

A Supplement for *TORG: ROLEPLAYING THE POSSIBILITY WARS*™

TM

TORG

THE LAND BELOW™



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Discover What Lurks Below™

THE LAND BELOW™

By Stewart and Stephan Wieck

Discover What Lurks Below





Roleplaying the Possibility Wars™

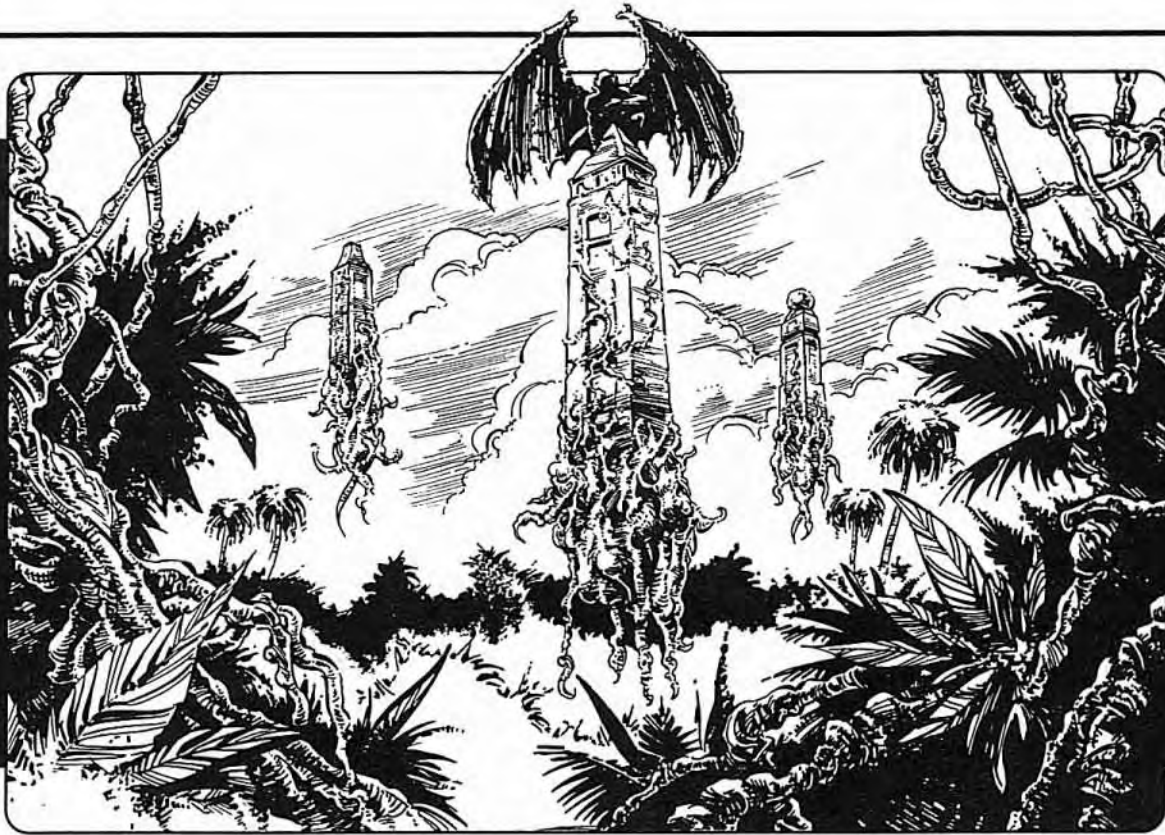
The Land Below™

Discover What Lurks Below

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Introduction



he caverns seemed endless. Smooth, cold stone. Air stale as death. Five days in this horrible maze and still no signs of the way out.

The two Storm Knights decided to take a quick rest. Jean-Claude rested against the cavern wall, scanning the area with his IR sights. The ceiling was about ten meters high, with a ledge directly across from him at about chest height. "Yeah, this is just as good as anyplace else. Nothing's around that I can see."

His companion, a woman dressed in military fatigues, dropped to her haunches, supporting herself with her rifle. She pulled the backpack off her aching shoulder, and put a canteen to her parched lips. Wordlessly, she handed the canteen to Jean-Claude.

He quickly flashed a "Thanks" on his mirror-shade LED display as he greedily drank the water. Seconds later, he threw the canteen to the ground, spitting out a mouthful of water in a strangled scream.

"That's impos—" was all he could get out as a black shape leapt into him. It all happened too quickly for the woman to react. There was no sound as blackness consumed the Frenchman. Before she could act the darkness engulfed her as well, leaving behind only a canteen to show that someone had passed.

Two deaths. Three seconds.

The Land Below

Six realms wage war with the citizens of Earth for control of the planet. High Lords from different realities have come to steal the vast resource of possibility energy the planet possesses.

Few people realize that the invasion has also fostered dramatic changes inside the planet. The Earth is now riddled with interconnecting subterranean passages. No one knows what lies deep in the caverns, for no expeditions have returned. These caverns are a whole new world, alien and dangerous. This is the *Land Below*.

The Shared Myth

What lurks below the surface of Earth? For thousands of years people believed that there was something down in the dark. Even until early in this century, popular fiction suggested that the world's interior might be a whole other world, with its own people and climates.

So it was with the other invading realms. Nippon Tech. The Nile. The Living Land. Aysle. Orrorsh. The Cyberpapacy. All of these realms had myths concerning what was below the familiar surface of their world. With the advent of the Possibility Wars, those myths became reality.

The Creation of the Caverns

As the possibility raiders settled into position and the war began in earnest, Pharaoh Mobius and Baruk Kaah formed a tenuous alliance. They decided it would be wise to establish a permanent link between their two realms. They allowed their Darkness Devices to construct an unobstructed tunnel, linking the Nile to the Living Land, using their possibility energy to build the cave. In the Nile, the energy also tapped the Egyptians' strong belief in the Underworld. As the Nile half of the cave burrowed toward the Living Land, this unfettered energy created numerous incidental cave branches.

As the energies expended themselves and burrowed into the Earth, they triggered the release of energy from the subconscious of people throughout the Earth. An amazing chain reaction spread into every realm, creating a cave network almost beyond imagining. The caverns had been born of the will of billions of minds.

A New Reality

The Darkness Devices were fascinated. The cave network was a most unexpected development. They agreed to keep information on the caverns a secret from their High Lords, while the two of them tried to determine what factors had triggered this kind of reaction. Perhaps Earth has untapped reserves of possibility energy that could be bled dry.

In the course of their searches, they discovered that the creation of these caverns had also brought a fringe reality into closer alignment with the Earth. Belladereth Dularent, who is credited with discovering the realm, named it the Land Below (he thinks it is actually a small area inside the Earth capable of supporting powerful magics).

As the war dragged on and Baruk Kaah and Mobius enjoyed ever greater victories, both Devices agreed that their High Lords were too concerned with the trappings of personal power. They were not creating enough destruction to suit Rec Pakken and the Kefertiri Idol's desires.

However, the Land Below was a savage realm where the ambitious and destructive could quickly rise to power. In their savagery, these people would also appreciate the usefulness of such destruction. Here was a realm most suited to breeding a High Lord worthy of becoming Torg.

Of particular interest is the domed world of Merretika, deep within the Land Below and home to Damo Kil of the Leopard Men and Hadian Fel Ar of the Pyrian Fire Tamers. However, to develop the skills necessary to rule a cosm, such individuals needed challenges; the warlords of the Land Below needed to learn about technology and magic, for without that knowledge they would face swift defeat at the hands of advanced cultures.





The alliance of destruction was forged, as the two agreed to “drop” dimthreads into the reality. Taking the form of caves, the first two dimthreads became permanent anchors to this realm, while several dozen more dimthreads were sent tunneling through Core Earth. Many of the dimthreads hover on the perimeter of the other invading realms as well. The dimthreads would lure adventurers into the Land Below to challenge the High Lord candidates.

The Inevitable Betrayal

The alliance of Rec Pakken and the Kefertiri Idol is one of the most unexpected developments so far in the Possibility Wars. While the two Darkness Devices have united to groom a new High Lord candidate, the alliance is doomed to disintegrate for many reasons.

At some point, one of the devices will turn on the other, since only one Darkness Device can merge with the proto-High Lord. It also means that the Darkness Device’s current High Lord will be one of the first sacrifices to the new High Lord. For this reason, neither Mobius nor Baruk Kaah are being informed of what has transpired below the Earth’s surface.

Until that time of battle, the two devices are subtly manipulating the realm and testing each other’s patience. It is a cosmic game of strategy with consequences that will affect the future of Earth forever.

The Other Realms

While the cave network connects to all of the realms on Earth, only Rec Pakken and the Kefertiri Idol are fully aware of its significance. Since neither Darkness Device is willing to push

An Alliance of Destruction

This level of cooperation between Darkness Devices has been unprecedented. Prior to this uneasy alliance, it seemed that the meeting of Darkness Devices resulted in a battle of epic destruction (Earth’s Darkness Device, Huitzilopochtli, lost such a battle to Heketon). While each High Lord pursues their own goals, each Darkness Device desires nothing more than the destruction of anything that might challenge its power, including any other Darkness Device. Such is the nature of the Nameless One.



The Fringe Realities

On the edges of each cosm lie the fringe realities. They are the home of realities once a part of the cosm, but now separate. The legends of a cosm are the reality of the fringe realms, still alive despite those who no longer believe in the "fairy tales" and myths of the past. Each fringe reality has its own reality, with axioms and world laws. However, each one is also forever tied to its cosm of origin.

Earth's fringe realities are numerous: the Dream Time, Avalon, Olympus, El Dorado and the Land Below are some of them. Many fringe realms were directly connected to Earth at some point. Some of them, like the Dream Time, can still be accessed by those with the right knowledge or tools.

One of those fringe realities, the Land Below, has now been brought to the forefront of the Possibility Wars.

one of its dimthreads through another realm, the other Darkness Devices are largely ignorant about the cave network, although they are trying to figure out what caused its creation.

The following paragraphs provide a general summary of the exploration and knowledge concerning the caves in the Earth and the Land Below fringe reality.

Nile Empire

Dr. Mobius is trying to gather information on the caves; what he knows is very sketchy.

Slaves in the mines of the Land of the Dead are constantly reporting encounters with fantastic subterranean creatures, and many people have disappeared without any clues as to their fate.

The Darkness Devices didn't put the permanent dimthreads through to the Land Below until August of 1990, but Mobius troops discovered the Nile's entrance (a gaping pit plunging straight down) only a few weeks after its creation.

The first expedition, led by Field Major Hopten-Ra, disappeared and has not yet returned (the fate of the expedition is detailed in "The Land Below" short story, to be published in *The Nile Empire* anthology from West End Games).

A second expedition has returned sketchy reports about a sub-tropical domed world below Earth's surface, some 5,000 kilometers down (or so the Nile troops believe). Mobius is impatiently waiting for a full report.

Living Land

Baruk Kaah is enjoying use of the cave running to the Nile Empire, but he ignores the rest of the cave network. He is simply unconcerned and has no idea that his Darkness Device is responsible for many of the caverns.

Jakatts are allowed to explore the caverns to their hearts content, but few of them travel more than a few kilometers into the darkness. While they find the creatures and natural formations of the rock fascinating, they

also know that their miracles will only work for a short while, so they seldom do any serious exploration.

Aysle

Pella Ardinay has an accurate map of the caves directly beneath her realm thanks to the explorations of Belladereth Dularent. He entered the caves with a hearty group of dwarven miners in early September of 1990 and emerged about one month later. His journey and reports have been kept from the general population of Aysle, while Ardinay decides what to do about the caves. She plans to send several teams of magicians into the caves to see if they can explain the "magic-rich" area Belladereth discovered.

Ardinay's decision to keep such matters secret had been very successful until recently. Aysle has been plagued by attacks from many foul beasts that have made their way to the surface, but most local authorities have deemed the creatures as the products of magic or other realms. The caves weren't well known.

The dwarves are slowly mapping out the region, but most humans dismiss their claims as exaggerations to make their stories more exciting. A few humans have entered the caverns as well, but few have returned, and most of them have but politely but firmly silenced by the government.

That was, of course, until reporters for the London Times were led into the caverns by a bunch of disgruntled dwarven miners who complained that they weren't being provided with adequate protection from tunnel dragons. Now with the story on the front page of the daily papers, brave (and foolish) adventurers are merrily tromping down into the darkness looking for treasure.



Meanwhile, far to the north, Uthorion is trying to find the rumored underground cities of half-folk somewhere in the mountains of Norway or Sweden. Uthorion is investigating the possibility of using the caves to launch attacks on Ardinay's strongholds, but these plans are very tentative.

Cyberpapacy

Jean Malreaux believes Inferno (the caverns beneath his realm) is a manifestation of demons that plan on attacking him. He has no idea that this area is just the manifestation of what his people believe the underworld to be like.

He is using the existence of these fiery caves to lure even more people into the church, and is promising that all of his faithful will be protected from the forces of evil. Most people take his word to be literal truth and aren't questioning his proclamations, at least not yet. Those few who have entered the cave network will confirm Malreaux's statements.

Malreaux's agents outside the realm haven't taken much notice of the caverns (except for those in Aysle), so Malreaux doesn't understand that the caverns run throughout the planet.

Nippon Tech

Kanawa Corporation, Hantu Limited and the Rauru Block are carefully examining the labyrinth of steel and concrete beneath the ground. The caves present a huge security risk to the companies because it is exceptionally difficult to block all of the caves beneath a particular building (many of the caves run directly into basements and underground floors).

Kanawa has several exploratory expeditions underground to determine the extent of the caverns.

Orrorsh

Thratchen is aware of the caves but hasn't found much use for them. He has yet to encounter the creatures hibernating in lairs at the lowest levels of the caverns. He is too busy trying to maintain power and keep the Gaunt Man's supporters off-guard to devote any time to these seemingly harmless (at least to him) caverns.

On the other hand, the Victorians and the natives of the realm know that the many caves that lead up to the surface are the source of many of the terrors of Orrorsh. They have not developed any coordinated responses to

the caves, although especially troublesome areas are periodically cleansed of creatures.

Important!

This sourcebook is a companion volume to *Torg: Roleplaying the Possibility Wars*. While this setting is adaptable to many other roleplaying games, many of the concepts and rules presented here are explained in greater detail in the boxed *Torg* rules set.

Religions in a Game

The *Land Below* sourcebook defines religions as they exist and operate in the fictional setting we have created for the *Torg* game. It is in no way intended to be a treatise about the state or nature of religion in the real world.





Chapter One

The Caverns of Earth



believe it's too early to theorize on the origins of this underground network. We are only beginning to realize the network's immensity and ubiquity from our initial investigations.

We will know more after the next major earthquake, when we can study wave propagation through the planet's crust. Until then we must rely on exploration.

—Dr. Tom Willis, Ph. D.,
Georgia Institute of Technology

The scientists of Earth have just begun to explore the caverns beneath the surface. The biggest obstacle to earlier exploration was a lack of funding from governments and private institutions — with a war underway most institutions had nothing to spare. However, as more and more speculation (some of it even accurate) regarding the caverns trickles into the media, companies and educational institutions are taking more interest in the topic, and the first well funded expeditions are soon to be underway.

Exploration

Players will undoubtedly explore the tunnels for a variety of reasons (concocted by the gamemaster). The tunnel network serves as a means of entering protected areas in other realms, discovering new races that are potential allies against the High Lords, or spoiling the schemes of the High Lords as they attempt to use the tunnels for their own dark purposes. Simply exploring the tunnels leads to a host of challenges for the players, and

preparing for an underground scenario requires some special consideration from the gamemaster.

Entrances

Finding an entrance to the cave network is a difficult task since only a few caves have been documented since the network was enhanced. While it is a good bet that most natural caves will somewhere enter the larger subterranean cave network, actually finding such a link is a risky proposition. Such preliminary searches gobble up a tremendous amount of resources and time, requiring several professionals from different fields, and still the returns are often negligible.

Storm Knights may be able to travel to the local library or university to learn about the most recent expeditions and findings. They may also secure employment for one of these expeditions (typically for "grunt work"). Enterprising characters should keep detailed journals and maps (to the best of their ability) since this information can be quite valuable to the right people.

The true nature of the caverns is unknown. A few people have correctly theorized that the network runs beneath the entire planet, but there are so many outlandish theories from supposedly respectable scientists that no one really knows the truth. How much the Storm Knights will learn themselves is up to the gamemaster. If they examine research papers and documented incidents, they may be able to figure out for themselves that this cave network permeates the entire planet.



Limestone Caves

The most common caves found near the surface are made of limestone, marble or other relatively soft rock. They have been carved out of the rock by running water, and consequentially often have underground pools and streams, although some were formed millions of years ago and the surrounding area's climate changed, removing the ready source of water.

These limestone caves have several common characteristics, including winding, twisting and irregular caverns, which range from several meters wide to barely large enough to crawl through. Stalactites and stalagmites are common in these types of caverns, which are generally cool and wet.

Coloration varies widely, depending upon the natural color of the rock as well as whatever sediments have been ground into it over the years. These types of caves are often suitable homes for the creatures of the subterranean realms, so they can be dangerous to explore.

Shore Caves

This type of cavern is also formed by the eroding action of water, but this time it is from the ocean or sea tides that have burrowed into the rocks of the shore. These caves can run deep into the side of cliffs, with intricate twists and very smooth walls. Typically they are still subjected to the forces of the oceans and seas, so they are explorable only at low tide or at certain times of the year.

Volcanic Caves

These caves are the legacy of the incredible volcanic forces deep in the planet. They are found only in areas that have seen volcanic activity at some point, and can wind for kilometers through the ground. These caves are also found near the surface, and typically are spacious, with very smooth surfaces.

Caves in regions of recent volcanic activity are much more dangerous. There is always the chance that renewed activity could send a stream of lava (damage value from 13 up to 20)

into the path of the characters or subject them to noxious gases.

Created Caves

Many of the caves created in the early days of the war reach to the surface as well. They often take on the characteristics of the natural caves in the area, although sometimes they have an unusual blend of characteristics from many types of caves. The caves near the surface are generally of smooth stone, cool and have plenty of accessible water. The caves deep in the Earth seemed to be a hybrid of the cave types: some smooth and circular caves are littered with stalagmites, for example. This phenomenon is of particular interest to geologists, who are trying to formulate theories to explain the network's existence.

Staging Hints

While each realm's caves have their own unique flavor, here are some general guidelines that can be used for background.

The caves of Earth are often just a curiosity, but little more. There are a few areas where a creature has come from the caverns and gone on a rampage through a nearby village, but these incidents are rare and often the connection to the caves isn't made by the local authorities.

Most entrances are inconvenient but not impassable. While there are thousands of entrances on Earth, many are located in remote areas of countryside.

In more rural areas, Storm Knights wandering into town looking for the nearest cave will be greeted with suspicion. Most towns people will give them directions, but little else. Of course, if anything emerges from the caves after the Storm Knights have gone investigating, they will be blamed and probably be branded as criminals.

The people in these areas often don't venture into the cave areas and would rather not know what's below the surface. These places make excellent lairs for large creatures or outcasts.

Families in especially hostile areas, like the Living Land or a nation under

seige, may take refuge in a cave entrance, not realizing that the cave extends for kilometers. They will probably cluster near the entrance, and may be well stocked with food and equipment.

Survivalists who have spent years planning for an apocalypse will also be encountered in the caverns, and they will probably do anything to keep the curious away.

Creatures that have been separated from their homeland will also take refuge in the caverns (perhaps an Ayslish dragon will be found hiding in a Core Earth cavern).

Even if the location of nearby caves is known, often the people have good reason to avoid it. Legends about these places are quite common — the unknown mixed with overactive imaginations has introduced a climate of fear whenever the caves are mentioned. These are normally effective deterrents to exploration, although some towns will hire Storm Knights to investigate these places and find out the truth.

The urban cave entrances are rare, but they are generally well known in the immediate vicinity. A few of the created entrances emerged right in the center of towns and cities (including "The Pit" in the center of Amarillo, Texas), and while people have explored the near-surface areas (as part of a tourist trap), very few people are willing to undergo days of claustrophobic conditions just to find out what's "down there." In this case, the cave entrances are well known and detailed local maps of the region may be available.

In cities where the caves have been ignored by local officials, the caverns are gathering places for those who can't or won't fit into society — the mentally ill, criminally insane, or the average person who just can't cope with the world seemingly falling apart.

In a city that has seen a great deal of conflict, such as New York or Paris, cave entrances may be just below street or subway level, but they are often blocked by wreckage, pools of poisonous water, and dangerous but common creatures (rats, poisonous snakes, etc.).



Deeper into the caverns, miniature civilizations are being constructed by the communities of outcasts. Territories and hunting grounds are staked, roles in the society are designated and outsiders are often fair game. These civilizations tend to be brutal and violent, with the strongest and cruelest ruling, but there are a few places where good people have banded together for mutual protection. Considering the communal nature of humans, these organizations may be large and fairly common in cities that have been struck by disaster.

The cave network has also worked its way into everyday life. That stairway going to a sub-basement may have a false door which leads to the caves; or a cave entrance may be in the center of a grove of trees, hidden by thick bushes. Anywhere that is dark and tends to give people the creeps is a good place for a cave entrance.

Getting the Storm Knights Interested

Storm Knights must have a reason to want to investigate. The easiest is to have a gamemaster character to hire them to investigate some strange phenomenon, such as disappearing live-

stock, sighting of "little men" at night, and so forth.

Another option is to hint that there is a powerful artifact lost somewhere in the caverns. Perhaps the Heart of the Coyote was stolen and is rumored to be in the caves below a large city in Orrorsh.

The Storm Knights may also have a personal stake — a longtime foe has taken up refuge, seeking a safe place to regain her power before continuing her quest to kill off the Storm Knights.

They may also be trapped in the caves. The characters may be traveling through the woods when inexplicably the ground collapses and they plummet many meters down into the darkness. They may be attacked by a creature, with the only retreat being into an unexplored cavern. No matter how they get there, they will soon be overwhelmed by the hostile environment of the caverns.

The Cave Network

The cave network within the Earth tunnels down for many kilometers, although the practical depth for human travel is about four kilometers (even at that depth, the rock is hot enough to burn the skin on contact — damage value 14 — and cave-ins and

noxious gases are alarmingly common).

Anyone who has been spelunking or even visited a park and toured such sites as Mammoth Caves or Carlsbad Caverns will realize the absolute beauty of natural caves. This natural beauty is often overlooked in underground role playing settings. There are a number of ways for the gamemaster to convey descriptions of the underground environment to the players to keep the environment exciting and wondrous.

Perhaps the most effective tool of description in an underground setting is the use of scale. Tunnels can be claustrophobically small one moment and then broaden suddenly into tremendous caverns the next. These shifts in scale accentuate the splendor of caverns and underground lakes. As a gamemaster describing underground settings, it is very effective to use these scale shifts and exaggeration of size to impress the players and thereby make the entire exploration more thrilling. Contrasting the tight fits in the tunnels to a vast underground sea, or having the characters come across a stalagmite pillar 30 meters tall are examples of using scale for description.

The gamemaster must also do some preparational work before running an underground scenario. The creatures and geography the characters encounter should maintain a consistent feel throughout the scenario, unless the characters travel from one underground region to another, in which case the reality and the environment will noticeably change. For example, designing a scenario for exploring the tombs under Orrorsh would feature a lot of undead and nasty slimy tunnels reeking with decay and crawling with worms and rats. An adventure below the Cyberpapacy should contain elements consistent with the cybernetic hell environment.

Hazards

The challenges for the players lie in finding their way through the tunnels, getting light sources, avoiding natural hazards, and facing all the nasty creatures that inhabit the tunnels and caverns.

Boundaries of Reality

The various realities that have invaded the Earth also extend below the surface (to a depth of 150 meters). Before the Gaunt Man was trapped (at the conclusion of *The Nightmare Dream*, the third novel in the Possibility Wars trilogy), he lowered Orrorsh's lower boundary to 1,000 meters below the surface.

Pure, dominant and mixed zone definitions extend below the surface, and match surface conditions.

The transition from an invading reality to Core Earth is often subtle, although there are some border areas with miniature re-

ality storms.

Most often, explorers will merely walk across the border of the two realities without any fanfare. In time they will just realize they are in a different reality as certain pieces of equipment fail or they encounter natural manifestations of magical power.

The miniature reality storms are wondrous to behold. While there are no swirling clouds, the adventurers will feel the tug of realities, complete with many of the hallucinative transformations of nearby objects found in surface reality storms.





Getting lost might actually be the toughest of these problems. As surface dwellers, humans traditionally think of directions in two dimensions. Trying to apply this two dimensional coordinate system to subterranean exploration leads to all kinds of problems.

No tunnel goes perfectly straight and level through the ground; each passage is sloped and meanders around in a hundred directions. Players will have to struggle with three dimensional mapping if they expect to accurately record their journeys. Marking walls or leaving a trail of bread crumbs doesn't really help. In poor lighting it is very difficult to find most markings. Equally difficult is determining landmarks. Rock walls and caverns look completely different when viewed from a different angle under poor lighting.

Lighting is another exploration difficulty for the players. Often over-

looked in role-playing sessions, keeping track of lighting or a lack of it can lead to all sorts of suspenseful and terrifying situations. A small lizard inspires a lot more fear if the characters can only hear the *clack! clack! clack!* of its claws scraping on the floor. They will mentally make up the rest of the details, often envisioning something a lot bigger and scarier than the real thing.

In some Core Earth caverns, dim greenish lighting is supplied by phosphorescent fungi which grow on the cavern walls. Other than this natural source, characters will have to depend on torches, lanterns, flashlights, or magic to supply light for their journey.

The hazards facing an exploration party are countless. Natural hazards include cave-ins, steam eruptions, poisonous gases, and explosive volcanic gases. All of these calamities have the potential to inflict massive destruction on the frail human body. The

gamemaster must balance excitement with danger when handling these hazards. For example, if the players are told that they feel lightheaded and that a strange odor like rotten eggs is in the air, that's fair warning for poisonous gas ahead. If they continue along without protection (i.e. gas masks or magic) then they should see their characters taking massive amounts of damage. Nobody said the underworld was safe.

Reality Warps

The same reality energy that created the caverns also feeds the dangerous *reality warps* which exist in the caverns of Core Earth. They are created by Core Earth in its attempts to fight the High Lords, and are a kind of very intense reality storm.

These transitory areas have their own world laws and axioms (normally a combination of existing laws and



axioms from other realms). They are normally less than a kilometer across and last for three to four days on average. Anything caught inside a reality warp may be transformed into something appropriate to the new reality. Storms may mark the boundaries of a warp, but this is not always so.

Core Earth

Nearly every nation has at least a few tunnel entrances, although most of them are yet to be discovered. If a tunnel is discovered, it is normally the subject of speculation and curiosity for the local villagers or city residents. Most of the time, it is believed the story is made up as part of the hysteria from the wars.

Governments are slowly beginning to realize that something very unusual has happened below Earth's surface, and they are dispatching scientists with whatever meager financing they can afford.

The Core Earth tunnels are mostly limestone caves. Near the surface, the caves are cool (around 10°C) and gets cooler as one goes further underground, until a depth of one kilometer, at which point the temperature starts to climb due to the Earth's molten interior. Underground lakes and springs are common and life is relatively plentiful. In the very lowest reaches of tunnels, the tunnels are very unsafe. Cave-ins, and explosions of steam and magma are common events.

Creatures of the Caverns

Many species of flora and fauna have taken up residence in the tunnel network, including a wide assortment of lower life forms such as phosphorescent fungi, bats, rodents, worms, and lizards. While many of the creatures have migrated from the surface, a large number of creatures have entered the Earth from the Land Below by use of the dimthreads.

Most of the predatory creatures in the caves and tunnels of Core Earth and the Land Below share characteristics with the predator fish found in Earth's ocean depths. The creatures have tremendously large eyes which

are either extremely sensitive to light (creature is *stymied* if bright light is aimed at its eyes) or blind. In the dark depths of the Earth, these creatures have come to rely primarily on their sense of smell to track down the lizards and small mammals that are the primary source of food. The deep-earth beasts may go weeks without a catch, so they tend to be very aggressive.

Most of the deep-earth creatures are amphibious and hunt in both the tunnels and lake caverns. They are tremendously varied in size and shape, with some being slug-like, other bipedal, and still others having a dozen limbs. Research scientists have found it impossible to catalogue these creatures because of the sparsity of data. Specific species have yet to be identified because no one has seen more than one example of any given creature. A "fringe" theory suggests that all of the creatures are evolved from the same set of genetic material, but each individual evolves appendages and tools appropriate to its environment. The most alarming constants between all of these creatures are a gigantic maw, lined with rows of teeth, and the reckless, frenzied approach to bringing down prey.

Bagger

The bagger (so named by an eccentric and now dead research scientist) is presented as one example of these deep-earth predators. It is bipedal, although it's so humpbacked that its front arms often drag on the ground. Its feet are broad paddles with webbed feet for swimming. Its eyes are large luminescent orbs of pale yellow, nearly a meter across. Most of its bloated torso is stomach and its meter wide mouth sports rows of 20 centimeter fangs. Its body is covered with green and grey scales which constantly molt and decay.

Bagger

DEXTERITY 13

Dodge 15, unarmed combat 15

STRENGTH 15

TOUGHNESS 14

PERCEPTION 4

Tracking 10

MIND 3

CHARISMA 3

Taunt (10)

SPIRIT 6

Intimidation (13)

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: claws (damage value STR +2/17), teeth (damage value STR +4/19), scaly hide (armor value TOU +2/16)

Molemen

The molemen are a race of shape-changers who are believed to have entered Core Earth tunnels from Orrorsh. However, the race quickly spread throughout the planet and the Land Below. The race forms communities varying in size from twenty to a thousand individuals.

In humanoid form, molemen average 165 cm tall with pale brown skin. Molemen have all but given up their human form in favor of their mole changeling physique, which provides many survival advantages underground. In changeling form, a moleman appears as a large, stocky humanoid mole with long fur, a sharp snout and thick claws for burrowing. Most molemen carry mauls or pick axes for clearing hard rock and defense against other denizens of the deep.

Each community cultivates much of its own food, with fungi and plant growth covering any nearby river and lake banks. They also actively hunt small game and fish in the numerous lakes.

They have a very complex and difficult language (difficulty 12). All communities speak the same language, which is a high pitched chattering sound. The molemen seem to be peaceful creatures, since they do not seem to wage war against other communities; when there is a dispute over territory, the smaller tribe simply leaves the area. However, they are wary of outsiders, normally attempting to subdue any strangers so they can be sure they are controlling the situation.

The first set of numbers represents a moleman in humanoid form, while the second indicates the changeling form.



Molemen

DEXTERITY 9 / 9

Dodge 10, melee weapons 10, unarmed combat 11

STRENGTH 10 / 12

Climbing 14, lifting 13

TOUGHNESS 10 / 12

PERCEPTION 10 / 9

MIND 10 / 9

Survival 10

CHARISMA 10 / 8

SPIRIT 12 / 12

Possibility Potential: some (60)

Natural Tools (in changeling form): claws (damage value STR +2/14), bite (damage value STR +3/15), fur (armor value TOU +2/14)

Equipment: maul (damage value STR +4/16), pick axe (damage value STR +4/16)

Regional Descriptions

The following sections describe the environment of each realm's unique caverns. While some of the information on Core Earth's caverns applies in each of these areas, the alternate reality dominates. Along with the description of the underground geography under each realm, a couple of nasty creatures are presented for each region. These creatures are presented more to generate some adventure ideas than to give an exhaustive bestiary of all of the denizens the players can encounter in the subterranean networks. The gamemaster should feel free to expand and create his own creatures using the ones presented as a guideline.

Nile Empire

The entrances to the caverns within the Nile Empire are numerous but well hidden. The most accessible entrance to the Land Below is in a cavern of the Land of the Dead (see *The Pharaoh's Network*). This entrance, a dimthread tunnel found by Field Major Hopten-Ra, drops 4590 kilometers into the Land Below (see *Chapter Two: The Land Below* and *Chapter Three: Merretika*). This tunnel is the one of the rare permanent dimthread tunnels in

the Nile Empire.

The caverns beneath the Nile Empire are called the Underworld. The tunnel which leads to the Living Land has its entrance about ten kilometers south of Alexandria.

Another important entrance is in Central Cairo, deep within the sewers of the ancient city. This entrance at first seems to be a simple tunnel, but soon barrels down into the heart of the Underworld.

The Kefertiri Idol often constructs temporary cavern entrances to snatch particularly troublesome Storm Knights and Ords. These entrances seem to appear from nowhere: the offending characters walk over a seemingly solid patch of ground only to find that it collapses beneath them.

Possessing little knowledge of the true nature of the world, the ancient Egyptians of Earth did as many other ancient peoples — they made up stories to explain natural phenomena beyond their ken.

For example, to the Egyptians, the sun was not a sphere many hundred times the size of the Earth. Instead, it

was a much smaller ball, albeit one that glowed brightly. When the sun "set" at night, the Egyptians believed that it actually passed through a great tunnel beneath the sands of Egypt so that it could "rise" on the other side of their land the next morning.

Historically, vast complexes of caverns that sat on top of the sun's tunnel housed much of the Egyptian Underworld. These are the stories in the Nile Empire that have helped spawn the miles and miles of tunnels and caverns beneath Egypt. Certainly, the pulp fiction elements of the realm are inherent in this area as well, but primarily the caverns have come to resemble the Egyptian Underworld of legend. Most creatures within the caves prowl the entire region, so Storm Knights should proceed with great care.

Busus

An example of the kind of demons that haunt the Egyptian nether-realms, busus are truly grotesque creatures. They have the body of a hippopotamus, the limbs of a lion, and the head



and tail of a crocodile. They walk upright on the lion legs and stand almost three and a half meters high.

Busus are concerned with devouring any unworthy souls encountered while wandering the lands of the dead. Any soul judged worthy is safe from the demons.

Characters and beings with an inclination of "good" will always be found worthy by a busus, while those who are "evil" will always be attacked. Characters without an inclination must *trick* the busus, by generating a *faith* total and beating the busus' *faith* total. Those who fail are judged unworthy.

Busus

DEXTERITY 8

Dodge 10, swimming 15, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 18

Lifting 20

TOUGHNESS 17

PERCEPTION 12

Find 16, trick (18)

MIND 12

Test of will (15), willpower 15

CHARISMA 8

Taunt (15)

SPIRIT 10

Faith 13, reality 12, intimidation 16

Possibility Potential: some (45)

Inclination: Evil

Natural Tools: claws (damage value STR +2/20), jaws (damage value STR +4/22), tail (damage value STR/18), hide (armor value TOU +2/19)

Invisible Men

A fairly complex society exists secretly under the surface of the Nile Empire. Huge tracts of tunnels and a few large centrally-located caverns are home to a race of people that may well go unnoticed for some time.

The invisible men regularly frequent the surface of the Nile Empire, but they have gone unnoticed because they can't be seen. This race has a special ability that functions like the *invisibility* pulp power (see page 46 of the *Torg Worldbook*), except the "power" is on at all times.

Invisible men wander the surface to glean secrets discovered by overhearing private discussions. Their motivations are unknown even to those few who know of their existence.

This race makes its home only in areas of the tunnels where a particular glowing fungus called photothon may be found. It seems that they move photothon plants with them when they must relocate to a new region. The strange light cast by photothon illuminates the outline of the invisible men, so they are able to interact with one another (invisible men can automatically see each other in this light; characters must make a *Perception* total of 12 to spot a lone invisible man, and if in groups, the character gets a Many-on-One bonus). Otherwise, these people are invisible even to each other.

Invisible Men

DEXTERITY 13

Dodge 15, maneuver 17, running 14, stealth 16, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 10

Climbing 13

TOUGHNESS 10

PERCEPTION 12

Find 14, scholar (underground tunnels) 17, tracking 14, trick 16

MIND 8

Hypnotism 14, survival 13, test of will 12, willpower 13

CHARISMA 8

SPIRIT 6

Possibility Potential: some (65)

Inclination: Good

Special Abilities: invisibility

Living Land

The most prominent Living Land cave entrance is in what used to be Upper Michigan. It is a huge chasm whose bottom is obscured by the Living Land's ever-present mist. The edeinos do not venture into the chasm, claiming that it has no bottom and is a dead spot on the land.

Actually, the chasm is a permanent dimthread into the Land Below and eventually forms the Great Waterfall in Merretika. The waterfall averages 200 meters in diameter.

The other end of the tunnel linking with the Nile Empire is in what used to be Rochester, Idiana. Baruk Kaah has a large group of edeinos patrolling the area.

The northeastern United States has an unusually high number of entrances, including several which can

be accessed from the ruins of New York City's subway system. These entrances are often populated by refugees of the war, many of whom have sunk to unbelievable levels of savagery.

Baruk Kaah seems ready to use the caves to his advantage. The people of Detroit believe that an army of edeinos warriors and gospog is using the tunnels to move beneath the city. If this is so, the city may fall into the hands of the invaders. Preliminary investigation by units of army troops show no signs of invasion.

The subterranean world below the Living Land is a network of seemingly natural caverns with moss covered walls, dripping stalactites, and pools of cold, clear water. The deep mist sinks into caverns and tunnels close to the surface, but quickly diminishes more than 150 meters below the surface. The caverns teem with life.

Monstrous plant roots run throughout the caves, knotting up and running along some underground passageways to water. The mosses and fungi that are occasionally found in Core Earth tunnels cover the rocky surfaces of the tunnels below the Living Land like a shaggy carpet. Worms and beetles over twice the size of Core Earth counterparts roam through the tunnels. Many of the creatures of the Living Land, large and small, can be found in the caverns. Baruk Kaah has finally realized the strategic advantages of the tunnels and parties of edeinos are becoming more common in the tunnels as they travel to flank North American troops or surprise holdout settlements within the Living Land.

Corpul

Corpul are spherical floaters related to the bedotok (see the *Living Land* sourcebook), and like the bedotok, corpuls come from the same home cosm as the stalenger. Corpuls have a keen sense of smell which they use to track down explosive gases like methane, which is their "food." Corpuls have elastic bodies, stretching from 10 cm to 120 cm in diameter, depending upon how much gas has been absorbed.

If startled by tremors or strange



smells, corpuls use their gas bladders to propel themselves in a random direction to escape. The creature is harmless to other forms of life, and are even helpful as a warning sign to avoid dangerous underground areas rich in explosive fumes. If a corpul is hit or shot, the creature will explode if it takes a wound, causing damage value 13-16 within a one meter radius. Halve the damage up to a maximum radius of three meters. The damage depends on the corpul's size. Such explosions can chain react through a group of corpuls, or worse yet, ignite natural gas deposits the corpul was feeding on.

Corpul

DEXTERITY 10

Flight 11

STRENGTH 2

TOUGHNESS 2

PERCEPTION 8

Tracking 9

MIND 1

CHARISMA 5

SPIRIT 5

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: gas sacs (speed value

8)

Ustanah

The edeinos have reported sighting a race of insect-men resembling the ustanah who were cleansed from Takta Ker thousands of years ago (see page 10 of *The Living Land* sourcebook). The edeinos have named them the ustanah, saying the race has returned from the lands of the dead to haunt all Jakatts. Whether the edeinos are correct, or whether they are matching a distant tribal tale with observation of a new and different race is conjecture, but there is definitely a race of sentient insectoids inhabiting the tunnels beneath the Living Land.

