

SC 2

13TH PLANET GAMES PRESENTS



FORTRESS OBLIVION

Forced to flee a howling sandstorm, heroes take shelter in an abandoned desert fortress. But they soon discover they're not alone. A protean horror stalks the empty stone halls, and unless the storm's refugees can unite in common cause, this ancient evil will pick them off one by one.

Fortress Oblivion is a brief Sword and Sorcery adventure for use with the Barbarians of Lemuria and Everywhen systems. Three pre-generated characters are included.

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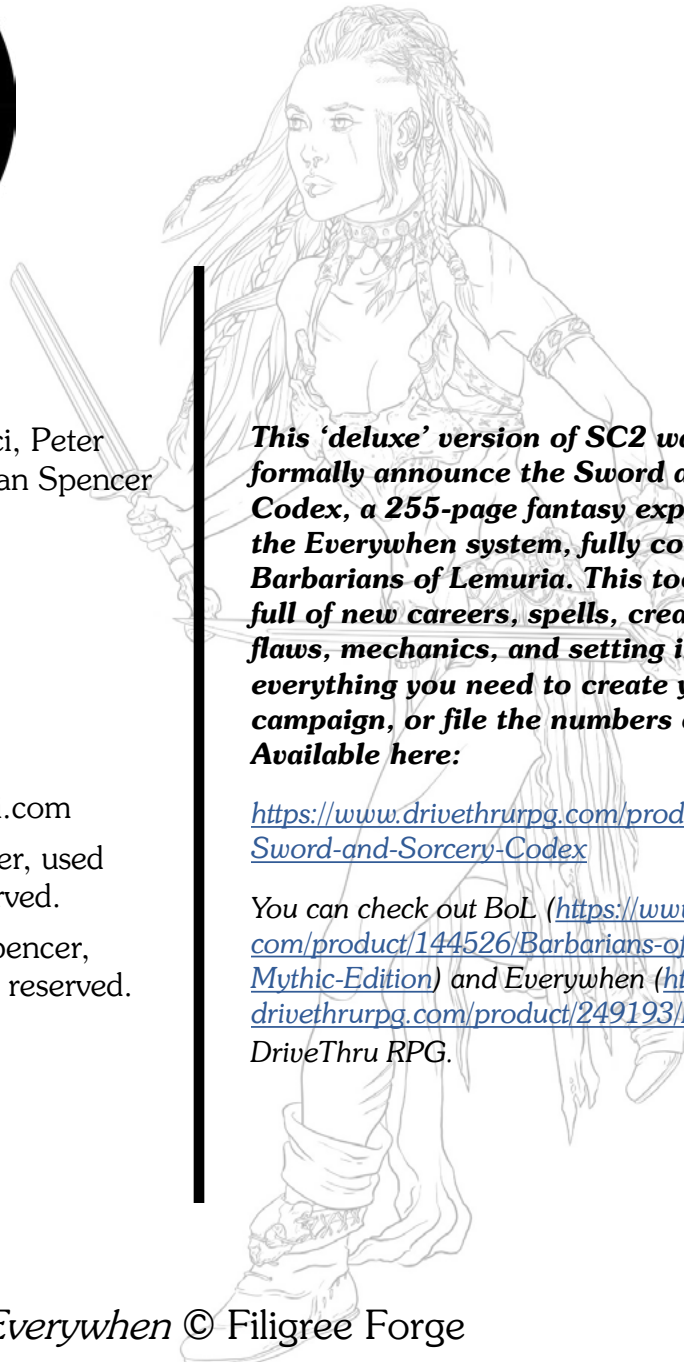
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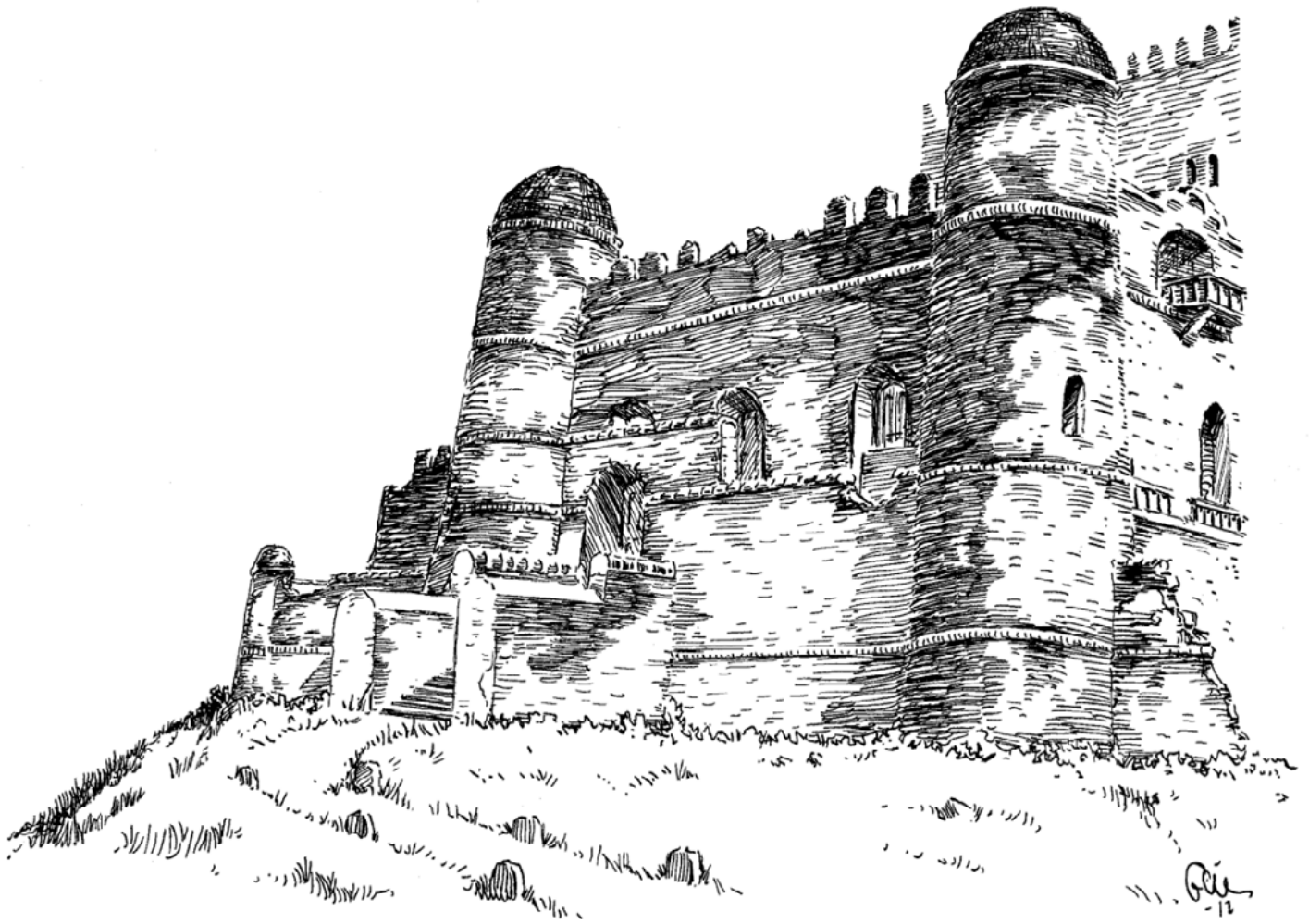


