her guidance.

Upon finishing his meditation he stood up and left the shrine. As he was about to exit the temple grounds he noticed a priestess signaling to him. She was strikingly beautiful and wore a garment covered in faceted dark green gems. Did she need someone to help perform the evening ceremony? He had the time.

Hríthik approached her and she asked, "What do you most desire?"

"The blessing of the Lady to enjoy the gaming houses of Her city would be most welcome." He replied deferentially.

"Then you shall have it. For your piety you are rewarded with this pouch of silver. Take it to Jakálla and enjoy." She handed him a soft green leather sack that jingled with coins.

Hríthik opened it and looked inside. He could see a large handful of hlásh pieces. It was more than he had ever owned before. As he looked up to thank her, she was nowhere to be seen. With his small riches in hand he quickly left the temple.

The trip along the sakbé road was onerous. The chlén beasts were smelly enough in the streets of Usenánu, but there he didn't have to be around them the entire day and night. There were many kévuk games going on between the other travelers at the various stops, but Hríthik always claimed that he had no money to spend on such sport. He had decided to save the money for the tláshten tables of the Jakállan Green clans.

Thus, with no interruptions he began to think about his situation. "Maybe I should save this for my future needs." He thought. "When I am old man I may wish to purchase the services of a young girl. If only to rub my feet." Soon his thoughts were filled with what he might desire in the years to come.

Upon arrival in Jakálla he reported to the clanhouse. He was greeted warmly and put up in the guesthouse. A young nephew named Gáyan was assigned to show him around after their work was done. "Uncle, what do you wish to see in our city? Perhaps a visit to the Dome of Moist Pleasures? Or maybe the Halls of Ineffable Fortune?" he asked.

"I cannot afford such luxuries." Hríthik replied. "I am but a poor clansman."

"I am sorry Uncle. I noticed your full purse when you were unpacking, so I naturally thought that you intended to celebrate on your trip here." Gáyan remarked.

"Never mind that." Hríthik scolded. "I have nothing to be wasted on trivialities." So, he spent the rest of his time in the city at the clanhouse selling lisútl root, never venturing out in case he might be tempted to spend even a single copper qirgál on an unnecessary item.

His farewell was not as warm as his greeting. The clan had soon tired of their taciturn cousin and was glad to see him go. The clanmaster gave him a letter of credit for the goods they had sold and sent him on his way.

Hríthik returned home dreaming about his comfortable old age. Only a few more years tending the roots and then he could start to spend his funds. "La, what a time that will be." He thought.

Back at the clanhouse he presented the letter to his clanmistress, Dzái hiChankólu. "Hríthik, did you enjoy yourself in Jakálla?" the dlántukoi asked.

"I am too poor to enjoy such an expensive place, esteemed one." Hríthik replied.

“That is most unfortunate since I have recently been given a summons demanding the repayment of your debt to the Golden Lintel Clan. You shall bring shame upon this house if you do not immediately tend to this matter. You are dismissed.” And she waived him out.

Hríthik scurried out of the meeting hall and went to his room to retrieve his money. He realized that the honor he had received for a successful trading trip had been entirely erased by the moneylender’s demand for his personal debt. All that he could do now is make sure that this problem would not grow. He nervously walked as fast as he could to the Golden Lintel’s clanhouse in the entertainment district. It was difficult to maintain the proper dignity when thoughts of bussán laid heavily on his mind.

Upon arrival at the Golden Lintel’s storefront he announced himself and requested to see his creditor, Achán hiSsaífvra. He nervously waited outside trying to keep from sweating. He failed.

“Hríthik hiFeshengáru,” Achán said as he entered the area, “please join me in the side room.”

The space was elegantly decorated with a celebration of precious metals. This clan made it clear that the pursuit of wealth was their main objective. They sat around an ornate round table. “So, you have come to balance your books?” Achán continued.

“Yes.” Hríthik replied. “Please forgive me for my lateness. I offer shámtla to compensate your clan for my error.”

“Very well. An extra five percent of your debt will be adequate. Let us count out the money.” Achán recommended and put out a thick cloth onto the inlaid wood.

Hríthik took out his sack, opened up the strings and upended the contents onto the cloth. What came out were not silver hlásh, but small flat green river stones. Perplexed, Achán looked up and said, “What have you brought me?”

Horrified, Hríthik stared at the stones. “I do not understand. Only this morning there were coins in there.”

