

KEPT IN THE DARK



AN EARTHDAWN ADVENTURE
BY GARY BOWERBANK

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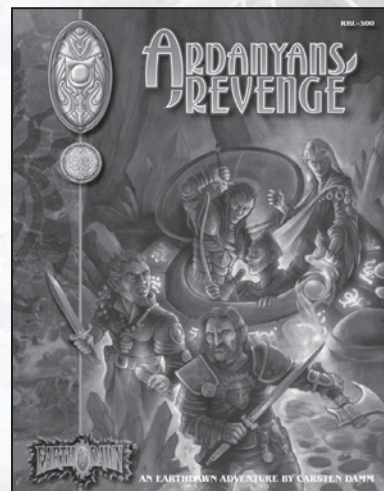
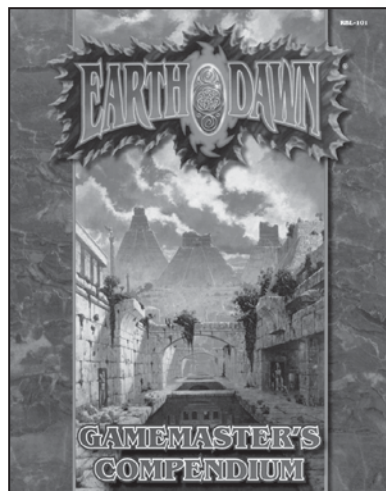
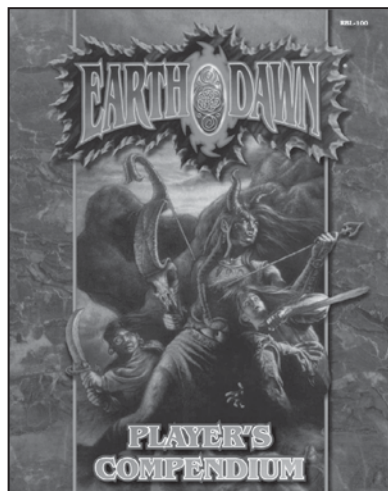
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KEPT IN THE DARK

Have you lost what little sense the Passions gave you? Imagine a scholar of your age wandering the Servos! And where will that leave me? Less one able scholar, that's where. At least have the decency to take a scribe, so we can record how you meet your end.

• **Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records, berates Wivin Akarem** •



Kept in the Dark is an adventure scenario designed for four to six First and Second Circle adepts of any Discipline, and intends to show players the dangers of entering the wilds of Barsaive.

In this adventure, the characters are hired by a scholar from the fabled Library of Throal to accompany him and his assistant into the dangerous depths of the Servos Jungle. There he hopes to find an almost forgotten healing herb which can reputedly relieve a host of a multitude of ailments, even, it is rumored, Horror-borne sickness. While fighting the natural hazards of the jungle, the characters will also encounter a group of Therans, which may prompt the characters to action beyond their employer's brief.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

Kept in the Dark is presented as a series of events. Each is described for the gamemaster, who should use the information given to run each section. There is little text to be read aloud to the players, meaning the gamemaster will have to describe many of the scenes to the characters as he sees fit. Where possible the text describes the terrain and areas the characters will travel through, but much of the detail is left to the gamemaster to devise.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Wivin Akarem is a man, or rather dwarf, with a mission. The Traveled Scholar has set out from the Great Library of Throal to (re)discover a rare fungus in the Servos Jungle which can reputedly alleviate the symptoms of disease, and is supposed to cure Horror-spawned ailments. After many months of researching he found his way to a source of the mushrooms. From fragmented stories and old books and

scrolls he has pieced together the rough location of an old temple which should still contain (at the very least) some of the spores which he hopes to cultivate.

The years have not been overly kind to Wivin however and although his ever faithful and enthusiastic scribe (a windling Named Skreet) has come along in attendance, there is more help needed than that. Wivin is an old Name-giver, his eyesight is failing—he constantly wears crystal eye glasses—his back is arched, making him seem small even for a dwarf and he suffers many aches and pains, including a terrible cough garnered from too many years in dusty libraries and not enough fresh air.

Wivin hopes to use his library funding to procure some adepts or other likely types to help him on his expedition. Unfortunately, a lot of the characters he has met around the lake seem unsavory and he has grown despondent (they're not at all like the adventurers he's read about...). On the upside, Skreet isn't at all put off and is scouring the local area looking for young, fit Name-givers looking for some exciting work exploring the wilds. Who wouldn't want to do *that*...?

PLOT SYNOPSIS

The characters find themselves with little money or lack of adventure near the shores of Lake Pyros, where they are hired by Wivin Akarem to accompany him into the Servos Jungle in search of a rare healing fungus. Once they have met Wivin and his zealous assistant Skreet the Windling, the group will swiftly leave the safety of civilization for the wilds of the Servos.

The characters' first morning of travel is hot and sultry in the jungle and an encounter with primitive humans could lead to violence if not properly handled, otherwise it may just unnerve cautious players. As the rain begins to lash at the characters, they must tread carefully to avoid

being swept off their feet and another of the jungle's inhabitants, this time a giant serpent, assails the group as they struggle through the elements.

An uncomfortable night follows and trouble with crojen and disease further add to the character's woes. With dampened spirits the next day, the characters happen upon some jungle t'skrang, which is a great opportunity to gain some allies if handled with care. A night in the safety of a t'skrang village follows if the characters choose, otherwise yet another visitor descends upon the group during the night, perhaps leaving eggs impregnated in an unwilling host.

After receiving a boost from their newfound allies, the characters head deeper into the hostile jungle, only to come across a Theran hunting party. Typically arrogant, the Theran noble baits the group hoping for conflict. The characters can avoid this with clever roleplaying or stony silence.

Once past this obstacle, the group finally reaches their goal. Within a ruined temple devoted to the Passion Jaspre, the characters will uncover magical flora they seek, along with hints of a Horror and possibly an attack from yet another of the Servos' denizens, an inshalata hungry for Name-giver flesh.

As the group returns, disease once again makes its mark. Wise characters can avoid contracting anything unpleasant with the aid of their newfound plant, but the rains start again and nothing can be done about that. After some travel the group comes upon an abandoned t'skrang village and find an escaped slave, who surely they feel honor bound to aid (especially with a Throalic dwarf with them).

The following day jungle drums are heard and the Theran noble appears, chased by jungle t'skrang. It is up to the players how they handle this, but the Theran will make tempting offers in return for his life, eventually fleeing if they decline, abandoning further slaves with the characters. After an encounter with the pursuing t'skrang, the characters eventually make it back to Lake Pyros and safety.

THEME AND MOOD

Initiate adepts may well have started from humble beginnings and yearn for the excitement and adventure of discovering long forgotten treasures or other such things that are sung of by Troubadours and fill the books of the Great Library. Although common Name-givers struggle to (and by and large) make a decent living in the wake of the Scourge and invasion by the Therans, their existence is

brittle and still under threat. This Shard aims to show players the dangers of Barsaive that lurk just around the corner, not a stone's throw from the relative safety of a village.

The initial part of this adventure should be light and upbeat, especially in order to contrast with later portions. The characters meet various cheerful folk in a relatively safe part of Barsaive. Engender the feeling of common people carving out a life for themselves on the shores of a river as a pleasant back drop, but before the players get bored of the humdrum surroundings, they get an offer of an exciting adventure into the Servos. Use Skreet to up the tempo and give tales of heroism and success to lift the spirits of the characters.

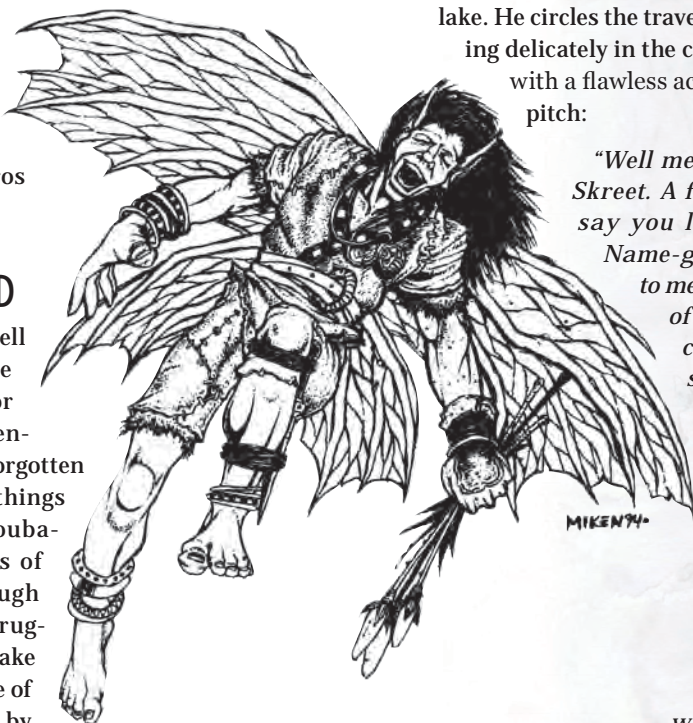
As the story progresses however, the mood should darken. The facade that everything is well in the world steadily disintegrates, as the Servos closes in and the harsh realities of a life of adventure make themselves plain. It should feel like the environment itself is against the characters. Don't forget to use all the senses and include description of how they feel and what they hear (not just what they see). Half-heard sounds and other devices increase the sense of menace.

The journey should be an ordeal, with things steadily going from bad to worse, but should ultimately lead to success. It is up to the players to cope with the pressures and trials that assail them, proving their potential as heroes to eventually become the stuff of legends.

