

CONAN[®]

TRIAL OF BLOOD



SECOND EDITION



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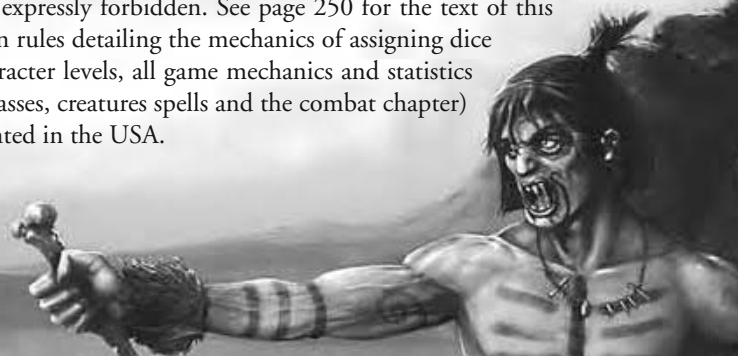
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Credits

AUTHOR

Bryan Steele

EDITOR

Nick Robinson

COVER ART

Chris Quilliams

CARTOGRAPHER

Leonel Domingos da Costa

INTERIOR ARTISTS

Nathan Furman, Phil Renne, Marco Morte,
Linda Pitman, Chad Sergesketter, Alejandro
Lizaur, Vicente Sivera, German Ponce, Ronald
Smith

PLAYTESTERS

Adam Gulwell, Alexander Fennell

CREATOR OF CONAN AND HYBORIA

Robert E. Howard





Prologue

'What did you want of me, wizard?' a powerful and booming voice echoed through the dusty chamber as the doors creaked open. Two well-muscled eunuchs pushed the doors aside to allow an even larger man in between them. One of his gem encrusted hands rubbed his shaved head as he entered the haze of incense, and the king of Stygia could not hide the displeasure on his painted eyes. 'Thoth-Amon? Where are you?'

'Ctesphon, my lord,' the most powerful wizard in Set's cult stepped out of the darkness with a wicked smile on his face, 'the moon is right and my apprentices have finally come with the last of the names.'

'It is real, then?' Ctesphon's noble eyes widened and lit up, 'The fall of King Conan is assured?'

'The meaning of no prophecy is certain,' a third voice cracked from the darkness, its owner stepping out cautiously, 'but I know what the Darkness says of this one.' A wiry woman in dark green silks bound at her neck and wrists, draped with copper bells jingling as she slinked into the main corridor of the chamber, bowing slightly as she did so.

'You must be Nefanari,' Ctesphon said with a wary grin, 'the prophetess that your master claims has seen the downfall of Aquilonia? If this is true, then you may earn the gratitude of the entire Stygian empire.'

'I am...' she began, but was cut off by Thoth-Amon's harsh tone.

'If she is wrong, milord,' the wizard hissed promisingly, 'then I can assure you that she will suffer a thousand deaths in ways that mortal man has not yet known. To this, by Set's very coils, I swear to you.'

'And I,' Nefanari nodded, trying to compose herself at the notion of eternal torment at the hands of her master, 'would not dare waste your majesty's time and resources.'

'What will you need from my kingdom, Thoth-Amon?'

'Seven of your most skilled huntsmen,' the wizard said, holding up a chain of seven linked stones, each marked with a different Acheronian key-letter, 'who will travel to the ends of the world for us, and in a timely fashion. You must bring me ten plus four virgins from the harem with which I will call a steed of flame and shadow for each hunting man. They will bring all the rest Nefanari needs to her in Garnak, where she will complete the particulars of the prophecy.'



INTRODUCTION



'What are these particulars?' Ctesphon grinned, 'I am no stranger to arcane matters. I want to know what she will do in those old ruins, and why should we risk our seven best hunters upon it?'

'Tell him,' Thoth-Amon said with the wave of his nimble fingers.

'The riders will seek out these seven maidens,' Nefanari began, unfurling a scroll from under her sleeve to reveal ancient writings, 'who were born with the sign of the stars upon their bosoms. These maidens must be taken by the riders as women as much as slaves, planting their seeds in the name of our plot. With child growing inside each of them, they must be brought to the Atlantean stone in Garnak, where each will bear their child. These children will all be put to the trial of their blood to find the heir of Atlantis.'

'The heir of Atlantis?' Ctesphon said mockingly, 'the fallen continent? What good will that do?'

'The prophecy speaks of the heir,' she continued, 'and how he will call up the armies of the Atlantean Legion to lay low his enemies.'

'How is kidnapping this powerful young heir's mother going to not turn us into one of his enemies?', Thoth-Amon chided her.

'We will have nothing to worry about,' she smiled knowingly, 'when we raise the boy as the son of the king.' She paused, clenching her enamelled fingernails around the scroll for dramatic effect, 'The Stygian kingdom will have the almighty power of the Atlantean Legion at its disposal!'

'Then you will have all that you need,' Ctesphon said with a sinister sneer, 'but heed my words woman. If this does not bring the fall of King Conan...I will enjoy the torments that Thoth shows to you. Come wizard, we must prepare these things if indeed the moon is right.'

'I will go to Garnak,' Nefanari hissed as the eunuchs closed the doors behind the two powerful Stygians, 'and await the coming of the marked maidens. Set's blessings to the both of you.' The doors rang out solidly when they sealed shut.

'You hide the truth well, apprentiss,' a dark and chilling voice rose up from the inky darkness behind her, 'I told you the prophecy will mean the fall of all the kingsss of men...which includess Ctesssphon. He will die when the Atlanteansss rissse, but yet he does not guess of your perfidy?'

'No, master,' Nefanari laughed wickedly, 'He does not.'

'You have learned well, apprentiss,' it said as two eyes of flame erupted in the darkness behind her, 'may our revenge begin.'





Introduction

WHAT IS TRIAL OF BLOOD?

Trial of Blood is designed to take a group of four to six 1st or 2nd level characters through a linked series of adventures, leading them through a number of increasingly difficult situations until they finally reach the climax of the story. By the time the Games Master has led his players through the entire collection of scenarios, they will have grown to a much higher experience level and will have had a chance to make some very powerful allies and enemies along the way. In fact, *Trial of Blood* will give the Player Characters a chance to save all of Hyboria, and they may never even realise it.

This campaign is designed to outline all of the major events necessary to run the story properly, leaving enough room between segments for the Games Master to add in their own scenarios, personalities and flavour as they go. It could be played strictly as written in order to move rapidly through the convoluted storyline, or it could map out the major events surrounding the Games Master's existing campaign. However the Games Master wants to use it, *Trial of Blood* details the scenarios needed to make a group of common adventurers into heroes.

IN THIS CAMPAIGN...

Taking place several years after he had taken the throne of Aquilonia, *Trial of Blood* details the events concerning an ancient prophecy that could lead to the end of King Conan's reign – perhaps the reign of all the Hyborian kings of this age. It was discovered by a sadistic Stygian witch named Nefanari, an apprentice to the Cult of Set, through the teachings of a much darker source. This prophecy speaks of special young women born with specific birthmarks on their bodies, and how one of them will produce the mystical heir to Atlantis – if born under the fullest moon of the year.

Nefanari studied this information for many years, paying attention to divinations and omens that predicted the

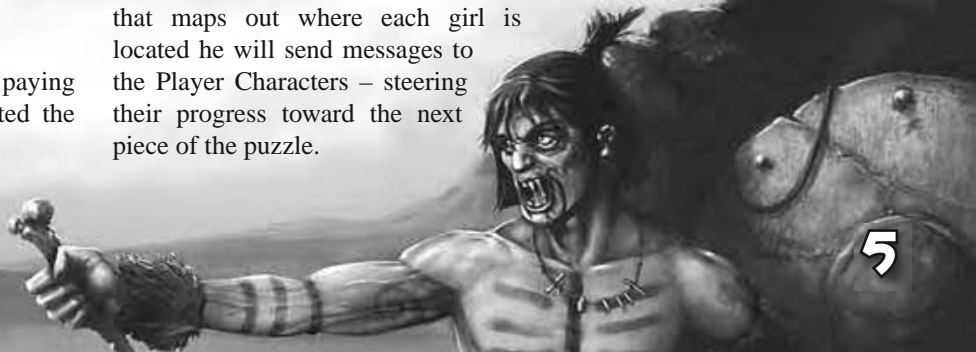
girls' births and eventual locations at adulthood. Using the resources of the Cult of Set, she eventually brought the matter before her 'master', Thoth-Amon. Doing his own divinations on the subject, Thoth agreed with Nefanari about the timing of the prophecy, and used his influence with the king of Stygia, Ctesphon IV, to put her plan into motion.

Seven skilled Stygian agents are sent to the corners of Hyboria to find, impregnate and kidnap the 'marked' women pointed out to them by Nefanari's orders. The women are to be brought back to the Stygian ruins of Qarnak, where they will be held until they give birth. The children will have their blood tested against the ancient Atlantean Stones Nefanari has in her possession thanks to Thoth-Amon, and the prophecy will be fulfilled.

The start of these events will happen in the prologue of the campaign, before the Player Characters ever even get involved. It will be a strange turn of events that start in a dingy Aquilonian tavern that will place the characters in the employ of Pallantides, and with King Conan's court in Tarantia. Showing their ability in the tavern, they will be perfect to look into a bizarre rumour – the talk of a Stygian rider moving toward the city of Sicas upon a steed of smoke and fire.

As a result of their findings at Sicas the king's advisor Dexitheus looks into the mystery of the rider and discovers records pertaining to the prophecy. With it comes the knowledge that a major threat may be materialising and that the characters are pivotal to any attempts to end it. This places the Player Characters directly in the employ of King Conan and the Black Dragons.

Once they have become agents of Aquilonia, they are directed to a number of locations and names that they will need to travel to in order to stop Ctesphon's plot. As Dexitheus deciphers the ancient Atlantean writing that maps out where each girl is located he will send messages to the Player Characters – steering their progress toward the next piece of the puzzle.





As they move from each suspected kidnapping to the next the Player Characters will learn more and more about what is going on from Dexitheus' messages and from the riders themselves. They will probably save some of the women, keep them safe; others might get taken away to eventually be brought to Qarnak. Eventually they will come to Qarnak and be forced to deal with Nefanari – and her dark master.

Whether or not the Player Characters' actions can stop the coming of the prophecy is what matters in *Trial of Blood*. The strength and outcome of the final encounter is dependent upon their actions throughout the campaign. The design of *Trial of Blood* allows the Games Master to keep track of how successful the Player Characters have been in stopping the many facets of the prophecy. Throughout the campaign there will be situations that have variable strengths and outcomes depending on just how many 'Prophecy Points' the Player Characters have managed to collect through their actions or inactions. At the end of *Trial of Blood*, the exact details of the prophecy's outcome are completely up to how thorough and successful the Player Characters had been to that point.

How *Trial of Blood* ends and unfolds is up to the Player Characters by the time they reach the revealing climax at Qarnak. It will allow them to have a real say in the way the adventures end, whether or not Nefanari and her hidden master will be victorious, and if their plot to control the risen legion of Atlantis will have come to fruition. The Player Characters, in part or in whole, will have a hand in keeping King Conan safe upon the throne – if they succeed.

PREPARING TO PLAY

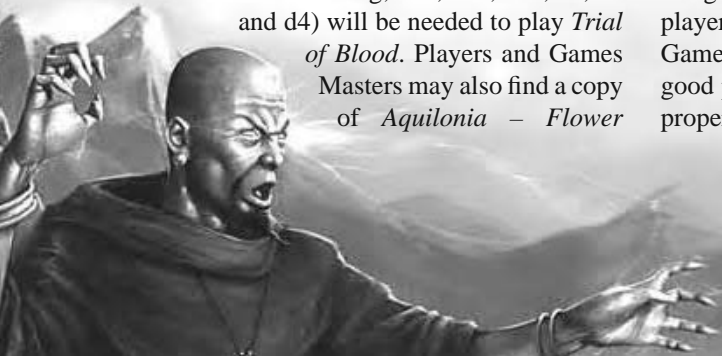
Trial of Blood is a world-spanning set of scenarios that will require many hours of gaming and likely months' worth of time at a gaming table. Depending on the amount of additional material the Games Master decides to insert between the various segments of the written scenarios the campaign could take much longer.

A copy of *Conan the Roleplaying Game Second Edition*, a notepad, pencils and a full set of dice (at least one of each of the following; d20, d12, d10, d8, d6 and d4) will be needed to play *Trial of Blood*. Players and Games Masters may also find a copy of *Aquilonia – Flower*

of the West and *Stygia – Serpent of the South* as good references for many of the people and places that the Player Characters will be interacting with. They are by no means necessary, as every encounter in the campaign has statistics listed for anyone involved; but a prepared Games Master will wish to have the extra information at their fingertips. This sort of information can come in quite handy when players take unexpected turns off the course of the written campaign. Some Games Masters will find it helpful to have a few miniatures or counters and some form of map handy for when battles occur, but are also not required if the Games Master does not wish to.

Games Masters should read and become familiar with the entire campaign before attempting to run it. This should allow any Games Master to mesh each segment or encounter together with the next seamlessly, or to adjust his methods to link the scenario segments with the sometimes unexpected and unique actions of his Player Characters. This is an important thing to note, as *Trial of Blood* is interwoven with numerous areas where free-formed action could simply catch the Player Characters up and they could lose track of the bigger picture and the written scenario events as they are supposed to occur. Part of the nature of *Trial of Blood* is that there is a timeline of events that lead towards the ending of the prophecy, and that the Player Characters will need to follow Dexitheus' messages or all will be lost. Should the Player Characters get too distracted, a cunning Games Master will be able to use further messages or even mystical dreams to get them back on track. After all, for every day that the Player Characters do not work against Nefanari's scheme, that is another tick closer to the fulfilment of the prophecy – and the fall of Hyboria's kings.

This campaign is designed for four to six Player Characters that are starting their adventuring careers at no higher than 2nd level, though since it spans such an immense amount of gaming time it can be easily adjusted or adapted to accommodate groups of higher or lower attendance. Should Games Masters have fewer players they can easily use their own judgment and assessment of their Player Characters' power level to lighten the severity of some encounters while strengthening those for a larger group. Additionally, as the campaign is designed to be run over many gaming sessions, and players or characters can come and go in that time, the Games Master will want to make sure that he has several good places throughout the campaign to introduce them properly, or be ready to find a way to do so if need be.



There is a great deal of freedom for Games Masters between scenario segments for them to shape the campaign in their own way, but the overall storyline should remain unchanged in the background for *Trial of Blood* to work properly. The campaign was written a certain way, but Games Masters should have the final say in how it is presented to their Player Characters.

THE PROPHECY POINT SYSTEM

Nefanari's prophecy about the rise of the Atlantean Legion is something that could very well take place if the Player Characters are not careful in their decisions throughout the campaign. This is measured and monitored through the addition of *Prophecy Points*.

Prophecy Points are added to a secret total throughout the campaign by the Games Master for a number of different reasons. Encounters that have some direct correlation to the Atlantean Prophecy will have an inserted sidebar that will explain how many Prophecy Points the Player Characters will add to this total, and for what reasons. For example, at the end of an important fight against one of the Stygian riders there may be a sidebar that looks as follows:

- ❖ Rider is killed, **+0 Prophecy Points**
- ❖ Woman is killed. **-1 Prophecy Points**
- ❖ Rider survived without Demonic Steed. **+1 Prophecy Points**
- ❖ Rider *and* Demonic Steed survived. **+2 Prophecy Points**
- ❖ Woman is kidnapped. **+3 Prophecy Points**

These numbers are cumulative. This means that in the above encounter, if the Rider survives and escapes with the woman after his steed is destroyed, the total number of Prophecy Points the Player Characters will have earned will be four (three from the kidnapping and one from the Rider's survival).

Once the Games Master has determined how many Prophecy Points the encounter earned, he will add them to a growing total that spans the entire campaign from start to finish. This total will effect events throughout the campaign – including the final strength of the enemy at the climax of the story!

Since the number of Prophecy Points gained are kept secret from the Player Characters, they must be given hints and signs that they are letting things slip by them without being too blatant and ruining the atmosphere of the campaign. To help Games Masters do this, we have designed the 'Prophecy Track' below. The Prophecy Track is a table that shows what sorts of omens and portents that will occur around Hyboria as the Atlantean Prophecy draws closer to being fulfilled. Each Prophecy Track level will not only explain what is happening to alert the Player Characters to the strange events, but also list the required DC of a Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (religion) skill check needed to decipher that the omen means that time is drawing closer...

The Games Master should always note that many encounters will have additional Prophecy Point-related encounter adjustments, especially when dealing with the supernatural aspects of Hyboria in relation to the return of the Atlantean Legion.

In addition to the encounter-specific Prophecy Point awards, there are a few specific ways that the Prophecy Point total can go up at any point during the campaign. These constant awards and their amounts are triggered as follows:

- ❖ A Player Character's Fate Point is spent to activate 'Left for Dead'. **+1 Prophecy Point**
- ❖ A Player Character dies. **+2 Prophecy Points**
- ❖ The Player Characters spend 1 week without attempting to stop the Atlantean Prophecy. **+1 Prophecy Point**
- ❖ The Player Characters spend 1 month without attempting to stop the Atlantean Prophecy. **+3 Prophecy Points** (in addition to the 3 for the previous weeks)
- ❖ The Player Characters summon a demon to aid them in any way. **+2 Prophecy Points**
- ❖ The Trial of Blood Ritual is completed successfully at Qarnak. **+50 Prophecy Points**

Additionally, the Games Master can always choose to add Prophecy Points to the total if they feel that the Player Characters are not staying focussed or on track as well as he would like. Although we suggest using the above Prophecy Point additions, this system is designed to give a greater degree of control to the Games Master concerning the timetable of the Prophecy and the campaign's progress.



Prophecy Track

Prophecy Point Total Reached	Effect	Knowledge DC
3	All Marked Maidens immediately become fertile for a prolonged time.	30
5	No clouds will fully cover the moon at night, they will just mute its newly reddish tint.	28
10	All winds blow away from the nearest sea or ocean, and smell of seawater.	26
15 ¹	Cimmerians are plagued by nightmares of risen dead warriors climbing out of the sea in the Pictish Wilderness and sacking their way through the country.	24
20	Pregnant women without the mark have a 25% chance of immediately and painfully miscarrying.	22
25	When it rains, it is salty seawater.	20
28	There is not a cloud in the sky, day or night.	18
30 ¹	Rivers run with salty seawater, killing plants and fish.	16
35	Horrible black sea squalls amass on the horizon of every sea and ocean, but never draw closer to ships or coasts.	14
40	Bronze begins to glow with golden light whenever within 30 feet of seawater.	12
45 ¹	Thousands of fish swim up onto the beaches of Hyboria and die.	10
48	The sea squalls move up to the shoreline, capsizing boats and pounding coastal towns with driving rain and lightning.	8
50+	The storms suddenly cease as the Atlantean Legions Rise. They form a line of several thousand undead Atlantean soldiers on the sandy shores of Stygia, marching out toward Qarnak to await the commands from their new Prince.	Auto

¹ At this point Dexitheus will send a special message to the Player Characters as well, explaining what he sees in these omens and to hopefully expedite their actions.





Eyes in a Tavern

THE TRUSTED LYRE

The Player Characters are all currently enjoying dinner and drinks at the *Trusted Lyre*, a well-known adventurer's tavern in the commercial quarter of Old Tarantia in Aquilonia. When the scene begins, read the following aloud:

You have been in the city of Tarantia for no more than a few days, having arrived here as part of one of the many caravans that ply the trade routes within Aquilonia. Having had your employment end on reaching the city you have asked around a number of establishments and have heard rumours that work is often available in the *Trusted Lyre*, an inn to the north of the city. You have let the barkeep know you are looking for employment and he agrees that it can be often found here, with those eager to hire sell-swords frequently visiting his place of business. Although no prospective employers have yet appeared you feel confident it is only a matter of time before they do so.

The haze of smoke in the *Trusted Lyre* is thin at this time of night, a cool spring breeze pushing it out of the open shutters to reveal a collection of smiles and laughter. Patrons from all over Aquilonia and beyond are revelling in cheap ales and twice-stewed pork loins, and a pair of unexpectedly talented musicians are leading singers in Zingaran drinking songs. It is a good night to have some extra coin in your purse, and it seems that you are not the only ones to think so...

The layout of the *Trusted Lyre* is very simple. It uses wooden furniture polished with lime or lemon oils to give them a darker shade, with tables and wine-stands bolted to the floor with decking nails (DC 18 to pry up).

The bar itself consists of two, twelve-foot lengths of ship decking that have been nailed together in so many places that no amount of human strength could pry it up. Above the bar is a polished lyre of some quality that has had its strings painted gold to serve as a sign for the tavern, a near worthless copy also hangs above the front door.

There are thirteen four-by-four square wooden tables in the main room of the tavern, six chairs around each one. Five more booth-styled tables are bolted to the wall opposite the bar, each one bordered by four-foot benches. A pair of heavy oak wine-stands that hold over a dozen bottles of cheap spirits sit next to the end of the bar (the 'good stuff' is kept in the cellar). There is a brick fireplace on the wall farthest from the front door; it is not lit tonight and seldom is at all except in winter.

There is a door behind the bar that leads to the kitchen and cellar access stairs. The door is never locked, but the barkeep and cook will sometimes set an empty keg in front of the door during busy nights to keep wandering drunks out of his kitchen. The kitchen itself is clay-floored and extremely simple. A brewing pot and iron skillet sit next to a fire-burning stove. Three pieces of cutlery (large knife, small knife and cleaver) hang from hobnail hooks above the stove, and a wooden shelf of spices and other cooking ingredients lines the wall opposite the door.

The stone stairs leading down to the cellar are shallow and easily navigable, but end in a small clay-walled room filled with liquor bottles, kegs and casks. It has a few stacks of grain and two meat hooks to hang salted or smoked fare, but has no lighting except what is brought by the person entering.





THE PATRONS AND STAFF

THE ASSORTED PATRONAGE

The rest of the tavern has roughly a dozen assorted Aquilonians and other Hyborians in attendance. Most of them are middle-aged, local workers, but there are a few Shemites and at least one Cimmerian that the Player Characters will be able to make out. They are drinking, eating and enjoying their night, making them mostly ignorant of their surroundings – except for the state of emptiness of their mugs or stew bowls. Although some might be killed by the trouble that happens in *Eight Blades of Fate* (see below), most will just try to run away from the tavern to escape the trouble and avoid paying their tabs! If necessary, use the statistics for ‘Aquilonian Citizens’ listed in the encounters section starting on page 16.

NISIO AND XUXA, TRAVELLING MUSICIANS

This husband and wife duo are the two musicians that are playing at the head of the bar. The husband has a booming voice that belts out drinking song after drinking song, and the wife plays a harp on her knee to keep time with him. Both quite talented Zingarans, rather attractive for sailing types, and always warm to anyone who comes up to talk to them, or better yet, drop some coins in the small brandy cask that sits at their feet. What is not known is that they were hired by some local thieves to loosen the lips and purse strings of the patrons before their trap is sprung. See the encounters section for Nisio and Xuxa’s statistics.

RHILE DENNO’S SON, WANTED MAN

Sulking in the darkest corner of the tavern, nursing the same ale he ordered at the beginning of the night, is Rhile Vinceir. Rhile is a Bossonian man who was recently framed for killing a prostitute, and he is hiding from the lawmen that he believes are constantly hunting him down. They are looking for him, but not any more than any other criminal on their arrest rosters. He is looking to try and avoid trouble, and will try to bolt away at the first sign of mishap. If necessary, use the statistics for ‘Average Tavern Patron’ listed in the encounters section for Rhile.

THE CREW OF THE SALTSKIPPER

An Argossean riverboat hit the docks of the Tybor River hard enough to crack a few hull planks a few days ago. Its twenty-man crew have flooded into the city to take advantage of a week’s worth

of repairs, seeking food, drink and women. There are currently five members of the crew in the tavern and they are loud, unruly and very drunk. At first sign of trouble they will roll up their sleeves and get ready to go batter anyone that gets too near to them! See the encounters section for the Crewmen’s statistics.

XOUTO TU GHANNA, EDON MERCENARY

At a table currently with two other men playing a game of ‘bones’ (dice) is a large, dark-skinned warrior named Xouto. He is a travelling sell-sword originally trained by Darfari gladiators how to fight, leaving him with a brutal and cold combat style that he only uses for the right amount of coin. He is not currently on a contract, and is simply looking for an evening of drink and gaming. He will ignore all but the most direct threats to his well-being, and will only draw his knife if he is injured. Beyond that, he will not even leave his seat. See the encounters section for Xouto’s statistics.

THREE CLOAKED FIGURES IN A CORNER

There are three men wearing heavy woollen cloaks with hoods raised in the corner next to the fireplace, doing their best to avoid direct inspection by other patrons. Although their behaviour is obviously shady, they are in fact utterly the opposite of criminals! With a Spot check that defeats their Bluff check, the Player Characters can reveal them to be three of King Conan’s royal Black Dragons! One of them, the man sitting in the middle, is the master of the Order himself – Pallantides. They are here to look out for prospective agents, and they will watch any altercations from the corner as long as they can without allowing citizens to be endangered. If discovered, Pallantides will simply buy his ‘admirers’ a round of drinks and get back to what he was doing. See the encounters section for the statistics of both Pallantides and his two Black Dragon fellows.

NOTUS, BARKEEP

This heavysset Nemedian opened the *Trusted Lyre* almost ten years ago in celebration of King Conan’s first son being born. He is fat with profits and jolly to nearly everyone who comes to his tavern and spends coin on his wares. He is very knowledgeable about the city of Tarantia (Knowledge (local) +8), and is always happy to share this information with a paying customer. He has a standing deal with Pallantides that allows the commander to do some of his recruiting from the *Trusted Lyre* so long as he gets all the protection he requires of them. Notus has never been much of a warrior, unlike his older brothers, and he will simply hide when something amiss



happens, especially when he knows that the mighty Pallantides is sitting just a few paces away. If necessary, use the statistics for 'Average Tavern Patron' listed in the encounters section for Notus.

JUDITTA, BAR WENCH

Notus's only good employee that stays late and enjoys her work, Juditta is a young Aquilonian girl of seventeen summers. She has a very beautiful smile that shows that she has a mouth full of straight and mostly white teeth, and enjoys flirting with the older men that come into the tavern so she can take home larger tips. She has been told by Notus time and time again that her amorous misleading could get her into trouble some day, but she enjoys the benefits of it for now. When trouble brews in the establishment she joins Notus hiding behind the bar until someone fixes the situation; she knows better than to fight some of the travellers that come into the *Trusted Lyre*. If necessary, use the statistics for 'Average Tavern Patron' listed in the encounters section for Juditta.

THE NIGHT'S REVELRY

As the night moves on and the drinks flow, some patrons will start to show a definite swagger to their walk and a slur to their speech – perhaps even the Player Characters as well. During this time they should mingle and enjoy the company of each other and the patrons (except for Pallantides, who will wave them away rudely). This should give a new group of characters the chance to meet and greet one another, perhaps even making some friends along the way.

EIGHT BLADES OF FATE

As the night wears on, the event that will bring the Player Characters together will come to bear in the form of eight armed thugs trying to come in and rob the *Trusted Lyre*. These foolish thieves are in for a great deal more than they bargained for.

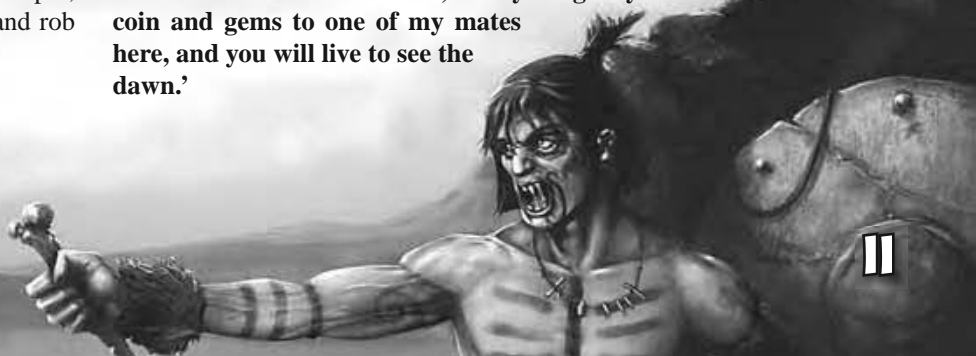
These eight thieves, the last remnants of a Zingaran gang that moved through the city a month before, hired Nisio and Xuxa to get everyone's coin flowing and inhibitions down. It is common sense that a bunch of drunks will be easier to intimidate, or fight if need be, than a room full of sober patrons. The thugs are not necessarily stupid, they simply have chosen the worst night to try and rob the tavern.



The ale-soaked floorboards creak with the stomping of dancing feet, and the walls can barely contain the echoing sounds of laughter and singing late into the night. During one of Nisio's favourite pieces, 'the Chant of Barrille', he stands up and makes the motion for everyone to stand with him and begin clapping in tune with the song. The patrons rise to their feet and begin to clank their mugs and clap their hands along with the boisterous musician.

Then, suddenly Nisio's voice cracks and his pitch slices through the noise like a bandit's knife. The song abruptly stops and laughter fills the tavern as the patronage points and makes fun of the musician's error – but then a single scream erupts from the front of the room.

'Alright then,' a cloaked figure holding a knife to the throat of a drunken man, 'everyone give your coin and gems to one of my mates here, and you will live to see the dawn.'





Nisio's high-pitched missed note was the signal for the Zingaran gang to sneak into the building, and anyone who notices that fact will be able to make a Sense Motive DC 15 check to see the knowing glint in the musicians' eyes.

There are eight Bloody Dawn Gang Thieves. See the encounters section starting on page 16 for their statistics. They will attack anyone who makes threatening moves toward them, using their fists to deal with unarmed opponents before using their knives upon armed ones.

The patrons of the tavern will begin to panic almost immediately after the first punch/attack is made, all of which will rush for the door (unless the special patrons above specify otherwise). This will leave the Player Characters to deal with the threat, which they will need to. If they simply roll over and pay off the thugs, then the Games Master will need to have one of the thieves be a bit more bloodthirsty than otherwise described in order to get them into a fight.

Pallantides and his two comrades are sitting in their corner, defending themselves with broadswords if they are attacked (but not killing the thieves if possible), but they are solely here to judge new agents worthy. They will come to the Player Characters' aid if they have shown sufficient valour and are losing against the thugs – but only if things are looking very bad. Pallantides knows that he can mop the floor with these thugs at any time, but knows that his agents must be able to stand on their own.

The fighting will likely be rather quick, as the eight thieves are not amazing combatants. If any thieves are taken alive they will gladly explain that they were kicked out of their gang for being too greedy, and that this was their last chance at making enough coin to buy horses to get away. They will also tell of Nisio and Xuxa's role in the ploy, even though the musicians have likely escaped when the fighting began. They will be arrested and taken away by Pallantides' Black Dragons once they have revealed themselves, but otherwise have little to say other than profanities and regrets.

When the Player Characters are eventually victorious, with Pallantides' help or without, he will rise to greet them by throwing back his hood and pulling aside his cloak to reveal his black tabard and red sash. His two Black Dragons will do the same, and

while he is speaking with the Player Characters they will bind any living thieves and help surviving patrons get out into the street safely.

When Pallantides reveals himself, read the following:

'You handle your weapons well, strangers,' a stout voice says from the rear of the room, a dark-haired man with handsome features pulls his cloak aside to reveal his face and clothing. He is wearing the black tabard of King Conan's personal guard, and the gilded red sash of an officer. Behind him are two more men wearing similar clothes, standing at the ready.

'My name is Commander Pallantides,' he says with a smile while extending his hand, 'and I have an offer for you. But first, to whom is it that I am speaking to?'


Pallantides will instruct his Black Dragons to go about their business and he will ask Notus to pour a new round of drinks (after thanking him for another fine night) for him and the Player Characters. He will begin to have a genuine conversation about the Player Characters. He is not faking interest; he wants to know everything that they are willing to tell him about themselves. Not only does this help the commander get to understand the people he thinks he is going to hire, but it helps brand new Player Characters get to know the other characters that they will be travelling with throughout the mega-campaign.

Once the Player Characters have told much of their background stories and explained to Pallantides, he will decide that this motley crew will be perfect to investigate a specific matter for him and the Black Dragons. He will pull out a small roll of small scrolls from his belt and hand each Player Character one of them. The scrolls each bear the inked signet seal of the Black Dragons, and reads as follows:

'The person bearing this writ is hereby allowed entry to the Black Fortress to speak with Commander Pallantides. They shall not be hindered or steered from this course under punishment by his honour, the lord of the Black Dragons.'