This 'deluxe' version of SC2 was released to formally announce the Sword and Sorcery Codex, a 255-page fantasy expansion for the Everywhen system, fully compatible with Barbarians of Lemuria. This toolkit is chock full of new careers, spells, creatures, boons, flaws, mechanics, and setting information—everything you need to create your own S&S campaign, or file the numbers off a classic! Available here:

<https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/445007/Sword-and-Sorcery-Codex>

You can check out BoL (<https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/144526/Barbarians-of-Lemuria-Mythic-Edition>) and Everywhen (<https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/249193/Everywhen>) at DriveThru RPG.

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OVERVIEW

The PCs, either captives or associates of the notorious desert raider **Yafar Al-Wazim**, are forced to seek shelter from a sandstorm. Unfortunately, the only refuge happens to be an abandoned fortress with a sinister reputation. PCs quickly discover the merchant **Bakr Faiz** and his mysterious companion, **Yeva** are also holed up inside. Bakr's bodyguard has just gone missing. As accusations fly, the *real* killer closes in. Will PCs uncover the mystery behind this protean horror before it consumes them all? Or will the fortress claim a new batch of victims?

(This 'slasher movie' adventure features the time-honored S&S trope of heroes starting in less-than-ideal circumstances. The GM can do away with Yafar and his men if the opening feels too contrived—the main point is to have some warm bodies for the antagonist to target before moving on to PCs. A timeline for events is included, but this will likely prove unnecessary as players go full sandbox on the scenario!)



FEAR AND RESOLVE

This adventure makes use of the resolve mechanic from *Everywhen*, which may be unfamiliar to veteran *Barbarians of Lemuria* players. Resolve is similar to 'fear' or 'sanity' systems used in horror RPGs, and serves mainly to heighten tension. **Appendix A** on pg. 8 explains how Resolve Checks work. If the GM doesn't want to bother with tracking resolve loss, other options for simulating fear are presented.