SKREET'S PROPOSAL

The characters find themselves sat around a traveler's rest on the banks of the Serpent, near the glowing shores of Lake Pyros. As they idly chat about their travels and watch the riverboats pass they are approached by a windling, who comes flitting in from the direction of the lake. He circles the travelers once or twice before landing delicately in the center of the group. He speaks with a flawless accent. Presently, he begins his pitch:

"Well met travelers, my Name is Skreet. A fine day is it not? I must say you look as fine a bunch of Name-givers as one might hope to meet — strong of arm, bright of eye and full of youthful curiosity no doubt? On such a beautiful day it would be a shame for you all to just languish here, baking in the hot sun, when you could be in the shade by fine lodgings, drinking at my master's expense. Come now fellows, what say you? Shall we adjourn to the village down the way and you can speak with the wise and venerable Wivin



Akarem, esteemed scholar at the Great Library of Throal? He may have just the task to fill your day and maybe your pockets as well. What say you?

Skreet will continue unabated for several minutes if the characters do not immediately agree and will continue to persist until they relent — after all, what is the harm in meeting for a drink and free breakfast? Presuming the group assents, Skreet will happily guide them back down the trail to meet Wivin. Along the way he will ask questions and try to ascertain the value of this group. Tailor his questions to the looks of the group.

Skreet might ask a heavily armed character if he is a Warrior, or a character in a robe what type of magician he is. He will also ask where the group hails from, where they have been and what perils they fought. As he has spent a lot of time in libraries reading about adventures, he is predisposed to think of the characters as heroes in the making and so will swallow almost anything they tell him of their prowess and vouch for them to his Master later on.

SKREET, WINDLING SCRIBE

Attributes

DEX (11): 5/D8 **STR** (5): 3/D4 **TOU** (8): 4/D6
PER (16): 7/D12 **WIL** (12): 5/D8 **CHA** (12): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 9 **Initiative:** 5/D8
Spell Defense: 9 **Physical Armor:** 3
Social Defense: 7 **Mystic Armor:** 1
Death Rating: 28 **Recovery Tests:** 2
Wound Threshold: 7 **Knockdown:** 3/D4
Unconsciousness Rating: 19

Combat Movement: 8/26⁺

Full Movement: 16/52⁺

⁺ The second value is the character's flying Movement rate.

Skills

Artisan:

Storytelling (2): 7/D12

Knowledge:

Botany (1): 8/2D6

Legends and Heroes (1): 8/2D6

Windling History (1): 8/2D6

General:

Conversation (2): 7/D12

Melee Weapons (1): 6/D10

Read and Write Language (2): 9/D8+D6

— Dwarf (Throalic), Windling

Research (1): 8/2D6

Speak Language (4): 11/D10+D8

— Dwarf (Throalic), Human, T'skrang, Windling

Equipment

Leather (Phys 3)

Windling Dagger (Damage 4/D6; Range 9–15–18)

Adventurer's Kit

Windling Trail Rations (1 week)

Traveler's Garb
Windling Waterskin
Writing Kit
Journal

Loot

20 silver pieces

Legend Points

45 Legend Points

Notes

The character possesses the windling racial abilities of Astral-Sensitive Sight, Flight, and Increased Physical Defense.

Commentary

Skreet is a windling scribe studying under Wivin. His boundless curiosity and thirst for knowledge led him to want to become a great scribe. Wivin was the only Traveled Scholar who would allow Skreet to become his apprentice. As a result of Wivin believing in him, Skreet's loyalty to Wivin is without question. Skreet is extremely talkative and loves to both tell and hear stories. Skreet seems to have endless enthusiasm, as he is excited about finally going on an expedition into the field with Wivin for the first time.

MEETING WIVIN

A short while later the group approaches a small village on the shores of Lake Pyros. Long before they reach the village proper they have seen the glistening of the lake and several craft on the water. Various Name-givers inhabit the local area, although predominantly dwarves and humans inhabit this particular village (Golden Shore). Children play in the street and some women go about chores, keeping one eye on the errant kids about the place. Apart from them, the village is more or less deserted as everyone else is in the fertile fields. A small militia remains behind, but they are largely the old. Not much of a defense is needed in an area such as this, with plenty of Name-givers in a relatively small location. Still, the characters are eyed suspiciously at first, until Skreet hails the watch and then they are greeted more warmly.

Skreet guides the characters to a large house which extends on stilts out into the water. On the veranda sits an elderly dwarf. Although he is old in body, he is still sharp in mind. He quickly assesses the group and realizes they are not as experienced or accomplished as he would hope for, but they are the best he is likely to get in the circumstances and he needs to get cracking soon or he will be recalled by Merrox, who was skeptical enough of this sabbatical as it was. He begins...

"Greetings adepts, for I see you are such. Take a seat and enjoy Fraya's fine hospitality—I have lodged here a short while and find the food homely but excellent".



The characters can seat themselves and relish the smoked fish and honeyed yoghurt that is on offer. Fraya, the motherly dwarf who owns the place, also provides watered wine and apologizes to any trolls or other large folk about the lack of seating, but suggests they sit facing the river and dangle their legs over the sides as the view is spectacular (and it is). Wivin continues, with his usual coughing and wheezing...

"I have neglected to introduce myself to you, how terribly remiss. I am Wivin Akarem, Senior Scholar to the Great Library of Throal. Perhaps you have heard of me? No? Regardless I have need of some able folk such as yourselves.

After many years of painstaking research I have discovered the location of possible cache of gray-top ashala spores. Incredibly exciting, I know—I'm surprised you can contain yourselves so well. I intend to set off this very day to that secret location and recover as large a sample as I can manage. Unfortunately I am old and not the dwarf I once was. A fine figure in my day I can tell you, many a head I turned, but I digress...

In order to last the perils of a journey into the Servos I require your help. Obviously the chance to be part of the expedition that once more brought gray-top ashala back to Barsaive is reward in and of itself, but I was young once and understand that you will all have things that require a more substantial incentive. As such the Great Library is willing to pay you one hundred silvers a piece for the task, with all living expenses included. In addition you will have my gratitude, and a favor such as that is not to be sniffed at. I have no doubt that young Skreet here will write up a glorious account of events and your exploits will be archived into the Great Library for all time.

Well, with such generous terms, how can you resist? What say you? Are you as keen and vital as

Skreet suggests, or are you more eager to try your hand at fishing or farming for the next week?

Hmmm?"

WIVIN AKAREM, THIRD CIRCLE TRAVELED SCHOLAR

Attributes

DEX (9): 4/D6 **STR** (10): 5/D8 **TOU** (10): 5/D8
PER (16): 7/D12 **WIL** (16): 7/D12 **CHA** (15): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 6 **Initiative:** 4/D6
Spell Defense: 9 **Physical Armor:** 3
Social Defense: 8 **Mystic Armor:** 2
Death Rating: 31 (49) **Recovery Tests:** 2
Wound Threshold: 8 **Knockdown:** 5/D8
Unconsciousness Rating: 22 (37)

Combat Movement: 14
Full Movement: 28

Karma Points: 11 **Karma Die:** 4/D6

Talents

Astral Sight (1): 8/2D6
Book Memory ^D (4): 11/D10+D8
Durability (6/5) (3): 3
Evidence Analysis (3): 10/D10+D6
Item History ^D (3): 10/D10+D6
Karma Ritual (3): 3
Melee Weapons (3): 7/D12
Read and Write Language ^D (4): 11/D10+D8
— Human, Sperethiel, T'skrang, Windling
Research ^D (4): 11/D10+D8
Search ^D (1): 8/2D6
Speak Language ^D (3): 10/D10+D6
— Human, T'skrang, Windling

Skills

Artisan:

Wood Carving (2): 8/2D6

Knowledge:

Botany (5): 12/2D10
Creature Lore (3): 10/D10+D6
Passion Lore (1): 8/2D6
Legends and Heroes (3): 10/D10+D6
Throal Politics (2): 9/D8+D6

General:

Alchemy (2): 9/D8+D6
Animal Handling (1): 8/2D6
Conversation (1): 7/D12
Etiquette (1): 7/D12
Navigation (2): 9/D8+D6
Read and Write Language (1): 8/2D6
— Dwarf (Throalic)
Speak Language (2): 9/D8+D6
— Dwarf (Throalic), Sperethiel
Streetwise (1): 8/2D6
Throwing Weapons (1): 5/D8

Loot

170 silver pieces, 60 gold pieces

Legend Points

140 Legend Points

Equipment

Leather Armor (Phys 3)

Dwarf Sword (Damage 8/2D6; w/scabbard)

2 × Daggers (Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18)

Adventurer's Kit

Arcane Tomes

Wood Carving Tools

Crystal Eyeglasses

Navigation Charts in Map/Scroll Case

Scrolls in Map Scroll Cases

Trail Rations (2 weeks)

Wealthy Traveler's Garb

Waterskin

Writing Kit

Notes

The adept possesses the dwarf racial ability of Heat Sight.

Commentary

Wivin Akarem is an elderly dwarf Traveled Scholar who works for the Library of Throal under Merrox. Currently on a sabbatical from the Great Library, Wivin is in search of the fabled gray-top ashala spores that are rumored to be able to cure any disease. Following a lead gleaned after years of painstaking research pointing to the Servos Jungle, Wivin has traveled to Golden Shore near Lake Pyros, accompanied by Skreet. Wivin is using the town of Golden Shore as a base to plan his trip into the Servos Jungle to procure the mushrooms, as well as looking for bodyguards to protect himself and Skreet on this adventure.