Once he has handed a scroll to each character, he will stand up and take his leave. He will tell them to get their things together and come and see him at the Black Fortress within the week. He will express to them that time is of the essence, and that he has a job for them. As he leaves he will pay their tab for them before going with any prisoners that may have been taken.





Pallantides is aware that enemies of Aquilonia and its king are difficult to counter with his regular troops and agents. Therefore he has arranged to have some of his agents within the city look out for promising mercenary types that might be looking for employment. If they do find someone who might be of merit they will then direct them to the establishment Pallantides is currently operating from so that the commander can gage their worth and, if they are deemed of sufficient quality, hire them for a task or two. If they show real aptitude then these men (and women) might be offered permanent roles within the kingdom, acting in whatever role they are best suited.

At this time Pallantides is basing his recruiting program from the *Trusted Lyre*, although he is soon to change venue, not wishing for any opponents to be able to thwart his efforts.

This will leave the Player Characters with an interesting choice – to meet with the Commander, or dodge their roles in this story. If they choose the former, they can go on to the next portion of this chapter. If not, they may not ever get intertwined with stopping the Atlantean Prophecy. It is up to the Games Master to try and persuade them, through events within Tarantia, to go to the Black Fortress, but here are a few examples of events that might happen to entice them to use the writs as Pallantides had intended them to:

- ✦ The Player Characters could witness a small parade or festival dedicated to the Black Legion and all its parts. During that flashy event they could hear about all of the special deals and prices that anyone attached to the Legion gets throughout Tarantia.
- ✦ Street rumours could reach the Player Characters' ears about how King Conan himself likes to meet the Black Legion members occasionally. This might be

enough of an enticing idea, to meet the Cimmerian himself, that they undertake the job for the chance.

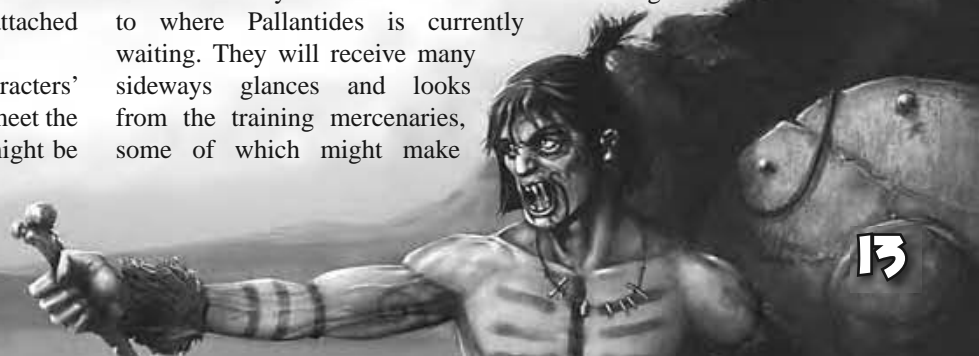
- ✦ One of the gang thieves from the tavern fight will have escaped capture (or perhaps it was someone they did not see leave during the battle), and has begun spreading the word that the Player Characters are already working for Pallantides. If the people wherever they go already treat them like agents of the Black Legion, maybe they will see that it would be better to go ahead and get the pay to go along with the reputation.
- ✦ They could be summoned to the Black Fortress by Pallantides as well. When all other options were exhausted for him, he sent a few Black Dragons to search for them and bring them to the Fortress. There he will explain that they are his best choice for the mission, and that he will raise their pay to double normal coin if they will do this for him.

AT THE BLACK FORTRESS

Once the Player Characters eventually choose to go to the Black Fortress to meet with Pallantides, they will find their way to the huge iron gates that lead to the massive complex. The writs that the Commander gave to the Player Characters will get them through the doors easy enough.

The Black Fortress is used to house, train and equip thousands of mercenaries and city sell-swords. It is a huge complex of several hundred large buildings spanned out over an entire city ward. Pallantides has been staying here in the fortress buildings ever since his scouts told him of the Stygian rider heading into Sicas. A few days before the fight at the *Trusted Lyre* he came to the realisation that using old hands and paid mercenaries already in the employ of the court could jeopardise the secrecy of a scouting mission. This is why the commander of the Black Dragons is meeting the Player Characters amidst a sea of hired swords and craftsmen instead of in the comfort of the royal palace or the Black Legion barracks.

When the Player Characters show the gate guards their writs they will be shown inside and brought to where Pallantides is currently waiting. They will receive many sideways glances and looks from the training mercenaries, some of which might make





inexperienced adventurers a bit worrisome when they meet their gaze. When the Games Master is satisfied that the Player Characters are suitably impressed by the sheer scope of what they are involved with, they should meet with the commander.

Once the Player Characters are shown to the preparation room where Pallantides is waiting, the Games Master should read the following aloud:

‘Excellent,’ Pallantides grins, unfurling a painted leather map upon the table in front of him, ‘you came. You do not know how much this means to the kingdom.’ He gestures to some wooden stools near the table, ‘please, have a seat. We have much to discuss. I have the authority to pay you each two hundred silvers each for one week’s work. Is this agreeable to you?’

Pallantides will explain to the Player Characters that he would like to make them direct agents of the Black Legion. He has the ability to double the aforementioned payment amount if the Player Characters begin to haggle about the amount, but he will not go any higher. He will only pay the Player Characters 100 of this amount before the mission, the rest will be paid upon the delivery of their information on the rider. Considering this is supposed to just be a scouting mission, their payment is very high due to the confidentiality of the mission.

Once the characters have agreed to work for him Pallantides will explain the following:

- ✦ A black-cloaked rider bearing the markings of an agent of Stygia was seen galloping at great speeds into the city of Sicas. As Sicas is a den of thieves, scum and miscreant mine-folk, this can mean no good for the greater kingdom of Aquilonia. Sicas is the largest silver mining community in the kingdom, and if King Ctesphon IV of Stygia could sabotage it in some way it would severely harm the Aquilonian economy. The royal court needs the Player Characters to go to Sicas, blend in with the locals long enough to discover the location of this rider, find out what he is doing, and return to Tarantia with that information.
- ✦ There are very few agents of the crown in Sicas. Sending known members of the Black Legion would raise too many suspicions and could possibly



send the rider into hiding, which is why Pallantides was looking for new faces that could help.

- ✦ The situation with Stygia is a tense one. With Thoth-Amon free and King Ctesphon IV on the throne, King Conan knows it is only a matter of time before they act against him. This rider could be involved in a plot against the throne, and the Player Characters should think of him or her as an enemy. If there is any question to his or her loyalty, they should always believe the rider to be loyal only to Stygia.
- ✦ The Player Characters to not tell anyone that they are agents of the throne. King Conan has enemies everywhere, and if they feel that they can use the relatively inexperienced Player Characters against him, they will happily do so.
- ✦ Sicas is not a pleasant place due to the hardship of living near and working in a silver mine. Many of the peasantry are broken and unhappy people that came to make their fortune and never managed to leave. Bribery and theft is commonplace, so the Player Characters should be very careful not to make

unnecessary enemies.

- ❖ Entering Sicas costs 2 silver per person, a fee which Pallantides is happy to pay for the Player Characters. He will be giving each of them a fistful (3d6) of Argossean-minted coins for this purpose, trying to sever any connections that could be made by guards or shopkeepers to link them to Aquilonia.
- ❖ Each Player Character can ask for gear, arms and armour from the Black Fortress armoury and repository. Each Player Character may ask for any combination of equipment, weapons, armour and shields that do not total up to more than 1,000 SP. These are still the property of the Black Fortress, but Pallantides will happily loan them to the Player Characters.
- ❖ This mission is a paid contract, but if it goes well enough perhaps the Black Legion will take them on as permanent agents. Until that time however, they are on their own to get this information.

Once the Player Characters have been fully filled in by Pallantides on exactly what they are expected to do, he will roll up the leather map on the table and hand it to them. The map has the roads/paths to Sicas marked down in charcoal, and will add a +3 equipment bonus to any Survival or Knowledge (geography) skill checks in central Aquilonia.

When the Player Characters are ready to get prepared and equipped for the mission, Pallantides will take them to the armoury personally. Read the following to the players aloud:

‘Here is the coin,’ Pallantides says as he quickly counts out some jingling silvers into a small leather pouch for each of you, ‘mostly Argossean mintage, but a bit of Aquilonian to avoid suspicions. Let us get you what you will need, friends. The sooner you are on the road to Sicas, the sooner we will know what this rider means.’ He looks very thoughtful for a moment, his face darkening slightly.

‘This rider may be nothing more than a fiction from the mouths of the tellers of tall tales, but I cannot help but feel as though something is very wrong,’ he admitted, ‘this rider is not a good omen. All the gods’ speed to you.’

PROPHECY POINTS

No prophecy points are awarded for this section.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The following suggested experience awards are what could be gained from this encounter segment. These are adjusted for the growing power level of the campaign, but Games Masters can feel free to adjust these numbers to fit the power progression they want out of this campaign.

- ❖ Basic Roleplaying Award for portraying characters well (200 xp)
- ❖ Befriending anyone (except Pallantides) in the *Trusted Lyre* that could serve as a contact later (100 xp)
- ❖ Each Gang Thug defeated (75 xp)
- ❖ Choosing to take up the test contract from Pallantides (200 xp)
- ❖ No Fate Points spent (100 xp)



ENCOUNTERS

AQUILONIAN CITIZENS

The majority of the patrons in the *Trusted Lyre* are all Aquilonian. These statistics are generally used for any one the lesser roles found in the encounter, and could be adjusted by the Games Master to create specific patrons if he wishes to (the Gambler, the Drunkard, Notus and so on).

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian Commoner 2)**Initiative:** +0 (+0 Dex, +0 Reflexes)**Sensory Traits:** Listen +3, Spot +3**Languages:** Aquilonian**Dodge Defence:** 10 (+0 Dex, +0 class)**Parry Defence:** 9 (-1 Str, +0 class)**DR:** -**Hit Points:** 5 hp**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +2**Defensive Specials:** -**Speed:** 30 ft.**Attack:** Knife -1 melee (1d3-1)**Full Attack:** Knife -1 melee (1d3-1)**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)**Base Attack:** +0**Grapple:** -1**Special Attacks:** Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)**Sorcery Knowledge:** -**Abilities:** Str 9, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 12**Special Qualities:** Adaptability (Profession and Survival), Illiteracy**Feats:** Alertness**Skills:** Gather Information +3, Knowledge (local) +5, Profession (varies) +4, Survival +3**Code of Honour:** Civilised**Reputation and Social Standing:** 2 (+0)**Possessions:** Simple Clothing, Knife, 1d3-1 sp

NISIO AND XUXA PASILLE

These Zingaran musicians are hirelings of the gang of thugs and will not fight for them unless attacked by a Player Character; perhaps if they are discovered to be involved in the set-up before they can escape.

Medium Humanoid (Zingaran Thief 1)**Initiative:** +3 (+1 Dex, +2 Reflexes)**Sensory Traits:** Listen +3, Spot +3**Languages:** Aquilonian, Argossean, Zingaran (Literate)**Dodge Defence:** 11 (+1 Dex, +0 class)**Parry Defence:** 12 (+1 Str, +0 class, +1 Zingaran)**DR:** -**Hit Points:** 9 hp**Saves:** Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +3**Defensive Specials:** -**Speed:** 30 ft.**Attack:** Dagger +1 melee (1d4+1, AP 1)**Full Attack:** Dagger +1 melee (1d4+1, AP 1)**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)**Base Attack:** +0**Grapple:** +1**Special Attacks:** +1 to hit with Broadsword and Arming Sword, Sneak Attack +2d6/+2d8, Weapon Familiarity (greatsword)**Sorcery Knowledge:** -**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 16**Special Qualities:** Sneak Attack Style (dagger), Trap Disarming**Feats:** Alertness, Skill Focus (Perform)**Skills:** Appraise +4, Bluff +7, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +4, Hide +5, Knowledge (songs) +5, Perform (harp) +8 (Xuxa), Perform (sing) +8 (Nisio), Sense Motive +3**Code of Honour:** Civilised**Reputation and Social Standing:** 6 (+1)**Possessions (Nisio):** Quality Entertainer's Blouse and Breeches, Dagger, 13 sp**Possessions (Xuxa):** Quality Entertainer's Dress, Dagger, Argossean Brass Harp, 8 sp

SALTSKIPPER CREWMEN

Argossean 'salvage experts' that sailed upriver to sell their goods at Tarantia, these crewmen are individually named Balthus, Diono, Eis, Narthas and Tiberas. They are nice enough people, but can become particularly belligerent and violent when one of their own is threatened.

Medium Humanoid (Argossean Pirate 1)

Initiative: +3 (+1 Dex, +2 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Spot +2

Languages: Aquilonian, Argossean, Zingaran

Dodge Defence: 11 (+1 Dex, +0 class); 12 (+1 seamanship)

Parry Defence: 12 (+2 Str, +0 class); 13 (+1 seamanship)

DR: –

Hit Points: 10 hp

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +3

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Unarmed +2 melee (1d6+2) or Cudgel +2 melee (1d4+3, AP 1)

Full Attack: Unarmed +2 melee (1d6+2) or Cudgel +2 melee (1d4+3, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +0

Grapple: +1

Special Attacks: +1 to hit with Broadsword and Arming Sword, Ferocious Attack, Power Attack, Weapon Familiarity (greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Hide and Swim), Seamanship +1

Feats: Brawl

Skills: Balance +3 (+4 seamanship), Hide +3, Profession (sailor) +3 (+4 seamanship), Swim +3

Code of Honour: Barbaric

Reputation and Social Standing: 4 (+1)

Possessions: Sailor's Shirt and Breeks, Cudgel. 1d6 sp

XOUTO TU GHANNA, EBON MERCENARY

Skilled with a blade from his training under the Chagir tribe warriors, Xouto Tu is a savage killer-for-hire that enjoys the feel of a dying foe on his weapon almost as much as the heft of coin in his purse. He has few loyalties to anyone beyond his faraway tribe, and can make for a good contact or hireling.

Medium Humanoid (Ghanata Barbarian 1 / Soldier 2)

Initiative: +7 (+1 Dex, +2 Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

Sensory Traits: Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages: Bossonian (dialect), Darfari, Ghanatan

Dodge Defence: 12 (+1 Dex, +1 class)

Parry Defence: 14 (+3 Str, +1 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 24 hp

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +5

Defensive Specials: Fearless

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Unarmed +6 melee (1d6+3) or Ghanata knife +2 melee (1d8+3, AP 1)

Full Attack: Unarmed +6 melee (1d6+3) or Ghanata knife +2 melee (1d8+3, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +6

Special Attacks: +1 to damage with scimitars and Ghanata knives, Power Attack

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Special Qualities: Versatility (–2 penalty)

Feats: Quick Draw, Track, Weapon Focus (Ghanata knife)

Skills: Climb +4, Hide +4, Intimidate +3, Jump +4, Move Silently +5, Profession (mercenary) +3, Survival +4, Use Rope +3

Code of Honour: Mercenary

Reputation and Social Standing: 6 (+0)

Possessions: Weathered Traveller's Outfit. 2 Ghanata knives, Tribal Charm (+1 to saving throws), 31 sp



PALLANTIDES

The commander of King Conan's personal guard, Pallantides is a hard-edged soldier with the looks of a royal court member. Handsome and passionate, he is an image of skill and dedication to Aquilonia. King Conan saw the strength in the young man when he promoted him to command his private army, and Pallantides has not yet given any reason for him to regret the decision.

Medium Humanoid (Attalusian (Hyborian) Noble 9 / Soldier 9)

Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages: Aquilonian (Literate), Attalusian (Literate), Ophirean, Zingaran

Dodge Defence: 19 (+2 Dex, +7 class)

Parry Defence: 26 (+6 Str, +10 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 105 hp

Saves: Fort +13, Ref +8, Will +10

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Broadsword +23 melee (1d10+6, AP 3)

Full Attack: Broadsword +24/+19/+14 melee (1d10+6, AP 3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +15/+10/+5

Grapple: +25

Special Attacks: +2 to hit with Broadsword, Hunting Bow, Heavy Lance and War Spear, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Grapple, Improved Sunder, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Ride-by Attack, Spirited Charge, Trample, Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 23, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 16

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Intimidate and Sense Motive), Enhanced Leadership, Formation Combat (*heavy cavalry, heavy infantry*), Lead By Example +2, Officer (2), Rank Hath Its Privileges, Social Ability (*ally, reputation*), Title (Lord Commander), Wealth

Feats: Leadership, Menacing Aura, Mounted Combat, Persuasive, Sleep Mastery, Steely Gaze, Weapon Focus (broadsword)

Skills: Bluff +13, Diplomacy +15, Gather Information +8, Handle Animal +15, Intimidate +27, Knowledge (geography) +13, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (nobility) +6, Ride +23, Search +10, Sense Motive +15

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 40 (+5)

Possessions: Brown Leather Cloak, Black Dragon Tabard with Red Silken Sash, Aquilonian Broadsword, Thick-hilted Dagger, 75 sp

BLACK DRAGON GUARDSMEN

These two loyal Black Dragons were brought to the tavern by Pallantides to be his additional pairs of eyes to seek out the proper agents for the mission at hand. Their names are Alcediades and Verrenius.

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian Soldier 5)

Initiative: +6 (+1 Dex, +1 Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

Sensory Traits: Listen +4, Spot +6

Languages: Aquilonian (Literate)

Dodge Defence: 13 (+1 Dex, +2 class)

Parry Defence: 16 (+3 Str, +3 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 42 hp

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +2

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Broadsword +8 melee (1d10+3, AP 3)

Full Attack: Broadsword +8 melee (1d10+3, AP 3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +5

Grapple: +8

Special Attacks: Ride-by Attack, Spirited Charge, Weapon Familiarity (Broadsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –



Abilities: Str 16, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Ride and Survival), Formation Combat (*heavy infantry*), Officer

Feats: Mounted Combat, Weapon Focus (Broadsword), Weapon Focus (heavy lance), Weapon Specialisation (greatsword)

Skills: Intimidate +3, Perform (horsemanship) +3, Ride +11, Sense Motive +3, Survival +9

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 40 (+5)

Possessions: Brown Leather Cloak, Black Dragon Tabard, Aquilonian Broadsword, 4d6 sp

BLOODY DAWN GANG THUGS

Incompetent thieves from the Bloody Dawn gang that came through Tarantia a few weeks ago, these eight bandits are broke and wish to make some fast coin. Their names are Lovo Da Masa, Rellez, Ulzko, Castillo, Geppett Da Coas, Enzo, Zaparista and Zollo Du Pac. They have no loyalty to one another and simply want to live on someone else's hard work and avoid capture, but they are desperate and have made a mistake in targeting the *Trusted Lyre*.

Medium Humanoid (Zingaran Thief 2)

Initiative: +5 (+2 Dex, +3 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Listen +1, Spot +2

Languages: Aquilonian, Argossean, Zingaran (Literate)

Dodge Defence: 13 (+2 Dex, +1 class)

Parry Defence: 12 (+0 Str, +1 class, +1 Zingaran)

DR: –

Hit Points: 9 hp

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +2

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Dagger +1 melee (1d4+1, AP 1) or Stiletto +1 melee (1d4+1, AP 1)

Full Attack: Dagger +1 melee (1d4+1, AP 1) or Stiletto +1 melee (1d4+1, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: +1

Special Attacks: +1 to hit with Broadsword and Arming Sword, Sneak Attack +2d6/+2d8, Weapon Familiarity (greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12

Special Qualities: Sneak Attack Style (dagger/stiletto), Trap Disarming

Feats: Eyes of the Cat, No Honour, Stealthy

Skills: Appraise +5, Bluff +6, Hide +9, Intimidate +4, Move Silently +7, Sense Motive +4, Use Rope +4, Tumble +5

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 4 (–1)

Possessions: Black Leather Cloak with Face Cowl, Weathered Traveller's Clothes, 2 Daggers or Stiletos, 6 Small Pouches, 1d3–1 sp, 2d3 ¼ silver bits





Sicas - The City in Silver

THE ROAD TO SICAS...

By this time the Player Characters have been equipped to their satisfaction in the city of Tarantia, perhaps even at the Black Fortress armoury. They have set out toward Sicas, likely upon the path drawn for them on the map. Using the map is not *necessary*, but it does cut back on the possibility for additional encounters. It is about 200 miles as the raven flies, with a river crossing near the end of the journey.

If they are on horseback the trip will take four days (three days if the map's trails are used). If the Player Characters are walking, it will be eight days (seven with the map). This is assuming the Player Characters are only moving at a steady pace for eight hours a day and could be adjusted for faster or slower movement.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

This journey could be an uneventful one, or it could be action-packed and quite dangerous for the newly set-off adventurers. Every day and every evening there is a chance for encountering something along the way to Sicas. This is rolled in secret by the Games Master, who will arrange for the encountered event to take place sometime during that stretch of time.

DAYTIME ENCOUNTERS

There is a 40% chance each day that the Player Characters will have an encounter on their way to Sicas. If an encounter is determined to take place, the Games Master will roll or choose on the following table to determine what manner of event happens.

Daytime Encounters on the Road to Sicas

2d6 Result	Encounter
2	Bandit Attack!
3 - 4	Badger Burrow
5 - 6	Scavenging Dog Pack
7 - 9	Fellow Travellers
10	Aquilonian Patrol
11	Injured Mercenary ¹
12	Merchant Caravan

¹ This Encounter must be re-rolled if rolled twice during the trip.

EVENING ENCOUNTERS

There is a 50% chance (65% if a camp is made without a fire) the Player Characters will have an encounter sometime in the night. If an encounter is determined to take place, the following table can be used to randomise what that will be.

Evening Encounters on the Road to Sicas

3d6 Result	Encounter
3	Wolf Pack Attack!
4	Boar Attack!
5 - 6	Bandit Attack!
7	Escaped Criminal ¹
8 - 9	Fellow Travellers
10 - 13	Distant Noises
14 - 15	Aquilonian Patrol
16	Wayward Farm Boy ¹
17	Wary Hunter ¹
18	Lost Merchant ¹

¹ This Encounter must be re-rolled if rolled twice during the trip.



AQUILONIAN PATROL

The Player Characters are happened upon by a small group of Aquilonian soldiers on patrol.

‘Aye there,’ says a lightly armoured man riding up to you on a light tan courser, ‘where you headed?’ Three more men on horseback ride up alongside of him, and you can see the blazons of the Aquilonian army upon their breastplates.

‘What say you?’

Depending on how the Player Characters interact with the soldiers (respectfully, angrily, etc.), they will either just wish them good luck and move on – or possibly try to arrest them! So long as it is not obvious that the Player Characters are hiding something, the patrol will not harass them too badly. Should they give away their secret allegiance; the soldiers will simply laugh at them and ride off. The patrol will only attack the Player Characters if they get threatening, or if they seem arrest-worthy.

Statistics for the Aquilonian Patrolmen can be found in the encounters section on page 33.

BADGER BURROW

The Player Characters have stumbled upon the den of an animal, and it ends up being a very angry badger.

Just a few paces off the side of the path lay a large mound of dirt and rocks that have many months of moss and lichen growing atop of it. In the side of the mound is a large hole about as large around as a grown man’s head.

The badger’s burrow is currently home to three baby badgers (too young to be a threat) and a very protective mother badger. The father is about fifty feet on the opposite side of the mound foraging for food, but will return at the first sign of his family being in danger. A Survival or Knowledge (nature) skill check DC 15 will reveal the mound at a glance for what it is, but will not tell whether or not it is inhabited.

Statistics for the Badgers can be found in the encounters section on page 33.

BANDIT ATTACK!

The Player Characters are ambushed by a small group of road bandits looking to rob them for a few coins and their weaponry.

‘Alright then,’ a gruff voice snaps from behind a tall lock of grasses, ‘don’ nobody do anything to make us kill you!’ A handful of men in brown cloaks leap out from behind similar clumps of foliage, each one holding a dagger or similar short blade.

‘Just be dropping your weapons and coin in a pile,’ says the tallest of the highwaymen, ‘and everyone goes home with their skin in one piece.’

There are 2d3 Highway Bandits in this encounter, who will gain surprise upon the Player Characters unless the leading character passes a Spot check DC 20. The bandits will use their surprise round to get into good charging positions around the Player Characters, but will not attack. They want to take the money and weapons of the Player Characters, but can be persuaded through the Diplomacy or Intimidate skills to accept other offers, or possibly even leave them alone completely. While this is possible it is not likely, and this encounter will likely end with the bandits attacking the Player Characters.

Statistics for the Highway Bandits can be found in the encounters section on page 34.

BOAR ATTACK!

While the Player Characters are trying to make the most of the darkness of night, an enraged wild boar comes charging into their camp/grouping.

Just as the wind calms down and the crickets begin to chirp loudly a new sound erupts from the underbrush nearby. Something between a growl and a squeal tears through the darkness, followed by the huge wild boar that emitted the sound. Three broken arrow shafts protrude from its haunches, and there is a slight limp to its gait from a long spear-gash on its foreleg.

The beast lets out a pained and panicked series of grunts, and then turns its eyes toward you and charges...

The boar was injured by hunters earlier this afternoon and the wounds have started to make the beast frenzied and violent. It smells the Player Characters and sees them as a threat, attacking them instantly.

Statistics for the Injured Boar can be found in the encounters section on page 34.

DISCANT NOISES

Something not too far away is giving off strange and eerie noises that make it difficult to sleep.

The night wind silences itself as a calm settles upon the area, allowing a light misting rain to fall from the sky until everything is wet or at least dampened. As your mind begins to drift away to peaceful slumber, a shrill echo rolls across the land to reach your ears. It is a horrible sound, thankfully far enough away to be just haunting, but it makes you wonder what sort of thing is making that noise...

Anyone that hears this sound (Listen check DC 8) will have some trouble getting it out of their head in order to get some sleep. In order to get a full night's sleep after hearing the eerie sound, a character must pass either a Will save or Concentration check at DC 12 each hour in order to fall asleep. Once asleep, these tests are not necessary any longer.

ESCAPED CRIMINAL

Burgeri, a member of a Sicas chain gang escaped his captors and is now on the run, moving only at night in order to avoid any patrols that might be looking to re-arrest him. When he hears the Player Characters coming his way he will try to find a good place to hide, requiring the Player Characters to beat the Escaped Criminal's Hide check with their own Spot check (remember any darkness penalties). If they do not discover him, he will simply let them pass by unmolested.

If they spot him and make obvious notice that he is hiding nearby, he will spring out from his hiding place and begin to try and run past the Player Characters into the darkness.

'Oh no!' the man shouts in a high-pitched voice as he begins to run quickly toward you, 'you will never put me back in that mine!' He has a long canvas tabard that is belted with a simple piece of leather at his waist, two blackened metal rings hanging from either hip and from his wrists. His face and hands are filthy with caked-on grime, and he holds a

fist-sized lump of sharpened rock in his hand. Dried blood covers his right hand and sleeve.

'I will never go back!' he cries frantically as he charges in your direction...

The criminal will try to run past the Player Characters before attacking any of them, but is capable of inflicting significant damage with his stone knife if he is forced to. Being that he has been 'free' for less than a day, he has no other possessions. If the Player Characters explain that they are not the law, or if they offer him food and water, he will calm slightly and say that 'he was innocent' and that he did not 'hurt that girl'. A Sense Motive skill check versus the Bluff of the Escaped Criminal will tell that he is in fact lying, and that he just wants to get as far away from Sicas as he can before the mine wardens find him and drag him back.

If they capture him, they will have the opportunity to turn him into the next Aquilonian Patrol they encounter, or wait until they get all the way to Sicas to do so. There is a 50 sp bounty on his capture, which they will receive at the Bridge Ward from the gate guards there.

Statistics for Burgeri the Escaped Criminal can be found in the encounters section on page 35.

FELLOW TRAVELLERS

A small group of travelling Aquilonians crosses paths with the Player Characters, giving them a chance to do some trade, information gossip, and perhaps make a safe camp.

'Hello and hail,' a hoarse voice shouts from ahead on the path. The voice belongs to the driver of a rickety wooden wagon pulled by a pair of oxen. 'Just comin' up from Sicas, myself. Any news from your way?'

There are 1d3 additional peasants in the wagon with the man, and they are simply travelling from Sicas to Tarantia to sell some of their silver wares. They have a few sacks of simple silver goods in a latched box in the wagon (DC 18 to open) worth around 200 sp in total.

The peasants can serve a number of different roles if the Player Characters wish them to. The Games Master can run the scene according to however they choose to interact with the peasants, but here are a few good examples of how they will react to certain ideas:



- ✿ If attacked or threatened by the Player Characters, the wagon driver will try to simply ride away. He has a Handle Animal of +5 and will spur his oxen to run as fast as they can pull the wagon in order to get away. If escape is not possible, he has a pickaxe in the bench next to him and he is proficient in its use (Attack: +0, 1d8 damage, 19-20/x2, AP 5).
- ✿ If asked to trade or barter, the peasant family has the following that they will happily sell (for 75% normal market price!) or trade for (at full market price): 200 sp worth of candlesticks and jewellery-grade chain, three pickaxes, four shovels, two pairs of leather boots, twelve pounds of unrefined silver-laden stones, eight jugs of blueberry wine, two racks of salted lamb, and one of the cart-oxen.
- ✿ If asked for information about Sicas, the peasant will explain that the finest place for drinks is the *House of Two Dragons*, the finest whores can be found in *The Wyvern*, and the most dangerous place to try and rent a room is the *Iron Skull Inn*. He will also inform the Player Characters that the gate tax has been raised to 3 silvers due to a recent string of bloody murders involving the city guardsmen. He does not live in the city as much as in the outskirts, so he knows only these big bits of information about 'the Silver City'.
- ✿ (Night Encounter Only) If asked to make camp with the Player Characters, the peasant will gladly share his food and drink (see above) with them in exchange for the protection that a group of adventurers means to a travelling commoner wagon. During the night the peasants will not take any watches at all, relying on the wary eye of their 'friends' instead.
- ✿ (Night Encounter Only) If stopped and questioned too much about where they are going, the peasant traveller will think he is being set up for an ambush and will be short, nervous and impatient with the Player Characters. If any of them reach for a weapon in any way, the driver will react as though attacked or threatened (see above).

The *Fellow Travellers* event possibility can be a good way for the Games Master to seed the Player Characters with any bits of information or equipment that he feels they should have for the rest of the Sicas segment of the campaign.

Statistics for the travelling peasants are considered to be the same for the Sicas Citizens found on page 51.

INJURED MERCENARY

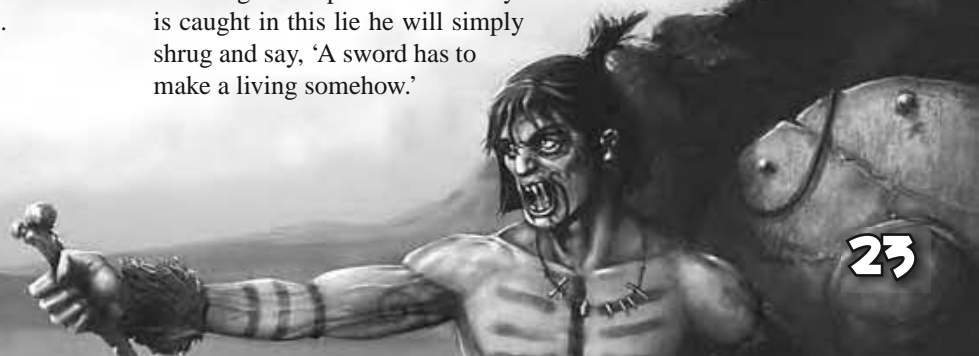
The Player Characters happen upon a mortally wounded, but still rather dangerous, mercenary.

'Unh...' a man groans from ahead, '...who goes? Name yourself and spare...urh...me a crossbow bolt.' Laying just off the path a few dozen paces in front of you is an obviously wounded man lying amidst shed segments of armour, gear and a blood-soaked horse blanket. In his shaking, gore-slick hands he holds a large and menacing crossbow pointed in your direction.

Vago the mercenary was set upon by horse thieves. They had impaled him several times with their spears, and he lost his seat upon his saddle. They took those he killed of their number with them, and they left him here for dead – which he will likely be if a wolf pack or other opportunists find him.

Depending on how the Player Characters deal with him, Vago could be a great asset or dangerous enemy to them.

- ✿ If attacked or threatened by the Player Characters, the mercenary will size up the largest warrior amongst the group and shoot his heavy crossbow at them. He only has a few bolts for it left, so he will only fire it once before picking up his arming sword and getting ready to defend himself. It should be noted that even though the mercenary is severely wounded, he is still significantly of higher level than the Player Characters and will be quite a fight in his current state.
- ✿ If the Player Characters offer to tend the mercenary's wounds, he will not initially trust them and will allow one Player Character at a time to approach him – and only with his sword in hand. If they are successful in healing *any* of his hit points, he will be very grateful and offer to give them a trinket or two from his possessions (see Encounter section on page 35).
- ✿ If asked for information about where he was/is going, he will say that he was heading toward Sicas to undertake a bodyguard position for a mining foreman there. This is a lie, as the mercenary was paid to go to Sicas to kill the mining foreman who had bought an Ophirean noble boy as a slave. If he is caught in this lie he will simply shrug and say, 'A sword has to make a living somehow.'