The resolve rules are completely optional. Removing them won't derail this adventure.





START

Depending on their moral flexibility (and the GMs general ruthlessness) there are two potential ways for PCs to begin the adventure; as captives of the notorious bandit Yafar Al-Wazim, or his new, hard-bitten recruits.

If captives

Yafar's band of raiders have had a hard week in the eastern Persian desert, with little to show for their efforts. The bandit leader captured PCs at dear cost: most of his men were killed in the process. Only the hope of ransom or a good price at the slave market is keeping the heroes alive. They have their hands bound with strong silken cords; their weapons and other equipment are kept bundled atop one of Yafar's spare horses. PCs can spend a Hero Point to have a dagger or similar small item concealed on their person, but being bound, they won't have ready access to it.

If associates

Desperate for employment, the heroes have thrown in with the bandit chieftain. Because his numbers were depleted after a failed raid, Yafar has been willing to take newcomers. The PCs have yet to prove themselves, however, and he does not trust them.

Regardless of either approach, there is only Yafar, his right hand **Salil**, and 1 raider (treat as Rabble) per PC left in the little band.

Just as the sun is setting for what promises to be a cold desert night, a massive veil of grayish-brown dust appears on the horizon, heralded by ferocious winds. A haboob! Anyone familiar with the desert knows exposure to such storms can be fatal—it will likely kill or blind the mounts. As luck would have it, the silhouette of a ruined border fortress juts from a nearby hill, promising shelter. However, Salil recognizes the structure and warns that demons roam within its walls.

"Better to pit our luck against rumors of djinn," Yafar says, "than choke on the certainties of wind and sand. We make for the fortress at once!"

YAFAR AL-WAZIM (RIVAL)

Attributes	Combat Abilities	
Strength 1	Initiative 1	Lifeblood 11
Agility 0	Melee 2	Resolve 11
Mind 1	Missile 0	Rival Points 5
Appeal 2	Defense 1	Protection d6-3



**Boons/Flaws**

Inspire
Desert Born
Skeptic

Careers

Nomad 1
 Rogue 2
 Merchant 1
 Noble 0

Yafar obtained the status of chieftain only after years of scheming. Short, bandy-legged, and balding, what he lacks in physical appearance he makes up for with sheer gravitas. Unlike most nomads, he scoffs at the supernatural, believing only in what he can see and touch.

SALIL (TOUGH)**Attributes**

Strength 2
 Agility 0
 Mind 0
 Appeal 0
 Lifeblood 7

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee
 Damage d6+2
 Defense 0
 Protection d6-3
 Resolve 5

Wiry, with steel-gray hair and a network of scars, Salil has advanced through blind obedience to Yafar, though his avariciousness gets him into trouble. Treat as a rank 1 nomad, rank 1 rogue. He always keeps a sharp scimitar close at hand.

Salil has the *Fearsome Looks* boon and *Greed* flaw.

DESERT RAIDER (RABBLE)**Attributes**

Strength 0
 Agility 0
 Mind 0
 Appeal 0
 Lifeblood 3

Combat Abilities

Attack +0 melee
 Damage d3
 Defense 0
 Protection 0
 Resolve 3

These raiders are all that's left of Yafar's men after several recent blunders, and their morale is fading. All are classed as Rabble. They carry scimitars and bows.

HABOOB!

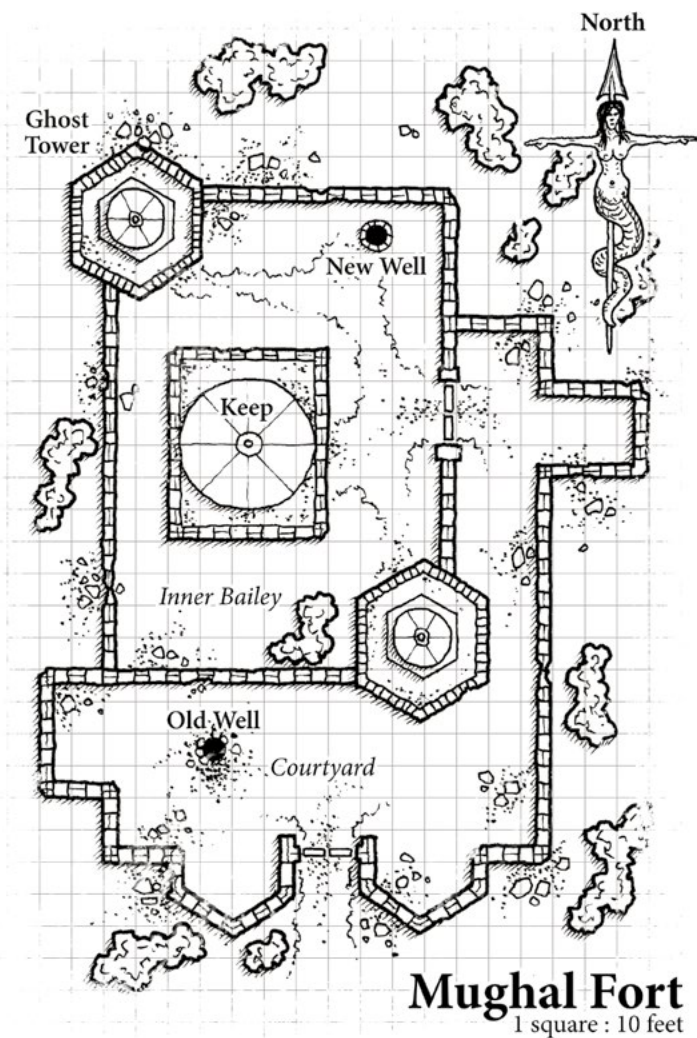
In the spirit of contrariness, non-captive PCs may ignore Yafar's orders and erect shelters on the spot, or take precautions like tying a scarf around their mouths and braving the storm. Yafar curses them for fools as he rides away.

