



# GHOSTS OF ACHERON

## Start

The adventure begins with the heroes being pursued by a murderous war party of Picts. Exactly why is up to the GM. Maybe one of the PCs killed a Pictish chief. Or Shaman. Or desecrated a sacred grove. Or unknowingly slew and ate a special totem animal . . .

Whatever the reason, the act was so heinous an entire tribe has declared a blood-oath, and has been pursuing the heroes for days through the wilderness west of the Black River.

This particular tribe has domesticated a large number of wolves. Between the animals' unerring scent and the Picts' masterful tracking, the heroes have been unable to throw off the hunt.

In keeping with Sword and Sorcery tropes, the GM may wish the heroes to begin play with less than their usual suite of equipment. Armor and shields (encumbering in a chase, anyway) are gone, and each hero has only one weapon available to him or her (PC's choice). This helps to ensure the heroes are

feeling particularly vulnerable when the Pictish war-drums sound in the distance.

### Pursuit!

The heroes are two days into the chase. They have only slept in snatches, tasted few scraps of food, and are cold, tired, and thirsty. Always, it seems, the Pictish drums sound in the distance, and their wolves' red eyes glint from the underbrush.

The PCs are just breaking a hasty camp at **Point A** on the map when a war-band comes upon them. The band's wolves attack first, 1.5 (round up) for each PC. Two rounds later, the Picts themselves arrive (2xPC's number, all classed as rabble). About half of the Picts will scamper up on boulders to pepper the heroes with missile fire (spears, tomahawks, and short bows) while the remainder charge forward with war clubs and hide shields.

The fight should be fast and bloody. Note if the PCs are allowed (metal) armor at this point, it will provide 1 to 2 additional points of protection against the Picts' inferior stone weapons.

Once the combat is over, the heroes are rewarded with the sight of several signal-fires rising in the near distance. War-shrieks cut through the air as savage drums pound closer and closer . . .

The PCs realize they are surrounded and about to be overrun by a numerically superior force. Escape is impossible. The only remaining hope is to find defensible ground and sell their lives at dear cost.

As luck would have it, less than a hundred yards away loom several carved dolmens of yellowed stone. These monoliths are arrayed in a tight circle, amidst an expanse of relatively flat terrain. Any defenders would have a clear view of approaching forces, as well as the benefit of putting their backs to solid rock.

If PCs are quick to seize this opportunity, they scramble to the dolmens and the next encounter with little incident.



If the heroes tarry, waves of Picts and their wolves break out from the scrub moments later, and close to attack. Each wave has roughly the same numbers as in the first combat. Heroes who want to flee (or make a fighting retreat) to the dolmens should be allowed to do so. Otherwise, the waves continue until all the heroes are dead.

### The Dolmens

On approach, it becomes obvious the dolmens are no crude megaliths. Curving inward like a giant crown of fangs, the ochre-colored stones are covered with ancient writing (Acheronian, if any of the heroes are of scholarly bent--though the writings have been worn by time, and are nigh-indecipherable).

PCs also soon notice neither the Picts nor their wolves will approach the site. In fact, they keep a healthy distance--too far even for missile-fire. The heroes are safe!

But the Picts do not leave the area. Instead, they completely surround the clearing and set up camp.

The drums in the distance beat a steady, monotonous tempo. The heroes are trapped!

A circular pit, about ten feet across, gapes at the ring's center. The bottom is dim and difficult to see. Near the pit is a large pile of rags, heaped atop a blanket. The 'rags' are actually the robes of Wei Xuilan, a crotchety old Khitain scholar. He stirs as the PCs approach.

Wei is fluent in several Western languages, and can communicate easily with the PCs. Glancing at the besieging Picts, he gauges the heroes' situation. *"In some trouble, are you?"*

Wei explains he is an apothecary who requires exotic ingredients for his medicines. Hence, he has ranged all over the Hyborian continent. *"This very spot is a tomb built by an ancient, decadent race, though their age is nothing compared to the antiquity of my people. I believe the mummified body of a sorcerer lies somewhere below. Such a corpse still holds a measure of supernatural power, and can be used in the distillation of certain potions. If you were to assist me with recovering this cadaver, perhaps I, in turn, could apply my humble skills to your situation. Those savages are no match for the esoteric knowledge of Khitan."*

If asked to elaborate, Wei explains that with a wizard's powdered bones he can create *"an unction so potent, you would become as the wind and the night, slipping unseen past open eyes."*

