RBL-101

EARTHDAWN®

GAMEMASTER'S COMPENDIUM

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Dedication

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 7
How to Use This Book 7

THE SCOURGE 8
The Books of Harrow 10
On the Building of the Shelters 11
Citadels 11
Kaers 11
Of the Rites of Protection and Passage 12
Astral Protection 12
Physical Protection 12
Of Life During the Scourge 12
On Life Outside the Shelters 13
On the Ending of the Scourge 13
Leaving the Shelters 14
On How the Scourge Changed Us 14
On the Changes in the Land 14
On the Changes in Living and Thought 14
On the Changes in the Passions and their Followers 15
On the Changes in Magic 15
On the Legacy of the Scourge 15

THE LAND OF BARSAIVE 16
Of the Land and its People 16
On Politics 16
On the Varying Customs of Barsaive 17
On the Passing of Days and Months 17
On the Feast of the Name-Day 17
On Common Spiritual Beliefs 18
On the Theran Abomination of Slavery 18
On Our Diverse Languages 19
On the Language of Throal 19
On the Theran Tongue 20
On Racial and Local Languages 20
Regarding the Name-giver Races 21
On the Ways of the Dwarfs 21
On the Ways of the Elves 21
On the Ways of the Humans 22
On the Ways of the Obsidimen 23
On the Ways of the Orks 23
On the Ways of the Trolls 24
On the Ways of the T'skrang 25
On the Ways of the Windlings 26
Where the Peoples of Barsaive Dwell 26
Towns and Villages 26
Farming Communities 27
T'skrang River Villages 28
On the Great Cities 29
Urupa 29
Travar 30
Kratas 31
Vivane 33
Jerris 33
Iopos 34
Haven 35
On the Kingdom of Throal 36
On Bartertown 36
On the Dwarf Kingdom 37
On Trade and the Flow of Goods 39
Trade on the Serpent River 41

PLACES OF LEGEND AND PERIL 42
A Discourse on Maps 42
On Traveling Over Land 42
On Determining Safe Routes and Places 42
On the Perils of Land Travel 43
On Ork Scorchers 44
On the Joys and Dangers of River Travel 45
Concerning Acts of Piracy 46
Of the Wonders of Airship Travel 46
On the Perils of Air Travel 46
On Crystal Raiders 47
On the Land and Its Places 49
On the Landscape and Weather 49
On the Jungles and Forests 50
On the Mountains of Barsaive 52
On the Badlands 56
On the Origins of the Badlands 56
Traveling the Badlands 56
On Native Creatures and Other Denizens 57
On Mountainshadow's Lair 58
Of Death's Sea 58
The Imprisonment of Death 58
Can Death Be Freed? 59
A Fire Miner's Advice 59
On the Denizens of Death's Sea 60
Pirates and Magicians 61
On the Scarlet Sea 61
Of Mount Bloodfire and the Caves of Death 62
On the Mist Swamps 62
On the Lost City 62
On the Great Dragon Aban 63
Of the Castle of Assassins 63
On the Aras Sea 64
On the Wastes 64
On the Creation of the Wastes 65
The Black Ash and Other Hazards 65
Of the Wastes' Twisted Magic 66
On the Forgotten City of Parlainth 66
On Blood Wood 67
How Blood Wood Came to Be 68
On Queen and Court 69
On the Theran Presence in Barsaive 69
Of Barsaivian Land Under Theran Control 69
On Sky Point 70
On Triumph 71
Of Theran Military Forces 71

ASTRAL SPACE 73
Using Astral Space in Adventures and Campaigns 73
Exploring Astral Space 73
Entering Astral Space 73
Detecting Threads 74
Name-givers in Astral Space 74
Travel in Astral Space 75
Astral Denizens 75
Spirits 75
Horrors 76
Other Astral Denizens 76
An Astral Space Gazetteer 76
Named Astral Locations 76
The Netherworlds 77
The Elemental Planes 79

GAMEMASTERING 80
Ground Rules 80
Gamemaster's Authority 80
Make it Fun 80
On the Nature of Rules 80
When Not to Use the Dice 81
Play Fair 81
Mistakes 81
Customizing Earthdawn 81
Creatures and Horrors 81
Treasure 81
Therans 81
Tone and Mood 82
Blood Magic 82
Goods and Services 82
Player Ideas 82
Gamemastering Guidelines 82
Be Aware 83
Be Knowledgeable 83
Be Realistic 83
Be Flexible 83
Be Tough, But Kind 83
Death and Earthdawn 84
Storytelling 84
Roleplaying 84
Pacing 84
Secrecy 84
Drama 85
Storytelling Techniques 85
Game Aids 86
Displays 86
Handouts 86
Maps 86
Gamemaster Character Files 86
Assistants 86
Creating Difficulty Numbers 86
Who Can Do It? 86
Task Difficulty 87
Finding the Difficulty Number 87
Adjusting Difficulty Numbers 87
Result Levels 87
Perception Tests 89
Perception Test Result Levels 89
Perception Test Modifiers 89
Gamemaster Character Attitudes 90
Awestruck 90
Loyal 90
Friendly 90
Neutral 90
Unfriendly 90
Hostile 90
Enemy 91
Better and Worse Attitudes 91
Social Interactions 91
Roleplaying 91
Interaction Tests 92
Awarding Legend Points 94
Assigning Legend Awards 95

ADVENTURES AND CAMPAIGNS 97
Using Published Adventures 97
Converting Adventures 97
Creating Adventures 97
Plot Synopsis 97
Objectives 97
Motivation 98
Opposition 98
Atmosphere and Mood 98
Conflicts and Challenges 98
Theme 99
Subplots 100
Fleshing Out the Story 100
Adventure Ideas 101
Horrors 102
Therans 102
Passions and Questors 102
Exploring Legends 102
Exploring Kaers and Citadels 102
Mapping Barsaive 102
Treasures 103
Communities 103
Creating Campaigns 103
Campaign Elements 103
Campaign Ideas 104
Caravan Campaign 104
Delving Campaign 104
Exploration Campaign 105
Kaer Campaign 105
Military Campaign 105
Political Campaign 105
Restoration Campaign 105

ADVENTURING 106
Barriers and Structures 106
Blood Ivy 106
Climbing 106
Creatures and Climbing 107
Climbing Gear 107
Failing a Climbing Test 107
Falling Damage 107
Fire 107
Secret Doors 108
Detecting Secret Doors 108
Opening Secret Doors 108
Traps 108
Trap Descriptions 109
Curses 110
Becoming Cursed 110
Minor Curses 111
Major Curses 111
Horror Curses 111
Curse Effects 111
Loot 111
Loot Worth Money 111
Treasure 112
Traveling 112
Travel Time 112
Overland Travel 112
Travel by River 113
Airship Travel 114
Underground Travel 115
Travel Hazards 116
Exposure and Frostbite 116
High Altitudes 117
Heat Exposure 117
Dehydration 117
Suffocation and Drowning 117
Survival 117
Weather 117
Visibility 117
Getting Lost 118
Theran Slavers 118
Wild Animals, Creatures, and Horrors 118
Exploring Kaers and Citadels 119
Sealed Kaers 119
Fatigue and Injury 120
Bad Food or Water 120
Burns 120
Cold 120
Fatigue 120
Fever 120
Severe Blisters 121
Strained Arm or Wrist Muscle 121
Sprained Ankle 121
Sunburn 121
Recovering From Injuries 121
Recovering From Fatigue 121
Poison 121
Effect 121
Onset Time 122
Duration 122
Methods of Exposure 122
Poison Resistance Tests 122
Antidotes and Poultices 122
Poison Descriptions 122
Disease 125
Methods of Exposure 125
Disease Treatments 125
Diseases and Their Effects 125

THE HEALING ARTS 128
The Importance of Early Treatment 128
First Treatment 129
Rest and Recovery 129
Natural Medicines 129
Adept's Blood 129
Aloe 129

Bloodwort 129
Bog Moss 130
Coreliander 130
Dragon's Tongue 130
Eyebright 130
Garlen's Hand 130
Garlic 130
Helmet Mushrooms 130
Jikar Root 131
Mahogany Trinrose 131
Mist Blossoms 131
Mynbruje's Balm 131
Sarfran 131
Serpent Vine 131
Sindolin 131
Sky Lotus 131
Star Root 132
Surrunic 132
Thalen 132
Trailfruit 132
Tranceweed 132
Vreela 133
Healing Magic and Garlen's Blessing 133
Resurrection 133
Blood Magic and Spells 134
The Kingdom of Death 134

BLOOD MAGIC 136
Using Blood Magic in Adventures and Campaigns 136
Gamemaster Considerations 136
History 137
The Dissemination 137
Research 137
Protection 137
Types of Blood Magic 138
Death Magic 138
Raw Magic Filter 138
Karma Boost 138
Damage Shift 139
Creating New Blood Charms 139
Determine the Type of Effect 139
Determine Charm Characteristics 140
Write Blood Charm Description 140

AIRSHIPS AND RIVERBOATS 141
Airships 141
The Law of Similarity 141
Airship Construction 141
Wooden Airships 141
Stone Airships 142
Ghost Ships 143
Airship Names 143
How Air Sailing Works 144
Riverboats 144
The Occurrence of Mutiny 144
On the Construction of Riverboats 144
Methods of Propulsion 145
Ship Statistics 145
Speed 145
Maneuverability 146
Firepower 146
Hull 146
Damage 146
Crew 146
Travel Hazards 147
Airship Hazards 147
Riverboat Hazards 147
Hazard Tests 147
Ship Combat 148
Pursuit 148
Combat Maneuvers 148
Ship Weapons 150
Ballista 150
Catapult 150
Fire Cannon 150
Dragon's Breath 150
Net Thrower 150
Spear Thrower 150
Thunderbolt Thrower 151
Fire Sheath 151
Weapon Range 151
Damage in Ship Combat 151
Using Talents in Ship Combat 151
Using Ship Weapons in Regular Combat 152
Ship Construction 152
Determine Ship Type 152
Equip and Modify Ship 152
Determine Price 152
Repairing Damaged Ships 153
Crew Repairs 153
Shipyard Repairs 153
Recovering Crews 154
Ship Maintenance 154
Fire Engines 154
Airship Descriptions 155
Airboat 155
Drakkar 155
Small Drakkar 155
Galley 155
Galleon 156
Transport Vedette 156
Mining Vedette 156
Military Vedette 156
Kila 156
Behemoth 157
Ghost Ship 157
Riverboat Descriptions 157
Canoe 157
Rowboat 158
Sailboat 158
Dreveki 158
Dwarf Barge 158
Canal Boat 159
Scavian Barge 159
River Ferry 159
Merchant Riverboat 159
River Warship 160
River Galley 160
Sailing Ship 160

MAGICAL TREASURES 161
Using Treasure in Adventures and Campaigns 161
Finding Key Knowledges 161
Creating New Treasures 161
Create Item Description and History 162
Determine Key Knowledges 162
Determine Magical Effects 162
Determine Item Characteristics 163
Treasure Game Information 163
Thread Items 164
Learning Key Knowledges 164
Creating Legendary Magical Treasures 164
Thread Weapons 165
Thread Armor 170
Thread Shields 172
Thread Objects 173
General Treasures 180
Bracers of Aras 180
Counterspell Staff 180
Crystal Spear 181
Crystal Spell Box 182
Espagra Boots 182
Espagra Saddle 183
Frost Pouch 183
Lightning Mace 184
Oratory Necklace 185
Potion of Life 185
Puppet Familiar 186
Purse Ever Bountiful 186
Silvered Shield 187
Spell Sword 188
Spike Bomb 188
Spike Gauntlets 189
Talisman Statue 189
Thorn Man Spear 190
War Helm of Landis 190
Whip of Defense 191
Windling Cup of Friendship 191
Unique Treasures 192
Amulet of Agamon 192
Bands of Fortune 192
Bloodwall 193
Bracers of Firewind 193
Denna's Brooch 194
Devastator Spear 195
Dragon Mail 195
Farliss' Dagger 196
Kegel's Sword 197
Kolldar's Gloves 197
Lorm's Axe 198
Mask of Oltion 198
Mirror 199
Monturk's Carpet 199
Neverburn 200
Nightscar 201
Nioku's Bow 201
Pathfinder 202
Purifier 203
Smoke 204
Soulsafe 204
Staff of Vylir 204
The Blade of Alemvor 205
The Ice Blade of Omifan 206
The Little Troll's Helm 206
The Scarab of Ilithor 207
The Sock of Granak 207
The Sword of Fentheri 208
The Talismans of Dianuus 208
The Twilight Staff 210
Tome of Memory 211
Truefang 211
Venna's Armor 212
Grimoires 213
The Book of Mysteries 213
The Chain of Skulls 213
The Gems of Joril 214
The Midnight Grimoire 214

GAMEMASTER CHARACTERS 215
Roles 215
Types 215
Patrons 215
Opponents 216
Supporters 216
Creating Gamemaster Characters 219
Fleshing Out Statistics 219
Calculating Legend Points for Gamemaster Characters 219
Game Balance 220
Determine Opposing Forces 220
Determine the Advantage 221
Even the Odds 221
Adept Gamemaster Characters 221
Non-Adept Gamemaster Characters 221
Troll City Watch 222
Human Cult Member 223
Human Foul Folk 224
Human Horror- Scarred Madman 225
Ork Mercenary 226
Dwarf Merchant 227
Obsidiman Messenger 228
T'skrang River Pirate 229
Elf Sage 230
Ork Scorcher 231
Dwarf Scribe 232
Theran Windling Spy 233
Human Tavern Owner 234
Human Veteran Guard 235
Human Air Sailor 236
Windling Archer 238
Elf Beastmaster 240
Ork Cavalryman 242
Ork Elementalist 244
Windling Illusionist 246
T'skrang Nethermancer 248
Human Scout 250
Troll Sky Raider 252
Dwarf Swordmaster 254
Human Thief 256
Elf Troubadour 258
Elf Warrior 260
Troll Weaponsmith 262
Human Wizard 264

CREATURES 266
Using Creatures in Adventures and Campaigns 266
Creature Entry Format 266
Creature Encounters 267
Designing New Creatures 268
Determine Attributes 268
Determine Characteristics 268
Determine Creature Traits 268
Determine Attack Step 269
Determine Karma 269
Determine Powers and Spells 270
Calculate Legend Points 270
Write Commentary 271
Customizing Creatures 272
Modify Attributes 272
Determine Characteristics 272
Change Powers and Spells 272
Recalculate Legend Points 272
Creature Powers 273
Acid Spray 273
Blinding Glare 273
Blood Veins 273
Bone Shaping 273
Breath Weapon 273
Burning Aura 274
Calm Others 274
Camouflage 274
Charge 274
Chilling Touch 274
Control Corpse 274
Crackling Armor 274
Curse 275
Disease 275
Durability 275
Engulf 275
Enhanced Senses 275
Enraging Scent 275
Entrancement 275
Fire Touch 275
Fire Trail 275
Flashing Glare 275
Freezing Aura 276
Harden Club 276
Howling Challenge 276
Ice Shackles 276
Karma 276
Killing Glare 276
Lightning 276
Locate Target 276
Magic Drain 276
Paralyzation 276
Poison 277
Regeneration 277
Sense Danger 277
Sense Magic 277
Sense Undead 277
Skills 277
Sonic Shriek 277
Spellcasting 277
Spells 277
Sticky Body 277
Sticky Spit 278
Surprise Attack 278
Talents 278
Tire Others 278
Triplicate 278
Venom 278
Creature Descriptions 278
Alligator 278
Ape 279
Basilisk 279
Bat 280
Bear 280
Behemoth 280
Blood Bee 281
Blood Monkey 281
Blood Oak Roots 282
Blood Raven 282
Blood Wasp 283
Bog Gob 283
Brain Millipede 284
Brithan 284
Broccha 285
Cat 285
Cave Crab 286
Cave Troll 286
Chakta Bird 287
Changeling 287
Cheetah 288
Chimera 288
Cloud Bird 290
Cockatrice 291
Crakbill 291
Creeping Vines 292

Crojen 292
Death Moth 293
Demiwraith 294
Dog 294
Dyre 295
Eagle 295
Earth Q'wril 296
Eddypad 297
Elephant 297
Espagra 297
Ethandrille 298
Falcon 299
Felux 299
Firebird 299
Fire Eagle 300
Firescale 301
Fire Wraith 302
Gargoyle 302
Gate Hound 303
Genhis 304
Ghoul Lizard 305
Giant Carnivorous Squirrel 305
Giant Spider 305
Giant Trapdoor Spider 306
Globberog 306
Goat 308
Granlain 308
Greater Termite 308
Griffin 309
Harbinger 309
Harpy 310
Hell Hound 311
Henghyoke Otter 312
Horse 312
Hulker 313
Huttawa 314
Ice Flyer 314
Inshalata 314
Jub Jub 315
Jungle Griffin 315
Kraken 316
Krillra 317
Krilworm 318
K'sathra 318
Kue 319
Leech Rat 319
Leopard 320
Lightning Lizard 320
Lion 320
Lizard 321
Magma Beast 321
Mangrove Eels 322
Manticore 322
Mastrylith 323
Messenger Bat 323
Molgrim 324
Monkey 325
Naga 325
Nautilid 326
Ogre 327
Ogre Twins 327
Pack Mule 328
Pangolus 328
Plague Lizard 329
Poison Vines 330
Porcupine Snake 330
Preces 331
Prisma 332
Quadrilobe 333
Rat 334
Relan 334
River Steed 335
Rhinoceros 335
Rockworm 336
Rolling Moss 336
Root Walker 337
Sand Lobster 338
Saural 338
Sea Snake 339
Selachi 340
Sentinel Hawk 340
Shadowmant 341
Shilagrue 341
Shrieker Bat 342
Skeorx 343
Snake 344
Snow Badger 344
Song Sprite 345
Stajian 345
Stinger 346
Stone Lion 347
Storm Crow 347
Storm Wolf 347
Thundra Beast 348
Tiger 348
Triplicant 349
Troajin 349
Unicorn 349
Velos 350
Vetta 351
Viraas 352
Volus 352
Water Strider 353
Whirlclaw 354
Wild Boar 354
Will o' the Wisp 355
Witherfang 356
Wood Lion 356
Wolf 357
Zoak 357

SPIRITS 358
Using Spirits in Adventures and Campaigns 358
Motivations, Attitudes and Personality 358
Spirit Strength Ratings 358
Increasing Spirit Strength Ratings 358
Great Form Spirits 359
On Ally Spirits 359
Ally Spirits and Names 359
On Elemental Spirits and Elementals 359
Elemental Spirits and Names 359
On the Invae 360
The Invae Burnings 360
On Named Spirits 360
Types of Named Spirits 360
Named Spirit Powers and Strength Ratings 360
Ghost Masters 360
Controlling Named Spirits 360
Name-givers as Named Spirits 361
On Tasked Spirits 361
Summoning 361
Summoning by Spell 361
Summoning by Talent 361
How Summoning Works 362
Repeated Summonings 363
Dangers of Summoning 363
Banishing 364
Blood Magic and Summoning 364
Spirit Powers 364
Aid Summoner 365
Astral Portal 365
Confusion 365
Detect Trap 365
Detect True Element 365
Detect Weapon 365
Disguise Self 365
Durability 365
Empathic Sense 365
Engulf 365
Enrage Element 366
Evil Eye 366
Find 366
Haggle 366
Karma 366
Manifest 366
Manipulate Element 367
Possession 367
Remove Element 367
Share Knowledge 367
Soothe 367
Spear 367
Spellcasting 367
Spells 367
Talents 367
Temperature 368
Spirit Descriptions 368
Air Spirits 368
Ally Spirits 369
Earth Spirits 370
Fire Spirits 372
Invae Spirits 373
Water Spirits 375
Wood Spirits 376

DRAGONS 378
Using Dragons in Adventures and Campaigns 378
Dragons as Allies 378
Dragons as Enemies 378
The Master of Secrets Speaks 380
Of Form Most Noble 380
On the Life Cycle of Dragons 380
Of Culture Most Polite and Complex 385
A Dragon's Life 390
Dragon Magic 394
Dragon Powers 397
Armored Scales 397
Dispel Magic 397
Disrupt Fate 397
Dominate Beast 397
Dragon Breath 398
Dragonsight 398
Dragonspeech 399
Durability 400
Fear 400
Karma Cancel 400
Karma Points 401
Lair Sense 401
Regeneration 401
Skills 401
Spellcasting 401
Spells 402
Summoning 402
Suppress Magic 402
Talents 402
Venom 402
Wingbeat 402
Dragon-kin 403
Creating Dragon-kin Characters 403
Dragon-like Creatures 404
Drakes 404
False (Lesser) Drakes 408
Hydras 409
Wyverns 410
Dragons 411
Common Dragons 412
Leviathans 416
Cathay Dragons 418
Feathered Dragons 421
Great Dragons 423
On the Abilities of Great Dragons 423
On the Role of Great Dragons 423
Average Great Dragon 423
Aban 424
Alamaise 425
Earthroot 426
Icewing 427
Mountainshadow 428
Usun 430
Vasdenjas 431
Vestrivan 432

HORRORS 434
Using Horrors in Adventures and Campaigns 434
On the Origins of the Horrors 435
Regarding the Nature of the Horrors 435
On a Singular Truth About the Forms of all Horrors 436
On the Dangers of Studying the Horrors 436
Regarding Horror-cursed Items and Places 437
Horror Powers 440
Animate Dead 441
Astral Camouflage 441
Astral Sight 441
Aura of Awe 441
Corrupt Karma 441
Corrupt Reality 441
Create Shadow 441
Cursed Luck 442
Damage Shift 442
Disease 442
Displace 442
Disrupt Magic 442
Dream Shape 442
Durability 442
Energy Drain 442
Forge Horror Construct 443
Forge Trap 443
Horror Mark 443
Horror Thread 445
Karma Boost 445
Karma Drain 446
Karma Points 446
Karma Tap 446
Poison 446
Skills 446
Skin Shift 446
Spellcasting 446
Spells 446
Suppress Horror Mark 446
Talents 447
Terror 447
Thought Worm 447
Unnatural Life 447
Horror Constructs 447
Black Mantis 447
Bone-Shambler 448
Cadaver Man 448
Falsemen 449
Ghoul 451
Jehuthra 452
Nightwist 452
Plague 453
Qural'lotectica 454
Shilagrue Horror 454
Spectral Dancer 455
Stormwraith 456
Minor Horrors 456
Baggi 456
Bloatform 457
Crystal Entity 458
Deceiver 459
Despairthought 460
Doppler 461
Dread Iota 461
Gharmhek 462
Gnasher 463
Kreescra 463
Mindslug 464
Scurrier 465
Slipshade 465
Wingflayer 466
Wormskull 467
Named Horrors 467
Aazhvat Many-Eyes 467
Artificer 470
Bone Crown the Usurper 472
Buualgathor 474
Chantrel's Horror 476
Despoiler of the Land 479
Druistadt 480
Giftbringer 483
Hate 485
Joie 486
Nebis 488
Nemesis 491
Ristul 493
Taint 495
The Tempter 497
Ubyr 499
Verjigorm 501
Ysrthgrathe 504

APPENDICES 506

INDEX 516

INTRODUCTION

The Passions play by their own rules—every being more powerful than a Name-giver does. It's a fact we have to live with. But remember that rules work both ways. Use your wits and you can make them work for you.

• J'Role the Honorable Thief •

Among a group of people who get together to play roleplaying games, one of the players does not play a permanent role. Instead, this player moderates the game, keeping in mind and enforcing the game's limits and rules. This person, called the **gamemaster**, determines the effects of the player characters' actions and what the responses to those actions will be. The gamemaster also plays all the bit parts—bystanders, creatures, villains, and other characters who are not central to the action but still interact with the player characters in some way.

As the gamemaster, you run the game. You create or adapt the story told during a game session. You create the situations and scenes your players' characters get involved in, you determine whether or not a character succeeds at an attempted action, and you roleplay all the people and creatures the characters meet. You decide what creatures the characters encounter, how those creatures react to the player characters, and who gets to hit who first. You describe the world as the characters see it, functioning as their eyes, ears, and other senses. Being a gamemaster requires both skill and practice, but the thrill of creating an adventure that engages the players, tests both their gaming skills and the characters' skills in the game world, and captures their imaginations makes the job worthwhile.

How to Use This Book

If you are new to **Earthdawn**, you might wonder what our intentions are by confronting you with several massive tomes of rules. While experienced **Earthdawn** players might love us for that, beginners might feel they have a reason to get scared. Don't worry, the **Earthdawn** game is really very easy to learn.

The **Player's** and **Gamemaster's Compendiums** contain all the rules you will ever need to run an **Earthdawn** game. Since most roleplaying games are played as ongoing campaigns, these books provide everything required for years of play—advanced rules, high-Circle opponents, legendary spells—you name it, you'll probably find it in one of these books. However, you only need to be familiar with a fraction of the material in order to get started.

The best advice we can give new players and gamemasters is this—*only use the rules you need*. You can safely ignore everything else; optional rules, for instance, can be integrated later when you are more comfortable with the game. Much of the content in the **Player's** and **Gamemaster's Compendiums** is sorted alphabetically—talents, skills, creatures, and so on—with other content organized in a similarly accessible order—creatures, for instance, which are grouped by their general type.

The first part of this book offers an in-depth description of the **Land of Barsaive**, complementing the information found in the **Player's Compendium**, and including historical information about **The Scourge**, reports written by other adventurers describing Barsaive's **Places of Legend and Peril**, and a detailed description of **Astral Space**.

In the book's second part, you will learn everything you need to know about the art of **Gamemastering**, creating **Adventures and Campaigns**, and how to deal with situations that your group will encounter while **Adventuring**. The chapter titled **The Healing Arts** deals with various herbs and plants found in Barsaive that can be used to mend a character's injuries, and also covers information about Death's realm and resurrection. **Blood Magic** builds upon the rituals and practices introduced in the **Player's Compendium**, provides guidelines for creating new blood charms, and describes death magic—an extreme form of blood magic better left to the villains of the campaign. The **Airships and Riverboats** chapter details the main trading vessels of **Earthdawn** and offers information on how to use them in your game, providing rules for ship combat, game statistics, and a system to construct and maintain these ships.

The third part of the book contains game statistics you will probably need to make reference to during your game sessions. **Magical Treasures** contains a number of general and unique magical items for use in your campaigns, and provides suggestions on how to customize and develop new treasures. **Gamemaster Characters** offers pre-generated game statistics for adepts of various Disciplines and Circles, as well as for many common types of non-player characters found in **Earthdawn**.

The **Creatures** chapter is the first of four chapters that comprises **Earthdawn's** massive bestiary and provides the necessary tools for customizing the game statistics of, as well as developing new, creatures. While this chapter lists creatures both magical and mundane, **Spirits**, **Dragons**, and **Horrors** are described in their own chapters—each detailing their unique powers and abilities and how to use them in your games.

While you might want to read both books from cover to cover, you will soon realize how boring it can be to read the descriptions of hundreds of creatures and magical items at a sitting (something your brain might take serious umbrage at being subjected to!). *You don't need to memorize everything.* Instead, focus on remembering where to quickly find the information you need. A comprehensive **Contents** and **Index** are included in each book to help you find things quickly. The **Appendices** should also prove useful as a quick reference to the powers and creatures found in this tome, along with providing handy forms for in-game use.

Armed with this knowledge, you should be in a good position to quickly get up to speed with your **Earthdawn** game and thus get your first campaign running as quickly as possible. Welcome aboard!

The Scourge

This work intends only to provide the history necessary to understand the Barsaive of our time. It is the workings of the present world I wish to preserve, and this history makes those workings clear. I have added to the account of the Scourge an excerpt from A Concordia of History, *a generational text constantly updated by the librarians of Throal. Readers interested in a detailed history of Barsaive and the ancient lands that became our province should peruse that volume. A similarly detailed history of Barsaive may also be found in the transcripts of the speakings of storymaster Jallo Redbeard, an account preserved in the Library of Throal.*

• Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records •

According to the tales the Therans tell, many hundreds of years ago, an elven scholar named Elianar Messias discovered ancient texts predicting an invasion of the world by creatures from a certain plane of astral space. These documents claimed that the creatures would ravage the Earth for nearly five hundred years and then return, sated, to their own plane of existence. The truth of this discovery drove Elianar to madness and a bloody death. Years later, Messias' colleague Kearos Navarim founded a school dedicated to the study of this prophecy on an island in the Selestrean Sea. A hundred years passed, during which time the school attracted talented magicians and adepts from all fields. The school taught all kinds of magical theory and practice, but turned its best minds toward finding a way to stop the invasion of our world by its astral enemies.

At that time, the area now known as Barsaive comprised a jumble of different peoples: the dwarfs in the mountains, the t'skrang along the Serpent River, the orks and trolls on the plains, the elves in the woods, humans in stone towns and a few cities, and so on. Different communities had little commerce with one another, and the dialects of each region varied enough to make communication between different groups almost impossible. Little, if any, trading went on between regions, or even between towns. Despite this staggering degree of isolation, travelers and adventurers from faraway places gradually carried tales of the extraordinary school for magic to the people of other lands, and many magicians and adepts traveled south to seek the school.

After a century of existence, the school had grown so large that its eldest members founded a city to house it, which they named Thera. With magicians and adepts as half of its citizens, the island that would become the Theran Empire claimed its place as the most powerful city in the world.

Word of the coming attack of the astral creatures, now referred to by all races as the Horrors, had begun to spread through the lands around Thera. When the distant elven kingdom of Shosara heard of the impending disaster, they sent messengers to Thera asking for guidance in defending against the approaching invaders. In their studies of ways to defeat or forestall the Horrors, the Therans had devised several methods of protection. Rather than simply giving this information to the elves of Shosara, however, they demanded favorable trade agreements in exchange for the knowledge. The elves accepted these terms, and soon other realms throughout the world followed suit, giving their riches to the Therans in return for the precious knowledge that the magical scholars held.

The Shosaran treaties marked the beginning of the Theran Empire. Soon after their success with the Shosaran elves, the Therans sent envoys to all the nearby lands, warning all of impending doom and selling the secrets of safety from the Horrors to all who could afford them. With every new bargain they made, their island city grew in power, until the Therans' reach stretched around the globe.

As trading increased, the various factions of the region that would become Barsaive took on common traits. The area's diverse people now shared much that they had not before: a fear of the Horrors, a need to build strongholds against them, and a distaste for Theran influence. This dislike bonded the races and factions together more tightly than any other. The Therans tried to impose their calendar, their style of dress, and their architecture on the region; they also brought with them the barbarism of slavery. Though not everyone suffered under the lash of the slaver's whip, everyone knew and feared that they might. Some groups worked together to stop the practice of slavery; others aided the Therans in a desperate attempt to buy continued freedom.

When the Therans arrived as Barsaive's conquerors, the dwarf kingdom of Throal was the largest realm in the region, and so the Therans delegated to them much of the day-to-day government. The dwarf language became the official language of trade, superseding the Theran tongue. Through their administrative responsibilities, the dwarfs exerted considerable influence over the area.

For one hundred years, Theran power grew. Using their magical arts to unite their new possession under a common name, the Therans officially created the province of Barsaive. They searched the world for Barsaive's pattern items,

knowing that the study of these items gave them an advantage in all places not already Named by those living in the province. What they did to Barsaive, they repeated throughout their empire, creating new Names and dividing the world they ruled into different provinces.

At the northeastern corner of Barsaive, the Therans built the sprawling city of Parlainth, intended as both the provincial capital of Barsaive and the gateway to the "uncivilized" world that lay beyond. Once the Horrors left the plane of the world, the Therans hoped to return to Barsaive and resume imperial rule. As the Therans worked their great magics to protect their island heart from the Scourge, people throughout the Theran Empire constructed shelters against the Horrors as the Theran magicians had taught them. Some of these shelters, built underground, were called kaers. Large shelters built above ground were called citadels. Many of the human-inhabited cities became citadels.

As the time of the invasion approached, strange monsters began to stalk the countryside. Far worse than the griffins, giant serpents, and fire dogs common to Barsaive, these misshapen monstrosities struck terror into the hearts of all who saw them, attacking with a perverse delight in their victims' pain. Some of these early-arriving Horrors looked like moving mass graves, single beings composed of a dozen corpses stitched together. Others wielded finely crafted instruments of torture embedded in their own skin. Some were misshapen lizards twenty feet long. Some attacked the body with teeth and claws; others attacked the victim's very thoughts.

Within a short time, the Horrors' attacks became bolder and more frequent. Creatures stormed villages; smaller Horrors swarmed forests and grasslands, consuming everything in their path. Flocks of birds vanished within hours. Herds of cattle disappeared, relentlessly pursued by Horrors. Barsaive's people tried to fight back, but the creatures' ferocity and overwhelming numbers finally drove the terrified people to seek protection within their kaers and citadels. They sealed themselves behind doors inscribed with wards and glyphs to ward the Horrors away, taking up residence in tomblike places that would be their homes for hundreds of years.

Within the kaers, magical lights lit the underground darkness and magical crops and springs fed the hiding populations. For four centuries, generations were born, lived, and died within the shelters, waiting for the day when they could return to the world their ancestors left behind. At the end of four hundred years, a full century earlier than the Theran magicians had predicted, the magical devices created by the Therans to herald the end of the Scourge revealed that the awaited time had come. Under the earth and in their walled towers, Barsaive's people waited, afraid to leave the safety of their shelters too soon. Finally, driven near to madness by the longing to leave their self-imposed imprisonment, the people began to unseal the doors of their kaers and citadels. Outside, they discovered a corrupted and barren world.

... The Passions no longer heed me; what have I done? I am a good king... this I know, for my subjects love me. Never, they say, never has Scytha had such a gracious and loving sovereign as King Cardok the Peacemaker.

Or so they said once. Now they raise their eyes to the heavens and cry out against the injustice of the world, begging the Passions to tell them wherein they have erred. And I, even I, the king, can do no more than raise my voice with theirs. I cannot stop the evil that has befallen Scytha. I cannot keep their children from dying.

I cannot keep my son from dying.

Every day he slips a little further away from me, my only son who almost cost his mother her life at his birthing. His illness began scarcely a week after his first breath, with a low fever and a dryness of the skin. Then a cough, harsh and hard as though the dust of a desert clogged his infant throat. He cries from the pain, but sheds no tears; he has not enough water left in his body to make his eyes wet. They stare upward at the ceiling and inward at nothing, crusted with the last tears that dried against his lashes like the salt ring on a barrel of fish. His voice comes out as a thin whine, often broken by coughs. Blood from his lungs dries on his parched lips, and his breath rattles in his throat. Ancient bones might make such a sound, raised to a horrid mockery of life by a nethermancer. In this last week, his skin has begun to wrinkle; my grandsire's leather saddle, ridden on to countless wars and cracked with age, feels more smooth and supple than the flesh of my son. I stroked his hair last night to calm him as he wailed, and pieces of it broke off and crumbled to nothing in my hands.

My son has lived for less than three weeks. He looks like a shriveled root, a dying old man.

Of all the children born in Scytha since the last year's harvest, none has yet lived a month. Something has sucked the life from them, some monstrous evil borne by the very air. With each tortured breath my child takes, I can hear the evil's footfall. With each passing day, I feel its nearness. We are dying, and we know not why...

—From the diary of King Cardok of Scytha

Some shelters did not survive the Scourge. Horrors entered some of the kaers and citadels, crashing physically through the walls or invading the minds of those hiding within, possessing them and making them do the Horrors' bidding. Whenever the creatures could breach a kaer's defenses, they fed well in the shelters; the victims within had nowhere to run and nothing to do but die.

As people emerged from hiding, they moved back onto the land, using magical arts to turn the world green again. Though the Horrors ended their assault on the world one hundred years earlier than the Therans had predicted, some especially powerful Horrors remained. To this day, they take every opportunity to shatter the fragile peace.

For the first fifty years after the opening of the kaers, the dwarfs of Throal worked to reunite Barsaive's scattered villages and towns through trade and treaties. In all that time, no word came from the Therans. Many believed, even hoped, that the island heart of the Theran Empire had perished during the Scourge. Alas, such hopes proved fruitless. Forty years ago the Therans returned in force, determined to lay claim to the province of Barsaive once more. The return of the empire sparked the Theran War, which ended in a massive siege of Throal. For once, the Therans' armed might failed to bring them victory, however. The people of Barsaive united against the Therans and drove them back to the southwest corner of Barsaive, where they still hold sway.

Barsaive in the present day is a land still recovering from the devastation of astral invasion, its people only beginning to reclaim their world. The Kingdom of Throal and the Theran Empire remain poised in conflict. Through widespread raiding, the Therans have brought back slavery to a land taking its first free breaths under the idealistic laws of the dwarf kingdom. The land is rife with unopened shelters, some reportedly still filled with people who refuse to believe the Scourge over, and monsters roam the hills in search of victims.

Upon this stage, with these players and props, the struggle for Barsaive and perhaps the future of our world will be acted out. If the Therans prevail, the world will turn one way; if the Kingdom of Throal prevails, the world will turn down a different path. Between these two great powers lie constant smaller struggles, each leaving its own mark, large or small, upon the shape of our world's destiny.

We cannot hope to completely understand the Barsaive of our

own day without understanding how the Scourge affected the land and its people. Both the threat of the Scourge and its arrival changed Barsaive in ways unimaginable to our ancestors. From a vibrant land of many tribes and kingdoms, Barsaive became a subject province of the oppressive Theran Empire, which owed its existence to the world's need for powerful magic to survive the coming disaster.

The Scourge itself drove the people underground and laid waste to the land, and Barsaive has yet to fully recover.

The Books of Harrow

Ever since the long-ago days when the elven scholar Kearos Navarim determined that creatures from another astral plane would one day roam the world, leaving destruction and corruption in their wake, this invasion has been called the Scourge.

The first glimmer of knowledge that such creatures as the Horrors existed came when Elianar Messias, now known as the Martyr Scholar, unearthed the *Books of Harrow* in the catacombs beneath an ancient monastery in the Delaris Mountains.

After extensive study of these six volumes, Messias learned the nature of the Horrors, a discovery that drove him mad. Whether his madness or some other force killed him, no one knows. Before he died, he scrawled a note that read:

These are the Books of Harrow.
They are our doom and our salvation.
Learn from them, or we will all perish.

Cryptic and unsettling, this note provided the first clue to the coming of the Scourge. After the death of Elianar Messias, an elven scholar and colleague named Kearos Navarim took the *Books of Harrow* and traveled with several fellow scholars to an island in the Selestrean Sea. Sequestering themselves for many years on the island that would one day become Thera, Navarim and his fellows studied to unlock the secrets the volumes held.

The final translation of the first *Book of Harrow*, completed a century and a half after they first came to light, revealed that the magic level of the world would increase until it reached a peak, at which time rapacious creatures from astral space would enter our world and ravage it. Navarim and his fellows, all scholars at the newly christened School of Shadows, also learned when this fearsome event would take place and calculated precisely how much time they had to discover a way to protect the world and its people from the Horrors.

After translating several more of the *Books of Harrow* and studying them closely, Navarim wrote the *Rites of Protection and Passage*. With this collection of plans for shelters to hide people from the Horrors and theories for creating magical protection against them, the Therans could counsel the rest of the world on how to prepare for and survive the Scourge.

On the Building of the Shelters

The Theran *Rites of Protection and Passage* instructed the people of Barsaive on how to construct two types of shelters: kaers and citadels. Though both share many features, each has unique aspects.

Citadels

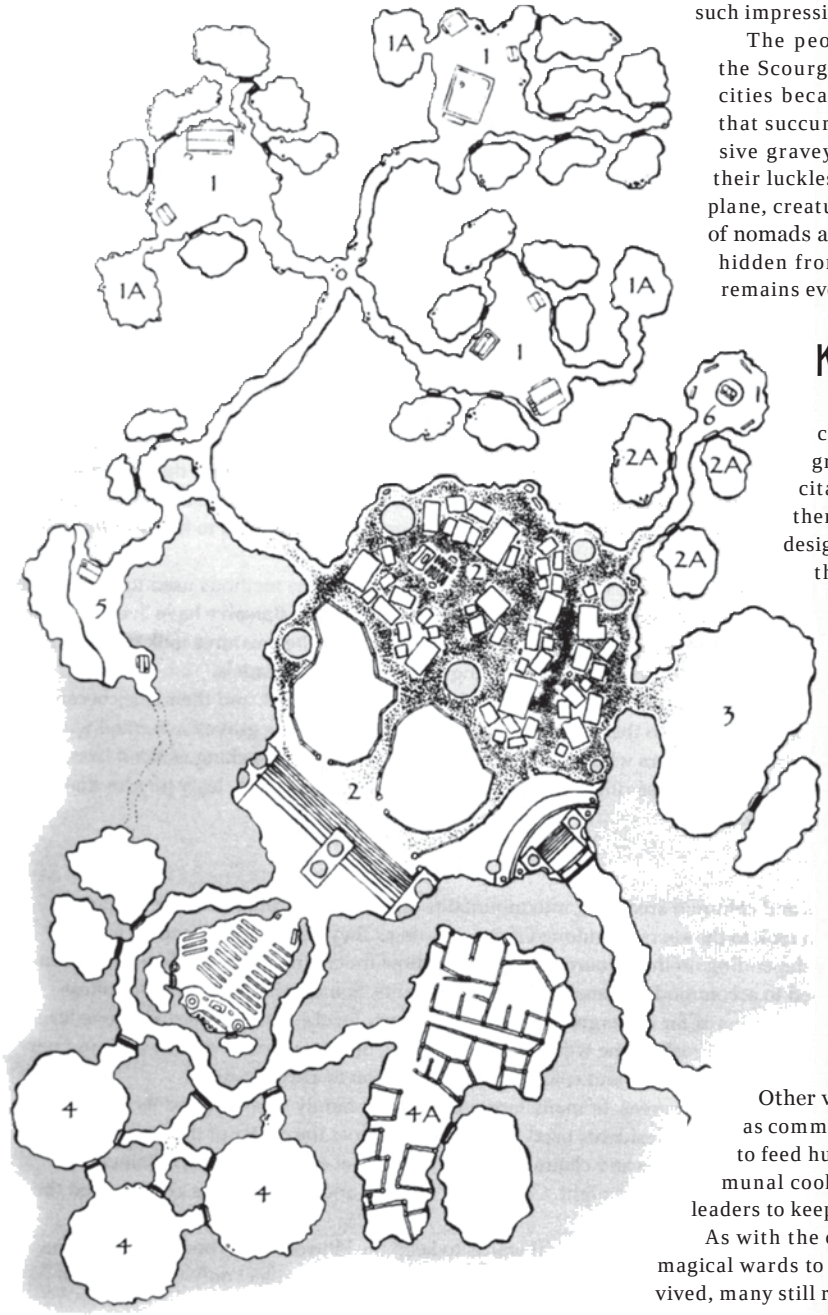
The term citadel carries two common meanings. The earlier meaning, which we survivors of the Scourge have begun to use again, refers to a large, walled city that also serves as a fortress. Barsaive has many such citadels, most built before the Scourge. Some of these suffered the ravages of time, war, and the Horrors; many others provide glowing testimonials to the builders' art and craft. Today, members of many of the Name-giving races inhabit these large cities, having resettled them after the Scourge.

The second meaning originated with the Scourge and refers to a city built or strengthened to withstand the Horrors. Massive domes of rune-inscribed stone usually surrounded such citadels, though some builders created domes of elemental air and fire. To protect against Horrors that might break through the first line of defense, magicians set traps and magical defenses at the edges of these fortified cities.

Because it is easier to build shelters from stone and dirt than from elemental fire, wood, water, and air, the Theran magicians focused on building with elemental earth. In the same way that magicians weave elemental air into the design when building an airship, elemental earth could be easily woven into the walls of the shelters. Equally important, the commonplace nature of small stone and dirt shelters made it easy to develop plans for larger shelters intended to house entire villages.

Castles and other shelters woven from elemental air, fire, water, and wood still exist, but the methods used to build those structures died with their architects. Few such citadels survived the Scourge intact, and few in Barsaive have ever seen one. Many believe that the Horrors enjoyed destroying these shelters more than any others, that the creatures took particular pleasure in crushing those who flaunted their control over magic by building such impressive citadels.

The people who lived in the citadels that survived the Scourge remained in them after it ended, and their cities became a part of the new Barsaive. The citadels that succumbed to the Horrors are little more than massive graveyards filled with the bones and treasures of their luckless inhabitants. Horrors who remained on this plane, creatures seeking isolated lairs, and roaming bands of nomads and ruffians often live in these ruined citadels, hidden from view in thick, leafy jungles that shield the remains even from passing airships.



Kaers

The kaers consisted of living quarters and common areas dug into mountains or under the ground. Unlike the people who sheltered in the citadels, most who took to the kaers abandoned them as soon as they believed it safe to do so. Kaer designs across Barsaive varied widely, depending on the resources at hand and how much time their builders had to construct them. All, however, were designed to accommodate generations of inhabitants. Some kaers, with their countless rooms and chambers, lay deep inside mountains or far underground. Some had many levels; others consisted of one level that stretched a long distance under the earth and rock. Some were dug out roughly, like the warrens of rats, long and narrow with winding passages; others boasted the clean lines and colossal design common to Throalic cities.

Most kaers were divided into common and private areas. In many larger kaers, each family was assigned its own quarters; smaller kaers built communal sleeping quarters. Residents used the large chamber at the center of the kaer for meetings and celebrations. Other vast rooms filled with tables and chairs served as communal eating facilities, adjoined by kitchens built to feed hundreds and set up to work day and night. Communal cooking and eating rooms also allowed the kaer's leaders to keep a watchful eye on food supplies.

As with the citadels, most kaer builders created traps and magical wards to keep the Horrors out. Though many kaers survived, many still remain sealed because of their inhabitants' fear.

Other still-sealed kaers protect only the corpses of inhabitants long dead, their treasures still guarded by the traps and wards designed to repel the Horrors.

Living Quarters (1)

A large area containing many smaller rooms wherein each family slept. Most also included a communal bathing chamber. (1A)

Central Chamber (2)

In this vast chamber, lit by magical moss to create the illusion of day and night, the people gathered for ceremonies and meetings. Merchants set up shops all around the perimeter, and the village's leading citizens attended to the smooth running of the kaer from offices also built in this place (2A).

Dining Areas (3)

Here the kaer's residents ate and drank together, at times chosen by the village leaders. Every member of the kaer shared in cooking the meal and cleaning.

Food Growth/ Preparation Chambers (4)

Here the villagers grew food for the kaer when the stored supplies ran out. Larger kaers set aside additional space to raise livestock (4A), but most kaers grew only vegetables and fruits. Generations of gardeners and farmers worked to feed the kaer, experimenting with water and light cycles and hybrids to produce heartier plants.

Water Source (5)

The water that kept the kaer alive often came from an underground river. A few villages built springs in their kaers that drew water from the elemental water plane.

Statue of Garlen (6)

The Passion of Hearth and Healing, Garlen spoke to the people's hearts more strongly than ever during the fearful years of the Scourge. Almost every kaer built in Barsaive raised a statue to Garlen, though the statues vary in likeness.

Of the Rites of Protection and Passage

The Theran *Rites of Protection and Passage* offered the people of Barsaive several ways to protect themselves from the Horrors. All Horrors possess both astral and physical forms, though they manifest in different ways. Some only manifest in astral form, while others manifest only in physical form. Because of the Horrors' dual nature, the Theran protections needed to work against both astral and physical attacks.

Astral Protection

The Theran *Rites* offered astral protection from the Horrors in two ways. The natural materials used to create the kaers and citadels offered one kind of protection; in addition to that natural barrier, the Therans created wards built of runes designed to drive the Horrors away. The protections worked in the following manner.

All living things, including animals, plants, and the earth itself, have a "solid" presence in astral space. Astral manifestations cannot pass through astral creatures or the astral aspects of other living things. Because of this property, the underground kaers posed a virtually impenetrable barrier to the astral forms of the Horrors.

Not content with a single layer of protection against such fearsome beings, the Therans also researched the runes most effective against Horrors, intending to use them to create magical barriers called wards that would block astral incursions. The people of Barsaive inscribed these runes on the outer walls of kaers and the domes of citadels. In many kaers, the builders also inscribed the inner walls with runes, creating still more magical wards as an additional layer of protection. This forethought saved many kaers, because too many Horrors found ways to penetrate the kaers' outer walls.

Potentially the weakest part of a shelter's defense, and therefore the most heavily protected, was the door. Because the entrance and exit of a kaer could not be made of elemental earth, the builders took extra care to protect these openings with additional magics, inscribing the doors with intricate runes and often lining them with orichalcum.

Physical Protection

In addition to the sheer mass and thickness of rock and earth, magical reinforcement of these materials offered physical protection from the Horrors. The creators of the citadels and kaers reinforced their domes and walls with elemental earth to strengthen them against the physical might of the Horrors, but this was a costly practice.

The builders of kaers that lacked sufficient resources simply took advantage of areas offering naturally strong, thick walls. These people built many kaers in abandoned mines and other places deep beneath the earth, thus providing the strongest physical protection short of reinforcement with elemental earth. Builders also used elemental earth to reinforce the doors and entranceways of both kaers and citadels.

In addition to reinforcing walls and building magical wards, many kaers and citadels also set physical traps throughout their shelters as a layered defense against any Horrors that managed to penetrate the outer protections. Constructing even the smallest shelters presented a monumental task; some kaers and citadels required more than two hundred years to complete.

Despite the protections devised by the Therans, the Horrors managed to penetrate far too many kaers and citadels. In some cases, the Horror simply proved stronger than the protections set to repel it, and easily penetrated the shelter's defenses. Other Horrors, blocked on the astral plane, were patient enough to dig through the walls of a kaer until they broke through. Still other Horrors used their magical powers to render inert the astral defenses of a kaer and then attacked the shelter's residents.

Of Life During the Scourge

As might be expected, the people of Barsaive found life in the underground kaers and sealed citadels drastically different from their former existence and often difficult.

Moving an entire civilization underground required people to greatly change the way they lived their lives, and many found these changes daunting to face.

To create a truly accurate portrayal of this complex subject, I have relied on the words of one long dead who lived through the first years of hiding. He left behind a journal from which I took the following entry. As a scholar, I am grateful for this and other such precious records of our history.

—Daron Fenn, Scholar of the Library of Throal

...Almost three weeks have passed since the good people of Ar Dham granted me admittance to their kaer, but I still feel as lonely as I did during the bleakest days of my wanderings. Suspicious glances and halfhearted words of greeting are the only replies my overtures elicit, and mothers whisk their children out of my path as I walk through the narrow avenues and hallways of this subterranean world. Still, I am more than grateful that these good folk have granted me sanctuary, and I cannot begrudge them their fear of Horror-touched strangers. And when I think of the stories I have heard of other kaers, where the fear and suspicion turn lifelong neighbors against one another and spawn the frenzied stonings of innocents, I consider the people of Ar Dham quite compassionate and myself Passion-blessed.

Despite my loneliness, my life has developed a strangely comforting rhythm here. Each day, we all receive a portion of vegetables from the kaer's carefully tended gardens. And on special occasions, the elders slaughter one of the precious goats, and everyone shares in the feast. I stroll through the avenues under the steady light of the glowing moss that lines the kaer walls and always seem to pass by the kaer's large signal at the same time every day. There I pause and join the others who watch the bowl of elemental water and the small sphere of elemental earth that floats in the air above it. We gaze at it in silence, all dreaming of that far-off day when the earth and water again shall meet and the Scourge will become no more than a painful memory.

Evenings are my favorite time, however. After supper a crowd always gathers for the storytelling around the fire in the center of the kaer. Mothers cradle sleeping babes in their arms, children sit in rapt attention, young lovers hold each other in easy embraces and listen to the storytellers weave eloquent tapestries of cool mountain brooks and warm summer breezes, emerald meadows and quiet orchards, fiery surprises and bird song and soft autumn evenings when the moonlight spills across the golden fields...

—From the journal of Dralacid, Swordmaster of Genve

On Life Outside the Shelters

Though life went on inside the kaers and citadels, the Horrors were ravaging the world without. Swarms of Horrors tore across the landscape, devouring everything in their paths. Where once lush forests had stood, the Horrors left little but gnawed, burnt roots and twigs. The Horrors fed so voraciously that at times the sound of the devastation penetrated even the walls of the shelters. This unbearable noise alternated with silence so profound that a few daring or desperate souls persuaded themselves that the Horrors had gone.

Those who dared left the kaers many years before the Scourge ended, hoping to find fresh meat or longing to once more see the sun. Of these hardy (and foolhardy) souls, only a handful returned to the safety of the shelters. Most ended their days as food for the Horrors; others the Horrors touched and sent back to their kaers, thereby gaining access to fresh supplies of victims. Many records found in deserted kaers imply that opening their doors was the last action the residents took. The following journal excerpt describes the fate of one kaer that opened its doors too soon.

...Not until long after Jaro's death did we learn of his corruption. When the wizards proclaimed that the Scourge had ended, he, I, and three others broke open the seals on the doors and walked outside. We had hoped to find a new world, but the one we found came close to breaking our hearts.

Before us stretched a barren land, devoid of almost all life. In what our storytellers had always described as a lush valley, we found a bleak and wasted landscape where only a few insects and small plants still struggled to survive. As we looked about us, the voice came. We all heard it—in our heads, not in our ears. As quick as thought, the sky grew dark with creatures, their attack nearly overwhelming us. We fought our way back into the kaer, just barely preventing the creatures from entering. Of the five of us that left, three died outside the kaer's doors.

We thought ourselves safe, but we had not kept all the Horrors out. We soon learned that a Horror had entered the mind of Jaro and in that way penetrated the safety of our kaer...

—From the journal of Mallem, 1401 TH, found in the ruins of Kaer Frohn near the Tylon Mountains

On the Ending of the Scourge

Though Theran scholars had predicted that the Scourge would last for five centuries, it ended one hundred years early, marked by an inexplicable occurrence. Contrary to the predictions of Theran magical theory, the fall of magical energy simply stopped long before it should have, a phenomenon recorded in the kaers and citadels by magic-level indicators of Theran devising. Scholars and magicians still cannot explain this discrepancy, except as a misinterpretation of the *Books of Harrow*.

This discrepancy between Theran prediction and reality has caused many scholars in Throal to dispute other so-called "revelations" by Thera's magicians.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

Based on their studies of the *Books of Harrow*, the original scholars at Thera's Eternal Library had concluded that the magical energy of the world determined the arrival and departure of the Horrors. As the level of ambient magic rose, the Horrors could breach the astral barriers between their plane of existence and ours. When the magic level subsided, the Horrors could no longer maintain the link between the two worlds and retreated to their native astral plane.

The magicians inside the shelters kept close watch as the world's magical energy slowly declined. At some point, they accepted the fact that the magic levels had seemingly ceased to drop, stopping short of the projected safe level. Though they suspected that the magic had receded enough to force most of the Horrors back to their own plane, they also guessed that an unwelcome number of especially powerful Horrors would remain.

Following the counsel of their magicians and village leaders, ever-increasing numbers of kaers and citadels pronounced the end of the Scourge and emerged to reclaim and re-tame their world. At long last, we seem to be winning that difficult struggle. However, many kaers and citadels still do not believe that the Scourge has ended. These people remain hidden, waiting patiently for a sign that they may re-enter the world their ancestors left behind.

Leaving the Shelters

Though the Scourge had ended, for many the battle for freedom had just begun. Most people had known only life in the kaer or citadel, and they feared to leave the safety of their shelters and face unknown danger.

Barsaivians left their shelters in a trickle, the shelters opening up one by one as the people spread cautiously across the land. By the time the dwarfs in Throal had organized a fleet of messengers to spread the news of the Scourge's end across Barsaive, the people of most kaers had rejoined the outside world. What greeted them little resembled the world described in legend. The Scourge may have ended, but four centuries of devastation had changed the world almost beyond recognition.

...I was among the first to leave my kaer. All my life, I had longed to breathe fresh air, see the mountains, leave the kaer's cramped confines. My first glance at the world outside dashed my hopes for a wondrous life. At first, I thought the tales told by the kaer's storytellers had grown into myth during four centuries underground. As I looked about, I began to see the truth. It was not the stories that had lied. Instead, the world had changed.

Towering oaks had become twisted husks, monstrous mockeries of trees. The mountains, once breathtaking, forested slopes, were now barren rock. I breathed in deeply, hoping to find at least the outside air uncorrupted. It tasted harsh and bitter and burned my throat. I fell to the ground gasping, hoping that I smelled the odor from the rotting trees nearby. I was wrong...

—From the journal of Me'gana of Kaer Lowilla, 1495 TH

On How the Scourge Changed Us

The Scourge left its mark on every aspect of life in Barsaive. The physical devastation was the most obvious change; once-lush forests withered and rotting, towns and cities obliterated, villages forever enslaved by Horrors. The Scourge had also changed people's hearts. The Barsaivians of our time have become a fearful lot, often preferring to hide from the future rather than face it. Though this may be understandable after our four hundred years in hiding, such a closing of the heart and mind bodes ill for the healing of our land.

The Scourge may never truly be ended for it utterly changed Barsaive and its people in every possible way: physically, mentally, spiritually, and magically.

On the Changes in the Land

The physical effects of the Scourge remain the most noticeable, for the very face of Barsaive is changed. The ravages of the Horrors left whole cities and towns in ruins. Some succumbed during the Scourge; others fell victim to the depredations of Horrors that remained in our world after the kaers opened. Entire villages were swept away, leaving no evidence that anyone had ever lived in those regions. The Horrors devastated much of the landscape as well, leaving it stripped of life except for plants and animals too small to capture the Horrors' deadly interest. In most cases, the little life that remained was forever corrupted; in the patches of forest left standing, the trees had become twisted and gnarled in a perverse reflection of their former glory. In some areas, even the air was tainted, choking the survivors who breathed it.

The worst devastation occurred in those areas now known as the Badlands and the Wastes. The Scourge altered the land irrevocably in these areas, transforming fertile farmland into barren ground, devoid of all life save the Horrors and the creatures that served them. A land once full of towns and villages became a bare and windswept plain shadowed by thick, ash-like clouds.

We must be careful with our generalizations. Rumor has it that Mountainshadow lairs within the Badlands.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

The effects of the Scourge in these areas teach us a lesson regarding the power we wield as Name-givers. By Naming these areas the Badlands and the Wastes, we have created True Patterns for these areas that define them in terms of what they are now, not what they once were or what they might become. As heroes continue to explore these areas and learn more about them, their true patterns grow stronger. Thus, as scholars and magicians debate the best method by which to heal these regions, their very study of them as the Badlands and the Wastes strengthens these True Patterns. Even as we seek knowledge with which to heal, we make the healing process more difficult.

—Derrat, Wizard of the City of Yistaine

On the Changes in Living and Thought

The effects of the Scourge on the minds and hearts of its survivors are much less obvious than the changes in the land, but in many ways far more significant. These changes fall into two broad categories: cultural changes and changes in behavior.

On the Changes in Culture

Strangely enough, the Scourge wrought some good in Barsaivian culture. Before the Scourge, the Name-giver races maintained separate cultures. The end of the Scourge, however, brought representatives of all the Name-giver races together in the same communities. When the people of Barsaive returned to the surface of the world to rebuild it, they reasoned that larger settlements might bring safety because a greater population provided a larger number of people to be trained as warriors. As groups of Barsaivians traveled across the province to establish new settlements, they realized that maintaining distinctions between races was far less important than building a strong community able to defend itself and thus chose to live as neighbors rather than enemies.

In contrast to this new acceptance between the races, though no less beneficial in its way, the isolation created by four centuries

of hiding gave rise to a multitude of different customs. Before the Scourge, communities that traded with each other and intermarried developed similar cultures, possessing the same customs, modes of dress, folklore and legends, and spiritual beliefs. During four hundred years of isolation, however, each community developed a unique culture. The resulting variety of customs, styles, and legends has given Barsaive society a color and richness badly needed to heal the darkness left by the Scourge. Barsaive now boasts so many different cultures that travelers no longer know what to expect when they arrive in a new settlement.

Though these changes have made Barsaive a far more dynamic place, this cultural explosion also creates the risk of us encountering beliefs and customs different from our own.

—Daron Fenn, Scholar of the Library of Throal

On the Changes in People

Though the wider cultural changes wrought by the Scourge seem to have brought us great good, changes in our individual thought and action often appear to counteract them. The people of Barsaive can accept differences in race and culture far more readily than did our ancestors because fear demands that we band together; yet this same fear has made Barsaivians mistrustful of everyone they meet.

The years of self-imprisonment fostered a strong streak of suspicion in most Barsaivians. Countless tales describing the dangers of the Horrors helped keep the residents of the shelters safe through constant vigilance, but many people took this caution to extremes. Family members often became as suspect as strangers, and anyone who showed even the slightest difference from "normal" behavior risked being stoned to death at the hands of frightened fellow kaersmen.

When they left the shelters, people carried their fears with them, and intense suspicion became a fact of everyday life in Barsaive. Small towns and villages rarely welcome strangers. The occasional stranger who stops for a night or several days finds himself the object of universal scrutiny and suspicion. This is true even for visitors to larger cities, whose residents are determined not to be duped by those possessed by a Horror. Travelers often feel as if everyone in the city or town is watching them.

In some ways, fear of the Horrors and the desire to avoid their influence has done more harm to Barsaive than have the Horrors themselves. The Horrors did not inflict the Ritual of the Thorns on the elves of the Blood Wood, for one. The Elven Court chose to walk that path rather than face destruction by the Horrors and did themselves greater, irretrievable harm than could the Horrors. In the same way, blood magic has often saved someone from the Horrors, but the price we pay for purchasing our safety through such gruesome means is often too high to justify the ends.

In an ironic corollary to this paranoia rampant in our society, travelers who feel watched in other cities almost always watch strangers in the same way when at home.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

On the Changes in the Passions and Their Followers

The Passions, powerless to prevent the Scourge (though many scholars and questors doubt they would have, even given the chance), stood by and watched the Horrors devastate their world and people. Of the twelve Passions, nine survived the Scourge intact. The remaining three—Dis, Raggok, and Vestrial—were driven mad by the corruption. Now known as the Mad Passions, these three have had a profound spiritual effect on their followers. Where once the Passions lived peacefully side by side, the three Mad Passions now work to destroy the other Passions, sowing discord and forcing the remaining Passions to fight off these attacks. This discord among the Passions led their questors to create the first organizations devoted to the ideals of the individual Passions. The desire of the Mad Passions to conquer and destroy the other Passions prompted their questors to create hierarchies within the ranks of devotees, the better to serve their crazed gods' purposes.

On the Changes in Magic

Though less visible than the changes in the land and less disruptive than the Scourge's spiritual effects, the changes the Scourge has wrought on magic are potentially the most profound.

Before the Scourge, magicians could draw magical energy directly from astral space to power their spells with little risk. Though careless spellcasters using magic in such a way often suffered damage, most experienced magicians could cast raw magic with no ill effects. But the Horrors warped and corrupted astral space when traveling through it during the Scourge, just as they did the rest of the world. To avoid the dangers of making direct contact with this polluted magical energy, magicians developed safer methods of powering their spells. Those few magicians still willing to cast raw magic risk being noticed and marked by a Horror.

The pollution of astral space gravely concerns many magical theorists. Though most of the world's corruption has begun to heal itself, the damage to astral space shows no signs of healing. Many observers fear that the corruption of astral space is permanent. Given the pervasive nature of magic in Barsaive, this taint irrevocably alters the way we live our lives.

Some magicians attribute the current steady level of magic to the effects of the Scourge. This theory has few supporters, though none of its detractors can conclusively prove the idea wrong.

—Derrat, Wizard of the City of Yistaine

On the Legacy of the Scourge

The Scourge left an indelible mark on our world. Though as a people we are determined to reclaim and rebuild our land, memories of the Scourge and its lasting effects make this task tremendously difficult.

Many troubadours and historians insist that the Therans' original prediction of a five-hundred-year Scourge was correct. Though Barsaive's people emerged from the kaers and citadels after only four hundred years, this last century might easily be considered the final stage of the Scourge.

Only now, after a century of healing, do we seem to have moved away from its dark shadow. Only now can we truly begin to rebuild our world in the hope of restoring it to its former beauty and glory.

The Land of Barsaive

Given the importance of the task, I thought myself the best candidate to write a condensed overview on the land of Barsaive. My work, culled from a vast array of material collected for this book, is as complete as I could manage, given the time and space constraints under which I labored. I can, however, personally vouch for the accuracy of information given.

• Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records •

In some ways, this chapter serves as a primer on Barsaive, providing enough information to prepare the reader for travel across the province, but not so much that it becomes overwhelming. Descriptions of Barsaive's languages, customs, economy, spiritual beliefs, and so on give the reader some notion of what to expect in different towns and cities, and also offers insights into Barsaive's many cultures.

Of the Land and its People

The vast land mass of Barsaive is bounded on the south by the Death's Sea, on the east by the Aras Sea, on the north by the Blood Wood, and on the west by the Wastes. Barsaive takes weeks to cross even on the back of a war horse. The journey from the northern boundary to the southern takes 40 days on foot, 25 on horseback—the journey from east to west requires 60 days on foot, 38 days on horseback.

Barsaive's southern boundary is Death's Sea, a huge body of molten stone so hot that only elementals, Horrors, and those with magical protection may travel over it. The heat from the sea has transformed the surrounding land into a vast expanse of barren sand and rock. Legend says that enough blood spilled into the earth will quench the fire, and the sea will turn to water.

At Barsaive's northern boundary lies Blood Wood, a lush forest many days' ride across wherein the elven Queen and her corrupt court reside. Many elves outside Blood Wood no longer give their allegiance to the elven Queen, considering her as monstrous as the Horrors. The elves of Blood Wood have never lost their ability to perform intricate magic, however. The Queen's palace, supported by eight great trees, is a magical wonder to behold.

For my part, I agree. But I must add that many years ago I visited Blood Wood and, despite the horrible things the elves did to themselves during the Scourge, they are still a beautiful people. A terrible beauty, perhaps, but undeniably so.

—Karon Foll, Historian of Throal

In the west of Barsaive lie the Wastes, where little magic has yet touched the land to renew it after the Scourge. Most scholars believe that the Horrors entered more shelters built in the Wastes than elsewhere, and so fewer people survived to re-emerge. Nowadays, little exists in the region other than monsters, Horrors, and a few small plants and animals. If the scholars are correct, then the Wastes must be dotted with more unopened, undiscovered kaers and citadels than exist in the rest of Barsaive. Because of the Wastes' reputation as a storehouse of undiscovered wonders, bands of adventurers often journey there in search of ancient treasure and magical artifacts. Unfortunately, few ever return.

The Aras Sea marks the eastern border of Barsaive. This large, saltwater ocean connects Barsaive to lands beyond the province and to the expanse of the Theran Empire. From the city of Urupa and other coastal towns, scores of seagoing ships sail from port to port, trading Barsaivian goods for those from other lands.

Other major trading ports lie along the Serpent River, a majestic waterway that cuts Barsaive into two uneven parts as it winds its way from north of the Wastes down to the Death's Sea. For most of its length the Serpent River is so wide that a riverboat takes an hour to traverse it. Save by magical means or on a well-designed ship, it is impossible to cross. The river creates the most fertile land in Barsaive, and the wide, long valley sloping up from its banks contains countless villages and towns. The reptilian t'skrang, who live in half-submerged towns alongside and in the river and sail their riverboats from port to port, conduct most trade along the Serpent River. Many t'skrang maintain trade agreements with the Kingdom of Throal and work to promote unity among the people along the Serpent. Other t'skrang captains use their ships for piracy and raiding.

The Serpent River winds its way around the Throal Mountains, a large range whose peaks reach into the clouds. So huge that they are almost a province unto themselves; the mountains are home to nomadic tribes who hunt the wild beasts that roam the slopes.

On Politics

In fact, though every community harbors racist factions, most of Barsaive's cities, towns, and villages gladly accept neighbors of many races. The dwarf Kingdom of Throal, which encourages members of all races to settle within its borders and builds homes for immigrants, is the greatest power in the province, followed by the elves of Blood Wood and the t'skrang of the Serpent River (though the latter suffer from the continual problem of infighting).

The next strongest power lies in various cities scattered across the land, followed by independent military groups such as the crystal raiders and the ork scorchers. The orks of the new-found nation of Cara Fahd struggle for their sovereignty, and the elusive Denairastas of Iopos seek to rule over Barsaive on their own. Many cities also wish to establish themselves as rivals to Throal, and the trollmoots have been trying for decades to make of their diverse tribes a cohesive political force.

On the Theran Empire

The Therans, whose lands adjoin Barsaive at its southwestern edge, claim Barsaive as part of their empire. Many Barsaivians steadfastly resist this Theran incursion. The people of Barsaive are not united in their allegiances, however. Some pledge loyalty to the Kingdom of Throal, upholding its egalitarian laws and ideal of freedom for everyone. Others, believing that the dwarfs will not give up power and authority easily, fear that in time Throal may become as oppressive as the Theran Empire. This stark contradiction between the perceptions of Barsaive's people and its

would-be overlords creates much of the conflict between Thera and Barsaive.

In order to expand their empire farther north, and reclaim what was once theirs, the Therans established the fortress of *Triumph* close to the center of our province. The Therans Named the province of Barsaive almost six hundred years ago, before the Scourge began. Once they had Named it, the Therans were content to let the internal politics of the province continue without interference, as long as those politics did not affect their own plans. As token ruler and watchdog over the province, the Therans created the position of Overgovernor, making the holder of that office responsible for shaping policy in the province to meet Thera's needs.

By Theran reckoning, Overgovernor Kypros is currently in charge of the province of Barsaive. In truth, his influence extends only over the province's southwestern corner, the area around the Sky Point outpost and the Theran-controlled city of Vivane. When Thera's leaders came to the conclusion that Overgovernor Kypros had failed to quell the anti-Theran resistance activities in Barsaive, they shifted the center of Theran presence in Barsaive to the shores of Lake Ban. While Sky Point remains Kypros' fortress, the recently established outpost *Triumph*, commanded by General Nikar Carinci, is the current focus of Thera's attention.

Both outposts are actively involved in sending Theran troops and airships deep into Barsaive to establish Trade agreements and capture slaves. Though the rulers of Barsaive's various cities and regions do not recognized the Theran's authority, they have been able to negotiate with certain non-official parties in some of the large cities of Barsaive's southern regions.

On the Varying Customs of Barsaive

Despite Barsaive's bewildering variety of cultures, certain customs and conventions such as the Name-day, belief in the Passions, and the use of Throalic and Theran calendars are common to many communities. The institution of slavery, a Theran barbarity imposed on Barsaive rather than a native practice, has unfortunately become enough a part of Barsaive society to rate inclusion in this section.

On the Passing of Days and Months

The people of Barsaive mark time according to one of two calendars: Theran or Throalic. The Throalic calendar was used before the Scourge, and most of Barsaive continues to use it. People living in areas under Theran rule use the Theran calendar, often under threat of punishment. In the city of Vivane, with the largest population in Barsaive under the yoke of Thera, authorities have outlawed Throalic calendars; anyone found using them must pay a heavy fine.

The Calendar of Throal

The Throalic calendar divides the year into twelve months of thirty days each, each month beginning near or on a new lunar cycle. The months are named Strassa, Veltom, Charassa, Rua, Mawag, Gahmil, Raquas, Sollus, Riag, Teayu, Borrum, and Doddul.

Between the months of Gahmil and Raquas, the Throalic calendar sets aside five days to celebrate the Earth. This five-day holiday reflects the calendar's dwarf origin. Though the dwarfs use the moon cycle to count the passage of days, they also wish to pay respect to their true home underground. With their preference for subterranean life, the dwarfs seldom see the moon. Indeed, their use of its cycles is more for convenience than because of any spiritual attachment to it.

Across Barsaive, people use these five days for many purposes. Throal sponsors holidays featuring contests of crafts involving stonework, primarily gem-cutting and sculpting. The contest winners earn seats of honor at local feasts. In many cities, residents indulge in revelry during these days, and the wealthy often sponsor enormous parties for the less fortunate.

Farming towns and villages also use the five days to celebrate the Earth, but focus their ceremonies on the fertility of the soil. Pageants and rituals celebrate birth, growth, decay, and death—the cycle of all life.

No Theran controlled territory or city, including Vivane, recognizes the five celebration days.

—Kern Redhand, Historian of Throal

The Throalic calendar takes the date of Throal's founding as its beginning. According to this calendar, the current year is 1510 TH.

The Calendar of Thera

Each Theran day begins and ends according to the cycle of the sun, and the Therans arrange their calendar in 73 five-day weeks rather than according to the lunar cycle. The Therans do not, however, worship the sun; they adopted a solar-based calendar simply for ease of use. Each week is numbered rather than named, and each day is designated by its week number and position in the week: for example, "fifth week, second day." When written, this date appears as 5/2, sometimes followed by the year. The Therans begin their calendar with the founding of the city of Thera; by their reckoning, the current year is 1070 TE.

Most Barsaivians assume that the Theran government adopted their calendar in order to more frequently tax their citizens. The Therans collect taxes every fourth week, or twenty days.

—Ardinn Tero, Scholar of the Library of Throal

On the Feast of the Name-day

Because our ability to Name things separates Name-givers from the other creations of the universe, the Naming of our own offspring becomes a significant event. Every culture and every race in Barsaive and in the whole world performs a Naming ritual for its children; even the Therans practice a Naming ritual, and slaves brought to Thera and Barsaive from other lands describe similar ceremonies common to their homelands.

Naming makes a person significant in our world. Though every person, place, and thing possesses a pattern that lets it interact with magic, Naming creates a true pattern and focuses the magic of the world into that pattern. By the act of Naming, Name-givers separate themselves from the formless void of the universe.

Most Name-day ceremonies take place within the first week of a child's life, though some people celebrate the Name-day during the child's adolescence. All children receive at least a simple nickname soon after birth. Children who perform the Name-day ritual during adolescence receive a second name to signify their Naming according to the proper ritual.

Most communities create a true pattern for their place of Naming by setting aside one location for the Naming ceremony. The family of the child to be Named prepares this place for the

Naming according to local custom. In the morning of the third day of the child's life, the parents bring him or her to the Naming place, usually a windowless room. They carry the child into the room and close the door, plunging the room into darkness. The scent of burning incense soon fills the room, calming those present and helping to make the coming ceremony the focus of their thoughts.

By magic or other means, a candle is lit. This single point of light illuminates the faces of all present—the baby, the parents, and friends of the family. Their illuminated faces and bodies seem to float in the surrounding darkness, and in that moment all present turn their hearts and minds toward the child.

One of the parents says to the child:

"On this your Name-day, I Name you so you may be known. This Name is not who you are, but who you will be. It is not a limit, but a vessel you shall fill."

The other parent then says:

"When people think of you, they will think not of your Name, but of the Passions that Name represents. You are not bound to this Name, for you are a Name-giver. We give you this Name. From now on, you will Name."

The parent not holding the child then picks up a candle and lights it from the flame. As the wick catches fire, both parents speak the first syllable of the Name in unison, then place the candle on a small table in the center of the room. The parents continue to light candles as they speak each syllable of the Name until they have spoken each separate syllable. When the couple has lit candles for each syllable of the child's Name, their friends open the door of the room just as the gathered group speaks the whole Name in unison. The light from outside the room rushes in, joining the light produced by the candles and driving out the void.

On Common Spiritual Beliefs

Barsaivians believe that the Passions of the world are the living embodiments of the life force of the universe. Much as an adept draws on the magic of the universe to perform great deeds, the Passions grant similar strength, power, and abilities to their questors, who in turn live out the ideals of the Passions in the eyes of the rest of the world.

Questors devote their lives to living as their chosen Passion would have them do and to teaching others about that Passion. Most questors wield power equivalent to that of magicians and adepts, but receive their power as a gift from their chosen Passion, rather than drawing it directly from the universe. Living his life according to a given Passion's ideals focuses a questor's power much as a Discipline focuses an adept's. The questor's life becomes a metaphor of the ideals that the Passions embody.

As their name implies, questors spend their lives pursuing a mission, the nature of which depends on the Passion the questor serves. As with magicians and adepts, the actions of most questors add color and vibrancy to the world.

On the Theran Abomination of Slavery

The evil of slavery came to Barsaive with the Therans, who began to deal in slaves as a valuable commodity before the Scourge. In those long-ago times a slave was educated, held a certain status in society, and could eventually earn the means to purchase his freedom. Though no one could ever view slavery as a good condition of life, a slave's lot in the Theran Empire would be enviable compared to the plight of a slave in our day.

Theran slavery weighed heavily on the citizens of Barsaive, especially the dwarfs of Throal. During the Scourge, the dwarfs decided to outlaw the practice of slavery in any form. They also vowed to enforce this sanction in Throal or in any other place where the shameful practice existed once the Scourge had ended.

In stark contrast to the Therans' view of slavery before the Scourge, the Therans of our time no longer believe that the Passions deign to inspire slaves and deny the unique nature each slave possesses as a Name-giver. They see slaves as less valuable than tools. While the Therans take special care of their tools, slaves they treat no better than coals and dry wood tossed into a fire and consumed. Once used, these materials turn to ash and burn away as waste.

Theran law sets forth certain conditions that make it legal to sell an individual into slavery, the foremost of which is criminal activity. Theft, murder, assault, or destruction of property can be punished by slavery. In cases involving Therans, Theran judges determine a criminal's fate. For cases involving Barsaivians, local judges pass sentence. Theran criminals receive a sentence of slavery only when they commit one of the aforementioned crimes against another Theran. By contrast, non-Theran criminals may be sentenced to slavery for almost any crime, regardless of the motive or victim.

In short, Theran law inverts Throalic justice, which states that the wealthier and more powerful the criminal, the greater the punishment. Theran law also ignores the fact that few Barsaivian communities other than Throal possess a legal system as complex as their own. The legal accountability that Therans take for granted simply does not exist throughout most of Barsaive. When a band of slavers arrives at *Triumph* or Sky Point herding two dozen prisoners they claim murderers, the Therans do not bother to ascertain whether or not the prisoners received a fair trial and deserve their fate. They simply assume it is so, pay the slavers for their property, and set the slaves to work.

This attitude encourages slavers to roam the land in search of the powerless and isolated for capture and sale. Attracted by the prospect of making profits at little risk, some Barsaivians have also begun to kidnap and sell their fellow citizens to the Therans. Scorcher tribes, neighboring villages, and others level spurious claims of criminal activity against each other in a desperate attempt to earn money or to avoid becoming slaves.

Theran slaves perform the work of household and personal servants, soldiers, farmers, miners, airship rowers, builders of ships and buildings, and innumerable other difficult or menial tasks. Because they receive little food, water, or rest, most slaves die within a few years of capture.

In an effort to prevent slaves from rebelling against their captivity, the Therans usually put them to work far from where they were captured. Though much of the slave trade is made up of unfortunates from communities too small to know Throalic or even be aware of the Theran Empire, the Therans make sure their slave gangs are composed only of individuals from various far-flung places, people who do not share a common language, culture, or knowledge of the nearby land.

Theran slave-owners also control their slaves by offering them a chance at freedom in return for information about planned revolts and escapes. We do not know, however, if the Therans reward such behavior by keeping their promises.

Regardless of the debatable morality of slavery, its continued existence in Barsaive seems a certainty for several years to come.

Years ago when I was enslaved, I rowed a Theran mining ship alongside people who spoke words I had never heard before. I never knew how many of my fellow sufferers were from Barsaive and how many had been dragged countless miles to suffer in my homeland.

—J'Role the Honorable Thief

On Our Diverse Languages

Barsaive's diverse population speaks several languages, some of them more widely used than others. The following discussion touches on each of the major languages.

On the Language of Throal

Throalic, the most common language in Barsaive, is a corrupted version of the ancient tongue used by the dwarfs of the Throal Mountains centuries ago.

When the Theran Empire conquered Barsaive before the Scourge, its leaders encouraged the dwarfs of Throal to establish trade routes throughout the province. Of all the native groups in Barsaive, the dwarfs alone could match the Therans in prosperity. Realizing that the dwarfs were helping to create trading ties throughout the land, which would only make the Theran Empire stronger, the Therans gave the dwarf merchants almost free rein.

For hundreds of years dwarf traders traveled throughout Barsaive, eventually establishing their language as the language of trade. Throalic words described the standard for measurements, weights, money, and the accepted terms of negotiation. The spread of language worked both ways, however. As the dwarfs went about their business in towns and villages across Barsaive, they incorporated many words from those communities into the Throalic tongue.

The Throalic dwarfs have always been adept at weaving other people's customs, words, and ideas into their own ways, instinctively choosing whatever will make their own kingdom and people more appealing to others. Of course, many claim that the dwarfs just as instinctively take credit for these customs, words, and ideas, conveniently forgetting that they originally borrowed them. I cannot dispute this claim.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

On Throalic as the Common Tongue

Because Throalic is a relatively easy language to master, and because over time it incorporated so many pan-Barsaivian words, increasing numbers of people found it expedient to use the language for purposes other than trade.

Because rule by the Theran Empire made trade and travel safer and easier before the Scourge, people from all walks of life and areas of the province were encountering each other on the road, in cities, and everywhere else people could meet. The only language they had in common was bits and pieces of Throalic. In this way, Throalic eventually became the most widespread provincial tongue. Later the dwarfs began to record and standardize their language, thus ensuring its continued prominence as the common tongue of Barsaive and furthering the spread of dwarf culture.

How the *Book of Tomorrow* Came to Be

As part of this effort, a group of linguists headed by the legendary dwarf scribe Mabbon Destroggus created a book listing all the Throalic words in common use in Barsaive at that time, adding the rules of grammar according to dwarf custom. As the time of the Scourge drew near, the purpose of this book changed to eventually include the history of Barsaive and Thera, the province's tales and legends, and the knowledge that Throal possessed concerning the coming Scourge. What began as a book of language became the *Book of Tomorrow*, offering Barsaivians counsel on surviving the coming Scourge and how they might one day resume their normal life after the Horrors departed our world.

King Varulus II commissioned countless scribes to copy out this tome so that the book could be sent to communities all over Barsaive—cities, trading towns, t'skrang crew covenants, farming towns and villages, ork tribes, and so on—until nearly every settlement, big or small, had received a copy.

Most communities received their copy just as the Scourge was about to strike, and so the people carried the *Book of Tomorrow* with them into their kaers and citadels. During the four hundred years of hiding, the *Book of Tomorrow* became a symbol of hope for the people of Barsaive, a link to their past and the promise of a brighter future.

Those of us now living in Barsaive must understand that the people who sealed themselves away in the shelters—even those who knew no other way of life—never accepted that state of affairs as natural. People hid because of the Horrors; the Horrors were terrible, and therefore living in shelters was terrible. Each generation told its children stories of life before the Scourge, of living in a world with a warm yellow sun, vast green jungles, blue skies, trails of white clouds, and grassy expanses that stretched as far as the distant horizon.

The *Book of Tomorrow* reminded people of what they had lost and what they would someday regain. The word for "sun" was clearly defined in the book, so that every day people could open the book and know that the sun existed! Every day people could read and speak words that referred to things they had never experienced, things that they had lost generations before when the Horrors tore the world apart. Sky. Mountains. Farms. Airships. Flowers. Riverboats. Races not represented in certain kaers were remembered as well: elves, dwarfs, orks, windlings, and so on. Though the people in their kaers and citadels had little firsthand knowledge of the wonders described, the *Book of Tomorrow* ensured that little was forgotten. As generations passed, the words for things in the world they had lost took on the mystique of magical talismans. And gradually, the peoples of Barsaive developed a deep reverence for the land they could only dream of.

Generation after generation learned the language of the dwarfs. As the *Book of Tomorrow* gained mythic proportions, entire communities began to adopt the tongue that spoke of the promised land we would find once the Horrors retreated to their own astral plane. Pronunciation varied wildly, of course, as each community spoke according to its own way. But when the people began to emerge from hiding again, a common language with which to communicate made it easier for Barsaive to begin its long road to recovery from the Scourge.

As a boy, I learned much about the world that I could not verify as true. The warmth of the sun, the majesty of the airships, and the beauty of the elves all seemed too fabulous to be believed. And neither had anyone I knew ever seen these things, for the last people to see the sun had died centuries before.

—J'Role the Honorable Thief

A Few Remaining Curiosities

Because written Throalic is a complicated language, formed by pictures adorned with elaborate symbols, only a few, well-educated people in any community could read and write it. These more literate folk took on the task of teaching the spoken language to the rest of their communities. The inability of most ordinary citizens to read Throalic added to the mystique of the *Book of Tomorrow* and of the words within it.

Almost universal access to the *Book of Tomorrow* had another unexpected effect. Because the book described many dwarf customs, attributes, and ideals, most Barsaivians emerged from the kaers and citadels already feeling a comfortable familiarity with the dwarfs and their ways. Though generations had passed without contact, the *Book of Tomorrow* established the dwarfs in the hopes and dreams of their countrymen. It was that which allowed the small subterranean people of the Throal Mountains to play such an important role in unifying the land and attracting other races to their cities after the Scourge.

On the Theran Tongue

Prior to the Scourge, the Therans attempted to teach their language to the wealthy and educated citizens of Barsaive, and records show that the Theran language enjoyed widespread use hundreds of years ago. However, it was the *Book of Tomorrow* that sustained the people of Barsaive during the terrible time of the Scourge; the Theran language quickly fell into disuse. Only a few stories tell of communities that spoke Theran when they emerged from their shelters.

Except for the many Theran words adopted by the dwarfs before the Scourge, Theran is rarely heard in Barsaive. As part of the Therans' attempt to re-conquer Barsaive, they are once again attempting to teach us their tongue, but find their task even harder now. When the Theran Empire dominated Barsaive centuries ago, no common language unified the people. Now the Therans must grapple with a cultural identity that they helped forge, only to have it work against them.

In general only Theran bureaucrats learn Throalic, and then simply to communicate more easily with the local population. The Theran government has not given up its goal of establishing Theran as the official language of Barsaive and the rest of its empire, however.

On Racial and Local Languages

Barsaive's unification has made racial and local languages rare, but a few such tongues are still spoken. Countless farming villages and towns, some cut off completely from the political turmoil that has gripped Barsaive in recent years, still speak their ancient languages. Lacking copies of the *Book of Tomorrow*, these communities did not learn of the Throalic language and therefore continued to speak the tongue of their ancestors while in hiding.

Even the best-prepared heroes re-exploring our land may find themselves unable to communicate verbally with such people. Some communities use more than one language. The crystal raiders and ork scorcher tribes speak their own ancient tongues as their primary languages and in some cases also speak fluent Throalic.

The t'skrang of the Serpent River, members of the Elven Court, and other single-race communities also preserve their racial languages, but tend to use them as formal, almost ritual tongues, reserving them for official functions. Only the elite of such communities learn these ancient tongues, and many fear that these venerable languages will one day be lost to time.

Of course, racial languages only remain pure in racially pure communities. The t'skrang crew covenants and the Elven Court of Blood Wood are two examples of this increasingly rare phenomenon, notable exceptions to the interracial communities that make up the bulk of Barsaive. In this modern day, most Name-givers define themselves by where they live rather than by race.

My task of compiling notes describing all the known denizens of Barsaive began easily enough, then quickly became more difficult than I had expected. The known denizens of our province include not only the Name-giver races, but also dragons, mundane creatures, and the Horrors. Documenting these three latter groups took a heavy toll on my already precarious health. Members of each Name-giving race gladly provided information regarding their own people. However, I found listening to their stories and recording everything in the proper order extremely taxing. In fact, I accumulated so much information that I intend to begin writing one or more volumes fully describing the character and unique qualities of each Name-giver race once I complete this current task. If I am granted a life long enough to complete such a monumental undertaking, that is.

—Humbly offered to the reader by Jerriv Forrim, Scribe and Scholar of the Library of Throal

Regarding the Name-giver Races

Eight Name-giver races live in Barsaive: dwarf, elf, human, obsidiman, ork, troll, t'skrang, and windling. In view of the mountains of information I gathered for this book, I have dispensed with physical descriptions of the races. Instead, I offer each race's own words about its ways, customs, and place in Barsaive's society.

On the Ways of the Dwarfs

—Transcribed from the speaking of Lunas Ironhand, dwarf Weaponsmith

We dwarfs are the most numerous people of Barsaive, numbering nearly a third of the province's inhabitants. Though half our people live in the Kingdom of Throal, the rest (such as myself) live in villages and cities throughout the land. To give you an idea of how many dwarfs live outside Throal, our numbers nearly equal those of the trolls, orks, and humans in Barsaive. Elves, obsidimen, and windlings are far fewer than we.

Out brethren in Throal have given Barsaive freedom from Theran rule and are leading the land back to greatness. All dwarfs, in Throal and outside it, know our place as Barsaive's chief citizens and feel kinship with all of its peoples and places. We are our fellow races' elder brothers and have a duty to live ourselves as we would have them live. Unlike the Therans, who oppressed us, we dwarfs lead by example.

All of Barsaive is home to a dwarf. We go where we will, and all welcome us. The Caucavic Mountains, the Serpent River, it matters not. Wherever we go, we remain dwarfs and are proud to be so.

Our nature as builders makes us dwarfs. We build everything: weapons, jewelry, roads, farms, houses, ships, carts, and everything else we—or others—need. In Throal, we have even built a new society! Of course, our pride in building carries its price, as does any gift. A dwarf measures himself by what he makes, by its beauty and its quantity, and by what he can endure in the making. I have seen fellow dwarfs exhaust themselves in labor to earn the respect of neighbors.

You ask me if the Kingdom of Throal holds the same place in a dwarf's heart as Blood Wood holds for an elf, and I tell you it does not. Though built by dwarfs, Throal is not a dwarf land. Most dwarfs in Barsaive take pride in the kingdom and its growing power, but we know well that many races other than dwarfs live inside its boundaries. And so it should be, for what is Barsaive itself but the common home of many peoples? Those of us who live outside Throal wish it well, but it is not our home. Like any other Name-giver, a dwarf's home is his city, town, or village.

In the interests of honesty, I must confess to you that some dwarf villages view Throal with suspicion. Not many, mind; those of us who know how to think know that Throal has done well by Barsaive. But some dwarfs with suspicious minds fear that Throal's military and political power will lead it to oppress the people of Barsaive once we have driven the hated Therans from our land.

Ironhand quaffed dwarf stout ale throughout the interview. He insisted that I drink some, which I did, against my better judgment. It was delicious, but later made me quite sick at my stomach.

—Jerriv Forrim, Scribe and Scholar of the Library of Throal

On the Ways of the Elves

—Transcribed from the Speaking of R'iallan ni Mar, elven Merchant of Travar

Of course you wish to know of Blood Wood. Why would anyone who speaks to an elf wish to know of anything else? No matter that throughout Barsaive live many elves who refused to take shelter in the Elven Queen's Court during the Scourge and so were saved from corruption. No matter that we are set apart from those now known as the Blood Elves. No matter that, like all the Name-giver races throughout Barsaive, we uncorrupted elves live in harmony and peace with non-elven neighbors. No matter that we do not look to the Elven Queen's Court to guide our existence. No matter that we live our lives like any of our neighbors, whether we live in a great city such as Travar or a small farming village buried deep in a jungle. People see us and think of the Blood Wood and must know what we think of it.

To my sorrow, I cannot claim that Blood Wood has no hold on me. Though it causes me great pain, I must speak truthfully of this matter. (There you have what it is to be an elf, chronicler. We follow the path of honor though we may die for it. See that you write that, when you tell our tale.) We cannot help but remember in every waking moment that in the northern reaches of Barsaive live a community of elves that most of Barsaive regards as monsters. And yet, these monsters are of one flesh with us—or were, ages ago. Our loyalty is torn. We recognize that the elves of Blood Wood did an abominable thing to themselves during the Scourge, yet cannot wholly renounce them. How can we renounce them, remembering that the Elven Queen's Court was once the heart of all elves? When it was Wyrm Wood, it was our glory; in it we gave voice to higher ideals and shape to finer beauty than any other Name-giver race has ever created. When Wyrm Wood became Blood Wood, it perverted these ideals and this beauty. And yet, it remains an exquisite place.

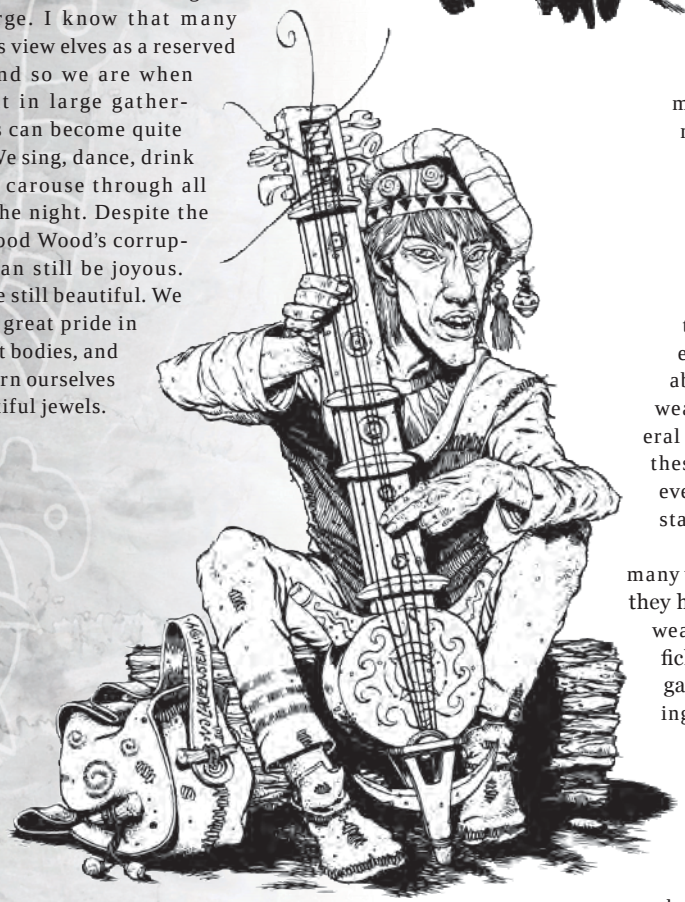
This change has worked its ill upon us. Where once elves strode across the land with heads held high, our bearing now at times reveals shame. Some elves let their shame weaken their pride in their heritage, walking with their eyes down-

cast and doing all they can to forget that they are elves. Other elves hide their shame by sneering at the ways of other races, belittling them and striving to show that elven ways are best. They do not truly believe this, of course; if they felt pride in being elves, they would feel no need to sneer and bully.

We uncorrupted elves firmly believe that we can and must someday return Blood Wood to its former purity and glory. Many of us devote our lives to working toward this day, some alone and some as members of the Seekers of the Heart. We reveal this hope in a short poem recited at the evening meal, spoken aloud among our own and silently in the presence of non-elves. An elven Troubadour wrote it 50 years ago. Your ears, chronicler, are the first non-elven ones ever to hear it.

My woodland heart is by its children killed,
In mocking life its voice forever stilled.
The sweet rose has become a cankered bud;
Its thorns have drowned the blossom deep in blood.
In memory, I see your beauties clear,
Each tree inclining gladly toward the sun
That in its turn rained down each golden tear
Till green and gold met, joined, became as one.
It lives within you still, each tree, each flower;
Each joyous elf, to reclaim with love's power.
Until that day, this world I'll not depart;
And to its coming, I do pledge my heart.

Besides the duty to purify Blood Wood, all elves have an obligation to protect nature. Even those of us who live in the cities must do what we can to heal the ravages of the Scourge. I know that many other races view elves as a reserved people, and so we are when alone. But in large gatherings, elves can become quite raucous. We sing, dance, drink wine, and carouse through all hours of the night. Despite the pain of Blood Wood's corruption, we can still be joyous. And we are still beautiful. We elves take great pride in our elegant bodies, and love to adorn ourselves with beautiful jewels.



R'iallan ni Mar's perfume gave me a splitting headache. I apologize if my inability to concentrate because of the pain caused me to transcribe anything inaccurately.

—Jerriv Forrim, Scribe and Scholar of the Library of Throal

On the Ways of the Humans

—Transcribed from the speaking of Tel Kour, human Thief of Kratas

Let me tell you about my fellow humans, friend. We would like to swagger through the world with as much bravado as orks and trolls, but humans haven't enough bulk to back up rude behavior. Instead, we humans accomplish our ends through manipulation, controlling magic, politics, and money. True, everyone else in Barsaive also uses magic, politics, and money to get what they want, but humans excel at it. We gather information, influence, and wealth and hold it close. Others may share if they can persuade us to trust them, but may not own what we have.

Humans, especially men, foolishly insist on believing that life is a conflict. He who refuses to see enemies everywhere will lose all to them, and so must strike others before they strike him. You must have listened to many a human conversation; you know the truth of what I say. Every discussion that does not turn on how best to do ill to someone else will invariably fall into gossip. Women gossip about personal matters—people in the village, who is wearing what these days. Men gossip about more general matters—people in power, who is dictating to whom these days. We humans rarely get to the heart of whatever business is at hand. Determining and establishing status, in any form, lies at the root of all our dealings.

Humans play these games of prestige and power in many ways. Some humans make sure the world knows that they have power. They seek positions of rank, flaunt their wealth, and lord it over everyone they meet. Others traffick in secrets, worming information from confidants, gathering influence and resources secretly, and revealing them only when they must.

I find it amusing when other Name-givers lump humans together with orks and trolls, as if we had much in common with those great louts. I find it even more amusing when my fellow humans take the comparison seriously. More than once, I have seen other humans display ridiculous physical bravado to prove that they are as tough as trolls and orks. Often, trolls and orks pick fights with hot-headed humans, knowing that the human will enter the fray to preserve his pride.

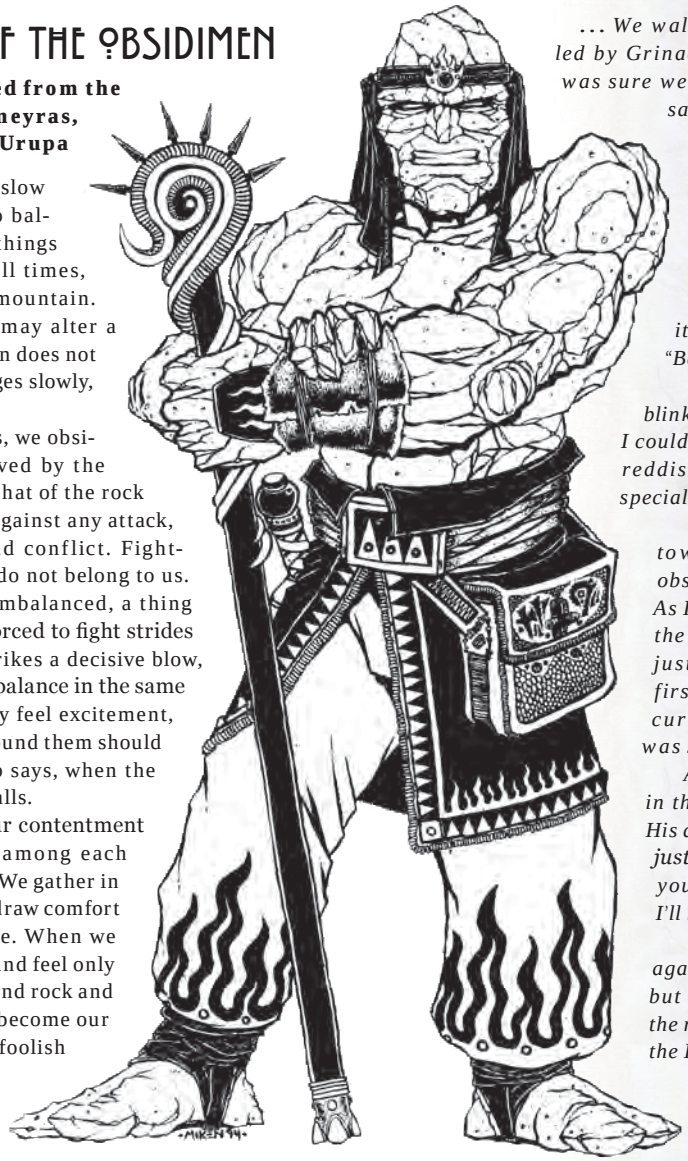
As might be expected, the human always loses. But in the strange world view held by my race, such a human wins. The simple fact that he accepted the challenge allows him to go back to his friends and boast that he stood up to the aggressor, gaining him much honor among his peers.

Of course, many humans will back down from a fight—and then arrange for ruffians to set upon the ork or troll later that night, or have the local authorities fine the bully until he has no coin or possessions to his name.

—Jerriv Forrim, Scribe and Scholar of the Library of Throal

On the Ways of the Obsidimen

—Transcribed from the speaking of Omeyras, Troubadour of Urupa



We obsidimen have a slow and steady nature, tied to balance. We believe that all things should remain stable at all times, like the tranquil life of a mountain. Time and rain and wind may alter a mountain, but the mountain does not make the changes. It changes slowly, simply by being.

Unlike our fellow races, we obsidimen are not easily moved by the Passions. Our strength is that of the rock and we can easily defend against any attack, but we do not understand conflict. Fighting and war, these things do not belong to us. Those who fight become imbalanced, a thing we abhor. An obsidiman forced to fight strides up to his opponent and strikes a decisive blow, ending the fight and its imbalance in the same moment. Obsidimen rarely feel excitement, but when they do, those around them should seek cover. As the proverb says, when the ground shakes, everyone falls.

Most often, we find our contentment in standing motionless, among each other and in the elements. We gather in groups to stand silent and draw comfort from each other's presence. When we stand so, we see and hear and feel only each other, only the earth and rock and air and rain. These things become our whole world, unless some foolish one threatens us.

Some obsidimen like myself become adventurers, seeking out other races simply to see how the imbalanced, frenzied, energy-wasters live. For myself, I have even come to love the life of quick energy that others of our race consider useless. Over the years, I came to spend less time with my own people and more with those who adventure by trade, until I chose to live in this great city among my hasty, strange, but beloved companions.

I have worked for many merchants as a caravan guard; they think well of obsidimen because we are well-behaved, responsible, and as tough as the rock we resemble. I have also worked for mercenary bands, though they had some difficulty in teaching me to attack swiftly. For those of my race, the world is less urgent, and so we sometimes fail to see the need for action until long after others join the fray. I must confess I prefer working for merchants; among them, I face less conflict and imbalance.

Obsidimen are rare in Barsaive, though some students of the race conjecture that they may live in greater numbers in other parts of the world. Needless to say, I had a difficult time finding one to speak to. The effort of traveling to Urupa to speak with the Troubadour Omeyras sent me to my pallet for a week.

—Jerriv Forrim, Scribe and Scholar of the Library of Throal

... We walked toward a rocky outcropping, led by Grinache, my obsidiman companion. I was sure we were in the wrong place. He had said we were looking for his Liferock, where he and his family enter their "time of thought," as he called it. Surely, I thought, this outsized rock formation couldn't be his Liferock. What's a tumbled lot of boulders got to do with life? I mean, rock's never been alive, has it? I asked him why he was stopping. "Because we are here," he said.

I'd nothing to say to that. Just blinked at him and kept my mouth shut. I couldn't believe that a heap of ordinary, reddish brown rock could be anything special to anyone.

But then, as I watched him move toward it, I saw the shape of an obsidiman begin to form in the stone. As I looked even closer, I realized that the shape had been there all along; I just hadn't seen it. To the left of the first shape I saw another obsidiman, curled up tight next to a third who was sitting.

As I stood mesmerized by the shapes in the Liferock, Grinache spoke to me. His deep voice, as always, reminded me just a little of muffled thunder. "Thank you for coming home with me, Rinn. I'll be staying for a time."

I stayed and watched. He leaned against the outcropping, not truly rock but his obsidiman brothers, and over the next several hours became one with the Liferock...

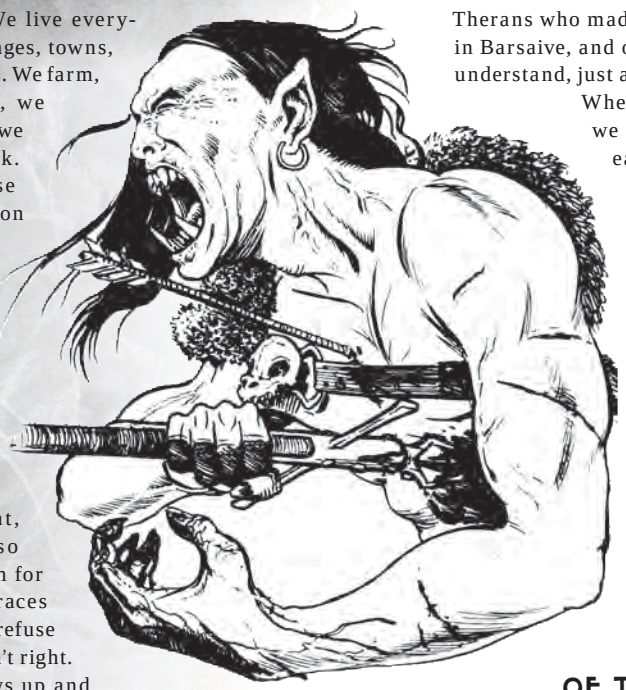
—From the journal of Rinnthal of Travar, 1506 TH

On the Ways of the Orks

—Transcribed from the speaking of V'Gogh Bonecracker, innkeeper

We orks have ambition, we do. We work hard at a task and never quit until it is done. Show me the puny human who works half as hard or does half as much! One in five of all Barsaivians is ork. Outside of Throal, more of us live in Barsaive than any

other single race. We live everywhere, we do: in villages, towns, and the greatest cities. We farm, we sell, we soldier, we lead the people, and we protect innocent folk. Plenty trust us these days; some still spit on the ground we walk on, but that only shows how stupid they are. As for us, we care nothing for what they think. Why should we? They are not ork.



Know what sticks in my throat, friend? We work so hard and do so much for Barsaive, yet other races still belittle us. They refuse us their respect. It isn't right. Every ork child grows up and goes off on his own, working hard to succeed as a farmer or merchant or even to strike it rich in a deserted kaer. Yet even if they get respect for what they have done, they get it in spite of being orks. Their so-called betters overlook their race, as if being ork were like being diseased.

Ironically, this hardened individualism is exactly what keeps orks from gaining power and respect as a group. However, with the recent re-founding of Cara Fahd, that might change.

—Jerriv Forrim, Scribe and Scholar of the Library of Throal

No matter what, an ork strives to succeed. Any ork worth the name will do almost anything to reach his goal. Most of us call this good, but sometimes it turns us bad. Honest orks work hard enough to make a dwarf jealous. In a dishonest ork, this striving to succeed at any cost can produce a thief, a murderer, or worse. Lucky for Barsaive, most of us are good people. Even the scorcher bands only want respect and a good living... well, most do. After all, why shouldn't orks charge tolls for the roads? Didn't we build most of them?

We built those roads, we did, with a stamina that no one else can claim. Orks can endure any pain if we must. Failure is not an end to an ork, only a wayside stop on the road to success.

Our children learn ambition through the stories we tell each generation. Ork lore tells us that in ancient times almost every race in the world used orks as slaves. We were Name-givers, yet they treated us as mindless animals. We didn't stand for it, we didn't. We won our freedom with our blood; we fought hard for it. We made them see us as Name-givers, just like themselves. They hated us for it. The looking-down-the-nose started back then. Strange to tell, it was the Therans who made things better for us. They enslaved all races in Barsaive, and only then did our fellow Name-givers begin to understand, just a little, what they had done to us.

When it came time to build the kaers and citadels, we orks built more and faster than anyone; that earned us heartfelt thanks, if nothing else. But not respect, oh no. Not for the lowly ork. I tell you, friend, sometimes it's enough to drive an ork to plunder and murder. If I have a treasure and you have nothing, you must respect me, right?

The food served at the inn in the Tylon foothills made me break out in spots. I cannot speak well of his cook.

—Jerriv Forrim, Scribe and Scholar of the Library of Throal

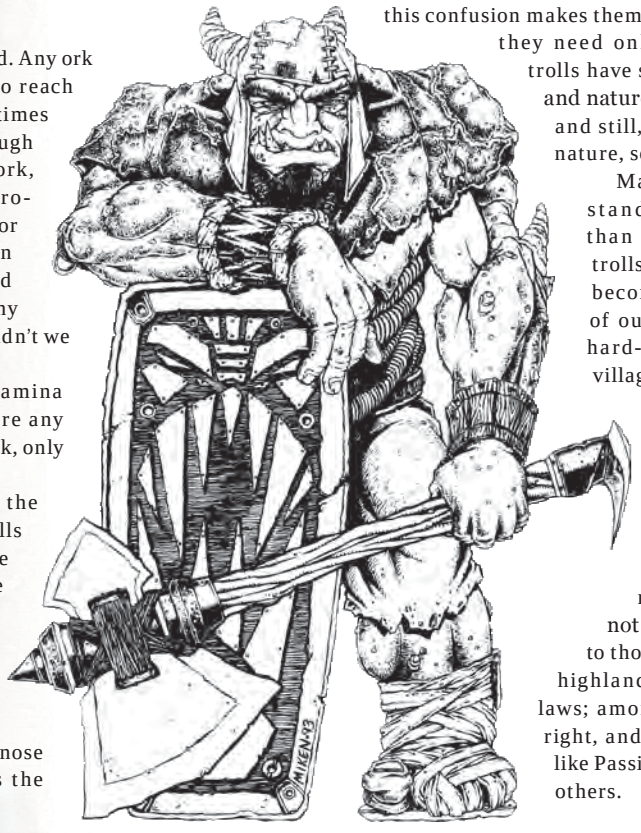
On the Ways of the Trolls

—Transcribed from the speaking of Haschem, leader of Kahlor

On behalf of my village, I welcome you, Jerriv Forrim. I say this so that you will know we are civilized.

First, let me say that we are not cousins to the obsidimen. True, we are large; true, many of us dig homes deep into the sides of mountains. We value the obsidimen, as we do all Name-giver races, but the rumor that we are kin is false.

It is sad that we trolls so confuse our fellow Name-givers. They see us impassioned, impatient, intemperate, and driven to extraordinary physical exertion; then they see us fall as suddenly still as an obsidiman when contemplating a sunset or the sparkle of sunlight against a mountain stream. They know not what to make of a race both fierce and gentle, and too often this confusion makes them fearful. To understand, they need only remember that we trolls have strong ties to the earth and nature. Nature itself is fierce and still, noisy and silent. As is nature, so are we.



Many also fail to understand that there is more than one kind of troll. The trolls of the highlands have become a crude stereotype of our people; they live in hard-to-reach mountaintop villages and live off the land, often herding goats and other animals for sustenance and barter. The crystal raiders are the best known of the highland dwellers, though many highland trolls do not fly airships. Compared to those of us in the lowlands, highland trolls have primitive laws; among them, might makes right, and they venerate the warlike Passion Thystonius above all others.

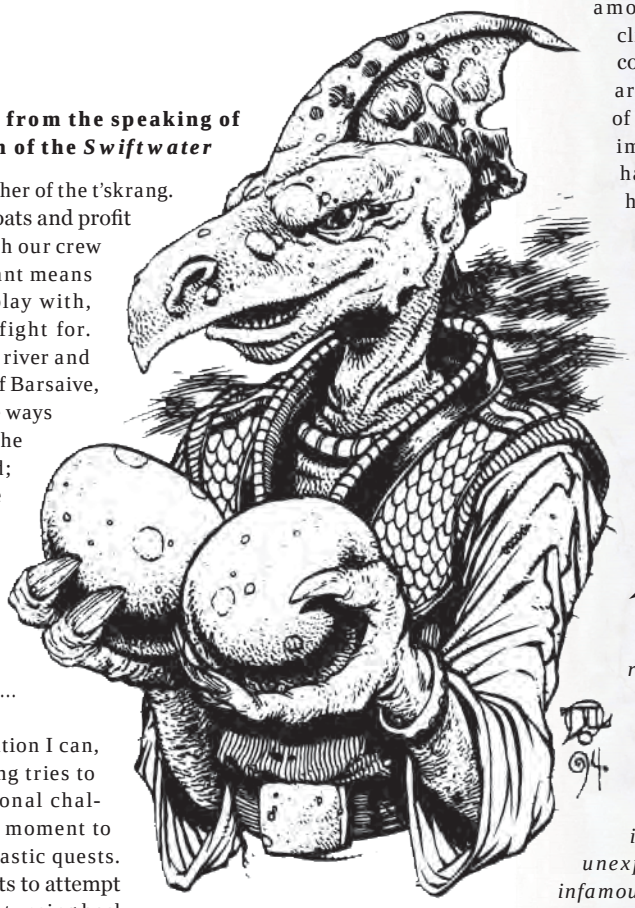
Sadly, most Barsaivians believe that all trolls act like highland trolls. Like all stereotypes, this notion is unfair and untrue. A troll family such as my own that has lived for generations in the lowlands has only its race in common with the highland trolls. To assume that we too are brash, violent, and driven by a need to plunder represents the worst sort of ignorance. We are a people like any other; we live peacefully in villages, towns, and cities, and some of us even achieve positions of power. Because many of our neighbors fail to fully accept us, however, most of us appear socially awkward in their eyes.

The greatest trouble we face in Barsaive society is our size—or rather, the failure of others to accommodate our size. As we lowland trolls are few in number, architects and other craftsmen rarely build corridors, doorways, chairs, tables, and tools large enough for troll bodies. In any city, a troll rarely finds a room to rent that he can fit in comfortably. Rarer still does a troll find a chair at a tavern that he will not crush by attempting to sit in it or a mug large enough to hold with any semblance of grace. Because we are large and the world is built small, everywhere we go we trolls appear ungainly, clumsy, and destructive. This is not our nature, but simply the fate of those living in a world not made for our comfort. Despite, or perhaps because of, these difficulties, we lowland trolls take pride in working to prove our worth to the towns and villages we live in.

On the Ways of the T'skrang

—Transcribed from the speaking of Dariinaeus, Captain of the *Swiftwater*

The Serpent River is the mother of the t'skrang. We sail her waters in our riverboats and profit from trade, with which we enrich our crew covenants. To us, a crew covenant means a family: those we eat with, play with, squabble with, care for, and fight for. Though many t'skrang leave the river and wander the width and breadth of Barsaive, they return in their hearts to the ways they learned growing up along the Serpent. And well they should; there's no life like it, and no race like the t'skrang.



We value bravado above all other things. Only a t'skrang truly understands bravado; we live it and breathe it as no one else does. Oh, a few individuals may, but as a race... (Here the t'skrang shrugged.)

I will give you what explanation I can, of course. Gladly! Every t'skrang tries to fill his life with as many personal challenges as possible—day to day, moment to moment. Some journey on fantastic quests. Others choose new, difficult feats to attempt each day—swinging from ropes, turning backflips, and such. If there is a simple way to do a thing and a flashy way to do the same thing, a t'skrang chooses flash every time. Other t'skrang follow those who show the most bravado, regarding the bravest and flashiest as the best teacher from whom to learn bravado.

Many people believe that the t'skrang express bravado only through fighting, but this is not so. Feats of dexterity, endurance, public oration, impromptu storytelling, blunt flirtation, and even convincing a man to give away all his goods count as impressive acts of bravado.

The other races of Barsaive laugh at us, but like true t'skrang we take that which is intended as good-natured contempt and make it a point of pride. Perhaps we are reckless, absurd, and fit to be laughed at—but after all, what is life without daring and amusement? We provide these things for you duller creatures; you'd die of boredom without us.

Understand, however, that t'skrang culture is more than showing off. We t'skrang are fiercely loyal to those around us—whether members of our crew covenant, neighbors in a city, or companions on an adventure. We balance our recklessness against the community's survival and safety, and each t'skrang must choose his or her own way to do this in the heat of the moment.

Captain Dariinaeus pressed me to accept some of the famous t'skrang spiced fish. Surprisingly, it agreed with me. I recommend it.

—Jerriv Forrim, Scribe and Scholar of the Library of Throal

Let me explain this by way of a story. We have a great, epic poem—the tale of Yustraa Piaan, most beloved among ancient t'skrang heroes. The climax pits Yustraa against just that conflict: should he return home alone, armed only with a bow and a quiver of arrows, to rescue his wife from the importunate attentions of suitors who have taken over his home? Or should he hire mercenaries to drive the suitors out? In the tale, he goes back alone and kills all the suitors, but both Yustraa Piaan and his wife also die. Many might consider this a tragic legend; we see it as a testament to the hero's bravado that he attempted such a battle single-handed. That he failed after coming so near to success gives the story a tragic undercurrent, but we regard his choice as courageous rather than foolish.

... On the fourth day, our riverboat pulled into the port town of T'uurl to take on supplies, and Nadalya and I took the opportunity to sample some t'skrang river life. We began with a fine t'skrang feast and were enjoying some music in a local tavern when we were unexpectedly treated to a taste of the infamous t'skrang bravado.

It all started innocently enough when an extravagantly dressed t'skrang riverman struck up a conversation with us. We both found his outrageous boasting amusing and soon were exchanging toasts of vinlo, an exquisitely spiced t'skrang wine with a kick like an ork war horse. Eventually the t'skrang's near-constant patter turned to Nadalya's physical charms, which didn't really bother me at first. But when I spied the lizard-man's tail begin snaking its way under the hem of my Nadalya's skirt, I decided enough was enough.

"All right, fish-face, that's it. Keep your tail where it belongs or I'll do it for you."

"What's wrong, little man?" he replied. "I'm only trying to show this beautiful lady some t'skrang hospitality. After all, such a fine young flower obviously cannot be satisfied by a tail-less freak such as yourself."

I must admit I lost my head at that point. I began to close with the t'skrang, and when he began to reach for the bejeweled handle of his sword, I sprang inside his reach, pinning his arm against his side and stepping down on his slimy green tail with all my weight. He immediately dropped to the ground, wailing like a wounded crakbill and cradling his scaly appendage.

I grabbed Nadalya by the hand and we flew like frightened windlings from the tavern, not stopping until we had reached the safety of our riverboat. When she finally caught her breath, Nadalya let loose with a string of obscenities the likes of which I'd never heard before. Apparently she thought I had over-reacted!

Three full days passed before she would speak to me again…

—From the journal of Paalo of Travar

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On the Ways of the Windlings

—Transcribed from the speaking of Tyrwhill, windling Archer of Clan Whaele

Change, change, change—that is the nature of windlings. Change is what we love, and change is what we will have. One generation may borrow the martial trappings of the highland trolls, the next dedicates themselves to peace. We watch everything and everyone; nothing escapes a windling's eye. We borrow what we will from the ways of others, shifting from one to the next as quickly and easily as the wealthy change their wardrobe to keep up with fashion. As we windlings often say, "Why live one way if there are hundreds of ways waiting for you?"

Children we love most of all. Few of us bear them, and so we cherish them and raise them with great care. A child is change made flesh. As the child windling sees the world through fascinated eyes, so do grown windlings try to recapture and sharpen our own feelings of wonder and enjoyment of the world.

We raise our children in clans of 30 windlings or so, four adults for each child. All grown windlings share care for all the children as if each were his or her own. Some doubtless think us too frivolous for parenting, but we take that task more seriously than any other. Any creature or person who threatens a windling can expect no quarter, and our small size belies our fierceness.

We windlings love to travel across Barsaive, meeting different races and telling stories back home of what we have seen and done. If we like what another race does, we do it; their ways become windling ways, at least until we tire of them and make up new ones. They say that windling life changes dramatically every ten years. I say it's more like six or seven, but that changes too.

A windling will try anything new at least once, laughing all the way through every new experience. Some call this windling daring bravado, comparing us to the t'skrang. Unlike the river people, windlings rarely care if we succeed or fail at something new. A t'skrang might feel shame at failure; not so a windling, except in matters of life and death. Windlings possess a fierce desire to live and will take fewer risks than a t'skrang. What matters most to us is not succeeding, but simply doing.

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The task of describing the places in which the people of Barsaive live fell to me. In some respects, I found my task an easy one; many people have visited our land's great cities, and most were eager to describe them for anyone willing to listen. Because this information could have filled an entire volume by itself, I have chosen only the most important or best-known of each city's or town's features. The reader should also note that the descriptions provided here can serve only as an introduction to the cities and towns of Barsaive. More exhaustive information is available in the Throal Encyclopedia, 1509 TH

—Written on the Eighth Day of Raquas by Kern Redhand, Historian of Throal

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Where the Peoples of Barsaive Dwell

Though each of the Name-giver races contributes to Barsaivian culture, the influence of each race on a given area differs according to its numbers in that area. The province of Barsaive can be divided into three broad regions: the Kingdom of Throal, including its recently constructed cities; the lowlands, which include most of the province's jungles, the Serpent River, and so on; and the highlands, which include all the mountains and plateaus of the province. All Barsaivian cities outside of Throal lie in the lowlands; many smaller villages and towns lie in the highlands.

One-third of the province's population lives in the Kingdom of Throal. Half the population lives in the lowlands, with half of this number residing in the cities. This means that the great lowland jungles of Barsaive support slightly more than a fourth of the province's population. Though the Scourge ended more than a century ago and we can now travel the land freely, most people, from habit or wisdom, prefer to cluster together.

Towns and Villages

Hundreds of villages and towns dot the landscape of Barsaive; this volume will describe them only in general terms. The only difference between villages and towns is the number of people living in them. Though no hard and fast rule exists to determine when a village becomes a town, as a rule of thumb, a settlement whose population numbers tens or hundreds is considered a vil-

lage, while one numbering in the high hundreds to the thousands is considered a town. Some feel that the distinction has less to do with numbers than with the way in which each settlement sees itself.

The discourse in these pages refers mainly to Barsaive's villages, towns, and a few nomadic groups that have ties of trade and politics with other settlements. As part of the devastating legacy of the Scourge, most towns and villages scattered throughout the jungles and hills of the province show little interest in their neighbors—except when attacked, of course. Those settlements that fall victim to attack do their best to rebuild and return to the life they lived before catastrophe befell them.

In fact, most people in Barsaive live their entire lives in the communities in which they were born; never having the need or desire for trade or travel. They learn a trade, which is usually farming; grow to adulthood, marry, and raise children. They teach their children the knowledge they accumulated in a lifetime, grow old, and die.

For villages and towns engaged in commerce, even if only that of hosting travelers in settlements that lie near roads, a select few townspeople usually deal with the outside world. Their fellow citizens consider travelers quite brave, though somewhat suspect, for to leave home one must abandon for a time one's family, village, and magical protections. Those with an aptitude for dealing with strangers often establish inns, creating a gathering place for the community and providing a few rooms for travelers to rent for a small fee. An inn allows those few individuals who are curious about the outside world, hungry for tales of strange places and peculiar adventures, to satisfy their curiosity in a relatively safe manner. Most villagers shun travelers, however. The Horrors still live in the world, and if even a trusted friend can become an enemy without warning, how can an unknown visitor be trusted?

Towns and villages that engage in commerce can be distinguished by their accessibility to and interest in the larger, outside world. Settlements that lie along major trade routes, or are connected to major roads by trails usually conduct at least a little trade with travelers and other communities.

Occasionally, people from neighboring villages or towns marry, but only if relations between the communities are very good.

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I and others I know believe that gathering with other people represents the best means to secure safety, but common sense comes in many forms. To each his own.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

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Most towns and villages lie far from established roads, many isolated ever since the time of the Scourge. When the Scourge ended, the people who left their shelters sought above all a place in the world safe from danger. Beyond that, they wished for nothing else. Even today, nearly a century later, some still believe that cutting off all ties with the rest of the world is the best means to guarantee their safety.

Though no town or village can depend entirely on trade for its survival, those communities accessible to regular trade routes often possess a greater variety of trinkets and clothes, and have more interest in strangers than do many more isolated farming communities. They also have a greater appetite for new ideas and trade goods, and show interest in novelties from far away (or not so far away, depending on the inhabitants' definition of distance).

Farming Communities

In contrast, farming communities usually keep to themselves. The people farm the hilly land, producing rice, fruit, and vegetables, and raise livestock, including sheep, cows, and goats. Because wide expanses of flat ground are rare in Barsaive except in the lowlands, many farmers plant crops in a series of irrigated ledges that follow the contours of the hills. The ledges resemble large, wet steps.

Most villages and towns build their houses on the ground, using stone, mud, and wood. Others are more exotic. Some villages in Barsaive build their homes on stilts that raise the buildings several feet above deep ponds and lakes. In these settlements, the villagers use canoes or boats to travel around the village. Other towns and villages build their homes in the trees. Many such tree-houses become quite elaborate, their massive structures connected by rope bridges spanning hundreds of feet between trees.

A word of warning for the cautious traveler: as the following journal entry shows, many isolated communities prefer to remain so. Keeping this in mind, the traveler should remember that many people in Barsaive still regard strangers with extreme hostility, despite the visitor's good intentions. An explorer will improve his chances of surviving the adventures that fall his way by making his first contact with isolated villages very cautiously.

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... I'll not go adventuring again. Mad for it, we were—my brother M'kael, our cousins D'nal and Rekera, and me, Melias. Runt of the litter, they called me. Funny, isn't it? In a tippy boat that D'nal had built from the memory of a t'skrang riverboat he'd seen once, we set out down the river our folk call Twistwater. Above our village it goes through bends and even rapids, and so we headed downriver toward calm waters. Safer there, we thought.

All we wanted was a little adventure, something to tell grandchildren by the bonfire on the village green ...

But the story turned out much differently.

A storm blew up one night, sending us down a river channel none of us knew. Morning saw us drifting among tall, thick reed beds, where the water smelled of hot sunlight and rotting weeds. We paddled around a bend and saw a little village, 20 round houses on stilts with a little canoe tied up by each one. A sudden wind brought us the scent of fish roasting, and we paddled closer hoping to obtain a bite to eat.

A canoe drifted close, in which sat a ragged, skinny boy cutting reeds with a large knife. D'nal shouted hello. The boy turned, and screamed at the sight of us—the kind of scream you give when your house is burning down or a nightmare chokes your throat so hard that you must wake or go mad. Then whip-quick, he hurled his knife at D'nal. The point struck D'nal in the chest, taking him down in a shower of blood. The rest of us grabbed oars and tried to paddle away, M'kael cursing as the prow caught in the weeds. Too slow, we were. Too slow. A dozen canoes came after us, the villagers shooting arrows and slinging

stones. An arrow took Rekera in the throat before M'kael and I went under as the weight of the stones capsized our boat. Poor M'kael never had learned to swim.

Seems they don't like strangers down the Twistwater.

—From the journal of Melias Mahoaryl of the Village of Danadal

T'skrang River Villages

Many t'skrang villages line the banks of the Serpent River. In these villages live the t'skrang crew covenants, that race's form of extended family. The crew covenant serves many functions for the t'skrang living in these riverside villages. Though t'skrang sailors love to travel up and down the river, they also enjoy long stays in their villages. The t'skrang love of children and their strong family ties make them value a safe haven in their riverside communities.

T'skrang villages are made up of four to twenty extended families, called foundations because they are the base on which t'skrang society is built. Each foundation is ruled by its oldest female elder, called the *lahala*.

These villages lie partly buried under the muddy bottom of the Serpent and rise slightly above it. Constructed of stone and shaped like domes, t'skrang homes are connected by underground tunnels. The domes vary in size, with at least one dome in every village large enough to hold the entire population for meetings and celebrations. Each foundation also builds a dome where its members communally eat and sleep. For every foundation formed, another dome must be built.

The t'skrang love to climb and swing on ropes. Where space permits, foundation members string ropes along walls and ceilings, forming some into ladders and dangling others from high ceilings. The play of t'skrang children consists almost entirely of chasing each other around on these ropes.

Society within each village is matriarchal. When two t'skrang marry, the man enters the woman's foundation. Decisions within each foundation as to the sharing of food, clothes, novelties, and so on are made by a council comprising the women of the foundation, led by its lahala. Men do not attend these meetings, but their wives and sisters usually solicit their opinions before the council meeting.

All members over the age of 15 have a voice in making decisions affecting the entire crew covenant (that is, the entire village). Monthly meetings take place in the large dome at the center of the village, though the council may call an unscheduled meeting if an emergency warrants it. The meetings reflect the nature of the t'skrang themselves: loud, boisterous, energetic, and full of motion. Impassioned t'skrang often climb the ropeworks of the dome during a meeting, scrambling over each other to reach the highest points in the room and shout each other down.

On the Building and Function of Towers

In every t'skrang village, large, thick spires extend upward from the river floor, usually four to twenty per village. Each of these towers belongs to one of the village's foundations. Rising above the surface of the Serpent, the towers resemble round rocks with flat tops from the shore. The towers are sturdily made to withstand the powerful, fast current of the Serpent and the constant pounding of the waves against the upriver face of the towers. A steady spray of water boils off the face of the tower and crashes back into the river, making for an interesting hazard when sailing.

These towers serve several purposes. They allow easy access between the village and the surface of the river, serve as docks for t'skrang riverboats, and protect the village from pirate attacks.

To defend against attack, the t'skrang mount on the towers the same fire cannons used on the riverboats. They also erect magical barricades called *refselenika* or *refs* that radiate from the towers. Lying invisible just below the surface of the water, *refs* consist of elemental water shaped into thick spikes that can tear open the hull of any riverboat passing above. Tower sentries raise and lower the *refs* to allow friendly riverboats to pass safely and covenant boats to leave or approach the tower. Because all towers are surrounded by *refs*, all riverboats steer clear of tower tops unless invited in by the towers' crew covenant.

To raise and lower the *refs* takes five minutes or so, leaving the village exposed to hostile riverboats for that length of time. Before lowering the *refs*, guards scan the Serpent carefully for unknown ships. Because the Serpent meanders in gentle curves, the tower guards can see farther than a ship can travel in five minutes, making it unlikely that an enemy ship can reach the village before the *refs* go down. Extraordinary as it may seem, however, more than one t'skrang captain has managed to bypass the *refs* of another village. Captain Patrochian of the *Breeton* accomplished this feat by arranging for a powerful spell of invisibility to be placed over her ship and waiting only yards away from a tower while the *refs* were lowered. Another captain, so the story goes, fueled his engines with so much elemental fire that he was able to charge down the Serpent from his hiding place around a bend in a scant three minutes. His engines exploded as he reached the village, but his story is remembered because he successfully passed his riverboat over the *refs*.

The t'skrang place especial importance on protecting the towers furthest upstream from the village, because ships that control those towers control access to the village. Once docked at a tower, the crew of a hostile ship can storm it and from there make their way to the helpless village. Because the village's best fighters and sailors go with the riverboats, the village is at its lowest strength when the village boats are out on the river. A raided village can only surrender, hope for rescue, or die fighting.

Allowing enemies to control even one tower gives them access to the rest of the village, and the t'skrang have few choices in such dire straits. Though they are uniformly good swimmers, the river is swift and strong; few t'skrang can leave their village from the riverbed, swim to the surface, and end up where they wish to be. Of course, enemy t'skrang who try to reach a village by swimming rather than through the towers face the same obstacle. If hostile ships control all of a village's towers, its citizens may starve to death. Most supplies come from the village's riverboats, either through trade or piracy. Those supplies move from boats and the shore to the village through the towers.

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The cities of Barsaive house many more people than do villages and towns, usually many thousands. As in all of Barsaive, each city features unique customs and culture. A common practice in Urupa, for example, may be a punishable offense in Iopos. In the following pages, I describe the most famed cities in Barsaive. I have organized the information given for each in such a manner as to best express the individual character of each city.

—Kern Redhand, Historian of Throal

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On the Great Cities

Barsaive is home to many cities and large settlements. This section provides an overview of the major urban population centers of the Province.

Urupa

The city of Urupa lies 23 days' walk or 15 days' ride from Throal. Situated on the shore of the Aras Sea near the end of a tributary of the Serpent River, Urupa stands alone among the cities of Barsaive. A relatively new city, Urupa was founded almost 90 years ago, shortly after the end of the Scourge.

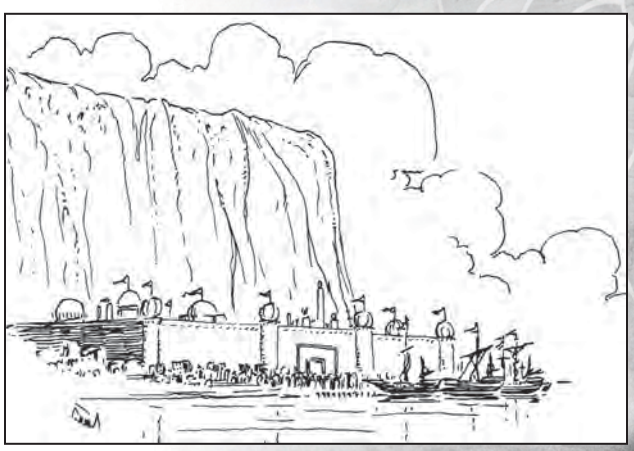
The residents of seven nearby kaers and citadels located along the shore of the Aras Sea established Urupa, believing that safety lay in numbers. Each community had reached this conclusion independently during the Scourge, and so readily pooled their resources and moved north after the Scourge toward the current site of the city. Intending to create the most advantageous trading arrangement possible, they positioned their new city on the coast of the Aras Sea and near a tributary of the Serpent River, planning that has brought them much good.

The city lies at the base of a high, sheer cliff, on a peninsula between the shores of the Serpent River and the Aras Sea. The 1,500-foot high cliff discourages attacks on the city from above, and a twenty-foot high wall broken by five watchtowers helps defend against all other attacks. Part of the city's militia of 2,000 troops serves as crew for an airfleet of three galleys and five drakkars. Though these ships double as trading vessels, five are always docked along the southern wall of the city, near the city's shipyards.

Urupa also boasts a fleet of five sea vessels that serve as both trading and military ships. The city maintains a regularly scheduled trade route to several ports along the shore of the Aras Sea, both in the known regions of Barsaive and along unexplored stretches of the sea's distant shores.

On the Rulers of Urupa

A seven-member Leadership Council, created by the city's founders, governs Urupa. The first council consisted of the leaders of the seven towns and villages that banded together to found the city. Every two years the council elects a leader, called the



chief councilor, who oversees the council's activities. At the end of a term, the council may re-elect the current chief councilor to another term. It is a tribute to the Council's wisdom that the chief councilor rarely loses his office. A serious political or financial blunder or unwarranted action against another councilor has on occasion forced a chief councilor to lose the support of the remaining councilors and so be enjoined to step down, but most chief councilors have served in that office for life.

The present chief councilor, a woman named Fellidra Jer, has been head of the Leadership Council for the past eight years and still enjoys the popular support of the city's residents.

...And as the river wound around the rocks, we came in view of Urupa, nestled between the shores of the Serpent River and the Aras Sea. Our riverboat pulled up along the docks on the Serpent side of the city, where the t'skrang boatmen docked the ship to unload cargo.

As we looked across the city, we could see the tall masts of the water ships moored at the sea docks.

We walked through the heart of the city until we came to the docks, as busy as any on the Serpent. Many water ships of all sorts and sizes were moored there, bearing flags of Urupa as well as places unknown to us.

We spied a caravan moving toward us from the dock, heading for the residential section of the city. At the head of the caravan walked a huge obsidiman, wearing ornate attire and attended by nearly a dozen servants. I and my traveling companions watched in fascination as he led his entourage through the city. Here, we realized, was a citizen of power and wealth.

—From the journal of Loran Redstone, 1506 TH

The alliance between the kaers that founded Urupa marks the city as unique in Barsaive. Whereas most Barsaivians emerging from their kaers and citadels could barely set aside their suspicions long enough to help themselves and other communities rebuild, the people of Urupa emerged determined to find like-minded souls and create a new, safe haven. With the exception of the final resistance effort by which the people of Barsaive defeated the Therans and ended the Theran War, the races of this province have never before shown such mutual trust.

Because of its location, Urupa enjoys the distinction of being one of the only cities to regularly welcome people from outside of Barsaive. Trading ships travel to Urupa across the Aras Sea twice annually, with every journey introducing unique goods and treasure to Barsaive.

The Kingdom of Throal has recently decided to send envoys across the Aras Sea in hopes of contacting those who live outside of Barsaive, and so lie beyond the reach of the Theran Empire. King Neden hopes that these people will look favorably on establishing political ties with Throal. He also hopes to learn how they protected themselves from the Horrors during the Scourge. The king's magicians are especially curious to learn how the Scourge affected other areas of the world, and perhaps to learn non-Theran forms of magical protection.

—Kern Redhand, Historian of Throal

TRAVAR

The city of Travar lies 22 days' walk or 13 days' ride from Throal. Travar is a beautiful city, full of gleaming white buildings, towers, and spires. Of all the cities in Barsaive that survived the Scourge, Travar alone still possesses its original splendor and grace. Its golden roofs catch the sun's light, reflecting its brilliance in all directions. Its location on the Byrose River gives Travar access to the t'skrang traders of the Serpent River and to the Kingdom of Throal. Its proximity to Death's Sea and the Servos Jungle allows easy access to both mundane goods and magical supplies. Travar builds most airships sold in Barsaive, and its own fleet now boasts four galleys and six drakkars. As the wealthiest city outside of Throal, Travar and its citizens enjoy the prosperous lives that accompany brisk trade and wise leadership.

The city's population hovers somewhere near 95,000 citizens, ranging in wealth from those rich enough to wear robes made of gold even to bed to those who sleep in the city's back alleys with only a few utensils and a dirty mat as possessions. Nowhere else in Barsaive do so many craftsmen and merchants gather as in Travar, and even among the poor are many skilled artisans and merchants who have not been fortunate enough to crack the city's market.

Like wealthy people everywhere, the citizens of Travar desire peace. Unfortunately, only the wealthiest members wield the clout to demand peace, and they often choose the terms and definition of that peace. Often, it seems to come at the expense of justice for the less fortunate. Despite the city's close ties with Throal, the magistrates continue to keep Travar's government separate from that of the dwarf kingdom, perhaps because some citizens are unwilling or unable to accept the equal justice that King Neden promises to bring to the world.

The people of Travar are merchants by nature; they will sell anything, procure anything, and buy anything as long as they believe that by doing so they are getting the better end of the bargain. The city's energy is infectious. Visitors who walk its streets suddenly quicken their stride, gain a sense of purpose, and begin to act like someone not to be trifled with, even when they have no purpose and are more than willing to be trifled with! This is the marvelous illusion of Travar: everyone in the city believes himself destined for greatness, even when the truth shows only enough room at the top for a few of the city's people.

On the Rulers of Travar

A council of three magistrates rules Travar, each magistrate serving for three years. Every year one magistrate steps down from his position, and those interested in serving as magistrate must hire a champion to compete in a tournament called the Founding. If a magistrate wishes to hold his post for three consecutive years, his champion must win the Founding. Magistrates often lose their position by losing the tournament, but regain the office in a later year.

The Founding is one of the most peculiar political institutions in Barsaive. Each year a group of magicians known as the Body of Five devises a spectacular tournament involving magic, wild beasts, puzzles, and traps. This huge affair lasts more than two weeks, when the citizens of Travar crowd into a great arena at the center of the city. Seating is limited, and the city's best efforts to control ticket distribution are always swept aside by theft, bribery, and skyrocketing prices. Games of finance are the principal sport of Travar, and lie at the heart of the Founding. Why should tickets for the Founding be exempt?

Persons who want to become magistrates must hire a champion to represent them in the Founding. Every year, candidates secure their champion(s) of choice months before the tournament and spend the intervening time on rigorous training and instruction. Champions come from the ranks of adepts, for the Body of Five creates difficult and subtle tests. No one can predict from year to year what skills and abilities will be needed in order to succeed. Because of this uncertainty, most who seek the magistrate's office hire more than one champion, often choosing several who possess a variety of talents.

The champions compete against one another and against the puzzles created by the Body of Five for two weeks without

rest. The crowd watches every event with unbridled glee, always waiting for the contests to reach greater heights of humiliation. Invariably, they do.

Though the outcomes of these contests never depend on bloodshed, little can be done to stop overzealous competitors from harming or killing their opponents once the contest has begun. The Founding allows competitors a sanctioned opportunity to give in to their fiercest instincts, should they choose to.

Every year, 50 or more men and women vie for the office of magistrate. Because training and paying champions is expensive, only the wealthy citizens of Travar can afford to run for the office. This expense, however, deters few; a magistrate exerts great influence over the city's trade and tax laws, and a crafty magistrate can double or quadruple his profits within a year's time.

Approximately 150 adepts register as champions each year. By a clever provision in the law governing the selection of magistrates, all officially registered champions must make themselves available to serve the city at all times. This creates a veritable army of heroes drawn from a broad range of talents standing ready to defend the city's interests. Because individuals support each champion, the citizens are spared the expense of supporting an army, and even ork scorchers or crystal raiders are unwilling to attack a city so well defended.

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Having resided in Travar during the Founding, I have witnessed some truly bizarre contests. With my own eyes I have seen combat fought with unusual weapons of magical origin; contests fought from the backs of huge, greased pigs; competitions played out on long logs strung over pits of molten lava drawn from the Death's Sea; races through elaborate mazes formed from whirling walls of flame; games of strategy where the champions are living "pieces" on a large playing board; riddle contests; tests requiring the champion to create an impromptu song on spontaneously chosen themes; and many more.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

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KRATAS

Kratas lies 15 days' walk or 9 days' ride from Throal. Located in the center of Barsaive, the city of Kratas serves as a crossroads of information and stolen goods. Despite its location near almost all major trade routes, few honest merchants pass through the city, for Kratas is ruled and run by thieves. Its people are the clever and desperate, the illegally wealthy and the horribly destitute of our province.

The site of an ancient citadel that fell to the Horrors during the Scourge, Kratas was crammed with treasures both magical and mundane when adventurers rediscovered it, empty of survivors, soon after the end of the Scourge. Rumors of its treasures led countless expeditions of heroes and treasure-seekers to scour the ruins bare of wealth and monsters. Within a few years, the dark buildings became home to bandits seeking a home base between their raiding activities. Over time the bandits and thieves began to feel themselves a community, though a true government did not form in Kratas until the outbreak of the Theran War.

In the early days of the occupation, the Theran army demanded obedience from the thousands of thieves and cutthroats that called the ruins home. When Throal organized the resistance that routed the Therans, the famous ork thief adept Garlthik One-Eye called together an army of his fellow thieves and chased the Therans out of Kratas. In their place, he appointed himself the city's ruler and has served the city well despite his unconventional rise to power.

The self-interested nature of the criminals that populate the city prevents Kratas from taking advantage of its accessibility to trade, and thus keeps it from developing into a true political power. Though the citadel of Kratas could easily hold some 100,000 people, Kratas' population remains at roughly half that number. Bands of thieves conceal their activities by constantly moving between empty neighborhoods, and only about a fifth of the population lives in fixed residences.

Kratas' streets are dirty, shadowed by cracked and leaning stone and wood buildings. Though the city is inhabited by tens of thousands of people, the secretive nature of Kratas' citizens often make the streets look deserted. Travelers can walk or ride hundreds of yards in the middle of the day and see nary a soul, yet experience the eerie feeling that the shuttered windows and dark doorways have hundreds of eyes.

A strange loyalty binds the outlaws of Kratas together and directs their mistrust and deceit against the rest of Barsaive. Odd as it may seem to honest citizens, most inhabitants of Kratas live there because it is the only place in Barsaive where they feel safe.

Besides the city's many thieves and mercenaries, numerous craftsmen, merchants, and artisans also live in Kratas. These more law-abiding citizens live in fear of attacks that rarely come, but remain there despite the dangers because their services are more amply rewarded in Kratas than in other cities. The thieves of Kratas recognize that their city needs these people to sustain it, and so they leave these honest citizens alone in their fierce competitions for control over the city's neighborhoods. Merchants and craftsmen must remain carefully neutral in their dealings, however. More than one unfortunate ally of a bandit leader or witness to a terrible deed has ended his days lying in a dark back alley with his throat slit.

The city also supports a thriving black market for secrets and for stolen goods, especially elemental magic items. Spies who report to the leaders of Kratas are everywhere. Indeed, it is often said that "every secret in Barsaive is gossip in Kratas." The only trade not permitted in Kratas is slavery.

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... Today we entered Kratas, a miserable den of ruffians. I can scarce believe that I have come to this place, where tumbledown shacks lean over the litter-ridden streets like crippled old men and the very air smells of deceit. Did I not have a debt of honor to settle, I would ride straight home to father. But then again it is likely my hired "companions" would follow me and kill me for my purse unless I pay them.

We rode through an iron gate set in crumbling walls of lichen-eaten stone, paying ten silver pieces each for the privilege. That princely sum, of course, came from my pocket. The dirty streets smelled of rotting food. I saw a band of urchins splashing in the filthy sluice that ran down one side street; another band ran after us, shouting for coin. One grabbed my horse's saddlebag and tried to swing herself up behind me, but lost her grip and tumbled to the dirt. When she sat up, I saw she was laughing. The scrofulous little beast shouted something after me, though I know not what. I swear they picked my pocket; I am missing a purse full of copper. I have scarce enough money left to pay the innkeeper, a surly sort who looks like he would as soon murder me as breathe.

Someone is at the door. Catulla the windling? Surely not—he cannot know that I have come to pay my debt. Who would dare disturb a gentleman at this dead hour of the night?

—From the journal of Shiellen Woodsong, eldest son of the Second Magistrate of Travar, found dead in the Drunken Dragon Inn

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On the Ruler of Kratas

A pragmatic Thief, Garlthik One-Eye rules his city in a pragmatic fashion. When it suits the city to help Throal, Garlthik supplies whatever is needed. If it better suits their purposes to

rob a dwarf caravan, Garlthik's subjects gladly loot and pillage.

Many gangs of thieves live in the city, some using it as a safe headquarters from which to raid the surrounding lands. Others steal only from those living within the city walls. Because it is their nature to covet what their neighbor has, gangs of thieves draw boundaries for territory that they claim as their own, denying others the opportunity to steal or operate within those boundaries. Outsiders may wonder at territorial wars fought within a half-deserted city, but violent disputes break out regularly. The two most powerful gangs of thieves in Kratas are the Force of the Eye and Brocher's Brood.

Force of the Eye

The most influential gang in Kratas, the Force of the Eye owes its existence and allegiance to the venerable ork thief, Garlthik One-Eye. Garlthik uses his gang to maintain the upper hand in Kratas; his anti-slavery, anti-Theran policies only carry weight because he has the strength to back them. Though none openly oppose Garlthik's decrees, many traders in Kratas would undoubtedly welcome the chance to reap the awesome profits of the slave trade.

The Force of the Eye has nearly 1,000 members, made up mostly of orks and elves, though it also includes members from the other Name-giver races. Garlthik regularly assigns about one quarter of his gang to work for him elsewhere in Barsaive, but retains several hundred informants throughout Kratas. These spies hold no official position in the Force of the Eye, but their ability to slip in and out of the city's many criminal factions makes them useful.

Garlthik's chief counsel is Terricia, a windling Thief rumored to be responsible for the recent deaths of several of Garlthik's most strident opponents.

Brocher's Brood

A particularly bloody gang of thieves, Brocher's Brood is Garlthik's chief rival for control of Kratas. Led by Vistrosh, a corrupted elf and former Blood Warder to the Elven Queen Alachia, this gang heads the illegal slave market in Kratas. The Brood numbers some 600 members, each of whom must swear an oath of personal loyalty to Vistrosh. The gang is rife with assassins, and few who dare to cross the Brood will escape its relentless pursuit.

VIVANE

The city of Vivane lies 49 days' walk or 29 days' ride from Throal. Isolated in the southwest corner of Barsaive, Vivane represents Thera's greatest conquest.

Decades ago, Vivane was the most beautiful city in the province. When the Therans returned to Barsaive following the Scourge, Vivane surrendered to the invaders, hoping to save the freedom and wealth its people enjoyed. Pleased by the picture of wealth and beauty that Vivane's bright blue spires and golden domes created, the Therans made the city their new provincial capital, bringing their slave laws with them. Vivane's bazaars soon filled with prisoners from throughout Barsaive, all torn from their homes by no law but greed.

During the Theran War, Vivane was a primary target. As the heart of Theran slave trade, it was also home to numerous Theran officials. Many airships and fire cannons fought the battle for Vivane, and much of the city's beauty was destroyed as its proud towers and spires crumbled to the streets. An underground resistance supported the air war, and the Therans were routed from the city.

Though Vivane enjoyed a brief period of freedom from Thera about 60 years ago, the Therans refused to accept defeat and have since reclaimed the city. However, they do not take their control of the city for granted. Overgovernor Kypros keeps a tight rein on the puppet government, and a well-trained and fanatical militia drawn from the city's population patrols the streets to stamp out even the slightest whisper of rebellion. Overgovernor Kypros often docks the massive airship *Ascendancy* in Vivane, and other Theran officials view the city as their personal possession.

Only a small corner of the city has been rebuilt since the Theran War. Named the Theran Quarter because Theran money rebuilt it, it will accept as residents only Therans and those Barsaivians most loyal to them. A new wall separates the Theran Quarter from the rest of the city, its single entrance well guarded by the city's militia. Only the Quarter's citizens and those with guest passes can gain entrance. Anyone caught in the Quarter without a pass is immediately arrested and may be thrown in prison or summarily executed.

The rest of the city alternates between solid, well-crafted buildings and the ruins of towers, spires, and homes. Though the rubble was cleared long ago, the remnants of shattered towers and walls still stand, their broken walls reaching toward the sky in a mockery of their former grace.

Vivane has a population of 95,000, of which 20,000 are slaves. The city has no airships, for the Therans dare not risk giving the citizens access to power. Entry into the city is carefully restricted, and the militia stays alert for known agitators. According to rumor, the underground resistance born during the Theran War still exists, and has even become more active since the landing of the behemoth. However, the resistance's leaders and operatives remain hidden too deep for the Therans to ferret out.

... To pick the Fearful Feather's pocket and live to tell the tale! Such a glorious endeavor! Not that Fearful's much to worry on ... it's his Theran guard you've got to watch for. Sharp spears, they've got, and a few have sharp eyes and minds to match. Lucky for me, most are as thick as posts. Ah, it's grand being a thief.

I spent the morn lurking near the wall between the Theran Quarter and the rest of Vivane, hoping to spot a mark. Not many Therans carry money outside the Quarter any more. Seems even a Theran can learn sense, if you give him long enough. Folk carry money in, where they can spend it among clean streets, white marble walls, and pretty gold and blue towers and spires. No mess or rubble for the Therans, thank you. They leave that for us, their lessers. I hoped a visiting merchant might go to see His Honorableness (hah!), the Theran puppet governor. Lucky me—after an hour or two Fearful himself came out, ringed by spear-toting Therans and carrying a heavy leather bag. None too tight a grip, neither—guards must make you careless. I couldn't resist it. Using my thief magic, I picked my way silent and unseen over the cracked cobbles and followed Fearful's entourage to one of the few shops outside the wall in good repair. Wine shop, as it happened. A guard stumbled on a broken stone, and I saw my chance. Snatched the bag then vanished before Fearful even felt it leave his fingers. By the time they raised a shout, I was spending my ill-gotten gains in my favorite tavern, the Dirty Dwarf.

Who says you can't make a living in Vivane?

—From the journal of Thysel, Thief

On the Ruler of Vivane

In keeping with Barsaive traditions, Vivane is ruled by a magistrate, the Honorable Quarique Oathstone. The discontented of the city call him the Fearful Feather, for a feather's weight is the extent of his political power.

Appointed by Overgovernor Kypros, Oathstone spends his days pretending to be a true ruler, but in reality the only thing he does without consulting one Theran offical or another is to choose the menus for his meals of the day.

JERRIS

The city of Jerris lies some 38 days' walk or 23 days' ride from Throal. Jerris occupies a peculiar place in the physical and spiritual geography of Barsaive. Located at the western edge of the province, the city huddles between the edge of the vast Wastes that cut us off from the rest of the world on one side and a huge, unexplored jungle on the other. Because the city borders on so much unexplored land, many people wonder if Jerris marks the border of Horror-filled lands, or perhaps actually lies within them.

The dark smoke that blows from the Wastes swirls perpetually through the streets of Jerris, rarely allowing the sun to shine brightly upon its citizens. The smoke looks and feels ashy, though no one has yet discovered its true nature. Visitors to Jerris who walk through the shadowed streets quickly discover an odd taste on their tongue, as if they had eaten cinders.

To me, the taste suggests something indefinable—perhaps the taste of nightmares. This observation lacks any real relevance to the discussion of ashes, I know, but there it is!

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

The people of Jerris are a brooding, temperamental lot. As in any other city, the streets of Jerris are usually filled with people, but unlike the throngs in other cities, the people of Jerris walk silently with their gaze turned toward the ground. This habit seems to infect everyone who stays too long within the city's walls. An air of listlessness seems to hang over the city, but make no mistake: however tired the people of Jerris may appear, they are easily moved to extremes of passion. Tears flow freely, whether of sorrow or joy. Blades are drawn easily and blood swiftly spilled, whether for money or love. Oddly, these passionate actions rarely inspire the slightest interest from people witnessing such outbursts.

Many scholars, and certain less-educated groups, have suggested that the city is cursed in some way. According to one rumor, the Hand of Corruption believes that the city rests on a wound in the earth and is a physical manifestation of a spiritual illness in our world. The Seekers of Pure Flesh, a gruesome living legend cult, agree with this theory. They suggest that the city can be saved by gathering bits of flesh from those who died for love. The Seekers have brought bucketfuls of flayed skin to Jerris, where it is stored in a pit under the town hall. So far, however, the magistrate of Jerris has refused to allow them to perform their homespun ritual. Those of a more pragmatic bent believe that the ash filtering over the city from the Wastes has blighted the people's hearts. None of these theories, however, can tell us what the ash is or from where it blows among the Wastes.

—Kern Redhand, Historian of Throal

Common wisdom in Barsaive says that strange creatures—perhaps Horrors—roam the city's streets at night, unnoticed by the people of Jerris, who cannot see these creatures through some strange effect peculiar to the city. Strange incidents support these stories. For example, certain tales say that every week ten people simply vanish in the night. Though such a claim is undoubtedly an exaggeration—the city would soon be empty if it were true—it is an exaggeration of truth. People do vanish in Jerris. Yet another mystery shrouds those rare occasions when someone is found murdered in their sleep, torn apart with what appear to be sharp daggers—or claws.

Why do people live in Jerris if they must suffer such miseries? In a word: money. Despite its grim aspect and filthy appearance, the city is home to wealthy merchants and airship builders. Though far from Barsaive's main trade routes, the city transports many goods from place to place throughout the province. Because strong air currents pass over Jerris, a merchant's ships can reach stops on the main trade routes quickly. This advantage allows the merchants of Jerris to serve both the t'skrang and the Kingdom of Throal as hired shipping agents. The airship builders also sell drakkars to towns and private merchants throughout the province. The city also makes considerable profit mining elemental air.

Not everyone is content with business in Jerris, however. The trading houses seek to stop the airship builders from selling drakkars outside of the city, fearing (with reason) that if airships become commonly available elsewhere in Barsaive, no longer will their services as shippers be in demand. The city's elemental air mining operations face constant threats from crystal raiders and the Therans; though the Therans are the greater threat of the two. Rather than simply raiding for cargo, the Therans try to sink new airships as soon as they float, most likely in an attempt to control Barsaive's ability to defend against or attack the Theran armada. Before establishing the fortress of *Triumph*, the Therans launched several air attacks against Jerris, to which the city responded by imposing a new tax on its citizens to finance construction of an airship fleet designed to protect the city.

At this writing, the city's fleet consists of one galley and four drakkars. The merchant fleets total another 15 drakkars, which the magistrate can command to defend Jerris. The total population of the city numbers 80,000.

Iopos

Iopos lies some 38 days' walk and 23 days' ride from Throal. Crouched on the northern edge of the province, Iopos presents the greatest internal threat to the power of Throal (the Theran Empire is, of course, the greatest external threat). The city is ruled by a family of magicians Named the Denairastas, an ancient bloodline whose members governed the city through the Scourge. Their success in keeping the city safe bound the loyalty of the city's people to their magically gifted overlords. To this day, the Denairastas can do whatever they please with nary a word of complaint from the populace.

Those few who dare protest are quickly crushed by the Holders of Trust, retainers loyal to the Denairastas who serve as both guards and informers. The guards of the Holders of Trust wear silver armor and carry large swords, presenting a visible and constant reminder of the family's power and authority. These guards will punish any accused dissenters brought to them by their spies. Charged with seeking out dissent, these spies are not formally identified as Holders of Trust, but walk as ordinary citizens among the people, ever alert for signs of complaint or dissatisfaction with the rule of the Denairastas. At a word from the informants, the guards move swiftly to arrest or kill all known or suspected dissidents.

To see this city is to see what our world would look like if the Scourge had never befallen us. The buildings seem to sparkle in the sunlight; the streets are clean, the people happy. No one speaks ill of anything, and all extol the grandeur and beauty of Iopos over any other place in Barsaive. From its outward appearance, Iopos seems a city in which the Passions dwell.

As pleasant as this city seems, darkness lies beneath its shining surface. As you know, I am nothing if not cautious. I have more than once felt as if someone were shadowing me, which is most strange, for I have done nothing but act the role of the rich merchant. By neither word nor deed have I behaved in such a manner as to arouse suspicion.

The Holders of Trust—the city militia, army, and secret police—are everywhere. All on the same day I saw two visiting merchants arrested, tried, and beheaded in the city center for not observing the law that one must give one percent of all profits to city leader Uhl Denairastas with the pledge, "Uhl is our leader, our beacon, our all." They gave the money gladly, but refused to make the pledge. And it was one of their own workers who turned them in. These merchants came from Jerris and have never been to Iopos before! I tell you, I have not seen such brutality in the guise of order since the dark days of Theran rule!

—From the last missive of Slock, Thief and Spy of the City of Kratas

The Holders of Trust have few occasions to punish offenders, however. Most citizens of Iopos feel loyalty to the point of fanaticism for their rulers; people commonly compare members of the Denairastas family to the Passions. When outsiders question this exaggeration, the citizens simply smile, as if they alone know the answer to a deep and important secret.

I advise visitors to the city to keep any questions or criticisms of Denairastas family politics to themselves.

More than one adventurer who volunteered to research Iopos was arrested, tried, and sentenced to death all within two short hours for no greater offense than seeking a firmer understanding of how the Denairastas command such loyalty.

—Kern Redhand, Historian of Throal

The Denairastas willfully abuse the worship of their subjects. Whereas cruel Theran masters whip their slaves to death, the people of Iopos work themselves to death of their own free will. Whatever the Denairastas family asks, the people will give, and the Denairastas demand a great deal. Scores of men and women die while mining magical elements, and the city's army is nearly suicidal in its valor. Parents compete to offer their own children for the blood magic rites the Denairastas sometimes practice.

I saw dozens of workers collapse from exhaustion while building a new palace for Uhl Denairastas. I learned later that two of them had actually died in service to their ruler.

—J'Role the Honorable Thief

The Denairastas have sworn to defeat both Throal and Thera, to take their power for themselves. Throal had long considered the Denairastas as a minor power, but the exposure of the real culprits behind King Varulus III's assassination transformed them into the kingdom's most immediate and dangerous enemy virtually overnight. Because Iopos lies so far from Theran influence, the city has turned its attention to disrupting the trade and state negotiations that King Neden's agents are conducting in his effort to unite Barsaive. The Holders of Trust form Iopos' front line in this effort, going into communities across Barsaive and sowing discontent through murder and destruction. They are skilled at disguising their work to look like the random violence of ork scorchers or crystal raiders, and choose their victims carefully.

The Denairastas' special interest in magic leads some Throalic scholars to speculate that certain living legend cults may be fronts for the family's goals, by which the Denairastas draw unwary people into their scheme of acquiring lost artifacts and knowledge. Iopos possesses a rich reserve of magical elements, collected by airships sent across Barsaive to mine elemental fire from Death's Sea and elemental air from the skies. The city's supply of elemental earth and wood hints at secret expeditions into the Blood Wood, though I dared not seek proof for fear of arrest for asking the wrong questions.

More than 100,000 people live in Iopos. The city's fleet of airships consists of three galleys and six drakkars. Three shipping companies also do business within the city, giving Denairastas another additional six drakkars should he require their services.

HAVEN

Haven lies some 21 days walking and 13 days riding from Throal. A small, rough town, Haven lies in the southeastern corner of the ruins of the Forgotten City of Parlainth. Ork and troll adventurers led by the famed troll Torgak founded the town of Haven almost two decades ago, after spending three years carefully exploring a small corner of Parlainth's ruins. After ridding that area of monsters and Horrors, the adventurers set up a permanent settlement from which to conduct further explorations. Other adventurers traveling to the Forgotten City began stopping in the safe area, by this time known as the Haven, to ask what portions of the city had yet to be explored and to hear the most current rumors of monsters and Horrors living in the ruins.

Eventually abandoning their own treasure-hunting efforts in favor of providing services to other adventurers, Torgak and his fellows rebuilt certain ruins into an inn they named the Restless Troll, and later a trading post called Torgak's Supplies and Goods. Because the ruins themselves are so impressive, the Restless Troll and Torgak's are spectacular establishments, featuring high ceilings, wide corridors, and marble steps down to the street; in many ways, they rival some of the buildings in the Kingdom of Throal. Their opulence provides an incongruous contrast to the rough-and-tumble spirit of Haven.

Haven boasts a permanent population of just over one thousand, including several dozen families. As many races live in Haven as in Throal, peacefully and amicably. Most trouble in Haven comes from outsiders. Of course, outsiders constantly travel to Haven, and so opportunities to stir up friction abound. A few years after the town achieved a stable population, other people interested in the opportunities to make a profit in Haven built onto the town, expanding away from the ruins. The first neighborhood constructed during this time is now known as the Old Neighborhood, though several sections of the town predate it.

On the Ruler of Haven

Haven is ruled by Torgak, founder of the trading post. A benevolent dictator, Torgak can use the strength of well-armed orks and trolls to enforce his will when necessary, but he has rarely needed to resort to this measure. His chief concerns are to increase trade and traffic through Haven and to keep the peace. Now that Torgak is getting on in years, he no longer craves adventure or the possibility of encountering violent situations. Outsiders who come to Haven intent on brewing trouble are often hauled before Torgak for a lecture; sometimes, he gives them a beating as well.

Despite Torgak's personal desire for peace, Haven still reflects the nature of the ork and troll adventurers who founded it. The town is noisy, rowdy, and rough, and both visitors and citizens alike can indulge in much brawling or other violence before anyone interferes to stop them.

The Defense of Haven

Given the quarrelsome nature of many of its inhabitants, only a town full of warriors ready for a fight could enforce the law in Haven. And despite its peaceful name, the community sits on the edge of a ruined city whose shadows hide countless dangers. Beneath the ancient cracked and bleached-white structures lie dark cellars and long, empty corridors in which monsters prowl and Horrors nest. Indeed, masses of monstrous creatures have attacked the city several times each year since its founding. The circumstances behind such coordinated attacks remain a mystery, but most Haveners suspect that one or more Horrors are behind them. The Horrors living in the ruins are those powerful enough to remain on our plane after the drop in magic that forced most of their kind from our world. Many are intelligent enough to make mental attacks so subtle that they can cause untold damage before being detected. Horrors can compel people to kill friends and family in their sleep, possess individual members of adventuring bands so that the pawn will lead his companions into a trap deep within the ruins of Parlainth, and perpetrate other unspeakably dreadful acts.

Rumor says that Haven also houses Theran spies and informants who look for ancient Theran treasure that remains in Parlainth and report any unusual activities within the Forgotten City to the Overgovernor at Sky Point. This rumor seems likely to be true. Parlainth was once a Theran city, and probably holds many secrets of Thera's past.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

On Haven and other Communities

Citizens of Haven have begun to develop working relationships with representatives of both Throal and the Blood Wood, currently the two largest political powers near Parlainth. Both King Neden and the Blood Warders of Blood Wood hunger for artifacts, information, and magic from the ruins, and will pay well any adventurers who can secure such items. Both the elves of Blood Wood and the king of Throal will often hire adventurers to enter and search any ruins rumored to contain an ancient treasure. Would-be heroes venturing into Parlainth from Haven must often contend not only with the monsters, Horrors, and ancient magical traps scattered throughout the ruins, but also other adventurers racing to claim their prize.

You might imagine the task of gathering information about the Kingdom of Throal would prove an easy one. And in many ways, it was: I found numerous sources readily available, well-organized and complete historical records, and an orderly kingdom to survey. The challenge lay in choosing what to include, and what to leave for further works. As I may take up only a few pages of this work for my subject, I provide the most basic information and encourage interested readers to study further.

—Inscribed by Jaron of Bethabal, Scholar of the Library of Throal

On the Kingdom of Throal

The entrance to the Kingdom of Throal stands on the south face of the Throal Mountain range. To reach Throal, one must pass through Bartertown, the sprawling city of merchants and traders that has grown around the entrance to the kingdom ever since the time of the Scourge's end.

On Bartertown

A vast, bewildering maze of a city that 50,000 people call home, Bartertown lies just outside the gates to the Kingdom of Throal. Sprawling in front of the three giant arches leading into the mountain kingdom, Bartertown grew out of a bazaar the dwarfs established years ago at the entrance to Throal.

Merchants, traders, and visitors gathered there over the years, and the town became a favorite destination for those who wished to take advantage of the dwarf kingdom's trade policies without feeling obligated to pledge loyalty to Throal. Huts and other permanent structures eventually replaced the open market bazaars and tents and were in turn replaced by larger, more comfortable buildings. As of this writing, it seems nothing can stop Bartertown's growth. During a busy trading season, the city's already large population can double in size.

The closer one approaches to Bartertown, the clearer its ramshackle nature and origins become. One can look up from any place in Bartertown and see the blue-misted mountains soaring high into the clouds, the peaks so enormous that they fill one's vision. The colossal mountains seem to lean down over Bartertown, almost giving one the sensation that the towering slopes might momentarily topple down upon the ramshackle city. At the base of the mountains, the three towering arches leading into the kingdom catch the sun's light and glimmer bright gold. These arches seem to stand guard over Bartertown, which tumbles away from the mountains like sharp, angular foothills.

The wide, smooth Royal Road cuts through Bartertown, leading visitors straight to the gates of Throal. King Varulus III ordered that this road be kept in continually pristine condition, a decree held up by his successor. The journey through Bartertown permits one a fascinating glimpse of the countless Barsaivian cultures and races that come to trade with Throal. Merchants, beggars, and charlatans fill the streets, wares of every sort are displayed for trade, and criers call out for mercenaries to guard shipments across the province. Truly, Bartertown is an awesome, overwhelming sight; yet even its colorful chaos takes second place to the majestic Throal Mountains.

On the Ruler of Bartertown

A magistrate chosen by the Council of Merchants rules Bartertown. The right to choose this magistrate became a thorny issue several years ago when King Varulus III of Throal and Bartertown's leading merchants wrangled over the power of appointment. Suddenly realizing how large and prosperous Bartertown had become, the king wished to appoint his own magistrate, presumably to extend his sovereignty over the city. Unwilling to relinquish their power, the merchants waved their original charter in the king's face until he was forced to relent.

To their misfortune, the merchants' stubbornness prompted King Varulus III to stop supplying money and military might to support the city. In the last 15 years the city has been forced to impose taxes to build better buildings and provide city guards, but many of the citizens simply ignore or cheat on their taxes, which has made the king's withdrawal of support a matter of serious concern. Bartertown's fate has yet to be determined, but already some citizens want the Council of Merchants to relinquish authority to King Neden. Many more citizens believe that pride demands that Bartertown succeed on its own. These good people consider the city their home and want it to become as independent and wealthy as any other city of Barsaive.

However, the absence of a system of checks and balances and a recent explosion of black market activities has allowed the current magistrate to accumulate unprecedented power. Magistrate Clystone is no longer accountable to anyone; even the Council of

Merchants, made up of prominent merchants from Bartertown's early days, are bullied by the man they appointed.

On the Unique Features of Bartertown

Reflecting its origins as an open-air market, Bartertown is unlike the other great cities of Barsaive. Most other cities, built generations ago with the aid of the Theran Empire, boast massive stone buildings, towers and spires plated with gold, wide domes that glow the blue of a beautiful dusk, and intricate patterns carved into stone walls laced with gold and silver. Even though the Scourge, the Theran War, and time have reduced many of these cities to ruins, and though the cities still inhabited reflect only a shadow of their former glory, their beauty eclipses the ramshackle streets and lively chaos of Bartertown.

Bartertown boasts no buildings higher than three stories; most stand only two stories tall. Lying as it does next to Throal and the mountains; the city's lack of stonework is immediately noticeable. The buildings of Bartertown are constructed of wood, covered with white plaster, and lack the sense of security that stone shelters provide. Despite the city's size, Bartertown gives more the impression of a small wilderness town that just happens to lie along trade routes. Bartertown owns no airships and maintains a minimal city guard.

The wide, smooth Royal Road bisects Bartertown, providing all visitors with a clear view of the arches carved out of the mountain ahead. Three-story buildings line both sides of the road, all adorned with colorful paint and bright signs proclaiming the sale of various wares, goods, and services. The Royal Road is clean and well kept, creating a sense of order that makes the city seem pleasant, if provincial. As visitors pass beneath the arches, they enter the Throal Bazaar—the dwarf kingdom's official trading area, housed in a huge cavern filled with countless stalls and merchants. Tunnels lead out of the bazaar into the kingdom itself.

Visitors who turn aside from the Royal Road and onto one of Bartertown's roads quickly see the true nature of this city. Its architecture resembles a child's version of a city, hundreds of buildings placed next to or on top of one another. A closer look shows that some shelters consist of nothing more than heavy cloth draped between two buildings. Visitors who venture further into Bartertown encounter a sea of jostling crowds in the streets and a cacophony of voices. Workers move their wares from craft shops in the inner recesses of the city to shops set up on or near the Royal Road, where traders from all over Barsaive scour the streets looking for bargains. Visiting airships dock at spires, their shadows falling across the crowded streets as their crews unload goods carried from as far away as towns and villages near Death's Sea or the Twilight Peaks. Pickpockets and thieves work the crowds as well, finding easy pickings among those who become careless in Bartertown's bustle and din.

The city is full of merchant houses busily making fabrics, dyes, magical potions, and every other imaginable good. Even if a product is not made in Bartertown, it can still be found within the city's shops and stalls. Customers seeking specific items must be prepared to spend considerable time sorting through the city's chaotic layout and willing to wait for information if finding the item requires that merchants contact other merchants. Items not immediately available can often be found and brought to Bartertown for a customer, though sometimes the seeker of a rare herb or exotic perfume is simply told in what remote comer of Barsaive he can find the thing he desires.

On the Origins of Bartertown

How did such an unplanned and sometimes ugly city come to lie at the gates of the magnificent Kingdom of Throal, itself a testament to planning and order? This question plagues the dwarfs, for it suggests that chaos can triumph despite their best efforts and that all their grandest plans may yet come to nothing.

The nature of the dwarfs themselves, so well-suited to planning and organizing, gave Bartertown its beginnings. Many traders and visitors simply wanted a place where they could trade and otherwise deal with the dwarfs without being subject to the laws of Throal. To fulfill this desire, King Varulus III granted a charter of land to a few merchants in order to create a community of merchants and traders outside of Throal. He wanted to encourage the presence of traders, but recognized that Throal's might could well frighten away the timid or those suspicious of any great power.

The other force behind Bartertown's swift growth came out of the physical nature of the dwarf kingdom. Many visitors to Throal, especially those of younger generations, simply disliked the idea of sleeping under a mountain. Though hundreds of thousands of people came—and still come—to populate the cities the dwarfs built within Throal, many others wished to be near the kingdom, but not of it. For these people, Bartertown provides the perfect home.

King Varulus III gave the city only its charter, nothing more; he pledged it no support or defense. Nonetheless, it continued to grow unchecked. Even the merchants who received the original charter intended to establish only a few trading houses, never envisioning the development of such a vast city. Because half of Bartertown's population at any given time is transient, the city still lacks a true sense of community, and permanent residents are in the awkward position of serving as an adjunct to Throal. Bartertown is neither a truly separate power, nor fully a part of the dwarf kingdom.

On the Dwarf Kingdom

As one approaches the mountains, the gates of the Kingdom of Throal are a welcome sight, perhaps because they relieve some of the breathtaking grandeur of the setting. These proofs of Namegiver habitation are reminders that the huge mountains can be tamed after all. The entrance to Throal lies through three massive arches carved into the mountains, their edges plated with gold. Because the mountains are so enormous, it is only from directly under the arches that one can truly appreciate the vastness of the gates. They tower overhead; people who look directly up at their golden curves often suffer the momentary sensation of falling over backward.

The three arches open into a vaulted chamber hundreds of feet high, which serves as the official entrance to the kingdom. Here is the place known as the Bazaar, where merchants who obtain licenses from the Kingdom of Throal can set up their booths. Throalic guards patrol the Bazaar, watching for questionable business practices and keeping a sharp eye out for thieves.

On the Halls of Throal

From the Bazaar, nine huge hallways lead into the heart of the mountains. All along their length, these hallways branch off into smaller corridors, leading into a maze that winds its way through the mountain range. Its myriad corridors and passageways extend a distance of many days' walk, branching off to other, seemingly endless corridors. Massive chambers and caverns filled with Throal's huge inner cities lie along these passages, as do all of the kingdom's important areas.

The winding halls of Throal and the living and working spaces which they connect represent unique dwarf construction styles. The countless wide tunnels reach some twelve feet high and wind through the mountains for a distance of many days' travel. These passages make up the old sections of the kingdom. Most citizens of Throal live here, preferring to dwell in the underground chambers where they feel most comfortable. Light quartz crystals line the walls of these corridors, illuminating their shadowy depths.

The old part of Throal, which served as the kingdom's kaer during the Scourge, is divided between residences and chambers used for trade, work, and research. Countless homes line the resi-

dential corridors, many-roomed dwellings that lie behind thick, wooden doors. In the trade and work spaces, the people of Throal conduct business, the making of goods, and scholarly research. These areas serve as workshops for craftspeople, provide meeting places for those who deal in importing and exporting goods, and contain the Great Library.

Long stairways carved from the mountain lead from certain tunnels, providing access between the different levels of Throal. The landings of some of the longer stairways feature small parks where people can rest, for the walk between levels can sometimes take an hour or more. In some of the parks are fountains of magical water especially enchanted to refresh those who partake of it. Unfortunately, the water loses its healing property when carried out of the city.

On the Great Library

Within the kingdom lies the Great Library of Throal, the most complete and inclusive library in the province. Its stone walls house the collective literary, artistic, and scholarly works of the people of Barsaive. Given the great numbers who dwell in Throal and the dwarf kingdom's extensive history, this priceless collection has grown over the centuries to a size almost beyond comprehension. In addition to gathering scholarly and literary works, the librarians are constantly adding to the record of Barsaive's history, from the province's beginnings to the present day.

Among the many ways the librarians accomplish this goal is by hiring adventurers to seek the truth behind certain legends and rumors and to verify events reported from every region of Barsaive. Rather than relying on memory alone, the librarians require these adventurers to keep journals of their travels, recording each day the perils and wonders they have faced. In addition, the library purchases the journals of adventurers who have explored all areas of the province.

The library makes a formal acquisition of journals once a year, during the months of Sollus and Riag. Thousands of adventurers descend on Throal at this time, all hoping to sell their stories and become a part of Barsaive's history. Some adventurers earn enough from the library to continue their journey or to return home; however, no adventurer or group can expect to earn a fortune in this way.

The Master of the Hall of Records, currently my colleague Merrox, administers the library. At any time, roughly two dozen librarians and scholars assist the Master, each taking charge of a general area of study: topography, city lore, history (this subject requires five librarians), and so on. The library also catalogues maps of the entire province as well as of the smaller regions within it.

All of the manuscripts and papers stored in the library are exhaustively indexed and coded so that visiting scholars and travelers can easily find what they are looking for. Visitors may use the library for a fee of twenty silver pieces a day, which includes assistance from the librarians, scribes, and research scholars.

The Chambers of the Inner Kingdom

Certain tunnels lead to the chambers wherein the King and his court conduct the day-to-day business of Throal and Barsaive. These rooms include the king's audience chamber and banquet hall, where formal functions and ceremonies take place; the private chambers of the king, his family, and his court; and the vaults of the kingdom, which contain Throal's treasure and valuable, magical artifacts.

Because it houses what we of Throal hold most dear, this Inner Kingdom remains under heavy guard at all times. Without exception, those venturing into this area without an authorized escort are detained.

On the Mines

The endless tunnels of Throal also provide access to Throal's most important natural resources: the magical and mundane minerals drawn from the mining tunnels and shafts that wind through the deepest heart of the Throal Mountains. Though many of Throal's dwarfs immerse themselves in the theory and practice of governing a kingdom, the vast majority prefer to delve into the earth and uncover its treasures.

Such work carries risks; cave-ins may occur at any time, as may attack by creatures that roam the tunnels. Some of these are mundane animals that have crept into the tunnels from the surface of the Throal Mountains. Other, more dangerous creatures emerge from the elemental plane of earth and attack the miners to prevent them from gathering elemental earth.

Several different mining companies work within Throal, constantly searching for new, rich sources of raw material and more efficient means to mine it. The level of competition for the market and the companies' unsurpassed ability to work the mines effectively puts the prices of minerals and elemental earth in constant flux.

On the Caverns and Cities

More recent additions to Throal include the massive cities built in huge caverns throughout the Throal Mountains. City architecture differs considerably from the building style of the old kaer, reflecting the present-day variety among Throal's citizens. When King Varulus III invited people of all races from across Barsaive to take up residence in the Kingdom of Throal, the officials in charge of housing the anticipated influx of people decided that the newcomers would adjust to their homes more quickly if their new residences resembled the homes they had left. Accordingly, Throalic engineers set about building roads, towers, and storied residences on the wide floors of the vast caverns. As was common in the kaers, these areas are illuminated by a magical, glowing moss that lines the roof of the caverns, supplemented by light-quartz crystals around the outer walls of each city.

The cities the dwarfs built inside the caverns, though generally smaller than cities in the rest of Barsaive, are no less splendid in design. Each houses approximately 25,000 people of many different races. Each city is ruled by a baron or baroness, also of a variety of races, who has sworn loyalty to King Neden. The city's noble families hold their titles for the life of the current baron or baroness. Upon the death of a city's ruler, the king may allow an heir to assume the place of his or her father or mother, or he may place a new ruler in charge of the city. In general, the king considers the current ruling family's popularity among the citizens when making this decision. If the people find their current rulers satisfactory, that family continues to rule. If the people feel otherwise, the king gives the stewardship of the city to a new noble family.

At this writing, the dwarfs have completed seven subterranean cities: Bethabal, Hustane, Valvria, Wishon, Tirtarga, Oshane, and Yistane. These cities are filled with a mix of races who chose to become citizens of Throal. Bethabal is famed for the garden that seems to float near the roof of that city's giant cave, planted on an observation platform built during the city's construction.

Six stone walkways now lead to the garden from various parts of the cavern, each affording a spectacular view of Bethabal. Two more cities, Raithabal and Thurdane, are in the final stages of construction. No residents have yet settled there, and only a few dwarfs still work in the quiet cities. Walking through their streets is an eerie experience, almost like exploring an empty kaer or citadel.

On the King and the Noble Houses

Several families have ruled Throal during its 1,500-year history. The current ruler, King Neden, is the last heir of House Avalus. **House Avalus** has been dwindling since the early days of the Scourge, and following the assassination of King Varulus III. The kingdom is a heartbeat away from a dynastic change, and in Throal such changes are rarely peaceful.

Throal has a total of twenty-eight noble houses, each privileged to select a courtier to attend the king. Three of these houses may send two courtiers each. Countless minor free trading houses also exist in the dwarf kingdom, but only six of them have real economic clout. Unlike noble houses, free traders do not customarily use "House" as part of their business name. Though most houses belong to a given political faction, not all houses are equally dedicated to that faction's goals. The two largest factions are the conservative old guard and the loyalist reformers. Whether old guard or reformist, the noble houses are all run by extended families.

House Chaozun is run by a group of old guard spinsters known as the Five Sisters. The house specializes in the sale of weapons and armor, and Throal's military is one of its chief customers.

House Garsun is the largest and richest of the noble houses, and many communities in Barsaive still associate the name Garsun with stability and honesty; they remembered the name of the trading house through all the years of the Scourge. House leader Lomron is a popular figurehead of the old guard faction.

The remarkably successful **House Ludi** is run by a family dedicated to the Passion Chorrolis. This old guard house is notorious for tricky contracts and other practices that just fall short of fraud.

"Trust is the foundation" is the motto of **House Mikul**, a prosperous family that has always believed in the long view and prides itself on their honest and above-board approach to business.

A prime example of a trading house that withered during the Scourge is **House Pa'vas**, who spent their fortunes during the long night and recently sold their noble heritage and allowed a greedy trader to become house leader.

House Ueraven is the nemesis to the royal family and built its business empire on a trade monopoly with Iopos. However, the revelation that the Denairastas were responsible for the assassination of King Varulus III dealt a serious blow to House Ueraven's reputation.

The loyal reformist **House Byril'ah** maintains close ties to the king and specializes in the sale of luxury items such as sculptures, paintings, and jewelry. This house produced more than its share of philosophers, diplomats and politicians.

House Elcomi does little business outside of Throal nowadays. The reformist house remains a major force in Throal and is a prominent financier of ventures by many other reformist and old guard houses.

The rapidly expanding **House Neumani** is actively involved in building new trade routes and relies heavily on adepts and adventurers these days. Close friends of the royal family, the flashing swords of House Neumani are swift defenders of King Neden.

A quiet but staunch supporter of the king, **House Sarafica's** true motivation remains a mystery. House leader Zendes is remarkably young and has shown a talent for spotting and exploiting weaknesses in the competition.

The family of **House Yilwaz** decided to use its trading operations against the Therans, promoting anti-slavery agitators. Needless to say, House Yilwaz is more strident in its opposition to the Therans than the king himself.

On Trade and the Flow of Goods

Though many self-sufficient villages remain scattered throughout Barsaive's remote regions, trade has once again begun to generate wealth in most of the province. Since the emergence from the shelters, burgeoning trade has created both rich and poor and given rise to various standards of living ranging from squalid to wealthy.

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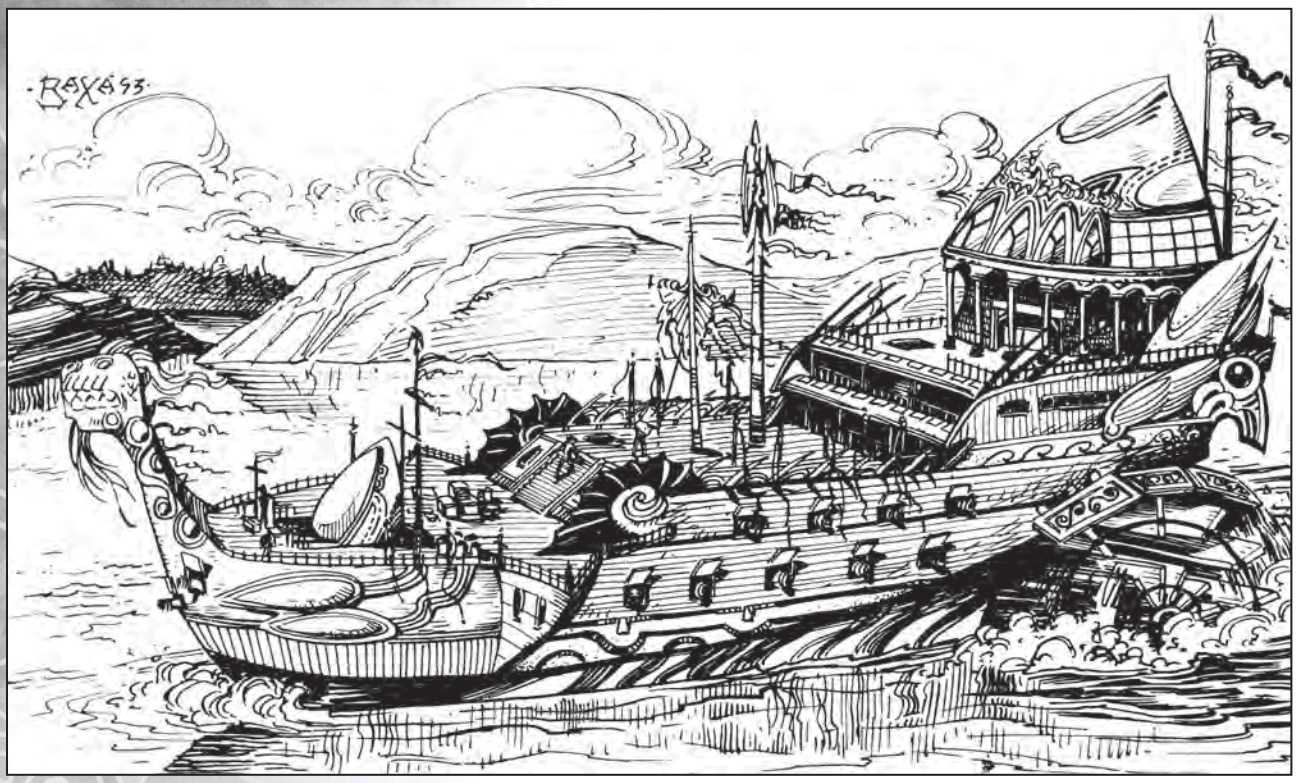
The Mercantile Exploits of Torkel of Barsaive as recorded by Thelonius, scribe of Bartertown, on the First Day of Raquas, 1506 TH

['Tis truly a sad day, Thelonius, when a learned scribe such as yourself is reduced to recording the daily life of a common trader. But you have only yourself to blame, after all. And Bonecrusher cannot remain angry forever. In a few weeks the swordmaster will calm down and surely understand when you explain you had no idea the young lady was his niece. In the meantime, where were we? Ah yes, Torkel.]

The beneficent merchant Torkel set out from the gates of Bartertown at dawn, leading a caravan of three camels, two oxen, swords and shields—a virtual cornucopia of fine merchandise...

[Yes, quite a "cornucopia"—one long sword; two shields;



three dwarf-weave rugs; assorted spearheads; a week's worth of dwarf rations; a mold-covered old keg, the contents of which I cared not to learn; 27 copper pieces; and a weathered old troll war helm fashioned from the skull of a thundra beast. The trader seemed especially proud of this last item.]

By midday our caravan reached Larken, a small village in the foothills of the Throal Mountains. Several young children ran out to greet us as we arrived, and Torkel puffed out his chest like a victorious warrior returning from battle. A small crowd had gathered in the town square, bringing sheep, wool and cotton, pelts of exotic creatures, and other sundries to exchange. Torkel's spearheads and rugs attracted immediate attention, and after much haggling he had exchanged six of the dwarf points and one rug for a small espagra hide, two bolts of cotton, and a basket of fresh apples and walnuts from the orchards and hills outside of town. The villagers insisted we stay for lunch to celebrate our transaction.

[Torkel accepted immediately, apparently not the type to turn down a free meal, no matter how crude the cuisine.]

Afterward, the magnanimous merchant treated our hosts to a round of the "finest dwarf stout" in a display of his unending generosity…

[He had one of the crew pour the toast from the mysterious mold-covered keg. The villagers apparently didn't know the difference or were ashamed to admit they had never tasted the rare dwarf brew, for they quaffed the vile liquid as though it were fine t'skrang vinlo.*]*

… The remainder of the day passed uneventfully. We stopped at two other villages, where Torkel traded several more spearheads for incense, more fruit and nuts, and some primitive but not unpleasing jewelry.

By noon of the second day, we had reached one of the lush green valleys that surround the Serpent's upper tributaries. We followed the road, winding our way through the vineyards that lined the hillsides until we reached a settlement of dwarfs and trolls nestled along the river's edge. Torkel spent the rest of the day trading, and by evening he had exchanged the two oxen, the two remaining rugs, the bolts of cotton and the rest of his spearheads for six large kegs of the valley's strong red wine.

Then, in yet another display of his uncommon generosity, Torkel treated your scribe, the caravan crew, and several of his dwarf and troll clients to a feast of roast pig at the local inn…

[Well, one could easily have mistaken the lavish repast for a display of generosity, until Torkel subjected his captive guests to an interminable discourse on the unrecognized importance of the merchant class in the life of the province. Some of my dinner mates had apparently heard it before, for they seemed to instinctively reach for the wine jugs as soon as he raised his cup and launched into his address. By evening's end, all present—save the magnanimous merchant—wore the same droopy-eyed expression.]

… On the third day we followed the river south as it gradually widened. We continued along the well-worn path, the camels straining under the weight of the heavy wine casks, until we reached the small river port called New Parlainth. The town did not look very impressive at first, but then we came on the docks along the river's edge, where t'skrang rivermen had tied their paddlewheelers and set out their wares. The exquisite aromas of trikella, ustander, pestain and other rare t'skrang spices filled the air, piles of spiced fish towered taller than a troll, finely detailed silks rippled in the breeze. Several of the boisterous lizard-men shouted greetings to Torkel, making offers of silver and gold coins, exotic clothing and jewelry, finely carved flutes, crying statues and chameleon rings and other t'skrang magical novelties in exchange for his wine casks.

Torkel, cunning merchant that he is, only smiled and nodded. After he sent the crew off to secure the camels and their cargo for the night, he explained that he would let the demand for his wine casks grow until the next day, when they would fetch twice the price. Then we made our way to a riverside tavern, where he treated me to a feast that surpassed even the previous evening's abundance.

[I excused myself, citing fatigue from the morning's travel, when Torkel began asking one of the t'skrang dancers if she had ever contemplated the vital contribution to cultural exchange made by Barsaive's merchants.]

… At midmorning of the fourth day, Torkel departed the port of New Parlainth in triumph. In an amazing stroke of good

fortune, he said, he had made the chance acquaintance of a t'skrang dancer the previous evening—a dancer whose uncle just happened to possess the last remaining stock of genuine t'skrang kalydospheres in New Parlainth! Unwilling to risk the chance that another buyer might snatch up the precious wares the next morning, he had cleverly concluded an agreement with the dancer that same evening and gained possession of the magical treasures for a mere six casks of wine, two shields, a sword, and assorted merchandise.

Thus our caravan departed the t'skrang river port, our camels laden with six hundred elemental water balls that change color when shaken…

—From the journal of Torkel, a Caravan Trader of northern Barsaive

Trade on the Serpent River

The t'skrang use their riverboats mainly for trade. These ships carry goods produced by t'skrang villages up and down the river, selling them to villages and towns on the fertile banks of the Serpent or to merchants, who buy them at docks along the river and carry them throughout Barsaive to sell at a profit.

The t'skrang owners of the goods sometimes travel with their merchandise, selling it themselves when the riverboat docks at a likely market. Sometimes merchants hire t'skrang to carry their goods to the other side of the river, a nearly impossible feat without a riverboat. Occasionally, the t'skrang crew purchases goods along their journey and sells those goods elsewhere, effectively acting as merchants.

Some crews without the patience for trade and careful bargaining turn to stealing from other riverboats. Piracy is not common along the entire Serpent, but certain stretches are regularly plagued by pirates.

…The first time I laid eyes upon the Serpent River, I watched one t'skrang riverboat attack another. The immense size of the Serpent had stunned me, and the strange vessels floating on its surface surprised me even more. A blue and green riverboat, smoke billowing from its two chimneys, moved upriver, its massive paddlewheel pushing it forward. Another ship, covered with gold and red, sailed downstream toward it. Suddenly the gold and red riverboat turned to starboard and unleashed a volley of fireballs from its fire cannons.

The red balls of fire, trailing plumes of flame behind them, arced over the intervening water toward the blue and green ship. Some of the fireballs crashed into the water, sending pillars of steam dozens of yards into the air. Others smashed into the upper decks of the riverboat, sending t'skrang sailors scrambling for buckets of water to quench the quickly growing fires. Their garments, sometimes a dozen colors of clothing scraps thrown on haphazardly, caught the sunlight and shimmered like iridescent flowers—green vests, red bandannas, wide-legged scarlet pants, and such. In the fiery light of their burning ship, their scales glowed bright emerald.

The blue and green ship turned to face the gold and red ship, smoke billowing thickly from its chimneys. As it charged forward, the red and gold ship continued to fire. However, because the blue and green ship faced the red and gold ship head-on, it offered a narrower target, and the fireballs fell to either side of it. When the second volley had passed, the blue and green ship turned hard to port. The red and gold ship could not fire, because the crew was still working hard to reload the fire cannons from the last volley. The green and blue ship, now almost on top of the red and gold ship, its starboard side lined up against the port side of the other ship, let loose its own barrage of shots. The fireballs slammed into the red and gold ship, sending flames racing along the upper decks.

Badly damaged from the fight, the red and gold ship wheeled away. On both ships, dozens of t'skrang armed with swords shook their fists at each other and swore oaths of vengeance. I know now that if the ships had passed just a few feet closer, sailors from both ships would have grabbed ropes and tried to swing over to the enemy ship to engage those crew members. But the red and gold ship turned around and headed toward the shore. The captain of the blue and green ship, not willing to risk additional damage to her craft, continued upriver.

—From the journal of J'Role the Honorable Thief

On Spiced Fish

The backbone of the t'skrang livelihood is a specially prepared fish that only they produce. Though the subtleties of taste and texture vary from village to village, this delicacy is always in demand. The t'skrang catch fish from the Serpent using elaborate mazes of nets strung across the riverbed, usually between two village towers. The nets trap any fish that swims into them, because all directions within the net maze lead to dead ends.

Every few hours t'skrang fishermen and women work their way along the nets and harvest the trapped fish, gathering them in large rope sacks. The t'skrang designed the nets to capture fish of a certain size; those small enough to escape simply grow big enough to be caught later.

Every member of the village helps to prepare the fish. The secret t'skrang recipes use unique spices collected from the river bottom, and both spices and recipes differ from village to village. Preparations combine spices with magic, creating a mouth-watering delicacy that retains its taste and freshness anywhere from two weeks to two months.

On many occasions, usually as a guest at the court of King Varulus III, I have had the pleasure of eating fish prepared by the t'skrang, and I believe it is the most wonderful food I have ever been privileged to taste. Ork scorchers and other bandits often attack caravans rumored to carry t'skrang fish, simply to savor that delicacy. Vicious rumors allege that the t'skrang spices and magic actually make the fish addictive; the t'skrang vehemently deny this, and I refuse to believe it.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

Though t'skrang often fight among themselves and steal from one another, no circumstance could ever prompt a t'skrang to reveal the secrets of preparing fish. Such an offense is punishable by death according to t'skrang law, but this threat is a mere formality. The t'skrang possess too much racial pride and loyalty, and need the support of their fellows too much, to ever betray their own people in this way. The t'skrang willingly sell the spices harvested from the plants that grow on the river bottom; these spices are among their most profitable trade goods.

The plants yield leaves and seeds that the t'skrang prepare in several forms, using some to produce their prepared fish and selling the rest. Though the spices alone do not produce the same extraordinary taste one finds in the t'skrang fish, cooks throughout Barsaive consider t'skrang spices the finest available.Oludet; nius sestatiquem manum nonves cont, foris.

Num, condam. Ocupimum iaedin intiferis et perunum P. Fordit? Nam inam quiderios ori et? Quoditia? Cature consupion pos, us ficatus et et in tant, derio etro clestra rimium tro, sus erus? Ler adductandiem quis consulto voltus mendetiem moendam

Places of Legend and Peril

I somehow earned the distinct privilege of compiling the information on travel in Barsaive. I have always enjoyed traveling, even under the most difficult conditions, and working on this part of our book gave me the opportunity to travel (free of charge, I must add!) by land, water, and air. Researching by doing rather than by taking someone else's word for the experience may sound like a sensible method of discovering the truth of any given matter, but not all of my fellow scholars enjoyed this luxury. For example, Merrox himself did not have the opportunity to visit Thera to research that chapter of this guide.

Describing Barsaive's legendary and perilous places brought me many delights, especially the opportunity to study at length the original maps of our province drawn by Shantaya Nightstar. Using these maps, exquisite in every detail, made my task much simpler and more satisfying. I now understand why travelers over all of Barsaive praise the work of this great explorer. Legends say that Shantaya ventured beyond the borders of Barsaive and mapped those regions with equal care and thoroughness. If this legend is true, these maps have a home in some other place than the Royal Library of Throal. According to the same legend, Shantaya is a descendant of the ancient elven kingdom of Shosara, proclaimed forever sundered from the Elven Court centuries ago by Queen Alachia's predecessor, Queen Failla. If Shosara still exists, perhaps Shantaya's legendary maps reside there? It is my devout hope that Merrox will send me in search of these additional maps as my next task.

• Thom Edrull, Archivist and Scribe of the Hall of Records •

Travel is an unending concern for all merchants, traders, explorers, and adventurers who live and ply their trades in Barsaive. Even with our command of magic, travel in Barsaive remains a perilous task at best. Villages, town, and cities lie far apart, and traveling from one place to another requires long journeys. The weather, landscape, plant and animal life force travelers to be cautious, as does the hazard of encountering a Horror.

Those who must travel across Barsaive can choose one of three methods: by land, by air, or by river.

A Discourse on Maps

To reach their destinations and avoid dangerous areas, travelers over land need a map. The province of Barsaive covers great distances, but all maps of the province show many areas left unexplored. In addition, the Scourge changed the land drastically by obliterating many towns and cities, forcing some to rebuild elsewhere and destroying many landmarks such as rivers, lakes, forests, and so on. Even the famous voyage of the *Earthdawn* made no provision for mapping Barsaive, and so no reliable maps have existed since the Scourge. Most maps only show the best-known landmarks still in existence, such as the larger mountain ranges, the ruins of Parlainth, the Theran outpost at Sky Point, the Serpent River, Death's Sea, the great cities of Iopos, Travar, Jerris, and Kratas, and the Kingdom of Throal. Some more costly maps also show the main trade routes across the province, but most of these maps are commissioned by traders and few can be found for sale.

Most mapmakers in Barsaive draw their maps for use with a device called Shantaya's sextant. Shantaya Nightstar was an elven troubadour who traveled the province and mapped it in the years before the Scourge. To make her work easy for others to use and copy, she developed a device to chart distance and bearings using the maps she drew. By aligning the sextant with certain landmarks and using the constellations on the margins of the map, a traveler can determine the bearing and distance in days walking or riding to almost any place in Barsaive. Also, by sighting the stars at night with the sextant, a traveler can determine his location. The most prominent landmarks on Shantaya's maps include Throal, Sky Point, Blood Wood (named Wyrm Wood on her map), the Death's Sea, and the Dragon Mountains.

On Traveling over Land

Most Barsaivians travel over land either on foot or mounted. In the interests of safety and to avoid losing their way, land travelers usually follow roads and established trade routes.

Those who journey by land normally travel for eight to ten hours each day, including stops for rest and meals. Travel during daylight is much preferred. Travel by night increases the chance of becoming lost or of succumbing to attacks by fearsome creatures and Horrors.

On Determining Safe Routes and Places

Because most of Barsaive remains unexplored, travelers with legitimate itineraries consider only the areas immediately surrounding most cities and a few established trading routes to be safe. Accidentally wandering away from these safe areas or deliberately traveling off the main paths can prove hazardous.

Small villages and farming towns surround most major cities, many no further than three hours' ride away. These towns supply

the city with foodstuffs in exchange for protection, usually regular patrols and quick defense by available armed forces, and favorable trade agreements. As the towns lie close to the city, brief trips between the city and the farming communities are common. Heavily settled and well-protected relative to the rest of Barsaive, the land between major cities and outlying villages offers travelers safe passage, but even these areas contain desolate and dangerous spots.

Other safe areas follow Barsaive's well-traveled trade routes, which connect great cities with trading ports along the Serpent River. The landmarks for these routes change occasionally, based on the most recent travelers' tales of their encounters. However, every trade route crosses unexplored regions; travelers who stray as little as a thousand yards off the trade route may stumble into unmapped regions and areas unexplored even before the Scourge.

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... We were three days out of Travar when the storm hit us. Gray clouds had been drifting across the sky all morning, and by mid-afternoon they had formed a black mass that blotted out the sun. The torrent began with a crack of thunder that reverberated across the plains, and within minutes rain was falling so heavily I could barely make out the man in front of me. Soon the trail became no more than a pool of mud, but the merchant insisted we keep moving, so we pushed on blindly. When the wagons could no longer negotiate the knee-deep muck, we drew them into a circle and stopped to wait out the tempest. Hours passed before the rains finally subsided and the horizon revealed itself again.

"Aurance! Aurance, we've lost the trail! Damn the Passions! We've lost the..."

The scorchers ripped through us like the claws of a mighty dragon, scattering the wagons and sending sprays of crimson and severed limbs into the air. Guttural war cries and the pitiful screams of dying men blended into a horrible music, and when the man beside me fell to the ground, clutching the spear shaft protruding from his chest, I grabbed his sword and began swinging wildly at any movement within range.

I cannot tell you how long I carried on so or how long that terrible night lasted, for the next thing I recall was waking to the sound of vultures tearing at the corpses that lay all around me...

—From the diary of Aurance, Swordmaster of Baku

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On the Recognition of Distance Markers

As trade routes proliferated across Barsaive, King Varulus III saw the wisdom of marking those routes used most often by merchants traveling to and from Throal. These markers would also help travelers find the dwarf kingdom.

The route markers look like small stone monoliths standing some six to seven feet high. Triangular and pointed at the top, each side of the post shows the distance in days' travel on foot and by horse to Throal and other significant cities in Barsaive, such as Iopos, Travar, Haven, and Urupa. The markers also bear the symbol of the Kingdom of Throal. Travelers can use these markers in conjunction with maps to plot distance and direction.

On the Perils of Land Travel

In addition to the expected hazards of traveling outside areas considered safe, land travel in Barsaive holds other dangers. Trouble can also befall the traveler who loses his way, encounters Theran slavers, runs across hostile villages, or meets a band of ork scorchers.

Regarding the Hazards of Getting Lost

Any number of circumstances can cause travelers to lose their way. A fierce storm might force them to travel in the wrong direction, or a small caravan might lose its bearings while making a detour to avoid a band of ork scorchers. Because so much of Barsaive's landscape changed beyond recognition during the Scourge, even the newly installed route markers may not prevent travelers from getting lost, especially if they wander through areas inadequately mapped before the Scourge.

Losing one's way poses enormous risks for the unlucky traveler. Adventurers may roam certain areas of Barsaive for years without encountering civilized settlements, and many small towns and villages are so isolated that they know nothing of the nearest village, let alone landmarks or trade routes.

On the Dangers of Trespass Among Strangers

Though the people of many kaers and citadels chose to come out of hiding long ago, and have reestablished their villages and towns under the bright light of day, travelers can still find sealed kaers and citadels. The residents of some are dead, while others still live in fear, trapped by Horrors or unaware that the Scourge is over.

Many small towns and villages rebuilt near their kaers, using their former home as a shelter in emergencies or for extra storage. Most communities have simply let their kaers fall into disrepair, however, hoping that memories of the Scourge will disintegrate along with the kaer's walls. Most citadels have removed the domes that shielded them from the Horrors, and these proud castles and strongholds stand as they did before the Scourge. Despite the people of Barsaive's bold steps into the new world, however, the fear brought by the Scourge still lives in their hearts.

Between their terror of being Horror-touched and their isolation, the people of small villages and towns regard strangers with suspicion. If travelers wish to remain safe, they must understand the reasons for the hostility shown them and be prepared to answer probing questions with politeness and patience.

On the Predations of Theran Slavers

Travelers in the hinterlands of Barsaive face a danger unique to that region. The Therans are known to hire mercenary bands which roam the countryside, capturing unwary travelers and hapless townspeople from the surrounding villages to serve as slaves. Many of these pass through the slave market of Servalen, close to the fortress of *Triumph*.

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My son,

As your mother informed you, I am not pleased with your decision to form your own caravan and establish a trade route to the t'skrang of Lake Vors in partnership with this guide you call Welis. I can already hear you mutter that you led three caravans from Kratas to Bartertown and are well-versed in the ways and means of commerce, and doubtless you will tell me that your friend Welis has great knowledge of the pathways through the mountains of Tylon and the plains beyond. Well, my son, your fine words matter nothing, and I shall tell you why.

The route to Kratas that you have so bravely traversed has been well established for more than twenty years. Posting houses and towns dot the route. An injured man can quickly be delivered into the hands of a questor of Garlen, not left to die in a desolate spot along the road. Break a wagon's axle and a wheelwright arrives in half a day. Lame beasts can easily be exchanged for fit and hale animals, and the lances of Throal hold scorchers at bay.

Nothing of this ilk exists in the wilds that you wish to travel. You will need to live on what you carry and protect yourself from man, beast, and Horror. I question you on the thoroughness of your preparations. Have you food for a hundred days, a questor of Garlen, huttawas, horses, herders, drivers, guards led by warriors of at least the Second Circle? And will the profit you make exceed the cost?

I also question your guide, Welis. Does he have a sextant of Shantaya? Does his rutter contain knowledge of the land as it is, or only as it was in the past? Can he find Vestrial at his darkest height even with the sun overhead, or must he sight the star at night? Does he know which scorcher tribes will grant safe passage for a flask of white water crystals, and which tribes desire blood for their dark magics?

You are well beyond the age of consent, so I cannot demand that you give up this foolishness. But listen to my questions and answer them truthfully.

May Chorrolis guide you in your paths.

—Letter from the merchant Dollwan to his son

On Ork Scorchers

Ork scorchers are bands of nomads that travel the lands of Barsaive. Divided between cavalry and raiders, all ork scorchers travel mounted on all manner of beasts, including horses, thundra beasts, and large, horned animals called *stajian*. Most ork scorcher warriors are also skilled adepts, capable of performing complex acrobatic feats and specialized attacks while riding. Both types of scorchers regard each other with deep animosity. The cavalry scorchers find the undisciplined, randomly violent lifestyle of the raiders embarrassing, partly because many Barsaivians make no distinction between the raiders and scorcher cavalries. As for the raiders, they detest what they consider the affectations of discipline and directed violence the cavalry scorchers have adopted.

Scorcher cavalry and raiders both sprang from orks who escaped slavery in the centuries before the Scourge. These escaped slaves banded together into small tribes, living as nomads in order to avoid recapture. Many orks found themselves surprisingly skilled at taming wild beasts and used this gift to create herds of animals trained to carry the tribes on their travels. The ork tribes raided isolated villages and farms for enough supplies to keep them going from day to day, sneaking in to take what they needed when discovery seemed least likely. As the tribes grew larger, these raids grew bolder and more devastating to the victims, because the orks' need for supplies became greater.

As the orks grew stronger, they began to believe that they could resist any attempts to return them to slavery. Their supply raids changed from desperate acts of survival to punishment inflicted on all other Name-giver races for the injustice the orks had suffered. As the centuries passed, even this justification gave way to the sheer pleasure of destruction and the desire to deprive the privileged of their prized possessions. The ork culture became a constant round of violence and wild celebration of successful, devastating raids. Their lightning attacks cut a wide swath of death and destruction, and their victims called them scorchers for the barren lives they left behind.

During the Scourge, each scorcher tribe established a separate kaer. No longer able to perform glorious feats in battle, the scorchers kept their traditions alive through legends of their great heroes. The first scorchers to leave the kaers found little worth raiding, but immediately took up the lives of their ancestors and waited for Barsaive to rebuild.

Only recently, most of the scorcher tribes have united under the leadership of Krathis Gron. The orks have begun constructing several permanent settlements in southwestern Barsaive, including the fortress city at Claw Ridge to commemorate the founding of new Cara Fahd. The young nation's borders are spreading, and have absorbed several of the region's existing towns and villages, including a few Theran-dominated settlements. The absorption of the latter has already led to several battles and skirmishes between Theran and ork forces.

On Scorcher Cavalry

Shortly after the united people of Barsaive defeated the Theran Empire and ended the Theran War, the leader of the Thunderers scorcher tribe decided that his people should earn their way in the world by offering their finely-honed fighting skills to other groups. Though the tribe resisted, their leader had seen the coming importance of trade to Barsaive, and eventually prevailed. Other tribes followed in his footsteps; they abandoned raiding and instead formed cavalries, selling their skills to the highest bidder. From their earliest days, some ork cavalries lived by strict rules that pledged each rider's loyalty to one side of a conflict, while others changed sides from one week to the next. This dichotomy remains in our own day.

Ork cavalries range in size from ten scorchers to 100, built around groupings of nine riders and one sergeant. Overall command of larger forces falls to a captain.

Individual cavalries identify themselves with symbols such as bloody teeth, torn pennants, or bloody horns affixed to their shields, breastplates, or helmets. This particular custom is one they share with the scorcher raiders, though in general the cavalries wear well-kept armor and maintain their weapons in good repair. As they travel, they often adopt the clothing styles of the towns and cities they encounter, adding robes, fine leather boots, and other luxuries to their wardrobes.

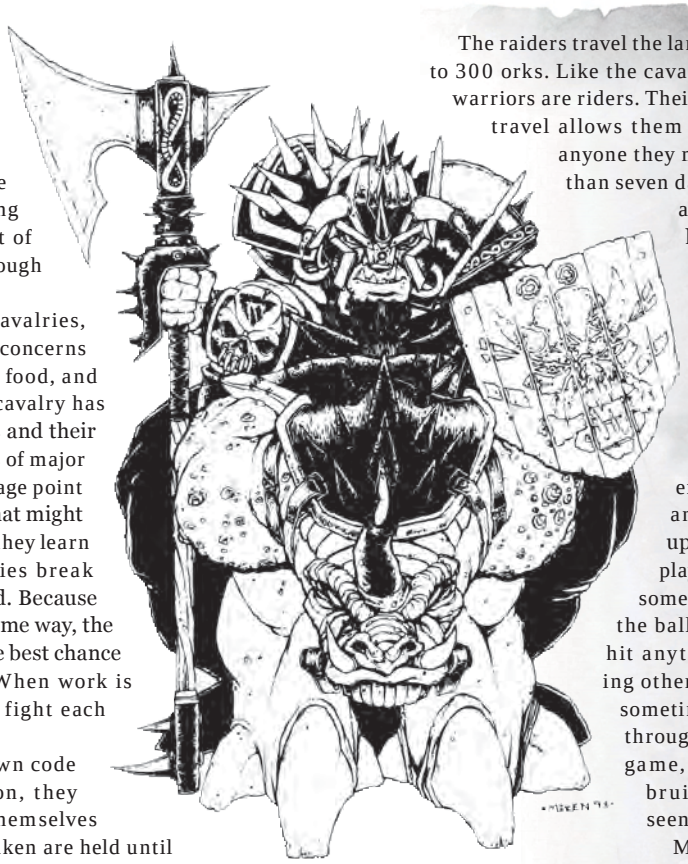
Only a rare few scorchers read and write, though many units contain adepts whose Disciplines include this talent. Because an ork leader may not have this ability, contracts are sealed verbally after the conclusion of negotiations. The cavalries offer a unique service, and so most prospective allies agree to even the most outrageous demands.

Because they love combat above all other things, scorcher cavalries usually attach themselves to frontline troops and wait

for the first volleys of enemy arrows and spells to cross the field. Then, armed with thick lances and riding their powerful mounts, the orks race across the battlefield to engage the enemy, running down anything in their paths. The mere sight of charging ork cavalry is often enough to break the opposing army.

Families travel with the cavalries, taking care of such day-to-day concerns as repairing weapons, cooking food, and tending the wounded. Once a cavalry has fulfilled its contract, the riders and their families camp outside the walls of major cities, using this excellent vantage point to sniff out political conflicts that might provide more work. Whenever they learn of battle brewing, the cavalries break camp and ride to the battlefield. Because all cavalries find work in the same way, the cavalry that arrives first has the best chance of winning the assignment. When work is particularly scarce, cavalries fight each other for contracts.

Cavalry units obey their own code of law. Warriors by profession, they treat other warriors as they themselves wish to be treated. Prisoners taken are held until the end of the conflict, when they are ransomed or simply returned to their army. Anything of value captured during battle goes to the winner. Once hired, most orks throw themselves completely behind the side that is paying them. Though some can be bribed to change sides, most scorcher cavalries units only abandon their employers when ordered to engage in suicidal attacks, or if the conflict escalates beyond the terms of the original contract. Should this happen, employers who refuse to renegotiate will swiftly lose their fine ork soldiers.



The raiders travel the land in tribes numbering from 50 to 300 orks. Like the cavalry scorchers, their prominent warriors are riders. Their nomadic life with its constant travel allows them to take what they want from anyone they meet. They rarely stop for more than seven days, pitching their conical tents and feasting and dancing around huge fires until dawn.

Fierce warriors, the scorcher raiders take pride in their physical prowess and skill in combat. Even their games often involve hitting, biting, clawing, and other physical attacks. One popular pastime, *tussdi*, requires players to move a ball (made from an animal's skull wrapped in cloth) up and down a playing field. The players use heavy poles measuring some six feet in length to manipulate the ball, but can also use the poles to hit anything else on the field, including other players. *Tussdi* is bloody and sometimes fatal, but the raiders laugh throughout the game. In a well-played game, every player suffers serious bruises, and serious wounds are seen as a badge of honor.

Most raiders wear furs and unfinished leathers, decorating their clothes and hair with bones and feathers. They wield crude weapons and often their first goal in a battle or raid is to acquire better ones.

...As we traveled across the lands near the ancient kingdom of Landis, we came upon a massive ork tribe camped for the night. Spotted by their sentries, we were escorted to the leader's quarters, where we met Titanstroke Greybeard. He cordially invited us to rest with the Thunderers scorcher tribe. That night we heard many legends of ork battles against Theran armies in which Theran slavers fared worst at the hands of the Thunderers.

Their terrible fierceness against slavers has its origins in our distant past, when orks were the only Name-giver race enslaved...

—From the journal of Freestone's Fighters, 1505 TH

On Scorcher Raiders

Ork raiders live in much the same primitive way that their ancestors did before the Scourge drove them into the kaers. They take pride in their shabby, dirty clothes, their inability to read and write, and the constant squabbling that goes on within and between tribes. They choose victims (whether persons, caravans, or communities) to raid based on known or rumored wealth and treat their victims according to how well they are dressed. Those who look wealthier are more likely to be killed or tortured. Balancing this savagery, the raiders often help the poorer people in society, sometimes aiding rebellions against cruel, wealthy merchants or slave owners.

On the Joys and Dangers of River Travel

Those who must travel great distances often arrange for transport down the Serpent River that crosses the length of Barsaive. Because few ordinary citizens own boats, most travelers must buy passage on a t'skrang riverboat.

At this writing, passage on a t'skrang riverboat costs an average of five silver pieces per person per day. Most ship captains demand full payment before beginning the voyage, though some accept partial payment in advance with the remainder due upon reaching the traveler's destination. Though the captain of my ship did not do so with me, I saw her charge certain passengers more than the average price, then encourage the passenger to bargain for the sheer joy of the exchange. Mounted travelers can arrange to transport their mounts on the same craft, but must pay an additional five silver pieces per day for the animal.

Travelers determined to reach their destination but short on ready coin may pay for their passage by working as a crew member during the voyage. I traveled this way, wishing to help my t'skrang hosts with the work of the ship. Each day that a passenger works for the crew earns him an average of three silver pieces, though pay rates are negotiable based on the person's skills. Instead of paying coin, some captains simply exchange passage for the traveler's time and labor. As I did, a passenger can usually work off most or all of the cost of his trip in this manner.

Swift and riverworthy, t'skrang riverboats cover vast distances in the sixteen hours per day that they travel, stopping all along the river to deliver and take on goods and passengers. Most

riverboats sail through the night without stopping, laying over at ports until morning only if night sailing would take the boat past its destination.

Concerning Acts of Piracy

Pirates also travel the Serpent River, attacking riverboats that carry passengers or any kind of cargo. Passengers who help fight off these marauders often receive a partial refund of their passage payment from a grateful captain.

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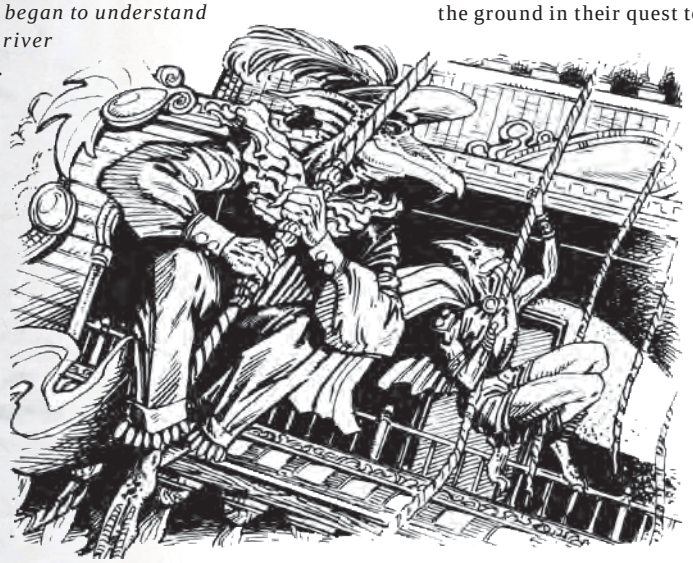
...Gyllina and I set out this morning aboard the Pride of Upandal. *Our captain, Yrogerg, sniggered when I offered to lend the crew a hand, and so after a quick breakfast of the spiced fish for which the t'skrang are so rightly famous, I climbed to the top deck of the* Pride *to better enjoy the beautiful morning. From my perch, the dark blue waters of the Serpent seemed to dance with a life of their own, and I began to understand the almost mystical awe the river inspires among the river folk.*

Suddenly, the roar of fire cannon drowned out the gentle splashing of the Pride's *paddlewheel. Startled, I peered over the edge of the deck and saw the t'skrang crew swinging about on the* Pride's *pole lines, their swords flashing as they grappled with the crew of a broken down riverboat that had pulled alongside our craft.*



My heart nearly stopped when I saw Gyllina in the clutches of a pirate.

"Val! Val!" she cried out as the lizard-man leapt to the pirate vessel.

I grabbed the nearest pole line and was halfway to the paddlewheeler when a t'skrang tail caught me in the side of the head and I fell into the wine-dark waters of the Serpent...

—From the journal of Val, Troubadour of Klestra

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Of the Wonders of Airship Travel

Because of the difficulty and expense of arranging airship passage, people only travel across Barsaive in this manner when they must reach their destination swiftly. Travel aboard airships can be unpleasant; most lack space for passengers, and airship captains and crews are rarely disposed kindly toward strangers aboard their vessels.

Most airships in Barsaive belong to the troll crystal raiders. Small and swift, these ships are made for combat and raiding, giving the captains even less reason to want the burden of passengers. Travelers who find troll raiders willing to give them passage should negotiate the terms of travel with extreme caution. Ideally, travelers seeking airship passage should track down the owner of a galley, most of which belong to trading companies. A galley captain will welcome passengers with less distaste than his fellow captains and flies his ship into fewer perilous situations.

Speed is air travel's greatest advantage. In the course of sixteen hours, an airship can travel a distance of six days' ride on a mount. Most airships do not fly through the night, except in battles or raids. Airships carrying passengers rarely go raiding unless the passengers agree to fight for the ship as part of the terms of passage.

On the Perils of Air Travel

The greatest danger of traveling by airship is the risk of encountering crystal raiders and Theran slave ships. The crystal raiders fly small, maneuverable, and well-armed ships that they call drakkars. Though the trolls most often raid near their homes in the Twilight Peaks, they sometimes range as far as one hundred days' ride away. The huge stone slave ships of the Theran Empire prey most often over the southeast reaches of Barsaive, capturing slaves and then ferrying them back to the Theran stronghold at Sky Point or to the nearby Theran-controlled city of Vivane. Theran slave ships often attack other airships as well as people on the ground in their quest to capture slaves for the empire.

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...I did not see my first airship until I was thirty years old. It was a Theran fortress—a castle made of shimmering white stone that could fly just beneath the clouds, then land on the ground and serve as a fortress. A true magical wonder, it was.

Like everyone in Barsaive, I had heard of the troll airships, but they were said to have the shape of seagoing vessels. This Theran marvel was a gleaming pile of stone upon stone, built into chambers and corridors and stairways without number. And still, for all its vastness and heaviness, it floated on the wind as lightly as a feather.

The wonder held me even though I first saw the ship as a helpless captive—but the wonder lasted only until Overgovernor Pavelis put me aboard a mining ship. Shackled to a hard stone rowers' bench in the dimly lit belly of the mining vessel, I no longer found the magic so splendid. The magic that propelled the vessel drew on the life of the slaves to keep the ship aloft as we searched the sky for pockets of elemental air. To this day, I hear the sound of the rowing drum in my nightmares. Intended to help us keep time, by some dreadful magic it kept us rowing far beyond our strength. Even those who had died on their benches kept rowing, rowing, rowing.

Thankfully a troll raid cut short my time aboard the slave ship. The crystal raiders also use life force to power their vessels, but they know the air currents above Barsaive well. Their light raiding ships darted quickly and easily through the sky, surrounding the Theran mining vessel like gnats around a dying crakbill.

—From the journal of J'Role the Honorable Thief

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On Crystal Raiders

For centuries, countless troll clans have claimed the Twilight Peaks as home. The tall mountain range put welcome distance between the trolls and the other Name-giving races and offered them deep caves and caverns in which to live. Before the Scourge, the Twilight Peaks abounded in life. Rich flora covered the mountains, even above the tree line in other areas of similar elevation. Careless of their prosperity, the troll clans gave little thought to farming and agriculture, neglecting the Passion Jaspree in favor of Thystonius, Passion of conflict.

The crystal raiders gained their Name from their use of weapons and armor carved from living crystal mined from the high mountain peaks they call home. These dazzling weapons and armor of solid crystal weigh far too much to be wielded by anyone with less strength than a troll, and the raiders use their unique crystal armaments with great skill. The sight of a ship full of trolls waving crystal-edged axes, spears and swords, clad in crystal armor and protected by crystal shields gleaming in the reddish light of the Twilight Peaks can strike fear into the heart of the most seasoned solider or veteran air sailor.

Few other species possessed the brute strength required to wield and wear such heavy, ornate items, and the trolls took pride in their unique weapons. They also built drakkars—long, wooden airships in which they sailed around the mountain peaks, fighting great battles against their own kind in the sweeping mountain slopes. These trolls were not the raiders we know today, who fight others as well as their own.

Like every other place in Barsaive, the Scourge changed the Twilight Peaks almost beyond recognition. Most of the trolls survived the Scourge buried deep in their mountain kaers, but their land fared far worse. Where once trees and grass, and fruits and vegetables grew wild, the Horrors left only barren ground and gray stone. The surviving trolls, inexperienced at working the land, have so far proved unable (some say unwilling) to re-plant the vegetation that flourished in earlier days. Instead of learning to use elemental earth and mundane tools for farming, they began to raid surrounding towns and villages in their drakkars, taking the food and supplies they needed.

Over the past 90 or so years, the trolls of the Twilight Peaks developed a new culture based on raiding and created customs and rituals to support their changed way of life. Their trollmoots have grown larger, some two hundred to a thousand strong. Though such numbers give the trolls an advantage in their constant warring, they have grown too numerous for the Twilight Peaks; the mountains cannot sustain the number of trolls attempting to live off the barren landscape. This crowding only worsens the lack of food and supplies and drives the trolls out on ever-increasing raids.

Crystal raider trollmoots vary greatly in temperament and fighting styles. They still fight among themselves in the mountains, but are as likely to attack Theran airships, farming communities, and caravans. Some, such as the Bloodlores, are the most ruthless of beings. The Stoneclaws, by contrast, are rumored to have offered shelter to those less fortunate than themselves during the Theran War.

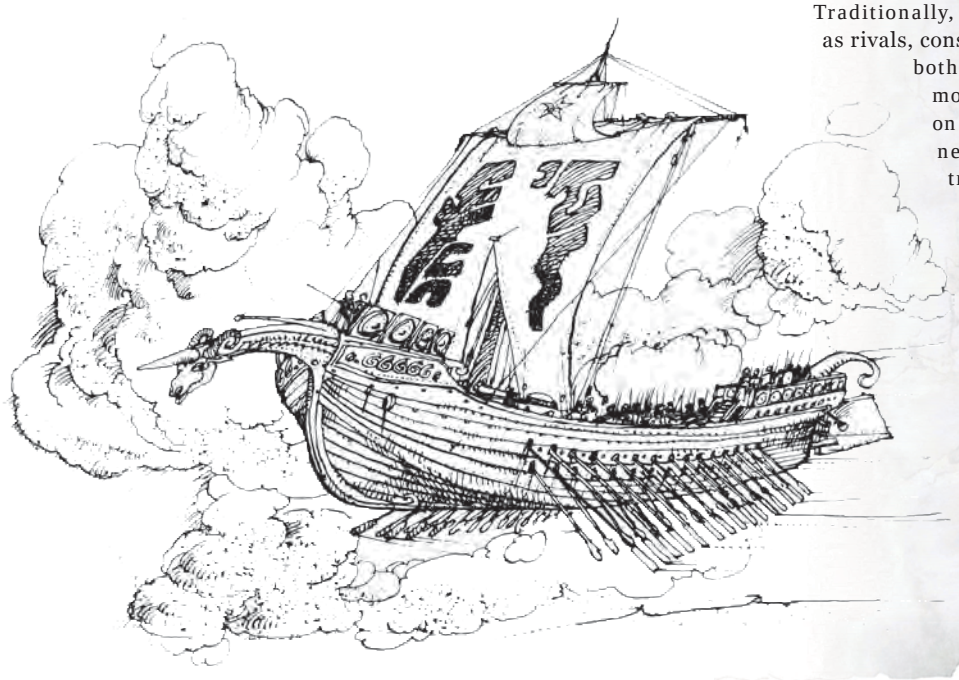
On the Customs of the Crystal Raiders

Crystal raider society is organized around the trollmoot, two or more troll clans that have banded together to share their lands, labor, and the rewards of raids. When two or more clan chiefs agree to join forces, the clans perform the *Ritual of the Trollmoot*, a rite of blood magic that requires the clan leaders to swear a blood promise to one another, forever proclaiming the loyalty of their two clans. Each trollmoot controls a large region of territory centered around its *alheim*, or moothome, which is used for meetings between the chiefs of the clans, as well as for meetings between different moots. Meeting another trollmoot at their moothome, however, acknowledges that moot's superiority and power, and so most meetings between trollmoots convene in a neutral place.

The many different trollmoots share a few common traditions. A chieftain leads each crystal raider trollmoot, usually the troll most feared by the other trolls. Anyone who believes he or she can best the chieftain may challenge him or her to one-on-one combat. The chieftain sets the terms of victory; most often, the battle continues until one troll falls down, bleeds, falls unconscious, or dies. The challenger chooses the method of combat, barehanded or armed. If the fight is set to continue only until one of the trolls is knocked down, the combatants usually forswear weapons. However, many challengers choose to fight with weapons regardless of the victory conditions in the hope that they can slay the reigning chieftain and take his or her place.

Work and danger fill the lives of crystal raider trollmoots. When they desire entertainment, they mount celebrations that rival any others in Barsaive for energy and frenzy. The mountain trolls love to move, whether in combat or while dancing around the great bonfires they build. In their wild dancing they call on Floranuus, Passion of revelry, victory, and motion.

Traditionally, all trollmoots treat each other as rivals, constantly raiding and fighting over both territory and wealth. Some trollmoots choose to focus their efforts on targets other than their trollmoot neighbors, but the longstanding tradition of interclan raiding still continues. Despite this apparent lack of interest in cooperation, a complex system of alliances, oaths and debts of honor bind the trollmoots together in a firmly tangled web that makes it all but impossible to consider one trollmoot separately from the others.



Crystal Raider Ships

Trollmoot activities center on airships and raiding. Crystal raiders use drakkars, the smallest type of wooden airships in Barsaive. These ships boast ornately decorated hulls, finely carved with runes by clan raiders. Narrow caves near the trollmoot's village serve as concealed mooring places; within them, the trolls care for and repair their swift vessels.

The chieftain of the trollmoot appoints a captain for each drakkar the trollmoot owns. The captain of the ship commands the crew of the vessel and makes decisions whenever the chieftain cannot bespeak the ship. For his own ship, the chieftain chooses a *vig* (second-in-command), ensuring a swift and smooth transfer of command should the chieftain die in battle. A few of the prouder warlords refuse to do this, annoyed by the suggestion that they might not survive a fight. Everyone else on the airship serves as crew, works the oars, or joins the warriors who will strike first. These fortunates sit in the center of the boat, swords in hand, ready to engage in combat at a single word.

The trolls left behind are either too young or too old for combat; sometimes they stay behind because the clan does not have enough airships to hold them. These members of the trollmoot build weapons, make repairs, and care for the young.

On the Place of Newots in Society

Over the past decades, the crystal raiders began abducting people from the towns, villages, and ships they raided. These prisoners, called newots, prepare food and perform other menial tasks for the trollmoot. Escape is difficult. Even trolls find it difficult to scale the Twilight Peaks, and a newot who escapes one trollmoot faces likely capture by another trollmoot during the climb down to the foot of the mountains.

The crystal raiders make a sharp distinction between their taking of newots and the Therans' taking of slaves, though only they understand the difference. They base their claim on the fact that the Therans trade and sell slaves, while the trolls capture newots only for their own use. They consider the newots members of their community, albeit members with no power, authority, or respect within the trollmoot.

A newot who survives the rigorous life of the trollmoot long enough may be formally invited by its chieftain to join the trollmoot as a full member. If the newot accepts the invitation, he or she undergoes the initiation rites of an adolescent troll. If the initiate survives the rituals, he or she receives all the rights of a member of the trollmoot.

In truth, the distinction between newots and slaves eludes most scholars. Of course, few scholars would dare say so for fear of angering a crystal raider.

—Jerriv Forrim, Scribe and Scholar of the Library of Throal

On Crystal Weapons and Armor

Besides being master craftsmen of their drakkar airships, the crystal raiders produce some of the most extraordinary weapons and armor in all of Barsaive, perhaps in all of the world. It is from these trappings of war that they take their name, which suits them better than any other. Though the raiders also use conventional arms made of metal and leather, a great many wield swords and spears made of blue-tinted crystal or wear armor thickly encrusted with jagged crystal shards.

The trolls cannot use natural crystal alone to produce such weapons and armor, because they would shatter during combat. Instead, they carve these beautiful but deadly weapons from crystals native to the Twilight Peaks, and then lace them with elemental earth to make them as strong as metal.

The Twilight Peaks offer two resources that make such craftsmanship possible. In deep caverns at the heart of the mountains lie a great supply of crystals called ice stones, so named because they are cold to the touch, and a rich supply of elemental earth. The caverns remain largely unexplored and unsettled, for they are rife with strange and dangerous creatures from the elemental plane of earth. The raiders, fierce and eager for combat at almost all other times, make expeditions into the caverns with uncharacteristic timidity. Though they greatly desire the treasures contained therein, they also believe that they are trespassing by intruding into these cares.

... The entire moot came out to see us off, the little ones gathering in the shadows of the mighty airships as I had done only a few years before. The moot elders, grizzled old men and women proudly bearing the scars of long-ago raids, bade farewell to their battle-girded sons and daughters with the traditional admonition to "Return victorious—or draped across your shield."

At the deep, rich sound of a b'ruar, *fashioned from the horn of a thundra beast, we 500 warriors formed a column. A second bellowing call sent us marching toward the drakkars. We moved as a great terrible beast, bristling with the gleaming points of crystal-tipped spears and swords. Others wielded finely-wrought battle-axes fitted with ice-stone heads the size of thundra skulls. Still others carried flails and maces, laced with elemental earth for strength. Some even wore elaborate helms and armor of jagged crystal, and all bore large ice-stone shields that flashed in the harsh mountain sun like dragon scales.*

As the last warriors boarded the drakkars, the crowd fell silent. Then the slow, steady beat of spears against shields announced the beginning of the h'kradt, *the ancient raider ritual. Slowly, the beat grew louder and faster until it grew into a thunder that filled the sky.*

The crowd answered with war cries and cheers. Then, as the last echoes of the h'kradt *reverberated through the mountain passes, the drakkars of the Stoneclaws rose toward the clouds...*

—From the journal of Zurc of the Stoneclaws

Crystal weapons and armor offer the same protection in battle as metal weapons or armor and seldom have magical properties. Few other than trolls use them, as it takes troll-like strength to wield such heavy armaments. However, a troll weaponsmith occasionally creates a truly extraordinary weapon, by accident or design. Such items that we know to exist include an enchanted crystal sword that inflicts more harm than any other sword of comparable weight and size, crystal spiked maces that emit a blazing blue light to blind the wielder's opponent, and suits of crystal armor that weigh as little as leather armor.

Many warriors throughout Barsaive covet such wondrous items; the raiders often become the raided when bands of adventurers attempt to slip into a trollmoot and steal such armor and weapons. Other heroes make desperate attempts to stop the trolls in mid-attack in the hope of seizing enchanted items from their fallen foes.

Most of the following comes to us from Nevear of Travar, an expert on the history of Barsaive and the changes wrought by the Scourge. Nevear's work has drawn praise from many of his fellow scholars, as well as from our late King Varulus III, who corresponded with him on occasion.

—Humbly presented for the edification of the reader by Thom Edrull, Archivist and Scribe of the Hall of Records

On the Land and its Places

Barsaive is home to great wonder—sites of surpassing beauty, cities that are monuments to the artistry of the Name-givers who built them—as well as places of terror and suffering. Our land still bears the scars of the Scourge, and they will heal slowly, if at all. These perilous places have but one virtue, in the minds of our province's heroes—they promise adventure to both the brave and the foolhardy going there to make their fortunes.

On the Landscape and Weather

Hilly uplands, plateaus, and low mountains cover most of Barsaive, giving the province often beautiful and always dramatic scenery. A few exceptionally large mountain ranges interrupt this rolling landscape, most notably the Throal Mountains and the Twilight Peaks, which rise to heights of more than 15,000 feet above the sea. The hill lands rise to some 2,600 feet above the sea, with plateaus and lower mountain ranges averaging 3,000 to 4,000 feet above sea level. The need for constant climbing and forcing one's way through lush jungles and forests makes travel difficult. Barsaive's few finished roads wind up and down hills and around plateaus and mountains, making even journeys along established routes arduous.

Nothing grew in Barsaive in the years immediately following the Scourge, which had the effect of causing dramatic and frequent shifts in temperature and rainfall. Once the people began to emerge from their kaers, however, they used magic to regenerate the world's greenery at a phenomenal rate.

Within a decade of the end of the Scourge, Barsaive enjoyed a year-round, temperate climate with moderate rainfall. Rainfall in most of southern Barsaive is heavier than the 40 to 60 inches common in the rest of the province, but the area surrounding Death's Sea suffers continual drought. Most of the year's rainfall occurs during the first six months.

Of the Serpent River

The long, winding Serpent River runs through the heart of Barsaive, dividing it in two. Home of the t'skrang and their villages, the river supports hundreds of tributaries and delivers fresh water to most of the people of Barsaive.

The river received its Name from the dwarfs of the ancient Kingdom of Scytha. It begins in the northern mountains well beyond the borders of Barsaive, entering the province near the city of Iopos and winding through the land, passing just south of the Scol Mountains that feed spring water into the river. From the Scol foothills, the Serpent passes through Lake Vors and winds around the massive Throal Mountains, which also add to its strength with fresh water. The river then flows through Lake Ban before passing through Lake Pyros in the Servos Jungle. It then enters the Mist Swamps, where it meets the molten stone of the Death's Sea.

The Serpent is wide, nearly an hour's crossing by riverboat at most points, and flows with a deceptively strong current. One cannot cross the river and arrive at a specific place without either magical aid or a boat. Swimming across the Serpent is considered an amazing feat of strength; most t'skrang villages hold a yearly swimming contest for those brave (or foolish) enough to attempt such a crossing. According to t'skrang tales, only one or two persons have ever accomplished this deed.

...As our airship cleared the last foothills of the Caucavic Mountains, the cool blue waters of the Serpent River appeared below us, the bright summer sun bouncing off her whitecaps and making them look like jewels. Fields of deep emerald and gold lined the river's gently sloping banks, pressing against her life-giving waters as if in a lover's embrace. As we drifted along, following the river's meandering path, two t'skrang paddlewheelers appeared, like gems set in her shimmering blue waters. As we watched, the boats began to close. They spewed tiny plumes of white into the air, the telltale signs of fire cannons. Farther down the river, the fields gave way to small trading ports, where brightly colored barges formed ever-changing mosaics along the riverbanks.

For days we followed the Great Serpent, as her blue waters flowed through Lake Ban, then under the dark canopy of the Servos Jungle, until they finally disappeared into the foul darkness of the Mist Swamps.

—From the journal of Yevad, Troubadour of Tirtarga

The t'skrang villages that trade up and down the length of the Serpent River control the activities of all ships plying the river. Sections of the Serpent lie under the jurisdiction of the great t'skrang trading houses, or *aropagoi*, formed by coalitions of several villages along each particular stretch of the river. The villages work together to manage trade and discourage piracy, joining their resources to create fleets of riverboats that can prevent pirate attacks along their portions of the river.

The strength of the *aropagoi* deters pirates from excessive raiding along most of the Serpent. But along sparsely populated stretches, such as through the Servos Jungle, piracy poses a great danger to travelers still.

Of the Lowlands and Plains

Coarse, tall grass covers Barsaive's broad, lowland plains, which become drowned in flood waters during heavy rains. Above the grasses, scattered trees rise like long-necked beasts. Traveling across the savanna on clear days is a delightful experience. The sharp blue of the sky and the touch of the cool wind brushing the tops of the long grass are soothing to the spirit, not to mention that passage through the grasses is much easier than through the tangled brush of the jungle. From all directions comes the constant buzz of insects, and occasionally travelers might catch sight of something larger through the grass—snakes, rodents, and sometimes large animals such as tigers and lions.

During the dry months, tribes of herders all across Barsaive stake out ranges for their animals. At this time of year, one often sees plumes of smoke rising out of the grass in the distance, signs of the camps of herders settled in for the season. These men and women must constantly be on the watch for thieves who would steal their cattle or predators ready to rip the herds apart to feed their young.

During the rains, travel across the grasslands becomes unpleasant. With every step, a man's feet or a beast's hooves sink an inch or two into the water-soaked land. Sometimes, travelers find themselves ankle-deep in mud and water. On such occasions it becomes necessary to lead one's animals on foot because the added burden of a rider would totally mire the average horse or mule. The grass stalks droop from the weight of the water, drenching one's skin and clothing with their heavy moisture. While plodding along in cold, wet misery, a traveler could too easily forget to be on the alert for the constant danger of stalking creatures or roving ork scorcher bands possibly lurking beyond the next hill.

Of the Creatures of Barsaive

Barsaive's abundant fauna includes small animals such as mice and frogs that are visible everywhere in the province. More dangerous animals usually stay hidden, sometimes allowing travelers to pass unmolested, other times pouncing at the last moment to take their victim by surprise.

Most creatures in Barsaive pose little danger to travelers or attack only when threatened. These creatures—monkeys, sloths, aardvarks, boars, snakes, parrots, hawks, peacocks, tortoises, and so on—have no magic. Other creatures, both mundane and magically endowed, pose a greater danger: tigers, rhinoceros, lions, bears, wild dogs, griffins, giant snakes, leopards, and so on. Greatest of all threats are the Horrors still roaming the world, of course. As everyone knows, we Name-givers have little natural defense against them.

On the Jungles and Forests

Records show that before the Scourge, tall trees with broad leaves shut out the sunlight from the floor of Barsaive's jungles and forests and so kept them clear of underbrush. In our time, through some combination of magic, intent, circumstance, and natural growth, jungles and forests grow thick with low vegetation that weaves between the tall trees, thriving with or without sunlight. Perhaps in reaction to the barrenness of the Scourge, Barsaive's jungles and forests now teem with animal and plant life. Magicians, questors, and others endlessly debate explanations for this rampant fertility, but have yet to reach a consensus.

Both jungle and forest flora range from ground-covering bushes to the tallest trees, which soar to heights of three hundred feet and are scattered throughout the woodlands. Trees that stand one hundred to two hundred feet tall form the canopy of leafy branches that blocks much of the sunlight and conceals the ground from the view of airships and flying creatures.

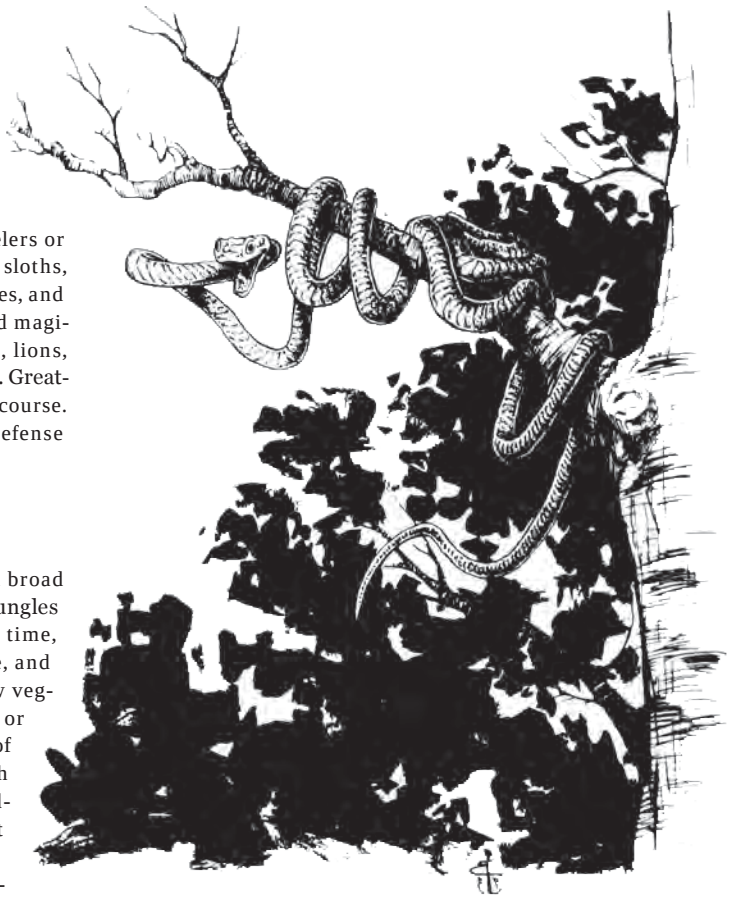
The next tallest trees rise fifty to eighty feet high. Their trunks, branches, twigs, and foliage grow together into an apparently impenetrable mass that sometimes extends down to the ground. Though whole groups of travelers may be able to walk freely through some areas of the forests and jungles, at other times the draping vines can conceal someone a mere step away.

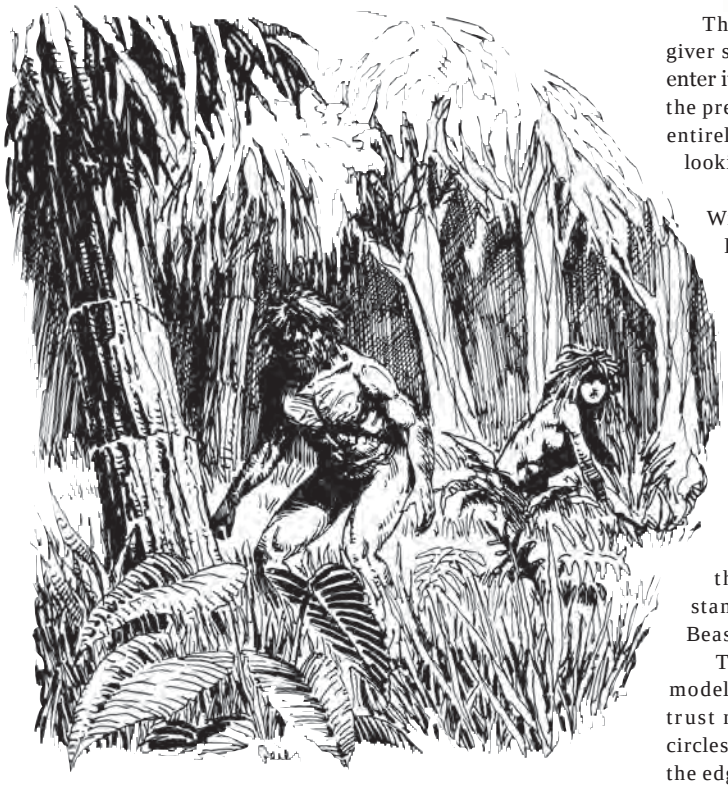
The wetter, southern part of Barsaive boasts jungles filled with dense stands of bright, green broad-leaved trees and woody, stemmed vines whose brilliant flowers blossom year round. The abundant vines festoon the trees and snake across the jungle floor, often winding their way through trees for a distance of several days' ride. The dampness also fosters the growth of mosses that hang from the trees and spring from dead plants. The variety of plant life in these jungles is astounding; questors of Jaspree estimate that thousands of varieties of plants and trees grow within a single day's ride in any direction.

In some areas, foliage is so thick that one must hack a path through the vines and small trees growing on the jungle floor. The overgrowth allows only a murky, green-gray light to filter through the thick canopy of leaves, turning the traveler's path into an eerie, twilight journey at any time of day.

Other sections of Barsaive's wooded lands provide easier and brighter passage, but no truly clear paths. As soon as a traveler cuts a passage and leaves it behind, the trees and growth begin crowding in again. Splashes of sunlight, beams of light so startlingly bright that they look like fire burning its way through the dimness, sometimes illuminate remnants of other explorers' trails.

The dense plant life makes the jungle a dangerous place for Name-givers and all manner of mundane creatures. Large predators often await their prey in branches high above the jungle paths





or in the shadow of underbrush. Often, more vulnerable creatures use the abundant flora to hide. The air echoes with bird song, the hum of insects, and the occasional roar of larger animals challenging trespassers or warning off scavengers hoping to share their kill. The temperature is the only comfortable part of traveling through Barsaive's forests and jungles; it is rarely hot, and may even be cold during the rainy season. Among the great trees, travelers can always find a dry spot to wait out the weather.

Farmers and herders all across Barsaive have begun to settle along the edges of the forests and jungles, felling trees and chopping away vines to make room for homes, crops, and grazing land. In clearing the land, they always create a border between the settlement and the thick tangle of the surrounding trees in hopes of avoiding surprise attacks by the predators and monstrous creatures hiding in the leafy green shadows.

Of the Liaj Jungle

The Liaj Jungle, dense and sparsely populated with Namegiver settlements, presents three distinct dangers to those who enter it. The first is Usun, one of the great dragons. No one knows the precise location of Usun's lair, but most people avoid the area entirely because the dragon is rumored to prowl the entire jungle looking for prey.

The second danger is the jungle's large, predatory animals. Within the thick stands of trees and layers of green, leafy vines live tigers, lions, bears, and giant snakes. Though the great dragon Usun strikes more fear into the heart, these more mundane animals pose the greater immediate danger.

The third danger is a tribe of humans and elves, some 200 strong, which have broken with civilization and instead roam the jungle. They call themselves Tamers, a Name that refers somewhat to their ability to bond with the jungle animals, but more strongly proclaims their own victory in refusing to weaken themselves with civilized living.

The Tamers have no permanent home and live by foraging for edible plants and small animals. Usun has not given them permission to live in his jungle, and they must constantly watch for the dragon's presence. The tribe boasts many Beastmaster adepts, as well as several questors of Jaspree.

The Tamers reject clothing, tools, and trade goods, instead modeling their lives on the animals with which they live. They trust no one from outside the jungle, and deliberately lead in circles anyone who tries to enter Liaj, eventually leaving them on the edge of the jungle.

Those who wish to speak to the Tamers must first prove themselves worthy of respect in the tribe's eyes. Earning Tamer respect requires that one adopt Tamer ways, forgoing all luxuries of everyday life. This respect is not easily earned, but once given it is not easily lost.

... We set out at dawn, heading east from Jerris. At the end of the first day we had reached the edge of the Liaj Jungle, where we pitched camp for the night. After all, only the very brave—or foolhardy—would dare enter the dark recesses of the Liaj after nightfall.

Soon after the last rays of the sun had disappeared, the jungle came to life. Far in the distance, the lone roar of a brithan pierced the air, followed by the sudden high-pitched cries of a crakbill flock. Just below these sounds ran a low hum that seemed to emanate from the jungle itself, the song of her countless insects.

Most disturbing were the rustlings we heard just outside our camp, which called to mind the nocturnal predators prowling under the thick canopy of the Liaj—storm wolves, lightninq lizards, giant serpents the size of airships, as well as more mundane but equally deadly beasts such as tigers and bears. Even worse, somewhere in the blackness lurked the dragon called Usun, a fearsome beast with a taste for the flesh of men.

Suddenly our campfire seemed very small indeed.

—From the journal of Aicila of Iopos

Of the Poison Forest

The Poison Forest is a vast jungle that lies between the city of Jerris and the Wastes. Many Barsaivians believe that the mysterious black soot that blows from the Wastes across Barsaive's western edge adversely affects the bodies and minds of the citizens of Jerris. They also believe that the soot has created the bizarre condition of the Poison Forest.

At first glance, the jungle appears dead. Traveling through it is an unpleasant experience; only rotting trunks, withered vines, and dry, decayed leaves meet the eye. The black and gray of the scene is unrelieved by a single blade of grass or leaf shining with the green of life. The sky is clearly visible above, the bright blue of a clear day contrasting sharply with the stark, blackened branches. The lack of a jungle canopy is disconcerting. One expects to journey through murky green, but instead travels exposed to the sky and elements.

The silence of the jungle seems to beat on one's ears, for no truly living creature roams there. No birds flutter by; no predators roar out warnings to keep rivals away from their territory. Though the jungle is filled with vaguely familiar shapes, nothing bears any true resemblance to the living world outside the forest.

Yet the forest lives, in its own perverse fashion. The trees, vines, and leaves may seem dead, but they are not. The pools of dank, standing water smell fetid and incapable of sustaining life, yet they seem to sustain the forest in a perpetual state of decay. Though no birds sing, animals crawl over the ground and sluggishly climb the rotting trees.

The paradox is this: the forest is not dead, but dying. As far as anyone can tell, it will continue to die till the end of time.

Each animal, each tree, each vine moves infinitesimally closer to death each day, but never truly dies. Because the trees never die, they do not fall and rot, making way for new life to take their place. For whatever reason, the Poison Forest cannot complete the natural cycle of death, decay, and rebirth.

...Today we finally reached the end of this accursed place, thanks to the Passions. Now I truly know why it is called the Poison Forest, for even now its all-pervasive stench of a thousand dying animals clings to our clothing as if the forest itself held us in a death grip.

I cannot forget the sight of the unholy creatures that roam the forest's lifeless gray floor—half-dead beasts draped in decaying flesh, hideous abominations that should never see the light of day. On our second day wandering through the blackened trees we encountered one such beast, a massive tiger whose putrid flesh crawled with thousands of tiny maggots.

I can scarcely wait to be out of this place. For it is not life, but some blasphemous mockery of life that is not from this world...

—From the journal of Yllom of Oshane

This unnatural state holds the animals of the forest in its thrall as well. They wander the jungle, alive, but dying, their natural instincts to mate, hunt, and sleep ruined. They make little noise, but exist in a twilight between life and death, so confused that they no longer know how to live.

Though half-decayed and caught between living and dying, the animals apparently still possess the instinct to attack. Stories abound of those who somehow wander into the Poison Forest barely surviving savage attacks by rotting tigers or assaults by flocks of featherless, putrefying raptors. Some suggest that the animals' hatred is all that remains alive or that perhaps something grants them the passion of jealousy, but no evidence can be found to support this conjecture.

These dangers are minor compared to the darker claims that the ever-dying jungle can exert its unnatural power over those who tarry within its miasma. A wanderer who stays too long in the forest may begin to decay, losing his or her sense of life, passion, and intelligence. Over time he, too, will enter the twilight between life and death, unable to fully live but also unable to die. As the victim's body and soul withers, he becomes a creature jealous of the living, striking out against those who enter the forest. Other stories tell of travelers who pass safely through the forest only to begin wasting away as they continue their travels.

Of course, we do not know enough to prove the stories' truth, but the only cure ever mentioned in legend for those afflicted is to perform a bold act inspired by each of the Passions.

Of the Servos Jungle

The Servos Jungle spreads its shade near the center of Barsaive, just south of the Throal Mountains. To walk from one side of the Servos to the other takes more than ten days. The jungle's apt Name comes from the human word meaning isolated, or separated from. Though the Servos exists within the borders of Barsaive, those who enter the jungle's boundaries leave Barsaive behind, in more than just name.

The jungle is dark and eerie, and many prefer to travel around rather than through it. Stories abound of the dangers in the Servos, and its fearsome reputation has spread across Barsaive. As with other jungles, untold creatures within it stalk unwary prey and the tribes of humans who apparently survived the Scourge under the Servos' canopy. Knowing what we do of the corrupted blood elves, most Barsaivians suspect that any group that lacked Theran protection against the Horrors must be Horror-touched.

The Serpent River is the largest of many rivers that crisscross the Servos Jungle. Even here, the rivers are home to many tribes of t'skrang and other Name-givers, though these tribes are more savage than those in Barsaive proper. Indeed, some are even cannibals. Lake Pyros and the stretch of the Serpent River that crosses the Servos Jungle are plagued by piracy, and no heroes have yet dared to break the pirates' hold on the few villages in the jungle.

On the Mountains of Barsaive

Barsaive holds far too many mountain ranges to describe them all in this document. Therefore, I describe only the major ranges here. I write a little from my own, limited knowledge, and in many cases also use accounts written by adventurers who traveled in, on, or near each mountain range.

Of the Caucavic Mountains

The Caucavic Mountains in the northeast corner of Barsaive lie roughly five days' walk from Haven and Parlainth. The mountains' Name, derived from the troll word for *feral* or *ferocious*, is particularly apt, for the Caucavic Mountains are the most treacherous in all Barsaive. Steep cliffs, deep valleys, and plunging gullies are said to hide all manner of creatures and even Horrors that somehow managed to survive among the barren rocks. The tree line ends only 1,500 feet above the base of the mountains; beyond that point, the terrain is unstable and prone to rockslides and quakes.

According to rumor, the Caucavics are the home of savage tribes that attack all intruders. These tribes, which are said to be survivors of the Scourge, live in caverns near the base of the mountain range. Though all the Name-givers races can be found among the tribes, most of their numbers are humans, orks, and dwarfs.

Of the Delaris Mountains

The Delaris Mountains lie near the western border of Barsaive, roughly ten days' walk south of Jerris and twelve days' walk north of Vivane and Sky Point. The Name of these mountains comes from the elven word for *quiet* or *serene*.

Breathtaking in their beauty and tranquility, the Delaris Mountains possess an odd, almost eerie quality. The drowsy peace of the mountains seems to envelop all those within a day's walk of their foothills, muffling all sound. Though animals of all kinds live in, on, and near the mountains, the creature sounds one might expect to hear simply do not exist.

Though a place without sound might seem a wonderful retreat for those seeking solitude, it presents certain hazards for the

ordinary traveler. People who lose their way or find themselves in danger cannot call for help or otherwise draw attention to their plight. The muffling of noise also allows creatures to move silently, enabling them to attack their prey without warning.

According to legend, the Delaris Mountains shelter the monastery to which Elianar Messias, the Martyr Scholar, was banished for opposing the Elven Queen Failla's Declaration of Separation from the elven nation Shosara. Messias found the Books of Harrow, which foretold the coming of the Horrors, in a nearby cavern in the Delaris foothills. The legends say that the mountains conspired to give Messias the silence he needed to study the books and so save the world.

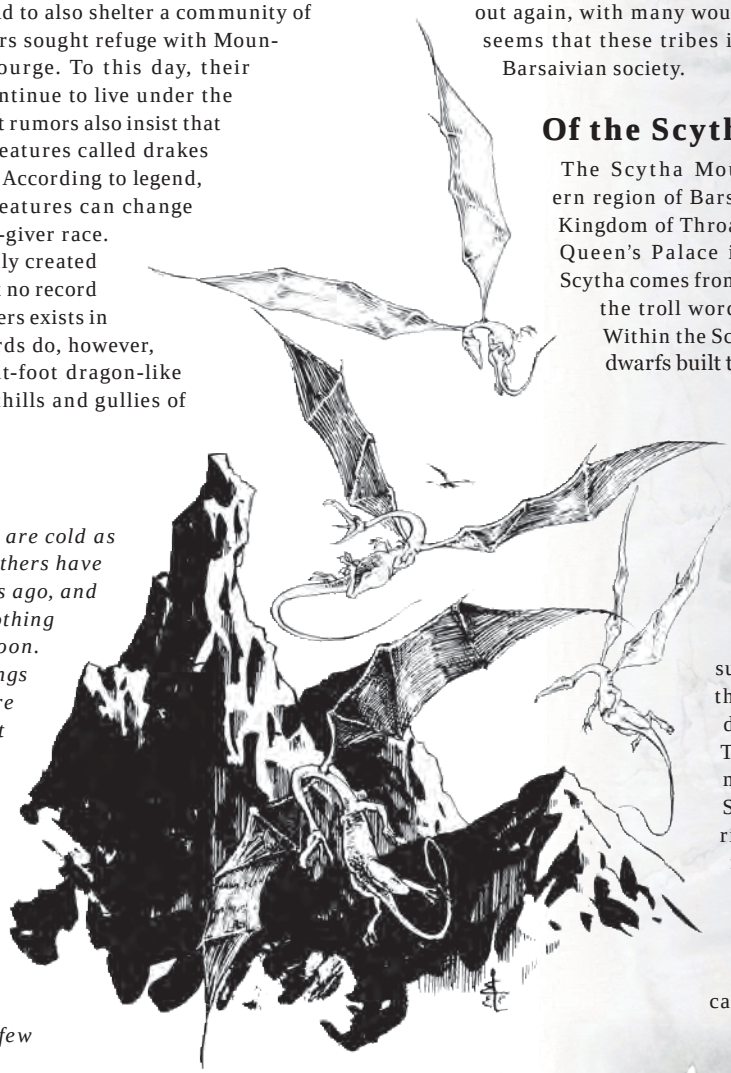
Regardless of the truth of this tale, the quiet is real. Though many have tried, no adventurers have yet found the monastery spoken of as the abode of the Martyr Scholar. Many believe it was destroyed during the Scourge; others claim it never existed, and consider the story of the Martyr Scholar nothing more than an excellent fiction.

Two major trollmoots call these mountains home: the Rockhorns to the east and the Skyseekers to the west.

Of the Dragon Mountains

The Dragon Mountains stand in the far southeast corner of Barsaive between the Aras and Death's seas, roughly ten days' ride from the city of Travar. The southern tip of the region known as the Badlands ends where the foothills of the Dragon Mountains begin.

The Dragon Mountains earned their Name because the great dragon Mountainshadow chose to lair in their peaks. The lair lies in a deep cave adjacent to a large plateau on the tallest peak of the mountain range. In addition to housing the dragon, Mountainshadow's lair is said to also shelter a community of Name-givers whose ancestors sought refuge with Mountainshadow during the Scourge. To this day, their descendants supposedly continue to live under the wing of the dragon. Persistent rumors also insist that a race of shape-changing creatures called drakes live in this mountain range. According to legend, these small, dragon-like creatures can change into the shape of any Name-giver race. The great dragons supposedly created the drakes to serve them, but no record of their shape-changing powers exists in the Library of Throal. Records do, however, offer reports of six- to eight-foot dragon-like creatures lairing in the foothills and gullies of the Dragon Mountains.



The Dragon Mountains are cold as death. I alone am left; the others have all died. Food ran out weeks ago, and these barren slopes hold nothing an elf can eat. I will die soon. 'Tis strange, but of all the things I might wish for as I lie here on the frozen stone, I want most to see a dragon before my last breath.

The intense desire to see one of these creatures with my own eyes is why I set out on this journey in the first place. I thought they lived in the Dragon Mountains, but I have seen nothing living save my companions and a few hardy lichens. These I tried to eat, but their bitter taste galled my tongue and turned my stomach. Nothing exists in these crags but chill mists, bitter plants, and cold stone.

. . . I scarce have strength to write, but I have seen a dragon! Floating over the highest peak, the one that stabs the sky like an accusing finger, I saw a dragon . . .

—From the Journal of Fomhair Evensong, elven Troubadour

Of the Scol Mountains

The Scol Mountains lie in northwest Barsaive between the Serpent River and Blood Wood, ten days' walk from Iopos and fifteen days from Jerris. The mountains' Name means *ancient*, and comes from the troll tongue.

According to troll folklore and legend, the Scol Mountains are the birthplace of the trolls who built and ruled the ancient kingdom of Ustrect. Unfortunately, no one has yet mounted a successful expedition to verify the truth of these legends. The best evidence to support the trolls' claim are the many isolated troll clans currently living in the Scol Mountains who speak a strange dialect of the troll language unknown anywhere else in Barsaive. Chief among them is the brutal and unforgiving Firescale trollmoot; known for killing strangers on sight. Though they have little save race in common with the crystal raiders, some of these troll clans also survive by raiding; they travel on large mounts similar to thundra beasts, but more savage.

The Stoneclaw trollmoot has often attempted to contact these tribes of trolls, possibly to negotiate an alliance, but to no avail. Scouting parties sent into the Scol Mountains always limp out again, with many wounded and dead. From this, it seems that these tribes intend to remain apart from Barsaivian society.

Of the Scytha Mountains

The Scytha Mountains occupy the northern region of Barsaive, lying just north of the Kingdom of Throal and southeast of the Elven Queen's Palace in Blood Wood. The Name Scytha comes from the dwarf language, and like the troll word *scol*, means *old* or *ancient*. Within the Scytha Mountains long ago, the dwarfs built their first kingdom in the land that would one day become Barsaive. The dwarf Kingdom of Scytha pre-dates the founding of Throal by many years, having been in existence long before Elianar Messias was banished to the Delaris Mountains.

The Kingdom of Scytha survived the Orichalcum Wars, though its prosperity began to decline with the arrival of the Therans and the establishment of the Theran Empire. Scytha quickly fell to the superior Theran military, and was forced to swear allegiance to the Empire. Though both poverty and Theran oppression weakened the Scythan kingdom, neither was the cause of its downfall.

Perhaps a hundred years before the coming of the Scourge, creatures now thought to be the first of the Horrors began to infest the caverns and passageways of Scytha. In time, these creatures drove the dwarfs from their home. The Scythan dwarfs traveled south to Throal, requesting haven in that kingdom. King Varulus I welcomed them graciously, and none have ever returned to their former homeland.

Long abandoned by the Name-giver races, the Scytha Mountains are now thought to be haunted by the vengeful spirits of the founders of Scytha. Despite these rumors, persistent tales of the vast wealth left behind by the dwarfs in their haste to depart the Horror-infested kingdom continue to draw adventurers to the mountains.

Recent expeditions to the Scytha Mountains have brought back reports of strange, dangerous creatures still prowling the caverns of the ancient dwarf kingdom. Every adventurer who returns relates a different description of these creatures; some insist that they are another manifestation of the Horrors, while others say the creatures appear in a guise never before seen.

The Scytha Mountains are the domain of the Great Dragon Vasdenjas, who has been known to give audiences on Mount Wyrmspire.

Of the Thunder Mountains

The Thunder Mountains cover the southeastern area of Barsaive, just north of the Dragon Mountains and a day's walk from Travar. Just south of Travar, the western edge of the Thunder Mountains meets the eastern edge of the Badlands.

The Name of the Thunder Mountains comes from the dwarf word for the thunderous sounds that roll out of the peaks and valleys during the months of Strassa, Veltom, and Charassa. No widely accepted explanation exists for these booming rumbles. Some legends say that a great dragon was trapped beneath the mountains before the Scourge, and the thunder is his roar. Others suggest that Verjigorm, the Horror also called Hunter of Great Dragons, is trapped beneath the mountains.

Still others, among them many questors, insist that the sounds are those of Death, still imprisoned beneath Death's Sea, calling out to remind the world of his presence. The last (and most likely) explanation is that the Thunder Mountains lie over a crack between the land masses that make up Barsaive, and the roars are the grinding of earth and rock as the land masses shift.

Other than the distinctive roar that comes from these mountains, the Thunder Mountains have few noteworthy characteristics.

Like most mountain ranges in Barsaive, they are home to all manner of wildlife and most likely a few Horrors.

... The Thunder Mountains looked like any others. Rock. More rock than the mind could comprehend. We were five days out of Travar, heading to the Aras Sea. We had heard the rumblings on our first day, but they seemed far away then, like thunder over the horizon. Today, without warning, the rumbling started again. At first it sounded like falling rocks in the distance, then grew to the sound of a million hammers forging a million blades. Under our feet the ground danced.

Anonlic, our overly superstitious Swordmaster, shouted, "Death has returned and we are to be its first meal!" Not to be outdone, our archer Mejox screeched, "The Dragon Lord is released!" Those of us closer to the earth realize that neither case was true, yet fear of these tales paralyzed my companions. They shook more than the rock they were standing on. I pulled them aside to keep them from getting crushed by falling rock or swallowed up by the widening crack in the ground. Breaths held, we waited for the quaking to cease. The roar drowned out my companions' mad cries of doom as we watched the earth open.

As quickly as it had begun, it ended. The dust was choking us.

Fearing to move too soon, I made my companions wait. When the dust settled, the Thunder Mountains still stood, though the path we had followed no longer existed. Death did not return, nor did the Dragon Lord. Mercifully, my hearing has not yet returned either. At least for today, I need not listen to my companions whining about the certain death that just barely passed us by…

—From the journal of Caron Lev, dwarf Illusionist

Of the Throal Mountains

The Throal Mountains, rising up through the clouds and extending across the heart of Barsaive, seem impossibly large. Indeed, as one approaches the Throal Mountains, their image fills one's sight. Maps of Barsaive fail to do justice to the sheer size of the peaks, for maps can show only the width of the mountains. In fact, if the surface area of the range could be laid out flat, it would cover one quarter of Barsaive.

The tremendous wasteland across the surface of the mountains provides a stark contrast to the orderly Kingdom of Throal, buried deep within the rocky slopes. The dwarfs devote no time or forces to policing the upper reaches of their mountains, and so the surface remains untamed, much as it was following the Scourge.

Travelers who walk across the mountainous wastes are struck by the cold blue tint of the soil. Myriad small stones cover the ground underfoot, making the trek awkward and threatening one with a turned ankle or twisted knee at every step.

Two-thirds of the way up the slopes, the air is so cold that exhaled breath turns to mist, and only thick furs will enable a visitor to survive the night. All manner of strange creatures roam the mountains. Many of them are solitary, like the feather serpents, which seek out food to bring back to their broods. Others, like the ice wolves, travel in packs. The numerous large boulders and tall outcroppings can hide any kind of ambusher. With food so scarce in the mountains, the few living predators and people must constantly struggle to kill for food or die of starvation.

Of ever greater danger for travelers are the savages that roam the slopes. Several primitive tribes of humans, orks, trolls, and even dwarfs live on the surface of the mountains, survivors of the Scourge. No one knows how these people lived through the Horrors' reign without the Rites of Protection and Passage. The most oft-told tales say that these tribes made deals with the Horrors, worshipping them as we worship the Passions. If true, some attacks on unwary travelers may be the work of questors of a Horror, but we cannot verify that these people consider themselves to be such.

The Great Dragon Icewing lairs on top of Mount Vapor; high above the clouds. Icewing is one of the few Great Dragons known to give audiences.

Of the Twilight Peaks

The Twilight Peaks lie in southern Barsaive along the edge of the Death's Sea and received their Name for the spectacular view they provide onlookers during the twilight hours. Crystal deposits growing on the far side of the mountains reflect and heighten the glow from the Death's Sea, creating a warm-colored aura that can be seen for miles around the mountains every eve at twilight.

The Twilight Peaks were Named by dwarf merchants traveling from Throal to Sky Point during the years immediately after the Orichalcum Wars. The dwarfs, from their vantage point along the trade route, could see the glowing mountains from miles away, but as they neared the mountains, the glow disappeared. Further investigation revealed the Death's Sea as the cause of the glow.

Barsaive's crystal raider trollmoots live on the slopes of the Twilight Peaks, away from the heat of the nearby Death's Sea. The major trollmoots are the Stoneclaws and the Swiftwinds to the east, the Bloodlores and Blackfangs to the west, and the Ironmongers and Thundersky trollmoots in the central peaks. As the trolls discovered long ago, the peaks are Barsaive's largest source of living crystal, which they use in forging their crystal armor, shields, and weapons. The living crystal from the Twilight Peaks is vastly superior to that found in other mountain ranges. Though no one has been able to explain why this is so, many weaponsmiths claim that the intense heat of the Death's Sea tempers the crystal, making it stronger and more durable. Others insist that the Twilight Peaks are also rich in elemental earth, which gives the crystal its special qualities.

Though most of the crystal mined from Twilight Peaks is taken from caverns far underground, the numerous surface deposits on the far side of the mountains near the Death's Sea can also be gathered by particularly enterprising adventurers.

Taking crystal from the mountainsides is hazardous, however. The heat of the sea of molten lava can burn or sicken those who come too near it, and many strange and dangerous creatures lair in the crystal caves.

Of the Tylon Mountains

The Tylon Mountains lie almost in the very heart of Barsaive, only one day's walk from Kratas and ten days' riding on horseback from Throal. The Tylons are Named for their improbably tall spires (tylons, in the ork tongue), which rise from each of the twelve peaks in the mountain range. These spires rival the Throal Mountains in height, and pierce the clouds beyond the sight of travelers standing at their foot.

Some slopes and glens of the Tylons are only barren rock, while others are covered with thick forest and brush. Unlike the Caucavic Mountains, which have a very low tree line, the Tylons tree line ends quite high up. Above that point, the terrain becomes craggy and difficult to traverse.

The spires, or tylons, serve as the source of many fascinating legends and myths. According to ork legend, the twelve spires of the Tylon Mountains are the twelve Passions, frozen in time as they reach toward the universe, the source of all that is in the world. This legend says that when the Passions learned of the coming Scourge, they sought protection for their world. Unable to accept that the Horrors, like all things, were a part of the universe, they pled with the universe to stop the Horrors. Sadly, the universe cannot stop what has begun—all things must occur in their own time, whether good or ill.

Because the Passions refused to accept the way of the world, they were frozen in time and space as they reached in supplication toward the sky, forced to watch as the Scourge ravaged their world and helpless to aid those who called for their assistance.

This legend suggests that the Passions are no longer active in Barsaive. Ork storytellers, anxious to explain this legend to modern scholars in a way that does not imply denial of the living Passions, say that the story illustrates the pitfalls of relying on others for aid, and teaches us to rely on ourselves. Skeptics believe that the legend originated with an inventive storyteller, who saw the twelve spires and likened them to the Passions to make a good tale.

The legend of the Spires of the Passions clearly reveals the orks' view of the world. The legend's message says that the events of the world will unfold as they will, and even the universe itself cannot change the outcome of those events. This view explains the ork philosophy of living life to the fullest. Because they feel powerless to alter the fate of the world, they are determined to grasp every emotion and opportunity life has to offer while they have the chance.

—Thom Edrull, Archivist and Scribe of the Great Library

On the Badlands

Stretching from the shores of the Scarlet Sea and west toward the Byrose River and the city of Travar, the Badlands are one of the most desolate and forbidding places in Barsaive. Home to Horrors and all manner of wild creatures, the Badlands also house lost kaers and ruins. Ancient records tell us that these kaers were among the richest in Barsaive, and they draw all manner of adventurers in search of treasures and secrets.

The recent illegal Theran settlement near Lake Ban has only increased the Badlands' attraction for treasure-hunters. Bands of Therans and Barsaivians alike now scour the region for hidden entrances to ruined kaers, hoping to find magical treasures left behind by the Theran settlers and envoys said to have sheltered here during the Scourge. Merchants from Travar have also sent adepts into the Badlands, to scout out suitable new airship routes to the west.

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…This night is too silent; I cannot sleep. I wish I had never come to the Badlands. I try to believe that Jaspree guides my steps to a safe haven here, but each day sorely tests my faith.

Jagged rocks lie loose on the ground, giving way at every step. This morning, a rockslide threw me down. Had I not caught a withered tree as I rolled past, I would now lie dead at the bottom of a ravine. My boots are torn, and I cannot mend them. I passed a kaer a few hour's walk away and thought to beg supplies from its folk, but could not make myself walk toward it. Its very stones seemed shrouded in darkness, and the wind blowing from its direction seemed to carry the stench of a charnel house. I am afraid; the roaring of wild beasts and the growing sense of evil paralyze me. The Passions save me, but I cannot go on. I cannot go back, either. There is no road, and I do not know the way.

Jaspree, Passion of growth and the land, if ever you have heeded your questors, hear me now. Guard me from the evils that may befall me, and guide me out of this benighted land…

—From the Journal of Tallis Treynar, Questor of Jaspree

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On the Origins of the Badlands

In the time before the Scourge, this region was among the loveliest in Barsaive. Warmed by the fiery glow of Death's Sea and watered by the life-giving Serpent River, the rich soil of the area was once the finest farmland in our province. Almost anything would grow here, and the abundant arable land gave rise to many cities and towns. The ancient Kingdom of Scavia to the west, traded heavily with the people of the Badlands for their crops, offering True earth from mines in the Twilight Peaks and True fire from Death's Sea to fuel forges and smithworks. In time, the local smiths and metalworkers earned fame throughout ancient Barsaive for their fine creations of gold, iron, steel and orichalcum. (Reportedly, the finest of these treasures remain in the lost kaers of the Badlands.)

When the Theran Empire claimed Barsaive, Therans began arriving in the region and built their own settlements, including seven sizable river villages along the Serpent for trading with their t'skrang allies of House K'tenshin. The Therans also brought knowledge of kaer-building, which they shared with the region's inhabitants as the Scourge approached.

Unfortunately, the people's faith in Theran magical protections proved sadly misplaced.

Perhaps attracted by the land's beauty and its people's obvious prosperity, the Horrors descended on the region in hordes. They took special delight in devastating the once-lovely countryside and elegant cities, turning the hopes of the people to ashes and the land into a barren waste. When the famed airship *Earthdawn* traveled to this region in the first days after the Scourge's end, Captain Vaare Longfang saw the devastation the Horrors had wrought and Named the region the Badlands. That Name has gained strength over the years as more and more Name-givers came to this place and witnessed its devastation. Some say the Name has altered the very nature of the place, perhaps forever. Names have great power, and it may be that by constantly using the Name Badlands for this region, we are only strengthening the corruption that has befallen it. One thing is certain—the Horrors could not have created a region more reflective of their own abominable natures if they had done so by design.

Certain questors of Jaspree in the town of Trosk, which lies along the Serpent River on the edge of the Badlands, are rumored to be seeking the Badlands' pattern items, to better understand what happened to the area and perhaps heal its wounds. The questors believe that the devastation of the Badlands reaches deep into the land itself. This, they say, is why the Badlands have not recovered from the Scourge as Barsaive's great jungles and forests have. No one is certain of the precise truth, but adventurers' journals and the writings of Throalic Traveled Scholars tell us that the Badlands seem to be growing.

The barrenness is creeping outward by a few feet each year; our records suggest that this has been happening since the end of the Scourge, and that the rate of growth is increasing. If our best current estimates are correct, the Badlands could reach the borders of Travar within two generations. To reverse this worrisome trend will take a deed of great courage and powerful life magic.

Traveling the Badlands

The Badlands is a harsh place. The land itself does not welcome intruders. Rocky ground, narrow gullies and gorges, and high cliffs wear down the feet of travelers. The sun bakes the traveler by day, and the hard, unyielding ground makes a poor bed on which to pass the cold night. Not even the fires of Death's Sea to the west and south can penetrate the night-time chill.

Travel through the Badlands is difficult, even on foot. Wagons and carts cannot cross the rocky ground—their wheels split on the stones, or else their weight sends them crashing down a ravine or cliff side when the brittle stone gives way underneath.

Mounts fare little better. Only the thick-skinned stajian favored by the southern ork tribes can walk for long on the rough ground. Other mounts suffer from torn feet and broken hooves and go lame within a scant few miles. Lame mounts in this desolate area must be put down to become meat for scavengers. Travel at night is even more hazardous than by day. The day's heat keeps most of the Badlands' predators deep in their lairs, asleep; but when the temperature drops with the setting of the sun, the night hunters emerge to stalk their prey. The gullies and ravines distort and magnify the hunters' roars and cries, making them seem closer or more distant than they are.

Little water exists in the Badlands, save for the banks of the Serpent and the River of Bones, a small tributary of the Iontos River that cuts through the region. This river is small and shallow, and its waters are said to taste of metal. Its Name comes from the treacherous whitewater that makes up most of its length; the rapids have slain so many that the river is virtually useless for travel. Occasional pools of still water appear elsewhere in the Badlands, but travelers should avoid them at all costs. The water is most likely diseased, or afflicted with dread iota—Horrors too small to see, which corrupt water sources and mark those who ingest them.

The heat in the Badlands leeches water from every source, including the bodies of Name-givers who travel there. The dry air and baked soil seem to suck moisture from everything they touch, and even a traveler who has taken precautions feels weak from water loss after a short time. Water is more precious than silver in the Badlands, where it can mean the difference between

life and death. To die of thirst is a terrible fate. The body burns slowly from within as the vital element withdraws, leaving behind a desiccated shell. Travelers should take care to protect their water supplies and drink regularly to keep their body's internal elements in proper balance.

Few Name-givers can go for more than a week without water. T'skrang especially need their native element; prolonged periods without bathing in water make the river folk irritable and ill. Certain magical items and spells can provide water, but these do not always work reliably in the Badlands. A few plants store water in their bodies, and a traveler in dire need can harvest water from such plants. Be warned, however, that getting to the stored water is not easy. Some succulents native to the Badlands are poisonous-the bell-shaped cactus that we dwarfs call *resk'ko* is one such. Even wholesome plants such as the *tre'kora*, or "three-limbed" cactus, must be harvested carefully. All such plants protect their water stores with thick-growing spines that bite deep into the skin and inflame it. Many also have a thick outer rind that even a sharp knife cannot easily cut through, the plant's water lies in its soft, inner flesh, which can be scooped out and eaten or sucked dry.

Sunlight, so beneficial to us in more temperate climes, is an enemy in the Badlands. The landscape provides little shelter from its merciless rays, and those who travel by day through the Badlands often suffer painful burns from the sunlight and hot stone. The simplest and best protection from the sun's fire is clothing—specifically, a light, loose covering that hides the skin from the sun's touch but allows heat to escape as the body grows warmer. Paler colors repel sunlight, so it is best to wear white or some other light shade. At night, additional layers of clothing will protect the traveler from the bone-chilling cold and retain some of the day's heat in their folds.

Food, like water, is scarce in the Badlands. Most of the creatures native to it spend their days well-hidden from even the sharpest-eyed scout and emerge only in the relative safety of darkness. Hunting is poor, and any creature a hunter might bring down is likely to be unpalatable at best, poisonous at worst. Few edible plants grow in the region; native flora tends toward stunted trees with spiky leaves, dry razor grass, and other hardy breeds that can survive with little water.

On Native Creatures and Other Denizens

As one might expect, dwellers in the Badlands are well suited to their desolate surroundings. The creatures of the area can survive with little water, feeding off other native species or the few scrub plants worth eating. Common beasts in the Badlands include lightning lizards, brocchas (near the edges of Death's Sea), basilisks, chimeras, hell hounds, hydras and molgrims.

Horrors and their constructs infest the many broken and ruined kaers; those most often encountered by unlucky adventurers include shadows, jehuthras and plagues. Ruined kaers and citadels are also often infested with cadaver men and ghouls. The few large exploring parties that have ventured into the Badlands report night raids on their camps by large numbers of these creatures, which suggests that some of the more powerful Horrors may have considerable forces of undead at their command.

Some tales tell of strange Horror constructs seen nowhere else in Barsaive. The vektha is one such—a shambling monstrosity made of the animated bones of creatures and Name-givers who have died of thirst in this terrible region. No two vektha look alike, and the bones are arranged in no sensible order; there may be a shinbone where the head should be, jawbones for feet, breast bones in place of arm-bones, and the like. The vektha seems to shimmer as it moves, as if seen through a heat haze. All who look upon it feel a terrible thirst, even if they have just drained a full waterskin. The thirst vanishes if you turn your eyes away; but the vektha compels its victims to gaze at it, and breaking that compulsion is far easier said than done. It is said that all who stand within twenty or so feet of the thing continue to feel raging thirst until they move out of its circle of influence. Often, the only warning of a vektha's approach is the rattling of its bones as it walks.

The Horrors of the Badlands rarely venture forth from their lairs, though some weaker Horrors reportedly roam about looking for sustenance or victims to torture. The more powerful Horrors remain hidden, often animating the dead to rebuild or restructure the kaers in which they dwell. No one yet knows why the Horrors remain tied to the Badlands; this remains one of the many mysteries of this dreaded place. Isam Derr of Throal speculates that the Horrors may have created the Badlands through a terrible act of blood magic, and that they remain to sustain it. He further theorizes that the Horrors are spreading the blood magic's warped influence, giving themselves both a haven and a means to extend the duration of the Scourge over this limited area. If this theory is true, all efforts to restore the Badlands will fail until the Horrors are cleared out—a monumental task, worthy of the greatest heroes.

A few settlements exist along the banks of the Serpent River, just outside the Badlands proper. Their inhabitants scratch out a living through farming and trade. According to several accounts, escapees from slave raids along the southern Serpent often find haven in these tiny villages. The questors of Jaspree living in Trosk frequently venture into the Badlands, seeking to heal the blight upon the land; scholarly studies of their findings have told us much of what we now know about the region.

Other stories of Name-givers inhabiting the Badlands are likely little more than fireside tales. Stories abound of magicians who have built citadels in the depths of the Badlands or taken ancient kaers as their private domains. Such individuals are said to desire the solitude that only a place as desolate as the Badlands

can provide and are rumored to experiment with Horrors and Horror-constructs—toward what end, none can say. However, no one has yet proved that such evil-minded magicians exist; and if they do, they are taking fatal risks by working magic in such a Horror-infested place.

On Mountainshadow's Lair

One tale of particular interest claims that the great dragon Mountainshadow lairs somewhere in the Badlands' desolate reaches. The seed of this tale is the Death Rebellion, which occurred in Throal many years ago. During the rebellion, Theran agents kidnapped Prince Neden and took him to the Badlands, where they inflicted terrible tortures upon him. After J'Role the Honorable Thief rescued the prince, he supposedly took him to Mountainshadow's lair, where the dragon aided J'Role and King Varulus III in restoring the prince to health.

It remains a mystery why Mountainshadow would choose to lair in a place like the Badlands. His usual lairing place in the Dragon Mountains is close by, and it is possible that J'Role took Prince Neden there to recover from his ordeal. In support of the story, however, the noted scholar Jerik Gol of Jerris has suggested that the great dragon may be studying the Badlands, perhaps to learn more about the Horrors and their workings. He cites the common knowledge that unknown persons have engaged adepts to explore and map parts of the Badlands, asking them to bring back parts of creatures they have encountered and slain along with plants, rocks and soil.

These unknown employers invariably vanish shortly after paying for the adepts' services, and Jerik suggests that they might be in the service of Mountainshadow. Of course, these individuals might just as easily be questors from Trosk or representatives of some other party with an interest in the Badlands. Unless one of them makes himself known, we cannot be sure.

Of Death's Sea

Death's Sea, an ocean of molten rock in the southern reaches of Barsaive, marks the southern border of the province. The fiery sea is ringed with black stone hills and cliffs that rise fifty to a hundred feet above its surface. It has existed for all of recorded history, and ancient legends claim that the Passions placed Death in its waters to spare Name-givers some part of Death's sting.

Many tales describe the origins of Death's Sea; here I relate the most renowned: *The Imprisonment of Death*.

The Death Sea is happy today. Its bright red glow mocks us, mocks our unsuccessful attempts to find its elemental fire and mocks the five crewmen who died today.

Two new sailors were killed when four viraas attacked them. The presence of viraas told us we were near a huge pocket of elemental fire. Of course, the attack panicked the new recruits. They tangled the rescue ropes, and I had to risk the life of four others to rescue them. We nearly had them out, when one slipped from the grip of a rescuer and was instantly devoured. A fire wraith took the second in a blaze of flame that engulfed him instantly. We chose to leave that pocket of elemental fire, and instead check out a fool's island that had remained solid longer than most.

On the fool's island, we lost Nob, Skatz, and my good friend Llink. It is always a gamble to land men on a fools island; I know it better than most, for I lost a foot to one years ago. It seems the Death's Sea knows when someone has trespassed on it. The fool's island stayed together nearly all day until Nob and Skatz landed on it, and only then did it begin to pull apart. Llink died trying to save them; an explosion blasted up from the sea, charring all three instantly. I have never done anything so difficult as cutting the rope that held my companion of these last six years, then watching his body fall into that red death.

—From the log of Qui Kyak, Captain of the airship *Angry Troll*

The Imprisonment of Death

In ancient times, before the Theran Empire came to Barsaive, our ancestors lived in harmony with the land and the Passions. But they did not always live in harmony with each other. Throughout the many kingdoms, Name-giver fought Name-giver for land, wealth and power, killing their fellows to gain their own selfish desires.

Now those who loved the slain mourned them bitterly and cried out to the Passion Garlen for comfort against the senselessness of Death. Garlen loves all Name-givers as a mother loves her children, and the tears of the bereaved found fertile soil in her tender heart. So she gave them what comfort she could. But it was never enough to take away the pain Death inflicted on the living.

Finally, Garlen asked her fellow Passions to meet in her dwelling place by the sea. When they came, Garlen told them of the suffering that Name-givers endured because of Death. "*The Universe loves life above all,*" she said, "*because life holds the joy and wonder that give the Universe meaning. We must protect life, or all will sink into despair.*" The other Passions, moved by Garlen's words, discussed the matter. For a long time, they could not agree on how best to protect life. Then the Passion Jaspree suggested imprisoning Death.

At first, the Passions disputed furiously among themselves. Lochost, unwilling to see anyone imprisoned, argued against the plan, while Garlen spoke eloquently of the Name-givers' plight. Then wise Mynbruje offered a compromise. The Passions would imprison Death, thereby sparing Name-givers its worst sting and satisfying Garlen. But to satisfy Lochost, Death would have a chance to win freedom.

Clever Vestrial devised a way to entrap Death, while Upandal the Builder suggested a way to keep Death prisoner. The other Passions traveled to the distant comers of the world to gather the things they would need. When they returned to Garlen's house, they brought with them the burning forge, a warm hearth and fire. They brought fire from the blazing sun, fire from a scholar's mind, a lover's heart and a warrior's spirit. They brought fires of love, desire and revelry; fires of comfort, growth, change and compassion; fires of strength, courage, creation and wit. They brought all the fires that were the essence of Passion.

All these fires Upandal placed in his forge, until it glowed with the mighty heat of the sun. Upandal plunged his hands into the fire and worked it with skill and cunning, weaving it into an ocean of flame strong enough to hold Death. When Upandal had finished, Chorrolis took a copper coin from his bulging purse. As clever Vestrial had planned, Chorrolis and the gentle Astendar both touched the coin and invested the spirits of desire within it. Then Chorrolis cast the coin into the sea near Garlen's dwelling.

With all in readiness, Vestrial went forth at the direction of Thystonius—who always seemed to know where Death was—and found Death overlooking a battlefield.

"*Greetings,*" the Clever One said with a bow. "*I regret interrupting your important work, but I wished to bring a certain matter to your attention.*"

Death turned from the spectacle of the battle. "*Say on,*" Death said, in a voice like a cold wind.

Vestrial hesitated. "*Now that I think of it, I'm not sure I should,*" he replied. "*I don't wish to cast aspersions on your noble work, nor to question your competence. It is best forgotten.*" So saying, the Passion turned to depart.

"Wait," Death commanded. *"How can you question my competence? I am Death. I know the measure of every life, and none escapes my touch."*

Vestrial bowed profoundly. *"Begging your pardon,"* He said, *"but that is not so. My siblings and I have discovered a life past its time that has not been collected. But this means nothing, I'm sure. You have so much to do, keeping track of all the lives in the world—no doubt you simply overlooked this one. It is no great matter, surely, for one life to go uncounted?"*

"Where is this life?" Death asked.

"A foolish sailor who drowned in the sea," the Clever One said. *"Beneath your notice, truly."*

"Show me," Death demanded. Vestrial nodded with great respect; but behind his solemn face, he was laughing.

Followed closely by Death, Vestrial sped toward Garlen's home by the edge of the sea. When they arrived, the other Passions were gathered by the shore. Vestrial pointed to the shimmering blue depths. Far below lay the coin that Chorrolis had dropped, glimmering with the power of desire.

"There is the poor soul," Vestrial said, *"awaiting the release that only Death can bring him."*

Death gazed through the shimmering waters to where the coin lay. It appeared to Death that the coin was a life uncollected, and so Death plunged beneath the waters.

When Death's hands touched the bottom, Upandal drew forth from his forge the fiery shield he had woven and cast it out over the sea. The flames stretched from shore to shore, engulfing the waters in fire. The gathered Passions each shed a drop of blood upon the flames. At the touch of the blood, the fire became a sea of molten rock, trapping Death below it.

Then Lochost spoke the spell of binding. *"By fire and blood you are bound; by blood and fire you may be freed. Each drop of Name-giver blood shed upon the land will wear away at your shackles, as water wears away stone."*

Death struggled against the binding, but could not escape from beneath the fiery sea. Thus, the Passions freed Name-givers from Death's grasp, until that time when our own folly might free Death to walk among us again. And from that day on, the fire-ocean has been Named Death's Sea.

CAN DEATH BE FREED?

The ongoing strife between Name-giver and Name-giver—in war, in city streets, on high roads through the wilds—are proof enough that Name-givers have not given up the shedding of blood. Many scholars and sages have wondered how much blood must be spilled before Death breaks free. Has not a great deal of blood been spilled throughout our history? How much more is required to free Death—and how close are we to reaching that terrifying threshold? Some sages, such as Rosethal of Travar, believe Death cannot escape or it would already have happened. If the blood shed by the Scourge was not sufficient, reasons Rosethal, what disaster could possibly be terrible enough to free Death? Other scholars say that only blood spilled by Name-givers in conflict with each other can break Death's bonds. The blood of beasts, or blood shed by the Horrors (which are not from this world), have no effect. Still others, Vestrinka of Vivane among them, suggest that the story of Death's Sea is simply a metaphor—that any time one Name-giver kills another, he has let Death walk among us.

The accounts of Name-givers who have purportedly entered Death's kingdom and returned, however, would seem to suggest that Death does, indeed, live under the sea; they all describe a place deep beneath a sea of fire. Whether historical fact or myth, the tale of Death's imprisonment clearly states that killing our brethren will bring our own destruction upon us. King Varulus I once said to his soldiers, *"Know in your heart that the next drop of blood you shed could be the key to Death's prison, and weigh your actions against that knowledge."*

All Name-givers would do well to heed those words.

The following account, transcribed by Archivist Ela Pono, comes from Armin Erys, retired captain of the fire miner Flamedancer. Erys now lives in Travar, where he produces fine embroidered sailcloth. We found Erys's account so marvelously entertaining and instructive that we chose to use it here in lieu of Nevear's text.

—Thom Edrull, Archivist and Scribe of the Great Library

A FIRE MINER'S ADVICE

Surviving Death's Sea? Easier said than done, as anyone with half their wits might expect. It's a terrible, beautiful place, Death's Sea. It'll break your heart with wonder and kill you the second you stop watching out for it. That's the real secret to surviving over the fiery ocean—pay attention to it. Every heartbeat. A few seconds' lapse at the wrong time, and you're done for.

You can see Death's Sea from days away, lighting up the Twilight Peaks with its fire. That's how the Peaks got their Name, you know. The glow from Death's Sea makes it twilight in those mountains, even when it's full black night everywhere else. It never gets dark over the Sea; the light of the churning fires reflects back off the clouds, and you feel like you're flying into the heart of a piece of True fire.

Speaking of True fire, let me lay a bit of so-called common wisdom to rest. Folk who've never been to the Sea think it's a huge, boiling ocean of True fire, or maybe ordinary flames with bits of True fire mixed in. The second notion's closer to the truth, but neither's quite right. Death's Sea is made of molten stone—stone turned into liquid fire, if you will—called magma.

Hot enough to melt metal, this stuff, and a quick death to any living thing unlucky enough to fall into it. (Except for those few strange beasts that live in liquid fire—but I'll get to them in a bit. You lot from the Library like your records all orderly and logical, or so I've heard. So first things first, eh?) Kernels of True fire, like white-hot sparks, glitter and gleam in the red-orange ripples of

molten stone. Those white sparkles bring a good price, and so we mine as much True fire from Death's prison as we can.

Now, mining anything from a lake of burning liquid rock, so hot it'll melt flesh at a mere touch, is no simple thing. But miners like me know the Sea and its ways. And we've our own ways of getting round the fearful dangers. We fly over the Sea in airships, of course. But you can't just fly out in your little wooden vedette, drop down toward the Sea and let the miners reach over the side to scoop up the True fire. Any captain fool enough to try that would find his airship going up in smoke. The air gets hotter the closer you get to the magma, so the airship's got to stay at a certain height—usually fifty feet or so. Skilled fire-ship captains learn to tell by instinct how close they can get to the surface without risking the airship.

When the ship's crew finds a suitable spot, the sailors make the ship hover while the miner goes down, and does the really dangerous work. A suitable spot is any place with plenty of True fire, all within a net's cast of what we call a fool's island. Where the burning rock touches the air, the magma hardens into chunks of black stone called *clenkas*—fool's islands are the biggest of these, big enough for a Name-giver to stand on. The miner shinnies down a fire-proof rope onto a fool's island that looks stable enough to hold for a bit. He wears thick boots and gloves to protect his hands and feet from the searing heat of the black stone (but not much else save a loincloth, or he'd boil to death inside his clothes). Once down, the miner casts an enchanted net woven with orichalcum into the magma to catch and haul out the kernels of True fire. Full nets—and the miner—are hauled back up to the ship. Last of all, the crew puts the True fire into orichalcum vessels. It'll burn its way through anything else and burn up the airship soon after. The greatest danger at this point is a ruptured net, which can spill True fire all across the deck and set the airship ablaze. (True fire's a rare and dangerous element, nothing to fool about with.)

Now, there's a reason that fool's islands have such a Name. They're not like islands in an ocean of water. The swirling fires of Death's Sea are always churning and can break up fool's islands in an eyeblink just like the smaller *clenkas*. A miner who happens to be standing on one at the time is dead, of course. No rope-hauler can move quickly enough to pull him to safety. So a good miner learns to spot approaching magma currents and feel the subtle tremors that warn of a crack-up. At any of these warning signs, he's up the rope quick as a blood monkey up a vine, and to blazes with the True fire (pardon an old miner's joke). After all, not much use to mine the stuff if you're not alive to share in the profits, is it?

There's other dangers as well, of course—some you'd expect, others you'd not. Flying near and over Death's Sea is like traveling through the Badlands or the Wastes; the heat'll kill you slowly, unless you guard against it. Bring plenty of water and drink often, or you'll dry out and faint—not something you want to do halfway down a rope to a fool's island! The hot air makes food spoil quickly if you stay for too long, so don't linger if you can help it. Otherwise, you may face a choice between starving or eating spoiled rations. An airship crew that comes down sick from bad food can leave you stranded, easy prey for whatever finds you.

The heat is a miner's worst enemy. It's not so bad while you're moving along high above the surface, but when you skim to a stop ten man-lengths above a fool's island, you feel like you're being slow-roasted on a spit. Standing on the fool's islands, it's even worse. Most folk can't handle that kind of heat for as long as one candlemark before passing out. We fire miners have a saying: *"Move quick in Death's domain, or Death will find you."* That's the truth of it. Death's Sea is no place for sightseeing. You do what you came to do quick as you can, and then you get out of there. Anything else is just asking for trouble.

You've also got to watch out for eruptions. Sometimes the magma leaps up from the surface like a geyser, and not with much warning, either. One of those can cripple your ship and send you crashing into the sea before you've even got time to yell *"Help!"* Eruptions happen whenever Death struggles against his chains (may the Passions hold him bound forever). Sometimes they're caused by magma beasts, or other terrible fire-creatures looking to make a meal out of you. And sometimes we create them on purpose, though it's a risky way to mine, if you ask me. A miner throws a bit of True air down onto the magma, which erupts the second the True air touches it. The eruption stirs up the magma all around, bringing kernels of True fire to the surface where we can get at them. Of course, eruptions can also damage airships that are hovering too close. Worse, they weaken the nearby fool's islands, making them more likely to break up when the miners are lowered onto them.

For the remainder of this document, we return to Nevear's extensive work.

—Thom Edrull, Archivist and Scribe of the Great Library

On the Denizens of Death's Sea

All sorts of strange beasties live in Death's Sea, and most have a taste for Name-givers. A mining ship looks as good to them as a pocketful of sweets to a greedy child. They'll attack any airship they see, sure as the sunrise. Even if they don't capsize it, they can cripple it and then come back with friends to finish it off. My ship got snagged once by a flock of fire eagles that scorched our sail before we drove them away, and we had to row hard out of there before they came back. Thank Floranuus we were close to shore where sensible mining crews stay. You can't row for long in that kind of heat without tiring out. If we'd gone as far from the shoreline as some fool folk do, we'd never have made it. Most ships that go far across the Sea looking for the True fire mother lode are never heard from again.

Creatures of elemental fire often come through the many passages between the Death's Sea and their home plane and choose to remain because the sea provides such a suitable home for them. Other magical creatures with a supreme resistance to heat and flame dwell in the molten rock of the sea and on the floating *clenkas* and fool's islands.

More creatures live on the Sea's edge than in its fiery depths. Fire eagles nest in the black hills and cliffs, soaring over the magma on the hot winds to hunt for food. I've heard tell of dragons gliding on those same winds, hunting or doing whatever else dragons get up to (though I don't believe for a minute the mad stories of dragons mining elemental fire from Death's Sea to fuel their fiery breaths). Thought I saw a dragon once, but it was so far away, it might just have been light-dazzle.

Out in the depths live truly strange creatures, like lava fish and salamanders. These odd beasts are cousins to the fish and reptiles most folk know of, but they can swim through molten stone like ordinary fish through water. Firebirds nest on *clenkas* and fool's islands, though you'll hardly ever see one. They can change color, you see, to hide from predators. (Though what would prey on a big, fierce flying creature like a firebird, I can't imagine. Dragons, maybe.) Fireworms crawl through the hollow pockets and tunnels of the *clenkas*, and packs of magma beasts surface every now and again to devour anything within reach. A magma beast—something between a lizard and human, with the nastier characteristics of each—can attack its prey with spurts of magma. Of all the fire creatures, they're the most dangerous, except for Horrors.