Once engulfed, heroes must make a Moderate (0) Strength check every 5 minutes or suffer d3 choking damage. Breathing through loose fabric or canvas grants +1 to the roll. Additionally, anyone who doesn't shut their eyes tight has to make a Hard (-1) Strength roll to avoid temporary (d6 rounds) blindness from the scouring sand.

Hastily erected tents, lean-to's, etc., will be buried under sand in 1-2 hours, eventually requiring Strength rolls to avoid choking as above. Any exposed mounts are killed.

If feeling charitable, the GM may allow blinded, half-suffocated heroes to eventually stumble into the fortress for a Hero Point apiece.





THE COURTYARD

A hard ride reaches the fortress gates just as the haboob comes crashing down. One gate hangs by a single bronze hinge (there is no portcullis), allowing access to the courtyard. Once inside, the fortress's steep stone walls provide good protection from the elements.

Just past the gate is a 60' well gone bone-dry. Dilapidated stables line the courtyard's western wall. To everyone's surprise, these are occupied by 5 camels loaded with baggage! The saddlebags are stuffed with valuable trade goods: casks of oil scented with sandalwood, and saffron and turmeric from India.

Yafar's loot-crazed men immediately argue over who gets what. Scimitars are drawn, despite Yafar's shouted protests. Fighting is about to erupt when a terrified cry echoes from deeper within the fortress.

THE INNER BAILEY

PCs following the sound pass through a second (open) gate into the smaller courtyard beyond. A naked scimitar lies on the flagstones, dust-free as if just dropped. The bailey hems a two-storied keep in excellent condition.

A well-dressed man stands in the entrance to the keep, his face ashen. This is Bakr Faiz, a traveling merchant; the sword belonged to his bodyguard, whom he has just discovered missing. It was Bakr's cry that alerted PCs. Crouching behind him is a dark-haired woman named Yeva. Though her features are obscured by a veil, she seems just as horrified as the merchant.

Bakr is surprised to see fellow refugees from the storm. After he's had a chance to calm down, he explains his small camel-train sought shelter here when he spotted the haboob. Maybe ten minutes earlier, he sent his bodyguard out to check on the camels, and now all that remains is his scimitar.

Suspicious by nature, Bakr doesn't think his guard's disappearance and the sudden arrival of raiders is a coincidence. However, he makes no accusations, being aware of his precarious situation. Instead, he urges everyone inside the protection of the keep, which has a stout iron door that can be barred. Yeva remains quiet, giving the PCs inscrutable glances.

A second well can be found in the northern portion of the bailey. Glancing over the side reveals water some 40' down. The bodyguard's killer, a protean horror, hides just beneath the surface, digesting its victim's remains. If PCs opt to climb down the well at this point, they find the **Ancient Shrine** (see pg. 6), though the horror won't reveal itself this early in the adventure.

BAKR FAIZ (TOUGH)

Attributes	Combat Abilities
Strength 0	Attack +0 melee
Agility 0	Damage by weapon
Mind 1	Defense 1
Appeal 1	Protection 0
Lifblood 5	Resolve 6

Bakr cuts a trim figure in his tailored robes and bejeweled turban. He does a brisk business in the transport of high-value cargo, like spices. A born haggler, he has the *Detect Deception* boon from long experience reading the faces of his clients. He and his bodyguard, Massoud, came across Yeva wandering the desert trade routes alone, and convinced her to accompany them.