He cautions, however: *"I myself have not journeyed down the pit, because I fear the possibility of a guardian beast. As you can see, my decrepit form would do me little credit in such a struggle. You, on the other hand, are young, and your coarse Western bodies bulge with sinew. Go below, and use your subhuman might to slay all who approach!"*

If attacked, the deceptively quick Wei will seize a gourd suspended from his neck and hurl it to the ground. The gourd explodes on contact, releasing a cloud of whirling scarlet mist. Under this cover, Wei will try to cast a second magnitude spell and transform himself into a tiny spider, to crawl

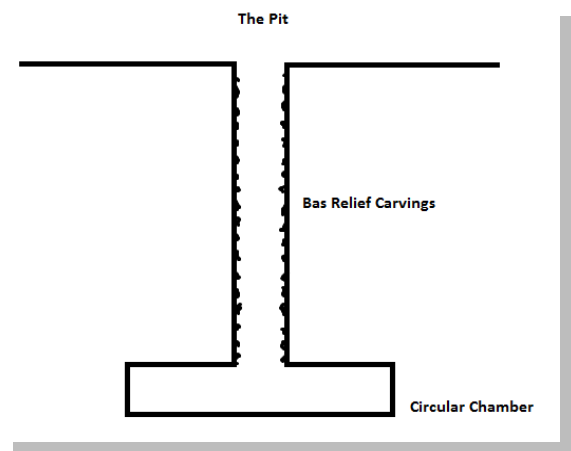
between the cracks in the dolmens and wait (he is infinitely patient). If this happens, the PCs will have to engineer their own escape from the Picts (see **Endgame**)

If Wei is killed, PCs are free to pick through his belongings (see **Appendix B: Treasures of the Tomb**)

### The Pit

Without rope, there does not appear to be a simple way down the pit (If the PCs start out "equipment starved" as recommended, rope is not available). Also, without a convenient torch, it is difficult to gauge how deep it goes (the pit is roughly 60' to the bottom).

Wei has all the materials, including flint and steel, to fabricate several torches. He has no rope, however.



Examination of the pit's sides shows they are carved with elaborate bas reliefs of horned skeletons, descending into the underworld. The depth and scale of the carvings are such that the figures' eyeholes, ribcages, and jawbones all present possible hand and foot-holds for someone wishing to climb down. In fact, descending in this manner is only a series of Easy (+1) Agility or Strength checks, adding any career ranks that involve climbing (Barbarian, Thief, or whatever else the GM approves). However, in dim light these checks become Tricky (-1) and in darkness Hard (-2), with

the person groping around blindly for the next secure hold.

The pit is only clearly lit by sunlight down to about 15' or so. After that it rapidly becomes dim, and then dark. Clever PCs who wait until the sun is directly overhead will have good lighting to about 30' down, after which the pit is dim for the rest of the descent.

Needless to say, trying to descend with a torch in one hand is probably not a good idea.

Consider having climbers roll three checks, at the beginning, mid-point, and near the end of the descent. Failure at the beginning results in a 60' drop to the flagstones below (3d6 damage), the midpoint a 30' drop (2d6), and near the end about 10' (1d6). Any PCs who blow their check can opt to spend a Hero Point and seize a secure hold at the last moment.

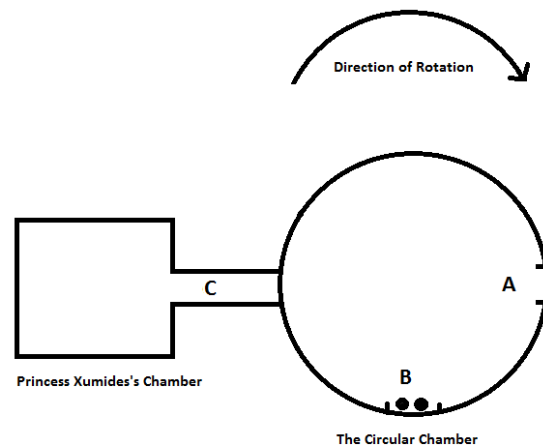
For the sake of 'realism', a PC who takes half or more of their current lifeblood from a fall should make a Hard (-2) Strength check, or suffer some kind of injury (break or sprain). The injury will incur a penalty die on most physical actions until fully healed.