You'd not think Horrors would find a home in a sea of molten rock, would you? But some do. The scholars tell us that some Horrors are drawn to the magical nature of Death's Sea, what with all the True fire in its depths. The terrible heat doesn't trouble them at all. They hide in the depths of the magma and lie in wait for

Name-givers to pass their way. They mark and stalk any prey that comes near them, sometimes for years. Tale upon tale tells of fire miners being marked by Horrors. I've seen some strange things in my time, and I'm sure some of the tales are true.

Fire spirits and sprites live in the Sea, where they play in the boiling lava like fish sporting in an ocean. Lots of them love to set fire to wooden airships and watch the crews scramble to put out the flames. Some do it for their own twisted amusement, while others hate Name-givers and attack any airships that enter their territory. I've heard tell of powerful fire spirits as vast as Theran kilas that live in the heart of the Sea, but they supposedly never leave the burning depths of their home. Given how powerful they're said to be, I say thank the Passions they stay put!

I have seen fire wraiths in my time, shadowy spirits of living fire. Legend says the wraiths are the spirits of the Name-givers who died at the moment when the Passions imprisoned Death. The spirits were set ablaze by Upandal's fiery shield; ever since, they've been doomed to dwell on the surface of Death's Sea, trapped between life and death in fire and rage. I've never fought one myself, but countless sailors swear that fire wraiths will attack Name-givers at every opportunity. And many sailors claim that destroying a fire wraith is impossible, because a broken-up wraith can simply reassemble itself with flames from the Sea.

Pirates and Magicians

A mining ship is a rich prize—even a small load of True fire can fetch plenty of gold in the right markets. So it's no surprise that pirates ply the airways near Death's Sea, just as their fellows elsewhere in Barsaive ply the Serpent River and other waterways in search of laden vessels. Most often, these privateers lie in wait on the shore and attack passing mining ships as they head for home.

Plenty of these brigands are Therans, but more than a few are a mixed bag of Barsaivians not worthy of the Name. My own ship nearly fell afoul of a Theran privateer—we knew they were Theran because they were flying a huge stone ship. It moved much faster than we expected, and only the chance appearance of another mining ship closer to the Therans' course saved us. The pirates veered off to take the easier prey, and we flew away as fast as we could. Our luck was our fellow miners' loss, of course—may Thystonius rot the Therans' bones!

The crystal raiders from the Twilight Peaks don't often attack mining ships, despite being so close to such a rich source of plunder. They say Death's Sea is cursed, and they want nothing to do with stealing from it. No one runs into them, except inexperienced captains foolish enough to fly across their territory.

There're stories galore of permanent islands in Death's Sea, kept from breaking up by powerful magic. (I'll not judge how true they are.) According to the tales, these islands are the fortresses of powerful magicians. Of course, the one thing the tales don't take into account is the fearful risk of using magic anywhere near Death's Sea. Any magician casting a spell while over the Sea must take great care, or he'll find himself marked for life by a terrible Horror.

Some tales claim these islands are prisons—though for whom, they don't say. Other stories tell of pirate bases, Theran fortresses and even citadels built by the Passions. So far as I know, though, no explorer has yet charted a permanent island in Death's Sea.

On the Scarlet Sea

The Scarlet Sea lies just north of Death's Sea, with a narrow strait called Dead Man's Gullet running between them. The Scarlet Sea is another magma ocean, but its fires are cooler than the raging inferno of Death's Sea. The Scarlet Sea is covered with *clenkas* and fool's islands, all larger and more stable than those in Death's Sea, and it's also less prone to eruptions and lava bursts. Much safer for mining all around, but the Scarlet Sea's True fire deposits are nowhere near as rich or numerous as those in Death's Sea. The best pockets of True fire are also much harder to get to, seeing as you first have to break through the hard crust of the *clenkas*. Nowadays, of course, the richest pockets have been mined out already—and competition for what's left is fierce. But

that's just the way of the world, eh?

The reason for the differences is the Serpent River, which pours its waters over the northern edge of the Scarlet Sea. The sea's heat turns the water into thick clouds of warm mist that float over the Mist Swamps and make the heavy rains that blow westward to fall over the Servos Jungle and the South Reach.

Fire eagles and their larger firebird cousins are common sights on the Scarlet Sea, as are broccha—reptiles that live on the drifting *clenkas*.

Of Mount Bloodfire and the Caves of Death

In the middle of Dead Man's Gullet lies a huge volcano, its sides red with lava and its base surrounded by a narrow ring of black stone. Black clouds of smoke and ash obscure the peak of the volcano, which the crystal raiders have Named Mount Bloodfire. Creatures of all sorts from Death's Sea nest along Bloodfire's craggy shores, and a few pirate bands likely live in the caves that honeycomb the mountain. (They've got to come from somewhere nearby, and some of those caves are large enough to hide a small airship.)

According to legend, Mount Bloodfire is a secret entrance into Death's realm. It's certain that the caves and tunnels—the so called Caves of Death—lead deep into the earth. Whether they reach as deep as the Kingdom of Death, no one knows. (I've never been down them that far, nor has anyone else I know, so you'll pardon me for being a bit skeptical.) Other legends say that Garlen's house, where the Passions hatched their plan to imprison Death, once stood on the island—which was a green and pleasant place in those distant days.

As the story goes, Garlen sacrificed her home as the price of her fellow Passions' aid, and her essence is said to linger on the island. Something's there, that's certain. Many a fire miner shipwrecked on the slopes of Bloodfire has talked over a pint of fine ale of being saved by a mysterious woman, dressed in white and wearing a veil over her face. They say Garlen appeared to them and protected them until help could arrive, keeping her children out of Death's grasp on Death's own doorstep. No one knows the truth of that, either—but stranger things do happen in this world, don't they?

On the Mist Swamps

The Mist Swamps mark the end of the mighty Serpent River. Near the easternmost finger of the Twilight Peaks, the Serpent splits into numerous smaller branches that fork over and over and over again into hundreds of rivulets that form a gigantic marshland. When this river delta meets the hot shores of the Scarlet Sea, the water turns to steam that blankets the delta and the land surrounding it. The hot mists slow the flow of the river and produce heavy rains over the delta, which pool in low-lying areas and keep the soil constantly drenched.

The Mist Swamps have existed in Barsaive since recorded history began, and perhaps for longer. Ancient myths say that the Scarlet Sea and Death's Sea were once bodies of water; if so, the land that is now the forbidding Mist Swamps may once have been home to thriving settlements of Name-givers. One such settlement, the so-called Lost City, is among the most persistent lost-treasure legends in Barsaive.

In the days when the Scarlet Sea was water instead of liquid fire (assuming the old myths are fact), the delta where the Serpent River empties into it would have made an excellent site for a good-sized city. Some people, scholars among them, believe (or are willing to grant) that such a city actually existed and thrived for centuries before Death's Sea and the Scarlet Sea became the oceans of fire we know today.

On the Lost City

The first speculations about the Lost City arose in Throal during the Scourge, when archivists of the Great Library discovered a map that appeared to depict ancient Barsaive. Though the southern portion of our province was not pictured, an arrow drawn near the bottom pointed south toward a place Named Yrns Morgath. The direction and placement of the arrow corresponded with the site of the Mist Swamps. Copious research over the years turned up additional cryptic references to Yrns Morgath in ancient documents, at least one of which called it "the Great City of the South."

This discovery led the inhabitants of Throal to tell tales about a "lost city" hidden in the Mist Swamps. At first, the stories were mere speculation; but over time, people came to accept them as factual accounts. The stories also grew in the telling; each version of the tale described more and more fabulous treasures allegedly waiting in the lost city for some enterprising explorer to find them. Throalic scholars are still studying the folk tales told during the Scourge, piecing them together with ancient written records to extract truth from fiction regarding Yrns Morgath and its location.

In the years since the Scourge ended, many explorers have traveled to the Mist Swamps seeking the fabled Lost City, but so far as I know, none have found it. Some adepts have made tantalizing discoveries, however—statues and other stone artifacts, apparently of great age, that might confirm stories of an ancient ruin hidden under the marshes. Of course, it is also possible that the artifacts are less ancient than they appear. Immersion in the hot waters of the Mist Swamps may have weathered the stone prematurely; some scholars suggest that the statues and such could have come from ships of our own time run aground in the swamps.

Scholarship continues to provide evidence for both sides of the argument. Scholars who believe in the antiquity of the finds point out, quite accurately, that the southernmost stretch of the Serpent River flows past the Badlands—a route not commonly traveled by merchant vessels full of art objects and other luxurious items. And certainly no ship would sail into the Mist Swamps nowadays, where it is certain to run aground and become stranded. The perils of the swamps are known to most Barsaivians, especially those who make their livings plying the Serpent River's trade routes.

Those who remain skeptical of the Lost City offer pirates as an explanation for the finds. They point out—again, quite accurately—that pirate bands in the South Reach might hide their treasures in the Mist Swamps. If the pirates are later captured or killed in battle, their treasure would eventually rot away in the marshy ground, save for long-lived items like stone statues and vessels. This theory, however, fails to explain why no gold or gemstones—which likewise do not decay—have been found along with the statuary and other fragments. And of course, pirate vessels would have as much difficulty as any other ships navigating safely in the swampland.

Many scholars now accept the notion that some kind of ruins do exist, but they continue to debate whether the ruins are of an ancient city or merely of a small trade outpost along the shores of the Scarlet Sea. A few scholars go so far as to say that the ruins in the Mist Swamps date all the way back to the Age of Dragons—a wild claim, but one that might explain the Mist Swamps' most famous inhabitant.

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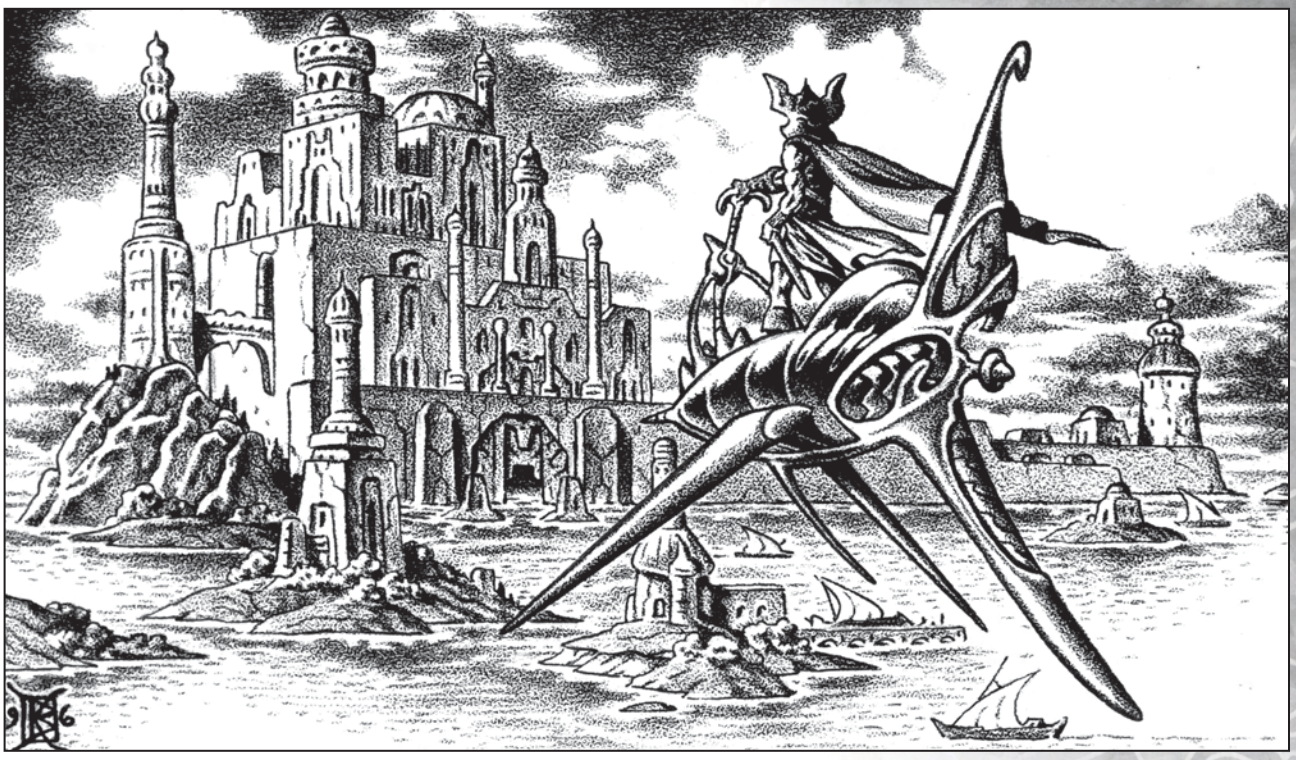
...You smell the Mist Swamps before you see them. Smell them and feel them, the heat soaking into your bones and making the very marrow feel heavy and wet. Ever smelled bad vegetables, cooked and eaten because you'd nothing more wholesome? That's what the swamps smell like. They say there's treasure buried deep in the muck, and I half believed it till I smelled the place. I just wonder what that rotting-vegetable water does to gold or



gems? If the treasures smell like that, let the swamps keep them.

We reached the edge of the swamps today and spent a bewitched hour watching the steam rise off the water. Through the mist, I could see dim, hulking shapes: trees, I think. I hope. Splashes and strange cries came from all around, echoing so much that I couldn't tell how far away they were.

The vines and hanging mosses that drape the gnarled trees seem to move as you watch them. Gave me the creeping terrors, they did. We set up camp on the other side of the trees, out of sight of the swamps. With night falling, none of us cares to camp too near the cursed place. Only the Passions know what might creep out of the bog, after all.

—From the journal of Negik Silverhand, dwarf Swordmaster of Throal

On the Great Dragon Aban

The great dragon Aban lairs somewhere in the depths of the Mist Swamps and claims the swamps as her territory. Most of Barsaive's people have wisely chosen to respect this claim, especially as they find the Mist Swamps of little use or interest.

Like most dragons, Aban seems to enjoy the solitude of this isolated place. Occasional travelers near the region, mostly riverboat crews on the southern Serpent, have reported seeing the dragon—usually from a great distance—as a dark shape flying low in the mists. As for how much of a threat Aban poses to those few Name-givers who enter the Mist Swamps in defiance of her territorial claim, no one knows for certain. It is true that many adventurers enter the swamps and never come out—but the Mist Swamps are full of hazards that can claim a careless adventurer's life. Still, tales abound of explorers and adventurers devoured by Aban for the crime of invading her privacy. Adding fuel to the fires of speculation, the Therans who recently arrived at Lake Ban have sent expeditions ever deeper into the Mist Swamps. Though we do not know their purpose, many people believe that the Therans are searching for the Lost City. Rumor also has it that at least one Theran exploratory party failed to return to the fortress at Lake Ban, and that Aban sent a warning to the Theran commander that she will not tolerate Theran intruders in her domain. The Therans appear to be ignoring these threats and so may be courting disaster.

Interestingly, many of the unexplained disappearances—and the few known encounters with Aban—have involved explorers who entered the Mist Swamps in search of the Lost City, Perhaps Aban wishes to guard the ruins from intruders. The ravings of one survivor suggest another, more sinister explanation. Some people have taken the poor victim's fevered tales of giant insect-men as evidence that a colony of invae have settled in the swamps and are seizing those Name-givers foolish enough to venture near their territory. The evidence is thin, however, and it seems unlikely that Aban would tolerate the presence of the insect-men.

Of the Castle of Assassins

Another curious tale of the Mist Swamps comes from adventurers who have traveled through the swamps' northern reaches, near the foothills of the Twilight Peaks. Here, floating ash from the peaks blends with the mists to produce a sooty gray smoke that envelops the area in perpetual gloom. In the depths of this endless night lies the legendary Castle of Assassins. According to the tales, its dark towers and walls are cut from the black stone of the mountains and adorned with leering gargoyles that also act as guardians. Though some travelers claim to have seen the castle, none have apparently drawn close enough to get a good look at it—or if they have, none have returned to share the tale. As its Name implies, the Castle of Assassins is reputed to be the secret training ground of various bands of killers, from Horror-worshipping cults to the vile criminals known as the Hand of Corruption. Indeed, the Hand of Corruption is the favorite villain of these stories. In the isolated halls of their alleged stronghold, the Hand is rumored to train assassins in the arts of stealth, subterfuge and murder. They intend thereby to complete the work of the Scourge by scouring all life from the world. The riverfolk tell tales of Hand agents abducting young children, to be taken to the castle and raised as perfect killers without conscience or remorse. Most likely these tales are devices used by parents to frighten recalcitrant children—but no atrocity is beyond the Hand. On the other hand, it seems unlikely that Aban would tolerate such killers so near her domain.

On the Aras Sea

The Aras Sea, located on the eastern edge of Barsaive, is a large saltwater ocean that reaches beyond the borders of Barsaive to unexplored lands. The Coil River, the largest tributary of the Serpent River, flows into the Aras Sea near the city of Urupa, the only city of any size located on the shoreline. The coast stretching south from Urupa also harbors many smaller cities and towns. Traders from Barsaive and from across the sea frequent Urupa and her neighboring ports. Urupa boasts a fortress-like embassy belonging to the people from across the Aras Sea, who frequent Urupa for trade. Only a handful of the wealthier citizens have been invited inside the fortress-like building.

The Aras can become violent without warning. Storms, some magical in nature, occasionally spring up on the Aras Sea and eventually travel to shore, where their destructive power causes great damage.

The sea is also home to abundant animal life, including magical creatures and a few water-dwelling Horrors. Reports of these dreadful creatures are few and far between, but those who journey on the Aras Sea should know that even crossing the waters requires caution.

...After only five days in Urupa, my companions and I were hired by a trading company. It was, oddly enough, the Overland Trading Company, owned by the obsidiman we had encountered on our first day in the city.

In the service of our new employers, we were to travel on a water ship over the Aras Sea to a smaller city along its western shore. We were to aid the ship's crew during the journey and work as guard during the trade negotiations. On the second night of our five-day voyage, a drunken sailor stumbled across the deck and fell overboard. A team of ten men worked to hoist the crewman out of the sea, but just as the man's waist cleared the water line, a huge tentacle surged up and grabbed him. He screamed horribly, his body pulled in two directions by the creature and the rope. The tentacle briefly loosened its grip, and we thought it might let the crewman go. Then it tightened around him again and gave a mighty yank that pulled the first five members of the rope crew over the rail. Their screams echoed across the water as the creature fed on them, one by one...

—From the journal of Loran Redstone, 1506 TH

On the Wastes

The Wastes, those blighted lands that form Barsaive's western boundary, represent one of the greatest tragedies wrought during the Scourge. Like the Badlands, the Wastes were once green and fertile, with rich soil suitable for farming. Then the Horrors descended on the land and left the Wastes desolate. Nothing lives there now, save for a few powerful Horrors and their twisted spawn.

As with the Badlands, however, the Wastes hold their share of treasures in lost and hidden kaers. And the mysteries of those lost kaers, as well as the hope of unearthing valuable secrets, draws explorers into this terrible, perilous land. The Wastes are said to hold more lost kaers than any other place in Barsaive, even more than the Badlands, and fabulous finds brought back from the Wastes have inspired many adepts to travel there and seek their own fame and fortune.

The greatest wealth of the Wastes is said to lie not in gold or silver, but in enchanted items and legendary artifacts. Centuries ago, magicians from nearby provinces of the Theran Empire, among them Vivane and Rugaria, allegedly founded towns and even schools in the Wastes, and many of their magical treasures are presumed to have survived the Scourge. Stories abound of this or that legendary item, supposedly created by some famed Wizard or Elementalist or Nethermancer, lost in a kaer deep in the Wastes. So compelling are some of the tales that His Majesty's Exploratory Force has even sent out a few large expeditions in search of magical artifacts. Despite such efforts, the vast majority of the Wastes' lost kaers remain undiscovered, waiting to yield up their secrets and their wealth to whoever finds them.

Others travel into the Wastes in search of knowledge. The terrible corruption of these lands may have serious implications for all of Barsaive, and certain adepts and questors have devoted their lives to discover its cause. In this way, they hope to undo the harm the Horrors inflicted and prevent the devastation of the Wastes from befalling any other area of Barsaive. Through their efforts, we may also gain knowledge of the Horrors that might enable us to drive them from Barsaive forever and perhaps even cleanse the astral realm of their taint.

... Today our galley passed over Jerris and then westward over the Wastes, a forsaken place that truly resembles the end of this world. Mercifully, a maelstrom of swirling, gray dust obscured the abominable land from the

eyes of our crew; they surely would have mutinied had they seen the forbidding landscape below us. For the Wastes are still ruled by Horrors, those unholy entities from the Great Void of the netherworlds, terrible abominations that existed long before the Books of Harrow were even a dream in the tortured mind of the Martyr Scholar.

No creatures of the light would dare set foot in the Wastes. The rancid air supports only the Horrors and their spawn: wormskulls, despairthoughts, bloatforms and jehuthras, swarms of krilworms, and other nameless creatures that feed on the souls of Name-givers.

—From the journal of Derleth, Nethermancer of Ar Kham

On the Creation of the Wastes

The Wastes lie to the northwest of the Delaris Mountains, just west of the Liaj Jungle. Settlers who came to Barsaive in ancient times from other parts of the Theran Empire were drawn to the Wastes by the richness of the land and its nearness to other Theran provinces. The city of Jerris, on the other side of the mountains, served as a gateway to the rest of Barsaive for the towns and villages of the Wastes.

How many villages there were, we can only guess, based on fragmentary records preserved in the Great Library. The accounts we have suggest that more than a hundred kaers were breached and destroyed, and thousands upon thousands of Name-givers slain. If so few sources tell of so much destruction, we can safely surmise that the kaers destroyed in the Wastes are as numerous as the stars in the sky. Ever since those dreadful days, the Wastes have been a place of darkness and despair, casting their shroud over the mountains and covering even the city of Jerris in their pall.

Interestingly, the little evidence we have suggests that the widespread destruction of kaers may not have been entirely the work of the Horrors—or if it was, the Horrors of the Wastes were more subtle and diabolical than their fellows elsewhere in Barsaive. Scattered records and other information recovered by explorers suggest that many kaers were overcome by a mysterious and terrible wasting disease. Fragments of ancient journals tell of children dying slowly, coughing up their lungs like water; of men and women turning into thin, pale ghosts of their former selves before finally withering away into nothing.

Some scholars believe this plague is simply the subtle workings of a Horror; other scholars think it a natural plague, taken into the kaers by the first inhabitants or somehow spawned during the centuries underground. Against this second possibility, however, is one frightening fact. The plague struck many kaers that lay a great distance apart, and given the isolation of the kaerfolk, it is difficult to see how such an illness could have been spread. The notion that it arose independently in so many different locations is likewise difficult to credit. A few scholars have suggested a connection with the mysterious black ash that falls over the Wastes, but as yet we have no more idea of what the ash is than we do of the illness.

The Black Ash and Other Hazards

Dark clouds hover perpetually over the Wastes, blocking out the sun and plunging the region into eternal night. The clouds are not made of air and water, as ordinary clouds are, nor yet are they smoke of any kind we might recognize. They are made of fine black powder, like wood or paper ash. Like a black snowfall, the ash covers the Wastes in a thin layer, blown about by the moaning winds into small drifts and choking eddies. Small ravines and depressions in the ground are filled with the stuff; many of these appear solid from a distance, but will quickly drag down and suffocate any unfortunate who steps into them.

The ash makes travel difficult and unpleasant, to say the least. Horses and other pack animals will enter the Wastes only with much coaxing, and carts and wagons often bog down where the silt has drifted deep. The ashfall also taints what little water exists in the Wastes, turning it brackish and foul-tasting. Ash-polluted springs and pools may also be a source of sickness. Travelers in these parts should therefore bring plenty of their own water and keep it tightly sealed in waterskins or other containers.

Magicians and scholars alike have studied samples of the ash and still have no idea what it really is or where it is coming from. It may stem from a Horror-curse on the land or may even be part of some strange kind of Horror-flakes of its body, perhaps, or tiny parts that make up a larger whole whose true appearance we can only guess at. Most people believe that the constant ashfall is the cause of the Wastes' desolation and the darkness of soul that hangs like a shroud over Jerris.

Food is scarce in this blighted land; no rain falls on it to nourish plants, and most of the creatures that live in the Wastes are Horrors or their constructs. The few other beasts native to the place are often disease-ridden or otherwise unwholesome—whether because of the Horrors, the black ash or both together, no one can be sure. Adventurers' rations are frequently the only edible thing to be found for miles and may attract hungry scavengers unless properly sealed away from the air.

Despite these desolate conditions, life has found a foothold even in this largely lifeless region. Molgrims, leech rats, plague lizards, krilworms and other foul beasts live and even thrive in the Wastes. Unlike their fellows in other parts of Barsaive, creatures native to the Wastes all seem to be colored a dark, dirty gray or tan, either to blend with the terrain or because the ashfall blankets their fur and skin. Explorers have also described encounters with numerous other creatures that dwell nowhere else in Barsaive. Many of these animals resemble such familiar beasts as brithans, thundras, lions and deer, but are often corrupted in some way or possess bizarre magical powers. Some magicians believe that the corruption of the Wastes has transformed these beasts into taint- ed versions of their common kin, like the pitiful creatures of the Poison Forest. Minor Horrors also abound in the Wastes; adventurers' journals tell of gnashers, kreescra and slipshades, more numerous in the Wastes than anywhere else in Barsaive. Few have reported seeing powerful Named Horrors, but their work is evident in the blighted land and its shattered kaers. In the kaers' depths, other adepts have encountered wormskulls, bloatforms, despairthoughts, plagues and wingflayers.

According to some wild tales making the rounds in Jerris, a strange tribe of Name-givers is reputed to dwell in the Wastes. The so-called Gray Folk—feral and barbaric Name-givers of human, ork or elven stock—supposedly wander the Wastes and savagely attack anyone they meet. Travelers have described them as dirty gray in color, wearing primitive clothing and wielding weapons of stone, bone and occasionally metal (salvaged from shattered kaers, undoubtedly). Some rumors claim that the Gray Folk serve a powerful Horror, which has a mysterious and sinister plan for them. No one knows the truth of these tales, though it is just possible that an isolated kaer or two might have survived the Scourge and fallen into barbarism. It is also possible that the Gray Folk are simply bandits or raiders who smear themselves with gray ash and assault travelers for their goods.

Of the Wastes' Twisted Magic

The most disturbing aspect of the corruption of the Wastes is its strange effect on magic. Everyone knows that the Horrors warped astral space wherever they traveled. In Horror-haunted ruins such as Parlainth, the astral taint is so thick that even looking into astral space is dangerous; as for using raw magic, one may as well slit one's own throat. These effects are even more pronounced in the Wastes, where the astral fabric is twisted and tattered, full of gaping black holes like an old blanket eaten by moths. Where the astral plane is intact, objects and distances look strangely distorted, as if viewed through ill-made glass full of bubbles and streaks.

Scholars have been trying to discover what this particular corruption of astral space might mean for the Wastes and for Barsaive, but study of these phenomena is difficult. The twisted astral space takes its toll on magicians who look upon it for too long, and the holes and distortions warp the use of magic in the Wastes in ways Name-givers can scarcely comprehend. Many travelers report that the climate of the Wastes grows increasingly hotter as one travels west, and some magicians theorize that the distortions of astral space may be related to this phenomenon. So far, the exact nature of such a connection remains a mystery.

Spell magic in the Wastes is often more powerful than elsewhere, but also more dangerously unpredictable. Spells gain energy, but are difficult to control and may veer off course or have other unexpected effects. Even using magical talents can damage an adept by exposing him to the corrupt energies in nearby astral space. Powerful spells and talents also reputedly draw the attention of Horrors even more quickly than in other regions of Barsaive. Spell matrices and other protections dampen the effects somewhat, but not nearly enough in many cases. And those few adepts foolish enough to use raw magic or travel astrally in the Wastes have never been heard from again.

After countless days of travel, many of my companions became convinced that we had become hopelessly lost. Though we had followed to the letter the directions given us in Throal, the Forgotten City was still nowhere in sight. I was determined to find the place and so resolved to continue on alone if need be. Fortunately my resolve was never tested, for only three days later we found it.

We were walking through a partially wooded area, the trees covering the top of a large hill. As we reached the hilltop, we saw the spires of ruined Parlainth spread out below us like a shattered mosaic. The descriptions we had read in the journals of J'Role the Thief and in the Library of Throal told of the shattered splendor of the Forgotten City, but I had foolishly considered this description exaggerated. The sight of the ruins taught me that words alone could not convey the awe and sadness one feels when face to face with the ruins of Parlainth.

The city lay smothered in tangled vines and overgrown plants. Once-tall spires and pyramids had crumbled into piles of broken stone, mute testimony to the destructive power and corruption of the Horrors.

Parlainth was like no city I had ever seen. I had been an explorer of sorts for years before that journey, and had discovered more than a dozen lost cities and kaers, but none as magnificent and sad as this. The ruins had a majesty to them, as if to say that neither the Horrors nor time itself could mar their beauty. But for all its grandeur, the place held a cold and uninviting presence…

—From the journal of Torgak, 1465 TH
(transcribed by Lorin of Throal)

On the Forgotten City of Parlainth

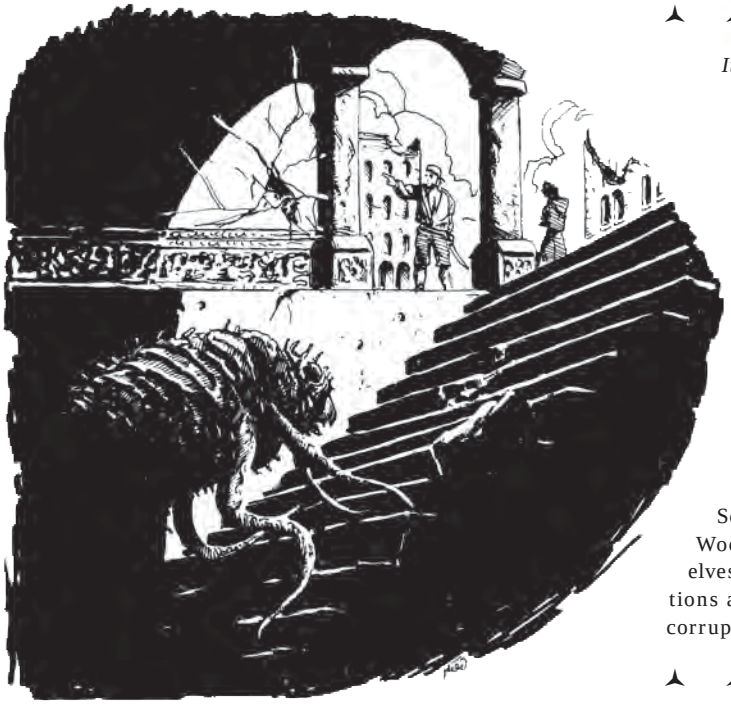
Built with Theran labor and money long ago, the great city of Parlainth marks the far northeast corner of Barsaive. In the time before the Scourge, it served as the First Theran Empire's provincial capital and the home of the Overgovernor. In the days of its triumph, Parlainth had opulence and splendor unmatched even by present-day Travar.

What we know of Parlainth's past in our time comes mostly from exploration of its ruins, and from legends and stories that occasionally resurface in the remotest areas of Barsaive. We know that before the Scourge, the city was the Theran provincial capital of Barsaive. To protect their fair city from the Scourge, the Therans did not transform it into a citadel, as did many other cities, but chose a different method of protection. They shifted the entire city into one of the netherworlds of astral space, wiping knowledge of its existence from every citizen's mind, believing that this was the only way to keep Parlainth safe from the Horrors.

Despite this great feat of magic, the Horrors still managed somehow to detect and invade the city during the Scourge, destroying the legendary Parlainth just as they had destroyed so many other cities.

Through the efforts of J'role the Honorable Thief and the Elementalist Releana, the Forgotten City of Parlainth was restored to earthly existence in Barsaive after the Scourge. It is true that its ruins harbor frightful creatures and Horrors, but they also contain countless treasures. The city itself is a wilderness to be explored and tamed, for the tall spires and dozens of substructures deep underground hide myriad creatures and traps for the unwary.

The small town of Haven occupies the ruined city's south-east corner. The founders of the town cleared this small portion of Par-



lainth of both monsters and treasure, and Haven now serves as a trading post and way station for adventurers journeying deep into the fabulous ruins in search of Parlainth's marvelous treasures.

...After about a day's ride northeast of the Caucavics, we reached Haven, where we purchased a moth-eaten adventuring log from a dwarf merchant. Using the directions supplied in its yellowing pages, we made our way to the outskirts of Parlainth, the fabled Forgotten City and the ancient Theran capital of Barsaive.

We saw the great citadel where mighty airships had once docked. Nearby, on a high hill overlooking the city, stood the monumental palace where the governor had once lived. Temples and great houses, market places and amphitheaters all spread out from the citadel. Deep green vines and mosses covered much of their fine, white stone walls, as if the jungle itself had conspired with Parlainth's original inhabitants to hide the great city. Though the wind and rain of many years had left the white stone pockmarked and pitted, close inspection revealed intricately carved designs and glyphs, a silent testament to the skill of Parlainth's artisans.

We carefully made our way toward the city center, on constant watch for the numerous Horrors still inhabiting the dead city.

Suddenly, we froze in our tracks. Before us lay a rectangular courtyard the size of ten Theran kilas, a courtyard whose white stone walls still bore the brown stains of blood spilled long ago. We had found the ancient Theran slave market.

—From the journal of Sargon of Urupa

Haven may provide refuge against the dangers of Parlainth, but its inhabitants—adventurers, thieves, swindlers, mad wizards, and even Horrors disguised as any of the above—often prove as formidable a challenge as the traps and monsters of the Forgotten City.

It seems certain that the Therans have spies within Haven, keeping watch over Parlainth and any explorers who plunder its ruins. Speculations about their aims range from Theran plans to reclaim Parlainth and retrieve its treasures for their Empire to tracking or even waylaying treasure-seekers brave enough to explore its depths.

—Kern Redhand, Historian of Throal

On Blood Wood

Blood Wood, a place both miraculous and unsettling, marks the northern boundary of Barsaive. Though life has returned to much of the world since the end of the Scourge, no place is so rich with life as the legendary Blood Wood. Revived and magically rejuvenated by the corrupted elves of the north, the forest has grown to enormous proportions and now stands as a testament to the beauty that elves, corrupted or not, can create.

If you have ever experienced mixed feelings, such as pain and pleasure, joy and sadness, or pride and shame, then you know what I felt being given the task of compiling information about Blood Wood and the Elven Court. Of course, many non-elves in Barsaive also feel as I do, and I know that my racial background should have no bearing on my work as a scholar, but I could not help but wonder what would have been my fate had I been born in Wyrm Wood instead of in a kaer. Might I have ended up as a blood elf? I cannot say, and do not wish to know.

—Set down on the Third Day of Rua, 1505 TH, by Karon Foll, elven Scholar

Blood Wood grows thick with green- and red-leafed undergrowth that brushes against a visitor's legs. Tall, thick-trunked birch trees overgrown with layers of furry moss lean down overhead, their leaves blocking most of the sun's light and turning the forest into an endless cavern of undergrowth. Thick vines hang in long loops from the canopy overhead down to the ground. Animal life is equally abundant in the forest. Though a traveler sometimes crosses an eerily silent section of the woodland—more terrifying than any constant sound—the animals of the Blood Wood chatter and call and whistle. Many of the smaller animals prey on each other, posing no threat to travelers. Other animals are very dangerous; the small but deadly blood monkey, the fierce witherfang, the sly giant python, and others all wait to hunt down the careless traveler.

But these mundane plants and animals are not the greatest danger within Blood Wood, nor are they its most interesting inhabitants. This magnificent forest is home to the largest elven population in Barsaive, the corrupted elves who still worship the Elven Queen Alachia as their High Queen and the guardian of elven culture.

...I remember my first sight of Blood Wood, decades ago. A shimmering island of green amid a barren, brown plain, its beauty both attracted and terrified me. Never in my life had I seen so many trees, hick covered the land like a monstrous army of alien growing things. The sheer abundance of life all around me made my heart stop beating and tore the breath from my

throat. Knowing I must enter whether I would or not, the emerald beauty of the leaves became dark and menacing, and the thick maze of branches and trunks became a single, powerful creature that might easily devour me. Until that day, I had seen only the stark, gray interior of my kaer and the mountainous brown horizon that surrounded my meager farming village. When I entered Blood Wood, I came upon a different land; even in my dreams I had never imagined such a place, and the difference of it paralyzed me with fear and longing.

—From the journal of J'Role the Honorable Thief

How Blood Wood Came To Be

In the days before the Scourge, the Elven Queen ruled all the elves of Barsaive and other lands. All elves pledged their loyalty to her court, though many lived their entire lives without ever paying their respects to her in person. Over time, the Elven Queen lost the power to rule any but the elves. Her kingdom, however, remained the most important and linked the realms of faerie with the mundane world. No matter where they lived, all elves owed and still owe their greatest loyalty to the Court of the Elven Queen, a tradition that continues undiminished to this day.

In return for their loyalty, the Elven Queen kept safe all elves in the world. With few exceptions, every Elven Queen has fulfilled this duty to her utmost. Keeping abreast of events in the world outside her northern forest kingdom by requiring reports on the outside world from all visitors to her kingdom, each Elven Queen learned where to focus her attention to guarantee the continued welfare of her subjects.

How the Schism Occured

Even such ingrained traditions, however, could not withstand the challenge of the Horrors. Seven hundred years ago, as the world discovered the impending onslaught of the Horrors and the rulers of Thera created the Rites of Protection and Passage, Thera demanded that all citizens swear loyalty to its empire in exchange for protection from the Scourge. All elves knew that their first loyalty lay with the Elven Queen, and most expected Queen Alachia to agree to these terms. But the Queen rejected the Theran demands, and with them the Rites of Protection and Passage. Many of the elves in Barsaive, fearing they could not survive the coming Scourge without the Theran Rites, forswore Queen Alachia and joined communities that had learned the Rites of Protection and Passage.

The elves called this time of turning away the Schism. Even as thousands of elves threw in their lot with Barsaive's other races and went into hiding in the kaers and citadels, the elven folk still loyal to the Elven Queen gathered around her in the giant Wyrm Wood for the hundred years preceding the Scourge. Bitterness settled upon them, and their hearts became closed and dark. They felt betrayed not only by their own kind, but by the world itself, which demanded that people make such unforgivable choices.

The Corruption of the Elves

Unlike most communities, whose people built their kaers and citadels from the stone and earth they knew so well, the elves of Wyrm Wood drew on elemental magic to build shelters of trees and plants. The Elven Queen and her court sealed Wyrm Wood under a thick canopy of vines and leaves, placing magical wards within the trees of their forest just as other people placed wards on the stones of their kaers and citadels.

But their wards did not hold. Slowly, the Horrors ate away at the outer defenses of Wyrm Wood. Even as the beleaguered elves tried to shore up their magical defenses, the Horrors slipped in, possessing elves, attacking those who lived within the failed kaer, and arousing untold terror. In desperation, the elves began to dig deep tunnels to escape the Horrors, but the creatures had entrenched themselves in Wyrm Wood. Before long, the elves began to lose the battle in earnest. In this darkest hour of elven history, the magicians of Wyrm Wood stumbled across a possible means of salvation. Rather than fighting the Horrors, they would simply make themselves unappealing to the creatures. Because the Horrors feed on the pain they inflict on their victims, the Court chose to drive them away by inflicting agony on themselves. By twisting elemental magic, they created the Ritual of the Thorns, which made sharp thorns grow out of their bodies and cut through their flesh. With their bodies and minds awash in constant, agonizing pain on which the Horrors could not feed, the elves forced the Horrors to leave the woodland alone.

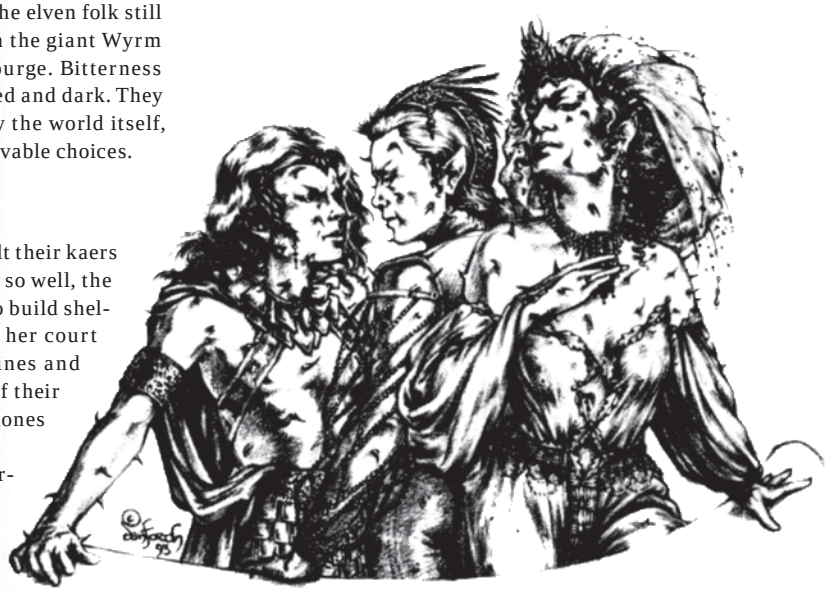
Because the Horrors also consider despair, fear, and other anguish of the heart a delicacy, the elves of the Court disciplined themselves to feel little. They feel enough to still be considered Name-givers, but are capable of only so much emotion. The blood elves, as they came to be called, can feel love and concern for others, but only to a limited degree. Like the rest of us, they have hopes, dreams, and fears—but these, too, have limits.

The terrible plan worked; the hastily dug underground shelters combined with the self-inflicted mental and physical torture kept the elves from succumbing to the Horrors. For their survival, however, they paid a dreadful price.

Some say that though the elves saved their own lives, what they did to themselves rendered their lives as empty as if they had died. Even the elves themselves cannot deny that they twisted their nature into something horrible. Still breathtakingly beautiful in their own way, the blood elves of the Queen's Court also evoke overwhelming pain and sorrow.

Though they rarely speak of it, the members of the Elven Court feel torn by their current state. The elves who survived the Scourge take great pride in their victory over the Horrors. Some continue to celebrate the extreme choice they made, scoffing at those who are repelled by their cold and masochistic existence. However, each member of the Elven Court also recognizes that he or she has become alien to the rest of the world. Though their longing is unspoken, they remember with regret the days when they lived without the constant pain and stifled emotions they now suffer.

With time and help, the Court may discover a way to reverse the Ritual of the Thorns. Of course, they will never ask for such help. In a display of elven arrogance sadly common to my race, their perverse pride in their condition prevents them from acting to achieve the changes that some small remnant of their hearts so desperately craves. They remain as they became during the Scourge; safe from the Horrors, but cut off from the world.



On Queen and Court

The life of the Court revolves around the Elven Queen's Palace, a tower of eight giant trees in a clearing in the heart of Blood Wood. The trees grow in a circle, their trunks as thick as taverns. The branches wind around each other, linking the trees in intricate patterns, as if they had been grown to create this order, and through the order, to become beautiful.

At the head of the Court is the Elven Queen. She holds ultimate power within the Court, and exerts considerable influence over elven folk outside Blood Wood who still owe her loyalty. The Elven Queen's first duty is to protect the Court, Blood Wood, and other forests across the world. Because its power and influence have eroded over the past several hundred years, the Court now finds it impossible to maintain its distance from the complicated politics of the world. If they are to survive, they must gain power by playing the same political games as every other realm.

The current Elven Queen, Alachia, has involved the Court in intrigues throughout Barsaive. Thus far, her attempts are marred by the Court's lack of experience in the affairs of other races. In centuries past, the Elven Queen and the elves of Blood Wood could command instant respect and awe; but few in Barsaive feel the same reverence since the elves carried out their self-inflicted corruption. The late King Varulus III of Throal made his antipathy toward the corrupted Court of Blood Wood quite apparent.

Those who know anything about Blood Wood and its inhabitants speculate that many years will pass before the Queen successfully replaces her imperious directness with the silent, unseen maneuvering necessary in our time.

Queen Alachia appoints eight advisors and courtiers, called *consortis*, one for each of the massive trees that supports the palace. The Elven Queen often dismisses a *consortis* and then appoints a new one with little warning or apparent logic. Her whims have prompted her to dismiss and reappoint some members of the court several times. As might be expected from this description, the *consortis* wield little actual power, but on occasion may influence the Elven Queen.

In the hierarchy of the Elven Court, the Court magicians are next in power to the Elven Queen and the *consortis*. Known as Blood Warders, the Court magicians continue to practice the twisted magics created during the Scourge. They create the thorn men, fire hounds, and other strange creatures that patrol Blood Wood. They advise the Elven Queen on various matters, and she listens carefully to their counsel. Though the Blood Warders often act independently of the Elven Queen's knowledge in the political sphere, the rest of the Court rarely protests their actions. The elves seem to have given the Blood Warders sole responsibility for keeping their perverse traditions alive without practicing the traditions themselves, knowing that it brings them considerable freedom to act.

Members of the Queen's personal guard are called *Exolashers*, adepts in martial magics. Fiercely loyal to the Queen, they will gladly die upon her command.

On Relations With Other Elves and Races

At the time of this writing, the Elven Court's relations with elves outside Blood Wood remain strained. The blood elves' self-inflicted corruption gives other elves pause, and the Court's strange pride in its tainted condition only increases the suspicion felt by elves not of Blood Wood. The Court frequently sends emissaries from Blood Wood to meet with other elves, whom the Elven Queen considers "lost" members of her Court, in hopes of persuading these elven communities to renew their old loyalty to the Elven Queen. On rare occasions an elf from outside returns to Blood Wood and submits him or herself to the Ritual of the Thorns. The magic of the Blood Warders corrupts these elves in the same way that all inhabitants of Blood Wood have been corrupted.

As for relations with other races and powers, the Queen has publicly decreed that the Court will undertake dealings with non-elves only when absolutely necessary. Of course, in a place such as the Elven Court, full of elves who breathe intrigue as other races breathe air, the word "necessary" has many definitions. According to one particularly interesting report, certain factions among the Blood Warders seek alliance with other realms, but must work covertly for fear of the Queen's wrath. She has, on occasion, been known to slay those who dare oppose her too openly. One rumor speaks of a nameless Blood Warder who even engaged in secret correspondence with the Theran Empire.

On the Theran Presence in Barsaive

The arrival of the *Triumph* came as a surprise for Barsaive's Overgovernor Kypros, who has been left behind with his garrison at Sky Point as a testament to his failure to quell the anti-Theran resistance activities in Barsaive. While Overgovernor Kypros is currently in charge of the province of Barsaive, his influence is limited to the area around the Sky Point outpost and the Theran-controlled city of Vivane.

The vast majority of Theran forces in Barsaive are controlled by General Nikar Carinci, who had been selected by the First Governor to establish a large, permanent military installation in Barsaive's heartland. The fortress of *Triumph* serves this purpose, reminding all people of Barsaive of the power of the Theran Empire.

Of Barsaivian Land Under Theran Control

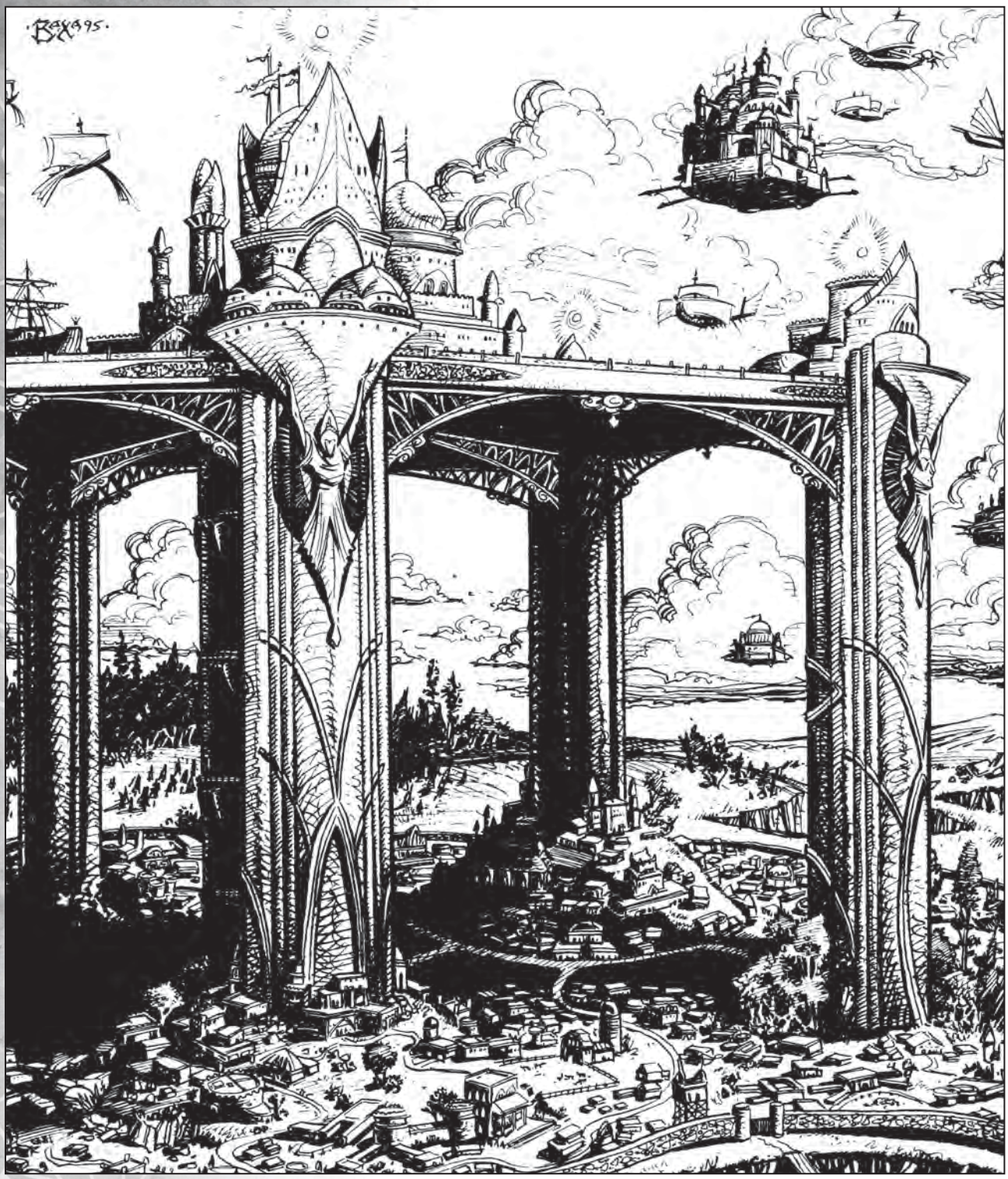
Though the Theran Empire once ruled all of Barsaive, in our time Thera controls only a portion of Barsaivian land. The regions currently under the control of Thera lie in Barsaive's heartland near Lake Ban and in the southwestern corner of the province, extending north to the Delaris Mountains and east to Death's Sea, touching the edge of the Twilight Peaks.

The largest city in the Theran-controlled area of Barsaive is Vivane, which lies completely under the Empire's thumb. Though this city has a Barsaivian native loyal to Thera as its nominal leader, it is commonly understood that this Barsaivian magistrate is nothing more than a puppet controlled by Overgovernor Kypros. Clearly visible from the military base at Sky Point, Vivane is the Theran playground, and many Therans regard it as their new provincial capital.

Every town and city close to Vivane and Sky Point has Theran representatives and administrators living within its boundaries. These official representatives of the Theran Empire often receive a small contingent of soldiers to be stationed in the town, usually numbering from five to fifty troops.

You ask me what it is to live under Theran rule? By your words it sounds as if you expect me to horrify you with tales of terrible perversions, of public slaughter, of arrogance, treachery and oppression. It is not so.

Yes, the Therans can be harsh masters. As I write this, I sit in the shadow of the Overgovernor's airship Ascendancy, which is once again docked at the Basalt Spire. It is here as a warning that the riots in the Broken Quarter must stop. Tonight, Theran guardsmen will bring that warning down into the streets, dealing with lawbreakers most harshly. But if a man breaks the law, should he not be punished?



Vivane is quiet, my friend. More quiet now than before the Therans returned. Yes, days and nights of fire and blood nearly consumed the city before the people recognized the truth before them. But I, for one, am pleased they are here. I feel safe. For as long as they remain, no Horror would dare come here, nor would any ork scorcher or raider. I feel safe, too, from the thieves that once peered in my windows at night, lusting after my wares and my children. The Therans have made Vivane safe for myself and my daughters. What more can I ask?

—From a letter by Adrak Erraom, liquid jewel merchant of Vivane, TE 1008

On Sky Point

Sky Point, one of the two Theran military strongholds within Barsaive's borders, is a huge platform elevated hundreds of feet above the ground by thick stone pillars. Overgovernor Kypros rules Sky Point through a group of Theran functionaries who see to the efficient running of the base. One can only reach the platform by airship or through spells or magical items designed to levitate people or objects through the air. No stairs or other mechanical means provide access to Sky Point, which makes the platform safe from most attackers. Each of the pillars is 300 feet thick and built to sustain a great deal of damage without breaking.

At all hours of the day and night Theran mining ships, crewed by slaves, float off the platform to search for elemental air. The

Therans use bursts of elemental fire to breach the barriers between planes and reveal pockets of the precious material. These mining bursts can sometimes be seen as far north as Throal, and serve as a constant reminder of the Theran presence. The mining ships are a common target for the crystal raiders, and the Therans exert serious efforts to keeping their mining operations safe from raiders and saboteurs.

Of Vrontok

Under the shadow of the Sky Point platform lies Vrontok, a settlement comprised mostly of humans who have thrown in their lot with the Therans. These unscrupulous people range all over Barsaive, capturing other sentient beings to sell to the Therans as slaves in exchange for Theran protection and certain magical items.

The settlement numbers some 20,000 inhabitants. Its dwellings huddle around two of the platform's pillars; many of them are built against the pillars themselves, rising on top of each other like moss climbing up a tree. Of course, these dwellings do not reach high enough to allow access to the platform.

Sky Point and Vrontok are surrounded by a series of trenches and pickets to foil attack from the ground. Several drawbridges allow access to the land beneath the platform, each heavily guarded. Theran soldier units live in camps beneath the platform, where the troops conduct maneuvers designed to repulse any invasion by land.

Of the Ascendancy

Kypros holds court from his personal kila, the *Ascendancy*, which is usually docked at Sky Point or the city of Vivane. Kypros regularly flies over the southwest section of the province to keep his Barsaivian allies in line and strike fear into the hearts of those who dare resist him.

From observation and the reports of escaped slaves, we know a little about the *Ascendancy*. The vessel is shaped like a square, two hundred feet to a side. At each corner stands a circular, fifty-foot-tall tower. The towers widen at the base, and this splayed plinth makes battering down the walls a difficult task.

The ship carries 170 sailors and 300 Theran soldiers. One out of every ten soldiers is an adept in a Discipline of martial combat. The *Ascendancy* carries approximately 200 close combat warriors and 100 archers and crossbowmen. The walls of the kila enclose the *Ascendancy's* Great Tower, which stands almost 70 feet tall and nearly 50 feet across. The walls are eight feet thick, and support a spiral staircase built into the side facing the kila's courtyard. The first floor of the Great Tower is the great hall, which contains a cooking hearth and serves as Kypros' council chamber and feast hall.

Kypros' quarters—a hall furnished with tables and chairs, a master bedroom, and a library—occupy the second floor. The stairway continues to a third floor, and from there to the roof. We do not yet know what the third floor contains, though rumors claim it is an elaborate shrine to the Mad Passion Dis. Slaves taken to the third floor never return, leading us to suspect that the Therans practice live sacrifice even though the Passions forbade such barbaric offerings generations ago.

Of Lankarden

The Theran garrison of Lankarden serves as a way station and staging area for military operations into northeastern Barsaive, Cara Fahd, and Landis. Although the town holds only 2,000 people, the Theran Empire stations four hundred soldiers in Lankarden and keeps at least two vedettes moored at the twin 250-foot airship towers inside the walls. Gaping metal chutes for dumping elemental fire and oil on enemy forces stand at regular intervals on the battlements, along with two vast catapults and several ballista platforms.

Newcomers immediately notice Lankarden's precise and military atmosphere, as the Therans remain rigorously suspicious of outsiders. Lankarden's fine smithies churn out armor, weapons, airship accessories and other material of war at a prodigious rate. The army also pays for the upkeep of several large farmsteads nearby that raise fine horses for the cavalry. While Lankarden supports a minor trade in animal skins and similar booty from hunter-gatherers, this commerce is much less organized than similar trading elsewhere. The Therans in Lankarden frequently employ mercenaries to bring back maps and information regarding the current state of affairs in Cara Fahd.

Local people rely on Vivane for provisions and rather devote their own efforts to capturing and selling slaves. A majority of slavers in this area of the province bring their captives to Lankarden and load them aboard airships en route to Sky Point. Mercenaries and ork scorchers occasionally bring their slave trains directly to the town, though the Therans prefer to deal with these people elsewhere and transport the slaves in their own airships.

Because Landis was largely unprotected from the Scourge, the Horrors ran rampant through that region's hills and mountains. Horror-possessed victims have entered Lankarden in the past, making local authorities wary of newcomers. As a form of defense, a small cabal of Theran Nethermancers lives in Lankarden, including at least one of considerable power. This magician's identity is known only to a handful of senior Theran military personnel, including the rulers of Vivane. From time to time, General Crotias or General Tularch visits this outpost personally rather than relying on reports from subordinate officers.

On Triumph

Clearly visible from the Serpent River, the grounded behemoth *Triumph* towers over the nearby landscape. The central part of the behemoth-turned-fortress includes the keep and towers from the former airship. Elemental magic was used to anchor the vessel's walls once it landed to provide additional stability. Also, the foundations of the towers and walls extend deep into the hillside to provide a strong defense and (so rumor has it) numerous secret tunnels and passages under the fortress city.

The city contains considerable room for expansion, and slaves are imported daily to work on fortifying the citadel. The Theran's life-draining magic has been depleting the energies of the Ayodhya Liferock underneath the fortress ever since the ship landed. A number of obsidimen trapped inside the Liferock are forever imprisoned, and the spirit of Ayodhya is doomed to wither away to nothing.

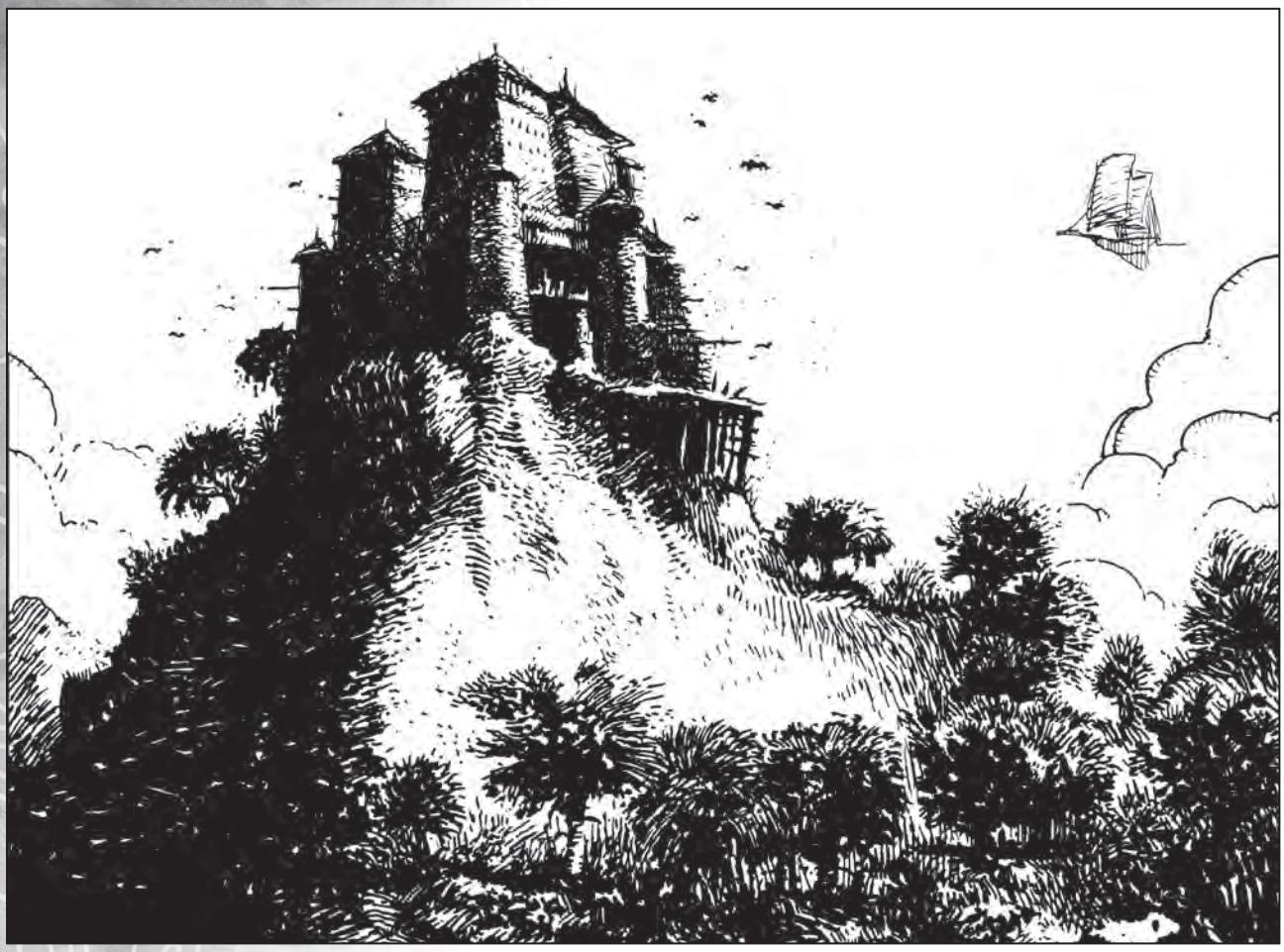
Of Theran Military Forces

The Theran Empire maintains a substantial military presence in Barsaive, which is split up between the outposts of Sky Point and *Triumph*.

The Theran Airship Fleet

The fortress city of *Triumph* is home to an air fleet composed of two Theran kilas and six stone vedettes, all with full crew complements. Most often, the kila known as the *Righteous* is stationed over the confluence of the South Reach of the Serpent River and Lake Ban, and the vedettes transport crewmen and supplies between the kila and the fortress city as needed. The second kila, known as the *Defiant*, typically patrols the length of the south Serpent River.

The vedettes stationed at the fortress city include four vessels from the Seventh Fleet at Sky Point: two mining ships, the *Amethyst* and the *Moonstone*; and two combat vedettes, the *Dauntless* and the *Ferocious*. Generally, three vedettes patrol the perimeter of the fortress city, while the other three perform elemental mining and courier duties. From time to time, the vedettes also



escort Theran ground forces or K'tenshin riverboats on trips to some of the less hospitable regions of the Serpent River. The Naval Commander of Triumph is Captain Drak Windsearcher, a troll as well as an old friend of General Nikar.

Two additional kila, stationed at Sky Point, patrol within the borders of Barsaive, the *Prestige* and the *Regal*, both commanded by Provincial Admiral Tularch, the former Overgovernor of Barsaive. The *Prestige* is a circular kila, 120 feet across with five towers built into the ship's wall. One of the towers serves as the great hall and Tularch's personal chambers. The *Regal* is a triangular kila, smaller than the *Prestige*, with a tower at each corner. Tularch also commands a dozen vedettes outfitted for combat and another dozen outfitted for mining. The admiral enjoys complete freedom to use the fleet as she wishes, but must report all maneuvers to Kypros.

Theran Ground Forces

Theran soldiers in Barsaive consist of the Fifth and Eighth Theran Legion. Within the legions are units called divisions, each made up of 120 troops in twelve files and ten ranks. A single division usually handles garrison duties and patrols the area around Sky Point.

A legion is also divided into larger units called cohorts. Four divisions form a cohort, numbering 480 soldiers. The foot soldiers are a mix of heavy infantry for close combat and light infantry armed with projectile weapons. The heavy infantry outnumber the light infantry three to one, and one out of every ten soldiers is an adept in martial combat. When a great battle is planned, all the divisions combine into cohorts, and the cohorts combine into a legion of 4,200 troops. Outside of such large-scale battles, cohorts often receive orders to engage in smaller skirmishes on their own.

The commander of a division is called a *strategos*, the commander of a cohort a *polemarch*. On paper, a General also commands the soldiers posted to the airships in addition to the soldiers of the legion. However, an unspoken rule gives ship's officers the power of command in combat, meaning that an Admiral commands her own soldiers in practice.

When combined into its full force, a legion is arranged as follows: twenty divisions draw up into two lines of ten divisions each, composed of heavy infantry. A gap of 20 yards, equal to each division's width, separates the units. The units of the second line fall in behind the spaces of the first line, allowing the second line to easily advance to the first or the first to fall back to the second. This arrangement gives the troops extra mobility when marching in two lines and solidarity when they combine to fight. The combined 20 divisions have a depth of ten ranks and a front line of 1,200 feet. Completing the legion is a third line of ten units of light foot soldiers, alternated with ten units of reserve troops. Each light foot unit numbers 120, and each reserve unit numbers sixty.

The fortress city of *Triumph* houses two full cohorts of Theran soldiers—nearly a thousand warriors. Half of these are from the Theran Eighth Legion stationed at Sky Point; the remainder are from the Fifth Legion transported to Barsaive aboard General Nikar's flotilla. General Nikar Carinci has led a long and glorious career in the service of the Theran Empire. Even though he is technically outranked by Overgovernor Kypros, the arrogant t'skrang can do whatever he wants in Barsaive—and Kypros must comply because Nikar enjoys the favor of the First Governor and the Empire.

The remainder of the Eighth Legion stationed at Sky Point is complemented by 700 cavalry. The troops stationed at Sky Point are under the command of General Crotias. A veteran of several campaigns in the south of the Theran Empire, Crotias arrived in Barsaive only half a decade ago, in 1504 TH.

ASTRAL SPACE

An interesting question comes to mind. Is astral space a reflection of our world? Or is our world merely a reflection of the astral one?

• Jandar of Urupa, Human Nethermancer •

Beyond the physical world lies another world, a realm just beyond the perceptions of most adepts. A source of endless speculation, conjecture and wonder, the font from which all magic springs, home to countless spirits and the birthplace of the Horrors—this is the world of astral space.

This chapter provides information on astral space for the gamemaster. It describes methods that enable Name-givers to enter and explore astral space, a general survey of the inhabitants of astral space, and describes a number of different locations in astral space and the netherworlds. It also provides some general advice for incorporating astral space and astral sensing into adventures and campaigns.

USING ASTRAL SPACE IN ADVENTURES AND CAMPAIGNS

As described in the **Workings of Magic** chapter on p. 254 of the **Player's Compendium**, astral space is intimately connected with the physical world. Because of this connection, and the abilities of adepts to view astral space, the gamemaster often needs to provide descriptions and details for this realm. This section will provide some advice and suggestions for incorporating astral space and astral sensing into your games.

First of all, like many other aspects of the **Earthdawn** rules, only use as much detail as you (and your players) are comfortable with. If your group doesn't show a lot of interest in the astral counterparts of the places they visit, don't emphasize it too much. As the players gain experience with the **Earthdawn** setting, and gain familiarity with how the physical and astral worlds are connected, they are likely to begin exploring it in more depth. You can add more detail as your game progresses to keep your players interested, as well as provide clues for their characters to follow up.

At the same time, don't allow astral sensing to give everything away. Astral sensing is a useful tool, but it can't do everything—there are talents and spells better suited to learning certain types of information, so don't allow astral sensing to duplicate those effects (at least without achieving higher result levels). This is especially true when it come to detecting or analyzing Horror taint. While the general level of astral corruption can indicate the presence or influence of a Horror, astral sensing shouldn't reveal a Horror mark or Horror corruption except in remarkable circumstances. Part of the reason the Horrors are so feared is because their presence and influence is so hard to detect.

One advantage to the progression of characters through their Disciplines—from Initiate to Master—is that their ability to view and interact with astral space grows with them. As novices, the duration and step number of their astral sensing talents are usually low, limiting the amount of information they can learn. At this level, adepts are usually using astral sensing to get a feel for the level of astral corruption, sense magic items, or other broad applications.

As characters make the transition from Novice (Circles 1–4) to Journeyman (Circles 5–8), astral space becomes more significant—especially for Disciplines that deal with the denizens of astral space (like Elementalists and Nethermancers). Their astral sensing step numbers get higher, allowing them to see more detail, and learn more from examination of astral space and astral patterns—they may start using astral sensing to duplicate more specialized talents or spells. They may even begin detecting and analyzing permanent threads woven to true patterns (see the **Detecting Threads** optional rule, on p. 74).

As their power grows into Warden (Circles 9–12) and Master (Circles 13–15) levels, characters may begin venturing into astral space, or even the netherworlds in pursuit of various goals. The **Astral Space Gazetteer** on p. 76 provides examples of places characters may wish to travel to, but the full range of the astral realms is beyond the scope of this text. The infinite depths of the netherworlds are limited only by your imagination.

EXPLORING ASTRAL SPACE

Perhaps because it is so mysterious and dangerous, the vast, uncharted frontier of astral space appeals to countless adepts intent on exploring its reaches. This section provides rules on entering, acting in and moving around astral space, descriptions of beings that astral explorers are likely to encounter, and descriptions of the potential hazards of astral exploration.

Once an adept takes on an astral form, he becomes subject to the laws of all astral beings. This means that, for instance, the adept may be summoned as if he were a Named spirit, provided the summoner knows the adept is in astral space and can meet the requirements of the Summon talent (see the **Talents** chapter on p. 204 of the **Player's Compendium**).

ENTERING ASTRAL SPACE

Beings may enter astral space using natural abilities, magical means or astral projection, though traveling between the physical world and astral space is not an easy or safe task. More often than not, cataclysmic events brought about by Horrors or perverted uses of powerful magic create the rare natural gateways that connect the two realms. Those gates that the Horrors generate, they often guard, and most gateways lie in the bleakest, most inhospitable areas of Barsaive.

Entering via Natural Ability

Certain Horrors and spirits exhibit a natural ability to enter and leave astral space. Some single-natured Horrors show an aptitude for entering and exiting astral space, but these entities do not appear to display any common characteristic that might explain this ability. The capability of certain Horrors to move between the astral and physical worlds seems to come from their natures, rather than from magical spells or powers.

Entering via Magical Means

Name-givers may enter astral space using magical means such as the Spirit Portal spell and the Astral Portal spirit power.

The **Spirit Portal** spell is probably the safest method of entering astral space, though what constitutes safety in astral space is open to much interpretation (see the **Nethermancy Spells** chapter on p. 363 of the **Player's Compendium**). The

spell enables a Name-giver to create a portal between the physical and astral worlds. When a subject passes through the portal, the gateway alters the subject's form from physical to astral or vice versa. When an adept uses a portal to pass from the physical to the astral plane, for example, the portal melds the adept's body with its astral imprint to create an astral form. The effects of the spell are not permanent, but they do last long enough for a Name-giver to enter and exit the portal multiple times.

The spirit power called **Astral Portal** functions in the same manner as the Spirit Portal spell (see **Spirit Powers** in the **Spirits** chapter on p. 365). Using this power, a spirit can create a portal that enables Name-givers to enter and exit astral space. In fact, many Name-giver magicians summon spirits for the sole purpose of having the spirit create such portals.

Astral Projection

Astral projection is a limited form of astral travel that enables a Name-giver to send his spirit into astral space while his body remains in the physical world. The primary form of astral projection is the Netherwalk talent. This talent provides an adept with near-perfect control of his astral imprint, though the duration of the talent's effect is limited.

Like other methods of entering astral space, astral projection entails certain risks, including damage based on the type of astral region the adept travels through. See the Netherwalk description in the **Talents** chapter on p. 194 of the **Player's Compendium** and **Travel in Astral Space**, p. 75, for more information about the hazards of astral travel.

Name-Givers in Astral Space

To enter astral space, an adept must transform from a physical being into an astral being. Most often, adepts accomplish this transformation by using the Spirit Portal spell or Astral Portal spirit power, but certain legendary artifacts and powers are said to create similar effects. During the transformation, an adept actually refocuses his pattern, removing his body from the physical world and converting it to astral energy. Then he joins this astral energy with his astral imprint to create an astral form for himself.

The adept's life essence provides his astral form with definition, and because the adept's mind and consciousness enter the astral form during the transformation as well, the adept can control the form as he would control his physical body. Like astral imprints, an astral form resembles its subject's true nature. Only the most powerful disguises or illusions can alter the appearance of an adept's true form. Radical alterations to an adept's pattern will produce a blurred, double-image astral form, but other characters will be able to discern the two images in the form (see **True to Form** in the **Workings of Magic** chapter on p. 256 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Note that an adept's astral form is not the same as his True pattern. A True pattern only represents its subject. The astral form is the subject completely present in astral space. The subject is alive, "solid" and can interact with other purely astral forms.

Name-givers may also transport inanimate objects or matter into astral space. In such cases, the object or matter ceases to exist in the physical world and takes on an astral form. Any astral being can pick up the astral form by making a conscious effort and may then carry the item with no further thought.

Astral Attributes, Abilities and Possessions

The values and functions of an adept's Attributes, talents, and most other characteristics remain unchanged when the adept assumes astral form. A character's Physical Defense rating is the Difficulty Number for resolving physical attacks in astral space, his Spell Defense rating is used for attacks made with spells and magical abilities, and so on. Characters suffer damage from attacks in astral space the same as they do in the physical world, and their Damage Ratings are used in the same manner. Likewise, characters in astral form use their standard Movement rates and abilities.

Physical objects worn or carried by an adept when he assumes astral form are transformed as well. However, non-magical objects do not take on substance in astral form and remain much like their astral imprints. Such objects can be carried, dropped, picked up, and so forth, but they have no true astral substance and therefore no effect on astral beings. For example, a non-magical sword transported into astral space can be swung and thrust, but it cannot do damage to an astral being. Magical items, in contrast, take on solid astral forms and may be used normally. Such items include magical weapons and armor, blood charms, and even potions. Items dropped in astral space remain there unless the character retrieves them before returning to the physical world.

Detecting Threads

Optional Rule: As adepts gain more proficiency at astral sensing, one piece of information you may wish to reveal to them is the presence of permanent threads attached to patterns. This optional rule provides some guidelines for detecting and analyzing permanent threads.

An adept may detect a thread if he achieves an Excellent or better result when examining a subject's pattern. If the thread is active (for example, an adept is using a magical sword he has woven a thread to), the magical energy traveling into the pattern from the thread causes the thread to glow more brightly, lowering the required result to Good or better. Success on this test only detects the presence of the thread, however; the adept would need to examine the thread more directly with astral sensing in order to gain more information.

To examine a thread more closely, the adept makes Astral Sensing Tests against the Spell Defense of the being (adept, dragon, Horror, and so on) that wove the thread to the subject. Sometimes these tests require a Good result or higher to learn any information (some Horrors are *very* good at hiding their influence).

What a thread looks like depends on who (or what) wove it. Most threads resemble small bits of astral "string" tied around a portion of the subject's pattern. The characteristics of the thread, such as color, texture, and shape, vary widely according to the nature of the thread weaver. For example, threads woven by a dragon may appear in the shape of a small dragon holding on to the pattern in some way—though threads rarely identify their weaver so obviously. A character's ability to gain information from a permanent pattern thread should not be used to identify other adepts, unless the gamemaster considers such a development appropriate to the story.

Threads do not establish actual "lines" between the weaver and the target. Even if a thread is active, the connection cannot be followed back to the weaver like a trail. The weaving being merely attaches a bit of his astral energy to the target. These bits of energy tend to share certain characteristics, however, and may be used by the gamemaster as clues to send the player characters in a certain direction (whether on or off the right track). For example, a rough, green, scaly thread may have been woven by a Beastmaster, a dragon, or even a reptilian Horror. Details like this can work especially well if they remind the characters of other unusual details they may have encountered. The appearance of an unfamiliar or unusual thread may foreshadow an encounter with the being that wove it.

The gamemaster determines the specific details a character learns when examining the thread using astral sensing based on the result level and the needs of the story.

Combat in Astral Space

Combat in astral space is resolved in the same manner as combat in the physical world. Initiative is determined as normal, except that non-magical armor does not impose Initiative penalties (Initiative penalties from magical armor still apply). Physical attacks are resolved as normal, using the target's Physical Defense as the Difficulty Number. Likewise, attacks made with spells or other magical abilities are made against the target's Spell Defense, and Social Talent Tests are made against a target's Social Defense.

As described above, attacks made with non-magical weapons in astral space cannot cause damage to a target. When determining damage with non-magical weapons, use only the character's Strength step. Magical weapons possess substance in astral space, so use standard rules when determining damage from magical weapons. Natural weapons (like an animal's claws, or a t'skrang's tail) are part of the individual's solid astral form, and are also used normally.

Armor works the same way as weapons in astral space. Non-magical armor offers no protection against physical attacks in astral space. Magical armor, such as living crystal and blood pebble armor, provides its normal protection against physical attacks and imposes its standard Initiative Penalty. Any armor that provides a Mystic Armor bonus is considered magical for the purposes of this rule.

Damage in astral combat is resolved as normal and may render a character unconscious or dead. Characters still suffer Wounds and combatants must make Knockdown Tests as normal. Damage is healed as normal (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 395 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Like most other activities, spellcasting in astral space follows standard rules. The risks of casting raw magic are greater for astral beings, however, so the Warping, Damage, and Horror Mark Tests made for any character casting with raw magic gain a +3 bonus (see the **Spell Magic** chapter on p. 289 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Blood Magic in Astral Space

Because a character becomes an astral being when in astral space, his use of blood magic becomes more effective. This benefit applies in two ways. First, it reduces the Strain damage a character suffers when using a talent or ability by 1 point, to a minimum of 1 Strain Point of damage. For example, the Flame Arrow talent normally causes an adept 2 Strain Points of damage. In astral space, using the talent causes only 1 Strain Point of damage.

The second benefit applies when a character uses blood magic to push his talents or abilities (see **Blood Magic** in the **Workings of Magic** chapter on p. 260 of the **Player's Compendium**). In this case, the character adds an additional +1 bonus to his Action Test. For example, an Archer may gain a +1 bonus to his Missile Weapons talent by taking a number of Strain Points of damage equal to his Toughness step. If he were in astral space, the Archer would gain a +2 bonus.

The same bonus applies to adepts who push a talent or ability by physically wounding themselves. For example, an Archer in astral space could take a Wound and gain a +4 bonus instead of a +3 bonus.

Travel in Astral Space

Generally, travel in astral space differs little from travel in the physical world. Character and creature Movement Rates remain unchanged in astral space. Few adepts other than Cavalrymen bring mounts into astral space because the bizarre appearance of astral space spooks most animals. Because travel on foot is fairly slow, adepts usually enter astral space as close to their destination as possible—assuming, of course, that the adepts know the location of their destination.

There are two key differences when traveling in astral space. First is the ability of astral beings to move through the astral imprints of non-magical and non-living objects. Theoretically, this ability enables astral travelers to simply walk through many obstacles, but doing so significantly disorients most astral travelers.

ASTRAL DAMAGE TABLE

Region Type	Damage per Minute*
Safe	NA
Open	Step 4
Tainted	Step 8
Corrupt	Step 12

* Mystic Armor protects against this damage.

Second, astral corruption causes damage to those exposed to it. Each minute that a character is in astral space, he suffers damage using the step number shown on the Astral Damage Table. Mystic Armor protects against this damage.

Spirits, Horrors and other native astral denizens are not bound by the same restraints as Name-givers while in astral space and can fly about and move through non-magical objects without penalty. They also do not suffer damage from exposure to corrupted astral energy—though such corruption may have other effects on such beings.

Astral Denizens

Various forms of astral beings reside in astral space, ranging from spirits to Horrors to other more unusual denizens. Most reside in the netherworlds of astral space, but many of them venture into areas of astral space where astral travelers are likely to encounter these unpredictable entities.

Spirits

Astral space is home to all manner of spirits, including spirits of the elemental planes, the spirits of deceased Name-givers, and strange spirits that inhabit the more unusual netherworlds. With the exception of those who are summoned, elemental spirits are rarely encountered outside their native planes. On rare occasions, elemental spirits roam other areas of astral space, most often near sites that resemble or evoke their native planes. For example, fire spirits are likely to roam astral space near the Death's Sea, while water spirits might be encountered in astral space along the Serpent River. Wood spirits might be found in one or more of Barsaive's jungles or perhaps even in astral space near the Blood Wood. Elemental spirits usually avoid Name-givers and will flee back to their home planes upon meeting such an astral presence.

Ally spirits from the netherworlds possess a natural curiosity, which sometimes inspires them to travel through astral space to observe the physical world or to seek out Name-givers in astral space. These spirits exhibit a mischievous streak as well, which can prove dangerous to astral travelers. In fact, numerous legends tell of ally spirits that lead adepts into dangerous or precarious predicaments so that the spirits can observe the adepts' attempts to save themselves. Their unpredictable nature can make ally spirits nearly as dangerous as Horrors.

Name-giver spirits are by far the most easily identifiable spirits that astral travelers are likely to encounter. Most Name-giver spirits retain forms that are very similar to the physical forms they possessed in life, but this is not always the case. Because characters sometimes hide their true natures, a Name-giver spirit might possess a form that is larger, smaller, more grotesque or more beautiful than its physical body. The spirits of questors commonly show such radical differences because of the narrow mental and emotional focus they achieve, as do the spirits of adepts who stressed a single side of their natures to the exclusion of all else. The behavior and attitudes of a Name-giver spirit may also vary greatly from the behavior and attitudes the Name-giver exhibited in life. Such changes may result from the traumatic transition

from a physical to an astral existence, or from the spirit's interaction with the powerful energies of astral space. Interacting with the purer energies of the astral realm may foster purity of thought in the spirit, along with a desire to battle the astral corruption brought forth by the Horrors. On the other hand, interacting with corrupted energies may twist a spirit into a monstrous apparition bent on inflicting as much pain and suffering as the Horrors themselves. Such spirits may attack astral travelers without provocation. Most spirits, however, fall somewhere between these extremes.

For more information about spirits, including their abilities and powers, see the **Spirits** chapter on p. 358.

Horrors

The most sinister and abhorrent creatures known to exist, Horrors prove especially dangerous in astral space, where they may take on a wide variety of forms. The more powerful Horrors can alter their astral forms at will, making it extremely difficult for astral travelers to recognize the true nature of these foul entities, or to recognize the same Horror twice.

Countless minor Horrors roam astral space and, in some instances, the netherworlds, searching for ways to defile the physical world. Fortunately for astral beings, this search consumes most Horrors beyond their ability to pursue any other goal, and so they devote little time or attention to actively seeking out astral explorers.

Most of the powerful Horrors that remain in or near Barsaive, especially Named Horrors, appear to follow private agendas consisting of devious, corrupt plans (see the **Horrors** chapter on p. 434). These Horrors rarely roam astral space without purpose, and so the likelihood of astral travelers encountering such a Horror by chance remains slim. However, these Horrors frequent certain places in astral space that eventually take on their own taint. Nethermancers call these locations **astral lairs**.

An astral lair is an area of astral space that a Horror has corrupted by its own deeds and presence, creating for itself a sort of astral haven. Horrors may create astral lairs by committing their foul deeds in astral space or in the physical world. These areas of astral space then become Tainted or Corrupt (see **Astral Regions** in the **Workings of Magic** chapter on p. 256 of the **Player's Compendium**). Named Horrors such as Verjigorm and Taint may maintain lairs of more terrifying intensity, though no Name-giver has ever reported encountering these astral lairs.

For more information on Horrors, including their powers and abilities, see the **Horrors** chapter on p. 434.

Other Astral Denizens

In addition to spirits and Horrors, adepts in astral space may encounter creatures that defy easy classification. Usually, such creatures frequent the netherworlds, but some have been known to venture into other areas of astral space as well. These creatures include highly magical beings restricted to the astral plane, and a seemingly endless variety of astral forms that appear to reflect physical creatures belonging to the infinite number of unidentified worlds and realities also connected to astral space.

An Astral Space Gazetteer

Traveling through astral space offers adepts a chance to visit dark and dismal locations, places of breathtaking beauty and dark reaches where only Horrors stalk.

This section describes a number of different astral locations, including specific sites in Barsaive, as well as some of the mysterious realms of astral space known as the netherworlds.

Named Astral Locations

Just as sites in the physical world can be Named, sites in astral space may become Named by a significant event or overwhelming emotion. Naming imparts True patterns to these places, which allows magic to interact with them via pattern items and threads. Just as adepts can travel to Named places in Barsaive, they can also journey to Named areas in astral space.

The Well of Souls and the Idyllic Gardens represent two of the best-known Named astral sites corresponding to sites in Barsaive.

Well of Souls

Of all the Corrupt regions of astral space, the site known as the Well of Souls is probably the darkest. The Well of Souls corresponds with the physical location of Mesa'loc Kaer, in the present-day Poison Forest.

During the early years of the Scourge, the kaer was breached by a powerful Horror that fed off the pain and anguish of the kaer's residents, then bound their spirits to the ruined kaer's pattern so that it could feed on their tortured souls even after death.

The severe corruption of the Well of Souls manifests as swirling patterns of black and violent reds that cascade in a turbulent wash of pain and anguish. This intense flood of feelings has been known to strike uncontrollable terror into the soul of adepts, and the warped nature of the landscape threatens the sanity of any who behold it. Indeed, only the bravest and most powerful adepts dare penetrate very far into the Well of Souls, as the entire surrounding area is a Corrupt region as well.

On rare occasions, magicians successfully summon Name-giver spirits from the Well. Invariably, such spirits prove eager to serve their summoners in return for a few hours of freedom from torment. Unfortunately, none of these spirits has ever been permanently freed. They must always return to their astral hell, a pattern indicating that the legendary Horror still resides in its astral lair, hidden deep within the center of the Well of Souls or perhaps in the ruins of Mesa'loc Kaer.

Idyllic Gardens

Memories of the Scourge do not haunt all Named astral locations. As the power of the Horrors has diminished in recent years, some magicians have successfully employed protection wards similar to those used during the Scourge to create sites that remain entirely free of the taint of these beings. Generally, magicians use these locations as magical laboratories, where they may study and work free from the threat of Horrors. Still other magicians, such as the windling Elementalist Named Llythia Silkenwings, have used protection wards to create inspiring enclaves that celebrate and encourage the restoration of life in the Horror-ravaged lands of Barsaive.

It was during her earliest travels across the devastated lands of Barsaive that Llythia discovered a pristine forest glade along the northern edge of the Delaris Mountains. Intrigued by the small patch of land that had escaped the destruction of the surrounding areas, Llythia examined the glade's counterpart in astral space and discovered a Safe region. Immediately she began work to expand the Safe region and find ways to protect it. She eventually chose blood magic as the most efficient and effective method of protection and used her own life force to power a complex set of wards to safeguard the physical and astral locations of the glade. In later years, several other windlings joined Llythia and founded a community dedicated to nurturing the land.

Today, the Idyllic Gardens draw pilgrims from all across Barsaive. A beautiful sight to behold, the refreshing glade is rumored to possess special powers that heal and restore the health of any who tread its shaded paths.

When entered from astral space, the Gardens offer a wondrous, truly overwhelming experience of peace and tranquility that many visitors contemplate for days or even weeks. The questors of several Passions, most notably those of Jaspree and Garlen, routinely visit the Idyllic Gardens, and many adepts use the Gardens as an oasis for rest and relaxation. All visitors are welcome, provided they treat the Gardens with the care and respect they deserve.

According to legend, Llythia still resides in the glade—she cannot leave or the wards will fail. It is said that several Horrors have discovered her work, but none have successfully challenged the wards she constructed to protect the glade.

The Netherworlds

The netherworlds are alternate physical realities connected to astral space in the same way that the world of **Earthdawn** is connected to astral space. They coexist with the physical world of **Earthdawn** and serve as the source of spirits, True elements and the Horrors. At present, Name-givers have explored only a handful of these countless worlds.

Each netherworld is unique, with its own natural laws. Some netherworlds support complete realities, much like the physical world known to Barsaivians, while others are little more than single chains of limited events that continually repeat themselves. Most netherworlds combine these two models, giving the appearance of complete worlds but existing only as chains of events and important locations. Scholars do not know whether these fragmented realities are the natural states of the netherworlds, the result of Horror intervention, or simply a false impression created by Name-givers' limited astral travel abilities.

The landscape of a netherworld can be chaotic or stable. At least one netherworld, known as Sylvar, seems completely stable though it comprises little more than wide expanses of barren, Horror-ravaged ground. Other charted netherworlds possess geographic features that rival or exceed the conflagration that is the Death's Sea, the most tranquil of forests, or landscapes roiling with tainted magical energy.

The age-old quest for knowledge and power draws many Name-givers to the netherworlds, for a journey to these places may yield invaluable experience and insight into astral space and

magic. Fortune draws others, who seek more direct access to True elements or hope to find unusual artifacts. And a few brave souls roam the netherworlds in search of Horrors to destroy.

The following sections describe gateways to the netherworlds and four netherworlds known to astral travelers. These netherworld descriptions illustrate only a few of the possible types of netherworlds characters can explore. Use them as models when creating your own netherworlds.

Gateways to the Netherworlds

Like the physical world of **Earthdawn**, each of the netherworlds creates an imprint in astral space. To travel to a netherworld, an adept must first locate the astral imprint of the netherworld. To locate a netherworld's astral imprint, an adept must locate the gateway that connects the netherworld's imprint with that of the physical world.

Most often, gateways to the netherworlds appear as portals much like those established by the Spirit Portal spell. Like much of astral space and its inhabitants, the appearances, locations and workings of these gateways follow no rhyme or reason. One gateway might appear as a doorway, while another might take the form of the mouth of a Horror or other hideous creature—in which case an adept must be swallowed by the Horror or creature to pass through the gateway.

Most gateways can be opened only with the use of specific types of spells or with the help of spirits, or under unusual or extreme conditions. For example, a gateway to the netherworld known as Cadence (see below) might be accessible only when the moon is full and after an adept performs a ritual of some sort. The gamemaster should feel free to invent any type of requirements for accessing the netherworlds.

As an adept passes through a gateway, he enters the astral imprint of the netherworld. The adept may then pass from the netherworld's astral imprint to the netherworld itself using an appropriate ability or spell, such as a spirit's Astral Portal power. The adept may return to the physical world by simply reversing the process. Because the first step of that process is to locate the portal back into astral space, and because astral travelers may forget the location of a netherworld gateway or become lost in the netherworld itself, returning rarely proves easy. For these reasons, adepts often employ spirits as guides when journeying to the netherworlds, because a spirit can always locate a gateway that it has passed through without any test and without error. (Nethermancers and other astral explorers rely heavily on this little-known spirit ability.)

In some instances, the locations of netherworld gateways correspond to the astral locations of corrupted sites in the physical world, such as specific spots in the Badlands, deep within the Blood Wood, or other areas the Horrors overran. For example, in Haven, rumors abound of a gateway whose location corresponds to the exact astral location of the Map Wall. This gateway supposedly leads to one of the most dangerous and corrupt netherworlds—one that few Name-givers have seen and survived. Adepts seeking this gate in astral space would see the astral imprint of the Map Wall and the surrounding area, as well as the gateway directly in front of the wall.

Some scholars believe that other netherworld gateways exist in deep or high astral zones that correspond to physical areas beyond the reach of all but the most intrepid Name-givers. In fact, some believe the legendary airship *Earthdawn*, which disappeared just at the end of the Scourge, passed through such a gateway and became trapped in one of the netherworlds, where it remains today.

Sylvar

The netherworld known as Sylvar tends to draw only the most daring of astral explorers. Sylvar might once have been a beautiful place, but the depredations of the Horrors have left it a world of wind-blasted rock formations, scorched earth and poisoned waters. Though choked with the scent of ash, Sylvar's air remains breathable. The astral space adjacent to Sylvar is a Tainted region, and most of the gateways to Sylvar also lie in Tainted regions.

Only a few minor Horrors remain in Sylvar, apparently glorying in its devastation or guarding it for reasons unknown. Though these entities are dangerous, those adepts experienced enough to travel astrally can defeat them with relative ease.

Numerous deposits of rare minerals lie close to Sylvar's razed surface, a powerful incentive that attracts adepts searching for precious metals and True elements. Others visit Sylvar in search of clues to the nature of the Horrors.

During the Scourge, Sylvar suffered from the depredations of the Horrors in much the same way as Barsaive, which has led many magicians to speculate that valuable knowledge in the struggle against the remaining Horrors might be gained by studying that netherworld. Some adepts also believe that pattern items for one or more Named Horrors may remain on Sylvar—items that would be of great value to adventurers battling the Horrors in Barsaive.

Cadence

Cadence is perhaps the most chaotic of the netherworlds known to Barsaivians. This world consists of a string of pocket realities, each vastly different from the one before. As a result, an astral traveler in the Cadencian landscape can move from an area resembling the elemental plane of fire to a mountaintop retreat in a single step.

Because the landscape of Cadence offers such a variety of realities, many Nethermancers believe that Cadence may hold the key to better understanding the secrets of the netherworlds. As a result, Cadence is a common destination for experienced astral explorers, especially Nethermancers seeking information on cosmology and other dimensions (see the **Walkers In Shadow** chapter on p. 109 of the **Player's Compendium**). Learning this information, however, requires significant effort on the part of the adept.

To find a specific piece of information in Cadence, an adept enters the gateway to the netherworld. He will immediately find himself in a location that presents one or more challenges he must defeat. Once he defeats the required challenges, the adept will find himself transported back to the astral gateway to Cadence. Again he must enter the gateway, but this time he will find himself in another location with new challenges he must defeat. If he succeeds, he will again find himself at the netherworld's astral gateway. The adept must continue to repeat this process until he arrives in the location that contains the information he seeks.

The order in which the adept defeats each location's challenges, and the manner in which he does so, partially determines the next location into which he passes. If the adept leaves the netherworld and travels back to astral space before defeating a location's challenges, he loses all progress toward his final destination and must begin the process again. As a result of Cadence's strange geography, locating the answer to a quest may take days, even weeks.

Throne

Throne consists of nothing more than a palace and the grounds on which it sits. From atop the high wall surrounding the grounds, an adept can view an entire kingdom. However, any adept who ventures past the walls is simply thrown back into astral space with a violent shock. The palace and estates are filled with nobles, common officials, supplicants, assassins, advisors and military people of all types.

Throne can provide any knowledge an adept might seek—providing the adept is up to the task. Knowledge that cannot be found elsewhere can always be found in Throne. To pass through the gateway to Throne, however, an adept must know the nature of

the knowledge he seeks—an adept traveling to Throne to learn a Key Knowledge for an item must know the specific information he seeks: the item's Name, the Name of the person who created the item, the target of the item's Empowering Deed and so on.

Once in Throne, the visitor must accept a role in a "game." For example, an adept might find himself in a grand ballroom at a royal masquerade ball, in the middle of a series of battles on the palace grounds, or even thrust into a bizarre game of court intrigue in which he must use his charisma and leadership skills to win the palace throne by popular acclamation. By winning this game, he receives the knowledge he seeks. As suggested by the examples, succeeding will be no easy task, and the adept will probably have to unseat several other astral travelers attempting the same feat to gain the information they seek.

An adept may visit Throne repeatedly, though the specifics of the game he must play during each visit will change and always demand a new solution. As part of this netherworld's challenge, locating the gateway to Throne becomes more difficult each time an adept attempts to do so, as does winning the game.

Tekk'sint

Very few adepts who set out to find Tekk'sint return, for the high magic levels make this a veritable Horror haven. In this netherworld, various types of Horrors exist as the dominant life form and live according to the laws of survival of the fittest. The strongest mark large areas as their own; those who fail to submit to their dominance are simply devoured.

The astral space that corresponds to this netherworld is a Corrupt region, and all gateways to Tekk'sint lie in Corrupt regions. These conditions make Tekk'sint one of the most inaccessible of the charted netherworlds, though particularly skilled adepts travel here to hone those talents most suited for killing Horrors.

The Elemental Planes

Each of the elemental planes embodies a single element in its purest form: fire, water, air, earth and wood. Despite the obvious hazards of going to a place consisting of nothing but a single element, adepts can and do travel to the elemental planes, usually in an attempt to harvest True elements or contact elemental spirits. Though conditions in the elemental planes make it extremely dangerous for adepts to linger there more than a few minutes, attempts to gather True elements by traveling to the elemental planes generally yield more, and more potent kernels than any other method of gathering True elements.

Areas of the physical world that possess features similar to the elemental plane often offer access of a sort to the elemental planes. Though too small for an astrally traveling adept to pass through, these fissures between the physical world and the elemental plane allow the most potent kernels of True elements to escape into the physical world. One such crack connecting the physical world to the elemental Plane of Fire exists near the center of the Death's Sea.

Adepts can reach the elemental planes through astral space. Unlike the netherworlds, however, the elemental planes have no astral imprint: an adept who enters a portal in order to reach one of the elemental planes leaves the physical world, takes on astral form, and steps directly into the elemental plane. Generally speaking, the nature of magic should make it possible for adepts to protect their astral forms in the elemental planes through the use of magical items, spells and talents. Players and gamemasters should work together to determine how such protection can be fashioned in their game.

Though the elemental planes show no physical signs of damage from the Horrors, the fact that some astral gateways to the elemental planes lie in Tainted or Corrupt astral space implies that those entities affected the elemental planes during the Scourge. Exactly why this is so remains a mystery to most magicians, but some Elementalists believe the close link between the physical world and the elemental planes, and the wide variety of the powers and natures of the Horrors, may explain how this was possible.

The Plane of Air

The elemental plane of True air is devoid of any trace of other True elements. The buoyancy of True air supports any traveler to the Plane of Air. All travelers to this plane may also breathe True air regardless of their physical nature. Adepts often become giddy when breathing the pure element, however, and doing so for more than a few minutes without taking suitable precautions may render the adept's lungs incapable of breathing normal air again.

The Horrors apparently found little they could corrupt in this plane; astral gateways to the Plane of Air are usually located within Safe or Open regions.

The Plane of Earth

Of all the elemental planes, the plane of True earth draws more adepts than any other. Numerous pockets of True air and True water exist in this plane, but passing between them is impossible for any being unable to move through solid earth. Adepts who make the journey to contact elemental spirits and who survive the plane's harsh conditions will find the spirits that inhabit the Plane of Earth to be quite cooperative.

Of all the elemental planes, the Plane of Earth suffered the most during the Scourge, and nearly all its gateways appear in Tainted or Corrupt regions of astral space.

The Plane of Fire

The Plane of Fire is the most hostile of the elemental planes. Most everything that enters this plane—be it Name-giver, spirit (save for fire spirits), even a small amount of True water—is immediately consumed by the True fire of the plane. Any character foolish enough to enter the Plane of Fire would be incinerated almost instantly, though some powers and spells may grant protection from the plane's dangers for brief periods of time.

The plane is home to several Horrors that apparently relish the painful burning sensation of its True fire. Other Horrors find pleasure in transporting hapless adepts to the Plane of Fire and feeding off the brief moment of terrible anguish and pain these Name-givers suffer before dying.

Gateways to the Plane of Fire are generally found in Open regions, though occasionally they are located in Tainted astral space.

The Plane of Water

As with any underwater travel, moving through the Plane of Water offers many challenges, not the least of which is breathing. The Gills spell (see the **Elementalism Spells** chapter on p. 298 of the **Player's Compendium**) can be used to stay alive in this elemental plane, but only for short periods of time—True water does not offer a great deal of oxygen to extract. Bubbles of True air large enough to sustain a single Name-giver, probably created by kernels of True fire colliding with the True water, occasionally drift through the Plane of Water, and while adepts fortunate enough to find one of these bubbles may stay in the elemental plane for several minutes, they often risk the same dangers as staying too long on the Plane of Air.

The Horrors apparently found no easy way to corrupt the Plane of Water; gateways to this plane are almost always located in Safe regions of astral space.

The Plane of Wood

No adept has ever traveled to the Plane of Wood and returned. Only the existence of True wood and wood and plant spirits supports the theory that this elemental plane exists.

GAMEMASTERING

Rules are meant to be broken, or at least twisted into a more pleasing shape. But the Passions protect their rules. Those you had best obey, lad, as courteously as you can.

• Garlthik One-Eye, Ork Thief •

The **gamemaster** determines how the rules of the game work, and makes sure everyone follows the same ground rules and interpretations. Though not easy, the gamemaster's role can be the most enjoyable part of playing roleplaying games. The gamemaster also awards the characters Legend Points for successfully completing an adventure, rewarding the player for roleplaying and the character for meeting goals, acting skillfully, and surviving.

The information in this chapter mostly benefits the gamemaster, but players may find it interesting as well. After playing a game for a while, the gamemaster and another player may want to trade places; the gamemaster becomes a player and creates his own character, and the player takes on the responsibilities of the gamemaster.

But before we delve into the down-and-dirty methods and tactics for gamemastering **Earthdawn**, we would like to point out a few things to keep in mind while running **Earthdawn**, or any roleplaying game for that matter. Remembering these few ideas may make running the game a whole lot easier. As with all the rules in this book and the **Player's Compendium**, treat the following as a guideline.

GROUND RULES

All roleplaying games have rules. Without them, the gamemaster would have a difficult time figuring out whether or not a character succeeds at an action and determining the outcome of a multitude of other events and situations. In addition to the rules specific to each different game, all roleplaying games share the following ground rules.

GAMEMASTER'S AUTHORITY

The gamemaster is the final authority. He accepted the responsibility for running the game, and therefore has the right to make the final decisions about what works and what doesn't. We guarantee that during the course of a game, the players will disagree with a decision made by the gamemaster. Don't worry about it. If the players are uncomfortable with a decision, discuss it after the game session ends, or before the next game session. Stopping in the middle of a game to discuss the rules interrupts the flow of the action and makes it difficult to resume play at the same level. It also makes more sense to discuss rules disagreements after everyone has had a chance to calm down—explaining how the device that killed a character works may not make much of an impression on a player who just lost Barsaive's most legendary obsidiman Illusionist.

To effectively shoulder his responsibilities, the gamemaster must keep track of what happens during the game. If the gamemaster does not know that a character is taking an action, he may decide that that action didn't happen. For example, if a character wants to visit the marketplace to purchase new equipment, the player must tell the gamemaster what his character intends to do. He cannot simply say, "*I went to the marketplace and bought some new equipment.*" The gamemaster may simply reply, "*No, you didn't,*" and his decision stands whether the player likes it or not. Keep in mind that the gamemaster's authority does not exist to allow the gamemaster to micromanage each player's character, or to ignore actions that throw off his plans. It simply prompts players to inform the gamemaster of any and all actions they want their characters to take. After all, the gamemaster cannot keep track of events unless he knows they are occurring.

MAKE IT FUN

Roleplaying games are first and foremost a form of entertainment. Think about it. Why do you play roleplaying games? To get together with some friends and have a good time. But it's easy, in the heat of the moment, to forget that you are playing the game to enjoy yourself. Some players pout when the adventure doesn't go the way they want it to. Some players get mad when their characters are injured or killed.

If at some point you discover that the group is no longer having fun playing **Earthdawn** (we hope this never happens), then stop. Talk it over with the rest of the players, and try to figure out why you are no longer enjoying yourselves. Maybe you just need a break. There's no harm in stopping a game session early to go out for pizza. Or maybe you're tired of gamemastering, and want to try playing instead. As well as giving another player the chance to be the gamemaster, this gives you a chance to learn what it's like on the other side of the gamemaster screen.

ON THE NATURE OF RULES

The world of **Earthdawn** is a fictional world—and the rules and mechanics presented reflect that fictional universe. The mechanics for doing things in **Earthdawn** are abstract guidelines for all of a character's actions, including combat, magic, and even social interactions. While we took real world concepts and abstracted them into game mechanics, the rules of a game like this cannot take into account all conditions or factors that constitute a given situation. In some cases this means certain game mechanics are there to make the game fun and entertaining rather than to reflect how things would work in reality—and in all cases, the rules have to abstract things we take for granted in daily life.

At the same time, we guarantee that two people playing **Earthdawn**, whether player or gamemaster, will read the same rule in this book and interpret it two different ways. For example, a player might declare that his character intends to resolve a situation using a talent that you, the gamemaster, consider inappropriate to the task at hand. You reread the talent description, and tell the player, "*The description doesn't say that you can do that with this talent.*" The player may retort, "*Well, it doesn't say I can't.*" Who's right?

Hundreds of individual abilities create a lot of rules to keep track of, and so questions of interpretation will arise. In most cases, the gamemaster decides how the rule works. As a rule of thumb, the **Earthdawn** rules describe what your character can do, rather than what he cannot, and so in the example above, the gamemaster's interpretation of the rule would be correct. While we've tried to deal individually with most of the rules that we feel may pose problems, we cannot anticipate every possible question. We recommend resolving disputes over rule interpretations as they arise, on a case-by-case basis. Because of the vast array of possibilities presented in these rules, no single rule of thumb covers everything.

Changing the Rules

As the gamemaster, you are in control. If a particular game mechanic doesn't fit your style of play or doesn't make sense to you, feel free to come up with something else you think works better. The rules of the **Earthdawn** game are there to help tell good stories—when the rules get in the way of telling the story, ignore them. Getting bogged down in rules disputes is counter-productive—it is always important to keep the plot moving, so be encouraged to improvise things on the spot.

If you create a new rule to resolve a specific situation that arises during a game, decide later whether or not you want to keep using it. You might decide to make it a "house rule" that will always apply in the future, or a one-shot solution that only applies in a similar situation. As with disputes over rules or decisions, wait until the game session ends to talk about the new rule: the middle of an adventure is no place to discuss the fine points of game mechanics. Gamemasters and players should play by the rules, so that everyone works with the same set of assumptions; but in case you change rules, make sure everyone knows the new version.

When Not To Use The Dice

Action Tests should only be required when the situation demands it. Encourage your players to roleplay a situation instead of rolling the dice to randomly determine the outcome of their attempts. More often than not, the gamemaster can tell what the outcome of a given situation is. If it isn't important to the story, don't even bother to make a test. In these situations, the gamemaster can simply provide a description of the outcome of a character's action—just go for the most dramatic or most amusing result and move on.

Play Fair

Needless to say, everyone playing the game should play fair. Players should be honest (and good-natured) about lousy dice rolls, and admit it when a character falls unconscious. Cheating at a roleplaying game is like cheating at solitaire. Any victory won by cheating is an empty one. The gamemaster is the only one allowed to ignore his own die rolls, but only when the rules get in the way of fun (see **Death and Earthdawn**, p. 84, for some additional advice).

Always remember that the players and gamemasters know far more about what is happening than the characters they play. A player may learn how his character should behave in Throal to avoid getting into trouble, or may develop more effective combat tactics against specific creatures. However, his character may not be privy to this information, and during the game the player should avoid having his character take actions based on information the character would not actually know. Likewise, the gamemaster knows the player characters' skills, weapons, spells, and so on, but the band of ork scorchers waiting in ambush on the edge of the forest should not.

Allowing gamemaster characters to respond to the player characters and make plans based on the gamemaster's knowledge is unfair to players, and makes for a frustrating game.

Mistakes

Everyone makes mistakes—players and gamemasters both. As you play **Earthdawn**, you may misinterpret how we intended some of the rules to work. By using the rules, playing the game, and comparing notes with other players and gamemasters, you may discover these mistakes. Don't agonize over goof-ups, but do explain the mistake to the players, especially if changing the use of a rule drastically affects the game universe or mechanics as your players know them.

Mistakes don't have to be a big deal. If you make a mistake, don't waste your time trying to figure out how it happened. Just admit the error, apologize to the players, and correct it if you can.

Customizing Earthdawn

Every **Earthdawn** game should be unique. The rules and information about the world that we publish should serve as a starting point: from there, it's up to you to present the world to your players in an interesting and appropriate way. A few suggestions for how to use the various aspects of the world of **Earthdawn** to make it your own appear below.

But before we begin, a word of warning: we have a firm idea of how the world of **Earthdawn** works and how it will develop, and we plan to publish **Earthdawn** material according to that vision. It may happen that material in one of our future products contradicts something you've developed on your own or changed in your game. You must decide how to resolve such contradictions, since we can only consider our version of the universe for purposes of continuity and other issues in our products. You can decide which ideas you like from your version and the published information and integrate both worlds into your next unique adventure or campaign. We don't think that is a problem, and neither should you. You can ignore what we've written or take it and change it to make it the game you want to play—the way the world of **Earthdawn** comes to life for you and your players is up to you. While we don't expect you to completely rewrite the rules, you are invited to tweak them here and there so that the game plays the way you like. **Earthdawn** will become your own world as a result.

Creatures and Horrors

If you don't like the creature or Horror descriptions we provide, feel free to change them and their game statistics. Keep in mind, however, that the Legend Point Awards for the creatures are calculated according to a system that takes into account their game statistics and abilities. If you change the statistics, review the ratio of the creature's power to the size of the Legend Point Award. See the **Creatures** chapter on p. 270 for details on how to do that.

The least risky thing to change about creatures and Horrors is their activity cycle and habitats. If it suits your adventure for a wormskull to be found in a wet, marshy swamp, then that's where it should be. We don't mind. Once again, what we publish should serve as the starting point; the base from which the rest of the game grows. It's up to you to aid that growth.

Treasure

Earthdawn encourages its gamemasters to customize magical treasures. Even the treasures provided in this book present only about half the information you need to use them in your adventure or campaign—you must supply the remainder of the information. This includes the specifics of Key Knowledges known as Research Knowledge. The open-ended system we created for magical treasure allows you to take what we provide and fill in the details in the way best suited to your group and adventure. In this area more than others, **Earthdawn** becomes your game. The **Magical Treasures** chapter (p. 161) covers all you need to know about developing and customizing magical treasure.

Therans

In our version of **Earthdawn**, the Theran Empire plays an important role in the setting of the game. They present a threat to the province of Barsaive, constantly plotting and working to

reclaim what was once theirs. They have a network of spies in place across Barsaive to implement their plans and work toward their ends, and they have landed the fortress of *Triumph* in the middle of the province as part of their plan.

If you don't like the idea of the Therans, and political intrigue and scheming is not the type of game you like to run, pretend the Therans don't exist or that they never returned after the first Theran War. Feel free to ignore them and scratch the fortress of *Triumph* off the map. On the other hand, you may want more information about the Therans now, because you want them to play a central role in your very first campaign. In that case, play up their role in Barsaive or raise the stakes for the players in your group. For example, if one of your players wants to play an obsidiman, make him part of the Ayodhya brotherhood. That way, he will have an active interest in working against the Therans.

Tone and Mood

As discussed in the **Adventures and Campaigns** chapter on p. 97, there are many ways to create the right mood for your Earthdawn adventures. But the game itself may be played using one of several different moods.

Earthdawn can be a game of heroic fantasy, where the characters strive to reclaim the world from the evils of the Horrors and the Therans that threaten it. **Earthdawn** can also be a world of discovery and wonder, where the characters are constantly surprised and amazed by each new discovery. This **Earthdawn** is full of unexplored lands and hidden secrets—some of which offer knowledge, others danger.

Earthdawn may also be a dark, injured world where the characters continually discover the scars the Horrors left on the world through their own efforts and through those corrupted by the Scourge. This dark mood of corruption can be easily related to a Horror theme, where people use whatever means necessary to protect themselves from the Horrors without regard for the consequences.

Choosing a specific mood and tone for your game is another way to make your **Earthdawn** unique.

Blood Magic

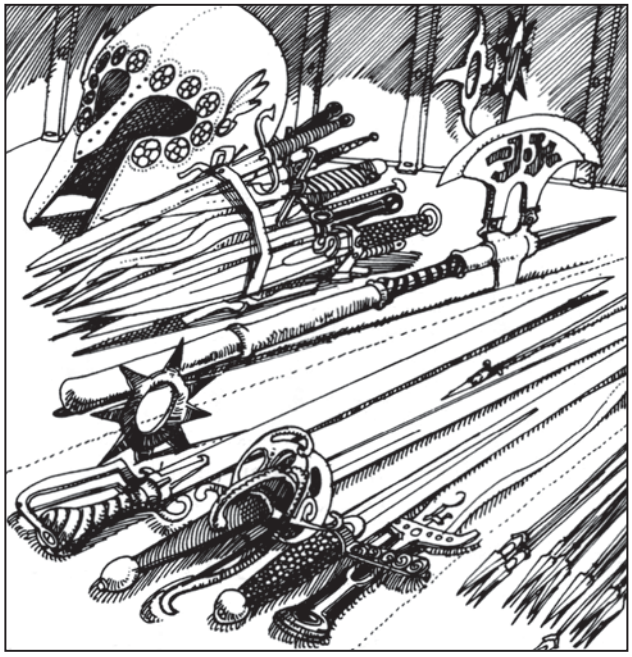
Blood magic is one of the most disturbing elements of the world of **Earthdawn.** How you decide to use it in your campaign is important. Blood magic is very powerful; the blood charms and blood oaths in the **Player's Compendium** represent powerful forces in the game. The gamemaster should also recognize that blood magic is one of the after-effects of the Scourge, and as such is inherently dangerous.

People turned to blood magic in an attempt to protect themselves from the Horrors before the Scourge. Though people have used it less in the years since the Scourge ended, blood magic still has a strong presence in Barsaive. Many people consider blood magic a constant reminder of the days of the Scourge, a time that most people would like to forget, and so the majority of the population shuns these magics. See the **Blood Magic** chapter on p. 136 for more information.

Goods and Services

The **Goods and Services** chapter on p. 432 of the **Player's Compendium** offered some guidelines for assigning Availability ratings to equipment and services in Barsaive. Availability provides another area in which you can customize your game. By making different goods and services more or less easy to obtain, you are altering the world to match your vision.

You may decide that blood charms are available, but only on the black market at outrageous prices. Perhaps you think that magical healing aids should be readily available nearly everywhere



in Barsaive. Certain weapons and armor may only be available in certain marketplaces, or be sold only by traveling peddlers. These and other choices further define your game and make it different from others.

Player Ideas

Your best source of ideas for customizing your **Earthdawn** game could be your players. We're confident that they will be able to tell you exactly what they want and don't want in their game, down to specific items, rules, talents, and spells. Asking for this input may result in more information than you actually wanted or needed, but will serve two purposes: it lets you know how they would like to see the game tailored, and lets you know what type of game they want to play. If you create a campaign with a dark, gritty mood, but they tell you they want heroic fantasy, you may want to reevaluate your approach.

If you give the players what they want, they're likely to stay with your game longer, and everyone will have a better time playing. However, you are the gamemaster, and, ultimately, you decide how your game will be played. We don't suggest that you alienate your players by insisting that everything be done your way, but they should also be willing to compromise and try something different. After all, that's why you picked up a new game in the first place—because it offered something different. But remember, having fun is the reason you chose to play **Earthdawn** in the first place.

Gamemastering Guidelines

The world of **Earthdawn** is an exciting place filled with dangers and plenty of opportunity for adventure. Whether fighting a Horror, running a campaign against the Therans, protecting a merchant caravan from marauding ork scorchers, or rescuing a t'skrang *lahala* from the clutches of a mad questor—the player characters are the heroes.

An **Earthdawn** game session should challenge the players' wits, and the gamemaster should reward good roleplaying. The following guidelines will help the gamemaster to run a challenging, exciting game.

BE AWARE

The gamemaster has a lot to keep in mind when running a game—the major events of an adventure or campaign, the flow of the story at hand, and all the little details that make the world of **Earthdawn** come alive for the players. He must listen to what the players say and keep track of both the player and gamemaster characters: their whereabouts, their plans, and so on. Organizing all this information is a good idea—always keep a pad handy for jotting down notes on these things as the adventure moves along.

As soon as a gamemaster assembles a group of players, he should determine their interests so that he can tailor adventures to appeal to them. A gamemaster who creates adventures solely for his own enjoyment may find that his adventures flop. But because the players probably know less about the game universe than the gamemaster, they may have only vague ideas about what they want to do—don't expect complexity and depth at first. Your carefully crafted adventure may lead the characters on a wild goose chase, but if they would rather go straight for the treasure than explore the world around them and they find a way to do so, you as the gamemaster must let them play it their way. Once they get a few adventures under their belts, and their characters' life stories take shape, the players will gradually develop better-defined goals and ideas. Rather than just looking for treasure, taking on a Horror, or dealing with the Blood Elves, they may want to hunt down a particular enemy, find a lost love, take revenge on a troll moot that did them dirty, or find a specific teacher or special piece of equipment. The gamemaster can and should build his players' ideas about and goals for their characters into major themes in his adventures.

Encourage the players to write out their characters' histories, including background on each character's family and friends. In addition to using other sources, the gamemaster can draw on those histories to develop adventures that get everyone involved.

Creating detailed notes of the events of each game session will help keep important information straight and consistent. Players might perceive the game differently than the gamemaster, and knowing their perspective and interests will help keep the adventure running. Keeping Adventure Logs is a great tool to recap past events at the start of a session (see the **Building your Legend** chapter on p. 419 of the **Player's Compendium**).

By tracking important events, you can also make both campaigns and adventures increasingly deep and complex. Because the events of your adventures can and will alter the game world, the more adventures your characters take part in, the more a part of the world they become. The world will be dynamic because of the characters in your group, not simply because we publish a certain sourcebook or adventure.

BE KNOWLEDGEABLE

The gamemaster must be familiar with the whole game. This does not mean memorizing the rulebooks word for word, but he should know them well enough to be able to find a particular rule quickly when needed. The gamemaster should also have a solid working knowledge of the basic game mechanics.

Keep a written outline of the adventure handy for quick reference. Experienced gamemasters usually improvise quite a bit as situations arise, but gamemasters working through their first adventures usually find it best to think the entire story through in advance and keep the plot relatively simple. This technique also helps gamemasters avoid those deadly lulls when the characters come face to face with a monstrous Horror, turn as one to look at the gamemaster to see what the creature does, and hear, *"Um—I just had it right here."*

Because anything can happen in a roleplaying game session, gamemasters may want to outline several possible outcomes for each adventure.

BE REALISTIC

Remember that the gamemaster characters are people, too, with their own fears, needs, hopes, and desires. By giving the gamemaster characters lives and personalities, the stories of the game have more depth and become more memorable for everyone involved.

In the same way, play creatures as real creatures. Many gamemasters ignore the fact that most animals do not kill for pleasure. They fight only when they need to eat, protect their young, or save their hides. Keep in mind that creatures usually live where they can find food and shelter—so your player characters shouldn't run into a flock of harpies unless there is a good reason for them to be there.

BE FLEXIBLE

Keep in mind that as the gamemaster, you have a unique responsibility to make the adventure exciting, keep the players involved and hold the story on track. In describing the world of **Earthdawn**, try to answer all the players' questions about what the characters see, hear, touch, smell, and taste. If a player wants to do something not explicitly covered in the rules, don't refuse to allow it on principle. Don't state that they can't attempt a specific action—this will make the game less exciting. Instead, find a creative way to resolve the attempted action. Decide what talent, skill or Attribute applies to the situation and inform the player that his chances are good, indifferent, or terrible. Don't reveal the precise Difficulty Number, just hint at whether or not the intended action or move is possible and how tough it might be to pull off. This way, the players can set their characters' own limitations based on their experiences with past failures.

To keep the players connected to the action, ask *"What do you do?"* each time you describe a new scene to them. By describing what they want their characters to do, the players help tell the story and add to their own enjoyment. If the players wander from the story line, you can drop hints to nudge them back in the right direction. Keep it subtle, however. A good gamemaster guides the players, he does not tell them what to do. Generally, players forced into situations they are trying to avoid are likely to end up resenting the gamemaster for not letting them play out the adventure their way.

Players always have their own ideas to solve a given situation—and every once in a while, there will be one that wrecks your carefully laid-out plans. That is not necessarily a bad thing. If the player characters act in a way you didn't consider, go with the flow and see where it leads—the results can be very rewarding. Adjusting your plans to account for the players' unexpected actions not only lets the players tell the story, but also gives inspiration for future events and further plot lines. An average game session only lasts for a few hours—allowing you to adjust your adventure between sessions.

BE TOUGH, BUT KIND

Challenge the players. Give them obstacles and threats they can't defeat with one hand tied behind their backs. If the player characters haven't worked hard for their Legend Points, then they haven't earned them. For example, two orks armed with short swords would not be the only guards at a city's gate, and few Horrors retreat from battle after taking just a single Wound.

Once everyone becomes comfortable with the way the rules work, the gamemaster can fine-tune the "threat level" of an adventure to suit his particular group of players. On a really rough adventure, the player characters should succeed by the skin of their teeth, and may not achieve all their goals exactly as they intended. However, the gamemaster shouldn't make the adventure so tough that only one or two characters survive. The gamemaster needs to challenge the players, but not overwhelm them.

A gamemaster can kill off a character anytime. He can continue to throw enormous risks at the player characters until their luck runs out and they fail a test. But only cheap bullies do that. Gamemasters who measure their success in trashed characters soon find themselves without players. Better to be too easy on the characters than too rough.

As a failsafe option, when the player characters get in over their heads, remember that bad guys like to take prisoners. Prisoners can be made to talk. Prisoners make great hostages. Prisoners can also pay ransom to enrich their captors. Most important, prisoners may escape and live to fight another day. Fictional villains like to gloat, and they can act stupid; if villains were smart enough to kill off the heroes at the first opportunity, then every adventure movie ever made would end after the first ten minutes.

Death and Earthdawn

Death is a touchy subject in any roleplaying game. Nobody likes it when their favorite character pushes up daisies. In **Earthdawn**, flowers can spring up almost anytime and anyplace. Characters can die before they even figure out what is happening. Despite all the special rules designed to guard against dying, and despite the advantages of magic, player characters will die during an adventure.

If necessary, the gamemaster may cheat to keep characters alive. If the gamemaster believes that a character did everything right and the player just had bad luck rolling dice, the character need not die. Knock the character out! Break one of his limbs! Whatever! Don't let a well-developed character die just because the player rolled a 4 when the character needed a 5. The gamemaster can and should decide that such a character survives long enough to get medical aid.

The same goes for the best gamemaster characters. If a villain you spent hours designing gets hit by a lucky blow, bury the body under a collapsing building or make it suffer some other disaster that *"no one could possibly survive."* Then bring the villain back a few months later, ready to wreak revenge against the player characters. (Remember, if you didn't find the body, he isn't necessarily dead.)

Storytelling

Roleplaying games are a form of storytelling, the difference between a printed story and a roleplaying adventure being that in roleplaying, the whole group of players tells the story, not just the author.

For example, an author writing a story creates all the characters, the setting of the story, and the plot. He also writes all the characters' dialogue himself. The author knows the way the story will end, and the consequences of the story's final events. This style of storytelling could be called "independent storytelling."

Storytelling in a roleplaying adventure is very different. No one person creates every element of the story; instead, the players create the central characters of the story, while the gamemaster decides on the setting, creates the plot, and creates the secondary characters. Both the gamemaster and the players act out the character dialogue. This type of storytelling could be called "interactive storytelling." That is, the story unfolds through interaction between the players and the gamemaster.

This is not to say that no-one controls the story. The gamemaster must take charge, controlling the pacing of the story and determining who the players' characters meet. In order to do this successfully, the gamemaster must learn the finer points of storytelling, including creating a good plot, interesting gamemaster characters, and so on. As described above, a good adventure provides objectives, motivation, and opposition. A good gamemaster also fleshes out his adventures by adding color to the story (using theme, mood, and other elements mentioned above). The gamemaster can synthesize the story elements suggested in this section into storytelling by using roleplaying, pacing, secrecy, and drama.

Roleplaying

The gamemaster should try to roleplay each gamemaster character as fully as a player would roleplay his character. This can mean keeping track of a lot of characters, but the effort is worthwhile. Work up to fully realizing all your gamemaster characters by rounding out just the key characters in the story; for example, the village leader who asks the heroes to protect his village from the Horror that threatens it, or the Theran slaver who captures the characters and plans to sell them as slaves in Sky Point.

As soon as you feel comfortable roleplaying the major gamemaster characters, gradually expand your repertoire until you can roleplay all the gamemaster characters as individuals. Because you will almost certainly create too many characters to remember, keep notes about the gamemaster characters that will appear in the adventure. Usually a few lines on each, a description of their prominent personality traits or what they know about the adventure, is enough to jog your memory.

The gamemaster should also create well-rounded recurring gamemaster characters—those characters who appear more than once during a campaign. Recurring characters most often represent friendly or neutral characters like merchants or teachers, though enemies or villains may also make repeat appearances.

Pacing

If you have ever read a story that seemed to drag on with no clear end in sight, or one filled with non-stop action that barely gave you time to catch a breath, you have seen examples of various styles of pacing. You can use any of these styles or many others to pace your stories; the difficult part is judging the best pacing for each adventure and your group.

One way to pace your adventures is to follow your players' lead. In other words, match the pace of the story to the players' mood. Are they bored, or do they need a break in the action? For example, if the group is preparing to make a cross-Barsaive trek and you allow them to spend the first three hours of the game session buying supplies, the players may get restless waiting for something to happen. This is when you should pick up the pace. Invent a minor incident to distract the characters and serve as a transition to their next action. For example, a fight between two farmers would draw the characters out of the various shops they were visiting and into the street. The gamemaster could take that opportunity to announce that all purchases have been made and ask what the characters intend to do next.

At the other end of the scale, if your adventure feels like one big fight after another, the players may need a break in the action to let their characters heal some damage or plan their next action.

The pacing of an adventure can also be used to emphasize some of the other elements discussed above. For example, an adventure with a creepy, dark atmosphere works well if run at a slow, steady pace. An adventure whose theme is action or heroism works best when run at a quick and lively pace.

Secrecy

Many situations in an **Earthdawn** game benefit from a bit of secrecy. Sometimes simply announcing a Difficulty Number for a particular test tells the players an important piece of information that they shouldn't know. One way to avoid revealing the gamemaster's secrets in such a case is to have the player roll the appropriate dice for the test and announce the results. Without disclosing the Difficulty Number, the gamemaster then determines if the test is successful and describes what happens.

However, even asking a player to make a dice roll can give away information. For example, if the gamemaster only asks for a Perception Test when the characters are about to trigger a trap or ambush, the players will soon figure out that connection and will know what to expect the next time the gamemaster asks for the test. To keep the players guessing, it doesn't hurt to occasionally ask every player to roll dice for no reason at all: nod sagely at the results, or say *"Huh, I thought so."* A little secrecy can be a powerful tool for helping a gamemaster stay ahead of his players.

You can also keep the players guessing by avoiding too much detail in describing important people or things. A wealth of detail about an object, person, or place tips off the players that the gamemaster spent a lot of time designing him, her, or it, and may let them know what to watch for before the gamemaster wants them to know. For example, when the players meet three gamemaster characters, one of whom is the villain and the other two are just his goons, refrain from saying, "You meet three fighters from the troll clan. The one on the left is wearing expensive, well-made clothes and an opal ring on his left ring finger, and is carrying a large battle-axe. The other two? Oh, uh, they're obviously fighters, too." This kind of description immediately tells the characters to watch out for the troll on the left. Either describe all three in relative detail, not revealing which character to watch, or introduce all three as "troll fighters; you've seen one, you've seen them all," and let the players ask for more information.

DRAMA

Drama can be a very effective tool to bring your players into the world of **Earthdawn**. The stories told in roleplaying games tend to be dramatic. Usually somewhat short on humor (though not always), these tales tell of heroes and danger, the very stuff of drama (or even melodrama). Don't be afraid to describe scenes to your players dramatically, or to dramatize when roleplaying your gamemaster characters. When a character you control offers his help to someone in need, don't just say, *"I'll help."* Instead, have the character declaim, *"Fear not, for I shall aid you in this time of need."* It may sound corny, but dramatic roleplaying gives your characters personality.

Remember that as a gamemaster, one of your most important responsibilities is to entertain your players. After all, the first ground rule of roleplaying is to have fun. One way of accomplishing this is through drama. If all your characters sound the same, then the players will begin to think they are the same.

STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES

The main techniques we recommend for storytelling in **Earthdawn** are **dreams**, **foreshadowing**, and **the tale**. Most authors use these techniques to accomplish certain things when telling stories and, while common, they are difficult to use effectively, especially the first time. For example, if you try to foreshadow events in your adventure and discover that you've been too subtle, or given the story away, don't think that you've failed and refuse to try again. Try to figure out what didn't work and learn from that mistake. You'll be better prepared to try using that technique again in the future.

Dreams

The gamemaster can use dreams to give a character (and player) a hint about something that might occur during the coming adventure. Dreams are a classic storytelling technique, often used in television shows and movies. Dreams can be used as a form of foreshadowing (see below), or to give the characters insight into a current or upcoming situation. Dreams let the player (and character) know that an event or situation is important.

Exactly how you use the dream to present information is another matter. The dream's message may be obvious, such as an accurate enactment of an upcoming event in the adventure. A dream may send a more subtle message, providing obscure clues that hint vaguely at the true situation through a metaphor or by wrapping symbolism around an event in a character's life.

Foreshadowing

In foreshadowing, an event early in the story hints at a similar, more important event later on. For example, the heroes may enter a town at the beginning of an adventure and see a child who has trapped and is torturing a small animal. The child isn't particularly cruel, he just doesn't know any better. It may even occur to the characters that perhaps the child is imitating something he's seen or heard about, or is subconsciously acting out something his conscious mind has suppressed. That event can foreshadow the heart of the adventure, when the heroes discover that a Theran slaver recently raided the town and made off with a few of the townsfolk. When the heroes track down the Theran and break into his stronghold or ship, they find that he is torturing his captives for information about a nearby town. The encounter with the small child foreshadows the heroes discovering the slaver torturing his captives.

The Tale

The world of **Earthdawn** is rich in oral tradition. Many stories and legends were passed down through the generations when Barsaive hid within the kaers and citadels to escape the Scourge. A gamemaster character sharing a tale or story with the player characters is an effective way to involve the characters in the adventure and provide the background for the story at the same time. The tale could be the legend of a long-lost magical treasure, the story of a town ravaged by a Horror that has yet to be defeated, or any number of other stories. The tale is a convenient way to tailor an adventure to your group's interests and the player characters' lives.

The players and their characters can also use the tale. The world's strong oral tradition of tales and legends should encourage adventurers to share the stories of their adventures with the people they meet throughout Barsaive. Characters may tell their stories to prove their credentials, as payment for lodging, food, or other supplies or favors, or simply to entertain the locals. And of course, the more people who know of them, the higher their Legendary Status.

Players may prefer to simply say "We tell our story while we're in town" or something to that effect. The players may also be willing to actually tell the story out loud with the drama appropriate to a heroic saga. As the gamemaster you know what happened in the last (and previous) adventures, but you may never have heard the players' version of events. If they will tell you (the gamemaster characters) the story as they remember it, you learn about events from their perspective and their view of the adventure's outcome (or the version they choose to tell strangers). This can be important if you want to build future adventures on the events of a past adventure. When the player characters tell their tale, you learn what the characters know (or remember) and can base your adventure on that information. What the player characters know may not represent the whole truth, of course.

In addition to using a gamemaster character's tale to draw the player characters into the adventure, you can base adventures on the player characters' own tale. For example, suppose you create an adventure in which the characters discover a smuggling ring in the city of Jerris. The smuggling ring is actually run by one of the city's rulers, but the players never discover that fact. They think they've found the ringleaders and smashed the smuggling operation, but the true powers behind the ring remain free to begin again. Later, you decide to create an adventure linked in some way to the smuggling adventure. The background for this adventure should not reveal the name of that city leader in connection with the ring; the characters didn't know about his involvement

before and so should not learn about it now. If the goal of this new adventure is to uncover the city leader's complicity in the smuggling ring, the player characters must discover it through the usual channels.

If the gamemaster keeps careful records of everything that happens during an adventure, he will probably know what information the characters have and what they don't. But by hearing the players tell the tale of the adventure, you'll find out how they remember the adventure, and that's what's important. This knowledge allows you to build on their perception of the world, which in turn helps you maintain the illusion that the world is real.

Game Aids

To make an adventure run smoothly, the gamemaster can use several strategies to keep track of story lines, gamemaster characters, combat, treasures, and the million and one other things that go into an adventure. The following describes the most useful aids in running a game.

Displays

Visual aids are the most useful game aid a gamemaster can have. They allow the players to see exactly where they are at any point during the adventure, and help settle the inevitable (and distracting) arguments about who stands where, who got hit by what spell or weapon, and so on. Draw the area or location of your adventure on a big pad of paper, or use any of the various plastic mats made for gaming that feature hexagonal or square grids. To show the placement of characters, enemies, creatures, and so on, use counters or metal miniatures. These add a lot of atmospheric detail and are small enough that you don't need an auditorium to display a battle.

Handouts

Players love handouts and props. When possible, try to create handouts for the players to look at: letters, puzzles, character drawings, and so on. While handouts are cool, they should be relevant to the game one way or the other. For example, the price list of a trading post increases the mood of the adventure only if the characters have to do business at the post. Additionally, handouts are perfect to hold hidden clues vital to the adventure. The trading posts price list could feature an item that you want the players to purchase, for instance, or contain a secret message intended for a "special" customer.

Maps

Maps are powerful tools. A map of the area where the adventure takes place, even just a simple sketch with shapes showing landmarks, is darn near essential to the smooth running of a game. Try using two maps: one to show the explored area that everyone knows (share this with the players) and another that shows the locations of all those secret places you want to send the characters (keep this one to yourself). As the group discovers these secret locations, they can add them to the "public knowledge" map.

Maps of smaller places in which certain events take place (buildings, neighborhoods, and so on) are also important. Draw them or borrow them from elsewhere. Don't be afraid to re-use them—just as in the real world, many buildings in **Earthdawn** have similar floor plans. Heck, if you've seen one cheap inn, you've seen them all.

Gamemaster Character Files

Complete dossiers on generic gamemaster characters and/or the major gamemaster characters in a specific adventure can also help the gamemaster a great deal. Use a card file, notebook, computer database or any other efficient system to store profiles for supporters, family members, lovers, people with special skills or talents (magicians, merchants, sages), important gamemaster characters in your game, or any other character likely to play recurring roles in adventures. Easy access to these characters lets the gamemaster throw his players plausible left curves and helps keep the game moving.

If published profiles keep showing up as characters or opponents again and again, players eventually become familiar enough with the bad guys' stats to defeat them regularly, so creating your own variations on such character profiles pays off for your game.

Assistants

Instead of keeping track of everything himself, the gamemaster can ask his players to assist him in running the game. For example, one of the players can keep track of everyone's Initiative during combat—the "Initiative Master" would be in charge to organize a combat round by asking for and announcing each player's (and the gamemaster's) turns and keep track of the duration of magical effects. Likewise, one or more players can take the role of non-vital gamemaster characters in scenes where their own characters aren't present. For example, if the group's Thief is caught by the town watch, the gamemaster can have the other players take the role of the watchmen—doing so involves everyone in the game and takes some of the pressure off the gamemaster (since he doesn't have to play all the gamemaster characters himself). Beside the change of pace, it adds flavor to the setting and is a lot of fun. On the same note, dead or unconscious player characters can take over creatures or characters of the opposition during combat.

Creating Difficulty Numbers

Difficulty Numbers usually derive from an opponent's characteristics or abilities. However, characters often want to perform actions or tasks that do not involve another being or use of magic or a skill. These situations offer no obvious values on which to base a Difficulty Number. This section explains how to create Difficulty Numbers for these situations.

Who Can Do It?

The key to the system for creating Difficulty Numbers described below is deciding what type of person would normally perform the activity being attempted. Might an ordinary person take this action? Would a low level of skill or talent suffice to accomplish it? Is it a task that only a highly skilled practitioner would dare try? This system sets up five levels of expertise by assigning Difficulty Number Ranges to five classes of characters: Ordinary, Novice, Journeyman, Warden, and Master. Note that, while these classes directly correlate to the status levels of adepts, they also apply to non-adepts.

An **Ordinary** character has no special skill or talent with which to perform the task.

A **Novice** character possesses some skill or talent particularly suited for the task, though not at an outstanding level. Novices include those characters with beginning and average skills (Rank 1–4) and adepts from First to Fourth Circle.

A **Journeyman** character is a seasoned veteran who knows the ropes and has climbed more than his share. Tasks that seem almost inconceivable for an Ordinary character, a Journeyman character considers merely difficult. The Journeyman category includes characters with above-average skills (Rank 5–8) and adepts from Fifth to Eighth Circle.

A **Warden** character enjoys a reputation as one of the best in his field, maybe even in the history of his field. His prowess has made him famous; others in his area of expertise speak with awe of his deeds. The Warden category includes characters with high-level skills (Rank 9–10) and adepts from Ninth to Twelfth Circle.

A **Master** character is legendary. Ordinary people know tales of his deeds, and tell them in awestruck whispers by the hearth fire. He is an example of the best that is, was, and ever will be. Tasks that he accomplishes with ease every day are the stuff of dreams to mundane characters. The Master category includes adepts from Thirteenth to Fifteenth Circle.

Task Difficulty

Once you choose the class of character that would normally perform a task, you decide how hard that task would be for the player character actually attempting it: Easy, Average, Hard, Very Hard, or Heroic. The Difficulty Number Table lists the five classes of characters in the Acting Character column and the 5 levels of Difficulty in the Difficulty Row across the top of the table. Each entry gives a range of Difficulty Numbers appropriate for a given class of character and Difficulty level.

A character makes his first visit to the city of Jerris. He wants to find a Weaponsmith, but decides to reduce the chances of anyone remembering him by not asking for directions. To determine the Difficulty Number of finding the Weaponsmith, the gamemaster reasons that many newcomers to Jerris need to purchase goods or services. Most of them would eventually find the appropriate shops, but would also ask directions. The gamemaster decides that finding the Weaponsmith is usually an average task for ordinary folks, made a hard task by refusing to ask directions. Consulting the Difficulty Number Table, the gamemaster reads across the Ordinary row to the Hard column, which gives a Difficulty Number range of 6–9.

Finding the Difficulty Number

From the appropriate range, choose the Difficulty Number that you think fits the situation best. If you are worried about making the task too difficult, choose the lower end of the range. Keep in mind that assigning a Difficulty Number is an art, not a science. Remember that your most important job is to come up with a reasonable number quickly. Getting a number wrong might create a small ripple in the flow of your game; agonizing over the correct number for too long can stop it cold. Don't agonize. Pick a number you feel is reasonable, explain your reasoning if appropriate, and have the players roll the dice. You have our official permission to make an occasional mistake.

Adjusting Difficulty Numbers

A gamemaster has three options for further adjusting the difficulty of a given task. He can use modifiers that affect a player's Action Test result (see **Bonuses and Penalties** in the **Game Concepts** chapter on p.18 of the **Player's Compendium**), adjust the Difficulty Number directly, or use a result level other than Average. The first two options allow the gamemaster to fine-tune the Difficulty Number, while modifying result levels provides a universal, but more coarse-grained, approach.

DIFFICULTY NUMBER TABLE

Acting Character	Easy	Average	Hard	Very Hard	Heroic
Ordinary	1–2	3–5	6–9	10–12	13–15
Novice	1–2	3–7	8–12	13–16	17–20
Journeyman	3–6	7–12	13–18	19–22	23–27
Warden	6–8	12–16	18–24	25–29	30–35
Master	8–11	17–20	25–28	29–34	35–41

Modifiers vs. Difficulty Numbers

There is a difference between applying modifiers to a test result and modifying the Difficulty Number directly, although it is a small one. But how do you decide what's best in a given situation? Our rule of thumb is: if the effect is **temporary**, modify the character's test result; if the effect is **permanent**, adjust the Difficulty Number.

For example, when a character is under pressure or making a decision to do something different, his test result should be modified accordingly. If the character is facing a task that will be the same working under any circumstances (such as finding a Weaponsmith without asking for directions in the example above), a higher Difficulty Number will do the trick.

Climbing the rigging of a ship sailing on the Aras Sea is an Average task for Novice class characters (Difficulty Number 3–7). Now consider the ship being caught in a fierce storm—blinding spray, howling winds, and crashing waves make being above deck a lot more dangerous. This situation is not permanent, so the gamemaster applies a –4 modifier to the test result of any character trying to get up the rigging. Using the rigging to swing across the deck and snatch the hat off a passenger's head is a different story. Ordinary and Novice characters shouldn't be capable of performing this task, but experienced sailors (Journeymen characters) should. Consulting the table, the gamemaster sees that an Average task for a Journeyman character has a Difficulty Number range of 7–12. The gamemaster decides that a Difficulty Number of 10 is appropriate for this particular task.

Result Levels

As a third option, the gamemaster can also use the Result Level Table to determine how difficult a task is to perform depending on the current conditions or situation. This works in any situation, but is much more coarse-grained.

To do this, the gamemaster determines the Difficulty Number of the task under normal (Average) circumstances using the methods described above, then determines the revised level of Difficulty he wishes to assign to the task (Easy, Hard, Very Hard, or Heroic). Once the gamemaster has chosen one of these levels of Difficulty, he finds that level on the Task Difficulty line (the top line of the expanded Result Level Table) and reads down the appropriate column until he reaches the row for the base Difficulty Number.

The numbers at the intersection point of the column and the row give the range of modified Difficulty Numbers appropriate for a given class of character and Difficulty level. As always, choose the Difficulty Number from the appropriate range that you think fits the situation best.

While trying to pick a door lock, Poorht the Thief triggers a trap which pours hot water down on him. Under normal circumstances, the Difficulty Number for picking a lock is 9. However, because of the extreme discomfort and distraction caused by picking a lock under a shower of hot water, the gamemaster decides that the task is Hard. Consulting the Result Level Table, the gamemaster finds 9 on the Difficulty Number column, then finds Hard on the Difficulty of Task line. Reading down and across, the gamemaster finds the modified Difficulty Number range (14–17). He decides to go with the lower end of the range—14 in this case.

RESULT LEVEL TABLE

Task Difficulty Result Level Difficulty Number	Very Easy Pathetic	Easy Poor	Average Average	Hard Good	Very Hard Excellent	Heroic Extraordinary
2	*	1	2–4	5–6	7–8	9+
3	*	1–2	3–5	6–7	8–9	10+
4	*	1–3	4–6	7–9	10–11	12+
5	*	1–4	5–8	9–10	11–13	14+
6	1	2–5	6–9	10–12	13–16	17+
7	1	2–6	7–11	12–14	15–18	19+
8	1–2	3–7	8–12	13–15	16–19	20+
9	1–3	4–8	9–13	14–17	18–21	22+
10	1–4	5–9	10–14	15–18	19–23	24+
11	1–4	5–10	11–16	17–20	21–24	25+
12	1–5	6–11	12–17	18–21	22–26	27+
13	1–5	6–12	13–19	20–23	24–28	29+
14	1–6	7–13	14–20	21–25	26–31	32+
15	1–7	8–14	15–21	22–26	27–32	33+
16	1–7	8–15	16–23	24–28	29–34	35+
17	1–8	9–16	17–24	25–29	30–36	37+
18	1–9	10–17	18–25	26–31	32–37	38+
19	1–10	11–18	19–26	27–32	33–38	39+
20	1–11	12–19	20–27	28–33	34–40	41+
21	1–12	13–20	21–28	29–34	35–41	42+
22	1–12	13–21	22–30	31–36	37–43	44+
23	1–13	14–22	23–31	32–37	38–44	45+
24	1–14	15–23	24–32	33–39	40–46	47+
25	1–15	16–24	25–33	34–40	41–47	48+
26	1–16	17–25	26–34	35–41	42–48	49+
27	1–17	18–26	27–35	36–42	43–50	51+
28	1–17	18–27	28–37	38–44	45–51	52+
29	1–18	19–28	29–38	39–45	46–53	54+
30	1–19	20–29	30–39	40–46	47–54	55+
31	1–20	21–30	31–40	41–47	48–55	56+
32	1–21	22–31	32–41	42–48	49–57	58+
33	1–22	23–32	33–42	43–50	51–58	59+
34	1–22	23–33	34–44	45–51	52–60	61+
35	1–23	24–34	35–45	46–52	53–61	62+
36	1–24	25–35	36–46	47–54	55–63	64+
37	1–25	26–36	37–47	48–55	56–64	65+
38	1–25	26–37	38–49	50–57	58–66	67+
39	1–26	27–38	39–50	51–58	59–67	68+
40	1–27	28–39	40–51	52–59	60–69	70+
41	1–28	29–40	41–52	53-60	61–70	71+
42	1–29	30–41	42–53	54-61	62–71	72+
43	1–30	31–42	43–54	55-63	64–72	73+
44	1–31	32–43	44–55	56-64	65–74	75+
45	1–31	32–44	45–57	58-66	67–76	77+
46	1–32	33–45	46–58	59-67	68–77	78+
47	1–33	34–46	47–59	60-68	69–78	79+
48	1–34	35–47	48–60	61-69	70–79	80+
49	1–35	36–48	49–61	62-70	71–80	81+
50	1–36	37–49	50–62	63-71	72–82	83+

* A Pathetic result only occurs on a roll of all ones on the Action Dice (see the **Game Concepts** chapter of the **Player's Compendium**).

Perception Tests

In **Earthdawn**, much of what happens during an adventure depends on what the player characters notice around them. The adventure may hinge on the Thief waiting to ambush the characters, a clue left behind by an assassin, or the scent of a creature or person.

The Difficulty Number for a Perception Test derives from the object of the test. For example, a Perception Test made to determine whether or not the characters see a Thief hiding in ambush, uses the Thief's Dexterity step as the Difficulty Number. The Difficulty Number for spotting traps is the Detection Difficulty of the trap in question.

The Perception Difficulty Table lists common situations requiring Perception Tests and the typical Difficulty Number for the different tests. The gamemaster should adjust these numbers to fit the situation at hand.

When to Make Perception Tests

When the gamemaster needs to know whether or not a character notices something, he asks the player to make a Perception Test for his character. Characters use their Perception step to make Perception Tests, unless they have a talent or skill appropriate for the task.

A group of adventurers is cautiously exploring the entrance of a kaer. The gamemaster wants to see if they notice the trap ahead in the corridor, so he asks each player to make a Perception Test for his character. Most of the characters use their Perception step, but the Thief wants to use his Detect Traps step instead. Because this talent is appropriate to the situation, the gamemaster agrees.

Sometimes the gamemaster may wish to make a Perception Test for a character, usually to keep the result hidden from the player. The gamemaster should keep a record of each character's Perception step handy to make this task easier (and less obvious).

Perception Test Result Levels

Perception Tests allow characters to notice things. The amount of information a Perception Test reveals depends on the result level of the test. An Average result simply tells the observing character that he notices something; a Good result means the character notices something, and has some idea of what it is; an Excellent result means the character knows what type of object or person he has noticed, and can guess at its exact nature; an Extraordinary result means the character knows precisely what he is looking at—until he can examine the object or meet the person, however, the character does not learn any more specific information about it.

Perception Test Modifiers

Of course, not all Perception Test Difficulty Numbers are as clear-cut as the examples given above show. The examples given assume that no distracting sights, sounds, or other environmental conditions make it more difficult for characters to make observations. In reality, many factors can affect a character's physical ability to see or the likelihood of their noticing any given person or object. Though characters can make Perception Tests for any of the five senses—sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste—environmental conditions can modify the Difficulty Number of any Perception Test. The Perception Modifiers Table suggests ways for gamemasters to take various environmental factors into account when players are making Perception Tests. Apply the suggested modifiers to the Difficulty Number of the test.

PERCEPTION DIFFICULTY TABLE

Situation	Typical Difficulty Number
Hidden target	Target's Dexterity step
Locate trap	Trap Detection Difficulty
Spot secret doors	8+
Notice clues	5+
Notice anything unusual about surroundings	6

PERCEPTION MODIFIERS TABLE

Environmental Condition	Difficulty Modifier
Sight:	
Dusk/dawn	+2
Darkness:*	
Partial	+1
Full	+2
Complete	+3
Light rain/precipitation	+1
Heavy rain/precipitation	+3
Target concealed:	
Partial	+2
Full	+4
Complete	+6
Target camouflaged, same color as surroundings	+3
Target color contrasts with surroundings	–3
Target uniquely shaped compared to surroundings	–2
Viewer knows what to look for, i.e., has seen specific object or character before	–2
Sound:	
Soft background noise	+1
People talking	+2
Boisterous talk/singing	+3
Loud noises/battle sounds:	
10–20 yards away	+1
21–50 yards away	+2
More than 50 yards away	+4
Sound lower in pitch than background noise	+2
Sound higher in pitch than background noise	–2
Sound has steady rhythm that contrasts with background noise	–2
Listener heard sound before and recognizes it	–2
Listener trying to identify the only audible sound	–3
Smell:	
Obvious odor	–2
Other odors present	+2
Touch:	
Extreme temperature (hot or cold)	–3
Perceiver is wearing gloves	+3
Taste:	
Taste is obvious	–3
Perceiver has a cold	+3
Astral Sensing (see the **Workings of Magic** chapter of the **Player's Compendium**)	Varies

* In addition to any Action Test penalties (see **Situation Modifiers** in the **Combat** chapter of the **Player's Compendium**).

GAMEMASTER CHARACTER ATTITUDES

All social interactions with gamemaster characters are based on the characters' attitudes toward the player characters. Their attitudes determine how difficult or easy it is for your character to influence a gamemaster character or otherwise achieve a goal requiring cooperation.

Like all characters, gamemaster characters have their own personalities. Each has a unique way of viewing the world and your character. The gamemaster may give each of his characters a detailed personality, or he may decide to accomplish the same ends using a kind of shorthand referred to as the character's Attitude. This attitude represents the gamemaster character's basic point of view about other characters and affects every type of interaction other than combat.

A gamemaster may assign one of seven basic attitudes to his characters: Awestruck, Loyal, Friendly, Neutral, Unfriendly, Hostile, and Enemy. Gamemaster characters, like most people, hold different attitudes toward different people. Your character need only be concerned with a gamemaster character's attitude toward him. A servant who is Loyal to the king, for example, might be Hostile to you. Player characters should not judge gamemaster characters' attitudes toward themselves by their attitudes toward other player or gamemaster characters.

AWESTRUCK

When a gamemaster character is **Awestruck** by your character, he thinks your character is the most wonderful person in the world. He may worship your character as a hero or fall head over heels in love with your character. An Awestruck gamemaster character willingly makes great sacrifices to please the object of his worship, and will take great risks, giving little or no thought to the consequences of his actions. He may even sacrifice his own life to save the life of your character.

LOYAL

A gamemaster character who is **Loyal** to your character firmly believes in your character's worth. A Loyal character might look up to you or devote himself to a cause you serve; harbor a strong, quiet love for your character; be a close friend or serve faithfully as a long-time employee. A Loyal character looks out for your character's best interests and expects to have his loyalty returned, but waits patiently even if this doesn't happen immediately.

A Loyal gamemaster character will take great risks for your character as long as he considers your character's actions and behavior worthy of his loyalty, and he will betray your character only under extreme duress.

FRIENDLY

A **Friendly** gamemaster character enjoys your character's companionship and values your character as a person. The Friendly attitude encompasses friendships formed through time, the relationships of employers and respected employees, and the solidarity of characters who share a common bond, such as a group of t'skrang meeting in an all-dwarf area of Throal. Friendly characters expect a mutually beneficial relationship over the short term as well as the long term.

A Friendly gamemaster character readily does small favors as long as those favors are returned. Your character may convince a Friendly character to take considerable risks for him, but only rarely and with much difficulty.

NEUTRAL

A **Neutral** gamemaster character takes a "live-and-let-live" attitude toward your character. He will not go out of his way to accommodate your character, but usually takes action if he sees someone violate another's right to live and let live. Neutral characters include neighbors and merchants—people who know your character but consider him no more than an acquaintance. A Neutral character might help a player character to fight an immediate, obvious injustice such as a mugging from a gang of thugs. He might not intervene, however, if he thinks your character started the fight. A Neutral character is more dispassionate than indifferent. If he sees values that he holds dear being trampled, he will involve himself in other people's affairs, but he will not go out of his way to make life better for others.

Neutral gamemaster characters can be convinced to do small favors for your character, but they will not take significant risks without the promise of equally significant rewards.

UNFRIENDLY

An **Unfriendly** character, on the other hand, is out for himself. He holds a "live-and-let-die" attitude toward your character. A greedy merchant, suspicious authorities, or a gamemaster character who supports a cause your character opposes would all be Unfriendly.

An Unfriendly character will take advantage of your character but without openly harming him, and will gladly deceive him. He may often act politely and feign friendliness to gain your character's trust. An Unfriendly character cannot be persuaded to do even a small favor for your character, unless he clearly gains from doing so. Convincing an Unfriendly character to take risks for your character will prove extremely difficult, and he will weasel out of any commitment at the first opportunity.

HOSTILE

A **Hostile** character is out for himself, and will not hesitate to harm your character if doing so will better his station in life. Hostile characters include thieves and other criminals and most

creatures. As with Unfriendly characters, Hostile characters may pretend friendliness to gain your character's trust in order to take advantage of him. However, most won't even bother with that pretence, openly and immediately attacking any character they judge incapable of defending himself. Your character will find it almost impossible to convince a Hostile character to take any positive action on his behalf, and convincing one to take significant risks is out of the question.

Enemy

An **Enemy** character harbors a personal vendetta against your character. The enemy may try to fake friendliness, but usually the best he can manage is a chilly politeness. An Enemy character takes great delight in contemplating and planning ways of harming your character and cannot be convinced to do your character any favors. An Enemy will mock any attempts at persuading him to take risks for your character.

Better and Worse Attitudes

Awestruck is the most favorable attitude a gamemaster character can have toward your character. Enemy is the least favorable. An attitude is "better" if it lies closer to Awestruck than the character's current attitude. An attitude is worse if it lies closer to Enemy. Thus, when the rules specify "an attitude of Unfriendly or better," this includes the Unfriendly, Neutral, Friendly, Loyal and Awestruck attitudes. An attitude of "Neutral or worse" includes Neutral, Unfriendly, Hostile and Enemy. An attitude that improves from Neutral to Friendly has improved by one degree. Some interactions, such as Favors, work only within a limited range of character attitudes, as explained below.

Social Interactions

This section provides rules on how player characters interact with gamemaster characters to accomplish ordinary tasks in the course of questing for a goal—in other words, those times a player character is not casting a spell or swinging a weapon. These social interactions are grouped into two general categories: roleplaying and making Interaction Tests.

Roleplaying

Roleplaying is perhaps the best way to resolve interactions with gamemaster characters. Players speak for their characters and describe their actions and reactions to the gamemaster characters. The gamemaster does the same for the gamemaster characters. The players and the gamemaster continue in this manner until they resolve the scene or reach an impasse. If you roleplay your way through the scene, congratulations—your character has succeeded at continuing his adventure through wit rather than dice rolls. If you reach an impasse, you can try another avenue.

When roleplaying an interaction, imagine yourself in the scene. What are your surroundings? Who are the gamemaster characters you are dealing with? What do they want, and can you give it to them and still get what you want? Draw on books and movies for inspiration—clever lines have saved the hides of many fictional heroes. And be daring—even the failure of a bold plan is more fun than a successful, but timid ploy.

Roleplay interactions between player and gamemaster characters whenever possible, because this frees characters from the random roll of the dice and involves the players in the game at the same time. Here's an example of play:

Charlie is playing an elven Archer named Delthrien, and Sam is playing a dwarf Sky Raider named Grolk.

The two characters wish to speak to a legendary Thief, Garlthik One-Eye, and have approached the entrance to Garlthik's stronghold in Kratas. Garlthik is not expecting them, and so the ten ork guards stationed at the gate have no instructions to allow them to pass. The two characters have a pendant that once belonged to Garlthik, however, and hope it will help them persuade the guards to let them pass.

In the exchange below, the players are speaking as their characters when noted.

***Gamemaster**: You round the corner, leaving the well-lit boulevard for Carrion Row. Three light crystals struggle to illuminate the street, the old enchantments flickering near the end of their usefulness. You see a group of orks stationed in front of a bronze-bound double door, and you know you've arrived at Garlthik's home.*

***Sam**: How many orks?*

***Gamemaster**: Nine or ten.*

***Sam**: Not a problem, we can take them.*

***Charlie**: And then what, chew on the door?*

***Charlie** [as Delthrien]: Evening to you, orks. We need to talk to Garlthik.*

***Gamemaster** [as ork guard]: Well, fancy that—an elf who can tell the time of day!*

***Sam**: Grolk is fingering the haft of his axe.*

***Gamemaster** [as second ork]: Yeah, and a dwarf with more beard than brains.*

***Sam**: That's it! Grolk is drawing his weapon.*

***Gamemaster**: The orks draw their weapons.*

***Charlie** [as Delthrien]: Hold, my friend. Don't give into the enchantment so easily.*

***Gamemaster** [as ork guard]: Huh?*

***Charlie**: I am taking out the pendant.*

***Charlie** [as Delthrien]: You see, Grolk here was put under an enchantment to return this pendant to Garlthik. The spell was none too subtle, and simply specified that he should let nothing stand in his way.*

***Sam**: Grolk gets a crazy gleam in his eye.*

***Sam** [as Grolk]: It sure looks like you men are in my way.*

***Charlie** [as Delthrien]: Please Grolk, not again. I just had this cloak cleaned. Now then, you look like resourceful orks, surely there is some way we can see Garlthik.*

***Gamemaster**: The orks cautiously start to surround the two of you. They are currently in a crescent formation with you at the center.*

Gamemaster *[as ork guard]: Face it dwarf, we'll get you before you get all of us.*

Charlie*: Delthrien carefully examines the fingernails of his right hand, as if he had nothing more important to do right then.*

Charlie *[as Delthrien]: That you died holding such a belief will be little comfort to your family and heirs, ork.*

Sam *[as Grolk]: I dunno, Delthrien, I say we find out.*

Sam*: Grolk raises the axe to its full height.*

Sam *[as Grolk]: Blood soon! Blood soon!*

Charlie*: Delthrien rolls his eyes, then sighs.*

Charlie *[as Delthrien]: Not again. Look ork, even if you live, you will spend the rest of the night hauling bodies and body parts to wherever it is you dispose of such things. What an unpleasant way to spend an evening! Not to mention Garlthik's wrath when he discovers that you turned away the pendant when it had arrived at his very gate.*

Sam *[as Grolk]: Bashings and smashings! Cuttings and severings!*

Gamemaster *[as ork guard]: All right, all right. Can you control him?*

Charlie *[as Delthrien]: Yes. For a time, anyway.*

Gamemaster *[as ork guard]: I will be right back. I need to check this with the head of the night watch.*

Charlie *[as Delthrien]: Be quick about it, then.*

Sam *[as Grolk]: Crushing, snapping, pulpings!*

Charlie *[as Delthrien]: Grolk, stop that!*

Sam *[as Grolk]: Rippings and stompings!*

Charlie *[as Delthrien]: Down Grolk!*

Sam *[as Grolk]: Grrrrrrr—*

Charlie *[as Delthrien]: Good Grolk.*

Gamemaster*: A few minutes pass. The remaining orks shift nervously from foot to foot, watching Grolk closely. The ork guard reappears.*

Gamemaster *[as ork guard]: The head watch says you can go in. Follow the green carpet to the staircase. Go up. Someone will meet you. Don't dawdle. You will be watched.*

Charlie *[as Delthrien]: Thank you. Most kind of you. Come along, Grolk.*

Sam*: Grolk is foaming slightly around the edges of his mouth. He keeps growling.*

Charlie *[as Delthrien]: And leave the orks with their parts intact.*

Sam *[as Grolk]: Whimper.*

The players gained entry into Garlthik's stronghold strictly by roleplaying. The players and the gamemaster created the scene by imagining the encounter from the viewpoints of their characters. Charlie's and Sam's characters wanted to see Garlthik. They might have been powerful enough to simply barge in, but killing the ork guards would almost certainly have angered Garlthik, making him very dangerous and difficult to deal with.

The gamemaster characters were concerned about angering their employer. By presenting the pendant, Delthrien demonstrated that Garlthik might have a reason to see them. The enchantment story was plausible, and the dwarf was acting more than a little strange. Though the orks would not simply allow the player characters to enter the hold, they were willing to check with a higher authority, rather than risk dying in a battle that Garlthik may not have wanted them to fight in the first place.

In the end, both groups got what they wanted, at least in the short run. This is the key to most roleplaying solutions: both sides have to gain something from an exchange. A player should try to figure out what a gamemaster character wants out of a situation, and manipulate the circumstances so that he can provide that and achieve his own goal at the same time.

INTERACTION TESTS

Even the most imaginative roleplaying sometimes ends in an impasse between player and gamemaster characters. To resolve such an impasse, a player character can use his Charisma step to make an **Interaction Test**. Five basic Interaction Tests can be resolved this way: Deceit, Insight, Intimidation, Making an Impression, and Favors. Most social interactions characters need to make in the **Earthdawn** game fall into one of these categories.

To resolve interactions, a character makes an Interaction Test against the target's Social Defense. The result level of the test determines the outcome, good or bad.

If a character has a talent or skill appropriate to a situation where interaction is required, he can make a Talent or Skill Test in place of the Interaction Test, otherwise he makes a Charisma Test. Many talents add bonuses to your character's Interaction Tests. When your character uses these talents when interacting with gamemaster characters, the rules given for the talent supersede the interaction rules detailed in this section.

Talents often provide better results than Interaction Tests, but have a limited range of applications when compared to the Interaction Test rules. For example, talents can rarely be used when requesting favors or using Intimidation to coerce a character. As a rule of thumb, the gamemaster should limit the use of talents to the applications described in the talent's description.

To find the minimum result levels required for each different type of Interaction Test, see the Interaction Success Table.

Deceit

Your character can attempt to convince another character of something that isn't true. This type of interaction is called **Deceit**. Deceit covers everything from the typical "little white lie" to the darkest moment of betrayal. Some types of Deceit are easier to accomplish than others. In order to deceive another target character, a character must speak to—and must be understood by—the character he is trying to deceive.

A Deceived character remains so until presented with facts or evidence that contradict the deception, which immediately ends the deception.

There are three different types of Deceit: Exaggeration, Fabrication, and Half-Truth.

Exaggeration: An Exaggeration is a stretching of the truth, perhaps changing details of a story to make it more impressive in some way. For example, telling your superior that you were ambushed by a dozen orks, rather than by the five who actually jumped you, would be an Exaggeration. Claiming that the orks were armed with fire swords, or misstating the size of a creature that got away—whether claiming it was larger or smaller than its actual size—would also be an Exaggeration. To make an Exaggeration, a character makes an Interaction Test against the target character's Social Defense. If the test is successful, the target believes the Exaggeration to be true.

Fabrication: A Fabrication is an outright lie cut from whole cloth. The story, or important parts of the story, have no basis in truth. Lies that contradict actual events are Fabrications. For example, reporting to your superior that no ambush attempt took place, even after dispatching the five orks who jumped you, would be a Fabrication. Saying you have no treasure map when you actually do, or making up stories about a lost city, would also count as Fabrications. To tell a Fabrication, a character makes an Interaction Test against the target character's Social Defense. An Average

INTERACTION SUCCESS TABLE	
Type of Interaction Test	**Result Level**
Deceit:	
Exaggeration	Average
Fabrication	Good
Half-Truth	Average
Insight:	
Detect basic emotions	Average
Detect deception	Good
Detect deception when target's features are obscured	Excellent
Intimidation (requires line of sight):	
Do nothing	Average
Take action	Good
Make an Impression:	
Improve target's attitude by one level	Average+
Worsen target's attitude by one level	Poor–
Ask for a Favor:	
Refer to the Favor Success Table	Varies

result causes the target to suspect the truth of the character's Fabrication—the character must come up with another good reason for his Fabrication to be believed to allow another Interaction Test to be made to convince the target character; a Good result means the target believes the Fabrication to be true.

Half-Truth: A Half-Truth reveals a sizable portion of the truth, while withholding at least one vital piece of information. A character telling a Half-Truth is speaking the truth, but in such as way as to mislead the listener. For example, telling someone you found more than 800 silver pieces when you actually found closer to 3,000 silver pieces would be a Half-Truth. Or telling authorities you saw nothing at the scene of a crime, when you heard the cries of the victim, would also be a Half-Truth. To tell a Half-Truth, a character makes an Interaction Test against the target character's Social Defense. If the test is successful, the target believes the Half-Truth to be true.

Insight

A character can attempt to determine the intentions of another character through a type of interaction called **Insight**. Insight gives the character information on what the target character is trying to accomplish in an interaction.

Basic Emotions: A character can use Insight to judge another target character's surface emotions or state of mind. Insight can allow a character to detect such emotions as anger, love, fear, lust, hunger, tranquility, or nervousness. To detect basic emotions, a character makes an Interaction Test against the target character's Social Defense. If the test is successful, the character successfully reads the target's feelings.

Detect Deception: Insight also allows the character to determine whether or not an opponent is trying to Deceive him (see **Deceit**, p. 92). To use Insight in this way, a character must observe the target character as he speaks. If the character cannot see the target character speaking, he cannot use Insight to detect the deception. To detect a deception, a character makes an Interaction Test against the target character's Social Defense. A Good result means the character detected the deception, seeing right through it. If the target character's features are obscured by a mask or helmet, an Excellent result is needed to detect the deception.

Intimidation

Player characters can also try to influence an interaction with another character by **Intimidation**. Generally, your character may only attempt Intimidation if the target character understands your character's speech. The gamemaster may allow non-verbal Intimidation in some cases.

Intimidation often creates resentment in the target character. A successful use of Intimidation against a target character makes all subsequent Favor attempts aimed at that same character at least one degree more difficult.

Intimidation works best against characters who have a reason to fear, and who hold Unfriendly or worse attitudes toward, your character. To use Intimidation, make an Interaction Test against the target character's Social Defense. The result level determines how successful the attempt is.

Stopping Actions: Your character can use Intimidation to order a character to refrain from performing an action, or do nothing. Examples of the first include orders such as "don't touch that," "stop dead in your tracks," or "leave her alone." An Average result on the Interaction Test makes a target character stop their action for one round. An Extraordinary result convinces the target character to refrain from a forbidden action as long as the intimidator is within sight. Your character cannot use Intimidation to make a target character stop an action he performs simply by existing. You cannot, for example, order a character to stop breathing.

Forcing Actions: Intimidation can also be used to force a character into taking an action, but the target character will not take an action he believes is more dangerous than resisting the Intimidation. A Good result on the Interaction Test will convince the target character to spill secrets, walk ahead in a corridor, or cast a spell. An intimidated character stops performing the requested action as soon as he is out of the intimidator's sight.

Making an Impression

Sometimes player characters want to impress gamemaster characters immediately upon meeting them. Player characters cannot simply impress anyone they choose to, however. For example, your character cannot impress characters who are already Awestruck, Loyal, or Enemies of your character.

When your character first meets another character, you must declare your intention to **Make an Impression** on the target character. To make an impression, make an Interaction Test against the target character's Social Defense. An Average result improves the character's Attitude by one degree—an Unfriendly character becomes Neutral, a Neutral character becomes Friendly, and so on. A Pathetic result worsens the character's Attitude by one degree—for example, an Unfriendly character becomes Hostile. The effects of Making an Impression last for one day.

Each time your character interacts with the impressed character in a Neutral, Unfriendly, or Hostile manner (determined by the gamemaster), the favorable impression may wear off. In this case, the impressed character makes a Willpower Test against your character's Social Defense. If the result level of the Willpower Test is equal to or greater than the result level of your Interaction Test, the impression fades. Any openly hostile act your character commits against the impressed character immediately erases the impression.

Delthrien Makes an Impression on an Unfriendly troll bruiser in a tavern. He gets a Good result on his Interaction Test, and the troll takes a Neutral attitude toward him. In an effort to trick the troll into an ambush, the elven Archer tries to talk him into going to another tavern. The troll makes a Willpower Test against Delthrien's Social Defense and gets a Good result. Because his result level matched Delthrien's, the troll's attitude reverts to Unfriendly.

Favors

Your character may to try to convince another character to take an action through logical argument, flattery, appeals to friendship, or "buttering up" the target character in other ways. As long as the target character understands your character's speech, your character may try to persuade him to do a **favor** for your character. In some cases the gamemaster may allow non-verbal attempts at such persuasion.

The target character's attitude can alter the result level required to persuade him to do a favor. This type of persuasion works best on characters who harbor a Neutral or better attitude toward your character. A character whose attitude is Unfriendly or worse can be persuaded to perform a favor only if he believes that doing so will benefit him.

Favors are grants of time, money, or resources that benefit your character, or actions performed on behalf of your character. The result level needed to gain a favor depends on the attitude of the gamemaster character from whom you request the boon. Consult the Favor Success Table to determine the result level required.

Small Favor: Your character can request small favors and large favors from other characters. Small favors include such things as holding a character's place in a queue, buying a round of drinks, or bringing water to a character's cell. As a rule of thumb, small favors cannot endanger a character or require more than 30 minutes of extra effort from him (as determined by the gamemaster). Small favors cannot cost a character more than 5 silver pieces, a few hours' earnings, or 1 percent of his cash on hand, whichever amount is largest. Characters holding an Unfriendly or better attitude toward your character can be persuaded to do small favors.

Large Favor: Large favors include giving loans (which your character must usually repay within three days), delivering a package across town into a questionable neighborhood, giving your character a place to stay for a few days, untying your character, and so on. As a rule of thumb, large favors cannot cost a character more than a day's earnings or 3 percent of his total cash savings. Loans provided as large favors cannot exceed a character's weekly earnings or 15 percent of his total savings. A large favor cannot require more than 8 hours of extra effort from a character, though it can pose physical, mental, or emotional risks. Keep in mind that only characters Loyal or Awestruck toward your character will agree to obviously dangerous favors.

Your character can persuade characters with a Friendly or better attitude toward him to do large or small favors over an extended period. For example, the tavern owner who always has your favorite ale on tap is doing you a small favor over time.

Friendly characters may let small favors go unreturned, but expect large favors to be repaid in kind. They expect your character to repay borrowed funds and items promptly, and will not extend more than one large favor until your character has done them a large favor in return.

Characters holding Loyal and Awestruck attitudes toward your character are more lenient in their accounting and will extend your character credit for two or even three large favors. They still expect favors in return, but will wait several months for repayment. Hostile or Enemy characters will do your character no favors unless prompted by their own ulterior motives.

FAVOR SUCCESS TABLE

Target Attitude	Small Favor	Large Favor
Awestruck	Poor	Average
Loyal	Average	Good
Friendly	Good	Excellent
Neutral	Excellent	Extraordinary
Unfriendly	Extraordinary	NA
Hostile	NA	NA
Enemy	NA	NA

Making Favor Tests

Except at the gamemaster's discretion, your character can request only one favor per day from a gamemaster character. To request a favor, the player character uses his Charisma step to make a Favor Test against the gamemaster character's Social Defense. The gamemaster character's attitude toward your character determines the result level required for success, as shown in the Favor Success Table. If the test fails, your character cannot repeat the request or ask that character for another favor for 24 hours.

Increasing the Likelihood of Favors

Your character can increase the likelihood of getting favors from a gamemaster character by "sweetening the deal": that is, adjusting your request for the favor or offering something in return. For example, you may offer to perform a small favor in exchange for a small favor, or a large favor for a large favor. If he accepts this deal, the gamemaster character must perform his favor first. Your character may make two consecutive Interaction Tests to persuade the gamemaster character to perform the favor.

Alternatively, you may propose the same "favor for favor" exchange, but have your character offer to perform a favor first. For the purposes of the Interaction Tests in this instance, the gamemaster character's attitude toward your character improves one degree. For example, an Unfriendly guard becomes Neutral when you try to persuade him to do you a small favor, if you do him a small favor first. As noted above, in this case your character can make two consecutive Interaction Tests to try to persuade the gamemaster character.

Your character may also offer to perform a large favor in return for a small favor, with the gamemaster character performing his favor first. For purposes of the Interaction Test in this case, the gamemaster character's attitude improves two degrees.

Finally, your character may offer to perform a large favor in return for a small favor at a later date. Your character may make two consecutive Interaction Tests to persuade the gamemaster character, whose attitude improves two degrees for the purposes of the tests.

Awarding Legend Points

Players use Legend Points to improve their characters by increasing Attribute values, adding ranks to talents, buying skills, advancing to a higher Circle, and so on. They earn Legend Points according to a system called Legend Awards.

When designing an adventure, the gamemaster calculates the potential number of Legend Points each character may earn for the whole adventure by taking into account four elements: completing the game session goal, defeating creatures or opponents, acquiring treasure, and completing the overall adventure goal.

Depending on how well the characters fulfill these elements, characters earn Legend Awards, a number of Legend Points determined by the character's Circle. Characters also earn Legend Awards for creative roleplaying and heroics, but the gamemaster determines these awards at the end of each session, rather than when designing the adventure. (See **Assigning Legend Awards**, p. 95).

The gamemaster awards Legend Points at the end of each game session, determining how much of the calculated Legend Award each player character has actually earned based on the

events that took place during the session and how the characters handled those events.

ASSIGNING LEGEND AWARDS

The Legend Award Table provides the gamemaster with a standard for determining the Legend Point value of the four elements mentioned above, and for evaluating characters' creative roleplaying and heroics during the session in terms of Legend Awards. Guidelines for determining specific Legend Award numbers for any of these elements appear in the descriptions of those elements following.

Based on a character's Circle, a single Legend Award should award a number of Legend Points that falls within the range given in the **Legend Award** column. For example, a Second Circle character should always receive from 100 to 300 Legend Points per Legend Award.

The total number of Legend Points received from all Legend Awards in any one game session should not exceed the upper limit given in the **Total Legend Points Awarded Per Session** column.

For each game session, the gamemaster should design a Legend Award for each character for each of the following elements:

❶ Completing Session Goals

❷ Defeating Opponents

❸ Gathering Magical Treasure

❹ Individual Deeds

❺ Roleplaying

Additionally, on completion of the adventure, each character gets a Legend Award for the following:

❻ Achieving the Adventure Goal

Completing Session Goals

Most adventures last for more than one game session. A session goal functions like a chapter break in a book; the story has not been resolved, but the current action reaches a conclusion. Session goals may be simple objectives such as the following:

- Reach Parlainth
- Contact the Guild agent in Bartertown
- Win the airship race
- Eat supper with the Prince without committing a serious social blunder.

Sessions may also be cliff-hanger ending points, rather than objectives. Some examples include:

- Discovering the secret door leading down into the labyrinth.
- Flying the airship into the heart of a storm to shake off Theran pursuit.
- Uncovering the identity of the traitor in the ork scorcher tribe.

LEGEND AWARD TABLE

Current Circle	Legend Award	Total Legend Points Awarded Per Session
1	25–75 (50)	100–300 (200)
2	100–300 (200)	400–1,200 (800)
3	200–500 (350)	800–2,000 (1,400)
4	250–700 (475)	1,000–2,800 (1,900)
5	500–1,500 (1,000)	2,000–6,000 (4,000)
6	900–2,700 (1,800)	3,600–10,800 (7,200)
7	1,650–4,900 (3,275)	6,600–19,600 (13,100)
8	2,350–7,000 (4,675)	9,400–28,000 (18,700)
9	4,800–14,200 (9,500)	19,200–56,800 (38,000)
10	8,600–25,800 (17,250)	34,400–103,200 (68,800)
11	9,000–26,900 (17,950)	36,000–107,600 (71,800)
12	9,400–28,150 (18,775)	37,600–112,600 (75,100)
13	15,200–45,500 (30,350)	60,800–182,000 (121,400)
14	21,800–65,500 (43,650)	87,200–262,000 (174,600)
15	25,600–77,000 (51,300)	102,400–308,000 (205,200)

* The Average Award for each Circle is shown in parentheses.

When the characters reach a session goal, the session ends. If this leaves your players clamoring for more, then you have them right where you want them—but not until next session.

Defeating Opponents

Characters receive Legend Points for defeating creatures and opponents—defeating them does not necessarily mean killing them, however. If the characters defeat creatures that you have set up as their opposition, award Legend Points for defeating them. If the player characters engage in wanton butchery of creatures or gamemaster characters never intended as opponents, you should cheerfully ignore their indignant pleas for Legend Points.

The number of Legend Points that each creature is worth appears in each creature's description. The gamemaster should distribute Legend Points earned by defeating creatures and opponents evenly between all player characters, dividing the number of Creature Legend Points by the number of characters in the party. At the gamemaster's discretion, if one or two characters in the party contribute little or nothing to the defeat of the creatures or opponents, the gamemaster may divide the total Creature Legend Award by the number of characters who actually did the work.

In an exception to the rule of thumb above, if a player character defeats a creature in single combat—with no help whatsoever from any other character—the character who defeated the creature receives all the Legend Points for that creature.

Each session should provide about a Legend Award's worth of Creature Legend Points per character. If all player characters in a group hold the same Circle, simply choose an appropriate Legend Award from the range given for that Circle in the Legend Award Table. If the characters hold different Circles, determine the average Circle number of the players and choose an appropriate Legend Award for that Circle. For example, if a group of four player characters are all Fifth Circle, the gamemaster consults the table and decides that the Legend Award for creatures will be 1,000 points per character. This means the gamemaster should include creatures worth a total of 4,000 Legend Points (1,000 × 4), for each session.

The gamemaster should feel free to adjust this formula to suit his game; the ranges given on the Legend Award Table provide a benchmark, with the average award shown in parentheses.

Gathering Magical Treasure

Everything your player characters carry away from defeated creatures or other opponents is loot. However, treasure is the only kind of loot worth Legend Points. Characters acquire treasure through heroic acts; characters who claim legendary treasures soon become legends themselves. Treasure is represented by goodies that people expect heroes to acquire: bits of nasty monsters, forgotten items from legend, magical weapons or talismans, gems snatched from the hoard of a Horror.

Every sentient inhabitant of the world of **Earthdawn** recognizes the presence and power of magic, and regards those who wield magic weapons and talismans with the awe and wonder befitting a living legend. Characters do not acquire treasure by lopping off an ork mercenary's head for his pay. That isn't heroic, so that silver doesn't count as treasure—it's plain old loot, and carries no Legend Points.

An adventure should provide a payoff of one Legend Award's worth of Treasure Legend Points per character, and should include the treasures that many creatures possess. When you are deciding what creatures you want the characters to meet, remember to note any treasure those creatures carry and include it in your total Treasure Legend Points. Creature treasure is listed in each creature's description.

Individual Deeds

Players sometimes play their characters with particular zest, entertaining the group with their antics and coming up with ingenious ways out of difficult situations. If you feel a player contributed something special to the game session, award his character a number of Legend Points up to one half of a Legend Award for that contribution.

Individual deeds are the heroic actions of high adventure; running underground rapids rather than taking the roadway, or holding off orks by setting a bridge on fire and then fighting the enemy on the burning bridge until the last possible moment. This is the stuff adrenaline rushes are made of. The gamemaster may build opportunities for heroics into the adventure, or the players may discover them on their own. Any character who throws himself into heroics should earn up to one half of a Legend Award.

Roleplaying

Roleplaying includes coming up with creative ideas, plans, or tactics for the group. Players who deliver a magnificent line at the right moment, solve the puzzle, or discover a particularly twisted use for a spell would all qualify for this bonus.

Gamemasters can also give characters bonus Legend Awards for sticking to their character's personality traits even when doing so puts the character at risk. A player who keeps his character true to himself only when it is safe to do so is missing part of the point of roleplaying.

Award characters up to a full Legend Award for a convincing roleplaying performance.

Achieving the Adventure Goal

The gamemaster should design adventures around goals toward which the player characters strive, and each game session should bring them closer to achieving these ends. The overall adventure goal could be retrieving a specific treasure, producing evidence of treachery, discovering the identity of a murderer, or convincing an ork cavalry tribe to work for your village rather than for a rival. Achieving the goal is the climax of the adventure.

Give your players the Adventure Legend Award at the end of the session in which the characters accomplish the adventure goal. Do not award a Session Legend Award in the same session in which you bestow the Adventure Legend Award; the adventure goal becomes the goal for that game session. Because most session goals represent steps on the way toward fulfilling the larger adventure goal, accomplishing the adventure goal earns the characters 2 Legend Awards.

Total Legend Awards

The gamemaster should give Legend Awards for reaching session goals, defeating creatures, obtaining treasures, and creative roleplaying/heroics on a session-by-session basis. Give the adventure goal Legend Award only at the end of the story; don't give partial Awards for approaching the adventure goal. This "lump sum" Legend Award emphasizes the story's climax; the big finale gets the big award.

Each character should earn between 2 and 5 Legend Awards per game session. Characters can only earn the maximum of 6 Legend Awards in the session in which they accomplish the adventure goal, and then only if all of the characters play well. On average, players should earn 3 or 4 Legend Awards per session, including one for achieving the session goal, one for defeating creatures and opponents, one for acquiring treasure, and one for character heroics and creative roleplaying.

Adjust the Legend Awards to suit your gaming style; for example, you might want to award more than the suggested Legend Points for acquiring treasure and fewer for defeating creatures. Remember, however, that keeping the per-character Legend Award total within the bounds described here will help you maintain the balance of your game.

Faster or Slower Character Advancement

The average award shown in parentheses in the Legend Award Table provides the benchmark for character advancement in **Earthdawn**. If the gamemaster wants a game where player characters advance more quickly, simply multiply the average Legend Award by 1.5—this will bring the award to the top end of the range given. Conversely, if the gamemaster wants slower advancement, multiply the average Legend Award by 0.5—this will lower the award to the bottom end of the range given.

The same principle applies to Creature Legend Awards; multiply them by 1.5 for quicker advancement or by 0.5 for slower advancement.

ADVENTURES AND CAMPAIGNS

Adventure? Bah! Over-rated if you ask me.

• Garlthik One-Eye, Ork Thief •

The denizens of **Earthdawn** live in an exciting, dangerous time filled with opportunity for adventure. The player characters live for adventure; the prospect of journeying into danger and triumphing over it lures them like the song of a siren. Whether searching for a forgotten kaer, guarding an embattled prince against enemies, or confronting a Horror in its lair, the player characters prove themselves the heroes of this age. A gamemaster must create adventures that challenge the players' wits even more than their characters' swords and spells, and should reward good roleplaying as generously as lucky dice-rolling.

This section provides information for gamemasters on different approaches they can use for their adventures. Gamemasters may use themes, subplots, storytelling, roleplaying, and other techniques to create, change, or enhance adventures and campaigns. The techniques defined below provide examples of their use. This section also offers suggestions for creating and maintaining an ongoing **Earthdawn** campaign and guidelines for making your **Earthdawn** game unique.

USING PUBLISHED ADVENTURES

Many gamemasters will try and play **Earthdawn** by running published adventures as written. Published adventures that provide the appropriate opposition level for every diverse group of player characters are a myth, however. Some groups are inherently more powerful than others, so gamemasters will have to "tweak" those adventures to suit their group or style of play. Therefore, gamemasters may need to adjust the game statistics and capabilities of an adventure's opposition to provide his players with an appropriate challenge.

Consult the **Gamemaster Characters** (p. 215) and **Creatures** (p. 266) chapters for more information on how to customize the opposition's game statistics to your needs.

CONVERTING ADVENTURES

You will find a lot of adventures available in printed or electronic format from publishers of other fantasy games. Of course, even though these may not have been written specifically for **Earthdawn**, they are likely to contain good ideas which can be easily converted into an **Earthdawn** story. All you need to do is use them as blueprints to develop adventures of your own.

If a story works well except for a glitch here and there, modify the plot or events to make the adventure a better one. Come up with game statistics for the gamemaster characters and creatures contained in that adventure and replace the names and locations with **Earthdawn**-specific ones.

This works with most, but not all, fantasy adventures. While we want you to keep your eyes open for new, original material, you should be aware that **RedBrick Limited** is not the only source of ideas for **Earthdawn**.

CREATING ADVENTURES

Though experience is by far the best way to learn how to write a good adventure, the following suggestions and tips may help the gamemaster take care of certain vital story elements. The main elements of an adventure include a plot synopsis, objectives, motivations, and opposition. Though these represent the most important elements of a good story, a good adventure also includes other elements such as atmosphere, mood, conflicts and challenges, themes, subplots, and storytelling.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

The **plot synopsis** describes the overall plot up to the point where the player characters get involved (and often hints at what can happen after that). This summary of events describes the scale of the adventure, creates the setting and hints at the adventure's theme.

In a large-scale adventure, the player characters might become pawns in a province-wide conspiracy, while a small-scale adventure might involve taking on a single villain in a town or city. The setting determines where the story will take place—one or more locations, such as the city-state of Travar, a small town in the southern foothills of Throal, a distant valley in the Dragon Mountains, or a journey that leads the adventurers from Throal to the Scytha Mountains.

OBJECTIVES

The most basic **objective** of every player character in an adventure is usually survival. Beyond that, the group often accepts a specific task: find a lost artifact, rescue a kidnap victim, pay off a debt, kill or capture a villain, or foil a villain's plan.

The stated objective may differ from the real objective; in fact, the group will often change its goal in mid-adventure. For example, an adventuring group might believe they were hired to accompany an emissary from Throal to a trollmoot in the Twilight Peaks, until they discover that the emissary plans to betray the clan. If one of the characters belongs to that moot, and perhaps even if not, the group may decide to adopt a new objective: foil the emissary's plan.

When writing an adventure, keep track of the group's objectives and give characters a chance to meet them. Offer them assignments or let them find clues that reveal the objectives. Characters who accomplish their objectives earn Legend Points, therefore fulfilling objectives becomes an important aspect of the game.

Motivation

Suppose the gamemaster creates an adventure and sends a messenger to the group with an offer that will catapult them right into the middle of it. After listening to the messenger, the characters say, "*Thank you for the intriguing offer, but we cannot accept at this time.*"

If this happens, the gamemaster needs to ask the players why they don't want to tackle the adventure. Is it too dangerous? Does it offer too little reward? Some characters might prefer payment in kind to silver. Magicians may ask for teachers or supplies, Adepts may want training—a Weaponsmith might bargain for the use of a smithy—and so on. If the premise of the adventure bores the players silly, it may be better to scrap the game in favor of a bull session on the kinds of adventures the players want their characters to get involved in.

The more information players give the gamemaster about their characters' lives, beliefs, and psychology, the more material the gamemaster can work with to build motivation into the adventures. As the players get more involved in the game, their characters will acquire friends, enemies, and obligations, and probably develop quirks. All these factors make good motivators for the adventurers, and the gamemaster should keep them in mind.

Opposition

Most adventures involve opposition, and the world of **Earthdawn** provides a wide array. In some adventures, the opposition may be as impersonal as an impenetrable forest, a curmudgeonly innkeeper, or an obscure magical effect; these obstacles may have nothing to do with the goal the adventurers strive for, but simply exist to make their lives difficult. In other adventures, the group may need to face and defeat a personal enemy in order to achieve their objectives.

Opposition from individuals or small groups roughly equal in size and power to the adventuring group can get personal very quickly, and a good enemy becomes a valuable resource for the gamemaster in writing future adventures. Depending on how thoroughly the adventurers trounced him, such a foe may want to repeatedly oppose the group simply to get revenge. A personal enemy can turn adventures into a series of duels between the player characters and their relentless foe, building up to a final showdown. The same enemy may also show up in unrelated adventures, just to strike at the characters any way he can.

Gamemasters may find the following descriptions of typical opposition useful. This list is by no means exhaustive, and lists only the biggest threats. Creatures, ork scorcher tribes, and trollmoots also make for great opposition, as do dwarf merchant houses or t'skrang *aropagoi*.

The Horrors

The most obvious and probably most frequent opposition in **Earthdawn** are the Horrors. These dreadful, other-dimensional beings ravaged the world during the Scourge, and many of them managed to remain behind after the world's magic ebbed. Though most Horrors have a bestial shape and nature, they possess great intelligence and cunning. They create schemes, lure victims into danger, and perpetrate a multitude of evil acts. The Horrors know no bounds.

Tragically, a number of people have felt the Horrors' touch and some have succumbed to these corrupt masters. These foul folk act toward ends no one understands, and often their seemingly innocent behavior lures adventurers to their doom.

The Theran Empire

Though the Therans no longer have free rein to force their rule, customs, and desires on the people of Barsaive, they remain a strong presence in the southern part of the province. The Therans control most of Barsaive's south-western corner and have a strong influence on the province due to their recently established fortress of *Triumph*. They gather reports on the rest of the province from numerous spies and agents working undercover in Barsaivian cities and towns. The Therans want to regain total political control over Barsaive, and will attempt any action that might advance their goal of domination.

The Mad Passions

Though your player characters would stand no chance against the Mad Passions themselves, they may meet and battle questors of the Mad Passions who work toward wicked ends. The questors of Dis, Raggok, and Vestrial willingly use whatever methods necessary to promote worship of their patron Passions. Though not a common situation, some questors of the Mad Passions serve Horrors. Some of these individuals have been corrupted by a Horror, and some simply follow their own misguided ambitions.

Atmosphere and Mood

The atmosphere of an adventure goes beyond its physical setting to include such elements as the attitudes of unfamiliar gamemaster characters, their actions, and the impression, or "feeling" the characters receive from their environment. The atmosphere of an adventure taking place during the day in a big city should be very different than the atmosphere of an adventure set at night near the Blood Wood or in the Badlands. In a big city during the day, the characters may feel relatively safe from surprise attack by anyone (or anything). Characters in the Blood Wood or the Badlands, on the other hand, can never be too careful.

In addition to the atmosphere evoked by a particular setting, an adventure should also have an overall "feel," or mood. Is the adventure a light-hearted journey to a big city or a dark, serious tale of evil and corruption? By defining the mood of an adventure, you sum up the overall emotional impression it should leave on the characters. You can establish the mood of an adventure quite easily by creating an atmosphere that conveys the feeling you want. For example, if the adventure is the tale of a village's corruption into sacrificing its own to a Horror, the overall atmosphere should be dark and gloomy with a touch of despair (the mood). Mood also relates closely to an adventure's theme (see below).

Conflicts and Challenges

Good adventures present the characters with conflicts other than combat against opposition. Conflicts can be emotional, intellectual, or moral or ethical. For example, an adventure may revolve around the inevitable conflict of heroes manipulated by a servitor of a Horror. The heroes start out believing that their noble goal is to destroy the evil questor of Vestrial, but when they finally encounter the questor, they discover that, in reality, he has been fighting to prevent a Horror from devastating a nearby town. By the time the characters realize they've been duped by their employer, they must choose between two evils.

Using non-combat conflict in your adventures forces your players to think carefully about their characters' actions.

Most conflicts can be resolved. In the above example, the characters can resolve the conflict in at least two ways. If they let the questor live, they allow him to continue his activities in the name of the Mad Passion Vestrial. If they kill the questor, they must deal with the Horror threatening the small town. Conflict resolution represents the wider consequences of an adventure.

Each adventure may offer several conflicts and resolutions. If an adventure takes several game sessions to complete, each session should have a goal (see **Awarding Legend Points** in the **Gamemastering** chapter on p. 94), which may be the resolution

to one or more conflicts. A conflict need not always have a resolution, though the players and characters may find too many loose ends frustrating. Strike a balance between conflicts that can be resolved, continuing plotlines, and situations that simply offer no satisfactory conclusion.

Good adventures challenge the characters in different ways. Some challenges take the form of an opposing gamemaster character or creature, but some are less direct. Sometimes the greatest challenge in an adventure is the journey across an unexplored area of Barsaive. Successfully completing the adventure may require the characters to solve a puzzle of some sort, presenting an intellectual challenge rather than a physical one.

Sometimes, the atmosphere itself can be the adventure's challenge. By virtue of its location, characters will find an adventure set in the Blood Wood more challenging than one set in a mundane forest. After all, most forests do not have patrols of thorn men and blood elves looking for trespassers.

Theme

A theme allows you to focus the details of an adventure around one central idea or concept that describes what the adventure is about—is it about exploring the dark caverns of a lost kaer? The betrayal wrought against the population of a mining town? Or a story of war, where the dwarfs of Throal try to find a way to get rid of the Theran occupation? For example, if an adventure centers on the activities of a ring of Theran spies working in the city-state of Travar, the theme might be intrigue. If the characters become involved in one trollmoot's revenge against a rival moot, the adventure's theme might be vengeance.

Of course, not all adventures need themes. The purpose of an adventure may be simply to get the characters from one place to another in an interesting way. For example, the courier job the characters are hired for may actually be a straightforward pickup and delivery, with no betrayal or double-cross awaiting the characters at the end.

Gamemasters can use mood, atmosphere, and conflicts to support the adventure's theme by creating specific elements or events that emphasize in different ways the main thrust of the characters' involvement.

Betrayal, vengeance, intrigue, and heroism all make suitable themes for adventures in **Earthdawn**; every gamemaster is sure to discover many others. As an illustration of one use of a theme, consider the commonly used theme of conflict with the Horrors.

Horror Theme

The word Horror as used here does not refer to the horror genre. It refers to the creatures from astral space that ravaged the world of **Earthdawn** during the Scourge. The Horror theme is a way of describing one of the overriding reasons heroes adventure in **Earthdawn**. These themes are usually complex enough to weave the plot of an adventure or tie together a series of adventures.

In one way, an adventure with a Horror theme may be the best way to initiate the players into the world of **Earthdawn**. Historically, the Horrors affected most of Barsaive in the same way; they ravaged the land and people, forcing all sentient beings to find a way to protect themselves. Even the magics provided by the Therans proved ineffective against some Horrors, and the communities that hid themselves in kaers and citadels found themselves forced to create new forms of protection, either to save themselves or to protect the rest of the world from the threat they faced.

These new protections sometimes took forms that required the people to perform actions as bad as or worse than those the Horrors themselves perpetrated; when those communities realized the truth of what they had done, they sought to leave those events in the past or to somehow redeem their actions.

The gamemaster may decide to provide a common history for the player characters by placing them all in the same kaer or citadel, then creating for them or allowing the players to invent the history and events of that hiding place. The adventure would begin as the characters re-emerge into the world, and the theme might revolve around their efforts to cleanse themselves of the actions they took against the Horrors while in the kaer, or, if nothing untoward happened during their time of hiding, to help free other Barsaivians from the influence of the Horrors.

The Horror theme as described above consists of four basic elements:

1. Characters somehow isolate themselves in an effort to protect themselves from the Horrors. This isolation is not always physical. For example, the Ritual of Thorns used by the elves of Blood Wood to fend off the Horrors is simply another form of isolation. In fact, most uses of blood magic in the days before the Scourge represented similar attempts at isolation.
2. The characters emerge from their self-imposed isolation when certain signs indicate that the Horrors are gone or less powerful than before. In most cases, this meant simply emerging from kaers and citadels. But the isolation sometimes affected a community as deeply as the Horrors themselves, and the physical emergence became only a first step to truly rejoining the world.
3. The characters realize that the isolation they believed would protect them has, in fact, corrupted their community on a deep level. At this point a character may realize that the means did not justify the ends.
4. The characters begin their efforts to recover what they once were, to redeem their actions, to grow beyond the damage done. Success in these efforts may take unexpected forms—redemption may involve more than performing ever-greater heroics ...

Adventuring the Horror Theme

Rather than starting the characters at the beginning of the story-inside the kaer or citadel-the gamemaster may decide to begin the adventure when the characters emerge from the kaer, when they recognize the consequences of what they have done, or as they begin their quest for redemption. Rather than creating an elaborate history at this point, the gamemaster may simply give the characters a mission or other compelling reason to leave the kaer, then reveal the story behind their flight bit by bit as the adventure unfolds or allow the players to make up their characters' history. Again, if the group of characters goes through all four stages of the Horror theme, the gamemaster may set up their isolation as another type of protection from a Horror (or other danger) rather than the more common retreat to a kaer or citadel. The characters would still move through the same four stages: isolation, emergence, realization, and redemption; the focus would simply be slightly different.

The Horror Theme can also be used as the overall theme of a campaign, with different adventures dealing with each of the four stages. The Horror theme may also tie together a campaign through a series of subplots woven in and through the main stories and adventures.

SUBPLOTS

Subplots create a second, less important story that serves as a counterpoint or provides subtle emphasis to the main story of the adventure. Subplots can provide comic relief or serve as a device to accomplish something in the main story of the adventure. For example, a subplot could center on a young child who follows a group of heroes around the city during an adventure and always manages to be in the way at inopportune times. The child may have nothing to do with the story at all and may be just a harmless annoyance. Or he may turn out to be the son of the very Nethermancer the characters are trying to find.

Subplots can also help establish mood and atmosphere, or emphasize the theme of an adventure. For example, if the adventure's theme is vengeance, then a subplot about a gamemaster character from a past adventure seeking revenge against one of the players' characters would serve to support the overall theme.

FLESHING OUT THE STORY

Now that you've written out the basic building blocks of your adventure, you need to bring it to life. Adding color, controlling the characters' preparation time, creating gamemaster characters to fit various situations that may come up, and deciding how much to tell the characters about what's really going on will help turn your story outline into an exciting roleplaying adventure.

Adding Color

A good roleplaying adventure must engage the players' imaginations. Use descriptions that relate to more than one or two of the characters' senses when describing encounters. Describing the odor of a particular place or the texture of the ground can help convey atmosphere to your players. The skill of imaginatively describing the atmosphere of your adventures is well worth developing. It will enhance the quality of your game and your players will thank you for your time and effort. Players need to see the scenery, hear the thwack of an arrow striking near their heads, feel the sweat trickling down their necks. Some players embrace this part of the game and end up doing most of the work. Other players refuse to play along, and make the gamemaster want to tear out his hair. Most players fall somewhere between these two extremes.

A wise old gamemaster once said, *"Don't tell them what's happening; show them!"* Avoid reciting descriptions in a dull monotone. Overact! Ham it up! The way in which the gamemaster describes the setting of an adventure helps establish the atmosphere by giving the characters a specific, powerful impression of their surroundings. A description of the Blood Wood as *"a big*

forest that is almost always dark and gloomy," does not create the same type of atmosphere as, "*the dark woods stretch for miles in all directions. Twisted trees and plants create the unsettling illusion that the entire forest is writhing. The corruption that pervades this place goes beyond the mere visual to permeate your every sense.*" The first description helps create the setting of the adventure, but, unlike the second description, fails to evoke much imagination or feeling. The second description not only provides visual information, but gives the player an idea of how his character feels.

When possible, illustrate the characters' surroundings using a display with miniatures. It takes much less effort to draw a wall with a door in it than to explain the layout verbally. Visual aids will help the players keep track of where they are, and cuts down on the arguments about who is standing where, who gets trapped by the Fire Wall when the magician casts it, and so on.

Use props to add a realistic feel to the game. For example, when the group finds a scroll outlining an evil Nethermancer's plans, don't just read it to them. Write it out before the adventure and hand it to them. If it suits your own plans or allows a character to use a skill, make parts of it illegible or missing. Every such prop speeds up play and adds color.

Make the gamemaster characters as colorful as possible. A lot of gamemasters act out their gamemaster characters, complete with funny voices. Being a ham helps. Steal material, attitudes, and speaking styles wholeheartedly from comic books, movies, television, and fiction. If you want to play one of a character's supporters as Groucho Marx, go ahead.

The way the players roleplay their characters should also add color to the game. Players should try to create a distinct character and stay in it. Adventures can also incorporate subplots to advance the adventurers' life stories when they are not fighting Horrors or researching magical items. Does a certain character have a love life? If not, does he want one? Who do the characters hang around with? How do they spend their spare time? Try to develop a few of these details in each adventure to add color and depth to your story.

Masterminds and Equalizers

The gamemaster can create two specific types of gamemaster characters: masterminds, to add complexity to the story, and equalizers, to give himself options for getting players out of a tough jam.

Consider making every adventure you write, even the small ones, part of some vast conspiracy. The mastermind behind the conspiracy could be an individual or an organization. Drop occasional clues for the player characters that hint at such conspiracies, even if a particular adventure has nothing to do with any far-reaching dastardly scheme. As ideas for the mastermind(s) present themselves, make notes. Eventually, the group may encounter the mastermind directly, and will be more than a little surprised to find that their latest opponent already hates their guts because they have unknowingly spent months foiling his plans.

Sometimes the characters get into more trouble than they can handle alone. If the gamemaster wants to bail them out, he can add an equalizer to the adventure. An equalizer can be a friendly member of an angry mob, a wandering Swordmaster, a former enemy turned traitor, and so on. The gamemaster should have a set of pre-generated characters able to step in and tip the balance in favor of the player characters should an emergency situation arise.

The equalizer can also cover for missing players in a pinch. Say the player who runs the group's magician is sick and does not show up. If the group stands to land in serious trouble without a magician, the gamemaster can substitute a handy gamemaster character magician to work with the group.

The gamemaster may try letting a player run the equalizer, but should be ready to take control of the equalizer's actions if the player does not remain in character.

Preparation Time

Once the characters receive the message (or see the injustice, or meet the maiden in distress) and accept the objective, the players will want time to prepare for the adventure. By this time, of course, the gamemaster should have finished all his preparation. Most players want to spend a lot of time getting ready to take on anything that looks like a tough job. If allowed, they may easily spend a whole game session just getting ready. Don't let them.

In the world of roleplaying games, player characters rarely book adventures in advance. Most adventures take place in response to a message of distress or some urgent matter. In these cases, the gamemaster should limit the players' preparation time to make the game more realistic. But even for adventures that the characters plan for their own benefit, shortening the actual time spent preparing makes the game more immediate and therefore more exciting to play. Unless the players really enjoy the research-and-report process, and you don't mind giving them that opportunity, have a certain amount of information available for them. Rather than letting them spend time hunting for it, pass it on through a supporter or a friend. If the characters want to double-check what they hear or do their own research, compress the time in which this occurs. Have a character who wants to conduct research or talk to supporters make an appropriate test and use the result to decide how much info he finds. Then cast some doubt on the credibility of the information. Like most people, characters must guess at whether or not what they've seen or learned represents the truth. If characters want to acquire special equipment to deal with a potential problem, send them to the shops and decide for them whether or not they find the desired equipment in the time available.

Ideally, you should give the group a little prep time, but don't let them keep the curtain from rising. If they're working under a time limit, let them know. After all, how long will it take the hypothetical evil Nethermancer to complete his summoning ritual? The characters can't wait too long to stop him. If they're not moving fast enough, turn up the heat. Give them an overriding reason to get the heck out of town. Perhaps they are one jump ahead of arrest and execution for a crime they can't prove they didn't commit, or perhaps some deadly enemy has discovered their whereabouts and is closing in. Whatever the reason, make the group want to get going as fast as possible.

Integrating New Player Characters

Few gaming groups are willing to start a new campaign just to add a new player or player character. Every time a new player wants to join the game, however, or a new player character needs to join the group because a former character retired or died or because the group is lacking a necessary skill, the players must find a way to successfully integrate new characters into the existing story.

Gamemasters can use nearly any element already present in their campaigns to get a new player onto an existing adventuring group. Using a befriended gamemaster character is one of the simplest ways of introducing a new player character to a group. This friend might introduce the new character at virtually any time and place. Gamemasters can easily fill the first adventure for the new group member with interesting and fun surprises, because he will probably be unfamiliar with the group's talents, skills, methods, personalities, and vice versa.

Adventure Ideas

The world of **Earthdawn** abounds with adventuring opportunities. Given the size of Barsaive and the conflicts that exist between its citizens, the possibilities for stories appear practically limitless.

To keep you from being overwhelmed by the possibilities, we present some of the major elements of **Earthdawn** below and suggest a few adventure ideas for each.

Horrors

The Horrors represent perhaps the most obvious source of adventures in **Earthdawn**. The characters may battle the Horrors that remain since the Scourge, or fight to right the damage left by the Scourge. Many Horrors still dominate towns and villages, feeding off their captives' fears and other strong emotions. Adventures and campaigns centered on the Horror theme usually fall into this category.

Therans

Though they don't rule the province of Barsaive anymore, the Theran Empire remains a very real threat and has a strong influence on the province due to their recently established fortress of *Triumph*. The Therans support a network of spies scattered throughout the larger province that works to subvert local governments. In this way the Therans hope to pave the way for eventual re-domination. The Therans show particular interest in Parlainth, once the provincial capital of Barsaive. Known Theran spies work in Haven, in the outlying areas of Parlainth, but their identities and agenda remain unknown.

Passions and Questors

The people of Barsaive turn to their Passions, the embodiment of the emotions and feelings of the people, for spiritual support. Because of their central role in peoples' lives, the Passions can serve as inspiration for many adventures. In particular, an examination of how the questors of the Passions interact with the people of Barsaive makes for good stories. Because most questors believe that serving their patron Passion is the only important goal in life, and many would fight to the death to do so, simply imagine the potential clash between questors of the same Passion pursuing similar goals but with different methods of achieving those goals.

The Mad Passions and their questors present the most adventure possibilities. The Mad Passions work individually (so far) to destroy the other Passions, giving no thought to the consequences. The result of a battle between the questors of a Mad Passion and the questors of any other Passion could be devastating.

Exploring Legends

Another key element of **Earthdawn** is the legends of that world and time. As the characters adventure across Barsaive, they will learn many legends of heroes, treasure, Horrors, and other monsters. These make ideal sources of adventures for your game. Share legends with the characters that will intrigue them and pique their curiosity, then use these legends to spark new adventures. For example, unfold to the characters the legend of the Crystal Spear, rumored to still lie within a kaer in the Badlands. The legend could serve as the focus of an adventure in which the heroes explore the Badlands and discover what lies within its borders.

Exploring Kaers and Citadels

Kaers and citadels dot the landscape of Barsaive. Most have been abandoned, though some remain inhabited by people still unwilling to believe that the Scourge has ended. Kaers and citadels generally make good adventuring sites, usually to find and use what was left behind. Kaers and citadels also make a good setting for an adventure or campaign with a Horror theme.

Mapping Barsaive

Barsaive changed significantly during the years of the Scourge. Many towns, villages, and cities were completely destroyed and others relocated to escape the Horrors. Most of the natural terrain remains as it was, but even some geographic formations have been transformed.

As a result, few accurate maps of Barsaive exist. As a change of pace from battle, some person or organization may hire the characters to map an area of Barsaive. This task could lead the characters to uncover a city long-forgotten from before the Scourge, or simply afford them the satisfaction of a job well done.

Treasures

In the same way that adventures that focus on legends are important to the people of Barsaive, adventures based on magical treasure benefit the denizens of **Earthdawn**. The histories of magical items contain the history of the people of Barsaive. Because these items can reveal to characters so much information about the history of Barsaive, they make a practical foundation for adventures and campaigns. In order for the characters to learn an item's past, they must inevitably travel from one end of Barsaive to the other; these travels can lead to any number of adventures.

Because the rules for using magical treasure require that characters seek out an item's Key Knowledges, gamemasters can easily use the task of discovering all the Key Knowledges of an item as the objective or motivation for several adventures or a campaign.

Communities

In addition to kaers and citadels, countless cities, towns, and villages also dot the landscape of Barsaive and provide almost endless possibilities for adventures. Adventures set in or near communities can involve thievery, political intrigue, the Horror theme, and so on.

Several of the major cities of Barsaive are briefly described in this book and in the **Player's Compendium**, but these only represent those known to the Kingdom of Throal. Many communities of various sizes wait to be rediscovered.

Creating Campaigns

Gamemasters may want to send their group of player characters through a campaign—a series of linked adventures featuring the same player characters, and usually the same players and gamemaster. Campaigns offer several gaming advantages, and we designed the world of **Earthdawn** to be played in this fashion. A campaign featuring the same characters allows the players and gamemaster to watch the characters grow more capable and powerful, becoming the heroes of legend by recognizing and achieving goals. While many situations in **Earthdawn** work well as individual adventures, many of the underlying political and magical themes in **Earthdawn** lend themselves to use as the backdrop for a longer series of stories. One familiar and pervasive example is the Theran Empire's continuing efforts to regain political control of Barsaive. A story this complex may stretch over many adventures, perhaps spanning years of the characters' lives. One adventure is simply not enough to explore the Theran storyline.

By definition, a campaign may be nothing more than a series of unrelated adventures connected by the fact that the same characters appear in all of them. However, you may find that it's more fun to plot storylines that require several adventures to resolve. For example, suppose you design an adventure in which the characters must seek out and kill a very powerful Horror, a task that can only be accomplished using a special magical weapon. Rather than creating an adventure in which the heroes simply find the weapon and attack the Horror, you can create a campaign made up of several steps, each of which is a separate adventure.

The characters learn that the Great Dragon Icewing has the magical weapon they need to kill the Horror. The characters travel to Icewing's lair to ask for the weapon. The dragon agrees, but asks in return that they retrieve a certain magical treasure for him, said to lie in the Badlands. Before the characters can go to the Badlands, they will need a map of the area. Maps of the Badlands are very hard to find—in fact, they can only be obtained from the Library in the Kingdom of Throal. One adventure expanded into a series of adventures with little difficulty.

Campaign Elements

An **Earthdawn** campaign can be a simple matter of running a series of adventures one after another, all featuring the same player characters. However, recurring player or gamemaster characters may not be enough to make an interesting connection between the stories in each adventure.

Subplots, motivation, objectives, and opposition all serve as excellent techniques for creating an interesting, engaging campaign.

Subplots

The gamemaster can use subplots to create continuity through several adventures to make a campaign. Secondary to the main story of the campaign, subplots relate adventures to one another through a minor storyline, character, or series of events. Subplots can hint at upcoming adventures or refer to past events.

For example, you might set the stage for an upcoming adventure by incorporating two or three scenes into the present adventure that relate to future events. When you run the new adventure, the characters (and players) will already have some information about or be familiar with the present situation. Continuity through subplots helps maintain the illusion that the world of the game is a living place that changes over time.

In the previous example, instead of simply setting the characters down in the village where the Horror lived, the gamemaster may have begun the campaign by enlisting the characters' help to rid a village of a Horror. In the first adventure of the campaign, the characters travel to that village, staying at more than one inn on the way. At each resting place they hear a tale or a snippet of information about Icewing the dragon. In a later adventure, when they discover that they must deal with Icewing to reach their goal, they realize that they already have some helpful information about this formidable adversary. Icewing has become a subplot of the campaign.

Subplots may also occur in a more haphazard fashion, though this use of the technique requires more complex planning. The gamemaster creates several apparently unrelated and unimportant events that the players and characters either witness or take part in during one or more adventures in a campaign. The end of the adventures fails to reveal whether or not these events held any importance; the players and characters may forget they even happened. In fact, these apparently unrelated and unimportant events form the basis of an adventure you plan to run in the near future, probably as part of the campaign.

When you get ready to run the adventure based on the subplot, review your notes on the events you used to hint at the new adventure and be sure to refer to those events during the adventure. The characters and players will have an 'aha!' reaction as everything suddenly makes sense, and once again you convince your players that your game world is a real place where people and situations change and grow.

Objectives

Most campaigns benefit from a planned objective. This is certainly true of campaigns built by expanding on one storyline, as in the example above. However, the campaign objective may be more abstract than simply achieving a single goal. For example, a legitimate but more long-term campaign objective may be to explore Barsaive and free it from the remaining Horrors.

As long as each adventure in a campaign has a clear objective, you need not create a campaign objective. But building an objective into your campaign will help focus the campaign and help you create a basis on which to build adventures.

Motivation

Campaigns also benefit from an overriding motivation. The campaign motivation may be the same as the motivation for an individual adventure, but is usually the overall reason that the characters continue their adventures. They may want to free the world from the Horrors, or spread the legends of the heroes of the world, or build their own legends. The motivation for a campaign may also be more practical. The characters may want to track down and rescue a person captured by Theran slavers or a Horror, seek knowledge of a specific race or place, or be determined to solve the puzzle of a family heirloom.

It is important to tie your adventures to the player characters' campaign motivation because it allows the characters to feel as if they are acting on personal motivation.

Opposition

An ongoing campaign also benefits from large-scale or very powerful opposition, usually characterized by an enemy or foe too large to handle in one or two adventures. This opposition may continue to combat the characters over a long period of time, such as a villain, a powerful Horror that consistently evades destruction, or agents of the Theran Empire.

A long-term campaign centered on a specific opponent also gives the characters an opportunity to find one or more of that opponent's Pattern Items and so become more likely to defeat him (or it).

Continuity and Change

Campaigns should be dynamic; that is, they should change over time. Some changes in a campaign are the direct result of the characters' actions; a gamemaster must be prepared to incorporate these changes into the planned storyline, and must also alter his story to fit the new circumstances. For example, if an important gamemaster character dies unexpectedly in one adventure, he should not show up in a subsequent adventure in the campaign no matter how vital he is to the gamemaster's plan, unless the gamemaster manipulated events so that the characters did not find a body.

Dead characters suddenly coming back to life is an extreme example of a lack of continuity, but a common failing. With everything that can occur during a campaign, it is easy to lose track of minor details.

The gamemaster needs to demonstrate to the players and characters that the world of **Earthdawn** continues to change. This can be accomplished in many ways. A friendly gamemaster character may grow older, become sick, or gradually experience a change of heart about one or more of the player characters. The gamemaster can also show changes in the game world by allowing gamemaster characters to share stories of the world from places the characters have never been. You could pass on rumors during the adventure, then update them for the characters from time to time.

If you offer the characters an adventure that they leave for another set of heroes to complete, reveal the result of their inaction later on. Gamemasters should feel free to invent other ways of demonstrating change in the characters' world.

Because the characters in your campaign will change over time, continually earning Legend Points and gaining different and better abilities, your campaign must change to accommodate this growth. As the characters grow in power and experience, you and the players will become more familiar with the rules of the game, which in turn may impact on how well both the player and gamemaster characters perform in the game.

As the gamemaster and players become more familiar with how the rules work, they will make better-informed choices and eventually maximize their characters' potential. Gamemasters will learn how to create campaigns suitable for higher-Circle characters with time and experience, but in early campaigns may have to adjust the planned events and opponents more drastically to account for changes in the characters.

Another important way in which your game may change over time will be a result of the characters (and players) learning more about the world of **Earthdawn** and how that world works. As you create adventures that deal with the various elements of the game, the players and their characters will learn and remember more about the world, and that knowledge will show in the way they play the game. This particular change is a natural one, and should be welcome; part of the excitement of all roleplaying games, and **Earthdawn** in particular, is discovering a new world.

Greater familiarity with the rules of the game and the game world allows both players and gamemaster to use those rules and that knowledge more creatively and with greater complexity.

Campaign Ideas

The following are some ideas for different campaigns that can be run in **Earthdawn**. The gamemaster is encouraged to expand or even mix and match these ideas in any way he sees fit.

Caravan Campaign

Trade moves throughout Barsaive over land, water and air, as merchants transport goods from one place to the next quickly and safely enough to secure a profit (if Chorrolis is kind). The constant demand for new trade routes gives explorers and adventurers a ready-made excuse to blaze new trails through the wilderness.

A caravan campaign can begin with a wealthy merchant or merchant company hiring player characters to explore new routes. One such potential employer is His Majesty's Trade Commission, the informal cooperative of merchant companies in the Kingdom of Throal. In addition to the various hazards of wilderness travel, the characters may also face competition from agents of other, rival merchant groups seeking similar routes or attempting to curry favor with the various settlements along a new trade route.

Once a route has been established, merchant caravans require skilled guides and adepts to protect them from the various hazards of the road. Eventually, player characters can even establish their own merchant companies to seek profits and adventure in the far reaches of Barsaive. Establishing a company exposes characters to the machinations of treacherous competitors as well as all the other dangers of shepherding caravans through the wilds.

Delving Campaign

Gamemasters can use Barsaive's unique history to flavor campaigns based on exploring ruined kaers and other underground tunnels and caves. In addition to seeking treasure, adepts and explorers might investigate ruined kaers in search of information, artifacts and stories thought lost during the Scourge. Adepts can aid scholars and historians, such as those of the Great Library of Throal, in digging up these lost secrets. Ruined kaers might also hold valuable magical knowledge, such as spells created by long-dead magicians or Key Knowledges of various thread items and magical treasures that characters discovered in previous adventures.

Areas thick with ruins, such as the Forgotten City of Parlainth or the Wastes, might even spawn "delvers' guilds"—alliances of explorers and adepts who systematically explore, map and loot the local ruins. Such groups might harass adepts who are not members of their organizations. This situation already exists in Parlainth, where the Loyal Order of Delvers and the Association of Unaffiliated Explorers compete with one another to snatch the spoils of the Forgotten City's ruins. Similarly, characters may find themselves competing with other independent groups over the same ruins.

Exploration Campaign

The Scourge altered much of Barsaive beyond recognition, and many areas of the province remain unknown to most present-day Name-givers. Many kingdoms and factions are interested in learning about these unexplored regions for the secrets and treasures they may contain or simply to expand their own knowledge. His Majesty's Exploratory Force is one example of an organization that employs adepts to explore Barsaive's distant wilds.

Exploration campaigns give characters the opportunity to travel to places no Name-giver has visited since long before the Scourge. Consequently, characters are likely to discover lost kaers and ancient ruins, potential new trade routes, isolated civilizations-and unfamiliar dangers, of course. The Kingdom of Throal also uses its explorer troops as special agents. Other parties that hire explorers might do the same, thus providing a convenient way to involve player characters in Barsaive's political intrigues.

Kaer Campaign

The kaer campaign provides an excellent way to introduce new players to the world of **Earthdawn** and give players and player characters a chance to explore a new world at the same time—thus enhancing the players' sense of wonder and discovery.

This type of campaign begins inside a kaer still sealed from the outside world. The kaer's residents, including the player characters, are initially unaware that the Scourge is over. After the residents open their kaer, the player characters become the first inhabitants to emerge and explore the world. No doubt they will be in for some surprises—among them the devastation wrought by the Scourge, Barsaive's independence from the Theran Empire, and the various political intrigues between Throal, Thera, Iopos and Barsaive's other great cities and powers.

Military Campaign

The characters are part of a military organization, such as the Throalic army, a Theran legion, an ork scorcher band or cavalry, a *shimoram's* crew on the Serpent River, or even a drakkar crew of trolls. The objective of such a campaign is usually straightforward; and involves doing whatever the government, House, tribe, or trollmoot needs the characters to do. The characters could also serve as spies or scouts rather than in large-scale conflicts, or as a group suited for 'special' operations.

A military campaign focuses on the warring factions of Barsaive, and usually involves a lot of combat. The gamemaster determines the assignments the characters have to follow, so he usually doesn't have to worry about motivation. The players, on the other hand, trade their freedom—but have the chance to become legendary war heroes commanding their own troops.

Political Campaign

A political campaign focuses on diplomacy and negotiation rather than fighting. The characters are involved in the day to day running of a particular government as court or council members, advisors, nobles, or influential merchants. When necessary they use their adept powers to negotiate with emissaries from other kingdoms or fight off threats to their land and population from within and from without.

On the smallest scale, the players form the ruling body of a small town or village attempting to expand. As the town grows, ork scorchers may threaten to become a constant threat requiring the characters to find allies for protection. On a larger scale, the characters might be involved to run a great city like Urupa or Travar, or even advise the dwarf king in governing Throal.

Restoration Campaign

The Scourge left scars on the face of Barsaive that have yet to be healed. Many different factions of Name-givers, especially questors of Jaspree, seek to restore wholeness to the land and its people and erase the taint of the Horrors forever. Places such as the Badlands, the Wastes and the Poison Forest are all good sites for the work of would-be restorers, such as the colony of questors from the town of Trosk on the edges of the Badlands.

Characters in a restoration campaign may have the backing of a patron or a living legend cult but will also face powerful opponents-such as Horrors in the region or other Name-givers who prefer the status quo. A restoration campaign that focuses on curing the corruption of Barsaive's people rather than the land might involve members of secret societies or cults, who might also make good patrons.

Player characters in such campaigns are likely to come into conflict with corrupted Name-givers such as the Hand of Corruption and the Elven Court of Blood Wood.

Adventuring

Of course, it's a stupid idea! Some of our best plans started with stupid ideas.

• Seethian, Windling Thief •

The heroes of **Earthdawn** pit their skills and courage against supernatural creatures and Horrors on a regular basis and confront their fears as a matter of course. Heroes brave the forgotten kaers and citadels left unexplored after the Scourge, or travel across Barsaive, facing nomadic ork scorchers and deadly crystal raiders, fighting to protect their world from the Horrors that remain. The heroes of **Earthdawn** strive to reclaim their world from both the ravages of the Horrors and the tyranny of others, such as the Theran Empire. As characters explore the world of **Earthdawn**, they will also face many everyday dangers that bear no relation to the plotting or malice of villains and creatures. Sometimes just surviving is a challenge.

This chapter offers guidelines for dealing with the everyday perils of adventuring, including climbing, traps, poison, diseases, curses, travel, and so on. Also described are many of the dangers of adventuring life, along with rules and suggestions for determining whether or not a character survives them. If the gamemaster finds dealing with all the situations outlined in this section bewildering, he should simply use the examples and guidelines presented until he feels more confident of his own judgment. These rules should help the gamemaster run his adventure, not get in his way.

Keep in mind that the gamemaster is still responsible for choosing the exact Difficulty Numbers required and determines how successfully a character performs various actions. No matter what a player may desire as an outcome for his character, the gamemaster always has the final say.

Barriers and Structures

During most adventures, player characters will eventually find themselves outside a structure they want to get into or inside a structure but determined to get out. Lacking a key or a handy magic word, the characters will need to break through a barrier to get in or out. To determine how successfully characters storm a barrier, the gamemaster must know the structural capacity of different types of barriers.

Every barrier has two characteristics: a **Physical Armor** rating and a **Death Rating**. In this case, a barrier's Death Rating indicates the amount of damage it can take before it breaks, crumbles, or falls apart. The Physical Armor rating serves the same purpose as armor worn by characters: it reduces the damage done by attacks. Unlike physical armor worn by characters, however, a character cannot make an Armor-Defeating Hit against a barrier.

BARRIER RATING TABLE

Barrier Material	Physical Armor	Death Rating
Blood Ivy	3	15
Cave or Natural Wall	30	150
Wood (up to 2 inches thick)	7	20
Wood (more than 2 inches thick)	9	30
Stone Wall (mortared)	12	45
Stone Block	20	85

Characters make Attack Tests against barriers using a Difficulty Number of 7. If the test result is less than 7, the blow glances off the barrier and causes no damage. If the test succeeds, the character makes a Damage Test as normal, subtracting the barrier's Physical Armor from the test result.

The Barrier Rating Table suggests Physical Armor and Death Ratings for common building materials. The gamemaster should use these as the basis for determining similar ratings for other materials.

Blood Ivy

Blood ivy appears primarily in the most overgrown areas of the Blood Wood, although it can be found in other areas of Barsaive as well. The ivy's distinctive dark-purple leaves, with light green edges and marked by narrow black veins, make the plant easily identifiable. Blood ivy grows slowly but inexorably, climbing over all plants in its vicinity until it covers them. It robs them of vital sunlight and air, eventually choking the life out of them. A cluster of blood ivy may cover thousands of square yards, and adventurers may traverse large patches of woodland filled with dozens of ivy-smothered, skeletal trees.

Blood ivy takes its name from the dark red sap that flows from the plant when it is cut. Cut samples of the plant are much heavier than one might expect, though no research has yet explained the unusual weight. Blood ivy is remarkably resilient. More than once, new growth has turned up in areas thought to be cleared of the parasitic vine.

Climbing

Many situations will require a character to climb to get his way out of (or into) trouble. He may have to climb out of a pit he has fallen into, or climb down a mountain face to escape a band of ork scorchers, or scale a wall in order to launch a surprise attack. The rules for climbing apply whenever a character chooses, or is forced, to climb up or down a vertical surface. A character who attempts to climb up or down a vertical surface must make a Climbing Test. The Difficulty Number for the Climbing Test depends on the surface being climbed. The Climbing Difficulty Table suggests Difficulty Numbers for various types of surfaces. The gamemaster should use this as a guide to determine climbing Difficulty Numbers for other types of surfaces.

CLIMBING DIFFICULTY TABLE

Surface	Difficulty Number
Tree	5
Pole	7
Rocky Cliff	9
Wall	12
Sheer Surface	15

Each successful Climbing Test allows a character to climb up or down a number of yards equal to his Climbing rank + 3 (see the **Talents** chapter on p.176 of the **Player's Compendium**). For example, a character with Climbing at Rank 4 wanting to climb a 70-yard high cliff must make ten successful Climbing Tests. Regardless of the character's Climbing rank, he cannot climb further than his Combat Movement rate each round.

When climbing on a treacherous surface, or under adverse conditions (such as in a rainstorm, or while under missile fire), the gamemaster may decide the character climbs more slowly—at half their normal climbing Movement rate, for instance. Alternatively, if the character has the time to prepare or think about what he is doing, the gamemaster may ask for Climbing Tests less frequently—each minute instead of each round, for example.

*Me'gana knows the Climbing talent at Rank 5. She can climb up or down 8 yards (5 + 3 = 8) with each successful Climbing Test she makes. If she fails a Climbing Test, she doesn't make any appreciable movement that round. However, on a Pathetic result she falls, taking Falling damage for the distance fallen (see **Falling Damage**, below).*

Creatures and Climbing

Some creatures climb as easily as they travel on the ground. While they have a Climbing skill and make Climbing Tests as normal, they use the Movement rates shown in their description to determine how fast they climb. Additionally, they may move at their Full Movement rate when climbing.

Climbing Gear

The Difficulty Numbers given in the Climbing Difficulty Table assume the character is climbing the surface freehand—without using climbing gear. A character using ropes or other suitable climbing gear gains a +4 bonus to his Climbing Tests.

*Corvis wants to climb down a cliff to reach the entrance of a long-forgotten kaer. He does not possess knowledge of the Climbing talent or skill, so the rules for Default Skill Use apply (see the **Skills** chapter on p. 230 of the **Player's Compendium**) and he uses only his Dexterity step (Step 6, and requiring a Good or better result) for his Climbing step. If he uses a rope and pitons, he gains a +4 bonus to his Climbing Tests, making the climb easier and his chances of falling less likely. If Corvis's Climbing Test is successful, his climbing Movement is limited to 4 yards per round—when using Climbing as a Default Skill he has an effective Rank of 1 for determining his climbing Movement rate (3 + 1 = 4 yards).*

Failing a Climbing Test

If a character's Climbing Test succeeds, he is able to safely climb that surface. But what happens if the character fails?

On a Poor result, the character simply fails to make any progress. Unless he has some sort of preventative measure in place (roped to another character, fastened to a piton), a character who fails a Climbing Test with a Pathetic result, loses his grip and plummets to the ground, taking Falling damage based on the distance fallen (see **Falling Damage**, below).

Me'gana is attempting to climb a 50-yard high cliff. No one is attacking her, she's not in a hurry, and the weather is ideal. Me'gana succeeds at her first two Climbing Tests and manages to climb 16 yards (her Climbing rank is 5, so her climbing Movement rate is 8 yards per round). However, when attempting to further scale the cliff, she fails her third Climbing Test with a Pathetic result. The hapless Swordmaster falls 16 yards to the ground below, taking two Step 20 Damage Tests for the distance fallen.

Falling Damage

It is a fact of life in **Earthdawn** that characters will fall, usually from high places. When a character takes a dive, use the Falling Damage Table to determine how much damage he takes from falling. After finding the Damage step, consult the Step / Action Dice Table (see the **Game Concepts** chapter on p. 17 of the **Player's Compendium**) to determine the number of dice to roll for Damage Tests. No armor protects against falling damage. The value in parentheses in the Damage Step column is the number of Damage Tests the player makes for his character's fall.

FALLING DAMAGE TABLE

Distance Fallen	Damage Step
2–3 yards	5
4–6 yards	10
7–10 yards	15
11–20 yards	(2) 20
21–30 yards	(2) 25
31–50 yards	(3) 25
51–100 yards	(3) 30
101–150 yards	(4) 30
151–200 yards	(4) 35
201+ yards	(5) 35

A character who falls from a height of 110 yards makes four Step 30 Damage Tests to determine how much falling damage he takes, without the benefit of armor to protect him. Even if he survives, he will probably suffer at least 4 Wounds, and is unlikely to walk away from the fall.

Fire

Characters in **Earthdawn** occasionally find themselves in situations where they may take damage from fire. Smoke detectors do not exist in **Earthdawn**. In addition to the regular occurrence of fireballs and other fire-based spells, natural disaster or sabotage remain likely events. This section provides guidelines for determining how much damage fire can inflict.

The size of the fire determines the Damage step of the flames. The Fire Damage Table suggests Damage steps for fires of varying sizes. Like the Climbing Difficulty Table, this list is not exhaustive; it simply serves as an example for the gamemaster.

FIRE DAMAGE TABLE

Size of Fire	Damage Step
Campfire (small)	6 (touch)
Campfire (large)	8 (touch)
House Fire	10
Forest Fire	12
Torch	4 (touch)

While Physical Armor normally protects against this damage, the gamemaster may decide to ignore armor protection completely if a character is exposed to especially large or fierce fires, or in situations where the character is completely surrounded by flame.

For each combat round that a character remains within 3 yards of the source of the fire, he uses the listed Damage step to make a Damage Test. For obvious reasons, a character must touch the fire of a torch or campfire to take damage from that source.

When wielded as a melee weapon, unlit torches use the same Damage step as clubs (Step 3), and Step 4 Damage if ablaze. At the gamemaster's discretion, a Pathetic Attack Test result extinguishes a lit torch.

Thom Hammerblade is fighting an ork scorcher who is wielding a lit torch. The ork manages to hit Thom with the torch. The ork wielding the torch (as a club) would normally make a Step 8 Damage Test (Strength step 5 + Damage step 3 for the torch). The fact that the torch is burning increases the damage it inflicts to 4 steps, for a Damage step of 9 (5+4=9).

Farliv the Archer wakes to find the once-comfortable Crakbill Inn an inferno. The gamemaster decides that the inn fire is already hotter than a house fire, and sets the Damage step at 11. Based on the position of his room, it will take Farliv 4 combat rounds to get out of the inn. During each of those 4 rounds, Farliv's player takes Step 11 damage. Ouch!

Secret Doors

Secret doors usually lead to areas used as hiding places, treasure rooms, and defensive strongholds. During the Scourge, hiding places provided bolt-holes in which the residents of the kaer could hide from an invading Horror or creature.

Treasure rooms keep valuables safe, and offer the most tempting targets for adventurers. Defensive areas are small rooms where people can take prepared defensive positions against invaders. These rooms commonly include a safe place from which bowmen could fire at their opponents, or a room from which magicians could safely cast spells. Some secret doors conceal magical or alchemical laboratories, smith shops, and even temples to one or more of the Passions.

Detecting Secret Doors

A character attempting to detect a secret door makes a Perception Test. The gamemaster determines the Difficulty Number for the test based on how well the door is hidden. Suggested Difficulty Numbers for spotting secret doors appear in the Detection Difficulty Table.

DETECTION DIFFICULTY TABLE

Detection Difficulty	Difficulty Number
Easy	5
Average	9
Hard	15
Very Hard	21
Heroic	25

If the character makes a successful Perception Test, he finds the secret door. The gamemaster should vary the Difficulty Numbers of secret doors to reflect how carefully the characters are looking for them. If the players look for a secret door in every room, hoping to get lucky, use the same Difficulty Number for every door. If the characters state that they are minutely examining every inch of wall space, the gamemaster might subtract –2 or –3 from the Difficulty Number to reflect the characters' meticulous search.

Opening Secret Doors

Successfully spotting a secret door does not mean a character knows how to open it. Some secret doors open when pushed against. Others slide into slots carved into the walls. Still others open when a character works some type of mechanism.

The gamemaster decides how a secret door opens at the same time that he determines the purpose of the door and how well it is hidden. Characters may succeed in opening the door on the first try, or they may open it only after a process of trial and error.

Traps

Shortly after people began to create goods worth keeping, they designed traps to protect them. Traps come in all shapes and sizes. They may lie concealed in small treasure chests, or guard the entrances to kaers and citadels.

Those who built the kaers before the Scourge constructed traps that they hoped would stop those Horrors able to penetrate the magical protections guarding the entrances. Characters may still encounter many of the traps placed in those kaers that remain sealed, either abandoned or filled with people who have yet to hear that the Scourge has ended.

The information listed below describes how traps function within the game.

Detection Difficulty

A character making a Perception or Talent Test to see or otherwise sense a trap uses the trap's Detection Difficulty as the Difficulty Number. Most traps have a Detection Difficulty of 5, though some traps are so obvious that the Detection Difficulty is 0. In effect, the owner of the trapped goods or treasure is saying, *"Look, stupid, this thing is trapped. So why don't you go steal someone else's stuff?"*

For magical traps, use the trap's Spell Defense as the Detection Difficulty.

Disarm Difficulty

This figure is the Difficulty Number for disarming the trap. If a character does not have the Disarm Trap skill or talent, he cannot disarm the trap. The best a character lacking the appropriate talent or skill can hope for is to keep from triggering the trap when he opens the door, stepping on the pressure plate, or taking some other action that would normally activate the trap.

A character attempting to avoid triggering a trap must make a Dexterity Test to avoid mechanical traps and a Perception Test to avoid magical traps. The Disarm Difficulty of the trap becomes the Difficulty Number for these tests. Most mechanical traps have a Disarm Difficulty of 7 to 9. The Disarm Difficulty of most magical traps is 8 or more.

The only other way a character can avoid a trap is to achieve a higher result than the triggered trap on an Initiative Test.

Trigger Condition

This entry describes the mechanism or action that triggers the trap. Stepping on a pressure plate, lifting the lid of a chest, and opening a door are common examples of trigger conditions

for mechanical traps. Characters using talents or spells within a certain range may trigger magical traps.

Trap Initiative

This figure is the trap's Initiative step number. Most mechanical traps have an Initiative step of 8 to 10. Magical traps often have a higher Initiative step. When a character triggers the trap, the gamemaster immediately makes an Initiative Test for the trap using the Trap Initiative step. All characters within range of the trap also make Initiative Tests. Those who achieve a higher result than the trap may be able to act to get out of harm's way. Those whose Initiative Test results are lower than or equal to the trap's Initiative succumb to the trap's effect.

The Trap Initiative talent allows characters to react to traps more quickly than normal (see the **Talents** chapter on p. 208 of the **Player's Compendium** for more information).

Trap Effect

The trap effect entry describes the type and steps of damage the trap inflicts. For example, some traps restrain their targets, others mark them with a magical stain, and still others may put a spell on the character that takes effect after a delay. A trap may have any effect conjured by the imagination and resources of the character building the trap. The type of damage the trap inflicts determines its Damage step. For example, the trap effect of a simple pit trap might be only Damage step 4, while a trap designed to smash an intruder might have a trap effect of Damage step 10 or more.

Spell Defense

This number is the trap's Spell Defense. Only magical traps have a Spell Defense rating, which also serves as their Detection Difficulty. The Spell Defense rating of most magical traps is equal to the Spell Defense of the character who built the trap.

TRAP DESCRIPTIONS

Following are descriptions of several sample traps, which can be adjusted to almost any situation:

Blade Trap

Blade traps generally feature several sharp blades set to slit a victim's throat or cut him across his legs. In old ruins or kaers the blades may be centuries old and rusted or corroded. These rusty blades can cause infected Wounds, or be so weakened that they do less damage than a clean, new blade. Use the following statistics for a typical blade trap:

Detection Difficulty: 7
Disarm Difficulty: 9

Trap Initiative: 17/D20+D10

Trigger Condition: Pressure plate, trip wire, or moving a specific object or stone

Trap Effect: Several blades spring from the ground beneath the victim or from the walls. The blades do a total of Step 13/D12+D10 damage. Most of the blades are rusted and may break against armor. If armor prevents the trap from doing damage to a character, the blades shatter. If the damage inflicted causes a Wound, the gamemaster makes a Step 5/D8 Damage Test against the victim's Toughness step. If the test succeeds, the Wound becomes infected. Treat an infected Wound as if the victim were affected by a debilitating poison (see **Poison**, p. 121). The infection has no effect on the victim until three to five days after he receives the Wound; at that point, fever, delirium, and nausea overcome the injured character. The infected Wound heals only if it is treated and the character rests for at least three days, or if cured by a magical healing aid.

Dart Trap

Three spring-loaded darts fly at the lock-picker. The darts are often coated with a poison (see **Poison**, p. 121). A typical dart trap uses the following statistics:

Detection Difficulty: 15
Disarm Difficulty: 8

Trap Initiative: 13/D12+D10

Trigger Condition: Opening box

Trap Effect: Darts strike the target, inflicting Step 6/D10 damage. If the character takes any damage, the poison takes effect.

Kaer Ward

A kaer ward is a magical trap designed to protect a kaer from intruders. A typical kaer ward uses the following statistics:

Detection Difficulty: 5
Disarm Difficulty: 19
Spell Defense: 19

Trap Initiative: 30/D20+D10+D8+2D6

Trigger Condition: The gamemaster makes a Step 17/D20+D10 Spellcasting Test against the Spell Defense of any character within

3 yards of the trap. If the test succeeds, the character triggers the trap.

Trap Effect: The trap casts an Onion Blood spell against the character who triggered it. The spell has Spellcasting step 17/D20+D10 and Effect step 23/D20+2D10, and causes damage each round for 10 rounds.

Mantrap

Often disguised by magic, a character who steps on one of these ghastly things triggers serrated metal jaws that spring up and grip the character's leg. This example has been disguised with magic, making it semi-invisible, and therefore extremely difficult to detect:

Detection Difficulty: 16 (12 for Illusionists)
Disarm Difficulty: 12

Trap Initiative: 13/D12+D10

Trigger Condition: Pressure plate

Trap Effect: The trap causes Step 20/D20+D8+D6 Damage. After the initial damage has been resolved, trapped characters suffer 1 Damage Point each round until they are freed. No armor protects against this damage. The gamemaster may also decide that a mantrap is poisoned, to further add to the character's misery. A character caught in a mantrap can only be freed if two characters work to spring the trap. Add the Strength steps of the two characters together to determine the step number, then make a Strength (12) Test. If the test succeeds, the victim is freed.

Pit Trap

A pit trap consists of a pit filled with stakes, hidden by a section of false floor. A typical pit trap uses the following statistics:

Detection Difficulty: 7
Disarm Difficulty: 7

Trap Initiative: 10/D10+D6

Trigger Condition: Pressure plate or trip wire

Trap Effect: A section of floor drops away and dumps the characters into a 5 yard deep pit lined with stakes, causing Step 10/D10+D6 Falling damage (no armor protects against this damage) and an additional Step 12/2D10 damage from the stakes.

Spike Trap

Spikes are sometimes hidden in the gaps between stones in some ruins or kaers. A thin layer of mortar completely conceals the spikes, making them much more difficult to detect. A typical spike trap uses the following statistics:

Detection Difficulty: 15
Disarm Difficulty: 15

Trap Initiative: 25/D20+D10+D8+D4

Trigger Condition: Pressure plate or trip wire

Trap Effect: Spikes shoot out from cracks in the walls, striking the character who tripped the trap. The spikes do Step 23/D20+2D10 damage to the victim. If the trap achieves an Armor-Defeating Hit against the victim, and the character takes a Wound, he is impaled on the spikes. Other characters may attempt to ease the victim off the spikes; to do so requires a successful Dexterity (15) Test. If the test fails, the victim takes another Step 10/D10+D6 damage. No armor protects against this damage.

Corridor spike traps block passage, once triggered. To push the spikes back into the walls, a character must make a successful Disarm Trap or Dexterity Test against a Difficulty Number of 15.

Ward Trap

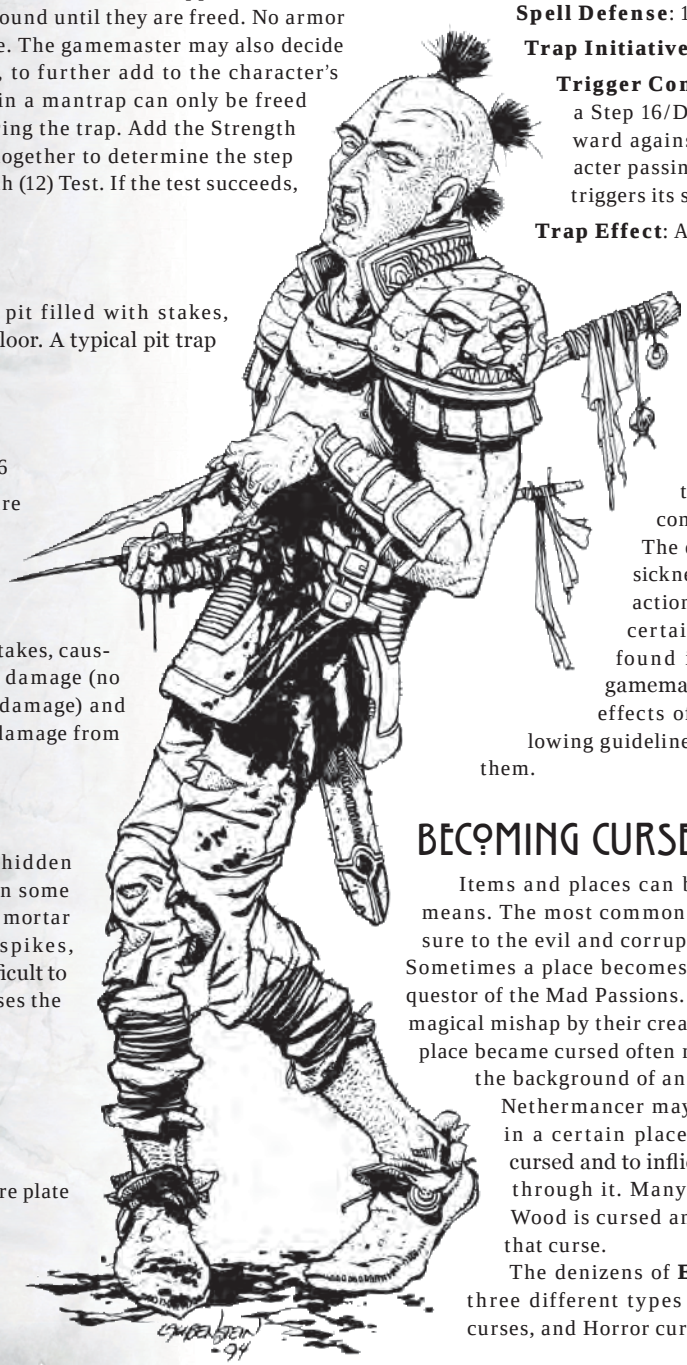
A ward is a magical trap designed to keep people from entering certain areas. Magicians often set wards to detect and ignore certain beings (for example, the ward's creator), and to spring into existence only if an unauthorized person attempts to pass the ward. A typical ward uses the following statistics:

Detection Difficulty: 10
Disarm Difficulty: 12
Spell Defense: 10

Trap Initiative: 30/D20+D10+D8+2D6

Trigger Condition: The gamemaster makes a Step 16/D20+D8 Spellcasting Test for the ward against the Spell Defense of any character passing it. If the test succeeds, the trap triggers its spell effect.

Trap Effect: Any spell (Willpower step 16)



Curses

Curses are negative magical effects attached to items and places. They often affect those characters that come into contact with the cursed item or place. The effects of a curse can range from sickness to a penalty when performing actions to damage. Kaers and citadels, certain rooms within them, or items found inside often carry curses. The gamemaster is free to invent the specific effects of curses, but we suggest the following guidelines for creating and implementing them.

Becoming Cursed

Items and places can become cursed through various means. The most common way is through prolonged exposure to the evil and corrupt magical powers of the Horrors. Sometimes a place becomes cursed through the efforts of a questor of the Mad Passions. Many cursed items result from a magical mishap by their creator. The details of how an item or place became cursed often make up an important element in the background of an adventure. For example, an evil Nethermancer may once have summoned a Horror in a certain place, causing that place to become cursed and to inflict illness on all who enter or pass through it. Many Barsaivians believe that Blood Wood is cursed and the Blood Elves are victims of that curse.

The denizens of **Earthdawn** may be affected by three different types of curses: minor curses, major curses, and Horror curses.

Minor Curses

The effects of **minor curses** usually range from inflicting a –2 or –3 penalty to a character's Action Tests, to affecting the character as a debilitating poison might (see **Poison**, p. 122) . Minor curses are most often associated with magical items rather than places.

The effects of a minor curse should handicap a character, but not threaten his life. Curses whose effects prove more than a minor handicap or irritant are considered major curses.

Major Curses

The effects of **major curses** should seriously impair characters that come into contact with the cursed item or place. For example, a major curse might affect a character by temporarily lowering one of his Attribute values. If the curse affects a character's Strength value, he might still be able to fight as skillfully, but his blows would no longer cause as much damage. Another major curse might create a runic scar across a character's face that causes other characters to fear him.

Major curses can be associated with both items and places; the curse's effect lasts as long as the character remains in contact with the cursed item or place. Characters affected by major curses must usually appeal to a powerful magician to help free them from the curse's effects.

Horror Curses

Horror curses represent the most powerful curses in **Earthdawn**. A Horror-cursed place or item functions in the same way as a Horror Mark: a Horror establishes a link to the item or place, and can use its powers against any characters that come into contact with that item or place. However, because the Horror must work indirectly through the cursed item or place, its powers become less effective.

Resolve the use of the Horror's powers as described in the **Horrors** chapter, keeping in mind the weakening effect of the indirect attack. A good rule of thumb is to apply a –5 or –10 penalty to a Horror's powers when it uses them through a cursed item or place. The gamemaster may wish to adjust the strength of the effect higher or lower than the suggested level.

CURSE TABLE

Curse Type	Step Number*	Effect
Minor	7–8	Reduced steps, minor damage
Major	9–15	Scars, reduced Attribute Values
Horror	Horror's Spellcasting step	Horror-marked items or characters, use of Horror powers through item

* The step number used to determine if a curse affects a character.

Horror curses can be powerful, and very dangerous to characters. In order to break the curse, the characters must usually kill the Horror who marked the item or place. Their desire for pain and suffering prompts most Horrors to channel their powers carefully through cursed items or places, using only those powers that will not so alarm the living that they abandon the place or object.

Horrors can, and frequently do use Horror cursed items or places as a channel through which to Horror Mark victims. This method of Horror Marking provides an exception to the usual line-of-sight restriction on the Horror Mark power. For more information, see the **Horror Mark** power in the **Horrors** chapter, on p. 443.

Curse Effects

When a character comes into contact with a cursed item or place, the gamemaster should make a Curse test against the character's Spell Defense rating to see if the curse affects the character. The curse's step number for this test depends on the type of curse: minor curses use a Step Number of 7 or 8, major curses use a Step Number between 9 and 15, and Horror curses use the Horror's Spellcasting step. If the test succeeds, the curse affects the character.

The Curse Table summarizes the suggested step numbers and effects for each of the three curse types. Again, the gamemaster should use this table as a guideline. Each individual curse is unique, and no two will necessarily affect a character in the same way.

Though the gamemaster may create any effect for a curse, he should be careful to make the curse work within the adventure, and avoid making the effects of the curse overwhelmingly powerful. When designing cursed items and places, the gamemaster should remember that curses are meant to challenge and hinder the player characters, and must be carefully thought out.

Loot

During the course of an adventure, your character will discover many opportunities for gathering loot and should grab those opportunities with both hands. Loot may be money or gemstones snatched from fallen enemies, precious objects found in a creature's lair, pieces of a creature brought back as trophies, or magical items.

Earthdawn loot comes in two distinct varieties: loot worth money and treasure.

Loot Worth Money

Ancient gold pieces, precious stones, elemental coins, items that can be sold for silver, or silver pieces filched from a hidden hoard all qualify as loot worth money. Characters can gather immediately usable money from dead opponents or from the lairs of creatures and Horrors. Other forms of loot must be converted to cash. The gamemaster ultimately decides the amount of potential loot available in any given adventure. He must tailor the amount

of money or other loot the characters find or acquire to the type of game he wants to run.

Note that characters can also earn money in **Earthdawn**. A town, organization, or individual may hire the characters to perform a certain task for payment, or once they achieve higher Circles, characters can train younger adepts for a fee.

A somewhat unorthodox method of turning loot into money is to sell equipment that belonged to deceased opponents. This requires a certain amount of caution; adventurers who leave town in the morning and return later that same day carrying various bits of equipment to sell that they didn't have before tend to draw the attention of the local constabulary.

However, not every town frowns on such activity. Several towns and cities in Barsaive—Kratas chief among them—regard the sale of used equipment as their primary local industry.

Treasure

In addition to loot worth money, adventurers in **Earthdawn** can also find treasure, the objects legendary heroes acquire during their adventures. Treasure comes in two forms: magical treasure, such as magical weapons and items, and creature treasure.

Magical Treasure

Magical treasure includes the magical weapons and other items that characters seek or find during their adventures. Characters can learn to use magical items through study, and, after reaching a certain level of knowledge, can use the item to gain information during an adventure.

See the **Magical Treasures** chapter, p. 161, to find out how to create and use magical treasure in your game.

Creature Treasure

Heroes of legend often take bits and pieces of the creatures they battle as proof of the encounter and of their prowess. These trophies represent a kind of treasure that increases a hero's legendary status.

Because only heroes can collect bits and pieces of vanquished creatures, characters in **Earthdawn** often collect such trophies to prove that they are heroes.

Traveling

Like all adventurers, characters in **Earthdawn** will spend many days traveling from place to place and searching the land for new adventures across Barsaive's nearly 1,500,000 square miles. Population centers are spread out across the land, often requiring long journeys simply to get from one place to the next. Most player characters end up traveling overland, either on foot or mounted. For long distances or otherwise appropriate situations, player characters may also travel by riverboat or airship (the latter for those who can afford it, or who must move with the speed an airship offers). Whatever mode of travel they choose, adventuring parties are likely to spend a great deal of time getting from one place to another in Barsaive. The information in this section outlines modes of transport, needed supplies, and ways of dealing with the weather and other potential travel hazards.

Travel Time

Travel time in Barsaive is most often measured in days or hours. Most maps made in Barsaive (and in most published **Earthdawn** products) contain scales for determining distance, and travel rates are provided in the Travel Rate Table. Characters can calculate travel times by dividing the distance of the trip by their travel rate. For example, a single horseman could make a 100 mile journey in two and a half days.

Characters on foot or mounted usually travel for eight hours a day, with occasional stops along the way to rest and eat. Every few hours, travelers should also stop briefly to check their location and verify that they are still on the correct route. Characters can attempt to travel for longer than eight hours per day but may become fatigued (see **Fatigue and Injury**, p. 120). If characters with mounts travel for longer than eight hours, their mounts also suffer fatigue. Additionally, each hour of travel beyond eight causes 3 Strain Points of damage to the mount. Thus, a careless traveler can keep a mount going until it falls unconscious. Cavalrymen, who know how to deal with their animals, make sure not to run their mounts too ragged. On long rides, they often use their Blood Share talent to restore a flagging mount's vigor.

Riverboats and airships can travel for longer than the standard eight hours by rotating their crews (which requires them to carry enough crewmen for an extra shift). Except for occasional stops to repair and take on supplies, such vessels can travel almost indefinitely.

Overland Travel

Most adventurers travel through Barsaive over land, either on foot or mounted. Characters traveling on foot can cover roughly 25 miles per day, assuming that they travel for 8 hours each day and take occasional breaks for rest and eating. The rough terrain throughout most of Barsaive precludes any faster rate of travel on foot. Injured characters and those carrying encumbering loads, may travel more slowly, perhaps only 20 miles per day.

Characters riding mounts can travel roughly 45 miles per day, again assuming 8 hours of travel with occasional breaks. If the mounts are carrying encumbering loads, they may only be able to cover 30 to 35 miles per day.

TRAVEL RATE TABLE

Method of Travel	Travel Rate
Airship	255 miles (per 16 hour day)
Caravan (foot)	20 miles (per 8 hour day)
Caravan (mounted)	30 miles (per 8 hour day)
Name-giver (foot)	25 miles (per 8 hour day)
Name-giver (mounted)	45 miles (per 8 hour day)
Riverboat	160 miles (per 16 hour day)

Occasionally, characters travel with merchant or trader caravans, either as guards or as fellow travelers. Most caravans travel at a rate of 30 miles per day when mounted, or 20 miles per day on foot.

Safe Areas

Because most of Barsaive remains unexplored, the law-abiding inhabitants of the land consider only the areas immediately surrounding most cities and a few established trading routes to be safe. Wandering away from these safe areas can prove hazardous to travelers (see **Wilderness**, below, and **Travel Hazards**, p. 116). Several smaller farming towns and villages surround most major cities within a radius of approximately 15 miles. These communities supply the city with agricultural goods in exchange for protection, usually in the form of favorable trade agreements and regular patrols by available armed forces. Their proximity to the city makes brief trips between the city and the farming communities feasible, and many towns arrange two-day journeys to trade their goods to the cities. Heavily settled and well-protected (relative to the rest of Barsaive), most of the territory within fifteen miles of a major city remains safe for travelers, but even these areas encompass desolate and dangerous spots.

Barsaive's major trade routes connect major cities and specific points along the Serpent River. These routes change occasionally, based on the most recent travelers' tales of their encounters along the established route. Well-traveled, often by caravans employing seasoned Warriors, the trade routes are safe for travelers. Keep in mind, however, that every trade route crosses unexplored territories; travelers who stray as little as a thousand yards off the trade route may stumble into unmapped regions and areas unexplored even before the Scourge.

Wilderness

Much of the time, adventurers in **Earthdawn** travel through wilderness. Even established trade routes often cut through regions that remain wild and largely unexplored. Whether traveling through jungles, mountain ranges or sparsely inhabited plains, adventuring characters must obtain adequate food, water and shelter—which can be just as challenging as dealing with hazardous terrain and dangerous creatures.

Though adventuring characters will likely carry rations and water with them, they may well need to live off the land if and when their supplies run out—if the characters get lost, for example, and subsequently take longer than they'd planned to get where they're going. The Wilderness Survival and Hunting skills (see the **Skills** chapter on p. 230 in the **Player's Compendium**) enable characters to find food, water and shelter in the wilderness.

Avoiding Attention

In many situations, traveling characters may wish to avoid the notice of patrols, guards, creatures, suspicious locals and other potential threats. Moving through an area unobtrusively reduces the chances that someone will spot a character or group of characters, but it also reduces the characters' travel rate by half. If a group of adventurers is making no attempt at concealment, the Difficulty Number for guards, other gamemaster characters, or creatures attempting to detect them is equal to the lowest Dexterity step of all the player characters in the group, appropriately modified for visibility and other factors. If characters traveling overland take steps to avoid attracting attention, however—sneaking past a walled village rather than walking up to the front gate, keeping to less-traveled roads, and so on—the Difficulty Number for spotting them is the highest Dexterity step of the group (with appropriate modifiers).

Despite the penalty to travel rate, player characters may well find this benefit desirable, especially when approaching areas prone to conflict (territory being fought over by rival scorcher tribes, for example) or traveling to cities known for their harsh treatment of strangers (such as Iopos). The gamemaster should consider such factors when determining if anyone spots the adventurers.

Encounters Along the Road

Traveling characters may have any number of interesting encounters during their journeys. Among other things, they may notice or encounter various creatures, other travelers, natural hazards such as rivers or streams to be crossed, potential rockslides, precarious bridges, and so on.

To liven up a road trip, have the characters make Perception Tests whenever they might spot anything of potential interest, whether dangerous or not. When characters make Perception Tests outdoors, use the guidelines for Perception Test modifiers given in the **Gamemastering** chapter. Note that followers of several Disciplines, particularly Scouts and Archers, can also use various talents and abilities to improve their awareness and extend their ranges of vision.

Social Interaction

Characters may meet any number of different people along the road—fellow travelers, local townspeople, bandits and raiders, and so on. In some cases they may fight, but combat is not the only or even the best way for adventurers to deal with their fellow Namegivers. Through social interaction, gamemasters can offer player characters some challenges in areas other than combat. Complex negotiations, political maneuvering and intrigue can also form the basis of adventures or campaigns in civilized settings, such as the great cities of Barsaive or the Kingdom of Throal.

The Social Interaction and Interaction Test rules outlined in the **Gamemastering** chapter offer useful guidelines for encounters with gamemaster characters on the road. While these rules are no substitute for good roleplaying on the part of the players, they can help the gamemaster determine how gamemaster characters might respond to player characters' actions.

Greeting Rituals

In many isolated regions of Barsaive, local inhabitants remain wary of the dangers posed by lingering Horrors. In such areas, inhabitants commonly require that strangers use their artisan skills to prove that they do not carry Horror taint. Consequently, player characters can expect many opportunities to demonstrate their artisan abilities.

A character using an artisan skill as part of such a greeting ritual should make his Artisan Skill Test against a Difficulty Number 5. If the test succeeds, the character proves himself free of Horror taint and the locals will likely accept him.

Gamemasters can also treat the Artisan Skill Test as a method of making an impression (see the **Gamemastering** chapter) to determine how people respond to the character. To do so, compare the result of the Artisan Skill Test to the highest Social Defense rating among the gamemaster characters present. An Average result improves their attitudes by one degree; a Poor result worsens their attitude by one degree, and may even lead people to believe that the player character is Horror-touched.

TRAVEL BY RIVER

Often, when a group of adventurers must travel long distances, they arrange transport on the Serpent River that crosses all of Barsaive. Because few characters own their own riverboats, most adventurers traveling up- or down-river must buy passage on a t'skrang riverboat.

Passage on a t'skrang riverboat costs an average of 5 silver pieces per person per day. Most ship captains demand full advance payment, though some accept partial payment in advance, the

remainder due on arrival at the character's destination. Some captains charge more than the average price, often bargaining with the characters to determine the fee. Characters can arrange to transport their mounts on the same craft, but must pay an additional 5 silver pieces per day for each animal.

Characters lacking ready funds may pay for their riverboat passage by working as a member of the crew during the voyage. Each day that a character works for the crew earns him an average of 3 silver pieces, though pay rates are negotiable based on the character's skills. Some captains, instead of paying out silver, simply exchange passage for the character's time and labor. A character can usually work off most or all of the cost of his trip in this manner. See the **Goods and Services** chapter on p. 455 of the **Player's Compendium** for more information about hiring river passage.

T'skrang riverboats travel roughly 100 miles and 16 hours per day, stopping along the river to pick up and drop off goods and passengers. Most riverboats stop only during daylight, usually sailing through the night, but occasionally laying over at a port until morning. Pirates, as well as legitimate traders, often travel on the Serpent River. Pirates routinely attack riverboats; those characters who help fight off these marauders often receive a partial refund of their passage payment.

AIRSHIP TRAVEL

Airships are the least common method of travel in Barsaive. Only a few dozen airships exist in all of Barsaive, and most of those are military or merchant craft. Consequently, gaining passage on an airship is usually an expensive and difficult proposition. Because of the difficulty and expense of arranging airship passage (see below), characters only travel across Barsaive by airship when speed is vital. Speed gives air travel its greatest advantage. An airship can travel up to 300 miles in 16 hours per day. Most airships do not fly throughout the night, except in battles or raids. Airships carrying passengers rarely engage in raiding unless the characters agree to help raid as part of the terms of their passage.

The greatest hazard of traveling by airship is the risk of encountering crystal raiders and Theran slave ships. The crystal raiders fly drakkars, small airships built for combat and raiding. The huge slave ships of the Theran Empire carry captives to the Theran stronghold at Sky Point and the nearby Theran-controlled city of Vivane. The crystal raiders tend to stay near their home turf in the Twilight Peaks, but may range as far as 500 miles away from that area. The Theran slave ships hunt in the southwest reaches of Barsaive nearest to the Empire's outposts, openly attacking other airships to capture slaves for the Theran Empire.

Airship Passage

Travel aboard airships can be unpleasant; most airships lack passenger space, and many airship captains dislike the idea of strangers aboard their vessels. The majority of airships in Barsaive belong to the troll crystal raiders, making it a tough prospect for the characters to find an airship captain and convince him to transport them. Ideally, adventurers seeking passage on airships should track down the owner of a galley, the type of ship used by the trading companies that operate across Barsaive. Dealing with a galley captain, the characters stand a better chance not only of booking passage, but of surviving it. Characters who find troll raiders willing to take on passengers should negotiate with extreme caution.

Passage aboard an airship usually runs about 30 silver pieces per day for cramped quarters and a no-frills meal. Adepts may be able to negotiate this rate with airship captains if they can provide services the ship will need. In most cases, adepts offer to help protect airships from raiders, slavers and airborne creatures that might attack during the trip. Some airship captains are also willing to take on skilled Air Sailors or Sky Raiders as temporary crew members, though the two Disciplines rarely mix

well. Captains might also lower their prices for Elementalists or skilled navigators. However, airship captains are notoriously difficult to negotiate with—most of them are troll Sky Raiders with deservedly fearsome reputations or overburdened merchant captains—so they drive hard bargains.

Cargo space on airships is at a premium, so airship passengers are rarely allowed to bring along more than their personal equipment. Bringing a mount aboard could cost 50 silvers or more, with the price going way up for especially large mounts. For obvious reasons, many airship captains won't hear of having a mount the size of a thundra beast aboard their ships. Trunks, chests, and other large pieces of luggage cost at least 10 silvers apiece to bring aboard, with larger pieces costing more at the gamemaster's discretion.

UNDERGROUND TRAVEL

Characters in **Earthdawn** are bound to explore an abandoned or ruined kaer at least once during their adventuring careers. In addition to kaer-crawls, characters may venture underground in search of True earth, while tracking down creatures or Horrors, or seeking shelter from storms. The following passages provide rules that reflect the myriad hazards of underground travel and kaer exploration.

Movement Underground

Movement underground is somewhat slower than movement above-ground. Characters going underground will almost always travel on foot, simply because the ceilings of most tunnels and caves are too low to accommodate mounted characters, and few mounts can navigate the slopes and sharp inclines commonly found beneath the earth's surface. Additionally, characters must follow the paths already formed by natural tunnels and caves. Not being made by Name-givers, as roads are, many of these paths do not represent the most direct route from place to place. In most circumstances, characters can travel at a rate roughly half to three-quarters of their surface travel rate—about 10–15 miles every 8 hours.

Most tunnels are narrow and have uneven floors covered with loose rocks and dirt. Characters should take their time traveling through these areas, as it is easy to slip and fall if they move too quickly. In particularly rough spots, gamemasters may call for Dexterity Tests against a Difficulty Number no higher than 5. A failed test usually results in either a few points of damage (which armor does not protect against) or a minor injury (see **Fatigue and Injury**, p. 120).

Furthermore, many tunnels and caves slope upward or downward, restricting movement even more. Some inclines can be so extreme that characters must make Dexterity Tests to safely traverse them. Set the Difficulty Number for these tests between 5 and 7, depending on the grade of the slope. A failed test can cause either a minor injury (for example, a sprained ankle or strained muscle), or falling damage if the slope is steep enough.

Unbreathable Air

Whenever characters enter areas containing stale air or poison gas, allow each character to make a Perception Test to detect any odor or taste that might alert them to the danger. Base the Difficulty Number on the specific conditions that have rendered the air unfit to breathe. Oxygen-poor air is very difficult to detect, and so tests to detect it should have a Difficulty Number of 10 to 12. Air tainted with toxic gases is more likely to smell or taste odd, and so the Difficulty Number might be 6 to 9. A successful Perception Test alerts a character that something is wrong with the air but does not tell him the cause of the problem.

Characters with skills appropriate to underground travel and exploration, such as Natural Science, Geology or Mining, can identify the problem by making an appropriate Skill Test against the same Difficulty Number as the Perception Test. A success enables the character to recognize the specific hazard in the air and suggest an appropriate precaution (wearing cloths over their mouth, running like blazes, and so on). Some animals, especially birds and rodents, are more sensitive to bad air than most Name-givers. Characters with familiars or Beastmasters with animal companions often rely on these to help them detect hazardous air when traveling underground.

Characters traveling through regions with stale air will suffer from suffocation. Extended travel through these areas can also impose a –1 penalty to a character's Fatigue Tests (if applicable, see **Fatigue and Injury**, p. 120).

Poison Gas

Traveling through areas containing poison gas can cause damage to the character beyond suffocation. Gamemasters determine the Damage step of any poison gas that characters encounter, to a maximum of Step 6. Characters suffer this damage each round they remain in the toxic area. No armor protects against this damage.

Explosive Gas

Many natural gases are highly flammable and explode when exposed to open flames such as torches and candles. Treat explosive gas buildup as a trap (see **Traps**, p. 108).

The following sample statistics offer suggested ratings for explosive gas traps.

Explosive Gas Trap

Detection Difficulty: 7–12

Disarm Difficulty: See following text

Trigger Condition: Exposure to open flame

Trap Initiative: 6–9

Trap Effect: Explosion that causes Step 10–20 damage to all characters within the area of the explosive gas.

Characters can detect explosive gas by making successful Perception Tests against a Difficulty Number equal to the Detection Difficulty of the gas. If characters detect explosive gas, they can attempt to douse all fire sources before accidentally triggering an explosion. To do so, each character carrying a fire source must make an Initiative Test against the Trap Initiative of the gas. If the test succeeds, the character manages to douse his flame in time. If one or more of the tests fail, the gas ignites and causes the damage listed under Trap Effect.

Cave-Ins and Collapses

At best, cave-ins and collapses impede characters' progress by blocking the way ahead. At worst, they can trap characters under tons of dirt and stone. Collisions with walls or braces or even loud noises in an unstable area can trigger cave-ins. Combat, especially using spells such as Fireball or Air Blast (see the **Elementalism Spells** chapter on p. 295 of the **Player's Compendium**), can trigger a collapse; gas explosions and natural tremors can also trigger them (though these are far less frequent).

Characters entering an area where a collapse may be imminent should make a Perception Test to notice cracks in tunnel walls and ceilings, or weakened or rotting braces in the case of mine or kaer tunnels. Base the Difficulty Number for such tests on the visibility of the cracks or other faults. Characters with Knowledge skills associated with mining or underground exploration, such as Geology or Mining, may make appropriate Skill Tests in place of (or to add a bonus to) Perception Tests. Characters can detect potential cave-ins or collapses by sensing minor shifts and tremors in the earth. Typically, these shifts are harder to detect than a crack in a wall but are often a much more reliable warning of an impending collapse.

An imminent collapse cannot really be disarmed, except through elemental magic or the aid of an earth spirit at the gamemaster's discretion. The best thing for characters to do is leave the dangerous area and/or find shelter from the falling rocks. In the event of a cave-in or collapse, each character should make an Initiative Test and compare the result to the result of a Trap Initiative Test. If the character's result is higher, he escapes from the unstable area in time to escape the collapse. Any character whose test fails takes damage from the falling rocks and earth.

Treat cave-ins and collapsing tunnels as traps (see **Traps**, p. 108). The following sample statistics provide suggested ranges for the characteristics of this type of trap.

Cave-In Trap

Detection Difficulty: 6–10

Disarm Difficulty: See preceding text.

Trigger Condition: Collision or loud noise

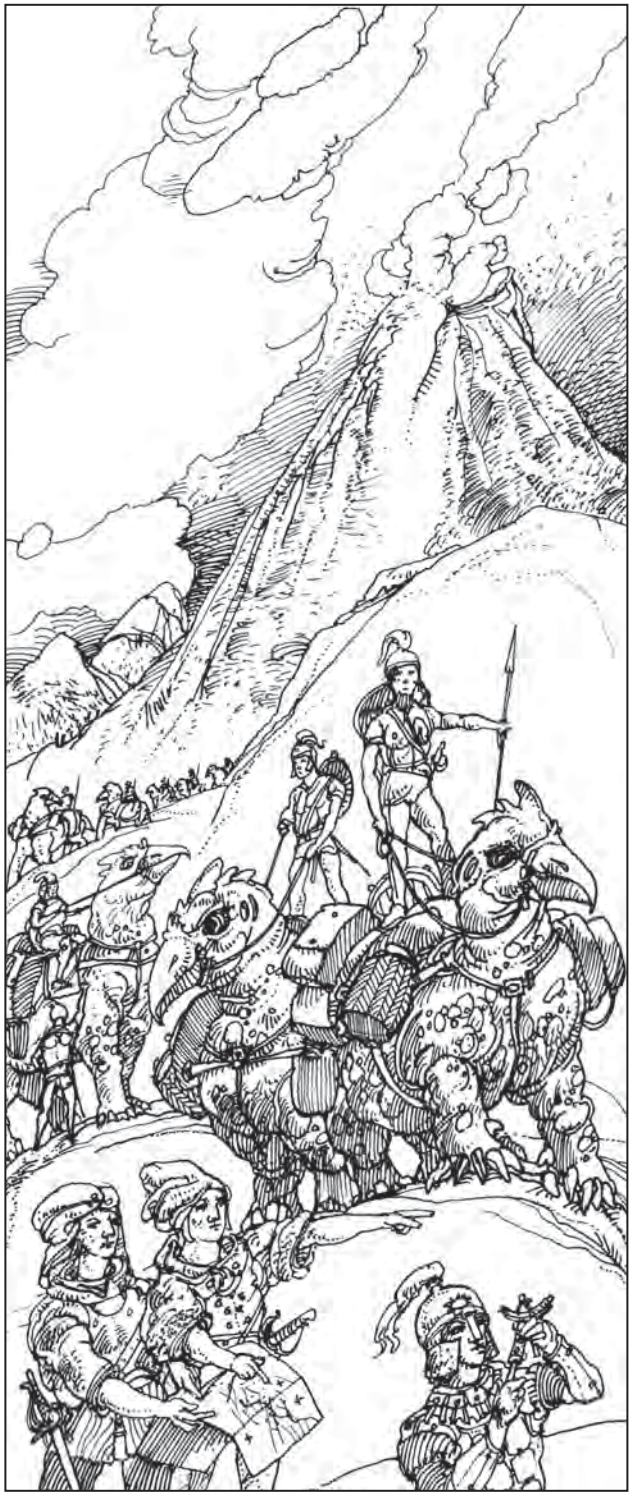
Trap Initiative: 7–12

Trap Effect: Damage step 12–18

Besides causing damage, cave-ins can also trap characters underground by blocking their way out of a cave or mine or burying them in rocks. In the latter case, trapped characters may also have to contend with a limited supply of fresh air. Gamemasters must determine how much air any trapped characters have and how long it will last before they begin to suffocate.

If the trapped characters attempt to dig themselves out, they must make a Strength Test each round against a Difficulty Number from 5 to 7, to reflect the difficulty of moving the fallen rock aside without triggering a second collapse. If the characters have talents, spells, or skills that the gamemaster deems appropriate for digging out, he may allow them to use those abilities in place of the Strength Tests. On a Poor result, the trapped characters make no progress freeing themselves. A Pathetic result causes a minor collapse that inflicts Step 7 damage to the character(s) doing the digging. No armor protects against this damage.

It takes an average of 10 result levels to dig out, though gamemasters may adjust this number as they see fit. Each result level achieved counts as 1 success. Each minor collapse reduces the character's accumulated-success tally by –1. For example, a character attempting to dig his way out achieves an Excellent result on his Strength Test. That result counts as 3 successes. On the next round, however, he gets a Pathetic result, causing a minor collapse. This costs him 1 of his 3 successes, leaving him with 2. He must now achieve 8 more successes to free himself.



Travel Hazards

Adventurers face serious risks traveling across Barsaive, especially when traveling over land. In many ways, the impersonal forces of nature can present a threat more challenging than any Horror or creature that characters might encounter. To survive in harsh conditions, characters must frequently use their wits and all the skills and talents at their command.

Here are several common hazards that await adventurers as they travel through Barsaive's wilderness.

Exposure and Frostbite

Exposure to severe cold can seriously injure Name-givers. If a character spends time exposed to the cold without adequate protection (warm clothing or some kind of magic), he runs the risk of frostbite.

For every half hour of exposure, the character suffers Step 4 damage. No armor protects against this damage. The gamemaster may increase the Damage step for exceptionally harsh conditions such as snowstorms or being buried beneath an avalanche. If the character remains in the cold long enough, he will eventually fall unconscious and freeze to death.

If any single Damage Test for exposure to cold exceeds the character's Wound Threshold, he suffers minor frostbite. Apply a –1 penalty to the character's Dexterity- or Strength-based Action Tests, depending on the affected body part. For example, a frostbitten finger would affect Dexterity, while a frostbitten calf might affect Strength.

If the character does not get to shelter within two hours of being frostbitten, he suffers from severe frostbite. At this point, the injury is considered a Wound and must be healed magically. (Any method of magical healing applicable to Wounds—such as a healing potion—will eliminate frostbite.) If left untreated, the frozen portions of flesh begin to rot and become infected. Unless infected portions are amputated, the character may die.

HIGH ALTITUDES

Double all Strain costs for characters operating at high altitudes to reflect the difficulty of breathing at such altitudes. Characters also tire more quickly at high altitudes. To reflect this, all characters—except for highland trolls, who are accustomed to the mountain environment—receive a –1 penalty to Fatigue Tests made in high mountain regions (see **Fatigue and Injury**, p. 120).

HEAT EXPOSURE

Exposure to intense heat, such as that of Death's Sea or underground volcanoes, can cause damage to characters lacking adequate protection. Such a character suffers Step 4 damage per hour of exposure and may also suffer dehydration if he is not carrying enough water. If heat exposure results in a Wound, treat it as a serious burn that will blister and require appropriate treatment. Extreme heat also cases fatigue. To reflect this, double all Strain costs and apply a –1 penalty to all Fatigue Tests in hot environments (see **Fatigue and Injury**, p. 120). Characters wearing armor heavy enough to impose an Initiative Penalty take Strain equal to the Initiative Penalty for every hour they travel in the armor, as well as every minute spent fighting in it.

DEHYDRATION

A human-sized Name-giver needs to drink at least 1 quart of water each day, assuming he doesn't get involved in any strenuous activity. Other Name-givers require less or more water, proportionate to their size. For each day that a character does not get sufficient water, he takes 3 Damage Points from dehydration. No armor protects against this damage. Additionally, he receives a penalty to his Recovery Tests equal to the number of days he has gone without adequate water. This damage may be added to any damage inflicted by heat exposure.

Alternatively, the gamemaster may treat dehydration as an injury and impose a –1 penalty to all Strength- or Toughness-based Action Tests (see **Fatigue and Injury**, p. 120).

SUFFOCATION AND DROWNING

Characters begin to suffocate whenever they cannot get sufficient oxygen into their lungs. Insufficient or depleted air in a mine shaft, being buried under snow, a 500-pound troll sitting on one's chest—these are just a few examples of such situations.

A character can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to his Toughness step. After that, he begins to take suffocation damage. In the first round that a character is suffocating, he takes Step 2 damage. This damage increases by +1 step during each subsequent round. No armor protects against this damage; suffocation damage does not cause Wounds, however. Strain-causing actions, such as combat, speed up the rate at which the character suffocates. Suffocating characters are considered Harried and their Movement rates are halved. Magical spells and effects that inflict suffocation (Suffocating Paste or Suffocation, for example) cause additional damage because of their magical nature. For these spells, use the effect as given in place of these rules.

Drowning occurs when a character cannot get sufficient oxygen because he is immersed in water. Rules for drowning appear in the description of the Swimming skill in the **Skills** chapter on p. 248 of the **Player's Compendium**.

SURVIVAL

Whether on foot or on horseback, traveling across Barsaive takes time. In order to survive extended periods of travel, characters must buy or otherwise acquire sufficient food and water. Though characters occasionally have the time to gather ample supplies of food and water for their trip, often circumstances force them to leave in a hurry. Taking off on an adventure or bolting out of town without sufficient food or water can quickly land a character in trouble.

Characters can use the Wilderness Survival skill to find water while in the wilderness (see the **Skills** chapter on p. 250 of the **Player's Compendium** for a full description).

WEATHER

Another challenge of traveling outdoors is surviving the elements. The gamemaster should use the weather to challenge his player characters from time to time. For example, as the characters travel through a ravine, the gamemaster might whip up a heavy storm that forces the characters to seek shelter, or he might mention the possibility of flash floods.

The effects of weather may have more to do with the story than with game mechanics. For example, a thunderstorm might spook the horses, causing them to throw their riders and flee; the detour to find shelter from the storm may range so far off the path that the group gets lost. Neither circumstance is life-threatening, though the horses may run off with much-needed supplies, or the delay may allow the evil Nethermancer more time to prepare a nasty surprise for the characters. Only extreme temperatures and heavy precipitation need produce game mechanic effects.

Precipitation most often causes problems with visibility, discussed below. Extreme temperatures may cause minor damage to the characters. For example, severe arctic temperatures on top of the Throal Mountains might cause Step 4 or 5 damage to characters dressed in inadequate clothing. Extreme heat, such as that encountered near Death's Sea, might cause the same level of damage, or might damage a character in the same way as dehydration. The gamemaster should determine the impact he wants weather to have in his game, and apply any game mechanics accordingly.

VISIBILITY

Visibility rarely poses a problem during the day under a bright sun. But how far and how well can characters see at night? Or in the darkened rooms of a kaer? Or during a torrential rain storm?

During daylight hours, with the sun overhead, a character can see clearly for several miles, depending on the terrain. On a bright, sunny day over clear terrain, for example, a character can see the Throal Mountains from up to 150 miles away, but would see only their outlines and virtually no details. To distinguish details, a character must be much closer to what he is looking at. Obviously, jungles and forests also limit characters' vision.

In order to notice someone or something, a character must be within at least 750 yards of the person or object. Beyond that distance, images begin to blur, losing distinguishing characteristics and markings. As a character approaches closer to an object or person, more details become visible. A character within 200 yards of a target can determine the identity of a person he knows or the

VISIBILITY TABLE

Condition	Short Range	Medium Range	Long Range
Daylight	20	200	750
Dawn/Dusk	15	125	500
Light fog	10	75	250
Heavy fog	2	5	10
Light rain/drizzle	15	175	350
Heavy rain	10	50	100
Night with moon	5	60	200
Night with no moon	5	15	30

type of creature or the race of the target. Spotting specific details requires a character to be within 20 yards of what he is looking at. As a rule of thumb, long range visibility extends out to 750 yards, medium range to 200 yards, and short range to 20 yards from the object of a character's gaze.

Note that the terms long, medium, and short range are used to simplify the discussion of visibility. These ranges *do not* correspond to the Ranges of missile and throwing weapons described in the **Combat** chapter on p. 408 of the **Player's Compendium**.

The distances listed above represent visibility ranges during normal daylight hours, in clear weather; in other words, under ideal conditions. Both the weather and time of day can reduce visibility ranges. The Visibility Table (p. 117) suggests guidelines for determining visibility ranges under various conditions.

Darkness

The Visibility Table, on p. 117, suggests visibility ranges for the natural darkness of night, which is often partially alleviated by a moon or stars. Characters within a cave or kaer must cope with total darkness that completely eliminates visibility. Without a light source, a character functions as if blind and suffers the movement and action penalties described for Darkness in the **Combat** chapter on p. 407 of the **Player's Compendium**. Typical light sources include campfires, torches, and lanterns. The Light Source Visibility Table suggests the effective ranges of light that these sources can provide. From these examples, the gamemaster can extrapolate the effectiveness of other light sources.

LIGHT SOURCE VISIBILITY TABLE

Light Source	Radius
Candle	2 yards
Torch	5 yards
Campfire	10 yards
Lantern	10 yards
Light Quartz	5 yards

Note that these are the effective visibility ranges. The character can see up to twice the distance shown, but incurs a Partial darkness penalty unless he possesses Low-Light Vision or a similar ability.

Getting Lost

Any number of circumstances can cause characters to lose their way. A fierce storm might force a group of adventurers to travel in the wrong direction, or the adventurers might detour to avoid a band of ork scorchers and lose their bearings. Because so much of Barsaive's landscape changed during the Scourge, even travelers following maps may get lost, especially if they are wandering in areas inadequately mapped before the Scourge. Getting lost poses potentially enormous risks for the unlucky traveler. Adventurers may wander around certain areas of Barsaive for years without encountering civilized settlements, and many small towns and villages are so isolated that they may know nothing of the nearest village, let alone major landmarks or trade routes.

The gamemaster should only force the characters out of their way to move the adventure forward. Having a group get lost just to watch them survive in the wild is only fun once, and may seriously frustrate the players. If, on the other hand, the characters get lost and happen to wander into a town being terrorized by a Horror, then throwing the characters off the track served a valid purpose and advanced the story. The gamemaster should be careful of using this technique too often, as it may make players feel manipulated.

Theran Slavers

Travelers in the region surrounding *Triumph* and south-western Barsaive face a danger unique to that region. The Therans who control the area hire mercenary bands to roam the countryside and capture hapless townspeople from the surrounding villages, to serve as slaves in Thera. Since the return of the Therans, slavery represents a very real danger in the region near those imperial outposts.

Wild Animals, Creatures, and Horrors

One of the most common perils of adventuring in **Earthdawn** is confronting the creatures and Horrors that inhabit the world. Many of Barsaive's wild beasts are little more than part of the scenery, but others are potentially dangerous opponents. Though some creatures are evil and attack characters on sight, others only attack to protect their young or to feed. Whatever the reason, characters will often find themselves fighting off creatures. On the other hand, some animals and magical creatures can be useful to player characters if properly trained.

For more information on animals, creatures, and their powers, refer to the **Creatures** chapter, p. 266.

Encountering Wild Animals and Creatures

Characters traveling through the wilderness most often encounter beasts in their natural habitats. This gives many beasts a camouflage bonus that increases the difficulty of spotting the beast. This holds particularly true for predators that sneak up on their prey. Additionally, heavy foliage, rain and darkness often provide cover for animals and enable creatures to approach characters unseen.

Detecting creatures and animals in the wilderness requires a successful Perception Test against the creature's or beast's Dexterity step, appropriately modified for the surrounding conditions. Natural camouflage usually adds +3 to the Difficulty Number. Heavy forest or jungle foliage adds +5, and heavy rain or darkness adds +7. If the creature is a predator stalking the characters,

the gamemaster makes an Action Test for the creature, using its Dexterity step or an adequate power. The result of that test, plus any appropriate modifier, is the Difficulty Number for detecting the animal. If the creature remains undetected, it may strike the characters with the advantage of Surprise (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 409 of the **Player's Compendium**).

When planning creature encounters, keep in mind that mundane animals are far more common than magical creatures or Horrors.

Fighting Wild Beasts

Wild animals and creatures can use many of the same combat options open to characters. Most animals favor charging or swooping attacks; they often Attack to Knockdown on their first attack and then follow up while their opponent lies prone. If characters enrage them—by trespassing on their lairs, nests or hunting grounds, for example—animals may attack quite aggressively. Generally, animals and creatures attempt surprise attacks, so apply Blindsided bonuses to their initial attack. Also, packs or flocks often attack a single opponent, which gives the opponent a Harried penalty.

Intelligent beasts can use many of the combat options and tactics described in the **Combat** chapter on p. 415 of the **Player's Compendium**, and they always use their surroundings to give themselves an advantage over intruders. Such a creature may also set traps or have various servitor creatures protecting the approaches to its lair.

Animal Training

The process of winning an animal's trust and training it to perform various tricks on command is described in the Animal Bond and Animal Training talents (see the **Talents** chapter on p. 166 of the **Player's Compendium**). Both of these talents can also be used as skills, and any character seeking to develop an animal companion should learn them to properly establish a rapport through which he can train an animal.

Keep a close eye on the number of animal companions that characters—especially Beastmasters—acquire. Animal companions are not pieces of equipment. They are living creatures that must be treated as friends, just as if they were fellow adepts. Animal companions need food, water, shelter, attention and affection from their Name-giver comrades, and failure to provide these things will have negative consequences.

A neglected animal will become more demanding, bothering the character for food, affection and attention at the most inopportune times. Neglect will also tend to make the companion less and less willing to do as the character asks. If seriously neglected or mistreated, a beast will either leave or turn on its former friend.

Stress the requirements of a training bond between character and animal companion to remind the player of the responsibilities his character is taking on. Such reminders become even more important if a character intends to take the animal as a familiar. A character must swear a blood oath to the familiar and will suffer the consequences of neglecting or mistreating it.

At the gamemaster's option, certain domesticated animals can become Loyal to a character without his using the Animal Bond skill or talent. Dogs and cats, which have long lived with Name-givers, can become Loyal through feeding and kind treatment. Horses and other domesticated mounts may also form bonds with Name-givers this way. Wild animals and magical creatures, on the other hand, must always be tamed and taught to respect their trainer before any training can take place.

Horrors

Unlike most creatures, the Horrors and their evil servants and constructs often deliberately attack characters. The Horrors enjoy inflicting pain and suffering on those around them, and isolated, sometimes foolish adventurers make excellent targets for their powers. However, not all Horrors attack their victims directly. Dreadfully patient, Horrors often use subtle means to draw more pain and agony from the victim than would result from a direct attack. For more information on Horrors, their minions, and their powers, see the **Horrors** chapter, p. 434.

Exploring Kaers and Citadels

Kaers and citadels lie scattered across Barsaive. In the aftermath of the Scourge, most kaers have opened, and their populations live in nearby towns and villages. The residents use the underground retreat as a shelter when needed or for storage. Most citadels have removed their protective domes and stand as they did before the Scourge, as castles and strongholds against attack. Adventurers should recognize that the citizens of small towns and villages may fear them simply because they are strangers. The scars of the Scourge are too fresh for people to easily accept the unknown. Most of the kaers that adventurers are likely to explore have already been opened, either breached during the Scourge by a Horror or opened voluntarily by the kaer's inhabitants after the Scourge ended. Opened kaers that survived the Scourge are the least appealing to explorers; in most cases, they contain nothing of value, unless the kaer's former residents use the place for storage.

Some kaers remain closed, their residents either dead or unaware that the Scourge has ended. These abandoned and dead kaers and citadels hold countless treasures and loot. Naturally, tales of these riches draw every adventurer ever to set foot outside his own community. In addition to fantastic wealth, these abandoned strongholds are also riddled with danger. Many serve as lairs for the creatures and Horrors that still lurk within, and offer other threats and challenges as well. Kaers that succumbed to Horrors or some other calamity during the Scourge are far more interesting to the average adventurer. Many such kaers have since become the lairs of various nasty creatures, from stingers and shadowmants to brithans and gargoyles. These creatures defend their homes aggressively, attacking characters who try to enter.

Sealed Kaers

Occasionally, explorers may find an unopened kaer with intact magical wards and defenses. Such kaers may still hold Name-givers unaware that the Scourge has ended and too afraid to emerge. Alternatively, the inhabitants may have died of plague or internal strife, in which case the kaer's treasures are undisturbed.

Kaers were designed to keep out the Horrors, who are both physically and magically powerful, and so entering a sealed kaer is no easy task. The greatest obstacles to entering a sealed kaer are its wards, or sealing spells, which shield the kaer from outside magical influences and keep out Horrors, spirits and other astral beings.

The rituals used to seal most kaers used Named spells, and so dispelling them is tough (see the **Spell Magic** chapter on p. 291 of the **Player's Compendium**). Typically, adepts attempting to dispel Named spells must obtain pattern items. But in the case of kaer-sealing spells, characters can study the runes that make up the wards and learn enough of a sealing spell's pattern to dispel the spell without a pattern item. To obtain the necessary information from ward runes, a character must spend at least 1 hour studying the runes and make a successful Read and Write Magic Test or Item History Test against the sealing spell's Dispel Difficulty. Most kaer-builders used Twelfth Circle sealing spells. However, gamemasters may decide that some kaers used spells of higher or lower Circles.

After obtaining the necessary pattern information, the character must make a Dispel Magic Test against the sealing spell. If the test succeeds, the ward is dispelled and the kaer doors can be opened—often a difficult task in itself. If the test fails, the character can try again, but the Difficulty Number increases by +2 for each subsequent attempt.

Kaer wards also make it quite difficult for anyone outside the kaer to communicate via magic with anyone inside. However, members of His Majesty's Exploratory Force of Throal have developed several spells to get around this problem. Kaer Knocking and Kaer Pictographs are two of the most common (see the **Wizardry Spells** chapter on p. 374 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Dealing With Traps

After entering a kaer, explorers must get past the many traps set by the kaer's original residents. Kaer-builders commonly filled kaer entryways with traps of all kinds intended to incapacitate or drive off Horrors that might manage to penetrate the kaer's wards and outer seals. In sealed kaers, many such traps are still in place and functioning; others may have been repaired or even improved by new inhabitants. Spike traps, blade traps, pits and crushing traps are the most common physical traps found in kaers. Magical traps were also frequently employed as well, such as those that cast terrible spells like Onion Blood and Skin Shift on their victims. See **Traps**, on p. 108, for more information and sample traps.

Dangerous Kaer Dwellers

Horrors and other intelligent inhabitants of ruined kaers may set traps, wards and other barriers to capture, harass or incapacitate intruders in and around the entrance of their lair. For example, the Named Horror Artificer (p. 470) is well known for the fiendish traps it lays for unsuspecting explorers.

Though most of these kaer-dwellers are Horrors or Horror constructs, some kaers have become havens for Name-giver cults such as the Horror-worshipping Cult of the Great Hunter. Many kaers inhabited by Horrors or cults set cadaver men to guard entry tunnels; most often, these guards are the re-animated corpses of the kaer's former residents. In some instances, Named Horrors use Horror constructs as guards. Jehuthra, bone shamblers, black mantises and blood bees are among their favorites.

See the **Horrors** chapter, p. 434, for more information.

Fatigue and Injury

The rules for dealing with damage in **Earthdawn** are designed to reflect significant injuries inflicted in combat with creatures, Horrors or enemy Name-givers. Even without combat, however, journeying through Barsaive's wilderness is often risky and arduous. Several days of relatively uneventful travel can often leave characters fatigued or injured. The following rules allow players and gamemasters to incorporate fatigue and minor injuries such as sprained ankles, burns and other impairments into their games.

Generally, minor injuries such as sprained ankles, severe blisters from ill-fitting footwear, serious sunburns and so on inflict a –1 penalty to any Action Tests involving one appropriate Attribute of the injured character. The gamemaster determines which Attribute is affected by which type of injury.

Some common minor injuries are described below. Minor ailments such as colds and mild fevers are considered injuries for purposes of these rules. This list does not describe all possible minor injuries characters may suffer—gamemasters can create additional injuries if desired, patterned on the following examples.

Bad Food or Water

A character who eats bad food or drinks unsafe water may suffer from any number of maladies, from nausea to diarrhea to fever and/or flu. Most often, a character who eats bad food or drinks bad water suffers a –1 penalty to his Toughness step, though this penalty can affect a character's Strength or Perception step instead, at the gamemaster's discretion.

Impose this type of injury only when a character eats or drinks something potentially dangerous (such as eating a poisonous animal or drinking obviously dirty water) without taking precautions. Recovering from the effects of bad food or water takes at least 2 days.

Burns

Burns are typically difficult to treat, prone to infection and slow to heal completely. Minor burns (heat-exposure damage below a character's Wound Threshold) are considered injuries and impose a –1 penalty to the afflicted character's Strength Tests.

At the gamemaster's discretion, a character may also receive a Wound per standard rules if he suffers fire- or heat-related damage that exceeds his Wound Threshold. Burn Wounds heal twice as slowly as normal Wounds (requiring two Recovery Tests, or the equivalent in healing magic) and must be carefully treated with clean dressings and poultices to keep them from becoming infected. Many of the healing herbs described in **On the Healing Arts**, p. 128, can help prevent infection and speed the healing of burns.

Cold

Characters getting caught in a torrential downpour or other severe weather can catch colds, especially if they are ill-prepared for rain and/or travel through terrain prone to rain and snowstorms, such as the high mountain slopes. As with bad food or water, impose this injury only on characters who take few or no preventive measures when planning a trip through territory with bad weather.

Colds are debilitating. A character who catches a cold suffers a –1 penalty to any or all of his Strength, Toughness, Dexterity, or Perception steps, at the gamemaster's discretion. The character will take at least 5 days to recover.

Fatigue

Characters normally travel 8 hours per day when walking or riding, but in some instances may need to travel for longer durations. A character or mount (or both) that travels for more than 8 hours per day can suffer from fatigue, depending on how hard the character pushes himself. In addition to fatigue, mounts also suffer the effects described above.

Each level of fatigue causes a – 1 penalty to all of the character's Action Tests (including further Fatigue Tests). For example, a character with 1 level of fatigue suffers a –1 penalty to all of his Action Tests, while a character with 3 levels of fatigue suffers a –3 penalty.

For every 2 hours (or portion thereof) beyond 8 that a character travels in a single day, that character must make a Toughness (7) Test as a Fatigue Test. If the test fails, the character suffers 1 level of fatigue. This rule also applies to mounts.

Fever

Fevers often accompany colds but can also occur when a character is exposed to other diseases or when a wound becomes infected. Characters succumb to fevers most often when traveling through the jungles, where they are often bitten by disease-carrying insects. A fever makes a character light-headed and nauseous,

and so an adventurer who catches a fever suffers a –1 penalty to all Action Tests based on Perception. Recovery from a fever takes at least 3 days.

Severe Blisters

Characters with inadequate or improper footwear often blister their feet. If left unattended, blisters can become infected. This severely limits a character's mobility, not to mention hurting a lot! Blisters impose a –1 penalty to all Action Tests based on an affected character's Dexterity and take at least 1 day to heal.

Strained Arm or Wrist Muscle

Much like a sprained ankle, a strained arm or wrist muscle can occur when a character missteps and falls or over-exerts himself. In game terms, this kind of strain occurs when a character rolls a Pathetic result on a Strength Test to lift a heavy object, or while performing some other Strength Test where the possibility of injury exists—such as breaking down doors, raising fallen tree trunks, lifting (or trying to lift) an unconscious or semi-conscious obsidiman, and so on.

A character who strains a muscle suffers a –1 penalty to all Action Tests based on Strength. The muscle takes at least 2 days to heal.

Sprained Ankle

Characters can sprain an ankle when traveling in rough or rocky terrain. To cross a stretch of rough ground, the gamemaster may have all the characters make Dexterity Tests against a Difficulty Number between 4 and 6, depending on the specific terrain. Characters whose tests fail sprain their ankles and receive a –1 penalty to all Action Tests based on Dexterity. A sprained ankle takes at least 2 days to heal.

Sunburn

Characters who spend a lot of time in the sun without wearing protective clothing can get badly sunburned, especially in and around the Badlands, the hinterlands or when traveling by airship or riverboat. A badly sunburned character suffers a –1 penalty to all Action Tests based on Strength or Toughness, at the gamemaster's discretion. Extremely severe sunburns can also result in heat stroke (see **Heat Exposure**, p. 117). A sunburn takes at least 2 days to heal.

Recovering from Injuries

Characters can heal a minor injury with one night's uninterrupted sleep (8 hours) and a Recovery Test. Before healing, however, the character must wait the minimum number of days listed in the appropriate injury description. For example, a character who suffers a sprained ankle must wait at least 2 days before he can make a Recovery Test to heal it.

After the required sleep, a character can make his Recovery Test and heal one injury. The character must spend a Recovery Test to heal the injury even if he has taken no other damage. Injuries do not affect the healing of Wounds, nor do Wounds prevent the healing of injuries.

Characters using appropriate healing aids need not wait to sleep before healing themselves. The magic of healing aids speeds up the healing process. Unless noted otherwise, a character can automatically heal one injury for each booster or healing potion he uses.

Recovering from Fatigue

To recover from fatigue, a character must rest for 4 hours for each level of fatigue suffered. (These 4 hours are in addition to the normal 8 hours of rest that most Name-givers require each day.) During this time, characters attempting to recover from fatigue cannot take any strenuous actions, such as practicing talents or skills, foraging, or hunting.

Brief exertion, such as quickly fighting off creatures attacking a character's camp, does not interrupt this rest unless the combat lasts for more than 15 or 20 minutes.

Poison

Several creatures in the world of **Earthdawn** use poisonous bite and sting attacks, and assassins and thieves often use poison on their weapons. The game mechanics of poison depend on three parameters: effect, onset time, and duration.

Effect

Poisons can have a number of different effects. Most commonly, the poison directly inflicts damage on its victim. Other poisons paralyze, debilitate, or instantly kill their victims.

Most poisons have a **Spell Defense** and a **Step Number**. The Spell Defense rating measures how well the poison resists magical treatment by ability, spell, or magical item. Most poi-

POISON TABLE			
Poison Type	**Spell Defense/ Step Number**	**Onset Time**	**Duration**
Damage	5–9	Instant/1–2 days	1–6 rounds
Debilitation	5–7	Instant	Effect Test days
Paralysis	5–9	Instant	Effect Test hours
Death	10–13	Instant/1–2 days	Instant

sons have a Spell Defense of 6 or more, though a good rule of thumb is that the Spell Defense of a poison equals the poison's step number.

A poison's step number is used for Effect Tests. When poison affects a character, either by injection, ingestion, or contact, the gamemaster makes an Effect Test for the poison and interprets the test result according to the poison's type of effect: paralysis, debilitation, damage, or instant death.

Paralysis

For a character affected by paralytic poison, compare the poison's Effect Test result to the target's Spell Defense. On an Excellent result, the poison paralyzes the character for a number of hours equal to the test result (or longer or shorter as the gamemaster wishes). A Good result causes a –2 penalty to all the character's Action Tests for the duration of the poison's effect. An Average result causes a –1 penalty to all the character's Action Tests.

Debilitation

Debilitating poisons create more severe adverse effects than paralytic poisons. For a character affected by a debilitating poison, compare the poison's Effect Test result against the character's Toughness step. An Average result causes a –1 penalty to all of the character's Action Tests for as long as the poison affects him. A Good result causes a –2 penalty; an Excellent result causes a –3 penalty; an Extraordinary result causes a –4 penalty.

This penalty lasts for a number of days equal to the Effect Test result. If he wishes, the gamemaster may lengthen or shorten the duration.

Damage

Most poisons used cause actual damage rather than simply creating a disadvantage for the affected character. The Effect Test result is the number of Damage Points the character takes.

Mystic Armor does not usually protect against poison, though the gamemaster may allow it to protect the character against certain magical poisons.