YEVA (TOUGH)

Attributes	Combat Abilities
Strength 0	Attack +0 melee
Agility 1	Damage by weapon
Mind 1	Defense 2
Appeal 0	Protection 0
Lifeblood 5	Resolve 6

Yeva is a Punjabi who grew up on the mean streets of Chandigarh, where she was eventually taken on as an apprentice by a hedge-magician and performer. After learning a smattering of magic, she decided to seek her fortunes elsewhere, and eventually fell in with Bakr.

Yeva is a rank 1 rogue, rank 1 witch. She wears a veil partially out of modesty, but also to conceal a crescent-shaped birthmark on her right cheek, which many (ironically) interpret as a *Witchmark*. She has 6 AP.



A LONG NIGHT

What happens next depends on the PCs actions. *Fortress Oblivion* is intended to play out like a slasher movie, with the protean horror picking off victims as they find various reasons to leave the safety of the keep—which isn't really safe, anyways (see **Final Confrontation**, pg. 7). The haboob lasts all night and into early morning, providing plenty of time for everyone to get themselves killed.

There are two additional keyed areas: the **Ghost Tower** and the **Ancient Shrine**, which PCs may or may not explore, depending on the course of events. Towards dawn, the **Final Confrontation** with the horror should occur, earlier if PCs are intent on staying put inside the keep.

The following timeline is a *suggestion* for how events can proceed, rather than a railroad. If PCs are taking a passive approach, this can be used to move things along. However, any or all of the events may be obviated by the PCs actions.

- Bakr offers everyone drinks from his stash of date wine. The raiders proceed to get roaring drunk, with the exception of Yafar.
- If the PCs are captives, Yeva takes advantage of the situation to surreptitiously cut their bonds. Rather than being altruistic, she's hoping the heroes will protect her if the situation gets ugly—which it soon does.
- A wine-emboldened Salil accuses Yeva of giving him the evil eye. He snatches off her veil, revealing an oddly-shaped birthmark. This is proof enough for the raiders they have a witch in their midst. A rough search of her clothing produces another piece of damning evidence: a small poppet, topped with human hair. Bakr, genuinely shocked, exclaims the poppet resembles his missing bodyguard, Massoud.
- Yeva really is a witch. However, she made the poppet to ensorcell Massoud as a lover, not kill him. Unfortunately, such fine distinctions are lost on the rest of the group.
- Desperate, Yeva tries to throw off suspicion by claiming she saw a spectral figure in the northernmost tower, just before the bodyguard left to check the camels. Obviously, this ghost is the real killer!



- An avowed skeptic, Yafar wants to investigate the tower. None of his men are feeling up to it. If the PCs are Yafar's associates, he asks one or more of them to accompany him. Otherwise, he leaves by himself and doesn't return. Yafar may be found wandering the courtyard sometime later, insensate and gibbering (see **Ghost Tower** for details).
- Salil tries to sneak out of the keep so he can steal Bakr's merchandise off the camels. One or more of the raiders accompany him. They are all killed by the horror, to the accompaniment of blood-curdling screams.

Basically, any time an NPC leaves the relative safety of the keep, the horror gets them. If PCs opt to investigate the Ghost Tower, then some, or all, of the group left behind may be missing on their return.

GHOST TOWER

This structure is the tallest tower in the fortress. On entering, PCs are struck by feelings of dread; the hairs on their nape prickle, and shadows here seem oppressively dark. A staircase leads to the upper battlements, enclosed by a minaret with arrow slits. The storm roars just outside.

Any light sources brought by PCs suddenly flicker and dim. A white-limned figure appears; a tall man with a commanding mien, wearing a breastplate and turban-wrapped helmet. Oblivious to the heroes he paces the tower, pausing every now and then to peer out an arrow slit. Then, as his eyes widen with shock, his hands fly to his throat. He's being strangled—though by *what* remains unclear. His eyes bulge from their sockets, his face pales, and in his last moments he seems to become aware of the PCs. "*The well . . .*," he manages to whisper, before vanishing.

The ghost is the former garrison commander, reenacting his death at the hands (pseudopods) of the protean horror. Witnessing this spectacle requires a Hard (-1) Resolve Check. Yafar, a staunch skeptic, goes temporarily insane. The desert raider gibbers and draws his sword at shadows for the remainder of the night. If left alone, he wanders off . . . and we all know what happens to people who wander off in haunted ruins, don't we?