The pit is intended as an exercise in problem-solving, not a way of killing off PCs or exhausting their Hero Points early in the adventure. The GM should be generous with any creative plan the Heroes are able to hatch (such as cutting Wei's blanket into strips, knotting them together, and using this 'rope' to lower a lit torch). You can scale up the difficulty by making the climbing check rolls Moderate (0) instead of Easy, though this will likely result in several falls. Wei will be willing to assist if he can, since it is in his best interest for the PCs to succeed. However, he will not volunteer using his magic, and he should not be a source of easy answers if the Heroes are stumped.

Characters who reach the bottom of the pit will be able to hang-drop from the last of the carvings to the chamber below, without taking any damage.

## The Circular Chamber

This area will be dark, unless the PCs have a light source. The walls depict a detailed mosaic, in chiefly indigo, gray, and orange-red tiles, of the Acheronian underworld: a twilight realm between trackless cold heavens and floes of fire and lava below. Any light will shine from these ancient tiles as if they've just been polished.



The floor of the chamber is littered with skeletons, the remains of hapless adventurers over the centuries. Many clutch bronze weapons and wear antiquated-looking armor. Much of this gear is pitted and rusted, but at the GM's option a few serviceable pieces can be scrounged--especially if the PCs are hurting to re-equip. Maybe even a fine Atlantean blade or breastplate of Lemurian steel is lying amid the debris! (See **Appendix B: Treasures of the Tomb**)

Heroes searching the rest of the chamber will come upon **The Blank Archway (A)** and **The Guardian Statues (B)**.

## The Blank Archway

An impressive-looking arch of basalt frames bare stone. Once one of the guardian beasts (below) is slain, the entire circular chamber rotates 180

degrees, until this open arch lines up with the hallway leading to Princess Xumides's chamber.

### The Guardian Statues

Two large statues occupy this niche, both carved from some unknown, metallic-looking stone. The bottommost is a giant serpent with six pairs of legs, and stylized smoke streaming from its nostrils. Leaping over the serpent is a sphinxlike creature with a woman's veiled head, bare torso, and a lion's body.

As soon as the statues are spotted, a voice booms out in ancient Acheronian: *Interlopers! Choose the manner of your passing. Claim the fires that thread serpent-like through the earth's hot blood* (a flawless ruby suddenly gleams within the mouth of the serpent statue), *or the freezing void between distant stars* (a topaz shimmers into existence atop the sphinx-creature's crown). *Choose now, and let your blood and flesh mingle with those who came before!*

Of course, the PCs probably don't speak ancient Acheronian, so all this comes across as a garble of strange consonants. However, the two gems gleam brightly enough in their respective places.

The two statues are the cause of all the bones littering the floor. If the ruby is removed from the serpent's mouth, then the serpent statue animates and attacks. Likewise, if the topaz is removed, the sphinx will animate. If some greedy bastard takes both gems, then *both* creatures will attack (and the PCs are in for a world of hurt).

Trying to smash a statue will also cause it to animate.

Once a guardian beast is slain it disappears, though the gem remains. With a shriek of ancient, demon-driven machinery, the circular chamber will rotate as described, until the lit hallway leading to Xumides's chamber lines up with the basalt archway (If your players are thorough and kill one guardian beast, then cause the other to animate and kill that one, the chamber will not rotate twice).

### The Hallway

This 40' corridor of blue marble connects the circular chamber to Princess Xumides's 'tomb.' A pair of lit torches blaze at the far end. Closer to the PCs are several blackened cressets where torches might have once been placed, but are empty now.

Further down the corridor, the Heroes will notice a faintly luminescent, sweet-swelling smoke filling the air. This is magical Incense of Stasis seeping from the Princess's chamber (see **Appendix B: Treasures of the Tomb**). The torches burn eternally; though long flames gutter from their tips, neither the wood nor the oil-soaked linen wrappings are actually consumed. Any torches the PCs are holding will be affected the same way, as long as they remain in the area of incense smoke.

A curtain of tiny amber beads screens the end of the hall.

### Princess Xumides's Chamber

Anyone expecting a dusty crypt at this point is in for a shock! The beaded curtain parts to reveal a bedchamber of comfortable proportions, with jade tile covering the floor and walls made from polished basalt. A low table groans under the weight of roast joint, fowl, ewers filled with purple wine, and silver bowls overflowing with lush tropical fruits.