Death

Poisons that cause instant death must be handled in a different way to other toxins. In this case, the Toughness Test a character makes to resist a poison determines whether the character lives or dies, rather than simply determining how severely the poison affects him. For death poisons, the character makes a Toughness Test against the poison's Spell Defense.

If the test fails, the character dies. On an Average result, he remains alive, but takes 2 Wounds from the poison. On a Good result, the character takes 1 Wound, but otherwise remains unharmed. If the character gets an Excellent result, the poison does not affect him.

Some poisons that cause death take a long time to kill their victims. A character affected by this type of poison begins to die when he fails his Toughness Test (as described above). Each day the character becomes weaker and weaker, suffering from effects similar to a debilitating poison, until he is dead. Poisons that cause instant death remain rare in Barsaive.

Onset Time

The onset time describes how quickly a poison affects a character. Most poisons affect the character immediately upon exposure. Other poisons take longer to affect a character; for example, many debilitating poisons have onset times as long as several days.

Duration

Some poisons affect characters over a prolonged period, referred to as the poison's duration. For example, many poisons that cause damage affect a character for a specific number of combat rounds. A debilitating poison might affect a character once a week for 4 weeks. Though most death poisons affect characters immediately, some death poisons can be used to slowly kill the victim over several days. The descriptions of the poisons below include each type's typical duration.

Methods of Exposure

Characters can be exposed to poison in a variety of ways. The most common is through the bite or sting of a poisonous creature. Weapons covered in poison must usually cause a Wound for the poison to take effect. Some poisons work only when ingested; the poison must be mixed with a person's food or drink in order to affect him. Other poisons work on contact, taking effect when a character touches the toxin.

The poisons described suggest standard step numbers, onset times, and durations. This list is not exhaustive; it only gives the gamemaster a guideline for dealing with poison in his game.

Poison Resistance Tests

When a poison enters a character's body, the character must make a Toughness Test against the Spell Defense of the poison. If the test succeeds, the character has resisted the effects of the poison. If the character fails the test, the character suffers the effects of the poison. The gamemaster makes an Effect Test for the poison, interpreting the results according to the poison effect types described below.

If a poison affects a character for more than a round, he may make a Toughness Test each round to resist the effects of the poison. Poisons that affect a character for a number of hours or days allow a character to make a Toughness Test each hour or day, respectively. As soon as the character makes a successful Toughness Test, the poison no longer affects him.

Antidotes and Poultices

Fortunately for the characters, antidotes exist that counter the effects of many poisons. Characters usually use one of two types of concoctions to counter poisons: antidotes and poultices. Antidotes are potions that halt the effects of a specific type of poison, such as snake venom, dragon venom, and so on. Poultices work as salves to counter the effects of all types of poisons. See the **Goods and Services** chapter on p. 450 of the **Player's Compendium** for the effects of specific antidotes and poultices.

Poison Descriptions

Name-givers have a sad talent for turning Nature's bounty into weapons against each other, and medicinal herbs and other substances are no exception. From the lethal experiments of the ill-intentioned and the insatiable but thoughtless curiosity of those

Name-givers foolish enough to try untested herbs or remedies without proper caution, we derive our knowledge of poisons.

Of the many different poisons known, only a handful see regular use. Some typical poisons are described below.

Black Brine

Type: Debilitation
Onset Time: 2 rounds
Duration: 2 hours
Spell Defense: 6
Step Number: 9

Black brine, a dark oil that smells strongly of salted fish, is extracted from the shelgar fish native to Lake Vors. Black brine may be ingested but is more commonly used on the tips of weapons. Certain t'skrang of House Ishkarat dip their arrowheads and dagger-blades in black brine, and rumor has it that it is quite popular among the secret societies who use it to advance their unknown ends.

Black brine causes muscle weakness and a painful stiffness in the tendons, making it difficult to move quickly or perform any feats of strength such as fighting or running. The toxin wears off within a few hours.

Black Mercy

Type: Paralysis
Onset Time: Instant
Duration: 6 hours
Spell Defense: 8
Step Number: 11

This poison comes from the pollen of the black mercy flower. When the flower reproduces, its pollen often attracts animals, which soon die; their decomposing bodies enrich the soil around the plant. When ingested or inhaled, black mercy induces a powerful sense of euphoria and vivid hallucinations in which the victim imagines his fondest wishes granted. While under the poison's influence, the victim is unaware of the world around him. If he is given regular doses—for example, if he unwisely lingers near enough to the plant to keep breathing the pollen—he will eventually die from starvation or thirst. A single dose, however, wears off in a matter of hours with no lasting effect.

Elfbane

Type: Death (see text)
Onset Time: 1 hour
Duration: Permanent
Spell Defense: 8
Step Number: 10

This rare flower grows in the northern reaches of Barsaive, just north of the Serpent River. The blossoms are pale blue with three petals, each roughly the size of a human's thumb. They contain a poison that affects only elves; it is commonly extracted by boiling the flowers and rendering their juices down to a thin, bitter-smelling liquid that can be mixed with wine or poured on the edges of weapons. Elfbane causes wracking joint pain, muscle spasms and eventual death unless counteracted by an antidote such as the mahogany trinrose.

According to legend, during the Separation of the Elven Court before the Scourge, bitter feelings ran high on both sides. Many elves cast out by Queen Alachia's decrees were so heartsick at being torn from the heart of elven culture that they preferred to die rather than obey, and so they took their own lives. The clumps of elfbane that grow in small patches throughout northern Barsaive are said to have grown where the exiles spilled their blood.

Eyebite

Type: Special (see text)
Onset Time: 3 rounds
Duration: 4 hours
Spell Defense: 6
Step Number: 8

Eyebite is a greasy, dark liquid drawn from the boiled roots of the corak shrub, a hardy plant that grows in patches in and around Barsaive's mountain ranges. Eyebite must be ingested and mixes well with many foods, though not with drink. Only a few drops are needed to affect most Name-givers; trolls and obsidimen require a small cupful, on account of their greater size.

The poison's bitter, burnt taste is most often disguised in spiced meat dishes or savory sauces. Eyebite causes temporary blindness; a victim's eyes appear to have no pupils, merely irises. When the drug wears off, usually within a few hours, the victim's eyesight returns.

According to certain adventurers' accounts in the Great Library, eyebite is sometimes administered to imprisoned magicians and adepts to prevent them from using spells and talents that require clear vision.

Fireleaf

Type: Damage
Onset Time: 1 round
Duration: 1 round (see text)
Spell Defense: 6
Step Number: 8

This ground creeper bears small, dark and glossy, arrow-shaped leaves that some say resemble tongues of dark flame. The leaves produce a colorless oil that severely irritates the skin, causing a red, itching rash similar to a mild burn. Though uncomfortable, the rash is largely harmless. Distillations of fireleaf oil can cause more serious burns, blistering and scarring where they touch bare skin. The pain and itching of fireleaf can be relieved with soothing poultices of aloe and mist blossoms, both of which help to keep down swelling and promote swift healing.

Hemlock

Type: Death
Onset Time: 10 minutes
Duration: Permanent
Spell Defense: 7
Step Number: 11

The juices of this fleshy plant are a deadly poison. When consumed, they cause nausea, chills, convulsions and, eventually, death. Victims of hemlock poisoning often feel cold and lethargic when the toxin begins to work. Hemlock grows in cool, damp places and is most prevalent along the Serpent River and its tributaries.

Keesra

Type: Paralysis (see text)
Onset Time: Instant
Duration: Effect Test hours
Spell Defense: 7
Step Number: 10

Keesra is most often made by windlings from the same berries that they use for keesris wine. Victims who absorb keesra through their skin fall into a deep sleep and awaken some hours later with splitting headaches and smelling of overripe berries. Windling Warriors use keesra on the nets in which they capture their enemies.

Laésal

Type: Paralysis (see text)
Onset Time: 5 rounds
Duration: Effect Test hours
Spell Defense: 8
Step Number: 12

Native to the Blood Wood, the laésal tree bears a fruit similar to a golden cherry. Eaten fresh, laésal fruit is sweet and produces feelings of mild euphoria. The fleshy red center of the fruit is filled with small, dark seeds in place of a cherry's hard pit, however. The seeds can be ground into a powder that dissolves easily in food or liquids (wine is particularly effective, especially wine made from laésal fruit). When consumed, laésal powder causes the victim to fall into a deep sleep for a brief time; when he wakes, he has forgotten the experiences of the past several hours. There is no known way for a victim to recover these lost memories.

Laésal is often used by blood warders when removing intruders that they do not wish to imprison or kill outright from the Blood Wood.

Night Pollen

Type: Damage
Spell Defense: 6
Onset Time: 1 round
Step Number: 10
Duration: 3 rounds

This fine, gray powder comes from the night-blooming moon creeper that grows from tree to tree throughout the Servos Jungle. Inhaling night pollen causes irritation of the throat and lungs, severe coughing and shortness of breath. Some victims of this poison may suffocate, but most recover soon after exposure. Warriors of the Servos tribes sometimes use night pollen as a weapon, blowing it from hollow tubes into the faces of their enemies.

Padendra

Type: Paralysis, Death
Spell Defense: 7
Onset Time: 2 rounds
Step Number: 10
Duration: Effect Test hours (Paralysis); Permanent (Death)

The only fatal poison known to be used by windlings, padendra may be injected or ingested. It causes nausea and painful muscle cramps, which paralyze the victim until he dies. Because windlings prize life so highly, they never use padendra lightly, and carefully guard the secret of its production.

Some scholars of healing believe that the poison comes from the same insect that produces the less-deadly whadrya venom.

Remis Berries

Type: Paralysis, Death
Spell Defense: 7
Onset Time: 2 hours
Step Number: 9
Duration: Effect Test hours (Paralysis); Permanent (Death)

The small white berries of the remis bush are gathered in the dark of the moon, when they reach their full potency. Pressing the berries yields a milky juice that can cause painful muscle cramps when ingested, eventually leading to paralysis and death.

The human Dinganni tribes collect remis berries on their travels and frequently sell them to traders. "Whiteberry wine," or "mother's milk," as the potion is mockingly called in some circles, is commonly sold in the markets of Kratas to assassins and poisoners.

Shadowmant Venom

Type: Damage
Spell Defense: 8
Onset Time: Instant
Step Number: 9
Duration: 10 rounds

This dark, syrupy liquid drips from the stinger in a shadowmant's tail. Highly toxic when mingled with a victim's blood, shadowmant venom is the favored poison for coating spear points and sword blades. Shadowmant venom is so virulent that it can kill any Name-giver in a matter of minutes. It also resists all treatments other than strong healing magic. Thankfully, the dangers involved in acquiring shadowmant venom keeps this toxin expensive and rare. In fact, many would-be venom collectors end up sampling their potential wares first-hand in the dark caves where the creatures hunt.

Whadrya Venom

Type: Paralysis
Spell Defense: 6
Onset Time: Instant
Step Number: 10
Duration: 1 hour

Whadrya venom is derived from the natural venom of the common wasp. The venom seeps through the skin of its victims and temporarily paralyzes them. Windlings often use it to tip blowgun darts. It must be handled carefully, as even small amounts absorbed through the skin will affect the user.

Witherfang Venom

Type: Special (see text)
Spell Defense: 7
Onset Time: Instant
Step Number: 12
Duration: Permanent

This thin, clear liquid comes from the stinger of the witherfang serpent, a creature found in and around the Blood Wood. When properly stored in an airtight container, the poison retains its potency for up to a year.

Witherfang venom must enter the victim's bloodstream through a cut in the skin; ingesting it produces no effect. The serpent's bite causes the affected limb or area of the body to wither and weaken until it becomes useless. The venom alone is less potent but causes severe weakness and muscle pain.

No known antidote for witherfang venom exists, apart from healing magic. Rumors persist that some Archers among the blood elves coat their arrowheads with witherfang venom.

Disease

Many diseases exist in Barsaive, including some that have been known from the beginnings of history. Other illnesses vanished during the Scourge, but more have emerged since the Scourge's end to take their place. Thus, the diagnosis of disease remains a difficult and challenging art, all the more so because so much priceless knowledge was lost during the Scourge.

Diseases in **Earthdawn** work like poisons. Each disease has a standard onset time, a given duration, a specific effect, a Spell Defense rating and an Effect step. See **Poison**, on p. 121, for more information on these terms.

Methods of Exposure

Most reputable healers recognize the following basic truths about diseases. First, Name-givers usually contract illnesses by eating or drinking tainted food or water or by touching someone who is infected. Less often, diseases are spread by breathing the air near an infected person or being bitten by vermin that carry infection with them. And many diseases have an affinity with dirt and filth, and so cleanliness of body and surroundings is every Name-giver's strongest weapon against infection.

Characters can catch a disease from exposure to a disease-carrying Name-giver or creature, or from disease-prone environments such as jungles and swamps. A character exposed to a disease must make an immediate Toughness Test against the disease's Spell Defense to determine if he has become infected. If the test succeeds, the character resists the disease. If the test fails, the character comes down with the illness, which begins to take effect after the onset time has expired.

Many diseases cause minor symptoms during onset that allow other characters to detect and diagnose them. However, some diseases produce no visible symptoms until the character has developed a full-blown case. After the initial infection (the first failed Toughness Test), an infected character may make up to two more Toughness Tests to throw off the disease. The first test is made when the onset time expires, the second halfway through the disease's duration. If either test succeeds, the character recovers after the duration listed in the disease description.

If both tests fail, the character and his companions can only let the disease run its course and hope for the best. If the disease is Deadly, the character may very well die at the end of the disease's duration unless he receives additional treatment.

Disease Treatments

Diseases can be treated with herbal medicines and the Physician skill, as well as by magic. Gamemasters should determine exact herbal treatments for the various diseases in their games, based on the following guidelines. First, any disease whose effects act like a poison may be treated with any remedy that works against poisons. For example, dragon's tongue, serpent vine and star root (see **Natural Medicines** in the **The Healing Arts** chapter, p. 129) can all be used to treat disease.

These simple remedies give an infected character additional Toughness Tests or provide a bonus for these tests. If desired, the gamemaster may create other remedies that work in the same manner. Other treatments, such as magical ones, can also completely cure a disease if applied correctly.

Diseases and Their Effects

The diseases listed below provide rules for using them in your games. Many additional diseases exist in Barsaive, however, along with plagues and illnesses spawned by curses, Horrors and magic gone wrong. Feel free to invent new and insidious diseases to inflict on your players as they explore Barsaive. Generally speaking, a disease should provide some obstacle or limitation for a character to overcome, rather than simply laying him flat on his back for a week of game time. Playing sick for a whole game isn't much fun.

Following are descriptions of several diseases and treatments known to healers in most regions of Barsaive.

Bone Plague

Type: Debilitation
Onset Time: 2–3 days
Duration: 3–4 weeks
Spell Defense: 6
Step Number: 9

Bone plague begins with a mild fever, a feeling of listlessness and pains in the joints. Over the course of a few days, the victim becomes progressively more fatigued, and his joints turn rubbery. In serious cases, the victim's joints and bones become so weak that they no longer function as they should; he cannot stand, walk, hold onto things or lift so much as a feather.

The illness itself is not fatal and passes within a few weeks even if left untreated. However, the weakness and paralysis that it causes can do great harm if the victim is far from help when the disease takes hold. There are cases where bone plague swept through a small village, striking down everyone virtually at once. With no able-bodied persons to help the sufferers eat and drink, many poor victims starved to death.

Those recovering from bone plague require a week's rest and hearty food to fully regain their strength. Increased appetite is a sure sign that the disease is departing.

Effect: Each week that a character is infected with bone plague, make a Disease Effect Test against the character's Toughness step. While the effect of the illness is treated like a Debilitating Poison, the penalty only affects tests for physical actions. If the penalty is equal to or greater than the character's Strength or Dexterity step, the character becomes too weak to stand or move on his own.

Penalties are recovered at a rate of 1 point per day of rest after the end of the bone plague's duration.

Death's Caress

Type: Death
Onset Time: 3–6 hours
Duration: 4–5 days
Spell Defense: 8
Step Number: 12

Also called fire plague in some areas of Barsaive, Death's caress is the most deadly and virulent plague known to us. It can be passed in water or food or from touching an infected person—the blood and other body fluids of victims are especially dangerous. Death's caress brings high fever, sweating, chills and painful muscle cramps. Victims become extremely sensitive to touch, smell, sound and light. Often, they must be placed on the softest possible surface in a darkened and quiet room, lest their own tortured senses drive them mad.

If the illness is left untreated, the fever burns the victim up from the inside until no more moisture remains in his body. Many victims see visions of Death's fiery kingdom while afflicted by this plague, and some scholars speculate that Death created the disease to avenge his imprisonment. Places where outbreaks of Death's caress are known to have occurred are shunned by the wise, to prevent infection. The bodies and clothing of victims are usually burned.

We know of no cure for Death's caress, save for powerful healing magic. Certain methods of treatment offer comfort to the sufferer and may even give him strength enough to hold on to life while the illness runs its course—but this happens rarely. Most victims of Death's caress succumb within days of first displaying the symptoms. The principal treatment is to bring the fever down, using cool water or even ice (if it can be had). The patient must also be made to drink as much water as possible, to keep the proper balance between the elements in his body.

Effect: Death's caress is one of the few deadly diseases listed here. A character who fails all tests to overcome this illness is likely to die at the end of the disease's duration without powerful magical healing.

Horrorfever

Type: Debilitation **Spell Defense:** 12
Onset Time: 20 days **Step Number:** 12
Duration: 12 hours (or more; see text)

A cyclical fever, this affliction earned its name because the victim experiences nightmares and night terrors in the illness's active phases. The disease is actually spread by flies and other disgusting insects, not by Horrors.

Effect: The gamemaster makes a disease Effect Test every 20 days against the character's Toughness step. If the test succeeds, the result level determines the duration of the fever. Each feverish episode lasts for a minimum of 12 hours, +12 additional hours for each result level above Average. The afflicted character suffers a –6 penalty to all of his Action Tests during the fever bouts, and sustained mental effort is impossible; the character cannot cast spells, read, engage in meaningful discussions, and so on. Administering the right antidote counters the disease's effects.

Lung-Rot

Type: Debilitation **Spell Defense:** 7
Onset Time: 1–4 months **Step Number:** 7
Duration: Chronic (see text)

Lung-rot—sometimes called galloping lung-rot—seems particularly prevalent in cold and damp regions. After the initial infection, it takes a few months to manifest—its marks are congestion of the chest, coughing, labored breathing and a mild fever. Those fortunate enough to contract a mild case of lung-rot usually recover within ten days or so, though they may suffer permanent damage if the illness is left untreated. Such patients often suffer from shortness of breath and a weakened constitution for the rest of their lives. In serious cases, the fever rises to dangerous levels, and the victim becomes gradually weaker until he no longer has sufficient strength to breathe.

The best-known treatment for lung-rot is Rianna's fan, a small forest-dwelling plant that grows in clusters around trees and stumps. The plant is Named for its broad, fan-shaped leaves, which are said to be the same shade of dark green as the legendary elf healer's eyes. Boiling the leaves produces steam that relieves congestion and eases breathing, as well giving off a strong, clean odor that freshens and cleanses the air.

Effect: Each month that a character suffers from lung-rot, make a Disease Effect Test against the character's Toughness step. Treat the effect as a Debilitating Poison, with a maximum penalty of –2 per test. This penalty affects only physical Attributes: Dexterity, Strength and Toughness. If the penalty becomes equal to or higher than the character's Toughness step, the character dies.

The disease is chronic, and so its effects continue until the character is healed by mundane or magical treatment. Once the disease is cured, make a final Disease Effect Test against the character's Toughness step. If the test yields an Excellent or better result, the disease scars the character's lungs and permanently reduces his Dexterity, Strength and Toughness values by –3 each.

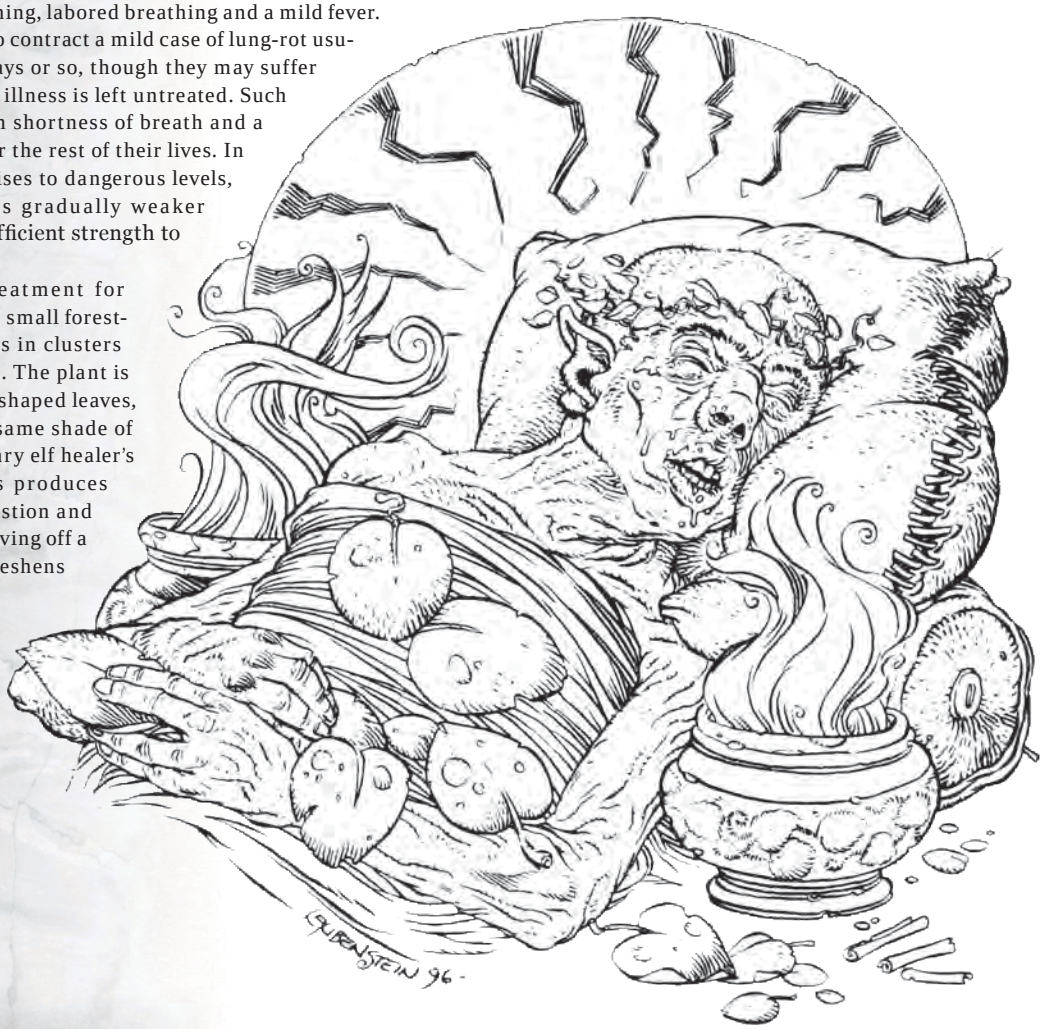
Quaking Fever

Type: Debilitation **Spell Defense:** 6
Onset Time: 1–3 days **Step Number:** 6
Duration: 7–10 days

Quaking fever generally breaks out in regions full of marshes and stagnant waters, such as the Mist Swamps and the Servos Jungle. Symptoms include swelling in the throat, fever, trembling limbs, an irritated nose and throat, and coughing fits. As this disease is not contagious, touching or being near victims of it poses no danger to others.

There is no specific cure for quaking fever, but it is not fatal unless the sufferer is already severely weakened in some way. In most cases, it passes within seven to ten days. In the meantime, many common plants may help alleviate the coughing fits and running nose (which are universally acknowledged to be the most troublesome of the symptoms).

Effect: Treat the effects of quaking fever like a Debilitating Poison. This disease is never fatal.



Smiling Death

Type: Debilitation
Onset Time: 1 week
Duration: 2 weeks
Spell Defense: 6
Step Number: 10

This strange disease can be caught from tainted water or from contact with an infected person—even breathing the air too near an infected person may expose one to contagion. The marks of smiling death, which appear about a week after infection, include headaches, blurred vision, high fever, sweating and muscle cramps severe enough to incapacitate the patient.

A few days after the illness sets in, victims suffer from facial grimaces and respiratory spasms that resemble smiling and faint laughter. In the most serious cases, victims lapse into unconsciousness after a week or so and die a few days afterward. In the disease's early stages, patients must be kept warm, made to rest and given plenty of fluids, along with herbal teas to purge the body. Usually, healing magic can cure smiling death even after the patient has lapsed into a coma, provided the healer is powerful enough and the patient has been unconscious for no more than two days.

Effect: Make a Disease Effect Test every three days for characters infected with smiling death. Treat the disease's effect like a Debilitating Poison. If the penalty becomes equal or greater than the character's Toughness step, the character dies. Otherwise, he eventually recovers.

Enforced rest and plenty of fluids allow an afflicted character to recover and remove the penalty at a rate of 1 point per day, which should be enough to keep the character alive in most cases.

Stenchfoot

Type: Debilitation
Onset Time: 1–4 days
Duration: 1–2 weeks (see text)
Spell Defense: 6
Step Number: 8

This grisly parasitic disease usually affects lower extremities first, as it is most often contracted by walking in boggy ground and picking up parasites through the feet. This disease causes flesh to rot, with blood poisoning eventually setting in.

Effect: The gamemaster must make a Disease Effect Test for the afflicted character every 48 hours in jungle or swamp conditions, but may be more lenient in other climes. For example, if a character escapes the jungle or bog to a cool and dry environment, the test might only be necessary every one to two weeks. If the result level achieved by the disease is Good or better, the disease progresses. A Good result reduces the character's Toughness and Charisma steps by –2 each.

After a minimum of two reductions to the character's Toughness step, the gamemaster makes an extra test for the disease against the character and an Average or better result level means the character loses an extremity. Most often the extremity lost is the place where the disease first manifested, but can be anywhere on the body: a foot, a hand, the nose, an ear, and so on.

The gamemaster must improvise the results of this loss, but some effects are obvious. For example, a character with one hand cannot use a bow, will use a shield strapped to his arm with difficulty, and so on. A character cannot replace lost body parts by healing the disease, but other effects of the disease disappear once it is healed.

Walking Fever

Type: Death
Onset Time: 1–2 days
Duration: 3 weeks
Spell Defense: 7
Step Number: 9

Some scholars of the healing arts question whether walking fever is a true disease or not, but the illness strikes down unfortunate victims just the same. The fever is caused by exposure to the spores of the darkbloom fungus, which grows only in damp caves or dark patches of forest where sunlight does not reach under logs. At a certain point, the fungus releases a cloud of spores. Anyone who breathes in the spores develops the symptoms of walking fever within the next day or two: a sore throat, headaches and a mild fever. The fever progressively worsens until the victim eventually falls unconscious.

If the victim has strength enough to fight off the infection, he will awaken during the next day or two with no symptoms and will recover fully in a matter of days. A victim who succumbs to infection will also awaken after a day or so, but his skin is hot to the touch and he becomes unusually sensitive to bright light. Such victims will seek shelter in some dark, dank place, and anyone who comes too near them for the next ten to fourteen days risks infection from the spores that they disgorge with every breath. At the end of that time, the victim dies and his body becomes host to new sprouts of darkbloom fungus.

Effect: If a character exposed to darkbloom spores fails his first Toughness Test, he becomes infected and begins to develop symptoms. The second Toughness Test, made halfway through the disease's duration, determines if the character lives or dies. If the second test succeeds, the character throws off the infection and awakens. If the test fails, the character succumbs to the infection and becomes a gamemaster character.

Victims seek shelter in a dark, dank place. Anyone coming into contact with them for the next 10 to 14 days risks infection from the spores the infected character bears. At the end of that time, the victim dies and his body becomes host to a new collection of darkbloom fungus, which will quickly begin sprouting.

Yellow Jig

Type: Special (see text)
Onset Time: 2–4 days
Duration: 2–4 weeks
Spell Defense: 6
Step Number: 8

Yellow jig can be caught from tainted water or by touching an infected victim. Initially, the disease causes a slight yellowing of the victim's skin, the whites of the eyes, and underside of the tongue. Within two to four days of these signs, the victim experiences weakness and trembling limbs. Victims also suffer from random fits of jerky, uncontrollable muscle spasms; they move as if engaged in some macabre dance, much like the effects of certain nethermantic spells.

The disease itself is not fatal, though some have died from accidents caused by convulsions at precisely the wrong moment. A popular tale mentions an ancient hero who broke his neck when a spasm shook him at the top of a steep flight of stairs. Yellow jig commonly passes within two to four weeks, during which time various potions and elixirs can be used to ease the spasms and provide the patient with much-needed rest.

Effect: Each day after the onset time expires, make a Disease Effect Test against the afflicted character's Toughness step. An Average result suffers a –1 penalty to all of the character's Action Tests; a Good result suffers a –2 penalty; an Excellent or better result suffers a –2 penalty and indicates that the character will have 1 to 4 convulsive episodes that day, each lasting 2D6 combat rounds.

Treat a convulsing character as if he is affected by a Bone Dance spell (see the **Nethermancy Spells** chapter on p. 345 of the **Player's Compendium**), using the disease's Effect Test result as the spell's Effect Test result.

The Healing Arts

Nearly every adventurer will undoubtedly suffer injuries or illnesses at some point during his explorations. To lessen the chance that such occurrences will prove fatal, we have provided the following excerpt from A Study of the Healing Arts, *a work in progress by Loragale of Travar, a renowned healer, scholar and questor of Garlen. We are honored that she chose to grace this volume with her work. In her studies, Lady Loragale has documented the medicinal properties of more than three hundred different plants and animals in Barsaive, as well as dozens of different illnesses and treatments for many kinds of injuries. We have included a sampling of the Lady's fine work on these subjects, but the constraints of space prevent us from going into exhaustive detail. Those seeking to learn more should read the Study when it is completed (at which time it will be made available from the Great Library, of course).*

• Thom Edrull, Archivist and Scribe of the Hall of Records •

Just as life can sustain itself in the face of many disasters, so the bodies of Name-givers can use their inborn healing gifts to survive injuries and illness. Those of us privileged to study the healing arts learn the ways that the body repairs itself and how to aid that process with our own knowledge and abilities. With the right combinations of healing magic, practical knowledge of the body's ways and medicines given to us by bountiful Nature, Name-givers can heal an amazing number of wounds and maladies. Ever since the Passions imprisoned Death in legendary times, the power of life has grown so strong that we can even snatch some of our patients from Death's very grasp, curing injuries and illnesses that would otherwise be fatal.

Despite these advances, healing remains a slow but steady thing. Rebuilding the body is like rebuilding a city—it must proceed according to a careful plan, and it takes time to accomplish. Certain techniques and magic can hurry the rebuilding along, but the healer must take care that his methods are both safe and reliable. The healing arts will not be hurried; attempting to do so often only brings more harm to the sufferer. Patience is the most important quality for a healer—or a patient, for that matter—to have.

Healing belongs as much to the mind and spirit as to the body. A patient's strength of spirit and will to live must remain strong, or all the medicinal teas and healing potions in Barsaive will not save him. Those who fight for their lives and believe in their recovery will heal more quickly and completely than those who do not. Patients who abandon all hope often slip away despite the best treatment. Therefore, one of the healer's most important duties is to keep hope alive in the patient's heart so that he may heal himself. As the saying goes, "Garlen heals the patient; the healer merely takes the credit."

The art of alchemy blends the humble skill of herbal medicine with magical techniques to produce potions, elixirs and salves from various ingredients and the hidden powers they contain. Although the practice is well known in Barsaive, it is a complicated and time-consuming process ill-suited to everyday needs or emergencies. Furthermore, improper alchemical treatments often cause more harm than the illnesses and injuries they seek to remedy. Therefore, we have omitted Lady Loragale's discussion of the alchemical arts.

For similar reasons, we have omitted much of her text on healing magic. As any adventurer knows (or should know), a magician's services are expensive, and many in need of healing cannot afford such remedies (assuming a skilled magician is near at hand to administer them in the first place). Thus, healing spells are largely the province of nobles, the wealthy and those adventurers fortunate enough to include a magician-healer among their number. We have instead chosen to concentrate on the simpler herbal remedies that will be of more use to adventurers in Barsaive's wilder lands.

—Thom Edrull, Archivist and Scribe of the Hall of Records

The Importance of Early Treatment

Any type of injury or malady must be treated as soon as possible, if the patient is to have any hope of full recovery. Injuries left untreated for too long or disregarded can become infected or otherwise worsened. Diseases that begin as mere discomforts can become fatal if the patient lacks the proper medicines and plenty of rest.

Immediate attention to injuries promotes rapid healing and prevents further harm. When treating a wound, the healer must first examine it thoroughly, clean it well and stop the bleeding. A broken bone must next be set, and finally, the wound must be properly bound or dressed to prevent infection and further injury. All these things can be accomplished by using certain herbs or magic. (With regard to stopping the bleeding, if no other means is available, a wound may be sealed with fire. However, this method is excruciatingly painful and should be used only as a last resort.)

Likewise, diseases must be treated when the first symptoms appear. Usually, we can recognize a disease from the signs it leaves on its victim. Sometimes, however, properly identifying a disease can be difficult. In such cases, certain information about the patient, such as his recent diet and activities, can often help a healer identify possible sources of disease. Studying the patient's reactions to different treatments can also provide useful information.

Once we know what the patient is suffering from, we can treat the illness with some herbal remedy or through the power of magic. A word of caution, however: disease is often more difficult to cure than a sword wound or a bite because it is elusive. Indeed, one illness sometimes masquerades as another, and sometimes only a skilled healer can tell which is which. Herbal remedies

are not always effective, and strong healing magic cannot always be had quickly enough to do any good. Generally, a sick person should exert himself as little as possible—if he can spend several days in bed, so much the better.

First Treatment

When a character suffers damage, standard rules assume that he has been cut or bruised and is most likely bleeding. If desired, gamemasters can use the optional Wounds that Bleed rule in such instances (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 401 of the **Player's Compendium** for details). Otherwise, simply assume that characters dress and clean any open cuts following a battle.

Wounds become infected if they are particularly dirty, or if the character fails to change his dressings regularly or otherwise exposes the Wound to especially unsanitary conditions. For example, a character suffers a Wound in combat during which he has been knocked down repeatedly in a large mud puddle. He is also unable to treat the Wound, so after one or two days it becomes infected. Likewise, if the character cleaned and dressed his Wound right away but the next day joined a battle and got knocked into swamp water, the Wound would become infected unless he takes care to clean it again. At the gamemaster's discretion, treat infected wounds as injuries that impose a –1 penalty to all Action Tests based on Dexterity or Strength. Infected Wounds cannot be healed for at least 2 days, and then only if the Wound is treated and cleaned each day after the infection sets in.

Dressing a Wound is especially important if the gamemaster is using the optional Wounds that Bleed rule (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 401 of the **Player's Compendium**). Bleeding Wounds continue to cause the character damage until they are treated properly. In most circumstances, simply applying pressure to a Wound will stop the bleeding. Gamemasters may rule that particularly nasty Wounds must be cauterized, which is most often done with heated knife blades or other hot implements that burn the Wound shut.

Cauterization is extremely painful, and a character whose Wound requires such treatment suffers from an injury that imposes an additional –1 penalty to all Action Tests based on Dexterity or Strength, as appropriate. This type of injury can be healed after only 1 day. Wounds can also be cauterized by certain magical spells, such as Flame Flash or Ignite. Unfortunately, using these spells in this way causes the character to suffer the normal damage inflicted by the spell. However, the Flame Weapon spell can be used to cauterize Wounds without causing more than 1 Damage Point.

Rest and Recovery

Rest and recovery is the best prescription for healing damage. Characters can recover from damage by using their allotted daily Recovery Tests. At least 1 hour must pass between each test, and players whose characters lapse into unconsciousness must wait at least 10 minutes before making the first Recovery Test for that character.

If a character is injured (takes any non-permanent damage), he must make a Recovery Test after each night of rest. Characters with only 1 Recovery Test per day use their test each morning and can only recover after a full night's rest. If a character has more than one Recovery Test per day, the player may make tests during the day as per the rules for **Recovering from Damage** in the **Combat** chapter on p. 402 of the **Player's Compendium**.

Characters often use healing aids, such as booster and healing potions, to enhance their Recovery Tests. However, a character must be conscious and able to swallow to use such a potion—these healing aids cannot be poured down an unconscious character's throat. Doing so inflicts suffocation/drowning damage on the character (see **Suffocation and Drowning** in the **Adventuring** chapter, on p. 117).

Natural Medicines

Nature exists in perfect balance. Thus, the very same Nature that gives rise to many diseases has also created countless plants and herbs with curative powers. Much knowledge of these marvels was lost to us during the Scourge, but we are fast relearning what we once knew.

Some scholars believe that there exists a cure in Nature for every disease that has or ever will exist—incurable maladies, they say, remain so simply because we have not discovered their cures. Whatever the truth of this assertion, it is certain that correctly prepared plants and herbs act as marvelous healing aids. I shall describe some of the most common and useful medicines known to healers across Barsaive.

Adept's Blood

Firestone mushrooms grow virtually anywhere with sufficient moisture to feed fungi. They appear in clumps and are easily recognizable by their reddish-orange tops. Though they are (barely) edible, their greatest value lies in a certain potion made from them, known as adept's blood. This red, syrupy liquid is made by boiling the mushrooms, straining the rendered broth, then boiling it again. The resulting syrup mixes easily with water or wine.

Healers in some areas of Barsaive use this potion to spark visions in apprentice adepts as they advance in skill—such vision-quests are particularly common among the Dinganni, the crystal raiders and certain windling tribes. Adept's blood induces a state in which the adept experiences extraordinarily realistic waking dreams that guide him to new levels of understanding. In some cases, images from such visions have been known to foretell the future.

As a side effect, adept's blood greatly lowers the imbiber's resistance to illusion magic. Illusionists have occasionally turned this to their advantage, as have some spirits and even Horrors when dealing with an adept under the influence of the potion. For this reason, adept's blood must be used with great care.

Effect: A character who consumes a dose of the adept's blood elixir experiences vivid hallucinations and waking dreams for the next 4 to 16 hours. This prevents the character from fully resting and he suffers a –1 penalty to his Recovery Tests during the next day. The character's Spell Defense against illusion magic drops to 3 for the duration of the extract's effect.

Aloe

The fleshy, spike-shaped leaves of the aloe plant hold a thick, sticky sap that makes an excellent poultice for burns. The sap also soothes such skin irritants as rashes and insect bites. Found throughout Barsaive, aloe is often cultivated for its healing properties; many Name-givers use it to make salves and creams that also contain other herbs.

Effect: The soothing properties of aloe halve the recovery time for burns, including reducing the number of Recovery Tests required to heal Burn Wounds from 2 to 1.

Bloodwort

Bloodwort grows in small clusters of rough stalks, topped with leafy tassels and lined with thin, spear-like leaves. The leaves and tassels are dark green, edged and speckled in dark red (hence the Name bloodwort).

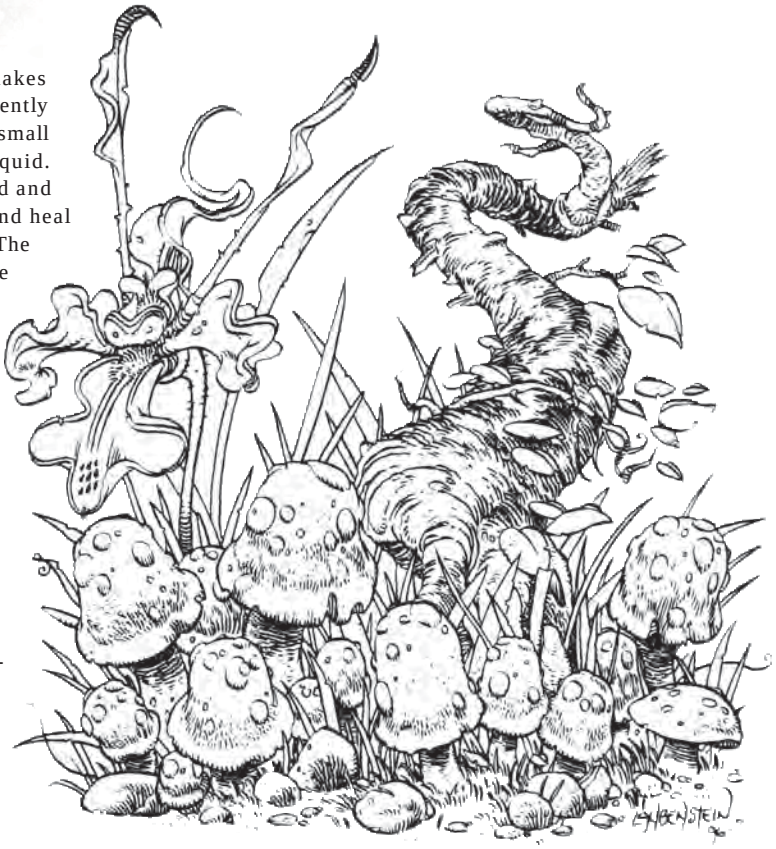
A poultice made from bloodwort leaves or tassels helps blood to clot quickly, prevents wounds from re-opening and promotes swift healing.

Effect: Dressing a wound with bloodwort staunches bleeding and grants a +2 bonus to Recovery Tests made to heal cuts and open wounds.

Bog Moss

Found in large quantities in marshes along the lakes and tributaries of the Serpent River, bog moss is excellently suited for dressing wounds. When dried and cleaned, a small amount of bog moss can absorb a vast amount of liquid. Wounds dressed with bog moss (and regularly cleaned and changed, of course!) are far less prone to infection and heal more swiftly and cleanly than wounds not so treated. The dry moss can be easily stored in loose cloth bags. Take care to keep it dry, however, as wet bog moss is useless as a healing aid.

Effect: Bog-moss dressings prevent most infections and help keep wounds clean if used and changed regularly. They also grant an additional bonus Recovery Test to the injured character every second day of treatment. This effect ceases once a character has healed all of his Wounds and damage which have been treated with the moss.



Coreliander

Coreliander is a flowering vine that grows throughout the Blood Wood. It is easy to care for and blooms all year round in a startling variety of colors. The scent of the blossoms is light and wholesome, making it a welcome addition to any home or garden. Of special note are the pure white blossoms, by far the least common color.

Effect: A Name-giver who eats a white blossom within 1 hour of picking it becomes much more alert and aware, gaining a +2 bonus to all Perception Tests made for 1 hour after eating the flower. Blossoms that are not freshly picked bestow a +1 bonus for 1 hour. The blossoms lose their alertness-enhancing qualities one month after being picked.

Dragon's Tongue

The dragon's tongue plant features two or three broad leaves surrounding a long, thin flower colored a vivid red. The flower petals remain tightly closed until the plant goes to seed, giving it the look of a long, serpentine tongue with a slight fork at one end. When boiled in water or wine, the leaves make a broth that can fight the effects of many poisons. This bitter-tasting drink can also keeps groggy patients conscious and alert.

Effect: Dragon's tongue is a mild stimulant and grants any character drinking it a +3 bonus on Toughness Tests against ingested poisons, provided that the character consumes the dragon's tongue before the poison's onset time. If taken after the onset time, the character gains an additional Toughness Test against the poison's Spell Defense rating, but without the +3 bonus.

Eyebright

This small, thorny bush grows amid various species of brambles. Its brilliant violet flowers can be dried and then steeped to make a tea that improves the imbiber's night vision, thus enabling humans to see at night as well as an elf or an ork. The tea makes the drinker's eyes unusually wide and sparkling, and its effects generally last for several hours.

Though the dried flowers retain their potency for months, the tea loses its effect an hour or two after brewing.

Effect: Fresh eyebright tea gives a human drinker Low-Light Vision like that of an elf or ork for 2 hours after the tea is taken. This effect shows itself by a slight shine and sparkle to the drinker's eyes. Eyebright tea has no effect on other Name-givers.

Garlen's Hand

This wonderful flower is a true gift from the Healing Passion. The blossom has five white petals, shot through with veins of red and pink. The broad leaves are a rich, dark green, and the stem and root are fleshy and soft. The plant grows in damp lowlands and moisture-rich places such as the Servos Jungle.

When crushed, the flowers yield a reddish oil that can be mixed with water to make a poultice or taken in a tea to promote healing and recovery from loss of blood. An infusion made of dried and crushed flowers produces the same benefits.

The fresh root yields a clear syrup that likewise promotes healing and helps to close wounds. The root loses its potency once dried, but the liquid can be extracted from fresh roots and kept in sealed bottles for later use.

Effect: Treatment with Garlen's hand encourages healing of all kinds. It provides an additional Recovery Test each day of treatment and helps promote smooth and rapid healing of most injuries.

Garlic

The pungent bulb of the garlic plant, used to season food in many regions of Barsaive, can be prepared and used to keep wounds clean and free of infection. Fresh juice squeezed from a garlic bulb also soothes pain and itching from insect bites and rashes and repels small insects. Garlic grows wild in many areas of Barsaive and is a commonly available medicine in almost every Barsaivian village.

Effect: Garlic juice soothes and cleans rashes, repels small insects and forces larger insects to make a successful Willpower (7) Test before approaching a character liberally coated with it. (It won't do much for the character's social life, either.)

Helmet Mushrooms

Helmet mushrooms grow wild in dark, moist forests but can be cultivated in any suitably wet climate. The mushrooms are quite

tasty when fresh, though they have no medicinal effect. However, a brown powder made from their caps—known as Helm of Bravery—can be mixed with hot water to produce a dark, bitter brew that dispels the imbiber's fears and produces a temporary feeling of courage. Some Dinganni Warriors use helm of bravery before a battle or hunt to help them resist fear; this artificial fearlessness, however, often leads the user to foolishly disregard dangers. The effects of the powder generally lasts a few hours.

Effect: When consumed, Helm of Bravery provides a +3 bonus to a character's Social Defense rating against fear and intimidation. Unfortunately, the bravado it inspires prohibits the character from taking a Defensive Stance or Giving Ground while under the influence of the drug. The character must make a successful Perception (9) Test to recognize and withdraw from certain danger. The effects of Helm of Bravery last 2 to 4 hours from the time the mushroom is consumed.

Jikar Root

The jikar plant is mostly long, wide leaves that spring from a white, fleshy root. Whether cooked or eaten raw, fresh jikar root serves as a powerful heart tonic, granting the eater great vigor and energy. The root can be used to counteract the sleep-inducing effects of some poisons and diseases, as well as to maintain wakefulness for a full day and night without sleep.

When the effects of the root wear off, the patient will feel tired, listless and irritable. Prolonged use of jikar root can endanger one's health, causing chronic nervousness and bouts of irrational terror.

Effect: Fresh jikar root gives the character a powerful energy boost that allows him to immediately recover all damage from Strain and Fatigue. However, when the root wears off, the character gains all that damage back again and must recover it normally. This can be dangerous if the character has continued to exert himself since taking the root; the accumulated damage can render the character unconscious or even kill him if it exceeds his Death Rating.

Mahogany Trinrose

The rust-colored mahogany trinrose is native to the Mid Reach of the Serpent River, where its vines climb the steep sides of the region's many canyons and cliffs. Its strong, unmistakable cinnamon-and-musk scent often wafts across the whole of the Mid Reach on warm, breezy days. The petals can be boiled to make a pleasant-tasting tea that promotes healing and general well-being; it is especially tasty taken with a touch of honey.

Effect: Any character who drinks tea brewed from mahogany trinrose petals gains a +3 bonus on his next Recovery Test that day. **Trinrose blossoms are also the only known cure for infestations** of the blood algae that blooms along large stretches of the Serpent.

Mist Blossoms

These ghost-white, trumpet-shaped flowers grow abundantly in the steamy heat of the Mist Swamps, where they were first discovered, and also in other hot and swampy regions of the Servos Jungle. So strong is the mist blossom's affinity for warmth that it dies rapidly if moved to cooler climates.

The white flowers and delicate leaves can be crushed and boiled to form a poultice for treating burns of all kinds. A mist blossom poultice soothes pain and discomfort, promotes healing, wards off infection and helps to repair burned skin without scarring.

Effect: A poultice of mist blossoms heals burn damage more rapidly than normal. Burns will heal like normal Wounds, at the rate of one burn per Recovery Test used (see **Fatigue and Injury** in the **Adventuring** chapter, p. 120). Also, mist blossoms grant a +3 bonus to all Recovery Tests to recover from burn damage.

Mynbruje's Balm

This plant, also known as Mynbruje's staff, grows in a straight stalk some two feet tall. Its leaves are hairy and broad, and small, bluish-purple flowers grow in a dense cluster near the top of the plant. Mynbruje's balm flowers in high summer and can be found in open fields and forest clearings. When boiled as a tea or steeped in wine, the leaves create a brew that reduces pain and discomfort. Mynbruje's balm smells and tastes much like lavender, with a slightly bitter aftertaste.

Effect: A tea or infusion of Mynbruje's balm eliminates all penalties from Wounds and the effects of Injuries for up to 4 hours, allowing the character to act normally during that time. However, it does not heal damage or protect the character from further injury, and existing injuries may be aggravated if a character using the balm strains himself too much while under its pain-killing influence. At the end of 4 hours, the character once again suffers the full penalties of any current Wounds or Injuries.

Sarfran

Also known as bone stem, the sarfran plant has a thin, brittle, cream-colored stem and broad, jagged leaves. When broken in pieces and boiled, the stem and leaves yield a milky broth that promotes the mending of broken bones if taken regularly every two days. The broth's chalky flavor can be disguised somewhat with the addition of sugar or honey.

Effect: A broth of sarfran gives a character an additional Recovery Test per day to recover from damage to his bones, such as that caused by the Bone Shatter spell and similar effects.

Serpent Vine

A flowering creeper, the serpent vine grows wild throughout many of Barsaive's forests, where it climbs the trunks and branches of large trees. The serpent vine has glossy, arrow-shaped leaves and a sprinkling of white and yellow flowers that can be dried and then ground into a fine powder. When mixed with a little water to make a paste, this powder can draw poison from a wound. It is especially effective against snake venom of all kinds.

Effect: A poultice of serpent vine paste, applied immediately to a poisoned Wound, grants the character an additional Toughness Test to purge it from his system. The character gains a +5 bonus to his Toughness Test if the poison originates from a snake or snake-like creature.

Sindolin

The small, pale-blue flowers of this ground-covering creeper can be crushed and applied to a wound or brewed as a tea.

Effect: The crushed flowers temporarily prevent blood from clotting, allowing a wound to be cleaned and tended. Once a wound treated with sindolin has been cleaned and closed, other herbs can be used to speed the clotting of the blood and seal over the wound. The tea serves admirably as a blood tonic and also cures certain diseases of the blood and heart.

Sky Lotus

The sky lotus is a rare water-lily species that grows only in the calm eddies near the banks of the Tylon River north of Kratas. The sky lotus bears a beautiful blue flower sometime after midsummer. Soon after the flower opens, the lily begins to float above the surface of the water, with only a thin, threadlike stem connecting the bloom to its roots. By late summer, the flower typically hovers

10 yards or so above the water. This phenomenon is caused by the small pockets of elemental air that sky lotuses trap within their bulbs. As summer progresses, the sky lotus bulbs expand, absorbing yet more of the precious elemental substance and causing the lotuses to float ever higher. Astellan of Kratas has observed that when fall comes and the lotuses wither, their bulbs simply drift away on the wind.

Effect: Alchemists and magicians across Barsaive will pay up to 12 silver pieces for a sky lotus bulb. 10 to 12 such bulbs allow the magician to extract one kernel of True air.

Star Root

A low-growing forest plant, star root has silvery leaves covered with delicate hair and bears a small, star-shaped flower. The fruit of the flower, a dark blue berry, can be crushed and the juice mixed with wine to make a tincture that helps to counteract the effects of poisons and cleanse them from the body. However, star root closely resembles night root, which is a deadly poison if taken internally. Thus, one must gather star root with great care to avoid making a potentially fatal mistake. The leaves of night root are lighter on the underside than those of star root, and the berries are somewhat darker in color.

Effect: Consuming the juice of star root berries lets the character make an immediate Toughness Test against the Spell Defense of any poison in his body.

Surrunic

The surrunic plant has a hard, brown stalk that produces pods filled with small black seeds. When roasted, these seeds can be chewed or brewed into a dark tea. In either of these forms, the seeds induce a state of single-minded concentration on whatever objective those who consume it have in mind. This stubborn attention to one single thing tends to make a character who eats surrunic rude and thoughtless toward others, especially if those others are attempting to change his mind. According to persistent rumor, Theran spies use surrunic to resist interrogation.

Effect: Surrunic seeds give a character who chews them or drinks them in tea a +3 bonus to his Social Defense for all Interaction Tests made against him. However, surrunic also imposes a –3 penalty on all of the character's own tests against other characters' Social Defense and makes the character single-minded, brusque and rude. These effects usually last for a couple of hours.

Thalen

Thalen is a low-growing shrub native to the Servos Jungle whose flat, triangular leaves can absorb amazing amounts of liquid. Thalen leaves make an admirable dressing for wounds, soaking up blood and soothing pain at the same time. I have heard tales of thieves and gamblers placing a thalen leaf under their tongue to allow them to engage in drinking bouts without becoming drunk. Apparently, the leaf absorbs most of the wine or ale, so the miscreant stays sober while his mark becomes sodden. Whether these tales are true or not, I cannot say.

Effect: If the gamemaster desires, a character may hold a thalen leaf in his mouth to absorb any liquid that he drinks. In the case of alcohol, the leaf absorbs enough of the first couple of pints of ale or glasses of wine for the drinks to have no effect. However, once the leaf has done so, it reaches its capacity to soak up more fluid, and has no further effect. Of course, the character now also has a mouthful of swollen thalen leaf to spit out without being seen.

Trailfruit

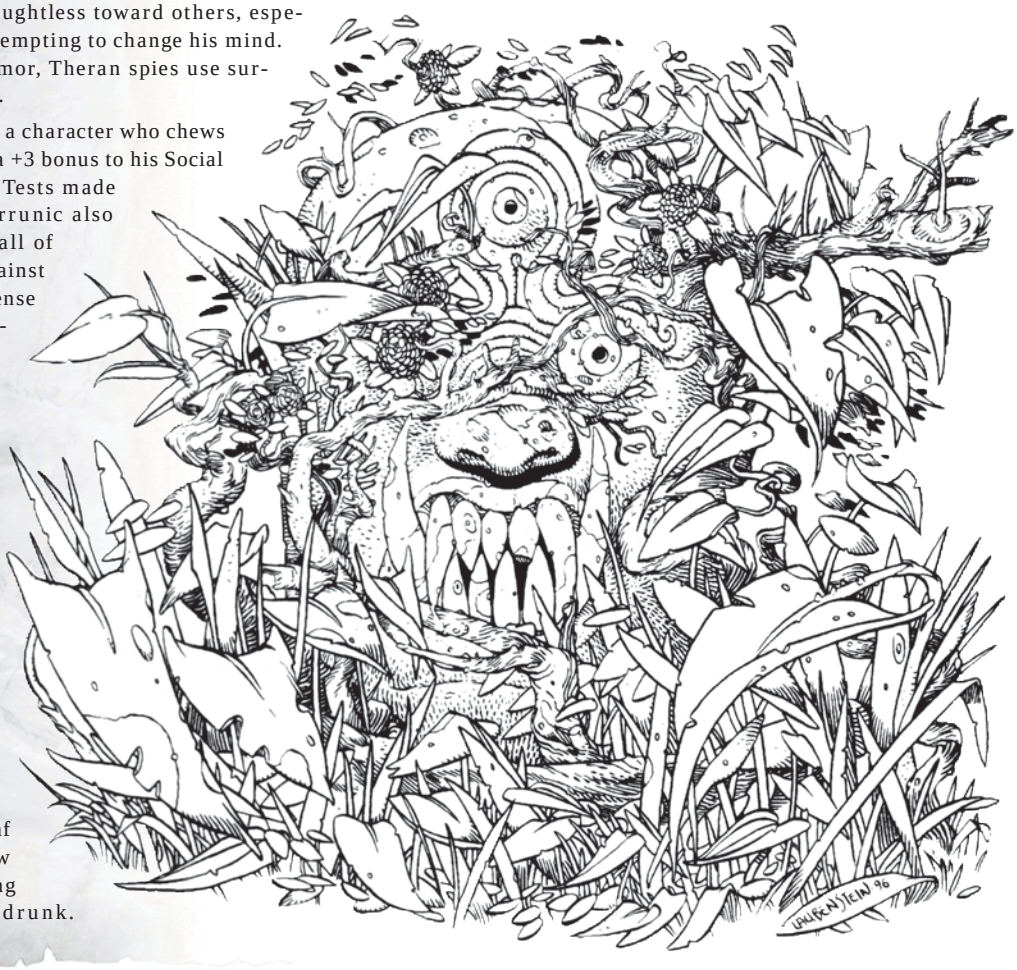
Trailfruit ferns are the result of an early experiment by blood warders to make survival easier for the blood elves during and after the Scourge. The ferns grow in tall clumps, with fruit in small bunches at the base of each plant. The oblong-shaped fruit is brown and wrinkly, about the size of an elf's clenched fist. The skin is chewy, but the flesh inside is smooth with no apparent seeds. Trailfruit tastes a bit like spiced figs, with an earthy aftertaste.

Effect: For most Name-givers, two trailfruits are as satisfying and nourishing as a full meal (though trolls and obsidimen have been known to require four or five). Unfortunately, trailfruit retains this magical quality for only a short time. Two days after picking, it is no more nourishing than ordinary fruit.

Tranceweed

Numerous varieties of tranceweed grow in the Blood Wood, all recognizable by the small tassels at the top of their stalks. These tassels contain seeds that scatter in a strong wind.

Effect: Burning the seeds produces a hallucinogenic smoke that inspires prophetic visions in those who inhale it. (The occurrence or accuracy of such visions is entirely at the gamemaster's discretion.) Chewing a tranceweed stalk produces a light, calming



trance that can be a useful aid to relaxation. A character may voluntarily break such a trance at any time, but a character who stays in the trance for a full hour gains a +1 bonus to any Recovery Test made at the end of that hour.

Vreela

Vreela grows in a thin, woody stalk one to two feet tall, from which spring thin leaves that are slightly curled along the edges. Fresh leaves, bruised and then boiled in water, make a poultice that relieves the pain of many wounds. This poultice will make the patient slightly drowsy and disoriented, however.

If taken internally, vreela induces convulsions and vomiting, followed by unconsciousness. If enough is consumed, the victim will die. In certain hinterland villages, small amounts of vreela are ingested as an emergency measure to purge the system of some more-lethal substance. However, calculating a safe dosage is so risky that such use is ill-advised. Care must also be taken when brewing the leaves, as the steam rising from the infusion sometimes induces hallucinations.

Effect: A vreela poultice relieves any pain from Wounds and eliminates all penalties for Wounds and injuries. It also makes the user drowsy, giving the character a –1 penalty to all Action Tests while the effect lasts. Vreela is toxic if taken internally. It will induce convulsions and vomiting, then unconsciousness and eventually death if enough is ingested.

Healing Magic and Garlen's Blessing

Healing magic is swifter than herbal remedies, though not always as sure. Spells of healing infuse energy into the patient's pattern, thereby repairing damage to the pattern caused by injury or illness. Such spells can restore a patient to health with wondrous speed but can also be disastrous if used without sufficient knowledge of the patient's condition. For example, a spell might heal the scars caused by a ravaging disease without eliminating the imbalance of bodily elements that first brought on the illness.

Likewise, I have known ill-informed magicians to set broken bones through magic—but because the magician knew nothing of setting and splinting the bone before working his spells upon it, the bone failed to re-knit properly. Some wielders of healing spells take trouble to learn the non-magical healer's art to complement their talents, and these are healers of surpassing skill. But far too many so-called healers merely offer a magical shortcut to real healing. Such shortcuts should be used with care.

The greatest healing power known to us belongs to Garlen, Passion of Hearth and Home. Through all who heal, by magic or other means—but most especially through her devoted questors—she eases the suffering of Name-givers and cures us of our ills. The Passion's power enables her questors to restore others to health with a mere touch, healing a wound or making a broken limb whole again as if no injury had ever been done to it. According to legend, some questors of Garlen who show her the greatest devotion are rewarded with abilities far beyond those that most of us enjoy. No ailment or injury is beyond their power to cure, and it is said such questors can wrestle with Death himself to protect a fellow Name-giver from harm.

Garlen has also chosen certain places as her own, investing them with her comforting and healing presence. The Passion prefers sheltered, secluded spots that symbolize the renewal of life and hope—she particularly favors small springs, groves of young trees and grottoes. The waters and the plants that grow at these sites have greater healing powers than ordinary specimens, and many such blessed places have become the most sacred sites of various healing orders and followers of Garlen. Members of these orders minister to the needs of all who come in search of succor and protect the sacred sites from any who intend to abuse their power. My own Order of the Blessed Hearth lives in a small chapter house in the Grove of Rowandown, four days' walk north of Urupa. There, we offer food and shelter as well as healing to all in need of it. Many of us also spend much of the year ranging across Barsaive, bringing the healing gifts of our Passion to isolated villages.

Additionally, those injured or dying far from all aid have often described visions of Garlen, who appears to them and miraculously brings them to safe havens. I have transcribed here one such account, from my dear friend Jorlan Kel—once a Warrior, who became a questor of Garlen after this experience.

The evil minions of the Hand of Corruption fought fiercely against us. Though we vanquished them, our victory was a hollow one—all of my comrades died at the very hands of those they slew. I alone was left alive, and so grievously hurt that I knew I could not live much longer.

With the last of my strength, I dragged myself from the field of battle into the dark woodland. I was too weak to think clearly—I had some confused notion of finding some shelter to die in, such as a woodsman's hut or some such, so that at least the vultures could not pick my poor bones. Arm-length by arm-length I dragged myself along, feeling my lifeblood ebb from my wounds. Just as my strength seemed about to fail me, I saw a small cottage in a clearing. Hope gave me new strength, like the last flare of a candle flame before the candle dies—but before I reached the cottage door, darkness and pain overcame me.

I awoke some time later in a warm bed, before a banked hearth-fire. My wounds had been carefully cleaned and bandaged. Warmth and comfort surrounded me like an embrace. Over the fire hung an iron cauldron, from which arose the savory smell of bubbling stew. Bunches of dried herbs hung from the rafters, adding their rich, spicy scents to the air. A woman was sitting near the fire, mending my torn clothes. Her belly was rounded with child, and when she saw me gazing at her, she smiled at me. Her smile was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen.

She fed and tended me for three days and nights, during which my wounds healed with impossible speed. I asked her Name, but she wouldn't tell me. She said she lived alone, and she never spoke of her child's father. When I had fully recovered, she gave me my clothes and weapons—all of which had been restored to bright newness—and sent me on my way. Some months later, I returned to the site of the cottage but the clearing showed no sign of ever having been disturbed by a Name-giver's hand. When I saw this, I knew that my savior had been the Passion Garlen, and I swore to serve her faithfully from that day.

—Unknown

Though the power of Garlen allows us to work seeming miracles, it is not without limit. Questors of the healing Passion must all learn the hard lesson that we cannot cure all the world's suffering or even all the suffering we see. Few questors can halt the ravages of disease or poison without the aid of herbal medicines and other non-magical cures, and even Garlen cannot always hold back the specter of Death.

Resurrection

Certain **Earthdawn** talents, spells and items enable characters to cheat death by avoiding it at the moment it comes knocking or even resurrecting dead characters. Both methods are

difficult, but the former is more common than the latter. Death cheat blood charms, the Life Check talent and last chance salves all enable a character to escape death at the moment of reckoning by allowing the character to make an immediate Recovery Test. If the test result heals enough of the character's Total Damage to prevent it from exceeding his Death Rating, the character lives.

Resurrecting characters who have been dead for some time—from hours to centuries—requires even more powerful magic. When using spells such as Journey to Life, the subject can have been dead only a short time. For characters who have been dead for a long time, returning them to life is best handled as a special adventure in which the dead character's companions and friends travel into the realm of Death and attempt to return their loved one to the world of the living.

Blood Magic and Spells

Blood magic is intimately connected with the forces of life and death. Death cheat charms, which are fashioned with blood magic, enable their bearers to escape death at the very last moment—but only at some cost to the bearer's life force. More powerful forms of blood magic consume the wielder's life but allow him to perform great feats of magic before he dies.

Certain spells can also bring a Name-giver back from the dead, but these enchantments are rare and difficult to cast. All of them require the lost spirit to find its way back to the body in which it lived, a slow process indeed. The body must be kept whole and free from decay while the spirit wanders, for no spirit can stay in the world of the living unless it has a sound body in which to reside. Tales abound of Nethermancers whose spells permit spirits to possess the bodies of other living beings, rather than returning to their own, but as far as I know these tales are no more than frightening stories.

The Kingdom of Death

In an age long past, the Passions imprisoned Death beneath the liquid fire of Death's Sea. They did this out of their love for their children, the Name-givers, so that we might not die.

But Death is too powerful to be wholly conquered, even by the Passions. Though his power is weakened, Death still holds sway over the realm of the living. Because of the Passions' bold act, however, it is possible to cheat Death of his prize. If a Name-giver is brave or foolhardy enough to dare Death's kingdom, he may snatch the life of a loved one from Death's very hands.

Those few who have traveled to the Kingdom of Death and returned to speak of it each tell a different tale. Some have described Death's domain as a paradise. Others speak of it as a realm of endless torture, while still others tell of an unfathomable place where certain themes or acts are played out over and over again, apparently for eternity. Many claim that a Name-giver's deeds in life determine his experience in death, but no one can prove this for certain. Some claim to have met and spoken with the Passions in Death's domain; others say that the Twelve are barred from that realm, save perhaps for the Mad Passions, who seek to end Death's imprisonment for some arcane purpose of their own.

Death's true form is likewise unknown to us. Those Name-givers who claim to have encountered Death all describe him in different ways. Sometimes Death appears as a close relative or friend, sometimes as a hated enemy or rival, sometimes as a complete stranger. Others have described Death taking the form of a Passion or even a Horror. (This last incarnation may mean that Horrors can travel to the realm of the dead or simply that Death takes the form of the things Name-givers most fear. The truth remains unknown.)

Escaping Death's Domain

Of the form and substance of Death's realm, we can know nothing for certain. Of traveling to and from it, we know a little. Death comes to Name-givers when the body can no longer sustain its True pattern—with the pattern broken, the spirit flees its confines and enters the Kingdom of Death. (Some spirits remain in the world of the living as creatures of astral space, bound to life by some vow or strong magic, such as the workings of Horrors—but such things are the province of Nethermancers and beyond the scope of this work.)

Once the spirit has fled, only powerful magic can bring a Name-giver back to life. Some charms, magical salves and whatnot can prevent the spirit from fleeing the dying body, if they are administered in time. I know certain Warrior adepts who use their fierce magic to come back from the brink of death in battle or bargain with Death, gaining themselves longer life by promising to surrender to Death when their last battle is over. Other enchantments of even greater power can allow a spirit to return from Death's kingdom. However, retrieving a spirit that has fallen under Death's dominion is a heroic task that only the strongest magic and bravest heart can accomplish.

The Mystery of Death's Favor

Some dying Name-givers who unaccountably revived have spoken of appearing before Death, only to be told that their time had not yet come. Upon regaining consciousness, they claimed that Death sent them back to our living world. Others who so appeared before Death speak of having begged for a reprieve, that they might finish some matter of great importance in life. According to legend, the Troubadour Elaen of Travar wrote so sad a ballad about his own demise that Death himself was moved and allowed Elaen to return to life for hundreds of years before he finally claimed his soul.

Retrieving a Soul from Death's Kingdom

According to legend and tradition, certain magical rituals allow living Name-givers to enter the kingdom of Death.

One tradition contends that when Death sleeps, the living can

visit the masque of Death's dreams through magic and attempt to retrieve a lost spirit. However, the visitor's life is forfeit if he should choose the wrong soul, and the masked spirits of the dance use flattery and all manner of deception to secure their own chance for renewed life. Other tales tell of tunnels, caves and passages deep in the Earth that lead beneath Death's Sea. These hidden ways may indeed be real, but no-one that we know of for certain have returned to speak of such a journey.

The following tale illustrates another magical rite by which a brave heart may rescue a lost spirit from Death—but only at a price.

The Tale of Josara, the Thief Who Stole from Death

Long ago, before the Scourge, the Thief adept Josara lived in the human kingdom of Landis. Josara had performed many a daring deed and was far advanced in the ways of her Discipline. So skilled a Thief was she that she could steal the sun and the moon from the sky if she chose to.

Of all the treasures Josara ever stole, the one she loved most was the heart of her husband, the Air Sailor Orlan Windrunner. Now Orlan was himself an adventurer of great renown and had always sworn that nothing but the spirit of adventure itself should ever claim his love. So when Josara stole his heart away, it was a feat truly worthy of a master Thief. These two heroes loved each other deeply and spent many a year traveling Barsaive together and performing daring deeds.

During one such expedition, a shadow spider attacked the pair. Although Orlan and Josara escaped from the terrible creature's lair, the spider managed to bite Orlan, who died from its deadly poison not long after. Grief-stricken, Josara spent most of the treasure the two of them had gained to buy her dead beloved a tomb that floated high above the mountains. This wondrous monument could be reached only by airship or through the aid of a bound air spirit that protected the tomb from looters.

But as rich and beautiful as the tomb was, it could not soothe Josara's wounded heart. And so she gathered her few remaining possessions and set off across Barsaive, seeking sages and scholars and magicians who knew the way to the realm of Death. Josara even spoke to the Keys of Death, those madmen who claim to be Death's questors, that she might learn their secrets. All this she did with one end in mind—to travel to Death's realm and steal her beloved from Death's cold grasp.

In time, Josara learned that Death hoards lives as a miser hoards gold, and a master Thief like Josara knew nothing so well as how to relieve a miser of his treasures. So she gathered a vast store of knowledge about Death and his kingdom and made her way to the shores of Death's Sea. There, she wove the many secrets she had learned into a powerful magical ritual. For nine days and nights she worked in the rocky badlands along the shores of the fiery sea, until all was in readiness.

In the darkness of the new moon, Josara drank a vial of poison she had made of white remis berries, ground pearls from Aras oysters and venom from the shadow spider that had killed Orlan. Then she lay upon a blanket embroidered with magical runes and symbols. She felt a terrible cold overtake her limbs, dispelling the fierce heat of Death's Sea. Lethargy crept over her, but she fought to keep her wits about her. She knew she would need them if she hoped to succeed.

Josara passed into the realm of Death, far below the liquid fire into an endless maze of underground passages, tunnels and caves. All were lit by the flickering flames of the burning sea above, and all were stuffed with treasures. Gems and fine weapons, gold and silver and pretty trinkets, even orichalcum coins enough to ransom a kingdom lay scattered about as far as Josara could see. Josara's Thief heart leapt at the sight of such wealth; she could feel the warm fingers of the Passion Chorrolis brush across her soul, urging her to take just one pretty bauble.

But Josara had not come into the realm of Death to seek such treasures as might be found in the world of the living. She wanted only the life of her beloved Orlan. So she turned her eyes away from the glittering heaps and moved through the dim tunnels like a shadow, looking for her love. For hours and hours she walked, but saw no one. In all those tunnels there was no living thing—neither Name-giver nor mouse nor even the smallest insect. Josara began to despair of ever finding Orlan—instead, she would be trapped forever in these forlorn tunnels, with untold wealth as her only companion.

"Passions!" she cried in anguish, "I would give all this wealth—all the wealth in the world—to be with my Orlan once more!"

Just then, a man appeared before her. He was human, broad and fat, dressed like a wealthy merchant. He wore all manner of costly jewels, and the purse at his belt bulged with coins. Everything about him cried out to Josara to give him the gift of theft.

"Would you indeed, Josara?" he asked as he reached into the folds of his velvet cloak. He withdrew a ruby the size of a child's fist and the color of blood. It gleamed seductively in the tunnel's dim light. Josara's Thief heart skipped, for she had never seen so fine a gem.

The merchant held the ruby out to her. "Would you truly surrender such treasures as this?" Visions danced in Josara's head. She knew she could take everything this merchant had, and much of the treasure that lay all around her. She could be the richest Thief in the world, living in luxury for the rest of her life. But her love for her husband was greater than the call of her Discipline.

"I want no treasure but the life of my true love," she replied.

The merchant smiled and tucked the ruby away. In an instant, Josara found herself lying on the shore of Death's Sea with Orlan asleep in her arms.

Some say the mysterious merchant was Death himself, who traded Josara's Thief magic for Orlan's life. Others say it was the Passion Chorrolis who made the bargain. But all anyone knows for certain is that Josara lived quietly and happily with her beloved for many more years.

Blood Magic

Many say that slavery is the worst thing the Therans brought to Barsaive. I for one, disagree. The worst they have done still remains among us. It is the use of our own blood in our magic…

• Vercian, Wizard of Throal and author of *Thoughts Concordia* •

Blood magic is one of several forms of magic used in the world of **Earthdawn**. To gain access to the power offered by the use of blood magic, a character must sacrifice his own blood. This sacrifice usually requires only a drop or two of blood, but the fact remains that the character is drawing on his own life energy to power his magic.

Because blood magic offers a vivid reminder of the torments people inflicted on themselves in the days before and during the Scourge, ordinary citizens often feel deeply suspicious of those who use blood magic. Most Barsaivians work hard at putting the devastation of the Horrors behind them or out of their minds completely, and choose to reject everything that blood magic represents—even its potential for helping those still battling the remnants of the Horrors. As a result, those who do accept blood magic as a necessary means to achieve the greater good of destroying the Horrors now refer to this practice as "life magic" in an attempt to stress the positive aspect of this magic and cultivate tolerance among the mainstream for those characters who use it.

This chapter discusses the history, spread and nature of blood magic throughout the world, and provides guidelines for different ways gamemasters can use blood magic in their **Earthdawn** campaigns. It also introduces rules for death magic (an extreme form of blood magic), and rules for creating new blood charms.

Using Blood Magic in Adventures and Campaigns

Earthdawn characters may use blood magic in a variety of ways. Most commonly, characters may use blood magic in the form of blood charms, or to power certain talents, spells, talent knacks, and living armor. Characters may also use blood magic to enhance their talents or abilities, to swear blood oaths and perform blood magic rituals. Characters may even use a special form of blood magic, known as death magic, to perform heroic feats, curse enemies or places, or create True patterns and powerful oaths. Every use of blood magic requires a character to make a sacrifice, which may take the form of Strain, permanent damage, Wounds, or even his life.

Refer to **Blood Magic** in the **Workings of Magic** chapter on p. 259 of the **Player's Compendium** for more information on the common uses of blood magic, blood oaths, and sacrifice magic. Blood charms are created by the use of enchanting (refer to the **Enchanting** chapter on p. 276 of the **Player's Compendium**, and the **Goods and Services** chapter on p. 443 of the same book for a list of sample blood charms).

Gamemaster Considerations

As the gamemaster, you determine what part blood magic will play in your **Earthdawn** game. Will it be a positive source of magic or will it be used only by evil beings and people? Will blood oaths be a way of life or cause for shunning? Are blood charms available in most cities and towns in Barsaive, or are they only available on the black market? Perhaps your campaign will not include blood magic at all. Perhaps in your world of **Earthdawn**, all uses of blood magic were forbidden at the end of the Scourge. If this is the game you choose to play, simply ignore all references to blood magic in **Earthdawn** products.

The material published for **Earthdawn** views blood magic as it was described in the history section. That is, blood magic exists in two forms: positive blood magic (life magic), and negative (evil) blood magic. Life magic is the only type of blood magic player characters can use. This practice allows the character to power his magic using his own blood. The sole exception to this is ritual blood magic, in which a donor voluntarily provides blood for the magic.

Gamemaster characters corrupted by the Horrors and other evil gamemaster characters may perform evil blood magic. We chose this view because we believe this dichotomy will inspire interesting characters and stories. But again, you must decide how you will run your **Earthdawn** game.

We offer the following considerations to help you determine the role of blood magic in your game.

1. Blood magic is a powerful force and can serve as an important element in the mood or atmosphere of an adventure. At the same time, life magic can allow player characters to become very powerful.
2. If you use blood magic in your campaign, your players should track any life magic damage their characters take in the appropriate space on the Character Record Sheet. This will help them distinguish between temporary damage received in combat and "permanent" damage from using blood magic. The damage caused by using life magic varies in duration. Most damage from blood magic is permanent, but some lasts only until the specific use of blood magic expires. If a magician uses blood magic to increase the duration of a spell, the damage can usually be healed after the spell expires. The damage from using blood charms lasts until the charm is removed.
3. If you decide to use blood magic in your game, make it one of the more disturbing elements of **Earthdawn**. Blood magic should serve as a reminder of the atrocities the people of Barsaive inflicted on themselves in attempts to protect themselves from the Scourge. Blood magic is one of the scars the Scourge left on this world, one created not by the Horrors, but by Name-givers themselves.

Whenever player characters use life magic, they should feel uneasy about doing so. Even their choice to use life magic and what that choice requires them to do to themselves should disturb the player characters.

Though the world of **Earthdawn** is trying to recover from a great physical disaster, its people are also trying to redeem themselves for the actions they took to fend off the Scourge and the Horrors. Even in pursuit of this noble goal, the ends may not justify the means, and the player characters should recognize that possibility.

History

Blood magic originated in the magical laboratories and experiment chambers of those men and women who would one day found the Theran Empire.

When the population of Nehr'esham (the "center of the mind," which would become the Eternal Library at Thera) threatened to grow beyond its leaders' control, they chose to impose rites of initiation upon those who wished to join the Great Project. One of these rites evolved as a blood oath sworn between the initiate and the leaders of Nehr'esham. With this oath, initiates dedicated their lives to the Great Project and to the completion of the Eternal Library.

This oath made with blood quickly became a tradition among the scholars at Nehr'esham, and they soon began to use it to swear oaths for other purposes as well. Former enemies used blood oaths to swear everlasting peace, and marriages were often sealed with blood oaths. The magical energies of the world began to pattern themselves after the practices of the people and eventually imbued blood oaths with magic power.

Where once a man who violated a blood oath was only shunned by those around him, now the magic inherent in the blood oath physically marked the violator. Runic scars would appear on the oath-breaker's body where the blood for the oath was drawn. These scars resisted all healing, including magical healing.

The Dissemination

The leaders of Nehr'esham sent adventurers out into the world to collect works for the Eternal Library, and those adventurers spread the ideas and practices of blood oaths as they traveled. Adventurers for the Library used blood oaths to seal trade agreements, pledges of loyalty and friendship, and for other important events and promises.

The use of blood magic spread throughout the known world, and as the frequency of its use increased, so did the strength of its bond to the world's magic. And as the bond of power between magical energy and blood magic rituals increased, so did the use of blood magic.

Research

Other uses of blood magic evolved from this prosaic beginning. Wizards and Nethermancers witnessed the power of blood magic and sought to better understand it. They reasoned that if blood magic could so powerfully seal oaths and promises, then it might have other magical uses. They began to experiment with blood sacrifices to power magical items. They met with limited success using blood magic to power existing items, but discovered methods of creating magical items powered solely by blood magic. This research resulted in what are now known as blood charms and living armor—magical charms and armor that offer their users powerful benefits or protection when imbued with blood magic.

During the years when research was producing blood charms, adventurers also found (some say formed) another type of blood magic. Heroes found that sacrificing their own blood allowed them to improve their talents and magical abilities beyond their races' physical and mental limits. Magicians used blood magic to increase the duration of spells, while the followers of other Disciplines used it to enhance the effects of their magical talents. In a familiar cycle, the widespread use of blood magic strengthened its power and caused it to manifest in still other forms. Unfortunately, this increased access to blood magic came at a time when the people of Barsaive were becoming desperate, aware that the Scourge would soon overtake them.

Protection

Before the Therans refined the Rites of Protection and Passage and offered them to the people of Barsaive during the days of the Orichalcum Wars, people sought to create individual methods of protection against the coming Scourge. Many people experimented with blood magic, but often obtained results that proved as horrible as or worse than the effects of the Scourge itself. These experiments continued even as people shut themselves into the kaers and citadels.

Having heard of and seen the Horrors' terrible power, Barsaivians feared that even the Theran methods of protection would fail, and so they embraced blood magic rituals to provide additional safeguards. The proven powers of blood magic led people to believe that, if used properly, blood magic would protect them even from those Horrors strong enough to break through the Therans' defenses.

The most horrifying legends describe communities sacrificing peoples' lives to power their blood magic rituals, thereby hoping to protect their descendants against the centuries-long Scourge. Some communities even used lotteries to select the victims of the blood magic. These victims were forced to accept their fate or be banished to the outside.

These are extreme examples, however. Most Barsaivians refused to embrace the power of blood magic so profoundly. A majority continued to use the power of blood magic only as it was taught through the centuries—to swear oaths and promises, and occasionally to create blood charms and provide magical enhancement.

The end of the Scourge and the opening of the kaers and citadels marked a decline in the use of blood magic in Barsaive. Though this decline may be a result of many things, it is most likely a reaction to the effects of blood magic as used by the elves of the Elven Court at Wyrm Wood. Too proud to accept Theran protection against the Horrors, the elves turned to blood magic when their own methods of magical protection failed. The

most extreme form of blood magic lives on in the elves of what is now called Blood Wood. Barsaivians have seen the effects of blood magic used in desperation, and they recoil in fear and disgust from those who accepted these methods.

Types of Blood Magic

The use of blood magic has evolved into two distinct practices. Most characters practice a type of blood magic whose power comes from small personal sacrifices of one's own life energy. This type of blood magic has come to be known as life magic. Though all uses of blood magic permanently mark the user both physically and mentally, the practice of life magic is considered relatively safe.

The term blood magic now refers almost exclusively to magic that draws its power not from the self-sacrifice of personal life energy, but from the sacrifice of unwilling victims. Though it is no longer practiced in Barsaive, rumors say the Therans still use this type of blood magic. Indeed, many attribute the Therans' ages-long pre-eminence in the magical arts to their continued practice of sacrificial blood magic.

One faction of magical scholars believes that blood magic poses no hazard to its users when employed in its original form—for oaths, charms and so on. These scholars propose that blood magic serves simply as an extension of the basic tenets of magic, and that its use poses no more danger to adepts than the use of patterns and threads.

Other scholars claim that blood magic originated with the Horrors. These scholars insist that any use of blood magic draws the user closer to the Horrors and that those who practice blood magic must themselves be corrupted. The scholarly world does not fall strictly into these two camps, however.

A third faction has seen blood magic used for both good and evil. Though the Blood Wood offers an ever-present example of blood magic gone horribly wrong, others have benefited from life magic and suffered no ill effects. These individuals agree that blood magic offers great power, but also stress that such power demands great responsibility of those who would use it.

Death Magic

Because of its strong association with the painful, horrifying memories of the Scourge, Throal and nearly every city in Barsaive forbid the use of **death magic** and exact extremely serious penalties for its practice. Death magic often attracts the attentions of the Horrors, and so most Barsaivian practitioners of death magic take care to conceal their activities from others. We suggest that only gamemaster characters can use the form of blood magic known as death magic, since characters who use death magic draw on the life force of other Name-givers to power acts of magic.

The magicians of Thera still practice death magic, usually using slaves as sacrificial victims, and this practice serves as another reason for Throal's opposition to Theran rule of Barsaive. The Therans continue to use death magic solely to gain the power it provides, but even Theran magicians work very hard to avoid attracting the attention of Horrors when performing death magic.

Raw Magic Filter

Theran magicians commonly use death magic to create **raw magic filters**. The magician uses a victim's living pattern to filter the astral energies tapped for raw magic in much the same way that a spell matrix filters polluted astral energies. The energy is "purified" by passing through the victim's pattern and can be used by the magician without any risk of harm.

To make use of a victim in this way, the magician must first establish and maintain physical contact with the victim. The victim must not be able to physically resist or struggle against the magician, so magicians performing death magic usually drug or bind their victims with restraints or spells.

Next, the magician must "attune" the victim's pattern by making a Thread Weaving Test against the victim's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the magician may use the victim as a raw magic filter. The victim's pattern remains attuned for a number of minutes equal to the magician's Thread Weaving rank, provided the magician maintains physical contact with the victim.

The magician then casts his raw magic spell as per the standard rules (see the **Spell Magic** chapter on p. 289 of the **Player's Compendium**), but the results of the Warping Test apply to the victim rather than the magician. As with all forms of death magic, Horrors find this technique particularly noticeable, and so using it adds a +3 bonus to the Horror Mark Test. Use the victim's Spell Defense as the Difficulty Number. If the Horror Mark Test is successful, the Horror marks the victim, and may choose to manipulate its new pawn against the magician who used the unfortunate Name-giver's pattern as a raw magic filter.

Karma Boost

Gamemaster characters may also use death magic to drain a character's life force and boost their own Karma. This use of death magic mimics the Horror power of Energy Drain, and many scholars believe that the first characters to use the technique learned it from Horrors or developed it in an effort to imitate their abilities.

To use death magic as a way to boost his own Karma, the character must be no farther than an arm's length away from the victim. The character must first attune the victim's pattern by making a successful Thread Weaving Test against the victim's Spell Defense. The victim's pattern remains attuned for a number of minutes equal to the magician's Thread Weaving rank.

Next, the character inflicts damage on the victim using a weapon or spell, gaining 1 Karma Point for each attack if it inflicts a Wound. The character may damage the victim multiple times, until he reaches his Maximum Karma Points. The character may use this Karma as normal.

Damage Shift

Gamemaster character magicians may use death magic to supply the necessary life force to perform substantial acts of blood magic, such as powerful ritual magic. To accomplish damage shift magic, the gamemaster magician must first attune the victim's pattern by making a successful Thread Weaving Test against the victim's Spell Defense.

The victim's pattern remains attuned for a number of minutes equal to the magician's Thread Weaving rank. As long as the victim's pattern remains attuned, the magician may draw Damage Points from the victim to fulfill any damage requirements (i.e., Strain or Wounds) of the blood magic rituals or other acts of magic that he is performing.

The magician takes no damage himself. If the gamemaster character magician is using blood magic to bind an enchantment or magical item to a character, the character receiving the enchantment or item must take at least 1 Strain Point of damage in order for the binding to occur.

Creating New Blood Charms

Blood charms are minor magical items that require a small amount of the wearer's life force in order to bond to the wearer and to activate the charm's magical power. Frequently used in the days before the Scourge, blood charms have remained popular and enjoy widespread use in Barsaive's burgeoning age of exploration, despite the very real cost they exact from those who wear them.

While player and gamemaster characters can purchase, find, or even re-create existing blood charms through the use of different enchanting techniques, this section is intended to give gamemasters guidelines for the creation of new charms with unique effects.

Creating a new blood charm follows a series of three steps:

❶ Determine the Type of Effect

❷ Determine Blood Charm Characteristics

❸ Write Blood Charm Description

Determine the Type of Effect

While blood charms have a wide variety of effects, their uses are usually simple. The first thing that needs to be determined when creating a new blood charm is the effect the charm provides its wearer. Most blood charms fit into one of the categories below, but note that this list is by no means exhaustive—feel free to add your own categories. For example, we haven't added a Karma category, as the available Karma charms cover pretty much everything that can be done with Karma and blood charms. Likewise, there are some charms that don't fit any category due to their unique nature: Garlen stones and blood matrices are good examples of these, since both can only be created by a specific group of people. Improvise if a blood charm of your own design can't be created using these guidelines—use the following rules as an example and extrapolate where necessary.

For more information on the game terms used, refer to the **Blood Charms** section in the **Goods and Services** chapter on p. 443 of the **Player's Compendium**.

Alteration

Permanent Damage: 1, 2, or 3
Strain: 1
Depatterning Rating: 2
Enchanting Difficulty: 15 + Permanent Damage Cost

Some blood charms change a user's body forever. These charms are always susceptible to stress depatterning, but provide extra abilities in exchange. These charms go beyond what is possible with the other blood charms, but trade greater power for a higher risk of depatterning. An Alteration charm can provide the same bonuses as other charms; feel free to alter the base values given above with any of the modifiers given in the tables for the other blood charm types. Each bonus provided is increased by one additional unit, however. If the charm provides an extra ability that the character can use automatically (and doesn't involve any tests, such as modified Movement rates), the permanent damage cost is always 3.

The wings of fire charm grants the ability of flight to a character. The gamemaster decides that the permanent Damage cost is 3.

Booster

Permanent Damage: 1, 2, or 3
Strain: 1
Depatterning Rating: 1
Enchanting Difficulty: 9 + Permanent Damage Cost

Booster charms are the most common blood charm type, providing a bonus to a single, predetermined Talent, Skill, or Damage Test. The bonus equals +1 for each permanent Damage point the charm causes. The bonus can also be made variable, allowing the user to choose the height of the bonus by paying an equal number of Strain points. Some booster charms allow the user to choose between related Action Tests. For example, an Attack Test is always followed by a Damage Test—so a charm might allow the

BOOSTER CHARM MODIFIERS TABLE

Type of Test	Permanent Damage Cost	Depatterning Rating	Strain Cost	Base Enchanting Difficulty
Attribute-only Test	+1	+1	+1	+2
Initiative Test	+3	—	—	+5
Recovery Test	—	—	0	+2
Variable Bonus	—	—	1/+1	+3
Choice Between Related Tests	—	—	—	+2
One-time Boost	—	—	0	+2
Bonus Split (Fend)	—	—	—	+2

character to choose whether he wants to boost his Attack Test or his Damage Test. This decision must be made upon activation. Blood charms of this type can also provide a one-time boost: this doubles the bonus, and costs no Strain. A fend provides protection in a special situation or a special type of magical powers and allows the character to split the total bonus between specific (but related) abilities or characteristics. However, one-time boosts and fend charms must be recharged after use; which first requires the character to heal the permanent damage caused by using the charm.

These charms can also augment other Action Tests, but these come at different costs, as outlined on the Booster Charm Modifiers Table below. If the test in question is not a Talent, Skill, or Damage Test, modify the base values accordingly.

A blood charm augmenting the wearer's Willpower by +1 costs 1 point of permanent damage and 2 points of Strain to activate. The charm has a Base Enchanting Difficulty of 12 (9+1+2), since it boosts an Attribute-only test. If the charm would provide a one-time boost, the activation wouldn't cost any Strain and the bonus would be +2. The charm would become inert after use, however.

Enhancement

Permanent Damage: 1, 2, or 3
Strain: 0
Depatterning Rating: 0
Enchanting Difficulty: 9 + Permanent Damage Cost

These charms provide additional senses or an extra pool of damage points. If the charm provides an extra sense that the character can use automatically (and doesn't involve any tests, such as Low Light vision), the permanent damage cost is always 2. If the ability involves a test related to the sense, a blood charm of this kind grants a bonus equal to the permanent damage cost at the cost of 1 Strain. Enhancement charms granting a pool of extra damage points provide 6 points per point of permanent damage. For example, an Absorb Blow Charm provides a pool of 12 additional damage points. After using such a charm, it is destroyed. The Enhancement Charm Modifiers Table provides a summary of these modifications.

ENHANCEMENT CHARM MODIFIERS TABLE

Modifier	Permanent Damage Cost	Strain Cost	Base Enchanting Difficulty
Sense Only	+2	—	—
Involves Action Test	—	+1	+2

A darksight eye allows a character to see in the dark as if he possessed the racial Low Light Vision ability. A character who already has this ability gains no benefit from wearing a darksight eye. Since there is no test required to use this ability, the permanent damage cost is 2. However, a modified version of the darksight eye might provide a +1 bonus to the wearer's Perception Tests when used in the dark at the cost of 1 point of Strain and +2 to the Enchanting Difficulty.

Poison

Permanent Damage: 1, 2, or 3
Strain: 0
Depatterning Rating: 2
Enchanting Difficulty: 17 + Permanent Damage Cost

These blood charms produce poison or diseases that may harm others. The character wearing the blood charms is immune to the effects of the poison or disease, since it is produced from his body. For more information on poisons and diseases, refer to the **Adventuring** chapter, p. 106.

POISON CHARM MODIFIERS TABLE

Modifier	Permanent Damage Cost	Strain Cost	Base Enchanting Difficulty
Step Number +1	+1	+1	+1
Spell Defense +1	+1	+1	+1
Range +5 yards	—	—	+1

If the poison has to be applied manually (for example, requiring the character to touch or inflict a Wound to the target), the poison's Step Number and Spell Defense are equal to the character's Toughness step. If the poison or disease affects targets within a given area, the poison's Step Number is equal to the character's Toughness step at a radius of 5 yards. No armor protects against this damage. Increasing that radius by +5 yards decreases the Step Number by –1.

The blood charm's poison or disease can also be made more potent: increase the step number or the Spell Defense by +1 for each additional permanent Damage Point, or the range of the effect by an additional +5 yards, as shown on the Poison Charm Modifiers Table.

A spore glands charm inflicts damage on living targets within a 10 yard radius when activated, which increases the Enchanting Difficulty for this charm from 18 to 19.

Determine Charm Characteristics

Calculate the Enchanting Difficulty based on the effect and any modifications. The result may be further modified by altering the blood charm's Depatterning Rating: each +1 increase lowers the Enchanting Difficulty by the same amount and vice versa. Also note down all other characteristics for the finished blood charm.

BLOOD CHARM COST TABLE

Type	Cost
Alteration	100–1,000
Booster	100–500
Enhancement	300–1,200
Poison	500–2,000

The Blood Charm Cost Table gives typical price ranges for different types of blood charms. As a rule of thumb, the greater the power of a given charm, the higher its value in silver pieces. The final market price and availability of the blood charm is ultimately determined by the gamemaster, however, depending on the role blood magic plays in his game.

Enchanting

If the blood charm was developed by a player character, he must create the new charm on his own. Since there is no existing recipe for creating the charm, add +3 to the Enchanting Difficulty to reflect the inherent difficulty of creating a new charm.

For more details on how player characters create blood charms, see the **Enchanting** chapter on p. 276 of the **Player's Compendium**.

Write Blood Charm Description

Once the blood charm's game mechanics have been determined, write down a description for the charm, along with any references to related game mechanics and any exceptions to these.

Blood charms are usually made from bones or semi-precious stones, such as jade, amber, or quartz; some are even made from gems. Blood charms are usually attached directly to a character's skin, breaking through it to reach the blood needed to power the charm's magic.

AIRSHIPS AND RIVERBOATS

Welcome aboard, honored guests! Please allow me to show you to your quarters, then Master Jik'havas will explain how to use the oars while you listen to the delightful tunes of his drum…

• Captain Trenjor, greets a new group of slaves aboard his vedette *Intimidator* •

This chapter describes the various types of airships and riverboats characters are likely to encounter in their adventures. The following material includes explanations of ship statistics, rules for ship travel including speed and navigational hazards, an overview of ship combat and rules for constructing, repairing and maintaining ships.

This section also includes descriptions of several different types of ships: crystal raider drakkars, the wooden airships of Throal, the paddle-wheeled riverboats of the t'skrang, the waterborne galleys of the merchant cities, and the powerful stone airships of the Theran Empire.

AIRSHIPS

Airships are made of either stone or wood. Within these two broad categories are several different ship types. General descriptions of the different ships are provided below; in practice, airships can take on any configuration.

The Therans, rich in magic and ever willing to flaunt their wealth, build stone airships almost without exception. The crystal raiders and shipwrights in Barsaivian cities build wooden airships. Within these two classifications are a number of variations, from warships to trading ships to the swift raiding vessels of the highland trollmoots.

THE LAW OF SIMILARITY

One of the laws governing the use of the magic flowing through the fabric of our universe is the **Law of Similarity**. This law states that those things that look alike are alike; things that behave the same way are the same. This law allows airships to float on air using magic, for they look and act like ships that float on water. Though the magical elements and orichalcum forged from all five of them can be used to implement the Law of Similarity, it often takes years to find the proper proportions of elemental magic needed to achieve various effects. Many people have, for example, tried to create ships able to sail through land as boats sail through water and air, but no one has yet succeeded. The combination of elemental earth and other magics needed to accomplish such a feat have yet to be discovered.

In accordance with the Law of Similarity, a wooden airship floats in the air as other ships float in water. Just as a waterborne ship will sink if its hull is breached, so an airship will sink if its hull takes too much damage. Whether damaged by fire cannons, magical spells, or a flock of giant eagles, a breached ship will sink slowly toward the earth. If the damage has been extreme, it will quickly plummet to the ground below. Theran ships make no use of this law, relying on other, crueler magics to keep their vessels afloat.

AIRSHIP CONSTRUCTION

Constructing an airship is a complex, time-consuming and expensive undertaking that requires the expertise of many highly skilled artisans. Indeed, even the great airship yards of Barsaive only turn out a few new airships each year.

Under the direction of a shipwright, carpenters and other craftsmen construct the keel and hull of the ship. Sailmakers, woodcarvers, metalsmiths and the like outfit the ship, and then one or more Elementalists and their assistants weave countless kernels of True air into the wood or stone to make the ship fly. The whole process takes many months; in a single year a shipyard might turn out three or four drakkars, or perhaps one or two galleys.

The crystal raiders are the best shipbuilders in the province. Several Barsaivian cities also build wooden airships, notably Urupa, Travar, Jerris, and Iopos. The art of shipbuilding has returned slowly to Barsaive since the Theran War, as the people struggle to recover from the Scourge and the Theran invasion. The shipbuilders might hope for greater profit if one or more shipyards pooled their resources, but, unfortunately, no two shipyards have been able to agree to work together.

WOODEN AIRSHIPS

In sharp contrast to stone airships, wooden airships are easier to build, easier to fly, and less expensive in terms of both elemental magic and money. Wooden airships—especially Barsaivian ones—seldom use slaves for propulsion. When an airship must fly swiftly, the crew members give their life energy voluntarily. Unlike the Therans, who kill slaves by draining their life force for this effort, Barsaivian crews give up smaller amounts of life energy and almost always survive this process.

The galleon, the galley, the drakkar, and the airboat represent the four classes of wooden airships.

Galleons

Galleons are the largest wooden airships, virtually unseen in Barsaive since the Scourge. These ships reach lengths of up to 150 feet and may be as wide as 35 feet or more, with multiple decks, masts and sails. Galleons are rarely powered by oars, but they require many Air Sailors to rig and control the sails. They usually have several decks and can carry up to five hundred passengers or troops.

Galleons can also carry considerable firepower, but they lumber by comparison to the more maneuverable drakkars and galleys and even the smaller stone airships of the Theran Empire.

Galleys

Galleys are mid-sized wooden airships most commonly used by the cities and nations of Barsaive. A typical galley is 100 feet long and more than 20 feet wide, powered by both oar and sail. Crewed by a hundred, galleys have more cargo capacity than drakkars, which they can use to carry an extra two hundred troops or passengers.

Most galleys are merchant vessels, carrying goods quickly across Barsaive. Other galleys are military ships. Usually, galleys have two upper decks—fore and aft—and two lower decks. A galley can carry weapons like fire cannons (often mounted on the fore or aft castles), and even a merchant ship often has some weapons to defend itself against attacks by pirates and raiders.

Drakkars

The crystal raiders use a class of ship known as the **drakkar**. Airfaring trollmoots have built such ships for untold centuries, and their skill continues to grow. Drakkars average 60 feet in length and sometimes support a single mast. Some drakkars have masts that can be taken down or raised as the situation demands. This sail supplements the ship's power, most of which comes from rowing crews of approximately thirty trolls. The ships can carry cargo, but usually use that space to transport additional crystal raiders.

Swiftness and maneuverability are the drakkar's greatest advantages, but its light weight means the ship can flip over easily in a high wind. It is a tribute to the skill of the crews that these ships so rarely plunge to the ground and shatter. In contrast to the large galleys, which feel much more substantial, little seems to hold the vessel up; it rushes through the air at dizzying speed, and the cold, sharp wind strikes your face like a surging wave.

Drakkars cannot carry fire cannons, but the crystal raiders have no great love of such weapons. When raiding, they prefer to rush slower vessels, evading the fireballs shot at them in defense. As soon as they are close enough, the raiders throw grappling hooks toward the other ship and use them to pull their own ship closer. Rather than waiting for the ships to touch, some raiders throw themselves across the space between the vessels—an extraordinary feat of courage when one considers that they are leaping over a sickening drop of many hundreds of feet.

At this point, the true crystal raider battle begins, for the raiders excel at hand-to-hand combat. Once boarded, few ships can defend against the crystal raiders' fierce, joyous attacks.

Airboats

Airboats are the smallest airships available, resembling small rowboats carrying only a handful of Name-givers and a small amount of cargo. Propelled by a single rower or a pair of rowers, airboats are most commonly used as lifeboats and launches for larger airships such as galleys and galleons. Drakkar-sized or smaller ships rarely carry airboats on board.

Stone Airships

Unlike wooden airships, stone ships have not the look of waterborne vessels. At best, they resemble flat-bottomed barges. Most lack sails, and few have the rudders or keels common to wooden ships. Many stone airships are powered by the physical strength and life force of oarsmen, usually slaves. Rather than relying on physical methods of navigation and steering, the Therans chart and stay their course through magic.

Most stone ships are built like fortresses—thick-walled, heavy, and nearly impossible to keep aloft. The magical resources required to construct such a ship and keep it airborne speaks well of Theran wealth and ill of their wasteful habits.

Three types of stone airships cruise the skies above the Theran Empire: behemoths, kilas, and vedettes. Though all stone airships are classed as one of these three, the classes themselves are determined by size. Thus, the vedette, the smallest class of stone airship, includes small warships as well as stone mining ships.

Behemoths

Behemoths are the largest and most awe-inspiring airships. A behemoth is a small floating city, often measuring over 250 yards to a side, surrounded by high stone walls and surmounted by many towers and structures. The bottom of the ship is a hollow foundation, usually circular or square. In this sunless area, the ship's slaves live out their miserable existences. The foundation supports two dozen or more buildings housing Theran officials, soldiers, libraries, and the ship's crew, making the behemoth a portable community of conquest. In these vessels, the Therans travel throughout the Theran Empire, carrying enough officials, soldiers, magicians, adepts, and questors to invade and occupy any place they wish to lay hands on.

According to the Therans with whom I have spoken, behemoths carry more than two hundred slaves. A great many die during long journeys, and so the ship must land often to replenish its slave population.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

A behemoth is a weapon of war second to none; its thick stone walls enable it to resist attacks from smaller ships while numerous fire cannons and other weapons mounted on those same walls rain destruction down on targets. A single behemoth defeated the gathered crystal raider moots at the Battle of Sky Point, and the behemoth *Triumph* has become a stronghold of Theran might in the heartland of Barsaive.

Kilas

With kilas, the resemblance between wooden and stone airships ends. **Kilas** are floating fortresses—small, fortified castles torn from their foundations and set in the sky by the power of Theran magicians. Instead of the dozens of buildings found on a behemoth, a kila supports only one building with several towers

and one wall. Kilas are most often square-shaped, measuring up to 80 yards on a side, with towers reaching four or five stories tall. The walls and towers of a kila can mount many fire cannons and other weapons, but the weapons cannot turn, and so can only be brought to bear on targets on the side on which they are mounted. Smaller and more maneuverable ships often take advantage of this limitation.

The kila serves as a movable fortress for the Theran military; they can land this airship on any patch of ground and immediately establish a fortress. These huge ships are much larger than wooden galleons, and the greatest of them can eclipse the sun by floating past it. Like the behemoth, the kila has a flat foundation where the ship's slaves are housed.

Vedettes

Vedettes are the smallest stone airships, used by the Theran Empire as mining barges, attack ships, cargo carriers, troop transports and fighter escorts for larger airships. They are similar in size to drakkars, up to 60 feet long and 10 to 15 feet wide, though they usually feature lower and upper decks. Though highly maneuverable, vedettes cannot mount as much firepower as larger ships. Their stone hulls make vedettes as tough as or tougher than wooden ships more than twice their size and protect them from many hazards that affect wooden airships.

The Therans often use vedettes against the crystal raiders and other native airships that prey on Theran vessels. Vedettes also swiftly move strike forces where they are needed and work as escorts for mining ships and behemoths. Vedettes also make useful barges for gathering magical elements. The sturdy stone hulls protect slaves and crews mining the Death's Sea for elemental fire, and the ships can rise high enough into the sky to gather elemental air.

Ghost Ships

Legends and rumors tell of airships that fly without crews. Called ghost ships, most such vessels ply the skies only briefly. Without life force from a crew or regular replacement of the ship's elemental air, a ghost ship will eventually crash to the ground like any other airship. Travelers who have seen one tell that ghost ships are created when a Horror invades an airship and kills the crew. The Horror then abandons the ship for greener pastures or else waits for salvagers to board the vessel and serve as its next victims. On rare occasions, crystal raiders attack a ship, kill its crew, take its riches, and leave the ship floating dead in the sky.

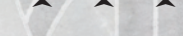
On occasion, more extraordinary events produce ghost ships that roam the skies for many years. These ships stay afloat as long as the spirits of the dead crew haunt the vessel. The *Golden Cloud*, a Theran mining ship, is one famous long-lived ghost ship. Once part of a fleet that used elemental fire charges to rip into the plane of elemental air and gather the shards of that magical element, the *Golden Cloud* fell victim to its success. The continuous mining ravaged a portion of the elemental plane beyond repair; angered by the destruction, elemental air spirits manifested and slaughtered the airship's crew. They invested the ship with enough elemental air magic to keep the airship high in the sky over Barsaive. To this day, so stories tell, the ship cuts a wide swath through the sky, reminding those who live below that air miners harm the elemental planes at their own risk. Several heroes and Theran salvagers have attempted to board the ship and capture its cargo, but none have ever returned.

Perhaps the most famous of all ghost ships is the *Earthdawn*, the ship flown by Vaare Longfang on her exploration of Barsaive in the days immediately following the Scourge. The *Earthdawn* returned once, and then set out again. It never returned from its second journey. Many legends tell of the *Earthdawn* appearing in the sky, and then vanishing in an eyeblink.

... From the decks of our drakkar, we watched the derelict Theran barge loom closer. In the prow of our ship, several of the Stoneclaws' best warriors pulled on the grappling ropes that made a slender bridge between our ship of wood and the stone barge. Though most Theran craftsmanship shows grace and beauty, the ugly lines and angles of the mining barge reflected the Therans callous indifference to their workers. Ash from the magma bursts used for mining caked and dirtied the vessel.

As the barge approached, everyone fell silent. On the deck of the barge lay the remains of the slaves, their bodies torn apart, their blood seeping into the deck. Across a rowers' bench lay the corpse of an elf, his long, lean body sliced open with delicate precision. Though the barge moved, nothing on it lived. We knew then it was the Horrors that had done this...

—From the journal of Vorg of the Stoneclaws



Airship Names

Because all airships are Named and have True patterns, they can be affected by magic like other Named people, places and objects. Though strictly speaking airships are closest to magical items, in game terms they function more like Named places, with their own pattern items.

Most Named airships have at least one pattern item, particularly if the airship is old or has been involved with many legendary deeds on the part of its crew. These pattern items can be used to study the True pattern of the airship and to weave threads to it. It is common for the captain of an airship to hold one or more of its pattern items and to have one or more threads woven to the ship's True pattern. These threads may be used to increase the weaver's abilities aboard ship, or the thread rank may be used to increase one of the ship's Attribute steps.

Crystal raider captains naturally guard the pattern items of their ships very carefully to avoid having them fall into the hands of their enemies. Since many of the crystal raider drakkars are connected to and crewed by a particular clan, the ships themselves effectively become pattern items for their clans.

How Air Sailing Works

The most important talent for the operation of an airship is Air Sailing. The Air Sailing talent includes the practical knowledge of serving on board an airship: how to row, trim sails, steer and perform all of the functions necessary to keep an airship running. Air Sailor and Sky Raider adepts are the primary characters who practice this talent, but the talent can be learned as a skill by non-adepts and airship crewmen of other Disciplines. Human adepts who serve on board airships often learn Air Sailing through the use of their Versatility talent.

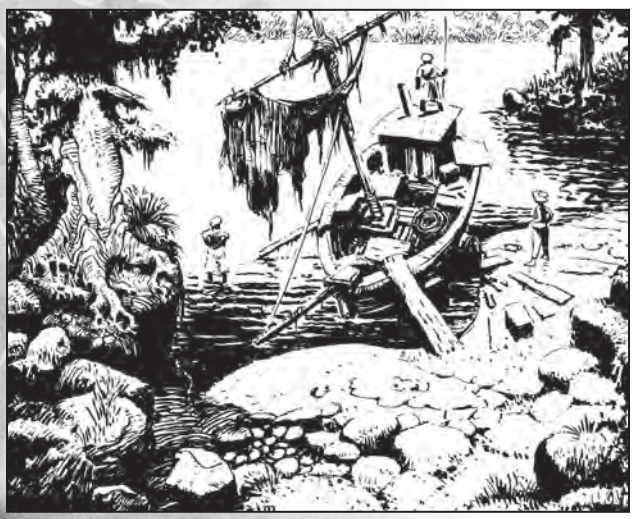
Air Sailing also provides much of the magic that allows an airship to soar through the sky as easily as an ordinary ship sails across water. A normal wooden oar rowed against nothing but air will do little to move a massive ship, even a free-floating airship. But the symbolic act of rowing combined with the power of the rower's will has magical effects. Rowing is a symbol of the rower's desire to move the ship. Air Sailing takes this desire and magically translates it into motive power that drives the airship. This is one of the reasons rowing is commonly used to propel airships: the force of Air Sailing magic usually allows rowed ships to travel more quickly than airships under sail. Air Sailing magic also comes into play in steering and the use of sails, but airships under sail receive more of their impetus to move from the winds than the efforts of the crew.

Even non-adepts trained in the Air Sailing skill can make use of this magical aspect of the talent. Because the will of the rowers represents the most important factor in ship propulsion, using barely trained rowers requires a much larger number of people; skilled Air Sailors, of course, can move an airship with a fairly small crew. The larger Theran stone ships, kilas and behemoths use large crews of slave rowers as an additional means of propulsion along with sails and life-draining magic—countless numbers of slaves have lost their lives to propel Theran ships.

Riverboats

Though their underwater villages provide them shelter from all sorts of attacks, including Horror assaults during the Scourge, most t'skrang feel trapped if they stay too long inside the stone domes of their river villages. Creatures of sweeping motion and intense passion, the t'skrang long for the chance to serve as crew members on the village's riverboat and travel the wide expanse of the Serpent. Larger villages support several riverboats, allowing even more of the village's citizens to travel the rivers.

T'skrang villages and communities exist to sail the Serpent; the crew covenant reflects the importance of the riverboat in their lives. To have a ship and sail upon it is all a t'skrang truly desires from life. Even the t'skrang cannot explain this overwhelming desire, but if one considers their love of motion, their amphibian nature, and the complete safety offered by their underwater villages, it seems clear that the riverboat has given them a way to balance their desires against the need to raise children in safety.



Though the foundation is matriarchal, crewing assignments for a ship are shared equally among the entire crew covenant. The actual assignments vary, depending on the size of the village and how many ships are available. The captain is chosen by the entire crew covenant, based on ability, experience, and more than a little politicking. The vote is seldom unanimous, but if two-thirds of a crew covenant agrees on a candidate, the choice is made. Chosen for a single season, the best captains often serve in that capacity for life. Incompetent captains lose their position at the end of a season, or may be voted out mid-season.

The Occurrence of Mutiny

The captain of a ship provides stability among the crew covenants, but can also become the target of jealousy among those rejected for the position. Though most crew covenants are too tightly knit for such feelings to surface, occasionally an overly ambitious t'skrang leads a mutiny against a captain, usually taking the position of captain himself. Particularly calculating t'skrang sometimes prop up a crew member they can influence as the captain so that if the mutiny goes badly, the true mutineer will suffer less heavy a punishment than his dupe. Usurpation of a captain's authority is punishable by death, and co-conspirators often die as well.

If their mutiny succeeds, the crew can either sail back to their village and attempt to force their will on the rest of the crew covenant, or find another village willing to accept the ship in its fleet. Though many villages might welcome another ship, most t'skrang consider it risky to invite mutinous sailors into the crew covenant. If a crew has mutinied once, it may well do so again. In most cases, a village that accepts a mutinous crew most likely struck a prior bargain with that crew. In such cases, the village interested in acquiring the ship may aid the mutineers by attacking the ship when the mutiny begins.

On the Construction of Riverboats

A typical t'skrang riverboat has five decks; one lower deck, three upper decks, and an aft castle from which the captain commands the ship.

The lower deck fills the flat, wide bottom of the riverboat; on it are stored the ship's supplies. The three upper decks, covering half the riverboat's length, hold the crew quarters, the ship's cargo, and the fire cannons. The cargo holds have large doors cut into the side of the riverboat, from which wide gangplanks are lowered during loading and unloading. Because the plank lies at a steeper angle against the uppermost deck, the crew stores lighter cargo items on the highest deck and the heaviest items on the lower deck.

The mid-decks are terraced in such a way that the exterior walls are set back a few yards from the ship's edge. The entire surface of the ship bristles with sturdy poles attached to hinged braces; from each pole hangs a length of rope. To move around the ship, t'skrang sailors grab the end of a rope and swing out over the water, then arc back toward the ship. If this swing leaves the sailor short of his destination, he grabs another rope and swings further. Though the interior of the ship provides corridors and stairs leading to every part of the vessel, the t'skrang prefer to swing around the ship—even if the trip takes longer.

Fire cannons stand along the decks and on the roof of the topside. First used hundreds of years ago when the first Theran Empire dominated Barsaive, the fire cannons' roaring explosions captured the imaginations of the excitable, spectacle-loving t'skrang. The cannons are fixed in position, forcing the crew to

turn the entire ship in order to aim them. As one might expect, t'skrang crews quickly become expert at maneuvering in a fight.

The aft castle is a large room elevated on stilts a few yards above the top deck. Windows line the bridge and provide a clear view of the river in all directions. The controls for the elemental fire engine and the ship's rudders are in the bridge, allowing the captain to determine where the ship goes and how fast it travels.

Methods of Propulsion

Unlike any other vessel in Barsaive, t'skrang riverboats do not use sails or oars to move through the river. Not even the Therans possess anything as extraordinary as the t'skrang fire engines and giant paddlewheels.

The fire engine is generally housed in a large room at the stern of the lower deck, and consists of a large metal chamber with one wheel on either side. A large wooden arm attaches to each wheel and extends past the rear of the ship.

The large, cylinder-shaped paddlewheel sits above the water on an axle, the large slats of wood fastened to the edge of the cylinder and angled as if radiating from the center of the cylinder resting in the water.

The arms protruding from the fire engine are attached to either end of the cylinder shape. As the wheels of the fire engine turn, they pull and push on these arms, and the arms pull and push on the paddlewheel. This motion spins the paddlewheel around its axle. As the wheel turns, the planks consecutively sink into the water and push against it. This pushing forces the riverboat forward or backward, depending on the direction in which the wheel is turning.

Different traditions describe the origins of the t'skrang knowledge of fire engines. Theran scholars suggest that the original fire engine was an ancient artifact from a time before our recorded history. They claim the t'skrang imitated the combination of engineering and magic by accident, and contend that the t'skrang have never applied the knowledge to anything else because they do not understand it.

The Therans always dismiss the achievements of native Barsaivians. They desire to make us all seem utterly insignificant.

—Velluniium, Captain of the *Breeton II*

The t'skrang themselves disagree about the source of their fire engines. Some believe that a questor of Upandal created the device centuries ago. According to the story, the power of the Passion Upandal so filled the questor's being that he was touched by madness. It is said that no Name-giver can begin to comprehend the complex and wonderful ideas that Upandal possesses. Driven by his madness, the questor constructed the fire engine, a device that combined mechanical ingenuity and a great deal of magic. This first engine powered the first riverboat and set the t'skrang on the path to become Barsaive's most skilled sailors and traders.

Other t'skrang believe that several t'skrang villages together created the device, working under the guidance of Upandal. The Passion was pleased by their ingenuity and willingness to cooperate in this creative process and ensured that this engine would succeed. When the marvelous device was completed, Upandal showed them how to attach it to their riverboats, and they grew rich from the trade the miraculous engine brought them.

With their newfound speed and mobility, the t'skrang prospered. Their battles also grew more destructive, for they could maneuver more quickly. According to a popular t'skrang tale, some of the Passions became jealous of the devotion to Upandal inspired by the fire engines and told Upandal that he must destroy his work. Upandal refused, and Chorrolis, Passion of trade, sided with him. This tale provides the only hint that the Passions could fight among themselves before madness took three of them during the Scourge.

The jealous Passions swore to destroy the t'skrang if Upandal did not destroy the fire engines. Now Upandal loved both the engines and the t'skrang who had worked so hard to build them, for it is Upandal's nature to love the objects made as much as those who fashion them. He agreed that the fire engines could be dangerous and proposed a compromise. The t'skrang would live and keep the engines attached to their riverboats, but no one would ever be able to build another engine of that kind for any other use. As a reward for their faith in him, Upandal made the t'skrang the only Name-givers capable of building the engines, but only for use on their ships. This compromise placated the jealous Passions and restored harmony among them.

This last tale in some ways seems the least likely, for there are no known other records of conflict between the Passions before the Scourge. On the other hand, Upandal has never again helped anyone who tried to duplicate the t'skrang fire engines. Though many have tried to build them, including the Therans, none have succeeded. Upandal himself never speaks of the matter, nor do any of the other Passions.

Historians reading this must realize that the t'skrang created the fire engine and paddlewheel long before the city of Thera was founded, and many centuries before our province was Named Barsaive.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

Ship Statistics

All ships have six Attributes: Speed, Maneuverability, Firepower, Hull, Damage and Crew.

Most of these Attributes are given as step numbers, and are used in the same way as a character's Attribute steps are. Some ship Attributes, however, represent other characteristics of the ship, such as the amount of damage the ship can sustain before becoming derelict, or the strength of the ship's armor. Each of these six Attributes is described more fully below. The **Ship Combat** section includes specifics for how many of these Attributes are used in the game. Always use the current Attribute step (modified by Critical Hits, Air Sailing Tests and so on) when making tests or using the Attribute as a Difficulty Number.

Unless stated otherwise, all airships and riverboats are considered to have a Spell Defense of 12.

Speed

Each ship has a Speed step that determines the speed at which it can travel. This is the ship's cruising speed under normal conditions. Speed steps may vary among different types of vessels, and also depend on the environment. To reflect this in the game, lower the Speed of ships traveling against the wind (or against the river current) by –1. If a ship is traveling with the current (or with the wind), add a +1 bonus to its Speed. A ship's Speed step is used when making certain tests for the ship while it is traveling or in combat.

Most ships can run faster for short bursts when necessary: the drummer on a galley can beat out a double time to the oarsmen or the ship can catch a strong gust of wind. To do this, the captain (or another character commanding the ship—most often the helmsman) makes an Air Sailing or Pilot Boat Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the ship's Speed step. An Average

SHIP SPEED TABLE			
Speed Step	Yards per Round	Miles per Hour	Distance in Miles (in 8 / 16 hours)
0	5	1	8 / 16
1	10	2	16 / 32
2	16	3.3	26 / 52
3	22	4.5	36 / 72
4	28	5.7	46 / 92
5	34	7	56 / 112
6	40	8.2	66 / 132
7	49	10	80 / 160
8	58	11.9	95 / 190
9	67	13.7	110 / 120
10	78	16	128 / 256
11	90	18.4	147 / 294
12	102	20.9	167 / 334
13	115	23.5	188 / 376
14	130	26.6	213 / 426
15	145	29.7	238 / 476

result adds a +1 bonus to the ship's Speed; a Good result adds +2; an Excellent result adds +3; an Extraordinary result adds a +4 bonus. In combat, this Speed increase lasts for a number of combat turns equal to the character's rank in Air Sailing or Pilot Boat, respectively. Regardless of increases, a ship's Speed step may never exceed 15.

The Ship Speed Table shows a ship's actual speed (in both miles per hour and yards per combat round) based on its Speed step, as well as how far a ship can travel (in miles) during an eight- or sixteen-hour period. Most ships travel for sixteen hours per day under normal conditions.

Jedaiyen Westhrall needs to get her riverboat 16 miles downstream to rescue a Scavian barge from the clutches of a K'tenshin warship. Her boat, Astendar's Desire*, has a Speed step of 8. She makes a Pilot Boat Test against a Difficulty Number of 8 and gets a 9—an Average result. That increases the boat's Speed by +1 to 9. The riverboat will be traveling with the river's current to reach its destination, which further increases its Speed to 10. That means* Astendar's Desire *will travel at 16 miles per hour, so it will reach the Scavian barge in one hour.*

Sailing Ships

The keeled sailing ships of the Aras Sea depend on the wind to push them along the water. A sailing ship's Speed step varies, depending on the strength of the prevailing wind and whether the ship is running with the wind or tacking against it.

Appropriate Speed steps are listed in the Sailing Speed Table. A sailing ship's Maneuverability Attribute is always the same as its Speed step.

SAILING SPEED TABLE		
	—Speed Step—	
Wind Speed	Same Direction	Tacking Against
Less than 5 mph	3	1
5–10 mph	5	3
11–20 mph	8	6
21–30 mph	11	9
More than 30 mph	13	11

Maneuverability

A ship's Maneuverability reflects how quickly it can change course, flank opponents and break off from an attack. A ship's Maneuverability step is used when making tests for various maneuvers, and is also the Difficulty Number for certain tests made against the ship.

An airship's Maneuverability step can also be increased by the use of the Air Sailing skill or talent.

Firepower

A ship's Firepower represents how effective the ship's weapons are in combat. This Attribute takes into account the number of weapons, their placement and their range. The number to the right of the slash represents the Attack step; the number to the left represents the Effect (usually Damage) step.

When the ship attacks with its weapons, the captain can split the Attack steps into any number of attacks that add up to the ship's total Firepower. See the **Fire** maneuver, on p. 149, for more information about how a ship's Firepower Attribute works in combat.

For most ships, the Firepower step represents the power of a weapon mounted on the ship. See the individual weapon descriptions in the **Ship Weapons** section to determine how these weapons are used in combat.

Hull

A ship's Hull Attribute represents the vessel's durability. This Attribute includes the actual thickness of the ship's walls, how cleverly the ship's design protects vital areas and so on. A ship's Hull covers three factors: Armor, Ramming and Cargo.

The **Armor** rating reduces the damage of all attacks made against that ship. The **Ramming** rating represents the Damage step of the ship's ramming attack against an opposing ship.

The ship's **Cargo** rating represents the amount of freight the ship can carry and still go at full speed. This rating is measured in *duari*, a barrel that is the standard unit of measurement used by every Trade Covenant on the Serpent River, as well as every trading company in Barsaive. A standard *duari* is a cask four feet tall and three feet in diameter, capable of holding 300 pounds of rice.

Every passenger aboard reduces the available space by 2 *duari*, which is important to know for military vessels. Every 20 *duari* a ship carries above its Cargo Rating reduces the ship's Speed by –1. If the Speed of the ship is reduced to zero through a combination of weight and combat Critical Hits, the ship becomes derelict.

Damage

A ship has three Health Ratings, just like a player character. A ship's **Destroyed** and **Derelict** ratings are the ship equivalents of a character's Death and Unconsciousness Ratings, while a ship's **Critical Threshold** is equivalent to a character's Wound Threshold. Specifically, a ship's Critical Threshold is the amount of damage the ship can take from a single attack, after applying armor, before it suffers a Critical Hit.

Each Critical Hit reduces the ship's Speed, Firepower, Hull and Crew Attributes by –1 step each. When a ship accumulates damage equal to its Derelict Rating, it may no longer move or fire. When it accumulates damage equal to its Destroyed Rating, it sinks or crashes.

Crew

Each ship has a Crew Attribute that represents the overall abilities of its captain and crew. A ship's Crew Attribute includes

five factors: its **Captain** rating, **Crew Size**, **Crew Skill**, **Crew** rating and **Morale**.

A ship's Captain rating represents the minimum talent or skill rank a captain must possess to operate that type of ship. The gamemaster can use this number to make tests for a ship when he has not fully fleshed out the captain's abilities and statistics. The Crew Size represents the number of crewmen it takes to operate the ship at its full potential, while the Crew Skill represents the average talent or skill ranks of the ship's crew.

A ship's Crew Rating is an abstract rating used in boarding maneuvers in much the same way Firepower is used in ranged combat. Lastly, a crew's Morale is the amount of damage the ship and the crew can sustain before the crew will consider surrendering. Any damage done to the ship's hull, or any damage done to the crew in a boarding action are applied toward the Morale rating to determine if a crew will surrender. Consider hull and crew damages as separate, not combined, for the purpose of this comparison. Of course, player characters may always choose to keep fighting or surrender. The Morale rating applies only to crewmen who are gamemaster characters.

The minimum number of crew required to move and maneuver a ship is one-half of its Crew Size. For an airship, that is the number of people who must successfully use the Air Sailing skill or talent (or an equivalent number if higher than Average results are obtained) in order to propel the ship in any direction. The Difficulty Number for this test is 5, +1 for each Critical Hit the ship has taken. In most situations, the gamemaster can assume or improvise what happens with a ship, but if large numbers of crewmen are wounded or killed in combat, rolling out the results may be necessary. If not enough Air Sailing Test successes are achieved to fly the ship, it goes adrift. The magic and True elements will keep it afloat, but it will drift indefinitely unless the crew manages to regain control of it.

The typical riverboat has enough cargo space to hold up to 300 *duari* of trade goods. Every crew member aboard, however, reduces the available space by 2 *duari*, and every point of Firepower further reduces it by 2 *duari*. For example, a riverboat with 75 crewmen and 12 points of Firepower can carry a maximum of 201 *duari*.

Travel Hazards

Airships often travel vast distances at high speeds, whether on raids, military missions or carrying trade goods to their destinations. Riverboats usually carry trade goods and passengers to destinations along Barsaive's rivers, but may also be involved in military missions and pirate attacks.

The following rules describe game mechanics for the hazards of ship travel.

Airship Hazards

The skies of Barsaive require great skill and experience to navigate. The most common problems are storms or turbulence, and airship crews constantly check the wind and weather to prevent mishaps from occurring. Other hazards, like flying creatures, are also a factor.

The various Hazard Levels of Barsaive's major air routes are shown on the Airship Hazard Table. The Hazard Level for most of Barsaive is 7. Controlled territory is any region controlled by the airship's owners, such as a Stoneclaws airship flying over that moot's territory in the eastern Twilight Peaks or a Theran airship over Vivane or Sky Point. Certain areas of Barsaive have higher Hazard Levels, particularly regions of the Twilight Peaks and other mountain ranges, the Mist Swamps, the Servos Jungle, the Liaj Jungle and other regions where large numbers of aerial creatures live, including Deaths Sea and the Scarlet Sea.

AIRSHIP HAZARD TABLE

Area	Hazard Level	Pursuit Modifier
Controlled Territory	5	+1
Open Plains of Barsaive	7	0
Mountains (Twilight, Delaris, Scol, etc.)	8	–2
Servos Jungle	8	–2
Badlands (Mist Swamp, Liaj Jungle, etc.)	9	–3
Scarlet Sea	10	–4
Death's Sea	12	–6

Terrain and hazards can also affect an airship chase. The Pursuit Modifiers in the second column of the Airship Hazard Table are applied to the Speed steps of all ships involved in pursuit (see **Ship Combat**, p. 148).

Riverboat Hazards

The Serpent and its tributaries contain numerous hazards that a captain must safely navigate. Hidden sand bars, submerged logs and harsh weather conditions can all damage or sink a ship if its captain is not careful.

The various Hazard Levels of the Serpent River system are shown on the Hazard Table. The Hazard Level for most of the river and its major tributaries is 7. However, several sections of the river present increased navigational hazards. These sections include the upper reaches of the Serpent in the Scol Mountains; the section of river that passes through the fenlands of the Servos Jungle west of Lake Pyros; the stretch of the river near the Mist Swamps; and the upper reaches of the Servos, Galanga and Coil rivers.

Terrain and hazards can also affect a riverboat chase. The Pursuit Modifiers in the second column of the Riverboat Hazard Table are applied to the Speed steps of all ships involved in pursuit (see **Ship Combat**, p.148).

Sailing Ship Hazards

Any time a sailing ship is sailing in a wind that exceeds 30 miles per hour, the gamemaster makes a Hazard Test for the ship against a Difficulty Number equal to the ship's Speed step. Use step number 4 for the test, and repeat the test every 8 hours if the ship remains in such conditions.

Hazard Tests

To reflect the challenge of safely navigating such hazards, a ship's captain must make a Hazard Test at the start of every 8-hour period in which his ship is moving. A Hazard Test is made using the Navigation skill for airships and the Read River skill for riverboats.

The Difficulty Number for the test is the Hazard Level of the area or section of river the vessel is on. If the ship will be travel-

RIVERBOAT HAZARD TABLE

River Section	Hazard Level	Pursuit Modifier
Serpent Lakes	5	+1
South and Mid Reaches, Coil River, Aras Sea and tributaries	7	0
North Reach and tributaries	8	–2
Servos Jungle, west of Lake Pyros	8	–2
Mist Swamps and nearby river	9	–4

HAZARD MODIFIERS TABLE

Situation	Hazard Modifier	Pursuit Modifier
Rival Territory	+1	—
Darkness	+1	+1
Rain	+1	+1
Storm	+2	+2
Major Storm	+3	+3
Severe Storm	+4	+4
Severe Storm on the Aras Sea	+3	+2
Gale on the Aras Sea	+4	+1

ing through areas with two different Hazard Levels during the 8-hour period, the captain must make the Hazard Test against the higher Hazard Level. Traveling in darkness or hazardous weather conditions also increases the Hazard Level by the amounts shown on the Hazard Modifiers Table. Rival territory is controlled by an unfriendly power, such as a Theran ship flying over the Twilight Peaks.

If the Hazard Test yields an Average result, the ship safely navigates all hazards and runs at its normal speed. Unless the Hazard Test achieves a Good result or better, the captain cannot increase the ship's speed (see **Speed**, p.145).

If the test fails, the gamemaster makes another Hazard Test using a step number equal to the Hazard Level of the area against a Difficulty Number equal to the ship's Maneuverability step. On an Average result, the ship's Speed incurs a penalty of –1. On a Good result, the penalty is –2. On an Excellent result or better, the ship is damaged and receives a Critical Hit.

Ship Combat

Like travel and trade, ship combat is a fact of life in the skies and rivers of Barsaive. Airships must be prepared to do battle with raiders, pirates, Theran slavers and similar menaces. Riverboats must be prepared to do battle with independent pirates, and even rival vessels from within their own *aropagoi* on rare occasions.

Any time two or more ships meet, they may engage in battle. All types of ship combat can be conducted according to a standard, three-step procedure: Declaration, Initiative and Resolve Actions. Various maneuvers that can be used during the combat sequence appear below.

1. **Declaration:** The captain of each ship declares which specific maneuver his ship will follow.
2. **Initiative:** The captain of each ship makes an Initiative Test using the ship's Maneuverability step.
3. **Resolve Actions:** In descending order of Initiative, each captain resolves the maneuver chosen in the Declaration Phase. As soon as a ship succeeds at its declared maneuver, no other ship may complete a maneuver against it that turn (nor can it hold over an incomplete maneuver until the next turn—the captain must declare a new maneuver).

In keeping with this abstract combat style, time is made abstract as well. Instead of combat rounds, captains maneuver their ships in turns of unspecified length. If a gamemaster finds it necessary to put a time limit on ship maneuvers, we recommend that a turn be equal to one minute, or six combat rounds. Remember, once the action moves back to the scale of the characters, time again divides into combat rounds.

Unless otherwise decided by the gamemaster, ships engaging each other in combat are considered to be at a distance of 500 yards. This is the maximum possible range for ship combat using these rules.

Pursuit

When two or more ships meet, one or more may try to engage another in battle. If one of the ships wishes to avoid combat while another wishes to engage in combat, the ships desiring combat must begin pursuit. Please note that the rules below only apply to ships of the same type. Airships have a definitive advantage over riverboats because they can fly—hence they can almost always escape a riverboat attack without using the rules below. Riverboats usually can't escape an airship attack for the same reason.

Pursuit consists of a series of Speed Tests made by each side in the combat. Every turn, each ship that is either pursuing or being pursued makes a Speed Test, rolling its Speed step against a Difficulty Number equal to the opponent's Speed step. Apply any Pursuit Modifiers from the respective Hazard Table (see **Travel Hazards,** p.147) to the Difficulty Number. If there is more than one ship on each side, the Difficulty Number for the pursuer is the lowest Speed step among the ships he is pursuing, while the Difficulty Number for the fleeing side is the highest Speed step among the pursuing vessels.

The first side to make three successful Speed Tests wins the pursuit; the victorious pursuing ship initiates combat or the fleeing ship evades combat. If the two sides achieve three successes in the same turn, the first ship to score one more success than its opponent wins the pursuit. When there is more than one ship on each side, the gamemaster may apply the results of the pursuit to all ships. Once an airship successfully engages another, it is considered to be roughly 500 yards away from its opponent—the maximum distance at which airships can engage in combat.

If the fleeing ships evade their opponent, the pursuer can make another Speed Test after an hour has passed. If this test succeeds, the pursuer may begin pursuit once again using the rules above. If the test fails, the quarry has escaped.

Combat Maneuvers

Airships and riverboats can use six different maneuvers in combat, each described below. Each maneuver has a Failure Modifier, which is a modifier that all opposing captains and ships receive on their tests against a ship that failed its declared maneuver in a given turn.

Alter Distance

Failure Modifier: +2

The Alter Distance maneuver allows the ship to close or extend the distance between it and an opposing ship. The captain makes a Speed Test for the ship against the Speed step of the opposing ship. Each result level allows the captain to alter the vertical or horizontal distance between the two ships by 50 yards. This distance can be split in increments of 50 yards between the vertical and the horizontal as desired. This maneuver is only available against opposing ships of the same type (airships vs. airships and riverboats vs. riverboats). Closing range with stationary targets does not require an Alter Distance maneuver.

Board

Failure Modifier: +4

A successful Boarding maneuver brings a ship up alongside another, so the crews of the ships may battle directly. In order to board and storm an opposing ship, the attacker makes a Maneuverability Test against the defender's Maneuverability step. If successful, this maneuver allows the attacking crew to engage the enemy crew in hand-to-hand combat in the next turn. This maneuver can only be attempted against ships within 100 yards of the attacking vessel and is only available against opposing ships of the same type (airships vs. airships and riverboats vs. riverboats).

Boarding actions can be accomplished in two ways. In the first, the boarding crew grapples their ship to the one they are boarding. Because they are grappled together, both ships suffer a –4 penalty to each of their Maneuverability and Speed steps. The second method of boarding involves sending a wave of attackers over, using Great Leap and similar talents in conjunction with the initial boarding maneuver. Both ships remain free to maneuver without the grappling penalty while their crews slug it out. However, in order for the attacking ship to get its boarding parties back onboard, it must at some point make another boarding maneuver, at which point its crew returns to their ship.

Boarding Battles

In a boarding battle, each side makes an Attack Test using its Crew Rating to physically harm the opposing crew. The Difficulty Number for these tests is the opposing Crew Rating. If an Attack Test succeeds, that crew makes a Damage Test using its Crew Rating. To resist damage from a boarding attack, a crew uses the Armor rating and Critical Threshold of its ship. If the damage from a single attack exceeds a ship's Critical Threshold, the crew is wounded and its Crew Rating is reduced by –1. The Critical Hit also means that five percent of the crew has received deadly injuries and will not survive without medical assistance. If a crew takes damage equal to or higher than its Morale Rating, it may surrender to the enemy.

A crew can fully recover its Morale after three turns providing it does not take any additional damage in those three turns and it did not surrender. A crew can only recover from Critical Hits by recruiting more crew members or allowing the wounded among the crew to heal completely. This most often takes at least one week.

Player characters who wish to enter boarding engagements should be able to affect the outcome of the combat. A turn of ship combat represents about one minute, or six combat rounds. If player characters enter the boarding combat, the gamemaster should run the combat in combat rounds as normal, using gamemaster characters for the opposing crew. The gamemaster should reduce the enemy crew's Morale by –1 point for each combatant the player characters incapacitate, and simultaneously raise the Morale of the player characters' crew by +1.

The boarding battle described above represents the bigger picture of the combat; the crew Attack Tests should be made in the first round of combat, and then every sixth round thereafter. The gamemaster should warn the player characters when their own crew's morale is about to break, because once their allies surrender, it is usually fruitless for the characters' small party to fight on against the sudden shift in the odds.

Break Off

Failure Modifier: +2

A ship that wishes to Break Off from combat must make a Speed Test against the highest Maneuverability step among the ships in the opposing fleet. The fleeing ship must succeed at this test in three consecutive turns before it may break off the combat and run, at which point the opposing ship will likely pursue it. This means that each time a pursuer manages to catch up with his quarry, he has at least three chances to damage that ship before it gets away once more.

In order to break off from an enemy that has successfully boarded and grappled, a ship must achieve an Excellent or better result on a single Speed Test for the Break Off maneuver. (Remember that both ships will suffer a –4 penalty to their Speed and Maneuverability steps because they are grappled.) If this happens, the enemy crew is assumed to have returned to its own ship.

Riverboats can't use this maneuver against an airship. Airships using this maneuver against riverboats must succeed at a single Speed Test instead of three.

Fire

Failure Modifier: None if attacking a single ship / +1 for each additional ship attacked

The Fire maneuver is used when a ship attacks an enemy ship with its weapons. The captain of the attacking ship can split the Firepower among his weapons to attack any number of opponents, provided that the sum of Firepower for all his attacks adds up to no more than his ship's Firepower step. Each attack requires a separate Attack Test using the designated Firepower step against each separate target's Maneuverability step. The captain may only make one Attack Test against each target. On an Excellent Success, the attack results in an Armor-Defeating Hit.

If a ship attacks a single target, the Failure Modifier does not apply. However, if attacking multiple ships, the ship suffers a +1 Failure Modifier for each attack that fails to hit each additional target after the first. The effect of the weapon attack (usually damage) is equal to the ship's full Firepower Effect step, –1 for each target after the first.

> *Captain Gro'tan has Firepower 18/18 on his ship. He could choose to split his Firepower into three attacks of Step 6 each. Each attack that hit would do Step 16 damage (18 – 2 = 16).*

Called Shots may be made against a specific ship Attribute—targeting the mast to reduce a ship's Speed, for example. Such an attack is made at a –3 penalty, and damage is applied normally. However, if any damage gets past the ship's Armor, the specified Attribute suffers a Critical Hit (which does not affect any other Attributes). If an Armor-Defeating Hit occurs, only a single Critical Hit is inflicted on the entire ship (the targeted Attribute does not take 2 Critical Hits).

Ground Assault

Failure Modifier: +4

In a Ground Assault, the captain attempts to bring his airship's weapons to bear on a target on the ground. The idea is to swoop in for a swift pass over the target, then veer off sharply to prevent retribution. A riverboat using this maneuver swoops in toward shore, fires at targets on the shore as it passes, then sharply veers away from shore to avoid return fire.

To use this maneuver, the captain makes a Maneuverability (8) Test. If the test succeeds, the ship may fire its weapons as described for the Fire maneuver, but at ground targets. If the test fails, the ship is unable to achieve the correct angle for an attack and cannot fire effectively. This maneuver can only be attempted against targets within 100 yards of the attacking vessel. Airships can use this maneuver against riverboats only if the riverboat is stationary.

Ram

Failure Modifier: +6

A ship that wishes to Ram its opponent makes a Speed Test against the target ship's Maneuverability step. If the test succeeds, the attacker has struck the enemy ship, and makes a Damage Test

using its Ramming step. This damage is reduced by the target's Armor as normal.

The Ram maneuver can only be attempted against targets within 100 yards of the attacking vessel. This maneuver is only available against opposing ships of the same type (airships vs. airships and riverboats vs. riverboats).

Ship Weapons

A ship's weapons use the ship's Firepower to hit and the Firepower Effect step to determine their effect (usually damage). Airships and riverboats can mix different types of ship-board weapons, but must split the Firepower step among them. For example, a drakkar with a Firepower of 10 / 13 can carry both spear throwers and net throwers, but must split the Firepower between them as if it were attacking multiple targets (see the **Fire** maneuver, p.149).

When firing weapons in this manner, apply a –1 penalty to the Effect test for each split. The sample drakkar therefore could use step 6 for the spear throwers and Firepower step 4 for the net throwers, but has to apply a –1 penalty to the Firepower Effect Test for each weapon.

Ship weapons can fire once per ship combat turn (once every six combat rounds). Thunderbolt throwers can only be fired once before they must be recharged.

Ballista

A ballista works like an oversized crossbow and fires long spears at its target. Apart from standard spears, special spears tipped with living crystal, True earth or such can also be used as ammunition.

A ballista has a short Range of up to 50 yards, medium Range from 51–100 yards, and long Range from 101–200 yards.

Catapult

Catapults most often fling stones, but may also hurl more exotic ammunition, including small casks of oil, alcohol or other flammable materials that can be ignited by fire cannons or dragon's breath weapons. Typically, a burning oil cask does only little (negligible) damage upon impact, but the fire does Step 8 damage to a wooden ship each turn until extinguished.

Some Sky Raiders even use ship-mounted catapults to launch themselves at enemy ships, gaining a bonus equal to half the airship's Firepower step on a Great Leap Test to reach the target ship. If multiple Sky Raider characters are launched in the same ship combat turn, the ship's Firepower must be divided among them.

A catapult has a short Range of up to 50 yards, medium Range from 51–100 yards, and long Range from 101–200 yards.

Fire Cannon

A fire cannon shoots a ball of flame at the target vessel, which explodes on impact. Each fire cannon can hold five kernels of elemental fire and five kernels of elemental air. The cannon works by mixing one kernel of each elemental substance, creating a fireball.

A single volley of a ship's fire cannons uses one elemental kernel of each type for each point of Firepower up to 12. Above 12, a single volley uses one of each type of kernel per extra point of Firepower. For example, a warship with Firepower 17 / 17 would use 5 kernels of fire and 5 kernels of air (17 – 12 = 5) each turn it fires its cannons.

A fire cannon has a short Range of up to 100 yards, medium Range from 101–250 yards, and long Range from 251–500 yards.

Dragon's Breath

Dragon's Breath weapons create an intense, streaming flame comparable to that produced by a real dragon. During each subsequent round, the fire does Step 8 damage to a wooden ship each turn until extinguished.

Dragon's Breath requires a kernel of elemental fire for each shot fired. A single volley of the weapon uses one additional elemental kernel for each point of Firepower above 12. For example, a Dragon's Breath attack at Step 14 would require 3 kernels of True fire.

A Dragon's Breath weapon has a short Range of up to 50 yards, medium Range from 51–100 yards, and long Range from 101–200 yards.

Net Thrower

Net throwers are intended as anti-personnel weapons, and only do temporary damage to the ship's Crew Rating as the nets entangle the crew.

A Called Shot with a net thrower can also entangle a weapon and prevent it from being fired until freed (Entangling Difficulty of 12).

A net thrower has a short Range of up to 50 yards, medium Range from 51–100 yards, and long Range from 101–200 yards.

Spear Thrower

Spear throwers fire long spears at a target, but use elemental magic to do so. Special spears can be used as ammunition (see **Ballista**, above).

Spear throwers require a kernel of elemental air. A single volley of the weapon uses one additional elemental kernel for each point of Firepower above 12. For example, a Spear Thrower attack at Step 13 would require 2 kernels of True air.

A spear thrower has a short Range of up to 50 yards, medium Range from 51–100 yards, and long Range from 101–200 yards.

AIRSHIP RANGE TABLE										
Horizontal	— Vertical Distance —									
Distance	50	100	150	200	250	300	350	400	450	500
50	50	100	150	200	250	300	350	400	450	500
100	100	150	200	200	250	300	350	400	450	500
150	150	200	200	250	300	350	400	450	450	500
200	200	200	250	300	300	350	400	450	500	NA
250	250	250	300	300	350	400	450	450	500	NA
300	300	300	350	350	400	400	450	500	NA	NA
350	350	350	400	400	450	450	500	NA	NA	NA
400	400	400	450	450	450	500	NA	NA	NA	NA
450	450	450	450	500	500	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
500	500	500	500	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Thunderbolt Thrower

Thunderbolt throwers gain a +6 bonus to the ship's Firepower Effect step for their Damage Test, but may only be used once before recharging. The strike of a thunderbolt thrower creates a deafening boom of thunder as well, imposing a –2 modifier to the targeted ship's Maneuverability for the next ship combat turn.

Thunderbolt throwers can only be recharged by an Elementalist or Weaponsmith while the airship flies through a storm.

A thunderbolt thrower has a short Range of up to 100 yards, medium Range from 101–250 yards, and long Range from 251–500 yards.

Fire Sheath

A fire sheath surrounds a ship with an elemental shield that protects against fire cannons and flame weapons such as Dragon's Breath. It must be activated by a word of command, usually known only to the ship's captain and mate. For each kernel of elemental air and fire used, the sheath adds +1 to the ship's Maneuverability against such attacks and increases the ship's Armor against all fire-based attacks by +3 for three ship combat turns, after which time the sheath burns out and must be refueled.

A fire sheath uses one kernel of True fire and one kernel of True air for every point of Maneuverability it adds, making it a last-ditch and expensive form of defense. Fire sheaths can be recharged by an Elementalist or Weaponsmith within an hour, but doing so requires five kernels of both True air and True fire.

Weapon Range

The range at which ship weapons can be used is an important factor in ship combat. Because airships can move in two dimensions (vertically as well as horizontally), figuring out range for the purposes of making weapon attacks is somewhat more complex than in combat between riverboats. The approximate range—short, medium or long—between any two ships can be calculated by taking the vertical distance and the horizontal distance between the two ships and comparing them on the Airship Range Table to determine the actual range. Round the distances between ships to the nearest 50 yards when using this table.

Standard range modifiers apply to ship combat. The range penalty is applied to the Firepower Attack step, but not to the Damage step. These penalties are in addition to any others that might apply to the Attack step due to environmental conditions or other modifiers described below, such as reductions to the ship's Firepower because of damage.

A ship can increase or decrease the range between it and other ships using the Alter Distance maneuver (p. 148).

Damage in Ship Combat

A ship takes damage in much the same way as a player character. The damage done to the ship by each attack is reduced by the ship's Armor rating. When a ship accumulates damage equal to its Derelict Rating (or has its Speed or Maneuverability reduced to zero), it becomes incapacitated and can no longer perform any combat maneuvers. When the damage exceeds the Destroyed Rating (or the ship's Armor rating is reduced to zero), the ship crashes to the ground, and any crew trapped on board are considered dead. On an airship, most adept crew members know the Wind Catcher talent and will try to leap to safety before the ship crashes.

If a single attack penetrates the ship's armor and does damage that exceeds the ship's Critical Threshold, the ship takes a Critical Hit, which reduces all of its Attributes by –1. A Critical Hit to the ship also reduces the Crew Rating, and indicates that up to five percent of the crew has received deadly injuries. A Critical Hit to the Crew step received in boarding combat, however, does not count as a Critical Hit to the ship. If a ship's Crew Attribute is reduced to zero by accumulated Critical Hits, it no longer has a crew and is pretty much useless.

When making Attack Tests in ship-to-ship combat, keep in mind that Armor-Defeating hits are possible, particularly when attacking with ship weapons like fire cannons and thunderbolt throwers. In addition, the ratings of a ship may be reduced by the effects of hazards encountered while traveling.

Vessels and crews engaged in contests usually Attack to Stun (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 404 of the **Player's Compendium**). Such damage cannot destroy a vessel, but it can inflict Critical Hits and cause it to become derelict. When a ship takes a Critical Hit in such a contest, only 1 crew member dies, rather than 5 percent of the total crew.

Using Talents in Ship Combat

A ship's crew can often affect the outcome of a battle by using their talents and skills. The key talents or skills used in ship combat are Air Sailing and Pilot Boat, respectively. A ship's captain is usually at the helm of the ship, and can use this talent to enhance the ship's Maneuverability step, much as he can enhance its Speed step. In order to enhance one of a ship's Attributes, a character makes an Air Sailing or Pilot Boat Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the (modified) Attribute step he wishes to enhance. For each result level achieved, the Attribute gains a +1 bonus for a number of turns equal to the character's rank in Air Sailing or Pilot Boat.

In tight ship combats, members of a crew might use the Talent Linking knack (see the **Talent Knacks** chapter on p. 227 of the **Player's Compendium**) to temporarily weave threads to the captain's Air Sailing or Pilot Boat talent for increased maneuverability or speed.

When engaging an enemy in ship combat, characters may want to use magic and missile weapons to target enemy personnel. All such attacks should be considered Called Shots, and are made using range modifiers based on the range between the airship and the character's target. Most such attacks take place at a range of approximately 50 yards, which for most missile weapons is medium range.

Using Ship Weapons in Regular Combat

The question of firing ship weapons at a character (or more likely, a creature or Horror) is bound to arise. The following rules apply to those occasions. Characters can use the Missile Weapons talent or skill when firing ship weapons in regular combat. Remember that it takes considerable time and effort to line up a shot, and unless the target is as big as a ship, the attempt will require a Called Shot (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 404 of the **Player's Compendium**). Ship weapons fired at individual characters inflict Armor-Defeating Hits on a Good result.

Regular Combat During Ship Combat

When regular combat is run at the same time as ship combat, the use of a ship's weapon will affect ship combat and vice versa. The fire rate for a ship weapon is once per ship combat turn, which is once per six standard combat rounds. If the ship weapon has already been used in the ship combat turn, the character has to wait until the next ship combat turn begins. The gamemaster decides in which combat round(s) the ship's maneuvers occur.

If the character uses a ship weapon before the ship's maneuver takes place, it can't be used in the current ship combat turn. Since a ship's Firepower Attack step is based on many weapons attacking in concert over a wide area, the ship's Firepower step is reduced. Divide the Firepower step by the number of weapons on the ship, and reduce the Firepower step by this number. The Firepower Effect step suffers a –1 penalty.

Ship Construction

The following guidelines allow gamemasters to construct new airships and customize existing ones to their needs. Please note that the following rules are only applicable to wooden airships and riverboats, stone airships are built only by the Therans, who never sell them. The cost of such ships can only be guessed at, but even a single stone ship is undoubtedly worth several wooden airships.

Constructing a new airship consists of three simple steps:

❶ Determine Ship Type

❷ Equip and Modify Ship

❸ Determine Price

Determine Ship Type

While a group of player characters is unlikely to have the skills needed to build an airship or riverboat on its own, a group can commission or purchase one from a shipyard.

The **Airship** and **Riverboat Descriptions** list the different basic ship types available in Barsaive, along with each ship's basic statistics.

Equip and Modify Ship

Each ship is unique, and the basic construction plans always include modifications on the customer's demand. Extra benches and oars for additional rowers will give the ship some extra speed; a stronger hull, weapons, and a trained military crew will make it combat-ready. Apart from weapon fittings, which are costed by Firepower, each modification costs 10 percent of the ship's base price and will affect a number of the ship's game statistics.

SHIP MODIFICATION TABLE

Type	Modifications
Extra Oars / Sails	+1 Speed, –10 Cargo
Extra Rudders	+1 Maneuverability, –10 Cargo, +1 Crew Skill
Weapon*	1,000 sp per point of extra Firepower, –10 Cargo per additional weapon
Ram	+5 Ramming
Stronger Hull	Special (see text)
Military Vessel**	+2 Captain Skill, +1 Crew Skill, +3 Crew Rating, +15 Morale

* A ship's Firepower can be increased to a maximum of 150% of the original rating.
** This modification can only be applied once.

The Ship Modification Table lists all possible modifications as well as the changes to the ship's base statistics. No modification may be applied more than twice, except where otherwise noted.

Modifying the ship's Hull directly affects its Armor Rating. The ship's Armor Rating is used to find its new Health Ratings. To determine a ship's modified Health Ratings, consult the extended Characteristics Table in the **Appendices**, p. 506. Find the ship's Armor Rating in the Step Number column. Always use the second entry to determine the Health Ratings from the Death Rating (Destroyed), Wound Threshold (Critical), and Unconsciousness Rating (Derelict) columns. For example, a ship with a modified Armor Rating of 12 has a Derelict Rating of 53, a Critical Rating of 17, and a Destroyed Rating of 60.

Determine Price

After applying all modifications, determine the final price of the ship. Ships are sold for whatever cost the market will bear and varies depending on demand. Demand for airships is high, however, so characters may not find one right away. Additionally, the purchase of an airship by a group of adventurers is unusual enough to draw attention. Please note that riverboats equipped with fire engines are only sold among t'skrang.

Unless noted otherwise, all prices shown are in silver pieces.

James wants to construct a new airship—a war galley. War galleys exist in the fleets of Throal, Travar, Iopos, Jerris and other great powers of Barsaive. He takes the basic game statistics listed for a galley and adds +8 to the ship's Firepower Attribute, increasing the ship's Attack and Damage steps by +4 each. He also adds a Ram to the ship's prow and increases the ship's Armor Rating. Since a war galley is a military ship, James adjusts the Crew characteristics accordingly. The modified galley now looks like this:

***Final Cost**: 203,000*

***Speed**: 10*
***Maneuverability**: 9*
***Firepower**: 20/20*

***Hull**:*
Armor: 18 *Ramming: 30*
Cargo: 300

***Damage**:*
Derelict: 77 *Critical: 23*
Destroyed: 84

Crew:
Captain: 6
Crew Skill: 2
Morale: 70
Crew Size: 150
Crew Rating: 18

Repairing Damaged Ships

Two types of repairs can be made to damaged ships: crew repairs and shipyard repairs. Repairing airships requires the skills of a shipwright and an Elementalist to handle damage to the ship's physical structure and enchantments. Most minor repairs can be made solely by craftsmen without magical aid, but Elementalists can accomplish many difficult repairs more easily, using magic to knit the airship back together.

Crew Repairs

Sometimes a crew needs to get underway more quickly than usual repair methods will allow. Under extreme circumstances, a crew can even try to make minor repairs while the ship is still moving "on the fly," so to speak. Repairs require the ship to set anchor and stay in the same place for one full day for each Critical Hit to be repaired. The step number for crew Repair Tests equals the ship's Crew Rating. Repair Tests are made against a Difficulty Number equal to 8+the number of Critical Hits the ship has taken. For each result level achieved on a Repair Test, the crew repairs one Critical Hit. For each Critical Hit repaired, the ship recovers a number of damage points equal to its Critical Threshold.

The Difficulty Number for these types of Repair Tests increases based on the amount of time spent on the repair, as shown on the Crew Repair Table. A crew can also concentrate on repairing a specific Attribute—the Speed of the ship, for example. In this case, the crew gains a +3 bonus to the Repair Test. If its crew fails a Repair Test or achieves only a Poor result, the ship takes an additional Critical Hit, and no further repairs are possible until it makes port.

The crew may also make a Repair Test to repair a damaged hull if the ship has no Critical Hits. The result of the test equals the number of Damage Points recovered. A ship can only make one such test before it must seek repairs in a fully equipped berth.

The Elementalist Repair spell offers another method of effecting quick repairs. When using this spell, the Effect Test replaces the standard Crew Repair Test, but adds +6 to the test's Difficulty Number.

During a battle with a Henghyoke marauder in Lake Pyros, the V'strimon patrol boat Allegro *takes 3 Critical Hits and 52 Damage Points before it breaks off from its opponent. The* Allegro's *captain knows that his ship will not escape pursuit unless he can get more speed within the hour, so he orders his crew to repair the boat's Speed step on the fly. The base Difficulty Number for the Crew Repair Test is 11 (8+3). The test receives a Difficulty Modifier of 5 (+2 for an On-the-Fly repair and +3 for performing the repair in 1 hour). That produces a final Difficulty Number of 16. The* Allegro *has a Crew Rating 16, but that rating gains a +3 modifier because the crew is repairing a single Attribute.*

The Crew Repair Test yields a 24, a Good result! This means that the ship recovers 2 Critical Hits, which pushes the ship's Speed step from 5 up to 7. With the boost in speed, the patrol boat is able to evade the marauder during the subsequent pursuit. The Crew Repair Test result also provides the Allegro's *controlling player with 2 Recovery Tests to recover Damage Points. The ship still has 1 Critical Hit, so the Armor rating for the tests is 17. The Recovery Tests yield results of 15 and 11, so the* Allegro *recovers 26 Damage Points. That leaves the ship with 26 Damage Points.*

CREW REPAIR TABLE

Repair Condition	Difficulty Number
Normal repairs	8 + number of Critical Hits (requires 1 day per Critical Hit repaired)
One day	+1
6 hours	+2
1 hour	+3
10 minutes	+4
Repair on the fly	+2
Repair one Attribute only	+3 bonus to Repair Test

Shipyard Repairs

All crystal raider moot-homes have a shipyard where they stock the equipment necessary to make full repairs to an airship. Major cities like Jerris, Travar and the Kingdom of Throal also have shipyards. Most t'skrang river villages maintain shipyards stocked with all the equipment necessary to fully repair riverboats and other types of vessels. Non-t'skrang towns and cities also maintain shipyards, but these facilities are usually far inferior to t'skrang yards. Ship repairs in a foreign port can be long, involved and frustrating for the crew.

Shipyard repairs do not entail any tests. Instead, the ship's crew pays a repair fee, and the shipyard makes the repair in a set number of weeks. When a ship enters a yard for repairs, it must undergo repairs to each of its Attributes in need of them, except for its Crew Attribute (see **Recovering Crews**, p.154). This means the ship must pay for and await separate repairs on its Speed, Maneuverability, Firepower and Hull Attributes. Fees are based on the number of steps the ship's crew wants restored in each Attribute.

A riverboat that returns to its home village for repairs pays no fee, but repairs still take the usual time. Because elemental fire engine technology is a unique, jealously guarded t'skrang secret, only t'skrang shipyards can repair the Speed and Maneuverability Attributes of ships powered by fire engines. The Shipyard Repair Table shows the standard costs and time required for shipyard repairs. Likewise, trollmoots do not charge members of their own moot for repairs, and a rival crystal raider moot will almost never repair a ship from another moot. Few places in Barsaive will offer to repair a crystal raider drakkar, though on rare occasions Throal has been known to repair ships belonging to the Stoneclaws or Swiftwind moots.

The Shipyard Repair Table shows the costs and time required for each type of repairs to any wooden airship or riverboat. Most shipyards will give an estimate on the time and cost for repairs to a ship, and request a twenty percent cash deposit before initiating the process. Haggling is expected.

The minimum cost to repair a damaged ship is 200 silver pieces, whether it took Critical Hits or not. Such repairs restore all Damage Points. Repairing the hull of a stone airship costs ten times the amount listed on the Shipyard Repair Table and requires facilities only available at Theran ports such as Sky Point.

Superior airship shipyards exist in Jerris and Travar, where all repair times are halved without an increase in cost. The same is true at Sky Point, but only Theran military ships may put in for repairs there. Several towns and cities along the river have superior riverboat shipyards, where ships can be repaired more quickly. The shipyards at Denlikiyan, for example, repair ships in half the standard time at no extra cost. The shipyards in Urupa can also perform repairs in half the standard time, but these

SHIPYARD REPAIR TABLE		
Attribute	**Cost**	**Repair Time**
Speed	200 sp per step	1 week per step
Maneuverability	300 sp per step	1 week per step
Firepower	300 sp per step	1 day per step
Hull:		
<25% of Destroyed Rating	200 sp per step	2 weeks per step
25–75% of Destroyed Rating	800 sp per step	4 weeks per step
>75% of Destroyed Rating	×2/3 original cost	6 months

yards can repair only sailing ships and galleys. The yards at House K'tenshin's headquarters can make repairs in half the time, but these yards service only K'tenshin vessels. Reportedly, House Ishkarat maintains a remarkably advanced shipyard near Iopos, but the facility only services Ishkaratan boats.

The Allegro *limps into a dwarf town on the eastern shore of Lake Pyros. The shipyard owner there tells the captain that the yard can refit the damaged fire cannons and fill in the holes in the hull (Firepower and Hull Attributes), but repairing the damage to the fire engine and paddle wheel (Speed and Maneuverability Attributes) are beyond his engineer's abilities. The captain asks for an estimate on the work, and the dwarf tells him that repairing the fire cannons, which still have 3 Critical Hits, will cost 900 silver pieces and take 3 days to complete. The hull damage is down to 16 points, slightly more than 25 percent of the ship's Destroyed Rating. Three Critical Hits remain, so repairing the hull will cost 2,400 silver pieces and take 12 weeks.*

The captain and the shipyard owner sit down to haggle over the 3,300 silver piece price tag. Of course, the captain still needs to find some good sailors to replace his casualties (Crew Attribute), and dwarfs are not exactly what he had in mind!

Recovering Crews

A ship can recover Crew Attribute steps only by recruiting new members. Most airships have a difficult time finding skilled Air Sailors anywhere other than in major cities where a decent airship yard exists. Only if absolutely necessary will an airship take on unskilled crew, usually starting them out as deck hands so they can learn the ropes. The need for new crewmembers can lead to an interesting problem for both crystal raiders and riverboat crews, however.

Most crystal raider airships are crewed by members of a given clan and are part of the moot that owns them. New crew members from outside the trollmoot are almost never recruited.

A troll drakkar in need of additional crew members often seeks out adepts and other travelers willing to exchange work on board the airship for passage, particularly if the drakkar is returning home.

Likewise, most riverboats are run as "family enterprises." New crew members from outside the covenant are seldom trusted and difficult to recompense. If the crew gives the recruit the same share in the profits as the original sailor, part of the profits end up leaving the covenant entirely. Furthermore, t'skrang crews typically view freelance sailors with suspicion. Ironically, inter-t'skrang rivalries often lead t'skrang crews to recruit replacements from other Name-giver races, particularly humans, orks and even the occasional elf.

Typically, t'skrang covenants recruit young folk in small river villages with enticing stories of the adventurous life that awaits them on the river. Then they pay these *khamorro,* or "deck scrubbers," a few coppers a day. In large ports, crews in need of recruits often hold open houses on board their ships and use generous amounts of food and drink to entice prospective crew members.

A seasoned sailor, however, will always hold out for a crew share in the ship's profits—and a wise one will demand to see the captain's books before he accepts a job on a riverboat.

Ship Maintenance

All ships require regular maintenance in order to remain in perfect working order. The rudder must be balanced and checked; decks must be cleaned and maintained; the hull and sails must be kept patched and any weather damage must be repaired. Fire engines must be tuned and stocked with kernels of elemental fire; paddlewheels must be balanced on their crankshafts; hulls must be scraped clean of barnacles; and a large number of appurtenances, from rope to oars to doorknobs, must be refurbished or replaced.

To reflect these maintenance requirements, a ship's captain or engineer must make a Maintenance Test each month, using his Air Sailing or Pilot Boat talent or skill, against a Difficulty Number equal to the number of months that have passed since the ship's last overhaul. If the test fails, the ship takes a Critical Hit that can only be repaired with an overhaul.

A full overhaul is best performed in a shipyard, where the crew must spend a week and 10 silver pieces for each point of the ship's Critical Threshold in order to return the ship to proper working order.

T'skrang shipyards are the only places where fire engine-powered vessels can receive complete overhauls.

Fire Engines

Riverboat crews need to keep their ship's fire engines supplied with ample amounts of elemental fire. T'skrang fire engines consume 1 kernel of elemental fire for every 200 hours of operation (about 1,000 miles of travel under normal speeds). Each time a captain or ship's engineer increases a ship's Speed step beyond its regular rating, whether in combat or in the course of travel, the kernel loses 10 hours of life (50 miles of travel).

Fire kernels are packaged by skilled craftsmen in boxes reinforced with orichalcum and elemental earth. Typically, a box contains 5 kernels and costs about 500 silver pieces on the South Reach, 600 silver pieces on the Coil River and Mid Reach, and 650 silver pieces on the river's North Reach.

Airship Descriptions

The following profiles provide descriptions and game statistics for the most common types of airships that travel the skies of Barsaive and the Theran Empire.

All prices are given in silver pieces, unless noted otherwise.

Airboat

This is the smallest type of airship, capable of carrying up to five human-sized Name-givers or three trolls without undue strain. Airboats are propelled by a single rower or a pair of rowers sitting side by side.

Airboats are most commonly used as lifeboats and launches for larger airships such as galleys and galleons. Drakkar-sized or smaller ships rarely carry airboats on board.

Base Price: 16,500

Speed: 4
Maneuverability: 5
Firepower: None

Hull:
Armor: 4
Cargo: 3
Ramming: 6

Damage:
Derelict: 19
Destroyed: 28
Critical: 7

Crew:
Captain: 0
Crew Skill: 0
Morale: 16
Crew Size: 1
Crew Rating: 5

Drakkar

Drakkars are almost exclusively used by the crystal raiders, but are also flown by freelance pirates, particularly along the shores of the Scarlet Sea. A typical drakkar measures up to 20 yards long and at least 5 yards wide, with banks of oars and sometimes a single mast for a sail.

These drakkars may carry any of the ship weapons described in **Ship Weapons**, p. 150, except for fire cannons, but they most often use spear throwers and catapults.

Base Price: 50,000

Speed: 10
Maneuverability: 10
Firepower: 10/13

Hull:
Armor: 12
Cargo: 120
Ramming: 23

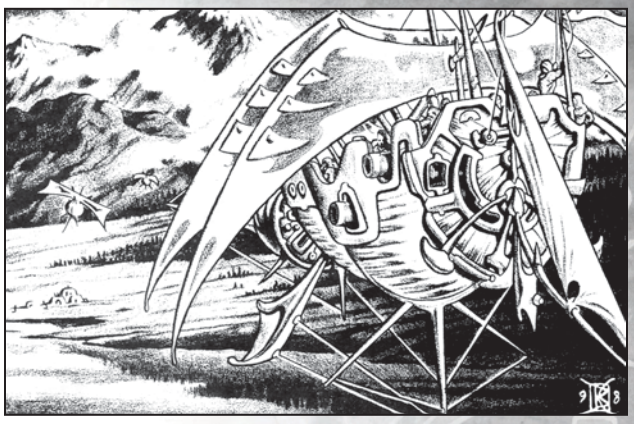
Damage:
Derelict: 53
Destroyed: 60
Critical: 17

Crew:
Captain: 5
Crew Skill: 1
Morale: 50
Crew Size: 30
Crew Rating: 15

Crystal Raider Drakkar

Crystal raider crews are fierce combatants who fight savagely and almost never surrender. To reflect this, crystal raider drakkars have an increased Morale rating of 60.

Almost all crystal raider drakkars have a crystal figurehead on their prows whose enchantments add +1 step to a ship Attribute of the gamemaster's choice.



Small Drakkar

This type of drakkar is one of the smallest used by the crystal raiders and other Name-givers of Barsaive as a small, fast scout and patrol ship. These vessels have limited firepower and hull protection, relying instead on speed and maneuverability to avoid combat and escape so that they can warn their home bases of intrusion or impending attack.

Such small drakkars are also used as messenger ships to carry urgent information quickly across great distances.

Base Price: 35,000

Speed: 12
Maneuverability: 10
Firepower: 8/12 (spear throwers)

Hull:
Armor: 10
Cargo: 30
Ramming: 18

Damage:
Derelict: 44
Destroyed: 52
Critical: 15

Crew:
Captain: 4
Crew Skill: 1
Morale: 45
Crew Size: 15
Crew Rating: 10

Galley

A galley is about 30 yards long and 6 yards wide, and typically appears in the fleets maintained by cities across Barsaive for shipping goods. Most galleys have sails as well as oars, giving them decent speed and maneuverability, and most mount fire cannons for defense against pirates and raiders. Galleys have enough cargo space for up to 150 passengers or troops or large amounts of cargo.

Generally, a galley will try to outrun or evade attackers. Combat risks the loss of the ship and its cargo, and so most merchant captains will fight only if forced to do so.

Base Price: 150,000

Speed: 10
Maneuverability: 9
Firepower: 16/16

Hull:
Armor: 15
Cargo: 300
Ramming: 25

Damage:
Derelict: 65
Destroyed: 72
Critical: 21

Crew:
Captain: 4 Crew Size: 100
Crew Skill: 1 Crew Rating: 15
Morale: 55

Galleon

A galleon is the largest of wooden airships, 50 yards long and more than 10 yards wide, triple-masted with multiple decks and two levels of oars and capable of mounting many fire cannons. The Throalic navy currently has three galleons, two recovered from Throal's pre-Scourge fleet, and a third recently completed by Silver Clouds Shipwrights of Jerris; the latter is Throal's flagship.

An air galleon can carry up to 230 troops and is a formidable airship in time of war, though it remains to be seen if such ships can equal the power of Theran kilas.

Base Price: 200,000

Speed: 11
Maneuverability: 8
Firepower: 25/25

Hull:
Armor: 23 Ramming: 30
Cargo: 450

Damage:
Derelict: 98 Critical: 27
Destroyed: 104

Crew:
Captain: 8 Crew Size: 200
Crew Skill: 3 Crew Rating: 20
Morale: 65

Transport Vedette

The following statistics represent a typical transport vedette used by the Theran Empire for a variety of purposes, usually as a passenger or cargo transport, sometimes as a swift messenger ship. Transport vedettes are lightly armed at best, usually with fire cannons; for armed ships, use the Firepower rating shown.

Base Price: NA

Speed: 11
Maneuverability: 10
Firepower: 8/10 (armed vedettes only)

Hull:
Armor: 10 Ramming: 20
Cargo: 80

Damage:
Derelict: 47 Critical: 15
Destroyed: 54

Crew:
Captain: 4 Crew Size: 30
Crew Skill: 1 Crew Rating: 12
Morale: 50

Mining Vedette

This workhorse Theran stone ship is used for elemental mining throughout the Empire. It is crewed primarily by slaves, overseen by a few Theran soldiers and a slavemaster along with the ship's captain. The ship's slavemaster can make a Charisma or Social Skill Test to increase the vedette's Speed by driving the slaves to work harder; this works in the same way as making an Air Sailing Test to increase speed. Because the crew are mostly slaves, crew statistics of mining vedettes are often lower than might be expected.

Mining vedettes rarely carry weapons, but sometimes mount fire cannons for defense. For armed mining vedettes, use the Firepower shown.

Base Price: NA

Speed: 9
Maneuverability: 10
Firepower: 8/10 (armed vedettes only)

Hull:
Armor: 20 Ramming: 25
Cargo: 150

Damage:
Derelict: 88 Critical: 25
Destroyed: 94

Crew:
Captain: 3 Crew Size: 20
Crew Skill: 0 Crew Rating: 12
Morale: 55

Military Vedette

A military vedette is equipped with a full crew of Air Sailors and soldiers and can carry an additional 100 troops as needed. Military vedettes are rowed by slave crews, and the ship's slavemaster can make a Charisma or Social Skill Test to increase the ship's Speed as described for mining vedettes, above.

Military vedettes mount fire cannons and commonly use ramming maneuvers against wooden airships, breaking or crushing their lighter hulls.

Base Price: NA

Speed: 9
Maneuverability: 10
Firepower: 16/16

Hull:
Armor: 20 Ramming: 25
Cargo: 80

Damage:
Derelict: 88 Critical: 25
Destroyed: 94

Crew:
Captain: 5 Crew Size: 40
Crew Skill: 1 Crew Rating: 15
Morale: 65

Kila

A massive floating fortress, averaging 70 to 80 yards on a side, a Theran kila is more like a flying castle than a traditional airship. Though a kila mounts many fire cannons along its battlements and towers, the shape of the fortress allows only one side's weapons to be brought to bear on a target at a time; the Firepower values below reflect this limitation. A kila can, however, attack

targets on all sides simultaneously with no loss in Firepower for multiple targets. Only multiple targets on the same side of the ship reduce the Firepower of the vessel as described under the Fire maneuver. What a kila might lack in concentrated firepower, it more than makes up for in ramming ability; smaller airships frequently smash to pieces against a kila's stone sides.

A kila has a crew of 170 and can carry up to a full Theran cohort (480 soldiers). Kilas commonly have various adepts among the crew, including an Elementalist of at least Sixth Circle and many Archers.

Base Price: NA

Speed: 10
Maneuverability: 9
Firepower: 25/25

Hull:
Armor: 25 Ramming: 35
Cargo: 1,000

Damage:
Derelict: 108 Critical: 29
Destroyed: 114

Crew:
Captain: 6 Crew Size: 170
Crew Skill: 2 Crew Rating: 18
Morale: 82

Behemoth

The largest airship ever seen in Barsaive is the Theran behemoth. A behemoth is hundreds of yards long on a side, a literal floating city supported by Theran magic. The fortress mounts many fire cannons on each side; though it suffers from the same targeting limitation as kilas, it can bring truly massive firepower to bear. A behemoth can carry two full cohorts of troops, nearly a thousand soldiers, and has a crew of hundreds—among them the slaves who power the vessel under the guidance of a slavemaster and his underlings. The only behemoth in Barsaive is the *Triumph*, now permanently grounded on the hill of Ayodhya near Lake Ban.

Base Price: NA

Speed: 12
Maneuverability: 7
Firepower: 25/30

Hull:
Armor: 35 Ramming: 35
Cargo: 2,000

Damage:
Derelict: 145 Critical: 35
Destroyed: 151

Crew:
Captain: 8 Crew Size: 250
Crew Skill: 2 Crew Rating: 22
Morale: 94

Ghost Ship

These phantom airships fly through the skies over Barsaive, looking for living foes to kill and add to their crews of undead spirits. Many ghost ships were created by Horrors; others were created by blood magic or oaths of vengeance sworn by crystal raiders who perished during the Orichalcum Wars or the Battle of Sky Point. Crystal raiders consider seeing a ghost ship a bad omen; no raider wants to meet one.

A ghost ship normally sails through astral space, but can materialize in the physical world to attack. The ghosts of crystal

raiders or Air Sailors that make up the ship's crew can attack like any living crew, but are more resistant to normal weapons and possess a Chilling Touch power identical to that of a demiwraith. Individual crew members of a ghost ship have the same statistics as demiwraiths.

Ghost ships often carry cannons that fire blasts of pure darkness; these do damage to target airships and crews using the ghost ship's Firepower. Ghost ships can become immaterial while fighting, making them invulnerable to most reprisals from other vessels. The only means of defeating a ghost ship is to board it in combat. If the ghost ship is rendered derelict, it vanishes back into astral space. If it is destroyed, it vanishes forever. Any character still on board the ship has Step 9 rounds (not turns) to escape before the ghost ship disappears into the netherworlds, taking the unlucky character with it.

Characters trapped on board a ghost ship when it vanishes may end up in the realm of Death or some other strange netherworld at the gamemaster's discretion.

Base Price: NA

Speed: 12
Maneuverability: 11
Firepower: 16/16

Hull:
Armor: 15 Ramming: 25
Cargo: NA

Damage:
Derelict: 65 Critical: 21
Destroyed: 72

Crew:
Captain: NA Crew Size: 30
Crew Skill: NA Crew Rating: 20
Morale: 62

Riverboat Descriptions

The following profiles provide descriptions and game statistics for the most common types of vessels that travel the Serpent River system and the Aras Sea.

All prices are given in silver pieces, unless noted otherwise.

Canoe

Canoes are the preferred mode of transportation in the Servos Jungle. They come in a variety of sizes. The largest can accommodate up to eight human-sized passengers.

Base Price: 20

Speed: 3
Maneuverability: 4
Firepower: None

Hull:
Armor: 2 Ramming: 3
Cargo: 5

Damage:
Derelict: 11 Critical: 4
Destroyed: 20

Crew:
Captain: 0 Crew Size: 3
Crew Skill: 0 Crew Rating: 7
Morale: 20

Rowboat

Rowboats can carry up to five human-sized Name-givers without undue strain. The Speed step of a rowboat is equal to the Strength step of its rower, divided by 3 and rounded down (to a minimum of Step 1).

Most Name-giver rowers can generate a Speed step between 1 and 2 (2–3 mph). Stronger characters, such as trolls or obsidimen, might be able to generate a Speed step of 3—provided they can get inside the rowboat without sinking it in the first place! Also, a rower can use the Pilot Boat skill or talent to increase a rowboat's Speed step (see **Speed**, p.145).

Base Price: 50

Speed: Rower's Strength step/3
Maneuverability: 5
Firepower: None

Hull:
Armor: 3 Ramming: 6
Cargo: 4

Damage:
Derelict: 15 Critical: 5
Destroyed: 24

Crew:
Captain: 0 Crew Size: 1
Crew Skill: 0 Crew Rating: 5
Morale: 24

Sailboat

Sailboats are most often used on the open sea and the Serpent Lakes. These craft range from 3 to 15 yards in length. The smallest sailboats carry only two human-sized passengers, while the largest carry up to 5 crew plus passengers.

Refer to the Sailing Speed Table (see **Speed** in the **Ship Statistics** section, p.145) when determining the Speed step and Maneuverability Attribute of a particular sailboat.

Sailboat (Long)

Base Price: 80

Speed: Special
Maneuverability: Special
Firepower: None

Hull:
Armor: 5 Ramming: 8
Cargo: 10

Damage:
Derelict: 24 Critical: 8
Destroyed: 32

Crew:
Captain: 1 Crew Size: 5
Crew Skill: 0 Crew Rating: 8
Morale: 25

Sailboat (Small)

Base Price: 60

Speed: Special
Maneuverability: Special
Firepower: None

Hull:
Armor: 4 Ramming: 6
Cargo: 4

Damage:
Derelict: 19 Critical: 7
Destroyed: 28

Crew:
Captain: 0 Crew Size: 2
Crew Skill: 0 Crew Rating: 5
Morale: 25

Dreveki

Examples of the *dreveki*, the small, sail-driven t'skrang fishing boat, can be seen along nearly all the waterways of Barsaive. Refer to the Sailing Speed Table (see **Speed** in the **Ship Statistics** section, p.145) when determining the Speed step and Maneuverability Attribute of a particular *dreveki*.

One can often guess the relative prosperity of a *dreveki's* owner by his vessel's appearance.

Base Price: 150

Speed: Special
Maneuverability: Special
Firepower: None

Hull:
Armor: 6 Ramming: 10
Cargo: 10

Damage:
Derelict: 28 Critical: 10
Destroyed: 36

Crew:
Captain: 1 Crew Size: 7
Crew Skill: 0 Crew Rating: 9
Morale: 25

Dwarf Barge

Dwarfs do not take easily to water, but in Barsaive a river is always the fastest route to market. "Thus trade makes sailors of us all," as the old dwarf adage says. As with so many other things, dwarf ship design exhibits a plodding utilitarian aesthetic, which makes all dwarf barges appear nearly identical.

Typically, these flat-bottomed boats run close to the river's banks. When traveling downstream, a dwarf barge is propelled by the river's current, and its crew uses poles to steer it. When a dwarf barge travels upstream, it is pulled by a team of pack animals that trudges along one of the ubiquitous tow paths that line the banks of the Serpent and its tributaries. Alternatively, a barge traveling upstream can usually purchase towing services from passing t'skrang ships. The usual fee for a riverboat tow is 30 silver pieces per day. In the area around Throal riverboats towing 2 or 3 barges are a common sight. Towing a barge in this manner reduces a riverboat's Speed step by –2 steps.

Dwarf barges are commonly used on the underground rivers of Throal to transport ore. These barges are nearly always accompanied by their own teams of pack animals to ensure that they do not become stranded without an effective means of locomotion. Most dwarf barges contain very few dwarf crew members, because most barge owners can hire human or t'skrang sailors for a frac-

tion of the price needed to persuade the typical dwarf to venture onto the water.

Base Price: 1,000

Speed: 3
Maneuverability: 3
Firepower: None

Hull:
Armor: 13 Ramming: 16
Cargo: 30

Damage:
Derelict: 57 Critical: 19
Destroyed: 64

Crew:
Captain: 0 Crew Size: 10
Crew Skill: 1 Crew Rating: 11
Morale: 35

Canal Boat

The square-shaped, flat-decked canal boats of the Lake Ban region are usually 10 to 15 yards long and 6 to 10 yards wide. The crews of these boats use long poles to propel and steer them, so they seldom venture far from shore when traveling on the lake.

Traditionally, the crews of these vessels paint their boats in garish colors.

Base Price: 1,000

Speed: 4
Maneuverability: 4
Firepower: None

Hull:
Armor: 8 Ramming: 12
Cargo: 30

Damage:
Derelict: 36 Critical: 13
Destroyed: 44

Crew:
Captain: 3 Crew Size: 7
Crew Skill: 1 Crew Rating: 10
Morale: 30

Scavian Barge

Scavian barges range from 30 to 70 yards in length and 20 to 45 yards in width. The decks of these barges typically ride close to the surface of the water and are covered with patchworks of lean-tos and shacks. Although Scavian barges may appear flimsy and haphazardly constructed, they contain numerous advanced features that illustrate the Scavians' ship-building expertise.

The Scavians construct the bases of their barges with stone, rather than wood, and so Scavian barges are much more durable than they appear. The vessels are powered by a mysterious means that makes no use of oars or fire engines and enables the barge to travel at a steady speed, regardless of the river's current. Finally, the Scavians' long tradition of elemental fire work is reflected in the impressive power of their barges' fire cannons.

The Crew Size reflects the crew size of the largest known Scavian barges. The actual population of a barge is usually twice its crew size, because Scavian women are forbidden to perform crew duties or make war. Smaller barges are typically populated by up to 30 residents and have correspondingly lower Crew Size ratings.

Base Price: 2,000

Speed: 5
Maneuverability: 6
Firepower: 18/23

Hull:
Armor: 20 Ramming: 20
Cargo: 30

Damage:
Derelict: 88 Critical: 25
Destroyed: 94

Crew:
Captain: 5 Crew Size: 50
Crew Skill: 3 Crew Rating: 16
Morale: 56

River Ferry

Most of the Serpent River's ferry boats are small, older riverboats no longer reliable enough to make journeys of any considerable distance. These vessels have fire engines, but are usually stripped of their fire cannons before entering ferry service.

Most often these ships ferry passengers across the river or to nearby towns and villages. On occasion, however, river ferries are used to transport trade goods short distances.

Base Price: 20,000

Speed: 5
Maneuverability: 5
Firepower: None

Hull:
Armor: 10 Ramming: 12
Cargo: 200

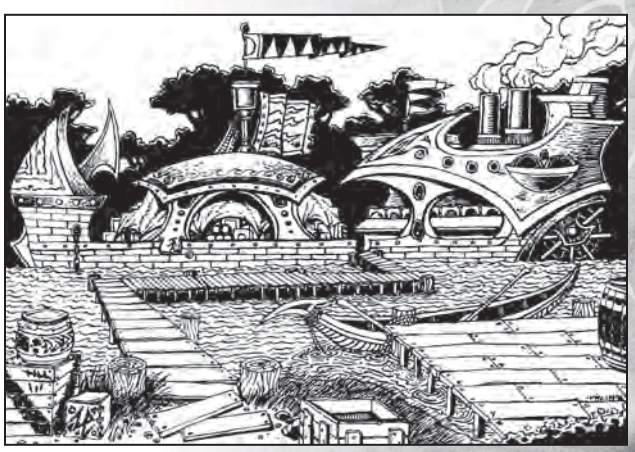
Damage:
Derelict: 45 Critical: 15
Destroyed: 52

Crew:
Captain: 2 Crew Size: 7
Crew Skill: 1 Crew Rating: 10
Morale: 30

Merchant Riverboat

The riverboats of the Serpent River are used almost exclusively by t'skrang traders. The average merchant vessel is 50 to 70 yards long and 30 to 40 yards wide, and carries goods, equipment and passengers. T'skrang riverboats are nearly always armed with fire cannons for defensive purposes, although the cannons may not always be in the best condition.

Typically, riverboats are built with flat bottoms so that they can more easily navigate sand bars and other submerged hazards.



In the past, strict regulations ensured that riverboat captains possessed considerable experience, but these standards have eroded in recent years.

Base Price: 40,000

Speed: 7
Maneuverability: 7
Firepower: 13/13

Hull:
Armor: 15 Ramming: 25
Cargo: 300

Damage:
Derelict: 67 Critical: 21
Destroyed: 74

Crew:
Captain: 4 Crew Size: 40
Crew Skill: 1 Crew Rating: 14
Morale: 45

RIVER WARSHIP

The warships of the *aropagoi* are the undisputed masters of Barsaive's waterways. The basic design of a warship differs little from a merchant riverboat, but warships tend to be considerably larger than merchant vessels—some, in fact, are as long as 300 feet. Warships also carry more fire cannons, armor and crew members than merchant vessels, which leaves them with less cargo space than trading boats.

Captains of *aropagoi* warships are among the craftiest fighters and tacticians anywhere on the river, and their crews are seasoned and fierce.

Base Price: 50,000

Speed: 7
Maneuverability: 7
Firepower: 17/17

Hull:
Armor: 16 Ramming: 25
Cargo: 100

Damage:
Derelict: 69 Critical: 22
Destroyed: 76

Crew:
Captain: 7 Crew Size: 150
Crew Skill: 2 Crew Rating: 18
Morale: 70

RIVER GALLEY

Most merchants from the trading cities of Urupa, Travar, Iopos and other non-t'skrang towns must rely on oar-driven galleys to transport their wares. These ships are powered by approximately 100 oarsmen, arranged in two staggered levels that enable each rower to pull a single oar. Typically, the galley's speed is controlled by a drummer, who sets the rowers' pace by beating on a drum set between the rows of oarsmen. Most modern galleys feature top decks that shield their rowers, fire cannons mounted along their gunwales, and small masts and sails. Galleys can only use their sails when traveling with tail winds, because they have no keels that would enable them to tack against the wind.

Free galleys, which use free men as oarsmen, are the norm throughout Throal-dominated Barsaive. Slave galleys use slaves as rowers and must employ small contingents of armed guards to keep their oarsmen under control. The ship's slavemaster can make a Charisma or Social Skill Test to increase the galley's Speed by driving the slaves to work harder; this works in the same way as making a Pilot Boat Test to increase speed.

Base Price: 100,000

Speed: 5
Maneuverability: 5
Firepower: 12/15

Hull:
Armor: 14 Ramming: 16
Cargo: 200

Damage:
Derelict: 61 Critical: 20
Destroyed: 69

Crew:
Captain: 3 Crew Size: 100
Crew Skill: 0 Crew Rating: 15
Morale: 51

SAILING SHIP

The keeled sailing ships of the Aras Sea depend on the wind to push them along the water. Reportedly, some of these vessels mount fire cannons, but few such ships have ever been seen in Barsaive's Aras ports. The statistics represent a ship that is 24 yards long and 12 yards wide, with 5 yards of draft.

A sailing ship's Speed step varies, depending on the strength of the prevailing wind and whether the ship is running with the wind or tacking against it (see **Speed** in the **Ship Statistics** section, on p.145).

Base Price: 30,000

Speed: Special
Maneuverability: Special
Firepower: 12/12

Hull:
Armor: 12 Ramming: 16
Cargo: 50

Damage:
Derelict: 53 Critical: 17
Destroyed: 60

Crew:
Captain: 3 Crew Size: 30
Crew Skill: 1 Crew Rating: 13
Morale: 46

MAGICAL TREASURES

Keep that gleam in your eye, boy. Treasure such as I have seen gleams even more. See what I have seen and you too will risk death to hold it, to call it yours.

• Garlthik One-Eye, Ork Thief •

The world of **Earthdawn** is filled with fantastic magical treasures. These treasures are precious not only for their uniqueness, but because they hold within them the history of Barsaive. These treasures hold the key to the past, and allow the heroes of today to become the legends of tomorrow.

The quest for magical treasure is an important **Earthdawn** adventure goal. Though the characters will often seek out and destroy Horrors that remain in their world, the search for magical weapons to use against the Horrors is an equally important goal. The characters' heroic status makes them perfect candidates for researching and learning about magical items, and through these items rediscovering the history of Barsaive and its people.

This section provides specific rules for using thread magic to learn about and use magical weapons and items. The gamemaster may find it useful to review the **Thread Magic** chapter on p. 264 of the **Player's Compendium**. That information allows characters to successfully research magical items and power them with magic—continuously activating more of each item's unique powers and properties.

USING TREASURE IN ADVENTURES AND CAMPAIGNS

Most of the treasures described here are one-of-a-kind items. These items never appear on the open market; they must be found, not bought. For this reason, your characters will never find just any old magic battle-axe. Instead, they might discover Lorm's Axe, once wielded by Lorm the troll, and used by him to blood the Horror that claimed Kaer Jalendale. Lorm's Axe, like all treasures, has a history.

The events that compose an item's history are a part of what makes the item unique. Each item's magical abilities also make it unique. It is unlikely that another magical battle-axe in all the world has the same powers as Lorm's Axe. By carefully creating descriptions of their history and abilities, the gamemaster ensures that all treasures are individual and distinctive.

FINDING KEY KNOWLEDGES

When a gamemaster introduces a magical treasure into his game, he must determine the Research Knowledges of each of its Key Knowledges. Each Research Knowledge can serve as the objective of a short adventure, and these adventures may make up a campaign to fully understand a weapon and wield it at its fullest power—probably to kill that pesky Horror that keeps getting in the characters' way. The gamemaster can set up such adventures in any way he finds appropriate, but the following guidelines may also be helpful.

Finding the Research Knowledge of a Key Knowledge should require effort on the part of the characters seeking the knowledge. The characters should not get something for nothing. For example, a character should have to undertake a journey of some distance to find a tome that has the information he seeks, rather than merely walking to the nearest collection of books and flipping through the pages for a few minutes. Once he arrives at his destination, he might also have to persuade the caretaker of the collection to allow him to look through the tome. To accomplish that, he may have to agree to do a favor.

The character must understand how the Key Knowledge fits into the history of the item. For example, if a character must learn the Name of the jungle that produced the wood used to create a staff, it isn't enough for him to guess the name of the jungle, even if he manages to guess correctly. The character may research different kinds of wood to pinpoint the type used to make the staff, in the process learning about where different types of trees grow, then discovering important stands or forests of those trees. Through this process, he will understand the significance of the wood used to make the staff.

The gamemaster must take care to create a way for the characters to obtain the Key Knowledges through clever roleplaying or unusual plans of action. The key is to create information that is difficult, but not impossible, to obtain. The risk or cost of obtaining the information must be worth the new ability of the item. For example, having to enter the lair of a dragon to earn the Key Knowledge for a Rank 2 Thread is probably too high a cost; and asking a character to learn whether the person who created an item was left- or right-handed is likely to be an impossible task. A good guideline is to base the difficulty of the task required to purchase the next thread rank on the Legend Point cost of that rank (see **Determine Item Characteristics**, p. 163). For example, if it costs 2,100 Legend Points to purchase the next thread rank for an item, the adventure to obtain the Key Knowledge should award the character approximately that many Legend Points.

CREATING NEW TREASURES

At some point, most gamemasters will want to create their own unique magical treasures. Go right ahead, and use the guidelines given here as a model. But first, a helpful tip: it is probably easier to customize an existing treasure to your needs than create one from scratch. While the treasures listed in this chapter represent a small percentage of the magical items in the world of **Earthdawn**, they are just a sampling of the treasures that can be found during a campaign.

Though the gamemaster can use them exactly as described, we encourage the gamemaster to customize the items to suit his campaign. Much of the information about individual items remains vague enough to allow the gamemaster to flesh out the details as appropriate to his group of players and current campaign. Feel free to tinker with the items—change the Key Knowledge descriptions, the Deeds, the Legend Point costs, or even the magical effects granted to suit events and characters from your campaign.

Think twice about making the items more powerful than they already are, however—the items presented in this chapter have been created with an eye toward game balance. If you create an item that turns out to be too powerful, the best way to deal with it is to take it away from the characters, modify it, then let them have it back. If the item is simply too grossly unbalanced to fix, swallow hard and remove the item from play. You will be spending

too much time running **Earthdawn** to let one magical treasure ruin the game for you.

Creating and customizing magical treasures follows a series of four steps:

1. Create Item Description and History
2. Determine Key Knowledges
3. Determine Magical Effects
4. Determine Item Characteristics

Create Item Description and History

Most players will enjoy finding truly mysterious treasure and then unraveling that mystery. A magical treasure is not just an item of power, it is a link to the past. Each item comes with a unique history, because almost all magical items are created under exceptional circumstances. Using treasures to tie characters to the history of your campaign helps make the world more real for them.

There is no hard and fast way to come up with a suitable history, the item's background depends on what you want in your campaign. A good starting point for initial ideas is probably to answer the basic questions given in the Key Knowledge Table. Apart from the Key Knowledge that has to be assigned to Rank 1 (the item's Name), there are no restrictions—if you have a better idea for a particular Key Knowledge, use it!

Determine Key Knowledges

The next decision you have to make is deciding the number of thread ranks the item has. The minimum is 1 and the maximum is 15. The Key Knowledge Table lists typical Key Knowledges for items, with a suggested thread rank for each. While each Thread rank could theoretically have a Key Knowledge assigned, it is not mandatory for all thread ranks to have one—only for the first rank.

It is recommended that you assign at least one Key Knowledge to each of the thread rank ranges given in the first column of the Key Knowledge Table, distributed as evenly as possible. For example, a magical treasure with a maximum of five thread ranks should come with at least three Key Knowledges; one assigned to Rank 1, one at Rank 3, and one at Rank 5.

Determine Magical Effects

Each thread rank grants a magical effect to the item's wielder. Most items offer a +1 bonus or special ability of some kind per thread rank, although two bonuses are also common. Only in the rarest case should a magical treasure supply three bonuses at once.

While the effects are not cumulative, keep in mind that more potent effects replace lesser ones of the same type. For example, an item might add +1 to the wielder's Physical Defense. If the item adds +2 to his Physical Defense at a higher rank, the character's Physical Defense is only increased by +2, not by a cumulative +3. Suitable powers and bonuses are listed below.

Damage

Damage bonuses usually apply to weapons of all sorts. Add the bonus to the weapon's basic Damage step (see the **Goods and Services** chapter on p. 434 of the **Player's Compendium** for details), and list the total Damage step for any given thread rank. Ranged weapons may also come with increased Range distances.

KEY KNOWLEDGE TABLE

Key Knowledge Thread Rank	Type of Knowledge
1	The Name of the item.
2–3	The Name of the person who created the item or the item's specific magical abilities.
4–5	The source of the material from which the item was constructed or the Name of the creature that aided in the item's construction.
6–7	The Name of the last known owner or wielder of the item.
8–15	The last event where the item was known to have been used.

A magical battle-axe comes with a basic Damage step of 6, which is used as long as no threads are woven to the weapon. The first thread rank offers a Damage Bonus of +1, and lists: The battle-axe is now Damage step 7. Spike Bombs at thread rank one inflict Willpower+6 damage and their thrown Range is: Short 2–9, Medium 10–15, Long 16–18 yards.

Characteristics

Characteristics bonuses can be granted by any item, but the exact bonus depends on the item's purpose and history. For example, a suit of chain mail armor offering bonuses to the wearer's Physical and Mystic Armor Ratings makes sense, but the same armor granting a bonus to the character's Climbing Tests probably doesn't. List the total bonus granted for any given thread rank, to which characteristic it applies (i.e. a single Defense or Armor Rating, the character's Initiative step, his Movement rates or Carrying Capacity, or even a single Health Rating), and note any restrictions or special rules that apply.

A Potion of Life grants a +6 bonus to the imbiber's next Recovery Test, which must be made within an hour of drinking the potion. The character may use no other potion or magic to enhance this Recovery Test; the bonus must come from the Potion of Life alone.

Immunities

Magical effects of this type offer protection from special situations or certain forms of attack, such as fire or heat-based damage or the effects of a specific power, talent or skill, spell, combat option, or Situation modifier. Please note that immunities are very powerful—too many of these effects can make characters invincible. Also note any restrictions or special rules that apply.

The legendary shield Bloodwall adds +5 to Physical and Mystic Armor against heat and fire attacks. The wearer of Dragon Mail armor adds +6 to his Mystic Armor against magical attacks made by dragons and drakes, including dragon powers, and is also immune to the dragon Venom power.

Action Tests

Some items add bonuses to the character's Action Tests or grant the item's user a bonus when using a specific talent. If the user does not know the talent in question, he may sometimes use it as if he had the talent at a rank equal to the bonus given instead. Unless noted otherwise, any Strain (or other) costs associated with the talent still apply when using the item. Note that these bonuses are magical in nature and only supplement the use of talents, not skills.

The Elemental Long-spear grants a +1 rank bonus to any Riposte Tests the wielder makes with the weapon. If

LEGEND POINT COST TABLE				
Thread Rank	—Spell Defense Range— 7–12	9–15	13–21	19+
1	100	200	300	500
2	200	300	500	800
3	300	500	800	1,300
4	500	800	1,300	2,100
5	800	1,300	2,100	3,400
6	1,300	2,100	3,400	5,500
7	2,100	3,400	5,500	8,900
8	3,400	5,500	8,900	14,400
9	5,500	8,900	14,400	23,300
10	8,900	14,400	23,300	37,700
11	14,400	23,300	37,700	61,000
12	23,300	37,700	61,000	98,700
13	37,700	61,000	98,700	159,700
14	61,000	98,700	159,700	258,400
15	98,700	159,700	258,400	418,100

the wielder does not know the Riposte talent, he uses it as if he had learned the Riposte talent at Rank 1.

Karma

Karma effects enhance the wielder's use of Karma, either by granting bonuses to his Karma step in certain situations, by increasing his Karma Pool by a certain amount, or even allowing him to spend Karma Points on a specific Action Test. Note any restrictions or special rules that apply.

The Bands of Fortune allow the wearer to store a number of Karma Points, equal to his thread rank, in the bands. The wearer can transfer Karma Points between his normal Karma Pool and the bands by taking 1 Strain Point of damage per Karma Point transferred.

Special Abilities

The item grants its wielder a special ability at the cost of strain. Most of these special abilities are similar in effect to existing spells or Discipline Abilities. This is the most free-form of the powers and should be handled with care. If you are seriously considering creating a "kill dragon" power for the magical sword you have in mind, you should probably prepare to see your campaign going up in a puff of magical smoke.

To determine the Strain cost, a good rule of thumb is to apply 2 points of Strain for each required spell thread if the ability works like an existing spell and 1 point of Strain if the spell has no required threads.

*The fire shield effect granted by the Bracers of Firewind works in a similar manner to the Lightning Shield spell (see the **Elementalism Spells** chapter on p.305 of the **Player's Compendium**), but with an Effect step equal to the wearer's Willpower+2. Using this effect causes the wearer 1 Strain Point of damage.*

Determine Item Characteristics

While the number of available thread ranks and the magical effects they offer define how powerful an item is, determining the item's **Spell Defense** and the progression of **Legend Point Costs** are the last levers of adjusting an item's overall power. The Spell Defense of an item determines how resistant it is against magical attacks, and influences the items Legend Point progression. The Legend Point Cost Table shows the four available Legend Point progressions and the Spell Defense range for each. All you need to do is pick a Spell Defense which best suits your item, then chose a Legend Point progression which you think is appropriate for the magical effects offered by the item. When in doubt, a Spell Defense of 13 in combination with the progression starting with 200 Legend Points at thread rank 1 will work for most magical treasures.

The **Number of Threads** determines how many people can have a thread woven to the item (and can therefore use it) at the same time. As a rule of thumb, this number should be 1 when the item is not easily shared with others (like a Spell Matrix Object, for example), and 2 when the item is able to be shared between two or more characters. This number may also be higher if the item's purpose justifies it.

Bands of Fortune are a very personal item which enhances the wearer's Karma pool, and allows only a single person to attach a thread. A Crystal Axe is an item which can be shared between two warriors, allowing a maximum of 2 threads to be attached. Oratory necklaces are made of semi-precious stones, and five of the stones are magically active. Up to five persons may attach their threads to one of those five stones.

Treasure Game Information

The treasures described below are grouped into two categories. The first contains items which represent a general type of item, for example, staffs with common properties. The second category contains unique, "only one like it ever" items.

Each treasure description provides the item's game information and history. The following information explains the terms used in each item description.

Maximum Threads: A character may only weave one thread to a magic item. However, many items hold more than one thread, so they may act magically for more than one character. If more than one character attaches a thread to an item, the character touching the item gets to use it. If an item already has the maximum number of threads woven to it and another character attaches a new thread, the thread of the lowest rank is replaced. For example, Monturk's Carpet can have two threads woven to it, at most. If it already has two threads attached to it—one at Rank 4 and the other at Rank 2—and someone weaves a new thread to the carpet, the new thread would displace the Rank 2 thread.

Spell Defense: The item's Spell Defense is the Difficulty Number used by a character attempting to use talents (such as Item History or Weapon History) or skills (such as Research) to learn an item's history. It also serves as the Difficulty Number for spells or talents used against the item.

Thread Ranks: This lists the thread rank, the Costs, Key Knowledges, Deeds, and effects the treasure has at each thread rank. Each item has a maximum number of thread ranks. A character cannot increase the rank of the thread he weaves to an item beyond the maximum listed rank. For example, a character with a Counterspell Staff may only increase the rank of the thread attached to the staff to Rank 6. It is simply not possible to weave a Rank 7 thread to a Counterspell Staff. Any attempt to weave a thread with a rank higher than the maximum automatically fails.

Effect: New effects are listed at each thread rank. If a higher rank does not list a new effect, assume it is the same as given at the previous thread rank. Newer, more potent effects replace lesser abilities of the same type. The effects are not cumulative. For example, an item might add +1 to the wielder's Spell Defense. If the item adds +2 to his Spell Defense at a higher rank, the character's Spell Defense is only increased by +2, not by a cumulative

+3 (1 + 2). For weapons, references to Damage step bonuses are to the weapon's base Damage step. Unless noted otherwise, the wielder adds his Strength step to this when making a Damage Test, as normal.

Some items add bonuses to the character's Action Tests. Others require or impart the ability to use a talent. Items which grant bonus ranks to a talent also allow a character who does not know the talent to use it at the equivalent rank as the bonus. Note that these bonuses are magical in nature and only supplement the use of talents, not skills. For example, an item that adds a +2 rank bonus to the wielder's Avoid Blow talent does not provide any improvement to the wielder's Avoid Blow skill, although the character can choose to make an Avoid Blow talent Test using the item's Rank 2 bonus if he chooses. When improving talent ranks, the character does so as if the item's rank bonus was not in effect. Also, if the character does not know the talent except when using the item, he cannot improve it until he learns the talent to at least Rank 1. **Unless noted otherwise, any Strain (or other) costs associated with use of the talent still apply when using the item.**

Cost: This is the Legend Point cost to weave a thread to an item or increase a thread's rank.

Thread Items

Thread items are objects whose magical properties remain dormant until a character attaches a magical thread to the item's True pattern. Once a character has done so, the thread activates the item's magical power. To use the magic in a thread item, a character must have knowledge of the Thread Weaving talent (see the **Talents** chapter on p. 207 of the **Player's Compendium**).

In many ways, thread items resemble other, more powerful, magical treasures. For instance, all thread items have a Name, a True pattern, Key Knowledges, and Pattern Knowledges. As with all magical treasures, a character must first study the thread item's Pattern Knowledge before he can attach a thread to the item's True pattern. Unlike other magical treasures, however, the True patterns of the thread items described in this section are so simple that they generally have only one Key Knowledge. This Key Knowledge always includes the item's Name, but sometimes includes other information about the item.

Also in contrast to magical treasures, many thread items can be purchased. Expensive, difficult to create, and hard to find, these items are normally only available in Barsaive's larger cities and towns. Though thread items are not as rare as magical treasures, they are still not commonly available. Most thread items have a Very Rare availability (see the **Goods and Services** chapter on p. 432 of the **Player's Compendium**). The Availability and sale value of thread items is always at the gamemaster's discretion.

Learning Key Knowledges

A character can learn the Name of a thread item upon purchase, often from the merchant selling the item or the craftsman who created it. Even for a thread item whose Name constitutes its entire Key Knowledge, learning the item's Name in this manner does not allow the character to understand its True pattern. To fully understand an item's Pattern Knowledge, a character must make a successful Item or Weapon History Test against the item's Spell Defense. As with magical treasures, understanding a thread item's Pattern Knowledge allows a character to effectively weave a magical thread to the item and so activate its power.

Creating Legendary Magical Treasures

In many cases, thread items eventually become legendary magical treasures. Though a thread item's True pattern begins very simply, usually consisting only of the item's Name, the item's participation in significant events and/or circumstances can imbue it with powers that reflect the nature of those events

and circumstances. For example, a thread weapon used to fight a Horror may grow in power after the battle, becoming more effective against Horrors. In fact, this is exactly the way most magical treasure is formed. Thread items are Named and used for years and years in myriad events, some significant, some not. Over time, the True pattern of the item begins to change because of the events in which the object has participated, eventually gaining powers based on those events.

Remember, though, that this process is very slow. Players should not expect to buy thread items with the intention of turning them into magical treasure. It often takes years and years for an item's True pattern to change at all, never mind gaining powers based on those changes. Players should not expect to use their thread weapon in a few battles and have it become more powerful overnight—it requires a character or hero using the item to perform a legendary deed (see **Legendary Items** in the **Enchanting** chapter on p. 278 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Gamemasters are free to alter the nature and powers of thread items as they are used by the player characters, but only after truly significant events. Thus, if a Swordmaster uses his thread sword in a deadly battle against a Horror, the sword may grow in power, gaining a new thread rank that gives the sword the power to do more damage, or gaining some other ability that reflects the slaying of the Horror. When allowing player characters to do so, match the item's powers and abilities to the item's specific purpose and keep the item's powers at a level that will not disrupt the balance of your campaign. Again, this should only happen after very significant events, and should be a very rare occurrence. The following is an example of the kind of situation that might warrant granting new powers to thread items.

Kricklen and his companions have learned that the dragon Keroth plans to attack the small town of Linnal in retribution for some minor transgression against the Horror-marked dragon. They have resolved to save the town by finding the dragon's lair and slaying Keroth before it can attack. The group finds Keroth's lair, where they must fight off many Horror constructs and other creatures who protect the dragon. As the adventurers at last enter the vast chamber where Keroth lairs, they come face to face with the tainted creature. The dragon immediately launches an attack on the group, whose members valiantly fight back. After a number of violent exchanges, both the dragon and the characters are badly hurt. Kricklen stands alone before Keroth, his companions lying around him, either unconscious or dead. Though severely injured, Kricklen leaps to attack the dragon, driving his magical sword deep into the dragon's body, at last slaying the foul beast.

After this encounter, the gamemaster decides that the significance of the event warrants the bestowing of an additional power on the sword. He adds a new thread rank to the sword and assigns it an additional new power. From this point on, the True pattern of Kricklen's sword will now include knowledge of his battle with Keroth and also its new power.

The thread items described in this section are divided into four categories: **weapons**, **armor**, **shields**, and **objects**.

Thread Weapons

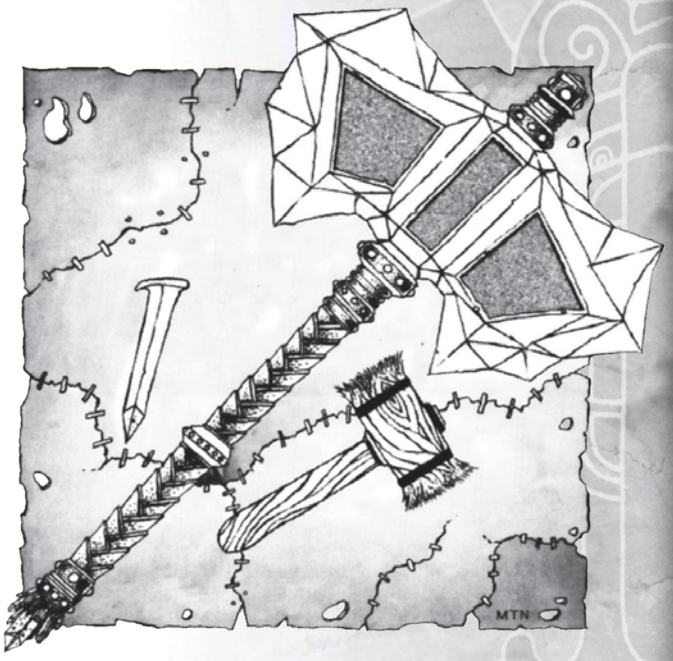
Thread weapons are magical weapons commercially available in larger towns and cities. Some thread weapons are unusual, while others closely resemble mundane weapons of the same type. The magical effects of thread weapons usually take the form of an improved Damage step and/or an increased attack Range.

Unless otherwise noted, all thread weapons act as normal versions of the weapon until the owner attaches a thread to them.

Crystal Axe

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 13

A crystal axe is a battle-axe with a blade made from crystal and pieces of True earth, rather than metal. The crystal used in



THREAD MELEE WEAPONS TABLE

Weapon	Damage Step*	STR Min.*	Size*	EDN	Cost	Weight*	Availability
Crystal Axe	6	13	4	21	2,100	6	Very Rare
Crystal Sword	7	16	5	22	3,500	9	Very Rare
Elemental Long-Spear	5	11	5	28	4,000	7	Very Rare
Maul Hammer	7	15	5	17	2,200	8	Very Rare
Prince Axe	6	13	4	21	2,100	6	Very Rare
Rain Club	3	7	2	23	3,100	3	Very Rare
Stone Broadsword	6	13	4	25	4,500	8	Very Rare
Stone Dagger	3	7	2	23	1,200	4	Very Rare
Three-Axe	6	13	4	17	2,100	6	Very Rare
Wrist Carver	2	4	1	17	2,000	1	Very Rare

* These are the weapon's characteristics with no threads attached.

EDN: The weapon's Enchanting Difficulty Number (see the **Enchanting** chapter on p. 273 of the **Player's Compendium**)

THREAD MISSILE WEAPONS TABLE

Weapon	Damage Step*	STR Min.*	Size*	EDN	Short Range*	Medium Range*	Long Range*	Cost	Weight*	Availability
Longbow	4	11**	5	19	2–60	61–120	121–240	1,900	4	Very Rare
Sling	2	5	2	20	2–20	21–40	41–80	1,000	1	Very Rare

* These are the weapon's characteristics with no threads attached.
** A minimum Dexterity value of 13 is required to use a thread longbow.
EDN: The weapon's Enchanting Difficulty Number (see the **Enchanting** chapter on p. 273 of the **Player's Compendium**)

crystal weapons can only be obtained in the Twilight Peaks.

With no threads attached to them, crystal axes have similar characteristics to normal battle-axes.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the axe's Name.

Effect: The axe is now Damage step 7.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The axe is now Damage step 8.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the axe's creator.

Effect: The axe is now Damage step 9.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

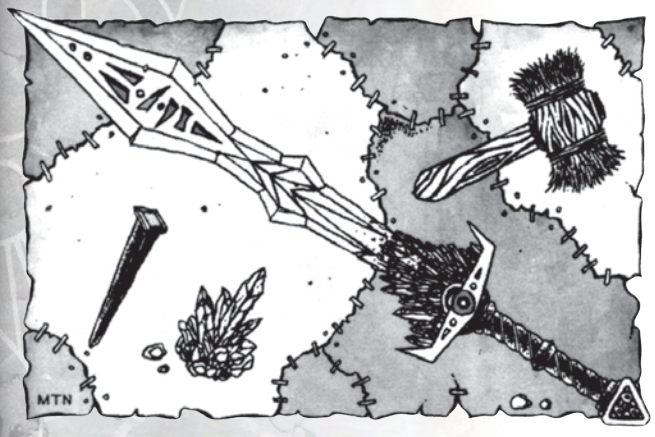
Effect: The axe is now Damage step 10.

Crystal Sword

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 14

A crystal sword is simply a two-handed sword with a blade made from crystal and pieces of True earth, rather than metal. The crystal used in crystal weapons can only be obtained in the Twilight Peaks.

With no threads attached to them, crystal swords have similar characteristics to normal two-handed swords.



Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the sword's Name.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 8.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 9.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the sword's creator.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 10.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 11.

Elemental Long-Spear

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 18

These 6 to 8 foot long wooden long-spears incorporate each of the five True elements. The shafts are woven with True wood, the hollow cores are filled with True air, and the spears' metal tips are woven with True earth. Each spear is then soaked in water that is rich in True water and hardened in flames fueled by True fire.

The long-spears float in water. Wielding an elemental long-spear requires a minimum Strength value of 11. Otherwise, with no threads attached to them, they have the same characteristics as a normal long-spear.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the spear's Name.

Effect: The spear is now Damage step 6. It is also immune to damage from fire or from the effects of talents such as Weapon Breaker. This latter property also keeps the spear from splintering when leveled against an opponent when charging.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The spear is now Damage step 7. The wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Initiative Tests.

THREAD THROWING WEAPONS TABLE

Weapon	Damage Step*	STR Min.*	Size*	EDN	Short Range*	Medium Range*	Long Range*	Cost	Weight*	Availability
Throwing Axe	3	7	3	21	2–12	13–20	21–24	1,300	2	Very Rare

* These are the weapon's characteristics with no threads attached.
EDN: The weapon's Enchanting Difficulty Number (see the **Enchanting** chapter on p. 273 of the **Player's Compendium**)

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the spear's creator.

Effect: The spear is now Damage step 8. Its tip glows red hot and gives the wielder a power similar to the Flameweapon spell (see the **Elementalism Spells** chapter on p. 296 of the **Player's Compendium**). For 1 Strain Point of damage the wielder rolls a separate Step 4 Flame die with the weapon's Damage Tests that round. Unlike the Flameweapon spell, the Flame die result never does harm to the wielder.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The spear is now Damage step 9. The wielder gains a +1 rank bonus to his Riposte talent when using the weapon.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn what type of wood the spear haft is constructed from and where it was grown.

Effect: The spear is now Damage step 10. It becomes extremely resilient; tremendous force can bend it, but not break it. Even the strength of a dragon twisting the spear in its talons cannot harm the spear. The wielder may use the spear to pole-vault, and gains a +1 rank bonus to his Acrobatic Strike talent when doing so.

Longbow

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 13

A thread longbow looks no different to a normal longbow, and with no threads attached to them, they have the same characteristics. These weapons come in a variety of designs.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the bow's Name.

Effect: The bow is now Damage step 5.

Thread Rank Two

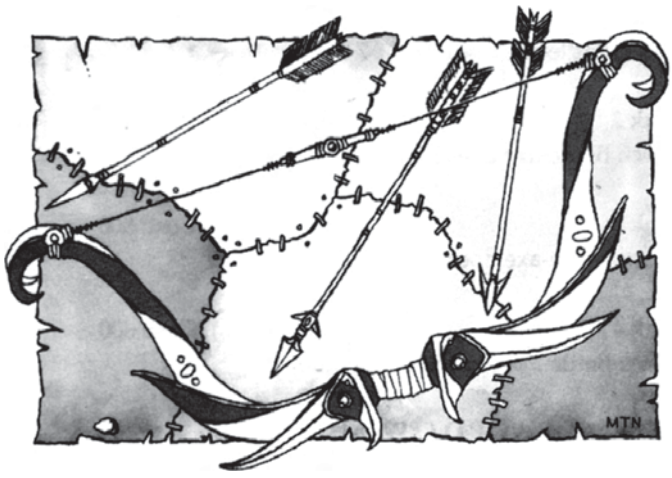
Cost: 300

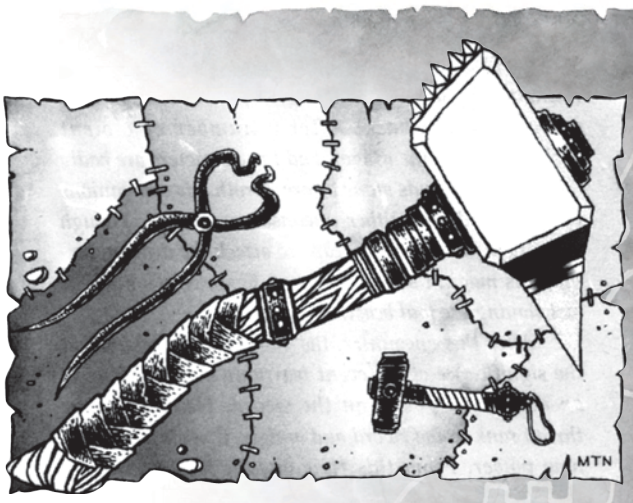
Effect: The bow is now Damage step 6. Its Range increases to: Short 2–70, Medium 71–140, Long 141–280 yards.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the bow's creator.





Effect: The bow is now Damage step 7. Its Range increases to: Short 2–80, Medium 81–160, Long 161–320 yards.

Maul Hammer

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 9

Designed especially to damage an opponent's shield, the maul hammer has a spike on one end and a studded surface on the other, both of which can inflict damage to either an opponent or his shield.

With no threads attached to them, thread maul hammers have the same characteristics as a normal warhammer.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the hammer's Name.

Effect: The hammer is now Damage step 8.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 200

Effect: The hammer's wielder gains a +3 bonus to his Damage Test when employing the Shattering a Shield combat option against an opponent's shield (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 406 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the hammer's creator.

Effect: The shock wave from a successful hammer attack causes the wielder's opponent to incur a —3 penalty to any Knockdown Test he makes as a result of the attack.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 500

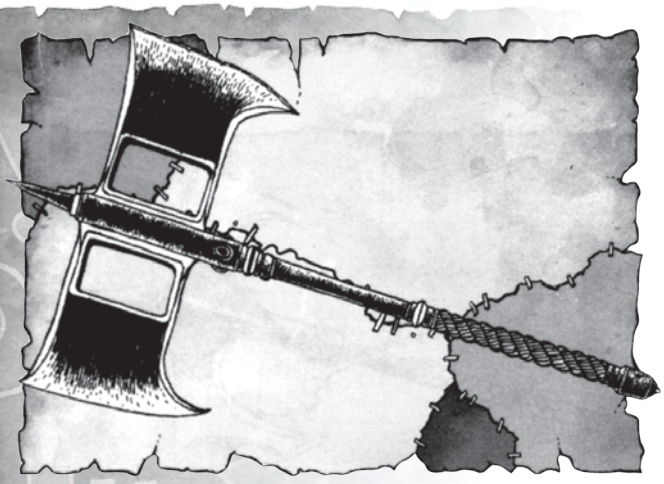
Effect: The hammer is now Damage step 9.

Prince Axe

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 13

Usually forged by a Weaponsmith in the employ of a noble (and not necessarily a prince), this thread weapon outwardly resembles and acts as an extremely ornate battle-axe.

With no threads attached to them, prince axes are Damage step 6 weapons. In all other respects, they have the same characteristics as other battle-axes.



Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn both the axe's Name and the Name of the noble whom the wielder is sworn to protect.

Oath: The magic of the axe only becomes functional when the wielder swears a blood oath to protect the noble for whom the axe was made from harm (see the **Workings of Magic** chapter on p. 260 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Effect: The axe is now Damage step 7. The wielder adds +1 to his Physical Defense.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The axe is now Damage step 8. The wielder adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the axe's creator.

Effect: The axe is now Damage step 9.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The axe's wielder adds +1 to his Social Defense and +2 to his Physical Defense.

Rain Club

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 13

Rain clubs are made in Barsaive's Servos and Liaj jungles, and in the distant land of Araucania. The clubs are made of light, durable wood, usually 2 to 3 inches thick, and float in water.

With no threads attached to them, rain clubs are Damage step 3 weapons. In all other respects, they have the same characteristics as normal clubs.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the club's Name.

Effect: The club is now Damage step 5. It also drips water when touched by fire, so it cannot be burned by normal flame. When the wielder grips the club's haft, it dries out on the area held so that it will not slip from the wielder's grasp.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The club is now Damage step 6.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the club's creator.

Effect: The club is now Damage step 7.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The club is now Damage step 8. The wielder gains a +1 rank bonus to his Wood Skin talent when he uses the club to perform the talent ritual.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The club is now Damage step 9.

Sling

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 12

A thread sling looks like a normal sling, except it is usually more ornate and durable. With no threads attached to them, thread slings have the same characteristics as normal slings.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the sling's Name.

Effect: The sling is now Damage step 3.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The sling is now Damage step 4. Its Range increases to: Short 2–30, Medium 31–60, Long 61–120 yards.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the sling's creator.

Effect: The sling is now Damage step 5. Its Range increases to: Short 2–40, Medium 41–80, Long 81–160 yards.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The sling is now Damage step 6.

Stone Broadsword

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 19

A stone broadsword is a broadsword carved completely from one piece of stone. These extremely heavy thread weapons are most often used by obsidimen and, on rare occasions, trolls.

With no threads attached to them, stone broadswords have similar characteristics to troll swords.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

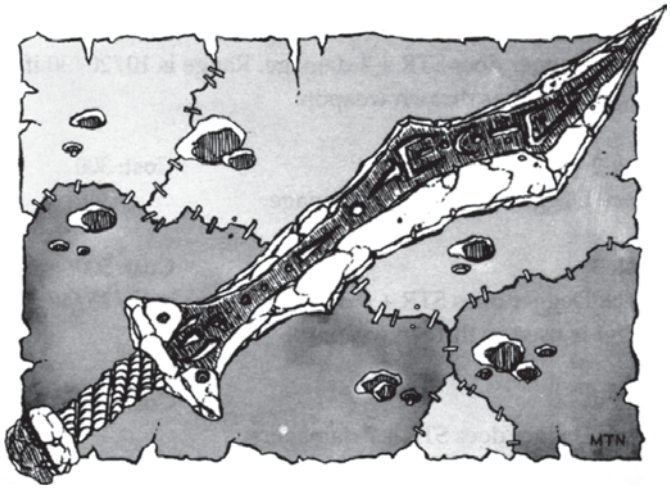
Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the sword's Name.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 8.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 9.



Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the sword's creator.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 10.

Stone Dagger

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 15

A stone dagger is a dagger carved completely from a single piece of stone. These weapons are fairly heavy, and are most often used by obsidimen.

With no threads attached to them, stone daggers have similar characteristics to dwarf swords (they are too heavy to throw).

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the dagger's Name.

Effect: The dagger is now Damage step 4. It can now be thrown with a Range of: Short 2–9, Medium 10–15, Long 16–18 yards.

Thread Rank Two

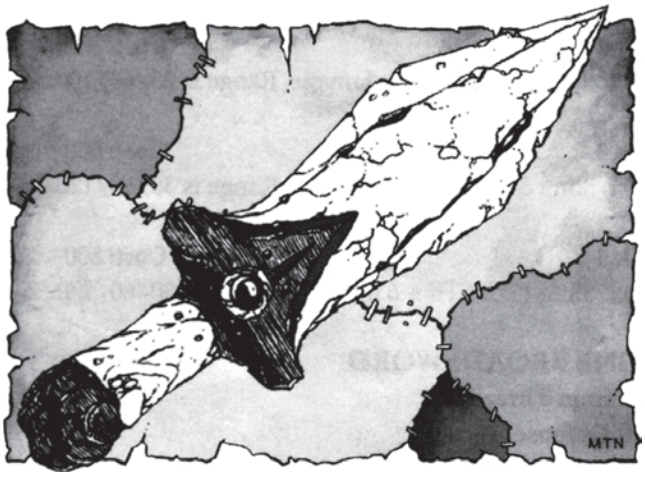
Cost: 300

Effect: The dagger is now Damage step 5.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the dagger's creator.



Effect: The dagger is now Damage step 6. Its thrown Range increases to: Short 2–15, Medium 16–25, Long 26–30 yards.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The dagger is now Damage step 7.

Three-Axe

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 9

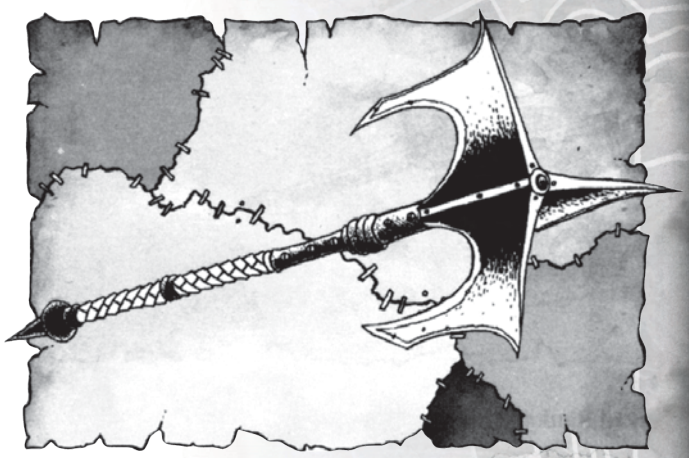
The three-axe is a fearsome, triple-bladed weapon. They are clumsy to use in combat: until he weaves at least one thread to the weapon, the wielder is considered Harried while using the axe (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 408 of the **Player's Compendium**). Otherwise, with no threads attached to them, three-axes have similar characteristics to normal battle-axes.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the axe's Name.

Effect: The axe is now Damage step 7. The wielder is no longer Harried while wielding the axe.



Thread Rank Two

Cost: 200

Effect: For 2 Strain Points of damage, the wielder may focus the energy of all three blades into just a single blade. Two of the blades become incorporeal, glowing a faint blue. When the wielder next strikes an opponent he gains a +5 bonus to his Damage Test; the axe then returns to its normal shape.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the axe's creator.

Effect: The axe is now Damage step 8.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 500

Effect: For 3 Strain Points of damage, the wielder may focus the energy of all three blades into just a single blade. Two of the blades become incorporeal, glowing a faint red. When the wielder next strikes an opponent he gains a +7 bonus to his Damage Test, the axe then returns to its normal shape.

THREAD ARMOR TABLE

Armor	Physical Armor*	Mystic Armor*	Initiative Penalty*	EDN	Cost	Weight*	Availability
Chain Mail	7	0	3	21	4,000	40	Very Rare
Hardened Leather	5	0	1	22	1,600	20	Very Rare
Leather	3	0	0	17	1,400	15	Very Rare
Obsidiman Skin	3	1	0	26	2,500	20	Very Rare
Plate Mail	9	0	4	33	12,500	60	Very Rare
Ring Mail	6	0	2	22	2,200	30	Very Rare
Wyvern-Skin Robe	3	0	0	31	6,000	15	Very Rare

* These are the armor's characteristics with no threads attached.

EDN: The armor's Enchanting Difficulty (see the **Enchanting** chapter on p. 273 of the **Player's Compendium**)

Throwing Axe

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 13

A thread throwing axe looks like a normal throwing axe, except it is usually more ornate and durable.

With no threads attached to them, thread throwing axes have the same characteristics as normal throwing axes.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the axe's Name.

Effect: The axe is now Damage step 4.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The axe's thrown Range increases to: Short 2–18, Medium 19–30, Long 31–36 yards.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the axe's creator.

Effect: The axe is now Damage step 5.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The axe is now Damage step 6.

Wrist Carver

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 9

A wrist carver is a curved, jagged blade attached to a bracer, worn on the wielder's wrist. Its ugly teeth can cause nasty, bleeding Wounds. With no threads attached to them, wrist carvers have the same characteristics as daggers (except they cannot be thrown).

Thread Rank One

Cost: 100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the wrist carver's Name.

Effect: The wrist carver is now Damage step 3.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 200

Effect: For 1 Strain Point of damage, the wielder gains a +2 bonus to the next Attack Test he makes with the wrist carver.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the wrist carver's creator.

Effect: The wrist carver is now Damage step 4. For 1 Strain Point of damage the wielder may attempt to cause a Bleeding Wound on his opponent. The wielder must decide to do this before he makes his Attack Test with the wrist carver. If the wielder inflicts a Wound, the wrist carver rips into his opponent, creating a gaping, bleeding injury, and causing the victim to take an additional 2 Damage Points at the end of each round, until he makes a successful Recovery Test, receives medical attention, or dies from blood loss. No armor protects against this damage.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 500

Effect: The wrist carver is now Damage step 5.

Thread Armor

Thread armor is magical armor commercially available in larger towns and cities. Most thread armor closely resembles its non-magical counterpart.

The magical effects of thread armor usually take the form of improved Physical and/or Mystic Armor. Unless otherwise noted, all thread armor acts as a normal version of the armor until the owner attaches a thread to it.

Chain Mail

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 13

With no threads attached, thread chain mail armor has the same characteristics as normal chain mail armor, except it maintains its shine and repels dirt and rust.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the armor's Name.

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 8.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The armor is now Mystic Armor 1.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the armor's creator.

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 9 and has no Initiative Penalty.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 10 and Mystic Armor 2.

Hardened Leather

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 14

With no threads attached, thread hardened leather armor has the same characteristics, and looks the same, as normal hardened leather armor.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 100

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the armor.

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 6.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 200

Effect: The armor is now Mystic Armor 1.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the armor's creator.

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 7 and Mystic Armor 2.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 500

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 8.

Leather

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 9

With no threads attached, thread leather armor has the same characteristics, and looks the same, as normal leather armor.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

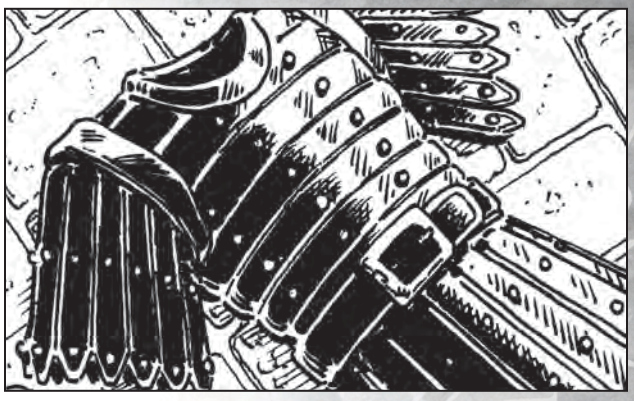
Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the armor's Name.

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 4.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The armor is now Mystic Armor 1.



Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the armor's creator.

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 5 and Mystic Armor 2.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The armor is now Mystic Armor 3.

Obsidiman Skin

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 18

Obsidiman skin armor is rare in Barsaive, the thread variety rarer still. Most Barsaivians abhor the thought of wearing it; the sight of someone wearing this armor has prompted attacks by enraged obsidiman.

Without a thread attached, the armor has the characteristics (and drawbacks) of standard obsidiman skin armor.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the armor's Name.

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 4 and Mystic Armor 2.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 5 and Mystic Armor 3.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the armor's creator.

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 6 and Mystic Armor 4.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The armor is now Mystic Armor 5.

Plate Mail

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 25

With no threads attached, thread plate mail armor has the same characteristics as normal plate mail armor, except it maintains its shine and repels dirt and rust.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the armor's Name.

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 10 and Mystic Armor 1.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 800

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 11 and Initiative Penalty 3.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the armor's creator.

Effect: The armor is now Mystic Armor 3 and Initiative Penalty 2.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 2,100

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 12 and Initiative Penalty 1.

Ring Mail

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 14

With no threads attached, thread ring mail armor has the same characteristics, and looks the same, as normal ring mail armor.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the armor's Name.

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 7.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 8.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the armor's creator.

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 9 and Mystic Armor 1.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The armor is now Mystic Armor 2.

Wyvern-Skin Robe

Maximum Threads: 3
Spell Defense: 13

These robes are made of several wyvern skins carefully sewn together. As wyverns vary in color from deep red to green to muddy brown, the robes often have a patchwork appearance. Nonetheless, they are still considered suitable attire for even the highest court functions. Without a thread attached, the robe is Physical Armor 3 and incurs no Initiative Penalty.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the robe's Name.

Effect: The robe is now Physical Armor 4 and Mystic Armor 1.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The robe is now Physical Armor 5 and Mystic Armor 2.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the robe's creator.

Effect: The robe is now Physical Armor 6 and Mystic Armor 3.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The robe is now Physical Armor 7 and Mystic Armor 4.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Names of the heroes who defeated the wyverns from whose skins the robe was crafted.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 bonus to his Initiative Tests. He also gains wyvern-like ferocity and can imitate a wyvern's screeching roar. The wearer gains a +1 rank bonus to his Battle Shout talent.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 2,100

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 bonus to his Initiative Tests.

THREAD SHIELDS

Thread shields are magical shields commercially available in larger towns and cities. Most thread shields closely resemble their non-magical counterparts.

The magical effects of thread shields usually takes the form of improved Physical and/or Mystic Armor. Unless noted otherwise, all thread shields acts as normal shields until the owner attaches a thread to them.

Buckler

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 13

With no threads attached, a thread buckler has the same characteristics as a normal buckler.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the buckler's Name.

Effect: The buckler is now Physical Armor 2.

THREAD SHIELD TABLE

Shield	Physical Armor*	Mystic Armor*	Initiative Penalty*	Shatter Threshold*	EDN	Cost	Weight*	Availability
Buckler	1	0	0	17	19	1,750	3	Very Rare
Crystal Buckler	1	1	0	17	27	2,300	5	Very Rare
Orichalcum Shield	4	4	3	20	29	150,000	15	Very Rare

* These are the shield's characteristics with no threads attached.

EDN: The shield's Enchanting Difficulty Number (see the **Enchanting** chapter of the **Player's Compendium**)

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The buckler is now Mystic Armor 1.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the buckler's creator.

Effect: The buckler is now Physical Armor 3.

Crystal Buckler

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 19

A crystal buckler is made of enchanted crystal, usually obtained from the Twilight Peaks.

With no threads attached, a thread crystal buckler has the same characteristics as a normal crystal buckler.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the buckler's Name.

Effect: The buckler is now Mystic Armor 2.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The buckler is now Physical Armor 2.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the buckler's creator.

Effect: The buckler is now Physical Armor 3 and Mystic Armor 3.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The buckler is now Physical Armor 4 and Mystic Armor 4.

Orichalcum Shield

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 24

Similar in size and shape to crystal raider shields, orichalcum shields are made of orichalcum-lined wooden and metal plates. Crafting these shields requires the combined efforts of a Weaponsmith and an Elementalist.

With no threads attached, an orichalcum shield is Physical Armor 4, Mystic Armor 4, and Initiative Penalty 3.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the shield's Name.

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 5, Mystic Armor 5, and Initiative Penalty 2.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 800

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 6, Mystic Armor 6, and Initiative Penalty 1. The wielder adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Names of both the Weaponsmith and Elementalist who created the shield.

Effect: The shield now has no Initiative Penalty. The wielder adds +2 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 2,100

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 7 and Mystic Armor 7. The wielder adds +3 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 3,400

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the place where the shield was created.

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 8 and Mystic Armor 8. The wielder adds +4 to his Spell Defense.

THREAD OBJECT TABLE

Object	EDN	Cost	Weight	Availability
Amulet	21	550	Neg.	Very Rare
Boots	20	1,800	2	Very Rare
Bracers	22	1,100	2	Very Rare
Brooch	18	450	1	Very Rare
Cloak	21	1,750	2	Very Rare
Container	21	1,800	1+	Very Rare
Crystal Box	24	3,000	3	Very Rare
Forest Robes	18	3,000	1	Very Rare
Gauntlets	24	2,000	4	Very Rare
Instrument	26	5,000+	2+	Very Rare
Lightning-Bolt Earrings	24	3,000	Neg.	Very Rare
Map of Location	31	4,000	1	Very Rare
Naga-Scale Brooch	27	2,000	1	Very Rare
Ring	21	1,500	Neg.	Very Rare
Ring of Accuracy	26	1,500	Neg.	Very Rare
Spell Matrix Object	27	1,500	2+	Very Rare
Enhanced Matrix Object	30	3,000	2+	Very Rare
Armored Matrix Object	34	4,500	2+	Very Rare
Shared Matrix Object	39	6,000	2+	Very Rare
Vetta-Skin Bridle	19	1,700	2	Very Rare
Vial	29	2,000	1	Very Rare
Wand	27	2,100	2	Very Rare

EDN: The object's Enchanting Difficulty Number (see the **Enchanting** chapter on p. 273 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Thread Objects

Many different thread objects are available for purchase in larger towns and cities. Like thread armor and weapons, thread objects resemble and act like their non-magical counterparts until the owners attach threads to them.

Amulet

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 13

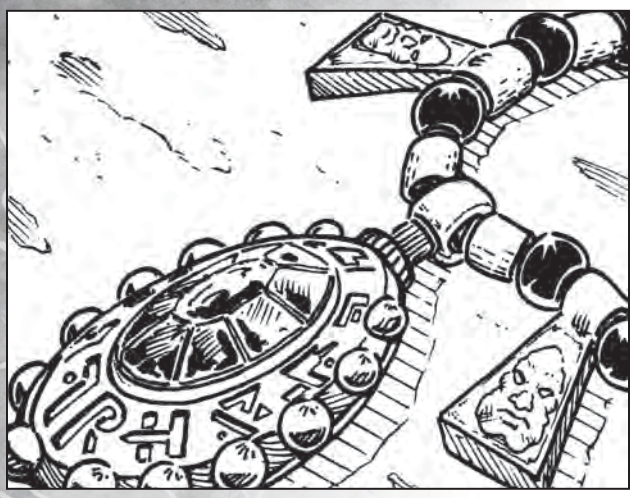
Thread amulets enhance the wearer's abilities in social occasions, and help protect against hostile magics.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the amulet's Name.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Social Defense.



Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Social Defense.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the amulet's creator.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Spell Defense.

Boots

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 12

Thread boots come in pairs and both enhance the wearer's ability to defend himself and help him climb better.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 100

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the boots' Name.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Physical Defense.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 200

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Physical Defense.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the boots' creator.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 rank bonus to his Climbing talent.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 500

Effect: The wearer adds +3 to his Physical Defense.

Bracers

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 14

Thread bracers are arm bands worn to protect the wearer. They look no different to normal bracers, but are generally more resistant to marring or scratching through use.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the bracers' Name.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Physical Defense.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the bracers' creator.

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Physical Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Spell Defense.

Brooch

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 12

Thread brooches enhance the wearer's natural charm in social occasions.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 100

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the brooch's Name.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Social Defense.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 200

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 bonus to Charisma-only Tests.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the brooch's creator.

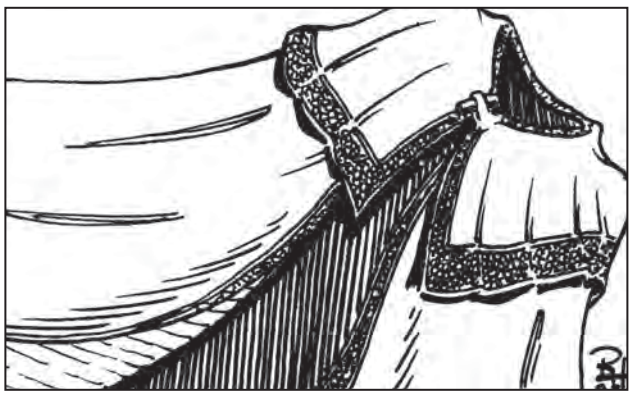
Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Social Defense.

Cloak

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 13

Thread cloaks enhance the wearer's social abilities and, in emergencies, add a little physical protection to situations where the overt use of armor is considered inappropriate or unwelcome.

The Physical Armor of the thread cloak is added to that from other armor the character is wearing, with the exception of other



cloaks. For example, a character cannot claim the armor benefit from wearing a thread cloak on top of an espagra-scale cloak.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the cloak's Name.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Social Defense.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The cloak is now Physical Armor 1.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the cloak's creator.

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Social Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The cloak is now Physical Armor 2. The wearer adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Container

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 13

Thread containers can be pouches, bags, backpacks, sacks, or other types of containers in which a character might normally carry items. They are usually created to either conceal items placed in them, or to allow characters to carry more weight than normal. Objects greater in size than would fit in the normal equivalent cannot be placed into a thread container.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the container's Name.

Effect: The container holds up to two times its normal capacity, but weighs only 10 percent of the actual weight carried inside it.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

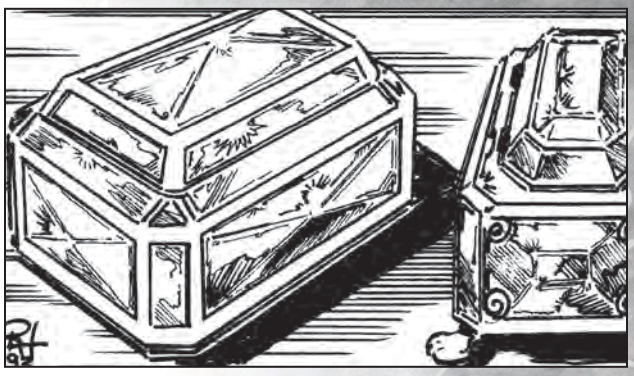
Effect: The container holds up to three times its normal capacity, but weighs only 10 percent of the actual weight carried inside it.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the container's creator.

Effect: The container holds up to four times its normal capacity, but weighs only 10 percent of the actual weight carried inside it.



Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The container holds up to five times its normal capacity, but weighs only 10 percent of the actual weight carried inside it.

Crystal Box

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 18

Crystal boxes are small boxes made of light or dark crystal, 4 inches by 4 inches by 6 inches in size. The edges and seams of the box are usually made of metal, sometimes even orichalcum.

These boxes are created for a variety of purposes. Some are used as storage boxes for fragile items, some can preserve food for prolonged periods of time, while others can conceal the magical aura of items placed in them.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the box's Name.

Effect: The box dampens and hides the astral imprint of items placed in it. Items placed in the box add +2 to their Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The box further dampens and hides the astral imprint of items placed in it. Items placed in the box add +3 to their Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the box's creator.

Effect: Items placed in the box add +4 to their Spell Defense.

Forest Robes

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 14

Before the Scourge, forest robes were popular among the elf magicians of Wyrm Wood, Shosara and other major elf settlements. Though most favored by Elementalists, the robes were worn by followers of all four magician Disciplines. Forest robes take their collective name from the woodland patterns with which they are decorated. Additionally, individual robes were often Named after their creator or owner.

Typically, robe patterns appear three-dimensional, as if one might reach inside and touch branches and leaves. Each robe looks slightly different from every other; the designs often depict the native forest of the creator or wearer, or display a jewelers' collage of branches, leaves and vines.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the robe's Name.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 rank bonus to his Spellcasting talent.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn when and where the robe was made.

Effect: The robe is now Mystic Armor 2. The wearer adds +2 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the robe's creator.

Effect: The robe holds a spell matrix, allowing the wearer to cast the Earth Blend spell up to thread rank times each day (see the **Elementalism Spells** chapter on p. 295 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn what types of plants are depicted in the robe's pattern.

Effect: The wearer may hide small objects (no greater than 6 feet long and 3 feet wide) within the robe. The robe wraps itself around the hidden objects, and its three-dimensional pattern helps conceal them. To hide something within the robe, the wearer must make a successful Thread Weaving Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the number of objects hidden in the robe + 9. A robe can conceal a maximum of four objects at one time. The wearer can remove an object from the robe anytime he wants; however, replacing the object requires him to make another successful Thread Weaving Test. Characters other than the wearer can only remove hidden objects by achieving a Good result with a Willpower Test against the robe's Spell Defense. The robe's Spell Defense is used as the Detection Difficulty for noticing objects hidden within its folds.

Gauntlets

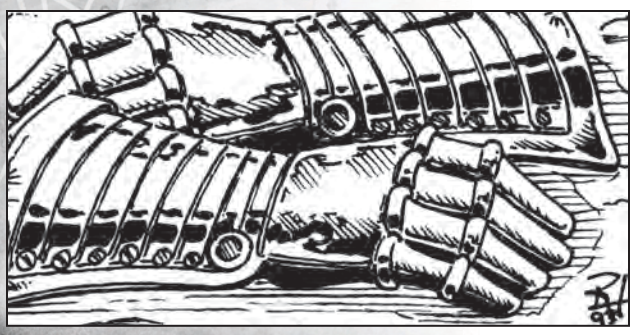
Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 18

Thread gauntlets enhance the wearer's ability to inflict damage to opponents in close combat. In all other ways they look like normal gauntlets, albeit more resistant to the rigors of daily wear and tear.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the gauntlets' Name.



Effect: The wearer gains a +1 bonus to his close combat Damage Tests.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 bonus to his close combat Damage Tests.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Effect: The wearer gains a +3 bonus to his close combat Damage Tests.

Instrument

Maximum Threads: 3
Spell Defense: 14

Thread instruments are rare, and the best are usually very old. Pre-Scourge records and stories speak of all kinds of thread instruments, including string and wind instruments. The cost and weight of these instruments can vary greatly with the quality and type.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the instrument's Name.

Effect: The user gains a +1 rank bonus to his Emotion Song talent.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The user adds +1 to his Social Defense.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the Name of the instrument's creator.

Effect: The user gains a +2 rank bonus to his Emotion Song talent.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The user gains a +3 rank bonus to his Emotion Song talent.

Lightning-Bolt Earring

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 14

A lightning-bolt earring is an intricate piece of silver jewelry, shaped like forked lightning, studded with small white, blue and purple gems, and attached to the wearer's ear with a short chain of delicate links. Crafting a lightning-bolt earring requires great skill and concentration, so magicians and jewelers often work together to produce this highly desired treasure. The earring glows momentarily when used.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the earring.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 bonus to Dexterity-only Tests.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 bonus to Dexterity-only Tests.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the earring's creator.

Effect: The wearer gains a +3 bonus to Dexterity-only Tests. For 1 Strain Point of damage, the wearer gains a +1 bonus to any Dexterity-based Test (including Initiative Tests).

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The wearer gains a +4 bonus to Dexterity-only Tests. For 2 Strain Points of damage, the wearer gains a +2 bonus to any Dexterity-based Test (including Initiative Tests).

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the composition of the earring: the number and type of gems, and also the relative amounts of silver and gems used in the earring's creation.

Effect: The wearer gains a +5 bonus to Dexterity-only Tests. For 3 Strain Points of damage, the wearer gains a +3 bonus to any Dexterity-based Test (including Initiative Tests). For 3 Strain Points of damage, the wearer adds +3 to his Spell Defense for 1 round against visible combat spells like Earth Darts, Ephemeral Bolt, and Razor Orb.

Map of Location

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 25

Thread maps come in many different types. Some are keys to finding lost cities or kaers, while others are updated versions showing new locations as the map owners learn of them.

Most maps are made of parchment, stored in tubes made of hollowed-out wood or bone. These tubes are often sealed to prevent damage from moisture. The map itself can be virtually any size and shape, depending on its purpose. The average map is usually 15 inches wide by 24 inches long.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 500

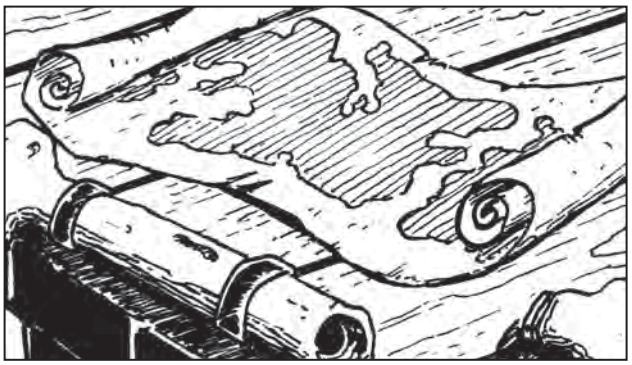
Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the map's Name.

Effect: The owner takes 1 Strain Point of damage and makes a Thread Weaving Test against the map's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the owner's current position is shown on the map, indicated by a faint red glowing mark, which lasts for 1 hour.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 800

Effect: The owner takes 1 Strain Point of damage and makes a Thread Weaving Test against the map's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, a specified location is shown on the map, indicated by a faint glowing red mark, which lasts for 1 hour. The owner must have an item from the location in his immediate possession for this power to be effective.



Thread Rank Three

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the map's creator.

Effect: The owner takes 1 Strain Point of damage and makes a Thread Weaving Test against the map's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the quickest path to a specified location is shown on the map, indicated by a faint glowing red mark, which lasts for 1 hour. The owner must have personally visited the place, or have an item from the location in his immediate possession, for this power to be effective.

Naga-Scale Brooch

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 15

These brooches are made from the scales of a naga. Each brooch is crafted from a single naga scale, set into a gold or silver backing that is often engraved with a serpent motif. The scale changes color to blend with the wearer's clothing. Any other piece of jewelry that contains a naga scale will exhibit the same magical effect. Such jewelry reputedly gives the wearer some of the naga's power to entrance those who observe it.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: Naga-scale brooches can be made only with scales willingly donated by a naga. Each brooch is Named after the naga from whom its scale came. The wearer must learn the brooch's Name.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 bonus to Charisma-only Tests.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 bonus to Charisma-only Tests.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: Nagas only give their scales to those who are neither ensnared by their entrancing powers, nor repulsed by their unnatural looks. The wearer must learn the Name of the person who obtained the scale and created the brooch.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Social Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: Nagas are territorial creatures; their homes are very important to them. The wielder must learn where the naga who supplied the scales for the brooch lived.

Effect: The wearer gains a +3 bonus to Charisma-only Tests and adds +2 to his Social Defense.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Deed: The character must befriend a naga. This Deed is worth 1,300 Legend Points.

Effect: The brooch grants the wearer a power similar to the naga's power of entrancement (see the **Creatures** chapter, p. 275). The wearer gains a +1 rank bonus to his Hypnotize talent.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 2,100

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 rank bonus to his Hypnotize talent.

Ring

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 13

Like thread brooches and amulets, thread rings enhance the wearer's natural charm in social occasions and offer some additional protection against magic.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 100

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the ring's Name.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Social Defense.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 200

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the ring's creator.

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Social Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 500

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Spell Defense.

Ring of Accuracy

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 18

Some thread rings are created to aid their wearer in performing certain tasks. Once such type of ring is the ring of accuracy. This ring is a stone band, roughly one-half inch wide. An individual wears this ring on his weapon hand.

The ring improves the accuracy of the wearer's close or ranged combat attacks. The effects apply only to attacks where the ring's wearer is using that particular weapon hand, or the weapon hand is at least equally involved in the attack (as in the case of using a bow, or two-handed weapon).

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the ring's Name.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 bonus to his close or ranged combat Attack Tests.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 bonus to his close or ranged combat Attack Tests.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the ring's creator.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 bonus to his close or ranged combat Damage Tests.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The wearer gains a +3 bonus to his close or ranged combat Attack Tests and a +2 bonus to his close or ranged combat Damage Tests.

Spell Matrix Object

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense (by Matrix Type*): Sp 12; En 15; Ar 19; Sh 24

* *Sp = Spell; En = Enhanced; Ar = Armored; Sh = Shared Matrix*

Common before the Scourge, spell matrix objects can take almost any physical form; staffs are practical and popular choices with magicians. If a character attaches a thread to a matrix object belonging to someone else, and displaces the current thread, any spell matrix contained in the item is wiped clean.

For standard spell matrices, spells which require threads must still have the requisite number of threads woven to them before being cast; likewise, the owner of the object must use his Spellcasting talent to cast the spell. Spell, enhanced, armored and shared matrix objects otherwise work in the same way as talents of the same name (see the **Talents** chapter, p. 166, and the **Spell Magic** chapter, p. 282, of the **Player's Compendium** for more information). Different matrix types cannot be mixed within the same object.

Note that some magical treasures allow the owner to take Strain damage instead of weaving threads, or make Spellcasting Tests using their Perception step as the Default Attribute. This does not apply to "generic" spell matrix objects, or other magical treasures with "general use" spell matrices in them. Unless specified in the treasure's description, all spell matrices are standard (not enhanced, armored or shared) matrices.

Thread Rank One

Cost: Sp 100; En 200; Ar 300; Sh 500

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the object's Name.

Effect: The maximum Circle spell the object can hold is 1.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: Sp 200; En 300; Ar 500; Sh 800

Effect: The maximum Circle spell the object can hold is now 2.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: Sp 300; En 500; Ar 800; Sh 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the object's creator.

Effect: The maximum Circle spell the object can hold is now 3.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: Sp 500, En 800, Ar 1,300, Sh 2,100

Effect: The maximum Circle spell the object can hold is now 4.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: Sp 800; En 1,300; Ar 2,100; Sh 3,400

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn what materials were used to create the object.

Effect: The maximum Circle spell the object can hold is now 5.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: Sp 1,300; En 2,100; Ar 3,400; Sh 5,500

Effect: The maximum Circle spell the object can hold is now 6.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: Sp 2,100; En 3,400; Ar 5,500; Sh 8,900

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn where the materials used to create the object came from.

Effect: The maximum Circle spell the object can hold is now 7.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: Sp 3,400; En 5,500; Ar 8,900; Sh 14,400

Effect: The maximum Circle spell the object can hold is now 8.

Thread Rank Nine

Cost: Sp 5,500; En 8,900; Ar 14,400; Sh 23,300

Effect: The maximum Circle spell the object can hold is now 9.

Thread Rank Ten

Cost: Sp 8,900; En 14,400; Ar 23,300; Sh 37,700

Effect: The maximum Circle spell the object can hold is now 10.

Thread Rank Eleven

Cost: Sp 14,400; En 23,300; Ar 37,700; Sh 61,000

Effect: The maximum Circle spell the object can hold is now 11.

Thread Rank Twelve

Cost: Sp 23,300; En 37,700; Ar 61,000; Sh 98,700

Effect: The maximum Circle spell the object can hold is now 12.

Thread Rank Thirteen

Cost: Sp 37,700; En 61,000; Ar 98,700; Sh 159,700

Effect: The maximum Circle spell the object can hold is now 13.

Thread Rank Fourteen

Cost: Sp 61,000; En 98,700; Ar 159,700; Sh 258,400

Effect: The maximum Circle spell the object can hold is now 14.

Thread Rank Fifteen

Cost: Sp 98,700; En 159,700; Ar 258,400; Sh 418,100

Effect: The maximum Circle spell the object can hold is now 15.

Vetta-Skin Bridle

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 11

These bridles, made from the skin of a vetta (see the **Creatures** chapter, p. 351), soothe those animals who wear them and also have a calming effect on their riders.

The most common bridles are made to fit a medium-sized animal, like a horse, but vetta-skin bridles can be obtained for a mount of any size, from a small pony to a thundra beast.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 100

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the bridle's Name.

Effect: The bridle soothes the mount wearing it. Both mount and rider gain a +1 bonus to Willpower- or Toughness-based Tests made to resist the effects of fear or pain.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 200

Effect: Both mount and rider gain a +2 bonus to Willpower- or Toughness-based Tests made to resist the effects of fear or pain.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the Name of the bridle's creator.

Effect: Both mount and rider gain a +3 bonus to Willpower- or Toughness-based Tests made to resist the effects of fear or pain.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 500

Effect: Both mount and rider gain a +4 bonus to Willpower- or Toughness-based Tests made to resist the effects of fear or pain.

Vial

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 21

Thread vials are most often created in such a way as to produce a special type of potion or liquid. Some vials simply produce water, while others may produce healing aids or poison antidotes.

Most magic vials are 4 to 6 inches high and 2 to 3 inches in diameter, with a tapered opening. Though made of ceramic, they are more durable than they appear, and can survive drops from a height of 10 yards without a scratch.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the vial's Name and the exact type of potion or liquid it can produce.

Effect: Once per day, the vial produces the equivalent of a minor booster potion, granting a +4 bonus to the imbiber's next Recovery Test.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: Once per day, the vial produces the equivalent of a minor booster potion, granting a +5 bonus to the imbiber's next Recovery Test.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the Name of the vial's creator.

Effect: Once per day, the vial produces the equivalent of a minor healing potion, granting a +6 bonus to the imbiber's next Recovery Test (or giving him a bonus Step 6 Recovery Test if he has no Recovery Tests available) or healing a Wound.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: Once per day, the vial produces the equivalent of a minor healing potion, granting a +7 bonus to the imbiber's next Recovery Test (or giving him a bonus Step 7 Recovery Test if he has no Recovery Tests available) or healing a Wound.

Wand

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 19

Thread wands are typically created by magicians to enhance the effectiveness of cast spells. Wands are usually made of wood, but can also be crafted from stone or metal.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the wand's Name.

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Spellcasting Tests.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 bonus to his Spellcasting Tests.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the Name of the wand's creator.

Effect: The wielder adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The wielder adds +2 to his Spell Defense and gains a +1 bonus to his spell Effect Tests.

General Treasures

This section describes magical items of a general type—more than one item of each type exhibiting the same magical properties exists.

Unlike common thread items, these treasures are rarely, if ever, offered for sale.

Bracers of Aras

Maximum Threads: 3
Spell Defense: 9

Bracers of Aras are made of flexible, silvery metal that wraps around the wrists and forearms of the wearer. The flexibility is a result of the elemental water that has been forged into the bracers. The elemental water pieces used in the crafting of the bracers resemble aquamarine gems, each piece approximately 1 inch in diameter.

The color of the elemental water gems constantly changes, oscillating with a swirling effect across the spectrum from deep aqua to bright blue.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 100

Key Knowledge: These arm bands are made from metals found only in mines located along the shore of the Aras Sea, and are encrusted with pieces of elemental water. Each set of bracers is Named by their creator. The wearer must learn the Name of the bracers.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Physical Defense.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the mine from which came the metals used to create the bracers.

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Physical Defense.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: Bracers of Aras are made with elemental water gathered from the Aras Sea. When powered by a thread, the magic properties inherent in the elemental water protect the wearer from magical attacks.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 500

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: As mundane water contains oxygen, elemental water contains elemental air. The creators of the Bracers of Aras formed the gems from a mixture of elemental air and water. The ratio of water to air varies for each set of bracers. The wearer must learn the exact ratio of water to air used to create the bracers he wears.

Effect: The bracers hold a spell matrix, allowing the wearer to cast the Gills spell (see the **Elementalism Spells** chapter on p. 298 of the **Player's Compendium**). The wearer need not weave any spell threads; he takes 4 Strain Points of damage instead.

Counterspell Staff

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 13

A counterspell staff is a 5 to 6 foot long quarterstaff, topped with a finely carved crystal. The crystal is carved into one of any number of shapes or figures, depending on the whim of the staff's creator. Counterspell staffs are most commonly made of wood, usually mahogany, but on occasion maple, oak, or ebony.

With no threads attached to it, a counterspell staff has the same characteristics as a normal quarterstaff.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the staff's Name.

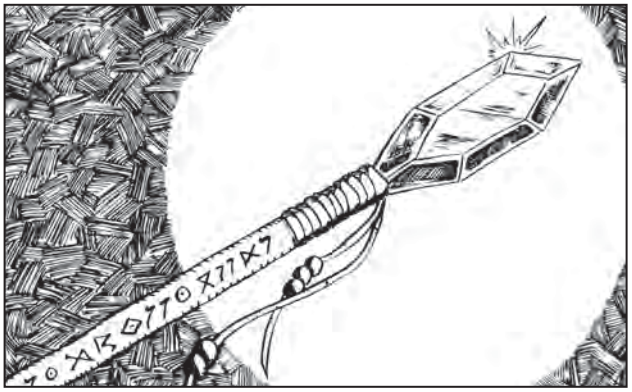
Effect: The wielder adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn where the crystal atop the staff came from.

Effect: The staff is now Damage step 3. The staff holds a spell matrix, allowing the wielder to cast the Counterspell spell up to thread rank times each day (see the **Wizardry Spells** chapter on p. 382 of the **Player's Compendium**). The wielder may use his



Perception step to make the Spellcasting Test instead if he does not know the Spellcasting talent.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the artisan who carved the crystal on the staff.

Effect: The Counterspell's Effect step is now Willpower+6.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Deed: The wielder may bind his magical energy to that of the staff, using blood magic to increase the effectiveness. The wielder takes 2 permanent Damage Points. This damage can never be healed. The ritual leaves the wielder with a scar that occasionally oozes a drop of blood. The drop of blood is magically drawn to a notch in the staff; the notch glistens red for 3 hours after the drop touches it. As soon as the glisten fades, another drop of blood falls from the scar. This Deed must be performed in the jungle or forest where the wood that the staff was created from was grown, and is worth 1,300 Legend Points.

Effect: The staff is now Damage step 4. The Counterspell's Effect step is now Willpower+7.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the magician who created the staff.

Effect: The Counterspell's Effect step is now Willpower+8. The wielder adds +2 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 2,100

Effect: The staff is now Damage step 5. The Counterspell's Effect step is now Willpower+9. The wielder adds +3 to his Spell Defense.

CRYSTAL SPEAR

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 19

Crystal spears were created by troll Weaponsmiths in ancient times to arm crystal raiders in their attacks against Theran ships. No one knows how many were created or remain intact. The trolls used each spear for a single assault.

As the name indicates, these magical items are spears made of solid crystal. The shafts of the spears are pentagonal and polished to a fine sheen. The head of the spear, also made of crystal, has a rough finish similar to that of the **Devastator Spear**, p. 195. The magic of the spear keeps the blade razor-sharp. With no threads attached, the crystal spear has the same characteristics as a normal spear.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: Each crystal spear is Named by its creator. The wielder must learn the spear's Name.

Effect: The spear is now Damage step 5.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the spear's creator.

Effect: The spear is now Damage step 6.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the troll Sky Raider for whom the spear was created (the spear's first owner).

Effect: The spear's thrown Range increases to: Short 2–24, Medium 25–40, Long 41–48 yards.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the first Theran killed by the spear.

Effect: For 1 Strain Point of damage, the wielder adds +2 to his Physical and Spell Defense for a number of rounds equal to the wielder's thread rank or until he makes an Attack Test with the spear, whichever comes first. The spear glows pale blue while this bonus is in effect.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Initiative Tests.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the last person to own the weapon.

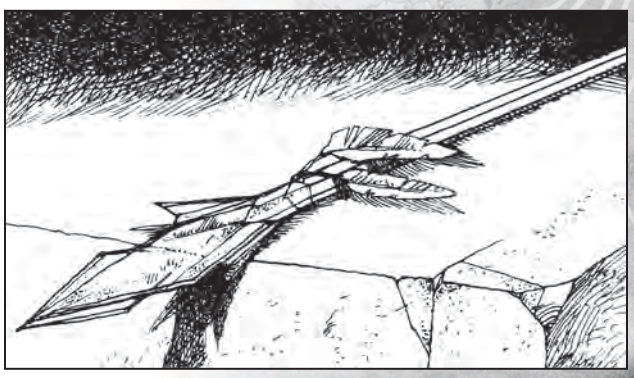
Effect: For 2 Strain Points of damage, the wielder gains a +2 bonus to the next Damage Test he makes with the spear. The spear glows a bright red when this bonus is in effect.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 5,500

Deed: The wielder must make a pilgrimage to the trollmoot to which the spear's creator, and most likely, first owner, belonged. At the trollmoot, the character must swear a Blood Oath with the trollmoot's leader, taking 2 permanent Damage Points. This Deed is worth 5,500 Legend Points.

Effect: Lower the result level required to deliver an Armor-Defeating Hit by one level (from Excellent to Good, for example).



For 3 Strain Points of damage, the spear causes 1 additional Wound on its next Damage Test, so long as it inflicts at least 1 Damage Point.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 8,900

Deed: The wielder must command an airship in an attack. During the attack he must invoke the Names of the weapon's creator, the original owner, and the trollmoot from which they came, then re-Name the spear in his own Name. This Deed is worth 8,900 Legend Points.

Effect: For 5 Strain Points of damage, the wielder can cause fear in his enemies and rally his own troops. This effect causes the spear to glow bright white, the light pulsing like a heartbeat. All of the wielder's allies within 100 yards receive the following: +1 bonus to Initiative and Attack Tests and +1 to Physical, Spell, and Social Defense. Additionally, increase the result level required to hit the spear's wielder by one level (from Average to Good, for example). The effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to the wielder's thread rank or until he makes an attack with the spear, whichever comes first.

Crystal Spell Box

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 12

Crystal spell boxes are small boxes made of crystal and metal. The sides, top, and bottom are all solid pieces of crystal, with the seams between the pieces made of precious metals, most often silver or gold. The boxes are not designed to be opened. The crystal used is usually deep amber in color, though clear or blackened crystal is used occasionally. A crystal spell box measures roughly 8 inches long by 5 inches wide by 3 inches high. Crystal spell boxes were designed by the great mage Masym. The spell boxes capture spells cast by enemies, and store them for later release. Whenever the box contains the maximum number of spells, a spell currently in the box must be released before another spell can be captured. When a box contains a spell, it radiates a faint glow, which intensifies as more spells are captured within it.

To capture a spell, the wielder of the box makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's spell's Spellcasting Test result. If the test succeeds, the spell is captured in the crystal spell box. All the Spellcasting bonuses given below apply only when the wielder uses the box to capture a spell cast by another—the wielder may not use the box to capture his own spells. To release a spell, the wielder makes the usual tests using his Spellcasting talent. The spell may be a Circle higher than the wielder's own. No Thread Weaving Tests are necessary when releasing spells from a crystal spell box; threads woven to cast the original spell are trapped with the spell. Once released, the spell is gone from the box and cannot be cast again.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the box's Name.

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 rank bonus to his Spellcasting talent when capturing spells into or casting spells from the box. The box can hold 1 spell.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

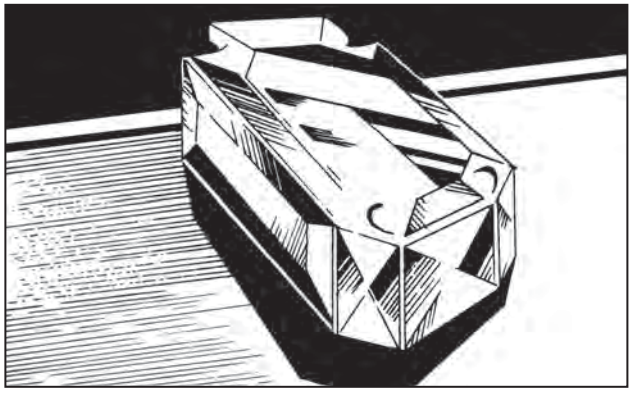
Effect: The wielder gains a +2 rank bonus to his Spellcasting talent when capturing spells into or casting spells from the box.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Deed: Masym did not personally build every box. Apprentices worked for hundreds of hours to build the rudiments of a single box; Masym chose to complete only the best of those boxes. Discovering the Name of an apprentice and then taking the box to the grave (or final resting place) of the apprentice and leaving an offering of thanks is worth 500 Legend Points.

Effect: The box can now hold up to 2 spells.



Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the mountain from which the crystal originated.

Effect: The wielder gains a +3 rank bonus to his Spellcasting talent when capturing spells into or casting spells from the box.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The box can now hold up to 3 spells.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the last person to have owned or used the box.

Effect: The wielder gains a +4 rank bonus to his Spellcasting talent when capturing spells into or casting spells from the box.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 3,400

Effect: The box can now hold up to 4 spells.

Espagra Boots

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 19

These fine boots are made from the hides of espagra, dragon-like, flying predators. Because of their origin, espagra boots are usually bright blue, interwoven with brown leather. The espagra scales also give the boots a brilliant luster, a trademark of espagra-skin products. Similar in appearance to espagra saddles, these boots are often worn by those whose work requires stealth, secrecy, or great agility.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the boots' Name. In present times worn mostly by thieves and rogues seeking an advantage of stealth and secrecy, legends tell that Theran soldiers and mercenaries wore this type of boots in the years before the Scourge. These legends contradict those stories that say these boots were first made in the city of Kratas, commissioned by the legendary ork Thief Garlthik One-Eye.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 rank bonus to his Avoid Blow talent.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the person who created the boots.

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 rank bonus to his Avoid Blow talent.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the first Thief to wear the boots.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 rank bonus to his Silent Walk talent.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 rank bonus to his Silent Walk talent.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the number of espagra hides used to create the boots.

Effect: The wearer gains a +3 rank bonus to his Avoid Blow and Silent Walk talents.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the place where the espagra whose hide was used for the boots originally made its home.

Effect: For 2 Strain Points of damage, the wearer gains the ability to fly at a Combat Movement rate of 30 yards, or a Full Movement rate of 60 yards, for 1 round. Each additional Strain Point of damage taken adds +5 yards to his flying Combat Movement rate and +10 yards to his Full Movement rate.

Espagra Saddle

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 12

These saddles are constructed using a combination of the hide and scales of the flying, dragon-like predators known as espagra. The shimmering blue espagra scales give these saddles a beautiful luster that makes them immediately recognizable. The hanging flaps of an espagra saddle are made entirely of the creature's hide. One saddle typically requires three to seven hides to make.

Cavalrymen and others who depend upon their mounts covet these saddles. Legend says that Guyak Jorann used the first espagra saddle, but these saddles were probably being stitched and enchanted centuries before the ork hero was born.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The rider must learn the saddle's Name.

Effect: The mount increases its Combat Movement rate by +10 yards and its Full Movement rate by +20 yards while the rider is seated in the saddle.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The mount adds +1 to its Physical Armor while the rider is seated in the saddle.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The rider must learn how many espagra hides the maker used to create the saddle.

Effect: The mount increases its Combat Movement rate by +20 yards and its Full Movement rate by +40 yards while the rider is seated in the saddle.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The mount adds +2 to its Physical Armor and +1 to its Physical Defense while the rider is seated in the saddle. The rider adds +1 to his Physical Armor while he is seated in the saddle.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The rider must learn the Name of the person who made the saddle.

Effect: The mount gains the ability to fly through the air while carrying the rider. This works in the same manner as the Air Mount knack, and costs the rider 2 Strain Points of damage per round of travel (see the **Talent Knacks** chapter on p. 216 of the **Player's Compendium**). While flying, the mount travels at the same Movement rate it uses on land, excluding any Movement rate bonuses gained from the saddle's lower thread ranks.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 2,100

Effect: Both rider and mount receive +1 Recovery Test per day. The saddle must be used by both parties for at least an hour each day to gain this bonus.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 3,400

Key Knowledge: The rider must learn the Name of the last person to use the saddle.

Effect: The mount is able to run through the air at increased speed, and now includes the Movement rate bonuses conferred by lower thread ranks when flying. The mount adds +5 to its Physical Armor while the rider is seated in the saddle. The rider gains a +1 bonus to any Action Tests he makes while seated in the saddle.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 5,500

Effect: Both rider and mount add +2 to their Physical, Spell and Social Defense while the rider is seated in the saddle.

Thread Rank Nine

Cost: 8,900

Key Knowledge: The rider must discover the Name of the place where the saddle's last owner died.

Effect: The rider adds +3 to his Physical Armor and gains a +3 bonus to any Action Tests he makes while seated in the saddle.

Frost Pouch

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 13

These are small pouches, usually 3 by 5 inches in size and made of white or blue cloth. The pouches always feel cool to the touch. Air elementals are essential for making a frost pouch.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the pouch's Name.

Effect: The pouch allows the owner to hurl bits of frost at an opponent. The owner reaches into the pouch, grabs a handful of frost, then hurls it at his opponent, making a Throwing Weapons Test against the target's Physical Defense. If the test succeeds, the owner makes a Willpower+5 Effect Test to determine how much damage is inflicted on the target. Physical Armor protects against this damage. Each use of a frost pouch causes the owner 1 Strain Point of damage. The thrown Range of a handful of frost is: Short 2–9, Medium 10–15, Long 16–18 yards.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The thrown Range of the frost becomes: Short 2–15; Medium 16–25; Long 26–30 yards.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The frost in the pouch originally came from mountain snow or glacier ice. The owner must learn the Name of the mountain or glacier.

Deed: Return to the mountain or glacier of origin and fill the pouch with snow or ice. The Deed is worth 500 Legend Points.

Effect: The frost now causes Willpower+6 damage.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The frost becomes more powerful; it now gains a power called *Freezing Frost*. The owner may choose to use this power instead of a normal frost attack. If the Throwing Weapons Test is successful, the owner compares the Effect Test result against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the target takes no damage, but is instead locked into position as if he were frozen; the target can take no actions while in this state and is otherwise considered Knocked Down (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 409 of the **Player's Compendium**) for all actions except Willpower Tests to break free. The effect of the Freezing Frost lasts for a number of rounds equal to the thread rank. Each round, the frozen victim makes a Willpower Test against the frost's Effect step. If the test succeeds, the character breaks free. A successful Dispel Magic Test against the pouch's Spell Defense will also end the effect of the Freezing Frost.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the Name of the air elemental who lent its power to the pouch.

Effect: The frost now causes Willpower+7 damage.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 2,100

Effect: The frost now causes Willpower+8 damage.

Lightning Mace

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 14

Lightning maces can be of as many different shapes and sizes as normal maces. The head of a lightning mace is always made of metal and often shows many small burn marks. When the wielder of a lightning mace activates its magic, the head of the mace crackles with small bolts of lightning. With no threads attached to them, lightning maces have the same characteristics as normal maces.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: Every lightning mace is Named by its creator. The wielder must learn the mace's Name.

Effect: The mace is now Damage step 5. For 1 Strain Point of damage, the mace crackles with lightning; the wielder gains a +3 bonus to his Damage Tests for a number of rounds equal to the thread rank.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The mace is now Damage step 6.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn how the mace became separated from its previous owner.

Deed: The wielder must visit the site where the previous owner lost the weapon. The wielder must make a pledge to never part with the mace, using blood magic to seal the blood oath (see the **Workings of Magic** chapter on p. 260 of the **Player's Compendium**). The Deed is worth 500 Legend Points.

Effect: The mace is now Damage step 7.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The mace is now Damage step 8. For 2 Strain Points of damage, the wielder may shoot bolts of lightning from the mace. Each lightning bolt is directed toward a different target, to a maximum number of bolts equal to the thread rank. The wielder makes a Spellcasting Test and compares the result against the Spell Defense of each target. The wielder may use his Perception step to make the Spellcasting Test instead if he does not know the Spellcasting talent. If the test succeeds, the lightning bolt hits. The wielder makes a Willpower+5 Test to determine how much damage is inflicted on each target struck. Non-metal Physical Armor protects against this damage.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the mace's creator.

Effect: The wielder now makes a Willpower+7 Effect Test to determine how much damage is inflicted on targets struck by lightning bolts.

Thread Rank Six

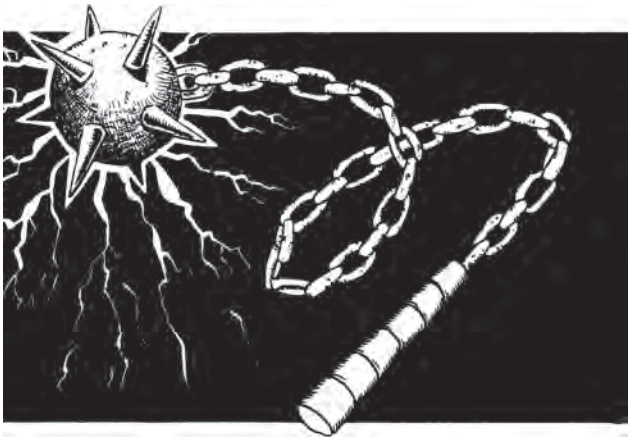
Cost: 2,100

Effect: The mace produces flashes of lightning that deflect physical and magical attacks. The wielder adds +1 to his Physical and Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 3,400

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the



previous owner of the mace. If that individual died, the wielder must also learn how he died. If the previous owner is still alive, the wielder must learn where he is currently living.

Effect: The mace is now Damage step 10.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 5,500

Deed: The wielder must pledge to complete the previous owner's unfinished task. Upon completing the mission, the wielder earns 5,500 Legend Points. If the previous owner left no unfinished task, this Deed cannot be performed.

Effect: The flashes of lightning increase in intensity. The wielder adds +2 to his Physical and Spell Defense.

Oratory Necklace

Maximum Threads: 5
Spell Defense: 8

Oratory necklaces are strings of eight to twelve semi-precious stones such as turquoise or tourmaline. Each stone measures roughly half an inch in diameter. The stones of most oratory necklaces vary widely in color, making each necklace unique.

The creator of an oratory necklace usually uses silver and semiprecious stones to make this magical item, though only five of the stones are magically active. The wearer must attach his thread to one of those five stones.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 100

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the necklace's Name.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 bonus to Charisma-only Tests.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 200

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Social Defense.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the necklace's creator.

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 bonus to Charisma-only Tests.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 500

Effect: The wearer may spend up to 2 Karma Points on Charisma-only Tests.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 800

Deed: One of the first recorded uses of an oratory necklace was by the Troubadour Eustacia. Disguising herself as a dwarf, she whipped a placid gathering of dwarfs into a howling mob demanding rough justice for their overlord. The exact nature of the injustices the overlord supposedly perpetrated were never recorded. Eustacia fell behind as the vengeful crowd moved on the overlord's manor. The mob caught the household unprepared and quickly carved their way through the manor's defenses. As they dragged the overlord out to hang him, Eustacia dropped her disguise and appeared as herself. Masterfully playing on the crowd's emotions, her speech calmed the crowd and saved the beleaguered overlord, who made Eustacia his most trusted advisor, as she "really knew how to handle people." To complete the Deed, the wearer must convince a group of at least 20 people to take a certain action. As they go about the first action, the wearer must convince the same group to take a different action. This Deed is worth 800 Legend Points.

Effect: Crowds react as if their Attitude were one degree more favorable toward the wearer.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Social Defense and gains a +3 bonus to Charisma-only Tests. For 1 Strain Point of damage, the wearer gains a +1 bonus to any Charisma-based Tests.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the last owner of the necklace.

Effect: The wearer gains a +4 bonus to Charisma-only Tests. For 2 Strain Points of damage, the wearer gains a +2 bonus to any Charisma-based Tests.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 3,400

Effect: The wearer adds +3 to his Social Defense.

Potion of Life

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 8

Potions of life vary greatly in color and consistency, depending on the alchemists who create them. A potion of life is stored in a magical flask. The containers holding these potions are most often porcelain, but are sometimes made from glass or metal.

The flask's owner tosses a silver coin over his shoulder while proposing a toast to the alchemist, then sacrifices one of his own Recovery Tests; a flare of green fire consumes the coin, and the flask fills with the potion of life. The flask refills itself once the potion has been consumed and the ritual performed again.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 100

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the flask's Name.

Effect: The potion grants a +6 bonus to the imbiber's next Recovery Test (or gives him a Step 6 Recovery Test if he has no Recovery Tests available), which must be made within an hour of drinking the potion. The character may use no other potion or magic to enhance this Recovery Test; the bonus must come from the potion of life alone.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 200

Effect: The potion grants a +7 bonus to the imbiber's next Recovery Test (or gives him a Step 7 Recovery Test if he has no Recovery Tests available), which must be made within an hour of drinking the potion. The character may use no other potion or magic to enhance this Recovery Test; the bonus must come from the potion of life alone.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the Name of the alchemist who created the potion.

Effect: The potion grants a +8 bonus to the imbiber's next Recovery Test (or gives him a Step 8 Recovery Test if he has no Recovery Tests available), which must be made within an hour of drinking the potion. The character may use no other potion or magic to enhance this Recovery Test; the bonus must come from the potion of life alone. The imbiber also gains a +4 bonus to any Toughness-based Tests he makes to resist the effects of poison for a number of rounds equal to the thread rank. Like the healing effect, the character may use no other potion or magic to enhance this effect; the bonus must come from the potion of life alone.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 500

Effect: The potion grants a +9 bonus to the imbiber's next Recovery Test (or gives him a Step 9 Recovery Test if he has no Recovery Tests available), which must be made within an hour of drinking the potion. The character may use no other potion or magic to enhance this Recovery Test; the bonus must come from the potion of life alone. The imbiber also gains a +5 bonus to any Toughness-based Tests he makes to resist the effects of poison for a number of rounds equal to the thread rank. Like the healing effect, the character may use no other potion or magic to enhance this effect; the bonus must come from the potion of life alone.

Puppet Familiar

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 13

Puppet familiars consist of small puppets formed in the shape of one of the Name-giver races. The puppets usually measure only 12 to 18 inches in height. The faces of puppet familiars usually express an exaggerated emotion, ranging from astonishment to fear to joy.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The character must learn the puppet's Name.

Effect: The puppet familiar is an inanimate puppet whose enchanted wood has been shaped to hold a spell matrix of a rank equal to the thread rank. A magician may place a spell in the puppet familiar and the character can then cast that spell as if casting from a spell matrix (see **Spell Matrix Object**, p. 178).

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The familiar now contains two spell matrices of a rank equal to the thread rank.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Effect: One of the puppet familiar's spell matrices is improved. The familiar now holds 1 spell matrix and 1 enhanced matrix.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The character must learn the Name of the person who created the puppet familiar and the Name of the last person to have a thread attached to the puppet familiar.

Deed The character must re-Name the puppet familiar. This blood magic ritual animates the puppet for a year and a day. The owner Names the puppet, and sacrifices six drops of blood (1 permanent Damage Point) to give it life. The puppet comes to life, but has no talents other than its spell matrices. Its Attribute steps are equal to the owner's corresponding Attribute step–2 (i.e., if the owner has a Strength step of 6, the puppet has a Strength step of 4). The puppet has the same Death Rating and Wound Threshold as its owner and shares its owner's Recovery Tests. The puppet is completely loyal to its owner, and usually also possesses all of its owner's annoying personality traits. This Deed is worth 800 Legend Points.

Effect: None. Isn't that enough?

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The remaining spell matrix is improved. The puppet familiar now holds 2 enhanced matrices.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: Puppet familiars are made from enchanted wood. The character must learn what type of wood was used and the Name of the forest or woods where the wood originated.

Effect: The familiar gains another enhanced matrix. The puppet familiar now holds 3 enhanced matrices.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 3,400

Effect: The familiar gains another enhanced matrix. The puppet familiar now holds 4 enhanced matrices.

Purse Ever Bountiful

Maximum Threads: 5
Spell Defense: 14

These small, leather purses close with a drawstring. Very ordinary looking, these purses in no way reveal their magical properties. Elementalists first created these purses some 5,000 years ago. For unexplained reasons, purses ever bountiful created near the peak of the magic cycle are more powerful than those created a century or more after the peak. Characters may only weave a maximum Rank 3 thread to less powerful purses.

The owner places a coin inside the purse, then makes a Willpower Test. The result is the number of duplicate coins the purse creates from the original coin. Each use causes a variable amount of Strain damage, based on the type of coin being duplicated. Duplicating a copper coin causes the owner 1 Strain Point of damage; silver causes 2 Strain Points of damage; duplicating a gold coin causes 3 Strain Points of damage.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the purse's Name.

Effect: The purse duplicates only copper coins.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The owner makes a Willpower+1 Test to determine how many duplicate coins are created.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the Name of the Elementalist who created the purse.

Effect: The purse can now duplicate silver coins. The owner makes a Willpower+2 Test to determine how many duplicate coins are created.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the type of coin that the purse first duplicated.

Deed: Obtain one of those coins minted in the same era and of the same denomination, and duplicate it with the purse. The Deed is worth 800 Legend Points.

Effect: The owner makes a Willpower+4 Test to determine how many duplicate coins are created.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The owner makes a Willpower+5 Test to determine how many duplicate coins are created.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the last person to own the purse.

Effect: The purse can now duplicate gold coins. The owner makes a Willpower+6 Test to determine how many duplicate coins are created.

Silvered Shield

Maximum Threads: 4
Spell Defense: 13

A silvered shield can appear as a shield of any type (see the **Goods and Services** chapter on p. 441 of the **Player's Compendium**). Crafted from elementally charged earth, the shield gains some of its power from an earth elemental. All have fine silver lines decorating their edges, making them appear of more than average worth. Many of these shields have sigils and designs outlined in silver. With no threads woven to it, the shield has the same characteristics as a normal shield of the same type. The characteristics below are added to or replace those of the shield as the wielder's thread rank increases.

Thread Rank One

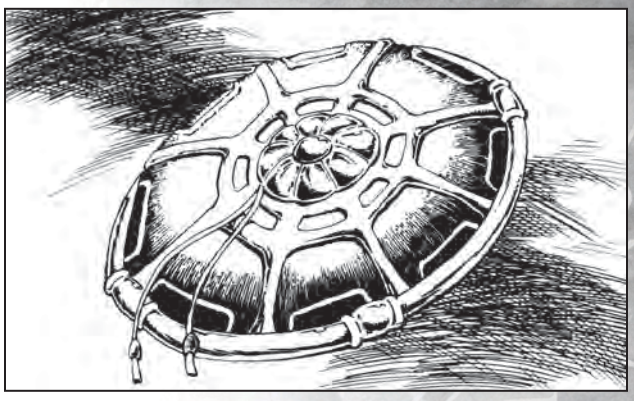
Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the shield's Name.

Effect: Add +2 to the shield's Physical and Mystic Armor. The shield's Initiative Penalty is now 1.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300



Effect: Add +3 to the shield's Physical Armor.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the shield's creator.

Effect: Add +3 to the shield's Mystic Armor. For 1 Strain Point of damage, the wielder may use his Standard action to deflect a visible combat spell directed at him. The wielder makes a Spellcasting Test against the spell caster's Spellcasting Test result. The wielder may use his Perception step to make the Spellcasting Test instead if he does not know the Spellcasting talent. If the test succeeds, the spell is directed back against its caster; use the wielder's Spellcasting Test result to determine if the spell affects the original caster.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The shield has no Initiative Penalty.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must determine the source of the elemental earth used in the creation of the shield.

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Spellcasting Test when using the shield to deflect a spell.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 2,100

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 bonus to his Spellcasting Test when using the shield to deflect a spell. The shield also grants elemental fortitude; the wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Recovery Tests.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 3,400

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the earth elemental who helped create the shield.

Effect: Add +4 to the shield's Physical and Mystic Armor.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 5,500

Deed: The wielder must find the earth elemental who imbued the shield with some of its power. The wielder pledges to defend the elemental against all enemies and to help protect elemental earth from those who would steal its power without permission, such as wildcat miners and Therans. The wielder makes a blood magic oath to seal the pact (see the **Workings of Magic** chapter on p. 260 of the **Player's Compendium**). This Deed is worth 5,500 Legend Points. If the wielder ever breaks the oath, the shield immediately shatters, destroyed beyond repair.

Effect: The blood magic improves the quality of the shield's overall protection. For 1 permanent Damage Point, increase the result level required to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on the wielder by one level (from Excellent to Extraordinary, for example). This damage can never be healed.

Spell Sword

Maximum Threads: 3
Spell Defense: 13

Spell swords come in differing styles and sizes, though most are broadswords. The elemental earth and air used to forge these swords mark the flat sides of their blades with an unusual swirled appearance. With no threads woven to it, the sword has the same characteristics as a normal broadsword.

The people of Barsaive no longer possess the art of making spell swords, though rumors say that the Therans have revived the art. These broadswords are created from a delicate mix of forged steel, elemental earth, and elemental air, usually in the following ratios: steel, 40 percent; elemental earth, 40 percent; and elemental air, 20 percent. These ratios can vary by plus or minus 5 percentage points each.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the sword's Name.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 6. The sword now contains a spell matrix of a rank equal to the thread rank. A magician may place a spell in the sword and the wielder may cast that spell as if casting from a spell matrix (see **Spell Matrix Object**, p. 178).

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 7. The wielder adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the previous owner of the sword and the greatest Deed that person performed with it. The wielder must inscribe the Name and the Deed along the blade.

Effect: The sword now holds a second spell matrix. The rank of each spell matrix equals the thread rank.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Deed: The wielder must decide upon a Deed to perform using the blade and then publicly declare his intention of doing the Deed. Once the wielder accomplishes the Deed, he gains 800 Legend Points. If he defeats a creature, he also gains the Legend Points from that, in effect gaining a double award. A Deed need not involve slaying a monster, however. For example, while mediating between two warring ork tribes, the hero Guyak Fairtongue swore not to draw his sword on either ork faction as long as a chance of peace still existed. He kept his word, refusing to draw his sword even after being struck by one side's ork champion. Fairtongue eventually worked out an acceptable peace.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 8.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The wielder adds +1 to his Physical Defense and +2 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must determine the exact percentages of the magical elements used to create the sword. When he is confident that he knows the percentages and chooses to weave the thread, he must spend the required Legend Points. If he chooses the wrong percentages, the Thread Weaving Test fails, the Legend Points are lost, and the wielder must spend more Legend Points when he next attempts to weave a thread to the sword.

Effect: The weapon is now Damage step 10. The sword now holds 3 spell matrices. The rank of each matrix equals the thread rank.

Spike Bomb

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 8

Spike bombs were invented during the previous Scourge to help battle the Horrors. The bombs are small, four-inch-diameter, metal balls covered with magical symbols. These symbols are usually arcane markings of no particular significance. Spike bombs are throwing weapons; throwing a bomb causes the wielder 1 Strain Point of damage. The wielder makes a Throwing Weapons Test against the target's Physical Defense, as normal. If the test succeeds, the bomb strikes the target and explodes, breaking into small spikes which are driven into the target by the arcane energy. The wielder makes a Willpower Test to determine how much damage is inflicted on the target. Mystic Armor protects against this damage. With no threads attached to it, the spike bomb does not explode.

A spike bomb is destroyed as soon as it is used, but the wielder can immediately recreate the bomb. The wielder makes a Spellcasting Test against the bomb's Spell Defense. The wielder may use his Perception step to make the Spellcasting Test instead if he does not know the Spellcasting talent. If the test succeeds, the spike bomb re-forms in the wielder's hand. If the test fails, the wielder may try to recreate the spike bomb again, but takes 1 Strain Point of damage for each additional attempt.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the bomb's Name.

Effect: The bomb inflicts Willpower+6 damage. The spike bomb affects only the target character. Its thrown Range is: Short 2–9, Medium 10–15, Long 16–18 yards.

Thread Rank Two

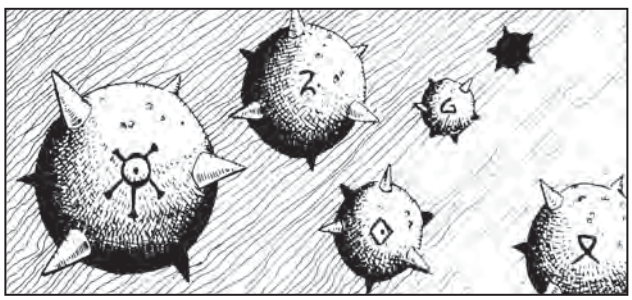
Cost: 200

Effect: The bomb now inflicts Willpower+8 damage.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: Spike bombs were first invented by the t'skrang alchemist Vreesfyr, but the technique eventually spread throughout Barsaive. The wielder must learn the Name of the



alchemist who created the spike bomb.

Effect: The spike bomb now affects multiple targets. If the attack succeeds, the wielder compares the Throwing Weapons Test result against the Physical Defense of all characters within 3 yards of the target. On a Good result, the target character is affected by the explosion and takes damage. The wielder makes a Willpower+8 Test to determine how much damage is inflicted on all targets hit. Mystic Armor protects against this damage.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 500

Effect: The thrown Range increases to: Short 2–15, Medium 16–25, Long 26–30 yards.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the name of the battle in which this alchemist's spike bombs had the greatest impact. For most living alchemists, this battle was the Siege of Throal.

Effect: The bomb now inflicts Willpower+9 damage.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 1,300

Deed: The wielder must Wound a Horror or Horror construct with the spike bomb. Wounding a Horror is worth 800 Legend Points; killing one is worth 1,300 Legend Points.

Effect: The thrown Range increases to: Short 2–21, Medium 22–35, Long 36–42 yards.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 2,100

Effect: The bomb now inflicts Willpower+10 damage.

Spike Gauntlets

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 14

Spike gauntlets are metal gauntlets bristling with many small, slender, steel spikes. These spikes are usually highly polished and sharply pointed. Spike gauntlets are made from metal mined in the Caucavic Mountains, despite earth elemental objections to the mining activities. The gauntlets draw power from the mountains themselves.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the gauntlets' Name.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Physical Defense.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

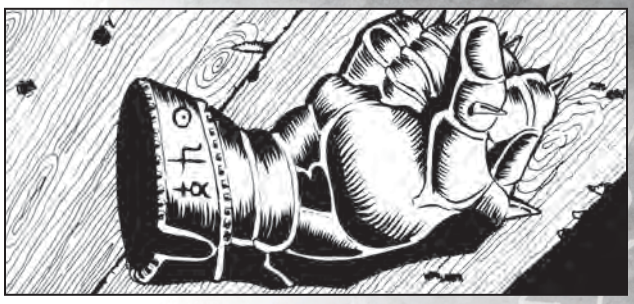
Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the person who created the gauntlets.

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Physical and Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: For 1 Strain Point of damage, the gauntlets increase the length of the spikes for one attack. The wearer gains a +4 bonus to his Damage Test for that attack. The wearer may also try to increase his chance of making an Armor-Defeating Hit that



round by taking additional Strain damage. For each Strain Point of damage he takes, the wearer gains a +1 bonus to his Attack Test. The maximum amount of Strain that the wearer can spend each round is equal to the gauntlets' thread rank.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the previous owner of the gauntlets.

Effect: The wearer adds +3 to his Physical and Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 2,100

Effect: For 1 Strain Point of damage, the wearer now gains a +6 bonus to his Damage Test for one attack.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 3,400

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the mountain that produced the metal used to create the gauntlets.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Social Defense and +4 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 5,500

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Social Defense and +4 to his Physical Defense.

Talisman Statue

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 13

Talisman statues are small statuettes, usually 3 to 4 inches tall, fashioned from stone, wood, or clay. Some rare statues measure up to 7 inches tall. Their creators usually carve intricate runes into talisman statues; some creators make their statues even rarer by imbedding small gems into the statuette's eyes.

Talisman statues can enhance the magical abilities of spellcasters. The owner must wear the statuette in order to benefit from its power (many owners wear their talisman statues around their necks, on leather thongs or metal chains).

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the statue's Name.

Effect: The owner gains a +1 bonus to his Spellcasting Tests.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The owner gains a +1 bonus to his Thread Weaving Tests.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the statue's creator.

Effect: The owner adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The owner adds +2 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The character must learn the Name of the mountain, mine, or forest from which the material used to create the talisman statue originated.

Effect: The owner adds +1 to his Mystic Armor.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The character must learn the Name, race, and Discipline of the last person to use the talisman statue before the Scourge.

Effect: By taking 1 point of permanent damage, the owner gains a +1 bonus to his Karma step when using Karma to enhance Spellcasting or Thread Weaving tests.

Thorn Man Spear

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 13

These are the spears wielded by the thorn men that guard the Blood Wood. Though the size and shape of these spears is unremarkable, thorn men spears sprout wicked thorns up and down their lengths. Unless the wielder is immune to the effects (like thorn men or blood elves), the thorns cause 1 Damage Point each round the spear is used. No armor protects against this damage.

When wielded by thorn men, the spears are used as if the thorn man had a Rank 4 thread woven to it. When used by others, the damage is based on the thread rank woven to the spear. These spears are created by the same ritual used to create thorn men. They can only be obtained by slaying a thorn man.

Over the years, a number of these spears have been acquired by members of the Exolashers and Blood Warders (of Blood Wood), who use them as thread weapons. Without a thread attached to them, thorn men spears have the same characteristics as normal spears, but with a Damage step of 3.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the spear's Name.

Effect: The spear is now Damage step 4.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The spear is now Damage step 5.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Effect: The spear is now Damage step 6.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The spear is now Damage step 7. The wielder no longer takes damage from the thorns protecting the spear's haft.

War Helm of Landis

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 9

The War Helm of Landis is a metal helmet adorned with the symbol of the ancient human kingdom of Landis. Mages and Weaponsmiths worked together to provide this protection to important military commanders of the kingdom of Landis. Many of these helmets were lost in the battles against the mindless ravagers who were the forerunners of the Horrors and marked the beginning of the Scourge.

The helm has a faceplate that can swing down or up, depending on whether the wearer wants to protect his face or simply wants to see better. The helmet's Armor bonuses stack with the Physical Armor of other armor he may be wearing.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the helmet's Name.

Deed: The wearer must polish and repair the helmet. Replacing the unit insignia on the helmet reactivates its magic. This Deed is worth 200 Legend Points.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Physical Armor, +1 to his Social Defense, and gains a +1 bonus to Charisma-only Tests.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Social Defense, and gains a +2 bonus to Charisma-only Tests.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

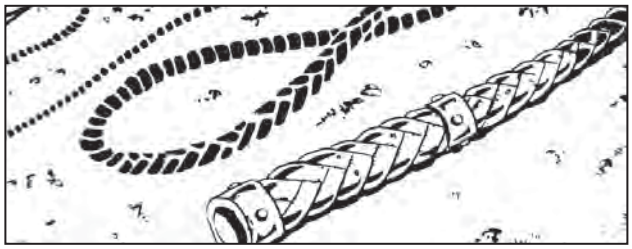
Key Knowledge: The wearer must find out what military unit was under the command of the helmet's original owner.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Physical Armor.



Whip of Defense

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 13

The main cord of a Whip of Defense is 12 feet long, composed of several strands of skin braided together. The whip can be made from a variety of different materials. The most common is leather, but some are made of espagra skin, lizard skin, and very infrequently, dragon skin. On certain rare whips, each strand is made from a different skin, giving the whipcord an unusual appearance.

With no threads attached, the Whip of Defense has the same characteristics as a normal whip.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the whip's Name.

Effect: The whip produces a number of cords of vibrant magical energy, helping the wielder deflect or block attacks while he is using the whip. The whip produces one cord, which adds +1 to the wielder's Physical Defense against 1 attack per combat round. The whip is now Damage step 4.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The whip now produces two energy cords, which add +2 to the wielder's Physical Defense against 2 attacks per combat round.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the whip's creator.

Effect: The wielder adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The whip is now Damage step 5. The whip now produces three energy cords, which add +3 to the wielder's Physical Defense against 3 attacks per combat round.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn what types of skins were used to make the whip.

Effect: The wielder adds +2 to his Spell Defense. The whip now produces four energy cords, which add +4 to the wielder's Physical Defense against 4 attacks per combat round.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 2,100

Effect: The wielder adds +3 to his Spell Defense. The whip now produces five energy cords, which add +5 to the wielder's Physical Defense against 5 attacks per combat round.

Windling Cup of Friendship

Maximum Threads: 5
Spell Defense: 13

These small (windling-sized), carved wooden cups sit atop a long wooden stem. Thin woven cords of various colors are braided around the stem, usually in shades of green and brown, though brighter colors such as blue, red, and yellow sometimes are used. They are made by windling villages all across Barsaive for use in community ceremonies. Though the cups were originally used only by windlings, that race has recently begun crafting friendship cups to use when solidifying relations with other Name-giver races. Each cup is Named when created; once in windling, and again in another tongue.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: Each cup has a non-windling Name. The cup holder must learn that Name.

Effect: For 1 Strain Point of damage, the cup fills on command with either clear water or windling *keesris* wine when its Name is spoken.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The cup holder must discover the windling clan or tribe from which the cup originated.

Effect: The cup holder gains a +1 bonus to any Charisma-based Tests made against any non-windling Name-giver races.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: Each cup has a special windling Name. The cup holder must learn that Name.