LOST MERCHANT

'Oh, bah your Mee-tra's grace and good bless-eeng,' a relieved woman cries as she rides her horse out into the path from behind a stand of short trees, 'you are not *them*. I have been pray-eeng to all the gods of thees land that you would come!' She is darker-skinned, very attractive despite showing some signs of road-weariness, and has a strange accent to her voice. Her horse has four large saddlebags nearly bursting at the seams, and she has far too many rings on her fingers and necklaces on her neck to be riding alone.

The woman, Orienna, is a Zamorian merchant whose caravan was set upon by bloodthirsty thugs a week ago. They set upon her caravan and began to kidnap the women and kill the men, so she packed as much of her goods as she could on her horse and rode for cover. Luckily for her the thieves were too busy with her friends and sisters to pay attention to her escape. She has been riding at night and hiding during the day for the last six days – and she is tired and hungry.

She will do nearly anything for a good meal and a safe place to sleep, including trade her goods at remarkably reduced rates. If the Player Characters offer her such hospitality, she will sell anything she has on her for 25% of the market price! If they press her for a better deal than that, or threaten to take what they want, she will curse them for bandits and begin to ride off into the night. Should the Player Characters deal with her in any way but friendly or caring, she will do the same; she is too afraid that the thugs will return to risk getting close to new enemies.

If asked about the thugs that attacked her caravan, she has the following information about them:

- ❖ If the Player Characters offer to take the horseless Mercenary to Sicas with them, he will be sceptical at first but happily accept the ride and companionship. He will fight alongside the Player Characters for the rest of the trip to Sicas, and will pay their way past the gate when they get there as thanks.
- ❖ (Night Encounter Only) If asked to make camp with the Player Characters, the mercenary will agree and thank them for not letting the wolves get to him. By morning he will be travel worthy and will begin his limp to Sicas – giving the Player Characters a chance to offer him a ride if they wish. (see above)

Statistics for Vago the Injured Mercenary can be found in the encounter section on page 35.

- ❖ They called themselves the Blood Dawn, and were almost all Zingaran by the sounds of their voices. The Player Characters might recognise this as the gang that the thieves in the *Trusted Lyre* were from.
- ❖ The gang members numbered around ten to twenty, but she was not able to count for sure.
- ❖ One thug mentioned taking the loot to Sicas to fill the ladies' purses at the *Wyvern*.





If they make friends with Oriennka she will try to stay with them as long as she can for protection. She will not travel with them however, if they mention that they are going to Sicas. If they do not tell her where they are going, she will stay with them until they get into another encounter with non-hostile people headed to Tarantia (Aquilonian Patrol, Fellow Travellers, Merchant Caravan); who she will join with to move on to safety.

Statistics for Oriennka the Lost Merchant can be found in the encounter section on page 36, which includes a list of her entire mercantile goods inventory.

MERCHANT CARAVAN

The Player Characters cross paths with a large merchant caravan headed to Tarantia, giving them a chance to buy some goods if they wish to.

The sounds of a coachman’s whip and the groan of ox-drawn wagons draw your attention forward on the path. A trio of large wooden wagons crests the low hill ahead of you, the corpulent man on the bench of the first already adjusting his jacket when he sees you.

‘Ho there and hello!’ the man says as the wagons approach closer. He is a fat man with a wind-blown face the colour of a dancer’s cheeks, but his smile is wide and full of ivory-coloured teeth. ‘What can we do for you this fine day?’

This merchant caravan is a small collection of likeminded Aquilonians from farther south in Shamar, on their way up to Tarantia for this season’s bazaar. Unless the Player Characters decide to try and become bandits themselves (which would look poorly upon them in Pallantides’ eyes); the merchant caravan can be used as a source for last minute supplies.

The caravan carries an assortment of equipment, weapons and armour that the Player Characters could choose to purchase.

The following table indicates the percentage chance the caravan has of having any particular item, the number of that item they have available, and the adjustment to market pricing the caravan will charge. The Player Characters might be able to haggle this price adjustment down by a maximum of 10%, but Diplomacy or related Profession skill rolls may be required.

If for some reason that the Player Characters decide to attack the caravan to gain all of its loot, the Games Master should roll for three items from each of the categories on the table above. These items are what the caravan will have for them to claim.

There are three caravan guards, which use the same statistics found in the Encounters for the Aquilonian Patrolmen. The four merchants in the caravan use the statistics for the Sicas Citizens found on page 51.

Merchant Caravan Contents

Item Type	Inventory Chance	Quantity	Price Adjustment
Simple Weapons	60%	1d8	+10%
Martial Weapons	35%	1d3	+20%
Exotic Weapons	5%	1d2-1	+30%
Light Armour	55%	1d3	+10%
Medium Armour	30%	1d2	+15%
Heavy Armour	5%	1	+20%
Helmets	40%	2d3	+5%
Shields	35%	1d2	+10%
Clothing	80%	1d2	+0%
Adventuring Gear	75%	1d6	+5%
Containers and Carriers	70%	2d3	+0%
Class Tools and Skill Kits	55%	1d2	+10%
Food and Drink	50%	2d4	+5%





SCAVENGING DOG PACK

The wind carries the stink of rot to your nostrils around the same time your ears pick up the snarling and smacking of scavengers tearing apart a corpse. You look a few dozen feet from the path and you can easily see where both the odour and the sounds are coming from; the straddled remains of what looks like a man and a pony surrounded by a half dozen snarling hounds. They are unkempt and filthy, obviously living out on their own in the wild.

One by one they turn their gore-stained muzzles toward you, raising their lips in a curl that reveals yellow and brown teeth dripping with clotting blood...

Wild dog packs are pretty common in the outskirts of populated areas of Aquilonia. They are often the remnants of hunting expeditions gone wrong or formerly domesticated sheep dogs that have been set loose. No matter how they turn feral they form large packs of scavengers that conduct the occasional hunt for a wayward human. In the case of this encounter, they are not only hungry – but are also protecting their meal from the Player Characters.

Their meal will likely not have much on him or her except for blood-soaked clothing, a dagger or shortsword, 2d6 silver coins, and perhaps (15% chance) some small piece of inexpensive jewellery worth 2d6 x 10 sp.

Statistics for the Feral Dogs can be found in the encounters section on page 36.

WARY HUNGER

‘Do not be alarmed,’ says a gruff voice from out of the darkness, ‘my name is Rugarius and I mean you no harm.’ It is produced by a tall man wrapped in layers of fur and leather, who now walks out of the gloom with his bow held at his side and a brace of hares in the other hand. ‘I heard your footfalls and thought you might have a cooking fire to sear these. A cup of wine or water, and a meal we will have.’

Rugarius is a local hunter from the outskirts of Sicas who frequently travels these roads and paths in search of small game. He is not above scavenging goods from the corpses of the remains left behind by bandits

or predators, but he always reports their location to the next patrol he comes across. He is a wary but fair man looking to make the most out of the life he has chosen.

This trip has lasted him four days thus far, and he has only managed to acquire four hares and a pheasant. He has already cleaned the pheasant and has many small strips of its meat soaking in a small keg of brine in his backpack. He has a few additional pieces of hunting equipment and the like, but he is most interested in having a little camaraderie and a safe place to stay for the rest of the evening. He is a bit more wary than normal due to a gang of thugs and thieves that recently moved through the area on the same path as the Player Characters (the Bloody Dawn).

Once he has a better idea that the Player Characters are not members of the gang or another group of bandits or highwaymen, he will gladly share his recent kills with them over a small cooking fire he will suggest they make. In exchange for the protection of the group he will share a single meal of hare, but if the Player Characters decide to trade he will gladly part with all his hares (so long as he can clean them and keep the furs).

If they befriend him, Rugarius will let them in on a little secret about getting in and out of Sicas without having to pay the gate fees. On the northwest side of the wall, just over the river crossing is a sewage venting aqueduct that has a very large (and thankfully dry!) bank on either side that he frequently uses to avoid the gate fee. He will explain that horses will not likely make it without dipping into the wastewater, and that the trip can only be made safely at night due to lack of real lighting in that area since it leads into the market Square.

He will also speak a bit of information about the few gangs that he knows about, and how best to avoid trouble when in Sicas. If asked, he will have the following things to say:

- ✦ **‘The Jackals are loan sharks and gambling thieves. Beware their dice games and never accuse them of cheating...they cut out peoples’ eyes for that.’**
- ✦ **‘The Wyverns are a bunch of slaving thugs that specialise in lotus-addled concubines. They keep most of their wares at *The Wyvern*, a tavern and brothel in the Pit. Everyone goes there if they want a warm body for a few coins.’**



❖ **‘A new player has been seen moving into town in the last week, the Bloody Dawn. They are Zingaran cutthroats and muggers, and have chosen to prey upon the poor people in the Pit. They probably won’t last long with their predations, but it will not be a pretty end – gang wars rarely are.’**

He will not choose to take any watches, and will say all of his goodbyes before he falls asleep. In the morning he will already be gone, having slipped away for the best pre-dawn hunting.

If Rugarius is instead attacked or threatened, he will at first offer a few silvers for safe passage. If that does not work, his skinning knife is quite sharp. If he can escape into woods or underbrush, he will do so. He will then report the Player Characters to the next Aquilonian patrol he runs into – making their secret career with the Black Legion a tumultuous one when Pallantides finds out what they have been up to.

Statistics for Rugarius the Wary Hunter can be found in the encounters section on page 37.

WAYWARD FARM BOY

‘Hello?’ a hoarse voice says sheepishly from somewhere in the darkness, ‘Hello? Can you help me?’ A dirty young man in a torn poncho of worn leathers walks into the path with his hands in front of him, showing he has no weaponry in his hands. ‘Are you coming from Sicas?’

The young man is named Barrett, and he is a local farmer’s son who took out the ox cart to reap in the orchard harvest. The ox was bitten by a snake and died two days ago, and he did not know what to do. He walked toward what he thought was the main road and got turned around, now he is very lost. He retraced his steps by the light of the next morning and found that his ox was ravaged by wolves or dogs and most of his harvest was picked over by crows.

He has no money, no map, no ox and no harvest – and he has no idea which way is his home. All he has is six more apples in his pockets, a small knife to defend him, and the hope that he will run into someone that can help him get back to and *into* Sicas to find his father.

The Player Characters could point him in the right direction, offer to escort him, or just ignore his plight and move along without him.

If they choose to simply direct him toward town, but imply that they are heading toward Sicas too, he will try to persuade them to let him follow them. He knows that this area is not a safe one at night, and he wants to get home safely. He cannot promise them anything at all in payment, save for a few apples, and he *knows* that his father is going to beat him for losing the ox and harvest cart, but he promises to repay them somehow.

If they offer straightaway to escort him to Sicas, he will be ecstatic and offer each Player Character an apple in thanks. He will simply follow along, asking the Player Characters to tell him all about their adventures, and will marvel at even the most rudimentary thing they claim to have accomplished. He will not be the stealthiest of travellers in most cases, and could pose a problem if the Player Characters ever try to be quiet.

If they decide to ignore his persuasion and leave him behind without so much as a pointed direction, he will choose to try and follow them from afar instead. He is not very good at hiding or being quiet, so it will likely be a short while before he is discovered by the Player Characters. Depending on how they deal with his shadowing of them, he might have to resort to begging them for help. If they threaten him in any way, he will cry out loudly for help and then run off in a random direction – only to return if this encounter is rolled a second time.

Statistics for Barrett the Wayward Farm Boy can be found in the encounters section on page 37.

WOLF PACK ATTACK!

The Player Characters are set upon by a small but hungry pack of wolves.

There is a loud growling in the darkness, and a cloud parts above you to shine moonlight into the yellow eyes of several hungry wolves.

There are 2d3 grey wolves that have smelled the Player Characters’ supplies and have come in search of food, but are happy to attack them for some fresh meat



instead. Unless someone makes a Handle Animal DC 25 skill check to make the perfect sound that will scare the beasts away, they will surely attack the Player Characters – starting with the smallest or most wounded one first in order to try and ‘cull the herd’.

Statistics for the Aquilonian Grey Wolves can be found in the encounters section on page 38.

NEARING THE END OF THE TRIP

After the last encounter is dealt with on the road to Sicas, all of the Player Characters should be asked to make both a Spot and Survival skill check.

The Spot check DC is only 12, which will point out a thin plume of smoke trailing into the grey sky from just a few miles beyond their line of sight.

The Survival check DC is 15, but it will reveal many sets of human footprints in the growingly

muddy ground headed toward that smoke trail. If any check scores greater than a DC 20 they will also realise that while some of these tracks are fresh (a couple of days at most), there are also many layers of older tracks. This shows that the trail leading to the smoke is an older, frequently used one.

The trail of smoke is the chimney at the *Fordhouse*, where the next encounter will take place unless the Player Characters decide to go the long route around the river (adding almost two weeks to their journey).

THE FORDHOUSE

Upon reaching the River Tyborr the Player Characters will have a chance to tie up their horses, and go inside a large inn called the *Fordhouse*. The owner has chosen to run a rafting business to travellers heading to and from Sicas, making a decidedly sizeable profit from merchant and miner caravans needing to cross the tumultuous river.

The *Fordhouse* is owned and operated by a large Argossean named Pertius, who has some ties to several mine owners inside the city. It is a large three-story building made of tar-sealed timber with a huge barge-like skiff floating against a wooden dock behind it. There are several covered stalls for horses or mules to be tied to the posts within, and the windows all have panes of glass keeping out the elements – an extravagance that most innkeepers cannot afford.

When the Player Characters approach, read the following description to them:

A massive building to find on the hilly plains, the inn that lies before you has a hand carved sign that reads ‘Fordhouse’ in Aquilonian hanging above its doors. Its darkly stained timber walls look old but in good repair, and the few windows that do not have their wooden shutters drawn show leaden glass behind them. A sweet smelling odour is carried from the place on the curling plume of smoke rising from the brickwork chimney.

There are seven horses of various breeds tied to posts outside the building, and you can see a young man taking off their saddles and other riding gear. He throws a heavy military saddle onto a pile with a few others as you approach. He looks your way with curiosity and a touch of displeasure.

The Player Characters might choose to talk to Sedge (the stable hand), or they could just go inside. If they talk to Sedge the following section is relevant to them. If they do not, they can move on to the inside of the *Fordhouse*.

SEGE THE STABLE HAND

Sedge is the inn's owner's nephew, who he hired to take care of the horses and pack animals that are left at the inn overnight whilst their owners stay inside. Occasionally someone will not want to take their horse or oxen into the city proper, so there is a boarding option at the *Fordhouse*. These animals are collectively looked after by Sedge, who generally likes animals more than people.

If the Player Characters come up to him, he will pause long enough to greet them begrudgingly:

'Heh,' a young man of twenty some years grunts as he moves a heavy saddle onto a pile of several others, 'you here to finish off what they started, or are you paying customers?'

Sedge is talking about the Bloody Dawn, who came this way a few hours before the Player Characters. The thugs barged into the tavern with blades drawn and a hot-headed sell-sword took a swing at them in response. The ensuing scene was utter chaos, and these seven horses are the ones that belonged to the people who died. Sedge is now getting them ready to be taken into market to be sold.

If the Player Characters inquire about the thugs, Sedge will just thumb toward the door and say 'Ask Pertius. He's cleaning up inside.'

If the Player Characters stop to try and tie up their own mounts, Sedge will shrug and explain 'Horses and mules are a silver a week, payable in advance. If you are just passing through, it'll be a minimum of 1 silver for the lot of you.'

If the Player Characters are interested in buying a horse from Sedge, he will become much friendlier and show them what he has to offer. He has three riding horses, two work horses, and two warhorses. If the optional breed variants from *The Hyborian Bestiary* are being used for the warhorses, one is a Hyborian warhorse and the other is a Nordheimer warhorse. Sedge will sell the riding horses for 75 sp each, the work horses for 50 sp

each, and the warhorses for 750 sp each. Anyone that offers to buy multiple horses will receive a discount of 2d6 sp per horse involved (roll once). He will be glad to not have to take as many animals to market if he does not have to, and will throw in the saddles for any animal he sells.

If the Player Characters buy a horse or just a saddle or two, there is a chance that Sedge will not completely have cleaned out the previous owner's goods from the saddlebags or pouch pockets. The riding saddles have a 25% chance of having a dagger and 2d6 silvers tucked into them. The pack saddle has a 45% chance of containing 2d3 random small general equipment items, and the warhorse saddles have a 10% chance of hiding a poniard or Zhaibar knife in them.

When the Player Characters are done dealing with Sedge, he will lead the horses to one of the river barges. If they offer to help him handle the animals for the trip to Sicas, he will tell them that he will let them hitch a ride over the river with him – but he is leaving very shortly. If they simply pay him to cross, he will smile broadly and accept half the normal fee (10 sp instead of 20 sp). Of course, this money is going to be pocketed by the young man instead of given to Pertius, but the Player Characters do not need to know that.

Statistics for Sedge the Stable Hand can be found in the encounters section on page 38.

INSIDE THE FORDHOUSE

It is likely that the Player Characters will want to go inside the *Fordhouse*, if only to rest their mounts and grab a drink or meal. They might be interested in what Sedge had to say (if they stopped to hear it), or they could just want to hire a river barge to get to Sicas. Whatever the reason, if the Player Characters go into the inn, they will enter the following scene.

The door creaks heavily under your hands, and the sweet smell of cooking sugar biscuits mixed liberally with the coppery smell of spilt blood strikes your nostrils. As your eyes adjust to the smoky haze you have walked into, you can see that the whole inner room of this inn looks as though it had been through a disaster. Tables are overturned, a few chairs are smashed, broken glass and spilled ale is scattered everywhere. At one end of the



room there are seven dead bodies, five of whom are covered by thin tablecloths through which blood stains have seeped through.

‘Hello,’ an older man says with a heavy sigh, ‘it might not look like it, but we are still open for business. I’m Pertius, what can I do for you?’

Pertius is the owner, cook, manager and barkeep of the *Fordhouse*. He refuses to hire any outside help in an effort to keep the profits for himself, which is why it is taking him so long to clean up the mess left behind by the Bloody Dawn.

If asked, he will explain that a group of thugs called the Bloody Dawn came charging in early that morning to try and steal the coffer:

‘They just barged on in, blades drawn and everything,’ he explains, ‘and started moving on my coin box. One of the patrons, a sell-sword by the looks of him, drew on my behalf and everything went badly.’

He points to one of the covered bodies, ‘Poor guy got stuck under his chin for his efforts, too. It is sad, really, so few heroes left in this world

anymore.’ He shakes his head and clicks his tongue in sad disgust, ‘He got two of them, though, before they turned tail and ran. Bloody dawn indeed, more like bloody cowards the lot of them.’

If the Player Characters want to use some of the services of the *Fordhouse*, the standard pricing is as shown on the table below.

If the Player Characters offer to help Pertius clean up around the room he will give them up to a total of 10 sp worth of goods and services for free, but he will not advertise that fact until they begin helping him.

Should they get him talking about other things, such as advice on getting by in Sicas or the sightings of a Stygian rider, he has the following pieces of information he could give. Each statement is marked as to whether or not it is true or false for Games Masters to use if they wish to expand upon the area later. If false, there is also an explanation as to why.

✦ The Bloody Dawn came from Tarantia, and they are not going to last long in Sicas. They are just too reckless and the established gangs will simply not have it. They will be decorating the gutters with their blood within a fortnight, to be sure. **TRUE**



Fordhouse Services Pricing

Listed Service	Cost
Ale, large mug	½ sp
Wine, pint glass	1 sp
Water, pint glass	1 sp
Clean Water, pint glass	1 ½ sp
Hot Bath, twelve pails	3 sp
Stable Service, one week	1 sp
Single Room	½ sp per night
Double Room	¾ sp per night
Today's Stew	¼ sp
Today's Meat	½ sp
Today's Bread	¼ sp
River Crossing, per man	20 sp
River Crossing, per steed	10 sp
Travel Ration, per day's worth	1 sp
Advice	Market Price

- ⊗ Supposedly a group of Set cultists manage the mining companies that run new silver mines further up river. **FALSE** – This is just a rumour spread by the jeweller's guild to drive the price of silver down.
- ⊗ The Pit is the cheapest place to try and live in Sicas without working the mine, but it is also the most dangerous. If there are more Bloody Dawn agents in Sicas already, the ones that came through here will likely join them soon. **TRUE**
- ⊗ The Miner's Guild has hired out to additional workers recently, and one of them employs criminal labour from Sicas' pillory. It is a bad idea altogether, and the Guild will end up paying for it when the criminals rebel against the honest labourers. **TRUE**
- ⊗ Bombas, the King's Reeve of Sicas, is a loyal supporter of King Conan's crown and is trying to get a decent degree of control over Sicas' crime. **FALSE** – Bombas is corrupt, and only keeps as much a rein on crime as he can profit from without bringing King Conan's soldiers to Sicas.
- ⊗ Although the *Iron Skull Inn* is the most notorious of drinking and sleeping establishments, the Red Butcher gang will not allow unsanctioned violence to happen inside their turf. They are very protective of the old building, and will kill to protect it from unwanted outside violence. **TRUE**
- ⊗ Never trust any Shemite working in the market bazaar; they are all cheats and liars looking only to make extra coin from your purses. **FALSE** – Although

many are crooked and expert hagglers, there are several Shemite merchants that are exceptionally fair. Pertius is just biased against them for the horrible deals he gets on wine and flour from one of them.

- ⊗ There has been a mysterious rider seen south of town atop a jet black horse. The rider is cloaked in greys and crimson, and he seems to travel alone. Pertius' last customer leaving Sicas told him that he saw the rider near the Pit. **TRUE**

Pertius enjoys company and loves to cook; if the Player Characters befriend him they will have made a genuinely useful ally. He is originally from south in Argos, but settled here for a woman that left him a few years afterwards. Her sister had a son, Sedge, and Pertius did the family a favour and hired the young man to run the stable and pilot the fording barges.

If the Player Characters manage to search the seven corpses, the following descriptions note what they might find. Pertius had not gotten around to fleecing the bodies yet when the Player Characters arrived and he stopped doing what he was doing, so they might be able to claim some items from them if they are sly or overly persuasive with him.

- ⊗ An Aquilonian farmer with his throat cut to the base of his chin has 4 sp in his pocket and a well-crafted copper bracelet marked with the sign of Mitra (worth 10 sp).
- ⊗ An Aquilonian merchant has no sign of wounds. A Heal skill check DC 16 will show that he died from choking on a piece of chicken. He has 30 sp in his pouch and a pair of fine silver earrings in one ear (worth 25 sp each).
- ⊗ An Aquilonian traveller with a single slash across his leg, deep enough to cut the artery there. He has 12 sp in his pouch and a shortsword on his hip.
- ⊗ A Bossonian bowyer has a pair of throwing knives in his chest, one deep enough to have sliced a lung. He has 101 sp (from selling a batch of Bossonian longbows in Sicas) and a single Bossonian longbow (strung for a +3 Str) on his back.
- ⊗ A tattooed and armoured Aesir man with a greatsword on his back and roughly a dozen small cuts and stab wound on his chest and back has 2 sp. He is wearing a mail shirt and breastplate marked with engraved bear's paws over the chest. This was the sell-sword Pertius spoke of.





- ❖ A Zingaran man in face paint and a dark cloak is cleft from his collar to his breastbone, and has three daggers and a pouch of 22 silvers.
- ❖ Another Zingaran, this one a woman, bears the same cloak but was killed by several puncture wounds to her lower abdomen. In her pocket is a pair of stiletto knives and 8 sp.

If they inquire about a river crossing to get to Sicas, Pertius will point at the sign showing the prices and explain that his nephew Sedge is going to be taking some horses over the river in a little while. If the Player Characters make it sound as if they will be wanting to eat, drink or stay overnight before they want to cross the river Pertius will open the window facing the stable area and shout to Sedge to hold off until 'paying customers' want to go. The river barge will be ready for the Player Characters whenever they want to pay the fee and head toward Sicas.

Statistics for Pertius the Innkeeper can be found in the encounters section on page 39.

When the Player Characters are finally ready to trek across the River Tyborr and go into Sicas, this encounter is over and Sedge will take them across.

THE RIVER BARGE TRIP

The four river barges are roughly twenty fide wide, thirty feet long, flat and have a short railing along the sides to help keep drunken passengers from falling off into the river. This far upstream the Tyborr can have a decent current to its deeper waters, making it a treacherous swim (-2 penalty to Swim checks), and tough to navigate any form of low-bottomed boats. The raft-like barges ride atop the faster moving water, but still require a thick, previously tied hemp rope used to drag the barge across the river.

Sedge has used these wide-paddled river barges for several years now, and is very good at his job. He does not make many mistakes, and considering it is only two hundred feet across, it is not too long of a trip.

Doing this trip alone takes Sedge normally takes half an hour, double this time if he is also trying to take care of the horses he needs to sell at market (see above). Anyone with Profession (sailor) or another useful skill (Rope Use?) of at

least 3 ranks can give him help steering the barge while he checks on the horses, allowing him to take the trip in normal time. Conversely, anyone with at least 3 ranks in Handle Animal, Profession (stable hand) or a similar skill can help him with the animals in order to let him worry about the barge; affecting the time of the trip similarly.

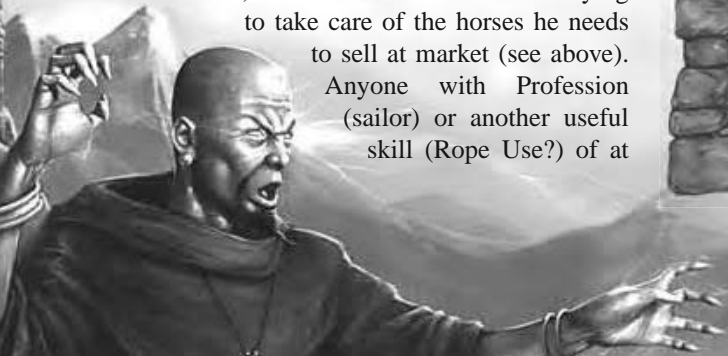
Unless the Player Characters do something unforeseen and foolish, the river barge trip will be uneventful. This brings them to the shores outside of Sicas' northern Bridge Ward – and the next portion of this chapter.

PROPHECY POINTS

- ❖ No attempt to make the trip faster (horseback rather than on foot, using map, etc.) +1 **Prophecy Points**
- ❖ Anyone outside of the Player Characters learned of their hunting of the Stygian Rider +1 **Prophecy Points**

EXPERIENCE POINTS

- ❖ Basic Roleplaying Award for portraying characters well (200 xp)
- ❖ Dealing successfully with an Aquilonian Patrol (100 xp)
- ❖ Each animal-based (Badger Burrow, Scavenging Dog Pack, etc.) encounter defeated or circumvented (150 xp)
- ❖ Each Bandit on the road to Sicas that is brought to justice (killed, bound, etc.) (100 xp)
- ❖ Capturing the escaped criminal, Bergeri (100 xp)
- ❖ Dealing with any passing Travellers or Merchant Caravans without giving away the mission or making undo enemies out of them (100 xp)
- ❖ Helping the Injured Mercenary, Lost Merchant or Wayward Farm Boy (200 xp)
- ❖ Making a Friend of Pertius or Sedge at the *Fordhouse* (200 xp)
- ❖ Getting across the River Tyborr into the outskirts of Sicas (250 xp)



ENCOUNTERS

AQUILONIAN PATROLMEN

Hailing from various walks of life, Aquilonian patrol soldiers are trained to be as brave and stalwart as they can be in the face of some of the dangers they may have to deal with. They are tough and skilled, but are still only hired constabulary given a modicum of decent power to watch over the wilderness roads and trails.

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian Soldier 1)

Initiative: +4 (+0 Dex, +0 Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

Sensory Traits: Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages: Aquilonian (20% speak Bossonian or Argossean)

Dodge Defence: 10 (+0 Dex, +0 class)

Parry Defence: 12 (+1 Str, +0 class, +1 Parry)

DR: 6 (+6 Breastplate)

Hit Points: 11 hp

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +3

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 25 ft.

Attack: Arming Sword +3 melee (1d10+1, AP 2)

Full Attack: Arming Sword +3 melee (1d10+1, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: +2

Special Attacks: Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 8

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Intimidate and Search)

Feats: Weapon Focus (Arming Sword)

Skills: Climb +3, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +2, Ride +2, Search +4

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 2 (+2)

Possessions: Aquilonian Breastplate, Aquilonian Arming Sword, Knife, Riding Horse, 1d4+1 sp

BADGER

The Aquilonian plains and woodlands are riddled with numerous badger burrows, which are frequently the cause of many injuries that weaken travellers for deadlier predators to come and finish them off. Aquilonian badgers are two-and-a-half foot long mammals that are coloured dark brown with ivory/white stripes, and are notoriously dangerous combatants for their size. It has been known for an angry badger to kill a man in short order, but not commonly.

Small Animal

Initiative: +5 (+2 Dex, +3 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 14 (+1 size, +3 Dex)

DR: 1

Hit Dice: 1d8+2 (6 hp)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft., 10 ft. burrow

Attack: Claws +4 melee finesse (1d3)

Full Attack: 2 Claws +4 melee finesse (1d3) and bite –1 melee finesse (1d4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: –3

Special Attacks: Rage

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Track

Skills: Escape Artist +7

COMBAT

Aquilonian badgers are feared in combat for their deep and tireless rages, which they fly into whenever injured or when protecting their young.

Rage (Ex): A badger that takes damage in combat flies into a berserk rage the following round, clawing and biting madly until either it or its opponent is dead. It gains +4 Strength, +4 Constitution and –2 Defence.

The creature cannot end its rage voluntarily, and will attack the closest target that most recently injured it.



HIGHWAY BANDITS

The roads and paths surrounding Sicas and the Tarantia outskirts are riddled with secret havens for highwaymen and bandits that prey upon the travellers that move between the two cities. The patrols would like to think that they discourage such criminal behaviour, but they are not everywhere at all times.

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian Thief 1)

Initiative: +4 (+2 Dex, +2 Reflexes)
Sensory Traits: Listen +3, Spot +3
Languages: Aquilonian (20% speak Argossean)

Dodge Defence: 12 (+2 Dex, +0 class)
Parry Defence: 11 (+1 Str, +0 class)
DR: 3 (+3 Quilted Jerkin)
Hit Points: 8 hp
Saves: Fort +0, Ref +4, Will -1
Defensive Specials: -

Speed: 30 ft.
Attack: Dagger +1 melee (1d4+1, AP 1) or Crossbow +2 ranged (2d6, AP 4)
Full Attack: Dagger +1 melee (1d4+1, AP 1) or Crossbow +2 ranged (2d6, AP 4)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)
Base Attack: +0
Grapple: +1
Special Attacks: Sneak Attack +1d6/+1d8, Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)
Sorcery Knowledge: -

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10
Special Qualities: Adaptability (Hide and Intimidate), Sneak Attack Style (Dagger), Trap Disarming
Feats: Stealthy
Skills: Appraise +3, Hide +6, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +6, Search +6, Sense Motive +3, Survival +3
Code of Honour: None
Reputation and Social Standing: 1 (-1)
Possessions: Hand-sewn Quilted Jerkin, 2 Daggers, Crossbow with 1d6 bolts, 2d4+1 sp

BOAR

Although primarily found in the wooded areas of Aquilonia, some sizeable boar can be found roaming the plains and river banks in search of food or mates. They are ill-tempered beasts apt to attack travellers without warning or mercy when they wander by or if humans trespass through the boars' territory. They are generally avoided rather than fought, though they are sometimes hunted down by nobles for bragging rights. Hunters will sometimes target boar for their porcine meat and thick hide, but it is a dangerous gamble.

Medium Animal

Initiative: +3 (Reflex)
Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +7, Spot +5
Languages: -

Dodge Defence: 11 (+1 natural)
DR: 6
Hit Dice: 3d8+12 (25 hp)
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2
Defensive Specials: Ferocity

Speed: 40 ft.
Attack: Gore +4 melee (1d10+3, AP 5)
Full Attack: Gore +4 melee (1d10+3, AP 5)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)
Base Attack: +2
Grapple: +4
Special Attacks: Ferocity
Sorcery Knowledge: -

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 4
Special Qualities: -
Feats: Alertness, Toughness
Skills: -

COMBAT

A single boar is a powerful combatant that can tear a man from gut to throat with a single swipe of its sharp and dense tusks. Even warriors on horseback are not above being attacked, the boar cutting the steed out from under them in a few bone-shattering impacts.