Farther back sits a canopied bed, flanked by two statues depicting ancient Chaga warriors, carved from ebony. The warriors stand close to 7' and hold short-hafted bronze axes. Behind the gauze screening the bed, a feminine silhouette can be glimpsed.

The chamber is lit by an ever-burning torch in each corner. Beneath each torch is a brazier with a fat green cake of burning incense. The sorcerous incense smoke wafts thick and permeates everything with a rich smell like sandalwood (See **Appendix B: Treasures of the Tomb**).

The princess peeks her face out from behind the gauze. She calls a greeting to the PCs in ancient

Acheronian. If this yields only confused looks, she will concentrate for a moment, and (after an expenditure of 4 Arcane Power), be able to converse fluently in the Heroes' tongue.

Xumides is happy to have visitors. After giving an account of her impressive lineage, she explains she has 'entombed' herself voluntarily, sleeping for all eternity in her luxurious chamber. *"The ravages of age cannot touch me in this place. Outside, kings die, empires crumble, the land withers and falls away. I care not. Here there is only languorous sleep, and dreams of fantastic antiquity. I await the perfect mate--a man of cunning, of strength, with the prowess to have defeated the guardian beasts protecting this chamber. That man will share paradise with me."*

Xumides asks the heroes to dine at her table. PCs doing so will soon learn the cups of wine and bowls of fruit never empty. Meat cut from the roast fowl and joints appear to "grow back," as if by magic. Though the princess offers no explanation, this is yet another effect of the magical incense.

Xumides main concern is picking an appropriate companion for eternity. She'll look all the male heroes over, but be drawn to qualities of good breeding, attractiveness, intelligence, and sheer physical presence. She might also ask the loaded question of who among the heroes is best!

Once she's made her choice, Xumides bluntly commands the lucky individual to remain with her in the chamber while the rest of the PCs leave. Any other response besides immediate compliance and fawning gratitude on behalf of her new 'mate' will draw shock and scorn from the princess. If feeling rejected, she haughtily barks a word of command and the two Chaga warriors (who aren't really carved from ebony) will be released from their magical stasis. The warriors spring to attack, while Xumides uses her sorcerous mind-powers to beguile the heroes.

Of course, the chosen 'mate' *could* simply decide to comply--there are worse fates in the harsh lands of

Hyboria, after all, and spending an eternal honeymoon with a beautiful princess might strike some as pleasant. In such a case, Xumides's chamber will rotate shut after the rest of the heroes take their leave, and won't open again.

Anyone injured while within Xumides's chamber will regain lost LB at the rate of one point per minute (but will *not* regain any LB lost prior to entering the room, as this goes against the stasis effect of the incense). If either Xumides or the Chaga warriors are dragged out into the corridor, beyond the sustaining properties of the incense, time will immediately catch up to them, and they will wither to powder before the heroes' eyes.

Of course, the powdered remains of Xumides is exactly what Wei Xuilan is looking for. And her necklace of flawless fire-opals also remains intact . . .

## Endgame

Once Xumides has been dealt with, the PCs still need to get back up the pit to the surface. Though ascending would nominally be more difficult than climbing down, the GM can handwave this part if he wants--the pit has already served its dramatic purpose. Piling up debris from the circular chamber and Xumides's vault will make it easy to reach the pit's sides.

*If* Wei Xuilan is still alive and the PCs give him Xumides's remains, he will happily make the magical unction he promised. This takes half a day as Wei boils various liquids and chants droning incantations. When finished, he has a bowl of sickly green paste he smears over the PCs faces and exposed limbs. The unction allows the heroes to *Pass Unnoticed* as per the spell (*Barbarians of Lemuria, Legendary Edition*, pg. 52) without having to roll for success. It also allows them to move with the untiring speed of a swift breeze. How long this lasts is up to the GM, but the heroes should have an easy time sneaking through the Pict cordon and affecting their escape.

If Wei Xuilan has been killed, or the PCs have failed to gather Xumides's remains, then creative planning is called for. The Picts won't be leaving the area any

time soon. A desperate night-sortie might allow the PCs to escape (after one or more of their number has fallen in combat). Alternatively, playing on the Picts' superstition of the dolmens would likely be more effective. PCs donning the ancient armor, for example, and dusting their skin with ash might be

mistaken as ghosts or malign spirits, and allowed to pass.

Once the heroes are free from the area, they may range where they will. Perhaps to Thunder River, and beyond . . .