Effect: The cup holder gains a +1 bonus to any Charisma-based Tests made against windlings.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Deed: The cup holder must share a drink with a windling he has never met, both parties drinking from the same cup. The Deed is only successful if the two part as friends who have shared tales with one another; the owner earns 800 Legend Points for this act of friendship.

Effect: If the cup holder shares wine from the cup with a stranger, the stranger's Attitude toward the cup holder improves by one degree.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The cup holder must discover the Name of the last person to own the cup.

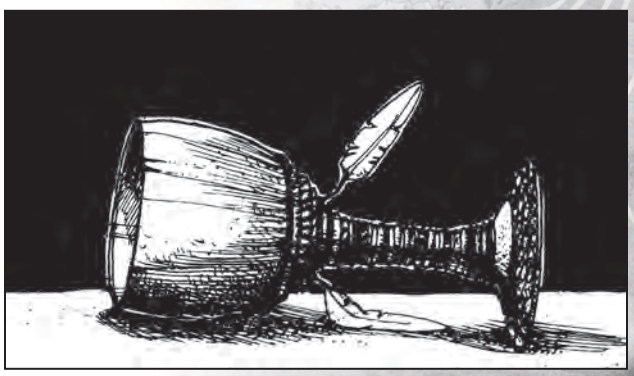
Effect: The cup holder gains a +2 bonus to Charisma-based Tests made against windlings.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The cup holder must discover how the previous owner came into possession of the cup.

Effect: The cup holder gains a +3 bonus to Charisma-based Tests made against windlings.



Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 3,400

Key Knowledge: Each cup has a special command word in the windling language. The cup holder must discover that word.

Effect: By sacrificing one of his Recovery Tests, the cup holder may command the cup to fill with a healing potion. The potion must be consumed from the cup within an hour or it loses its effect.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 5,500

Deed: The cup holder must visit the village or clan where the cup was fashioned and return the cup to the village elders. In a formal ritual known as the windling friendship cup ceremony, the owner receives the cup back from the village elders. This is not automatic, however. The village may require that a second Deed be accomplished before the ceremony takes place to allow the cup's holder to prove his worthiness to own the cup. The cup ceremony is an elaborate ritual, originally used by windling villages when joining with or swearing loyalty to another village. Since the Scourge most windling villages remain isolated. They view all who approach as enemies rather than potential friends and so the ceremony has been largely forgotten. Part of the Deed is to convince the villagers to perform the ritual, which involves blood magic oaths (most often a Blood Sworn Oath between the two villages' leaders). In this case, the cup's holder must take this oath with the village's leader. The ritual concludes with a wind dance, a three-hour long celebration in which participants dance both on land and in the air. Name-givers bound to the ground can only perform the land-based movements of the dance, but are asked to mimic the flying movements as best they can. This Deed is worth 5,500 Legend Points.

Effect: The cup grants its owner temporary versions of many windling racial abilities. These versions are less powerful than the racial ability being mimicked, and the cup holder must take Strain to use them (unlike the windlings, who use them naturally). In this sense, the abilities granted are temporary. These abilities include: Increased Physical Defense, Astral-Sensitive Sight, and Flight. The cup holder can only use one of these abilities at a time and each use causes the holder 2 Strain Points of damage. The abilities function as follows:

Increased Physical Defense: The cup holder adds +2 to his Physical Defense for a number of rounds equal to the thread rank.

Astral-Sensitive Sight: This works in the same manner as the windling racial ability described in the **Creating Characters** chapter on p. 48 of the **Player's Compendium**. This ability can be used for a number of rounds equal to the thread rank.

Flight: This is a limited version of the windling ability to fly. The cup holder may fly at a Combat Movement rate of 20 yards (Full Movement rate of 40 yards) per round for a number of rounds equal to the thread rank. For +1 Strain Point of damage, the cup holder can increase his Combat Movement rate by +5 yards (Full Movement rate by +10 yards) per round, to a maximum Combat Movement rate of 10 × thread rank in yards per round. This ability can only be used once per day.

Unique Treasures

This section describes magical items that are unique in the world. Only one of each item exists.

If a thread rank requires a Deed, the character must successfully complete the Deed to weave a thread at that rank.

Amulet of Agamon

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 24

This amulet consists of a ruby gem fastened into a gold setting fashioned in the shape of a scarab. The amulet's red cord boasts a number of smaller gems, all in settings similar to that framing the large gem. The amulet's settings are made of a gold/orichalcum alloy that gives the jewelry an unusual luster and means that the metal never needs polishing and cannot be scratched.

This rare treasure is one of relatively few magical items created since the Scourge. The magician Agamon hailed from a citadel nestled in the Thunder Mountains. He led a party of heroes out into Barsaive shortly after the end of the Scourge. He created this amulet during his travels as a means of storing additional spell matrices, but the amulet gained additional defensive power as his journeys continued.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the amulet's Name.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Mystic Armor and Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 800

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Mystic Armor.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the place where Agamon created the amulet.

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 2,100

Effect: The amulet now holds a spell matrix of a rank equal to the thread rank. A magician may place a spell in the amulet and the wielder may cast that spell as if casting from a spell matrix (see **Spell Matrix Object**, p. 178).

Bands of Fortune

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 18

The Bands of Fortune are a mismatched set of bands—a silver circlet, an iron ring, a gold ring, a leather headband and a bronze forearm brace—first wielded by an adventuring group called Fortune's Favorites. The group met its end at the hands of a Horror that, ironically, defeated them primarily through its Cursed Luck power. The bands are thought to have been scattered across Barsaive since the demise of their original owners.

The bands were the adventurers' group pattern items but have since taken on additional properties. Each of the bands has become a magical treasure in its own right, and can be used independently of the others. However, the bands can be used only by characters who have woven threads to a group pattern.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn that his band is one of the Bands of Fortune and must learn that specific band's Name.

Effect: The wearer may store a number of Karma Points, equal to his thread rank, in the band. The wearer can transfer Karma Points between his normal Karma Pool and the band by taking 1

Strain Point of damage per Karma Point transferred.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name, Discipline, and race of the member of Fortune's Favorites who wore this particular band.

Effect: The wearer may spend 1 additional Karma Point on any Action Test for which he can normally use Karma. This Karma Point must come from those stored in the band.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 bonus to the Karma step of any Karma Points spent from the band.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 bonus to the Karma step of any Karma Points spent from the band.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the Horror who slew the original owner of the band.

Effect: For 5 Strain Points of damage, the wearer may spend up to 5 additional Karma Points on a single Action Test for which he can normally spend Karma. The Karma Points must come from those stored in the band.

Bloodwall

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 18

Bloodwall is a large oval shield made from translucent red crystal, with an inlay of beaten copper and gold around its rim. The shield's frame supports the crystal, enabling the wielder to see through the shield as through red glass.

Bloodwall was made by the troll Weaponsmith Nemar Firewalker in the years before the Scourge. Following an inspiration from his Passion, Upandal, Nemar traveled on foot from the Twilight Peaks to Death's Sea. Filled with the Passion's power, he walked across the sea's burning surface to a small fool's island, where he discovered a sheet of living crystal as red as blood. He took the crystal and returned safely to the shore, with an image of the crystal's true form burning in his mind.

Gripped by the fever of creation, Nemar set up his tools along the shore of Death's Sea. He worked tirelessly for days in the burning heat, carving and shaping the crystal and forging the frame to hold it. When his work was finished, he returned to his trollmoot bearing the finest shield that their Sky Raiders and Warriors had ever seen. Nemar Named the shield Bloodwall and presented it to Odan Astaru, the chief of his clan, as a gift. The chieftain was greatly honored, and the story of Nemar Firewalker was told throughout the trollmoots of the Twilight Peaks.

Bloodwall was lost when Firewalker's trollmoot was decimated shortly before the Scourge. Though the tale of the Weaponsmith and his magical creation have survived, no one has yet discovered the fate of Bloodwall.

With no threads attached, the shield is Physical Armor 3, Mystic Armor 3, and Initiative Penalty 2.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the shield's Name is Bloodwall.

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 4 and Mystic Armor 4.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 5. It also adds +5 to Physical and Mystic Armor against heat and fire attacks.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the story of Nemar Firewalker and how he created Bloodwall by the shores of Death's Sea.

Effect: The shield is now Mystic Armor 5. Additionally, Bloodwall helps the wielder defend against attacks that rely on eye contact (such as the Frighten spell). If the wielder views his opponent through the translucent crystal of the shield, he may avoid any attack directed against his eyes or relying on eye contact. The wielder makes an Avoid Blow Test against his opponent's Attack Test result. If the test succeeds, the attack is deflected away from the wielder.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 6, Mystic Armor 6, and Initiative Penalty 1.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Deed: The wielder must seek out a trollmoot in the Twilight Peaks and use Bloodwall to aid the moot in some way—assisting the moot in a raid, protecting them from danger, or inspiring them to some feat of glory. This Deed is worth 2,100 Legend Points.

Effect: The shield now has no Initiative Penalty. It also adds +10 to Physical and Mystic Armor against heat and fire attacks.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 7, Mystic Armor 7. It also adds +15 to Physical and Mystic Armor against heat and fire attacks.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 5,500

Deed: The wielder must travel to Death's Sea and call upon the Passion Upandal to witness the glory of Nemar Firewalker's creation. Then the wielder must step into the sea, trusting in the power of Bloodwall and Upandal to protect him. The wielder makes a Willpower (12) Test. If the test succeeds, he can walk across the surface of the Death's Sea and back without harm. If the test fails, the wielder suffers Step 30 damage from the molten stone and cannot attempt the Deed again for a year and a day. Because the wielder has fallen into Death's Sea, no armor protects against this damage. This Deed is worth 5,500 Legend Points.

Effect: The wielder gains the power of *Bloodwall-clear vision*. By looking through the crystal of the shield, the wielder gains a +3 rank bonus to his Astral Sight talent, use of which also counts as Sensing Tests for any illusions that he might see through the shield. Each use of this power causes the wielder 1 Strain Point of damage.

Bracers of Firewind

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 15

These two golden arm bracers were wielded by the legendary Elementalist Aras Firewind, renowned before the Scourge for her prowess with spells of fire and air. The details of her demise,

rumored to have occurred during the final days before the Scourge, remain a mystery.

Ornate engraving and gems decorate both bracers. The ruby-studded Fire bracer features images of flames. The sapphire-studded Wind bracer features images of clouds and storms.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn that the bracers are Named the Bracers of Firewind.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 bonus to his Spellcasting and Thread Weaving (Elementalism) Tests.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn where the bracers were created.

Effect: For 1 Strain Point of damage, the wearer can throw a bolt of fire or air at a target up to 50 yards away. The wearer makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. The wielder may use his Perception step to make the Spellcasting Test instead if he does not know the Spellcasting talent. If the test succeeds, the target is struck; the type of bolt determines the effect. With a *fire bolt*, the wearer makes a Willpower+2 Test to determine how much damage is inflicted on the target. Physical Armor protects against this damage. With an *air bolt*, the wearer makes a Willpower Test, the result of which is the bolt's Knockdown Difficulty. The target must make a Knockdown Test against the Knockdown Difficulty. If the test fails, the target is Knocked Down (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 408 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Physical Defense. The wearer now makes a Willpower+4 Test for the fire bolt, and a Willpower+2 Test for the air bolt.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Deed: The wearer must locate the original elemental spirits that Aras Firewind summoned when she created her bracers. The wearer must then convince the spirits to give their blessing to the continued use of the bracers. This Deed is worth 1,300 Legend Points.

Effect: The fire and air bolts' range increases to 100 yards. The wearer also gains the fire shield and wind shield powers. The *fire shield* works in a similar manner to the Lightning Shield spell (see the **Elementalism Spells** chapter on p. 305 of the **Player's Compendium**), but with an Effect step equal to the wearer's Willpower+2. The *wind shield* deflects incoming attacks with a concentrated gale of air. To use this power, the wearer makes a Willpower Test against the Attack Test result. If the test succeeds, the wind shield deflects the attack. Using either type of shield causes the wearer 1 Strain Point of damage. Each shield may be used only once per round, though both may be used at the same time against a single attack (for 2 Strain Points of damage).

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Spell Defense. The wearer now makes a Willpower+6 Test for the fire bolt, and a Willpower+4 Test for the air bolt.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Effect: The fire and air bolts' range increases to 150 yards. The wearer gains a +2 bonus to his Spellcasting and Thread Weaving (Elementalism) Tests.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 5,500

Deed: The wearer must find out what became of Aras Firewind and pay tribute to her memory at the site of her demise. This Deed is worth 5,500 Legend Points.

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Physical and Spell Defense.

Denna's Brooch

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 15

Denna was an elven Elementalist who lived in Wyrm Wood before the Scourge. Though she left the Wyrm Wood to find surer protection against the Horrors, she remained loyal in mind and heart to the Elven Court, hoping it would survive the coming devastation. Determined to help if she could, Denna studied elemental wood and its magics. Before she left Blood Wood, Denna's father, one of Queen Alachia's advisors, gave her this brooch to remind her of her home.

Denna's Brooch is made of silver edged with fine gold. The shape of the brooch is an inverted triangle, two inches to each side. In the center of the triangle is a starburst fashioned from red jewels.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn that the brooch is Denna's Brooch.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 bonus to his Spellcasting Tests when casting Elementalism spells.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the spellcasting Discipline that Denna followed.

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 bonus to his Spellcasting Tests when casting Elementalism spells.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: Denna also undertook the task of recording the history of the Elven Court from the separation of the Court from Shosara to the present. The wearer must learn the Name of Denna's father.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 bonus to any Research or Knowledge Tests he makes while researching any aspect of the history of Barsaive.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 bonus to his Thread Weaving (Elementalism) Tests.

Thread Rank Five

Cost 1,300

Deed: The wearer must travel to the site of Denna's home within Wyrm Wood, now Blood Wood, and remain there for five days and nights. During this time, the wearer can take no action against any living denizen of the Blood Wood. This Deed is worth 1,300 Legend Points.

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 bonus to any Research or Knowledge Tests he makes while researching any aspect of the history of Barsaive.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 2100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the last person to weave a thread to the brooch.

Effect: The wearer gains a +3 bonus to any Research or Knowledge Tests he makes while researching any aspect of the history of the Elven Court or its legends.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 3,400

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn where Denna traveled after leaving Wyrm Wood.

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 bonus to all Spellcasting and Thread Weaving (Elementalism) Tests he makes while within the confines of the Blood Wood. The wearer gains a +3 bonus to his Spellcasting Tests when casting Elementalism spells involving wood or plant life.

Devastator Spear

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 8

Frightening in appearance, this spear is an eight-foot length of dark brown wood lined with runes that depict its origins. Rumor claims that the spear was constructed using the blood of a Horror as the source of its enchantment. The tip of the spear is made of chiseled obsidian, polished to a blinding sheen. The magic of the spear maintains the shine of its tip, which never dulls.

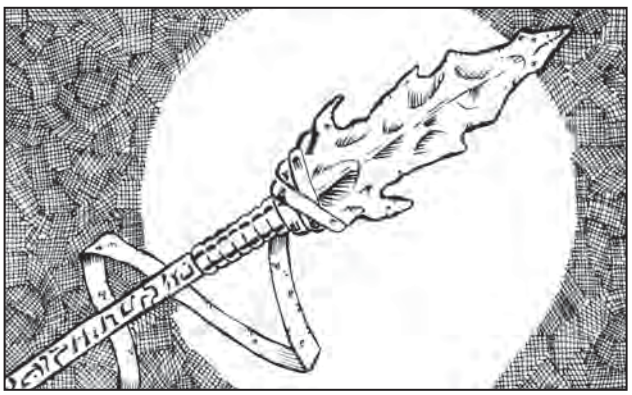
Despite its appearance and size, with no threads woven to it, the spear has the same characteristics as a normal spear, including thrown Range, but is only Damage step 3.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the Name of this spear is the Devastator Spear.

Effect: The spear is now Damage step 4.



Thread Rank Two

Cost: 200

Effect: The spear is now Damage step 5. When thrown, the spear splits into a number of spears equal to its thread rank; the wielder may choose to throw fewer than the maximum number of spears. These spears may be targeted against one character or against different characters. The wielder makes a Throwing Weapons Test against the highest Physical Defense among the target group. The result of this test applies to all the image-spears—all the spears either hit or miss. After the attack, all the image-spears disappear, and the Devastator returns to the wielder's hand. Using the Devastator Spear in this manner causes the wielder 1 Strain Point of damage for each spear thrown.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the first victim slain by the spear.

Effect: The spear is now Damage step 6.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 500

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Throwing Weapons Test.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 800

Deed: The wielder must defeat a monster in single combat. The wielder may throw the Devastator Spear only once, and that attack must either kill the creature or knock it unconscious. Accomplishing the Deed earns the wielder Legend Points for the creature as well as the same number of points for the Deed. In effect, he earns double the Legend Points for defeating the creature.

Effect: The spear is now Damage step 7.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The spear increases the wielder's nimbleness when avoiding attacks. The wielder adds +2 to his Physical Defense.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the spear's creator.

Effect: The spear is now Damage step 8. The wielder gains a +2 bonus to his Throwing Weapons Test.

Dragon Mail

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 17

The Dragon Mail is a suit of 6 to 8 layers of chain mail woven from an extremely fine wire and forged of a black metal unlike any commonly worked metal in Barsaive. The suit is tailored for an ork or perhaps a human, though an elf could also wear it comfortably. Astral examination of the armor or a successful Item or Weapon History Test against the armor's Spell Defense reveals that it is saturated with dragon or dragon-like magic.

This unique chain mail suit was created by a great dragon for one of his servants to wear while in human-like form. The suit was designed to enable the wearer to resist the magic of other great dragons. The original wearer unfortunately came to believe that the armor had made him immune to dragon attacks and so became arrogant in his power. He was killed for insubordination

by the dragon that made the armor.

Without a thread woven to it, the armor has the same characteristics as a normal suit of chain mail. The armor cannot be destroyed by the Dragon Breath power (see **Dragon Powers** in the **Dragons** chapter, p. 398).

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn that the Name of the armor is *Tra'kir Elthro* (the draconic words for "dragon-proof").

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 8 and Initiative Penalty 2.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The armor now has no Initiative Penalty. The wearer adds +4 to his Mystic Armor against magical attacks made by dragons and drakes, including dragon powers.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the last person who owned the armor.

Effect: The wearer adds +6 to his Mystic Armor against magical attacks made by dragons and drakes, including dragon powers. The result level required to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit against the wearer is now one level more difficult (from Excellent to Extraordinary, for example), and attacks made by dragons cannot inflict Armor-Defeating Hits against the wearer. The wearer is also immune to the dragon Venom power (see **Dragon Powers** in the **Dragons** chapter, p. 402).

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the dragon that created the armor.

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 9 and Mystic Armor 2. The wearer adds +6 to his Mystic Armor against magical attacks made by dragons and drakes, including dragon powers.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn that the person for whom the armor was created was killed by a dragon.

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 10 and Mystic Armor 3. The wearer gains a +1 bonus to his Initiative Tests.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Effect: The armor is now Mystic Armor 4. The wearer adds +8 to his Mystic Armor against magical attacks made by dragons and drakes, including dragon powers.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 5,500

Deed: The wearer must swear a blood oath to serve a great dragon. The oath causes the wearer 4 permanent Damage Points, and the dragon 2 permanent Damage Points (see the **Workings of Magic** chapter on p. 260 of the **Player's Compendium**). This Deed is worth 5,500 Legend Points.

Effect: The wearer may store a number of Karma Points equal to the thread rank in the armor. The wearer may spend these Karma Points instead of his normal Karma for any Action Test he can normally spend Karma on. The wearer must use one of his daily Karma rituals to store Karma Points in the armor, however these points do not count toward his Maximum Karma Points. The wearer adds +2 to his Physical, Spell, and Social Defense against attacks by dragons and drakes.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 8,900

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn why the dragon created the armor.

Effect: The dragon to whom the wearer swore the blood oath may give some of its own Karma Points to the wearer. These points are stored in the armor, and the wearer can spend them on any Action Test for which he can normally spend Karma. When the wearer spends these Karma Points, he uses the dragon's Karma step instead of his own.

Thread Rank Nine

Cost: 14,400

Effect: The armor is now Mystic Armor 5. The wearer adds +3 to his Physical, Spell, and Social Defense against attacks by dragons and drakes.

Farliss' Dagger

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 10

Farliss the Great once wielded this dagger. A Troubadour in the time before the Scourge, Farliss told stories describing the legends of the Martyr Scholar and of Jaron the Everliving, and he personally battled the Horrors throughout Barsaive.

Farliss' Dagger has an ebony handle distinguished by a deep blue gem set in its pommel. The blade is made of shining steel, with blackened runes etched on either side. Without any threads woven to it, it has the same characteristics as a normal dagger.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the Name of this weapon is Farliss' Dagger.

Effect: The dagger is now Damage step 4.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 200

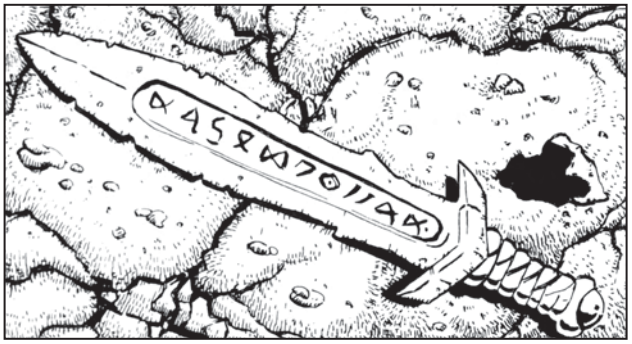
Key Knowledge: In the early days of the Scourge, Farliss traveled all across the province battling Horrors. At the end, when he was forced to retreat into a kaer, he chose to join the village of Tardim. The wielder must learn where Farliss lived during the Scourge, and how he died.

Effect: The dagger is now Damage step 5.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: Farliss fought a series of confrontations with a Horror Named R'Ishann. Though he was constantly searching for a way to finally defeat the Horror, Farliss only obtained the dagger,



which he learned was destined to destroy Horrors, between their final two battles. Farliss managed to Wound the Horror with the dagger. The wielder must learn the Name of the Horror from whom Farliss drew blood while using the dagger.

Effect: Even 1 Damage Point inflicted by the dagger will cause a Wound on a Horror or Horror construct.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the person who last owned the dagger, and where he now lives or is buried.

Effect: The dagger is now Damage step 6.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 800

Deed: The wielder must locate and visit Farliss' tomb. There he must pledge to spread the legend of Farliss across Barsaive, sealing this pledge with a blood magic ritual during which he takes 2 permanent points of damage (see the **Workings of Magic** chapter on p. 260 of the **Player's Compendium**). This Deed is worth 800 Legend Points.

Effect: The dagger can now detect the presence of Horror and Horror constructs. For 1 Strain Point of damage, the wielder may make a Perception Test against the Spell Defense of the closest Horror or Horror construct within 500 yards. If the test succeeds, the gem in the pommel of the dagger glows a faint blue for a number of rounds equal to the thread rank. This ability does not provide direction or exact distance to the Horror or its construct, but simply indicates that it is nearby.

Kegel's Sword

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 13

The dwarf Warrior Kegel used this sword for nearly 20 years. It was buried with him when he died, but stolen by tomb robbers. Rumors of its subsequent appearances and disappearances still make the rounds of tavern gossip.

Kegel's Sword is a broadsword of shorter-than-average length. The sword's hilt contains a small ruby that glows when the sword's magic is activated. The blade is a dull steel-gray, with fine runes carved along it. These runes describe some of Kegel's adventures. The tip of this sword is blackened, as if by long exposure to soot and ash. With no thread woven it, the sword has the same characteristics as a normal broadsword.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the Name of this sword is Kegel's Sword. He must also learn the Name of Kegel's beloved, to whom he pledged the sword.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 7.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 8. For 1 Strain Point of damage, the wielder may make the tip of the sword blaze into flame, acting as if it were a torch. Each use of this effect lasts for one hour, or until the flame is extinguished.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the sword's creator.

Effect: The wielder adds +1 to his Physical Defense. For 1 Strain Point of damage, the wielder can attach himself firmly to the earth. The wielder gains a +6 bonus to his next Knockdown Test. The effect lasts for one hour, or until used, whichever comes first.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The wielder adds +2 to his Physical Defense. For 1 Strain Point of damage, the wielder may take on a more fluid form. Though retaining his basic shape, he can flow around an attacker's blow. The wielder chooses when to do this; the flowing effect adds +6 to the wielder's Physical Armor against that attack. The effect lasts for one hour, or until used, whichever comes first.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: Kegel undertook a quest for a fire elemental, an earth elemental, a water elemental, and an air elemental. The wielder must learn the Name of the four elementals with whom Kegel bargained to empower his sword.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 9. For 1 Strain Point of damage, the wielder can call on the power of the winds to chill the blade edge to bone-freezing cold. When used against a target affected by cold, the wielder gains a +6 bonus to his Damage Test. The chilled edge lasts for one hour, or until used, whichever comes first.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 2,100

Effect: The wielder adds +2 to his Spell Defense.

Kolldar's Gloves

Maximum Threads: 3
Spell Defense: 25

These gloves belonged to Kolldar the Thief, an ork who lived in the ancient ork kingdom of Cara Fahd. The gloves once belonged to a wealthy merchant who flaunted the gloves in public. Kolldar saw the merchant's attitude as a challenge, and stole the gloves to use in his training as a Thief adept. The gloves are made of fine, light brown leather, stitched with an intricate pattern in bright

blue thread. Though sized for an ork, the gloves magically adjust to fit any size hand.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn that the Name of the gloves are Kolldar's Gloves.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 rank bonus to his Lock Picking talent.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 800

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 rank bonus to his Lock Picking talent.

Thread Rank Three

Cost 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the person from whom Kolldar stole the gloves.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 rank bonus to his Picking Pockets talent.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 2,100

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 rank bonus to his Picking Pockets talent.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 3,400

Deed: Kolldar became a legendary figure before the Scourge, and many tales tell of his wondrous abilities, each tale more glorious than the last. The wielder must learn the tale of one of Kolldar's legendary feats and tell the story to a group of no less than 100, among which 10 percent must be thieves, mundane or adept. This Deed is worth 3,400 Legend Points.

Effect: The gloves can help the wearer talk his way out of troublesome situations. The wearer gains a +1 bonus to any Charisma-based Tests he uses to get (or stay) out of trouble.

Thread Rank Six

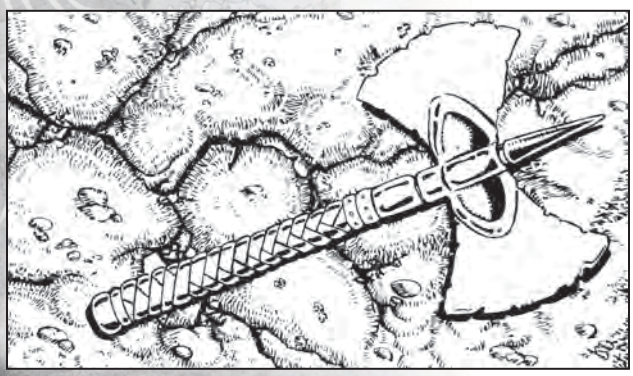
Cost: 5,500

Key Knowledge: Kolldar was also known for his talent for dealing with traps, both magical and mundane. His prowess in this area is generally attributed to his gloves, which the ork considered a lucky charm. The wearer must learn the nickname Kolldar gave his gloves.

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 rank bonus to his Detect Trap talent.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 8,900



Effect: The wearer gains a +2 rank bonus to his Disarm Trap talent.

Lorm's Axe

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 7

Lorm's Axe is a large battle-axe and belonged to Lorm, a fledgling troll hero who died in Kaer Jalendale. The handle is made of light-colored oak. The blade has large black stains along both edges.

With no threads woven to it, the axe has the same characteristics as a normal battle-axe, but is extremely heavy, weighing 15 pounds.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the Name of the axe is Lorm's Axe.

Effect: The axe is now Damage step 7.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 200

Deed: Lorm's Axe is destined to blood Horrors and their constructs. The wielder should inscribe his own Name on the haft of the axe. The wielder then hunts down a Horror or a Horror construct, invokes Lorm's name, and strikes his opponent in close combat. If he inflicts any damage, he earns Legend Points that he can use to raise the thread rank of Lorm's Axe. For striking a Horror construct, the wielder earns 300 Legend Points; for striking a Horror, the wielder earns 800 Legend Points; for striking the wormskull that killed Lorm, the wielder earns 1,600 Legend Points.

Effect: The axe is now Damage step 8.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the axe's creator.

Effect: The wielder adds +1 to his Physical Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 500

Effect: The axe is now Damage step 9. The wielder adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the trollmoot to which Lorm belonged.

Effect: The wielder adds +2 to his Spell Defense.

Mask of Oltion

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 13

Oltion was a Wizard known for his intricate devices and peculiar sense of humor. He created dozens of items, most of them utilitarian, most not meant for use in combat. The Mask of Oltion is a fine silken mask with eye and mouth slits. When affixed properly, it covers a person's entire face. The mask is a deep royal blue, and the eye and mouth slits are embroidered in pale blue.

The wearer must always think of the mask as the "Mask of Oltion," but never refer to it as the "Mask of Oltion." In game terms, the player must always use the exact phrase when telling

the gamemaster that his character is using the Mask of Oltion. If he fails to say "Mask of Oltion," the item will not work. On the other hand, if the player character ever refers to the mask during in-game conversation or explanation as the "Mask of Oltion," the mask freezes its magic for a period of 24 hours.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn that the Name of the mask is the Mask of Oltion.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 bonus to his Recovery Tests.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The mask will mimic the face of any character the wearer can remember. The wearer gains a +2 bonus to any Charisma-based Tests he makes when attempting to deceive others into believing he is the person whose face he wears.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn Oltion's race.

Effect: For 1 Strain Point of damage, the mask grants the wearer Astral-Sensitive Sight (as per the windling racial ability in the **Creating Characters** on p. 48 of the **Player's Compendium**), but with a range of 20 yards. The wearer gains a +2 bonus to his Perception Test to use this ability. The effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to the thread rank.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Spell and Social Defense.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the adventuring group to which Oltion belonged.

Effect: For 5 Strain Points of damage, the wearer can create a giant column of flame that erupts on top of a target up to 60 yards away. (Oltion built this last effect into the mask primarily because no one else had figured out how to build such a big effect into a device with so many other innocuous effects. He also apparently grew weary of all those fighter-types asking, "When are you going to build something useful?") The wearer makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. The wielder may use his Perception step to make the Spellcasting Test instead if he does not know the Spellcasting talent. If the test succeeds, a pillar of fire erupts from where the target is standing. The wearer makes a Willpower+30 Test to determine how much damage is inflicted. Physical Armor protects against this damage.

Mirror

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 15

The ironwood buckler known as Mirror sports a dull iron plate in its center, a reinforcing rim of bronze, and espagra-leather hand straps. The Weaponsmith who forged this buckler created it as a companion piece to the broadsword Named **Smoke** (p. 203). Without a thread attached to it, Mirror has the same characteristics as a normal buckler.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the Name of the shield is Mirror.

Effect: The wielder adds +1 to his Physical Defense.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the previous owner of the shield.

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 3 and Mystic Armor 1.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the Name of the shield's creator is Vsthrix, a t'skrang Weaponsmith.

Effect: The shield is now Physical Armor 4 and Mystic Armor 2. The wielder adds +2 to his Physical Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Deed: The wielder must locate the sword Smoke and attach a thread to it. This Deed is worth 800 Legend Points.

Effect: At the wielder's command, the iron plate brightens and the shield gains the ability of *blinding reflection*. Any opponent who can see the shield is nearly blinded by light gleaming off the metal. The wielder's opponent must make a Perception (7) Test. If the test fails, the wielder gains a +3 bonus to his next Attack Test against that opponent. Using this ability costs the wielder 1 Strain Point of damage. If the sword Smoke is ever lost, the wielder cannot use the blinding reflection ability until the sword is recovered.

Monturk's Carpet

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 19

Monturk was a Theran Wizard, a dwarf killed for throwing his lot in with the wrong Theran faction. Though he failed in his attempt to create a permanent flying carpet, he ended up creating a far more unusual object than just a flying rug.

Monturk's Carpet is a small 6 foot by 4 foot carpet, its edges fringed in fine golden silk. The multi-colored designs and patterns on the carpet are of Theran origin, set against a striped background of blue, red, and yellow. Woven into these stripes are threads of gold and luminescent elemental air.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn that the Name of the carpet is Monturk's Carpet.

Effect: The carpet is alive, but remains dormant until a thread is attached to it. The mystical energy from the thread revives the carpet. Monturk's Carpet can fly, but is not really strong enough to carry much weight. In addition, its temperament is ill-suited for flying carpet-hood. Even if it is able to do so, Monturk's Carpet generally refuses to carry other living beings. The carpet is sometimes willing to carry letters or small packages that weigh no more than 5 pounds. Monturk's Carpet will serve its master in other ways. It can scout ahead, fight alongside its master, and use other abilities as the thread rank increases.

The carpet has the following statistics:

Monturk's Carpet

DEX: 5 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 13
PER: 5 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 8 **Physical Defense**: 7
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 9
Attack (1): 6 **Social Defense**: Immune
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 4
Unarmed (2): 4 **Mystic Armor**: 3

Death Rating: 63 **Recovery Tests**: 6
Wound Threshold: 18 **Knockdown**: Immune
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Combat Movement: 40✦ **Full Movement**: 80✦

✦ This value is the carpet's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Spellcasting (2): 7

Legend Points: None

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

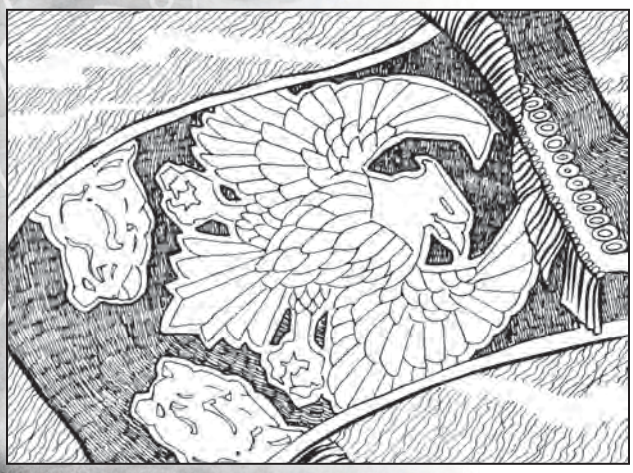
Effect: The carpet gains the ability to make tones and whistles. It cannot speak words, but will try to communicate through sound. The carpet gains a +2 bonus to its Initiative Tests.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn how and in what year Monturk was killed.

Effect: The carpet may transfer Recovery Tests to its owner. The carpet makes a Spellcasting Test against the owner's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, one of the carpet's Recovery Tests is transferred to the character. The owner makes that Recovery Test using the carpet's Toughness step of 13, rather than the character's Toughness step. The carpet may transfer a number of Recovery Tests per day up to its thread rank.



Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Deed: The carpet was worked with threads of gold and elemental air, worth 2,500 silver pieces (500 for the gold, 2,000 for the elemental air). Neglect and a harrowing escape from Monturk's enemies have damaged these threads. Having the rug rewoven strengthens the magic in the carpet. The Deed is worth 1,300 Legend Points.

Effect: The carpet gains a +4 bonus to its Initiative Tests and a +1 bonus to its Spellcasting Tests. The carpet's Combat Movement increases to 55 yards, and its Full Movement increases to 110 yards.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the Name of the carpet's previous master.

Effect: The carpet forms a telepathic link with its owner through which both can transmit speech-like thoughts. The link has a range of 250 yards, and does not require an action to use. The carpet's Combat Movement increases to 70 yards, and its Full Movement increases to 150 yards.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Effect: The carpet gains an ability similar to the Levitate spell (see the **Wizardry Spells** chapter on p. 378 of the **Player's Compendium**) covering a 3 yard by 6 yard area behind the carpet. The levitation ability lifts up to 2,000 pounds, but can only lift objects up to 10 yards in height above the levitation area. Unlike the Levitate spell, the levitation area moves along with the carpet, permitting characters to levitate behind the carpet as it flies. Passengers should be aware that the carpet enjoys performing acrobatics, and will zoom, climb, twist, and roll when dragging others along for a ride.

Neverburn

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 9

The magical torch called Neverburn was created as a dying legacy by Gathrad, a troll Illusionist who was seriously wounded by ghouls and succumbed to the ghoul poison in his system. Without a thread woven to it, Neverburn looks like a normal torch.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the Name of the torch is Neverburn.

Effect: As soon as a thread is woven to the torch, it glows in a manner similar to the Light spell (See the **Illusionism Spells** chapter on p. 324 of the **Player's Compendium**). The light cannot be doused except by concealing the torch.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the Name of the torch's creator was Gathrad.

Effect: The wielder may turn the torch on or off by speaking its Name and giving the appropriate command: "Neverburn off" turns off the torch; "Neverburn on" turns it on.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that Gathrad was a troll Illusionist.

Effect: The wielder gains the troll racial ability of Heat Sight (see the **Creating Characters** chapter on p. 49 of the **Player's Compendium**) within a range of 150 yards.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that Gathrad was killed by ghoul poison.

Effect: The wielder gains a +3 bonus to Toughness Tests made to resist ghoul poison.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 800

Effect: The wielder gains a +3 bonus to Toughness Tests made to resist any type of poison. When resisting ghoul poison, the wielder gains a +5 bonus to his Toughness Tests.

NIGHTSCAR

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 23

A Nethermancer named Noir Darkwind created Nightscar during the Scourge as a weapon against Horrors. Darkwind imprisoned an ally spirit Named Gloom within the blade to give the wielder additional powers to call upon and to give the sword its own intelligence and experience. Gloom can telepathically communicate with anyone who has woven a Rank 2 or higher thread to the sword, but the spirit has come to resent its imprisonment after a few hundred years and wants only to be free from Nightscar. Unfortunately, Gloom's freedom would mean the destruction of the sword, and so far no wielder has been willing to destroy Nightscar to release an ally spirit that might very well be insane after centuries of imprisonment.

Nightscar is a magical sword with a blade carved from black crystal, set in a silver hilt and pommel. The hilt and pommel are blackened with age. The flat sides of the blade are etched with magical runes, which are also filled with silver, and a rounded black crystal of the same material as the blade is set in the pommel. With no threads attached, Nightscar has the same characteristics as a normal broadsword.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the Name of the sword is Nightscar.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 7.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the Name of the spirit trapped in the sword is Gloom and must win a Contest of Wills against the spirit to establish dominance (see the **Spirits** chapter, p. 363).

Effect: The wielder can communicate with Gloom telepathically while touching the sword. Additionally, the wielder can call on the spirit's various powers (see the **Spirits** chapter, p. 364). Gloom is a Strength 4 ally spirit with a Willpower step of 10 and the following powers: Aid Summoner 4, Astral Sight 14, Empathic Sense 11, Lifesense 14, Confuse 13, Detect Trap 14, and Detect Weapon 14. Any time the wielder uses one of Gloom's powers, the wielder must pay the standard Strain cost for the power. Any time the wielder tries to call on Gloom's abilities, the spirit initiates a Contest of Wills. Only if the wielder succeeds in winning the contest, can he can use the power.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 8.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the history of Nightscar and the Name of the Nethermancer who created it.

Effect: The sword holds a spell matrix, allowing the wielder to cast the Ethereal Darkness spell (see the **Nethermancy Spells** chapter on p. 348 of the **Player's Compendium**). The wielder may use his Perception step to make the Spellcasting Test instead if he does not know the Spellcasting talent. The wielder need not weave any spell threads; he takes 2 Strain Points of damage instead. The wielder is considered to be a Nethermancer for purposes of using this ability, and is unaffected by Ethereal Darkness spells cast by himself or others.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 3,400

Deed: The wielder of Nightscar must Wound a Horror in combat. This Deed is worth 10 percent of the Horror's Legend Point Award, in addition to any Legend Points gained if the wielder slays the Horror.

Effect: For 3 Strain Points of damage, the wielder can call on the sword's *Chillblade* power. This power makes the sword freezing cold and inflicts that same numbing cold on anyone struck by it. After making a successful attack, the wielder makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. The wielder may use his Perception step to make the Spellcasting Test instead if he does not know the Spellcasting talent. If the test succeeds, the target is frozen in place, and cannot take any actions for a number of rounds equal to the wielder's Willpower step. Each round, the target may make a Willpower (12) Test to break free of the chill. If the test succeeds, the cold ends and the target is free to act again.

NIOKU'S BOW

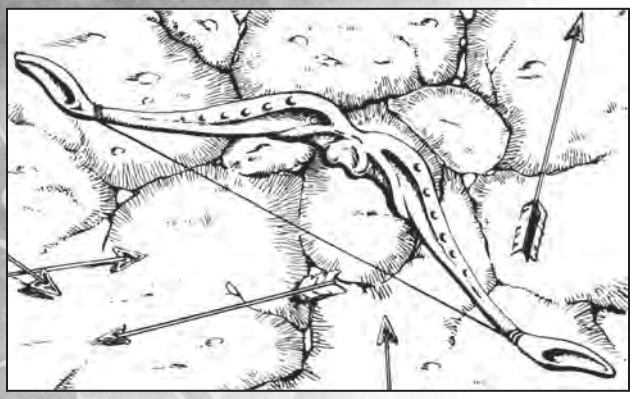
Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 24

Nioku was a troll Archer, a female hero of an earlier time. She is one of the very few heroes who could truthfully claim to have killed a dragon in one-on-one combat.

Nioku's Bow is a longer-than-average longbow, made of dark oak with small grooves along its sides lined with fine red crystal. The bowstring is made of catgut lined with elemental air. With no threads attached, Nioku's Bow has the same characteristics as a normal longbow.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 500



Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the Name of the bow is Nioku's Bow.

Effect: The bow is now Damage step 5.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 800

Effect: The bow's Range increases to: Short 2–70, Medium 71–140, Long 141–280 yards. The wielder gains a +1 bonus to his ranged Attack Tests.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: Nioku made arrowheads from the bones of slain enemies. The wielder must learn the Name of one of Nioku's enemies.

Deed: The wielder must carve twelve arrowheads from the bones of one of his enemies. He receives 2,100 Legend Points for this Deed.

Effect: The bow is now Damage step 7.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 2,100

Effect: The bow is now Damage step 8. The wielder adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 3,400

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the last person killed by the bow.

Effect: The bow's Range increases to: Short 2–80, Medium 81–160, Long 161–320 yards. The wielder adds +2 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 5,500

Effect: The bow is now Damage step 10.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 8,900

Key Knowledge: Legends tell of a long-running competition between Nioku and an elven Archer named Talondel. Talondel had been corrupted by a Horror, though he did not fall under its control. He and Nioku crossed paths and competed in feats of Archery, which always ended in a tie, for more than seven years. Nioku finally defeated Talondel, who was shortly thereafter captured and held in rune chains in a dwarf prison. Several months after she defeated Talondel, Nioku uncovered the lair of a Horror that had been terrorizing Sky Raiders, including members of her trollmoot. Nioku could not defeat the Horror's magic because the creature knew too much about her. Soon after her failed attack, the Horror ravaged another Sky Raider camp, killing Nioku's uncle and younger brother.

Nioku traveled to the dwarf prison where Talondel lay chained and asked the elf to slay the Horror that was killing her kinsmen. In exchange, she would convince the dwarfs to pardon the elf. Talondel laughed at her proposal, asking how he could kill a Horror that Nioku and her mighty bow had not been able to touch. Nioku swore a blood oath and offered Talondel her bow to use against the Horror, and to keep if he killed it. Impressed by her willing sacrifice, Talondel accepted the offer. The power of the oath somehow allowed Talondel to use the bow while it still drew power from Nioku's thread.

Talondel slew the Horror, then disappeared. Nearly fourteen months later he returned and gave the bow back to Nioku, saying that from this day forward he must use his own magic. As Nioku touched her bow, it began to glow, then became translucent with a silvery sheen. The bow had taken its most powerful form. The wielder must learn the legend, and the Name of Nioku's elven Archer competitor.

Deed: The wielder must give the bow to a previously defeated enemy. The enemy will perform a Deed with the bow, and is then entitled to keep the bow. Whether or not the enemy character ever returns the bow is up to him. The wielder may not accompany the other character, nor send anyone else along with him, either to help or keep an eye on the enemy; the former enemy is on his own. The bow continues to draw power from the wielder's thread. If the enemy character returns the bow, the wielder receives 8,900 Legend Points for the Deed.

Effect: The wielder adds +1 to his Physical Defense and +3 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 14,400

Effect: The bow is now Damage step 12.

Thread Rank Nine

Cost: 23,300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the Horror that Talondel killed using Nioku's Bow.

Effect: The bow is now Damage step 14. The wielder gains a +2 bonus to his Willpower Tests when resisting the effects of spells or other magical effects.

Thread Rank Ten

Cost: 37,700

Effect: The bow becomes translucent and silvery like a silver-speckled moonbeam. The bow is now Damage step 15. The wielder gains a +3 bonus to his ranged Attack Tests.

Pathfinder

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 18

Pathfinder was made by the dwarf Scout Flannon Farseer, who wandered the wilds of Barsaive not long after the Kingdom of Throal opened its gates to the outside world. Farseer explored and re-discovered much of northern Barsaive and recorded his journeys by carving them on his trusty walking stick.

Over time, the staff he Named Pathfinder became an important part of Flannon Farseer's legend and gained some aspects of the Scout's magic and knowledge. An aging Farseer eventually returned to Throal to spend his final few years at home-but without his magical staff. When asked what had become of it, he claimed that he had given it to a young Scout on the road because Pathfinder still had many trails to blaze.

Ever since that time, Pathfinder has ended up in the hands of different travelers and adventurers in Barsaive. Sometimes the

staff is passed on willingly; other times, it simply seems to turn up wherever the greatest opportunity to travel far and wide exists. Many Barsaivians have speculated that a kind of intelligence guides the staff and that it has powers far beyond those known to its wielders. So far, any such powers remain just another aspect of the legend, however.

Pathfinder is a walking staff made of dark wood, with an elaborate map of northern Barsaive delicately carved in a spiral around it. Thin strands of orichalcum wire are wrapped around the staff, serving as the map's winding roads and paths. Pathfinder is about five feet long, which makes it a bit short for most obsidimen or trolls but well-suited for an elf, human, ork, t'skrang or dwarf. With no threads attached, Pathfinder has the same characteristics as a normal quarterstaff.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the staff's Name is Pathfinder.

Effect: The staff is now Damage step 3. The wielder gains a +2 bonus to his Perception Tests.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 rank bonus to his Tracking talent.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn about Flannon Farseer, the first bearer of Pathfinder, and all of his journeys across Barsaive.

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 rank bonus to his Astral Sight talent.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The staff is now Damage step 5. The wielder adds +1 to his Physical Defense.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Deed: The wielder must travel the path followed by Flannon Farseer on his first exploration of Barsaive after the Scourge. This journey takes about two months on foot and takes the character through the northern reaches of Barsaive, including the Scol Mountains, Lake Vors, the Scytha Mountains, Blood Wood and the Caucavic Mountains. This Deed is worth 2,100 Legend Points.

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 rank bonus to his Safe Path talent.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Deed: The wielder must bring Pathfinder to a place where it has never been before and carve a sign into the staff to symbolize the journey. This Deed is more difficult than it may sound—Pathfinder has traveled throughout most of Barsaive, so there are not many new places left for it. The gamemaster should feel free to drop hints about appropriate places to which the character might travel. This Deed is worth 3,400 Legend Points.

Effect: By taking 3 Strain Points of damage, and rolling Pathfinder over dirt, sand or soft clay, the wielder can create a map of Barsaive that shows his current location. This map, drawn on the dirt or sand over which Pathfinder is rolled, can then be copied. Pathfinder cannot provide information on any place to which it has not been, so certain areas of the map (at the gamemaster's discretion) may still be blank or sketchy. Also, the map is not highly detailed; the gamemaster determines exactly how much detail Pathfinder can impress in the dirt or sand.

PURIFIER

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 18

Purifier was created at the direction of King Varulus I of Throal when the Horrors first began to enter the world, and was used by many of the heroes of the pre-Scourge world. According to legend, a powerful Wizard cast a spell on the sword to make it look old and rusted.

Purifier appears as a worn, rusty broadsword, damaged from several years' use by many different heroes. Carved along the blade's flat side are runes bearing the symbols of the Kingdom of Throal and of King Varulus I. With no thread woven to it, Purifier has the same characteristics as a normal broadsword, but is only Damage step 2 (from the rust).

Before a character can weave any threads to Purifier, he must first remove the spell that changes its appearance. The spell resists any Dispel Magic attempts as if it were an Eleventh Circle spell (see the **Spell Magic** chapter on p. 291 of the **Player's Compendium**). Having removed the spell, the character can weave threads to Purifier.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the sword's Name is Purifier.

Effect: The sword can be wielded by anyone, regardless of size or strength. The sword is now Damage step 6.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 800

Effect: When used against Horrors, the blade glows red hot. The wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Damage Tests against Horrors and Horror constructs.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Names of the Weaponsmiths who created the sword.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 7.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 2,100

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 bonus to his Damage Tests against Horrors and Horror constructs.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 3,400

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the last owner of the sword.

Effect: The sword can detect those who have been corrupted by a Horror. The wielder makes a Spellcasting Test against the Horror's Spell Defense. The wielder may use his Perception step to make the Spellcasting Test instead if he does not know the Spellcasting talent. If the test succeeds, the wielder is alerted to the Horror's presence.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 5,500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the Wizard who cast the illusion on the sword.

Effect: The wielder gains a +4 bonus to his Damage Tests against Horrors and Horror constructs. For 4 permanent Damage Points, the wielder can use blood magic to use Purifier to slay a designated Horror or Horror construct with one blow. When the wielder invokes this power, the blade becomes searing hot; the wielder gains a +28 bonus to his Damage Tests against the target Horror or Horror construct. Even 1 Damage Point from a successful attack against the Horror automatically inflicts a minimum of 10 Wounds. The effect of the blood magic lasts until the wielder is dead or the Horror is dead. This damage can never be healed.

Smoke

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 15

The broadsword called Smoke features a hilt wrapped in espagra leather and a smoky-gray steel blade with a ruby-studded blood groove. The Weaponsmith who made this sword created it as a companion piece to a buckler Named **Mirror** (p. 199). Without a thread woven to it, Smoke has the same characteristics as a normal broadsword.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the Name of the sword is Smoke.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 6.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the sword's last wielder.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 7. The wielder gains a +1 bonus to his melee Attack Tests.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the Name of the sword's creator is Vsthrix, a t'skrang Weaponsmith.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 9. The wielder gains a +2 bonus to his melee Attack Tests.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Deed: The wielder must locate Mirror and attach a thread to it. This Deed is worth 800 Legend Points.

Effect: The sword gains the *Mystic Strike* ability. For 2 Strain Points of damage, the sword blade becomes insubstantial for one Attack Test. If the attack succeeds, the wielder makes a Damage Test as normal. Physical Armor provides no protection against this attack. If the buckler Mirror is ever lost (p. 199), the sword loses the Mystic Strike ability until the shield is recovered.

Soulsafe

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 13

The origins of the windling-sized medallion known as Soulsafe are unknown, though the protection it gives its wearer against spells is well documented. The earliest mention of Soulsafe appears in legends from the troll kingdom of Ustrect, where Gresham Thunderstrike, a minor ruler, claimed it as a prize from a band of windlings. After having the medallion redesigned to fit his huge frame and emboldened by the windlings' claims that it would make him immune to magic, he was promptly fried to a crisp by the next magician he met. The medallion is now part of a troll-sized pendant; the fine chain that once graced it has long since disappeared.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn that the Name of the medallion is Soulsafe.

Deed: The wielder must return the medallion to its original state by removing it from the troll-sized backing plate and stringing it on a chain crafted by windlings (though the chain need not be sized for a windling). This Deed is worth 200 Legend Points.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Physical Defense.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Social Defense.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Physical Defense.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the windling who crafted the medallion.

Effect: For 4 Strain Points of damage, the wearer adds +4 to his Spell Defense for 4 rounds. During this time, any attack made against the wearer by a Horror or Horror construct, or any Horror power or spell that mimics a Horror power, requires 1 result level higher than normal to affect the wearer. For example, a spell cast by a Horror requires a Good result, rather than an Average result, to affect the medallion's wearer.

Staff of Vylir

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 18

The Staff of Vylir is actually a nondescript brown leather glove fashioned by the legendary t'skrang Elementalist Vylir of House V'strimon. Concerned that others might try to steal her fabulously bejeweled staff, Vylir transferred the staff's enchantment into the glove that she wore on the hand she used to hold the staff.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn that the Name of the glove is the Staff of Vylir.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 bonus to his Spellcasting Tests. Once per day, for 1 Strain Point of damage, the wearer may form

a 6 foot long, gilded, jewel-encrusted staff from any piece of wood at least 1 inch thick and 8 inches long. In addition to the jewels, which cannot be removed, the staff has several small indentations in its surface. The staff reverts to its previous form if it remains out of contact with the glove for more than thread rank hours.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: For 1 Strain Point of damage, the glove's wearer may throw the jeweled staff as a spear. The staff acts like the Spear spirit power (see **Spirit Powers** in the **Spirits** chapter, p. 367). The wearer makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. The wielder may use his Perception step to make the Spellcasting Test instead if he does not know the Spellcasting talent. If the test succeeds, he makes a Willpower+2 Test to determine how much damage is inflicted on the target. Physical Armor protects against this damage.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: Vylir had a famous academic rivalry with a fellow member of the College of the Vine. The bearer must learn the Name of this rival.

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 bonus to his Spellcasting Tests.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The wearer may use the Detect True Element spirit power (see **Spirit Powers** in the **Spirits** chapter, p. 365). Using this power requires the wearer to place one kernel of the True element to be detected into one of the indentations on the staff's surface. Each kernel so placed enables the wearer to use the Detect True Element power for one day. The kernels are consumed at the end of the power's duration. The power's range is a number of miles equal to the thread rank.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: A message is hidden in the pattern of the gems covering the staff. The wearer must decipher this message.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 bonus to his Willforce Tests.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Deed: The Shivalahala V'strimon helped Vylir create her staff. The wearer must persuade the current *shivalahala* to re-consecrate the treasure. This Deed is worth 3,400 Legend Points.

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 bonus on any Action Test made to summon or control elemental spirits. This includes any Contest of Wills the wearer makes.

The Blade of Alemvor

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 18

The Blade of Alemvor is an ancient broadsword of ork design, with numerous small runes and symbols carved into its double-edged blade and chain-wrapped cross-hilt. The pommel is carved in the shape of a claw; it holds a blood-red stone the size and shape of a robin's egg. The blade looks battered and used but retains a sharp edge.

The blade was wielded by the ork Warrior and Wizard Alemvor in the years just before the Scourge. Alemvor lived in the ancient kingdom of Cara Fahd in Barsaive's southern reaches and was renowned for his keen mind as well as his skill at swordplay. Alemvor spent much of his career as an adventurer fighting the Horrors that were appearing in increasing numbers in the years before the sealing of the kaers. He researched many spells and gathered arcane knowledge to preserve it during the dark years, and he studied the Horrors he fought to learn more about them.

Alemvor's fate is unknown. None of the kaers in the region of Cara Fahd claim to have housed him during the Scourge; most Barsaivians therefore assume that the great hero failed to seek the safety of underground shelter and perished. Alemvor's sword was discovered a few years ago by a band of adepts known as the Talons, in the lair of the Horror Shastuk-Lor. The slain Horror was in no position to reveal how it had come by the blade, but scholars at the Great Library of Throal were able to accurately identify the sword as Alemvor's based on descriptions of the weapon in ork legend and from the ork script along the flat of the blade.

A human Named Karim, a Swordmaster of the Talons, wielded the Blade of Alemvor for several years before it was stolen from him by thieves in the employ of an ork Wizard. This Wizard, Grole the Gray, desired the sword for its magical lore. As the most common story goes, Grole traded the blade to a Horror as part of a poorly arranged deal that ended with the Wizard's death at the hands of the vengeful Talons. The Horror is said to have vanished with the sword; no one knows the blade's current whereabouts.

The Blade of Alemvor is a powerful magical item as well as a repository of much of Alemvor's accumulated magical knowledge. The runes and symbols etched into the blade are the formulae for various spells that the ork Wizard wished to preserve: Astral Sense, Iron Hand, Combat Fury, Mage Armor, Delay Blow, or any other spells the gamemaster wishes the blade to contain. A Wizard who makes a successful Read and Write Magic Test can learn these spells by studying the runes. With no threads attached, the Blade of Alemvor has the same characteristics as a normal broadsword.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the Name of the sword is the Blade of Alemvor.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 7.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: At the wielder's command, the sword sheds a silvery-blue radiance that illuminates the surrounding area in a 5 yard radius, like a dim torch. The staff holds a spell matrix, allowing the wielder to cast the Divine Aura spell (see the **Wizardry Spells** chapter on p. 375 of the **Player's Compendium**). The wielder may use his Perception step to make the Spellcasting Test if he does not know the Spellcasting talent. The wielder need not weave any spell threads; he takes 2 Strain Points of damage instead.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn Alemvor's history up until the time of the Scourge.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 8. The sword now holds a spell matrix of a rank equal to the thread rank. A magician may place a spell in the sword and the wielder may cast that spell as if casting from a spell matrix (see **Spell Matrix Object**, p. 178). The wielder may use his Perception step to make the Spellcasting Test instead if he does not know the Spellcasting talent.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Deed: The wielder must have a new spell engraved on the blade of the sword, either of his own creation or one freely given by another magician. This Deed is worth 1,300 Legend Points.

Effect: The wielder gains a +1 rank bonus to his Spellcasting and Thread Weaving (Wizardry) talents.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Deed: The wielder must discover Alemvor's fate. This Deed is worth 2,100 Legend Points.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 9. For 2 Strain Points of damage, the wielder gains a +3 rank bonus to his Ethereal Weapon talent.

The Ice Blade of Omifan

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 14

The Ice Blade of Omifan is a dagger-sized weapon designed as a windling broadsword. The sword is enchanted by an air elemental imprisoned within the small diamond embedded in its hilt. Once a thread is woven to the sword, flashes and sparkles appear within the diamond.

Without a thread attached, the Ice Blade has the same characteristics as a windling broadsword (a normal dagger). Non-windlings who wield this weapon in combat are always considered Harried (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 408 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the Name of the sword is the Ice Blade of Omifan.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 3. Its tip develops a cold blue sheen and gives the wielder a power similar to the Flameweapon spell, but inflicting cold damage instead (see the **Elementalism Spells** chapter on p. 296 of the **Player's Compendium**). For 1 Strain Point of damage the wielder rolls a separate Step 3 Frost die with the weapon's Damage Test that round. Unlike the Flameweapon spell, the Frost die result never does harm to the wielder.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The sword now contains a spell matrix of a rank equal to the thread rank. A magician may place a spell in the sword and the wielder may cast that spell as if casting from a spell matrix (see **Spell Matrix Object**, p. 178). The wielder may use his Perception step to make the Spellcasting Test instead if he does not know the Spellcasting talent.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the Name of the elemental spirit trapped in the blade is Dokelnacht.

Effect: For 1 Strain Point of damage, the wielder now rolls a Step 4 Frost die with the weapon's Damage Test.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the spirit in the blade is an air elemental.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 4.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Effect: For 1 Strain Point of damage, the wielder now rolls a Step 5 Frost die with the weapon's Damage Test.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Deed: The air elemental must be rebound to the blade. This Deed is worth 3,400 Legend Points.

Effect: For 1 Strain Point of damage, the wielder now rolls a Step 6 Frost die with the weapon's Damage Test. The wielder adds +3 Physical and Mystic Armor against cold-based attacks.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 5,500

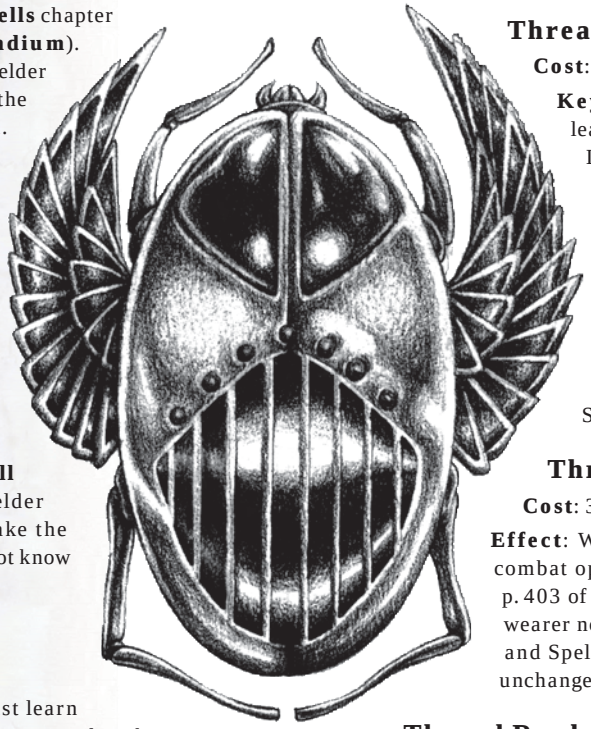
Effect: The sword is now Damage step 5.

The Little Troll's Helm

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 12

The Little Troll's Helm, originally worn by an ork, is made of iron plates sewn to a leather skullcap. The leather can be re-sized to fit just about any character except for a troll. Two of the plates have large iron "troll horns" on them, and the helm also sports a chin guard that has two large tusks.

This helm was originally worn by an ork ("the little troll") who joined a trollmoot and became renowned among trolls for his ferocity.



Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn that the Name of the helm is the Little Troll's Helm.

Effect: When using the Aggressive Attack combat option (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 403 of the **Player's Compendium**), the wearer now gains a +4 bonus to his close combat Attack and Damage Tests, and suffers a –2 penalty to his Physical and Spell Defense. The Strain cost remains unchanged.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: When using the Aggressive Attack combat option (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 403 of the **Player's Compendium**), the wearer now incurs no penalty to his Physical and Spell Defense. The Strain cost remains unchanged.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the ork who first wore this helm.

Effect: The wearer gains a +3 rank bonus to his Battle Shout talent.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the trollmoot to which the ork belonged.

Effect: The wearer gains a +3 rank bonus to his Great Leap talent.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the story of the battle in which the ork was asked to join the trollmoot.

Effect: The wearer gains a +3 rank bonus to his Battle Bellow talent.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 2,100

Deed: The wearer must become a member of a trollmoot. This Deed is worth 2,100 Legend Points.

Effect: The wearer gains a +3 rank bonus to his Crushing Blow talent.

The Scarab of Ilithor

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 14

The Scarab of Ilithor is a beetle-shaped brooch made of tiger's eye in a gold setting. It was created by a group of four magicians to help a Thief steal things for them. The Thief was given the item in payment for his services.

The various thread ranks grant the wearer of the brooch abilities similar to different spells. The wearer makes a Spellcasting Test as given in the spell's description, using his Perception step if he does not know the Spellcasting talent. Abilities do not require any spell threads to be woven; instead, the wearer takes Strain damage, as noted below. The scarab's abilities can only be used by the wearer; they do not affect others.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn that the Name of the scarab is the Scarab of Ilithor.

Effect: For 2 Strain Points of damage, the wearer gains an ability similar to the Crunch Climb spell (see the **Elementalism Spells** chapter on p. 295 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the Elementalist who helped create the scarab.

Effect: For 4 Strain Points of damage, the wearer gains an ability similar to the Gills spell (see the **Elementalism Spells** chapter on p. 298 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the Nethermancer who helped create the scarab.

Effect: For 2 Strain Points of damage, the wearer gains an ability similar to the Ethereal Darkness spell (see the **Nethermancy Spells** chapter on p. 348 of the **Player's Compendium**). The wearer is considered to be a Nethermancer for purposes of using this ability, and is unaffected by Ethereal Darkness spells cast by himself or others, even if he isn't using this ability at the time.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the Wizard who helped create the scarab.

Effect: The wearer gains an ability similar to the Leaps and Bounds spell (see **Wizardry Spells** in the **Player's Compendium**). This ability can be used thread rank times per day.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the Illusionist who helped create the scarab.

Effect: For 2 Strain Points of damage, the wearer gains an ability similar to the Nobody Here spell (see the **Illusionism Spells** chapter on p. 329 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 2,100

Deed: The wearer must steal an item, using each of the scarab's abilities for the task. This Deed is worth 2,100 Legend Points.

Effect: For 8 Strain Points of damage, the wearer gains an ability similar to the Inventory spell (see the **Wizardry Spells** chapter on p. 381 of the **Player's Compendium**).

The Sock of Granak

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 18

The Sock of Granak is a thick woolen stocking dyed deep green. Legend states that the sock was worn by the great troll Sky Raider Granak, who managed to defeat a Horror in single combat, despite being caught in the middle of the night with no armor or weapon. The Sock was stained green by the ichors that oozed from the Horror Granak fought.

When a thread is attached, the stocking automatically resizes itself to fit the wearer.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn that the Name of the stocking is the Sock of Granak.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 bonus to his Unarmed Combat Tests.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the Horror Granak defeated.

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 rank bonus to his Swift Kick talent. To use this ability, the wearer must fight with no covering on the limb he is attacking with, other than the Sock.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the exact oath that Granak bellowed when engaging in battle.

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 rank bonus to his Battle Shout talent.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 rank bonus to his Unarmed Combat talent and a +3 rank bonus to his Swift Kick talent (the wearer must fight with no covering on the limb he is attacking with, other than the Sock).

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: Granak always planned to spend his adventuring spoils by commissioning an airship. The character must learn the intended Name of the never-completed vessel.

Effect: The wearer gains a +1 rank bonus to his Air Sailing and Great Leap talents.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Deed: The character must defeat a powerful opponent in combat without using weapons or armor. This Deed is worth 3,400 Legend Points.

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 rank bonus to his Crushing Blow talent.

The Sword of Fentheri

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 23

Fentheri Sulphin was captain of the *Eltanin*, one of the elf sailing ships that plied the Aras Sea before the destruction of the fleet at Queen Alachia's decree. One day the Passion Floranuus appeared to Fentheri in the form of an elf maiden clad in flames, dancing on a raft of flowers that was drawn through the water on oars of silk.

Fentheri followed this raft to the site of a battle between an aquatic Horror and another elf ship, the *Cirena*. Fentheri joined the battle and helped defeat the Horror, though both ships lost many crewmen. The captain of the *Cirena* perished in the battle, and the crew sank the ship as a memorial and tomb for him. The crew then joined Fentheri's ship, who re-Named it *Maiden of the Lilies* in gratitude for the Passion's aid against the Horror.

The sword is disguised as a work of art—it is made of a single piece of lapis, cunningly wrought into the shape of a stylized lobster. The lobster's body forms the hilt, while the crosspiece consists of its outstretched claws. A faint bluish shimmer emanates from the end of the crosspiece, at the lobster's head.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the Name of the sword is the Sword of Fentheri.

Effect: The wielder gains a +2 bonus to Recovery or Toughness-only Tests. If the sword is stolen while a thread is attached to it, the lobster's claws pinch the hands of the culprit. The claws hang on to the culprit until the sword is returned or the thread is unraveled. Each round, the claws inflict damage to the thief with a Damage step equal to the thread rank+3. No armor protects against this damage, unless the target is wearing metal gauntlets. Removing the claws requires an Extraordinary result on a Strength Test against the claws' Damage step. If the sword is simply lost, and subsequently picked up by someone, nothing happens to the character who finds it.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the word for "geyser" in Sperethiel.

Effect: The word acts as a command word for the sword. The wielder speaks the word aloud and takes 2 Strain Points of damage, whereupon the kernels of elemental water embedded in the sword's hilt project a 4 foot blade of solid water. The sword is now Damage step 5. Each use of this effect lasts for 1 hour or until the command word is spoken again, which causes the blade to disappear.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must discover the identity of Fentheri.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 6. The wielder adds +2 to his Physical Defense. The wielder gains a +2 rank bonus to his Sprint talent.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that Fentheri referred to the Passion Floranuus as the Maiden of the Lilies.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 7. The wielder adds +2 to his Mystic Armor and gains a +2 bonus to Willpower Tests against the effects of spells and Horror abilities.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 3,400

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that Fentheri followed the Warrior and Troubadour Disciplines.

Effect: For 3 Strain Points of damage, the wielder requires one result level less to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on an opponent (a Good result instead of an Excellent result, for example). The effect applies to only one Attack Test.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 5,500

Deed: The wielder must pledge service to Floranuus by swearing a blood oath that causes 3 permanent Damage Points (see the **Workings of Magic** chapter on p. 260 of the **Player's Compendium**). This Deed is worth 5,500 Legend Points.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 8. The wielder gains the Speed Ship questor power (see the **Passions and Questors** chapter on p. 478 of the **Player's Compendium**), which he uses as if he were a Rank 6 questor of Floranuus.

The Talismans of Dianuus

The Talismans of Dianuus are three magical items that belonged to the legendary elf Elementalist Dianuus. Dianuus and his talismans helped a kaer survive the ravages of the Scourge, and the three magical items became part of that kaer's legacy. All three thread items—an amulet, an orichalcum-laced dagger, and Dianuus's robe—contain powerful elemental magic.

A Warder of Wyrm Wood, Dianuus was one of the many elves who publicly (though reluctantly) disagreed with the Elf Queen Alachia's dangerous strategy for surviving the Scourge. Dianuus was sent into exile for disobedience to his Queen, never to see his woodland home again. On his travels away from Wyrm Wood, Dianuus came across Daralon, a small settlement in the Caucavic Mountains, and chose to stay there. In the dark years before the Scourge struck, Dianuus used his Elementalist magic to aid the people of Daralon in building the kaer that would shelter them through the long night. He built a tower overlooking the settlement, and there he worked until the threat of the Horrors became too great; then Dianuus retreated with his adopted people into the kaer and sealed it behind them.

About a century and a half before the Scourge ended, an outbreak of plague in the kaer nearly doomed all of its inhabitants. Dianuus, still alive but stricken with the disease, magically caused a rock slide that buried the access tunnel to the most plague-ridden portion of the kaer. This extreme measure—Dianuus's final sacrifice for the people he had come to love-halted spread of the plague and saved the rest of the kaer, though it cost Daralon's survivors the accumulated wisdom of Dianuus and several other adepts who were lost in the tragedy.

After the kaer was re-opened, explorers dug through the collapsed sections to find the legendary Elementalist and his lost treasures. The explorers found the items, only to lose them to a Blood Warder who had likewise been researching the legend of Dianuus. The items were in turn taken from the Blood Warder by an unknown third party who left the blood elf dead on the streets of Haven.

Dianuus's talismans remain missing, but most people believe they will someday resurface.

The Amulet of Dianuus

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 14

Dianuus's amulet is made of gold, copper and orichalcum, set with a piece of green jade carved in a finely detailed leaf shape. The amulet is about the size of a human's palm and hangs from a flat chain of orichalcum and gold links.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn that the Name of the amulet is the Amulet of Dianuus.

Effect: The wearer adds +1 to his Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Mystic Armor.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the history of Dianuus the Master-Builder and the Name of the kaer he aided.

Effect: The amulet holds a spell matrix of a rank equal to the thread rank. A magician may place a spell in the amulet and the wearer may cast that spell as if casting from a spell matrix (see **Spell Matrix Object**, p. 178).

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The wearer adds +2 to his Spell Defense and +4 to his Mystic Armor.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn how Dianuus created the amulet with the aid of various elemental spirits and must learn the Names of those spirits.

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 rank bonus to his Elemental Tongues talent.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 2,100

Effect: The wearer adds +6 to his Mystic Armor and gains a +3 rank bonus to his Elemental Tongues talent.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 3,400

Deed: The wearer must forge a pact with one spirit of each of the five elements, for which the wearer carries out a task at the spirit's request. The pact is then sealed with blood magic, which causes 1 permanent Damage Point (see the **Workings of Magic** chapter on p. 259 of the **Player's Compendium**). Successfully completing a task for each of the five spirits earns the character 3,400 Legend Points, in addition to any Legend Points earned by performing the specific tasks.

Effect: Once per year, the wearer can summon a Strength 3 elemental spirit from each of the five elements to perform a single service (see the **Spirits** chapter, p. 361). This summoning does not require a Summoning Test or a Contest of Wills. The elemental spirit will appear the round after it is summoned and carry out the wearer's request to the best of its ability. If the elemental is destroyed in the performance of the service, the wearer permanently loses the ability to call upon that type of elemental spirit using the amulet.

The Dagger of Dianuus

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 16

The Dagger of Dianuus is a double-edged blade made with an orichalcum alloy that gives it a lustrous golden tint. Both sides of the blade are engraved with the Sperethiel words, "In Wisdom, Strength." The dark wooden handle is inlaid with gold filigree and worked to a fine polish. Without a thread attached, the dagger has the same characteristics as a normal dagger.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the Name of the weapon is the Dagger of Dianuus.

Effect: The dagger is now Damage step 4.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The wielder gains a +3 bonus to his Damage Tests against physically manifested spirits of all kinds, including astral Horrors in physical form.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the tale of how Dianuus averted the plague by using his dagger as part of a spell to seal off a portion of Kaer Daralon.

Effect: The wielder gains a +3 rank bonus to his Matrix Strike talent.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Effect: The wielder gains a +5 bonus to his Damage Tests against physically manifest spirits of all kinds, including astral Horrors in physical form.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Deed: The wielder must overcome a spirit in single combat, using only the dagger and his own abilities. Any use of another weapon, spell or outside help invalidates the contest. This Deed is worth 1,300 Legend Points.

Effect: The wielder gains a +3 rank bonus to his Spirit Strike talent. The wielder can attack spirits in astral space that he can see using Astral Sight. When used in this manner, the wielder receives the same +5 bonus to his Damage Test as he does against physically manifest spirits.

The Robe of Dianuus

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 19

The Robe of Dianuus is just the right size for a human or an elf and is made of a dark green silken fabric decorated with embroi-

dered leaves, vines and flowers so lifelike that they seem to have grown across the surface of the garment. Close inspection reveals that the small stitches of the leaves and vines form tiny blocks of graceful, poetic Sperethiel. The fabric is resistant to tears and appears to shed dirt in a manner similar to an everclean cloak.

The complex embroidery serves two purposes. Some of the designs record various spells that Dianuus knew and used. Others, worked in orichalcum thread, form the basis for three spell matrices that are woven into the robe, in a style often used by magicians during the Scourge. The matrices function like normal spell matrix objects (see **Spell Matrix Object**, p. 178). These matrices can be used in addition to the robe's other powers.

The Elementalist spells woven on the surface of the robe are: Earth Blend, Plant Talk, Path Home, Plant Feast, Repair, Lighten Load, Uneven Ground, Earth Staff and Ease Passage. A successful Read and Write Magic Test enables an Elementalist to learn these spells by studying the embroidered patterns.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn that the Name of the robe is the Robe of Dianuus.

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 bonus to his Spellcasting Tests.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The wearer adds +3 to his Mystic Armor.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wearer must have learned at least one of the spells embroidered on the robe. He must also have learned of Dianuus's history and how he came to Kaer Daralon from the Elven Court.

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 bonus to his Thread Weaving (Elementalism) Tests.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The wearer adds +3 to his Physical Armor.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Deed: The wearer must create a new Elementalism spell that somehow affects or uses the elements of earth or wood and must embroider it on the robe. This Deed is worth 2,100 Legend Points.

Effect: The wearer gains a +2 bonus to his Summon Tests for summoning elemental spirits.

The Twilight Staff

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 18

The staff was created centuries ago by a group of Nethermancers known as the Order of the Silver Twilight. The Order was devoted to exploring the netherworlds and astral space, and their leader wielded the Twilight Staff. In the early days of the Scourge, the Order was decimated by a Horror named Thess'a'il. The Order's last grand master, Eolim Belial, used powerful magic to trap his own spirit between life and death so that he could protect the secrets of the Order's hidden sanctum as well as its treasures.

The Twilight Staff was taken from the sanctum by a fleeing Nethermancer and has passed through the hands of many magicians over the years. None, however, have discovered the location

of the Order's sanctum or sought out the spirit of Eolim Belial. Legends and rumors connect possession of the Twilight Staff with the fate of the spirits of the slain Nethermancers, and some fear that it may attract the attention of the Horror Thess'a'il as well.

The Twilight Staff is 6 foot long, carved from an unknown type of wood and worn silvery-gray with age and use. Smooth and featureless, the staff is bound and shod in dark iron bands with magical symbols inlaid in silver. When bathed in moonlight, the staff gives off a faint silver glow. With no threads attached, the Twilight Staff has the same characteristics as a normal quarterstaff.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the Name of the staff is the Twilight Staff.

Effect: The staff is now Damage step 4. At the wielder's command, it sheds a silvery light equal to bright moonlight. Though bright enough to see by, the light cannot be used as an offensive weapon.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The staff is now Damage step 5. The wielder gains a +1 bonus to his Damage Tests against Horrors, Horror constructs and undead.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Names of all of the magicians who have owned the staff and whose sigils are engraved upon it.

Deed: The wielder must travel to the Poison Forest, where the piece of wood for the staff was cut before the Scourge. There, by the light of the full moon, the wielder must carve his own sigil into the staff. This Deed is worth 800 Legend Points.

Effect: For 2 Strain Points of damage, the wielder can make the astral aura of a target within line of sight visible to others. The wielder makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. The wielder may use his Perception step to make the

Spellcasting Test instead if he does not know the Spellcasting talent. If the test succeeds, the target's aura becomes visible to normal sight for 1 minute.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the fate of Eolim Belial.

Effect: The staff holds a spell matrix, allowing the wielder to cast the Blessed Light spell (see the **Nethermancy Spells** chapter on p. 359 of the **Player's Compendium**). The wielder may use his Perception step to make the Spellcasting Test instead if he does not know the Spellcasting talent. The wielder need not weave any spell threads; he takes 2 Strain Points of damage instead.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

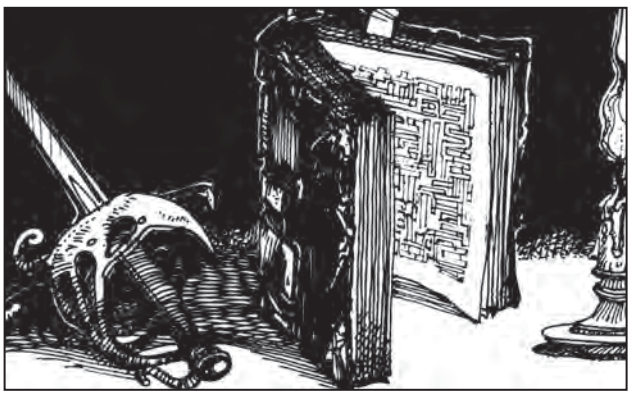
Deed: The bearer must seek out Eolim Belial's ghost and obtain his blessing on the staff; this will permit the bearer to perform the ritual of passing the staff on to a worthy successor.

Effect: The staff's magic can temporarily block a Horror's access to astral space. Upon striking a Horror with the staff, the wielder takes 4 Strain Points of damage and makes a Spellcasting Test against the Horror's Spell Defense. The wielder may use his Perception step to make the Spellcasting Test instead if he does not know the Spellcasting talent. If the test succeeds, the Horror cannot move into astral space for a number of rounds equal to the thread rank. The wielder gains a +3 bonus to his Damage Tests against Horrors, Horror constructs and undead.

Tome of Memory

Maximum Threads: 3
Spell Defense: 14

The Tome of Memory was created by the Theran Nethermancer Ulan Ya before the Scourge. Unsure of what to expect from the Scourge and afraid of losing or forgetting his skills, he created this tome to "help him maintain the facilities to manipulate the facets of magic." The Tome of Memory is a small book, only four inches by six inches by two inches thick. The covers of the book are a flat black, and the edges of the pages are blood red. The tome looks very old and worn, as if it would fall apart if not handled properly. Each page of the Tome of Memory contains a pictograph, drawing, maze, or other visual puzzle. In order to "read" each page of this tome and decipher the puzzles, the owner makes a Read and Write Magic Test against the tome's Spell Defense. An Average result means the character understands 25 percent of the puzzles; for each additional result level, the character understands another 25 percent of the puzzles. The owner can repeatedly attempt to understand the puzzles until he solves all of them, though each attempt after the first on any single day causes 1 Strain Point of damage.



Thread Rank One

Cost: 200

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn that the Name of the book is the Tome of Memory.

Effect: The owner of the tome gains a +1 rank bonus to his Read and Write Magic and Read and Write Language talent when using the tome to research lost knowledge or legends.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 300

Effect: The owner of the tome gains a +1 rank bonus for every 25 percent of the tome's puzzles understood to his Read and Write Magic or Read and Write Language talents. This bonus lasts for a number of days equal to the thread rank, after which the puzzle must be studied again.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn the Name of the last person to weave a thread to the Tome of Memory.

Effect: The owner adds +1 to his Spell Defense against Nethermancy spells.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The owner must learn how it was that the Tome of Memory left Thera and ended up in Barsaive.

Effect: The owner adds +2 to his Spell Defense against Nethermancy spells.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 1,300

Deed: The owner must create a puzzle and draw it on a blank page in the tome. In order for the puzzle to remain in the book, the character requires an Extraordinary result on a Spellcasting Test made against the tome's Spell Defense. No Karma Points may be spent on this test. Inscribing the puzzle into the book requires a blood magic ritual, which inflicts a Blood Wound and 1 permanent Damage Point (see the **Workings of Magic** chapter on p. 259 of the **Player's Compendium**). The Wound may be healed after a year and a day. This Deed is worth 1,300 Legend Points.

Effect: The new puzzle created in the tome now holds a spell matrix of a rank equal to the thread rank. A magician may place a spell in the tome and the owner may cast that spell as if casting from a spell matrix (see **Spell Matrix Object**, p. 178). The wielder may use his Perception step to make the Spellcasting Test instead if he does not know the Spellcasting talent.

Truefang

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 23

Truefang was forged by the elven Weaponsmith Lyranden of Landis for the ork Swordmaster Morag Tarn after Morag saved Lyranden's life. The Weaponsmith had the bad fortune to insult Agimore, known as the Mad Magician, and was suffering from the effects of a powerful curse that Agimore had laid upon him. Morag Tarn sought out Agimore's hidden tower in the Lost Woods of Landis, where he fought and overcame the Wizard and ended the curse. In gratitude, Lyranden created for Morag the finest blade of his career.

Morag wielded Truefang for the rest of his life. He eventually passed the blade on to his son, Kilas, who spent most of his days working to keep his Discipline alive down in the darkness of the kaer in which he lived. Kilas established a school of swordsmanship in the kaer, and for the next four centuries Truefang was

passed from generation to generation of the Tarn family.

About fifty years ago, Grella Tarn, the most recent inheritor of the blade, led a party of explorers out from her kaer to see if the Scourge had truly ended. They never returned, and the kaer stayed sealed for another ten years before finally opening its gates. The fate of Grella Tarn's expedition and the magical blade Truefang remains unknown.

Truefang is a fine sword with a single edge and a chisel point. Around the hilt is an elaborate basket-guard of gold, similar to the style of many elf and t'skrang swords. The hilt itself is wrapped in strips of soft dark leather, topped with a gold pommel in the shape of a dragon's head. An arrow pointing toward the blade's tip is engraved in the blade near the hand guard. The arrow is bisected by a triangle and a circle, the mark of the blade's maker. With no threads attached, Truefang has the same characteristics as a normal broadsword.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn that the Name of the sword is Truefang.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 6.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 800

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 7.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Names of the creator and first owner of the sword.

Effect: The wielder gains the Swift Bite power; he gains a +2 bonus to his Initiative Tests.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the sword's last owner.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 8. The wielder gains the Gliding Block power, which enables him to more easily block attacks; he adds +1 to his Physical Defense.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 3,400

Deed: The wielder must perform a quest to lift a curse from someone and swear a blood oath to do so. If the wielder successfully lifts the curse, he earns 3,400 Legend Points.

Effect: The sword is now Damage step 10. The wielder gains the Spell Eater power, which blocks some of the force directed at him by magic; he adds +4 to his Mystic Armor against magical attacks.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 5,500

Deed: The wielder must seek out the current living heir of the Tarn family and offer to return Truefang to that person. If the heir accepts, the sword continues to draw power for any threads the former owner has woven to it, even though that character is no longer wielding the blade. If the heir finds the wielder sufficiently worthy to return the blade to him or her, the wielder gains 5,500 Legend Points.

Effect: The wielder gains the Deep Bite power, which enables Truefang to inflict vicious bleeding wounds. The wielder takes 2 Strain Points of damage, then makes his melee Attack Test. If the attack causes a Wound, his opponent takes an additional 2 Damage Points each round until he dies or makes a Recovery Test.

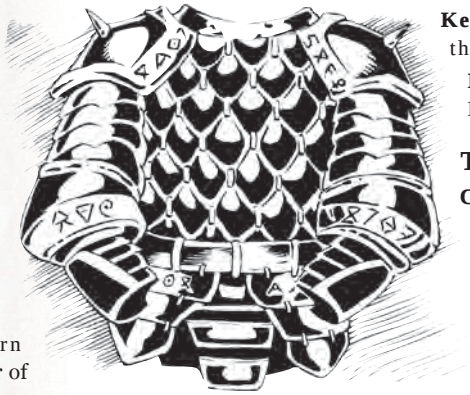
Venna's Armor

Maximum Threads: 2
Spell Defense: 18

Venna's Armor is a set of finely wrought plate mail armor with runes etched on its surfaces. The armor was worn by a female hero named Venna nearly five millennia ago. Lost records leave it uncertain whether she was human or elven. The construction of this armor is somewhat different than the plate mail found in Barsaive. Though the armor looks old, it does not appear worn or damaged. With no threads attached, Venna's Armor has the same characteristics as normal plate mail.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 300



Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn that the Name of the armor is Venna's Armor.

Effect: The armor is now Mystic Armor 3 and Initiative Penalty 3.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 500

Effect: The armor is now Initiative Penalty 2.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The character must learn the Name of the Horror who slew Venna.

Effect: The armor is now Initiative Penalty 1.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 1,300

Effect: The armor is now Mystic Armor 5. For 2 permanent Damage Points, the wearer may increase the quality of the armor. This damage may never be healed. The result level required to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on the wearer is increased by one level (from Excellent to Extraordinary, for example).

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 2,100

Deed: The wearer must learn the fate, or the location, of the Horror who killed Venna. Having discovered the Horror's fate or its whereabouts, the wearer earns 2,100 Legend Points.

Effect: For 2 permanent Damage Points, the wearer may store Karma Points within the armor. This damage may never be healed. The wearer may store a number of Karma Points equal to the thread rank in the armor. The wearer may spend these Karma Points instead of his normal Karma for any Action Test he can normally spend Karma on. The wearer must use one of his daily Karma rituals to store Karma Points in the armor, however these points do not count toward his Maximum Karma Points.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 3,400

Key Knowledge: The wearer must find out whether Venna was a human or an elf.

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 10 and Mystic Armor 6.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 5,500

Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 11 and has no Initiative Penalty

Thread Rank Eight

Cost: 8,900

Key Knowledge: Before her defeat, Venna won many battles. The wearer must learn the legend of her greatest battle. Who did she defeat and how did she do it?

Deed: Travel to the spot of Venna's greatest victory and build a memorial to her. The character must personally help build the memorial. The memorial need not be flashy or large, but it must be durable. The character must write an inscription declaring the memorial's purpose. The Deed is worth 8,900 Legend Points.

Effect: The wearer may spend 1 Karma Point from the armor in addition to any Karma Points he is entitled to spend on an Action Test.

Thread Rank Nine

Cost: 14,400

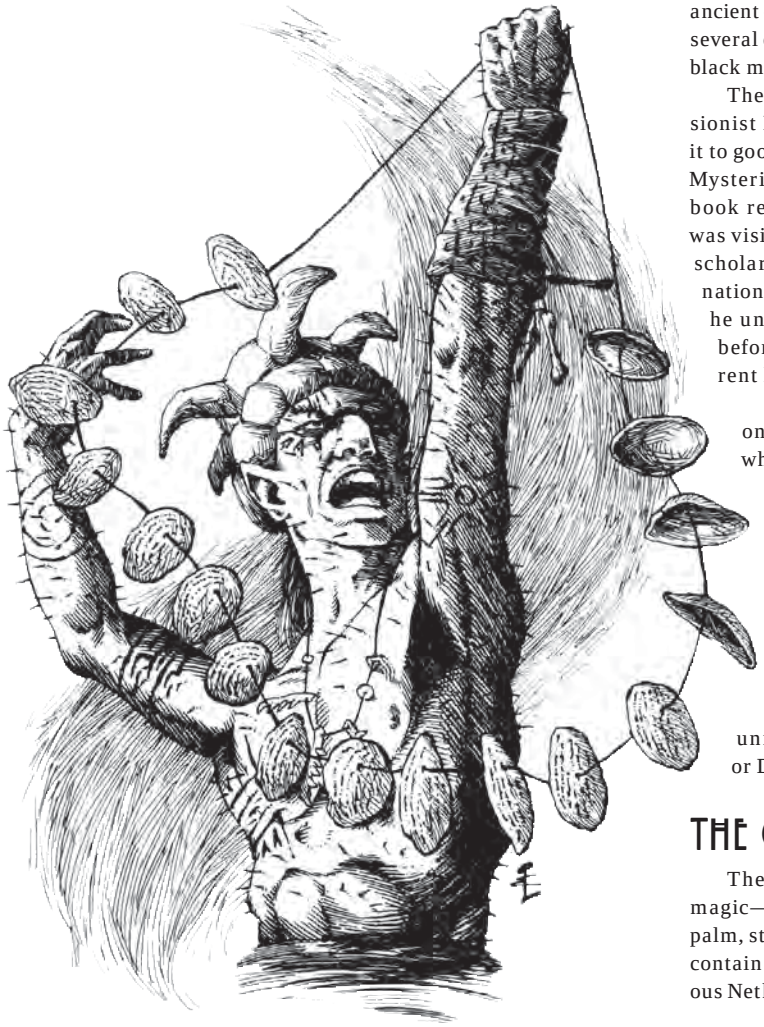
Effect: The armor is now Physical Armor 12 and Mystic Armor 9. The wearer adds +1 to his Physical and Spell Defense.

Thread Rank Ten

Cost: 23,300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the armor's previous owner.

Effect: The wearer may unleash all the Karma stored in the armor to perform a single action. Each Karma Point used causes him 1 Strain Point of damage. A character may fall unconscious or even die from using so much Karma, however the wearer may complete the action before the effects of Strain take their toll.



Grimoires

The following grimoires are examples of famous magical tomes that adepts may discover or learn about during their adventures. Each offers the gamemaster adventure hooks—each grimoire has a unique history, and all are highly sought-after.

These descriptions may also inspire players of magician characters when creating their own grimoires.

The Book of Mysteries

The Book of Mysteries is a large volume, a bit more than three hand-spans high and two hand-spans wide. Its covers are of pale gray wood whose grain is enhanced by elaborate, delicately carved spiral designs. The cover bears no title or other writing. The wooden covers are connected to a spine of beaten silver, which holds the book's leather binding and fine parchment pages. The interior of the book is written in a neat hand, with many beautifully illuminated letters and artwork. When first examined, the writing appears to be gibberish—or at least written in a language unknown in Barsaive.

The Book of Mysteries is the work of Hanna Wintereyes, a human Illusionist who lived some years before the Scourge. She created the book to hold her own magical knowledge and spells and also as a tool for teaching her students and apprentices at the School of Truth in Kratas. Over the years, many of the masters at the School of Truth added their own knowledge to the tome.

The Book of Mysteries was lost along with the whole of the city of Kratas during the Scourge, when the citadel was overcome by Horrors. After the Scourge ended, the city's ruins became the foundation of modern Kratas when numerous thieves and brigands took up residence there. The new inhabitants looted the ancient city's remains and found the Book of Mysteries, along with several other treasures of the School of Truth. All were sold in the black market of the burgeoning City of Thieves.

The book next surfaced in the hands of an adventuring Illusionist Named Kel the Clever, who used several of the spells in it to good advantage during his career. Both Kel and the Book of Mysteries were lost in the Badlands during an expedition. The book remained missing for decades until a scholar in Travar was visited by the obsidiman Shalos, who bore a tome which the scholar identified as the Book of Mysteries. During his examination of the volume, the scholar took notes on its contents, but he unfortunately did not have time to copy any of the spells before Shalos reclaimed the treasure. No one knows the current location of the obsidiman and his book.

The Book of Mysteries contains extensive information on the theory and use of magical illusions; an Illusionist who reads the entire tome gains 300 Legend Points, though these can be used only toward the improvement of the Illusionist's Thread Weaving (Illusionism) talent. The book also contains spells, one per page, in the following order: Light, Crafty Thought, Encrypt, Monstrous Mantle, Impossible Lock, Flying Carpet, Wall of Unfire, Phantom Fireball, and Bond of Silence.

Reading the Book of Mysteries is no simple task—every page has a permanent version of the Encrypt spell cast on it. This spell renders the pages unreadable unless the reader makes a successful Disbelief or Dispel Magic Test against the illusion.

The Chain of Skulls

The Chain of Skulls is a macabre item of nethermantic magic—seventeen round bone disks, each the size of a human palm, strung on a knotted cord of black silk. The sides of each disk contain carvings of runes and magical symbols that describe various Nethermantic spells and enchantments. The Chain is allegedly

kept in a long narrow box of dark wood inlaid with bone and lined with black velvet.

The Chain of Skulls represents generations of work by a nethermantic magical order known as the Fellowship of the Night. These magicians devote themselves to exploring the netherworlds, studying the native spirits in those realms and preserving all their knowledge for future generations. One of their most important tasks has been the gathering of information related to the Horrors and the Scourge so that Barsaive's people may one day eliminate the threat that the Horrors pose.

Upon the death of each master of the Fellowship, his or her fellows perform a ritual in which a disk of bone is cut from the skull of the deceased Nethermancer. This disk is then inscribed with the master's most powerful spell or enchantment. For seventeen generations, the Fellowship has kept the chain unbroken, and the current members of the Fellowship consider it their most sacred and valuable possession.

Recently, unknown miscreants stole the Chain of Skulls from the Fellowship of the Night. A short time after the Nethermancers discovered that the Chain was missing, they found an acolyte of the Fellowship dead in his rooms. They also sensed the presence of a powerful spirit in the chamber, and magical investigation revealed that the acolyte died of terror strong enough to stop his heart. The Fellowship believes that the Chain has been taken by a powerful spirit or Horror, and the Nethermancers have been trying to recover it. Any adepts or adventurers who have knowledge of the Chain's whereabouts will surely attract the Fellowship's attention.

Each disk in the Chain of Skulls contains the formula for a single spell, inscribed on both sides of the disk. The spells are Bone Dance, Astral Spear, Life Circle of One, Fog of Fear, Shadow Hunter, Astral Flare, Astral Horror, Blessed Light, Blood Servitor, Spirit Portal, Control Being, Step through Shadow, Restrain Horror, Create Life, Dark Sword, Walking Dead, and Gateway. The Chain is also a talisman that enables anyone who knows the Ritual of the Ghost Master to call upon the dead master Nethermancers whose bones form part of the chain. This property of the Chain is the one most prized by the Fellowship, and the primary reason they wish to recover it.

The Gems of Joril

The gems of Joril are a collection of fourteen semi-precious stones, primarily translucent and opaque gems such as amethyst, obsidian and tiger's eye. Each stone is about the size of a large walnut, roughly rectangular and polished to a smooth, flat finish. Small symbols are delicately engraved on both sides of each stone. When last seen, the stones were kept in a pouch of soft black leather covered with magical symbols and embroidered in orichalcum thread.

The gems were the personal grimoire of the dwarf Elementalist and explorer Joril, who lived in the Kingdom of Throal and was one of the first of its adepts to explore the outside world following the Scourge. As an Elementalist who specialized in working with earth, Joril took particular interest in the fate of the land following the invasion of the Horrors. He explored the Throal Mountains and much of the surrounding region, studying the damage done to the land and astral space and seeking means by which the earth could be purified and restored.

Not long after the opening of the kaers, Joril vanished during an expedition into the Throal Mountains. The pouch containing his spellstones turned up fifty years later in Bartertown, in the hands of an adept named Nox Darktreader, who sold the treasure to a local dwarf scholar. The scholar identified the pouch as Joril's from the markings stitched into it but was robbed of the pouch just a few days afterward.

Joril's gems next surfaced on the black market in Kratas, where an Elementalist Named Rond Firefriend purchased them for a respectable sum. Rond is thought to have learned the spells contained in the stones, and used them during his own adventuring career. He passed the gems on to a student of his Named Tyla; she carried them until her party of adepts, the Fellowship of Fire, was lost in the Wastes almost twenty years ago. The fate of the stones since then remains unknown.

The Gems of Joril served as the grimoire for many of Joril's spells, including several of his own invention. The black leather bag in which the stones are carried is a spell matrix object (p. 178). The spells, one etched onto each stone, are Earth Blend, Earth Darts, Plant Talk, Purify Earth, Slow Metal Weapon, Plant Feast, Repair, Stone Rain, Earth Staff, Ease Passage, Grasping Hand of Earth, Tossing Earth, Crushing Hand of Earth, and Silver Shadow.

The Midnight Grimoire

The Midnight Grimoire is a small book, little more than a hand-span square. Its white vellum pages are sewn to a flexible leather spine, which is connected to thin wooden covers overlaid with black leather and secured with silver corner caps. The leather is embossed with silver inlays that form magical symbols, including a large crescent moon and star on the front. The book is written in beautiful black script, in a firm hand.

The Midnight Grimoire is the work of the Nethermancer Mordrinn, who spent the Scourge in a kaer in the northwestern reaches of Barsaive. He kept it as a personal research journal, recording in it his magical experiments as well as several new spells that he developed during his lifetime.

One of Mordrinn's experiments unfortunately attracted the attention of a Horror, which breached Mordrinn's kaer sometime during the Scourge and killed all the inhabitants. The ruins of the kaer were discovered many years later by a group of adventurers, the Fellowship of Seven, which drove out the Horror and recovered much lost treasure, including Mordrinn's book. The book was later sold to an interested Nethermancer in the city of Haven. who lost it during a fatal journey into the ruins of Parlainth.

Many years later, the Midnight Grimoire was rediscovered by adventurers exploring Parlainth. They initially believed it to be a Theran grimoire, but the Wizard and scholar Hiermon of Haven correctly identified it as Barsaivian and written in *Sperethiel*. The book was sold in Haven, though no one knows to whom. Its current whereabouts are unknown.

The grimoire's text requires some translation to be useful to most adepts. The pages contain spells and research results in a clear, concise hand. The spells, one per page, are all Nethermancy spells: Experience Death, Undead Struggle, Bone Circle, Fog Ghost, Pocket Guardian, Command Nightflyer, Nightflyer's Cloak, Dark Messenger, Dark Spy, Spirit Servant, Astral Horror, and Circle of Astral Protection.

The last half-dozen pages of the book are blank. If viewed underground during the new moon, writing appears on these pages that describes the Nethermancer version of the Ritual of the Ghost Master (see the **Talents** chapter, p. 166, and **Building Your Legend** chapter, p. 419, of the **Player's Compendium**), along with the information necessary for a character who learns the ritual to summon Mordrinn as a ghost master. All of the normal rules of the ghost master ritual apply, except that the character in possession of the grimoire can use it in place of a pledge coin.

GAMEMASTER CHARACTERS

Follow me, my friends. I know this tavern's owner, and he always keeps a cask of a special brew behind the bar for me… Myrthion, my good man, five mugs of the good stuff please. Zounds! You're not Myrthion!

• Swordmaster Luthan discovers that change is inevitable •

This chapter offers guidelines for making gamemaster characters an active and ongoing part of adventures and campaigns. This section also provides several gamemaster character profiles representing a variety of ordinary Barsaivian citizens that adventurers may encounter on a regular basis. You can drop these fully developed characters into your campaigns with very little work.

Because the player characters may also meet extraordinary gamemaster characters who are adepts like themselves, this chapter provides rules for creating such characters, who are usually equal or superior to the characters controlled by the players. Adept gamemaster characters usually appear as opponents rather than townsfolk.

Roles

Gamemaster characters may fill several roles in an **Earthdawn** game. Player characters may count some gamemaster characters as friends and supporters; some gamemaster characters act as opponents; others function simply as merchants and other neutral characters. All types of gamemaster characters hold various degrees of importance. Many gamemaster characters play small, unimportant roles in an adventure, serving mostly as arrow fodder, for example, the henchmen of the evil Wizard or random ork scorchers that roam the countryside.

Once they appear, these characters rarely survive to reappear in your campaign. Once revealed, they're dead or gone. Only those with an extraordinary gift for self-preservation make it past the first encounter; the gamemaster may also make an effort to save and reintroduce those with an unusual (and fun) character.

Some gamemaster characters will play a more important role in your campaigns. For example, the characters may come to depend on the merchant from whom they buy their adventuring equipment, the tavern owner who always knows the latest rumors and gossip, and the blacksmith who understands horses better than anyone else. These characters are likely to become permanent fixtures in your campaign, and may become a part of the characters' lives.

The gamemaster characters who play the most significant roles in adventures or campaigns are those who will help unfold the story of **Earthdawn**, legendary characters such as King Neden (the son of the late King Varulus III), Queen Alachia, and Mountainshadow the dragon. These characters can become allies, employers, and opponents. Because we understand how useful this type of gamemaster character can be in a campaign or other long-term setting, certain characters may reappear from time to time in our published products. Their stories will provide examples of how to use similar characters of your own creation. For example, Garlthik One-Eye, ruler of Kratas, may be the mastermind behind the scheme of an adventure or may marshal his forces to oppose the mastermind who hired the player characters. The plainly dressed storyteller in the local tavern may turn out to be the famed elven Troubadour Millat.

Of course, we fully expect that you will decide to incorporate some of these same people into your campaigns as gamemaster characters. If the stories we create around these characters do not match the stories you tell about them, just remember that these are legends of **Earthdawn**; they live richly varied lives, and not everything said about them is true.

Types

Though many different types of gamemaster characters appear in **Earthdawn** adventures and campaigns, the three types who have the most impact on the player characters are **patrons**, **opponents**, and **supporters**. Each type of gamemaster character can serve one specific or several different purposes in an adventure or campaign.

Patrons

Patrons are essentially gamemaster characters who help the players' characters on an ongoing basis. Though similar to supporters (see below), patrons perform a slightly different function: while supporters only help characters, patrons may also hire the characters to perform missions or to undertake quests or journeys. For example, characters could enjoy the patronage of an important person such as the head librarian of the Library of Throal. In exchange for providing them assistance whenever the characters are in Throal, the librarian might trade favors (see the **Gamemastering** chapter, p. 94) by asking the characters to journey to the rumored location of a forgotten kaer to search for historically important records. The librarian might also take advantage of the group's experience and status and ask them to transport important documents from Throal to Jerris, or Travar, or some other important city in Barsaive.

The gamemaster can use patrons as a springboard for adventures, a technique especially useful for those times when you have to nudge your players a bit to get them into an adventure. By establishing a patron, you essentially keep the characters on retainer; they are available to be hired on short notice because they feel a loyalty to and may "owe" their patron.

A word of warning, however; avoid using the patron to draw the characters into the adventure too often. The characters may begin to act as if every adventure must be predetermined, and the players may feel that they have no control over which adventures their characters participate in. This will take the fun out of the game for everyone.

Patrons also provide a logical and convenient way to begin an **Earthdawn** game by giving individual characters a common purpose and goal. By the time they've journeyed together on an adventure or two, the characters may decide to stay together for reasons unrelated to their patron. For example, the characters may find a magical treasure while fulfilling a mission for their patron, then decide to continue to adventure as a group in order to learn the history of the item and unlock its magical abilities.

The patron's mission can also serve as a device to get the characters to the "real adventure." For example, the patron may ask the characters to carry an item or scroll from Throal to the Dragon Mountains. On the way there, or en route to their next destination, the characters discover a deserted kaer. This is the heart of the adventure; the journey served to get the characters to that location so that they could uncover the lair of the Horror that has been feeding on the nearby locals since the end of the Scourge.

Patrons come from all walks of life. Some are sages, others are questors of the Passions, still others hold posts in town or city government. The patrons in your game can be any of these types or any other person you may imagine.

Opponents

Gamemaster character opponents are, simply put, the bad guys in an **Earthdawn** adventure. They are the evil Nethermancer who uses the population of a town for his experiments with the denizens of the netherworlds; Theran slavers, constantly on the lookout for towns and villages to raid for ever more slaves; the questors of the Mad Passions, those who work to destroy the power of the other Passions and increase the power of their own.

Opponents represent the most common type of gamemaster characters you will use in your adventures. Good stories usually center around strong characters; the best stories have good opponents, fully realized characters with complex personalities, a variety of quirks, and everything else that makes up a real person. Make the opponents of your adventures as real as possible by giving them unique characteristics and goals. Give their actions a reason—don't create an evil Wizard who acts that way "just because he's evil." Try to figure out his motivation. Maybe he is evil because his desire to attain power overwhelms all else? Reaching his goal justifies the consequences of his actions, and he lets no one stand in his way.

One way to create well-rounded opponents for your adventures is to use the character creation system provided in the **Earthdawn** rulebook. Put as much thought into your opponent character as the players give to their characters; after all, gamemaster characters are your vehicle for creative expression in the game. Answer the questions in the **Flesh Out Your Character** section in the **Creating Characters** chapter on p. 54 of the **Player's Compendium** for each opponent you create. This will help prevent your opponents from becoming dime-a-dozen throw-away bad guys. You can also tailor one of the archetypes from the **Player's Compendium** to meet your needs. Another option is to create gamemaster character adepts using the rules given below. These rules allow you to create a high-Circle adept opponent in a relatively short time and provide powerful opposition for your characters.

Most importantly, good opponents should live through more than one adventure. Make every effort to keep good opponents alive to plague the characters over and over again. If the characters face the same opponent several times, they are likely to feel more heroic when they finally defeat him for good than if they just beat the most recent in a long line of one-time opponents.

Supporters

Supporters are gamemaster characters who ally themselves with a player character. In order to be a supporter, a gamemaster character must hold a Neutral or better attitude toward the player character. Supporters serve many functions. They can act as additional eyes and ears for a character, keeping tabs on events when the character needs to be somewhere else. They can lend aid to characters, and some supporters may even travel with the character they support from time to time. Supporters may be considered minor characters in a hero's life, the ordinary foil to their extraordinary exploits. They often provide vital clues or aid to help a hero accomplish the task at hand, but the character must perform the legendary deeds.

Legends often say that heroes and their supporters are fated to meet. Other stories describe the bond between supporter and hero as a form of blood magic. These accounts apparently hold some truth, because heroes do gain supporters through effort, destiny, and blood magic.

Gaining Supporters

A player character can try to enlist a gamemaster character as a supporter as long as the gamemaster character holds a Neutral attitude or better toward the player character. Trying to make a supporter out of an Unfriendly character will always fail.

To gain a supporter, begin by roleplaying the character's interaction with the gamemaster character. The player character cannot use his Charisma, talents, or any spells to convince the gamemaster character to be his supporter.

Though legends describe numerous ceremonies that heroes and their supporters have used to seal their bonds, these rules do not require a formal ritualistic exchange when a gamemaster character agrees to be a supporter. All heroes and their supporters, however, must swear a blood peace oath. All gamemaster characters who agree to support a player character must immediately take the oath. Each year, near the anniversary of the first oath, the character must renew the blood peace oath with any characters he wishes to keep as supporters.

The taciturn dwarf hero Ulka spent six hours watching the human Weaponsmith Thrit at work. Ulka sat silently, moving only when he could no longer see Thrit work from where he sat. Thrit worked as if the dwarf were not there. In the late afternoon, Ulka cleared his throat. Thrit immediately stopped hammering.

"Figure I have a spell of fighting coming up," Ulka said.

"I've heard tell," Thrit replied. His hammer remained poised as the Weaponsmith waited for Ulka to continue. The dwarf said nothing. Thrit hammered for another hour.

As the sun set, Thrit polished his day's work. Ulka stood. Thrit glanced at him, his face impassive. Dying embers crackled in the stillness of the evening.

"Figure I need some good weapons for the fight—and

a Weaponsmith I can rely on," Ulka said. Thrit cracked a half-smile that was all but invisible in the fading light.

"You got one," he said.

The two men swore an oath of blood peace, sealing a relationship that they would forge into friendship.

Storytellers still recount the feasts and entertainments held when Queen Alachia of the elves became a supporter of the Elementalist Kirgravane. For six days the Elementalist strove to prove himself worthy of the queen's support by participating in a series of games and dances chosen by Alachia.

On the first day, the queen commanded Kirgravane to join the wrestling competition between the thorn men. The Elementalist quickly discovered that much of his magic did not affect his adversaries. Queen Alachia delighted in his immediate dismay, but lowered the barrier she had raised against magic when one of the thorn men grabbed Kirgravane by the throat. Though Kirgravane sensed his spells would now work, he was determined to impress the queen, and so refused to help himself by casting his spells. Instead, he gripped the hand crushing his throat and rolled backward, using the thorn man's extended arm as a lever. The thorn man, bracing himself to ward off a spell from the Elementalist, was caught off guard and thrown to the ground. Kirgravane quickly pinned his opponent to win the match and stood, his throat bleeding, to bow low to the queen.

For five more days and five more nights Kirgravane did as the queen commanded. Using skill or wit, the Elementalist won each test Alachia devised. And with every trap he avoided, every challenge he overcame, the queen's respect for Kirgravane grew.

On the final night, the queen commanded Kirgravane to join in the Moon's Flight, a dance performed by hundreds of winged fairies who spun and flitted, weaving magic patterns in the air. The patterns bent the moonlight into arcs of cascading sparkles that lifted the dancers from the forest floor. Kirgravane first danced with the ladies of the court. The steps were difficult, and Kirgravane concentrated, lest he lose the rhythm and miss an arc and step unsupported into the cold night air. Soon the arcs spiraled upward, making a misstep that initially would have been a mere embarrassment potentially injurious. As the dancers soared higher, any step he missed would become fatal.

When the moving figures cleared the tops of the trees of Wyrm Wood, the ladies left Kirgravane. The queen commanded him to dance with her, and the elven queen and the Elementalist drifted higher into the darkness. What they spoke of no-one admits to knowing. What was promised, and by whom, has not been told. But when the pair descended, Queen Alachia announced her undying support for the hero Kirgravane. The two swore an oath of blood peace before the assembled ladies and lords.

Types of Supporters

Not all gamemaster characters are created equal, and so the support they can provide may vary greatly. A kindly itinerant peddler, for example, could not hope to equal the support of Queen Alachia. The support of a Weaponsmith adept is probably worth more than the peddler's, but less than the queen's.

The blood magic of the blood peace oath is social magic. Because player characters must perform certain actions to maintain supporters' loyalty, the social differences between the characters swearing the oath affects the cost to maintain these supporters.

Supporters are divided into three types, according to their stations in life and abilities. Peddlers, merchants, and others of a similar social stratum are Type 1 supporters. Adepts and persons employed within the lower levels of government are Type 2 supporters. Key members of governments, like Queen Alachia and King Neden, are Type 3 supporters. Maintaining the support of each type requires different actions.

Maintaining Supporters

Supporters may aid characters in many ways, and will continue to help their hero's cause in his absence. However, a hero cannot endlessly draw support from a character without returning a measure of the respect, trust, and support given him. During a full year of game time, a character must demonstrate his desire to retain his supporters by performing certain actions determined by the type of the supporter. If a character fails to perform these actions, he will probably lose that supporter. The actions needed to maintain a supporter each year fall into four basic categories.

Swearing an oath of blood peace and renewing it once per year is sufficient to maintain a minor, Type 1 supporter.

Characters may also maintain supporters by performing small favors for them. Three small favors are adequate to maintain the loyalty of any Type 1 supporter, as long as the supporter wants the favors.

A player's character can maintain a Type 2 supporter by performing one large favor for that supporter each year. Again, the supporter must want the favor.

Performing one dangerous, heroic action per year, such as a blood promise deed, will maintain a Type 3 supporter. The supporter must need or have requested the deed, however.

The gamemaster decides exactly what type of action is required to maintain each type of supporter.

Losing Supporters

A character can lose a supporter by failing to maintain the supporter, through the death of the supporter, or through the betrayal of a traitorous supporter.

If a character fails to maintain a supporter, when the blood peace oath ends after a year and a day, the character may then heal the 2 permanent Damage Points taken during the oath ceremony. Most supporters resent being "dumped" by heroes, and may renounce the blood peace oath before a year and a day has passed.

When a supporter dies, he automatically releases the player character from the oath of blood peace. The damage caused by the oath is healed, and the character loses the advantage of the extra point to his Death Rating.

A supporter who turns traitor and betrays the character has broken the blood peace oath and suffers the magical Wound. The 2 Damage Points the character suffered by taking the blood peace oath are healed, but the character also loses the advantage of the extra point to his Death Rating.

What Supporters Will Do

Over time, supporters willingly perform a large number of small favors for .the characters they support, for example, keeping their ears open for interesting rumors. Supporters may also exchange large favors with a character. These large favors exchanged, however, do not include those used to maintain the supporter.

Kirgravane performs two large favors every year for Queen Alachia as part of the cost to maintain her support. The queen sees these as her due and will not perform favors in return. However, Alachia will return the third large favor Kirgravane performs in a given year, and all large favors after that.

A supporter whose attitude is Loyal or Awestruck toward a character may perform a large favor for him or her as a gift each year.

All supporters will take risks for a player character. Those whose attitudes are Neutral will take substantial risks only when they know that failing to do so would allow the character to die.

Friendly supporters will take risks whenever their actions can prevent a character from suffering significant harm, including Wounds or death, imprisonment, and capture. Friendly supporters will take these actions on their own initiative and will also watch for other, minor threats to the character they support.

Loyal or Awestruck supporters always take whatever risks are necessary to help a character, and remain ever vigilant to protect the character's best interests.

What Supporters Won't Do

The gamemaster decides the exact actions that a supporter will perform, but he should recognize that supporters will not throw their lives away for a character. This does not mean a supporter will not sacrifice his life if that is the only way to save the hero. At the same time, a supporter will not automatically open suspicious-looking chests just because the character does not want to take the risk himself.

Though supporters are gamemaster characters, they, too, have individual lives in the world of **Earthdawn**. Supporters may not be able to drop whatever they are doing to help a character every time she calls. Friendly supporters accept some demands with grace, and Loyal supporters respond to their hero's request every time, but even the most loyal supporter has his limits. A character who willfully and carelessly exceeds those limits may find his supporters much less helpful.

Supporters and Legend Points

Though supporters never become the focus of legends, they play vital roles in many adventures recorded in the annals of Barsaive, in their own way becoming as important to that history as the heroes they support. In fact, scholars have long noted that the strong blood magic that ties together a hero and his supporters strengthens both characters, helping to fuel their legendary deeds.

Each time a character renews an oath of blood peace with a supporter, she gains a number of Legend Points, determined by the type of the supporter and the number of times the character has renewed the blood peace oath.

To determine the number of Legend Points the character gains, consult the Talent Rank Cost Table in the **Building Your Legend** chapter on p. 421 of the **Player's Compendium**. Use the Circle 1–4 column to calculate Legend Points for Type 1 supporters, the Circle 5–8 column to calculate the points received for Type 2 supporters, and the Circle 9–12 column for Type 3 supporters. Find the number of times the blood peace oath has been renewed in the talent rank column. The result of cross-referencing the appropriate Circle and Rank columns is the number of Legend Points the player character earns.

> *Ulka renews his oath of blood peace with Thrit for the first time, equivalent to Rank 1 on the Talent Rank Cost Table. Thrit is a Type 2 supporter, placing him in the Circle 5–8 column of the table. Thus, Ulka earns 200 Legend Points for renewing the vow. If Ulka renews it next year, he will gain 300 Legend Points.*
>
> *Kirgravane renews his oath of blood peace with Queen Alachia for the eighth time. Queen Alachia is a Type 3 supporter, and so Kirgravane earns 8,900 Legend Points. The fifteenth time he renews the oath of blood peace with the elven queen he will earn 258,400 Legend Points!*

Each renewal beyond the fifteenth earns the same number of Legend Points as if it was the fifteenth renewal. If a supporter is an adept, renewing an oath of blood peace earns the supporter half as many Legend Points as the character.

Only heroes who spend most of their time performing legendary deeds can gain Legend Points from their supporters. Heroes who retire to rule a land, found an academy, advise the King of Throal, or simply settle down, do not earn Legend Points from their supporters. However, many retired heroes renew their oaths of blood peace yearly for friendship or loyalty's sake. Many also continue to maintain their supporters just in case their retirement proves to be temporary.

Traitors

If a character attempts to gain the support of a gamemaster character whose attitude is Unfriendly or worse, the attempt will fail. However, the gamemaster may lead the player character to believe he has gained a supporter, when he has in fact decided to trust a traitor. The gamemaster can lend credence to this deception by presenting the supporter as a specific type and fleshing out the supporter's role completely. Then, naturally at an inopportune time, the traitor betrays the character.

If a player character feels any doubt about the sincerity of the attitude of a gamemaster character, he should not make that character a supporter.

Supporters who betray their hero must break their blood peace oath by doing so and will suffer the consequences as a result.

Creating Gamemaster Characters

Because we designed **Earthdawn** as a gamemaster-driven game, our products often provide only an abbreviated version of the game statistics for minor gamemaster characters. This format allows gamemasters to use a minimal approach to these minor characters when appropriate, but also provides enough information for gamemasters to round out the character more fully. We provide major gamemaster characters with all necessary stats, spells, and equipment. The abbreviated format includes the following information:

Name: This is the name of the character.

Rank and **Discipline** (if an adept): This provides the Discipline and appropriate rank of adept characters.

Occupation (if not an adept): Every character who is not an adept must have an occupation.

Attributes: These entries provide the character's Attribute steps and Action dice, with an Attribute value shown in parentheses ( ) as follows:

Dexterity (#): #/D# **Perception** (#): #/D#
Strength (#): #/D# **Willpower** (#): #/D#
Toughness (#): #/D# **Charisma** (#): #/D#

This information serves as the basis for fleshing out the character as the gamemaster sees fit; for example, making the character more or less powerful, depending on the situation. The abbreviated stats give you the basic character information, but the rest is up to you.

Fleshing Out Statistics

We suggest two ways to flesh out these abbreviated stats. The first is to consult the Step/Action Dice Table on p. 17 of the **Player's Compendium** to find the Attribute values associated with each given step number. Using the Attribute values, find the appropriate characteristics in the Characteristics Table, also in the **Player's Compendium**, on p. 46. This method serves as a shortcut through the character creation process.

One alternative, an even more quick-and-dirty way to generate the values needed to play a character, uses the Step Number Conversion Table below, which summarizes the Characteristics Table based on step numbers rather than Attribute values. A gamemaster in need of a specific number to resolve a situation involving his character simply checks the step numbers provided and consults the Step Number Conversion Table to find a range of appropriate values.

The Step Number Conversion Table provides values for the most commonly used game statistics.

Attribute value: This represents a range of Attribute values for the given step number. Attributes represent a character's natural abilities.

Defense Ratings: This column represents a range of values for Physical, Spell, and Social Defenses. Defense ratings determine how well characters avoid certain types of attacks.

Mystic Armor: This provides a range of Mystic Armor ratings. Mystic Armor helps protect the character from magical attacks.

Death Rating: This column provides an appropriate range of Death Ratings. The Death Rating represents how much damage a character can take before dying.

Wound Threshold: This represents an appropriate range of Wound Threshold values. Any single attack that inflicts a number of Damage Points equal to or exceeding the Wound Threshold causes a Wound.

Unconsciousness Rating: This column provides a range of Unconsciousness Ratings. This number represents the amount of cumulative damage it takes to knock a character unconscious.

Using the Step Number Conversion Table

The Step Number Conversion Table allows the gamemaster to derive values for the most commonly used characteristics directly from the step numbers given in the statistics for gamemaster characters. To use the table, find the step number in the left-hand column, then read across that line to find the required characteristic values. The table lists a range of values for each of the characteristics. The range provided allows you to make your gamemaster characters less or more powerful than average by choosing a number from the lower or upper end of the range. Choosing from a range also allows you to create gamemaster characters that better resemble player characters (with a more varied scope of characteristic values) by choosing high numbers for some characteristics and low numbers for others.

By cross-referencing the Step Number Conversion Table to the Step/Action Dice Table and the Characteristics Table in the **Player's Compendium**, gamemasters can convert the step numbers for gamemaster characters into accurate Attribute values and so determine the exact value of all of the character's characteristics.

Calculating Legend Points for Gamemaster Characters

For non-adept gamemaster characters follow the exact same guidelines for determining creature Legend Awards using the Creature Legend Points Table (see the **Creatures** chapter, p. 270).

STEP NUMBER CONVERSION TABLE

Step Number	Attribute Value	Defense Rating	Mystic Armor	Death Rating	Unconsciousness Rating	Wound Threshold
2	1–3	2–3	0	19–22	10–13	3–4
3	4–6	4	0	23–26	14–17	5–6
4	7–9	5–6	0	27–30	18–21	6–7
5	10–12	6–7	0–1	31–34	22–26	8–9
6	13–15	7–8	1–2	35–38	27–30	9–10
7	16–18	9–10	2–3	39–42	31–34	11–12
8	19–21	10–11	3–4	43–46	35–39	12–13
9	22–24	11–12	4–5	47–50	40–43	13–14
10	25–27	13	5–6	51–54	44–47	15
11	28–30	14–15	6–7	55–58	48–51	16–17
12	31–33	15–16	7–8	59–62	52–55	17–18

ACTION MULTIPLIER TABLE	
Talent	**Multiplier Bonus***
Air Dance	+1
Claw Frenzy	+Rank
Quick Shot	+Rank
Lightning Throw	+Rank in Throwing Weapons
Momentum Attack	+1
Multi-Charge	+Rank
Multi-Weaving	+2
Multi-Shot	+Rank
Multi-Strike	+Rank
Riposte	+1
Second Attack	+1
Second Weapon	+1
Swift Kick	+1
Whirlwind	+3
* The Base Multiplier is always ×1.	

Calculating Legend Points for Adepts

The procedure for determining Legend Awards for adept gamemaster characters is slightly different. Determine the Legend Points for the adept's Attributes, Karma, and Physical Armor as normal using the Creature Legend Points Table on p. 270. Determine the average ranks for the adept's talents and skills as described under **Powers and Abilities** on p. 270.

If the adept has any of the talents or talent knacks listed on the Action Multiplier Table, add the multipliers together to calculate the Legend Points for the adept's talents and skills.

A Fifth Circle Warrior has a ×3 Action Multiplier (Base 1, +1 for Air Dance, +1 for Swift Kick). The average Rank of his talents and skills is 5, so he adds 300 Legend Points to his running total (100 × 3).

ADEPT BONUS LEGEND POINTS AWARD TABLE	
Circle	**Legend Point Award**
1	10
2	20
3	30
4	50
5	80
6	130
7	210
8	340
9	550
10	890
11	1,440
12	2,330
13	3,770
14	6,100
15	9,870

For magicians, find the highest spell's Circle that they can cast on the Spell Circle column of the Creature Legend Points Table to determine the Legend Points for spells. Multiply this by the number of spell matrices available to the character, up to a maximum of 10. Additionally, each adept gains an extra Legend Award for each thread he has woven to items and abilities; use the Average rank column of the Creature Legend Points Table using each of the adept's thread ranks to determine the Legend Point amount. Finally, add in the adept bonus for their Circle, which takes into account his increasing number of talents and special abilities (see the Adept Bonus Legend Points Award Table).

A Fifth Circle ork Elementalist has Attribute steps of 6, 6, 6, 7, 6, and 4. The four Attributes at step 6 are worth 8 Legend Points each, the Attribute step of 7 is worth 15 Legend Points, and the Attribute step of 4 is worth 5 Legend Points. The total award for Attributes is 52 Legend Points (32 +15 +5 = 52). The ork's Armor Rating of 5 is worth 5 Legend Points. His Karma step of 5 is worth another 35 Legend Points. The Elementalist has an average ability Rank of 5 and one action per round, so this is worth 100 Legend Points. The Elementalist has four spell matrices at Rank 5 and access to Fifth Circle spells. This is worth 100 Legend Points per matrix, for a total of 400 Legend Points. He also has a Rank 4 thread attached to thread leather armor; this is worth an additional 55 Legend Points. Lastly, for being a Fifth Circle adept, a bonus of 80 Legend Points is added. The overall total Legend Point Award for the adept is 730 Legend Points (52 + 5 + 35 + 100 + 400 + 55 + 80 = 727, rounded up to 730 Legend Points).

Game Balance

One of the hardest tasks a gamemaster faces in nearly all roleplaying games is creating a fair but challenging match between opponents and the player characters. This holds true for **Earthdawn**. It is impossible to create a hard-and-fast rule for judging levels of opposition; every group of characters is different from every other, and opposition that proves too powerful for one group might be a pushover for another. With that in mind, we offer the following suggestions to help you balance combat situations. (Of course, we don't believe that every fight should be fair. Sometimes the players draw an easy target; sometimes the odds of survival are overwhelmingly against them.)

These suggestions provide a system for determining approximate numbers to create game balance. This system can help you create a fair match, but requires a certain amount of work. You may decide to use this method or create one of your own.

Determine Opposing Forces

To determine what forces each side brings to a battle, compare the abilities of the players' characters to the abilities of the opposing gamemaster characters. The two parameters used to compare abilities are the capability to attack successfully and the damage potential of a successful attack.

Attack Potential

To judge each side's ability to successfully attack, first determine the average Defense Ratings of the players' characters by separately adding up the ratings for each type of Defense (Physical, Spell, and Social) and dividing each total by the number of player characters, rounding fractions up.

Compare the result to the opposition's attack step number. The attack step number could be an Attack or Spellcasting step for creatures or a Talent step for gamemaster character adepts. If the step number is equal to the appropriate average Defense Rating (Physical, Spell, or Social), then the opponent holds an even chance of attacking the characters successfully. If the step number is lower or higher than the average Defense Rating, the opponent has a less than or greater than even chance of attacking successfully.

To determine the player characters' potential for making a successful attack, compare the player characters' attack step numbers to the average Defense Ratings of the opposition (as above). After you determine the chances of a successful attack for both sides, compare the information for a rough idea of how often the characters and their opponents could successfully attack each other. By next determining and comparing the damage potential of each side, you will see how well- or ill-matched the opponents are.

Damage Potential

To determine each side's damage potential, compare the average Damage step of each side to the average Toughness step of the opposition. This comparison will show if one side has an advantage over the other.

To use an alternative method for judging damage potential, take the average Damage step of the opponents and subtract the

average Physical Armor rating of the player characters, then divide the result into the average Unconsciousness and Death Ratings of the player characters. The final numbers provide an average of how many successful attacks are needed to render one of the player characters unconscious or dead (respectively). Apply this same formula to the player characters to determine how many successful attacks they need to make to render an opponent unconscious or dead.

Determine the Advantage

By knowing how the player characters' strengths and potential damage compares to that of your gamemaster characters, you can create more balanced fights for your adventures and campaigns.

Gamemasters can compare characters and opponents to determine which side holds an advantage using the following parameters:

- Characters' Attack vs. Opponents' Defense
- Opponents' Attack vs. Characters' Defense
- Characters' Damage Potential vs. Opponents' Damage Resistance
- Opponents' Damage Potential vs. Characters' Damage Resistance

To use these comparisons to balance an encounter, first determine which side has the advantage in each comparison, if one exists. For example, if the player characters have higher attack step numbers than their opponents' Defense ratings, the characters have the advantage.

To determine which side has the overall advantage, simply add up the number of parameters that give each an advantage and compare the totals. The side with more advantages has the overall advantage in that encounter.

Even the Odds

To balance fights between unevenly matched groups of characters and opponents, simply adjust the number of opponents to more closely match the number of characters. For example, a group of Third Circle adepts would have to fight more than double their number in skeletons in order for the fight to be fair.

If the difference in power, abilities, and numbers between the characters and opponents is relatively minor; increase or decrease (as appropriate) the number of opponents by a smaller margin.

Adept Gamemaster Characters

Gamemasters who want to create more powerful and complex gamemaster characters can create adepts. Adept gamemaster characters can be supporters, opponents, or patrons. For example, the player characters might find a unique tavern-keeper and retired adventurer to act as their patron; a casual acquaintance often met in the same weapon shop could become a supporter.

To create an adept gamemaster character, start by generating a character according to the rules for **Creating Characters** in the **Player's Compendium**, or choose one of the Discipline archetypes from the same rulebook.

If the adept gamemaster character will be First Circle, the archetypes can be used as is. If you want to play a higher-Circle adept, choose the character's Circle and then find the minimum number of talents and their minimum ranks for adepts of that Circle on the Circle Advancement Table in the **Building Your Legend** chapter on p. 424 of the **Player's Compendium**. Select a number of additional talents from the appropriate **Disciplines** chapter in the same rulebook to bring the character's total talents to the minimum for adepts of the desired Circle. Assign each of the talents the minimum rank for adepts of that Circle, then adjust the character's characteristics according to his Circle and note any special abilities.

This system produces adept gamemaster characters that meet the minimum requirements of the chosen Circle. If you want to give your character more than the minimum statistics, simply choose an additional 2–4 talents and assign each a Rank of 2 or 3. Feel free to further tailor the archetype by increasing the ranks of the character's other talents as well. You can further round out the character by adding several talent knacks to provide specializations where you feel they are required.

As you create your gamemaster characters, particularly those who will likely last longer than a single encounter or adventure, fill out a Character Record Sheet. Note that all of the gamemaster characters are able to read and write Dwarf (Throalic) as well as Speak Dwarf (Throalic) and their racial language as General skills, if these skills are not listed.

For adept gamemaster characters, Discipline talents are listed with a superscript ^{D} and talents that require Karma are *italicized*.

First Circle Adept Archetype Legend Point Awards

Sample First Circle adept archetypes were included for each Discipline in the **Player's Compendium**. As well as providing examples for players, these characters make excellent gamemaster adepts. The First Circle Adept Legend Award Table shows the Legend Point Award for defeating these First Circle adepts.

FIRST CIRCLE ADEPT LEGEND AWARD TABLE

Discipline	Race	Circle	Legend Point Award
Air Sailor	Human	First	105
Archer	Human	First	100
Beastmaster	Ork	First	115
Cavalryman	Dwarf	First	115
Elementalist	Dwarf	First	115
Illusionist	Troll	First	105
Nethermancer	Human	First	125
Scout	Human	First	105
Sky Raider	Ork	First	110
Swordmaster	T'skrang	First	125
Thief	Windling	First	130
Troubadour	Elf	First	110
Warrior	Obsidiman	First	135
Weaponsmith	Dwarf	First	100
Wizard	Obsidiman	First	125

Non-Adept Gamemaster Characters

The following profiles describe typical gamemaster characters for use as supporters, guards, opponents, and so on. Feel free to alter these profiles to suit your game. Gamemasters may like to modify these characters for different Name-giver races. This is usually just a case of adjusting the character's Attribute and associated Skill steps. Some Death Ratings take into account permanent damage caused by using blood magic (usually blood charms). These are noted in the character's statistics. See the descriptions of blood charms in the **Goods and Services** chapter on p. 443 of the **Player's Compendium**.

TROLL CITY WATCH

"The people pay me to keep their town secure, and roving bands of so-called heroes like you make my life difficult. And when my life gets difficult, I get mad, and when I get mad, I like to take it out on roving bands of heroes. So I only have one rule—don't make my life difficult!"

Attributes

Dexterity (10): 5/D8
Strength (18): 7/D12
Toughness (16): 7/D12
Perception (9): 4/D6
Willpower (9): 4/D6
Charisma (8): 4/D6

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Initiative: 2/D4–1
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 0
Death Rating: 37*
Wound Threshold: 11
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 7/D12
Unconsciousness Rating: 29*

* These values have been adjusted for blood magic.

Combat Movement: 20
Full Movement: 40

Skills

Artisan:
Runic Carving (1): 5/D8
Knowledge:
Local Lore (3): 8/2D6
Local Politics (3): 8/2D6
General:
Detect Weapon (2): 6/D10
Disarm (2): 7/D12
Melee Weapons (3): 8/2D6
Riposte (3): 8/2D6
Tactics (3): 7/D12
Unarmed Combat (1): 6/D10

Equipment

Buckler (Phys 1; Shatter 17)
Chain Mail (Phys 7; Init 3)
Club (Damage 10/D10+D6)
Pole-Axe (Damage 15/D20+D6)
2 × Spears (Damage 11/D10+D8; Range 18–30–36)
Absorb Blow Charm
Belt Pouch
Carving Tool
Traveler's Garb

Loot

15 silver pieces

Legend Award

125 Legend Points

Notes

The character possesses the troll Heat Sight racial ability.

Quotes

"Meet my good friend Sir Pole-axe."

"You're beginning to make my life difficult, young sir."

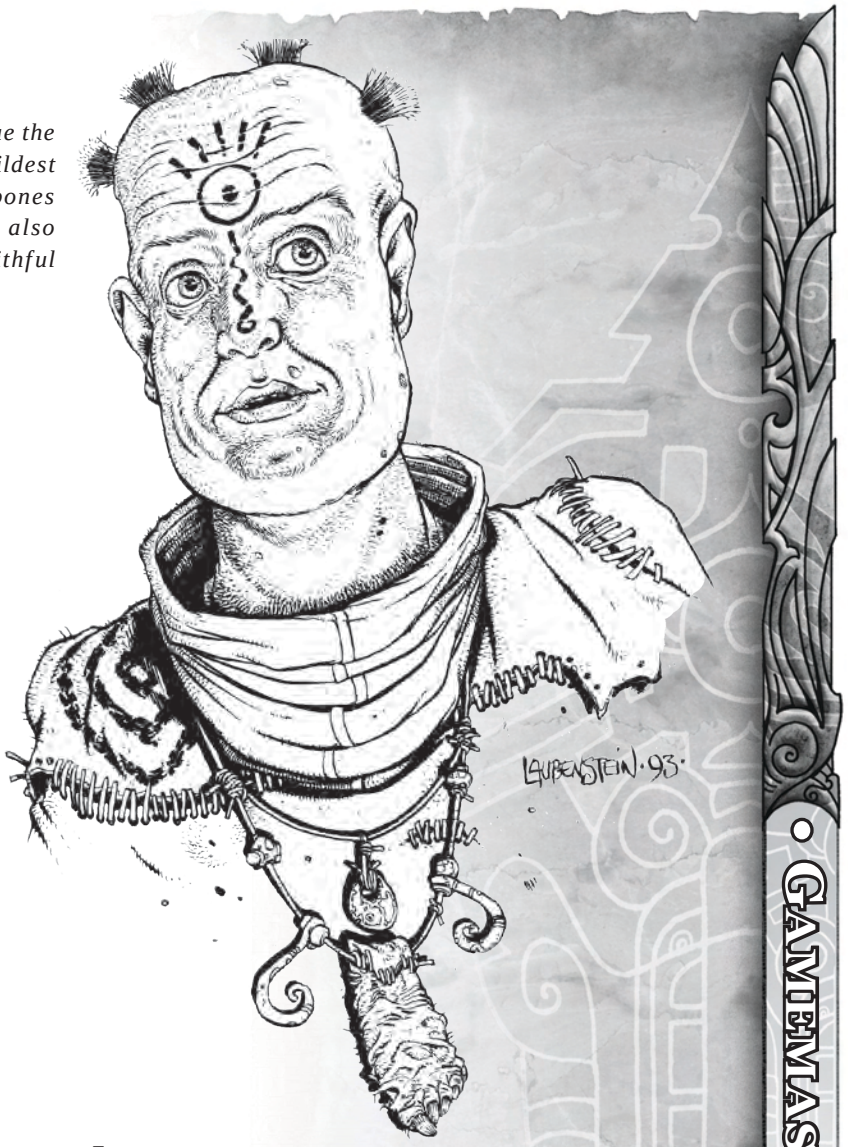
"Have you ever had a grown troll sit on your chest until your face turned purple and you begged for mercy? It can be easily arranged."

Commentary

The troll city watch's job is to keep the peace, and if he has to break a few skulls to do it, so be it. He's got a bad attitude, a big weapon, and the law on his side. In short, he's your worst nightmare—a troll with a badge of office.

Human Cult Member

"Have you not heard of the Shield of Slangue the Merciless? Its ancient power would dwarf your wildest imaginings. I will search for the Shield until my bones lie bleaching in the sun. Countless others would also gladly give their lives to return the Shield to its faithful worshippers."



Attributes

Dexterity (7): 4/D6
Strength (10): 5/D8
Toughness (10): 5/D8
Perception (11): 5/D8
Willpower (14): 6/D10
Charisma (14): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 8
Initiative: 3/D4
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 2
Death Rating: 28*
Wound Threshold: 8
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5/D8
Unconsciousness Rating: 19*

* These values have been adjusted for blood magic.

Combat Movement: 14
Full Movement: 28

Skills

Artisan:
Dancing (2): 8/2D6
Knowledge:
Cult of Slangue (1): 6/D10
Legends and Heroes (2): 7/D12
Shield Lore (1): 6/D10
General:
Animal Handling (1): 7/D12
Arcane Mutterings (1): 7/D12
Conversation (3): 9/D8+D6
Emotion Song (1): 7/D12
First Impression (3): 9/D8+D6
Melee Weapons (1): 5/D8

Equipment

Hardened Leather Armor (Phys 5; Init 1)
Broadsword (Damage 10/D10+D6)
Dagger (Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18)
Ancient Map (to Shield of Slangue)
Adventurer's Kit
Bit, Bridle, and Harness
2 × Booster Potions
Large Saddlebags
Horror Fend Charm
Riding Horse
Saddle, Stirrups, Blanket
Tent
Trail Rations (1 week)
Traveler's Garb
2 × Waterskins

Loot

15 silver pieces

Legend Award

45 Legend Points

Quotes

"What do you mean my map is wrong? Where's the town that should be here?"

"The Shield is holy, that is all an infidel like you need know."

"Only the holy Shield can remove the evil stain the Horrors left on the world and make our dwelling place pure again."

Commentary

Hope drives the cult member. Striving against all odds, he searches for one legendary artifact, though no proof exists to show that it is real. He believes the artifact holds the power to right the evils the Horrors wrought, and he will spend his entire life on his sacred quest. Some people question his sanity, others join him on his crusade, but none question his dedication.

Human Foul Folk

"I have no time for you and yours. You think you survived the Scourge, but you have no real idea of what it 'actually' took from us all."

Attributes

Dexterity (10): 5/D8
Strength (12): 5/D8
Toughness (10): 5/D8
Perception (10): 5/D8
Willpower (10): 5/D8
Charisma (10): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Initiative: 5/D8
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5/D8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Combat Movement: 20
Full Movement: 40

Skills

Artisan:
Tattooing (1): 6/D10
Knowledge:
Scourge History (2): 7/D12
Horror Lore (2): 7/D12
General:
Melee Weapons (2): 7/D12
Quickblade (1): 6/D10
Speak Language (2): 7/D12
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human
Streetwise (2): 7/D12
Wilderness Survival (2): 7/D12

Equipment

Padded Cloth (Phys 2)
Dagger (Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18)
Dwarf Sword (Damage 8/2D6)
Peasant Garb
Tattooing Tools

Loot

None

Legend Award

45 Legend Points

Quotes

"Yes, yes. I hear you talking but I care nothing for what you have to say."

"Pain? You have no idea what real pain is. Here, let me show you…"

"Mmmmmrmmmrmm… Arrrrggghh!"

Commentary

Foul folk offers a catchall term to describe Name-givers corrupted by the Horrors. Though foul folk may exist anywhere in Barsaive, many of them are drawn to the ruins of Parlainth.

Most foul folk look very much like normal Name-givers, except for a slightly crazed, somehow evil look in their eyes. Their corruption robbed them of the last remnant of good, and only those foul folk with extremely high Charisma can convincingly mimic positive emotions such as love or joy.

Foul folk exist among all the Name-giver races, and their statistics vary according to their race. The statistics given here represent an average human member of the foul folk. A few of the foul folk are adepts. Use the Discipline archetypes in this chapter and in the **Player's Compendium** for statistics.

Human Horror-Scarred Madman

"The Horror lived in my brain, right here above my eye. Well, actually closer to my ear, but near the top of my skull. HEY! WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT! You know, the Horror looked at me the same way. Did I tell you he was in my brain?"

Attributes

Dexterity (8): 4/D6
Strength (7): 4/D6
Toughness (7): 4/D6
Perception (19): 8/2D6
Willpower (8): 4/D6
Charisma (7): 4/D6

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 15*
Initiative: 4/D6
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

* Magically enhanced value.

Death Rating: 27
Wound Threshold: 6
Unconsciousness Rating: 18
Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 4/D6

Combat Movement: 16
Full Movement: 32

Skills

Artisan:
Body Painting (1): 5/D8
Knowledge:
Horror Lore (10): 18/D20+D12
Rock History (4): 12/2D10
Stick History: (4): 12/2D10
String History (4): 12/2D10
General:
Arcane Mutterings (2): 6/D10
Wilderness Survival (2): 10/D10+D6

Equipment

Ball of String
Peasant's Garb
Rock
Stick

Loot

7 copper pieces

Legend Award

60 Legend Points

Quotes

"Don't touch my rock."

"The Horror was in my friend Neville's brain, too. But that was before he exploded…"

"Yes. I know how I got it out of my head. I used my string. Want me to show you how?"

Commentary

Spared by a Horror (and no one knows exactly why), this poor fool was left part idiot and part genius. If you can listen to his bewildering train of thought for any length of time, you may learn more factual information about the Horrors than you believed was possible for any one person to know. Of course, you may also learn the history of his rock, and his string, and his stick.

Ork Mercenary

"I fight for a living. It's never a pretty job and you only get paid if you survive, but I do it because I'm good at it. If you need an experienced fighter, I'm your man. I don't do work that requires me to think much, I don't look after mewling babes, and I don't fight for the Therans. Now, show me your silver and we'll hammer out the terms."

Attributes

Dexterity (14): 6/D10
Strength (15): 6/D10
Toughness (12): 5/D8
Perception (10): 5/D8
Willpower (9): 4/D6
Charisma (6): 3/D4

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 4
Initiative: 3/D4
Physical Armor: 7
Mystic Armor: 4
Death Rating: 31*
Wound Threshold: 9
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6/D10
Unconsciousness Rating: 23*

* These values have been adjusted for blood magic.

Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60

Skills

Artisan:
Runic Carving (1): 4/D6
Knowledge:
Ancient Weapons (1): 6/D10
Weapons Lore (1): 6/D10
General:
Maneuver (2): 8/2D6
Melee Weapons (5): 11/D10+D8
Second Attack (1): 7/D12
Tactics (1): 6/D10
Unarmed Combat (2): 8/2D6
Wound Balance (1): 7/D12

Equipment

Crystal Ringlet (Phys 4; Myst 4; Init 2)
Footman's Shield (Phys 3; Init 1; Shatter 19)
2 × Daggers (Damage 8/2D6; Range 9–15–18)
Short Sword (Damage 10/D10+D6)
Spiked Mace (Damage 12/2D10)
Adventurer's Kit
2 × Booster Potions
Carving Tool
Death Cheat Charm
Dwarf Winternight Cloak
Rope (15 yards)
Tent
Trail Rations (1 week)
Traveler's Garb

Loot

25 silver pieces

Legend Award

100 Legend Points

Notes

The character possesses the ork Low-Light Vision and *Gahad* racial abilities.

Quotes

"I have scars older than you, lad."

"Sharpen your blades, here come the Therans."

"Flank, shmank—just hit that fiend swinging the big axe. Yes, the one in front of you trying to take off your head."

Commentary

The ork mercenary knows only one thing, but he knows it well—how to fight. Highly opinionated and disdainful of anyone he considers incompetent, most employers value his skills enough to overlook his often abrasive personality. The ork mercenary is no fool, and always demands handsome compensation for high-risk tasks.

Dwarf Merchant

"Welcome, welcome! Please take your time and browse. You'll find everything you want or need. If it's not here, it doesn't exist. You say your friend only speaks troll? Not to worry. I speak all the languages of the land fluently—just another service that I am happy to provide. Oh, you would like to trade? Please step into my office."

Attributes

Dexterity (10): 5/D8
Strength (13): 6/D10
Toughness (13): 6/D10
Perception (12): 5/D8
Willpower (10): 5/D8
Charisma (9): 4/D6

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Initiative: 5/D8
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 0
Death Rating: 35
Wound Threshold: 9
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6/D10
Unconsciousness Rating: 27
Combat Movement: 16
Full Movement: 32

Skills

Artisan:
Carving (1): 5/D8
Knowledge:
Appraising Gems (2): 7/D12
Dwarf Trade Routes (2): 7/D12
General:
Conversation (3): 7/D12
Haggle (2): 6/D10
Speak Language (8): 13/D12+D10
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Sperethiel*, Human, Obsidiman, *Or'zet*, Troll, T'skrang, Windling
Trading (5): 9/D8+D6

Equipment

Leather Armor (Phys 3)
Dagger (Damage 8/2D6; Range 9–15–18)
Dwarf Sword (Damage 9/D8+D6)
Belt Pouch
Carving Tool
Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Loot

1 gold piece, 40 silver pieces, 50 copper pieces

Legend Award

50 Legend Points

Notes

The character possesses the dwarf Heat Sight racial ability.

Quotes

"It is a well-known fact that the legendary hero Thom Hammerblade bought 15 yards of rope from this length right here."

"Windling spears, windling spears—let me think. Ah yes, I stock them near the toothpicks."

"I'm very sorry, but I do not have the item you seek at the moment. It seems my supplier angered some river pirates. We hope to find his body soon."

Commentary

"Anything and everything" is the dwarf merchant's motto. His shop is full to bursting with supplies from all over Barsaive and select items from Thera. The merchandise ranges from the mundane to the exotic: elven-made clothes, Theran tomes, t'skrang spices, dwarf tools, windling weapons. The merchant considers no item too bizarre to stock in his emporium, and sees every person who steps into his shop as a potential sale. On rare occasions, he may offer a guarantee on his product after the transaction is complete.

OBSIDIMAN MESSENGER

"Trustworthy, honest, and reliable—it's not just a motto, it's a way of life. Some messages I carry are inane, some are matters of life and death. I don't care, I get them through all the same. Don't try and stop me. I can fight if need be."

Attributes

Dexterity (8): 4/D6
Strength (21): 8/2D6
Toughness (20): 8/2D6
Perception (8): 4/D6
Willpower (10): 5/D8
Charisma (10): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 6
Initiative: 2/D4–1
Physical Armor: 7
Mystic Armor: 4
Death Rating: 41*
Wound Threshold: 16
Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 8/2D6
Unconsciousness Rating: 33*

* These values have been adjusted for blood magic.

Combat Movement: 10
Full Movement: 20

Skills

Artisan:
Crystal Carving (2): 7/D12
Knowledge:
Barsaive Politics (3): 7/D12
Throal Politics (2): 6/D10
General:
Conversation (3): 8/2D6
Detect Trap (1): 5/D8
Detect Weapon (2): 6/D10
Etiquette (3): 8/2D6
First Impression (2): 7/D12
Graceful Exit (2): 7/D12
Melee Weapons (1): 5/D8
Missile Weapons (1): 5/D8
Trap Initiative (1): 5/D8
Throwing Weapons (1): 5/D8
Unarmed Combat (1): 5/D8

Equipment

Crystal Ringlet (Phys 4; Myst 4; Init 2)
Warhammer (Damage 15/D20+D6)
2 × Spears (Damage 12/2D10; Range 18–30–36)
Troll Sling (Damage 12/2D10; Range 30–60–120)
Belt Pouch (with 15 stones)
Adventurer's Kit
Carving Tool
Death Cheat Charm
Trail Rations (1 week)
Traveler's Garb
Walking Stick

Loot

15 silver pieces

Legend Award

95 Legend Points

Notes

The character possesses the obsidiman Increased Wound Threshold and Natural Armor racial abilities.

Quotes

"I regret the damage to the guards, but I carry a message addressed to you personally."

"I am merely the messenger."

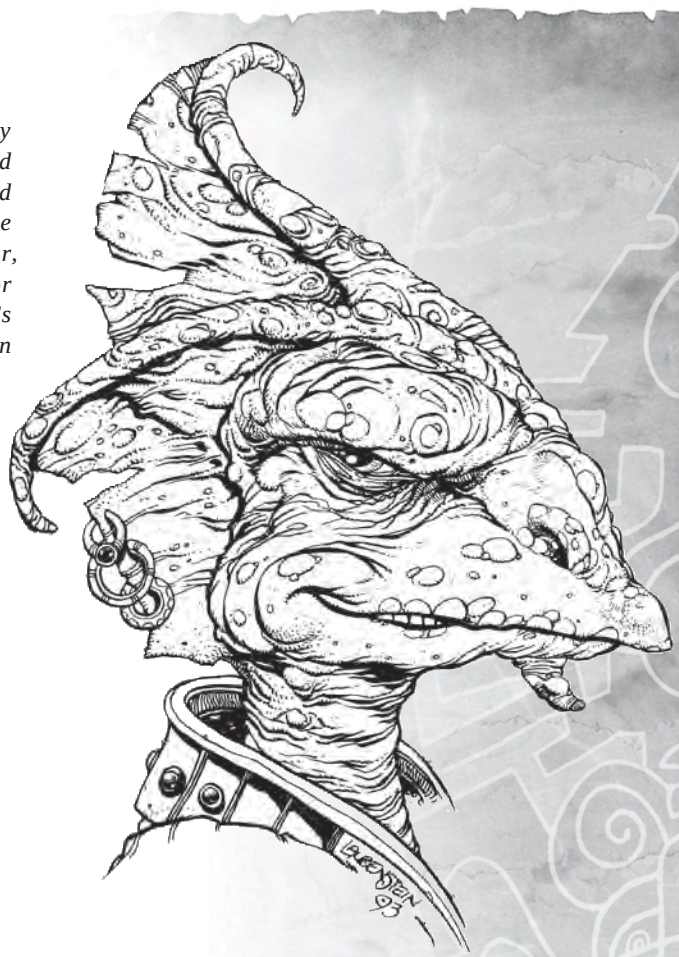
"Greetings. I carry a message from the city of Iopos. The missive is from Lady Nessel to one Sir Flower-Of-My-Heart."

Commentary

A strange single-mindedness seems to possess the obsidiman messenger when he carries a missive. These individuals consider their tasks a sacred duty and perform them with unflagging dedication, regardless of the message's content. As a result of their impeccable reputation and personal integrity, people throughout Barsaive accord them great respect and so keep their services in great demand. Many obsidiman messengers have reached legendary status by overcoming tremendous obstacles to deliver messages.

T'SKRANG RIVER PIRATE

"Greetings and salutations, friends. Do not let my appearance deceive you. The stories you have heard about the t'skrang are most untrue. The dwarfs started those vicious lies because they envy our ability to sail the river. They accuse us of stealing because they envy our, ah, resourcefulness. Take these elegant elven cloaks, for instance. I found them aboard an abandoned ship. It's not my fault the elves are so irresponsible as to allow an unmanned ship to float down the Serpent River."



Attributes

Dexterity (19): 8/2D6
Strength (13): 6/D10
Toughness (12): 5/D8
Perception (10): 5/D8
Willpower (10): 5/D8
Charisma (11) : 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 7
Initiative: 7/D12
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 1
Death Rating: 34
Wound Threshold: 9
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6/D10
Unconsciousness Rating: 26
Combat Movement: 38
Full Movement: 76

Skills

Artisan:
Music (Singing) (2): 7/D12
Knowledge:
Serpent River Lore (3): 8/2D6
General:
Acrobatic Strike (2): 10/D10+D6
Bribery (2): 7/D12
Engaging Banter (2): 7/D12
Fence (4): 9/D8+D6
Fishing (1): 6/D10
Melee Weapons (3): 11/D10+D8
Navigation (1): 6/D10
Pilot Boat (4): 9/D8+D6
Read River (4): 9/D8+D6
Riposte (3): 11/D10+D8
Swimming (2): 8/2D6
Throwing Weapons (3): 11/D10+D8
Unarmed Combat (3): 11/D10+D8

Equipment

Buckler (Phys 1; Shatter 17)
Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1)
Broadsword (Damage 11/D10+D8)
2 × Daggers (Damage 8/2D6; Range 9–15–18)
2 × Spears (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 18–30–36)
Belt Pouch
Cloaksense Brooch
Fishing Kit
Navigation Charts (in Map/Scroll Case)
Traveler's Garb

Loot

10 silver pieces

Legend Award

110 Legend Points

Notes

The character possesses the t'skrang Tail Attack (Damage 6/D10) racial ability.

Quotes

"We will board your ship, take all of your goods, and if you cooperate, we won't turn the Serpent River red with your blood."

"Stealing is such a strong word. I prefer to think of your contribution as a toll for using our section of the river."

"I threaten you not. Only question, good sir. Can you swim to shore from here?"

Commentary

The t'skrang river pirate's charismatic and flamboyant personality disguises his formidable fighting prowess. He operates under his own code of ethics, and no ship is safe from this scoundrel. On the whole an unpredictable lot, many pirate tales circulate through the land from the elven court to Throal and Thera. Some stories recount tales of vile torture and ruthless cruelty, while others describe practical jokes perpetrated on unwary travelers sailing the Serpent River. Though generalizing about such individualists is dangerous, most pirates harbor a strong sense of loyalty and will befriend for life someone who does them right. On the other hand, they show double-crossers no mercy.

Elf Sage

"So you need to know if that old sword you acquired is the Great Blade of Sanquadra or just a lump of forged metal? You have come to the right place, friend. All heroes need magic, and I can tell you if you are holding it in your hands."

Attributes

Dexterity (11): 5/D8
Strength (9): 4/D6
Toughness (7): 4/D6
Perception (13): 6/D10
Willpower (12): 5/D8
Charisma (10): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Initiative: 5/D8
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 27
Wound Threshold: 6
Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 4/D6

Unconsciousness Rating: 18

Combat Movement: 24
Full Movement: 48

Skills

Artisan:
Embroidery (2): 7/D12
Knowledge:
Ancient Weapons (2): 8/2D6
Legend and Heroes (1): 7/D12
Magical Lore (1): 7/D12
General:
Read and Write Language (5): 11/D10+D8
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Sperethiel*, Human, *Or'zet*, Troll
Read and Write Magic (2): 8/2D6
Research (2): 8/2D6
Speak Language (4): 10/D10+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Sperethiel*, Human, *Or'zet*

Equipment

Dagger (Damage 6/D10; Range 9–15–18)
Arcane Tomes
Belt Pouch
Embroidery Tool
Scrolls
Wealthy Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Loot

25 silver pieces

Legend Award

45 Legend Points

Notes

The character possesses the elf Low-Light Vision racial ability.

Quotes

"Remove this junk from my sight."

"Runic carvings? Hmmm, very interesting. Hand me that book."

"Power? You don't know the meaning of power until you've held in your hands the Ruby Scimitar of Daeth!"

Commentary

Both a historian and a source of magical information, the elf sage links the arcane past with the magical present. Magic and knowledge represent power throughout the land, and the elf sage can provide access to both.

Ork Scorcher

"Welcome to my territory. The upcoming terrain is filled with potential danger. I suspect you'll need to hire some bodyguards. We just happen to be available. Let's make camp here and negotiate our protection fees."

Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10
Strength (15): 6/D10
Toughness (11): 5/D8
Perception (10): 5/D8
Willpower (13): 6/D10
Charisma (9): 4/D6

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Initiative: 2/D4–1
Physical Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 32
Wound Threshold: 8
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6/D10

Unconsciousness Rating: 24

Combat Movement: 28
Full Movement: 56

Skills

Artisan:
Tattooing (1): 5/D8
Knowledge:
Caravan Trade Routes (2): 7/D12
General:
Animal Bond (2): 6/D10
Animal Handling (1): 7/D12
Charge (1): 7/D12
Fence (2): 6/D10
Melee Weapons (1): 7/D12
Tactics (1): 6/D10
Throwing Weapons (1): 7/D12
Trick Riding (1): 7/D12
Unarmed Combat (1): 7/D12
Wound Balance (1): 7/D12

Equipment

Chain Mail (Phys 7; Init 3)
Rider's Shield (Phys 3; Init 1; Shatter 19)
Broadsword (Damage 11/D10+D8)
Dagger (Damage 8/2D6; Range 9–15–18)
Long-Spear (Damage 11/D10+D8)
Spear (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 18–30–36)
Adventurer's Kit
Bit, Bridle, and Harness
Large Saddlebag
2 × Oil Flasks
Riding Horse (combat-trained)
Saddle, Stirrups, Blanket
Tattooing Tool
Trail Rations (2 weeks)
Traveler's Garb
Waterskin

Loot

5 silver pieces

Legend Award

80 Legend Points

Notes

The character possesses the ork Low-Light Vision and *Gahad* racial abilities.

Quotes

"I warned you of potential danger. Now hand over your silvers or prepare to die, trespassers!"

"Treachery? I prefer to call it a switching of business partners for profit."

Commentary

The ork described in this entry is the standard ork scorcher, standing approximately 6 feet 3 inches tall and weighing 225 pounds. Sometimes mercenaries, often bandits, orks always negotiate if they sense potential profit. If an ork thinks he can get a better deal by working with a party rather than jumping it, he will. Orks roam all the lands of Barsaive in mercenary bands. These ork scorcher bands travel the countryside, seeking employment. Some bands are cavalrymen, mounted on riding horses and occasionally on war horses or massive thundra beasts. Ork cavalrymen often use lances and spears to charge their opponents.

Dwarf Scribe

"Please speak slowly and clearly. Remember, this will be stored in the Great Library of Throal. Your stories will be repeated throughout the land, and young and old alike will revere you for your deeds for generations to come."

Attributes

Dexterity (8): 4/D6
Strength (10): 5/D8
Toughness (10): 5/D8
Perception (16): 7/D12
Willpower (12): 5/D8
Charisma (10): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 6
Initiative: 4/D6
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5/D8

Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Combat Movement: 12
Full Movement: 24

Skills

Artisan:
Poetry (3): 8/2D6

Knowledge:
Dwarf History (3): 10/D10+D6
Kaer Lore (3): 10/D10+D6
Legends and Heroes (4): 11/D10+D8

General:
Read and Write Language (8): 15/D20+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Sperethiel*, Human, Obsidiman, *Or'zet*, Troll, T'skrang, Windling
Research (1): 8/2D6
Speak Language (4): 11/D10+D8
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human, Troll, T'skrang

Equipment

Knife (Damage 6/D10)
Arcane Tomes
Belt Pouch
Scrolls
Writing Kit
Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Loot

35 silver pieces

Legend Award

45 Legend Points

Notes

The character possesses the dwarf Heat Sight racial ability.

Quotes

"Of course my name goes at the top of the page. I'm doing all the writing, am I not?"

"If you kill a dragon in the deepest woods but no one was there to write down the event, did it really happen?"

"I would prefer you pay me in advance, good sir, before you fight the Horror."

Commentary

The dwarf scribe is your ticket to immortality. He can transform a humiliating drubbing at the hands of a group of gargoyles into an epic battle between good and evil. He rarely involves himself personally in adventures, preferring to live vicariously through his employers' adventures.

If a story is boring, he can make it interesting. And if a tale is interesting, he can make it legendary.

Theran Windling Spy

"Information can make you rich. Any information, no matter how trivial it might seem, is worth something to someone. Now, the Therans reward loyalty very handsomely, so when you hear something, tell only me. I would truly grieve if compelled to visit you in the dark of night. Hearing of a hero who dies in his sleep always saddens my heart—such a waste of potential."

Attributes

Dexterity (15): 6/D10
Strength (4): 3/D4
Toughness (7): 4/D6
Perception (16): 7/D12
Willpower (11): 5/D8
Charisma (17): 7/D12

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 9
Initiative: 6/D10
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 1
Death Rating: 26*
Wound Threshold: 6
Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 3/D4
Unconsciousness Rating: 17*

* These values have been adjusted for blood magic.

Combat Movement: 14/34✦
Full Movement: 28/68✦

✦ The second value is the character's flying Movement rate.

Skills

Artisan:
Acting (2): 9/D8+D6
Knowledge:
Local Lore (3): 10/D10+D6
Theran Politics (2): 9/D8+D6
General:
Bribery (2): 9/D8+D6
Conceal Weapon (2): 9/D8+D6
Detect Trap (2): 9/D8+D6
Disarm Trap (2): 8/2D6
Disguise (1): 8/2D6
Fast Hand (1): 7/D12
Forgery (1): 7/D12
Lip Reading (2): 9/D8+D6
Lock Picking (2): 8/2D6
Melee Weapons (2): 8/2D6
Picking Pockets (3): 9/D8+D6
Read and Write Language (2): 9/D8+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Theran
Speak Language (3): 10/D10+D6
—Dwarf (Throalic), Theran, Windling
Streetwise (3): 10/D10+D6
Surprise Strike (2): 5/D8
Throwing Weapons (2): 8/2D6

Equipment

Leather Armor (Phys 3)
Windling Spear (Damage 5/D8; Range 9–15–18)
Windling Dagger (Damage 4/D6; Range 6–10–12)
Adventurer's Kit
Cloaksense Brooch
Disguise Kit
2 × Kelia's Antidote
2 × Vials of Keesra Poison (Sleep; SD 7)
Windling Trail Rations (1 week)
Targeting Eye
Thieves' Picks and Tools
Traveler's Garb
Writing Kit

Loot

3 gold pieces

Legend Award

65 Legend Points

Notes

The character possesses the windling Astral-Sensitive Sight, Flight, and Increased Physical Defense racial abilities.

Quotes

"If they catch us, remember—you don't know me and I don't know you."

"We are only criminals if our side loses."

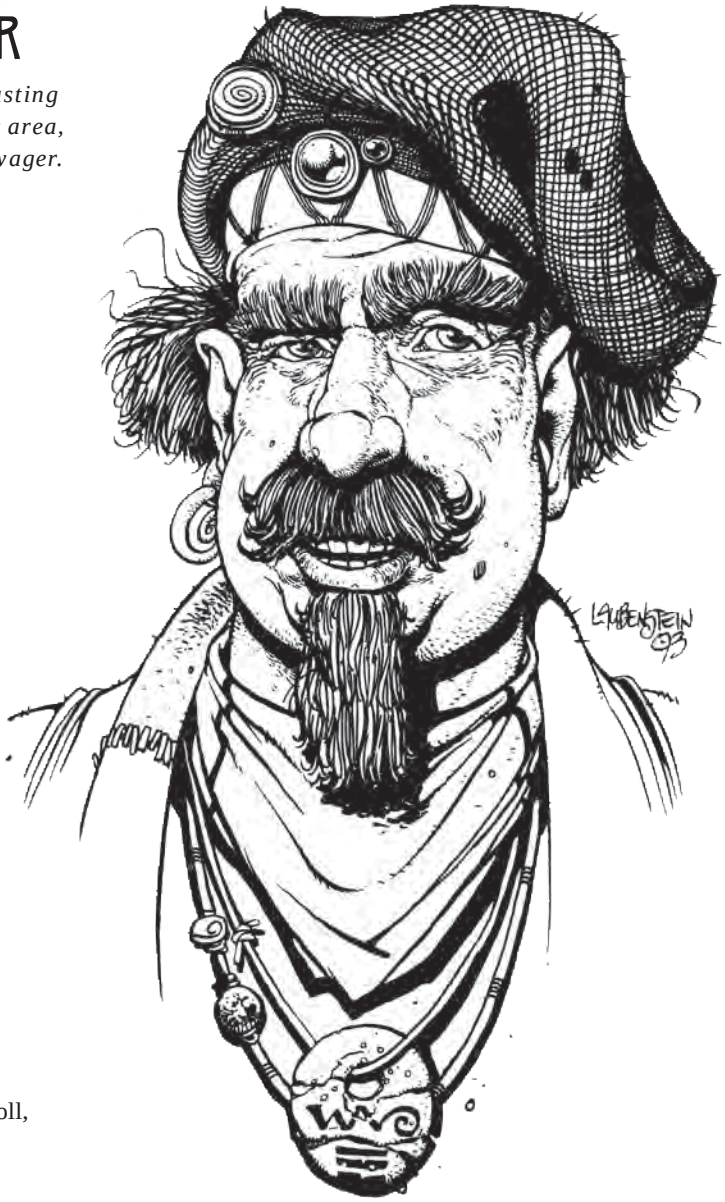
"You must be mistaking me for another windling. We all look very similar, you know."

Commentary

The Theran windling spy is a master of stealth and cunning. Privy to some of the most closely guarded secrets in Barsaive, he plays an essential part in the political ambitions of many Therans. A ruthless and deadly character, many look at his unimposing appearance and judge him insignificant and harmless. Do not make this misjudgment. Many heroes have paid for it with their lives.

Human Tavern Owner

"Sit down and have an ale. The meat is roasting and should be ready in a moment. You're new to this area, aren't you? Looking to forge a legend of your own, I wager. Well, rumor has it…"



Attributes

Dexterity (9): 4/D6
Strength (9): 4/D6
Toughness (10): 5/D8
Perception (12): 5/D8
Willpower (9): 4/D6
Charisma (10): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Initiative: 4/D6
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 4/D6
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Combat Movement: 18
Full Movement: 36

Skills

Artisan:
Entertainer (Storytelling) (1): 6/D10
Music (Flute) (1): 6/D10
Knowledge:
Legends and Heroes (2): 7/D12
Local Lore (3): 8/2D6
General:
Animal Handling (1): 5/D8
Conversation (4): 9/D8+D6
Melee Weapons (1): 5/D8
Speak Language (7): 12/2D10
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Sperethiel*, Obsidiman, *Or'zet*, Troll, T'skrang, Windling
Unarmed Combat (2): 6/D10

Equipment

Club (Damage 7/D12)
Knife (Damage 5/D8)
Sap (Damage 5/D8)
Belt Pouch
Flute
Guard Dog
Traveler's Garb

Loot

20 silver pieces

Legend Award

40 Legend Points

Quotes

"Rumors are free. Facts, now that's another matter."

"Bitter?! That ale has aged for well over three days, Sir Connoisseur!"

"Hey! Keep your dirty hands off the servers!"

Commentary

People come to the tavern to eat, drink, be entertained, and to meet other people. The tavern owner wears many hats—bartender, entertainer, rumormonger. He watches and remembers the comings and goings of all characters who pass through his humble establishment and, with the help of some silver pieces, may be persuaded to share this information.

Human Veteran Guard

"So you wish to see my master? Tell me the truth of why you want to visit him and I might allow it. Lie to me, and I'll make sure you never pass this checkpoint."

Attributes

Dexterity (16): 7/D12
Strength (13): 6/D10
Toughness (14): 6/D10
Perception (13): 6/D10
Willpower (14): 6/D10
Charisma (16): 7/D12

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 9
Initiative: 5/D8
Physical Armor: 7
Mystic Armor: 2
Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 10
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 6/D10
Unconsciousness Rating: 28
Combat Movement: 32
Full Movement: 64

Skills

Artisan:
Weapon Runic Carving (1): 8/2D6
Knowledge:
Local Lore (3): 9/D8+D6
Local Politics (3): 9/D8+D6
General:
Detect Weapon (2): 8/2D6
Disarm (2): 9/D8+D6
Melee Weapons (3): 10/D10+D6
Quickblade* (5): 10/D10+D6
Riposte (3): 10/D10+D6
Spellcasting (1): 7/D12
Tactics (3): 9/D8+D6
Unarmed Combat (1): 8/2D6
Wound Balance (1): 7/D12

* –2 Initiative Penalty applied.

Equipment

Ring Mail (Phys 6; Init 2)
Buckler (Phys 1; Shatter 17)
Battle-Axe (Damage 12/2D10)
Club (Damage 9/D8+D6)
Sap (Damage 7/D12)
Belt Pouch
Carving Tool
Traveler's Garb

Lucky Charm: Lucky charm valued at 2D6 silver pieces if not magical, 2D6 × 20 silver pieces if magical. To determine the magical value of a guard veteran's charm, the gamemaster makes a Step 4 Magic (10) Test. If the test is successful, the charm is magical, and adds +1 to the veteran's Physical and Spell Defense. To activate the charm, the guard takes 1 Strain Point of damage and makes a Spellcasting (6) Test. If the test succeeds, the charm's protection lasts for a number of rounds equal to the Spellcasting Test result.

Loot

25 silver pieces

Legend Award

130 Legend Points

Quotes

"You speak of trust. The horrors and their pawns shattered trust long ago. If you want to see my master, you'll prove yourself to be without taint."

"If you lay even one finger on my master, I'll make sure the last thing you see is my axe swinging at your neck."

Commentary

A soldier with years of experience, a guard veteran has loyally served his city, house, or master for a lengthy period of time. Most have encountered the Horrors or their constructs at least once, and none care to repeat the experience. Though steadfast, guard veterans do not give their employers blind loyalty. Most consider themselves guardians of justice, and if a character can prove that an employer has evil intentions, many guard veterans will cease to defend him. All guard veterans possess the following ability:

Detect Deceit: Guard veterans have honed an uncanny judge of character into a magical ability. Whenever a character tries to deceive a guard veteran, the guard makes a Spellcasting Test against the character's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the guard's suspicions are roused, although he does not determine the character's true intent. The guard adds +5 to his Social Defense against the character, making him less likely to fall for the character's scam. This bonus lasts for a number of days equal to the guard's Spellcasting Test result.

Human Air Sailor

Attributes

Dexterity (18): 7/D12 | **Strength** (14): 6/D10 | **Toughness** (12): 5/D8
Perception (13): 6/D10 | **Willpower** (11): 5/D8 | **Charisma** (11): 5/D8

Combat	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Physical Defense:	10	10	10	14	14	15
Spell Defense:	7	7	7	7	8	10
Social Defense:	7	7	7	8	8	11
Physical Armor:	9	9	12	12	12	12
Mystic Armor:	2	2	4	4	4	4

Initiative Step: 5/D8
Combat Movement: 36
Full Movement: 72

Health	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Death Rating:	40	52	64	76	88	100
Wound Threshold:	9	9	9	9	9	9
Unconsciousness Rating:	31	41	51	61	71	81

Recovery Tests: 2

Karma	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Karma Points:	12	15	24	37	40	40

Karma Step: 5/D8

Talents	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Acrobatic Strike	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Air Sailing [D]	3/8	4/9	6/11	8/13	10/15	12/17
Avoid Blow [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Climbing [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/15	9/17	11/19
Karma Ritual	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Melee Weapons [D]	3/10	4/11	6/13	8/15	10/17	12/19
Durability (6/5)	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Great Leap [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Throwing Weapons	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Wind Catcher [D]	—	3/8	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Wound Balance [D]	—	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Thread Weaving (Air Weaving) [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Unarmed Combat	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Air Dance	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Haggle [D]	—	—	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Riposte	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Taunt	—	—	—	7/12	9/14	11/16
Second Weapon	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Speak Language [D]	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Gliding Stride [D]	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Missile Weapons	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Lion Heart	—	—	—	—	9/14	11/16
Resist Taunt [D]	—	—	—	—	9/14	11/16
Second Attack	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Endure Cold [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/16
Swing Attack	—	—	—	—	—	11/18
Defense [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/18
Shield Beater	—	—	—	—	—	11/11

Skills	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
General:						
Champion Challenge	—	—	—	—	—	1/6
Disarm	—	—	—	1/8	2/9	3/10
Evaluate	—	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10
Heartening Laugh	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Navigation	1/7	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Tactics	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Trading	—	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9

Knowledge:						
Airships	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12
Barsaive History	1/7	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Artisan:						
Mapmaking	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Sail Embroidery	1/6	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Loot	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Silver Pieces	45	55	105	235	575	1,465
Legend Award	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Legend Points	120	145	455	1,760	5,805	14,250

Equipment

Equipment: Second Circle

Hardened Leather Armor (Phys 5; Init 1), Buckler (Phys 1; Shatter 17), Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1), Broadsword (Damage 11/D10+D8), Short Sword (Damage 10/D10+D6), 2 × Hawk Hatchets (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 24–40–48), Dagger (Damage 8/2D6; Range 9–15–18), Adventurer's Kit, Traveler's Garb, Trail Rations (1 week), Embroidery Tools, Climbing Kit, Navigation Charts (in Map/Scroll Case)

Equipment: Third Circle

As Second Circle, with the following changes: Broadsword (Forged +1; Damage 12/2D10), Cloaksense Brooch, Writing Kit

Equipment: Fifth Circle

As Third Circle, with the following changes: Broadsword (Forged +2; Damage 13/D12+D10), Short Sword (Forged +1; Damage 11/D10+D8), Thread Hardened Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 8; Myst 2; Init 1)

Equipment: Seventh Circle

As Fifth Circle, with the following changes: Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 14/D20+D4), Short Sword (Forged +2; Damage 12/2D10), Thread Boots (Rank 4; PhysDef +3; Climbing rank +1)

Equipment: Ninth Circle

As Seventh Circle, with the following changes: Thread Longbow (Rank 3; Damage 13/D12+D10; Range 80–160–320), Quiver (with 20 longbow arrows)

Equipment: Eleventh Circle

As Ninth Circle, with the following changes: Thread Amulet (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; SocDef +2), Quiver (with 40 longbow arrows)

Notes

The adept possesses the human Versatility racial ability.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Karma on Strength-only Tests

Sixth Circle: +1 Social Defense

Seventh Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Eighth Circle: Karma on melee combat Damage Tests

Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests; +1 Spell Defense

Tenth Circle: +1 Social Defense; +1 Recovery Test (3)

Eleventh Circle: +1 Physical Defense; +1 Recovery Test (4)

Windling Archer

Attributes

Dexterity (19): 8/2D6 | **Strength** (7): 4/D6 | **Toughness** (10): 5/D8
Perception (15): 6/D10 | **Willpower** (12): 5/D8 | **Charisma** (13): 6/D10

Combat	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Physical Defense:	12	12	12	16	16	17
Spell Defense:	8	8	8	8	9	12
Social Defense:	7	7	7	7	7	9
Physical Armor:	6	6	8	8	8	8
Mystic Armor:	2	2	5	5	5	5

Initiative Step: 7/D12
Combat Movement: 22/43[+]
Full Movement: 44/86[+]

[+] The second value is the adept's flying Movement rate.

Health	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Death Rating:	37	49	61	73	85	97
Wound Threshold:	8	8	8	8	8	8
Unconsciousness Rating:	27	37	47	57	67	77

Recovery Tests: 2

Karma	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Karma Points:	17	20	29	42	59	60

Karma Step: 6/D10

Talents	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Avoid Blow	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15	9/17	11/19
Direction Arrow [D]	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Karma Ritual	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Missile Weapons [D]	3/11	4/12	6/14	8/16	10/18	12/20
Mystic Aim [D]	3/9	4/10	6/12	8/14	10/16	12/18
True Shot	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15	9/1 7	11/19
Durability (6/5)	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Sprint	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15	9/17	11/19
Throwing Weapons [D]	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15	9/17	11/19
Flame Arrow [D]	—	3/8	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Wound Balance	—	3/7	5/9	7/11	9/13	11/15
Melee Weapons	—	—	5/13	7/15	9/17	11/19
Thread Weaving (Arrow Weaving) [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
First Impression	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Stopping Aim [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Bank Shot [D]	—	—	—	7/15	9/17	11/19
Speak Language	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Anticipate Blow	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Call Arrow [D]	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Eagle Eye [D]	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Impressive Shot [D]	—	—	—	—	9/17	11/19
Silent Walk	—	—	—	—	9/17	11/19
Trace Missile [D]	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Warning Shot [D]	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Dominate Arrow [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/16
Rushing Attack [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/19
Blind Fire [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Quick Shot [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/19

Skills	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
General:						
Climbing	1/9	2/10	3/11	4/13	5/14	6/15
Creature Analysis	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Evidence Analysis	—	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10
Hunting	—	1/9	2/10	3/11	4/12	5/13
Navigation	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Wilderness Survival	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12

Knowledge:						
Barsaive History	1/7	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Creature Lore	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Windling Lore	1/7	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Artisan:						
Mapmaking	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Wood Carving	1/7	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Loot	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Silver Pieces	30	40	90	220	560	1,450
Legend Award	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Legend Points	145	170	355	770	1,835	29,280

Equipment

Equipment: Second Circle

Leather Armor (Phys 3), Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1), Windling Bow (Damage 6/D10; Range 12–24–48), Quiver (with 20 windling bow arrows), 2 × Windling Spears (Damage 6/D10; Range 9–15–18), Windling Broadsword (Damage 6/D10), Adventurer's Kit, Traveler's Garb, Windling Trail Rations (1 week), Wood Carving Tools, Climbing Kit

Equipment: Third Circle

As Second Circle, with the following changes: Quiver (with 40 windling bow arrows), Cloaksense Brooch, Navigation Charts (in Map/Scroll Case), Writing Kit

Equipment: Fifth Circle

As Third Circle, with the following changes: Windling Two-Handed Sword (Damage 7/D12), Thread Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3)

Equipment: Seventh Circle

As Fifth Circle, with the following changes: Thread Boots (Rank 4; PhysDef +3; Climbing +1)

Equipment: Ninth Circle

As Seventh Circle, with the following changes: Thread Belt Pouch (Rank 4; 5 × capacity; 1/10 weight items inside)

Equipment: Eleventh Circle

As Ninth Circle, with the following changes: Thread Amulet (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; SocDef +2)

Notes

The adept possesses the windling Astral-Sensitive Sight, Flight, and Increased Physical Defense racial abilities.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests

Sixth Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Seventh Circle: Karma on missile weapon Damage Tests

Eighth Circle: +1 Spell Defense

Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests; +1 Recovery Test (3)

Tenth Circle: +1 Spell Defense; +1 Initiative step (9/D8+D6)

Eleventh Circle: +1 Physical Defense; +1 Initiative step (10/D10+D6)

Elf Beastmaster

Attributes

Dexterity (14): 6/D10 | **Strength** (13): 6/D10 | **Toughness** (13): 6/D10
Perception (11): 5/D8 | **Willpower** (14): 6/D10 | **Charisma** (17): 7/D12

Combat	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Physical Defense:	8	8	8	11	11	12
Spell Defense:	6	6	6	8	9	11
Social Defense:	9	9	9	9	9	12
Physical Armor:	9	9	12	12	14	14
Mystic Armor:	4	4	5	5	6	6

Initiative Step: 4/D6
Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60

Health	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Death Rating:	42	56	70	84	98	112
Wound Threshold:	9	9	9	9	9	9
Unconsciousness Rating:	33	45	57	69	81	93

Recovery Tests: 2

Karma	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Karma Points:	12	15	24	37	40	40

Karma Step: 4/D6

Talents	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Animal Bond [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Claw Shape [D]	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Dominate Beast [D]	3/9	4/10	6/12	8/14	10/16	12/18
Karma Ritual	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Tracking	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Unarmed Combat	3/9	4/10	6/12	8/14	10/16	12/18
Animal Training [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Creature Analysis [D]	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Durability (7/6)	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Cat's Paw [D]	—	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Lizard Leap [D]	—	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Frighten Animals [D]	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Thread Weaving (Beast Weaving) [D]	—	—	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Borrow Sense [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Heal Animal Servant [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Endure Cold	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Incite Stampede [D]	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Claw Frenzy [D]	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Sense Poison	—	—	—	7/12	9/14	11/16
Lion Heart [D]	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Poison Resistance	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Animal Possession	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Bestial Toughness	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Howl [D]	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Animal Leadership	—	—	—	—	—	11/18
Lion Spirit	—	—	—	—	—	11/11
Develop Animal Sense [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/16
Tame Mount [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/18

Skills	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
General:						
Avoid Blow	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Battle Shout	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12
Fishing	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11
Melee Weapons	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Swimming	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12
Wilderness Survival	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10

Knowledge:						
Botany	—	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9
Creature Lore	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11
Wild Animals	1/6	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Artisan:						
Craftsman: Woodworker	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Wood Carving	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13
Loot	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Silver Pieces	35	45	95	225	565	1,455
Legend Award	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Legend Points	125	150	360	2,755	9,830	29,275

Equipment

Equipment: Second Circle

Hide Armor (Phys 5; Myst 1; Init 1), Buckler (Phys 1; Shatter 17), Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1), Hand Axe (Damage 10/D10+D6), Whip (Damage 9/D8+D6; Entangle 9), 2 × Daggers (Damage 8/2D6; Range 9–15–18), Adventurer's Kit, Traveler's Garb, Trail Rations (2 weeks), Fishing Kit, Wood Carving Tools, Waterskin

Equipment: Third Circle

As Second Circle, with the following changes: Cloaksense Brooch, Craftsman Tools

Equipment: Fifth Circle

As Third Circle, with the following changes: Thread Hardened Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 8; Myst 2; Init 1), Monkey Animal Companion

Equipment: Seventh Circle

As Fifth Circle, with the following changes: Thread Bracers (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SpellDef +2), Eagle Animal Companion

Equipment: Ninth Circle

As Seventh Circle, with the following changes: Thread Buckler (Rank 3; Phys 3; Myst 1; Shatter 17)

Equipment: Eleventh Circle

As Ninth Circle, with the following changes: Thread Amulet (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; SocDef +2)

Notes

The adept possesses the elf Low-Light Vision racial ability.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Charisma-only Tests
Fifth Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests
Sixth Circle: Karma on Toughness-only Tests
Seventh Circle: +1 Physical Defense
Eighth Circle: +1 Spell Defense
Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests
Tenth Circle: +1 Social Defense
Eleventh Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Ork Cavalryman

Attributes

Dexterity (12): 5/D8 | **Strength** (17): 7/D12 | **Toughness** (19): 8/2D6
Perception (11): 5/D8 | **Willpower** (10): 5/D8 | **Charisma** (11): 5/D8

Combat	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Physical Defense:	7	7	7	7	10	11
Spell Defense:	7	7	7	9	11	13
Social Defense:	7	7	7	9	9	10
Physical Armor:	10	10	11	11	11	11
Mystic Armor:	1	1	4	4	4	4

Initiative Step: 3/D4
Combat Movement: 26
Full Movement: 52

Health	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Death Rating:	50	64	78	92	106	120
Wound Threshold:	12	12	12	12	12	12
Unconsciousness Rating:	41	53	65	77	89	101

Recovery Tests: 3

Karma	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Karma Points:	12	15	24	37	40	40

Karma Step: 5/D8

Talents	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Animal Bond	3/8	4/9	6/11	8/13	10/15	12/17
Avoid Blow	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Charge [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Karma Ritual	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Melee Weapons	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Trick Riding [D]	3/8	4/9	6/11	8/13	10/15	12/17
Blood Share [D]	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15	9/17	11/19
Durability (7/6)	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Empathic Command [D]	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Spirit Mount [D]	—	3/8	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Wheeling Attack	—	3/8	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Resist Taunt [D]	—	—	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Thread Weaving (Rider Weaving) [D]	—	—	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Sure Mount [D]	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Wheeling Defense [D]	—	—	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Dominate Beast	—	—	—	7/12	9/14	11/16
Mount Durability (6/5)	—	—	—	6/6	9/9	11/11
Lasting Impression	—	—	—	7/12	9/14	11/16
Missile Weapons	—	—	—	7/12	9/14	11/16
Fearsome Charge [D]	—	—	—	—	9/14	11/16
Trample [D]	—	—	—	—	9/9	11/11
Call Mount [D]	—	—	—	—	9/14	11/16
Down Strike	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Rally [D]	—	—	—	—	9/14	11/16
Armor Mount	—	—	—	—	—	11/16
Champion Challenge	—	—	—	—	—	11/16
Heal Animal Servant [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/19
Tame Mount	—	—	—	—	—	11/16

Skills	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
General:						
Animal Training	—	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9
Great Leap	—	—	—	—	1/6	2/7
Hunting	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Navigation	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Tactics	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11
Tracking	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11
Wilderness Survival	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10

Knowledge:						
Ancient Weapons	1/6	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Weapon Lore	1/6	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Artisan:						
Mapmaking	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Runic Carving	1/6	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
LOOT	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Silver Pieces	40	50	100	230	570	1,460
LEGEND AWARD	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Legend Points	140	165	355	770	1,835	4,280

Equipment

Equipment: Second Circle

Padded Leather Armor (Phys 4), Rider's Shield (Phys 3; Init 1; Shatter 19), Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1), Flail (Damage 12/2D10), Spear (Damage 11/D10+D8; Range 18–30–36), 2 × Daggers (Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 9–15–18), Lance (Damage 13/D12+D10), Adventurer's Kit, Traveler's Garb, Trail Rations (2 weeks), Carving Tools, Waterskin, Riding Horse (combat trained), Bit, Bridle, and Harness, Large Saddlebag, Saddle, Stirrups, and Blanket

Equipment: Third Circle

As Second Circle, with the following changes: Flail (Forged +1; Damage 13/D12+D10), Medium Crossbow (Damage 12/2D10; Range 70–140–280), Quiver (with 15 medium crossbow bolts), Cloaksense Brooch, Writing Kit, Navigation Charts (in Map/Scroll Case)

Equipment: Fifth Circle

As Third Circle, with the following changes: Flail (Forged +2; Damage 14/D20+D4), Quiver (with 30 medium crossbow bolts), Thread Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3)

Equipment: Seventh Circle

As Fifth Circle, with the following changes: Flail (Forged +3; Damage 15/D20+D6), Thread Amulet (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; SocDef +2)

Equipment: Ninth Circle

As Seventh Circle, with the following changes: Thread Bracers (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SpellDef +2)

Equipment: Eleventh Circle

As Ninth Circle, with the following changes: Thread Vetta-Skin Bridle (Rank 4; +4 Toughness and Willpower steps versus fear for rider/mount)

NOTES

The adept possesses the ork Low-Light Vision and *Gahad* racial abilities.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Strength-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Karma on Toughness-only Tests

Sixth Circle: Karma on Charisma-only Tests

Seventh Circle: Karma on mount Damage Tests

Eighth Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests

Tenth Circle: +1 Social and Spell Defense

Eleventh Circle: +1 Physical and Spell Defense

Ork Elementalist

Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10 | **Strength** (13): 6/D10 | **Toughness** (13): 6/D10
Perception (16): 7/D12 | **Willpower** (14): 6/D10 | **Charisma** (9): 4/D6

Combat	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Physical Defense:	7	7	7	9	9	10
Spell Defense:	9	9	9	12	12	15
Social Defense:	6	6	6	6	6	9
Physical Armor:	3	3	5	5	5	5
Mystic Armor:	2	2	5	5	5	5

Initiative Step: 6/D10
Combat Movement: 28
Full Movement: 56

Health	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Death Rating:	39	47	55	62	70	78
Wound Threshold:	9	9	9	9	9	9
Unconsciousness Rating:	30	36	42	47	53	59

Recovery Tests: 2

Karma	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Karma Points:	12	15	24	37	40	40

Karma Step: 5/D8

Talents	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Karma Ritual	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Read and Write Language	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Read and Write Magic [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Spellcasting [D]	3/10	4/11	6/13	8/15	10/17	12/19
Spell Matrix	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Spell Matrix	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Thread Weaving (Elementalism) [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Durability (4/3)	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Fire Heal [D]	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Spell Matrix	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Air Speaking [D]	—	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Elemental Tongues [D]	—	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Astral Sight	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Spell Matrix	—	—	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Elemental Hold [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Summon (Elemental Spirits) [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Cold Purify [D]	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Willforce	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Enhanced Matrix	—	—	—	7/7	9/9	11/11
Unshakable Earth	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Enhanced Matrix	—	—	—		9/9	11/11
Temperature [D]	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Armored Matrix	—	—	—	—	9/9	11/11
Metal Ward [D]	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Safe Path [D]	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Plant Shelter [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/15
Reshape Object [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Animate Object	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Summoning Circle [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/17

Skills	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
General:						
Detect Trap	—	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11
Detect Weapon	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12
Disarm Trap	—	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10
Lock Picking	—	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10
Melee Weapons	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12
Trap Initiative	—	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10
Wilderness Survival	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13

Knowledge:						
Horror Lore	1/8	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12
Magical Lore	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13
Trap Lore	—	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11
Artisan:						
Robe Embroidery	1/5	2/6	3/7	4/8	5/9	6/10
Loot	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Silver Pieces	30	40	90	220	560	1,450
Legend Award	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Legend Points	145	220	730	2,395	8,780	21,725

Spells

The adept knows the following First Circle Elementalism spells: Earthblend, Earth Darts, Flameweapon, Plant Talk, Purify Water, Resist Cold, and Resist Fire. The adept may know any number of other spells the gamemaster desires up to a spell Circle equivalent to the adept's Circle. For example, the gamemaster could decide that a Second Circle Elementalist knows the entire First and Second Circle Elementalism spell lists.

Equipment

Equipment: Second Circle

Leather Armor (Phys 3), Broadsword (Damage 11/D10+D8), 2 × Daggers (Damage 8/2D6; Range 9–15–18), Dwarf Winternight Cloak, Adventurer's Kit, Traveler's Garb, Trail Rations (1 week), Embroidery Tools, Embroidered Robe, Writing Kit, Grimoire, Booster Potion

Equipment: Third Circle

As Second Circle, with the following changes: Broadsword (Forged +1; Damage 12/2D10), Cloaksense Brooch

Equipment: Fifth Circle

As Third Circle, with the following changes: Broadsword (Forged +2; Damage 13/D12+D10), Thread Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3), Thieves' Picks and Tools

Equipment: Seventh Circle

As Fifth Circle, with the following changes: Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 14/D20+D4), Thread Bracers (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SpellDef +2)

Equipment: Ninth Circle

As Seventh Circle, with the following changes: Thread Brooch (Rank 3; SocDef +2; +1 step Charisma-only Tests)

Equipment: Eleventh Circle

As Ninth Circle, with the following changes: Thread Wand (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; Spellcasting step +2; Spell Effect step +1)

Notes

The adept possesses the ork Low-Light Vision and *Gahad* racial abilities.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests

Sixth Circle: Fire and Ice (1 Damage Point)

Seventh Circle: +1 Spell Defense

Eighth Circle: Karma on spell Effect Tests

Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests

Tenth Circle: +1 Social Defense

Eleventh Circle: +1 Physical and Spell Defense

WINDLING ILLUSIONIST

ATTRIBUTES

Dexterity (11): 5/D8 | **Strength** (7): 4/D6 | **Toughness** (10): 5/D8
Perception (16): 7/D12 | **Willpower** (16): 7/D12 | **Charisma** (15): 6/D10

COMBAT	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Physical Defense:	9	9	9	12	12	13
Spell Defense:	9	9	9	9	10	13
Social Defense:	8	8	8	8	8	10
Physical Armor:	6	6	8	8	8	8
Mystic Armor:	3	3	6	6	6	6

Initiative Step: 4/D6
Combat Movement: 8/26✦
Full Movement: 16/52✦

✦ The second value is the adept's flying Movement rate.

HEALTH	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Death Rating:	35	43	50	58	66	74
Wound Threshold:	8	8	8	8	8	8
Unconsciousness Rating:	25	31	36	42	48	54

Recovery Tests: 2

KARMA	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Karma Points:	17	20	29	42	59	60

Karma Step: 6/D10

TALENTS	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Karma Ritual	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Read and Write Language	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Read and Write Magic [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Spellcasting [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Spell Matrix	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Spell Matrix	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Thread Weaving (Illusionism) [D]	3/10	4/11	6/13	8/15	10/17	12/19
Disguise Self [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Durability (4/3)	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Spell Matrix	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Dead Fall [D]	—	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Speak Language	—	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
False Sight [D]	—	—	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Spell Matrix	—	—	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Slough Blame [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Willforce	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Astral Sight [D]	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Fast Hand [D]	—	—	—	7/12	9/14	11/16
Engaging Banter [D]	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Enhanced Matrix	—	—	—	7/7	9/9	11/11
Enhanced Matrix	—	—	—	—	9/9	11/11
True Sight [D]	—	—	—	—	9/9	11/11
Armored Matrix	—	—	—	—	9/9	11/11
Detect Falsehood [D]	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Resist Taunt [D]	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Memorize Image	—	—	—	—	—	11/18
Mind Wave [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/18
Armored Matrix	—	—	—	—	—	11/11
Hypnotize [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/17

SKILLS	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
General:						
Alchemy	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12
Climbing	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/10	5/11	6/12
Haggle	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Mimic Voice	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12
Picking Pockets	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	3/8	4/9
Streetwise	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13
Taunt	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11

Knowledge:						
Alchemy and Potions	1/8	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12
Botany	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12
Magical Lore	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13
Artisan:						
Robe Embroidery	1/7	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Loot	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Silver Pieces	30	40	90	220	560	1,450
Legend Award	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Legend Points	165	245	750	2,415	8,830	24,275

Spells

The adept knows the First Circle Illusionism spells: Assuring Touch, Best Face, Disguise Metal, Displace Image, Light, Rope Guide, and Unseen Voices. The adept may know any number of other spells the gamemaster desires up to a spell Circle equivalent to the adept's Circle. For example, the gamemaster could decide that a Second Circle Illusionist knows the entire First and Second Circle Illusionism spell lists.

Equipment

Equipment: Second Circle

Leather Armor (Phys 3), Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1), Windling Spear (Damage 6/D10; Range 9–15–18), Windling Bow (6/D10; Range 12–24–48), Quiver (with 20 windling bow arrows), Adventurer's Kit, Traveler's Garb, Windling Trail Rations (1 week), Embroidery Tools, Embroidered Robe, Climbing Kit, Writing Kit, Booster Potion, Grimoire

Equipment: Third Circle

As Second Circle, with the following changes: Cloaksense Brooch, 2 × Booster Potions, Quiet-Fingers Gloves, Alchemy Kit, Thieves' Picks and Tools

Equipment: Fifth Circle

As Third Circle, with the following changes: Thread Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3), 3 × Booster Potions

Equipment: Seventh Circle

As Fifth Circle, with the following changes: Thread Boots (Rank 4; PhysDef +3; Climbing rank +1), Salve of Closure

Equipment: Ninth Circle

As Seventh Circle, with the following changes: Thread Belt Pouch (Rank 4; 5 × capacity; 1/10 weight items inside), Healing Potion

Equipment: Eleventh Circle

As Ninth Circle, with the following changes: Thread Wand (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; Spellcasting step +2; Spell Effect step +1), Last Chance Salve

Notes

The adept possesses the windling Astral-Sensitive Sight, Flight, and Increased Physical Defense racial abilities.

Fourth Circle: Glamour (1 Damage Point)
Fifth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests
Sixth Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests
Seventh Circle: Karma on spell Effect Tests
Eighth Circle: +1 Spell Defense
Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests
Tenth Circle: +1 Physical and Social Defense
Eleventh Circle: +1 Social and Spell Defense

T'skrang Nethermancer

Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10 | **Strength** (11): 5/D8 | **Toughness** (14): 6/D10
Perception (16): 7/D12 | **Willpower** (14): 6/D10 | **Charisma** (14): 6/D10

Combat	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Physical Defense:	7	7	7	9	9	10
Spell Defense:	9	9	9	12	14	15
Social Defense:	8	8	8	9	9	10
Physical Armor:	3	3	5	5	5	5
Mystic Armor:	2	2	5	5	5	5

Initiative Step: 6/D10
Combat Movement: 26
Full Movement: 52

Health	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Death Rating:	40	48	56	64	72	78
Wound Threshold:	10	10	10	10	10	10
Unconsciousness Rating:	31	37	43	49	55	59

Recovery Tests: 3

Karma	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Karma Points:	8	11	20	25	25	25

Karma Step: 4/D6

Talents	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Karma Ritual	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Read and Write Language	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Read and Write Magic [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Spellcasting [D]	3/10	4/11	6/13	8/15	10/17	12/19
Spell Matrix	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Spell Matrix	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Thread Weaving (Nethermancy) [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Astral Sight [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Durability (4/3)	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Frighten	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Spell Matrix	—	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Spirit Talk [D]	—	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Animal Possession	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Spell Matrix	—	—	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Spirit Hold [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Summon (Ally Spirits) [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Lifesight [D]	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Willforce	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Enhanced Matrix	—	—	—	7/7	9/9	11/11
Spirit Dodge [D]	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Enhanced Matrix	—	—	—	—	9/9	11/11
Orbiting Spy [D]	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Arcane Mutterings	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Armored Matrix	—	—	—	—	9/9	11/11
Astral Pocket [D]	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Animate Object [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Summoning Circle	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Armored Matrix	—	—	—	—	—	11/11
Bargain With Summoned Creature [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/17

Skills	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
General:						
Animal Bond	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Animal Handling	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Animal Training	—	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10
Resist Taunt	—	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10
Taunt	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Unarmed Combat	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12
Wound Balance	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11

Knowledge:						
Creature Lore	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12
Magical Lore	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13
Scourge History	1/8	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12
Artisan:						
Robe Embroidery	1/7	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Loot	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Silver Pieces	25	35	85	215	555	1,455
Legend Award	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Legend Points	135	210	720	2,385	8,800	24,245

Spells

The adept knows the First Circle Nethermancy spells: Bone Dance, Chilling Circle, Command Nightflyer, Detect Undead, Experience Death, Spirit Grip, and Undead Struggle. The adept may know any number of other spells the gamemaster desires up to a spell Circle equivalent to the adept's Circle. For example, the gamemaster could decide that a Second Circle Nethermancer knows the entire First and Second Circle Nethermancy spell lists.

Equipment

Equipment: Second Circle

Leather Armor (Phys 3), Quarterstaff (Damage 7/D12), 2 × Daggers (Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18), Knife (Damage 6/D10), Sling (Damage 7/D12; Range 20–40–80), Belt Pouch (with 15 stones), Dwarf Winternight Cloak, Adventurer's Kit's, Traveler's Garb, Trail Rations (2 weeks), Embroidery Tools, Embroidered Robe, Writing Kit, Waterskin, Booster Potion, Grimoire, Hooded Lantern, 2 × Flasks of Oil

Equipment: Third Circle

As Second Circle, with the following changes: Cloaksense Brooch

Equipment: Fifth Circle

As Third Circle, with the following changes: Thread Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3), Krilworm Animal Companion

Equipment: Seventh Circle

As Fifth Circle, with the following changes: Thread Bracers (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SpellDef +2)

Equipment: Ninth Circle

As Seventh Circle, with the following changes: Thread Belt Pouch (Rank 4; 5 × capacity; 1/10 weight items inside; w/15 stones)

Equipment: Eleventh Circle

As Ninth Circle, with the following changes: Thread Wand (Rank 4; Spell Def +2; Spellcasting step +2; Spell Effect step +1)

Notes

The adept possesses the t'skrang Tail Attack (Damage 5/D8) racial ability.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests

Sixth Circle: +1 Spell Defense

Seventh Circle: +1 Social Defense

Eighth Circle: Karma on controlled creatures or spirits Action Tests

Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests; Karma on spell Effect Tests

Tenth Circle: +1 Physical and Social Defense

Eleventh Circle: Otherworldly Control (2 Damage Points)

Human Scout

Attributes

Dexterity (16): 7/D12 | **Strength** (13): 6/D10 | **Toughness** (13): 6/D10
Perception (14): 6/D10 | **Willpower** (12): 5/D8 | **Charisma** (11): 5/D8

Combat	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Physical Defense:	9	9	9	13	13	14
Spell Defense:	8	8	8	8	9	9
Social Defense:	7	7	7	7	7	8
Physical Armor:	9	9	12	12	12	12
Mystic Armor:	2	2	4	4	4	4

Initiative Step: 5/D8
Combat Movement: 32
Full Movement: 64

Health	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Death Rating:	41	53	64	76	88	98
Wound Threshold:	9	9	9	9	9	9
Unconsciousness Rating:	32	42	51	61	71	79

Recovery Tests: 2

Karma	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Karma Points:	12	15	24	37	40	40

Karma Step: 5/D8

Talents	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Avoid Blow [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Climbing [D]	3/10	4/11	6/13	8/16	10/18	12/20
Karma Ritual	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Melee Weapons	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Silent Walk [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Tracking [D]	3/9	4/10	6/12	8/14	10/16	12/18
Durability (6/5)	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Maneuver	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Read and Write Language	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Astral Sight [D]	—	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Sprint	—	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Riposte	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Thread Weaving (Scout Weaving) [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Lock Sense	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Trap Initiative [D]	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Great Leap	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Speak Language	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Detect Trap [D]	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Endure Cold [D]	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Gliding Stride [D]	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Missile Weapons	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Anticipate Blow	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Creature Analysis [D]	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Detect Weapon [D]	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Missile Twister	—	—	—	—	—	11/16
Trace Missile	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Disguise Self	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Wound Balance	—	—	—	—	—	11/17

Skills	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
General:						
Conceal Weapon	—	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11
Disarm Trap	—	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11
Down Strike	—	—	—	1/7	2/8	3/9
Lip Reading	—	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9
Lock Picking	—	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11
Read and Write Magic	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Resist Taunt	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11
Swimming	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12

Knowledge:						
Barsaive History	1/7	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Creature Lore	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12
Artisan:						
Wood Carving	1/6	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Loot	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Silver Pieces	65	75	125	255	595	1,480
Legend Award	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Legend Points	120	150	455	1,100	2,805	6,750

Equipment

Equipment: Second Circle

Hardened Leather Armor (Phys 5; Init 1), Buckler (Phys 1; Shatter 17), Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1), Broadsword (Damage 11/D10+D8), Dagger (Damage 8/2D6; Range 9–15–18), Adventurer's Kit, Traveler's Garb, Trail Rations (1 week), Wood Carving Tools, Writing Kit, Navigation Charts (in Map/Scroll Case), Climbing Kit

Equipment: Third Circle

As Second Circle, with the following changes: Broadsword (Forged +1; Damage 12/2D10), Cloaksense Brooch

Equipment: Fifth Circle

As Third Circle, with the following changes: Broadsword (Forged +2; Damage 13/D12+D10), Thread Hardened Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 8; Myst 2; Init 1), Thieves' Picks and Tools

Equipment: Seventh Circle

As Fifth Circle, with the following changes: Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 14/D20+D4), Thread Boots (Rank 4; PhysDef +3; Climbing rank +1)

Equipment: Ninth Circle

As Seventh Circle, with the following changes: Thread Longbow (Rank 3; Damage 13/D12+D10; Range 80–160–320), Quiver (with 20 longbow arrows)

Equipment: Eleventh Circle

As Ninth Circle, with the following changes: Thread Belt Pouch (Rank 4; 5 × capacity; 1/10 weight items inside), Quiver (with 40 longbow arrows)

Notes

The adept possesses the human Versatility racial ability.

Fourth Circle: Enhanced Senses (1 Damage Point)

Fifth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests

Sixth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

Seventh Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Eighth Circle: +1 Spell Defense

Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests; +1 Initiative step (7/D12)

Tenth Circle: Blend (2 Damage Points)

Eleventh Circle: +1 Physical and Social Defense

Troll Sky Raider

Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10 | **Strength** (17): 7/D12 | **Toughness** (20): 8/2D6
Perception (11): 5/D8 | **Willpower** (11): 5/D8 | **Charisma** (13): 6/D10

Combat	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Physical Defense:	7	7	7	10	10	13
Spell Defense:	7	7	7	7	10	13
Social Defense:	7	7	7	7	10	11
Physical Armor:	11	11	14	14	14	14
Mystic Armor:	5	5	7	7	7	7

Initiative Step: 2/D4–1
Combat Movement: 26
Full Movement: 52

Health	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Death Rating:	52	68	84	100	116	132
Wound Threshold:	13	13	13	13	13	13
Unconsciousness Rating:	42	54	66	78	90	102

Recovery Tests: 4

Karma	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Karma Points:	7	10	19	20	20	20

Karma Step: 3/D4

Talents	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Air Sailing [D]	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Avoid Blow	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Battle Shout [D]	3/9	4/10	6/12	8/14	10/16	12/18
Fireblood [D]	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15	9/17	11/19
Karma Ritual	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Melee Weapons [D]	3/9	4/10	6/12	8/14	10/16	12/18
Durability (8/6)	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Great Leap [D]	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Shield Charge [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Unarmed Combat	—	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Wind Catcher [D]	—	3/8	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Swift Kick	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Thread Weaving (Sky Weaving) [D]	—	—	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Battle Bellow [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Fence	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Momentum Attack [D]	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Steely Stare [D]	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Speak Language	—	—	—	7/12	9/14	11/16
Throwing Weapons	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Crushing Blow [D]	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Missile Weapons	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Endure Cold [D]	—	—	—	—	9/17	11/19
Lion Heart [D]	—	—	—	—	9/14	11/16
Second Attack [D]	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Shield Beater	—	—	—	—	—	11/11
Thunder Axe [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/18
Defense	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Weapon Breaker [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/18

Skills	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
General:						
Champion Challenge	—	—	—	—	—	1/7
Hunting	—	—	—	1/7	2/8	3/9
Riposte	—	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10
Streetwise	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Tactics	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11
Wilderness Survival	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Wound Balance	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13

Knowledge:						
Military History	1/6	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/10	5/11
Troll Lore	1/6	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/10	5/11
Artisan:						
Mapmaking	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Runic Carving	1/7	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Loot	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Silver Pieces	45	55	95	235	575	1,465
Legend Award	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Legend Points	135	165	575	1,780	5,855	14,300

Equipment

Equipment: Second Circle

Hardened Leather Armor (Phys 5; Init 1), Crystal Raider Shield (Phys 3; Myst 3; Init 2; Shatter 18), Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1), Battle-Axe (Damage 13/D12+D10), Club (Damage 10/D10+D6), Dwarf Sword (Damage 10/D10+D6), Troll Sling (Damage 11/D10+D8; Range 30–60–120), Belt Pouch (with 15 stones), Adventurer's Kit, Traveler's Garb, Trail Rations (1 week), Carving Tool, Navigation Charts (in Map/Scroll Case), Climbing Kit

Equipment: Third Circle

As Second Circle, with the following changes: Battle-Axe (Forged +1; Damage 14/D20+D4), Cloaksense Brooch, Writing Kit

Equipment: Fifth Circle

As Third Circle, with the following changes: Battle-Axe (Forged +2; Damage 15/D20+D6), Thread Hardened Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 8; Myst 2; Init 1)

Equipment: Seventh Circle

As Fifth Circle, with the following changes: Battle-Axe (Forged +3; Damage 16/D20+D8), 2 × Spears (Damage 11/D10+D8; Range 18–30–36), Thread Boots (Rank 4; PhysDef +3; Climbing rank +1)

Equipment: Ninth Circle

As Seventh Circle, with the following changes: Battle-Axe (Forged +4; Damage 17/D20+D10), Thread Amulet (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; SocDef +2)

Equipment: Eleventh Circle

As Ninth Circle, with the following changes: Thread Bracers (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SpellDef +2)

Notes

The adept possesses the troll Heat Sight racial ability.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Strength-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

Sixth Circle: Karma on Toughness-only Tests

Seventh Circle: Karma on melee combat Damage Tests

Eighth Circle: +1 Spell Defense

Ninth Circle: +1 Physical Defense; Karma on Recovery Tests

Tenth Circle: +1 Social Defense

Eleventh Circle: +1 Physical and Spell Defense

Dwarf Swordmaster

Attributes

Dexterity (18): 7/D12 | **Strength** (15): 6/D10 | **Toughness** (16): 7/D12
Perception (11): 5/D8 | **Willpower** (11): 5/D8 | **Charisma** (11): 5/D8

Combat	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Physical Defense:	10	10	10	10	12	13
Spell Defense:	7	7	7	9	12	12
Social Defense:	7	7	7	10	10	12
Physical Armor:	8	8	11	11	11	11
Mystic Armor:	1	1	3	3	3	3

Initiative Step: 5/D8
Combat Movement: 32
Full Movement: 64

Health	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Death Rating:	46	60	74	88	102	116
Wound Threshold:	11	11	11	11	11	11
Unconsciousness Rating:	37	49	61	73	85	97

Recovery Tests: 3

Karma	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Karma Points:	9	12	21	25	25	25

Karma Step: 4/D6

Talents	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Avoid Blow [D]	3/10	4/11	6/13	8/15	10/17	12/19
Karma Ritual	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Maneuver [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Melee Weapons [D]	3/10	4/11	6/13	8/15	10/17	12/19
Taunt	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Wound Balance	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Durability (7/6)	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
First Impression	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Riposte [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Heartening Laugh	—	3/8	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Throwing Weapons	—	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Speak Language	—	—	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Thread Weaving (Weapon Weaving) [D]	—	—	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Second Weapon [D]	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Winning Smile	—	—	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Disarm [D]	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Engaging Banter	—	—	—	7/12	9/14	11/16
Resist Taunt [D]	—	—	—	7/12	9/14	11/16
Second Attack [D]	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Anticipate Blow	—	—	—	—	9/14	11/16
Graceful Exit	—	—	—	—	9/14	11/16
Cobra Strike	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Impressive Strike [D]	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Pin [D]	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Critical Hit [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/11
Whirlwind [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/18
Quick Blade	—	—	—	—	—	11/18
Shield Beater [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/11

Skills	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
General:						
Acrobatic Strike	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12
Conversation	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11
Etiquette	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Flirting	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Streetwise	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Tactics	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Unarmed Combat	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13
Weapon Breaker	—	—	—	—	—	1/7

Knowledge:						
Barsaivian Legends	1/6	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Dwarf Lore	1/6	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Artisan:						
Dancing	1/6	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Loot	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Silver Pieces	30	40	90	220	560	1,450
Legend Award	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Legend Points	140	185	570	1,775	4,850	19,265

Equipment

Equipment: Second Circle

Hardened Leather Armor (Phys 5; Init 1), Footman's Shield (Phys 3; Init 1; Shatter 19), Dwarf Winternight Cloak, Broadsword (Damage 11/D10+D8), Short Sword (Damage 10/D10+D6), Dagger (Damage 8/2D6; Range 9–15–18), Adventurer's Kit, Traveler's Garb, Trail Rations (1 week)

Equipment: Third Circle

As Second Circle, with the following changes: Broadsword (Forged +1; Damage 12/2D10), 2 × Hawk Hatchets (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 24–40–48), Cloaksense Brooch

Equipment: Fifth Circle

As Third Circle, with the following changes: Broadsword (Forged +2; Damage 13/D12+D10), Short Sword (Forged +1; Damage 11/D10+D8), Thread Hardened Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 8; Myst 2; Init 1)

Equipment: Seventh Circle

As Fifth Circle, with the following changes: Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 14/D20+D4), Short Sword (Forged +2; Damage 12/2D10), Thread Amulet (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; SocDef +2)

Equipment: Ninth Circle

As Seventh Circle, with the following changes: Thread Bracers (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SpellDef +2)

Equipment: Eleventh Circle

As Ninth Circle, with the following changes: Thread Brooch (Rank 3; SocDef +2; +1 step to Charisma-only Tests)

Notes

The adept possesses the dwarf Heat Sight racial ability.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Karma on Charisma-only Tests

Sixth Circle: +1 Social Defense

Seventh Circle: Karma on melee combat Damage Tests

Eighth Circle: +1 Spell Defense

Ninth Circle: Karma on Recovery Tests

Tenth Circle: +1 Physical Defense; +1 Recovery Test (4)

Eleventh Circle: +1 Initiative step (6/D10); +1 Recovery Test (5)

Human Thief

Attributes

Dexterity (18): 7/D12 | **Strength** (11): 5/D8 | **Toughness** (14): 6/D10
Perception (13): 6/D10 | **Willpower** (11): 5/D8 | **Charisma** (12): 5/D8

Combat	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Physical Defense:	10	10	10	14	14	15
Spell Defense:	7	7	7	7	10	11
Social Defense:	7	7	7	7	9	10
Physical Armor:	6	6	6	6	6	8
Mystic Armor:	2	2	2	2	2	5

Initiative Step: 6/D10
Combat Movement: 36
Full Movement: 72

Health	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Death Rating:	41	51	60	70	78	88
Wound Threshold:	10	10	10	10	10	10
Unconsciousness Rating:	32	40	47	55	61	69

Recovery Tests: 3

Karma	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Karma Points:	12	15	24	37	40	40

Karma Step: 5/D8

Talents	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Climbing	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/15	9/17	11/19
Karma Ritual	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Lock Pick [D]	3/10	4/11	6/13	8/15	10/17	12/19
Melee Weapons	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Picking Pockets [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Silent Walk [D]	3/10	4/11	6/13	8/15	1o/17	12/19
Durability (5/4)	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Lock Sense [D]	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Surprise Strike [D]	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Avoid Blow [D]	—	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Fence [D]	—	3/8	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Thread Weaving (Thief Weaving) [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Trap Initiative [D]	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Detect Trap	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Disarm Trap [D]	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Disguise Self	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Fast Hand [D]	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Detect Weapon	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Throwing Weapons [D]	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Missile Weapons	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Slough Blame	—	—	—	—	9/14	11/16
Conceal Weapon [D]	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Gold Sense	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Sprint	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Astral Pocket [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Speak Language	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Lip Reading [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/16
Wound Balance	—	—	—	—	—	11/16

Skills	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
General:						
Bribery	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/12
False Shackles	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12
Fast Grab	—	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11
Forgery	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13
Great Leap	—	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11
Shackle Shrug	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12
Streetwise	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12

Knowledge:						
Gem Lore	—	—	—	—	1/7	2/8
Human Lore	1/7	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Throalic Law	1/7	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Artisan:						
Poetry	1/6	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Loot	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Silver Pieces	35	45	95	225	565	1,455
Legend Award	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Legend Points	115	140	320	735	1,800	4,250

Equipment

Equipment: Second Circle

Leather Armor (Phys 3), Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1), Flail (Damage 10/D10+D6), Dagger (Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18), Sap (Damage 6/D10), Adventurer's Kit, Traveler's Garb, Trail Rations (1 week), Quiet Fingers Gloves, Climbing Kit, Booster Potion

Equipment: Third Circle

As Second Circle, with the following changes: Flail (Forged +1; Damage 11/D10+D8), Cloaksense Brooch

Equipment: Fifth Circle

As Third Circle, with the following changes: Flail (Forged +2; Damage 12/2D10), Thread Belt Pouch (Rank 4; 5 × capacity; 1/10 weight items inside), 2 × Booster Potions

Equipment: Seventh Circle

As Fifth Circle, with the following changes: Flail (Forged +3; Damage 13/D12+D10), 2 × Hawk Hatchets (Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 24–40–48), Thread Boots (Rank 4; Phys Def +3; Climbing rank +1)

Equipment: Ninth Circle

As Seventh Circle, with the following changes: Light Crossbow (Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 50–100–200), Quiver (with 15 light crossbow bolts), Thread Amulet (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; SocDef +2)

Equipment: Eleventh Circle

As Ninth Circle, with the following changes: Thread Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3), Quiver (with 30 light crossbow bolts)

Notes

The adept possesses the human Versatility racial ability.

Fourth Circle: Thieves' Tongue (1 Damage Point)

Fifth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests

Sixth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

Seventh Circle: +1 Physical Defense

Eighth Circle: Evaluate Item (2 Damage Points)

Ninth Circle: +1 Spell Defense; Karma on Recovery Tests

Tenth Circle: +1 Social Defense; +1 Recovery Test (4)

Eleventh Circle: +1 Physical and Spell Defense

Elf Troubadour

Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10 | **Strength** (11): 5/D8 | **Toughness** (11): 5/D8
Perception (16): 7/D12 | **Willpower** (11): 5/D8 | **Charisma** (19): 8/2D6

Combat	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Physical Defense:	7	7	7	9	9	10
Spell Defense:	9	9	9	11	12	12
Social Defense:	10	10	10	10	12	14
Physical Armor:	7	7	9	9	9	9
Mystic Armor:	4	4	7	7	7	7

Initiative Step: 4/D6
Combat Movement: 28
Full Movement: 56

Health	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Death Rating:	38	50	62	73	85	95
Wound Threshold:	8	8	8	8	8	8
Unconsciousness Rating:	29	39	49	58	68	76

Recovery Tests: 2

Karma	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Karma Points:	8	11	20	25	25	25

Karma Step: 4/D6

Talents	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Disguise Self [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Emotion Song [D]	3/11	4/12	6/14	8/16	10/18	12/20
First Impression	3/11	4/12	6/14	8/16	10/18	12/20
Karma Ritual	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Melee Weapons	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Mimic Voice [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Durability (6/5)	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Item History	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Speak Language [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Empathic Sense [D]	—	3/11	5/13	7/15	9/17	11/19
Read and Write Language [D]	—	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Taunt	—	—	5/13	7/15	9/17	11/19
Thread Weaving (Story Weaving) [D]	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Engaging Banter [D]	—	—	5/13	7/15	9/17	11/19
Throwing Weapons	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Haggle	—	—	—	7/15	9/17	11/19
Resist Taunt [D]	—	—	—	7/12	9/14	11/16
Incite Mob [D]	—	—	—	7/12	9/14	11/16
Missile Weapons	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Graceful Exit	—	—	—	—	9/17	11/19
Hypnotize	—	—	—	—	9/17	11/19
Bardic Voice [D]	—	—	—	—	9/17	11/19
Blade Juggle	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
True Sight	—	—	—	—	9/9	11/11
Multi-Tongue	—	—	—	—	—	11/18
Slough Blame [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/19
Impressive Shot	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Song of Deflection [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/16

Skills	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
General:						
Conversation	—	1/9	2/10	3/11	4/12	5/13
Etiquette	1/9	2/10	3/11	4/12	5/13	6/14
Flirting	—	1/9	2/10	3/11	4/12	4/13
Heartening Laugh	—	—	1/9	2/10	3/11	4/12
Read and Write Magic	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12
Seduction	—	1/9	2/10	3/11	4/12	5/13
Streetwise	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13

Knowledge:						
Elven Lore	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13
Legends and Heroes	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13
Artisan:						
Mapmaking	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12
Music: Lute	1/9	2/10	3/11	4/12	5/13	6/14
Loot	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Silver Pieces	30	40	90	220	560	1,450
Legend Award	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Legend Points	125	150	335	750	1,785	4,230

Equipment

Equipment: Second Circle

Leather Armor (Phys 3), Ferndask Shield (Phys 1; Myst 2; Init 1; Shatter 16), Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1), Bola (Damage 8/2D6; Range 12–20–24; Entangle 9), Broadsword (Damage 10/D10+D6), 2 × Daggers (Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18), Adventurer's Kit, Wealthy Traveler's Garb, Trail Rations (1 week), Harp, Writing Kit, Elfweave Robe, Lute, Waterskin

Equipment: Third Circle

As Second Circle, with the following changes: Broadsword (Forged +1; Damage 11/D10+D8), Cloaksense Brooch

Equipment: Fifth Circle

As Third Circle, with the following changes: Broadsword (Forged +2; Damage 12/2D10), Thread Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3), 2 × Hawk Hatchets (Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 24–40–48)

Equipment: Seventh Circle

As Fifth Circle, with the following changes: Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 13/D12+D10), Shortbow (Damage 8/2D6; Range 30–60–120), Quiver (with 20 shortbow arrows), Thread Bracers (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SpellDef +2)

Equipment: Ninth Circle

As Seventh Circle, with the following changes: 9 × Daggers (Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18), Thread Brooch (Rank 3; SocDef +2; +1 step to Charisma-only Tests), Quiver (with 40 shortbow arrows)

Equipment: Eleventh Circle

As Ninth Circle, with the following changes: 11 × Daggers (Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18), Thread Lute (Rank 4; SocDef +1; Emotion Song step +4)

Notes

The adept possesses the elf Low-Light Vision racial ability.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests

Sixth Circle: Karma on Charisma-only Tests

Seventh Circle: Karma on supporting another character's social Action Test

Eighth Circle: The Kiss (1 Damage Point)

Ninth Circle: +1 Spell Defense; Karma on Recovery Tests

Tenth Circle: The Tale (2 Damage Points); +1 Recovery Test (3)

Eleventh Circle: +1 Physical and Social Defense

Elf Warrior

Attributes

Dexterity (15): 6/D10 | **Strength** (15): 6/D10 | **Toughness** (14): 6/D10
Perception (13): 6/D10 | **Willpower** (13): 6/D10 | **Charisma** (11): 5/D8

Combat	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Physical Defense:	8	8	8	8	11	12
Spell Defense:	7	7	9	9	11	12
Social Defense:	7	7	9	9	9	10
Physical Armor:	8	8	8	8	8	9
Mystic Armor:	2	2	2	2	2	5

Initiative Step: 5/D8
Combat Movement: 32
Full Movement: 64

Health	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Death Rating:	45	63	81	99	117	135
Wound Threshold:	10	10	10	10	10	10
Unconsciousness Rating:	35	49	63	77	91	105

Recovery Tests: 3

Karma	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Karma Points:	8	11	20	25	25	25

Karma Step: 4/D6

Talents	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Acrobatic Strike	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Air Dance	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Karma Ritual	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Melee Weapons [D]	3/9	4/10	6/12	8/14	10/16	12/18
Unarmed Combat [D]	3/9	4/10	6/12	8/14	10/16	12/18
Wood Skin [D]	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Anticipate Blow [D]	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Durability (9/7)	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Throwing Weapons	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Avoid Blow [D]	—	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Tiger Spring	—	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Down Strike [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Thread Weaving (War Weaving) [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Gliding Stride	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Swift Kick [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Life Check [D]	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Missile Weapons	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Earth Skin	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Second Attack	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Cobra Strike [D]	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Spirit Strike [D]	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Cat's Paw	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Missile Twister	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Second Weapon	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Body Blade [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Matrix Strike	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Spot Armor Flaw	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Vitality	—	—	—	—	—	11/17

Skills	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
General:						
Detect Weapon	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Disarm	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12
Resist Taunt	—	—	—	1/7	2/8	3/9
Riposte	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12
Shield Charge	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Tactics	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Weapon Breaker	—	—	—	—	—	1/7
Wound Balance	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11

Knowledge:						
Ancient Weapons	1/7	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Military History	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12
Artisan:						
Wood Carving	1/6	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Loot	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Silver Pieces	40	50	100	230	570	1,460
Legend Award	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Legend Points	120	180	610	2,015	6,760	16,710

Equipment

Equipment: Second Circle

Padded Leather Armor (Phys 4), Buckler (Phys 1; Shatter 17), Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1), Broadsword (Damage 11/D10+D8), Short Sword (Damage 10/D10+D6), 2 × Spears (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 18–30–36), 2 × Hawk Hatchets (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 24–40–48), Adventurer's Kit, Traveler's Garb, Trail Rations (1 week), Carving Tool, Waterskin

Equipment: Third Circle

As Second Circle, with the following changes: Broadsword (Forged +1; Damage 12/2D10), Cloaksense Brooch

Equipment: Fifth Circle

As Third Circle, with the following changes: Broadsword (Forged +2; Damage 13/D12+D10), Thread Amulet (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; SocDef +2)

Equipment: Seventh Circle

As Fifth Circle, with the following changes: Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 14/D20+D4), Short Sword (Forged +1; Damage 11/D10+D8), Thread Longbow (Rank 3; Damage 13/D12+D10; Range 80–160–320), Quiver (with 20 longbow arrows)

Equipment: Ninth Circle

As Seventh Circle, with the following changes: Short Sword (Forged +2; Damage 12/2D10), Thread Bracers (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SpellDef +2), Quiver (with 40 longbow arrows)

Equipment: Eleventh Circle

As Ninth Circle, with the following changes: Thread Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3)

Notes

The adept possesses the elf Low-Light Vision racial ability.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

Sixth Circle: Karma on Strength-only Tests

Seventh Circle: Karma on melee combat Damage Tests

Eighth Circle: Karma on unarmed combat Damage Tests

Ninth Circle: +1 Physical Defense; Karma on Recovery Tests

Tenth Circle: +1 Spell Defense; +1 Recovery Test (4)

Eleventh Circle: +1 Physical and Social Defense

Troll Weaponsmith

Attributes

Dexterity (11): 5/D8 | **Strength** (15): 6/D10 | **Toughness** (16): 7/D12
Perception (15): 6/D10 | **Willpower** (16): 7/D12 | **Charisma** (11): 5/D8

Combat	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Physical Defense:	7	7	7	7	8	8
Spell Defense:	8	8	8	10	11	13
Social Defense:	7	7	7	9	9	10
Physical Armor:	5	5	6	6	8	11
Mystic Armor:	2	2	5	5	6	6

Initiative Step: 5/D8
Combat Movement: 22
Full Movement: 44

Health	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Death Rating:	45	57	68	80	92	101
Wound Threshold:	11	11	11	11	11	11
Unconsciousness Rating:	36	46	55	65	75	82

Recovery Tests: 3

Karma	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Karma Points:	7	10	19	20	20	20

Karma Step: 3/D4

Talents	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Avoid Blow	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Forge Blade [D]	3/9	4/10	6/12	8/14	10/16	12/18
Karma Ritual	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Melee Weapons	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Steel Thought [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Weapon History [D]	3/9	4/10	6/12	8/14	10/16	12/18
Durability (6/5)	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Haggle [D]	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Read and Write Language	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Abate Curse [D]	—	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Detect Weapon	—	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Speak Language	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Thread Weaving (Thread Smithing) [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Temper Self [D]	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Warp Missile [D]	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Conceal Weapon	—	—	—	7/12	9/14	11/16
Spot Armor Flaw [D]	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Disarm	—	—	—	7/12	9/14	11/16
Temper Other [D]	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Improve Blade [D]	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Read and Write Magic	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Thread Weaving (Elementalism)	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Enhanced Matrix	—	—	—	—	9/9	11/11
Spellcasting	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Metal Ward	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Sense Magic Weapons [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Fireblood	—	—	—	—	—	11/18
Forge Armor [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/17

Skills	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
General:						
Bribery	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	6/11
Forgery	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Quickblade	—	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/10*
Research	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Second Weapon	—	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9
Streetwise	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12
Trading	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10

* Modified by +1 Initiative bonus at Eleventh Circle

Knowledge:						
Ancient Weapons	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	6/12
Throal History	1/7	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Artisan:						
Armor Runic Carving	1/6	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Weapon Runic Carving	1/6	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Loot	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Silver Pieces	45	55	105	235	575	1,465
Legend Award	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Legend Points	105	135	415	1,060	2,785	8,010

Spells

At Ninth Circle, the Weaponsmith is able to cast Elementalism spells. Spells that manipulate weapons, armor, and shields in some way, such as Air Armor, Flameweapon, and Lightning Shield, make the most appropriate choices. The gamemaster chooses what Elementalism spells the Weaponsmith has learned, although the Weaponsmith should generally not know more than half the spells available to other magicians at any given spell Circle.

Equipment

Equipment: Second Circle

Padded Leather Armor (Phys 4), Buckler (Phys 1; Shatter 17), Broadsword (Damage 11/D10+D8), Hand Axe (Damage 10/D10+D6), 2 × Spears (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 18–30–36), Troll Sword (Damage 12/2D10), Dwarf Winternight Cloak, Adventurer's Kit, Traveler's Garb, Trail Rations (1 week), Forge Tools, Whetstone, 2 × Craftsman's Tools, 2 × Carving Tools

Equipment: Third Circle

As Second Circle, with the following changes: Troll Sword (Forged +1; Damage 13/D12+D10), Cloaksense Brooch

Equipment: Fifth Circle

As Third Circle, with the following changes: Broadsword (Forged +1; Damage 12/2D10), Troll Sword (Forged +2; Damage 14/D20+D4), Thread Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3)

Equipment: Seventh Circle

As Fifth Circle, with the following changes: Broadsword (Forged +2; Damage 13/D12+D10), Troll Sword (Forged +3; Damage 15/D20+D6), Thread Amulet (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; SocDef +2)

Equipment: Ninth Circle

As Seventh Circle, with the following changes: Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage 14/D20+D4), Troll Sword (Forged +4; Damage 16/D20+D8), Thread Buckler (Rank 3; Phys 3; Myst 1; Shatter 17), Grimoire

Equipment: Eleventh Circle

As Ninth Circle, with the following changes: Troll Sword (Forged +4; Blood Edge (1 Damage Point); Damage 18/D20+D12), Thread Buckler (Forged +1; Rank 3; Phys 4; Myst 1; Shatter 17), Thread Leather Armor (Forged +2; Rank 4; Phys 7; Myst 3), Thread Wand (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; When using Elementalism spells: Spellcasting step +2; Spell Effect step +1)

Notes

The adept possesses the troll Heat Sight racial ability.

Fourth Circle: Evaluate Weapon (1 Damage Point)

Fifth Circle: Karma on Dexterity-only Tests

Sixth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests

Seventh Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests

Eighth Circle: +1 Spell Defense

Ninth Circle: +1 Physical Defense; Karma on Recovery Tests

Tenth Circle: +1 Social Defense; +1 Initiative step (6/D10)

Eleventh Circle: Blood Edge (2 Damage Points)

Human Wizard

Attributes

Dexterity (11): 5/D8 | **Strength** (11): 5/D8 | **Toughness** (14): 6/D10
Perception (16): 7/D12 | **Willpower** (15): 6/D10 | **Charisma** (11): 5/D8

Combat	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Physical Defense:	7	7	7	9	10	10
Spell Defense:	9	9	9	12	12	15
Social Defense:	7	7	7	7	8	9
Physical Armor:	7	7	8	8	8	8
Mystic Armor:	3	3	6	6	6	6

Initiative Step: 4/D6
Combat Movement: 22
Full Movement: 44

Health	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Death Rating:	40	48	56	64	72	78
Wound Threshold:	10	10	10	10	10	10
Unconsciousness Rating:	31	37	43	49	55	59

Recovery Tests: 3

Karma	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Karma Points:	12	15	24	37	40	40

Karma Step: 5/D8

Talents	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Karma Ritual	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Read and Write Language	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Read and Write Magic [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Spellcasting [D]	3/10	4/11	6/13	8/15	10/17	12/19
Spell Matrix	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Spell Matrix	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Thread Weaving (Wizardry) [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Durability (4/3)	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Evidence Analysis [D]	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Spell Matrix	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Book Memory [D]	—	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Arcane Mutterings [D]	—	3/8	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Astral Sight [D]	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Book Recall [D]	—	—	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/18
Lip Reading	—	—	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Willforce	—	—	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Enhanced Matrix	—	—	—	7/7	9/9	11/11
Speak Language [D]	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Hold Thread [D]	—	—	—	7/13	9/15	11/17
Lifesight [D]	—	—	—	7/14	9/16	11/18
Enhanced Matrix	—	—	—	—	9/9	11/11
Resist Taunt	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Armored Matrix	—	—	—	—	9/9	11/11
Matrix Strike [D]	—	—	—	—	9/15	11/17
Range Pattern [D]	—	—	—	—	9/16	11/18
Life Check	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Spirit Strike [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/17
Armored Matrix	—	—	—	—	—	11/11
Casting Pattern [D]	—	—	—	—	—	11/18

Skills	2nd	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
General:						
Alchemy	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12
Cold Purify	—	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11
Creature Analysis	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12
Etiquette	—	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
Physician	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13
Research	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13

Knowledge:						
Alchemy and Potions	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12
Botany	—	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12
Creature Lore	1/8	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12
Magical Lore	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13
Artisan:						
Robe Embroidery	1/6	1/6	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10
LOOT	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Silver Pieces	25	35	85	215	555	1,445
LEGEND AWARD	**2nd**	**3rd**	**5th**	**7th**	**9th**	**11th**
Legend Points	140	220	625	2,060	7,805	21,750

SPELLS

The adept knows the First Circle Wizardry spells: Astral Sense, Crushing Will, Dispel Magic, Divine Aura, Ignite, Iron Hand, and Mind Dagger. The adept may know any number of other spells the gamemaster desires up to a spell Circle equivalent to the adept's Circle. For example, the gamemaster could decide that a Second Circle Wizard knows the entire First and Second Circle Wizardry spell lists.

EQUIPMENT

Equipment: Second Circle

Padded Leather Armor (Phys 4), Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1), Mace (Damage 9/D8+D6), 2 × Daggers (Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18), Sling (Damage 7/D12; Range 30–60–120), Belt Pouch (with 15 stones), Adventurer's Kit, Wealthy Traveler's Garb, Trail Rations (2 weeks), Embroidery Tools, Embroidered Robe, Writing Kit, Waterskin, Grimoire, 3 × Physician's Kits, 3 × Healing Kits

Equipment: Third Circle

As Second Circle, with the following changes: Alchemy Kit, Booster Potion, Cloaksense Brooch, Kelix's Poultice

Equipment: Fifth Circle

As Third Circle, with the following changes: 2 × Booster Potions, Thread Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3), Resist Disease Potion

Equipment: Seventh Circle

As Fifth Circle, with the following changes: 3 × Booster Potions, Thread Bracers (Rank 4; PhysDef +2; SpellDef +2)

Equipment: Ninth Circle

As Seventh Circle, with the following changes: Salve of Closure, Thread Belt Pouch (Rank 4; 5 × capacity; 1/10 weight items inside; with 15 stones)

Equipment: Eleventh Circle

As Ninth Circle, with the following changes: Healing Potion, Thread Wand (Rank 4; SpellDef +2; Spellcasting step +2; Spell Effect step +1)

NOTES

The adept possesses the human Versatility racial ability.

Fourth Circle: Karma on Perception-only Tests

Fifth Circle: Karma on Willpower-only Tests

Sixth Circle: +1 Spell Defense

Seventh Circle: Karma on spell Effect Tests

Eighth Circle: +1 Social Defense

Ninth Circle: +1 Physical Defense; Karma on Recovery Tests

Tenth Circle: Matrix Split (2 Damage Points)

Eleventh Circle: +1 Social and Spell Defense

Creatures

The jungle crawled with horrific creatures, both of this world and others…

• Ardiss Foarr, Wizard, to a gathering of the village of Tardim •

A wide array of magical and mundane creatures inhabit the world of **Earthdawn**. The animals and plants of the forests and jungles, creatures magical and mundane, all roam the lands of Barsaive, and many pose real dangers to the unwary traveler or adventurer.

Using Creatures in Adventures and Campaigns

Creatures can provide a major source of adventure ideas in **Earthdawn**, and encounters with creatures can give players and their characters a wide variety of challenges. This section explains the format in which creatures are presented and includes guidelines for running creature encounters.

Creature Entry Format

The statistics throughout this book describe "average" members of each type of creature, unless otherwise noted. However, there really is no such thing as an "average" creature. All creatures are as individual and unique as other Name-givers, and gamemasters should vary the statistics and powers listed in these creature examples as desired.

See **Customizing Creatures**, p. 272, for more information on altering the statistics and powers of creatures.

Statistics

Attributes: Each creature has a step number for the following Attributes: Dexterity (DEX), Strength (STR), Toughness (TOU), Perception (PER), Willpower (WIL), and Charisma (CHA). Use the Action dice for this step number when making Attribute Tests.

Initiative: Use the Action dice for this step number to make the creature's Initiative Tests.

Number of Actions: This number describes how many Standard Actions the creature may make in each combat round.

Attack: Use the Action dice for this step number to make the creature's Attack Tests. If the creature can make more than one type of attack, the step number for each type of attack is listed separately.

Damage: Use this step number to make Damage Tests resulting from the creature's physical attacks. Separate Damage steps are provided for each type of attack a creature can make.

Physical Defense: This is the creature's Physical Defense.

Spell Defense: This is the creature's Spell Defense.

Social Defense: This is the creature's Social Defense. Characters must be able to communicate to use social abilities against the creature. Battle Shout, Taunt and other non-verbal talents work on most creatures.

Physical Armor: This is the creature's natural Physical Armor rating. Most often, the creature's natural armor is its tough skin, thick fur, or some other body covering; however, certain magical abilities can also determine or affect this number.

Mystic Armor: This is the creature's Mystic Armor rating.

Knockdown: The creature uses this step number to resist Knockdown. A notation of "Immune" means that the creature cannot be knocked down. A notation of "NA," or "Not Applicable," indicates that a creature cannot resist Knockdown; the creature is knocked down any time it suffers a Wound.

Death Rating: This number represents the creature's Death Rating.

Wound Threshold: This is the creature's Wound Threshold. A notation of "Immune" means that the creature cannot be Wounded.

Unconsciousness Rating: This represents the creature's Unconsciousness Rating. A notation of "Immune" means that accumulated damage does not render the creature unconscious.

Recovery Tests: This represents the number of Recovery Tests the creature may make each day. Most creatures use their Toughness step for Recovery Tests. If the creature uses a step number other than its Toughness step to make Recovery Tests, that step number appears in parentheses.

Combat Movement: This is the number of yards a creature can move in a combat round while remaining able to attack or take other action. Unless noted otherwise, this form of movement is considered to be land-based.

Full Movement: This number represents the number of yards the creature can move if it takes no other action in a combat round. Unless noted otherwise, this form of movement is considered to be land-based.

Karma Points; Karma Step: Only magical creatures can use Karma to enhance their abilities. However, not all magical creatures necessarily have Karma. The number of points and the step number are listed with the creature's entry.

Powers: This entry lists all the powers and abilities possessed by the creature. For detailed information on how these powers work, see the individual **Powers** sections in the **Creatures** (p. 273), **Spirits** (p. 364), **Dragons** (p. 397), and **Horrors** (p. 440) chapters. For those powers that require an Action Test, a step number is also listed. Some spell-like powers also require a Spellcasting Test, which is listed as a separate power; for most powers the Spellcasting Test meets the action requirement for that power.

Spells: This entry lists the spells available to the creature. The listed spells work as described in the **Player's Compendium**. Some creatures have access to all spells of a certain Discipline, and may cast any spell of that Discipline up to the listed Circle.

Legend Points: This is the Legend Point Award for defeating a creature (see the **Gamemastering** chapter on p. 95 for details on how to determine which—and how many—creatures are appropriate opposition for any given adventure). Some creatures are a challenge to an entire party of adventurers on their own; the number of characters such creatures can take on at the same time is shown in parentheses. Some creatures' Legend Point Awards are variable, based on the gamemaster decision as to the powers and abilities of each creature. Add the variable number of Legend Points to the Legend Points Award. For example, the Legend Points entry for will o' the wisps reads "85 + spells." The creature's spell list states that wisps have one spell, and gives several choices. If the gamemaster assigns the Mind Dagger spell to a wisp he is using, he adds +3 Legend Points to the total, as Mind Dagger is a First Circle spell (see the Creature Legend Points Table on p. 270).

Equipment: This notation refers to any weapons, armor, magical items and the like, which the creature possesses. At the gamemaster's discretion, a creature may have more or better equipment than what is listed.

Loot: This notation lists the valuable items or body parts the creature possesses, including items worth Legend Points. For more information on treasure and Legend Points, see the **Building Your Legend** chapter on p. 419 of the **Player's Compendium**.

Creature Encounters

With the possible exception of large towns and cities, player characters may encounter creatures almost anywhere in Barsaive. Some areas of the province, however, have more creatures prowling around them than others. For example, the ruins of Parlainth provide lairs and hiding places for all manner of Barsaivian beasts, including various nasty carnivores and Horror-twisted animals.

Many creatures also nest in caves and the entrances of abandoned kaers. In general, creature encounters should have some connection to the characters' current adventure rather than occurring at random. However, the encounters need not be connected to the adventure's main plot. For example, an adventure that takes the characters into the Servos Jungle might plausibly lead them to any number of encounters with creatures inhabiting the Servos. In this case, the setting of the adventure provides the connection.

Which Creatures Should I Use?

Creatures work best in an adventure if you choose them based on the size of your player group and the average Circle of the members' characters. For example, sending a group of six Second Circle

characters against a wyvern would be inappropriate because the characters stand no chance against such a beast—it will kill them and end the adventure very quickly. A group of seven Sixth Circle characters, on the other hand, might need a more hefty challenge. Sending them against three or four ice flyers wouldn't give them the chance to even work up a sweat.

For suggestions on how best to balance creature combat with characters' capabilities, see **Game Balance** in the **Gamemaster Characters** chapter on p. 220.

How Many Creatures Should I Use?

The number of creatures to include in an encounter also depends on the average abilities of the characters in your player group. Most of the creature descriptions in **Earthdawn** products suggest the number of any given creature that characters can normally expect to encounter, but the gamemaster should always consider these suggestions with an eye toward game balance. For example, blood monkeys often attack in swarms of up to 100, but only the most powerful characters could possibly survive such an attack. Unless your players' characters are incredibly powerful, don't send the maximum number of blood monkeys against them—instead, send whatever number they can feasibly handle.

A good rule of thumb is to use one creature per character, unless the creature is question is extremely tough or exceptionally weak. If the creatures are tougher than the characters, use one creature for every two characters. If the creatures are particularly weak, use two creatures per character.

Why Do Creatures Attack?

Creatures rarely attack because they are nasty, evil entities that want to wipe the Name-giver races off the face of the earth. In almost all cases, they attack when they are threatened, hungry, or under the influence of some power. Most of the time, creatures attack characters in the wilds because they instinctively perceive the characters as a threat to themselves or their young, particularly if a group of characters stumbles on one of the creature's lairs or enters the creature's territory. Because creatures that attack when threatened are fighting for their own or their offspring's survival, they rarely break off from battle.

Hungry carnivores hunting for food frequently see wandering characters as just another meal, and will attack if nothing

else tasty is around. Unlike creatures battling a threat, creatures attacking from hunger will break away from a losing fight in search of easier prey.

Sometimes, though less often, creatures attack when compelled to by some outside influence—anything from an angry beastmaster to a Horror-tainted magician to a Horror itself. Creatures under the influence of other entities are often guard animals or servants of major villains in an adventure such as insane magicians, corrupted Beastmasters and Horrors.

Designing New Creatures

This chapter provides many creatures that may appear in any **Earthdawn** campaign or adventure. Eventually, however, player characters may become familiar with these creatures' powers and abilities, and will no longer be surprised by their sudden appearances or overwhelmed by their attacks. This section provides guidelines to help gamemasters create their own creatures.

Designing a new creature follows a series of eight steps:

1. Determine Attributes
2. Determine Characteristics
3. Determine Creature Traits
4. Determine Attack Step
5. Determine Karma
6. Determine Powers and Spells
7. Calculate Legend Points
8. Write Commentary

Determine Attributes

Attributes are generally measured in steps rather than values, although Attribute values can be used to fine-tune a creature's characteristics (see below). There is no hard and fast way to determine the average Attribute steps for a new creature—almost any combination is possible.

The following text serves as a guideline; use the existing creatures as examples.

Dexterity: The smaller the creature, the more nimble it is (a mouse can react much more quickly than an elephant). Generally, the higher the creature's Dexterity, the faster it can move. Dexterity also influences the base step number for a creature's physical attacks.

Strength: Strength influences the base step number for the physical damage a creature inflicts. The larger the creature, the stronger it will usually be. Because Strength determines how much a creature can lift and carry, this becomes a particularly important Attribute for animals that could be used as pack animals.

Toughness: Toughness determines how much damage a creature can take before it falls unconscious or dies. This step number also determines how fast a creature heals.

Perception: Perception relates to a creature's innate intelligence. This value does not reflect its sentience or lack thereof, but simply means that it is well-adapted and highly effective at identifying food or enemies. A creature with high Perception also uses any innate magical abilities effectively.

Willpower: Do not confuse Willpower with Toughness. A very tough creature with a low Willpower step may wilt at the first sign of danger, but take a very long time to die (whimpering and crying all the while). A creature with high Willpower appears fearless and is less likely to believe illusions.

Charisma: This Attribute determines how much of an impression the creature makes on others and how resistant it is against taming and/or domination attempts.

Carsten prepares for his next session of Earthdawn and wants to send his players into the depths of the Glenwood Deep forests. Glenwood Deep is home to many windling clans, but there are certain areas of the wood the windlings avoid. One of the reasons for this, Carsten decides, is the presence of a predator specialized to hunt windlings. While he remembers having seen a fitting creature in one of the numerous Earthdawn fan projects available on the Internet, he is in a hurry and can't find what he is looking for.

The creature Carsten has in mind is akin to the chameleon. He imagines that the fly-catching ability of these animals would also work for windlings—so all he needs is a very large version of a chameleon; human-sized will probably do. He intends to use such a creature to challenge the windling player character in his group, who is currently at Third Circle.

With that in mind, the first step in creature design requires Carsten to assign Attribute steps. The creature needs to be fast and strong enough to catch a windling, so he assigns both Dexterity and Strength a step of 8. Perception is also important, since windlings tend to be difficult to detect, so he assigns this Attribute a step of 7. Toughness, Willpower and Charisma are less important, so he assigns each of them a step of 4.

Determine Characteristics

Creature characteristics function exactly like player character characteristics except where noted otherwise (see the **Creating Characters** chapter on p. 45 of the **Player's Compendium**). Use the Characteristics Table to determine the exact characteristics of a creature. The exact Attribute values are determined by the gamemaster and can be used to fine-tune the relevant characteristics.

Starting with Dexterity, Carsten looks up the average Attribute values on the Characteristics table. Step 8 has a value range of 19–21, so he decides to use the average value of 20. The creature's Physical Defense will be 10 and it will have a Combat/Full Movement rate of 60/120 (which is far too high, but more on that later). Since the animal is not a beast of burden, Carsten ignores the Encumbrance entries. With a Perception step of 7, the creature's Spell Defense will be 9 or 10, depending on the value Carsten chooses. He decides to stay with the average, so the creature's Spell Defense will be 9. He looks up the creature's Social Defense, which will be 5 (for a Charisma attribute of 7) and also its Mystic Armor (which is 0 for a Willpower step of 4). Finally, Carsten looks up the creature's Health Ratings for a Toughness step of 9: Death Rating 30, Wound Threshold 7, and an Unconsciousness Rating of 21. The chameleon will have 2 Recovery Tests per day.

Determine Creature Traits

A creature's Characteristics do not solely depend on its Attributes, but also its physical make-up. The Characteristics Table applies to creatures that have humanoid bodies. If the creature differs from that, apply one or more of the Traits listed below. There is no need to list these Traits with the creature's game statistics; they just serve to help when creating one. However, any assigned Traits might well influence the creature's description (see **Write Commentary**, p. 271).

Additional Arms: Increase the Number of Actions the creature can carry out each round by +1 per additional pair of arms.

Additional Legs: Increase the creature's Knockdown step by at

least +1 step per additional pair of legs. Determine the creature's Movement rates as Dexterity+5 for quadrupeds, Dexterity+7 for creatures with six or more legs.

Additional Sense: The creature has additional senses, such as Low-Light Vision, Heat Sight, enhanced hearing, or Astral-Sensitive Sight. There are no bonuses involved, but it is assumed that this sense is reflected by the creature's Perception step.

Ethereal: The creature has an incorporeal form, much like that of a spirit. Increase the creature's Physical Defense by +5 or more.

Fast: The creature can move faster than usual. Calculate its Movement Rate as Dexterity+3 or more (in addition to **Additional Legs**, above).

Flight: The creature is able to fly or glide through the air. Calculate its Movement Rate as Dexterity+5 or more.

Gaseous: The creature has a gaseous form, and appears as a cloud of mist or smoke. Increase the creature's Physical Defense by +3 or more.

Immunity: The creature is immune to a certain form of attack, such as non-magical melee weapons or fire damage. This immunity needs to be listed in the rules section following the creature's commentary.

Increased Karma Pool: The creature has more Karma Points than usual (see **Determine Karma**, below). Increase the creature's Karma Points in multiples of +5, to a maximum of two times the original value.

Increased Knockdown Step: The creature has a higher Knockdown step than normal, because it's heavier than usual for creatures of its size or because of its physical make-up. Add +1 step or more to the creature's Knockdown step.

Karma: The creature is able to use Karma and has a Karma step (see **Determine Karma**, below) and a number of Karma Points available to it. Unless the description states otherwise, creatures regenerate used Karma Points at the rate of 1 point per day.

Large: Any creature larger than 13 feet tall or wide, or weighing 1,000 pounds or greater, subtracts –2 or more from its Physical Defense.

Magical Immunity: The creature has a strong magical defense. Add +1 or more to the creature's Spell Defense and Mystic Armor.

Multiple Actions: Most creatures can perform just one Standard action per round (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 415 of the **Player's Compendium**). Creatures with this trait are able to make more actions during a combat round (in addition to **Additional Arms**, above). As a general guideline, use the following formula: divide the creature's Dexterity step by 5 and use the result as the number of actions (round fractions to the nearest value, with a minimum of 1 action). If the creature has powers, use the higher of its Dexterity or Perception steps.

Natural Weapon: A creature's natural weapons increase the physical damage it can inflict on its victims. Natural weapons can be claws, sharp teeth, beaks, horns, antlers, or stings. The Damage step of the weapon is based on its Size. Use the Melee Weapons table in the **Goods and Services** chapter on p. 436 of the **Player's Compendium** as a guideline.

Natural Armor: A creature's natural armor determines its Physical Armor. Use the Armor Table in the **Goods and Services** chapter on p. 440 of the **Player's Compendium** as a guide. Initiative step penalties may be applied as appropriate.

Quick: The creature is unnaturally fast in combat. Add +1 step or more to the creature's Initiative step.

Reduced Karma Pool: If the creature has Karma, it possesses fewer Karma Points than normal (see **Determine Karma**, below). Reduce its Karma Points in multiples of –5, to a minimum of 5 points.

Reduced Knockdown Step: The creature has a lower Knockdown step than normal because it is lighter than usual for its size or because of its physical make-up. Subtract –1 step or more from the creature's Knockdown step.

Slow: The creature moves slower than usual. Subtract –1 step or more from its Initiative step. Calculate its Movement rates as Dexterity–2 or more. If the creature is unable to move (a plant, for example) it has no Movement Rate, and is generally easier to attack (–3 or more to the creature's Physical Defense).

Small: Any creature smaller than 2 feet tall or wide, or weighing 20 pounds or less, adds +2 or more to its Physical Defense.

Social Immunity: The creature is resistant to social attacks. Add +1 or more to the creature's Social Defense.

Undead: The creature is undead and cannot be rendered unconscious. It therefore has no Unconsciousness Rating. Abilities that cause Strain damage still do so. This damage can end up "killing" the creature as it has no buffer to fall unconscious before it dies (or dies again).

Vulnerability: The creature is susceptible to a certain substance or a special form of attack, such as salt, or fire-based damage. This vulnerability needs to be listed in the rules section following the creature's commentary, including any special rules that apply if the creature is confronted with it.

In the previous step, Carsten noticed that the Movement rates for his creature were far too high. The chameleons he remembers move slow and appear to be lazy—until they strike at their airborne targets with a sudden move. He applies the Slow Trait to his creature, which suffers a –1 step penalty to Initiative, and decides to calculate its Movement Rates as Dexterity–12, which would give the chameleon a Combat/Full Movement rate of 20/40 yards. Additionally, Carsten decides that his creature's only natural weapon will be its bite, which it needs to chew on windlings. He imagines that the damage caused by these jaws would be equivalent to that inflicted by a short sword, so he opts for a Damage step of 4 (plus Strength step).

Determine Attack Step

A creature's Attack step is measured in ranks, which are added to the creature's Dexterity step. If the creature has more than one attack form, it may develop different ranks for each. As a rule of thumb, most creatures have 1 to 3 ranks in this ability.

The chameleon will use two attack forms, but both will be handled with the same step number. The chameleon's primary weapon is its mouth, consisting of a sticky tongue (for grappling a target) and a nasty bite. Carsten figures that the creature will do fine with an Attack step of 10, which also seems to be a good challenge for the windling player in his group. Thus, he assigns +2 extra ranks to the creature's basic Attack step of 8.

Determine Karma

As opposed to mundane creatures, magical creatures can have Karma. Spirits, Dragons and Horrors are always magical creatures. As with Name-givers, a small number of mundane creatures are also able to develop magical powers and the ability to use Karma. The higher the Karma step, the more powerful the creature is. Creatures usually recover a number of Karma points per day equal to their Karma step (see the Creature Karma Table).

CREATURE KARMA TABLE

Karma Step	Karma Points
1-10	10
11-15	20
16-20	30

The creature Carsten has in mind won't have a Karma step—in fact, he is not sure if the chameleon will be a magical creature at all.

DETERMINE POWERS AND SPELLS

As seen in the preceding chapters, each creature can be assigned to one of four categories: **creatures**, **spirits**, **dragons**, or **Horrors**. Each of these creature types has its unique list of powers, which appear in the relevant chapters. Use common sense when assigning new powers to a creature. For example, horses certainly don't know how to handle melee weapons, but ogres might learn.

The step number of any power is usually determined by adding the rank to the corresponding Attribute step. The maximum rank a creature can have in any power or ability is Rank 10 for mundane and Rank 15 for magical creatures.

Browsing through the Creature Powers section, Carsten finds two powers that would fit the description of his creature: Surprise Attack and Camouflage. This combination will allow the creature to hide in the deep forests and strike suddenly at its victims. With that in mind, he decides that nothing else is needed—so there is no need to select and assign spells. The only spell Carsten imagines would help is Earth Blend, but that ability is already covered by the Camouflage power. Carsten assigns +4 ranks each to the Surprise Attack and Camouflage powers.

CALCULATE LEGEND POINTS

The final step in creating a new creature is to assign it an appropriate number of Legend Points. This creature design system generates Legend Awards by assigning Legend Points to the creature's Attributes and abilities. Add the Legend Points determined below to a running total in order to generate a grand Legend Award total.

Attributes

Find each of the creature's Attribute steps in the Attribute Step column of the Creature Legend Points Table, then add the corresponding value from the Legend Points column to the running Legend Award total.

Carsten's new creature has two Attributes at Step 8, three Attributes at Step 4, and one Attribute at Step 7. The Step 8 Attributes are worth 25 Legend Points each; the Step 4 Attributes 5 Legend Points each, and the Step 7 Attribute is worth 15 Legend Points. The running total for Carsten's creature is 80 Legend Points (25 + 25 + 15 + 5 + 5 + 5).

Powers and Abilities

To determine the Legend Point award for the creature's abilities, find the average Rank among the creature's powers, attack and highest Damage rank entries (use the listed Spell Defense for poisons, if applicable). Round all fractions to the nearest whole, then locate the number in the Average Rank column of the Creature Legend Points Table and multiply the corresponding value from the Legend Points column by the creature's Number of Actions entry. Add the result to the creature's running Legend Award total. For example, a jungle griffin has 2 actions each combat round. The average Rank among the creature's abilities is 4: it has an attack Rank of 4, damage Rank of 7, three powers at Rank 5, one power at Rank 3 and another power at Rank 2. An average Rank of 4 is awarded 55 Legend Points; since the jungle griffin has 2 actions, this reward is doubled. The running total of the creature's Legend Points is increased by 110 (55 × 2).

Carsten's new creature has an average ability rank of 4 (attack Rank 2, damage Rank 4, and two powers at Rank 4 = 14/4 = 3.5, rounded up to 4), which is worth 55 Legend Points. It has just one Action available, so this value is not multiplied.

CREATURE LEGEND POINTS TABLE

Attribute Step Physical Armor Rating	Average Rank Spell Circle	Karma Step	Legend Points
2–3	1	—	3
4–5	—	1	5
6	2	2	8
7	—	3	15
8	3	4	25
9–10	—	5	35
11	4	6	55
12	—	—	75
13	5	7	100
14–15	—	—	150
16	6	8	200
17	—	—	250
18	7	9	330
19–20	—	—	450
21	8	10	570
22	—	—	750
23	9	11	1,000
24–25	—	—	1,500
26	10	12	2,000
27	11	—	2,500
28	12	13	3,300
29–30	13	—	4,500
31	14	14	5,700
32	15	—	7,500
33	—	15	12,500
34–35	—	16	18,750
36	—	17	25,000
37	—	18	37,500
38	—	19	50,000
39–40	—	20	62,500

Physical Armor

If the creature has a Physical Armor rating of 2 or more, find the number in the Physical Armor column of the Creature Legend Points Table, then add the corresponding value from the Legend Points column to the Legend Award total.

A drawback of Carsten's chameleon is that it has no armor of any kind, so this section does not add to the running Legend Points total.

Karma

If the creature uses Karma, find the step number in the Karma Step column of the Ability Legend Points Table and add the number from the Legend Points column to the Legend Award total.

As a mundane creature, the chameleon has no Karma step, so this section does not add to the running total of Legend Points.

Spells

Find each spell's Circle on the Spell Circle column of the Creature Legend Points Table to determine the Legend Points added to the total for each spell. For example, will o' the wisps have one spell. If the gamemaster assigns the Mind Dagger spell to a wisp he is using, he adds +3 Legend Points to the total, as this is a First Circle spell.

If the creature has access to an entire spell list, multiply the Legend Point Award for the highest Circle spell the creature knows ×10. For example, wormskull Horrors have access to all Nethermancy spells up to Sixth Circle. A Legend Point value of 200 is normally awarded for Sixth Circle spells. Since the wormskull has access to the full list, however, this value is multiplied by 10 for a total spell Legend Point Award of 2,000 Legend Points (200 × 10). This award is given for each type of spell the creature knows.

As a mundane creature, the chameleon has no spells, so this section does not add to its Legend Points total.

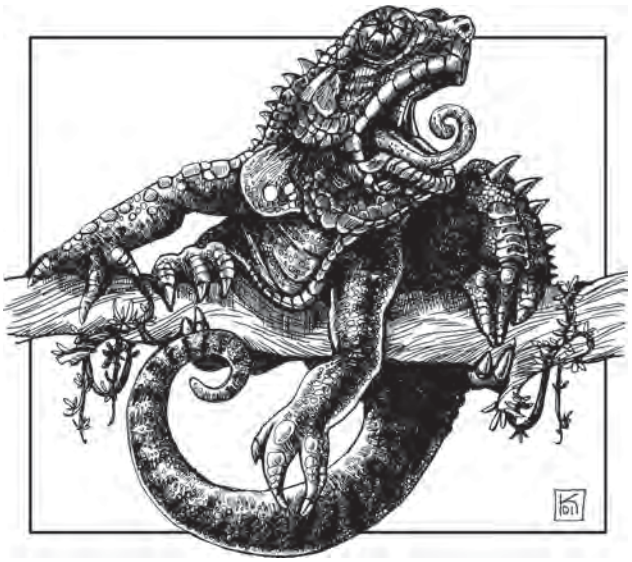
Adjust the Total

Round off the total Legend Award to the nearest increment of 5, rounding up. Adjust the final total to fit your game, taking into account the intended role of the creature in the game. The number generated from the above guidelines should be considered a benchmark figure. The final award for the creature should be based on its abilities, but more importantly, should reflect how the gamemaster wants the creature to affect his game.

The total for Carsten's new creature is 135 Legend Points (80 + 55), a value that does not need adjusting.

The creature Legend Awards calculated using this system are based on the Legend Awards Table on p. 95 of the **Gamemastering** chapter (also refer to this chapter to find out how to determine which creatures can be a challenge for a group). While this allows for easy scaling, some creatures are inherently more powerful and can challenge a whole party of adventurers on their own—kraken, hydras, dragons and most Horrors fall into this category. To account for this increased threat, multiply the Legend Award with a Hazard Multiplier, which should be equal to the average group size the creature can take on.

Hazard Multipliers are listed in a creature's description where appropriate and serve as an indicator for gamemasters wanting to find out how many opponents a creature can take on at the same time. For example, the kraken lists "Legend Points (5): 89,075," which means that the kraken was intended as an opponent for a group of five characters. The listed Legend Point Award of 89,075 has already been multiplied by this number, so it can be split up between the player characters fighting the kraken (as per the standard rules; see the **Gamemastering** chapter on p. 95 for details).



WRITE COMMENTARY

Once the gamemaster has determined the creature's game statistics, he must write a commentary. The commentary should include the creature's physical description, its common habitat and other, similar characteristics. The decisions made about the creature's Attributes and Traits should give the gamemaster a fairly clear idea of what the creature looks like and eats, where it hunts and lives, and so on. The gamemaster should answer the following questions in order to help flesh out the creature.

What does the creature look like? How does it mate? Is it a pack animal? What does it eat? How well does it get along with other creatures? What does it fear? When does it hunt and when does it sleep? Can it be trained? Where can it normally be found? How does it relate to the other creatures in its ecosystem?

This step also requires the gamemaster to decide what, if any, equipment the creature may use. Most animals and non-sentient creatures do not use equipment, but a race of subterranean creatures might use stone spears and knives.

Finally, decide if the creature collects loot. If the creature is sentient, it may be guarding a cache of money and weapons of previous victims. If the creature is a popular target of adventuring groups, its loot may consist of the belongings of many previous challengers. Many creatures with magical abilities hoard magical treasure, including horns, feathers, teeth, or blood. Decide what type of treasure a creature possesses, and its worth in silver pieces and Legend Points.

Rules

If applicable, add a rules section below the commentary. This section should describe how the creature behaves in combat and any rules unique to the creature. Some creature powers need unique treatment, mostly with regard to characteristics such as range (Breath Weapons) and effect (Poisons). Some creature traits also need to be addressed in this section, for example, Immunity and Vulnerability.

Adventure Hook

To give gamemasters useful ideas on how to use the creature in their campaigns, add an **Adventure Hook** suggesting how to use the creature as a starting point for an adventure.

Sample Creature

Here is the final version of the creature Carsten came up with, along with rules and an adventure hook:

Trap Lizard

***DEX**: 8* ***STR**: 8* ***TOU**: 4*
***PER**: 7* ***WIL**: 4* ***CHA**: 4*

***Initiative**: 7 (11)* ***Physical Defense**: 10*
***Number of Actions**: 1* ***Spell Defense**: 9*
***Attack** (2): 10* ***Social Defense**: 5*
***Damage**:* ***Physical Armor**: 0*
***Bite** (4): 12* ***Mystic Armor**: 0*

***Death Rating**: 28* ***Recovery Tests**: 2*
***Wound Threshold**: 7* ***Knockdown**: 9*
***Unconsciousness Rating**: 23*

***Combat Movement**: 26* ***Full Movement**: 52*

***Powers**: Camouflage (4): 8, Surprise Attack (4)*

***Legend Points**: 135*

***Equipment**: NA*

***Loot**: NA*

Commentary

The trap lizard is a creature native to the deep forests of Glenwood Deep. Its slender, green body is almost as heavy as that of a human, and it measures about 20 feet from nose to tail. Trap lizards live in the high treetops of the forest, and tend to be well hidden from sight. The windlings native to Glenwood Deep call the creature a trap lizard as it proves a real hazard to them—windlings are perfect prey for these creatures; and there is more than a bit of truth to the stories windlings tell their children at night. There are whole areas of the forest regarded as off-limits by the windling tribes.

Rules

The trap lizard uses its Camouflage power to stay hidden from sight, waiting for its prey. When a suitable victim comes within range, the trap lizard uses its long, sticky tongue to grapple it (see the ***Combat*** *chapter on p. 411 of the* ***Player's Compendium****). The lizard's tongue is as fast as lightning, and builds up enough momentum to pull a windling-sized victim towards its mouth in the same action as it attacks. The trap lizard's tongue has a range of six yards Fortunately, the lizard has no armor of any kind—its primary weakness.*

Adventure Hook

In the month after the annual celebration days, the town's windlings begin to disappear one after another. The town council hires the heroes to find out what's going on.

Customizing Creatures

This section holds guidelines on how to adjust a creature's game statistics to the needs of a gamemaster's individual campaign. Adapting a creature follows a series of four steps:

1. Modify Attributes
2. Determine Characteristics
3. Change Powers and Spells
4. Recalculate Legend Points

Modify Attributes

Attributes are measured in step numbers rather than values. When modifying an existing creature's Attributes, increase or decrease them by up to 2 steps (characteristics can be fine-tuned by adjusting the exact Attribute values, see **Designing New Creatures**, p. 268).

Carsten is about to run another session of ***Earthdawn****, where he plans to pit his player characters against the personal guard of King Neden. He imagines that the king's men ride on cat-like huttawas, which are the favored mounts for dwarf cavalrymen. However, since they form an elite corps, the huttawas ridden should be stronger than average, especially bred for this military unit. Looking over the creature's attributes, Carsten decides to keep everything as is, except for Dexterity. He raises the creature's Dexterity step from 5 to 7 to reflect the advanced training these beasts have in combat.*

Determine Characteristics

If a creature's Attribute steps have been altered, the corresponding characteristics also need to be adjusted (see **Designing New Creatures**, p. 268).

The change of Dexterity is the only one that needs to be taken care of for Carsten's elite huttawa. Assuming that the creature's Attribute values are set at the upper end, the huttawa's new Physical Defense is 9, and the new Combat/Full Movement rate is 52/104. The creature's Initiative step also increases by +2. All other characteristics remain the same.

Change Powers and Spells

By increasing or decreasing the assigned rank of a power, the gamemaster is able to scale the creature to his needs. This includes the creature's Attack step(s). At the gamemaster's discretion, new powers may be assigned or existing powers removed. However, there should be a good reason why a creature develops a new power or learns ranks in a new ability. This is usually achieved by training or the unusual requirements of a creature's habitat.

Since Carsten is dealing with elite huttawas trained for combat, he raises the creature's attack rank from 2 to 5, for a final Attack step of 12. The remaining powers also receive additional ranks; Carsten increases all of them from Rank 1 to Rank 3, and adds the Durability power at Rank 3.

Spells

Generally speaking, the spells known to a creature are all it can ever learn. Only more intelligent entities (such as Horrors, Spirits and Dragons) can learn new spells and make use of more refined forms of spell magic (matrix casting, for example) in addition to their natural abilities.

Creatures and Legend Points

Creatures can also earn Legend Points, although there is usually no requirement to keep track of them. Creatures can spend Legend Points to increase ranks in their abilities as normal (see the **Building Your Legend** chapter on p. 419 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Magical abilities cost the same as Fifth Circle talents; mundane abilities (including Attack and Spellcasting steps) cost the same as skills. While the Legend Points cost appears to be identical, note that the maximum rank a creature can have in any power or ability is Rank 10 for mundane and Rank 15 for magical creatures.

Recalculate Legend Points

The last step of customizing involves the recalculation of the assigned Legend Point award based on the new game statistics (refer to the **Calculate Legend Points** section, p. 270).

Now Carsten needs to assign a new Legend Point award to his creature. The huttawa's attributes are worth 15 Legend Points for DEX step 7, 35 Legend Points for STR step 9, 25 Legend Points for TOU step 8, 5 Legend Points for PER step 5, 5 Legend Points for WIL step 4, and 5 Legend Points for CHA step 5: a total of 90 Legend Points. The average Rank for the creature's powers is (5 + 2 + 3 + 3 + 3 + 3 = 19; 19/6 = 3.2, rounded down to 3), which is awarded with 25 Legend Points. This number is not multiplied since the creature only has one action. The creature has Physical Armor of 2, which is awarded 3 Legend Points. The creature does not have Karma or spells, so no Legend Points are awarded for these sections. The total is 120 Legend Points (90 + 25 + 3 = 118, rounded up).

Elite Huttawa

DEX*: 7*	***STR****: 9*	***TOU****: 8*
PER*: 5*	***WIL****: 4*	***CHA****: 5*

***Initiative**: 8* ***Physical Defense**: 9*
***Number of Actions**: 1* ***Spell Defense**: 6*
***Attack** (5): 12* ***Social Defense**: 7*
***Damage**:* ***Physical Armor**: 2*
Beak (2): 11 ***Mystic Armor**: 0*

***Death Rating**: 43 (61)* ***Recovery Tests**: 3*
***Wound Threshold**: 12* ***Knockdown**: 10*
***Unconsciousness Rating**: 35 (50)*

***Combat Movement**: 52* ***Full Movement**: 104*

***Powers**: Climbing [S] (3): 9, Durability (3), Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 7, Great Leap [S] (3): 9*

***Legend Points**: 120*

***Equipment**: NA*

***Loot**: NA*

Commentary

These animals are trained for combat and used only by the personal guard of King Neden of Throal (see the huttawa description, p. 314, for more information).

Creature Powers

Creatures have a wide range of magical and mundane powers at their command. The following text describes the creature powers available to the creatures in this book. The list is by no means comprehensive, and many creatures have unique ways of using their powers.

Game Terms

The **step number** of a power is usually determined by adding the power's rank to the Attribute step listed under the "**Step Number**:" notation. If the power requires the creature to make a test, the step number is used to determine the Action dice rolled. For example, a creature with a Willpower step of 6 and the Bone Shaping power at Rank 3 would have a Bone Shaping step of 9 (6 + 3). The Step/Action Dice Table shows that Step 9 uses D8+D6 Action dice (see the **Game Concepts** chapter on p. 17 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Some powers use only a rank; no Attribute step is added to the rank in this case. Many of these powers don't require a test; their effect is determined differently, as detailed in each power's description. For example, a creature's Burning Aura rank determines the Damage step used against all targets within 3 yards of the creature. Other powers require the creature to take an **action** to use them. These are noted by the word "Yes" in the "**Action**:" notation. Powers that do not require an action are noted by the word "No" in the "**Action**:" notation. These powers usually require a Spellcasting Test that meets the Action requirement and are effectively Simple actions (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 397 of the **Player's Compendium**).

The **type** of power (the "**Type**:" notation) indicates whether it is magical or mundane in nature.

Some powers correspond to normal talents or skills (see **Talents**, p. 278, and **Skills**, p. 277). These are noted by a superscripted 'T' (talents as powers) or 'S' (skills as powers) at the end of the power's name.

Acid Spray

Step Number: Rank + Dexterity
Action: Yes **Type**: Mundane

Just below the creature's mouth is an organ that can fire a spray of concentrated irritant. This substance is not corrosive, but causes extremely painful rashes and swelling if it hits exposed flesh. The creature makes an Acid Spray Test against the target's Physical Defense. If the test succeeds, the target is hit with acidic spray. Any character hit by the irritant must make a Willpower Test against the Acid Spray Test result. If this test fails, the target falls to the ground, writhing in agony for a number of rounds equal to the Acid Spray rank. The target may make a Willpower Test against the Acid Spray Test result each round to recover. The acid's potency decreases over time; subtract –1 from the Difficulty Number of the Willpower Test each round after the first.

Blinding Glare

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical

This magical eyelight creates a cone of steady light that extends in front of the creature, widening in a 45-degree arc to the far end. The exact range of the glare is listed with the creature's description. To use steady eyelight, the creature makes a Blinding Glare Test and compares the result against the Spell Defense of each target within the cone of effect. If the test is successful, the target is blinded for a number of rounds equal to the creature's Blinding Glare rank. A blinded character becomes Dazzled (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 408 of the **Player's Compendium**), based on the result level of the Blinding Glare Test—Partial for an Average result; Full for a Good result; Complete for an Excellent or Extraordinary result.

Blood Veins

Step Number: Rank + Strength
Action: Yes **Type**: Mundane

The Blood Veins power allows the creature to push small veins into victims it is touching, drawing away and deriving its sustenance from the victim's blood and fluids. Each minute it is attached to the victim, the creature makes a Blood Veins Test to determine how much damage it inflicts. No armor protects against this damage.

Bone Shaping

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: No **Type**: Magical

The Bone Shaping power is especially dangerous, as it derives from Horror magic. To use this power, the creature makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If using its bone shaping ability on a Horror-marked target, the creature adds a +2 bonus to its Spellcasting Test, courtesy of its affinity with and its understanding of the intricacies of Horror magic. If the test succeeds, the creature begins reshaping the victim's bones at will. The creature makes a Bone Shaping Test to determine how much damage it inflicts. Mystic Armor protects against this damage. The victim incurs a penalty to his Action Tests equal to the creature's Bone Shaping rank. The effects can be undone, but only by being subjected to more use of the Bone Shaping power.

Breath Weapon

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: No **Type**: Magical

This power allows a creature to breathe a damaging substance at its victims, possibly even a burning one. The exact substance and range is listed with each creature. To attack with its breath weapon, the creature makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the creature makes a Breath Weapon Test to determine how much damage is inflicted. Mystic Armor provides protection against this damage.

If the substance is burning or acidic in nature, it continues to bum the character for the next 3 rounds, doing an additional Step

6 damage every round unless the character puts it out by diving into a pool of water, somehow neutralizing it (if it is an acid), or suffocating the flames by other means. For burning substances, the heat from a fire this size is equal to a small campfire (see the rules for **Fire** in the **Adventuring** chapter on p. 107) and can affect nearby targets, the victim's possessions, and the surrounding area.

Burning Aura

Step Number: Rank
Action: No **Type**: Magical

Some creatures can generate a tremendous amount of heat, appearing as if burning themselves. If the creature passes within ten feet of a target, the target automatically suffers damage equal to the creature's Burning Aura rank. Physical armor protects against this damage. Advanced forms of this power can make non-magical wooden weapons burst into flames at a touch or even melt metal weapons.

Calm Others

Step Number: Rank + Charisma
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical

This power allows creatures to calm targets, removing from them all desire to cause harm. To use this ability, the creature makes a Calm Others Test and compares the result against the Social Defense of every target within range (the exact range of this power is listed with each creature). If the test succeeds, the power dispels any normal- or magically-induced fear effects the target may be affected by and also physically relaxes him. The target may not initiate any actions that directly or indirectly involve harming anyone. Each round, the target may make a Willpower Test against the creature's Calm Others Test result to shrug off the lethargy.

Camouflage

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical; Mundane

Many creatures have the ability to hide in their natural environment, and can use this ability to camouflage themselves or even hide something being sought. The creature makes a Camouflage Test to blend in with its environment, the result of which becomes the Difficulty Number for characters attempting to notice it. Creatures can attack from a camouflaged position. If the intended target fails a Perception Test to spot the creature, the camouflaged creature can make a Surprise attack against the target (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 409 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Charge

Step Number: Rank
Action: Yes **Type**: Mundane

The creature is able to make sudden and rapid Charging attacks. The creature must move a distance at least equal to its Combat Movement rate that round, before attacking an opponent. If the attack is successful, the creature adds its Charge rank as a bonus to the Damage Test.

Chilling Touch

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical

To inflict Chilling Touch, the creature must touch the target and make a Chilling Touch Test against the target's Spell Defense. Chilling Touch manifests as severe cold, freezing the victim in his tracks. The victim takes 1 point of damage per combat round and can take no action until the Chilling Touch effect is dispelled or the character overcomes the effect by making a Willpower Test against the result of the Chilling Touch Test. No armor protects against this damage.

Control Corpse

Step Number: Rank
Action: No **Type**: Magical

Creatures using this power can reanimate and use a corpse as a host. This power only works on the bodies of creatures or people dead for two days or less. The host body becomes useless after a number of weeks equal to the creature's Control Corpse rank; the creature must find a new host after this time. In the case of other creatures, the creature can easily assume the habits common to its host when living. However, if a Name-giver is chosen as a host, the controlling creature must convincingly pass as its host or else avoid society altogether. Not all creatures are good at mimicking Name-giver behavior, which tends to be more complex than the behavior of beasts. Any characters encountering a fellow Name-giver under the control of this power may make a Perception Test against the controlling creature's Social Defense to notice that something is wrong. The success of this Perception Test depends entirely on how well the character knew the host in life. For a casual acquaintance, the character must achieve an Excellent result, while a close friend or family member requires only an Average result.

Crackling Armor

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical

This power surrounds the creature with bolts of lightning, crackling and popping a mere inch from its skin. Crackling Armor takes one round to activate, and remains active for a number of minutes equal to the creature's Crackling Armor rank. The creature adds its Cracking Armor rank as a bonus to its Physical Armor. Any time a character physically strikes the creature, with his hand or foot, a weapon, or some other object, the creature makes a Spellcasting Test against the attacker's Attack Test result. If the test succeeds, lightning arcs from the creature into

the attacker. The creature makes a Crackling Armor Test to determine how much damage is inflicted. Non-metal Physical Armor protects against this damage.

Curse

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical

The creature is able to bestow a curse on a target. The creature must be able to communicate with the target. The creature makes a Curse Test against the victim's Spell Defense. If the test is successful, the target becomes cursed. The gamemaster determines the exact nature and effects of the curse (see **Curses** in the **Adventuring** chapter on p. 110).

Disease

Step Number: Rank
Action: No **Type**: Magical; Mundane

Creatures with this power are infectious and are able to infect a target with a disease. No test is required for a creature to affect a target with the disease—if the victim is physically struck and damaged by tooth, claw or stinger; the disease automatically affects them. After taking damage, the target might get infected by the effects of the creature's disease, which are listed with each creature (for more information about diseases, see the **Adventuring** chapter on p. 125).

Durability

Step Number: Rank
Action: No **Type**: Magical

The Durability power increases a creature's ability to take damage. Each rank in the Durability power permanently adds +6 to the creature's Death Rating and +5 to its Unconsciousness Rating. The creature's Death and Unconsciousness Ratings, adjusted for Durability, are shown in parentheses beside the creature's unadjusted ratings.

Engulf

Step Number: Rank + Strength
Action: No **Type**: Magical

The Engulf power enables a creature to engulf a victim with parts of its body, causing the victim to take damage during each round of exposure. The creature makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the target is completely engulfed by the creature and takes Engulf Test damage each round for a number of rounds equal to the creature's Engulf rank. Engulfed characters are considered Harried (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 408 of the **Player's Compendium**).

After taking damage each round, the engulfed character may make a Strength Test against the creature's Spellcasting Test result. If the test is successful, he manages to break free.

Enhanced Senses

Step Number: Rank
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical; Mundane

A creature that has the Enhanced Senses power has an improved sense of hearing, smell, sight, taste or touch. When the creature makes a Perception Test using the enhanced sense, it adds the Enhanced Senses Rank as a bonus to the Perception Test result. The five enhanced senses that creatures possess include: listen, sight, smell, taste and touch. The specific senses enhanced by this power are shown with the power.

Enraging Scent

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical

This magical scent enrages all who smell it. To use it, the creature must make a successful Enraging Scent Test against the target character's Spell Defense. If the test is successful, the target becomes infuriated for a number of rounds equal to the creature's Enraging Scent rank. During this duration an affected target will immediately seek out the closest living creature, friend or foe, and attempt to render it limb from limb. To shrug off the effects of this ability, a target must succeed at a Willpower Test against the creature's Enraging Scent Test result.

Entrancement

Step Number: Rank + Charisma
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical

The creature can entrance members of any Name-giver race. To use this ability, the creature makes an Entrancement Test against the target's Social Defense. If the test succeeds, the victim falls under the creature's control, though the creature can only force him to walk in the direction of its choice. An entranced character can break free from the creature's influence by making a successful Willpower Test against the creature's Entrancement Test result. Additionally, the trance automatically breaks if the victim sustains Damage Points equal to this number. Unless the creature has its victim firmly under its mental control, it will not attempt to confront it physically.

Fire Touch

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical

Fire Touch makes the creature's target believe that he is burning. To activate this power, the creature makes a Fire Touch Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the target feels as if he is covered in flame. Each round, the victim takes 1 Damage Point and decreases his Initiative step by –2 steps. No armor protects against this damage. Once his Initiative step is reduced to 1, the target can only roll around on the ground trying to put out the fire or run wildly about. To shrug off the effects of this ability, the target must make a successful Willpower Test against the creature's Fire Touch step. Otherwise, the effects of the power end after a number of rounds equal to the creature's Fire Touch Test result.

Fire Trail

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: No **Type**: Magical

Flying creatures using this power leave trails of fire that follow them, burning targets in their wake. After a creature using this power attacks, it makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the creature makes a Fire Trail Test in place of a Damage Test. Mystic Armor protects against this damage.

Flashing Glare

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical

The creature has a shining eyelight, which it can flash on and off, causing uncontrollable seizures in its victims. The creature makes a Flashing Glare Test against the Spell Defense of all targets caught in the glare. If this test succeeds, affected targets become paralyzed for as long as the flashing light remains visible. The

sudden seizures can cause the victims to fall to the ground if they fail a Knockdown Test against the Flashing Glare Test result (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 400 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Freezing Aura

Step Number: Rank
Action: No **Type**: Magical

Some creatures can radiate extreme cold. If the creature passes within 3 yards of a target, the target automatically suffers Damage Points equal to the creature's Freezing Aura rank. Physical Armor protects against this damage. Advanced forms of this power can make non-magical metal weapons shatter into pieces when struck.

Harden Club

Step Number: Rank
Action: No **Type**: Magical

Wooden clubs reinforced by this ability are nearly impossible to break. In the hands of an ogre, the club adds the ogre's Harden Club rank to it's Damage rank. A wooden club untouched by the creature for more than 24 hours becomes an ordinary hunk of wood, similar to an ordinary club.

Howling Challenge

Step Number: Rank + Charisma
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical

The leader of a group of creatures may use its Howling Challenge power on a target within line of sight. Howling Challenge has a range, which is listed with each creature. The lead creature spends one round howling; in the following round, it makes a Howling Challenge Test against the target's Social Defense. A successful result forces the target into a howling contest with the creature. The victim then makes a Charisma Test against the creature's Howling Challenge Test result. If this test succeeds, the challenge ends and the creature flees in shame, followed next round by its fellow creatures. If the victim's Charisma Test fails, the leader may maintain the Howling Challenge, making another Howling Challenge Test to produce a new Difficulty Number each round for as long as the challenge lasts. The leader can maintain a Howling Challenge as long as it continues to win, and as long as it takes no other action.

Ice Shackles

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical

The creature makes an Ice Shackles Test against the Spell Defense of any single target within its line of sight. If the test succeeds, the target is wrapped in bands of magical frost. Ice Shackles melt after a number of rounds equal to the creature's Ice Shackles rank. To break free of the shackles, the target must succeed at a Strength Test against the creature's Ice Shackles Test result, which shatters the shackles into hundreds of shards. Unless completely destroyed in this way, the shackles automatically repair any cracks or breaks, leaving the character trapped. Ice Shackles has a range, which is listed with each creature.

Karma

Step Number: Special (see text)
Action: NA **Type**: Magical

Creatures with a Karma step can spend 1 Karma Point to augment any Action Test they make.

Killing Glare

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: No **Type**: Magical

Creatures with this ability have a killing eyelight that shines in a 45-degree arc directly to the front of the creature. The eyes glow with a fierce white light, which might save a lucky adventurer from destruction if he spots the glow and has the sense to run. The maximum range of the eyelight depends on the ambient light in the area. In direct sunlight, the killing glare becomes so weak that it can only affect opponents standing a yard or less away from the creature. In twilight, the glare harms an opponent up to 5 yards away; in complete darkness, up to 10 yards away. When the creature's eyelight falls on a target, the creature makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If multiple targets are within the eyelight, compare the result of the Spellcasting Test against each target's Spell Defense separately. If the test succeeds, the creature makes a Killing Glare Test to determine how much damage is inflicted. Mystic Armor protects against this damage.

Lightning

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: No **Type**: Magical

Some creatures have the power to strike their target with lightning. To use this lightning-generating ability, the creature makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the creature makes a Lightning Test to determine how much damage is inflicted. Non-metal Physical Armor protects against this damage.

Locate Target

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical; Mundane

Creatures with the Locate Target power can find their target's position even if they are not able to see them (i.e., on the earth's surface from underground, or in complete darkness). To determine an opponent's location, the creature makes a Locate Target Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the creature is aware of the target's position. The Locate Target range is listed with the creature's description.

Magic Drain

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical

To use this power, the creature makes a Magic Drain Test and compares the result against the Spell Defense of every other character or creature within range. If the test succeeds, the creature drains magical energy from each affected victim, the amount depending on the Magic Drain Test result. The creature reduces the step number of the victim's entire repertoire of magical abilities (including talents) by –1 step for each result level achieved. This draining effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to the creature's Magic Drain rank. The power's range is listed with the creature's description.

Paralyzation

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical

Some creatures run or fly around their target when using this ability, cawing and screeching madly, while others fly gracefully overhead and caw at the trespassers, lulling them into a trance with their beauty and grace. The creature makes a Paralyzation Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the

target becomes paralyzed for a number of rounds equal to the creature's Paralyzation rank. The paralysis effect automatically renders a target Knocked Down (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 409 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Poison

Step Number: Rank
Action: No **Type**: Magical; Mundane

Creatures with this power have poisonous fangs, teeth, claws or stingers. No test is required for a creature to affect a target with the poison—if the victim is physically struck and takes even a single Damage Point, he is exposed to the poison and suffers the effects. The specific effect of the poison is given in the creature's description (for more information about poisons, see the **Adventuring** chapter on p. 121).

Regeneration

Step Number: Rank + Toughness
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical

The creature must have a Recovery Test available to use this power. The creature makes a Regeneration Test, reducing its Current Damage by the result. As long as it has Recovery Tests available to it, the creature can use this power each round; it is not subject to the normal rules for resting between Recovery Tests.

Sense Danger

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical

The creature makes a Sense Danger Test against the Spell Defense of any target within line of sight. In the case of more than one target, the creature makes a test against the highest Spell Defense among the group. If the test succeeds, the creature knows whether or not the target(s) intend to attack or otherwise intend it harm.

Sense Magic

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical

The creature can use its magic-sensing ability over a range of Sense Magic rank miles. To detect the use of magic, the creature makes a Sense Magic Test against a Difficulty Number based on the type of magic being used, as shown in the Magic Use Table. If the test succeeds, the creature can track the source of the magic within its range. Because magic use is so pervasive in Barsaive, a creature can detect several different sources of magic use within the range of its power. The strain of sensing multiple uses of magic often confuses and irritates the creature, possibly making it more dangerous.

MAGIC USE TABLE

Magic Type	Difficulty Number
Raw Magic	4
Creature Magic	9
Adept Magic	11
Magical Items	12
Matrix-cast Spells	14

Sense Undead

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical

The creature makes a Sense Undead Test against the Spell Defense of any target within line of sight. In the case of more than one target, the creature makes a test against the highest Spell Defense among the group. If the test succeeds, the creature knows whether or not the target(s) are undead.

Skills

Step Number: Special (see text)
Action: Special (see text) **Type**: Mundane

Some creatures have powers based on skills. Refer to the **Skills** chapter on p. 230 of the **Player's Compendium** for a description of available skills. Skills as powers are noted by a superscripted 'S' at the end of the power's name.

Sonic Shriek

Step Number: Rank + Strength
Action: Yes **Type**: Mundane

This power allows a creature to shatter brittle objects—including crystal armor and weapons, glassware, pottery, and so on. The creature makes a Sonic Shriek Test and compares the result against the Spell Defense (increased by +10) of each item within range. If the test succeeds, the object shatters into hundreds of pieces. Weapons and armor crack horribly or break into fragments; potion bottles crack and spill their contents to the ground. Magical items (including magically-enhanced crystal armor and weapons) are almost immune to the effects of a Sonic Shriek attack; they only shatter on an Extraordinary result. The power's range is listed with the creature's description.

Spellcasting

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical

The Spellcasting power enables creatures to cast spells using raw magic. When casting spells with this power, creatures are vulnerable to the same Warping and Damage effects as Namegiver magicians, but they don't run the same risk of becoming Horror-marked as Horrors are usually less interested in marking creatures than in marking more intelligent life forms. Most creatures do not use spell matrices, but they must weave spell threads where required. Thread Weaving is only required for creatures that need to weave threads (see **Talents**, p. 278). To determine the effect of a spell, use the creature's Willpower step.

Spells

Step Number: Special (see text)
Action: No **Type**: Magical

Generally, creatures can cast spells of only one Discipline, though some powerful creatures are able to cast spells of several Disciplines. The spells that the creature can cast are listed with its description.

Sticky Body

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: No **Type**: Magical; Mundane

Creatures with this power excrete a sticky fluid. Whenever the creature comes into contact with another character or item, the creature makes a Sticky Body Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test is successful, the fluid glues the character and the creature together. Creatures using this ability are free to perform other actions while attached to a victim. A character is considered Harried as soon as even a single creature sticks to him using this power (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 408 of the **Player's Compendium**). Once four creatures stick to a target, it begins to suffocate. The victim takes 1 Damage Point each combat round until fewer than four creatures remain on it. No armor protects against this damage. Optionally, characters suffer from the Overwhelmed optional rule at this stage (refer to the **Combat** chapter of the **Player's Compendium** for details), further hampering them. As a guideline, up to six creatures can

stick to a character of equal size. To break free from the gluey gob, the target must make a successful Strength Test against the result of the creature's Sticky Body Test. The only other way to escape the glue is to wait for the sun to break down the substance, but a creature with this power will rarely allow that to happen. Making physical attacks against a sticky creature is very difficult. At the start of combat, the gamemaster makes a Sticky Body Test to determine the strength of the creature's adhesive layer. Whenever an opponent successfully attacks the creature, his weapon, hand and so on sticks to the creature; the attacker must make a successful Strength Test against the result of the Sticky Body Test to pull the weapon or limb free. If the Strength Test fails, the attacker may make further Strength Tests, but the Difficulty Number for each additional test increases by +1.

Sticky Spit

Step Number: Rank + Strength
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical; Mundane

Creatures using this power usually prefer to glue their foes to the ground rather than fight them in close combat. The creature can spit a gob of adhesive at any opponent within the range listed in its description. To spit the gob, the creature makes a Sticky Spit Test against the target's Physical Defense. If the test succeeds, the target is struck by the mucus. The spit hinders the character's movement; the character is considered Harried (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 408 of the **Player's Compendium**). The spit can be removed with a mild acid, such as vinegar, and a good scrubbing brush. Alternatively, a round spent trying to pull the goo free allows the target to make a Strength Test against the creature's Sticky Spit Test result. If this test succeeds, enough of the goo has been removed to allow freedom of movement again. For this reason, it is common for creature with this power to use it more than once against the same opponent to ensure it's prey is well and truly stuck (and to force multiple Strength Tests to break free). The gamemaster may wish to use the Overwhelmed optional rule to account for the effect of multiple Sticky Spit attacks on a target (refer to the **Combat** chapter on p. 408 of the **Player's Compendium** for details).

Surprise Attack

Step Number: Rank
Action: No **Type**: Magical; Mundane

The creature is able to strike faster in its initial attack, usually from a hidden position. Add the creature's Surprise Attack rank to its Initiative step in the first round of combat. The creature's victim may also suffer a Surprised penalty (see the **Combat** Chapter on p. 409 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Talents

Step Number: Special (see text)
Action: Special (see text) **Type**: Magical

Some creatures have powers based on adept talents. Refer to the **Talents** chapter on p. 166 of the **Player's Compendium** for a description of the talent in question. Creatures without Karma must sacrifice one of their available Recovery Tests to use talents that require Karma as a power. Talents as powers are noted by a superscripted 'T' at the end of the power's name.

Tire Others

Step Number: Rank + Charisma
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical

Those affected by this power become listless and tired, losing all interest in anything they are doing for a number of minutes equal to the Tire Others Test result. To shrug off the effects of this ability, a target must make a successful Willpower Test against the result of the creature's Tire Others Test.

Triplicate

Step Number: Rank
Action: Yes **Type**: Magical

Creatures using this power can create copies of themselves to engage in combat. Only the original creature, called the core creature, can reproduce. This process takes 3 combat rounds to perform and causes 1 point of damage to the core creature. Once the time is over, two duplicates appear. These duplicates remain for a number of hours equal to the core creature's Triplicate rank before dissolving into a frothy mush. The copies may act individually or together, and even under the influence of magical charms refuse to harm the core creature. A core creature can create a maximum number of duplicates equal to its Triplicate rank.

Venom

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: No **Type**: Magical

Creatures using this power can spit venom at targets. The venom is caustic to the touch and creates an irritating burn if it contacts a victim's skin. Whenever a creature makes a venom attack, make a Spellcasting Test for the creature against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, make a Venom Test for the creature to determine the damage the attack causes. Venom has a range, which is listed with each creature.

Creature Descriptions

Each creature description is presented in up to four sections. First, each creature entry lists its relevant game statistics (see the **Creature Entry Format** section on p. 266 for details on what each entry represents).

The **Commentary** includes a physical description of each creature, as well as various details about the creature's habitat, eating and mating habits, and natural defenses.

The optional **Rules** section includes all game rules that correspond to the descriptions of each creature and possible ways to defeat or escape it. This section also includes rules for resolving the use of any unique powers or abilities a creature may possess, including any exceptions to existing rules. For example, a blood raven has the Astral Sight power, which works like the talent of the same name. The Rules section of the creature's description states that the blood raven's Astral Sight is limited to a range of 30 yards, which is an exception to the normal range of the Astral Sight talent.

An **Adventure Hook** suggests at least one way gamemasters might use an encounter with a creature as a starting point for an adventure. These adventure hooks are intended to spark ideas for fleshing out a complete adventure and/or integrating the creature into an ongoing **Earthdawn** campaign. Not all creatures list an Adventure Hook.

Keep in mind that the suggestions offered in this section are just that: suggestions. The gamemaster should feel free to use the creatures in this book in any way he can imagine.

Alligator

DEX: 5	**STR**: 6	**TOU**: 6
PER: 4	**WIL**: 4	**CHA**: 3

Initiative: 5 (7; see text) **Physical Defense**: 7
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 6
Attack (3): 8 **Social Defense**: 4

Damage:
Bite (5): 11

Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 38
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 30

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 7

Combat Movement: 32/26[+]

Full Movement: 64/52[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's swimming Movement rate.

Powers: Surprise Attack (2), Swimming[S] (2): 8

Legend Points: 65

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

This aggressive aquatic predator is approximately 10 to 12 feet long, and possesses sharp teeth and powerful jaws. It is found in the numerous river and marshland areas of Barsaive, although alligators are most prevalent in the rivers of the Servos Jungle. These cunning reptiles lie submerged in the water with only their eyes and nostrils showing, waiting for prey to come within reach for them to attack. When in the water they are difficult to discern from floating wood or other detritus.

Rules

Sight-based Perception Tests made to detect a partially-submerged alligator require a Good or better result. Even if detected, an alligator's initial attack is extremely sudden—the alligator gains a +2 bonus to its first Initiative Test.

The alligator's favored attack strategy is to quickly capture prey using a Bite and Hold attack (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 416 of the **Player's Compendium**) against a (usually) Surprised victim, dragging it underwater to drown.

Aquatic: Alligators require one result level lower than normal when making Swimming Tests, usually only needing a Poor result. They can hold their breath for a number of minutes equal to their Toughness step before drowning.

APE

DEX: 6 **STR**: 8 **TOU**: 6
PER: 4 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 8
Damage:
Bite (5): 13

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 28

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 8

Combat Movement: 28/32[+]

Full Movement: 56/64[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's climbing Movement rate.

Powers: Climbing[S] (2): 8, Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 6, Great Leap[S] (2): 8

Legend Points: 85

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

These large primates are found in the jungle regions of Barsaive, where they live in the treetops. Many different species exist: baboons, gorillas, and orangutans. These animals live in small tribes and are usually peaceful in nature.

BASILISK

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

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 7
Damage:
Bite (1): 6

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: 36

Full Movement: 72

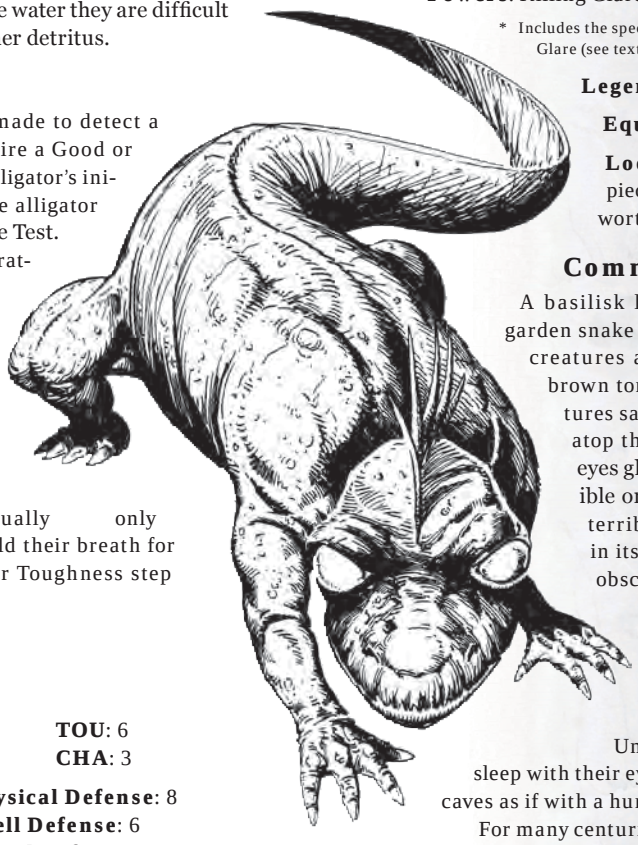
Powers: Killing Glare (9): 24*, Spellcasting (13): 17

* Includes the special bonus for the basilisk's Powerful Glare (see text).

Legend Points (2): 480

Equipment: None

Loot: Eyes worth 200 silver pieces each (count as treasure worth Legend Points).



Commentary

A basilisk looks like a cross between a garden snake and a 4-foot-long lizard. These creatures are usually colored in gray or brown tones, with no distinguishing features save for a gray, rooster-like comb atop their heads and beady eyes. The eyes glow with a fierce white light, visible only at night, and which inflicts terrible damage to any living being in its path. During the day, sunlight obscures the basilisk's eyelight.

The basilisk hunts by night, crawling out of its cave at twilight. At this time, they are most dangerous, driven to hunt by ravenous hunger. Unlike most creatures, basilisks sleep with their eyes open, lighting up their small caves as if with a hundred candles.

For many centuries, magicians and scholars puzzled over how basilisks reproduce. A creature that kills anything it looks at can hardly be expected to mate in any normal way and would most likely kill any baby basilisks it managed to spawn. The answer to this puzzle is that the basilisk does not mate, but splits. Every so often in a basilisk's life, its tail begins to grow thicker and takes on the appearance of a second head. After several weeks, both heads look exactly the same, and the creature splits in half. The two halves begin to grow new tails, and within days there are two basilisks instead of one.

Some scholars claim the basilisk resembles the cockatrice—others believe basilisks and dragons are related. Legends abound of foolish magicians who tried to harness the basilisk's magic for their own ends, and died from their efforts.

Rules

The basilisk is able to do damage far out of proportion to its size. This creature rarely needs to fight its enemies and so often

travels into dangerous places in search of food. If the basilisk runs into anything hostile, it tries to kill its opponent, and it usually succeeds. If it cannot kill its opponent, because the sunlight is strong enough to mask its glare or the opponent is magically protected, for example, the basilisk flees. If cornered, it bites, but this attack is far less dangerous than its gaze.

Powerful Glare: A basilisk's Killing Glare power is far more potent than that of other creatures. To reflect this, the basilisk has a unique +10 step bonus when using this power. Like its hapless victims, the basilisk cannot withstand its own sight. If a basilisk's eyelight is reflected back at it, the creature will be affected in the same way as its victims.