An ustanah resembles a bipedal preying mantis with slender legs and long arms which are held folded at its side. Its body is covered with green-blue chitin that serves as natural armor. The creatures have two sets of mandibles, one for rending and one for chewing, along with two sets of feelers around their mouths to hold food while it's being chewed. They have large black eyes which are excellent for motion detection, but poor at

picking out detail. Most ustanah carry a club that is hooked at one end. It has a groove running down its length and around the inside of the hook. This weapon serves as both a club in melee and as a kind of atlatl to help the ustanah propel flat disks of sharp crystal at their enemies. Using the stick and the ustanah's long arms, the disks can be hurled at ferocious velocities.

The ustanah are very intelligent, communicating in their own language and having social organization. However, little is known about their level of advancement. Most encounters with the race have been violent, though a national guardsman claims to have been saved from edeinos by the ustanah and introduced to a ustanah scholar before being set free along an underground passage that led him back to a safe zone in southern Indiana.

Ustanah

DEXTERITY 12

Dodge 14, maneuver 14, melee weapons 13, missile weapons 14, unarmed combat 13

STRENGTH 10

Climbing 13

TOUGHNESS 12

PERCEPTION 9

First aid 10*, scholar 11*

MIND 13

Medicine 14*, science 14*, test 14, willpower 14

CHARISMA 11

SPIRIT 10

*some ustanah don't have these skills

Possibility Potential: some (70)

Natural Tools: pincers (damage value STR +2/12), mandibles (damage value STR +3/13), chitin (armor value TOU +2/14)

Equipment: crystal disks (damage value STR +3/13 when thrown; STR +5/15 when used with club-atlatl), club-atlatl (damage value STR +3/13)

Cyberpapacy

Paris is not only the center of the resistance movement, but its catacombs allow for quick access to the caverns of Earth. The people of Paris fear the death that this new reality has brought to the underground, although

many gangs are fighting for control of the tunnels.

The Cyberpapacy's belief in Hell has created a terrifying and dangerous cave network beneath France. The place is known as Inferno and it is truly fit only for the damned.

The presence of the Inferno has become a well known folk-tale. The Church has pronounced that the Inferno is part of a demonic plot to take over France, but spies report that Malreaux is pleased that his subjects have such a vivid reminder of what happens to heretics when they die. Most entrances in CyberFrance are in large urban areas instead of in the wilderness.

The Inferno is a physical place. Entrances seem to be ordinary caves, but once the cave has been entered, the ground erupts, spewing fire and intense heat.

Throughout the journey, walls of fire rise to block the way or force explorers down a particular tunnel. Open flames ignite and disappear without reason. Such fires need no special fuel since solid rock can sustain fire in these caverns and tunnels. The fire inflicts damage with a value range of 10 to 25.

While the boundaries of Inferno are limited to the boundaries of the Cyberpapacy, it is easy to become disoriented and wander indefinitely.

There are demons wandering throughout the tunnels of Inferno. Half of the demons are the fire-and-brimstone variety, while the other half are cybernetically enhanced.

Many demons have left the tunnels of the Inferno and now live in the catacombs, and a few even travel to the streets at night.

(NeuralJack) Nightmare

Nightmares are human-sized, ebony-skinned demons. The bodies of the creatures are smooth, almost glassy, and have absolutely no hair. The only other feature of a nightmare is a profusion of cybernetics, primarily eight slender cables that whirl ominously around the beast. Two of these cables are monofilament whips, but believe it or not, it's the other six transfer cables that will cause the most bad dreams. The two whips and the



six transfer cables are all controlled by the nightmare as if they were tentacles.

Inside the body of a nightmare is a processor of respectable power. When any of the six transfer cables score a *vital blow* on characters with a neural jack, then the demon has successfully inserted a cable in the jack. The victim's perception immediately shifts from real world to the GodNet.

The demon has trapped the character within a section of the GodNet, where it attempts to possess the character. Nightmares choose isolated sections of the Net where they can spread mayhem without attracting too much attention. They also fortify the "prison" so that kidnapped characters have a very difficult time escaping; if the character can escape, she would be able to navigate the GodNet normally. All but the very best of deckers will effectively become prisoners within the demon. The particular region should be mapped out by the gamemaster ahead of time.

Up to six opponents may be "kidnapped" in this fashion (one per cable), though each of the virtual selves will begin inside a different cell. These "holding" cells are several cells removed from the slave cell that controls the cable that sucked the character's virtual self inside in the first place.

A victim of this attack may only return his consciousness to his own body if the nightmare is slain. If there is no one present to interrupt the processing, a nightmare will completely process the consciousness of a victim in about five minutes. The result of this processing is essentially a spirit chip, except the spirit so contained becomes part of the nightmare's built-in computer, not a separate chip. Any skills possessed by the spirit may be utilized just as if the demon had a spirit chip. This means that a virtual self inside a nightmare has five minutes to save herself by shutting down the core cell of the processor if no one is left in the physical world to save her (processed characters may attempt to take over the demon as per the spirit chip rules on pages 105-107 of *The Cyberpapacy* sourcebook).

After the nightmare succeeds in this stage of its attack, it can use the energy

that courses through the connecting cable to take control of the victim's cyberware. Weapons may be fired, punches or kicks delivered, etc. Obviously, any part of the victim that is not powered by cyberware may not be controlled by the demon. Note that the cables may be cut by a second opponent before or after the tip has been inserted into an opponent's neural jack. However, considering the demon's skill at maneuvering in combat, this is not an easy task.

If a transfer cable is severed, the demon must still be defeated to save a comrade. Someone trapped inside a Nightmare had best hope that any friends who cut a transfer cable also know how to repair it, for recovery is only possible after the demon is defeated.

This mode of attack certainly makes the nightmare most dangerous to cybernetic opponents, but the demon's claws and monofilament whips can be used to good effect against others. Note that a failure by ten or more with a whip will not cause self-injury, but will instead cut one of the transfer cables.

(NeuralJack) Nightmare

DEXTERITY 14

Dodge 16, maneuver 20, melee weapons 17, stealth 16

STRENGTH 13

TOUGHNESS 14 (18)

PERCEPTION 14

Find 16, cyberdeck operation 16, scholar (computer science) 17, tracking 16, trick (19)

MIND 14

Cybertech 18, test (18), willpower 23

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion (16), taunt (15)

SPIRIT 11

Faith 16, focus 15, reality 13 (if possibility rated), intimidation 13

Net Values: net attack (melee) 21, net defense 20, net find 18, net stealth 20, net manipulation 18, net tracking 20

Possibility Potential: some (28)

Skill Notes: A nightmare may possess a character. See page 68 of *The GodNet*.

Natural Tools: claws (damage value STR +3/16)

Equipment: Cyberware: NeuraCal (5), six EpiphaNeur and connecting transfer cables (12), CSI HotShot II (2), two monofilament whips (damage value 23) (2), Interdermal Plating (armor value TOU +4/18)(2), cyber value (23)

Response/Stealth/Processor/Storage: 2/2/7/15

Swarmers

Swarmers are squat, powerful-looking demons. Their appearance is very similar to the popular conception of the demons of Hell. They are red-skinned and sport a pair of marvelous horns, not to mention a slender tail. These demons are like an entire civilization unto themselves because of the vast numbers of nanotech beings that exist within them. These nanotech beings are actually produced by the machinery in the stomach of swarmers, and characteristically make use of the nanotech beings by infecting opponents with them.

One hand of the demon is a water hose sized nozzle and the other is a spike about the width of an ice pick. The tip of the spike is open as well. The larger nozzle is a nanotech discharger and is used to spray millions of nanotech beings at opponents (this is a *missile weapons* attack, with a range of four meters, covering a 120 degree arc). Any opponents in melee combat with the swarmer who are in the path of discharge suffer a -3 modifier to any *dodge* attempts. Opponents hit by the attack will be infested with the dangerous nanotech beings, which slowly deaden the nerves and reflexes of opponents. Those who are infested suffer damage value 12 each round, although those with sealed battle suits will not suffer damage for the first two rounds.

Swarmers also have a potent nanotech injector, but they only use it when seriously threatened since they prefer to devour live victims. If a swarmer scores a hit with the injector (an *unarmed combat* attack) and causes at least a wound of damage, then a more virulent form of nanotech enters the victim's body, causing damage value 17 every round and completely liquifying the victim's innards.



Swarmer**DEXTERITY 10**

Dodge 12, missile weapons 14, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 15**TOUGHNESS 13 (22)****PERCEPTION 12**

Find 16, trick (18)

MIND 11

Test (20)

CHARISMA 7

Persuasion 10, taunt 11

SPIRIT 9

Intimidation 15, reality 10

Possibility Potential: some (34)

Natural Tools: fangs (damage value STR +2/17), horns (damage value STR +3/18)

Equipment: Cyberware: NeuraCal (5), BelleMicro View (2), Interdermal Plating (+6) (2) and Trigon Body Plating (+3) (3) for a total armor add of +9, Nanotech Discharger (2), Nanotech Injector (damage value 18) (2), cyber value 16

Aysle

Many tunnels and caves can be found in occupied Scandinavia, in addition to the uncounted entrances in the British Isles.

There are rumors that many evil half-folk have established a huge underground city somewhere between Ostersund and Sundsvall in Sweden.

In Scotland, huge sinkholes have swallowed entire houses. The coal mines of Britain are a convenient means for horrors from below to migrate to the surface, and it is believed that many of the creatures from Aysle's Land Between have moved to the caverns of Earth.

Many of the dwarves are mapping out the mines and the new caves which have sprung up. Several dwarven companies are devoted exclusively to exploration and development of the resources uncovered in these tunnels. The excitement of the dwarves has sparked the term "gem rush" to describe the zeal with which they are entering the caves. The magic seems to be within the land as well.

Subterranean realms are nothing new to the people of the Aysle cosm, with its strange flat disk world and

Land Between. Most folk have taken the caverns and tunnels beneath the Aysle realm on Earth to be perfectly natural; they expect an extensive underworld to exist beneath their feet. However, the underworld below England is not altogether like the spacious Land Between of the Aysle cosm. Instead of a vaulting cavernous sky, the Earth's underworld is made up of relatively modest caverns interconnected by a complex network of tunnels. This change in subterranean geography is enough to make some Aysle cosm folk as uncomfortable as anyone else in the claustrophobic underworld.

The look and feel of the Aysle underworld is not very different from the Core Earth tunnels except that the Aysle tunnels tend to appear as if they were mined out of hard rock rather than created from natural causes. Indeed, many of the tunnels are populated by human and dwarven mining forces who have braced the tunnels with wood to make them safer as the miners explore for veins of ore.

Deeper into the Aysle underworld exist races far more foul. In addition to the manes and gremlins, there are rumors of more powerful sentient races that have found a home below the Aysle realm: races of mad giants, and aquatic half-folk who have built cities in water-filled caverns. Many lesser folk communities have also entered the caves.

Equally as dangerous as these races are the myriad of less intelligent monsters that call the underworld their home. Wyverns, tunnel dragons, and gorgons are only a few of the creatures that make travel in the Aysle underworld dangerous.

Draconis Cavernum

The tunnel dragon appears to be the first dragon native to the Aysle realm, although it certainly is as formidable as its cousins from the cosm. Ayslish magicians theorize that this dragon "race" came about when wandering creatures entered Aysle from the caverns and were physically transformed. However, if this theory is true, the number of tunnel dragons is unusually high.

The tunnel dragon bores through

earth and stone with its massive front claws, often using its acid breath to get through very difficult sections of rock. Tunnels built by the dragon are circular, normally about three meters in diameter (just large enough to accommodate the dragon's serpentine body). This territorial creature takes the tunnels to be its lair. The longer a dragon lives, the vaster its lair's network of tunnels becomes, although most of the dragons are so "young" that few of the lairs are more than a kilometer in diameter.

The dragon typically sleeps close to a place of great heat. It can sense almost any disturbance in its lair (make a *Perception* check), although many tunnel dragons construct magic alarm systems as well. It glides through its tunnels at startling speeds, propelled along by sets of clawed hands along the length of its body. Despite its great intelligence, it views most people as little more than a quick snack; very seldom do unlucky adventures get the opportunity to beg for mercy.

Draconis Cavernum

DEXTERITY 10

Running 14, unarmed combat 16

STRENGTH 22

Climbing 24

TOUGHNESS 26**PERCEPTION 13**

Alteration magic 14, divination magic 16, find 15, language 16, tracking 15, trick 16

MIND 14

Appotation magic 16, conjuration magic 15, test 16, willpower 15

CHARISMA 8

Charm 10, persuasion 12, taunt 10

SPIRIT 11

Intimidation (14)

Additional Skills: three at +1 add

Possibility Potential: some (40)

Arcane Knowledges: earthly 4, darkness 3, earth 3, metal 2, entity 2, enchanted 2

Natural Tools: claws (damage value STR +4/26), bite (damage value STR +3/25), acid breath (damage value 25, range 25/50/100, use *unarmed combat* skill)

Note: although tunnel dragons can understand most folk languages, they are unable to pronounce most of them without magical assistance.



Gremlins

Gremlins are a race of Lesser Folk originally from the Aysle cosm. They average 60 cm in height, with hairless, black skin and sharply pointed ears and teeth. They dress in crude leathers or animal hides and carry small spears.

Originally from the Land Between in the Aysle realm, a large number of gremlins came across the maelstrom bridge when Uthorion invaded Earth. Even Uthorion's forces found the creatures detestable, and they were driven into the caverns almost immediately. Eventually, they invaded the coal mines of England and from there worked their way into the huge network of tunnels that had formed under the Earth's surface. Gremlins are still found mainly in the upper tunnels beneath the Aysle realm, where Ayslish reality is dominant.

Gremlins are a malicious and impish race, numbering among their favorite pastimes such things as killing, torturing, vandalizing, and looting. They despise dwarves, and generally dislike giants, who tend to enslave the little race. Gremlins cluster in large tribes of thirty to a hundred individuals for protection from larger races. Anyone unlucky enough to venture upon the warren home of a gremlin tribe usually finds themselves facing early retirement as scores of the little creatures attack the intruder from all directions. If the gremlins lose a battle, they duck into tunnels too small for most creatures to follow. The gremlins taunt intruders with numerous small attacks before launching a serious attack. Very tough intruders are usually annoyed from a safe distance, or herded towards one of the many pits or snares set about the gremlins' cave area.

Gremlins

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 12, maneuver 11, melee weapons 12, missile weapons 11, unarmed combat 11

STRENGTH 5

TOUGHNESS 7

PERCEPTION 9

Languages 10, trick 11

MIND 8

Test 10

CHARISMA 7

Taunt 9

SPIRIT 9

Intimidation (12)

Possibility Potential: some (50)

Natural Tools: claws (damage value STR +1/6), teeth (damage value STR +2/7)

Equipment: spear (damage value STR +3/8), buckler (armor value TOU +1/8)

Monoliths

Monoliths are a mysterious race of folk whose origins are unknown, even to the people of Aysle. Their appearance is rare even in the Land Between, and so their rumored appearance in the caverns is a shock to many dwarves. No monoliths are known to have come over the bridge from Aysle. Dwarven lore holds that the monoliths are created by the gods of Aysle to track down and destroy those who have offended them.

Monoliths appear as huge men, over four meters tall, with skin the color of stone and faceted like a cut gem. They wear simple clothes bound with iron bands and carry large battle axes with shafts of iron and a blade of faceted stone. They always travel alone, never speaking or communicating with any other beings. They often seem preoccupied with their travels, only taking notice of those who bar their path. Anyone who obstructs a monolith (accidentally or otherwise) is attacked until the way is clear. The origin of the geas which compels the monoliths is unknown, as is the race's origin, but it is bad fortune indeed to be the target of a monolith's quest, since the creature never rests until the quest is complete (it moves at a speed value of 12). It is known that monoliths require neither rest, nor food, and possibly can exist without air.

The monoliths use the tunnels to follow their chosen prey wherever it may go around the globe. The creature will surface only to attack its target and then immediately disappear back into the tunnels of the Earth.

Monoliths

DEXTERITY 10

Melee weapons 15, unarmed combat 11

STRENGTH 18

TOUGHNESS 18

PERCEPTION 9

MIND 6

Test (18)

CHARISMA 6

Taunt (18)

SPIRIT 12

Intimidation (18)

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: rock hide (armor value TOU +4/22), magic tracking sense (tracks with effect value of 27 and a range of value 36)

Equipment: battle axe (damage value STR +5/23)

Note: Monoliths carry specially constructed battle axes. Should they have to use one for a smaller race, the maximum damage value drops to 20.

Nippon Tech

Like CyberFrance, most of the Nippon Tech entrances to the Land Below are urban in nature. They are also far more frequent than most other realms and very difficult to discern. It is quite feasible for someone to think they have only found an underground level of a building when they have actually entered the caverns.

The most accessible entrances are well guarded, but it is still fairly easy to find an unguarded entrance. The biggest danger with entering the caverns of Nippon Tech are the mutants and desperate poor that have taken over many subterranean sections.

Beneath Nippon Tech is a very strange subterranean world unlike any other on Earth. The underworld is made up of subway tunnels, basement complexes, and networks of corridors with walls sheathed in steel. Just as Japan scarcely realizes it has been invaded by another reality, so too is it difficult to realize that the world below Nippon Tech is anything other than man-made passages. Actually, the underworld was created in the same way as the tunnels below other realms and Core Earth, but the Nippon Tech underworld took on the technological image of its realm.

The Kanawa Corporation has little use for the tunnels at this time, but it is also finding them a burden, since mutants, malcontents, terrorists,



agents of the Rauru Block and the priests of Palan are taking over in the underground. Technically, each corporation owns the land beneath the tunnels, but since they completely intertwine it is impossible to provide adequate security to prevent infiltrations. Scientists from all three of the corporate blocks are trying to determine what caused the caves and their extent within and outside the realm.

Godon

The memories and fears of atomic weaponry inspired the Japanese movie monster genre. That subconscious fear of total destruction has manifested itself in living incarnations of these apocalyptic creatures, although none have appeared — yet. A half dozen of these giant creatures sleep under the nearby seas or in massive caverns. Such events as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, or weapons testing could awaken one of these beasts and cause a rampage through Japan or China.

There are rumors that Kanawa scientists have uncovered a sleeping behemoth and are trying to discover ways to control the beast so that they could awaken it and use it as a potential weapon of war or sell its services for profit. Godon is a typical example of this type of creature, although particular characteristics vary greatly from individual to individual.

Godon has a reptilian body, similar to an alligator, with two long flexible necks each topped by a fearsome head. While most movie monsters have rudimentary intelligence or instinctive, empathic drives, Godon isn't that smart, and the big guy generally just rampages randomly about. Godon currently slumbers in a cave near a subway expansion tunnel which is now under construction beneath Tokyo. Workers blasting the new tunnel are getting closer and closer to his sleeping form.

Godon

DEXTERITY 12
swimming 13, unarmed combat 19
STRENGTH 38
TOUGHNESS 35
PERCEPTION 9
Trick (12)

MIND

Test (19)

CHARISMA

Taunt (17)

SPIRIT

Intimidate (21)

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: tail sweep (damage value STR +5/ 43), bite (damage value STR +2/40), stomp (damage value 42), radioactive fire breath (damage value 32, range 500/1 km/ 4 km, use *unarmed combat* skill)

Kensai Spirit

Kensai spirits, or spirits of any kind, are so alien to the realm of Nippon Tech that they will horrify any residents who have never encountered spirits before (act as *intimidation* 17). Kensai spirits appear as translucent images of Japanese men wearing simple, medieval clothing and carrying a very fine (and very corporeal) katana. The spirits seem to be drawn to unnaturally high technology to destroy the items and/or persons utilizing the technology.

Kensai mostly dwell beneath the Nippon Tech realm but have been sighted above ground at night. Anyone using technology based on axioms above 24 might attract a Kensai spirit. The spirits are especially drawn to the bubbles created by possibility rated individuals if their reality is tech axiom 25 or higher.

Kensai Spirit

DEXTERITY

Dodge 15, maneuver 15, melee weapons 16

STRENGTH

TOUGHNESS

PERCEPTION

Find 17, tracking 16

MIND

Test (20)

CHARISMA

SPIRIT

Reality 13 (possibility rated only), intimidation (16)

Possibility Potential: some (35)

Natural Tools: semi-corporeal (armor value TOU +12/ 24 vs. physical attacks, +8/ 20 vs. energy attacks)

Equipment: katana (damage value +6/18)

Orrorsh

The people of Orrorsh avoid any tunnel and cave entrances that they come across. They are correct in believing that anything lurking below the surface must be at least as horrible as the monstrosities on the surface.

For brave Storm Knights, the entrances can be found almost anywhere: at the base of a huge tree in the jungle, disguised behind rocks on a mountain side, even as a seemingly innocent broom closet in the basement of a building. The psychology of terror lends itself to mysterious and dark subterranean passages.

The terrifying underworld of the Orrorsh realm is split into two different kinds of hell, of course, due to the tinkering of the Gaunt Man. The High Lord commanded Heketon to extend the boundaries of the realm an additional 1,000 meters below the surface of the realm.

The first level consists of the tombs, barrows, and unhallowed burial grounds that exist in abundance throughout the realm. These lands are marked by mass graves filled with the bodies of pagans whom the Victorians were unable to convert. Men who were excommunicated or otherwise considered below God's grace are also entombed in these graveyards. Beneath these tracts of sin-blasted soil thrive legions of undead thirsting for revenge on the living. Small burrowed tunnels run chaotically below the ground, interconnecting tombs and graves with larger caverns. This area extends 150 meters down.

The other underworld of Orrorsh is the caverns that lie much deeper in the earth. These caves are filled with pools of slime from which emerge all manner of nameless, gibbering beasts whose very sight is enough to drive sanity from a man's head. Luckily these creatures rarely make it to the surface unless called upon by some insane ritual or powerful being. When called, these nightmarish creatures erupt from the earth to destroy the life around them.



D imthreads in the Earth

The Kefertiri Idol and Rec Pakken used a series of dimthreads to link their realms to the Land Below. The dimthreads allow them to covertly manipulate the realm without getting the attention of their or the other High Lords.

A dimthread is a temporary bridge between cosms, normally used to ferry agents from a High Lord's cosm to a cosm that has been marked for invasion. It is also an excellent short cut, since it "jumps" from one location to another, similar to teleportation. Normally, dimthreads go directly from one location to another, but these dimthreads connect to Core Earth and the Land Below in many locations. Most people are unaware that they are travelling inside a dimthread, and believe the entire cave network is inside the Earth. They don't realize that they have actually entered a different reality, which has led to the reports of a tropical world inside the planet.

To create a dimthread, the Darkness Device must expend five possibilities. Normally they only last for about one hour. Beyond the first hour, the Darkness Device must expend additional possibilities to keep the bridge "up". The Darkness Devices have found their experiment with longer duration dimthreads to be a stunning success.

Which Reality?

Although a dimthread is a passageway to other cosms, it doesn't always retain its natural reality and axioms. For dimthreads that will be main-

tained for any length of time, it is often much more practical to make it attuned to the reality it is passing through (in essence it is merely a passageway, although it can tunnel through solid objects). A dimthread that strictly holds the reality of its home cosm (consider it a pure zone) costs an additional possibility every two hours; double the cost if it must travel through a pure zone of another reality. A dimthread that is a dominant zone for its home reality costs an additional possibility every six hours (double the cost if it passes through a pure zone of another reality). The final, and cheapest alternative, is to have the dimthread take on the reality of the area it is passing through, at a cost of one possibility every 36 hours (with no additional cost for passing through other pure zones).

The Nile pit to Merretika is an example of a dimthread that doesn't retain its natural reality. Regardless of the reality within a dimthread, reality storms do not occur in dimthreads (unless someone within the dimthread summons one).

Darkness Devices are almost always unaware of what is occurring within a dimthread, since they are busy tending to their stelae and the events within their borders. While powerful, they aren't omnipotent. However, a Darkness Device is master over the form of the dimthread, and can alter gravity, change the atmosphere, decrease or enlarge it (up to a maximum diameter of 200 meters) and move it to new locations at will.

Permanent Dimthreads

There are only two "permanent" dimthreads at this time: one from the Living Land to Merretika and one from the Nile Empire to Merretika. The tunnel linking the Nile Empire and the Living Land is a created tunnel. The two Darkness Devices have placed a dimthread in two side tunnels directly off the main tunnel. Those who know of the dimthread's existence may dramatically shorten the travel time.

The single dimthreads from each realm offer direct access to Merretika, although they are dangerous to traverse (they are detailed in *Chapter Three: Merretika*). The Darkness Devices established these as a direct means of moving people and things to the realm if they saw the need. Eventually, if a good High Lord candidate does emerge, they will send agents down these passageways to retrieve the candidate, or possibly to plant stelae.

The tunnel connecting the Nile and Living Land runs from Alexandria, Egypt to Rochester, Indiana. It is a dangerous journey between realms, covering about 12,000 kilometers. However, the dimthread shortens the trip to 300 kilometers and is contained entirely within the Nile Empire and the Living Land! Both tunnel and dimthread are about 50 meters wide and have been used for a variety of important missions. Both realms guard their entrance very well and have kept the tunnel's existence a secret.



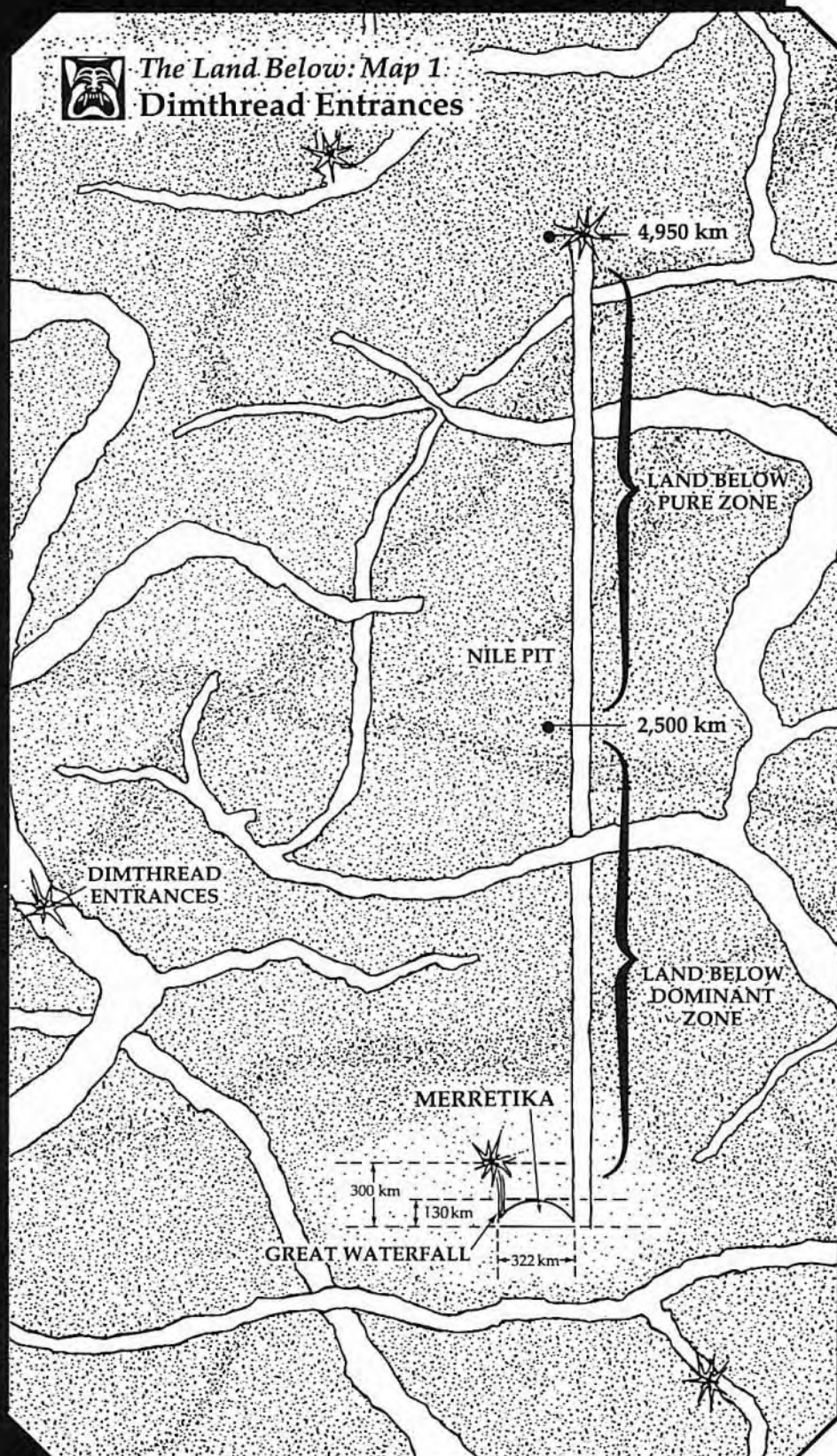
Temporary Dimthreads

The Darkness Devices also make extensive use of temporary dimthreads. Each Device will have up to two dozen threads cast into the Land Below at any one time.

The threads wind their way throughout the rock of the native realm, Core Earth and the Land Below.

Since the dimthreads are designed to look like a natural cave, it is difficult to know whether you are in a cave or a dimthread. Because of this, it is possible to cross completely across the Earth in just a few meters if you know where the dimthreads lie. Unfortunately, this also makes it virtually impossible to map the caverns beneath the Earth.

The Darkness Devices will not run these dimthreads through territory under the axioms of another realm, but they can bring the dimthread up to the surface of Core Earth, the Nile Empire or the Living Land. Sometimes a dimthread will tunnel up beneath a group of Storm Knights, "swallowing" them into the Earth. The Darkness Device then closes the way to the surface, forcing the Storm Knights to explore the caves. This has been an excellent means to get rid of Storm Knights who have caused too much trouble. The Kefertiri Idol is experimenting with the idea of luring groups of Storm Knights to Merretika to teach the High Lord candidates about the foes they will have to face.



Nightmare Worm

The nightmare worm is one of the Gaunt Man's horrendous creations. These 10 foot long, caterpillar-like creatures are the High Lord's harbingers of madness and insanity. They live deep in the Earth until called. Once summoned, they burst from the ground to destroy their victim. The nightmare worm lashes out with the four long tentacles which extrude from its gruesomely human-like face.

Victims injured by the slashing tentacles are subject to the insidious venom carried by the nightmare worm's appendages. In addition to damage from the tentacle itself, the victim must generate a *Toughness* total of 12 or greater to resist the poison's effect. If the victim fails the check, find the monster's result points on the Power Push Table, removing that many points of *Mind*. The character is also paralyzed with fear for the duration of the encounter. Anyone reduced to a *Mind* of 0 goes insane. Lost *Mind* points return at a rate of one point per hour. Those who go insane do not recover *Mind* points.

Nightmare Worm

DEXTERITY 9

Stealth 11, unarmed combat 11

STRENGTH 18

TOUGHNESS 12

PERCEPTION 8

Tracking 10

MIND 4

Test (14)

CHARISMA 2

SPIRIT 8

Intimidation (10), reality 10 (possibility rated only)

Possibility Potential: some (35)

Natural Tools: four tentacles (attack separately, damage value STR+1/19), venom (see description)

Power Rating: 1 (may not choose *attack form resistance: heat/fire*)

Corruption Value: 14

Fear Rating: 1/2

Suggested Perseverance DN: 12

Suggested Weakness: open flame

Suggested True Death: to be cast into a volcanic pit after each tentacle has been severed by a blessed blade

Wight

It is said in Orrorsh that some men have souls that are so wicked even the devil does not want them in hell. Of course, that is wrong since the Gaunt Man keeps these precious souls for wights. Wights are doomed to wander the earth, never to show their face to the sun again. These vile creatures have an insane hatred for all that lives and seek to murder any living being.

Wights appear as ghastly white, bloated corpses still dressed in the remains of their burial clothing (which often allows them to be recognized). Their teeth are pointed and their fingernails are unnaturally long and wickedly curved. Wights are so imbued with the chill of dead flesh that any living being who contacts a wight must

resist the creature's life-draining power.

Both the wight and the victim generate *Spirit* totals. If the wight's total is greater, then the difference in the results is checked on the Combat Results Table (page 40 of the *Torg Rulebook*) to find how much damage the wight's victim suffers. If the victim generates a higher *Spirit* total than the wight, the creature takes no damage, but may suffer a setback at the gamemaster's discretion.

Wight

DEXTERITY 11

Dodge 14, maneuver 13, stealth 13, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 15

Climbing 16

TOUGHNESS 16

PERCEPTION 13

Tracking 14, trick 15

MIND 8

CHARISMA 3

SPIRIT 16

Intimidation 18

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: claws (damage value STR+3/18 plus life-drain), teeth (damage value STR+2/17 plus life-drain)

Power Rating: 2

Corruption Value: 14

Fear Rating: 1/2

Suggested Perseverance DN: 13

Suggested Weakness: sunlight

Suggested True Death: a miracle which completely destroys the wight's body (must cause six or more wounds).



Chapter Two

Entering the Caves



I am sure that these tunnels lead somewhere far more alien than the other realms on the Earth. Throughout our journeys beneath the planet we encountered things unexpected and for the time being inexplicable.

However, all of the surprises of our subterranean journeys were nothing compared to the realization that deep in the core of the Earth was a realm where magic worked freely, seemingly as powerful as beloved Aysle.

I have yet to determine the nature of this region — is Earth's reality malleable? Is Earth itself changing to accept all portions of these new realities? If this is so, the resiliency of the planet is remarkable.

My maps and careful journal entries should certainly be enough to entice others to finance explorations of the caverns. This land below the Earth may be an important key in the wars. With more substantial funding and exploration we should be able to determine the peculiarities of this region.

— B. D.

19 October, 1990 (Earth reckoning)

Belladereth Dularent's first expedition into the caverns provided the most comprehensive knowledge of the underground caverns beneath Aysle. His initial report documented many of creatures beneath the realm and his painstaking research (supplemented throughout the journey by various divination magics) produced an accurate map of many sections of the caverns of Aysle.

Belladereth's party kept a careful record of magic potency throughout their journeys, and were surprised to learn how shallow the boundaries of Aysle were. They were even more surprised to find a rather large pocket within the Earth that supported much higher magics. What they did not know was that they actually entered the fringe reality of the Land Below

(Belladereth coined the name, despite his misunderstanding of the true nature of his discovery).

History of the Land Below

The Land Below is a great, unexplored frontier. The fringe reality had at one time been connected to the reality of the Earth, and could be physically entered through many of the caves leading underground.

While the physical link was stable, millions of people believed in an underground world providing a psychic anchor to Earth's reality. As mankind's world view became increasingly scientific, people simply stopped believing in the possibility of a world "within" the Earth, severing both the psychic and the physical link.

The Realm's Boundaries

The Land Below is a huge mass of rock in the form of an oblong cylinder. It is nearly 25 million kilometers long and over 10 million kilometers in height and thickness. The cylinder is everything in the realm — there is nothing "outside" the cylinder, not even a void. There is simply no physical space outside this amazingly large hunk of rock.

Within the rock are millions of caves and caverns. The surface area of the known tunnels easily exceeds the surface area of the Earth. The whole of the realm is filled with an oxygen rich atmosphere especially hospitable to humans.

The caves are home to all kinds of creatures both known and unknown. Many creatures have migrated across to the Land Below from Earth. Unlike



the Earth, there was never a great cataclysm to wipe out the dinosaurs, so most varieties of Earth dinosaurs can be found. Creatures from all of the major epochs can be found within different sections of the caves. In addition, creatures seemingly native to the Land Below are quite common, encompassing all of the major biological groups.

The Nature of the Caves

The Land Below is a realm rich in animal and plant life. With abundant running water and even plenty of soil, many strange life forms thrive.

There is no standard size for the cave passages. Some are dozens of meters across, others are only a fraction as wide. The cave walls are generally cool and most are very damp due to the high moisture content of the realm. The rock walls are often rough and jagged, and it is quite easy to trip in the near permanent darkness and twilight. The passages wind and twist unpredictably, with numerous intersections and branches: even the most experienced cartographer will have difficulty making an accurate map (difficulty of 13 for every 500 meters mapped), especially considering that the caves are never flat, but instead twist up and down around each other.

Streams, rivers and lakes (some the size of respectable Earth seas) are found throughout the multi-level caverns. The water is almost always clear and very cold, but refreshing and safe to drink. The moisture also collects in dense pockets of mist that can be found nearly anywhere. The mists further obscure vision in the realm.

Plant Life

The dominant plant life forms of the Land Below are moss and fungi, although ferns can be found in small quantities. More sophisticated plants like bushes and trees can only be found in the domed worlds.

The fungi come in all shapes and sizes, with some growing as high as ten meters. Common species are less than one-meter tall, with several short stem-like protrusions growing vertically out from the main root. They typically have well-developed roots

which are able to absorb the requisite nutrients and moisture from the soil, while the protrusions absorb scarcer materials from the air. They are an excellent source of nutrition for most of the animals in the realm.

Many of the plants have specialized adaptations to protect themselves or propagate the species. Some species of fungi have exploding sacs so that creatures will spread the small spores throughout nearby caves.

There are also several luminescent species of fungi, which use the cool glow to attract insects for food. Some of the larger fungi have adapted to prey on larger creatures such as mice and other herbivores. Most forms of fungi are white or off-white, although a few species have developed other pigments, like light blue or brown.

Moss is very common, and most caverns are covered with a soft carpet of the primitive plants. The plants have been spread throughout the realm by roaming creatures, and serve a necessary niche in the food chain. Some species are brown or other dark colors, although like the fungi, there are many different species that have pigments for blue, yellow or green.

Most mosses provide food for the creatures of the realm, but there are a few poisonous varieties as well (damage value 9 to 14 for up to one hour). Moss can be found clinging to stalagmites and stalactites, as well as hanging off ceilings.

Ferns have a difficult time surviving in the environment of the Land Below. In fact, those in the Land Below can barely be classified as ferns since they require no sunlight for survival. They also depend on a good root structure to draw nutrients and water from the soil, and are often white or grey in color. Their only advantage in the Land Below is that each cave has a stable climate, with no variation in temperature and moisture.

Below is a listing of some of the more interesting and useful varieties of plant life in the Land Below. A character with a *scholar (plant lore)* specialization may identify any of these fungi and mosses with a total of 10. Characters without skill in this field may identify these plants and learn their uses with a total of 13.

Abethor Bulbs

These highly explosive round fungus plants present a hazard to careless explorers, but they do have their uses. The plants are about 15 centimeters high, including the round bulb which is about 10 centimeters high. The rest of the plant is a thick stem. The plant's color is a mixture of red and white swirls. When touched to an open flame the bulbs explode, doing damage value 13 in a two meter blast radius. Unfortunately, these plants normally grow in closely grouped clusters, and the explosion of just one bulb often sets off a chain reaction that consumes whole caverns.

Black Stem

Black Stem is a black colored root for a mushroom-like fungus. When mixed with water it is used for water-soluble inks, which are excellent for making temporary or erasable messages. Some artisans also use the ink to temporarily dye fabrics for religious festivals and other ceremonies.