Ferocity (Ex): A boar is such a tenacious combatant that it continues to fight without penalty even while disabled or dying.



BURGERI THE ESCAPED CRIMINAL

Charged with the rape and murder of a young Zingaran girl in The Pit, Burgeri was spared the hangman's noose in an effort to try and speed up silver mining by the new allies of the mine factor. He escaped by sharpening a stone into a knife, slitting the throat of a guard to steal his key, and ran northward.

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian Thief 2)

Initiative: +4 (+1 Dex, +3 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Listen +4, Spot +2

Languages: Aquilonian, Zingaran

Dodge Defence: 12 (+1 Dex, +1 class)

Parry Defence: 13 (+2 Str, +1 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 13 hp

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +4, Will -1 (-4 versus Corruption)

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Primitive Dagger +3 melee (1d4+2)

Full Attack: Dagger +3 melee (1d4+2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: +3

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack +1d6/+1d8, Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 7, Cha 8

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Intimidate and Move Silently), Sneak Attack Style (Dagger), Trap Disarming

Feats: Eyes of the Cat, No Honour

Skills: Bluff +3, Climb +4, Disable Device +4, Hide +6, Intimidate +4, Jump +5, Move Silently +5

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 2 (-1)

Possessions: Poor Quality Peasant's Outfit, Primitive Stone Daggers, Manacle Key

VAGO THE INJURED MERCENARY

A thick-limbed sell-sword from Ophir, Vago came to central Aquilonia in search of riches and fame bought with the edge of a blade. He found it, but he also found that travelling alone – no matter how tough you might be – is foolish.

As a note, Vago's hit points are at the amount currently in parenthesis due to his injuries when the Player Characters find him.

Medium Humanoid (Ophirean Borderer 3 / Soldier 2)

Initiative: +9 (+2 Dex, +3 Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

Sensory Traits: Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages: Aquilonian, Kothic, Ophirean (literate)

Dodge Defence: 10 (+2 Dex, +2 class)

Parry Defence: 12 (+2 Str, +2 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 31 hp (6 hp)

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +3

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Arming Sword +8 melee (1d10+2, AP 2) or Crossbow +8 ranged (2d6, AP 4)

Full Attack: Arming Sword +8 melee (1d10+2, AP 2) or Crossbow +8 ranged (2d6, AP 4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +5

Grapple: +7

Special Attacks: Combat Style (archery), Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 11

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Intimidate and Tumble), Favoured Terrain (plains)

Feats: Endurance, Track, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Weapon Focus (Arming Sword), Weapon Focus (Crossbow)

Skills: Appraise +3, Bluff +2, Diplomacy +2, Hide +5, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (geography) +6, Profession (mercenary) +7, Ride +3, Search +5

Code of Honour: Mercenary

Reputation and Social Standing: 7 (+3)

Possessions: Ophirean Mail Shirt and Breastplate (not currently worn), Superior Crimson Cloak, Aquilonian Arming Sword, Crossbow with 4 Bolts, Pouch of Scavenged Jewellery (2d6 pieces worth 1d6 x10 sp each), Supposed Kothic Treasure Map, Exquisite Silken Slippers (for small, female feet), 2 days rations



ORIENKA THE LOST MERCHANT

Beautiful and persuasive, Orienka is a Zamorian saleswoman that uses her shapely body and alluring accent to make a huge profit with her wares. Although she is not found here in her best attire or attitude, she still carries herself with a flair that most Aquilonians find disarming, if not enchanting.

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian Commoner 3)

Initiative: +2 (+1 Dex, +1 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +4, Spot +2

Languages: Aquilonian (heavily accented), Shemitish, Zamorian

Dodge Defence: 12 (+1 Dex, +1 class)

Parry Defence: 10 (-1 Str, +1 class)

DR: -

Hit Points: 8 hp

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5

Defensive Specials: -

Speed: 40 ft.

Attack: Unarmed +0 melee (1d3-1 nonlethal)

Full Attack: Unarmed +0 melee (1d3-1 nonlethal)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: +0

Special Attacks: -

Sorcery Knowledge: -

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 17

Special Qualities: Illiterate

Feats: Fleet-footed, Persuasive

Skills: Appraise +6, Bluff +8, Diplomacy +9, Hide +4, Knowledge (geography) +3, Profession (merchant) +8, Ride +2, Sense Motive +4

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 3 (+1)

Possessions: Fine Merchant's Outfit, Superior Noble's Outfit, 3 Zhaibar knives, 2 Whips, 12 Hyrkanian bowstrings (spun for +1 Str), 3 days worth of Superior Rations, 10 pieces of silver jewellery worth 15 sp each, 1 Bolt of Red Silk (worth 100 sp), 2 ounces Khitan Allspice (worth 25 sp an ounce), 2 pounds of Salt, 24 Sewing Needles, a box of 24 Serrated Arrowheads (-1 to hit, +1 damage), 8 feet of Spooled Copper Wire (worth 10 sp a foot), Riding Horse, 7 ¾ sp

FERAL DOGS

There are numerous packs of abandoned or forgotten dogs roaming the outskirts of many Hyborian cities, even the 'metropolitan' expanses of Aquilonia. These packs of dogs are not likely to attack foes that outnumber them unless they are hungry or sick, but a lone traveller has much to fear from a group of feral hounds.

Small Animal

Initiative: +5 (+3 Dex, +2 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +5, Spot +5

Languages: -

Dodge Defence: 14 (+1 size, +3 Dex)

DR: 1

Hit Dice: 1d8+2 (6 hp)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1

Defensive Specials: -

Speed: 40 ft.

Attack: Bite +2 melee (1d4+1)

Full Attack: Bite +2 melee (1d4+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: -2

Special Attacks: -

Sorcery Knowledge: -

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Special Qualities: -

Feats: Alertness, Track

Skills: Jump +7, Move Silently +5, Survival +2

COMBAT

Feral dogs generally hunt and scavenge in packs, chasing and exhausting most prey until they can finally drag it down. They are rarely much of a worry to a skilled warrior, but six or seven of the beasts can overwhelm even a seasoned soldier.

Skills: Feral dogs have a +4 racial bonus on Jump checks.



RUGARIUS THE WARY HUNTER

A skilled hunter and a shrewd tracker, Rugarius is not a fantastic conversationalist or much of a hit with the ladies of Sicas, his home town. He is unattractive and gruff, but he always brings numerous and well-tanned hides and furs to market and is never without a good quip when the time calls for it.

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian Nomad 3)

Initiative: +6 (+3 Dex, +3 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-Light Vision, Listen +6, Spot +4

Languages: Aquilonian, Shemetish

Dodge Defence: 14 (+3 Dex, +1 class)

Parry Defence: 12 (+1 Str, +1 class)

DR: 3 (+3 Quilted Jerkin)

Hit Points: 26 hp

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +4

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Skinning Knife +3 melee (1d3+2, AP 1) or Hunting Bow +7 ranged (1d8+1, AP 1)

Full Attack: Skinning Knife +3 melee (1d3+2, AP 1) or Hunting Bow +7 ranged (1d8+1, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +4

Special Attacks: Point Blank Shot, Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 9

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Hide and Survival), Born to the Saddle, Favoured Terrain (plains) +1

Feats: Endurance, Eyes of the Cat, Track, Weapon Focus (Hunting Bow)

Skills: Climb +4, Hide +8, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (local) +3, Knowledge (nature) +4, Move Silently +5, Profession (hunter) +6, Ride +4, Search +4, Survival +8

Code of Honour: Barbaric

Reputation and Social Standing: 3 (+1)

Possessions: Aquilonian Quilted Jerkin, Superior Hunter's Outfit, Skinning Knife, Hunting Bow (+1) with 14 Arrows, 4 Dressed Hares, 1 Jar of Brine Pheasant, 4 days' worth of Rations, 12 ½ sp

BARRETT THE WAYWARD FARM BOY

Large for a boy of fourteen summers, Barrett is a kind of simple lad with a heart of gold. He is not often let out of the farmstead alone, and his loss of the ox-wagon and apples harvest is exactly why. He should be left to tending the fields and lifting heavy things.

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian Commoner 1)

Initiative: –1 (–1 Dex, +0 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages: Aquilonian

Dodge Defence: 9 (–1 Dex, +0 class)

Parry Defence: 12 (+2 Str, +0 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 6 hp

Saves: Fort +2, Ref –1, Will +2

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Unarmed Strike +2 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal) or Knife +2 melee (1d3+2, AP 1)

Full Attack: Unarmed Strike +2 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal) or Knife +2 melee (1d3+2, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +0

Grapple: +2

Special Attacks: Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 9, Con 14, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 13

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Handle Animal and Profession), Illiteracy

Feats: Endurance

Skills: Handle Animal +3, Profession (farmhand) +3, Ride +4, Survival +3

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 1 (+0)

Possessions: Simple Clothing, Knife, 6 Apples



AQUILONIAN GREY WOLVES

Common grey wolves are found throughout the central and northern parts of Aquilonia, Nemedra and Brythunia, as well as the mountains and hills to the north of the Eastern Desert. They are night time hunters that seek out easy prey first, dragging down the sick and wounded in order to grab as much of a meal as they can before larger foes can interrupt them. They are stealthy and quite vicious, but can be spooked by a good enough sign of aggression.

Medium Animal

Initiative: +5 (+2 Dex, +3 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +6, Spot +4

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 13 (+2 Dex, +1 natural)

DR: 2

Hit Dice: 2d8+4 (13 hp)

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 50 ft.

Attack: Bite +3 melee finesse (1d8 +1, AP 1)

Full Attack: Bite +3 melee finesse (1d8 +1, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: +2

Special Attacks: Trip

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Track

Skills: **Skills:** Hide +4, Move Silently +5, Survival +1 (+5)

COMBAT

Grey wolves rarely attack humans or prey of Large-size unless they have a pack of five or more, in which case they coordinate their attacks against them, harrying the prey with snaps and flanking bites until it is exhausted. Once the prey is too tired to fight the wolves move in for the kill and summary feast. The strongest of the wolves use their trip attack to make a target prone, while the rest of the pack then descends upon them with their strong and agile muzzles.

Trip (Ex): An Aquilonian grey wolf that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent (+1 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the wolf.

Skills: Aquilonian grey wolves receive a +4 racial bonus to Survival checks when tracking by scent.

SEGE THE STABLE HAND

Sent to live with his uncle after being caught picking pockets in the market by his mother, Sedge is always looking for a good way to make enough money to run away. He knows that the lands around Sicas are not safe, and that he is not much of a warrior unless he can sneak up on someone, so for now he just tries to steal as much coin as he can from his uncle's profits and just tries to stay out of other troubles.

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian Commoner 1 / Thief 1)

Initiative: +3 (+1 Dex, +2 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages: Aquilonian

Dodge Defence: 11 (+1 Dex, +0 class)

Parry Defence: 11 (+1 Str, +0 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 9 hp

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Dagger +1 melee (1d4+1, AP 2)

Full Attack: Dagger +1 melee (1d4+1, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +0

Grapple: +1

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack +1d6/+1d8, Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Handle Animal and Sleight-of-Hand), Illiteracy, Sneak Attack Style (Dagger), Trap Disarming

Feats: Alertness

Skills: Bluff +5, Handle Animal +4, Hide +4, Profession (sailor) +4, Ride +4, Sense Motive +3, Sleight-of-Hand +4, Swim +4



Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 2 (-1)

Possessions: Simple Peasant's Outfit, Dagger, 11 sp

PERTIUS THE INNKEEPER

Pertius is a shrewd businessman and an unshakeable bastion of good commercial sense. No matter how many bodies he has to clean off his floor, thieves he must pay off, or tables he must replace – he is always ready for the next set of travellers with a smile and a handshake. As long as they have coin to pay for his services, he will still offer them openly.

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian Commoner 6)

Initiative: +2 (+0 Dex, +2 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +4, Spot +6

Languages: Aquilonian, Argossean, Bossonian (dialect)

Dodge Defence: 13 (+0 Dex, +3 class)

Parry Defence: 13 (+0 Str, +3 class)

DR: 2 (+2 Leather Apron)

Hit Points: 18 hp

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +6

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Unarmed Strike +3 melee (1d6 nonlethal or lethal)

Full Attack: Unarmed Strike +3 melee (1d6 nonlethal or lethal)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +3

Special Attacks: Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 15

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Diplomacy and Profession)

Feats: Brawl, Carouser, Skill Focus (Profession (innkeeper))

Skills: Appraise +4, Bluff +5, Craft (cooking) +6, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +3, Profession (innkeeper) +12, Sense Motive +5, Sleight-of-Hand +4

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 7 (+3)

Possessions: Average Peasant's Outfit, Leather Cooking Apron, 12 sp

SICAS - VILLAINY IN SHINING SILVER

THE BRIDGE INTO SICAS

After crossing the River Tyborr and walking another five hundred feet or so, the Player Characters can begin to see the Northern Bridge Ward. The Bridge Wards are huge areas riddled with tents, kiosks and merchants looking to make a sale from those passing through. As the two Bridge Wards are the only two ways to get across the foul-watered moat and thick brick walls of the city, these areas are constantly busy night and day.

As they approach the area, read the following to them:

Although the glow and hum of the city looms behind tall stone walls, you can see a sea of activity ahead of you outside of Sicas. Tents, wagons, and throngs of people form a disorganised bazaar selling all kinds of goods and services. As you approach even closer, you begin to hear the shouts of merchants and smell the strange mixture of meats, fruits and spices that only a market can bring to you.

'Fresh eel,' one man shouts as he waves a stick of skewered rubbery things at you, 'straight from Kordava!'

'Wool, grand Vendhyan wool!'

'Bronze blades! As sharp as steel at half the price!'

The market bazaar surrounding the Bridge Ward is a good place to not only buy some supplies, but also where the Player Characters could sell some loot. Anything found in the core rulebook's equipment lists can be bought here at a +10% mark up, and anything they try to sell will fetch 50% less than its normal price.

There are also many skilled pickpockets found throughout the crowd. These pickpockets are willing to try and grab anything small and easily lifted off of a Player Character's belt or saddle (pouches, daggers and so on) as they perform the 'bump-and-grab' technique. Each Player Character has a 50% chance of being targeted by one of these thieves, and then must roll a Spot check that equals or exceeds the Sleight-of-Hand check of the pickpocket. If they do not succeed, they will notice something





‘Halt,’ says the burly and unshaven guardsman as he sets his hand on the pommel of his sword, ‘state your names, business and where ye’r travellin’ from and it be three silvers for bridge tax. Name?’ He holds out his hand for the coin...

The Player Characters will likely come up with some kind of lie to tell the bridge guardsman, and the Games Master should have any who do roll a Bluff skill check. The guard hates his job and is only half-listening to them in the first place, so unless anyone rolls a natural ‘1’ on their Bluff skill, he will let them in without issue. A natural ‘1’ on the Bluff means such a ridiculous story just came rolling out of the character’s mouth that even the guard is concerned – at which point he will demand five silvers as hush money immediately.

Unless the Player Characters are foolish they should have no trouble getting into the city using the funds that Pallantides gave them.

Passing the guard, you walk up onto the wood and brickwork bridge that goes over the muddy waters of the moat below. As you crest the bridge and walk between the heavy gates of the wall, you look down upon the expanse of Sicas. Cut into distinct sections, you can see the smoke and steam rising from the dark and sooty area devoted to smithing and smelting, and the bright colours of the market square looks like a silk and canvas garden at the base of the bridge.

being gone later, whenever they try to go for it again. If they catch the pickpocket’s attempt, they can make an immediate Grapple check to catch the thief’s hand. If they fail, a chase will surely ensue.

Such activity is so common in the Bridge Ward that the guards do not pay any attention to the chase or scuffle. If a proven pickpocket is brought to a guard after being captured in some way, the guard will ask for three eye witnesses (which the other Player Characters can serve as if need be). If he gets the three witnesses to agree with the pickpocket’s activities, he will draw his arming sword and lop off the thief’s hand right there on the spot. Sicas is not known for its long or tedious judicial system; it moves quickly when it moves at all.

Eventually the Player Characters will wind their way through all the sellers and stands to get to the front of the line leading over the moat bridge into Sicas.

There is a single Sicas guardsman standing at the gate. When the Player Characters reach their turn in line to get into the city, read the following:

Statistics for average Sicas Citizens, Pickpockets and the Sicas Guardsman can be found in the encounters section on page 51.

WHAT ABOUT THE SECRET ENTRANCE?

The hunter Rugarius may have told the Player Characters about a secret way into Sicas through a sewer aqueduct in the northern wall if they ran into him on the road to the city. If they choose to use this entrance instead of the Bridge Ward, Games Masters may want to skip the Bridge Ward scene altogether and allow the Player Characters to sneak into the city with a few Hide and Move Silently skill checks, or perhaps a Ride check or two to keep out of the sewage if on horseback.

THE DISTRICTS OF SICAS

This section details some of the various events that could attract the Player Characters' attention while they are moving about the city of Sicas. It is split into the four districts of the city itself to help Games Masters arrange what sorts of encounters occur in these areas; the Bridge Wards, the Square, Shanty Town, and the Pit.

While some of these events are singular in nature and have nothing to do with the overall story arc of *Trial of Blood*, some are pieces to the campaign. These latter encounters have their headers marked with a '*'.

BRIDGE WARDS

The two massive city gates surrounding Sicas' filthy moat of sewage and polluted wastewater have become huge bazaars of sellers, beggars and thieves looking to get the best deals from those coming into Sicas and the best price out of those leaving it. Several hundred people per ward live in tents and lean-tos in order to always be ready to make their next deal or sale.

There are two distinct Bridge Wards, the Northern Ward that the Player Characters likely entered through that leads down into the Square and the market district of Sicas; and the Southern Ward that leads into the crafting blocks of the Pit. To better help Gamesmasters any encounters that are North-South specific have been labelled. Other than those noted, all other encounter segments could occur at either Bridge Ward.

❁ TOWN CRIER

Although the King's Reeve of Sicas does not pay anyone to serve as criers of local news, a private guild has taken up the duty for whatever coin they earn on the street for their elaborate and dramatic performances. One such of these town criers will be shouting out the recent news to the gathered travellers in a Bridge Ward just as the Player Characters are passing by.

The following bits of information are what the crier will occasionally repeat loudly, accenting everything with grand gestures of his hands and wide-brimmed hat:

- ❁ 'Gate taxes to rise again! Rising taxes mean rising safety from the thieves of this world! From two to three, and now from three to three and a half silvers

to pass the gates! In one month's time, marked and signed, gate tax goes to three and a half silvers!'

- ❁ 'Three ales for the price of two at the *Iron Skull Inn* for one week to celebrate Mitra's Day! Three ales, price of two!'
- ❁ 'Girl gone missing! The eldest daughter of Baelerius Harp was taken from the steps of his home, and now she cannot be found! A girl of two and twenty years, young Shevan is dark of hair and fair of face. Fifty silvers to her rescuer!'
- ❁ 'Murder! Murder in the streets of the Pit! Two guards dead, crushed as if by hooves, and only a glimpse of a dark rider to blame! One hundred silvers to the headsman that brings the rider to justice! Stable hands and innkeeps beware any new faces with black steeds!'

The last two news points are important to the Atlantean Prophecy. If the Player Characters research more into Baelerius Harp and his missing daughter (who is one of the marked maidens) will want to go to the *Harp's Plight* encounter in the Square section.

The two guards that were murdered in the Pit were indeed crushed to death by the Uncanny Steed that the Stygian rider came into town upon. More information on this scene can be found in the *Murder! Murder!* encounter in the Pit section.

For the town crier's statistics, use the statistics given in the encounter section on page 51 for Sicas Citizens.

NO BETTER DEAL IN TOWN

'Hassai...hold,' an old, heavily accented voice says from within as you pass a simple red tent, 'come in and share my tea. Weary feet, weary mind. No cost to you but time. Come in and see what the world beyond yours can offer.'

The old man is Pho, a Khitan merchant of various items that the Player Characters might be able to buy from him. The inside of his tent is covered in oddities and trinkets, and the old man himself is a withered old Khitan in a colourful silken robe. His fingernails and facial hair are very long and thin, but he moves with more grace than might be expected.

If the Player Characters are rude and simply ask to see what is for sale and the prices of them, Pho will become visibly disappointed



Khitan Oddity Merchant Inventory

Item	Silver Price	True Price	Item Use Description
Horsehair Charm	100 sp	Buyer's shaven hair	+1 mystic equipment bonus to Handle Animal and Ride skill checks targeting equines while attached to saddle
Monkey Tooth Earring	300 sp	A unique story about the buyer	Wearer can inflict lethal damage against demonic beings with Unarmed strikes while worn
Golden Needles	125 sp	A secret fear	+1 equipment bonus to Heal checks if used to stitch wounds
Bottled Dragon Yolk	200 sp	A truth that no one else has heard yet	Adds 1d2 Power Points permanently to character, but can never learn any further spells from the Nature School of magic
Peppered Milk	55 sp per dose	A song from buyer's homeland	Restores 1d2 points of Con damage but inflicts 1 hit point of damage and makes voice hoarse for 2d6 hours. Dose can be used twice.
Shinta Tea Leaves	25 sp per dose	Drink a cup of tea with seller	Cures 1 hit point of damage per cup, but also penalises drinker's Dex by -1 per cup for 6 hours. One dose makes 2d6 cups of tea in a single brewing.
Ivory Shavings in Quicksilver	50 sp per dose	An article of currently worn clothing off of buyer	Cures any Injected Poison if rubbed painfully into the wound, suffering 1d2 hit points of damage in the process. Dose can be used three times.
Glass Cat's Eye	200 sp	Anything the buyer had taken without the owner's permission	+1 mystical equipment bonus to Spot and Sense Motive
Khitan Razored Sword	600 sp	A finger of buyer's choice from buyer's hand	Martial Weapon; 1d8+1d6 damage; 19-20/x2; AP 5; Hardness 10; 8 hit points; 5 lb.; Slashing
Akbitanan Dagger	65 sp	Any of the buyer's currently owned weapons or armour	See page 153 of <i>The Conan Roleplaying Game Second Edition</i>

and quote the silver prices listed on the inventory table below. If they are friendly, jovial, share his tea and talk to him as a person instead of a merchant – they can instead use the true prices listed. The table not only shows the inventory and prices, but also what these strange objects do (if an explanation is required).

Unless the phrase ‘per dose’ is listed in the Silver Price of the items above, the item is unique to the shop and Pho has one to sell. If the item is listed per dose, he has 1d6+1 of the items available instead. Pho will only sell one type of item (although multiple doses to the same purchaser is alright) to each Player Character.

Statistics for Pho the Khitan Oddity Merchant can be found in the encounter section on page 53.

FRAMED THIEF (NORTHERN WARD)

‘No!’ a little girl screams, ‘I did not take it!’

‘What have we here?’ the guard shouts.

‘A thief, sir,’ one man says, ‘she took a pearl moon necklace from our stall and promptly swallowed it. I want her hand to stake to our tent pole!’

‘No! I swear by all the gods in the heavens!’ she sobs, ‘It was the bearded man!’

The Player Characters could ignore the situation while a little girl has her hand chopped off and bleeds to death in the street, or they might call for a Sense Motive DC 12 check upon the girl or her accusers. Strangely enough, neither party believes they are wrong – the merchants have the wrong person.





A fast Search or Spot skill check against the jewel thief's Hide skill will reveal the real thief to the Player Characters, as they will see a bearded Shemite tucking a pearl moon necklace into his collar, under his thick beard. If they simply point him out, the guard will shout for the man to halt – which will cause him to panic and flee. If the Player Characters go to capture the man themselves, they could save the girl and earn the respect of her textile merchant parents. If they manage to save the girl successfully in either fashion, the parents will give a 50% discount to anything the Player Characters buy from their stall (clothing and bulk fabric only).

Use the statistics for Sicas Citizens for the merchants, little girl, her family and the crowd. The jewel thief uses the listed statistics for Pickpockets, and the guard is a Sicas Guardsman. All of these statistics can be found in the Encounters.

❁ BLOODY DAWN MUGGING (SOUTHERN WARD)

‘But that stable is my life!’ a cracking voice proclaims from behind a pulled flap of a tent, ‘You cannot do this!’

‘Just hand over ye’r keys old man,’ a gruff voice with a heavy Zingaran accent says before the sound of something pliable cracking against flesh, ‘and we will let you live this day. The keys or your life, your choice.’

If the Player Characters come to the aid of the old man they will pull aside the tent flap to initially show two cloaked men standing over an elderly Aquilonian man with a split lip and eyebrow. One of the muggers is holding a folded piece of hard leather in his hand with blood on it.

The muggers are Bloody Dawn members and they will attack the Player Characters as soon as they have been discovered. It will not likely be much of a fight until the third Bloody Dawn Thug enters the tent from *behind* the Player Characters (unless they left someone watching outside), giving him a chance for a Sneak Attack upon the rearmost Player Character.

When the fight is over and the thugs are dealt with, the elderly man thanks the Player Characters and introduces himself as Rubilo Padwater. He is a stable keeper inside the Pit and a seller of horses. Not only will he sell any of his horses for half price to the Player Characters, he will offer them a bit of information that they might not have otherwise known.

‘That rider,’ he says in a whisper as he makes the sign of Mitra over his heart, ‘the one the crier shouts about. I saw him...well, his horse anyway. Black as night and twice as deep, this beast was of a breed I have never seen and obeyed the man’s commands like it understood his foreign tongue. It even nodded to him! Devilish beast, I say...’

Statistics for the Bloody Dawn Gang Thugs can be found in an earlier section on page 19, while the statistics for a common Sicas Citizen should be used for Rubilo Padwater.

THE SQUARE

The wealthiest district of Sicas, the Square contains the most expensive shops, guilds, temples, markets, offices, and noble estates the city has to offer. It is a colourful sprawl of tightly-packed streets and raised pavilions, and it would be very easy for a traveller to get lost in the crowds and swallowed up by the enamelled veneer of crime that thrives here.

Not only can the markets here supply nearly any type of goods if the buyer is willing to pay enough, but the House of Xanthus (named for one of the first mine factors) and the walled headquarters of King’s Reeve Bombas bring foreign traders and travellers from far and wide. As the commercial and political centre of a mining town, silver flows in both raw and coin forms in the Square.

❁ RAVING MADMAN IN CHAINS

‘A flying horse!’ a wild voice shouts from nearby. It is coming from a gangly, filthy vagrant currently locked tightly into a wooden pillory, rotten fruit and other substances staining his skin and the dais on which he is raised. A sign is posted above him, written in Aquilonian. ‘The devil on the back of a black horse with a buzzard’s wings! Black as night! I saw it! Beware the flying horse and its devilish rider!’

If any of the Player Characters can read Aquilonian, the sign says ‘*Artius – Rabble Rousing and Lunacy’s Rambling*’. Artius is the mentally-addled homeless man in the pillory, who is stark raving mad. If the Player Characters talk to him at all, he will alternate his speech from that of a grown man to that of a little girl, and he will talk about nonsensical things intermittent with warnings of a flying black horse.





His worries about the flying horse are real. He saw the Stygian rider fly over the wall on the Uncanny Steed to avoid the Southern Bridge Ward and any questions, and it has stuck in his already broken mind. He believed that he was seeing a devil, and he began to scream and shout through the streets in the middle of the night about it, earning him his stay in chains.

If the Player Characters can score a 20 or higher on a Diplomacy skill check with Artius to calm him down, they can get the following bits of information out of him before he begins his raving again:

- ❖ The flying horse came into Sicas over the Shanty Town wall, and then rode off toward the Square.
- ❖ The rider looked human, but Artius thinks it was a devil in human skin.
- ❖ The horse only had wings while it was flying; they disappeared into smoke when it touched ground.

❖ HARP'S FLIGHT

The Player Characters might have heard from the town criers about a missing girl, or they could simply read one of the handwritten signs in the Square about her. Baelerius Harp is a cartographer who managed to map out much of northern Aquilonia and parts of Cimmeria, and now sells copies of his maps here in Sicas.

If they choose to ever go to the Harp residence to talk to the father for more information, the following information will be revealed to them. After short introductions, Baelerius will explain:

'Shevan's mother,' Baelerius says with a slight quiver to his voice, 'died when our girl was very young. She was a Cimmerian I met while I was chronicling, and the city life was just not for her. She complained through all seven of her summers here before she passed.' He swallows hard, fighting tears. 'And now our little girl is gone. I just want her back, safe and sound. I cannot stand to lose her too...'

Baelerius was not home when Shevan was taken; he came home to find the door broken off its hinges and street mud tracked into the house by booted feet. He has repaired the door and swept up the mess, but that he drew a picture of what the track looked like.

The guardsmen did not care about the drawing at all, but he will gladly show the Player Characters if they seem amiable to the idea.

As that he is a very skilled artiste for his maps, the drawing of the track is superb. Although it will incur a -2 penalty to the Survival skill required to look over the track/drawing due to being two-dimensional, a Player Character scoring a 15 or higher will tell that the foot was not booted – but sandaled. If anyone manages to score a 20 or more however, they will know that it is a heavy-heeled sandal, as if it was built for riding or marching. Anyone with the proper Knowledge skill might be able to know that the wood-core sandals of the Stygian military leave tracks with very heavy heels.

Harp has offered 50 silvers to the public to try and find his girl, but he is willing to double that offer to the Player Characters if they can focus on bringing Shevan home. He knows that it will basically bankrupt him for the rest of the year's map sales, but he is willing to labour in the mine for a few months if it means his daughter is safe.

The statistics for Baelerius Harp should be considered to be the same as a normal Sicas Citizen, and can be found in the encounters section.

LION ON THE LOOSE!

A Shemetish animal merchant has brought a yearling lion from his home country's savannah to sell to the King's Reeve as an exotic pet. On his way to Bombas' headquarters estate the cage-bearing wagon threw an axle and the cage tilted off the back and smashed open. The lion is now loose in the Square and has already killed four people and two guards, placing an imperative upon the Player Characters to get involved as it comes charging around the corner.

'Oh gods! Help!' a shrill woman's scream pulls your eyes from what you are doing to the end of the street. As panicking people begin to run from the open area of the street, climbing stalls and boxes, trampling one another to get away, a large tawny cat lets out a scratchy half-roar as it pads forward. Blood cakes its fur around its four feet and fang-filled muzzle, and its short and patchy mane is speckled with gore.

After taking a swipe at nearby merchant, it turns its gaze toward you...





The young lion is mad with hunger and mistreatment by the Shemite's animal handlers, and will attack anyone and anything that gets in its way. Handle Animal checks made against it are taken at a -3 penalty due to it being terrified of being in the city, and anyone attempting to do so unsuccessfully will become the lion's new target.

Stats for the Lion are found in the encounters section on page 53.

ARSON! MURDER!

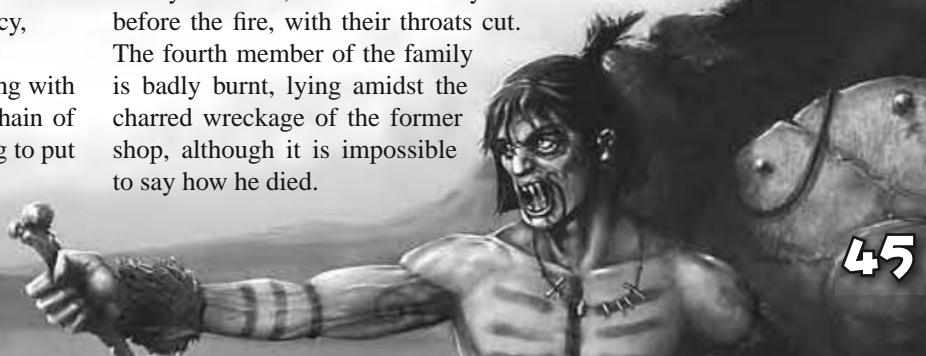
Your attention is grabbed by shouts and screams from further up the street. A plume of smoke is visible and people are rushing forward with a sense of urgency,

As you get closer you can see a small, low building with roaring flames coming out of the windows. A chain of bucket wielding townsfolk has formed, attempting to put

out the fire before it spreads to adjacent buildings. An old woman looks up at you 'You youngsters should be helping put out that fire! If it spreads the whole city could go up in flames. Here, take this bucket and join the line.'

The fire will be brought under control quite quickly with the flames extinguished in timely fashion. If the players investigate the building, or hang around long enough for others to do so, they will discover that the family that lived there are all dead. The front room where the fire was set contained most of the fire, the rear room of the place is mostly untouched and the bodies of three of the family are there, it is obvious they met a violent end before the fire, with their throats cut.

The fourth member of the family is badly burnt, lying amidst the charred wreckage of the former shop, although it is impossible to say how he died.





The town guard will arrive and decree the owner of the business must have killed his own family before taking his own life in the flames. Case closed. This exhaustive, ten minute investigation does not satisfy any of the onlookers but there is nothing they can do to protest against such a judgement and they slowly disperse.