## Appendix A: Cast of Characters (in order of appearance)

### Pictish Trained Wolf

**Attributes**

Strength 1  
Agility 2  
Mind --

**Combat Abilities**

Attack with Bite +2, d6-1 damage  
Defense: 1  
Protection: 1 pt. furred hide  
Lifeblood: 4 (Rabble)

These skulking creatures have been domesticated by the Picts to serve as trackers and attack-animals. The GM may wish to designate one wolf as the "Alpha" with LB of 9 (not rabble), and a +3 Bite attack .

### Typical Pict

**Attributes**

Strength 0  
Agility 1  
Mind 0  
Appeal -1

**Combat Abilities**

Brawl 0  
Melee 0  
Missile 0  
Defense 0

Lifeblood: 3 (Rabble)

Protection: None, or Hide Shield (1 pt.)

Weapons: Spear, Tomahawk, Bow, or War-Club (all d6)\*

\*Stone weapons: targets wearing metal armor get an additional 1-2 points of protection.

Each Pict is rank 1 in either Barbarian or Hunter.

## Wei Xuilan, Khitain Scholar

### Attributes

Strength -1  
Agility 2  
Mind 2  
Appeal 1

### Combat Abilities

Brawl 0  
Melee 1  
Missile 0  
Defense 3

Lifeblood: 9  
Hero/Villain Points: 5  
Protection: None  
Weapons: Knife, 1d3-1  
Arcane Points: 11

### Boons/Flaws

Silken Reflexes (bonus die to initiative)  
Learned  
Arrogant

### Careers

Scholar 3  
Merchant 0  
Alchemist 2  
Sorcerer 1

At least a hundred seasons old, Wei Xuilan (also known as 'Decrepit Wei'), was originally born in Paikan and trained in the arts of esoteric knowledge. He has spent the bulk of his career collecting rare ingredients from all over the Hyborian continent. Dismissive of non-Khitains, he is nevertheless a practical man and speaks several foreign languages fluently.

Most of Wei's magic centers around alchemical preparations. See **Appendix B** for examples. If hard-pressed, he can cast a Hard (-2) second magnitude spell to transform into a tiny spider and escape (cost: 10 arcane points, requires special ingredients).

## Fire-Serpent (Guardian Beast)

### Attributes

Strength 5  
Agility 2  
Mind 0

### Combat Abilities

Attack with Bite +4, d6+1+1d3\* damage  
Defense: 2  
Protection: d6 scaled hide  
Lifeblood: 25

\*extra d3 is fire damage

This twelve-legged creature has a body like a giant anaconda, with bronze-colored scales. It exhales jets of flame and black smoke; the intended target of its bite (whether the fire-serpent hits or not) has a -2 penalty to attack because of the heat and blinding fumes.

For a tougher version, add +5 LB and a constriction attack, +4, d6+1 continuous damage until target is freed (Strength check with a modifier of target's Strength-5). The serpent can constrict one opponent *and* make a separate bite attack.

## Sphinx-Like Creature (Guardian Beast)

### Attributes

Strength 4  
Agility 2  
Mind 2

### Combat Abilities

Attack with 2 Claws, +3, d6 damage or gaze attack (see below)  
Defense: 3  
Protection: d3 tough hide  
Lifeblood: 30

This improbable combination of veiled maiden and lion can make a special gaze attack every other round. The creature draws aside her veil and glares with the cold fury of vacuum. The attack is +6 to hit and does d6 damage, ignoring armor protection. Additionally, anyone taking damage must also pass a Strength check at -2 or be paralyzed on his or her next action, with a penalty die for the next d3 rounds after that.



## Chaga Warriors

### Attributes

Strength 3  
Agility 1  
Mind 0

### Combat Abilities

Attack with Axe at +3, d6+3 damage  
Defense: 0  
Protection: 1 pt. thick skin  
Lifeblood: 11 (NPC)

These ancient warriors of Chaga stand close to 7' and wear silk pantaloons with ostrich feathers. At first glance they appear to be carved from ebony, but are, in fact, held in a deep stasis Xumides can break with a command word. They are fiercely loyal to their princess.

For a tougher challenge, give the warriors Great Axes (d6+5 damage) and/or double their number.