Achán stood up and said sternly, “You have shamed me in my own clanhouse. I shall immediately make claim on your clan for full recompense of your debt and shámtla for your actions today. Leave now.”

As if punctuating the meaning of his demand two burly clan guards appeared at the entrance to escort him out.

Dazed by what had just occurred, Hríthik wandered the streets of the district. Afraid to go back to the clan, but knowing that it was inevitable he could think of no defense for his actions. The Green Opal clan could not afford to pay off his debt. His future was bleak.

As night fell he found himself outside of the temple of Dlamélish without realizing how he got there. “Perhaps I can find some solace in here.” He thought. The temple was preparing for the nightly crowd. It was difficult to find a quiet place to pray and he had to keep searching until he saw a small delicate shrine with no patrons and a lone priestess sitting in meditation.

“Revered One,” he began as he entered the shrine. “I am a poor man who will soon lose what I have left. I need guidance.”

As the priestess looked up recognition spread across Hríthik’s face. This was the same one who had given him the pouch.

“A poor man indeed.” she said sadly. “You were gifted with a purse of endlessly flowing silver and you did nothing to appreciate it.”

“An endless amount of silver?” croaked Hríthik. “I did not know!”

“Of course you did not know because you did not try to spend it.” She chided. “You hoarded it and did not even share with your clansmen in Jakálla.”

“But I was thinking of my future.” He moaned.

“The Lady is not about the future!” the priestess reproved, “She is of the pleasures of this moment. You could have had untold enjoyment but you chose the secure path. You have failed miserably in your devotion and for that you shall be punished.” With that said she returned to her meditation and as he watched the shrine began to shimmer and change.

He found himself standing in the noon sun facing the clan hall entrance. The commotion inside drew him forward. As he entered with trepidation the clan cousins recognized him and the assemblage quickly silenced. The dlántukoi called to him, “Where have you been for the last three days? Your absence has brought even more shame onto the clan.”

“I do not know, honored one.” Hríthik replied.

“Fhá,” the dlántukoi exclaimed “then do you know how you will pay these debts?”

“I cannot.” he sobbed.

“Then the clan council has no choice but to sell you into slavery in order to not lose any more honor.” She signaled to the guards to take him.

“Wait,” slobbered Hríthik, “I claim the Right of Meshmúra to become chattel of the Temple of Dlamélish for my loss of property through gambling.” He said this thinking that being a slave at the temple for following Her doctrine was better than being a slave anywhere else. He felt that he could make his case.

A rumble went through the assembled crowd. Such a request had not been made in generations. Perhaps this could be a way to keep some of the clan’s honor intact.

Dzái turned to the elderly clergywoman sitting next to her on the dais. “Clansister, does the Lady accept this cousin and his debts into Her Temple?”

Closing her eyes the priestess announced, “No, we find him lacking. He did not earn the Right.”