Drowners

These fungi are also very dangerous to curious passersby. The drowners are about 35 centimeters tall when full grown, with a round, flattened dome at the top of a thin stem. The white plants constantly sway as if being blown in the wind.

The drowners are very sensitive and explode when touched, showering the offending character in a cloud of spores about one meter across. Any character in the cloud and facing the plant must make a *dodge* total against a difficulty of 12 or the spores hit the character directly in the face. The spores do damage value 9 in the first round and lodge in the lungs. For the next week the character must make a Toughness check against a steadily increasing difficulty or take damage from the spores. The first day's difficulty is 10, and the difficulty increases by one for each additional day. If the check is failed the character takes damage value 11. The Kets have developed an elixir made from water, the eggs of Hunndel fish and black root, which immedi-





ately destroys the spores without damage to the character.

Glowers

Glowers is a term used to describe the many luminescent fungi found in the Land Below. An average glower is used to illuminate a one meter radius for six hours.

Kattecoph

This root is normally found only in drier sections of the Land Below. When dried and soaked for three hours in any vegetable oil it provides a strand

which can be used to mend clothing and other materials made of cloth. While the root is plainly visible, the mended article is at least as strong as the original. Kattecoph may not be used to mend leather, wood, plastics, metals or other such products.

Lure Cream

This effective ointment is created from a mixture of any cream and the juice from "death lure" stems. The carnivorous fungus uses synthesized pheromones to lure small mammals. The stems are drained of their juices and mixed with creams and ground

actolin ferns. Several of the different humanoid tribes use this cream to attract creatures to hunting parties.

Pellspores

These fungi are generally small, circular growths found scattered amongst many other varieties of fungi. The spores are about 3 cm tall and 4 cm across, with white coloring and layered brown dots. When ground into a fine powder and mixed with water and sensin stalks (blue fungi stalks about 10 cm tall) they form a watery salve which can be applied to many kinds of wounds to help speed heal-



ing. It takes five ground pellspores and three sensin stalks to make one application, which adds a +2 to all *first aid* rolls.

Sata'Chlar

This fern helps characters resist pain. The short reddish fern can be found on the edges of streams and rivers. The juice is drained from the fern's stem and drunk the round after a K result has been taken. If the character can make a *willpower* total of 15, the character may ignore the effects of the "K" (the K effectively goes away).

Talgar Spore

These large white spores are filled with a sap that assists in climbing. Characters who rub this sap on their hands get a +1 to all *climbing* rolls. This sap may be stored indefinitely, but a new application must be made after every half hour of climbing.

Tbathap

This kind of moss is a brownish blue in color and has a foul smell. When eaten it heightens one's *Perception* in dark situations. The character must eat 40 grams of the moss to get the *Perception* benefit. To eat the moss requires a *willpower* of 11 due to the revolting stench of the moss, but the character adds +1 to *Perception* for a time value of 25 (one day).

Zeta'ckl Moss

The "useful" properties of this moss were discovered by the Kets. This moss is dried to form a flaked powder, which is then applied to a spear or other bladed weapon. The powder causes extreme pain when injected into the blood stream, causing stun damage with a value of 13 for four rounds (if the weapon causes any damage, consider the moss injected into the target's blood stream; armor is ignored for purposes of stun damage determination).

Animal Life

The animal life of the Land Below is both diverse and exciting: a superior playground for biologists! Creatures of every type can be found, including dinosaurs, insects, mammals, lizards, amphibians, and avians.

Creatures also range from extremely small herbivores to large carnivorous beasts towering up to 20 meters tall. Creatures are found in the environments most suited to them — reptiles in hot and moist swamps, mammals just about everywhere, avians in caverns with high roofs and plenty of plants for food.

Most of the creatures in the caverns are well adapted to the permanent darkness of the realm. Many of them have a highly developed sense of smell, while others have eyesight that is tuned well into the infra-red range. Some have even developed sonar akin to that of Earth bats.

Below are some of the commonly encountered creatures native to the Land Below.

Atten

Atten are small avians found in many of the large caverns of the Land Below. They are at home in the permanent darkness of the realm and have developed a kind of sonar that greatly enhances their *Perception* in the dark.

The small birds weigh less than a kilogram, but are equipped with razor sharp talons. They have dark brown feathers and an unmistakable cackle. They normally nest in large groups, and use the cackle to warn off invaders.

They make their nests in the cavern walls and are fiercely protective of their territory. They attack any creature that enters their cavern, and since they are able to rally so many of their kind in these attacks, they are normally able to drive away almost any creature. A typical Atten cavern will have 30 adult birds guarding about 25 nests. If the Storm Knights can get to the nests, the eggs are nutritious and satisfying.

Atten

DEXTERITY 5

Flying 9, maneuver 13, unarmed combat 13

STRENGTH 1

TOUGHNESS 1

PERCEPTION 9

Tracking 12

MIND 2

CHARISMA 1

SPIRIT 1

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: Talons (damage value STR +4/5)

Rassitar

The rassitar is a large reptile found only in the warmest sections of the Land Below. A full grown specimen reaches up to four meters long and bears an uncanny resemblance to Earth crocodiles. Their snouts are short, but filled with sharp teeth. Their legs are also rather long (about one and a half meters), so they have a high profile (about two meters tall at the shoulder).

The creatures are at home in both water and on land, and are capable of running and swimming at remarkable speeds. They do most of their hunting on land.

Rassitar

DEXTERITY 12

Stealth 15, running 16, swimming 16, unarmed combat 16

STRENGTH 13

TOUGHNESS 14

PERCEPTION 7

Tracking 11, trick (16)

MIND 3

Test (13)

CHARISMA 2

Taunt (10)

SPIRIT 4

Intimidation (18)

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: Tough hide (armor value TOU+3/17), teeth (damage value STR +3/16), claws (damage value STR +2/15), running (speed value 12 before pushing)



Civilizations

Many different civilizations can be found within the Land Below. Most of them control a specific territory and utilize hunting and farming as the primary means of acquiring food. Many of the people in the Land Below obviously migrated to this realm from Earth, but others are unique to the realm. The following examples are not exhaustive, but are merely present to give gamemasters a feel for the type of civilizations that may be presented in the Land Below.

Kets

The Kets are short humanoids (averaging 125 cm tall) that have mastered their local cavern environment. There are many tribes of the species, normally numbering from 50 to 200 individuals. The difficulty of finding enough food to support larger groups keeps the population of individual tribes down, and the tribes themselves are often hundreds of kilometers away from each other.

They are humanoid in form, with pale brown skin. Their heads are oblong, curving up at the back, with large ears, and small eyes set far back in the skull. Each hand and foot only has four digits, with one pair opposed to the other pair for added agility.

As a whole they are aggressive and territorial. They will attack anything that they feel threatens their territory, although they do have a predictable fascination with items of magic and technology. They have developed up to about Tech level 7, with use of spears for hunting and the beginning of domestication of animals for food and travel. They have a thorough knowledge of the fungi and mosses of the area, and rely on them for many of their products.

Typical Ket

DEXTERITY 8

Dodge 9, melee combat 10, stealth 10, unarmed combat 9

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 7

PERCEPTION 7

Find 8, first aid 9, scholar (animal husbandry) 10, scholar (plant lore) 10, tracking 9

MIND 8

Survival 10, test 10

CHARISMA 7

SPIRIT 6

Possibility Potential: some (55)

Tools: spear (STR +3/10), animal hides, various fungi mixtures.

Wanneck

The wanneck are a proud, but friendly people who inhabit the caves of the Land Below. They are clearly human, with short but muscled bodies and deep brown to black skin.

These people are divided into many tribes, but they also have strong extended family ties that extend beyond the tribal organization. For this reason the people have never warred upon each other, and the tribes often band together for to eliminate a common enemy. The tribes have formed several small, permanent city/states, and they are learning to use hard metals in much of everyday life (they have discovered a few caves with abundant resources). They use glowers to illuminate their uninhabited territories, but they mix the glowers with juices from fedder ferns for lanterns and other long range light sources.

The tribes are very communal in nature, with natural resources shared amongst all members of the community provided that person provides whatever service he or she can. The Wanneck also have use of the *engineering* skill and have been known to construct elaborate temples at the center of their settlements.

If encountered by the Storm Knights, they will be hospitable providing them shelter and food for a time. The wanneck are also practical, and if the Storm Knights do not offer to help support the community, they will be asked to join and take up a role (such as becoming a hunter, farmer or craftsman). If the Storm Knights refuse they will be asked to leave, and it is not wise to overstep the bounds of their kindness.

Typical Wanneck

DEXTERITY 8

Beast riding 9, missile weapons 9, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 8

Divination magic 9, find 9, first aid 10, scholar (plant lore) 11

MIND 7

CHARISMA 9

Charm 10, persuasion 12, taunt 10

SPIRIT 8

Intimidation 9

Possibility Potential: some (70)

Exploration

Many of the guidelines for subterranean exploration of the Earth apply to the Land Below, although there are quite a few elements of this realm that require closer examination.

The Domed Worlds

Scattered within the endless maze of caverns are the domed worlds of the realm. These worlds are of respectable size, being hundreds or thousands of kilometers across. Most of these worlds have domes many kilometers high, and a few, such as Merretika, have their own satellite to provide heat and light (like Helepehez, these satellites are normally powered by the spiritual energies of the realm).

Naturally, they have an ecology quite different from that of the caverns. While all of them are bound by the axioms and world laws of the Land Below, there is a great deal of diversity within the different worlds.

The domes worlds are rare (perhaps one every few thousand kilometers), but they provide a much easier existence than that of the caverns. Each domed world normally has several unique species of creatures (as well as many common to the Land Below), as well as at least one intelligent race. Terrain within the worlds is frequently plains or mountainous, although



swamps, jungles, forests and even deserts can be found in some of the worlds.

Merretika is an excellent example of the kind of diversity that can be found in a domed world. Use this as a guideline when developing your own unique domed worlds of the Land Below.

Lost Civilizations

The Land Below seems to have been populated by many ancient civilizations which also existed on Earth. Their legacy is apparent everywhere. Characters in the Land Below will stumble across the ruins of buildings and cities of Greek, Roman, Egyptian, Mayan, Aztec, or Chinese origin. There are some cities that have a combination of architectural styles, clearly showing that these cultures interacted within the Land Below. Some of the temples defy even the amazing architecture of the parent cultures on Earth (a result of the Law of Wonders).

Still other ruins seem to indicate as yet undiscovered civilizations. Few clues to indicate why these cities were abandoned. Considering the expansionist and violent natures of many of

the Earth cultures, it is quite possible that many were conquered and either assimilated or destroyed in the process. However, other tragedies could have befallen these ancient cities — it is up to the Storm Knights to find out for themselves.

Wealth and Magic

The characters should also encounter magical artifacts. Powerful artifacts are probably well guarded by mechanical and magical traps, but lesser artifacts and magically enhanced items could be discovered almost anywhere.

The minerals and gems of the Land Below offer rich bounty to those who can return to Earth. Many of Earth's valuable metals and gems, such as gold, silver, diamonds, rubies and so forth, can be found, while Storm Knights will find gems which are unique to the Land Below.

Natural materials for metal smelting are also abundant. While it would be impossible for Earth interests to make use of this mineral wealth, many of the civilizations native to the Land Below are utilizing the materials to fashion hard metal tools.

Knowledge

Once characters have entered the Land Below the most valuable treasure is knowledge. Characters will be desperate to secure steady supplies of food, water and shelter from the more aggressive creatures. They will also want to acquire weapons and probably salves and potions made from the natural plant life.

They can be given this information by native tribes or wandering individuals.

After a time the wanderlust of the characters will ignite the desire to leave the Land Below no matter how comfortable an existence they may have been able to eke out. They could always just wander back into a dimthread to lead them to Earth, or they might enter Merretika and discover the Nile pit or the Living Land waterfall. They might also encounter other groups of wandering Storm Knights, and between them they may be able to formulate a plan for escape. The final option is to have them acquire a mystical artifact loaded with divination knowledge so that they may be able to find their way home.



Chapter Three

Merretika



Time had stopped. The world had ended for all they knew. It was now just a battle for survival. Guenthar of House Daleron had been mortally wounded in a battle with a large insectoid creature.

While his companions tended his wounds, a sense of dread overwhelmed them. The troop of Storm Knights had resigned themselves to death in this alien land of darkness.

Tainia the dwarf had wandered down the cavern. Her shout echoed back to her friends, "By the stars! There is a world in these endless caves!"

With Guenthar cradled in a travois, they followed Tainia's path. A warm, pleasant breeze flowed into the cave; a light appeared in the distance.

A few minutes later, they had all emerged from the cave's mouth. The cave was part of a rock wall which towered into the sky. Before them was a lush jungle and high in the sky was a sun, providing warmth and heat. Perhaps there was hope.

A Domed World

The realm of Merretika is a hollow, circular cavity roughly 320 kilometers in diameter. The realm's roof is domed, 130 kilometers at its peak. The entire dome is filled with breathable air.

The land is illuminated by a glowing entity known as Helephez, which is 100 kilometers above the land. The light and heat are evenly spread throughout the realm, keeping all of Merretika habitable to humans.

The land contains a bizarre assortment of terrain, including dense jungles, fiery volcanoes, savannahs, and rugged mountains. It is a realm of scenic wonder and awe-inspiring beauty. Waterfalls hundreds of meters high plummet from cliff tops, volca-

noes spew their molten interior into the sky, and the jungles grow in a dense ocean of green.

Entrances

There are six entrances to the domed world of Merretika. Four are simply caverns which enter into the world almost without warning (the characters may feel a slight breeze and see light up ahead).

One entrance is in the northern lands, an area unclaimed by any of the people of Merretika and only 20 kilometers from the Abominari Temple.

Another entrance further is further to the east, near where the Wild River leaves Merretika and enters the cavern network.

On the eastern rim of the Mountains of the Beast lies an entrance which is inaccessible to all of the people of Merretika due to the presence of Ungrosh.

The final unexplored entrance lies to the south of the waterfall from the Living Land and is within reach of the Pyrians.

The final two entrances demand further elaboration, primarily because they connect to the dimthreads of Rec Pakken and the Kefertiri Idol.

The Great Waterfall

The first is the Great Waterfall, in the southern corner of the land. The source of the waterfall had been a subterranean river, but just a few months ago Rec Pakken created a giant chasm in Michigan, and used a permanent dimthread connection to connect to Merretika. The Great Waterfall dimthread maintains the reality of whatever realm it is passing through. The waterfall drops 1,000 meters into



the Earth, before moving into the Land Below, where it falls another 300 kilometers and smashes into Merretika's roof. At the roof, it becomes a normal waterfall, but plunges another 60 kilometers to the surface.

At the base of the waterfall is the Lake of the Giver, which supplies water to three major river systems in Merretika. Prior to the dimthread's arrival, the Great Waterfall was fed by a series of subterranean rivers. If the dimthread remains connected to the domed world it is quite possible that the Lake of the Giver could end up flooding the nearby jungles and plains within a couple of years.

The Nile Pit

This entrance is a dimthread pit nearly 5,000 kilometers long which plummets from the Land of the Dead in the Nile Empire to a small cavern only a few kilometers from the cave entrance near the Ohibi village.

Pharaoh Mobius discovered the pit many months ago and Field Major Hopten-Ra, a trusted and experienced soldier, commanded an expedition down the pit. The expedition disappeared (the circumstances are explained in the *Nile Empire* short story anthology to be published by West End Games). Mobius has sent a sec-

ond expedition to discover what happened to Hopten-Ra.

The entrance to the pit can only be found after exploring the cavern system in the Land of the Dead. Near heavily populated mining areas, this particular cavern system was declared too unstable for immediate exploitation. There is no doubt that the slaves of Pharaoh Mobius would have eventually been forced to work in this area even if its secret hadn't been discovered.

The dimthread/pit lies at the end of a seemingly seemingly ordinary tunnel. The tunnel is presently a very tight squeeze and those traversing it may do so only by crawling on their bellies. A crack squad of explosives experts is working on widening the tunnel, but the instability of the caves here makes it a difficult problem. The Kefertiri Idol may squeeze this tunnel tight again to carefully control what is allowed to enter the Land Below.

At the end of the tiny tunnel is an almost perfectly circular, vaulted chamber about 12 meters in diameter. Directly in the center of the room is a gaping 2-1/2 meter hole. As far as can be determined with the naked eye or even a powerful flashlight, the "pit" has no bottom.

Actually, it plummets 4,950 kilometers straight down. This dimthread takes on the axioms of whatever reality it is passing through. About 150 meters down, Core Earth's axioms replace the Nile Empire's, while at 2,100 meters the dimthread smoothly shifts to the Land Below. The dimthread enters in a Land Below pure zone, which ends 2,500 kilometers later. The rest of the way "down" is a Land Below dominant zone. If anyone is unfortunate enough to fall into the pit, freefall to the bottom takes 20 hours.

One side of this pit is dominated by a levitation machine used to ferry supplies down to Merretika. The device is a huge, round disk, with hundreds of wires, levers, and other weird science gizmos attached to it. A huge barrel projects out from it and points straight down the pit. It stands about three meters high.

The gizmo generates the *flight* pulp power, but passes it through a giant gun barrel-like apparatus and broadcasts it "down" the pit. Anyone pass-

ing into the invisible beam is swept up in the flight ray.

While the operator runs the machine, each passenger carries a backpack radio to signal up, down, slow or off (the *flight* power moves passengers and objects at flight 16, or 600 meters per round; the slow setting allows for a soft touchdown at the bottom of the pit). The device can carry up to 60,000 kilograms. There is no chance of a Nile operator disconnecting while running the machine; operators from a realm without a high enough tech risk a one-case contradiction. Anything which enters the invisible beam is pulled or pushed in the direction of flight (passengers have no risk of disconnection by merely riding in the beam). The flight direction may be changed at any time.

The Nile expedition uses a backpack radio to command the operator. Each trooper carries a flashlight and a radio; once he has passed through the Land Below pure zone he turns on the flashlight to see how far down the cave floor is. Once the bottom is spotted, he radios for the operator to slow the flight speed. Both the flashlight and the radio only cause short-range contradictions in the Land Below dominant zone. There is a slight margin of error (due to the intricacies of the machine and human error), so delicate goods cannot be sent down unless they are well-packed.

For safety's sake, a guard is always on watch at the bottom of the cavern so someone who disconnects on the way down doesn't splat into the ground.

The levitation machine is guarded by 20 veteran shocktroopers and its creator, Dr. Halim Hofdet.

Shocktrooper

DEXTERITY 9

Beast riding 11, fire combat 12, heavy weapons 12, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 9

Climbing 10

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 7

Find 9, first aid 9, tracking 9, trick 9

MIND 7

Survival 9, test 9, willpower 12

CHARISMA 7

Taunt 9

A Way Home

The original expedition used a levitation machine which was hidden in the jungle by Kord, the self-proclaimed protector of Merretika (see *Chapter Eight: Folk and Creatures of Merretika*). Storm Knights may be lucky enough to find this device.

Levitation Machine

STRENGTH 12

Housing Toughness: 9

Powers: flight 10

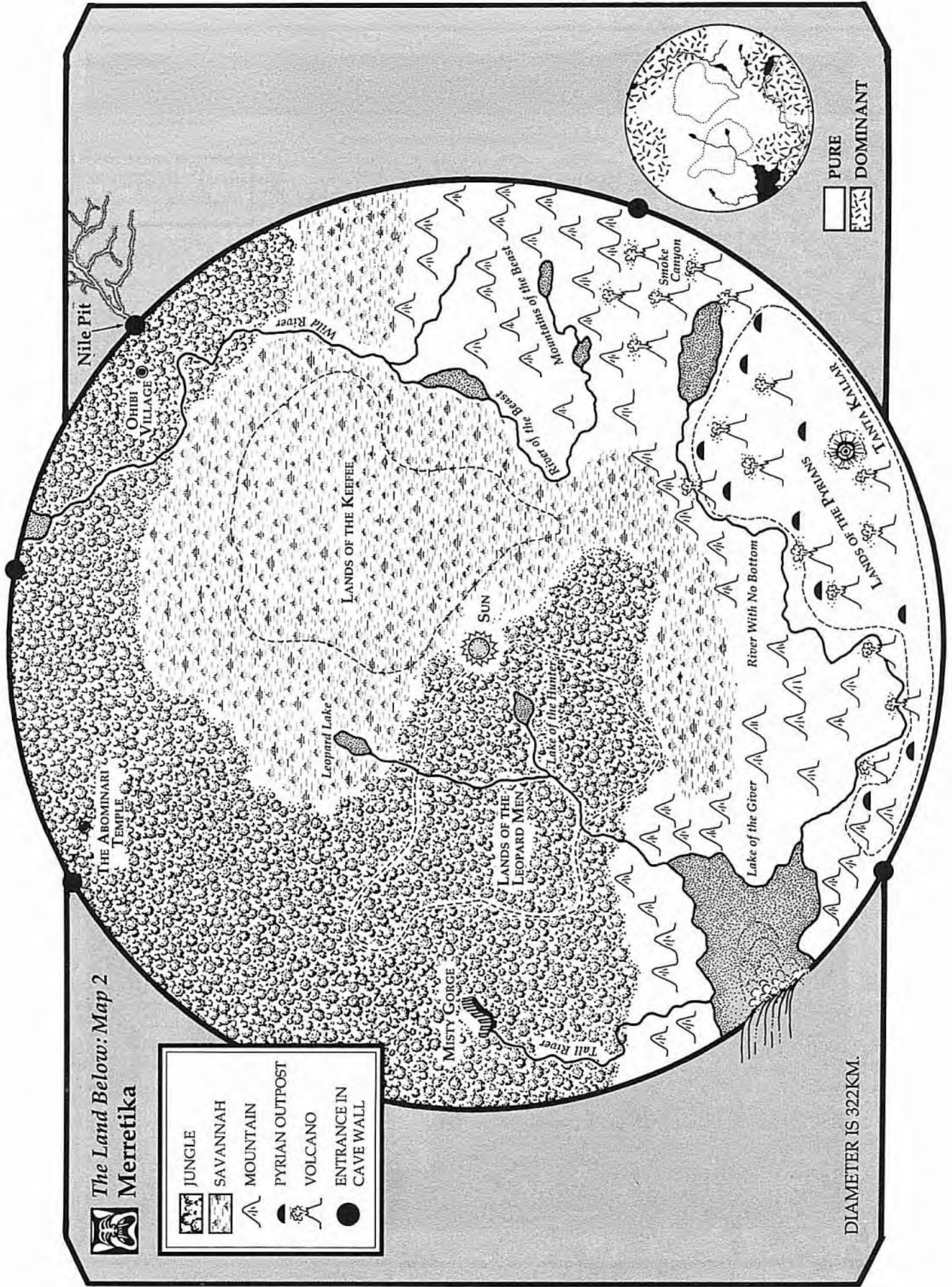
Power Plants: 12 (powering Strength)



The Land Below: Map 2
Merretika



	JUNGLE
	SAVANNAH
	MOUNTAIN
	PYRIAN OUTPOST
	VOLCANO
	ENTRANCE IN CAVE WALL



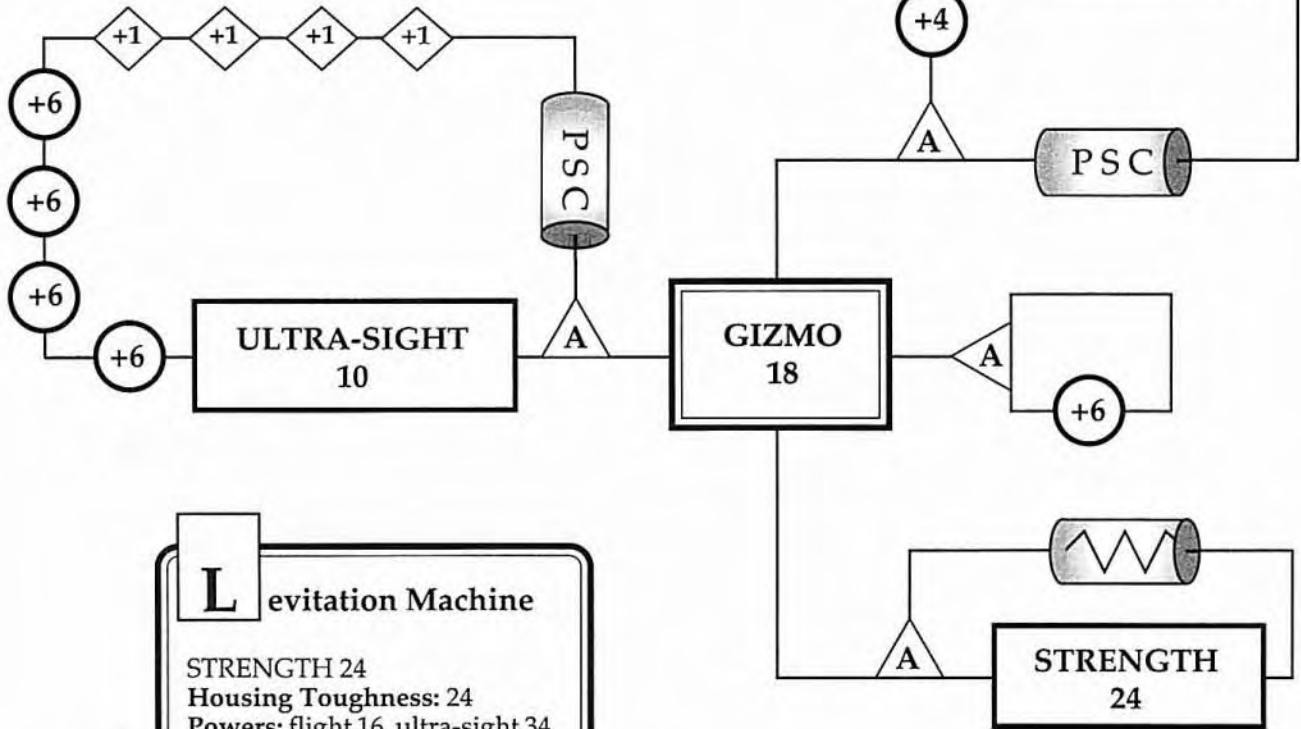
	PURE
	DOMINANT

DIAMETER IS 322KM.



The Land Below: Diagram 1

Levitation Machine Blueprint



L evitation Machine

STRENGTH 24

Housing Toughness: 24

Powers: flight 16, ultra-sight 34

Power Plants: 24 (powering STR)

Note: levitation machine projects *flight* power onto anyone in the flight beam. It takes 8 hours and 15 minutes to fly from top to bottom. The range of the beam is equal to the *ultra-sight* power value (34).

Because of the six boosters, anyone in the beam has a -6 penalty to all skills governed by *Dexterity*.

C omponent Symbols

- Housing
- System
- Power Plant
- Possibility Capacitor
- Adaptors

Stephen Crane/Cathleen Hunter



SPIRIT 9

Faith (Egyptian) 12, intimidation 12

Inclination: Evil**Possibility Potential:** none**Equipment:** KK81 (damage value 19), two grenades (damage value 18), bayonet/knife (damage value STR+4/13), backpack radio, flashlight, field kit.**Dr. Kalim Hoftet****DEXTERITY 7**

Maneuver 8

STRENGTH 8**TOUGHNESS 8****PERCEPTION 13**

Evidence analysis 16, find 15, scholar (scientific discoveries) 15

MIND 14

Science 17, weird science 28

CHARISMA 10**SPIRIT 9**

Reality 12

Inclination: Evil**Possibilities:** 8**Equipment:** flashlight, backpack radio, spare gizmo components

The bottom of the pit is a small chamber about 10 meters across that opens into the caves of the Land Below. Like the tunnels that carve through the Land of the Dead in the Nile Empire, these tunnels are seemingly never-ending and it would be an easy matter to get lost without a detailed map.

At least one guard is here at all times to watch out for intruders and make sure that supplies are coming down safely. The guard is stationed at the Nile outpost in Merretika, and is also equipped with a flashlight and backpack radio.

Helephez

Helephez, the glowing orb of light high in the sky, makes life possible in Merretika. In fact, all of the races of Merretika, in one form or another, worship Helephez as creator of the universe.

Helephez is a creature that does little beyond exist. Helephez produces only spiritual heat and energy, so every portion of the realm receives an equal amount of heat and light, for a remarkably consistent climate. Characters flying close to Helephez

wouldn't have to worry about being burned up, although they would probably have to deal with a brutal spiritual attack.

Helephez reacts violently whenever anything touches it or comes within a few kilometers. It makes a spiritual attack with a damage value of 45 (plus the bonus modifier).

Helephez**DEXTERITY 0**

Maneuver (50)

STRENGTH 0**TOUGHNESS 65****PERCEPTION 0**

Trick (26)

MIND 1

Test (30)

CHARISMA 0

Charm (47), persuasion (47), taunt (50)

SPIRIT 36

Faith 39, focus 41, intimidation 43

Possibilities: 32

The Enclosed World

The bizarre geography of Merretika is often disturbing to visitors. Because the world is flat, it is possible to see the mountains to the south and the Great Waterfall from nearly any point in the world. While shapes do get slightly distorted by the atmosphere, the sight of mountains hundreds of kilometers away is still impressive.

The walls of the dome appear to be a deep brown within a few kilometers, but as one travels closer to the center of the realm, they turn to a murky blue. The sidewalls do curve in somewhat as they reach the realm's ceiling, but this curvature is hardly noticeable from the ground.

Travelers often use Helephez and the thin white ribbon of the waterfall as navigation beacons.

The Endless Day

Another striking characteristic is the absence of night. Helephez constantly bathes the land in heat and light, although not enough to cause dead zones. Most of the inhabitants have

Errors of the Dark

The people of Merretika are understandably reluctant to enter the caverns. Their entire lives they have known only constant sunlight, with the occasional light rain. Any place of darkness is terrifying. The different races believe that the lands of Merretika are meant for them, but the caverns harbor great evil and creatures of death.

developed unique work and rest rhythms since there is no day and night cycle to guide them.

Visitors who stay for any length of time will realize that Merretika has no seasons either. Plants are in a constant state of growth, checked only by localized conditions and other creatures. Weather variations are very mild, with only a few light rains. Strong winds, snow, thunder and lightning are unknown in Merretika.

Direction

Compasses do not operate in the Land Below, and the idea of north, south, east and west are ideas which don't make much sense to the inhabitants of the realm (see *Chapter Four: Inhabitants*). For convenience, Merretika's map has been arbitrarily labeled with directions as indicated on the realm map.

Terrain

The terrain in Merretika is mostly jungle and savannah in the north, while mountains and volcanoes dominate the southern half of the land. Terrain shifts very quickly in Merretika, going from mountains to jungle or savannah in just a few steps.

Savannahs

Large stretches of land in the central portion of Merretika are covered



with tall brown grasses interrupted occasionally by large, lonesome Dalberry trees. The grasslands and its waterholes are teeming with life. All manner of small lizards, frogs, and waterfowl make their homes near the waterholes, and ground-nesting birds, insects, and rodents make their homes in the dry grasses. Larger animals include migratory herds of herbivores and the predators who feed on them. The grasslands are inhabited by tribes of Keefee, called the Termite People by most inhabitants of Merretika because of the Keefee's small stature and mound homes.

Jungles

The thick jungles of Merretika occupy nearly half of the realm's land surface, covering most of the northern regions. Under the cover of this green canopy, all sorts of strange flora and fauna have developed. Several races also call the jungle their home. The Ohibi people live in the northeastern jungles, the Darooni Wasp Riders dwell in the Misty Gorge to the west, and the tribes of Leopard Men make their home throughout the jungle.

The jungles are much more dangerous than the plains, with large num-

bers of predatory mammals, poisonous snakes, insect swarms and large lizards. The game to feed these creatures is also plentiful. While the creatures represent a serious danger, nutritious berries and fruits are also common, so the *survival* difficulty is only 5.

In the southwest, the jungles overlap with the mountains near the Lake of the Giver and the Great Waterfall. It is here that the savage splendor of Merretika is most evident, with waterfalls, lush lakes which feed the jungles, and beautiful scenery.

Volcanoes

The southern third of Merretika is dominated by the volcanoes, whose pillars of fire and smoke reach high into the sky and can be seen from nearly every portion of the realm. Mountains and open lakes of bubbling lava separate the volcanoes, with small plains of volcanic glass. While there are few creatures suited to this environment, the hardy Pyrian Fire Tamers have thrived.

Traversing the volcanic plains is an adventure of discomfort and survival. The ground consists of hot, baked clay or cooled lava flows covered with a fine gravel of sharp crystal. There are

occasional springs that vent like steaming geysers, but running water is rare. The only lakes are craters filled with molten lava. Some of these magma ponds are hundreds of meters across, and the ground near them is far too hot for hiking.

Travels across these land require a *survival* total of 15 to find enough food and shelter. *Climbing* mountain tops has a difficulty of 8, while the difficulty to climb active volcanoes is 13. The plains of volcanic glass and rock are especially dangerous, inflicting damage value 10 on anyone thrown to the ground. Characters may avoid damage by making an *acrobatics* total of 8 or higher.

Characters totally immersed in boiling lava suffer damage value 24 (each round), while submerging just a limb causes damage value 16. The lava also emits toxic fumes, which inflict damage based on how far the character is from the source of the gas: within 60 meters causes damage value 4 from the noxious fumes each round. Each value closer (60 meters, 40 meters, 25 meters, etc.) adds +2 to damage.

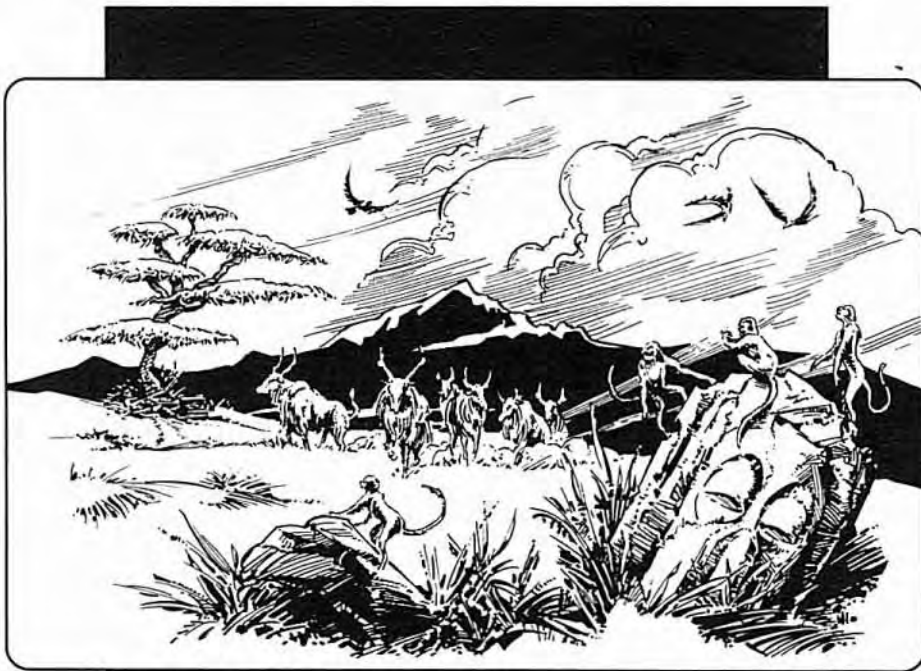
Those values are for a full fledged volcano or a lava flow more than 10 meters across. For each value lower (6 meters across, than 4 meters across, then 2.5 meters across, etc.), lower the damage by -2.

Mountains

The mountains in the eastern regions are warm and habitable, but an unique individual makes them quite dangerous. The aptly named Mountains of the Beast stretch hundreds of meters into the air. The mountains are covered by a variety of grasses, trees and other plants, with a large population of animals. The true master of this area is Ungrosh, the giant ape.

The mountains get much more rain than the rest of the realm, and are the source of the Wild River and the River of the Beast, which empty from Merretika at the dome's edge to the north.

Smaller mountains run the entire width of Merretika to the south, closely bordering the volcanoes and the River with no Bottom.





Rivers

The rivers of Merretika provide water to most regions of the land, but they are almost unusable as a means of transport.

Merretika's rivers receive much of their water from outside the realm. Rivers from the Land Below caverns feed the Lake of the Giver, while rainfall is generated by water vapor which finds its way into Merretika through several cave entrances many kilometers above ground level. The Living Land's waterfall has increased the flow of water into the land.

Lake of the Giver

The Lake of the Giver is fed by the Great Waterfall, which is over half a kilometer wide. The lake extends over 60 kilometers into Merretika from the wall of the realm.

The lake was originally just a river wandering through the high mountain passes. Over thousands of years, the area was worn down, creating a

giant crater to hold the lake, with only three rivers emerging through the mountains to the east and down into the jungle and savannah low lands to the north. The lake and surrounding mountains tower over 400 meters above the lowlands.

Great clouds of swirling mist obscure the violence of the waterfall smashing into the lake, although the results, huge waves which constantly batter the lake shore, are plainly evident. Pilots must beat a *water vehicle* difficulty of 10 to prevent a ship or boat from capsizing due to the waves.

Three main rivers flow from the Lake of the Giver: the River with no Bottom, the Tall River and the Leopard River.

River with no Bottom

The River with no Bottom is a savage, twisting waterway, dominated by huge whirlpools and waterfalls. It borders the realm of the Pyrians and is the only reason they have not advanced further north: they are afraid of the

uncontrolled waters. Any character foolish enough to attempt to boat across the river must make a *water vehicles* total with a minimum difficulty of 18; if the boat is caught in one of the frequent whirlpools, the difficulty jumps to 23. Anyone who fails a roll has their boat battered into rocks or the rocky shore. *Swimming* difficulties are at +3 compared to the difficulties for water vehicles.

The river is normally bordered by sharp peaks and volcanic lava flow, creating huge clouds of steam in many spots.

The River with no Bottom eventually flows into the Smoke Canyon, where it smashes into a continuous stream of lava and boils away in a deadly cloud.

Tall River

The Tall River flows north and is more easily used for shipping, although none of the local inhabitants are using it for this purpose. About 45 kilometers long, the river dumps into





the Misty Gorge and eventually flows through out of the realm at the northern end of the gorge.

Leopard River

The Leopard River flows northeast, eventually forming the Lake of the Hunter and Leopard Lake. This river is peaceful by all appearances, but the dominant inhabitant is a particularly nasty variety of crocodilians called arhet crom. They often lurk just below

the water, waiting for unwary creatures to enter for a brief swim.

Eastern Rivers

The Mountains of the Beast are the source of the River of the Beast and the Wild River, which bisect the entire eastern half of Merretika. The two rivers join just west of the mountains and eventually flow into a small lake on the dome's northern rim. Both rivers get their name due to the numerous

rapids and waterfalls, and pilots must make a *water vehicles* total of 12 to successfully navigate these dangerous waterways. The lake flows into a titanic waterfall that leads out of the bottom of the realm.

Landmarks

Several unique landmarks and locations in Merretika deserve special attention, providing numerous potential adventure hooks.