## Xumides, Acheronian Princess

### Attributes

Strength -1  
Agility 0  
Mind 2  
Appeal 3

### Combat Abilities

Brawl 0  
Melee 0  
Missile 0  
Defense 4

Lifeblood: 7  
Villain Points: 4  
Protection: None  
Weapons: None  
Arcane Points: 14

### Boons/Flaws

Attractive  
Power of the Void  
Magic of the Sorcerer Kings  
Slender  
Arrogant

### Careers

Noble 2  
Assassin 0  
Scholar 1  
Sorcerer 2

With lustrous black eyes, porcelain skin, and fair hair so fine it falls past her sculpted shoulders like sea-foam, Xumides is the archetypal beautiful princess. However, her mind was warped even before she began her centuries-long 'entombment' in hopes of finding the perfect eternal mate. Impossibly vain, her temper will snap into a cold rage if she is made to feel scorned or slighted.

All of Xumides's sorcery involves the projection of her powerful will. Her favorite tactic is to cast *Beguile* (see *Barbarians of Lemuria, Legendary Edition*, pg. 52) on the most powerful-looking hero and command him to attack his friends.

## Appendix B: Treasures of the Tomb

### Wei Xulan's Belongings

These are a collection of different alchemical preparations, and the tools to make them (pestles, braziers, flasks, etc.). None of the various containers are marked, however. Roll a d6 if a PC decides to root through the mess for something useful:

- 1) Ceramic vial full of virulent poison (if drunk, -4 Strength check or 1d6 damage every round for 3 rounds).
- 2) Pink Lotus powder. Extremely powerful aphrodisiac.
- 3) Yellow Lotus pollen. If inhaled, puts the user into a trance for d6 hours during which he or she has a +2 bonus to Mind score.
- 4) Crypt-dust. When cast into the eyes of an opponent, causes temporary blindness (d3+1 rounds), unless a -2 Strength check is made.
- 5) Stone beaker of Xuthalian Golden Wine. Immediately restores 2d6 LB if drunk.
- 6) Rare ingredients (scales from a giant serpent, etc.). These meet the 'Rare Ingredients' requirement for second magnitude spells.

Only a '6' result can be rolled more than once. PCs with ranks in Scholar or Alchemist might have a chance to figure out what these items are without experimentation (GM's choice).

## Superior Ancient Weapons

Some of the pre-Hyborian civilizations had access to advanced metalworking techniques, producing the equivalent of Akibitan steel (or better). These artifacts are tinged with rust, but have otherwise held up well over the centuries.

**Atlantean Blade:** This Greatsword is perfectly balanced, and holds a razor-sharp edge. Anyone using the sword gets a bonus die in combat. Additionally, the keen metal negates 1 point of an opponent's armor protection.

**Lemurian Breastplate:** This cuirass of lightweight, stylized steel grants the protection of heavy armor (d6) with the restrictions of medium armor (-1 Agility, maximum defense of 3).

## Incense of Stasis

These squat green cakes produce a thick, rich-smelling smoke that smells of sandalwood and cedar. Objects (including living beings) within the area of the smoke become subject to a magical stasis, preserving their original form (i.e. the form they had when first coming into contact with the smoke) despite the passage of time or adverse events. This magic affects the incense cakes *themselves*, preventing them from being consumed by the fire used to light them.

Once an object is taken out of the area of magical smoke time will immediately catch up with it, and the stasis effect cannot be re-established.

Needless to say, these cakes of incense are priceless to sorcerers or priests who understand their function.

## Appendix C: Pre-Generated Characters

Note: Weapons and armor appearing after the “/” are only present if the GM opts *not* to start with the “equipment starved” option discussed at the beginning of the adventure.

### Lord Torqual, Jaded Aquilonian

#### Attributes

Strength 2  
Agility 1  
Mind 1  
Appeal 0

#### Combat Abilities

Brawl 0  
Melee 2  
Missile 0  
Defense 2

Lifeblood: 12  
Hero Points: 5  
Protection: None / Heavy Armor + Shield, d6+1, -1 Agility  
Weapons: Aquilonian Broadsword \* / Poniard, d6

#### Boons/Flaws

Attractive  
Trademark Weapon (Broadsword\*)  
Arrogant

#### Careers

Noble 2  
Rogue 0  
Champion 1  
Mercenary 1

\*-1 to hit and d6+3 damage if used one-handed, or d6+4 two-handed (strength bonus already added). Torqual gets a bonus die when using this weapon.

At 6'4" with coal-black hair and goatee, Torqual cuts a dashing figure. The second-born son of a once-great noble line, he has wandered over the Hyborian provinces seeking to improve his station. Unfortunately, his usual sorry luck has done little to improve his disposition. Torqual possesses a streak of humanity, but does his best to keep it hidden.