ANCIENT SHRINE

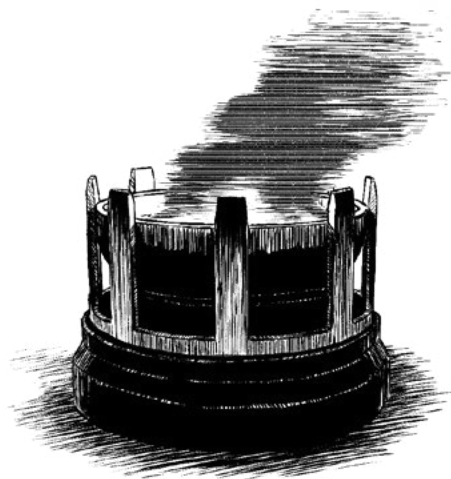
Prompted by the ghost, PCs may decide to investigate the wells in the main courtyard and inner bailey. The latter looks newer, suggesting it was dug sometime after the first. Heroes can climb down by bracing against the uneven rock walls. The temperature drops sharply as they descend. At 40' the narrow shaft opens off to one side, just before it terminates in a pool of fresh water.

The narrow side tunnel leads to a small chamber walled in mirror-bright black rock. Cave-ins have sealed this off from the larger ruin complex (unless GMs want to expand the adventure). The room is a vastly ancient shrine, buried by millennia before the fortress's first stones were laid. Incomprehensible glyphs have been carved into nearly every surface, and a sigil-inscribed brass bowl rests atop a tripod in the center.

This bowl was the original resting place of the protean horror. Decades earlier, the fortress garrison unwittingly released it while digging the new well. After its subterranean prison had been breached, the cunning monster began killing soldiers one by one, until the survivors all fled. Luckily for PCs, the horror is elsewhere when they discover the chamber.

If the GM desires, the creature uses this place as a dump, depositing the undigestible equipment of its victims. Though some items have gone to rust, others are relatively new, and coinage has been scattered throughout.

The bowl can be used to magically entrap the horror instead of slaying it (see **Final Confrontation**).



FINAL CONFRONTATION

At some point, the protean horror decides to reveal itself for a climactic final battle. Ideally this should be after most of the NPCs have been killed, with the possible exception of Yeva. If PCs have holed up in the keep thinking it will protect them, the sentient ooze takes great joy proving them wrong. It seeps under the iron door or pours itself through an arrow-slit, before rearing up in a tall, pseudopod-flailing mass! Witnessing the creature's first appearance requires a Tough (-2) Resolve Check.

The heroes have a real fight on their hands. Only fire or magic can do lasting damage to the horror. The sandalwood oil from Bakr's camels is probably the best weapon; it burns easily, causing from d6 to 2d6 damage the first round, depending on how much is used. The flaming oil does roughly half that on the second round, before burning out. A swung torch or other firebrand inflicts d6L damage, though Strength bonuses don't count.

Magic affects the horror normally. A sorcerer or witch PC who suggests using the brass bowl from the shrine spontaneously recalls a spell of abjuration that could entrap it inside. The spell is First Magnitude with Hard (-1) Difficulty and Special Item (the bowl) as a casting requirement. Optionally Yeva can try to cast it, but only if no magic-using PCs are available, and the fight isn't going well.

PROTEAN HORROR (ENTITY)

Attributes	Combat Abilities
Strength 4	Attack +4 melee (x2)
Agility 2	Damage d6H or engulf
Mind 1	Defense 2
Appeal —	Protection d6+1, 0 vs. fire
Lifeblood 20	Fear 2

This cunning, intelligent mass of non-terrene protoplasm was originally summoned and bound by antediluvian sorcerers, who charged it to protect several important artifacts (now missing) in the shrine chamber. Previous upheavals and cataclysms sealed the chamber off, but when the fortress's new well-shaft penetrated the chamber, several glyphs that had been keeping the horror bound were destroyed. The creature was free to glut its millennial-old hunger.

The horror is a crafty hunter, preferring to take its prey one by one, when isolated. It can fit its entire form into masonry cracks or receptacles that would seem too small to accommodate its mass, a trick it likes to use to attack from ambush. The creature's mercurial flesh resists most attacks (weapons tend to pass right through), though fire and magic do normal damage. Mighty Success options like Vital Blow and Precision Strike do no additional damage, thanks to the horror's amorphous nature.

In combat, the creature can extend two pseudopods up to '30 to attack, either to strike or constrict (d6H damage on subsequent rounds after a successful attack). A PC caught in a pseudopod's grip can attempt to escape with a modified Strength roll (PC's Strength – the horror's Strength of 4) or sever the offending limb by dealing 3 or more points of damage in a single blow. Severed pseudopods fall to the floor and 'swim' back to the main body without causing lifeblood damage to the horror. It can also attempt to engulf a single opponent, inflicting 2d6 damage per round following a successful attack. The engulfed character takes a penalty die on all actions and can try to escape as per a constricting pseudopod. Note that the horror can only engulf one character at a time.

CONCLUSION

The haboob dissipates by late morning, allowing survivors to continue on their journey. Though just surviving an adventure like this is a reward, the GM can place a treasure hoard in the **Ancient Shrine** or on Bakr's corpse, who happened to be carrying around a small fortune in gemstones.