Misty Gorge

In the western jungles of the realm, the land falls away into a great mist shrouded gorge. The name of the chasm is different in every tribal language of the realm, but all of the names mean Misty Gorge. The canyon is almost a kilometer deep and its sides are sheer walls of slick shale and rock marked by infrequent outcroppings, ledges, and tiny caves. The impenetrable mist begins only 50 meters below the rim of the gorge and continues until only 60 meters above the surface.

The gorge is boot-shaped, with a length of 16 kilometers. At its widest point, from heel to toe of the boot, the gorge is almost five kilometers wide.

The Tall River is the source of a huge waterfall in the southern end of the gorge. The river flows north before dropping through a hole in the floor of the Misty Gorge. Where the river goes after leaving Merretika is unknown, although the Gorge's inhabitants, the Darooni Wasp Riders, feel the area is a place of death.

The difficulties of getting into the gorge and the fierceness of the people has prevented anyone from learning much about the Darooni. Getting into the Misty Gorge can be quite a problem. The mist not only disguises the depths of the chasm, but the humidity from the vapors also makes the sheer sides of the gorge very slippery and treacherous. The base difficulty number for *climbing* the gorge walls is 14. This may be adjusted by -3 if the climbers have mountaineering tools. Improvised tools, such as jungle vines and daggers, yield a -1 or -2 modifier to the difficulty number. Most likely,



characters will attempt the climb as a non-combat macro skill. The length of the climb makes it quite possible that the climbers will be spotted by wasp riders as the hunters leave the chasm in search of food. This can lead to desperate fights from the sheer walls of the gorge or a heroic stand on a ledge where the group pauses to rest.

Alternately, the characters may be able to utilize magic or flight powers to reach the bottom of the gorge. Navigating an aircraft into the gorge is a risky venture for even the bravest pilot with possibility points to burn. The mist makes it very difficult to accurately gauge where one is, and it is quite easy to smash into the walls of the gorge or slam into trees. To successfully fly in the gorge, the *air vehicles* difficulty is 18 for most aircraft and 12 for hovering vehicles like helicopters and VTOLs (use this as a macro-skill, checking every five minutes). Any aircraft without vertical landing capability will have to crash land on the narrow strips of cultivated land along the river, with a difficulty of 16 to land without injuring any passengers and a difficulty of 20 not to damage the plane. Vertical landing craft can land with a difficulty of 12.

Tanta Kallar

This mountain, Merretika's largest volcano, is called Tanta Kallar by the Pyrian Fire Tamers. The volcano rises 1,500 meters above the nearby volcanic plains, with sides that seep rivers of molten lava. The top is a great hollow pit filled with bubbling magma. Its sides are girdled with the houses of the Pyrians, and above the volcano's smoking top sits the wondrous temple of the Pyrians (see *Chapter Four: Inhabitants*).

Smoke Canyon

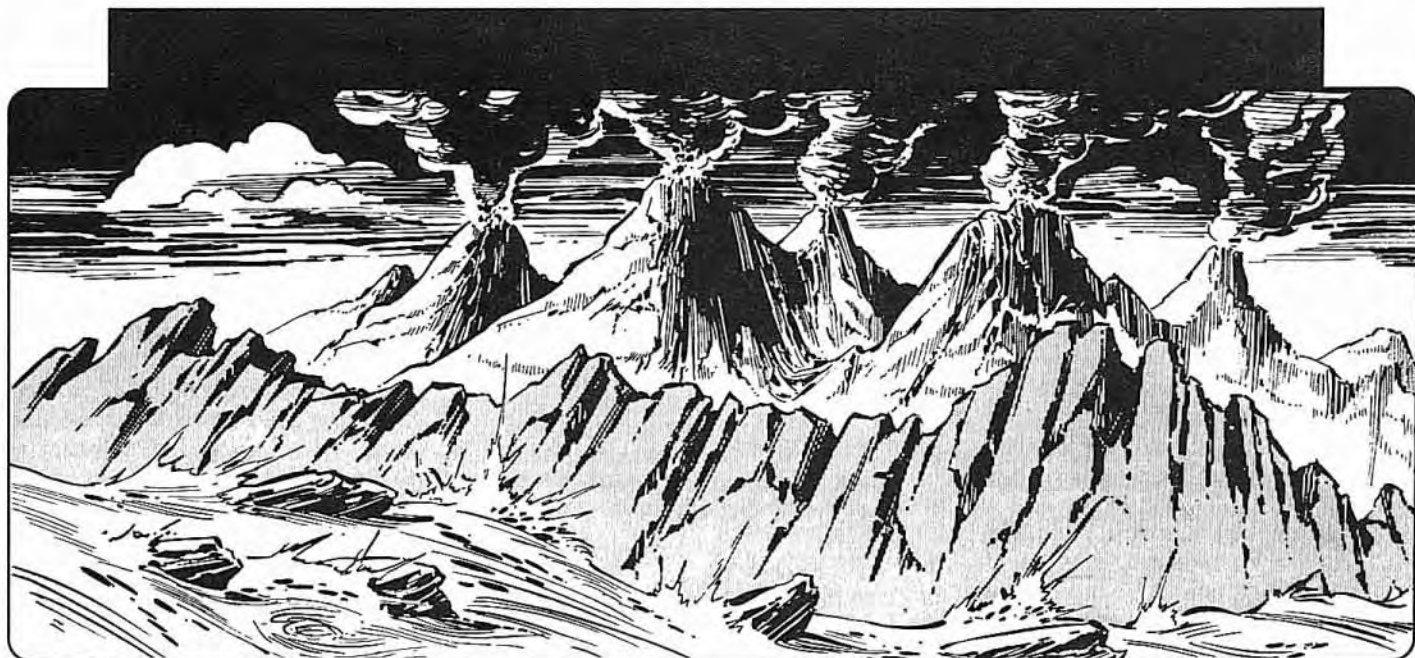
Smoke Canyon is the end of the River with no Bottom, and is an impassible area blocking Pyrian eastward expansion. The canyon is about a kilometer long, half as wide and only 100 meters deep. Several open fissures allow lava to seep into the canyon, where it mixes with the water, producing noxious clouds of steam which can be seen from the southernmost lands of the Keefee. Anyone who comes within 60 meters of the canyon suffers damage value 4 from the noxious fumes each round. Each value closer (60

meters, 40 meters, 25 meters, etc.) adds +2 to damage. Anyone actually entering the canyon suffers damage value 20 each round she remains in the canyon (armor doesn't count for purposes of resisting damage).

The Abominari Temple

The Abominari Temple is in the northwestern portion of Merretika and presents some interesting questions regarding Merretika. It is hidden deep in the uninhabited jungles of the north, and only a few kilometers from Merretika's wall.

It is obviously the product of the Law of Wonders, with a trio of floating obelisks which revolve around a central point once every 16 earth hours. The obelisks float about two meters off the ground and are made of a shiny black and very hard (*Toughness 21*) stone. They are about four meters high and are covered with carved runes. Apparently growing out of the bottom of each obelisks are several long roots: at the base of the obelisk, they seem almost to be made of stone, but





the ends are flexible and definitely plant-like. A huevenge lurks nearby (see *Chapter Eight: Creatures of Merretika*).

The Nile Outpost

Though it's a small outpost, the invading Nile shocktroopers have established a camp just outside of the caves in the domed world of Merretika. It is only a few kilometers from the Ohibi village, but the troops have not yet discovered the Sphere. Only about a dozen soldiers are here and they have been issued swords rather than risk disconnection from using their guns.

The leader of the group, Field Major Achmed Tunakakan, feels that a larger presence would be too threatening to the nearby Ohibi and he is not eager to instigate an unnecessary war — at least, not at the present time. So far, the Major has maintained peace with the Ohibi by not interfering with them when they enter the caves. He

hasn't tried to follow them, knowing that if his men were caught they could be slain.

The current procedure is to maintain the shocktrooper force already stationed here, while secretly smuggling more supplies down from the surface. About a half dozen explorers have been secretly sent off to wander Merretika. Mobius has been told only that there is a domed, tropical world in the caverns; he doesn't know any specific details.

Shocktrooper

DEXTERITY 9

Beast riding 11, fire combat 12, heavy weapons 12, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 9

Climbing 10

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 7

Find 9, first aid 9, tracking 9, trick 9

MIND 7

Survival 9, test 9, willpower 12

CHARISMA 7

Taunt 9

SPIRIT 9

Faith (Egyptian) 12, intimidation 12

Possibility Potential: none

Equipment: sword (damage value STR +6/ 15), knife (damage value STR +4/13), field kit

Field Major Achmed Tunakakan

DEXTERITY 11

Dodge 14, fire combat 13, heavy weapons 12, maneuver 12, melee weapons 15, stealth 12, unarmed combat 13

STRENGTH 12

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 9

Find 12, hieroglyphics 11, scholar (small unit tactics) 14, trick 11

MIND 12

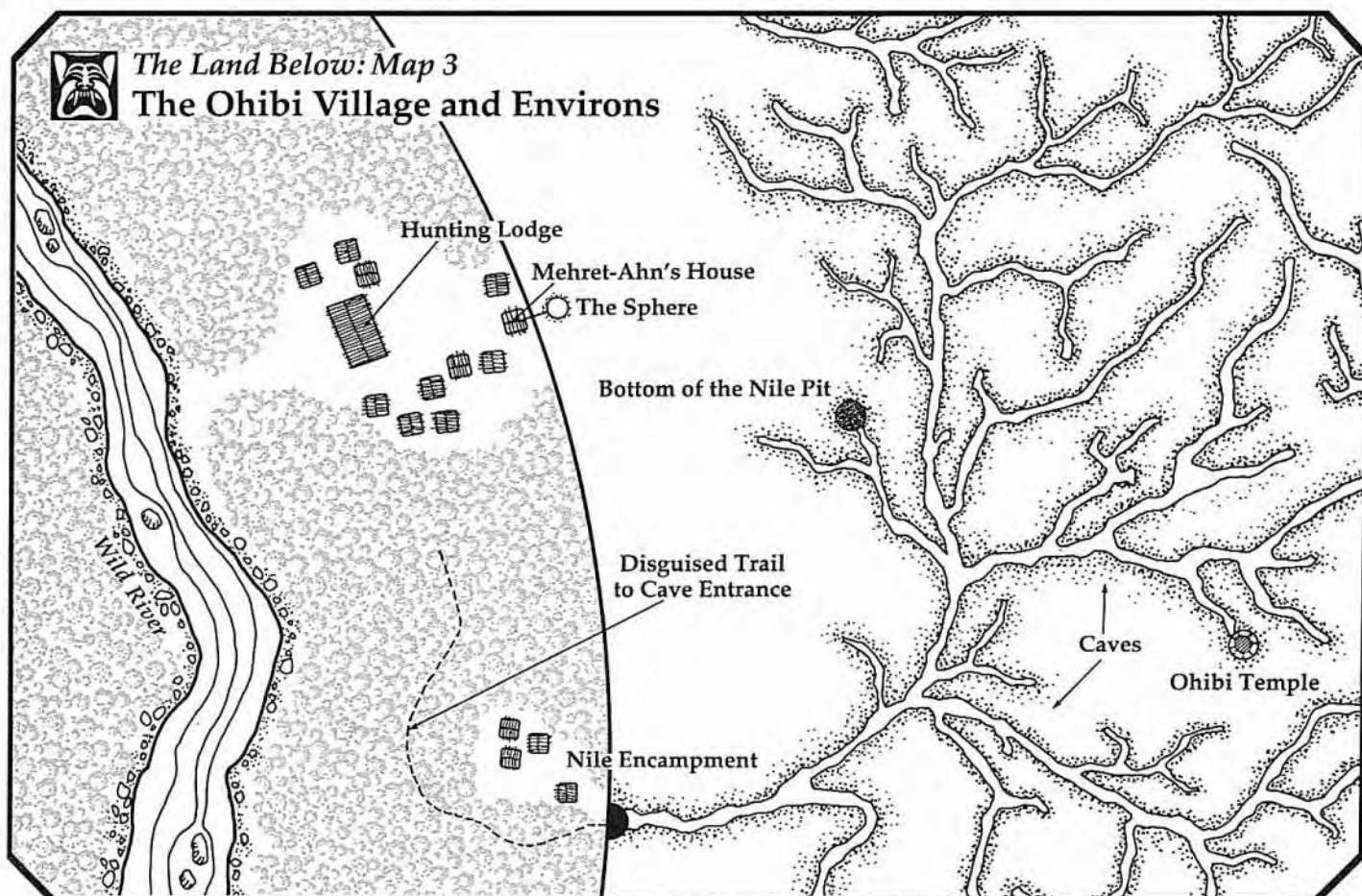
Survival 14, test 13, willpower 14

CHARISMA 9

SPIRIT 10

Faith (Egyptian religion) 13, intimidation 14





Inclination: Evil

Possibilities: not rated

Equipment: spear (damage value STR+4/16), sword (damage value STR 6/18), Nile headdress, backpack radio, diary

The Sphere

The Sphere is one of the largest and most powerful eternity shards yet to be encountered in the possibility wars. To get to the Sphere, characters must use a hidden tunnel in Mehret-Ahn's house in the Ohibi village (see *Chapter Four: Inhabitants*).

The chamber at the end of Mehret-Ahn's secret tunnel is dominated by a singularly mind-blowing sight. Those who enter may at first think it a deception or a trick of the light, but the very walls of the room seem to be made of the red and blue swirled rock that is characteristic of reality shards.

In fact, the chamber is a huge, hollow eternity shard called the Sphere.

The only opening into the shard is the approximately man-sized cave entrance that runs from Mehret-Ahn's house. Otherwise, the shard is an unbroken sphere that is visible along the curved walls and vaulted ceiling, though the curved bottom is buried beneath the flat, stone floor. About ten man-sized beings could be in the Sphere at the same time. Mehret-Ahn views the Sphere as the gift of Mehret to the Ohibi people.

The Sphere is imbedded in tons of rock. If anyone attempts to move the Sphere, it will make an energy attack on everyone within 15 meters (damage value 27). The attacks will continue until everyone is dead or leaves the area.

The Sphere

Cosm: Land Below

Possibilities: Thousands

Tapping Difficulty: 30

Purpose: To preserve the uncomplicated and savage nature of the Land Below

Powers: The Sphere is an entity of the Land Below, creating a pure zone with a 10 meter radius. Characters who have attuned themselves to the Sphere may carry a splinter of it with them and carry possibilities.

Group Power: *Seize*

To use the Group Power, all of the members of the group must gather within the interior of the Sphere. Characters must be inside the Sphere when spending possibilities to purchase the power.

Restrictions: Possibilities may only be used to further the primitive nature of the realm by fighting those who would dominate it or opposing those who have higher technology or magic axioms than that of the Land Below.

A character may gain possibilities for later use after undergoing an elaborate power-investment ritual. Only bearers may perform this ceremony.

First, a portion of the Sphere must be shaved from the shard (*Toughness* 12; user must get a wound result to chip off a piece of the shard; consider



the shard possibility-rated).

The character must spend the next 24 hours (Earth time) inside the chamber, attuning his perception of reality to that of the shard. To simulate this process, the character must generate a *reality* total. If the result is greater than 15, then he has been successful. Add ten to the result points and translate this total to a time value (see page 43 of the *Torg Rulebook*). This value is how long the piece of the Sphere retains possibilities. If it is ever lost or taken from the bearer, then the connection is broken and all possibilities are lost. Slivers of the Sphere lose all possibilities once they are taken more than 150 kilometers from the shard.

After the investment, the character makes the normal *reality* skill roll against the tapping difficulty to see how many possibilities are gained.

The Sphere can only be tapped once every 18 Core Earth hours and never more than once every 36 Core Earth hours by the same person. The possibilities gained may only be used in combat or to benefit the primitive reality of the Land Below.

Seize

Purchase: 20

Use Cost: 14

Coordination: 10

Difficulty: 15

Range: reality value

Duration: one round

Effect: opens a gate and captures the closest being.

This group power allows the users to open a gate to another location and capture the individual closest to the gate. This power is often used to capture a specific individual when their location is known. The gate appears two meters away from the lead character and is as large as is necessary to accommodate the seized being.

The *reality* skill value becomes the range for the power. The power has an effect value of 30. In order to seize someone, compare the target's largest physical attribute to the effect value. If the result points are greater than the target's *Spirit*, the person is pulled through the gate. The lead character may elect to increase the range or the effect value before using the power. For every two points of range or effect increase, the difficulty increases by three.

Ohibi Temple

Though not obvious (*tracking* total of 11 to notice), there is a marked path that runs from the Ohibi village to the entrance of the caverns a few kilometers away (this is the same entrance from which the two Nile expeditions have emerged). Once they have entered the caverns, the Ohibi then follow a memorized path to the Ohibi temple.

It is almost impossible to find the temple without knowing exactly where it is. Random wanderings will almost never reveal its location (*find*

total of 20 to spot the gigantic stone wheel if Storm Knights travel by).

Even if someone is aware of the temple's location (either through a map or by following someone there), it is still difficult to spot the stone wheel due to its excellent craftsmanship (*find* total of 13 to spot). The wheel is over 2-1/2 meters tall and seamlessly fits into the natural rock of the cavern wall. When it is rolled along a carved groove (*Strength* total of 8 to move), the small Ohibi temple is revealed behind. There are no other entrances to this chamber.

The rough rock walls of the chamber have been worked smooth and are decorated with a variety of charcoal illustrations. In order from left to right around the slightly rounded walls are illustrations depicting the Ohibi village, the network of tunnels that leads to the Sacred Temple, the temple itself, and a figure that represents Mehret.

On the far end of the cavern is a small altar formed of finely carved stone. On the altar sits a wooden idol of a squat man. The carefully sculpted face closely resembles that of the last charcoal illustration. The presumption is that the drawing on the wall represents the soul of Mehret while the idol is the god's physical presence in the world of the Ohibi.

As part of a solemn religious ceremony, Mehret-Ahn, the Ohibi leader, places a sliver of the Sphere inside the idol and calls upon the *Power of Mehret* miracle (see *Chapter Six: Miracles of Faith*).



Chapter Four

Inhabitants



Merretika is populated by several groups of humans in varying stages of development. Most of the groups are organized around the tribe, although the Pyrian Fire Tamers have a king who would like to build an empire through conquest.

However different their cultures, the groups all share some conceptions about their homes and the universe as a whole.

Direction

North, south, east and west have few practical applications in Merretika. Instead, the inhabitants have developed a system of navigation based on the sun, Helephez, and the location of the Great Waterfall, which can be seen from almost any point in the realm.

The prime direction is Ret-Heleph, which translates into "toward Helephez". Moving away from Helephez is Wul-Heleph. These two directions measure distance from the absolute center of Merretika.

The Pyrians use a simple stick about two meters long, with a disk attached to one end. The stick is held perpendicular to the ground and a pebble is placed at the end of the shadow. The user lays the stick on the ground, matching one of the many notches on the stick to the pebble. This tells the user how far she is from the center of the realm.

Then, the user lines up one of eight notches on the disk (each representing a 45 degree increment) with the reference landmark (normally the Great Waterfall). From the landmark, the user can compare it to known coordinates of the desired location and determine which direction to go.

Time

Because Merretika is a land of constant daylight and unchanging seasons, the people have no convenient way of measuring the passage of time. The people of this realm are based very much in the present, with time thought about from a first person perspective ("when I was smaller", or "the time that I killed the leopard"). The past and future are only vague concepts, which fluidly merge with the present. To them, change is constant but measured time is an alien concept.

Darkness

Living in a world of constant light has bred an almost universal fear of darkness and dark places. Only the Ohibi will willingly enter the caves on the borders of the realm. The other cultures largely believe that the "holes of darkness" are places of death, inhabited by monsters more terrifying than any creature of Merretika.

The night sky so familiar to most of Merretika's visitors would terrify any of the natives, but they are used to the constant daylight, which will certainly be unsettling to most visitors.

Languages

All of the societies in the Land Below speak different languages. A language total of 12 is required to understand the various tribal tongues. A second attempt to understand the language could be given after a week of struggling to communicate. This will facilitate role playing in the realm by forcing characters to communicate with hand signals and grunts.



Darooni Wasp Riders

In the depths of the great Misty Gorge live the fearsome Darooni people. This cannibalistic culture has molded their society and religion around a hive of gigantic wasps to such an extent that the people and wasps are now interdependent.

The Leopard Men and the Darooni are bitter enemies since the Darooni often capture children for food and religious sacrifices. The lucky prey are those that are killed immediately for food. The unfortunate are the souls taken alive into the Misty Gorge, where their death will come slowly in one of the Daroonis' savage rituals.

Race Description

The Darooni are a stunted race. Individuals rarely exceed one and a half meters in height. Their frames are built from small bones and knotted, wiry muscles. They have dusky, light brown skin and black hair.

The Darooni tend to be nearsighted, but they compensate for this with excellent hearing and smell. Darooni wear dyed animal skins as a means of adornment. The priestesses are granted more elaborate dress and are allowed to wear jewelry, small animal bones, and pieces of quartz. The Darooni culture is female dominated. Darooni men are not allowed to use weapons or learn the skills relating to their use.

Typical Darooni

DEXTERITY 9

Melee weapons 11, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 9

Direction sense (*Living Land* sourcebook) 11,

MIND 8

CHARISMA 7

SPIRIT 10

Faith (Olakaa) 11, intimidation 11

Possibility Potential: some (39)

Equipment: Club (STR+4/damage value 11), javelin (STR+3/damage value 10), dyed animal skins.

Homeland

The Darooni can only be found in the Misty Gorge, the great chasm located in the western part of Merretika. The only Darooni ever seen by most Merretikans are the Wasp Riders who fly out of the Misty Gorge to hunt in the surrounding jungle. What little is known of the Darooni ways comes from individuals who are outcast from the society. However, such cases are rare and outcasts seldom survive long enough on their own to spread many stories.

The Darooni homes are dispersed along the length of the chasm, collected on the bank of the Tall River. The Darooni have cultivated the riverbank, but the majority of the chasm floor is still dense jungle. Sometimes the thick mist filling the gorge drops down to ground level, reducing normal visibility to only 30 meters, although this is hardly a handicap for the Darooni, who depend mostly on sound and smell for finding their way in the gorge.

The largest collection of houses looks like a small village and is built around the southern pond formed by the waterfall. The mist from the waterfall reduces visibility to only 20 meters. The wasp hive and the Darooni temple are situated in the toe of the gorge's boot shape.

Society

The Darooni tribe includes nearly 300 people and a nest of giant wasps numbering over 60 insects. The Darooni society is a result of both the people's symbiotic relationship with the wasp nest and the geography of the chasm.

The Darooni have a cycle which is roughly nine Earth hours in length. In that cycle, they have one rest period (which is about three Earth hours), and then an active period which is twice as long.

The Darooni society is closely regulated by the religion, which regards the giant wasps as superior to humans. Darooni society is very clearly dominated by females, and only women may become Wasp Priestesses

and Wasp Riders, the two most important classes in the society. The most important male is The Boatman, who is responsible for trade in Darooni society. Next are the Wasp Scouts, the only men who are entitled to fly with the giant wasps. Farmers form the largest caste. Wasp Consorts are men who are taken in by the priestesses for basic tasks, but they have no formal status in the society, and are considered property of the priestesses and the wasps.

The religion is built around worship of the wasps and the great hunts outside the chasm. Status and comfort in Darooni society is measured directly by where in the gorge a Darooni lives. The houses are built along nearly the entire length of the river. Farming families are assigned houses depending on the highest ranking child, while families without children who have become a Priestess or Wasp Rider live farthest from the village.

A Warrior Society

The Wasp Priestesses live in the most elaborate houses of the tribe, built from trees and using tree sap as an adhesive to hold the sturdy structures together.

At the northern shore of the pond are the homes of the Wasp Riders, the women who have been chosen by individual wasps to be their companion in battle and hunting. These houses are small but comfortable, often decorated with plants, animal skins and weapons constructed by the rider.

The Wasp Riders and Priestesses do not have families as such. They choose several Wasp Consorts, and should a Priestess or Wasp Rider decide to have children, the Consort will be granted a house in which to raise the children at the northern end of the river (he joins the farmer caste).

The place where the pond forms into a river is the home of Dedak Got, the Boatman.

The Darooni Wasp Scouts live next down the river, with simple thatched huts. They are trained to scout for the hunting parties, have families and engage in some farming.

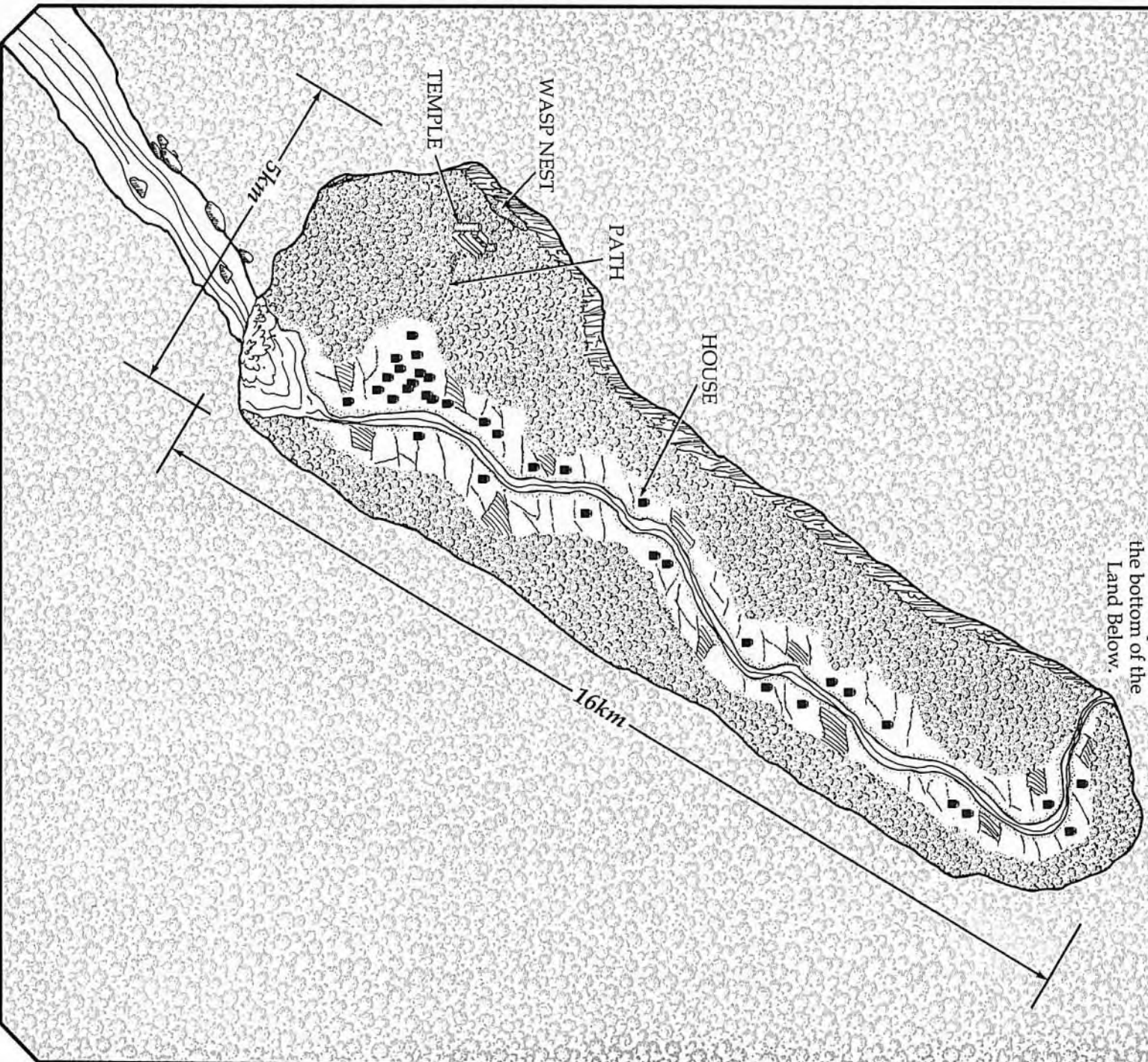
The majority of the Darooni are farmers who live in simple thatched huts along the gorge's river. These





The Land Below: Map 4
The Misty Gorge

Water drops out of
the bottom of the
Land Below.



families cultivate strips of land along the river to grow several vegetables and fruits.

Darooni Trade

The Darooni Priestesses have a very firm control over their society. They are responsible for caring for the wasp nest and planning the wasp rider hunts. The Wasp Riders are responsible for providing meat to the Darooni society, while the farmers grow the vegetables and fruits for the rest of the tribe.

The most plentiful crop is a leafy spinach-like vegetable called jeega. Other common crops are a highly nutritious grain called wuquen and several smaller, potato-like vegetables collectively called fewweth.

A few select fields, mostly close to the village, are seeded with a melon-bearing vegetable called ushti. When these melons become ripe, the farmers will dig up the fruit and break them open. The melons are left rotting in the fields to let a bright red fungus cover the decaying rinds. This fungus, called ushti dak, is harvested and made into a variety of substances including red body paint, spices, and drugs for religious rituals.

The greatest benefit for those Darooni who live near the waterfall comes through the tribe's food distribution system. When the Wasp Riders return with game from a hunt, the Wasp Scout families skin and prepare the game, giving the best meats to the Priestesses and Wasp Riders. The scout families are allowed to choose a portion of the meat, and trade the rest to Dedak Got in exchange for vegetables. Next, the extra game is taken downstream by the Boatman and traded for the vegetables grown by the farmers.

Farmers who live upstream are able to pick the best meat the Boatman has to offer, whereas the Darooni living at the end of the river must settle for whatever their fellow tribesmen have rejected and often get no meat at all if the hunt was small. Even if there is no meat, Dedak Got is entitled to any vegetables not needed by the family.

The Priestesses carefully control the growing of Ushti Dak and normally allow only the upstream farmers to grow the crop.

The Boatman

Dedak Got is the Darooni Boatman, the most important male in the Darooni culture. Dedak and his young sons are responsible for transporting meat from the Wasp Riders' kills down through the chasm, bartering with the farmers for vegetables and Ushti Dak. Dedak is also the tribal messenger, carrying news, announcements and gossip to all the farmers as he travels the river.

Approximately every six months (Core Earth time), a Priestess will accompany Dedak and his sons on their barge to bring the news of a new Wasp Hatching to all the tribesmen.

Dedak is a physically powerful man as Darooni go. He is a stubborn man who is fiercely proud of his family and his three sons. Dedak is only beginning to realize the potential power he has over his tribe as the tribe's information link to all of the river farmers. He has begun accepting small bribes in return for extra meats or advanced warnings of a Wasp Hatching.

Dedak Got, the Boatman

DEXTERITY 8
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 8
PERCEPTION 10
 Direction sense 13, water vehicles 13
MIND 9
CHARISMA 10

Charm 13, persuasion 14

SPIRIT 10

Faith (Olakaa) 11, intimidation 11

Possibilities: none

Equipment: Meats and vegetables for trade, boat

Dedak's three sons have the same statistics as typical Darooni, except their *Strength* and *Toughness* are -2. The sons appear young, perhaps 12 years old or younger (Core Earth time). The oldest, Dujjil, will soon be ready to take part in the Choosing Ceremony.

Darooni Religion

The Darooni see the world about them in a very symbolic way. The chasm in which they live is the home given to them by their goddess Olakaa (O-la-kay-a). The land above the Misty Gorge is divine, but not sacred. That land is filled with gifts from Olakaa to the Darooni people, such as the river which falls down into the chasm or prey to be hunted by the Wasp Riders.

The Darooni make no distinction between man or beast when hunting, and all creatures may be hunted for food since they exist only to benefit the Darooni people. It is perfectly fine for a Darooni to eat the flesh of another human, just so that the human is not a Darooni. The Darooni do not respect or worship that which comes from the world above them, but they will thank Olakaa in prayer for providing such things.

The Darooni are Olakaa's chosen people and the Misty Gorge is sacred land. The giant wasps are sacred and divine representatives of Olakaa's will, and the people are to fulfill the needs of the wasps.

This same geographic symbolism is extended all along the river. Darooni living upstream are closer to Olakaa's gifts of life, while the people living near the end of the river are further from Olakaa's sight. The place where the river plummets through a tunnel and leaves the Misty Gorge is considered a place of death by the Darooni. Anything that leaves the chasm through that watery tunnel has left the lands of the living. When a Darooni dies, his body is placed on a funeral boat which is set adrift at the head of the river. The funeral barge wanders through the gorge until it plummets out the exit tunnel at the north end of the chasm.

The giant wasps provide the Darooni with transportation to Olakaa's divine land and allow the Darooni to remain true to Olakaa's will. When a wasp dies, its rider will usually forfeit her or his own life.

Religious Structure

The Darooni religion is directed by Priestesses and Olakaa is seen as a goddess. In addition to the Head Priest-



ess, Okina Ko (who is spiritually linked to the wasp queen), seven other priestesses serve the seven most important wasps of the hive. The priestesses and wasps care for the wasp young and insure the queen's comfort. A couple of these wasps may join especially important hunts.

The Priestesses

Okina Ko, the Head Priestess, is the closest thing the Darooni have to a chief. She is the central authority figure for the tribe and everyone is subject to her commands. Okina does fear Kihiti Dok, the leader of the Wasp Riders. Her ability to communicate with the insects is stirring rumors among the Darooni that she is a chosen one sent by Olakaa herself. Okina has attempted to silence these rumors and limit Kihiti's influence whenever she can.

Okina is not a pretty woman, even by Darooni standards. Like most priestesses, she has ugly scars from her initiation rites, but she carries them with honor. She is very faithful, though often her interpretations of Olakaa's signs coincidentally favor Okina's own goals. Okina tolerates no dissension amongst her people. She will call upon other wasps and Wasp Riders to protect her if the Branch of the Wasp is not sufficient.

She is possibility-rated, but is not considered by the Darkness Devices to possess the potential to become the Chosen One.

Okina Ko, Darooni Head Priestess

DEXTERITY 9

Beast riding 10, melee weapons 10, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 6

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 10

Direction sense 13, trick 12

MIND 10

Willpower 11

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 10

SPIRIT 13

Faith (Olakaa) 16, focus 15, intimidation 16, reality 14

Possibilities: 16

Equipment: Branch of the Wasp Sting (see below), decorative animal skins, jewelry, quartz wrist bracelet

Darooni Priestess

DEXTERITY 9

Beast riding 10, melee weapons 10, unarmed combat 10

STRENGTH 7

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 9

Direction sense 12, trick 11

MIND 10

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 9

SPIRIT 12

Faith (Olakaa) 14, focus 13, intimidation 13

Possibilities: none

Equipment: Animal skins, jewelry, animal bones

The Branch of the Wasp

The Branch of the Wasp is a powerful symbol of the Darooni religion, and is passed down from head priestess to head priestess. It is permanently empowered with the *Catalepsy* and *Wasp Sting* miracles and provides its own *faith* and *focus* (both at 17). If for some reason the branch fails on its roll, the Okina Ko may make a *faith* roll with a difficulty of 12. Then find the Power Push and add that to the branch's *faith* and *focus* totals to see if the miracle succeeds. Only the head priestess is able to use the Branch.

The Wasp Riders

Young Darooni females are raised with the sole ambition of becoming one of their tribe's fearsome, aerially-mounted hunters.

They train hours everyday throwing javelins and conditioning their bodies for the Choosing Ceremony. This competition is held to determine which of the potential young candidates will have the honor of riding any unmatched wasps.

Darooni Wasp Riders have physiques that are well suited for their duties. Their legs are thin, weak, and slightly bowlegged. However, the riders have powerful arms and chests for throwing javelins or impaling prey with lances. The Wasp Riders wear simple loincloths and will paint themselves with red and black pastes before leaving on a hunt.

Each Wasp Rider carries four to seven javelins with them. The riders

dip their javelin points in the wasp venom, relying on the paralyzing neurotoxin to bring down their prey. If the javelin causes any damage to the target, then the poisonous payload is injected, which will cause only "K" or "O" results (acts as damage value 15 but does no shock or wound damage). If the target is KO'ed, the victim is paralyzed for five rounds but still conscious. Once prey has been paralyzed, the riders will land on the prey and kill it with their lances or let their mounts sting the prey to death. If the riders are on a Hatching Hunt, they will dismount to bind the paralyzed prey and latch the prey by tow line to one or more wasps to fly home.

Darooni Wasp Rider

DEXTERITY 11

Beast riding 14, melee weapons 13, missile weapons 14, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 10

Direction sense 13, tracking 12

MIND 9

CHARISMA 8

SPIRIT 11

Faith (Olakaa) 12, intimidation 12

Possibility Potential: some (37)

Equipment: Lance (STR+4/damage value 13), javelin (STR+3/damage value 12), javelin venom (damage value 15, but only causes "K" or "O" results)

Recently, the senior Wasp Rider was persuaded to retire to teaching in the temple. The young rider who replaced her is known as Kihiti Dok. Kihiti is said to be one with the goddess for she can speak directly to the wasps, disdaining the ceremonies used by the other Wasp Riders to summon and control their mounts.

Because of her special power, Kihiti is feared and envied by Okina Ko. Kihiti has the same general physique as the other Wasp Riders, but is very quick. Her slight stature and animal speech allows her to direct her mount and perform amazing flight maneuvers. Her accuracy with a javelin is legendary.

Kihiti is a possibility-rated individual. As such, she is being watched by the Darkness Devices. However,





Kihiti is still far too young, brash, and ignorant to be considered a true High Lord candidate.

Kihiti Dok, Leader of the Wasp Riders

DEXTERITY 14

Beast riding 17, melee weapons 17, missile weapons 18, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 10

PERCEPTION 11

Direction sense 14, tracking 13,

MIND 10

CHARISMA 9

SPIRIT 11

Faith (Olakaa) 13, intimidation 13, reality 12

Possibilities: 14

Equipment: Lance (STR +5/15), javelin (STR +4/14), javelin venom (damage value 15, but only causes "K" or "O" results)

Pulp Powers: animal friend (see *The Nile Empire* sourcebook)

Wasp Scouts

Men may be allowed to become Wasp Scouts, who are responsible for finding prey for the wasp riders. However, because of the nature of the tribe, men are not allowed to use weapons. Wasp Scouts are also selected in the Choosing Ceremony, although they have a much less promising life ahead of them.

While injured and elderly Wasp Riders often retire to teach in the temple, old and injured Wasp Scouts may retire to farming, or if too feeble for that harsh lifestyle, they are used for the larvae in the Hatching Ceremony.

Darooni Wasp Scout

DEXTERITY 10

Beast riding 14

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 10

Direction sense 13, tracking 14

MIND 9

CHARISMA 8

SPIRIT 11

Faith (Olakaa) 12, intimidation 12

Possibility Potential: some (39)

Equipment: Animal skins, low toned whistles to call the Wasp Riders once prey is spotted.

Religious Rituals

The birth of new wasps is one of the two great events to the Darooni, while the other is the selection of new Priestesses, Wasp Riders and Wasp Scouts.

All religious services take place at the temple located in the southern end of the chasm. This area has been cleared of jungle vegetation and excavated to create a dirt amphitheater.

The temple itself is simply four three meter tall wooden posts supporting a roof of dried mud and brambles. A simple altar of carved wood made from a tree trunk sits below the temple roof.

The entire structure sits at the bottom of the excavated pit. Semicircular tiers radiate out and up from the temple structure to create the amphitheater.