Wivin has been struck by the physical malaise that come with age. Years of poring over and deciphering small and almost unreadable texts have ruined his eyesight, forcing him to rely on his crystal eyeglasses to see. His back is arched from many long nights hunching over texts in the Great Library. He has developed a nagging cough from years of breathing dusty and mildew-covered tomes. Despite his physical problems, his mental acumen has not dulled with age. Wivin recruited Skreet to act as his eyes and ears in Golden Shore and to help recruit adventurers for the task at hand. He becomes more depressed and impatient with each day Skreet is unable to find heroes to aid them, as he fears Merrox will soon recall him to the Library of Throal.

PREPARING FOR THE JOURNEY

Wivin has allowed a further two hundred silvers for expenses and although he sends Skreet to arrange three pack mules and sufficient rations, he has bought no other

supplies other than his own tent, books, notes, inks and quills or other paraphernalia. He knows little of rough travel and is relying on the characters to organize anything that might be needed. If necessary, he can provide a further hundred in silver, but must be persuaded. This is not hard to do, as he has little idea what is really needed, but he wants to make sure that the Library's coin is not being squandered unnecessarily. The characters can purchase mundane items of all sorts in Golden Shore, such as clothing, lanterns, bedrolls, tents, weapons, armor, and livestock. Magical items are restricted to healing aids only, at the gamemaster's discretion.

The group has an opportunity to gather information before they embark on their trip. Speaking to the locals about the jungle will garner about a fifty-fifty cache of good information to bad. Largely everyone warns that the jungle is dangerous and to be careful if one really insists on going in, although staying out all together would be best. Information they may retrieve is in the **Rumors** section, below.

After the characters' arrangements have been made, the group should be ready to set off around midday after a fine lunch of cold meats and fresh garden vegetables. Wivin rides one mule; with the expedition gear stored on the other two. Skreet spends his time flitting between the characters, sitting on their shoulders and swapping tales of legends and heroes. While his cheerfulness and enthusiasm is infectious at first, it may soon become grating.

RUMORS

People around the village of Golden Shore have the following to say about the Servos and the expedition if asked:

Fishermen

"The Servos? Has cannibals in it, my lad! A taste for Name-giver flesh they have and a large appetite. Steer clear of those my friend, sharpen their teeth on rocks they do those primitives. Better to take your chances with a crojen."

Housewives

"Be careful in there young master. Full of beasts is the jungle and careful what you eat — everything is poisonous. It'll be better when we've cleared the trees and made good farm land."

Kids

"There's monsters in there, Dad says. Can I come, I want to see? Will you get eaten up?"

Wivin

"Well the Servos sprang back up after the Scourge — within a hundred years it is as large and lush as you see now. Some say it is Horror tainted, but those things destroy not create, especially such lush abundance of life. A vast array of flora and fauna, very exciting. Native peoples live in there — primitive Name-givers who survived the



Scourge without the help of Thera or Throal. It would be quite interesting to talk to them don't you think? Perhaps on my next expedition..."

Skreet

"I've read everything about it — there's a dragon in there I'm sure, perhaps we'll meet it! That would be excellent — imagine the stories it knows! And I'm pretty sure we shouldn't eat the tree frogs with yellow stripes on their backs."

Farmers

"Keep sharp lookout lads and fire close to you at night, beasts are generally wary of a fire. You'd be better of carving yourself out a farm than going wandering in there. It might seem an exciting life, but it'll be a short one, I promise you that much. Take care and let the Passions guide you."

Fraya

"It's very exciting isn't it? Master Skreet says he's going to write about me in a paper that will sit in the Great Library at Throal no less! Apparently I'll be famous as the owner of the lodgings where it all started. From humble beginnings and all that. I'm so proud."

EAVES OF THE SERVOS

The group spends the rest of the day traveling along the lake and then inland through the rich, cultivated land, towards the looming Servos Jungle. They pass many folk working in the fields and soon think themselves lucky that they are doing something with their lives, rather than toiling in the heat. Towards the end of the day the farmers

head back from the fields, tired after the day's labor and the characters approach the eaves of the jungle. This far from the river there is only the odd farmstead dotted about, pushing back the wilds. Wivin suggests that they set up camp for the evening. He asks the characters to set up his tent as he is not in the best of health and wheezes appropriately if necessary (clearly Skreet isn't up to the task, being barely sixteen inches tall)! He enjoys a warm meal with the group and will happily bore them with tales of various flora and fauna to be found in these parts, before casually throwing a comment about carnivorous plants and man-eating insects. He then beds down and leaves the group to decide on watches. Skreet offers to help — as long as he has someone to talk to — but otherwise it is up to the players what their characters do.

If the group fails to set a watch properly then a brithan will disturb them during the night, attracted into the camp by the smells of the cooking fire. Otherwise, any activity in the camp (such as Skreet's incessant chattering) will keep the beast at bay.

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: 32

Full Movement: 64

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 describe 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. Refer to p. 284 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium** for more information and special rules.

UNDER A DARK CANOPY

The next day promises to be as bright and warm as the previous one, with the rising glow of the sun to the east masked by trees and complemented by the now faint early morning fog of the Pyros Lake to the south. As the group enters under the canopy it is quite cool, although the char-

acters may be surprised when the heat rises later in the day despite the shade. Around the edges of the Servos, outside the canopy, the undergrowth is quite thick and requires some strenuous work to hack through, but once inside the jungle the floor clears out a little, as plants starved off sunlight by the thick covering leaves above struggle to grow. The morning passes fairly uneventfully and after a short break for lunch where Wivin consults his map, notes and sextant several times, the journey continues. After an hour or two following an animal trail a snake suddenly darts out in front of Wivin's mule causing it to buck. The librarian is thrown from his mount and suffers a nasty bump. The characters must be quick thinking and decisive to stop the creature before it bites the mule or Wivin himself.

After this excitement, little else happens — Wivin seems generally okay, although a little shaken and one lens of his eye glasses was stamped on by the frightened mule so that he has to squint to see clearly and takes more time over his deliberations. The group can find a clearing towards dusk and bed down. Sentries on watch may get the feeling that they are being watched (and indeed they are — by Cathan scouts) but they will not get a clear sighting. As long as they are not overly aggressive they have little to fear at this stage, aside from ravenous insects (which Skreet complains about frequently: *"They're huge! Nearly as big as me!"*).

THE NEXT MORNING

The following morning promises a day as sticky and uncomfortable as the last from the sultry feel of the air. A good breakfast of fried sausages is enough to rouse Wivin who seems none the worse now from his encounter with the snake, apart from the obvious optical issue. Soon, camp is broken and the group can continue. Within an hour the group starts descending down a fairly steep gorge, sticking close to the valley wall. The chattering of monkeys and parrots can be heard overhead and the incessant hiss and buzz of insects arises from below. Three or four more hours sees the bottom of the valley floor (which declines further) and a break for a meal and for Wivin to get his bearings. As the group assembles, sharp-eyed members may notice (with a successful Perception (9) Test) that a loose collection of primitive humans are watching them from the trees. They are hard to spot as their olive bodies are covered in tattoos mimicking the dappling effect of the sun and they are dressed in loose scraps of natural materials.

They are armed with bows, but not overtly hostile. If challenged they will respond. They are concerned about slavers or other Therans, but will offer to show the group to a t'skrang village to save themselves if the group seems hostile. They are happy to discuss the local surrounding and state of affairs and will give advice based on how generous the characters are to them with trade goods (metal weapons or anything else they have difficulty procuring). If offered violence they will fight in skirmish style with two at a time providing covering fire with their bows, while the others retreat through the trees and then cover their friends. They will then return later with a larger force, attacking from ambush and using snares, hoping to capture the group and sell them to the Therans.

CATHAN SCOUTS (8)

Attributes

DEX (15): 6/D10 **STR** (8): 4/D6 **TOU** (11): 5/D8
PER (13): 6/D10 **WIL** (9): 4/D6 **CHA** (9): 4/D6

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 8 **Initiative:** 6/D10
Spell Defense: 7 **Physical Armor:** 3
Social Defense: 6 **Mystic Armor:** 0
Death Rating: 32 **Recovery Tests:** 2
Wound Threshold: 8 **Knockdown:** 4/D6
Unconsciousness Rating: 24
Combat Movement: 30 **Full Movement:** 60

Skills

Artisan:

Tattooing (1): 5/D8

Knowledge:

Botany (1): 7/D12

Creature Lore (1): 7/D12

Snares and Traps (1): 7/D12

General:

Avoid Blow (2): 8/2D6

Climbing (2): 8/2D6

Melee Weapons (1): 7/D12

Missile Weapons (2): 8/2D6

Hunting (2): 8/2D6

Silent Walk (1): 7/D12

Speak Language (2): 8/2D6

— Dwarf (Throalic), Human (Cathan)

Tracking (2): 8/2D6

Wilderness Survival (2): 8/2D6

Equipment

Leather (Phys 3)

Bone Dagger (Damage 5/D8; Range 9–15–18)

Shortbow (Damage 7/D12; Range 30–60–120)

Quiver (w/20 shortbow arrows)

Belt Pouch

Peasant's Garb

Tattooing Tools

Waterskin

Loot

D4 silver pieces

Legend Points

50 Legend Points

Commentary

A Cathan scouting party sent out to protect a nearby Cathan village. They have many duties including putting down crojen snares to keep those predators away from the village, hunting and gathering, as well as ambushing jungle t'skrang, jungle elves, and others wandering too close to the Cathan village. The olive skinned and tattooed Cathan easily blend into the Servos Jungle making it difficult to



see them (Detection Difficulty 9). Cathans are cowardly and as a rule avoid direct confrontations, preferring instead to use ambushes and snares to defeat their enemies.