Like a living creature, the fortress's empty battlements and towers seem to watch PCs as they ride away into the desert . . .



APPENDIX A

RESOLVE CHECKS

S&S heroes can expect to have their courage tested to the core. Akin to 'Sanity' or 'Fear' rolls from other systems, Resolve Checks chiefly serve to heighten tension. The GM decides when to call for them; typically when faced with a supernatural threat or a ferocious animal. However, it's recommended to use Resolve Checks *sparingly*. You don't want heroes reduced to quaking wrecks before the climax of an adventure!

To make a Resolve Check, you need to roll your Mind + any relevant careers - a Fear rating assigned by the GM. The *Fear Resistance* boon from *Everywhen* adds a bonus die. The *Fearless* boon from *Barbarians of Lemuria* obviates the roll.

- If using the *Everywhen* system and/or the resolve mechanic, you take d6 normal resolve damage on a failed roll. Additionally, if a Resolve Check is failed while in combat, you hesitate and lose priority on your next action.
- If using the *Barbarians of Lemuria* system, you lose priority on a failed check as above. Further, you take a penalty die on all actions involving the object of your fear until a successful roll is made. Once this happens you have 'overcome' your terror and the penalty is removed. This can also be negated by spending a Hero Point.
- Alternately, the GM can treat resolve damage as a negative modifier on the character's *next* action, whether an Attack or Arcana Roll, an Attribute check, etc. So, if a character would normally lose 3 resolve, they instead take a -3 modifier on their next roll, as fear or shock robs them of their concentration.

APPENDIX B

PRE-GENS

The following heroes were generated using the standard character creation rules. The resolve characteristic can be ignored if using the *Barbarians of Lemuria* system. Similar boons and flaws from both systems under different names are indicated with a '/'.

Additionally, a couple new boons have been added:

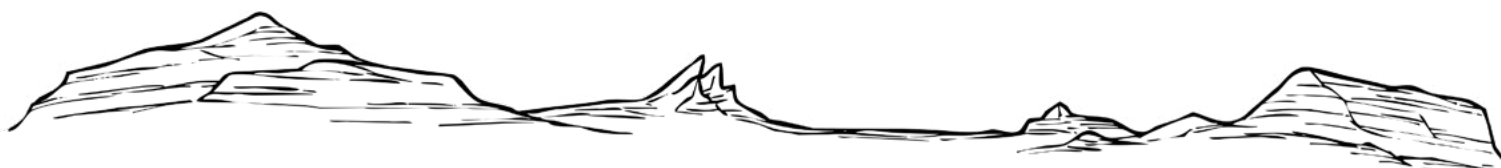
Born in Armor

You feel naked without armor, and can use it to best effect. Your Strength score offsets armor Agility penalties on a 1:1 basis (e.g. no Agility penalty for a Strength 1 character wearing medium armor).

Intermediary Spirit

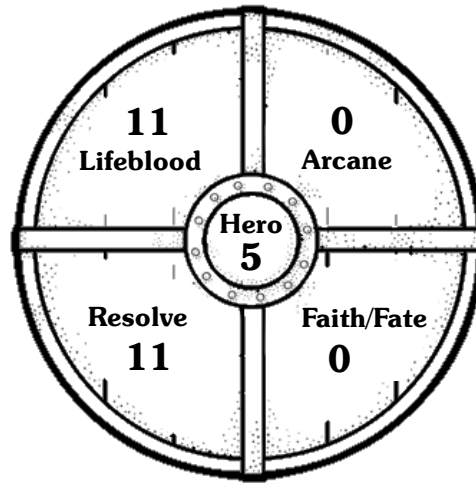
This boon is only available to sorcerers or witches. You have command over a Minor Entity (see *Everywhen*, pg. 94) or a Minor Demon (see *Barbarians of Lemuria*, pg. 131) who assists in casting spells. The Intermediary Spirit can be used as a casting requirement for First and Second Magnitude spells; in addition to reducing AP cost, this makes Second Magnitude spells available for casting "on the fly," without lengthy preparations or special items.

Intermediary Spirits are contrary by nature and resent their servitude. If used in an adventure more than once they bestow a cumulative -1 to the Arcana Roll, as they become increasingly surly from 'overwork.' On a Calamitous Failure the spirit has been deeply offended and will vanish for the rest of the adventure.