## Isaib Idrih, Shemite Mercenary

### Attributes

Strength 1  
Agility 2  
Mind 0  
Appeal 1

### Combat Abilities

Brawl 1  
Melee 1  
Missile 2  
Defense 0

Lifeblood: 13  
Hero Points: 5  
Protection: None / Medium Armor, d6-1, -1 Agility  
Weapons: Shemite Bow, d6+1\* / Scimitar, d6+1

### Boons/Flaws

Born with a Bow (bonus die)  
Hard to Kill  
Greedy

### Careers

Soldier (Archer) 1  
Merchant 0  
Rogue 1  
Mercenary 2

\*This compound, re-curved bow allows the user's full strength bonus to damage. Isaib gets a bonus die when using this weapon.

Isaib is short and broad-shouldered, with a shaved pate and lustrous beard. Though he laughs frequently, the cold blood of a true mercenary courses through his veins. He loves nothing more than a handful of greasy coins. Isaib has been left for dead twice on the field of battle, and hopes someday to enact revenge on the mercenary captain Yar-Asif—who also happens to be his brother.

## Gyathwa, Escaped Pict

### Attributes

Strength 0  
Agility 0  
Mind 2  
Appeal 2

### Combat Abilities

Brawl 0  
Melee 0  
Missile 1  
Defense 3

Lifeblood: 8  
Hero Points: 6  
Fate Points: 2 Arcane Points: 10  
Protection: None / None  
Weapons: Dagger, d3 / Sling, d6-2

### Boons/Flaws

Marked by the Gods  
Beast Friend  
Slender

### Careers

Hunter 1  
Healer 1  
Priest (Shaman) 2  
Sorcerer 0

Gyathwa has been a "chosen" since birth, identified by the shamans of her tribe as having great mystical potential. Among Picts, however, being chosen is not necessarily a good thing. She has been "promised" to a giant serpent that roams the primeval forests. Rather than ending her young life inside the slimy confines of the serpent's belly, she has opted to escape with a group of outsiders.

(If Gyathwa is chosen as a PC, she is likely the reason the Pictish tribes are pursuing the heroes with such vengeance).

## Cyrmic the Cimmerian, Border Warden

### Attributes

Strength 2  
Agility 2  
Mind 1  
Appeal -1

### Combat Abilities

Brawl 1  
Melee 1  
Missile 1  
Defense 1

Lifeflood: 12  
Hero Points: 5  
Protection: None / Light Armor + Buckler, d6-1  
Weapons: Axe\*, d6+2 / Bow, d6

### Boons/Flaws

Born Climber  
Keen Eyesight  
Taciturn

### Careers

Barbarian 2  
Blacksmith 0  
Hunter 1  
Soldier 1

\*Cyrmic can throw this weapon with a range increment of '10 for d6+1 damage.

While relatively small for his race (5'9" and 165 pounds), this scowling, scarred northerner was a seasoned raider by age fifteen. At sixteen, he wandered into the Bossonian Marches and eventually made a name for himself as a fearless killer of Picts. In the past he has acted as both a scout and captain for an elite unit of Bossonian soldiers. Cyrmic wears a totem sacred to Badb, whom he frequently swears oaths by.

## Halki Bearfist, Aesir Skald

### Attributes

Strength 3  
Agility 0  
Mind 0  
Appeal 2

### Combat Abilities

Brawl 2  
Melee 2  
Missile -1  
Defense 1

Lifeflood: 13  
Hero Points: 5  
Protection: None / Light Armor, d6-2  
Weapons: Iron-shod Greatstaff, d6+4\* / Axe, d6+3

### Boons/Flaws

Nordheimer's Might (+1 to Strength)  
Quick Recovery  
Feels the Heat

### Careers

Barbarian 1  
Slave 0  
Courtier 1  
Minstrel (Skald) 2

\*Halki gains a +1 bonus when he opts to parry with this weapon.

This hulking, blond-bearded giant of a man speaks with a surprisingly dulcet voice. Captured as a youth by the Vanir, he became a slave in the hall of a great War-Chief, but his prodigious size and social gifts eventually won him a position as an entertainer and adviser. Halki was granted his freedom in a rarely-seen gesture of Vanir benevolence. He now wanders to gather stories and compose his own epic.

## CREDITS

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