Adventure Hook

A powerful Nethermancer wishes to study the basilisk's killing glare in the hope of devising a spell to produce a similar effect. He needs a live basilisk, and hires the characters for the difficult task of capturing one.

Bat

DEX: 8 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 3
PER: 6 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 8 **Physical Defense**: 12
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 8
Attack (1): 9 **Social Defense**: 3
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 0
Bite (1): 3 **Mystic Armor**: 1

Death Rating: 24 **Recovery Tests**: 1
Wound Threshold: 5 **Knockdown**: 2
Unconsciousness Rating: 15

Combat Movement: 24/55[+] **Full Movement**: 48/110[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Blood Veins (3): 5, Enhanced Senses (Listen) (2): 8, Locate Target (3): 9, Silent Walk[S] (1): 9

Legend Points: 55

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Bats are nocturnal flying mammals. Most are herbivores that eat fruit or insectivores that eat insects, although some feed on the blood of other creatures. These blood-sucking bats are the only ones that attack Name-givers. Bats are blind and "see" by emitting high-frequency sounds, like sonar, that are inaudible to most creatures. The bat's sonar works like a mundane version of the Locate Target power.

Bear

DEX: 5 **STR**: 7 **TOU**: 6
PER: 3 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 5 **Physical Defense**: 7
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 4
Attack (2): 7 **Social Defense**: 7
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 5
Bite (5): 12 **Mystic Armor**: 0

Death Rating: 38 **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 10 **Knockdown**: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 30

Combat Movement: 32 **Full Movement**: 64

Powers: Battle Shout[S] (Roar) (1): 6, Climbing[S] (2): 7, Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 5, Swimming[S] (1): 8

Legend Points: 55

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Bears are forest and mountain-dwelling omnivores that are usually not dangerous unless an unwary traveler enters their lair, or threatens their cubs. Bears usually permit travelers to pass through their territory, unless the trespassers pose an obvious threat to the animal's food supply.

Behemoth

DEX: 5 **STR**: 16 **TOU**: 17
PER: 4 **WIL**: 10 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 4 **Physical Defense**: 5
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 13
Attack (2): 7 **Social Defense**: 12
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 10
Horns (9): 25 **Mystic Armor**: 12
Trample (2): 18

Death Rating: 79 (115) **Recovery Tests**: 8
Wound Threshold: 22 **Knockdown**: 17
Unconsciousness Rating: 72 (102)

Combat Movement: 34 **Full Movement**: 68

Powers: Durability (6), Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 6

Legend Points: 635

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Nicknamed "swamp thundra," these giant beasts have attained near-mythical status among Cara Fahd's cavalrymen. Physically, they resemble thundra beasts with dragon-like necks and tails and shorter horns. The males stand 10 feet high at the shoulder, average 25 feet in length, and weigh about 15 tons.

They are usually slow, shy and secretive, supporting their bulk in the waters of the Locust River mire in southwest Cara Fahd. Though generally docile, they attack by stomping and goring if threatened. The males live to be 25 years old, the females 50. They grow throughout their lives, so it is possible to find a female behemoth in excess of 60 feet in length.

Males make up roughly four-fifths of the small population. They need vast territories to feed, so a single herd usually consists of a female, three to five males and no more than three half-grown young.

Rules

Behemoths are extremely ornery and resistant to taming, even from Beastmasters. To reflect this creature's innate resistance to training, characters using their talents and abilities to tame or command a behemoth must achieve a result two levels higher than normal to be successful. For example, the Animal Training talent normally requires an Average result to work against a target creature. Using Animal Training against a behemoth, however, requires an Excellent result.

Adventure Hook

The powdered horn of the behemoth is an essential ingredient in some unique ork scorcher rituals. The characters are asked to slay a behemoth and bring back the horn. However, the nearest herd is the property of a rival tribe of ork scorchers.

Blood Bee

DEX: 7 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 5
PER: 5 **WIL**: 4 **CHA** 2

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 9
Damage:
Stinger (6): 8 (see text)

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 2

Combat Movement: 18/46[+] **Full Movement**: 36/92[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Blood Veins (3): 5

Legend Points: 95

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Blood bees resemble 2-foot-long wasps with an accordion-like sac flapping from the thorax. When attacking, the bee flies backward, strikes its prey with the sticky sac, then flies forward. The forward motion extrudes a hollow spine from within the sac, which punctures the victim's skin and drains his blood. Once filled, the bag becomes heavy enough for the bee to pull free. The laden insect then flies back to its nest to feast on the victim's blood.

Rules

Blood bees use special rules with regard to their Blood Veins power, and are vulnerable to salt.

Blood Veins: A blood bee can use its Blood Veins power only if it successfully stings its target, requiring an Armor-Defeating Hit on its initial attack. A blood bee's sac can hold nearly half a gallon of blood, so this blood loss can prove fatal to most victims. To remove the bee, the target character must knock it down by inflicting a Wound on it. If the bee fails its Knockdown Test, it is detached from the victim and falls to the ground. Knocking down a bee may look easy, but keep in mind that these creatures *always* attack in swarms.

Vulnerability to Salt: A blood bee's sac is terribly susceptible to salt. If a blood bee touches salt, it takes Step 3/D4 damage. Physical Armor protects against this damage. A character coating himself in salt will enrage the bees, but the buzzing swarms rarely gather the courage to attack him. Usually, a salt-covered character is attacked in only one out of ten encounters.

Adventure Hook

While exploring some ruins, the characters come across an old statue with what appears to be gemstones in place of eyes. Only one problem: covering the larger part of the statue is the nest of a large swarm of blood bees.

Blood Monkey

DEX: 8 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 7
PER: 5 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 8 (11)
Number of Actions: 3
Attack (3): 11
Damage:
Bite (5): 10
2 × Claws (3): 8

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 3

Death Rating: 42
Wound Threshold: 12
Unconsciousness Rating: 34

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 5

Combat Movement: 38/43[+] **Full Movement**: 76/86[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's climbing Movement rate.

Powers: Climbing[S] (3): 11, Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 7, Great Leap[S] (3): 11, Surprise Attack (3)

Legend Points: 135

Equipment: None

Loot: Pelt worth 100 silver pieces each (counts as treasure worth Legend Points). May find bits of treasure, items, weapons, and armor from the last unfortunate adventurers who passed this way.

Commentary

Blood monkeys are small simians thickly covered in fur of a deep red color. Their bodies rarely exceed 2 feet in length, but they have prehensile tail that add another 2 feet to their overall length. They appear small and harmless, but are actually quite vicious. Sharp claws grow from the ends of their five fingers, and they sport a mouthful of long, needle-sharp teeth.

Blood monkeys are found in most areas of the Blood Wood except the Elven Court and the central regions. The Queen's Blood Warders have taken measures to keep the monkeys away from the Palace and the overwhelming corruption of the Forest's Heart keeps them far away from the center of the Wood.

Blood monkeys typically live in groups of up to one hundred animals, but legends tell of attacks by multiple groups numbering in the thousands. Recently, blood monkey pelts have become a sought-after item in some areas of Barsaive. They sell for roughly 100 silver pieces each.

Rules

Extremely territorial, blood monkeys will attack everything from individuals to whole trade caravans. Typically, up to fifteen of the strongest males in a blood monkey band will initiate an attack by dropping from the treetops onto their targets, usually by surprise. Blood monkeys can attack up to three times in a combat round, clawing and biting.

Reinforcements: If any blood monkey's initial attack causes damage to a victim, the monkeys give a screech that summons five to fifteen more blood monkeys. These "reinforcements" arrive within minutes. If the targets defend themselves successfully

against the initial attack, and actually manage to counterattack, the blood monkeys will try to escape.

Adventure Hook

Rumors lead the characters to an old shrine, purported to hide the secret location of an old kaer. The shrine, however, has become the favored breeding ground of a local group of blood monkeys, who don't take kindly to having their conjugal relations interrupted by strangers.

Blood Oak Roots

DEX: 7 **STR**: 13 **TOU**: 12
PER: 5 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 6 **Physical Defense**: 7
Number of Actions: 1 (see text) **Spell Defense**: 10 (7; see text)
Attack (5): 12 **Social Defense**: 15
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 9
Root Whip (3): 16 **Mystic Armor**: 3 (0; see text)

Death Rating: 60 (150) **Recovery Tests**: 6
Wound Threshold: Immune **Knockdown**: Immune
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Combat Movement: 6 **Full Movement**: 12

Powers: Blood Veins (see text), Durability (15), Engulf (1): 14, Poison (SD 8; Sleep), Spellcasting (5): 10

Legend Points: 440

Equipment: None

Loot: Items belonging to previous victims may be scattered around the tree's base.

Commentary

The blood oak is named for the bright red veins that run through its leaves and the deep red hue that its leaves take on for three months of the year. These trees grow to majestic heights throughout the Blood Wood, often exceeding 60 yards. Their crowns grow equally broad, giving each blood oak a wide area around its trunk and roots clear of other large plant life. According to legend, all of the Blood Wood's oaks are descended from the eight trees that form the foundation and towers of Queen Alachia's palace. Blood oaks derive part of their sustenance from the blood of creatures that come to rest beneath their branches. When a creature remains motionless beneath the tree's leaves, hundreds of tiny root-like filaments wriggle up through the ground, attach themselves to the victim and secrete a thin sap that deadens the target creature's nerves.

Rules

Blood oaks can defend themselves by reaching up from the earth with bunches of roots to grasp creatures and squeeze them to death or draw them down into the earth. Whenever a blood oak is actively threatened or is awakened by a root walker (see **Root Walker**, p. 337), it uses its roots in this fashion. A blood oak may attack anywhere from one to three characters, depending on the age of the tree. Use the statistics above for each root bunch. When a root bunch successfully attacks a character, it grapples him and automatically causes damage each round until the character breaks free (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 411 of the **Player's Compendium**) or the roots are destroyed. The roots also attempt to Engulf the target. The oaks normally leave dead characters beneath the earth to decompose. Characters may destroy the tree as they would destroy a barrier (see **Barriers and Structures** in the **Adventuring** chapter on p. 106).

Blood Veins: Attaching its blood veins takes only a few minutes. Once it is complete, the blood oak begins to suck the target's blood, inflicting 1 Damage Point per minute until the damage reaches the target's Death Rating. No armor protects against this damage. Once the creature is dead, the filaments disengage and retreat beneath the earth. If the target fails to resist the effects of the blood oak's poison, it does not feel the effects of the blood drain and may die unless some one else comes to aid. The filaments are weak; removing them requires no test.

Limited Movement: The Movement rates listed for the roots indicate how far a root bunch may reach each round. A root bunch moves by pulling more of itself out of the ground to reach farther. This action, however, exposes more of the root to attack. Also, the root may not reach more than 30 yards from its point of emergence. However, a root bunch may move entirely underground and emerge up to 100 to 250 yards from the trunk, depending on the tree's age. A blood oak senses its victims primarily through their contact with the earth, so foes that remain airborne, such as windlings or flying creatures, escape its notice.

Vulnerability to Fire: Blood oaks have a Spell Defense of 10, except against spells that cause fire damage; against these, the Spell Defense drops to 7 and their Mystic Armor is reduced to 0.

Adventure Hook

The characters make camp in what looks like an easily-protected area in the roots of a large tree. Unfortunately for the characters, this tree obscures a blood oak; and its roots are entangled and hidden among those of the other tree.

Blood Raven

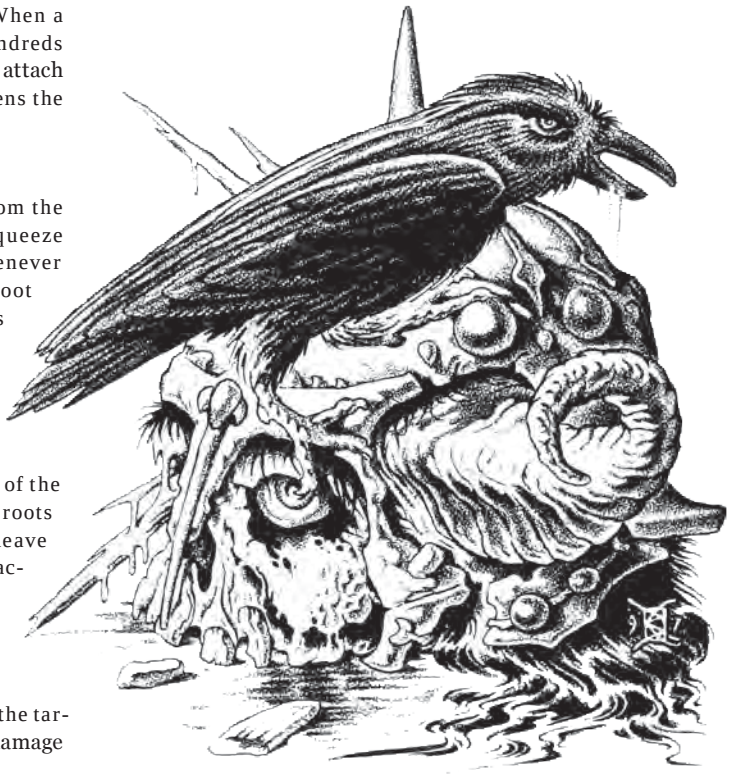
DEX: 6 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 3
PER: 7 **WIL**: 5 **CHA** 5

Initiative: 6 **Physical Defense**: 9
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 10
Attack (3): 9 **Social Defense**: 7
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 0
Bite (3): 5 **Mystic Armor**: 0

Death Rating: 23 **Recovery Tests**: 1
Wound Threshold: 5 **Knockdown**: 2
Unconsciousness Rating: 14

Combat Movement: 20/49[+] **Full Movement**: 40/98[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.



Powers: Astral Sight [T] (3): 10, Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 9

Legend Points: 65

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Blood ravens can be distinguished from normal ravens by their larger size and reddish legs. Individually, blood ravens pose little threat to Name-givers. However, they most often appear in flocks of dozens of birds. Blood ravens are intelligent, with sharp eyesight and the ability to see astrally as well. For these reasons blood ravens are highly sought after by magicians, and blood elves often take blood ravens as familiars.

Rules

Blood ravens usually attack a character's eyes, hoping to blind him. To make such an attack, a raven must use the Called Shot combat option against the target (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 404 of the **Player's Compendium**). Only helmets or other armor specifically designed to provide eye protection will shield a character against such attacks. A successful attack temporarily blinds the target for 2 rounds (see **Blindness** on p. 408 of the **Player's Compendium**). If the damage to the target's eyes is sufficient to cause a Wound, the target remains blind until that Wound is healed.

Astral Sight: The blood raven's Astral Sight power is similar to the Astral Sight talent, though their vision is limited to 30 yards on the astral plane.

BLOOD WASP

DEX: 8 **STR**: 3 **TOU**: 6
PER: 6 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 8 **Physical Defense**: 12
Number of Actions: 1 (see text) **Spell Defense**: 8
Attack (3): 11 **Social Defense**: 12
Damage: (see text) **Physical Armor**: 0
One Target (10): 13 **Mystic Armor**: 0
Two Targets (7): 10
Three Targets (4): 7

Death Rating: NA (see text) **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: Immune **Knockdown**: NA
Unconsciousness Rating: 38

Combat Movement: 52[+] **Full Movement**: 104[+]

[+] This value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Legend Points: 655

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Blood wasps are aggressive insects that attack in swarms to gather the blood they feed on. Only slightly larger than ordinary wasps, they are fiercely territorial and mercilessly attack any creature that comes too close to their nests.

Rules

The statistics above apply to a swarm of 250 to 300 insects, the number in an average blood wasp nest. A swarm this size occupies a sphere-shaped area roughly 10 yards in diameter and will attack up to three creatures within the sphere, though the swarm can only attack each creature once. The statistics above include three different Damage steps, and the number of targets within the sphere determines which Damage step is used. Once a swarm has taken damage equal to its Unconsciousness Rating, it disperses. A dispersed swarm needs two weeks to regenerate.

Dousing a character with vinegar or wine will drive away any attacking wasps and temporarily prevent further attacks. Pungent salves derived from the sap of certain trees will also ward off blood wasp attacks, but knowledge of these salves is a closely guarded secret in the Blood Wood.

Swarm Form: Attacking a blood wasp swarm with most ordinary weapons (such as a sword or a bow) is virtually useless. All damage inflicted with such weapons is reduced to 1 Damage Point.

Vulnerability to Fire: Attacks made with flame-based weapons or spells gain a +5 bonus to their Damage Test.

BOG GOB

DEX: 5 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 8
PER: 4 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 4 **Physical Defense**: 6
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 8
Attack (1): 6 **Social Defense**: 12
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 7
Half-spear (3): 9 **Mystic Armor**: 3

Death Rating: 43 **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 12 **Knockdown**: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 35

Combat Movement: 16 **Full Movement**: 32

Powers: Sticky Body (3): 7

Legend Points: 80

Equipment: Half-spear (Damage: STR + 3; Cost: 2; STR Min: 7; Weight: 3; Size: 2)

Loot: D10 silver pieces

Commentary

Not native to Barsaive, bog gobs are squat, ugly, wicked creatures with glowing yellow eyes set in mottled-gray heads. Standing 4 to 5 feet tall, they weigh a staggering 200 pounds. The same magic that holds their mud-colored, bipedal bodies together also acts as resilient natural armor.

They gather in groups numbering from ten to sixty members throughout the wilderness of Barsaive. According to legends, these creatures came to Barsaive from faraway swamps in the lands to the north.

Rules

Bog gobs often attack simply to injure victims, as well as to kill and loot. These creatures always leave survivors, although the larger the attacking group, the fewer the survivors. The reason for this behavior remains a mystery, though some believe the gobs leave survivors because they enjoy the tales that inevitably spread following these attacks. Beastmasters cannot use their powers to affect bog gobs.

Brain Millipede

DEX: 4 **STR**: 3 **TOU**: 6
PER: 6 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 6 **Physical Defense**: 6
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 8
Attack (1): 5 **Social Defense**: 8
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 0
Bite (5): 8 **Mystic Armor**: 4

Death Rating: 35 **Recovery Tests**: 2
Wound Threshold: 9 **Knockdown**: NA
Unconsciousness Rating: 27

Combat Movement: 8+ **Full Movement**: 16+

+ This value is the creature's swimming Movement rate.

Powers: Mind Crush (5): 13; Spellcasting (1): 7

Legend Points: 80

Equipment: None

Loot: Occasionally coins and objects from previous victims can be retrieved.

Commentary

Brain millipedes are an aquatic species that cannot live out of the water. Typically, specimens congregate in large masses that vaguely resemble exposed brains. When grouped together in this manner, a brain millipede colony possesses a limited intelligence. According to river tales, brain millipede colonies consume the brains of their victims last and retain the intellects of those victims. However, such tales are probably no more than the musings of garrulous boatmen.

Rules

A congregated colony uses a unique power called Mind Crush to attack any target within range until the target leaves the colony's vicinity or is rendered unconscious. If a target loses consciousness, the colony members disperse and reassemble on the victim's body. Then they slowly consume the victim until they have contracted into the same clump they occupied before they dispersed. If the victim regains consciousness, he may remove the millipedes without any further tests. However, the millipede colony will reform itself within 3 rounds and attack the victim again with its spell-like power if the victim remains within range.

Mind Crush: This unique power directly attacks the will of the victim, which must be within a range of 120 yards. The brain millipede colony makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the creature makes a Mind Crush Test to determine how much damage is inflicted on the target. Mystic Armor protects against this damage.

Aquatic: Brain millipedes require one result level lower than normal when making Swimming Tests, usually only needing a Poor result.

Brithan

DEX: 5 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 9
PER: 5 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 5 **Physical Defense**: 7
Number of Actions: 1 (see text) **Spell Defense**: 7
Attack (2): 7 (see text) **Social Defense**: 9
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 5
Bite (7): 13 (see text) **Mystic Armor**: 2

Death Rating: 48 (54) **Recovery Tests**: 4
Wound Threshold: 14 **Knockdown**: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 41 (46)

Combat Movement: 34 **Full Movement**: 68

Powers: Battle Shout[S] (Roar) (3): 7, Climbing[S] (2): 7, Durability (1), Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 7, Swimming[S] (2): 8

Legend Points: 120

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Dwarf hunters have described the brithan as a cross between a bear and an elemental having a bad day. Luminescent flecks color these animals' eyes, and their large heads sit atop ursine bodies covered with shaggy, deep brown or blue-black fur. Brithans are territorial and will stand on their hind legs and roar a challenge to anything that enters their domain. If a single character answers the challenge, the brithan enters into ritual combat with him, and the two fight until one submits.

Rules

Brithans submit after taking their first Wound; battering a brithan to unconsciousness is also a victory. A character need not kill the brithan in order to win the combat. Defeating a brithan in ritual combat earns the character all of the creature's Legend Points. A brithan's submission lasts for about 3 days, after which the creature tends to forget who beat him. Any character who submits to a brithan must move himself and his team at least half a mile away from the victorious creature, or the brithan will attack the character in an attempt to kill him.

Frenzy: If more than one character attacks a brithan, the animal fights back savagely, gaining an additional bite attack and a +4 bonus to its Attack and Damage Tests.

BROCCHA

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

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 8
Damage:
Bite (1): 6
2 × Claws (2): 7
Tail (3): 8

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6

Combat Movement: 36 **Full Movement**: 72

Powers: Breath Weapon (Fire) (3): 9, Spellcasting (2): 8

Legend Points: 90

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Broccha live on what are known as *clenkas* or "fool's islands" in Death's Sea. Broccha are reptilian in nature, with a snake-like head, four stocky legs, and a long tail lined with short spikes. The creature's skin has the odor and texture of the *clenkas* it lies on, a resemblance accentuated by small, bright-red welts, each roughly an inch in diameter, that dot the broccha's skin. These welts show the elemental fire that runs through the broccha's blood. Their coloration allows broccha to lie motionless on the fool's islands and to blend in perfectly with their environment. Intruders never know the creature is there until too late.

Broccha apparently possess an unlimited capacity for their fire-spitting power, though the bright red welts on their skin seem to fade the more they use it. Some tales tell of broccha that have no red welts and never use this form of attack, but we cannot begin to understand the implications of these rumors.

Rules

Though they appear slow and sluggish, brocchas are deadly opponents, made even more so by their fearsome fire-spitting power and their spiked, 4 foot long tails.

Breath Weapon: The broccha's Breath Weapon power enables the creature to spit small, exploding spheres of fire at targets

within a range of 100 yards. With a Good result on the Spellcasting Test, the sphere of fire explodes, splashing all characters within 2 yards of the victim with a Spell Defense equal to or less than the Spellcasting Test result.

Tail Weapon: When the tail is used as a third close combat weapon, treat the tail attack like any other attack. Because a broccha can attack anyone within range, it can attack two characters at once.

Tail Frenzy: The tail frenzy is a defensive posture in which the creature whips its tail around in random patterns to keep attacks out of range. The tail frenzy is not an attack, though it causes damage to anyone who gets in the way. The main danger of the tail frenzy is the chance that it will knock a character down. Any successful Attack Test made by the broccha during the tail frenzy means the attacked character must make a special Knockdown (5) Test. If the test succeeds, the character remains standing. On a failure, the character falls—possibly onto molten rock.

CAT

DEX: 5 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 2
PER: 5 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 5
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 6
Damage:
Claws (1): 3

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 19
Wound Threshold: 3
Unconsciousness Rating: 10

Recovery Tests: 1/2 days
Knockdown: 3

Combat Movement: 30 **Full Movement**: 60

Powers: Climbing [S] (1): 6, Great Leap [S] (1): 6, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk [S] (1): 6

Legend Points: 30

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Common, domesticated house cats are found in almost all

towns and cities of Barsaive, since they are often kept as pets by Name-givers of all races. Cats are virtually harmless to Name-givers, but they are useful for keeping buildings free of mice and rats.

Cave Crab

DEX: 10 **STR**: 16 **TOU**: 12
PER: 4 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 9
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 12
Damage:
Bite (1): 17
Claws (6): 22 (see text)

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 59 (101)
Wound Threshold: 17
Unconsciousness Rating: 52 (87)

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 17

Combat Movement: 58
Full Movement: 116

Powers: Durability (7)

Legend Points (2): 950

Equipment: None

Loot: Intact shell, for which armorers will pay up to 300 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points). Large pieces of shell may fetch lower prices, at the gamemaster's discretion.

Commentary

The cave crab lives in the Delaris Mountains, which ring the southern region of the terrible and corrupted Wastes. Unlike its ocean-born brethren, the cave crab possesses four legs and two pincers instead of six legs and pincers. A thick armored shell encases its entire boneless body, including its unnaturally slim legs. The shell is as strong as iron and as light as wood—almost impossible to pierce.

The crab's horrible pincers, each more than 4 feet long, are strong and sharp enough to slice a thick tree trunk or any nearby obsidiman neatly in half. The underside of each claw is sharp also, enabling the crab to slash at its opponent or close its great pincers on a convenient limb. The crab lives in the many caves throughout the Delaris peaks, where it can hide in the cool shade during the day. It leaves the cave at night to hunt—these creatures eat everything from tree branches to horses to people.

Dragons find the cave crab absolutely delicious. Any dragon who has tasted the flesh of a cave crab at least once will usually risk anything to eat any other cave crab it encounters.

Rules

The cave crab is a killing machine. In close combat, it can slash at an opponent with the sharp bottom half of its huge pincers; alternatively, it can close its pincers and sever limbs (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 417 of the **Player's Compendium**). The cave crab also possesses huge jaws, which it uses to bite its opponent if its pincer attack fails.

Hardened Armor: The shell of a cave crab is extremely tough. Armor-Defeating Hits require one result level greater than normal (usually an Extraordinary result) to penetrate the crab's shell.

Cave Troll

DEX: 6 **STR**: 13 **TOU**: 8
PER: 4 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 3
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (5): 11
Damage:
Cave Axe (7): 20

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 7 (armor)
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 43
Wound Threshold: 12
Unconsciousness Rating: 35

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 13

Combat Movement: 28
Full Movement: 56

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 6

Legend Points: 270

Equipment: Cave axe, chain mail

Loot: D4 silver pieces

Commentary

Cave trolls are descended from tribes of trolls who took to the deep places of the Earth when the Horrors came. Their isolation from the rest of the world led to cultural stagnation, and in some cases, degeneration among these tribes. Elemental magic has raised the strength of these cave trolls beyond that of civilized trolls, however, and in recent years they have emerged from their tunnels to explore the world above. Rude, and often violent, the cave trolls' habit of mixing trade with raiding has made them unwelcome visitors in most of Barsaive.

Rules

Cave trolls use large stone weapons called cave axes, little more than crude stone axes bolstered with elemental magic.

Cave Axe: Wielding a cave axe requires a minimum Strength value of 16. Cave axes add +7 to the troll's Strength step when making Damage Tests. Because demand for these weapons is low, cave axes are usually undervalued at 50 silver pieces each. Cave trolls take offense at anyone other than a fellow cave troll using one of their axes and will react accordingly; worsen the Attitude toward the wielder (and his obvious companions) for Interaction Tests by one level.

Chakta Bird

DEX: 8 **STR**: 3 **TOU**: 4
PER: 6 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 8

Initiative: 8
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 9
Damage:
Bite (7): 10

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 3

Death Rating: 30
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 21

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 3

Combat Movement: 24/55[+] **Full Movement**: 48/110[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 8, Paralyzation (5): 12

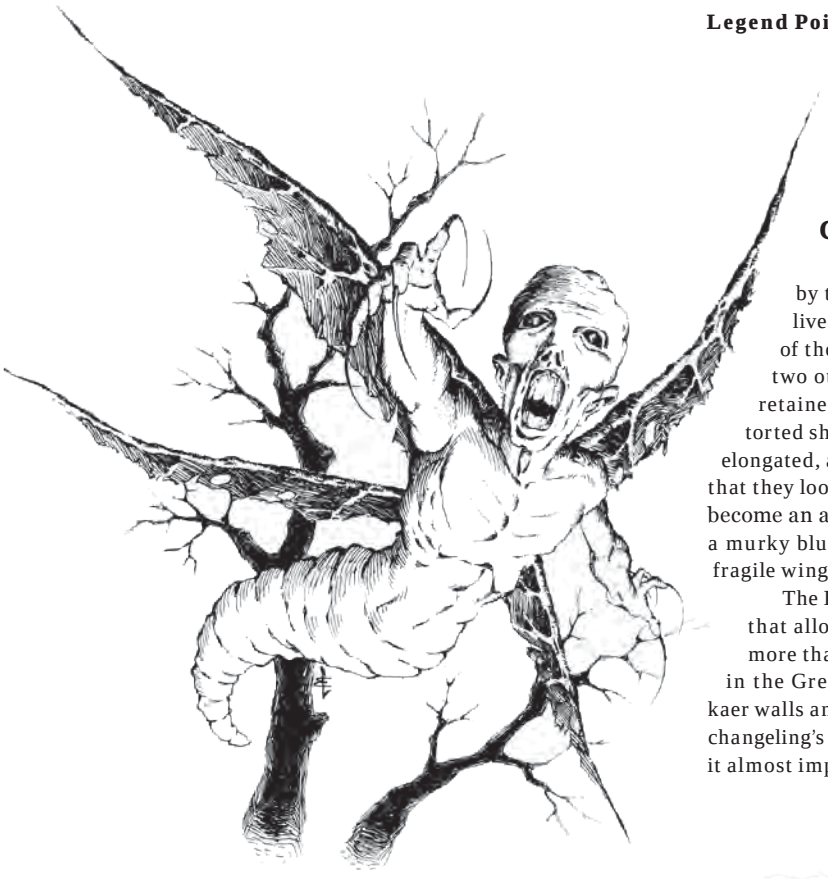
Legend Points: 140

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Chakta birds resemble large ravens with red-tipped wings and gold-flecked feathers. These social animals usually travel in flocks of 15 to 25 birds, and can use their limited telepathy to communicate with intelligent beings within a 60 yard radius. They often approach travelers to share news of the air (or road) ahead, an example of the "civilized" behavior that has prompted some scholars to speculate about their origins. Courteous animals, chakta birds expect courtesy in return. Any rude behavior or omission of simple road courtesies, such as sharing of bread or hunting catch, proper introductions, or offering of places at a fire, enrages chakta birds.



Rules

When angered, most chakta birds attack the offending character, and some almost always attack the offender's companions. Chakta birds begin an attack by flying around their targets in a whirling circle, cawing and screeching madly. If the chakta birds manage to paralyze their targets, they swoop in to physically attack. A character can break the paralysis before the duration has expired if he apologizes profusely to the bird (through stiffened, rigid lips), or makes a successful Charisma Test against the bird's Social Defense.

Changeling

DEX: 9 **STR**: 4 **TOU**: 5
PER: 8 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 9
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 10
Damage:
Bone Weapon (3): 7 (see text)

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 31 (43)
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 23 (33)

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 4

Combat Movement: 28/52[+] **Full Movement**: 56/104[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Astral-Sensitive Sight, Bone Shaping (5): 10, Durability (2), Flight, Spellcasting (2): 10

Legend Points (2): 230

Equipment: Sculpted bone weapon (Damage: STR + 3)

Loot: A changeling kaer may contain beautiful bone sculptures worth 1,000 silver pieces or more each.

Commentary

These Horror-tainted windlings, called changelings by those few who have encountered them and survived, live only in the Scytha Mountains near the eastern edge of the Blood Wood, although there are rumors of at least two other places where they have appeared. Changelings retained the same size as windlings, but with a terribly distorted shape. Their faces are bulbous and hairless, their teeth elongated, and their hands tipped with nails so long and wicked that they look more like claws. Their legs have joined together to become an armored, wormlike tail. Once-healthy flesh is tinted a murky blue, resembling the color of corpses. Only their thin, fragile wings have remained the same.

The Horrors granted the changelings a terrible ability, one that allows them to reshape living bones from a distance of more than ten feet. A fragmentary account of these creatures in the Great Library says that the bones also strengthen the kaer walls and serve as a powerful defense against intruders. At a changeling's command, the bones turn into wicked spikes, making it almost impossible to enter without getting cut to ribbons.

Rules

Changelings are completely corrupted. They cannot be redeemed, and have very little in common with their untainted brothers. Player characters cannot be changelings.

In physical combat, changelings are relatively weak. They usually carry some kind of weapon made of bone that they use if their magical abilities fail them. For specific changelings, use their Strength and the type of weapon they carry to determine how much damage they can do in combat. The changeling's bone-shaping power, however, is its true weapon.

Skull Folding: Against an extremely dangerous opponent, changelings will use their Bone Shaping power to fold the victim's skull backward into the brain. This type of shaping causes an additional +10 Damage steps per round. If the changelings have time and can accomplish it safely, they will reshape each of a victim's limbs in turn, causing him terrible pain, before killing him.

Adventure Hook

A rich aristocrat with an extensive collection of unusual and beautiful artifacts learns of the changeling kaer's existence. The changelings have lined the inside of their kaer with the bones of living beings, twisted into eerily beautiful shapes—it seems not even the taint of the Horrors could rob them of their artistic gifts. These sculptures are extremely rare (for obvious reasons), and certain collectors pay immense sums for them.

The dazzling profit to be made continues to lure the foolhardy, desperate, or simply greedy adventurer to dare the perils of the changeling's kaer, despite the fact that few ever return. The aristocrat hires the characters to get a few bone sculptures for him, promising them wealth beyond their wildest dreams.

Cheetah

DEX: 8 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 4
PER: 5 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 9
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (3): 11
Damage:
Bite (5): 10
2 × Claws (3): 8
Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 30
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 21
Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 6

Combat Movement: 64 **Full Movement**: 128

Powers: Climbing [S] (2): 10, Great Leap [S] (2): 10, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk [S] (2): 10, Sprint [T] (5): 13

Legend Points: 75

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The cheetah is a long-legged and swift running cat, with black spots, yellowish-brown fur, and non-retractable claws. These creatures are most likely to be encountered in plains regions near Barsaive's forests.

Rules

Unlike other cats this size, a cheetah's high speed is what makes it a threat. Using their Sprint power, cheetahs can quickly cover any intervening ground and take their prey by surprise—running off with the body before a herd (or group of adventurers) realizes what hit them. The cheetah's speed makes up for its low endurance. Cheetahs will usually flee before they get involved in a fight.

Chimera

All chimeras have a large lion's body and a ferocious lion's head. The remaining two heads can be any combination of creatures the gamemaster desires. The following game statistics serve as a template for these creatures; see the rules and examples below on how to flesh out different chimeras.

DEX: 10 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 11
PER: 4 **WIL**: 9 **CHA**: 7

Initiative: 10
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 12
Damage:
2 × Claws (3): 15
Lion Bite (5): 17
Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 11
Physical Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 8

Death Rating: 58 (100)
Wound Threshold: 17
Unconsciousness Rating: 51 (86)
Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 13

Combat Movement: 70[+] **Full Movement**: 140[+]

[+] This value is also the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Battle Shout [S] (Roar) (3): 10, Durability (7), Head-specific Powers (see the Chimera Head Table), Low-Light Vision, Spellcasting (5): 9

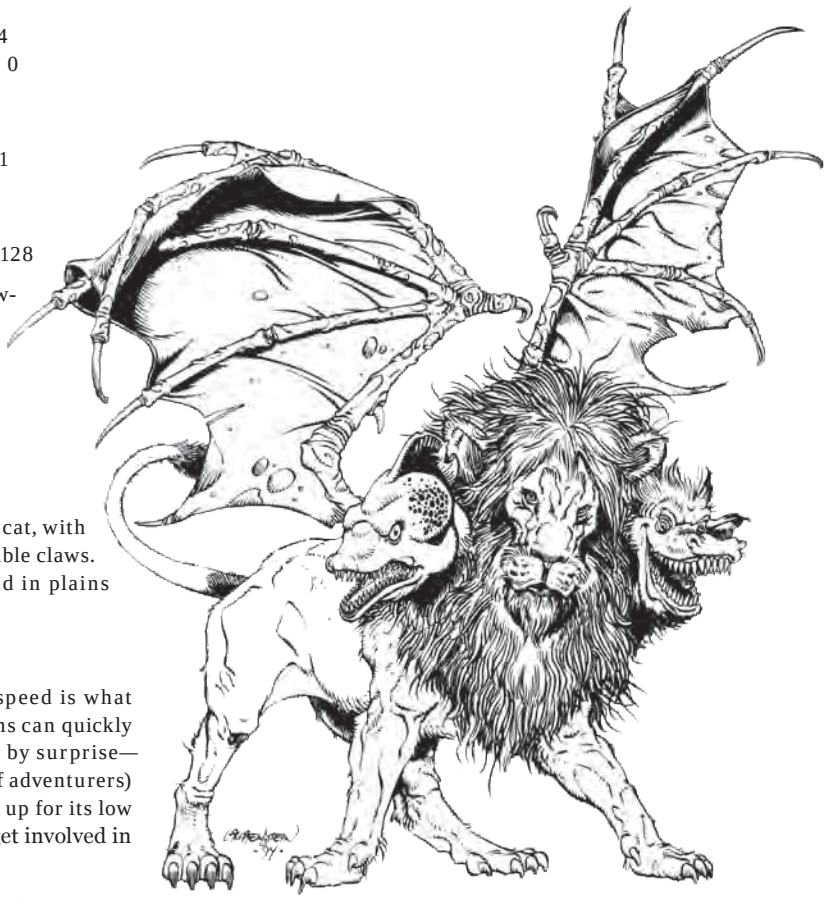
Legend Points (3): 1,020

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Chimeras are very unintelligent creatures, which is fortunate, because otherwise they could probably lay waste to most of Barsaive unopposed. Chimeras are powerful enough to pose some slight danger to dragons, but are far more threatening to the Name-giver races.



CHIMERA HEAD TABLE

Head	Number of Actions	Attack Type and Damage	Physical Armor	Powers
Crojen	+1	Bite: 17	0	Blood Frenzy (see **Crojen**, p. 292). This adds +1 additional Bite attack if it is triggered.
Dragon	+2	Bite: 18	+12	Astral Sight (7): 12, Breath Weapon (3): 12, Fear (5): 12
Goat	+1	Horns: 14	+3	None
Hell Hound	+1	Bite: 17	+3	Fire Breath (1): 10
Ice Flyer	+1	Bite: 17	+3	Ice Shackles (4): 13
Lightning Lizard	+1	Bite: 16	+3	Lightning (2): 11 (Twinbolts; see **Lightning Lizard**, p. 320)
Serpent	+1	Bite: 13	0	Poison (SD 9; Damage 9)

Many different kinds of chimeras exist, though all share certain similar features. They are large creatures, often standing taller than 8 feet at the shoulder. They all possess a lion's body and head, and also two extra heads that sprout from the base of the neck. Finally, every chimera has leathery, bat-like wings that enable them to fly. Where chimeras differ is in the two extra heads. The most common chimera has a serpent and a goat head to either side of its lion head, but there are far stranger assortments: a lion, a frog, and a goat; a lion, a rat, and a hound; and so on.

The chimera's extra heads determine its powers, though not every chimera with the same three heads has exactly the same abilities. Chimeras are known to breathe fire, sense astral creatures, and inspire mortal terror in those who see them, to name just a few of this creature's powers.

Chimeras mate every three years. The male chimeras hunt various animals, attempting to find and slay the most powerful foes in hopes of impressing the females. After each male has caught two such creatures, he presents the carcasses to a female as a gift. She examines them and chooses her mate based on who has brought her the strongest beasts. The female and her chosen male each eat one of the gifts as a precursor to mating. The litter of three to five infant chimeras, born a year later, all have the middle lion head flanked by the heads of the two creatures eaten by the parent chimeras.

Fortunately for those who must fight them, chimeras can be fooled with simple tricks. They make particularly easy targets for Wizards, who can control their tiny minds with little effort. Before the Scourge, attempts were made to use chimeras to guard kaers. The creatures didn't follow orders terribly well and proved almost impossible to train. Despite this overwhelming disadvantage, many Wizards will still pay amazingly high prices for newborn chimera cubs.

Rules

In combat, the chimera attempts to bite its opponent and/or slash at him with its claws. Against foes smaller than itself, the chimera bites its victim firmly in the throat and then shakes it back and forth, hoping to break its neck with a Bite and Shake attack (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 416 of the **Player's Compendium**). With the exceptions of dwarfs and windlings, chimeras seldom use this type of attack on Name-givers because the other races are too tall for chimeras to reach their necks easily.

When the gamemaster creates a chimera, he must decide what other heads to give it. Depending on how strong the gamemaster wants to make the creature, he can give it almost any type of head. The Chimera Head Table lists common chimera heads, along with the abilities they confer on the chimera.

In addition to the basic game statistic above, a number of sample chimeras are presented as follows.

Classic Chimera

DEX: 10 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 11
PER: 4 **WIL**: 9 **CHA**: 7

Initiative: 10
Number of Actions: 4
Attack (4): 14
Damage:
2 × Claws (3): 15
Goat Horns (2): 14
Lion Bite (5): 17
Serpent Bite (1): 13

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 11
Physical Armor: 9
Mystic Armor: 8

Death Rating: 58 (100)
Wound Threshold: 17
Unconsciousness Rating: 51 (86)

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 13

Combat Movement: 70[+] **Full Movement**: 140[+]

[+] This value is also the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Battle Shout[S] (Roar) (4): 11, Durability (7), Low-Light Vision, Poison (SD 9; Damage 9), Spellcasting (5): 9

Legend Points (3): 3,165

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

A classic chimera features a goat and snake/serpent head in addition to the lion's body.

Fire Chimera

DEX: 10 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 11
PER: 4 **WIL**: 9 **CHA**: 7

Initiative: 10
Number of Actions: 5
Attack (5): 15
Damage:
2 × Claws (3): 15
Dragon Bite (6): 18
Hell Hound Bite (5): 17
Lion Bite (5): 17

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 11
Physical Armor: 21
Mystic Armor: 8

Death Rating: 58 (100)
Wound Threshold: 17
Unconsciousness Rating: 51 (86)

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 13

Combat Movement: 70[+] **Full Movement**: 140[+]

[+] This value is also the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Astral Sight[T] (7): 12, Battle Shout[S] (Roar) (5): 12, Breath Weapon (Fire) (3): 12, Durability (7), Fear (5): 12, Low-Light Vision, Spellcasting (5): 9

Legend Points (3): 3,870

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

A flame chimera featuring a hell hound and a fire-spewing dragon head in addition to the lion's body.

Ice Chimera

DEX: 10 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 11
PER: 4 **WIL**: 9 **CHA**: 7

Initiative: 10
Number of Actions: 5
Attack (5): 15
Damage:
2 × Claws (3): 15
Dragon Bite (6): 18
Ice Flyer Bite (5): 17
Lion Bite (5): 17

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 11
Physical Armor: 21
Mystic Armor: 8

Death Rating: 58 (100)
Wound Threshold: 17
Unconsciousness Rating: 51 (86)

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 13

Combat Movement: 70+ **Full Movement**: 140+

+ This value is also the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Astral Sight T (7): 12, Battle Shout S (Roar) (5): 12, Breath Weapon (Cold) (3): 12, Durability (7), Fear (5): 12, Ice Flyer Shackles (4): 13, Low-Light Vision, Spellcasting (5): 9

Legend Points (3): 3,870

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

An ice chimera featuring an ice flyer and a frost-breathing dragon head in addition to the lion's body.

Thunder Chimera

DEX: 10 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 11
PER: 4 **WIL**: 9 **CHA**: 7

Initiative: 10
Number of Actions: 5
Attack (5): 15
Damage:
2 × Claws (3): 15
Dragon Bite (6): 18
Lightning Lizard Bite (4): 16
Lion Bite (5): 17

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 11
Physical Armor: 21
Mystic Armor: 8

Death Rating: 58 (100)
Wound Threshold: 17
Unconsciousness Rating: 51 (86)

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 13

Combat Movement: 70+ **Full Movement**: 140+

+ This value is also the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Astral Sight T (7): 12, Battle Shout S (Roar) (5): 12, Breath Weapon (Thunder) (3): 12, Durability (7), Fear (5): 12, Lightning (2)(Twinbolts): 11, Low-Light Vision, Spellcasting (5): 9

Legend Points (3): 3,870

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

A thunder chimera features a lightning lizard and a lightning-hurling dragon head in addition to the lion's body.

Adventure Hook

Five or more years ago, a famous band of adventurers discovered a kaer thought to be destroyed during the Scourge. By magical means, they informed King Varulus III of Throal of their discovery, but they disappeared shortly afterward. Following up on matters left unresolved since the death of his father, King Neden hires the characters to discover the fate of the vanished adventurers and, if possible, to rediscover and explore the kaer. Unknown to the characters, the adventurers died fighting a chimera, who brought them to a female as mating gifts. The resulting litter of five all have two human heads and an assortment of powers appropriate to the devoured adventurers. All five still live near the kaer, and one has its nest inside the kaer's entrance.

CLOUD BIRD

The following game statistics represent both an adult and a baby cloud bird.

Adult Cloud Bird

DEX: 10 **STR**: 20 **TOU**: 20
PER: 10 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 10
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (4): 14
Damage:
Bite (5): 25
Claws (2): 22

Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 14
Social Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 91 (127)
Wound Threshold: 25
Unconsciousness Rating: 85 (115)

Recovery Tests: 9
Knockdown: 20

Combat Movement: 34/70+ **Full Movement**: 68/140+

+ The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Durability (6), Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 12

Legend Points (2): 2,190

Equipment: None

Loot: Cloud bird pelts are valued in many cities and can be sold for 500 silver pieces (count as treasure worth Legend Points).

Baby Cloud Bird

DEX: 5 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 10
PER: 5 **WIL**: 2 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 4
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (3): 8
Damage:
Bite (2): 12

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 54
Wound Threshold: 15
Unconsciousness Rating: 47

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 10

Combat Movement: 9 **Full Movement**: 18

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 7

Legend Points: 100

Equipment: None

Loot: Cloud bird pelts are valued in many cities and can be sold for 500 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Cloud birds were so named because their immense size allows them to block the sun like a passing cloud. They are gray with white underbellies, with a wingspan ranging from 50 to 100 feet. They nest in high mountain peaks all over Barsaive, so their feathers are soft and fluffy, like a snowy owl. They feed primarily on mountain sheep and goats, but can easily carry away a full grown

horse or baby thundra beast. Name-givers who do not bathe on a regular basis are distasteful to the cloud bird and are taken only when food is scarce, or when they have young who need small prey brought to the nest to practice hunting. At such times, the parent birds carefully keep Name-giver-sized prey alive, carrying them gently in their great talons and depositing them in nests the size of a small house that contain one to three baby birds.

Cockatrice

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

Initiative: 8
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 9
Damage:
Claws (2): 8
Tail (3): 9

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 40 (52)
Wound Threshold: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 32 (42)

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 6

Combat Movement: 40
Full Movement: 80

Powers: Durability (2), Great Leap [S] (3): 10, Poison (SD 9; Paralysis)

Legend Points: 175

Equipment:
None

Loot: Feathers worth D6 × 10 silver pieces, blood worth 5D6 × 10 silver pieces, and venomous barbs worth 2D6 × 10 silver pieces (all counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

A solitary, silent, and deadly hunter, the cockatrice gathers in packs only during mating season. This large earth-bound bird appears to be half rooster, half lizard, and bears a passing resemblance to the basilisk. Approximately 6 feet in length, the cockatrice is covered with many-hued feathers, except for its bare legs and tail. The feathers are anything but the soft, silky down to which most Name-givers are accustomed; they are rough enough to draw blood from a human's, elf's, or dwarf's fragile skin.

The cockatrice prefers wide plains such as those near Parlainth and Iopos, but they have also been spotted in the Badlands near Travar and the Scytha Mountains.

A cockatrice's short, stubby wings are useless for flying, but can help the creatures double or even triple the distance they can jump. Unlike the basilisk, which looks most like a lizard, the cockatrice shows much more of the bird in its appearance. The rooster's comb atop the cockatrice's head leads the gullible to suppose it akin to the basilisk, which it is not. A cockatrice's mouth is a perfect blending of a chicken's beak and a lizard's jaws, and though its legs look like a lizard's, the knee joint bends backward like a bird's. The cockatrice's only reptilian feature is its snake-like tail, which is often half the length of the entire creature.

It hunts by charging its victims and leaping on them, carefully placing its lizard feet to make no sound that might alert its prey. It can leap amazing distances when trying to land on its victim's back, biting and clawing. Tiny hooked barbs grow all over its tail, able to pierce the victim's skin and inject a paralytic poison. When the cockatrice strikes or even lightly brushes a victim with its tail, the tiny hooks dig into the skin and break free from the creature. The paralytic poison will immobilize a victim and leave it entirely at the mercy of the cockatrice. These wickedly sharp hooks grow so fast that if a cockatrice cannot leave them in some hapless foe's hide, it must scrape its tail against a tree or rock every two days or so to remove them and give fresh barbs ample room to emerge.

Rules

Though deadly, cockatrices fight like cowards. They often take on creatures far larger than themselves, but they always attack from behind. If a cockatrice is met head on, it will do everything it can to get behind its victim, trying to leap at its target with outstretched claws, and raking its victim's back with its large claws and barbed tail.

Back Attack: To land on its victim, the cockatrice makes a Great Leap Test against the target's Physical Defense. If this test fails, the cockatrice has missed its target by a few feet to one side or the other. If struck, any target weighing less than 300 pounds must make a successful Knockdown Test against the creature's Great Leap step to avoid being knocked to the ground.

Barbed Tail: The tail barbs automatically pierce cloth armor or anything lighter, sending paralytic poison into the victim's flesh. If the cockatrice manages to Wound its target, the victim suffers the effects of its poison (see **Poison** in the **Adventuring** chapter, p. 121). This paralysis last 10 rounds, long enough for the cockatrice to kill its victim and begin feasting.

Coward: When presented with the opportunity to attack a creature larger than itself from behind, this cowardly creature must make a successful Willpower Test against its own Perception step to avoid leaping into combat.

Adventure Hook

According to Theran and Barsaivian alchemists, a cockatrice's blood can help to remove a Horror mark. A government official who recently suffered an unfortunate encounter with a Horror hires the characters to bring him a live cockatrice so that he can use its fresh blood to remove the Horror's taint.

Crakbill

DEX: 5 **STR**: 7 **TOU**: 5
PER: 2 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 5
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 7
Damage:
Bite (2): 9

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 4

Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 7

Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60

Powers: Breath Weapon (Paralyzing Stream; see text) (3): 10, Spellcasting (4): 6

Legend Points: 75

Equipment: None

Loot: Neck cord worth D6 × 10 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Crakbills are 75 pound, 5 foot tall, carnivorous birds with necks extending to just over half their height. They travel in gaggles of 3 to 18 birds. Using their heavy bills like stone hatchets, the birds crack open the skulls of recent kills or paralyzed prey and feast on the brains of their victims. The bills are less useful against mobile targets than their fearsome appearance suggests. Though crakbills have skulls and body and leg bones, their necks contain no vertebrae. Instead, a crakbill's neck is a thin tube of interwoven muscle. A flexible spiral of magical material that looks like burnished copper connects the skull to the body and reinforces the neck muscles.

Rules

The crakbill's most potent weapon is its paralyzing breath, which the bird spews in an orange, gaseous stream around a single victim.

Breath Weapon: Their Paralyzing breath can only be used at close combat range, thus crakbills combine the breath weapon attack with a special running attack in which they run full speed past the intended victim and hiss orange vapor at him in passing. A character Wounded by the breath weapon becomes Paralyzed and automatically becomes Knocked Down. To break the paralysis, the character must roll a Willpower Test with a result of 10 or better. Crakbills continue these running attacks until at least one or two victims succumb to paralysis. This attack is similar to the **Splitting Movement** combat option (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 406 of the **Player's Compendium**). Once the crakbills have dropped a victim, the birds feed on the paralyzed body.

Creeping Vines

DEX: 8 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 6
PER: 6 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 7 **Physical Defense**: 7
Number of Actions: 2 **Spell Defense**: 9
Attack (2): 10 **Social Defense**: Immune
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 6
Thorn Whip (3): 9 **Mystic Armor**: 4

Death Rating: 35 (53) **Recovery Tests**: 2
Wound Threshold: 9 **Knockdown**: Immune
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Combat Movement: 9 **Full Movement**: 18

Powers: Durability (3), Silent Walk [S] (2): 10

Legend Points: 140

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Like many dangerous plants in Barsaive, creeping vines look like ordinary vines. Most of the vines grow within old ruins, most notably the ruins of Parlainth. Though possessed of animal-level intelligence, creeping vines are not smart enough to recognize or react to social interactions.

Rules

Creeping vines possess a malign, animal-level intelligence and will attack any animal or character within the vines' 2 yard reach. Creeping vines make 2 attacks per combat round, using their sharp leaves and thorns. In some rare cases, creeping vines can move into attack range instead of waiting for a victim to venture close enough. In addition to a standard assault, creeping vines can also grapple characters within their reach (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 411 of the **Player's Compendium**). Once they attack a target, creeping vines continue to attack until the target moves beyond their attack range, the vines are destroyed, or the target dies. Large and tough, creeping vines have an unusually high Death Rating for a plant.

Immunity to Spells: Any spells that affect a victim's mind have no effect on creeping vines.

Crojen

DEX: 12 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 9
PER: 6 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 12 **Physical Defense**: 15
Number of Actions: 2 (see text) **Spell Defense**: 8
Attack (2): 14 **Social Defense**: 6
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 0
Bite (5): 15 (see text) **Mystic Armor**: 3
2 × Claws (2): 12

Death Rating: 50 **Recovery Tests**: 4
Wound Threshold: 14 **Knockdown**: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 43 (Immune; see text)

Combat Movement: 94 **Full Movement**: 188

Powers: Astral Sight [T] (2): 8, Climbing [S] (3): 15, Great Leap [S] (3): 15, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk [S] (2): 14

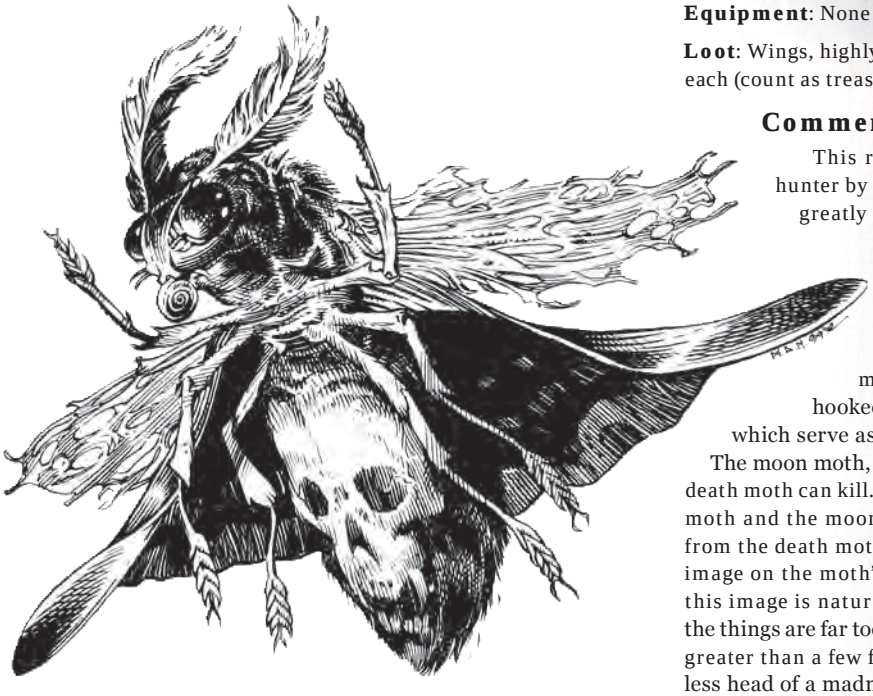
Legend Points: 245

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Crojen are deadly predators that hunt in packs of five to ten males and females in the Servos and Liaj jungles. Small black tigers that resemble panther cubs even when fully grown, crojen are roughly 2 feet long and 1 foot tall at the shoulder. Their tails add another foot to their body length, though adventurers who have come into contact with them swear that these creatures are larger.



Rules

Crojen patiently hunt their prey for days if necessary, using both normal vision and Astral Sight. This special power makes it hard to elude these creatures except by magic. Crojen have a ferocious bite-and-claw attack, which legend says can rip apart a full-grown troll in just over a minute. No armor can withstand a crojen attack. All of a crojen's attacks require one result level less to inflict Armor-Defeating Hits (usually a Good result).

Feeding Frenzy: A crojen that gets a taste of flesh and blood may go into a feeding frenzy. Each round after it makes a successful attack, the crojen must make a Willpower (7) Test. If the test fails, the crojen slips into a wild feeding frenzy. Crojen normally attack using their claws to rend their victim's flesh. When in a feeding frenzy, however, the crojen also bites its prey, making a third attack at the end of the round, after all other combatants have taken their actions. A character cannot reserve his action in order to move after the crojen's third attack; the crojen's bite is always the last attack during a combat round. Once in a feeding frenzy, a crojen will not break off an attack and cannot be knocked unconscious; the only way to stop one is to kill it. The feeding frenzy will last as long as there is fresh meat nearby. When there is nothing else left to attack or eat, the crojen will leave the area.

Death Moth

DEX: 7 **STR**: 3 **TOU**: 3
PER: 4 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 8
Damage:
Stinger (1): 4

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 26
Wound Threshold: 6
Unconsciousness Rating: 17

Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 3

Combat Movement: 46✦
Full Movement: 92✦

✦ This value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Frighten (4): 8, Poison (SD 8; Amnesia and Paralysis; see text)

Legend Points: 95

Equipment: None

Loot: Wings, highly prized for clothing, worth 200 silver pieces each (count as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

This repulsive insect, called the nocturnal headhunter by some scholars, looks deceptively harmless. It greatly resembles a moon moth, growing to a length of 2 feet or so with a wingspan of 5 feet and even possessing similar coloring. Most death moths are dark blue to dull black, though there are tales of lilac-colored ones in remote parts of Barsaive. Like the moon moth, the death moth has six legs that end in hooked claws and two sets of wings, the first set of which serve as protection for its cobweb-thin flying wings.

The moon moth, of course, is a harmless flying nuisance. The death moth can kill. The only visible difference between the death moth and the moon moth is a horrible, leering face peering up from the death moth's underbelly, as if a Horror had tattooed its image on the moth's underside. Close examination reveals that this image is natural coloring—but most people who encounter the things are far too terrified to inspect them. From any distance greater than a few feet away, the death moth looks like the bodiless head of a madman floating through the air—a sight to send even the boldest adventurer into screaming fits.

The death moth bears a long barbed stinger at the end of its belly. The venom inside this stinger is potent enough to paralyze almost any victim. Only those with a tremendously strong constitution can fight the paralysis, and even they usually succumb to the venom's second effect—the poison makes the victim forget the past four hours of his life, including encountering the moth.

The death moth attacks other living things because it must lay its eggs in a living host. The eggs live in the venom and enter the host when he or she or it is stung. The death moth prefers large animals such as cattle or horses, but willingly uses Name-givers. It most often stings its victims in the shoulders and back, laying its eggs in the muscles. Within little more than two weeks, the infesting larvae completely consume their host's internal organs. Once the insects reach a length of six inches, they eat their way out of the host's body in search of a nearby tree or house to climb, in whose branches or eaves they cocoon. Upon leaving the cocoon as adult death moths, they must mate and find a host for their eggs within two weeks, and then they die.

Rules

In direct combat, the death moth is very ineffective. Its stinger is its only natural weapon, and the moth always tries to sting its victims in an unarmored spot. However, the moth excels at trapping hosts in which to lay its eggs.

Frighten: To stop potential hosts dead in their tracks with fear, the death moth must show its grim visage. In order to use its Frighten power, the moth flies over a victim. On an Average result, the victim is frightened but able to flee from the moth. On a Good result, the victim is paralyzed by fear for a number of rounds equal to the moth's Frighten rank. On an Excellent or Extraordinary result, the victim faints in terror.

Laying Eggs: Once the death moth has trapped its victim through fear, it injects paralytic venom into the body that also erases short-term memory. If the poison takes effect (see **Poison** in the **Adventuring** chapter, p. 121), the victim is completely paralyzed for the next 15 rounds. During this time, the moth lays its eggs in the victim's flesh. The victim will remember nothing of the past four hours once the paralysis wears off. Within a week to ten days, the larvae of the death moth begin to gnaw on the victim's internal organs, causing intense pain. This dreadful feeding causes Step 8/2D6 damage once per day and imposes a –2 penalty on all Action Tests made by the victim. Unless the creatures are destroyed, the afflicted character dies in short order.

Adventure Hook

A traveling companion of the characters goes off on his own into the forest, where a death moth attacks him and implants its eggs in his back. He returns to his companions less than an hour after he left, shaken and unable to remember the events of the past few hours. The characters investigate their friend's memory loss and stumble over a nest of eight or nine death moths nearby.

Demiwraith

DEX: 7 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 6
PER: 6 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 8
Damage:
Claws (3): 9

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 9 (14; see text)
Social Defense: 13
Physical Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 4 (9; see text)

Death Rating: 38
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 6

Combat Movement: 34 **Full Movement**: 68

Powers: Chilling Touch (4): 12

Legend Points (2): 210

Equipment: None

Loot: D4 small gems, each worth D12 × 10 silver pieces, or a total of 5D6 × 10 silver pieces (count as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Demiwraiths are an unusual type of animated dead. Not true undead, such as ghouls or ghosts, these hateful spirits possessed victims during the long years of the Scourge and eventually merged with the host body. Some of these spirits could not separate themselves from their hosts when the hosts died, and became demiwraiths.

The demiwraiths animate the dead flesh that imprisons them, and revel in destroying the living. A black, foggy, astral substance often shrouds a demiwraith's body, giving these beings an appearance similar to that of a true wraith.

Rules

Because a demiwraith is not true undead, increase its Spell Defense and Mystic Armor by +5 against spells or powers specifically designed to target undead beings.

Dog

Like cats, dogs are found in almost all populated areas of Barsaive, since they are often kept as pets by Name-givers of all races. Dogs can be trained for all kind of things, but are mostly used as guardians.

Guard Dog

DEX: 4 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 3
PER: 5 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 4
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 6
Damage:
Bite (5): 10

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 26
Wound Threshold: 6
Unconsciousness Rating: 17

Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 6

Combat Movement: 28 **Full Movement**: 56

Powers: Battle Shout (Bark) S (2): 6, Enhanced Senses (Listen, Sight, Smell) (3): 8

Legend Points: 55

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Guard dogs are trained to guard a house or an area. They bark at anyone who enters their territory and will attack if the intruder persists.

Hunting Dog

DEX: 5 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 3
PER: 5 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 5
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 7
Damage:
Bite (5): 10

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 26
Wound Threshold: 6
Unconsciousness Rating: 17

Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 6

Combat Movement: 32 **Full Movement**: 64

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 7, Great Leap S (2): 7, Hunting S (2): 7, Tracking S (2): 7

Legend Points: 50

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Dogs trained for hunting are used to hunt and track down other animals and creatures. They usually try to help their masters in the hunt, but can bring down the prey if ordered to do so.

War Dog

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

Initiative: 5
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (3): 8
Damage:
Bite (5): 11

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 30
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 21

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 7

Combat Movement: 32 **Full Movement**: 64

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 6 , Great Leap [S] (2): 7

Legend Points: 60

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

These dogs are a rare breed, as they need careful training. Bred for aggression, these animals are trained for war and attack to kill on command.

DYRE

DEX: 6 **STR**: 14 **TOU**: 14
PER: 5 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 5
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (4): 10
Damage:
Charge (5): 19
Horn Sweep (1): 15 (see text)
Trample (2): 16

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 70
Wound Threshold: 20
Unconsciousness Rating: 63

Recovery Tests: 7
Knockdown: 15

Combat Movement: 38 **Full Movement**: 76

Powers: Charge (4), Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 7

Legend Points: 410

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The dyre eats grasses, travels in herds, and appears to pose little danger to adventurers. Ork cavalrymen prize the dyre as a mount because of its huge size, quick brain, and irritable temper. Most ork cavalries have at least one or two in their ranks, if not several. Anyone foolish enough to think the dyre a placid, docile creature because it is a mere herd-beast should think twice before hunting one. The slightest annoyance triggers a killing frenzy in these huge animals, another trait that their ork riders value. An ork enjoys nothing more than guiding this great mount into battle and riding its ferocious wave of destruction, bobbing to and fro like a feather in a whirlpool and spearing enemies on all sides with his long lance.

Standing only a little taller than 12 feet at the shoulder; the dyre is covered in long, matted brown fur. Its back rises sharply in the middle as if humped, and it resembles a cross between a bear and bull. Like a bear, the dyre has squat, stubby legs and a short tail. Its head looks like a bull's, only wider, with sharply curving horns. The beast has hardly any neck at all, holding its head so low to the ground that only its back-hump shows over the top of the high plains grass. A dyre looks ferocious, but it eats no meat—only grasses such as abound on the plains near Parlainth and the ancient ork kingdom of Cara Fahd. Dyres will eat other plants when they can get them, and consider fruits and vegetables rare delicacies. Indeed, they will often eat themselves ill given a chance. To keep them healthy, their ork riders often muzzle them when not on the battlefield.

A herd of wild dyres numbers about 40 animals—mostly females, half-grown males, and young. Every herd has only one adult male, who has the sole privilege of mating with the females. Once a young dyre reaches maturity, the herd leader challenges him and usually forces him out. After a few years on his own, the hardened young male often returns to the pack to challenge the leader—those not strengthened by their solitary ordeal die. Most returning males are more than a match for the leader, and so often win the fight to become the new herd leader. Mating season comes only once every two years, and so very few herd leaders mate more than once or twice with the females before being deposed.

When approached by a predator, the dyres gather into a huge circle with the young at the center. The females stand on the outside of the circle to hold off attackers. Most predators lack the prodigious strength necessary to take down a healthy adult, and won't risk getting crushed by the dyres' hooves or speared with their wicked horns for the slight chance of bringing down a young animal.

Rules

In close combat, the dyre attempts to gore its opponent with its huge horns. When battling an opponent human-sized or smaller, the dyre will often sweep its horns toward him or her, using the Attacking to Knockdown combat option (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 403 of the **Player's Compendium**). If successful, this sweep will then throw its enemy anywhere from 3 to 6 yards into the air (use the **Falling Damage** rules in the **Adventuring** chapter on p. 107 to determine how much damage the victim takes from plummeting to the ground). Once its victim has landed, the dyre tries to trample him to death. In each round that the victim is on the ground near the dyre, the beast must make a successful Attack Test to strike the victim with its hooves. Dyres can be trained using the Animal Training talent or skill.

Adventure Hook

The characters briefly join an ork scorcher band, during which time they learn ancient scorcher ways of sharpening weapons, riding mounts, fighting honorably, and breaking in dyre calves. In a trial by fire, the scorcher leader orders the characters to find a dyre herd and retrieve a few young beasts for training.

EAGLE

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

Initiative: 5
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (3): 8
Damage:
Bite (4): 9

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 30 **Recovery Tests**: 2
Wound Threshold: 7 **Knockdown**: 5
Unconsciousness Rating: 21

Combat Movement: 9/34[+] **Full Movement**: 18/68[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Sight) (5): 11

Legend Points: 90

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Eagles are large birds of prey, characterized by a powerful, hooked bill, broad wings, and strong, soaring flight. Eagles can be found almost everywhere in Barsaive, hunting for food in the air and on the ground.

Earth Q'wril

DEX: 5 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 2
PER: 2 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 5 **Physical Defense**: 7
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 3
Attack (1): 6 **Social Defense**: 4
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 0
Bite (2): 4 (see text) **Mystic Armor**: 0

Death Rating: 19 **Recovery Tests**: 1/2 days
Wound Threshold: 3 **Knockdownt**: 3
Unconsciousness Rating: 10

Combat Movement: 32/12[+] **Full Movement**: 64/24[+]

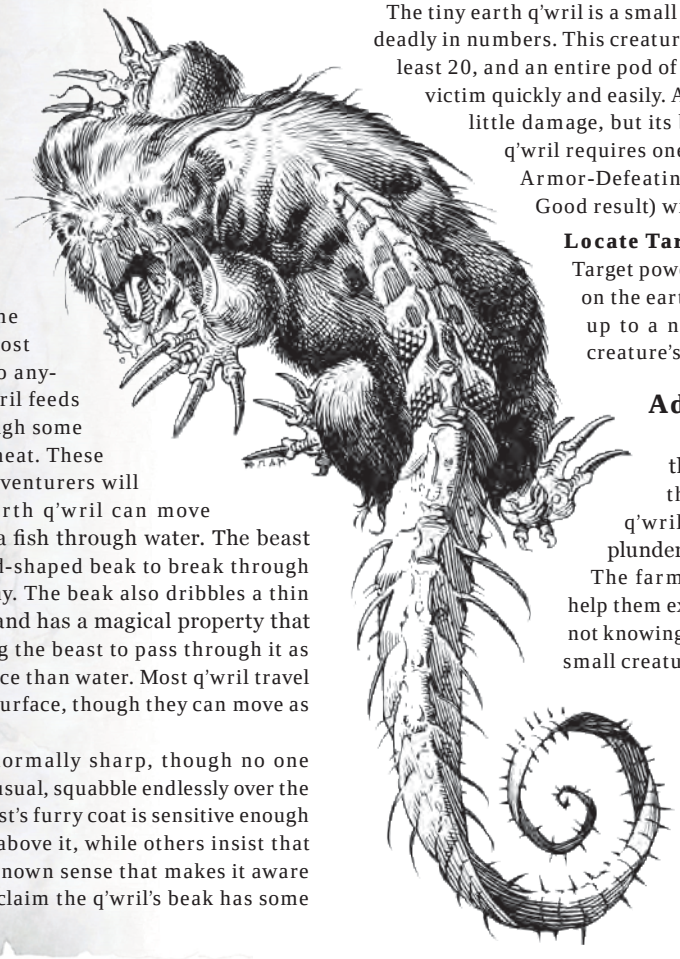
[+] The second value is the creature's burrowing Movement rate.

Powers: Locate Target (4): 6

Legend Points: 30

Equipment: None

Loot: Triangular beak worth 25 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).



Commentary

This furred creature looks part mole and part serpent, with a bird-like beak. About as long as a human's forearm, the earth q'wril looks harmless. Most of these beasts pose no threat to anything save a few plants. The q'wril feeds on roots, berries, and fruit, though some few have developed a taste for meat. These latter are quite rare, and few adventurers will likely encounter them. The earth q'wril can move through the earth as easily as a fish through water. The beast uses its diamond-hard, pyramid-shaped beak to break through all but stone and the hardest clay. The beak also dribbles a thin fluid, which acts as a lubricant and has a magical property that somehow thins the soil, allowing the beast to pass through it as if the earth had no more substance than water. Most q'wril travel just a few feet below the earth's surface, though they can move as far below ground as they desire.

The q'wril's senses are abnormally sharp, though no one seems to know why. Scholars, as usual, squabble endlessly over the reason; some believe that the beast's furry coat is sensitive enough to detect objects on the ground above it, while others insist that the creature has some other unknown sense that makes it aware of its surroundings. Still others claim the q'wril's beak has some mystical property apart from the magic liquid it secretes, basing this staggeringly far-fetched assumption on the rapid clicking of the beak below the soil that is occasionally heard. The q'wril's extraordinary senses, combined with its prowess at hurling itself out of the earth with great force, enables this subterranean beast to find the fruit on which it lives. The q'wril can burst from the ground and seize objects many feet above it, bounding into the boughs of an oak to graze on its leaves or plucking a tasty apple from an exposed branch. It can even spear other small animals, leaping into them like a tiny furred javelin. The surface disturbance caused by the q'wril's subterranean movement ceases just before it leaps because the animal is sinking deeper into the soil to get a longer run at the surface.

The q'wril likes the company of its fellows, often moving in groups of twenty or more. A pod of q'wril cresting above the fields or weaving around the trunks of trees below a forest floor is one of Barsaive's most fascinating sights, though most of Barsaive's farmers would not agree. The creature's taste for roots make the q'wril the farmer's enemy; a large pod can devastate a field in a scant few days. In areas plagued by q'wril, the working folk build stone corrals around their fields and bury stone slabs in the soil to keep the creatures from burrowing in and then erect palisades upon the stone foundations to stop the beast from leaping over the top. Many farms in these areas resemble intricate mazes or daunting fortifications, all to stop the depredations of a creature smaller than a dog.

Villages plagued by the q'wril rarely seek out and exterminate the animals, having learned from bitter experience that they will only lose many Name-giver lives in the process. The creatures attack in pods, bursting suddenly through the earth at blinding speed and using their deadly beaks to stab their attackers through even the heaviest armor. Elves prize these beaks as arrowheads, and some windlings use them as spear tips when they can get them.

Rules

The tiny earth q'wril is a small threat by itself, but potentially deadly in numbers. This creature always travels in groups of at least 20, and an entire pod of q'wril can dispatch an unwary victim quickly and easily. A q'wril's sharp bite causes only little damage, but its bill is enormously strong. The q'wril requires one result level less to achieve an Armor-Defeating Hit on its victim (usually a Good result) with its beak.

Locate Target: The earth q'wril's Locate Target power allows them to sense targets on the earth's surface from underground, up to a number of yards equal to the creature's rank in Locate Target.

Adventure Hook

A river near a village where the characters are staying floods the feeding grounds of the local q'wril population, forcing them to plunder the farmers' fields to survive. The farmers turn to the characters to help them exterminate the unwanted pests, not knowing how deadly an opponent these small creatures can be.

EDDYPAD

DEX: 8 **STR**: 8 **TOU**: 8
PER: 3 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 9
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (4): 12
Damage: Engulf (see Powers)
Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: Immune
Physical Armor: 10 (13)
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 43 (55)
Wound Threshold: 12 (15)
Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Combat Movement: NA
Full Movement: NA

Powers: Durability (2), Engulf (2): 10, Spellcasting (4): 7

Legend Points: 215

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Eddypads resemble large lily pads. Ranging in size from 3 to 60 feet across, eddypads float just below the surface of the river, or any of its numerous tributaries or adjacent pools. Even the slightest change in current may cause an eddypad to close like a flower around a passing creature. Within minutes, the eddypad constricts and forms a skin-tight cocoon around its prey.

Although the inner surface of an eddypad is delicate, the outer layer is a tough, fibrous membrane through which victims must cut to escape. Swimmers are the most common victims of eddypads, but even small boats can fall victim to larger pads.

Rules

In the statistics above, the Physical Armor rating in parentheses represents the outer layer of the eddypad. An engulfed character may free himself—or another character may free him—by inflicting a Wound on the eddypad with an attack. However, any external attack that inflicts an Armor-Defeating Hit on the eddypad also damages anyone trapped inside (the character's own armor protects him as normal, however).

ELEPHANT

DEX: 4 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 9
PER: 4 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 3
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 5
Damage:
Charge (8): 20
Trample (2): 14
Tusks (4): 16
Physical Defense: 4
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 50
Wound Threshold: 14
Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 43

Combat Movement: 30 **Full Movement**: 60

Powers: Charge (4), Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 6

Legend Points: 165

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

These large herbivorous mammals are often trained to serve as war mounts in the provinces of Creana, Indrisa, and Thera. Elephants are often used as beasts of burden for transporting goods as well. In Barsaive, elephants are typically found in the plains and forested regions.

Rules

If provoked, elephants tend to gore their unfortunate victims with their tusks before using their hooves to trample them down.

ESPAGRA

DEX: 9 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 8
PER: 6 **WIL**: 10 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 10
Number of Actions: 3
Attack (3): 12
Damage:
2 × Claws (3): 9
Tail (3): 9
Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 6

Death Rating: 44 (56)
Wound Threshold: 13
Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 36 (46)

Combat Movement: 61[+] **Full Movement**: 122[+]

[+] This value is also the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Durability (2)

Legend Points: 200

Equipment: None

Loot: Scales worth D20 × 10 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Flying predators colored a brilliant shade of blue, espagras resemble small dragons except for their iguana-like heads. An espagra's wingspan often reaches 12 feet. Though quick and agile flyers, espagras do not strike opponents while in flight, preferring to swoop down upon an enemy, knock him down, and continue the struggle on the ground. Some espagra scales exude elemental air magic. These scales add luster and brilliance to the other scales, making the creature shimmer in a way that other espagra—and many races—find appealing. Master clothiers can tailor garments using espagra scales; such clothes look richer than other fine garments, even those decorated with precious jewels (see the **Goods and Services** chapter on p. 432 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Rules

An agile beast, the espagra can strike at three different targets simultaneously without penalty, one with each attack, as long as the targets stand within 3 yards of each other.

Swooping Attack: An espagra's swooping attack gains a +7 bonus to the Damage Test if the creature hits the target character, but a swooping espagra sacrifices its remaining two attacks that round. An espagra may make a swooping attack after it has used its Full (flying) Movement of 122 yards in a round, and may follow up with three non-swooping attacks starting in the following round.

Ethandrille

DEX: 8 **STR**: 7 **TOU**: 5
PER: 5 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 10 **Physical Defense**: 10
Number of Actions: 2 **Spell Defense**: 8
Attack (3): 11 **Social Defense**: 7
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 3
Bite (5): 12 **Mystic Armor**: 4

Death Rating: 34 (40) **Recovery Tests**: 1
Wound Threshold: 9 **Knockdown**: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 26 (31)

Combat Movement: 52 **Full Movement**: 104

Powers: Battle Shout[S] (Howl) (3): 7, Durability (1), Great Leap[S] (2): 10, Lightning (1): 9, Locate Target (2): 7, Maneuver[S] (2): 10, Spellcasting (4): 9, Tracking[S] (3): 8

Legend Points: 135

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The ethandrille represents a tragedy like that of the changeling. Once, the ethandrille was a creature with a place in the life of the Universe, a proud beast that roamed the wilds of the Wyrm Wood. Those ethandrilles preyed on the smaller animals of the forests and even occasionally took on larger prey, such as full-grown elk. But then the accursed blood elves used their terrible magic to transform the ethandrille into a fearsome abomination

as bad as they. The blood elves not only corrupted themselves with their powerful and dangerous magic during the Scourge—they also corrupted all the innocent living things around them, living things that had no choice in the matter.

Before the blood elves' magic corrupted them, ethandrilles were a kind of wolf only a little larger than big dogs. The wretched creatures now known as ethandrilles still look somewhat the same as their forerunners once did; covered in brown and gray fur to better conceal themselves in the forests. Thorns pierce the thin skin around the ethandrilles' mouths and stretched their fur in a horrible manner where their pelts were too thick for the thorns to penetrate. The poor beasts look tortured, as indeed they are. Like the blood elves, ethandrilles are in constant agony from the thorns and are immune to the pain-causing powers of the Horrors. The thorn magic also made the ethandrilles larger and fiercer, and enhanced their already keen tracking abilities. In addition, the magic gave them the ability to discharge a mighty bolt of lightning at an opponent before actually engaging in combat.

The blood elves have domesticated the once-proud ethandrille, using the beasts as draft animals, pets, and more. The elves use ethandrilles to ferry supplies and food from tree to tree, stand guard throughout the forest, and drive intruders back across the wood's borders.

Rules

An ethandrille can locate any intruders within their territory within a matter of minutes, using their Locate Target power. One of the reasons these magical wolves hunt in packs is to ensure that at least one of them can successfully track any invader. Before ethandrilles attack physically, they usually attempt to strike their target with their Lightning power.

Adventure Hook

A rich patron hires the characters to capture a few ethandrilles from the Blood Wood, a task much easier said than done. From the moment the characters arrive in the Blood Wood, the ethandrilles follow them. Within a day or two, the elves of the Blood Wood discover the characters and demand that they leave the forest. If the characters refuse, the ethandrilles drive them out; the characters will need all their skill to get out of Blood Wood alive.

Falcon

DEX: 8 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 5
PER: 7 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 8
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (3): 11
Damage:
Beak (5): 11
2 × Claws (3): 9

Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 34
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 26

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6

Combat Movement: 22/52[+] **Full Movement**: 44/104[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 9, Hunting[S] (2): 8, Tracking[S] (2): 9

Legend Points: 120

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Falcons are small birds of prey, characterized by long, pointed, and powerful wings, and capable of swift flight. Falcons can be found almost everywhere in Barsaive, hunting for prey. These birds are typically trained for hunting.

Felux

DEX: 10 **STR**: 8 **TOU**: 9
PER: 6 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 10
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 12
Damage:
Bite (10): 18
2 × Claws (4): 12

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 5

Death Rating: 48 (54)
Wound Threshold: 14
Unconsciousness Rating: 41 (46)

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 9

Combat Movement: 70 **Full Movement**: 140

Powers: Battle Shout[S] (Roar) (2): 7, Blinding Glare (4): 10, Climbing[S] (3): 13, Durability (1), Flashing Glare (4): 10, Great Leap[S] (3): 13, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk[S] (2): 12

Legend Points (2): 380

Equipment: None

Loot: Extremely delicate eyes, worth 300 silver pieces each (count as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

The felux looks like a lion, but with eyes almost the size of a human's hand. A night hunter, the felux uses its eyes to catch its prey. The felux is one of the few cases in which a change induced by magic helped a creature to survive instead of destroying it.

The felux stalks its prey in deadly silence, then throws a beam of light brighter than a thousand moons from its eyes. The glare blinds the unfortunate victim; the felux gives a quick flick of its sharp claws and its erstwhile quarry becomes a tasty dinner. If necessary, the felux can also attack by causing its eyelight to flicker at an amazing speed. Those who gaze at the flashing light fall to the ground, racked with spasms, which do not cease until the eyelight stops flickering. More than a few people find this method of crippling an enemy extremely useful, and several magicians have been known to develop spells that duplicate this effect.

A felux can also be trained, though they do not feel the same loyalty or warmth toward their masters as a dog or a house cat. They can be managed only if caught as kittens and trained from their earliest weeks. Catching a kitten is nearly impossible, unless the guarding mother has been killed. There are rumors of mercenaries who use trained feluxes for night work and ambushes. Once their targets enter a certain area, they command the feluxes to use their flickering eyelight. Anything within the light falls to the ground in an uncontrollable fit.

The guards of Stoneforge Keep use feluxes as guard animals and walk around the walls of the castle with them. On command, each felux gazes out across the surrounding lands. Anything anywhere near the Keep might as well try to hide in broad daylight; the felux will certainly see it and flash its eyelight to incapacitate would-be intruders. For an unknown reason, the felux's eyelight terrifies the Horrors, and some accounts tell of a few adventuring bands which have used these creatures to explore forgotten kaers.

Rules

A felux typically attacks its victim with its Blinding Glare and Flashing Glare powers before leaping on the target's back and biting through his neck or laying open the target's back with its wicked back claws.

Adventure Hook

The characters are hired to guard a caravan en route from Bartertown to Haven, which lies within the ruins of Parlainth. The caravaneers, fearful of meeting Horrors along the way, have acquired a felux to serve as a guard animal in the hope that the creature's eyelight will protect them.

Not many days from Parlainth, a Horror-marked questor of Jaspree halts the caravan and demands that the caravaneers release the felux into the wild. The characters attempt to drive off the questor, but he or she takes command of the felux and orders it to attack.

Firebird

DEX: 8 **STR**: 4 **TOU**: 5
PER: 4 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 8
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 10
Damage:
Bite (2): 6
2 × Claws (1): 5

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 32
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 24

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 4

Combat Movement: 24/55[+] **Full Movement**: 48/110[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Burning Aura (6), Color Change (see text), Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 6

Legend Points (2): 220

Equipment: None

Loot: Feathers worth D6 × 10 silver pieces, eggs worth 3D6 × 10 silver pieces, and hatchlings worth 300 silver pieces each (all of this counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

The firebird is a truly beautiful and fascinating creature; roaming the air above the molten lava of the Death's Sea, it is one of the many living creatures that inhabit that supposedly barren wasteland. The firebird is closely related to the fire eagle, with a wingspan of about 10 feet, but its feathers change color depending on its surroundings. Like most creatures of the Death's Sea, the firebird can tolerate the intense heat of the lava and the sun overhead without burning; however, the firebird does not care much for such temperatures. When it glides over the lava in search of food, it changes its feathers to a burnished silver to reflect the heat of the updrafts back down into the sea. Other color changes help it hide from predators; the firebird can change color to match the reddish lava flows or the brown of a hardened-lava island, depending on its needs.

Mating firebirds are among Barsaive's most amazing sights. The male hunts down a large creature as a gift for the female, and then the female and the male feast on the carcass. After mating, the female lays several eggs, often more than twenty, each the size of a human's fist. Life is harsh in the Death's Sea; almost all of the eggs and hatchlings are eaten by other predators within a year, and so only a large clutch of eggs will produce enough offspring to ensure that a few will live to adulthood. The firebird's existence is further threatened by certain magicians who will pay handsome sums for firebird eggs, feathers, and hatchlings so as to extract elemental fire from them.

Rules

When the firebird fights, it uses its unique Color Change power to change to a dull black and flies in a long, low circle over the boiling lava in order to build up tremendous heat in its body. It then flies close to its foe, upon which its Burning Aura can inflict great damage without even a touch. The firebird finds its smoldering-hot body temperature painful, but endurable; its enemy, however, usually cannot withstand the heat. Clothing, sails, even some kinds of armor, regularly burst into flame when a firebird passes close by. As for weapons with which one might strike a firebird, a wooden club or staff becomes an instant torch and a sword or other metal weapon becomes soft and malleable after a blow or two. Wooden airships are especially vulnerable to a firebird's attacks unless specially treated to resist flames.

The firebird also uses its weight as a devastating offensive weapon. It often streaks toward its foe at blinding speed and strikes him. The luckiest victim of such a collision suffers truly dreadful burns; the impact knocks the less fortunate off their ship or island and into the lethal lava below.

Color Change: To change color, the firebird must make a successful Spellcasting (6) Test. When it changes to silver, potential observers gain a +3 bonus to all Perception Tests to spot the creature. When it attempts to camouflage itself, potential observers suffer a –3 penalty to all such Perception Tests.

Immunity to Fire: Because the firebird can withstand such high temperatures, it suffers no damage from mundane fire attacks, and only a quarter of normal damage from magical and elemental fire attacks. Though the firebird can resist the intense heat of the Death's Sea, it can burn. If it falls into the lava, it will die immediately.

Adventure Hook

While working on an airship mining elemental fire, the characters are sent down to a temporary island in the Death's Sea. As they walk across the island, they discover a nest of fresh firebird eggs. The parent birds are out hunting, providing the characters with the perfect opportunity to scoop up the eggs in order to sell them when they reach civilization. After the parents return to find the nest empty, however, they will search far and wide for the criminals who stole their children.

FIRE EAGLE

DEX: 11 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 4
PER: 5 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 11
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 13
Damage:
Beak (2): 7
2 × Claws (1): 6

Physical Defense: 14
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 30
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 21

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5

Combat Movement: 40/82[+] **Full Movement**: 80/164[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Fire Trail (3): 8, Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 7, Spellcasting (2): 7

Legend Points: 100

Equipment: None

Loot: Eggs and feathers containing True fire worth 100 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Fire eagles are predatory birds that nest atop the bizarre rock formations that form along the shores of Death's Sea. Their 12 foot wingspan makes these birds resemble large eagles with continually flaming feathers, the flames fuelled by the elemental fire in their blood. The razor-sharp claws of fire eagles are a shiny black and usually more than four inches long. These birds are fiercely territorial; only one person has ever claimed to have tamed one, and that was the great Beastmaster Nil Tasio of the Dragon Mountains.

Fire eagle feathers do not remain on fire if taken from their bodies; the fire is a side-effect of the elemental fire that courses through their blood. The feathers possess certain other qualities that alchemists, Elementalists, and sages find valuable, however, and can be sold for considerable profit. Fire eagle eggs throb with elemental fire. They are extremely rare and extremely valuable, mostly because many magic items based on elemental fire contain pieces of fire eagle egg.

Rules

Fire eagles make Swooping attacks, but do not incur any penalties for Splitting Movement (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 415 of the **Player's Compendium** for details). They attack primarily with their claws, often using their deadly Fire Trail power as a follow-up. If encountered on the ground, a fire eagle will attack with its beak and claws.

The fire eagle generates fire equivalent to a large campfire (see **Fire** in the **Adventuring** chapter, p. 107).

FIRESCALE

DEX: 8 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 13
PER: 5 **WIL**: 8 **CHA** 5

Initiative: 9
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 10
Damage:
Charge (8): 20
Horns (4): 16
Trample (2): 14

Physical Defense: 9
Social Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 12
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 8

Death Rating: 64 (70)
Wound Threshold: 19
Unconsciousness Rating: 57 (62)

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 13

Combat Movement: 58
Full Movement: 116

Powers: Breath Weapon (Fire; 3/day) (5): 13, Charge (4), Climbing^{S} (2): 10, Durability (1), Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 7, Spellcasting (7): 12

Legend Points: 370

Equipment: None

Loot: Blood worth 50 silver pieces per gallon, and horns worth 2D6 × 10 silver pieces (all counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

These huge, four-legged animals resemble thundra beasts and are large enough for trolls to use as mounts. These beasts are known to live only in the Scol Mountains of Barsaive. Firescales stand more than 8 feet tall at the shoulder, are 12 to 15 feet long and weigh well over 1,000 pounds. Their rock-like, deep red hides resemble dragon scales.

Trolls of the Firescale moot use these creatures as mounts. They consider the beasts sacred; to slay one for its blood or horns is unthinkable, and they viciously attack any who dare attempt to do so. Only if a firescale dies in battle do the Firescale trolls consider using it for such purposes.

Rules

Like thundra beasts, firescales have a large horn in the center of their foreheads, as well as one on either side of their skulls, all of which they use to gore their victims. Firescales also often trample their victims, crushing unlucky targets under their huge hooves.

Firescales can attack twice per round, using two gore attacks, two trample attacks or one of each. A firescale's Breath Weapon allows them to breathe gouts of flame at their victims as they charge by.

True Fire: Because these creatures are magical, their horns and blood are valuable to magicians and alchemists. Distilling the blood of a firescale (which requires a complex alchemical ritual) allows a magician to harvest kernels of True fire from it. Each gallon of distilled firescale blood yields one kernel of True fire. Firescale horns are used to create many different potions and also to craft magical weapons.

Fire Wraith

DEX: 8 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 7
PER: 6 **WIL**: 9 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 8
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 10
Damage:
Touch (3): 9

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 9 (see text)
Social Defense: 12
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 5 (see text)

Death Rating: 42
Wound Threshold: 12
Unconsciousness Rating: 34

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 6

Combat Movement: 46[+]
Full Movement: 92[+]

[+] This value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Fire Touch (3): 12, Elementalism[T] (2): 8, Spellcasting (2): 8, Willforce[T] (3): 12

Spells: Fireball 17, Flame Flash 13, Ignite 4, Boil Water, Drastic Temperature 12

Legend Points: 435

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Fire wraiths figure in most legends about Death's Sea, where they are said to lie in wait for over-confident adventurers. Similar in shape and size to demiwraiths, fire wraiths are composed entirely of living flame and are found only near Death's Sea. Their ghostly movement and appearance create a haunting experience for those confronted by fire wraiths. The most-repeated legend says that these creatures represent the souls of the first to die when Death was imprisoned.

Rules

Aside from casting spells, fire wraiths attack with their flame-covered limbs, using their Fire Touch power. Many of the general characteristics of the fire wraith are the same as those of the demiwraith. Because fire wraiths are not true undead, increase their Spell Defense and Mystic Armor by +5 against spells specifically designed to target undead beings.

Immunity to Fire: Fire wraiths are immune to all fire-based attacks, both magic and mundane.

Vulnerability to Water: Decrease the fire wraith's Spell Defense and Mystic Armor by +5 against water-based spells.

Gargoyle

DEX: 8 **STR**: 18 **TOU**: 12
PER: 4 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (3): 11
Damage:
2 × Claws (4): 22

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 11
Physical Armor: 15
Mystic Armor: 6

Death Rating: 59
Wound Threshold: 20
Unconsciousness Rating: 52

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 18

Combat Movement: 32/43[+]
Full Movement: 64/86[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Legend Points: 705

Equipment: None

Loot: Horns worth 5D6 × 10 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Like obsidimen, gargoyles are creatures of elemental earth and stone. However, these creatures are the results of a magical experiment gone wrong long before the Scourge. Their exact origins have been forgotten, but gargoyles are found in many parts of Barsaive. Gargoyles stand about 5 feet 6 inches tall and weigh an impressive 900 pounds. Their heads are elongated and distorted. Their hands end in long claws that they use to rake opponents, often in fly-by attacks. Though they gather in groups of 6 to 10 gargoyles, similar to lion prides, gargoyles are not social crea-

tures. Individual gargoyles sometimes leave the pride for months, wandering the skies alone or in pairs. Because many of these wandering gargoyles are staking a claim to new territory, they act more aggressively than full prides. Occasionally an entire pride of gargoyles migrates, for unknown reasons.

Rules

Despite their nasty dispositions, gargoyles usually attack only to defend their territory or to protect other elemental earth. Note that magical talents and spells that affect entities work against gargoyles.

GATE HOUND

DEX: 7 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 7
PER: 4 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 8
Damage:
Bite (5): 15
Claws (2): 12

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 6

Death Rating: 42 (48)
Wound Threshold: 12
Unconsciousness Rating: 34 (40)

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 11

Combat Movement: 46
Full Movement: 92

Powers: Durability (1), Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 6, Great Leap [S] (2): 9, Magic Drain (2): 8, Tracking [S] (2): 6

Legend Points: 100

Equipment: None

Loot: Magic-draining organ worth 500 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

The gate hound is an aberration not of Nature, but of certain Name-givers' meddling with Nature. In the last few years before the Scourge, many magicians searched frantically for ways to protect the Name-giver races from the Horrors. The sensible ones built the kaers and citadels. A few mages attempted to lower the magic levels around their city of Chasteyn so that the Horrors would never arrive there. However, this was a monumental task—halting the natural cycle of magic is far beyond the ability of any magician in Barsaive, or anywhere else in the world. To achieve their goal, the magicians chose to create a creature that could drain magic. Their experiment failed to produce the desired result; instead, it produced the gate hound, a creature of limited ability to drain magic and an enormous appetite for warm flesh.

The gate hound resembles a giant dog or wolf, often standing 6 feet tall at the shoulder. Stocky and thick-muscled, they are covered in dull red fur that seems to soak up the light. Their eyes glow with a fierce white light, not unlike a basilisk's. They have huge jaws crammed full of sharp teeth, and hunt in packs large enough to bring down almost any living creature—eight to ten hounds at least, sometimes more.

Gate hounds can drain magic, though nowhere near as well as their creators hoped. They store magical energy drained from another creature in an organ just below their thick, ugly necks. The drain is short-lived, however, wearing off within a few seconds.

More than a few magicians—perhaps the latter-day descendants of the fools who created these beasts—have attempted to harness the power of the gate hounds. Thus far, all have failed. One rumor tells of a magician who tried to use a hound's magic-draining organ to lower the level of magic around his house. He failed and drained his own magical ability; worse yet, he made the effect permanent.

Rules

In combat, gate hounds can bite or rake an opponent with their powerful claws. Their favorite tactic is to clamp their jaws down on an opponent and shake the hapless victim back and forth in an effort to break his neck using a Bite and Shake attack (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 416 of the **Player's Compendium** for details).

The hound can use its Magic Drain power only against other creatures; it cannot drain areas. Trying to tame or otherwise use a gate hound is impossible.

Attracted to Magic: Like Horrors, gate hounds are drawn to magic-rich places. The two species often meet and attack each other savagely. Some secret animosity seems to exist between them; even intelligent Horrors renowned for savoring their foes' slow death over many years do not retreat from battle with gate hounds until either they or the gate hounds die.

Adventure Hook

A pack of gate hounds begins to stalk a character (or a friend of the characters) who, unknown to his companions, has a Horror mark. Rather than attack their victim, however, the hounds simply follow and watch him. The characters investigate the hounds' presence and discover the Horror mark just as the Horror itself turns up to check on its new slave. The unfortunate character with the Horror mark, as well as his companions, are immediately caught in the middle of a titanic battle between the Horror and the slavering gate hounds.

Genhis

The following game statistics represent both an adult and the dangerous baby genhis.

Adult Genhis

DEX: 5 **STR**: 9 **TOU**: 9
PER: 3 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 5
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 6
Damage:
Bite (1): 10

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 47 (65)
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 40 (55)

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 10

Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60

Powers: Durability (3)

Legend Points: 100

Equipment: None

Loot: Birth sack worth 100 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Baby Genhis

DEX: 9 **STR**: 4 **TOU**: 3
PER: 3 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 9
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 11
Damage:
Bite (4): 8

Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 24
Wound Threshold: 5
Unconsciousness Rating: 15

Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 5

Combat Movement: 61
Full Movement: 122

Legend Points: 120

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The adult genhis is a placid, faintly foolish-looking grass eater that resembles a large cow. It travels in herds, though only in small ones. This gentle, slow-thinking creature long ago destroyed every village and town in the ancient troll Kingdom of Ustrect. Most scholars blame the razing of Ustrect on Horrors, partly to convince themselves that such destruction cannot happen again because most of the Horrors are gone.

Most people know of the adult genhis and in some areas of Barsaive even use them as meat animals. The prudent among genhis herders rid themselves of their herds every 10 years, if not more often, for it is almost impossible to tell which of the cow-like adults is a pregnant female. The young take a decade or so to grow large and strong enough to survive outside the womb, and it's when they emerge from that womb that the trouble begins. Moments after being born, young genhis begin to raze everything in their path in a frenzied search for food.

A pregnant genhis carries within her womb a large, tough, sack-shaped membrane in which the unborn infants grow. Without the membrane to restrain them, the horrible little beasts would swiftly eat their way out of their mother's body. Before giving birth, the mother genhis looks for the perfect spot in which to bring her young into the world. She greatly prefers forests and farms, which have plenty and varied food for her ravenous babies—trees, birds, deer, cattle, horses, crops, people, everything. Having chosen the birthing place, the mother genhis expels the sack from her womb and runs for her life. Within a scant few minutes of landing on the ground, the baby genhis chew their way through the sack and swiftly begin eating everything within reach.

Young genhis look nothing like their parents. Instead, they resemble a cross between a bird and a lizard, with a toothy mouth almost half the length of the entire creature. Their powerful jaws enable them to chew through anything—metal, wood, stone, and flesh. Fortunately for Barsaive, the horrid little pests frequently feast on each other soon after birth, and many a genhis brood destroys itself before doing much damage to anything else. Those that avoid becoming prey for their brood-mates can destroy countless acres of land, as well as all inhabitants, within a few hours, though they eventually spread out to destroy more isolated pockets of land. Why they don't eat each other in the womb is unknown, but it is surmised that magic plays some part in protecting them. As the genhis grow larger, they become less and less ravenous, after about five years turning into placid plant eaters. Unfortunately, most of the genhis that survive are female, and most of the females become pregnant soon after maturing.

Rules

An adult genhis is virtually harmless and fairly stupid, though it can be trained as a draft animal if the owner feels inclined to keep a nasty accident waiting to happen in his or her barn.

Baby genhis are incredibly dangerous in numbers, somewhat less so by themselves. A single brood of genhis can contain as many as 200 babies. The longer one waits before entering an area where a pregnant genhis has given birth, the greater the chance that the baby genhis will disperse. The circle of destruction wrought by these deadly pests expands rapidly, and they will often spend five days or more rampaging through a given area in search of food. Fortunately, the young genhis have no qualms about consuming each other. Within a brood's first few days of life, 200 baby genhis may diminish to 50 to 60 animals, who will eventually cover so much area that they no longer pose much of a hazard.

Adventure Hook

A Nethermancer hires the characters to bring him a genhis' birth sac on which to try a few gruesome experiments. Of course, the magician neglects to mention what is inside the birth sac, leaving the unsuspecting characters in for a painful and dangerous surprise.

Ghoul Lizard

DEX: 5 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 6
PER: 4 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 5
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (4): 9
Damage:
Tail (4): 10
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 38
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 30
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 7

Combat Movement: 32
Full Movement: 64

Powers: Climbing[S] (2): 7, Poison (SD 8; Damage 8)

Legend Points: 140

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The nocturnal ghoul lizard gets its name from its taste for carrion and its unusual appearance—the pale, green-white scales and raised bony ridges around the lizard's eyes and along the top of its snout resemble the upper half of a human skull. Ghoul lizards can grow up to 9 feet long, including their long tails. More of the bony spikes are located in three rows down a lizard's back. These spines remain folded flat until the animal is threatened or readies itself to attack. Though primarily a carrion eater, the ghoul lizard has been known to attack weakened live prey. Though the lizard's claws and teeth are ineffective for this task, its tail is covered with short, bony poisoned spikes that can easily pierce even hard armor, like chain mail.

Rules

If a ghoul lizard Wounds its target, its victim must resist the effects of its poison, which causes damage as noted above (see **Poison** in the **Adventuring** chapter, p.121).

Spikes: Any character who fails an attack against a ghoul lizard must make a Dexterity (7) Test. If this test is failed, the would-be attacker is stuck by one of the lizard's spikes and may suffer the effects of the poison. If the Dexterity Test yields a Pathetic result, the would-be attacker automatically takes Step 3/D4 damage. No armor protects against this damage.

Giant Carnivorous Squirrel

DEX: 6 **STR**: 4 **TOU**: 4
PER: 5 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1 (see text)
Attack (3): 9 (see text)
Damage:
Bite (4): 8 (see text)
Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 30
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 21
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5

Combat Movement: 38/32[+]
Full Movement: 76/64[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's climbing Movement rate.

Powers: Climbing[S] (2): 8, Disease (SD 7; Debilitation), Great Leap[S] (2): 8

Legend Points: 200

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Giant carnivorous squirrels have appeared in the Blood Wood since the Scourge. Their true origin remains unknown, though some scholars from outside the Blood Wood believe that these squirrels are the results of early experiments by the blood warders. These massive rodents, nearly five times the size of ordinary squirrels, frequent the treetops, attacking any living creature they meet to sate their voracious appetites. Far more dangerous than their smaller, mundane cousins, giant carnivorous squirrels nonetheless possess many of their same instincts, including the urge to store food for later consumption. This instinct, coupled with the squirrel's carnivorous diet, produces overpowering odors of rot and decay in areas inhabited by the creatures.

Rules

These squirrels attack in groups of 8 to 20 animals, leaping upon their prey from the trees and biting with their sharp front teeth. Because they live amid the rotting carcasses of their prey, giant carnivorous squirrels often carry diseases. Consequently, any victim who suffers a Wound from a squirrel attack may contract a severely debilitating disease as well (see below).

Giant carnivorous squirrels will attack and consume each other whenever other prey is unavailable, a habit that (thankfully) helps keep the carnivorous squirrel population relatively low.

Disease: Most diseases carried by these creatures have an onset time of 1–3 hours. At the end of this time, the victim must make a Toughness (7) Test. If this test fails, reduce the character's Toughness value by –1 and adjust his Toughness step and characteristics as appropriate. Every day, the character must make another Toughness (7) Test. Each failed test further reduces the character's Toughness value by –1, along with all related characteristics. If a character's Toughness value drops to 0, he dies. A successful Toughness Test at any time prior to death allows the character to throw off the effects of the disease, and he subsequently regains lost Toughness points at the rate of +1 point per day. Throughout the course of the disease and recovery, the character suffers a penalty to all Action Tests equal to the difference between the victim's current and normal Toughness steps.

Frenzy: If a squirrel's attack Wounds its target, the taste of blood drives the squirrel into a frenzy. Frenzied squirrels double the number of attacks they make each round and gain a +2 bonus to their Attack and Damage Tests.

Giant Spider

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

Initiative: 5
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 7
Damage:
Bite (3): 8
Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 39 **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 11 **Knockdown**: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 31

Combat Movement: 36/26[+] **Full Movement**: 72/52[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's climbing Movement rate.

Powers: Climbing[S] (2): 7, Poison (SD 7; Paralysis; Damage 9), Spellcasting (5): 10, Venom (4): 9

Legend Points: 100

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The giant spiders of the Servos Jungle are approximately the size of jehuthra—arachnid Horror constructs—but have none of the special powers that make jehuthra such terrifying opponents (refer to the **Horrors** chapter, on p. 452, for details on the jehuthra). Horror powers or no, giant spiders are still very dangerous creatures.

Rules

If a target falls unconscious by the spider's venomous spit, the spider encases the victim in a thick cocoon and feeds on the victim at its leisure. A cocooned victim who awakens may free himself without making any tests. Occasionally, packs of 6 or more giant spiders spin large communal webs to ensnare prey.

Web Trap: To detect a giant spider's web, which is strong enough to entangle even Name-giver-sized victims, characters must make a successful Perception (9) Test. Whenever a character stumbles into a giant spider web, the gamemaster determines the web's Strength value by making a Step 8/2D6 Strength Test. To free himself from the web, the character must make a successful Strength Test against the web's Strength value. Giant spider webs are often large enough to ensnare up to three human-sized targets.

GIANT TRAPDOOR SPIDER

DEX: 6 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 6
PER: 5 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 6 (12) **Physical Defense**: 8
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 6
Attack (2): 8 **Social Defense**: 4
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 4
Bite (3): 9 **Mystic Armor**: 0

Death Rating: 36 **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 10 **Knockdown**: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 28

Combat Movement: 43/32[+] **Full Movement**: 86/64[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's climbing Movement rate.

Powers: Climbing[S] (2): 8, Poison (SD 9; Paralysis), Surprise Attack (6)

Legend Points: 100

Equipment: Lair may contain equipment from previous victims.

Loot: Lair may contain small valuables from previous victims.

Commentary

The giant trapdoor spider has adopted a unique tactic to catch its prey. Rather than spinning a web, the giant trapdoor spider finds an empty animal burrow and lines the interior with webs. It then crafts a cover of sticks, leaves and rocks, using its webbing as glue to hold it all together. The spider places the cover over the burrow's entrance and hides beneath it, ready to spring out and attack any victim that falls into its trap. Giant trapdoor spiders are most commonly found in the southern portion of the Blood Wood, though they also live in the western region.

Rules

When a victim falls into the burrow (see below), the spider makes two attacks. First, it grapples the victim. If the spider successfully grapples its target, it will attempt to trap the victim in the webs that line the burrow. For its second attack, the spider attempts to bite the victim and inject him with a paralyzing poison (see **Poison** in the **Adventuring** chapter, p. 121).

Cocoon: If the poison takes effect, the victim is paralyzed for a number of minutes equal to the result of the Effect Test, and the spider spins a cocoon around the victim. Once the paralytic venom has worn off, a cocooned character may free himself by making a successful Strength (8) Test. However, the victim must still deal with the spider to escape from the burrow.

Burrow: Characters passing near a spider's lair may notice it by making a successful Perception (10) Test. (Characters with the Wilderness Survival skill or the Creature Lore knowledge skill can make a Skill Test in place of the Perception Test.) If the test fails, the character does not notice the trapdoor and may fall into the burrow unless he makes a successful Initiative (9) Test.

GLOBBEROG

DEX: 5 **STR**: 14 **TOU**: 10
PER: 4 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 4 **Physical Defense**: 4
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 10
Attack: NA **Social Defense**: 8
Damage: NA **Physical Armor**: 10-20+
Mystic Armor: 10

Death Rating: 52 (64) **Recovery Tests**: 5
Wound Threshold: 15 **Knockdown**: 18
Unconsciousness Rating: 45 (55)

Combat Movement: 9 **Full Movement**: 18

Powers: Blood Veins (1): 15, Durability (2), Sticky Body (4): 12, Sticky Spit (11): 25

Legend Points: 330 + Armor

Equipment: None

Loot: Glue glands worth 250 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points). Treasure, coins, and other valuables stuck to the creature's back, worth at least 1,000 silver pieces. The gamemaster determines the specific items found.

Commentary

The globberog is a most curious and repulsive creature that protects its own fragile body with the flesh and bones of other living things. This disgusting lump of quivering meat exudes and can also spit a sticky ooze with which it glues to itself the bodies of those unfortunate enough to fall afoul of it. From these bodies it creates a shell, which over the years can grow amazingly thick and strong, depending on how many creatures or Name-givers the globberog catches.

Any unlucky victim trapped by this spittle remains paralyzed by it unless it breaks down, which begins to occur (if at all) only after more than five hours' exposure to sunlight. In most cases, of course, the victim does not have this slim chance of escape. If the globberog gets close enough to trap a person or creature by brushing its sticky slime against him, the victim instantly becomes the newest piece in the globberog's revolting shell. If the thing must spit at its victim to ensnare him, it rarely allows five hours to pass before slithering up to the poor wretch and fusing him to itself. The globberog's sticky spittle is magical in nature, much like the spit of the bog gob. Victims struggling to set themselves free only worsen matters, the more they struggle, the faster they spread the sickening stuff all over themselves.

Because the globberog builds its shell from whatever creatures or Name-givers it encounters, each shell is uniquely disgusting. More than a few people have been driven mad with grief and revulsion at the sight of friends and loved ones stuck to a globberog's back, staring vacantly at them from under a glaze of slime. One legend tells of a globberog that entered a kaer and killed all the inhabitants. The poor people and all of the kaer's treasure were stuck to its outsides, making the thing look like a huge, slithering treasure chest. Though globberogs have no use for the treasures and coins they often pick up, they fiercely resist any attempt to remove these bits and pieces.

The creature under the shell is a soft, hairless lump about the size of a cow, covered in a disgusting ooze. It has four tiny nearsighted eyes that fortunately give it poor aim when spitting. When the beast begins to build its shell, it sends small veins into the bodies on its back, through which it draws sustenance from its victims. The creatures can only feed in this revolting way, as they have no mouths or stomachs. The veins also carry the globberog's spittle and keep it flowing across the creature's entire shell. Because it is constantly exuding a fresh layer of slime, the globberog rarely suffers any ill effects from prolonged sunlight.

When a globberog's shell finally gets so huge that the creature can no longer move, the globberog detaches itself from the shell and (coincidentally) gives birth to several new globberogs. The newborn globberogs, each the size of a large cat, cling to the inside of the discarded shell, which protects them from most natural predators hungry enough to actually want to eat one of them. The adult globberog stays near its young and will quickly add to its new shell any predator foolish enough to attack its offspring.

As a globberog's spittle makes an almost unbreakable glue, the glands that produce it can fetch high prices in many cities. Killing a globberog to get these glands requires caution, of course. Many a greedy and feckless adventurer has paid for a lack of planning with his or her life.

Rules

Globberogs move slowly but silently and often sneak up on opponents to spit at them from behind. A globberog prefers to glue its foes to the ground rather than fight in close combat. If it feels threatened, a globberog will attempt to use its Sticky Spit power at any opponent up to 8 yards away. If the victim fails to break free, the globberog attaches him to its back within minutes of a successful attack. The globberog then begins to attach its Blood Veins to the victim.

Hard Shell: Because a globberog's shell provides excellent protection, the globberog can spend a great deal of time lining up the perfect shot before its opponents can possibly reach the vulnerable creature within (unless they're very lucky). Depending on its age, a globberog's shell may have a Physical Armor rating of 20 or more, though younger creatures may have ratings as low as 10. All globberog shells are immune to Armor-Defeating Hits.

Adventure Hook

A globberog that long ago entered a kaer and killed all its inhabitants is now wandering the countryside in search of more victims. The people of a town that lies on the path of the creature's wanderings hire the characters to track it down and kill it; as an added inducement, the locals agree that the characters can keep any valuables they find stuck to the globberog in addition to their fee. Unknown to the characters, they are not the first party sent to kill the creature; several other adventurers have already tried and failed, including some of the characters' friends. The globberog has fused the remains of those friends into its shell, right where the characters can see them.

GOAT

DEX: 4 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 6
PER: 4 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 4
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 5
Damage:
Gore (2): 8

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 35
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 27

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 7

Combat Movement: 26
Full Movement: 52

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 6

Legend Points: 50

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Goats are bearded, horned herbivores that are often domesticated. Shepherding herdsmen raise them on Barsaive's mountains and hills for milk and meat. Goats are sometimes used by windlings as cheap riding mounts.

These statistics can also be used for other horned or antlered herbivores, such as deer and moose.

GRANLAIN

DEX: 5 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 8
PER: 4 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 5
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 7
Damage:
Trample (2): 12

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 46
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 39

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 11

Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 6, Great Leap [S] (2): 7

Legend Points: 100

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Granlain are unusually large, strong horses that often serve as draft animals. They stand 7 feet tall at the shoulder and commonly reach 10 feet in length. Granlain are stubborn animals, and trolls are often the only Name-givers strong enough to deal with these massive, willful beasts. Granlain are not common. Wild granlain live only in the plains and foothills near mountainous regions.

Rules

To reflect this creature's innate resistance to training, any characters using their talents and abilities to tame or command a granlain must achieve a result one level higher than normal to be successful. For example, the Animal Training talent normally requires an Average result to work against a target creature. Using Animal Training against a granlain, however, requires a Good result.

GREATER TERMITE

DEX: 6 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 5
PER: 2 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 8
Damage:
Bite (1): 7
Claws (4): 10

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 8

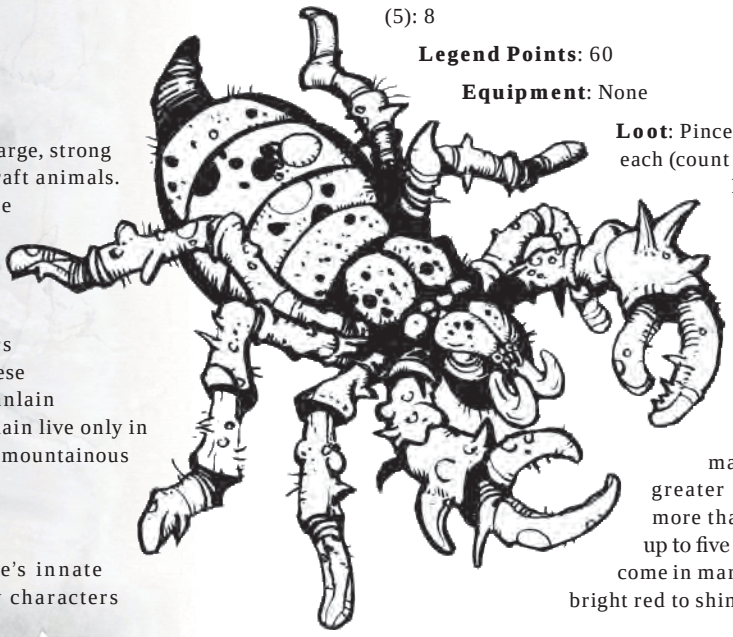
Combat Movement: 40
Full Movement: 80

Powers: Acid Spray (1): 7, Climbing [S] (2): 8, Empathic Sense [T] (5): 8

Legend Points: 60

Equipment: None

Loot: Pincers worth D6 × 5 silver pieces each (count as treasure worth Legend Points).



Commentary

These enormous insects often reach a size and length that Barsaive's largest rats might envy. Like their tinier brethren, colonies of greater termites create giant towers of mashed tree pulp; however, the greater termites' towers often rise more than ten yards into the sky and up to five yards wide. Greater termites come in many colors, from pasty white to bright red to shiny black. In many cases, each

colony of termites seems to have its own distinct coloring. A thick carapace protects them from most predators.

Three kinds of greater termites exist: workers, soldiers, and queens. The workers build the colony's towers, hunt for food, and care for the young. The soldiers protect the colony from predators. These termites have powerful pincers, vicious temperaments, and a natural poison that unfortunately does not kill, but makes its victim writhe on the ground in agony if so much as a drop of the secretion touches his skin. The queen, the mother of the colony, is a bloated version of her smaller kindred.

Greater termites eat both meat and plants and have developed powerful jaws with which to chew an amazing variety of foodstuffs. They also use these fearsome mandibles to bore through any substance in search of food and to make the pulp from which they build their towers.

One mystery about these insects is their ability to communicate silently with each other across great distances. Scholars believe them to be under the mental control of the queen. Only an intense mental bond can explain how the soldier fighting some foe outside the colony knows immediately that its queen is under attack. Those foolish enough to attack a termite queen will soon face every soldier in the colony that returns to it from any distance to defend her. This kind of mental bond also explains the behavior of worker termites. When one of these finds food, it begins to stuff its jaws, and without stirring a step away from its feast somehow manages to call its fellow workers to join it. Within minutes, hundreds of other worker termites arrive to help collect the same food supply.

Rules

Because only soldier termites fight, the statistics above apply only to them. Soldier termites have huge pincers and can also rake opponents with a vicious set of barbed front legs.

Adventure Hook

A colony of greater termites infests the wall of a fortress, whose owner hires the characters to remove the pests before they do too much damage. Of course, exterminating a nest of rat-sized insects with mandibles that can slice through armor, flesh, and bone is easier said than done.

GRIFFIN

DEX: 5 **STR**: 7 **TOU**: 9
PER: 6 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (3): 8
Damage:
Claws (5): 12

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 50
Wound Threshold: 14
Unconsciousness Rating: 43

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 8

Combat Movement: 34+ **Full Movement**: 68+

+ This value is also the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 8

Legend Points: 135

Equipment: None

Loot: Beak and feathers worth 3D6×10 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

These strange, four-legged creatures combine a lion's body with the head, legs, and wings of a large eagle. Like an eagle, a griffin's front legs are covered in feathers and end in sharp talons; its hind legs resemble those of a lion, covered in soft fur and

ending in paws. Typically, griffins stand 4 feet tall at the shoulder, and are 5 to 6 feet long with an average wingspan of 7 to 9 feet. The head of a griffin resembles that of an eagle, with large, keen eyes and a sharp beak. Its wings are covered with bright feathers, usually yellow and white, but sometimes red and orange. Griffins gather in nests of up to ten individuals, but more commonly live in flocks of four to five. They nest in mountainous regions, and rarely venture into the jungles or forests of Barsaive.

Humanoids of average human size and smaller, except for windlings, can use griffins as aerial mounts. Before a griffin can be used in this way, however, it must undergo extensive training, which keeps the cost of these animals high. Though difficult to train, once broken in, tame griffins make excellent and loyal steeds.

Rules

Griffins seldom attack travelers on foot, unless their territory is threatened. Their strong taste for horse meat occasionally leads them to attack travelers on horseback, in order to feed on the horse. Trained griffins lack the swooping attack capability of their wild counterparts.

To reflect this creature's innate resistance to training, any characters using their talents and abilities to tame or command a griffin must achieve a result one level higher than normal to be successful. For example, the Animal Training talent normally requires an Average result to work against a target creature. Using Animal Training against a griffin, however, requires a Good result.

Swooping Attack: An attacking griffin swoops down on an opponent and strikes out with its talons. Such a Swooping attack adds a +3 bonus to the griffin's Damage Test. After swooping down, the griffin remains on the ground where it can attack its prey with its talons and hind claws.

HARBINGER

DEX: 15 **STR**: 20 **TOU**: 22
PER: 12 **WIL**: 15 **CHA**: 12

Initiative: 15
Number of Actions: 3
Attack (3): 18
Damage:
Sword (8): 28

Physical Defense: 19
Spell Defense: 15
Social Defense: 15
Physical Armor: 12*
Mystic Armor: 10 (18)*

* Immune to Armor-Defeating Hits (see text).

Death Rating: 100
Wound Threshold: 27
Unconsciousness Rating: 94

Recovery Tests: 11
Knockdown: 20

Combat Movement: 110 **Full Movement**: 220

Powers: Locate Target (6): 28*

* Includes the Passion-granted bonus for this power (see text).

Legend Points (3): 6,975

Equipment: Magical plate armor, two-handed sword (see text)

Loot: None

Commentary

A harbinger usually appears as a giant, ethereal, armored knight, standing more than 10 feet tall and wielding a huge, two-handed sword with deadly accuracy. Most who know of them believe that the harbingers valiantly upheld a certain Passion's beliefs in life and have been rewarded after death with a chance to destroy their beloved Passion's enemies. Only those strong enough to defeat a harbinger—few souls, indeed—dare risk angering a Passion. Because the Passions manifest their harbingers, each of these beings possesses several magical powers that aid them in hunting down evildoers. Each harbinger appears in the place where the atrocity that roused the Passion's anger occurred, so that local folk will see that the Passion intends to avenge the evil. The harbinger tracks the evildoer tirelessly, stopping only when it completes its task or is destroyed (a highly unlikely occurrence). Upon discovering its quarry, the harbinger announces itself and challenges the criminal to single combat with its magical sword.

Harbingers were far less of a peril before the Scourge, because the Passions only used them to punish the most grievous crimes. When the Scourge drove three of the Passions mad, those Passions began to call down harbingers at will. It may be that their madness makes them see almost any action that does not glorify them as a grievous crime, and that belief is all they need. Of course, begging for forgiveness and promising to atone for the mistake might enable a harbinger's target to survive. If this is done swiftly and convincingly enough when the harbinger appears, it and its creator may have mercy on the criminal. Harbingers can smell lies. Unless the victim tells the truth, he will be killed. Also, if the victim fails to atone for his wrongs, the Passion's vengeance will be swift and brutal indeed.

Rules

Harbingers appear as members of every Name-giver race, depending on whom the given harbinger was in life.

Locate Target: Harbingers receive a Passion-granted +10 step bonus to their Locate Target power to track those who have transgressed against their patron Passion. The range for using this power is unlimited.

Magical Armor: A harbinger's magical armor provides him with excellent physical and magical protection. This armor cannot be by passed with Armor-Defeating Hits. No living Name-giver may use a harbinger's magical armor.

Magical Sword: A harbinger's mighty sword is also magical, and inflicts Strength+8 damage against any foe. No living Name-giver may use a harbinger's magical sword.

Adventure Hook

As the characters are traveling through a city, an obviously terrified local asks for their protection—against what, he refuses to say. Claiming to be rich, he offers to pay them handsomely for their efforts, but tells them very little about himself. The characters soon discover that their new employer is a questor of the Passion Mynbruje who has angered her by calling upon her to punish his enemies one too many times. The questor fears, with reason, that Mynbruje will send one of her terrible harbingers against him.

HARPY

DEX: 5 **STR**: 4 **TOU**: 5
PER: 5 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 7
Damage:
Claws (2): 6

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 34
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 26

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 4

Combat Movement: 24/34[+] **Full Movement**: 48/68[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Curse (4): 8, Disease (SD 7; Debilitation), Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 7, Taunt[S] (6): 8

Legend Points: 90

Equipment: Primitive weapons

Loot: None

Commentary

Harpies are a repulsive cross between bird and human, displaying the worst qualities of both. They have the faces and bodies of hags, covered with grimy matted feathers. Their bird-like feet and short stubby wings are dirt encrusted, their faces are dotted with suppurating boils, and their feathers crawl with parasites. Their harsh, shrill voices irritate the ear like the scrape of a sword blade on rocks.

A single harpy poses no danger to anyone. However, harpies almost always travel in packs. Groups of the foul things pose a serious threat. A hunting pack of harpies usually lands in the trees near their chosen victims, at whom they hurl every slur and foul word they know (they know more curses than most people will hear in a lifetime). By this torrent of abuse they hope to anger their opponents so as to make them careless in combat. The insults also help the harpies determine the strength of their foe. An enemy who remains calm is most likely an experienced adventurer too strong for the harpies' taste, whereas one who becomes furious likely has little discipline and so will be easily defeated. Harpies are cowards by nature and prefer to attack as few opponents as possible, and weak ones, at that.

The greatest danger harpies pose, assuming their victims survive an attack, is the threat of disease. These dreadful monsters wallow constantly in their own filth and carry several terrible afflictions to which they are immune but most other living things are not. Often, victims who survive an initial harpy attack succumb to some bizarre and debilitating disease within a few hours. If the illness doesn't kill them, the harpies will fall upon their weakened prey and slay him.

The young are born into a world of filth and forced to fend for themselves almost immediately—a harpy feels no familial ties and has no compunction about kicking its offspring away from food violently enough to snap a chick's dirty neck. The last to feed on kills, young harpies eat a steady diet of rotting meat (when they eat anything at all). Prone to starvation and not yet immune to the diseases rampant in the filth amid which they live, young harpies die at a tremendous rate—though not fast enough to eliminate the species entirely. Harpies do appear to have a limited form of intelligence almost as keen as a Name-giver's, but they care nothing for the pursuit of knowledge, the study of magic or the arts, or any other thing except their foul kind's survival.

Rules

Harpies almost always precede physical attacks by insulting their victims in an attempt to enrage them by using a specialized form of the Taunt talent. Once they succeed in angering their enemies, the harpies attack. Because they have had time to gauge their opponents' strength, they almost always attack the strongest fighter or the group's leader first, swooping down upon him before wheeling off to attack others. Harpies slash at their victims' faces with their sharp-taloned feet and batter them with makeshift weapons, such as clubs and large rocks. If the battle seems to turn against them, the harpies fly back to the treetops and hurl more foul words. In close physical combat, the harpies use their claws to inflict damage. If their attacks successfully inflict any damage, their victims are exposed to the effects of the creatures' diseases.

Disease: Most diseases carried by these creatures have an onset time of 1–3 hours. At the end of this time, the victim must make a Toughness (7) Test. If this test fails, reduce the character's Toughness value by -1 and adjust his characteristics and Toughness step as appropriate. Every day, the character must make another Toughness (7) Test. Each failed test further reduces the character's Toughness value by -1 point and also reduces all related characteristics. If the character's Toughness value drops to 0, he dies. However, a successful Toughness Test at any time prior to death allows the character to throw off the effects of the disease, and subsequently he begins to regain lost Toughness points at the rate of +1 point per day. Throughout the course of the disease and recovery, the character suffers a step penalty to all Action Tests equal to the difference between the victim's current and normal Toughness steps.

Taunt: If the Taunt Test is successful the target feels compelled to go all out to destroy the harpy, even if doing so will leave him vulnerable to assault.

Adventure Hook

A questor of Lochost, determined to civilize the harpies, hires the characters to protect him from the monsters' constant assaults and to carry supplies deep into the wilds of Barsaive, where colonies of harpies are rumored to exist.

Hell Hound

DEX: 8 **STR**: 8 **TOU**: 6
PER: 3 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 8
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 10
Damage:
Bite (5): 13
2 × Claws (2): 10

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 3

Death Rating: 35 (59)
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 27 (47)
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 9

Combat Movement: 52
Full Movement: 104

Powers: Astral Sight [T] (5): 8, Breath Weapon (Fire; 3/day) (6): 10, Durability (4), Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 5, Great Leap [S] (2): 10, Spellcasting (7): 10, Tracking [S] (3): 6

Legend Points: 130

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Hell hounds are large dogs, standing more than 4 feet high at the shoulder. Their stocky, muscular bodies are covered with short dark-brown fur that seems to absorb the light; indeed, they bear a passing resemblance to gate hounds. Teeth as sharp as talons fill their jaws; a hell hound can easily tear an arm or a leg off a human or an elf with a single bite. The presence of a fire flickering within in its mouth, however, clearly shows the hell hound for what it is. A hell hound's eyes also seem to burn; deep within the sockets are twin balls of flame. In complete darkness, the eyes of a hell hound glow like candle flames.

Hell hounds have an impressive magical power, one they share with dragons. At the height of their power, they can breathe great gouts of flame. Unlike normal fire, this magical flame can briefly burn almost anything, including armor, weapons, rocks, clothing, wood, and flesh. The hell hound's magic flames are not precisely fire as most Name-givers understand it. The flame mixes in the hound's throat with a volatile ooze that sticks to the hound's target and burns continuously. One can only put out this burning ooze by completely suffocating it.

Hell hounds travel and hunt in packs so that they can surround their prey from all sides. Once the pack has encircled its victim, the pack leader sets the poor wretch afire. If the victim tries to bolt in any direction, the hound nearest him or her coughs up its own stream of fire at the sufferer, forcing the victim to stagger back into the tightening circle of hell hounds. Most victims begin to succumb to the pain and shock of burning flesh within minutes. The smaller the prey, of course, the faster it burns. Hell hounds hunt in this way to ensure that only a few pack members use up their fire-breathing power at any given time and to cook their food so as to reduce their chances of eating diseased meat.

More than a few rumors make the rounds regarding hell hounds and dragons, which supposedly created these creatures as pets. However, the fact that they breathe fire is no more than a coincidence of Nature. A hell hound can be kept as a pet if raised from a pup, and will show amazing loyalty to its master as long as it is not hungry. Those who wish to tame a hell hound would be well advised to feed it often.

Rules

Hell hounds can see into the astral plane, but they cannot affect creatures there. If forced to a close-quarters fight when its fire has run out, a hell hound attacks with claws and teeth.

Breath Weapon: The hell hounds' ability to breathe fire makes them extremely dangerous. They can use this power 3 times per day, but it diminishes in strength with each use. Once a hell hound has used its power, 24 hours must pass before the fire-breathing ability returns to full strength. The second time a hell hound uses its fiery breath, reduce its Spellcasting step by 1 step; the third time reduce it by 2 steps. These reductions also apply to the damage caused by the fire.

Adventure Hook

Through his efficient spy network, King Neden of Throal learns that the Therans are attempting to create devastating siege weapons whose fiery blasts can bum through almost anything. If they succeed, no fortress in Barsaive will provide protection. Neden hires the characters to find out how the weapon builders intend to produce the powerful fire. The characters learn that the Therans are slaying hell hounds to obtain a supply of the unique magical substance the animals use to spit their dangerous flames.

Henghyoke Otter

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

Initiative: 12 **Physical Defense**: 12
Number of Actions: 2 **Spell Defense**: 11
Attack (3): 12 **Social Defense**: 10
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 2
Claws (3): 9 **Mystic Armor**: 2

Death Rating: 36 **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 10 **Knockdown**: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 28

Combat Movement: 64/49[+] **Full Movement**: 128/98[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's swimming Movement rate.

Powers: Silent Walk[S] (4): 13, Swimming[S] (2): 8, Tracking[S] (3): 12

Legend Points: 180

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The Henghyoke otter is a species of river otter bred by the t'skrang of House Henghyoke. Specimens can grow up to 6 feet long and 2 feet tall at the shoulder. The creatures are amazingly dexterous and have been trained to fight under the direction of their masters. In fact, some boatmen claim that Henghyoke otters are more fearsome than their t'skrang masters.

Rules

Aquatic: Otters require one result level lower than normal when making Swimming Tests, usually only needing a Poor result. They can hold their breath for a number of minutes equal to their Toughness step before drowning.

Horse

Horses have recently regained importance in Barsaive. Most of the horses in the region descend from those brought in by the first ork nomad tribes to re-enter Barsaive after the Scourge.

Ork tribes remain Barsaive's premier source of horses, and ork cavalrymen take justifiable pride in their tribes' abilities to breed strong, hearty animals.

Draft Horse

DEX: 5 **STR**: 8 **TOU**: 8
PER: 3 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 4 **Physical Defense**: 6
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 4
Attack (1): 6 **Social Defense**: 4
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 0
Trample (2): 10 **Mystic Armor**: 1

Death Rating: 43 **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 12 **Knockdown**: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 35

Combat Movement: 30 **Full Movement**: 60

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 5

Legend Points: 75

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

A draft horse is used to transport goods across great distances. These animals are often found drawing the carts and wagons of the caravans found on the trade routes of Barsaive.

Pony

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

Initiative: 6 **Physical Defense**: 7
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 6
Attack (1): 6 **Social Defense**: 7
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 0
Trample (2): 8 **Mystic Armor**: 1

Death Rating: 40 **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 11 **Knockdown**: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 32

Combat Movement: 40 **Full Movement**: 80

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 7, Great Leap[S] (2): 7

Legend Points: 55

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

A smaller breed of horse used mainly by dwarfs for transportation and war. Many ork, elf, and human children train their horse riding skills on ponies as they grow up. Ponies cannot wear barding or armor. A pony can carry a rider and up to 125 pounds of equipment without suffering encumbrance penalties.

Riding Horse

DEX: 6 **STR**: 7 **TOU**: 8
PER: 4 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 7
Damage:
Trample (2): 9

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 44
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 36

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 8

Combat Movement: 52 **Full Movement**: 104

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 6, Great Leap [S] (2): 8

Legend Points: 75

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The most common horses used, riding horses make strong mounts, but cannot wear barding or armor. A riding horse can carry a rider and up to 250 pounds of equipment without suffering encumbrance penalties.

War Horse

DEX: 7 **STR**: 9 **TOU**: 9
PER: 5 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 9
Damage:
Trample (4): 13

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 48
Wound Threshold: 14
Unconsciousness Rating: 41

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 10

Combat Movement: 43 **Full Movement**: 86

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 7, Great Leap [S] (2): 9

Legend Points: 140

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Larger and stronger than riding horses, war horses are bred to carry heavy loads while remaining able to canter and gallop. War horses can wear barding, and can carry their rider and up to 350 pounds of equipment without suffering encumbrance penalties. War horses are often used by armies and cavalry units, particularly ork scorcher tribes.

HULKER

DEX: 8 **STR**: 15 **TOU**: 12
PER: 5 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (4): 12
Damage:
Claws (5): 20

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 11
Physical Armor: 12
Mystic Armor: 3

Death Rating: 62 (80)
Wound Threshold: 18
Unconsciousness Rating: 55 (70)

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 15

Combat Movement: 24 **Full Movement**: 48

Powers: Camouflage (5): 10, Durability (3), Regeneration (3): 15

Legend Points (2): 900

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Hulkers are large, solitary predators that move slowly through the darkest parts of the Blood Wood. Hulkers stalk the area surrounding the central areas of the forest, as well as parts of the Western Border and Northern Reaches closest to the center of the forest. Standing somewhat taller than a troll, they have thick, gnarled skin that resembles tree bark. Their thick, powerful legs end in flat feet that resemble roots. A hulker's head seems to be one with its torso, and it attacks with two immensely strong arms that each end in a single massive horned talon. When it must lift fallen prey, a second, smaller talon springs out from the base of

the larger one, forming a pincer with which the hulker can grasp its meal. Though hulkers will eat anything they can catch, they display a particular fondness for Name-giver flesh. Hulkers will not attack Name-giver settlements, however, unless driven to desperation by extreme hunger.

Rules

What the hulker lacks in speed it often makes up for in guile, using its magical ability to camouflage itself among the trees. Hulkers prefer to attack from camouflage because most prey can easily outrun them. Additionally, the hulker can use its regenerative powers to heal itself during combat. During each combat round, a hulker may make a single Recovery Test, in place of one of its attacks. A hulker may repeat this process every round until it has no Recovery Tests remaining for the day.

Hardened Armor: The hulker's bark-like skin is so thick that only an Extraordinary result on an Attack Test can pierce it.

Huttawa

DEX: 5 **STR**: 8 **TOU**: 8
PER: 5 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 7
Damage:
Beak (2): 10

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 43
Wound Threshold: 12
Unconsciousness Rating: 35

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 9

Combat Movement: 30 **Full Movement**: 60

Powers: Climbing[S] (1): 6, Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 7, Great Leap[S] (1): 6

Legend Points: 85

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The huttawa's body resembles that of a lion or tiger, but it has an eagle-like head with a large beak and bird-like eyes. 4 feet at the shoulder and 6 feet long, huttawa are a favored mount for dwarf cavalrymen, and often help pull caravan wagons belonging to dwarf trading companies.

Rules

Though not overly bright, huttawa are easy to train. To account for this, any characters using their talents and abilities to tame or command a huttawa must achieve a result one level lower than normal to be successful. For example, the Animal Training talent normally requires an Average result to work against a target creature. Using Animal Training against a huttawa, however, only requires a Poor result.

Ice Flyer

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

Initiative: 10
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (3): 9
Damage:
Bite (9): 14

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 3

Death Rating: 34 (40)
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 26 (31)

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5

Combat Movement: 36[+] **Full Movement**: 72[+]

[+] This value is also the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Durability (1), Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 7, Ice Shackles (6): 13, Howling Challenge (1): 6

Legend Points: 105 (155 Leader)

Equipment: None

Loot: Ice feathers worth D6 × 10 silver pieces (count as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Ice flyers resemble white, winged baboons, standing roughly 6 feet tall and weighing up to 700 pounds. They often gather in flocks of 4 to 24 individuals, one of which leads the flock. Some, though not all, of their feathers gleam as if made of crystal. These are enchanted feathers that stay cold even in tropical heat, allowing the creatures to live in tropical or arid environments. These ice feathers count as treasure worth Legend Points.

Rules

Ice flyers may strike targets from the air, swooping in to attack in a flurry of shrieking and clawing, and then flapping upward out of the melee. The leader usually stays out of direct combat, using its powers to attack rather than physically entering the fray.

Inshalata

DEX: 9 **STR**: 9 **TOU**: 9
PER: 8 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 9 (13)
Number of Actions: 4
Attack (4): 13
Damage:
4 × Claws (4): 13

Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 11
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 47
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 40

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 10

Combat Movement: 67/52[+] **Full Movement**: 134/104[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's climbing Movement rate.

Powers: Climbing [S] (4): 13, Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 10, Silent Walk [S] (4): 13, Surprise Attack (4)

Legend Points (2): 770

Equipment: None

Loot: Claws and mandibles worth D6 × 10 silver pieces (count as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

The inshalata is a species of giant praying mantis, about 7 feet tall from tail to head, that hunts the Servos Jungle. The creature is an exceptionally gifted hunter and nearly always gets the drop on its prey.

Rules

When attacking a group of creatures, an inshalata directs its attacks against a single victim. If it can defeat this target, it picks up the body and attempts to carry it away to its lair, where it consumes the meal at its leisure. Servos tribesmen make weapons from the claws and mandibles of inshalata.

JUB JUB

DEX: 7 **STR**: 8 **TOU**: 7
PER: 6 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 11
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 8
Damage:
Tusks (6): 14

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0

Knockdown: 9

Recovery Tests: 3

Death Rating: 39 (51)
Wound Threshold: 11

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 9

Unconsciousness Rating: 31 (41)

Combat Movement: 24/38 [+] **Full Movement**: 48/76 [+]

[+] The second value is the creature's swimming Movement rate.

Powers: Battle Shout [S] (2): 8, Durability (2), Great Leap [S] (4): 11, Poison (SD 6; Paralysis 10), Swimming [S] (2): 10

Legend Points: 105

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Jub jubs are "giant frogs with fangs," as many riverboat captains describe them. The jub jub's name comes from its shockingly loud, rumbling call, which will jolt a Name-giver's bones. A large jub jub can swallow a windling in one gulp. Jub jubs hunt along the banks of the river and prefer to prey on lone individuals.

Rules

Jub jubs attack by leaping from long distances and attempting to sink their fangs, which can grow up to a foot long, into their targets' torsos. To sink its fangs into its victim, a jub jub must inflict enough damage on its target to create a Wound. If successful, the jub jub then hangs on and waits until its poison paralyses its victim. After paralyzing a victim, the jub jub attempts to swallow its prey whole.

Poison: The poison of the jub jub takes effect 3 rounds after the initial attack.

Aquatic: Jub jubs require one result level lower than normal when making Swimming Tests, usually only needing a Poor result. They can hold their breath for a number of minutes equal to their Toughness step before drowning.

JUNGLE GRIFFIN

DEX: 7 **STR**: 8 **TOU**: 8
PER: 8 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 7

Initiative: 9
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (4): 11
Damage:
Bite (7): 15
2 × Claws (5): 13

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 11
Social Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 3

Death Rating: 46 (58)
Wound Threshold: 13

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 9

Unconsciousness Rating: 39 (49)

Combat Movement: 46 [+] **Full Movement**: 92 [+]

[+] This value is also the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Durability (2), Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 10, Frighten (5): 13, Paralyzation (5): 13, Sense Danger (5): 13

Legend Points: 230

Equipment: None

Loot: Beak and feathers worth 5D6 × 10 silver pieces (count as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

The jungle griffin is one of Jaspree's most beautiful and dangerous children. Brother to the common griffin, the jungle griffin is a creature of even greater grace and beauty. Far larger than

common griffins, jungle griffins stand 6 to 7 feet tall at the shoulder, are 8 to 9 feet long, and have a wingspan of almost 15 feet. The portion of the creature that resembles an eagle carries much brighter-colored feathers than do common griffins—red, yellow, and even green are quite usual among jungle griffins. Large horns extend from either side of the jungle griffin's head.

As their name implies, jungle griffins live in or near jungles. The Servos Jungle harbors a few, but most of Barsaive's jungle griffins are found in the Liaj Jungle. Fifteen or twenty jungle griffins at a time build their nests near clearings in the dense growth, often not far from wide rivers or waterfalls. They appear to love both water and sunlight. The differences between griffins and jungle griffins go deeper than size or coloring. Of particular interest to Name-givers who have ridden common griffins is this fact: no jungle griffin will ever permit a Name-giver to sit on its back. More than one Cavalryman or Beastmaster has been killed and eaten after trying to ride a jungle griffin.

Jungle griffins also possess magical abilities that common griffins do not. These territorial creatures use their magical abilities to deal with trespassers. Jungle griffins stake out territory surrounding their nests to a distance that a Name-giver might walk in an hour, and they can magically sense any Name-givers who enter this region. Two or three griffins seek out the trespassers and frighten them off, if possible. If not, the jungle griffins use a second magical trick. The griffins can send intruders into a trance, during which they lead the trespassers beyond the borders of their territory. The trance lasts for several minutes after the subjects have departed from the griffins' land; upon awakening, trespassers have only the vaguest memory of where they were and what happened to them. Most jungle griffins prefer to deal with trespassing Name-givers in this way; they dislike fighting because it endangers their young and taints the air with the smell of blood. However, they will brutally attack any Name-givers who insist upon re-entering their territory too many times.

Rules

When forced to engage in physical combat, jungle griffins attack with their claws and occasionally their beaks. Jungle griffins usually rake the target with both forepaws and only use beaks if necessary. Though the beak is a nastier weapon, it is more difficult to use, and so a jungle griffin may make only 1 attack per round when using its beak instead of the usual 2 attacks.

Jungle griffins use their magical abilities to avoid unnecessary contact with Name-givers whenever possible. When a Name-giver enters the territory of a pride of jungle griffins, the creatures sense it and send one or two members of the pride to seek out the trespasser. The griffins announce their presence to the intruding Name-givers, most often by simply squawking and flying overhead, while using their Sense Danger power.

Frighten: If the trespassers intend to hunt, attack, or harass the griffins, the griffins attempt to scare the Name-givers away by squawking and screeching loudly, using their Frighten power. If the Frighten Test is successful in this case, the target becomes so frightened that he or she feels compelled to leave the area as soon as possible. This fear lasts until the target has left the griffins' territory. Targets affected by this fear can overcome it by making a successful Willpower Test against the Frighten Test result.

Paralyzation: If the trespassers have no negative intentions toward the griffins, the griffins fly gracefully overhead and caw at the trespassers, using their Paralyzation power. If the Paralyzation Test is successful, the target is lulled into a light trance by the beauty and grace of these creatures. The griffins then lead the awestruck trespasser out of their territory. The trespasser remains entranced for 10 minutes after he has left the griffins' territory and regains normal consciousness with only a vague recollection of what just happened.

Adventure Hook

While walking through the Servos Jungle in search of a kaer supposedly located near a waterfall along the Serpent River, the characters discover that the lands around the waterfall contain a den of jungle griffins. To reach the kaer, the characters must find a way to pass through the griffins' territory without falling victim to the creatures' magical abilities or causing them to attack.

Kraken

DEX: 14 **STR**: 20 **TOU**: 30
PER: 7 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 8

Initiative: 16
Number of Actions: 5
Attack (6): 20
Damage:
Bite (10): 30
Tentacles (1): 21

Physical Defense: 16
Spell Defense: 16
Social Defense: 15
Physical Armor: 15
Mystic Armor: 10

Death Rating: 132 (222)
Wound Threshold: 32
Unconsciousness Rating: 126 (201)

Recovery Tests: 15
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: 102[+]
Full Movement: 204[+]

[+] This value is the creature's swimming Movement rate.

Powers: Durability (15), Poison (SD15; Death), Swimming[S] (8): 28

Legend Points (5): 89,075

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

This creature, described (with intense hysteria) in a few legends and histories, is a myth. Many Name-givers have been deluded into believing that kraken exist. Astonishingly enough, the legends that describe this mythical beast are very detailed. Some legends of kraken spring from an obvious source—some people have seen large squid, a few of which can grow to lengths of 30 feet or better, and simply exaggerated their size.

Twenty years or so ago, the captain and crew of the *Denman*—a sea-going galley—claimed to have seen a kraken rolling in the water not very far away from them. They said it swam toward them and tried to grab the ship with its ten long, ropy limbs, and only the captain's skilled piloting enabled them to escape being devoured by the terrible creature. This story neglects to mention, however, that the *Denman* was trying to plunder a Theran cargo ship carrying a powerful magician, which might have created the illusion of a kraken to scare off the pirate vessel.

An account from the coastal town of Myrapor, dated some eight centuries ago, speaks of a terrible battle between two kraken not far from Myrapor's harbor. Those who witnessed the battle through a spyglass saw two huge, snakelike creatures writhing in the water, wrapping their great tentacles around each other and inflicting terrible wounds.

Rules

Despite the lack of clear evidence, kraken do exist. These rare, colossal squid lurk at the bottom of the ocean waiting to prey on ships and large sea creatures. When attacking its prey, a kraken grasps it and holds tight with its huge, sucker-lined tentacles. In each combat round, a kraken can attack with up to five of its tentacles. To grab a creature, the kraken must make a successful Attack Test against the target's Physical Defense; to grab a ship, the kraken must make a successful Attack Test against the ship's Maneuverability Rating (see the **Airships and Riverboats** chapter, p.146). Each grasping tentacle does massive damage to the target, enough to completely destroy even the strongest ship if the kraken successfully grabs with the maximum five tentacles. Once the kraken grabs its victim, it can attack with its massive beak. The beak is made of a strong, bonelike substance and is the only hard part of the entire creature.

Poison Cloud: The kraken exudes a potent black venom, which it uses as both a defense and an attack. Any creatures or characters that inhale or are touched by the cloud may be affected by the poison. To squirt its venom, the kraken must make a Strength Test. The result determines the number of yards affected by the poison, radiating out from the creature.

Aquatic: Kraken require one result level lower than normal when making Swimming Tests (usually only needing a Poor result).

Adventure Hook

A mercantile trading company that recently lost three ships hires the characters to defend the merchant vessels against the pirates they believe are responsible. Unfortunately, the ships were destroyed and the crew eaten by a kraken ... and the same fate awaits the fourth ship unless the characters and crew together can defeat the terrible sea monster.

KRILLRA

DEX: 11 **STR**: 14 **TOU**: 12
PER: 8 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 7

Initiative: 12
Number of Actions: 4
Attack (4): 15
Damage:
Bite: (3): 17
Tentacles (1): 15

Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 8
(tentacles 6)
Mystic Armor: 3

Death Rating: 59 (71)
Wound Threshold: 17
Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: Immune
Unconsciousness Rating: 52 (62)

Combat Movement: 82[+] **Full Movement**: 164[+]

[+] This value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Durability (2), Low-Light Vision

Legend Points (2): 940

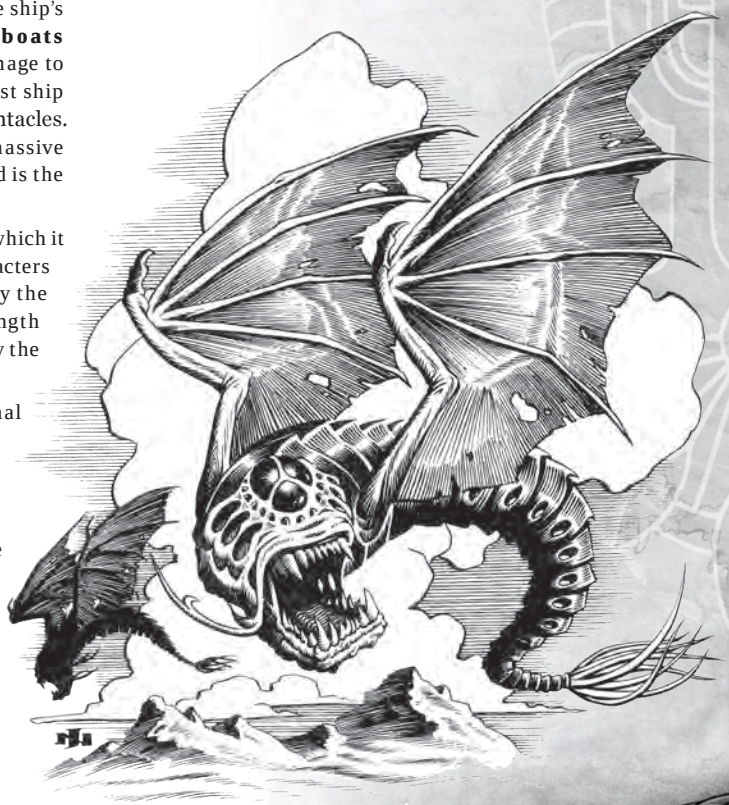
Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The female krilworm, or krillra, shares certain features with the male (see **Krilworm**, p.318), but in many ways looks quite different. The krilworm, at its largest, measures no longer than a human's hand and foot placed end to end. The krillra, however, often stretches 15 or more feet. The krillra also has a single, triple-faceted eye. The female's mouth is proportionately smaller than the krilworm's, but on a 15 foot long insect, even a small mouth is large enough to tear off a human-or dwarf-sized limb in one bite. Both the krillra and krilworm have black, bat-like wings, though the krillra's span 25 feet or better. Like the krilworm's, the krillra's tail is tipped with four squiggling tentacles. The krillra also shares the krilworm's preference for underground holes and swampy ground.

Krillra spend their lives flying over land, rarely touching the ground. They eat birds and other flying things, including an occasional airship crew. In complete and deadly silence, the krillra approaches its prey from the direction of the sun so that its quarry



cannot see it until it is too late. Once in striking range, the krillra snaps its tail forward and grabs its victim in its loathsome tentacles. Only the largest and strongest creatures can avoid being crushed into a bloody pulp in the krillra's cruel grip—and if it cannot kill by crushing, the krillra simply bites its victim's head in two. Having killed its meal, the krillra holds the corpse in one or two tentacles and uses the remaining ones to tear off succulent bits of mashed, dripping flesh.

To see krillras and krilworms mate is to witness a scene of violence rarely seen in other of Nature's creatures. Once a year, krilworms gather together in enormous swarms and take flight across the countryside, devouring anything that gets in their way. They feed on as many creatures as possible in order to strengthen themselves for their ordeal; the mating ritual will kill the swarm's weakest members. When a single female krillra drops down from the sky, the krilworms swarm over her in a violent rush to impregnate her. Not only do the krilworms often kill each other in this frenzy, but the krillra herself kills any krilworm she can reach with her mouth and tentacles. Only the strongest and luckiest krilworms will manage to climb past the krillra's thrashing tail and leave their seed within her.

Once all the krilworms have either mated or died, the krillra flies to the nearest body of water and skims across its surface, depositing her eggs by the thousands. Three months later, the infant krilworms hatch and immediately fly away in a frantic search for food. Both the males and females of this species have a strange affinity for Nethermancers.

Rules

Though krillra have plenty of sharp teeth, they never bite a target until they first have it firmly grasped in their tentacles.

Affinity for Nethermancers: Krillra have a peculiar affinity for Nethermancers, and Nethermancers in turn often harbor a soft spot for these loathsome creatures. This unusual affinity allows Nethermancers to add a +2 bonus to any Interaction Tests they make against a krillra's Social Defense.

Tentacles: When attacking a target, a krillra makes an Attack Test for each of its four tentacles. If two or more of these tests are successful, the krillra has a firm hold on its victim. During each subsequent combat round, the krillra's grip does damage to the victim automatically until he or she stops struggling. To break the grip of a krillra, the hapless victim must make a successful Strength Test against the creature's Strength step. (Prudent victims will consider their altitude and come up with a method of slowing their descent before trying to escape the krillra's grasp.) Trapped characters may also escape the grip of the krillra by hacking through its tentacles. Each tentacle can take 17 points of damage and should be treated as having Physical Armor of 6.

Adventure Hook

A scholar who believes that krillras are intelligent hires the characters to fly an airship into known krillra feeding grounds and attempt to talk to the creatures. Unfortunately for the characters, the scholar is wrong. The krillra are not intelligent—simply dangerous and very, very hungry.

Krilworm

DEX: 5 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 5
PER: 6 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 6 **Physical Defense**: 7
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 7
Attack (1): 6 **Social Defense**: 7
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 0
Bite (1): 6 **Mystic Armor**: 2

Death Rating: 31 **Recovery Tests**: 2
Wound Threshold: 8 **Knockdown**: 5
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Combat Movement: 30[+] **Full Movement**: 60[+]

[+] This value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Locate Target (2): 8

Legend Points: 45

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Krilworms are nocturnal flyers, traveling in swarms ranging from 8 to 80 members and feeding off of large insects and small mammals. Their needle-like teeth drip a foul-smelling substance that many believe to be toxic. They have segmented bodies about 18 inches long, with bat-like wings sprouting near the front. Eyeless, they "see" through divination magic organs that look like six open, running sores. Both the males and females (see **Krillra**, p. 317) of this species have a strange affinity for Nethermancers.

Rules

On occasion, swarms of krilworms attack large animals and humanoids, but a determined character can easily drive off these swarms. For each krilworm killed fighting a larger opponent, the swarm makes a Willpower (4) Test. If the test is successful, the swarm continues its attack on the target, otherwise the swarm leaves to find easier pickings.

Affinity for Nethermancers: Krilworms have a peculiar affinity for Nethermancers, and Nethermancers in turn often harbor a soft spot for these loathsome creatures. This unusual affinity allows Nethermancers to add a +2 bonus to any Interaction Tests they make against a krilworm's Social Defense.

Locate Target: This ability replaces a krilworm's normal sight, but also works on invisible or hidden targets. The powerful divination organs can (so far) only be used by krilworms, and are worthless on the open market.

K'sathra

DEX: 10 **STR**: 4 **TOU**: 9
PER: 6 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 10 **Physical Defense**: 13
Number of Actions: 1 (see text) **Spell Defense**: 7
Attack (3): 13 **Social Defense**: 6
Damage: (see text) **Physical Armor**: 0
One Target (10): 14 **Mystic Armor**: 0
Two Targets (7): 11
Three Targets (4): 8

Death Rating: NA **Recovery Tests**: 4
Wound Threshold: Immune **Knockdown**: Immune
Unconsciousness Rating: 47

Combat Movement: 55[+] **Full Movement**: 110[+]

[+] This value is the creature's swimming Movement rate.

Legend Points: 425

Equipment: None

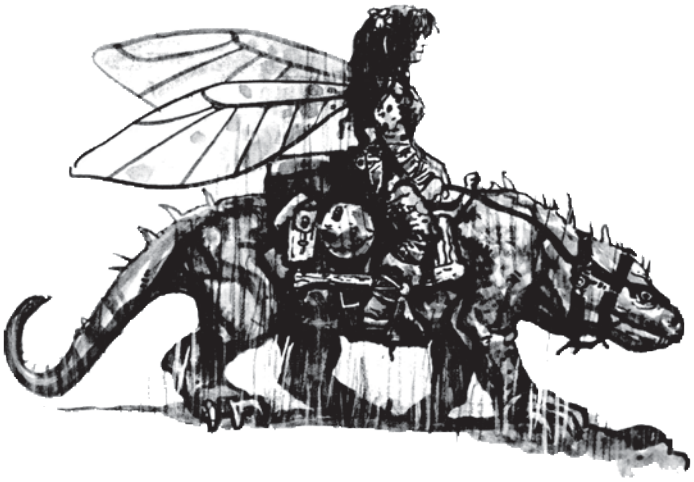
Loot: None

Commentary

Small carnivorous fish, a school of k'sathra can strip a full-sized herd animal down to the bone in a matter of minutes. K'sathra are one of the worst menaces in the Mist Swamps, and their numbers have exploded during the past twenty years.

Rules

The game statistics above represent a school of 30 or so k'sathra, which would occupy an area of roughly 15 cubic feet in the water. A single school makes 1, 2 or 3 attacks per round,



depending on the number of victims within its range. Each victim within the school's range receives the same number of attacks. If a character attacks a k'sathra school, do not attempt to resolve damage to each fish. A k'sathra school automatically disperses when it takes damage equal to its Unconsciousness Rating.

KUE

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

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 8
Damage:
Claws (3): 7
Tail (3): 7

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 28

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 5

Combat Movement: 40 **Full Movement**: 80

Powers: Climbing[S] (2): 8, Great Leap[S] (2): 8, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk[S] (2): 8

Legend Points: 60

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The kue resembles a cross between a lizard and a cat, with a reptilian body and feline mannerisms and facial features. Like cats, kue possess excellent night vision, and sometimes serve windling communities as watch animals. A kue has long, slender legs rather than the short squat legs typical of most lizards. They are about 2 feet tall at the shoulder, 3 to 4 feet long, and have horns on their heads and tails.

Kues are native to jungles and forests, and make ideal mounts for the windling Cavalrymen and Warriors who protect windling communities and villages. Kues are generally sold only in larger cities and those towns located near jungles.

LEECH RAT

DEX: 5 **STR**: 3 **TOU**: 3
PER: 5 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 5
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 6
Damage:
Bite (2): 5
Claws (1): 4

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 23
Wound Threshold: 5
Unconsciousness Rating: 14

Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 4

Combat Movement: 30 **Full Movement**: 60

Powers: Climbing[S] (3): 8, Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 7, Enraging Scent (8): 12, Paralyzation (8): 12

Legend Points: 85

Equipment: None

Loot: Scent glands worth 200 silver pieces each (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

The leech rat looks like an ordinary rat, except that it moves on six legs and balances with a short tail. Most have brown fur, but black and white ones are known to exist. The leech rat has wickedly long claws for its size, perfect for climbing, and a somewhat larger mouth than one might expect of a rodent. At the base of its tail lie two scent glands, which it uses to control larger animals so that they may kill its meat for the rat.

The first gland produces a soothing scent that pacifies the creature chosen by the leech rat as its mount; often, the mount enters a sleep like state under this odor's influence. The leech rat then climbs on the somnolent creature's back, sits on its shoulder, and grips firmly with its claws. Small glands just above each of the claws produce a mild painkiller so that the host creature does not feel its rider and attempt to throw off the rat. The second scent gland sends the leech rat's mount into a frenzy, during which it tries to kill anything in its path (and usually succeeds). When a creature is under the influence of this scent, killing it is often the only way to stop it. Once the berserk mount has slain every potential predator in sight (or they have all sensibly fled), the leech rat once more exudes the soothing scent to calm the mount. Then it carefully climbs down and feasts on the carcasses of the slain.

To ensure an ample food supply—and also to protect themselves from predators with a taste for rats—the leech rat chooses its mount for strength and ferocity. If a mounted leech rat encounters a creature stronger than the one it is riding, it sprays its soothing scent in the air in hopes of ensnaring the other creature and changing mounts. It does not confine itself to dumb beasts, either; there are many tales of powerful Warriors acquiring a leech rat before battling some fierce creature.

Many magicians and alchemists who have recently rediscovered old magical texts and learned the value of the leech rat's glands will pay a high price for those sacs of scent, as will the few healers who know of the creature's existence. Getting the glands, of course, is a risky proposition. The leech rat may be riding anything from a lion to a brithan to a chimera, and so the bold (or greedy) adventurer in search of one must defend against all the powers of the leech rat's host creature. When

removing the glands from a dead rat, a character must handle them with great care, otherwise the glands will burst and spray their contents all over the place, paralyzing those nearby or driving them into a killing madness.

Rules

By itself, a leech rat is almost no threat in combat. Its tiny bite and claws only do little damage. A leech rat on a mount, however, is a different story. The leech rat hides on its mount's upper neck and is extremely difficult to see and to hit. To successfully hit a mounted leech rat requires a Called Shot (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 404 of the **Player's Compendium**).

In most cases, it is easier to deal with the mount first and the leech rat later. The leech rat's Enraging Scent and Paralyzation powers are much more formidable than its weak physical defenses, and the leech rat uses them to great effect.

Adventure Hook

For the past few weeks, a wyvern has rampaged through the area where the characters are staying. Hired to track and kill the wyvern, the characters discover that the beast is being driven mad by the leech rat perched on its back. They must not only kill the enraged wyvern, but avoid becoming the leech rat's next chosen mounts.

Leopard

DEX: 6 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 4
PER: 3 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (3): 9
Damage:
Claws (3): 8

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 30
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 21

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6

Combat Movement: 38 **Full Movement**: 76

Powers: Climbing S (2): 8, Great Leap S (2): 8, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk S (2): 8

Legend Points: 40

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Leopards have yellowish-brown fur, covered with black spots and striations. They are most likely to be encountered in the plains near Barsaive's forests, although the snow leopard having white fur with black spots and striations can be encountered in the mountains.

Lightning Lizard

DEX: 6 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 5
PER: 9 **WIL**: 12 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (3): 9
Damage:
Claws (3): 8

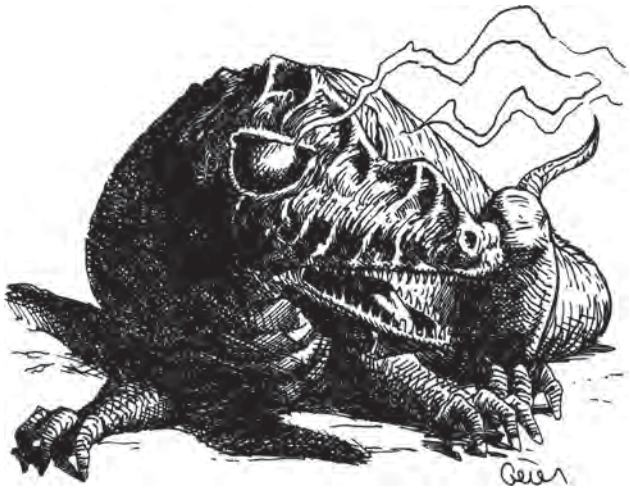
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 11
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 3 (6; see text)
Mystic Armor: 8

Death Rating: 34
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 26

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6

Combat Movement: 36 **Full Movement**: 72

Powers: Climbing S (3): 9, Crackling Armor (3): 15, Lightning (2): 14 (see text), Spellcasting (3): 12



Legend Points: 190

Equipment: None

Loot: Eyes worth 150 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Traveling in prides of three to thirteen individuals, lightning lizards are 4-foot long with 3-foot-long tails and weigh roughly 200 pounds. When dry, their yellow-and-green skin glistens as though oiled. Lizards bloated from feeding within the past 48 hours (during which time they eat over one-third of their body weight), are usually docile unless provoked. Hungry lizards, by contrast, show remarkable aggression.

Rules

Utilizing electricity for defense, lightning lizards also pack a powerful electrical attack.

Twinbolts: The lightning that a lizard produces comes from its eyes as two bolts, directed against a single target within 120 yards. If the lizard's Spellcasting Test succeeds, it makes two separate Lightning Tests to determine how much damage is inflicted on the target. Non-metal Physical Armor protects against this damage. This power can be used only once each round.

Lion

DEX: 4 **STR**: 7 **TOU**: 5
PER: 3 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 4
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (3): 7
Damage:
Bite (5): 12

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 34
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 26

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 8

Combat Movement: 28 **Full Movement**: 56

Powers: Battle Shout S (Roar) (3): 6, Climbing S (2): 6, Great Leap S (2): 6, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk S (2): 6

Legend Points: 60

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The lion is a ferocious carnivore, with a yellow-brown coat, loud roar, and a devastating bite. The males have a long, thick mane, whereas females do not. These animals live in the plains of Barsaive, but the same statistics can be used for mountain lions, which live in mountains and foothills.

LIZARD

DEX: 4 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 5
PER: 4 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 4
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 5
Damage:
Claws (1): 6

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6

Combat Movement: 24 **Full Movement**: 48

Powers: Climbing^{S} (2): 6

Legend Points: 35

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Small lizards are sometimes kept as pets by Name-givers of all races. These creatures are found in almost every corner of Barsaive.

MAGMA BEAST

DEX: 8 **STR**: 18 **TOU**: 11
PER: 5 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (5): 13
Damage:
Bite (2): 20
2 × Claws (1): 19

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 6

Death Rating: 58
Wound Threshold: 17
Unconsciousness Rating: 51

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 18

Combat Movement: 34 **Full Movement**: 68

Powers: Burning Aura (20): 20, Magma Spurt (2): 10

Legend Points (3): 3,345

Equipment: None

Loot: Elemental fire hoard worth 3,000 silver pieces, hidden in lava tubes where magma beasts live (counts as treasure worth Legend Points); blood worth a price of the gamemaster's choice, highly prized by magicians for creating fire-based magical items and spells (also counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Among the many hazards that face those who mine elemental fire from the Death's Sea is the magma beast, a truly fearsome predator that many folk believe is a Horror. Almost twice as tall as an obsidiman, the magma beast is a dreadful combination of human and lizard. Red-brown scales cover its body, and its toes and fingers end in wicked claws. Its head is covered in tentacles that writhe and hiss like fiery, venomous snakes.

The magma beast lives in the runnels throughout the flowing lava of the Death's Sea, leaving the lava only to hunt. Their red color makes magma beasts almost impossible to distinguish from the molten ocean, a camouflage that allows them to easily stalk their favorite meal—elemental fire miners. Once a magma beast spots an airship heading toward a floating island, it summons several of its fellows to gather around the island with only their heads showing above the surface. Then the whole pack of them waits, hidden by the lava flow, until the miners' shipmates lower them toward the glowing surface on ropes specially made to be impervious to fire. As soon as the miners have dropped low enough to gather the fire, the magma beasts spring onto the island (to gain sure footing for attack) and slay the luckless victims. Inevitably, some of the crewmen lose their footing and plunge toward the island below, where the waiting magma beasts gobble them up. This method of hunting proves that magma beasts have an uncanny intelligence. Most creatures would simply eat the prey already on the ground, rather than employing any stratagem to get more.

There is a tale of a mining crew that managed to trick magma beasts. Instead of lowering miners on fireproof ropes, they lowered cloth dummies on ropes made of ordinary flax. When the magma beasts tried to grab the ropes, they burned right through them and the ship lifted off safely.

In addition to fire miners, magma beasts also eat salamanders, firebirds, lava fish, and other creatures who live in or near the Death's Sea. They enjoy company and often travel in large groups. The magma beast possesses the curious ability to make a volcano erupt at will.

Rules

One of the most terrifying opponents the characters can run into in the Death's Sea, magma beasts give off tremendous heat with their Burning Aura power. In close combat, the magma beast strikes at its opponent with its powerful claws, and can also deliver a devastating bite.

Burning Aura: Unless somehow fireproofed, non-magical metal and wooden weapons are useless against a magma beast; any blow a character lands against the creature automatically destroys the weapon. Metal swords and daggers simply melt, and wooden shafts burst into flame.

Magma Spurt: Though magma beasts cannot actually cause volcanoes to erupt, they can cause molten lava to spurt once per day. To use this ability, the magma beast makes a Magma Spurt Test against the target's Spell Defense, or against the vessel's Maneuverability Rating if used against a ship. If this test succeeds, the lava spurt hits the target, inflicting Step 50/2D20+3D10+2D8

damage for 5 consecutive rounds. Physical Armor protects against this damage. Any character or creature unlucky enough to survive such a lava barrage will be hideously disfigured and most likely lose a limb or two.

Adventure Hook

A scholar who believes that magma beasts are intelligent creatures decides to gather definitive information on magma-beast society. She charters passage aboard a fire-mining airship and hires the characters to protect her from the dangerous creatures of the Death's Sea (and from her rough-and-tumble crewmates).

MANGROVE EELS

DEX: 8 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 8
PER: 4 **WIL**: 2 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 8
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 10
Damage:
Tentacle (4): 10

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 12
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 43
Wound Threshold: 12
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: NA

Combat Movement: 6 **Full Movement**: 12

Legend Points: 125

Equipment: None

Loot: Occasionally loot from previous victims can be retrieved.

Commentary

So-called mangrove eels are actually the roots of certain mangrove trees that grow in the Servos Jungle. These highly evolved roots possess heat-sensing organs that enable them to sense creatures (or Name-givers) passing nearby. The t'skrang tribes of the Servos Jungle believe that mangrove eels are guardian spirits of elemental wood and regularly make offerings of fruit and fish to the roots to share in the spirits' protection.

Rules

The movement of a group of mangrove eels is limited to a 12 yard radius surrounding the group's parent tree. Once a group of roots senses prey, the roots use their powerful pinion jaws and saw-blade teeth to pull their victim under the surface of the water and into the center of the tree's underwater root system. There, the victim's decaying body provides nutrients to the growing tree.

MANTICORE

DEX: 9 **STR**: 13 **TOU**: 10
PER: 11 **WIL**: 9 **CHA**: 7

Initiative: 9
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (3): 12
Damage:
Claws (3): 16
Tail (7): 20
Wings (2): 15

Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 14
Social Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 5

Death Rating: 52 (64)
Wound Threshold: 15
Unconsciousness Rating: 45 (55)

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 14

Combat Movement: 61+ **Full Movement**: 122+

+ This value is also the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Durability (2), Spellcasting (2): 13

Spells: Choose up to 4 spells requiring 0 threads from any type of magic (Elementalism, Illusionism, Nethermancy or Wizardry)

Legend Points: 385 + Spells

Equipment: None

Loot: Spiked tail worth 5D6 × 10 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Long ago, before the Scourge, these terrible creatures were truly noble beings, intelligent and honorable, able to discuss Art and Nature and other such subjects with ease. As with so many living things in Barsaive, however, the noble manticores were corrupted by the Horrors almost beyond recognition. Those Horrors

killed most of the manticores, allowing only those driven mad by their attacks to live. These poor, mad manticores bred and carried on the species throughout the Scourge, passing on their madness to their offspring. Why the Horrors devastated the manticores with such particular ferocity is unknown.

The manticores of this time look the same as their ancestors did—they resemble huge lions with bat-like wings and humanlike faces. Their tails end in spiked balls, which they use to dreadful effect in combat. Most manticores nowadays are dull yellow in color; few of the black, brown, and white manticores remain.

Before the Scourge, manticores only hunted to eat. Those who live in Barsaive these days, however, attack at random. They fly back and forth around their enemy, raking him with their long claws and striking hard with their spiked tails until blood seems to rain down on them. When fighting at close quarters or on the ground, they use their claws to disembowel their foe; if that tactic fails, they knock the enemy to the ground with their spiked tails. If a manticore swings its entire body from side to side, it can hit an opponent standing directly in front of it with its lethal tail. It can even knock over its enemy with its great wings, either by striking with the wings themselves or by creating huge gusts of air that send the foe sprawling backward.

Manticores also cast spells, using their human-like mouths to speak the necessary words as easily as any Name-giver. Some folk find this spellcasting ability terrifying, for good reason.

Rules

The manticore usually attacks with its claws, its tail and with its wings. All manticores can cast spells from any of the four spellcasting Disciplines. The exact spells are up to the gamemaster, with the following limitations—most manticores can only cast three or four spells, and they cannot cast any spells that require threads.

Knockout: Any character struck by a manticore's spiked tail ball must make a successful Toughness Test against the tail's Damage Test result. If the test fails, the blow knocks the affected character unconscious for 4 rounds. The manticore then attempts to kill its unconscious foe with repeated blows from its tail.

Adventure Hook

A town where the characters are staying suffers several magical attacks by a large lion-like creature. A local magician suspects a manticore is behind the attacks and convinces the town to hire the characters to find the mysterious beast. The magician asks the characters not to kill the creature because he hopes to discover the secrets of the manticore's spellcasting ability.

MASTRYLITH

DEX: 5 **STR**: 13 **TOU**: 13
PER: 5 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 4
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (3): 8
Damage:
Charge (8): 21
Trample (2): 15
Tusks (4): 17

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 64 (100)
Wound Threshold: 19
Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 14
Unconsciousness Rating: 57 (87)

Combat Movement: 32
Full Movement: 64

Powers: Charge (4), Durability (6), Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 7

Legend Points: 360

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

A mastrylith is a huge war elephant weighing about 15 tons. Although these animals are native to the province of Indrisa, they can be found throughout the Theran Empire, including the province of Barsaive.

MESSENGER BAT

DEX: 8 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 6
PER: 8 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 9
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 9
Damage:
Bite (1): 6

Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 35 **Recovery Tests**: 2
Wound Threshold: 9 **Knockdown**: 5
Unconsciousness Rating: 27

Combat Movement: 30/64[+] **Full Movement**: 60/128[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 10, Locate Target (15): 23, Silent Walk[S] (1): 9

Legend Points: 130

Equipment: None

Loot: Direction-sensing organs, worth 200 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Messenger bats are slightly larger than windlings, with monkey-like faces and long fingers at the ends of their wings. They are usually brown, gray or black and are found primarily in Cara Fahd's jungles, where native orks have tamed and trained them for years. The bats eat insects, small mice and lizards, and do not attack Name-giver-sized creatures. When attacked, they invariably fly away unless cornered, in which case they flap their wings in the attacker's face to distract him, and bite only until there is room to flee.

Rules

The bats can navigate locations perfectly, using magical direction-sensing organs in their heads, memory of the sun and scent cues in order to fly to any given location. If a messenger bat is ordered to fly to any place that it has previously been, even as an infant, the bat will be able to get there. For this reason, the orks of Cara Fahd use messenger bats to deliver message stones and papers between towns. Getting them to understand an order, however, requires a Beastmaster. Critical information is not usually sent via messenger bat: they are slow-witted, easily distracted and can be intercepted by anyone who feeds the bat.

Molgrim

DEX: 9 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 9
PER: 4 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 9 **Physical Defense**: 12
Number of Actions: 2 **Spell Defense**: 9
Attack (2): 11 **Social Defense**: 10
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 8
Bite (4): 14 **Mystic Armor**: 4
2 × Claws (2): 12

Death Rating: 48 (60) **Recovery Tests**: 4
Wound Threshold: 14 **Knockdown**: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 41 (51)

Combat Movement: 64 **Full Movement**: 128

Powers: Climbing[S] (3): 12, Durability (2), Great Leap[S] (3): 12

Legend Points: 205

Equipment: None

Loot: Occasional valuables dropped by its prey, at the gamemaster's discretion.

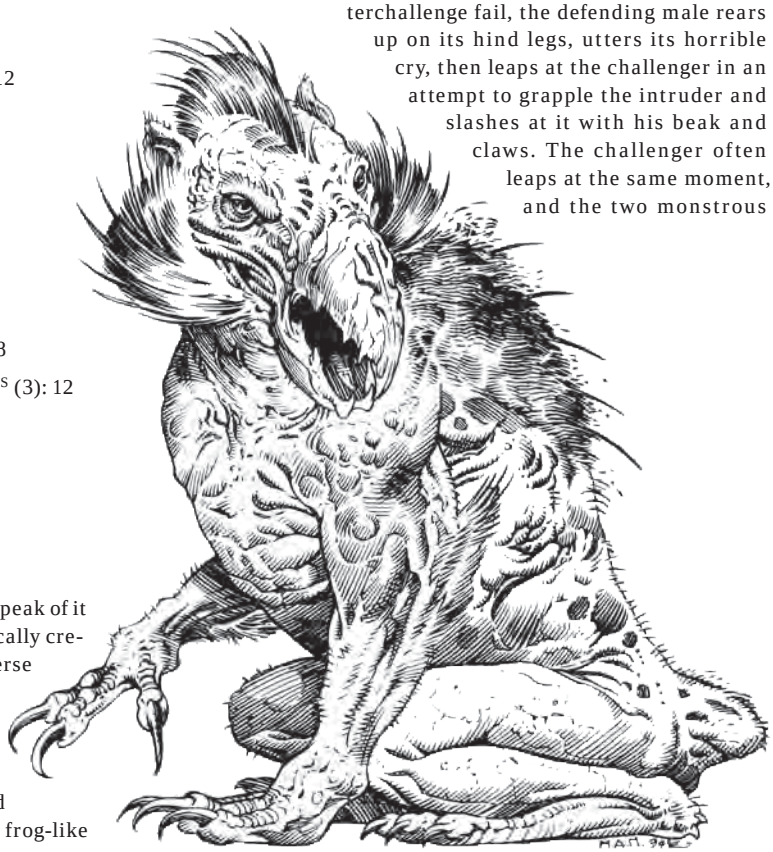
Commentary

Most folk who have seen the molgrim and lived to speak of it assume it is not a natural beast, but yet another magically created abomination. They cannot imagine that the Universe actually gave birth to something so hideous—and the molgrim is certainly hideous, combining bits and pieces of many different creatures into a truly sickening whole. Moderately sized, the thing is about as tall as a large bear, but much broader, with a deep and powerful chest. Its back slopes like a toad's, and it has frog-like hind legs with which it can make prodigious leaps. Its forelegs, though smaller, are as strong as a human's arms, and the three fingers on its broad hands are tipped with claws as long and broad as a human's forefinger.

Even though it looks like a large and ugly frog, the molgrim is not an amphibian. Its hide is not moist like a frog's, but dry and tough like imperfectly cured leather. Short, thick, oily fur grows from its mottled skin, light-colored on the back and darker on the belly. Most molgrims are gray or light tan around the spine, dark brown or black underneath. A molgrim's head is too large for its body, and the shape of its skull is unusual. Most of the head looks bear-like, but the molgrim has a large beak in place of a snout. Wickedly hooked and sharp as a dragon's claws, this beak is perfect for tearing flesh.

The molgrim is a carnivore, most often found in the foothills of the rugged mountain ranges ringing the region Named the Wastes (though any stretch of rough, broken ground will do). It eats bears and mountain sheep most often, as well as anything else that wanders into the gaze of its small, red-rimmed eyes. Lacking the patience and intelligence to ambush its food, the molgrim prefers to chase down its prey. The creature can leap up to 35 feet forward and almost half that distance upward, and it can run faster than a galloping horse for minutes at a time. Molgrims often capture their prey with one terrifying leap, landing on a victim's back and brutally snapping the spine in half. If a molgrim must give chase to capture its meal, it invariably captures it. Once the creature has the scent of its prey and sets off in pursuit with an ugly, barking cry, only death will end the hunt.

Molgrims are constantly hungry, and during the day they are always either feeding or seeking food. More territorial than griffins or even wyverns, molgrims hunt alone; one of the few things that can distract a molgrim from the chase is the arrival of another molgrim in its hunting grounds. Unless the interloper is a female seeking a mate (or a male intruding on a female's hunting grounds), the two molgrims will fight to the death. Many such challenges kill both combatants; one gets torn to shreds, and the other dies soon afterward from its wounds. The defending male first attempts to charge the challenging male and drive the challenger from his territory. Should this counterchallenge fail, the defending male rears up on its hind legs, utters its horrible cry, then leaps at the challenger in an attempt to grapple the intruder and slashes at it with his beak and claws. The challenger often leaps at the same moment, and the two monstrous



figures clash in midair, falling to the ground already tearing and clawing at each other. If one manages to break free, they repeat this behavior until one loses enough blood to fall unconscious and die at the beak of the other.

The female molgrim always seeks her mate rather than waiting for a male to seek her out, testing each male she encounters by entering his territory and challenging him. Only if the male survives this vicious challenge does the mating proceed. Because the male is smaller and weaker than the female, only the strongest males battle their would-be mate to a draw and earn the right to pass on their fitness to survive to a new generation. After mating, the male departs, never to return to that female except by chance. Within six months, the female gives birth to two or three cubs and protects them until they are weaned, a year later. After that, the young molgrims must fend for themselves.

Rules

A molgrim's preferred method of attack is to leap onto its prey, biting with its beak while tearing its victim's flesh with its forelimbs. If the creature cannot use its favorite attack, it will rear up on its hind legs to bring its forelimbs and beak into play. The creature can also deliver a punishing kick to a target behind it, but this uses all of the molgrim's attacks that round.

Adventure Hook

While in the city of Jerris, the characters hear of a nearby town under attack by molgrims. Upon arriving in the town as its protectors, they learn that the local folk recently expanded their farmlands into a hunting ground contested by two huge molgrims, which killed several of the farmers. Not long after the characters arrive, a female molgrim seeking a mate enters the same territory and proceeds to challenge the males. All three molgrims are shoring up their strength by snacking on the local farmers, and may add the characters to the menu as well unless the characters can defeat them.

Monkey

DEX: 7 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 4
PER: 5 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 7 **Physical Defense**: 11
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 7
Attack (1): 8 **Social Defense**: 4
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 0
Bite (5): 10 **Mystic Armor**: 0

Death Rating: 30 **Recovery Tests**: 2
Wound Threshold: 7 **Knockdown**: 5
Unconsciousness Rating: 21

Combat Movement: 34/38[+] **Full Movement**: 68/76[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's climbing Movement rate.

Powers: Climbing[S] (2): 9, Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 7, Great Leap[S] (2): 9

Legend Points: 45

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Monkeys are small arboreal primates who live in the forests and jungles of Barsaive. Many different species exist: lemurs, tarsiers, and marmosets. These animals live in small tribes and are usually peaceful in nature.

Naga

DEX: 6 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 6
PER: 6 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 10

Initiative: 8 **Physical Defense**: 7
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 10
Attack (2): 8 **Social Defense**: 13
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 5
Bite (1): 6 **Mystic Armor**: 3

Death Rating: 35 **Recovery Tests**: 2
Wound Threshold: 9 **Knockdown**: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 27

Combat Movement: 26 **Full Movement**: 52

Powers: Camouflage (3): 9, Climbing[S] (2): 8, Entrancement (2): 12, Silent Walk[S] (2): 8

Legend Points: 85

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

A naga has the body of a snake and the head of a human. The body is roughly the size of a rock python or a sea snake. Coin-sized scales cover it, their color changing to suit the place where the naga lies. As nagas live everywhere, from mountain peaks to misty swamps, differences in color can be huge. Most nagas, however, prefer bare earth and so are dusty brown in color.

A naga's head is always that of a woman in the prime of her life, beautiful in face but as bald as a dragon's egg. Her eyes are silver-colored, and fine scales cover her skin. Many males of the Name-giver races find nagas' faces irresistible. Even their two-inch canine teeth, which most males would surely find distasteful, don't seem to detract from the nagas' beauty.

Nagas possess an innate magical ability to enthrall any male with a single glance, save for those possessing the strongest will. The victim of this power forgets that the object of his obsession is a bizarre blend of human and snake. Used in combination with the naga's second power, which allows it to change the color of its scales to blend with its surroundings, the naga's magic makes it a formidable foe.

A camouflaged naga stealthily approaches its prospective victim, then reveals itself and entrances him in order to lead him to a secluded spot. Once it gets its victim alone, it compels him to lie down so that it can feed on his lifeblood. However (and very luckily for the victim), the naga has intelligence enough to have

developed a conscience. Many nagas no longer kill other intelligent beings, preferring to kill and eat tree monkeys. Therefore, most of them now use their entrancing power simply to lead men away from their homes.

It is likely that Therans in the pay of Overgovernor Pavelis created the naga. Shortly after the end of the Scourge, when the Therans began to think of returning to Barsaive, they realized that they might face resistance to their rule. Just in case anyone in Barsaive had managed to raise an army to oppose Thera, Pavelis ordered certain mages to create the naga as a secret tool of assassination. When released into Barsaive, the nagas were to entrance and devour all the able males in the province's fighting force, making any ensuing battle an easy victory for the Therans.

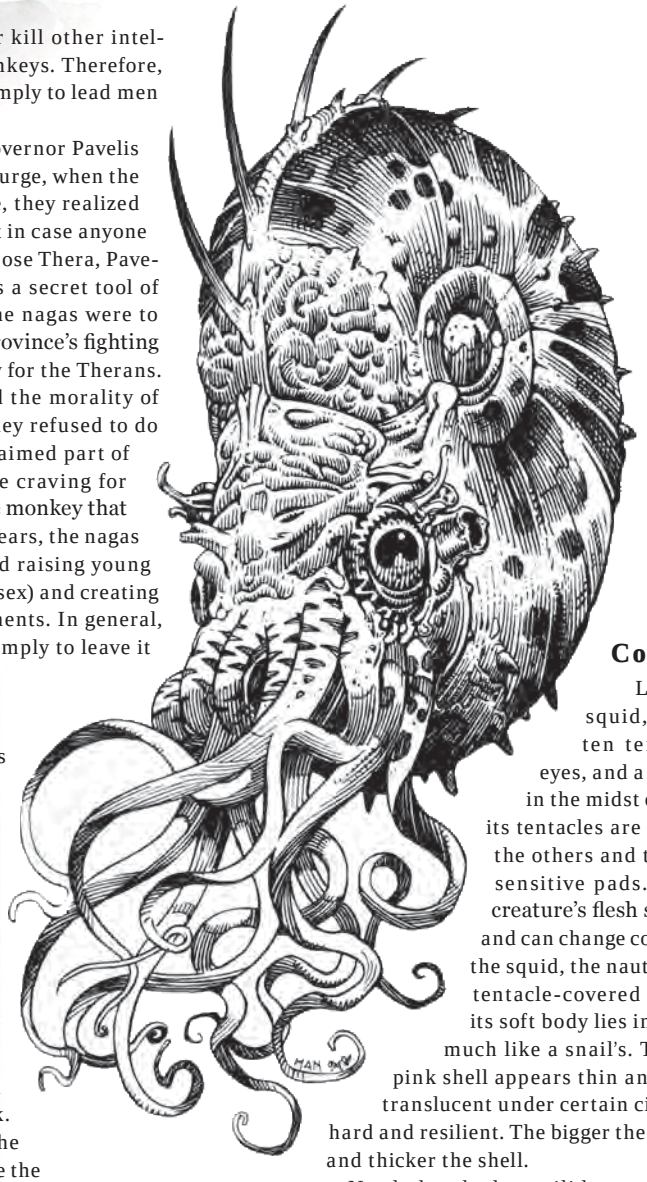
Unluckily for Pavelis, the nagas questioned the morality of such an action. When released into Barsaive, they refused to do what the Therans wanted. Instead, the nagas claimed part of Barsaive as their own and quieted their innate craving for Name-giver flesh by eating a certain kind of tree monkey that seemed to satisfy them. For the past sixty or so years, the nagas have lived more or less peacefully, breeding and raising young (how is unknown, as they all appear to be of one sex) and creating homes that might almost be called naga settlements. In general, the best way to avoid being slain by a naga is simply to leave it alone—or to be sharp-eyed and female.

Rules

Nagas rarely attack victims. One of the naga's most effective magical powers enables it to blend perfectly with its surroundings. The naga can also entrance males of any Name-giver race, using its Entrancement power.

Adventure Hook

While traveling with a caravan, the characters enter a region of Barsaive that the nagas have claimed for their own. Mistakenly believing that the caravaneers plan to attack them, the nagas are killing them one by one, using their entrancement powers to draw off stragglers and dispatch them in private with a bite to the neck. When the characters notice that members of the caravan are starting to disappear, they investigate the situation and must then deal with the nagas.



NAUTILID

DEX: 6 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 10
PER: 4 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 8
Damage:
Beak (2): 14
Tentacles (1): 13

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor:
Shell: 10
Tentacles: 2
Mystic Armor: 3

Death Rating: 51
Wound Threshold: 15
Unconsciousness Rating: 44

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: 34+
Full Movement: 68+

+ This value is the creature's swimming Movement rate (see text for special rules relating to the nautilid's movement).

Powers: Swimming[S] (2): 14

Legend Points: 180

Equipment: None

Loot: Shell worth 3,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Like its kin the squid, the nautilid has ten tentacles, bulbous eyes, and a hard beak nestled in the midst of its limbs. Two of its tentacles are much longer than the others and tipped with broad, sensitive pads. When alive, the creature's flesh seems to shimmer and can change color rapidly. Unlike the squid, the nautilid shows only its tentacle-covered head. The rest of its soft body lies inside a spiral shell, much like a snail's. Though this pearl-pink shell appears thin and delicate, almost translucent under certain circumstances, it is hard and resilient. The bigger the nautilid, the older and thicker the shell.

Newly hatched nautilids are shell-less, resembling tiny squids no larger than the smallest joint of a human's little finger. They quickly secrete the substance with which they form their first shell, a spiral little larger than themselves. As they grow, they add new chambers to the shell, into which their bodies expand. An average adult nautilid's shell measures perhaps 2 feet across the spiral, and its longest tentacles trail almost 3 feet beyond the shell. Of course, some full-grown nautilids are smaller and a few rare ones are much larger.

Like squid, nautilids move by spraying powerful jets of water through a muscular organ called the "siphon." They usually move shell-first, tentacles trailing, but can pivot the siphon to move tentacles-first if necessary. Nautilids have little endurance, but in short sprints of 30 yards or so they are among the swiftest creatures in the ocean. Carnivorous by nature, nautilids hunt fish of all kinds, hanging motionless beneath rocky overhangs until their prey comes close and then bursting forth in a blindingly fast sprint. Once a nautilid wraps its sucker-lined tentacles around its meal, only the strongest fish can break its grip before the creature's beak tears it to shreds.

Nautilids seem to be social beasts and often hunt together in groups of up to a dozen. Though they hunt together, they do not cooperate terribly well. By day, nautilids prefer to hunt at depths of 10 yards or more (unless prey on the surface particularly attracts them, of course). After sundown, however, they come within 1 or 2 yards of the surface—not to hunt, but apparently simply to gather. These gatherings are the most fascinating aspect of nautilid behavior.

The part of the nautilid protected by its shell contains some kind of light-producing organ or substance, with which the nautilids glow when the sea grows dark. Up to a hundred of them gather together, swimming slowly in ever-changing geometrical patterns. From above, these patterns seem complex and incredibly precise. They also change color, beginning with a blue-green light and shifting to various hues in ways that almost suggest purposeful communication.

Rules

A nautilid's sucker-equipped tentacles grip tightly, making it difficult for prey to escape the grapple (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 411 of the **Player's Compendium**). To attack a nautilid's tentacles requires a successful Called Shot. Once a nautilid has a grip on its victim, it can strike with its beak each round, automatically inflicting damage without making an Attack Test.

Water Jet: If a fight begins to go against a nautilid, it releases any victims it holds and uses its jet propulsion to escape. This allows the nautilid a Full Movement of 92 yards, for up to 12 rounds. The nautilid's jet can be employed only once per hour, however. If escape is impossible, the nautilid's head changes color, adopting a complex rippling pattern of reds and purples. This display calls all other nautilids within sight to its aid. Nautilids sometimes spray jets of water at crewmen on the decks of ships, but only the largest nautilids can knock them into the sea this way. At worst, these attacks usually just dampen or distract the target.

Aquatic: Nautilids require one result level lower than normal when making Swimming Tests (usually only needing a Poor result).

Adventure Hook

A certain dwarf scholar believes that the geometrical patterns created by nautilids have some deep meaning, and decides to study them as close to firsthand as he or she can get. However, the patterns can only be viewed from the air—and this particular scholar is scared to death of setting foot in an airship or going out over the vast sea far from the sight of land. The scholar hires the characters to fly over the sea in his or her stead and record as many nautilid patterns as possible. Of course, flying out over the sea at night is generally not a particularly safe thing to do ...

OGRE

DEX: 6 **STR**: 11 **TOU**: 9
PER: 4 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 3
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (6): 12
Damage:
Club (5*): 16

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 7
Mystic Armor: 2

* Includes the ogre's Harden Club rank (see text).

Death Rating: 47 (53)
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 40 (45)

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 11

Combat Movement: 30 **Full Movement**: 60

Powers: Detect True Element (Earth) (1): 5, Durability (1), Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 6, Harden Club (2)

Legend Points: 155

Equipment: Ogre club, chain mail

Loot: D6 × 10 silver pieces.

Commentary

Orks claim that ogres look like overgrown dwarfs; dwarfs think ogres look like overlarge orks. Everyone agrees that ogres are big and ugly. They stand 7 feet 6 inches tall, weigh 400 pounds, and can use elemental magic to detect certain metals and wield powerful weapons.

Rules

Ogres believe the crude lengths of wood they wield are magical weapons, unaware that the magic that reinforces their clubs lies in themselves, not in their weapons.

Detect True Element (Earth): Ogres can smell True earth, silver and other precious metals, and often dig makeshift mines to locate the ore. Once dug up, they trade the ore to greedy dwarfs in exchange for chain mail, plate armor, and (occasionally) weapons.

OGRE TWINS

DEX: 7 **STR**: 11 **TOU**: 9
PER: 7 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 4
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (6): 13
Damage:
Club (5*): 16

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 11
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 7
Mystic Armor: 4

* Includes the ogre's Harden Club rank (see text).

Death Rating: 50 (62)
Wound Threshold: 14
Unconsciousness Rating: 43 (53)

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 11

Combat Movement: 36 **Full Movement**: 72

Powers: Detect True Element (Earth) (2): 9, Displace, Durability (2), Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 9, Harden Club (2), Regeneration (2): 11

Legend Points: 360 (for the pair)

Equipment: Ogre club, chain mail

Loot: Each twin has D6 × 10 silver pieces and D4 small gems worth 50 silver pieces each (gems count as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Ogre twins are two identical ogres, only one of whom can inhabit the material plane at a time. Ogre twins are indistinguishable from their single counterparts, unless a character can sense connections between a twin and the astral plane.

Rules

If a character makes a successful Astral Sight (or Sense) Test against the ogre twin's Spell Defense, he can see a pair of faint, white lines trailing from the ogre twin's head and disappearing into astral space. Either twin can use his Regeneration power to heal himself. Ogre twins usually heal in the dimensional pocket, switching places when the other twin needs healing.

Like conventional ogres, ogre twins can sense precious metals and magically harden their clubs.

Detect True Element (Earth): Ogres can smell True earth, silver and other precious metals, and often dig makeshift mines to locate the ore. Once dug up, they trade the ore to greedy dwarfs in exchange for chain mail, plate armor, and (occasionally) weapons.

Displace: Ogre twins can switch places with a thought; they don't have to spend an action for it. Each twin's physical possessions remain on the material plane; the second twin's body appears in the same spot occupied by the first twin, in the same position, even in mid-action if the twins so desire. The displaced twin inhabits a small, dimensional pocket between the astral and material planes. The white lines magically connect the displaced twin with the thoughts of the material twin, and also provide the displaced twin with air. If one of the ogres is killed, the other immediately appears on the physical plane to avenge its twin's death.

PACK MULE

DEX: 4 **STR**: 7 **TOU**: 7
PER: 3 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 4 **Physical Defense**: 6
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 4
Attack (1): 5 **Social Defense**: 7
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 0
Trample (2): 9 **Mystic Armor**: 2

Death Rating: 42 **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 12 **Knockdown**: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 34

Combat Movement: 28 **Full Movement**: 56

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 5

Legend Points: 60

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Mules are the sterile crossbreeds of donkeys and horses. Pack mules are used to transport goods all across Barsaive. Though not as strong as draft horses, they are more sure-footed and travel better on uneven ground. These animals are often found pulling the carts and wagons of caravans traveling through rough terrain.

PANGOLUS

DEX: 8 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 4
PER: 6 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 9 **Physical Defense**: 10
Number of Actions: 2 **Spell Defense**: 8
Attack (2): 10 **Social Defense**: 6
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 3
Claws (2): 7 **Mystic Armor**: 1

Death Rating: 30 **Recovery Tests**: 2
Wound Threshold: 7 **Knockdown**: 5
Unconsciousness Rating: 21

Combat Movement: 40/46[+] **Full Movement**: 80/92[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's climbing Movement rate.

Powers: Battle Shout[S] (Howl) (3): 8, Climbing[S] (3): 11, Great Leap[S] (3): 11

Legend Points: 110

Equipment: None

Loot: A collection of various shiny objects, usually worth no more than 10–15 silver pieces in total.

Commentary

Some notable sages claim that the pangolus is the ancestor of all the Name-giver races. Others, equally notable, insist that

the pangolus is actually a degenerate form of Name-giver. The pangolus is the height of a dwarf, but has the slender body and limbs of a human or an elf. Its arms are longer and its legs shorter in comparison to its height than is true of elves or most humans, and it has a useless stump of a tail. Its thin muscles are disproportionately strong, and an average pangolus weighs no more than 80 pounds. The creature's small head has a sharply sloping forehead, leaving relatively little space for a brain. A pangolus has no more intelligence than a hunting dog by comparison.

Pangoli spend much of their time in the branches of large trees, climbing them by means of long hooked claws on their hands and feet. In addition to climbing, they use their claws to tear open rotting trunks in search of their favorite food—grubs and other insects. Pangoli are swift and dexterous, almost graceful, in the treetops—they have no fear of falling and easily leap great distances from one tree to another. Few predators can match a pangolus for climbing speed. On the ground, however, they are slow and clumsy. Their short legs and long arms slow them down to a waddling walk. Only by crouching can they move with any kind of stealth.

In addition to grubs, leaves, and fruit, pangoli also eat tree rats and other small living creatures. They stalk and frequently catch nesting birds, including such dangerous predators as cloud owls. On the ground, they dig up small burrowing creatures with their claws—they seem to like star moles and rock squirrels more than anything else. Sometimes they even feed on carrion.

Among their own kind, male pangoli are almost as territorial as jungle griffins. Females are always welcome, but the arrival of another male in a pangolus's territory prompts a threatening display. The pangolus whose territory is invaded hangs from a large branch and gives a strange, piercing, hooting cry. If the rival does not give ground, the defending pangolus starts to charge. If the intruder refuses to flee, the charging pangolus pulls up and hoots again. If the rival runs from the charge, however, the defending pangolus pursues it and attacks, often killing the unfortunate beast. The only way for the intruder to safely back down from a challenge is to voice its own battle cry and then slowly and deliberately depart. Most challenges end this way, though a few lead to dreadful clawing duels that end when one pangolus gives up or dies. The beasts cannot distinguish between Name-givers and their fellow pangoli, or between a male and a female Name-giver. Adventurers passing near pangolus territory had best be cautious.

Young pangoli can fend for themselves almost from birth, quite unlike the younglings of Name-giver races. The mother pangolus protects and helps feed her young for almost a year, but the father has nothing to do with mother or offspring after mating.

Rules

A pangolus attacks with its claws, raking its foe. When battling a creature larger than itself, it may grasp the opponent with its forepaws in a Grappling attack (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 411 of the **Player's Compendium**). This attack inflicts normal damage while the pangolus secures its grip. The creature can then tear at its opponent with its rear claws in the following round. The creature's rear claws inflict the same damage as its foreclaws, but using them adds a +3 bonus to the pangolus's Attack Test.

Adventure Hook

Reacting to rumors that somewhere on the fringes of the Wastes exists a colony of pangoli that uses a primitive language, a sage hires the characters to investigate. They find the colony, only to discover that a village in the region is fighting the pangoli because the villagers want to hunt on the land. In defense of their territory, the pangoli have recently raided the village and harmed a few inhabitants. The villagers responded by hiring a band of hunters to eliminate the creatures.

PLAGUE LIZARD

DEX: 5 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 8
PER: 4 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 7
Damage:
Bite (4): 10
Claws (1): 7

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 43
Wound Threshold: 12
Unconsciousness Rating: 35

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 7

Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60

Powers: Climbing [S] (2): 7, Disease (SD 10; Damage 10), Disease Immunity

Legend Points: 155

Equipment: None

Loot: None (unless someone comes up with some perverted use for the creature's diseases).

Commentary

A plague lizard looks like the twisted offspring of a reptile and a rodent, if one can imagine a lizard-rat that measures more than 10 feet from snout to tail. Its entire body is covered with boils and welts, each of which carries a different disease. The lizard actually likes contagion, and often seeks out contaminated places where it can browse among filthy sicknesses as a gourmet Name-giver might browse at a banquet. Of course, the unfortunate tendency of most Name-givers to build and live in cities has given the plague lizard any number of such banquets to choose from. Nowhere in the world can a plague lizard find such a delicious variety of diseases as in a city's garbage heaps and overcrowded streets.

Once a plague lizard makes its nest in a garbage heap, Name-givers living nearby start sickening and dying in great numbers. The hallmark of lizard-borne illness is the variety of plagues that afflict the luckless population at once, as well as their virulence. Unless the afflicted have powerful magical and mundane defenses against the lizard's diseases—all of them—death is inevitable. The

only way to stop the spread of contagion is to root the lizard out of its nest and kill it, then burn the stinking corpse in a red-hot kiln to destroy all trace of its plagues.

Rules

Plague lizards attack opponents using their claws and teeth. A plague lizard's bite usually transmits the lizard's most virulent disease, which it stores in small glands at the base of its teeth. Unless he has a strong constitution, the victim can die within a minute. The lizard can also make two claw attacks each round, each of which may also transmit a disease.

Disease: Most of the diseases carried by the plague lizard cause the victim Step 10/D10+D6 damage each round until he dies. The victim may make a Toughness Test each round to resist the disease, but the Difficulty Number increases by +2 each time. The plague lizard is, of course, immune to all diseases. Many of the diseases a plague lizard carries are magical and can be dispelled by means of a successful Dispel Magic spell Effect Test against a Difficulty Number of 10 (increased by +2 in each subsequent round). As the lizard collects diseases, the gamemaster can substitute a new disease for each one used. The specific diseases a given plague lizard may be carrying are up to the gamemaster—any plague he can think up can exist in the world of **Earthdawn**. Be creative, be cruel—but be careful!

Adventure Hook

The Throal government learns of a small village whose inhabitants have died of a variety of diseases almost overnight and hires the characters to protect a group of magical healers sent to relieve the suffering. One of the healers has seen a similar outbreak before and tells the characters that they must hunt down the plague lizard responsible and kill it.

Poison Vines

DEX: 4 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 2
PER: NA **WIL**: NA **CHA**: NA

Initiative: NA **Physical Defense**: 2
Number of Actions: 1 (see text) **Spell Defense**: 2
Attack (3): 7 **Social Defense**: Immune
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 0
Leaves (3): 5 **Mystic Armor**: 0

Death Rating: 19 **Recovery Tests**: 0
Wound Threshold: 3 **Knockdown**: Immune
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Combat Movement: NA **Full Movement**: NA

Powers: Poison (SD 12; see text)

Legend Points: 40

Equipment: None

Loot: Poison sap worth D10 × 4 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Poison vines look very much like the ordinary, harmless vines that grow over many ruined buildings. Few visible marks distinguish poison vines from their harmless counterparts.

Rules

If characters attempt to hack down a poison vine, use the statistics listed above for the vine. The "Number of Actions" reflects exposure to the vines; the vines don't attack. Because poison vines cannot fight back, they are generally easy to kill, as long as the characters are careful to wear protective clothing or take steps to avoid being poisoned. Poison vines contain a toxic sap; the oil that coats the vines' razor-sharp leaves contains the same toxin.

Poison: A character who brushes past the vine's leaves may suffer cuts without realizing it, allowing the poison to affect him. The poison causes an extremely irritating rash that reduces all of the target's step numbers by –1. This effect lasts until the character applies a poultice or poison antidote, or for 7 days (whichever comes first). The healing powers of a questor of Garlen can also neutralize the poison.

Porcupine Snake

DEX: 7 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 10
PER: 3 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 8 **Physical Defense**: 7
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 6
Attack (2): 9 **Social Defense**: 10
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 7
Constrict: 10 (see text) **Mystic Armor**: 2

Death Rating: 54 (60) **Recovery Tests**: 5
Wound Threshold: 15 **Knockdown**: Immune
Unconsciousness Rating: 47 (52)

Combat Movement: 24/34[+] **Full Movement**: 48/68[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's swimming Movement rate.

Powers: Climbing[S] (2): 9, Durability (1), Swimming[S] (2): 12

Legend Points: 120

Equipment: None

Loot: Quills worth 100 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

These gigantic snakes can grow up to 60 feet long and more than a foot in diameter. They are thick-bodied, weighing several hundred pounds. They feed primarily on fish, turtles, beavers and other snakes, but gladly eat pigs, chickens and anything up to human size. They are a muddy brown-green with intricate black swirled markings on their backs and yellowish stomachs. Normally, porcupine snakes are lazy and good-natured (for snakes), allowing curious onlookers within ten feet before they strike a defensive and threatening posture of puffing up their bodies and hissing. They feed at relatively long intervals and are only dangerous when actively threatened or very hungry.

Rules

When a porcupine snake attacks, it tries to constrict its prey in its coils, suffocating them before consuming them.

Constrict: Both the snake and its victim make a Strength Test, with the higher result being successful. If the victim's result is higher, he is able to prevent the snake from constricting him. If the snake's result is higher, it coils around the prey in the same round as the initial attack, but does no extra damage. Each round thereafter, both opponents repeat the Strength Test. If the character remains ensnared, he takes damage, increasing by +1 Damage step each round, to a maximum of Step 20/D20+D8+D6. The snake does not stop constricting until a full five minutes have elapsed. When hurt or surprised, the porcupine snake inflates to nearly twice its diameter, popping three-inch quills as hard as ivory out from underneath its scales. To anything already constricted, this defensive measure inflicts an extra Step 15/D20+D6 damage every round. A thrashing, irritated porcupine snake with quills out may strike a character with its tail or body, doing Step 13/D12+D10 damage, but reduce its Attack step to Step 4 to reflect that it is merely thrashing about, not actively attacking a specific target.

Aquatic: Porcupine snakes require one result level lower than normal when making Swimming Tests (usually only needing a Poor result). They can hold their breath for a number of minutes equal to their Toughness step before drowning.

PRECES

DEX: 8 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 4
PER: 5 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 9
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 10
Damage:
Bite (2): 7
2 × Claws (1): 6

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 27
Wound Threshold: 6
Unconsciousness Rating: 18

Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 6

Combat Movement: 38 **Full Movement**: 76

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 7, Poison (SD 8; Damage 8), Great Leap S (2): 10

Legend Points: 100

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The preces has many different Names. The Name "preces" was bestowed on this creature by the Therans centuries before the Scourge, and the folk of Barsaive's southern regions still call it that. Further north, local people call it "supplicant," to the west, it is Named "prayer rabbit," and the few folk along the borders of the Wastes call it "grassfang." To most people outside the Wastes, the preces is a legendary beast; few Barsaivians have ever seen a living preces, let alone studied it. Until the past several years, the creature has been rarely encountered outside the Wastes.

The preces is about the size and shape of a large hare, some 2 feet long. When it sits on its haunches to observe its surroundings, the top of its head reaches as high as a troll's knee. Its soft, silky fur ranges in color from pale yellow to a rich chestnut brown. A preces looks and acts much like a rabbit, but you can see differences if you take a closer look. A rabbit's teeth are all the square shape needed to crop and chew grass, whereas a preces also has a set of sharp incisors and eyeteeth. When extended, these fangs show their tips below the creature's soft, furry lips. The preces's forelegs are also unusual, longer than its hind legs when fully extended. Usually, however, these legs are bent double.

Imagine a Name-giver holding his arms bent at the elbow, palms together so that his fingers are in front of his face as if in prayer. The preces holds its forelimbs in just such a pose, its "elbows" bent so that its "forearms" and "upper arms" are close together. When the creature moves—either in a slow, rocking walk or a high-speed dash—its elbows, not its front paws, touch the ground. Some folk in the Wastes hunt preces for food and for their soft pelts, but the swift-moving creatures have an uncanny ability to sense approaching danger. Often, they dash to the safety of their burrows before their would-be hunters even see them.

Most of the year, the preces is as placid and calm as the rabbit it resembles. It lives peacefully in groups of up to twenty, grazing on succulent wildflowers and fleeing from the smallest threat. For a single month, however, as the days shorten and the harvest approaches, the preces enters its mating season and becomes a crazed carnivore. Males and females both refuse grass and flowers in favor of warm bleeding flesh, and the males battle each other ferociously as the females look on. They tear each other to shreds, continuing to fight long after any other creature would have collapsed from shock, pain, and blood loss.

Any preces in the grip of mating frenzy will attack anything it sees regardless of size. A preces attacks with blinding swiftness, flinging itself at its target and extending its forelimbs to catch its prey in a deadly grip. The beast is far stronger than a creature its size has any right to be, and its small furry feet are tipped with needle-sharp, hooked claws. On the insides of its forearms, usually hidden by its soft pelt, are half a dozen barbs, all tipped with a terrible poison. A single preces in heat can badly maul or kill an unwary Name-giver, except possibly a troll or obsidiman. Though male preces in a frenzy hunt alone, females often hunt in groups of six or more.

Rules

An attacking preces charges so fast that those who don't recognize the animal will be surprised. It usually attacks with its claw-tipped forearms. A mating preces is fearless and will fight any opponent to the death.

Poison: The venomous barbs on the insides of the creature's forearms inflict poison damage each round for 5 rounds; the poison causes a –1 penalty to all Action Tests the victim makes for the duration of its effect.

Adventure Hook

In a certain region near the Wastes, where a few buried kaers have high levels of residual magic, bands of adventurers attempting to enter the newly discovered kaers have succumbed to vicious attacks by local colonies of preces, despite the fact that the beasts' mating season is months past. The characters hear travelers' tales of these misfortunes, and within days are hired by a friend to help him investigate possible connections between the magic of the kaers and the preces' abnormal behavior.

PRISMA

The following game statistics represent both an adult and a larval prisma.

Adult Prisma

DEX: 7 **STR**: 7 **TOU**: 7
PER: 4 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 8
Damage:
Bite (7): 14
Claws (1): 8

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 4

Death Rating: 40
Wound Threshold: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 32

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 7

Combat Movement: 46+ **Full Movement**: 92+

+ This value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 6

Legend Points: 95

Equipment: None

Loot: Wings worth 2,000 silver pieces, or 5,000 silver pieces if retrieved immediately after death (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Larval Prisma

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

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 7
Damage:
Bite (2): 8

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 4

Death Rating: 35
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 27

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 7

Combat Movement: 36 **Full Movement**: 72

Legend Points: 50

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

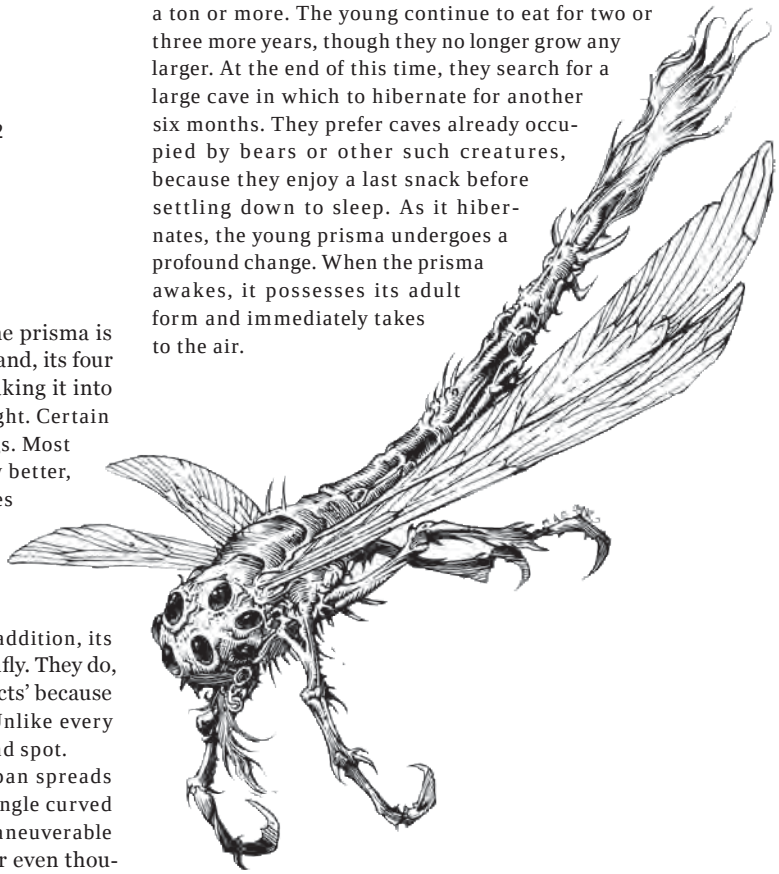
Of all the flying creatures native to Barsaive, the prisma is perhaps the most beautiful. As it flies high over the land, its four colorful wings reflect and refract the sunlight, breaking it into ever-shifting rainbows and spears of multicolored light. Certain artists and artisans pay handsomely for prisma wings. Most terrestrial creatures, even scholars who should know better, call the prisma an insect simply because it resembles a huge version of a dragonfly, with its long, tapering body and double wings. However, the prisma is not an insect, but a warm-blooded creature. It has four legs rather than an insect's customary six, and an internal skeleton rather than a carapace. In addition, its eight eyes are not the compound eyes of a true dragonfly. They do, however, give it a field of vision as wide as many insects' because they are spaced evenly around its spherical head. Unlike every other warm-blooded creature, the prisma has no blind spot.

The prisma's body is 40 feet long and its wingspan spreads almost 50 feet. Each of its muscular legs ends in a single curved claw the length of a human's forearm. A fast and maneuverable flyer, the prisma loves the thin, cold air hundreds or even thousands of feet above ice-capped mountains. An adult prisma rarely descends nearer to the ground than four or five thousand feet, finding the thicker and moister air at lower levels distasteful. Indeed, a prisma lands only a handful of times in its entire adult life, always on the highest and most isolated peaks. Few people, therefore, have ever seen an adult prisma up close.

Adult prisma have beaks set in the undersides of their bodies, with which they catch and devour small flying creatures on those rare occasions when they feel hunger (small, to a prisma, being anything the size of a large eagle or less). They enjoy hunting and will not pass by easy prey, but they do not kill for enjoyment or in anger. They can survive if necessary on a single eagle a week, drawing strength from the rich fat they store in their long narrow bodies. They build up this fat reserve by voracious feeding in their infant stage. On occasion, prisma dive down on high-flying airships and snatch crewmen from the decks. Trolls and obsidimen are too large for their tastes, but other Name-givers are at grave risk when the prisma indulges in one of these hunting raids.

Prisma live pitifully short adult lives, four or five years at best. Usually solitary, prisma seem to sense when one of their number is dying and gather around it in its last days. When the creature dies in its last flight, its fellows fall upon it and tear it to shreds before it can strike the ground. Soon after maturing, adult prisma mate and the female gives birth to a clutch of five or six live offspring, which it deposits in the rugged, broken ground of high mountain passes. These so-called larval prisma are about the size of a large cat and strikingly ugly. Slimy black skin covers their broad, flat bodies, four single-clawed legs, and small heads. Like the adult prisma, the young ones have eight eyes, as well as a pair of tusks that somewhat resemble an insect's mandibles.

The young prisma is an aggressive hunter, easily capable of slaughtering a full-grown mountain sheep (or unlucky mountaineer). It will attack and eat anything that comes near it, including its siblings. To help ensure her young's survival, the mother puts each larva in her clutch down several miles away from its fellows. The creatures feed voraciously and triple in size within a month. Within a year, they reach their full length of fifteen feet, remaining able to move with incredible speed despite weighing a ton or more. The young continue to eat for two or three more years, though they no longer grow any larger. At the end of this time, they search for a large cave in which to hibernate for another six months. They prefer caves already occupied by bears or other such creatures, because they enjoy a last snack before settling down to sleep. As it hibernates, the young prisma undergoes a profound change. When the prisma awakes, it possesses its adult form and immediately takes to the air.



Rules

An adult prisma attacks by grappling its prey with its clawed limbs (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 411 of the **Player's Compendium**) and dragging the unfortunate target to its beak, then biting it in the next round. When hunting a flying creature, the prisma first tries to cripple its target or tear off the victim's wings. Prisma larvae can inflict a damaging bite with their mandible-like tusks. They do not use the claws on their legs to attack. During their metamorphosis from larvae to adult, prisma are defenseless.

Adventure Hook

A certain artist or mage has developed a theory that a dying prisma secretes a substance that makes its wings a particularly valuable prize. This person, determined to get his hands on such a pair of wings, hires the characters for the almost-impossible task of harvesting wings from a dying prisma.

QUADRILOBE

DEX: 4 **STR**: 4 **TOU**: 5
PER: 3 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 5
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 6
Damage:
Bite (3): 7

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 5
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 34
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 26

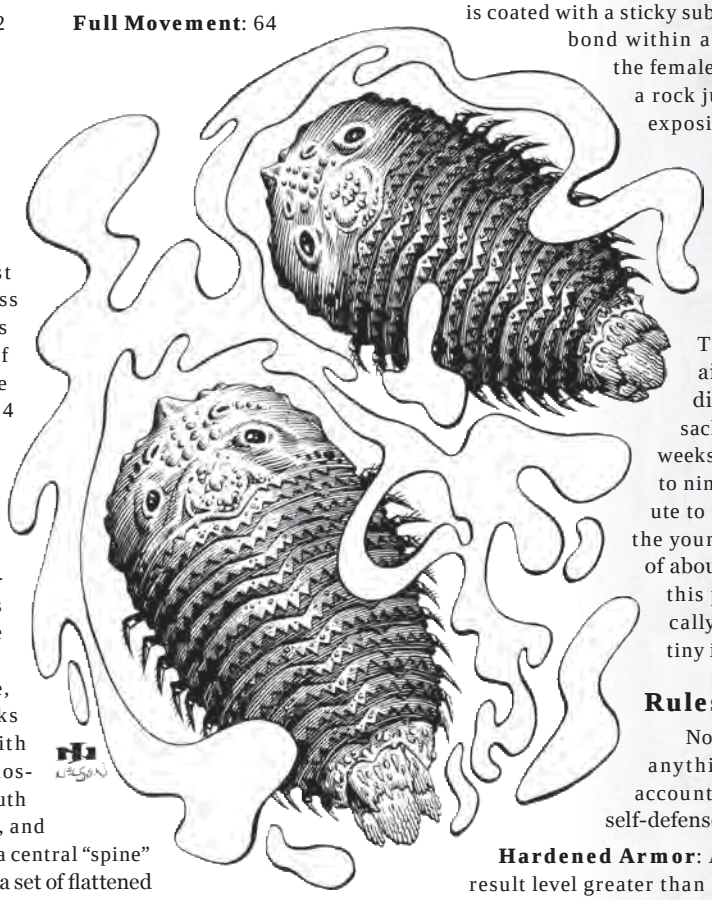
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: 32
Full Movement: 64

Legend Points: 65

Equipment: None

Loot: None



Commentary

The quadrilobe is a truly ancient creature that has existed almost unchanged for countless millennia. Quadrilobes are small even by dwarf standards. The largest one known measures a mere 4 feet long, but the more common specimens are only half that size. Broad and flat in shape, the quadrilobe's width averages about two-thirds its length, and its height represents a mere eighth of its length.

Viewed from above, the creature's head looks semicircular, dotted with two tiny eyes and two nostrils set in the top. Its mouth is hidden below the head, and behind the head extends a central "spine" of overlapping plates and a set of flattened ribs that curve slightly backward. For each of the twenty four plates in its spine, an adult quadrilobe has two ribs on both sides and one pair of legs attached to its underside. Three overlapping fins make up its tail in a manner similar to a lobster or crayfish. The quadrilobe grows additional plates as it reaches maturity; young quadrilobes have fewer spinal plates than an adult creature, and a newly hatched quadrilobe, about the size of a human child's hand, has no more than six.

Despite its relatively small size, the quadrilobe is an inordinately heavy beast. An adult of average size can weigh as much as three hundred pounds. The soft, vulnerable parts of its body nestle safely inside a carapace of rock-hard chitin, a shell that is usually more than half an inch thick. Even the heaviest quadrilobe can move remarkably quickly, however, almost as fast as a running human or elf. It usually scuttles forward, but can easily change direction and move just as quickly to either side or to the rear.

Most quadrilobes live on the rocky shores and in the shallows of the Aras Sea. They do not swim, but scurry and scuttle underwater in exactly the same manner as they do on land. They breathe both air and water equally efficiently, but must immerse themselves in water at intervals of roughly one or two hours and so rarely stray more than a spear-cast from the ocean. Quadrilobes have never been seen living in fresh water. Quadrilobes are scavengers, sometimes searching for food alone but often scuttling across the rocks and sand in groups as large as a dozen. They feed by tearing the flesh of dead animals from the bones using their wickedly sharp and highly specialized teeth, and a group of quadrilobes can strip the body of a cow to the bone in minutes. Quadrilobes lack somewhat for intelligence and do not always distinguish between the dead and the merely motionless. A downed Name-giver too badly wounded to drag himself away from the shoreline may suffer a nasty demise.

Quadrilobes mate up to three times a year in the coastal shallows, males and females joining multiple times with different partners. After being impregnated, the female remains underwater until ready to lay her egg pouch. This rubbery, resilient sack is coated with a sticky substance that dries into a stone-hard bond within an hour or so. This "glue" enables the female quadrilobe to attach her pouch to a rock just above the low-water line, thus exposing the pouch to air for only a few minutes at every ebb tide. Once the female has laid her eggs, she often leaves the area entirely.

The pouch has a distinctive odor—reminiscent of both tannin and honey—that repels fish that might otherwise eat the eggs. The smell seems to attract certain airborne predators, but they find it difficult to break open the hardened sack. The eggs hatch after six to seven weeks, releasing an average clutch of four to nine immature quadrilobes. As a tribute to the creatures' instinct for survival, the young grow rapidly, reaching a length of about two feet within the first year. At this point, their growth slows dramatically, though they continue to grow in tiny increments all their lives.

Rules

Note that these creatures will not bite anything moving faster than might be accounted for by water currents, even in self-defense. If threatened, they flee.

Hardened Armor: Armor-Defeating Hits require one result level greater than normal (usually an Extraordinary result) against a quadrilobe's chitinous exoskeleton.

Adventure Hook

According to certain legends, the quadrilobes of Barsaive disappeared almost entirely from their accustomed shores throughout the decade or so before the Horrors arrived. Some

people argue that the primitive creatures sensed the approaching Scourge and hid from the destruction. Shortly after learning of this legend, the characters hear that the quadrilobes have vanished from a particular area of the Aras Sea coast... and no one can explain why.

Rat

DEX: 4 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 3
PER: 4 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 5
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 5
Damage:
Bite (1): 3

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: NA
Wound Threshold: Immune
Unconsciousness Rating: 23

Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: 28
Full Movement: 56

Powers: Disease (SD 5–8; Blood Poisoning)

Legend Points: 35-50 (depending on Disease virulence)

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

These are rats—each animal up to 12 inches long, hungry, vicious, diseased, black- or brown-furred, with sharp yellow teeth. Rats appear in groups of 10 to 20 animals at a time. At the gamemaster's discretion, they may or may not attack, depending on how hungry or vicious they are.

Rules

Rats use the rules for **Pack or Swarm Attacks** (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 417 of the **Player's Compendium**); the statistics reflected above reflects a pack of 10 to 20 animals.

Disease: A character bitten by a rat might suffer the effects of the blood-poisoning disease the rat is carrying. The disease's Spell Defense varies from rat to rat, ranging from 5 to 8, and the onset time ranges from 12 to 24 hours. For 36 hours before the poisoning actually sets in, the infected character becomes feverish—during this period he is considered Harried (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 408 of the **Player's Compendium**). In addition, the infected character must make a Toughness Test every 24 hours; the character reduces his Toughness value by –1 for every test he fails. Once the disease sets in, the character's body becomes a disgusting mass of boils, sores, and pustulant buboes. A healer can cure these effects for a fee of 25 silver pieces per day of treatment. A character undergoing treatment regains lost points of Toughness at the rate of +1 for every 48 hours of bed rest or week of normal activity. If the character's Toughness value is reduced below 1 point, he dies.

Relan

DEX: 6 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 3
PER: 8 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 5
Number of Actions: As host
Attack: As host
Damage: As host

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 23
Wound Threshold: 5
Unconsciousness Rating: 14

Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 3 or as host

Combat Movement: 9
Full Movement: 18

Powers: Control Corpse (4), Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 10

Legend Points: 85 + host's Legend Points Award

Equipment: None

Loot: Host's possessions (if any).

Commentary

The loathsome little parasite called the relan is incredibly dangerous, simply because it often hides inside a familiar and harmless being. The relan cannot eat on its own, but must use the digestive tract of a larger, more complex creature to turn food into strength. It accomplishes this feat by burrowing into a deceased creature and reanimating it. Therefore, any creature—or Namegiver, for that matter—may be controlled by a relan (especially if the possibility exists that the person or creature in question may have died recently). As long as the relan is concerned only with making its host eat, there is little danger to fear from it, but if confronted, the host may become a powerful threat. Relans can send a powerful venom through the host body that in time causes irreparable damage, but until then gives the host immense strength and endurance. The relan then uses its host to fight its opponent or else makes the body flee to wherever the dreadful little beast can find a new host.

In appearance, the relan is a squat worm, rarely growing longer than 12 inches. Six small black eyes, as well as other sense organs dot its tiny head. Each of its six legs ends in small, sharp claws which the repulsive little pest uses to burrow into its host. On its underside is a small, thin tube that it extends into its host's intestines. The relan nestles at the base of the corpse's spine, from which it can control all parts of the body. Using its ample supply of magic, it can reanimate the corpse sufficiently to get it moving again, at which point it sends the dead thing in search of food. As the animated corpse eats, the relan siphons off what it wishes through its feeding tube. In choosing its host, the relan prefers as recent a death as possible and an intact body, so that the reanimated host will be in fine working order. A powerful physique is an advantage, so that the worm will not be forced to change hosts too often. If a relan must change hosts, it can survive on its own internal stores of food for a week. After that, the little worm begins to starve. Before the Scourge, relans mostly used to haunt battlefields, where an endless supply of food lay on

the ground for their taking. Now, one may find these disgusting worms everywhere.

Over time, the relan as a species has gained greater and greater skill at controlling their hosts. Long ago, they could use their hosts only for the rudimentary task of eating anything in sight. As time went on, however, the relan learned to force its host body to walk, run, and perform complicated physical acts. It even learned to slow down—perhaps even to halt—the decomposition of dead flesh. With these abilities, relans that took over Name-giver corpses could almost blend in with society. However, dead Name-givers animated in this way are slow to speak and cannot act in a normal manner.

There are legends of a realm in which the people see relans as the Passions in physical form. They actually leave their dead where relans can easily find them, and sometimes they even breed the little creatures. They believe that if they can't bring their loved ones back from the grave, the walking corpse is an acceptable substitute.

Rules

A relan can only attack through its host's body, and so the gamemaster must create statistics for the host if necessary. The statistics given apply to the relan itself.

Venom: The relan's powerful venom increases the host's Strength and Toughness steps by +8 each, and adds +20 to the host's Death Rating. The venom takes a heavy toll on the host body, however, causing it to decompose within two hours. A host affected by relan venom cannot be revived.

Adventure Hook

During a savage battle against a foe of the gamemaster's choice, a gamemaster-character friend of the characters goes down under a mass of the enemy. Understandably, the characters assume their comrade is dead. Two days later, however, the fallen comrade returns, wounded but apparently alive. Gradually, the characters notice small but strange changes in their companion, and decide to find out what really happened after they saw him or her cut down. Unknown to the characters, their companion is in fact dead, and has been reanimated by a relan.

River Steed

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

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 8
Damage:
Bite (3): 12

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 46
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 39

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 9

Combat Movement: 46[+] **Full Movement**: 92[+]

[+] This value is the creature's swimming Movement rate.

Powers: Swimming[S] (2): 11

Legend Points: 110

Equipment: Saddle, if trained

Loot: None

Commentary

The river steed is an unusual creature that resembles a large sea snake with fins. The t'skrang of House Ishkarat are said to breed the creatures and train them to swim along the water's surface and respond to a bridle and bit. Allegedly, the Ishkaratans race these river steeds for sport and use them as mounts for messengers. Some tales claim that a member of the Denairastas clan of Iopos has formed an entire regiment of "river cavalry" composed of riders on river steeds. Wild river steeds typically shy away from swimmers and riverboats and pose little danger to travelers.

Rules

Aquatic: River steeds require one result level lower than normal when making Swimming Tests, usually only needing a Poor result.

Rhinoceros

DEX: 5 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 10
PER: 3 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 5
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 6
Damage:
Charge (8): 18
Gore (4): 14

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 52
Wound Threshold: 15
Unconsciousness Rating: 45

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 11

Combat Movement: 32 **Full Movement**: 64

Powers: Charge (4), Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 5

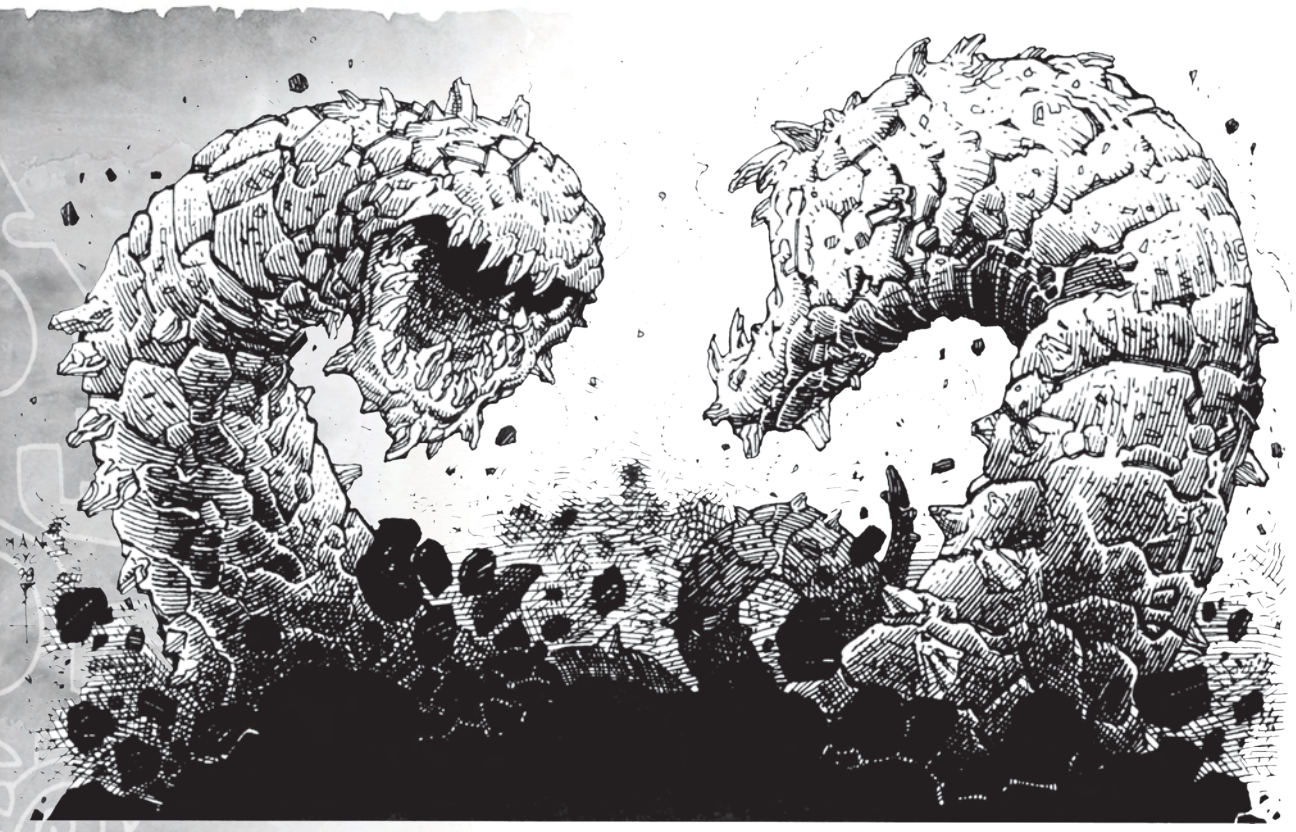
Legend Points: 155

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

A rhinoceros is a large, thick-skinned mammal bearing up to two horns on its snout. As herbivorous herd animals, they live on



the plains of Barsaive. Rhinos are known for their bad tempers and will typically charge intruders if they get too close, attempting to gore their foes on their horns. Typically, a rhinoceros directs its first Charge attack at the nearest character or animal that poses a threat.

Rockworm

DEX: 7 **STR**: 11 **TOU**: 10
PER: 2 **WIL**: 2 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 7 (10*)
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 8
Damage:
Bite (5): 16

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 13
Physical Armor: 13
Mystic Armor: 3

* This value include the creature's Surprise Attack rank.

Death Rating: 51
Wound Threshold: 18
Unconsciousness Rating: 44

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 13

Combat Movement: 30/12+ **Full Movement**: 60/24+

+ The second value is the creature's burrowing Movement rate.

Powers: Surprise Attack (3)

Legend Points: 240

Equipment: None

Loot: Gems and crystals worth 5D6 × 10 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

These elemental creatures resemble giant worms 10 to 15 feet long, covered with a rocky hide of overlapping plates. They burrow through the hardest rock and stone like dirt, consuming elemental earth and other minerals to sustain themselves. Though mindless, they are fiercely territorial and will attack any other creature that intrudes on their territory; miners and prospectors are among their most numerous victims. Though prospecting around rockworm territory is often dangerous, it can be profitable as well, as the worms tend to lair in areas with high concentrations of elemental earth. Such concentrations usually indicate veins of living crystal and/or orichalcum nearby, which can net a lucky prospector even more money. Some prospectors and miners follow the signs of rockworm tunnels to find these rich deposits, keeping close watch for an attack by the worms.

Rules

A rockworm typically bursts out of the ground without warning and attacks with a powerful bite; its stony jaws, lined with jagged pieces of crystal, can inflict considerable damage. Its tough hide makes the worm difficult to hurt. If seriously wounded, a rockworm usually retreats back beneath the earth.

Rolling Moss

DEX: 4 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 2
PER: NA **WIL**: NA **CHA**: NA

Initiative: 1
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (5): 9
Damage:
Roots (2): 4

Physical Defense: 2
Spell Defense: 2
Social Defense: Immune
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 19
Wound Threshold: Immune
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Recovery Tests: 0
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: NA **Full Movement**: NA

Powers: Poison (SD 9; Paralysis)

Legend Points: 115

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Rolling moss, deep green in color with dark roots, grows in subterranean areas as well as outdoors. Its ability to grow swiftly over anything in its path gave rolling moss its name (though even rolling moss cannot grow on a rolling stone). Rolling moss can,

however, grow fast enough to cover an animal or character within two hours. Because it possesses only rudimentary intelligence, rolling moss attacks solely for food, and will attempt to cover conscious as well as unconscious victims. Any character remaining motionless for 1 to 2 hours may be covered in rolling moss.

Rules

Though swift when compared to the growth rate of normal plants, rolling moss moves slowly enough that a character or creature may notice it creeping over his body, even in his sleep. To become aware of the moss, a sleeping target must make a successful Perception Test against a Difficulty Number of 21. When the moss begins to creep toward the target, but does not yet cover any portion of the character, the Difficulty Number for the Perception Test is 11. Once the moss begins its attack by growing over a hand or foot, the Difficulty Number drops to 5.

Poison: Rolling moss produces an aromatic pollen that acts like a paralytic poison, putting the target character or animal to sleep. Once the moss has covered 75 percent of its target, the pollen induces a sleep-like, paralytic state. To awaken from this effect, the affected character must make a Toughness Test against a Difficulty Number of 9 plus the number of minutes since the pollen took effect. For characters attempting to wake up without aid, the gamemaster should allow the character to make a Toughness (14) Test after 5 minutes. Any aid a character receives in waking lowers the Difficulty Number for the Toughness Test to 5. Using any radical method to wake a character, such as splashing water in his face, attacking him, and so on, automatically wakes the victim.

Roots: If a character or animal does not wake from the paralysis within 4 hours, the moss begins to take root in the victim's body. The gamemaster makes an Attack Test for the moss against the victim's Physical Defense. If the Attack Test succeeds, the gamemaster makes a Damage Test for the moss to determine the damage done by the moss' roots digging into the victim. Armor offers no protection against rolling moss, because it creeps along the body beneath a character's armor. The moss can only attack its victim once per day; this limit allows characters a chance to wake up and stop further attacks. If a victim wakes up after the moss makes a successful first attack, the victim must remove the roots that have burrowed into his or her body. The difficulty of this task depends on how much damage the character has taken from the moss. If the total damage is less than the victim's Wound Threshold, the victim may simply pull the moss out, taking Step 2/D4–1 damage in the process. No armor protects against this damage. If the total damage done to the character exceeds his Wound Threshold, the moss has dug so deeply into his body that only magic, like the Sterilize Object spell, can remove it. Note that an awakened victim takes no additional damage from the moss, no matter how long it takes him or her to get rid of it. Unless the victim can free himself from the moss, it will eventually kill him. Many of the explorers and animals whose corpses litter Parlainth's tunnels and streets met their deaths this way.

Root Walker

DEX: 9 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 10
PER: 6 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 8
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 11
Damage:
Root Whip (3): 13

Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 12
Social Defense: 12
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 5

Death Rating: 51 (75)
Wound Threshold: 15
Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: NA
Unconsciousness Rating: 44 (64)

Combat Movement: 28/12[+] **Full Movement**: 56/24[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's burrowing Movement rate.

Powers: Durability (4), Engulf (5): 15, Spellcasting (6): 12, Locate Target (3): 9

Legend Points (2): 530

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The six root walkers that roam the Blood Wood were created by Blood Warders as one line of defense specifically intended to kill intruders into the Wood. These warders sought to combine the ethandrille's ability to sense intruders with the primitive self-awareness of plant spirits.

By magically fusing the patterns of several ethandrilles with those of several blood-oak saplings, the blood warders created a frightening animal/plant hybrid that lives among the roots of blood oaks and ferociously hunts down trespassers. Fortunately for their intended victims, these creatures move slowly, tunneling through the soil a few feet below the surface.

Rules

A root walker that encounters an intruder attacks suddenly and viciously, sending root-like tentacles shooting up through the earth to grapple the target. If the attack succeeds, the roots cause damage every combat round until the character is dead or freed from the roots. The character may escape by the normal means used to escape a grapple or by cutting the roots. A second character can attempt to free the victim by attacking the root walker's exposed roots. If such an attack fails to hit the root walker, then the second character has struck the victim. If a root walker successfully grapples a character, it will attempt to use its Engulf power during the following combat round.

Generally, the root walker's body remains two to three feet beneath the earth's surface while it is fighting, and so its roots are the only target for attack. Each root has the Defense and Armor ratings listed in the statistics above. Inflicting 40 points of damage on a root will force the root walker to retreat to heal itself. Additional damage to the roots is useless; the creature can be harmed further only by damage done directly to its body.

To attack the body, characters must force a root walker to the surface or use long weapons that can strike through the ground. These types of attacks suffer a –3 penalty to Attack and Damage Tests. The root walker's roots and Engulf power alone make it a formidable opponent, but the creature's most fearsome power is its ability to awaken blood oaks.

Engulf: Any character successfully attacked with the Engulf power is drawn into the earth, where he suffers from suffocation damage in addition to the constriction damage caused by the roots. A victim may make a Strength Test against the result of the root walker's Attack Test to resist being pulled into the earth. Up to two characters may add their Strength steps to that of the grappled character for this test. Engulf is a spirit power (see the **Spirits** chapter on p. 365 for details).

Locate Target: Root walkers can sense intruders within 10 miles of their position.

Respect for Elves: A root walker will always attack elves last when it encounters a group of intruders belonging to various Name-giver races. If the root walker senses any blood elves on the ground within 20 yards of an intruder, it will not attack. Magical wards put in place by the blood warders keep the root walkers at least a thousand yards away from the queen's palace at all times, and so all Name-givers in that area are safe from root walker attack.

Wake Blood Oak: If a root walker attacks a character within 30 yards of a blood oak (see **Blood Oak Roots**, p. 282), the oak will direct its roots to attack other intruders in the area. If the root walker is attacking a single intruder, however, the blood oak cannot assist.

Sand Lobster

DEX: 8 **STR**: 11 **TOU**: 11
PER: 6 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 9 (14)
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 10
Damage:
Pincers (4): 15

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 55 (61)
Wound Threshold: 16
Unconsciousness Rating: 48 (53)

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 15

Combat Movement: 61/30[+]
Full Movement: 122/60[+]

[+] This value is the creature's burrowing Movement rate.

Powers: Durability (1), Surprise Attack (5)

Legend Points: 235

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Sand lobsters like to bury themselves in the sandy banks of the lower Coil River and wait for approaching prey. Most varieties of sand lobster are small, and their claws inflict no more than painful pinches. In fact, the meat of these smaller specimens is a prized delicacy in Urupa and increasingly elsewhere along the river. Those seeking to cash in on this growing food craze, however, should keep in mind that certain sand lobster varieties may grow to the size of a horse and possess enough strength to crush a troll.

Rules

The statistics above represent a moderate-sized sand lobster, roughly 3 to 4 feet long. When a creature or Name-giver walks above a sand lobster, the lobster springs out of the ground and grabs its victim with its claws.

Saural

DEX: 5 **STR**: 4 **TOU**: 5
PER: 3 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 5
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 7
Damage:
Bite (1): 5

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 7

Combat Movement: 32 **Full Movement**: 64

Powers: Breath Weapon (Acid) (12): 15, Climbing[S] (2): 7, Spellcasting (6): 9

Legend Points (2): 260

Equipment: None

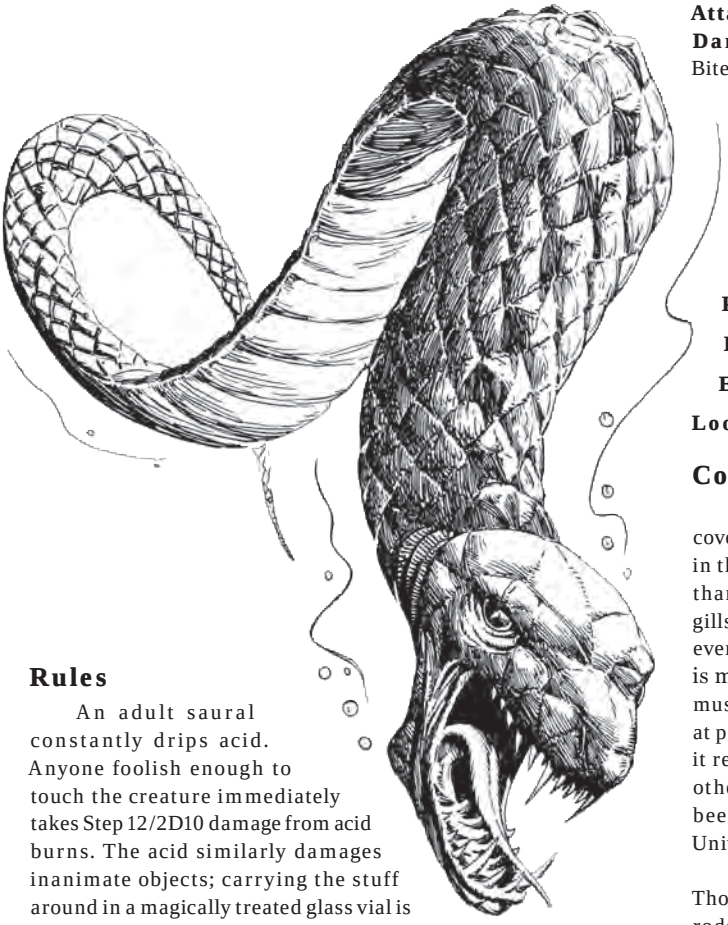
Loot: Acid-creating and acid-neutralizing organs worth 200 silver pieces each (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

A strange creature indeed is the saural, a creature halfway between frog and lizard that can burn with the slightest touch. Anyone who has ever encountered long, winding paths seemingly burned into the ground or the heat-blackened rocks that dot the shores of the Serpent River, has seen the trail of the saural. The grayish-green saural is about 4 feet long and can breathe on land and in the water through the gills at the base of its thick neck. Thick, armor-like scales protect it against most natural predators. Its most powerful protection, however, is the burning acid that covers its entire body. From a distance, the acid looks like sticky slime, but it is nothing so harmless as that. No matter what surface the saural sits on, a constant cloud of steam rises around it as its natural acid eats through whatever it touches.

Though a cold-blooded creature, the saural can live in extremely high temperatures. Often, a saural will spend so much time on a rock that its acid eats all the way through. The melted rocks look as if they were as soft as river clay and some huge artist's hand pushed the saurals into the rock to form the impressions. Obviously, touching a saural is a foolish act, but would-be heroes can also come into contact with the acid through no fault of their own. The creature can also spit acid for a distance of more than thirty feet. By instinct, it aims for the eyes whenever it can. The lucky victim of such an attack is merely blinded for life, and strong healing magic can restore the mess that was once his eyes to a semblance of physical wholeness. If the victim is unlucky, the acid will eat through his eyes and the front of his skull, dissolving his brain within minutes. Only by immediately bathing his or her eyes in a running stream can the victim wash the acid away. Luckily for those who encounter a saural, the beast can be fooled by a simple trick. Draw a pair of eyes larger and more menacing than your own on some other surface or object, and the saural will instinctively aim its caustic spit at those eyes instead of yours.

As to the question of why saurals don't melt themselves into piles of slime, the beast appears to have a protective layer of liquid underneath the acid that seems to neutralize the burning effect. This second liquid also allows saurals to mate; both males and females seem able to exude this protective substance outside the acid layer so that they do not harm each other. An infant saural exudes no acid at all, lest it burn itself out of its eggshell prematurely; only upon reaching a large enough size to fend for themselves do they develop the necessary organs in the skin to produce the substance. The organs that produce the acid and its antidote are in high demand from alchemists and adventurers, respectively—alchemists find the acid extremely useful in their experiments, and adventurers use the antidote to protect themselves against all manner of irritants.



Rules

An adult saural constantly drips acid. Anyone foolish enough to touch the creature immediately takes Step 12/2D10 damage from acid burns. The acid similarly damages inanimate objects; carrying the stuff around in a magically treated glass vial is ideal for melting away locks and other hindrances. Acid-spitting saurals always attempt to hit their target's eyes, requiring a Called Shot to succeed. If a saural hits a target's eyes, the target is blinded by the acid (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 408 of the **Player's Compendium**). If the damage to the target's eyes is high enough to cause a Wound, the target remains blind until that Wound is healed. At the gamemaster's discretion, this blindness may be permanent or may only remain until the victim can be healed by powerful magic, such as that of a questor of Garlen.

Breath Weapon: To spit its acid at a victim, the saural uses its Breath Weapon power. After a target has been hit successfully, the acid continues to burn for 4 rounds, each round inflicting –1 less step of damage. Armor protects against this damage, but at the price of permanent injury or destruction. For example, if plate armor (Phys 9) is hit by a gob of acid that does 8 Damage Points, the armor permanently loses 8 points of protection—its new Physical Armor rating is now 1. Certain types of armor that are immune to saural acid include living crystal armor, blood pebble armor, and all forms of crystal armor and shields.

Adventure Hook

T'skrang merchants near a busy port on the Serpent River discover a colony of saurals near their docks and hire the characters to exterminate the beasts before they manage to burn the docks away. The t'skrang are willing to pay a handsome fee and allow the characters to keep the valuable skin organs from any saural they kill. Killing a saural, however, is much easier said than done.

SEA SNAKE

DEX: 8 **STR**: 7 **TOU**: 5
PER: 5 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 8 **Physical Defense**: 10
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 6

Attack (2): 10 **Social Defense**: 6
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 4
Bite (3): 10 **Mystic Armor**: 2

Death Rating: 31 (49) **Recovery Tests**: 2
Wound Threshold: 8 **Knockdown**: Immune
Unconsciousness Rating: 22 (37)

Combat Movement: 20/38[+]
Full Movement: 40/76[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's swimming Movement rate.

Powers: Climbing[S] (2): 10, Durability (3), Swimming[S] (3): 10

Legend Points: 95

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

A large serpent, the slender sea snake is often as long as 10 feet, covered in luminescent blue-green scales that glimmer like jewels in the sun. Its large jaws can unhinge to swallow prey much larger than the width of its head. Just behind its jaws lie the sea snake's gills, with which it breathes water as easily as air. Anyone who has ever fought a sea snake (assuming he lived) knows that the beast is made almost entirely of muscle. The sea snake can flatten its muscular body to an incredible thinness and race through water at prodigious speeds. When the creature wishes to leave the water, it resumes a rounder shape and slithers up onto the land. Unlike other serpents, the sea snake is warm-blooded. No scholar has been able to explain this oddity; it seems to be another of the Universe's mysteries.

As well as living anywhere, the sea snake can eat anything. Though it seems to prefer red meat, this beast eats anything from rodents, humans and birds to tree bark, mollusks and fruit. Some people believe it eats anything it can get its mouth around, if it's hungry enough. Sea snakes are vicious hunters, often taking on creatures much larger than themselves. In the water, the sea snake out-swims its prey and then swallows as much of it whole as possible. It will usually try to leap briefly out of the water and knock its victim under the surface, where it can easily swallow its catch. The sea snake builds up tremendous speed under the water, before launching itself upward—it is able to knock a sailor overboard this way.

Rules

The sea snake bites its victims with its jaws either hinged or unhinged. When hinged, the jaws apply considerable force, causing the damage listed for its bite. With the jaws unhinged, the sea snake's bite is feebler, but it can swallow a sufficiently small prey in one gulp. To knock prey into the water, a sea snake must make a successful Attack Test using the Attacking to Knockdown combat option (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 403 of the **Player's Compendium**). The sea snake then clamps its mouth around the victim's leg, arm, clothes, or any other convenient handle and drags him down to drown. For each round the victim struggles with the snake, he is dragged another 10 yards beneath the water's surface, and so a character who manages to break the snake's hold faces a long swim back to air.

Aquatic: Sea snakes require one result level lower than normal when making Swimming Tests, usually only needing a Poor result.

Adventure Hook

A scholar who wishes to discover whether all sea snakes are actually the same species hires the characters to bring back live specimens from all across Barsaive. The gamemaster can send the characters anywhere in Barsaive he wishes to capture the huge snakes, exposing them to all kinds of danger and giving them a chance to explore the entire province.

Selachi

DEX: 8 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 9
PER: 3 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 9
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 10
Damage:
Bite (6): 16 (see text)
Ram (4): 14

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 50 (80)
Wound Threshold: 14
Unconsciousness Rating: 43 (68)

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: 46[+]
Full Movement: 92[+]

[+] This value is the creature's swimming Movement rate.

Powers: Durability (5), Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Smell) (3): 6, Swimming[S] (3): 13

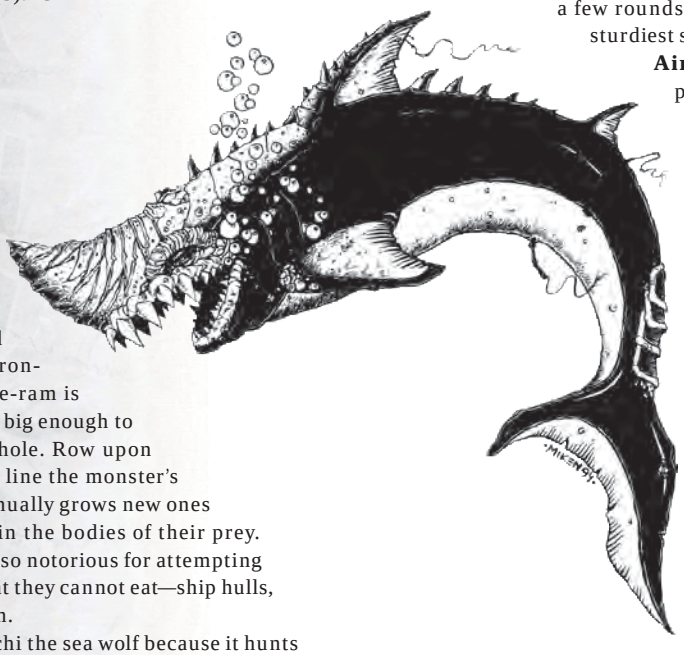
Legend Points (2): 380

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

These shark-like creatures measure at least 25 feet from nose to tail. Unlike a common shark, the selachi has a squarish nose covered with layer upon layer of iron-hard bone. Below this bone-ram is the creature's huge mouth, big enough to swallow a large human whole. Row upon row of dagger-length teeth line the monster's jaws, and the selachi continually grows new ones as the old teeth break off in the bodies of their prey. Interestingly, selachi are also notorious for attempting to bite and chew objects that they cannot eat—ship hulls, sunken treasures, and such.



Some folk call the selachi the sea wolf because it hunts in packs of five to ten. The creatures find their prey by means of amazingly acute senses. Their keen hearing can as easily lead them to an animal splashing in the water as it can to the rhythmic churning of a t'skrang fire engine. They can smell even the faintest trace of blood in the water. Unlike other sea creatures, they can also see well both in water and out of it. Indeed, a selachi will often swim toward the surface at a great speed and launch itself several feet into the air, so that it may see any nearby ships, leviathans, or pods of whales before it plunges back beneath the waves.

Once a selachi has found its prey, the entire pack swims toward the luckless meal as fast as possible and rams it with their armored noses. The vicious carnivores will strike whales or leviathans again and again, hoping to daze the creatures enough to tear them apart with their terrible jaws. Selachi packs also hunt wooden ships, leaping out of the water and slamming headfirst into a boat's side until it crumbles into timbers. Once the ship is destroyed, the selachi can devour its soft, chewy crew and passengers at leisure.

The most successful method of keeping selachi away from a ship requires attracting them first. As mad as that no doubt sounds: it works. Whenever a selachi is spotted in the distance, sailors kill one of the cattle on board and pour some of its blood over the side. The pack of selachi will swim toward the blood and drift aimlessly around in it in search of the animal from which it came until the blood disperses. All this time, of course, the ship is sailing swiftly away. After enough time has passed for the blood to have vanished, more blood is poured into the water to distract the creatures again. By this means, sailors make sure to stay one step ahead of the selachi throughout the voyage. However, waiting until a selachi is seen in the distance is more dangerous than simply spilling blood at regular intervals. Selachi can swim so fast that there might not be enough time to slaughter a cow or pig before the ravenous pack has reached the ship.

However, playing "follow the leader" with these vicious beasts in the manner may have terrible consequences if they follow the ship into port. There, they will wreak havoc not only on the ship but on every ship in the harbor.

Rules

Selachi are fearsome opponents when encountered on the open sea. A selachi takes 3 rounds to build up enough speed to ram its prey.

Ram: To ram, a selachi makes an Attack Test against the prey's Physical Defense or Maneuverability step (in the case of a ship). If the test is successful, the target takes damage. After a few rounds of this kind of onslaught, even the sturdiest ships will likely be destroyed. See the **Airships and Riverboats** chapter on p. 157 for statistics of ships likely to be attacked by selachi.

Bite and Swallow: Once the selachi has rendered its prey unconscious in the water, the beast attempts to bite and swallow it. Human-sized or smaller creatures are swallowed whole. No armor protects against this damage.

Aquatic: Selachi require one result level lower than normal when making Swimming Tests (usually only needing a Poor result).

Adventure Hook

A ship docks in a busy harbor, and the ship's hands are beginning their work just as the characters board the vessel. Minutes later, the dockmaster shouts a dire warning: a school of selachi has entered the bay. As the creatures start smashing into boats and sending them to the bottom, the terrified ship owner begs the characters to drive them off or kill them.

Sentinel Hawk

DEX: 11 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 4
PER: 10 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 7

Initiative: 11
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 13
Damage:
Beak (2): 7
2 × Claws (1): 6

Physical Defense: 15
Spell Defense: 14
Social Defense: 13
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 5

Death Rating: 30 (54)
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 21 (41)

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5

Combat Movement: 43/90[+]
Full Movement: 86/180[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 10 **Karma Step**: 6

Powers: Durability (4), Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 12, Spellcasting[T] (2): 12, Elementalism[T] (2): 12, Willforce[T] (2)

Spells: Air Armor, Air Blast 17, (Air) Spear 15, Astral Sense (Elementalism) 14, Behind Eye, Blizzard Sphere 16, Detect Elementalism Magic 14, Dispel Elementalism Magic 8, Ease Passage 18, Fingers of Wind 8, Moonglow, Path Home, Winds of Deflection 15

Legend Points: 745

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Sentinel hawks are magical, intelligent raptors that live high in the mountains of Barsaive. They can understand Name-giver speech, but cannot speak themselves without the aid of magic. Sentinel hawks were unknown before the Scourge, and their origin since remains a mystery. Some scholars speculate that a magician created them just before or during the Scourge to act as sentries and guardians against Horrors, and that the hawks eventually escaped and bred in the wild. The sentinel hawks refuse to discuss the subject. They look like larger versions of ordinary hawks with white, gray or black feathers or some combination of the three.

Sentinel hawks are guardians of life and fierce enemies of corruption. They attack Horrors and Horror constructs, and aid Name-givers in need of help so long as the Name-giver has committed no offense against the hawk or the natural world. Some sentinel hawks have even enlisted the aid of Name-givers in their fight against corruption, guiding adventurers to the lairs of Horrors (some might say guiding them to their doom).

Rules

A sentinel hawk attacks with its sharp talons and beak, using swooping attacks. It can also cast several Elementalism spells, using the standard spellcasting rules except that the sentinel hawk does not require spell matrices.

Immunity to Warping Damage: Sentinel hawks are immune to warping damage from casting raw magic (see the **Spell Magic** chapter on p. 289 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Resistant to Horrors: Sentinel hawks are especially resistant to Horror powers and abilities. Any Horror or Horror construct employing a Horror power directly or indirectly against a sentinel hawk requires one result level greater than normal to be successful. This includes spells cast by the Horror against the hawk and those magician spells noted as being based on a Horror power.

SHADOWMANT

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

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 7
Damage:
Stinger (2): 7

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 35
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 27

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5

Combat Movement: 32[+] **Full Movement**: 64[+]

[+] This value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Low-Light Vision, Poison (SD 8; Damage Step 9)

Legend Points: 95

Equipment: None

Loot: Stinger worth D10 × 10 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

8 feet wide with a 5 foot long tail, shadowmants resemble large, flying stingrays. A shadowmant's outer side is black, its underside dark gray, and its tail ends in a crystalline stinger. A shadowmant has two eyes and a small mouth lined with rows of tiny, needle-sharp teeth. Nocturnal creatures, shadowmants roam at night, spending daylight hours underground. Alchemists prize shadowmant stingers, using them to brew magical potions.

Rules

A shadowmant uses its tail to sting its victims. The stinger contains a poison powerful enough to kill a troll within 10 rounds. Once the poison has killed its prey, the shadowmant eats its victim.

Poison: The shadowmant's virulent poison resists the healing effects of talents or healing aids with a Spell Defense of 8.

SHILAGRUE

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

Initiative: 8
Number of Actions: 1
Attack: NA
Damage: NA

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 35
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 27

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6

Combat Movement: NA[+] **Full Movement**: NA[+]

[+] The creature's swimming Movement rate is determined by the speed of the river current.

Powers: Engulf (2): 8, Spellcasting (3): 8

Legend Points: 75

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Shilagrue is the t'skrang word for "wandering shawl," which aptly describes these strange creatures. flat and thin as a piece of cloth, shilagrue vary in size from 4 to 20 square feet. Shilagrue possess no means of locomotion. Instead, they billow and float

underwater, drifting along with the current. A shilagrue's shape and translucent coloring make it difficult to see, and swimmers often fail to spot a shilagrue until it is almost upon them.

Rules

Once any part of a shilagrue touches a victim, the creature reflexively attempts to envelop him. If possible, the shilagrue seals its edges, sinks to the bottom of the river and suffocates its victim (even creatures and characters that can breathe underwater may be killed in this manner). A character enveloped by a shilagrue immediately begins to take damage from drowning each round he remains trapped in the creature. A shilagrue that has killed prey remains on the river bottom as it digests its meal, then ejects any skeletal remains and begins to drift once more with the current.

SHRIEKER BAT

DEX: 7 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 5
PER: 3 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 8
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 8
Damage:
Bite (2): 7

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 34
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 26

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5

Combat Movement: 26/52[+] **Full Movement**: 52/104[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Listen, Sight) (2): 5, Low-Light Vision, Paralyzation (8): 12, Silent Walk[S] (2): 9, Sonic Shriek (7): 12

Legend Points (2): 190

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The shrieker bat looks almost exactly like its smaller cousins, except for its greater size. At full extension, its leathery wings span 4 feet, it also has larger eyes and smaller ears. Unlike other bats, the shrieker bat does not navigate by sound but by sight—therefore, it does not need the large mouse-like ears common to its tiny kindred. Instead, it can produce a cry every bit as piercing; a painfully irritating, sound, worse than sharp talons on metal. The shrieker bat uses its cry to paralyze its prey, most often birds and rodents (though any source of meat, including Name-givers, is quite welcome to its palate). The shriek affects any animal within hearing range, though the paralysis effect grows weaker the bigger the victim. The shriek also affects inanimate objects. Weapons, glassware, pottery, and other objects made of similar materials may well shatter into slivers when the shrieker bat flies near.

This creature is quite dangerous when hunting; its dull black fur makes it almost impossible to see in the dark, and its high-pitched cry is beyond the ability of the Name-giver races to hear—only the rush of its wings gives its presence away. Unlike other bats, the shrieker bat also flies in daylight, most often to protect its nest from harm, but a ravenous bat will also hunt in sunlight if it must.

Once the bat paralyzes its prey, it lands on its victim and begins to tear out great chunks of flesh with its sharp claws and teeth. The effects of its cry last for at least a couple of minutes, to prevent a bat's victims from running before the bat starts to eat. Any traveler unlucky enough to fall victim to a shrieker bat had best hope his companions have intact weapons left with which to battle it until he can move again. However, these bats usually travel in packs of 10, 20, or sometimes more—defeating them should prove a challenge for even the most experienced heroes.

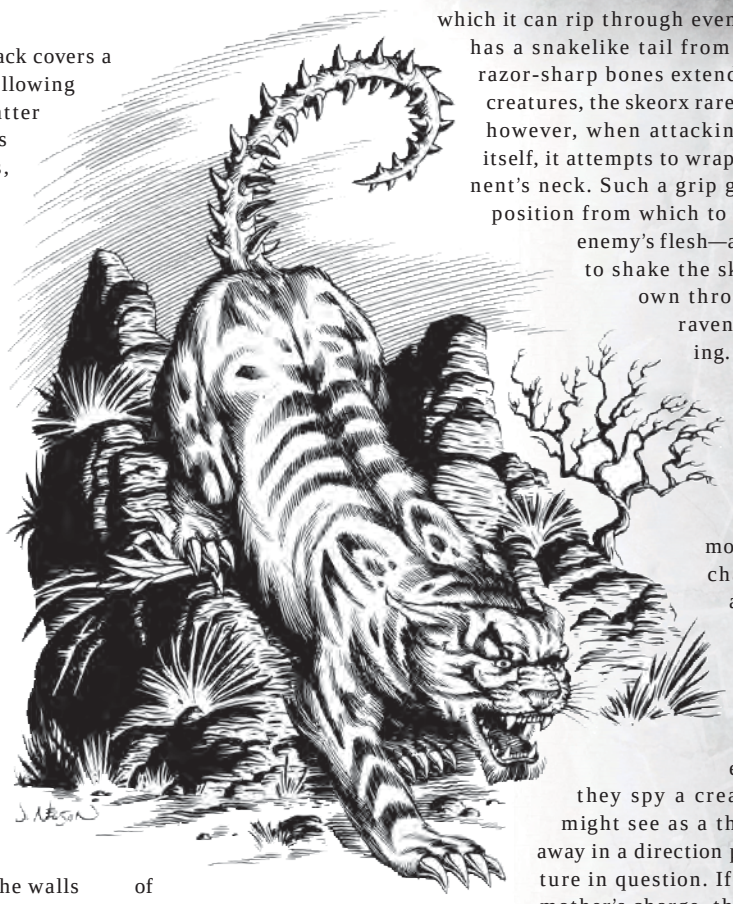
Rules

The shrieker bat's sonic attack covers a large part of the audio range, allowing it to paralyze victims and shatter objects. When the bat attempts to paralyze living creatures, use the creature's Paralyzation power. The shrieker bat uses its Sonic Shriek power to shatter brittle objects.

Once it paralyzes a target, the shrieker bat lands on its prey and begins to eat. The bat attacks the victim in each round that he remains paralyzed. The bat eats until it is sated or until someone knocks it off the victim. In general, a bat feeds for 5 to 10 rounds, and so a pack of shrieker bats may find a single victim to be an insufficient food source.

Adventure Hook

The characters go in search of a long-forgotten kaer that reports say contains a valuable store of gems. The characters find and enter the kaer and even find the gemstones—along with a colony of shrieker bats, who have built a nest in the walls of the gem room. Before the characters can retrieve the precious stones, the bats attack them. The characters must not only defeat the bats, but also draw them far enough away from the gemstones so that their cries do not shatter the gems.



SKEORX

DEX: 13 **STR**: 18 **TOU**: 10
PER: 7 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 17
Number of Actions: 3
Attack (3): 16
Damage:
Bite (7): 25
Claws (2): 20
Tail (3): 21

Physical Defense: 14
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 12
Physical Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 4

Death Rating: 54 (90)
Wound Threshold: 15
Unconsciousness Rating: 47 (77)

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 19

Combat Movement: 106
Full Movement: 212

Powers: Battle Shout (Roar) (3): 8, Climbing[S] (3): 16, Durability (6), Great Leap[S] (3): 16, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk[S] (3): 16

Legend Points (2): 1,420

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The skeorx is one of the most brutal and dangerous beasts in Barsaive. A skeorx is a four-legged creature with a tiger-like head, commonly 8 feet long from snout to tail, but some grow as long as 15 feet. Their bodies are covered with short fur of a drab, brownish-green shade that blends well with the dark jungle undergrowth. On each of the skeorx's feet are huge claws, with which it can rip through even dragon hide. Finally, it has a snakelike tail from which row upon row of razor-sharp bones extend. When fighting smaller creatures, the skeorx rarely brings its tail into play; however, when attacking creatures larger than itself, it attempts to wrap the tail around its opponent's neck. Such a grip gives the skeorx a stable position from which to rake its claws across its enemy's flesh—and if the victim attempts to shake the skeorx free, it will cut its own throat. The skeorx is always ravenous, almost always feeding. If it is not hunched over a fresh kill, gorging noisily, it is hunting for something else to kill.

No one should ever go near a mother skeorx and her young. A mother skeorx will so eagerly charge forward to destroy any threat to her babes that she often tramples the infants themselves without noticing. The young have developed an interesting habit to ensure their survival—if they spy a creature which the mother might see as a threat to them, they dash away in a direction perpendicular to the creature in question. If they cannot dodge their mother's charge, the young skeorxes flatten themselves to the ground in the hope that their mother will miss them.

There are rumors that skeorxes can even resist the magical abilities of Beastmasters. Explorers with such abilities should therefore be wary—their talents will probably not save them from this ravening beast.

Rules

When attacking an opponent its own size or smaller, the skeorx uses its claws, teeth and tail. A skeorx's powerful legs allow it to leap great distances. Against an opponent larger than itself, the skeorx leaps onto the victim and attempts to wrap its jagged-edged tail around the victim's neck as a Grappling attack (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 411 of the **Player's Compendium**). Any attempt to struggle causes an additional Step 10/D10+D6 damage. Physical Armor protects against this damage, as normal.

To reflect this creature's innate resistance to training, any characters using their talents and abilities to tame or command a skeorx must achieve a result two levels higher than normal to be successful. For example, the Dominate Beast talent normally requires an Average result to work against a target creature. Using Dominate Beast against a skeorx, however, requires an Excellent result.

Adventure Hook

As the characters are walking through a forest, they come across a half-grown skeorx. They do not know that the creature is practicing its hunting skills while its mother watches from the shadows. The young skeorx attacks the characters, and the mother initially holds back to see how well her offspring fights against such weak opponents.

The minute the tide of battle turns in the characters' favor, the mother skeorx leaps into the fray. If the characters kill the youngling, they find themselves in real trouble.

Snake

DEX: 6 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 4
PER: 3 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 8
Damage:
Bite (3): 8

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 28
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 19

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: 26 **Full Movement**: 52

Powers: Climbing [S] (2): 8, Poison (SD 5; Damage 5), Silent Walk [S] (2): 8

Legend Points: 60

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The snake is a small, scaly, legless, venomous reptile. These creatures are found all over Barsaive, but most of them live in the forests and jungles of Barsaive. There are a wide variety of species, such as asps, black adders, cobras, and the like.

Snow Badger

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

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 7
Damage:
Bite (3): 8
Claws (1): 6

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 38 (50)
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 30 (40)

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 8

Combat Movement: 36/12[+] **Full Movement**: 72/24[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's burrowing Movement rate.

Powers: Climbing [S] (2): 8, Durability (2), Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 6, Freezing Aura (3), Temperature [T] (7): 11

Legend Points: 65

Equipment: None

Loot: Pelt worth 100 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Only in Barsaive's tallest mountains, where snow falls deep and lingers throughout the year, can the snow badger still be found. Thousands of years ago, when large portions of Barsaive lay under a white blanket for months at a time, snow badgers were numerous and fat. Now, the land is temperate and growing ever warmer, and many believe that within a few hundred years the snow badger will disappear altogether.

The snow badger strongly resembles its mundane brethren, though it is somewhat larger. Its pelt is almost entirely white, crossed with a few darker stripes. The badger's coloring allows it to blend perfectly with the shadows on the snowy landscape; often, the only clue to a snow badger's presence is its squeal of alarm. Its short muzzle hides small sharp teeth, though its bite does painful damage. A snow badger also has short, but sharp claws on its back feet and long, curving front claws that can burrow into the earth as easily as they dig into an unlucky predator's flesh.

The snow badger's real weapon is not teeth or claws, but its magical ability to give off waves of biting cold. The badger somehow sucks up the cold from the surrounding snow and concentrates it around itself. The creature can lower the temperature so far that the thin skin of most Name-givers will freeze, and fingers and toes grow brittle with frostbite and fall off. Most adventurers don't prepare for such extreme concentrated cold and will quickly succumb to it unless they kill the creature or flee. When the beast begins to draw in the cold, blue-white lines form in the snow in a wheel-spoke pattern around the creature, extending in all directions for several hundred feet. It looks as if the badger is drawing in lightning from the snowdrifts—the lines seem to crackle and snap with power.

In many troll communities of Barsaive's mountain ranges, the pelts of snow badgers are highly prized. As one can imagine, obtaining such a pelt requires great stealth and cunning and has become even more difficult as the population of snow badgers has dwindled. As a result, they confer great status on their wearers—mostly powerful chieftains and Warriors who wear them as ceremonial dress. Troll legends also claim that a snow badger pelt confers the creature's unique power on its wearer, but it seems improbable that the dried pelt of a living creature would retain any of the creature's magical powers. One can find merchants selling snow badger pelts in most of the marketplaces of Barsaive. But almost all of these are simply the pelts of mundane badgers, dyed to resemble the coats of snow badgers.

Snow badgers mate for life. Therefore, if you see one snow badger, you will likely soon meet another one. They couple during the spring and usually produce six to eight dark-gray or black cubs. For the first half year of their lives, young snow badgers do not leave the hidden burrow dug by their parents—their dark coloring, though useless in the snow, perfectly hides them from snooping predators in the darkness of their holes. Many of these burrows are large enough to admit a human and extend downward for several feet, though they are only about three feet across. Of course, the parents are never far off—any predator that tries to crawl inside the burrow will face a couple of angry adult badgers within seconds.

Rules

The badger prefers to defend itself from its protected burrow, only coming out of the entrance far enough to bite and slash at its opponent.

Temperature: The magical ability of the snow badger works like the Temperature talent, except it can affect open areas to a radius of 20 yards around the badger. For each 10 degrees of cold, those

unprepared to face it take Step 3 damage per round. No armor protects against this damage, but the gamemaster may reduce this damage by whatever amount he feels is appropriate for targets wearing some kind of warm winter clothing. For example, if a snow badger lowers the temperature by 30 degrees, every person and creature in the affected area (except the badger) takes Step 9/D8+D6 damage from the cold every round.

Adventure Hook

The characters are traveling in the mountains when they come across a large snow badger burrow, which they mistake for the entrance to a nearby kaer. The characters climb down into the burrow just as the adult badgers are returning. Once they realize their mistake, the characters must fight their way past the angry and frightened mother and father of the helpless badger cubs.

Song Sprite

DEX: 5 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 2
PER: 5 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 8

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack: NA
Damage: NA

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 13
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 5

Death Rating: 22
Wound Threshold: 4
Unconsciousness Rating: 13

Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 2

Combat Movement: 32[+] **Full Movement**: 64[+]

[+] This value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Entrancement (3): 8

Legend Points: 90

Equipment: None

Loot: Lair may contain 50–100 silver pieces worth of jewelry per sprite, taken from previous victims.

Commentary

These small, delicate, beautiful creatures flit around on sparkling wings seemingly spun of gossamer threads. Though they resemble windlings, song sprites rarely exceed 6 inches in height. They are actually a variety of will o' the wisp that produce sound rather than light. By modulating the sound they produce, these creatures can create harmonious, ethereal melodies as they fly through the Blood Wood. Many song sprites are harmless, and visitors may see a few flitting around Queen Alachia's palace. Like the will o' the wisps, however, some song sprites were driven mad by the Scourge and have since used their songs to sow death and corruption.

Rules

Song sprites are commonly attracted to small, shiny objects such as gems and jewelry. Their small size prohibits them from carrying off much, but they will often take any small items that their victims were carrying (up to half a pound in weight). Sprites usually live in small groves, and each sprite adorns its nest with items it has collected.

Entrancement: A sprite's song can be heard up to 100 yards away from the sprite, entrancing Name-givers and drawing them toward the music. The sprites use their melodies to draw victims into deadly situations—into quicksand, towards groups of hunting wood lions, and so on. A single sprite's song is not terribly dangerous. However, song sprites often travel in groups, which enables them to weave more complex and powerful melodies. In a group, each sprite beyond the first adds +1 step to the song's Entrancement step. If the Entrancement Test succeeds, the target becomes entranced and immediately begins to move toward the sprites, heedless of any danger nearby. Sprites may attempt to enchant only one target per round.

Stajian

DEX: 7 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 10
PER: 5 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 4

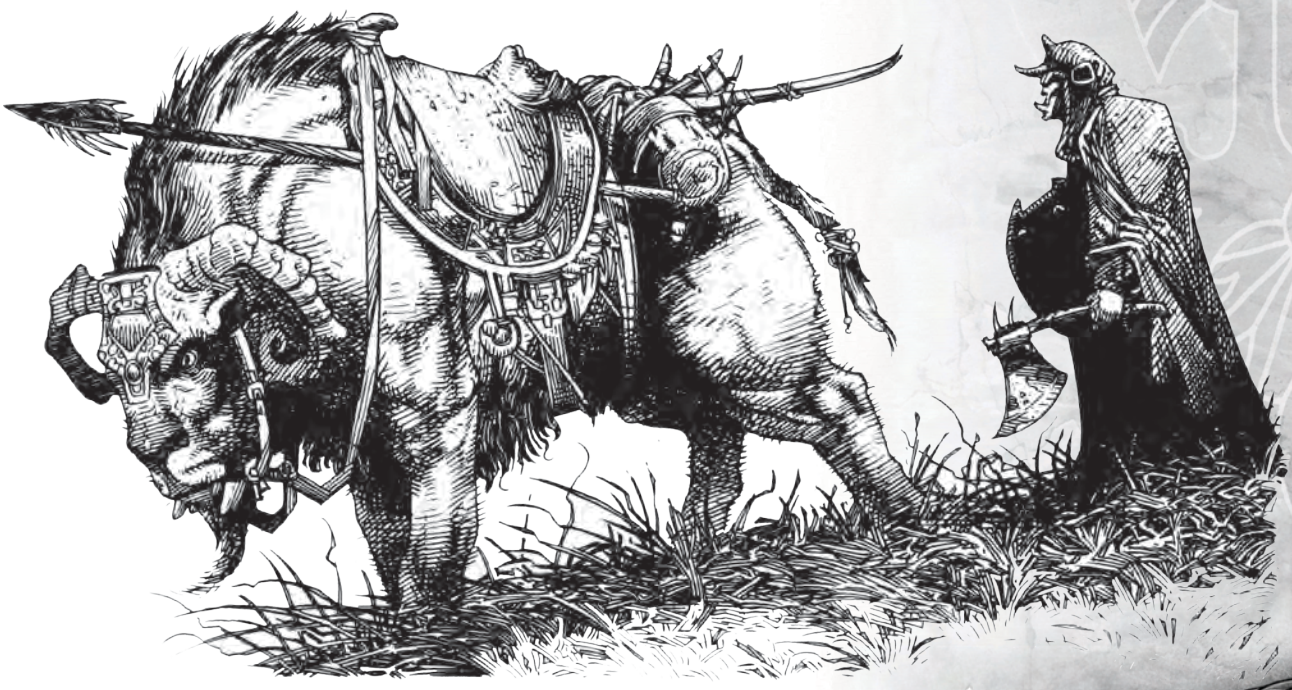
Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 9
Damage:
Charge (8): 18
Gore (4): 14

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 54 (60)
Wound Threshold: 15
Unconsciousness Rating: 47 (52)

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 11

Combat Movement: 55 **Full Movement**: 110



Powers: Charge (4), Durability (1), Enhanced Senses (Listen, Sight) (2): 7

Legend Points: 135

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Stajian are large, bison-like animals often used as mounts by ork cavalry. They are 6 feet high at the shoulder—less massive than a thundra beast, but faster, and far stronger than a horse. Their broad hooves allow them to traverse maountains and swamps with equal ease. Stajian live wild on the plains of Barsaive. They eat anything from grass to tree limbs and usually congregate in herds of five to ten females and young, and one to six males. They are rare to encounter in most other places.

Rules

Ornery in the extreme, wild stajian frequently fight for dominance of their herd, and such behavior continues with domesticated animals, meaning stabled stajian must be watched carefully. This tendency can be trained to be directed at enemy mounts, and a ridden stajian will gleefully gore, bite and kick opposing animals or Name-givers without direction from its rider.

No troops that use stajian consider the beasts to be trained for war since their use of such tactics are unreliable to control.

STINGER

DEX: 9 **STR**: 7 **TOU**: 4
PER: 4 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 10
Number of Actions: 3
Attack (3): 12
Damage:
2 × Claws (1): 8
Head Stinger (2): 9
Tail Stinger (3): 10

Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 27 (33)
Wound Threshold: 6
Unconsciousness Rating: 18 (23)

Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 8

Combat Movement: 70/30[+] **Full Movement**: 140/60[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's burrowing Movement rate.

Powers: Climbing[S] (3): 12, Durability (1), Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 6, Poison (Head) (SD 10; Damage 10), Poison (Tail) (SD 12; Damage 12), Spellcasting (8): 12

Legend Points: 375

Equipment: None

Loot: Stingers and poison sacs worth 2D10 × 10 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Small and rodent-like, the stinger stands a mere 4 feet tall, with much of its body drooping over its short hind legs. Its upper half tapers into a narrow head, flanked on either side by vicious barbs. The beast has two even shorter front legs, which it uses to dig tunnels, climb walls (though rarely), and attack prey. These limbs end in long, sharp claws that can swiftly make a bloody mess of most Name-givers. The creature's lower half tapers into a sturdy tail, also tipped with a sharp barb. Its back legs, slightly longer than the front ones, give it an amazingly fast running speed.

Stingers tend to gather in swarms of 15 to 20, preferring underground spots such as natural caves and abandoned kaers. Unlike many creatures, these beasts do not shy away from Horror-taint; more than a few swarms of them roam the Badlands in search of food. Stingers uses their front claws to dig long, intricate tunnels through the soil that makes up their homes. They are also appallingly swift—faster than almost any other land-bound creature in Barsaive, and a group of Name-givers can succumb to a swarm of these beasts as easily as any other animal on which the stingers prey.

Stingers will eat any type of living animal, from small rats and mice to thundra beasts and even elephants. The small stinger can bring down such a variety of beasts larger than itself because it always hunts in swarms and because its poison is unbelievably potent. Stingers attack in groups of five or more from all directions at once, dashing by their prey and raking it with their curved front claws. As the creature passes by, it also strikes with its tail stinger, injecting the victim with venom that eats away at the prey's flesh. This poison can burn through flesh and bone as easily as fire burns human hair. Alchemists and magicians greatly prize stinger venom. Many an adventurer has met his death attempting to harvest it from a stinger swarm.

Rules

Stingers usually attack with their claws, raking an opponent with both forepaws, but when fighting creatures their own size may grapple their victims (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 411 of the **Player's Compendium**) and attempt to use their head stingers. When attacking Name-givers, stingers rely on their claws and tail stingers.

Poison: Any time a victim attacked by a stinger's tail suffers a Wound, the stinger has injected the victim with its poison. The acidic tail venom does Step 12/2D10 damage for 3 rounds before it wears off. In addition to this damage, the venom also burns away the victim's flesh (and possibly bones). If this burning damage causes a Wound, treat it as described under the optional **Damage To A Limb** rules in the **Combat** chapter on p. 401 of the **Player's Compendium**. The poison in the head stingers is slightly less potent than the poison in the tail, and causes only Step 10/D10+D6 damage.

Swift Attacks: Stingers are extremely swift. They may use the Split Movement combat option (see the **Combat** chapter of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**), leaping forward from behind rocks or from crevices to slash at or sting their opponents, then ducking back into cover.

Adventure Hook

When the characters venture into a forgotten kaer, they notice a number of holes about three to four feet high in the walls of many of the kaer's passageways. As they move deeper within the kaer, the characters stumble on a large swarm of stingers that has lived there since the last years of the Scourge. To get out alive, the characters must defeat the stingers.

Stone Lion

DEX: 10 **STR**: 9 **TOU**: 12
PER: 6 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 9
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 12
Damage:
Bite (7): 16
2 × Claws (3): 12
Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 15
Mystic Armor: 5

Death Rating: 60
Wound Threshold: 20
Unconsciousness Rating: 53
Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 10

Combat Movement: 67 **Full Movement**: 134

Powers: Battle Shout[S] (Roar) (3): 8, Climbing[S] (3): 13, Great Leap[S] (3): 13, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk[S] (3): 13

Legend Points: 445

Equipment: None

Loot: Elemental earth worth 3D6 × 20 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Like the brithan, stone lions are part savage mountain creature and part angry earth elemental. These small, gray mountain lions have fur as hard as rock, along with razor-sharp, crystal-edged claws and teeth that can tear armor as easily as flesh. Stealthy and patient hunters, they stalk mountain goats and other creatures, and are territorial enough to attack a full-grown troll who intrudes on their hunting grounds. Most stone lions are solitary, but hunters and travelers have occasionally reported seeing a mated pair. Crystal raiders sometimes hunt stone lions for their pelts, which can be made into strong and flexible hide armor. Stone lion flesh is tough and unpleasant to eat. Hunting a stone lion is often considered a Rite of Passage for a young crystal raider before he undergoes his Rite of Naming.

Storm Crow

DEX: 7 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 2
PER: 6 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 9
Damage:
Claws (2): 4
Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 12
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 20
Wound Threshold: 4
Unconsciousness Rating: 11
Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 2

Combat Movement: 22/43[+] **Full Movement**: 44/86[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 8, Lightning (3): 8, Spellcasting (3): 9

Legend Points: 50

Equipment: None

Loot: Silver talons worth 20–25 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Storm crows are often mistaken for the larger and more aggressive blood ravens, though the two birds are natural enemies. Storm crows will go out of their way to attack blood ravens, protecting the other animals of Blood Wood in the process. Storm crows are commonly found in the same areas as blood ravens, including the northern and southern stretches of the forest. Storm crows can often be seen cavorting in the rain and wind when storms pass over the Blood Wood, a time when other birds seek shelter. This kinship with the elemental power of storms gives these birds a dramatic magical power that they employ in combat.

Rules

Capturing and training a storm crow is extraordinarily difficult. They are naturally resistant to magical abilities and spells that control or dominate animals, such as Dominate Beast and Animal Bond. Use of any animal-based talents or spells requires one result level better than normal against storm crows. When diving toward a target, a storm crow's outstretched silver talons briefly glow blue and then discharge a small bolt of lightning.

Lightning: Normally, a single storm crow may create only one bolt of lightning per day. When engaged in combat during a storm, storm crows can cast a bolt of lightning every other combat round for the storm's duration.

Storm Wolf

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

Initiative: 9
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 9
Damage:
Bite (6): 12
Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 3

Death Rating: 32
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 24
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 7

Combat Movement: 46 **Full Movement**: 92

Powers: Battle Shout[S] (Howl) (3): 8, Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 7, Great Leap[S] (3): 10, Maneuver[S] (3): 10, Sense Undead (3): 8, Storm Call (4): 9

Legend Points: 75 (125 for leader)

Equipment: None

Loot: Pelt worth 75 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

An excellent hunter, the handsome storm wolf stands taller and is a little stronger than a normal wolf. Storm wolves travel in packs of 8 to 24 animals, and hunt travelers only if desperately hungry or if they sense evil emanating from the traveling party. A storm wolf's pure, elemental spirit can detect impurities commonly found in undead spirits, and the wolves go out of their way to destroy such impurities. Legends say storm wolves have hunted

undead creatures across hundreds of leagues. In the past, storm wolves have led travelers to sites of the undead they wish to see destroyed, creating a storm to let a party approach safely.

Rules

Elementalists are forbidden by their Discipline to take storm wolf pelts. Also, any character who has skinned a storm wolf for its pelt can never receive aid from another storm wolf; every wolf's spirit can sense the character's desecration of its fellow wolf.

Storm Call: Storm wolves have an ability called Storm Call, an eerie, whistling howl that summons a storm. The pack leader take 2 Strain points of damage and makes a Storm Call (20) Test—each additional wolf in the pack adds a +1 bonus to the leader's Storm Call Test. If the test succeeds, the storm arrives in Step 4/D6 rounds. It disperses after one hour, unless the leader's command dispels it earlier. Should the pack leader die, another wolf takes his place and automatically inherits control of the storm. During the round after the pack leader calls the storm, the storm wolves leap into action. When the storm arrives, the fury of the elements cause the wolves' opponents to suffer a –3 penalty to all of their Action Tests. The storm energizes the wolves, who gain a +3 bonus to their Attack and Damage Tests. Injured wolves may make use one of their Recovery Test during as their action that round, adding a +3 bonus to their test result. The normal waiting period between Recovery Tests does not apply to storm wolves while the storm is in effect. Though it can heal injuries, the rains do not revive dead wolves, however. The leader of the storm wolf pack can also heal an injured character by placing his muzzle in the character's lap, thereby transferring the healing power of the storm to the character.

Thundra Beast

DEX: 6 **STR**: 11 **TOU**: 12
PER: 5 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 7
Damage:
Charge (8): 19
Horns (4): 15
Trample (2): 13

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 60 (66)
Wound Threshold: 17
Unconsciousness Rating: 53 (58)

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 12

Combat Movement: 40
Full Movement: 80

Powers: Charge (4), Durability (1), Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 7

Legend Points: 215

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

This large, four-legged animal looks like a cross between a rhinoceros and a dinosaur, with a tough, rock-like skin covering its entire body. Thundra beasts stand 7 feet tall at the shoulder, are 10 to 12 feet long, and weigh about 5,000 pounds. Each thundra beast has a large horn in the center of its forehead, which it uses to attack opponents.

Ork scorcher groups frequently ride thundra beasts; adventurers will rarely encounter a thundra beast in the wild. Thundra beasts usually attack by charging their target and goring with their horns or trampling with their hooves.

Tiger

DEX: 5 **STR**: 7 **TOU**: 5
PER: 3 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 5
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (3): 8
Damage:
Bite (5): 12

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 3
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 32
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 24

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 8

Combat Movement: 32
Full Movement: 64

Powers: Battle Shout[S] (Roar) (3): 5, Climbing[S] (2): 7, Great Leap[S] (2): 7, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk[S] (2): 7

Legend Points: 60

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

A tiger is a large carnivorous mammal found in Barsaive's jungles and plains. A tiger's fur is usually white, yellow or golden in color, with black stripes.

TRIPLICANT

DEX: 8 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 11
PER: 3 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 9
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (4): 12
Damage:
Fist (10): 16
Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 5

Death Rating: 55
Wound Threshold: 16
Unconsciousness Rating: 48
Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 6

Combat Movement: 43 **Full Movement**: 86

Powers: Triplicate (10)

Legend Points: 685 for core creature; 225 for each copy

Equipment: None

Loot: Odds and ends worth D8 × 10 silver pieces.

Commentary

Solitary creatures, triplicants stand about 5 feet tall and have bluish-white skin and purple eyes. Their hands look huge in proportion to their slender bodies. Triplicants wander the land, eking out a living through hunting and theft. Though of subhuman intelligence, they display great cunning, ambushing unwary travelers in search of ordinary items that they consider treasure. According to rumor, triplicants sometimes manage to collect items of real value along with the everyday odds and ends they hoard.

Rules

Triplicants can conjure copies of themselves to engage in combat, using their Triplicate power.

TROAJIN

DEX: 5 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 6
PER: 4 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (3): 8
Damage:
Claws (3): 9
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 38
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 30
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 7

Combat Movement: 32 **Full Movement**: 64

Powers: Battle Shout [S] (Roar) (3): 6, Climbing [S] (2): 7, Great Leap [S] (2): 7, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk [S] (2): 7

Legend Points: 60

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Troajin are tiger-like animals native to jungle and mountain country. The average troajin stands approximately 4 feet at the shoulder and is 8 feet long, a combination of a 5 foot body and a 3 foot tail. Wild troajin are fiercely territorial and defend themselves with sharp claws and teeth. Troajin often become animal companions for Beastmasters.

UNICORN

The Scourge wiped out many of Barsaive's wondrous beasts and transformed others nearly beyond recognition. The latter fate befell the unicorn, though it was greatly improved rather than corrupted. Before the Scourge, the unicorn was one of Barsaive's most feared predators. Even the mere sight of the foul beasts, with their matted fur and blood-encrusted horns, struck fear in the hearts of most Name-givers. Unlike most predators, the unicorns did not hunt merely to feed themselves; they seemed to enjoy killing for its own sake. These unicorns hunted in packs and showed an uncanny intelligence that allowed them to take on much larger and more powerful creatures. They often hunted thundra beasts, manticores, and even an occasional dragon, surrounding their prey and wearing it down with sheer numbers. Some of these vicious, malignant beasts learned to lie in wait along footpaths and trade roads, where they would ambush small bands of adventurers or lone travelers, then feast on their flesh. For Name-givers, these unicorns became a special danger, for once they tasted the tender flesh of humans and the like, they often forsook other prey. Many of these same herds even took to raiding Name-giver villages, attacking under the cover of darkness and using their terrible horns and sharp hooves to devastate all in their paths. Soon, the hamlets of the countryside learned to fear the sound of hoof-beats in the night.

Inexplicably, the Scourge changed the unicorn from vicious creatures with a taste for Name-giver flesh to gentle beasts of great beauty. Now, unicorns have become solitary animals that feed on the plants of the forest, rather than its inhabitants. Though unicorns look like large horses with horns on their heads, these noble creatures are nowhere near as docile as the farm beasts. They are gentler than they were, but not if someone is trying to capture them. A unicorn still loves its freedom as much as ever. Most unicorns are pure white, though there are spotted and even black ones. The unicorn's horn is a terrifying weapon, two to three feet long and supposedly capable of killing a Horror with one blow. The popular belief in the horn's power may well be just a myth, however. Certainly the horn can cause a vicious stab wound—it can even plunge through bone if the beast is galloping fast enough when it strikes.

Whether or not it can kill Horrors, a fresh unicorn horn possesses a remarkable sensitivity to poisons. When touched to any substance even the least bit venomous—or at least poisonous enough to harm the unicorn—the horn changes color. The darker it turns, the more dangerous the poison. Also, a tiny sprinkling of powdered unicorn horn can neutralize any poison, no matter how potent.

Post-Scourge Unicorn

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

Initiative: 8
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 9
Damage:
Horn (10): 20
Trample (6): 16
Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 13
Social Defense: 13
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 7

Death Rating: 50 **Recovery Tests**: 4
Wound Threshold: 14 **Knockdown**: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 43

Combat Movement: 55 **Full Movement**: 110

Powers: Calm Others (1): 11, Detect Poison, Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 9

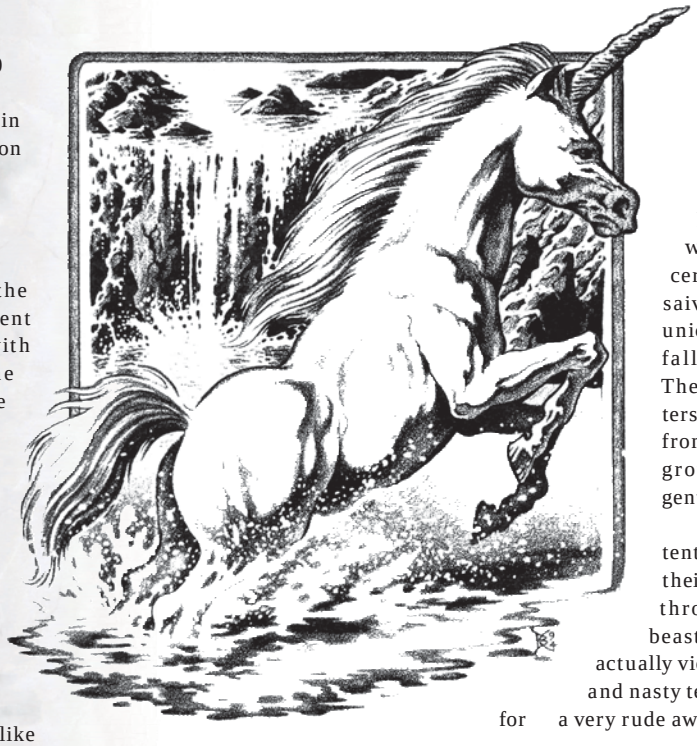
Legend Points: 205

Equipment: None

Loot: Horn worth at least 2,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points). Note that in most areas of Barsaive, possession of a unicorn horn is a criminal offense.

Rules

The changes wrought by the Scourge created several different variations of unicorns, each with its own distinct powers. The description and statistics above apply to the most common type. Incidentally, a unicorn's horn cannot kill a Horror with one blow. Though they prefer to avoid combat, all unicorns can be terrifying opponents when cornered or if their young are threatened. A unicorn typically attacks by goring its opponent with its horn. The beast can also kick with its hind legs like a strong horse.



Detect Poison: A unicorn's horn can detect poisons if a large part of the horn is immersed in the substance in question. The horn darkens to indicate that a substance is poisonous; the darker the color, the deadlier the poison. Depending on the type of poison, its potency, and the concentration, the horn can take anywhere from one to ten minutes to change color. Powdered unicorn horn neutralizes all types of poisons.

Pre-Scourge Unicorn

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

Initiative: 8 **Physical Defense**: 9
Number of Actions: 1 (2; see text) **Spell Defense**: 13
Attack (3): 10 **Social Defense**: 13
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 0
Bite (8): 18 **Mystic Armor**: 7
Horn (10): 20
Trample (6): 16

Death Rating: 50 **Recovery Tests**: 4
Wound Threshold: 14 **Knockdown**: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 43

Combat Movement: 55 **Full Movement**: 110

Powers: Detect Poison, Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 9

Legend Points: 350

Equipment: None

Loot: Horn worth at least 2,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points). Note that in most areas of Barsaive, possession of a unicorn horn is a criminal offense.

Rules

Few in number, pre-Scourge unicorns are still in existence. These unicorns thirst for blood and killing. They do not have the ability to Calm Others as post-Scourge unicorns do, but have their own power instead.

Blood Rage: A pre-Scourge unicorn that hits with a bite attack and delivers a Wound becomes infused with blood lust, gaining +1 attack per round and receiving a +4 bonus to its Attack and Damage Tests.

Adventure Hook

A band of Theran slavers has taken to killing unicorns wherever they find them, and certain people in southern Barsaive are fearful that a herd of unicorns near their village may fall victim to the marauding Therans. They hire the characters to herd the unicorns far away from the Therans' usual hunting grounds in hope of saving the gentle beasts.

Unfortunately, the well-intentioned locals don't know that their unicorn herd is made up of throwbacks to the pre-Scourge beast—these "gentle" animals are actually vicious killers with sharp teeth and nasty tempers. The characters are in for a very rude awakening.

Velos

DEX: 9 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 12
PER: 7 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 8 **Physical Defense**: 11
Number of Actions: 2 **Spell Defense**: 9
Attack (3): 12 **Social Defense**: 7
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 3
Spear (4): 16 **Mystic Armor**: 2
Tail Knife (4): 16

Death Rating: 62 (68) **Recovery Tests**: 6
Wound Threshold: 18 **Knockdown**: 12
Unconsciousness Rating: 55 (60)

Combat Movement: 46 **Full Movement**: 92

Powers: Climbing^{S} (2): 11, Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 9, Silent Walk^{S} (2): 11, Swimming^{S} (2): 14

Legend Points: 270

Equipment: Spears (Damage: STR + 4), footman's shield, bone knives (Damage: STR + 3 for tail)

Loot: Villages contain feathers, furs, and handicrafts worth 200 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

The velos inhabit the darkest interior of the Servos Jungle. Long considered mythical, the velos have only recently been rediscovered by agents of House K'tenshin. At first sight, a velos' reptilian features and long tail can easily lead observers to mistake the creature for a tall t'skrang. In truth, velos are taller than the average obsidiman and possess long, sharp teeth and razor-like claws on their feet. First reports made the velos out

as savage beasts, because they hunted down and ate many of the early K'tenshin explorers. However, more recent evidence indicates that the velos may be Name-givers closely related to the primitive t'skrang of the Servos Jungle. According to all accounts, the velos live in four or five isolated villages located deep in the Mist Swamps.

VETTA

DEX: 4 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 3
PER: 3 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (3): 7
Damage:
Horns (2): 7

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 24 (42)
Wound Threshold: 5
Unconsciousness Rating: 15 (30)

Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 6

Combat Movement: 26
Full Movement: 52

Powers: Durability (3), Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 5, Tire Others (1): 5

Legend Points: 40

Equipment: None

Loot: Horns worth 3D6 × 10 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Like the unicorn, the vetta owes its modern-day appearance and behavior to the Scourge. The vetta, however, suffered terribly from the Horrors' influence, becoming an ugly changeling version of its former self. The ancient vettas were a perfect source of food for many denizens of Barsaive, being slow and stupid and meaty enough to feed several people. The modern-day vetta is still slow and stupid, but it possesses a powerful magical enchantment that keeps it safe from harm. It seems to have gained this ability as it lost every natural defense it once had, which suggests that even Horror-tainted creatures must bow to the essential harmony of the Universe.

Vettas resemble large gazelles, standing 5 to 6 feet tall at the shoulder. The beast prefers mountains to plains and grasslands, and its legs end in hooves. The beast's long, curved horns have grown too tangled to be used in its defense, made so by the corruption of the Horrors. Its once-graceful, long legs have grown so short that the animal can no longer run fast except in brief spurts. Its eyes have grown small, almost beady. Its ears are perhaps half the size of a deer's, and it reacts sluggishly to loud noises or nearby predators.