The Hatching Ceremony

The Hatching Ceremony is one of the most important festivals in Darooni religion because the Darooni believe that the birth of new wasps is a confirmation of their status as the chosen people of Olakaa. These ceremonies take place every six months of Core Earth time (the Darooni, lacking a time keeping system, just know that a Hatching Ceremony is due "in a while", "soon" or "very soon").

When the queen wasp is ready to lay eggs, the Head Priestess will call for a Hatching Ceremony. Immediately, the Wasp Riders are sent on a Hatching Hunt to bring back a live humanoid to serve as the egg receptacle. The Boatman spreads the news among the tribesmen, who then canoe upriver to gather for the Hatching Ceremony.

During the ritual, the victim of the Hatching Hunt is restrained on the temple altar and then miraculously forced into a state of catalepsy by the Head Priestess. The queen wasp is then called by the Head Priestess to come forth from the nest.

The queen responds by descending on the altar and landing on the sacrificial victim. The queen then implants her eggs into the victim's abdomen and returns to her nest. The ritual ends with the Priestesses carrying the victim's paralyzed body up into the wasp hive.

The Priestesses monitor the eggs in the victim's belly until they are ready

to hatch, which is usually around thirty sleep cycles. The farmers are then notified and they again make the trip up the river to complete the Hatching Ceremony. The victim's body is carried out of the nest and placed upon the altar. The victim is left on the altar while the Darooni celebrate with a large feast. Sometime during the feast, the eggs hatch and the wasp larva devour the victim's body. The priestesses count and sex the new larva before transporting them up into the wasp nest. Hatchings produce five or six new wasps on average.

The Choosing Ceremony

The Choosing Ceremony, held about once every three Earth years, is the culmination of brutal induction rites for potential Priestesses and Wasp Riders. Males who wish to become Wasp Scouts must also endure the trials. Any young Darooni may attempt to join the upper castes, and most older children do (in Core Earth time, in the early teens).

The rites are lengthy, spanning over nearly three hundred rest cycles, and involve fasting, and testing the limits of strength, endurance and willpower. After the preliminary rites, the remaining candidates undergo several rituals to prepare them for the final portion of the ceremony.

While the rest of the Darooni feast, the candidates are measured for body weight, to insure that the men and women are light enough to be borne by a giant wasp. There is also a javelin marksmanship competition for the women.

Then, the women and men enter the wasp hive for the final segment of the Choosing Ceremony. If a wasp chooses a woman to be its rider, the wasp will emerge from the hive with the woman. Male wasps may choose a scout, and will accompany the lucky man outside the hive.

If there is a vacancy amongst the Priestesses, all of the riderless female wasps will battle for the right to commune with the queen. The winner will choose one of the women to be a new Priestess, and will carry the young woman outside the hive and to the altar of the temple.

Those who are not chosen are stung



by the queen wasp and left for the Priestesses to drag out of the hive for healing.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the initiates are taken to an isolated portion of the temple, where retired riders, scouts and priestesses will train them for a period of over 100 rest cycles.

Living locations along the river are redistributed after each Hatching Ceremony. If there is any question as to where a family should live, the Wasp Riders and Priestesses gather and vote among themselves. It is very important to the farming families to have their children selected as Wasp Riders or Priestesses so the family can move up the river and up in status. After the new selection, the Darooni families migrate to their new homes, leaving their old house to the new residents.

The Wasps

Exactly how the nest of giant wasps and Darooni developed the cooperative life style is lost in antiquity, although they believe it is the work of Olakaa. The hive of giant insects has become dependent on their human neighbors in order to reproduce.

A female wasp would normally lay her eggs in a living host paralyzed by her own sting. In this culture, the hive is dependent on the Darooni Priestesses to prepare a host for the eggs. In return, the hive takes time out from food gathering to allow the Wasp Riders to mount them and use them for hunting.

The 60 giant wasps that currently live in Merretika are all in the Misty Gorge. The wasps all live in a gigantic nest of hardened mud, sticks, and bramble constructed and maintained by the hive. The nest is attached to the cliff walls of the Misty Gorge above the Darooni temple area. The nest itself bulges 15 meters out from the cliff wall and stretches across a tremendous area of the cliff face. The queen resides deep in the nest, actually living inside a natural cave in the cliff surface. The entrance to the cave is covered by the nest itself.

There are eight male and 52 female wasps in the hive, although only the queen is active in reproduction.

Only female wasps have stingers. The wasp's venomous sting has a damage value of 16 and if the wasp or Wasp Riders are able to inflict a KO result, the victim is totally paralyzed. The wasps will then carry helpless victims back to the nest to be eaten, or to the Darooni, depending upon the need.

The wasps grow to lengths of five meters and have wingspans of over 10 meters. They have small black heads with multi-faceted eyes, a black thorax, and large, deep-red abdomen. Like its normal-sized cousin, the giant wasp's abdomen hangs down in flight. The harnesses used by the Wasp Riders gird the creatures' abdomens well above the stinger so the riders are seated vertically, hanging with the abdomen rather than riding on top of the insect.

Giant Wasp

DEXTERITY 10

Flight 14, maneuver 12

STRENGTH 13

TOUGHNESS 12

PERCEPTION 8

Trick (8)

MIND 5

CHARISMA 4

SPIRIT 6

Intimidation (16)

Possibility Potential: some (35), with one to five possibilities.

Natural Tools: stinger (damage value 17), wasp venom (damage value 16; if KO results, victim is paralyzed), wings (speed value 11), carapace (armor value +1/13)

The Keefee

Dotting the landscape of the realm's savannahs are tall, majestic Dalberry trees. Around all of these fruit-bearing trees live the tribes of the Keefee people.

The Keefee people are relatively peaceful and knowledgeable folk compared to the other races of Merretika. They have a structured, agricultural/gatherer society and indulge in the arts more than any other race in the realm. The Keefee build mound and burrow homes in the soil and care for their tribal Dalberry tree with religious zeal.

Unlike the more hostile cultures in the realm, the Keefee are willing to befriend outsiders who approach them openly and speak honestly.

Race Description

The Keefee are called the Termite Men, Ant Men, or Rat Men by other races in Merretika. The name is certainly not without foundation because the Keefee live in homes made from mounds of dirt, and because the average Keefee stands 30 centimeters tall and weighs approximately four and a half kilograms.

The Keefee share facial and other physical characteristics with Core Earth Caucasians, excluding the size difference. The Keefee wear simple clothes woven from crude fibers or made from segments of animal hide sewn together in plain patterns. The men are bearded with dark hair and tanned skin. The women keep their hair short and are also well-tanned. Both men and women carry miniature pole axes for pruning Dalberry trees and self-defense. The axes are typically 30 centimeters long.

Typical Keefee

DEXTERITY 8

Dodge 10, melee combat 9

STRENGTH 4

TOUGHNESS 5

PERCEPTION 8

First aid 9, language 9, tracking 9, trick 11

MIND 9

Artist 10, medicine 10, survival 10

CHARISMA 9

Persuasion 10, taunt 11

SPIRIT 8

Faith (Raya) 9

Possibility Potential: some (36)

Equipment: Pole axe (STR+1/5)

Homeland

The Keefee can only be found in the savannahs of the realm. It is fairly easy to find a Keefee tribe because every tribe is built around a Dalberry tree and the trees do not grow without a caretaker Keefee tribe nearby. There is only about one tree for every 50 square kilometers. No other vegetation grows





in the savannahs except dense grass and sparse bushes.

The Keefee burrow mounds, typically about 30 centimeters high, are built in the shadow of their tribal tree. The entrance drops straight down over a meter and then horizontal tunnels lead to the various burrowed caverns for the families. Each burrow is entirely interconnected for emergencies, and some tribes have tunnels that go up into their Dalberry tree and exit out from hollows high in the tree. The Keefee use their tunnel networks to play tricks on predators and human attackers.

Society

The Keefee have a simple society, with no leader or chieftain. Even the tribe's religious leaders, the Lallap, have no command over the tribe. When a problem arises among the tribe, they meet at the base of the Dalberry tree and openly discuss the problem to

decide on a remedy and course of action.

In these discussions, the old and the tribe's Lallap do have great power for they are considered wise and fair. The Keefee normally can resolve problems through debate and an issue is not considered settled until an unanimous solution is approved. On the rare occasion that the tribe cannot compromise, the meeting will adjourn and will not reconvene until opinions in the tribe are changed or events precipitate a need for another meeting. It is a slow, but peaceful process.

Keefee society makes little distinction concerning sex or age — an individual is judged by her wisdom alone. The Keefee are also exceptionally peaceful. The concept of war is alien to their peaceful and artistic nature. The other people of Merretika regard the Keefee as curiosities.

The relaxed Keefee lifestyle generally allows individuals to spend their time as they like. The needs of the tribe, such as hunting or tending the

Dalberry tree, occupy very little of a Keefee's time, and most of the time is spent with family members and friends or crafting items or tools. The Keefee have no standardized rest periods: when an individual is tired, she sleeps, and when one is awake, one plays or hunts or enjoys company.

The Keefee devote their free time to art. They adorn the tribal tree with carvings and paintings, which often carry religious themes. Dead branches are made into sculptures or crafted into crude furniture for the home. Very little is wasted in the Keefee society and nothing is done in haste. Building a fire or making an axe from flint and wood are considered as artistic as painting or sculpture.

Finally, a select few Keefee give up their tribe to travel the great savannahs. Such journeys are hazardous for the little people, but these nomadic bards, called Haroo, are an important part of the Keefee culture. They are the liaisons between tribes, bringing news of distant events and troubles, as well as



exaggerated tales of heroism. In all of these stories told by the Haroo, the hero uses trickery to defeat his enemies; the Keefee are a race that enjoys tricking the evil giant since they can seldom survive combat.

The Dalberry Tree

The livelihood of the tribe is dependent on their Dalberry tree. The tree gets most of its water through roots which dive far down into the soil to reach the land's water table. The tree also has many roots that spread out just under the ground's surface to collect precipitation. Each Keefee household builds their warren around one of these surface roots, and the family gets its drinking water by directly tapping the root. They ration their water use carefully however, lest their house root wither and die.

The tribe also gets much of its food from the large violet berries which the tree continuously produces. The Keefee often have to fight off herds of herbivores who come to feast on the tree's berries. The tribesman take to their tree, pole-axes in hand, to defend the tree.

To supplement their diet, the Keefee men and women make forays into the grasses to collect edible roots, bird eggs, insects, and big game such as house-cat size pigs called gilks (for large game, they use snares and ambushes). The Keefee also use the sap of the Dalberry tree in cooking and herbal potions, mixing it with other berries, grains and roots.

The tree is intimately related to much of the Keefee religion and lore. The Keefee not only care for the tree, but can also shape it through their miracles. This huge work of art is a source of great pride to the tribe, as each member relates how his or her faith helped shape a limb or produce extra fruit.

Omens and prophecies are divined from the tree. If the tree begins to sway when there is no breeze, it is a sign that the tribe has reached a decision which is unwise. If rotted fruit drop from the tree, it means that the tree is about to die and that the tribe should create a fruit with seeds using the seedberry miracle. The new fruit is then used to



transplant the tribe to a new location on the savannahs. If the tree's leaves become wet without a recent rain, it means that there is opportunity for an alliance with a nearby Keefee tribe or a group of helpful strangers. By this omen, many individual Keefee tribes have temporarily joined just before a major disaster struck.

Other, rarer prophecies are known to the Keefee, although most of them must be interpreted by the tribe as a whole. To the Keefee, the tree is alive with knowledge, although they can only learn what the tree freely tells them.

Religion

The Keefee religion is based around Raya, the great tree planter. Raya is the only deity in the Keefee religion, and is represented as a female.

In Keefee mythology, Raya created the sky and the grasses to balance the sides of the world. Soon the grass wept for the sky could not keep it company and it was all alone, so Raya created

the Dalberry trees and planted them amongst the grasses. She created the beasts of the earth to travel the plains. But some of the beasts turned foul and destroyed the grass and the trees, so Raya banished them from her sight, creating jungles to hide them for she could not bear the sight of her mistake. Then, the goddess created the Keefee to care for the trees and to talk to the grass and to protect the land from the foul beasts. With her creation complete, Raya leapt into the sky to provide the Keefee with constant light so that the evil beasts would not return to the grasses. Raya became Helephetz shortly thereafter. The Keefee are also the ones who named the world Merretika.

Keefee tribes take their roles as tree guardians very seriously for both religious and survival reasons. The tribe's Dalberry tree is their livelihood, and they protect it at all costs. Every tribe has a single religious leader, who may be of either sex, known as the Lallap. This person is responsible for the tribe's Dalberry tree and the tribe's lore and



myths, although the traveling bards help her in this. Each Lallap will also retain one or two apprentices to learn from her and eventually inherit the role.

Artho Tark (Worm Wrestler)

Artho Tark is a typical Keefee Lallap. He is old and sagacious. Instead of carrying the customary pole axe of his people, Artho instead chooses a staff of knotted wood (a little twig to humans). He often answers questions with questions and gives advice in riddles. He is very wise, but slightly whimsical in delivering his knowledge.

Keefee names are often humorous or strange when translated literally. Keefee are given a youth name and then eventually shed this when the tribe renames them after they accomplish a feat worthy of an adult. Artho was given a rather ridiculous adult name, much to his pleasure, after an incident when several earthworms invaded his burrow home during heavy precipitation.

Artho Tark

DEXTERITY 7

Dodge 9, melee combat 8

STRENGTH 4

TOUGHNESS 4

PERCEPTION 10

First aid 11, language 12, tracking 11, trick 12

MIND 13

Artist 15, medicine 15, survival 14

CHARISMA 9

Charm 13, persuasion 11, taunt 10

SPIRIT 10

Faith (Raya) 12, focus 13, reality 11

Possibilities: 9

Equipment: Staff (STR+1/damage value 5)

The Leopard Men

Throughout the western jungles of the realm lives a race of fierce hunters known as the Leopard Men. Their skill at the hunt and their savagery in combat is unparalleled in the Land Below. Despite their savagery, the Leopard Men are not an inherently evil race, such as the base and craven Darooni Wasp Riders. The Leopard Men act

out of instinct, not evil, like any other beast of nature.

The Leopard Men are a territorial race and defend their hunting grounds with feral ferocity. Those who unwittingly cross into a Leopard family's hunting grounds usually discover their error very quickly and fatally. The only way to gain the respect of a Leopard Man is to best him in single combat, although the only way to gain true loyalty is to perform a Jyhackt, an act of unrivaled bravery which benefits the tribe as a whole. This honor is bestowed upon individuals only and seldom extends to his or her companions.

Race Description

The Leopard Men are incredible physical specimens. The men average over six and a half feet in height, and weigh an average of 230 pounds. They have heavily muscled frames that hold very little fat. Their skin is ebony black, and their heads are shaved bald. The only clothing worn by the men is the skin of a great leopard, which they wear wrapped to their backs so that the animal's face covers the Leopard Man's head and the hide drapes down their back until it is tied off into a loincloth at their waist. The arms of the leopard hide extend down the man's arms up to the back of the hand. A pair of clawed hand sleeves complete the Leopard Man's cat-like appearance by giving him claws on the back of his hands.

The women of the Leopard Men race are no less statuesque than the men. They are as tall as the males but have lithe, finely-muscled bodies. Their skin is the same dark color as the males, and the women grow their black hair in long, wild strands. They also wear Leopard skins cut for their bodies or loosely draped about themselves.

Females maintain the tribal religious rituals, while the males are hunters. Children from infancy are taught their role in Leopard Man society. There are no old Leopard Men: females and males are either killed by the dangerous daily existence, or are cast out of the tribe when they can no longer do the hunting or hard labor the tribe demands.

Homeland

The Leopard Men tribes range throughout the jungles of Merretika. There are over a dozen small tribes of 60 individuals or less, but each tribe will claim a large area of the jungle as their hunting grounds, so that all told, the race occupies an immense area of the realm. Each tribe marks their territory with hunting totems (see *Religion* below).

Society

The Leopard Men are organized into small tribal units consisting of four to seven families. Each family unit consists of a mother and father and usually no more than five children. The Leopard Man society is male-dominated, and the father is the head of the family unit.

The strongest male in the tribe is the chieftain, who has absolute command over tribal affairs and leads the men in combat. The chieftain must be willing to defend his right to rule at any time, as a tribe member may challenge the leader for any reason. The contests are fought by bare-handed wrestling matches. There is no ritualistic preliminary to the contest, and the struggle often begins when, in the heat of anger, a man attacks the chieftain. The contest is fierce and sometimes fatal. The victor is chieftain and the vanquished is shamed before the tribe. If a man is repeatedly unsuccessful at wresting power from his chief, shame will cause him to leave the tribe and his family.

Leopard Men tribes constantly war with one another over hunting grounds or out of revenge for some act real or imagined. These wars tend to be drawn out affairs that never truly end. A chieftain will lead his men on guerilla attacks into the neighboring tribe's hunting ground. These guerilla units try to find solitary hunters to attack. Occasionally, the fighting will produce casualties, but more often, the victors will only scar their victims, since the wars are often fought for pride rather than survival. If the tribe has several females who are ready to choose a mate, sometimes young men





are abducted from a neighboring tribe if a suitable mate is not available in the female's tribe.

Within the tribe, each family has its own tree house, built by weaving the branches of the tree into a rough globe. The top foliage is used to shield the house from rain, and the lowest, strongest branches serve as the house's floor. The homes are small and are only used as sleeping dens. The Leopard Men have little need for sleep, seldom resting for more than an hour every 30 hours (Core Earth time).

Adulthood

When a boy has learned all of the hunting skills of his father he is ready to become a man in the eyes of the tribe. The boy is cast out into the jungles where he must find a great leopard and kill it single-handedly.

He will eat the great cat's heart to

gain the animal's power and then skin the animal and wear the hide to show his ascension to adulthood. He will return to his tribe and claim a mate or will single-handedly attempt to kidnap a mate from another tribe. The male may not choose females that already have a mate.

In order to insure a healthy tribe, the Leopard Men often raid a neighboring tribe to capture boys who are almost ready to take the manhood ritual. Those who have undergone the ritual will forever belong to their tribe alone.

Young women are taught all of the religious rituals by their mothers, but there is no ritual of adulthood for them. In the eyes of a tribe, the female is a child until a male chooses her to be his mate. However, the female does have the right to refuse to accept a male.

A female will never have more than one mate, and a woman who's mate is killed is doomed to a lonely existence.

The Hunters

All adult Leopard Men are hunters for the tribe and their presence causes fear for any other creatures that are in the area. They relish in the simple joys of tracking, stalking, and killing their prey. A Leopard Man will almost always hunt alone to insure that he has the pleasure and pride of the kill all to himself.

The Leopard Men only hunt in groups when they are on the trail of a large animal, or when they are tracking groups of intruders.

A hunter wears the hide of the great leopard that he killed to become a man. His weapons are his uncanny strength, his jungle reflexes, and his deadly leopard claws. The latter are sheaths of tough hide that slide over the hunter's hands. The backhand side of the sheath is fixed with large claws for slashing and rending prey. The palm side of the sheath is set with



smaller, thicker blades curved for gripping and climbing.

Leopard Man Hunter

DEXTERITY 10

Acrobatics 12, dodge 13, maneuver 12, stealth 13, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 13

Climbing 14

TOUGHNESS 11

PERCEPTION 10

Tracking 11, trick 13

MIND 8

Survival 10, test 11, willpower 11

CHARISMA 9

SPIRIT 10

Faith (Holuku) 12, focus 12, intimidation 14

Possibility Potential: some (40)

Equipment: Leopard claws (STR +3/damage value 16; +2 to *climbing*)

Special Powers: *Minimal Sleep:* Leopard Men need much less sleep than most other human races. A Leopard Man may go for a time value of 25 (one day) without any rest. If the Leopard Man wishes to go to time value 26 (40 hours) without any rest, roll a *willpower* check with a difficulty of 10. Roll *willpower* checks at each subsequent time value, adding one to the difficulty for each additional check. Once a Leopard Man fails the check, he must rest for one tenth the time he was awake.

The Leopard Men are often under the influence of one or more miracles that increase their attributes.

Women

The women of the tribe are supposed to be subservient to the men, but subservience is more a tradition spoken of by the men than practiced by the women. The females of the Leopard Men spend their days hunting small game, gathering edible plants and insects, and tending to the family needs. The women are wild and free-spirited. They bicker, argue, and occasionally fight among themselves and with their husbands. The women are also caretakers of the tribe's religious lore, passing it on from mother to daughter.

Leopard Woman

DEXTERITY 12

Melee combat 14, stealth 12, unarmed combat 13

STRENGTH 9

Climbing 11

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 10

First aid 12, tracking 11

MIND 9

Survival 10, willpower 10

CHARISMA 10

Taunt 13

SPIRIT 10

Faith (Holuku) 13, focus 13, intimidation 12

Possibility Potential: some (40)

Equipment: Spear (STR +4/damage value 13), knife (STR +2/damage value 11)

Special Powers: *Minimal Sleep:* Leopard Women need much less sleep than most other humans. A Leopard Woman may go for a time value of 25 (one day) without any rest. If the Leopard Woman wishes to go to time value 26 (40 hours) without any rest, roll a *willpower* check with a difficulty of 10. Roll *willpower* checks at each subsequent time value, adding one to the difficulty for each additional check. Once a Leopard Woman fails the check, she must rest for one tenth the time she was awake.

Religion

The Leopard Men have a strong animism religion they call Holuku (see page 125 of the *Torg Rulebook*). They believe that every living thing has a soul and every non-living thing is protected by a spirit.

However, their classifications of living and unliving are not always obvious to outsiders. For example, they consider streams to be living and to have souls since streams move, but a tree is an unliving thing guarded by a spirit since it does not move. Similarly, the misty clouds in the sky are alive to the Leopard Men while Helephetz, though it gives heat and light, is considered unliving.

The classification between spirit or soul is very important to the Leopard Men since it determines their conduct

toward the thing. When a Leopard Man kills a living thing or partakes of its essence, he prays for its soul. In so doing, the Leopard Men believe (and thus it is often so) that they are gaining the power and essence of the soul.

When the Leopard Men use an unliving thing, such as when they weave a tree into a house, they must give offerings and thanks to the unliving thing's guardian spirit. Every Leopard Man follows the spiritual practices for taking a soul's essence, but it is left to the women of the tribe to appease the spirits through small sacrifices and prayer.

Damo Kil

Among the Leopard Men, there has emerged a man of phenomenal prowess and diabolical cunning. His name is Damo Kil, and he has become the first Leopard Man chieftain to unite two tribes. This legendary man strode into the camp of a neighboring tribe, consecutively besting all of their warriors in combat, and then defeated their chieftain, making the tribe his own. Damo is now the chieftain of two tribes that have become one. Most assuredly, he will not stop there. He plans to unite all of the Leopard Men under his rule and then wage war on other races.

The Darkness Devices are ecstatic over Damo Kil. He is powerful, loyal but not subservient to his religion, and completely ruthless. Unlike most of his people, Damo Kil is an evil man. He is the beast that kills more than it can eat for the sheer joy of killing. He rules his people by fear and pain. Many of the hunters in his tribe have become fanatically loyal to Damo.

Damo himself is an impressive sight, standing a full seven feet tall with muscles bulging from his frame. Damo wears the skin of one of the rare, great black leopards. That he took the essence of a great black leopard when he became a man is a sign of power among the Leopard Men. Damo is brutal in combat and gives no quarter to his enemies. He is also shrewd and guileful like a serpent. He will be generous and diplomatic one moment and treacherous the next.



Damo Kil**DEXTERITY 13**

Acrobatics 15, dodge 16, maneuver 14, long jumping 14, running 14, stealth 15, swimming 14, unarmed combat 17

STRENGTH 15

Climbing 17, lifting 16

TOUGHNESS 15**PERCEPTION 12**

Find 13, tracking 15, trick 16

MIND 10

Survival 12, test 12, willpower 13

CHARISMA 11

Charm 14, persuasion 14, taunt 13

SPIRIT 12

Faith (Holuku) 14, focus 14, intimidation 16, reality 13

Possibilities: 22

Equipment: Leopard claws (STR +3/damage value 18, +2 to *climbing*)

Pulp Powers: Mega-Scent, Regeneration

The Ohibi

In the northeast section of Merretika is a small tribe of humans known as the Ohibi. They are a reclusive group of hunter-gatherers who are, for the most part, ignorant of their homeland beyond the river and jungle bordering the village.

Physical Description

The Ohibi have brownish red skin with dark hair and eyes. The men are fairly short (about five to five and a half feet tall) and slender. The women are about the same height as the men, but they tend to be stocky and well-muscled from the hard work they do.

Typical Ohibi**DEXTERITY 10**

Melee combat 12, missile combat 13, running 12, stealth 12, swimming 12, unarmed combat 11

STRENGTH 9**TOUGHNESS 9****PERCEPTION 9**

Tracking 12

MIND 8

Survival 9

CHARISMA 7**SPIRIT 10**

Faith (Mehret) 12

Possibility Potential: some (55)

Equipment: Spear (STR+4/damage value 13), small bow (STR+4/damage value 13)

Homeland

The sole Ohibi village has about 150 members (approximately 40 men, 45 women and 65 children). The villagers have been isolated for many generations because they have not developed a means to cross the dangerous Wild River. Since their village is nestled against the wall of Merretika's dome, they primarily hunt only in the jungles north and south of the village. They use the caverns for religious ceremonies, but aside from Mehret-Ahn, the religious leader of the Ohibi, all of the people are afraid of the dark and will not willingly enter the caverns unless guided by Mehret-Ahn.

Unfortunately for the Ohibi, the caverns are also near the bottom of the pit from the Nile Empire, subjecting the people to the abuses of two Nile expeditions.

Society

The Ohibi are a hunter-gatherer society. The division of labor falls along lines normally found in such a primitive culture. The women gather huge quantities of plant food in addition to caring for the tribe's community. The men spend a much greater amount of time securing a much lower volume of meat and have little to do with the upkeep of the homes of the tribe.

Leadership of the Ohibi is purely a religious matter. The chosen spokesman for the god Mehret is also the chief of the tribe. The current spokesman, Mehret-Ahn, is a popular man and his words are accepted as divine wisdom.

The men of the tribe normally dress only in loincloths since more clothing is not needed in the semi-tropical environment of Merretika. Their dress also allows freedom of movement while hunting. The Ohibi women only wear skirts. The children often run naked. In fact, it is considered a mark

of adulthood to don even the minimal amount of clothing worn by the elders.

The Ohibi are not explorers. Their world consists of the jungles, the Wild River, and the wall of Merretika. They have no interest in crossing the Wild River (they have more than enough food in the immediate area), and while their religious temple is inside the caves, they have no interest in further exploring the passageways. The believe that horrible monsters inhabit the caves and that only the power of Mehret can protect them from certain death.

In Ohibi society, only the nuclear family dwells within a single home. Bachelor men and women, elderly who have outlived their spouse, and orphans (a rare occurrence) are either invited to live with relatives or share living space in a unit with other unmated tribe members of the same sex.

The Ohibi village is always busy with activity. Families often share meals with other families and often the whole tribe gathers together for religious ceremonies or a retelling of a great hunting myth.

Most Ohibi live for about fifty Core Earth years. Generally the Ohibi have alternating rest and waking phases of six hours.

The Ohibi are not an overtly violent race, but they are isolationistic and protective of the lands they consider their own. In addition, they can appear to be cruel, as many of their practices are very primitive. For instance, they have no qualms about executing those who they feel have been unfaithful to the ways of Mehret. They periodically sacrifice animals to appease Mehret and insure a good hunt.

The Ohibi, while protective, are curious about people from outside their tribe. They have been contacted by two Nile Empire expeditions. The first groups were believed to be servants of Mehret sent to assist them until the Storm Knight Kord exposed their evil (for a complete recounting of Major Hopten-Ra's expedition see the upcoming *Nile Empire* short story anthology from West End Games). The second party has camped near the entrance to the caverns and has yet to discover the Sphere (see *Chapter Three*:



Merretika for details).

For now, the Ohibi will tolerate the presence of the Nile Empire emissaries, but only because they have free passage to enter the caves where Mehret-Ahn performs his ceremony. If any trouble results because of the Nile Empire soldiers, then the Ohibi will not hesitate to attack and destroy them all.

Religion

Like most of the other tribes of Merretika, religion plays an important role in the lives of the Ohibi. The people believe that Mehret created the world for the Ohibi. Other, less perfect people were created after the Ohibi, but they were not able to survive in the chosen lands and fled across the river. Their trials changed them physically and spiritually, as they became more and more distanced from the gifts of Mehret.

Mehret's light and warmth protect the people. As a challenge to the wisest Ohibi, Mehret constructed the holy temple in the dangers of the caves. The darkness is also a sacred gift of Mehret, perhaps even greater than the light and abundant food, but the dangers are always lurking in the dark.

Mehret-Ahn is responsible for religious guidance for the Ohibi. He teaches them to share each family's bounty with other families, although the Ohibi must always be willing to protect their lands. Outsiders will be welcome for only a short while, after which they must acknowledge that they do not have the right to stay in the Ohibi holy lands. The Nile Empire expeditions have been granted a longer stay because of their unusual nature.

The Ohibi worship Mehret through dancing and storytelling, normally just before meals and hunting expeditions.

Mehret-Ahn holds special religious ceremonies regularly (about once every other Core Earth month). He believes that the Sphere is a gift of Mehret, so the precious eternity shard plays an important role in the ceremonies, although none of the other Ohibi are aware of its existence.

When Mehret-Ahn declares that it is time for a ceremony, the Ohibi people

will gather and feast while Mehret-Ahn attunes himself to the Sphere. At the conclusion of his meditations, Mehret-Ahn places a small sliver of the Sphere into an animal-skin sack for transport to the temple within the caves.

When Mehret-Ahn emerges from his house, dressed in the plumage headdress, the Ohibi people don ceremonial robes. Between three and a dozen men, dressed in colorful dyed robes decorated with feathers, will escort Mehret-Ahn to the temple.

Mehret-Ahn and his ceremonially-attired and spear-laden escort walk the sacred path shown on the map of the Ohibi village and enter the caves.

Once inside, Mehret-Ahn leads the procession to the hidden temple and places the small sliver of the Sphere in the idol and performs the Power of Mehret miracle. After the miracle, he gathers the eternity sliver and returns it to the Sphere.

Mehret-Ahn

Mehret-Ahn is the voice of the Ohibi god Mehret, and is thus named after the god by adding a diminutive to the name (thus, he's known as Little Mehret). Physically, he is an average specimen, about five and a half feet tall. His most distinguishing characteristic is the red and blue swirling pattern tattooed into his chest. This is the symbol of the Ohibi leader, reflecting their unique access to the Sphere. He has slowly graying hair and is wearing his brilliant headdress.

He is the tribe's leader and is well liked and trusted by his people. That trust is well founded though, as Mehret-Ahn's two main concerns in life are Mehret and his tribe. He is generally cautious concerning any new venture, although he will not hesitate to order complete retaliation against anything or anyone who may threaten the future of the tribe. While Mehret-Ahn is quite perceptive, he is also stubborn, brutal and unpredictable.

Mehret-Ahn

DEXTERITY 8
Melee combat 10
STRENGTH 9
TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION

12

MIND 13

Medicine 14

CHARISMA

11

Charm 15, persuasion 16

SPIRIT

14

Faith (Mehret) 18, focus 18, reality

19

Possibilities: 10 (possibly more if he has tapped the Sphere recently)

Equipment: Elaborate feather headdress, full-figure robe, animal skin bag containing a piece of the Sphere

Mehret-Ahn would be a prime candidate for the Chosen One that the Darkness Devices want if he had any interest other than dedication to the ways of his god, Mehret. With access to the staggeringly tremendous power offered by the Sphere, Mehret-Ahn could probably conquer Merretika rather quickly.

However, the same power that he refuses to use to initiate war against others is very potent in protecting the Ohibi people from attack. The Chosen One, whoever and wherever he may be, will be sorely tested to defeat the Ohibi priest.

The Ohibi Village

It is very likely that the Storm Knights will investigate the area of the Ohibi village. They may find the Ohibi Temple in the caves if they are lucky. For more information on the Nile Empire encampment or the temple see *Chapter Three: Merretika*.

The majority of structures in the village house just one family, and they are built from saplings and river mud, and provide quite adequate housing for the Ohibi people. The houses are about four meters by two meters.

The Hunting Lodge

The ceremonial hunting lodge is the largest building in the village. It is about twice as large as the family houses and is filled with hunting trophies collected and preserved over generations of Ohibi hunters. The largest, fiercest, and fastest game creatures are stuffed and displayed, along with other creatures that simply have a part in a good story. On some occa-



sions, the hunters will bring a piece of their collection out of hiding and use it to re-enact a story for the rest of the village.

The eldest male of the tribe is granted the honor of living within and maintaining the lodge. Currently, this position is held by an Ohibi named Jehren. His hunting skills have diminished with time, but his story telling skills are superior. He has been known to embellish stories to make them more interesting, although no one in the village seems to mind.

Mehret-Ahn's House

Butting up against the northern wall of the realm is the home of Mehret-Ahn, the holy man among the Ohibi. The house is much like all of the others in the village, though it is a bit larger. It is decorated with the plumage of many of the remarkably beautiful birds that can be found in Merretika, but it is still rather spartan. He often accommodates groups for mediation or counselling.

The back wall of the home is not an Ohibi-made structure, for the front and two sides are pressed against the northeastern wall of the realm. The wall is thickly lined with animal pelts of all sizes and description.

This is all just a manner of hiding the secret tunnel that bores its way into the solid rock which surrounds the realm. This tunnel is secret even from the other members of the Ohibi tribe. The Mehret-Ahn of each generation passes his knowledge of the tunnel on to the one he trains to take his place upon his death.

The tunnel leads to the huge eternity shard known as the Sphere (see *Chapter Three: Merretika* for more information).

The Pyrian Fire Tamers

The volcanic terrain in the realm's southeastern edge makes the land uninhabitable by any rational standard, but the people of Pyria have not only made the area their home, they have bent the violent environment to their bidding. The Pyrians are the most



advanced race in Merretika. Their advancements take full advantage of the Law of Wonders.

The Darkness Devices are looking with great interest at many of the possibility-rated leaders of Pyria, since the Pyrian nation is militaristic and harsh, a good society for grooming a High Lord.

Race Description

The Pyrians are slender, pale-skinned people with light hair and pale green eyes. Their facial features are finely chiseled, almost elfish. The men have slightly hooked noses and thin lips. The women have thin noses and full lips. The Pyrians are an attractive race and are proud of their appearance.

Men dress in cotton-like fiber togas dyed with dark colors and adorned with simple bronze clasps. The women



predominantly wear longer, white or orange togas also clasped with bronze or belted with cords of thicker fiber buckled with bronze. Both sexes wear sandals. Men usually carry knives of bronze or obsidian.

Typical Pyrian

DEXTERITY 8

Beast riding 9, melee weapons 10, unarmed combat 9

STRENGTH 8

Climbing 9

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 9

MIND 9

CHARISMA 10

Taunt 11

SPIRIT 9

Faith(Karruk) 10

Possibility Potential: some (45)

Equipment: Knife (STR +2/ damage value 10

Pyrians will also have one add in *scholar, medicine, artist, science* or the skill which most accurately represents their occupation.

Homeland

The Pyrian nation is native to the harsh volcanic regions in the southern regions of Merretika. Tanta Kallar is both the largest volcano in Merretika and the capitol city of the Pyrians, which is built upon the volcano. The Pyrians have established ten other small outposts in the region. The Pyrian people are hemmed into their area by Merretika's great wall to the south and west, the River with no Bottom to the north and the Smoke Canyon and an impassable group of volcanoes to the east. The people would like to expand their empire to more hospitable regions but they have been unable to overcome these natural obstacles.

The Pyrians endure the volcanoes primarily for religious reasons, although the area is almost uninhabitable. Crops cannot be grown near the volcanoes, so all food must be imported from the mountains to the south or from along the river bank to the north. Meat is also scarce in the area, so slaves are often sent on hunts into the mountains. Despite the seeming impracti-

cality of importing almost everything, the Pyrian society is able to thrive due to constant work and discipline.

Society

The Pyrians are the most advanced people of Merretika socially and technologically, but they have a harsh, intolerant society. They have developed a very limited government, with Tanta Kallar serving as the central authority and numerous outposts paying taxes and supplying the capital city.

The society is also strictly divided by a caste system. Military leaders top the hierarchy, with religious leaders at the second tier, craftsmen at the third tier, common laborers at the fourth tier and the slave class at the bottom of the system. Naturally, the caste is passed within a family from generation to generation, with almost no hope for advancement. However, the Pyrians make few distinctions based on sex, and women are just as likely as men to occupy positions of power.

Hadian Fel Ar is the currently ruler of the Pyrian nation and commander of the Pyrian army and militia. His word is law, and he also acts as the prime judge within the nation.

Lord Ar draws his advisors and executive officials from both the military and the priesthood. Advisors may serve for an extended period of time, but any individual who gains enough power and influence to threaten Hadian is granted the "privilege" of service on the frontier away from court politics and power. Ar also uses subterfuge and political intrigue to keep his advisors bickering amongst themselves.

The priesthood, led by Amethia Cor Tal, exerts a tremendous but less obvious influence over the Pyrian people. Amethia is one of Ar's advisors, but he recognizes her desire to remove him from power.

Common soldiers and lower priests are considered to be slightly above the craftsmen of Tanta Kallar. They are completely supported by Lord Ar's high taxes on other castes and are well respected within the community.

Craftsmen normally include smiths, weavers, pottery makers and merchants. This is a small, but powerful class of people in Tanta Kallar. Smiths are especially prized for their ability to make and mold bronze for the military. Smiths are granted key housing positions on Tanta Kallar where they can use a lava vent to power their smelts. Merchants lead miserable lives, transporting cargo back and forth from the frontier to the capital. Artists are a small portion of the craftsman caste. They live as rigorous a life as any other Pyrian and they are required to produce artwork at an unmerciful rate.

The craftsmen normally accept the dictates of the military and the priesthood and spend a great deal of time convincing the common laborers of the wisdom the Lord Ar and Priestess Amethia.

The few scholars of Tanta Kallar are considered to be of the craftsman caste. Scholars are a small group supported by the priests. The scholars record events in the Pyrian's pictographic language, or study medicine or engineering.

Common laborers often serve engineers or smiths, or farm. Although many of the laborers know the principles of engineering or smithing, they have no chance to advance in society. The largest group of common laborers in the nation are the farmers, but none of them live in Tanta Kallar itself due to the lack of arable land. Their life is a little easier simply because they are further removed from the capital of the nation. Farm families work long hours on the mountain sides growing hearty vine plants. The plants yield a bean rich in nutrients which is mashed, cooked, fermented, and baked in thousands of recipes by the Pyrians. Only the higher classes get meat on their tables from birds and lizards.

The lowest caste members of Pyrian society are the slaves. These poor folk are mostly war prisoners captured from a small number of independent settlements (they are physically identical to the Pyrians, but the Pyrians deny that they are of the same heritage). The slaves work the frontier mines for tin and copper to make bronze. They also build the rock walls



that surround Tanta Kallar and several of the frontier forts, or are servants of merchants transporting goods throughout the nation.