If the Player Characters ask they will be told the shop was owned by the scribe Benedictus and that he was hardly the type to kill his own family, or anybody else for that matter. Benedictus owned a small library of documents that he sold to those interested in such things but mostly made his living from drew up contracts for others.

The rider Xanamun was told to steal a certain scroll that was a risk to the plans of Nefanari according to divinations she has made. Unsure as to what this threat could be Nefanari wanted the scroll returned to her upon Xanamun's return. The scroll contains details of the prophecy and will be instrumental in foiling Nefanari and her master. It will be discovered after the Player Characters have confronted the Stygian.

SHANTY TOWN

The area surrounding and leading up to the silver mine is a two-acre field of ramshackle homes and hovels where the miners and their families live between their long and arduous shifts in the mine. It is known to be a noisy locale during the day and a less than safe place at night.

☼ THE RIDER'S TRACKS

Even though the Stygian rider landed in Shanty Town days ago, the Player Characters might wish to go and see if they can find any sign of his passing. It will not be an easy task to try and randomly track where the rider came into Sicas, but if they have managed to gain some insight it could be made easier.

When the Player Characters specifically head into Shanty Town to look for signs of the rider, they should be asked to make Spot or Survival skill checks to discover the tracks of the rider's Uncanny Steed. If Spot is the skill used than the DC for the check will be 25 if the Player Characters have no idea what they are looking for, 20 if they do. If Survival is used, the checks' DC are instead 20 and 15 respectively. They will need to spend several hours looking for the tracks as they have a large area to search for them.

If they are successful in any of these checks the Player Characters can discover a set of deep horse tracks that simply seem to appear a few dozen feet from the external wall of Sicas. No amount of tracking or natural knowledge will help them figure out where these tracks came from *before* they appeared, but they can tell that they were from a single mount which ran off quickly toward the Square.

THE FORCED LABOURERS

If the Player Characters managed to meet up with the escaped criminal on the road to Sicas, they are aware that the silver mine has started to use forced criminal labour as of late. This is a new idea that the mine factor has begun to use, starting with some local Aquilonian criminals and imported Ophirean ones.

If the Player Characters ask questions regarding the forced labourers the following information about the situation might be divulged:

- ☼ The shifts for paid workers have gone from five days a week to four and their pay has slipped by 20% as well. The extra shifts are being taken up by the criminal labour, and several families have turned to loan sharks like the Jackals to survive.
- ☼ The gaolers are nothing more than off duty town guards trying to make a few extra silvers a week, so they are less than vigilant at keeping the criminals from mingling with the paid miners. This has caused several fights, arguments and at least one fatality in the mine.
- ☼ Several of the paid miners have begun sabotaging the chains and mining equipment around the labour campsite in hopes of causing enough trouble to show the mine factor that it is not worth the cost in materials and manpower.
- ☼ One of the Ophirean 'criminals' is an innocent noble's son that was sent here by a rival to get him out the way of politics. A deadly sell-sword named Vago (see page 35) has been dispatched to free him and kill the labour camp manager – and anyone else who gets in his way.

If the Player Characters get into any trouble with the miners, use the statistics for Sicas Citizens found in the encounters section. If they instead interact with the criminal labour, use the statistics provided for Burgeri the Escaped Criminal on page 35 instead.



THE PIT

A major reason why many come to Sicas, the Pit is mostly in the southern half of the city and home to its seediest and most dangerous portions. Roughly twice the size of the Square, the Pit is home to street gangs, organised crime, wanton disregard for legal officials, and many illicit activities. It is also where the King's Reeve has ensured that all 'dirty' crafts and trades take place.

Smiths, refineries, stables, textile dyers, and so forth are all ushered to business buildings in the Pit. As the whole district is run by the three main criminal gangs in Sicas (Jackals, Red Butchers and Wyverns), most of these businesses pay protection money to one or more of these organisations to stay in operation as well as taxes to the city itself.

The Pit is divided into five distinct 'streets', which are entire blocks of buildings and complexes. They and what is offered within is as follows:

Street of the Bakers – Bakers, pastry makers and grain housing.

Street of the Locksmiths – Blacksmiths, launderers, tanners, taxidermists and several other careers that tend to smell very bad due to the smoke, steam or offal produced within.

Street of the Masons – Bricklayers, stonemasons, potters and anyone plying their trade with earth, clay or stone.

Street of the Weavers – Dyers, wool traders, bleach makers and anyone dealing with raw, unfinished cloth or fabric.

Street of the Woodworkers – Coffin makers, furniture carvers, and other wood-related careers.

Besides the day to day businesses crafting their wares in the Pit, there are three other well known buildings that have their own personalities and encounter possibilities. They have been detailed better below.

A GAME OF BONES AT THE WYVERN

If the Player Characters decide to go to the house of ill-repute called *The Wyvern*, they will discover that instead of it being just a tavern it is also a brothel and gambling house. It is the home turf of the Wyverns, a street gang of thieves and burglars; and the Jackals, a gang of gamblers and con artistes. The Player Characters could be in for a very tense evening if they cannot gamble with the best of them...

When the Player Characters enter the scene:

Half-naked prostitutes and scenes of carnal debauchery are open and abound, and a haze of lotus smoke stings your eyes and nose to the point of tingling. Three armed men who show no sign of being guardsmen look your way, one with a subtle nod of the head to welcome you. This is a den of sinners, thieves and scum from all over – and you are caught in the middle of it.

'Oi then,' a three-toothed thug with a tattoo of the mythic serpent the tavern is named for over one eye says to you, 'fancy a drink, a woman, or a game? Say none...and it's a fight ye'll be having instead.'

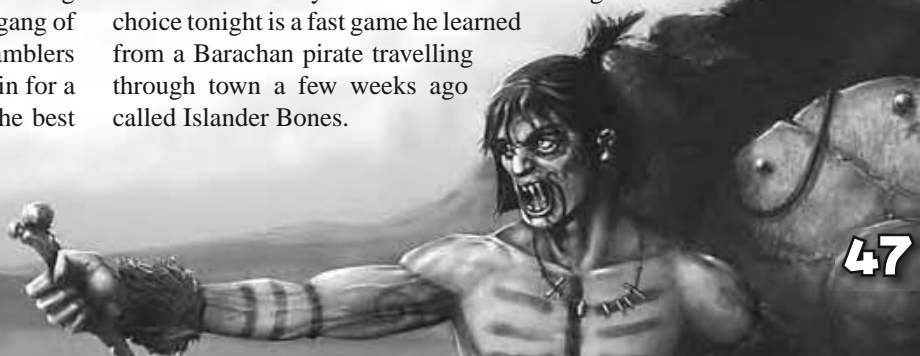
If the Player Character chooses to have a few drinks and socialise to fit in (if they do not already!), they will find that the ale is watered down, the grog too strong, and the wine almost unpalatable. All drinks cost only ¼ silver for a full pint, so what they lack in quality they tend to make up in quantity of sales.

If they choose a woman, the price is a standard 10 sp for 'open room play', which means they are to enjoy their purchase in the main tavern room. 15 sp buys a booth at the back of the bar, and 25 sp gets the buyer a closet-sized room upstairs. The women are gaudily painted and dressed (those who still are dressed!), but they are good at what they do and have no qualms about advertising it. Loud, boisterous and rude – these describe all of the working girls in the establishment.

If at least one Player Character chooses a game, then a particular gambler will step forward and introduce him:

'Pale-eyed Piotr is my name,' a tall but wiry Hyperborean says as he steps up to you, a pair of wooden cups rattling in his hands, 'and I heard you want a game? Islander bones is what we play here, and it is quite easy. One silver buy in, one silver roll overs. Here, first game is just for show...'

Pale-Eyed Piotr is one of the Jackals, the street gang of gamblers. He has had a bit too much to drink tonight and is not looking to cheat or anything, he just wants to throw some dice and maybe win some coins. His game of choice tonight is a fast game he learned from a Barachan pirate travelling through town a few weeks ago called Islander Bones.





On board a sailing ship, it is very hard to play commonplace games with cards, as the winds and seas spray will ruin a deck of even the stiffest cards in just a few weeks into a long journey, so dice is the game of choice. Using leather grog mugs to roll in, this is a game with dozens of interpretations and styles. The names it goes by ranges from Zingaran Aces and Crom's Crows to the game that was shown to Piotr – Islander Bones.

In Islander Bones, each player has five dice, and must pay the ante (1 sp in this instance) to buy into a roll. Once in, all players roll their dice in secret (but in front of everyone to make sure no one is cheating) and look at their results. Starting with the biggest lout (highest Strength plus Constitution score; Piotr has a 27) at the table and then moving to his or her right, everyone then bets on their current total dice score. Once bets are in, each player can then pay a previously decided amount (1 sp in this instance) per die to 'roll over' any number of dice – but they must do so openly, keeping any dice they did not re-roll a secret. After this round of betting and re-rolling, a final betting round is made once more,

starting with the highest showing dice (or the biggest player again, if there is a tie).

After that, all dice are shown and the pot is taken by the player with the highest total score, with ties splitting the pot. The one exception to this is if someone manages to roll all five dice to come up as the 'Shark's Grin' – all 6s. This hand pushes the game and the pot stays for the next ante and set of rolls. Obviously this game could get very expensive, very quick – which is why many sailors only play for fun or for small deckside favours.

If the Player Characters decide to avoid any of the choices that the barkeep gave them, they will soon have a bar brawl on their hands. Word has gotten out that the Bloody Dawn is in town and making a bad name for the gangs, and neither the Jackals nor the Wyverns trust anyone who comes to their bar to simply stand around and spy.

There are 1d6+1 Jackal Thugs (counting Pale-Eyed Piotr) and 2d6 Wyvern Thugs in the tavern at any given time – all of which will happily beat the Player Characters to unconsciousness, take any money and jewellery they might have on them, and dump them in Shanty Town to awake the next morning. This will occur if they do not spend money in *The Wyvern*, get caught trying to cheat, or generally start a ruckus.

If they do enjoy themselves and make some friends for the evening, they can learn a little bit about Sicas from gossip and merriment:

- ✦ The Bloody Dawn is a crew of Zingaran cutthroats and thugs worse than the Red Butchers, and they will not last long in Sicas if they do not start respecting gang territories.
- ✦ None of the gangs have claimed the guardsmen murders from a few days back, and no hired swords they know of uses a horse to kill. It is probably a new freelancer, or it was some kind of freak accident.
- ✦ The Red Butchers lay claim to the *Iron Skull Inn*, making it the most notorious and dangerous place to stay in the Pit – but their special prices on ale right now make it quite worth the risk!
- ✦ So long as the gangs pay additional 'secret' taxes to Bombas the King's Reeve they are left alone by the guardsmen for the most part. Only when things get obviously bad or bloody do they intervene and cause problems – which is why the Bloody Dawn must be dealt with.

Statistics for the Sicas Citizens, Jackal Thugs, Wyvern Thugs, Prostitutes and Pale-Eyed Piotr can be found in the encounter section on page 51.

THE BLOODY DAWN

The Bloody Dawn gang has foolishly chosen to move in on the Sicas gangs' territory in the Pit, repeatedly mugging inhabitants on the street without so much as asking permission first. This has made them remarkably unpopular over the last few days, and if news gets out that the Player Characters have administered some 'street justice' upon them then it will be seen as a positive when dealing with the established gangs as well as the citizenry of Sicas.

Whenever the Games Master feels that a little action is necessary in the Pit, he can reveal a group of the Bloody Dawn to the Player Characters with any/all of the following narrative ways:

- ❖ **'Well, what do we have here?' a voice says as its owner turns the corner. He is a Zingaran with a dark leather cloak clasped over his shoulder, and in his hand he fiddles with a knife of some kind. A handful of similarly dressed thugs appear behind him, drawing a sly smile from his lips. 'Be a good mark and just hand over your valuables, will you?'**
- ❖ **'Bloody Dawn scum! Unh...' a voice shouts before choking away into a gurgle in the alley just a few feet away from you. You cannot help but freeze, but when a group of cloaked men come out of the mouth of the darkness wiping blood from their blades, you know you are in trouble.**
- ❖ **'You there,' a cloaked man and his Zingaran friend calls out to you, 'you ever wanted to be in a real gang, have you? It just so happens that the Bloody Dawn is recruiting in these...wait a minute...you with the guard, aren't you? Get them!'**

Any of the above introductions will result in 1d3+3 of the Bloody Dawn thugs attacking the Player Characters. Use the statistics found on page 19 for the Bloody Dawn Gang Thugs, except that all of the thugs will be carrying a purse of 4d6 sp instead of the listed amount.

❖ DRINKS AT THE IRON SKULL INN

The Player Characters may eventually want to go and investigate the notorious *Iron Skull Inn*, a sprawling inn that is the primary hangout for the dangerous Red Butchers. Although it might not seem like the greatest idea at first glance to go willingly into a den of muggers and assassins, between the town crier's announcements of reduced prices on drinks (see page 41) or the general rumours that the *Iron Skull Inn* is the best place for gossip and information gathering the characters may want to eventually take the chance.

The inn is a three-story brick building adorned with dozens of roughly hammered and forged skulls of wrought iron decorating much of the inside. It is a seedy place filled with unsavoury types, but it is generally kept safe for customers that are spending coin by the sheer number of deadly men that call the place home.

When the Player Characters decide to go into the *Iron Skull Inn*, read the following introduction to them:

As you grab the wrought metal jawbones that serve as the building's door handles and push the heavy wooden doors aside you are welcomed by two dozen or more raised mugs and glasses and a resounding cheer to your joining them.

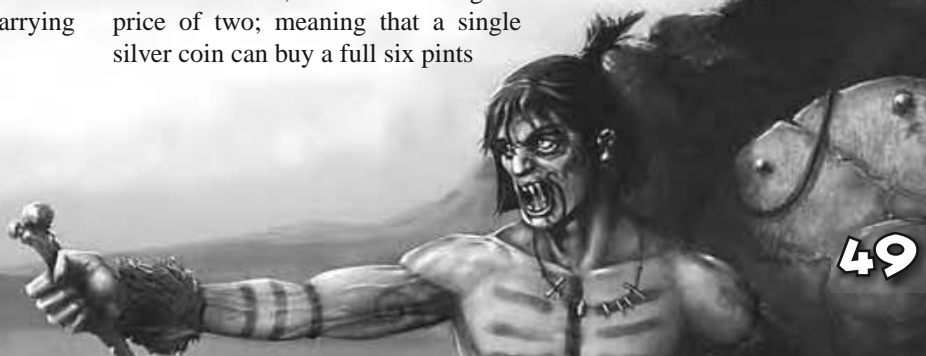
'Hey! Get those folk a drink!' someone shouts.

'Or three!' laughs another.

'Hail,' a large man with more scars on his face than whiskers says from behind the bar with a sneer that might be called his smile, 'what can I get you?'

The barkeep's name is Tyrsson, and he is a half-Vanir/half-Cimmerian lout that has worked for the Red Butchers for over ten years. He is the manager of the *Iron Skull Inn*, but he pays most of the profits to Rista Daan the spice merchant, who funded the place's opening. He is gruff and to the point, but he is also fair and does not water down the drinks.

Even if the Player Characters did not hear about it from somewhere else, the inn is selling three ales for the price of two; meaning that a single silver coin can buy a full six pints





of stout, dark ale. This is a fantastic deal, and the room is filled with Sicas citizens taking advantage of it.

So long as the Player Characters begin to drink, socialise and do their best to not look like they are trying to dig up specific information (Bluff or Diplomacy checks may be required of them), the patrons and gang members will slowly offer the following points of information freely to them. Each statement is marked as to whether or not it is true or false for Games Masters to use if they wish to expand upon the area later.

- ❖ The Bloody Dawn are as good as dead in Sicas. The Red Butchers were just recently blamed by a certain noble in town for something the outsiders did, something that the gang does not take lightly. They have already been tying their nooses and sharpening their knives for the gang war to follow. **TRUE**
- ❖ The mine factor is going to give the mine over to the criminal labourers completely next season, which will cause 30 some odd families to seek work elsewhere. **FALSE** – the forced labour currently at work with the miners is just a test to see if it would work out, and by all the trouble it is causing the mine factor will likely cancel the contract when winter comes.
- ❖ The price of venison is going to triple or even quadruple come winter; all of the local hunters are saying that something is causing a high number of stillborn fauns this season. When combined with the growing packs of wolves in the area, it will be a hard season on deer hunting. **TRUE**
- ❖ The increased gate taxes imposed by the Reeve is said to be to help pay for training new city guardsmen, but there have been no new recruiting drives since the increase. This probably means that Bombas is taking the profits for himself again. **TRUE**
- ❖ A monster of some kind lives in the moat around Sicas! It pulls those who fall in to their watery deaths no matter how good a swimmer they might be. **FALSE** – there is no monster, just several feet of silt and mine detritus that has turned the bottom half and sides of the moat into a sticky, slick and deadly natural trap. Swim checks while in it and Climb checks to try and get out of the moat are taken at a –5 penalty.

Eventually, when the Player Characters are ready to further the plot to the likely end of their time in Sicas, there should be a new patron that enters the inn:



‘Well,’ an angry looking man covered foot to knees in mud, ‘at least you are open tonight!’ The man seems extremely put off, plopping down heavily in the first bar stool available to him and dropping a few silvers onto the counter. ‘Keep my tankard filled, friend. And you will get every coin the Dragons was going to!’

The upset patron will calm down when he gets an ale or two into him, visibly relaxing and turning around to see the rest of the room. If he is ignored by the Player Characters, one of the other patrons they have been befriending will offer to pay for the new patron’s next drink, which will bring him over to the Player Characters’ table to chat.

Whether they go to him or he comes to them, the upset patron has the following story to tell:

‘So,’ he slurs slightly, ‘there I was, coin in hand, at the door to the *House of Two Dragons*. But they would not open up, even though I saw shadows upstairs and smelled cooking meat! Sure, there was only that big black horse in the stable...but I know I heard a woman and her lover upstairs, too!’ He tosses back his head and drains his mug. ‘You’d think if the *Two Dragons* started hiring whores, we’d know about, eh?’



This statement is a baited one. It is designed to pique the interests of the players and bring the Player Characters to the assumption that something is amiss at the *House of Two Dragons*, a finer pub in the northwest corner of the Pit.

Statistics for the upset patron and the rest of the drinkers in the inn should be equal to that of the Sicas Citizens. Those and the statistics for the 3d6+3 Red Butcher Thugs (including Tyrsson) in the tavern can all be found in the encounters section on page 51.

PROPHECY POINTS

- ✦ Any Sicas Guardsmen or Sicas Citizens were harmed directly by action or inaction on the Player Characters' part **+1 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ Anyone outside of the Player Characters learned of their relationship with Tarantia, Pallantides or King Conan **+1 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ The Player Characters helped instigate a gang war between the Bloody Dawn and the street gangs of Sicas **+1 Prophecy Points**

EXPERIENCE POINTS

- ✦ Basic Roleplaying Award for portraying characters well (300 xp)
- ✦ Sneaking into Sicas without paying Bridge Ward fees (50 xp)
- ✦ Catching a thief or pickpocket and seeing that justice is done (150 xp)
- ✦ Helping put out the fire at the home of the scribe Benedictus (100 xp)
- ✦ Making allies within any or all of the three existing Sicas street gangs (Jackals, Red Butchers, or Wyverns) (100 xp)
- ✦ Discovering the 'true price' for things after being pleasant to Pho the Khitan Oddity Merchant (50 xp)
- ✦ Learning enough clues to figure out that the Stygian rider came in from Shanty Town, killed a few guardsmen in the Pit with his horse, kidnapped Shevan Harp, and then took her back into the Pit (500 xp)

ENCOUNTERS

SICAS CITIZENS

The vast majority of those who call themselves citizens of Sicas are from central Aquilonia, with a few Bossonians, Argosseans and Ophireans mixed in for good measure. They are a practical people that live in a corrupt town that is better managed by the street gangs than by the nobles, so many of them cannot help but be a bit wary around strangers.

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian Commoner 2)

Initiative: +0 (+0 Dex, +0 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +2, Spot +4

Languages: Aquilonian (20% chance of speaking Bossonian or Argossean as well)

Dodge Defence: 10 (+0 Dex, +0 class)

Parry Defence: 10 (+0 Str, +0 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 6 hp

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +2

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Dagger +0 melee (1d4, AP 2)

Full Attack: Dagger +0 melee (1d4, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +0

Grapple: +0

Special Attacks: Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 8, Cha 9

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Profession and Sense Motive), Illiteracy

Feats: Alertness

Skills: Bluff +1, Gather Information +2, Knowledge (local) +4, Profession (varies) +5, Sense Motive +3

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 2 (+0)

Possessions: Simple Clothing, Dagger, 1d2–1 sp



PICKPOCKETS

Often too young to work in a pub or the mine, many of Sicas' citizens turn a blind eye to their children becoming pickpockets in the busy streets and Bridge Ward bazaars in order to help feed the family. Some of these 'innocent' children grow into young adults that still fleece travellers, and eventually into adults that thrive on these ill-gotten gains.

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian Thief 1)

Initiative: +5 (+3 Dex, +2 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages: Aquilonian (10% speak Zingaran)

Dodge Defence: 13 (+3 Dex, +0 class)

Parry Defence: 10 (+0 Str, +0 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 7 hp

Saves: Fort –1, Ref +5, Will –1

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Dagger +0 melee (1d4, AP 1)

Full Attack: Dagger +0 melee (1d4, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +0

Grapple: +0

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack +1d6/+1d8, Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 16, Con 9, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Hide and Sleight-of-Hand), Sneak Attack Style (Dagger), Trap Disarming

Feats: Stealthy

Skills: Appraise +4, Hide +5, Knowledge (local) +4, Move Silently +5, Search +4, Sleight-of-Hand +7

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 1 (–1)

Possessions: Simple Peasant's Outfit, Dagger, 2 Empty Pouches, 2d6+3 sp

SICAS GUARDSMAN

Recruited from failed businessmen or those who owe the street gangs too much money, Sicas guardsmen are average citizens that have been schooled in the most basic talents of soldiery in order to protect the city from foreign threats – because they are often bribed to look away from domestic ones!

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian Commoner 1 / Soldier 1)

Initiative: +0 (+0 Dex, +0 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +3, Spot +2

Languages: Aquilonian (20% speak Bossonian or Argossean)

Dodge Defence: 11 (+0 Dex, +0 class, +1 Dodge)

Parry Defence: 11 (+1 Str, +0 class)

DR: 5 (+5 Mail Shirt)

Hit Points: 12 hp

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +3

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Arming Sword +2 melee (1d10+1, AP 2)

Full Attack: Arming Sword +2 melee (1d10+1, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: +2

Special Attacks: Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Search and Sense Motive), Illiteracy

Feats: Alertness

Skills: Intimidate +4, Knowledge (local) +3, Profession (guardsman) +3, Ride +2, Search +4, Sense Motive +4

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 2 (+2)

Possessions: Aquilonian Mail Shirt, Aquilonian Arming Sword, 1d3 sp



PHO THE KHITAN ODDITY MERCHANT

Old and mysterious, Pho came to Sicas because his ancestor spirits claimed that he would one day be needed. He is strange and eccentric, making him an enigma that many visitors to the Bridge Ward where he makes his home avoid.

Medium Humanoid (Khitan Commoner 4 / Scholar 2)

Initiative: +3 (+1 Dex, +2 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +8, Spot +6

Languages: Aquilonian (Literate), Khitan (Literate), Stygian (Literate), Vendhyan (Literate)

Dodge Defence: 14 (+1 Dex, +2 class, +1 Dodge)

Parry Defence: 10 (-2 Str, +2 class)

DR: -

Hit Points: 30 hp

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +6

Defensive Specials: Spells

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Unarmed Strike +4 melee (1d6-2 nonlethal or lethal)

Full Attack: Unarmed Strike +4 melee (1d6-2 nonlethal or lethal)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +1

Special Attacks: Spells

Sorcery Knowledge: Hypnotism, Oriental; 11 Power Points (Dragon Yolk Bonus; can never learn Nature Magic)

Magic Attack Bonus: +6 (+2 class, +4 Charisma)

Spells Known: *Calm of the Adept*, *Entrance*, *Vanish (Defensive Blast)*

Abilities: Str 7, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 19, Cha 18

Special Qualities: +2 DC to target's save against Hypnotism spells cast, Background (Independent), Knowledge is Power, Scholar

Feats: Brawl, Knowledgeable, Weapon Focus (Unarmed)

Skills: Appraise +4, Bluff +6, Concentration +5, Craft (alchemy) +6, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (nature) +6, Perform (ritual) +6, Sense Motive +6

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 4 (+1)

Corruption and Insanity: 0

Possessions: Superior Merchant's Robes, Khitan Gi, Seven Locks of Hair, Jade Charm (+2 to saves)

YOUNG LION

Taken from the savannah, thrown into a cage, and mistreated for the weeks it took to journey to Sicas, this young adult lion is just growing into its mane and its hunting instincts. If given the chance to grow to its full adult size it would be a devastating creature to loose upon the inside of a city. As it is, the beast is merely deadly.

Medium Animal

Initiative: +8 (+3 Dex, +5 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages: -

Dodge Defence: 15 (+3 Dex, +2 natural)

DR: 2

Hit Dice: 5d10+10 (35 hp)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +2

Defensive Specials: -

Speed: 40 ft.

Attack: Claw +5 melee (1d6+2, AP 1)

Full Attack: 2 Claws +5 melee (1d6+2, AP 1) and Bite +2 melee (1d8+1, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +9

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Pounce, Rake 1d4+2, AP 1

Sorcery Knowledge: -

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 4

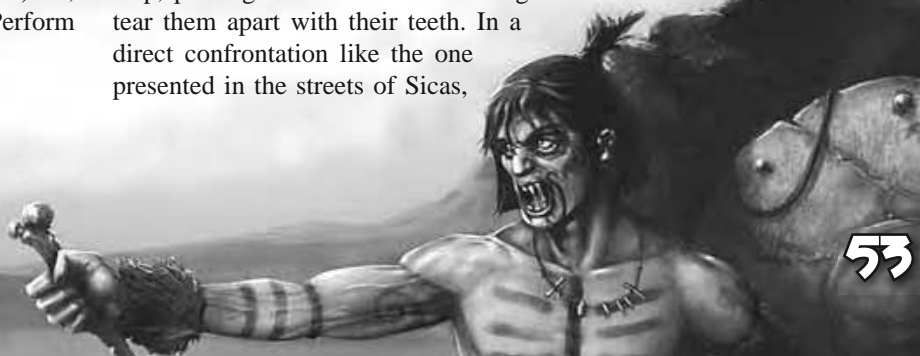
Special Qualities: -

Feats: Alertness, Run

Skills: Balance +6, Hide +4 (+13), Jump +10, Move Silently +8

COMBAT

All lions fight much like any great predatory cat. They would rather slink up under cover of tall grasses if they can and ambush their prey with a powerful raking leap, pinning it down with their weight in order to tear them apart with their teeth. In a direct confrontation like the one presented in the streets of Sicas,





its claws are best used to maim and injure anything that draws close to it – finishing off the wounded after it is safe to do so.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the yearling lion must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake.

Pounce (Ex): If the yearling lion charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +5 melee, damage 1d4+2, AP 1.

Skills: The yearling lion has a +4 racial bonus to Balance, Hide and Move Silently checks. If in areas of tall grass or similar cover, their Hide bonus increases to +13.

JACKAL THUGS

Gamblers and con artistes, the Jackals are much like a club for those who enjoy ill-gotten moneys. Cards, dice, shell games and scams are how they get by from day to day; but they are not above the occasional armed robbery either.

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian Thief 2)

Initiative: +4 (+1 Dex, +3 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Listen +3, Spot +5

Languages: Aquilonian

Dodge Defence: 12 (+1 Dex, +1 class)

Parry Defence: 11 (+0 Str, +1 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 9 hp

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +0

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Dagger +1 melee (1d4+1, AP 1)

Full Attack: Dagger +1 melee (1d4+1, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: +1

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack +2d6/+2d8, Weapon Familiarity (greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Bluff and Sense Motive), Sneak Attack Style (dagger), Trap Disarming

Feats: Alertness, Eyes of the Cat, Stealthy

Skills: Appraise +4, Bluff +8, Hide +6, Intimidate +5, Move Silently +5, Sense Motive +8

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 4 (–1)

Possessions: Average Peasant's Outfit, Half-Cape, Weathered Traveller's Coat, Dagger, 3 Small Pouches, 1d3 Games of Choice, 2d8–1 sp, 3d4 ¼ silver bits

WYVERN THUGS

Formerly a group of burglars who despised violent crime, the Wyverns learned that the slave trade – especially when you own the most infamous brothel in town – is an extremely lucrative business. They have become the most businesslike of the street gangs in Sicas, and how they get by because of it shows that fact.

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian Commoner 1 / Thief 2)

Initiative: +5 (+2 Dex, +3 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages: Aquilonian, Argossean

Dodge Defence: 13 (+2 Dex, +1 class)

Parry Defence: 11 (+0 Str, +1 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 10 hp

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +0

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Dagger +1 melee (1d4, AP 1) or Sap +1 melee (1d4 nonlethal)

Full Attack: Dagger +1 melee (1d4, AP 1) or Sap +1 melee (1d4 nonlethal)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: +1

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack +2d6/+2d8, Weapon Familiarity (greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –



Abilities: Str 11, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 14

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Bluff and Profession), Sneak Attack Style (dagger), Trap Disarming

Feats: Alertness, Eyes of the Cat, Persuasive

Skills: Appraise +6, Bluff +7, Diplomacy +6, Hide +4, Intimidate +4, Move Silently +4, Profession (slaver) +6, Sense Motive +6

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 4 (+0)

Possessions: Average Craftsman's Outfit, Dagger, Sap, 3d10-2 sp, 2d6 ¼ silver bits

PROSTITUTES

Hyboria's oldest profession to be sure, the prostitutes of Sicas are well-versed in using their bodies not only to get coin, but also anything else they might need in their daily life. Most are slaves to the Wyvern gang, but some are just hardworking ladies that have a different set of skills as the common adventurer.

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian Commoner 1 / Temptress 1)

Initiative: +4 (+2 Dex, +2 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +4, Spot +2

Languages: Aquilonian, Zingaran

Dodge Defence: 12 (+2 Dex, +0 class, +1 Dodge)

Parry Defence: 9 (-1 Str, +0 class)

DR: -

Hit Points: 7 hp

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5

Defensive Specials: -

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Unarmed Strike -1 melee (1d3-1 nonlethal)

Full Attack: Unarmed Strike -1 melee (1d3-1 nonlethal)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +0

Grapple: -1

Special Attacks: Weapon Familiarity (greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: -

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 16

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Bluff and Profession), Comeliness, Savoir-Faire

Feats: Persuasive

Skills: Appraise +4, Bluff +6, Diplomacy +6, Hide +3, Move Silently +3, Profession (prostitute) +7, Sense Motive +4

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 2 (+0)

Possessions: Silk or Cheesecloth Dancer's Outfit

PALE-EYED PIOTR

A long way from his home, Piotr was a sell-sword that was stranded in Sicas after a contract-related injury left his right eye milky and blinded. He turned to drink and gaming, finding that it was remarkably to his tastes, and soon the Jackals were asking him to join. Not only did they recruit a jovial and pleasant gambler to share a table with them, but he is very handy in a fight as well!

As a note, Piotr is -2 on all ranged combat rolls due to his being blind in one eye.

Medium Humanoid (Hyperborean Soldier 2 / Thief 2)

Initiative: +4 (+1 Dex, +3 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Listen +5, Spot +6

Languages: Aquilonian, Hyperborean, Nordheimer

Dodge Defence: 14 (+1 Dex, +3 class)

Parry Defence: 16 (+3 Str, +3 class)

DR: 5 (+5 Mail Shirt)

Hit Points: 28 hp

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +0

Defensive Specials: -

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Cestus +7 melee (1d6+3, AP 1)

Full Attack: Cestus +7 melee (1d6+3, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +6

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack +2d6/+2d8, Weapon Familiarity (greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: -



Abilities: Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 15
Special Qualities: Adaptability (Intimidate and Sense Motive), Sneak Attack Style (cestus), Trap Dismarming
Feats: Alertness, Brawl, Eyes of the Cat, Quick Draw, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (cestus)
Skills: Appraise +5, Bluff +6, Hide +6, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (geography) +4, Move Silently +4, Sense Motive +8, Sleight-of-Hand +3,
Code of Honour: Barbaric
Reputation and Social Standing: 5 (+1)
Possessions: Average Traveller's Outfit, Half-Cape, Hyperborean Mail Shirt, Cestus, Dagger, 2 Pouches of Dice and Cards, 22 ¼ sp

RED BUTCHER THUGS

Large, violent and loyal only to those who they have shared ale, women or blood with, the Red Butchers began as assassins and murderous cutthroats who bled the streets of Sicas red. Time has passed and the Butchers have become more organised and businesslike. Now they are *still* assassins and murderous cutthroats who try to keep their activities in alleys and storehouses!