TORRENTS DESCEND

As the group continues on their way the heavens open in the early afternoon and warm rain joins the cloying heat. The group travels along the valley floor, which soon becomes a stream and then a small river, and then continues with the waters up to the mules' bellies. The going is difficult, with roots and other obstacles now hidden under the silt-laden water rushing down the valley. A huge snake, eager for a meal, will target unwary characters fumbling in the shallows. The snake hides in the swampy water, but can be detected with a successful Perception (10) Test.

If it is not spotted, the snake will attack the first character passing by from behind by surprise (see **Surprised** on p. 409 of the **Player's Compendium**). Anyone fighting in the sodden ground must make a Knockdown (5) Test each round or fall prone. The snake will try to paralyze the group one by one with its venom, before swallowing them whole.

GIANT VIPER

DEX: 5	STR: 8	TOU: 7
PER: 3	WIL: 5	CHA: 4
Initiative: 5	Physical Defense: 7	
Number of Actions: 1	Spell Defense: 4	
Attack (2): 7	Social Defense: 6	
Damage:	Physical Armor: 2	
Bite (3): 11	Mystic Armor: 1	

Death Rating: 40 **Recovery Tests:** 3
Wound Threshold: 11 **Knockdown:** Immune
Unconsciousness Rating: 32

Combat Movement: 20 **Full Movement:** 40

Powers: Climbing^S (2): 7, Enhanced Senses (Touch) (2): 5, Heat Sight, Poison (SD 7; Paralysis; see text), Silent Walk^S (2): 7

Legend Points: 90

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Unheard of before the Scourge, the Giant Viper has the head and jaws of a venomous viper and the body of a constrictor usually with lengths reaching up to twelve feet long. This huge viper finds its prey through vibrations on the jungle floor or even through the water and can sense a prey's body heat with its flicking tongue and heat sensing pits. The massive snake uses its venomous fangs to paralyze sensed prey and then unhinges its powerful, jaws to consume them whole. If this strategy fails at first, the giant viper will attempt the Grab and Bite combat option (see p. 416 of the **Player's Compendium**) to hold the prey in place by coiling around it and make additional Bite attacks until the prey fails unconscious or becomes paralyzed. At this point, the giant serpent releases its hold on the victim, allowing it to fall to the jungle floor, and then eats it.

Giant Viper Venom

Type: Paralysis

Spell Defense: 7

Onset Time: 2 rounds

Step Number: 7

Duration: Effect Test hours (see text)

For a character affected by giant viper venom, compare the poison's Effect Test result to the target's Spell Defense. On an Extraordinary result, the poison paralyzes the character for a number of hours equal to the Effect Test result. An Excellent result incurs a penalty of -3 to all of the character's Action Tests for the duration of the poison's effect. A Good result incurs a -2 penalty, and an Average result incurs a -1 penalty.

NIGHT VISITORS

After dispatching the snake, the party can continue on and after a couple more hours of trudging through the mud, the rains start to ease and the temporary river has become water logged ground, covered by a couple of inches of filthy water. Making camp is not a particularly easy task, although assembling a raised platform shouldn't be too difficult for adepts with a little woodcraft. Watches should be set as usual after a cold meal of hard tack.

Wivin's cough seems worse and he is now sneezing and shivering as well. Anyone with knowledge of diseases may identify the symptoms of Quaking Fever (see p. 126 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**). While not usually fatal, someone in Wivin's general state of health could be in danger.

During the night predators emerge as usual in the Servos and crojen are stalking the group. The tethered mules make a tempting target and, unless the characters on watch pass a Perception (12) Test to spot the beast before it attacks, they will become one. The crojen's mate may be nearby as well, depending on how well the characters handle the encounter (if they are struggling or badly wounded, it is a solitary beast). If a mule is lost in the attack, it may slow the group down or force them to abandon some equipment to maintain their pace.

Wivin does not recover during a fitful night's sleep, but at least does not get any worse. A damp drizzle seems to permeate the atmosphere and even Skreet's usually playful demeanor is dampened — though this may have something to do with his master's state more than the weather.

CROJEN (2)

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 the Servos and Liaj jungles. Small black tigers that resemble panther cubs even when fully grown, crojen are roughly two feet long and one 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. Refer to p. 292 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium** for more information and special rules.

MASKS OF WOOD

The morning travels continue after a short breakfast and the unusually quiet Skreet making some measurements on Wivin's behalf. He attentively flits around the old dwarf throughout the day, although the wizened character does little but hang on to his mule, coughing and spluttering, occasionally dozing when he can. He insists on carrying on with the mission though and genuinely doesn't care if it's the last thing he will do. He views it as his crowning glory.

Throughout the early part of the day the journey is simple enough although hot as usual. Monkeys gibber from the trees and snakes are prevalent after the recent rains. The ground is soggy underfoot, but not hazardous.

Attentive characters should make a Perception (6) Test, with the results listed below.

Poor: They notice nothing other than the usual animals.

Average: The character is sure that someone is following them.

Good: Briefly he spots a vicious animal face — maybe a Horror?

Excellent: The sharp-eyed character spots several t'skrang in large masks tracking the group.

The jungle t'skrang are cautious and are following the group to see what they are up to in the area, worried for their homes. They know some Therans are about (although they don't know who they are) and are concerned that these groups are just scouting parties ahead of a larger force, or will otherwise gather information and then come back in large numbers. Any signs of aggression by the group will result in the t'skrang running away. If followed, a few will stay behind to cover the escape of some runners who will raise the alarm and assemble hunting parties. The echoing drums will be heard for miles around as a harrowing pre-cursor to the hunt to come. Assuming the group is a little more level headed, the t'skrang are cautious, but not initially hostile.

Consider the jungle t'skrang leader to have an Unfriendly Attitude towards the characters (see p. 90 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**). Some creative roleplaying, use of talents and either offers of goods and assistance or a request for such can gain a little trust from the primitives. In game terms, the characters must increase the t'skrang leader's Attitude to Neutral to convince him they are friendly (with bonuses for the above roleplaying or others efforts). Once this is done the t'skrang congregate round (leaving one or two runners hidden in the brush just in case).

Once the characters can prove their good intentions and make convincing assurances that they will never aid the Therans in any way, the t'skrang leader—Takanth—offers to take the group back to the village to find aid for their ailing leader. Wivin wishes to continue with all haste, but is not really in any state to argue. Skreet is currently in awe of the characters—assuming they have done well so far—and wants them to make the right decision for him. If they decline, the t'skrang wish them well and ask them again to avoid the Therans. If they accept, then the jungle folk will take them swiftly through the safest routes to their village.

TAKANTH, JUNGLE T'SKRANG LEADER

Attributes

DEX (18): 7/D12 **STR** (14): 6/D10 **TOU** (15): 6/D10
PER (14): 6/D10 **WIL** (14): 6/D10 **CHA** (15): 6/D10

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 10 **Initiative:** 7/D12
Spell Defense: 8 **Physical Armor:** 3
Social Defense: 8 **Mystic Armor:** 2
Death Rating: 38 **Recovery Tests:** 3
Wound Threshold: 10 **Knockdown:** 6/D10
Unconsciousness Rating: 30
Combat Movement: 36 **Full Movement:** 72

Skills

Artisan:

Musician (Drum) (1): 7/D12

Knowledge:

Creature Lore (1): 7/D12

Servos T'skrang Lore (1): 7/D12

General:

Avoid Blow (2): 9/D8+D6

Hunting (3): 10/D10+D6

Melee Weapons (2): 9/D8+D6

Missile Weapons (3): 10/D10+D6

Speak Language (2): 8/2D6

—Dwarf (Throalic), T'skrang (Servos)

Swimming (1): 7/D12

Tactics (1): 7/D12

Tracking (3): 9/D8+D6

Unarmed Combat (2): 9/D8+D6

Wilderness Survival (3): 9/D8+D6

Equipment

Leather (Phys 3)

Bone Dagger (Damage 7/D12; Range 9–15–18)

Bone Spear (Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 18–30–36)

Blowgun (Damage 7/D12; Range 4–8–16)

Box (w/10 needles)

Longbow (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 60–120–240)

Quiver (w/20 longbow arrows)

2 × vials of Night Pollen Poison (see **Gamemaster's Compendium**, p. 123).

Belt Pouch

Carving Tools

Drum

Traveler's Garb

Waterskin

Wooden Mask

Loot

D6 silver pieces

Legend Points

135 Legend Points

Commentary

The jungle t'skrang hunting party leader was sent out by the village to direct the attacks on the Therans.