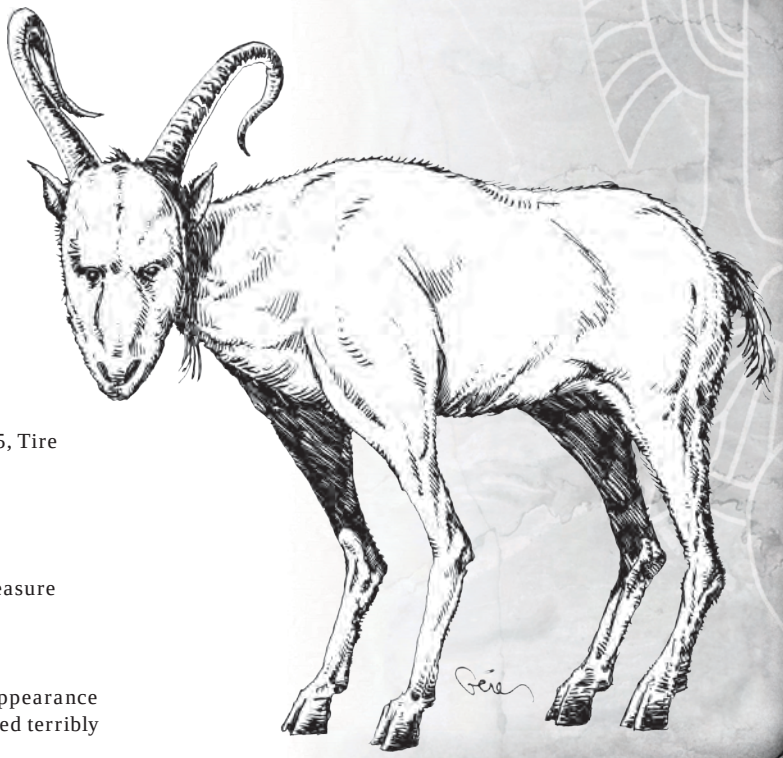
The modern-day vetta's powerful magical defense causes creatures around it to grow unnaturally listless and tired. A predator within range of this power forgets what it was hunting for and most often decides to take a long nap in the hot sun. The vettas amble away from the drowsy predator, which after a time slowly comes to its senses.

The vetta's power waxes and wanes depending on the time of day. During the early morning, when predators are most active, this power is strong enough to affect any creature that approaches within 20 yards of a vetta herd. At midday, when the temperature is high and most predators usually find a shady spot to sleep, the power wanes to almost nothing. The power increases again at twilight, then drops to almost nothing overnight while the vettas sleep. Nocturnal hunters can almost always make a meal of a vetta.

Because vettas are herd creatures, their power seems to depend on how many of them are using it. A predator stalking a single vetta won't have much trouble catching it, but trying to hunt one from a whole herd is a fruitless exercise.

Rules

If the vetta's would-be attacker shakes off or never succumbs



to the creature's magical ability, he or she can easily dispatch the vetta. In close combat, vettas can gash an opponent with their horns, but most often they run from predators.

Tire Others: Because the vettas' Tire Others power depends on their numbers, the step number for this ability rises according to the number of animals in a given vetta herd. The base step number increases by +1 for every creature in the herd beyond the first. For example, a herd of sixteen vettas makes a Spellcasting Test using Step 20/D20+D8+D6 (base Step 5 + 15 = 20). The larger the herd, the more difficult this ability becomes to defend against. To reflect the fact that the vettas' power waxes and wanes throughout the day, halve the Tire Others step at midday and reduce it by three-quarters during the night. During morning and twilight hours, the vettas' power is at full strength. Once the gamemaster has determined the proper step number, he makes a single Tire Others Test for the entire herd.

Adventure Hook

While the characters are traveling through mountains, they run into a herd of vettas. They suddenly become extremely tired and decide to have a quick little nap. Unfortunately for them, a pride of stone lions also fell into the vettas' trap. When the sun climbs higher and the vettas' power wanes, the characters and the lions begin to awaken—very, very close to each other.

VIRAAS

DEX: 8 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 10
PER: 5 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 7

Initiative: 8
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 10
Damage:
Bite (5): 15
2 × Claws (2): 12

Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 54
Wound Threshold: 15
Unconsciousness Rating: 47

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 11

Combat Movement: 58
Full Movement: 116

Powers: Climbing[S] (2): 10

Legend Points (2): 350

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Viraas are lizards that live on the massed clenkas in Death's Sea known as fool's islands, usually hiding in relatively cool pockets beneath the surface of the island. Viraas measure 5 feet long, and stand 3 feet high at the shoulder. Their thick skin is most often a dark beige or tan color, and is covered with what appear to be warts. These are actually scars from touching the hottest molten stone of Death's Sea. Viraas are very rare. Legends state that Death kept them as pets and that they await his return. Death supposedly loved these creatures so well because they can kill a person with a single bite.

Rules

Viraas attack with their claws and by biting. Their unusual habitat made them immune to fire, but vulnerable to water.

Immunity to Fire: Viraas are immune to the effects of all fire-based attacks, both magic and mundane. Because all recorded encounters with viraas have taken place near areas rich in elemental fire, we assume they protect it instinctively.

Powerful Bite: Viraas have incredibly powerful jaws and sharp teeth, capable of penetrating nearly all forms of armor. All successful bite attacks are armor-defeating.

Vulnerability to Water: Viraas armor has no effect against water-based attacks. Attacks made with elemental water can actually daze them into lethargy. An elemental water attack that succeeds with a Good or better result causes the viraas to lose 1 step to its Dexterity step and all related stats for the duration of that encounter.

VOLUS

DEX: 7 **STR**: 9 **TOU**: 10
PER: 4 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 8
Damage:
Bite (1): 10
Claws (6): 15

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 5

Death Rating: 54 (84)
Wound Threshold: 15
Unconsciousness Rating: 47 (72)

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 10

Combat Movement: 46/18[+] **Full Movement**: 92/36[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's burrowing Movement rate.

Powers: Climbing[S] (2): 9, Durability (5), Sense Magic (6): 10

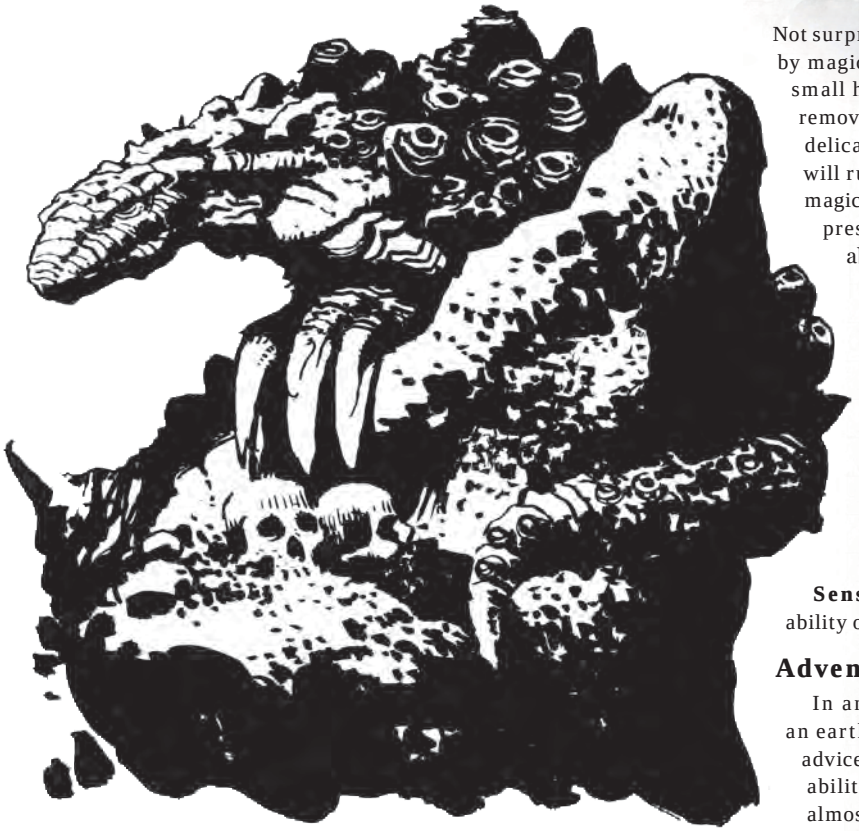
Legend Points: 195

Equipment: None

Loot: Magic-sensing organ worth 300 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

The volus' entire 15 foot long body is covered with tough, chi-



tinous plates of varied hues and sizes. The huge claws tipping its front feet are far larger than its rear claws, and its head resembles the bowl of a thick shovel. It uses its strangely shaped head and large front claws to dig vast tunnels beneath the earth in search of food.

The way the volus finds food is truly amazing. The beast can smell magic as a dog follows a scent. Once the volus catches a whiff of its prey, it digs through the earth until it is directly beneath its intended lunch. Then the volus collapses the earth beneath its victim, entrapping and suffocating the victim underground. The volus rarely fails to catch a meal this way; six feet of earth above the victim's head will kill it as surely as claws and teeth. Not many Name-givers can dig half as well as the volus, so travelers beware this beast. One safeguard against it is to stand on solid rock; the volus cannot dig through stone. One indication of a volus's hunting ground is the presence of several sinkholes in a given area.

The volus's ability to sense magic is highly refined—even the most alert Horror might find it difficult to match this creature's prowess. The volus can sense any use of magic, no matter how small (though it can sense larger uses of magic over longer distances, of course). Even the feeble magical aura given off by enchanted items acts as a beacon for the volus. If a great deal of magic is being used, several voluses might converge on the user from a wide range. A Wizard once botched a powerful magical experiment and blew the top of his house off; half a day later, thirty voluses arrived and proceeded to drag the house under the ground. It is believed that the volus developed its unique ability over time as the rise of the world's magical energy created many creatures with innate magical powers. All of these the volus can sense, stalk, and eat.

The volus is also a territorial beast, preferring to mark out its own hunting grounds. These hunting grounds may be any region where a good deal of magic is used—towns and villages with too many adepts in them often fall prey to volus infestations. They also often hunt on the high roads of Barsaive, particularly in recent years as more and more of the magically adept travel on those roads in search of adventure. A party of several adepts is often an invitation to dine to any number of voluses, depending on how many of the creatures' hunting grounds they pass on their journey.

Not surprisingly, a volus's magic-sensing organ is prized by magicians and alchemists. The little gland forms a small hard lump at the base of the neck, and can be removed with a sharp knife. It is, however, extremely delicate—one touch of the blade on the gland itself will ruin it. To prevent decay, it has to be placed in a magical container or preserved with a spell. Carefully preserved, the organ will retain its magic-sensing abilities indefinitely.

The volus can also be trained to act as a sort of hunting dog for magical threats, including Horrors—most convenient for helping travelers avoid such perils. To train a volus, of course, first requires catching one—and once it is trained, its master should keep it well fed.

Rules

In close combat, a volus attacks with its huge digging claws and its shovel-shaped mouth.

Sense Magic: The volus can use its magic-sensing ability over a range of ten miles.

Adventure Hook

In an attempt to find a legendary kaer buried by an earthquake or a landslide, the characters take the advice of a sage who suggests that the magic-sensing abilities of the volus might help. The intact kaer is almost certainly full of magical treasures, and a volus will be drawn to it like a bloodhound after a scent. To find the kaer and get their hands on its wealth, the characters must seek out a volus and somehow use it to lead them to their goal without getting killed and eaten in the attempt.

WATER STRIDER

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

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 8
Damage:
Bite (2): 8

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 34
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 26

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 9

Combat Movement: 43
Full Movement: 86

Powers: Climbing[S] (2): 8

Legend Points: 65

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Water striders are one of the many varieties of giant insects that live on the upper reaches of the Serpent River, near Iopos. These large spiders have bodies about the size of a human's head and legs that extend 3 to 5 feet in every direction. The creatures' long legs enable them to actually walk on the surface of the water. Water striders avoid all contact with swimmers and other aquatic life forms whenever possible.

While not dangerous, water striders can present a considerable nuisance to riverboat crews, because they often climb the sides of riverboats and raid the ship's stores for food. The ravenous creatures can consume a month's worth of provisions in just a few short hours, leaving the crew to go hungry. Boatmen consider it bad luck for a water strider to cross the path of their vessels.

WHIRLCLAW

DEX: 10 **STR**: 4 **TOU**: 5
PER: 5 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 12
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 12
Damage:
Claws (3): 7

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 32
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 24

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 4

Combat Movement: 64/30+ **Full Movement**: 128/60+

+ The second value is the creature's burrowing Movement rate.

Powers: Climbing S (3): 13, Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 7, Great Leap S (3): 13

Legend Points: 110

Equipment: None

Loot: Two claws worth 3D6 silver pieces each (count as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

The whirlclaw is a small, exceptionally quick and nimble biped that lives in shallow burrows along the forest's edge and other thinly wooded parts of the Blood Wood. The shaggy creatures rarely exceed 2 feet in height, but they possess long, spindly arms that end in sharp, wickedly curved claws. The whirlclaw relies on speed and multiple claw attacks to overcome its prey, often leaping from target to target to cause chaos and confusion.

Rules

The creature preys on small mammals and birds, though it sometimes travels in groups of 4 to 6 and attacks larger prey such as Name-givers. After downing its prey, the whirlclaw usually gorges itself, then returns to its burrow and sleeps for up to a week. The whirlclaw fears fire and usually flees when confronted with open flames.

WILD BOAR

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

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (3): 8
Damage:
Charge (11): 17
Tusks (5): 11

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 40
Wound Threshold: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 32

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 7

Combat Movement: 32 **Full Movement**: 64

Powers: Charge (6), Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 6

Legend Points: 105

Equipment: None

Loot: Tusks worth 3D6 silver pieces (count as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Wild boars are hunted throughout Barsaive and their meat is a staple in many woodland settlements. A single male leads and protects each boar pack, attacking all threats to the pack with a pair of wicked tusks that can cause ragged and bleeding wounds. Typically, a boar directs its first attack charge at the nearest character or animal that poses a threat.

WILL O' THE WISP

DEX: 6 **STR**: 2 **TOU**: 3
PER: 4 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 1
Attack: NA
Damage: NA

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 12
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 7

Death Rating: 23
Wound Threshold: 5
Unconsciousness Rating: 14

Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 2

Combat Movement: 40+ **Full Movement**: 80+

+ This value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Spellcasting (6): 10, Thread Weaving T (6): 10*

* All of the magical Disciplines—Elementalism, Illusionism, Nethermancy, Wizardry—are covered by the same step number.

Spells: Choose one or more spells. Common spells used by this creature include: Repel Animal, Alarm, Circle of Well-Being, Metal Scream, Mind Dagger, Spirit Grip

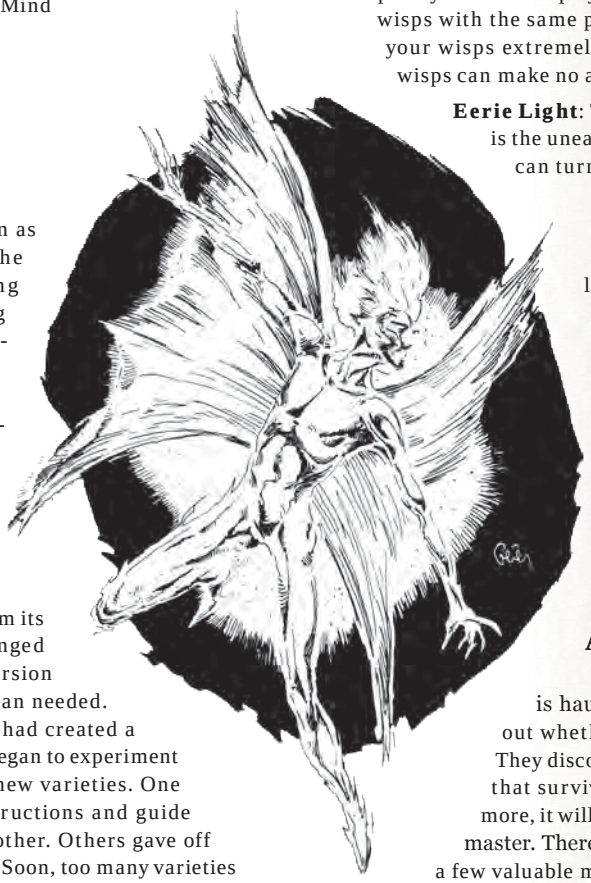
Legend Points: 85 + Spells

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The will o' the wisp began as a magical construct, but the Scourge turned something harmless into something dreadful... or at least unpleasant. The first will o' the wisps served as portable lights. With one of these little creatures floating beside him, a magician never needed to carry a candle or torch and had his hands free to open doors, cast spells, and so on. To keep itself alive, the little creature drew magic from its surroundings, which it changed into sustenance. This conversion threw off the light the magician needed. Never able to stop once they had created a good thing, many magicians began to experiment with the wisps and created new varieties. One could remember simple instructions and guide people from one place to another. Others gave off sound or heat instead of light. Soon, too many varieties of wisps existed for any one person to remember.



During the Scourge, most of the wisps were left outside the kaers, where the Horrors slew and ate them. Some of the wisps, however, hid from the Horrors, and thus survived and bred. After five centuries of existence as wild creatures, the wisps have become just that. Most are utterly feral, and many were twisted by the Horrors as well. These latter specimens often dimly remember their ancient duties and perform them to the best of their insane abilities. A few—a very few—are sane and still remember their original purpose. Some of these, created as guides, can still lead people to their master's home (or the remnants of it) and the treasures, if any, that lie within.

The most dangerous wisps are those meant to paralyze, harm, or even kill those who entered their master's home without permission. The Horrors kept these wisps alive whenever they found them but drove them insane. These wisps now believe that their master's home is all of Barsaive and attack as an intruder any Name-giver they come across. Almost as dangerous are the ones called magic twisters; these wisps can drastically change the effects of any spells cast within the area of their light. Sometimes they reduce the effects to almost nothing, other times they boost a spell's power so that it flies out of the caster's control.

What makes the wisp particularly hazardous to the traveler or adventurer is the similarity of their looks and the vast difference in what they can do. All wisps emit an unearthly green light, but here any resemblance between them ends. One can't tell by looking which wisp is a still-sane guide, which a harmless light-giver, and which an insane defender of Barsaive. And because will o' the wisps have bred and multiplied on their own for five centuries, many kinds may exist that their creators never envisioned. In short, any wisp may be able to do just about anything you can imagine—and perhaps a few things no one deemed possible.

Rules

Will o' the wisps offer the gamemaster a perfect tool to completely confuse his players. The characters will never run into two wisps with the same powers. Feel free to create havoc by giving your wisps extremely weird abilities. Other than their spells, wisps can make no attacks.

Eerie Light: The only feature all wisps have in common is the unearthly green light they give off, though some can turn this light on and off.

Spells: The gamemaster determines exactly what spells a given wisp possesses; common spells include the ones listed above. Wisps might have more than one spell from more than one magician Discipline. Will o' the wisps do not use spell matrices. Any spells they can cast are innate powers. Therefore, wisps can always cast their spells without the need to spend time attuning matrices. If it is necessary to tweak the rules so that they make more sense for a given wisp, go right ahead. The gamemaster has free rein to add to the characters' paranoia.

Adventure Hook

The characters learn that a will o' the wisp is haunting a nearby region and decide to find out whether it can lead them to anything valuable. They discover that the wisp is one of the fortunate few that survived the Scourge and stayed sane; furthermore, it will lead them to the ruined home of its Wizard master. There, the characters can expect to find at least a few valuable magical items. Unknown to them, however, the wisp was actually created by another Wizard to sneak into his rival's home, kill anything living there, and generally cause massive destruction. When the characters follow the wisp home, it follows its centuries-old orders. It immediately goes berserk and tries to kill them with its powerful spells (determined by the gamemaster).

Witherfang

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

Initiative: 4 **Physical Defense**: 9
Number of Actions: 2 **Spell Defense**: 5
Attack (2): 9 **Social Defense**: 5
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 0
Bite (2): 7 (see text) **Mystic Armor**: 0
Tail (3): 8

Death Rating: 36 **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 10 **Knockdown**: Immune
Unconsciousness Rating: 28

Combat Movement: 22 **Full Movement**: 44

Powers: Camouflage (2): 6, Climbing S (2): 9, Poison (SD 12; Wither Limb), Silent Walk S (2): 9

Legend Points: 155

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Although found elsewhere in Barsaive, witherfangs are native to the Blood Wood and can be identified by their thick bodies and flared, cobra-like hoods. These snakes are named for the powerful poison transmitted through the stinger at the ends of their tails—a poison that can wither a victim's limb until it is virtually useless. The witherfang's other unique characteristic is its large number of teeth, which it uses to hold victims immobile while it administers its poisonous sting. Witherfangs usually match the colors of their surroundings, possessing a form of natural camouflage. Most are a dull gray-green, though the coloring of individual snakes may vary depending on their habitats.

Rules

A witherfang attacks by biting its victim, then coiling its body around the prey and striking with its tail stinger. The bite attack inflicts damage each round until the witherfang's grip is broken (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 411 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Strong Grapple: To break a witherfang's grip, the target must achieve an Armor-Defeating Hit against the snake. However, an Armor-Defeating Hit does not stop a tail stinger attack.

Poison: Witherfang poison has an effect similar to the Wither Limb spell (see the **Nethermancy Spells** chapter on p. 359 of the **Player's Compendium**). If a successful tail attack Wounds the target, the target may suffer the effects of the poison (see **Poison** in the **Adventuring** chapter, p. 125). If the Poison Resistance Test fails, the target's bitten limb withers. Only powerful healing magic can restore the limb to usefulness. The Reverse Withering spell will heal a withered limb. Though a withered limb can be healed, no known antidote exists. In fact, many Nethermancers and Wizards use witherfang venom to create varying paralytic poisons, as well as a poison that mimics the effects of the witherfang's sting.

Wood Lion

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

Initiative: 8 **Physical Defense**: 8
Number of Actions: 3 (5; see text) **Spell Defense**: 7
Attack (3): 9 **Social Defense**: 6
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 2
Bite (3): 8 (see text) **Mystic Armor**: 0
Claws (3): 8 (13; see text)

Death Rating: 30 **Recovery Tests**: 2
Wound Threshold: 7 **Knockdown**: 6
Unconsciousness Rating: 21

Combat Movement: 49 **Full Movement**: 98

Powers: Battle Shout S (Roar) (3): 7, Climbing S (3): 9, Great Leap S (3): 9, Low-Light Vision, Silent Walk S (6): 12

Legend Points: 205

Equipment: None

Loot: Pelt worth 40–60 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

The wood lion is equally at home in the branches of trees or on the ground. Its fur is dappled like that of a newborn deer. A

full-grown adult is approximately 5 feet long and weighs about 400 pounds.

Rules

The wood lion usually attacks from a concealed position in the undergrowth or from the lower branches of a large tree. Its first attack is always an attempt to knock down its prey. From the trees, it leaps on the target's back. When making its first attack from the ground, the wood lion can rush a distance up to its Full Movement rate and still make an attack.

Leap Attack: The momentum of rushing or leaping grants the lion a +5 bonus to its Damage step for this first attack, which is also considered to be an Attack to Knockdown (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 403 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Number of Attacks: If the lion manages to knock its victim to the ground, it can attack 5 times per round—using all four claws and a bite—while the victim remains prone. Once the target gets up, the lion may only attack 3 times per round.

Wolf

Wolves are related to domesticated dogs, but are wild, fierce carnivores that attack as a pack and maneuver to outflank their intended prey before attacking. Wolves can be encountered anywhere in Barsaive but have a preference for mountainous terrain.

The following game statistics represent a wolf pack leader and a pack member.

Wolf Pack Leader (Alpha Wolf)

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

Initiative: 8
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (3): 10
Damage:
Bite (5): 11

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 6
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 34
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 26

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 7

Combat Movement: 46 **Full Movement**: 92

Powers: Battle Shout [S] (Howl) (3): 7, Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 8, Great Leap [S] (2): 9, Maneuver [S] (2): 9, Tracking [S] (2): 8

Legend Points: 75

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Use these statistics for the alpha wolf—the leader of the wolf pack. If he is beaten, the rest of the pack will usually retreat.

Wolf Pack Member

DEX: 6 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 4
PER: 5 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 8
Damage:
Bite (5): 10

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 4
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 0

Death Rating: 27
Wound Threshold: 6
Unconsciousness Rating: 18

Recovery Tests: 1
Knockdown: 6

Combat Movement: 38 **Full Movement**: 76

Powers: Battle Shout [S] (Howl) (3): 6, Enhanced Senses (Listen, Smell) (2): 7, Great Leap [S] (2): 8, Maneuver [S] (2): 8, Tracking [S] (2): 7

Legend Points: 60

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

These statistics represent regular wolf pack members, those who loyally follow their leader.

Zoak

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

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (3): 9
Damage:
Claws (3): 8

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 3
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 38
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 30

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 5

Combat Movement: 14/40[+] **Full Movement**: 28/80[+]

[+] The second value is the creature's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 8

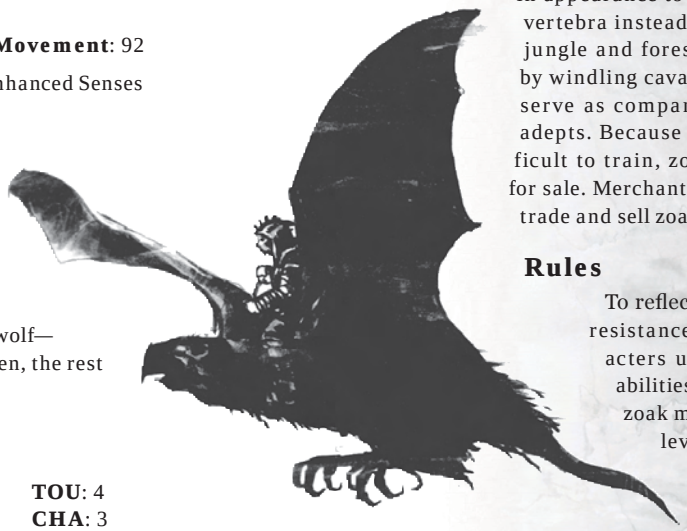
Legend Points: 70

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The zoak looks like a cross between a large bird and a bat, with feathers on its body and head and a leathery neck, wings, and tail. The creature's feathered legs each end in four eagle-like talons. Zoaks measure roughly 4 feet from beak to tail-tip. The zoak's neck is long and flexible, similar in appearance to the crakbill's, but with vertebra instead of pure muscle. These jungle and forest animals are favored by windling cavalrymen, and also often serve as companions for Beastmaster adepts. Because they usually prove difficult to train, zoaks are rarely offered for sale. Merchants in cities are known to trade and sell zoaks.



Rules

To reflect this creature's innate resistance to training, any characters using their talents and abilities to tame or command a zoak must achieve a result one level higher than normal to be successful. For example, the Animal Training talent normally requires an Average result to work against a target creature. Using Animal Training against a zoak, however, requires a Good result.

SPIRITS

What do you think prevents us from talking to them once they're dead?

• Belgaras, Troll Nethermancer •

Spirits are entities that exist solely in the various realms of astral space. Scholars and magicians agree that these varied and unique entities inhabit the netherworlds, elemental planes and other various astral regions. Beyond that, little is known about the true nature of spirits, though years of study have yielded some useful information on these beings.

Spirits rarely have a desire to come to this world without a reason all on their own. But since spirits have proven to be useful and wise, these entities are often called upon and asked for their services.

The art of attracting spirits to perform some sort of service is called **summoning**.

Using Spirits in Adventures and Campaigns

Most spirits prefer to remain in astral space and only manifest in the physical world when forced to do so by their summoner. Once a spirit has manifested physically, it can affect physical objects and characters in the same way as any other physical being.

More often than not, spirits have thoughts, feelings, likes, dislikes, and memories like Name-givers. Adepts should regard all spirits with caution and respect—spirits usually find a way to punish those who treat them with insufficient respect. But perhaps more importantly, spirits exhibit an impressive capacity to learn. As a result, some of them possess great wisdom, while others have become quite cunning and treacherous. Still others have learned to cast spells, and some carry the knowledge of all those who have summoned them, making them a valuable asset to any magician.

Magicians recognize five major categories of spirits: tasked spirits, elemental spirits, ally spirits, Named spirits, and invae spirits. Full descriptions of the different spirit types appear later in this chapter.

Motivations, Attitudes and Personality

Like Name-givers, spirits have unique motivations and attitudes. Like the motivations and attitudes of Horrors, however, those of spirits seem bizarre and alien to Name-givers. The very nature of spirits precludes Name-givers from truly understanding the workings of the spirit mind.

Despite their mysterious behavior, spirits do seem to possess personalities as distinct as any Name-giver. Each individual spirit is a unique creature with a unique outlook. A rare few spirits enjoy being summoned and put to use, while the great majority strongly resent being disturbed by Name-givers too ineffectual to solve their own problems. Many spirits consider themselves so superior to Name-givers that they feel insulted when a Name-giver summons them; a few others relish the idea of exploring a bit of the physical world every now and again. Any spirit may be summoned—even those with the most abrasive personalities—but adepts usually choose to summon spirits with reasonable personalities. Of course, until an adept has summoned one such spirit, he must take what he gets.

Spirit Strength Ratings

Not all spirits are equally powerful. A spirit's **Strength Rating** is an approximate measure of its power level in relation to other spirits. The higher a spirit's Strength Rating, the more powerful the spirit, both in its base statistics and in the powers at its disposal. Note that a spirit's Strength Rating is different from its Strength Attribute.

Each increase in a spirit's Strength Rating enhances the spirit's characteristics and grants it additional powers and abilities. Refer to the **Spirit Descriptions**, p. 368, for details. Because a spirit's Strength Rating directly affects its Spell Defense, summoning spirits with a significant Strength Rating can be extremely difficult.

Increasing Spirit Strength Ratings

A spirit's Strength Rating can increase in two ways. First, the rating grows as the spirit ages. Second, repeated summonings can increase the rating.

Increases due to age accumulate slowly and account for very little growth in a spirit's Strength Rating. Generally, a spirit's Strength Rating is related to its age—the older the spirit, the higher its Strength Rating. However, the two factors are not always so directly proportional. For example, a 100-year-old spirit might have a Strength Rating of only 4 or 5, while a 500-year-old spirit could have a Strength Rating of 10 or more.

The primary way a spirit's Strength Rating increases is through repeated summonings. Whenever a spirit is summoned, the summoner uses magical energy to reach out to the spirit's pattern and draw it toward the summoner. As is the case with most magic use, under ordinary circumstances the magical energy dissipates once the spirit has been summoned. When a specific spirit is summoned repeatedly, however, the spirit learns to recognize that it is being summoned and to absorb a little of the magical energy used in the summoning before the energy dissipates. The vast majority do this to increase their Strength Rating in an attempt to eventually become too powerful to be summoned.

Summoners recognize that this phenomenon increases a spirit's strength and have found a way to avoid it, because a spirit becomes harder to control as its Strength Rating increases. The section on **Repeat Summonings** details a special procedure summoners may use to repeatedly summon a spirit without adding to its Strength Rating.

Great Form Spirits

Spirits with Strength Ratings of 15 and higher are considered **great form spirits**, and are usually Named. The difficulties of summoning and controlling such powerful spirits prevent most adepts from ever attempting the feat. When magicians do try to summon such spirits, they usually use ritual magic, because few adepts possess enough power to summon a great form spirit by themselves. Typically, summoners employ the Summoning Circle talent when calling up great form spirits.

Any great form spirit that breaks free from its summoner by winning a Contest of Wills is likely to wreak havoc in order to express its displeasure at being summoned before returning to its native astral habitat.

On Ally Spirits

Nethermancers summon **ally spirits** when they need an astral ally or servant. In this respect, ally spirits resemble tasked spirits (see below), but allies are much more powerful and versatile because their existence is not tied to the completion of a specific task. Ally spirits may assume astral or physical forms, but generally prefer to remain in their astral incarnations. When they do physically manifest, ally spirits appear as ghosts or apparitions. They never take on truly solid physical forms, but they can attack and be attacked by physical beings.

Individual ally spirits may vary widely. Some are astral denizens of the netherworlds, while others are the spirits of deceased Name-givers. A Nethermancer never knows which type of ally spirit will arrive when he summons one, and most ally spirits prefer to reveal as little about themselves as possible.

The gamemaster determines the exact powers and abilities of a summoned ally spirit, though Nethermancers may specify services they want an ally to perform. In these cases, the spirit's powers and abilities generally reflect the type of service. For example, a spirit that is summoned to meld with a Name-giver will have the Possession power. An ally spirit summoned to aid a Nethermancer in combat will have relatively high physical statistics, or perhaps specific combat-related abilities. A spirit summoned to aid a Nethermancer in ritual magic or spellcasting will likely have relatively high Perception and Willpower steps.

Alternatively, Nethermancers may summon ally spirits with specific powers and abilities, as noted in the **Summoning** section.

Ally Spirits and Names

Most ally spirits have Names, but they cannot be forced to reveal them. Summoning an ally spirit as a Named spirit provides the summoner with greater control and power over the spirit. See the **Summoning** section for more information.

On Elemental Spirits and Elementals

Elemental spirits are the astral form of spirits from the elemental planes in astral space. Five types of elemental spirits exist, one for each True element: air, earth, fire, water and wood. Elemental spirits may switch between their astral and physical forms at will, though these spirits are very reluctant to assume physical form and usually must be coerced to do so. Physically manifested elemental spirits are called **elementals**. For example, an elemental air spirit in astral form would be called an air spirit; in its physical form, the same spirit would be called an air elemental. Elementals appear in a multitude of guises, based on the elements they embody. For example, a water elemental may appear as a soft mist, a whirlwind of water, or a quiet pool. A wood elemental may take the shape of any plant.

Most Elementalists summon elemental spirits to make use of these spirits' powers. Summoned elementals, however, also serve well as champions for magicians who prefer not to fight an opponent themselves. Most Elementalists summon these spirits with extreme care and the utmost respect, because these magicians believe the elemental spirits have lived in the elemental planes since before Name-givers walked on the earth. In the view of an Elementalist, summoning an elemental spirit is like summoning the sacred elemental planes themselves. Only Elementalists may summon elemental spirits.

Elemental Spirits and Names

Most elemental spirits have Names. Elemental spirits need not be summoned as Named spirits, however, and cannot be forced to reveal their Names. Summoning an elemental spirit as a Named spirit provides the summoner with greater control and power over the spirit, a benefit most Elementalists feel is worth the extra difficulties the method presents.

On the Invae

Not much is known about the **invae**, apart from the fact that they are spirits inhabiting the netherworlds—and frequently try to enter our world. Many regard them as another form of Horror, and rumors frequently tell of invae appearing in areas where a summoning went horribly wrong. However, the most common legend told is the one about the Invae Burnings—which (as it turned out) was only one of the invae's many endeavors.

The Invae Burnings

Chorrolis, the Passion of wealth and trade, was much venerated along the great trading routes and wealthy cities of the ancient kingdoms of Landis and Cara Fahd. Long ago, when the Scourge was but a dark rumor, one cult of his followers worshipped Chorrolis with greater fervor than any other in those lands. As they grew in number, their rivals in trade began to disappear. The dead bodies of some were found, others never appeared again. When the leaders of Landis and Cara Fahd at last began searching for the killers, they discovered the cult of Chorrolis had come under the sway of an evil, loathsome insect race called the invae.

The invae knew no mercy toward the people of Barsaive; they took captives and used them in bizarre, arcane rituals that transformed their captives into insects or summoned more of their cursed race from the black depths of astral space. No one knew how long the invae had worked their evil will in Barsaive, nor how far their presence had spread.

Panic swept through Landis at the news of the invae and soon spilled over to other kingdoms. Soldiers and terrified citizens swept through the temples of Chorrolis, slaying all within and burning the buildings. Unable to tell friend from foe in their frenzy, the people also razed temples of Astendar and Floranuus and killed many of their innocent worshippers.

These first attacks—known as the Invae Burnings—killed hundreds of invae. The rest fought fiercely to protect their brood, and the streets ran red with blood. The terrible battles of sword and magic destroyed the once-proud city of Emmerlich and left the very earth on which it stood lifeless.

The burning of the invae continued across Barsaive long after the creatures had died or gone into hiding, and thousands of innocents lost their lives. In memory of their dead, followers of Chorrolis hold a bitter feast once a year. Even today, the followers of Chorrolis still carry a light stigma of being corrupt—some people believe the loathsome creatures survived the burnings and the Scourge and even now work their evil among the races of Barsaive through corrupted followers of Chorrolis. And who can tell if someone is corrupted or not?

On Named Spirits

Often the target of nethermantic summoning, **Named spirits** can be important sources of knowledge of past myths, tales and legends. Summoning a Named spirit requires the summoner to make use of the Law of Contagion—one of the laws governing the use of the magic flowing through the fabric of the universe. The Law of Contagion states that once a connection has been forged between two things, they remain connected forever. A dragon's scale is always part of that dragon, even if he sheds it. The place of his birth is a part of a Name-giver's legend until the end of his days, even if he journeys far away from it. As a result, the summoner is required to either know the spirit's True Name or have one of the spirit's pattern items at his disposal. Learning a spirit's True Name or obtaining a Named spirit's pattern item is a difficult and involved process that may require journeys into astral space and the netherworlds. Because of these potential difficulties, adepts usually only summon a Named spirit when no other spirit will fit their needs. Adepts may also summon Named spirits in order to use the spirit's powers or abilities. For example, a powerful Named spell might require the presence of a specific Named spirit. A Nethermancer studying an ancient ork weapon may summon the spirit of the legendary ork Weaponsmith Rugaah Gloh to aid his research.

Types of Named Spirits

Both ally and elemental spirits may be Named, though tasked spirits are almost never Named. Named ally spirits are almost always the spirits of deceased Name-giver adepts, sometimes referred to as **Name-giver spirits**. On very rare occasions, a Nethermancer may learn the Name of and/or obtain a pattern item belonging to a spirit native to the netherworlds.

Nethermancers most often summon Name-giver spirits. Usually, these spirits are adepts with knowledge and experience that can greatly help their summoners.

Summoning Named elemental spirits remains an extremely difficult proposition for most Elementalists, chiefly because obtaining a pattern item of such a spirit is nearly impossible. According to legends, Barsaivians frequently encountered Named elementals before the Scourge, and some tales even speak of small cities summoning such elemental spirits to help build their kaers and citadels. If such tales are true, recovering pattern items of these elemental spirits and then summoning them seems possible.

Named Spirit Powers and Strength Ratings

The powers of specific Named spirits are determined by the spirit's type (ally or elemental) and Strength Rating. Most Named spirits have several of the powers available to spirits of their type and possess Strength Ratings of 8 or higher. The Strength Rating of a Name-giver spirit always equals or exceeds the Circle of the Name-giver from whom the spirit descends.

Ghost Masters

While most adepts train with living tutors, some adepts—usually Nethermancers—seek Discipline training from a Name-giver spirit. If summoned for a sufficient amount of time, Name-giver spirits can serve as instructors and help adepts advance in their Disciplines.

Training in a Discipline requires at least 40 hours of time, so Named spirits used in this way must remain in service for at least that long. Ideally, the spirit would remain in service for at least 3 days, however, because Discipline training is most effective when the student rests at least 8 hours a day. It is possible to summon a Named spirit for such extended periods of time as an alternative to the Ritual of the Ghostmaster talent, but doing so requires the use of blood magic.

Controlling Named Spirits

Though difficult to summon, Named spirits are sometimes easier to control than other powerful spirits if the summoner possesses at least one of the spirit's pattern items and has woven a thread to the item. Add the rank of this thread as a bonus to the summoner's Willpower Tests for any Contest of Wills he makes against the spirit (see **Summoning**, p. 362, for more information). Apply the same bonus to the summoner's Charisma Tests, Bargain With Summoned Creature Tests, or any other talent he uses when bargaining with the spirit.

For example, a Nethermancer has obtained a pattern item for a Strength 8 Named ally spirit and has woven a Rank 4 thread to it. The Nethermancer summons the spirit and orders it to open a

portal into astral space. The spirit, a native to astral space and the netherworlds, refuses to comply with its summoner's orders. The Nethermancer decides to challenge the spirit to a Contest of Wills to force it to do as he wishes. The Rank 4 thread he has woven to the spirit's pattern item gives the Nethermancer a +4 bonus to his Willpower Tests when making the test for the contest.

Name-givers as Named Spirits

When Name-givers enter astral space, they become subject to the same laws as other residents of astral space. This means that a Name-giver traveling in astral space may be summoned. To do so, an adept must use the Summon talent to summon the Name-giver's spirit as though it were a Named spirit. A summoned Name-giver appears in astral space near the summoner and is bound to serve the summoner as any other summoned spirit.

For more information about Name-givers in astral space, see the **Astral Space** chapter, p. 74.

On Tasked Spirits

Tasked spirits are the most common and least dangerous type of spirit encountered in Earthdawn. These spirits exist solely to provide specific services for their summoners. They may perform any number of duties, such as dusting, guarding a valuable item, scouting for danger or annoying a specified target. Unlike other types of spirits, tasked spirits commonly manifest in physical form. Most of the time, a tasked spirit's physical appearance is related to the task it performs. For example, tasked spirits may manifest as brooms, mice, shadows or any other form that suits the gamemaster's imagination.

These spirits are summoned by different spells and/or talents for specific tasks. Examples of tasked spirits include the spirits summoned by the Pocket Guardian spell, the Orbiting Spy talent, and the Spirit Dodge talent. Any adept with the appropriate spell or talent may summon a tasked spirit. The spirit's game statistics are always listed with the talent or spell in question.

All tasked spirits' Strength Ratings increase only under very unusual occasions. Tasked spirits cannot refuse to obey a summoner and may only provide the services described by the spell or talent used to summon them. Tasked spirits can be banished like any other spirit. However, anyone other than a tasked spirit's summoner must achieve a Good or better result to banish the tasked spirit.

Summoning

Summoning is the art of attracting spirits to perform some sort of service for the summoner. Though there are talents and spells used to summon specific types of spirits, this chapter provides rules for all uses of summoning in Earthdawn. Regardless of the method used, the actual test made to summon a spirit is called the Summoning Test.

Like Thread Weaving for spells, each **Summon** talent is unique and can only be used to summon spirits of a certain type. For example, Elementalists can summon only elemental spirits with this talent, while Nethermancers can summon only ally spirits. A failure on the Summoning Test may trigger the effects described in the **Dangers of Summoning** section, on p. 363.

To summon a Named spirit, the adept must either know the spirit's true name or acquire a pattern item of the spirit. These tasks alone may be extremely difficult, as true names are usually closely guarded secrets. Many Named spirits exist only in astral space and the Netherworlds and have few or no pattern items.

Adepts may also summon spirits with specific spells or with other talents that make use of spirits.

Summoning by Spell

Earthdawn contains a number of spells used to summon spirits, such as Pocket Guardian, Porter, Pack Bags and others. The spirits summoned by those spells are known as tasked spirits. Any adept may summon spirits with these spells, provided the appropriate spell is available to him.

When summoning using spells, the adept's Spellcasting Test is considered the Summoning Test. If the spell requires a Willpower Test as well, both tests are considered Summoning Tests. A failure on either test cannot trigger the effects described in **Dangers of Summoning**, p. 363. Repeat summonings of a specific tasked spirit require a Good or better result and suffer the same penalties incurred when making a repeat summoning of any other type of spirit. Tasked spirits' Strength Ratings do not increase when the spirits are summoned in this manner (see **Repeated Summonings**, p. 363). Unless otherwise noted, a magician cannot summon more tasked spirits than his rank in Spellcasting at a time.

In addition to spells used to summon tasked spirits, the **Earthdawn** game contains a number of related spells used to control, communicate with and manipulate spirits, other astral entities, and astral space. Here are a few examples:

Astral Materialization is an Illusionism spell that enables the user to force a spirit or entity to physically manifest for a duration of 1 hour. During this time, the entity is under the magician's control, unless it can make a successful Willpower Test against the magician's Willforce step. The Astral Materialization spell can be used on spirits summoned by other magicians, as well as Horrors and other astral creatures. This spell is so strong that it even works on spirits that cannot normally manifest physically.

Horror Call is a Nethermancy spell that only works on Horrors. To use the spell, a magician must know the Horror's Name. The spell summons the Horror into a protective circle.

The **Plant Talk** spell enables magicians to communicate with plant and wood spirits. This spell does not work with other types of elementals or spirits.

The **Restrain Entity** spell enables magicians to restrain undead beings, Horrors and Horror constructs. This spell also works against physically manifested spirits. The Restrain Entity spell makes a good backup for Nethermancers summoning Named spirits with the Summon and Summoning Circle talents.

The **Restrain Horror** spell enables magicians to restrain Horrors, preventing them from acting.

Spirit Portal is a Nethermancy spell that creates a gateway to astral space, enabling Name-givers and other physical creatures to enter the astral realm. Astral creatures and spirits can also use the gateway to enter the physical world. Passing through the portal created by this spell alters the form (astral or physical) of a character or creature.

Summoning by Talent

In addition to spells and the Summon talent, **Earthdawn** contains a number of talents used to summon tasked spirits (see the **Talents** chapter on p. 166 of the **Player's Compendium** for full descriptions). These talents include the Orbiting Spy, Spirit Dodge and Spirit Mount talents. When summoning with talents, the Talent Test is the Summoning Test, but failed Talent Tests cannot trigger the effects described in the **Dangers of Summoning**, p. 363. **Earthdawn** also contains a number of related talents that enable adepts to bargain and communicate with, contain and strike at spirits. Unless otherwise noted, a magician cannot summon more spirits than his rank in the appropriate talent at a time. Here are a few examples:

The **Bargain With Summoned Creature** talent enables adepts to persuade or convince spirits or other astral entities they have summoned to carry out the summoner's wishes. If an adept does not possess this high-Circle talent, he must use his Charisma step when bargaining with summoned spirits.

The **Spirit Talk** talent allows an adept to talk with spirits. The talent works on spirits that are summoned or detected using other means.

The **Elemental Tongues** talent enables adepts to speak with any air, earth, fire or water elemental spirit. To speak with wood or plant spirits, however, requires use of the Plant Talk spell.

The **Spirit Hold** talent allows an adept to restrain any spirit, astral entity, undead creature or Horror construct. When restrained with this talent, a target cannot take any action other than communication. This talent works equally well against astral or physically manifested spirits and may be used to hold spirits before they are trapped into the patterns of magical items. Most spirits resent being restrained by this spell, however, and they will initiate a Contest of Wills against adepts who attempt to use it.

The **Elemental Hold** talent enables adepts to restrain elemental spirits and elementals and works in the same way as Spirit Hold.

The **Ritual of the Ghost Master** talent allows a character to summon the ghost of a former member of his Discipline to help a character advance to the next Circle.

The **Spirit Strike** talent allows an adept on the physical plane to strike at opponents in astral space, including spirits. This talent is especially effective when combined with talents such as Spirit Hold or Elemental Hold. Spirits that are unable to attack physical targets generally retreat when confronted by an adept using this talent, but such spirits often seek revenge in other ways.

The **Summoning Circle** talent enables an adept to create a protective circle to contain a summoned spirit.

The **Netherwalk** talent enables an adept to send his own spirit into astral space. The adept's spirit takes on the properties of a typical spirit in astral space, but retains all of his talents and spells. While in astral space, the adept's spirit may interact with spirits and other entities.

How Summoning Works

This section provides guidelines on how to summon spirits, including information on the forms of summoned spirits and the services they may perform, and a means of controlling spirits called the Contest of Wills.

Summoning follows a series of three steps:

1. Make Summoning Test
2. Determine Duration
3. Determine Spirit Services

Make Summoning Test

The summoner makes a Summoning Test using a step number appropriate to the method (see above). The test's Difficulty Number is equal to the spirit's Spell Defense. The gamemaster decides about the additional powers assigned to a spirit, unless the summoner wants to choose himself. In that case, increase the Difficulty Number of the test by +2 points for each power specified by the summoner. For example, if a Nethermancer wants to summon a Strength 4 ally spirit with two specific powers, the Difficulty Number is 18 (14 for the spirit's Spell Defense, and +2 for each of the two powers). Summoning a Named Spirit always requires a Good result.

If the test succeeds, the spirit arrives a moment later in astral space. It remains in astral space near the summoner, who may call on the spirit for services for the duration of the summoning. As long as the summoned spirit is not a tasked spirit, Nethermancers must use the Spirit Talk talent and Elementalists must use either the Elemental Tongues talent or Plant Talk spell to communicate with it. Some tasked spirits manifest automatically when summoned, but generally most summoned spirits must be coerced before they will assume physical form.

Determine Duration

To determine how long the spirit remains, the summoner makes a Willpower (or Willforce) Test, the result of which is the number of minutes the spirit remains in his service. The summoner may increase this duration by using blood magic. By taking a number of Strain Points of damage equal to his Wound Threshold, the summoner can increase the duration to a number of hours equal to the Willpower Test result. If the summoner physically inflicts a Wound on himself, the duration is increased to a number of days equal to the Willpower Test result. This Wound cannot be healed for a year and a day.

Determine Spirit Services

Once an adept has summoned a spirit, he can call on it to perform services. Spirit services may include anything from helping the summoner perform a task to enhancing the summoner's abilities. The **Spirit Powers** section, p. 364, lists a number of typical abilities that spirits may use when providing services.

When the summoned spirit is an ally, elemental or Named spirit, the result level of the Summoning Test determines the number of services the spirit will perform for the summoner. The spirit performs one service for the summoner for each result level achieved with the test. The specific spell or talent used to summon a tasked spirit determines the service the spirit performs.

A summoned spirit will perform services only for the duration of the summoning. If the summoner does not use all the spirit's services before the summoning duration expires, those services are lost. However, a summoner may use a Contest of Wills to coerce a spirit to perform more services than those granted by the Summoning Test.

Spirits normally perform the services demanded by their summoners with little or no resistance. Some spirits may argue or debate the merits of some services, but rarely do they outright refuse. In these cases, summoners may attempt to persuade reluctant spirits to perform services. In general, persuading a spirit to do the summoner's bidding is more difficult than defeating a spirit in a Contest of Wills, but a successful attempt at persuasion is less likely to anger the spirit in question.

Persuading a Spirit

A summoner who wishes to persuade a spirit makes a Charisma-based Half-Magic Test against the spirit's Social Defense. If the test succeeds, the spirit grants the summoner's request.

Summoners can also use other social talents against spirits, but because these talents are intended for use against Name-givers, their effectiveness against spirits is somewhat limited. For this reason, any Interaction Test made to Persuade a spirit requires a Good or better result against the spirit's Social Defense.

High-Circle adepts may use the Bargain with Summoned Creature talent to persuade spirits. This talent is designed especially for use against spirits, so its effective use does not require a Good or better result.

Contest of Wills

In some instances, spirits may refuse to perform services that pose a threat to them or refuse to grant additional services to the summoner. In these cases, the summoner may impose his will on the spirit by defeating the spirit in a Contest of Wills. For example, a fire elemental may refuse to manifest inside a boat on a lake. A wood elemental will almost always refuse to walk into a fire. Most spirits will refuse to perform any more services than they have been summoned for.

In a Contest of Wills, both the summoner and the spirit make a Willpower Test. Whoever achieves the highest result wins the contest. Both spirit and summoner can spend 1 Karma Point on this test. If the summoner prevails, the spirit must comply with his wishes. If the spirit wins, it may refuse the summoner's request. If both results are the same, the summoner may choose to continue the Contest of Wills, in which case both parties make another Willpower Test, or he may concede defeat to the spirit.

Any spirit that wins a Contest of Wills may attempt to break free of the summoner's control by winning another Contest of Wills. If the spirit wins the second contest, it breaks free of the summoner. It may simply return to its astral home, or it may exact revenge on (or perhaps just cause mischief for) the summoner. The gamemaster determines the response of a freed spirit, based on the spirit's personality, the summoner's treatment of it and any past dealings it has had with the summoner.

Repeated Summonings

Normally, standard summoning methods do not allow an adept to choose the individual spirit a summoning will produce (except in the case of Named spirits). But an adept can summon a spirit he has summoned previously. To do so, the adept must make the appropriate Summoning Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the spirit's Spell Defense + 1. This Difficulty Number increase is cumulative, so an adept summoning a specific spirit for a third time would make the test against the spirit's Spell Defense + 2. A fourth summoning attempt would be made against the spirit's Spell Defense + 3, and so on. Players and gamemasters should keep track of the number of times each character summons a specific spirit.

If the Summoning Test succeeds, the desired spirit appears. On a Good or better result, the spirit's Strength Rating does not increase. However, on an Average result, the spirit's Strength Rating increases by 1 point after it has performed all of its services. This means the spirit will be more powerful and also harder to summon in the future.

The Elementalist Karel Longstride wishes to summon a Strength 3 earth spirit. Previously, Karel had received great help from a specific earth spirit, so he decides to summon that spirit again. The spirit's Spell Defense is 12, so Karel must make his Summoning Test against a Difficulty Number of 13 (the spirit's Spell Defense, +1 point for a second summoning). He achieves a Good result on the test, so the spirit is summoned and its Strength Rating remains the same.

Dangers of Summoning

Any time an adept attempts to summon or banish a spirit, he exposes himself to the hazards of astral space. Generally, the spells, talents and half-magic process used for summoning protect the adept from these hazards, but only when they work as designed. Any failed Summoning Test or banishing attempt may cause an adept damage or worse.

Summoning and Banishing Test failures fall into two groups: normal failures and catastrophic failures. A normal failure occurs when an adept's Summoning or Banishing Test yields a Poor result. A catastrophic failure occurs when a Summoning or Banishing Test yields a Pathetic result.

Common effects of both types of failures are described in the following sections. However, gamemasters should feel free to create new and nasty effects, based on the specific summoning failure.

Normal Failure

Normal failures cause an astral backlash that injures the adept in a way similar to effects of casting raw magic. The type of astral region in which the failed summoning attempt took place can affect the amount of damage the adept suffers. To determine the damage caused by the backlash, refer to the Astral Backlash Table. Mystic Armor protects against this damage. The Damage step is determined by the Strength Rating of the spirit that the character was attempting to summon.

ASTRAL BACKLASH TABLE

Region Type	Damage Step
Safe	Strength Rating + 4
Open	Strength Rating + 8
Tainted	Strength Rating + 12
Corrupt	Strength Rating + 16

Alternatively, the summoning attempt may produce a spirit not bound to obey the summoner. Such spirits may be of any type and have usually the same Strength Rating as the spirit the adept intended to summon, but don't perform services or obey the summoner at all—they may even attack the summoner and any nearby companions.

Catastrophic Failure

Catastrophic failures commonly result in the adept receiving a curse. The adept automatically receives the curse (no test is needed), and the gamemaster determines the curse's effects based on the astral region and the desired Strength Rating of the spirit. Possible curse effects include increased difficulty when summoning spirits or casting spells associated with the type of spirit and increased difficulty when using a specific type of magic. See **Curses** in the **Adventuring** chapter, p. 110, for more information.

The catastrophic failure may also summon a Horror, which may launch a direct attack against the adept and his companions or use one or more of its powers, such as Horror Mark. The gamemaster determines the nature and power of the Horror, based on the astral region and the Strength Rating of the spirit the adept intended to summon. For example, a failed attempt to summon a Strength 1 air spirit might summon an invae, a kreescra, or a crystal entity. A failed attempt to summon a Strength 7 ally spirit, on the other hand, might arouse the attention of a Minor Horror, such as a bloatform. A failed attempt to summon a Strength 12 spirit might instead get a Named Horror, such as Taint or Ysrthgrathe, interested in the summoner's activities...

Banishing

Elemental, ally and Named spirits can only be banished by summoners—adepts who have learned the Summon talent. To banish a spirit, the adept makes a Banishing Test using his Summon talent against a Difficulty Number equal to the spirit's Spell Defense.

If the test succeeds, the spirit is forced back to its normal astral habitat. Summoners must achieve an Excellent result if they attempt to banish spirits of a type they cannot summon. For example, Elementalists must achieve an Excellent result to banish ally spirits, and Nethermancers must likewise achieve an Excellent result to banish elemental spirits. Likewise, both must achieve an Excellent result to banish invae spirits. Note that Horrors or Horror constructs cannot be banished using this method. Failed Banishing Tests trigger the effects as described in the **Dangers of Summoning**, p. 363. In some cases, a banished spirit may take offense and come back later to retaliate against the banisher.

Banishing Tasked Spirits

Tasked spirits can be banished with the normal rules for Dispelling Magic (see the **Spell Magic** chapter on p. 291 of the **Player's Compendium**). For tasked spirits summoned by spells, the Dispel Difficulty is based on the spell's Circle; for spirits summoned by talents, the Dispel Difficulty is based on the talent rank. A failure on the Dispelling Test cannot trigger the effects described in the **Dangers of Summoning**, p. 363.

Blood Magic and Summoning

Apart from extending the duration of a spirit's services, summoning can be augmented by the use of blood magic. In the case of summoning by spells or talents, blood magic can be used to augment Spellcasting and Talent Tests. An adept may also use blood magic to increase his Summoning Test in the same way as for a talent.

Using blood magic during summoning does entail additional risks, however. If a blood magic-assisted Summoning Test yields a Pathetic result, it is automatically considered a catastrophic failure (see **Dangers of Summoning**, p. 363). For example, a failed attempt to summon a Strength 7 invae spirit using blood magic will not only rouse the attention of the spirit, instead, it may decide to possess the summoner directly and start a new hive right now!

Spirit Powers

Ally, elemental and Named spirits may possess a number of special powers, much like the powers of creatures, dragons and Horrors. The spirit type descriptions list some of the spirit powers common to these different spirits. As they increase in Strength, spirits may gain new powers as well, as noted in **Spirit Strength Ratings**, p. 358. Unless a power's description states otherwise, any type of spirit may possess that power.

The following list of spirit powers is not intended to be comprehensive. Gamemasters should feel free to create additional powers for their games.

Game Terms

As with other abilities, spirits must use a step number to make tests with their powers. Most of these step numbers are based on one of the spirit's Attributes, usually Willpower, and the spirit's Strength Rating. Any increase in a spirit's Strength Rating also increases the step number it uses to make tests. If a power's description does not provide a step number formula, the power has a specific effect that does not require a test.

Some powers require the spirit to take an action to use them. These are noted by the word "Yes" in the "Action:" notation. Powers which do not require an action are noted by the word "No" in the "Action:" notation. These powers usually require a Spellcasting Test that meets the Action requirement and are effectively Simple actions (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 397 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Aid Summoner

Step Number: Strength Rating
Action: Yes

The Aid Summoner power allows a spirit to enhance its summoner's magical abilities. To activate this power, the spirit's summoner takes a number of Strain Points of damage equal to the spirit's Strength Rating. He takes this Strain all at once, even if it causes him to take a Wound. For the duration of the power, the summoner may add a bonus equal to the spirit's Strength Rating to any of his magical ability steps when making tests. This includes talents such as Spellcasting, Thread Weaving and Willforce. This bonus may be applied to different abilities, as chosen by the summoner, but only one ability each round. For example, during one round the summoner may boost his Spellcasting talent, while in the next round he may boost his Willforce talent. Each time the summoner uses the bonus on an Action Test he takes 2 Strain Points of damage. Each use of the Aid Summoner power lasts for a number of minutes equal to the spirit's Strength Rating.

Astral Portal

Step Number: Strength Rating
Action: Yes

This power is available to ally spirits only. This power enables a spirit to create a portal through which Name-givers can enter astral space. The portal remains open for a number of minutes equal to the spirit's Strength Rating × 10. Note that the portal is two-way, allowing entry into and exit from astral space.

Confusion

Step Number: Willpower + Strength Rating
Action: Yes

This power is available to ally spirits only. This power enables a spirit to temporarily confuse a target character by passing some of its own energy through him. The spirit makes a Confusion Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the target suffers a –1 penalty to his Perception and Willpower steps for each result level achieved. This penalty affects all abilities based on the reduced Attributes. The effect lasts for a number of minutes equal to the spirit's Strength Rating.

Detect Trap

Step Number: Perception + Strength Rating
Action: Yes

This power is available to ally spirits only. The Detect Trap power works in the same manner as the talent of the same name.

Detect True Element

Step Number: Strength Rating
Action: Yes

This power is available to elemental spirits only. This power enables an elemental spirit to detect the presence of its own True element. For example, an air spirit could detect only True air by using this power. Because elemental spirits represent a manifestation of the elemental planes, and because Elementalists generally use this power to locate True elements for their own use, these spirits do not like to use the Detect True Element power for their summoners. Coercing an elemental spirit to do so requires a Contest of Wills. If the summoner wins the contest, the spirit leads the summoner to any source of its True element within a number of miles equal to the spirit's Strength Rating—a spirit cannot detect the presence of its True element beyond this range. Elemental spirits will never aid a summoner in making a Gathering Test (see the **Enchanting** chapter on p. 280 of the **Player's Compendium**). Even losing a Contest of Wills cannot coerce a spirit to violate this principle.

Detect Weapon

Step Number: Perception + Strength Rating
Action: Yes

This power is available to ally and elemental earth spirits only. The Detect Weapon power works in the same manner as the talent of the same name. This power also enables a spirit to describe the general size, shape and location of the weapon.

Disguise Self

Step Number: Charisma + Strength Rating
Action: Yes

This power is available to ally spirits only. The Disguise Self power works in the same manner as the talent of the same name and allows the spirit to physically manifest in the form of any Name-giver the spirit has seen.

Durability

Step Number: Rank
Action: No

The Durability power increases a spirit's ability to take damage. Each rank in the Durability power permanently adds +7 to the spirit's Death Rating and +6 to its Unconsciousness Rating.

Empathic Sense

Step Number: Perception + Strength Rating
Action: Yes

This power is available to ally spirits only. The Empathic Sense power enables a spirit to retain an empathic connection with its summoner, in much the same manner as the talent of the same name.

Engulf

Step Number: Willpower + Strength Rating
Action: No

This power is available to elemental spirits only. This power enables an elemental spirit to engulf a victim in its element, causing the victim to take damage during each round of exposure. The elemental must be physically manifested to use this power. The elemental must successfully grapple the target in order to use this power (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 411 of the **Player's Com-**

pendium). Once the victim is grappled, it is completely engulfed by a harmful version of the appropriate element (see below) and takes damage each round equal to the result of the Engulf Test. Each round, after taking damage, the engulfed character may make a Strength Test against the elemental's Attack Test result. If the test succeeds, he breaks free of the element.

Air: The spirit is able to make the air around a victim unbreatheable. The victim can hold his breath and begins to take damage when he falls unconscious. Mystic Armor protects against this damage. Victims might suffocate if engulfed for too long.

Earth: The target receives damage from the crushing weight of the spirit. Physical Armor protects against this damage.

Fire: The target is covered in fire and starts to burn. Physical Armor protects against this damage.

Water: The spirit is capable of exerting great pressure on engulfed victims. Physical Armor protects against this damage and victims might drown if engulfed for too long.

Wood: The target is covered in thorny vines that pierce his skin. Physical Armor protects against this damage.

Enrage Element

Step Number: Willpower + Strength Rating
Action: Yes

This power is available to elemental spirits only. This power enables an elemental to create a tumultuous whirlwind of its element. Earth elementals may create small storms of flying rocks; air elementals may create whirling winds; wood elementals, storms of spinning twigs; fire elementals, showering sparks; and water elementals, hurricane-like waves. The power affects all targets within a radius equal to the spirit's Strength Rating in yards. The power's effects last for a number of rounds equal to the spirit's Strength Rating. Each round, the spirit makes an Enrage Element Test in place of a Damage Test to determine how much damage each target takes. Physical Armor protects against this damage. In addition, any target within the area of effect is considered Harried (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 408 of the **Player's Compendium**).

Evil Eye

Step Number: Willpower + Strength Rating
Action: Yes

This power is available to ally spirits only. To use this curse-like power, a spirit makes an Evil Eye Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, one of the target's Attribute steps suffers a –2 penalty for a number of hours equal to the spirit's Strength Rating, affecting all abilities based on that Attribute. The spirit or its summoner chooses the affected Attribute. A single target can be subjected to only one use of this power at a time.

Find

Step Number: Perception + Strength Rating
Action: Yes

The Find power enables a spirit to trace an item to its origin, as long as it is within a range no greater than the spirit's Strength Rating × 1,000 miles. For example, if a spirit has a lock of hair, it can locate the hair's owner. If it has a piece of a wall, it can locate the building from which the piece came. To use this power, the spirit makes a Find Test against the subject's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the spirit has located the subject and reports back to the summoner. Tracing an item can take a long time. As a rule of thumb, the spirits needs one hour per 1,000 miles of distance. A spirit usually cancels his search if the summoning duration ends – often without reporting back.

Haggle

Step Number: Charisma + Strength Rating
Action: Yes

The Haggle power works in the same manner as the talent of the same name, except spirits may use the power only when bargaining with a summoner.

Karma

Step Number: Special (see text)
Action: na

Like dragons and Horrors, spirits can spend 1 Karma Point on any test. Most spirits have a relatively low Karma step, but the step number increases as the spirit's Strength Rating increases.

Manifest

Step Number: Strength Rating
Action: Yes

The Manifest power enables a spirit to manifest in the physical plane. The duration of the manifestation is limited to a number of hours equal to the spirit's Strength Rating. Physically manifested elemental spirits are called elementals. Physically manifested ally spirits appear as ghosts or apparitions and remain insubstantial enough to pass through solid objects, including walls, doors and rock. If the object is thicker than 1 yard, however, the spirit becomes lost inside it and requires an extra round per yard of depth to find its way back out.

Manipulate Element

Step Number: Willpower + Strength Rating
Action: Yes

This power is available to elemental spirits only. This power enables a spirit to change the basic structure of any object composed of the spirit's native element. The diameter of the area of effect cannot exceed the spirit's Strength Rating in yards. For example, an earth elemental can use the Manipulate Element power to turn an area of solid earth into mud or quicksand. An air elemental could make the air in a certain area toxic. A water elemental could turn a pool into solid ice, and a wood elemental could twist a tree into a cage. A fire elemental could make a dying ember burn white-hot or even explode. The gamemaster determines the specific effects of each use of the Manipulate Element power. The effects of this power last for a number of minutes equal to the spirit's Manipulate Element Test result.

Possession

Step Number: Willpower + Strength Rating
Action: Yes

This power is available to ally spirits only. This power allows a spirit to temporarily possess and take control of a target's physical body. To use the power, a spirit makes a Possession Test against the victim's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the victim is possessed by the spirit for a number of minutes equal to the spirit's Strength Rating. During this time, the target is aware of his body's actions but cannot control them. Possessed targets may force the spirit out by making a successful Willpower Test against the spirit's Spell Defense.

Remove Element

Step Number: Willpower + Strength Rating
Action: Yes

This power is available to elemental spirits only. This power enables a spirit to remove any trace of its native element from an area. The diameter of the area of effect cannot exceed the spirit's Strength Rating in yards. For example, an earth spirit could use the power to damage a building by removing the dirt around one or more of the building's supporting walls, or a water spirit could remove all the water from a character's body. The spirit makes a Remove Element Test against the target's Spell Defense. When using the power against a Name-giver, a spirit must achieve an Excellent or better result. Any time a spirit successfully uses this power to remove the water or air from a Name-giver's body, the character takes damage equal to the Remove Element Test result. Mystic Armor protects against this damage.

Share Knowledge

Step Number: Strength Rating
Action: Yes

This power is available to elemental spirits only. This power allows a spirit to learn general information about any recent activity in, on, or near its native element. For example, an earth spirit may learn that two horses recently passed along a dirt road, a breeze may carry snippets of conversation to an air spirit, or a water spirit may learn that a boat recently passed along a river. The power enables spirits to learn only of events that occurred within a number of hours equal to the spirit's Strength Rating. The gamemaster determines exactly how much information the elemental learns.

Soothe

Step Number: Charisma + Strength Rating
Action: Yes

This power is available to elemental spirits only. This power enables a spirit to produce soothing sounds or smells that cause its target to relax. Sounds and smells might include a cool breeze, the sound of a softly gurgling brook, the smell of fresh dirt, the sound of leaves rustling in the wind, or the sound of a crackling fire. To use this power, a spirit makes a Soothe Test against the target's Social Defense. If the test succeeds, the character rests more comfortably and gains a +1 bonus to his next Recovery Test.

Spear

Step Number: Strength + Strength Rating
Action: No

This power is available to elemental spirits only. This power allows a physically manifested spirit to form a spear from its elemental essence and throw it at a target. In the case of a water elemental, the spear might take the form of an icicle. For a fire elemental, it might be a flame bolt. An air elemental's spear might appear as a barely visible shimmering that cuts through the air on its way to the target. The spirit makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the spirit makes a Spear Test in place of a Damage Test to determine how much damage the target takes. Physical Armor protects against this damage.

Spellcasting

Step Number: Perception + Strength Rating
Action: Yes

The Spellcasting power enables spirits to cast spells using raw magic. When casting spells in this manner, spirits are vulnerable to the same Warping and Damage effects as Name-giver magicians, and they run the same risk of becoming Horror-marked. For these reasons, spirits rarely use this power unless a summoner forces to them do so. Some (but not all) spirits employ the Thread Weaving and Spell Matrix powers when casting spells (see **Talents**, below).

Spells

Step Number: Special (see text)
Action: No

Elemental spirits may only cast spells that deal with their native elements. Generally, ally spirits can cast spells of only one Discipline, though some powerful ally spirits can cast spells of several Disciplines. The spirit's Strength Rating determines the maximum spell Circle it may cast. Thus, a Strength 6 ally spirit could cast any spell up to Sixth Circle for any type of magic it knows.

Talents

Step Number: Special (see text)
Action: Special (see text)

Some spirits have powers based on adept talents, denoted by a superscripted 'T' at the end of the power's name. Refer to the **Talents** chapter on p.166 of the **Player's Compendium** for a description of the talent in question. Spirits ignore any Karma requirements listed with a talent.

Temperature

Step Number: Willpower + Strength Rating
Action: Yes

This power is available to ally and elemental fire spirits only. This power enables spirits to alter the temperature of an area up to its Strength Rating in yards in diameter. The spirit raises or lowers the temperature enough to disconcert or discomfit characters within the area of effect, but not enough to endanger the characters. Characters or creatures within the area of effect experience difficulty concentrating and suffer a –1 penalty to their Perception and Willpower Tests. The effect of the Temperature power lasts for a number of minutes equal to the spirit's Strength Rating.

Spirit Descriptions

The following descriptions are organized by spirit type. Most of the examples below include simple formulas to calculate a spirit's basic game statistics. The spirit's Strength Rating appears abbreviated as 'SR'. For example, air spirits with a Strength Rating of 5–8 are listed with a Social Defense of 9 + SR. A Strength Rating 5 air spirit would have a Social Defense of 14 (5 + 9).

Please keep in mind that these formulas are only guidelines and serve to form the basic game statistics for most spirits. As shown in the examples, these can always be modified to serve a special purpose. See **Customizing Creatures** in the **Creatures** chapter, p. 272, for more information.

Great Form Spirits

Spirits with Strength Ratings of 15 or higher are very difficult to summon and control, and are usually summoned with ritual magic—few adepts possess enough power to summon these spirits all by themselves. The templates below only list spirits up to a Strength Rating of 15. To create statistics for spirits with even higher Strength Ratings, use the **Customizing Creatures** rules in the **Creatures** chapter, p. 272, and add +1 per point of Strength Rating above 15 to their Attribute steps.

Air Spirits

Air spirits embody the nature of air. Air spirits tend to be extremely perceptive and possess better social skills than any other type of elemental spirit. Most are good-natured as well, but can quickly turn from happy-go-lucky breezes to killer tornadoes when displeased. Most air spirits accept being summoned without complaint or struggle, and a few occasionally bargain with the summoner to stay longer or to be summoned again. Air spirits prefer to be near the flow of air at all times and become uncomfortable in enclosed spaces.

Manifested air spirits may take many physical forms. Air elementals have been known to manifest as whirlwinds, soft breezes, or the sound of breathing. Air elementals often assume humanoid faces that appear as wispy, changing visages floating in the midst of their bodies.

Strength Rating 1–4

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

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack: 6 + SR
Damage: See Powers

Physical Defense: 6 + SR
Spell Defense: 6 + SR
Social Defense: 3 + SR
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: SR

Death Rating: 28
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 19

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: 38
Full Movement: 76

Karma Points: 2 × SR
Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Astral Sight T (PER + SR)
Detect True Element (PER + SR)
Engulf (STR + SR)
Manifest (SR)
Manipulate Element (WIL + SR)
Share Knowledge (SR)
Spear (STR + SR)
Spellcasting T (PER + SR)

Legend Points: SR 1: 70; SR 2: 85; SR 3: 120; SR 4: 195

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Strength Rating 5–8

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

Initiative: 10
Number of Actions: 2
Attack: 10 + SR
Damage: See Powers

Physical Defense: 11 + SR
Spell Defense: 11 + SR
Social Defense: 8 + SR
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: SR

Death Rating: 44
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 36

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: 74
Full Movement: 148

Karma Points: 2 × SR
Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Astral Sight T (PER + SR)
Detect True Element (PER + SR)
Engulf (STR + SR)
Manifest (SR)
Manipulate Element (WIL + SR)
Share Knowledge (SR)
Spear (STR + SR)
Spellcasting T (PER + SR)

Legend Points: SR 5: 615; SR 6: 945; SR 7: 1,445; SR 8: 2,355

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Strength Rating 9–12

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

Initiative: 14
Number of Actions: 3
Attack: 14 + SR
Damage: See Powers

Physical Defense: 16 + SR
Spell Defense: 16 + SR
Social Defense: 14 + SR
Physical Armor: 12
Mystic Armor: SR

Death Rating: 60
Wound Threshold: 17
Unconsciousness Rating: 53

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: 125
Full Movement: 250

Karma Points: 2 × SR
Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Astral Sight T (PER + SR)
Detect True Element (PER + SR)
Engulf (STR + SR)
Manifest (SR)
Manipulate Element (WIL + SR)
Share Knowledge (SR)
Spear (STR + SR)
Spellcasting T (PER + SR)

Legend Points (2): SR 9: 11,450; SR 10: 20,050; SR 11: 27,850; SR 12: 46,250

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Strength Rating 13–15

DEX: 18 **STR**: 17 **TOU**: 16
PER: 18 **WIL**: 17 **CHA**: 16

Initiative: 18
Number of Actions: 4
Attack: 18 + SR
Damage: See Powers

Physical Defense: 21 + SR
Spell Defense: 21 + SR
Social Defense: 19 + SR
Physical Armor: 16
Mystic Armor: SR

Death Rating: 84
Wound Threshold: 23
Unconsciousness Rating: 77

Recovery Tests: 9
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: 190

Full Movement: 380

Karma Points: 2 × SR

Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Detect True Element (PER + SR)
Manifest (SR)
Share Knowledge (SR)
Spellcasting[T] (PER + SR)
Astral Sight[T] (PER + SR)
Engulf (STR + SR)
Manipulate Element (WIL + SR)
Spear (STR + SR)

Legend Points (3): SR 13: 115,530; SR 14: 134,280; SR 15: 171,780

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Rules

Due to its gaseous form, an air spirit only attacks using its Engulf or Spear powers. Choose a number of additional powers up to the air spirit's Strength Rating.

Gaseous Form: Attacking a manifested air spirit with most non-magical, ordinary weapons (such as a sword or a bow) is virtually useless. All damage inflicted with such a weapon is ignored.

Invisibility: Because air can rarely be seen, air elementals may become invisible at will. The air spirit makes a Spellcasting Test, the result of which is the Detection Difficulty for any attempts to detect the elemental.

Vulnerability to Earth: Lower the result level required to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on an air spirit or elemental by one level (from Excellent to Good, for example) if the attack was made with an earth-based weapon or spell.

ALLY SPIRITS

Ally spirits are summoned by Nethermancers to provide a variety of services. The spirit possesses powers common to all ally spirits. Note that this is only one possible configuration of an ally spirit. The gamemaster determines the exact powers and spells of ally spirits to suit his games and campaign.

Strength Rating 1–4

DEX: 5 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 5
PER: 5 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack: 5 + SR
Damage:
Unarmed: 5

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 5 + SR
Social Defense: 5 + SR
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: SR

Death Rating: 32
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 24

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5

Combat Movement: 22

Full Movement: 44

Karma Points: 2 × SR

Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Empathic Sense (PER + SR)
Manifest (SR)
Astral Sight[T] (PER + SR)
Lifesense (PER + SR)
Spellcasting[T] (PER + SR)

Legend Points: SR 1: 65 + spells; SR 2: 80; SR 3: 115 + spells; SR 4: 190 + spells

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Strength Rating 5–8

DEX: 9 **STR**: 9 **TOU**: 9
PER: 9 **WIL**: 9 **CHA**: 9

Initiative: 10
Number of Actions: 2
Attack: 9 + SR
Damage:
Unarmed: 9

Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 11 + SR
Social Defense: 11 + SR
Physical Armor: 9
Mystic Armor: SR

Death Rating: 48
Wound Threshold: 14
Unconsciousness Rating: 41

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 9

Combat Movement: 49

Full Movement: 98

Karma Points: 2 × SR

Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Empathic Sense (PER + SR)
Manifest (SR)
Astral Sight[T] (PER + SR)
Lifesense (PER + SR)
Spellcasting[T] (PER + SR)

Legend Points: SR 5: 645 + spells; SR 6: 975 + spells; SR 7: 1,475 + spells; SR 8: 2,385 + spells

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Strength Rating 9–12

DEX: 13 **STR**: 13 **TOU**: 13
PER: 13 **WIL**: 13 **CHA**: 13

Initiative: 14
Number of Actions: 3
Attack: 13 + SR
Damage:
Unarmed: 13

Physical Defense: 17
Spell Defense: 16 + SR
Social Defense: 16 + SR
Physical Armor: 13
Mystic Armor: SR

Death Rating: 64
Wound Threshold: 19
Unconsciousness Rating: 57

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 13

Combat Movement: 90

Full Movement: 180

Karma Points: 2 × SR

Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Empathic Sense (PER + SR)
Manifest (SR)
Astral Sight[T] (PER + SR)
Lifesense (PER + SR)
Spellcasting[T] (PER + SR)

Legend Points (2): SR 9: 11,400 + spells; SR 10: 20,000 + spells; SR 11: 27,800 + spells; SR 12: 46,200 + spells

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Strength Rating 13–15

DEX: 17 **STR**: 17 **TOU**: 17
PER: 17 **WIL**: 17 **CHA**: 17

Initiative: 18
Number of Actions: 4
Attack: 17 + SR

Physical Defense: 22
Spell Defense: 21 + SR
Social Defense: 21 + SR

ALLY SPIRIT POWERS TABLE	
Spirit Power	**Minimum Strength Rating**
Confusion, Detect Trap, Detect Weapons, Talents	1
Astral Portal, Find, Possession, Temperature	5
Evil Eye	9

Damage: Unarmed: 17
Physical Armor: 17
Mystic Armor: SR

Death Rating: 80
Recovery Tests: 8
Wound Threshold: 23
Knockdown: 17
Unconsciousness Rating: 73

Combat Movement: 145
Full Movement: 290

Karma Points: 2 × SR
Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Astral Sight T (PER + SR)
Empathic Sense (PER + SR)
Lifesense (PER + SR)
Manifest (SR)
Spellcasting T (PER + SR)

Legend Points (3): SR 13: 115,500 + spells; SR 14: 148,650 + spells; SR 15: 207,750 + spells

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Rules

Add +5 to the Physical Defense of an ally spirit when physically manifested. Choose a number of additional powers equal to the ally spirit's Strength Rating.

Powers: Ally spirits do not gain powers in any specific order or priority. Gamemasters should, however, use the guidelines in the Ally Spirit Powers Table when assigning powers to ally spirits as their Strength Ratings increase. Note that these suggestions apply to ally spirits only.

Shadow (Sample Ally Spirit)

When a Horror kills a victim's body, it can create a shadow by capturing the slain Name-giver's spirit (see **Horror Powers** in the **Horrors** chapter, p. 440). Driven mad by the sundering of spirit and body, magically enslaved by the Horror, the shadow becomes a fearsome tool for its master's dread designs.

A shadow doesn't have the kind of physical being it once had as a Name-giver; it has no depth, no thickness, none of the bulk of living flesh. It appears to have no more substance than the harmless shadow of any object or person; only the closest gaze at an ordinary patch of shade can reveal the slightly darker shape of the Horror's shadow-servant. A shadow can assume whatever shape its master pleases, matching the exact outlines of a common shadow cast by any object. It can also dim its glowing red eyes, becoming almost invisible within normal shade. The only thing that gives it away is this: the affected object or person seems to cast a slightly darker shadow than the other objects in the room.

Thus, shadows have not enough substance to affect the physical world directly, but can easily act as spies for their dreadful masters. Able to blend in perfectly with almost any surroundings, shadows enable Horrors to keep watch over whomever they choose. If necessary, these terrible beings can even skitter from shadow to shadow to avoid detection.

Rules

A shadow is a corrupted ally spirit. The Strength Rating is determined by the rank of the Horror's Create Shadow power, and usually equals the highest Circle a victim has achieved as an adept.

Manifestation Restriction: Shadows can only manifest within the shade cast by an object or person; they cannot do so in total darkness or in direct light.

Possession: Shadows with the Possession power can aid the Horrors in taking control of victims. If a shadow-servant shapes itself to match a real person's shadow, the shadow-servant can attempt to possess that person. If it succeeds in its foul purpose, the shadow controls the victim's body, though it cannot possess the victim's mind. A shadow often stalks its intended victim for some time, carefully learning exactly how he behaves before taking possession, lest the victim manage to use its mind against the shadow in some subtle way.

Because shadows are no longer Name-givers, characters under their control often act strangely. They may exhibit subtle differences in speech patterns or mannerisms, or do something blatantly out of character like attacking a loved one. Depending on the oddness of the behavior, other characters may notice something wrong with a shadow's victim by making a Perception Test against the result of the Possession Test used by the shadow to take control. If the victim's odd behavior is subtle, the Perception Test receives no modifiers. However, if the shadow's victim lashes out at friends and companions, characters may add a +3 or +4 bonus to this Perception Test, at the gamemaster's discretion.

Of course, controlling a body while leaving the mind free offers the Horrors a chance to cause pain and suffering in ways they find especially delicious. The victim is compelled by the shadow to do dreadful things, and all his will to rebel cannot prevent him from committing whatever atrocity the controlling Horror desires. By playing one person against another and making diabolical use of its shadow-controlled puppets, a Horror can often tear an entire town or village apart from within and feed on the anguish of all the inhabitants.

Vulnerability to Light: Other than a spell designed to strike directly at the shadow, there is only one way to kill it. Light shed on the shadow's hiding place before it can leap to a new pool of darkness or return to astral space, will destroy it.

Adventure Hook

In a city of the gamemaster's choice, a politician who is also a close friend of the characters has begun to act extremely unlike himself. He makes confusing and often contradictory decisions, as if in the grip of some internal struggle. The characters decide to find out why, and if possible to help their friend through his or her trouble. Unfortunately, their friend has fallen victim to a shadow.

To save their friend, the characters must confront and destroy the shadow and the Horror who created it. As they search for answers and try to take action, the Horror is consolidating its control over others in local government and forcing them to commit horrible acts—the characters must stop the Horror before it destroys the entire city.

EARTH SPIRITS

Earth spirits embody the nature of True earth, the element from which all physical objects arise and to which they return. An earth spirit's nature makes it more attuned to the physical world than any other type of elemental spirit.

Earth spirits tend to be patient and calm. They speak slowly, take their time when thinking through an idea or making a decision, and they perform tasks with diligence and patience. An earth elemental can be unpredictable when angered, but even when in the grip of rage the spirit remains outwardly unemotional, a characteristic that often frustrates a summoner attempting to gauge a spirit's emotional state.

While the living manifestation of their element fascinates earth elementals, most of these spirits prefer to remain in the Plane of Earth, surrounded by their True earth. They especially

dislike being summoned in water or in the air. They will first attempt to manifest in an outcropping of rock or in dirt, or in a clay pot if no other earthen material is available.

Strength Rating 1–4

DEX: 3 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 7
PER: 4 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 2
Number of Actions: 1
Attack: 3 + SR
Damage:
Unarmed (5): 11
Physical Defense: 4
Spell Defense: 7 + SR
Social Defense: 4 + SR
Physical Armor: 6 + SR
Mystic Armor: 2 + SR

Death Rating: 40
Wound Threshold: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 32
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 6 + SR

Combat Movement: 8
Full Movement: 16

Karma Points: 2 × SR
Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Detect True Element (SR)
Manifest (SR)
Share Knowledge (SR)
Spellcasting[T] (PER + SR)
Astral Sight[T] (PER + SR)
Engulf (WIL + SR)
Manipulate Element (WIL + SR)
Spear (STR + SR)

Legend Points: SR 1: 90; SR 2: 115; SR 3: 160; SR 4: 235

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Strength Rating 5–8

DEX: 7 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 11
PER: 8 **WIL**: 10 **CHA**: 8

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 2
Attack: 7 + SR
Damage:
Unarmed (5): 15
Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 13 + SR
Social Defense: 10 + SR
Physical Armor: 10 + SR
Mystic Armor: 1 + SR

Death Rating: 56
Wound Threshold: 16
Unconsciousness Rating: 49
Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 10 + SR

Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60

Karma Points: 2 × SR
Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Detect True Element (SR)
Manifest (SR)
Share Knowledge (SR)
Spellcasting[T] (PER + SR)
Astral Sight[T] (PER + SR)
Engulf (WIL + SR)
Manipulate Element (WIL + SR)
Spear (STR + SR)

Legend Points: SR 5: 740; SR 6: 1,120; SR 7: 1,670; SR 8: 2,660

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Strength Rating 9–12

DEX: 11 **STR**: 14 **TOU**: 15
PER: 12 **WIL**: 14 **CHA**: 12

Initiative: 10
Number of Actions: 2
Attack: 11 + SR
Damage:
Unarmed (5): 19
Physical Defense: 14
Spell Defense: 18 + SR
Social Defense: 15 + SR
Physical Armor: 15 + SR
Mystic Armor: 1 + SR

Death Rating: 72
Wound Threshold: 21
Unconsciousness Rating: 65
Recovery Tests: 7
Knockdown: 14 + SR

Combat Movement: 61
Full Movement: 122

Karma Points: 2 × SR
Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Detect True Element (SR)
Manifest (SR)
Share Knowledge (SR)
Spellcasting[T] (PER + SR)
Astral Sight[T] (PER + SR)
Engulf (WIL + SR)
Manipulate Element (WIL + SR)
Spear (STR + SR)

Legend Points(2): SR 9: 14,310; SR 10: 22,910; SR 11: 31,710; SR 12: 51,110

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Strength Rating 13–15

DEX: 15 **STR**: 18 **TOU**: 19
PER: 16 **WIL**: 18 **CHA**: 16

Initiative: 14
Number of Actions: 3
Attack: 15 + SR
Damage:
Unarmed (5): 23
Physical Defense: 19
Spell Defense: 23 + SR
Social Defense: 20 + SR
Physical Armor: 19 + SR
Mystic Armor: 1 + SR

Death Rating: 88
Wound Threshold: 24
Unconsciousness Rating: 82
Recovery Tests: 9
Knockdown: 18 + SR

Combat Movement: 106
Full Movement: 212

Karma Points: 2 × SR
Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Detect True Element (SR)
Manifest (SR)
Share Knowledge (SR)
Spellcasting[T] (PER + SR)
Astral Sight[T] (PER + SR)
Engulf (WIL + SR)
Manipulate Element (WIL + SR)
Spear (STR + SR)

Legend Points (3): SR 13: 124,230; SR 14: 168,780; SR 15: 241,230

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Rules

Choose a number of additional powers equal to the earth spirit's Strength Rating.

Manifestation Restriction: Earth elementals require the presence of earth to manifest. This requirement only presents a problem when the elemental attempts to manifest aboard an airship, on the upper floor of a wooden building, or under other special circumstances. Earth elementals may manifest as pools of mud, large rocks, clods of dirt, or in many other forms. Often, these elementals shape themselves into humanoid forms.

Vulnerability to Wood: Lower the result level required to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on an earth spirit or elemental by one level (from Excellent to Good, for example) if the attack was made with a wooden weapon or wood-based spell.

Shard (Sample Earth Spirit)

DEX: 7 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 12
PER: 6 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (5): 12
Damage:
Unarmed (5): 15

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 11
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 15
Mystic Armor: 5

Death Rating: 60
Wound Threshold: 17
Unconsciousness Rating: 53

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 15

Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60

Karma Points: 10
Karma Step: 8

Powers:
Aid Summoner (5)
Detect True Element (5)
Enrage Element (5): 13
Manipulate Element (5): 13
Spear (5): 15
Astral Sight T (5): 11
Engulf (5): 13
Manifest (5)
Share Knowledge (5)

Legend Points: 620

Equipment: None

Loot: Embedded crystals and gems worth D6 × 20 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Shards are Strength Rating 5 earth spirits that manifest in living crystal. They appear as tall, spidery humanoid figures with long limbs, their bodies formed from multifaceted crystal with many sharp edges, like a roughly hewn statue. Shards use their crystalline limbs and sharp cutting edges to attack.

Most shards are not terribly intelligent. They often guard deposits of living crystal or act as thralls of a more powerful earth spirit. Shards have been encountered in some of the deep crystal caves in the Twilight Peaks and elsewhere, concealed among the crystals there and virtually invisible until they attack.

Rules

Due to their crystalline bodies, shards are not vulnerable to wood. Instead, their bodies shatter easily.

Fragile Body: Because their bodies are crystalline, shards can be shattered by a sufficiently powerful blow. Lower the result level required to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on a shard by one level (from Excellent to Good, for example) if the attack was made with a blunt weapon, such as a mace or a hammer. Other weapons inflict Armor-Defeating Hits normally.

Fire Spirits

Fire is the great destroyer, an element that clears away the old to make room for new growth. While fire is a vital part of the world's natural order, it remains hazardous, unpredictable and often uncontrollable. All of these traits characterize fire spirits and elementals.

Fire spirits have vivid imaginations and are quick to anger. They experience extreme, rapidly changing emotions. Whether a fire spirit is expressing anger, fear, love, hate, disgust, or friendship it does so loudly and forcefully.

When they manifest, fire elementals arise from a fire source and assume a roughly humanoid form. A fire elemental's appearance changes to match its current emotions. Cozy, crackling flames may form the body of a calm elemental, while an angry elemental may become a blazing inferno. Unlike other elementals, fire elementals do not generally care where they manifest, as long as a source of fire is present.

Strength Rating 1–4

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

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 1
Attack: 5 + SR
Damage:
Unarmed (5): 10

Physical Defense: 7 + SR
Spell Defense: 7 + SR
Social Defense: 4 + SR
Physical Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: SR

Death Rating: 32
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 24

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: 38
Full Movement: 76

Karma Points: 2 × SR
Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Burning Aura (SR)
Engulf (WIL + SR)
Manipulate Element (WIL + SR)
Spear (STR + SR)
Astral Sight T (PER + SR)
Detect True Element (SR)
Manifest (SR)
Share Knowledge (SR)
Spellcasting T (PER + SR)

Legend Points: SR 1: 70; SR 2: 85; SR 3: 125; SR 4: 200

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Strength Rating 5–8

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

Initiative: 11
Number of Actions: 2
Attack: 9 + SR
Damage:
Unarmed (5): 14

Physical Defense: 12 + SR
Spell Defense: 12 + SR
Social Defense: 9 + SR
Physical Armor: 9
Mystic Armor: SR

Death Rating: 48
Wound Threshold: 14
Unconsciousness Rating: 41

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: 74
Full Movement: 148

Karma Points: 2 × SR
Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Burning Aura (SR)
Engulf (WIL + SR)
Manipulate Element (WIL + SR)
Spear (STR + SR)
Astral Sight T (PER + SR)
Detect True Element (SR)
Manifest (SR)
Share Knowledge (SR)
Spellcasting T (PER + SR)

Legend Points: SR 5: 625; SR 6: 955; SR 7: 1,455; SR 8: 2,365

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Strength Rating 9–12

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

Initiative: 15 **Physical Defense**: 17 + SR
Number of Actions: 3 **Spell Defense**: 18 + SR
Attack: 13 + SR **Social Defense**: 15 + SR
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 13
Unarmed (5): 18 **Mystic Armor**: SR

Death Rating: 64 **Recovery Tests**: 6
Wound Threshold: 19 **Knockdown**: Immune
Unconsciousness Rating: 57

Combat Movement: 125 **Full Movement**: 250

Karma Points: 2 × SR **Karma Step**: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR) Astral Sight T (PER + SR)
Burning Aura (SR) Detect True Element (SR)
Engulf (WIL + SR) Manifest (SR)
Manipulate Element (WIL + SR) Share Knowledge (SR)
Spear (STR + SR) Spellcasting T (PER + SR)

Legend Points (2): SR 9: 11,500; SR 10: 20,100; SR 11: 27,900; SR 12: 46,300

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Strength Rating 13–15

DEX: 18 **STR**: 17 **TOU**: 17
PER: 16 **WIL**: 18 **CHA**: 16

Initiative: 19 **Physical Defense**: 22 + SR
Number of Actions: 4 **Spell Defense**: 23 + SR
Attack: 17 + SR **Social Defense**: 20 + SR
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 17
Unarmed (5): 22 **Mystic Armor**: SR

Death Rating: 80 **Recovery Tests**: 8
Wound Threshold: 23 **Knockdown**: Immune
Unconsciousness Rating: 73

Combat Movement: 190 **Full Movement**: 380

Karma Points: 2 × SR **Karma Step**: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR) Astral Sight T (PER + SR)
Burning Aura (SR) Detect True Element (SR)
Engulf (WIL + SR) Manifest (SR)
Manipulate Element (WIL + SR) Share Knowledge (SR)
Spear (STR + SR) Spellcasting T (PER + SR)

Legend Points (3): SR 13: 115,680; SR 14: 148,830; SR 15: 207,930

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Rules

Add +5 to the Physical Defense of a fire spirit when it is physically manifested. Choose a number of additional powers equal to the fire spirit's Strength Rating.

Burning Aura: Manifested fire spirits generate a tremendous amount of heat. If the spirit passes within 3 yards of a target, the target automatically suffers damage equal to the spirit's Strength Rating. Physical Armor protects against this damage. Unless somehow fireproofed, non-magical metal and wooden weapons are useless against a manifested fire spirit of Strength Rating 9 or higher. Any blow a character lands against the spirit automatically destroys the weapon—metal swords and daggers melt, wooden shafts burst into flame.

Manifestation Restriction: Fire elementals can only manifest from a source of fire. The size of the source determines the Strength Rating of the elemental that manifests. Torches and other small flames may only spawn fire elementals of Strength Ratings 1–3. Only campfires and larger sources can produce a fire elemental of Strength Rating 4 or higher.

Vulnerability to Water: Lower the result level required to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on a fire spirit or elemental by one level (from Excellent to Good, for example) if the attack was made with a water-based weapon or spell.

INVAE SPIRITS

The insectoid spirits known as the invae are neither ally nor elemental spirits, and thus cannot be directly summoned by Nethermancers or Elementalists. Invae do not come from the planes familiar to most magicians. Little is known of these netherworlds, save that the invae have referred to them as "crowded."

The invae are usually human-sized spirits that most often resemble wasps or ants, though they have been known to appear in termite or even mantis forms. Hybrid forms combining these insect features and characteristics of the Name-giver races are also fairly common. Most people believe that other forms of invae exist, as yet unseen in Barsaive.

Though few in number, most invae live in hive-like societies located near large population centers. Though many regard them as another form of Horror, the invae act quite differently. Rather than feeding off the pain of their victims, the invae subject their victims to loathsome rituals that induce metamorphosis, transforming the victim into a Name-giver/invae hybrid. These creatures, in turn, breed new invae to increase the size and power of the hive. Once the hive reaches a certain size, it will attempt to summon an invae queen from astral space.

Strength Rating 1–4

DEX: 3 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 10
PER: 3 **WIL**: 4 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 4 **Physical Defense**: 4
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 3 + SR
Attack: 3 + SR **Social Defense**: 6 + SR
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 10
Claws (3): 8 **Mystic Armor**: SR

Death Rating: 52 **Recovery Tests**: 5
Wound Threshold: 15 **Knockdown**: 4 + SR
Unconsciousness Rating: 45

Combat Movement: 14 **Full Movement**: 28

Karma Points: 2 × SR **Karma Step**: 3 + SR

Powers:
Climbing T (DEX + SR) Manifest (SR)
Poison [SD 5 + SR; Paralysis] Silent Walk T (DEX + SR)
Summon T (PER + SR) Transform (WIL + SR; see text)

Legend Points: SR 1: 120; SR 2: 135; SR 3: 175; SR 4: 250

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Strength Rating 5–8

DEX: 7 **STR**: 9 **TOU**: 14
PER: 6 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 9

Initiative: 8
Number of Actions: 2
Attack: 7 + SR
Damage:
Claws (3): 12

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 7 + SR
Social Defense: 11 + SR
Physical Armor: 14
Mystic Armor: SR

Death Rating: 68
Wound Threshold: 20
Unconsciousness Rating: 61

Recovery Tests: 7
Knockdown: 8 + SR

Combat Movement: 38
Full Movement: 76

Karma Points: 2 × SR
Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Climbing[T] (DEX + SR)
Poison [SD 5 + SR; Paralysis]
Summon[T] (PER + SR)
Manifest (SR)
Silent Walk[T] (DEX + SR)
Transform (WIL + SR; see text)

Legend Points: SR 5: 820; SR 6: 1,150; SR 7: 1,650; SR 8: 2,560

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Strength Rating 9–12

DEX: 11 **STR**: 13 **TOU**: 18
PER: 10 **WIL**: 12 **CHA**: 13

Initiative: 15
Number of Actions: 3
Attack: 15 + SR
Damage:
Claws (3): 16

Physical Defense: 14
Spell Defense: 12 + SR
Social Defense: 16 + SR
Physical Armor: 18
Mystic Armor: SR

Death Rating: 84
Wound Threshold: 23
Unconsciousness Rating: 77

Recovery Tests: 9
Knockdown: 12 + SR

Combat Movement: 74
Full Movement: 148

Karma Points: 2 × SR
Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Climbing[T] (DEX + SR)
Poison [SD 5 + SR; Paralysis]
Summon[T] (PER + SR)
Manifest (SR)
Silent Walk[T] (DEX + SR)
Transform (WIL + SR; see text)

Legend Points (2): SR 9: 12,050; SR 10: 20,650; SR 11: 28,450; SR 12: 46,850

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Strength Rating 13–15

DEX: 15 **STR**: 17 **TOU**: 22
PER: 14 **WIL**: 16 **CHA**: 17

Initiative: 16
Number of Actions: 4
Attack: 15 + SR
Damage:
Claws (3): 20

Physical Defense: 19
Spell Defense: 17 + SR
Social Defense: 21 + SR
Physical Armor: 22
Mystic Armor: SR

Death Rating: 100
Wound Threshold: 27
Unconsciousness Rating: 94

Recovery Tests: 11
Knockdown: 16 + SR

Combat Movement: 125
Full Movement: 250

Karma Points: 2 × SR
Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Climbing[T] (DEX + SR)
Poison [SD 5 + SR; Paralysis]
Summon[T] (PER + SR)
Manifest (SR)
Silent Walk[T] (DEX + SR)
Transform (WIL + SR; see text)

Legend Points (3): SR 13: 117,750; SR 14: 150,900; SR 15: 210,000

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Rules

Though a myriad of invae varieties exist, the statistics above generally apply to all types. Choose a number of additional powers equal to the invae spirit's Strength Rating.

All invae attack by striking their victims with chitinous claws, then rending the victim's flesh with both claws and mandibles. In addition to normal damage, a bite attack exposes the victim to a paralyzing venom. Invae usually try to render their victims unconscious, in order to take them prisoner and eventually turn them into one of their own.

Transform: Invae spirits use this power to permanently manifest in living hosts. These hosts must be specially prepared (usually in a cocoon) and spend some time in a coma while the invae spirit enacts physical changes on the host from astral space. The host body slowly changes form over time, turning it into a hybrid in a matter of days. During the process, the host gains a bizarre mix of insectoid features in addition to his own, often creating gross parodies and abominations.

In game terms, the invae spirit is allowed to make a Transform roll once per day. If the result is higher than the host's Spell Defense, one of the host's Attributes is replaced with one of the invae's. The transformation is complete once all of the host's Attributes have been replaced. Once started, no part of this transformation process can be reverted, except perhaps with powerful healing magic.

Poison: Unlike many paralytic poisons, invae venom reduces the victim's Dexterity until he cannot move any longer, making him an easy target. Subtract –1 from the victim's Dexterity step each round until it reaches zero, at which point the victim is completely paralyzed.

Summon: Invae use this power to summon more of their kind, and to summon their queen once their hive size allows for a summoning ritual. An invae queen has a minimum Strength Rating of 13.

WATER SPIRITS

Water is ever-changing, fluid, perpetually moving. Water spirits exhibit these characteristics as well, quickly moving from experience to experience with a curiosity and excitement shown by no other type of elemental spirit. Many magicians attribute this curiosity to the broad range of incarnations experienced by water spirits, from the slow, waiting time of ice to the fast-flowing movement of water to the floating airiness of mist.

Often, water elementals change their appearance several times while physically manifested. An elemental may first appear as a large bubble of water floating in midair, then disperse into a fog and finally coalesce into a block of ice. Generally, water elementals do not mind being summoned to the physical plane; they are generally curious beings, as their shifting nature implies.

Strength Rating 1–4

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

Initiative: 8
Number of Actions: 2
Attack: 6 + SR
Damage:
Unarmed: 4
Physical Defense: 8 + SR
Spell Defense: 9 + SR
Social Defense: 6 + SR
Physical Armor: 4
Mystic Armor: SR

Death Rating: 28
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 19
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: 40
Full Movement: 80

Karma Points: 2 × SR
Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Detect True Element (SR)
Manifest (SR)
Share Knowledge (SR)
Spellcasting[T] (PER + SR)
Astral Sight[T] (PER + SR)
Engulf (WIL + SR)
Manipulate Element (WIL + SR)
Spear (STR + SR)

Legend Points: SR 1: 75; SR 2: 90; SR 3: 125; SR 4: 200

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Strength Rating 5–8

DEX: 11 **STR**: 8 **TOU**: 8
PER: 9 **WIL**: 9 **CHA**: 9

Initiative: 12
Number of Actions: 2
Attack: 10 + SR
Damage:
Unarmed: 8
Physical Defense: 13 + SR
Spell Defense: 14 + SR
Social Defense: 11 + SR
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: SR

Death Rating: 44
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 36
Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: 78
Full Movement: 156

Karma Points: 2 × SR
Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Detect True Element (SR)
Manifest (SR)
Share Knowledge (SR)
Spellcasting[T] (PER + SR)
Astral Sight[T] (PER + SR)
Engulf (WIL + SR)
Manipulate Element (WIL + SR)
Spear (STR + SR)

Legend Points: SR 5: 635; SR 6: 965; SR 7: 1,465; SR 8: 2,375

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Strength Rating 9–12

DEX: 15 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 12
PER: 13 **WIL**: 13 **CHA**: 13

Initiative: 16
Number of Actions: 3
Attack: 14 + SR
Damage:
Unarmed: 12
Physical Defense: 18 + SR
Spell Defense: 19 + SR
Social Defense: 16 + SR
Physical Armor: 12
Mystic Armor: SR

Death Rating: 60
Wound Threshold: 17
Unconsciousness Rating: 53
Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: 130
Full Movement: 260

Karma Points: 2 × SR
Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Detect True Element (SR)
Manifest (SR)
Share Knowledge (SR)
Spellcasting[T] (PER + SR)
Astral Sight[T] (PER + SR)
Engulf (WIL + SR)
Manipulate Element (WIL + SR)
Spear (STR + SR)

Legend Points (2): SR 9: 11,350; SR 10: 19,950; SR 11: 27,750; SR 12: 46,150

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Strength Rating 13–15

DEX: 19 **STR**: 16 **TOU**: 16
PER: 17 **WIL**: 17 **CHA**: 17

Initiative: 20
Number of Actions: 4
Attack: 18 + SR
Damage:
Unarmed: 16
Physical Defense: 23 + SR
Spell Defense: 24 + SR
Social Defense: 21 + SR
Physical Armor: 16
Mystic Armor: SR

Death Rating: 76
Wound Threshold: 22
Unconsciousness Rating: 69
Recovery Tests: 8
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: 196
Full Movement: 392

Karma Points: 2 × SR
Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Detect True Element (SR)
Manifest (SR)
Share Knowledge (SR)
Spellcasting[T] (PER + SR)
Astral Sight[T] (PER + SR)
Engulf (WIL + SR)
Manipulate Element (WIL + SR)
Spear (STR + SR)

Legend Points (3): SR 13: 115,650; SR 14: 148,800; SR 15: 207,900

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Rules

The spirit's Physical Defense is used in astral space as well as when physically manifested. Choose a number of additional powers equal to the water spirit's Strength Rating.

Manifestation Restriction: Water elementals can only manifest from a source of water. The size of the water source has no bearing on the Strength Rating of the water elemental that may manifest from it. Even a drop of water is sufficient to spawn the mightiest of water spirits.

Vulnerability to Air: Lower the result level required to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on a water spirit or elemental by one level (from Excellent to Good, for example) if the attack was made with an air-based weapon or spell.

Wood Spirits

Wood spirits serve a special purpose in the grand scheme of things, because the element of wood holds all the other elements together. Wood sends its roots deep into earth. It draws water through itself. It pulls in air through its pores. It provides fuel for fire, which clears the way for new wood to grow and continue the cycle. Without wood, the harmonious balance of the elements could not exist.

Many magicians find that wood spirits show a high level of self-confidence and wisdom. They attribute these characteristics to wood's ability to store knowledge. They point out that trees collect information through their roots and pores, channel it through their veins and store it in their rings. The wise sayings of wood spirits, though often vague, verge on prophecy.

Wood spirits do not appreciate being forced to manifest. The weakest of the elemental spirits, they prefer to stay in their elemental plane among their own kind, sorting and considering the information they receive from the outside world. They object to being summoned underwater or in any other environment where another element shuts them off from the flow of information, and so wood spirits must be coerced to appear by the summoner making a successful Contest of Wills.

Strength Rating 1–4

DEX: 3 **STR**: 4 **TOU**: 4
PER: 5 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack: 7 + SR
Damage:
Unarmed (3): 7
Physical Defense: 4
Spell Defense: 9 + SR
Social Defense: 6 + SR
Physical Armor: 7
Mystic Armor: SR

Death Rating: 28
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 19
Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 6 + SR

Combat Movement: 8
Full Movement: 16

Karma Points: 2 × SR
Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Detect True Element (SR)
Manifest (SR)
Share Knowledge (SR)
Spellcasting T (PER + SR)
Astral Sight T (PER + SR)
Engulf (WIL + SR)
Manipulate Element (WIL + SR)
Spear (STR + SR)

Legend Points: SR 1: 75; SR 2: 90; SR 3: 125; SR 4: 200

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Strength Rating 5–8

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

Initiative: 10
Number of Actions: 2
Attack: 11 + SR
Damage:
Unarmed (3): 11
Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 14 + SR
Social Defense: 11 + SR
Physical Armor: 11
Mystic Armor: SR

Death Rating: 44
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 36
Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 8 + SR

Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60

Karma Points: 2 × SR
Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Detect True Element (SR)
Manifest (SR)
Share Knowledge (SR)
Spellcasting T (PER + SR)
Astral Sight T (PER + SR)
Engulf (WIL + SR)
Manipulate Element (WIL + SR)
Spear (STR + SR)

Legend Points: SR 5: 625; SR 6: 955; SR 7: 1,455; SR 8: 2,365

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Strength Rating 9–12

DEX: 11 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 12
PER: 13 **WIL**: 13 **CHA**: 13

Initiative: 15
Number of Actions: 3
Attack: 15 + SR
Damage:
Unarmed (3): 15
Physical Defense: 14
Spell Defense: 19 + SR
Social Defense: 16 + SR
Physical Armor: 15
Mystic Armor: SR

Death Rating: 60
Wound Threshold: 17
Unconsciousness Rating: 53
Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 12 + SR

Combat Movement: 61
Full Movement: 122

Karma Points: 2 × SR
Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Detect True Element (SR)
Manifest (SR)
Share Knowledge (SR)
Spellcasting T (PER + SR)
Astral Sight T (PER + SR)
Engulf (WIL + SR)
Manipulate Element (WIL + SR)
Spear (STR + SR)

Legend Points (2): SR 9: 11,310; SR 10: 19,910; SR 11: 27,710; SR 12: 46,110

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Strength Rating 13–15

DEX: 15 **STR**: 16 **TOU**: 16
PER: 17 **WIL**: 17 **CHA**: 17

Initiative: 18
Number of Actions: 4
Attack: 19 + SR
Physical Defense: 19
Spell Defense: 24 + SR
Social Defense: 21 + SR

Damage:
Unarmed (3): 19

Physical Armor: 19
Mystic Armor: SR

Death Rating: 76
Wound Threshold: 22
Unconsciousness Rating: 69

Recovery Tests: 8
Knockdown: 16 + SR

Combat Movement: 106

Full Movement: 212

Karma Points: 2 × SR

Karma Step: 3 + SR

Powers:
Aid Summoner (SR)
Detect True Element (SR)
Manifest (SR)
Share Knowledge (SR)
Spellcasting[T] (PER + SR)
Astral Sight[T] (PER + SR)
Engulf (WIL + SR)
Manipulate Element (WIL + SR)
Spear (STR + SR)

Legend Points (3): SR 13: 115,500; SR 14: 148,650; SR 15: 207,750

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Rules

Subtract –3 from the Physical Defense of a wood spirit when it is physically manifested. Choose a number of additional powers equal to the wood spirit's Strength Rating.

Manifestation Restriction: Wood elementals manifest within trees and plants, usually altering the shape of the tree or plant into a humanoid form with bark skin and leafy appendages. The approximate size of a plant determines the maximum Strength Rating of the wood elemental. Strength Rating 1–4 elementals can manifest in smaller plants and bushes, or small trees. Strength Rating 5–8 elementals take the shape of large bushes or medium-sized trees. Strength Rating 9–12 elementals only manifest in large, old trees. Elementals of Strength Rating 13 or more need a giant and possibly ancient plant to manifest in.

Vulnerability to Fire: Lower the result level required to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on a wood spirit or elemental by one level (from Excellent to Good, for example) if the attack was made with a fire-based weapon or spell.

Adventure Hook

Legends say that in protecting themselves from the Horrors, the elves of Blood Wood twisted the wood elementals in their forest to make them manifest spontaneously. A local noble hires the characters to bring him such a wood elemental for his private garden. Unfortunately for the characters, only the elves of Blood Wood know how and when their wood elementals manifest, and they rarely reveal their secrets to outsiders. To collect their fee from the noble, the characters must first convince the elves to point them toward a wood elemental; once they have found one, they must hold onto it and bring it to their employer.

Thorn Man (Sample Wood Spirit)

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

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 6
Damage:
Spear (7): 13
Unarmed (3): 9

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 13
Physical Armor: 7
Mystic Armor: 1

Death Rating: 36
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 28

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 7

Combat Movement: 18

Full Movement: 36

Karma Points: 2

Karma Step: 4

Powers:
Aid Summoner (1)
Detect True Element (1)
Manifest (1)
Tiger Spring[T] (1)
Astral Sight[T] (1): 6
Engulf (1): 6
Manipulate Element (1): 6

Legend Points: 85 + 55 for spear

Equipment: None (Thorn Man Spear; see text)

Loot: None

Commentary

Blood Warders summon the wood spirits known as thorn men to help protect the Blood Wood's borders. Thorn men also guard many settlements and sites within the Blood Wood, including Queen Alachia's palace.

Thorn men are animated bundles of thorns with rudimentary intelligence. Vaguely human-like in appearance, they stand roughly six feet tall and weigh sixty pounds.

Though some thorn men remain active at all times, most are awakened when the approach of intruders activates the wards around the edges of the Blood Wood. The thorn men emerge from the trees and other plants when the wards are triggered and immediately seek out the intruders, attempting to eject them from the forest or prevent them from entering until blood elf reinforcements arrive.

Rules

Thorn men are Strength Rating 1 wood spirits summoned by thorn men wards. These wards line the perimeter of the Blood Wood to keep intruders out (see **Traps** in the **Adventuring** chapter, p.108, for more information on thorn man wards).

Thorn Man Spear: Many thorn men carry wooden spears with polished stone tips. These spears are magical weapons, given to them by their summoners. When wielded by anyone but a thorn man, the spear acts as an ordinary spear unless a thread is attached to it (for more information on these weapons, see **Thorn Man Spear** in the **Magical Treasures** chapter, p.190).

Vulnerability to Fire: Lower the result level required to inflict an Armor-Defeating Hit on a thorn man by one level (from Excellent to Good, for example) if the attack was made with a fire-based weapon or spell.

Dragons

You have impressed me… as a snack.

• Icewing •

For as long as any race can remember, dragons have existed. Every culture in Barsaive has stories about dragons, many of them millennia old. Some scholars of the ancient races teach that dragons were the first of the world's living creatures, though little support exists for this theory. The dragons, who know the truth, generally decline to answer questions about their past. Dragons are solitary creatures, living alone by choice. Despite unsubstantiated rumors of dragon moots or councils, cooperation among dragons remains the stuff of legends.

All dragons are dangerous. Few tolerate other races meddling in their affairs, unless the dragon initiates the contact. Though some, such as the great dragon Vasdenjas, have established a protocol by which the races of Barsaive may talk to them, most dragons prefer to be left alone.

Using Dragons in Adventures and Campaigns

A close look at the statistics and abilities of the dragons in this chapter should reveal an obvious fact: these things are dangerous! Even the slightest of dragons is more powerful than most groups of adepts, and great dragons dwarf the power of adepts of nearly any Circle. Fortunately, it is (or at least should be) fairly rare that a group of characters will find themselves the enemy of one or more of the dragons of Barsaive, and the power these creatures wield is one that few characters will ever face directly. Nonetheless, using dragons in adventures in any way is a delicate business.

It requires careful consideration as to which dragon to use, as well as the role the dragon should play in the adventure or campaign. Before we address these issues, however, we should ask one question. Should dragons be that powerful? Yes. Absolutely. The dragons need to be as powerful as they are for the simple fact that they are the oldest and most powerful creatures in the world. Their abilities with magic are unrivaled. Even the most powerful and skilled magicians of the Theran Empire pale in comparison to the magical skills of dragons. Even the most mighty of adepts should feel apprehension at the thought of confronting a dragon under any circumstances. Because dragons are such powerful and important beings, gamemasters need to exercise great care when using them in adventures and campaigns, to prevent dragons from becoming just another monster. Dragons are intelligent Name-givers with their own desires and goals.

There are two basic approaches to using dragons in **Earthdawn** adventures and campaigns: as allies, or as enemies. In either role dragons function best behind the scenes, where they can spin their plots and pull the strings of nations and great powers. A great dragon has the power to lay waste to an entire kingdom if it wishes, but dragons tend to restrain their power, preferring to act indirectly. This—along with the difficulties dragons have with group cooperation—explains why the dragons don't simply descend en masse against the Therans, the Denairastas or anyone else who offends them. They prefer the slow and cautious method. After all, what is a century or more to beings who measure their lives in millennia?

Dragons as Allies

As noted above, dragons are intelligent Name-givers with their own desires and goals. Sometimes these goals coincide with those of other Name-givers, as in the case of Barsaive's struggle against the Theran Empire. These situations allow gamemasters to introduce dragons as allies or even patrons of the player characters.

A dragon, especially a great dragon, is a powerful ally. Dragons have considerable knowledge and magical power, as well as great wealth. A dragon ally can provide adepts with important information, Key Knowledges of magical items, spells and material resources (including silver!). How much the dragon is willing to give depends on how much it thinks the player characters can advance the dragon's own cause.

Dragons are not known for their generosity, and they give away nothing unless it benefits them in some way. A dragon who lavishes gifts on the player characters expects undying loyalty and service in return. Any alliance with a dragon is likely to be a temporary thing, as that is how most dragons prefer to deal with Name-givers. A typical arrangement might be as follows: the dragon asks the player characters to perform a specific task, perhaps in exchange for some service or resource the dragon has to offer. As an example, adepts might seek out a great dragon such as Icewing in hopes of learning a Key Knowledge or some particularly obscure piece of arcane lore. In return, the dragon asks the adepts to spy on a Theran operation near Lake Ban and report back to him, then he will give them the information they seek.

Gamemasters can also establish more lasting relations between dragons and adepts. A dragon can serve as a patron and mentor for the adepts, who perform tasks and serve as the dragon's eyes and hands in Name-giver society. Dragons run a whole network of spies and agents which provides an ideal means for gamemasters to use dragons as patrons.

While dragons usually treat their servants well, they are not bound by the culture and beliefs of other Name-givers. Dragons are arrogant and treat other Name-givers much like children or pets. It is not uncommon for a dragon to sacrifice agents like pawns in a greater game. Adepts who are chosen for sacrifice may not take the same dispassionate view of the situation as their dragon master. If they survive, they may choose to seek revenge on their former patron.

One interesting way a dragon can become a patron of a group of characters is if all of the characters are dragon-kin related to the particular dragon, such as being members of the Denairastas Clan. In this case, the dragon has reasons of its own for defying the traditions of its kind and wishes to aid and support its progeny. Characters in such a campaign will tend to have many other dragon enemies, since most dragon view dragon-kin as abominations.

Dragons as Enemies

A dragon (especially a great dragon) makes an epic foe for an **Earthdawn** campaign. Dragons are very powerful creatures,

perhaps the most powerful beings in the world, with the possible exceptions of mighty astral entities such as the Passions and perhaps the most powerful Horrors, such as Verjigorm, the Great Hunter.

Dragons have great physical ability and magical power, and the intelligence to use both well. A fight against any dragon should never be easy; such a battle should be the climax of a long campaign, rather than a simple clash.

Fortunately, dragons rarely operate in the open where would-be dragon-slayers can come and find them. Most dragons are plotters and schemers, operating through a complex network of servants and informants to carry out their intricate plans. The nature of dragon culture and custom makes dragons aloof and separate from the day-to-day affairs of other Name-givers.

A dragon villain works best as a puppetmaster, operating behind the scenes at first. While the player characters are low-Circle adepts, the dragon's presence is virtually unknown; they interact only with its servants and agents. As time goes on and the characters gain Legend Points and advance in Circle, they interact with more and more of the dragon's powerful servants and uncover more of its schemes, becoming a thorn in its side. Eventually, after a long campaign, the adepts may gain enough power to confront the dragon directly and slay it in an epic battle that shakes the earth and is retold in song and story for generations to come. The defeat of a dragon is no small thing; it is the stuff legends are made of.

The very nature of the dragons creates an interesting dilemma for gamemasters. Using any of the Named dragons in this book can easily result in the death of one or more of the player characters. When dealing with entities as powerful as the dragons, character death should not be unexpected. But while character death is undesirable, it is an important element of **Earthdawn** and one the gamemaster should not try to avoid. If every time the characters encounter a dragon they escape unscathed (or at least not dead!), the significance and power of dragons in the world of **Earthdawn** becomes diluted. The threat and danger they present to the world becomes less sincere.

So the question becomes: how can a gamemaster use the dragons as enemies and maintain the dragons' true nature, but not kill the characters in each adventure? Below are some suggestions for how to resolve this dilemma, without diluting the essence of the **Earthdawn** universe.

The first thing to keep in mind is that most dragons should be long-term opponents. Some of the dragon-like creatures such as drakes are suitable for single adventures, but most should be used over a series of adventures, in which the characters discover the dragon's plans, encounter the dragon's victims, or witness its powers in use. This serves two purposes.

First, it allows the players to encounter the dragon indirectly, as they learn more and more about its influence and machinations. Second, over a series of adventures, the characters will grow in power and experience, and be more ready to deal with the dragon (or at least with its servants and minions).

Another way to look at this is to consider dragons as campaign level opponents. These are not things you battle once and slay. All dragons are very powerful, and only an experienced group of characters has a chance at defeating any of them. The Named dragons in this book represent opportunities for several different types of campaigns, based on the specific attitudes and goals of the individual dragons. Each of these dragons offers different types of adventures and stories. Also, many of these dragons prefer to use their powers over a long-term period. For instance, you should never plan for the characters to learn about, confront, and battle Vestrivan in the course of a single adventure. This would be a waste of a good dragon.

Another idea to keep in mind is that the characters need not confront the dragon itself right from the start. Many of the dragons work through agents, either willing or not. Willing agents include Name-giver servants, drakes or other dragons. Unwilling agents might be Name-givers who aren't even aware that they serve the dragon's goals.

Adventures featuring the Named dragons from this book also need not conclude with the characters actually confronting the dragon itself. In some cases, characters should consider themselves fortunate to survive any type of encounter with a dragon, direct or not! A series of small, minor victories that disrupts the dragon's plans is a good way in which these powerful creatures can be used without risking the lives of the characters too much. Of course, if a dragon's plans were to be disrupted too often, it might just consider a direct assault on the party responsible.

On a slightly less upbeat topic, remember that adventures in which characters are killed are an excellent reminder for the players (and gamemaster) that the world of **Earthdawn** is a dangerous one.

Adventure after adventure in which the characters succeed against any opponent they face only diminishes the feeling that Barsaive is a very dangerous place, one that is still far from safe. An occasional adventure in which the characters suffer losses of some sort, be it serious injury or death, helps to maintain the proper atmosphere of Barsaive as potentially lethal.

As it is inevitable that one or more characters will suffer some misfortune, try to work it into the story, and have it be a significant event. When this occurs, try to let it mean something more than that one of the players needs to make a new character. Don't let the death (or other type of loss) of a character happen for no good reason. The characters in **Earthdawn** are heroes. If they are going to go down, let them go down heroically!

The following work is transcribed from the words of Vasdenjas, the Master of Secrets, a most noble and intelligent great dragon with whom it has been my privilege to work as a scribe and scholar for these past seven years. It contains the dragon's thoughts and reflections on the nature, culture and history of his race, the dragons. I have endeavored to leave the great dragon's words untouched, merely organizing his thoughts and dissertations in a logical order for ease of use and reference. Otherwise, I have included all of the information as he relayed it to me.

—By the Hand of Tiabdjin the Knower, scribe of the Great Library of Throal and First Scholar of the *khavro'am*

The Master of Secrets Speaks

To the Young Races of Barsaive, Vasdenjas the Master of Secrets extends his most cordial greetings. I have long enjoyed the works of the scholars of the Great Library of Throal, and wish to repay the amusement I have gained from reading your various works by contributing some of my own vast knowledge to your collection. After a brief bout of ire (and I apologize once again for the singeing of your beard, noble scribe) I realized that no scholar from the Young Races could possibly have written with authority anything of substance with regard to my kind, and the scholars of the Great Library wisely declined even to try, knowing they could not possibly do us justice.

Therefore, I have decided to take it upon myself to once again impart my wisdom to the Young Races, this time concerning my own kind, the dragons of Barsaive. I hope this document will help to clear up many misconceptions and rumors about our noble and ancient race. As a sign of our goodwill towards the Young Races, I have asked for this volume, upon completion, to be placed in the Great Library of Throal so that all of the citizens of Throal can be enlightened about the true nature of dragons. I am sure the scholars of the Great Library will treat it with the reverence and serious attention it deserves.

Of Form Most Noble

The dragon is the most noble and perfect creature to grace the world since the very beginning of time. We possess many abilities which make us the strongest, wisest and most graceful beings in existence; one of which is the form and function of our bodies. (Yes, Tiabdjin, if you are patient, I will get to all of the questions I see written on your face.)

Dragons are found in different forms and types throughout the world (I will speak more of this later) but we share many traits that define us as dragons.

The first is the strength and power of our physical form. Adult dragons grow larger than most airships, far larger than any of the little folk of the Young Races. A great dragon such as myself dwarfs even the greatest airship of the Throalic fleet (if you will excuse the pun, my dwarf friend).

You small folk are born into the world naked, soft and helpless. Even the scales of a t'skrang are too soft to turn aside the claws of a wild cat. The obsidimen do have some natural armor of course, but their elemental nature is quite a different matter. Coming as they do from a single Liferock they ... ah, but I digress.

At birth, we dragons possess sharp teeth and talons, with hides able to turn aside the little injuries that threaten such as you. Why, I've seen newborn hatchlings kill and devour several bears with no more difficulty than a dwarf dispatching a few rabbits. We also recover quickly from any injury we do sustain, using the power of our magic to knit damaged flesh and bone anew. These natural defenses are sorely needed because, as you will see, the life of a dragon can be a harsh one compared to those of the Young Races. We are challenged by Nature in many ways—ensuring that only the strongest and most able of us survive.

The other distinguishing trait of dragon-kind is our keen intellect and magical nature. You Young Races call yourselves Name-givers, and rightly so, as you share with us the unique ability to give Names to what you see. We dragons are Name-makers, because we are the only race to choose our own Names, rather than having them bestowed upon us by others.

But what of trolls, Master? They choose their Names upon reaching adulthood.

Eh? Oh, that. You speak of re-Naming, my dear Tiabdjin, something any Name-giver can accomplish, given sufficient knowledge. Even then, the re-Naming that occurs among trolls is not true re-Naming. Nonetheless, I am speaking of knowing your own Name before it is spoken by any other. Did you know your Name before you parents told you what it was? Does a newborn troll know the nature of his Name? I would say not.

Now then, our magical nature is born into us as surely as our knowledge of Naming. Dragons are in touch with the primal forces of what you call astral space, the wellspring of all magic in this world. We can see the astral patterns of things around us, the astral imprints of living beings, and the ebb and flow of astral energies around us.

Magic is to us like air is to you: it is our natural environment, our very essence. While your people have learned to understand and control a tiny amount of magic, they have only brushed the surface of an ocean deeper and more mysterious than the Selestrean Sea itself. Like our own Names, we know the depths of these mysteries; know the powers of magic, from the very time we are born. Astral space is the pool from which we draw our magic and our very life.

Our knowledge of the currents of astral energies allows us to affect the outcome of events, to tip the balance of Fate towards a desired end. For most dragons, this ability is an expression of will and magical power, affecting only our own actions. For the more advanced and capable (such as myself) we can work our wills to change the fates of other creatures as well as ourselves.

On the Life Cycle of Dragons

The life of a dragon is not unlike that of one of your people, Tiabdjin, or of any of the Young Races. We are born, we grow, we mate, and produce young. These are things all living creatures understand. What you must know is the unique way we dragons follow the path of life and how long our road is compared to your own.

On the Rite of Mating

Like most living creatures, a new dragon begins with a mating. Unlike most other creatures, a female dragon controls when she is ready to reproduce. Female dragons choose the times to mate during the adult stage of their lives, and most females mate more than once, perhaps every hundred years or so. The process of mating and laying eggs is quite draining, and most females prefer not to leave themselves in a weakened condition very often.

When she decides the time has come to mate, the female seeks out a suitable male. Usually she chooses a potential mate on the basis of traits she wishes to pass on to her offspring. Females only rarely mate with the same male twice, preferring to seek out a different mate each time. In this way, we add diversity and strength to our offspring, mixing the most desirable traits from many dragons.

Once a female has found a desirable mate, she approaches him and performs the First Rite of Mating. In this Rite, the female informs the male that she has chosen him and asks the male to prove his worthiness to father her young. If the male does not desire the mating, he may perform the Rite of Refusal with no shame to either party, and the two dragons simply part. There are some stories of spurned female dragons becoming vengeful, but these stories have grown in the telling, I can assure you. Unlike the Young Races, our mating practices do not consume all of our thoughts and feelings.

If the chosen male desires the mating as well, he must respond with the Second Rite of Mating, in which he describes the valuable traits he has to offer the female and pass on to her offspring. This Rite is accompanied by the Dance of Courting, where the candidate male demonstrates his worthiness through grace of movement as well as words. Many young males perform foolish and extravagant stunts during the Dance to show off to the female. Age and experience soon show them that females are more impressed by signs of wisdom, strength and maturity than youthful foolhardiness. I, for example, mated many females in my younger days who were taken

with my clear wit and great intelligence, rather than how many clever aerial tricks I could perform. Now I see just as many young males performing for a female's attention like giant, silly birds as ever before. It is sad, the state of youth today, Tiabdjin.

Again, during the Second Rite, if the female decides she does not want the male as a mate, she may refuse him without recrimination. Many females are quite choosy, and prefer to perform the Second Rite with many males before deciding which one will be her mate. Males have been known to compete with each other for the attention of an especially desirable female, hoping to humiliate their rivals by defeating them in battle. Our legends tell of the great battles that were fought long ago for the affections of the mighty All-Wings, she who was the pinnacle of female dragonhood. Males killed each other in duels to prove their worthiness as mates.

Yes, the competition between males for the attention of a female sometimes invokes the rarely used Ritual of Battle. The male candidates fight to determine who is the most worthy of the female. Such a struggle is not only a test of physical prowess, but of cunning, intelligence and magical might, all traits a female might consider desirable. The winner of the Ritual is considered the most worthy, although the female may still choose to reject him. The Ritual is not always to the death, but it often results in such. The ire of a dragon is a mighty thing, my friend. Once roused, it is difficult to end a battle without the death of one side.

Once the first two Rites of Mating are performed, and the female and male are both satisfied with their choice, the two retire to a secluded location to perform the Dance of New Life. It is a ritual lasting for many days in which the two dragons prepare for the moment of mating, and the female begins her cycle that will culminate in readiness to conceive. I have heard tales of other Name-givers witnessing the Dance, without knowing what it was they were seeing.

Some believed the two dragons were locked in combat, and some parts of the Dance would seem that way to outsiders.

Others believed they found two dragons in love, although I would never ascribe such an emotion to mating rites.

Oh no, we do not mate for life, as many of the Young Races do. Mating is, for us, a practical thing, the creation of new life, not a permanent bond. As I said, a female will mate with many different males during her life, and a male will likewise perform the Dance with many different females, if he is worthy. Once the mating is done, the two dragons perform the Rite of Separation and take their leave of each other, the male always leaving the place of mating first and returning to his home. The female will lay her eggs in time, usually three or four at once, and then pass them on to be tended for and raised by the proper guardian of such new life.

On the Care of Eggs

Dragon eggs are cared for by great dragons. We are the elders of our race, and so the most fit to protect and educate the young. A female dragon with newly-laid eggs will come to a great dragon and perform the Petition of Caregiving, humbly asking the dragon to become the guardian of her eggs. The female describes her offspring in the most flattering and complimentary way, telling how they will bring pride and happiness into the great dragon's life. She speaks of the sterling qualities that make this great dragon her choice. If her petition is accepted, the female places her eggs in the great dragon's care and departs, most likely never to see them again. The parents have no further role in the lives of the young from that moment on. Indeed, most dragons never even know who their parents are. They know only the care of the great dragon sire who raised them.

After hearing the female's Petition, a great dragon may refuse to care for the eggs. No reason need be given for such a refusal, and the female has no recourse but to seek out another great dragon to care for her eggs. There are many reasons one of us might refuse to become guardian for an egg clutch, such as having too many young to care for already, receiving many different Petitions at once, and other matters which demand our attention and prevent us from giving the eggs the care they require.

The Hatching

It was at this point that I asked Master Vasdenjas if he himself had eggs he was caring for. The Master of Secrets said yes, he did, and I was given the singular honor of being perhaps the first Name-giver to see the Egg Chamber of a great dragon. I was bodily carried, blindfolded, into the depths of Vasdenjas' lair, to a small cavern barely large enough to accommodate the great dragon's bulk. The cave was warm and dry, the floor covered with hot sand. Half-buried in a shallow pit in the center was a collection of great speckled eggs large enough that a dwarf could have stood up inside one quite comfortably. I counted a dozen such eggs, many of them in slightly different shades and patterns.

Having heard tales of adepts finding dragon eggs—specifically, a number of eggs under the care of Icewing—I asked about the size of the eggs before me, as they were considerably larger than those that were described to me. Vasdenjas replied that, unlike the eggs of most other creatures, dragon eggs actually grow during their incubation, starting as small as one foot in diameter, and growing as large as the eggs I saw here. He also reminded me not to place too much credence on the stories of adepts, as they are prone to exaggeration.

Vasdenjas showed me how he used his fiery breath to heat the stones and sand of the cave to keep the eggs warm. Indeed, it was quite hot in the cave, and I was sweating profusely, while the dry air seemed to draw the moisture away from my body like a sponge. I watched as the great dragon examined the eggs with the greatest of care, gently turning them in the sand with his talons and narrowing his eyes to examine each shell with his sharp senses, watching for something that was likely far beyond my limited perception. It was then that the most amazing thing happened.

Vasdenjas withdrew from the eggs, but made no motion for us to leave. After waiting for long minutes in silence, I began to ask the great dragon what we were waiting for, but the Master of Secrets silenced me with a look that sent a chill through me, even in that sweltering heat. I was certain if I spoke again it would be the last thing I ever said. So I waited with the dragon in silence, making myself as comfortable as I could.

I cannot say how much time passed, hours perhaps. I may have fainted from the heat for a short time, it is difficult to say. I recall my attention being captured by a noise and a sight I shall never forget for as long as I live. One of the eggs in the sandpit began to tremble and shiver. Then a flickering light lit the egg from within, visible through the thick shell. It did so again twice more before there was a loud snapping sound, and a crack appeared in the top of the shell. A set of powerful claws emerged

from the crack and slowly began to widen it, enough to allow a thin trickle of smoke to leak out. Then, with a mighty heave, the shell split and a long, serpentine head emerged with a mewling cry. The shell split cleanly in half, revealing a dragon hatchling.

The newborn hatchling was an amazing creature. It was a full twelve feet in length, much like a serpent, with a pair of leathery wings folded tightly to its body and a stubby pair of legs below. I saw no sign of forelimbs, and the head was considerably blunter than a dragon's snout. I did, however, take note of the barbed tail that lashed about, tipped with some kind of stinger as sharp as a dagger. I have no doubt that, were Vasdenjas not present with me, the hatchling would have killed and devoured me only moments out of its shell.

As it was, the Master of Secrets approached the newborn and fixed his gaze upon it. I cannot say for sure what passed between them, but I felt an overpowering sense that an exchange of some kind took place. Almost immediately, the hatchling curled up in the warm sand with a contented growling sound and Vasdenjas guided me out of the Egg Chamber before excusing himself to get the hatching something to eat. He explained that a newborn is usually exhausted by breaking out of its tough shell and needs rest, food and warmth above all else. It was some time before he returned, but I hardly noticed, so engrossed was I in writing down these very words before the incredible experience of seeing a dragon born could be forgotten.

On the Stages of Draconic Life

Much like other Name-givers, Tiabdjin, we dragons pass through stages of our lives, from birth through adulthood, to great age and wisdom. You have already seen how a dragon is born. Now allow me to explain to you the other stages of our lives.

Hatchling

A newborn dragon is called a hatchling. It generally takes about a hundred years or so for a hatchling to be ready to emerge from its shell. Dragon eggs have very strong shells, not like the delicate eggs of birds or even t'skrang.

The tough outer shell can resist even blows from a sword, much like a dragon's armored hide. Indeed, both shell and scale are formed of the same material. The production of the tough eggshells is what most depletes the female during her egg-laying time. When the hatchling is ready, it uses its dragon breath (a natural ability possessed even in the shell) to weaken the shell from within. This quickly heats the inside of the shell to great temperatures, so once it has begun to try to break out of the shell, the hatchling must be successful or else it will die, cooked alive within its shell. Such unfortunates—along with eggs that are not successfully fertilized—are eaten by the guardian dragon in the Ritual of the Quintessential Feast, taking into ourselves the substance of life unfulfilled and gaining, perhaps, some small part of the uniqueness that has been lost.

You're looking a touch pale, Tiabdjin. Do you require anything? Something to eat perhaps? No? Very well, then.

Once the hatchling has broken out of the shell, its guardian greets it. We use Dragonspeech to welcome the new life into the world and to impress our guardianship upon it. For that moment on, the hatchling knows its sire as its mentor and protector.

For information on Dragonspeech, consult the section ***On the Many Types of Communication****, p.386.*

During the first few years of its life, a hatchling learns the basics of flight, as well as how to hunt and survive.

Upon reaching the age of 20 years, the hatchling begins to learn the basics of understanding and using its magical heritage, including such abilities as dragon breath and spellcasting. I always feel a sense of pride in watching a hatchling char its prey for the first time. The Rite of the Second Fire celebrates this time and reminds the hatchling of the trial by fire it survived to come into this world.

By the age of 50 years, a hatchling's education moves beyond learning about its various powers and abilities, to include instruction concerning dragon society. The hatchling is taught about our traditions and customs including mating, the use of Names, proper etiquette and all of the other Rites and Rituals we use. A hatchling can be allowed to speak in the presence of another dragon only after this time, lest some offense be given. It is rare for a hatchling even to be allowed in the presence of another dragon apart from its sire, of course, but it does happen from time to time.

During the first 100 or so years of their lives, a hatchling lives near its caregiver's lair, and the range of its activities tends to be limited to within roughly 4 days walking (as measured by you small Name-givers) of the lair. The hatchling is allowed short flights to hunt and explore, but is carefully watched and spends much of its time being instructed and taught by its guardian. It is extremely rare for outsiders to encounter a hatchling during this time. We great dragons take care to prevent other Name-givers, and even other dragons, from encountering our hatchlings at such a young age.

When the hatchling engages in activities outside the lair, its guardian is always close by. You may wish to ask your readers to keep this in mind, Tiabdjin, if the idea of attacking a hatchling should ever come into their minds.

By the age of 100 years, the hatchling becomes much more self-reliant, able to strike out on its own for brief excursions. For the next 100 years, the hatchling is encouraged to learn on its own, but still within the confines of its guardian's territory. It is during this time that most young dragons begin to really develop their powers. Sometimes youthful experimentation can get out of control, like the time when a hatchling under my care set a large area of the forest aflame. The other Name-givers in the area blamed me for the fire when they saw me flying overhead after retrieving the youngster and sending her back to my lair. As if I would set fire to an area of virgin forest for no reason! I tell you, this is how one gets an undeserved reputation.

When the hatchling reaches the age of 200 years, it comes time for it to leave the care of its guardian and strike out on its own for a time. We perform the Rite of Separation at that time, and the hatchling is left on its own to begin the next, brutal, and thankfully brief, stage of its life.

Adolescence

In reading works from the Great Library of Throal and speaking with many Name-givers, I have noticed something else dragons have in common with the Young Races. There comes a time in the life of every young Name-giver, somewhere between childhood and adulthood, when the forces of natural growth become even more rapid and seem to overwhelm the Name-giver's reason, turning the child into an irrational, irritable and most unreasonable creature, neither child nor adult. You call them adolescents, which is the Name I shall use here.

A dragon adolescent is as far beyond an adolescent of your kind as a dragon adult is beyond an adult of the Young Races—which is to say, a great deal. While you might find your adolescents irrational and emotional, they are nothing compared to a young dragon on the verge of adulthood. It is a period of madness, when primal urges and drives take hold and send the youngling into a state where it is little more than a beast.

When a young dragon reaches this stage, it secludes itself in the wilderness, sometimes close to the lair of its guardian but often quite far away. There it lives, occasionally gathering with other adolescent dragons, for as long as a hundred years, hunting and sleeping, its thoughts (if such they can be called) consumed with nothing more than the need to survive. Adolescent dragons are just as territorial as adults, perhaps even more so. They also lack the reason and etiquette necessary to settle their disputes properly, so they often find themselves locked in struggles to the death with other young dragons, even their own egg-mates. As many as two-thirds of them will die in

these struggles. Few survive to pass on to the next stage.

In fact, it is not unknown for young dragons to attack even an adult dragon who threatens their territory. While a single youngling is no match for the might of an adult, a flock of them can bring one down, which is reason enough for us to give our adolescents a wide berth. None of us has any wish to kill our own young unless we are forced to.

Fortunately for other Name-givers, an adolescent dragon has not yet come into its full powers or mature state.

These creatures lose the use all of the magic they learned as hatchlings, blotted out by their savage drives, and have only an animal cunning to aid them. They still have their strong scales, sharp teeth and powerful talons, capable of rending any Name-giver to bits. It is also at this time that the young dragon's venom begins to flow. The sting of its tail can bring a painful death and young dragons learn to use their venom against prey at this time.

Your pardon, master, but I noticed that the hatchling had only a pair of wings and hind limbs, but no forelimbs as adult dragons do. How does a creature like a hatchling become so different as an adult?

Patience, Tiabdjin, patience. I am coming to that stage, which comes immediately following adolescence.

Then an adolescent dragon appears much like a hatchling, only larger, with a poisonous tail barb?

Yes ...

Then they appear much like wyverns, do they not?

I did not say so! Why, I never said anything of the sort!

But Master Vasdenjas...

Silence! Wyverns are not dragons! They never have been, and they never shall be. You will not speak of this again! How dare you! Get out, get out of my sight!

It was at this point that I withdrew, quite fearful for my life. Never before had I seen Vasdenjas so angry. I retreated outside the dragon's lair and it was some time before the Master of Secrets calmed down and invited me back into his presence. He apologized for his outburst and asked that the whole matter be forgotten. I never did get an answer to my question, however, and I have thought better of raising it again.

Metamorphosis

The time of adolescence is fortunately the shortest in a dragon's life, lasting only 50 to 100 years or so. When it is done, the madness that gripped the young dragon begins to lift from its mind and it is generally drawn back to the place of its birth and raising, there to begin the great Rite of Change that will begin its journey to its adult form and status.

The young dragon enters the realm of astral space like a bird returning to the forest where it was born. There it uses magic to weave a cocoon of astral threads around itself where it will sleep and undergo the transformation. These cocoons exist only in astral space, and cannot be seen or detected from the physical world. It is during this time that the dragon's True Pattern changes and its body changes as well, taking on the adult form that is familiar to the Young Races of Barsaive.

The Horrors' corruption of astral space during the Scourge poses a serious threat to young dragons undergoing The Rite of Change. For this reason, the astral cocoons are nearly always located in astral space high above the ground, usually near the lair of the young dragons' guardian so they can be watched and protected from any harm. Astral regions polluted by the Horrors are no more suitable for the Rite of Change than waters fouled by pollution are suited to the birthing of fish.

Master?

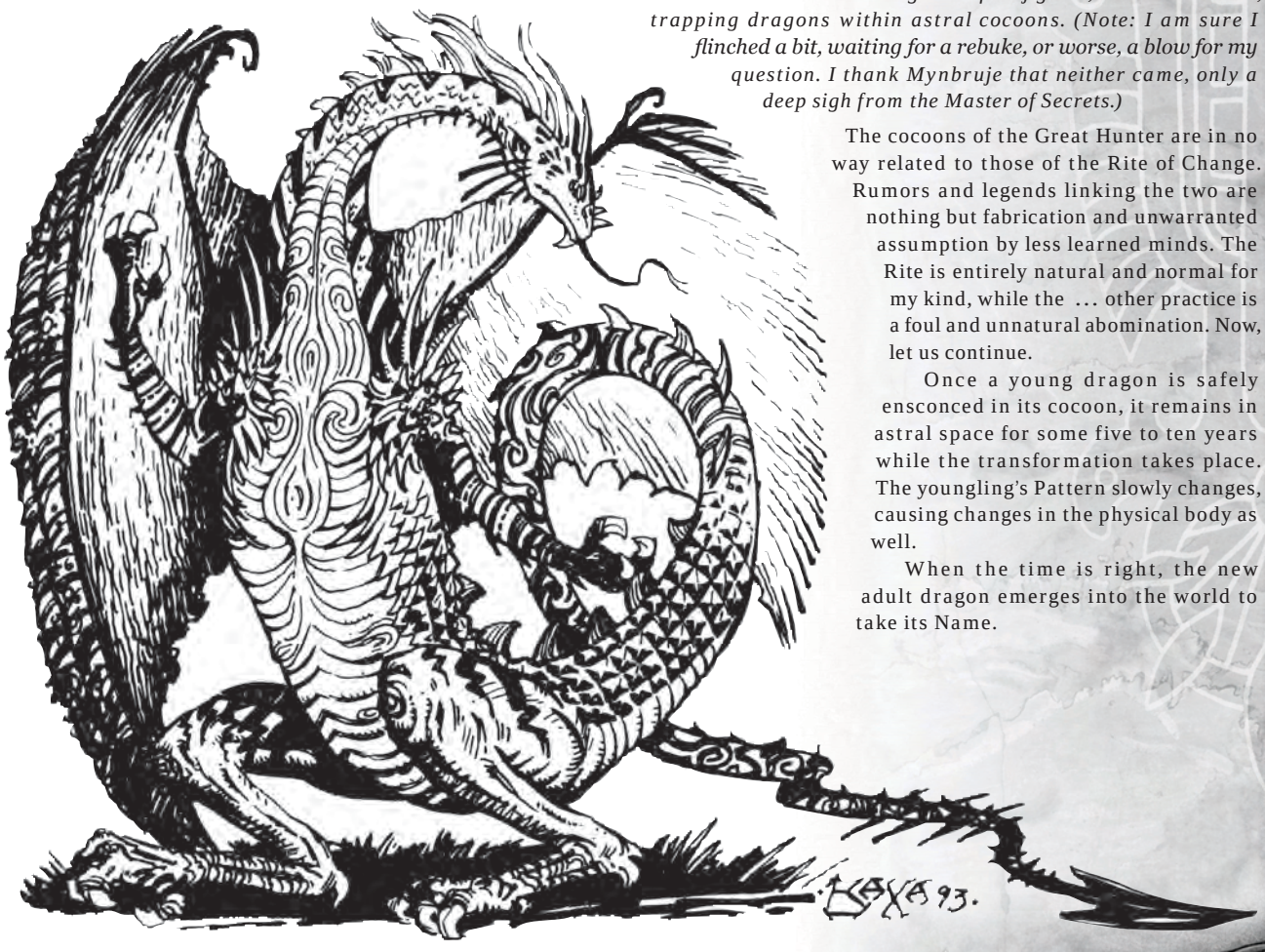
Yes, Tiabdjin?

Please forgive this humble inquiry, but the cocoons you describe sound similar to legends of Verjigorm, the Great Hunter, trapping dragons within astral cocoons. (Note: I am sure I flinched a bit, waiting for a rebuke, or worse, a blow for my question. I thank Mynbruje that neither came, only a deep sigh from the Master of Secrets.)

The cocoons of the Great Hunter are in no way related to those of the Rite of Change. Rumors and legends linking the two are nothing but fabrication and unwarranted assumption by less learned minds. The Rite is entirely natural and normal for my kind, while the ... other practice is a foul and unnatural abomination. Now, let us continue.

Once a young dragon is safely ensconced in its cocoon, it remains in astral space for some five to ten years while the transformation takes place. The youngling's Pattern slowly changes, causing changes in the physical body as well.

When the time is right, the new adult dragon emerges into the world to take its Name.



Adulthood

The Rite of Emergence is one of the most important in a dragon's life. It is when a young dragon, after centuries of learning, preparation and survival, takes on a Name and becomes an adult. You see, until a dragon reaches the time of Emergence, it has no Name. Hatchlings and adolescents are Nameless; we do not Name our young as other Name-givers do, imposing a Name on a child without its knowledge or consent. We Name ourselves upon becoming adults. Your people are Name-givers, but mine are Name-takers and Name-makers as well.

Excuse me Master, but if young dragons have no Name, how are you able to communicate with them or identify one young dragon from a group?

Why do you insist that something have a Name in order for it to be identified? Are Names truly necessary for communication? To answer your question, it is through Dragonspeech, we are able to communicate with our young, in ways far more efficient and effective than mere speech. Tiabdjin, though you are indeed a most learned scholar, there are time when you think entirely too much like a dwarf. May I continue? Thank you.

When the new dragon emerges from the cocoon, it has the form known to the Young Races. Nearly all Name-giver descriptions of the various types of dragons I have heard and read are based on the adult form, and only a very few members of the Young Races besides yourself have ever seen a dragon hatchling.

The Emergence of a new dragon is a time of great pride for the dragon's former guardian. Like seeing the hatchling emerge from the egg, we watch the adult come from its astral cocoon. There, the new dragon declares its Name for the first time, announcing itself to the world with a mighty roar. From that time on, the dragon is a member of our society and no longer a ward of its guardian great dragon.

The new adult will first seek a domain to claim as its own, and set up a lair. Each of us requires a large area in which to hunt, and we are territorial by nature, defending our domains fiercely. Many dragons find unclaimed areas and make them their own, while others will seek out another dragon and conduct a Ritual of Challenge to take its lair. Many young dragons die in this way, fighting for control of territory.

Once comfortable in a lair, dragons settle into a life of contemplation and development. During adulthood we refine our mastery of the magical arts and our own natural abilities, advance our knowledge of the world and begin to gather and collect mementos and keepsakes to remind us of our past in the years to come. Adulthood is also the time when we mate to produce young, beginning the Dance of New Life again to continue our kind.

An adult dragon may continue in this way for thousands of years, longer than the entire history of your Kingdom, Tiabdjin. We live a very long time indeed, compared to the brief lives of you small folk. Even elves rarely live longer than it takes for one of us to grow from hatching to adulthood.

Also, unlike the Young Races, dragons never stop growing. A new adult dragon is fairly small by our standards, perhaps half my own size. As the centuries pass, we continue to grow larger, stronger and more powerful where other Name-givers quickly reach their peak and start to become smaller and feebler with each passing day. Not so for dragons. We grow in body, mind and spirit with the passage of the years; gaining in power, knowledge and, hopefully, wisdom.

Eventually, if the dragon lives long enough, it grows sufficiently to reach the last stage of life, becoming a great dragon.

Great Dragon

We great dragons are the elders of our kind. It takes a long time for an adult dragon to become great, some 2,000 years. Most dragons never accumulate enough power and wisdom to survive long enough to become great dragons.

Perhaps one in every four makes it this far. The others are slain by Horrors, dragon-hunters or even other dragons, or else fall victim to their own poor judgment and die in accidents or similar misfortunes. It is for these reasons that we great dragons are so rare. Indeed, in all of Barsaive there have never been more than a dozen great dragons at any one time, and I dare say there never will be.

Your Great Library has numerous tales and legends of the Rites we must undergo to become great dragons. I have read them all with considerable amusement and shared them with many of my fellow great dragons. They found the accounts as insightful as I did, although not all found them as humorous.

Great dragons are above the concerns of our younger relations. It is our duty and privilege to guide our race. We are the guardians of the past and the future. We are keepers of lore, history, tradition and custom from throughout our ancient past. We are also the caretakers of the eggs and the hatchlings that ensure the future of our kind. We understand the flow of time and the eternal march of history better than any other creature because we have seen it all pass before us.

It falls on us to use our wisdom and experience to guide our race through the dangerous waters of time. We always strive to learn from the mistakes of the past, so we will not be doomed to repeat them in the future.

On the Rites of Death

All things die in their time. Even among dragons Death is not a stranger. Most of the eggs you saw in my Egg Chamber will not survive. Of the hatchlings that will come forth, many will die. Many more will be lost as adolescents and only a tiny fraction will speak their Names and become adults. Perhaps there is even a single future great dragon or two among those lives in my care, one to take its place among the eldest of our kind. Who can say?

We dragons know death well. We are hunters and predators at heart. No amount of lore or learning can change that. We hunt and kill to survive, and I know of no dragon, no matter how old, whose heart does not quicken at the thrill of pursuing prey.

The death of a great dragon is a sad event for us all. There are very few of us, and the loss of any dragon diminishes us all. We perform the Rites of Death for all great dragons, and for notable adults who have fallen. It is one of the few occasions when we put aside our territorial nature and gather together in a single place.

The Rites of Death are many, including the Dance for the Fallen and the Rite of Succession. The Dance is performed in the air above the fallen dragon's lair or place of death. It honors the life of the fallen as each dragon expresses their thoughts, feelings and memories through the movements of the Dance. It is a time to put aside all differences in the face of Death.

The Rite of Succession is an altogether different matter. Dragon custom dictates that the strongest and most worthy should inherit the possessions and domain of the fallen. Often, it is clear who the successor should be. The Rite determines matters in cases where it is not clear. It is a ritual combat to decide who among the gathered dragons has the greatest right to Succeed the fallen and claim what was once theirs. The Rite is rarely to the death, but again, we are competitive creatures, and willing to struggle until the very end.

After the successor has been chosen, he conducts the Ritual of the Cleansing Fire. The remains of the fallen are burned in dragon breath until only ashes remain, to be taken by the winds and the Earth, returning the fallen to the elements from which we spring. It is unfit to leave the body of any dragon to simply rot and be torn apart by scavengers.

The Cleansing Fire sends the light and smoke to tell all Name-givers that a great event has taken place; that a great dragon has died.

Of Culture Most Polite and Complex

We dragons are creatures of passion, capable of extreme temper and savagery. Our traditions, rituals and customs are like a complex web of incredibly fine spider silk that holds those primal urges in check. They are the means by which we survive and keep conflict among ourselves to a minimum. They serve as a reminder of who and what we are in this world.

There was a time when this was not so. In the beginning, when the world was young and dragons first flew in the skies, when the Young Races had not even laid the first stone of their first nation, we were without the culture we have today. Dragons were little more than savages, more like mindless adolescents than civilized adults. Our hearts ruled our minds, and our great intellects were focused on our rivalries and warfare. We fought amongst ourselves and with any other creature that challenged us. In those battles many dragons died, and the Earth shook from the fury of our conflict.

Then came the great dragon Logolas, the Lawgiver. He was one of the first great dragons, a wily and intelligent creature who survived using his superior wit rather than his brute strength. Logolas had a vision in which dragons turned their fierce cunning towards constructive, rather than destructive, ends, and he worked to spread that vision to other dragons. He was able to convince two of his fellow great dragons to meet with him, setting certain rules for the meeting and binding them with a powerful Oath—the very first Rite of Greeting among dragons.

The results of the meeting spread like dragon fire. Logolas and his allies began to create new Rites and Rituals to overcome our natural aggressive and territorial tendencies. These allowed them to work together to achieve common goals, and to resolve disputes without the death of one of the parties involved. In time, other dragons began to realize the benefits and to see the wisdom in the Rites and Rituals Logolas and the others created. If the dragons were able to adapt to this new culture of cooperation, they gained numerous allies, a form of relationship without precedent among our kind. If they continued on their own, they risked the wrath of more than one enemy. To attack one member of the new society was considered a crime—another new concept—something the society as a whole could act to punish.

From those early beginnings the greatness of dragon culture flowered. Reason came to rule emotion, and we found our powers virtually limitless when focused and no longer distracted by war. Our newfound cooperation allowed us to work together to achieve a great pinnacle of civilization as yet unrivaled throughout history. Our society also instilled a great pride in all dragons across the world, a loftiness which ultimately proved disastrous. But like so many other races, we've come to learn from our mistakes.

Vasdenjas refused to elaborate on the above statement, saying only "it is best to let some things be the mysteries that they are." Much of what he related here and elsewhere in this volume supports legends of an Age of Dragons long ago, when dragon civilization was at its peak and dominated the world. What became of this great civilization we can only guess.

On Proper Etiquette

Among dragons, proper behavior is most important. Without the support of our customs and codes of conduct, our society, like any other, would crumble into chaos and never-ending conflict. It is the rituals we observe that allow us to live in relative peace and harmony.

Dragons are creatures of ritual. We have rituals for everything: meeting, parting, cooperation, disagreement, mating, birth, death, transformation and communication. Every aspect of life where we interact with another of our kind is governed by some kind of ritual, telling us how we should behave and telling others what they can expect of us. To not follow proper etiquette is a serious offense among my kind, and often leads to conflict and struggles to the death when our predator nature comes to the fore.

For example, if you wished to visit a friend in one of the inner cities of Throal, you would go to your friend's home and knock on their door. They would answer and invite you in, perhaps offer you some refreshment, and you would talk of things of importance to you. You would not enter someone else's home uninvited, or abuse their hospitality, without risk of offending them.

If I wished to visit one of my fellow dragons, I would travel to their lair and perform a Rite of Honored Greeting (of which there are several). The specific Rite of Honored Greeting I would perform would depend on the status of the host, of course. To do otherwise would be considered a challenge to that dragon's domain, a challenge he would be required to answer, or else appear weak. A Rite of Challenge is a serious affair, since it may result in the death of one of the challengers.

If the other dragon did not wish the confrontation, and I can hardly think of any dragon who would wish to Challenge me, he could choose to perform the Ritual of Humble Veneration, assuming the Second Posture of Formal Regard and thereby acknowledging my superior strength, avoiding the need for a challenge.

Once mutual goodwill is established, it is considered proper to conduct affairs promptly. We do not concern ourselves with the chatter you small folk seem to love so dearly. No words are wasted on unnecessary conversation between dragons. Our rituals ensure precision in both speech and action. They provide a dependable medium for the exchange of ideas, resources and news among dragons while keeping our conflicts controlled.

(While Vasdenjas speaks of promptness and brevity here, I also learned that some dragon rituals take many hours or even days to perform. Readers should keep in mind that the meaning of "prompt" is different for creatures who measure their lives in many centuries.)

Master Vasdenjas, before you go on, I have a question.

Of course you do Tiabdjin, it seems to be your way concerning this work.

I understand that the Rites and Rituals that you use are passed from a great dragon sire to the young, but do you have among your kind a dragon who maintains the dragons' traditions, etiquette and protocol? For that matter, do you have archivists of any sort, to record and maintain the history of your kind?

Actually, yes we have those among us who are responsible for both these duties. For though young dragons are taught both the history and the Rites and Rituals of dragon-kind, events in our past have shown us the wisdom of maintaining and recording both the customs of our kind, and what you might refer to as a written history of our kind. Among the dragons of a given region there is chosen one who is known as the Loremaster. This is the dragon who ensures that proper Ritual and tradition is adhered to at dragon gatherings, and is also the dragon responsible for recording the history of the dragons of his region, and for ensuring that our history is maintained even after his death.

Gatherings? Under what conditions or circumstance do dragons gather?

Suffice to say that on occasion there are times, only a scant few in this most recent age of magic I might add, when events require the gathering of great dragons, in order that a course of action or actions be discussed and agreed upon. We refer to these gatherings as Councils, and they are a most serious matter among dragons. Councils are not convened casually, nor are the issues discussed at Council to be dismissed. To ignore or disobey the edicts of a great dragon Council is among the most serious of crimes among my kind.

What would be the penalty for disobeying the edicts of a great dragon Council? Has there ever been a case of a dragon who did so?

I expected you would ask this. The penalty is harsh indeed, though I will spare you the specifics. There are some secrets which should remain so. As to your second question, only once has a great dragon defied its fellows, and that dragon has paid a terrible price indeed.

Has paid? But ... ?

No more questions my friend. I've said more than I should already. Let us move on before you ask the many questions I know you have in your mind, as I cannot answer them.

On the Importance of Names

Anyone in Barsaive knows that Names are important. The ability to Name and use Names is what makes us Name-givers, after all. For dragons, Names are particularly important. Since we Name ourselves, rather than being Named by our parents or guardians, we understand the power and value Names have. To know something's Name is power, to Name something is an even greater power.

Dragons have many Names. For example, I am Vasdenjas. I am also the Master of Secrets, the Terrible, the Eater of Cities, the Master of Mount Wyrmspire, and many other things. Those Names all describe me and who I am. Some are more accurate than others, perhaps, but all of them are mine. As a dragon goes through life, he accumulates Names. The more Names a dragon has, the older and more powerful he tends to be.

Because we have and use so many Names, we dragons also have rules and rituals about which Names we use in which situations. For example, another dragon—hatchling, adolescent, adult or even great—does not address a great dragon by his chosen Name. Such is considered a grave insult. Dragons address great dragons by other Names to show their respect. We great dragons even use these other Names when speaking of a great dragon to other Name-givers. To do otherwise is considered the same thing as addressing a great dragon by his chosen Name. Conversely, other Name-givers must address us by our chosen Name or a proper title, since to use the same Name that other dragons do in addressing us would be to suggest equality with other dragons, a breech of etiquette that could get someone eaten.

The improper use of titles can be trouble for even a Name-giver. I know of one rather foolish diplomat from Travar who met with Firedancer, an adult dragon dwelling in the Dragon Mountains, regarding the passage of airships over his domain. In an effort to be polite, the diplomat began "We ask you, O Great Dragon." Firedancer was quite offended that the diplomat should address him by a title he had not earned (being a relatively young adult). He perceived it as a mocking insult, suggesting he was inferior, so he ate the diplomat in a fit of pique (younglings can often be quite emotional). It was some time before Travar chose to send another envoy, and Firedancer found himself fending off dragon-slayers and champions from Travar for several years.

As a general rule, if you are uncertain how to address a dragon (either because you do not know its Name or are confused, as small folk often are) it is always proper to use "noble dragon." I do not recommend addressing a dragon by Name unless it gives you leave to do so. Improper familiarity may insult dragons more sensitive to matters of protocol.

Master, I have a question about this subject.

Yes, what is it Tiabdjin?

Why do some dragon Names, such as Mountainshadow or Icewing, seem to be taken from Throalic, while others, such as your own Name, are far more exotic and unusual?

An excellent question, but alas, one that is not so easily answered. As I've told you, dragons Name themselves upon reaching adulthood. However, there are no rules or standards by which dragons choose their Names. All I can tell you is that dragons who choose what you refer to as more exotic names, such as myself, most often take Names from the dragon language (yes we have one, though we don't find much use for it save for the most formal of occasions), while the "Throalic" Names, as you call them, are likely chosen to inspire the very images that the Names you mentioned instill when you hear them.

On the Many Types of Communication

You have asked many questions about our language, Tiabdjin, and I would like to answer them, but first you must understand that dragons use means of communicating other than simple speech and written words. Our "language," if such it may be called, is far more complex and subtle than any Name-giver tongue.

Speech

Dragons can speak, of course, or else I would not be talking to you now. We learned to master the many languages and dialects spoken by the Young Races long ago, including Throalic, Sperethiel, trollish, orkish, and even the t'skrang's tongue. I myself speak more than fifty Name-giver languages, including some belonging to civilizations that were dust before Death's Sea was fire. With our keen minds and magical power, learning and speaking a new language is a simple matter.

In fact, I know some dragons who collect languages as often as they do new items for their hoards.

We consider it polite to speak to other Name-givers in their own tongue, and so we learn your languages, even though they are not our natural method of communicating. Our natural magic allows us to speak aloud, but the dragon mouth, tongue and throat were not designed for the use of your words. For us, the mouth is better used as a place to put food or produce fire. We have natural vocalizations of our own, but they are usually limited to hunting, battle and mating. Primal sounds to convey primal emotions. Not proper things used to convey thoughts or ideas.

Dance and Gesture

The most basic component of our own language is the subtle communication of movement. You small folk have some crude similarity in using gestures when you speak. You nod your heads to indicate agreement, or lift your shoulders and furrow your brows to show confusion. Many Name-givers gesture vaguely with their hands while they speak, a muddled and distracting habit, I must say.

Movement is very important in communication among dragons. How we stand, the position of the head, the motion of talons, wings and tail, all of these things speak volumes about our mood, our intent and our thoughts. Dragons are taught proper posture and movement from the time they are hatchlings. There are hundreds of different Poses and Postures used to communicate different attitudes. The Postures of Formal Regard demonstrate respect, for example. The Pose of Aggression, with wings spread wide and head held high, shows anger and forcefulness. It is quite similar to the Pose of Command, except the wings are held closer in the latter. Nearly every movement we make has meaning to us.

Even more complex than our many gestures are our Dances. A Dance makes use of the basic Poses and Postures, combining them in a flowing display, much as you combine spoken words to make phrases, sentences and whole stories.

A Dance tells a story, with traditional forms used for different purposes. The Dance of New Life honors the act of mating and tells of the power of passion and creation. The Dance for the Fallen speaks of the life of a dragon who has died and honors their spirit. Most of our dances are best performed in the air, allowing for the greatest freedom of movement. If you are ever fortunate enough to see a dragon's dance, Tiabdjin, I advise you to take the opportunity. There are fewer things in this world more beautiful or graceful.

Dragonspeech

Even with its significance and importance, movement is only the first part of our true language. The other is the power of Dragonspeech. Our minds are in touch with the forces of astral space and with the ebb and flow of all living things. This allows us to send out our thoughts with our minds like you send out words with your lips and tongue.

Like this.

It was only then that I realized the Master of Secrets had fallen silent while speaking to me. I heard his voice, not with my ears, but with my mind. It is almost impossible to describe, like an illusion or phantom of a voice speaking from within you. It is a most disturbing sensation at first, which is why dragons tend not to use Dragonspeech with other Name-givers, so as not to unsettle them.

Dragonspeech allows us to communicate with each other with more than simple words. We can also speak in thoughts, images and ideas. Spoken language is crude and imprecise by comparison. You can place multiple meanings in words, and your poets and artists amuse themselves with double entendres and word games, but we can describe multiple layers of thought and meaning in an instant through our own form of communication. Combining movement and Dragonspeech allows us to describe an entire experience or concept quickly, clearly and easily.

The power of Dragonspeech is used from a very young age to begin educating our hatchlings, and is another important role of the guardian. Great dragons are the experienced elders of dragon-kind. Using Dragonspeech, it is possible for us to pass on our wisdom and knowledge directly without needing to try to express the customs and traditions of millennia in words. It would take more volumes than your entire Great Library to hold such knowledge. I often think this vastness of our own language is the reason why dragons are so adept with Names. We see the deeper meaning of a Name all at once, understanding, experiencing the whole of it rather than breaking it into word, sound and meaning.

In general we prefer to use Dragonspeech among ourselves because it is less cumbersome than spoken language.

So many of the concepts of our language cannot be conveyed by the spoken word, so it is nearly impossible to learn to "speak dragon", as so many scholars have attempted. Parts of our language can be written down or translated into spoken words, but many concepts can be expressed only through thought and movement.

Dragonspeech also has the advantage of being silent, allowing us to communicate with each other without fear of being overheard. If you see two dragons engaged in a whirling aerial dance, they may be carrying on an entire conversation using their thoughts and their motions without anyone the wiser.

Normally, Dragonspeech is only the projection of thought; one mind sending its ideas into another. However, many of us learn to listen as well as speak with our minds. Yes, this allows us to see into the minds of others, Tiabdjin, and know their thoughts and memories. What? No, I didn't do it just then. For the most part, you Young Races are open books to anyone with an observant eye. It didn't take the power of Dragonspeech to know what your next question was going to be. Our knowledge of movement and gesture alone is generally enough to read the intent of any creature clearly.

Still, there are dragons skilled enough in the use of Dragonspeech to pluck thoughts from your mind as easily as you might pluck a single flower from a hillside. We have learned a great deal about other Name-givers in this way; seeing the world as they do, knowing what they know. This experience has inspired many ideas and experiments among my kind, some more successful than others.

Writing

Like speech, we have learned and mastered the many systems of writing used by the Young Races. I can read any of the books in your Great Library, and I have enjoyed many of the obscure volumes you have collected over the years. I find books a fascinating idea. They are so small and fragile, but they contain a certain artistry I find compelling.

Other Name-givers have spoken of the pleasure of holding and reading a fine book, and I confess a certain understanding of the sensation.

We ourselves do not create books; they are generally too small, and our talons can make neither paper nor ink.

On rare occasions we write on parchment, but usually with the help of a scribe (such as yourself Tiabdjin). Additionally, we do sometimes scribe symbols and runes derived from our movements and dances onto surfaces like stone or metal to serve as messages to others, but such things are rare. As with Dragonspeech, our natural form for storing information goes far beyond simple writing.

Memory Crystals

To record important knowledge, we dragons use magically prepared pieces of living crystal we call memory crystals. The crystalline structure of living crystal serves to capture and hold the thoughts, memories, images and ideas projected into it, freezing them like an insect caught in a piece of amber, maintained as they are, unchanging with the passage of time. Once such information has been placed within a memory crystal, Dragonspeech can be used to retrieve the wisdom placed within the crystal. In this way we preserve important knowledge so it is not lost.

Small memory crystals, no larger than the tip of one of my talons, perhaps large enough to fit in the hand of a dwarf such as yourself, can hold only a single message or piece of complex information; we would use them to send messages and correspondence to others. Larger crystals contain correspondingly greater amounts of information. Some memory crystals are as large as you, my dwarf friend, or even larger.

Memory crystals can take many forms. Some are rough-faceted and unworked, while others are shaped by skill and magic into works of arts. Many of the jewels you see in my own hoard are more than pretty baubles, they are memory crystals containing dragon lore older than your nation, or any nation of this Age. To those of you foolish enough to consider looting a dragon's lair, beware, the beautiful gemstones you set your greedy gaze upon may contain treasures beyond your feeble imagination, and may carry with them the retribution of all of my kind.

I inquired about the similarity between memory crystals and the message stones we use to carry messages. Vasdenjas gave a rumbling chuckle and told me that memory crystals were far different from simple message stones. The stones use elemental air to trap sounds, like the sound of a voice, and simply repeat the sounds at a later time. Memory crystals trap thought and memory itself. The knowledge in a crystal is only accessible through the power of Dragonspeech, although the Master of Secrets did concede that other magic might theoretically be able to retrieve information from a memory crystal.

On Dragon History and Beliefs

As you have already seen, our lives are long and we have much time to contemplate the mysteries of life. This has led dragon-kind to develop an awareness of the nature of the Universe and our role in it unrivaled by the Young Races. The full body of dragon understanding and knowledge is vast, enough to fill many large memory crystals. Since I know the impatient nature of you Young Races, Tiabdjin, I shall keep my comments on the fascinating and complex tapestry of our beliefs simple and brief.

The Origin of the World

This tale is similar to the origin of dragon-kind told by Icewing in the Horrors collection. I note that the Master of Secrets spoke the Name of the Great Hunter with considerable trepidation and did not wish to elaborate further.

Dragons were the first Name-givers, indeed the first creatures to understand the power of Names. When we appeared, long, long ago, we gave Names to ourselves, separating us from the Nameless and formless mass of the world.

It was a very different world then, a world of darkness, pain and suffering. Black clouds blotted out the sky and the land was covered in foul mists, the waters dark and bubbling. It was into this world that the First Named came.

It was the Age of the Dark One, the sole creature that lived in the world. Then it had no Name as we know it. It simply was, a creature of unimaginable foulness and corruption. The Dark One created spawn, called horoi, in its image, creatures of darkness and endless hunger that fought battles on the land, in the sea and in the sky above the world for their master's amusement. The Dark One reveled in the slaughter and the rivers were filled with the toxic ichor of the slain horoi.

In time, the Dark One gave rise to a horoi that was not like all others. It possessed a spark, a vital essence no other creature had. Instead of joining in endless battle, the horoi fled to a distant part of the world the Dark One and its minions had not touched. There it Named itself and became Nightslayer, the First Named.

Nightslayer stood on a rocky pinnacle overlooking a great ocean and was overcome with joy at the beauty of the world. Nine tears fell from its eye and became creatures where they splashed upon the Earth. The first of those creatures was the First Dragon, Dayheart, who proudly proclaimed her Name. The others did not have Names of their own, so Nightslayer gave them Names. They became the progenitors of the Young Races, who even now lack the ability to Name themselves and must be given Names by others.

When the Dark One discovered what Nightslayer had done, it grew furious. It raged and brought forth armies of horoi to kill Nightslayer and its new creations. But the First Named stood strong against the onslaught. With the power of Naming, it forced the horoi and the Dark One to flee from the world into the depths of the netherworlds. The Dark One swore that day, "I will hunt your children for the rest of time. I will slay every last one of them, and my minions will feed on their pain and terror. But I will not give the mercy of death to your favorite—the Dragon, the one you created in your image. As you betrayed me, the children of the Dragon's line will betray you. I will corrupt them, twist their souls and make them my own. Then I will return and reign over all the world."

The Dark One fled, hurling a ball of fire at Nightslayer as it departed. The First Named gathered its children under the protection of its mighty wings. There was a sound like a thousand roars. The earth and sky trembled and a great cloud filled the sky. When the rumbling stopped, Nightslayer's children lived, but the First Named was no more.

They gathered by its great head and mourned its passing, honoring the sacrifice of Nightslayer so that its children might live. Since that earliest time, all dragons are consumed by fire in death, echoing the sacrifice of the First Named for us.

In time, the children of Dayheart, the First Dragon, grew many and strong. They learned the secrets of threads and patterns and gained wisdom in the ways of the world far beyond that of the short-lived Young Races. They laid the foundations for our civilization that continues to this very day, and we wait for the return of the Dark One, the Great Hunter, Named Verjigorm.

The Role of Dragons

If you were to ask one of your kind what reason dragons have to exist, they would likely answer that we exist to terrorize you little folk and to provide heroes with enemies to hunt and slay so

they may have songs written of their glorious deeds. Despite the millennia we have existed alongside the Young Races, most of you still do not understand the importance of dragons in the scheme of things. I hope this document can correct those misconceptions.

As the oldest of all Name-givers, we are living history, a link to the past. We understand the complex nature of astral space and the warp and weft of the tapestry of fate. It is our burden to understand all of these things and more. To understand, to watch, to learn and to gather experience as we gather treasures and trinkets. Yes, it is a heavy burden.

Much as a parent watches over a growing child, so do we watch the progress of the Young Races, as you stumble through your first steps toward civilization, towards an understanding of the world and its mysteries. And like that experienced parent, we can guide, we can test and we can strengthen you through our wisdom, but we cannot walk the path with you. A child must be allowed to fall many times before it learns to walk, or to fly. So do your people fall into war, upheaval, and folly. The orks say "tell me and I hear a tale, show me and I see a vision, fight me and I have an experience." Such is the way with all Young Races. We can tell you what we have learned, but you must experience things for yourselves before you truly understand.

The Young Races have left the carefree time of childhood for the turbulent time of adolescence. Like all adolescents, you are belligerent, stubborn and willful. You do not heed the wisdom of your elders and you rebel against all that seems strange or confining to you. You make your own rules, you seek your own path. Sometimes you strike out against us. It is strange that the people of Throal consider themselves so superior for their abolishment of slavery, for their affirmation of the rights of all Name-givers, but no court in Throal would consider the murder of one of my kind a crime.

Instead, it is a legend to be celebrated in song and story. Consider that when you next hear tales of a brave band of dragon-slayers.

The Passions

Oh, we dragons are not without passion, but not the Passions as you know them. We do not worship the things as the Young Races do. Name-givers call upon Thystonius for strength in physical endeavors, on Astendar for help in matters of love and even on Mynbruje to aid intellect and insight. We rely on no one but ourselves. It is understandable that the Young Races might wish to believe in something greater than they, powers they can entrust to aid and guide them. We have no such need. We acknowledge the power of the Passions, but we have seen Passions change many times over the years. If you could live to be as old as I, Tiabdjin—or any other dragon—then you would have a very different view of the Passions, I assure you.

Strange, is it not, that Name-givers of the Young Races revere the power of the Passions, look to them for strength, guidance and wisdom, but at the same time turn away in fear from the same qualities in dragons? Only an enlightened few (like your good self) seek us out with their questions rather than crowding the temples and praying in solitude. Perhaps because the Passions wear more comfortable masks. It is easier for Name-givers to seek what they need from beings cast in their own image than from creatures so different from them. No matter that I have looked upon the true faces of the Passions and can tell you with certainty that they are no more like you than I am, less so in fact. Perhaps because dragons do not seek your worship, our knowledge is considered less pure than the insights offered by unbound Passion. Who can truly say why you small folk do anything?

If dragons can be said to worship anything, then we worship the Universe itself. We honor the beauty and majesty of all creation in our thoughts and our dances. We revere the primal mystery that gave life to all things, allowing us to live and experience. Some of my kind have said that the Universe is the only thing grand enough to awe even a dragon.

On Relations With Other Name-Givers

As you have seen, the relationship between dragon-kind and the Young Races is not unlike that of a distant parent and wayward child. For the most part, we choose to remain uninvolved in the activities of the Young Races. We stay close to our own concerns and leave your affairs to you, and only when other Name-givers impinge upon our lives do we take action. That has been the way of things for longer than your nation has existed, and will continue for some time to come, unless something happens which requires our attention.

In general, we dragons have few relations with the Young Races. Most of you small folk are too fragile, too short-lived and too impatient to appreciate the nuances of dragon culture, and far too many of you consider dragons nothing more than creatures to be slain or bowed to in abject fear. It is difficult to have a conversation with a Name-giver who is either cowering in terror or trying to hack you to pieces.

On rare occasions we do find Name-givers (such as yourself) who are willing to converse with us, or to petition for aid or advice. I know many of my kind who have no interest in speaking with other Name-givers whatsoever. They live in isolation from the Young Races and consider them no more than an occasional light snack when there are no cattle or other food available. In their view, the Young Races are a waste of our time (although why they worry about the loss of a few days out of a life span such as ours is beyond me).

There are some among us, such as Doll-Maker (known to you as Icewing) and myself, who view themselves as representatives of our kind to yours. We go out of our way to make our lairs accessible to those of you in need of our wisdom and insight. Be forewarned, however, our attention rarely comes without a price.

So, conversations such as this one are exceedingly rare, as you might imagine. Only true seekers of knowledge and intelligent discourse seek us out and capture our attention as you have done, Tiabdjin. For that reason, we tend to deal more often with the Young Races given to scholarship and contemplation, such as you dwarfs or the obsidimen. The cultures of orks and trolls tend to be too violent and too wrapped up in their endless raiding and wars to consider us anything more than another enemy to fight. Windlings are often too flighty, and I sometimes wonder if humans will ever realize they are not the sole center of all creation. The t'skrang have had their dealing with my kind, and they understand some of what it is to be hatched. The elves I will speak of shortly.

The Kingdom of Throal

The Kingdom of Throal is the only great power of Barsaive to have significant dealings with dragon-kind. In addition to myself and the great works I have bequeathed to the Library of Throal, the dwarf kingdom has had relations with my fellow great dragon Doll-Maker in the past, as well as crossed paths with Root Protector (known to you as Earthroot), the dragon-king of the Pale Ones, who lives in the subterranean depths of the Throal Mountains. And then, of course, there is young King Neden's encounter with Far Scholar (known to you as Mountainshadow) in his childhood. Indeed, Throal seems to have attracted a great deal of attention from us in comparison to the other kingdoms of Barsaive.

Before you or anyone else interprets this as some kind of special favor towards the dwarf kingdom, let me say that our dealings with Throal are not favoritism, nor biased in any way. For the most part, they simply stem from the fact that Throal is a great power in Barsaive, and one willing to entertain the notion of civilized dealings with my kind. The other nations and city-states of this land consider dragons a threat, but I believe Throal is beginning to recognize and understand our true nature. We are no threat to that which does not threaten us.

The Blood Wood

The elves of Blood Wood take every opportunity to slander dragons and express their distrust of us. They claim one of my kind, the great dragon Elfbane (known to you as Alamaise), was responsible for the death of their Queen Dallia. I will not dignify their tales and rumors with a response, except to say this: if the elves outside of the Elven Court could understand a tenth of what really happened to their Queen, and why, they would not be so quick to condemn us.

The Blood Elves, especially, are hardly fit to pass judgment on any other Name-giver, given what they have done to themselves and their once-beautiful home. I prefer to have no dealing with them whatsoever. Swallowing one up is a painful proposition, at least without first roasting them so that their thorns turn to char. Even then, they are so riddled with corruption that they leave a foul aftertaste long after you swallow them, like a bitter root.

The Theran Empire

The dealings of dragon-kind with the Theran Empire are well known. In the years before the Scourge, when the Therans spread the word of the coming Horrors, some dragons sought to offer our knowledge to aid the Young Races.

The techniques we use for creating our lairs are not unlike those of the kaers offered by the Therans, although vastly superior. When we generously offered our help to the Young Races, how was it received? The Theran Empire began a program of persecution and execution against any dragon who tried to undermine their monopoly on protection against the Horrors. We were given no choice but to defend ourselves.

After the first few Therans died, the Empire wisely chose to leave us alone. We, in turn, withdrew our offer of aid to the Young Races and allowed the Therans to go about their business. In the end, the separation and servitude the Empire forced on provinces such as Barsaive backfired. During the Scourge, Throal realized the folly of the Theran way and chose its own path, as have other places once loyal to the Empire. Now Thera tries to reunite their scattered Empire through the power of spell and sword. They have clearly learned nothing since their dealings with us long ago.

Of the Theran Empire's current game of brinkmanship in Barsaive, I shall say only this: the Empire discovered once what happens to those who challenge us. Let us hope they have learned their lesson.

On Worship and Service

There are those among the Young Races who recognize the ancient power and wisdom we possess. Some of these Name-givers choose to devote themselves to our service, helping to improve relations between us and the Young Races through their work. I have known many over the years, and they are devoted folk, although sometimes a bit too devoted.

It is quite understandable, you see, that some Name-givers consider us objects of worship and veneration just as others consider us objects of fear. Reverence and dread are closely related, Tiabdjin. To please us, these Name-givers offer us devotion and service. We, in turn, can offer them our knowledge, our protection and a sense of purpose in life. Not all dragons choose to accept the supplication of others. Most of us prefer lives of solitude and to choose or make our own servants as needed.

Others of my kind, however, thrive on the attention and love of the Young Races. Far Scholar, for example, came to the aid of many Name-givers before the Scourge, offering them shelter in his vast lair in the Dragon Mountains. The descendants of those people consider the great dragon their savior and treat him like one of the Passions; offering him homage and continued loyalty. Root Protector, a fellow great dragon, is the king of the Pale Ones, an extended tribe of t'skrang living in deep caves and underground rivers beneath the Throal Mountains. The presence of his small nation of pale t'skrang allows Root Protector to carry out his activities through many servants, and to have eyes and ears throughout his underground domain. For their part, the Pale Ones treat Root Protector as both king and patron Passion of their people.

I have heard of other dragons permitting Name-givers to serve them. It is an ancient tradition, after all.

Nevertheless, most dragons prefer solitude over the recreation of past glories.

A Dragon's Life

So, you ask, what is it that dragons do? I have told you of the grand scheme, of the cycle of life from birth onward, but what of the daily business of dragon-kind? What things make up the routine of a dragon? Worthy questions, deserving of answers. Attend and you shall learn how we spend our time.

Lairs

The most important place to a dragon is her lair, much as the home of a Name-giver is central to his life. We spend much of our time in our lairs, and we try to make them as comfortable and pleasant as possible. The similarity with the homes of other Name-givers ends there. A dragon lair is as different from a simple dwarf stone house as is a t'skrang tower deep beneath the waters of the Serpent River, or the Palace of the Elf Queen, growing from the very trees of the Blood Wood.

The most common type of lair used by dragons is a cave located high in the mountains. We dragons are creatures of flight, soaring high above the Earth, and we prefer our homes to be in suitably aerial environs. Some dragons prefer more earthly homes, like the depths of a dark forest or swamp, or even a subterranean den, but most of my kind live close to the sky.

Mountain caves are well-suited to our needs for a number of reasons beyond this, however. They are dry and comfortably temperate, remaining cool in the heat of day and warm in the chill of night. The stone in many caves is worn smooth, making it pleasant to lie upon (although some rough spots are wonderful for scratching one's scales against when they become dry and itchy).

We do not require furnishings like you small folk—what chair could hold a dragon, after all? For us, the flat surfaces of our lair are enough to lie upon, and many dragons gather their belongings close for their repose, curling around a cool pile of metal and crystal.

Likewise, we do not need most of the tools the Young Races surround themselves with. We eat our food raw, or sometimes prepare it first with dragon breath. The refuse is cast outside the lair, and serves as a warning to other predators (and Name-givers) not to approach too close without invitation. We get water from underground springs, mountain lakes and the power of our own magic as needed. We have no use for the other trinkets Name-givers fawn over except as suits our hoard, a topic I will explain shortly.

Our inherent understanding and sensing of the astral world and its effects upon the material world allow us to choose our lairs with great care, ensuring a place safe from the taint of the Horrors, where we can work our magic freely. I am sad to say that such places have become increasingly rare since the Scourge. Only the dragon lairs which remained sealed throughout the Scourge have avoided any touch of corruption. New lairs are becoming harder to find, and young dragons have been known to fight for control of a prime lair, or even to settle for lairing in more questionable territory, restraining much of their magic to avoid the notice of the Horrors.

A dragon's lair is more than just a home, however. It is a place that, over time, becomes a part of us, like an extension of ourselves. We can sense the presence of unwanted visitors in our lairs just as you might feel a bug crawling across your skin. We also use magic to create various wards and traps to protect our lairs, just as many Name-giver magicians protected their kaers and shelters from the Horrors during the Scourge. But whereas most traps Name-givers make are intended primarily to prevent entrance or to injure their victim, our traps also alert us to the presence of trespassers in our lairs. Any Name-giver who thinks to surprise a dragon in her lair is in for a rude awakening.

Shal-mora

We spend most, in fact nearly all, of our time in our lairs in a state we call *shal-mora*. It has no translation in any other Name-giver language, but it has some similarities (albeit vague) to the state the obsidimen call "the Dreaming" among their own kind. It is a trance-state somewhere between sleep and deep thought, nearly indistinguishable from sleep to non-dragons. A dragon in *shal-mora* is at rest, usually curled up on the floor of its lair, and to most onlookers appears to be slumbering. In truth, dragons do not sleep or dream nearly often as the Young Races do, perhaps only once a month or so. The rest of the time, our minds are active in *shal-mora*.

While in *shal-mora* we think and contemplate things—many, many things. Our long lives give us more memories than I suspect could even fit into the minds of the Young Races, so we always have something to think about or consider. The *shal-mora* shuts out minor distractions and worldly concerns, allowing us to focus inward and make the most use of our considerable mental faculties. It is not a complete ignorance of the outside world, however—quite the opposite. *Shal-mora* has the effect of opening up our consciousness and putting our minds in a state of hyper-awareness, so that thoughts and sensory input flow with increased speed. A dragon in *shal-mora* can rouse instantly at the first sign of trouble or an intruder in its lair. Many would-be dragon-slayers have taken the *shal-mora* to mean that dragons sleep constantly, and can therefore be taken unawares. They have learned their mistake when their prey surprised them with sudden wakefulness.

Hunting and Eating

Outside of our lairs, we dragons spend a good deal of our time hunting. As you might imagine, we require a great deal of food to sustain us, being so much larger than other Name-givers. Although we can create food magically when needed, most dragons prefer our food as fresh as possible. Several sheep or cattle can make a decent meal for a dragon, as can any number of succulent creatures like cave crabs or dyres, or even some horsemeat or mountain goat when the mood strikes.

At this moment, the Master of Secrets realized he was quite hungry and excused himself for a time to go hunting. He returned an hour or so later with a slightly charred ox clutched in his fore claws, which he dropped on the floor of his lair and proceeded to tear into as he continued his narrative. Although he offered me a share of the meat, I politely refused; partially cooked beef has never been a favorite of mine.

Now, as I was saying, dragons are primarily meat-eaters. We eat greenery occasionally, to supplement our diet and aid in proper digestion, but our diet properly consists of prey. The type of animals eaten depends on the individual dragon's taste, much as certain dwarfs may like mutton while others prefer chicken or turkey. I have known other dragons to eat the most disgusting or unpleasant things, such as saurals or sea snakes.

Contrary to tales I have heard, dragons rarely eat members of the Young Races. It does happen from time to time, of course, but I know few if any dragons who regularly hunt other Name-givers for food. After all, it is far easier to hunt prey that doesn't carry a grudge as you small folk do. A dragon who too often indulges in a meal of Name-givers quickly finds itself the target of endless would-be dragon-slayers, and can even bring the wrath of an entire nation down on its head. It's altogether easier to stick to simple beasts and eat only those Name-givers foolish enough to violate one's lair uninvited. This maintains good relations, and helps you small folk by weeding out the most stupid of your kind, hopefully before they've had an opportunity to breed. Personally, I find most other Name-givers only vaguely satisfying; t'skrang are too tough and salty, and eating orks tends to upset my stomach. Trolls are entirely too crunchy for my taste, and dwarfs … Tiab-djin, you are looking quite pale, are you well? Oh, I see, perhaps we should turn back to hunting, yes?

The hunting territory of a dragon is considered part of the dragon's domain. As you might imagine, we require a very large area in which to hunt. An individual dragon may claim an area of about a day's flight from its lair (somewhere in the area of 4 to 6 days walking for most Name-givers by my calculations). Any intrusion into the territory of another dragon is considered a serious offense unless the visitor performs the proper Rites, such as the Rite of Visitation, and has business with the master of the domain.

We hunt for a portion of each day. Usually we find a decent meal early or late in the day, and spend much of the remainder of the day resting in *shal-mora* while the food settles. During times when we are more active, such as while you and I have been working on this document, we eat smaller meals more frequently. This helps maintain a feeling of lightness and wakefulness.

Correspondence

We dragons are not as social as the Young Races; we do not build cities or habitations to live together. Once a young dragon leaves the care of its sire, it finds a lair of its own and has little direct contact with other dragons outside of mating. We value our solitude and prefer to keep conflicts between us to a minimum.

Still, there are many reasons for a dragon to keep in touch with others. We have siblings, egg-mates and even friends among our own kind. Does that surprise you? Additionally, we exchange ideas, thoughts and news of importance to our fellow dragons.

Most of this correspondence is not conducted in person. As I said, eye-to-eye meetings among my kind are rare, since they tend to cause struggles for dominance and provoke our predatory nature. Instead, we conduct our business through messengers, usually servants such as drakes or summoned spirits able to quickly carry messages across the great distance between our lairs. From time to time we entrust messages to other Name-givers, servants or hirelings, much like you might employ a courier to deliver something to a distant city.

Short messages can be entrusted to the memory of a servant to deliver (drakes have excellent memories by design). Longer correspondence and important ideas are placed in memory crystals to be delivered to the other dragon or dragons. Only rarely do we make use of written documents as the Young Races do; such pages tend to be too cumbersome and fragile for our use. I remember—yes, yes, little one, I see you. What may I answer for you now?

Drakes, Master?

All good things in time, Tiabdjin. I'll explain drakes later; suffice it to say for now that they are servants of dragons created in our own image.

Hoarding

In addition to hunting, and conducting business with our fellow dragons, another activity that takes up much of our time is hoarding. I use the term because it is common among your own scholars and legends, a more appropriate word for it might be "gathering" or "collecting."

You see, dragons are creatures with very long memories. Our lives may last longer than the history of one of your nations, and we have many experiences and times to remember. We hoard things of value to help remind us of the different stories and tales that make up our long lives. For example, the jeweled hilt you see sticking up over there is the Sword of Hallad the Bold, an ork warrior who lived in Cara Fahd long before the Scourge. He tried to slay me over some piddling quarrel involving some cattle and a nobleman's daughter. I keep the sword as a reminder of our battle. He fought quite well, but underestimated me in the end, which is invariably fatal. Each of the other items here has a similar story.

We also retain items such as memory crystals containing useful or valuable knowledge. I have even known some dragons to find and keep books and scrolls written by other Name-givers. Some make a habit of hoarding the bones of worthy enemies and prey, while others I know keep collections of certain kinds of metals, jewels, armor and other such things.

If my hoard seems large to you, just think of the vast number of things you small folk accumulate over your short lives and compare it to the store of a dragon such as I. When you think about it, you'll see we dragons are actually quite frugal. If I had kept every bauble and coin that fell into my talons since I Named myself, I would need a lair many times the size of this one, just to keep it all in! Time forces us to choose to keep only the things which have the greatest meaning and use, the rest is used to pursue various interests, given away or used as the owner sees fit.

Personal Interests

The remainder of time not spent hunting, hoarding, communicating with our fellow dragons or resting and contemplating in *shal-mora* is spent as we please. Dragons indulge in a variety of activities to pass the time and expand their personal knowledge and experience. Often times a particular activity will seize a dragon's heart and the dragon will follow it with great devotion for a few years, perhaps even as long as a century, before losing interest and moving on to something else.

I, for example, was fascinated with the Andevin School of Music in the ancient Kingdom of Landis before the Scourge, and I spent many years secretly patronizing the musicians of that school before the fall of the kingdom. One of the greatest tragedies of the Scourge was the loss of such fine and wonderful music.

Dragons have personal interests as broad, if not more so, than any race. Dragons can become interested in nearly anything, and our long lives give us the opportunity to experience many different things. The various arts most commonly capture our interest, ranging from philosophy to poetry to sculpture and music. Some of us have even been known to become secret patrons of Name-giver artists who catch our attention, as I did with the Andevin School.

Of course, the greatest art among us is magic. We often spend a great deal of time contemplating the twist and turns of the astral fabric, learning new techniques and methods of magic. Magical experimentation can be a tricky business, even for us, so it is undertaken with great care. Accidents do happen, but such things are never allowed to get out of control.

Master, I am curious; how do dragons experience many of these things you speak of? You say you patronized the Andevin School in secret, but I would think the presence of a great dragon at a performance of a group of troubadours would draw no small amount of attention.

Quite so, Tiabdjin, which brings me to an important and little-known facet of our nature.

So saying, the Master of Secrets lifted up his long neck, his eyes flashing with magical power, and vanished.

Walking on Two Legs

In Vasdenjas' place stood a dwarf of most noble stature and bearing. He was quite tall for a dwarf, towering easily a full head taller than me. His hair and beard were a sandy color, with golden highlights gleaming in the light of the cavern, and his eyes were the most unusual shade of amber. I could not say for sure how old he appeared; somewhere in the vague age between maturity and old age. He wore the fine clothes and cloak of a dwarf gentleman, right down to a high polish on his black leather boots and a pair of fine calfskin gloves tucked into his belt. Gold gleamed on his fingers and one of his ears, and mischief twinkled in his eyes as he regarded me, sitting quite in a state of shock. I opened my mouth to speak, but no sound came forth, the strange dwarf threw back his head and gave a laugh that echoed in the suddenly large and empty cave.

You should see the look on your face, Tiabdjin! Ah, I have not had such amusement in some time. Why so shocked, my dwarf friend? I have told you that we are creatures of magic, with powers equal to those of any magician. With spellcasters able to take the forms of birds and bats and illusory beasts, I would think a dragon able to take the shape of your people would not be so surprising. The magic used for both are not so different from one another.

I suppose not, Master. It's just the idea that a great dragon would wish to take dwarf form never really occurred to me.

And why should it? Why, you might ask, would a being as great and powerful as I wish to take on the shape and bearing of so small a creature as a dwarf?

Listen carefully and I shall explain. Since the very beginning, we have studied the nature of the Young Races to better understand you. At first it was to care for you and help guide you as an elder race should, and later, to understand and observe as you made your own way. We learned much through the power of Dragonspeech, reading memories and experiences directly from the minds of certain Name-givers, and this inspired in some of us a desire to understand the nature of your kind first hand. These dragons developed the skills necessary to alter our natural form into one resembling yours. Over time, we learned to use magic to assume the form of any of the Young Races, and some dragons became quite adept at the art of form-changing. It allowed us to move among the Young Races unnoticed, to experience life as you small folk do, and to see things without the response offered to a mighty dragon.

There is a legend among your people of how King Varulus the First would disguise himself as a commoner using illusion magic and walk out among his people. He desired to hear their opinions and concerns, and to debate important issues with them without the separation of king and commoner. I can tell you he got that idea from us (from Doll-Maker, to be specific). We already knew the value of seeing the world through another set of eyes. Our knowledge of form-changing also allowed us to give our drake servants the inborn ability to assume Name-giver form, blending the most useful aspects of the Young Races with draconic resilience and strength.

It is quite an experience to see the world through other eyes. Your forms take some getting used to, as they are quite soft and small and fragile. You lack talons and fangs to fight with, and have no armor except what you make for yourselves. Your vision is dim and blurred compared to ours. Even the Heat Sight that dwarfs possess lacks clarity to my eyes. Your hearing is likewise muffled and your senses of smell and taste nearly nonexistent by dragon standards. I was pleasantly surprised by the sensitivity of touch possessed by many of the Young Races; soft and supple skin has its advantages, I suppose.

However, your skin must be covered and protected against the heat, the cold, the sun, wind and rain. The sensation of wearing clothing is a very strange one. Never would a dragon have thought of wrapping itself up in fabric.

Yet it is not unlike the comfort of being back in the astral cocoon again. Before I experienced clothing, I had no idea of the feeling of different textures of fabric sliding over skin (and of course, the sensation of having skin rather than scales was still new to me as well). Clothing also comes in such a bewildering variety of styles, shapes and colors. It allows you to change your plumage to suit the occasion, a most interesting idea. I have experimented a bit with different styles of Name-giver clothing, and have found that the clothes one wears can radically alter how others interact with you. Most curious.

I also quite like your hands.

Here Vasdenjas, still in dwarf form, held out one hand and flexed it, turning it over and looking at it like something he'd never seen before.

Name-giver hands are remarkable things. We dragons have a fair amount of dexterity ourselves, but nothing quite like the small, clever hands of the Young Races, so well suited for making and using the tools you love so much. So very sensitive, able to tell many things by touch alone. I have quite enjoyed using hands to wield both pen and sword, using tools as you might use them. That is the whole reason for the experience.

Assuming the form of one of the Young Races allows us to understand you more fully. We can know what it is to eat, sleep, speak and move as one of you in a way that even Dragonspeech cannot fully convey. I know that many of my kind consider other Name-giver forms weak and unpleasant, and I confess that I would not wish to spend the whole of my existence trapped in a form such as this, but there is so much to experience from other perspectives it is quite compelling. Eating and drinking as an ork, running and hunting as a human, swimming as a t'skrang, mating rituals …

Excuse me, Master, did you say mating?

What? Oh, yes. Yes, I did.

Then you have … ?

Coupled with other Name-givers? Yes, on occasion. Your customs are so different from ours, the experiences proved most interesting.

I see. Could anything ever come of such a coupling of a dragon and another Name-giver?

The words had barely left my lips when Vasdenjas' brows crouched low over his dark eyes and his dwarf form begin to stretch and flow like water, growing larger and reassuming his true form, towering above me mere seconds later.

Certainly not! It would be quite impossible. Coupling with other Name-givers is something we once did out of curiosity, a passing fancy, but it is no longer permitted. No dragon among us bothers with it any more, I'm sure. In fact, we rarely assume Name-giver form these days. It was something of an experiment once, but we prefer to keep to ourselves now, so most dragons do not invest the time or effort in learning the necessary magic any longer.

After this point, any further attempt at discussing the matter with the Master of Secrets was met with tangents and stories of other things, so this work cannot further illuminate the experience of dragons taking Name-giver form, other than to say it is clearly possible. We can only speculate on the possibilities.

Vasdenjas' words reminded me of the t'skrang legend of the

founding of the line of House Syrtis. The Syrtis claim their ancient ancestress mated in secret with the Dragon of the Moon to produce their line. Many scholars have taken this tale as apocryphal or symbolic in some way, but perhaps there are Name-givers, such as the Syrtis, who are literally descended from the union of a dragon in Name-giver form and another Name-giver. Certainly, the Shivalahala Syrtis is one of the greatest magicians and seers in all of Barsaive. Do her unique talents (and perhaps, even her well-known eccentricities) stem from this unusual heritage? I cannot say with any certainty, and the Master of Secrets remains silent, almost suspiciously so, on this matter.

DRAGON MAGIC

Dragons have practiced magic since long before the Young Races understood the power of Names and patterns at all. Magic is woven into our very beings, as natural to us as breathing or flying. Over the millennia, we have gained a great deal of knowledge and wisdom in the Art. More than any other Name-givers, we are masters of the magic that flows through the Age of Legend. We are in tune with the energies of astral space and able to instinctively perceive and understand the warp and weft of the fabric of astral space. This gift gives us dragons great magical knowledge and ability to call upon in addition to our formidable powers.

Adult dragons have magical skills rivaling some of the greatest magicians among the Young Races, including even the famed Heavenherds of Thera, while we great dragons have magic unrivaled by any other creature.

Innate Magic

Dragons are born with certain insights and abilities of magic that take Name-giver magicians years to learn. We are natural spellcasters and possess Dragonsight, allowing us to clearly perceive the weave of astral space in a way almost incomprehensible to others. I will try to make clear the natural advantages we possess.

First and foremost, dragons have a natural astral sight ability not unlike that possessed by windlings, though far superior. We can see the astral images and patterns of everything around us through an act of will. Other Name-givers learn to perceive astral space so they can learn to use magic, but dragons are born with the ability to do so. Right now, Tiabdjin, I can see your astral image as clearly as your physical body. I can see the complex threading of your Pattern and the many subtle shadings of your thoughts, feelings and history woven into it. Given time, I could study your Pattern to learn more about it. Our ability to do so is the basis of our magic.

However, since the Scourge, Dragonsight has become something of a mixed blessing. While it allows us to see the areas of astral space warped and corrupted by the presence of the Horrors, and thereby avoid those places, it also causes us to see the damage done by the Scourge to astral space, damage that has not healed like many physical scars the world bears from the passage of the Horrors. Few Name-givers remember the sublime beauty of astral space in the time before the coming of the Scourge. To view it as it is now is a great tragedy.

You will recall my saying how Dragonspeech allows us to express thoughts and ideas in a way other languages do not allow. The power of Dragonspeech also allows us to speak to the Universe in words it understands. Our true language is the language of ideas, concepts and patterns. Using the power of Dragonspeech, it is possible to express any pattern we desire and manifest that pattern in astral space. Magicians of the Young Races call this process "spellcasting" the creation of a pattern which expresses a particular effect, charged with astral energies to bring the effect into the physical world.

Once, this ability allowed us to cast spells in a way no other Name-giver could emulate, then or now. We merely focused our desire on the patterns of astral space and, through the power of our will, brought that desire into being. We used no grimoires, no codified spells. They were not needed.

Master, I am no magician, but the process you describe sounds much like what we call "raw magic," something Name-giver magicians have known of for centuries.

Tiabdjin, I thought you were paying more attention. Our natural magic is indeed much like what you Young Races call raw magic, with one important difference. A magician may cast any spell he knows using raw magic, but he must first learn the spell's pattern and know how to call up that pattern in his mind's eye to cast it, even with raw magic.

We do not need to learn patterns, we create raw spell patterns at will. Using natural magic, a dragon can cast any spell that exists, or create a new one on the spot. Anything we could imagine, we could do with sufficient effort and strength of will.

Spell Magic

As it has done to so much of our world, the Scourge and the tainting of astral space changed our use of magic.

There had always been those among us who studied the ways of the magician, creating more complex and codified forms of spell magic. But the coming of the Horrors made the use of our natural spellcasting abilities dangerous even for creatures as powerful as we. The damage we caused ourselves by use of raw magic was previously so minor it was hardly noticed, not the risk weaker Name-givers take when they allow the energies of astral space to surge through their frail forms. Still, the warping damage one suffered in places where the Horrors passed was great enough to make even a dragon wary. Even so, that was not the greatest concern.

The most serious threat is the danger of being marked by a Horror. Yes, even dragons fear the danger a Horror Mark poses. Given our innate skill and understanding of magic, no dragon dares risk becoming a victim of the Horrors' ability to corrupt from within. To allow such power to fall into the hands of the Horrors might well cost the world much more than we lost during the Scourge, and so most of us abandoned use of our innate spellcasting except when we were assured of safety, such as in our own lairs. In its place many of my kind took up the study of spell magic as other Name-givers performed it, using spell matrices to protect them from the pollution of astral space and the notice of the Horrors.

These techniques allow us to use spell magic safely, even though they require more time and learning than the abilities that come to us naturally. Because of the limitations of Name-giver spell magic, not all dragons bothered to learn these techniques. Many of them suffered for their lack of foresight, I can tell you.

We study the spells of the various disciplines much as you Young Races do, although we have no need for grimoires to record spell formulas and patterns. Such formulas and patterns are quite simple to memorize or impress in a memory crystal to pass on to others. We also invent our own spells quite often. I have heard many legends of Name-givers stealing a dragon's grimoire, and I can tell you there is no truth to any of them. Even if a band of adventurers were to find a memory crystal used by a dragon to store spell patterns and lore, and remove it from the dragon's lair, there is no way known for any other Name-giver to make use of the information without the benefit of Dragonspeech.

There is some truth to tales of dragons teaching spells to Name-giver magicians. A spell pattern is a spell pattern, after all, and some rare magicians are clever enough to learn some useful spells from a dragon with the patience to teach. Magical lore is not given away cheaply, however, and it is frowned upon for a dragon to teach any magician secrets that might later come back to threaten us.

Most adult dragons choose to learn the spells of a particular discipline, such as elementalism or wizardry. As they grow older,

most branch out into other disciplines. Great dragons generally know spells from several different disciplines, although some can be single-minded enough to focus solely on a single discipline for centuries. These dragons often develop considerable finesse in their use of spells, using more complex techniques to make their spells harder to dispel, or to create spell-traps for their lairs.

The process of using spells is the same for us as it is for any other Name-giver. We do have certain advantages over the Young Races, of course, such as our natural talent for using spells, our faster thought processes and a knack for understanding and recalling spell patterns. These allow dragons to cast complex spells far more quickly than any other Name-giver magician.

Game Information

As mentioned in the descriptions of the Spellcasting and Spells powers, many dragons make use of the spellcasting methods and techniques of Name-giver magicians. A dragon with the Spells power has learned to use the spells of one or more magician Disciplines. However, because of dragons' considerable skill with magic, the rules for their casting of spells in this manner are slightly different. The following rules also apply to any dragon-like creatures with the Spells power.

Spell Matrices

Dragons use spell matrices like other Name-givers. However, the spell matrices are a natural defense mechanism and thus, a dragon has no need to learn these like other Name-givers do. All of the normal spell matrix rules apply to dragons, including the need to reattune their matrices. See the Spellcasting power for more details.

Thread Weaving

Dragons weave threads to their spells like other spell-casters, using the Thread Weaving power. A dragon with multiple Standard Actions can use them to weave more than one thread at a time. For example, a dragon with "**Number of Actions**: 4" could weave three threads for a spell and cast the spell in the same combat round.

Spell Effects

To determine the effect of a dragon's spell, use the dragon's Willpower step. Dragons do not have the Willforce talent, nor do they ever learn it. This limitation represents the one true restriction dragons face when using the "primitive" spellcasting techniques of Name-givers.

Learning Spells

Dragons learn new spells using their Spellcasting power instead of the Read and Write Magic talent against the Learning Difficulty of the spell they wish to learn. A dragon generally knows all of the spells for the Circles it has in a Discipline.

Spellcasting Talent Knacks

Dragons may learn any of the Spellcasting or Thread Weaving talent knacks in the **Player's Compendium** as a knack for their Spells power.

Dragons do not need the Spell Design talent knacks to design spells; their natural sense for magic allows them to do so. Dragons use their Spellcasting step for all tests associated with designing new spells.

Thread Magic

Dragonsight gives all dragons the ability to see the patterns of things. From the very earliest times, we understood the importance of Names and patterns and learned how to use them to our advantage. Weaving connections to the True patterns of other things and beings is an ancient art among my kind.

We use thread magic in some of the same ways as other Name-givers: weaving threads from our True patterns to the patterns of other creatures and places via pattern items, in order to enhance our abilities in dealing with them. It is a common practice, for example, for a dragon to weave a thread to its lair. The thread's magic can be used to enhance one of the dragon's abilities within the lair or—more commonly—to enhance one of the lair's own properties; making its defenses stronger or its traps and wards more difficult to detect, for example.

Dragons also weave threads to other beings, but only rarely. We do not usually concern ourselves with the pattern items of other Name-givers, although some dragons have many pattern items in their hoards. We guard the nature and location of our own pattern items very carefully indeed. I know one dragon who nearly allowed one of his pattern items to fall into the hands of other Name-givers, a mistake which might have spelled his downfall if it had not been recovered. pattern items have great power, even over us.

There was once a practice of weaving threads to the True pattern of a trusted and valued Name-giver servant or champion. A dragon would show favor to the Name-giver by weaving threads to his pattern, providing magic to increase the champion's abilities. This practice has nearly died out in this age, as few Name-givers are willing to entrust a dragon with one of their pattern items, and our other servants are best left as we have made them. Still, a dragon with possession of a Name-giver's pattern item is in as much of a position to help them as to hurt them. Unlike you small folk, we do not weave threads to things very often. We do not use the magical devices and equipment that form the basis for so many tales and legends among your kind, so we have no need to weave such threads. Occasionally a dragon possesses a Named item of sufficient magic and power to weave a thread to power it, but most dragons I know do not bother with such things.

Our Dragonsight and intimate knowledge of patterns does allow us a certain insight into magical items few magicians or other Name-givers can match. Adepts have been known to bring items to a dragon to ask for aid in deciphering the object's pattern so they can use it. Doll-Maker often entertains such audiences in exchange for a suitable gift, but I prefer to keep such unwanted visitors away from my lair. Such Name-givers are better off to learn some true scholarship, in my view, rather than to look for quick answers from their betters.

Game Information

Dragons use thread magic like other Name-givers, using the Spellcasting and Thread Weaving powers. A dragon can have a maximum number of threads equal to its Thread Weaving step, and each has a maximum thread rank of 15. A dragon's hoard may contain many pattern items collected by the dragon over the years, and dragons very carefully guard their own pattern items. These rules for dragon thread magic apply to drakes as well.

Spirit Magic

As a general rule dragons do not traffic with spirits as often as the magicians and adepts of the Young Races do. Perhaps it is some inherent need on the part of you small creatures to command other beings to do your bidding, I cannot say. We dragons have servants enough without the need to surround ourselves with a flock of stubborn and strong-willed spirits, who are often more trouble then they are worth.

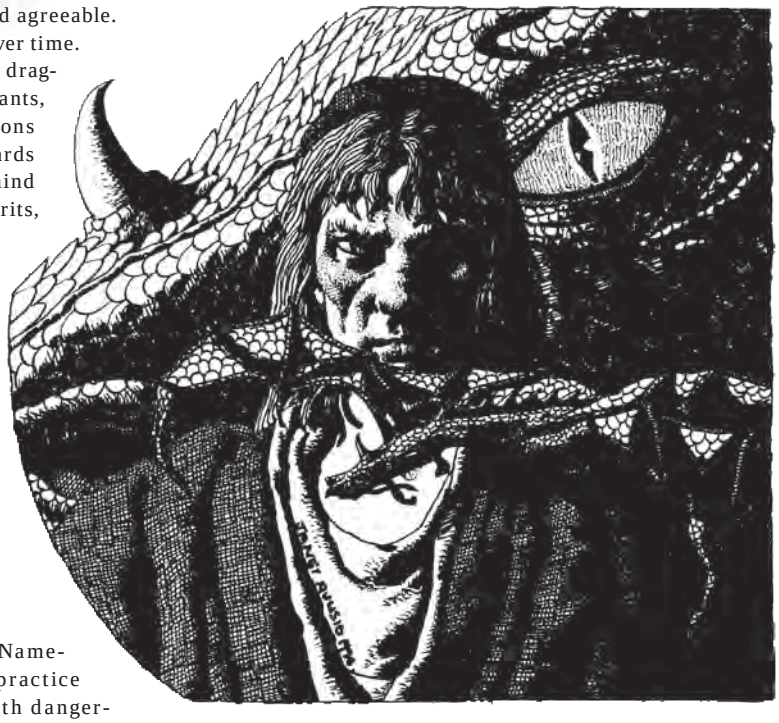
Not that spirits don't make useful servants. I frequently employ tasked spirits to carry out minor errands such as delivering messages to my noble associates elsewhere in Barsaive, tidying up my lair and keeping watch over the goings-on in my domain. These are tasks suited to a spirit. So is more specialized work, like calling on an earth spirit to dig a new tunnel into the mountain, or a water spirit to provide a new spring for drinking. For any of these things, I can call forth a spirit, set it to work and dismiss it when the task is done. For longer, more precise tasks requiring

a level of intelligence, drakes are far more useful and agreeable. Spirits tend to become rebellious and quarrelsome over time.

Despite my words above, however, there are great dragons who make frequent and effective use of spirit servants, most often elemental spirits. Most often great dragons will use spirits native to the terrain of their lair as guards and servants. I leave it to your delightfully curious mind to ponder which great dragons use which types of spirits, as there are some secrets which need remain secret.

The one area of spirit magic we know best is tied to life magic, which I will explain in a moment.

We also have our dealings from time to time with spirits that are not our servants. Most of them steer well clear of us, as even powerful Named spirits know not to offend a dragon. We can see spirits where they are normally invisible to other Name-givers, and our powers are sufficient to deal with any upstart spirit that gets out of control. The mere sound of a dragon's roar is enough to send lesser spirits scattering like dead leaves before a gale wind.



Blood Magic

Dragons do not practice blood magic as other Name-givers do. Indeed, for the most part we do not practice blood magic at all, since it is a practice that is both dangerous and unnecessary for beings at our level of magical power and sophistication. Unfortunately, you Young Races have not yet learned the wisdom to handle blood magic properly, and your ignorance of its power and danger has done nothing to curb your usage of it. I sometimes think the Scourge taught you nothing.

The use of blood magic to empower spells and items (such as charms) is unknown among dragons. We have no need for the tiny power offered by blood charms, which some among the Young Races use to imitate dragons, giving themselves claws, armored skin and astral sight. I recall the first time I saw a Name-giver laden with these charms, which turned his whole body into a crude imitation of our most noble form. I was nearly paralyzed with mirth at the sight, although my good humor was cut short by his attempt to stab me with a spear. I demonstrated most eloquently the superiority of our natural abilities over his magical add-ons. In fact, I think I still have his stone-covered hide here somewhere. Perhaps I can show it to you later.

Likewise, the use of blood drawn from other creatures for magic is forbidden among dragons. It is a corrupt practice that cannot be tolerated among any Name-givers. That the Therans continue to use the sacrifice of slaves by the thousands to prop up their tottering Empire is another example of their corruption and ultimate road to doom. How little some learn from the mistakes of the past. Such a short-term gain in power is not worth its cost a short way down the path.

Two forms of blood magic are known and used among my kind. The first is what you Young Races call "life magic," a far more apt Name in my opinion. Life magic is a personal sacrifice of some kind to support an act of magic. It is used to create and seal oaths and to work powerful magic, and can also be used by us in the creation of new life. Dragons can and do use life magic for the creation of blood oaths among us, although such an oath is always a very serious matter. A blood oath may bind one of us for centuries, even millennia, so a dragon makes no promise lightly, especially one sealed in blood.

A kind of life magic is also used in the creation of our drake servants. Life must always come from life in some way, so the creator of a drake must make a sacrifice to spark the new creation's life force. The process is long and laborious, similar to spells and rituals employed by some nethermancers, but far more sophisticated.

Game Information

Although they are able to use blood magic like other Name-givers, dragons generally disdain it in favor of their other magical powers and abilities. Certain feathered dragons are the only dragons to regularly use blood magic. Dragons do not use blood charms or similar items, nor do they generally make use of death magic. They can and do use blood magic to seal oaths, and blood magic is also used in the Dance of Blue Spirits, the process by which great dragons create drakes. Dragons swear few if any blood oaths in their long lives. A pledge made by a dragon is a serious thing, since it may last for thousands of years.

Ritual Magic

Most of the magic I have spoken of until now is used by the Young Races in one form or another. We dragons may have more skill and experience, but the most capable of your magicians can duplicate many of the same feats of magic I have described. However, there is magic known only to dragons, magic beyond anything any other Name-giver race has ever accomplished.

I have told you of our Rites and Rituals, how they serve to maintain good relations between dragons. What you do not yet know are the rituals of great magical power, rites that allow us to cooperate not only socially but magically as well. Name-giver magicians have means by which lesser talents support greater ones; apprentices lending power to their teachers, servants to their masters. The rituals we work allow us to cooperate as peers, equal powers combining to perform magic far greater than any individual dragon could accomplish alone. In fact such magic is so powerful that I question whether any one individual or group should ever wield such power at all.

With the power of our magical rituals, we can change the face of the world: level mountains, flood plains, dry oceans and sink islands. We can change the course of the heavens, shake the foundations of the earth and even alter the very course of history forever. It is the power to reweave the most primal patterns of existence into new forms, to speak to the Universe and be obeyed.

As you might well imagine, it is not a power to be used lightly. We once used our great power without the wisdom or foresight needed to wield it properly, and terrible mistakes were made. We have since learned restraint and the need to judge our every action in light of what might be the consequences. In the whole history

of your kingdom, no ritual like I describe has been performed. It is difficult at best to gather enough dragons together in one place, to gain the cooperation needed to perform such a ritual is rare in the extreme. Since all of those who take part must agree fully that the ritual is necessary, it is an often debated and rarely settled issue. If we are fortunate and Fate is kind, this Age may never see the full power of dragon magic. However, it is my experience that Fate is rarely kind.

Like so many topics he discussed in the course of dictating this essay to me, Vasdenjas refused to elaborate on his cryptic comments concerning ritual magic. I thought to try to learn more by asking questions related to ritual magic, hoping to gradually shift the conversation to my true goal. I should have known better. Vasdenjas anticipated my every question, and every attempt to learn more was met with a quick and subtle rebuke. He finally convinced me to cease my efforts when, after assuming dwarf form once again, he looked directly into my eyes and said to me "Tiabdjin, you might believe that I and my kind fear nothing, and that there is nothing we would not dare attempt. In truth, there are things that even great dragons dare not meddle with. Ritual magic is one of them."

I needed to hear nothing further.

Game Information

No rules are given for dragon ritual magic. Suffice to say that such massively powerful magical rituals are capable of causing vast changes in the forces of nature, the structure of astral space and even in the very fabric of reality itself. A dragon ritual could certainly destroy a city or an entire nation. They are greater in power than Thirteenth Circle or higher spells, like Call Forth the Maelstrom, Call Forth the Army of Decay, or City in a Bottle.

Dragon rituals take time, effort and the presence of several dragons working in concert. They are magic on a truly epic scope. As such, they are better treated as major events in the history of a campaign rather than simple spells. Keep in mind that ritual magic has not been performed by any of the dragons of Barsaive since long before the Scourge and perhaps even longer before that. These massively powerful rituals are not something that dragons invoke lightly. As Vasdenjas points out in his treatise, the dragons of Barsaive have learned from their past mistakes.

Dragon Powers

Dragons have a wide range of magical powers at their command. All dragons have at least some of the powers listed here, and great dragons often have all of these powers (and more) to call upon. Adult dragons always have the Disrupt Fate, Dragon Breath, and Fear powers, as well as their other innate abilities including Armored Scales, Astral Sight, Karma, and Regeneration (see below). As a dragon ages, it is able to improve its existing powers and to develop and learn more powers, not unlike the modification of an adept's True pattern over time as the adept improves and learns more talents.

Dragon Power Knacks

In addition to their various powers, many dragons also develop dragon power knacks. These are similar to an adept's talent knacks, and allow dragons to use their powers in new and different ways. Some dragons know many power knacks while others know very few.

Most adult dragons choose to specialize in learning knacks for a few powers. Great dragons often know many, many knacks for their various powers, learned over their extremely long lives. The gamemaster can decide if a dragon knows any of the power knacks described here and should also feel free to create new power knacks to ensure that dragons and their powers are always an unknown quantity. Example knacks are listed for a number of the dragon powers described below.

Armored Scales

Step Number: Rank + Toughness (see text)
Action: No

A dragon's armored hide provides great physical and magical protection against attack. Use the Armored Scales step number as the dragon's Physical Armor rating. Add the dragon's Armored Scales rank to its Mystic Armor rating. Only attacks that score an Extraordinary result against the dragon's Physical Defense achieve an Armor-Defeating Hit. Mystic Armor protects against magical attacks in the same way; any attacks made against the dragon's Spell Defense must achieve an Extraordinary result to bypass the dragon's Mystic Armor.

Dispel Magic

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: No

With their power over the forces of magic, many dragons can dispel many types of magic at will. A dragon using this power makes a Spellcasting Test against the Spell Defense of the magician who cast the target spell, or of the creature or character that created the magical effect the dragons wishes to dispel. If the test succeeds, the dragon makes a Dispel Magic Test against the spell's Dispel Difficulty (see **Dispelling Magic** in the **Spell Magic** chapter on p. 291 of the **Player's Compendium**). If this test is successful, the spell is broken and immediately ends.

This power can also be used to dispel other magical effects and abilities, such as talents and creature abilities (including Horror and dragon powers) that have a sustained duration. The Dispel Difficulty for creature powers is based on the step number of the power or ability. The Dispel Difficulty for talents is based on the talent rank. Find the step number (or rank, in the case of talents) on the Circle column of the Dispel Difficulty Table. The corresponding Dispel Difficulty is used for the talent or power to be dispelled. If a creature power or ability step number is higher than 15, add +1 to the Dispel Difficulty for each step above 15. For example, the Horror power Corrupt Reality at Step 17 would have a Dispel Difficulty of 28 (26 + 2).

Disrupt Fate

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: No

Dragons with this power can alter the fate of other creatures. To use this ability the dragon spends a Karma Point, which entitles it to make an immediate Disrupt Fate Test against the Spell Defense of a target character or creature. If the test succeeds, the target must immediately repeat the most recent test he made. The new test result stands, and cannot be disrupted a second time. Disrupt Fate counts as a Simple action. As long as the dragon has Karma Points, it may make as many Disrupt Fate Tests as there are targets. Note that the Karma Point expenditure entitles the dragon to use its Disrupt Fate ability; the dragon does not roll any Karma dice when making a Disrupt Fate Test.

Dominate Beast

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: Yes

This power allows a dragon to control beasts, similar to the beastmaster talent of the same name. To use this power, the dragon makes a Dominate Beast Test against the Spell Defense of the beast(s) the dragon wishes to control. If successful, the dragon

controls the target creature(s) for a number of minutes equal to its Dominate Beast step. An animal under the effect of this power will not take any hostile action against the dragon, and will perform one simple task for the dragon that does not exceed the duration of the power.

The great dragons Aban and Usun both possess this power, using it to control the various creatures living in their respective homes in the Mist Swamps and the Liaj Jungle.

Dominate Beast Knacks

Some knacks based on the Dominate Beast power include:

Beast's Eyes

This knack allows the dragon to perceive through the senses of any beast it dominates. To use this knack the dragon makes a Dominate Beast Test against the Spell Defense of the dominated beast. If the test succeeds, the dragon can perceives everything the beast perceives. Dragons with this knack, including Aban and Usun, use dominated beasts in their domain as scouts and spies.

Stampede

A dragon with this knack can cause a group of animals to stampede in a specific direction like the Incite Stampede talent. Using this knack requires only a single action. The dragon makes a Dominate Beast Test in place of the Incite Stampede Test.

Dragon Breath

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: No

The most famed and feared power of dragons is their fiery breath. Every culture has horrific legends of the destruction of villages, towns, and cities by furious dragons. Dragon Breath targets everything within a 90-degree arc, using the dragon's mouth as the arc's center. The distance the arc extends is based on how much Strain the dragon is willing to take, as shown on the Dragon Breath Table.

DRAGON BREATH TABLE

Strain Cost	Range
1 Strain Point	25 yards
5 Strain Points	50 yards
15 Strain Points	100 yards
30 Strain Points	200 yards

Dragon Breath engulfs every target within the arc. Each arc of Dragon Breath requires one of the dragon's actions. If it has enough actions available, a dragon may lay down more than one fiery arc per round. To determine which targets within the area of effect are damaged by Dragon Breath, the dragon makes a Spellcasting Test and compares the result against the Spell Defense of each target within the arc. If the test succeeds, the target catches fire, taking damage as a result. As long as the dragon stays within 1,000 yards of the flames, they cannot be extinguished by normal means. Only a successful Willpower or Dispel Magic Test against the dragon's Spell Defense can put out the Dragon Breath fire. The affected character makes the appropriate test; if the test is successful, the flames stop burning.

A burning target takes damage during each combat round that the fire burns. The dragon makes a Dragon Breath Test each round as a Damage Test. If the Dragon Breath attack inflicted an Armor Defeating Hit, even normally non-combustible objects burn. Dragon fire can burn anything, including weapons, boulders, bricks, and metal or crystal armor. Burning armor degrades at a rate of 2 Armor Points per combat round. Weapons degrade at the rate of 2 Damage steps per combat round. These losses are spread evenly among whatever Damage steps or Armor ratings the object has. For example, a ferndask shield would lose 1 point from each of Physical and Mystic Armor each round when burning, rather than losing 2 points from either the shield's Physical or Mystic Armor. Once the object's Damage step or Physical Armor rating reaches 0, the object is reduced to slag.

Dragon Breath Knacks

Dragons have developed various power knacks to control and refine the power of Dragon Breath, such as the following:

Flame Spout

With this knack, the dragon breathes a line or bolt of flame at a single target, rather than an arc. The Strain cost of a Flame Spout is half the normal cost (round up) and it causes normal Dragon Breath damage to its target. A dragon can use this knack to strike at multiple targets in one attack with individual bolts of flame, as long as all the intended targets are spread out no further than 50 yards. The dragon uses the knack as described, but takes an extra 3 Strain Points of damage for each additional target above the first.

Flame Ball

Using Flame Ball, a dragon can spit a bolt of flame that explodes into a sphere of fire on impact with its target, creating an effect similar to the elementalist spell Fireball. The sphere has a radius equal to half the range of the bolt, based on the Strain taken by the dragon. For example, a Flame Ball with a range of 100 yards has a 50 yard radius.

The dragon makes a normal Spellcasting Test and compares the result against the Spell Defense of all the targets within the radius of the fireball to determine who takes damage. Damage from a flame ball attack continues to damage the targets each round as normal for Dragon Breath.

Friendly Fire

Dragons with this power knack have the amazing ability to choose which targets are affected by their Dragon Breath and which are not. Targets in the affected arc whom the dragon chooses not to affect are completely unharmed by the dragon fire. Their clothing and equipment aren't even singed. Other targets take damage normally.

This knack is so selective that a dragon can use it to burn a Name-giver to ash while leaving his clothing and equipment untouched (or vice-versa, leaving a helpless and likely very embarrassed Name-giver).

Smoke Cloud

The dragon using this knack breathes not fire, but a thick cloud of choking black smoke. The smoke covers an arc similar to the Dragon Breath. The dragon makes a Spellcasting Test and compares the result against the Spell Defense of each target within the intended area effect. If successful, the dragon makes a Dragon Breath Test to determine how much damage the targets take from the heat and choking vapors.

Targets do not burn, but temporary blindness will cause them to suffer a –3 penalty to all Action Tests for the next 5 rounds. A character can make a Willpower or Dispel Magic Test against the dragon's Spell Defense to overcome this penalty; a successful test result allows the character to see and removes the penalty from that character.

Dragonsight

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: Yes

Dragons are naturally attuned to astral space, allowing them to see astral forms at will. To use this power, the dragon makes a Dragonsight Test. If the result of the test exceeds the Spell Defense of any subject within the dragon's line of sight, the dragon can see

the astral image of the subject. The Dragonsight power is a heightened version of the Astral Sight talent. Unlike most Name-givers, dragons do not have to spend Strain to use it. For more information about the use of Astral Sight and other astral sensing abilities, see the **Astral Space** chapter on p. 73.

Dragonsight Knacks

Many dragons develop power knacks using their Dragonsight. Any of the Astral Sight talent knacks from the **Talent Knacks** chapter on p. 213 of the **Player's Compendium** may be learned by dragons as Dragonsight power knacks. Dragons also have some unique Dragonsight knacks of their own:

Item History

This knack functions exactly like the Item History talent except the dragon uses its Dragonsight step in place of the Talent step, and the dragon needs to study the item for only a day, not a full week. Use the results of the dragon's Item History Test normally for determining an item's Key Knowledges. Some dragons (including Icewing) have been known to perform Item History on powerful magical items with high Spell Defenses), in exchange for future favors from adventurers.

Matrix Strike

With the Matrix Strike knack, a dragon can attack a magician's spell matrices in astral space, just like the Matrix Strike talent. To use this power, the dragon must have first detected the astral image of the target with a Dragonsight Test. The dragon then makes a Spellcasting Test against the target magician's Spell Defense. A successful test damages one of the target's spell matrices. Dragons can attack matrices only with their claws when using this power. The target's Mystic Armor protects against this damage.

Spirit Strike

This knack allows the dragon to strike at opponents from astral space, just like the Spirit Strike talent. To use this power, the dragon must have first detected the astral image of the target with a Dragonsight Test. The dragon then makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If successful, the dragon causes normal attack damage. Mystic Armor protects against this damage, but defensive talents such as Avoid Blow cannot be used to avoid a Spirit Strike.

True Sight

Dragons are difficult to fool, and dragons with this knack are even more so. True Sight allows a dragon to see through illusions, like the talent of the same name. To use this knack the dragon makes a Dragonsight Test against the Disbelief Difficulty of each illusion to overcome it.

See **Sensing and Disbelieving Illusions** in the **Illusionism Spells** chapter on p. 322 of the **Player's Compendium** for more information.

DRAGONSPEECH

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: Yes

All adult dragons have the Dragonspeech power. It allows the dragon to transmit its thoughts as speech to any being within the dragon's line of sight, by making a successful Dragonspeech Test against the being's Spell Defense. The dragon can also send simple images as well as speech through its mental link. A target that wishes to hear the dragon's mental speech can voluntarily lower its Spell Defense, of course, although considering the further probing Dragonspeech can be used for, it is not always wise to trust a dragon. Under normal circumstances, the gamemaster can assume a dragon's use of Dragonspeech is successful, unless the subject has a Spell Defense higher than the dragon's Spellcasting step.

Dragonspeech is the natural method of communication for dragons, and they use it most often among themselves. It is also useful because it transcends language, allowing a dragon to speak to another being whether or not it understands the subject's language.

Dragonspeech Knacks

Most dragons hardly bother with Dragonspeech except among their own kind, but some have developed a number of power knacks using Dragonspeech, including the following:

Animal Talk

This knack allows the dragon to communicate with animals using Dragonspeech. This knack is commonly used by Leviathans to communicate with other underwater creatures and summon them to protect their underwater domain and lairs.

Read Thoughts

This knack allows the dragon to not only project its own thoughts, but to read the surface thoughts of any being it can see, with a successful Dragonspeech Test against the subject's Spell Defense. This permits two-way mental communication between the dragon and the subject, transcending language barriers. It also allows the dragon to know what the subject is thinking. A successful Willpower or Willforce Test against the result of the dragon's Dragonspeech Test is required to successfully hide a thought from the dragon, or to tell a lie. Dragons with this knack tend to have great insight into other Name-givers.

Learn Language

By touching the mind of a subject using Dragonspeech, the dragon can learn any language the subject knows. The dragon makes a Dragonspeech Test against the subject's Spell Defense. On an Excellent result, the dragon learns one language the subject knows, speaking and reading it as fluently as the subject can.

Thought Probe

Thought Probe is one step more advanced than Read Thoughts. It allows the dragon to sift through the thoughts and memories of a subject like hunting through a pile of coin and gems. With a successful Dragonspeech Test, the dragon can probe the subject's mind for a particular memory or piece of information. The result level of the Test determines what information the dragon can dig up. An Average result allows the dragon to locate any memory up to a day old; a Good result up to a week old; an Excellent result up to a year old; an Extraordinary result can locate any memory, even information the subject is not consciously aware of. In addition to gaining useful information from unwilling subjects, dragons can use this knack to read the memories of willing subjects (such as drake and Name-giver servants). This allows a dragon to directly experience what its servant experienced.

Second Sight

Using the Second Sight knack, a dragon can use Dragonspeech to perceive through the senses of another being, with or without that being's consent. The dragon must first establish a connection to the subject via thread magic to use this knack. Once this is accomplished the dragon may, at any time, make a Dragonspeech Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the dragon gains access to one of the subject's senses for each result level achieved. An Extraordinary result allows the dragon to perceive with all of the subject's senses. The dragon does not have any

direct power over the subject using this knack; in fact, the subject is not even aware the dragon is eavesdropping, unless the dragon achieves a Poor result on its Dragonspeech Test, in which case the subject feels a brief sensation of being watched.

Suggestion

The Suggestion knack allows a dragon to mentally plant a suggestion in the target's mind, similar to a powerful post-hypnotic suggestion. The dragon makes a Dragonspeech Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the dragon may implant a single suggestion. This can be something immediate or it can be triggered by later circumstances. To overcome the suggestion, the victim must make a Willpower Test against the dragon's Dragonspeech step. Otherwise, the victim follows the suggestion as if it were his own idea.

Reweave Mind

This is the most powerful and sophisticated knack of Dragonspeech—the ability to tear the fabric of a living mind and reweave it to the dragon's will. The great dragon Mountainshadow is known to have reached this level of ability, but few other dragons can hope to do so. With Reweave Mind, a dragon can mentally reshape the fabric of the subject's mind, altering, removing or restoring memories, changing personality and so forth. The process is not fast, even for the powerful mind of a dragon. Any attempt at Reweave Mind takes at least one hour, longer if the changes are more complex. The dragon makes a Dragonspeech Test against the subject's Spell Defense. On an Excellent result, this power allows the dragon to alter the subject's memories and such at will. An Extraordinary result is required to make fundamental changes in personality or vital memories. Any other result has no effect on the subject. This power can also literally rebuild a mind shattered by illness or madness.

Durability

Step Number: Rank
Action: No

The Durability power increases a dragon's ability to take damage. Each Durability rank permanently increases a dragon's Death and Unconsciousness Ratings. The amount of this increase is determined by the type of dragon. The Dragon Durability Increase Table shows the appropriate increase per Durability rank listed as two numbers separated by a slash. The number to the left of the slash represents the increase to the dragon's Death Rating. The number to the right represents the increase to the dragon's Unconsciousness Rating. If a dragon has learned a Discipline which employs higher Durability ratings, these values are replaced by those of the Discipline.

DRAGON DURABILITY INCREASE TABLE

Age	Increase
Dragon-kin	6 / 5
Dragon-like creatures	7 / 6
Dragons	8 / 7
Great Dragons	9 / 8

Fear

Step Number: Rank+Charisma
Action: Yes

Dragons radiate a fearsome aura. Many heroes who try to confront a dragon flee in terror upon seeing the beast. To use its Fear power, a dragon makes a Fear Test and compares the result against the Spell Defense of all characters and creatures within 100 yards. Within this distance, the dragon's bellow rattles the ground, enough to make the most dauntless character nervous. A successful test result means the dragon's Fear power affects the characters; its victims tremble, sweat, stammer and exhibit other hallmarks of extreme fright. The result of the Fear Test becomes the Difficulty Number for any attempts to resist the dragon's Fear power. Before an affected character can take any action that requires a test, he must resist the effect of the Fear power by making a successful Willpower Test against that Difficulty Number. While under the influence of Fear, however, he can move, talk, or perform other actions that do not require tests.

Fear Knacks

Some of the more common Fear knacks include:

Awe

A dragon using this power knack does not inspire just fear but more of a powerful sense of awe and respect mixed with a touch of fear. The effects are the same as described for Fear, except victims are less frightened, and more impressed.

Paralyzing Gaze

This knack allows a dragon to focus the power of its Fear on a single individual, rendering that character incapable of any action. The dragon makes its Fear Test normally. If it is successful, the victim is paralyzed, unable to do anything except stare in fear at the dragon for as long as the dragon's gaze is upon him. In order to take any action at all, the victim must make a successful Willpower Test against the result of the dragon's Fear Test.

Terror

The Terror knack allows a dragon to instill blind panic in its victims. It costs the dragon 5 Strain Points. On a successful Fear Test, the victim flees from the dragon as quickly as possible. To take any action other than fleeing madly, the victim must make a Willpower Test against the result of the dragon's Fear Test.

Karma Cancel

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: No

Karma Cancel allows a dragon to override another character's use of Karma. The dragon makes a Karma Cancel Test against the target character's Spell Defense. If successful, the dragon may spend a Karma Point to cancel the target's use of Karma. If a target spends multiple Karma Points (such as for the use of the True Shot talent), the dragon must spend the same number of points to cancel them. Karma Cancel does not require an action; a dragon may attempt to cancel an opponent's use of Karma at any time so long as it still has Karma Points to spend.

Karma Cancel Knacks

Some knacks based on the Karma Cancel power include:

Lend Karma

The Lend Karma knack allows a dragon to give Karma Points or lend its Karma step to any other being it can see or that the dragon has woven a thread to. The dragon makes a Karma Cancel Test against the target's Spell Defense (a willing target may lower his Spell Defense; see the **Spell Magic** chapter on p. 287 of the **Player's Compendium** for rules on how to do this). If the test succeeds, the dragon can transfer 1 Karma Point from its own Karma pool to the target for each result level achieved. The target may spend the Karma Points he receives from this knack as normal. For example, a dragon who achieves a Good result on a Karma Cancel Test may give the target up to 2 Karma Points.

Alternatively, the dragon may "lend" the target its own Karma step for a number of rounds equal to the result level achieved. An Average result equals 1 round; a Good result, 2 rounds; an Excellent result, 3 rounds; an Extraordinary result equals 4 rounds. The

target spends his own Karma Points as normal, but rolls Karma dice based on the dragon's Karma step instead of his own.

Karma Points

Step Number: Special (see text)
Action: NA

All dragons have Karma Points they may use to augment any of their Action Tests. A dragon may spend only 1 Karma Point per test.

Lair Sense

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: No

A dragon makes its lair an extension of itself, and can use Lair Sense to notice intruders anywhere within its lair. Whenever a character makes a test within the confines of the dragon's lair, he triggers the dragon's Lair Sense. Simple movement and quiet conversation tend not to activate this power, thought they can on occasion. To use this ability, the dragon makes a Lair Sense Test against the Spell Defense of the character whose action activated the power. If the test succeeds, the dragon detects the character and his location within the lair. Dragons often booby-trap their lairs to take advantage of this power, forcing characters to beat the traps by performing an action that reveals their presence.

Lair Sense Knacks

Many dragons develop Lair Sense knacks, like the following:

Absent Lair Sense

Lair Sense normally works only when the dragon is in its lair, protecting the dragon from being surprised while in *shal-mora* or otherwise distracted. A dragon with this knack may use Lair Sense to detect intruders even while away from its lair. The Lair Sense works normally otherwise. Characters who wait for a dragon to depart before raiding its lair may still be in for a surprise if they trigger the dragon's Lair Sense.

Identify Intruder

A dragon with this knack not only senses the presence of an intruder, but also gains some information about him. The dragon gets a visual image of the intruder in his mind and knows his Name. The dragon may recognize characters with sufficient Legendary Status and will certainly recognize anyone it has encountered before.

Lair Mark

This knack allows a dragon to place an invisible astral "mark" on a character detected by its Lair Sense. The dragon makes a Lair Sense Test against the target character's Spell Defense. If successful, the dragon is able to know the exact location of the marked character for a year and a day, up to 5,000 miles away from the dragon. The mark does not allow the dragon to affect the character in any way, just to know his location. Many Name-givers who thought that they had successfully robbed a dragon's lair have been hunted down using this knack.

Lair Vision

With this knack, a dragon whose Lair Sense detects an intruder can see and hear everything happening at the intruder's location in the lair as if the dragon were physically present. This allows the dragon to see any companions the intruder might have, and to listen in on their plans. Many would-be dragon hunters have been surprised to find their prey waiting as if the dragon was expecting them.

Regeneration

Step Number: Rank + Toughness
Action: No

Dragons can regenerate any damage done to them by opponents. To activate this power, the dragon must sacrifice a Recovery Test and spend 1 Karma Point. The dragon then makes a Regeneration Test, and reduces its Current Damage by the total.

Regeneration Knacks

Great dragons have developed a very powerful knack for the Regeneration power:

Regrowth

Similar to the regenerative capacity of some reptiles, dragons with the Regrowth knack can actually regenerate lost body parts, so long as the dragon's brain and spine are intact. The lost part regrows once the dragon's Current Damage and Wounds are fully healed, at a cost of one Recovery Test for a small body part like a talon, and up to five Recovery Tests for a limb. Regrowth takes a number of days equal to the number of Recovery Tests required.

Skills

Step Number: Special (see text)
Action: Special (see text)

Some Dragons have powers based on skills. Refer to the **Skills** chapter on p. 230 of the **Player's Compendium** for a description of each skill and how it works.

Spellcasting

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: Yes

All adult dragons know how to use spell magic. The ability to manipulate the energies of astral space is inherent. Dragons can use their Spellcasting power to cast any spell as Raw Magic. The dragon doesn't need to know the spell, it simply shapes the astral energy to its will and the spell happens. This is a natural ability for dragons. For a long time, dragons performed all of their magic in this way, grabbing magical energy and shaping it to their wills.

Dragons use the Thread Weaving power when casting spells in this manner (see **Talents**, p. 402). Hatchlings using this ability must weave all the threads necessary for the spell they wish to cast. Adult dragons need weave only one-half (rounded down) the required threads for any spells they cast in this manner, while great dragons need not weave any threads for spells they cast using this ability.

Dragons automatically receive a number of spell matrices equal to their Spellcasting step divided by 4 (rounded up). One out of every three of a dragon's matrices are Enhanced Matrices and one out of every six are Armored Matrices. For example, a dragon with a Spellcasting step of 23 would have 23 / 4 = 5.75, rounded up to 6 spell matrices. Three of these would be standard spell matrices, two would be Enhanced Matrices and one would be an Armored Matrix. All of a dragon's matrices have a rank equal to that of the maximum Circle spell the dragon can cast.

Despite the versatility and power of this ability, not all dragons exploit the full potential of their spellcasting abilities. With the tainting of astral space by the Horrors, the use of Raw Magic is dangerous, even to creatures as powerful as dragons. For this reason, many dragons have adopted the more complex forms of spell magic practiced by other Name-givers. See **Dragon Magic**, p. 394, for more information.

Spells

Step Number: Special (see text)
Action: NA

Dragons are natural born spellcasters, with an inherent knowledge of the workings of magic. They use spell magic regularly. This power refers to the dragon's use of spell magic as practiced by magician adepts (spell matrices, threads, etc.), but dragons also have their own unique form of spell magic. See the **Dragon Magic** section for more information on dragons' use of spells.

Summoning

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: Yes

Dragons may summon any kind of spirit by making a Summoning Test against the spirit's Spell Defense. For each result level achieved on the test, the spirit will perform one service for the dragon summoner. After summoning a spirit, the dragon makes a Willpower Test, the result of which determines the number of days the spirit remains in service. For complete information on summoning spirits, see the **Spirits** chapter on p. 361.

Suppress Magic

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: Yes

With their natural knack for manipulating astral space, most dragons can suppress magic used by other creatures. To use the Suppress Magic ability, the dragon makes a Suppress Magic Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the dragon reduces the target's use of magic by a number of steps equal to its Suppress Magic rank. In addition to reducing spells, Suppress Magic reduces the step numbers of all talents, the damage from magical weapons, and any other magic use. Suppress Magic lasts for a number of rounds equal to the Suppress Magic Test result. If it prefers, a dragon can use this ability to suppress one specific type of magic, such as talents, magic items or spells, instead of suppressing all types.

Talents

Step Number: Special (see text)
Action: Special (see text)

Many dragons have powers based on adept talents. Refer to the **Talents** chapter on p. 166 of the **Player's Compendium** for a description of the talent in question. Dragons ignore any Karma requirements listed with a talent. Dragons cannot learn the Willforce talent.

Venom

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: No

Dragons with this power have venomous teeth and claws, and any tooth or claw attack that causes damage to a character also poisons him. No test is required for a dragon to affect a character with poison—if the character is physically struck and damaged by tooth or claw, he is automatically affected by it. After taking damage from a dragon's teeth or claws, a character must make a successful Toughness Test against the dragon's Spell Defense each round for 10 consecutive rounds to resist the effects of the venom. If the character fails a Poison Resistance Test, the dragon makes a Venom Test to determine how much damage the character takes from the Venom. (For more information on poisons and how they work, see the **Adventuring** chapter, p. 121.) Each use of the Venom power lasts for 10 rounds, after which time the poison ceases to damage the character. A single target can only suffer damage from one use of the Venom power at a time.

Venom Knacks

Some knacks based on the Venom power include:

Pain Venom

Instead of causing damage, the Venom of a dragon with this knack causes excruciating pain, rendering most victims unable to do anything except writhe on the ground in agony. The dragon makes the Venom Test as usual, except the result becomes the Difficulty Number for the victim to take any action. Each round, the poisoned character must make a Willpower Test against this Difficulty Number in order to take any action. The Venom lasts for 10 rounds as normal.

Sleep Venom

A dragon with this knack can use its Venom power to render victims unconscious, rather than killing them. Damage from the venom ceases to affect the victim once his Current Damage reaches his Unconsciousness Threshold. Venom damage done when using this knack does not kill the victim.

Spit Venom

Some dragons have the ability to spit or spray venom from their mouths. A dragon with this knack makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the dragon makes a Venom Test to determine how much damage is inflicted on the victim from the corrosive venom. Physical Armor protects against this damage. On an Extraordinary result, the dragon's venom hits the target's eyes, causing full Blindness for 10 rounds (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 408 of the **Player's Compendium**), in addition to the damage caused by the venom.

Wingbeat

Step Number: Rank + Dexterity
Action: Yes

Winged dragons can use their wings to knock over opponents. The dragon makes a Wingbeat Test, the result of which is compared against the Physical Defense of each character up to 20 yards away, in a 90 degree arc from the front of the dragon. If the test succeeds, the dragon's wing hits the character.

The test result also becomes the Difficulty Number for the Knockdown Test that any character struck by the wings must perform. Any character who fails the Knockdown Test is knocked down and moved backward a number of yards equal to the difference between the Difficulty Number and the result of the Knockdown Test. For example, a character whose Knockdown Test result is 11 points less than the Difficulty Number would be knocked backwards 11 yards. This can be especially hazardous for characters fighting a dragon somewhere high up, like the deck of an airship or a mountain top.

Wingbeat Knacks

The following knack is available to dragons with the Wingbeat power:

Dust Cloud

A dragon using this knack can stir up a cloud of dust, dirt, sand, ash or similar material using the winds generated by beating its wings. The dragon makes a Wingbeat Test and the result becomes the range in yards that the cloud extends in all directions from the dragon. Any characters in the dust cloud suffer

a –3 penalty to their Action Tests from the flying, stinging dust. The cloud lasts for 5 rounds, after which it settles harmlessly to the ground.

Dragon-kin

Dragon-kin are Name-givers born of or descended from the mating of a Name-giver and a dragon in Name-giver form. They have certain unique abilities as a result of their heritage. Without careful breeding and a regular infusion of dragon blood, most families of dragon-kin become ordinary Name-givers after many generations as the dragon blood is slowly diluted. Dragon tradition now forbids dragons mating with any of the Young Races to produce dragon-kin, and the practice has been banned since the dawn of the Age of Legend. Violating this tradition is one of the few actions that is likely to result in a dragon being banished from dragon society. As a result, the number of these Name-givers in Barsaive is extremely small and is constantly decreasing.

Any Name-giver race can produce dragon-kin, with the exception of the obsidimen, who do not reproduce as other Name-givers do. Because of this, dragon-kin are less of a "race" and more of a "subspecies" of their Name-giver parent race, but also sharing certain characteristics with the dragon side of their mixed heritage. Dragon-kin are capable of breeding with other members of their Name-giver parent's race, and their children are generally dragon-kin as well, with the trait appearing for generations.

It is a closely guarded secret that the Denairastas Clan of Iopos is the only extended family of dragon-kin currently in existence, though the great dragons of Barsaive may know of or suspect others. The Denairastas are the children of the great dragon Denairastas who chose to violate dragon tradition by mating with a human female sometime before the Scourge. This dragon, now banished from dragon society, lairs in the Scol Mountains and is one of the most powerful allies of the Denairastas clan.

Aside from the great dragons' original servants, the Denairastas Clan are the only known living dragon-kin in Barsaive, perhaps in the entire world. Members of the Denairastas Clan cover their various dragon traits using clothing, makeup and illusionism magic. Those children with deformities too severe to be concealed are generally killed, although there are rumors that Uhl Denairastas keeps some of them alive to perform experiments requiring dragon-kin subjects.

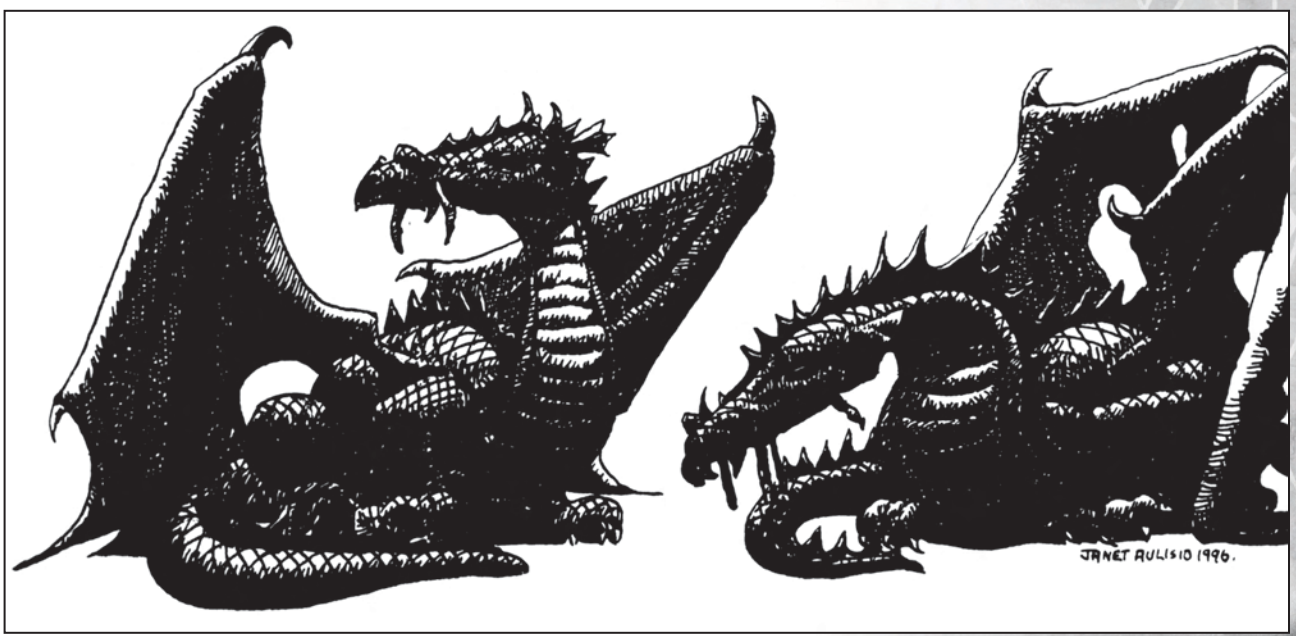
Legends among the t'skrang insist that members of House Syrtis are descended from a dragon, but the truth of these tales is not known.

Other families and lineages of dragon-kin may exist in Barsaive, keeping their heritage secret out of fear of persecution from both the dragons and other Name-givers. The gamemaster can introduce such isolated dragon-kin into the campaign as desired. Violating this tradition is one of the most serious transgressions a dragon can commit, and none of Barsaive's great dragons would ever consider doing so.

Creating Dragon-kin Characters

Dragon-kin have the normal racial abilities and modifiers of their Name-giver parent, with an additional +1 to their Perception and Willpower values. All dragon-kin also have the Racial Abilities of Astral-Sensitive Sight and Low-Light Vision. Their abilities make dragon-kin natural-born spellcasters, and many of them follow one or more of the magician Disciplines.

Dragon-kin all have at least one physical deformity or trait tied to their dragon blood, sometimes more than one. Common traits include scaly patches of skin, pointed ears, oddly colored eyes, eyes that feature slitted pupils, or eyes that lack pupils altogether. Other traits include webbed fingers and/or toes, a vestigial tail or wings, small horns, pronounced canine teeth, a complete lack of body hair, or bony deposits on the skin similar to heavy scales. These traits make the character recognizable to anyone familiar with dragon-kin (particularly any dragon). Most dragons strongly dislike dragon-kin. Drakes particularly detest dragon-kin, perhaps because they are jealous of their close kinship with their dragon masters. Name-givers unaware of the dragon-kin's heritage will often think him cursed or Horror-touched.



In addition to the information he provided on the different types of dragons, I prevailed upon Master Vasdenjas to provide more information on some of the various dragon-like creatures living in Barsaive. These include drakes (shape-shifting servants of the dragons), hydras and (at my insistence) wyverns. Some of the information below is most intriguing. See my commentary, as follows.

—By the Hand of Tiabdjin the Knower, scribe of the Great Library of Throal and First Scholar of the *khavro'am*

Dragon-like Creatures

There are some creatures in Barsaive that resemble dragon-kind, but they are not dragons, nor should they be considered as such, any more than you would consider a pangolus or a blood monkey related to your good self, Tiabdjin.

Still, these beings, specifically drakes and hydras, share some of our nature and abilities, through design in both cases, the first brilliant and the second tragic. This does make them worthy subjects for this tome.

Drakes

As I have said, some dragons are served by members of the Young Races. Most great dragons such as myself, however, prefer to avoid becoming entangled with the culture of other Name-givers. Given this, there remained the matter of who would serve us in the society of the Name-givers. To solve the problem, we created the drakes to be our eyes, ears and hands in the world, so we would not need to trouble ourselves with minor details and trifling tasks. Drakes have been the finest servants we could ask for, far better than those of the past, in my opinion.

Servants of the past, Master?

Don't change the subject, Tiabdjin.

Drakes are not Name-givers. They are not born from others of their kind, but made using powerful magic. The enchantments used in creating a single drake are complex, lengthy and involved, far beyond the understanding of any of your people. These enchantments are so complex that they are beyond the skills of even most adult dragons, never mind magicians of the Young Races. The enchantments are also quite exhausting, for the spark of life to create the drake must come from its maker. Drakes are our magical children, in a manner of speaking, rather than children born of mating. Once the drake is formed, it is given a Name of its own.

Since the process of making a drake is so involved, we create fairly few of them, just enough to see to our needs. Only the most powerful dragons create drakes as servants, and our traditions define a limit on the number of drake servants a dragon may create as a matter of rank and status among us. Great dragons are generally the only dragons with the power and prestige sufficient to have more than a single drake. Adult dragons have but one, if any, and most make do without drakes at all, having Name-giver servants or no servants whatsoever.

Apart from their unique origin, drakes are much like Name-givers in all other respects. They eat, sleep and require air just like you do (although drakes do not require as much sleep as the Young Races; part of their dragon heritage). In their natural form, drakes look like miniature dragons, perhaps seven to eight feet in length. They resemble the type of dragon who created them, so my own drakes appear as western, Barsaivian dragons, with a coloration similar to my own. A knowledgeable dragon can tell a drake's creator and master at a glance, without ever having seen the drake before.

Cathay dragons and feathered dragons tend to create drakes far less frequently than western dragons, the former preferring Name-giver servants. Leviathans only very rarely create drakes, so nearly all drakes resemble so-called "common" dragons. (By Nightslayer's Maw, Tiabdjin, you small folk practically have me using that ridiculous Name!)

The most useful quality of drakes is their ability to assume Name-giver form. A drake can assume the form of any of the Young Races, except for windlings (too small to imitate) and obsidimen (a mix of flesh and elemental earth). Not only does this ability give drakes an understanding of your different races, it allows them to interact with Name-givers and move through Name-giver society without provoking the sort of fear and distrust you generally reserve for my kind (as well as others different from yourselves).

This makes drakes useful agents in the world outside our lairs.

In Name-giver form, a drake is identical in appearance to a normal Name-giver, but loses its dragon-like physical abilities. It retains its magical powers, however, which can prove quite a surprise for those unaware of the drake's true nature.

Magical beings to their very heart, many drakes follow adept disciplines, and use those abilities when in their Name-giver form. Like their creators, drakes have a gift for magic, so many of them follow the magician disciplines, while the rest tend to follow fighting disciplines like the way of the Warrior or Swordmaster, or stealthy paths like the Thief or Scout. They learn quickly, and many advance quite far in their chosen discipline, some even taking on Name-giver students (with their master's permission, of course).

Drakes live far longer than the Young Races, another gift of their dragon heritage. Barring accident or death in battle, a drake can live for centuries. Their lives are finite, however. Upon death, drakes return to the base matter from which they sprang, decaying far more swiftly than other creatures until they are little more than pools of dissolved flesh and bone.

Average Drake

DEX: 12 **STR**: 15 **TOU**: 12
PER: 14 **WIL**: 16 **CHA**: 13

Initiative: 15
Number of Actions: 3 (1)
Attack (4): 16
Damage:
Bite (3): 18
2 × Claws (4): 19
Weapon: (by type)

Physical Defense: 16
Spell Defense: 18
Social Defense: 17
Physical Armor: 15 (armor)
Mystic Armor: 15

Death Rating: 62
Wound Threshold: 18
Unconsciousness Rating: 55

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 16 (15)

Combat Movement: 90/110✦
Full Movement: 180/220✦

✦ The second value is the drake's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 20

Karma Step: 10

Powers:
Armored Scales (3)
Disrupt Fate (1): 17
Dragonsight (1): 15
Enhanced Matrix[T] (6)
Dispel Magic (1): 17
Dragon Breath (1): 17
Dragonspeech (1): 15
Fear (1): 14

Regeneration (1): 13
Spell Matrix[T] (6)
Spell Matrix[T] (6)
Spellcasting (2): 16
Spell Matrix[T] (6)
Suppress Magic (1): 17
Thread Weaving (Discipline)[T] (2): 16

Spells: By Discipline (up to Sixth Circle)

Legend Points (3): 12,435

Equipment: Varies by Name-giver form

Loot: Scales and blood worth D6 × 50 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Notes: Statistics in parentheses ( ) apply when in Name-giver form.

Commentary

Drakes are magical constructs created by dragons, primarily great dragons, as their servants. Although there are both male and female drakes, they are not capable of reproduction on their own. Each drake represents the investment of considerable time, effort and magical power, so dragons do not use them casually.

Drakes have two forms. Their "natural" form is that of a miniature dragon about five to seven feet long from head to tail. They can also assume the forms of the different Name-giver races. Drakes cannot assume windling or obsidiman forms because duplicating the special magical natures of those Name-givers would be too difficult.

Rules

While working as envoys and agents of their dragon masters, drakes prefer to remain in Name-giver form so as not to give away their true nature. They assume their dragon form only when circumstances require it.

Shapeshifting: This ability requires one of the drake's actions to switch between forms. A drake in Name-giver form can be detected by someone who examines the drake's pattern in astral space. Detecting a drake's true nature requires an Excellent result on an Astral Sight Test against the drake's Spell Defense. A failure on this test results in the viewer seeing an astral form of the drake's Name-giver form.

In Name-giver form, drakes can follow Disciplines and learn talents and skills just like other Name-givers. Most drakes are adepts, and most of them follow one or more of the magician Disciplines. Some drakes follow the Disciplines of Beastmaster, Scout, Swordmaster, Thief or Warrior. A typical drake will be at least Sixth Circle in its chosen Discipline. The drake's talents and Discipline abilities function only while it is in Name-giver form, although magician drakes can still cast spells in dragon form.

In addition to their Discipline abilities, drakes share many of the powers of their dragon masters, some of which can be used in either form. In Name-giver form drakes can use only Dispel Magic, Dragonsight, Dragon Durability, Regeneration and Suppress Magic. In addition, while in Name-giver form they have the abilities listed in parentheses above. When a drake switches form, all of the clothing and equipment from their Name-giver form vanishes into an Astral Pocket, similar to the talent of the same name (see the **Talents** chapter on p. 170 of the **Player's Compendium**). The equipment returns when the drake returns to Name-giver form.

In addition to the basic game statistics above, a number of sample drakes are presented below.

Arondry—Drake Form

DEX: 12 **STR**: 15 **TOU**: 12
PER: 14 **WIL**: 16 **CHA**: 13

Initiative: 15
Number of Actions: 3 (1)
Attack (4): 16
Damage:
Bite (3): 18
2 × Claws (4): 19
Weapon: (by type)

Physical Defense: 16
Spell Defense: 18
Social Defense: 17
Physical Armor: 15 (armor)
Mystic Armor: 15

Death Rating: 62 (104)
Wound Threshold: 18
Unconsciousness Rating: 55 (91)

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 16 (15)

Combat Movement: 90/110✦
Full Movement: 180/220✦

✦ The second value is the drake's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 20

Karma Step: 10

Powers:
Armored Scales (3)
Disrupt Fate (1): 17
Dragon Durability (6)
Dragonspeech (1): 15
Fear (1): 14
Spellcasting (6): 20
Spell Matrix[T] (6)
Suppress Magic (1): 17
Dispel Magic (1): 17
Dragon Breath (1): 17
Dragonsight (1): 15
Enhanced Matrix[T] (6)
Regeneration (1): 13
Spell Matrix[T] (6)
Spell Matrix[T] (6)
Thread Weaving (Wizardry)[T] (6): 20

Spells: Wizardry (Sixth Circle)

Legend Points (3): 14,640

Equipment: Varies by Name-giver form

Loot: Scales and blood worth D6 × 50 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Arondry—Elf Form (Sixth Circle Wizard)

DEX: 12 **STR**: 15 **TOU**: 12
PER: 14 **WIL**: 16 **CHA**: 13

Initiative: 15
Number of Actions: 1
Attack: 12
Damage:
Dagger (3): 18

Physical Defense: 16
Spell Defense: 19
Social Defense: 17
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 19

Death Rating: 62 (104)
Wound Threshold: 18
Unconsciousness Rating: 55 (91)

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 15

Combat Movement: 78
Full Movement: 156

Karma Points: 20
Karma Step: 10

Powers:
Dispel Magic (1): 17
Dragon Durability (6)
Suppress Magic (1): 17
Dragonsight (1): 15
Regeneration (1): 13

Talents:
Arcane Mutterings [D] (6): 19
Book Recall [D] (6): 20
Evidence Analysis [D] (6): 20
Read and Write Language (6): 20
—*Sperethiel*
Read and Write Magic [D] (6): 20
Spellcasting [D] (6): 20
Spell Matrix (6): 6
Thread Weaving (Wizardry) [D] (6): 20
Willforce (6): 22
Book Memory [D] (6): 22
Enhanced Matrix (6): 6
Karma Ritual (6): 6
Spell Matrix (6): 6
Spell Matrix (6): 6

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Spells: Wizardry (Sixth Circle)

Discipline Abilities:
Karma on Perception- and Willpower-only Tests; +1 Spell Defense

Skills:
Ancient Weapons (1): 15
Legends and Heroes (1): 15
Research (2): 16
Robe Embroidery (1): 14
Read and Write Language (1): 15
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 16
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Sperethiel*

Legend Points (3): 14,640

Equipment: Thread Buckler (Rank 3; Phys 3; Myst 1; ST 17), Thread Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3), Dagger (Forged +1; Damage: 18/D20+D12; Range 6–12–18), Adventurer's Kit, Cloaksense Brooch, Embroidery Kit, Embroidered Robes, Grimoire, Trail Rations (1 week), Wealthy Traveler's Garb, Writing Kit

Loot: Scales and blood worth D6 × 50 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points). 600 silver pieces.

Commentary

Arondry becomes an elf when in Name-giver form; he stands 6 foot 2 inches tall, weighs 200 pounds, and has light brown hair and dark skin.

As an accomplished Sixth Circle Wizard, Arondry serves as Icewing's primary researcher into arcane lore, pattern items, and artifacts, and frequently travels afar throughout Barsaive and other lands in search of knowledge and thread items for his master.

Rathann—Drake Form

DEX: 12 **STR**: 15 **TOU**: 12
PER: 14 **WIL**: 16 **CHA**: 13

Initiative: 15
Number of Actions: 3 (1)
Attack (4): 16
Damage:
Bite (3): 18
2 × Claws (4): 19
Weapon: (by type)

Physical Defense: 16
Spell Defense: 18
Social Defense: 17
Physical Armor: 15 (armor)
Mystic Armor: 15

Death Rating: 62 (111)
Wound Threshold: 18
Unconsciousness Rating: 55 (97)

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 16 (15)

Combat Movement: 90/110✦
Full Movement: 180/220✦

✦ The second value is the drake's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 20
Karma Step: 10

Powers:
Armored Scales (3)
Disrupt Fate (1): 17
Dragon Breath (1): 17
Dragonsight (1): 15
Fear (1): 14
Spellcasting (2): 16
Dispel Magic (1): 17
Dominate Beast (7): 23
Dragon Durability (7)
Dragonspeech (1): 15
Regeneration (1): 13
Suppress Magic (1): 17

Legend Points (3): 14,010

Equipment: Varies by Name-giver form

Loot: Scales and blood worth D6 × 50 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Rathann—Elf Form (Seventh Circle Beastmaster)

DEX: 12 **STR**: 15 **TOU**: 12
PER: 14 **WIL**: 16 **CHA**: 13

Initiative: 15
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (7): 19
Damage:
Claw Shape (7): 22

Physical Defense: 17
Spell Defense: 18
Social Defense: 17
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 19

Death Rating: 62 (111)
Wound Threshold: 18
Unconsciousness Rating: 55 (97)

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 15

Combat Movement: 78
Full Movement: 156

Karma Points: 20
Karma Step: 10

Powers:
Dispel Magic (1): 17
Dragon Durability (7)
Suppress Magic (1): 17
Dragonsight (1): 15
Regeneration (1): 13

Talents:
Animal Bond [D] (7): 20
Borrow Sense [D] (7): 23
Claw Frenzy [D] (7): 19
Creature Analysis [D] (7): 21
Endure Cold (7): 19
Karma Ritual (7): 7
Sense Poison (7): 21
Thread Weaving (Beast Weaving) [D] (7): 21
Tracking (7): 21
Animal Training [D] (7): 20
Cat's Paw [D] (7): 19
Claw Shape [D] (7): 22
Dominate Beast [D] (7): 23
Heal Animal Servant [D] (7): 19
Lizard Leap [D] (7): 22
Unarmed Combat (7): 19

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Discipline Abilities:
Karma on Charisma–, Toughness- and Willpower-only Tests; +1 Physical Defense

Tellanion—Drake Form

DEX: 12 **STR**: 15 **TOU**: 12
PER: 14 **WIL**: 16 **CHA**: 13

Initiative: 15
Number of Actions: 3 (1)
Attack (4): 16
Damage:
Bite (3): 18
2 × Claws (4): 19
Weapon: (by type)

Physical Defense: 16
Spell Defense: 18
Social Defense: 17
Physical Armor: 15 (armor)
Mystic Armor: 15

Death Rating: 61 (103)
Wound Threshold: 18
Unconsciousness Rating: 54 (90)

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 16 (15)

Combat Movement: 90/110✦
Full Movement: 180/220✦

✦ The second value is the drake's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 20

Karma Step: 10

Powers:
Armored Scales (3)
Disrupt Fate (1): 17
Dragon Durability (6)
Dragonspeech (1): 15
Regeneration (1): 13
Suppress Magic (1): 17
Dispel Magic (1): 17
Dragon Breath (1): 17
Dragonsight (1): 15
Fear (1): 14
Spellcasting (2): 16

Legend Points (3): 8,640

Equipment: Varies by Name-giver form

Loot: Scales and blood worth D6 × 50 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Tellanion—Human Form (Sixth Circle Thief)

DEX: 12 **STR**: 15 **TOU**: 12
PER: 15 **WIL**: 17 **CHA**: 16

Initiative: 15
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (6): 18
Damage:
Broadsword (8): 23
Dagger (3): 18

Physical Defense: 16
Spell Defense: 18
Social Defense: 17
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 19

Death Rating: 61 (103)
Wound Threshold: 18
Unconsciousness Rating: 54 (90)

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 15

Combat Movement: 78

Full Movement: 156

Karma Points: 20

Karma Step: 10

Powers:
Dispel Magic (1): 17
Dragon Durability (6)
Suppress Magic (1): 17
Dragonsight (1): 15
Regeneration (1): 13

Talents:
Avoid Blow[D] (6): 18
Detect Trap (6): 20
Disguise Self (6): 20
Karma Ritual (6): 6
Lock Sense[D] (6): 21
Picking Pockets[D] (6): 18
Surprise Strike[D] (6): 21
Thread Weaving (Thief Weaving)[D] (6): 20
Trap Initiative[D] (6): 18
Climbing (6): 18
Disarm Trap[D] (6): 18
Fast Hand[D] (6): 18
Lock Picking[D] (6): 18
Melee Weapons (6): 18
Silent Walk[D] (6): 18

[D] Indicates a Discipline talent.

Discipline Abilities:
Karma on Dexterity– and Perception-only Tests; Thieves' Tongue (1 permanent Damage Point)

Skills:
Alchemy and Potions (1): 15
Body Painting (1): 14
Botany (1): 15
Haggle (1): 14
Read and Write Language (1): 15
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 17
—Dwarf (Throalic), *Sperethiel*
Streetwise (1): 15

Legend Points (3): 14,010

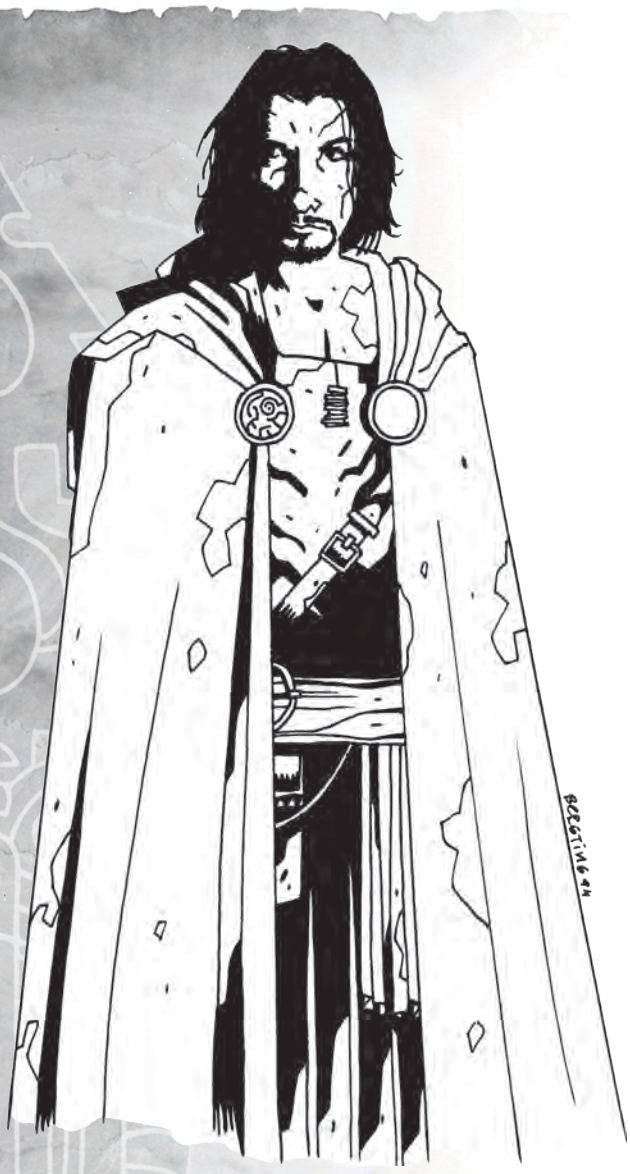
Equipment: Thread Buckler (Rank 3; Phys 3; Myst 1; ST 17), Thread Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3), Dagger (Forged +1; Damage 18/D20+D12; Range 6–12–18), Adventurer's Kit, Cloaksense Brooch, Painting Tool, Trail Rations (1 week), Traveler's Garb

Loot: Scales and blood worth D6 × 50 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points). 700 silver pieces.

Commentary

This restless drake acts as Icewing's wandering spy and troubleshooter. He is constantly on the move, looking and listening for things of interest to his master. He also serves as Icewing's primary liaison with adventurers and adept groups that Icewing hires (usually without their knowledge) for various missions to further Icewing's causes.

In Name-giver form, Rathann resembles an elderly elf with white hair and light skin. He stands 5 foot 11 inches tall—short for an elf. Rathann is the drake most often sent into Barsaive's cities and settlements by Icewing. In his elf form, he is known throughout the Kingdom of Throal as a Seventh Circle Beastmaster; no one knows that he is actually a drake in the service of Icewing.



Skills:
Acting (1): 14
Animal Handling (1): 17
Botany (1): 15
Creature Lore (1): 15
Hunting (1): 13
Read and Write Language (1): 15
—Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 16
—Dwarf (Throalic), Human
Wilderness Survival (1): 15

Legend Points (3): 8,640

Equipment: Thread Buckler (Rank 3; Phys 3; Myst 1; ST 17), Thread Leather Armor (Rank 4; Phys 5; Myst 3), Broadsword (Forged +3; Damage: 23), Dagger (Forged +1; Damage: 18/D20+D12; Range 6–12–18), Adventurer's Kit, Climbing Kit, Cloaksense Brooch, Trail Rations (1 week), Traveler's Garb

Loot: Scales and blood worth D6 × 50 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points). 600 Silver pieces.

Commentary

Tellanion serves as Icewing's primary messenger to other dragons. In Name-giver form, Tellanion appears as a short, dark-skinned human. Tellanion stands 5 feet, 8 inches tall, and weighs 155 pounds. He is a Sixth Circle Thief.

False (Lesser) Drakes

The so-called "false drakes" of Blood Wood are in fact drakes, only they lack the shapeshifting ability of true drakes. The false drakes have the form of a small dragon, which is their only form (so far as I know). Their creator disdains the usefulness of the Name-giver form and prefers drakes which lack that "weakness" (as he puts it). It is clear that false drakes are not nearly as intelligent or capable as true drakes. Since they lack insight into the nature of the Young Races, false drakes tend to be rather flighty and even playful, more like dragon hatchlings than full-grown adult Name-givers. Still, they are more than capable of rending an opponent with their teeth and claws and no doubt make useful, if limited, servants.

Vasdenjas refused to say who the creator of the false drakes is, other than indicating it is a male dragon, most likely a great dragon. The Master of Secrets also had very little to say regarding the culture or traditions of drakes (if indeed they have any). Likewise, I could not pry from him any information about how drakes are created apart from what is given previously. The great dragon claims such magic is beyond our comprehension, and perhaps so, but it is also possible it is simply considered too valuable or too dangerous (or both) to fall into the hands of "the Young Races."

I find it curious that even a great dragon like Vasdenjas can speak so easily about magically creating life from nothing, a feat only the most powerful magicians can accomplish. When we first talked years ago, while compiling the Creatures of Barsaive collection, Vasdenjas spoke often of the "tampering" Name-giver magicians performed on the natural development of certain creatures, experiments which led to the creation of things like the naga and the hydra.

"We dragons did not create hell hounds," *Vasdenjas said,* "nor do we keep them as pets—certainly we have never indulged in any kind of dubious magical experimentation to produce these creatures; as far as I know, only your races subject other living beings to such butchery."

"The naga is one of far too many creatures that seem to owe their existence to barbaric magical experiments with innocent living things," *he began on another occasion.*

And on another occasion, he stated "The will o' the wisp began as a magical construct—why you smaller races insist on bothering with unnecessary tinkering, I do not understand. We dragons do not use our magical abilities so frivolously."

Clearly, Vasdenjas looks upon the magical alteration of living creatures as wrong, yet he and other dragons use their magic to create drakes—which are clearly intelligent, thinking creatures who are used as little more than slaves. I find it difficult to reconcile these apparently contradictory attitudes. Is creating and enslaving an entire race better than altering what already exists? Apparently so for dragons. Is expending great effort and magical power on the creation of a single servant better than using the same energy to recruit many Name-giver servants? Again, apparently so by the standards of the dragons of Barsaive (although not those of other, distant lands, like Cathay).

The only explanation I can offer for this behavior comes from the words of Vasdenjas himself. The Master of Secrets spoke many times in our talks about dragons of "the mistakes of the past." He never made clear what these mistakes were, only that he and other dragons were determined not to see them repeated in the present. Perhaps dragons once performed magical experiments of the kind Vasdenjas now speaks of with such disdain. They realized the error of their ways and instead chose to create life, tailored to their design, rather than altering it. It is also quite possible that the creation of hydras (described in the following section) embittered all dragons against any tampering with existing life.

If any of the above is true, I can only offer this speculation to the magicians engaged in similar work. Is tampering with the

fundamental Patterns of Life truly worth the risk? Do we want to be the ones to repeat the very mistakes the dragons seek to avoid? And if we do, how will the great dragons respond?

Average False (Lesser) Drake

DEX: 12 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 10
PER: 11 **WIL**: 11 **CHA**: 12

Initiative: 12
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (3): 15
Damage:
Bite (2): 14
2 × Claws (3): 15

Physical Defense: 15
Spell Defense: 14
Social Defense: 15
Physical Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 6

Death Rating: 51
Wound Threshold: 15
Unconsciousness Rating: 44

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 13

Combat Movement: 86/106✦
Full Movement: 172/212✦

✦ The second value is the drake's flying Movement rate.

Powers:
Dispel Magic (2): 13
Dragonsight (2): 13
Suppress Magic (2): 13
Dragon Breath (2): 13
Spellcasting (2): 13
Venom (2): 13

Legend Points (3): 1,275

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

These creatures are most commonly found in the Blood Wood, but are occasionally found in other areas of northern Barsaive as well. Lesser or "false" drakes strongly resemble true drakes, but they are not intelligent and are somewhat weaker physically. They also do not share a true drake's ability to assume Name-giver form. Though lesser drakes cannot speak, they emit fierce cries of pleasure as they hunt or swoop through the Blood Wood, weaving intricate patterns as they fly around the trunks and branches of the Blood Wood's largest trees.

Rules

Lesser drakes use their dragon powers in much the same way as dragons and true drakes.

Dragon Breath: A lesser drake's Dragon Breath power produces a thin stream of fiery breath that can strike only one target at a time, similar to the Flame Spout power knack.

HYDRAS

Knowledge is a most powerful kind of spirit, Tiabdjin. Once it is free from confinement, it can never be imprisoned again. Years ago, I told you the origin of the hydra so you could record it in your tome on the fauna of Barsaive. It was a secret my fellow dragons did not want revealed, and many were not pleased with me for telling it. Now that the secret is out, even they cannot confine it again. No further harm (and perhaps a great deal of good) can be done by spreading the knowledge.

Not long ago (about 600 years), there lived in Barsaive a great dragon Named Thermail. She was fairly young for a great dragon, having only recently achieved great status. Thermail mated for the last time not long before becoming a great dragon. When the time came to lay her eggs, Thermail was already a great dragon and she chose to do what no other dragon had done since the time of All-Wings herself: care for her own eggs. It is a decision that always seems to come to tragedy.

Thermail was a great friend to the Young Races at that time; she encouraged visitors to come to her lair and talk with her of art, history, philosophy, music, magic and a great many other things. Her wisdom and advice were legendary, and many Name-givers sought her out. Thermail received them all with graciousness and great trust—a trust that was betrayed only once, but most grievously.

When it came time for Thermail's eggs to hatch, she withdrew from the world into her lair and accepted no visitors for many years. Not even she would allow other Name-givers to see her hatchlings. Thermail's clutch was an exceptionally large one, and she chose to remain isolated to devote her time to the hatchlings until they were ready to leave the lair. However, her protective measures were not enough. A magician of Thermail's acquaintance, a human who had spent much time with the dragon, snuck into her lair and lured away seven of her ten hatchlings.

No one knows the magician's Name (may his spirit writhe in agony for all time), or the reasoning for what he did with the stolen hatchlings. Using powerful magic, the thief merged the seven hatchlings into a single monstrous creature with the heads of seven dragons, the first hydra. Worse still, he magically caused another hydra to be produced from the first, and mated them so now the foul creatures can be found all over Barsaive and in many other lands.

When she discovered what had happened to her children, Thermail went mad from grief. She flew over the lands of Barsaive, burning villages and razing cities, killing any Name-givers who stood in her way. Still, no matter how many she killed, she could not find the thief who caused the awful metamorphosis, nor could she bring back her lost children. Finally, to end her pain, she impaled herself on the pinnacle of a high mountain, which other Name-givers called Mount Wyrmspire—the same peak under which we sit, Tiabdjin. Thermail was one of the finest of our kind and I honor her memory here in my lair, Named for her, not me.

Despite our efforts to wipe them out, hydras still exist. They are hideous creatures, perhaps half the size of an adult dragon, roughly 40 feet in length, with seven dragon-like heads springing from a central body. They are wingless, and nearly mindless as well. The melding of different dragons used to create the first hydra gives the creatures sporadic dragon-like abilities. No two hydra necessarily have the same powers. Some breathe flames, while others are lethally venomous or capable of freezing their prey in place with terror. There is no way of telling what powers a hydra might have, so it is always best to assume the worst. No hydra has the intelligence to use spells (thankfully), nor can they speak in any way, including Dragonspeech. They are mindless beasts, not Name-givers.

Hydras are not dragons, though they were made from dragons. They are hideous abominations of life that never should have been. Should any Name-giver with sufficient strength encounter a hydra, I recommend you kill it immediately and spare it the pain of such a tortured existence. All dragons kill hydras on sight as quickly and cleanly as possible. They are abominations, but they did not ask to be created, nor did they choose their terrible existence.

Average Hydra

DEX: 9 **STR**: 22 **TOU**: 22
PER: 8 **WIL**: 10 **CHA**: 8

Initiative: 8
Number of Actions: 5
Attack (8): 17
Damage:
Bite (3): 25
2 × Claws (1): 23

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 25
Mystic Armor: 5

Death Rating: 99 (148)
Wound Threshold: 27
Unconsciousness Rating: 93 (135)

Recovery Tests: 10
Knockdown: 23

Combat Movement: 58

Full Movement: 116

Karma Points: 10 **Karma Step**: 8

Powers:
Durability (7) Spellcasting (5): 13
And one or more of the following powers:

Dispel Magic (5): 15 Dragon Breath (5): 15
Dragonsight (5): 13 Fear (5): 13
Regeneration (5): 27 Suppress Magic (5): 15
Venom (5): 15

Legend Points (4): 58,480

Equipment: None

Loot: Up to 10,000 silver pieces worth of treasure hidden in its lair (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Hydras are up to 40 feet long, from head to tail. Hydras are magical abominations originally created from the merging of seven western dragon hatchlings. The magician who created the first hydra is one of the ancestors of the Denairastas Clan of Iopos. Only recently was the truth of the hydra's creator revealed, to both Uhl Denairastas and (inadvertently) the great dragons of Barsaive. What, if any, form of retaliation the great dragons plan is not known at this time.

Rules

A hydra usually attacks by biting its opponent with its many heads. Each combat round, a hydra can attack with up to five of its heads, as well as with its front claws.

Hydra Armor: Hydra armor, like dragon hide, is extremely tough, requiring an Extraordinary result on an Attack Test to achieve an Armor-Defeating Hit against the hydra. However, unlike the Armored Scales ability, hydra armor does not offer increased Mystic Armor protection.

Powers Restriction: A hydra may have any of the dragon powers listed above, but each individual hydra possesses only one of them. If the player characters are more than a match for a normal hydra, the gamemaster may add additional dragon powers to create a very powerful and dangerous hydra sufficient to withstand the player characters.

WYVERNS

It was only with great reluctance that Vasdenjas agreed to speak any further on wyverns. I very carefully avoided my earlier blunder in comparing wyverns to adolescent dragons, but I remain most curious about the similarity between the two.

I can hardly imagine why you persist with such an interest in wyverns, Tiabdjin. They are savage, bestial things that hardly bear discussing. Not nearly as interesting as, say, magma beasts, or even prisma … oh, very well, if we must.

I have said it before, and I will say it again. Wyverns are not dragons. They are not even Name-givers. They are nothing more than mindless beasts, driven entirely by instinct and a savage nature. Any resemblance between wyverns and dragons is pure chance—or perhaps a mocking joke on the part of the Universe—nothing more.

That said, wyverns do somewhat resemble small dragons, growing as large as 30 feet from head to tail. Unlike dragons, they have only two powerful hind legs in addition to their wings, and no forelimbs of any kind. The tops of their wings are tipped with claws that allow them to climb trees and cliff-faces, and to rend their prey limb from limb. The legs are also tipped with sharp, tearing talons. Their bodies are quite slim, covered in overlapping scales. Their heads are rather small (they don't accommodate much in the way of intelligence), but their jaws are quite large, capable of swallowing a dwarf in a single bite. Their long, muscular tail ends in a wickedly sharp, barbed stinger.

Their stingers contain their greatest weapon—a deadly venom. Wyverns sting their prey and allow the venom to do its work while they continue their attack. They often sting multiple times, and I have seen wyverns sting prey even after it is dead.

Just because they are stupid beasts, wyverns should not be underestimated. They have considerable cunning, and use it in hunting prey and staying alive. Sometimes a group of wyverns will cooperate to bring down larger prey, and others have been known to take advantage of the natural features of the terrain, especially long drops into mountain canyons and valleys, to overcome flightless prey.

Wyverns tend to live in isolated areas, usually heavily forested or mountainous regions, and they defend their territory fiercely against all other predators. If you stumble into a wyvern's hunting grounds, likely it will find you before you find it. Wyverns fly rather quickly and can move through difficult terrain with surprising speed and agility. Their snakelike bodies can coil around high trees or on top of rocky ledges and the like, to offer some camouflage while they hunt. They favor surprise attacks.

Wyverns are built to be hunters, and they are well-equipped to overcome and kill their prey. They hunt nearly any-thing, although they usually restrict themselves to prey the same size or smaller than themselves. Still, a wyvern or a small group of them have been known to attack larger prey, yes, even dragons. If wyverns can bring down a creature as powerful as one of my kind, you can imagine what they can do to creatures as small and frail as the Young Races. To all those would-be wyvern hunters, I say it is suicide. Wyverns are death-machines better left alone.

This was all I could learn. Vasdenjas said nothing about wyvern mating rituals, how they are born, how long they live or anything else about their life cycle. Having done some research, I can say that no Name-giver has reported seeing wyvern young or eggs (if indeed they lay eggs) and, while dead wyverns have been found, they always die by violence, no old wyverns are ever seen. As far as anyone can tell, wyverns spring from nowhere fully grown, then die in battle or vanish, never to be seen again.

Although the Master of Secrets describes wyverns as stupid and savage beasts, he speaks quite highly of their combat abilities. If I did not known better, I would almost think he was exaggerating the threat posed by a wyvern to make them seem more fearsome. They are deadly creatures, to be sure, but wyvern hunters manage to kill them fairly often. One would think the great dragon wished to give other Name-givers a reason not to hunt wyverns. Unfortunately, I have no facts to offer, only the speculations and musings of a humble scholar.

Average Wyvern

DEX: 11 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 10
PER: 6 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 12
Number of Actions: 3
Attack (3): 14
Damage:
Bite (2): 14
2 × Claws (1): 13
Tail (3): 15

Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 51 (79)
Wound Threshold: 15
Unconsciousness Rating: 44 (68)

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 12

Combat Movement: 40/82✦
Full Movement: 80/164✦

✦ The second value is the wyvern's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Durability (4), Venom (6): 13

Legend Points (2): 790

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Wyverns average 30 feet in length. They bear a strong resemblance to adolescent western dragons (and are somewhat larger than western hatchlings). Not only do they share the physical characteristics of western dragons, but they also have the fierce, aggressive nature of adolescents. No information is known about the breeding or mating habits of wyverns, how they raise their young, or how old they live, giving some scholars (Tiabdjin the Knower among them) cause to consider the possibility that wyverns are in truth directly related to western dragons.

Rules

Wyverns prefer to attack non-flying targets with sweeping flybys, tearing the victim apart with a few slashes of their claws. If a wyvern can't cause enough damage quickly, it will land on the ground near its opponent and rear up to its full height. This stance allows the creature to bring its venomous tail into play.

The following material contains Master Vasdenjas' musings on the differences among various types of dragons, including types of dragons that are not at all well-known within the boundaries of Barsaive. These dragons hail from distant lands, such as Cathay and Indrisa, and Araucania, far across the Selestrean Sea. Though these dragons are only rarely (if ever) seen in Barsaive, based on Vasdenjas' stories and lectures on these other types of dragons, I believe Vasdenjas (and, perhaps, the other great dragons of Barsaive) had or have regular contact with others of their kind in remote places.

—By the Hand of Tiabdjin the Knower,
Scribe of the Great Library of Throal and
First Scholar of the *khavro'am*

Dragons

Dragons come in as much variety—if not more—than the Young Races. We have unique colors, shapes and features all our own, as distinctive as your own colors and textures of hair and skin, your facial and body shapes and other things Name-givers use to distinguish themselves from each other. No two dragons are exactly the same, any more than two other Name-givers are exactly the same. (And before you ask, Tiabdjin, twins are exceedingly rare among my kind, since we are not born as you are, but hatched. I can recall but one instance of identical dragon twins in my entire life—not egg twins—but that is a tale for another time.)

Although there are many individual variations among my kind, dragons can be broadly divided into four main types. In some cases the type is related to the areas where they usually dwell, in other cases, the type is identified by other factors. You small folk have your own Names for these types of dragons already, and so I will use them, despite the fact that they are often erroneous and even rather clumsy. Such is to be expected of your language, I suppose. Among ourselves, the four types of dragons are thought of in relation to four of the elements. Beyond these four types are the great dragons, who remain distinct and separate from our younger brethren.

The four types of dragons are separate races in much the way that elves are not the same as humans, who are not the same as t'skrang, yet they are all Name-givers. In the same way, although the different types of dragons often appear quite different from each other, even in having different limbs and bodies, we are all dragons, all part of the same line that began with Nightslayer and Dayheart so long ago. All dragons share a tie of blood and history that cannot be denied.

Customizing Dragons

The sample statistics in this chapter provide only rough guidelines regarding the powers and abilities of the different types of dragons and of dragon-like creatures. These are intended as a starting point from which the gamemaster can customize the abilities of a specific dragon. Dragons are unique creatures, as individual as any other Name-givers. They are not simple "monsters," but gamemaster characters, with their own personalities and motivations. Two dragons will have as much in common as any two other Name-givers.

Gamemasters should reflect the individuality of dragons by adjusting the various abilities, attributes and step numbers given in the sample statistics, based on the specific characteristics of the dragon in question. (Refer to **Customizing Creatures** in

the **Creatures** chapter on p. 272 for guidelines.)

The entries on the Named great dragons of Barsaive include specific details about the abilities of the dragon described. For instance, both Aban and Usun are described as being larger and stronger than most dragons. This is reflected by slightly higher physical Attribute steps, Attack and Damage steps, and by higher Death and Unconsciousness Ratings. Likewise, Mountainshadow is said to be the most skilled at magic, which is supported by his slightly higher Spellcasting step.

Beyond their attributes and characteristics, individual dragons may also have different ratings in various dragon powers, or even powers entirely different from those listed in the sample statistics. Beyond giving a specific dragon different powers or adjusting the step numbers of their powers, dragons can also know a number of different dragon power knacks (see **Dragon Powers**, p. 397) which offer another means of customizing an individual dragon's abilities.

In addition to their game statistics, each dragon has a unique appearance, personality and goals. The gamemaster should take time to consider these unique aspects of the dragon's nature. What sets it apart? How does it act? What does the dragon want? These things help to make a dragon less of a faceless monster and more of an individual. The material in the section **The Master of Secrets Speaks**, starting on p. 380, can provide additional ideas on personalizing dragons of the gamemaster's creation, while the individual dragon entries can provide additional ideas on personalizing the statistics of the dragons described in this chapter.

Common Dragons

I will begin, of course, with the dragons best known to the people of Barsaive. Since the type which I and the other great dragons—with the exception of Root Protector—sprang from is the most common in this land, you have given us the Name "common" dragons. Depending on which dragon you ask, this is a matter of either great humor or great displeasure among my kind. As if any dragon, even the smallest hatchling, could be considered "common!" I was quite shocked to discover the word used in some of the scholarly texts in your own Library.

Though I understand the resistance to change among Name-givers (including dragons), I strongly advise both your fellow scholars and the people of Barsaive to seriously consider using a different word for the dragons you see most often. At the very least, do not call any dragon "common" to her face if you wish to avoid becoming her next meal. Although I would tend not to devour a Name-giver merely for the mistake of ill-informed scholars and poor language, most of my kind are not nearly so merciful or understanding of your ways.

To the people and dragons of Cathay, we are known as "western dragons," a name I find considerably more polite than "common dragons." But then, the people of Cathay have always shown more of the proper respect for my kind than any of the other Young Races in this world, as I shall explain in due time. Among ourselves, the so-called "common dragons" are known as Dragons of the Earth, because we are closest to the nature of the elemental of Earth and stone: solid, strong, sharp, filled with inner fire and deep wisdom. Thus our great resonance with places of earth and stone like mountains and caves. For our purposes here I shall avoid giving credence to the mistakes of the past, so I shall use the Cathay term "western dragon" to refer to what you might call "common." Perhaps the idea will catch on and we can put this "common" nonsense to rest once and for all!

Western dragons are, in fact, the most common of all dragons in Barsaive. We are what Name-givers in these regions think of when they hear the word "dragon": creatures having long, powerful bodies with fore and hind limbs, a pair of wings, long neck and tail. Our heads are topped with horns and possessed of sharp teeth, and we have a most attractive ruff about the head, leading into a stretch of spines down the back.

Other than those traits, western dragons differ greatly in appearance. Our dragon scales come in all the colors of the Earth itself: from nearly black to deep green, brown, golden, silvery or deep blue. Most are a single color, and are usually darker towards the back and paler towards the belly, underside and wings. A rare few dragons are multiple colors, or decorated with patterns of stripes or even spots.

On some occasions, I have known young dragons to decorate themselves in this way intentionally, though for the most part, dragons keep their natural coloration as a matter of pride, since it demonstrates lineage and character. Eggshells are usually similar in color to the hatchling that will emerge. A great dragon with much experience in caring for eggs, such as myself, can often tell at a glance the parentage of a particular egg.

Horns are a very common trait among Dragons of the Earth, although some western dragons have quite small horns—little more than nubs—and others sport very large, curling horns like those of a ram. It is quite rare for a western dragon to be born without horns at all. Females often consider a male's horns a very attractive characteristic, perhaps one of the reasons horns are so common.

Face and form come in many varieties, as with other Name-givers. Some dragons are large, others small. Some are thin and others fat, although few dragons reach the extremes known to the Young Races. A western dragon who allowed himself to become skeletal-thin or too obese to easily move would not survive for very long. Like other Name-givers, individual dragons very often have their own unique features. I was shocked to discover other Name-givers, even some respected scholars, consider color the primary means to tell us apart. You might as well say you can tell an obsidiman from a troll only by the color of their skins!

Most of what I have already told you about dragons as a whole—customs, traditions and physiology—applies to western dragons, since that is my own experience. We are the solid bedrock of dragon-kind—strong, vital and dependable.

Average Common Dragon

DEX: 19 **STR**: 25 **TOU**: 27
PER: 17 **WIL**: 18 **CHA**: 15

Initiative: 22
Number of Actions: 4
Attack (4): 23
Damage:
Bite (7): 32
4 × Claws (5): 30

Physical Defense: 23
Spell Defense: 22
Social Defense: 20
Physical Armor: 31
Mystic Armor: 18

Death Rating: 120 (240)
Wound Threshold: 30
Unconsciousness Rating: 114 (219)

Recovery Tests: 13
Knockdown: 26

Combat Movement: 166/208✦
Full Movement: 332/416✦

✦ The second value is the dragon's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 20

Karma Step: 10

Powers:
Armored Matrix[T] (9)
Disrupt Fate (7): 25
Armored Scales (4)
Dragon Breath (7): 25

Dragonsight (4): 21
Dragonspeech (5): 22
Durability (15)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (9)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (9)
Fear (10): 25
Lair Sense (4): 21
Regeneration (4): 31
Spellcasting (6): 23
Spell Matrix[T] (9)
Spell Matrix[T] (9)
Spell Matrix[T] (9)
Summoning (5): 23
Suppress Magic (5): 23
Thread Weaving (Discipline) (6): 23
Venom (7): 25
Wingbeat (11): 30

Spells: By Discipline (up to Ninth Circle)

Legend Points (4): 268,480

Equipment: None

Loot: Magical items and a hoard of coins and gems worth around 300,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Common, or western dragons as Vasdenjas refers to them, average 65 feet in length. Their tail adds another 55 feet to their overall length, and their wingspan is 100 feet in width. Though they are the most common type of dragons in Barsaive, one of the quickest ways to die in Barsaive is to call a common dragon "common" to his face. Indeed, the Name is a misnomer. Though the people of Barsaive use it because nearly all the dragons they know of are of similar size, shape, and general appearance, they are by no means common. In fact, few people in Barsaive have ever seen a dragon of any kind. Common dragons much prefer the Cathay term "western dragons" when referring to dragons of their type. Common dragons can vary greatly in individual appearance, goals, mannerisms and abilities. Gamemasters may consult the information in the other sections of this chapter for ideas on the nature and variety of common dragons, particularly the description of the Named common dragons, below.

Rules

Most common dragons know spells of at least one magician Discipline, and many know spells from more than one. Dragons who know spells of only one Discipline know spells up to and including Ninth Circle. Those who follow more than one Discipline know spells up to and including Seventh Circle.

Average Hatchling (Common Dragon)

DEX: 10 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 10
PER: 10 **WIL**: 10 **CHA**: 9

Initiative: 11
Physical Defense: 13
Number of Actions: 2
Spell Defense: 13
Attack (3): 13
Social Defense: 11
Damage:
Physical Armor: 11
Bite (3): 15
Mystic Armor: 6
2 × Claws (1): 13

Death Rating: 51 (67)
Recovery Tests: 4
Wound Threshold: 15
Knockdown: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 44 (58)

Combat Movement: 49/70[+]
Full Movement: 98/140[+]

[+] The second value is the dragon's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 10
Karma Step: 10

Powers:
Armored Scales (1)
Dragon Breath (5): 15
Dragonsight (2): 12
Dragonspeech (2): 12
Durability (2)
Regeneration (1): 11
Spellcasting (3): 13
Suppress Magic (2): 12
Thread Weaving (Discipline) (3): 13
Venom (2): 12

Legend Points (2): 2,180

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Hatchlings start life at about 12 feet long, and have only one set of limbs and a pair of wings. Hatchlings have slim bodies and size, and their strength and power are nowhere near that of a full grown dragon. Hatchlings of other types of dragons share physical characteristics with their parent dragons.

Rules

These statistics represent a hatchling no more than a few decades old (barely a toddler in dragon terms). Still, a dragon hatchling can be a dangerous opponent for a group of low Circle adepts, particularly when the effects of its magical powers are taken into account. Add to this the fact that hatchlings are usually found in small groups, and that their guardian great dragon is never too far away, and it becomes clear that attacking a dragon hatchling is asking for trouble.