REYNA SCARLET

STRENGTH	1
AGILITY	2
MIND	1
APPEAL	0



Career	Rank
Nomad	1
Slave	0
Gladiator	2
Soldier	1



Combat Abilities	Value
Initiative	0
Melee	2
Ranged	1
Defense	1(2)

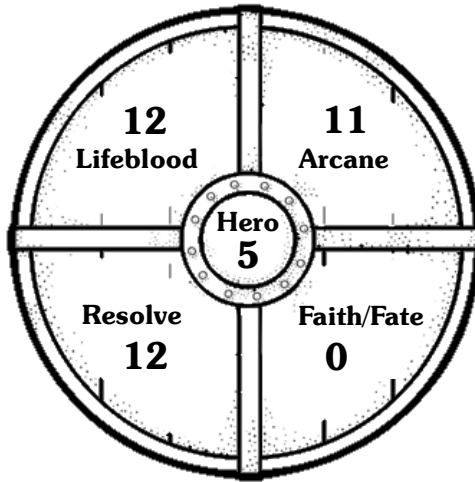
Boons	Flaws	Weapons & Armor	Prot./Dmg.
<i>Alert</i>	<i>Notorious/Infamous</i>	Medium Armor	d6-2
<i>Brawler</i>	<i>Taciturn</i>	Tulwar (Sword)	d6+1
<i>Born in Armor</i>		Buckler	+1 Defense
		Circassian Dagger	d6L+1
		Composite Bow, 30'	d6

A child of the rolling steppe, Reyna was captured by a rival nomadic tribe and sold for a pittance. After donning a white concubine's mask, she strangled her new 'husband' with a silken girdle and escaped. Reyna wears this same mask into battle to mark her transformation on that fateful night.

Though she amassed considerable fame and martial skill as a pit-fighter, Reyna has since left that career to wander. She contemplates the words of a bleary-eyed shaman, who prophesized she will one day seize the mantle of the Red Queen (as her name implies) and rule over a vast host.

AL-AFZAR

STRENGTH	2
AGILITY	0
MIND	2
APPEAL	0



Career	Rank
Merchant	1
Scholar	0
Soldier	2
Sorcerer	1



Combat Abilities	Value
Initiative	0
Melee	3
Ranged	0
Defense	1

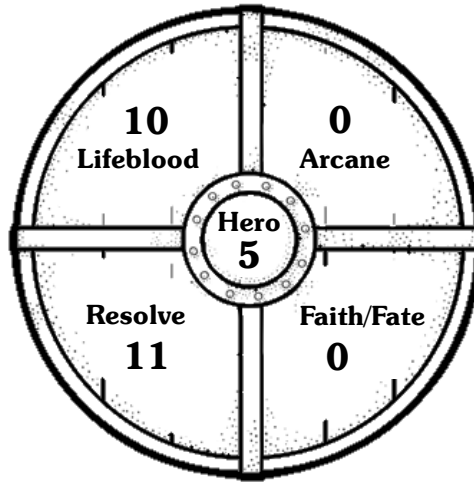
Boons	Flaws	Weapons & Armor	Prot./Dmg.
<i>Intermediary Spirit</i>	<i>Feels the Cold</i>	Great Shamshir (2H Sword)	d6H+2
<i>Desert Born</i>	<i>Memorable/</i>	Khanjar Dagger (Dagger)	d6L+2
<i>Fearsome Looks</i>	<i>Distinctive Appearance</i>		

A 6'4" Berber with brooding features, Al-Afzar was born of a merchant family. Though educated at a young age, his hulking physique and calm disposition led him down a soldier's path. After successfully guarding a caravan from attack, his grateful employer rewarded him with a gilded bottle, not knowing a djinn was bound inside. The creature, named Semsem, has since persuaded Afzar to pursue a new career as a sorcerer.

Al-Afzar wears a bright blue turban tied the in Berber style and carries an enormous shamshir over one shoulder, primarily for intimidation.

'GLIB' BABAK

STRENGTH	0
AGILITY	2
MIND	1
APPEAL	1



Career	Rank
Slave	0
Noble (Courtier)	2
Beggar	0
Rogue	2



Combat Abilities	Value
Initiative	1
Melee	0
Ranged	1
Defense	2

Boons	Flaws	Weapons & Armor	Prot./Dmg.
Artistic	Mute	Light Armor	d6-3
Quick Recovery	Urbanite/	Composite Short Bow, 20'	d6
Stealthy/Sneaky	City Dweller	Jambiya (Dagger)	d6L

Short and slight, Babak's nickname is a cruel joke. Born a slave, he cajoled his way into Persian high society with a silver tongue, where he won renown as a poet and comedian. However, an ill-timed joke about the Satrap's girth ended this career. Babak was arrested and had the tongue cut from his mouth; this was then cooked with spices and fed back to him, while the Satrap watched.

Now mute, Babak was forced to draw on other talents to survive. After begging for awhile he took up thievery, which suits him far better. He communicates with hand signals or writes out short messages on a piece of slate he keeps around his neck.