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian Thief 2)

Initiative: +4 (+1 Dex, +3 Reflexes)
Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Listen +4, Spot +4
Languages: Aquilonian

Dodge Defence: 12 (+1 Dex, +1 class)
Parry Defence: 13 (+2 Str, +1 class)
DR: 3 (+3 Quilted Jerkin)
Hit Points: 9 hp
Saves: Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +0
Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.
Attack: Ghanata Knife +4 melee (1d8+2, AP 1)
Full Attack: Ghanata Knife +4 melee (1d8+2, AP 1)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)
Base Attack: +1
Grapple: +3
Special Attacks: Sneak Attack +2d6/+2d8, Weapon Familiarity (greatsword)
Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11
Special Qualities: Adaptability (Hide and Move Silently), Sneak Attack Style (Ghanata knife), Trap Dismarming
Feats: Eyes of the Cat, Weapon Focus (Ghanata knife)
Skills: Bluff +5, Hide +7, Intimidate +6, Move Silently +7
Code of Honour: None
Reputation and Social Standing: 3 (–1)
Possessions: Average Peasant's Outfit, Black Quilted Jerkin, Ghanata Knife, Dagger, 1d8+2 sp, 1d6 ¼ silver bits

A RIDER IN SMOKE AND FIRE

As a note to Games Masters, the average character level in the Player Character group at this time should be 3rd. If they have yet to reach this level, they may have some difficulty with the encounter and Games Masters should be ready to add additional Sicas Guardsmen to aid them if necessary.

THE HOUSE OF TWO DRAGONS

When the Player Characters have found enough clues to go to the *House of Two Dragons* to investigate, they will go to the pub and find that it is strangely closed despite signs otherwise.

The *House of Two Dragons* looms before you; smoke curling softly up from its chimney and the flicker of lamps or a fire dancing across the yellowed glass of its windows. A single pull on the door will reveal that it is locked, even though there is no sign explaining such a closure...

The Player Characters will all need to make a Listen DC 15 skill check at this time. Those who are successful will be able to hear the low whinnying exhalation of a horse in the stable nearby. Should anyone have scored a 20 or higher on that check, they will instead hear the muffled whimpering of a woman on the second floor of the pub.





THE STABLE

Should the Player Characters go to the stable, they will immediately smell smoke, ash and blood as they approach (no rolls necessary). When they get closer still, they should see the following scene:

The butcher's stench of spilled blood and horse dung fill your nostrils as you turn the corner to look in upon the simple five stall stable. Three dead stallions lie broken and bleeding in their enclosures, heads still lashed to the posts that kept them there while they were battered to death. Only one stallion remains – a jet black beast of indeterminate breed. It is not even tied to a stall, but instead free to wander from horse corpse to horse corpse, occasionally stooping down to lap up the pooling gore like it was at a refreshing spring!

The black horse is the Stygian rider's Uncanny Steed, summoned for his use by Thoth-Amon in Khemi. It is feeding on the remains of the other horses to stay strong so it can carry its rider back to Qarnak when the maiden is successfully impregnated – which has happened over the last day or so since her capture.

The Uncanny Steed can be a powerful opponent, but the Player Characters will have the element of surprise on their side and hopefully a numerical advantage as well. Once either the Uncanny Steed senses the Player Characters or the Player Characters attack it, the steed will let out hissing whinnies that are obviously evil and demonic – which could call 1d2 Sicas Guardsmen to the scene if the Games Master feels the Player Characters are heavily outmatched by the demonic horse. The Uncanny Steed will not retreat unless commanded to do so by its rider, so it will likely fight to its destruction.

Every round of the combat there is a 25% chance that Xanamun the Stygian Rider will hear the commotion, grab up Shevan, and leap down from the second storey of the pub to try and ride away. This could make for a very tense and oddly climactic moment – or even a chase – which the Uncanny Steed will win (it can fly). In that case, the strange symbols that will attach the Player Characters to the Atlantean Prophecy (see *Saving Shevan* below for details) will need to be seen and described to them here instead of inside the pub.

If and when the Player Characters destroy the Uncanny Steed, read the following to them aloud:

Your last blow strikes deep into the midnight flesh of the wicked stallion, and it rears back in seemingly great pain. Two great, bat-like wings of smoke and ash explode from its back and try to carry it into the air, but as soon as it lifts off it explodes like piece of black talc against the sky. A cloud of slowly fading black soot drifts slowly to the ground all around you – and you feel the chill of the damned creep up your spine in response to sending the creature back to hell.

The statistics for the Uncanny Steed can be found in the encounters section on page 60.

THE PUB

Should the Player Characters break a window, pick a lock, or otherwise manage to gain entry to the main floor of the *House of Two Dragons*, they will find a horrid scene of carnage that might turn their stomachs. When they come inside, read the following:





Your eyes adjust to the gloom inside of the *House of Two Dragons* as the first wave of odours hit you – bile, rotting meat, and human waste roll up to meet your nostrils from the floor all around you. Everywhere you look there are dead men and women clutching their throats, the agonies of blood-filled vomiting frozen upon their faces. Pools of lost meals and bowels mix liberally upon the wooden ground, and you fight to keep your own food down.

Who and what could have done such a thing to these people?

The patrons of the pub were poisoned with a horrific ingested agent called Set's Song, and luckily there is no more active poison in or on anything in the pub (not that any Player Characters should want to eat right now!). Xanamun added it to the night's stew immediately before paying for everyone in the place to have a full bowl and a glass of wine, claiming it to be his birthday. When the convulsing and haemorrhaging began, he locked the door and shut the shades so he could wait for Shevan to become fertile upstairs.

It is doubtful that the Player Characters will try to search the faeces and bile covered bodies, and Games Masters should make any who try pass a Fort save DC 15 or begin to vomit as well, but if they do it should be noted that there are 11 Sicas Citizens (see page 51) dead in the room and two more in the kitchen.

Once the Player Characters are suitably disgusted by what has happened, they can then go upstairs to confront Xanamun and hopefully save Shevan.

SAVING SHEVAN

When the Player Characters go upstairs to investigate the sound they may have heard outside earlier, or if they are just curious and thorough, they will see that a flicker of light is coming out from around a door that is ajar. There are two ways for them to enter the scene: slow and cautiously, or fast and dramatically.

If they choose to investigate the room slowly and cautiously:

You creep up to the door and peer inside, and your skin blanches slightly at the sight. A young, dark-haired girl lies nude, tied to a bed. She seems awake and red-eyed from long hours of crying, breathing shallowly. She seems unwounded, and inky sigils are smeared on her stomach and breasts.

'Tanh eb khem,' a voice hisses from outside of your view, 'Set tut ab kumihn. Atlantanh un perket.' The owner of the voice steps into your view as his blade flashes down and cuts the girl's bonds at her ankles. He is shirtless, covered in similar greasepaint sigils, and his Stygian features seem emotionless and cold. Just as he looks to cut her hands free, she catches sight of you and turns her head weakly to the door...

'Help...me...' she whispers hoarsely, ignoring her captor's presence and alerting him to your presence.

If they choose to investigate the room with a flourish and a dramatic entrance:

You kick open the door and fill its doorway with your body, giving the two people in the room quite a start. A young, dark-haired girl lies nude, tied to a bed. She is awake and red-eyed from long hours of crying, and she weakly struggles with her bonds. She seems unwounded, and inky sigils are smeared on her stomach and breasts. She sees you and tries to whisper for help, but is too weak.

'Tanh eb khem,' a shirtless Stygian hisses from the bedside, 'Set tut ab kumihn. Atlantanh un perket.' His curved blade flashes down and cuts the girl's bonds at her ankles before he holds it up to defend himself. His sweat-glistened chest is covered in similar greasepaint sigils, and his features are twisted into a scowl. 'You are too late,' he laughs, 'the girl is with the child! The prophecy will be fulfilled!'

No matter how the Player Characters are brought into the scene, they will come to realise that Shevan has been raped and that some kind of ritual must have been placed upon her because of the sigils. Xanamun had kept her here hostage until she was showing signs of her fertility, then made sure she was to be with child when he brought her back to Qarnak – as instructed. The Player Characters will not likely know what is going on or what was really happening, even if they have sufficient Knowledge (arcana), but they will recognise the markings of magic script upon Xanamun and Shevan.



If any of the Player Characters in the room speak Old Stygian, they can understand what Xanamun had said to the girl when they entered the scene: 'By our faith. Set is king of all. The Atlanteans will serve him.'

Xanamun will attack them from his place at Shevan's side, taking his first action to cut her hands free from the bed. He knows that his mission is to get the now-impregnated woman away to Qarnak. After he gets Shevan over a shoulder he will fight the Player Characters if he must, but his primary goal is to simply get passed them with the girl. If he cannot get passed them, he will instead go to a window and try to get out onto the roof – where he will try to call his Uncanny Steed, success depending on whether or not the Player Characters have already dealt with it.

Should Shevan be killed in the fight (by accident or by design), Xanamun knows he has failed and will simply try to escape. With or without the girl he will need to report back to Nefanari and accept the consequences.

If they manage to kill Xanamun before he can get away, he will give one last parting comment of 'You cannot know what path you have turned upon. Where my eyes cannot see the trail of blood, yours will witness it fully! Set tut ab kumihn!' (Set is king of all). When he says this, he touches the slightly marred sigils on his chest and spits – linking the Player Characters to the prophecy as he was linked to it by Nefanari (see *Bound to the Course*, on page 242).

When they get a chance to search it, the room contains all of Shevan's clothes, 2d6 sp on the bed stand, and a scroll of parchment that Xanamun carelessly left behind when he escaped/died. If they have his body to search they will find his possessions (as listed in his statistics below).

The scroll of parchment is written in a language that none of the Player Characters are likely to know (Acheronian), and is the guideline in which Dexitheus will be instructing them to their various destinations. It is very important that they grab this scroll and bring it back to Pallantides. Games Masters are encouraged to express the import of such a document – or at least describe the similarity of the symbols on the scroll are the same as the ones painted on Shevan and Xanamun's chest.

Statistics for the Lesser Uncanny Steed, Xanamun the Stygian Rider and Shevan are found in the encounters section on page 60.

PROPHECY POINTS

- ✦ Xanamun was killed, +0 Prophecy Points
- ✦ Shevan was killed. -1 Prophecy Points
- ✦ Xanamun survived without Uncanny Steed. +1 Prophecy Points
- ✦ Xanamun *and* Uncanny Steed survived. +2 Prophecy Points
- ✦ Shevan was successfully kidnapped. +3 Prophecy Points

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The following suggested experience awards are what could be gained from this encounter segment.

- ✦ Basic Roleplaying Award for portraying characters well (100 xp)
- ✦ Defeating the Uncanny Steed at the stables (500 xp)
- ✦ Killing Xanamun before he could escape (1,000 xp)
- ✦ Shevan is safely returned home (200 xp)

LEAVING SICAS

Once they have confronted the Stygian rider and discovered what information they could about his reasons for being there, the Player Characters will likely want to wrap up whatever they feel they have left to do in Sicas and get back to Tarantia and Pallantides.

Although it might take a few days of extra time, it might be necessary for them to tie up loose ends here depending on how long and involved their stay in Sicas had been up until their meeting with the rider. Games Masters will want to keep track of the amount of time that passes for Prophecy Point reasons, but eventually the Player Characters will likely move on to the journey home.



ENCOUNTERS

LESSER UNCANNY STEED

This demon has taken the form of a powerful stallion extremely muscular in form and stark black in colour. Unless it needs to sprout its ashen wings, there is nothing save its colour and strength by which to tell it apart from an ordinary horse. It also has a knowing and intelligent look in its eyes, which can unsettle those who look into them expecting an animal's return gaze.

Large Outsider (demon)

Initiative: +9 (+4 Dex, +5 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages: Demonic

Dodge Defence: 18 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +1 Dodge, +4 natural)

DR: 5

Hit Dice: 6d8+16 (27 hp)

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +4

Defensive Specials: Dodge

Speed: 80 ft.

Attack: Hoof +12 melee (2d6+5)

Full Attack: 2 hoofs +12 melee (2d6+5), bite +10 (1d8+3)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 10 ft. (2)

Base Attack: +7

Grapple: +16

Special Attacks: -

Sorcery Knowledge: -

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 12

Special Qualities: Flight, Manifest

Feats: Endurance, Multiattack

Skills: Climb +18, Intimidate +12, Jump +18

COMBAT

Uncanny steeds rarely fight at all, but this one has been instructed by Thoth-Amon to battle anyone who gets too close to it or its rider. It lashes out with its hard hooves or fanged bite, crushing foes beneath it. It is a deadly combatant, but it rarely goes for the kill on a target when there are still other opponents nearby.

Flight (Su): Up to once per day, the uncanny steed can sprout wings and fly at a speed of 120 feet with average manoeuvrability. It can continue flying for up to one minute per HD (usually eight minutes) after which its wings vanish once more.

Manifest (Su): As a standard action, the uncanny steed can either leave Earth and return to its home place, or appear on Earth. In either case, it manifests at the new location at the end of its action. Thoth-Amon commanded that this one not use this ability at all, as that it would mean that the girl could be lost and the prophecy thwarted.

XANAMUN THE STYGIAN RIDER

Trained to be the best long distance agent the Cult of Set could ever have, Xanamun is athletic and devoted to the course of Thoth-Amon's teachings. He has learned a tiny bit of the inner secrets of the cult, but he knows the real strength of the faith is in his willingness to do whatever it takes to fulfil the destiny laid before him.

Medium Humanoid (Stygian Nomad 5 / Scholar 1)

Initiative: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +7, Spot +7

Languages: Aquilonian, Old Stygian, Stygian (Literate)

Dodge Defence: 15 (+2 Dex, +2 class, +1 Dodge)

Parry Defence: 14 (+2 Str, +2 class)

DR: -

Hit Points: 30 hp

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +7 (+2 against Corruption)

Defensive Specials: Mobility





Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Scimitar +7 melee (1d8+2, AP 2)

Full Attack: Scimitar +7 melee (1d8+2, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +5

Grapple: +7

Special Attacks: +1 to attack with Stygian Bow, Nomad Charge +1, Ride-by Attack

Sorcery Knowledge: Curses; 5 Power Points

Magic Attack Bonus: +6 (+1 class, +1 Charisma)

Spells Known: *Bound to the Course*, *Weapon Curse (Defensive Blast)*

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 12

Special Qualities: Background (Acolyte), Born to the Saddle, Favoured Terrain (plains) +2, Knowledge if Power, Scholar

Feats: Endurance, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Stygian Bow), Mounted Combat, No Honour, Track

Skills: Bluff +4, Climb +5, Hide +5, Jump +4, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (religion) +3, Perform (ritual) +4, Ride +8, Use Rope +3

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 6 (+2)

Possessions: Stygian scimitar, Leather Jerkin (not worn currently), Superior Black Cloak and Traveller's Outfit, Dagger, Boiled Slave-Fat Greasepaint, 44 sp, Uncanny Steed

SHEVAN HARP, MARKED MAIDEN OF ATLANTEAN BLOOD

Born to an Aquilonian father and a Cimmerian mother, Shevan has her father's light eyes and her mother's dark curls. She is not unattractive, if maybe a little plain of face. She has a very distinct birthmark upon the side of her neck – it looks similar to the curl of an ocean wave in a light blue tone. She was working in a local pub as a cleaning wench until the day she was abducted by the mysterious rider. Since her abduction she has been tied up, sedated, raped, and impregnated with the potential heir to the Atlantean Legions of the undead.

As a note, her hit points below in parenthesis reflect her injuries and anguish at the hands of Xanamun.

Medium Humanoid (Half-Aquilonian/Half-Cimmerian Commoner 1)

Initiative: -1 (-1 Dex, +0 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +1, Spot +1

Languages: Aquilonian

Dodge Defence: 9 (-1 Dex, +0 class)

Parry Defence: 8 (-2 Str, +0 class)

DR: -

Hit Points: 5 hp (2 hp)

Saves: Fort +1, Ref -1, Will +3

Defensive Specials: -

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Unarmed Strike -2 melee (1d3-2 nonlethal)

Full Attack: Unarmed Strike -2 melee (1d3-2 nonlethal)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +0

Grapple: -2

Special Attacks: Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: -

Abilities: Str 7, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 15

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Diplomacy and Profession), Illiteracy

Feats: Skill Focus (Profession (domestic servant))

Skills: Handle Animal +3, Profession (farmhand) +3, Ride +4, Survival +3

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 1 (+0)

Possessions: Simple Peasant's Outfit, 2 sp



BACK TO TARANTIA

The Player Characters will eventually go back to Tarantia to report to Pallantides. Games Masters can roll possible battle encounters upon the road from Sicas as they did going toward the city, depending on the level of action they want in their sessions.

One thing for the Games Master to make sure to enforce is the recurring dreams about the sigils that were painted upon the Stygian and the girl. These symbols appear in all of their dreams in one way or another, and the Player Characters will find themselves even seeing or discovering them in their waking life. It is unnerving and eerie, and a sign that something larger is afoot than they first thought.

When they return to Tarantia and eventually wind their way to the Black Fortress compound. The Black Legion has been informed to let the Player Characters in to see the commander, who will be waiting for them.

When they get in front of Pallantides, read the following:

‘We had runners from Sicas tell us of gang wars and bloody murders,’ the regal man says with a firm chin, ‘was this the reason the Stygian was there? Did he start this mess? What say you?’

Pallantides will sit and listen to what the Player Characters have to tell him. He will seem very interested in anything about the kidnapping and the demonic steed, and will take special note of anything sorcery-related or supernatural in their descriptions.

When any of the Player Characters talk about the magic writing, how it is appearing in their dreams and daily lives, or give him the Acheronian scroll, Pallantides will let out a heavy sigh and interrupt them:



‘Gods curse that wretch Amon,’ Pallantides says with the shake of his head as he stands, ‘he is somehow involved in this, I’m sure of it. You have done very well by me and the Black Legion, friends. I’ll get you the payment we discussed.’ He pinches the bridge of his nose and closes his eyes for a moment. ‘Stay where I can send for you. I need to talk to someone more schooled in such things and get back with you. Things just got a great deal more complicated, I believe.’

Pallantides will get the agreed upon payment to the Player Characters and then go and see Dexitheus about the scroll, the writing and how the Player Characters are now inextricably involved.



The Chaotic Portents of Tor

The Player Characters have been marked by magic, becoming entwined with the unfolding Atlantean Prophecy, and they have become unlikely allies with some of the most powerful men in Tarantia. Now they are about to find out what it means to be destined to do something greater than yourself.

In this chapter the Player Characters are informed and consoled by Pallantides about their involvement with a thus-far-mysterious prophecy, and then are recruited to help thwart it – one piece at a time. They are told very little, but what they do know is that it is up to them to save the single most famous person in Hyboria.

PALLANTIDES NEEDS YOU... AGAIN

Either a day or so after they reported to Pallantides about what happened in Sicas, or just as they are about to try and leave Tarantia (maybe to avoid further responsibility), they are tracked down by a handful of the Black Dragons – and asked ‘politely’ to accompany them to the Royal Palace of Tarantia!

When this scene happens, read the following aloud:

‘Halt!’ a gruff voice shouts from behind you, ‘You lot are to come with us.’

You spin to see the black armour of the Black Dragons on five men slowly surrounding you. None have weapons drawn, but they are moving with the deliberation that experience in battle tends to spawn in such men.

‘Alright then,’ the soldier says again, ‘come along.’

The five Black Dragons have been ordered to make this escort look like a kind of summons or arrest just in case Stygian agents are watching. They have specific orders to not use deadly force in any instance, and they will not even draw their blades at all. If forced into a fight by the Player Characters, they will only use their armoured fists (1d6 nonlethal damage) to eventually knock them out and take them to their meeting unwillingly. Hopefully they will recognise this to be a ploy, or at least related to Pallantides saying that he would send for them, and go peacefully.

If need be, use the statistics for the Black Dragons on page 18 earlier in this book for the five soldiers, but place them in plate mail, giving them a total DR of 8.

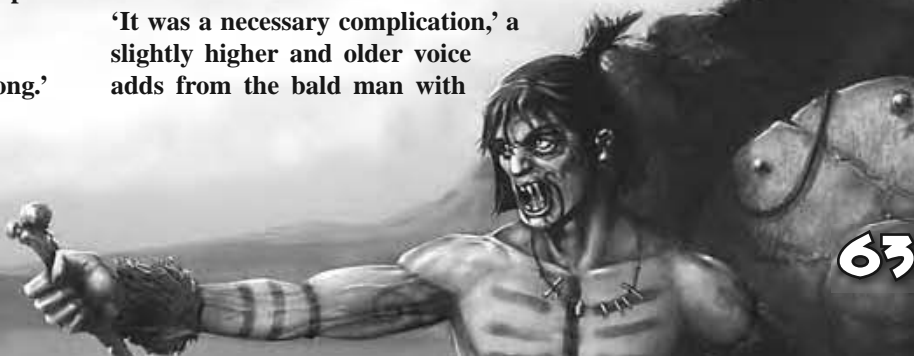
AT THE ROYAL PALACE

Eventually, whether on their feet or on their backs, the Player Characters will be brought into the gold and indigo towers of the Aquilonian Royal Palace of Tarantia. They will be escorted by Black Dragons at all times, probably receiving many looks and glances from house staff and visitors that see them.

They will be ultimately brought to a conference room that overlooks the river, where Pallantides and Dexitheus will be waiting for them:

‘I am truly sorry for the way you had to be brought here, friends,’ Pallantides says with a slight laugh in his voice, ‘we could not know if anyone was watching that could report your involvement with all of this.’

‘It was a necessary complication,’ a slightly higher and older voice adds from the bald man with





the long grey beard at the front of the room. He is poring over several scrolls and books on a large wooden desk, not sparing a look up to see who is speaking to.

‘Friends,’ Pallantides continues gravely, ‘I want you to meet Dexitheus, the Archpriest of Mitra and my personal friend. He has some very bad news for all of us it seems.’

‘Please,’ Dexitheus says as he begins to unfurl a very old-looking piece of parchment, ‘you all will want to sit down for this...’

Dexitheus will explain all of the following points in order, stopping only to sip wine from a goblet or answer any questions if he can – which is not many at this time.

‘We are facing what can only be described as a grave threat to the kingdom and King Conan. Through my research and translation of various ancient texts I have been able to identify an ancient prophecy which ties all this together’

‘The rider you faced in Sicas was but one of seven, sent out by their masters to take special maidens that have specific birth marks upon their breasts. Although I have not fully translated the prophecy yet it is clear it is a danger to us all, there are certain terms dealing with death of the ‘kings of men’ and I have been able to infer that this will include King Conan.’

‘The other maidens and their locations are part of the prophecy, but as the whole thing is protected by a complex cipher I am unable to unearth all their locations, yet, but I have been able to discover that the next one to ‘be taken’ is located in the Nemedian barony of Tor. I feel certain I will be able to trace the others in time, but for now the maiden in Tor is our primary concern. It should be possible for the prophecy to be halted if you get there in short order.’

‘Why you? The rider has cast an enchantment that has entwined your fates with the prophecy. The prophecy mentions there is an enemy, ‘agents of the kings’, that will try to prevent the final phases of it. By tackling the rider in Sicas you are undoubtedly the agents the prophecy speaks of. Apparently if you fail the prophecy marks you out for receiving an

unimaginably terrible punishment, however since it is more important to prevent it coming to pass I have not translated that part fully, I think you will agree this is the better thing to do.’

‘The dreams you have been having regarding the sigils are just part of the prophecy, and of the curse the rider placed upon you. Apparently the whole thing is designed to raise up the ‘Heir to Atlantis’, whatever that means, to claim his birthright, whatever that is.’

‘You are to thwart both the prophecy and this ‘Heir’. In doing so you will not only be saving the lives of the king, but you will also fend off your own fate.’

This is a lot for the average Player Character to swallow in one sitting, and Dexitheus will seem very apologetic and sad that they have become entangled in this ‘mess’. Whenever he gets the opportunity to say so, he will explain that he wishes that he could take their place – but that he cannot.

Pallantides is far more straightforward after Dexitheus is finished explaining that the Player Characters really do not have a choice. He will tell them that he is ready to make them full agents of the Black Dragons if they work with him to stop this prophecy from taking place. He will offer them 100 sp a month for a wage, which is far higher than any other normal position in the order.

If the Player Characters are still unsure about their importance in this matter, the following scene will likely change their minds:

‘I have heard enough,’ a deep and firm voice says from behind you, ‘if they will not do it for coin, perhaps they will do it for the spirit of the chase, the thrill of the hunt...the ring of their blades against bone.’ You twist to see where the voice is coming from, and your mouth suddenly hangs agape by instinct alone. ‘May it be simply that they will do it for me.’

Standing before you, draped in a silken blouse and woollen breeches that do a poor job hiding his fierce musculature, is the king of all Aquilonia – Conan himself. Upon his head sits the crown of his kingdom, pressing down upon a worry-wrinkled brow.

‘I have been in chairs like those you warm more times than I have ever had numbers for,’ the Cimmerian begins with a knowing grin, ‘and I once thought that coin and gold was all that mattered to a man with the road under his feet and the wind in his hair.’ He





laughs, and it carries the mirth of a thousand past victories. **‘But it is my son, my family that is the truest treasure I have known, and this prophecy speaks of my death. My passing means little to me, but this would leave them vulnerable.’**

‘Help me protect them from my enemies,’ King Conan extends the hand that has slain kings and gods to you in friendship, ‘and you will never find an enemy in my kingdom that I would not kill for you.’

The appearance of King Conan and his heartfelt speech to them will no doubt sway even the hardest of Player Characters to joining the quest to stop the Atlantean Prophecy. Having an ally in the king of Aquilonia is no small benefit, so their decision does not even need to be an altruistic one either.

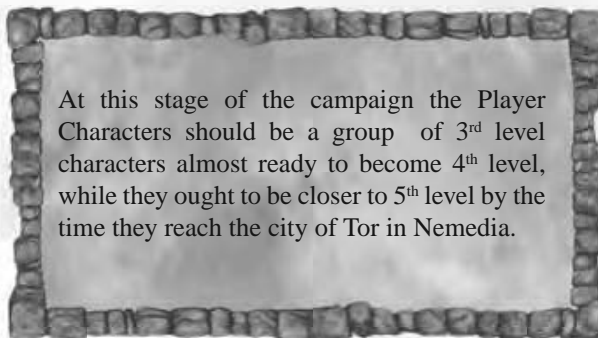
Once they have decided to help, Dexitheus will explain that he will be sending updates on his deciphering of the ancient texts and prophecy through his trained messenger falcons, and that it will likely be the only

form of communication they should trust while out on the road. His falcons will have the messages written on tiny scrolls tied to their legs, and will expect to be fed a mouse, shrew or bit of fish for delivering them. ‘I will work on this as much as I can,’ he will explain, ‘but the Stygians had years to discover this, and I have but months!’

The hiring of Black Dragon agents is uncommon for Pallantides to do so swiftly, and the Player Characters will have some negotiating room to acquire money, gear and other items if they think to ask while King Conan is in the room. While Conan is around, Pallantides will be overruled in stopping the Player Characters from taking advantage of the royal coffers or supply repository by a laugh and a nod from the Cimmerian.

When Pallantides has put seals on all the necessary paperwork and King Conan has thanked each Player Character personally, they will be ready to receive their requested goods and get moving to the first known destination toward stopping the Atlantean Prophecy.

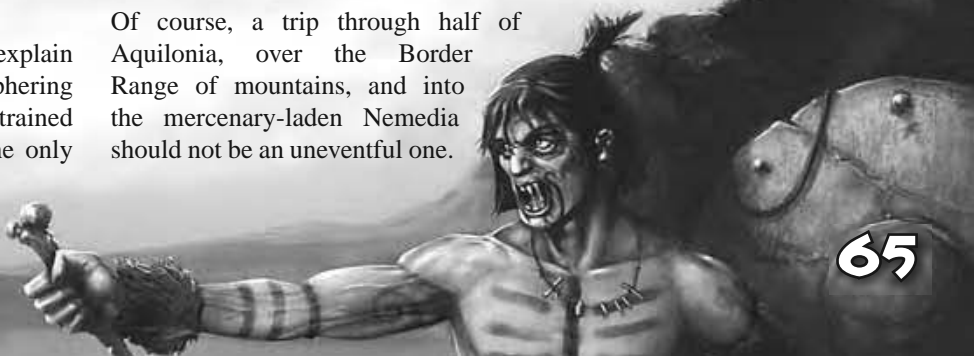
THE JOURNEY TO TOR



At this stage of the campaign the Player Characters should be a group of 3rd level characters almost ready to become 4th level, while they ought to be closer to 5th level by the time they reach the city of Tor in Nemedica.

Pallantides will mark on a new map the location of Tor, a barony in Nemedica that Conan once journeyed to in order to stop the rise of a powerful mummy named Xaltotun. He will explain that the trip will not be too harsh, as the Player Characters will take the Road of Kings the majority of the way to the capitol city. With the best horses Tarantia’s stables can offer and a well-guarded roadway such as the Road of Kings to travel upon, Pallantides is sure the trip will be simple enough.

Of course, a trip through half of Aquilonia, over the Border Range of mountains, and into the mercenary-laden Nemedica should not be an uneventful one.





Games Masters should feel free to make the trip to Tor as exciting and adventurous as they wish.

EASTERN AQUILONIA

The wilderness surrounding the Aquilonian portion of the Road of Kings is very well protected and frequently travelled by mobile militias and units of soldiers, making it particularly safe to travel during the day. There is always danger of bandits or other highwaymen in the flats of Pellia and Thune, but mostly only at night.

BURNING FARMHOUSE

A column of dark black smoke rolls upward from just beyond a hilltop, maybe a hundred paces beyond your point of vision. As the wind dies down in your ears you believe you hear a young girl's scream...

If the Player Characters go to investigate the smoke or the scream, they will crest the hill to see a small cottage farm house with its peat-and-thatch roof burning to one side. The black smoke is coming from the peat, and the screams are coming from a young woman who is kneeling and sobbing a few dozen feet from the building. Surrounding the cottage are several open paddocks for sheep, many littered with slain animals.

The woman is the shepherd's wife, and she has been injured from a crossbow bolt driven through her thigh. The shepherd himself was killed in the fields a few acres north of the cottage by the bandits that then came here to steal his supplies and a few dozen sheep for mutton. They dragged the wife out into the yard while they ransacked the house, but when she tried to stab one of them with a stick he shot her and she passed out. When she awoke the roof was burning and the remaining livestock had been slaughtered. Now she is only concerned for her child, who was in his crib when the bandits struck.

As soon as she sees the Player Characters, the woman will point to the building and shout hysterically about her son being inside and that she cannot get past the door, pulling painfully at the crossbow bolt in her leg.

Unless the Player Characters have some way to put out the fire (unlikely), they will have to smash their way into the door and fight the fire and smoke to get at the young boy. This requires three steps:



1. Entry into the burning cottage. Battering down the door requires a Will save DC 12 (the house is on fire, after all), and a Strength check DC 18. Jumping in a window requires the same Will save, but will only require a Jump or Tumble check DC 15 to get inside.
2. Once inside, it will take 2d6 rounds to navigate throughout the smoke and fire-filled cottage to find the child's crib. Each round the characters inside the cottage will need to pass a Fort save DC 15 or suffer 1d4 points of unpreventable damage from smoke inhalation and minor burns.
3. When they have found the child in his crib, he is surrounded by urine-soaked blankets and bedding that have been keeping him from getting burned. It requires two Diplomacy skill checks at DC 10 or a simple Grapple (child has -3 modifier) to get the boy out of his crib and into the character's arms. After that, it will take 1d3 rounds to exit the cottage (suffering the effects above).

When/if the child is brought outside safe and sound, the woman will sob uncontrollably while holding the young boy. After a few seconds of this, the roof will collapse into the cottage with a plume of flame and debris.



When she calms down a bit, the shepherd's wife will explain that her husband's brother will be by later that evening (he always comes for dinner) and she will go home with him. Her wound could use some treatment, but if the Player Characters are unskilled in such talents and do not want to risk hurting her further, she will not mind the pain in light of her son's rescue.

She has very little to reward the Player Characters other than the slain livestock for food or the golden chain hanging around her neck (worth 25 sp). If they demand payment of some kind she will offer these things, but she will seem very cold about it. In fact, she will see them not as saviours anymore but just another type of bandit.

Any Player Characters that do not so much as ask for a reward (or just take what they want without asking) should be rewarded for the altruistic nature of their deed – earning a Fate Point.