While most hatchlings have not yet learned formal spells, they can still cast spells using raw magic like any dragon (see **Dragon Magic**, p. 394). The lairs where hatchlings are raised are generally considered Safe regions for the purpose of casting raw magic.

Asante

DEX: 19 **STR**: 25 **TOU**: 27
PER: 17 **WIL**: 17 **CHA**: 20

Initiative: 22
Physical Defense: 23
Number of Actions: 4
Spell Defense: 22
Attack (4): 23
Social Defense: 25
Damage:
Physical Armor: 31
Bite (7): 32
Mystic Armor: 17
4 × Claws (5): 30

Death Rating: 120 (240)
Recovery Tests: 13
Wound Threshold: 30
Knockdown: 26
Unconsciousness Rating: 114 (219)

Combat Movement: 166/208[+]
Full Movement: 332/416[+]

[+] The second value is the dragon's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 20
Karma Step: 10

Powers (Knacks):
Armored Matrix[T] (7)
Armored Scales (4)
Disrupt Fate (7): 24
Dragon Breath (8): 25 (Friendly Fire)
Dragonsight (4): 21
Dragonspeech (6): 23 (Suggestion)
Durability (15)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (7)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (7)
Fear (10): 30
Haggle[T] (4): 24
Lair Sense (5): 22 (Absent Lair Sense, Identify Intruder)
Regeneration (4): 31
Spellcasting (6): 23
Spell Matrix[T] (7)
Spell Matrix[T] (7)
Spell Matrix[T] (7)
Summoning (5): 23
Suppress Magic (5): 23
Thread Weaving (Elementalism) (6): 23
Thread Weaving (Wizardry) (6): 23
Venom (7): 25 (Sleep Venom)
Wingbeat (11): 30

Spells: Elementalism, Wizardry (both at Seventh Circle)

Legend Points (4): 279,880

Equipment: None

Loot: Magical items and a hoard of coins and gems worth around 150,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

While substantially older than her mate Nightsky (see below), Asante's age of 800 years is still very young by dragon standards. In contrast to Nightsky, Asante's coloration is an unusual creamy white, with a much darker tint on her horns and claws. Among dragons she is considered exceptionally beautiful.

Asante's main flaw is that her youth leaves her naïve and unwilling to recognize the power that dragon blood gives her over weaker races. Indeed, her fondness for the Young Races became a weakness that was exploited by cunning Name-givers in her youth, and which later forced her into dissension with her elders. Over the years, she has become more self-righteous in her attitudes, and thus still vulnerable to manipulation.

In addition to her naiveté, Asante does not have the vast resources possessed by many other dragons, even those of her age. Much of her wealth has gone to aiding and supporting Name-givers in need—mostly victims of Horrors—and she rarely sees a return on her investments. Her preoccupation with Name-giver affairs has replaced drives common in other dragons, specifically the hoarding of wealth and accumulation of influence and power. Her attention is devoted to more ephemeral things, and she is thus unlikely to be suspicious of well-laid plans.

Charcoalgrin

DEX: 19 **STR**: 25 **TOU**: 27
PER: 19 **WIL**: 22 **CHA**: 14

Initiative: 22
Number of Actions: 4
Attack (4): 23
Damage:
Bite (7): 32
4 × Claws (5): 30

Physical Defense: 23
Spell Defense: 24
Social Defense: 19
Physical Armor: 31
Mystic Armor: 22

Death Rating: 120 (240)
Wound Threshold: 30
Unconsciousness Rating: 114 (219)

Recovery Tests: 13
Knockdown: 26

Combat Movement: 166/208[+]
Full Movement: 332/416[+]

[+] The second value is the dragon's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 20
Karma Step: 10

Powers (Knacks):
Armored Matrix[T] (7)
Armored Scales (4)
Disrupt Fate (7): 29
Dominate Beast (4): 26
Dragon Breath (7): 29
Dragonsight (5): 24 (Item History)
Dragonspeech (7): 26 (Read Thoughts, Thought Probe)
Durability (15)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (7)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (7)
Fear (11): 25 (Awe)
Lair Sense (4): 23
Regeneration (4): 31
Spellcasting (6): 25
Spell Matrix[T] (7)
Spell Matrix[T] (7)
Spell Matrix[T] (7)
Spell Matrix[T] (7)
Summoning (5): 27
Suppress Magic (5): 27
Thread Weaving (Nethermancy) (6): 25
Thread Weaving (Wizardry) (6): 25
Venom (7): 29
Wingbeat (11): 30

Spells: Nethermancy and Wizardry (both at Seventh Circle)

Legend Points (4): 279,880

Equipment: None

Loot: Magical items and a hoard of coins and gems worth around 450,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

The dragon Charcoalgrin is known to anyone who has traveled to Parlainth and Haven in search of adventure and fortune. She is the most powerful creature living in the ruins, except perhaps for Horrors that have not yet been discovered in the catacombs' depths.

Charcoalgrin's story begins before the Scourge, when she was but barely an adult, and when the glorious city of Parlainth had been completed and its wizards and scholars were looking for ways to defend it from the Horrors. Like Mountainshadow, Charcoalgrin was intrigued by the Young Races, and studied the residents of Parlainth at a distance from her lair in the nearby Caucavic Mountains. But where Mountainshadow is wise and maintains discretion in his studies, Charcoalgrin fell victim to the innocence of her youth, and grew fascinated by the Name-givers who created the city.

In defiance of dragon traditions concerning contact with the Theran Empire—in particular, magicians of the Theran Empire—Charcoalgrin sought out contact with the magicians of Parlainth and willingly taught them mysteries as yet undiscovered by their superiors in Thera.

One Theran Wizard in particular fascinated the dragon. This human Wizard, Named Eyripemes, was among the magicians leading the city's efforts to protect itself from the coming Scourge. Over time, Charcoalgrin took a liking to this human and revealed to him the secret to hiding Parlainth from the Horrors, a spell taught to her by her sire, one that had not been cast since the previous age of magic. She shared with Eyripemes not only this ancient spell, but also the location of a pocket of astral space, a separate reality of sorts where Parlainth could escape to during the Scourge, sealing itself off from the coming Horrors.

Charcoalgrin also instructed the city's magicians and builders in the creation of vessels that would allow them to move about in this astral pocket if needed. These vessels would allow the Theran magicians of Parlainth to explore regions of astral space unknown to any Name-givers save the dragons. The vessels resembled small stone airships, much smaller than vedettes, capable of carrying only a handful of passengers. Parlainth's magicians were able to build only a small number of these, less than two dozen, before they were forced to enact the spell that would send Parlainth from this world to the next.

Eyripemes was delighted, not only because he now had a way to protect his beloved city, but because he now had access to magic more ancient than anyone had ever imagined. The human devoted his life to Charcoalgrin, and would do anything she said in return for another nugget of wisdom. As a gift for Eyripemes' devotion, Charcoalgrin transformed the wizard, giving him the shapeshifting ability of drakes, allowing him to take dragon form, and thus greatly extending his life. The relationship between the two strengthened, as often happens between teacher and student, and Charcoalgrin grew quite fond of Eyripemes, right up until Parlainth's disappearance. The day Parlainth vanished was indeed one of the saddest of Charcoalgrin's life.

Not even Charcoalgrin was immune to the spell the Therans used to cover their tracks into astral space. She, like all other Name-givers, forgot about the city the moment it vanished. The years of the Scourge went by and finally the Long Night had ended. The Name-givers emerged from their kaers, and the dragons once again flew in the skies. Charcoalgrin was among them, but was never as animated or clever as she had been before. Parlainth returned, and with it returned Charcoalgrin's memories of Parlainth and Eyripemes, and much of her former enthusiasm and energy. She immediately flew to the city, only to discover it in ruins, a shattered version of its former self. Rather than going back to her lair in the Caucavic Mountains, Charcoalgrin remained in the ruins, sequestering herself in what remained of the Imperial Palace, claiming the entire northern quarter of the city as her own.

Along with the return of her memories of Parlainth and Eyripemes came memories of the magical astral vessels she had told the magicians to build. She sought out these vessels in the city, hoping they might hold the secret of Parlainth's fall. She was able to find only a handful among the ruins, while a few others remained hidden deep in the undercity, crushed under the weight of tons of stone and rubble. After an exhaustive search, she returned to her lair in the Vaults of Parlainth, convinced that a number of vessels had in fact been jettisoned from Parlainth into astral space. The notion that some of Parlainth's Name-givers, perhaps Eyripemes, had escaped the Horror-ravaged city in one of these vessels plagued Charcoalgrin's mind. As stragglers and criminals came to Parlainth, she exerted her particularly powerful personality and created from them a devoted army that now exists only to find clues of these missing vessels. Even more interesting is the evidence that Charcoalgrin is in fact searching for clues on how to return the city of Parlainth to its other reality, so she can continue her search for Eyripemes.

Rules

Like most of her kind, Charcoalgrin is arrogant to a fault. By sequestering herself in the moldering ruins of Parlainth, the dragon has assured that she will forever be the biggest fish in a very small pond. Other dragons view her as little more than an eccentric, content to play with the Young Races and creatures who gather beneath her tattered wings. Her servants are very suspicious and thorough, and go to great lengths to ensure that there is no way to gather information about her from sources other than herself.

Charcoalgrin is always prepared to speak at great length on any topic one could name. Her favorite topic, naturally, is herself. Those who have gone to Charcoalgrin in search of information usually get it, but at the cost of their lives when they show the faintest hint of boredom at her pedantic delivery.

Nightsky

DEX: 20 **STR**: 26 **TOU**: 27
PER: 17 **WIL**: 17 **CHA**: 15

Initiative: 23
Number of Actions: 4
Attack (4): 24
Damage:
Bite (7): 33
4 × Claws (5): 31

Physical Defense: 24
Spell Defense: 22
Social Defense: 20
Physical Armor: 32
Mystic Armor: 17

Death Rating: 120 (240)
Wound Threshold: 30
Unconsciousness Rating: 114 (219)

Recovery Tests: 13
Knockdown: 27

Combat Movement: 184/227✦
Full Movement: 368/454✦

✦ The second value is the dragon's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step**: 10

Powers (Knacks):
Armored Matrix[T] (9) Armored Scales (5)
Chameleon[T] (4): 24
Disrupt Fate (7): 24
Dragon Breath (8): 25 (Flame Spout)
Dragonsight (4): 21 Dragonspeech (5): 22
Durability (15)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (9) Enhanced Matrix[T] (9)
Fear (11): 26 (Terror)
Lair Sense (4): 21
Regeneration (4): 31 Spellcasting (6): 23
Spell Matrix[T] (9) Spell Matrix[T] (9)
Spell Matrix[T] (9)
Summoning (5): 22 Suppress Magic (5): 22
Thread Weaving (Elementalism) (6): 23
Venom (8): 25 (Pain Venom)
Wingbeat (11): 31

Spells: Elementalism (Ninth Circle)

Legend Points (4): 279,880

Loot: Magical items and a hoard of coins and gems worth around 150,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Nightsky is the youngest adult dragon in Barsaive today, having emerged from his astral cocoon just two years before Throal sealed itself from the world. Nightsky was the last of Usun's hatchlings to emerge before the Scourge. His few brothers and sisters who remained in their cocoons after that year were destroyed by astral Horrors.

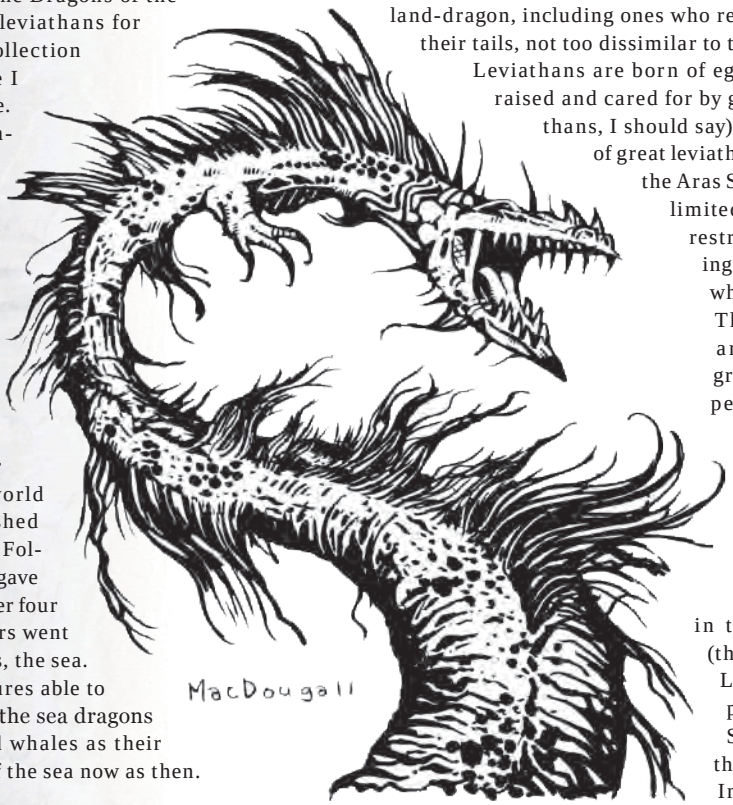
Physically, Nightsky is very large for a dragon of his young age, nearly 75 feet long. He is jet black in color with flecks of silver on the tips of his scales and horns. This coloration gives the effect of stars on a moonless night, a key factor in his choosing his Name. His natural coloration also led Nightsky to favor nocturnal hunting, and on clear starlit nights, he moves all but undetected

through the region of the Caucavic Mountains that he and Asante (see above) claim as their lair.

Nightsky awoke from his cocoon impatient and eager to take on the world, as young whelps usually are. He entered adulthood just as the Scourge began in earnest, and did not have time to construct a proper dragon lair, so he was forced to seek shelter with another dragon. Having arrived too late to remain with his sire Usun, he was fortunate enough to find shelter under the Throal Mountains, where Earthroot took him in. His impatience made the time of hiding particularly long and torturous, preventing him from entering the *shal-mora* as most dragons did during the Long Night. Eventually he could wait no more and left his shelter soon after the Scourge had ended, being one of the first Name-givers to look upon the Scourge-ravaged landscape of Barsaive. Even for a dragon this act was a foolish risk, as many powerful Horrors still roamed the world. Though Nightsky would surely deny it, it was fortune rather than physical prowess that kept him alive.

Leviathans

As western dragons are Dragons of the Earth, the next most "common" of the dragons in Barsaive, though still only rarely encountered, are leviathans, the Dragons of the Water. I spoke a small bit on leviathans for your Creatures of Barsaive collection and, upon reflection, I realize I did not entirely do them justice. (Of course, had all of my comments been included, rather than being edited for length by those without one-hundredth of my experience and insight ... but, no matter.) Long, long ago, Dayheart, the First Dragon, gave birth to eight eggs, which in turn hatched into eight hatchlings, four male and four female. In time, the four pairs of hatchlings grew to claim their right of rulership over the world from which Nightslayer banished the Dark One and his spawn. Following their Naming, Dayheart gave the young dragons dominion over four of the elements. To my ancestors went the earth, and to the leviathans, the sea. In the sea, there are few creatures able to fight a leviathan and win, and the sea dragons hunt the greatest krakens and whales as their prey. They are as much kings of the sea now as then.



On the Form of Leviathans

Untold years of life in the depths of the sea has changed the leviathans. They are smaller than western dragons, perhaps half the size on average. Their bodies are sleeker and more slender, not unlike the bodies of Cathay dragons (of which I shall speak shortly). Their scales tend to be smaller and more tightly overlapping, giving leviathans a wet, iridescent appearance, even out of the water. They tend towards oceanic colors of blue-green, with some paler and darker colors known. I have seen at least one leviathan with black scales and another white as pearl.

Having largely abandoned both the sky and the land, leviathans have no wings and only small, stubby limbs that are little more than vestigial. Yes, I do recall your insightful comments, Tiabdjin, about how a leviathan can tear apart a ship with their "vestigial" limbs. Indeed they are still useful for such crude tasks, but otherwise possess virtually no dexterity. I suspect, as time passes, with less and less use, these limbs will begin to disappear entirely. Despite their lack of wings, however, leviathans can fly, albeit for only short distances at a time, perhaps as far as a dwarf might walk in a few days. Leviathans fly with a motion like swimming through the air. They are only rarely seen flying, as it is very tiring, and the air is not their natural element. Nonetheless, their ability to fly allow leviathans to move about Barsaive, most often from body of water to body of water, without resorting to travel on land, something they are quite adverse to. A leviathan forced onto land is severely limited in its mobility, and can move only a fraction as fast as it can in water. This is not to say that leviathans cannot survive on land; they can breathe air just as easily as they do water. They simply prefer to remain in their natural environment whenever possible. The ability to survive on land is one of the lesser-known facts about our water-born brothers, and something that many so-called "leviathan hunters" learn too late.

A leviathan's jaws are generally larger than those of a land dragon, with long, sharp teeth. They are capable of swallowing entire schools of fish, or fishing boats, for that matter. A leviathan's bite is its strongest attack, for they lack powerful talons and wings such as my kind have. Some also strike with their whip-like tail, a blow powerful enough to smash a small boat. I have encountered some leviathans with venom nearly as strong as that of a land-dragon, including ones who retain a powerful stinger in their tails, not too dissimilar to that found on wyverns.

Leviathans are born of eggs like all other dragons, raised and cared for by great dragons (great leviathans, I should say). I know of only a handful of great leviathans living in the depths of the Aras Sea, partly due to that sea's limited space, a factor that also restricts the mating and breeding practices of the leviathans who make their homes there. They are allowed to mate and breed only when the great leviathans grant them permission. This prevents overpopulation and unneeded conflicts between them. Most Barsaivians think of leviathans as found only in the Aras Sea, but there are legends of leviathans in the Serpent River lakes (though I highly doubt this). Leviathans are far more plentiful in the Selestrean Sea and the Sea of Storms that borders the province of Indrisa. In these and other larger bodies of water, leviathans mate and breed as they will, like most other dragons.

When leviathans reach adolescence, they leave the care of their great leviathan sire and swim out on their own. It is at this stage that most leviathans are encountered by Name-givers, particularly sailors and the so-called 'leviathan-hunters.' The younglings are bestial and entirely without reason, often attacking boats and Name-givers without any knowledge or awareness of what they are doing. Name-givers often hunt and slay the young leviathans without any awareness that they are hunting a Name-giving creature, although I doubt that would sway most of the heartless mercenaries who make their living selling leviathan corpses.

Those few who survive the harsh years of madness at sea weave cocoons for themselves at the very bottom of the ocean where they undergo their development into adulthood. Leviathan

adults are nearly identical in appearance to hatchlings, save for size, and their transformation does not take very long. I have heard it is in the area of ten to twenty years or so, after which, upon Emergence, the leviathan finds its Name and takes its place as an adult of its kind. In some rare instances, adult leviathans have relocated to other bodies of water to find their lairs.

On Leviathan Culture

Compared to western dragons, leviathans lack a sophisticated understanding of the surface-world and of other Name-givers. Most leviathans in my experience tend to be quite parochial. They have no interest in the customs, traditions or history of the Young Races. They strictly maintain the traditions and ways of dragon-kind. For example, few leviathans deign to speak aloud to other Name-givers, leading you to consider them mindless beasts. They usually use only Dragonspeech among themselves, and rarely bother to speak to other dragons. This is not a lack of ability—I know leviathans who can speak many different languages—it is more a lack of desire or interest.

As they do not concern themselves with spoken language, leviathans have even less use for writing. Paper and similar materials are useless in the watery depths, and even more durable materials can be worn away by time and tide. What lore leviathans do keep over the years is stored in memory crystals kept in undersea caves and grottos known only to them. I have heard interesting tales and legends of sea dragons cultivating beautiful forms of living crystal and unique coral for their memory crystals, but have never been privileged enough to see one.

Beyond these differences, leviathans are not too unlike their earth-bound brothers. They make lairs, gather mementos (mostly from the ships they encounter at sea), study magic, hunt for food, and spend a great deal of their time in the *shal-mora,* perhaps even more than most western dragons. The reasons for this are unclear to me, but I suspect their underwater habitats result in very little contact with the outside world, thus freeing them from the tiresome interruptions that many dragons must endure.

The underwater dances of the leviathans are as beautiful in their own way as the aerial dances of my kind. Leviathan mating rites are especially involved, and woe betide any other Name-givers who come upon a mating pair of leviathans near the surface of the sea. If the intruders are fortunate, they will manage to leave without attracting notice. Otherwise, they are certain to become part of the Rite of Feasting, along with the other local sea-life.

On Leviathans and Name-givers

As you might suspect, leviathans tend towards solitude even more than most dragons. This is true even with regard to their fellow dragons. Leviathan society is almost completely separate from the rest of dragon-kind. They contact us only when circumstances demand it, an event that has occurred only once in my memory, long before the Scourge.

Leviathans rarely welcome any Name-givers into their watery realm. Even other dragons are treated with grudging respect, and a leviathan is quite likely to invoke a Rite of Challenge on any dragon so foolish as to disturb its domain unbidden. Fortunately, they have no concern about the skies over the sea, and other dragons can soar high over the waters without offering insult to the kings of the sea, provided they do not hunt or seek to collect goods the leviathans consider their own. In general, adult leviathans do not attack ships on the surface without provocation—usually only when their domain is threatened. The same is not true however of adolescent leviathans, who are quite likely to assault any ship or creature that gets too close.

Despite their usual preference for isolation and general dislike of most Name-givers, there are leviathans who have shown interest in surface-dwellers. One great leviathan in particular, whom I know as Wavedancer, lairs near the city of Urupa on the Aras Sea, and has been known to welcome visitors from Barsaive. Twice since the Scourge this dragon has invited a number of visitors to her lair (likely only one of several lairs) to a small festival of sorts. (Leviathan's lairs are often air-filled grottos, Tiabdjin.) These gatherings last several days (I've heard anywhere from two to seven days) during which the dragon invites Troubadours to perform for her and her other guests, and where contests of skill and strength are held between the visitors and Wavedancer's servants. I have been unable to discern the reasons for these festivals, though some stories I've heard suggest that Wavedancer uses them to find suitable adepts to serve as her agents in Barsaive, acting as her eyes and ears on land. If these stories are true, then perhaps this points to the end of the centuries-long isolation of the leviathans of the Aras Sea.

On the Magic of Leviathans

Yes, the sea dragons use magic. Though I would say leviathans are the least magically skilled of all dragons, their command of the element of water is unrivaled. Nearly all sea-dragons use their magical gifts to study the discipline of the Elementalist, and only a rare few show interest in any other sort of magic (Wavedancer being the one exception known to me, she having also studied the Illusionist discipline). Still, a sea-dragon sorcerer can call up water spirits, stir the seas into a raging froth and command storms into being to serve their needs. Their undersea lairs may contain great magical lore in elementalism, but I would urge caution on any Name-giver foolish enough to seek out a leviathan's lair.

In addition to their spellcasting, many leviathans have developed their Dragonspeech to allow them to communicate with the creatures of the deep. They rarely use this power to aid in hunting, but can raise a virtual army of angry sea-life against surface-dwellers who intrude on their domains. Many leviathan-hunters have faced sharks, sea snakes, selachi and worse under the control of a leviathan.

The magic powers of great leviathans far surpass those of adult leviathans, just as the magic of great dragons surpasses that of adult dragons. Great leviathans share many of the abilities of other great dragons, including the ability to assume Name-giver form and to create drake servants.

Having some experience with leviathan-hunters, I can say these creatures are sought mainly for an organ in their body which gathers True water from the seas the leviathan swims in. This organ is worth thousands of silver pieces on the open market. Vasdenjas did not mention this organ, so I can only speculate as to its purpose. Perhaps the elemental water provides some form of nourishment or protection for the leviathan. It may also be vital to the sea dragon's magic in some unknown way.

Average Leviathan

DEX: 19 **STR**: 25 **TOU**: 25
PER: 15 **WIL**: 15 **CHA**: 12

Initiative: 20
Number of Actions: 4
Attack (4): 23
Damage:
Bite (5): 30
2 × Claws (1): 26
Tail (3): 28

Physical Defense: 23
Spell Defense: 20
Social Defense: 15
Physical Armor: 29
Mystic Armor: 14

Death Rating: 114 (218)
Wound Threshold: 29
Unconsciousness Rating: 105 (196)

Recovery Tests: 12
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: 115/150✦/208#
Full Movement: 230/300✦/416#

✦ The second value is the dragon's flying Movement rate.
\# The third value is the dragon's swimming Movement rate.

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step**: 10

Powers (Knacks):
Armored Scales (4)
Dominate Beast (4): 19
Dragon Breath (10): 25
Dragonspeech (5): 20 (Animal Talk)
Enhanced Matrix T (6)
Regeneration (4): 29
Spell Matrix T (6)
Spell Matrix T (6)
Summoning (4): 19
Thread Weaving (Elementalism) (4): 19
Disrupt Fate (10): 25
Durability (13) (8/7)
Dragonsight (4): 19
Fear (13): 25
Spellcasting (4): 19
Spell Matrix T (6)
Spell Matrix T (6)

Spells: Elementalism (up to Sixth Circle)

Legend Points (4): 128,780

Equipment: None

Loot: Elemental water collecting organ worth 10,000 silver pieces. Treasure hoard worth up to 100,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Leviathans average 60 feet in length overall, and have four short, stubby legs, each about 6 feet long. In Barsaive, leviathans are found primarily in the Aras Sea, but also live in the Selestrean Sea to the west and the Sea of Storms near the Theran province of Indrisa.

These aquatic dragons are the most reclusive of all dragons, only rarely interacting with other dragons or Name-givers, except when their domain is threatened.

Rules

When dealing with smaller ships, swimmers, and various other floating enemies, leviathans prefer to swallow them whole. Leviathans can swallow anything that measures up to a tenth of their entire length. Against larger creatures and boats, the leviathan often coils around the victim and then tears at it with its powerful claws.

Coil Attack: To coil around a creature, the leviathan must achieve a Good result on its Attack Test against the target's Physical Defense; when attacking ships, the vessel's Maneuverability Rating serves as its Physical Defense (see the **Airships and Riverboats** chapter, p. 146). Once coiled tightly, the leviathan causes damage with its claws each round until it is killed or driven off. The leviathan can even use its twisted tail as a weapon, inflicting Step 28/D20+2d10+D8 damage to the target.

Spells: Roughly one-third of all leviathans can cast spells, and nearly all those cast spells of the Elementalist Discipline. Those leviathans who do cast spells have generally mastered the spells of their Discipline up to Sixth Circle. Leviathans, like all dragons, can use their natural spellcasting ability to cast spells using raw magic (see **Dragon Magic**, p. 394).

CATHAY DRAGONS

In the lands to the east of Barsaive, far across the Aras Sea and far beyond the borders of Indrisa, are dragons as different in spirit from leviathans as day is from night. These dragons of far Cathay are the Dragons of the Wind.

When the hatchlings of Dayheart chose their domains, one pair chose the endless blue sky. They traveled to the east and used the clouds to build their immense palaces and lairs. To the people of the eastern lands, they are known as the "celestial ones," the "masters of wind and storm," and "kings of rain." The people of Barsaive call them Cathay Dragons—a far more respectful name than "common," wouldn't you say, Tiabdjin?

The Young Races of Barsaive are apparently more reverent towards exotic, foreign beings than to the wonders living in their own lands, it seems.

On the Form of Cathay Dragons

Cathay dragons are similar in appearance to leviathans in that they have no wings and long, sinuous bodies, but the similarities end there. Cathay dragons have small, iridescent scales in a variety of colors. The most common is green with gold highlights, but blue, red and predominantly gold are also known. They have a fringe of whiskers along the chin and back of the head, as well as a pair of handsome horns. Cathay dragon limbs are not the tiny, weak things possessed by leviathans, but quite well developed.

In fact, the forelimbs of Cathay dragons have considerable dexterity. I have seen a wind-dragon hold a delicate vase in its claws without so much as chipping it. I suspect their love of fine and delicate things has helped to cultivate this careful sense of touch. Cathay dragons likewise have sharp senses of sight and smell, having large eyes and even larger nostrils compared to us western dragons.

Your pardon, Master, but how does a Cathay dragon fly if they have no wings?

I was coming to that. You are so impatient, you small folk.

Cathay dragons swim through the air by magic as the leviathans do, though much more gracefully. They tuck their legs up close to their bodies and move with an undulating motion, allowing them to fly quite quickly. While western dragons appear to float aloft in the sky when they fly, Cathay dragons are not so sedate, constantly moving about, swirling through the air, a testament to a mastery of the winds undisputed among dragons.

Cathay dragons love the freedom of the air, so they have their lairs in high places exposed to the air, such as mountain peaks. Many Cathay dragons use elemental magic to sculpt "cloud islands" high above the earth, lairs the likes of which are unheard of in Barsaive or anyplace else in the world! Cathay dragon lairs are usually elaborate structures, unlike the simple network of caves associated with most western dragons. The Name-givers who serve these dragons build them great palaces and halls and help to see to their comfort, and the process of building often goes on and on as each dragon continues to modify its home over the centuries. Personally, I find all of the decoration and delicate building excessive, but at least the Cathay dragons and their creations are appreciated by the Young Races in their domains, very much so in fact.

On Servants (and Slaves)

The Young Races in Cathay give dragons the reverence we deserve. They respect the wisdom, age and magical power of the Cathay dragons, and consider them close to the Passions in terms of respect. (A considerable error, confusing a dragon with something as … flighty as a Passion, but still, it's the thought that counts.)

Most Cathay dragons have Name-giver servants and slaves rather than drakes, and seem to prefer it that way. Most of the Young Races in that part of the world consider it a great honor to be taken into the home of a dragon. Many of the heroes and legends of distant Cathay and the Lands of the East have been taught by wind-dragons, or inspired by them in the very least. For example, there is the tale of Mi Ling, the Dragon's Daughter.

In the land of Cathay, long, long ago, there lived a human champion by the Name of Feng Po, who was somewhat akin to what you might call a Swordmaster; a daring Warrior greatly skilled with a blade. Feng Po fought many creatures and explored many places. While traveling into the highest mountains in the land, he chanced upon a wondrous palace, the likes of which he had never seen. Entering the palace, he found few people in its vast halls and rooms. The first person he encountered was a beautiful woman, who looked at Feng Po, such a strong and dashing human, with great admiration in her eyes.

She told Feng Po that her Name was Mi Ling. She had lived her entire life to that point in the palace, which belonged to the great dragon Luung. Except for the palace servants, Mi Ling

had never before seen another human, and she was quite taken with Feng Po.

Just then, the master of the palace chose to appear. The great dragon Luung filled the great hall and towered over Mi Ling and Feng Po. The daring hero found himself struck with fear at the appearance of the mighty dragon, who asked why Feng Po violated the privacy of his palace. Fortunately for him, Feng Po kept his wits about him and remained polite and showed the master of the palace the proper respect. (A lesson other Name-givers in Barsaive would do well to learn!) He apologized most abjectly for entering the dragon's home unbidden, and requested the right of guestship in the palace, as the high mountains were harsh and night was fast closing in. Ever the gracious host, Luung agreed and invited the human to dine with him.

That night, a fine feast was presented for Luung, Feng Po and Mi Ling. Luung had assumed the form of a human, and the three dined in a manner more lavish than Feng Po had ever imagined. As they ate, Feng Po told tales of his travels and adventures, and Mi Ling's admiration for him grew and grew. The hero also found himself increasingly drawn to Mi Ling's flower-like beauty. By the end of the evening, Feng Po asked the dragon for permission to court the beautiful lady.

"If you would court my daughter," the great dragon said, "you must prove yourself worthy." Luung tested Feng Po with many strenuous challenges, from obtaining a majestic pearl from the depths of the sea, to learning and committing to memory a library of ancient lore. After many tests and trials that have become legends among his people, Feng Po proved himself to the Dragon Master of the Wind and married Mi Ling, giving rise to a great family line in his homeland.

Was Mi Ling truly a dragon, then? If she was Luung's daughter ...

A figure of speech, of course. As if a great dragon—from any land—would allow a true child of dragon-kind to marry and mate with a human! Why, the very thought is ridiculous! The truth of this is based on ancient Cathay dragon traditions handed down from a time long since past. Where dragons of some regions of the world chose to enslave Name-givers as servants, the dragons of Cathay followed a different course, that of adopting Name-givers as children from time to time. This practice allowed the Cathay dragons to avoid the unpleasantness other dragons faced when their servants rebelled, as these adopted children grew to honor and respect their dragon elders in a way that has caused many dragons the world over to envy the wisdom of their Cathay brothers.

In fact, the appellation "Son (or Daughter) of a Dragon" is well-known among the great nobles and heroes of Cathay. Mi Ling's parents were loyal servants of Luung who died serving their master. The great dragon took the infant and raised her with the aid of his other servants, protecting her from the dangers of the outside world. When the time came for Mi Ling to be married, Luung made certain her potential husband was worthy of her. His honor demanded no less. Cathay dragons are very honorable creatures.

But did you not say that Cathay dragons keep slaves?

Ah, yes, the Throalic bias against slavery. Does doing so make Cathay dragons without honor in your eyes? I see that it does. One day you and yours will learn that the world is not so simple, not so black and white, so good versus evil. Simply because the dragons of Cathay keep slaves is no reason to liken them to the slavers of the Theran Empire. For while the Therans capture slaves to keep their Empire alive and running, Cathay dragons enslave only those who are deserving of such treatment.

It is true that many Cathay dragons make slaves of members of the Young Races, but you will find that these slaves are thieves and brigands who sought to rob the dragon's home or otherwise stole something of value to the dragon. Rather than killing them outright as most dragons (or even some other Name-givers) would, some Cathay dragons choose to enslave such criminals instead. The wrongdoers save their lives through serving and entertaining their dragon masters. If they please the dragon, these criminals may eventually earn their freedom as well, and leave considerably older and wiser than when they first entered their master's service. It is a considerable mercy on the part of the Cathay dragons who are—as I said—most curious and honorable creatures.

On the Culture of Cathay Dragons

Although they interact with the Young Races more often than most of my kind in Barsaive, Cathay dragons have not left behind any of the traditions or beliefs of dragon-kind (as some maintain). Quite the contrary, they are staunch traditionalists in most ways, making even the most traditional dragons of Barsaive seem unconventional by contrast.

Cathay dragons follow the same cycle of life as other dragons. Their eggs are cared for by the eldest of their kind, hatched and cared for while the young learn how to survive in the world. Cathay dragons appear to mate quite infrequently, although that may simply be because so few of them make their way this far west of their homeland. I have not been to Cathay for quite some time, so perhaps Cathay dragons are more populous in lands further east.

What of the ancient tales from Cathay I have seen recorded in the Great Library, tales that speak of the Cathay dragons descending from the stars long ago?

Oh, those. Hyperbole on the part of the Cathay dragons, I'm sure. When the first of them chose to settle in the Lands of the East, they flew there to take up residence. To the Young Races living in those lands at the time, the arrival of the Cathay dragons, flying through the night sky, must have certainly made it appear as if they had descended from the heavens themselves. It is a tale the Cathay dragons have done nothing to discourage, and even quietly encourage from what I have seen. Indeed, some Young Races in the east call Cathay dragons "the starborn."

Adult Cathay dragons choose lairs for themselves and usually gather servants to build and maintain their palaces. Many such dwellings are created using magic, indeed, some can exist only through the power of magic, as they take forms quite impossible to build otherwise. I have seen palaces of crystal, ice, water and mist built by Cathay dragons. They are quite skilled artists, with a fine appreciation of beauty.

As part of that appreciation, Cathay dragons collect many diverse items that capture their attention. The hoard of a Cathay dragon is a sight to behold, containing artworks and fine things from far and wide. Cathay dragons are less interested in the memories captured by a particular item—although they do collect such things—than in its sheer artistic value. They love beautiful and delicate things in particular. A Cathay dragon collects things no other dragon would bother with: fine sculptures in jade and agate, painted scrolls, pottery more thin and delicate than a Name-giver skull. I know of few other dragons who could even hold such things without breaking them. Cathay dragons not only gather them, they carefully organize and display their treasures in a variety of pleasing ways.

Creatures of strict protocol and tradition, Cathay dragons adhere to the many Rites and Rituals we dragons use in our social encounters. They demand similar politeness and etiquette from other dragons as well as from the other Name-givers who choose to visit them. Should you (or anyone who reads this text) ever have the opportunity to speak with a Cathay dragon, exercise your most polite and precise manners, and you may be invited to dinner as something other than the entrée.

I suspect the main reason Cathay dragons are so frequently gracious to the Young Races is because of their fascination with stories and lore. Like myself and a few others of my kind, most Cathay dragons are scholars and desire a sharing of knowledge. I suspect they would find many of the volumes in your Great Library

most amusing, but Cathay dragons prefer to hear stories from the mouths of others, rather than reading them from texts. There are many cases of Cathay dragons taking in Name-givers to hear their tales and rewarding them if the story is good enough.

On the Magic of Cathay Dragons

As part of their interest in lore and knowledge, nearly all Cathay dragons study and practice the arts of magic. While not all dragons in lands like Barsaive choose to hone their natural magical abilities to greater levels, most Cathay dragons do. They are particularly skilled in elementalism, especially the secrets of the winds. Cathay dragons know how to raise storms, command rain and create thick mists to hide their mountain homes, or cloud banks to conceal their sky castles.

They also use illusion magic, often weaving complex spells to enhance the appearance of their homes and conceal them from prying outsiders. When dealing with a Cathay dragon, nothing is entirely as it seems. They delight in puzzles and complex mazes of words and images to fool the unwary.

More than most other dragons, Cathay dragons traffic with various spirits, mostly air spirits they use as servants, messengers, spies and guards for their homes. Cathay dragons summon and command other elemental spirits, particularly water spirits. I am quite sure elementals are used to create some of the more elaborate palaces I have seen and heard about. Cathay dragons have little use for nethermantic spirits of any kind, and rarely bother with such things.

As is the case with all dragons, great Cathay dragons practice magical skills far beyond those of their adult brethren. In fact, great dragons of Cathay are among the most magically skilled and powerful of all dragons, far surpassing the power even of some of Barsaive's great dragons. Like other great dragons, those of Cathay are skilled in the creation of drakes, and in assuming the form of other Name-givers. In fact, many great dragons of Cathay prefer to appear in Name-giver form when entertaining visitors. Though I have never dared ask their reasons for this, I believe they adopt this strategy to make themselves appear more like their Name-giver subjects than they truly are. While most western great dragons prefer to remain in dragon form, allowing our imposing size and stature to convey our strength and power to visitors, Cathay dragons are supremely confident in their abilities and power, so they rarely resort to such tactics. They prefer lulling their subjects into a false sense of security, revealing the true scope of their power only as needed. Whether this approach has contributed to their success with their servants and subjects is uncertain.

After completing his discourse on Cathay dragons, Vasdenjas excused himself and left for a few hours in search of food. While he was out I compiled and read through his comments, preparing them to be eventually transcribed into the document you are now reading. As I read through my notes, I noticed something that made me quite curious, and I planned to inquire about it upon Vasdenjas' return.

The dragon returned a few hours later with a pair of his favorite delicacy, cave crabs. As Vasdenjas roasted one of the crabs, I asked him about some of his comments, specifically about his use of the term subjects when referring to the Name-givers who visit the great dragons of Cathay. His only response, which he made with a distinct tone of voice and mannerism that told me to pursue the topic no further, was that the relationships between Name-givers and dragons are not the same everywhere. Where the dragons of Barsaive tend to remain aloof from the affairs of Name-givers, the same is not necessarily the case elsewhere.

Average Cathay Dragon

DEX: 18 **STR**: 27 **TOU**: 24
PER: 23 **WIL**: 21 **CHA**: 21

Initiative: 23
Number of Actions: 5
Attack (5): 23
Damage:
Bite (11): 38
4 × Claws (8): 35

Physical Defense: 22
Spell Defense: 30
Social Defense: 28
Physical Armor: 30
Mystic Armor: 22

Death Rating: 110 (198)
Wound Threshold: 28
Unconsciousness Rating: 104 (181)

Recovery Tests: 12
Knockdown: 28

Combat Movement: 160/202✦
Full Movement: 320/404✦

✦ The second value is the dragon's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 40

Karma Step: 15

Powers:
Armored Matrix[T] (11)
Armored Scales (6)
Dispel Magic (9): 30
Disrupt Fate (9): 30
Durability (11)
Dragon Breath (9): 30
Dragonsight (7): 30
Dragonspeech (7): 30
Enhanced Matrix[T] (11)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (11)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (11)
Fear (5): 26
Regeneration (5): 29
Spellcasting (12): 35
Spell Matrix[T] (11)
Spell Matrix[T] (11)
Spell Matrix[T] (11)
Spell Matrix[T] (11)
Spell Matrix[T] (11)
Spell Matrix[T] (11)
Summoning (14): 35
Suppress Magic (9): 30
Thread Weaving (Discipline) (12): 35

Spells: By Discipline (Up to Eleventh Circle)

Legend Points (5): 532,350

Equipment: None

Loot: Scrolls, books, gems, artwork and precious metals worth around 300,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Cathay dragons generally measure about 50 feet in length, with their tail adding another 50 feet. These dragons come from Cathay, a land to the far east of Barsaive, beyond even the realm of the Theran Empire.

The most sociable breed of dragons, Cathay dragons often hire Name-giver servants, and have also been known to keep Name-giver slaves. They sometimes invite travelers to dine with them, to entertain the dragons with tales of other places and exciting times.

Though sufficiently skilled entreaties can sometimes entice them to show off their treasures, Cathay dragons allow no one to touch or take any of their truly valuable possessions.

Rules

All Cathay dragons can cast spells of one or more of the magician Disciplines. Most pursue either the Illusionist or Elementalist Disciplines, or both, though some also cast spells of the Wizard Discipline. Nethermancy is rare among Cathay dragons. Cathay dragons who know spells of only one Discipline know spells up to and including Eleventh Circle. Those who follow more than one Discipline know spells up to and including Eighth Circle.

Feathered Dragons

The remaining children of Dayheart chose to dwell in the hot, sunlit lands of the south. They are the brightly colored Dragons of Fire, known as feathered dragons by your scholars and those of the Theran Empire. They are the rarest of dragons in this part of the world, more rare even than the legendary Cathay dragons. Feathered dragons are most often found quite far from Barsaive, in the warm, tropical lands across the great ocean, near Araucania, where they are called Quetzal by the native Name-givers. Feathered dragons are also known to live in the warm regions closer to this land, such as Indrisa, and in the central and southern regions of Fekara near the ancient Nuboz Empire.

No feathered serpents make their home in Barsaive, and only on the rarest of instances have they visited this land. Barsaivians are unlikely to encounter a feathered serpent without traveling very, very far. I myself have only met two feathered serpents, and then only because they were invited to join us at a great dragon council in the time before the Scourge.

On the Form of Feathered Dragons

Feathered dragons are quite unlike any other dragons in form and appearance. They are thin and sinuous like Cathay dragons, but are smaller, and more serpent-like. They have a powerful pair of wings and a single pair of small limbs they use to walk rather clumsily on the ground. In fact, feathered dragons are quite similar to dragon hatchlings in shape, having smaller limbs and a slightly thinner body.

The greatest difference between feathered dragons and others is also the source of their name—they are covered in brightly colored feathers along their entire body, including a ruff of feathers around the head and a tuft at the tip of the tail. The wing feathers are the largest and brightest, while the body feathers tend to be small and similar to brightly colored scales. The feathers are predominantly green and blue, but vivid wing and head feathers may be crimson, yellow, white or purple.

Feathered dragons have sharp, venomous fangs and a dagger-like tail spine which is likewise venomous. They often coil around prey to stab with their tails and bite, or they simply crush the life out of their prey with their powerful bodies. Their compact shape makes feathered dragons well-suited for life in the brightly colored jungles of the south, where they wind their way through the tree-tops. A feathered dragon at rest in the upper limbs of a strong tree can be difficult to spot in the jungle foliage. They enjoy the warmth of the sun and love to lay draped across a strong tree or an outcropping of rock to soak up the heat.

On the Life and Culture of Feathered Dragons

Feathered dragons are not born feathered. Their hatchlings look much like those of other dragons, covered in fine scales, with membranous wings and smaller hind limbs. They are raised and cared for by the great feathered dragons, taught life in the harsh jungle and shown how to hunt and fend for themselves. Eventually, they live for a time on their own in the jungle, where they struggle to survive against countless other predators there, including their fellow dragons. Life in some of the southern jungles can be truly harsh, not unlike the jungles of Barsaive. Only a few young feathered dragons survive adolescence.

It is during the metamorphosis from adolescent to adult that feathered dragons take on their true nature. They weave fantastically colored cocoons in the depths of astral space, where they undergo the change into their adult state. When they emerge from astral space, they shine with their new brilliance. Each new adult then takes its Name and its place among the other adult feathered dragons.

Like us, feathered dragons tend to be solitary beings. They establish their own domains in their jungle homes and defend them against intruders. Unlike other dragons, feathered dragons tend to be shy and prefer to conceal themselves from strangers. They will often watch intruders entering their domains carefully for a time before taking any action, using Illusionism magic to allow them to get quite close without anyone the wiser.

Feathered dragons are quite skilled in the use of illusions, and they have a mischievous sense of humor as well. Name-givers who dwell near feathered dragons sometimes become the subject of elaborate pranks or deceptions. Some among my kind consider this to be little more than our feathered brothers playing with what they consider their toys, but I believe the feathered dragons have other, more honorable motives. Feathered dragons have been known to aid members of the Young Races who become lost in the jungle, subtly guiding them to safety while protecting them from jungle hazards. Only when the visitors are outside the jungle confines do they look back to see a brightly-feathered form vanish back into the foliage.

Beyond this, feathered dragons have little to do with other Name-givers who live nearby. In fact, most Name-givers in lands that are home to feathered dragons consider them little more than large, dangerous creatures, and do not afford them the same respect and awe dragons are shown elsewhere in the world. These members of the Young Races do not realize that the feathered ones are vast fonts of knowledge and wisdom, and avoid them. I believe it is this misunderstanding that drives feathered dragons to treat other Name-givers in the manner described above. Those Name-givers should see that surely any beings who enjoy playing pranks and aiding lost travelers are more than mere beasts.

For all of their humor and quiet nature, feathered dragons are fierce enemies of anything that threatens their home. I have heard tales of a feathered dragon who became locked in aerial combat with a Horror twice its size. They fought for hours, each struggling to overcome the other. During that time the dragon never faltered. Even though the Horror dealt it grievous wounds, the feathered dragon fought savagely, with all of the fierce strength of the Dragons of Fire, and overcame the Horror in the end. Such is the fate of all enemies that violate the homeland of a feathered dragon.

Beyond the differences in physical appearance, and the different relations between feathered dragons and Name-givers, they share many similarities with other dragons. They have lairs, usually hidden deep within the jungles, or near waterfalls alongside rivers. They hoard treasure and mementos as other dragons do, and hunt and study just as we do. Given their natural habitat, feathered dragons spend considerable time studying nature and the abundant flora and fauna. They are masters of animal and plant magic, and have developed abilities that allow them to experience the world through nature's eyes, seeing, hearing and sensing life through the plants and animals of the jungle. It is this ability that makes approaching a feathered dragon's lair so difficult, even for the most subtle. I believe it is also because of this ability that feathered dragons allow trespassers to get so close to their lairs before confronting them, as they are able to closely observe and study the trespassers before chasing them off.

On the Magic of Feathered Dragons

Feathered dragons are the only dragons to make any significant use of blood magic, specifically the more powerful and dangerous forms of blood magic that you know as death magic. They understand the fire that flows in the veins of dragon-kind and, to a lesser degree, within all creatures. In their own lands, feathered dragons have used blood magic to heal the damage done to the land by the Scourge, repairing scars and making the jungles fertile once again. The elves of the Blood Wood could take some lessons from the feathered dragons in using blood magic to enhance growth without twisting the land and its creatures beyond recognition.

There is a definite split among the feathered dragons concerning the different uses of blood magic. Some feathered dragons are strongly opposed to death magic—that is, blood magic used solely for power. These dragons consider death magic inherently wrong, and suggest that it partakes of the power of the Horrors, and can only prolong the presence of those Horrors remaining since the Scourge. While they understand and appreciate the value of life magic, used to aid and restore life, these dragons see the two forms of blood magic as inextricably linked, and fear that use of one type leads to use of the other. The second group of feathered dragons believes all forms of blood magic, whether life magic or death magic, are, like all magic, merely power—a tool beyond good and evil, to be used for whatever ends they see fit.

They argue that if any beings are powerful enough and wise enough to use blood magic safely, it is the dragons. It saddens me that there are some among my kind who have failed to learn the lessons of the past. Perhaps most frightening about the feathered dragons' use of blood magic is their propagation of its use to other Name-givers. There are some feathered dragons who teach and encourage the use of blood magic, specifically death magic, among the Young Races that live near them. I do not understand the purpose of this practice, and I fear its ultimate consequences. Fortunately, this practice is not widespread, and most feathered dragons oppose passing such potentially dangerous knowledge on to others.

What began as a philosophical argument has grown over the years to become a serious rift among feathered dragons (good enough reason to leave blood magic alone, in my view). I have heard tales from the hot lands of the south of feathered dragons fighting and even killing each other over the matter of blood magic. Some suggest there may be a Horror at work, corrupting some feathered dragons through the use of death magic. I cannot say, but I hope that reason prevails and the feathered dragons are able to settle their differences according to our tradition rather than repeating the mistakes of the past.

Along with their knowledge of blood magic, feathered dragons make considerable use of other magic, as I have mentioned. Many are spellcasters of considerable skill, particularly with illusion magic. Others practice elementalism and study the forces abroad in their jungle homes, in particular the different types of elemental spirits and animals. Some few feathered dragons also study nethermancy, particularly those with a strong interest in blood magic as well. These dragons have a great understanding of the netherworlds and astral space, perhaps too great an understanding for the comfort of others, as there are many things in the netherworlds that are best left alone.

Like the great dragons of Barsaive and Cathay, great feathered dragons are masters of magic far beyond that practiced by adult feathered ones. Great feathered dragons create drake servants just as we do, though not as often. Drakes are used by feathered dragons primarily as their eyes and ears in the cities and lands of other Name-givers, and are less often used to pursue a particular agenda. As you might expect, these drakes resemble small feathered dragons, as our drakes resemble us. As with other drakes, they can assume Name-giver form if necessary.

Average Feathered Dragon

DEX: 18 **STR**: 23 **TOU**: 23
PER: 21 **WIL**: 20 **CHA**: 19

Initiative: 23
Number of Actions: 4
Attack (5): 23
Damage:
Bite (7): 30
4 × Claws (5): 28

Physical Defense: 21
Spell Defense: 27
Social Defense: 24
Physical Armor: 27
Mystic Armor: 19

Death Rating: 104 (200) **Recovery Tests**: 11
Wound Threshold: 27 **Knockdown**: 24
Unconsciousness Rating: 98 (182)

Combat Movement: 145/184✦
Full Movement: 290/368✦

✦ The second value is the dragon's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 30 **Karma Step**: 12

Powers:
Armored Matrix[T] (10) Armored Scales (4)
Disrupt Fate (5): 25 Dragon Breath (5): 25
Dragonsight (4): 25 Dragonspeech (4): 25
Durability (12)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (10) Enhanced Matrix[T] (10)
Fear (4): 23
Lair Sense (4): 25 Regeneration (4): 27
Spellcasting (7): 28
Spell Matrix[T] (10) Spell Matrix[T] (10)
Spell Matrix[T] (10) Spell Matrix[T] (10)
Summoning (4): 24 Suppress Magic (4): 24
Thread Weaving (Discipline) (7): 28
Venom (5): 25 Wingbeat (5): 23

Spells: By Discipline (up to Tenth Circle; see text)

Legend Points (4): 210,200

Equipment: None

Loot: Magical items and a hoard of precious metals and gems worth around 300,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Feathered dragons average about 40 feet in length, with a 40 foot tail, and a wingspan of 60 feet. They originate from a land far from Barsaive, near Araucania, but are also found in the jungles of lands such as Indrisa.

Feathered dragons tend to avoid contact with Name-givers except in their distant homelands.

Rules

All feathered dragons can cast spells of one or more of the magician Disciplines. Most cast spells of either the Illusionist or Elementalist Disciplines, or both, though some also follow the Wizard and Nethermancer Disciplines, the latter being especially common among those feathered serpents who pursue blood magic.

Feathered dragons usually know spells of only one Discipline up to the Tenth Circle. Those rare feathered dragons who do follow more than one Discipline know spells up to the Eighth Circle.

Given the role that dragons have in the affairs of Throal and Thera, it is refreshing to read a candid treatise on the motivations and machinations of the great dragons of Barsaive. Vasdenjas has much of importance to say, but the reader is encouraged to form his own opinion on any 'truths' that may appear in this text. The 'truth' spoken by a dragon is usually what the dragon wants us to hear.

—By the Hand of Tiabdjin the Knower,
Scribe of the Great Library of Throal and
First Scholar of the *khavro'am*

Great Dragons

We great dragons are not a race as the other types of dragons are. All types of dragons have great dragons among them. Any dragon who lives long enough and gains the wisdom and experience that comes with great age can join the ranks of the great dragons. Still, there are things about great dragons that make us unique and worthy of consideration as a separate type of dragon. The most important differences between great dragons and younger dragons are our physical and magical abilities and our important role in draconian society.

On the Abilities of Great Dragons

Dragons continue growing throughout life, so great dragons, as the oldest of our kind, are also the largest. Some of us are easily twice the size of an adult dragon, with a corresponding increase in physical prowess. Our teeth and talons are longer, sharper and harder than those of a younger dragon as well. Unlike you Young Races, our teeth and bones do not become weaker as we age, they become stronger. Likewise our scales become toughened by the rigors of life. The armor of a great dragon is strong enough to resist almost any attack.

As our physical abilities increase, so do our mental and magical powers. Our long lives give us a great deal of time to hone our abilities. Great dragons are adept at the manipulation of magic to levels far beyond any other Name-givers. We all know many spells, often from many different magical disciplines, including spells no Young Race magician has imagined. Beyond these, we also create new spells to serve our needs, though most of these spells are of a type not suitable for use by Name-giver magicians.

The magical powers of a great dragon include improving our inborn gifts as well. My breath can flame targets with much greater power and range than in the years of my youth, and I have learned to use it in ways no young dragon could match. For example, the hides on which you sit I cured with puffs of flame, where a youngling would have incinerated them. We also use Dragonspeech and Dragonsight to our greatest advantage, to understand the nature and patterns of both Name-givers and of the world, for it is in our nature to seek understanding of the universe around us.

Perhaps the greatest abilities of a great dragon are the knowledge and experiences that come from living a long life. I have seen nations of Name-givers rise and fall. I have witnessed the performances of great artists, both of my kind and others, heard more tales than are recorded in your Great Library, and hunted every manner of beast in this land. I have battled Name-givers, spoken with them, even dwelled, worked and played with them over the years. I have seen eggs hatch, and hatchlings grow and change and become adults to take their place among our kind. All of this and so much more have I witnessed. It is those experiences that make me great and give me the responsibility to use my knowledge for the good of dragon-kind.

On the Role of Great Dragons

Great dragons are the rulers of dragon-kind. We do not rule like your kings or first governors; we do not share your idea of "government." Each adult dragon governs himself or herself for the most part, in accordance with our customs and traditions. This is why our youngsters are so deeply steeped in our customs, so that they may know correct behavior. Great dragons might be thought of as the overseers of dragon-kind. We lead by example and teaching, and when we must intervene, it is the great dragons who decide what is best for our kind.

The first duty of a great dragon is to look to the future. We care for the eggs and the young who hatch from them. The future of all dragon-kind is placed in our care. Young are quite rare among dragons. We mate only once in one of your lifetimes, and the hatching of an egg requires another dwarf lifetime or the passing of perhaps five or more generations of orks. While you Young Races breed rapidly (so rapidly that it's a wonder there is room enough for all of you), we dragons do not. Every new life is precious to us, which is why only the most experienced and learned among us are entrusted to guard and raise the young.

I have seen how you Young Races deal with your children. Anyone is permitted to be a parent simply because they feel the need to mate. Some parents are loving and raise their children well, but many are foolish or uncaring or simply unprepared for the responsibility. In fact, many care nothing for their offspring, casting them aside, while others treat children as no better than pets or possessions. Your vast numbers seem to make you value a single life far less. Why be concerned, when there will always be more children, more Name-givers? I suspect it is the cause of much of the social unrest among your kind.

We use our wisdom to decide the best path for our kind, and endeavor to learn from errors we have made so as not to repeat them. Yes, we make mistakes—I believe that is part of being alive—but we remember the lessons from each and every one, and our triumphs as well. Thus we are prepared for those rare times when we great dragons must decide the future of dragon-kind, for what actions we take will set the course of events for some years to come. The need for such decisions is rare, but they have become more frequent in recent years. It is at these times that we convene the Great Dragon Councils I spoke of earlier.

The second duty of a great dragon is to protect and recall the past. One reason great dragons are best suited for raising the young is because we have so much to teach them. Only those as experienced as we are can pass on a true understanding of the history and lore of our kind. As each generation of dragons learns from the great dragons before them, the wisdom and experience of our race grows with the passing of the millennia. I know lore that stretches back to the time of Dayheart the First Dragon, those who follow me will know all that and more.

We are the guardians and upholders of our culture and traditions. Younger dragons seek us out to hear our wisdom regarding their conflicts over tradition, and our decisions shape the future of our culture. We are the lawmakers and judges of our race. Without law and tradition, dragons would have no means to live together in harmony. Our culture allows us to control our predator nature and exist as civilized creatures. It is up to great dragons to protect and sustain such precious knowledge.

There are those of us, myself included, who believe we also have an obligation of sorts to you Young Races. Dragons are the oldest of all Name-givers, and great dragons are the oldest of all dragons, making us the most ancient and the wisest creatures in this world. As such, we have a duty to try to enlighten and educate the Young Races when possible. Such is the reason for this work that I offer to the Great Library, a collection of knowledge that may help some of your people to understand us and to pass that knowledge on to others.

Average Great Dragon

DEX: 20 **STR**: 33 **TOU**: 28
PER: 26 **WIL**: 26 **CHA**: 23

Initiative: 25
Number of Actions: 5
Attack (8): 28
Damage:
Bite (7): 40
4 × Claws (5): 38

Physical Defense: 24
Spell Defense: 33
Social Defense: 29
Physical Armor: 36
Mystic Armor: 30

Death Rating: 126 (261)
Wound Threshold: 31
Unconsciousness Rating: 120 (240)

Recovery Tests: 14
Knockdown: 34

Combat Movement: 184/227✦
Full Movement: 368/454✦

✦ The second value is the dragon's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 50 **Karma Step**: 18

Powers:
Armored Matrix[T] (13) Armored Scales (8)
Dispel Magic (5): 31 Disrupt Fate (5): 31
Dragon Breath (5): 31 Dragonsight (5): 31
Dragonspeech (5): 31 Durability (15)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (13) Enhanced Matrix[T] (13)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (13)
Fear (7): 30 Karma Cancel (5): 31
Lair Sense (5): 31 Regeneration (5): 33
Spellcasting (11): 37
Spell Matrix[T] (13) Spell Matrix[T] (13)
Spell Matrix[T] (13) Spell Matrix[T] (13)
Spell Matrix[T] (13) Spell Matrix[T] (13)
Summoning (11): 37 Suppress Magic (5): 31
Thread Weaving (Discipline) (11): 37
Venom (5): 31 Wingbeat (5): 25

Spells: By Discipline (up to Thirteenth Circle)

Legend Points (5): 943,750

Equipment: None

Loot: Magical items (some quite ancient) and a hoard of coins and gems worth around 500,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Great dragons are not really a unique type of dragon. Rather they are the oldest and most powerful specimens of the other types of dragons. There are great western (common) dragons, great Cathay dragons, great feathered dragons, and great leviathans. These shrewd, highly intelligent creatures spend their long lives hatching and nurturing their plans for the world. Great dragons often interact with the world around them, but usually work through a web of contacts and agents rather than acting directly. Believing that the world holds powerful enemies, these great creatures apparently prefer to use discretion in their dealings.

Rules

All great dragons can cast spells of at least one of the magician Disciplines. Most great dragons can cast spells of two Disciplines, and there are some who cast spells of three, or even all the magician Disciplines. Great dragons who know spells of only one Discipline know spells up to and including Thirteenth Circle, those who cast spells of two Disciplines know spells up to and including Tenth Circle, and those who know spells of three Disciplines know spells up to and including Ninth Circle.

Keep in mind that these statements describe the average abilities of great dragons. Individual great dragons' abilities vary to a degree, some greatly, some very little. See **Customizing Dragons** for more information about adjusting the abilities of great dragons.

ABAN

DEX: 21 **STR**: 34 **TOU**: 29
PER: 25 **WIL**: 25 **CHA**: 22

Initiative: 26 **Physical Defense**: 26
Number of Actions: 5 **Spell Defense**: 32
Attack (8): 29 **Social Defense**: 28
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 38
Bite (7): 41 **Mystic Armor**: 29
4 × Claws (5): 39

Death Rating: 130 (265) **Recovery Tests**: 14
Wound Threshold: 32 **Knockdown**: 35
Unconsciousness Rating: 124 (244)

Combat Movement: 208/255✦
Full Movement: 416/510✦

✦ The second value is the dragon's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 50 **Karma Step**: 18

Powers (Knacks):
Armored Matrix[T] (15) Armored Scales (9)
Chameleon[T] (5): 26 Dispel Magic (5): 30
Disrupt Fate (5): 30
Dominate Beast (5): 30 (Beast Eyes)
Dragon Breath (6): 31 (Smoke Cloud)
Dragonsight (5): 30
Dragonspeech (7): 32 (Animal Talk, Second Sight)
Durability (15)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (15) Enhanced Matrix[T] (15)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (15)
Fear (7): 29 Karma Cancel (5): 30
Lair Sense (5): 30
Regeneration (6): 35 (Regrowth)
Spellcasting (12): 37 (Anchored Spell)
Spell Matrix[T] (15) Spell Matrix[T] (15)
Spell Matrix[T] (15) Spell Matrix[T] (15)
Spell Matrix[T] (15) Spell Matrix[T] (15)
Summoning (11): 36 Suppress Magic (5): 30
Thread Weaving (Elementalism) (12): 37
Venom (5): 30 Wingbeat (5): 26

Spells: Elementalism (Fifteenth Circle)

Legend Points (5): 1,168,750

Equipment: None

Loot: Magical items (some quite ancient) and a hoard of coins and gems worth around 500,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Of the great dragons of Barsaive, Aban is the only one not born during the Age of Dragons. Aban was among the very first dragons hatched under the care of the mighty Cloudtamer during the first century of this magically-endowed age. Cloudtamer was a warrior among dragons, the fiercest of the fierce. Though his magical skills were not insignificant, he greatly enjoyed physical conflict and developed magic that augmented those capabilities above any other. As impatient as a great dragon may be said to be, he typically sought direct and violent solutions to his problems.

Cloudtamer was a harsh sire, even by the standards of a race that deliberately culls the weak from its numbers. He deliberately exposed his brood to danger, and pitted his hatchlings against each other in physical contests. The slightest weakness earned reproof, and consistent failure meant exile to the wilderness or death at his talons. Aban's gender earned her no lenience, for female dragons must, if anything, be stronger than males, the better to protect themselves when they carry eggs. Little wonder, then, that Aban is so hard and fierce.

Cloudtamer met his end shortly before the beginning of the Scourge, at the hands of the Theran Empire. A proud symbol of the strength of dragonkind, he was identified as the first target of the Theran behemoths when the Empire sought to discourage the great dragons from revealing magic that would protect people from the Scourge. Legendary though his strength was, his direct method of solving problems was not sufficient to the task, and he was destroyed. While few dragons retain lasting emotional attachments to the great dragons who raise them, Aban deeply respected her sire for his lessons and the strength they engendered. When the Therans killed Cloudtamer, they made of Aban an eternal and implacable enemy, a fact that the commanders and crews of airships in the region above and around the Mist Swamps have begun to learn personally.

Aban was taught to thrive in a world that slayed nearly all of those born with her, and her strength and aggression led her into adulthood earlier than is common. She is the only great dragon among all those born in this age. Her relative youth works against her in many ways. First, only newly admitted to the society of the great dragons, her voice is accorded little influence among the older dragons at Councils, who consider themselves far wiser than she (though to ignore her reveals the lie behind that opinion). She fanatically adheres to custom and ritual, especially the Rite of the Fifteen Venerations, as a way of assuring that she is given the respect that is her due. Second, she has not the same depth of experience as the other great dragons, a fact that sometimes leads her into what passes for impetuosity among her kind. She has not the same control over herself that most other great dragons have, and her rage sometimes gets the better of her. Third, she has not the degree of mastery over her powers that great dragons of the likes of Mountainshadow and Icewing have.

Physically, Aban is larger than most other dragons of her age; perhaps only Mountainshadow is larger. Despite this, she has no difficulty moving about the Mist Swamps completely unseen; she can appear from the gloom of the swamps suddenly and without warning, a fact well-described in journals left at Throal's Great Library by those who have survived encounters with her. The same tales that agree so completely on this account differ greatly on another, however—that of Aban's coloration. In one book she is described as having scales the deep red of old blood and eyes as black as the midnight sky, while another tome paints a picture of her with greenish-black scales and unsettling yellow eyes. Whatever the reason for it, be it the effects of living in the Mist Swamps or some deliberate magical change, Aban's coloration can vary.

Rules

Aban, the enigmatic mistress of the Mist Swamps, allows no one to reach the heart of her domain. Her vigil over the ancient, elusive ruins of Yrns Morgath, the city long lost in the depths of the swamp, is eternal and unceasing. Only other dragons may approach that ancient place without raising her ire, and she takes a dim view of those who prevail upon her too often or who do not show the proper deference when seeking audience.

By virtue of her youth, Aban has not yet developed her powers to the same extent as other great dragons, and she may be considered one of the magically weaker of her kind. Her magical might is less than that of her brethren because they have had many millennia to perfect and develop their powers, while she has had only just over two thousand years.

Aban has a great affinity for the magic of the elements, which may explain why she chooses to live in a place where all of the elements come together. She knows every Elementalist spell known in existence.

In addition to spell magic, Aban exercises her mastery of the elements in many ways, including the summoning and control of elemental spirits. She often leaves elementals to guard her lair when she must be away from it for an extended time. Through the assistance of these elementals, Aban has attuned herself to the Mist Swamps and every living creature within them, extending her ability to sense her lair to include the entirety of the area. Everything the creatures of the swamps see and hear is known to her; they serve as her eyes and ears. These senses are usually distracted, as though she were listening to a crowd assembled outside a window. Whenever she chooses, however, she may concentrate upon a specific area and borrow the senses of the beasts therein, so as to see everything that occurs.

Manipulate Element: Aban's Manipulate Element power gives her near-total control over the very terrain of the Mist Swamps. She can quickly change water from boiling to cool and back again. Solid earth becomes thin mud at her whim, and the gnarled and twisted trees of the swamp rearrange themselves as she wills. She can thicken and thin the billowing mists with a thought, no doubt the explanation for why such a huge creature as Aban can suddenly appear without warning before the most observant and perceptive of explorers. For a description of this power, see the **Spirits** chapter on p. 366.

ALAMAISE

DEX: 20 **STR**: 34 **TOU**: 27
PER: 27 **WIL**: 27 **CHA**: 22

Initiative: 25
Number of Actions: 5
Attack (8): 28
Damage:
Bite (7): 41
4 × Claws (5): 39

Physical Defense: 24
Spell Defense: 34
Social Defense: 28
Physical Armor: 36
Mystic Armor: 31

Death Rating: 122 (257)
Wound Threshold: 30
Unconsciousness Rating: 116 (236)

Recovery Tests: 13
Knockdown: 35

Combat Movement: 208/255✦
Full Movement: 416/510✦

✦ The second value is the dragon's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 50
Karma Step: 18

Powers (Knacks):
Armored Matrix[T] (13)
Armored Scales (9)
Dispel Magic (5): 32
Disrupt Fate (5): 32
Dominate Beast (5): 32 (Beast Eyes)
Dragon Breath (6): 33 (Flame Ball)
Dragonsight (7): 34 (Item History, Matrix Strike)
Dragonspeech (6): 33 (Second Sight)
Durability (15)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (13)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (13)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (13)
Fear (7): 29
Karma Cancel (6): 33 (Lend Karma)
Lair Sense (7): 34 (Absent Lair Sense, Lair Vision)

Regeneration (3): 30
Spellcasting (11): 38 (Anchored Spell)
Spell Matrix[T] (13) Spell Matrix[T] (13)
Spell Matrix[T] (13) Spell Matrix[T] (13)
Spell Matrix[T] (13) Spell Matrix[T] (13)
Summoning (10): 38 Suppress Magic (5): 32
Thread Weaving (Elementalism) (11): 38
Venom (5): 32 Wingbeat (5): 25

Spells: Elementalism (Thirteenth Circle)

Legend Points (5): 1,168,750

Equipment: None

Loot: Magical items (some quite ancient) and a hoard of coins and gems worth around 500,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Alamaise is an old dragon, one of the oldest great dragons of Barsaive. His scales are golden and red, the colors of a fiery sunset, and his tail is tipped with sharp spines. His bright yellow eyes burn like pits of fire, and his voice is deep and commanding. Alamaise carries himself with great pride and arrogance, even for a great dragon. He considers all others beneath him and barely worthy of his notice, including other dragons. Such pride has earned him few allies among the dragons of Barsaive, but Alamaise has earned their respect with his focused power and keen mind.

All dragons possess and wield great force, but Alamaise is one of the few to admit to seeking power. He has always wished to increase his own strength and to extend his rule over the land and the Young Races who inhabit it. To Alamaise, this is his right. The most powerful beings should rule and the less powerful should serve.

His arrogance is the key to understanding Alamaise's nature. He is assured of his superiority and righteousness. No matter what mistakes he might make, Alamaise will never admit to them—but he will learn from them. Nothing scratches under his scales worse than his own flaws, and he roots out any such imperfections as quickly and ruthlessly as he would dispatch an impetuous Name-giver.

Alamaise is a dragon obsessed with a single goal, that of regaining control of Wyrm Wood and the elves who inhabit it. This goal drives Alamaise to the exclusion of all else. Since the death of Queen Dallia of the Elven Court, Alamaise has not been seen anywhere in Barsaive, even by his fellow dragons. Instead, he has existed in isolation, pursuing his goal. As no kingdom or city in Barsaive concerns Alamaise, apart from the Elven Court, he is not involved in the politics of nations like Throal or the Theran Empire.

The greatest power Alamaise possessed was taken from him by Queen Alachia and the magicians of the Elven Court. As the Namer and maker of Wyrm Wood, Alamaise had many threads woven to the Wood's True Pattern. Within the bounds of Wyrm Wood, Alamaise was supremely powerful and no dragon would even think of challenging him on his home ground. His threads also strengthened the pattern and defenses of the Wood, giving it a special magic and sustaining it, even after the rebellion forced him to abandon it.

Perhaps the Elven Queen Alachia believed the magic and the ancient protections woven by Alamaise would preserve Wyrm Wood against the Scourge. Perhaps she is merely touched with the same arrogance as Alamaise, unable to admit error on her part. For whatever reason, the Elven Court refused the protection of Theran magic and decided to turn the living trees of Wyrm Wood into a barrier against the Horrors.

During the Scourge, the Elven Court's wooden kaer failed. In a desperate attempt to save themselves, the elves used powerful magic to alter the True Pattern of Wyrm Wood itself. The Ritual of the Thorns transformed the elves living in the wood into blood elves, their skin pierced with thorns dripping blood. More importantly, the Ritual transformed Wyrm Wood into the Blood Wood. With its True Pattern reshaped, the threads woven to the wood by Alamaise were cut and the great dragon's last connection to his former domain was severed.

Rules

Alamaise is a foreign dragon, but he has lived in the northern reaches of Barsaive for millennia. He originally hails from a distant land to the north and west of Barsaive, near the outskirts of Vasgothia, where his brother lives still. A conflict between Alamaise and his brother long ago drove Alamaise away from his original home, into the lands that became Barsaive. Alamaise and his brother hate each other and disagree on nearly every matter of consequence.

Alamaise is old and strong, with mighty claws and teeth. His scales in particular are quite strong, able to ward off any weapon with ease and nigh-impossible to penetrate, even for the talons or flames of another dragon.

Alamaise knows a great deal of magic, particularly elementalism. He was a master of the element of wood, and is quite adept at encouraging growth and molding greenery to suit his needs. The fantastic palaces and wooden structures of the Elven Court began as seeds in the mind of Alamaise, who taught the elves the arts of wood-shaping and elemental magic. His skill with the other elements is nearly as great: in his day, Alamaise diverted rivers, carved mountains and commanded rain and lightning. All of the beasts of Wyrm Wood were his to command as well. He occasionally took on different forms, including various Name--givers and forest beasts.

Earthroot

DEX: 18 **STR**: 35 **TOU**: 30
PER: 25 **WIL**: 28 **CHA**: 22

Initiative: 20
Number of Actions: 5
Attack (10): 28
Damage:
Bite (7): 42
4 × Claws (5): 40

Physical Defense: 21
Spell Defense: 32
Social Defense: 28
Physical Armor: 39
Mystic Armor: 32

Death Rating: 134 (269)
Wound Threshold: 32
Unconsciousness Rating: 128 (248)

Recovery Tests: 15
Knockdown: 36

Combat Movement: 145/184[+]
Full Movement: 290/368[+]

[+] The second value is the dragon's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 50

Karma Step: 18

Powers (Knacks):
Armored Matrix[T] (10) Armored Scales (9)
Dispel Magic (5): 33 Disrupt Fate (5): 33
Dragon Breath (6): 34 (Friendly Fire)
Dragonsight (6): 31 (Item History)
Dragonspeech (6): 31 (Suggestion)
Durability (15) Earth Merge (see text)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (10) Enhanced Matrix[T] (10)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (10)
Fear (9): 31 (Awe, Paralyzing Gaze)
Karma Cancel (6): 34 (Lend Karma)
Lair Sense (5): 30 Regeneration (6): 34
Spellcasting (12): 37 (Anchored Spell, Maintain Spell Threads)
Spell Matrix[T] (10) Spell Matrix[T] (10)
Spell Matrix[T] (10) Spell Matrix[T] (10)
Spell Matrix[T] (10) Spell Matrix[T] (10)
Summoning (11): 39 Suppress Magic (5): 33
Thread Weaving (Elementalism) (12): 37
Thread Weaving (Illusionism) (12): 37

Thread Weaving (Wizardry) (12): 37
Venom (5): 33 Wingbeat (5): 23

Spells: Elementalism (Tenth Circle), Illusionism (Ninth Circle), Wizardry (Ninth Circle)

Legend Points (5): 1,168,750

Equipment: None

Loot: Magical items (some quite ancient) and a hoard of coins and gems worth around 500,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Though a generation younger than Mountainshadow and Icewing, Earthroot has lived long enough to gain considerable wisdom—much of it from far off Cathay, his native land. He came to Barsaive three hundred years after the death of All-Wings, possibly in search of territory. Rumor has it that Earthroot lost a battle with an ancient Cathay dragon Named White Lotus before he disappeared from Cathay.

Earthroot favors the dark and secret places of the earth because they reflect his essential self. This love of darkness, of being hidden, lends some credence to the conflict with White Lotus; that titanic battle is said to have taken place above a high peak Named Spirit Mountain, whose snowy slopes were well known to Earthroot and upon whose summit he hoped to lair. The bitterness of his defeat may show in his self-chosen exile so far from Cathay, and in his choice to live almost exclusively underground. Since his arrival in Barsaive, he has shown himself in the open air a mere three times, if the legends are to be believed.

Earthroot is exceptionally large, and his scales appear to glisten whether wet or dry. They shimmer in all the colors of mother of pearl, from silver to pale green to the rose of the dawn sky. The scales on his underbelly are the deep green of seaweed, and his luminous large eyes are as black as the underground night. Many who have seen him and lived to tell of it are dazzled by his beauty and mesmerized by his gaze; often described as "like falling into a depthless, dark pool."

Though he prefers to spend most of his time submerged in underground lakes, Earthroot is as much at home out of the water as in it. Living under the earth, at depths where almost no Namegiver cares to go since the end of the Scourge, gives Earthroot the freedom to act far removed from prying eyes. He speaks in riddles and acts in shadow.

Earthroot is not a constant meddler, like Mountainshadow; but when he does take action, it is like a stone tossed into a pool. Consequences flow from it like ripples across the water—and for every ripple visible, there is at least one deep current hidden beneath the surface. Highly intelligent, Earthroot can see far into the future, and routinely lays plans that will not bear fruit for centuries. For example, his seemingly impulsive act in saving a small band of t'skrang from the ravages of the Scourge has given him an entire society of devoted worshippers and lackeys to call upon. The Pale Ones—primitive t'skrang who live out their brief lives beneath the Throal Mountains, in Earthroot's domain—belong to him, as he intended from the very first word he ever spoke to their ancestors. Through one simple action, he gained a population of servants that many other dragons envy: willing, grateful and endlessly renewable through means more natural and far simpler than the rites used to create drakes. Even Mountainshadow must have been impressed by this stroke of quiet genius.

Rules

Earthroot's magical ability matches his intelligence, and may exceed it. Elemental magic of all kinds is his especial interest—but do not conclude from this that he has seriously neglected the study of illusion, wizardry or any other field of arcane knowledge.

Apart from the Pale Ones and the dwarfs of Throal, Earthroot appears little interested in the affairs of the Young Races. Unlike Mountainshadow, he does not find them objects worthy of constant study or devotion. Only those Name-givers who dwell in or near his domain truly matter to him. He considers them under his protection, and will fight for them with every means at his disposal.

Earth Merge: Among the most unique of Earthroot's powers is the ability to move through the earth itself, merging with earth and rock and traveling through it as easily as one might walk across the land. The only other beings known to possess this ability are spirits, and obsidimen who are able to merge with their Liferock. Given his strong affinity for the elemental magic of the earth, it stands to reason that Earthroot would seek out such knowledge, and it is possible that Earthroot sought out obsidimen from whom he might learn and expand this ability.

ICEWING

DEX: 22 **STR**: 34 **TOU**: 28
PER: 26 **WIL**: 27 **CHA**: 23

Initiative: 27
Number of Actions: 5
Attack (8): 30
Damage:
Bite (7): 41
4 × Claws (5): 39

Physical Defense: 25
Spell Defense: 33
Social Defense: 29
Physical Armor: 36
Mystic Armor: 31

Death Rating: 126 (261)
Wound Threshold: 31
Unconsciousness Rating: 120 (240)

Recovery Tests: 14
Knockdown: 35

Combat Movement: 227/276✦
Full Movement: 454/552✦

✦ The second value is the dragon's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 50

Karma Step: 18

Powers (Knacks):
Armored Matrix[T] (9)
Armored Scales (8)
Dispel Magic (5): 32
Disrupt Fate (5): 32
Dragon Breath (Ice) (5): 32
Dragonsight (8): 34 (Item History, Spirit Strike, True Sight)
Dragonspeech (7): 33 (Read Thoughts, Thought Probe)
Durability (15)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (13)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (9)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (13)
Fear (9): 32 (Awe, Paralyzing Gaze)
Karma Cancel (6): 33 (Lend Karma)
Lair Sense (5): 31
Regeneration (5): 33
Spellcasting (12): 38
(Anchored Spell, Maintain Spell Threads, Spell Stacking)
Spell Matrix[T] (13)
Spell Matrix[T] (9)
Spell Matrix[T] (13)
Spell Matrix[T] (9)
Spell Matrix[T] (13)
Spell Matrix[T] (9)
Summoning (11): 38
Suppress Magic (5): 32
Thread Weaving (Illusionism) (12): 38
Thread Weaving (Nethermancy) (12): 38
Thread Weaving (Wizardry) (12): 38
Venom (5): 32
Wingbeat (7): 29 (Freezing Gale)

Spells: Illusionism (Ninth Circle), Nethermancy (Ninth Circle), Wizardry (Ninth Circle)

Legend Points (5): 1,168,750

Equipment: None

Loot: Magical items (some quite ancient) and a hoard of coins and gems worth around 1,000,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

As one of the most public and visible of dragonkind, Icewing has learned well how to deal with scrutiny. Many of his plots are

buried deeply, under layers and layers of lies and misinformation, spread through various agents and dupes. Dealing with Icewing often means penetrating illusion and deception to even get a hint of the truth. However, he is more impulsive and impatient then his brethren, and frequently intervenes with an overconfidence that reveals an astonishing disregard for protocol and the wishes of his fellow great dragons (that he has faced little reprimand for). This is especially true when his pawns or he himself are directly challenged, in which case he acts aggressively and prematurely against his rivals.

Icewing's views towards the Young Races once contained elements of fondness and nurturing to rival Mountainshadow's, but now are of a more "protective" nature, as Icewing sees his responsibility to guard them from threats generated by the dragons' actions in the past and "guide" them onto a path more inline with his visions. He makes extensive use of Name-giver servants, and his own private network complements Mountainshadow's as the backbone of the dragons' spy network. His primary focus is the Theran Empire, but his agents are spread throughout the world, and he is not afraid to use them, nor as slow to react as the others.

Icewing has an open-door policy toward Name-givers, allowing them to approach his lair on Mount Vapor on the condition that they bring a suitable gift. In his self-appointed role as liaison and advocate, he maintains this policy as a sort of responsibility he feels towards the Young Races. The demand of gifts is a testimony to his belief in dragon superiority, a throwback to the past that he maintains as a lesson. His open-door policy has proven beneficial in many ways, as many adventurers and adepts bring him news or items or questions that reveal much about various events in the world. It also allows the dwarfs of Throal and the agents of other dragons to access him if they have need of his assistance.

Icewing has become deeply invested in the dwarfs of Throal, and has done much more than they know on their behalf, including manipulating economic factors and rooting out Theran infiltrators. Icewing and Earthroot together work towards developing Throal as a viable alternative to Theran authority—one that is thoroughly under their claws. As Earthroot works below, using his abilities to strengthen Throal's physical defenses, Icewing is carefully molding Throal into a major political force. He has offered up his counsel to Throalic leaders in person on several occasions, and they have gratefully accepted it, unaware of how he uses them. Many high-ranking officials and dwarfs of influence within Throal are quietly sponsored by Icewing, and subtly induced to further his goals by various means. Through careful channels he has been strengthening their relationships with Cara Fahd, the t'skrang *aropagoi*, and other major political entities—destroying more than one competitive influence in the process. His agents abroad work feverishly to dredge up support for his pets in the form of trade compacts, exchanges of lore, and aid against the Therans. While supportive of the dwarfs, he views them foremost as tools, and so takes care not to allow suspicion or resentment of Mountainshadow and Earthroot's influence among them to interfere with his plans.

The downfall of Thera is one of Icewing's primary motivations—perhaps symbolic to him in terms of rectifying past mistakes. The very existence of this empire is a thorn under his scales. Since Thera's inception, Icewing has hindered the Empire from both within and without by any means at his disposal. His intelligence regarding their activities is excellent, indicating that he has some very high-placed spies, perhaps even a member among the Heavenherds. He takes this struggle personally, as he illustrated after the Therans' abortive attempt on his life, when a short time later he was so bold as to appear on top of the Sphinx on the Isle of Thera itself, his presence a warning that preceded a series of calculated strikes that forced the Therans to withdraw from conflict with the dragons.

The most dangerous of Icewing's powers is the unique one which gives him his Name. While all dragons can use the mighty force of their wings to fling opponents aside, stunning them and leaving them open for the kill, Icewing can manipulate the elements themselves with his wingbeats. He was once seen as he dueled with an adult dragon, who was so foolish as to challenge Icewing's claim to another's hoard. Icewing descended upon his opponent, his wings beating so furiously that they were but a flashing and blinding blur. A whirlwind of ice and snow churned forward, enveloping his foe and encasing him in an icy prison. The dragon immediately began to burn and tear himself free, but not before Icewing was upon him, ripping him open and slashing him apart. By the time the dragon had freed himself, Icewing had grievously injured him, and dispatched him shortly afterwards.

Rules

Almost as large as his brother Mountainshadow, Icewing is more physically aggressive, and could easily rend an obsidiman in two with a swipe of his tail or claws. His demeanor is hard, callous and fearsome, and his frosty gaze can cause the hardiest warriors to flee him in abject terror. The Therans lost a behemoth when they attacked his mate Yuichotol, and if Icewing had stayed to fight them openly they would likely have lost two more, so terrifying is Icewing with speed and fire and sorcery.

Freezing Gale: The great dragon Icewing has a unique knack based on his Wingbeat power. To use this knack, Icewing makes a Spellcasting Test against the highest Spell Defense among the target group, +1 for each additional target above the first. All of the intended targets must be within an area no larger than 20 yards in diameter. Each use of this power costs Icewing 5 Strain Points of damage. Each additional target beyond the first costs Icewing 1 additional Strain Point of damage. If the test succeeds, the victim is encased in ice, and Icewing makes a Wingbeat Test. The result of this test is the Difficulty Number for any Strength Tests made to break free of the ice from the inside. The ice can be attacked from the outside, and is treated like a barrier with a Physical Armor rating of 10, and a Damage Rating equal to the Wingbeat Test result. Characters encased in ice are in danger of suffocation.

Mountainshadow

DEX: 20 **STR**: 34 **TOU**: 29
PER: 28 **WIL**: 26 **CHA**: 23

Initiative: 25
Number of Actions: 5
Attack (8): 28
Damage:
Bite (7): 41
4 × Claws (5): 38

Physical Defense: 24
Spell Defense: 36
Social Defense: 29
Physical Armor: 38
Mystic Armor: 31

Death Rating: 130 (265)
Wound Threshold: 32
Unconsciousness Rating: 124 (244)

Recovery Tests: 14
Knockdown: 35

Combat Movement: 184/227+
Full Movement: 368/454+

+ The second value is the dragon's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 50

Karma Step: 18

Powers (Knacks):
Armored Matrix T (7)
Armored Scales (9)
Dispel Magic (5): 31
Disrupt Fate (5): 31
Dragon Breath (6): 32 (Friendly Fire)
Dragonsight (7): 35 (Item History, True Sight)
Dragonspeech (11): 39
(Learn Language, Read Thoughts, Reweave Mind, Second Sight, Suggestion, Thought Probe)
Durability (15)
Enhanced Matrix T (7)
Enhanced Matrix T (7)
Enhanced Matrix T (7)

Fear (7): 31 (Paralyzing Gaze; see text)
Karma Cancel (6): 32 (Lend Karma)
Lair Sense (9): 37
(Absent Lair Sense, Identify Intruder, Lair Vision, Lair Mark)
Regeneration (5): 34
Spellcasting (12): 40 (Anchored Spell, Maintain Spell Threads)

Spell Matrix^{T} (7)	Spell Matrix^{T} (7)
Spell Matrix^{T} (7)	Spell Matrix^{T} (7)
Spell Matrix^{T} (7)	Spell Matrix^{T} (7)
Summoning (11): 37	Suppress Magic (5): 31

Thread Weaving (All Disciplines) (12): 40

Venom (5): 31	Wingbeat (5): 25

Spells: All Disciplines (Seventh Circle)

Legend Points (5): 1,168,750

Equipment: None

Loot: Magical items (some quite ancient) and a hoard of coins and gems worth around 500,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Mountainshadow was hatched long before the founding of any kingdom in Barsaive, from an egg clutch protected by the mighty All-Wings, greatest of the great dragons. To be of the clutch of All-Wings is to be a prince among dragons, with a proud and noble heritage, and a heavy burden of responsibility. All-Wings taught her hatchlings the traditions and history of dragon-kind and raised them to become wise and fierce beyond all other dragons. And so they were, and so they remain to this day. Unfortunately, the surviving descendants of All-Wings are not worthy of their illustrious foremother. They may have her power, but cannot claim her wisdom or clarity of vision.

Many of her clutch did not survive their first centuries of life; competition between them was fierce and often lethal. As the last clutch of All-Wings passed through their wild years into adulthood, the greatest of dragons was struck down by the treachery of Name-givers and her own arrogance. Mountainshadow and his clutch-mates are therefore the last dragons hatched and raised by All-Wings, and Mountainshadow and his brother Icewing are the two who have survived and prospered through all the centuries since. Through overwhelming strength and all the guile at his command, Mountainshadow remains first among his kind.

Mountainshadow's size is as immense as his age. His vast body is longer than an air galley, his jaws capable of crushing a troll in a single bite. His silvery-blue scales shimmer in the light like polished armor. Many have seen him soaring high above his domain in the Dragon Mountains or, more rarely, flying out over the Badlands or the nearby Servos Jungle. Mountainshadow has a lair hidden in the depths of the Badlands, a place so blighted by the Scourge that even many dragons shun it. That he dwells there is testament to his fearlessness; the most dangerous denizens of the Badlands pose no threat to him.

Mountainshadow is one of the few dragons who pursue knowledge above all for its own sake—indeed, he is obsessed with collecting every scrap of lore he can lay talons on. (To act on his knowledge is another thing entirely; like most of Barsaive's dragons, he prefers talking to doing. Only those who threaten to cross him feel his swift wrath.) Lost magic, ancient legends, scraps of history concerning every Name-giver race in addition to his own ... all these and more, Mountainshadow prizes as another might prize a rare and precious pearl or a fine living-crystal sword. He also eagerly consumes the latest news and gossip from the far corners of the world. His many servants are his eyes and ears throughout Barsaive and beyond, bringing him the knowledge he craves. Dragonspeech enables Mountainshadow to perceive the experiences of his servants directly from their memories, and he often relives their experiences in this manner. He knows a great deal and can discover even more. Given enough time, no secret is safe from him—even if it is ringed with a thousand allegedly unbreakable enchantments.

Mountainshadow's genuine interest in the Young Races makes him unusual among his kind. Most dragons regard other Name-givers as lesser creatures valuable only as servants or as a source of food or sport. Mountainshadow dimly understands these truths, though he still regards the Young Races as lesser beings. His interest in the Young Races has led him to involve himself in the affairs of Name-givers in the past; during the Scourge, he sheltered many in the Dragon Mountains against the Horrors' onslaught. No one has fathomed his reasons for doing so, as he is otherwise opposed to mingling with the Young Races. He prefers to watch over them from afar, seeing to their welfare (as he defines it) through intermediaries.

Curiosity drives Mountainshadow more than any other motive, to the point where it might be considered one of his few weaknesses. His thirst for knowledge apparently cannot ever be fully quenched. His desire to know everything outweighs all other desires and considerations. Mountainshadow has spared the lives of Name-givers who offended him merely to hear their life stories and understand the reasons for their actions. Often this indulgence buys the offenders only enough time to tell their tales before Mountainshadow devours them. Others, lucky enough to amuse their captor sufficiently, are allowed to live. How Mountainshadow judges who shall live and who shall die is unknown.

Rules

Like any dragon of his venerable age, Mountainshadow is powerful of tooth and claw, but the true source of his strength is his vast store of arcane knowledge. Mountainshadow knows more mystic secrets than anyone else in Barsaive, perhaps more than anyone in this part of the world. His command of the arcane arts allows him to ward his lair and create magical traps and servants whenever he requires them. His extensive library contains magical lore unknown to other Name-givers, powerful enough to shake mountains or reduce cities to smoking ruins.

Along with his mastery of the mystic arts, Mountainshadow is especially skilled in the use of Dragonspeech and Dragonsight. Mountainshadow's Dragonsight is as sharp as his talons. He understands patterns and the delicate threads that make them, especially the power of patterns to create and destroy. With Dragonspeech, he has refined the ancient arts of touching the minds of others and sifting through their memories like a heap of gleaming gems to find exactly the one he seeks. He once spoke of experiencing life from the view of the Young Races, and how vastly different the world looked through their eyes. With Dragonspeech, Mountainshadow can pluck the very thoughts from inside any Name-giver's head.

Mountainshadow shows great interest in the Young Races and has countless Name-giver servants in places where no one would expect to find them. The recent incursion of the Theran Empire into Barsaive has roused him from his endless studies and experiments, and moved him to take action with the formation of what the Therans refer to as the Dragon's Network. His Name-giver servants make up a significant part of this vast net of spies and lackeys, enhancing his influence even more among the dragons of Barsaive.

Paralyzing Gaze: Mountainshadow's gaze is like that of a viper, paralyzing in its intensity. For details on how this power works, see the description for the **Paralyzation** power in the **Creatures** chapter (p. 276). Once his victims are rendered helpless, Mountainshadow slithers through their minds and takes whatever he desires, using his Dragonspeech power. With it, he can also bend a mind to his will, planting ideas, feelings and even memories. The crafting of such thoughts, which subtly tug at the threads of a Name-giver's pattern until they change it, requires time and concentration, but can be a more powerful weapon than flame or claw.

USUN

DEX: 21 **STR**: 35 **TOU**: 29
PER: 26 **WIL**: 25 **CHA**: 22

Initiative: 26
Number of Actions: 5
Attack (8): 29
Damage:
Bite (7): 42
4 × Claws (5): 40

Physical Defense: 26
Spell Defense: 33
Social Defense: 28
Physical Armor: 38
Mystic Armor: 30

Death Rating: 130 (265)
Wound Threshold: 32
Unconsciousness Rating: 124 (244)

Recovery Tests: 14
Knockdown: 36

Combat Movement: 208/255[+]
Full Movement: 416/510[+]

[+] The second value is the dragon's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 50
Karma Step: 18

Powers:
Armored Matrix[T] (13)
Armored Scales (9)
Chameleon[T] (5): 26
Dispel Magic (5): 30
Disrupt Fate (5): 30
Dominate Beast (5): 30 (Beast Eyes)
Dragon Breath (8): 33 (Flame Spout, Friendly Fire, Smoke Cloud)
Dragonsight (5): 31
Dragonspeech (7): 33 (Animal Talk, Second Sight)
Durability (15)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (13)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (13)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (13)
Fear (8): 30 (Terror)
Karma Cancel (6): 31 (Lend Karma)
Lair Sense (6): 32 (Absent Lair Sense)
Regeneration (6): 35 (Regrowth)
Spellcasting (11): 37
Spell Matrix[T] (13)
Spell Matrix[T] (13)
Spell Matrix[T] (13)
Spell Matrix[T] (13)
Spell Matrix[T] (13)
Spell Matrix[T] (13)
Summoning (11): 36
Suppress Magic (5): 30
Thread Weaving (Discipline) (11): 37
Venom (8): 33 (Pain Venom, Sleep Venom, Spit Venom)
Wingbeat (5): 26

Spells: Elementalism (Thirteenth Circle)

Legend Points (5): 1,168,750

Equipment: None

Loot: Magical items (some quite ancient) and a hoard of coins and gems worth around 500,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Usun is legend among the Name-givers of Barsaive, particularly those who live close to his home in the Liaj Jungle. He is fairly young by great dragon standards; although still older than any nation known. His great body is sleek and powerfully muscled, covered with overlapping scales of burnished green, like aged copper. His wings and underbelly are a paler green, allowing him to almost disappear into the jungle foliage. Usun's broad head is topped with a pair of horns twisted like those of a ram, and equipped with a set of powerful jaws with teeth honed by hunting and fighting.

Usun is a warrior and a hunter, known as Vast Green to other great dragons. He harkens back to the predator heritage of his kind, savage and cunning. Where Mountainshadow or Vasdenjas might use honeyed words or subterfuge, Usun strikes with flame and claw and knows no mercy. The master of the Liaj Jungle has no use for words or diplomacy. He is a fighter who lives for the glory of battle, pitting his strength against the strength of the enemy. Since he has no enemies to fight, and cannot go to war against the Young Races as he might wish, Usun dwells in the Liaj Jungle, home to some of the most savage creatures in Barsaive. There he pits his strength and cunning against them in a daily struggle for life. No doubt Usun finds most of the creatures of the jungle a poor challenge for his abilities.

Unlike other great dragons, Usun has no interest in the Young Races as anything other than prey. He looks on all of the Young Races as they look upon the animals they slaughter for food, or perhaps more like the vermin they exterminate from their homes. Were it in his power, Usun would likely scour Barsaive with flame and reduce all of its cities to ash and rubble.

His savage warrior-nature may cause his enemies to underestimate Usun's cleverness. Although Usun does not follow the intellectual pursuits of other great dragons, he is no less intelligent because of it. Usun knows much lore, and he collects information on the natural world, giving him a great understanding of the flora and fauna of Barsaive.

Usun is one of the most isolationist of all of the great dragons of Barsaive. He claims the Liaj Jungle as his, and woe betide any other Name-giver he catches there. This does not stop some Name-givers (like the legendary Tamers) from living in the jungle, but it certainly makes Usun and his motives mysterious to the outside world.

Usun firmly believes dragons should rightfully rule the world—and while many fellow great dragons agree with this, Usun has been staunchly opposed in his desire to war against all other Name-givers and subjugate them, as it was in the Age of Dragons. Failing that, he would see the Young Races wiped out, removed from the world so it can be shaped by dragon strength and magic. The other great dragons consider Usun's plans both impractical and unacceptable. The Therans and other Name-givers have developed too much, and are too powerful to oppose in open warfare. Great dragons such as Icewing and Mountainshadow prefer to work behind the scenes, manipulating events to further their plans. Such machinations frustrate Usun, who has thus far agreed to abide by the will of the others and limits himself to the Liaj, where he takes out his frustrations on any Name-giver foolish enough to defy his ban on their entering the jungle.

There are certain similarities between Usun and Aban, the great dragon of the Mist Swamps. It is certainly true that the two do in fact share a number of traits, such as a preference for physical combat, use of spirits and creatures as their eyes and ears within their domains, and jealous guarding of their territories. Given these similarities, it is easy to think these dragons are two of a kind, but they are not.

Rules

Usun is a mighty opponent in battle. His scales are more resilient than any armor made by the Young Races and his teeth and talons are sharper than thrice-forged swords, able to rend other creatures apart with ease and tipped with potent venom. For the most part, Usun is able to rely solely on his physical prowess to bring down even the most dangerous prey. His constant hunting has honed his fighting skills, marking him as one of the most formidable fighters among dragon-kind. Few other great dragons could even aspire to best him.

It is true that the master of the Liaj Jungle rarely makes use of his fiery breath, since the flames can destroy large areas of jungle growth with a single blast. Yet Usun has refined his breath to spew forth clouds of choking smoke that render the jungle as dark as night, or even to breathe flames that burn only what he wishes to burn. A blast of Usun's fire can burn an intruder to ash while leaving the surrounding jungle untouched. Despite this, Usun prefers to face opponents with fang and claw.

Disdainful of Name-givers, Usun rarely speaks in any Name-giver tongue, as languages of lesser races are beneath his stature. He prefers the use of Dragonspeech, which has led many Name-givers to believe that Usun does not speak at all. Some Name-givers (mostly windlings) living near the jungle refer to Usun as "the

Silent One." Despite this reputation, Usun is more than capable of speaking—in a number of different languages—whenever he chooses, he simply prefers not to resort to such crude means.

As part of his development of Dragonspeech, Usun has learned to use it to sense the emotions of other creatures near him—especially those he hunts. Usun certainly possesses the power of all great dragons to inspire fear and unreasoning terror in the hearts of all creatures that see him; the passage of Usun's shadow is said to paralyze other creatures with fear, pinning them to the spot like the passage of a hawk's shadow over a field mouse.

In addition to his empathic abilities, Usun has developed a great rapport with the creatures of the Liaj Jungle. He uses Dragonspeech to command the creatures of the jungle and employ them as spies, servants and soldiers.

Usun does not possess the breadth of magical knowledge exhibited by great dragons such as Mountainshadow or Vasdenjas, but he does have considerable mastery of the arts of elementalism. Elemental magic allows Usun to control nearly every aspect of the Liaj Jungle to suit him. He can animate the trees and jungle vines to attack intruders, create rain and fog to shroud the jungle, and wield the powers of fire, ice, and earth as weapons. There is a great deal of elemental lore to be learned from Usun's magic, although wresting such secrets from him may be an impossible task.

VASDENJAS

DEX: 20 **STR**: 32 **TOU**: 28
PER: 27 **WIL**: 27 **CHA**: 25

Initiative: 25
Number of Actions: 5
Attack (8): 28
Damage:
Bite (7): 39
4 × Claws (5): 37

Physical Defense: 24
Spell Defense: 34
Social Defense: 32
Physical Armor: 36
Mystic Armor: 31

Death Rating: 126 (261)
Wound Threshold: 31
Unconsciousness Rating: 120 (240)

Recovery Tests: 14
Knockdown: 33

Combat Movement: 208/255✦
Full Movement: 416/510✦

✦ The second value is the dragon's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 50

Karma Step: 18

Powers (Knacks):
Armored Matrix[T] (9)
Armored Scales (8)
Creature Lore[S] (10): 37
Dispel Magic (5): 32
Disrupt Fate (5): 32
Dragon Breath (5): 32
Dragon Lore[S] (10): 37
Dragonsight (9): 36
(Item History, Matrix Strike, Spirit Strike, True Sight)
Dragonspeech (6): 33 (Learn Language)
Durability (15)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (9)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (9)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (9)
Fear (7): 32
Horror Lore[S] (5): 32
Karma Cancel (6): 33 (Lend Karma)
Lair Sense (5): 32
Regeneration (5): 33
Spellcasting (12): 39
(Anchored Spellcasting, Maintain Spell Threads)
Spell Matrix[T] (9)
Spell Matrix[T] (9)
Spell Matrix[T] (9)
Spell Matrix[T] (9)
Spell Matrix[T] (9)
Spell Matrix[T] (9)
Summoning (11): 38
Suppress Magic (5): 32
Thread Weaving (Illusionism) (12): 39
Thread Weaving (Nethermancy) (12): 39
Thread Weaving (Wizardry) (12): 39
Venom (5): 32
Wingbeat (5): 25

Spells: Illusionism (Ninth Circle), Nethermancy (Ninth Circle), Wizardry (Ninth Circle)

Legend Points (5): 1,168,750

Equipment: None

Loot: Magical items (some quite ancient) and a hoard of coins and gems worth around 500,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Vasdenjas, the Master of Secrets, the Terrible, the Eater of Cities, called Talespeaker by dragonkind, is a meddlesome gossip and storyteller, something akin to a dragon troubadour. Vasdenjas is one of the most learned and scholarly of the great dragons of Barsaive. He is the Loremaster of Barsaive's dragons, a very important role among dragons. Loremasters are those who keep records of the history and stories of our dragonkind, passed on from the time of Nightslayer and Dayheart, the First Dragons. Loremasters learn, maintain and pass on knowledge from one generation of dragons to the next. They also serve as Keepers of the Rites, ensuring that the etiquette and traditions the great dragons have developed are adhered to. Since the death of Barsaive's last Loremaster, Thermail, Vasdenjas has performed admirably in this position, and has even taken his role a step further—a step not all of his fellow dragons agree with.

Like Mountainshadow and Icewing, Vasdenjas believes we dragons have something of a responsibility to the Young Races. Unlike Mountainshadow, Vasdenjas has very little curiosity about Name-givers—he knows all that he needs or cares to know about them. Unlike Icewing, he has little patience for meddling in Name-giver affairs. Instead, Vasdenjas believes in passing on knowledge and lore to the Young Races to help guide and educate them in the wonders of the world. He truly loves to pontificate and to hear the sound of his own voice, going on endlessly about nearly any topic. Vasdenjas considers himself an expert on nearly everything, someone who can offer guidance to the foolish and limited Name-givers of Barsaive. He has no interest in learning from them in return, as Mountainshadow claims to do.

Despite his desire to share information with the young races, Vasdenjas is still a traditionalist. He believes other Name-givers should be subservient to dragons and that they should be educated, guided, and controlled like children.

At the same time, Vasdenjas is also a hypocrite. He argues and pontificates against the experiments conducted by the Young

Races to produce creatures such as hell hounds or nagas and rails against the magician who created the hydra, yet Vasdenjas is one of the most skilled in tampering with life of any of the great dragons. He is a master of creating drakes.

Vasdenjas' greatest assets are clearly his mind and his clever tongue, which he uses to worm his way into the attention of Name-givers. In body he is not the most powerful of great dragons, and prefers to avoid physical conflict when necessary. He talks his way from fights when he can, and is thought by some dragons to be almost afraid of battle, if such a thing could be said to be true of a great dragon. Though he hunts well enough, he claims to be above the dragon's ancient struggles and physical conflicts, much as one might expect from a scholar or wordsmith from one of the Young Races.

Still, Vasdenjas is a great dragon, with all that entails. He is larger than any newly Named dragon, as large as a small air galleon. His scales are a dun color, fading to yellow on his wings and almost eggshell color on his belly. They match the colors of the stone where Vasdenjas prefers to rest. His horns are fairly straight, curving slightly back from his head along his neck. Vasdenjas has sharp talons and teeth, although he uses them only to hunt, rarely slaying any intruders in his lair.

Rules

Vasdenjas is the only great dragon to share any substantial portion of his knowledge with other Name-givers. Apart from Icewing, Vasdenjas is the only great dragon the dwarf kingdom of Throal has had any significant open contact with, and the so-called Master of Secrets is a good deal more forthcoming than Icewing, for reasons of his own.

The Master of Secrets is, as his title implies, a scholar and keeper of lore. Though not quite as learned as his elder, Mountainshadow, Vasdenjas is a vast storehouse of knowledge from throughout the centuries, stretching back across the Ages. His store of wisdom is the dragon's greatest power and, perhaps, his greatest weakness. His physical prowess is considerable, but unremarkable for a great dragon. Vasdenjas can destroy a city if he chooses, but physical conflict is not normally his way, preferring to avoid it whenever possible. The Master of Secrets excels instead in activities connected to his pursuit and love of knowledge: magic and an understanding of Patterns.

Vasdenjas has great magical skills, some of the best among the great dragons of Barsaive. His knowledge is not as great as that of Mountainshadow, but it is far greater than any magician of the Young Races. Vasdenjas knows spells of wizardry, nethermancy and illusion, and perhaps some of elementalism as well. Like all dragons, Vasdenjas certainly knows spells and enchantments he keeps to himself, although he may share them with his small brood of younger dragons. Great magical lore, preserved on memory crystals, may be hidden among the jewels and gems of the dragon's treasure hoard, more valuable than any gemstone or coin could ever be.

As skilled as Vasdenjas is in magic, he is even more skilled in the use of Dragonsight. He earned the Name Master of Secrets from his ability to see what others would keep hidden, to use Dragonsight to penetrate into the deepest and most complex of Patterns and understand them. It is his understanding of Patterns that causes Vasdenjas to be so interested in knowledge. Knowledge is power, and to know something is to begin to understand its Pattern, its true self. Knowledge is the key to unlocking the secrets of a pattern, and Vasdenjas has over the centuries become a master locksmith.

As one might expect, Vasdenjas is quite skilled in working thread magic of all kinds. He is also skilled in more powerful pattern magic. He has become adept at the creation of life, forming new patterns out of the formless energy of astral space. He has spent many years working with Icewing, and has become an expert in the Dance of Blue Spirits. In recent years he has experimented on this drake-creating ritual and refined it significantly.

Vestrivan

DEX: 18 **STR**: 33 **TOU**: 28
PER: 28 **WIL**: 28 **CHA**: 24

Initiative: 20
Number of Actions: 5
Attack (8): 26
Damage:
Bite (7): 40
4 × Claws (5): 38

Physical Defense: 22
Spell Defense: 36
Social Defense: 31
Physical Armor: 36
Mystic Armor: 32

Death Rating: 126 (261)
Wound Threshold: 31
Unconsciousness Rating: 120 (240)

Recovery Tests: 14
Knockdown: 34

Combat Movement: 155/196✦
Full Movement: 310/392✦

✦ The second value is the dragon's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 50
Karma Step: 18

Powers (Knacks):
Armored Matrix[T] (13)
Armored Scales (8)
Dragonsight (5): 33
Dragonspeech (5): 33
Durability (15)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (13)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (13)
Enhanced Matrix[T] (13)
Horror Lore[S] (8): 36
Spellcasting (11): 39
Spell Matrix[T] (13)
Spell Matrix[T] (13)
Spell Matrix[T] (13)
Spell Matrix[T] (13)
Spell Matrix[T] (13)
Spell Matrix[T] (13)
Thread Weaving (Nethermancy) (11): 39

And add 3 or more of the following dragon powers (knacks):

Dispel Magic (5): 33
Disrupt Fate (5): 33
Dragon Breath (5): 33
Fear (6): 30 (Terror)
Karma Cancel (6): 34 (Lend Karma)
Lair Sense (5): 33
Regeneration (5): 33
Summoning (10): 38
Suppress Magic (5): 33
Venom (5): 33
Wingbeat (5): 23

Horror Powers: See **Despoiler of the Land** in the **Horrors** chapter, p. 479, for his powers when the Despoiler is in control of Vestrivan.

Spells: Nethermancy (Thirteenth Circle)

Legend Points (5): 1,168,750

Equipment: None

Loot: Magical items (some quite ancient) and a hoard of coins and gems worth around 500,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

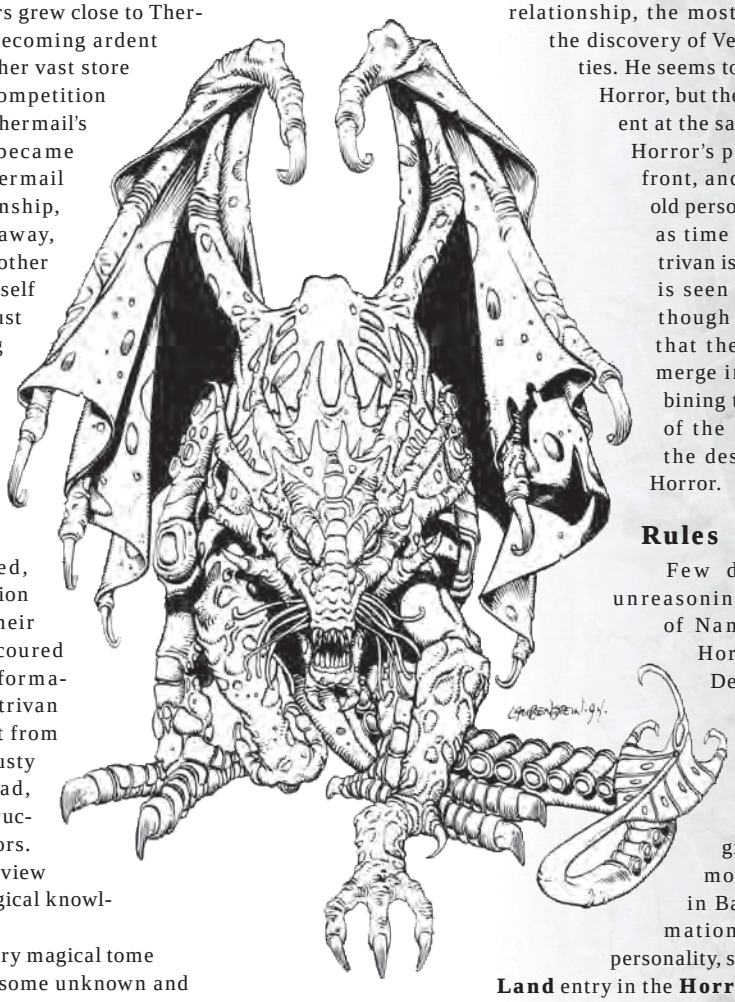
Commentary

Vestrivan and Vasdenjas were born in a twin-shelled egg, two apparently normal eggs joined end to end. Such proximity allowed the two to share the same intimate telepathy that a sire shares with his brood. Such intimacy is what made the two brothers so close, and so identical in mind and spirit. The pair together grew to become two of the greatest scholars of all dragonkind.

It is interesting to note, however, that the brothers approached their shared destiny in very different ways. Vasdenjas was anxious to travel the world and learn from experience, while Vestrivan wanted to delve through the accumulated knowledge of all Name-givers, dragons included, and benefit from the experience of others. This is where the brothers were destined to forever veer from each other's lives.

In their youth, the pair could not be parted from each other. They made their sire, Yuichotol, proud as they quickly picked up the traditions and rituals of dragonkind. The first divisions became apparent during this time, as Vasdenjas sought always to journey as far out from the lair as they were allowed in order to see the world and converse with others, while Vestrivan sought only to dig slowly through the memory crystals Yuichotol had provided for study.

Later in their lives, as Named adults, they stayed close but grew even further apart. While Vasdenjas traversed the lands, conversing and learning of creatures and Name-givers and legends, Vestrivan again kept mostly to Barsaive and the lands near their lair, devoting his mind to learning and studying even more about magic. As they became great dragons, Vasdenjas settled down considerably, but still stayed as active and outgoing as other great dragons. The brothers grew close to Thermail, Loremaster of the time, becoming ardent students, thoroughly exploring her vast store of knowledge. At this time, a competition developed between the two for Thermail's favor, and their relationship became strained and soured. When Thermail chose Vasdenjas for companionship, Vestrivan cloistered himself away, and shunned most contact with other dragons. Instead, he threw himself thoroughly into his passion and lust for knowledge, eagerly devouring any scrap and tidbit of magical lore in particular. Over his years of self-isolation, Vestrivan came to be an unprecedented wielder of magical power—very few arcane secrets escaped him.



As the Scourge approached, the brothers turned their attention to the study of Horrors and their effects. As always, Vasdenjas scoured the land, seeking tales and information and direct experience. Vestrivan also learned of the Horrors, but from memory crystals and old and musty tomes. Witnessing what he had, Vasdenjas realized the raw, destructive and evil power of the Horrors. Conversely, his brother came to view them as potential sources of magical knowledge. Both were correct.

When Vestrivan had read every magical tome known to the Name-givers, and some unknown and since lost forever, he came to the realization that only one realm of magical learning remained. To fully understand every nuance of patterns, names, threads and blood magic, Vestrivan would have to learn from the Horrors.

Vestrivan learned of the Horrors from scholarly works penned by races and peoples that have vanished since the Age of Dragons. Those tomes, certainly as old as or older than the Theran's Books of Harrow, are supposedly long gone, physically devoured by Vestrivan after reading them and realizing their content.

Like his brother, Vestrivan proved to be defiantly curious. Anxious to learn the unlearnable Horror magic, Vestrivan used the knowledge within those devoured tomes and made contact with the Horrors. And the Horrors responded with the greed and hunger for which they are so well known.

Vestrivan was no fool, however, and had prepared himself thoroughly. He was not easily defeated. Vestrivan struggled with a formless spirit for at least forty years. At first, Vasdenjas sought to aid his brother, but Vestrivan spurned him, and invoked the Rite of Inviolate Self-Direction. Vasdenjas had no choice but to watch his brother struggle from afar, and slowly succumb.

Eventually Vestrivan capitulated to the Horror, as nearly everyone and everything eventually does to an entity as powerful as it was. But the defeat was not complete. The Horror was either unwilling or unable to completely devour Vestrivan's mind, and in fact was lured and trapped inside Vestrivan's body itself—which they both now share. This was exactly what Vestrivan wanted—he was able to continue studying the Horrors and their magic, while the Horror gained a form in which to walk through our world.

There are several disturbing facets of this malign relationship, the most surprising of which is the discovery of Vestrivan's dual personalities. He seems to share his body with the Horror, but the two are never both present at the same time. Sometimes the Horror's personality is at the forefront, and sometimes Vestrivan's old persona comes through. Sadly, as time progresses, the old Vestrivan is seen less and the Horror is seen more. One intriguing—though remote—possibility, is that the two might eventually merge into a single being, combining the wisdom and intellect of the dragon Vestrivan with the destructive hunger of the Horror.

Rules

Few dragons strike such unreasoning fear into the hearts of Name-givers as does the Horror-marked Vestrivan. Despite the failure of other great dragons to recognize Vestrivan as a 'great dragon,' he is doubtless as powerful—considering the gifts from his 'patron'—as most other great dragons in Barsaive. For more information on Vestrivan's other personality, see the **Despoiler of the Land** entry in the **Horrors** chapter, on p. 479.

Vestrivan's story is not merely about his villainy. Indeed, there is a more tragic story in Vestrivan's past, of hubris and power and lost brotherhood with his fellow dragons. For within Vestrivan there are two minds, two distinct beings: The old Vestrivan, broodmate of Vasdenjas and magical scholar, and the Horror that accepted Vestrivan's ill-considered invitation to reside alongside the soul of the scholar. In short, there is more to Vestrivan's story than anyone has suspected.

Vestrivan is intended to be an enigma, and—as a Horror-corrupted dragon—is likely to be the most powerful opponent the characters will ever meet. Gamemasters should be careful when introducing him into their campaigns.

HORRORS

Foolish Name-givers! Knowledge is a powerful tool in this age of magic. Knowledge of the Horrors, however, invites their touch upon your mind and heart. The wise Name-giver will remember this and be wary.

• Vasdenjas, Master of Secrets •

What the Horrors are, where they come from, and their reasons for doing what they do are not easily answered questions. Though theories abound, debated endlessly by scholars, sages, and Nethermancers, the people of Barsaive know precious little of the Horrors' true nature. Few of the existing theories answer all the questions posed about the Horrors; though this chapter describes many traits common to the known Horrors in Barsaive, vast areas of information remain frustratingly vague.

USING HORRORS IN ADVENTURES AND CAMPAIGNS

A close look at the statistics and powers of the Horrors in this chapter should make clear just how dangerous these beings are. The Horrors possess incredible powers and abilities that they use to do vile, horrible, and evil things. They manipulate whole populations into killing themselves and each other. They feed off the fear and anguish wrought by the devastation of the Scourge. They torture people and creatures for nourishment, in the form of flesh or emotion. This lethal combination of great power with the worst types of actions makes using Horrors in adventures a delicate business. Carefully consider what type of Horrors to use as well as how to use them.

Should the Horrors be that powerful? Yes, absolutely. The Horrors need to be as tough as they are because they are the cause of the Scourge. The Horrors forced the world's population to live in shelters for four hundred years and left the land decimated. They destroyed forests, corrupted jungles and laid waste vast stretches of terrain. With rare exceptions, no one save those who accepted Theran aid survived the Horrors' onslaught.

The evil and powerful nature of the Horrors creates an interesting dilemma for gamemasters. Using any of the Named Horrors in this book will likely result in the death or permanent corruption of one or more of the player characters. When dealing with entities this powerful, those kinds of things are likely to happen. Though the death or corruption of a player character may be undesirable, both are important elements of **Earthdawn**, and the gamemaster should not try to avoid them. If the characters escape unscathed every time they encounter a Horror, the impact of the Horrors on the game universe is diluted because the threat they present to the world becomes less real.

The following guidelines suggest ways to present the true power of Horrors without killing large numbers of player characters in each adventure.

First of all, most Horrors (especially Named Horrors) should be long-term opponents. Certain minor Horrors and Horror constructs may work well in single adventures, but most Horrors should be used over a series of adventures in which the characters encounter the Horror's victims or witness the effects of its powers. Using a Horror in this way allows the players to encounter the Horror indirectly and gradually learn more about its influence and machinations. This knowledge, as well as the power and experience the players will gain during the course of several adventures, will leave them more ready to deal with the Horror by the time they meet it face-to-face.

Consider the Horrors campaign-level opponents. These are not the kinds of beings that characters fight once and slay. Most of the Horrors in this book are so powerful that only an experienced group of characters has any chance of defeating them. The Named Horrors in this chapter represent opportunities for over fifteen different types of campaigns, using different kinds of adventures and stories. Also, many of these Horrors prefer to use their powers over a long period of time. For example, planning for the characters to learn about, confront, and battle Ysrthgrathe in the course of a single adventure is a waste of a good Horror.

Keep in mind that the characters need not confront the Horror right from the start. Many Horrors work through agents, willing or otherwise. Willing agents might include cultists devoted to a particular Horror or constructs under the Horror's control. Unwilling agents might include Name-giver pawns of Ristul or the tormented victims of Chantrel's Horror.

Adventures featuring the Named Horrors need not conclude with the characters actually confronting the Horror head-on. In most cases, characters should consider themselves fortunate to survive any encounter with a Horror, direct or not! A series of minor victories for the characters that disrupt a Horror's activities is a good way to use these powerful Horrors in adventures without

risking the lives of the characters too seriously. Of course, if a Horror's plans are disrupted too often, that Horror might consider a direct assault on the party responsible.

Remember also that adventures in which characters die or become Horror constructs or servitors act as an excellent reminder that the world of **Earthdawn** is a dangerous one. Adventure after adventure in which the characters succeed against any opponent they face only serves to diminish the sense of danger that Barsaive should hold. An occasional adventure in which the characters suffer losses, either through injury or death, helps maintain a challenging atmosphere in your **Earthdawn** adventures and campaigns.

It is inevitable that one or more characters will suffer some misfortune at a Horror's hands, so try to work such misfortunes into the story. Make them significant events. Make them mean something beyond the fact that one of the players needs to create a new character. Don't let the death or corruption of a character happen for no good reason. The characters in **Earthdawn** are heroes; if they are going to die, let them die well!

Finally, consider the importance of the Horrors to the world of **Earthdawn**. One of the major themes in **Earthdawn** is battling the Horrors and attempting to drive them from the world. Therefore, the Horrors should be interesting opponents rather than simply invincible ones. Always give your player characters some way to defeat a Horror. Not just any group of characters should be able to defeat any Horror, of course. But the gamemaster must strike a balance between allowing some possibility of success for the characters and maintaining a threat level consistent with the terrible nature of the Horrors.

On the Origins of the Horrors

As the First Book of Harrow foretold, the Horrors entered Barsaive hundreds of years ago at the beginning of the terrible time called the Scourge. According to the famed dwarf scholar Jaron, the Horrors' native lands lie somewhere in the deepest (or perhaps furthest) reaches of the astral plane. These dark netherworlds are surely places of fluid, ever-changing evil, and it is doubtful that any Name-giver could reach the Horrors' homeland without losing body, mind, and soul.

Explicating his theories, Jaron states that, *"the darkling spirits may only exist in a world that supplies them sufficient magical energies. Without sufficient energies, the Horrors suffocate, just as the Name-givers suffocate without sufficient air to breathe."* (*First Book of Harrow, 1, III*) Jaron goes on to state that the level of magical energies in this world fluctuates as do the tides. It may be that at low tide, no magic exists—certainly the Horrors cannot exist in such an environment. However, when the tide rises to a critical point, the Horrors can enter and exist in this world. If the tidal analogy is correct, it appears that Name-givers are magically "amphibious," able to exist with or without such energies as amphibious creatures can exist immersed in and outside water. Certain scholars, mostly human, assert that only humans and perhaps dwarfs can exist as Name-giver races without a certain amount of magical energy. This human-centered theory, of course, is a source of great contention in many academic circles.

If Jaron's hypothesis is accepted as being accurate, the conclusion would be that the Horrors come from a magic-rich netherworld whose landscape remains unimaginable and inaccessible to Name-givers. The question then immediately arises: why do the Horrors leave their home plane to wreak havoc in this world? If the Horrors have all the magical energies and anything else they can possibly want in their netherworld, then this question can't be answered.

However, all too many Horrors appear eager to bridge the gap between the astral and physical realms to feast upon the land. Any Barsaivian who glances out his window at the still-scarred landscape, or listens to family stories about his forebears' time in the kaers, knows the truth of this. Therefore, the only conclusion is that the Horrors want or need something this world has to offer.

Regarding the Nature of the Horrors

Though it is extremely difficult to make any statement that is true of all Horrors, every one of these monstrosities shares the need to feed. This need for sustenance is one that all living creatures possess, and the Horrors are most certainly living creatures. However, Horrors do not all feed on flesh or plant life or other such physical substances as most creatures. In fact, most Horrors seem to feed on intangible emotions and the very energy of life. The life force of all living beings appears to draw the Horrors to our world, and the more complex and varied the life force, the richer a source of food the Horror finds it. For this reason the Horrors are particularly drawn to Name-givers, who have the most rich and complex emotions and life energies of all Barsaive's creatures.

Even those Horrors that feed on physical flesh seem to share the need to cause emotional upheaval in their victims. It is interesting to note that, although the type of emotional disturbance each Horror seems to most enjoy varies, all Horrors cause some sort of emotional or psychic distress in their victims. The conclusion seems inescapable that the Horrors either need or strongly desire these powerful emotional energies.

However, this theory alone does not adequately explain why no Horrors appear to feed on such intense but pleasant emotions

as love or joy. Instead, Horrors prefer to cause madness, pain, terror, despair, jealousy, and the like. Some scholars suggest that this preference means pleasurable emotions might hold the key to driving the Horrors away forever, but such a conclusion is highly theoretical at best. However, it's not good advice to use a smile instead of a spell or a sword when faced with a Horror!

Although it is known that Horrors must feed upon powerful, negative emotional energies, scholars can only make few additional general statements about these terrible entities. No two types of Horrors appear to be the same, nor can we assume they possess the same strengths and weaknesses. Several magical abilities that known Horrors possess have been described, as well as those that seem more or less common than others. The truth is that the only characteristic that unifies these monstrosities is their amazing diversity!

Not all Horrors are unique creatures—for example, there exist such general types of Horrors as bloatforms, dopplers, kreescra, and so on—but the vast majority are singular beings. As with all unique creatures, most Horrors have Names. Most of them have different ways of behaving, differing abilities, forms, modes of hunting, and desires. Such an incredible range presents terrible problems for those brave souls who attempt to rid our lands of these monsters. There is no certainty save uncertainty when facing a Horror.

Each and every sane Name-giver in Barsaive believes with every fiber of his being that the Horrors are evil, perhaps even evil incarnate. Most people wake sweating, with their hearts in their throats, at the merest thought of a Horror in their dreams. Such a reaction is natural, given the devastation the Horrors have inflicted (and still inflict) on this world. However, the Name-givers still comprehend almost nothing about them. No sages or scholars specialize in studying the desires or motives of Horrors. No peacemakers exist to help Horrors and Name-givers understand each other the way some have done between the different Name-giver races. Certainly, no scholar or adept—not even Nethermancers, for all their often sinister reputation—questions that Horrors perpetrate tremendous evil. However, anyone who faces or studies these creatures is urged to keep an open mind regarding their motives and true goals. When dealing with Horrors, blind fear, hatred and ignorance can all too easily prove fatal.

On a Singular Truth About the Forms of All Horrors

The Horrors are amazingly varied in nature. In a particularly unusual variation, not all Horrors exist on the same plane. Some Horrors possess only astral bodies and cannot exist in the physical world. Other Horrors possess only physical forms during their sojourns in Barsaive. Still others seem to have both astral and physical bodies. This last variation is particularly intriguing, as all other creatures known to us have only one mode of existence. Either all individual creatures of a given type exist astrally, or they all exist physically, or they all exist in both planes—there is no variation between individual members of a given species. Of all the creatures that are known to exist, only the Horrors depart from this pattern.

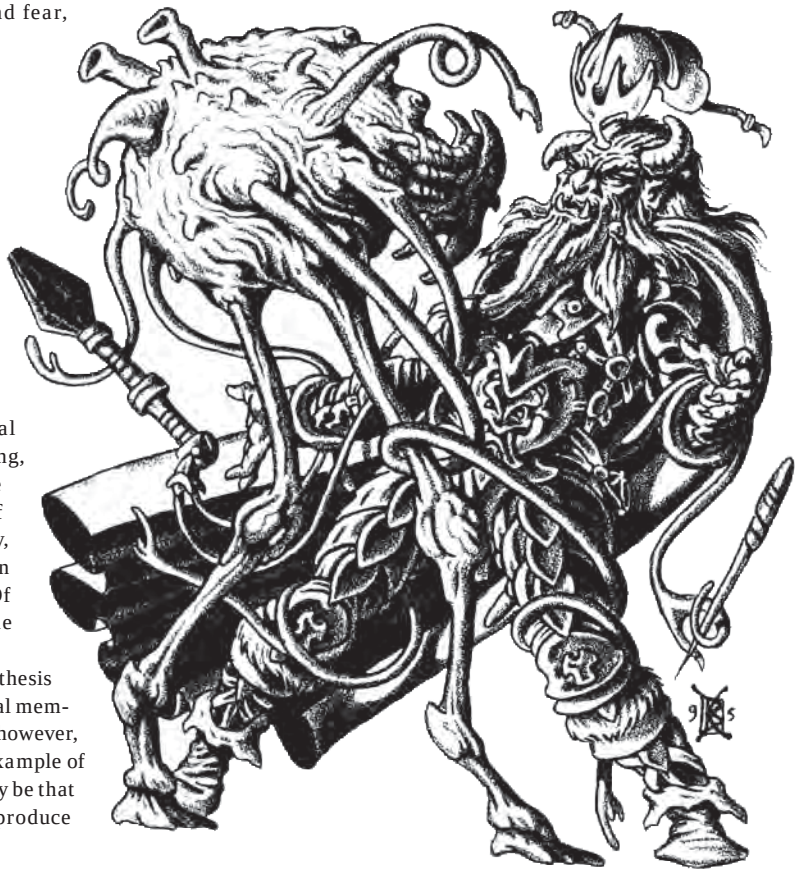
This has led some scholars to the intriguing hypothesis that those beings called Horrors are actually individual members of countless separate species. This hypothesis, however, does not adequately explain why only one, unique example of most Horrors is encountered in Barsaive. It may simply be that the vagaries of magic and existence in astral space produce countless permutations of the same basic stock.

Many Nethermancers agree that variations in physical and astral manifestation might provide a primitive means of classifying Horrors as astral in nature, physical in nature, and dual in nature. This simple classification may at first appear to have little or no practical application. However, anyone who ever attempts to destroy a Horror would be well advised to keep these categories in mind, as they offer one of the few clues known concerning how to kill or banish Horrors.

Specific rituals of banishment, physical attacks, astral quests, and more may be necessary to destroy or repel a Horror. If the Horror only exists on the physical plane, then one may safely assume that destroying its body destroys the Horror. However, an astral Horror can only be destroyed through spells, astral combat, and other means that attack the creature's intangible essence. And Horrors that reside in both the physical and astral worlds must be destroyed on both these planes; destroying one form or the other will not suffice to kill the Horror. Almost all of the Horrors are able to recreate either one of their bodies as long as one remains intact. Any number of brave Name-givers have no doubt prematurely celebrated a Horror's destruction, only to find themselves dying a horrible death inflicted by the supposedly deceased creature. It is important never to assume to know a Horror's true nature or how to destroy it.

On the Dangers of Studying the Horrors

Some people say that the Horrors are too terrible, too destructive for mortal minds and hearts to bear. Certainly the number of people driven insane by the slightest contact with a Horror should be caution enough for anyone. It is always dangerous to dwell overlong on thoughts of the Horrors, for they appear able to sense attention directed at them. It is also highly inadvisable to speak a Horror's Name aloud, as the chance of attracting the creature's attention grows much greater with every utterance.



Unfortunately, such concerns often play no part for the more heroic-minded among Barsaive's people detesting the very thought of a dread secret remaining unknown, particularly if the revelation of it may save lives one day. Such heroic souls and seekers are the most vulnerable to the Horrors. Their noblest qualities are the very things that may draw the Horrors to them.

Regarding Horror-Cursed Items and Places

Just as the Horrors can mark individuals with their fearsome powers, so too can they mark places and objects. These so-called Horror-cursed locations and items provide channels that Horrors can use to influence the physical world. Almost all Horrors can channel their Horror Mark power through such things, and many Horrors, such as Artificer and Aazhvat Many-Eyes, can use all manner of dreadful powers through cursed items and places.

Horror-cursed items come in as many shapes and sizes as do Name-givers, from seemingly mundane items to strange objects created from a Horror's body or forged by a Horror or one of its servitors. Some Horror-cursed items grant the user certain of the Horror's powers; in many gruesome cases, they also transform the user into a Horror construct. The danger of a Horror curse should never be underestimated, for entire towns have fallen under a Horror's influence because some careless merchant sold a Horror-cursed item to an inhabitant.

A Horror-cursed place or item functions in the same way as a Horror mark (see **Horror Powers**, p. 443). Through the curse, a Horror establishes a link to the item or place and can use its powers against any characters who pass through that place or come into contact with that item. Because the Horror must work indirectly through the cursed item or place, however, its powers become less effective. Resolve the use of the Horror's powers as described in the **Horror Powers** section, p. 440, but weaken them by a number of steps to reflect this. Feel free to adjust the power's effect higher or lower than the suggested level, as best suits your game. Generally, Horrors channel their powers carefully through cursed items or places, using only those powers that will not alarm the living sufficiently to make them abandon the place or object.

In some instances, Horrors may also Horror mark any character who comes into contact with cursed items or places. To do this, the gamemaster makes a Curse Test against the character's Spell Defense. The curse's step number is equal to the Spellcasting step of the Horror that laid the curse. If the test succeeds, the character is Horror-marked. This method of Horror-marking is an exception to the normal line-of-sight restriction on the Horror Mark power (for more information, see description for the **Horror Mark** power on p. 443).

Other Horror-cursed items or places may contain specific curses that affect characters. Use the Curse Test described in the preceding paragraph to determine if characters are affected by these curses. To break a Horror curse, the characters must usually kill the Horror that marked the item or place. Doing so breaks the curse on the place or item and on any characters under its effects. Descriptions of a few Horror-cursed items, are as follows.

Tainted Orichalcum

Name-givers throughout Barsaive use orichalcum in a variety of enchantments, ranging from the forging of magical weapons and armor to blood-magic rituals. Because of the widespread use of this magical metal, Horror-tainted orichalcum remains a grave and never-ending threat to all Name-givers.

A Horror may use the Horror Mark (p. 443) or Horror Thread (p. 445) power to taint a supply of orichalcum. Treat all items made of tainted orichalcum as Horror-cursed items.

The Flydrop Coat

According to legend the so-called Flydrop Coat, Raknidor, was created by magicians enslaved by the infamous Horror known as Hate (p. 485). Few records exist of this garment, which reputedly transforms its wearers into monstrous, spider-like Horror constructs called jehuthras (p. 452).

The Flydrop Coat requires no threads or Key Knowledges to activate its power. Anyone who puts on the coat for the first time must make a Willpower (10) Test. If the test succeeds, the coat's effect on the wearer is suppressed for 24 hours. If the character is still wearing the coat the next day, he must make a Willpower (11) Test. Add +1 to the Difficulty Number for each day the character wears the coat, until the character's Willpower Test fails or he removes the coat. A failed test arouses in the wearer an inexplicable desire to wear the coat every day.

The coat changes fashion and color up to once a day as the wearer desires. However, the design always includes gray fur (actually spider hair) and conceals the body from shoulder to knee.

Whenever the wearer wills it, the coat kills all flies within Willpower step yards of the wearer. After a week of wearing the coat, the wearer learns he may excrete a lump of organic material that attracts flies within a radius in miles equal to his Willpower step. The lump's magic lasts for 1 week, after which time the wearer can produce another lump.

About the same time, the thought enters the wearer's mind that the flies killed by the coat probably taste good. A second full week of wearing the coat brings on a compulsion to spit saliva, which dries instantly into tough threads, and to weave the threads into cat's cradles or webs. A month after his failed Willpower Test, the wearer's behavior drives away even casual visitors.

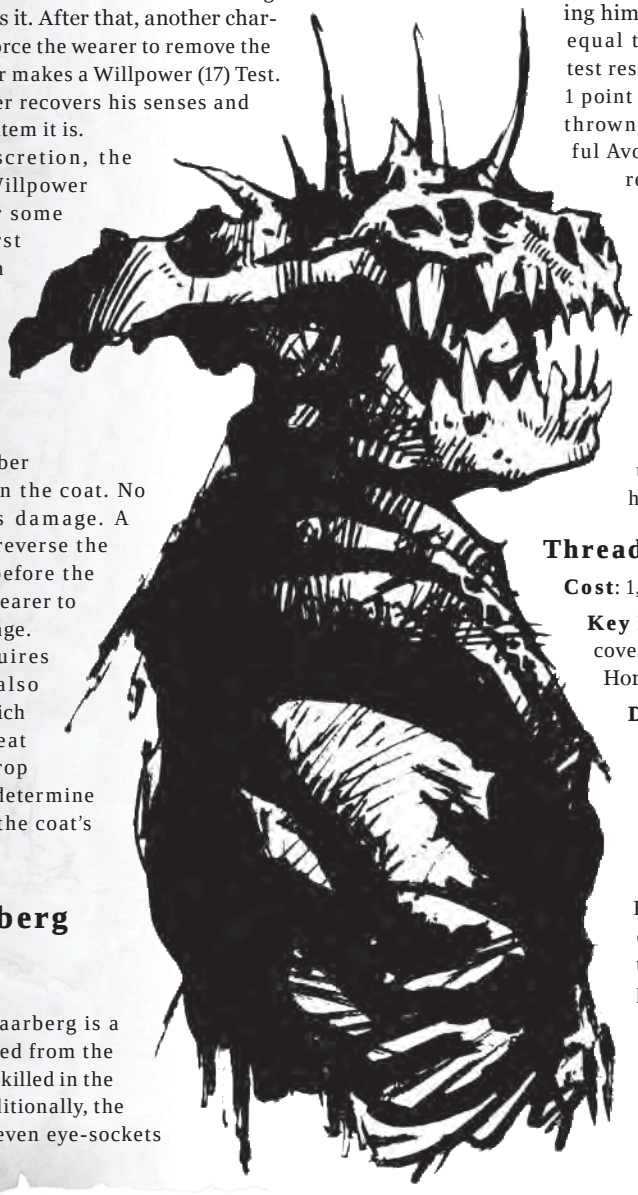
At this point, the coat attaches thick adhesive tendrils to the wearer's body, preventing him from removing it. Over the next month the wearer, who now feeds solely on flies, grows lazy and withdraws into some shadowy, unfrequented niche such as a cave or a cellar.

The coat now begins to transform the hapless character. The wearer's limbs atrophy and most of his body withdraws into his abdomen, which swells five-fold. His skin grows milky, tough, and inflexible, eventually becoming a cocoon. As the cocoon grows, the coat peels away under its own power and reforms intact nearby. After three days of slow growth into a papery, foul-smelling sphere, the cocoon tears open and a mature jehuthra crawls out. The new-hatched jehuthra carries the coat to a public place where someone will find it and goes off to spread panic and terror as Hate desires.

The wearer can remove the coat without trouble during the first week in which he wears it. After that, another character must persuade, trick, or force the wearer to remove the coat. If this happens, the wearer makes a Willpower (17) Test. If this test succeeds, the wearer recovers his senses and recognizes the coat as the vile item it is.

At the gamemaster's discretion, the wearer may make a similar Willpower Test to remove the coat after some shock, such as eating his first fly or facing a jehuthra in combat and uncomfortably recognizing his own kinship with his opponent. Once the transformation begins, however, removing the coat inflicts damage at a step number equal to the number of weeks the wearer has worn the coat. No armor protects against this damage. A questor's healing magic can reverse the transformation at any time before the cocoon stage and enable the wearer to remove the coat without damage.

Destroying the coat requires powerful magic. That act also releases the coat's energies, which attracts Hate's attention. Treat attempts to destroy the flydrop coat as a use of raw magic to determine whether Hate Horror-marks the coat's destroyer.



The Skull of Maarberg

Maximum Threads: 1
Spell Defense: 21

The legendary Skull of Maarberg is a fearsome-looking helmet formed from the skull of a large reptilian Horror killed in the early years of the Scourge. Traditionally, the skull is described as having seven eye-sockets and several large spiked horns, which give its wearer a menacing appearance. Reputedly, anyone who wears the Skull gains the powers of the Horror to which it once belonged—and risks possession by the Horror as well. The ancient Skull of Maarberg has turned a dull brownish color with age and patches of light green discoloration mar its surface. The Skull is much stronger than it looks, however, and the legends are true—any wearer who weaves threads to the skull receives the ability to wield several Horror powers. Currently, the skull belongs to Moltaa, an obsidiman Nethermancer who leads a small unit of the Grim Legion in the hinterlands of Barsaive just north of the Tylon Mountains.

Thread Rank One

Cost: 500

Key Knowledge: The skull belongs to a Horror slain by a great hero during the earliest days of the Scourge. It was recovered many years after the Invae Burnings in a buried city its discoverers christened Maarberg. The user must discover the Name given to the city by its long- dead inhabitants (the gamemaster supplies the Name).

Effect: The wearer gains the **Swat** ability. The step number for this ability is equal to the wearer's Strength step + the helmet's thread rank. Using the ability is a Simple action. When struck, the wearer makes a Swat Test against his opponent's Attack Test result. If the test succeeds, the wearer deflects the force of the blow with a backhanded swipe of his arm. The force of the blow rebounds into the attacker, sending him flying backward a number of yards equal to the difference between the two test results (at least 1 yard). To avoid taking 1 point of Stun damage for each yard he is thrown, the attacker must make a successful Avoid Blow Test against the Swat Test result. If the wearer's Swat Test fails, his opponent's blow does standard damage, and the wearer is immediately Knocked Down.

Thread Rank Two

Cost: 800

Effect: The wearer gains the Horror power Animate Dead (p. 441). The step number for this power is equal to the wearer's Willpower step + the helmet's thread rank.

Thread Rank Three

Cost: 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must discover the Name of the hero who slew the Horror in the final defense of his city.

Deed: When the wearer attaches this thread to the Skull, the lingering, malign presence of the dead Horror psychically assaults him. To resist, the wearer makes a Willpower Test against the Horror's Spell Defense. If the test fails, the spirit of the Horror possesses the wearer for three days, during which time it attempts to force the wearer to cause as much pain and suffering as possible. If the wearer resists the Horror, he gains 1,300 Legend Points for the Deed. If not, he gains no Legend Points, but the Deed is still successful.

Effect: The wearer gains the Horror power Cursed Luck (p. 442). The step number for this power is equal to the wearer's Willpower step + the helmet's thread rank.

Thread Rank Four

Cost: 2,100

Effect: The wearer gains the Horror power Damage Shift (p. 442). The step number for this power is equal to the wearer's Willpower step + the helmet's thread rank.

Thread Rank Five

Cost: 3,400

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the Horror whose skull he wears (the gamemaster supplies the Name).

Deed: When the wearer attaches this thread, the Horror's spirit psychically assaults him. To resist, the wearer must make a Willpower Test against the Horror's Spell Defense. If the test fails, the Horror possesses the wearer for a year and a day. If the wearer resists the Horror, he gains 3,400 Legend Points for the Deed. If not, he gains no Legend Points, but the Deed is still successful.

Effect: The wearer gains the Horror power Skin Shift (p. 446). The step number for this power is equal to the wearer's Willpower step + the helmet's thread rank.

Thread Rank Six

Cost: 5,500

Effect: The wearer gains the Horror power Corrupt Karma (p. 441). The step number for this power is equal to the wearer's Willpower step + the helmet's thread rank.

Thread Rank Seven

Cost: 8,900

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the curse that escaped the lips of the Horror at the moment of its death: "Through a Name-giver's greed for power, I shall live again to laugh at your crumbling bones!"

Deed: The spirit of the Horror makes a final attempt to possess the wearer, who must make a Willpower Test against the Horror's Spell Defense. If the test fails, the Horror destroys the wearer's identity and takes over his body until he dies of natural causes. If the test succeeds, the Horror possesses the wearer for three days. Regardless of success, the wearer gets no Legend Points for this Deed.

Effect: The wearer gains the Horror power Karma Tap (p. 446). The step number for this power is equal to the wearer's Perception step + the helmet's thread rank.

The Pipes of Wrongness

The Pipes of Wrongness are a set of panpipes beautifully wrought of pewter. Crafted by an unknown, long-dead craftsman, the rune-covered pipes carry an unusual and powerful curse of the Horror called **Fla Tra Lys**, the Eater of Music (see p. 458).

Anyone who picks up the pipes immediately experiences an irresistible urge to blow them and hear their melody. Unfortunately, the only music they produce is a high, unpleasant, piercing whistle. Within days after a character blows the pipes, an undead servant of the Horror called Fla Tra Lys appears. This servant is an unimaginably haggard, haunted looking individual with thin white hair, sunken cheeks, and a skeletal body. His clothes are filthy, as though he has been recently dug from the earth. The servant possesses the same game statistics as a cadaver man (p. 448).

The servant says, "*I am a gift from Fla Tra Lys, the Eater of Music. I will serve as your slave for a year and a day. You may beat me or starve me, but I will continue to serve you. You may drive me away, but I will return to serve you. If you slay me, I will rise from the dead and serve you even as my body rots.*"

The undead servant remains with the character for a full year and a day. During that time, the servant rises from any injury or death to continue its service. Once that time has elapsed, the Horror appears to claim the servant and slay the character it has been serving. Then the Horror uses the Unnatural Life power to transform the character into a new undead servant, who serves

the next character who blows the pipes.

If a character who blew the pipes dies before Fla Tra Lys claims him, the undead servant remains with the character's surviving fellow adventurers. However, the Horror soon shows up to devour the servant. Blowing on the pipes again before the servant's time is up has no effect.

Characters may compel or bargain with Fla Tra Lys to take back the pipes and remove the item's curse from a player character. However, they must first summon the Horror by some means (if it is not already present), such as the Horror Call spell (see the **Nethermancy Spells** chapter on p. 364 of the **Player's Compendium**).

The pipes can be destroyed by tossing them into the Death's Sea, but the Horror will try to prevent this. Dragon flame also destroys the pipes, but persuading a dragon to use its breath in this manner may prove difficult. A generous gamemaster may decide that the act of destroying the pipes also weakens Fla Tra Lys, so that characters may more easily destroy the Horror. A powerful questor of Garlen, Lochost, or Mynbruje can remove the enslaving curse from a victim but cannot destroy the pipes.

Horror Powers

All Horrors demonstrate powerful magical abilities. They may use the magical energies of the world to wield these powers, as Name-givers use spells or talents, or these powers may exist because the Horrors are actual manifestations of astral energy. No one knows for certain.

Keep in mind that not every Horror possesses every power, nor are Horror powers limited to the list below. The powers described in this section are those most extensively documented. As far as anyone knows, the Horrors may have any number of additional, fearsome abilities.

The following text describes known Horror powers and demonstrates different ways to use some of them, plus it offers guidelines for altering Horror powers to suit your needs, and describes other abilities unique to Horrors.

Customizing Horror Powers

The descriptions of Horror powers represent the most commonly encountered manifestation of those Horror powers. However, not all Horror powers function identically for all Horrors. Many Horrors use slight variations of them, which add an element of the unknown to the game. Alterations to Horror powers may make them more powerful, but can also make them less so. Some Horror powers are extremely deadly — adding limitations to such powers makes the Horror a bit easier for characters to deal with. Below are guidelines for altering certain Horror powers during play:

The most common method of altering a Horror power from the norm changes the parameters of a power's effect, such as its range or duration. For example, many standard Horror powers can only be used on victims that the Horror can see. One variation might allow the Horror to use any or all of its powers on any victim it has Horror-marked, operating on the theory that the Horror mark allows it to "see" the character in question. Similarly, the standard Damage Shift power transfers current Damage only—a more powerful variation might allow the Horror to transfer Wounds as well.

The other method of alteration involves changing the power's actual effect. Such variations are common among the Named Horrors presented later in this chapter. Each of these Horrors is unique and so manifests its powers in a unique way. For example, the Horror Mark power used by the entity known as Taint (p. 495) provides a good example of an altered effect. Instead of marking victims as most other Horrors do, Taint must mark the victim a little bit at a time until the Horror has tainted the victim's pattern sufficiently to create the Horror mark. Once a victim has been marked, Taint can use its Corrupt Magic power on that character. The alterations to Taint's Horror Mark power limit the power in one way, but also allow the Horror to use other abilities against the victim.

The rules for Horror powers are meant as guidelines, and the gamemaster may bend, twist, or even break them in whatever way best suits his adventures. Similarly, the descriptions of Horror powers in this book are simply mechanics for resolving the actions most commonly associated with the Horrors, and the gamemaster should feel free to modify the way these powers work as he sees fit. For example, if the gamemaster wishes to create a Horror whose Horror mark allows it to take control of its victims for brief periods of time, he should do so. Just because the existing description of the Horror Mark power does not cite this type of effect does not mean that a given Horror cannot use it that way.

However, keep in mind that the dreadful powers of many Horrors can result in the death of many characters if used without caution. Horror powers are dangerous enough as written, and any enhancements of them might easily make the Horrors unbeatable.

If the characters have little or no chance of ever defeating a Horror, the adventure in which they face the Horror will soon cease to be fun. Therefore, resist the temptation to beef up Horror powers too much. In fact, altering a Horror's powers to reduce their effectiveness may add to the fun of the game by forcing the Horror to use more subtle approaches to ensure its success.

Some Horror powers are so effective as written that they can prevent the characters from taking any action against the Horror. For example, the Terror power can completely incapacitate an entire group of adepts, while the Damage Shift power can transfer all of the damage the characters inflicted on the Horror to another victim. High step numbers for either of these powers can result in a dead-end scenario for the characters, and so the gamemaster may wish to substitute lower step numbers for these powers. For example, if a Horror's Damage Shift step number is only +1 or +2 steps higher than the average Spell Defense of a group of characters, the Horror will likely suffer at least some of the damage the characters inflict on it.

Animate Dead

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: Yes

The Animate Dead power allows a Horror to place an undead spirit into a corpse or cadaver, resulting in the creation of a cadaver man (p. 448). The Horror touches a portion of the deceased body and makes an Animate Dead Test against the deceased target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the dead man is raised to unlife for a number of days equal to the Horror's Animate Dead step, turning him into a cadaver man under the Horror's control. The Horror can directly control the cadaver man at a distance equal to its Animate Dead step × 20 yards. Though the Horror must concentrate to control the dead, it need not make any tests to give the cadaver man orders. Because cadaver men created with this power are telepathically linked to the Horror, its commands to them do not depend on speech or line of sight. The Horror may use blood magic to extend the power's duration. For 1 permanent Damage Point, the Horror can keep the cadaver man animated for a year and a day. At the end of this time, the cadaver man collapses into dust unless the Horror continues to extend the blood magic. This damage can be healed once the cadaver man is destroyed or the power ends, whichever occurs first.

Astral Camouflage

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: Yes

Some Horrors have the ability to hide their presence in astral space, and can use this power to camouflage their astral imprint. The Horror makes an Astral Camouflage Test, the result of which becomes the Detection Difficulty for Perception and any Astral Sensing Tests. If the Horror engages in combat or moves faster than half its normal Movement rate, the camouflage is disrupted. Though its features appear blurry and indistinct, it can be seen normally, and will remain visible until the end of the round in which it slows down. Each use of the Astral Camouflage power lasts for a number of hours equal to the Horror's rank in Astral Camouflage.

Astral Sight

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: Yes

Like dragons, almost all Horrors possess astral sight. To use this ability, the Horror makes an Astral Sight Test. The gamemaster then compares the result against the Spell Defense of each object or being within Astral Sight step × 10 yards of the Horror and in its line of sight. If the test succeeds, the Horror can see the target's astral image.

Aura of Awe

Step Number: Rank + Charisma
Action: Yes

The Aura of Awe power allows a Horror to alter the attitudes of other characters toward it. To use this power, the Horror makes an Aura of Awe Test against the target's Social Defense. The result level achieved determines the Attitude of the target. On a Poor result, the target adopts a Neutral attitude toward the Horror. On an Average result, the target adopts a Friendly attitude. On a Good result, the target becomes Loyal. An Excellent or better result means the target is Awestruck. The effect lasts until the target has been out of the Horror's presence for a year and a day, or until the Horror directly or otherwise obviously injures the target. When a player character is affected by the Aura of Awe, the gamemaster may secretly instruct the player to run the character appropriately or may temporarily take over decisions for the player until the power ends or is dispelled.

Corrupt Karma

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: Yes

The Corrupt Karma power allows the Horror to alter another being's use of Karma. The Horror makes a Corrupt Karma Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the Horror overrides the character's use of Karma, preventing him from spending Karma on any actions taken against the Horror. If the Horror achieves an Excellent result on the Corrupt Karma Test, it can prevent the character from using Karma at all. Though this power normally works only through line of sight, it can also work against a Horror-marked character several hundred miles away from the Horror in question.

Corrupt Reality

Step Number: Rank
Action: Yes

The Corrupt Reality power enables a Horror to distort the fabric of reality within sensing distance of a victim it has previously Horror-marked. By distorting reality in this manner, the Horror can alarm and torment the victim and anyone else in the victim's vicinity. This serves to isolate the victim from others, who will typically avoid the presence of anyone who is a locus for such occurrences. Typical effects of Corrupt Reality include the ever-present eye images associated with Aazhvat Many-Eyes, as well as the fouling of food and drink, the creation of eerie sounds or changes in temperature, the transformation of mundane objects into slime-covered monstrosities, and the induced rapid decay of inanimate objects. The effects of Corrupt Reality appear for a number of rounds equal to the Horror's Corrupt Reality rank. These manifestations are not illusions, and it therefore does no good attempting to disbelieve them. However, the effects of Corrupt Reality are not permanent. Any transformed object returns to normal at the end of the duration, and Corrupt Reality cannot directly cause damage to living organisms. Of course, the fear and dismay the effect induces may cause those beholding it to act in a manner resulting in harm to themselves or others.

Create Shadow

Step Number: Rank
Action: Yes

Using this power, a Horror can create a shadow by killing a victim's body and capturing the slain Name-giver's spirit. With a terrible wrenching sound, the Horror sucks the soul from the dead or dying body and corrupts it. A terrible blackness slowly passes over the poor victim's astral self, until the only bit of the wretch still visible is the dull glow of his eyes. Nothing remains

of the victim, not the smallest shred of his soul—the victim has died, completely and irrevocably. The shadow has a maximum Strength Rating equal to the Horror's rank in the Create Shadow power. For more information on shadows, refer to the **Spirits** chapter on p. 370.

CURSED LUCK

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: Yes

Many Horrors can bring bad luck to their opponents using this power. To use Cursed Luck, the Horror makes a Cursed Luck Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the power reduces the result of at least one die rolled by the target for any action to 1. The result level achieved determines how many of the target's dice have their results reduced. An Average result reduces one die; a Good result reduces two dice; an Excellent result three; an Extraordinary result reduces four dice. Cursed Luck automatically reduces the highest numbers rolled by the target character. For example, if a character rolls a 2 and a 6, the Cursed Luck power reduces the 6 to a 1.

If the result level achieved by the Horror allows it to reduce more dice than the target character has rolled, the power affects all the target's dice and gives the character an automatic result of 1, meaning that his action fails, probably with a Pathetic result (see the **Rule of One** in the **Game Concepts** chapter on p. 18 of the **Player's Compendium**). A character may not use cursed dice as Bonus dice, because the curse has already reduced any result from such dice to 1 before the character can gain any benefit. Cursed Luck only affects the results of one test and can only be used if the Horror has a higher Initiative than his target.

DAMAGE SHIFT

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: No

The Damage Shift power allows a Horror to shift damage it has taken onto a target character. The Horror may use Damage Shift by making a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, a number of Damage Points equal to the Horror's Damage Shift Test result, up to a maximum equal to the Horror's Current Damage total, are shifted to the target character. Damage Shift works by line of sight, meaning that the Horror must be able to see its chosen target.

DISEASE

Step Number: Rank
Action: No

Horrors with this power are infectious and are able to infect a target with a disease. No test is required for a Horror to infect a target with the disease—if the victim is physically struck and damaged by the Horror, it is automatically exposed to the disease. The effects of the Horror's disease are listed with the description for the Horror (for more information about diseases, see the **Adventuring** chapter, p. 125).

DISPLACE

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: Yes

Horrors can exist in the physical world, astral space, or both. All Horrors capable of existing in both astral space and the physical world have the ability to enter and leave astral space at will. When a single-natured Horror uses this power to enter astral space, its body disappears from the world. If the Horror is attacked and killed while in this state in astral space, it is utterly destroyed. To use this power, the Horror makes a Displace Test against its own unlowered Spell Defense. The type of region the Horror is in when it attempts to enter or leave astral space can aid or hinder the Horror. Horrors receive a bonus to the Displace Test when moving into or out of astral space in Tainted or Corrupt regions. Tainted regions add a +2 bonus to the Horror's Displace Test, while Corrupt regions add a +4 bonus. Open regions add no bonus; Safe regions cause a –2 penalty to the Horror's Displace Test. If the test succeeds, the Horror shifts into or out of astral space, depending on where it is when it uses this power.

DISRUPT MAGIC

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: Yes

The Disrupt Magic power allows a Horror to disrupt any form of magical force or pattern, from a sustained spell to the talents of a Name-giver. To use this power, the Horror makes a Disrupt Magic Test. If the target of the power is a spell, the Disrupt Magic Test result must equal or exceed the Dispel Difficulty of the spell. If it does, the spell is dispelled. If the Disrupt Magic Test result equals or exceeds the step number of the ability or talent being targeted, the ability/talent is damaged and cannot be used until the target character (or creature) makes a Recovery Test to restore the ability/talent.

DREAM SHAPE

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: Yes

The Dream Shape power enables a Horror to enter the dreams of a sleeping Name-giver by making a successful Dream Shape Test against the subject's Spell Defense. The Horror can only use this power against Name-givers it has previously marked. The Horror can make only one attempt per night to enter a specific Name-giver's dreams. A successful test allows the Horror to manipulate the victim's dreams in any way the Horror desires. For example, a Horror might continuously plant a specific dream instructing the character to go to an undiscovered kaer and perform certain actions that will free the Horror's physical form. Some Horrors use this power to cause particular emotions in their target. Others enjoy driving their victims mad through the sadistically twisted imagery they place in the Name-givers' minds. For example, Druistadt often causes its victims to dream of themselves dying, impaled on the burning bill of a ferocious bird with glowing red eyes.

DURABILITY

Step Number: Rank
Action: No

The Durability power increases a Horror's ability to take damage. Each Durability rank permanently increases a Horror's Death and Unconsciousness Ratings. The amount of increase is determined by the Horror's type. The Horror Durability Increase Table shows the appropriate increase per Durability rank listed as two numbers separated by a slash. The number to the left of the slash represents the increase to the Horror's Death Rating. The number to the right represents the increase to the Horror's Unconsciousness Rating.

HORROR DURABILITY INCREASE TABLE

Type	Increase
Horror construct	6/5
Minor Horror	7/6
Named Horror	9/8

ENERGY DRAIN

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: No (see text)

This power allows Horrors to sustain themselves by feeding on the emotions and life energies of their victims. This nourish-

ment is represented by a Horror's Karma Points, which in turn represent the Horror's raw magical energy. All Horrors automatically regain a number of Karma Points per day. The Energy Drain power allows Horrors to gain additional Karma Points beyond the base rate. This power is related to the Karma Drain power, but can only be used once per day.

Horrors can gain Karma by feeding on the negative emotions of Name-givers or by drawing on the victim's life energy. In the first case, fear, anger, hatred, and jealousy are all examples of the types of emotions that Horrors find pleasurable. Most often, the Horror feeding on these emotions has caused those emotions to boil up in its victims in the first place. The Horror essentially manipulates its victims into creating food for it. The second method allows Horrors to feed on the magical or life energy of Name-givers. As magic and life are so closely intertwined in Earthdawn, these two types of energy are essentially the same. When feeding on life energy, the Horror is usually careful not to completely drain its victims, so that it can maintain its own food supply.

Feeding off emotion requires the Horror to make an Energy Drain Test against the victim's Social Defense; draining life energy requires an Energy Drain Test against the victim's Spell Defense. When draining energy from multiple victims, the Horror makes the appropriate test against the highest Defense Rating among all the victims, adding +1 to the Difficulty Number for each victim beyond the first. In either case, a successful test means the Horror gains a number of additional Karma Points equal to his rank in Energy Drain. These Karma Points are in addition to those the Horror regains under normal conditions.

Some powerful Horrors can also increase their Karma step using this power. Each time a Horror achieves an Extraordinary result using its Energy Drain power, it may increase its Karma step by 1 instead of gaining Karma Points. This increase is not permanent, however. The Horror's Karma step will revert to normal on the day after the Horror has increased it in this way.

Forge Horror Construct

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: Yes

With this power, Horrors can create Horror constructs from other life forms such as mundane animals, magical creatures, and even Name-givers. Horrors can forge constructs from dead or living bodies, although they prefer living creatures. When using Name-givers, the vilest Horrors usually leave a bit of the victim's mind intact, so that he will live out his entire existence dimly aware that he is a Horror construct. To use this power against living targets, the Horror must have previously Horror-marked them. The body used must be of sufficient size and weight to form the body of the construct desired. For example, a Horror would need a body at least the size of troll or obsidiman to create a construct as large as a jehuthra. However, as Horror constructs can be of virtually any size and shape, most Horrors can make do with whatever victims happen to be handy.

To forge a construct costs the Horror 5 points of Karma. These initial Karma Points infuse the target body with the Horror's magical energy, initiating the body's transformation. After the Horror has initiated the change, it makes a series of five Forge Horror Construct Tests against the target body's Spell Defense. If the target body is dead, use the Spell Defense the target had when it was alive. Each successful Forge Horror Construct Test allows the Horror to alter one of the target body's Attributes to that of the type of construct being forged or to grant the construct a power or special ability. Each result level above Average on any Forge Horror Construct Test allows the Horror to alter one additional Attribute or add one additional power. Note that the Horror cannot add his Karma dice to the roll for any of these tests; the Karma is used simply to fuel the power.

The Horror can also alter the target's other characteristics by 1 point for every additional point of Karma spent. When spending Karma to change a certain Characteristic, the Horror makes an additional Forge Horror Construct Test. There is no limit to the number of additional Karma Points a Horror can spend on forging a construct. For example, if a Horror spends 2 Karma Points to grow natural armor on his victim, he needs to succeed at a Forge Horror Construct Test against the victim's Spell Defense. As a result, the victim's skin hardens permanently, providing 2 points of natural Armor.

When used against living targets, each successful Forge Horror Construct Test causes damage to the victim equal to the result of the test. This damage often kills the target, but many Horrors make a point of leaving the target an alive and unwilling pawn in their control. To alter the Attributes of living targets, the Horror must achieve a Good result on its Forge Horror Construct Tests. When a Horror uses this power against Name-givers, the victim may make a Willpower Test to attempt to resist the effects of the Horror's magic. The result of the Willpower Test can substitute for the victim's Spell Defense when he resists in this way. Then the victim makes a Willpower Test for each of the Horror's Forge Horror Construct Tests. If the result of the victim's Willpower Test is lower than his Spell Defense, he defends using his normal Spell Defense.

When all the construct's Attributes and abilities have been altered as the Horror wishes, the Horror makes a Horror Mark Test to form a link between itself and the construct. If this test succeeds, the construct is complete. Once formed, Horror constructs remain under the control of the Horror that forged them. Many Horrors forge constructs and let them roam Barsaive, inflicting pain and suffering on all the Name-givers they encounter.

Almost all magically active Horrors possess the ability to forge constructs. The Horror powers Animate Dead and Karma Tap are specialized forms of this power, each with special restrictions. Dual-natured Horrors can also use this power to forge new bodies for themselves, and some Horrors build this power into Horror-cursed items. When activated, such items begin to transform a victim into a construct as described above.

This ability is extremely powerful, and gamemasters should use it sparingly against player characters.

Forge Trap

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: Yes

The Forge Trap power enables a Horror to transform an earth, stone, or metal passageway so that it becomes a trap or contains one. The nature of the Horror determines the precise type of trap. The Difficulty Number for the Forge Trap Test necessary to use this power is based on the predominant material of the passageway. For a passage of raw earth, the Difficulty Number is 6; for raw stone, 10; for worked stone, 15; and for metal, 20. If the Forge Trap Test succeeds, distribute the result between the trap's Detection Difficulty, Disarm Difficulty, Trap Initiative, and Trap Effect/Damage Step. See **Traps** in the **Adventuring** chapter on p. 108 for more information on traps and how they work.

The Horror may spend a Karma Point to create a link between itself and its traps, which enables it to use the Energy Drain power to feed on the suffering of any living being taking damage from the traps. Traps may do indirect damage—for example, by preventing characters from escaping a small room—and may require nonstandard methods to neutralize. For example, characters might need to solve a riddle or puzzle to deactivate the trap.

Horror Mark

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: Yes

This terrible ability allows Horrors to mark victims and items, thereby linking the Horror and the target. When cast on a target,

a Horror mark becomes embedded into the target's True Pattern, making it difficult even for other Horrors to detect. To use this power, the Horror must be able to see the target. The Horror makes a Horror Mark Test against the target's Spell Defense. (If the target character has used raw magic, use the method described under **Casting Raw Magic** in the **Spell Magic** chapter on p. 289 of the **Player's Compendium** instead of this Test.) If the test succeeds, the target becomes Horror-marked.

The Horror mark links the Horror to the target over vast distances and allows the Horror to use any of its abilities against or through the target when it is within 10 miles of the Horror. For a range up to 100 miles, the Horror mark allows the Horror to take actions against a target character that do not directly cause damage, and communication between the Horror and the target extends for 5,000 miles. Horror marks last a year and a day, and the Horror may renew the Horror mark whenever it is within 100 miles of the target.

Unique Horror Marks

The standard description of the Horror Mark power outlines the power's basic effects and the most common method in which Horrors use it. However, many major Horrors have their own versions of this power that exemplify each Horror's strengths, weaknesses, and favorite tactics. The **Game Information** sections for many of the Named Horrors in this book offer expanded game mechanics for how the Horror's unique variant of the Horror Mark power functions in the game.

When creating new Horrors or using the Horrors in published **Earthdawn** material, feel free to alter the specific effects of the Horror Mark power to best suit the Horror using it and satisfy the needs of the story (see **Customizing Horror Powers**, p. 440).

Effects of a Horror Mark

A Horror mark has an impact on the marked character and the overall adventure/campaign. The gamemaster immediately has a new story to tell in which the Horror uses the advantages of its mark, either directly or subtly. Exactly how and when the Horror shows itself is up to the gamemaster and depends on the specifics of his or her campaign—the Horror mark affects the victim as much or as little as the gamemaster decides.

Most people in Barsaive know that a Horror mark is a bad thing. If it becomes common knowledge that a character has been marked, he will face challenges in dealing with fellow Name-givers. Ever fearful of the Horrors, the common folk would rather leave a Horror-marked victim to die of wounds or exposure rather than aid such a person and risk facing a Horror. Like much about the Horrors, Horror marks are a source of considerable superstition. Countless tales exist about the ways in which Horrors can work through their marked victims, many of which are true. For every true tale, however, there are perhaps two or three false ones told.

Detecting Horror Marks

A Horror-marked victim does not necessarily know that he or she has been marked—a Horror mark leaves no physical trace on the victim unless the Horror's specific use of this power causes one. Instead, a Horror mark taints a victim's True Pattern, and so detecting one requires some type of astral sensing ability such as the Astral Sight talent, the Astral Sense spell, or the naturally Astral-Sensitive Sight possessed by windlings.

When perceived astrally, a Horror mark appears as a small stain on the victim's pattern. The texture and design of this stain are unique to the Horror whose mark it is. For example, the Horror mark of Aazhvat Many-Eyes might appear as an unblinking eye, while the Horror mark of Taint would resemble a spot of corrupted energy. Describing the appearance of a Horror mark in a way that reflects the Horror who marked the victim allows the gamemaster to drop hints about the Horror's nature to the characters and players (assuming that the character is unaware of the Horror mark in the first place).

To detect a Horror mark, the sensing character must make an astral sensing test based on the appropriate ability against the Spell Defense of the Horror that marked the victim. This astral sensing test can also allow characters to detect Horror curses on items and places, any attempt to do so requires the character to achieve a Good result.

Determining if a character is under the influence of a Horror by having him perform an Artisan skill is unlikely to result in real proof—this widespread tradition is the result of centuries of legend and superstition. However, that does not necessarily mean that this method never works—some Horrors do pervert the Artisan skills of their victims, such as the Horror known as Fla Tra Lys (see **Minor Horrors**, p. 458).

Horror Marks and Raw Magic

A magician who casts raw magic may find himself Horror-marked. The use of raw magic acts like an astral flare, drawing the attention of nearby Horrors and allowing them to easily locate the magician in astral space. Once a Horror finds the magician, it can easily use its Horror Mark power on the unfortunate victim. The Horror (or type of Horror) that marks a character in this situation depends on the preparations and personal preferences of the gamemaster.

If the Horror mark was not pre-planned (as is most likely), the creation of a Horror mark through the use of raw magic allows the gamemaster to design a Horror that can later be introduced into the campaign to torment the unfortunate magician. The gamemaster can also link the marking to an upcoming adventure that features a Horror.

This situation can also fit into an adventure or campaign in which a Horror is already involved. This Horror might well be the one that marks the magician. If the adventure ends with the death of the Horror, the victim avoids its dreadful intentions. If not, he will face no end of challenges in subsequent adventures.

Planned Horror Marks

Optional Rule: If the gamemaster plans to put a Horror mark on one of the player characters, the player himself can bring the Horror into the campaign in the most convenient manner. In this case, the gamemaster has chosen a Horror and is simply waiting for the right opportunity to use its powers against the characters. A magician using raw magic provides just such an opportunity.

For situations in which the gamemaster has a Horror standing ready to mark any adepts daring enough to use raw magic, the following optional method may be used to resolve the Horror Mark Test required by the casting of raw magic (see the **Spell Magic** chapter of the **Player's Compendium**). This option greatly increases the likelihood of the magician in question receiving a Horror mark. This option also assumes that a Horror is lurking nearby in astral space, has already targeted the magician and is simply waiting for the best opportunity to mark him.

RAW MAGIC HORROR MARK TABLE

Region Type	Horror Mark Step Bonus
Safe	None
Open	Circle
Tainted	Circle + 3
Corrupt	Circle + 5

The step number for the standard Horror Mark Test when casting raw magic is based on the Circle of the spell cast and the type of region in which the magician cast the spell (see the **Spell Magic** chapter of the **Player's Compendium**). When using this optional rule, the Circle of the spell and the type of astral region act as a bonus to the step number of the Horror Mark power. For the appropriate bonus, consult the Raw Magic Horror Mark Table.

Horror Marks and Items

An item, such as a grimore (see **Casting From a Grimoire** in the **Spell Magic** chapter on p. 290 of the **Player's Compendium**), may end up carrying a Horror mark as well. A Horror-marked item can be used to influence Name-givers carrying or using it, allowing the Horror to use the item as a medium for using its powers. To reflect that the Horror's influence isn't applied directly, the gamemaster should incur a –3 penalty to any tests the Horror makes when using its powers through a marked item.

Horror Thread

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: Yes

The Horror Thread power enables Horrors to connect to the patterns of magical items and Name-givers. The connection formed by use of this power is similar to that created by a Horror mark but is far stronger. A Horror thread allows a Horror to eventually tap into and use the victim's natural abilities. Horrors can only use the Horror Thread power on victims they have previously Horror-marked. To use this power, the Horror spends an initial 5 Karma Points and makes a Horror Thread Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the Horror has woven a thread connecting its True Pattern to that of the victim. Once this thread is established, the Horror can attempt to obtain Pattern Knowledge about the victim, just as if the Horror had acquired one of the victim's Pattern Items.

Obtaining this Pattern Knowledge allows the Horror to make up to five Horror Thread Tests against the victim's Spell Defense. Each of these tests requires the Horror to spend a Karma Point. Note that the Horror cannot add his Karma dice to the roll for these tests. On a successful test, the Horror learns a portion of the victim's Pattern Knowledge, which enables the Horror to weave an additional thread to the victim. Each additional thread woven to a victim requires the Horror to spend another 5 Karma Points. The Horror must study the victim for at least a month before it can attempt to learn any of the victim's Pattern Knowledge and must attach a new thread to the victim each time it learns before it can attempt to gain additional Pattern Knowledge.

The effects of the threads connecting the Horror to its victim grow with the number of threads woven. Each thread grants the Horror a +1 bonus to any test made by the Horror against the victim. The first thread woven also grants the Horror access to the victim's thoughts and memories, allowing the Horror to taunt and torment the victim more effectively.

When the Horror's thread number equals the victim's Willpower step number, the Horror can actually tap into the victim's powers and use them as its own. The victim becomes merely a channel between the Horror and the physical world. This allows the Horror to use the victim's talents, skills, spells, and the like as it desires. When using these abilities, the Horror makes tests using the victim's appropriate step numbers. The Horror can spend Karma Points on any action taken by a victim via use of this power. The Horror can also use any of its own abilities through the victim.

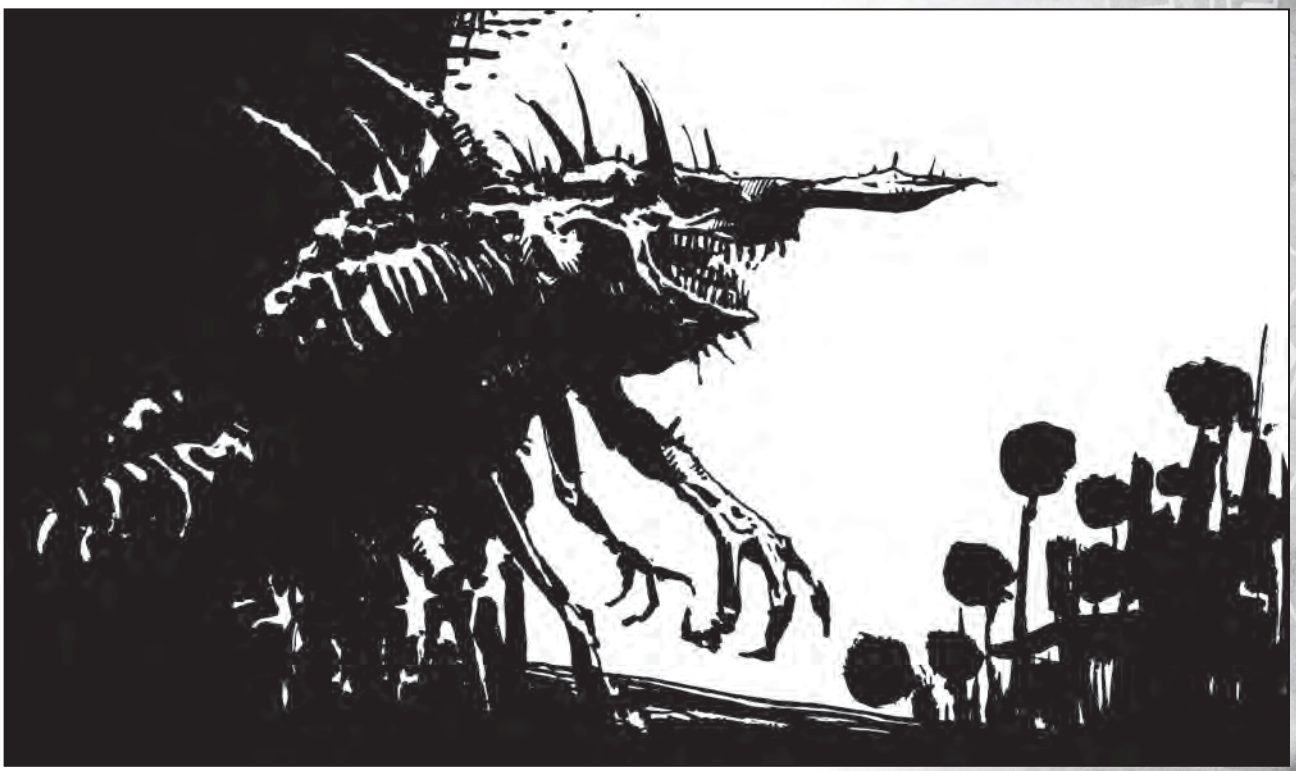
The Horror Thread power also allows the Horror to take physical control of its victim. For example, a Horror might force a Beastmaster to use his Claw Shape and Claw Frenzy talents against an unsuspecting target. In this case, the Horror would physically dominate the Beastmaster as the Horror slashes the victim's claws into its target. In the case of some talents, particularly Spellcasting and Thread Weaving, no physical clues reveal that a Horror is controlling the victim's actions. In all cases, however, the victim himself senses that some alien entity is using his abilities.

Karma Boost

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: Yes

The Karma Boost power enables a Horror to offer aid to a victim and eventually transform the individual into a Horror construct. To use the power, the Horror offers to boost the Karma of a previously marked character. If the character accepts the offer, the Horror must spend a Karma Point. The victim may then add a number of Karma Points equal to the Horror's rank in Karma Boost to his own. Note that the victim must willingly accept the Horror's aid for Karma Boost to be used. The Horror must spend a Karma Point each time the victim accepts its aid.

Make a secret Karma Boost Test for the Horror against the character's Spell Defense each time the character accepts the



Karma Boost. If the test succeeds, reduce the initial number of Karma Points the Horror has to spend to transform the character into a Horror construct (see the **Forge Horror Construct** power on p. 443).

Horrors with Karma Boost may not build on Karma Boosts previously accepted by another Horror. Once a Horror uses Karma Boost on a victim, any previous acceptances of aid from other Horrors are neutralized.

KARMA DRAIN

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: Yes

This power allows a Horror to transfer Karma Points to itself from any of its Horror-marked victims. To use Karma Drain, the Horror makes a Karma Drain Test against the victim's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the Horror can drain a number of Karma Points equal to its rank in Karma Drain from the victim. The Horror cannot drain more Karma Points than the victim's Current Karma Points total, however.

KARMA POINTS

Step Number: Special (see text)
Action: NA

Nearly all Horrors and many Horror constructs have Karma Points that they may use on any test, though they may spend only 1 Karma Point per test.

KARMA TAP

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: Yes

This ability allows a Horror to suggest actions to characters. The Horror makes a Karma Tap Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the Horror forms a telepathic link with the character. If a character is Horror-marked by the Horror suggesting the action, the Horror adds a +3 bonus to its Karma Tap Test. If the test succeeds, the link lasts for a number of days equal to the Horror's rank in Karma Tap. If the character accepts the suggestion, the Horror substitutes its Karma step for the character's when the character embarks on the suggested course of action. Though the influenced character must still spend his or her own Karma Point, he may spend it on any action, and uses the Horror's Karma step rather than his own to carry it out. The telepathic link extends for 1,000 miles.

POISON

Step Number: Rank
Action: No

Horrors with this power have poisonous teeth, claws or stingers that are able to poison a target. No test is required for a Horror to affect a target with poison—if the victim is physically struck and damaged by the Horror, it is automatically affected by the Poison. After taking damage, the target suffers the effects of the Horror's poison, which is listed with the Horror's description (for more information about poisons, see the **Adventuring** chapter on p. 121).

SKILLS

Step Number: Special (see text)
Action: Special (see text)

Some Horrors have powers based on skills. Refer to the **Skills** chapter on p. 230 of the **Player's Compendium** for a description of the skill in question.

SKIN SHIFT

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: No

This gruesome ability allows the Horror to mutilate a target's body. The Horror makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the Horror rolls the Skin Shift dice to determine damage. The target takes Damage Points equal to the result of the Skin Shift dice roll; his skin tears loose from muscles and ligaments, twisting and rotating about his body. Skin Shift inflicts a number of Wounds equal to the Horror's rank in Skin Shift on the target in addition to the damage of the Skin Shift dice roll result.

SPELLCASTING

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: Yes

Almost all Horrors know how to use spell magic. The ability to manipulate the energies of astral space is inherent. Though Horrors cast all spells as raw magic (see the **Spell Magic** chapter on p. 289 of the **Player's Compendium**), they take no damage and generally ignore raw magic spells cast by other Horrors. Also, Horrors do not use spell matrices, though they must weave spell threads where required. Horrors use the Thread Weaving power when casting spells in this manner (see **Talents**, p. 447).

SPELLS

Step Number: Special (see text)
Action: NA

Horrors often learn spells from sentient captives who follow a particular magician Discipline. Horrors can learn every spell from their captives' listed Disciplines and Circles, though they rarely learn those spells that affect the undead and spirits. Though Horrors may learn the spells from a Discipline, they acquire none of that Discipline's other talents.

SUPPRESS HORROR MARK

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: Yes

The Suppress Horror Mark power allows a Horror to bury a Horror mark deep within the pattern of a marked character. The Horror can only affect one of its own Horror marks with this power. As long as the power is in use, the Horror mark has no effect on the character. To use this power, the Horror makes a Suppress Horror Mark Test. The result is the Difficulty Number for detecting the suppressed mark and also the Difficulty Number the Horror must exceed to remove the effects of this power. The relationship between the marked character and the detecting character determines the result level needed to detect a suppressed Horror mark. When attempting to detect a suppressed mark, consult the Relationship Table to determine the result level.

See the **Horror Mark** power, p. 443, for more information about detecting Horror marks.

RELATIONSHIP TABLE

Target Character	Result Needed
Related by blood	Poor
Related by marriage	Average
A business associate	Extraordinary
A recent friend	Excellent
A friend for a year and a day, or longer	Good
A lover	Average
Connected through a pattern item	Poor

Talents

Step Number: Special (see text)
Action: Special (see text)

Many Horrors have powers based on adept talents. Refer to the **Talents** chapter on p. 166 of the **Player's Compendium** for a description of the Talents in question. Horrors ignore any Karma requirements listed for talents. Also, note that Horrors cannot learn the Willforce talent.

Terror

Step Number: Rank + Charisma
Action: Yes

Terror allows Horrors to instill intense fear into their targets. Each use of Terror causes the Horror 5 Strain Points of damage. To use this power, the Horror makes a Terror Test and compares the result against the Spell Defense of all characters within 50 yards of the Horror. If the test succeeds against any character, the affected character must make a successful Willpower Test against the Horror's Terror step before he can perform any action against the Horror. Until the character makes a successful Willpower Test, he can take no other actions. His speech becomes a piteous wail, and any movements become random twitches.

Thought Worm

Step Number: Rank + Perception
Action: Yes

The Thought Worm power allows a Horror to create a telepathic link between itself and a character. The target must be within the Horror's line of sight for the Horror to place a Thought Worm in the character's mind. The Horror makes a Thought Worm Test against the victim's Spell Defense. If the target has been previously Horror-marked by the Horror creating the worm, the Horror gains a +3 bonus to its Thought Worm Test. If the test succeeds, a Thought Worm is placed within the mind of the victim. The worm lasts for a year and a day, and the Horror may renew it at the price of 1 permanent Damage Point for each year of renewal. If the target character dies, the Horror may heal this damage.

A Thought Worm allows the Horror to make telepathic suggestions to the target when he is within 1,000 miles of the Horror. If the target resists the suggestion, the Horror makes a Thought Worm Test, and the character takes a number of Damage Points equal to the result. Mystic Armor protects against this damage. When a character resists, the gamemaster also records a number of Legend Points for the Thought Worm equal to the Horror's rank in Thought Worm × 100. For example, when a character resists a Horror that has the Thought Worm power at Rank 5, the gamemaster records 500 Legend Points. Because Horrors enjoy rewarding their faithful servants, each resistance adds to the total Legend Points; if the character subsequently acts upon a suggestion from the Thought Worm, he gains all of the Legend Points previously accumulated through his resistance. Unfortunately, in addition to the Legend Points, the Horror gains another opportunity to use its Horror Mark power on the character.

Unnatural Life

Step Number: Rank + Willpower
Action: Yes

This ability allows a Horror to give a corpse the "gift" of unnatural life. This ability only works on corpses dead for less than a year and a day. To use this power, the Horror touches the dead body and makes an Unnatural Life Test against its Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, Unnatural Life revives the corpse. Though not as dreadful to behold as a zombie or a ghoul, the corpse remains visibly decayed and retains the distinctive odor of rotting flesh. Aside from a horrific appearance and smell, the animated character can function as he did in life; Unnatural Life revives him with all of his Attributes and talents intact.

Characters animated by Unnatural Life are hard to destroy. They may make a Recovery Test during any Combat Round, which counts as their action for that round. Additionally, the unnaturally living may make unlimited Recovery Tests in the course of a day.

The Horror loses 1 Damage Point when it uses this power and regains it when the Unnatural Life ends. The Horror may stop the effects of Unnatural Life any time the unnaturally alive character is within 100 yards of the Horror.

Horror Constructs

Horror constructs are the living tools of the Horrors, created from the flesh of the Horrors' dead and living victims. These abominations vary in form as widely as do the Horrors themselves. Among the most commonly reported Horror constructs are cadaver men, shadows, jehuthras, and the dreaded plagues.

The following passages represent a mere handful of the Horror constructs that likely infest Barsaive.

Black Mantis

DEX: 10 **STR**: 13 **TOU**: 10
PER: 9 **WIL**: 5 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 10 (14)
Number of Actions: 4
Attack (4): 14
Damage:
Claws (4): 17

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 12
Social Defense: 15
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 51
Wound Threshold: 15
Unconsciousness Rating: 44

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 14

Combat Movement: 78/61•
Full Movement: 156/122•

• The second value is the Horror construct's climbing Movement rate.

Karma Points: 5
Karma Step: 10

Powers: Climbing S (4): 14, Enhanced Senses (Sight) (2): 11, Silent Walk S (4): 14, Surprise Attack (4)

Legend Points (2): 2,060

Equipment: None

Loot: Eggs worth 150 silver pieces each (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

The black mantis is a huge 9-foot-tall insect with a thick, black carapace that acts as natural armor and eight arms, each ending in a barbed spike. The mantis uses these spikes to spear its prey, then carries the prey to its mandibles and devours it. Six legs support the mantis's 18-inch thorax, helping it climb most rough surfaces with ease.

The Horror Tyrannisis forged the black mantises from inshalata (see the **Creatures** chapter, p. 314) and used them as soldiers when it attacked Talon Kaer. The horrible creatures climbed the kaer's walls using tangled fronds of glow-moss and other natural handholds, and ravaged the kaer more swiftly than even Rasper-Nor had thought possible. After destroying Talon Kaer, the black mantises spread across much of Barsaive.

BONE-SHAMBLER

DEX: 8 **STR**: 15 **TOU**: 15
PER: 4 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 2

Initiative: 7 **Physical Defense**: 8
Number of Actions: 2 **Spell Defense**: 7
Attack (4): 12 **Social Defense**: 15
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 10
Spikes (2): 17 **Mystic Armor**: 5

Death Rating: 74 **Recovery Tests**: 7
Wound Threshold: 21 **Knockdown**: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Combat Movement: 16 **Full Movement**: 32

Karma Points: 5 **Karma Step**: 10

Legend Points (2): 2,010

Equipment: Broken weapons and armor of incorporated victims.

Loot: 3D10 silver pieces and 2D8 gold pieces attached to body (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Bone-shamblers are a horrible form of undead Horror construct built from the thousands of bones that litter the ruins of Horror-penetrated kaers. Many, though not all, bone-shamblers have gold and silver pieces incorporated into their bodies. Bone-shamblers move by rolling, the bones and their former owners' armor and weapons rattling around with a sound guaranteed to set teeth on edge.

Rules

When a bone-shambler attacks, jagged bones and broken weapons protrude from its "arms" like giant spikes. A bone-shambler sees through "eyes" made of smaller bones, and can ambush a target from behind. If it takes damage equal to its Death Rating, a bone-shambler shatters into hundreds of bone fragments. Unless these fragments are scattered or destroyed, a bone-shambler can re-form itself in 1 to 4 hours.

CADAVER MAN

DEX: 4 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 7
PER: 4 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 4 **Physical Defense**: 6
Number of Actions: 1 (4; see text) **Spell Defense**: 6
Attack (3): 7 **Social Defense**: 11
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 0
Claws (3): 9 **Mystic Armor**: 1

Death Rating: 39 **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 11 **Knockdown**: 6
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Combat Movement: 18 **Full Movement**: 36

Legend Points: 150

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

During the Scourge, some residents of citadels infested by Horrors chose death rather than face such evil beings. From these suicide victims, some of the more intelligent Horrors created the animated corpses known as "cadaver men," undead beings capable of feeling only pain. Although most cadaver men retain their human intelligence, their miserable existences have filled them with hatred of the living and driven most insane. As a result, social contact with cadaver men, though possible, is unsettling for living beings. Cadaver men are also cannibals, but contrary to popular myth do not require sentient flesh for survival.

Rules

Cadaver men become easily enraged, flying into a manic fury if they experience any significant pain, such as being subjected to a Pain spell or receiving a Wound.

Rage: An enraged cadaver man makes 4 attacks per round until it has killed the source of the pain or 10 rounds have passed, whichever comes first. If a cadaver man cannot determine who caused it pain, it attacks and kills the nearest living creature. When enraged, a cadaver man will often use the Aggressive Attack combat option (see the **Combat** chapter on p. 403 of the **Player's Compendium**). The effect of the rage overcomes any penalties they may suffer from the pain itself; this means the cadaver man ignores Wound penalties or any Harried or Knocked Down penalties the pain would normally cause.

FALSEMEN

Falsemen are servitors animated from various inanimate substances by the powerful Theran magicians of Parlainth. Initially constructed to carry out tasks deemed too sensitive for slaves, falsemen eventually became a status symbol in Parlainth. Several magicians founded wealthy merchant houses using profits from the manufacture of falsemen. The faddish demand for falsemen explains the wide variety of materials, some of dubious practicality, from which they were fashioned.

The Twelfth Circle Forge Falsemen ritual (see the **Nethermancy Spells** chapter on p. 372 of the **Player's Compendium**) describes the method used to create falsemen. The information below should be used by the gamemaster to supplement that given in the spell description.

In general, falsemen lack an independent consciousness, instead responding unthinkingly to those magically attuned to it. A character who wishes to give a falseman orders must first weave a thread to it using the falseman's Spell Defense as the Difficulty Number. Because falsemen possess a limited capacity to understand instructions, the character who successfully weaves such a thread must make a Charisma Test to issue an order to a falseman against a Difficulty Number based on the complexity of the order. The simpler the order, the lower the Difficulty Number.

The sample orders below indicate the levels of difficulty common to various kinds of orders (the Difficulty Number is shown in parentheses).

Easy (5): "Prevent anyone from entering this room."

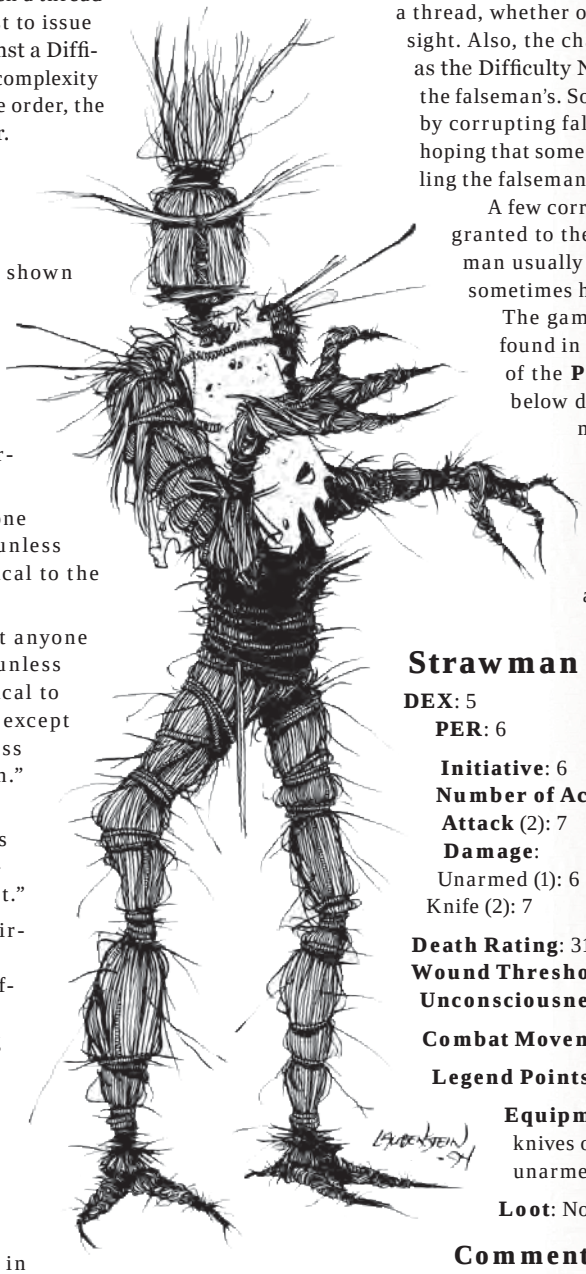
Average (9): "Prevent anyone but me from entering this room."

Hard (15): "Prevent anyone from entering this room unless they wear a brooch identical to the one I hold before me."

Very Hard (21): "Prevent anyone from entering this room unless they wear a brooch identical to the one I hold before me, except for orks. Orks may not pass even if they have a brooch."

Heroic (25): "Prevent anyone from entering this room who seems untrustworthy or of hostile intent."

Note that orders requiring falsemen to exercise judgment are the most difficult for them to follow. Also, successfully issuing an order does not mean that the falseman will carry it out as the character wishes. In the case of the last example, the falseman may understand the order, but may decide who seems hostile in an arbitrary way.



Corrupted Falsemen

Most falsemen encountered in ruins such as Parlainth cannot be controlled by player characters. Endowed by the Horrors with rudimentary consciousness and exposed to those powerful beings' evil for centuries, these falsemen grew beyond blank-minded constructs. They have minds of their own of a sort, and pose a serious threat to hapless explorers.

After destroying the population of Parlainth, the Horrors trapped in the city nearly went mad from boredom until some of them thought to stage war games against each other using falsemen as pieces. The Horrors gave the falsemen minimal awareness and aggressive instincts in order to add spice to the games, which the falsemen still play. Some attack anything that moves; others have spent centuries honing a blind instinct for torture and cruelty. A select few may have evolved to a level of self-awareness greater than the Horrors ever intended, but these rare individuals seem viciously insane by civilized standards.

A character weaving a thread to a Horror-corrupted falseman faces unimaginable danger. If the Horror who corrupted the falseman maintains an active link to the construct, the Horror may attempt to Horror-mark the adventurer attempting to weave such a thread, whether or not that character is in the Horror's line of sight. Also, the character must use the Horror's Spell Defense as the Difficulty Number for his Thread Weaving attempt, not the falseman's. Some Horrors set traps for unwary adventurers by corrupting falsemen and ordering them to act untouched, hoping that some foolish adventurer will try his luck at controlling the falseman.

A few corrupted falsemen may also have Karma Points, granted to them by their controlling Horror. Such a falseman usually has the same Karma step as the Horror, but sometimes has a smaller number of Karma Points.

The game statistics for untouched falsemen can be found in the **Nethermancy Spells** chapter on p. 372 of the **Player's Compendium**. The values shown below describe typical examples of corrupted falsemen. Regard the statistics for corrupted falsemen as a guideline rather than an absolute; not all corrupted falsemen have exactly the same statistics. Special rules for corrupted falsemen, such as no Armor-Defeating Hits and vulnerabilities also apply to untouched falsemen.

Strawman

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

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 7
Damage:
Unarmed (1): 6
Knife (2): 7

Physical Defense: 6
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 2

Death Rating: 31
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 5

Combat Movement: 20
Full Movement: 40

Legend Points: 50

Equipment: Usually none. Some strawmen carry knives openly or concealed (+1 Damage step to unarmed damage).

Loot: None

Commentary

Strawmen, animated wicker mannequins, are quite common in the ruins of Parlainth. The Horrors constructed strawmen

in great quantities and a few of the originals, simple servitors created by the magicians of Parlainth to perform non-strenuous physical tasks or serve as conversation pieces at parties, survived to the present.

Adventurers should assume that any strawmen they meet are extremely hostile. Fortunately, the flimsiness of their component material makes them more of a nuisance than a threat. Since Parlainth's return to Barsaive, the word "strawman" has slipped into the Throalic language to mean a weakling or an easily defeated opponent. When debaters use arguments they know are without merit in order to draw out their rivals, they are often said to be "building a strawman."

Rules

Because they lack vital areas, Armor-Defeating Hits are not possible against strawmen.

Vulnerability to Fire: Strawmen are especially vulnerable to fire. Once set alight, they take progressively doubled damage from fire each combat round until completely consumed.

Waxman

DEX: 6 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 6
PER: 7 **WIL**: 7 **CHA**: 7

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (2): 8
Damage:
Unarmed (1): 7
Sword (4): 10

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 9
Social Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 3

Death Rating: 35
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 6

Combat Movement: 26
Full Movement: 52

Legend Points: 95

Equipment: Usually none. Some waxmen wield dwarf swords (+3 Damage steps to unarmed damage).

Loot: None

Commentary

Like strawmen, waxmen performed menial labor in areas vulnerable to sabotage, spying, or betrayal. These crude, humanoid wax shapes are much rarer than other falsemen because the Horrors did not make any during their imprisonment in Parlainth during the Scourge, and because most of the originals were not durable enough to survive. Most remaining waxmen can be found in areas untouched both by Horrors and explorers.

Rules

Because they lack vital areas, Armor-Defeating Hits are not possible against waxmen.

Vulnerability to Fire: Like strawmen, waxmen are especially vulnerable to fire, taking progressively doubled damage from exposure to heat each combat round until completely melted.

Stoneman

DEX: 6 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 12
PER: 13 **WIL**: 10 **CHA**: 10

Initiative: 6
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (6): 11
Damage:
Unarmed (4): 16

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 16
Social Defense: 13
Physical Armor: 15
Mystic Armor: 5

Death Rating: 59
Wound Threshold: 20
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 12

Combat Movement: 18
Full Movement: 36

Legend Points: 680

Equipment: None

Loot: Any reasonably intact pieces of a shattered stoneman can be sold as sculpture and count as treasure worth Legend Points. Depending on the quality of the workmanship, an intact head is worth D6×1000 silver pieces; an intact head and torso might be double that value. Intact pieces of those rare stonemen sculpted from semi-precious stone such as jade or turquoise may bring quintuple that value.

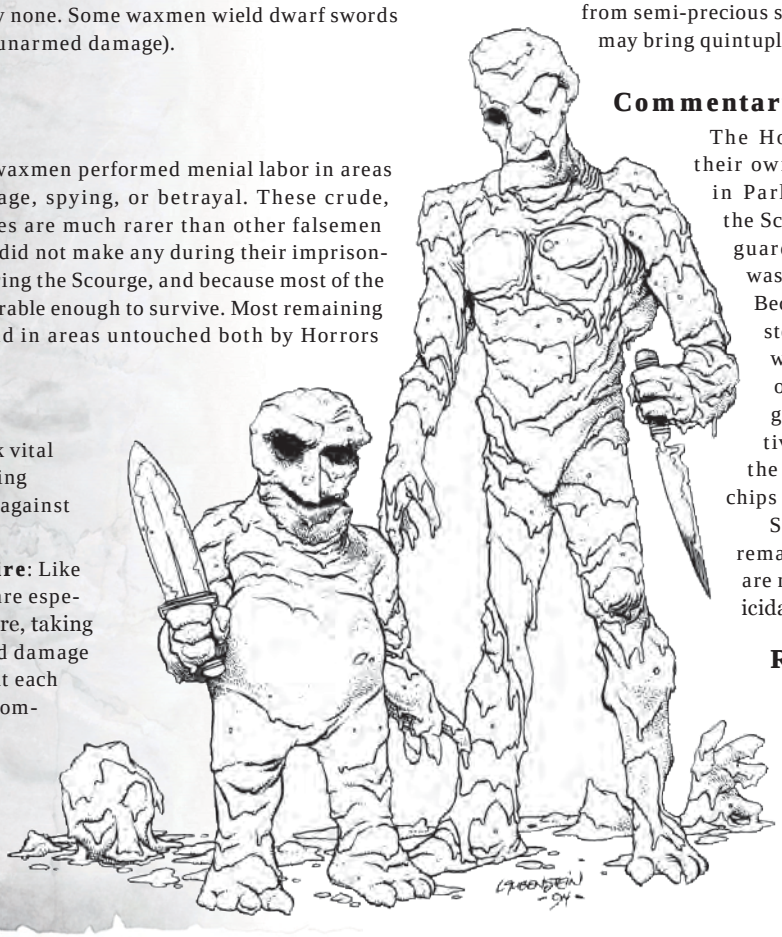
Commentary

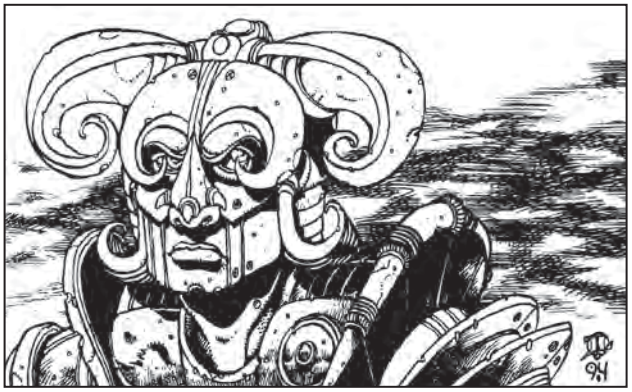
The Horrors made no stonemen of their own, so all stonemen remaining in Parlainth survived from before the Scourge. Constructed to serve as guards for sensitive sites, each one was carved holding a stone weapon. Because Parlainthians considered stonemen to be status symbols as well as sentries, their intricate ornamentation and classical grace of form make them attractive statues. Stonemen used in the Horrors' war games may show chips in their ornamentation.

Slightly damaged stonemen remain formidable adversaries, and are more likely to have become homicidal under the Horrors' influence.

Rules

Because they lack vital areas, Armor-Defeating Hits are not possible against stonemen.





Steelman

DEX: 8 **STR**: 20 **TOU**: 18
PER: 16 **WIL**: 14 **CHA**: 14

Initiative: 8 **Physical Defense**: 10
Number of Actions: 2 **Spell Defense**: 20
Attack (6): 14 **Social Defense**: 19
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 18
Unarmed (4): 24 **Mystic Armor**: 9

Death Rating: 83 **Recovery Tests**: 8
Wound Threshold: 23 **Knockdown**: 20
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Combat Movement: 30 **Full Movement**: 60

Legend Points: 1,835

Equipment: None

Loot: Player characters may sell reasonably intact pieces of a broken steelman as sculpture. Such pieces also count as treasure worth Legend Points. Depending on the quality of the workmanship, an intact head is worth D6×1000 silver pieces; an intact torso might be worth double that value. The few steelmen sculpted from precious metals are worth even more: any part of a copper steelman is worth five times the same part of a standard one, silver steelmen are worth ten times copper, and gold are worth ten times silver.

Commentary

Rarer and more durable than stonemen, steelmen once fulfilled the same purpose as their stone counterparts. Like the stonemen, many of them make dazzling art objects as well as potentially deadly foes. Steelmen reacted well to the rudimentary consciousness that the Horrors gave to some falsemen, and therefore tend to be somewhat more intelligent than other falsemen so endowed.

Steelmen untouched by Horrors usually continue to perform their original duties, guarding a place or item of value to the long-dead Theran rulers of Parlainth.

Rules

Because they lack vital areas, Armor-Defeating Hits are not possible against steelmen.

Ghoul

DEX: 5 **STR**: 4 **TOU**: 6
PER: 4 **WIL**: 3 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 5 **Physical Defense**: 7
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 5
Attack (2): 7 **Social Defense**: 7
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 4
Claws (4): 8 **Mystic Armor**: 0

Death Rating: 36 **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 10 **Knockdown**: 4
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Combat Movement: 22 **Full Movement**: 44

Powers: Poison (SD 10; see text)

Legend Points: 140

Equipment: None

Loot: 3D6 silver pieces, taken from both tombs and victims. Many ghoul leaders carry jewelry worth D8×25 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Ghouls are undead creatures created by the Horrors' arcane magics. To sustain themselves, ghouls must eat the vital organs of the living or recently dead. They live along trade routes where they ambush passing travelers, in cemeteries where they feed on the newly dead, or in city sewers, crawling out at night to hunt their victims.

Rules

Ghouls react badly to sunlight, incurring a –2 penalty to their Attack and Damage Tests if forced to fight in full sunlight or its equivalent.

Ghouls generally travel in groups of 6 to 25 individuals. Though some travelers have reported seeing ghoul hordes comprised of as many as 100 members, such huge bands have become rare since the departure of the Horrors.

Poison: Ghouls produce a magical toxin called *cacofian* that remains inert until the ghoul strikes the target with a successful Attack Test to release the toxin. The poison takes effect for 6 rounds, or until dispelled or resisted. The poison does progressive damage, increasing in intensity for each round in which it remains active. In the first round, it inflicts 1 Damage Point. Over the next five rounds it inflicts 4, 5, 10, 15, and 20 Damage Points, respectively. No armor protects against this damage. When a ghoul dies, its *cacofian* becomes inert. Many Nethermancers have attempted to use this toxin, but none have succeeded.

JEHUTHRA

DEX: 7 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 7
PER: 10 **WIL**: 9 **CHA**: 5

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (6): 13
Damage:
Claws (6): 11

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 13
Social Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 4

Death Rating: 42 (54)
Wound Threshold: 12
Unconsciousness Rating: 34 (44)

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: 8

Combat Movement: 49/36* **Full Movement**: 98/72*

* The second value is the Horror construct's climbing Movement rate.

Powers: Climbing S (2): 9, Durability (2), Frost Web (1): 10, Iron Web (2): 11, Lacerators, Spellcasting (2): 12

Legend Points: 245

Equipment: None

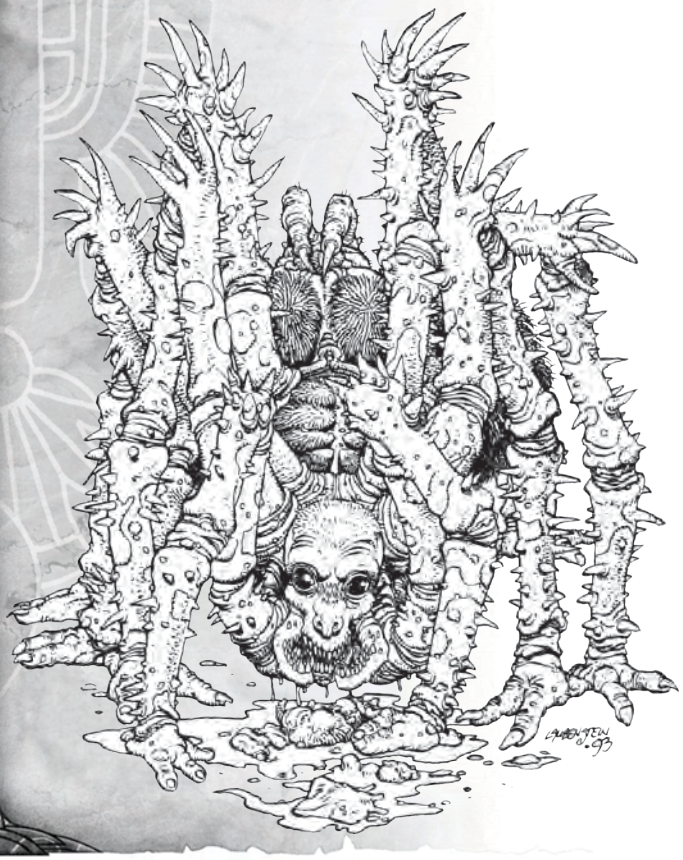
Loot: Thorax web worth D12 × 10 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Jehuthra are constructs of the Horror known as Hate, first formed during the early years of the Scourge. These 7 foot long spider-like beings have eight legs, each 10 feet long, and their bristly bodies end in humanoid faces. Though their eyes look vacant, jehuthras possess considerable cunning and intelligence. They prefer traps and ambushes to a straight confrontation, and an overmatched jehuthra will flee rather than fight. Only if flight looks difficult or impossible does a jehuthra defend itself with its magical powers.

Rules

The metallic deposits on a jehuthra's chest form a thorax web, which the creatures use to create three different magical effects: Frost Web, Iron Web and Lacerators. Unless noted otherwise, all of these effects have a Dispel Difficulty of 12.



Frost Web: Frost web takes 1 round to cast against a single character, who must be within 100 yards of the jehuthra. The jehuthra rubs its thorax web and points at the target, then makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the victim is entangled in an icy, barbed web, which is extremely cold. The jehuthra makes a Frost Web Test for damage each round. Physical Armor protects against this damage, but metal armor offers no more than 3 points of protection. The web holds the victim fast for 3 rounds, unless he shatters it by making a successful Strength (12) Test.

Iron Web: Iron Web is a defensive effect that allows a jehuthra to form a metal maze around its prey. The jehuthra traces a pattern upon its thorax web, then makes an Iron Web Test against the highest Spell Defense among all the target characters within a 25 yard radius. If the test succeeds, a 5 yard high maze is created, consisting of eight independent paths that lead to the maze's center. The web maze extends for 25 yards around the jehuthra, closing over the top of the maze walls. The Iron Web isolates each character, placing him on a separate path from his fellow travelers. If a group has more than eight characters, the Iron Web distributes them as evenly as possible. The paths lead only to the center of the maze, and do not intersect. Characters moving faster than a slow walk (10 yards per round) must make a successful Dexterity (6) Test in order to safely move through the maze. A Poor result inflicts Step 7/D12 damage on the character as the web's magical barbs tear at him. Physical Armor protects against this damage. A Pathetic result means the character also trips and is Knocked Down unless he makes a successful Knockdown (7) Test. The web lasts for Step 9/D8+D6 rounds, or until dispelled. Dispelling a single path has a Dispel Difficulty of 12; the entire web has a Dispel Difficulty of 21.

Rather than wait in the center, the jehuthra usually scurries down a path either to escape or to attack a character. If it wishes, the jehuthra can make a Spellcasting Test to dispel its own Iron Web—either a single path or the entire web.

Lacerators: Lacerators are cold, icy spikes that form on two of the jehuthra's legs, granting a +4 bonus to the construct's Damage Tests. They take 1 round to form and last for Step 9/D8+D6 rounds (the construct's Willpower step).

NIGHTWIST

DEX: 13 **STR**: 5 **TOU**: 9
PER: 15 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 7

Initiative: 15
Number of Actions: 3
Attack (4): 17
Damage:
Unarmed: (4): 9

Physical Defense: 16
Spell Defense: 22
Social Defense: 19
Physical Armor: 9
Mystic Armor: 5

Death Rating: 50 (98)
Wound Threshold: 14
Unconsciousness Rating: 43 (83)

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 5

Combat Movement: 106+ **Full Movement**: 212+

+ This value is the Horror construct's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step**: 10

Powers: Corrupt Karma (10): 16, Durability (8), Horror Mark (3): 18, Karma Tap (3): 18, Spellcasting (5): 20, Terror (5): 12

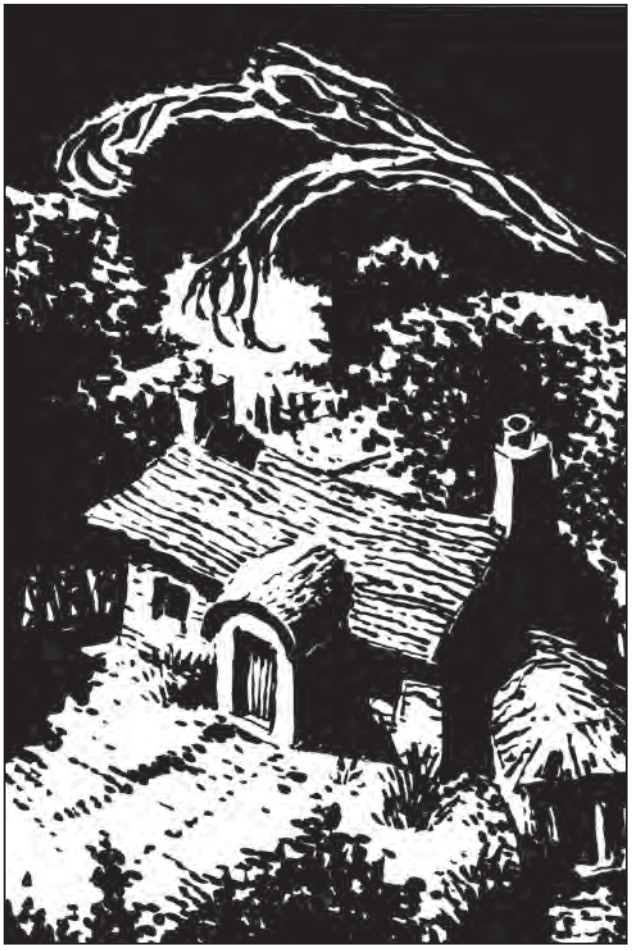
Legend Points (4): 4,880

Equipment: None

Loot: A captured nightwist is worth (D8 + 10) × 100 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Nightwists are the most commonly encountered manifestations of the Named Horror called Ristul. These Horror constructs



appear as twisted strands of darkness, bending and distorting the night air as they pass through it. They may be as small as a windling or as large as a thundra beast, and they may assume any shape imagined in nightmare. Nightwists appear only in corrupted areas, around astral breaches, or in the proximity of Horror-marked characters.

Rules

Because nightwists are made from the corrupt essence of dreams, they may serve as components for blood charms that corrupt karma, creating an effect similar to the Corrupt Karma power. Only containers that can hold astral or magical material, such as orichalcum jars, can hold nightwists. In a pinch, a spell matrix can be used to capture and contain a nightwist. To do so, the magician makes a Thread Weaving Test against the nightwist's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the nightwist is placed in the spell matrix. To release the nightwist, the magician must make another successful Thread Weaving Test against the nightwist's Spell Defense. Using a spell matrix in this manner corrupts it beyond repair. Attempts to cast a spell using the corrupted spell matrix result in the same effect as a spell cast with raw magic.

PLAGUE

DEX: 13 **STR**: 8 **TOU**: 15
PER: 13 **WIL**: 15 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 14
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 15
Damage:
Unarmed (1): 9

Physical Defense: 17
Spell Defense: 17
Social Defense: 15
Physical Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 10

Death Rating: 71
Wound Threshold: 21
Unconsciousness Rating: 64

Recovery Tests: 7
Knockdown: 5

Combat Movement: 90 **Full Movement**: 180

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step**: 12

Powers: Disease (SD 20; see text), Spellcasting (3): 15, Thread Weaving (Illusionism) (3): 15

Spells: Illusionism (Fourth Circle)

Legend Points (3): 10,545

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Though the heroes of the Scourge documented many Horrors and Horror constructs, few seem as fearsome or as insidious as the Horror constructs known as plagues. These vile things first appeared in southwest Barsaive just prior to the Scourge. According to legend, plagues spread through the vicinity of the ancient Kingdom of Landis, and only severe quarantine measures prevented them from spreading illness and death throughout the province of Barsaive. However, various accounts describe plagues in regions as far from Landis as the city of Parlainth.

Plagues most often appear as tall, gaunt humans with thin, splotchy hair and discolored blisters covering their skin. They often wear filthy rags and reek of decay and mould. Surprisingly limber, plagues can move very quickly when necessary.

Rules

Despite their grotesque appearance, plagues shy away from physical combat and use illusion spells to escape any potential fights. However, all plagues possess the Cause Plague power.

Cause Plague: The Cause Plague power enables the construct to infect Name-givers with a plague-like disease. The disease can infect any Name-giver who approaches within 50 yards of it by making a successful Cause Plague Test against the target's Spell Defense. Within the first few days of infection, victims experience red speckles or rashes on their throats and chests. A few days later the victim suffers dizziness, nausea, body aches, and a relentless dry cough. Within two weeks, fever leaves the victim bedridden and death becomes inevitable. The game effects of this disease are similar to those of a Debilitating Poison (see **Poison** in the **Adventuring** chapter, p.121). The disease also creates a bond between the plague and its victim, similar to the bond created by a Horror Mark. This bond enables the plague to monitor the victim's location, as well as his physical and emotional states.

A Name-giver infected with the disease may infect others through skin-to-skin contact, and the highly contagious disease remains alive in a victim's corpse long after the victim has died. This latter characteristic led to the spread of plague throughout Barsaive and the decimation of entire kaers and towns in past times. This characteristic also led to the practice of burning corpses, a common precaution still employed by Name-givers throughout Barsaive to prevent the creation of disease-carrying cadaver men.

Few proven cures for this disease exist. An Excellent result on a Dispel Magic Test against the Cause Plague Test result can cure a victim. Additionally, victims recover from the disease if the plague that caused the disease dies. No other known cures exist, however.

Adventure Hook

Plagues can be introduced into adventures by simply having the players stumble across an outbreak of a plague-caused epidemic, or the players might be persuaded to help save a town surrounded by plague-ridden hot spots. Keep in mind that contracting the disease practically guarantees death, so make sure the players know enough about the disease to protect themselves. Plagues can also be used to inject urgency into a game. If a player becomes infected and no magical healing services are available, the players will have to slay the plague that caused the disease

within mere weeks in order to save their comrade. In another possible adventure, villagers may hire the players to hunt down and kill a plague. Though the Horror construct may not seem like a formidable opponent at first, keep in mind that as a general rule, players cannot retreat from combat with one and escape with their lives.

QURAL'LOTECTICA

DEX: 10 **STR**: 9 **TOU**: 12
PER: 12 **WIL**: 9 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 12
Number of Actions: 4
Attack (4): 14
Damage:
Tentacles (6): 15

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 16
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 4

Death Rating: 60
Wound Threshold: 17
Unconsciousness Rating: 53

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 10

Combat Movement: 34
Full Movement: 68

Karma Points: 5
Karma Step: 5

Powers: Poison (SD 20; Paralysis)

Legend Points (2): 16,600

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The terrible creature known as the qural'lotectica is one of the most feared Horror constructs known to Name-givers. The qural'lotectica, or "qural," consists of a small, bulbous body from which numerous tentacles emerge. These creatures hide themselves in trees along forest pathways or along alleyways in cities and towns. They drape their thin tentacles across the passage. As a victim walks by, the qural's tendrils pierce the individual's skin. Then the entity swiftly draws the blood from its victim, its transparent tendrils and body taking on a deep crimson color. The qural consumes only the blood of its victims, leaving drained, emaciated corpses as a sign of its presence.

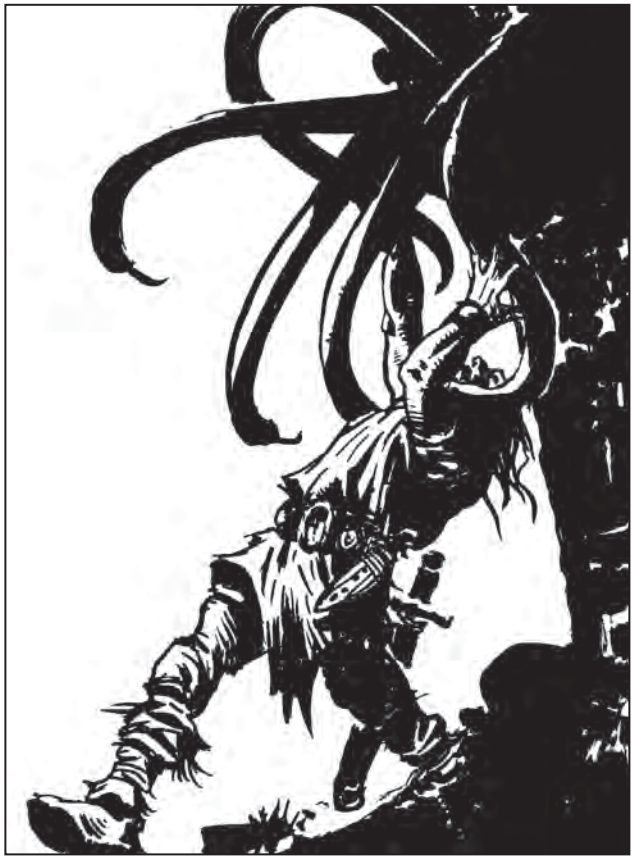
According to the stories of Cathan elders, qurals infested the Servos Jungles during the Scourge, preying on the beasts of the jungle as well as the Cathan and other tribes. Apparently, qurals would lie in wait in the subterranean tunnels where the jungle people took refuge during that dark time, feeding in the dark and narrow passageways. Though most of these Horror constructs live in Barsaive's jungles and forests, they may inhabit cities and towns as well.

Rules

The qural's tentacles are each tipped with a sharp hollow claw. The base of each claw contains a gland that secretes a paralytic toxin, which the qural injects into the victim. The poison swiftly immobilizes the victim so that the Horror construct will not be damaged by the struggles of its meal while it attaches more of its bloodsucking tentacles. The qural's tentacles are also hollow and carry blood from the thing's luckless prey to its stomach (which comprises most of its bulbous body).

Vulnerability to Fire: The qural is vulnerable to fire, and its tentacles can be broken or severed by a strong hand or a sharp blade-if the adventurer who runs across one is lucky enough to see it before it sinks its tentacles into him. To reflect the creature's vulnerability to flames, grant a +5 bonus to the attacker's Damage Test for any fire-based attacks used against a qural.

Tentacles: Attacking one of the creature's tentacles requires a successful use of the Called Shot combat option. Each of the qural's tentacles has a Death Rating of 17. If a single tentacle suffers damage equal to its Death Rating, the tentacle is destroyed.



SHILAGRUE HORROR

DEX: 9 **STR**: 13 **TOU**: 13
PER: 8 **WIL**: 10 **CHA**: 8

Initiative: 10
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 11
Damage:
Constrict: (1): 14

Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 6

Death Rating: 63
Wound Threshold: 18
Unconsciousness Rating: 56

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 13

Combat Movement: 22♦
Full Movement: 44♦

♦ This value is the Horror construct's swimming Movement rate.

Karma Points: 15
Karma Step: 7

Powers: Animate Dead (5): 15, Engulf (2): 12, Possession (see text), Spellcasting (2): 10, Terror (2): 10

Legend Points (3): 1,395

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The shilagrue Horror is a rare type of construct that closely resembles the common shilagrue (see the **Creatures** chapter, p. 341).

Rules

The statistics above represent an unattached shilagrue Horror. Once a shilagrue Horror possesses a victim, it uses the victim's statistics while retaining its own Karma and Horror powers. After possessing a victim, a shilagrue Horror often preys on the victim's closest companions.

Possession: When a shilagrue Horror envelops a victim, it forms itself around its prey like a second skin and takes control

of the victim's thoughts and actions. Then the shilagrue Horror opens small vents in its body to provide air to its victim to keep the prey alive. The skin of characters possessed by shilagrue Horrors exhibits a wet pallor and unnatural smoothness, and the victim's eyes are covered with a milky glaze. This power otherwise works like the Engulf spirit power (see the **Spirits** chapter, p. 365, for details).

SPECTRAL DANCER

DEX: 12 **STR**: 7 **TOU**: 14
PER: 12 **WIL**: 13 **CHA**: 9

Initiative: 13
Number of Actions: 1
Attack: NA (see text)
Damage: NA (see text)

Physical Defense: 20
Spell Defense: 15
Social Defense: 12
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 8

Death Rating: 67 (91)
Wound Threshold: 19
Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Combat Movement: 38✦
Full Movement: 96✦

✦ This value is the Horror construct's flying Movement rate.

Powers: Durability (4), Spellcasting (8): 20, Willforce^{T} (8): 21

Spells: Spirit Dart 15 (23 with Willforce)

Legend Points (2): 1,570

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Undead creations of the Horrors, spectral dancers are individuals who possessed considerable charisma and social skill in life. They appear as phantoms of the bodies they once inhabited. To make a spectral dancer, the Horror severs the dancer's spirit from his body in a grisly ritual, so that the dancer loses almost all ability to communicate with other sentient beings. He can occasionally see, hear, smell, and taste the world of the living, but cannot make contact with his fellows. The spectral dancer can only speak in garbled howls, and loses all ability to write, draw, or communicate in any way. The desire to communicate and the need for companionship remain, heightened by the ritual to the point of torment.

Rules

Their utter isolation drives spectral dancers insane. The spirits flit in and out of humanity, moving in a chaotic, frenzied dance. Desperate to communicate, a spectral dancer approaches a character and dances for one to three rounds, waiting for the character to join it. If the character turns down the "invitation," the spectral dancer attacks with desperate fury, using its Spellcasting step. The creature makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the spectral dancer makes a Spirit Dart Test to determine how much damage is inflicted on the target. Mystic Armor protects against this damage. It continues to attack until the character dies or the dancer is destroyed. Keep in mind that these devastating magical attacks can kill even a stout troll within a few rounds. The spectral dancer's almost incorporeal form gives it a high Physical Defense, reflecting the difficulty of finding a solid spot to hit amid the swirling, pulsing light and fog. Though not an easy task, a determined (and lucky) character can find and attack such a spot.

A character may also attempt to defend himself by joining the spectral dancer in the dance, but this carries its own danger. The character and the dancer remain locked in the dance until the character either dies or manages to assuage the dancer's terrible loneliness for a brief moment. Once joined, the character must see the dance through to its conclusion. During each round that

the dance continues, the dancer's movements cause a number of steps of damage to the character equal to the number of rounds the dance has lasted. For example, on round 5 of the dance, the dancer inflicts Step 5/D8 damage, Step 6/D10 damage on round 6, and so on. No armor protects against this damage.

During any round of the dance, the character can try to make contact with the dancer in order to ease its loneliness. To do this, the character makes a Charisma Test against the spectral dancer's Social Defense; at the gamemaster's discretion the character may use another Charisma-based talent for the test. To ease the spirit's loneliness and escape its clutches, the character must achieve an Extraordinary result against the dancer's Social Defense. Each result level achieved adds a +1 bonus to the character's Charisma Test for the duration of the dance, as his empathy with and understanding of the spectral dancer improves. As the dance nears its end, the character often sees or relives the dancer's memories. Once the character achieves an Extraordinary result, the spectral dancer's motions slow, then stop. The dancer thanks the character for giving it brief companionship, then fades away.

Stormwraith

DEX: 8 **STR**: 4 **TOU**: 8
PER: 7 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 9
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 10
Damage:
Unarmed (5): 9 (see text)

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 4

Death Rating: 44
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 36

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 4

Combat Movement: 55✦ **Full Movement**: 110✦

✦ This value is the Horror construct's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 15 **Karma Step**: 6

Powers: Spellcasting (5): 12, Thread Weaving (Elementalism) (5): 12

Spells: Lightning Bolt 13, Winds of Deflection 14

Legend Points (2): 660

Equipment: None

Loot: Kernels of elemental air worth 2D6 × 20 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Stormwraiths are creatures of dark mist, created by Horrors from elemental air and corrupt magic. They dwell in storms and near high mountain peaks where the elemental air needed to sustain them is found. They appear as dark blobs of mist with a vaguely humanoid shape in which faint, bluish lightning crackles. Two burning pits of electric blue that seem to radiate hatred serve as a stormwraith's eyes. Stormwraiths can speak and understand Name-giver languages, and are intelligent enough to plan and work together. They hate all living creatures and attack them at every opportunity, especially airships mining True air from the clouds and high peaks where stormwraiths abound.

Rules

A stormwraith attacks using a touch that carries a powerful electrical shock. A stormwraith that makes a successful physical attack, also makes a Spellcasting Test against the victim's Spell Defense. If this test succeeds, the stormwraith inflicts Step 12/2D10 electrical damage. Physical Armor protects against this damage. This type of attack does not count as one of the stormwraith's spells. Stormwraiths are immune to electrical- and air-based attacks made against them.

Stormwraiths can also cast the Elementalist spells Lightning Bolt and Winds of Deflection. The stormwraith casts these spells normally, using its Spellcasting step for weaving threads and for the Spellcasting Test, but does not require a spell matrix. The Effect step of these spells is based on the stormwraith's Willpower step. Being Horror constructs, stormwraiths take no damage from using raw magic.

Minor Horrors

The term "minor Horrors" is somewhat misleading. The danger these entities pose is minor only when compared to the threat of the so-called major, or greater Horrors. Indeed, many so-called minor Horrors possess Names and True patterns, and most of these entities are more than a match for even the most skilled hero—a fact that any would-be Horror hunter overlooks at his own peril. And because these Horrors are much more common than their more well-known brethren, they may actually present greater danger to Name-givers.

The minor Horrors may be classified into several general types, such as bloatforms, wormskulls, plagues, gnashers, and so on. This tome endeavors to describe but a few of these types. Adventurers would do well to assume that many other unclassified, minor Horrors still roam the lands of Barsaive and always be wary.

Baggi

DEX: 15 **STR**: 22 **TOU**: 21
PER: 12 **WIL**: 24 **CHA**: 13

Initiative: 11
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (6): 21
Damage:
Unarmed (2): 24

Physical Defense: 19
Spell Defense: 15
Social Defense: 17
Physical Armor: 30
Mystic Armor: 20

Death Rating: 95
Wound Threshold: 26
Unconsciousness Rating: 89

Recovery Tests: 10
Knockdown: 18

Combat Movement: 43/78✦ **Full Movement**: 86/156✦

✦ The second value is the Horror's climbing Movement rate.

Karma Points: 15 **Karma Step**: 5

Powers: Climbing S (4): 19, Enhanced Senses (Smell) (2): 14, Great Leap S (4): 19,

Legend Points (2): 15,580

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Baggis are arboreal Horrors, most often sighted in the outer fringes of the Blood Wood. These Horrors resemble obese apes, somewhat like hairless black orangutans with long arms, flabby bodies, bullet-shaped heads and terrible claws. Their large eyes are a sickly pale pink, and their skins have an unpleasant oily texture and rank smell. Baggis slack toothless mouths are permanently twisted into vicious idiot grins. Unlike true apes, baggis seem to have no skeletons whatsoever. They can stiffen parts of their bodies to move or attack, but essentially they are quasi-humanoid bags of skin filled with some unknown substance. (No records exist of a baggi corpse being dissected.)

Baggi are superior climbers and swingers and generally travel in small packs of 3 to 8 individuals. They lurk in the high branches of trees, then swoop down on any unsuspecting prey that passes

beneath them. Usually, baggi tear their victims apart with their claws, but these Horrors can also widen their mouths enough to swallow a human-sized victim whole.

One legend tells of a party of hunters from Blood Wood who were attacked by a pair of baggi in the early days of the Scourge. One young elf had fallen behind the group, and a baggi seized and devoured him. The other baggi attacked the rest of the hunters, who managed to slay it. The hunters then chased the surviving baggi to a clearing, where the Horror climbed a tree. After expending all their arrows, they tried to climb the tree after the monster but were repeatedly thrown back down.

Afterwards the hunters stated they could clearly see their devoured companion struggling inside the baggi's body for hours trying to push his way out. In the end the hunters set fire to the tree to put their friend out of his misery. Rather than attempt to flee, the baggi sat on a high branch as the flames enveloped the tree, making a sound something like a horrible barking laugh.

Rules

The malleable physique of baggi enables them to squeeze through any hole or crack through which a grown man can insert his fist. Obviously, this does not apply if the baggi is currently digesting a large victim.

Devouring: Baggi must achieve an Excellent result on their Attack Test to devour a victim. Baggi are intelligent enough not to try to swallow an obviously armed victim, and victims who are swallowed generally are too constrained by the creature's body to effectively attack with bare hands. However, if a devoured adventurer is carrying a small, concealed blade or similar weapon, he can attack the baggi from the inside. The baggi's interior is Physical Armor 1.

A devoured character is prone to drowning, as if he had failed his Swimming Tests (see the **Skills** chapter on p. 248 of the **Player's Compendium** for rules on drowning) and takes Step 3/D4 damage every minute from the baggi's digestive processes while he remains within the Horror. No armor protects against this damage.

BLOATFORM

DEX: 13 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 18
PER: 15 **WIL**: 20 **CHA**: 14

Initiative: 11
Number of Actions: 3
Attack (7): 20
Damage:
Tentacle (3): 15

Physical Defense: 16
Spell Defense: 19
Social Defense: 18
Physical Armor: 25
Mystic Armor: 23

Death Rating: 86 (114)
Wound Threshold: 24
Recovery Tests: 9
Knockdown: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Combat Movement: 20
Full Movement: 40

Karma Points: 30
Karma Step: 12

Powers: Corrupt Karma (3): 23, Create Shadow (3), Durability (4), Horror Mark (3): 17, Spellcasting (7): 22, Terror (3): 17, Thread Weaving (Wizardry) (7): 22, Thought Worm (3): 17

Spells: Wizardry (Seventh Circle)

Legend Points (3): 24,660

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

A catch-all name for a diverse class of Horrors, bloatforms often look like floating slugs or jellyfish. Other bloatforms appear as impossibly bloated, bubbling corpses. For an example of a Named bloatform, see **Fla Tra Lys** on p. 458.

Rules

Bloatforms rarely kill their victims directly, preferring to encourage suicide or murder. They especially enjoy insinuating themselves into small settlements and manipulating a community into self-destruction. Bloatforms enjoy chatting with victims they have marked. They cajole, threaten, taunt, and negotiate with the victim, all with the aim of getting the victim to destroy himself.

Some bloatforms have other talents from a variety of Disciplines as well as the average bloatform's powers and spells. Often, they lie dormant until a delicious whiff of pain crosses their path and rouses them. Horribly patient, bloatforms can wait years for the destruction of a particularly succulent victim.

Fla Tra Lys

DEX: 13 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 18
PER: 15 **WIL**: 20 **CHA**: 14

Initiative: 10
Number of Actions: 3
Attack (7): 20
Damage:
Tentacle: (3): 15

Physical Defense: 16
Spell Defense: 19
Social Defense: 18
Physical Armor: 27
Mystic Armor: 25

Death Rating: 86 (114)
Wound Threshold: 24
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Recovery Tests: 9
Knockdown: 13

Combat Movement: 6
Full Movement: 12

Karma Points: 30
Karma Step: 12

Powers: Corrupt Karma (3): 23, Create Shadow (3), Durability (4), Horror Mark (3): 17, Spellcasting (7): 22, Terror (3): 17, Thread Weaving (Nethermancy) (7): 22, Thought Worm (3): 17, Unnatural Life (3): 23

Spells: Nethermancy (Seventh Circle)

Legend Points (3): 27,660

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

This slow, globular-shaped Horror has six short, thick tentacles. When it moves, bulky masses shift and rotate beneath its scabby hide. A shimmering haze rises from it, and it emits a cool, sterile smell like rubbing alcohol. Unlike other bloatforms, Fla Tra Lys cannot float.

Survivors of Fla Tra Lys's attacks named the Horror "the Eater of Music" for its horrible effect on music. The Horror uses a unique magical effect to turn music played in its vicinity into wretched, grating noises. Apparently the Horror delights in the disquiet this causes and often manifests where music is being played.

Rules

Fla Tra Lys has ambitions beyond a steady supply of human pain. Less bluntly manipulative than some other Horrors, Fla Tra Lys seeks to corrupt Name-givers' artistic impulses. It offers easy wealth to talented creators, especially musicians, if they accept its suggestions when creating their works. If an artist gives a performance or fashions a work that embodies the Horror's advice—an unsettling experience for any audience, in as much as the Horror has no sense of beauty—then Fla Tra Lys tells the corrupted creator how to reach some long-hidden treasure. This usually involves hardships far beyond the treasure's intrinsic worth. Inevitably the artist's resulting wealth and guilty conscience bring corruption of a different kind, and Fla Tra Lys feeds well on that, too. For more information on how Fla Tra Lys lures his victims, see **The Pipes of Wrongness** on p. 439.

Horror Mark: A victim marked by Fla Tra Lys cannot perform music. Any attempt to do so results in the same wretched, grating noises that appear when the Horror is present.

CRYSTAL ENTITY

DEX: 7 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 7
PER: 8 **WIL**: 6 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 5
Number of Actions: 2
Attack: NA
Damage: NA

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 12
Physical Armor: 13
Mystic Armor: 5

Death Rating: 42 (77)
Wound Threshold: 15
Unconsciousness Rating: 34 (64)

Recovery Tests: 3
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: NA
Full Movement: NA

Karma Points: 20
Karma Step: 10

Powers: Death Spikes (10): 16, Durability (5), Horror Mark (11): 19, Karma Tap (12): 20, Spellcasting (8): 16, Thread Weaving (Wizardry) (8): 16

Spells: Astral Sense 12, Counterspell 11, Dispel Magic 6, Mind Dagger 8

Legend Points (2): 5,910

Equipment: None

Loot: Blood creates D6 elemental earth coins worth 100 silver pieces each (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Crystal entities drop into the world from the astral plane. They must inhabit an object or structure at least the size of a coffin, and commonly infest huts, garden sheds, or similar small structures. The infested structure looks built of glass, quartz, or ice. When an entity is wounded, its rock-hard skin ruptures and oozes an oily liquid. When killed, its skin shatters and its blood coagulates into elemental earth coins. For an example of a Named crystal entity, see **Ago'astia**, p. 459.

Rules

Crystal entities attack opponents and defend themselves by using spells. Though a crystal entity can make no direct physical attacks, it can cast spells. When casting spells at a target, a crystal entity makes the Spellcasting Test required by the spell's description. If the test succeeds, the crystal entity then makes the applicable Effect Test or rolls the Effect dice to determine damage.

Death Spikes: To use the Death Spikes power, the entity makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the spell alters the joints and bones of a victim within the spell's 1,000 yard range, forming crystalline spikes that pierce the skin from the inside out. To determine damage, the entity rolls its Death Spike dice. No armor protects against this damage. In addition to other damage inflicted, Death Spikes cause a minimum of 1 Wound. The spikes remain in effect for a day, or until dispelled. For dispel purposes, treat Death Spikes as a Fifth Circle spell.

Ago'astia

DEX: 14 **STR**: 12 **TOU**: 14
PER: 16 **WIL**: 12 **CHA**: 8

Initiative: 12 **Physical Defense**: 14
Number of Actions: 3 **Spell Defense**: 20
Attack: NA **Social Defense**: 22
Damage: NA **Physical Armor**: 20
Mystic Armor: 10

Death Rating: 67 (102) **Recovery Tests**: 6
Wound Threshold: 22 **Knockdown**: Immune
Unconsciousness Rating: 60 (90)

Combat Movement: NA **Full Movement**: NA

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step**: 10

Powers: Death Spikes (10): 22, Durability (5), Forge Horror Construct (5): 21, Horror Mark (11): 27, Karma Tap (12): 28, Spellcasting (8): 24, Thread Weaving (Elementalism) (8): 24, Thread Weaving (Wizardry) (8): 24, Thought Worm (3): 15

Spells: Astral Sense 18, Counterspell 17, Dispel Magic 12, Mind Dagger 14, and Elementalism (Eighth Circle)

Legend Points (3): 27,945

Equipment: None

Loot: Blood creates 2D6 elemental earth coins worth 100 silver pieces each (count as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

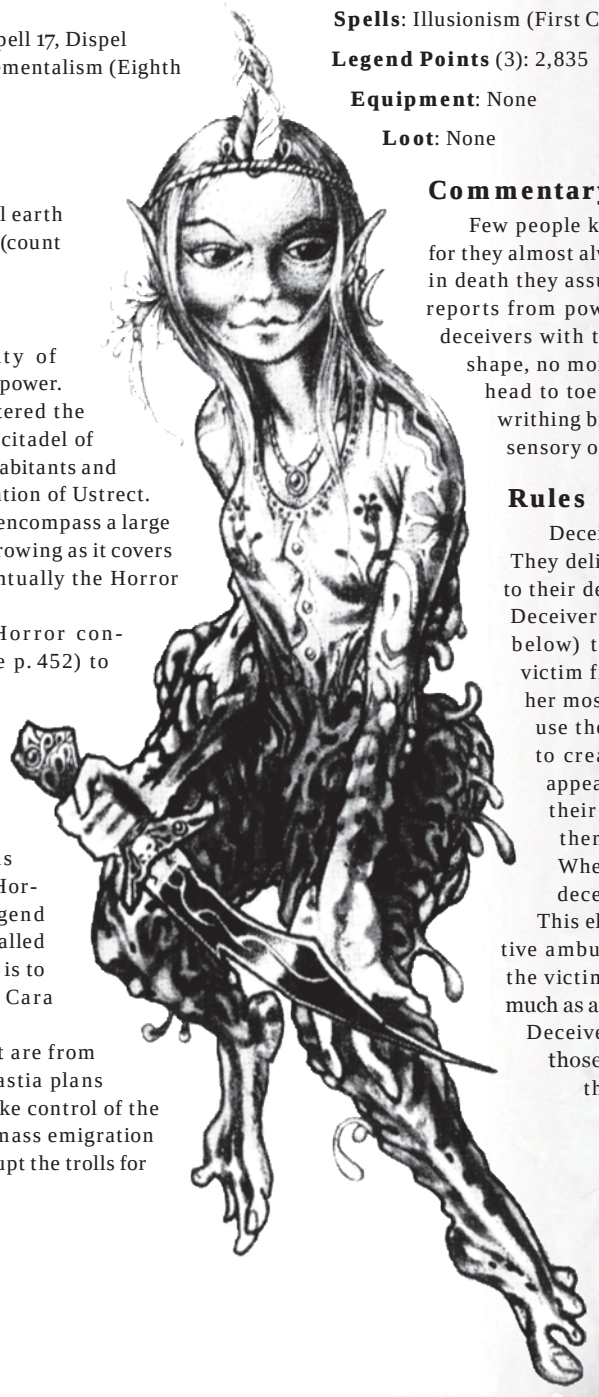
Ago'astia is a crystal entity of unusual intelligence, cunning, and power. During the Scourge, Ago'astia entered the physical world and breached the citadel of Arrakal, killing all of the kaer's inhabitants and destroying what was left of the nation of Ustrect. Since then Ago'astia has grown to encompass a large part of the ruined city; its power growing as it covers more and more of the ruins. Eventually the Horror may encompass the entire city.

It has created numerous Horror constructs similar to jehuthras (see p. 452) to serve it, made entirely from crystal and capable of casting the Earth Darts spell in addition to other powers.

Adventure Hook

More recently, Ago'astia has begun an insidious plan. It has Horror-marked a group of living legend cult members of an organization called the Raisers of Ustrect, whose goal is to restore Ustrect in the same way Cara Fahd has begun anew.

Most of the Raisers of Ustrect are from the Ironmongers trollmoot. Ago'astia plans to use the Raisers of Ustrect to take control of the Ironmongers moot and call for a mass emigration to Ustrect, and then seize and corrupt the trolls for its own purposes.



DECEIVER

DEX: 8 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 8
PER: 14 **WIL**: 11 **CHA**: 15

Initiative: 7 **Physical Defense**: 10
Number of Actions: 3 **Spell Defense**: 18
Attack (2): 10 **Social Defense**: 19
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 0
Unarmed (6): 12 **Mystic Armor**: 7

Death Rating: 43 **Recovery Tests**: 4
Wound Threshold: 12 **Knockdown**: 6
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Combat Movement: 40 **Full Movement**: 80

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step**: 8

Powers: Animate Dead (1): 12, Corrupt Karma (1): 12, Cursed Luck (1): 12, Damage Shift (1): 12, Empathy Net (8): 22, False Form (9): 20, Spellcasting (8): 22, Thread Weaving (Illusionism) (8): 22, Thought Mirror (8)

Spells: Illusionism (First Circle)

Legend Points (3): 2,835

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Few people know what deceivers really look like, for they almost always appear cloaked in illusion. Even in death they assume a false form. According to a few reports from powerful Illusionists who have beheld deceivers with true sight, they appear humanoid in shape, no more than 4 feet tall, and covered from head to toe in gray, lumpy skin that resembles writhing brain matter. These Illusionists saw no sensory organs or other visible features.

Rules

Deceivers usually roam in packs of 6 to 8. They delight in using trickery to lure victims to their destruction, either physical or mental. Deceivers use their Empathy Net power (see below) to mentally scan an unsuspecting victim from a distance and determine his or her most noble instincts. Then the deceivers use the Thought Mirror power (see p. 460) to create a large-scale illusion meant to appeal to those instincts. Finally, they use their False Form power (see p. 460) to fit themselves seamlessly into the illusion. When the victim comes to investigate, the deceivers reveal themselves and attack. This element of surprise makes for an effective ambush, but the deceivers seem to enjoy the victim's feelings of shock and betrayal as much as any physical damage they might inflict. Deceivers get their thrills from punishing those who act unselfishly. Given a choice, they prefer to leave their victims barely alive rather than killing them, most likely in hopes that the victim will refuse the next opportunity to act heroically once he or she recovers. Deceivers revel in the knowledge of having stained a shining soul with fear and self-doubt.

In combat, deceivers combine their Empathy Net and False Form powers to identify and mimic the appearance of their opponent's loved ones. This nasty trick unsettles the opponent by forcing him or her to hack away at those he or she cares for most in the world. If its opponent succeeds in killing a deceiver, the Horror plays one final trick: it shapeshifts into a precise copy of its slayer as a child between the ages of six and ten. More than one hero has been attacked in the act of disposing of a deceiver corpse by righteous assailants who believe they have caught a child-murderer.

Of all the Horrors, deceivers are among the easiest to kill despite the ferocity with which they defend themselves. They rarely flee from fights, and many scholars believe that they care more about inflicting mental trauma on others than their own survival. To a deceiver, death at the hands of a Name-giver simply affords the Horror another opportunity to cause its killer harm.

Empathy Net: Once a deceiver selects a spot it believes will attract the right kind of victim, it expends a Karma Point and performs a brief ritual during which it dashes out the brain of a living creature against a rock. After this gruesome rite, the deceiver waits until a Name-giver approaches to within 500 yards of it, at which point the power of the ritual mentally alerts the deceiver to its victim's presence. The deceiver then makes an Empathy Net Test against the highest Spell Defense of any Name-givers within the 500-yard range. If the test succeeds, the Empathy Net power fills the deceiver's mind with images from the Name-givers' minds. From this telepathic flow, the deceiver can determine what situations would most likely trigger a self-sacrificing response from the targets, what their past and present loved ones look like, and what they looked like as young children.

False Form: The False Form power allows the deceiver to mimic anything it sees in an Empathy Net scan. This power works in three ways, depending on which of the victim's thoughts the deceiver is using to inspire the false form. The deceiver can, for example, become part of a complex illusion created by its Thought Mirror power. As part of the thought mirror, the deceiver's false form shares the Thought Mirror's Sensing and Disbelief Difficulty Numbers (see below).

The deceiver can also assume the form of an opponent's loved one by making a False Form Test against the victim's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the victim suffers a –2 penalty to all Action Tests for a number of rounds equal to the difference between the test result and the victim's Spell Defense. When the effect wears off, the deceiver can attempt to adopt the form of yet another loved one. Because the deceiver changes its shape while its opponent watches, the victim knows he or she is fighting an illusion. In this case, however, disbelief does not negate the –2 penalty. Even though a victim knows he is not really chopping up his mother, he still finds the act emotionally difficult to perform.

If mortally wounded in combat, the deceiver makes a final False Form Test against its killer's Spell Defense. On a successful result, the deceiver transforms into a replica of its opponent as a child. Oddly enough, this change is not an illusion. The deceiver actually becomes a dead child of the relevant Name-giver race, matching its opponent at that age down to the last freckle.

Thought Mirror: The Thought Mirror power allows the deceiver to use images gleaned from an Empathy Net scan to create a complex illusion that appeals to the victim's sense of heroism. Examples include a mother and baby trapped in a burning building, a drowning child being swept down a river, or a kitten being stalked by a rabid dog. The illusion covers an area up to Thought Mirror rank × 5 square yards. The illusion has a Sensing Difficulty of 42 and a Disbelief Difficulty of 26.

DESPAIRTHOUGHT

DEX: 6 **STR**: 13 **TOU**: 12
PER: 8 **WIL**: 12 **CHA**: 8

Initiative: 8
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (4): 10
Damage:
Bite (2): 15

Physical Defense: 8
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 7

Death Rating: 62 (83)
Wound Threshold: 18
Unconsciousness Rating: 55 (73)

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 14

Combat Movement: 43
Full Movement: 86

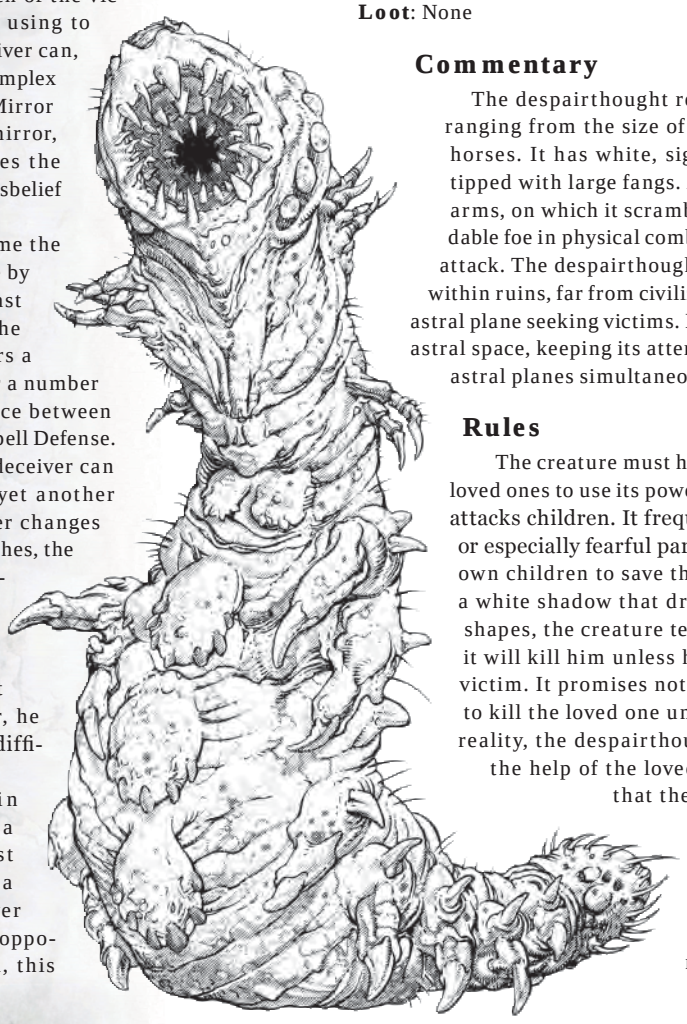
Karma Points: 20
Karma Step: 10

Powers: Corrupt Karma (3): 15, Displace (1): 9, Durability (3)

Legend Points (2): 1,910

Equipment: None

Loot: None



Commentary

The despairthought resembles a giant, white larva, ranging from the size of a sheep to the size of several horses. It has white, sightless eyes and a huge maw tipped with large fangs. Along its body are child-sized arms, on which it scrambles around. Although a formidable foe in physical combat, the Horror prefers psychic attack. The despairthought usually hides in a cavern or within ruins, far from civilization, and travels through the astral plane seeking victims. It can roam a limitless range in astral space, keeping its attention on both the physical and astral planes simultaneously.

Rules

The creature must have aid from one of its victim's loved ones to use its powers, and for this reason it often attacks children. It frequently seeks out cruel, selfish, or especially fearful parents who might sacrifice their own children to save themselves. Taking the form of a white shadow that drifts in and out of amorphous shapes, the creature tells the victim's loved one that it will kill him unless he helps the creature take the victim. It promises not to kill the victim, but swears to kill the loved one unless he assists the Horror. In reality, the despairthought can do no harm without the help of the loved one, but few people realize that the death threat is pure bluff. If the loved one cooperates, the creature describes a pattern to its newfound accomplice. The loved one must trace this pattern—a special Horror mark—upon the flesh of the

victim. Though invisible, the mark lets the despairthought follow the victim until he dies or the Horror is killed. The Horror cannot leave its chosen victim; both remain trapped with one another until one of them dies. Once the Horror's accomplice has made the mark, the creature enters the victim's thoughts, allowing it to use the following powers:

Commit Suicide: The despairthought can render its victim suicidal. Once a year, the Horror can attempt to force the victim to commit suicide. In this case, the Horror and the victim each make three sets of Willpower Tests against each other's Willpower step, and compare the results of the tests. If the Horror's results exceed the victim's for each of the three tests, the victim commits suicide within 24 hours. The Horror usually does not invoke this power for at least a full year after invading the victim, preferring to wallow in the pain it can cause the victim during that time.

Thoughts of Despair: Inside the victim's mind, the Horror constantly feeds him bleak ideas, cynical notions, and hopeless views of the world. To reflect this process, once a day the creature can make a Willpower Test against the victim's Willpower step. The Horror can make this roll at any time, and usually does so when the victim is in danger. If the test succeeds, the victim can take no action of any kind. He cannot fall to the floor, take shelter, or do anything potentially useful. Most despairthoughts affect their victims this way to get the victim killed, though some despairthoughts simply enjoy causing the victim inconvenience, embarrassment, or trouble. The creature's influence lasts a number of rounds equal to the Willpower Test result.

Tormenting Voice: When the victim tries to speak, the creature takes control of the victim's voice, making horrible sounds and grunts issue forth instead of words. The victim often spasms and loses control of his body, and his noises torment those who hear them. Anyone within hearing range of the victim's voice must make a Willpower Test against the despairthought's Willpower step. If the test is unsuccessful, the listener automatically suffers a knockdown. He clutches at his head as his consciousness drowns in agony for all the painful actions, large or small, that he has ever committed against anyone. The horrible sounds amplify these memories to such a degree that the listener is rendered incapable of taking any action. Some listeners cry, howl, or roll back and forth on the floor in agonizing pain. The effects of the Horror's terrible voice last until the listener makes a successful Willpower Test, or until the victim makes a successful Willpower Test against the despairthought's Willpower step.

Doppler

DEX: 11 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 12
PER: 11 **WIL**: 12 **CHA**: 10

Initiative: 12
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 13
Damage:
Unarmed (1): 11

Physical Defense: 14
Spell Defense: 15
Social Defense: 13
Physical Armor: Varies
Mystic Armor: 9

Death Rating: 59
Wound Threshold: 17
Unconsciousness Rating: 52

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 10

Combat Movement: 64

Full Movement: 128

Karma Points: 15

Karma Step: 9

Powers: Corrupt Karma (3): 15, Doppler Sting (10): 20, Spellcasting (2): 13, Thread Weaving (Discipline) (2): 13, Talents (see text)

Spells: By Discipline (see text)

Legend Points: 710 + Armor + Spells

Equipment: Varies by victim

Loot: Varies by victim

Commentary

These bizarre Horrors consist of one or more humanoid bodies, normal save for the flexible, 2 foot stinger that grows from their upper arms or hips. Dopplers grow in strength by using their stinger to increase their numbers, as it allows them to replicate their victims. The only other clue to a doppler's true nature is the slightly disconnected aura that surrounds the entity's body when viewed in astral space. On careful observation, a doppler's body appears to have shrunk away from its aura. No theorist can satisfactorily explain why doppler bodies emit this oversized aura.

Mystery shrouds the origin of dopplers. Legends describe the original doppler as a large, blighted tree or other plant, and the various dopplers now in Barsaive as its astral "seeds." Other legends insist that present-day dopplers originate from more than one parent. The parent doppler, or dopplers, are said to know everything ever known by every doppler victim.

Various tales place the original doppler tree in the Liaj Jungle or Blood Wood. Those who claim the doppler tree is located in Blood Wood also murmur that Queen Alachia knows of it and may even have made a pact with the Horror. If this is true, even destroying all the known dopplers in Barsaive will not end their existence; only the destruction of the doppler tree would stop their insidious propagation.

Rules

Dopplers seek to expand their power by creating more dopplers. Related dopplers can serve as cannon fodder, or they can infiltrate an existing community and corrupt it, particularly if the victim was someone of sufficient power to influence other Name-givers. Dopplers are particularly interested in manipulating events on a large scale by taking the place of key persons and so provide an excellent way to introduce conspiracies and intrigue into **Earthdawn** campaigns.

Each doppler possesses the same attributes and statistics. However, each doppler is unique in that it possesses the abilities of the Name-giver it was created from. Additionally, each doppler possesses all the knowledge and skills of any other dopplers created by the same "parent" doppler. Note that these related dopplers do not possess each other's talents.

Most of the time, dopplers attack with the talents and skills of their Name-giver form. In addition, dopplers that have been unmasked use their stingers to slash at opponents. When a doppler attacks with its stinger, it uses its normal Attack step for the Attack Test, and its Doppler Sting step for the Damage Test.

Doppler Sting: Whenever a doppler kills a Name-giver, it uses its stinger to draw blood from the corpse, then detaches the blood-filled stinger and plants it in some hidden spot. Over the course of the following month, the planted stinger grows into a new doppler that is an exact replica of the slain Name-giver. The original "parent" doppler grows a new stinger within a few days after planting the old stinger.

Dread Iota

DEX: NA **STR**: NA **TOU**: NA
PER: 8 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: NA
Number of Actions: 2
Attack: NA
Damage: NA

Physical Defense: NA
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 10
Physical Armor: NA
Mystic Armor: 4

Death Rating: NA
Wound Threshold: Immune
Unconsciousness Rating: NA

Recovery Tests: NA
Knockdown: NA

Combat Movement: NA

Full Movement: NA

Karma Points: 10

Karma Step: 8

Powers: Animate Dead (7): 15, Create Shadow (7), Horror Mark (7): 15, Karma Tap (7): 15, Spellcasting (7): 15, Thread Weaving (Nethermancy) (7): 15

Spells: Nethermancy (Third Circle)

Legend Points: 1,165

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The smallest type of Horror known, a single dread iota is invisible to the naked eye and may be found in water, as well as in many plants and animals. Dread iotas are fully intelligent Horrors that exercise a cruel influence over any creature unfortunate enough to ingest them, including Name-givers. When these parasites group together, they resemble an intelligent, directed disease. Masses of dread iotas infest streams, ponds, springs, lakes, and even rain clouds in parts of Barsaive that still bear the worst scars of the Scourge. Dread iotas can enter a Name-giver's body if the Name-giver drinks water or eats a plant or animal infected by iotas. Questors have been able to cast iotas out of victims in some cases, but in general, infected Name-givers slowly waste away and die.

One scholar, the late Yamonis IV of Throal, created a device that combined a number of magnifying lenses. Using this device, Yamonis successfully observed dread iotas. His sketches depict them as humanoid in structure, with scaly hides and grinning, malevolent faces.

Rules

Once a dread iota has entered a Name-giver, it can use its Horror Mark power on that Name-giver. The dread iota's primary goal is to reproduce and infect other intelligent victims. One way it may accomplish this goal is to reveal itself to the victim and use its Karma Tap ability to reward hosts who help it infect others (Name-givers may become infected by the exchange of bodily fluids with an infected victim). Dread iotas are also fond of using the Bone Dance spell to temporarily control the movements of their hosts. If a host dies, the dread iotas often animate the corpse and seek out a new host before the old one rots away.

Dread iotas are difficult to kill. The Elementalist spell Purify Water will kill dread iotas in water samples, but once a victim has been infected, only the questor of Garlen Heal power is known to be effective against the parasites. Avoiding infection in the first place remains the best way to deal with dread iotas. Fortunately, anyone who successfully uses any sort of astral sensing can spot the distinct astral signature of dread iotas by making an appropriate test against the dread iota's Spell Defense. Any material, animal, or Name-giver infected with dread iotas glows faintly under such observation.

Degeneration: The presence of this parasitic Horror causes tissue degeneration and eventual death. Infected victims must make a Toughness Test each week against a Difficulty Number equal to the number of weeks they have been infected. Each time the test fails, the victim loses –1 point from each Attribute value. The victim dies when any Attribute value, other than Charisma, reaches zero. The Attribute value loss is permanent, barring the direct intercession of one of the Passions or perhaps the use of legendary healing magic.

Adventure Hook

Sometimes entire villages become infected by dread iotas. The victims act much like foul folk, though the infection will leave many of them weakened. In one possible adventure, the neighbors of an infected settlement may hire the players to accompany questors of Garlen into the hamlet to heal as many as can be saved, and slay the rest.

GHARMHEK

DEX: 4 **STR**: 4 **TOU**: 11
PER: 8 **WIL**: 14 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 4
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (5): 9
Damage:
Bite (7): 11

Physical Defense: 5
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 5
Physical Armor:
10 (head); 0 (body)
Mystic Armor: 10

Death Rating: 58
Wound Threshold: 17
Unconsciousness Rating: 51

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: Immune

Combat Movement: 16/6⬩ **Full Movement**: 32/12⬩

⬩ The second value is the Horror's burrowing Movement rate.

Karma Points: 15 **Karma Step**: 12

Powers: Animate Dead (2): 16, Damage Shift (1): 15, Horror Mark (2): 10, Spellcasting (2): 10, Terror (6): 10

Legend Points (2): 4,670

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

These loathsome Horrors feed on Name-giver feelings of distaste and revulsion. Less robust than many of their kind, they skulk in safe burrows waiting for dead Name-givers to be brought near them. They prefer to live near graveyards, catacombs, field hospitals, and other such places where the dead abound. The gharmhek use their Animate Dead power to make cadaver men of the corpses, then wait for Name-givers to approach and react with disgust to the sight of the walking dead. Living Name-givers react especially strongly to the unlife of those walking dead they knew personally; the specific negative emotions of these Name-givers is a rare delicacy to the gharmhek, who quiver with pleasure when they detect it. A brief shot of such personal revulsion can sustain them for months. When forced to do without it entirely, the gharmhek hibernate, surviving in sleep for centuries.

The gharmhek resemble bizarre reptiles, with frills of heavy bone behind their armored heads and sharp fearsome-looking beaks for mouths. Their tiny, dark eyes burn with cruel intelligence. Their flabby snakelike bodies extend roughly three feet behind their heads and are encrusted with scabs and sores that often leak a milky, greenish fluid.

Characters can converse with gharmhek if they wish, though these Horrors display an unpleasant preoccupation with decomposition and other biological processes usually avoided in polite society. Gharmhek occasionally make deals with Name-givers or other hostile creatures in order to ensure their own survival, but honor such agreements only as long as it benefits them.

Rules

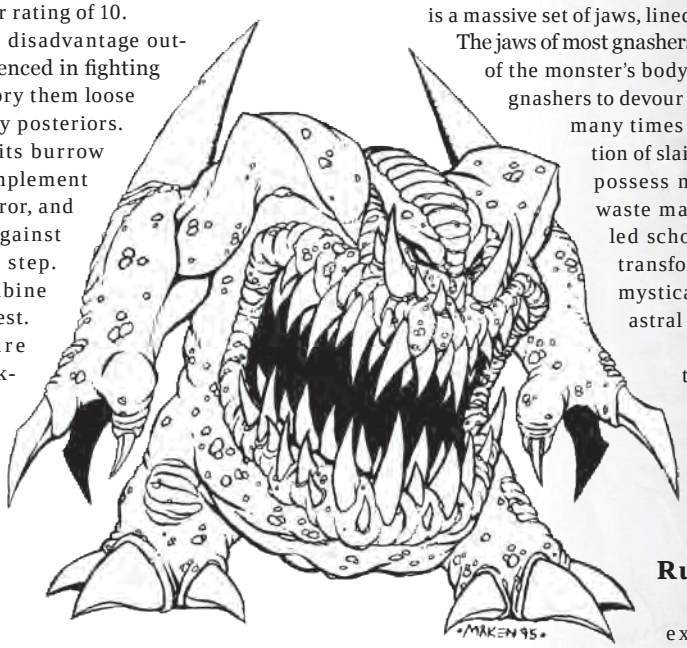
The following rules apply to gharmeks.

Animate Dead: Unlike most other Horrors, the gharmhek can use their Animate Dead power within 30 yards of the victim and need not touch the victim.

Burrow: The gharmhek protect their weak bodies by burrowing into the ground of earthen walls, exposing only their armored heads. As long as a gharmhek remains in its burrow, it uses its head's Physical Armor rating of 10.

A gharmhek is at a great disadvantage outside its burrow. Those experienced in fighting the gharmhek usually try to pry them loose in order to expose their pulpy posteriors. To force a gharmhek out of its burrow requires a pole or similar implement with which to pry out the Horror, and a successful Strength Test against the gharmhek's Toughness step. Several characters can combine their Strength steps for this test.

Although gharmhek are immune to normal Knockdown, those pried from their burrows can only physically strike at floor-level targets (such as an opponent's feet). A gharmhek outside its burrow uses its body's Physical Armor rating of 0.



GNASHER

DEX: 5 **STR**: 8 **TOU**: 4
PER: 2 **WIL**: 8 **CHA**: 3

Initiative: 5
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (5): 10
Damage:
Bite (12): 20
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 15
Physical Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 6

Death Rating: 30 (44)
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 21 (33)
Recovery Tests: 2
Knockdown: 8

Combat Movement: 22
Full Movement: 44

Karma Points: 15 (see text)
Karma Step: 5

Powers: Durability (2), Enhanced Senses (Smell) (12): 14 (Heightened Senses; see text), Great Leap [S] (2): 7

Legend Points: 435

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Gnashers are the simplest of the Horrors. During the Scourge, legions of these mindless entities swarmed across the face of the world, devouring everything in sight and leaving poisoned wastelands in their wake. Though gnashers prefer sentient victims, these Horrors will eat any living thing and even inanimate matter if no other food is available. The only thing they do not attempt to eat is each other. Unlike most other Horrors, gnashers show no signs of higher intelligence and are indifferent to the pain and suffering they cause. They possess none of the dread powers associated with most Horrors. Gnashers are simply killing machines driven by a blind, insatiable impulse to devour.

Gnashers typically travel in swarms of several dozen. They eat constantly, and their gobbling and snarfing sounds are usually audible from a considerable distance. Gnashers try to eat anything they can sense, and their acute sense of smell enables them to detect prey within a quarter of a mile. These Horrors have no sense of self-preservation and continue to attack no matter how effectively their prey fights back. They never flee, even when large numbers of them are slain.

Gnashers vary widely in appearance. Some are reptilian, others toad-like or mammalian. Some possess features of several different animals, and still others are utterly alien or formless in structure. Most are the size of a large dog. The one feature all gnashers possess is a massive set of jaws, lined with dozens of razor-sharp teeth. The jaws of most gnashers represent more than fifty percent of the monster's body mass. These terrible jaws enable gnashers to devour the equivalent of their own weight many times over in mere minutes. Examination of slain gnashers has revealed that they possess no standard means of excreting waste matter from their bodies. This has led scholars to speculate that gnashers transform the matter they consume into mystical energy, which they expel into astral space.

Several popular theories attempt to explain what happens to this energy when it reaches astral space. The most popular theory contends that the excrement merely float about, obscuring much of the astral plane.

Rules

These Horrors make an excellent combat challenge for intermediate or experienced adventurers. They possess too little personality to serve as the linchpin of an entire plotline, but may be useful for wearing down a party or emphasizing the inherent danger of a Horror-infested area. Because gnashers are virtually mindless, the action-lovers in the gaming group can enjoy a guilt-free, good time bashing away at them.

Gnashers travel by leaping, and can jump up to their Combat Movement in height to get at higher targets. Some gnashers have powerful back legs that they clearly use for locomotion. Others, however, have no apparent means of physically making these incredible leaps.

Though less robust than some Horrors, gnashers pay no heed to damage inflicted on them and continue to attack until they lapse into unconsciousness or die. Up to eight gnashers may engage a human-, t'skrang- or ork-sized target at one time. Up to twelve may engage a troll- or obsidiman-sized target. Generally, no more than five will attack a dwarf. Windlings need only worry about one or two gnashers attacking.

Heightened Senses: Gnashers gain a +10 bonus to their Enhanced Senses (Smell) Tests (already accounted for in the statistics).

Karma Cap: Gnashers may only spend Karma Points on Attack or Damage Tests.

KREESCRA

DEX: 9 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 9
PER: 6 **WIL**: 11 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 10
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 11
Damage:
Unarmed (2): 12
Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 8
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 7

Death Rating: 47 **Recovery Tests**: 4
Wound Threshold: 13 **Knockdown**: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 40

Combat Movement: 49 **Full Movement**: 98

Karma Points: 15 **Karma Step**: 12

Powers: Climbing T (1): 10, Cursed Luck (2): 13, Lock Picking T (1): 10, Silent Walk T (1): 10, Spellcasting (4): 10, Tracking T (4): 10

Legend Points (2): 4,440

Equipment: None

Loot: None

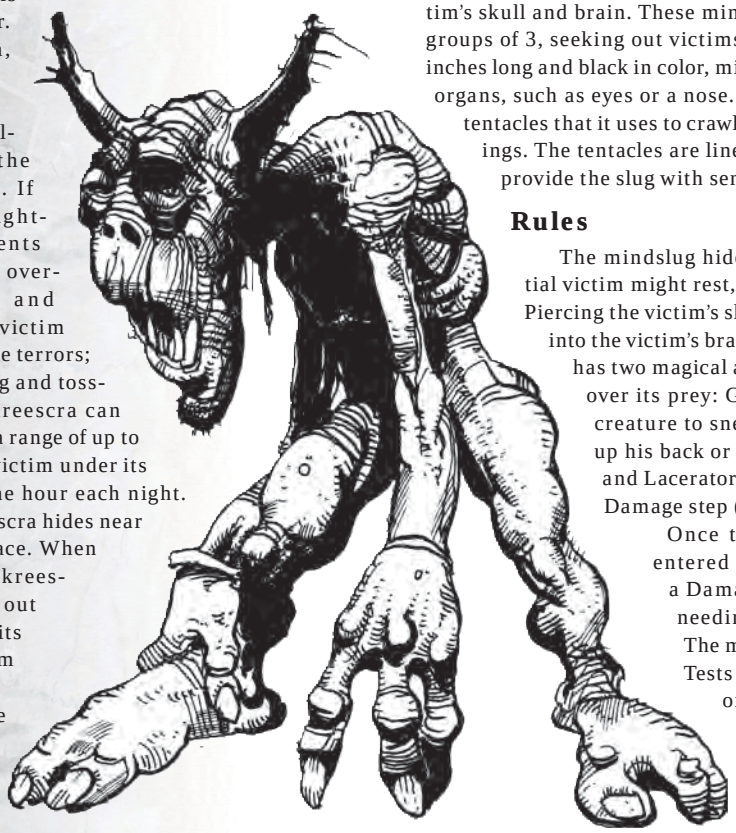
Commentary

Most kreescra stand 3 feet tall, a few as tall as 4 feet. Their bodies are misshapen travesties—all twisted limbs and jaws and faces that seem about to slide off their heads. Despite their crippled appearance, kreescra are surprisingly nimble and difficult to catch or strike.

Rules

The following special rules apply to kreescra.

Haunting Nightmares: Kreescra usually attack by approaching wounded individuals who are deep in slumber. Finding such a victim, the Horror places its hands on the victim's head and makes a Spellcasting Test against the victim's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, nightmares of horrible events from the victim's past overwhelm the dreamer and disrupt his sleep. The victim does not wake from these terrors; he stays asleep, sweating and tossing and turning. The kreescra can reactivate this power at a range of up to 100 yards, keeping the victim under its influence for at least one hour each night. During the day, the kreescra hides near the victim's sleeping place. When the victim travels, the kreescra trails him, keeping out of sight and only using its powers while the victim slumbers.



During the horrible nightmares, the victim makes a Willpower Test against the kreescra's Willpower step. If the Willpower Test is unsuccessful, the victim receives no Recovery Tests the next day despite his full night of sleep. For every continuous week that the kreescra haunts the victim, whether or not it successfully keeps the victim from making daily Recovery Tests, the victim takes 7 Damage Points. If possible, the kreescra stays with the same victim until the victim dies, slowly killing him with nightmares and the effects of unhealed wounds. If the victim achieves an Extraordinary result on one of his Willpower Tests against the kreescra, he has forced the Horror from his mind. Once a victim recovers from the damage done by the kreescra, the creature seeks out another victim.

MINDSLUG

DEX: 6 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 8
PER: 7 **WIL**: 10 **CHA**: 6

Initiative: 8 **Physical Defense**: 9
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense**: 10
Attack (1): 7 **Social Defense**: 7
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 0
Tentacle (2): 8 **Mystic Armor**: 6

Death Rating: 43 **Recovery Tests**: 3
Wound Threshold: 12 **Knockdown**: 6
Unconsciousness Rating: 35

Combat Movement: 22 **Full Movement**: 44

Karma Points: 10 **Karma Step**: 7

Powers: Corrupt Karma (3): 13, Gain Surprise T (1): 11, Lacerators

Legend Points: 225

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Mindslugs feed off the pain caused by their attacks on a victim's skull and brain. These mindless creatures usually travel in groups of 3, seeking out victims as a poisonous spider might. 6 inches long and black in color, mindslugs have no obvious sensory organs, such as eyes or a nose. Instead, each possesses several tentacles that it uses to crawl along the ground, walls and ceilings. The tentacles are lined with small, silvery hooks that provide the slug with sensory information.

Rules

The mindslug hides in dark places where a potential victim might rest, and attacks as the victim sleeps. Piercing the victim's skull, the mindslug worms its way into the victim's brain and begins to feed. The Horror has two magical abilities that give it an advantage over its prey: Gain Surprise, which allows the creature to sneak up on its victim by crawling up his back or dropping down from the ceiling, and Lacerators, which increase the mindslug's Damage step (see below).

Once the mindslug has successfully entered its victim, the creature makes a Damage Test in every round without needing to make an additional attack. The mindslug continues these Damage Tests until the victim removes the slug or dies, at which point the mindslug leaves the corpse and seeks out a new victim.

Removing the creature is no easy task. The mindslug's body is slippery, and it uses the small hooks along its tentacles to grip the inside of its victim's skull. Both of these characteristics make these creatures difficult to dislodge, assuming that a character can catch one. To catch the creature with fingers, tweezers or some similar tool, the character doing the catching must make a successful Dexterity Test against the creature's Physical Defense. Once he has grabbed the slug, the character must make a Willpower Test against the mindslug's Willpower step. If the test succeeds, the victim can remove the mindslug, inflicting Step 6/D10 damage and 1 Wound to the character. No armor protects against this damage. If the Willpower Test is unsuccessful, the mindslug continues to worm its way into the victim's brain.

Starting with the second round in which the mindslug inhabits the victim's skull, each round that the creature remains in the

victim's head increases its Physical Defense by +2. For example, by the third round after a successful attack the creature's Physical Defense is 12 (8+2+2 = 12). Also, each round that the mindslug remains in the victim's head further increases the Difficulty Number for removing it (its Willpower step) by +2. Once plucked out of the victim's skull, the creature attempts to wriggle away and escape.

Lacerators: Lacerators are cold, icy spikes that form on the mindslug's tentacles, granting a +4 bonus to the Horror's Damage Tests. They take 1 round to form and last for Step 10/D10+D6 rounds.

SCURRIER

DEX: 9 **STR**: 6 **TOU**: 9
PER: 9 **WIL**: 9 **CHA**: 4

Initiative: 9
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (1): 10
Damage:
Spear (4): 10

Physical Defense: 11
Spell Defense: 12
Social Defense: 8
Physical Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 6

Death Rating: 47
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 40

Recovery Tests: 4
Knockdown: 6

Combat Movement: 46
Full Movement: 92

Karma Points: 15
Karma Step: 12

Powers: Cursed Luck (4): 13, Repair Trap (15): 24

Legend Points: 2,365

Equipment: Spear (Damage step 4)

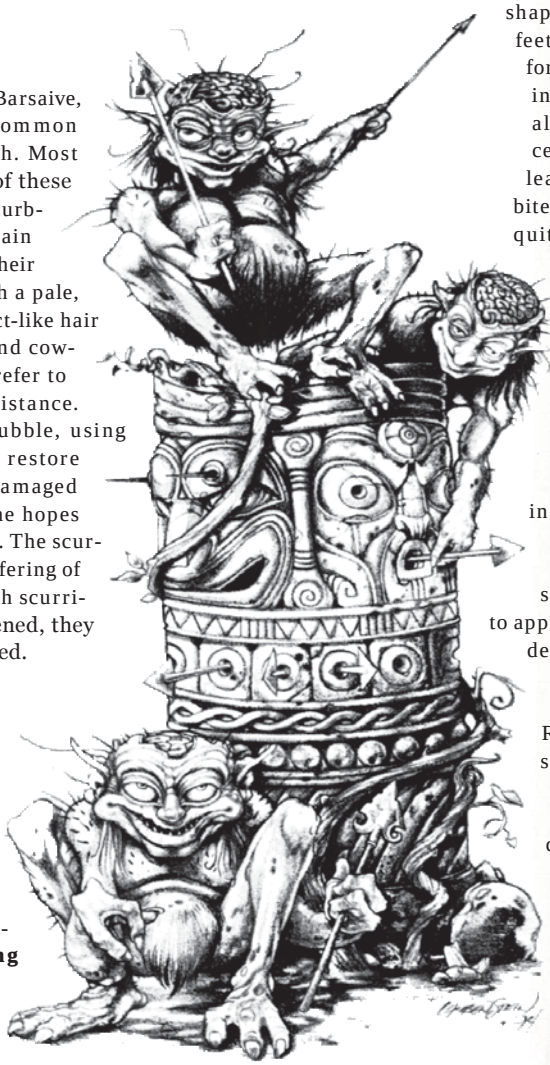
Loot: None

Commentary

Rarely seen elsewhere in Barsaive, scurriers are regrettably common inside the ruins of Parlainth. Most Name-givers find the sight of these small, humanoid Horrors disturbing. Exposed bits of living brain bulge out from their skulls, their saucer shaped eyes glow with a pale, sickly color, and coarse, insect-like hair covers their bodies. Weak and cowardly by nature, scurriers prefer to harm their victims from a distance. They scurry through the rubble, using their Repair Trap power to restore the Forgotten City's many damaged and deteriorating traps in the hopes of catching hapless explorers. The scurriers feed on the pain and suffering of their trapped victims. Though scurriers usually flee when threatened, they fight ferociously when cornered.

Rules

Repair Trap: The Horror power of Repair Trap allows scurriers to use elemental force to fuse together the broken pieces of a trap. A scurrier using this ability makes a Repair Trap Test against a Journeyman Difficulty Number (see **Creating Difficulty Numbers** in the **Gamemastering** chapter, p. 86) determined by the gamemaster based on the condition of the trap in question. For example, a trap that needed only a single part replaced would be an Easy task for the scurrier (Difficulty Number of 3–6); restoring a trap corroded into a pile of rust would be a Heroic task for the scurrier (Difficulty Number of 23–27).



SLIPSHADE

DEX: 11 **STR**: 8 **TOU**: 11
PER: 11 **WIL**: 15 **CHA**: 13

Initiative: 13
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (2): 13
Damage:
Unarmed (2): 10

Physical Defense: 14 (see text)
Spell Defense: 15 (see text)
Social Defense: 14
Physical Armor: 11
Mystic Armor: 11

Death Rating: 58 (79)
Wound Threshold: 17
Unconsciousness Rating: 51 (69)

Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 8

Combat Movement: 40

Full Movement: 80

Karma Points: 15

Karma Step: 10

Powers: Durability (3), Terror (1): 14

Legend Points (2): 2,150

Equipment: None

Loot: Varies (see text)

Commentary

Slipshades are a greatly feared, but thankfully rare type of minor Horror. Slipshades resemble humanoid shapes of absolute blackness, anywhere from 4 to 6 feet tall, and can transform themselves into a flat form no thicker than a sheet of parchment. When in this form, these dangerous entities can slide along a floor, ground, or even across walls or ceilings. Slipshades attack with their bare hands, leaving gaping, tearing wounds much like the bite of a carnivore. Fortunately, these entities are quite rare, not particularly aggressive (for Horrors), and generally do not cooperate with greater Horrors. Otherwise, few kaers would have been able to withstand the slipshades' powers of infiltration.

Apparently, slipshades do not seek out intelligent prey but will destroy mercilessly any sentient creature that wanders into their territories. Some slipshades have been known to establish permanent lairs, usually in caves or grottos in deep wilderness, and grow fiercely protective of these areas. Though these strange Horrors do not love precious stones or metals for their own sake, they seem to appreciate fine workmanship and do not wantonly destroy intricate things of beauty. Occasionally slipshades even hoard treasure, particularly magical objects and finely worked craft pieces. Rumors also tell of certain exceptional slipshades that are spellcasters of potent ability.

Slipshades' goals are mysterious. These Horrors do not appear to devour or otherwise derive nourishment from their victims, and their means of sustenance remains unknown. No slipshade has been reliably reported in Barsaive in more than 75 years, but some may still lurk about, hidden away in the deep wilderness.

Rules

Slipshades usually attack in groups of two to five. Because they are dim and shadowy, two-dimensional slipshades gain a +4 bonus, and three-dimensional slipshades gain a +2 bonus, to both their Physical and Spell Defenses while in dim and shadowy conditions. Two-dimensional slipshades are virtually impossible to see when viewed in profile.

Switch Form: Slipshades can switch from three- to two-dimensional form or vice versa instantaneously, as often as they wish. In two-dimensional form, the slipshade can elongate itself and pass through a crack of any width whatsoever, as long as the opening is at least six inches long. The slipshade can move normally by sliding along a wall, floor, ceiling or the ground. If moving upright across an open area while in two-dimensional form, the slipshade's speed is reduced by half and its movement acquires an eerie, unsteady, undulating quality. Slipshades cannot attack while in two-dimensional form, but take damage normally. In three-dimensional form, slipshades can move normally across open territory but cannot slide up walls or across ceilings.

WINGFLAYER

DEX: 15 **STR**: 16 **TOU**: 14
PER: 9 **WIL**: 14 **CHA**: 13

Initiative: 10
Number of Actions: 3
Attack (7): 22
Damage:
Slivers (1): 17

Physical Defense: 20
Spell Defense: 12
Social Defense: 17
Physical Armor: 25
Mystic Armor: 10

Death Rating: 67 (81)
Wound Threshold: 19
Unconsciousness Rating: 60 (72)

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 16

Combat Movement: 34[+]
Full Movement: 68[+]

[+] This value is the Horror's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 20
Karma Step: 10

Powers: Durability (2), See text

Legend Points (3): 8,790

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Wingflayers are among the strangest of the minor Horrors to plague Barsaive. The unique physical properties of these Horrors have led some authorities to claim that wingflayers never really existed except in the minds of overly imaginative windlings. Those who have studied the matter deeply, however, point to several reliable accounts that seem to establish that wingflayers did exist during the Scourge—and may still live.

Wingflayers appear as swirling clouds of hundreds of tiny airborne slivers, each about half an inch to 2 inches long, made of some unknown metallic substance. Usually the cloud resembles a rough cylinder about 3 feet wide and 6 feet high, but wingflayers have been known to take other shapes, including crude parodies of the human form. Wingflayers can also expand themselves. Some evidence suggests that wingflayers can expand to four times their normal size before they begin to lose shape. Also, a wingflayer can insert itself through pinhole-sized openings by sending its slivers through one at a time.

At rest, wingflayers settle into piles of slivers about a foot in diameter and barely an inch high. Resting wingflayers appear to need a certain amount of open area to reanimate themselves; they have been successfully captured inside fragile glass vessels and even in light leather sacks that a fully animated wingflayer could shred in seconds. Wingflayers do not appear to be particularly social Horrors and never form groups of more than two.

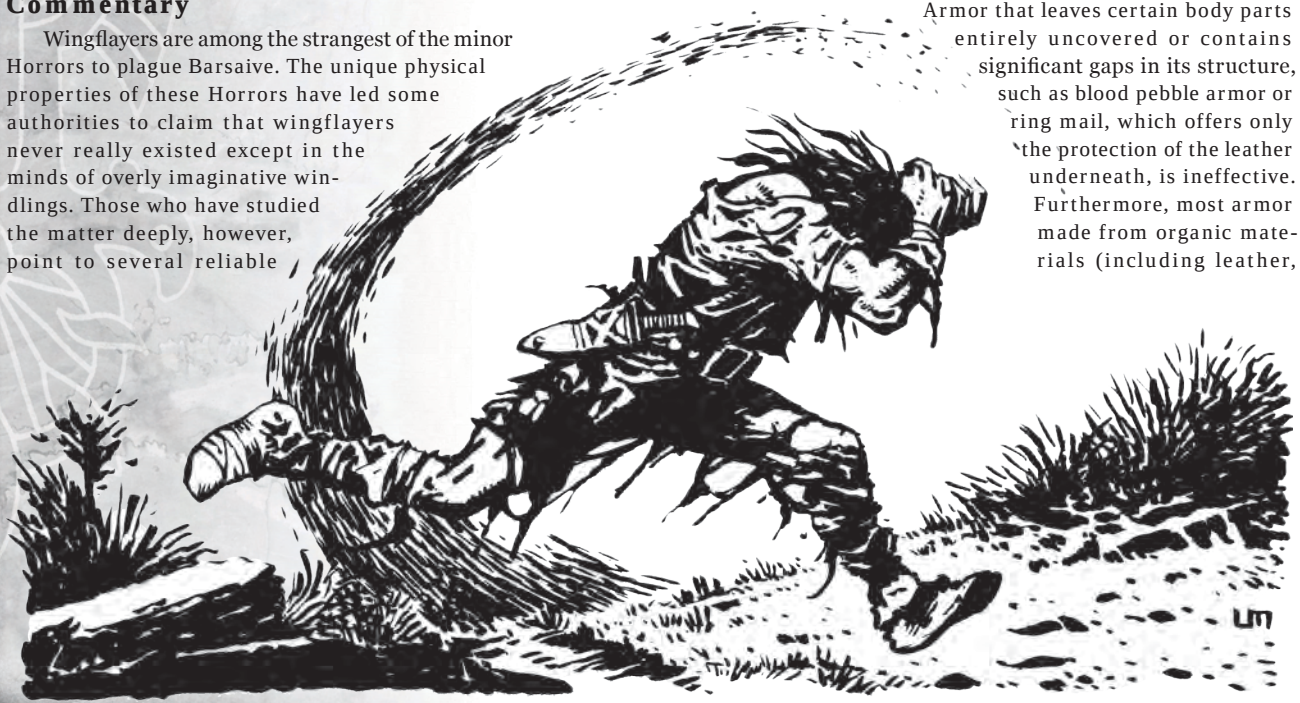
The slivers that make up a wingflayer are remarkably light, and an entire wingflayer normally weighs less than five pounds. Although this would seem to suggest these entities are insubstantial and weak, wingflayer attacks usually leave their victims little more than unidentifiable piles of raw meat. Indeed, a particularly intensive or prolonged attack can reduce a victim to a small scattering of bone splinters.

Wingflayers seem to be creatures of almost pure magic. They possess nothing that even remotely resembles sensory, digestive, or reproductive organs, yet they seem to see and hear, take in nourishment, and even reproduce. Some scholars theorize that wingflayers take the vital energy of their victims and convert it directly into mass for their constituent splinters. When the splinters reach a certain size, they divide into two or more smaller splinters.

Rules

Surprisingly, physical attacks harm wingflayers. Theorists contend that blows from solid objects disrupt the matrices of the unknown energies that give wingflayers their form. However, streamlined missiles such as arrows, darts, and thrown spears are curiously ineffective against wingflayers. Damage Tests made with such weapons against the Horror suffer a –3 penalty.

Armor is ineffective against wingflayers unless it covers the target's entire body. Armor that leaves certain body parts entirely uncovered or contains significant gaps in its structure, such as blood pebble armor or ring mail, which offers only the protection of the leather underneath, is ineffective. Furthermore, most armor made from organic materials (including leather,



hide and fernweave, but not obsidiman skin) can be permanently scoured away by persistent attacks from a wingflayer at a rate of –1 point of Physical and Mystic Armor every 3 combat rounds. However, some enchantments may make organic armor impervious to, or at least more resistant against, wingflayer attacks. Eye protection is particularly crucial when arming against wingflayers.

Wormskull

DEX: 13 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 10
PER: 13 **WIL**: 11 **CHA**: 10

Initiative: 13 **Physical Defense**: 17
Number of Actions: 2 **Spell Defense**: 17
Attack (5): 18 **Social Defense**: 18
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 17
Unarmed (13): 23 **Mystic Armor**: 14

Death Rating: 54 (110) **Recovery Tests**: 5
Wound Threshold: 15 **Knockdown**: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 47 (95)

Combat Movement: 49 **Full Movement**: 98

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step**: 9

Powers: Animate Dead (13): 24, Avoid Blow^{T} (5): 18, Create Shadow (6), Displace (6): 19, Durability (8), Skin Shift (5): 16, Spellcasting (6): 19, Thread Weaving (Nethermancy) (6): 19, Terror (15): 25

Spells: Nethermancy (Sixth Circle)

Legend Points (3): 12,240

Equipment: None

Loot: Breastplate pieces made of elemental earth. Characters can pry out pieces of armor worth (D20+D8+D6) × 100 silver pieces (count as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Wormskulls are a class of Horrors that vary in appearance but have one feature in common: their skulls look like masses of writhing worms. Often, their hands and feet also end in worm-like appendages. Wormskulls range in height from 5 to 8 feet tall. Their bodies are partly made of armor, and pieces of this armor count as treasure worth Legend Points. Because wormskulls prefer dry environments, their presence tends to remove moisture from an area 1,000 yards in circumference around them. Occasionally, wormskulls serve other Horrors.

Named Horrors

The distinction between Named Horrors and those without Names is a critical one, and not simply because the Named Horrors are unique (though the world should surely be thankful that there exists only one Hunter of Great Dragons; were there more than one, we would surely not have survived the Scourge). Any Horror that has a Name also has a True Pattern, and is therefore subject to the same laws of magic that we Name-givers know. Of course, using thread magic against these Horrors, while certainly possible, is extremely difficult, not least because the hero who would boldly attack one must first learn his enemy's True Name. As the reader of this tome will discover, many of the Names by which we call these Horrors are labels rather than the True Names of these beings. And as every Barsaivian knows, to learn the True Name of a Horror is often as dangerous as directly confronting one—for it may be that only through thread magic will we have any chance of driving the Horrors from our world. The following descriptions include information our librarians have collected about these powerful and dangerous beings.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

The following text is an edited version of the notorious Eurydon Document. *The document, purchased by the traveled scholar Falamica from an itinerant peddler in 1502 TH, has since become the center of much controversy here at the Hall of Records. Purportedly, the document is the human merchant Eurydon's account of his experiences under the Horror mark of a being known as Aazhvat Many-Eyes—hence its inclusion in this compendium. The document also holds great interest for linguistic scholars of Throal, for it veers seemingly at random between three languages: human, Throalic, and a tongue as yet unidentified. The noted language historian Verrif Kanos and his apprentices studied the document intensively between 1503 and 1504 in an attempt to identify this unknown script. Though the group made little progress in decoding these passages, Verrif Kanos concluded that the weird letters represented the language—or one language—of the Horrors themselves. When several of Verrif's apprentices were implicated in the so-called Copper Dagger Murders of 1504, King Varulus, in his wisdom, elected to suppress the* Eurydon Document, *identifying it as the cause of their madness. And so it is only with the special dispensation of the king—and under the provision that the passages in the unknown language be stricken from the document—that we present it here, in this most secret and restricted of Great Library compilations. We hope that what remains of the document can shed light on the nature of the Horrors, with minimal risk to the sanity of the reader.*

—Ardiv Fasha, Apprentice Archivist,
Great Library of Throal, 1507 TH

Aazhvat Many-Eyes

I had not seen nor spoken to my brother Uraxes for more than three years. Though no quarrel divided us, our paths through life had become separate. Uraxes had chosen the way of the adventurer, seeking to build a great legend. I had chosen the way of the merchant, seeking only to build a respectable business.

I learned of Uraxes's death when a messenger delivered his worldly goods to me, per the note found on his body. The authorities had dutifully delivered my brother's effects—minus the death tax, of course—but the accompanying document describing the circumstances of Uraxes's demise was hardly illuminating. That

missive said merely that my brother had been slain in an inn, the Briar Lizard, in the city of Iopos. The note's lack of detail preyed on my mind, and, after a period of contemplation, I arranged my affairs and set off for Iopos.

The proprietor of the Briar Lizard was obviously not pleased to see me and was close-mouthed about my brother's fate. However, the purchase of several rounds of *hurlg* bought me considerable information from the ork patrons of the inn's tavern. They said Uraxes had frequented the tavern shortly before he died, trying to recruit adventurers to help him salvage goods from an abandoned kaer he had found. Unfortunately he had little success, for it was widely known that his previous companions had been slain in the kaer and he had little money to attract recruits. The orks said that Uraxes's behavior became more and more erratic over several weeks, until one night he smashed the tavern's large mirror and launched himself at the patrons, swinging his axe and screaming in rage. Uraxes slew many of the unfortunate souls, as well as the soldiers sent to subdue him. The mirror, its hundred pieces hastily affixed in its frame, hung above the bar in silent testimony to the havoc he had wrought that dark night.

After a while, I left the inn and sought out the officer in charge of public order for the district. He hinted that, for a fee, he might release into my care an item that had been withheld as evidence. I paid the troll the silver pieces he wanted and he provided me with a map to a kaer that had been drawn with Uraxes's characteristic precision. I decided to use the resources at my disposal to hire a crew of adventurers to investigate the kaer, in the hope its contents might shed some light on my brother's demise. In a short time I had assembled a group of Namegivers experienced in such matters, and we set out.

I had never taken part in the exploration of a kaer before, but by the time we reached the site the mystery of my brother's fate filled me with a consuming curiosity. Undoubtedly this curiosity suppressed my usual caution as I plunged into the kaer alongside my hired companions, never suspecting the danger awaiting us.

As we entered the foul place, I gasped and clutched at my throat. As my eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, I discovered the source of the rancid vapors that filled the dark air. Strewn about the dirt floor were the bodies of the kaer's inhabitants, seemingly mummified by some unknown process. The uniform expression of terror on their pitiful faces remains fresh in my mind, as if burned into my memory. At the time I felt much dismayed by the casual, almost joking manner the others displayed at our gruesome discovery. Though I now understand it as a hardened, necessary reaction of those all too accustomed to such shocking sights, it angered me then. I recklessly hurried ahead, stumbling into an anteroom — where I beheld IT.

At first, it seemed nothing more than a forgotten old shield hanging on the wall, dusty and corroded. But then the lid appeared, sweeping open languidly to reveal the eye—that horrible, round, liquid EYE! I staggered back, shaken, and when I looked again I could see no trace of the cursed orb. I said nothing to my companions. Instinctively, I knew I had found the clue I had sought—and in so doing I had committed the worst error of my life.

That night, I went back to the Briar Lizard. Though I could well afford superior accommodations, I found myself driven by an inexplicable, irresistible urge to retrace the footsteps of my departed brother, to understand what had gone on in his mind. Already I had grown certain that he had seen IT as well, and like me he had been unable to purge the terrible image from his mind.

And so I sat in the tavern, this time seeking no companionship. I overindulged in the nectar of the vine and I thought of my brother, and of his strange demise, and the terrible thing in the kaer.

I next remember reeling into my room, hot wax from the candle dripping onto my hand. I set the candle down onto the chest of drawers and emptied my pockets, spilling out my coins next to the taper. Suddenly, eleven liquid eyes blinked open from the silver pieces and stared at me, boring into me and penetrating my soul. I screamed and fell backwards, and then all went dark.

I awoke with sunlight upon my face. I shook my throbbing head and thought of the eyes in the coins—a dream, a wine-fueled hallucination, I admonished myself. I staggered to my feet and walked over to the chest of drawers.

The coins were still looking at me—for an instant at least. Then they blinked shut. I grabbed them and held them tight. They were metallic, solid—common coins. I clattered them together, threw them against the wall—common coins in every respect. I threw myself down upon the crude and musty bed and wept, for what had happened seemed obvious. I had been marked by a Horror in the kaer—the same Horror that had marked Uraxes. It had driven him mad, and now it would do the same to me.

For several days this went on. Coins, buttons, saucers, the wine in my goblet—each of these things opened their eyes to me; their staring, malign, relentless eyes. It happened in my room. It happened in the tavern. I tried my best to conceal my growing agitation, but soon I began to tremble uncontrollably. Sleep became impossible, for whenever I drifted off I began to dream of those eyes, that Eye, everywhere, boring through me, paralyzing me. Nowhere could I escape its unceasing gaze!

Somehow I located an expert on the Horrors and their magics, a Nethermancer who had recently retired from the Denairastas's service. I spoke to her of my recent experiences and told her of my brother's demise. She listened attentively to my desperate outpouring of words with an expression of deep sympathy. When I had finished, I pleaded desperately for a solution to my dilemma.

"You have been marked by Aazhvat, also known as Aazhvat Many-Eyes," she said. "Legends speak of several ways of breaking the mark of Aazhvat. Self-blinding is said to be one, but some tales claim this method is ineffective. Seeking the mark of a more powerful Horror is another way, but that is clearly undesirable. But there is a third way," she said as she slid a dagger across the table to me. Fixing me with a brief, piercing gaze, she walked from the room.

Her meaning was clear; suicide was the only surcease. But I could not bring myself to surrender.

As I walked back to the tavern, all those I passed on the streets seemed to stare at me with the awful eyes of Aazhvat. As I returned to the tavern, I saw workmen installing a new mirror. Before it was securely in its frame, it had already become an Eye of Aazhvat—looking at me, taunting me. Suddenly I found an empty bottle in my hand and I was smashing at it, again and again and again and again, until the shards were shards of shards of shards. The proprietor advanced on me, fury in his eyes. I knew what I must do, and I seized one of the shards, plunging it into my left eye. I plunged it again and again, and into my right eye as well. The pain, the pain was indescribable. The proprietor had stopped, shocked by this display of self-mutilation.

His anger melted, and his knees buckled beneath him. He lurched for a table. A feeling of terror then began to grow in my stomach, for I realized I had not escaped. For though I had destroyed both my eyes, I could still see!

Game Information

DEX: 7 **STR**: 7 **TOU**: 18
PER: 23 **WIL**: 20 **CHA**: 18

Initiative: 7
Number of Actions: 5
Attack: NA
Damage: NA

Physical Defense: 9
Social Defense: 29
Spell Defense: 23
Physical Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 15

Death Rating: 84 (183)
Wound Threshold: 23
Recovery Tests: 9
Knockdown: Immune
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Combat Movement: 30 **Full Movement**: 60

Karma Points: 0–40 (see text) **Karma Step**: 15

Powers: Corrupt Reality (15), Create Shadow (6), Durability (11), Horror Mark (5): 28 (special; see text), Karma Drain (5): 25, Spellcasting (7): 30, Thread Weaving (Nethermancy) (7): 30

Spells: Nethermancy (Ninth Circle)

Legend Points (5): 137,625

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Aazhvat Many-Eyes exists solely on the astral plane but maintains a close connection to the physical plane, where it finds its victims. No description of it exists, except that the Horror can manifest a large eye to peek into the physical realm.

Rules

Like many Horrors, Aazhvat Many-Eyes feeds by inducing terror, dread, and despair in its victims. But Aazhvat does so in a very particular manner.