JUNGLE T'SKRANG (6)

Attributes

DEX (15): 6/D10 **STR** (12): 5/D8 **TOU** (12): 5/D8
PER (11): 5/D8 **WIL** (11): 5/D8 **CHA** (11): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 8 **Initiative:** 6/D10
Spell Defense: 7 **Physical Armor:** 3
Social Defense: 7 **Mystic Armor:** 1
Death Rating: 34 **Recovery Tests:** 2
Wound Threshold: 9 **Knockdown:** 5/D8
Unconsciousness Rating: 26
Combat Movement: 30 **Full Movement:** 60

Skills

Artisan:

Mask Carving (1): 6/D10

Knowledge:

Botany (1): 6/D10

Creature Lore (1): 6/D10

General:

Avoid Blow (2): 8/2D6

Hunting (2): 8/2D6

Melee Weapons (1): 7/D12

Missile Weapons (2): 8/2D6

Read and Write Language (1): 6/D10

—Dwarf (Throalic)

Speak Language (2): 7/D12

—Dwarf (Throalic), T'skrang (Servos)

Swimming (1): 6/D10

Tracking (2): 7/D12

Unarmed Combat (1): 7/D12

Wilderness Survival (2): 7/D12

Equipment

Leather (Phys 3)

Bone Dagger (Damage 6/D10; Range 9–15–18)

Longbow (Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 60–120–240)

Quiver (w/20 longbow arrows)

Belt Pouch

Carving Tools



Peasant's Garb
Waterskin

Loot
None

Legend Points
45 Legend Points

Commentary

A jungle t'skrang hunting party sent out to protect a nearby jungle t'skrang village. They have many duties including hunting for food and gathering, as well as hunting enemies of the jungle t'skrang including the Cathans and Therans.

The T'skrang Village

In a small lagoon, the characters can make out close to fifty half-submerged reed domes that comprise the t'skrang's homes. Many of the folk will come out to welcome the returning group and greet the newcomers. A meal is organized and small fires are assembled to cooking fresh fish as the worst of the day's heat passes. The old Shaman—referred to only as Elder—meets with the group and sees to Wivin.

He declares that he can help the man and does so with the characters' consent. He asks for any news that may help his people and warns them that bad men (Therans) are abroad and probably looking for healthy slaves like the characters themselves. He asks the leader of the group to swear a Blood Oath to keep the location of the village secret. As Wivin is in no condition he looks to one of the others to do so. If they all refuse then Skreet will step forward. Swearing the oath gains the Name-giver who did so a token

from the tribe (a carved snake skull) that will mark him as a friend of the jungle t'skrang (a player who performs this action should receive an extra Legend award at the end of the session).

The villagers offer to shelter the group for the night and keep them safe until morning. If the group accepts this genuine offer of hospitality, then they get a well-earned rest and recover from any fatigue they may be suffering. The t'skrang insist that the group stay until mid morning to avoid the late predators and then bid them farewell and pray that the great tree will look after them.

Alone in the Dark

At some point the players may decide against staying with the t'skrang or avoid them all together. If so this will mean another night on the jungle floor. During the middle watch, a Death Moth flies out of the darkness hoping to paralyze the sentry with fear and lay its eggs in his tender flesh. The t'skrang may be able to help remove the larvae, if they can be found again at some time later.

DEATH MOTH

DEX: 7 **STR:** 3 **TOU:** 3
PER: 4 **WIL:** 4 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 7 **Physical Defense:** 9
Number of Actions: 1 **Spell Defense:** 5
Attack (1): 8 **Social Defense:** 8
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 2
Stinger (1): 4 **Mystic Armor:** 0
Death Rating: 26 **Recovery Tests:** 1
Wound Threshold: 6 **Knockdown:** 3
Unconsciousness Rating: 17

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.

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 two feet or so with a wingspan of five 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. 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 and a horrible, leering face peering up from the death moth's underbelly. Refer to p. 293 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium** for more information and special rules.

HUNTING, THE NOBLE ART

As the group continues their journey the next day, they see that Wivin has recovered slightly and is on the mend after some medicine and a good night's sleep in safety. Skreet is also in better spirits, constantly chattering, especially to Wivin, but also the others, frequently seeking confirmation: *"Everything is going to be alright, isn't it?"* and *"We are going to succeed aren't we?"*

After a couple of hours travel, the characters see the dead bole of a tree — twenty feet high and rotting in a small clearing ahead — surrounded by three or four other decaying trunks of large trees that may pose a problem for the mules to cross. They should make a Perception (8) Test if they are keeping a lookout, with results as follows:

Poor: They notice nothing other than the usual animals.

Average: They are aware of another group moving some way off to the east.

Good: A huge (7 feet tall) mantis seems to be standing by a tree up ahead, half concealed.

Excellent: The eagle eyes of the character spot the figure as a Name-giver dressed in chitinous segments of insect carapace — he grins at them.

If the characters spot the hunter and hail him he is mildly impressed with this bunch of Name-givers; if not, he will add extra scorn into his comments. A Theran hunting party is scouring the area looking for sport in exotic beasts. This fellow is one of them — Rancar by Name — a minor noble who is bored of politicking and has come out to the wilderness on the fringes of the Empire, thinking this the best place to find things worthy of sport. He has so far caught an inshalata and used its hide for armor. He is a Warrior and therefore not someone with whom to cause trouble, unless one is a very capable fighter. His companions are not far behind and will come out of cover once it is clear that there are to be no immediate hostilities. If the characters decide to start trouble, the Therans are more than happy to oblige. That is what they are here for after all. The Therans are more interested in humiliating their opponents than outright slaughter though, and so they'll give the characters ample opportunity to back off and lick their wounds.

DEALING WITH THE THERANS

Rancar is haughty and in many ways typical of his kind. He will take great pleasure in jibing his new prey and try and force a duel of 'honor' out of one of them. He aims to humiliate these backwater Name-givers (as he sees them) and offers a fight to first blood. He will not back down from anything up to and including a fight to the death if offered, as he cannot afford to lose face in front of his companions. Those cohorts are: an ork Scout to hunt down his prey, an elven Troubadour to sing his praises and increase his legend and another human Warrior who is his protégé. His mundane followers include six soldiers of the Theran Eighth Legion and some elven slaves. There were a round dozen of the latter wretched souls, but one has escaped and Rancar hunts him along with other prey.

If the characters were bright enough to spot him or manage to defeat him in a duel he will gladly exchange points of interests with the characters. He is looking for his lost slave, any native villages and any interesting beasts. In return he will provide information on the inshalata or offer a slave or two. If the characters are beneath his considerable contempt, he will demand the information he requires and do his best to antagonize the characters into starting trouble. Throughout the exchange Wivin plays up his suffering so as not to get involved and Skreet burns to say something, but knows that it is not his place and so bites his tongue while flitting angrily about — hoping the adepts will do his fighting for him.

If the characters seem determined to fight, play up the strength of the force against them, with well worn — but equally well maintained — weapons and armor. Additionally, have the characters make Perception Tests to spot more Theran troops in the undergrowth. Ultimately, Rancar will force a one-on-one duel (to first blood, or first Wound) if the characters simply must have a fight. If necessary, adjust the Theran's game statistics to back up this claim.

RANCAR, THIRD CIRCLE HUMAN WARRIOR

Attributes

DEX (14): 6/D10 **STR** (18): 7/D12 **TOU** (16): 7/D12
PER (10): 5/D8 **WIL** (9): 4/D6 **CHA** (11): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 8	Initiative: 4/D6
Spell Defense: 6	Physical Armor: 9
Social Defense: 7	Mystic Armor: 2
Death Rating: 39 (66)	Recovery Tests: 3
Wound Threshold: 11	Knockdown: 7/D12
Unconsciousness Rating: 31 (52)	
Combat Movement: 28	Full Movement: 56
Karma Points: 15	Karma Die: 5/D8

Talents

Acrobatic Strike (3): 9/D8+D6
Air Dance* (3): 8/2D6
Anticipate Blow ^D (3): 8/2D6
Avoid Blow ^D (3): 9/D8+D6
Durability (9/7) (3): 3
Karma Ritual (3): 3
Melee Weapons ^D (4): 10/D10+D6
Silent Walk (2): 8/2D6
Throwing Weapons (3): 9/D8+D6
Tiger Spring (3): 3
Unarmed Combat ^D (4): 10/D10+D6
Versatility (2): 2
Wood Skin (3): 10/D10+D6

* Talent modified by -1 Initiative Penalty

Skills

Artisan:

Craft Armor (1): 7/D12

Knowledge:

Creature Lore (1): 6/D10
Theran Politics (1): 6/D10

General:

Hunting (1): 7/D12
Read and Write Language (3): 8/2D6
— Dwarf (Throalic), Theran, Human
Speak Language (3): 8/2D6
— Dwarf (Throalic), Theran, Human
Tactics (1): 6/D10
Taunt (1): 6/D10
Wilderness Survival (1): 6/D10

Equipment

Buckler (Phys 1; ST 17)
Espagra-Scale Cloak (Phys 3; Myst 1; Init 0/1)
Inshalata Carapace Armor (Phys 5; Myst 1; Init 1)
2 × Bolas (Damage 10/D10+D6; Range 12–20–24)
Broadsword (Damage 12/2D10; w/scabbard)
Dagger (Damage 9/D8+D6; Range 9–15–18)
Net (Size 6; Range 6–10–12)
Whip (Damage 10/D10+D6)
Adventurer's Kit
Craftsman Tools
Traveler's Garb

Loot

80 silver pieces

Legend Points

230 Legend Points

Notes

The adept possesses the human racial ability of Versatility.

Commentary

Rancar is a minor Theran noble who came to Barsaive along with the *Triumph*. Arrogant and haughty, Rancar considers all non-Therans to be beneath him, especially the inhabitants of the backwater province of Barsaive.