A Structured Life

Pyrian society is harsh and unforgiving, emphasizing hard work and dedication. The people have virtually no time for recreation and are granted minimal time for sleep or family activities. Indeed, if they were granted this time most of the Pyrians wouldn't know what to do with it because they are so strongly conditioned for constant work.

This standard of labor extends throughout the caste system, so even the priests and military leaders are under constant pressure to accomplish Lord Ar's objectives.

The people are very cold and distanced from each other since they are singularly obsessed with their jobs. While many Pyrians attempt to steal private moments away, they also realize the severe punishments for not fully serving the state. Although Pyrians select a mate for life, the decision is based entirely on caste and seldom on compatibility. Having children is seen as a way of serving the needs of the nation.

This lack of warmth and caring has created a very aggressive nation. The Pyrians have conquered the southern lands and would like expand the boundaries of their empire, but the natural obstacles have so far prevented this.

Military

The military of the Pyrians is structured with a clear chain of command. Common soldiers are called thralls, officers are called talons and their uniform color displays their rank. Red talons command squads of thralls or serve as Lord Ar's guards. Grey talons command forts or garrisons. The three black talons serve Lord Ar directly as advisors at Tanta Kallar or travel throughout the frontier as direct representatives of Lord Ar.

The Pyrian military emphasizes training over raw physical power.

The Pyrian nation has about 1500 thralls, with 50 grey talons and a dozen red talons. Of these troops, roughly one third are stationed in Tanta Kallar, with the rest spread evenly amongst the frontier settlements. Troops spend most of their time training for combat and developing their attributes. Troops stationed in Tanta Kallar are assigned patrol and police duties, as well as given the responsibility to collect taxes. In the frontier outposts, troops supervise hunts, protect the villages from dangerous predators and enforce the edicts of Lord Ar.

Statistics are given below for Pyrian thralls and for a typical grey talon. Add two attribute points and two skill adds for a red talon, in addition to *persuasion* and *willpower* at +2 adds each.

Pyrian Thrall

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 11, melee weapons 12, missile weapons 11, unarmed combat 11

STRENGTH 9

Climbing 10

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 9

MIND 8

CHARISMA 9

Taunt 11

SPIRIT 10

Faith(Karruk) 11, intimidation (12)

Possibility Potential: some (45)

Equipment: Bronze sword (damage value STR +4/13), spear (damage value STR +3/12), leather and bronze armor (TOU +3/12)

Grey Talon

DEXTERITY 13

Dodge 16, maneuver 14, melee weapons 17, missile weapons 16, unarmed combat 15

STRENGTH 12

Climbing 13

TOUGHNESS 12

PERCEPTION 10

First aid 12, language 13, trick 12,

MIND 11

Willpower 13

CHARISMA 13

Persuasion 14, taunt 15

SPIRIT 11

Faith(Karruk) 12, intimidation 14

Possibility Potential: some (40)

Equipment: Heavy bronze sword (damage value STR+5/17), spear (damage value STR+3/15), leather and bronze armor (TOU +3/15)

Lord Hadian Fel Ar

Lord Ar is the ruler of the Pyrian nation. He took the throne through deceit and treachery, and he now holds the throne with threats and cunning. He often plays his advisors off each other to insure that no one gains too much power. Lord Ar believes that competence should be justly rewarded and that stupidity and failure should be dealt with unmercifully.

Hadian is in control of his emotions at all times and isn't prone to outbursts. Instead, he is calculated and quick. His plans are always intricate, with numerous options at his disposal at any given time. He seems charming, but he is willing to deceive anyone to accomplish his aims.

He is a master swordsman, a shrewd thinker, and a good leader. Wisely, he suspects that many of his underlings would like to replace him. Hadian is of average height but has a thicker frame than most Pyrians. His short-cut hair is pale blonde and his eyes are steel grey.

The Darkness Devices are interested in Hadian since he is possibility-rated and heads the only nation in Merretika. They believe that the harsh Pyrian way of life breeds the correct attitudes and ambitions.

Hadian Fel Ar

DEXTERITY 13

Dodge 17, maneuver 16, melee weapons 22, missile weapons 16, unarmed combat 15

STRENGTH 13

Climbing 14, lifting 15

TOUGHNESS 13

PERCEPTION 12

First aid 14, language 17, scholar 15, trick 15

MIND 13

Science 14, test 17, willpower 17

CHARISMA 14

Charm 17, persuasion 17, taunt 16

SPIRIT 12

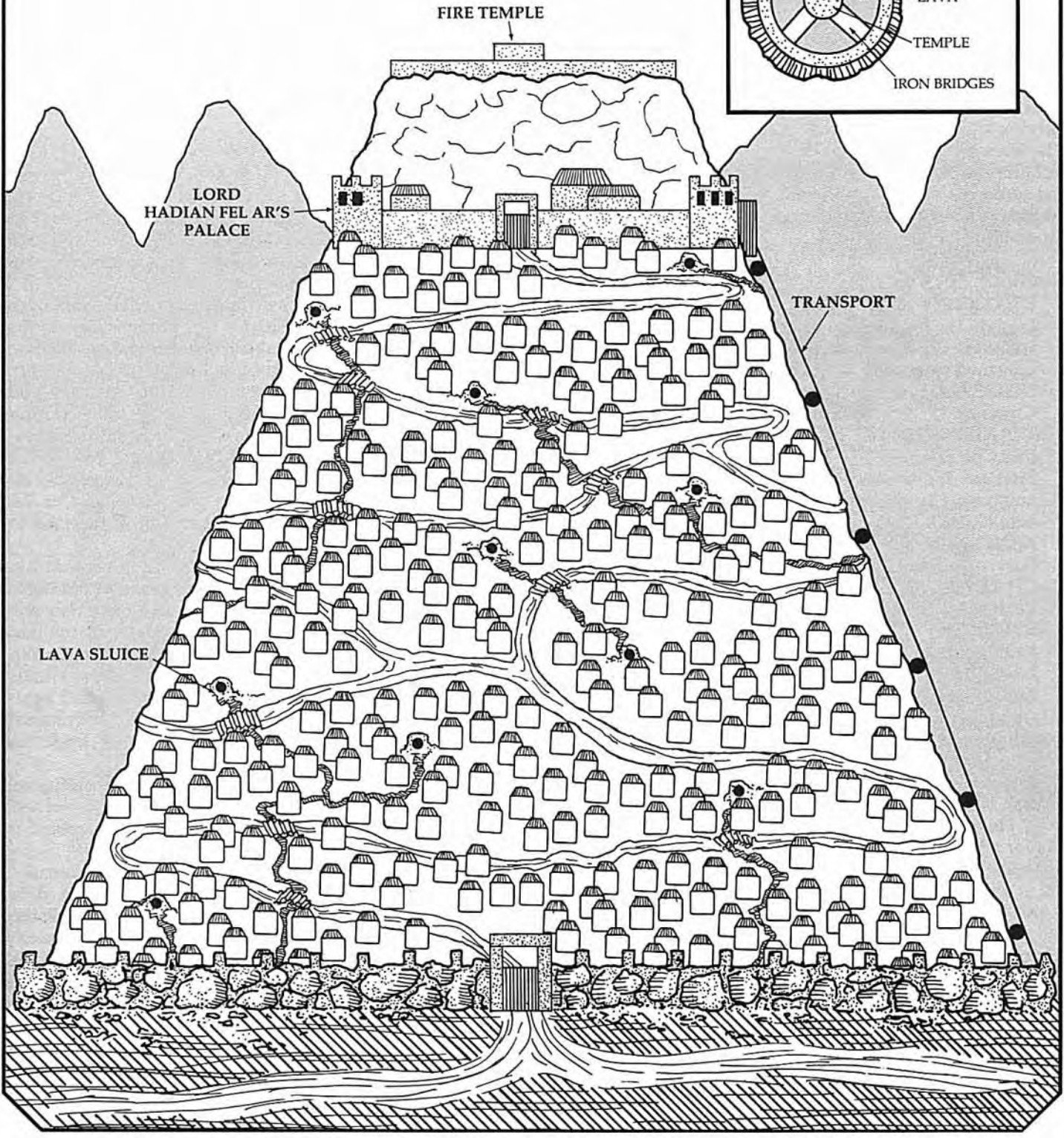
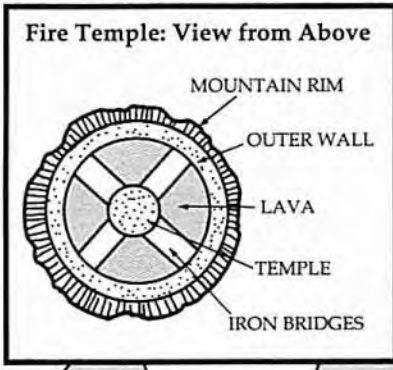
Faith(Karruk) 14, intimidation 16, reality 13

Possibilities: 19





The Land Below: Map 5
Tanta Kellar



Equipment: Heavy bronze sword (damage value STR+5/17), spear (damage value STR+3/16), leather and bronze armor (TOU +3/16)

Pulp Powers: Super skill (melee weapons)

The Black Talons

The three black talons (Inelliam Ber Tek, Hyetl Caa, and Reli Dee Jull), along with Amethia Cor Tal and her top two priestesses, Derrun Yet Morn and Hevvil Gok Tek, are the primary advisors of Lord Ar. Information on the three priestesses is provided in the religion section. The black talons are responsible for military planning, and sometimes personally lead important operations.

Inelliam Ber Tek

DEXTERITY 13

Dodge 16, maneuver 14, melee weapons 17, missile weapons 16, unarmed combat 15

STRENGTH 10

Climbing 13

TOUGHNESS 11

PERCEPTION 10

First aid 12, evidence analysis 12, language 13, scholar (military tactics) 12, trick 12

MIND 11

Survival 12, test 13, willpower 13

CHARISMA 13

Persuasion 15, taunt 17

SPIRIT 11

Faith(Karruk) 12, intimidation 14

Possibilities: 3

Equipment: Heavy bronze sword (damage value STR+5/17), spear (damage value STR+3/15), leather and bronze armor (TOU +3/15)

Inelliam Ber Tek is past his physical prime, but his keen mind serves him well. He has been an advisor for Lord Ar for a long time and he is perhaps the most trusted of the six. However, he is actively planning to overthrow Lord Ar.

Hyetl Caa

DEXTERITY 13

Dodge 14, maneuver 16, melee weapons 17, missile weapons 16, unarmed combat 15

STRENGTH 12

Climbing 13

TOUGHNESS 12

PERCEPTION 10

First aid 12, evidence analysis 14, language 13, scholar (military tactics) 11, trick 14

MIND 11

Survival 12, test 13, willpower 13

CHARISMA 13

Persuasion 15, taunt 17

SPIRIT 11

Faith(Karruk) 12, intimidation 14

Possibilities: 2

Equipment: Heavy bronze sword (damage value STR+5/17), spear (damage value STR+3/15), leather and bronze armor (TOU +3/15)

Hyetl Caa is the only female advisor from the military. She is young, attractive and ruthless, with platinum blond hair and green eyes. She gives her rivals no quarter on the battlefield or in Lord Ar's advisory chamber. She is in greatest competition with the three priestesses because she feels that she can manipulate Reli Dee Jull and Inelliam Ber Tek rather easily. She believes that at some point she may be able to forge a coalition between these two and eliminate Lord Ar.

Reli Dee Jull

DEXTERITY 11

Dodge 12, maneuver 12, melee weapons 13, missile weapons 13, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 10

Climbing 11

TOUGHNESS 12

PERCEPTION 8

First aid 10, evidence analysis 9, language 11, scholar (military tactics) 11, trick 9

MIND 9

Willpower 11

CHARISMA 9

Persuasion 10, taunt 12

SPIRIT 11

Faith(Karruk) 12, intimidation 12

Possibilities: 2

Equipment: Heavy bronze sword (damage value STR+5/15), spear (damage value STR+3/13), leather and bronze armor (TOU +3/15)

Reli Dee Jull is perhaps the most unlikely advisor, but fortunately for him the position is based on heredity and not talent. He is young but woefully out of shape by Pyrian standards. He has a tendency toward laziness

and actively tries to avoid responsibility. Reli does not suspect that Lord Ar is about to replace him with his younger brother Reli Kem Jull.

Religion

The religion of the Pyrians is logically based around the violent terrain they call home. Their religion is an unusual monotheism. Instead of having a diametrically opposed evil power, as in many monotheistic religions, the Pyrians see their god as having two sides: one good, and one evil.

When the god is benevolent, he is called Karruk, the warmth-giver. When the god turns violent and evil, he is known as Darok, the hell-breather. This duality of being is based on the dual protective and destructive natures of fire.

When the priests of Pyria announce that Karruk has become Darok, the Pyrians will make human sacrifices to him at the Fire Temple on Tanta Kallar. The determination of when the god changes mood is as much a political decision as a matter of faith, but because the Pyrian people believe the proclamations, these changes do indeed become real. Amethia Cor Tal determines when Darok switches to Karruk and vice versa.

Outsiders may be confused into believing the Pyrians are sacrificing to an evil god, which in a sense they are, but the goal is to appease Darok into becoming Karruk again. Every Pyrian citizen must take part in these rituals by returning to their homes and lighting their fireplace. The fire burns until the priests announce that Karruk has returned.

To please Karruk, the priestesses lead the people in regular prayer sessions, involving elaborate responsive prayers and sacrifices of food.

The Pyrians believe that Karruk/Darok makes his will known only through the activity of the volcano Tanta Kallar. This has meant that the Pyrians have spent many generations fortifying their city on the side of the volcano. The Pyrians believe that their god affects all of their people, no matter where they are, but the order of the Fire Priests are only capable of correctly interpreting the volatile god's will.





The head of religion in Pyria is the Great Priestess Amethia Cor Tal. She advises Lord Ar as to the state of mind of the god and what must be done to appease him. Under the Great Priestess, there are over fifty religious men and women, known as Fire Priests, serving the frontier settlements and the residents of Tanta Kallar.

Fire Priest

DEXTERITY 8

Melee weapons 10, unarmed combat 9

STRENGTH 8

Climbing 9

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 10

First aid 12,

MIND 10

Medicine 11

CHARISMA 10

Taunt 11

SPIRIT 11

Faith(Karruk) 14, focus 13, intimidation 12

Possibility Potential: some (45)

Equipment: Knife (damage value STR +2/10), robes, bronze and cloth headdress

Amethia Cor Tal

Amethia is quite young to be the head of the order. She rose to power with Hadian Fel Ar and he made her the Great Priestess for her help in getting him the throne. Amethia has already turned her attentions toward greater power. She is plotting with Inelliam Ber Tek to overthrow Hadian (see *Chapter Nine: Adventures*).

Amethia is an incredibly desirable woman, and she uses her physical appeal to her fullest advantage to control men. She has long red hair and dazzling eyes of palest green.

Amethia Cor Tal

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 13, melee weapons 12, prestidigitation 11, unarmed combat 11

STRENGTH 8

Climbing 9

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 13

First aid 14, language 14, scholar 14, trick 14

MIND 14

Medicine 15, test 16

CHARISMA 14

Charm 17, persuasion 17, taunt 16

SPIRIT 12

Focus(Karruk) 17, focus 16, intimidation 13, reality 13

Possibilities: 8

Equipment: Poisoned knife (damage value STR +2/10, with damage value 15 for three rounds after the first), bronze and cloth headdress, gold jewelry, bronze staff (damage value STR +4/12)

Derrun Yet Morn

DEXTERITY 9

Melee weapons 11, prestidigitation 10, stealth 10, unarmed combat 11

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 11

Find 12, first aid 12, language 12, scholar 14, trick 14

MIND 11

Medicine 13

CHARISMA 11

Charm 14, persuasion 13, taunt 13

SPIRIT 11

Focus(Karruk) 15, focus 14, intimidation 12

Possibilities: none

Equipment: Knife (damage value STR +2/10), headdress

Derrun is fanatically loyal to Amethia. She believes that if she serves the head priestess she will be rewarded by Amethia and Karruk. She is thin, short and attractive. She proudly carries herself whenever dealing with other priests, although she makes it clear that she is subservient to Amethia.

Hevvil Gok Tek

DEXTERITY 9

Dodge 12, melee weapons 11, unarmed combat 11

STRENGTH 8

Climbing 9

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 12

Evidence analysis 13, first aid 12, trick 14

MIND 14

Medicine 15, test 15, willpower 16

CHARISMA 12

Charm 15, persuasion 14, taunt 13

SPIRIT 12

Focus(Karruk) 15, focus 14, intimidation 13

Possibilities: none

Equipment: Knife (damage value

STR +2/10), headdress, robes

Hevvil has developed a fierce rivalry with Derrun, but her lack of subtlety has caused her to fall out of favor with Amethia. She is very tall, with short blond hair. She has an elaborate spy network and she thinks nothing of dispensing pain upon those who fail her.

Tanta Kallar

Tanta Kallar is both home to the Pyrian people and their only religious site. The people have built a wondrous city, with all of the buildings built in several levels along the side of the huge volcano. The spectacular Temple of Fire practically floats above the active volcano's crater.

The city is organized by the caste system, with Lord Ar and his advisors having the largest and most splendid homes at the top of the volcano. Further down the slope are the homes of the Fire Priests and the common soldiers. The homes of the craftsmen and scholars start about midway up the volcano and continue nearly to the bottom, with common laborers living at the base of the volcano and on the plains of black volcanic glass nearby. Slaves are quartered with their owners, although in a squalid second section of the house. Approximately 10,000 Pyrians call Tanta Kallar home.

The layout of the Pyrian city on Tanta Kallar is made possible only by the Law of Wonders (see *Chapter Five: Axioms and World Laws*). The volcano, with a peak of over 1500 meters, can be seen jutting above all of the other peaks in the southern region. In addition, the bronze shingled roofs of the Pyrian buildings reflect a golden red glow that can be seen from over 40 kilometers away. From across the River with no Bottom, the volcano appears to be a glowing mountain, constantly belching a thin trail of black smoke into the air.

As travelers near the city, often they cannot look directly at the volcano for fear of being blinded. However, as one gets to the base of Tanta Kallar, the danger of the reflected light is eliminated since it all radiates into the sky.

The city is a wondrous work of engineering. The Pyrian streets are



steeply angled as they wind around the massive volcano. From the roads, stairs or ladders lead to individual homes or shops. Two tremendous staircases carved from natural rock scale opposite sides of the volcano, but meet near Lord Ar's palace (just below the crater's rim, on the north slope). A slave-powered incline runs up the west side of the volcano and a team of slaves works the pulley system to raise and lower cargo and military or religious officers.

The Rock Wall

A massive rock wall encircles the city and nearby volcanic plains, 100 meters out from the base of the volcano. Engineers, using slave labor, built the wall in portions by heaping huge mounds of earth and rock blessed by the Fire Priests. Sluices have been carved into many portions of the volcano where lava flows to ground level. The sluices then route the lava down into a large ditch which has been excavated from the mounds of earth.

The lava is left to cool and harden, forming a solid wall of volcanic rock eight meters tall and three meters thick (*Toughness* 19). The northern side of the wall has the only gate into the city and it is guarded by a dozen thralls, a grey talon and a fire priest.

The purpose of the wall is not to fend off invaders from another race, for the Pyrians have had only slight contact with the Leopard Men and Keefee and no contact with the Ohibi and the Darooni. Rather it is intended to keep out the Caleacons that have attacked the city on several occasions.

Lord Ar's Palace

Lord Ar's palace contains a main building which sweeps across the entire north face of the volcano (the ground floor runs 100 meters from end to end), towering 50 meters into the air and covered with bronze. Huge sculptures of Pyrian heroes line the lower wall of the palace, while smaller sculptures can be seen on the many balconies built into the upper floors. The entrance is an arch 20 meters tall, with numerous guards. Torches over four meters tall line the walls. The

presence of Karruk is seen throughout the building, as countless bronzed torches, from one to three meters tall, are within and on the outer walls of the palace. Two guard towers of seamless black stone, 70 meters tall and over 20 meters in diameter at the base, rise on the east and west slopes and connect to the palace.

The interior of the palace is a series of hallways with ornate carvings in the walls and ceilings. The largest room is the royal library, where Lord Ar consults his scholars and advisors on matters of import. Another large room is the Pyrian court, where Lord Ar, or more commonly one of his six advisors, rule on the claims of the Pyrian citizens. Generally the ruling is favor of the person from the higher caste, but there are exceptions for obvious violations of Pyrian law. The palace also has several rooms for the lord's private quarters and the quarters of his five wives and twelve young children.

The Fire Temple

The Fire Temple is a structure that almost seems to float above Tanta Kallar's fiery pit. Eight chains anchor the temple to the rim of the volcano, as it hovers over 300 meters above the molten interior. The temple is subjected to incredibly toxic levels of gases and any non-Pyrian brought to the temple suffers damage value 12 each round if the volcano is in Karruk phase and damage value 20 each round if the volcano is in Darok phase (millenia of living in the region have resulted in the Pyrians forming a complex lung structure that can filter out all the gases).

The temple sits on a thin platform made from solidified ash, which is reasonably strong and very light. The platform is round and 20 meters in diameter. Eight chains secure it to the volcano's rim. Four crude metal bridges run from the rim to the temple, all blistering hot to non-Pyrians (damage value 12 each round if without protective shoes or boots). The platform and temple are not unreasonably hot because of Pyrian miracles. The round temple is eight meters in diameter, one story and has no roof. The

temple is made of seamless black rock, but it is painted with bright colors depicting the two phases of their god (which appears as a humanoid column of fire) and his actions toward the Pyrians. Sculptures of gargoyle-like creatures are positioned on the platform directly over the chains.

Whenever the volcano becomes very active (Darok phase), the Pyrians sacrifice a slave in this building to appease their god. At the center of the temple, a hole runs through the platform so that slaves may be thrown into the pit.

The Frontier

The Pyrians have established ten small mining towns and forts throughout the volcanic regions of Merretika. Each outpost has anywhere from 50 to 200 residents, with about 20 percent of any given population being soldiers. Each town also has one fire priest.

These settlements are established around sources of raw material for bronze production, or near plains of fertile land to grow food. The forts also send out military detachments to capture slaves from the smaller independent settlements throughout the area. Crude roads run between the settlements and Tanta Kallar to transport minerals, slaves, and produce to the capital. Frontier merchants use slave labor and animal-drawn wagons to transport the goods back to Tanta Kallar.

The Pyrian military is currently looking for a convenient way to cross the River with no Bottom, but it seems that a bridge may have to be constructed and Lord Ar is too busy feeding his people and further developing the outpost network to consider an expansion over the river. The military also regularly goes on missions to capture slaves from the independent communities that dot the area. Since most of these communities are small tribes of a few families, there is no organized resistance to the Pyrian activities. Another top priority is the construction of walls similar to the one around Tanta Kallar to protect the towns and mines from the caleacons.





Chapter Five

Axioms and World Laws

The gargantuan cave realm of the Land Below, and its domed worlds such as Merretika, is a realm of savagery and mystic energy, both magical and spiritual. While rich with magic and spiritual energy, technology is much more primitive.

The Land Below's Axioms

The basic rules that govern reality in each of the cosmos and realms are called axioms. The four axioms are magic, social, spiritual and tech, and are rated on a scale of zero to 33 (zero representing extremely low development and 33 representing incredibly high development). Items, individuals, or organizations that are more highly developed than the Land Below in these areas will not function properly within the realm (for more information on axioms and everlaws, see pages 91-102 of the *Torg Rulebook*).

As soon as a person (or creature or thing) crosses the threshold into the Land Below, he immediately becomes subject to the Land Below's axioms. The axioms of the Land Below are:

Magic: 12
Social: 8
Spiritual: 17
Tech: 10

Reconnection Numbers

If the character is from another realm and in the Land Below when she disconnects, she must generate the following *reality* total to reconnect to her native realm:

Core Earth	15
Living Land	9
Aysle	13
Nippon Tech	16

Cyberpapacy	17
Orrorsh	15
Nile Empire	14

If the character is from the Land Below and disconnects in another realm, she must generate the following *reality* total to reconnect to her reality:

Core Earth	11
Living Land	15
Aysle	4
Nippon Tech	12
Cyberpapacy	7
Orrorsh	3
Nile Empire	3

The Magic Axiom: 12

Fairly strong magics are possible in the Land Below, although they are most often used by the highly magical creatures found in the caverns. Many creatures have inherent magical abilities, while other creatures and entities are wholly dependent upon magic. A prime example of this phenomenon is the Ungrosh, the giant ape. Without the high magic axiom his bones would shatter from the tremendous mass of his body. Numerous ancient objects imbued with magic, forgotten and lost with the collapse of ancient civilizations, may also be discovered within the caverns and Merretika.

Magic is also used to sustain stunning structures, such as buildings, temples, massive fountains and other amazing monuments of civilization (see the Law of Wonders).

Most of the Merretikan civilizations are very suspicious of overt spell-based magics, preferring to rely upon the powerful miracles of their gods. How-



ever, a Keefee Haroo by the name of Bernibab Felte ("Great Explorer") is spreading tales that a former Pyrian scholar (now a slave due to his research into the supernatural) has learned to tap some of the mystic energies. His theories indicate that magical aptitude is not available to everyone, but instead is passed down from generation to generation within a small number of Pyrian families.

Unlike in Orrorsh and the Nile Empire, Ayslish magic does not inherently create a contradiction in the Land Below, although it is still subject to axiom 12 limitations. Magical spells and objects may be researched using Ayslish magic rules.

The Social Axiom: 8

The social axiom is not much of a factor within the caverns simply because there are not that many intelligent inhabitants to use the axiom. There are many humanoid tribes in the caverns, but they seem to concentrate on warfare over food or territory.

Within Merretika, all of the societies except for the Pyrians operate on a simple tribal or village basis, with powerful individuals ruling either through religion or sheer physical power. The Keefee operate at a tribal level, but they have a remarkably peaceful, freedom loving society where every individual has an equal amount of power and decisions are reached by agreement and negotiation.

More complicated social organizations such as legislative bodies, or distributed power structures are beyond the social axiom of the realm. Characters who belong to complicated organizations, such as a Core Earth military unit, will find that their memories of the organization grow foggy when in a pure zone. A character will remember his allegiance in terms of the tribe, social responsibility, or perhaps slavery depending on the character's disposition toward his organization.

Justice systems among the people of the Land Below are crude and direct, especially amongst the Leopard Men and Darooni. These people use trial by ordeal, such as running a gaunt-

let of club-wielding men, sticking a hand in boiling water, or trial by combat. If the defendant endures the trial, he is deemed innocent. The fact that the trial is often punishment enough is often overlooked.

Death sentences are rare, since banishment from the protective custody of the tribe is seen as the equal of death. A few individuals wander the Land Below alone, having been banished from their tribe. Such people are often still loyal to their tribe unless they were banished unjustly.

The Pyrians often use testimony from witnesses and the accused, with Lord Ar or one of his advisors making final judgement. While the trials are fair, punishment for the guilty is often severe, including torture and enslavement. The Pyrians are rapidly developing, through use of a centralized city, taxation to support an army and a social system that demands constant work and no time for recreation. The people are aggressive and ambitious, and likely to overwhelm many of the other Merretikan societies when they decide to expand.

The Spiritual Axiom: 17

Spiritual energies are very powerful in the Land Below, and most intelligent creatures have developed their own belief system. Most of the religions are monotheistic, although some of the tribes in the caverns believe in so many deities that there are two or three gods to protect each tribal member. Some, but not all, of these belief systems have a small number of unique miracles.

Most of the Merretikan religions share some characteristics, although the worship practices and faith are different for each religion. Spiritual powers are strong in the realm, and miracles are an integral part of life for the inhabitants of the realm. The specific religious practices and miracles of these groups are covered in *Chapter Four: Inhabitants* and *Chapter Six: Miracles of Faith*.

The Technological Axiom: 10

There is a great diversity of technological use among the civilizations in the Land Below. Due to the dangerous nature of the caverns, many tribes are nomadic and have had scant chance to develop much beyond basic weapons, medicines, and domesticated creatures. Less "practical" items such as mathematics, permanent buildings, tool construction and writing are not available to most tribes since survival is so difficult.

Most of the tribes in Merretika still rely on hunting and gathering as their major means of survival. The abundance of game and edible flora in the realm make it possible for these tribes to settle instead of being nomadic. They use sticks, spears, and light bows to hunt birds and other types of small game. The Darooni Wasp Riders are able to hunt large game because of the giant wasps and their venomous spears.

Since food in Merretika is so plentiful, many of the tribes construct permanent buildings. The Keefee are the only tribe to actively practice medicine, the arts and science. Agriculture is practiced whenever convenient, except for the Pyrians who depend on agricultural areas far away from Tanta Kallar.

The Pyrians are more advanced socially, which has given them the time to develop new technologies no one else in Merretika has. They are well versed in science, engineering, the arts, medicine, agriculture and weaponry. They depend upon writing instead of oral tradition and use simple plumbing. The Pyrians use copper and bronze for most of their metal working and are slowly incorporating iron and other harder metals into their civilization.

World Laws

The Land Below has several unique world laws that also govern the reality of this vast realm. These laws develop the feel and mood of the realm while the axioms dictate the basic reality.



Law of Savagery

The most pronounced effect on life in the Land Below is a result of the Law of Savagery. The people of the realm (even the "advanced" Pyrians) appear primitive, with a seeming penchant for mayhem just lurking below the veil of civilization. Characters who flip over to this reality will find their strategy in combat shifting from tactical melee to savage, blood-letting fury. The Keefee seem to place combat at a much lower priority, but considering their diminutive nature, this shouldn't be surprising.

The Law of Savagery heightens rage during combat. This has two effects on game play. First, a player may only use Drama or Hero cards from his pool during combat for physical attacks or to reduce damage. Second, when Attack is an approved action, players will only get an additional drama deck card if they use the All-Out Attack option (*Torg Rulebook*, page 78).

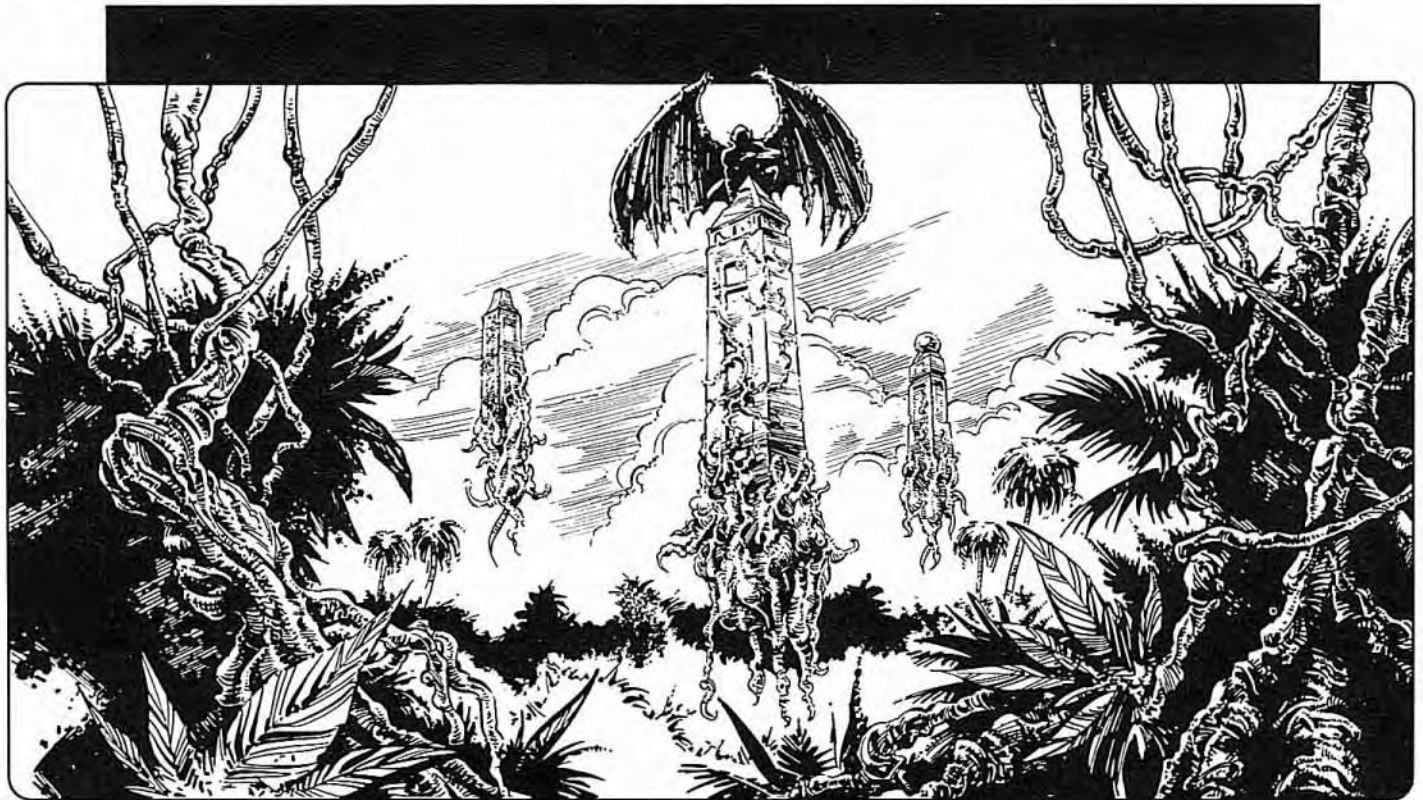
In addition to these game mechanics, the gamemaster can encourage the players to get into the spirit of the

fight. Any characters who are naturally inclined towards savagery, like many Living Land templates, will feel the effects even more strongly. These characters may decide to All-Out Attack at every opportunity if their players so choose. The Gamemaster should consider rewarding players who fully role play the savagery effects with an extra possibility point at the end of each act.

Another effect of the Law of Savagery is the destruction of clothing. Characters will find themselves reduced to loincloths and tattered shirts after spending a few days in the Land Below. This gradual destruction takes place in many ways: thorns snagging fabric as characters walk through the jungle, natives trading their own clothing for the characters' wardrobe as peaceful greeting gestures, and combat always results in the shredding of fabric. Characters will always be left with enough rags for modesty's sake, but not much more. Some areas, such as Tanta Kallar, don't lend themselves to situations that destroy clothing. Suits of armor and other special outfits fare

slightly better than regular apparel in the Land Below (the gamemaster should reduce armor values and give plausible explanations). The maximum armor allowed through the tech level of the axiom is +4 (with fatigue). These effects are permanent, so the gamemaster should penalize with care, but the characters need to know that even their armor isn't safe in the Land Below.

Finally, there are a few physical side effects of the Law of Savagery (they only affect characters who are in a pure zone or convert to the Land Below's reality). Male characters will find that their body hair grows at an alarming rate. Beards are grown in a few days and chest hair will become thick within a week. Female characters will find that their scalp hair grows at this incredible rate and after a week, their hair will reach their waists or even their ankles if their hair was already long. The new hair growth can be cut or shaved normally if the tools are at hand, but the hair will quickly grow back again. Many of the native



L and Below Engineering

The Law of Wonders relies on the use of the *engineering* skill introduced in *The Nile Empire* sourcebook. As in the Nile Empire, this skill may only be used for civil engineering projects (such as buildings and temples). This skill is also so precisely defined that the Principle of Definition is only invoked when multiple versions of the same spell are used on a structure (as opposed to Ayslish magic, which invokes the Principle of Definition whenever two spells with the same pattern knowledge are used). Engineers also use maats to imbue their buildings with magical spells and miracles of faith (although such miracles are powered by the gods of the many races and groups of the Land Below).

The engineering spell *Imbue with Mystic Energy* does not exist in the Land Below. The magic axiom is sufficient to support

many of the powers engineers wish to add to a building. In addition, there is no mystical significance to the form of pyramids in the Land Below; use of that form is just a design option.

In addition to the spells used in the Nile Empire, engineers in the Land Below have developed one other spell for their craft.

Magical Enhancement

Axiom Level: 10

Skill: *alteration/engineering*

Backlash: 18

Difficulty: 22

Effect Value: 24

Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 10 (100 meters)

Duration: 58 (10,000 years)

Cast Time: 29 (one week)

Manipulation: unknown

Magical enhancement allows

the engineer to design portions of a building to exceed what physics would consider "safe" weight loads and design. The spell uses magic energy to support and strengthen the structure at hand.

In practice, the spell is used to create winding staircases without central supports, impossibly thin columns to support heavy roofs, very thin walls to support multi-story structures (which are very difficult to build considering the available materials).

When the spell is cast, compare the effect value to the *Toughness* or *Strength* of the material (use whichever attribute is higher). Add the result points directly to the material's *Strength* and *Toughness*. The spell affects a 25 meter sphere, although the engineer may choose to affect a lesser area as long as it is entirely within the spherical area of effect.

tribes regularly cut their hair out of tradition.

The other physical side effect of the Law of Savagery is that physical attractions become heightened as the animalistic effects of the law take hold. Members of the opposite sex will appear more attractive to one another and latent love interests will flare to bold passion. Characters who play a *romance* subplot while adventuring in the Land Below receive one extra possibility point at the end of each adventure act. Also, any *Charisma*-based test involving a member of the opposite sex receives an automatic +3 to effect (as if a Presence card had been played).

The Law of Action

Like the Nile Empire, the Land Below is a realm of heroic action. A rush of adrenalin makes the impossible become possible. Every pit can be

spanned with a heroic leap. There is always a vine on hand to swing to the next tree in the daring pursuit of the kidnapped maiden.

In game terms, the Law of Action allows possibility-rated characters attuned to the Land Below's reality (or in a Land Below pure zone) to spend two Possibilities on actions and apply either result (but not both) to her die total.

Example: A character in a pure zone of the caverns is caught in the grips of a dinosaur. As he is pulled to the beast's waiting jaws, the player decides to wedge his staff into the monster's gaping maw. The Game-master rules the action a Vital Blow. The player rolls the die and gets a 5. He decides to burn two possibilities to improve his attempt and rolls a 19 and a 7 on his two rolls. He wisely chooses the 19, wedging the staff in place and forestalling his character's demise.

Law of Wonders

The Law of Wonders has created many engineering marvels in the Land Below that are very similar to the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World of Core Earth.

In game terms, the Law of Wonders allows the construction of temples, palaces and other buildings which greatly exceed the tech axiom through the use of the *engineering* skill. The skill functions in the same manner as the Nile Empire *engineering* skill, and only applies to buildings and structures (which indicates that, perhaps, in the distant past Earth's magic axiom was 12 and the ancient Egyptians used the *engineering* skill). Within Merretika, only the Pyrians use engineers, and they are closely monitored by the Fire Priests.





Chapter Six

Miracles of Faith



he spiritual power of the Land Below is immense, with power equivalent to Orrorsh and the Nile Empire. Unlike these realms, miracles of many faiths are common, and each religion has several miracles unique to the particular faith. The following miracles are the most important and powerful miracles of the particular faith.