Corrupted Objects: Throughout Barsaive, Aazhvat maintains psychic manifestations of itself, which it overlays onto mundane objects in the material world. These objects are always large, round items such as shields, plaques, broken pot bottoms, circular box lids, and so forth. Additionally, these objects must be located in areas of the physical world adjacent to highly polluted portions of astral space, such as Tainted or Corrupt regions (see **Casting Raw Magic** in the **Spell Magic** chapter on p. 289 of the **Player's Compendium**). These areas often retain a heavy Horror taint; examples include the Badlands, the ruins of Parlainth, or any kaer ravaged by Horrors during the Scourge.

Aazhvat maintains a maximum of thirteen of these charged objects throughout Barsaive. When one is discovered or destroyed, the Horror searches the physical plane for another likely spot and object to imprint with its essence. The act of imprinting an object requires no tests, but it costs Aazhvat 12 Karma Points. Once an object has been so imprinted, that object is considered Horror-marked by Aazhvat. Aazhvat senses whenever a suitable being ventures across one of these charged objects. When a victim beholds the object, Aazhvat employs its Corrupt Reality power to temporarily transform the object into a socket for one of its own eyes (understandably, most Name-givers find this a deeply disturbing sight). Aazhvat then uses this conduit to the physical plane to attempt to Horror-mark the victim. If the character does not immediately avert his gaze from the eye of Aazhvat, the Horror gains a +3 bonus to its Horror Mark Test.

Gaze of Corruption: Aazhvat usually induces insanity in its victims by using the Corrupt Reality power, which enables it to distort the very fabric of reality. It uses this power to make every vaguely round object appear to the victim as a manifestation of one of the Horror's gruesome eyes. It can even transform other Name-givers so that their eyes momentarily look like its eyes. Aazhvat never communicates directly with its victims, because it savors their terrified confusion.

Horror Mark: Aazhvat's unique Horror Mark ability is much more powerful than that of other Horrors. Aazhvat may mark victims who merely gaze at objects charged with its essence, rather than only victims it can see. As long as the original charged object exists intact, Aazhvat may always use any of its other powers on the victim, regardless of the distance between them. Aazhvat may only renew its Horror mark when it expires by spending 13 Karma Points.

Aazhvat's Horror mark is exceedingly difficult to break because the Horror can renew the mark without regard to distance. Destroying the original object containing Aazhvat's imprint changes Aazhvat's Horror mark to a standard one, which forces Aazhvat to occupy a point in astral space no more than ten miles from the Horror-marked character to manifest its powers. However, the only guaranteed way to completely erase Aazhvat's mark is to destroy Aazhvat. Because this Horror dwells exclusively in astral space, characters must fight Aazhvat in astral space to harm it. In astral space, Aazhvat appears as an enormous blob of wet, blinking eyes, roiling and bubbling in a chaotic mass. It has no appendages and fights solely by casting spells. Aazhvat is somewhat vulnerable to physical attacks, assuming that the characters can get to astral space and are carrying weapons that will manifest there as well. (Assume that only magical weapons with threads attached to them can do damage to the Horror on the astral plane.)

Karma: Aazhvat does not regain Karma naturally; it must leech karma from victims it has marked by using its Karma Drain power. To ensure itself a supply of Karma, Aazhvat typically maintains a dozen or so marked victims of various races at any given time. Because Aazhvat experiences intense pleasure when its victims go mad and destroy themselves, Aazhvat must constantly balance its hunger with its need for fresh victims to sustain its Karma supply.

Adventure Hook

Characters can become involved with Aazhvat Many-Eyes through exposure to Aazhvat's Horror-marked items or through contact with one of Aazhvat's victims. Once a victim is marked, the Horror stalks the victim, using its powers to torment him.

One possible adventure involving Aazhvat involves a number of travelers in a rural area. Aazhvat marks the individuals, leading to a number of recent deaths. In response to the slayings, local village leaders have pooled their resources and hired the player characters to find and destroy the object that Aazhvat has imprinted with its essence. In this case, the object is a rounded knot of a tree in a patch of jungle that was corrupted during the Scourge and is currently inhabited by bizarre plant creatures.

Shortly after I began to research the Horror known as Artificer, I discovered that no solid documentary evidence of it existed. The literature contains many fragmentary, offhand references to it, but no coherent legends describe it directly. Therefore, I elicited the aid of a number of adventurers who have experienced personally the handiwork of this most curious Horror. What follows is a transcript of a discussion, which I moderated. The participants are Ajmar the Admirable, Court Wizard to the King of Throal; K'reena T'shimon, accomplished thief and leader emeritus of His Majesty's Exploratory Force; and Thridula, freelance scout.

—Vomonica Cerrov, Apprentice Archivist, Library of Throal

ARTIFICER

Vomonica: The topic of discussion today is the Horror known as Artificer. Thridula, you seem ... discomfited.

Thridula: You may be willing to speak the Name, but I am not.

Vomonica: How are we to discuss the entity if we do not speak its—

Thridula: I consider it unwise to speak the Name of any major Horror at any time.

Ajmar: Superstition, mere superstition! It is well known that Artificer resides on the astral plane exclusively, and that it can harm us only through its traps. As I see no traps in this comfortable reading room, I believe we can be confident that we are beyond its reach.

Thridula: Still, one can never be too—

Vomonica: Ajmar, this is the nub of the matter I wish to explore today. You say that such and so is well known about Artificer, but I found almost no references to the Horror in the existing literature.

K'reena: You must have experience in the field to understand this, boy. The Name of Artificer echoes in the mind of any seasoned explorer.

Vomonica: But the many adventurers' journals here at the library mention this Horror only sparingly.

Thridula: One does not tempt Fate by referring idly to a Horror such as this one.

Vomonica: Well, perhaps each of you could briefly describe Artificer, from what you know of him.

Thridula: It.

Vomonica: Very well, it. K'reena?

K'reena: Artificer is the nightmare of every explorer who ventures underground. Whenever you creep through a passageway, open a door or drop through a hole, a part of you fears that one of Artificer's cruel surprises is waiting for you, hungry to rend your flesh and taste your blood.

Thridula: Thankfully, the foul creature of which we speak leaves ample evidence of its work. It leaves all that it touches—be it earth, stone, whatever material—a smooth, gleaming, unearthly metal.

Ajmar: Strictly speaking, little about the metal itself is unearthly. I have extensively tested the material in my laboratory, as has an Elementalist colleague, and I have found that the metal created by Artificer has no innately magical characteristics. However, the material cannot be duplicated by any known means. The greatest metalworkers of Throal have gazed at it in wonder, admiring its absolute smoothness and seamlessness.

Vomonica: So Artificer is a Horror that changes underground complexes, covering them in this unusual metal and larding them with vicious traps. To what end?

Thridula: It wishes to feed on our pain.

Vomonica: And how do you know this?

Thridula: I have scars. The first two joints on my index finger I lost in a trap in the ruins of Landis. This leg was crippled by a crushing mechanism in an alcove in an abandoned kaer to the west of Blood Wood.

Ajmar: Curious, Thridula. I have never noticed you limping.

Thridula: A questor of Garlen healed it for me. Good as new on the outside. But on the inside, it still feels crippled. I've been wounded many a time in my day. Were I to recount all of my wounds, we would be here for hours—

Ajmar: No doubt.

Thridula: —but of all these, it is the Wound I suffered from that thing's trap that still haunts me.

Vomonica: But how do you know that Artificer fed on the pain you suffered?

Thridula: I could feel the vile thing. For the briefest moment, when my head was swimming with agony, I could feel its presence. Far away, yet close as well. It was terrifying and might have driven me mad had it lasted longer than a moment.

K'reena: I felt the same thing when I was hit with the scythe blade of a trap in a kaer outside Urupa. The Horror did not speak directly to me or communicate any specific thoughts, but I knew it was there nonetheless.

Ajmar: I must say that I have not been as unlucky as my colleagues. Though I have been in a kaer altered by Artificer—the one catalogued as K626 in *Jabru's Atlas of Excavated Kaers*—I have never been personally injured by one of its traps. Not that I haven't had several close calls, I hasten to add! However, several of my companions on that desperate day were harmed by the traps and reported sensing a vast, impossibly strange consciousness touching theirs.

Vomonica: So no one knows what Artificer looks like? They just know its presence in their minds.

Thridula: I know what it looks like. The Horror of which we speak is half a league long, made of metal and covered with curious mechanisms and devices: wheels, pulleys, dials, rivets, seams. Its orifices excrete hot steam, dark and foul liquids, and throat-tightening gases.

K'reena: The only thing like it is the engine of one of my people's riverboats. Yes, it is a gigantic, distorted boat engine turned inside out. Its image is madness.

Vomonica: And how do you know this?

K'reena: I simply know it.

Vomonica: Have you always known this?

K'reena: No, I suppose not. Tales of this thing were never told in our compact.

Ajmar: I believe that Thridula and K'reena's visions of Artificer came to them when they were harmed by its traps. I have spoken to many adventurers about Artificer since our own encounter with its awful works. Those who have been in its traps describe it as our friends have done just now. Those who have not profess ignorance of the Horror's nature and appearance.

Vomonica: You also said it is well-known that the thing exists only on the astral plane. How is this well-known?

Ajmar: Perhaps it is not. I thought it was well-known. Curiously, I have always believed it to be common knowledge, yet I rarely speak without being completely assured of the veracity of my statements.

Thridula: Indeed.

Vomonica: Have there been any reports of the Horror manifesting on the physical plane?

Ajmar: I am aware of none.

Vomonica: Is there anything else anyone cares to add about their experiences with Artificer?

Thridula: I could describe its traps more fully, but as to the thing itself, I have nothing more than those odd impressions. It is something I shall never forget.

Ajmar: I will speculate on its origins, if you will permit me. Having consulted an Elementalist colleague when studying the metal mentioned earlier, I came to the conclusion that the Horror might be related somehow to the elemental spirits.

K'reena: An elemental spirit and a Horror both? How can that be?

Thridula: Never trust an elemental spirit, that's all I'll say.

Ajmar: Needless to say, our theory is tentative. But my experiences in K626 seems to suggest such a connection. Our warrior had a magical lance bequeathed to him by an earth spirit in exchange for services rendered. The lance, which the warrior knew to be useless against other earth elementals, simply went dead within the confines of the complex. The threads he wove to it vanished as if dispelled, but sprang back into being as soon as we escaped from the kaer. From this, I conclude that Artificer is in part either an earth elemental or a related entity.

K'reena: The concept of elemental spirits being corrupted in this manner is most disturbing. Thank Mynbruje that no corrupted water elementals exist.

Ajmar: Do not be so sure, my t'skrang friend. What we know about the Horrors can fit in a thimble, tossed on a vast ocean of ignorance.

Vomonica: In conclusion, then, is there any advice you would like to present to readers of this tome who may find themselves in one of Artificer's mazes?

Thridula: If you find yourself in an area of worked and gleaming metal, the like of which you have never seen before, turn back immediately.

K'reena: The maze always contains a point that blocks one's exit. Map very carefully, for you will likely have to search for another way out.

Ajmar: Most of Artificer's mazes contain another route as well—one engineered to take you through the worst of the traps.

Thridula: Forget about any treasures you see. The Horror of which we speak packs its mazes with fabulous jewels and magical objects, enough to whet the greed of any dwarf. Remember, these items are placed there as bait.

K'reena: Two of my finest comrades were slain attempting to remove gems from a statue found in one of Artificer's kaers. Emeralds the size of your head, worth enough to retire on forever.

Thridula: I was with them. They retired, all right, but not in the manner they had intended. Another thing—beware of traps within traps. I found several traps that were triggered by actions necessary to disarm yet other traps. The Horror designs its devices to cripple the thieves and scouts, so as to prevent them from disarming the more diabolical traps ahead.

K'reena I shudder at these memories. We have said enough today. Let us retire to the tavern and speak of better things.

Game Information

DEX: 10 **STR**: 20 **TOU**: 28
PER: 20 **WIL**: 19 **CHA**: 10

Initiative: 7 **Physical Defense**: 11
Number of Actions: 4 **Spell Defense**: 25
Attack (6): 16 **Social Defense**: 13
Damage: **Physical Armor**: 33
Spikes (5): 25 **Mystic Armor**: 20

Death Rating: 126 (261) **Recovery Tests**: 14
Wound Threshold: 34 **Knockdown**: 23
Unconsciousness Rating: 120 (240)

Combat Movement: 32 **Full Movement**: 64

Karma Points: 30 **Karma Step**: 15

Powers: Durability (15), Forge Trap (15): 35

Legend Points (4): 150,880

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

During a previous Scourge, a group of dragons summoned a powerful elemental to the physical world to use in their fight against the Horrors. This elemental was summoned from the Realm of Metal, an unearthly plane accessible via the larger Plane of Earth. Unfortunately for the dragons—and countless Name-givers thereafter—the Horrors corrupted the elemental, turning it into a strange hybrid of Horror and elemental that contains certain traits of both.

Artificer feeds in an unusual manner. Whenever the magic level in the world is high enough to permit its entry, it burrows through the earth in search of underground caverns and tunnels. It then uses the Forge Trap power to transform these places into gleaming, metallic mazes strewn with fiendish mechanical traps. When the mystic energies abate and the world becomes hostile to its presence, Artificer retreats to the astral plane and waits. The deformed patterns of its trap mazes are connected to its own pattern, and so whenever a living being falls into one of its traps, Artificer can feed on the victim's pain.

During the most recent Scourge, Artificer found breached kaers ideal environments to transform into trap complexes. It also searched for gold, gems, magical treasures and other items valued by Name-givers and placed these inside these complexes as bait.

Physically, Artificer appears as an enormous entity with a vaguely quadruped body shape. Gleaming silver, gold, and bronze comprise its body, and a chaotic mix of rivets, gears, pulleys, levers, and other mechanical devices cover it, An array of wheels along its underside enables the Horror to propel itself along the ground when necessary, and it can burrow through earth as a whale swims through water. The Horror may attack by shooting forth up to four gigantic, spring-loaded spikes from its body per combat round.

Rules

Though terrifying in combat, Artificer has no great interest in fighting. Instead, the Horror prefers to feed on those caught in its traps. Current magic levels prevent Artificer from returning to the material world, though some dread rituals may be powerful

enough to summon it back temporarily. The Horror now resides solely on the astral plane, usually in the astral space surrounding one of its trap complexes.

Immunity to Earth: Artificer's elemental nature renders it immune to attacks by earth elementals and their kin and from the effects of earth-related Elementalist spells such as Earth Darts, Earth Staff, Metal Scream, Stone Cage, Tossing Earth.

Adventure Hook

Artificer provides a rationale for the underground complex full of traps and treasure, a staple plot element of fantasy roleplaying. Gamemasters can use the classic "go in and get the loot" structure or vary the formula by having the characters form a rescue party to find and save someone who has disappeared into one of Artificer's complexes. Alternatively, the characters may attempt to enter astral space in search of Artificer, in the hope they might destroy it. In this case, locating the Horror becomes the first step in a particularly dangerous, exciting adventure.

The following text was drawn from the Journal of Mustan, which was recovered from the ruins of Parlainth in 1502 TH by His Majesty's Exploratory Force. The journal appears to be an account of life in Parlainth at the time of the city's disappearance from our reality in 1044. The journal's author, Mustan Mustanicus, was the head of a Theran trading house. Unfortunately, the little of the journal that has not been rendered illegible by the ravages of time consists largely of curt notations of business dealings: it is not the key to the secrets of Parlainth's mysterious history that my superiors had initially hoped it would be. However, its disturbing last pages contain vital clues to the ongoing enigma of Parlainth's fate. As they also concern the baleful entity known as Bone Crown the Usurper, we chose to include them in this volume. In translating this journal excerpt from the Theran, I have retained the original Theran dating.

—Zamirica One-Knee, Apprentice Archivist, Great Library of Throal

Bone Crown the Usurper

Sixtieth Week/Third Day, 607

Meeting with Emila Fist-Heart, a supporter of Headbreaker. Fist-Heart requests support of my trading house and vassals in upcoming skirmish with Vastbelly's forces. Fist-Heart's loyalty to Headbreaker is strong but without apparent motive. I do not understand Headbreaker's success in rallying so many to her cause. I impress upon Fist-Heart the need for peace and the futility of shedding Name-giver blood.

Sixtieth Week/Fourth Day, 607

Meeting with Herek Quantz, chancellor to the Lord Mayor. Quantz also requests the support of my house and vassals. I repeat assertions given to Fist-Heart: need for reconciliation, mediation, solution—not fighting.

Sixtieth Week/Fifth Day, 607

Fighting breaks out in the merchant's quarter. A troop of Headbreaker's fighters ambushes Vastbelly's tax patrol. Six are slain, fourteen seriously injured. This is madness.

Sixty-First Week/Second Day, 607

Dinner with Phabre turns *peculiar*. Phabre is now a fierce partisan of Headbreaker. I detect a gleam in Phabre's eyes that seems, well, *eerie*. Last week he was fulminating against Headbreaker, crying "traitor" and "shame!" Now he claims Headbreaker is Parlainth's only hope. Spittle flies from his lips as he swears death to Vastbelly. I upbraid him and he storms out.

Sixty-First Week/Third Day, 607

Still disquieted by dinner with Phabre. I begin inquiries, searching for a magical explanation for bizarre—

(text obscured by water damage)

Sixty-Seventh Week/Fourth Day, 607

No further outbreaks of violence. Mediation efforts seem to have borne fruit—for now. My suspicions of Headbreaker's supporters have grown stronger for their fervency seems unnatural. I feel I am getting closer to an explanation, however.

Sixty-Ninth Week/Fifth Day, 607

I swallow my pride and visit Jadrian. Past differences forgotten. Jadrian is concerned new outbreaks are imminent. Like me, he worries that desire for peace is shallow on both sides. I ask Jadrian about a possible Horror connection to the cruel and stupid behavior of Headbreaker's rebels. Jadrian replies, "Do not impute to the influence of Horrors what can be explained by the eternal folly of Name-givers."

Seventieth Week/Third Day, 607

Success! I have found an actual witness to the events leading up to the Kathaz massacre. The witness is an ork serving woman, Name of Lalak. She says the town prepared for the Scourge with a cooperative effort to build a kaer. Then a series of mysterious slayings occurred. Community leaders were killed in their beds or simply disappeared. Then a man Named Zornos, a long-lost brother of one of the slain, appeared in town. Zornos found blood-magic fetishes buried inside the kaer's foundations. He blamed the current councilors, and fighting broke out between those who followed Zornos and the city guards. Blood flowed, and all the councilors were slain or fled. Zornos was acclaimed the new headman.

Over the next few months, Zornos convinced the townspeople that neighboring villagers had plotted with the councilors to plant the fetishes. He told them their neighbors had planned to take over their farms when the Scourge ended. *Lalak says the eyes of the Katkaz townsfolk had the same kind of look I detected in Phabre's!*

Zornos began training the townsfolk for war. Soon, kaer-building stopped and raids on other villages began. Zornos then told the townspeople their kaer had been permanently fouled and said they must kill other villagers and take over their kaers to survive. A series of raids followed over the next few months, in which dozens, perhaps hundreds, were killed. Lalak and others spoke out against Zornos, but they were arrested and tortured. Lalak escaped and was picked up by a Theran infantry patrol marching toward Kathaz.

Soon afterward, a Theran infantry unit attacked Kathaz. The townsfolk fought to the death, and every last man, woman, and child was slain. Zornos's body was never found.

I wondered if Zornos and Headbreaker are the same person, but it seems too simple. Also, Headbreaker is a troll and Zornos was an ork. Still, I feel Lalak's tale has some important connection to the present crisis.

Seventieth Week/Fourth Day, 607

I visit Jadrian and recount Lalak's tale for him. Jadrian agrees that the Kathaz massacre sounds Horror-tainted but he remains unconvinced that it is related to Parlainth's current troubles. He promises to consult his library for similar accounts.

Seventieth Week/Fifth Day, 607

The agreement between Vastbelly and Headbreaker has been violated. A fight broke out between partisans of both sides near the fountain. Unclear which side started it, and whether either was authorized to fight. Riots spread throughout the administrative quarter. Several elderly, peaceful Vastbelly supporters were doused with oil and set afire. Tensions are high throughout the city. I was summoned to mediate once more. Vastbelly is alternately cooperative and bombastic. Headbreaker sends an emissary—Emila Fist-Heart, who seems even more fervent than before. *Something is missing behind her eyes.* I propose

a direct meeting between Vastbelly and Headbreaker, but Fist-Heart refuses. Vastbelly is offended. I ask for an audience with Headbreaker; I'm told "not yet." Very peculiar. More meetings are scheduled for tomorrow.

Seventy-Second Week/First Day, 607

Peace again, for now. Firstweek festivities will be tense but not marked by bloodshed—I hope. I am exhausted, but the conflict seems papered over.

Seventy-Second Week/Third Day, 607

Summoned by messenger to meet Jadrian. His excitement is obvious in his demeanor. In various texts, Jadrian has found legendary references to a possible culprit: Bone Crown the Usurper.

An entity by this Name was active during the Invae Burnings in southern Barsaive, before the founding of Thera. The Invae were insect-like creatures that infested the ancient kingdom of Landis, assumed the forms of Name-givers, infiltrated the cult of Chorrolis and began turning others into insect beings. In the ensuing confusion and hysteria, many innocents died.

Much of the innocent blood was spilled by an officer of the army of Landis, a human named Husan Allar. Allar became known as the Questor Killer and the Passion Slayer. He began to recruit followers of his own, outside the authority of the king of Landis. Eventually the king sent loyalist troops to bring Allar to heel. Several minor battles ensued, and many of the so-called loyalists defected to Allar. Allar's army continued to grow even after the threat of the Invae had ended. Soon Allar's army had captured a small province, of which Allar declared himself king.

The king of Landis then sent two questors to Allar: one of the Trickster Vestrial, and one of Erendis, Passion of Order. Erendis's follower failed in his attempt to uncover Allar's true nature and was put to death. But the woman who followed Vestrial tricked Allar into believing she had converted to his cause. Then she exposed him to a mirror (why she thought to do so is unclear from the legend), and he was revealed as a monstrous thing, a creature "of a thousand eyes, most hideous; of a thousand tongues, all gibbering; of a thousand teeth; all gnashing." The thing (we know now it was a Horror) revealed itself as Bone Crown the Usurper. It proclaimed itself the herald of a host of abominations and screeched that it would one day rule all of Barsaive. Then it fled. Allar was never seen again, and his forces soon dispersed. The many deserters from the armies of Landis were granted amnesty by the king, on the grounds that they had been "bewitched."

Jadrian and I sit for many minutes in silence after reading this. Suddenly I wish not to believe my suspicions. For if they are true, Horrors have entered Parlainth despite all we have done to protect it. Jadrian says he has found other possible accounts of Bone Crown's activities since then, and he will continue to research. Will meet again on the morrow.

Seventy-Second Week/Fourth Day, 607

I have been thinking much. If Headbreaker is Zornos, is Allar, is Bone Crown the Usurper, my previous neutrality must be abandoned. But my role as honest broker is precisely what has prevented great carnage. Do I remain a mediator, or do I throw my lot in with Vastbelly? Vastbelly's faults are as enormous as his girth, and his sorcerer backers are mad and menacing in their own way, but at least they are not Horrors. And do I have any real evidence to present to Vastbelly, to the people of Parlainth, to anyone? Can I better strike at Headbreaker by acting alone? More pondering in days ahead, no doubt.

On my way to consult again with Jadrian, I am accosted on the street by Phabre, who tells me that Headbreaker wishes to meet with me. Alone, I shudder. But perhaps this is an opportunity. I send a messenger with my regrets to Jadrian and spend the evening in the tavern, drawing what I can from Phabre. I soon become all the more convinced that something is wrong with him. Although he is inches from my face, he sounds like he is speaking to me from miles away.

Seventy-Second Week/Fifth Day, 607

First-week celebrations are only days away, but they will hold no joy for me. I went to Jadrian's home, but he was not there. Instead, I found blood on the floor of his study. His wife and children are also missing. Near frantic, I tracked down his friends, but none knew his whereabouts. I had sensed something strange in the maid's manner and went back to question her further, but she had disappeared.

Second Week/First Day, 608

After penning these words, I leave for my appointed meeting with Headbreaker. My hands are trembling. I have never been a warrior, never claimed to be a hero. I am a man of peace, of accommodation, of negotiation. But now I venture into the bosom of absolute malignity—if, that is, my guesses are right and not just the fevered imaginings of an old dodderer who has seen too much killing and mayhem. There is a mirror in the left pocket of my robe, another in the right pocket, and a third sewn into the lining of my cape. May the Passions help me.

Second Week/Second Day, 608

Headbreaker is a great leader of Name-givers, but her chain of command leaves much to be desired. As Headbreaker's First Adviser, my top priority is to untangle the web of connections between her followers and mold this chance collusion of merchants, tradesmen and ruffians into a political entity that successfully can take power from Vastbelly when we finally tumble that incompetent from his feathered roost. I know my skills will allow us to make a smooth transition to rule with a minimum of slaughter and am confident that, under my tutelage, Headbreaker's rule of Parlainth will be glorious.

Game Information

DEX: 18 **STR**: 20 **TOU**: 20
PER: 18 **WIL**: 20 **CHA**: 22

Initiative: 15
Number of Actions: 4
Attack (4): 22
Damage:
Dagger (23): 43

Physical Defense: 23
Spell Defense: 23
Social Defense: 28
Physical Armor: 7
Mystic Armor: 15

Death Rating: 94 (211)
Wound Threshold: 25
Unconsciousness Rating: 88 (184)

Recovery Tests: 10
Knockdown: 20

Combat Movement: 140 **Full Movement**: 280

Karma Points: 20 **Karma Step**: See text

Powers: Aura of Awe (4): 26, Corrupt Karma (4): 24, Create Shadow (5), Cursed Luck (4): 24, Durability (12), Spellcasting (7): 25, Thread Weaving (Illusionism) (7): 25

Spells: Illusionism (Seventh Circle)

Legend Points (4): 283,420

Equipment: Enchanted dagger (Forged +1; see text), Chain mail

Loot: None

Commentary

Bone Crown the Usurper cloaks its identity in deceit, passing among Name-givers as one of their own. The more Name-givers who follow its commands, the more mystical power it gains, whether the Name-givers in question obey it wittingly or unwittingly, directly or indirectly. If it wins the fealty of a scorcher chieftain, for example, it gains a magical benefit not only from ruling that chieftain, but from ruling all those loyal to him as well.

Bone Crown usually finds a community of Name-givers in grave trouble for one reason or another. It presents itself to them as a heroic adventurer and surreptitiously uses its powers to end the crisis of the moment—which it may well have caused. Bone Crown then uses its Aura of Awe power to convince the community to appoint it as their leader. Once it has a grip on the reins of authority, Bone Crown begins to twist people, demanding that they violate their own principles in the name of authority and community stability. Alternatively, Bone Crown selects one of the strongest-willed, noblest members of a community and methodically corrupts him. The Horror's powers of persuasion are so powerful that many of its followers continue to fight for it even after it is exposed as a Horror.

Sly and articulate, Bone Crown speaks in soft, soothing tones and moves slowly and gracefully. Bone Crown enjoys the pleasures that Barsaive has to offer, having developed a taste for fine food and drink and luxurious surroundings. It loves to be flattered, even though it is seldom fooled by the honeyed words of others.

Rules

Though Bone Crown is formidable in combat, it prefers to fight through its followers. Bone Crown prefers to wear chain mail armor.

Enchanted Dagger: Bone Crown usually carries a dagger that has been specially enchanted. When wielded by Bone Crown, this dagger's Damage step increases by +20.

Karma: The Horror's Karma step is based on the number of followers it has under its sway. The Horror has a base Karma step of 3, +1 for every full 5 followers, to a maximum Karma step of 20/D20+D8+D6. For example, if Bone Crown has an army of 50 followers, its Karma step rises to Step 13/D12+D10 (50 / 5 = 10 + 3 = 13).

Shapeshifting: Bone Crown may adopt the form of any Name-giver, with the exception of dragons. The Horror must spend 10 Karma Points to transform itself in this manner. For this reason, Bone Crown transforms only when necessary. The Horror zealously guards its true identity, revealing it only when presented with no other choice. Bone Crown loathes mirrors, as they reveal its true nature; in their reflection, it appears as a misshapen humanoid figure covered with hundreds of miniature faces.

Adventure Hook

Generally, player characters will encounter Bone Crown the Usurper by coming into contact with a community or group under the Horror's influence. One possible adventure involves Bone Crown assembling a power base in an area of interest to the adventurers. Perhaps it has taken over a scorcher band that controls a crucial trade route or is building a coalition of river pirates. Maybe it has gained authority over a confederation of settlements agitating against the adventurers' political allies, such as the Kingdom of Throal. The player characters can struggle with Bone Crown's minions over a series of adventures and then infiltrate the Horror's "inner circle" in an attempt to learn more of the mysterious leader who has been causing so much trouble in the region.

The following text is from the Journal of Zeier, which was recovered from the ruins of Parlainth in 1505 TH by an expedition of the Haven Grim Legionnaires led by Hotbolt. Zeier was a simple Theran soldier, trying to keep his family alive as the city descended into darkness. His tale is tragic, but sheds some light on the Horror known as Buualgathor, the Horror Hunter. In translating this journal excerpt from the Theran, I have retained the original Theran dating.

—Zamirica One-Knee, Apprentice Archivist, Great Library of Throal

BUUALGATHOR

Eighth Week/Third Day, 608 TE

The city continues to slide into civil war. The battle lines are drawn between the merchant Headbreaker and the magicians and Vastbelly. As a Theran soldier, it is my duty to protect the magicians and Vastbelly, the Lord Mayor of Parlainth. My fiancée, Roselle and I, are getting married tomorrow. My friends among the soldiers decided to have a party tonight at the local tavern to commemorate my last day as a "free" man, with ale and wenches. But, I am worried about my beloved Roselle and my city which continues to crumble to pointless battle. I must keep on fighting to earn my pay, or else I will have no way to take care of my wife and child-to-be. I am caught up in this civil war with no say about how it is fought or why. My thoughts keep returning to these problems and I am ill at ease at a party held in my honor.

Eighth Week/Fourth Day, 608 TE

I was married to my wife, Roselle in a subdued ceremony during a time of war. I have been given a week or two off to spend time with my wife. Our child will be born late this year, possibly in the sixty-first week, or so says the midwife.

Tenth Week/Fifth Day, 608 TE

My wife told me she was worried for my safety at work. She gave me a back massage and told me she had learned of a magical tattoo that could protect me, but only if it was drawn by her. To ease her fears, I allowed her to begin work on the tattoo later that night though I doubted it could help protect me.

Eleventh Week/Fourth Day, 608 TE

My back continues to itch from the tattooing. I have seen it through our mirror; it is a rose, symbolizing our love, surrounded by a wall of thorns and vines, symbolizing protection. Roselle always did love the flower she is named after.

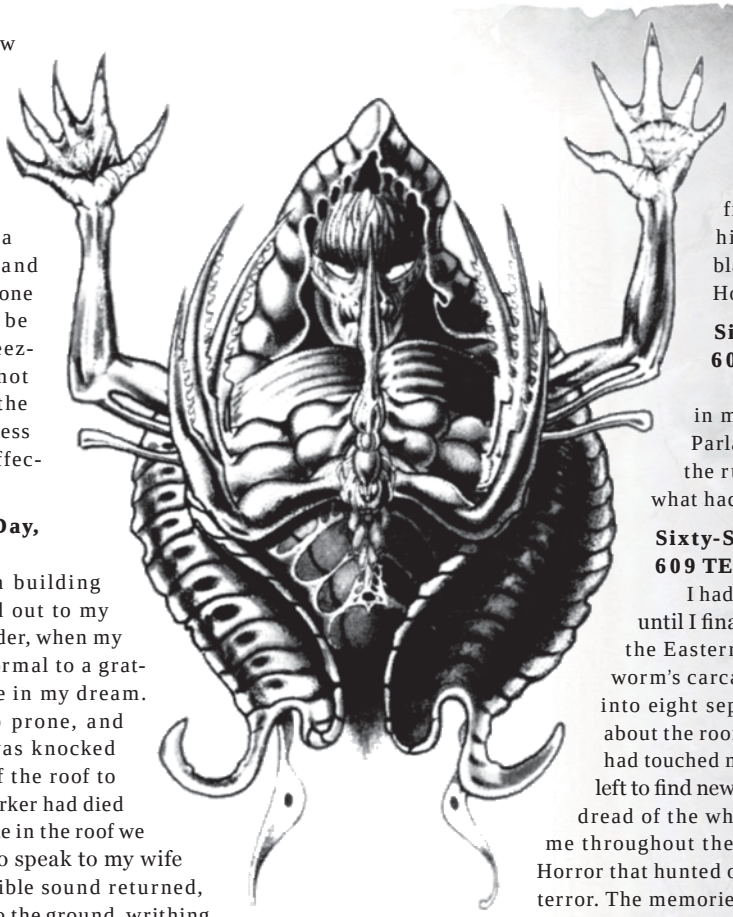
Twentieth Week/ First Day, 608 TE

I was transferred from Vastbelly's guards to the magician's fortress in the Western Quarter. I am unhappy about this assignment, as I believe the magicians are as responsible for the war as Headbreaker. However, their war magics are one of the keys to our continued survival, so it is an important task. I often freeze up in combat now, I can't understand or explain it. I am a veteran Theran soldier, this shouldn't be happening to me! I've been demoted and am getting paid less now as a result. How am I going to take care of my family if I continue to fail at my job like this?

Thirty-Fifth Week/ Third Day, 608 TE

I had a terrible nightmare. My wife was in the middle of childbirth, and unable to push any longer both her and my child

were lost to me. I then saw a plain, pale-faced, fat man. He was laughing at me, a horrible grating sound. It must be a sign. I must quit my job under Vastbelly, or this will be the result. I can work as a craftsman, since the demand for construction work has gone up as the city continues to be destroyed by war. My freezing up in combat should not affect my work there, and the pay can't possibly be much less than the private rank I effectively hold.



Fifty-Fifth Week/First Day, 608 TE

I was on the roof of a building when it happened. I called out to my fellow worker to bring a ladder, when my voice just changed from normal to a grating sound, just like the one in my dream. The sound made me drop prone, and I rolled off the roof and was knocked unconscious when I fell off the roof to the ground below. My co-worker had died from his fall through the hole in the roof we were fixing. When I tried to speak to my wife after I had awoke, the terrible sound returned, and I watched my wife fall to the ground, writhing in agony. I can't even talk to my own wife without causing her pain and sorrow. And what of my baby to be? The child could have been injured by the fall as well. I had been marked by a Horror, probably as a result of the magicians' experiments.

Fifty-Sixth Week/First Day, 608 TE

I would have vengeance. I have leaked written information to the Headbreaker side about the weaknesses of the Western Quarter magician lab. I would have gone there myself if I could be free of my own painful wailing, if I could do more than merely stay in this bed. They did this to me; they deserve to die.

Sixtieth Week/ Fifth Day 609 TE

The baby was born two weeks premature. To my horror, my nightmare has become reality. My wife pushed with all the strength she had left, but it was not enough to push the child into the light. Roselle, and my child, were gone in an instant. Both dead in labor; I truly have nothing left to live for in this cruel alternate realm. I grabbed a cutting knife in the kitchen and gutted the old midwife like a fish for her failure to save my wife and child. Everything that I had cared about, I had betrayed. There was only one thing left to do, end it all. I climbed up the roof of my house on a ladder. I prepared to jump off and kill myself.

It was there that I saw It on the roof. It was a creature dressed in a black, swirling cloak, with withered old hands, and cold, empty eyes. I felt a wave of dread and started back down the ladder, running away from the creature. It agilely jumped off the roof, its black cloak flying backwards, revealing seven more arms with blades at the tips instead of hands. I ran back inside my house, and shut the door behind me. But It just jumped into the house through a closed window with the glass shattering, shards flying everywhere. I was trapped in the house with It. It was on me in an instant, and It touched its old withered hands to my forehead, and I screamed like never before or since.

All the painful memories of the past year hit me all at once and my body burned with searing agony. I thought I would die from the wracking pain. My eyes saw an impossibly bright flash of golden light and I fell unconscious with my last vision of a giant white larva in a ruined building and the sounds of wretched, familiar laughter stopping and abruptly turning into fearful wails, as the thing that had touched me came from the shadows, pushed back his cloak, revealed his seven blade arms, and charged at the Horror.

Sixty-First Week/First Day 609 TE

I felt that the place I had seen in my dream was real and was in Parlainth. I started my search for the ruined building. I had to know what had happened.

Sixty-Second Week/Fifth Day 609 TE

I had searched for nearly two weeks until I finally found the place I sought in the Eastern Quarter. There was a white worm's carcass there, cut apart, and split into eight separate pieces. I cast my eyes about the room, looking for the Horror who had touched me, but the Horror had already left to find new prey. I could feel the lingering dread of the white larva that had tormented me throughout the ruined building. This was a Horror that hunted other Horrors and fed on their terror. The memories of fear in this place seemed to scream the Name of the Horror to me; Buualgathor, the Horror Hunter. It used tortured souls like me as bait. It had let my whole family die, let me betray everyone I had once cared about, almost let me commit suicide, all to draw out another Horror to slay. The Horror Hunter's touch itself had nearly destroyed me. The Horror could have prevented so much suffering, if it had used its power on me as soon as I was marked. My family and countless others would still be alive. It is just as responsible for what I have become as the other Horror. I will hunt Buualgathor down for what it has done to me.

Game Information

DEX: 16 **STR**: 16 **TOU**: 20
PER: 16 **WIL**: 15 **CHA**: 16

Initiative: 13
Number of Actions: 5
Attack (6): 22
Damage:
4 × Blades (12): 28
Claws (1): 17

Physical Defense: 20
Spell Defense: 21
Social Defense: 21
Physical Armor: 25
Mystic Armor: 16

Death Rating: 94 (229)
Wound Threshold: 25
Recovery Tests: 10
Knockdown: 16
Unconsciousness Rating: 88 (208)

Combat Movement: 110
Full Movement: 220

Karma Points: 35
Karma Step: 18

Powers: Astral Sight (5): 21, Damage Shift (5): 20, Detect Horror (5): 21, Displace (5): 21, Durability (15), Mark Trace (5): 21, Silent Walk [T] (5): 21, Spellcasting (7): 23, Terror (5): 21, Thread Weaving (Nethermancy) (7): 23

Spells: Nethermancy (Eighth Circle)

Legend Points (5): 238,750

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Buualgathor, also called the Horror Hunter, considers Name-givers to be very unsatisfying prey. It finds greater satisfaction in feeding on the terror and pain of other Horrors, and so was the bane of other Horrors in Parlainth for all the centuries in which the city remained outside the material realm. Buualgathor finds bloatforms and despairthoughts particularly tasty, both of which are very common in Parlainth.

The dread that Buualgathor inspired in other Horrors permeates Parlainth's very stones, and those who spend time in the ruins often sense Buualgathor's presence, though they cannot identify it as such. Usually, this sensitivity manifests as a series of dreams or a strong tendency to believe without question rumors or legends of the Horror Hunter. Many longtime residents of Haven, for example, insist that their parents or grandparents told them tales of Buualgathor as children, though in truth their knowledge of the Horror Hunter comes from the memories of the Horrors living in the ruins of Parlainth. Other Horror Hunters may exist, but Buualgathor is the only one known to exist in Barsaive.

Buualgathor appears as a humanoid figure, usually of the same race as the person seeing it, wearing a dark cloak that seems to move with an eerie life of its own. On closer inspection, those who behold this Horror can see that the "cloak" is an appendage made of the same ropy tissue that makes up the rest of the Horror Hunter's body. When Buualgathor engages in physical combat, it throws back the "cloak" to reveal seven blade-like arms. Buualgathor also has two stunted, weak arms with normal hands.

Rules

Buualgathor finds most of its prey by following the link between a Horror-marked Name-giver and his or her tormentor to the Horror's lair. Buualgathor tries to catch Horrors in the act of tormenting their victims, because the change from tormentor to victim makes the Horror's terror more acute. To hunt in this manner, Buualgathor uses the special Horror powers of Detect Horror and Mark Trace.

Detect Horror: The Detect Horror ability allows the Horror Hunter to notice the presence of Horrors, Horror-marked characters, and Horror-cursed items within 100 yards. To use this power, Buualgathor makes a Detect Horror Test versus the Spell Defense of the Horror it wishes to hunt (which must be physically present, or be responsible for the mark or curse present). On an Average result, the Horror Hunter knows the location of the Horror, the marked victim, or cursed item, and knows what type of Horror it is hunting. If more than one Horror, marked victim, or cursed item lies within the Horror Hunter's Detect Horror power range, compare the Detect Horror Test versus the Spell Defense of each Horror, marked victim, or cursed item. Buualgathor detects those whose Spell Defense is less than or equal to the Detect Horror Test result.

Mark Trace: In order to trace a Horror through its Horror-marked victim, Buulgathor must touch the victim's forehead. Though Buualgathor prefers to use its withered hands to make this link, its blade appendages work just as well. The Horror Hunter then makes a Mark Trace Test versus the victim's Spell Defense. On an Average result, the thread of magical energy between the marked victim and the Horror briefly becomes visible. The Horror Hunter rides this thread to the Horror's physical location; to outside observers, it appears as though the Horror Hunter turns to visible energy and shoots along this glowing thread. Though allowing Buualgathor to destroy the Horror tormenting them may appeal to Horror-marked characters, only the suicidal hope for Buualgathor to use its Mark Trace power on them, because the Horror-marked individual suffers damage equal to the result of the Horror Hunter's Mark Trace Test. Mystic Armor protects against this damage.

Adventure Hook

When one of the members of the adventuring group is marked by a Horror in Parlainth, the mark is sensed by Buualgathor. That night, the adventurers are beset by nightmares of a mysterious cloaked warrior. The party must rush to defeat the Horror that has marked their comrade, or else Buualgathor will use his terrible Mark Trace on the Horror-marked adventurer and possibly destroy him to get at the Horror he has sensed. The adventurers must chase the Horror to save their companion, as Buulgathor chases them.

The following account is transcribed from the words of Chantrel the Troubadour, a young human whose fame as a bard is marred only by the eternal curse she bears. Though this Horror is commonly named for its connection to Chantrel, it may in fact have an entirely different Name of its own. I had no desire to explore this possibility, as the less knowledge I take away from this book, the safer I feel.

—Lard0 Muanto, Apprentice Scholar,
Great Library of Throal

CHANTREL'S HORROR

Dreams drove me from my kaer, dreams that sparked fear in my kindred and sheared the bonds of blood, family, and home. Each night, my sleeping eye watched horrified, transfixed by the gore on the smooth metal frame. Silent, whirring blades sculpted the Horror's features, and it spit bloody froth as it sought to speak to me. Its eyes always sought mine; but I turned away, all flailing torso and twisting neck, my body a whip cracked by terror. Often its gaze scraped at my mind, but it never found my eyes before I awoke. Then one night I awoke with the sheets bunched between my crooked, cramped fingers and my chest aching from exertion, and I saw my brother Aleac's face. The lamplight reflected off his tears and gleamed along his upraised knife. Aleac looked at my mother for permission. I looked at her for mercy. Her chiseled features revealed neither.

"The elders shall decide her fate," she said, in a voice heavier than the thick marble walls of the temple. But knocks of mailed fists upon our door announced their answer before a word was spoken. Guards in chain armor, lacquered with the gleaming silver sigils of Thystonius and streaked with the bright blue and yellow war paints of an elder's blessing, carried me to the gates of the kaer. The clap of the closing gate echoed down the valley. As my ears rang with the sound, the mages chanted, forbidding my return to the only home I had ever known.

I cursed the guards, the elders, the mages, and eventually I cursed my family—my mother last. Their callousness might have held their only hope for survival, but I could not forgive them. Drawing on the myriad tales I had heard as a child, I conjured fates for them. I imagined questing for the enchantment that would defeat the Horror and then returning to the grateful cheers of my people. Sometimes I was gracious in my fantasies, but other times I spurned those who turned me out. These fantasies sustained me, growing more and more vivid until my daily existence seemed a faint memory. I now believe that the Horror fed these daydreams to distract me from the bleakness of living.

I wandered Barsaive, saw the ravaged land marred like a plague-pocked face. Few devourers still scoured the lands. Other things had taken their place, things that left me alone. For I had been marked by another, and that mark warned the more mindless Horrors away. I slept very little for I could hear my tormentor as I tossed restlessly, its whirring knives changing speed and pitch in grating imitation of speech. It promised to sustain me, to protect me, to never let me be alone again. It said it would not be a false friend, but a true friend—an eternal friend.

I led an impossible existence, scrounging what I could from the broken land during the years of the Scourge. I expected to die. I wanted to die. I am not sure how many years passed, but I know that somehow my tormentor kept me physically fresh, young. The nightmares faded after months or years, I am not sure which. And as Barsaive began to heal, so did my spirit recover from the scars inflicted by the Horror. I did not hear from it for months, and then years. When the kaers began to open, I watched and trembled from the fear and hope in my heart.

I settled in the village of Kolomay, which lay a few days northeast of the city of Travar in the foothills of the Thunder Mountains. The villagers were cautious of all strangers, but my throat no longer cracked from the strain of carrying the Horror. They accepted me. I proved my usefulness during the hard days and increased my popularity by spinning tales under the soft glow of the evening fires.

I began to teach the young boy Calvis my trade, for the flow of magic within him bent easily to a story. He argued with me over most every point, as boys are wont to do, but he listened well. And while the village women sought to soothe me when crow's-feet first crinkled my eyes, Calvis sensed that my tears were a release of past sorrow, not a weeping for what was to come.

As Travar grew again, so did the flow of silver and traveler's tales through Kolomay. The tales stirred the restlessness within Calvis's young heart. He wanted me to travel the lands with him, but for me wandering Barsaive was as pleasant a prospect as trudging through a trackless desert without even the mirage of joy. Kolomay had become my home.

During the month of Charassa, all youths who wanted to leave the village had to declare their intent. Calvis spoke first, and the village council agreed that his path led away from Kolomay. On the final night of Charassa, the entire village celebrated the Night of New Journeys. Boisterous singing filled the night air, notes rising along with the sparks of the brilliant blue bonfires of enchanted wood. The night was filled with bold promises, the jangly excitement of those about to leave, the smell of roasted meat, the furtive touch of lovers not yet declared, the quiet pride of parents, the envy of siblings and those who had grown stagnant. I shall always remember Calvis that night. He stood straight and tall, outlined by the blue fire behind him, and led the village in "All Journeys End."

Later, I found I could not sleep, and so I worked on my gift for Calvis—a locket engraved with the opening lines of the first three epic poems I had taught him. I meant it to remind him of what he had accomplished, to remind him that what once had seemed nearly impossible was now child's play. I knew he would scoff at a locket. But I also knew he would keep it—and one day appreciate it.

As the sun rose on the Day of Leave-Taking, I took the locket to his house. I noticed the sick, wet smell as I knocked on the door, which swung open too easily. For a moment I stared incomprehensibly at the drying pile of flesh that lay on the inside steps. Then I recognized Calvis's mother's wedding ring on the half-hand lying at the base of the steps and I screamed, again and again.

As tears filled my eyes, I breathed through my sleeve and entered the house. I had to find Calvis. My legs trembled as I passed the raw heaps that had once been his younger brother and sister. I mounted the steps to the second floor, following the buzz of flies already feasting, and a whine escaped my throat as I slipped on the excretion on the landing. I nearly bit my lip through when I saw Calvis's father, his skin peeled away from his body as if he were a ripe fruit.

I stepped over the corpse, keeping my balance by sliding my hand along the blood-spattered walls leading to Calvis's bedroom. Panting wildly despite the smell, I gripped the door frame of the room with an outstretched hand, willing my arm to pull me to the doorway. I pulled and stepped, but closed my eyes as I did so. I stood weeping in the doorway for several moments, unable to open my eyes. Then I looked.

The thing had dissected Calvis with impossible precision, leaving most of his skin intact. The boy's organs were sliced thinly and fanned out on the floor on the left of the bed, the bones separated and piled neatly on the right. I remember wondering where all Calvis's blood had gone and sobbing because it had left his face intact, lying still handsome amid the carnage.

Then suddenly Calvis's eyes fluttered open, looked over at his bones, then found me. I tried to scream but my throat could manage only a wet rattle. The face smiled, and in a voice of whirring blades and metal-scraping-metal it said, "I missed you."

The villagers said I sobbed for hours after they pulled me from the house. I left the village as soon as I had the strength, but it was too late. My friendship with Calvis had given the Horror a gateway to others in the village and to their kin in other towns. Sometimes it killed one man, other times it slaughtered entire encampments. Even today many call that region of the Thunder Mountains the Butcher Hills.

The Horror again talks to me at night. My hair has lost its gray, and my face is as smooth as if I had never lived those years at all. I imagine I shall live as long as it wants me to. I have even thrown myself into Deaths Sea, but to no avail. It can repair me, recreate a whole new me with its despicable magic.

Should you see me on the road, a slight woman with lips a little too crooked and a nose a little too small, eyes bright when telling a story, please be courteous. I promise to share nothing more than your fire and a story or two. You and your companions can then travel on your way. I shall take my own path, the one I share with my friend—my eternal friend.

Game Information

DEX: 18 **STR**: 22 **TOU**: 20
PER: 18 **WIL**: 21 **CHA**: 19

Initiative: 14
Number of Actions: 4
Attack (5): 23
Damage:
Blades (8): 30

Physical Defense: 23
Spell Defense: 24
Social Defense: 24
Physical Armor: 29
Mystic Armor: 26

Death Rating: 94 (220)
Wound Threshold: 25
Unconsciousness Rating: 88 (200)

Recovery Tests: 10
Knockdown: NA

Combat Movement: 106
Full Movement: 212

Karma Points: 40 **Karma Step**: 15

Powers: Astral Slice (8): 30, Blood Memory (4): 25, Cursed Luck (4): 25, Durability (14), Horror Mark (4): 22, Karma Tap (4): 22, Suppress Horror Mark (4): 22, Spellcasting (5): 23, Thread Weaving (Elementalism) (5): 23, Terror (4): 23

Spells: Elementalism (Eighth Circle)

Legend Points (4): 105,520

Equipment: None

Loot: Frame contains retrievable fragments of orichalcum, worth 40,000 + (D10+D6) × 1,000 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

Commentary

Chantrel's Horror has never been observed in the physical world. It has only been observed in the astral form of a bloody, demonic humanoid suspended in a metal frame. The edges of the frame comprise hundreds of small whirring blades forged of many metals, including the magical metal orichalcum. If the Horror is killed in its astral form, the frame can be taken from astral space. While many Horrors use their powers directly against their victims, Chantrel's Horror prefers to terrorize its victims by attacking their family, friends and loved ones. The True Name of Chantrel's Horror is unknown, even to its victims. It is called Chantrel's Horror because of its relationship to the troubadour Chantrel. As a result, any magic that relies on the power of Names and Naming is useless against this Horror.

Rules

Chantrel's Horror draws sustenance from the pain of separation and loneliness that its marked victims suffer. According to dragon lore, the Horror revels in a twisted empathy with the victim. The Horror often lies dormant for years, allowing its marked victims to establish new relationships. Dragon lore suggests that the number of the Horror's marked victims cannot exceed the number of full moons during a year, but even the dragons do not know why this is so.

Chantrel's Horror possesses many special powers. Some are possessed by other Horrors as well, while others are unique to Chantrel's Horror. All these special powers are described below.

Astral Slice: To use its unique astral slice attack, Chantrel's Horror makes a Spellcasting Test against a victim's Spell Defense. If it achieves an Armor-Defeating Hit, it can make an astral slice. In the following combat round, the victim takes physical damage from the astral slice. This attack originates in astral space, bypassing any physical protection or armor the target may have. The Horror rarely uses astral slice in combat. Instead, it most often uses this power to achieve ghoulish dissection effects, cutting and removing the bones and muscle from its victims while leaving their skin intact.

Blood Memory: The Blood Memory power enables a Horror to keep the essence of the slain character alive in the character's blood. In turn, the Horror keeps the blood in its own whirling, bloody mess of a body. To use this power, the Horror makes a Blood Memory Test against the Social Defense of the victim. A successful result absorbs the blood shed by the victim from attacks made by the Horror. If the target dies during the round in which Blood Memory is used, Chantrel's Horror absorbs a number of "blood memory points" equal to the victim's Death Rating. The Horror may use these points to extend the grief and pain of any victim it has marked through the slain character. Once the marked victim has recovered, the Horror expends 1 point of the absorbed blood, starting the pain afresh as if it had just happened. The renewed pain lasts for at least a year and a day each time it is renewed. Chantrel's Horror may also use blood memory points to create a new body for a victim whose previous body has been destroyed.

Eternal Youth: Chantrel's Horror can keep a marked victim young by making Recovery Tests for the healthy victim. The Horror makes a number of Recovery Tests and the gamemaster records the results, keeping a total. Once the total equals the victim's Death Rating, the victim loses a year from his physical age. In this way, the Horror substitutes its own immortal essence for that of the marked character, undoing the work of time.

Healing: Chantrel's Horror can heal or regenerate a marked victim by substituting its own Recovery Tests for those of the victim. If the body of a marked victim has been completely destroyed or is otherwise inaccessible, the Horror must have at least one point of blood memory (see **Blood Memory**, above) from someone connected to the victim. The Horror can use the power of the blood memory to sculpt a new body for the marked victim from scratch. This new body is identical to the victim's old one.

Horror Mark: Many of Chantrel's Horror's powers can be used only against victims the Horror has previously marked. Generally, the Horror only appears in the dreams of its victims, through which it marks them. Chantrel's Horror first seeks a victim whose dreams are vivid enough to be sensed from astral space. To do this, the Horror makes a Spellcasting Test against the dreaming character's Spell Defense. The Horror must achieve an Extraordinary result to sense the victim. The Horror may attempt this test only once per month against any given character. Once the Horror has found its target, it Horror-marks that unfortunate character as per the standard rules. Chantrel's Horror can use the Suppress Horror Mark power to bury its mark deep within the pattern of a character.

Instant Travel: Once the Horror has marked a victim, it can travel the "thread that binds the bones" to attack or mark any other character related to the marked character by blood or friendship. To do this, the Horror makes a Spellcasting Test against the Social Defense of the targeted character. The required result level appears in the Relationship Table of the Suppress Horror Mark power (see **Horror Powers**, p. 446). The physical distance between the marked character and the target character is irrelevant—the Horror can travel from a mother on the Aras Sea to her

son in Bartertown by achieving a Poor result. Once the Horror has jumped to a new victim, it may mark or kill him. Generally, the Horror does not kill victims it marks. Also, the Horror cannot reach casual acquaintances of a marked victim.

Adventure Hook

Chantrel's Horror spreads terror and corruption through its marked victims, who travel Barsaive, carrying death and despair with them. The Horror may use its powers to keep these victims alive for many, many years. Additionally, it uses its Suppress Horror Mark power to keep many of them ignorant of the mark they carry and the danger they present to others.

The characters may fall under the sway of Chantrel's Horror if one of their relatives or friends is marked by the Horror or by meeting one of its victims, such as the Troubadour Chantrel herself. Alternatively, the player characters may be approached by a victim who realizes he has been marked and is aware of the danger he presents. The victim requests that the characters seek out and destroy any and all records of his existence, in essence making the victim disappear from the minds of all of Barsaive. This could lead the characters to seek out the victim's pattern items and attempt to destroy them. Such action might also draw the attention of Chantrel's Horror away from the victim and to the player characters themselves.

The following account is transcribed from the words of Vestrivan himself, who gave me this account in one of his rare moments of control of his own body. He sought me out, knowing of my work with his brother Vasdenjas on the Creatures of Barsaive *and the dragons portion of* Denizens of Earthdawn. *This information about the Horror entwined within Vestrivan may be invaluable in stopping that Horror and possibly saving Vestrivan himself. I have passed this information to Vasdenjas. After hearing his version of his brother's transformation, he may be overjoyed in learning that his brother is alive even in part and may yet be saved.*

—By the Hand of Tiabdjin the Knower, Scribe of the Great Library of Throal and First Scholar of the *khavro'am*

DESPOILER OF THE LAND

I was returning to Throal from the Scythan Mountains, when a dragon roared above my caravan. Most of the caravan dashed for Throal, my so called bodyguards abandoning me in their terror. I ducked behind an outcropping of rocks. The dragon dished out a storm of flame and smoke, charring and smothering Name-giver and mount alike. When the smoke finally cleared, I realized I was the only survivor. I then noticed the dragon writhing in pain on the ground, though none had landed a single blow this day. And then all of sudden the dragon got up and screamed out," Tiabdjin, be alive!" The dragon gave the area a quick look and easily found my location with his Dragonsight. He picked me up from my hiding spot with his claws. I stared into the dragon's mouth, an open, toothy abyss in front of me. I thought for sure that was the last image I'd ever see. I was shocked when the dragon put me down. "Tiabdjin I presume? Write down my words without delay or face my wrath." I did as I was told.

My name is Vestrivan, brother of Vadenjas, a great dragon marked by a Horror. Despoiler of the Land found a thought in my subconscious involving you, and a desire to tell you my story. We are two entities that share the same body and fight for our share of consciousness. So he came here to destroy your caravan, and kill you to feed on my torment, my guilt at having caused your deaths. You are lucky I was able to overcome him when I did. He had already astrally-sensed you and was preparing a particularly gruesome Nethermancer spell for you, hoping to prolong your agony.

You know of my transformation, and how I came to be joined with the Horror. I shall not waste precious time reiterating that part of the tale. When the Despoiler of the Land had finally defeated my will and wards after forty years to become the dominant persona; he ravaged Name-giver communities just before the Scourge, destroying crops and erasing memories. The people called me Despoiler of the Land for these acts. This is what I call the Horror, but it is not its true name. I still search for that name, it may be my only hope. How did the Despoiler do these acts? He possesses the ability to disrupt magic itself. One of the reasons I have weakened into such a submissive persona over the years is his disruption of most of my pattern. Fortunately, he cannot disrupt my entire pattern, as this would also destroy him as his pattern is entwined with mine.

What is the aim of his disruption of patterns? He has the ability to unweave most of a pattern, and then use horror magic to change and alter the pattern. Using this and his prolific abilities to forge constructs, he wishes to create a new race of hybrid Name-givers and Horrors. The frightening possibility of Horror constructs with adept powers seems to be his goal.

He has created an army of loyal hybrids using a secret adept school where he corrupts them. They go throughout the land, disrupting patterns and kidnapping children at their master's bidding. All of this is to further the goal of the Despoiler to create a new hybrid race of Horrors and Name-givers. Where is the school? Its somewhere in ... run Tiabdjin run! ...

With that Vestrivan fell to the ground in convulsions, battling for control of his body with the Despoiler of the Land. I ran and never looked back, and somehow made it back to Throal alive.

Game Information

DEX: 18 **STR**: 23 **TOU**: 26
PER: 21 **WIL**: 22 **CHA**: 16

Initiative: 20
Number of Actions: 4
Attack (4): 22
Damage:
Unarmed (7): 30

Physical Defense: 24
Spell Defense: 27
Social Defense: 20
Physical Armor: 26
Mystic Armor: 17

Death Rating: 115 (241)
Wound Threshold: 29
Recovery Tests: 12
Knockdown: 24
Unconsciousness Rating: 109 (221)

Combat Movement: 140
Full Movement: 280

Karma Points: 20
Karma Step: 10

Powers: Astral Sight (12): 33, Disrupt Magic (11): 33, Durability (14), Energy Drain (4): 25, Forge Horror Construct (4): 25, Horror Mark (9): 30, Horror Thread (9): 30, Karma Tap (4): 25, Spellcasting (5): 26, Thread Weaving: (Nethermancy) (5): 26, Thread Weaving: (Wizardry) (5): 26

Dragon Powers: See the entry for **Vestrivan** in the **Dragons** chapter, p. 432, for his powers when the Despoiler of the Land is in control.

Spells: Nethermancy and Wizardry (Eighth Circle)

Legend Points (4): 80,560

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The Despoiler of the Land is the name given to Vestrivan by the people of the lowland Twilight Peaks whose crops were blighted and memories stolen by the Horror's disrupt magic ability. The name has come to represent the Horror itself, but it is not its true name.

The goal of Despoiler of the Land seems to be to cause harm by disrupting the patterns of objects, places, and Name-givers. After the passing of the Scourge, it grew in sophistication, learning how to use Horror threads to alter and corrupt a pattern after disrupting it. It combined this knowledge with its own ability to forge Horror constructs to create adept/Horror hybrids.

After some early experimentation, the Horror decided to create a school for adepts in the Twilight Peaks using the name of Vestrivan the Sage. The school draws power hungry and curious adepts from throughout Barsaive and beyond. Because the Despoiler of the Land must feed on negative emotions such as fear and anger, these adepts are thrown into a living nightmare where no-win situations and the competitive learning environment cause the death of at least one of the participants in the class. Their dreams are haunted by promises of power mixed with visions of the Despoiler's origin, on a twisted world located somewhere in the netherworlds. These student's patterns are also slowly disrupted by the Despoiler, their essential magical fabric unwoven and remade by the Horror's own threads. By the end of their "graduation" and indoctrination, the surviving students are completely remade in the Despoiler's own image.

The Despoiler's students are valuable servants indeed, for they spread the Horror's bizarre disrupt magic efforts farther and wider than the dragon could himself. Students travel in groups of 3–8, usually a single Wizard or Nethermancer followed by a handful of warriors. Single exceptional students also travel around Barsaive spreading the word of the Despoiler's elite college. They are unparalleled in their ability to seek out and whet the appetite of power-hungry and greedy adepts.

One of the recruiters of particular interest is an obsidiman Wizard by the Name of Urgulan. The obsidiman is apparently responsible for most of the thefts of orphans. Urgulan offers to purchase infants born to extremely poor parents, or those left on the doorsteps of houses and fortresses by anonymous parents. Street urchins are naturally attracted to him as well, and often follow him of their own accord when he leaves town. All children he gathers follow him back to the Despoiler's lair, even when the trip takes weeks. Some students have even been traveling Barsaive attempting to establish additional schools on behalf of their mentor.

Rules

Adepts corrupted by the Despoiler of the Land lose the ability to weave threads between themselves and other patterns, including magical treasure and other thread items. Their ability to use talents and weave spell threads is unaffected.

Adventure Hook

The Battle of Prajjor's Field caused the death of many Throalic soldiers. An adept called Urgulan has come to Throal to collect the plentiful orphans and street urchins, as well as convince magicians to attend a magician school he is establishing in the Scythan mountains. Urgulan approaches the party magicians to attempt to convince them to go. When the rest of the party awakens the next day, they find the party magicians gone. The rest of the party must pursue Urgulan, who has kidnapped the magicians, as well as a many Throalic children. Urgulan sends a Despoiler adept group of a Nethermancer, Wizard, and Warriors for the remaining players to stop the group from following any further. If the party succeeds in defeating them, they must chase Urgulan to save the magicians and the orphans. Urgulan heads for Darranis where he is going to get a boat to take him to House Syrtis where he can travel by land to Scytha. Make sure Urgulan gets away on the boat. A sequel to this adventure is the party heading for the Scythan Mountains to destroy the school and get revenge on Urgulan.

The following text comes from the work of Reodlan T'rilclaw, a noted t'skrang sage and magician. The passage provides much invaluable insight into its topic, but readers will note that it does not provide the Name of the Horror, like several other entries in this tome. Instead, a word from the t'skrang tongue—druistadt—*is used to denote the entity. Reodlan included the following definition of the term:*

***druistadt**: (droo-i-staat). 1. mysterious name. Often applied to a particularly taboo subject as an alternative to verbalizing the forbidden phrase. 2. (prop. n.) The common name given to a particular Horror said to inhabit the region of Barsaive near the Serpent River and southeast of the dwarf kingdom of Throal.*

—Ardonn Fil, Apprentice Scholar, 1507 TH

DRUISTADT

I, Reodlan Trilclaw, take up feather and ink to write these words with some trepidation, for there exist mysteries into which no one—not even a sage and scholar such as I—should inquire too closely. The Horror of which I write is one such mystery. Nevertheless, the importance of my task—spreading my knowledge of this abomination throughout Barsaive so that all may guard against it—outweighs the dangers it presents. Ignorance can only serve the foul needs of this entity, which roams our waterways and preys on unsuspecting travelers in a fair but false guise.

For those of you who are not familiar with my work (you really should read more), I am a spellweaver, a sage, and a reluctant student of Horror lore. During the past few years I have devoted particular attention to the Horror that we t'skrang call Druistadt. The monster's True Name is unknown except to its victims and should never be spoken or recorded, for repetition of its True Name gives Druistadt power over Name-givers (but more of that later). My knowledge of this thing stems from a close friend's encounter with it—which he, the only survivor, related to me with tears and moans that would have melted a stone heart—and my subsequent prolonged study of ancient tales concerning various river monsters. I offer this treatise in hopes it might spare others the harm done to my friend and in memory of my dear sister Achatuss, who succumbed to this fiendish thing.

Here follow the words of my poor friend Khazios, once the proud bosun of the *Tarrywell*.

"We'd just put in at port in the town of Callomere, a few hours' travel from Throal, where the river takes a sharp bend between the foothills of the Throal Mountains and Lake Ban. A squall had come up suddenly the day before, causing an anchor line to slip its knot and drag one of our crewmen overboard. Well, we needed a replacement, didn't we? I suppose we could have done poor Sadji's work ourselves well enough, but none of us cared to tire ourselves out so when there was no need. And there was no need because the perfect replacement turned up not an hour after we dropped anchor. Lysteruss, she said her name was—a t'skrang so beautiful that half the sailors were calling down love-verses to her from the rigging before she'd been aboard ten minutes. Noble limbs, pleasing curves in all the right places, a head crest that sported all the colors of the rainbow as well as some hues that Nature can't imagine. Yes, she was a rare beauty. How were we to know, I ask you? How were we to know?!

"Well, we spent the rest of the morning patching up the storm damage, and Lysteruss proved her worth. She went right to work with a will, not shirking from any of the hard tasks, just as if she'd been born among the Tarrywell's crew and loved the ship as we did. She joked and bantered with us, and when it came time to break for our noon meal we were all ready to swear undying love for our new crewman.

"So we ate and drank, and Lysteruss sang us a rousing drinking song with some nonsensical words as the chorus. (I know now that one of those words was Druistadt's True Name, and I won't repeat it.) Well, we liked the song so much we insisted that she sing it again. She said she would, but only if someone joined her. Then she asked who had the sweetest voice in the crew, and Lajlion the stoker spoke up. So Lajlion and Lysteruss struck up the song, and Lajlion sang that unmentionable Name three times during the first chorus. About then, we all started to feel strangely tired, and Lajlion trailed off without finishing. We had to force ourselves to get up and cast off from Callomere's docks, because the captain was set on sailing a bit farther before nightfall. We didn't think anything of our fatigue at the time; but we should have known it was the first sign that the thing we'd taken into our midst had begun to feed off our spirits.

"We all had terrible nightmares that night. I dreamed of my own death—slow suffocation while trapped in the cargo hold of our burning ship. I woke with my throat raw from my own screams. All around me I heard the agonized cries of others as they died equally horrible dream-deaths. The next night it was the same, and the night after that. Lajlion threw himself overboard at dawn, driven half-mad by the nightmares. We dragged for him, but found no trace of his body even though we'd all marked well where he went down. And all the while, we grew increasingly weak and listless—more even than our disturbed slumbers could account for.

"We turned away from the rail, numb with grief for Lajlion, and started back toward our posts. Suddenly, before my eyes, two sailors clutched at their chests and fell dead on the deck. Heart seizures, it looked like. We all turned and looked at Lysteruss then, as if a compass needle had drawn our eyes. She smiled, and the air around her seemed to shimmer for a moment. Then it cleared, and we saw that her beak had grown two feet long. Poison dripped from its knifelike edge, burning the deck where it touched. Such terror gripped us that we couldn't move. The thing we'd called Lysteruss walked right up to Achatuss, our bosun, stabbed its beak into her chest, ripped out her heart and swallowed it in a single gulp. Then the monster began to do the same to every crewman in turn. Not one could run, or fight, or even hardly breathe for pure, heart-freezing fear. Finally, some vestige of jik'harra *broke my paralysis, and I leaped overboard and swam away from the doomed* Tarrywell *as fast as I could. I didn't dare look back.*

"I thought I had escaped. But then one night as I lay asleep, the infernal thing came to me in a dream and told me it could hear my heartbeat. It said the sound of my own blood pumping through my veins will always tell it where to find me, no matter how far I flee. I know the fiend spoke the truth; I've felt it lurking near me, waiting until it drains the last drop of fear from my heart before it kills me. I can never escape it. Never."

What little I can add to this account comes from considerable research into ancient tales, and I am as confident of its truth as anyone can be of legends concerning a Horror.

Druistadt appears to prefer groups of victims to individuals and always eats the heart of every Name-giver it slays. The Horror possesses great cunning as well and excels at turning members of a riverboat crew or adventuring band violently against one other before it finally destroys them.

Druistadt has the power to link its own pattern with those of its victims. This enables it to track all the victims it marks. Some claim this link is a Horror mark, while others insist it is an arcane ability unique to Druistadt. Whatever the true nature of this power, survivors of groups attacked by Druistadt invariably discover that fleeing only delays their eventual deaths. Druistadt relentlessly hunts down any Name-giver to whom it is linked and seems to focus exclusively on a single group of victims until it has slain all its members. The most powerful magics may prevent Druistadt from physically reaching its victims, but nothing can break the Horror's link to its victims' patterns and minds. Some scholars believe that Druistadt is so dogged in its pursuit because it must destroy all the members of a linked group before it can link itself to another group; chance comments made by the Horror itself at various times tend to support this notion.

Druistadt's astral aspect resembles its physical form, but its beak is even longer, as are its fingers and claws. Its gentle curves and pleasing lines disappear almost entirely. The colors of its head crest shimmer and undulate, making one dizzy to look upon it, and its eyes glow redder than the heart of a fire engine.

The most intriguing tale of Druistadt concerns the Horror's origin. According to the story, when the Horrors first came to Barsaive long ago Druistadt corrupted a t'skrang riverboat captain Named Szdanzo Rela'zar. In return for promises of power, Rela'zar used foul magics to help the Horror return to the surface of our world. Druistadt used its abilities to read Rela'zar's thoughts and responded by assuming the form of a voluptuous t'skrang to stalk all of its subsequent victims.

This story may also explain why Druistadt prefers to hunt near the Serpent River and prefers as its prey our sailing ships. It is quite possible that the monster lairs near, within, or underneath the Serpent. Some tales, however, speak of Druistadt tracking its prey thousands of miles overland. From what I have read of this Horror, I would not be too quick to dismiss those tales. He who underestimates such beings as Druistadt courts a dreadful and untimely death.

Game Information

DEX: 19 **STR**: 19 **TOU**: 21
PER: 18 **WIL**: 24 **CHA**: 20

Initiative: 16
Number of Actions: 4
Attack (7): 26
Damage:
Claws (9): 28

Physical Defense: 24
Spell Defense: 23
Social Defense: 25
Physical Armor: 21
Mystic Armor: 20

Death Rating: 96 (150)
Wound Threshold: 26
Unconsciousness Rating: 90 (138)

Recovery Tests: 10
Knockdown: 19

Combat Movement: 140
Full Movement: 280

Karma Points: 35
Karma Step: 14

Powers: Damage Shift (4): 28, Durability (6), Dream Shape (6): 30, Horror Mark (7): 25, Karma Tap (10): 28, Spellcasting (4): 22, Thread Weaving (Illusionism) (4): 22, Terror (4): 24

Spells: Illusionism (Eighth Circle)

Legend Points (4): 66,080

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Druistadt prefers to operate through stealth, isolating its victims and attacking them after gaining their trust. The Horror usually presents itself to a group as a fellow traveler, assuming the guise of a female t'skrang. However, its spell abilities enable it to assume almost any form circumstances might require. After meeting its victims, the Horror manipulates one of them into repeating its True Name three times. That done, Druistadt may use its Horror Mark power. Druistadt can track victims it has marked by the sound of their heartbeats.

Rules

Druistadt's formidable spells and physical gifts are enough to overwhelm most adversaries, but it can be defeated with a tremendous concentration of power. However, Druistadt is above all a survivor, and can blend in well with its surroundings. It knows when to retreat to fight another day.

Dream Shape: Druistadt can use the Dream Shape power to enter the dreams of any victims it has previously marked. The Horror uses this power to torment victims by causing them to dream of themselves dying, for example, impaled on the burning bill of a ferocious bird with glowing red eyes.

Horror Mark: Druistadt's Horror Mark power works slightly differently than previously described. Once Druistadt has manipulated a member of a target group to speak its True Name three times, the Horror can use this power to mark all the members of the group. (For purposes of Druistadt's powers, a "group" is any collection of Name-givers who are together in some fashion: the passengers and crew of a riverboat, all the customers in a given tavern, and the like.)

Karma Tap: Druistadt uses its Karma Tap ability to wreak havoc on its victims from a distance. It may use this ability to influence the actions of fleeing victims who are aware of its existence or compel marked victims to commit unspeakable acts against their companions.

Terror: Druistadt attempts to use its Terror power at the beginning of every combat, immediately after it manifests in its true form. During combat the Horror uses Damage Shift as well, causing the blows of its enemies to harm other targets.

Adventure Hook

Player characters most likely encounter Druistadt while traveling on or near the Serpent River. In one intriguing option, the characters begin hearing of a number of victims—all found with their hearts ripped out of their bodies. Eventually the characters may realize the victims were all members of some group targeted by Druistadt. The victims may have all traveled or crewed on a particular riverboat trip or may frequent a particular tavern. The player characters may even realize that they are members of the targeted group as well. Soon, the characters begin to have nightmarish dreams, and eventually Druistadt tracks the characters down.

In another possible adventure, the characters hear rumors that the ghost of Szdanzo Rela'zar still haunts Barsaive, doomed to walk the decks of his ship forever unless he can somehow reverse the terrible evil he committed four centuries ago. This rumor is true. The ghost of the t'skrang captain still haunts the wrecked hulk of his riverboat, the *Scaled Lady*, which lies at the bottom of the Serpent River. (The characters may learn of Rela'zar's story, his deal with Druistadt, and the approximate location of his riverboat from a variety of scholarly or popular works.) Rela'zar's ghost cannot leave the wreck of the *Scaled Lady*, but he remembers the ritual he used to bring Druistadt across the void. The ghost gladly communicates this information to the characters if they promise to defeat Druistadt. Reversing the ritual might enable the characters to drive the Horror out of Barsaive permanently. Unfortunately, the ritual can only be performed in the Horror's presence.

Alternatively, the characters may be hired to recover the cargo of a riverboat attacked by Druistadt. The characters do not know who attacked the vessel, and so they get a big surprise when they learn the true nature of their opponent. The quest to track down and defeat this powerful adversary could be a defining epic for the career of any hero!

The following account was provided by a victim of the Horror known as the Giftbringer. Unfortunately, the author of the tale did not identify himself or his town. Though bothersome, these omissions do not seriously reduce the value of this text, as it is unlikely that this Horror would limit itself to a particular area of Barsaive.

—Marrlo Tendril, Apprentice Archivist, 1507 TH

GIFTBRINGER

I'll never forget the day the man came to town. All bright eyes and riding atop a pulsing wagon filled with boxes. That's right, the wagon pulsed. You'd look at it and it'd be one size, then you could look away and a breath later it'd be a little bigger or smaller. Strange, but then we'd seen some Illusionists come through not so long ago, and we figured this fellow might be one of the adepts we hear of from time to time. Truth be told, most of us just wanted to have this man around. Something about him just felt right, and he had all those boxes—all sizes and shapes, wrapped up in shiny ribbons and cloth all the colors of the rainbow. Never seen anything like it. Hope never to again.

The man looked a bit odd, but nothing too out of the ordinary. He was tall, with great arms and legs and a body that didn't seem quite big or strong enough to warrant those limbs. And he was skinny. Not starving skinny, just sort of lanky and long. His face I guess some would call handsome, and he had a thick beard that he kept trimmed. His nose was fine and straight, perched over a mouth that seemed to stretch from ear to ear when he smiled. His eyes were like green fire, emeralds set into his skull to shine the light of his thoughts through.

Everyone was curious as soon as they saw him. He didn't say a word at first. But you could sense he had a sort of power you couldn't deny. It was like he knew everything about you. He would smile at you, all shining teeth and rosy lips, and you got the impression he was better than everyone else. You didn't get the feeling he was going to hurt you, though. Not until later.

He set up shop near the center of town. Bought out Gerry, the carpenter who'd called the place home for more than twenty years. The man just pulled right up, brought out one of his boxes and handed it right over. Old Gerry cleared right out after that, packed up his wife and kids and just took off. Never saw him again. Lucky bastard.

Not long after, the man opened his doors and people started to go in. Just one or two at first. It seemed like the sort of dark and quiet place you didn't want to go rushing into, so people kind of crept in, almost like they were sneaking—like they knew what they were going to find in there. I'm ashamed to admit I was one of the first to go in. I can see by your face that you think you'd never have done it. But you don't know how it was. The place pulled at you, nagged at your mind, called to you in your sleep. You had to go there, you just had to.

That store had everything, and all of it was on display, sitting on glass stands and cluttering up the shelves. Toys, silverware, jewelry, swords, tools, books—everything. And when you came through the door, the man was waiting behind his counter like he'd been expecting you. He'd sit there sort of hunched over, perched on his stool like some damned vulture. And he'd smile, all teeth and shiny lips, and hold out his hand, pointing. And right behind you, you'd find just what you'd always wanted.

But once you'd left the dark little store, you'd start thinking and wondering. Maybe this wasn't quite what you'd thought you were going to get. And hadn't the man said something about someone else getting just the thing you were looking for? And surely they couldn't appreciate it as much as you would, and maybe they'd bring it back. And you'd go back, once or twice a week at first and then every day, looking to see if they'd brought it back. And every time he'd say the same thing: "No, they didn't bring it back. I can't believe how cruel they are, keeping something they don't want, just knowing how much you'd like to have it."

Anyway, things started to get bad soon after that. I can remember people starting to fight over little things. A mother would strike one of her babies for crying, a father would beat his son for having a shirt lace untied. Friends turned on each other like snakes crammed into a small hole, biting and tearing with words and blows. I'd never seen anything like it.

Then one night it all came loose. The man hadn't opened his store that day, and you could see people were getting mad. Some hadn't been into the place yet, and they were anxious that the store wouldn't open again, that they wouldn't get what they had coming. They were wrong. Everybody got what they had coming.

It was awful once it began. Seemed to start with Jerrik, the stout dwarf barkeep. He smashed his cousin's brains with a mug, then drank out of it with brains still dropping off the bottom and his kin's blood splashed up the sides. Sydn went next. The little seamstress drove her scissors into her aunt's throat, cut out the poor woman's voicebox. Hell came to town after that.

Everywhere I looked, people were at each other screaming about thieves and getting what they deserved. Blood and brains and guts and bones filled the streets. Me, all I could think about was that snuffbox I'd seen old man Farlus tinkering with the day before. See, when I went to the store, I got this nice old pipe made out of some sort of bone (even though I don't smoke). All gold inlays and silver curlicues around. Quin the bellows-mender had tried to kill me for that pipe, so I smashed him with a hammer. Cracked him right between the eyes as hard as I could. I knew he was trying to trick me out of old man Farlus's snuffbox, too. I wanted that box, and I'd be damned if I wasn't going to get it.

And I did get that box, by the way. I remember Farlus was running from me, and I just kept getting madder and madder. That box was really mine, after all, and Farlus knew it. I caught the thief in the alley out behind the man's store. Grabbed him by the beard and started bouncing his head off the rough stone wall. When he didn't die fast enough, I put his skull to the pavement and kept pounding. I still remember that. Something snapped and popped and his face just sort of caved in. But I had that box, ripped it out

of his pocket with my hand still slippery with his blood.

Right then a caravan pulled into town. The ashen-faced guards sitting on the caravan wagons immediately started felling people with crossbow bolts. I'd be dead myself if it weren't for the man leaving. Came busting out of the roof of the store, timbers flying like busted splinters. I remember it too well, that shiny slick skin stretched out on the ends of arms turned to wings, big enough to blot out the moon as he flew over. I could see all his bones jutting up against his skin just as sharp as knives under parchment. His head had gotten all long and skinny too, and his nose and mouth had turned into a shiny black beak. His green eyes were huge, as big as my head, and they seemed about to burst out of their sockets. Those legs of his had been long before, but now they were thin and tapered almost half again as long, ending in clicking claws that could snap around a man's neck without even closing all the way. The guards sent flight after flight of bolts at the thing, but it just kept on flying, just kept going.

After that, I felt awful down. The snuffbox looked like nothing more than an old, worthless trinket. I started crying, tears mixing with the blood and running down into my mouth. That's what saved me from the guards and their damn bows, I think. I was crying, and they could see it wasn't my fault. They realized then what I know now—a Horror had been among us.

Game Information

DEX: 18 **STR**: 20 **TOU**: 24
PER: 18 **WIL**: 21 **CHA**: 19

Initiative: 23
Number of Actions: 4
Attack (6): 24
Damage:
Claws (5): 25

Physical Defense: 23
Spell Defense: 23
Social Defense: 24
Physical Armor: 28
Mystic Armor: 21

Death Rating: 108 (171)
Wound Threshold: 28
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Recovery Tests: 12
Knockdown: 20

Combat Movement: 120/160✦
Full Movement: 240/320✦

✦ The second number represents the Horror's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 40 **Karma Step**: 14

Powers: Damage Shift (4): 25, Durability (7), Gifts (4): 25, Horror Mark (4): 24, Karma Tap (4): 24, Spellcasting (4): 22, Thread Weaving (Illusionism) (4): 22, Terror (4): 23

Spells: Illusionism (Seventh Circle)

Legend Points (4): 65,320

Equipment: 2 horses, a wagon, numerous empty boxes

Loot: None

Commentary

The Giftbringer is a dangerous Horror that feeds off aggression and violence, especially violence between two people who know and care for each other. It uses gifts to drive people at each other, to kindle their own latent jealousies into hatred, rage, and violence on which it can feast.

In its physical manifestation, the Horror appears as the creature described at the end of the preceding tale. When disguised, it often appears as a human male (though it can appear as males of other races as well). In Name-giver form, the Horror has a charismatic presence that it uses to entice victims into its shop.

The Giftbringer's astral forms differ, however. When physically disguised as a Name-giver, its astral form looks perfectly normal, masked to perfection. If the Horror is not physically disguised, its astral form becomes a mass of seething knots of energy, all screaming out at once. These knots are the life energy taken from those the Giftbringer causes to die.

The Giftbringer favors small, out-of-the-way towns because

their residents offer the least resistance to its machinations. Larger towns contain more individuals for the Horror to deal with, which increases the chances that its true nature will be discovered.

The Giftbringer cannot change form, but uses illusions to mask its true appearance. Perceptive adepts may be able to see through these illusions and bring the Horror's dreadful ruse to an end, and so the Giftbringer does its best to avoid such individuals.

The Horror is fearsome when fighting and relishes physical combat almost as much as feeding on the pain and misery it causes. If pushed into a fight, the Giftbringer drops its illusory guise and uses Illusionism spells to confuse and terrorize its opponents. If the Giftbringer believes it is losing a battle, it may use those same spells to cover its escape as it flies off to the next town to start all over again.

Rules

The Giftbringer usually rolls into town, using Illusionism spells to make its wagon intriguing to the villagers, and sets up shop. Then the Horror uses Illusionism spells such as Clarion Call to entice customers into his store. The first few customers are offered nothing, but the Giftbringer uses its Gifts power (see **Gifts**, below) to create items they desire. The Horror gives these items to the next customers and uses its Gifts power on these individuals as well. Eventually, everyone in the town receives something that someone else wants.

At this point, Giftbringer uses its Horror Mark power on individuals and its Karma Tap power to convince them that they have the right to take what they believe is rightfully theirs. Very quickly, the town devolves into a madhouse as neighbor attacks neighbor and husband turns on wife. Once the town has destroyed itself, the Giftbringer moves on to the next town.

Gifts: This power allows the Giftbringer to create an exact duplicate of whatever his target desires by performing a successful Gifts Test against the Spell Defense of the target character. Items created with the Gifts power are real in every way. Such items are always small (less than 3 feet × 3 feet × 3 feet), and generally light (less than 50 pounds). Items created by this power do not disappear unless specifically destroyed, even if the Giftbringer is destroyed.

Shapeshifting: Giftbringer may adopt the form of any Name-giver, with the exception of dragons. The Horror must spend 10 Karma Points to transform itself in this manner. For this reason, Giftbringer tries to transform only when necessary.

Adventure Hook

The Giftbringer always uses the same method of operation, which provides many opportunities for characters to become involved with the Horror. Most simply, the Giftbringer may set up shop in the town that the player characters call home. In this case, the characters may become embroiled in the Horror's violent mind games, causing them to do terrible harm to themselves and those they love.

In another possible adventure, the characters are contacted by someone they know in a distant town, who tells them of strange events taking place there. When the characters arrive, they may find any variety of conditions in the town, from growing tension to murderous mayhem—all sparked by the Giftbringer. If the Giftbringer escapes, the characters may pursue it, if only to ensure that the madness spreads no further. This provides the characters yet another chance to become embroiled in the intrigues of the Giftbringer.

In yet another adventure, the characters find themselves passing through a village as it explodes in a fit of jealous violence brought on by the Giftbringer. In this case, they may well become the objects of hatred by people they don't even know, and will have to choose between defending themselves and slaughtering innocents. This scenario may also lead the characters to pursue the Horror in an attempt to stop its destruction of another town.

Sadly, Renwil Fasthand, the scribe who researched the incidents described below, never returned. Lochost preserve his memory.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

HATE

Hate destroyed at least two kaers during the Scourge. He also penetrated two others, Coppertail and Menkin Town, but left those intact. To this day, most Barsaive citizens harbor deep suspicions of residents from Coppertail and Menkin Town, assuming that the Horror left the kaers alone because the residents promised him something better. No one can guess what they might have promised, and few care to try.

Game Information

DEX: 19 **STR**: 19 **TOU**: 20
PER: 19 **WIL**: 22 **CHA**: 16

Initiative: 22
Number of Actions: 4
Attack (4): 23
Damage:
Unarmed (7): 26

Physical Defense: 24
Spell Defense: 24
Social Defense: 20
Physical Armor: 20
Mystic Armor: 18

Death Rating: 94 (139)
Wound Threshold: 25
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Recovery Tests: 10
Knockdown: 19

Combat Movement: 130
Full Movement: 260

Karma Points: 40
Karma Step: 15

Powers: Animate Dead (4): 26, Cursed Luck (4): 26, Damage Shift (4): 26, Durability (5), Forge Horror Construct (5): 24, Horror Mark (4): 23, Skin Shift (8): 30, Spellcasting (4): 23, Thread Weaving (Illusionism) (4): 23, Terror (4): 20

Spells: Illusionism (Eighth Circle)

Legend Points (4): 87,200

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Hate entered Kaer Coppertail and Menkin Town, as well as two other kaers during the Scourge, offering each a terrible choice: to bring him the magicians of the Kaer or be killed to the last man, woman, and child. The first two kaers fought to the bitter end and refused to be corrupted by the Horror, but they were ultimately overwhelmed by his strength. The residents of Coppertail and Menkin Town, however, turned on their town magicians in a cowardly act, offering them up to Hate to survive. Hate used these enslaved magicians to create the Flydrop Coat (see **Regarding Horror-cursed Items**, p. 437), which he promptly used on the magicians themselves in a first experiment. He released them back into the kaers, feeding on the agony of the fight that followed.

Hate appears as a glowing, well-proportioned male human. From the top of his back sprout twelve multi-jointed limbs. As Hate speaks the limbs move, each limb producing grating speech in a different tone. The limbs can extend in front of Hate, and the Horror uses them to strike opponents.

Rules

When Hate attacks traveling parties, he horribly mutilates some members of the party and leaves others virtually unscathed. Most residents of Barsaive treat survivors of such attacks with even more suspicion than people from Coppertail or Menkin Town. Hate feeds by corrupting Name-givers and pitting them against that which they once held dear. Hate has also been feeding off the suspicion of other Name-givers of the surviving residents of Coppertail and Menkin Town.

His major goals include propagating as many jehuthras as possible as well as causing hatred and strife in groups of adventurers—and perhaps even nations, if he can create the jehuthra army he wants.

Adventure Hook

Jehuthras are becoming a major threat near the Servos Jungle. The adventurers are hired by Eldemar Von, leader of a town close to the Servos Jungle, to destroy a jehuthra's lair. Arriving at the lair, they find an entire group of jehuthra surrounding a cocoon of some sort. While the adventurers fight them, another jehuthra bursts out of the cocoon, carrying a gray fur cloak. Using its powers to delay the adventurers, it runs fast for the town that hired them.

The adventurers return to the village, they find Eldemar Von himself wearing the gray coat. The town leader refuses to pay the adventurers and even provokes them by telling them to get out of his town. Later, the characters hear rumors about how Von's behavior changed in the past days. When the adventurers investigate, they find out that Von is suffering the slow transformation induced by the coat.

The adventurers must somehow convince the town leader to remove the cloak—to save him and to get their payment. If they succeed, the hidden jehuthra attacks the heroes at the first opportunity in an attempt to steal the cloak back. If the party succeeds in destroying the cloak, Hate will be forced to recreate the cloak—and his plans to do so might involve the player characters themselves...

This disturbing account comes to us from Mystal Gentlehands, a humble bonesetter from the village of Circle Round in the hinterlands near Lake Ban. I have placed the date of its writing in 1489 TH, and so the actual incidents related herein likely occurred in 1479 TH or thereabouts. Some maps drawn before that date identify three villages within half a day of the forest's edge; maps of the region drawn after 1483 TH show no villages at all. The available records on the being known as Joie have provoked some debate as to whether the creature is a Horror or something else. Most people unlucky

enough to encounter Joie insist that she is a Horror; some scholars, however, have put forward the interesting theory that this being is actually a Horror-corrupted servant of the mad Passion Vestrial. Joie's apparent ability to shift between Name-giver and monstrous forms would seem to paint her as a Horror, however, the paucity of records that describe Joie's astral aspect might support the Vestrial theory.

—Kerrith Golden-Tongue, Assistant Scribe of the Great Library of Throal

Joie

We knew enough to be wary of strangers. The wandering minstrel, the tinsmith or peddler seeking a day's profit or a night's shelter—these we would have suspected and tested, to be sure they were what they appeared to be. Or like as not, we'd have driven them away. No sense taking risks in times like these, after all. But who can refuse an abandoned child? And she was such a pretty little thing...

Couldn't have been more than six summers old, I thought when I first laid eyes on her. Lilla, she said her Name was—that's the elven word for gold, the color of the pretty curls that tumbled down her back. Her eyes were as blue as the heart of a summer sky. I've seen blue eyes before, but never quite that shade.

A delicate little elf-maid, she was, though I daresay she'd have made herself any race needful to touch our hearts. I took her in, as I shared my house only with my apprentice, Cevas. Poor Cevas was a bit simple, and he'd sometimes get frustrated when he couldn't learn a skill—but once Lilla came, he was happy all the time. Her very presence seemed to calm him.

At first folk said she brought us good fortune, and it was true—from the first day we took Lilla in, the weather was a blessing to us farmers. The sun shone when the land needed plowing and sowing, and gentle rains fell just often enough when the seed was in the ground. We were all so happy at the thought of the bumper crop we were finally going to get, after years of harvesting mostly stones and barren stalks fit only for feeding to mules.

Everything seemed to go right for everyone—no one came down sick, everyone's grackle hens laid large and beautiful eggs, vegetable gardens flourished, harnesses never needed mending. All manner of small annoyances vanished from our lives, and we felt truly blessed.

Things first went wrong on the midsummer night that Anaster's barn burned to the ground. Everyone said at the time how lucky Anaster was, himself included—one of his sons or someone had left the barn door unlatched, and all the stock had bolted when they first smelled smoke. So all he'd lost was a building—and though it was a shame it happened, Anaster was glad it had been no worse. Indeed, he was positively gleeful about the prospect of a barn-raising. We'd not had a proper festival in Circle Round for years, because the hard grind of every day wore us out too much. But a barn-raising's a joyful thing—the work goes easy when all pull together, and afterward the whole village gathers for a feast and a night of song and dancing (for them young enough to have strength left). So Anaster just looked at the charred stubs of his barn and smiled, like the loss of it was a birthday present he'd always wanted.

At the barn-raising, Tarris the carpenter slipped off the roof-frame and fell, breaking her leg in three places. I set the bones, and from the way they'd splintered in one spot I knew Tarris would never walk quite straight again. When I told her this, she smiled and said, "Could have been worse. I could have broken something to cost me the use of my hands." And I found myself nodding my head, grinning like a fool with relief that she was taking it so well.

A few weeks later, when I stopped to see how Tarris was doing, I found her hobbling around on a makeshift crutch. Now only two weeks had passed, mind, and I knew the bones hadn't knit yet. To walk on them must have felt like stepping on knife-blades. Tarris should have been screaming in agony. But she wasn't. She was bathed in sweat and her eyes were glazed, so I knew she was feeling something—but when she saw me, she smiled and told me to watch. And I did.

Tarris should have been flat abed—I should have snatched her off that leg and laid her down quicker than I could say my own Name. But I stood still and watched my patient grinding the broken ends of her own bones together in a fair bid to cripple herself, and all I could think was how wonderfully brave she was.

Finally she couldn't walk any more, and she collapsed against the side of her pallet with a shriek. The sound brought me to my senses, and I rushed over and got her onto the pallet as gently as I could. Every movement made her cry out, but she seemed almost to be enjoying it. When I asked what had possessed her to try walking so soon, she grinned at me and said, "Because the pain makes me feel alive. It's wonderful."

I went home, much disturbed in mind. But worse was to come. Cevas was sitting at the table in the warm kitchen, working over something. When I moved closer, I saw that he was sawing away at his own arms with a fine-edged dagger I'd given him as a festival-day gift. He'd drawn waves and curlicues into his skin; blood welled up in the cuts like crimson lace. He saw me staring at him in shock, held out one mutilated arm toward me and said, "Pretty, isn't it, Myskal? Pretty pattern?"

Before I could take a step toward him, he turned back to his grim work with a delighted smile and slashed the dagger's edge across his wrist. A deep cut, this one, much deeper than any of the others looked. His heart's blood came spurting out, and he watched in wonder even as the lifelight dimmed in his eves.

"See the pattern!" he cried out to me, like a child might share

the wonder of its first pony ride. “See the pretty rubies falling through the air!”

As Cevas’s corpse collapsed over the table, I felt eyes on me. I turned, slowly, and saw Lilla standing in the doorway. She looked at Cevas, then at me, and her blue eyes glowed with joy. She smiled and then began to laugh. I’ve never before nor since heard a sound so beautiful—or so horrible. Silvery and sweet, like little bells, but with the howl of a storm wind underneath—and as I listened, the wind howled louder and louder until I could see and hear nothing else. Just for a moment, like a shadow across my mind, I saw a monster with huge claws and a wide mouth stretched in an evil smile. I could smell the stench of its rotting teeth. Then it vanished.

Some while later—I’m not sure how long—the wind went away. I came to myself, sitting on the kitchen floor and staring at Cevas’s body. My lantern had fallen over and shattered, and flames were licking up one wall and toward me across the floor-boards. I sat and watched the fire spread, enchanted by the dance of the red-gold flames with their blue hearts—as blue as Lilla’s eyes. Only when the fire touched my sleeve did I move. I still don’t know what happened. I only remember feeling as if I had awakened from a sleep and suddenly I felt afraid. I ran as if the mad Passion Raggok himself pursued me, past a circle of neighbors who were dancing and singing as they watched my house burn.

It’s been ten years now, and I’ve heard nothing of anyone from Circle Round. Nothing of Lilla, either. I still don’t know what she was, though I can guess. She was no elf-child, that’s certain. She was nothing of this world.

Game Information

DEX: 16 **STR**: 10 **TOU**:17
PER: 18 **WIL**: 18 **CHA**: 19

Initiative: 15
Number of Actions: 4
Attack (4): 20
Damage:
Bite (6): 16
Claws (2): 12

Physical Defense: 20
Spell Defense: 23
Social Defense: 25
Physical Armor: 16
Mystic Armor: 14

Death Rating: 79 (106)
Wound Threshold: 22
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Recovery Tests: 8
Knockdown: 10

Combat Movement: 115

Full Movement: 230

Karma Points: 20

Karma Step: 10

Powers: Corrupt Karma (4): 22, Disguise Self [T] (4): 22, Durability (3), Horror Mark (4): 22, Karma Tap (4): 22, Pervert Emotion (4): 23, Terror (4): 23

Legend Points (4): 10,340

Equipment: None

Loot: Usually none

Commentary

Joie can alter its physical appearance and frequently manifests as a wandering minstrel, a village idiot, or a child with blond hair and blue eyes. The Horror appears in these forms to the isolated villages that are its preferred prey, seeking aid, shelter, or any other plausible need suited to the form it has taken. Though it prefers to remain disguised whenever possible, Joie’s true shape is that of a lithe, man-sized beast of terrible strength, with a thick hide and wicked claws. The beast has a particularly evil smile; its mouth appears wider than physically possible, and is filled with rows of cracked, yellow teeth. Its tongue, the size and texture of the liver of a small animal, plays constantly across these teeth.

Over a number of days, Joie makes itself wholly welcome in its target community, all the while observing the citizens for weaknesses upon which to prey. After a short time, Joie begins to pervert the emotions of the local folk, usually starting with one or two minor incidents. The Horror gradually spreads its influence until most of the community is firmly under its control and begins drawing nourishment from the warped psyches of its victims. The Horror stays in a given village or town until its dreadful doings are discovered. Once unmasked, Joie departs in search of new victims. Often, though not always, Joie slays the villagers before leaving.

Rules

Joie rarely engages in combat, preferring to manipulate its victims from the shadows. However, Joie can be formidable in battle. The Horror can use its huge, toothy jaws to bite an opponent or rake enemies with its powerful claws.

In Name-giver guise, Joie can use its Corrupt Karma, Horror Mark, and Karma Tap powers, as well as its unique Pervert Emotion power (see below). In its monstrous true form, Joie adds the Terror power to its arsenal.

Pervert Emotion: Many powerful Horrors feed on negative emotions such as hatred, anger, fear, and jealousy. Once people realize that these emotions are controlling their actions, they will resist these feelings, thereby starving the Horror. The Pervert Emotion power, unique to Joie, allows the Horror to subvert such resistance by warping its victims' minds so that painful and evil things become a source of happiness to them.

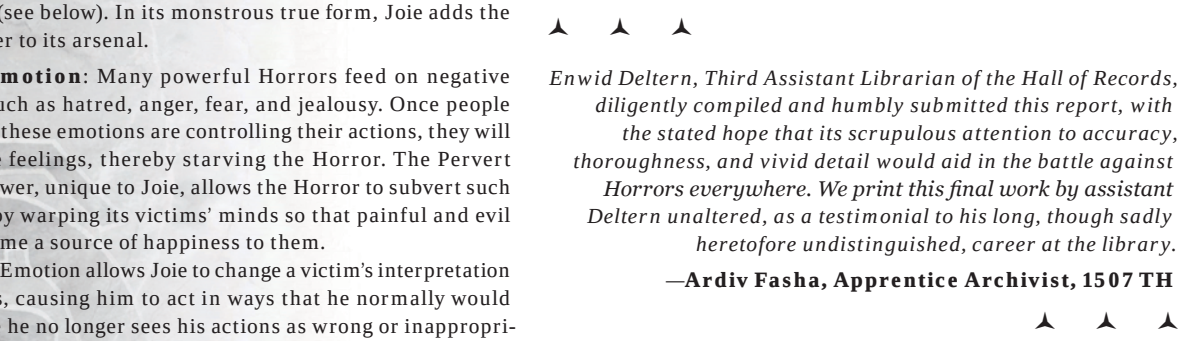
Pervert Emotion allows Joie to change a victim's interpretation of emotions, causing him to act in ways that he normally would not because he no longer sees his actions as wrong or inappropriate. For example, a character who feels joy rather than disgust at physical violence may express his affection for his neighbor by nailing the individual's cap to his head. While under the influence of this horrible power, people can commit truly terrifying acts without realizing it.

To use this power, Joie makes a Pervert Emotion Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, Joie perverts the target's emotions in a way that the victim finds pleasing, and that is also appetizing to the Horror. The result level achieved determines the ease with which Joie can pervert the victim's feelings. Altering strong anger into simple affection requires an Average result; turning bitter jealousy into euphoria requires an Extraordinary result. The gamemaster determines the power's effectiveness, based on the circumstances of the given situation.

A victim under the influence of this power may realize that his emotions are being manipulated if he makes a successful Perception Test against the result of the Pervert Emotion Test. The gamemaster should make this test for the character. If the test succeeds, the character realizes that his emotions are somehow inappropriate, though he cannot control them. To break free of the Pervert Emotion power, the character must make a successful Willpower Test against the result of the Pervert Emotion Test.

Adventure Hook

Typically, player characters encounter Joie by coming into contact with the population of a small town or village that has come under the influence of the Horror's Pervert Emotion power. Alternatively, Joie may simply try to use its powers directly against the characters or even attack them outright. In one possible adventure, player characters on a long journey stop at a village for the night. Soon after their arrival, they notice that the local people are behaving strangely—laughing uproariously when they or others hurt themselves, acting joyful at things that ought to make them angry or sad, and so on. Once the characters realize that a Horror might be causing these bizarre emotional shifts, they may attempt to find and destroy Joie. However, the citizens of the town are less than willing to give up their new-found, constant pleasure; and Joie is unwilling to leave her latest meal unfinished.



Enwid Deltern, Third Assistant Librarian of the Hall of Records, diligently compiled and humbly submitted this report, with the stated hope that its scrupulous attention to accuracy, thoroughness, and vivid detail would aid in the battle against Horrors everywhere. We print this final work by assistant Deltern unaltered, as a testimonial to his long, though sadly heretofore undistinguished, career at the library.

—Ardiv Fasha, Apprentice Archivist, 1507 TH

NEBIS

Reports of the entity called Nebis have surfaced only since the end of the Scourge. Many adepts have encountered the Horror, and happily, almost all the stronger adventuring parties have come away with survivors.

One adept who has tangled with Nebis—Manterlinck the Enchanter, chronicler of the Seven Learned Fellows—speculates that Nebis could not compete with the more powerful Horrors in Barsaive during the Scourge. This theory might account for Nebis's relatively recent appearance.

"The high level of magic may have distressed it, or the entity may have feared rival Horrors," writes Manterlinck, one of three surviving Fellows. "Now that the magic has declined somewhat, Nebis finds our milieu better suited to his lesser strength."

Here follows a comprehensive list of Nebis's known manifestations, compiled through strenuous effort by your humble scribe,

- *Destruction of Kaer Mornwood (1423 TH, first documented appearance of N.) and Kaer Lanhord Deere (1445 TH, both located in the Tylon Mountains. Some folklore implicates N. in the loss of Kaer Dunholden (1456 TH) in the Caucavics, but N.'s involvement seems doubtful, as N. has not been observed so far northeast.*
- *Destruction of Merchad, village south of Kratas (1438 TH, by provoking residents to murder one another. Destruction of central Barsaivian villages Cabo (1466 TH), Dairen (1478 TH), Numaovasi (1488 TH), and Nea Manolas (1492 TH), means unknown. Maddened survivors in some cases.*

- *Failed destruction attempts: Samatirula, southwest of Kratas (1450 TH), stopped by Seven Learned Fellows. Village of Cut Off (1463 TH), foiled by Order of Danbury. Repeated attempts to enter Bartertown (1496, 1501, 1503, 1504 TH), foiled at great cost by various bands of adepts.*
- *Implicated in assassination of Olan Urzicenyi, mayor of Bartertown (1495-96 TH). Implicated in deaths of 26 Bartertown children (1501 TH). Implicated in the deaths of Logen Olaria, leader of Bartertown's primary Garlen shrine (1503 TH), and of numerous officials, questors, and caregivers in many small villages. N. also linked to hundreds of cases of incurable insanity.*
- *Widespread agreement among writers that N. aids various Living Legend cults, Hand of Corruption, questors of Vestrial, and other agents of chaos. No concrete evidence to support these speculations, however.*

Many readers may wonder why Nebis has been grouped with the Named Horrors, considering its relatively minor record of devastation. True, Nebis poses little physical threat. The Horror is fat, slow, and lazy of manner, and even inexperienced adepts have defeated him in physical combat. But the principal differences between common Horrors and Named Horrors are the methods and ambitions of these vile entities, and Nebis appears much more intelligent and crafty than most un-Named Horrors. It possesses a shiftier disposition and employs more devious tactics than common Horrors, and Nebis's opponents report that the entity possesses many insidious abilities often attributed to Named Horrors. Nebis also entertains the ambitions of a Named Horror. In notes left in the ruins of Merchad village, apparently dictated by Nebis, the entity vows to bring madness on every Name-giver in Barsaive.

Many survivors of battles with Nebis describe its revolting appearance in detail. According to these accounts, Nebis possesses a body shaped like a tun cask of wine, covered with short tawny or white fur. Normally, the entity walks on all four of its limbs, but has been observed standing upright. Nebis's arms resemble those of the gorillas of the Liaj jungle. The Horror possesses two short, hind limbs like those of a lion, and four-digit clawed hands and feet.

Bone spikes cover Nebis's long reptilian tail, but the Horror's most terrible feature is its face. An elongated triangular visage of trollish aspect, Nebis's face lacks a forehead, contains a single central nostril, and sports overgrown tusks set in a protuberant jaw.

The only astral description of Nebis comes from Lannonder the Gray Wizard. Lannonder describes the form as a "slowly roiling concatenation of what seemed a dozen patterns, much larger than the physical body and jarring and ugly in their clashes."

According to all accounts, Nebis persistently manipulates a victim's sense of reality using dreams, Name-givers under its control, and telepathic suggestion. He slowly subverts the tormented victim's every belief, then the victim's perception of his surroundings, and finally the individual's sense of self. The unfortunate lunatic becomes one more pawn Nebis can use in its insidious plots against Barsaive. More than one adept group has run afoul of these plots and has taken steps to foil them. Imagine their astonishment and alarm when they discover that Nebis has merely assimilated them into its plans!

Extracts from an account by Dandeer of Lowfen, human weaponsmith of the Bright Spear Fellowship, offer a telling example of Nebis's machinations.

"We first met it in a nameless village three days' walk southwest of Kratas. Everyone there had died or gone mad. We tracked it to the village headman's home, where it had set the last two living people—a mother and child—upon each other, so that it might feed on their pain.

"We fought it well and bravely, though it crushed Theona's skull and ripped off Caedmon's leg. I gave the killing stroke myself. We chopped up its body and burned the pieces. Not until months later did we notice disturbing signs.

"Two nights after that first battle, each of us received a dream that we took to be from the Passion Thystonius. Words cannot convey the marvelous, solemn authority in those visions. The Passion told us of grave danger in a nearby village. When we arrived at the place, we found a demented troll slaughtering villagers at random. We killed him and gained the surviving villagers' acclaim. Thereafter, Thystonius directed us to several other dangers, and we acquitted ourselves with honor. So we grew to trust the dreams implicitly.

"One night Thystonius told us that a Horror had possessed the mayor of the nearby village of Solile. The Passion instructed us to kill the mayor for the good of the village. The next morning some of us voiced suspicions of this dream's message, but on the way to Solile we met a villager who confirmed the Passion's claim with vivid accounts of the possessed mayor's awful deeds.

"Convinced by this, we entered Solile by stealth. Nothing appeared wrong, but mindful of Thystonius' warning we ambushed the mayor in her bed and slew her, then fled. In our dreams that night Thystonius promised to reward us. When we awoke, each of us bore a golden tattoo. Mine was on my right leg, and thereafter I found I could run faster and leap higher. Landy Born, our warrior, had one on his sword arm, which had become stronger. We later found that Candia's chest tattoo made her more resistant to injury, and Adjunius had a forehead tattoo that improved his vision. Poor Adjunius! He was my dearest friend.

"Soon thereafter, we met a traveling questor of Thystonius—or so he seemed—who identified the marks as blessings of the Passion. 'Now you belong to the Brothers of Thystonius,' he said, as he showed us his own tattoo.

"So encouraged, we pursued our travels. Then one night, we received a dream message of quite another kind than we had grown accustomed to. The Horror, its own repulsive person undisguised, manifested in a terrifying nightmare that we all shared. 'I have a body again,' it said, sniggering and drooling horribly. 'I can come to you now. Prepare for your imminent doom!' It seems obvious now that this Horror-sent dream should have inspired us to reexamine the dreams from Thystonius, but the thought did not cross our minds.

"These nightmares continued for several nights. In desperation we began investigating ways to destroy the Horror. In Kratas, apparently by accident, we met a fellow Brother of Thystonius, a

Nethermancer who told us of a blood ritual that she insisted would drive the Horror out of this realm for a year and a day. We had no better choice, and so we resolved to try it.

"After much labor we assembled the required orichalcum and other elements. In so doing we met other Brothers of Thystonius embarked on the same mission, and they joined us. At midnight, with all of us present, Adjunius cast the spell."

Here the narrative grows less coherent. "We lost poor Adjunius right away, his head separated and changed. Landy's arm grew like a gorillas, then suddenly ripped from his torso and flew across the circle, trailing blood everywhere. A stranger there lost his arm too, or maybe he lost the leg—I don't remember, for just then my own leg tore loose. All the bloody parts flew together overhead, melded together, and suddenly the Horror stood before us. It could do anything it wanted to us, but it let us live. I don't know why except I'm always afraid, I don't even want to write his Name because he'll find me again..."

Dandeer's account ends here. Her attendants at a local shrine to Garlen add a note that Dandeer can now walk well on her wooden leg. Dandeer and other writers accept implicitly that Nebis can notice and manipulate unwary Name-givers who invoke its Name too often. Your humble scribe finds this unlikely, for Nebis Nebis has not demonstrated clairvoyant powers of this Nebis description, certainly not on those Nebis whom Nebis has not Nebis already marked. Assuming such Nebis were true, the effects of Nebis's Nebis's NEBIS'S manipulation would become evident to an NEBIS observer. NEBIS To date no such NEBIS has surfaced, despite the NEBIS diligent inquiry of one NEBIS who only desires to NEBIS the NEBIS of the NEBIS Library of NEBIS, and hopes that NEBIS superiors will NEBIS him with NEBIS and NEBIS NEBIS NEBIS.

Enwid Deltern, 1445–1507 TH. Lochost preserve his memory.

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

Game Information

DEX: 7 **STR**: 10 **TOU**: 18
PER: 9 **WIL**: 20 **CHA**: 20

Initiative: 8
Number of Actions: 2
Attack (3): 10
Damage:
Claws (3): 13

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 12
Social Defense: 25
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 16

Death Rating:
Physical: 84 (111)
Astral: 84 (111)

Recovery Tests: 9

Wound Threshold: 28
Knockdown: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Combat Movement: 34
Full Movement: 68

Karma Points: 30
Karma Step: 12

Powers: Cursed Luck (2): 22, Durability (3), Horror Mark (9): 18, Karma Tap (5): 14, Spellcasting (13): 22, Tattoo Claim (2): 22 (see text), Thread Weaving (Illusionism) (13): 22, Thought Worm (5): 14

Spells: Illusionism (Third Circle), Tattoo Ritual

Legend Points: Astral (4): 15,960; Physical (2): 7,980

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Nebis exists solely on the astral plane but maintains a close connection to the physical plane, where it finds its victims. No description of Nebis exists, since the Horror manifests a new physical body by stealing body parts from its victims.

Rules

Nebis presents a slight threat in combat compared to other Named Horrors. The Horror defends its lair primarily with prepared defenses such as the Illusionist spells Alarm, Impossible Lock, and Nobody Here. Though Nebis is physically weak, the destruction of the Horror's physical body does not kill it. Instead, physical destruction of the Horror forces Nebis to retreat to astral space for a year and a day or until it can manifest a new body using its unique Tattoo Claim power (see **Tattoo Claim**, below).

To kill Nebis, characters must destroy both its physical and astral forms. Each form has a separate Death Rating of 111. Physical damage is subtracted only from the physical Death Rating. Damage from attacks that work against Mystic Armor is subtracted from both ratings.

While on the astral plane, Nebis can use powers that cause Strain or require the Horror to take permanent damage. When Nebis acquires a new body, this Strain and damage are transferred to its new physical form.

Though slow to react to new information, Nebis is profoundly intelligent and deeply vindictive. The Horror develops personal grudges against adepts who slay its physical body or interfere with its plans. Nebis uses its actions in combat to Horror-mark its opponents, then plants Thought Worms and Karma Taps. Once it marks all opponents, Nebis makes physical attacks against them until its body dies.

Nebis is the subject of more than one of the so-called Horror cults, and the Horror often uses the members of these cults as pawns in its plans.

The fictional entry on Nebis mentions its ability to sense the mention or thought of its Name. The gamemaster should decide whether this is true according to the needs of his adventure.

Clairvoyancy: By spending 1 point of Strain per round, Nebis can clairvoyantly sense anything of which a previously marked character is aware. The marked character does not sense Nebis's eavesdropping.

Tattoo Claim: The Tattoo Claim power enables Nebis to place special tattoos on characters it has previously marked and later retrieve the tattooed body parts for its own use. To use the power, Nebis makes a Tattoo Claim Test against the Spell Defense of any sleeping targeted character. If the test succeeds, the target character receives a tattoo on one body part chosen by the gamemaster: arm, leg, chest, head, and so on. The tattoo is recognizably magical and especially visible on the astral plane. A character cannot receive more than one Tattoo Claim, and Nebis must take 1 point of permanent damage for each Tattoo Claim Test it makes.

The tattooed character gains a +2 bonus to one ability or set

of abilities, depending on the tattooed body part. A tattooed arm adds +2 steps to Strength; a tattooed leg, +2 steps to Dexterity; chest, +2 to the character's Physical Armor; a tattooed head, +2 steps to Perception. The tattoo and the bonus last for a year and a day, or until Nebis's Horror mark lapses. Nebis can renew the tattoo by making another Tattoo Claim Test whenever the target character is within 100 miles of the Horror.

Dispel Magic and similar effects may remove a character's tattoo by overcoming the Horror's Spell Defense of 12. The tattoo does not confer this Spell Defense on the character.

If six or more characters bear Nebis's Tattoo Claim, Nebis can manifest a new physical body by persuading its victims to perform a Tattoo Ritual (see below).

Thought Worm: Nebis's Thought Worm power enables the Horror to manipulate the dreams of any sleeping character it has previously marked. By making a successful Spellcasting Test against the dreaming target's Spell Defense, Nebis can convincingly impersonate a benevolent Passion, ghost, fictitious spirit, and so on. (These beings need not really exist in Barsaive, as long as Nebis persuades his victim that they do.) The target may experience deep emotions during the dream and always remembers it on waking. After one successful test, Nebis can impersonate the same figure in the character's later dreams without making another test. This use of the Thought Worm power causes the victim no pain or damage.

Nebis must spend 1 point of Strain per round to send a dream message. The Horror can send the same dream to a group of marked characters simultaneously, as long as all the targeted characters are sleeping.

Tattoo Ritual: Nebis teaches this ritual to its agents and/or victims, usually under the false pretext that the ritual accomplishes something else, such as driving the Horror from the world or destroying Nebis forever. Members of Horror cults devoted to Nebis and others among Nebis's corrupt servitors often teach the ritual as well. The Tattoo Ritual requires at least six characters with Tattoo Claims, one for each body part (head, chest, left and right arms, left and right legs).

The ritual requires no particular location, materials, or preparation, though Nebis often invents these to lull characters' suspicions. Performing the ritual takes ten minutes, allowing Nebis to make a single Tattoo Ritual Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the highest Spell Defense of any tattooed character present, +1 for each additional character. If the test succeeds, all of the characters tattooed by Nebis are affected by the ritual.

Characters with a head or chest tattoo die immediately. Those with limb tattoos take 1 Wound and Step 16/D20+D8 damage, as the tattooed limb tears away. No armor protects against this damage. They suffer extreme pain, with effects similar to the Pain spell, though these characters incur no further damage. The character also loses the step bonus granted by the Tattoo Claim.

If Nebis receives more body parts than it needs (an extra arm or head, for instance), the parts are incorporated into its new body. Add +10 to Nebis's Death Rating for each extra body part beyond six. Nebis also gains a +4 bonus to all Action Tests it makes against any character who has lost a body part to the Horror.

If Nebis's Tattoo Ritual Test fails, the ritual has no effect. Nebis takes 10 Strain Points of damage and cannot make another Tattoo Ritual Test for 24 hours. Nebis cannot use any of these powers on characters it has not personally marked, nor can Nebis sense or use other Horrors' marks.

Adventure Hook

Nebis seeks out adepts to battle, for it cares little if its physical form is destroyed. If player characters kill its body, the Horror stalks the characters in astral space. Nebis uses its powers to mark its victims and eventually tricks them into performing its Tattoo Ritual.

The information we have regarding the Horror Nemesis comes to us from one Veran Tuul, a scholar from the area near Urupa. As Tuul's account attests, Nemesis has involved itself in slave trade and other acts usually the sole domain of Name-givers. Nemesis is a particularly dangerous entity, as it has been known to deceive even the most clear-headed and virtuous heroes.

—Voiha Mystral, Apprentice Archivist, Great Library of Throal, 1507 TH

NEMESIS

I can offer no better example of the insidious danger the Horror called Nemesis poses than the following letter. I took this missive from the hand of a dead comrade, who had succumbed to Nemesis's wiles. Until the last day of his life, he maintained that the Horror had sent it to him.

Enlightened Being,

I have watched your peoples for many decades now, counting the years as you do days. I have witnessed your vain attempts to hide from those beings that you call Horrors and have watched with great interest the power that you and others like you have learned to wield.

Nevertheless, you are nothing compared to those you fight. Hiding in the earth did not save you, for they were patient and merely awaited your return. And now they crouch all around you, hiding in shadows and riding beneath the very skins of those you may call friends. You know I speak the truth, for you have learned to sense them, to see the way they warp astral space and rip at the very fabric of the magic you hold so dear. But still you are powerless to destroy them.

It does not have to be so, however. I have knowledge that you might use to your advantage, powerful insights into the ways of the Horrors you seek to destroy. You know of Patterns and Pattern Items, and you know the power of Knowledge. I can give you these and much, much more. You have but to place around your neck the amulet you will find in this package, and it will guide you to me.

Your destiny awaits, for surely you will be known as the greatest of the Horror hunters.

—The Knowing One

None should be misled by the frail appearance of many of Nemesis's physical forms. This entity's truly powerful weapons are its mastery of metamorphoses and deception. It is impossible to say for certain how Nemesis will appear at any given time, though the Horror's physical aspects contain certain distinguishing features.

First, Nemesis always takes the form of a male or female human, never of one of the other Name-giver races. Second, it almost always has blue-white eyes that shine with the brilliance of lightning. Often Nemesis explains this strange gleam as the mark of a Wizard, and the Horror has the abilities needed to convince others that it is indeed competent in the magical arts. Third, the Horror dresses in light clothing, eschewing armor in favor of flowing silks and brightly colored sashes. It delights in drawing attention to itself and is often quite attractive. I doubt that Nemesis has what could be called a True Form. I know of two individuals who have seen Nemesis near to death; both said the Horror's form began to shift from one human guise to the next, but never to anything inhuman.

The Horror's astral appearance, however, is quite striking. It remains human-looking, but glowing lines of force emanate from its body. The lines pulse between black and purple and seem to extend outward forever. I have come to believe that these lines are

Nemesis's magical connections to adepts across Barsaive, and I shudder for us all if I am correct. Hundreds, if not thousands, of these glowing lines shoot from Nemesis's body, and if each of these represents a corrupted adept, then surely we are all doomed.

The Horror we call Nemesis is old, though not as old as many others. I have traced hundreds of reports of the being, including many letters written shortly after the end of the Scourge, and I believe that this dread entity arrived in our world not long after the opening of the first kaers. Whether or not it was present before that time is uncertain, but it seems to have made no contact with Name-givers until the kaers opened.

Since the end of the Scourge, Nemesis has contacted many, many adepts. In each case, Nemesis has offered them the knowledge or weapons, or both, necessary to destroy other Horrors. In every case I know of, Nemesis has destroyed these adepts in mind, spirit, and body, consuming every tortured emotion from their dying husks. I believe that Nemesis originally took control of its victims to reduce its own competition. By providing adepts with the means to destroy other Horrors, Nemesis ensured that fewer Horrors could contend with it for the emotional energy it needs to maintain its physical form.

The letters and accounts tell us that Nemesis did not bestow its knowledge and weapons freely. It tainted each gift with its terrible essence, and through these it manipulated the adepts it had chosen. Nemesis allowed these adepts to destroy a Horror and then turned them against one another at the height of their celebrations. Journal entries tell of petty arguments that exploded into fights with drawn weapons, disagreements that became bitter feuds. Nemesis became quite skilled at wringing terrible emotions from his pawns, exhausting them of all their strength before forcing them to kill themselves. The Horror would then give its tainted gifts to new victims, beginning its terrible game all over again.

Nemesis's voracious appetite continued to grow, however, and soon the Horror realized that it needed a more constant supply of nourishment. And so Nemesis began to sell its knowledge. The Horror traveled to various towns and cities, offering knowledge of other Horrors in exchange for large sums of silver. With the Scourge and years of hiding still fresh in their minds, nearly all the Name-givers it approached agreed to its bargain. Nemesis took its profits and traveled south, entering the shattered remnants of the Theran Empire where the foul practice of slavery still exists. Nemesis offered premium prices for slaves, often paying in information as well as silver.

Soon, Nemesis established itself as a slaver. The money it gained from selling information about Horrors allowed Nemesis to build numerous strongholds near Iopos and Jerris, one in the depths of the Liaj Jungle, another beneath the Twilight Peaks, two secreted in the depths of the Servos Jungle, one near Urupa, and a final one hidden in the Caucavic Mountains near Parlainth. More may exist, but these are reportedly the largest. Slaves pour into these strongholds regularly, supplied by the Therans and the many individuals Nemesis has corrupted throughout Barsaive. Nemesis's caravan travels by night to collect the poor souls and transport them to the nearest of the strongholds. It is said that great numbers of cadaver men guard these caravans, that Wizards guide them, and that to look upon them is death.

Many accounts say that at the new moon, these accursed strongholds become arenas for gladiatorial matches. Slaves are armed with savage weapons and thrown into pits to fight one another. Often wild beasts join the battles, driven mad by the power of Nemesis. Certain wealthy Barsaivians have been seen traveling to these events, and I can only assume that Nemesis is corrupting them for its nefarious schemes. I suspect Nemesis feeds off the suffering of those in the pits and also from the roiling emotions of the spectators.

As far as I can tell, the Horror still seeks adepts. Its pawns seem to lurk everywhere, looking for those with hot blood and little sense, those who can be easily corrupted. On behalf of their Horror master, Nemesis's minions offer those unfortunate individuals information about Horrors and speak of the glory to be won by destroying these terrifying creatures. Of course, those who accept information and assistance from these minions or their awful patron are damned from that moment on. As time passes they become more and more hostile, urged on by the power of Nemesis, until eventually they destroy themselves and everything they love. Throughout, Nemesis swallows every tasty morsel of Name-giver pain and rage.

I regret to say I have no idea how Nemesis travels. Whether it can move through astral space or uses some form of magic to transport itself, I do not know. I have heard reports of the entity appearing at opposite ends of Barsaive within days; if these reports are true, I can only surmise that the Horror can move itself almost instantaneously if the need arises.

Game Information

DEX: 5 **STR**: 5 **TOU** 19
PER: 23 **WIL**: 25 **CHA** 16

Initiative: 10
Number of Actions: 5
Attack (5): 10
Damage:
Unarmed (1): 6

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 29
Social Defense: 20
Physical Armor: 19
Mystic Armor: 21

Death Rating: 90
Wound Threshold: 25
Unconsciousness Rating: 84

Recovery Tests: 9
Knockdown: 5

Combat Movement: 24
Full Movement: 48

Karma Points: 60
Karma Step: 20

Powers: Animate Dead (5): 30, Create Shadow (7), Damage Shift (5): 30, Knowledge: Horror Lore[S] (7): 30, Horror Mark (5): 28, Spellcasting (5): 28, Thread Weaving (Wizardry) (5): 28, Thought Worm (5): 28, Transport (5): 28

Spells: Wizardry (Ninth Circle)

Legend Points (5): 383,050

Equipment: Loose robes, personal items befitting a noble

Loot: Usually none, though several thousand silver pieces can be found at each of Nemesis's strongholds.

Commentary

Nemesis exists solely on the astral plane but maintains a close connection to the physical plane, where it finds its victims. Various descriptions of Nemesis exist, since the Horror manifests in many disguises. However, all of its disguises are human with lightning blue-white eyes.

Rules

Nemesis hates standup fights and uses its spells to kill as many attackers as quickly as it can if things become violent. If it appears that the Horror cannot win, Nemesis uses its Transport power to flee the scene, vowing to return and slay the player characters another day.

Horror Lore: Nemesis's unique Horror Lore power is the source of the entity's knowledge concerning Horrors. To use this power, Nemesis makes a Horror Lore Test against the Spell Defense of the Horror in question. If the test succeeds, Nemesis may spend 1 Karma Point to discover the weaknesses (if any) of a particular Horror. A successful test also enables Nemesis to empower a weapon so that it causes extra damage to the targeted Horror. Nemesis may spend up to 5 Karma Points to do this. Each Karma Point increases the Damage step of the weapon by 2 steps when used against the targeted Horror. When used against any other target, the weapon functions normally.

Horror Mark: Nemesis's Horror Mark power only works against player characters who have accepted gifts from the Horror. If a character accepts such a gift, Nemesis may then attempt to mark the character at any time, as long as the character keeps the gift. These gifts are usually the weapons Nemesis gives player characters to destroy other Horrors, but any other item will work as well. Nemesis usually uses human agents to contact player characters it wishes to mark. These agents offer the characters the knowledge and weapons they need to destroy a nearby Horror. Nemesis then uses its Horror Lore power (see **Horror Lore**, above) to provide these weapons. Nemesis also tells the characters the Horror's Name and other information about its weaknesses.

Nemesis also tries to mark at least one of the player characters, more if the adventuring group appears particularly weak or overconfident. Once a player character is Horror-marked, Nemesis tries to implant a Thought Worm in the individual, slowly turning the character against friends and family and finally forcing the individual to destroy all he holds dear.

Transport: Nemesis's Transport power enables the Horror to move from one of its strongholds to the next through astral space. To use this power, Nemesis makes a Transport Test against its own Spell Defense. If the test succeeds the Horror shifts into astral space and transports to a new location. However, each time the Horror uses this power, it takes Step 10/D10+D6 damage (reduced by –1 point for each result level achieved on the Transport Test). No armor protects against this damage. Though it is unlikely to happen, Nemesis can die from overusing this power. When using its Transport power, Nemesis may travel from stronghold to stronghold in one combat round.

Adventure Hook

Nemesis is an intelligent, cultivated Horror that moves among circles most Horrors do not. Rather than a grotesque monstrosity to be feared on sight, Nemesis is a beautiful, cunning entity that prefers to manipulate its foes and victims into destroying themselves rather than lay hands on them itself.

In one possible adventure, the characters arrive in a small town to find that the streets are nearly deserted and that the remaining townspeople are half-mad with fear. It seems a wormskull Horror has taken up residence nearby and is systematically destroying the town. The survivors tell the characters that they have heard of a Wizard not far from the town who might know how to destroy the Horror, but none of them are strong or brave enough to make the trip. The Wizard, of course, is really Nemesis, who is more than happy to provide the characters with the information and weapons they need to destroy the wormskull.

Alternatively, the characters may be hired by a city official to find out what is happening in the city government. Many officials have begun taking extended vacations and returning with some interesting new thoughts. As a result the city is becoming a crueler place, with heavier taxes and harsher penalties for crimes.

The player characters must involve themselves in the politics of the city to discover that during these extended vacations, city officials have been attending gladiatorial games hosted by someone they refuse to identify. If the characters can wangle themselves an invitation to one of these events or convince someone of import that the characters should serve as guards, they witness a scene of senseless cruelty and barbarism. Provide subtle clues that the host of the event is a Horror. If the characters try to attack Nemesis, the Horror does its best to calm them and offers information about other Horrors, trying to persuade them to enter its service. Depending on how the characters handle the situation, it ends in a bloody fight or becomes the beginning of a sinister and uneasy alliance.

This text is the work of one Cymric the Wizard. Though Cymric is not well known in Throal, the endorsement he has received from Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records, provides more than adequate reason to include his dissertation in this tome. Merrox's endorsement, along with the fact that Cymric confronted the Horror he describes and yet was not corrupted, lends credence to Cymric's authority and suggests the inestimable value his work holds for those who would study the ways of the Horrors.

—Reelo Pasha, Apprentice Scribe, Great Library of Throal, 1507 TH

RISTUL

I wish to thank Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records, for the opportunity to add my meager tidbit to the great storehouse of knowledge that is the Library of Throal. I hear the librarians so fear this book that they have ordered scribes to simply ensure that the pages of each section are in order and to read no more than the first sentence of each entry. Now, I would be less than the Wizard I am if I passed by this chance to pull the nose hairs of so prestigious a dwarf as Master Merrox. But we must keep up appearances, so if you could just blanch as if reading the most terrible thing, mutter direly under your breath and then look wildly about the room, that should clear away any nosy bystanders. My thanks in absentia.

Now, imagine that we sit in a tavern specializing in rude help, stale breads and watery ales. You try to ply me with enough drink to loosen my tongue about Ristul, I try not to lose my tongue to drink. My gestures grow grander with each swallow. I flop forward, elbow catching the edge of the table as I try to settle myself. You hunch forward to hear what I am saying. Through a lopsided smile I ask, "Why are you in such a hurry to die?"

If you cannot answer that question to your satisfaction, close this book now. Good, you are still reading; I hate going on an imaginary drinking spree alone. So order me another ale and I will tell you what I know of Ristul.

Let me start by saying that Ristul is not what most people think of as a Horror. This entity is not an individual being with a body, a mind, a distinct identity. Think of it this way. You are a person, as am I, as is the bartender who keeps watering this swill. We are three distinct entities. But consider water. A fountain holds water, as does a lake. But we do not look at a fountain and say, "oh look, a water" or at a lake and say, "Gads, there go seven waters." Certainly we measure water, a cup here, a barrel there, but those

measures are arbitrary standards we place on water.

In this way Ristul is like water. In fact, the Horror's Name is a bastardized contraction of the phrase, "*riyah istu leev aertin*" which loosely translates to "action eternally corrupting." So Ristul is far more frightening than water; for we can see water in a glass, in a lake, burbling over rocks during a mountain thaw. But how can we see action eternally corrupting? We cannot, save for the results of this corruption in our world. And so the Abyss of Aras Nehem is Ristul, as are nightwists and the Ristular. And so, if certain legends hold truth, are the Mad Passions.

Ristul corrupts all, and is all that Ristul corrupts. What Ristul corrupts, Ristul absorbs. To be corrupted by Ristul is to become part of Ristul, as though by drinking a glass of water you became water and were poured into the barrel with all the rest. Once corrupted, a victim loses his individual identity, just as every cup of water from a barrel is much like every other. He does not, however, lose awareness (as had originally been thought).

At one time, a Nethermancer named Maeumis (whose work I have read) performed extensive research on Ristul and concluded that individuals might be extracted from the Horror. Maeumis believed that all sentience is not lost in Ristul, and that a Name-giver might be reconstructed by gathering all of his scattered soul back together. Maeumis's magical theories seem sound, but I reckon the chances of gathering a scattered soul are no better than tossing a barrel in a stormy sea in hopes of retrieving a flagon of water emptied into the surf months before. Magical practice lags far behind theory in this area.

Ristul is Hell. This statement was scrawled again and again in large, loose letters across hundreds of pages in Maeumis's grimoire. At first I assumed the notes were a product of his madness. Maeumis was a Nethermancer, after all, and you know how they get. But as I continued my research, I came to understand what that ugly little dwarf meant. Ristul is action eternally corrupting, and sentience is not lost upon absorption by Ristul. The Horror's victims remain aware of the atomizing of their souls, the bending of their thoughts, the perversion of their memories, the destruction of their selves. And as a victim blends and mixes with other souls trapped in Ristul, he shares their pain and loss. And so the victim of Ristul continually experiences terror and pain as his soul is fragmented, recombined, and fragmented over and over again. I am certain our universe holds many Hells, but undoubtedly Ristul is one of them.

As I said before, Ristul is not an individual being. The Horror can take many forms in our world, all of which are corrupt—and all of which may threaten the soul of a Name-giver. Ristul most often assumes the form of nightwists. These things are literally the stuff of nightmares. Ristul shapes these constructs from itself, forging them from the dark shapes that haunt our dreams. These twisted bits of darkness travel the world, seeking the owners of the dreams that spawned them. Of course, most often the dreamers are long dead, leaving the nightwists to prey on the living.

Ristul also manifests itself in the Ristular, those who embrace the corruption that is Ristul. Ristular are Name-givers, corrupt to the last, who offer themselves to serve Ristul and in turn are served by Ristul. The Ristular can be found in virtually any area of Barsaive, working to further the corruption that is Ristul.

But perhaps I can best impress on you the power of Ristul by recounting the tale of Aras Nehem.

The Abyss of Aras Nehem

Ten or twelve days walking along the jagged coastline southwest of Urupa will bring you to the caverns of Aras Nehem. The caverns are now known as the prime source of those disgusting flying worms some magicians favor as companions. But around Urupa the caverns are still known for the richness of the enchanted and elemental life that exists within them. Scholars, gossips, and storytellers also know the site as the home of Kaer Otosk, once the largest troll haven in southern Barsaive.

Kaer Otosk was a rambling, disjointed cavern city in comparison to dwarf or Theran kaers. For protection, Kaer Otosk depended on enchantments provided by three significant sites arranged in a perfect triangle, which in turn formed a pyramid-shaped safe area above the Nehem Liferock located several hundred feet below the surface. On each site a temple had been built years before the kaer was started. The temples were devoted to Dis, Raggok and Vestrial. Local legends recall the fall of Kaer Otosk as the Betrayal, when the Passions went mad and directed their followers to abandon the protections. This allowed an abyss to open near the Liferock, through which Horrors poured to swarm through Otosk unimpeded. They razed the city, desecrated the temples, and befouled and consumed Kaer Otosk's doomed inhabitants. Some claim the Liferock still remains, covered by clinging obsidimen locked in the Dreaming by the swirling spiritual putrescence that spills from the abyss.

I have pieced together a different version of the fall of Kaer Otosk. I believe the fall was not a betrayal, but a sacrifice—a grand sacrifice. True, the abyss is a breach into astral space through which Ristul could pass. And given enough time, Ristul could have consumed all of Barsaive and beyond, for Ristul is insatiable. I believe the Passions and their questors sensed the abyss and Ristul's approach. And I believe the questors and their Passions chose to sacrifice themselves, to be corrupted and absorbed by Ristul. The three Passions went mad because they surrendered themselves to Ristul. But even action eternally corrupting cannot consume three Passions—not all of them, not all at once. The Mad Passions, therefore, prevented Ristul from consuming the world in its vile corruption ... at least, thus far. The Mad Passions remain, twisted and shrunken versions of themselves. If Ristul is Hell, it is no wonder the three Passions went mad.

Game Information

DEX: NA **STR**: NA **TOU**: NA
PER: 20 **WIL**: 24 **CHA**: NA

Initiative: NA
Number of Actions: 4
Attack: NA
Damage: NA

Physical Defense: NA
Spell Defense: 25
Social Defense: NA
Physical Armor: NA
Mystic Armor: 20

Death Rating: NA
Wound Threshold: Immune
Unconsciousness Rating: NA

Recovery Tests: NA
Knockdown: NA

Combat Movement: NA **Full Movement**: NA

Karma Points: 40 **Karma Step**: 18

Powers: Corrupt Karma (4): 29, Horror Mark (4): 24, Horror Thread (4): 24 (see text), Karma Tap (4): 24

Legend Points (4): 158,680

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Ristul has no single form that can be seen either astrally or physically. It has no shape that can be attacked or destroyed, and so Ristul will remain until all corruption is driven from Barsaive. Ristul most often manifests as the black, inky substance that pollutes much of astral space. As this pollution is more common in certain areas of Barsaive than in others, so too is Ristul more likely to be an influence in these places. Nightwists and corrupted Name-givers are additional manifestations of this Horror, as is the Abyss of Aras Nehem. The Abyss is the only manifestation of Ristul that remains stationary. Through this gaping hole between the physical and astral worlds Ristul spills into the realm of Name-givers.

Rules

Though Ristul has no single form, it possesses powers and abilities that aid it in its endless corruption. However, Ristul's powers and abilities also suffer from a number of significant restrictions that limit how and when the Horror may use them. In general, Ristul can only use its powers in areas where it has manifested—regions classified as either Tainted or Corrupt (see **Casting Raw Magic** in the **Spell Magic** chapter on p. 289 of the **Player's Compendium**). However, Ristular in any type of region can act as a conduit for Ristul to use its powers.

Horror Thread: Ristul's most potent power, Horror Thread, enables it to spread its corruption among Name-givers. However, Ristul can only use this power in places where it has manifested.

Adventure Hook

Nightwist constructs and the Ristular are the most likely way player characters will encounter Ristul. A confrontation with either of these Horror minions will likely result in one or more of the characters being Horror-marked and eventually falling victim to Ristul's Horror Thread power.

The player characters may enter a small town and discover the bodies of several townspeople who have been ritually slain, the corpses left to serve as a warning to the survivors of what might happen to them. As the characters investigate the deaths, they learn that each of the victims had been seen talking with a group of mysterious men the night before the slayings. As the characters follow up on these leads, they eventually catch up to the Ristular, only to come upon them as they are enacting their ritual.

Though the ritual is doomed to failure, it has attracted the attention of Ristul, which marks the players characters in short order. The characters must seek a way to rid themselves of the Horror's mark.

TAINT

Though not a creature in the same sense as the skeorx or cave crab (as Vasdenjas said this, I heard his stomach growl), Taint is an entity of which all Barsaive should be made aware. I have encountered Taint on more than one occasion—much to my misfortune—and only my superior magical ability protected me from the mark of this Horror. Of course, every Horror is a fearsome thing to Name-givers, particularly to you small folk. Taint, however, is a being of particular evil whose attack is most greatly to be feared. Those of you who have become adepts often think of yourselves as better able than common folk to challenge the Horrors, and many a time you are right. But in the case of Taint, adepts are more at risk than the common Name-giver. Adepts of the spellcasting Disciplines face the greatest danger of all.

This increased danger results from the nature of this accursed Horror, for Taint marks its prey by tainting the flow of magic to an adept. Almost all Horrors possess this ability in one form or another, but Taint can conceal the use of its dreadful power, even as it marks its victims. This Horror-marks victims gradually, by subtly tainting the flow of magic from astral space to the adept until, over time, this taint grows into a Horror mark.

Unlike most other Horrors, Taint is bound to the astral plane and cannot take physical form in our world. But Taint has learned every secret of the powerful realm in which it dwells. Therefore, it knows exactly how to corrupt the flow of magic so that its tampering goes entirely unnoticed. Let us say that you are a Wizard, weaving threads for some magical purpose (I assume all my readers know that all magic use involves gathering threads of astral energy).

If Taint is lurking in astral space near you when you weave your thread, it carefully taints the thread, making certain that the amount of corrupted magic is low enough to avoid detection. Taint continues to do this, lingering near its chosen victim and subtly corrupting every thread the adept weaves until—days, weeks, or even months later—the victim becomes Horror-marked. Once this happens, the Horror can corrupt any use of magic by the victim. The Horror may cause the adept's own magic to turn against him or may pervert the magic's intent in some horrible way.

The most famous example of Taint's terrible work is the tragic destruction of Kaer Orinthall. I see by your face that you know the Name, but I daresay the full story is unknown to you. The

The following text came to the Great Library of Throal as part of the manuscript for Creatures of Barsaive, *a most valuable tome dictated by the Great Dragon Vasdenjas and scribed by Tiabdjin the Knower, First Scholar of the Khavro'am. After long consultation with Tiabdjin and subsequent correspondence with Vasdenjas, I chose to place this text in this tome on the Horrors. Our thanks go to Vasdenjas for allowing this work to appear here.*

—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records, 1507 TH

denizens of this kaer had created their defenses carefully enough to have weathered the Scourge well, but they knew nothing of Taint and could not guard against its subtle guile. All the elaborate traps, all the stalwart defenders made no difference. Taint placed itself outside the kaer and slowly, over the course of twenty years, corrupted its first victim inside the kaer: an adept responsible for growing the kaer's food. Through this first victim, Taint made every soul in the kaer its unwilling servant. Within fifty years after this insidious Horror began its terrible work, the entire kaer was in its grip. It kept the people of Orinthall alive for a time—until it ceased to find their anguish diverting, I doubt not. And then it turned them against each other in a blood bath of dreadful proportions. No one from doomed Orinthall survived.

Noble Master, how does one defend against such a fiend?

Not easily, friend Tiabdjin, not easily. Taint exists only in the astral plane, and so no physical act can touch it. The only way to destroy this horrible entity is to cast powerful magic at it or to confront it on the astral plane. Both methods force one to combat the Horror in its natural element, both are extremely dangerous. In the former case, Taint can turn the spells you cast back against you. In the latter case, you end up battling Taint on a battleground it has spent its entire existence learning to understand, and of which you know almost nothing by comparison.

Game Information

DEX: 12 **STR**: 16 **TOU**: 13
PER: 18 **WIL**: 15 **CHA**: 12

Initiative: 15
Number of Actions: 4
Attack (4): 16
Damage:
Unarmed (1): 17

Physical Defense: 15
Spell Defense: 23
Social Defense: 15
Physical Armor: 10
Mystic Armor: 10

Death Rating: 63 (81)
Wound Threshold: 18
Unconsciousness Rating: 56 (72)

Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: NA

Combat Movement: 74
Full Movement: 148

Karma Points: 40
Karma Step: 16

Powers: Astral Camouflage (5): 20, Corrupt Karma (5): 20, Corrupt Magic (5): 20, Create Shadow (4), Durability (2), Horror Mark (4): 22, Karma Tap (4): 22, Spellcasting (4): 22, Thread Weaving (Wizardry) (4): 22

Spells: Wizard (Tenth Circle)

Legend Points (4): 159,740

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Taint exists solely on the astral plane, where it appears as a huge bodiless head, floating amid swirls of polluted astral energy. Taint's face (if it can be called that) has four huge dark eyes, a pair on either side, that stare lifelessly into the depths of astral space. Its mouth can stretch to impossibly large dimensions, enabling it to swallow almost any astral prey. A pair of talon-tipped tendrils float at the top and bottom of Taint's body; the Horror uses these tendrils to draw astral victims into its gaping maw.

Taint roams astral space, searching for potential victims to mark. Though the Horror can mark adepts of any Discipline, Taint most often attacks magicians because their use of magic is much more obvious and easier to corrupt.

Rules

Taint favors areas that suffered worst during the Scourge and shows up most often in regions designated as Tainted or Corrupt (see **Casting Raw Magic** in the **Spell Magic** chapter on p. 289 of the **Player's Compendium**). Taint occasionally wanders through Open regions as well, but enters Safe regions only in rare circumstances, as these areas expose the Horror to adepts' astral sensing abilities. In addition to a few unique abilities discussed below, Taint possesses several common Horror powers, including Corrupt Karma and Spellcasting.

Astral Camouflage: Taint's affinity for corrupted magical energies makes the Horror comfortable in polluted regions of astral space. When in these areas, Taint is more difficult to detect than normal, as the astral pollution functions as magical camouflage. To reflect this, Taint gains a bonus to its Astral Camouflage Test when it lurks in polluted areas of astral space, as shown on the Astral Pollution Camouflage Table.

ASTRAL POLLUTION CAMOUFLAGE TABLE

Region	Bonus
Safe	+0
Open	+4
Tainted	+12
Corrupt	+20

Corrupt Magic: The Corrupt Magic power enables Taint to corrupt any use of magic by a Horror-marked target, such as casting spells and using talents. This corruption can take many forms, ranging from damage to the Horror-marked character to a perversion of the magic's intent. To use this power, Taint makes a Corrupt Magic Test against the target's Spell Defense. If this test succeeds, the Horror can influence the outcome of the target's use of magic. The gamemaster determines the exact effects of this power. The following examples illustrate possible effects.

If a tainted spell causes damage to the marked character, the effect is similar to that of casting raw magic. The target takes damage based on the result level of Taint's Corrupt Magic Test. An Average result causes damage as if the character had cast raw magic in a Safe region; a Good result damages the target as if he had cast magic in an Open region; an Excellent result, as if he had cast in a Tainted region; an Extraordinary result, as if he had cast in a Corrupt region. When Taint uses this power to damage a character using a talent, the talent rank substitutes for the spell Circle when calculating the damage taken by the target.

Taint can also cause the effects of a talent or spell to go wrong. For example, a spell that heals a target may do harm, or a talent that improves an object or target character (i.e. Forge Blade) may damage the object or character. Alternatively, the spell or talent may affect the wrong target. For example, a Bone Shatter spell aimed at an enemy may instead strike a companion.

Horror Mark: Taint's Horror Mark power works a little differently than the standard version of this power. When Taint chooses to Horror-mark a victim, the Horror must use its power over and over again until enough corruption has collected in the adept's pattern to Horror-mark him or her. Unlike normal versions of this power, Taint can only make a Horror Mark Test against a target who is manipulating magical energy in some way: weaving spell threads, casting a spell, using thread magic, or improving talent ranks. Magicians are Taint's favored targets because the use of their spellcasting abilities makes them easy prey.

Each time Taint attempts to use its Horror Mark power, it makes a Horror Mark Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, a part of the target's magic has become tainted. As soon as the number of successful tests is equal to the target's Perception step, the victim is Horror-marked. For example, if Taint attempts to pervert the flow of magic to a Wizard with Perception step 7, the Horror must make seven successful Horror Mark Tests. On the seventh successful test, the victim is Horror-marked. If a test fails, however, the target may make a Perception Test against the result of the failed Horror Mark Test. If the Perception Test succeeds, the character realizes that some outside force has interfered with his use of magic.

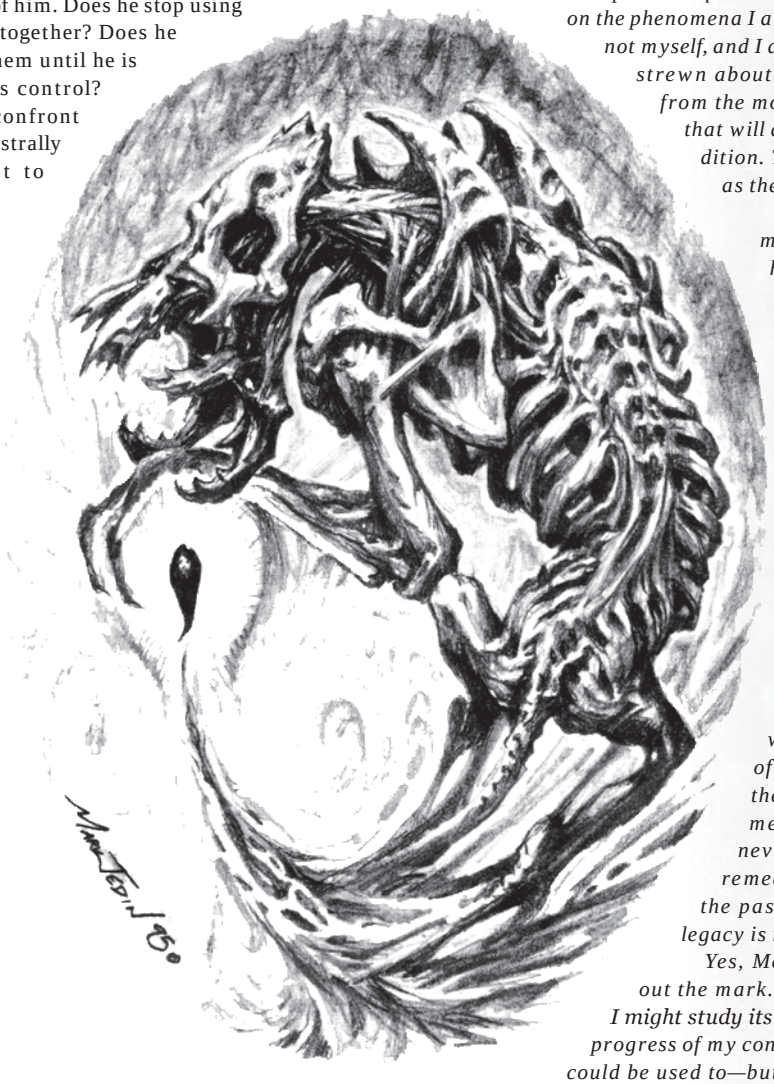
Through its Horror mark, Taint can corrupt a marked victim's use of magic. Victims of Taint's Horror mark can also serve as conduits through which the Horror can use its other powers against targets in the physical world. It can cast its spells at other targets near the marked victim.

Regenerate: Taint can also draw strength from corrupt astral energy. This enables the Horror to recover from damage and regenerate spent or lost Karma without making tests. However, Taint cannot engage in other activities while drawing on corrupt astral energy for this purpose. In Open regions, each hour that Taint draws energy gains the Horror 1 additional Recovery Test or 1 point of Karma. In Tainted regions it gains 2 Recovery Tests or 2 points of Karma per hour. In Corrupt regions it gains 3 Recovery Tests or 3 points of Karma. Note that Taint can accumulate more than the listed 40 Karma Points in this manner.

Adventure Hook

Taint's method of attack makes it a particularly insidious danger. It prefers to target the most powerful of adepts, as these offer the greatest opportunities for it to use its corrupting powers. Once the Horror has marked such a victim, it can use its Corrupt Magic power to cause the victim to spread pain, fear, and terror throughout Barsaive. And any adept once marked by Taint will never be able to fully trust his own abilities again.

Taint is a particularly good choice of Horror for a group that has been adventuring together for quite some time, whose members are beginning to think they've seen everything Barsaive can throw at them. During an appropriate adventure, one of the characters (whichever could most do with a little paranoia) begins to sense something wrong with his magic. Each time this character uses a talent, he feels a terrible drain on his soul. If the characters dig around for information, they will most likely determine the source of the problem. Once they realize that Taint is responsible, the tainted character has some difficult decisions ahead of him. Does he stop using his talents altogether? Does he keep using them until he is under Taint's control? Or does he confront the creature astrally and attempt to destroy it?



Seldom does a librarian bemoan the authenticity of a document she is researching. But I find myself doing so with this text, an epistle to the Master of the Hall of Records by the traveled scholar Elberg the Younger. Elberg served as my master when I was initiated into the Discipline, and no dwarf could ask for a gentler and wiser teacher. Though he was in ill health even when I knew him, his wisdom and generosity shone through like the finest of light crystals. Upon my return to the library after my latest series of inquiries in Barsaive, I was asked to study this document and determine its authenticity. I must sadly attest that the letter's familiar style is indeed Elberg's. As to its veracity, I cannot say for certain, for the Horrors are not my field of expertise. Instead, I shall merely state that Elberg, even under the terrible pressures described in the text below, would die before allowing falsehood to contaminate the body of dwarf knowledge.

—Carina Featherhood, Traveled Scholar of Throal, 1505 TH

THE TEMPTER

Dear Merrox,

Pardon the curtness of this letter, for the sands in my hourglass are dwindling and I have little time for academic formalities. I had hoped to bequeath to you an entire volume of careful notes on the phenomena I am about to describe. But last night I was not myself, and I awoke to see my notes torn to shreds and strewn about my room. I write to you from Kratas, from the most disreputable of inns—the only place that will accept my patronage in my current condition. The notes, the notes were all destroyed, as the other half of me—

But my thoughts run away with me. Let me begin at the beginning. As you might have discerned when I last visited the library, disease has been slowly pressing the life from my body for nigh on two years now. I have consulted healer after healer, from the royal physicians to the sisters of the elusive Order of Garlen, and none could offer me any hope. Nothing can be done. The healers inform me that I am dying, Merrox, have been dying for months, and the disease I have—the Inner Wastes—was curable before the Scourge, but no longer. Not for me, at least.

I decided to do something useful with my few remaining months. Long have we struggled to understand the ways of the Horrors and the experience of being marked, so as to better combat these monsters. We have had many fragments presented to us, many clues, but never a comprehensive study. I sought to remedy this situation with a volume I spent the past months laboring over. But my final legacy is now a heap of tatters—ruined! Ruined!

Yes, Merrox, I did the unthinkable. I sought out the mark. I sought the mark of a Horror, so that I might study its effects firsthand, carefully monitor the progress of my condition and leave behind something that could be used to—but the time for noble pronouncements is past. I shall tell you what I can of the Horror called the Tempter.

The Tempter is a tiny thing, scarcely what one would speak of in the same breath as Verjigorm or Chantrel's Horror. But make no mistake, its malignance is vast. I have held the vile thing in my hands. It has flown from my fingers, flitted about the room, tormented me. It resembles a seed of the azalvine or hainthorn bushes, a burr with small hooks it uses to catch onto clothing or—yes, Merrox, I know you think I am mad, but this Horror takes the shape of a simple seed! Why is it that we believe easily in the Horror with a hundred tentacles, or the slime-covered mass of flesh that towers above the landscape, yet we doubt the evil that takes the form of a common, mundane object? It seems so absurd now, even as I write this, even with the thing still in my—

It whispers to you at night, Merrox, whispers. It speaks softly in the mind's ear. Not at all the terrifying, wretched voice I expected. No, the Tempter sounded like my mother as she sang me lullabies during my childhood. It was not dishonest with me. It told me it was a Horror, that it called itself the Tempter. It assured me it would not do anything to me that I did not wish for. It assured me that it was patient, that it could wait—that it would only destroy me if I requested destruction. It is a seed, indeed, the seed of all the vainglory, self-deception, and self-destruction a Name-giver hides within his own heart.

Undoubtedly you will ask, Merrox, how I acquired the mark of this great Horror? In the villages outside Urupa I heard rumors that the revered purifier Onac had been behaving erratically and had committed foul and remorseless crimes. Reportedly, he had slaughtered many in a particular village. I traveled to the cursed hamlet and heard the tale. I heard how they had given Onac hospitality. They told me he had looked changed, more troll than obsidiman—but something else horrible added to the mix as well. They told me he had he cried in his sleep and screamed the Name of the Tempter.

I knew the Name from many texts. But these tomes always contained vague references, couched in fear and too unreliable to be of any use. And so I followed the trail of destruction left by Onac until I found his corpse. A determined trio of young adepts had run him to ground and, after a great struggle, hastened him to his grave. His form had been appallingly corrupted; he looked more like a gargoyle than a great obsidiman hero. I had hoped to question Onac as to where one might find this Tempter, and thought my plans at a dead end. However, the Tempter was waiting for me in a fold of Onac's cape—

Oh, Merrox, the thing wishes to dictate to you, wishes me to let it write to you directly. It says it welcomes fools like me, welcomes those who seek its mark. It usually spends many weeks or months between victims, looking for those sufficiently heroic to attach itself to, those with goals, ideals, things that must be done, things for which its help is required. It says nothing thrills it more than to take a Name-giver with a cause—a cause such as mine. I cannot drive it from my mind, Merrox, the temptation is so—to feel its power run through your veins. I had thought myself a calm and rational dwarf, not one given to flights of—in all my pain, my mental and physical agony, there is still the memory of those moments when the Tempter's essence roared through my veins, and I had twice the strength of my youth. My mind grew and took in new vistas of understanding. I became bigger, better! Join it! Seek it out and join it! I have promised it an empire, an empire of servants, if only it will spare me its insistent promises, its seductive offers. IF ONLY IT WILL LEAVE ME ALONE, I WILL GIVE IT OTHERS, COUNTLESS OTHERS, JUST TO SPARE ME AND ME ALONE—

Forgive me, Merrox, I am mad. No, I was mad, engorged with an old man's pride. To think any good could have come from my plan! I thought I had the strength to offer myself up as a sacrifice, that my weakness could become power through a redemptive act of—but now I am beyond redemption. I have fallen, I have killed that which a dwarf was not meant to kill, tasted the meat no Name-giver was meant to taste, all because I accepted its offer once. Once. I did so even when all my instincts howled in my being and warned me not to. But the child was about to be crushed, Merrox, crushed, and it promised me the strength to hold the wall long enough, just long enough to… After the first time, the second acceptance was easier, and the third easier still.

Whether the Tempter engineered the collapse of the wall or not, I cannot guess. I have not plumbed the limits of its powers. I have learned little about it, and it has learned everything about me—the fundamental weakness in my soul, the softness, the pride.

Every time I gave into its offers—each offer sensible, calm, without coercion; each cause just, worthy—the foul entity drew a little more of my soul into its hooks. Now I am changing, my gross and corrupt inner self hardening my skin into a chitinous shell and lengthening my nails into claws. I am no longer a Name-giver, Merrox! My pattern is warped and twisted, twisted from the inside, with my help—my blind, benighted, arrogant help!

My tears stain the page, and my strength fails me. Yes, I have an offer of help, a boost of potency with which to continue this letter, all day and all night if need be. But it is an offer I dare not accept. I have a messenger standing by to forward it to you. With luck I shall be dead by the time you read it.

—Elberg

Game Information

DEX: 20 **STR**: 4 **TOU**: 10
PER: 23 **WIL**: 24 **CHA**: 18

Initiative: 20
Number of Actions: 5
Attack: NA
Damage: NA

Physical Defense: 27
Spell Defense: 29
Social Defense: 23
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 20

Death Rating: 54 (81)
Wound Threshold: 15
Recovery Tests: 5
Knockdown: 6
Unconsciousness Rating: 47 (71)

Combat Movement: 220✦ **Full Movement**: 440✦

✦ This value represents the Horror's flying Movement rate.

Karma Points: 40 **Karma Step**: 15

Powers: Create Shadow (5), Durability (3), Horror Mark (5): 28, Forge Horror Construct (5): 28, Karma Boost (5): 28, Spellcasting (7): 30, Thread Weaving (Illusionism) (7): 30

Spells: Illusionism (Sixth Circle)

Legend Points (5): 91,725

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The Tempter specializes in the corruption of the most righteous of Barsaivians: it concentrates on questors, Lightbearers, members of warrior bands, liberators, and others who live according to vows or strict principles of honor. It derives sustenance from fear, pain, and doubt as most Horrors do, but it gains extra power from the despair that results from self-betrayal. It exists to steer unfortunate souls to betray all they stand for. Once its victims are at their lowest ebb, it enjoys the additional cruelty of transforming them into Horror constructs.

Physically, the Tempter appears as a burr, a thorny seed case no more than half an inch in diameter. The Tempter uses its tiny spikes to latch onto a victim's cloak, boots, or leggings. It may also hide in the hair of a victim's mount. What, if anything, is contained inside the seed case is unknown. It is unlikely that anyone has opened the case and lived to report on its contents. According to legend, however, an ork liberator once opened the Tempter's case in the early years after the Scourge. She found inside it an oozing, half-formed, miniature replica of herself.

Despite the Tempter's small size, harming the Horror physically is extremely difficult. Though the Tempter cannot harm opponents in direct physical combat (it is particularly fond of the Illusory Missiles spell) it typically flees when discovered, for it derives no mystic energy from slaying victims directly. It has no means of ground locomotion, but can fly through the air at high speeds. If it remains interested in a victim from whom it has fled, the Tempter returns later. It uses its illusion spells cleverly to disguise its presence if need be.

Rules

After the Tempter has latched onto a victim, it immediately uses its Horror Mark power. Marking its victim allows the Tempter to form a mental link with the unfortunate individual, through which it offers assistance in various situations. The Horror's first suggestions do not violate any principles the victim believes in. In fact, the Tempter offers aid in the form of its Karma Boost power, in moments when the character truly needs help. It whispers praise for the victim's code of honor and claims to be a benign entity cruelly slandered in legend. If the victim refuses its aid, the Tempter merely sniffs its regret. It is a patient Horror and will wait for its victims to betray themselves by asking for that extra surge of Karma when times get rough. After the victim has accepted its help a few times, the Tempter's whispering becomes more frequent and it offers Karma Boosts for increasingly trivial matters. It aims to make the victim completely dependent upon it. Eventually the victim accepts the Tempter's aid one time too many and begins to turn into a Horror construct.

Adventure Hook

Player characters can encounter the Tempter without meeting the Horror directly. They may fight the Horror constructs it leaves in its wake or try to bring one of its victims to a Wizard powerful enough to dispel the effects of its Karma Boost power.

However, if you want a player character to be marked by a major Horror, the Tempter makes an interesting choice. Because it provides boosts when the character most wants them, the character might well be tempted to draw upon those +15 extra steps again and again, until it is too late—which leaves the character's doom or salvation in the player's hands.

The following account of Ubyr, Horror of the Serpent River, was provided by the t'skrang weaponsmith Leahr, who recounted his experience of the Horror to Damorpin the scribe in the year 1075 TH. This fascinating document has only recently come to light.

—Lasher Smallfast, Apprentice Scholar, Library of Throal, 1507 TH

UBYR

In the final days before the closing of the kaers, many riverboat crews grew wealthy by braving the ever-growing threat of the Horrors to bring supplies to those villages and riverside communities whose kaers remained open. So it happened that I, inspired by a youthful craving for adventure that gnawed at my belly and an unwillingness to seal myself away prematurely, signed onto the river galley *Aetritris* under the command of Captain Ladarrak. My task was to see that the crew was armed with weapons of sufficient virtue to withstand the assaults of the myriad Horrors abroad at that time. And indeed, in several confrontations with marauding entities of the lesser sort, the valiant t'skrang of the *Aetritris* proved equal to the task set them.

Ladarrak's plan called for the galley to make a single trip from Kaer Chivitus to Kaer Agalit and back, a voyage of some three weeks. During the upriver voyage, we planned to purchase surplus items from anyone who might remain in any covenant we passed by (and to take anything of value found abandoned). On the downriver voyage we would sell these items to the needy people of Agalit, Dirirmir, Javukk and Chivitus, the four communities that lay along our route. This single voyage of three weeks was to bring us as much profit as five good years of regular river trade.

The upriver voyage passed profitably, though not without danger, and we did good business at Agalit and Dirirmir. In good spirits we approached Javukk, a mere three days from Chivitus, wealth, and safety. Javukk was the smallest community along that part of the Serpent, but many thought its kaer the most secure. Dwarf engineers and their crews had carved the structure out of a single gigantic, unbroken protrusion of volcanic rock. Indeed, many of the wealthiest merchants and nobles in that area of Barsaive planned to make their homes in the kaer. We had intended to make our greatest single profit thereby, selling luxury items abandoned by refugees. When we reached Javukk, we found the place so quiet that we thought the folk had sealed their kaer early. Upon inspection, however, we found the great granite door pulled tightly shut but the final seals and bars not yet in place. Intent on making some profit, the captain determined we should enter.

Now I have walked on battlefields strewn with the fallen and have swam amid slain covenants where the shredded flesh of Horror victims floated, so corrupt that even the small fishes would not touch it. I tell you that these sights were nothing compared to the strange tableau we found within Kaer Javukk. Countless dead people lay where they had fallen, their bodies unmarked by violence or sign of illness. Their expressions showed neither fear nor despair, but only a profound weariness, like the faces of t'skrang who, having labored on the docks for a day and a night and a day, finally fall into painful slumber. The bodies showed little evidence of swelling or natural putrefaction, as though the very agents of corruption had been slain along with the inhabitants of Javukk.

Some of the residents of the kaer seemed to have arisen in the last minutes of their lives and set forth as though to try to reach their own homes, or at least the side of a loved one. From the evidence of their movements, we came to believe that the people of the kaer had known they were doomed, and that their dying had taken no more than one hour—most certainly an hour of fear and dread.

When we emerged from that accursed place, we discovered more evidence illuminating the kaer's final fate. The surrounding rocks showed tracks and impressions unmistakably made by a huge, serpentine body. Judging from the impressions, the beast was as wide around as a t'skrang is tall, and its length was staggering—several hundreds of yards. It seemed to have been long enough, at any rate, to have stretched itself entirely around the upper portion of Kaer Javukk. The creature had clearly come up out of the water to wrap itself around the kaer. And though we found no clear evidence of an attack, it seemed obvious that the monster had somehow drained the life from the victims of Javukk.

I do not know what beneficent Passion touched me that day, but to that Passion I pledge my undying devotion. For when the captain ordered the crew aboard to resume the voyage to Chivitus, an overwhelming terror possessed me. Though in my mind I knew that the land was as perilous as the river, no force could compel my heart to return to the riverboat. Instead, I determined to strike out alone and return to Chivitus overland. My desertion enraged the captain, but she could conceive of no threat more terrible to me than the prospect of returning to the riverboat. And so in the end I was left behind—to my certain doom, as most of the crew thought, myself included.

From the dome of rock above the tomb that Javukk had become, I watched the *Aetritris* move away. The doomed vessel had barely moved from shore when disaster struck. The terrible serpent sprang out of the river like a bow of iron and snatched the bosun from the deck. Its body was scaled like an eel, but its head was flat and featureless, merely a tooth-lined circular maw like

that of a leech. It hoisted the bosun high above the deck of the ship and shook him about for less than a minute before throwing his bloodless body ashore, a distance of more than 100 feet. In shock, I realized that I had heard of this monster—a fearsome tale told by a troubadour had spoken of it as the Horror Named Ubyr.

The captain, seeing that flight was futile, ordered the *Aetritris* about. She attacked Ubyr with the sword Aetrin, perhaps the finest blade ever to emerge from my forge. I watched her give Ubyr three great wounds with the blade, until the water boiled with the ichor that flowed from the creature's flesh. In the end it availed her naught, for the monster was not slowed. The valiant captain suffered the same fate as her helpless bosun, and the noble blade Aetrin was lost beneath the boiling river.

At the captain's death the crew fell into panic, and I watched in terror as they were slain to the last t'skrang. Those who did not become part of Ubyr's repast were broken by its thrashing coils or else succumbed to the boiling acid of the creature's blood. As I watched, Ubyr smashed the *Aetritris* to splinters. Only after the terrible thing had devoured the last crew member and reduced the riverboat to wreckage did I realize how exposed my position was, and so I hastened inland.

I remember little of the next five days and nights. I know that I either hid from or fought wild beasts, bandits and lesser Horrors. I arrived at Chivitus in the late morning, and at sunset that evening the kaer was sealed. So disheveled and incoherent was I that they almost refused to let me in, fearing I might be Horror-touched. After some days I recovered my senses and my strength, but it was not until now that I have felt able to speak of the last voyage of the doomed *Aetritris* and the Horror called Ubyr.

Game Information

DEX: 21 **STR**: 30 **TOU**: 21
PER: 15 **WIL**: 21 **CHA**: 15

Initiative: 17
Number of Actions: 1
Attack (3): 24
Damage:
Constrict (1): 31

Physical Defense: 25
Spell Defense: 22
Social Defense: 27
Physical Armor: 30
Mystic Armor: 20

Death Rating: 95 (185)
Wound Threshold: 26
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Recovery Tests: 10
Knockdown: 32

Combat Movement: 135 **Full Movement**: 270

Karma Points: 40 **Karma Step**: 15

Powers: Durability (10), Enhanced Senses (Smell) (10): 25, Locate Target (10): 25, Horror Mark (1): 16, Siphon Will (1): 22, Terror (2): 17

Legend Points (4): 94,440

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Ubyr is a unique, gargantuan Horror that haunted the Serpent River during the Scourge, preying on the crew covenants of the t'skrang and on coastal villages of other races. A leechlike creature of staggering size, it seems to feed both on blood and on the pure vital energy of its victims. In addition to using its fantastic size and strength to simply smash a victim or object, Ubyr can also completely drain the blood of a human-sized victim caught in its jaws within seconds. Ubyr also has a far stranger and more devastating ability. After encircling a building or other inhabited enclosure, it can drain the vital energy from every living creature inside that structure.

Ubyr is usually about 400 yards long, but can stretch its body to a maximum length of 700 yards. This stretching allows it to encircle a square building as long as 500 feet to a side.

Rules

Ubyr is blind, but can sense any living being that passes within 30 yards of any part of its body, unless a solid object lies between the being and the Horror. If Ubyr senses a victim about to escape its coils, it usually breaks off its Siphon Will attack and simply crushes or devours the structure and everyone inside. Implacable in its pursuit of escaped prey, Ubyr can unerringly track a victim once it has the target's "scent." Nonetheless, intended victims may escape from Ubyr's coils by using underground tunnels, for example, or swimming beyond the Horror's reach.

Corrosive Blood: The ichor that courses through Ubyr's veins is corrosive. Direct contact with it causes Step 15/D20+D6 damage. When the ichor comes into contact with water it turns even more acidic, causing Step 20/D20+D8+D6 damage to any who touch it. Neither clothing nor armor provide any protection against the damage. If Ubyr is wounded in the water (it spends almost all of its time in the water, though it can move just as fast on land) the ichor spreads out from the wound at a rate of one cubic yard per round, to a maximum radius equal to the total damage taken by Ubyr (maximum radius is measured in cubic yards).

Horror Mark: Ubyr can only use its Horror Mark power to track a victim that has escaped its coils. Whenever a victim manages to free himself from Ubyr, the Horror makes a Perception Test. If the result equals or exceeds the target's Spell Defense, Ubyr has sensed the target and immediately attempts to Horror-mark him or her. If the Horror Mark Test succeeds, Ubyr can track the target at a range of up to 100 miles. This tracking is automatic and does not require any further tests. Few who confront Ubyr ever survive to tell the tale.

Siphon Will: The Siphon Will power allows Ubyr to drain the life force from victims trapped within a structure encircled by the Horror. Once Ubyr has completely encircled the structure, it makes a Siphon Will Test against the highest Spell Defense among any targets within the structure. If the test succeeds, each individual inside the encircled building loses 1 point from each Attribute value every minute, with an appropriate reduction to all step numbers and other characteristics.

This loss cannot be resisted and only stops when Ubyr uncoils. The loss stops for individual targets who escape the circle of Ubyr's body as well. Whenever any Attribute value reaches 0, the character is dead. Any character who somehow escapes Ubyr before losing all his vital energy regains 1 point of each affected

Attribute value with every successful Recovery Test.

Ubyr uses the life energy drained by this power to replenish its Karma Points, as well as heal damage. For every victim Ubyr kills with this power, the Horror can regain 1 Karma Point or heal 5 Damage Points it has previously taken. (See the **Energy Drain** Horror power, for more information.)

Ubyr can use its Siphon Will power against any structure with four solid walls and a roof. The gamemaster determines whether walled compounds, tents, and other reasonably solid enclosures constitute such structures. If Ubyr completely encircles a portion of a much larger structure or complex, its power only affects those in the encircled area. For example, if Ubyr climbed up the wall of a fort and draped itself around one of the towers, its power would affect everyone in the tower, but nobody in the other parts of the fort.

Adventure Hook

In one possible adventure involving Ubyr, a riverboat is found adrift on the Serpent River with all of its crew struck dead where they stood. No marks of violence or sickness appear anywhere on them, and the ship and its cargo are untouched. At first the authorities assume that the crew fell prey to some new form of magical attack launched by river pirates or business rivals of the ship's owners. Then an elder t'skrang remembers childhood tales he has heard of Ubyr, the giant river-leech. This tale prompts others to come forward and tell of a great serpentine body glimpsed in the river at midnight, or friends of friends mysteriously and recently lost on parts of the river thought to be safe from monsters and pirates. The player characters are hired to retrace the drifting ship's last voyage and discover its true fate. The gamemaster determines whether the river killer is some mundane menace or actually Ubyr, awakened from a long sleep at the bottom of the Serpent River.

In another possible adventure, the crews of riverboats begin telling strange stories of shadowy figures seen at night on the rocky dome above the long-abandoned shell of Kaer Javukk, or of mysterious lights flickering in the river below. Some who have passed near the lost kaer report dreams of silent t'skrang coming to them and demanding some sort of unknown service. Because of these manifestations, the river communities decide to re-open Javukk to ensure that the kaer's dead still lie undisturbed. The characters are commissioned to investigate, spending a full night exploring the rooms of Kaer Javukk. The gamemaster determines whether the manifestations are really restless spirits, some lingering and belated manifestation of Ubyr, or some more mundane threat that has come to lair in the necropolis of Javukk.

The following account was graciously provided by the great dragon Icewing. The Library of Throal, and indeed all the Name-givers of Barsaive, owe this generous dragon a debt of undying gratitude for the information he has provided on this entity. Scholars throughout the land agree that Verjigorm is the most powerful Horror that has ever existed—a terrible, vile abomination whose strength towers above that of all other Horrors. May the Passions protect us all against the curse of the Horror called Verjigorm and its unnatural spawn, for its unmatched power and malevolent intelligence may yet spell the end of all that we know.

—Laanto Myrn, Apprentice Scholar, Library of Throal, 1507 TH

VERJIGORM

Generations of Name-givers throughout Barsaive and the lands beyond have learned to fear the great dragons. Even your most powerful magicians are but bumbling children in things magical when compared to us, and your most celebrated heroes cringe like frightened old women at the thought of facing the sword-like teeth and scythe-like claws of a dragon in battle. There is no shame in this fear. Beings of much greater power than you little folk have learned to fear us, for we great dragons are ancient and powerful beyond imagining. We walked these lands and rode the wind thousands of years before the first t'skrang tasted the waters of the Serpent or the first windling unfurled its wings in the cool morning air.

But one being exists that even great dragons fear, a being that existed long before my ancient race appeared in Barsaive. Some call it the Horror of a Thousand Faces, or the Corruptor. Others know it as the Horror That Is Worshiped as a Passion, or the Great Hunter. Even today, dragons speak its cursed Name only in whispers, for it is said to have ears that hear all and eyes that never close. It is the Horror that always was, the Horror that is, the Horror that ever shall be. It is Verjigorm.

The words of Name-givers cannot describe this Horror's all-encompassing evil, but I will try to do so in the hope that some day the monster might be banished forever from our world. Perhaps the following story, which I heard often as a hatchling, may help you understand.

Long before the first dragon soared through the sky, the world was darkness, a never-ending moonless night that even the sun and stars could not penetrate. Thick, black clouds choked the sky and spawned cold, biting rains that scoured the barren land like a plague of hungry locusts. The seas and rivers were foul, bubbling cesspools teeming with plague and death.

This was the age of the Dark One. One thousand and seven eyes sprang from its head, so that it might watch forever its cursed kingdom. Its terrible ears never shut, so that it might always hear the gnashing of teeth and the wailing and moaning of all living things. From its mouth flowed countless foul poisons into the waters and the winds. Its decaying flesh gave birth to countless abominations—creeping, sightless many-legged things that crawled and slithered across the land; black-winged, cloven-hoofed creatures that swarmed in the storm-filled skies; powerful, many-toothed beasts that ruled the dark waters.

As the ages passed the Dark One grew bored with its foul minions, for they were mindless entities. And so it spawned others in its own image. Soon the children of the Dark One, the *horoi*, began to birth their own foul spawn into the world. Each tried to

outdo the others by creating the foulest creature to impress the Dark One, and soon the *horoi* grew insanely jealous of one another. Then the Dark One's children began to attack one other, directing their terrible spawn as a general commands troops against an enemy. Their vile blood filled the oceans, and their minions fed on the putrid corpses that littered the land. The Dark One rejoiced at the carnage and spawned new *horoi* to replace those devoured by their brothers.

Some time during the world's endless night, the Dark One bore a *horoi* that was not like the others. At first it seemed little different from its vile brethren. But as time passed, the *horoi* slowly changed. First, it withdrew from the terrible battle that consumed all the others. It stretched its dark, webbed wings and soared into the sky. The grotesque minions of its brethren pursued it, clawing at its skin and pecking at its eyes, but it paid them no heed. It continued to climb higher and higher, until it passed the dark storm clouds and its tormentors could no longer follow it. It soared on the winds until it reached the other side of the world, a place the Dark One had not yet corrupted. Exhausted by its journey, it set down and fell into a deep, deep sleep.

For ages it slumbered, as the carnage and suffering continued unabated in the domain of the Dark One. Then one day a break appeared in the ever-present clouds overhead, letting in a stream of sunlight that warmed the *horoi* and wakened it. As it looked about, it noticed that its slimy, pockmarked, blackened skin had turned into gleaming white scales. The formless hulk of its body had been replaced with four strong legs, a slender tail and neck, and a pair of graceful wings, all connected to a stout and powerful middle. As the *horoi* gazed at itself in wonder, it realized that the air was silent—free of the cries of pain and fear that filled the Dark One's domain. As it surveyed its surroundings, the *horoi* realized that it was alone. Nothing crawled underfoot or slithered through the seas or swarmed in the sky. For a moment, the *horoi* felt a great relief. Then the *horoi* closed its great eyes for a moment and felt something else. For the first time in its life, the *horoi* knew it was lonely.

As the thought entered its mind, a wonderful thing happened. Beneath its feet, it felt grass burst through the earth: then bushes and trees and entire forests. Suddenly, the sound of waves crashing against the shore reached its ears, and the *horoi* knew that an ocean lay over the horizon. Next came the sound of running rivers and waterfalls, then the sounds of animals in the forests. As the *horoi* surveyed what its loneliness had called forth, its heart grew full of something it had never known—joy. At that moment, nine large tears formed in its eyes and fell to the ground. At the spot where the first drop struck, a handsome winged creature resembling the *horoi* appeared. This creature, it called Dragon. The second and third drops yielded creatures the *horoi* Named Elf and Human. The fourth and fifth drops created Obsidiman and T'skrang. The sixth and seventh formed Dwarf and Windling; and the eighth and ninth, Troll and Ork.

These new creatures traveled across the new land, swiftly producing others of their kind. Their voices were like music to the *horoi's* ears, and their settlements were like jewels set upon a giant tapestry. As the days passed the *horoi* taught its children all it knew. It taught them how to harvest food from the forests and rivers, how to sing and write and paint. And with great sadness, it taught them how to forge and wield the sword and shield. The weapons puzzled the *horoi's* inquisitive children, for they knew not war; but the horoi told them that one day a darkness would descend on them and they must be ready to fight.

Meanwhile, the Dark One's domain grew until its spawn reached the edge of the untouched lands. When the foul things saw the wonders that their transformed brother had wrought, they hurried back to their dark master and told it what they had seen. When the Dark One heard their news, it vowed to destroy the *horoi* and its children, and gathered its minions together into a terrible army.

The Dark One's army filled the sky like a storm cloud and teemed across the untouched land like a giant shadow. From all sides the Dark One's minions attacked the *horoi* and its children, spewing venom and gnashing teeth, cutting and burning and striking and killing all in their path. For seven days and nights the battle raged, as the *horoi's* children fought with sword and shield against the overwhelming foe. Finally, only the *horoi* and its nine firstborn children remained standing against the Dark One and its legion of abominations.

At that moment, the *horoi* reared up on its hind legs, spread its wings and shouted in a voice that echoed like thunder across the plains. "I am Nightslayer, Mother of Beauty and Father of Good, Protector of All That Is Light! I command you to leave this place! Be gone!"

As the *horoi's* children watched, a strange thing happened—the land itself, the waters, and the sky rose up against the Dark One and its spawn. Terrified before a power greater than their own, the wretched creatures fled, flying higher and higher until they disappeared from view. The Dark One watched helplessly, shouting at its minions to remain and fight, but it could not stop them. Enraged, the Dark One turned toward the *horoi*.

"Ungrateful horoi, you know not what you do," the Dark One said. "But you will pay for your insolence. I, Verjigorm, will hunt your children for the rest of time. I will slay every last one of them, and my minions will feed on their pain and terror. But I will not give the mercy of death to your favorite—the Dragon, the one you created in your image. The Dragon will know eternal pain. As you betrayed me, the children of the Dragon's line will betray you. I will corrupt them, twist their souls and make them my own. Then I will return to reign over all the world."

With that the Dark One fled after its minions, throwing an enormous ball of fire at Nightslayer as it did so. As the glowing orb approached, the *horoi* gathered its children under its wings. When the ball struck Nightslayer, it exploded like a thousand thunder-

claps. The earth and sky rumbled, and a vast cloud filled the sky. After a time, the great rumbling stopped and the sun shone once again. Nightslayer's children then gathered near the *horoi's* head, but the great creature had died. They were left alone to await the return of the Dark One called Verjigorm.

Game Information

DEX: 26 **STR**: 33 **TOU**: 29
PER: 28 **WIL**: 40 **CHA**: 23

Initiative: 30
Number of Actions: 6
Attack (12): 38
Damage:
Claws (7): 40

Physical Defense: 32
Spell Defense: 40
Social Defense: 30
Physical Armor: 40
Mystic Armor: 40

Death Rating: 130 (400)
Wound Threshold: 32
Unconsciousness Rating: 124 (364)

Recovery Tests: 14
Knockdown: 34

Combat Movement: 255
Full Movement: 510

Karma Points: 50
Karma Step: 20

Powers: Animate Dead (6): 46, Corrupt Karma (6): 46, Cursed Luck (6): 46, Damage Shift (6): 46, Displace (6): 34, Durability (15), Forge Horror Construct (6): 34, Horror Mark (6): 34, Horror Thread (6): 34, Spellcasting (12): 40, Thread Weaving (Wizardry) (12): 40, Thought Worm (6): 46, Unnatural Life (6): 46

Spells: Wizardry (Eighth Circle)

Legend Points (7): 1,539,440

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Verjigorm, the Great Hunter, is perhaps the most powerful and feared Horror in the **Earthdawn** universe. Dragons especially fear and hate Verjigorm because dragons are the Horror's preferred prey. However, Verjigorm's unmatched physical and magical powers, intelligence, and plans for ruling over the whole world make it a threat to all Name-givers.

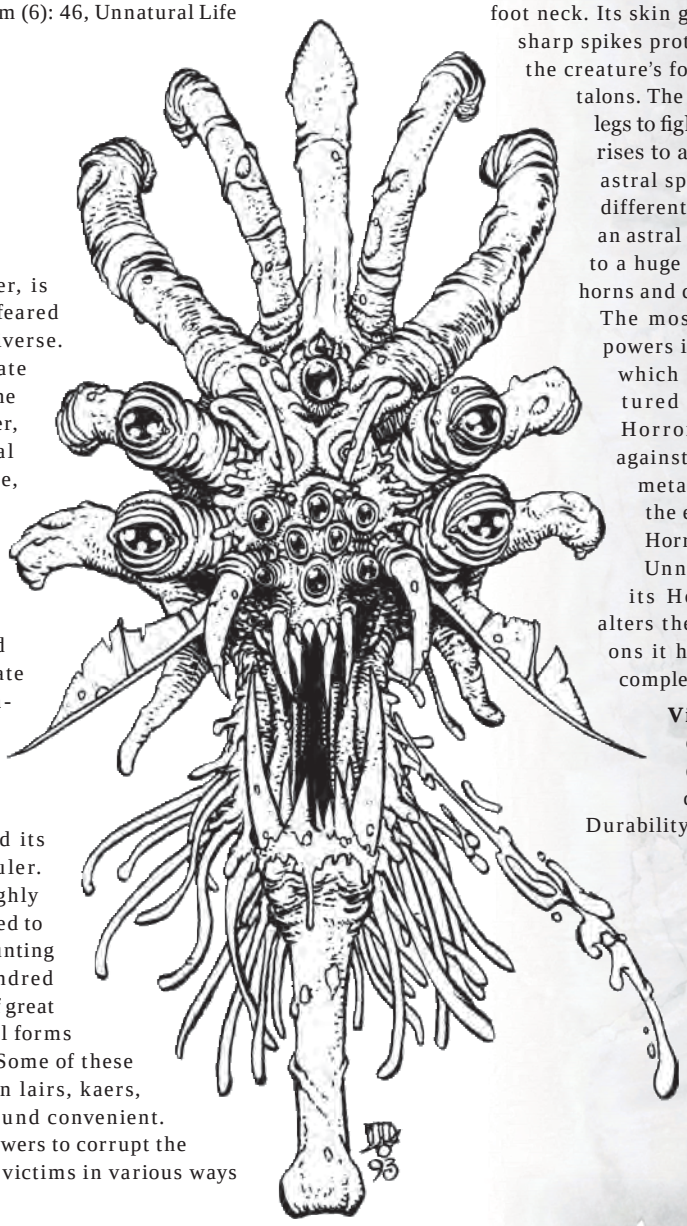
Unlike most Horrors, Verjigorm is driven by more than the need to feed on pain and despair. Two obsessions motivate this ancient Horror—an insatiable hunger for power and a fanatical hatred of dragons. Verjigorm views dragons as the "creator race" of Barsaive and believes they have usurped its rightful place as Barsaive's ruler. During a previous Scourge roughly 10,000 years ago, the Horror aimed to rectify this perceived wrong by hunting down and capturing several hundred dragons, among them a number of great dragons. It then placed the astral forms of its victims in astral cocoons. Some of these cocoons are located near dragon lairs, kaers, or whatever places Verjigorm found convenient. Verjigorm has used its various powers to corrupt the True patterns of these cocooned victims in various ways and transform them into powerful, Horror-like creatures.

Ultimately Verjigorm intends to create a new race of powerful Name-givers that can re-Name, and thus redefine, the world and its denizens according to Verjigorm's tastes. In this new world, all life forms would become corrupted. Orks would become more savage, obsidimen violent and impatient, t'skrang ill-tempered and venomous, and so on.

Most of Barsaive's Name-givers who are not dragons remain almost indifferent to tales of Verjigorm because the Horror remained largely inactive during the most recent Scourge (apparently to avoid drawing the attention of Barsaive's great dragons). However, the "incubation" periods for Verjigorm's cocooned victims are drawing to a close and many scholars fear these corrupted Name-givers will soon begin wreaking havoc in Barsaive. Some even believe that a few leaders of the so-called Cult of the Great Hunter are corrupted dragons that have emerged from the cocoons. The greatest fear of Horror scholars, however, is that Verjigorm itself will soon reappear in this world.

Rules

Verjigorm can manifest in many different forms, though it most often takes on a single physical appearance of horrifying proportions. In its most common manifestation, Verjigorm stands 15 feet tall at the shoulder. The face of this hideous creature sports six eyes, a wide mouth with three-inch fangs, and spiked horns. Its horrifying head is connected to its torso by a flexible, 10 foot neck. Its skin gleams like metal and razor-sharp spikes protrude from its body. Each of the creature's four legs ends in three sharp talons. The Horror can stand on its rear legs to fight; when it does so, its height rises to a towering forty-five feet. In astral space Verjigorm adopts many different appearances, ranging from an astral duplicate of its physical form to a huge face, surrounded by spiked horns and dozens of staring eyes.



The most fearsome of Verjigorm's powers is the Horror Thread power, which links Verjigorm to its captured dragons and enables the Horror to use its other powers against the dragons while they are metamorphosing. By combining the effects of its Corrupt Karma, Horror Mark, Thought Worm and Unnatural Life powers through its Horror Threads, Verjigorm alters the True patterns of the dragons it has captured to place them completely under its control.

Vitality of the Ages: As one of the most ancient and powerful Horrors, Verjigorm has double the normal Horror Durability rating (18/16).

Adventure Hook

Verjigorm is perhaps the most powerful of Horrors, and direct confrontations with the Horror will almost certainly result in the death of most, if not all, the player characters in a group. However, characters may oppose the Horror indirectly by confronting members of the Cult of the Great Hunter. By becoming involved with Verjigorm's schemes, player characters have an opportunity to make some very powerful enemies—the cultists or even the Horror itself. On the other hand, opposing Verjigorm may make the characters some very powerful friends or allies among the dragons of Barsaive.

The following account was excerpted from the journal of Noleta of Iopos. Most scholars believe Noleta was possessed by the Horror called Ysrthgrathe at the time she wrote these words, and that they represent the thoughts of the Horror itself. If this is true, then these passages are a truly invaluable record of the consciousness of a powerful and deadly Horror. Noleta killed herself shortly after committing these words to paper.

—Elk0 Mar, Apprentice Scholar, Library of Throal, 1507 TH

YSRTHGRATHE

I had forgotten what the world felt like to a Name-giver form. It is a pity that this body is all but used up, for I have had such enjoyment with it. But it has been all too short, far too short. Yes, in this body I can remember why Name-givers are always in such a hurry. Their fragile bodies are decaying as they live in them! Each breath they take leads them closer to the grave. What a constant worry that must be to them.

This one foolishly asked for immortality. I gave it to her, of course. Don't I always oblige the requests made of me? But she didn't ask for eternal youth. What an unfortunate oversight.

As I write these words using her withered hands, I bask in the memory of her despair when she realized what she had done. Such wailing and tearful pleadings. But that's always the way of it. These Name-givers are so eager to grasp at what they cannot understand. And then they despair when they realize how they have been misled. Ah, but their cries provide such solace to my soul.

I have known the universe for far longer than I can recall. My memory spans this world, and worlds from long times before; times when we came to the world and took from it sweet life and caused such beautiful pain. Like now. True, they were more prepared for us this time. But that only made my work all the more challenging. Their foolish beliefs in their runes and wards, their childish illusions of safety and security—how delightful it was to tear their meager protections apart! Not all at once, of course. Granted, such crudity is the hallmark of some of my kind, and in younger times I too took my pleasure quickly and crudely. But age has given me an appreciation of subtlety. I no longer rush to destroy, but rather linger and take what I will slowly.

My honesty no doubt horrifies you Name-givers, for you like to think yourselves better than my kind. But you do not know how we are made in your image. The longer we spend with you, the more like you we become. For do we not feel pain when we are cut? Do we not bleed from our wounds? Do we not take pleasure in our work? Do we not experience what you call the finer emotions?

Without us, you Name-givers would be at each other's throats. Even with the Scourge over, you still battle one another. Over what? Property? We give you something you can look down upon, a dark foil to contrast with your imagined superiority. Without us, you would have to look into your souls and face the ugliness there.

You are greedy and vain, petty and opportunistic. You covet that which is not yours. And sometimes, when coveting is not enough, you take without permission. You trample over each other like elephants—for emotions, money, land. It doesn't matter. We are not the evil ones. You are.

But that is neither here nor there.

Personally, I find it most annoying that Name-givers provide such limited vehicles for my pleasures. Oh, I have certainly found more than enough willing to dance with me. But few have fulfilled my deepest needs. True, the occasional human or dwarf has withstood years of torment, but they all die unexpectedly and deprive me of my amusement. Once I managed to trap an obsidiman, but even that experience disappointed me in the end.

I have amused myself from time to time with these others, but for me the fullest satisfaction came from one source. For years, decades, centuries, I waited for her to come. Our union was a banquet of suffering. All the others were but a preparation for this one, for the wedding of need and longing. I have tried to find solace with others, but I shall always return to her—my most constant desire, my faithful victim.

When I rip the love from new prey, does it give me pleasure? A bit, perhaps, but never nearly as much as I took from her. When I steal the self-respect from another, does it please me as well? No. I confess that everything palls before the happiness she gave me. And I shall punish all of them for it. Punish them for not giving me enough of what I need, for not being her.

Game Information

DEX: 13 **STR**: 15 **TOU**: 13
PER: 20 **WIL**: 20 **CHA**: 18

Initiative: 15
Number of Actions: 4
Attack (4): 17
Damage:
Unarmed (3): 18

Physical Defense: 17
Spell Defense: 25
Social Defense: 23
Physical Armor: 8
Mystic Armor: 15

Death Rating: 66 (120)
Wound Threshold: 19
Recovery Tests: 6
Knockdown: 15
Unconsciousness Rating: 59 (104)

Combat Movement: 94
Full Movement: 188

Karma Points: 30
Karma Step: 18

Powers: Corrupt Karma (4): 24, Create Shadow (4), Cursed Luck (4): 24, Displace (4): 24, Disrupt Magic (4): 24, Durability (6), Horror Mark (4): 24, Karma Tap (4): 24, Thought Worm (7): 27, Spellcasting (4): 24, Thread Weaving (All) (4): 24

Spells: All Disciplines (Tenth Circle)

Legend Points (4): 477,300

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Ysrthgrathe can disguise its appearance masterfully. When Ysrthgrathe first shows itself to one of its victims, the victim often sees only the Horror's long velvet robes. The hood of its robe constantly shadows its face, which often leads an anxious victim to conjure up terrible ideas of what Ysrthgrathe might look like. Other victims may perceive Ysrthgrathe as beautiful, with a melodic and hypnotic voice and robes richly embroidered with gold and precious stones. Everyone who experiences Ysrthgrathe sees the Horror differently. In general, the physical form the victim perceives depends on whatever nasty trick Ysrthgrathe has in mind, and any desire the Horror may elicit in the victim.

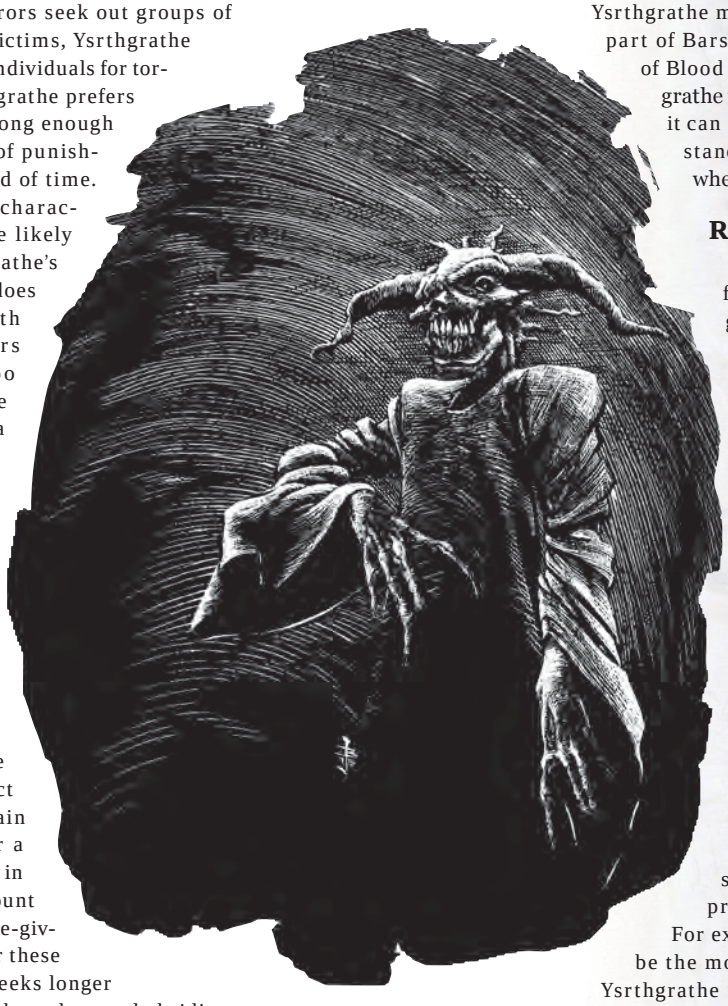
A few characteristics appear in all of Ysrthgrathe's manifestations, however. The most prominent recurring characteristic is the long robe of brown velvet the Horror wears. Often something appears to be writhing underneath the garment. The Horror's

long, thin, spidery hands and razor-sharp nails also appear in each manifestation, though Ysrthgrathe usually keeps them hidden within the folds of its robe.

In its most "true" physical form, the upper part of the Horror's body resembles a well-muscled human torso. The lower half of Ysrthgrathe's body is a snakelike tail covered with yellow-green, iridescent scales. Thick, hard ridges stick out at irregular intervals along the length of its body. Ysrthgrathe's face appears as an elongated skull with black eyes, and long yellow teeth line its mouth.

On the astral planes, the Horror appears as an amorphous black form. Alternatively, Ysrthgrathe may appear astrally in the shape of a physical manifestation it has taken in front of a character.

Though many Horrors seek out groups of Name-givers as their victims, Ysrthgrathe much prefers to target individuals for torment. Generally, Ysrthgrathe prefers characters who are strong enough to withstand its form of punishment over a long period of time. The more powerful a character becomes, the more likely he is to attract Ysrthgrathe's attention. The Horror does not waste its time with low-Circle characters because they are too easily destroyed. Give it a seasoned warrior, a high-Circle magician, or a devoted questor, and the Horror is in its element.



Ysrthgrathe is unimaginably ancient. Long ago the Horror realized that the relatively short life spans and weakness of most Name-givers severely limited the pleasure it could extract from them. Physical pain will drive a human or a dwarf or a t'skrang crazy in a remarkably short amount of time, and many Name-givers are killed easily. For these reasons, Ysrthgrathe seeks longer living Name-givers, such as elves and obsidimen. These Name-givers can provide centuries-long banquets for the Horror.

Many scholars who have studied the Horrors theorize that the longer the Horrors are exposed to Name-givers, the more like Name-givers the Horrors become. For example, Horrors begin to experience more "human" emotions. Though this theory may not hold true for all Horrors, it applies to Ysrthgrathe. Like Name-givers, Ysrthgrathe experiences intense fits of jealousy and anger and can become obsessed with its victims at times. The Horror hates the idea of anyone else hurting one of its victims and becomes quite possessive of them. The Horror will even go so far as to protect its Horror-marked victims from any other that tries to harm them. Ysrthgrathe also prefers victims who have some sort of conscience, because such victims are more likely to feel guilty if the Horror kills someone else because of them.

This intense, human-like bond that Ysrthgrathe builds between itself and its victims has led more than one victim to believe the Horror is actually helpful rather than harmful to their cause. Whenever the Horror senses such beliefs in its victims, it offers its victims aid of some sort: power, protection, anything to assuage the victim's fears for the moment. This truce of sorts never lasts long, however, because Ysrthgrathe eventually yearns to rekindle the torment that only it can deliver.

Often, Ysrthgrathe's victims try to divert the Horror's attention from themselves by offering it another victim. Ysrthgrathe usually allows the victim to believe it might work before claiming both unfortunate targets. Ysrthgrathe never willingly lets a victim escape and the Horror adores trickery.

Ysrthgrathe may be encountered in almost any part of Barsaive, with the notable exception of Blood Wood. Like most Horrors, Ysrthgrathe finds the Wood distasteful, though it can travel there under special circumstances. Otherwise, Ysrthgrathe goes wherever it can find potential victims.

Rules

Most of Ysrthgrathe's powers function normally. However, Ysrthgrathe always seeks to use them in the most destructive manner possible. The Horror can cast spells from all of the magician Disciplines practiced in Barsaive, but harbors a particular affinity for combat spells.

Ysrthgrathe also possesses the Disrupt Magic power. This power enables the Horror to disrupt any form of magical force or pattern.

Adventure Hook

Gamemasters can introduce Ysrthgrathe into campaigns by enticing player characters to accept favors from the Horror. Ysrthgrathe appears quite beneficial, but the Horror always exploits some psychological tic already present in the targeted character. For example, a character might long to be the most powerful warrior in Barsaive. Ysrthgrathe might approach such a character and offer to give him the power to achieve this goal. If the player accepts the gift, the gamemaster would then increase the character's powers accordingly. However, the warrior character will soon find himself winning a string of impressive—but empty—victories. He may kill a monster only to discover that the person he meant to rescue is already dead. Nobody doubts his prowess or abilities, of course; things just never seem to turn out as planned. Naturally, Ysrthgrathe shows up at appropriate moments to enjoy the character's mounting frustration and eventual despair.

Ysrthgrathe provides an excellent tool for adjusting the balance of a game, forcing a player to grow in roleplaying, or simply shaking things up when they become too rigid.

RESULT LEVEL TABLE

Task Difficulty Result Level Difficulty Number	Very Easy Pathetic	Easy Poor	Average Average	Hard Good	Very Hard Excellent	Heroic Extraordinary
2	*	1	2–4	5–6	7–8	9+
3	*	1–2	3–5	6–7	8–9	10+
4	*	1–3	4–6	7–9	10–11	12+
5	*	1–4	5–8	9–10	11–13	14+
6	1	2–5	6–9	10–12	13–16	17+
7	1	2–6	7–11	12–14	15–18	19+
8	1–2	3–7	8–12	13–15	16–19	20+
9	1–3	4–8	9–13	14–17	18–21	22+
10	1–4	5–9	10–14	15–18	19–23	24+
11	1–4	5–10	11–16	17–20	21–24	25+
12	1–5	6–11	12–17	18–21	22–26	27+
13	1–5	6–12	13–19	20–23	24–28	29+
14	1–6	7–13	14–20	21–25	26–31	32+
15	1–7	8–14	15–21	22–26	27–32	33+
16	1–7	8–15	16–23	24–28	29–34	35+
17	1–8	9–16	17–24	25–29	30–36	37+
18	1–9	10–17	18–25	26–31	32–37	38+
19	1–10	11–18	19–26	27–32	33–38	39+
20	1–11	12–19	20–27	28–33	34–40	41+
21	1–12	13–20	21–28	29–34	35–41	42+
22	1–12	13–21	22–30	31–36	37–43	44+
23	1–13	14–22	23–31	32–37	38–44	45+
24	1–14	15–23	24–32	33–39	40–46	47+
25	1–15	16–24	25–33	34–40	41–47	48+
26	1–16	17–25	26–34	35–41	42–48	49+
27	1–17	18–26	27–35	36–42	43–50	51+
28	1–17	18–27	28–37	38–44	45–51	52+
29	1–18	19–28	29–38	39–45	46–53	54+
30	1–19	20–29	30–39	40–46	47–54	55+
31	1–20	21–30	31–40	41–47	48–55	56+
32	1–21	22–31	32–41	42–48	49–57	58+
33	1–22	23–32	33–42	43–50	51–58	59+
34	1–22	23–33	34–44	45–51	52–60	61+
35	1–23	24–34	35–45	46–52	53–61	62+
36	1–24	25–35	36–46	47–54	55–63	64+
37	1–25	26–36	37–47	48–55	56–64	65+
38	1–25	26–37	38–49	50–57	58–66	67+
39	1–26	27–38	39–50	51–58	59–67	68+
40	1–27	28–39	40–51	52–59	60–69	70+
41	1–28	29–40	41–52	53-60	61–70	71+
42	1–29	30–41	42–53	54-61	62–71	72+
43	1–30	31–42	43–54	55-63	64–72	73+
44	1–31	32–43	44–55	56-64	65–74	75+
45	1–31	32–44	45–57	58-66	67–76	77+
46	1–32	33–45	46–58	59-67	68–77	78+
47	1–33	34–46	47–59	60-68	69–78	79+
48	1–34	35–47	48–60	61-69	70–79	80+
49	1–35	36–48	49–61	62-70	71–80	81+
50	1–36	37–49	50–62	63-71	72–82	83+

* A Pathetic result only occurs on a roll of all ones on the Action Dice (see the **Game Concepts** chapter of the **Player's Compendium**).

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CHARACTERISTICS TABLE

	Initiative *DEX*	*Defense Ratings* *DEX / PER / CHA*	*Movement Rates* *DEX*	*Encumbrance* *STR*		*Health Ratings* *TOU*			*Armor* *WIL*
Attribute Value	**Step Number**	**Physical / Spell / Social Defense**	**Movement Combat / Full (yds / round)**	**Carrying / Lifting Capacity (lbs)**	**Death Rating**	**Uncon. Rating**	**Wound Threshold**	**Recovery Tests (per day)**	**Mystic Armor**
1	2	2	6 / 12	5 / 10	19	10	3	1 / 2 days	0
2	2	3	7 / 14	10 / 20	20	11	4	1 / 2 days	0
3	2	3	8 / 16	15 / 30	22	13	4	1	0
4	3	4	9 / 18	20 / 40	23	14	5	1	0
5	3	4	10 / 20	25 / 50	24	15	5	1	0
6	3	4	12 / 24	30 / 60	26	17	6	1	0
7	4	5	14 / 28	40 / 80	27	18	6	1	0
8	4	5	16 / 32	50 / 100	28	19	7	2	0
9	4	6	18 / 36	60 / 120	30	21	7	2	0
10	5	6	20 / 40	70 / 140	31	22	8	2	0
11	5	7	22 / 44	80 / 160	32	24	8	2	1
12	5	7	24 / 48	95 / 190	34	26	9	2	1
13	6	7	26 / 52	110 / 220	35	27	9	2	1
14	6	8	28 / 56	125 / 250	36	28	10	3	2
15	6	8	30 / 60	140 / 280	38	30	10	3	2
16	7	9	32 / 64	160 / 320	39	31	11	3	2
17	7	9	34 / 68	180 / 360	40	32	11	3	3
18	7	10	36 / 72	200 / 400	42	34	12	3	3
19	8	10	38 / 76	230 / 460	43	35	12	3	3
20	8	10	40 / 80	260 / 520	44	36	13	4	4
21	8	11	43 / 86	290 / 580	46	39	13	4	4
22	9	11	46 / 92	330 / 660	47	40	13	4	4
23	9	12	49 / 98	370 / 740	48	41	14	4	5
24	9	12	52 / 104	410 / 820	50	43	14	4	5
25	10	13	55 / 110	460 / 940	51	44	15	4	5
26	10	13	58 / 116	510 / 1,020	52	45	15	5	6
27	10	13	61 / 122	560 / 1,120	54	47	15	5	6
28	11	14	64 / 128	620 / 1,240	55	48	16	5	6
29	11	14	67 / 134	680 / 1,360	56	49	16	5	7
30	11	15	70 / 140	740 / 1,480	58	51	17	5	7
31	12	15	74 / 148	810 / 1,620	59	52	17	5	7
32	12	16	78 / 156	880 / 1,760	60	53	17	6	8
33	12	16	82 / 164	950 / 1,900	62	55	18	6	8
34	13	16	86 / 172	1,030 / 2,060	63	56	18	6	8
35	13	17	90 / 180	1,110 / 2,220	64	57	19	6	9
36	13	17	94 / 188	1,190 / 2,380	66	59	19	6	9
37	14	18	98 / 196	1,280 / 2,560	67	60	19	6	9
38	14	18	102 / 204	1,370 / 2,740	68	61	20	7	10
39	14	19	106 / 212	1,460 / 2,920	70	63	20	7	10
40	15	19	110 / 220	1,560 / 3,120	71	64	21	7	10
41	15	19	115 / 230	1,660 / 3,320	72	65	21	7	11
42	15	20	120 / 240	1,760 / 3,520	74	67	21	7	11
43	16	20	125 / 250	1,870 / 3,740	75	68	21	7	11
44	16	21	130 / 260	1,980 / 3,960	76	69	22	8	12
45	16	21	135 / 270	2,090 / 4,180	78	71	22	8	12
46	17	22	140 / 280	2,210 / 4,420	79	72	22	8	12
47	17	22	145 / 290	2,330 / 4,660	80	73	23	8	13
48	17	22	150 / 300	2,450 / 4,900	82	75	23	8	13
49	18	23	155 / 310	2,580 / 5,160	83	76	23	8	13
50	18	23	160 / 320	2,710 / 5,420	84	77	23	9	14

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CHARACTERISTICS TABLE

	Initiative DEX	*Defense Ratings* DEX / PER / CHA	*Movement Rates* DEX	*Encumbrance* STR		*Health Ratings* TOU			*Armor* WIL
Attribute Value	**Step Number**	**Physical / Spell / Social Defense**	**Movement Combat / Full (yds / round)**	**Carrying / Lifting Capacity (lbs)**	**Death Rating**	**Uncon. Rating**	**Wound Threshold**	**Recovery Tests (per day)**	**Mystic Armor**
51	18	24	166 / 332	2,840 / 5,680	86	80	24	9	14
52	19	24	172 / 344	2,980 / 5,960	87	81	24	9	14
53	19	25	178 / 356	3,120 / 6,240	88	82	24	9	15
54	19	25	184 / 368	3,260 / 6,520	90	84	25	9	15
55	20	25	190 / 380	3,410 / 6,820	91	85	25	9	15
56	20	26	196 / 392	3,560 / 7,120	92	86	25	10	16
57	20	26	202 / 404	3,710 / 7,420	94	88	25	10	16
58	21	27	208 / 416	3,870 / 7,740	95	89	26	10	16
59	21	27	214 / 428	4,030 / 8,060	96	90	26	10	17
60	21	28	220 / 440	4,190 / 8,380	98	92	26	10	17
61	22	28	227 / 454	4,360 / 8,720	99	93	27	10	17
62	22	28	234 / 468	4,530 / 9,060	100	94	27	11	18
63	22	29	241 / 482	4,700 / 9,400	102	96	27	11	18
64	23	29	248 / 496	4,880 / 9,760	103	97	27	11	18
65	23	30	255 / 510	5,060 / 10,120	104	98	27	11	19
66	23	30	262 / 524	5,240 / 10,480	106	100	28	11	19
67	24	31	269 / 538	5,430 / 10,860	107	101	28	11	19
68	24	31	276 / 552	5,620 / 11,240	108	102	28	12	20
69	24	31	283 / 566	5,810 / 11,620	110	104	28	12	20
70	25	32	290 / 580	6,010 / 12,020	111	105	29	12	20
71	25	32	298 / 596	6,210 / 12,420	112	106	29	12	21
72	25	33	306 / 612	6,410 / 12,820	114	108	29	12	21
73	26	33	314 / 628	6,620 / 13,240	115	109	29	12	21
74	26	34	322 / 644	6,830 / 13,660	116	110	29	13	22
75	26	34	330 / 660	7,040 / 14,080	118	112	30	13	22
76	27	34	338 / 676	7,260 / 14,520	119	113	30	13	22
77	27	35	346 / 692	7,480 / 14,960	120	114	30	13	23
78	27	35	354 / 708	7,700 / 15,400	122	116	30	13	23
79	28	36	362 / 724	7,930 / 15,860	123	117	31	13	23
80	28	36	370 / 740	8,160 / 16,320	124	118	31	14	24
81	28	37	379 / 758	8,390 / 16,780	126	120	31	14	24
82	29	37	388 / 776	8,630 / 17,260	127	121	31	14	24
83	29	37	397 / 794	8,870 / 17,740	128	122	31	14	25
84	29	38	406 / 812	9,110 / 18,220	130	124	32	14	25
85	30	38	415 / 830	9,360 / 18,720	131	125	32	14	25
86	30	39	424 / 848	9,610 / 19,220	132	126	32	15	26
87	30	39	433 / 866	9,860 / 19,720	134	128	32	15	26
88	31	40	442 / 884	10,120 / 20,240	135	129	33	15	26
89	31	40	451 / 902	10,380 / 20,760	136	130	33	15	27
90	31	40	460 / 920	10,640 / 21,280	138	132	33	15	27
91	32	41	470 / 940	10,910 / 21,820	139	133	33	15	27
92	32	41	480 / 960	11,180 / 22,360	140	134	33	16	28
93	32	42	490 / 980	11,450 / 22,900	142	136	34	16	28
94	33	42	500 / 1,000	11,730 / 23,460	143	137	34	16	28
95	33	43	510 / 1,020	12,010 / 24,020	144	138	34	16	29
96	33	43	520 / 1,040	12,290 / 24,580	146	140	34	16	29
97	34	43	530 / 1,060	12,580 / 25,160	147	141	35	16	29
98	34	44	540 / 1,080	12,870 / 25,740	148	142	35	17	30
99	34	44	550 / 1,100	13,160 / 26,320	150	144	35	17	30
100	35	45	560 / 1,120	13,460 / 26,920	151	145	35	17	30

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CREATURE

TYPE: _____

DESCRIPTION: _____

_____

ATTRIBUTES

	STEP	ACTION DICE		STEP	ACTION DICE
DEXTERITY			**PERCEPTION**		
STRENGTH			**WILLPOWER**		
TOUGHNESS			**CHARISMA**		

INITIATIVE

STEP _____ ACTION DICE _____

MOVEMENT

COMBAT _____ FULL _____

ATTACK

STEP _____ ACTION DICE _____

NUMBER OF ACTIONS _____

DEFENSE RATINGS

PHYSICAL DEFENSE _____

SPELL DEFENSE _____

SOCIAL DEFENSE _____

ARMOR RATINGS

PHYSICAL ARMOR _____

MYSTIC ARMOR _____

HEALTH RATINGS

UNCONSCIOUSNESS RATING _____

WOUND THRESHOLD _____

WOUNDS ☐ -1 -2 -3 -4 -5 -6 -7 -8 -9

DEATH RATING _____

CURRENT DAMAGE _____

RECOVERY

TESTS PER DAY _____ STEP _____ ACTION DICE _____

KNOCKDOWN

STEP _____ ACTION DICE _____

KARMA

STEP _____ ACTION DICE _____

AVAILABLE KARMA _____

WEAPONS/ATTACK TYPES

WEAPON	DAMAGE STEP	WEAPON	DAMAGE STEP

POWERS

POWER NAME	ACTION?	ATTRIBUTE	RANK	STEP	ACTION DICE
	☐		+	=	
	☐		+	=	
	☐		+	=	
	☐		+	=	
	☐		+	=	
	☐		+	=	
	☐		+	=	

EQUIPMENT & LOOT

ITEMS

_____

_____

LEGEND POINTS _____

CREATURE

TYPE: _____

DESCRIPTION: _____

_____

ATTRIBUTES

	STEP	ACTION DICE		STEP	ACTION DICE
DEXTERITY			**PERCEPTION**		
STRENGTH			**WILLPOWER**		
TOUGHNESS			**CHARISMA**		

INITIATIVE

STEP _____ ACTION DICE _____

MOVEMENT

COMBAT _____ FULL _____

ATTACK

STEP _____ ACTION DICE _____

NUMBER OF ACTIONS _____

DEFENSE RATINGS

PHYSICAL DEFENSE _____

SPELL DEFENSE _____

SOCIAL DEFENSE _____

ARMOR RATINGS

PHYSICAL ARMOR _____

MYSTIC ARMOR _____

HEALTH RATINGS

UNCONSCIOUSNESS RATING _____

WOUND THRESHOLD _____

WOUNDS ☐ -1 -2 -3 -4 -5 -6 -7 -8 -9

DEATH RATING _____

CURRENT DAMAGE _____

RECOVERY

TESTS PER DAY _____ STEP _____ ACTION DICE _____

KNOCKDOWN

STEP _____ ACTION DICE _____

KARMA

STEP _____ ACTION DICE _____

AVAILABLE KARMA _____

WEAPONS/ATTACK TYPES

WEAPON	DAMAGE STEP	WEAPON	DAMAGE STEP

POWERS

POWER NAME	ACTION?	ATTRIBUTE	RANK	STEP	ACTION DICE
	☐		+	=	
	☐		+	=	
	☐		+	=	
	☐		+	=	
	☐		+	=	
	☐		+	=	
	☐		+	=	

EQUIPMENT & LOOT

ITEMS

_____

_____

LEGEND POINTS _____

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CREATURE

TYPE: _____

DESCRIPTION: _____

ATTRIBUTES

	STEP	ACTION DICE		STEP	ACTION DICE
DEXTERITY			PERCEPTION		
STRENGTH			WILLPOWER		
TOUGHNESS			CHARISMA		

INITIATIVE

STEP _____ ACTION DICE _____

MOVEMENT

COMBAT _____ FULL _____

ATTACK

STEP _____ ACTION DICE _____

NUMBER OF ACTIONS _____

DEFENSE RATINGS

PHYSICAL DEFENSE _____

SPELL DEFENSE _____

SOCIAL DEFENSE _____

ARMOR RATINGS

PHYSICAL ARMOR _____

MYSTIC ARMOR _____

HEALTH RATINGS

UNCONSCIOUSNESS RATING _____

WOUND THRESHOLD _____

WOUNDS ☐ -1 -2 -3 -4 -5 -6 -7 -8 -9

DEATH RATING _____

CURRENT DAMAGE _____

RECOVERY

TESTS PER DAY _____ STEP _____ ACTION DICE _____

KNOCKDOWN

STEP _____ ACTION DICE _____

KARMA

STEP _____ ACTION DICE _____

AVAILABLE KARMA _____

WEAPONS/ATTACK TYPES

WEAPON	DAMAGE STEP	WEAPON	DAMAGE STEP

SPECIAL ABILITIES

_____

POWERS

POWER NAME	ACTION?	ATTRIBUTE	RANK	STEP	ACTION DICE
	☐				
	☐				
	☐				
	☐				
	☐				
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	☐				
	☐				

EQUIPMENT & LOOT

_____

LEGEND POINTS _____

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CREATURE DESIGN SUMMARY

1. Determine Attributes

Attributes are generally measured in steps rather than values, although Attribute values can be used to fine-tune a creature's characteristics (see below).

2. Determine Characteristics

Creature characteristics function exactly like player character characteristics except where noted otherwise (see the **Creating Characters** chapter of the **Player's Compendium**). Use the Characteristics Table to determine the exact characteristics of a creature. The exact Attribute values are determined by the gamemaster and can be used to fine-tune the relevant Characteristics.

3. Determine Creature Traits

A creature's Characteristics do not solely depend on its Attributes, but also its physical make-up. The Characteristics Table applies to creatures that have humanoid bodies. If the creature differs from that, apply one or more of the Traits listed below. There is no need to list these Traits with the creature's game statistics; they just serve to help when creating one. However, any assigned Traits might well influence the creature's description (see **Write Commentary**, below).

Additional Arms: Increase the Number of Actions the creature can carry out each round by +1 per additional pair of arms.

Additional Legs: Increase the creature's Knockdown step by at least +1 step per additional pair of legs. Determine the creature's Movement rates as Dexterity+5 for quadrupeds, Dexterity+7 for creatures with six or more legs.

Additional Sense: The creature has additional senses, such as Low-Light Vision, Heat Sight, enhanced hearing, or Astral-Sensitive Sight. There are no bonuses involved, but it is assumed that this sense is reflected by the creature's Perception step.

Ethereal: The creature has an incorporeal form, much like that of a spirit. Increase the creature's Physical Defense by +5 or more.

Fast: The creature can move faster than usual. Calculate its Movement Rate as Dexterity+3 or more (in addition to **Additional Legs**, above).

Flight: The creature is able to fly or glide through the air. Calculate its Movement Rate as Dexterity+5 or more.

Gaseous: The creature has a gaseous form, and appears as a cloud of mist or smoke. Increase the creature's Physical Defense by +3 or more.

Immunity: The creature is immune to a certain form of attack, such as non-magical melee weapons or fire damage. This immunity needs to be listed in the rules section following the creature's commentary.

Increased Karma Pool: The creature has more Karma Points than usual (see **Determine Karma**, below). Increase the creature's Karma Points in multiples of +5, to a maximum of two times the original value.

Increased Knockdown Step: The creature has a higher Knockdown step than normal, because it's heavier than usual for creatures of its size or because of its physical make-up. Add +1 step or more to the creatures Knockdown step.

Karma: The creature is able to use Karma and has a Karma step (see **Determine Karma**, below) and a number of Karma Points available to it. Unless the description states otherwise, creatures regenerate used Karma Points at the rate of 1 point per day.

Large: Any creature larger than 13 feet tall or wide, or weighing 1,000 pounds or greater, subtracts –2 or more from its Physical Defense.

Magical Immunity: The creature has a strong magical defense. Add +1 or more to the creature's Spell Defense and Mystic Armor.

Multiple Actions: Most creatures can perform just one action per round (see the **Combat** chapter of the **Player's Compendium**). Creatures with this trait are able to make more actions during a combat round (in addition to **Additional Arms**, above). As a general guideline, use the following formula: divide the creature's Dexterity step by 5 and use the result as the number of actions (round fractions to the nearest value, with a minimum of 1 action). If the creature has powers, use the higher of its Dexterity or Perception steps.

Natural Weapon: A creature's natural weapons increase the physical damage it can inflict on its victims. Natural weapons can be claws, sharp teeth, beaks, horns, antlers, or stings. The Damage step of the weapon is based on its Size. Use the Melee Weapons table in the **Goods and Services** chapter of the **Player's Compendium** as a guideline.

Natural Armor: A creature's natural armor determines its Physical Armor. Use the Armor Table in the **Goods and Services** chapter of the **Player's Compendium** as a guideline. Penalties to the creature's Initiative step may be applied as appropriate.

Quick: The creature is unnaturally fast in combat. Add+1 step or more to the creature's Initiative step.

Reduced Karma Pool: If the creature has Karma, it possesses fewer Karma Points than normal (see **Determine Karma**, below). Reduce its Karma Points in multiples of –5, to a minimum of 5 points.

Reduced Knockdown Step: The creature has a lower Knockdown step than normal because it is lighter than usual for its size or because of its physical make-up. Subtract –1 step or more from the creatures Knockdown step.

Slow: The creature moves slower than usual. Subtract –1 step or more from its Initiative step. Calculate its Movement rates as Dexterity–2 or more. If the creature is unable to move (a plant, for example) it has no Movement Rate, and is generally easier to attack (–3 or more to the creature's Physical Defense).

Small: Any creature smaller than 2 feet tall or wide, or weighing 20 pounds or less, adds +2 or more to its Physical Defense.

Social Immunity: The creature is resistant to social attacks. Add +1 or more to the creature's Social Defense.

Undead: The creature is undead and cannot be rendered unconscious. It therefore has no Unconsciousness Rating. Abilities that cause Strain damage still do so. This damage can end up "killing" the creature as it has no buffer to fall unconscious before it dies (or dies again).

Vulnerability: The creature is susceptible to a certain substance or a special form of attack, such as salt, or fire-based damage. This vulnerability needs to be listed in the rules section following the creature's commentary, including any special rules that apply if the creature is confronted with it.

3. Determine Attack Step

A creature's Attack step is measured in ranks, which are added to the creature's Dexterity step. If the creature has more than one attack form, it may develop different ranks for each. As a rule of thumb, creatures feature 1 to 3 ranks in this ability.

4. Determine Karma

As opposed to mundane creatures, magical creatures can have Karma. Dragons, spirits and Horrors are always magical creatures. As with Name-givers, a small number of mundane creatures are also able to develop magical powers and the ability to use Karma. The higher the Karma step, the more powerful the creature is. Creatures usually recover a number of Karma points per day equal to their Karma step (see the Creature Karma Table).

CREATURE KARMA TABLE

Karma Step	Karma Points
1-10	10
11-15	20
16-20	30

5. Determine Powers and Spells

As seen in the preceding chapters, each creature can be assigned to one of four categories: **creatures**, **spirits**, **dragons**, or **Horrors**. Each of these creature types has its unique list of powers, which appear in the relevant chapters. Use common sense when assigning new powers to a creature.

6. Calculate Legend Points

Add the Legend Points determined below to a running total in order to generate a grand Legend Award total. Round off the total Legend Award to the nearest increment of 5, rounding up. Adjust that final total to fit your game, taking into account the intended role of the creature in the game. The number generated from these guidelines should be considered a benchmark figure. The final award for the creature should be based on its abilities, but, more importantly, should reflect how the gamemaster wants the creature to affect his game.

Attributes: Find each of the creature's Attribute steps in the Attribute Step column of the Creature Legend Points Table, then add the corresponding value from the Legend Points column to the running Legend Award total.

Powers and Abilities: To determine the Legend Point award for the creature's abilities, find the average Rank among the creature's powers, attack and highest Damage step entries (use the listed Spell Defense for poisons, if applicable). Round all fractions to the nearest whole, then locate the number in the Average Rank column of the Creature Legend Points Table and multiply the corresponding value from the Legend Points column by the creature's Number of Actions entry. Add the result to the creature's running Legend Award total.

Physical Armor: If the creature has a Physical Armor rating of 2 or more, find the number in the Physical Armor column of the Creature Legend Points Table, then add the corresponding value from the Legend Points column to the Legend Award total.

Karma: If the creature uses Karma, find the step number in the Karma Step column of the Ability Legend Points Table and add the number from the Legend Points column to the Legend Award total.

Spells: Find each spell's Circle on the Spell Circle column of the Creature Legend Points Table to determine the Legend Points added to the total for each spell. If the creature has access to an entire spell list, multiply the Legend Point Award for the maximum spell Circle known by 10.

Hazard Multiplier: Some creatures are inherently more powerful and can challenge a whole party of adventurers on their own. To account for this increased threat, multiply the Legend Award with a Hazard Multiplier, which should be equal to the average group size the creature can take on. Hazard Multipliers are listed with a creature's description where appropriate and serve as an indicator for gamemasters wanting to find out how many opponents a creature can take on at the same time.

7. Write Commentary

The commentary should include the creature's physical description, its common habitat and other, similar characteristics. What does the creature look like? How does it mate? Is it a pack animal? What does it eat? How well does it get along with other creatures? What does it fear? When does it hunt and when does it sleep? Can it be trained? Where can it normally be found? How does it relate to the other creatures in its ecosystem? What, if any, equipment does the creature have? Does it collect Loot?

Rules: If applicable, this section should describe how the creature behaves in combat and any rules unique to this creature.

Adventure Hook: If possible, add an Adventure Hook suggesting how to use the creature as a starting point for an adventure.

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CREATURE LEGEND POINTS TABLE

Attribute Step Physical Armor Rating	Average Rank Spell Circle	Karma Step	Legend Points
2–3	1	—	3
4–5	—	1	5
6	2	2	8
7	—	3	15
8	3	4	25
9–10	—	5	35
11	4	6	55
12	—	—	75
13	5	7	100
14–15	—	—	150
16	6	8	200
17	—	—	250
18	7	9	330
19–20	—	—	450
21	8	10	570
22	—	—	750
23	9	11	1,000
24–25	—	—	1,500
26	10	12	2,000
27	11	—	2,500
28	12	13	3,300
29–30	13	—	4,500
31	14	14	5,700
32	15	—	7,500
33	—	15	12,500
34–35	—	16	18,750
36	—	17	25,000
37	—	18	37,500
38	—	19	50,000
39–40	—	20	62,500

MASTER HORROR POWERS TABLE

Power Name	Step Number	Action
Animate Dead (p. 441)	Rank + WIL	Yes
Astral Camouflage (p. 441)	Rank + WIL	Yes
Astral Sight (p. 441)	Rank + PER	Yes
Aura of Awe (p. 441)	Rank + CHA	Yes
Corrupt Karma (p. 441)	Rank + WIL	Yes
Corrupt Reality (p. 441)	Rank	Yes
Create Shadow (p. 441)	Rank	Yes
Cursed Luck (p. 442)	Rank + WIL	Yes
Damage Shift (p. 442)	Rank + WIL	No
Disease (p. 442)	Rank	No
Displace (p. 442)	Rank + PER	Yes
Disrupt Magic (p. 442)	Rank + WIL	Yes
Dream Shape (p. 442)	Rank + WIL	Yes
Durability (p. 442)	Rank	No
Energy Drain (p. 442)	Rank + PER	No (see text)
Forge Horror Construct (p. 443)	Rank + PER	Yes
Forge Trap (p. 443)	Rank + PER	Yes
Horror Mark (p. 443)	Rank + PER	Yes
Horror Thread (p. 445)	Rank + PER	Yes
Karma Boost (p. 445)	Rank + PER	Yes
Karma Drain (p. 446)	Rank + WIL	Yes
Karma Points (p. 446)	Special (see text)	NA
Karma Tap (p. 446)	Rank + PER	Yes
Poison (p. 446)	Rank	No
Skin Shift (p. 446)	Rank + WIL	No
Spellcasting (p. 446)	Rank + PER	Yes
Suppress Horror Mark (p. 446)	Rank + PER	Yes
Terror (p. 447)	Rank + CHA	Yes
Thought Worm (p. 447)	Rank + PER	Yes
Unnatural Life (p. 447)	Rank + WIL	Yes

MASTER CREATURE POWERS TABLE

Power Name	Step Number	Action	Type
Acid Spray (p. 273)	Rank + DEX	Yes	Mundane
Blinding Glare (p. 273)	Rank + PER	Yes	Magical
Blood Veins (p. 273)	Rank + STR	Yes	Mundane
Bone Shaping (p. 273)	Rank + WIL	No	Magical
Breath Weapon (p. 273)	Rank + WIL	No	Magical
Burning Aura (p. 274)	Rank	No	Magical
Calm Others (p. 274)	Rank + CHA	Yes	Magical
Camouflage (p. 274)	Rank + WIL	Yes	Magical, Mundane
Charge (p. 274)	Rank	Yes	Mundane
Chilling Touch (p. 274)	Rank + WIL	Yes	Magical
Control Corpse (p. 274)	Rank	No	Magical
Crackling Armor (p. 274)	Rank + WIL	Yes	Magical
Curse (p. 275)	Rank + WIL	Yes	Magical
Disease (p. 275)	Rank	No	Magical, Mundane
Durability (p. 275)	Rank	No	Magical
Engulf (p. 275)	Rank + STR	No	Magical
Enhanced Senses (p. 275)	Rank	Yes	Magical, Mundane
Enraging Scent (p. 275)	Rank + WIL	Yes	Magical
Entrancement (p. 275)	Rank + CHA	Yes	Magical
Fire Touch (p. 275)	Rank + WIL	Yes	Magical
Fire Trail (p. 275)	Rank + WIL	No	Magical
Flashing Glare (p. 275)	Rank + WIL	Yes	Magical
Freezing Aura (p. 276)	Rank	No	Magical
Harden Club (p. 276)	Rank	No	Magical
Howling Challenge (p. 276)	Rank + CHA	Yes	Magical
Ice Shackles (p. 276)	Rank + WIL	Yes	Magical
Killing Glare (p. 276)	Rank + WIL	No	Magical
Lightning (p. 276)	Rank + WIL	No	Magical
Locate Target (p. 276)	Rank + PER	Yes	Magical, Mundane
Magic Drain (p. 276)	Rank + WIL	Yes	Magical
Paralyzation (p. 276)	Rank + WIL	Yes	Magical
Poison (p. 277)	Rank	No	Magical, Mundane
Regeneration (p. 277)	Rank + TOU	Yes	Magical
Sense Danger (p. 277)	Rank + PER	Yes	Magical
Sense Magic (p. 277)	Rank + PER	Yes	Magical
Sense Undead (p. 277)	Rank + PER	Yes	Magical
Sonic Shriek (p. 277)	Rank + STR	Yes	Mundane
Spellcasting (p. 277)	Rank + PER	Yes	Magical
Sticky Body (p. 277)	Rank + WIL	No	Magical, Mundane
Sticky Spit (p. 278)	Rank + STR	Yes	Magical, Mundane
Surprise Attack (p. 278)	Rank	No	Magical, Mundane
Tire Others (p. 278)	Rank + CHA	Yes	Magical
Triplicate (p. 278)	Rank	Yes	Magical
Venom (p. 278)	Rank + WIL	No	Magical

MASTER SPIRIT POWERS TABLE

Power Name	Step Number	Action	Restriction
Aid Summoner (p. 365)	SR	Yes	None
Astral Portal (p. 365)	SR	Yes	Ally
Confusion (p. 365)	Willpower + SR	Yes	Ally
Detect True Element (p. 365)	SR	Yes	Elemental
Detect Trap (p. 365)	Perception + SR	Yes	Ally
Detect Weapon (p. 365)	Perception + SR	Yes	Ally, Earth
Disguise Self (p. 365)	Charisma + SR	Yes	Ally
Durability (p. 365)	Rank	No	None
Empathic Sense (p. 365)	Perception + SR	Yes	Ally
Engulf (p. 365)	Willpower + SR	No	Elemental
Enrage Element (p. 366)	Willpower + SR	Yes	Elemental
Evil Eye (p. 366)	Willpower + SR	Yes	Ally
Find (p. 366)	Perception + SR	Yes	None
Haggle (p. 366)	Charisma + SR	Yes	None
Manifest (p. 366)	SR	Yes	None
Manipulate Element (p. 366)	Willpower + SR	Yes	Elemental
Possession (p. 367)	Willpower + SR	Yes	Ally
Remove Element (p. 367)	Willpower + SR	Yes	Elemental
Share Knowledge (p. 367)	SR	Yes	Elemental
Soothe (p. 367)	Charisma + SR	Yes	Elemental
Spear (p. 367)	Strength + SR	No	Elemental
Spellcasting (p. 367)	Perception + SR	Yes	None
Temperature (p. 367)	Willpower + SR	Yes	Ally, Fire

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MASTER DRAGON POWERS TABLE

Power Name	Step Number	Action	Knacks
Armored Scales (p. 397)	Rank + TOU (see text)	No	
Dispel Magic (p. 397)	Rank + WIL	No	
Disrupt Fate (p. 397)	Rank + WIL	No	
Dominate Beast (p. 397)	Rank + WIL	Yes	Beast's Eyes, Stampede
Dragon Breath (p. 398)	Rank + WIL	No	Flame Spout, Flame Ball, Friendly Fire, Smoke Cloud
Dragonsight (p. 398)	Rank + PER	Yes	Item History, Matrix Strike, Spirit Strike, True Sight
Dragonspeech (p. 399)	Rank + PER	Yes	Animal Talk, Read Thoughts, Learn Language, Thought Probe, Second Sight, Suggestion, Reweave Mind
Durability (p. 400)	Rank	No	
Fear (p. 400)	Rank + CHA	Yes	Awe, Paralyzing Gaze, Terror
Karma Cancel (p. 400)	Rank + WIL	No	Lend Karma
Lair Sense (p. 401)	Rank + PER	No	Absent Lair Sense, Identify Intruder, Lair Mark, Lair Vision
Regeneration (p. 401)	Rank + TOU	No	Regrowth
Spellcasting (p. 401)	Rank + PER	Yes	
Summoning (p. 402)	Rank + WIL	Yes	
Suppress Magic (p. 402)	Rank + WIL	Yes	
Venom (p. 402)	Rank + WIL	No	Pain Venom, Sleep Venom, Spit Venom
Wingbeat (p. 402)	Rank + DEX	Yes	Dust Cloud

POISON TABLE

Poison Type	Spell Defense/ Step Number	Onset Time	Duration
Damage	5–9	Instant/1–2 days	1–6 rounds
Debilitation	5–7	Instant	Effect Test days
Paralysis	5–9	Instant	Effect Test hours
Death	10–13	Instant/1–2 days	Instant

CURSE TABLE

Curse Type	Step Number*	Effect
Minor	7–8	Reduced steps, minor damage
Major	9–15	Scars, reduced Attribute Values
Horror	Horror's Spellcasting step	Horror-marked items or characters, use of Horror powers through item

* The step number used to determine if a curse affects a character.

VISIBILITY TABLE

Condition	Short Range	Medium Range	Long Range
Daylight	20	200	750
Dawn/Dusk	15	125	500
Light fog	10	75	250
Heavy fog	2	5	10
Light rain/drizzle	15	175	350
Heavy rain	10	50	100
Night with moon	5	60	200
Night with no moon	5	15	30

FIRE DAMAGE TABLE

Size of Fire	Damage Step
Campfire (small)	6 (touch)
Campfire (large)	8 (touch)
House Fire	10
Forest Fire	12
Torch	4 (touch)

LIGHT SOURCE VISIBILITY TABLE

Light Source	Radius
Candle	2 yards
Torch	5 yards
Campfire	10 yards
Lantern	10 yards
Light Quartz	5 yards

FALLING DAMAGE TABLE

Distance Fallen	Damage Step
2–3 yards	5
4–6 yards	10
7–10 yards	15
11–20 yards	(2) 20
21–30 yards	(2) 25
31–50 yards	(3) 25
51–100 yards	(3) 30
101–150 yards	(4) 30
151–200 yards	(4) 35
201+ yards	(5) 35

CLIMBING DIFFICULTY TABLE

Surface	Difficulty Number
Tree	5
Pole	7
Wall	9
Rocky Cliff	12
Sheer Surface	15

DETECTION DIFFICULTY TABLE

Detection Difficulty	Difficulty Number
Easy	5
Average	9
Hard	15
Very Hard	21
Heroic	25

TRAVEL RATE TABLE

Method of Travel	Travel Rate
Airship	255 miles (per 16 hour day)
Caravan (foot)	20 miles (per 8 hour day)
Caravan (mounted)	30 miles (per 8 hour day)
Name-giver (foot)	25 miles (per 8 hour day)
Name-giver (mounted)	45 miles (per 8 hour day)
Riverboat	160 miles (per 16 hour day)

BARRIER RATING TABLE

Barrier Material	Physical Armor	Death Rating
Blood Ivy	3	15
Cave or Natural Wall	30	150
Wood (up to 2 inches thick)	7	20
Wood (more than 2 inches thick)	9	30
Stone Wall (mortared)	12	45
Stone Block	20	85

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PERCEPTION MODIFIERS TABLE

Environmental Condition	Difficulty Modifier
Sight:	
Dusk/dawn	+2
Darkness:*	
Partial	+1
Full	+2
Complete	+3
Light rain/precipitation	+1
Heavy rain/precipitation	+3
Target concealed:	
Partial	+2
Full	+4
Complete	+6
Target camouflaged, same color as surroundings	+3
Target color contrasts with surroundings	–3
Target uniquely shaped compared to surroundings	–2
Viewer knows what to look for, i.e., has seen specific object or character before	–2
Sound:	
Soft background noise	+1
People talking	+2
Boisterous talk/singing	+3
Loud noises/battle sounds:	
10–20 yards away	+1
21–50 yards away	+2
More than 50 yards away	+4
Sound lower in pitch than background noise	+2
Sound higher in pitch than background noise	–2
Sound has steady rhythm that contrasts with background noise	–2
Listener heard sound before and recognizes it	–2
Listener trying to identify the only audible sound	–3
Smell:	
Obvious odor	–2
Other odors present	+2
Touch:	
Extreme temperature (hot or cold)	–3
Perceiver is wearing gloves	+3
Taste:	
Taste is obvious	–3
Perceiver has a cold	+3
Astral Sensing (see the **Workings of Magic** chapter of the **Player's Compendium**)	Varies

* In addition to any Action Test penalties (see **Situation Modifiers** in the **Combat** chapter of the **Player's Compendium**).

PERCEPTION DIFFICULTY TABLE

Situation	Typical Difficulty Number
Hidden target	Target's Dexterity step
Locate trap	Trap Detection Difficulty
Spot secret doors	8+
Notice clues	5+
Notice anything unusual about surroundings	6

DIFFICULTY NUMBER TABLE

Acting Character	Easy	Average	Hard	Very Hard	Heroic
Ordinary	1–2	3–5	6–9	10–12	13–15
Novice	1–2	3–7	8–12	13–16	17–20
Journeyman	3–6	7–12	13–18	19–22	23–27
Warden	6–8	12–16	18–24	25–29	30–35
Master	8–11	17–20	25–28	29–34	35–41

INTERACTION SUCCESS TABLE

Type of Interaction Test	Result Level
Deceit:	
Exaggeration	Average
Fabrication	Good
Half-Truth	Average
Insight:	
Detect basic emotions	Average
Detect deception	Good
Detect deception when target's features are obscured	Excellent
Intimidation (requires line of sight):	
Do nothing	Average
Take action	Good
Make an Impression:	
Improve target's attitude by one level	Average+
Worsen target's attitude by one level	Poor–
Ask for a Favor:	
Refer to the Favor Success Table	Varies

FAVOR SUCCESS TABLE

Target Attitude	Small Favor	Large Favor
Awestruck	Poor	Average
Loyal	Average	Good
Friendly	Good	Excellent
Neutral	Excellent	Extraordinary
Unfriendly	Extraordinary	NA
Hostile	NA	NA
Enemy	NA	NA

LEGEND AWARD TABLE

Current Circle	Legend Award	Total Legend Points Awarded Per Session
1	25–75 (50)	100–300 (200)
2	100–300 (200)	400–1,200 (800)
3	200–500 (350)	800–2,000 (1,400)
4	250–700 (475)	1,000–2,800 (1,900)
5	500–1,500 (1,000)	2,000–6,000 (4,000)
6	900–2,700 (1,800)	3,600–10,800 (7,200)
7	1,650–4,900 (3,275)	6,600–19,600 (13,100)
8	2,350–7,000 (4,675)	9,400–28,000 (18,700)
9	4,800–14,200 (9,500)	19,200–56,800 (38,000)
10	8,600–25,800 (17,250)	34,400–103,200 (68,800)
11	9,000–26,900 (17,950)	36,000–107,600 (71,800)
12	9,400–28,150 (18,775)	37,600–112,600 (75,100)
13	15,200–45,500 (30,350)	60,800–182,000 (121,400)
14	21,800–65,500 (43,650)	87,200–262,000 (174,600)
15	25,600–77,000 (51,300)	102,400–308,000 (205,200)

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BARSAIVE
PROVINCE
City State
City
Town/Village
Place of importance
Seven days walking
Four days riding
Aras Sea
Death's Sea
Barsaive
Caucavic Mountains
Caucavic River
Haven
Barlanth
Ovinan River
Urupa
Thunder Mountains
Dragon Mountains
Scytha Mountains
Serpent River
Throal
Throal Mountains
Barterstown
Syrtis
Alidar River
Cassiersda
Old Throalic Road
Vivek
Lake Bay
Coil River
Darrans
Pilgrimage Route
Coil River
Ardanyan
Galanga River
Servos Jungle
Servos River
Kratas
Dauchi
Taylon River
Taylon Mountains
Lake Ishkarat
Vors
Mortingale River
Blood Wood
Elf Queen's Palace
Glenwood Deeps
Sea Mountains
Jerris
Canal
Topos
Liaj Jungle
Liaj River
Delaris Mountains
Poison Forest
Claw Ridge
Twilight Peaks
Ustinee
Kratas
Serpent River
Mistwood Swamps
Scarlet Sea
Farram
Kerenshin
Tawar
Barrens
Barose River
Lontos River
Badlands
Cara Fahd
Greenheart River
Longpoint River
Landis
Landbarken
Skyfire Peak
Vivane
Skyfire Peak
Skyfire Peak

INDEX

. . . You still *can't find it?! I'll tell you yet again—use the index!*

Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

—A—

Aazhvat Many-Eyes (Named Horror), 467
Aban, 63, 424
Absent Lair Sense (Dragon Power Knack), 401
Abyss of Aras Nehem, The, 494
Acid Spray (Creature Power), 273
Action Multiplier Table, 220
Adept Bonus Legend Points Award Table, 220
Adept Gamemaster Characters, 221, 236–265
Adept's Blood (Medicinal Plant), 129
Adult Cloud Bird (Creature), 290
Adult Genhis (Creature), 304
Adult Prisma (Creature), 331
Adventure Goal, 96
Adventures: 97–105
  Astral Space, 73
  Blood Magic, 136
  Citadels, 102
  Communities, 103
  Creating, 97–101
  Creatures, 266
  Dragons, 378
  Horrors, 102, 434
  Ideas, 101–103
  Kaers, 102
  Legends, 102
  Mapping, 102
  Passions, 102
  Questors, 102
  Spirits, 358
  Therans, 102
  Treasures, 102, 161
Adventuring, 106–127
Affinity for Nethermancers (Creature Ability), 318
Agamon, Amulet of (Legendary Treasure), 192
Ago'astia (Minor Horror), 459
Aid Summoner (Spirit Power), 365
Air Sailor, Human (GM Character), 236
Air Spirits (Spirit): 368
  Strength Rating 1–4 (Spirit), 368
  Strength Rating 5–8 (Spirit), 368
  Strength Rating 9–12 (Spirit), 368
  Strength Rating 13–15 (Spirit), 368
Air, The Plane of, 79
Airboat (Airship), 142, 155
Airship Construction, 152
Airship Hazard Table, 147
Airship Hazards, 147
Airship Maintenance, 154
Airship Range Table, 151
Airships and Riverboats, 141–160
Airships: 141–144
  Names, 143
  Stone, 142–143
  Wooden, 141–142
Alamaise, 425
Alligator (Creature), 278
Ally Spirit Powers Table, 370
Ally Spirits (Spirit): 359, 369–370
  Shadow (Spirit), 370
  Strength Rating 1–4 (Spirit), 369
  Strength Rating 5–8 (Spirit), 369
  Strength Rating 9–12 (Spirit), 369
  Strength Rating 13–15 (Spirit), 369
Aloe (Medicinal Plant), 129
Alter Distance, 148
Altitudes, High, 117
Amulet (Thread Object), 173
Amulet of Agamon (Legendary Treasure), 192
Amulet of Dianuus, The (Legendary Treasure), 208
Animal Talk (Dragon Power Knack), 399
Animate Dead (Horror Ability), 463
Animate Dead (Horror Power), 441
Antidotes, 122
Ape (Creature), 279
Aquatic (Creature Ability), 279, 312, 315, 317, 327, 330, 335, 339, 340
Aras Nehem, The Abyss of, 494
Aras Sea, 64
Archer, Windling (GM Character), 238
Armored Scales (Dragon Power), 397
Arondry, Drake Form, 405
Arondry, Elf Form, 405
Artificer (Named Horror), 470
Asante, 413
Ascendancy, The, 71
Ash, Black, 65
Astral Backlash Table, 363
Astral Camouflage (Horror Ability), 496
Astral Camouflage (Horror Power), 441
Astral Damage Table, 75
Astral Denizens, 75–76
Astral Locations: 76–77
  Idyllic Gardens, 77
  Well of Souls, 77
Astral Pollution Camouflage Table, 496
Astral Portal (Spirit Power), 365
Astral Projection, 74
Astral Protection, 12
Astral Sight (Creature Ability), 283
Astral Sight (Horror Power), 441
Astral Slice (Horror Ability), 478
Astral Space: 73–79
  Blood Magic in, 75
  Combat in, 75
  Denizens, 75–76
  Entering, 73
  Exploring, 73
  Gazetteer, 76–79
  Named Locations, 76–77
  Name-givers in, 74
Attitudes: 90–91
  Awestruck, 90
  Better and Worse, 91
  Enemy, 91
  Friendly, 90
  Hostile, 90
  Loyal, 90
  Neutral, 90
  Unfriendly, 90
Attracted to Magic (Creature Ability), 303
Aura of Awe (Horror Power), 441
Awe (Dragon Power Knack), 400
Awestruck, 90
Axe, Crystal (Thread Weapon), 165

—B—

Baboon (Creature; see Ape), 279
Baby Cloud Bird (Creature), 290
Baby Genhis (Creature), 304
Bad Food, 120
Bad Water, 120
Badger, Snow (Creature), 344
Badlands, 56–58
Back Attack (Creature Ability), 291
Baggi (Minor Horror), 456
Ballista, 150
Bands of Fortune (Legendary Treasure), 192
Banishing, 363
Barbed Tail (Creature Ability), 291
Barge, Dwarf (Riverboat), 158
Barrier Rating Table, 106, 513
Barriers and Structures, 106
Barsaive, 16–41
Barsaive, Map, 515
Bartertown, 36–37
Basilisk (Creature), 279
Bat (Creature), 280
Bat, Messenger (Creature), 323
Bat, Shrieker (Creature), 342
Bear (Creature), 280
Beast's Eyes (Dragon Power Knack), 398
Beastmaster, Human (GM Character), 240
Bee, Blood (Creature), 280
Behemoth (Airship), 142, 157
Behemoth (Creature), 280
Bird, Chakta (Creature), 287
Bird, Cloud (Creature), 290
Bite and Swallow (Creature Ability), 340
Black Ash, 65
Black Brine (Poison), 123
Black Mantis (Horror Construct), 447
Black Mercy (Poison), 123
Blade of Alemvor, The (Legendary Treasure), 205
Blade Trap, 109
Blinding Glare (Creature Power), 273
Blisters, Severe, 121
Bloatform (Minor Horror), 457
Bloatform, Fla Tra Lys (Minor Horror), 458
Blood Bee (Creature), 281
Blood Charm Cost Table, 140
Blood Charms: 139–140
  Alteration, 139
  Booster, 139
  Creating, 139–140
  Enhancement, 140
  Poison, 140
Blood Ivy, 106
Blood Magic, 134, 136–140
Blood Memory (Horror Ability), 478
Blood Monkey (Creature), 281
Blood Oak Roots (Creature), 282
Blood Rage (Creature Ability), 350
Blood Raven (Creature), 282
Blood Veins (Creature Ability), 281, 282
Blood Veins (Creature Power), 273
Blood Wasp (Creature), 283
Blood Wood, 67–69
Bloodwall (Legendary Treasure), 193
Bloodwort (Medicinal Plant), 129
Boar, Wild (Creature), 354
Board, 148
Boarding Battles, 149
Bog Gob (Creature), 283
Bog Moss (Medicinal Plant), 130
Bone Crown the Usurper (Named Horror), 472
Bone Plague (Disease), 125
Bone Shaping (Creature Power), 273
Bone-Shambler (Horror Construct), 448
Book of Mysteries, The (Grimoire), 213
Book of Tomorrow, The, 19
Booster Charm Modifiers Table, 139
Boots (Thread Object), 174
Box, Crystal (Thread Object), 175

Bracers (Thread Object), 174
Bracers of Aras (General Treasure), 180
Bracers of Firewind (Legendary Treasure), 193
Brain Millipede (Creature), 284
Break Off, 149
Breath Weapon (Creature Ability), 285, 292, 312, 339
Breath Weapon (Creature Power), 273
Brithan (Creature), 284
Broccha (Creature), 285
Brocher's Brood, 32
Brooch (Thread Object), 174
Buckler (Thread Shield), 172
Buckler, Crystal (Thread Shield), 173
Burning Aura (Creature Ability), 321
Burning Aura (Creature Power), 274
Burning Aura (Spirit Ability), 373
Burns, 120
Burrow (Creature Ability), 306
Burrow (Horror Ability), 463
Buualgathor (Named Horror), 474

— C —

Cacofian (Poison), 451
Cadaver Man (Horror Construct), 448
Cadence, 78
Calendar, Theran, 17
Calendar, Throalic, 17
Calm Others (Creature Power), 274
Camouflage (Creature Power), 274
Campaigns: 97–105
  Astral Space, 73
  Blood Magic, 136
  Caravan, 104
  Creating, 103–104
  Creatures, 266
  Delving, 104
  Dragons, 378
  Exploration, 104
  Horrors, 434
  Kaer, 104
  Military, 104
  Political, 104
  Restoration, 104
  Spirits, 358
  Treasures, 161
Canal Boat (Riverboat), 159
Canoe (Riverboat), 157
Carnivorous Squirrel, Giant (Creature), 305
Castle of Assassins, The, 63
Cat (Creature), 285
Catapult, 150
Cathay Dragon, Average, 420
Cathay Dragons, 418–420
Caucavic Mountains, 52
Cause Plague (Horror Ability), 453
Cavalryman, Ork (GM Character), 242
Cave Axe (Creature Ability), 287
Cave Crab (Creature), 286
Cave Troll (Creature), 286
Cave-In Trap, 116
Cave-Ins, 116
Caves of Death, The, 62
Chain Mail (Thread Armor), 170
Chain of Skulls, The (Grimoire), 213
Chakta Bird (Creature), 287
Chambers of the Inner Kingdom, 38
Changeling (Creature), 287
Changes, Culture, 14
Changes, Land, 14
Changes, Living and Thought, 14
Changes, Magic, 15
Changes, Passions, 15
Changes, People, 15
Chantrel's Horror (Named Horror), 476
Character Advancement, 96
Characteristics Table, 507–508
Charcoalgrin, 414
Charge (Creature Power), 274
Cheetah (Creature), 288
Chilling Touch (Creature Power), 274
Chimera (Creature): 288
  Classic (Creature), 289
  Fire (Creature), 289
  Ice (Creature), 290
  Thunder (Creature), 290
Chimera Head Table, 289
Citadels: 11
  Exploring, 119–120
Cities, 29–41
City Watch, Troll (GM Character), 222
Clairvoyancy (Horror Ability), 490
Classic Chimera (Creature), 289
Climbing Difficulty Table, 106, 513
Climbing Gear, 107
Climbing Tests, 106–107
Climbing, 106–107
Cloak (Thread Object), 175
Cloud Bird (Creature), 290
Cloud Bird, Adult (Creature), 290
Cloud Bird, Baby (Creature), 290
Cockatrice (Creature), 291
Cocoon (Creature Ability), 306
Coil Attack (Dragon Ability), 418
Cold, 120
Combat Maneuvers, 148–150
Commit Suicide (Horror Ability), 461
Common Dragon, Average, 412
Common Dragons, 412–415
Confusion (Spirit Power), 365
Constrict (Creature Ability), 330
Construction, Airship, 141, 152
Construction, Riverboat, 144, 152
Construction, Ship, 141, 144, 152
Container (Thread Object), 175
Contest of Wills, 363
Control Corpse (Creature Power), 274
Coreliander (Medicinal Plant), 130
Corrosive Blood (Horror Ability), 500
Corrupt Karma (Horror Power), 441
Corrupt Magic (Horror Ability), 496
Corrupt Reality (Horror Power), 441
Corrupted Falsemen (Horror Construct), 449
Corrupted Objects (Horror Ability), 469
Counterspell Staff (General Treasure), 180
Coward (Creature Ability), 291
Crab, Cave (Creature), 286
Crackling Armor (Creature Power), 274
Crakbill (Creature), 291
Create Shadow (Horror Power), 441
Creating Difficulty Numbers, 86–88
Creating Gamemaster Characters, 219
Creating New Treasures, 161–163, 164
Creature Design Summary, 511
Creature Karma Table, 269
Creature Legend Points Table, 270, 512
Creature Powers Table, Master, 512
Creature Powers, 273–278
Creature Record Sheet, 509, 510
Creatures: 266–357
  Customizing, 272
  Designing New, 268–271
Creeping Vines (Creature), 292
Crew Repair Table, 153
Crew Repairs, 153
Crew, 146
Crojen (Creature), 292
Crow, Storm (Creature), 347
Crystal Armor, 48
Crystal Axe (Thread Weapon), 165
Crystal Box (Thread Object), 175
Crystal Buckler (Thread Shield), 173
Crystal Entity (Minor Horror), 458
Crystal Entity, Ago'astia (Minor Horror), 459
Crystal Raider Drakkar (Airship), 155
Crystal Raiders, 47–48
Crystal Spear (General Treasure), 181
Crystal Spell Box (General Treasure), 182
Crystal Sword (Thread Weapon), 166
Crystal Weapons, 48
Cult Member, Human (GM Character), 223
Curse (Creature Power), 275
Curse Table, 111, 513
Cursed Luck (Horror Power), 442
Curses, 110–111
Customizing Creatures, 272
Customs, 17

— D —

Dagger of Dianuus, The (Legendary Treasure), 209
Dagger, Farliss' (Legendary Treasure), 196
Damage Shift (Horror Power), 442
Damage Shift, 139
Damage, 146
Damaged Ships, Repair, 153–154
Darkness, 118
Dart Trap, 109
Days, 17
Death Magic, 138–139
Death Moth (Creature), 293
Death Spikes (Horror Ability), 458
Death's Caress (Disease), 125
Death's Favor, 134
Death's Kingdom, 134
Death's Sea, 58–61
Deceit, 92
Deceiver (Minor Horror), 459
Deeds, 96
Degeneration (Horror Ability), 462
Dehydration, 117
Delaris Mountains, 52
Demiwraith (Creature), 294
Denna's Brooch (Legendary Treasure), 194
Designing New Creatures, 268–271
Despairthought (Minor Horror), 460
Despoiler of the Land (Named Horror), 479
Detect Deceit (Character Ability), 235
Detect Horror (Horror Ability), 476
Detect Poison (Creature Ability), 350
Detect Trap (Spirit Power), 365
Detect True Element (Creature Ability), 327, 328
Detect True Element (Spirit Power), 365
Detect Weapon (Spirit Power), 365
Detecting Threads (Option), 74
Detection Difficulty Table, 108, 513
Devastator Spear (Legendary Treasure), 195
Devouring, 457
Difficulty Number Table, 87, 514
Difficulty Numbers: 86–88
  Adjusting, 87
  Creating, 86–88
  Finding, 87
  Modifiers vs., 87
Disease, 125–127
Disease (Creature Ability), 305, 311, 330, 334
Disease (Creature Power), 275
Disease (Horror Power), 442
Disguise Self (Spirit Power), 365
Dispel Magic (Dragon Power), 397
Displace (Creature Ability), 328
Displace (Horror Power), 442
Disrupt Fate (Dragon Power), 397
Disrupt Magic (Horror Power), 442
Dissemination, The, 137
Distance Markers, 43
Dog (Creature): 294
  Guard (Creature), 294
  Hunting (Creature), 294
  War (Creature), 294
Dominate Beast (Dragon Power), 397
Doppler (Minor Horror), 461
Doppler Sting (Horror Ability), 461
Draft Horse (Creature), 312
Dragon Breath (Dragon Ability), 409
Dragon Breath (Dragon Power), 398
Dragon Breath Table, 398
Dragon Durability Increase Table, 400
Dragon Magic, 394–397
Dragon Mail (Legendary Treasure), 195
Dragon Mountains, 53
Dragon Powers, 397–402
Dragon Powers Table, Master, 513

Dragon's Breath, 150
Dragon's Tongue (Medicinal Plant), 130
Dragon-kin, 403
Dragon-like Creatures, 404–411
Dragons, 378–432
Dragons: 411–432
  Cathay, 418–420
  Common, 412–415
  Feathered, 421–422
  Great, 423–432
Dragonsight (Dragon Power), 398
Dragonspeech (Dragon Power), 399
Dragonspeech, 387
Drake, Average, 404
Drake, False (Lesser) Drake, 409
Drakes, 404–407
Drakes, False (Lesser), 408–409
Drakkar (Airship), 142, 155
Drakkar, Crystal Raider (Airship), 142, 155
Drakkar, Small (Airship), 155
Dread Iota (Minor Horror), 461
Dream Shape (Horror Ability), 482
Dream Shape (Horror Power), 442
Dreveki (Riverboat), 158
Drowning, 117
Druistadt (Named Horror), 480
Durability (Creature Power), 275
Durability (Dragon Power), 400
Durability (Horror Power), 442
Durability (Spirit Power), 365
Dust Cloud (Dragon Power Knack), 402
Dwarf Barge (Riverboat), 158
Dwarf Merchant (GM Character), 227
Dwarf Scribe (GM Character), 232
Dwarf Swordmaster (GM Character), 254
Dwarfs, 21
Dwarf Kingdom, 36–39, 37
Dyre (Creature), 295

— E —

Eagle (Creature), 295
Eagle, Fire (Creature), 300
Earth Magic (Dragon Ability), 427
Earth Q'wril (Creature), 296
Earth Spirits (Spirit), 370–372
  Shard (Spirit), 372
  Strength Rating 1–4 (Spirit), 370
  Strength Rating 5–8 (Spirit), 371
  Strength Rating 9–12 (Spirit), 371
  Strength Rating 13–15 (Spirit), 371
Earth, The Plane of, 79
Earthroot, 426
Eddypad (Creature), 297
Eels, Mangrove (Creature), 322
Eerie Light (Creature Ability), 355
Elemental Long-Spear (Thread Weapon), 166
Elemental Planes, The: 79
  Plane of Air, The, 79
  Plane of Earth, The, 79
  Plane of Fire, The, 79
  Plane of Water, The, 79
  Plane of Wood, The, 79
Elemental Spirits, 359
Elementalist, Ork (GM Character), 244
Elementals, 359
Elephant (Creature), 297
Elf Sage (GM Character), 230
Elf Troubadour (GM Character), 258
Elf Warrior (GM Character), 260
Elfbane (Poison), 123
Elves: 21
  Corruption of the, 68
Empathic Sense (Spirit Power), 365
Empathy Net (Horror Ability), 460
Enchanted Danger (Horror Ability), 474
Enemy, 91
Energy Drain (Horror Power), 442
Engulf (Creature Ability), 337
Engulf (Creature Power), 275
Engulf (Spirit Power), 365
Enhanced Senses (Creature Power), 275
Enhancement Charm Modifiers Table, 140
Enrage Element (Spirit Power), 366
Enraging Scent (Creature Power), 275
Entrancement (Creature Ability), 345
Entrancement (Creature Power), 275
Espagra (Creature), 297
Espagra Boots (General Treasure), 182
Espagra Saddle (General Treasure), 183
Eternal Youth (Horror Ability), 478
Ethandrille (Creature), 298
Evil Eye (Spirit Power), 366
Explosive Gas, 115
Explosive Gas Trap, 115
Exposure, 116
Eyebite (Poison), 123
Eyebright (Medicinal Plant), 130

— F —

Falcon (Creature), 299
Falling Damage, 107
Falling Damage Table, 107, 513
False (Lesser) Drake, Average, 409
False (Lesser) Drakes, 408–409
False Form (Horror Ability), 460
Falsemen (Horror Construct): 449–450
  Corrupted (Horror Construct), 449
  Steelman (Horror Construct), 451
  Stoneman (Horror Construct), 450
  Strawman (Horror Construct), 449
  Waxman (Horror Construct), 450
Farliss' Dagger (Legendary Treasure), 196
Farming Communities, 27
Fatigue and Injury, 120–121
Fatigue, Recovering From, 121
Favor Success Table, 94, 514
Favor Tests, 94
Favors, 94
Fear (Dragon Power), 400
Feast of the Name-Day, The, 17
Feathered Dragon, Average, 422
Feathered Dragons, 421–422
Felux (Creature), 299
Fever, 121
Find (Spirit Power), 366
Fire (Maneuver), 149
Fire Cannon, 150
Fire Chimera (Creature), 289
Fire Damage Table, 108, 513
Fire Eagle (Creature), 300
Fire Engines, 154
Fire Sheath, 151
Fire Spirits (Spirit): 372–373
  Strength Rating 1–4 (Spirit), 372
  Strength Rating 5–8 (Spirit), 372
  Strength Rating 9–12 (Spirit), 372
  Strength Rating 13–15 (Spirit), 373
Fire Touch (Creature Power), 275
Fire Trail (Creature Power), 275
Fire Wraith (Creature), 302
Fire, 107
Fire, The Plane of, 79
Firebird (Creature), 299
Fireleaf (Poison), 123
Firepower, 146
Firescale (Creature), 301
First Circle Adept Legend Award Table, 221
Fla Tra Lys (Minor Horror), 458
Flame Ball (Dragon Power Knack), 398
Flame Spout (Dragon Power Knack), 398
Flashing Glare (Creature Power), 275
Flydrop Coat, The, 437
Food, Bad, 120
Force of the Eye, 32
Forest Robes (Thread Object), 176
Forest, Poison, 51
Forests, 50–52
Forge Horror Construct (Horror Power), 443
Forge Trap (Horror Power), 443
Forgotten City of Parlainth, The, 66
Foul Folk, Human (GM Character), 224
Fragile Body (Spirit Ability), 372
Freezing Aura (Creature Power), 276
Freezing Gale (Dragon Ability), 428
Frenzy (Creature Ability), 285, 305
Friendly Fire (Dragon Power Knack), 398
Friendly, 90
Frighten (Creature Ability), 293, 316
Frost Pouch (General Treasure), 183
Frost Web (Horror Ability), 452
Frostbite, 116

— G —

Galleon (Airship), 141, 156
Galley (Airship), 141, 155
Game Aids, 86
Game Balance, 220–221
Gamemaster Characters: 215–265
  Adept, 221, 236–265
  Creating, 219
  Non-Adept, 221, 222–235
Gamemastering, 80–96
Gargoyle (Creature), 302
Garlen's Blessing, 133
Garlen's Hand (Medicinal Plant), 130
Garlic (Medicinal Plant), 130
Gas: 115
  Explosive, 115
  Poison, 115
Gaseous Forms (Spirit Ability), 369
Gate Hound (Creature), 303
Gauntlets (Thread Object), 176
Gaze of Corruption (Horror Ability), 469
Gems of Joril, The (Grimoire), 214
General Treasures, 180–191
Genhis (Creature), 304
Genhis, Adult (Creature), 304
Genhis, Baby (Creature), 304
Gharmhek (Minor Horror), 462
Ghost Ship (Airship), 143, 157
Ghoul (Horror Construct), 451
Ghoul Lizard (Creature), 305
Giant Carnivorous Squirrel (Creature), 305
Giant Spider (Creature), 305
Giant Spider, Trapdoor (Creature), 306
Giant Trapdoor Spider (Creature), 306
Giftbringer (Named Horror), 483
Gifts (Horror Ability), 484
Globberog (Creature), 306
Gloves, Kolldar's (Legendary Treasure), 197
Gnasher (Minor Horror), 463
Goat (Creature), 308
Gorilla (Creature; see Ape), 279
Granlain (Creature), 308
Great Dragon, Average, 423
Great Dragons, 384, 423–432
Great Form Spirits, 359
Great Library, 38
Greater Termite (Creature), 308
Greeting Rituals, 113
Griffin (Creature), 309
Griffin, Jungle (Creature), 315
Grimoires, 213–214
Ground Assault, 149
Guard Dog (Creature), 294

— H —

Haggle (Spirit Power), 366
Halls of Throal, The, 37
Hammer, Maul (Thread Weapon), 167
Harbinger (Creature), 309
Hard Shell (Creature Ability), 307
Harden Club (Creature Power), 276
Hardened Armor (Creature Ability), 286, 314, 333
Hardened Leather (Thread Armor), 171
Harpy (Creature), 310
Hatchling (Common Dragon), Average, 413
Hatchling, 382
Hate (Named Horror), 485
Haunting Nightmares (Horror Ability), 464
Haven, 35

Haven, Ruler of, 35
Hawk, Sentinel (Creature), 340
Hazard Modifiers Table, 148
Hazard Multiplier, 271
Hazard Tests, 147
Hazards: 147
  Airship, 147
  Riverboat, 147
Healing (Horror Ability), 478
Healing Arts, The, 128–135
Healing Magic, 133
Heat Exposure, 117
Heightened Senses (Horror Ability), 463
Hell Hound (Creature), 311
Helmet Mushrooms (Medicinal Plant), 130
Hemlock (Poison), 123
Henghyoke Otter (Creature), 312
Horror Constructs, 447–456
Horror Curses, 111
Horror Durability Increase Table, 442
Horror Lore (Horror Ability), 493
Horror Mark (Horror Ability), 458, 469, 478, 482, 493, 496, 500
Horror Mark (Horror Power), 443
Horror Marks, Planned (Option), 444
Horror Powers Table, Master, 512
Horror Powers, 440–447
Horror Thread (Horror Ability), 495
Horror Thread (Horror Power), 445
Horror-cursed Items and Places, 437
Horrorfever (Disease), 126
Horrors: 76, 434–504
  Minor, 456–457
  Named, 467–504
  Origins of the, 435
Horror-Scarred Madman, Human (GM Character), 225
Horse (Creature): 312
  Draft (Creature), 312
  Riding (Creature), 313
  War (Creature), 313
Hostile, 90
Hound, Gate (Creature), 303
Hound, Hell (Creature), 311
Howling Challenge (Creature Power), 276
Hulker (Creature), 313
Hull, 146
Human Air Sailor (GM Character), 236
Human Beastmaster (GM Character), 240
Human Cult Member (GM Character), 223
Human Foul Folk (GM Character), 224
Human Horror-Scarred Madman (GM Character), 225
Human Scout (GM Character), 250
Human Tavern Owner (GM Character), 234
Human Thief (GM Character), 256
Human Veteran Guard (GM Character), 235
Human Wizard (GM Character), 264
Humans, 22
Hunting Dog (Creature), 294
Huttawa (Creature), 314
Hydra, Average, 409
Hydra Armor (Dragon Ability), 410
Hydras, 409

— I —

Ice Blade of Omifan, The (Legendary Treasure), 205
Ice Chimera (Creature), 290
Ice Flyer (Creature), 314
Ice Shackles (Creature Power), 276
Icewing, 427
Identify Intruder (Dragon Power Knack), 401
Idyllic Gardens, 77
Illusionist, Windling (GM Character), 246
Immunity to Earth (Horror Ability), 472
Immunity to Fire (Creature Ability), 302, 352
Immunity to Spells (Creature Ability), 292
Immunity to Warping Damage (Creature Ability), 341
Injuries, Recovering From, 121
Innate Magic, 394
Inner Kingdom, The, 38
Insect Spirits (Spirit), 373
Inshalata (Creature), 314
Insight, 92
Instant Travel (Horror Ability), 478
Instrument (Thread Object), 176
Interaction Success Table, 93, 514
Interaction Tests: 92–94
  Deceit, 92
  Favors, 94
  Insight, 92
  Intimidation, 93
  Making an Impression, 93
Intimidation, 93
Invae Burnings, The, 360
Invae Spirits (Spirit): 373–374
  Strength Rating 1–4 (Spirit), 373
  Strength Rating 5–8 (Spirit), 373
  Strength Rating 9–12 (Spirit), 374
  Strength Rating 13–15 (Spirit), 374
Invae, 360
Invisibility (Spirit Ability), 369
Iopos, 34
Iron Web (Horror Ability), 452
Item History (Dragon Power Knack), 399

— J —

Jehuthra (Horror Construct), 452
Jerris, 33
Jikar Root (Medicinal Plant), 131
Joie (Named Horror), 486
Josara, 135
Jub Jub (Creature), 315
Jungle Griffin (Creature), 315
Jungles: 50–52
  Liaj, 51
  Servos, 52

— K —

K'sathra (Creature), 318
Karma (Horror Ability), 469, 474
Karma Cap (Horror Ability), 463
Karma Tap (Horror Ability), 482
Kaer Ward, 109
Kaers: 11, 12
  Exploring, 119–120
Karma (Creature Power), 276
Karma (Spirit Power), 366
Karma Boost (Horror Power), 445
Karma Boost, 138
Karma Cancel (Dragon Power), 400
Karma Drain (Horror Power), 446
Karma Points (Dragon Power), 401
Karma Points (Horror Power), 446
Karma Tap (Horror Power), 446
Keesra (Poison), 123
Kegel's Sword (Legendary Treasure), 197
Key Knowledge Table, 162
Key Knowledges, Learning, 164
Kila (Airship), 142, 156
Killing Glare (Creature Power), 276
Kingdom of Death, The, 134
Kingdom of Throal, The, 36–39
Kolldar's Gloves (Legendary Treasure), 197
Knockout (Creature Ability), 232
Kraken (Creature), 316
Kratas, 31
Kratas, Ruler of, 31
Kreescra (Minor Horror), 463
Krillra (Creature), 317
Krilworm (Creature), 318
Kue (Creature), 319

— L —

Lacerators (Horror Ability), 452, 465
Laésal (Poison), 123
Lair Mark (Dragon Power Knack), 401
Lair Sense (Dragon Power), 401
Lair Vision (Dragon Power Knack), 401
Lairs, 390
Land of Barsaive, 16–41
Landscape, 49
Language of Throal, 19
Languages: 19–20
  Local, 20
  Racial, 20
  Theran, 20
  Throalic, 19
Lankarden, 71
Larval Prisma (Creature), 332
Laying Eggs (Creature Ability), 293
Law of Similarity, The, 141
Leap Attack (Creature Ability), 357
Learn Language (Dragon Power Knack), 399
Leather (Thread Armor), 171
Leech Rat (Creature), 319
Legend Award Table, 95, 514
Legend Awards: 94–96
  Assigning, 95
  Deeds, 96
  Defeating Opponents, 96
  Magical Treasures, 96
  Roleplaying, 96
  Session Goals, 96
  Total, 96
Legend Point Cost Table, 163
Legend Points, Awarding, 94–96
Lend Karma (Dragon Power Knack), 400
Leopard (Creature), 320
Leviathan, Average, 417
Leviathans, 416–417
Liaj Jungle, 51
Light Source Visibility Table, 118, 513
Lightning (Creature Ability), 347
Lightning (Creature Power), 276
Lightning Lizard (Creature), 320
Lightning Mace (General Treasure), 184
Lightning-Bolt Earring (Thread Object), 176
Limited Movement (Creature Ability), 282
Lion (Creature): 320
Lion, Stone (Creature), 347
Lion, Wood (Creature), 356
Little Troll's Helm, The (Legendary Treasure), 206
Lizard (Creature), 321
Lizard, Lightning (Creature), 320
Lizard, Plague (Creature), 329
Lobster, Sand (Creature), 338
Locate Target (Creature Ability), 296, 310, 318, 337
Locate Target (Creature Power), 276
Longbow (Thread Weapon), 167
Loot, 111–112
Lorm's Axe (Legendary Treasure), 198
Lost City, The, 62
Lost, Getting, 118
Lowlands, 50
Loyal, 90
Lucky Charm (Common Magical Item), 235
Lung-Rot (Disease), 126

— M —

Magic Drain (Creature Power), 276
Magic Use Table, 277
Magical Armor (Creature Ability), 310
Magical Sword (Creature Ability), 310
Magical Treasures, 161–214
Magma Beast (Creature), 321
Magma Spurt (Creature Ability), 321
Mahogany Trinrose (Medicinal Plant), 131
Maintenance, Airship, 154
Maintenance, Riverboat, 154
Maintenance, Ship, 154
Making an Impression, 93
Maneuverability, 146
Mangrove Eels (Creature), 322
Manifest (Spirit Power), 366
Manifestation Restriction (Spirit Ability), 370, 371 373, 375, 376

Manipulate Element (Dragon Ability), 425
Manipulate Element (Spirit Power), 366
Manticore (Creature), 322
Mantis, Black (Horror Construct), 447
Mantrap, 110
Map of Location (Thread Object), 177
Map, Barsaive, 515
Maps, 42
Mark Trace (Horror Ability), 476
Mask of Oltion (Legendary Treasure), 198
Master Creature Powers Table, 512
Master Dragon Powers Table, 513
Master Horror Powers Table, 512
Master Spirit Powers Table, 512
Mastrylith (Creature), 323
Matrix Strike (Dragon Power Knack), 399
Maul Hammer (Thread Weapon), 167
Memory Crystals, 388
Mercenary, Ork (GM Character), 226
Merchant Riverboat (Riverboat), 159
Merchant, Dwarf (GM Character), 227
Messenger Bat (Creature), 323
Messenger, Obsidiman (GM Character), 228
Metamorphosis, 383
Midnight Grimoire, The (Grimoire), 214
Military Vedette (Airship), 156
Millipede, Brain (Creature), 284
Mind Crush (Creature Ability), 284
Mindslug (Minor Horror), 464
Mines, 38
Mining Vedette (Airship), 156
Minor Horrors, 456–467
Mirror (Legendary Treasure), 199
Mist Blossoms (Medicinal Plant), 131
Mist Swamps, 62–63
Molgrim (Creature), 324
Monkey (Creature), 325
Monkey, Blood (Creature), 281
Months, 17
Monturk's Carpet (Legendary Treasure), 199
Moss, Rolling (Creature), 336
Mount Bloodfire, 62
Mountain Lion (Creature; see Lion), 320
Mountains: 52–55
  Caucavic, 52
  Delaris, 52
  Dragon, 53
  Scol, 53
  Scytha, 53
  Throal, 55
  Thunder, 54
  Twilight Peaks, 55
  Tylon, 55
Mountainshadow, 428
Mountainshadow's Lair, 58
Mule, Pack (Creature), 328
Mutiny, 144
Mynbruje's Balm (Medicinal Plant), 131

— N —

Naga (Creature), 325
Naga-Scale Brooch (Thread Object), 177
Named Horrors, 467–504
Named Spirits, 360–361
Name-giver Races, 21–26
Nautilid (Creature), 326
Nebis (Named Horror), 488
Necklace, Oratory (General Treasure), 185
Nemesis (Named Horror), 491
Net Thrower, 150
Nethermancer, T'skrang (GM Character), 248
Netherworlds, The: 77–79
  Cadence, 78
  Gateways to, 78
  Sylvar, 78
  Tekk'sint, 79
  Throne, 78
Neutral, 90
Neverburn (Legendary Treasure), 200
Newots, 48
Night Pollen (Poison), 124
Nightscar (Legendary Treasure), 200
Nightsky, 415
Nightwist (Horror Construct), 452
Nioku's Bow (Legendary Treasure), 201
Noble Houses, 39
Non-Adept Gamemaster Characters, 221, 222–235
Number of Attacks (Creature Ability), 357

— O —

Obsidiman Messenger (GM Character), 228
Obsidiman Skin (Thread Armor), 171
Obsidimen, 23
Ogre (Creature), 327
Ogre Twins (Creature), 327
Oltion, Mask of (Legendary Treasure), 198
Opponents, 216
Orangutan (Creature; see Ape), 279
Oratory Necklace (General Treasure), 185
Orichalcum Shield (Thread Shield), 173
Orichalcum, Tainted, 437
Origins of the Horrors, 435
Ork Cavalryman (GM Character), 242
Ork Elementalist (GM Character), 244
Ork Mercenary (GM Character), 226
Ork Scorcher (GM Character), 231
Ork Scorchers, 44
Orks, 23
Otter, Henghyoke (Creature), 312

— P —

Pack Mule (Creature), 328
Padendra (Poison), 124
Pain Venom (Dragon Power Knack), 402
Pangolus (Creature), 328
Paralyzation (Creature Ability), 316
Paralyzation (Creature Power), 276
Paralyzing Gaze (Dragon Ability), 429
Paralyzing Gaze (Dragon Power Knack), 400
Parlainth, The Forgotten City of, 66
Pathfinder (Legendary Treasure), 202
Patrons, 215
Peaks, Twilight, 55
Perception Difficulty Table, 89, 514
Perception Modifier Table, 89, 514
Perception Modifiers, 89
Perception Tests, 89
Perception Tests, Modifiers, 89
Pervert Emotion (Horror Ability), 488
Physical Protection, 12
Pipes of Wrongness, The, 439
Piracy, 46, 61
Pirates, 61
Pit Trap, 110
Plague (Horror Construct), 453
Plague Lizard (Creature), 329
Plains, 50
Plane of Air, The, 79
Plane of Earth, The, 79
Plane of Fire, The, 79
Plane of Water, The, 79
Plane of Wood, The, 79
Planned Horror Marks (Option), 444
Plate Mail (Thread Armor), 171
Poison (Creature Ability), 315, 330, 331, 341, 346, 356
Poison (Creature Power), 277
Poison (Horror Ability), 451
Poison (Horror Power), 446
Poison (Spirit Ability), 374
Poison Charm Modifiers Table, 140
Poison Cloud (Creature Ability), 317
Poison Forest, 51
Poison Gas, 115
Poison Resistance Tests, 122
Poison Table, 122, 513
Poison Vines (Creature), 330
Poison, 121–124
Politics, 16
Pony (Creature), 312
Porcupine Snake (Creature), 330
Possession (Horror Ability), 454
Possession (Spirit Ability), 370
Possession (Spirit Power), 367
Post-Scourge Unicorn (Creature), 350
Potion of Life (General Treasure), 185
Poultices, 122
Powerful Bite (Creature Ability), 352
Powerful Glare (Creature Ability), 280
Powers Restriction (Dragon Ability), 410
Preces (Creature), 330
Pre-Scourge Unicorn (Creature), 350
Prince Axe (Thread Weapon), 167
Prisma (Creature), 332
Prisma, Adult (Creature), 331
Prisma, Larval (Creature), 332
Propulsion, Methods of, 145
Protection, Astral, 12
Protection, Physical, 12
Protection, The Rites of Passage and, 12
Puppet Familiar (General Treasure), 186
Purifier (Legendary Treasure), 203
Purse Ever Bountiful (General Treasure), 186
Pursuit, 148

— Q —

Q'wril, Earth (Creature), 296
Quadrilobe (Creature), 333
Quaking Fever (Disease), 126
Qural'lotectica (Horror Construct), 454

— R —

Rage (Horror Ability), 448
Rain Club (Thread Weapon), 168
Ram, 149
Ram (Creature Ability), 341
Rat (Creature), 334
Rat, Leech (Creature), 319
Rathann, Drake Form, 406
Rathann, Elf Form, 406
Raven, Blood (Creature), 282
Raw Magic Filter, 138
Raw Magic Horror Mark Table, 444
Read Thoughts (Dragon Power Knack), 399
Recovering From Fatigue, 121
Recovering From Injuries, 121
Regenerate (Horror Ability), 497
Regeneration (Creature Power), 277
Regeneration (Dragon Power), 401
Regrowth (Dragon Power Knack), 401
Reinforcements (Creature Ability), 281
Relan (Creature), 334
Relationship Table, 446
Remis Berries (Poison), 124
Remove Element (Spirit Power), 367
Repair Trap (Horror Ability), 465
Repairs, Crew, 153
Repairs, Damaged Ship, 153–154
Repairs, Shipyard, 153
Resistant to Horrors (Creature Ability), 341
Respect for Elves (Creature Ability), 337
Result Level Table, 88, 506
Result Levels, 87
Resurrection, 133
Reweave Mind (Dragon Power Knack), 400
Rhinoceros (Creature), 335
Riding Horse (Creature), 313
Ring (Thread Object), 178
Ring Mail (Thread Armor), 172
Ring of Accuracy (Thread Object), 178
Ristul (Named Horror), 493
Rite of Mating, 380
Rites of Passage and Protection, The, 12
River Ferry (Riverboat), 159
River Galley (Riverboat), 160
River Pirate, T'skrang (GM Character), 229
River Steed (Creature), 335
River Villages, T'skrang, 28
River Warship (Riverboat), 160
Riverboat Construction, 152

Riverboat Hazard Table, 147
Riverboat Hazards, 147
Riverboat Maintenance, 154
Riverboats, 144–145
Robe of Dianuus, The (Legendary Treasure), 209
Rockworm (Creature), 336
Roles, 215
Rolling Moss (Creature), 336
Root Walker (Creature), 337
Roots (Creature Ability), 337
Roots, Blood Oak (Creature), 281
Rowboat (Riverboat), 158

— S —

Sage, Elf (GM Character), 230
Sailboat (Long) (Riverboat), 158
Sailboat (Riverboat), 158
Sailboat (Small) (Riverboat), 158
Sailing Ship (Riverboat), 146, 160
Sailing Speed Table, 146
Sand Lobster (Creature), 338
Sarfran (Medicinal Plant), 131
Saural (Creature), 338
Scarab of Ilithor, The (Legendary Treasure), 206
Scarlet Sea, 61–62
Scavian Barge (Riverboat), 159
Scol Mountains, 53
Scorcher Cavalry, 44
Scorcher Raiders, 45
Scorcher, Ork (GM Character), 231
Scorchers, Ork, 44
Scourge, Ending of, 13
Scourge, Legacy, 15
Scourge, Life During, 12
Scout, Human (GM Character), 250
Scribe, Dwarf (GM Character), 232
Scurrier (Minor Horror), 465
Scytha Mountains, 53
Sea Snake (Creature), 339
Sea, Aras, 64
Sea, Death's, 58–61
Sea, Scarlet, 61–62
Second Sight (Dragon Power Knack), 399
Secret Doors, 108
Selachi (Creature), 340
Sense Danger (Creature Power), 277
Sense Magic (Creature Power), 277
Sense Undead (Creature Power), 277
Sentinel Hawk (Creature), 340
Serpent River, The, 49
Serpent Vine (Medicinal Plant), 131
Servos Jungle, 52
Session Goals, Completing, 95
Shapeshifting (Dragon Ability), 405
Shapeshifting (Horror Ability), 474, 484
Shadow (Spirit), 370
Shadowmant (Creature), 341
Shadowmant Venom (Poison), 124
Shal-mora, 391
Shard (Spirit), 372
Share Knowledge (Spirit Power), 367
Shelters, 11–14
  Leaving, 14
  Life Outside, 13
Shilagrue (Creature), 341
Shilagrue Horror (Horror Construct), 454
Ship Combat, 148–150
Ship Construction, 152
Ship Maintenance, 154
Ship Modification Table, 152
Ship Speed Table, 146
Ship Weapons, 150–152
Ships, Sailing, 146
Shipyard Repair Table, 154
Shipyard Repairs, 153
Shrieker Bat (Creature), 342
Silvered Shield (General Treasure), 187
Sindolin (Medicinal Plant), 131
Siphon Will (Horror Ability), 500
Skeorx (Creature), 343
Skills (Creature Power), 277
Skills (Dragon Power), 401
Skills (Horror Power), 446
Skin Shift (Horror Power), 446
Skull of Maarberg, The, 438
Sky Lotus (Medicinal Plant), 131
Sky Point, 70
Sky Raider, Troll (GM Character), 252
Slavers, 43, 118
Slavery, 18, 43
Sleep Venom (Dragon Power Knack), 402
Sling (Thread Weapon), 168
Slipshade (Minor Horror), 465
Small Drakkar (Airship), 155
Smiling Death (Disease), 127
Smoke (Legendary Treasure), 203
Smoke Cloud (Dragon Power Knack), 398
Snake (Creature), 344
Snake, Porcupine (Creature), 330
Snake, Sea (Creature), 339
Snow Badger (Creature), 344
Snow Leopard (Creature; see Leopard), 320
Social Interactions, 91–94
Sock of Granak, The (Legendary Treasure), 207
Song Sprite (Creature), 345
Sonic Shriek (Creature Power), 277
Soothe (Spirit Power), 367
Soulsafe (Legendary Treasure), 204
Spear (Spirit Power), 367
Spear Thrower, 150
Spectral Dancer (Horror Construct), 455
Speed, 145
Spell Matrix Object (Thread Object), 178
Spell Sword (General Treasure), 188
Spellcasting (Creature Power), 277
Spellcasting (Dragon Power), 401
Spellcasting (Horror Power), 446
Spellcasting (Spirit Power), 367
Spells (Creature Ability), 355
Spells (Creature Power), 277
Spells (Dragon Ability), 418
Spells (Dragon Power), 402
Spells (Horror Power), 446
Spells (Spirit Power), 367
Spiced Fish, 41
Spider, Giant (Creature), 305
Spider, Giant Trapdoor (Creature), 306
Spike Bomb (General Treasure), 188
Spike Gauntlets (General Treasure), 189
Spike Trap, 110
Spikes (Creature Ability), 305
Spirit Powers Table, Master, 512
Spirit Powers, 364–367
Spirit Strength Ratings, 358–359
Spirit Strike (Dragon Power Knack), 399
Spirits: 75, 358–377
  Air (Spirit), 368
  Ally (Spirit), 369
  Earth (Spirit), 370
  Elemental, 359
  Fire (Spirit), 372
  Great Form, 359
  Insect (Spirit), 373
  Invae (Spirit), 373
  Named, 360–361
  Tasked, 361
  Water (Spirit), 374
  Wood (Spirit), 375
Spit Venom (Dragon Power Knack), 402
Sprained Ankle, 121
Sprite, Song (Creature), 345
Spy, Theran Windling (GM Character), 233
Squirrel, Giant Carnivorous (Creature), 305
Staff of Vylir (Legendary Treasure), 204
Stajian (Creature), 345
Stampede (Dragon Power Knack), 398
Star Root (Medicinal Plant), 132
Steelman (Horror Construct), 451
Stenchfoot (Disease), 127
Step Number Conversion Table, 219
Sticky Body (Creature Power), 277
Sticky Spit (Creature Power), 278
Stinger (Creature), 346
Stone Airships, 142–143
Stone Broadsword (Thread Weapon), 168
Stone Dagger (Thread Weapon), 169
Stone Lion (Creature), 347
Stoneman (Horror Construct), 450
Storm Call (Creature Ability), 348
Storm Crow (Creature), 347
Storm Wolf (Creature), 347
Stormwraith (Horror Construct), 456
Storytelling, 84–85
Strained Arm, 121
Strained Wrist, 121
Strangers, 43
Strawman (Horror Construct), 449
Strength Ratings, Spirit, 358–359
Suffocation, 117
Suggestion (Dragon Power Knack), 400
Summon (Spirit Ability), 374
Summoning (Dragon Power), 402
Summoning: 361–364
  Dangers, 363
  Repeated, 363
Sunburn, 121
Supporters, 216
Suppress Horror Mark (Horror Power), 446
Suppress Magic (Dragon Power), 402
Surprise Attack (Creature Power), 278
Surrunic (Medicinal Plant), 132
Swamps, Mist, 62–63
Swarm Form (Creature Ability), 283
Swift Attacks (Creature Ability), 346
Switch Form (Horror Ability), 466
Swooping Attack (Creature Ability), 298, 309
Sword of Fentheri, The (Legendary Treasure), 207
Swordmaster, Dwarf (GM Character), 254
Sylvar, 78

— T —

T'skrang Nethermancer (GM Character), 248
T'skrang River Pirate (GM Character), 229
T'skrang River Villages, 28
T'skrang, 25
Tail Frenzy (Creature Ability), 285
Tail Weapon (Creature Ability), 285
Taint (Named Horror), 495
Tainted Orichalcum, 437
Talents (Creature Power), 278
Talents (Dragon Power), 402
Talents (Horror Power), 447
Talents (Spirit Power), 367
Talisman Statue (General Treasure), 189
Talismans of Dianuus, The (Legendary Treasure), 208
Task Difficulty, 87
Tasked Spirits, 361
Tattoo Claim (Horror Ability), 490
Tattoo Ritual (Horror Ability), 491
Taunt (Creature Ability), 311
Tavern Owner, Human (GM Character), 234
Tekk'sint, 79
Tellanion, Drake Form, 407
Tellanion, Human Form, 407
Temperature (Creature Ability), 344
Temperature (Spirit Power), 367
Tempter, The (Named Horror), 497
Tentacles (Creature Ability), 318
Tentacles (Horror Ability), 454
Termite, Greater (Creature), 308
Terror (Dragon Power Knack), 400
Terror (Horror Ability), 482
Terror (Horror Power), 447
Thalen (Medicinal Plant), 132
The Abyss of Aras Nehem, 494
The Amulet of Dianuus (Legendary Treasure), 208
The Blade of Alemvor (Legendary Treasure), 205
The Book of Mysteries (Grimoire), 213

The Books of Harrow, 10
The Chain of Skulls (Grimoire), 213
The Dagger of Dianuus (Legendary Treasure), 209
The Dissemination, 137
The Flydrop Coat, 437
The Forgotten City of Parlainth, 66
The Gems of Joril (Grimoire), 214
The Healing Arts, 128–135
The Ice Blade of Omifan (Legendary Treasure), 205
The Kingdom of Death, 134
The Law of Similarity, 141
The Little Troll's Helm (Legendary Treasure), 206
The Midnight Grimoire (Grimoire), 214
The Pipes of Wrongness, 439
The Rites of Passage and Protection, 12
The Robe of Dianuus (Legendary Treasure), 209
The Scarab of Ilithor (Legendary Treasure), 206
The Scourge, 8–15
The Skull of Maarberg, 438
The Sock of Granak (Legendary Treasure), 207
The Sword of Fentheri (Legendary Treasure), 207
The Talismans of Dianuus (Legendary Treasure), 208
The Tempter (Named Horror), 497
The Twilight Staff (Legendary Treasure), 209
Theran Airship Fleet, 71
Theran Calendar, 17
Theran Empire, The, 16
Theran Ground Forces, 72
Theran Military Forces, 71
Theran Slavers, 43
Theran Spy, Windling (GM Character), 233
Theran Tongue, 20
Theran Windling Spy (GM Character), 233
Thief, Human (GM Character), 256
Thorn Man (Spirit), 377
Thorn Man Spear (General Treasure), 190
Thorn Man Spear (Spirit Ability), 377
Thought Mirror (Horror Ability), 460
Thought Probe (Dragon Power Knack), 399
Thought Worm (Horror Ability), 491
Thought Worm (Horror Power), 447
Thoughts of Despair (Horror Ability), 461
Thread Armor Table, 170
Thread Armor, 170–172
Thread Items, 164–180
Thread Melee Weapons Table, 165
Thread Missile Weapons Table, 166
Thread Object Table, 173
Thread Objects, 173–180
Thread Shield Table, 172
Thread Shields, 172–173
Thread Throwing Weapons Table, 166
Thread Weapons, 165–170
Threads, Detecting (Option), 74
Three-Axe (Thread Weapon), 169
Throal Mountains, 55
Throalic Calendar, 17
Throne, 78
Throwing Axe (Thread Weapon), 169
Thunder Chimera (Creature), 290
Thunder Mountains, 54
Thunderbolt Thrower, 150
Thundra Beast (Creature), 348
Tiger (Creature), 348
Tire Others (Creature Ability), 352
Tire Others (Creature Power), 278
Tome of Memory (Legendary Treasure), 210
Tormenting Voice (Horror Ability), 461
Towers, 28
Towns, 26
Trade, 39–41
Trailfruit (Medicinal Plant), 132
Tranceweed (Medicinal Plant), 132
Transform (Spirit Ability), 374
Transport (Horror Ability), 493
Transport Vedette (Airship), 156
Traps, 108–110, 115, 116
  Blade, 109
  Cave-In, 116
  Dart, 109
  Explosive Gas, 115
  Kaer Ward, 109
  Mantrap, 110
  Pit, 110
  Spike, 110
  Ward, 110
Travar, 30
Travar, Rulers of, 30
Travel Hazards, 116–119, 147
Travel Rate Table, 112, 513
Travel, Airship, 46–48, 114
Travel, Land, 42–45, 112–113
Travel, River, 45–46, 113
Travel, Underground, 115–116
Traveling, 112–116
Treasures, Creating New, 161–163, 164
Trespass, 43
Triplicant (Creature), 349
Triplicate (Creature Power), 278
Triumph, The, 71
Troajin (Creature), 349
Troll City Watch (GM Character), 222
Troll Sky Raider (GM Character), 252
Troll Weaponsmith (GM Character), 262
Troll, Cave (Creature), 286
Trolls, 24
Troubadour, Elf (GM Character), 258
True Fire (Creature Ability), 301
True Sight (Dragon Power Knack), 399
Truefang (Legendary Treasure), 211
Twilight Peaks, 55
Twilight Staff, The (Legendary Treasure), 209
Twinbolts (Creature Ability), 320
Tylon Mountains, 55

— U —

Ubyr (Named Horror), 499
Unfriendly, 90
Unicorn (Creature), 349
Unicorn, Post-Scourge (Creature), 350
Unicorn, Pre-Scourge (Creature), 350
Unique Treasures, 192–212
Unnatural Life (Horror Power), 447
Urupa, 29
Urupa, Rulers of 29
Usun, 430

— V —

Vasdenjas, 431
Vedette, Military (Airship), 156
Vedette, Mining (Airship), 156
Vedette, Transport (Airship), 156
Vedettes, 143
Velos (Creature), 350
Venna's Armor (Legendary Treasure), 212
Venom (Creature Ability), 335
Venom (Creature Power), 278
Venom (Dragon Power), 402
Verjigorm (Named Horror), 501
Vestrivan, 432
Veteran Guard, Human (GM Character), 235
Vetta (Creature), 351
Vetta-Skin Bridle (Thread Object), 179
Vial (Thread Object), 179
Villages, 26
Villages, T'skrang River, 28
Vines, Creeping (Creature), 292
Vines, Poison (Creature), 330
Viraas (Creature), 352
Visibility Table, 117, 513
Visibility, 117–118
Vitality of the Ages (Horror Ability), 503
Vivane, 32
Vivane, Ruler of, 33
Volus (Creature), 352
Vreela (Medicinal Plant), 133
Vrontok, 71
Vulnerability to Air (Spirit Ability), 375
Vulnerability to Earth (Spirit Ability), 369
Vulnerability to Fire (Creature Ability), 282, 283
Vulnerability to Fire (Horror Ability), 450, 454
Vulnerability to Fire (Spirit Ability), 377
Vulnerability to Light (Spirit Ability), 370
Vulnerability to Salt (Creature Ability), 281
Vulnerability to Water (Creature Ability), 302, 352
Vulnerability to Water (Spirit Ability), 373
Vulnerability to Wood (Spirit Ability), 371

— W —

Wake Blood Oak (Creature Ability), 337
Walking Fever (Disease), 127
Wand (Thread Object), 180
War Dog (Creature), 294
War Helm of Landis (General Treasure), 190
War Horse (Creature), 313
Ward Trap, 110
Warrior, Elf (GM Character), 260
Wasp, Blood (Creature), 283
Wastes, The, 64–66
Water Spirits (Spirit): 375
  Strength Rating 1–4 (Spirit), 375
  Strength Rating 5–8 (Spirit), 375
  Strength Rating 9–12 (Spirit), 375
  Strength Rating 13–15 (Spirit), 375
Water Strider (Creature), 353
Water, Bad, 120
Water, The Plane of, 79
Water Jet (Creature Ability), 327
Waxman (Horror Construct), 450
Weapons, Ship, 150–152
Weaponsmith, Troll (GM Character), 262
Weather, 49, 117
Web Trap (Creature Ability), 306
Well of Souls, 77
Whadrya Venom (Poison), 124
Whip of Defense (General Treasure), 190
Whirlclaw (Creature), 354
Wild Boar (Creature), 354
Will o' the Wisp (Creature), 355
Windling Archer (GM Character), 238
Windling Cup of Friendship (General Treasure), 191
Windling Illusionist (GM Character), 246
Windlings, 26
Wingbeat (Dragon Power), 402
Wingflayer (Minor Horror), 466
Witherfang (Creature), 356
Witherfang Venom (Poison), 124
Wizard, Human (GM Character), 264
Wolf (Creature), 357
Wolf, Pack Leader (Alpha Wolf) (Creature), 357
Wolf, Pack Member (Creature), 357
Wolf, Storm (Creature), 347
Wood Lion (Creature), 356
Wood Spirits (Spirit): 376–377
  Thorn Man (Spirit), 377
  Strength Rating 1–4 (Spirit), 376
  Strength Rating 5–8 (Spirit), 376
  Strength Rating 9–12 (Spirit), 376
  Strength Rating 13–15 (Spirit), 376
Wood, The Plane of, 79
Wooden Airships, 141–142
Wormskull (Minor Horror), 467
Wraith, Fire (Creature), 302
Wrist Carver (Thread Weapon), 170
Wyvern, Average, 411
Wyverns, 410–411
Wyvern-Skin Robe (Thread Armor), 172

— Y —

Yellow Jig (Disease), 127
Ysrthgrathe (Named Horror), 504

— Z —

Zoak (Creature), 357

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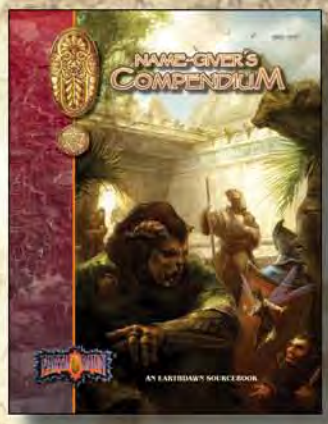

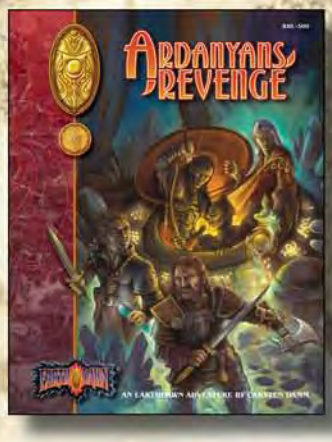

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