BRELAKE, SECOND CIRCLE

ORK SCOUT

Attributes

DEX (14): 6/D10 **STR** (14): 6/D10 **TOU** (12): 5/D8
PER (16): 7/D12 **WIL** (8): 4/D6 **CHA** (9): 4/D6

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 8	Initiative: 6/D10
Spell Defense: 9	Physical Armor: 5
Social Defense: 6	Mystic Armor: 0
Death Rating: 34 (40)	Recovery Tests: 2
Wound Threshold: 9	Knockdown: 6/D10
Unconsciousness Rating: 26 (31)	
Combat Movement: 30	Full Movement: 60
Karma Points: 12	Karma Die: 5/D8

Talents

Avoid Blow ^D (3): 9/D8+D6
Climbing ^D (2): 8/2D6
Durability (6/5) (1): 1
Karma Ritual (2): 2
Maneuver (2): 8/2D6
Melee Weapons (2): 8/2D6
Read and Write Language (2): 9/D8+D6
— Dwarf (Throalic), Ork
Silent Walk ^D (2): 8/2D6
Tracking (3): 10/D10+D6

Skills

Artisan:

Wood Carving (1): 5/D8

Knowledge:

Creature Lore (1): 8/2D6
Snares and Traps Lore (1): 8/2D6

General:

Read and Write Language (1): 8/2D6
— Theran
Speak Language (3): 10/D10+D6
— Dwarf (Throalic), Theran, Ork
Swimming (1): 7/D12
Throwing Weapons (1): 7/D12

Equipment

Buckler (Phys 1; ST 17)
Padded Leather (Phys 4)
Broadsword (Damage 11/D10+D8; w/scabbard)
2 × Daggers (Damage 8/2D6; Range 9–15–18)
Adventurer's Kit
Carving Tools
Climbing Kit
Traveler's Garb

Loot

20 silver pieces

Legend Points

115 Legend Points

Notes

The adept possesses the ork racial abilities of Low-Light Vision and *Gahad*.

Commentary

Brelak is an ork Scout who works for Rancar finding the tracks that lead him to his escaped slave.

SELMOREA, FIRST CIRCLE

ELF TROUBADOUR

Attributes

DEX (14): 6/D10 **STR** (8): 4/D6 **TOU** (11): 5/D8
PER (14): 6/D10 **WIL** (9): 4/D6 **CHA** (17): 7/D12

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 8 **Initiative:** 6/D10
Spell Defense: 8 **Physical Armor:** 4
Social Defense: 9 **Mystic Armor:** 0
Death Rating: 32 **Recovery Tests:** 2
Wound Threshold: 8 **Knockdown:** 4/D6
Unconsciousness Rating: 24
Combat Movement: 30 **Full Movement:** 60
Karma Points: 6 **Karma Die:** 4/D6

Talents

Disguise Self^D (1): 7/D12
Emotion Song^D (2): 9/D8+D6
First Impression (1): 8/2D6
Karma Ritual (1): 1
Melee Weapons (2): 8/2D6
Mimic Voice^D (1): 7/D12

Skills

Artisan:

Entertainer (Singing) (1): 8/2D6
Music (Harp) (1): 8/2D6

Knowledge:

Legends and Heroes (1): 7/D12
Theran History (1): 7/D12

General:

Flirting (1): 8/2D6
Read and Write Language (2): 8/2D6
— Dwarf (Throalic), Theran
Seduction (1): 8/2D6
Speak Language (2): 8/2D6
— Dwarf (Throalic), Theran

Equipment

Padded Leather (Phys 4)
Dagger (Damage 6/D10; Range 9–15–18)
Short Sword (Damage 8/2D6) w/scabbard
Whip (Damage 7/D12)
Adventurer's Kit
Harp
Traveler's Garb

Loot

20 silver pieces

Legend Points

90 Legend Points

Notes

The adept possesses the elf racial ability of Low-Light Vision.

Commentary

Selmorea is an elf Troubadour employed by Rancar to sing his praises and spread his legend. Selmorea follows Rancar because she loves him; unfortunately for her Rancar does not notice this since he only loves himself.

JILUR, FIRST CIRCLE HUMAN WARRIOR

Attributes

DEX (12): 5/D8 **STR** (15): 6/D10 **TOU** (15): 6/D10
PER (9): 4/D6 **WIL** (6): 3/D4 **CHA** (9): 4/D6

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 7 **Initiative:** 5/D8
Spell Defense: 6 **Physical Armor:** 5
Social Defense: 6 **Mystic Armor:** 0
Death Rating: 38 **Recovery Tests:** 3
Wound Threshold: 10 **Knockdown:** 6/D10
Unconsciousness Rating: 30
Combat Movement: 24 **Full Movement:** 48
Karma Points: 10 **Karma Die:** 5/D8

Talents

Acrobatic Strike (1): 6/D10
Air Dance (1): 6/D10
Karma Ritual (1): 1
Melee Weapons^D (2): 7/D12
Silent Walk (1): 6/D10
Unarmed Combat^D (2): 7/D12
Versatility (1): 1
Wood Skin (1): 7/D12

Skills

Artisan:

Weapon Rune Carving (1): 5/D8

Knowledge:

Creature Lore (1): 5/D8
Theran Military Organization (1): 5/D8

General:

Read and Write Language (2): 6/D10
— Theran
Speak Language (3): 7/D12
— Dwarf (Throalic), Human, Theran
Tactics (1): 5/D8
Taunt (1): 5/D8

Equipment

Buckler (Phys 1; ST 17)
Padded Leather (Phys 4)
Broadsword (Damage 11/D10+D8; w/scabbard)
Dagger (Damage 8/2D6; Range 9–15–18)
Whip (Damage 9/D8+D6)
Adventurer's Kit
Carving Tools
Traveler's Garb

Loot

10 silver pieces

Legend Points

90 Legend Points

Notes

The adept possesses the human racial ability of Versatility.

Commentary

Jilur is Rancar's human Warrior apprentice. He is loyal to Rancar despite Rancar's abusive training style, which focuses on pain endurance as a way to improve as a Warrior.

THERAN SOLDIERS (6)

Attributes

DEX (14): 6/D10 **STR** (14): 6/D10 **TOU** (12): 5/D8
PER (11): 5/D8 **WIL** (11): 5/D8 **CHA** (11): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 8 **Initiative:** 5/D8
Spell Defense: 7 **Physical Armor:** 6
Social Defense: 7 **Mystic Armor:** 1
Death Rating: 34 **Recovery Tests:** 2
Wound Threshold: 9 **Knockdown:** 6/D10
Unconsciousness Rating: 26
Combat Movement: 28 **Full Movement:** 56

Skills

Artisan:

Weapon Rune Carving (1): 6/D10

Knowledge:

Theran Military History (1): 6/D10
Theran Military Organization (1): 6/D10

General:

Avoid Blow (3): 9/D8+D6
Melee Weapons (3): 9/D8+D6
Read and Write Language (2): 7/D12
— Dwarf (Throalic), Theran
Speak Language (3): 8/2D6
— Dwarf (Throalic), Human, Theran
Throwing Weapons (2): 8/2D6
Unarmed Combat (3): 9/D8+D6

Equipment

Buckler (Phys 1; ST 17)
Hardened Leather (Phys 5; Init 1)
Broadsword (Damage 11/D10+D8; w/scabbard)
Dagger (Damage 8/2D6; Range 9–15–18)
Net (Size 6; Range 6–10–12)
Adventurer's Kit
Carving Tools
Traveler's Garb

Loot

D8 silver pieces

Legend Points

70 Legend Points

Commentary

These are human non-adept Theran soldiers from the Eighth Legion under the command of Rancar. The soldiers guard the slaves and hold watch.

ELVEN SLAVES (6)

Attributes

DEX (12): 5/D8 **STR** (9): 4/D6 **TOU** (9): 4/D6
PER (11): 5/D8 **WIL** (11): 5/D8 **CHA** (11): 5/D8

Characteristics

Physical Defense: 7 **Initiative:** 5/D8
Spell Defense: 7 **Physical Armor:** 0
Social Defense: 7 **Mystic Armor:** 1
Death Rating: 30 **Recovery Tests:** 2
Wound Threshold: 7 **Knockdown:** 4/D6
Unconsciousness Rating: 21
Combat Movement: 26 **Full Movement:** 52

Skills

Artisan:

Tattooing (1): 6/D10

Knowledge:

Creature Lore (1): 6/D10
Elf History (1): 6/D10

General:

Avoid Blow (1): 6/D10
Climbing (1): 6/D10
Hunting (1): 6/D10
Melee Weapons (1): 6/D10
Missile Weapons (1): 6/D10
Read and Write Language (1): 6/D10
— Theran
Speak Language (2): 7/D12
— *Sperethiel*, Theran
Tracking (1): 6/D10
Wilderness Survival (1): 6/D10

Equipment

Peasant's Garb
Trail Rations (2 weeks)
2 × Waterskin

Loot

None

Legend Points

35 Legend Points

Commentary

These are the slaves of Rancar's entourage, hailing from a faraway Theran province. They carry the group's supplies. The slaves aren't chained or bound in any way, but are constantly watched by their guards.



JASPREE'S RUINS

The group may decide to eat with the Theran, although it is doubtful. If not, they can push on for another hour or so, with Wivin mumbling to himself about pompous fools and Skreet telling anyone who'll listen what he would have done to that arrogant piece of scorcher dung given half a chance (only he had to look after the librarian and all). The day winds on relatively peacefully until the characters are thinking about camp. As they look around for a likely site to pitch their tents they can make Perception (5) Tests and receive the following results:

Poor: They notice nothing other than the dense jungle close around them.

Average: A clearing seems to open up ahead.

Good: There seems to be some man made architecture ahead.

Excellent: The sharp-eyed character picks out a statue, broken and covered in vines — barely identifiable in the gloom, it looks like a petrified tree.