Darooni Wasp Riders

Call Giant Wasp

Spiritual Rating: 13
Community Rating: 8
Difficulty: 8
Range: 15 (one kilometer)
Duration: na
Effect: calls a giant wasp to the invoker

This miracle is used every sixth Darooni cycle by the priestesses to call the giant wasps from their nest. When summoned, the wasps fly out of the nest and land beside the assembled Wasp Riders. The riders then saddle the insects and leave for the hunt.

The prayer is also used during the Hatching Ceremony to call the queen wasp from her nest. The queen responds to the prayer and lays her fertile eggs in the Darooni's sacrificial victim.

The miracle only calls the giant wasps, but does not command them once they arrive. The Wasp Riders must expertly handle the creatures to get the insects to obey.

Catalepsy

Spiritual Rating: 15
Community Rating: 11
Difficulty: 13
Range: touch
Duration: 30 (two weeks)
Effect: induces total paralysis in victim.

The victim of the *catalepsy* miracle loses all control of voluntary bodily functions. The victim will be aware of his surroundings, but will be unable to do anything beyond breathe. The subject's body functions also slow down drastically so that only close observation will detect the signs of life in his body. This prayer is used by the Darooni during the Hatching Ceremony to paralyze the sacrificial victim before the queen is called to lay her eggs.

Cure Poison

Spiritual Rating: 11
Community Rating: 10
Difficulty: see below
Range: touch
Duration: na
Effect: cleanses poisons from recipient's body

This miracle clears the recipient's body of all toxic substances, preventing any continuing damage, although it will not heal previously-inflicted damage. It will cure any side effects beyond damage, such as paralysis or hallucinations. The difficulty of the miracle is determined by the poison being destroyed. The gamemaster can also adjust the difficulty level according to the amount of poison in the victim's system.





Poison Difficulty Chart

Alcohol	7
Black Widow Bite	8
Drug Overdose	10
Giant Wasp Sting	11
Arsenic	13
Cyanide	15

Wasp Touch

Spiritual Rating: 14

Community Rating: 12

Difficulty: 11

Range: touch

Duration: na

Effect: poisons the victim with effects similar to a giant wasp sting

This miracle delivers a poisonous affliction exactly like the sting of a giant wasp. The touch delivers sharp pain, but does not cause the physical damage that the thrust of the stinger does. However, the venom does damage value 16, and if a KO result occurs,

the victim is paralyzed for one hour. The Darooni priestesses use this prayer for personal defense, and it is also rumored to be the final test in the trials of becoming a priestess.

Keefee

Most of the miracles in the Keefee religion center on the Dalberry tree. Other miracles involve the savannahs and personal health.

Animate Tree

Spiritual Rating: 14

Community Rating: 10

Difficulty: 10

Range: touch

Duration: performance

Effect: animates and controls a tree

This prayer allows a Keefee to animate the branches and roots of a tree. The tree can be made to strike with its

branches or entangle with its roots. Dalberry trees have large branches and small surface roots. To hit a target, the Keefee must generate a *faith* total greater than the target's active defense; the branches hit for damage value 14 (a character must generate a *Strength* total of 12 or greater to break free).

This miracle is most useful to Haroo traveling in the jungles since the Keefee savannahs only have tribal Dalberry trees, and roots form a part of each Keefee family's home. If the controlled tree has a shallow root network, it can be completely uprooted and made to pull itself along the ground using its roots (speed value 5).

Poisonberry

Spiritual Rating: 10

Community Rating: 9

Difficulty: 11

Range: touch

Duration: na

Effect: turns fruits poisonous



This miracle will turn any natural fruit that is still on the vine or tree into a poisonous sac. The fruit remains poisonous even after the fruit has been removed. The poison has a damage value of 18 if ingested. The *faith* total is the number of fruits poisoned by the miracle. The Keefee use this spell on the berries for bait in traps or to poison herbivores feasting on the tribe's tree.

Seedberry

Spiritual Rating: 10
Community Rating: 9
Difficulty: 10
Range: touch
Duration: na

Effect: produces a seed bearing dalberry

This simple ritual takes only a few moments, as the Keefee gather around their Dalberry tree and begin chanting in unison. The result is a berry with a seed, which is taken by several Keefee into the savannahs. The fruit is planted in a distant location, providing a home for a new or relocated tribe. This miracle may only be used twice on a particular Dalberry tree. It is unknown if Dalberry trees can reproduce without this miracle.

Speak with Grass

Spiritual Rating: 13
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: 11
Range: touch
Duration: performance
Effect: allows limited communication with grasses

This prayer allows a Keefee Lallap to communicate with grass and other simple plants. The communication can take several different forms, depending on the success level of the miracle. To use the miracle, the Lallap sits on the ground and stares deeply at the grass. After a few seconds, the Lallap's body will start swaying, as if moved by a gentle breeze, while he whistles a high pitched song. The song is the means by which the Lallap communicates with the grass. Use the *faith* total to determine the level of success. *Minimal* success grants simple empathy

only and the invoker experiences any strong emotions that were evoked recently in the area. *Average* success allows deeper empathy, picking up trace emotions from further away or longer ago. *Good* success allows empathy and blurred, dream-like visions of past events. *Superior* allows empathy and clearer visions. *Spectacular* allows the invoker clear postcognitive visions of the area, complete empathy, and the whistling of the wind in the grass will recreate many of the sounds of the scene for all nearby to hear (others nearby may generate a *Spirit* total of 11 or higher to divine the meaning).

Speak with Tree

Spiritual Rating: 14
Community Rating: 11
Difficulty: 13
Range: touch
Duration: performance
Effect: allows communication with trees

This prayer is almost identical to *Speak with Grass*. The Keefee Lallap will often use this miracle if he is unsure of what to do or if a confusing omen has come from the tree. In essence, the Lallap is both getting information about the tree's past and is also asking it a question about what it "thinks" the future is.

Minimal success grants the user a murky vision concerning the question and also gives a detailed vision of anything that occurred within the past 24 hours. *Average* grants a murky vision about the question and detailed knowledge of the past "week". *Good* success gives clear vision of the past "week" and gives a brief glimpse of the exact location and the individuals involved in the omen. *Superior* success give the user a "minute's" worth of sight, sound and touch concerning the omen (the character may not manipulate anything, though). *Spectacular* success gives the user a minute's worth of sight, sound and touch, and the character may manipulate items as if he were present, although nothing may be "brought through" after the miracle ends. To the individuals that are the subject of the miracle, it is as if an invisible creature is able to move things around. In the case of a *spectacular*

success, although the Lallap may manipulate items, those in that area may only harm him by other miracles.

Leopard Men

The miracles of the Leopard Men are based around the principles of praying for the souls of the living and offering sacrifices to the guardian spirits of unliving things. The miracles will only work under certain conditions. Many of the Leopard Men miracles have no Community Rating because they are always practiced alone. The rituals are for appeasing the spirits and are only performed by the females.

Steal the Essence of the Water

Spiritual Rating: 14
Community Rating: na
Difficulty: 11
Range: self
Duration: na
Effect: heals a wound by drinking water

Leopard Men injured during a hunt will often seek out a stream, spring, or river and partake of the water's essence to heal wounds. Successfully performing this miracle and drinking from a natural source of water will restore any of the following: one wound, all shock points, or a "K" or "O" condition. The miracle will work on the same individual only once per day.

Consume the Leopard's Heart

Spiritual Rating: 14
Community Rating: na
Difficulty: 12
Range: self
Duration: 31 (2.5 weeks)
Effect: raises attributes by eating the heart of a great leopard

For a boy to become a man among the Leopard Man race, he must hunt down a great leopard and kill it single-handedly. When he eats the heart of the great cat, the boy becomes a man in the eyes of his people. This miracle is



L earning Miracles from Other Cosms

It is possible for characters with the *focus* skill to acquire miracles from other cosms. Three conditions must be met before it is even possible to acquire a miracle.

1. The religious beliefs of the faith from which the miracle originates must be compatible with the beliefs of the religion of the character acquiring the miracle.

Example: The faith of the Cyberpope explicitly denies to the validity of other religions. A character with Cyber-papist faith and focus could not learn miracles from any other cosm.

2. The character acquiring the miracle must be able to explain the miracle as a function of his own religion. If the player cannot explain to the gamemaster how the miracle could be a manifestation of his character's faith, the character cannot acquire the miracle.

3. The character must have witnessed the miracle.

To acquire the miracle, the character must invoke his deity (page 127 of the *Torg Rulebook*) using the spiritual axiom of the cosm to which the miracle belongs. Gaining Living Land miracles is done using the spiritual axiom of the Living Land.

When making the invocation the Condition Modifier chart on page 127 of the *Torg Rulebook* is in effect.

If this invocation is successful, the miracle is granted. The character may now pray for this miracle as he would any other miracle with which he is familiar. If the invocation is unsuccessful, the character is denied that miracle, now and forever. When attempting to acquire a miracle, a player may play cards for his character, but may not trade or receive cards from any other player. Acquiring a miracle is a private affair between a character of faith and his deity.

The particulars of the miracle remain the same, except for the spiritual rating. If the person who has acquired the miracles has a higher spiritual axiom than the miracle, the miracle's spiritual rating is raised to match the character's. If the character has a lower spiritual axiom, the spiritual rating remains the same.

For example, miracles from the Living Land are easier to acquire than those from Core Earth, but are likely to cause four-case contradictions anywhere but the Living Land. Core Earth miracles are more difficult to obtain, but cause fewer contradictions.

gies as his own. The miracle will raise some of the user's attributes, although the exact effects are highly variable depending on the animal.

When the miracle is used, compare the user's *faith* total to each attribute of the creature, reading any results on the Power Push Table. The attribute increases to the corresponding Power Push result up to the animal's attribute.

Ritual of the Hunting Totem

Spiritual Rating: 15

Community Rating: 13

Difficulty: 15

Range: touch

Duration: na

Effect: creates a hunting totem

The Leopard Men are very territorial, and will often kill intruding humanoids. However, the hunting land claimed by each tribe is too vast to be regularly patrolled, so it plants wooden posts called hunting totems to warn of intruders. Each two meter tall hunting totem is decorated with carved animal faces looking every direction.

The women of a tribe will come together for the four hour ritual to create a single hunting totem. The men then take finished poles and plant them at the borders of their hunting ground.

When a humanoid crosses the boundary line between two hunting totems, they must pass a *Spirit* test at difficulty number 10. If the intruder succeeds with a *good* result or better, they may pass through the tribe's territory without penalty and without triggering the totems. If a humanoid fails the test, he suffers a fatigue result, but the shock points will not be removed until the character leaves the tribe's territory. Additionally, the failure will allow the totem to send a psychic warning to the woman who served as the focus for the hunting totem ritual. She will lapse into unconsciousness and will be able to see through the eyes of the hunting totem to get a good view of the intruder. Those who passed the test with at least a good result are invisible to her spirit sight.

Leopard Men will respond to intrusions by sending a group of hunters to hunt them down.

cast by the young man to capture the power of the leopard's soul and make it his own. Compare the boy's *faith* total to the leopard's *Spirit*, reading the results on the power push table. The boy may add the power push to any attribute except *Mind*, or divide the result among any number of attributes. The miracle's benefits are in effect for a time value of 31 (two and a half "weeks"). This miracle is only used once in a lifetime by each Leopard Man.

Power of the Beast

Spiritual Rating: 14

Community Rating: na

Difficulty: 12

Range: self

Duration: 25 (one day)

Effect: captures an animal's power to raises the user's attributes

After a kill, the Leopard Man hunter invokes this miracle to both honor the dead animal and to take its life ener-



Ritual of Tree Bracing

Spiritual Rating: 10
Community Rating: 10
Difficulty: 10
Range: touch
Duration: na
Effect: strengthens tree branches and makes them rigid

This two hour ritual is used by the mother of a family to periodically strengthen her family's house tree. Each result point adds +1 to the tree's *Toughness*. Further uses of the ritual must produce more result points than the original miracle to add any additional protection to the tree. For example, the priestess gets four result points for her original casting and increases her tree's *Toughness* by +4. She uses the miracle again and gets 6 result points, giving the tree another +2 to *Toughness*. The ritual takes two hours and requires sacrifices of berries and beetles to the tree's guardian spirit.

Ritual of Tree Weaving

Spiritual Rating: 13
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: 14
Range: touch
Duration: 18 (one hour)
Effect: makes the branches of a tree soft and flexible

This ritual is used by a family's head female to prepare the family tree house. After the three hour ritual, the entire tribe joins together to weave the soft branches of the tree into the floor, walls, and ceiling of a house. Once the house is completed, the *ritual of tree bracing* will be performed to seal the branches into the new shape.

Ohibi

The following are special miracles that only an Ohibi with the *focus* skill can perform. Mehret-Ahn is the only Ohibi with the skill at this time and will freely perform these rituals on the hunters of the tribe when it is warranted.

Animal Sounds

Spiritual Rating: 10
Community Rating: 10
Difficulty: 10
Range: 5 (10 meters)
Duration: 18 (one hour)
Effect: allows the mimicking of any animal

This miracle allows the recipient to exactly reproduce the sound of any mammal or bird native to Merretika. No actual communication is possible with animals, but such effects as mating calls, danger signals, etc. of the animals may be reproduced. This is used as a means of disguising communication between members of the tribe; to understand the message, the other members must make beat a *Perception* difficulty of 10, while non-tribal members must beat a difficulty of 15.

Calm Beast

Spiritual Rating: 8
Community Rating: 9
Difficulty: 10
Range: voice
Duration: 18 (one hour)
Effect: an enraged or attacking animal can be made peaceful

This miracle calms any attacking animal. Compare the user's *faith* to the target's *Spirit*, and if there is a *good* or better success, the animal is calmed. A calm creature will cease any violent actions (unless later attacked) and leave the area. This miracle will not work when the user is the aggressor (such as being in an animal's den). By the end of the miracle's duration, the animal usually has left the area.

Living Jungle

Spiritual Rating: 14
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: 15
Range: 10 (100 meters)
Duration: performance
Effect: the plants of the jungle come alive to entrap those who pass through it

This miracle causes the vines, grasses, and trees of the jungle to come "alive" and entangle those who at-

tempt to pass through it. The area of jungle that is affected by the miracle has a radius equal to the *faith* total of the miracle (the radius may exceed the range). Only jungle areas may be affected by this miracle. Any member of the community that participated in the miracle may pass through the jungle without danger.

Those caught within the area of the *living jungle* will be attacked by the jungle every round (use the *faith* total as the skill, but treat it as an *unarmed combat* attack). The vines and trees do damage value 12 each round that a character is trapped until the character generates a *Strength* total higher than the *faith* total to break free. Any character trying to pass through the affected area must make a *stealth* total of 15 or have her movement halved.

Painless Kill

Spiritual Rating: 11
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: 16
Range: touch
Duration: first hit in combat
Effect: the first blow struck causes additional damage, but results in no pain

This powerful miracle is often used in conjunction with the ceremonial killing of animals (or humans!) to make the death a quick and painless one. The miracle may be invoked at any time, but is not activated until the user makes an *unarmed combat* hit. The damage value of the miracle is 10 plus the *faith* total, but the attack causes no pain (KO and wound results are counted normally, but shock points aren't taken). This damage replaces normal *unarmed combat* damage. The victim may not realize he has been gravely injured.

Pass Quietly

Spiritual Rating: 7
Community Rating: 10
Difficulty: 10
Range: touch
Duration: 18 (one hour)
Effect: any inadvertent sound is silenced

This miracle allows the recipient to move through any environment with-



out making a sound, although she can willingly make sounds. For example, the snapping of a twig in a forest would be blanked out, but if the recipient would like to whisper to a friend, his voice may be heard. Effectively, this miracle give a +8 bonus to the *stealth* skill in circumstances where the recipient may only be detected by sound (sneaking through a darkened cave, etc.).

Power of Mehret

Spiritual Rating: 11
Community Rating: na
Difficulty: 11
Range: 1 (one meter)
Duration: 25 (one day)
Effect: increases an attribute

This is a powerful miracle that Mehret-Ahn normally performs only on himself. He can perform it only in the Ohibi temple within the caves (see *Chapter Three: Merretika*) and when he has possession of a sliver of the Sphere.

Mehret-Ahn places the Sphere sliver within the statuette and kneels before it, chanting numerous praises to Mehret. Numerous bolts of energy emerge from the statuette, scorching his skin black and causing pain. Compare his *faith* value to the difficulty number, reading the result on the Power Push Table. The number may be added to any one attribute or divided up among any number of attributes. The additional power may be granted to other people as well.

For each use of the miracle beyond the first in a given 24-hour period, increase the difficulty by +7.

Pyrian Fire Tamers

The miracles of the Pyrians reflect the two natures of their god. The miracles either bring about destruction or protection; there are very few which divine or perceive. Many of the miracles list two difficulties, the first number for when the god is Karruk and second for when the god is Darok.

Cloud of Ash

Spiritual Rating: 14
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: 14 / 12
Range: 11 (150 meters)
Duration: performance
Effect: creates a cloud of ash

This miracle produces a cloud of volcanic ash 100 yards in diameter. Anything trapped in the cloud will be unable to see one meter away, and will begin to suffocate from the ash (damage value nine each round). Armor will not help against suffocation, but gas masks or air tanks will prevent damage.

Darok's Breath

Spiritual Rating: 15
Community Rating: 11
Difficulty: 16 / 12
Range: 10 (100 meters)
Duration: 7 (25 seconds)
Effect: causes a miniature volcanic eruption

This miracle persuades the god to breath upon the surface of the land wherever the priest desires. The ground at that location will immediately begin to bulge and crack, hissing steam. The following round it will explode like a volcano, erupting lava high into the air.

Anyone within 10 meters of the site will suffer damage value 24 from the explosion. The rent in the earth will continue to hiss steam for another round and then close up the following round.

Fertility

Spiritual Rating: 11
Community Rating: 10
Difficulty: 11 / —
Range: 15 (600 meters)
Duration: see below
Effect: changes the ground into fertile soil

This miracle may only be cast while the god is Karruk. The Fire Priest grabs a handful of soil and throws it into the air. The soil bursts into flame and falls to the ground (it will not burn anything or cause damage though). All soil within a 600 meter radius becomes fertile and crops are able to grow. When the volcano god changes demeanor to evil, the land that he once made fertile through this miracle reverts to its normal state. Compare the *faith* total to the difficulty: with a *superior* or *spectacular* result, the ground will remain fertile even after Darok returns.

Flame Aura

Spiritual Rating: 15
Community Rating: 12
Difficulty: 16 / 10
Range: self
Duration: 10 (100 seconds)
Effect: surrounds the body in flames

Successful use of this prayer will turn the priest's body into a mass of flames. Flammable items carried or worn at the time will burst into flame and soft metals will melt away. *Unarmed combat* attacks from the flaming figure do normal damage plus fire damage of value 16. Striking the burning figure with an *unarmed combat* attack inflicts damage value 16 on the attacker. In addition, the priest has +5 armor protection against attacks from weapons of soft metal or wood. This is a spell of Darok.

Flame Ward

Spiritual Rating: 13
Community Rating: 10
Difficulty: 12 / 14
Range: touch
Duration: 17 (40 minutes)
Effect: protects the body from heat

This miracle will give the receiver a +8 bonus against heat-based damage (this category does not include energy weapons).





Chapter Seven

Pulp Powers



The Land Below's fringe reality offers many things that will surprise visitors, not the least of which is that some characters have pulp powers. Unlike the Nile Empire powers, which are a by-product of *weird science*, the powers of the Land Below are generated by the high magic and spirit axioms and the Law of Savagery (see *Chapter Five: Axioms and World Laws*). The primitive and spiritual reality of the Land Below allows inhabitants to have uncanny abilities to communicate with animals, enhance one's combat abilities, and be more in tune with the natural and savage environment. These powers are a gift of birth, or can only be gained by eating magical berries or some other mystic or spiritual ritual; there are no gizmos in the Land Below.

Characters from other realms may accidentally gain these powers as a result of specific adventures set up by the gamemaster. These powers are only available to possibility-rated characters.

Several Land Below pulp powers function identically to powers in the Nile Empire. However, Nile Empire pulp powers are a one-case contradiction in the Land Below. Land Below pulp powers are specifically attuned to the magic and spiritual axioms and the Law of Savagery and create a one-case contradiction in the Nile Empire and all other realms.

The following powers, which appear in the *Nile Empire* sourcebook and the *Torg Worldbook*, are available to Land Below characters. The available powers are: *animal friend*, *jump*, *mega-hearing*, *mega-scent*, *mega-sight*, *running*, *super attribute*, *super skill*, *swimming*, and *ultra-sight*. Since the Land Below versions of these powers create a contradiction everywhere

but the Land Below, the tech rating must be ignored.

The powers new to the Land Below are as follows:

Adrenaline

Adventure Cost: 3

Action Value: TOU +2

Range: Self

This power allows a character to regulate the flow of adrenaline in his body, thereby allowing him to find reserves of energy when otherwise impossible. The character is capable of great feats of strength and endurance, removing all shock points and increasing *Strength* and *Dexterity*. This may be done only twice per 24-hour period without suffering deleterious side-effects as a result of the effort.

The difficulty of the power's use is determined by the value of the measure of time that the character wants to be "pumped up." If the character wants to be wired for one minute (measure of 60 seconds), then the difficulty is 9. If the roll is failed, then the character overloaded his body and receives no bonuses (the power is burned out until the character spends three possibilities to "renew" the power).

If successful, read the result points on the Power Push Table, and add the result to *Strength* and *Dexterity* for the power's duration. The character also removes all shock points.

There are no side-effects following this flow of adrenaline unless this power is used more than twice per "day." For each use beyond the second, shock damage will not be healed and add +1 to the difficulty to activate the power. In addition, one shock point is inflicted for each round the power is used.





Animal Companion

Adventure Cost: 3

Action Value: CHA+5

Range: Unlimited

Much like the *animal friend* pulp power described in the *Nile Empire* sourcebook, the *animal companion* power allows the possessor to have a particular animal companion that is unshakably loyal. The possessor of this power does not have any influence whatsoever over any animal other than his companion.

The bond between the animal and character is unbreakable. The animal will sacrifice itself to protect the character, and the character should be willing to do the same. Additionally, this power allows for very complicated communication between the man (or whatever) and animal. On some subconscious level the animal is able to precisely convey whatever message it desires to its friend; the possessor of

the power must be content to only speak to the animal (the animal can understand the character).

The animal will also accept attitudes toward others as does its "master." Therefore, friends of the master become friends of the animal, though there's no mistaking where the animal's ultimate loyalty rests. Because of this, the animal will seek out friends of its master if something happens to the character. It can understand others so long as they speak in the same language as its master, but no one else can communicate with it without miracles or magic.

The only time a total needs to be generated for this power is when the character sends his companion on a dangerous mission. The total must exceed the animal's *Spirit*.

Claws

Adventure Cost: 2/3

Action Value: STR+3

Range: Self

This power very conveniently allows fighting types to never be caught without a weapon. Claws on the character's hands may be used in combat to inflict STR+3 damage. The *unarmed combat* skill is used to attack with the claws. At the gamemaster's discretion, some other sort of natural weaponry can substituted for claws (fangs, horns, or whatever).

The variable costs depends on whether or not the claws are retractable. If so, then the adventure cost is 3. Retracted claws are not noticeable, so this is an excellent way to smuggle a "weapon" into an area where they are otherwise forbidden. The power is "on" at all times.



Far Vision

Adventure Cost: 2

Value: MIN+10

Range: Power Value

This power allows the user to see what is happening to companions or acquaintances. To activate the power, the user must choose one specific person. If that particular person is within the power's range, the user can "see" in his mind's eye what is happening to the character. The power has a duration of three rounds, and may be used once per hour.

The vision is 10 meters away from the subject of the *far vision*, and may not be controlled by the user (although the power always allows an unobstructed view of the target). If the target moves, the vision will follow the target. The vision also includes sound, but has no smell or tactile sensations. This power may only be used to spy on specific characters, not locations, and may not be used to see across dimensional boundaries.

Regeneration

Adventure Cost: 5

Action Value: TOU

Range: Self

This very potent power allows the instant recovery from wounds. When the power is activated, the possessor may remove either an "O" condition, a "K" condition, or lower her wound level by one. It takes only one round to reduce damage. O's, K's and wounds must be removed in that order (i.e., an O must be removed before a wound can be removed). Shock points cannot be healed with this power.

The power's difficulty depends upon the type of damage being healed: an "O" or "K" result requires the character to roll *Toughness*-3. To remove a wound, the character must roll against a difficulty equal to her *Toughness*. To reduce a heavy wound to a wound, the difficulty is equal to her *Toughness*+3, while reducing a mortal wound to a heavy wound requires rolling against a difficulty of *Toughness*+6.

However, there is one major restriction to this power. As soon as a *regeneration* roll is failed, the character cannot attempt to regenerate that particular wound again, nor may she proceed to attempt to regenerate other wounds, until that level of damage

heals naturally. Other characters can cancel possibilities spent to improve the *regeneration* roll.

Sense Magic

Adventure Cost: 1

Value: PER+7

Range: Power Value

This power allows the possessor to sense most forms of active magic within range. The power can be activated for up to ten minutes, and may not be used more than once every 12 hours.

To determine if the character knows where the magic is, compare the power total to the casting total of the magic to be detected. If there is more than one magical item or effect functioning, compare each item separately. If the power total equals or exceeds the casting total, the power user will know that the item is magical and active, as well as the skill, pattern knowledge and realm of origin. The character will see the magical items glow (no one else will see this change), and will instinctively "know" this information.

This power will detect active magics (spells) and anything with stored magics (including wards) or imbued with mystic energy.



Chapter Eight

Creatures and Folk of Merretika



Merretika teems with life, much like the entire Land Below. Within the domed world huge mammals (carnivorous and her-

bivorous) dominate the land, but giant lizards, mammoth insects, and huge predatory birds are here as well. In fact, it wouldn't be unusual for adventuring Storm Knights to encounter may different kinds of animals even in the shortest journeys — it would tie in nicely with the lush jungles, awe-inspiring forgotten temples and incredible waterways which dominate the land. Some creatures are easy to spot from a great distance, but most are experts at hiding themselves from prying eyes. Creatures from other realms have even entered Merretika, although they are few in number and mostly limited to the flying lizards of the Living Land.

Arhet Crom

Ahret crows are fierce crocodiles native to the jungles of Merretika. They are about four meters long, with a grey hide. They spend most of their time in the rivers, waiting for prey to approach the shores. Once a character has been bitten by an arhet crom, the character must make a *Strength* total of 16 to break the vice-like grip of the creature's jaws.

Arhet Crom

DEXTERITY 8

Running 12, stealth 10, unarmed combat 12

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 10

PERCEPTION 3

Find 10, track 9, trick (8)

MIND 2

Test (15)

CHARISMA 2

Charm (12), persuasion (11), taunt (8)

SPIRIT 3

Intimidation (8)

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: hide (armor value TOU +2/12), teeth (damage value STR +4/12), tail (damage value STR +1/9)

Cave Bear

A fearsome and fearless carnivore wherever it decides to wander in Merretika, the gigantic cave bear towers five meters high when upright on its hind legs. The creature has a voracious appetite and will rarely back down once it has committed itself to gaining its prey. Cave bears are only found in the Mountains of the Beast.

Cave Bear

DEXTERITY 11

Dodge 13, maneuver 12, running 14, stealth 13, unarmed combat 15

STRENGTH 18

TOUGHNESS 19

PERCEPTION 14

Find 16, track 17

MIND 5

Test (18)

CHARISMA 7

Charm (13), persuasion (13), taunt (15)

SPIRIT 6

Intimidation 16

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: fur (armor value TOU +3/22), claws (damage value STR +3/21), teeth (damage value STR +1/19)





Caleacon

One of the most-feared creatures in Merretika, especially among the Pyrians, the caleacon is a huge (three meters at the shoulder), four-legged lizard that makes its home in the lava pools in the southern portion of the world. An extremely thick hide and a burning hot metabolism allows these creatures to survive such searing temperatures.

Amidst the lava, these deep-orange skinned beasts are almost invisible (*Perception* or *find* total of 20 to spot). One of the most dangerous aspects of this beast is its dreaded ability to radiate a burning heat comparable to that in which it lives. This drains the beast because of the huge expenditure of energy involved (it loses two shock points), but all beings within range suffer a damage value 20 attack. These creatures also have an effective +2 TOU against all heat attacks, but a -2 TOU against all cold attacks.

While these creatures seem to gain a lot of the food energy they need to survive from the heat of lava, they apparently enjoy the taste of meat, for they never pass up a chance to have it. In fact, caleacons sometimes attack the settlements of the nearby Pyrians without provocation apparently just to dine on flesh.

Caleacon

DEXTERITY 10
Swimming 12, unarmed combat 14
STRENGTH 21
TOUGHNESS 21
PERCEPTION 9
Find 12, trick (10)
MIND 4
Test (12)
CHARISMA 3
Charm (13), persuasion (12), taunt (10)
SPIRIT 8
Intimidation 22
Possibility Potential: some (70)
Natural Tools: hide (armor value TOU +4/25), fangs (damage value STR +4/25), claws (damage value STR +2/23), heat (damage value 20, 25/50/100)

Deathcat

The deathcat is one of the most dangerous creatures of the Land Below, primarily due to its magically enhanced darkness attack. The creature appears to be made of shadow, but has the form of a cat. Even in full light it seems to be a creature made of pure darkness. Because of this natural camouflage, it has a +3 to all *stealth* attempts whenever it hides in shadows. The creature also uses a darkness attack, leaping at travelers and consuming them with the blackness of death (an *unarmed combat* attack). Calculate damage normally, but if the creature is able to cause a total of seven wounds, the unlucky victim has been entirely consumed by the darkness. Victims may negate the effects of the darkness attack through use of darkness spells cast upon himself (see the Principle of Definition: if the target's casting total is higher than the creature's casting total, i.e., the effect value after being modified with the bonus number, then the attack is negated).

The deathcat is extremely rare, but it can be found anywhere in the caverns of the Land Below or Merretika. It doesn't seem to require water or sleep; it is believed that it derives its sustenance from the life forces of its victims.

Deathcat

DEXTERITY 11
Dodge 12, stealth 16, unarmed combat 14
STRENGTH 9
TOUGHNESS 10
PERCEPTION 6
Survival 9, test (16)
MIND 3
Find 6, trick (10)
CHARISMA 6
Charm (12), persuasion (11), taunt (15)
SPIRIT 4
Intimidation (19)
Possibility Potential: some (60)
Natural Tools: Darkness attack (damage value 29 — see text), dark hide (armor value TOU +4/14)

Ghouls

The ghouls of the Land Below are slightly tougher than the creatures known to inhabit Aysle, but their motivations are the same. They feed on corpses, but enjoy killing living creatures in preparation for a fine feast.

Ghouls appear to be grey rotting corpses, with fangs and long claws. They are quite strong and are almost silent when moving. They normally hunt in groups, and then fight among themselves over the kill (see the cover of this product).

Ghouls

DEXTERITY 13
Dodge 14, lock-picking 14, stealth 14, unarmed combat 16
STRENGTH 12
Lifting 14
TOUGHNESS 13
PERCEPTION 7
Find 10, tracking 8, trick (12)
MIND 5
Test 8, willpower 21
CHARISMA 6
Charm (9), persuasion (11), taunt (9)
SPIRIT 7
Intimidation 9
Possibility Potential: none
Natural Tools: Claws (damage value STR +2/14), fangs (damage value STR +2/14)
Note: Immune to KO conditions. If *Hero Setback* card comes up, characters flee in fear if intimidated.

Great Leopard

These great cats dominate the forests and jungles of Merretika, where their spotted hides allow them to camouflage beautifully with the shadows and trees. They normally strike first by pouncing from a tree. If their quarry is capable of flight after that blow, the leopard can often run the victim down.

Though very rare, some great leopards have completely black pelts. There are no statistical differences between the normal and "black panther" types.



Great Leopard

DEXTERITY 13

Dodge 15, long jumping 16, maneuver 14, running 15, stealth 14, unarmed combat 16

STRENGTH 12

TOUGHNESS 13

PERCEPTION 15

Find 17, track 17

MIND 7

Test (15)

CHARISMA 5

Charm (10), persuasion (9), taunt (12)

SPIRIT 10

Intimidation (18)

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: fur (armor value TOU +1/14), teeth (damage value STR +1/13), claws (damage value STR +2/14)

Huevenge

The huevenge is a solitary flying creature found only near the Temple of the Abominari in the north. It is about three meters tall, with large

wings and sharp teeth. It is a reddish-brown in coloration, which gives ample warning to any creatures in the area. It seems to feed on the plants growing out of the base of the obelisks. It ferociously defends the area immediately around the obelisks.

Huevenge

DEXTERITY 12

Dodge 14, flying 15, unarmed combat 16

STRENGTH 14

Lifting 16

TOUGHNESS 15

PERCEPTION 3

Find 10, tracking 9, trick (14)

MIND 3

Test (15)

CHARISMA 2

Charm (11), persuasion (10), taunt (12)

SPIRIT 3

Intimidation (16)

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: hide (armor value TOU +2/17), teeth (damage value STR +4/18), wings (speed value 13)

Rodar

These crafty, forest-dwelling rodents are remarkable in that they are often possibility-rated. Because they are social animals, rodar are found living in groups of up to one thousand individuals, though communities of a couple hundred are more common. This tendency toward working together makes them fearsome opponents in combat when they swarm over their victim (use the Many-on-One chart, although up to 25 can swarm a man-sized target at once).

Rodar are about the size of a Core Earth rat, but seem a little smaller due to their short hair. They show a surprising amount of intelligence, and often are beneficial to peaceful and kind people near them. They have been known to chew the straps from bound men, gnaw nets that hold other animals, and gather and return items that have been lost in the jungle.



Rodar**DEXTERITY 12**

Dodge 16, maneuver 14, stealth 15, unarmed combat 13

STRENGTH 3**TOUGHNESS 4****PERCEPTION 14**

Find 17

MIND 8**CHARISMA 9****SPIRIT 12**

Possibility Potential: some (30)

Natural Tools: fur (armor value TOU +1/5), teeth (damage value STR +1/4)

Smileodon

One of the most fearsome predators of the plains regions of Merretika, the sabertooth tiger is a squat, stocky great cat that sports enlarged canines. These curved teeth are often up to 20 centimeters long and are used to cut through the thick hides of the elephants and giant ground sloths upon which it regularly feeds.

Since their heavy, muscular frames were not designed for running at terribly great speeds, the sabertooth tiger relies on ambush to gain its meals. However, speed is not essential when stalking such prey as the giant ground sloth.

Once a victim has been speared by the huge teeth of this cat, it must make a successful *maneuver* test against the animal in order to escape. The tiger will automatically inflict damage each round someone is impaled on one of the teeth.

Smileodon (Sabertooth Cat)**DEXTERITY 12**

Dodge 14, long jumping 14, maneuver 14, stealth 15, unarmed combat 15

STRENGTH 13**TOUGHNESS 15****PERCEPTION 13**

Find 15, tracking 16, trick (14)

MIND 8

Test (17)

CHARISMA 6

Charm (10), persuasion (11), taunt (12)

SPIRIT 7

Intimidation 14

Possibility Potential: none

Natural Tools: fur (armor value TOU +2/17), saberteeth (damage value STR +3/16), claws (damage value STR +2/15)

Personalities

Though most of the areas of Merretika are dominated by groups of people, there are three forces in this realm that demand attention and respect though they are just individuals.

Kord

Kord is a powerful possibility-rated individual and the self-proclaimed protector of the world. He was originally a Core Earther. Since his transformation, he is only vaguely aware of the High Lords and their plans for the subjugation of Earth. Kord is simply a noble-hearted jungle lord who acts in what he feels are the best interests of those he meets.

A young man who fell into the caverns a short time ago, the Core Earther aimlessly wandered. With the creation of the dimthread passages to Merretika, he discovered the realm and soon transformed to the reality.

Kord has vague memories of "civilization" — his once-upon-a-time home in Michigan. He feels that he must have once lived with many people like him, but he somehow became lost in the Land Below. He does not resent his predicament, but has nonetheless wandered the length and breadth of the realm searching for clues to his heritage. During these journeys he has studied all of the cultures; he has developed a friendship only with the Keefee, and is a sworn enemy of the Darooni.

Though he is alone, Kord is not lonely. He has managed to make friends of many of the animals of the realm, and one has even become his constant companion. Shakart is a powerful male sabertooth tiger (use the statistics earlier in this chapter). Kord spends most of his time in the jungle near the Ohibi village and the plains.

The noble jungle lord carries very little with him, but during his early travels he did find an eternity shard that he wears on a thong around his neck. Kord doesn't fully understand the eternity shard, however, he does know that he finds strength when he grasps it tightly and wills it. Note that he cannot use the group power of the shard because he has no possibility-rated companions at present.

Kord**DEXTERITY 13**

Acrobatics 17, dodge 15, long jumping 14, melee weapons 15, running 16, stealth 16, swimming 16, unarmed combat 16

STRENGTH 13

Climbing 14, lifting 14

TOUGHNESS 12**PERCEPTION 13**

Find 14, first aid 14, language 17, scholar (Merretikan inhabitants) 16, tracking 14, trick 13

MIND 10

Survival 13, test 12, willpower 11.

CHARISMA 9**SPIRIT 12**

Reality 14

Possibilities: 14

Pulp Powers:

animal companion, ultra-sight

Tools: spear (damage value STR +4/17), Fang

Fang

Fang appears similar to a giant carnivore's tooth, although it is cast in the familiar red and blue swirling stone.

Fang

Cosm: Land Below

Possibilities: 31

Tapping Difficulty: 15

Purpose: To preserve the natural order in the Land Below.

Powers: Adds +2 to user's *Strength* and *Toughness* for a time value equal to the *reality* total. Also gives the user the benefit of the pulp power *animal friends* for the same time value.

Group Power: *Herald*



Restrictions: No animals will assist the bearer unless he has consistently acted in the interest of preserving the savage nature of the Land Below.

Lathiar the Mystic

Lathiar is the most accomplished mage of Merretika. He spends most of his time travelling the various regions of this domed world, although he has been known to enter the caverns.

Lathiar is a very pale human, middle-aged and balding. Several wisps of grey hair always seem to be partially obscuring his face, and he only wears an animal skin loincloth. He has a keen interest in magics, but he is also protective of his homeland. He has a small hut in the northernmost regions of Merretika, a few kilometers from the Wild River. He has good relations with many of the Keefee tribes, although he generally avoids the Leopard Men and the Darooni Wasp Riders. He has been known to spend some time in the company of the Ohibi, but he doesn't truly trust them. He avoids the Pyrian nations, but has taught the independent Pyrian tribes many defensive spells to help protect them from the Pyrian slaving raids.

Lathiar

DEXTERITY 9

Beast riding 11, dodge 10, melee weapons 10, stealth 10, swimming 11

STRENGTH 8

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 13

Alteration magic 16, divination magic 17, find 14, language 15, tracking 14

MIND 13

Apportation magic 16, conjuration magic 17, survival 15, test 16, willpower 16

CHARISMA 10

Persuasion 12

SPIRIT 9

Intimidation 11, reality 14

Possibilities: 17

Pulp Powers: far vision

Arcane Knowledges: Avian 2, darkness 3, earth 2, earthly 4, enchanted 1, engineering 1, fire 4, folk 6, inanimate forces 2, light 2, living forces 3, magic 3, metal 1, plant 4, water 3

Tools: knife (STR +3/11), loincloth, several pouches with spell components

Ungrosh

Ungrosh is as close as you come to an unstoppable force in the Land Below. This gigantic black ape towers at a height of twenty meters. When he is

in sight, there is nothing that is more spectacular or more terrifying. While not necessarily worshipped by any of the people of the realm, Ungrosh is certainly given wide berth and most villages are very prepared to offer mounds of food to him in the event he should be hungry and wander near. Ungrosh has supposedly devoured whole herds of animals. Ungrosh spends most of his time in the Mountains of the Beast.