Statistics for the shepherd's wife are found under the entry for Aquilonian Citizens on page 16, earlier in this book. The child uses the same statistics, but is reduced to 3 Hit Points and halves its Strength, Constitution, Intelligence and Wisdom scores.

FEAST FOR RATS

The sickly sweet smell of rotting vegetation rises to your noses as you approach a row of three large wooden wagons heaped with some kind of grain. Drawing nearer you can see *movement* all over the wagons and their rotting payloads, as dozens of black rats scurry about oblivious to your intrusion upon their kingly feast.

Suddenly a hissing sound from beneath one of the wagons attracts your attention, and you look down to see a trio of enormous brown rats stained with the black blood of the heaped wagon riders they were eating a second before. One opens its foul mouth to reveal jagged, bloodstained teeth and lets out a grating screech before it springs toward what might be a new and fresher meal...

There are three Giant Rats that are eating the wagon drivers' corpses, earning a taste for human flesh. They will attack the Player Characters instantly and try to kill them, but they are not fearless creatures that will not flee at the first time they are wounded. The common rats will not pay attention to anything that does not disturb their meal.

When the Giant Rats are dealt with or run off, the Player Characters could search the wagons and corpses and find the following:

- ✿ Two average quality shortswords
- ✿ 22 sp
- ✿ A hand-drawn map to a local village (with an inn, tavern and blacksmith)
- ✿ 1500 lbs of rotting grain infested with rats

The map leads to a small unnamed village a few hours' ride away. This could be useful for a group of Player Characters who have gotten low on supplies or simply want a bed to sleep in instead of having to set watches and camping off the path. It is also a good way to introduce other local side-plots if desired.

There is no clue as to how the wagon drivers were killed, with the deplorable state of their remains making any deduction impossible.

The statistics for Giant Rats are found in the encounters section.

IT'S A TRAP!

The Player Characters will require one of the Player Characters to make a Spot check DC 12 to see a brace of slain rabbits hanging from a nearby low tree branch.

Seeing the oddly hanging brace of rabbits, you go closer and investigate. They are slain by small punctures, likely a crossbow bolt or arrow, and hung in a cluster by their feet to drain out from a deep slit in their throats. A pool of dried blood clumps the matted grass below them, and no other signs of a camp or ownership are present at all...

The rabbits were killed and then strung up in a branch low enough that the breeze would catch their scent and require a wolf to get beneath to grab them.

The pit trap beneath the rabbits is an eight foot circle dug ten feet straight down, filled with harpoon-like stakes, and then covered with a thin mesh of crossed twigs and thatch grasses. It requires a DC 20 Spot check to discover the trap casually, DC 16 if the character is checking carefully. If anything weighing more than 60 pounds gets within the diameter of the pit, they will have to make a DC 20 Reflex save or fall into the pit!



The pit trap inflicts 1d6 falling damage (Fort save DC 10 for half damage) on top of skewering a body 2d3 times with the equivalent of short spears (1d6+1 damage each, AP 2). Once at the bottom of the pit it is easy to knock the stakes aside and pull them out of their wounds, but it will take rope and a Climb check DC 15 to get out, or a very good Jump skill roll.

If the Player Characters wait for the hunter they will be here for some time, he will not appear for several days before he comes to check if his trap has caught anything. He is very skilled and will be cautious as he approaches the trap, he has been injured by hurt animals in the past and as a result is very careful. The Player Characters will all need to roll a Hide check against DC15 or the man spots them some way off and quickly makes his exit before anyone can see him.

PITIFUL WRETCCH

‘Ho! Help! Help!’ a frantic voice calls from just beyond a small copse of trees, ‘Over here! Help!’

If the Player Characters approach:

‘Thank the gods!’ a dirty man in little more than rags exclaims when you come into view, ‘I thought the wolves would gorge on my guts for sure!’ He has been chained around the ankles to a stout tree, his wrists bound together by a slaver’s manacles. He has several bruises on his face and arms that show he has been beaten recently, and the dry skin around his lips suggest he is quite thirsty. ‘Get these chains off of me, please!’

The man is a cunning thief named Legius, and he was tracked down and caught by some local militiamen for stealing their paymaster’s coffer. He hid the money well, proclaimed his innocence, and they chose to chain him here for a few days to hopefully ‘loosen his tongue’.

A crafty liar, he will try to get the Player Characters to believe a story about bandits that took all his things and tied him there, but if they manage to get the real story out of him – with repeated Intimidate or Sense Motive skill checks – he will offer to split the money with them if he is freed.

He has hidden roughly 1000 sp in a locked wooden box in a hollow tree just a few

dozen paces from where the militiamen chained him up, which he will give half to the Player Characters if he has to – but he would much rather talk his way to freedom first.

The statistics for Legius the Thief can be found in the encounters section.

FOR MORE...

Games Masters who want further details on this area to create encounters should also see the *Return to the Road of Kings* and *Aquilonia – Flower of the West* sourcebooks.

BORDER RANGE MOUNTAINS

The mountains that separate Aquilonia from Nemedra are jagged and rocky, but not so much that navigating them is impossible. The Road of Kings passes directly through them on a well-travelled series of passes and pathways that can allow a wagon caravan between the two kingdoms without too much trouble outside of the winter months. It is said that there are still ancient evils that live in the mountains, but anyone who finds them cannot hope to live to tell about it.

The following are encounters that could take place on the journey to Tor while in the Border Range:

Acheronian Mystery

The Player Characters could go hunting into the mountains, off the path, and find the lair of a most unusual individual. This encounter cannot be used unless the Player Characters ever venture into the crags and valleys surrounding the road, as the Acheronian would not live too close to where he could be found.

Should this opportunity present itself, the Games Master should read the following:

You can hardly believe it, but the slight smell of mint and citrus draws you curiously toward a dark tear in the rocks ahead of you. It is dark inside, but the smell of such rare flavours piques your interest...

If they go inside:

‘Come inside,’ a deep voice from further in the cave says, startling you, ‘I will share with you my broth and

my wisdom, for just a bit of your time, traveller.' As you round a stony corner to settle into the red glow of cooking embers, you can see a tall and gaunt woman of striking beauty. Her skin is the colour of washed ivory and her hair is as dark as a raven's wings. She pours the savoury smelling soup into a clay bowl and extends her long and slender arm to hand it to you.

The voice belongs to a Acheronian, still alive through unholy pacts made with demons, but her offer remains truthful. She has made a mint, lime and ram stew that is remarkably tasty and moderately filling. She had planned on saving the rest for the next day or so, but she will gladly share her meal with those brave enough to sit with her.

Her name is Denista Kahmun, and she has lived in these mountains for a hundred years or more (she has lost count) to get away from the growing appetites of the Stygian Empire. Now all she wants is the occasional story told from the outside world and supplies from travelling caravans that get abandoned in the winter – or killed by the mountain Man-Brutes that thrive in the pass.

If the Player Characters are not opposed to trading with her, she will enjoy hearing anything they have to tell about the world outside of the Border Range, especially Stygia, Nemedra and Shem (where she claims to have lived). She also has a few trinkets and supplies to trade for items that she cannot get readily enough up in the mountains. She has the following things to trade:

- ✿ A salve made from ground shrews and mint used to fight infections (add +5 to any Fort save for infected or poisoned wounds the salve is applied to)
- ✿ An older-style Stygian Bow (strung for a +4 Str wielder) – which she will only trade for another ranged weapon
- ✿ Her 'minty ram' stew
- ✿ Sheets of ram leather or bolts of ram's wool

Additionally, Denista has many decades more of life experience that can teach the Player Characters a few things if they ask for her advice on certain subjects:

- ✿ If the Player Characters ask about the dangers of the Border Range, she will explain that there are many caves full of what she has come to call 'man-brutes' that will strike in daylight or night if they think a target good enough. They look for shining objects and weaponry, but they also target women for abduction. They cannot be reasoned with, and simply must be avoided or put down.

- ✿ If the Player Characters ask about sorcery, Denista will explain that the Acheronians were a people who had mastered magic at the level that the Atlanteans had before they died. She will also admit to being a sorceress herself, but will only share her magical knowledge to someone that can stump her in an arcane riddle (Knowledge (arcana) skill contest).
- ✿ If the Player Characters ask her about Atlanteans or the Atlantean Prophecy, she will not know the specifics, but she will claim to have seen the first signs of ill omens in her runes. She will throw her strange runes again in front of the Player Characters, but will not tell them what she sees – only that they cannot fail in their task or the whole world will suffer.

If the Player Characters foolishly attack Denista, she will speak the name of her *demonic pact* (Alibraxi) and summon up the lesser brylukas she is bound to and defend herself with the full extent of her own abilities.

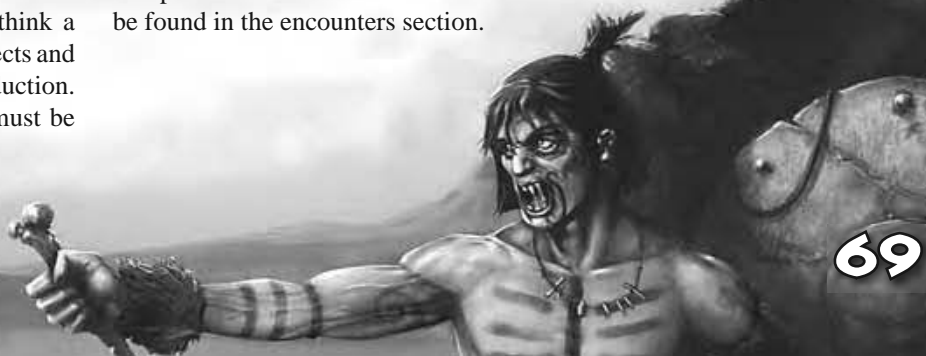
The statistics for Denista Kahmun the Acheronian Witch and Alibraxi the Lesser Brylukas can be found in the encounters section.

MAN-BRUTE ATTACK!

'You give Ungal weapons and meat!' a loud and guttural voice shouts from the rocks above just before a chorus of animal-like cries and hoots answer. Suddenly you find yourselves surrounded by enormous, unkempt men. Furred leather protects their sensitive areas from the elements, and thick body hair on their chests and limbs is caked with filth. Hugely muscled and wearing tight scowls full of yellowed and broken teeth upon their faces, one raises his tree-limb club and growls menacingly, 'Ungals...attack!'

There should be 1d4+1 Man-Brutes in a single attack, which will make for a very good fight for most Player Characters. As noted in their statistics they are not terribly intelligent and can be dissuaded by those with stronger personal confidence and power of personality. Otherwise, they will fight until half their number has died before trying to scramble back up the rocks (which they excel at) and escape.

The possessions and statistics for the Man-Brutes can be found in the encounters section.





NEMEDIAN MERCENARY TRAINING CAMP

The Player Characters could find any of the numerous mountain camps that Nemedian mercenary forces will occasionally use as training facilities for their rangers and soldiers.

In the pass ahead you can see the fires of several small campsites grouped together behind a simple wooden palisade, and several men practicing in the main yard area with large pole arms. You can hear the shouts of drilling instructors and the ring of metal on metal for hundreds of paces around. You cannot quite make out the colours of the pennants flying on the tent poles, which makes you uneasy as the compound looms closer...

The mercenary force that is training here is only twenty men strong plus two instructors and a team of five stewards, and they are all members of any of the existing Nemedian mercenary companies – the Wintering Blades, Horns of Glory, Tenann's Dervish and so on. No matter who they are members of, they will

see the Player Characters as a minor nuisance. Barring any actions by a Player Character, they will be allowed to pass by without incident.

If they ask convincingly enough (perhaps requiring Diplomacy checks) the Player Characters could also be allowed to come onto the camp's grounds to trade or talk with the mercenaries there. If they manage to do this they can hope to try and buy any arms and armour from the following list, but at double normal market price. The mercenaries are weeks away from going back to a town yet, and they will not readily part with their gear unless it is for a serious profit.

They have the following goods to trade (each requiring a separate Diplomacy check against an Instructor): 15 Poleaxes, 25 arming swords, 5 war swords, 5 greatswords, 20 crossbows, 5 arbalests, 100 crossbow bolts, 30 arbalest bolts, 10 Hyrkanian bows (strung to +2 Str), 100 arrows, 25 Nemedian Mail Shirts and Breastplates, 25 Nemedian Great Helms, and 5 Hyborian Warhorses.

Should the Player Characters ask any of the mercenaries about Tor, they will receive many laughs and jibes, but eventually they will receive the following information:

'Are you joking?' the soldier half-coughs, 'Tor has been in chaos for years now, ever since that cur Conan the Usurper came and killed Amalric. It is a place where fools go to disappear, and sell-swords like us go to get rich!'

Should the Player Characters try to start any kind of conflict with the mercenaries – which would likely be suicide – they will not attack all at once if they can help it. The mercenaries will gladly use the Player Characters' folly to better their training, sending units of five like-armed soldiers at them to best use their Formation and Officer class features.

The statistics for the Nemedian Mercenaries and Mercenary Instructors can be found in the encounters section, while the mercenary stewards should use the statistics for Nemedian Citizens.

WESTERN NEMEDIA

As the Player Characters leave the Border Range and enter the baronies of Nemedias, they will have several opportunities to meet with many different facets of Nemedian life. The terrain is hilly, wooded and scattered

with plains that are much easier to traverse than the mountainous passes that the Road of Kings takes through the Border Range.

The following are encounters that could take place on the journey to Tor while in the western half of Nemedra:

WHERE ARE ALL THE MEN?

The smell of cooking flatbread welcomes you as you enter a small village of a dozen cottages and longhouses. Young children play with wooden swords and shields in the muddy street, an pair of women awkwardly steer an ox towards unseen farm fields and another woman is struggling to hang a new roll of thatch upon her cottage.

It will not take too long for most players to realise that there are no grown men in this village, and that the women are having a difficult time trying to do the jobs that their men once did, lacking the appropriate skills. The village has recently visited by the Numalian Swords of Service, paying a fistful of coin to every man that came with them willingly to the Border Kingdoms. Those who did not go willingly were quickly forced into service by their peers – often at sword point.

The Swords moved on more than a month ago (too far for the Player Characters to go after them at this time), and the women are having trouble in some ways. Although many of them have taken on their husbands' and brothers' former jobs easily enough, there are a few things that they are simply too untrained to perform.

The village will do nearly anything for the Player Characters if they stop long enough to help them with a few specific duties around the village. The following is a list of things that the women and children have not been able to do themselves and could use help with (and the skill checks required, if any):

- ✿ Get the bucket and rope from the bottom of the well (Climb DC 15)
- ✿ Fix the support beams over the food storehouse (related Craft or Profession DC 12)
- ✿ Bring the wayward cattle back to the village paddock (Handle Animal DC 15)
- ✿ Finish the temper on new spears and axe heads (Craft (blacksmith) DC 12)
- ✿ Teach the eldest boys of ten summers how to use a spear and shoot a bow
- ✿ Hunt down the family of foxes that have been stealing eggs and killing hens

If the Player Characters perform four of the above duties, they will be rewarded with anything the village can offer. They do not have much in the way of material wealth, but having a place far away from home that they are always welcome can sometimes be worth more than gold or silver.

Should the Player Characters perform *all* of the duties above and not ask or accept any reward except for the women's thanks, they should receive a Fate Point instead for their deep generosity.

Statistics for the women and children should fall under those of the Nemedian Citizens found in the encounters section.

ROADSIDE JUSTICE

'Do not weep, cur!' you hear ahead of you, immediately before the crack of a whip and the whimper of its target, 'The gods pay no heed to weakness; it does you no good!'

As you round the trees to enter a clearing, you see three armed and armoured men in similar uniforms – red leggings and tan cloaks over mailed shirts – beating one shirtless man with a length of blood soaked rope. Another man, headless and similarly beaten, lies a few feet away.

'Move along,' one of the two soldiers holding their prisoner's arms barks at you as you approach, 'these men are horse thieves, and are due what they are getting. Be gone with you!'

The three 'soldiers' are mercenaries from a local charter a few miles away to the north. The two men were stable hands in the great city of Belverius and were caught admiring the mercenary captain's horse too closely – and called horse thieves for it. The three meanest sell-swords were dispatched and they have only recently caught up with the fleeing stable hands. They have obviously already beaten and beheaded one of the two innocent men, leaving the one who will plead for his life.

If the Player Characters linger around for more than a few moments or ask too many questions, especially if they are directed at the soldiers' being too harsh or unjust, the three mercenaries will simply drop the beaten man and draw their axes. They are not as interested in the Player Characters' interests





PROPHECY POINTS

- ✦ The Player Characters did not have the Stygian scroll to give to Pallantides/Dexitheus **+3 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ Denista Kahmun the Acheronian witch was told about the Atlantean Prophecy, the Stygian Riders or the Player Characters' attachment to King Conan and Aquilonia **+1 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ Anyone outside of the Player Characters learned of their role in the greater battling of King Conan's enemies **+1 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ Ignoring all encounters the Player Characters had the ability to avoid in order to make the best possible time to Tor **-1 Prophecy Points**

EXPERIENCE POINTS

- ✦ Basic Roleplaying Award for portraying characters well (500 xp)
- ✦ Making King Conan an ally (250 xp)
- ✦ Making the trip to Tor without giving into distractions (250 xp)
- ✦ Helping the shepherd's wife save her son at the burning farmhouse (200 xp)
- ✦ Dealing with the Giant Rats at the rotten grain wagons (150 xp); without contracting a disease (200 xp)
- ✦ Discovering the hunter's pit trap without harm to any Player Characters or their mounts (150 xp)
- ✦ Trading and storytelling with Denista Kahmun (100 xp)
- ✦ Killing Densita Kahmun and her Lesser Brylukas for whatever reason (1,000 xp)
- ✦ Defeating a group of Man-Brutes (350 xp)
- ✦ Making allies with anyone in the Nemedian mercenary camp (150 xp)
- ✦ Helping the village of women and children with their tasks (50 xp per duty fulfilled)
- ✦ Saving the innocent stable hand from the hands of the Nemedian soldiers (200 xp)

or excuses as they are in their weapons, armour and coin purses.

Use the statistics for the Nemedian Mercenaries for the sell-swords and those for a Nemedian Citizen reduced to one Hit Point for Reginald the stable hand.

ENCOUNTERS

GIANT RAT

There are many breeds of rats found throughout Hyboria, with some growing to enormous size. If the conditions and food sources are optimal, like plentiful grain fields and sufficient carrion, rats can get to the size of small dogs. These giant rats are just as daring and invasive as their smaller cousins, but tend to carry an even thicker degree of disease and foulness in their matted fur. They are not predators, but they will protect any food they have claimed for the nest fiercely.

Small Animal

Initiative: +6 (+3 Dex, +3 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Darkvision 60 ft., Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +6, Spot +3

Languages: -

Dodge Defence: 14 (+1 size, +3 Dex)

DR: -

Hit Dice: 2d8 (9 hp)

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +0

Defensive Specials: Toxin Resistance

Speed: 40 ft., 10 ft. burrow, 20 ft. climb, 20 ft. swim

Attack: Bite +3 melee finesse (1d3)

Full Attack: Bite +3 melee finesse (1d3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +0

Grapple: -4

Special Attacks: Chew, Infection

Sorcery Knowledge: -

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 6

Special Qualities: -

Feats: Alertness, Skill Focus (Hide)

Skills: Balance +5, Climb +5, Hide +8, Survival +5, Swim +5

Possessions: -

Advancement: 3 - 4 HD (Small), 5 - 7 HD (Medium)

COMBAT

Giant rats use their strong, chisel-like teeth to tear painful and ragged wounds into anything that threatens them or their food source. Unless incensed by a feeding frenzy or illness, they are not often committed to conflict; ironically these swarms of teeth and claws are called a *plague*.

Chew (Ex): Giant rats, like their smaller cousins, can gnaw their way through just about any substance if given the time and the desire. A giant rat can roll its normal bite damage each full minute it spends gnawing on an object, inflicting that much damage automatically to the object – bypassing hardness or DR.

Infection (Ex): A giant rat that attacks a living creature with its teeth will have a 50% chance of passing on a foul disease of some kind. The damaged target must pass a Fortitude save DC 12 or be struck with the contagion. After 1d3 days of incubation the target will lose 1d2 Str and 1d2 Con daily until the target can overcome the disease, which requires daily Fortitude saves or special medical applications.

Skills: Giant rats have a +4 racial bonus to Balance, Climb, Hide and Swim skill checks, and can always take 10 on Climb checks even when threatened or rushed.

LEGIUS THE THIEF

A true honourless cur that enjoys only the sound of coin in his pockets and the taste of rum in his mouth, Legius is crafty and cunning, but sloppy. He was discovered when he tried to steal fine silks from a caravan headed to Tarantia, which is why he began his trek toward Nemedi – and now he has been caught again with his hand in the proverbial pockets of a mercenary band.

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian Thief 3)

Initiative: +6 (+3 Dex, +3 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Listen +5, Spot +5

Languages: Aquilonian, Nemedian

Dodge Defence: 12 (+3 Dex, +1 class)

Parry Defence: 11 (+1 Str, +1 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 18 hp

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +2 (–1 against Corruption)

Defensive Specials: Trap Sense +1

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Unarmed Strike +3 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal)

Full Attack: Unarmed Strike +3 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +2

Grapple: +3

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack +2d6/+2d8, Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 7, Cha 14

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Hide and Sleight-of-Hand), Sneak Attack Style (Dagger), Trap Disarming

Feats: Eyes of the Cat, No Honour, Stealthy

Skills: Appraise +6, Bluff +8, Diplomacy +6, Hide +5, Knowledge (local) +4, Move Silently +8, Search +8, Sense Motive +5, Sleight-of-Hand +8, Tumble +6, Use Rope +6

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 1 (–1)

Possessions: Rags, Two Swallowed Rubies (worth 50 sp each), Mercenary Coffers with 1000 sp (hidden)

DENISTA KAHMUN THE ACHERONIAN WITCH

One hundred and seven years in age, Denista is a throwback to the age when the last Acheronians were still openly moving across Hyboria. Knowing that the growing Stygian Empire would soon swallow the last remnants of her people, she used her magical skills to find her hiding spot in the Border Range, where she would wait for an eternity if she must. Boredom and loneliness drew her to summoning up the Alibraxi, a demon consort of hers that has kept her sane over the decades.



Medium Humanoid (Acheronian Scholar 7)

Initiative: +3 (+1 Dex, +2 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages: Acheronian (Literate), Aquilonian (Literate), Nemedian, Old Stygian (Literate), Stygian (Literate)

Dodge Defence: 14 (+1 Dex, +2 class, +1 Dodge)

Parry Defence: 13 (+1 Str, +2 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 50 hp

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +10 (+4 against Corruption)

Defensive Specials: Spells

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Dagger +6 melee (1d4+1, AP 1) or Stygian Bow +6 ranged (1d12+1, AP 2)

Full Attack: Dagger +6 melee (1d4+1, AP 1) or Stygian Bow +6 ranged (1d12+1, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +5

Grapple: +6

Special Attacks: +1 to hit with Stygian Bow, Spells

Sorcery Knowledge: Immortality¹, Necromancy, Summonings; 9 Power Points

Magic Attack Bonus: +8 (+3 class, +4 Charisma, +1 Acheronian)

Spells Known: *Chill of the Grave (Defensive Blast)*, *Demonic Pact*, *Eternal Youth*¹, *Ill-Fortune*, *Lesser Ill-Fortune*, *Master Aid Me! (Defensive Blast)*, *Raise Corpse*, *Summon Demon*, *Witches Vigour*¹

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 19, Wis 17, Cha 19

Special Qualities: Background (Priestess), Increased Maximum Power Points (triple), Knowledge is Power, Scholar

Feats: Alertness, Eyes of the Cat, Iron Will

Skills: Climb +5, Concentration +6, Craft (alchemy) +10, Craft (herbalism) +8, Decipher Script +8, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (nature) +6, Knowledge (religion) +10, Perform (ritual) +10, Sense Motive +6, Survival +8

Code of Honour: Barbaric

Reputation and Social Standing: 6 (+2)

Corruption and Insanity: 8; Paranoia (Stygian Empire)

Possessions: Ram's Wool Clothing, Dagger, Stygian Bow (+4) with 8 Arrows

¹ This spell can be found in the *Secrets of Skelos* sourcebook.

**ALIBRAXI THE LESSER
BRYLUKAS**

Summoned with lesser sacrifices by Denista to be her companion and conversational partner, Alibraxi was called to Earth at a slightly weaker state than its other bat-demon brethren. Alibraxi is a head shorter than a man in height, and has thin and leathery wings that stretch much larger behind it. Its face is a twist of bat-like and mannish features drawn over strong bones, with long and sharp fangs in its black jaws, glowing red eyes and fringed ears. Alibraxi's sinewy body is covered in patches of thin fur, and its blood is as black and thick as tar when it is spilled.

Medium Outsider (demon)

Initiative: +13 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative, +6 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Darkvision 120 ft., Scent, Listen +12, Spot +8

Languages: Any human and Demonic

Dodge Defence: 18 (+3 Dex, +5 natural)

DR: 4

Hit Dice: 50 hp

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +5

Defensive Specials: Resistances, Weakness to Fire / Silver

Speed: 30 ft., 40 ft. fly (average)

Attack: Claws +10 melee (1d8+2, AP 3)

Full Attack: 2 Claws +10 melee (1d8+2, AP 3) and Bite +8 melee (1d6+1, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +7

Grapple: +13

Special Attacks: Flyby Attack, Improved Grab, Wounding

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Manifest

Feats: Alertness, Endurance, Track

Skills: Bluff +6, Climb +10, Hide +12, Jump +8, Knowledge (arcane) +12, Move Silently +8, Survival +12

Possessions: –

COMBAT

Alibraxi prefers to attack from above under the cover of night when it can, flying down and tearing at its foes with its sharp talons and fang-filled jaws. It spends much of its time in the cavern with Denista or out swooping down





MAN-BRUTES

Found in small family units throughout the Border Range, man-brutes were originally bred for ages in servitude to others during the ancient ages. They are somewhat of a mutant species of human, likely from the cross-breeding of demons, and are instinctively subservient to a purer race. They cannot fight against a stronger will than theirs, and thrive in a state of servitude as if it were their natural order, which is why they only prey upon commoner caravans and single travellers when they can help it – avoiding conflicts with obvious ‘superior’ peoples.

Each man-brute is likely to be slightly different than the rest of his kin, but they all stand around eight feet tall and have rippling muscles and heavy girths. Their faces are somewhat bestial, and they speak with the lisp of having too large of teeth for their palate.

Large Monstrous Humanoid

Initiative: +1 (+1 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages: Any local human (although primitively)

Dodge Defence: 10 (–1 size, +1 natural)

DR: – (5)

Hit Dice: 3d12+6 (26hp)

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +1, Will –1

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: by weapon (Primitive Axe +7 melee (1d12+6)) or Unarmed Strike +7 melee (1d6+4)

Full Attack: by weapon (Primitive Axe +7 melee (1d12+6)) or Unarmed Strike +7 melee (1d6+4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +11

Special Attacks: –

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 6

Special Qualities: Subservient, Thick-skinned

Feats: Brawl, Great Fortitude

Skills: Climb +8, Intimidate +10, Survival +6

Possessions: Primitive Weaponry, Ram’s Leather Cloaks and Clothing

COMBAT

Man-brutes are simple folk that understand simple weaponry: axes, clubs and spears. When no weapon is available to them,

upon mountain rams to bring her food and supplies. It is just as at home crawling around on its feet and wing tips as it is in the air, slashing at its foes from the walls or ceiling of the dark stone lair.

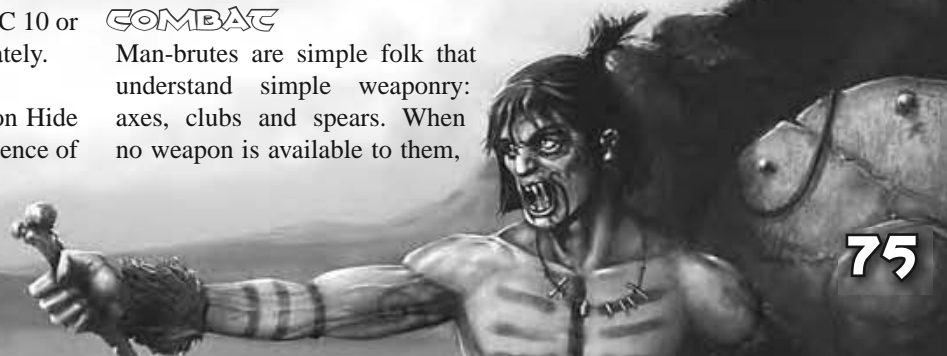
Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the brylukas must hit with a claw attack. If it gets a hold, it can then begin to make bite attacks without need for further attack rolls. Additionally, the bat-demon can fly at half speed in any direction while grappling.

Manifest (Su): As a standard action, Alibraxi can either leave Earth and return to its home place, or appear on Earth. In either case, it manifests at the new location at the end of its action.

Resistances (Su): Alibraxi reduces all physical damage by half (round up), except that dealt by either fire or objects made from silver. Silver weapons are not generally manufactured during the Hyborian Age, though improvised weapons made from silver buckles, candlesticks, mugs etc. could be used.

Wounding (Ex): Any living creature damaged by a lesser brylukas’ sharp claws or teeth continues to bleed due to the nature of the demon’s natural weaponry, losing 1 hit point per round thereafter. Multiple wounds do not result in cumulative bleeding, and a Heal skill check DC 10 or magical healing will stop the blood loss immediately.

Skills: Lesser brylukas have a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks due to their dark colouration and eerie silence of movement.





they can just as easily bash in a man's head with their knotted ham fists.

Subservient (Ex): Man-brutes are bred to follow the orders of a stronger willed person. They suffer a - 4 DC to their Will saves whenever testing against Bluff, Diplomacy or Intimidate skill checks by humans with a higher Charisma score than them.

Thick-skinned (Ex): The flesh of a man-brute is thick and almost leathery in certain areas, making them difficult to injure without a weapon. Man-brutes are considered to have a DR of 5 against unarmed or natural attacks.

Skills: Due to their imposing stature and monstrous features, all man-brutes gain a +8 racial bonus to the Intimidate skill.

NEMEDIAN MERCENARIES

Mercenaries and hired soldiers are a staple of Nemedian life, and seeing throngs of armoured men marching under a different coloured or patterned banner every day should come as no surprise. It is a profitable career for those who can make a good life of it, should they survive to do so.

Medium Humanoid (Nemedian Soldier 4)

Initiative: +5 (+0 Dex, +1 Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

Sensory Traits: Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages: Nemedian (35% also speak Aquilonian or Bossonian)

Dodge Defence: 12 (+0 Dex, +2 class)

Parry Defence: 16 (+3 Str, +3 class)

DR: 8 (+8 Mail Shirt and Breastplate)

Hit Points: 36 hp

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +4

Defensive Specials: -

Speed: 25 ft.

Attack: Arming Sword +8 melee (1d10+5, AP 2)

Full Attack: Arming Sword +8 melee (1d10+5, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +4

Grapple: +7

Special Attacks: Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: -

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Intimidate and Survival), Formation Combat (Heavy Infantry)

Feats: Weapon Focus (Arming Sword), Weapon Focus (Poleaxe), Weapon Specialisation (Arming Sword)

Skills: Climb -2, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +4, Profession (mercenary) +8, Ride +4, Search +4, Survival +6

Code of Honour: Mercenary

Reputation and Social Standing: 6 (+2)

Possessions: Nemedian Mail Shirt and Breastplate, Aquilonian Arming Sword, Poleaxe, 3d6+3 sp

MERCENARY INSTRUCTORS

In Nemedian, there is little honour higher than leading a group of farmers and potters into being hardened soldiers that will march off into foreign lands to earn their coin at the edge of a blade. Seasoned mercenaries will often take on the responsibility of training these new recruits.

Medium Humanoid (Nemedian Soldier 6)

Initiative: +7 (+1 Dex, +2 Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

Sensory Traits: Listen +6, Spot +8

Languages: Nemedian (75% also speak Aquilonian, Bossonian and Turanian)

Dodge Defence: 14 (+1 Dex, +3 class)

Parry Defence: 17 (+3 Str, +4 class)

DR: 7 (+5 Mail Shirt, +2 Great Helm)

Hit Points: 52 hp

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +6

Defensive Specials: -

Speed: 25 ft.