Just ahead is the entrance way and courtyard of an old temple to the Passion Jaspre. It is ruined now and has

been for several hundred years. The crumbling remains lie in a swampy area of the Servos, covered with vines, foliage and creepers. It takes a sharp eye to spot the ruins for what they are without being right on top of them. It is up to the characters to decide what to do next. Wivin is understandably excited at the find, but weary from the hot travels and fever. He would dearly love to reach his goal now, but fears he would be a hindrance to himself if he continued. He suggests they set up camp and attack the ruins afresh in the morning. Concerned for his master Skreet claims he is tired also from all the flapping he's had to do to keep up with his taller fellows, though he is eager to take his watch like a Name-giver and prove his worth (if allowed to however, he will fall asleep, proving a danger to everyone).

There are various encounters that will take place. Depending on whether they take place in the dark, make them more or less dangerous.

TEMPLE WALLS

The walls of the place are largely still there, but are mostly collapsed and overgrown by roots and vines. Large parts of masonry survived, but are riddled with vegeta-

tion and warped out of shape. They form a hexagon maybe 100 yards across that encompasses the courtyard. Three walls have archways, the stone decorated to look like writhing snakes swallowing each other's tails. The main gate consisted of two statues of Grandfather Tree figures, one of which is now rubble and a fine set of gates which, like the wooden doors that used to guard the arches, have long since been broken down and rotted.

COURTYARD

The interior is as overgrown as any part of the jungle and more so than most. The central piece is a small temple

which has a dark entrance leading down into the earth. Between this and the gates are two marble structures (one left and one right). Although the left most one is little more than a pile of stones, the other is structurally sound and consists of many pillars holding up a lintel. Within the bounds of the structure are various statues of animals, along with the usual vegetation.

There is also an inshalata looking for a meal. If it is dark then it will be very well camouflaged and the other statues may seem alive in the moonlight. The creature can be detected with a successful Perception (12) Test. The Difficulty Number increases to 14 if it is dark. On the far side of the temple are two fountains, one all but demol-



ished, but still leaking water, the other seemingly intact, but not working. The fountain is still blessed by Jaspre and the water will help cure any natural diseases thanks to his power (swallowing the water will add a +1 bonus to a characters next Toughness Test made to resist disease that day).

INSHALATA

DEX: 9 **STR:** 9 **TOU:** 9
PER: 8 **WIL:** 4 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 9 (13) **Physical Defense:** 11
Number of Actions: 4 **Spell Defense:** 11
Attack (4): 13 **Social Defense:** 5
Damage: **Physical Armor:** 8
Claws (4): 13 **Mystic Armor:** 1

Death Rating: 47 **Recovery Tests:** 4
Wound Threshold: 13 **Knockdown:** 10
Unconsciousness Rating: 40

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 (counts 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.

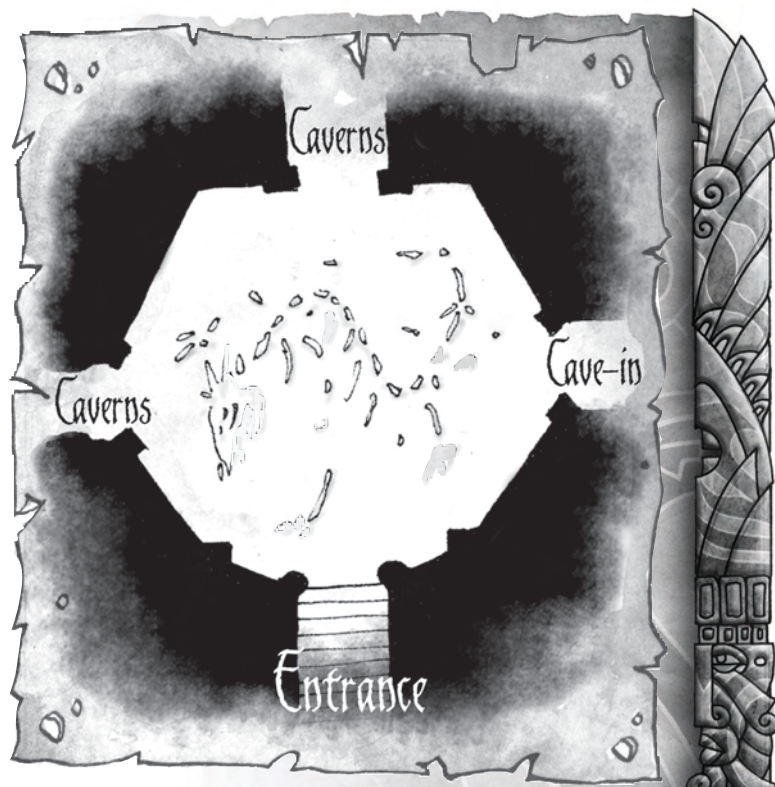
Servos tribesmen make weapons from the claws and mandibles of inshalata.

TEMPLE

There were once stone doors cunningly crafted to walls of the temple, but they were dashed by a Horror during the Scourge. A dressed stone corridor heads down several flights of stairs that back track on each other and take unexpected turns. Heading down here the air cools perceptibly, though Wivin still labors to catch his breath nonetheless. At several points there is evidence of a trap being sprung and the bones of some many legged creatures lie collecting dust in the dark. At one point a cunning pit trap may surprise the group unless the lead character can make a Perception (7) test.

Pit Trap

The pit trap consists of a pit filled with stakes, hidden by a section of false floor.



Detection Difficulty: 7

Disarm Difficulty: 7

Trigger Condition: Pressure plate

Trap Initiative: 10

Trap Effect: A section of floor drops away and dumps the characters into a 5 yard deep pit lined with stakes, causing Step 10 falling damage and an additional Step 12 damage from the stakes.

Entrance

When the group descends to the bottom of the stairwell an archway and shattered doors greet them. They see a dusty chamber covered in glyphs—the walls appear to be covered in a dull oxidized metal (the orichalcum here was drained of all its power is now useless, rusty scrap). In the center of the room lie the bones of the thing that breached the outer doors of this temple. An educated guess would put the creature at nearly 100 feet in length in life, with many legs and three sets of mandibles. Its bones lie coiled in a spiral where the magic here slew it.

Wivin, after a good few minutes catching his breath, wishes to continue. Skreet is extremely nervous at the sight of so many bones and for the first time wishes he was back safe at the library.

Cavern

To the left a natural cavern opens up that contains the gray-top ashala, and some luminescent mosses and various fungi remain. Scattered on the base of this huge cavern are the bodies of several questors who refused to leave the temple before the Scourge, and died to Horror constructs and some of those beasts themselves. All are naught but bones now however. Several pools of water are located here, including one that ultimately, through magic, feeds the fountains above. The gray-top ashala grows in abundance here. Wivin will be delighted and scoop as much as he can

into his collecting jars and Skreet will be equally pleased, although still unsure of himself down here in the dark.

Gray-top Ashala

The pale-gray plant has strong vines covered by tiny round leaves. The plant grows close to the ground, and climbs walls and stones. Gray-top ashala only grows in dark, cool places. The petals have a variety of uses in potions and other alchemical solutions that cure disease.

Effect: Any character who chews fresh gray-top ashala leaves gains a +3 bonus on his next Recovery Test made to resist disease that day.

Cave-in

To the right a maze of caves once existed where the animals were kept. A general collapse caused in no small part by the Horror's demented thrashing killed most of them, its minions doing in the rest.

Half-formed hybrids of animals the constructs mated with lie in desiccated wombs, but other than that there is little to see here.

THE LONG JOURNEY HOME

After recovering sufficient samples the group must return to the surface. Any further searching proves eerie and ultimately fruitless. Wivin has trouble with the steps and has to stop several times for a rest, each time examining his cache closely and getting overly excited, babbling at Skreet in a half conversation no one else can follow.

Without mishap though, the group makes it to the surface once more. Depending on when they entered the sun may be up or not. Assuming they will travel by day, as soon as the group is rested and fed, they resume their journey as follows.

DRENCHED AND DISEASED

The skies open in the latter part of the day and once again everyone must trudge through mud (with the notable exception of Wivin and Skreet). Navigation proves difficult and Wivin decides to take a different route home, tackling the gorge in this weather was bad enough on the way down, going against the current would be madness.

The first few hours get the characters nearer home without incident and they can set their camp once more in the wet. Wivin seems rather recovered from the disease, if bone tired. Before retiring for the night though, he ensures everyone has a cup of hot mushroom soup he and Skreet prepare using gray-top ashala leaves as an ingredient. Anyone taking this is safe from quaking fever, but the rest must make Toughness (6) Tests or succumb to the debilitating disease. Although loath to use his precious cargo so soon, Wivin is well aware that if they don't make it back at all, the whole expedition will have been in vain.

ABANDONED HOME, HOME FOR ABANDONED

Another day begins with a meager breakfast. The characters are now no doubt run down and their gear is in no better state, with leather armor developing mildew and iron items starting to rust. Anyone who is diseased is in dire straights. The characters must continue, and after a few hours following a river, with parrots and other animals calling to them from above, the group encounters an inlet which leads to a hidden lake. Keen-eyed characters may wish to scan ahead first — Perception (4) Tests apply:

Poor: They notice nothing other than floating timber.

Average: A t'skrang village lies ahead.

Good: The village is abandoned and destroyed.

Excellent: While no natives dwell here, there is an elf in one of the huts.