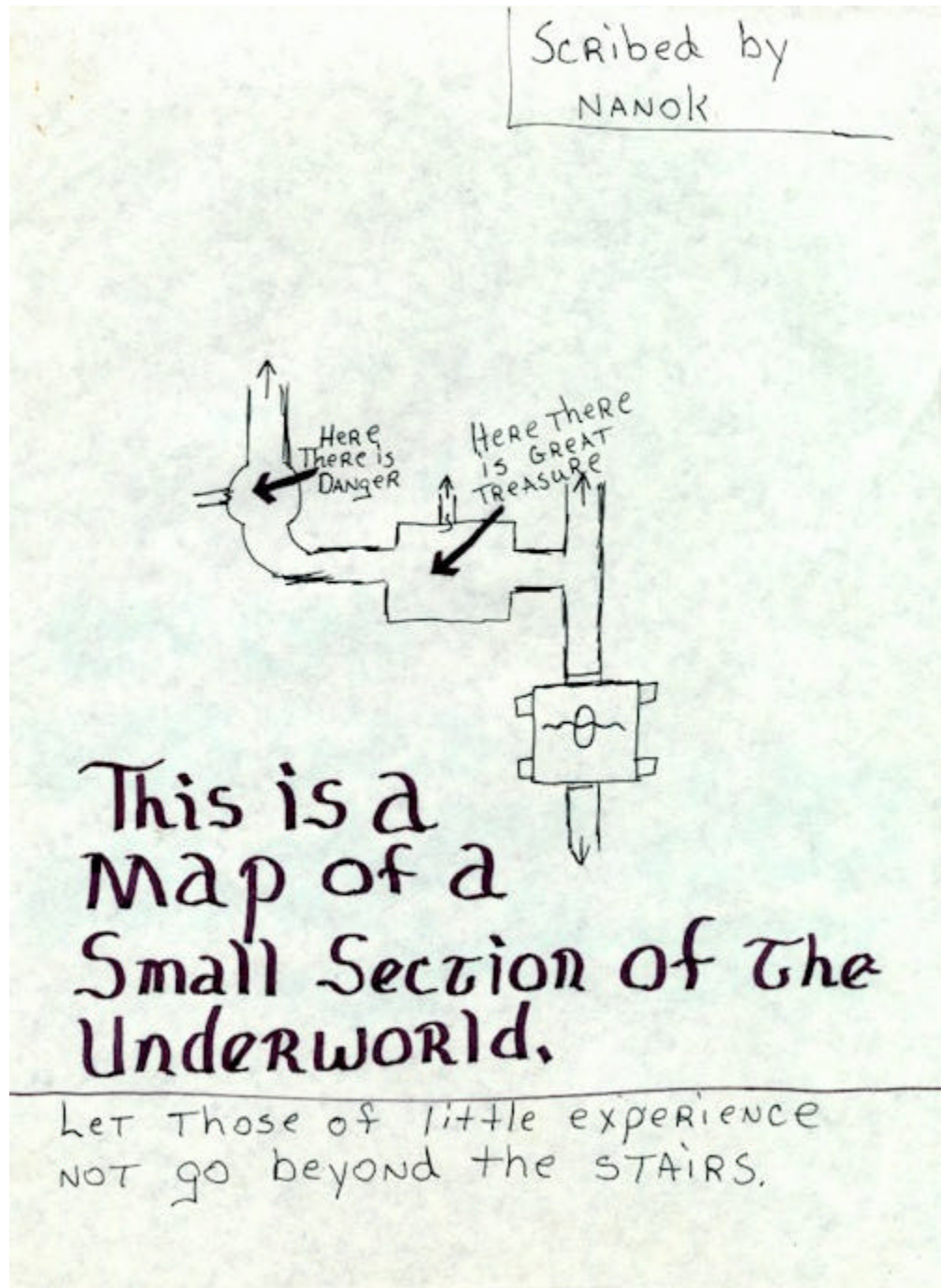
Dzái stood and proclaimed, “I declare this man to be nakomé. Take him to the slave market and return with the proceeds so that I may personally delivery it to the Golden Lintel clan.”

As Hríthik was taken from the room he saw through welled-up eyes that no one recognized his presence. Even his mother tuned her face and his father looked straight through him. He had become a symbol of their collective disgrace and his name would not be mentioned again.

The end was slow in coming. Hríthik was sold to the Emerald Circler clan and performed as an entertainer who worked between acts as a human target that ran around the stage while drunken revelers threw darts at him. He stood as witness to their merriment. His true punishment was to observe those who truly understood how to enjoy this life. Finally, one evening while playing his role, he slipped on some patron’s vomit and fell onto a phallic shaped stage light. His body was dragged off broken and bleeding as the customers showed their appreciation by tossing qirgáls. This was an appropriate beginning for his journey to the Plane of Unfulfilled Desires.

Map translation (from the beginning of this issue)

The map that I have included with this first issue of Visitations of Glory is a map that I created for the first Tekumel campaign that I ran back in 1978. I was way too young to really run Tekumel effectively, I think, but we all had a great time and the map is one that I have used in several subsequent campaigns. To me, it is something like a good luck charm (it seems like every time I haven't used it, things haven't gone so well) so I am putting it in here as my first submission in the hopes that whatever good luck that it does possess will rub off on this endeavor. - FEB



## Contributor's biographies

### Floyd Brigdon

Like a lot of people on the Tekumel mailing list, I discovered The Empire of the Petal Throne very early, in 1976, but unlike a lot of people it took me a couple of years to build up the confidence to run a campaign. Well, that first series of games was run in 1978 and I have been a Tekumel-junkie ever since. I now teach English literature and Composition at Trinity Valley Community College in Terrell, Texas but whenever I am not grading research papers or lecturing to a group of people, I spend my time dreaming of the Five Empires and the College at the End of Time.