Ungrosh

DEXTERITY 13

Running 20, swimming 16, unarmed combat 17

STRENGTH 28

Climbing 31, lifting 32

TOUGHNESS 26

PERCEPTION 20

Find 23, tracking 22

MIND 7

Test (16)

CHARISMA 6

Taunt (12)

SPIRIT 13

Intimidation 19, reality 15

Note: Ungrosh's movement limit value is 14.

Possibilities: 9

Natural Tools: fur (armor value TOU +2/28), fists (damage value STR +1/29), bite (damage value STR +2/30), stomp (damage value STR +5/33)



Chapter Nine

Adventures



Fescape from the dangerous jungles of the Leopard Men. Discover these secrets of the Ohibi. Battle the ever-encroaching presence of the Nile Empire. Travel to the bottom of the Misty Gorge. Deal with the powerful Pyrian Empire.

What makes the Land Below unique in the *Torg* universe is that there is no central villain. The realm is an unknown, waiting for exploration. There is no active High Lord to oppose. However, that doesn't mean that Storm Knights will have an easy time of it. Petty warlords, dangerous creatures and wondrous sights await those who enter the fringe reality.

Once a group of Storm Knights have entered the Land Below, there are two main ways of pushing adventures along: have one of the players use one of the Land Below templates and funnel her information, or use the jungle lord Kord to send the Storm Knights on their way.

In this section are outlines of a few possible adventures in the Land Below. One of the ideas involves the characters' discovery of the realm, while two more detailed adventures are set entirely in the realm. Adventure hooks round out the chapter.

A World Discovered

This adventure allows the characters a means of entering the Land Below through the Nile Empire entrance. While this is certainly the most interesting entrance to Merretika, the characters will also immediately realize that Mobius has discovered the realm. If you want to keep this fact a secret, the adventure is inappropriate.

After spending an evening in a Cairo gin-joint celebrating a successful ad-

venture, the characters run across a man with some very interesting information. The man is just a gossip and doesn't remember who told him this latest bit of news, but he assures the Storm Knights that the news is accurate and recent.

The informant tells the characters that he has heard more news of the Pharaoh's operations in the Land of the Dead. A sizable convoy of trucks carted a full-load of supplies to some of the mining caves of the region. He admits that's not so strange, but what is peculiar is that these particular caves were closed a while ago because they were deemed unstable. Plus, this convoy included a large complement of weird scientists. Another peculiarity is that the shocktroopers were seen carrying around bows, spears, and arrows.

He will try to convince the Storm Knights to give him money for directions to the area. However, he will relay the directions to them even if they don't seem to be too interested. The gamemaster may want to include several encounters on the way to the Land of the Dead.

The convoy is being sent to the Land Below. These troops, skilled in melee combat, will replace the ones currently near the Ohibi village. Unless the characters wait a long time before investigating, the exchange will not have been made by the time they arrive. If the characters find the convoy, they will discover nearly a dozen shocktroopers guarding the tunnel entrance which leads directly to the pit.

As the characters watch, a small group of men approach the guards and prepare to enter. The characters are too far away to hear the conversation, but the visitors obviously do not know where to go. In plain sight of the characters, the guards use hand motions to give the visitors directions through the winding caverns. If the





characters can memorize the directions, or succeed at a *tracking* roll with a difficulty of 15, they can find the entrance to the Land Below in these caves (once they get past the guards).

The levitation machine is guarded at all times. They may be able to approach the Nile encampment unnoticed, but it will be very difficult to get through the compound and to the machine unnoticed.

The Ride Down

It is quite possible that a firefight will break out for control of the levitation machine (assuming the Storm Knights can figure out the gizmo's purpose). Once the Storm Knights have started the descent, it would be only fair for them to realize that there is probably someone at the bottom of the cavern who is trying to figure out why he can't radio to the levitation machine operator. If the Storm Knights dawdle, someone from the convoy may enter the cavern and take appro-

priate action (turn off the machine, for example).

Once at the bottom of the pit, the characters will have to find their way to Merretika. This might only be accomplished after a few encounters with the lizards that roam the caverns. They may even discover the Ohibi temple to Mehret.

Once they have found the exit, the characters will have to sneak or battle their way through the shocktrooper encampment in order to gain the opportunity to explore the remainder of the realm. The entire realm is then open to them. There is one minor problem — the Storm Knights may find it difficult to return to the surface of the Earth. While the levitation machine is an option, knowing trigger-happy characters, it's possible that they have eliminated this option.

After they have been in the domed world for some time, the characters are bound to encounter Kord. He doesn't understand exactly how the device works, but he stole the original,

hand-held levitation gizmo used by the first Nile Empire explorers in the Land Below. The gizmo is explained in *Chapter Three: Merretika* and gives the Storm Knights a chance to get back home.

The Spirit Shrine

Kord placed the gizmo in a location where he was sure it would be safe — the top of an ancient shrine buried in the jungle near the Ohibi village. The shrine was the burial ground of an ancient race of people now gone from the Land Below and is protected by their spirits. There are four spirits in the shrine. Feel free to also add any assorted tricks and traps to the shrine that you've seen in your favorite adventure films.

Ancient Spirits

Spirits of an ancient race that once inhabited this jungle area of Merretika, the beings will attack any who dare



enter their burial shrine. The spirits have a humanoid form, though their skin is charred black. Each one carries a thick, beautifully carved wooden rod that is wielded in combat.

The spirits will attempt surprise and frighten away any intruders. Failing this, they will resort to melee combat. Though not fierce opponents in combat, they become more dangerous once slain. When the telling blow is struck, the spirit's body goes up in flame and staggers about chaotically and ineffectively for a round. Meanwhile its spirit lashes out with a *possession* attack on the one who destroyed its body. Compare the spirit's *possession* total against the victim's *Mind*. The result points are the number of rounds that the spirit may control the actions of the character before losing its power and disappearing. The spirit will save a possibility point to increase this total.

While the spirit is in control of the character, it has the skills and abilities of its host body. In addition, the spirit will use the host's possibilities to increase attack values. The host may impede this use of his possibility energy by generating a *Spirit* total greater than the spirit's *possession* skill (neither party may use possibilities to increase this total). The only action a character may take once he has been possessed is to battle the spirit's *possession* with *Mind* totals, reducing one round of the spirit's control for each result point the player gets.

About 10 hours after the spirits are slain, they reform as charred corpses and renew their vigil over their burial chamber.

Ancient Spirits

DEXTERITY 9

Maneuver 11, melee combat 12, stealth 11

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 10

PERCEPTION 12

Trick (20)

MIND 13

Test (20)

CHARISMA 9

Charm (18), persuasion (21), taunt (20)

SPIRIT 11

Intimidation 18, possession 15, reality 14

Possibilities: 3

Equipment: ceremonial wooden rods (damage value STR +2/12)

The Bride of Ungrosh

An interesting encounter that can take place anywhere in the Land Below is one with the gigantic ape Ungrosh. Though best played if near Ungrosh's home in the Mountains of the Beast, the encounter can occur almost anywhere in Merretika.

To introduce Ungrosh, have the Knights travelling (either on a mission or for simple exploration) when they hear a distant booming noise. The terrain they are in will determine how soon they can see the giant ape approaching. Hopefully in the jungle at the time, the characters will not be able to make out the source of the noise until Ungrosh is almost on top of them.

The beast has finally found a mate, or at least someone he cares for. Sharta Ohtet, an explorer from the Nile Empire camp near the Ohibi village, has been scooped up by the ape and is being carried back to his home where the beast plans to care and provide for her. Always an attractive woman, Sharta has become an overwhelming beauty due to the Law of Savagery. Her normally close-cropped hair has sprouted into a glorious mane of knee-length raven hair. Any Storm Knight in possession of a Romance subplot card should play it now!

Sharta and Ungrosh will notice the characters and the ape will attempt to crush them as it continues toward its mountain home. Sharta, on the other hand, will plead with the characters to rescue her. However, if combat is initiated, it should be painfully obvious to the characters that they will have to follow the ape and hope to find some way to trick him.

The journey through the mountains should be a difficult one for the Storm Knights. The ape will cross a seemingly bottomless chasm that is spanned only by the trunk of an enormous tree. If the characters are close on his tail, Ungrosh will cross the chasm and set Sharta down so he can roll the log back and forth to spill the characters into the chasm.

Finally at his home, Ungrosh will

rest and protect his beloved Sharta. About the time the characters draw near the huge cave, a gigantic snake will approach and attack Ungrosh. In the confusion of the battle, a fight Ungrosh will handily win after several rounds, the characters should sweep in and rescue Sharta. While fleeing, the characters will have to reach into their bag of tricks in order to elude the angered and practically unharmed giant ape.

Ungrosh

Ungrosh is a gigantic black ape, twenty meters tall. When he is in sight, there is nothing that is more spectacular or more terrifying. His heart has been taken by Sharta and he wishes nothing more than to care for her and protect her. Obviously he is a lonely creature.

Ungrosh

DEXTERITY 13

Running 20, swimming 16, unarmed combat 17

STRENGTH 28

Climbing 31, lifting 32

TOUGHNESS 26

PERCEPTION 20

Find 23, tracking 22

MIND 7

Test (16)

CHARISMA 6

Taunt (12)

SPIRIT 13

Intimidation 19, reality 15

Note: Ungrosh's movement limit value is 14.

Possibilities: 9

Natural Tools: fur (armor value TOU +2/28), fists (damage value STR +1/29), bite (damage value STR +2/30), stomp (damage value STR +5/33)

The Giant Snake

The huge serpent that challenges Ungrosh should come as a surprise to the Storm Knights. Aside from the ape, they won't have encountered any giant creatures. It is about 35 meters long, with a body over 4 meters in diameter. It is large enough to swallow a Storm Knight whole (an *unarmed combat* attack, but the gamemaster states it is trying to swallow the character instead of do dam-





age; the snake succeeds if it gets a *superior* success). The snake is also quite venomous.

For added spice, the gamemaster may have the Storm Knights stumble across the snake's nest, which has six eggs about two meters in diameter. The nest will be bordering the plains and the Mountains of the Beast.

Giant Snake

DEXTERITY 11

Unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 22

Climbing 26

TOUGHNESS 23/19*

PERCEPTION 6

Find 12, tracking 9

MIND 5

Test (19)

CHARISMA 4

Charm (15), persuasion (16), taunt (14)

SPIRIT 10

Intimidation 15

Possibilities: none

* Second number is snake's interior *Toughness* if a character has to cut himself out.

Natural Tools: scales (armor value TOU +2/25), bite (damage value STR +4/26), venom (damage value 24 for three rounds after bite)

Sharta Ohtet

A very capable explorer, Sharta was one of a handful of people chosen by Pharaoh Mobius to explore the unknown reaches of the Land Below. Sharta jumped at the opportunity. Her duties were to explore eastern areas of Merretika. Unfortunately for her, Sharta ran afoul of Ungrosh.

Instead of killing and eating her as she expected, Ungrosh decided to keep Sharta. If Sharta can escape her current predicament, she will return to the Nile Empire base camp.

If Sharta is rescued by the characters, she will do her best to hide her true identity. She will pretend to be a princess of a race far to the south in Merretika and demand that they release her so she may travel back to her people. She will attempt to betray the Storm Knights if they make their true identity known — having Ungrosh feast on their bodies would be appropriate payment for rescuing her.

Sharta Ohtet

DEXTERITY 12

Dodge 14, fire combat 13, long jumping 14, running 14, swimming 13, unarmed combat 14

STRENGTH 10

Climbing 12, lifting 11

TOUGHNESS 11

PERCEPTION 12

Find 16, first aid 15, land vehicles 14, tracking 15

MIND 12

Survival 15, willpower 13.

CHARISMA 12/14

Charm 16, persuasion 15, taunt 17

SPIRIT 9

Possibilities: none

Inclination: Evil

Pyrian Treachery

Storm Knights crossing the River with no Bottom will certainly encounter representatives of Hadian Fel Ar's Pyrian nation. When they first pass near Seldar Hym, one of the border outposts of Tanta Kallar, a troop of soldiers will attempt to detain the strangers. The soldiers will first attempt to get the characters to peacefully accompany them back to the outpost (where they will then be imprisoned), but if a fight breaks out the soldiers will struggle until obviously outmatched. Then they will fall back to the outpost.

These stories of powerful strangers will impress Dorock Trim, the Grey Talon who commands the outpost. He will send a messenger, bearing a message of peace and inviting the Storm Knights to be his guest. He will apologize for the obvious misunderstanding. If the characters originally returned with the soldiers and were imprisoned, they will be set free by Dorock with apologies.

In either case, Dorock's change of heart comes because he realizes that there is something special about the characters. Dorock is already plotting with Amethia Cor Tal, the head priestess in Tanta Kallar, to overthrow the Pyrian leader, Hadian Fel Ar, and he sees a way to use the characters to his advantage.

When the characters meet with Dorock, he will tell them a story that

contains a germ of truth and hope to win their trust. He will explain that he was banished from the capital of Tanta Kallar by a tyrannical leader who is intent on using the resources of Pyria to wage war on all the other peaceful people of the world. He claims he was banished because he sued for peace, but Hadian would not listen to him. He was only spared execution because he had other powerful friends who made it politically unwise for Hadian to kill him.

The story is true except for the reason of banishment. Dorock is a devious fellow who was solely interested in gaining the seat of power for himself. His plots were uncovered by Hadian and the ruler assigned Dorock to Seldar Hym. He would wage war as quickly, though not as competently, as Hadian Fel Ar. All the soldiers of Seldar Hym are loyal to Dorock and will not discuss their leader's past with anyone aside from commenting that Dorock was unjustly driven from Tanta Kallar.

If the characters are convinced to help Dorock overthrow Hadian, then the Grey Talon will propose a plan. The characters pretend to be Dorock's prisoners so he has an excuse to return to Tanta Kallar — he must escort the very special prisoners to personally make sure there are no problems on the trip. He promises the characters that they will not be imprisoned long once in the city. A friend of his will make sure they are free so they may assist him even further.

Exploring Seldar Hym

The Storm Knights should be given ample opportunity to explore Seldar Hym. The Pyrian work ethic should come through loud and clear, and any Storm Knight entering the mines or smelting furnaces will likely be enraged by how the lives of the slaves are held in such low regard.

They will soon realize that the people have no understanding or appreciation of games or recreation. Their entire lives are devoted to work, whether it be completing the wall around the city, training for combat, or mining. They will see a repressed and unhappy people.



Travelling to Tanta Kallar

Dorock's plan is simple and effective. He will send a messenger to Amethia before they leave for Tanta Kallar.

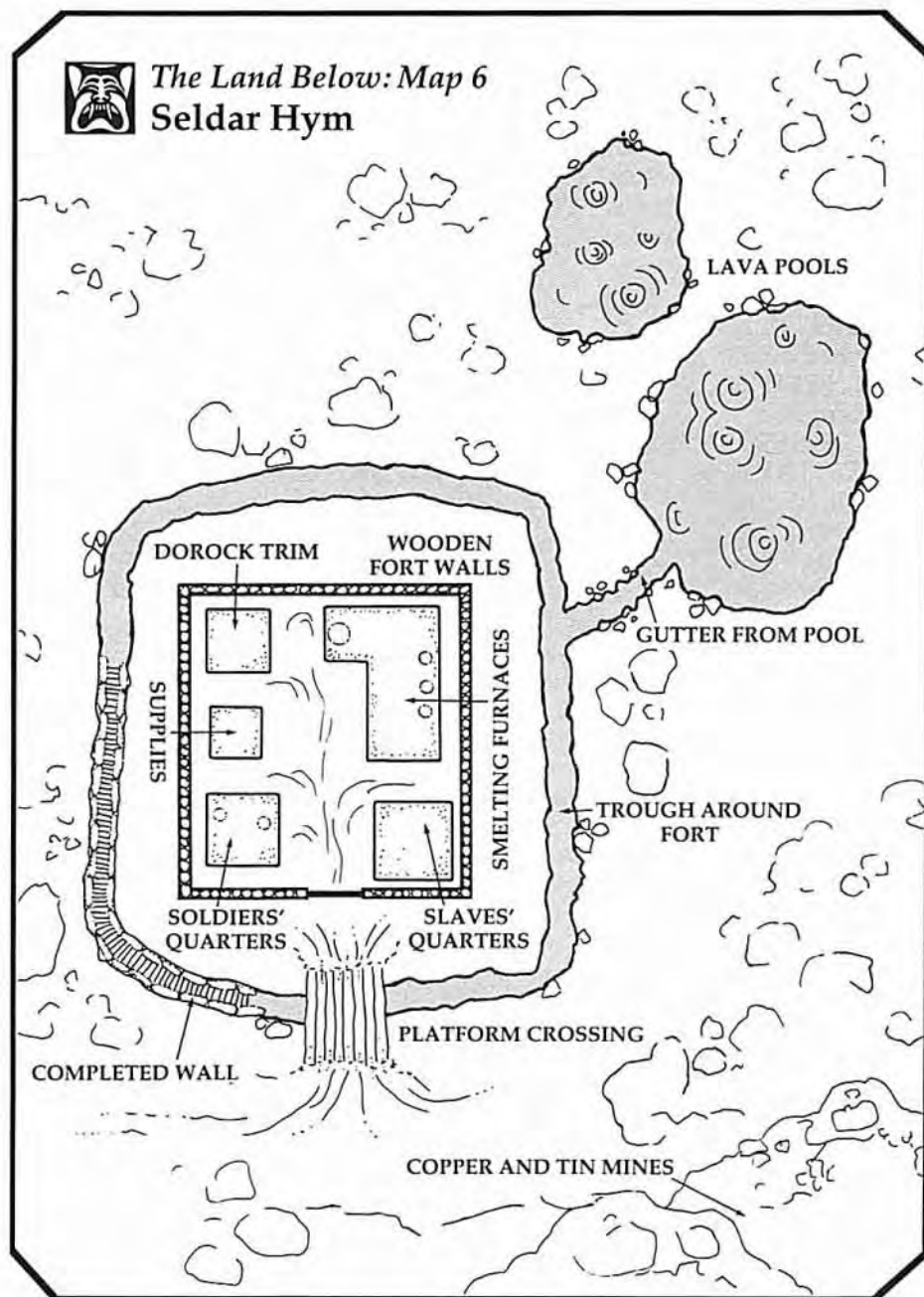
The journey to Tanta Kallar will be dangerous, with the party having to avoid sudden volcanic eruptions and large creatures. Several of the thralls accompanying Dorock and the Storm Knights will probably be killed.

Because of the messenger, Amethia will inform Hadian that the volcano god has taken on the aspect of Darok and must be appeased. Before arrangements for the sacrificial ceremony can be completed, Dorock and the characters arrive in the city. Amethia then immediately informs Hadian that the aspect of their god unexpectedly and mysteriously reverted to Karruk. She suggests that a ceremony still be held at the temple, but now it will be to welcome the guests, the Storm Knights, that Amethia says have caused their god great pleasure. Dorock will get word to the characters that their weapons will be returned to them during the ceremony and they must then help him overcome Hadian while he is away from his secure palace walls.

Though Hadian hates Dorock and fears that he may gain status for bringing such divine guests to Tanta Kallar, he cannot refuse such a ceremony and will even personally present the characters to Karruk during the ceremony in the floating temple. He does so in an attempt to reserve the glory of the occasion for himself and not Dorock. However, he will only be playing right into the hands of Amethia and her Grey Talon suitor.

After Hadian has spoken, Amethia will take control of the ceremony again and proclaim that Hadian spoke truly. Then, she announces that while the characters are indeed divine servants of Karruk, their mission was to return the rightful leader of the nation back to Pyria. Plus, she adds, Karruk has asked that his servants be returned to him — by dropping them into the molten interior of the volcano! And he asks that the false leader, Hadian Fel Ar, join them! Obviously, the Storm Knights should realize that their weapons are not about to be returned.

Upon hearing this, all of the priest-



esses of the temple will attempt to restrain Hadian and the characters so they may be dropped though the temple floor into the volcano. There are about three dozen thralls and a dozen priestesses at the ceremony.

Hadian and the characters will be forced to fight side by side. The priestesses will be firmly allied with Amethia at the beginning of the battle, while the thralls will seem to waver between Amethia and Hadian. However, as soon as one side begins to gain a clear

advantage, the thralls and priestesses will quickly switch their loyalties in order to be on the winning side.

Dorock Trim

Dorock Trim is an energetic and ambitious young man. He achieved the high position of Grey Talon through combat prowess, and has plans to advance to ruler of the Pyrian nation. Caught in his plotting about a year ago, Dorock was assigned to





Seldar Hym by Hadian Fel Ar. Hadian could not absolutely prove his suspicions of conspiracy, so he could not have Dorock executed.

After realizing the potential of the Storm Knights, Dorock concocted the plan detailed in this adventure as a final attempt to achieve the position he believes should be his.

Dorock Trim

DEXTERITY 13

Dodge 16, maneuver 17, melee weapons 16, missile weapons 15, unarmed combat 15

STRENGTH 12

Climbing 13, lifting 14

TOUGHNESS 12

PERCEPTION 12

First aid 14, language 13, trick 14

MIND 11

Test 17, willpower 13

CHARISMA 11

Persuasion 13, taunt 14

SPIRIT 9

Faith (Karruk) 12, intimidation 11, reality 11

Possibilities: 6

Tools: Leather armor (armor value TOU +2/15), bronze sword (damage value STR +4/16), spear (damage value STR +4/16)

Hadian Fel Ar

Hadian has come to suspect Amethia's treachery, but cannot prove anything. He suspects these mysterious visitors may be a trap, and will think nothing of executing them if they seem to cooperate with any devious plans.

He is controlled and calm, even in battle. His calculated manner will throw off many of the priestesses, while the thralls realize that it probably is in their best interest to stand beside Hadian.

Hadian Fel Ar

DEXTERITY 13

Dodge 17, maneuver 16, melee weapons 22, missile weapons 16, unarmed combat 15

STRENGTH 13

Climbing 14, lifting 15

TOUGHNESS 13

PERCEPTION 12

First aid 14, language 17, scholar 15, trick 15

MIND 13

Science 14, test 17, willpower 17

CHARISMA 14

Charm 17, persuasion 17, taunt 16

SPIRIT 12

Faith (Karruk) 14, intimidation 16, reality 13

Possibilities: 19

Equipment: Heavy bronze sword (damage value STR +5/17), spear (damage value STR +3/16), leather and bronze armor (TOU +3/16)

Pulp Powers: Super skill (melee weapons)

Amethia Cor Tal

Amethia is quite young to be the head of the order. She rose to power with Hadian Fel Ar and he made her the Great Priestess for her help in getting him the throne. She also wants the throne and thinks nothing of making potentially fatal arrangements if they offer power.



Amethia Cor Tal

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 13, melee weapons 12, prestidigitation 11, unarmed combat 11

STRENGTH 8

Climbing 9

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 13

First aid 14, language 14, scholar 14, trick 14

MIND 14

Medicine 15, test 16

CHARISMA 14

Charm 17, persuasion 17, taunt 16

SPIRIT 12

Focus(Karruk) 17, focus 16, intimidation 13, reality 13

Possibilities: 8

Equipment: Poisoned knife (damage value STR +2/10, with damage value 15 for three rounds after the first), bronze and cloth headdress, gold jewelry, bronze staff (damage value STR +4/12)

Fire Priest

DEXTERITY 8

Melee weapons 10, unarmed combat 9

STRENGTH 8

Climbing 9

TOUGHNESS 8

PERCEPTION 10

First aid 12,

MIND 10

Medicine 11

CHARISMA 10

Taunt 11

SPIRIT 11

Faith(Karruk) 14, focus 13, intimidation 12

Possibility Potential: some (45)

Equipment: Knife (damage value STR +2/10), robes, bronze and cloth headdress

Pyrian Thrall

DEXTERITY 10

Dodge 11, melee weapons 12, missile weapons 11, unarmed combat 11

STRENGTH 9

Climbing 10

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 9

MIND 8

CHARISMA 9

Taunt 11

SPIRIT 10

Faith(Karruk) 11, intimidation (12)

Possibility Potential: some (45)

Equipment: Bronze sword (damage value STR +4/13), spear (damage value STR +3/12), leather and bronze armor (TOU +3/12)

If Hadian survives and the Storm Knights were helpful, he will heap praise upon them, as he sacrifices Amethia and Dorock to Karruk. The Storm Knights will become instant celebrities, although they will probably run afoul of Hadian and his dictatorial policies very quickly. It is quite likely that the Storm Knights will have to flee Tanta Kallar, with Pyrian troops in hot pursuit.

If Amethia wins, the Storm Knights face certain sacrifice, unless they can offer the Pyrians information and knowledge of great value, and even that will only delay death. They may need to wait several "days" before escaping, and then will be tracked throughout Pyrian lands.

In the wilds, the Storm Knights may find help from one of the independent tribes of Pyrians. They are hardy, and strong-willed, but also friendly and loyal, and may save the Storm Knights from death.

Additional Adventure Hooks

There are many other possible adventures in the Land Below. The three ideas presented above should get you started or at least provide a complete outline of possible adventures.

However, you may decide that you would rather have the characters in your group enter the Land Below through the Living Land, or may you may be at a loss initially where to proceed from here. Therefore, we have presented in very short form an idea for introducing the characters to this realm through the Michigan entrance and five other ideas for adventures. These ideas should be expanded and inserted into your own ongoing campaign.

Downed Pilot

The characters first stumble upon the entrance in the Living Land after entering that realm in search of a downed airplane that is carrying especially important reconnaissance information. The pilot was a Stormer who became disconnected while operating the airplane. The pilot's crash landing sent him plummeting directly into a gaping hole in the ground in Michigan.

Upon entering the Living Land, resistance communities will tell the Storm Knights about hearing a plane die out. As they further explore the jungle, they will see several downed trees, plenty of debris from the plane, and the trail ends at the huge waterfall and chasm. If the characters descend into the Land Below they will probably have to use the levitation gizmo in the first adventure to return home.

The characters will find the plane, battered almost beyond recognition, near the Lake of the Hunter. A steady stream of debris should lead them there. The pilot is dead (killed in the crash), and any gear of worth has been taken from the plane.

The Leopard Men have taken the gear, as well as the reconnaissance information the Storm Knights were sent to retrieve. Getting said items back from this race of warriors will be no easy task.

Egg Fertilizer

After exploring this strange new land for some time, the characters are likely to encounter the jungle lord Kord. His assistance will be of immense help to the characters as they try to figure out who and what populates the realm. However, after traveling with the characters for some time and demonstrating his friendship and courage more than once, Kord is snatched up by a Darooni raiding party and taken to the Misty Gorge, where the jungle lord will become food for a brood of insects.

With only Kord's animal companion, Skakart, to follow, the characters



must attempt to save the life of their new friend. The dangers in this adventure include scaling the walls of the Misty Gorge, as well as finding an inconspicuous way to save Kord.

Enslaving the Little Folk

Most of the inhabitants of Merretika are going to be violently opposed to the characters. Therefore, the small Keefee will come as a pleasant surprise. A Haroo may well become an excellent source of information for the characters.

Once the characters become familiar with these courteous folk, you should run an adventure that requires the characters to help them. As the Storm Knights talk to the assembled Keefee in the shade of Dalberry tree, a wandering Haroo comes into sight. He brings news of a Keefee tribe far to the south, that somehow used underground tunnels to enter the Pyrian lands. They were captured, and are now being used as slave labor and as gladiators for the warped amusement of the Pyrians. The Storm Knights must rescue the peaceful little people.

Caverns of Infinity

This adventure is best if the Storm Knights travelled directly to Merretika from an easy entrance, such as the Nile Empire pit or the chasm in the Living Land.

After the characters have become completely involved in the politics and events of Merretika, it is time for them to discover the true extent of the caverns. They should “catch” a dimthread back to Earth, where they will encounter a large group of the mole men.

These humanoids are facing grave danger from collapsing caverns and hideous monsters. The characters may be able to convince them that there is more living space available in the caverns of the Land Below. The rest of the adventure would document the dangerous migration of an entire people, with the Storm Knights supervising (of course).

The Trial of the Leopard Men

This adventure hook puts the Storm Knights into conflict with the Leopard Men, but also gives them a chance to prove their valor to the primitive people.

The adventure begins when the Storm Knights cross over the hunting totems. A Leopard Man hunting party will hunt down the characters, setting an ambush for them. As the battle begins, the Leopard Men will be impressed by the fighting ability of the Storm Knights. Since only a few of them triggered the hunting totem, those that passed the initial test will be allowed to go free, while the others will be killed by the Leopard Men.

If the Storm Knights protest, Ressi Yentok, the tribal chief, will allow the Storm Knights to live if they complete a trial of honor.

They must travel to Leopard Lake and find an ancient tablet buried in the muck of the north shore (it is hidden in the shadow of a large rock). The Leopard Men claim that the tablet has brought great evil to them, but they are forbidden to disturb the spirit guarding the shore. If they return with the tablet, the Leopard Men will be allowed to destroy the tablet, and will remove all curses from the Storm Knights.

The trip to the river bank will include encounters with poisonous snakes, large crocodiles and herds of animals bathing and grazing in the area. After a long search, they will be able to find the tablet. However, once they unearth it, the lake seems to be struck by a huge storm, the likes of which Merretika has never seen. Waves several meters high begin to pound the shores, as all of the creatures flee in mortal terror. Savage winds and rolling storm clouds sweep over the lake, and follow the Storm Knights to the Leopard Man village. The storm will end only after the Leopard Men have destroyed the tablet in a religious ceremony, smashing it into many pieces and throwing it into the nearby river.

The Magi

The Storm Knights are travelling in the Pyrian lands when they see a group of thralls and a talon bearing down on a human dressed in long robes of silver and red. The woman seems weak, and her clothing is tattered and dirty.

The thralls make their charge, only to be encased in a block of clear stone. The pain is clearly etched on their faces, but a new group of Pyrian soldiers has circled behind her and clubs her into unconsciousness. The talon leers over her form before the troops bind her and set off for a nearby encampment.

The Storm Knights would be wise to observe the journey from a distance, since a heroic rescue would probably mean death because the Storm Knights are outnumbered.

The encampment is on the side of an active volcano, and periodically huge plumes of black smoke rise into the air. The encampment is strategically located between two large lava flows.

If the Storm Knights can sneak into the encampment, they will see the talon questioning the woman concerning her magics and her home. She is uncooperative no matter what the Pyrians do, and the talon orders her to be cast into the volcano. Now is the time for the Storm Knights to act, and if the rescue is successful, the young woman, called Inill Tra Setch, will be grateful.

She will then try to escape from the Storm Knights. If they follow her, she will lead them to her renegade band of mages, who have a well disguised base very near Merretika's wall. The only entrance is through a subterranean tunnel, and the base appears to be a small hill. The renegade mages are of Pyrian descent, but because of the cultural stigma against magic, they have fled and are learning the art on their own. They desperately wish to keep their existence a secret, so they will probably will take strong action against anyone who knows the location of their base.





Keefee Haroo

Player Name: _____

Character Name		Home Land Below		Possibilities	
Age	Wound Level	Shock Damage		Magic	Social
Height	Wound	K O		12	8
Weight	Hvy Wound			Spiritual	Tech
	Mortal			17	10
	Dead			10	

Skill	Add	Attribute	Value
Reality		SPI	
Dodge		DEX	
Long Jumping		DEX	
Maneuver		DEX	
Melee Weapons		DEX	
Missile Weapons		DEX	
Prestidigitation		DEX	
Running		DEX	
Stealth		DEX	
Unarmed Combat		DEX	
Climbing		STR	
Find		PER	
First Aid		PER	
Language		PER	
Scholar		PER	
Trick	3	PER	16
Artist		MIN	
Survival		MIN	
Charm		CHA	
Persuasion		CHA	
Taunt		CHA	
Faith (Raya)		SPI	
Focus		SPI	

Equipment	Value	Axiom Level	S	Range M	L
Armor					
Weapons					
Pole Axe +1	5				

Bonus Chart																					
Die	3	5	7	9	11	13	21	26	31	36	41	46									
Roll	1	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	+5
Bonus #	-12	-10	-8	-5	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	+1



Keefee Haroo

Player Name: _____

Cosm: Land Below

Background: You were born in your parent's burrow home beneath the tribal Dalberry tree. Your young life was care free. You especially enjoyed hiking in the tall grasses to collect bird eggs after tricking the mother away from the nest. All your life you sought new experiences: to know what was in the mountains or to meet some of the "big ones". You listened with wonder to the traveling Haroo as they wove their tales of the giants in the lands beyond. You diligently learned and worked the care-crafts of the Dalberry tree, but such was not for you.

Finally, you earned your adult name and with the farewells of family and friends, you took to the grasslands to become a Haroo for your people. The journeys are not easy, but the pleasure of entertaining and learning make the going easier. Now giants have come to the world who claim to be from afar, bringing with them their own tales of splendid things and the tricks they play on their "High Lords." To join them and tell their tales or to trick these lords who are higher than the giants would be epic.

Personality: Adventurous, witty and sly, you have survived on your journeys through trickery and it has become a way of life. You build your stories around your own good-na-

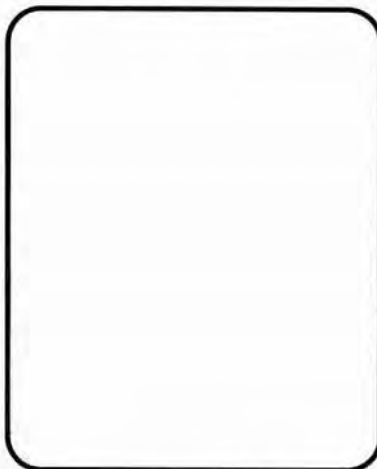


tured tricks and get the satisfaction of entertaining others with your exaggerations.

Equipment: Keefee pole-axe (damage value STR+1/5), simple fiber clothing, well worn boots, reed flute

Quote: "Eat me? Good creature, I have just eaten a Kith root, myself. Most poisonous to you. I'd hate to cause you indigestion."

Skill Notes: Your tag skill is *trick*.



Attributes	Approved Actions
Dexterity 11	Maneuver
Strength 4	
Toughness 6	
Perception 13	Trick
Mind 10	Test
Charisma 11	Taunt
Spirit 11	Intimidate
Movement Rates	Limit Values
Running	
Swimming	
Jumping	
Climbing	
Lifting	



Leopard Man Warrior

Player Name: _____

Cosm: Land Below

Background: Since you were young, your life has followed the way of blood, and you accepted the souls and the spirits as the brothers of your world. You learned the ways of the hunt and of the soul from your father and the thanking of the spirits from your mother. You grew in stature and prowess until your tribe cast you out to become a man or die.

You followed the track of the great leopard for days and weeks. The leopard showed you the length and breadth of your world before offering up his soul to your cunning and his power to your body. There was no mistaking the great leopard's message. You were born to wander and the world is your hunting ground.

Personality: You embody the Land Below. Like an animal, you are beautiful and noble at rest; savage and ferocious in strife. You are straightforward and honest. Your pride allows no malicious act, but you show no mercy to those who are petty. You are loyal to a few, and wary of all others.

Equipment: leopard skin clothing, leopard claws (damage value STR+3/16, +2 to climbing)

Quote: "I will kill you, but I will not praise your soul or take power from your heart. Your soul is empty and your heart is wicked."



Skill Notes: Your tag skill is *tracking*. You have only 10 skill adds, but you also have the pulp power of *super attribute* (Nile sourcebook) which gives you +3 to your *Strength* (up to 16) at an adventure cost of 3. You may purchase the pulp powers *adrenaline* (see this sourcebook) or *mega-scent* (see *The Nile Empire* sourcebook) for three beginning possibilities and at an adventure cost of 3.



Leopard Man Warrior

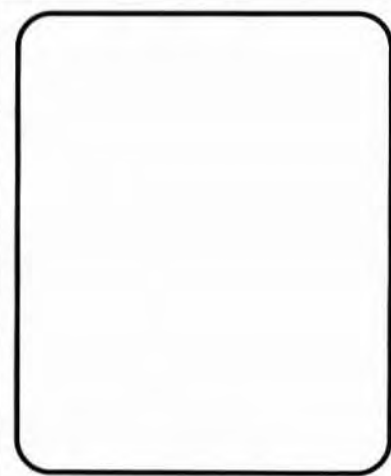
Player Name: _____

Character Name		Home Land Below Cosm			Possibilities 10	
Age	Wound Level	Shock Damage		Magic	Social	
Height	Wound Hvy Wound Mortal Dead	K	O	12	8	
Weight				Spiritual 17	Tech 10	

Skill	Add	Attribute	Value
Reality		SPI	
Acrobatics		DEX	
Dodge		DEX	
Long Jumping		DEX	
Maneuver		DEX	
Melee Weapons		DEX	
Missile Weapons		DEX	
Running		DEX	
Stealth		DEX	
Swimming		DEX	
Unarmed Combat		DEX	
Climbing		STR	
Lifting		STR	
First Aid		PER	
Tracking	3	PER	11
Trick		PER	
Survival		MIN	
Test of Will		MIN	
Willpower		MIN	
Faith		SPI	
Focus		SPI	
Intimidation		SPI	

Equipment	Axiom		Range		
	Value	Level	S	M	L
Armor					
Weapons					
Claws +2	16				

Bonus Chart	
Die	3 5 7 9 11 13 21 26 31 36 41 46
Roll	1 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 +5
Bonus #	-12 -10 -8 -5 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 +1



Attributes	Approved Actions
Dexterity 9	Maneuver
Strength 13	
Toughness 10	
Perception 8	Trick
Mind 8	Test
Charisma 8	Taunt
Spirit 10	Intimidate
Movement Rates	Limit Values
Running	
Swimming	
Jumping	
Climbing	
Lifting	

THE LAND BELOW™

By Stewart and Stephan Wieck



It started only days after the invasion. Deep in the planet's interior, hidden from prying eyes, the caverns were created.

The caverns went down for miles, reaching to every corner of the Earth. Populated by creatures both kind and cruel, the tunnels grabbed Storm Knights™, pulling them into an underground realm of death.

The wonders of the underground world seemed endless: new civilizations, incredible treasures, and a dangerous passageway to a fringe reality. Only the bravest will survive the perils of the Land Below.

"However, all of the surprises of our subterranean journeys were nothing compared to the realization that deep in the core of the Earth was a realm where magic worked freely..."

—Belladereth Dularent



Roleplaying the Possibility Wars™



Fantasy/Games

This supplement is designed as a companion to *Torg: Roleplaying the Possibility Wars*. It introduces players and gamemasters to the mysterious tunnel network running throughout the Earth, and provides complete information for a new fringe reality connected to the Earth.

For ages 12 and up.



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