The escaped slave (Vesrell) mentioned earlier by Rancar has been making his home here. He was once a wealthy merchant, but does not begrudge his new abode given his recent experiences. He is scarred from beatings and being nearly gored to death by a wild boar. He spots the approaching entourage and attempts to hide from them. Uncertain of whether the group are more Therans (or worse), he is torn between calling out and being rescued from this place and staying quiet and taking his chances with the jungle rather than risking slavery once more.

If discovered, he attempts to flee, but the characters should be able to convince him of their virtue even if he doesn't understand Throalic. Vesrell joins them if given half a chance and some food. If not, he follows the group, hoping they can lead him out and also that they will encounter any trouble first and give him chance to escape if necessary. Wivin, being a Throalite, is extremely keen to rescue this slave and plays to the characters' morality if he needs to.

The village is as good a place as anywhere to bed down as no one (or thing) is likely to be messing around near here in the close future.

DRUMS OF WAR

The Theran hunting party has been causing problems and a t'skrang hunting band or two is currently tracking them. Around mid morning (once the group has broken their fast and set off once more) the group hears the drums of the native t'skrang once more. As the day progresses, they seem to get louder and finally stop around dusk. That evening everyone beds down as usual, although maybe more attentive than normal. Assuming the Therans were not killed in the first encounter with the characters, the first watch should make a Perception (5) Test:

Poor: Everything seems eerily quiet.

Average: Several creatures are approaching from the east.



Good: There are three or four Name-givers coming from the east.

Excellent: Four Name-givers are approaching, they seem to be in a hurry but trying to keep quiet, one of them is giving the rest away.

From out of the darkness, whether announced or not, comes Rancar, the Theran noble. He looks bruised and with him are only his Scout, a soldier and a solitary injured slave. He asks for parley and intends no trouble. Once the group is awake he tells them his tale:

"Well friends, who would have thought it—the hunter the hunted? I was ambushed by dozens of feral t'skrang, most of my number brought down by poisonous weapons and other foul means. My protégé called for single combat against their champion, but when he stepped forward, several of them jumped upon him and tore him apart with bone knives. Scum. We few managed to get away, yet they track us still. They carried away the bodies of the fallen—to feast on, no doubt. You are in danger as much as I. Let us join forces to get out of this nightmare place before we all end up as lizard food."

Rancar then tries to argue his case using flawed logic (after all the t'skrang are not after the characters). If he is getting no joy he will offer a grand reward (1,000 silver each and slaves or favors) if the group can get him back to safety. Finally he will plead with Wivin to protect him and appeal to his sense of morals.

Wivin holds his Throalic values dear to his heart. While he has no love for the Therans, he is more willing to try to convert them to his way of thinking than see them perish. He will definitely stop the characters from any hostile action if he can, taking a dim view of this if a fight occurs. His view is that Rancar should take a Blood Oath to free his current slaves and never take any of his own again in return for the character's aid in getting him out of the jungle. The characters (and indeed any escaped slaves they have with them) may balk at this though. The alternative is that the two groups might agree to go their separate ways, with the character wanting nothing to do with the Theran, especially as t'skrang (who may be their new found friends) are chasing Rancar through the Servos.

If rebuffed Rancar takes this with ill grace, cursing the group as a whole before heading into the darkness with his entourage in tow. The Theran will leave the slave here, hoping the blood trail will lead the t'skrang to the group and they will mistake the characters for the Therans:

"Curse you then, I hope your bones rot in this hell. Take this slave as my parting gift oh so noble Throalites. He is only slowing me and I can withstand his stench no longer. Die and be forgotten fools."

THE FINAL CHALLENGE

The following morning after dusk the drums start up once more. A few hours of traveling, with Wivin pushing for the best speed the group can make, the t'skrang will encounter the group. This hunting band is different than the one they saw initially, but if someone has the friendship token from the previous village then safety is guaranteed, providing no offensive action is taken. If Rancar is with them, the characters will have to negotiate with the leader of the t'skrang and show their good intentions. While the leader is willing to listen (due to the friendship token), he and his men are ready to attack. The jungle t'skrang leader has an Unfriendly Attitude towards the characters and is outright Hostile to Rancar (see p. 90 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**).

As in previous negotiations, the characters should use their roleplaying skills, proof of a Blood Oath from Rancar and other means to improve the Attitude of the t'skrang and prevent a massacre. If the leader of the war band has his attitude improved to Neutral or better, then he will allow the characters (and Rancar if he is with them) to travel on unmolested. Should his Attitude drop to Hostile, he and his t'skrang will attack with little care for the friendship token. Use the game statistics on p. 11–12 for the jungle t'skrang warband and their leader.

If the characters are traveling without Rancar, the encounter is much easier for them. If they don't have the friendship token from earlier in the adventure, the characters still need to get an Unfriendly t'skrang to Neutral or better status. If they do have the token, the war-band is initially neutral, but some good roleplaying or judicious use of talents might earn the character more friends for future adventures. Once this is out of the way, the group has one last (and thankfully uneventful) day in the forest before reaching the edge and seeing Lake Pyros ahead of them.

AFTERMATH

Upon arriving back in Golden Shore, the characters will be swamped by villagers all eager to learn what happened and live vicariously through the adept's actions. Skreet will be insufferable and will not hesitate to expound the character's virtues to anyone with ears. Wivin is extremely pleased with his collection.

From here Wivin may offer the characters a job guarding him and his precious cargo back to Throal, promising to show them the outstanding delights of the Dwarf Kingdom. Certainly in the future, when the scholar makes other discoveries, he may well employ the characters to go out and make the collections as the dwarf grows old and is happy to have trustworthy Name-givers to send out in his place.

The characters may have made allies within the Servos, in the shape of various t'skrang tribes. These new friends may seek out the characters at a future date requiring help, or perhaps prove to be a safe haven for the group if they are in danger. Even capable enemies would pause before following their prey into the heart of the Servos Jungle.

If the characters didn't kill him, Rancar will survive one way or the other. If they didn't bring him out with them, he callously sacrificed his companions one after the other in his flight through the jungle and was eventually picked up by a Theran patrol from the Behemoth. He (or any of his adept companions) can make an excellent recurring character in campaigns, either as an antagonist intent on revenge for being abandoned in the jungle, or an embarrassing ally who insists on meeting with his rescuers infrequently, showing up at inopportune moments to humiliate the characters with his personality, or occasionally helping them out, if in trouble.

If, at any point Wivin passes away, Skreet insists on keeping the expedition alive to honor his memory. If Wivin's death was the characters' fault then he will demand they carry on as the least they can do. If it was accidental he will implore them to continue to honor the dwarf's dying wish.

AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

As suggested in the **Gamemastering** chapter on p. 94 of the **Gamemaster's Compendium**, an adventure like **Kept in the Dark** awards a number of Legend Awards to the player characters.

A single Legend Award should give a number of Legend Points as determined by the character's Circle. For example, a First Circle character receives from 25 to 75 Legend Points per Legend Award, and a total of 2–5 Legend Awards per game session. In the final game session that concludes the adventure, the characters may gain two extra Legend Awards for completing the overall adventure goal.

The creatures presented in this adventure have listings for Legend Points. These are the points characters earn for defeating the creatures.

In addition to Legend Points, each character earns the money paid to them by Wivin.

EARTHDAWN SHARDS: SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The **Shards** series is a collection of adventures and encounters for the **Earthdawn** game. Intended as an inexpensive adventure resource for **Earthdawn** gamemasters, they are also a springboard for aspiring writers. The **Shards** series is published and available for purchase online from *DriveThruRPG.com*—it is possible that a collection might see print at a later stage. Please read the following guidelines carefully before submitting your idea for a Shard. Submissions that do not conform to the guidelines may not be accepted.

WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

Short adventures and encounters (including appropriate setting descriptions) for **Earthdawn**, written to be used with the rules contained in the **Earthdawn Player's** and **Gamemaster's Compendiums**. A Shard can also contain new creatures and gamemaster characters. The tone and style of the text should fit the **Earthdawn** setting (refer to previously published adventures to get an idea of what we are talking about here).

As mentioned above, the **Shards** series also serves as a hunting ground to find potential new writers we can send outlines to and ask to participate in bigger projects, so succeeding here may result in future agreements.

WHAT YOU NEED TO SEND US

Your manuscript, formatted as outlined below, attached to an email sent to submissions@earthdawn.com. The email must contain a standard disclosure agreement (you can copy and paste the boxed text unaltered into the body of your email). Please note that these guidelines are subject to change, so check our web site at www.earthdawn.com for updates and an FAQ).

Formatting

We accept electronic submissions only. Each entry should come as a separate file (please use any of the following formats for your entries: DOC, RTF, TXT, or PDF). Your full name and email address should be provided clearly on the first page of the entry and/or in the header/footer. All pages should be plain white Letter- or A4-sized paper with one-inch margins all around, and set in a Times Roman type no smaller than 10 point). Using the default settings of your word processor is usually a good idea. Please pay close attention to spelling, grammar, and punctuation—use our **Submission Handbook** for **Earthdawn** as a guide.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MY SUBMISSION GETS ACCEPTED?

If your submission survives our evaluation process (as outlined in the **Revisions and Rejections** section on p. 6 of our **Submission Handbook** for **Earthdawn**), we will contact you and start working on getting the Shard ready for publication (this involves editing, artwork selection/creation, and layout by our staff).

I wish to submit the materials attached to this eMail for consideration for publication by **RedBrick Limited**, subject to all of the conditions below:

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I agree that **RedBrick Limited** may have a reasonable period in which to review this submission.

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Version: 20060318

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