### Krista Donnelly

Born and raised in Ohio, I majored in Russian history at The Ohio State University, dropping out of the program at the ABD (All But Dissertation) level. Now living in Washington D.C., I'm working for the National Archives at the Record Center in Suitland, Maryland. I started role-playing D&D when I was 11 years old, back in 1980. Not having any access to gaming materials outside of mainstream bookstores, I was unaware of the rich diversity out there. Then the demands of college pushed role-playing into the background for a number of years. I discovered Tekumel in 1997 when I got back into the hobby and stumbled across a review of the Different Worlds edition in an old Dragon magazine that I'd been reading to see what I'd missed. I haven't looked back since.

### Robert Dushay

I am a 39 year old male, a tenth-circle scholar-priest of Thumis, specializing in studying human minds and behavior. I have one father and one mother, two brothers, one sister. I have one daughter.

More seriously. Born and raised near Syracuse, New York. I discovered role playing in high school (1975 or so) and gamed my way through college, and somewhat less through grad school and my career. Although I first discovered Empire of the Petal Throne in 1978 or so, I didn't really start playing it until the late 1980s and early 1990s.

I have ricocheted between teaching and research positions for my entire career so far, mainly staying around the New York City area. At the moment, I am an assistant professor of psychology at SUNY Morrisville College of Agriculture and Technology in rural central New York state, not far from Syracuse.

Other RPGs I'm interested in (at the moment) include Jorune, Unknown Armies, and Everway. I'd like to try Blue Planet someday, and I like Call of Cthulhu. I keep a webpage called "The Museum of Role Playing Games" that reviews some of the older gems I have in my collection.(See <http://rdushay.home.mindspring.com/Museum/Index.html>).

Beside gaming (role playing, board games, wargames, especially with tanks), my hobbies include cooking (and eating the results), reading just about anything I can get my hands on, with a preference for science fiction/fantasy and history, dinosaurs, cartoons (both printed and animated), and fooling around with computers.

My very understanding wife doesn't game, but doesn't find it /too/ strange.

### Malcolm Heath

I was born in Minneapolis, MN, and started role-playing at age 9, when a friend introduced me to D&D. I met and became friends with Victor Raymond, a long-time member of Professor Barker's Thursday Night group in 1986. He got me involved in his game, and I've preferred Tekumel to any other game since.

I now live in Portland, Oregon, and work as a UNIX systems administrator for a privately held company. Other interests include religions (I recieved a BA in Religious Studies from Lewis and Clark College in 1995), travel to distant lands (Scandanavia in 1984, Britain in 1987, Scotland in 1991 and 1993, Indonesia in 1994, and Brazil in 2001), and cooking. I can be reached at [malcolm@indeterminate.net](mailto:malcolm@indeterminate.net)

## Brad Johnson

I was born in the hinterlands of Minnesota during the Eisenhower administration. My parents decided when I was very young, that we did not live far enough north so they decided to move us to Alaska soon after the Great Earthquake. My childhood was filled with summer days that lasted 22 hours and winter days when I only saw the sun during lunch breaks. I am part of that last American generation that can say that I had to walk to school in the freezing cold, blowing winds, in total darkness.

I belonged to probably the most heavily armed Boy Scout troop in the world, out of necessity to fight back the critters trying to use us as trail food. I worked in the vast oilfields, and fished in raging glacier fed rivers. None of this prepared me to become what I am today, an aerospace engineer that travels around the world designing repairs for aging aircraft and creating new depot level maintenance plans.

I was introduced to Tekumel in the late seventies while I was going to college where I actually got to participate in a game with Professor Barker at The Council of Five Nations. From then on I was hooked. I still have my original books and I have added to the collection ever since.

## Dave Sutherland III

No bio was submitted for this issue.

## Steven Woodcock

Like most Tekumel fans I'm thirty-something and overeducated. I'm a chemist living in Oakland, CA, and have been reading about Tekumel for many, many years. Tekumel has always reflected (or maybe sparked?) my interests in Asian cultures and arts, classical studies, linguistics, and pulp-era sci-fi. I'm also a part-time art student, and am hoping to do more Tekumel-based material.

## Next issue

What?!? Did you think we were through already? Oh, no no!



(Illustration by Steven Woodcock)

It just LOOKS like this is the end.

Remember that the deadline for the second issue of Visitations of Glory is the last week in July. The issue should be ready to ship the first week of August.

So go get to work on your Tékumel projects and be sure to send your comments on this issue's contents either to me (brigdon@tvcc.cc.tx.us), your humble collator, or to the Tékumel APA group on Yahoo groups (at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/apatekumel>).

Chegúkh lé! brumazík!

FEB