Attack: Arming Sword +10 melee (1d10+5, AP 2)

Full Attack: Arming Sword +10/+5 melee (1d10+5, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +6/+1

Grapple: +9

Special Attacks: Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: -

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 14

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Intimidate and Profession (mercenary)), Formation Combat (Heavy Infantry), Officer

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Mounted Combat, Skill Focus (Profession (mercenary)), Weapon Focus (Arming Sword), Weapon Specialisation (Arming Sword)

Skills: Bluff +5, Climb +2, Diplomacy +5, Heal +3,



Intimidate +10, Knowledge (geography) +4, Knowledge (local) +6, Profession (mercenary) +12, Ride +6, Search +5, Sense Motive +6, Survival +6

Code of Honour: Mercenary

Reputation and Social Standing: 10 (+4)

Possessions: Nemedian Mail Shirt, Nemedian Horned Great Helm, Aquilonian Arming Sword, Hyborean Warhorse, 2d6x10 sp

NEMEDIAN CITIZENS

Practical people that have learned the strength in having a fit body and some fighting skill to help them get by in this rough land, the populace of Nemedian tend to be a little rougher around the edges than other Hyborean cultures. They live their lives in the hopes of never having to draw their blade to defend their homesteads, but they know that it is always a possibility.

Medium Humanoid (Nemedian Commoner 2)

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex, +0 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages: Nemedian (20% chance of speaking Aquilonian or Bossonian)

Dodge Defence: 11 (+1 Dex, +0 class)

Parry Defence: 11 (+1 Str, +0 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 6 hp

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +2

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Shortsword +1 melee (1d8+1, AP 1)

Full Attack: Shortsword +1 melee (1d8+1, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +0

Grapple: +1

Special Attacks: Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Profession and Survival), Illiteracy

Feats: Alertness

Skills: Craft (varies) +3, Gather Information +1, Knowledge (local) +3, Profession (varies) +4, Sense Motive +2, Survival +5

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 2 (+0)

Possessions: Simple Clothing, Shortsword, Dagger, 1d3–1 sp

THE BARONY AND CITY OF TOR

Found in southern central Nemedian, Tor is a stretch of plains and steppe land that has been thick with strife and chaos for years after King Conan came to the kingdom and slew Lord Amalric. Amalric was the ringleader of a cabal of dabblers in sorcery that raised a powerful mummy from the dead to control the world on their behalf, but King Conan destroyed the mummy and the ring of sorcerers.

The deaths of Amalric and his associates threw the whole barony into turmoil. The larger mercenary chapters that were once led by these men shattered and fell into smaller sects and groupings that began infighting. The whole area exploded into small conflicts that bled the fields red for many months, but the conflicts eventually died down and the sects settled into smaller city-states. The largest of these city-states remained the barony and capitol city of Tor.

The barony of Tor is roughly three day's ride from one end to the other; one-fifth of that area is the urban sprawl of the city itself. Tor was once a walled metropolis filled with people, but the violence between the mercenary factions within its boundaries have transformed it dramatically into a massive slum of cracked stone streets, dark alleys and fearful citizens. What used to have a population of some twenty-five thousand residents shrank to a paltry seven thousand.

There used to be only four gates into Tor but the last few years have been hard and the wall has degraded in many places. Through these cracks and splits in the city's wall travellers come and go at will, leaving little reason for a town guard or militia to watch over the old entrances to the city. With the number of independent mercenary and sell-sword cells that take refuge in Tor, the protection of their friends and neighbours is oftentimes left in their capable – but expensive – hands.

Inside the city there were once thriving marketplaces and rows upon rows of craft houses, brothels and taverns. Many of these businesses have fallen into disrepair and disuse from families moving away or simply getting caught up in local 'politics'. Now the remaining shops, craft houses, and recreational areas are larger group affairs run by several families at once to ensure the safety of the business. All



of these business fall under the jurisdiction of one of the three 'Lord Barons' of Tor, and are all universally protected for the fear of the loss of yet another resource or asset.

THE LORD BARONS OF TOR

At the close of the initial infighting that turned the barony of Tor into a battlefield, there were three main groups of factions that rose to the top of the social and political heap. The leaders of these three factions came to call themselves the 'Lord Barons' of Tor, as they commanded a significant amount of the area's territory and resources.

The three Lord Barons have very distinct personalities and run their organisations dramatically differently from one another. Knowing how they deal with the people of the city might help Games Masters to help design or adapt scenarios to take place while the Player Characters search Tor. The following are brief descriptions of each of the Lord Barons' methods for running their quarter of Tor.

HERODI PAGNIUS

A master swordsmen trained by a dozen masters up and down the borders of Turan and Zamora, Herodi is a Bossonian-born waif of a man. Lithe, wiry and unattractive, he has never been accused of being a powerful man, but his flashing arming sword has cut down countless enemies. He is not unfriendly to his allies and tends to be cordial to his guests, but has nothing but contempt for the other two Lord Barons.

Herodi runs his quarter of Tor like a business. The craftsmen that can manage to pay the five silvers he demands of them are never at a loss for orders or work to be done. In exchange for these weekly payments Herodi promises that no harm will come to them, their families or their patrons. The businesses that can keep these payments up become more popular with the people of Tor, and therefore make more money.

IVANNOR OF NORTHWIND

A Vanir that came to Nemedica as a gladiator, Ivannor was still considered an owned slave when King Conan killed Amalric. The chaos that followed gave Ivannor his chance to free himself and exact revenge upon the gladiator master, turning the entire gladiatorial stable

into his personal gang. It did not take long for his men and women to use their violent talents to carve out a piece of the city around the old coliseum for their own. It was hard was for any number of sell-swords to defeat the combined fighting skills of a hundred seasoned gladiators, and Ivannor's claim held fast.

Although he has no head for business or moneymaking, Ivannor knows how to earn the people's love and admiration as easily as he can their pleas and tears. He keeps an inordinate amount of blacksmiths and leatherworkers in his quarter of town to outfit his soldiers, and holds a bi-weekly fighting event at the coliseum to help raise coin that he will use to buy supplies from the farmers and food stores outside the city itself.

AMALIA OF TOR

The bastard daughter of Amalric himself, Amalia was born in Tor to one of her father's advisory councilman's wives. She was raised to hopefully usurp her father's claim to the barony when she was ready, but when she was a mere twenty years of age he was killed and Tor was hurled into chaos. She donned her helm and armour and fought to keep her father's empire together – to no avail.

Since she was not able to keep Tor together single-handedly, she instead turned to trying to organise Amalric's men as best she could. The result was a small but tightly knit crew of professional soldiers and craftsmen that were once loyal to Amarlic, but now bow their heads to Amalia. She is rather plain-looking, but much of that is due to her boyish hair, muscular physique and tendency to wear a scale shirt at all times. Her people live well enough in the northern half of Tor and she has agents throughout the city as well.

SO MANY MERCENARIES, SO LITTLE TIME

Besides the smattering of craftsmen and labourers that walk the streets and alleys of Tor, there are over a dozen different bands of sell-swords and soldiers-of-fortune that likely pay allegiance to one Lord Baron or another. While not every mercenary is a death dealing murderer for hire, it takes a flexible sense of right and wrong to happily fight and kill for money.

The following table names the largest mercenary factions, who they generally pay allegiance to, what is their chosen uniform and armament, and how many of their number live within the city.

Mercenaries of Tor

Faction	Allegiance	Uniform	Weapons	Armour	Number
Sheildborn Society	Amalia	Ivory Cloaks	Arming Sword	Chain Mail and Shield	150
Scarred	Herodi	None; Branded Star upon Neck	Zhaibar Knife and Crossbow	Mail Shirt and Scale Corselet	100
Coliseum Veterans	Ivannor	Short Black Half-Capes trimmed in Crimson	Various (Axes or Cesti are common)	Spiked Leathers and Mail Shirts	60
League of Escort	Herodi	Indigo Coats	War Spear	Mail Shirt and Breastplate	90
Numalian Swords of Service	Amalia	Red Tabards, Black Breeches	Greatsword	Breastplate and Helm	40
Red River Corsairs	Amalia	Grey Coats and Caps	Cutlass and Stiletto	Leather	55
Two Winters	Herodi	White Hare-Fur Cloaks	Arming Sword and Arbalest	Mail Hauberk and Brigandine Coat	80
Free Knights of the Moon	Ivannor	Pale Grey Tabards and Cloaks	War Sword or Greatsword	Mail Shirt, Scale Hauberk and Steel Cap	45
Pikemens Legion	Ivannor	Crimson Armour	Pike	Scale Hauberk	70
Hangman's Recruits	Amalia	Black Tabards	Battleaxe	None	55
Blades for Silver	Neutral	Bands of White Leather	Broadsword	Mail Shirt and Breastplate	70
Wormfeeders	Neutral	Blue Sashes around Neck	Greatsword	Scale Corselet	60

The mercenary factions listed on the table above are found throughout Tor in small groups of five to seven members, often led by a single higher-level officer. The Player Characters could have any number of encounters with these factions,

Use the statistics for the Nemedian Mercenaries on page 76 for the common members of these factions (change the weapons and armament to match the faction), and the statistics for Mercenary Instructor for the group leaders (again, change the weapons and armour accordingly).

THE HOURGLASS SANDS ARE RUNNING...

When the Player Characters arrive in the city of Tor, the Games Master should mark that they will have eight days and nights to find the marked maiden and stop the Stygian rider from taking her away. This could mean that the encounter *Day Eight – Chasing Fog and Catching Moonbeams* on day eight (or after) will be utterly uneventful, with the rider having gotten away with the maiden.

The following sections detail specific events that will take place in Tor over the course of the seven days and nights that precede the prophecy event in Tor. Each day and night offers an event that the Player Characters will face.

DAY ONE - A BRASH WELCOME IT IS

When they have reached the first of the populated areas of Tor, read the following to them:

You are pleased to see a number of small shops open amidst the dusty expanse of the city street, tawny-haired people mulling about looking at bolts of fabric and newly forged tools. The shopkeeper looks over his customers' heads to see you, gives a slight nod of acknowledgement, and then returns to his business.

'The League of Escort will never yield to the likes of Amalia!' a sudden shout twists your head to a side street, seeing a group



of men in blue coats wielding war spears standing off against another group in black coats wielding heavy axes.

‘Then keep on moving,’ the leader of the axe-wielders grunts, ‘because there is no deal to be had.’

Your foot scuffs a stone and both of the two groups’ speakers twist to look at you.

‘What is this?’ says one of them.

‘New blood?’ says the other.

‘Double crossing scum!’ they both shout over the sword of blades coming out of their sheathes...

There are five members of the League of Escort led by one of their officers named Sintripus and six Hangman’s Recruits led by Gracio. The two sides will immediately begin to fight amongst themselves, and also with the Player Characters – who have just been mistaken for being a new sell-sword faction in town!

It is possible for the Player Characters to convince Sintripus or Gracio to stop fighting if they can be grappled or disarmed so they could be spoken to, but Diplomacy skill checks are definitely required. If this occurs, the two opposed factions will lay a few more blows upon one another before scattering into the attached alleys. They will also scatter if the battle gets too bloody (three or more dead on either side).

The battle will end when the sides scatter, or if either faction group is killed or incapacitated completely. When it is over and the Player Characters are the only ones left standing (hopefully), they will be able to loot the bodies for possessions for only 1d3 minutes before the local townsfolk come out of their shadows to join them in taking anything worth stealing or selling.

Should one side or the other have been defeated, the Player Characters will have made an ally of either Lord Baroness Amalia or Lord Baron Herodi – and an enemy of the other. Gossip will spread about the Player Characters’ actions fast enough to reach the Lord Barons, especially Lord Baron Ivannor (who was not involved). Ivannor will try to make use of the Player Characters on the seventh day they are in Tor because of this.

Statistics for these mercenaries and the officers leading them can be found on page 76, earlier in the chapter under Nemedian Mercenaries and Mercenary Instructors, Their weaponry and armour will need to be changed to that of the faction listed on the table on page 79.

DAY TWO - UNEXPECTED WARNING

The Player Characters, while trying to enjoy a meal and a drink in a local tavern, are sought out by a local mystic who has ‘seen’ their fates.

After a good and enjoyable meal, the prophet will come to the Player Characters:

Just as you lift your tankard once more to look upon the bottom again, lowering it after the last gulp to see a wrinkled man, long into his grey years, standing before you. He is shaking like a leaf and his eyes flutter back and forth between you.

‘Y-you,’ the old man stammers behind his wagging finger, ‘are marked for a d-destiny. Destiny that cannot be ignored!’ He drops his hand into a pouch



made of shrivelled skin, produces a fistful of bones and stones to drop upon the table. He points at the random symbols and colours upon the objects, ‘You see? You see the signs? You m-must stop it! The d-darkness that rides! Two d-days time a-and it will be where blood turns to silver!’

The old seer is a local legend named Tephantomous. Through his magic of Divination he has received dreams about the coming of the Stygian rider, which he knows will arrive in Tor in two days (on day four) near the coliseum (‘where blood turns to silver’). He will speak to the Player Characters in riddles and cryptic sentences, possibly shining some light on what they will need to do over the course of the prophecy.

If they strike up any form of conversation with him Tephantomous will answer with the following phrases; the meanings of which are written in italics:

- ❁ ‘S-savage is the ways of the south, and t-the road to heaven is paved with dead b-babes.’ – *He is speaking of the infants that will die in Stygia to find the heir to Atlantis.*
- ❁ ‘The r-risen islands leave their m-marks upon the maidens f-fair!’ – *He is describing the splotchy birthmarks upon the marked maidens in the prophecy.*
- ❁ ‘S-silver is the metal that scares the d-darkness, hold it and t-the darkness is dispelled!’ – *He is telling them that silver weapons can hurt demons.*
- ❁ ‘One in-infant will inherit the end of al-all things!’ – *He is speaking of the heir of Atlantis and that it means more than just the death of King Conan.*
- ❁ ‘Five and one d-days longer, in the shadows of the p-place of death, and the maiden is here n-no more.’ – *He is saying that in six days (on day eight) the maiden will be taken away from the graveyard.*
- ❁ ‘A b-blade will not stop the black k-king from rising to his body, unless it is d-driven into his queen.’ – *He is talking about the demon lord behind Nefanari and how she needs to be killed in order to stop him from fully manifesting.*

Tephantomous will rant and rave for as long as he is allowed to talk to the Player Characters, occasionally repeating what he has already said to make sure it is remembered. Eventually he will scoop up his divining runes and wander out of the bar or pub never to be seen again, but his visit will hopefully give the Player Characters a bit more insight into their role in a much larger design.

Statistics for Tephantomous can be found in the encounters section.

DAY THREE - A VISIT FROM A LORD BARON

‘Stand aside!’ bellows a huge man in a studded leather vest as he nudges a pair of townsfolk out of the way of the small entourage following him, ‘Hands to your sides, and speak when spoken to!’ The throng of similarly built and dressed men and women come forward into the clearing and spread out. The trembling townsfolk pull back from the booming sound of his voice and the presence of his cohorts, too curious to scatter but too afraid to disobey.

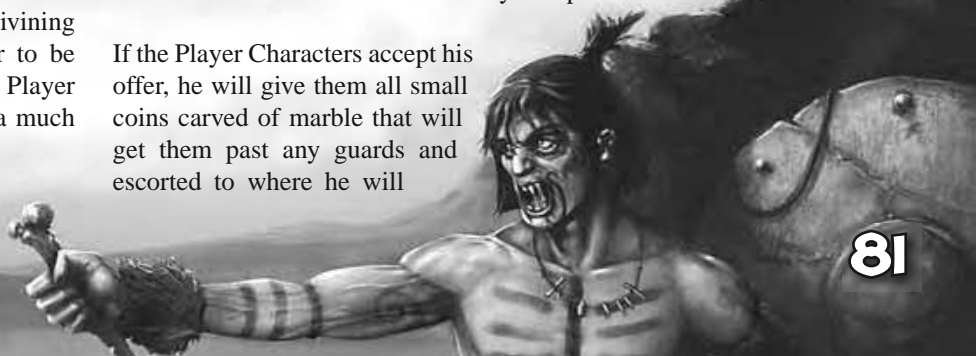
‘Friends,’ a thickly accented voice says as a massive man with a shaved head and a long red braid for a beard steps out of the group of musclebound bodyguards, ‘I am Lord Baron Ivannor, and I have an invitation for you.’

Lord Baron Ivannor has heard about the conflict between Amalia’s and Herodi’s soldiers on day one, and the fact that the Player Characters were there. In fact, some townsfolk are claiming that they started the fight in order to better supplant them. He is very pleased with the Player Characters, as one of the mercenaries that died was wanted for murdering one of his men last week; he believes the Player Characters’ involvement saved him the coin to hire an assassin to hunt him down.

Ivannor is holding his weekly battle event at the old coliseum on the following day, and he would like to express a personal invitation for the Player Characters to come and see the show. He will not take ‘no’ for an answer very well, and will demand that they at least stop by and place a bet upon his main event. He will claim to have purchased a mythic beast from the jungles of the far south and is pitting two of his best warriors against it; he is sure it will be an amazing spectacle.

If the Player Characters seem disinterested in the event, Ivannor should lean in close and confide in them that he also has a business proposal for them. This is not nearly as urgent as he will make it seem, but it is not a lie – he does have work for them to do if they accept it.

If the Player Characters accept his offer, he will give them all small coins carved of marble that will get them past any guards and escorted to where he will





waiting for them. He explains that the coins are very important to give to the guards, or they might end up in the line with the recruited fighters for the melee before the main event.

Once he has left the coins with the Player Characters (unless he was completely rebuked) he will pull back into the circle of bodyguards, snap his fingers to draw them to him and leave the way he came.

Ivannor and his bodyguards would be a devastatingly foolish fight to get into if the Player Characters choose to do so, as they are likely to all be several levels higher than the Player Characters and trained for deadly combat. Any action that might start violence (short of a direct attack) with Ivannor would simply be laughed off; he is Vanir after all, and his family used to beat each other senseless weekly!

Statistics for the Coliseum Veteran members can be found as Nemedian Mercenaries on page 76, save for their armament (shown on the table on page 79). Statistics for Lord Baron Ivannor can be found on page 87.

DAY FOUR - DARKNESS COMES TO THE COLISEUM

If the Player Characters accepted Ivannor's offer, they will want to go to the coliseum and enjoy his hospitality. Unfortunately for them, the Stygian rider will have arrived as well. When the Player Characters arrive at the coliseum, read the following:

The large stone structure before you is majestic and awe inspiring, a testimony to the protection against looters and conflict that Ivannor has brought to his quarter of Tor. It is easily four storeys tall, with enough timber benches to seat over ten thousand. It is sad that it once used to fill to bursting in Tor's greatest days, and now it could hold the entire city's population with room to spare.

'Paying or fighting,' a gruff voice belonging to a brutish man in crimson scale armour says, 'three silvers to watch today's events.'

Obviously if the Player Characters hand over the marble coins they were likely given by Ivannor they will get in

without any trouble and will be brought directly to where Ivannor currently is – the surgeon's stall (see below).

If they did not receive the coins or if they choose not to use them and pay their way in, they will be ushered into the long line that heads toward the upper benches. This will mean that they will not have the chance to meet Ivannor at the surgeon's stall before the Stygian rider's distraction is sprung.

Inside the coliseum are two huge tunnel-like hallways beneath the seating where fighters, beasts and other workers prepare for the events. The Player Characters will only be allowed to wander that area if they have either convinced the front gate guard that they are gladiatorial fighters, managed to sneak in, or used the marble coins to get inside. However they do so, they should eventually be seen by Ivannor – who will wave them over to the surgeon's stall.

At the surgeon's stall, Ivannor is having a row of four slashes in his forearm sewn up by an older man in a bloodstained apron. When the Player Characters approach, he will laugh and gesture with his other hand to the bloody slashes:

'Damn thing got its paws on me,' Ivannor chuckles, 'but the barber Oliver here will get me all patched up.' He mocks a face as if wincing from pain. 'The taste of blood will hopefully get it more riled for the crowd, yes? More wine, Lori, if you please.'

'Can I get you anything?' asks the young woman as she appears from behind the curtain, curtsying slightly, **'It would be no trouble.'**

Ivannor was injured by the Great Ape he had purchased as the main event for the show, which is stored in a metal cage a hundred paces away in an otherwise empty area of the hallway. When he gestures to the ape the Player Characters should be allowed to make a Spot check against a DC 25 Hide check (on behalf of the Stygian rider lurking in the darkness nearby). If they fail they can only see the huge ape but if they pass, however, they will be able to see a cloaked figure standing near to the cage, possibly messing with the lock.

If the Player Characters pay any attention to the surgeon's daughter Lori Oliver, they will be asked to make a Spot check at DC 14 in order to see a light blur swirl of a birthmark just below her collarbone of the





young woman. This might be enough for them to try and protect her, or they might not realise exactly what they are looking upon.

Either when the Player Characters notice the Stygian rider by the ape cage, or when they are about to say something about Lori Oliver's birthmark – the ape is set free! Read the following:

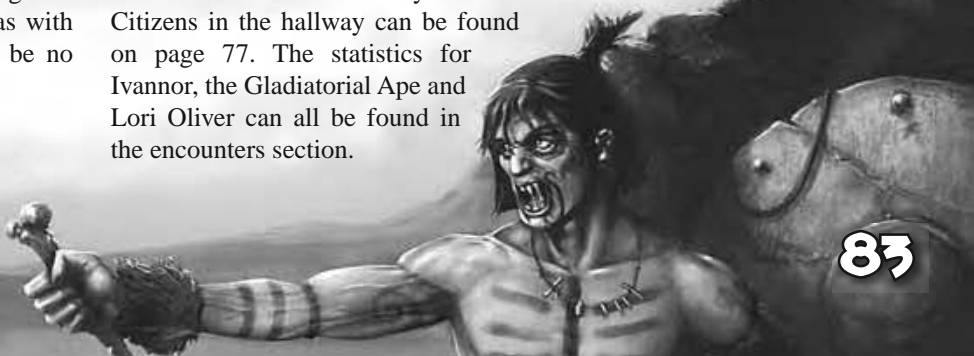
With the clang of metal against stone and the roar of a wild beast unfettered, the great ape bursts free of its cage and lashes out at the two nearest labourers. It smashes them to the ground with the heavy leather bands and studs that it had been fitted with, for a better show to be sure, and then catches a familiar scent on the wind, turning its head toward Ivannor and his bloody arm...

The Great Ape was released from its cage by Nisunh, the Stygian rider sent to kidnap Lori Oliver, in an effort to serve as a bloody distraction while he sweeps in and takes her away into the shadows. With the kind of carnage the ape will cause amongst the bystanders as well as with Ivannor and the Player Characters, this should be no simple task.

It is possible that the Player Characters might see Nisunh grapple with Lori Oliver during the combat, and they might have the idea that they could step in and stop him. This is not very likely due to the rampaging ape, but they should feel that they have a good chance. Nisunh is the craftiest and stealthiest of the Stygian riders, and he ought to be able to get away if they get too close. If Nisunh cannot get Lori at this attempt, he will try again over the next few hours until he is eventually successful to arrange for the events that take place later in *Chasing Fog and Catching Moonbeams*.

The combat will be bloody and violent, but will likely end in the demise of the ape. When it is over, Ivannor will be so incensed (and possibly injured) that he will order the coliseum event cancelled and for everyone to go home. He will be very upset at the situation, and he will not feel much like a conversation. In fact, he will simply start shouting 'everyone get out!' at the top of his lungs until he gets his way and everyone leaves.

The statistics for the twenty some Nemedian Citizens in the hallway can be found on page 77. The statistics for Ivannor, the Gladiatorial Ape and Lori Oliver can all be found in the encounters section.





DAY FIVE - TAKING SIDES

'Ho! Travellers!' a voice cries out to you, 'A word we will have with you!' The shouting is coming from a man atop a brownish horse, who is trotting ahead of a covered palanquin held up by men in ivory cloaks.

The man on the horse is Rupinio, Amalia's lover and herald. The eight men carrying her palanquin are all common members of her Shieldborn Society, and they are able to carry her at a movement of 15 feet per round (should the palanquin be involved in combat).

Rupino will try to get the Player Characters to stay still long enough for Amalia to be carried over to them, and then she will pull back the curtains and introduce herself.

'Hello, visitors to Tor,' the woman inside the palanquin says with a knowing laugh, 'less a week, and a name you have already made.' She is athletic and muscular, with a tell-tale blade scar running down her tan shoulder that disappears into her bust line. 'I am the Lord Baroness Amalia,' she says with a smile, 'and you seem to be backing my enemies.'

Amalia is not happy with the altercation that happened between her and Herodi's men four days earlier, especially when the other people involved (the Player Characters) were seen shortly thereafter being personally invited to a major event by Lord Baron Ivannor. She believes that the Player Characters are soldiers-of-fortune that Ivannor has brought into Tor immediately before making a major offensive against one of the other Lord Barons – namely, her.

No amount of explaining will sway Amalia from her ideas and conspiracy theories, and she is basically here to make a counter offer of 5,000 silver coins for the Player Characters to leave, 10,000 if they would betray Ivannor instead.

The Player Characters are obviously being mistaken for employees of Ivannor's, but they do have a chance to make a small fortune if they are willing to sell out their new 'friend' – even if Amalia has no real intentions of paying. She learned one thing from reading her father's old journals about leadership; 'Never trust a

man who is willing to turn traitor for coin, your enemies' coffers could be deeper than yours.'

If the Player Characters humour her and say they will think about her offer, she will act as though she has patience and tell them they have a day to make up their minds. At that time she will come looking for an answer.

If they simply tell her, for whatever excuses they come up with, that they will not work for her, she will be very displeased:

'You are fools,' she says with disgust, 'terrible fools to make an enemy of the true heir to Tor. It is a decision you will regret.' Her palanquin turns away, slower than before, as only four of the eight ferrymen leave with it. The remaining four draw their blades and swiftly pull their shields from their backs. 'For as long as it takes my men to kill you.'

The four remaining Shieldborn Society soldiers will attack the Player Characters immediately while Rupinio and Amalia head away to safety. They will fight until two of them have fallen, and then will make a fighting retreat. Rupinio, Amalia and the four palanquin ferrymen will move 10 feet per combat round until they can get to safety.

Should the Player Characters continue to pursue her or not allow the palanquin to leave the area somehow, she will draw her father's arming sword, put on her helmet, and spring from the palanquin while Rupinio rides off to get help. Amalia is not an unskilled opponent, and it should show in her fighting stance and style rather quickly. Her soldiers will not allow her to be killed or captured however, and Games Masters should make sure players are aware of other soldiers with arbalests and crossbows taking positions in or on nearby buildings or fallen archways, hopefully giving an injured Amalia time to escape if necessary.

Statistics for Rupinio and any bystanders will fall under the same as those for all Nemedian Citizens found on page 77, whereas the Shieldborn Society members should be represented by the statistics for Nemedian Mercenaries on page 76 with altered armament to match their faction, and Amalia of Tor can be found in the following encounters section.



DAY SIX - THE MAIDEN HAS GONE MISSING

When the Player Characters are in a street sometime during the sixth day:

'The Northwind wishes to speak with you,' says a strapping young man in a worn leather coat, pointing toward the door of an unassuming building, 'he is inside, and the Lord Baron will not wait long.'

When the Player Characters go into the small rented storehouse where Ivannor is waiting, he will be sitting in a big empty room:

'Hello, friends,' Ivannor says through a cloud of pipe smoke. He is sitting in a huge empty room in a high backed chair along with a dozen of his gladiatorial cohorts. 'I have but one question to ask. Did you have anything to do with the abduction of my surgeon's daughter? Answer me truthfully, or by Ymir's icy knuckles, I will tear out your hearts and mix your life's blood with my mead.'

Obviously the Player Characters ought to be able to convince him that they were not involved with the kidnapping, but they will now suspect (if they did not before) that Lori Oliver is probably the one they are here to 'save'. Ivannor will offer the following information, some of which the Player Characters might already know.

- ❖ The Oliver family is from southern Cimmeria, and Lori has the looks of her grandfather – a great tribal chieftain.
- ❖ Lori disappeared during the ape attack in the coliseum, and Ivannor believes that it may have simply been a distraction for the kidnapping.
- ❖ The people around the coliseum after the kidnapping claim to have seen a black stallion riding away to the south, toward the old barracks house near the cemetery.
- ❖ Ivannor will offer 1,000 sp for her safe return, claiming that 'his warriors are not safe without Siegr Oliver in his right mind'.

When the conversation is over, Ivannor will show the Player Characters out and tell them one last thing about Lori and the kidnapping:

'Be careful,' the northman says with a grin, 'word is out that you are with me, and the other Lord Barons will not be pleased by this. Be wary of those who

do not wear my colours, for they will not see you as anything but enemies.' He laughs heartily. **'Amalia is a bastard whore and Herodi is an honourless fop – but underestimate either and this will surely be your last meeting with me. They would make a deal with the frozen devil himself if it meant a victory over me. Go in safety, and watch your backs.'**

The Coliseum Veterans should use the statistics for Nemedian Mercenaries on page 77. There are statistics for Ivannor the Northwind in the encounters section.

DAY SEVEN - RUMOURS IN THE SOUTH

The Player Characters will begin to hear about the spirits and apparitions that have risen in the southern side of town, getting many rumours about why they have come. No matter where the Player Characters are in Tor, they will pick up on specific rumours.

The rumours that the Player Characters will hear on their seventh day, and the truth behind them, are as follows:

- ❖ Herodi has made an alliance that will cement his position as the last Lord Baron standing. **FALSE** – *Herodi has made a deal with Nisunh (the Stygian rider) to help keep people out of the cemetery while he performs his part of the ritual upon the maiden, but it had nothing to do with the other Lord Barons, just the money he was paid.*
- ❖ White-faced ghosts have been seen attacking travellers throughout the southern edge of town, warning those who get away to keep out of the cemetery. **TRUE** – *The 'ghosts' are only Herodi's men dressed as apparitions, but they are attacking travellers and telling them to stay away from the cemetery.*
- ❖ A woman's screams have been heard coming from the cemetery at night. **TRUE** – *Lori has been screaming whenever she awakens from the Lotus-induced sleep Nisunh uses to better prepare her for travel.*
- ❖ Ivannor is planning an imminent and bloody war upon the other Lord Barons. **FALSE** – *Ivannor is spreading out his troops to find Lori.*
- ❖ A demon hunter riding a jet black stallion was seen entering the cemetery four days ago, and must have died because he has not been seen again since. **FALSE** – *Nisunh the Stygian rider is not a demon hunter, and he was heading into the cemetery with Lori over his lap on his uncanny steed.*



❖ The cemetery is home to ghosts, ghouls and demons called up because of all the blood spilled during Lord Amalric's reign. **FALSE** – *The cemetery is nothing special or supernatural at all, except for the uncanny steed that is currently abiding there.*

The Player Characters will likely run to Lori's rescue (if they made it here in a timely fashion, despite distractions), moving them on to the final encounter in this chapter – *Chasing Fog and Catching Moonbeams.*

DAY EIGHT - ENTERING THE CEMETERY

When the Player Characters get within eyesight of the broken edge of Tor's wall that opens up to the city's cemetery, read the following:

'Pain and suffering,' moans a voice behind you, 'to any who dare disturb the dead of Tor!' All around you appear from alleys and broken rubble a group of pearl-coloured humanoids draped in funeral cloths and moving slowly toward you, shining arming swords at the ready...

The 'ghosts' are nothing more than five members of the Two Winters mercenary faction made up to look like ghosts with a Disguise check total of 12. Anyone wishing to make a Spot check against that number can see them for what they are. The 'ghosts' will try to incapacitate the Player Characters first, getting them to run away if possible, but fight harder when they are discovered in some way (a bleeding ghost is a big clue). They will fight until their number drops to two, at which point they will try to retreat into the cemetery.

Use the statistics for Nemedian Mercenaries found on page 76 for the five 'ghosts', but they will not be wearing any armour due to their disguises.

When the battle is over (for whatever reason) the Player Characters should be close enough to the cemetery to hear the following:

'Get away from me, you snake!' a girl screams from inside the cemetery's low wall.

'Hold her down!' a male voice shouts.

'I am trying,' another adds, 'but she...ouch...is a biter!'

'Stand aside fools,' a third man hisses, 'she cannot fight destiny...'

PROPHECY POINTS

- ❖ The Player Characters ignore Tephanomous' ravings when he tries to warn them **+1 Prophecy Points**
- ❖ The Player Characters manage to postpone the abduction of Lori Oliver at the coliseum **-1 Prophecy Points**
- ❖ Anyone outside of the Player Characters learned of their connection to King Conan **+1 Prophecy Points**

EXPERIENCE POINTS

- ❖ Basic Roleplaying Award for portraying characters well (500 xp)
- ❖ Overcoming the mercenaries on Day One without taking sides (250 xp)
- ❖ Overcoming the mercenaries on Day One by siding with one faction over the other (150 xp)
- ❖ Overcoming the mercenaries on Day One through diplomacy or intimidation instead of violence (300 xp)
- ❖ Deciphering anything that Tephanomous said as a vision (200 xp)
- ❖ Defeating the Gladiatorial Ape without suffering casualties (500 xp)
- ❖ Defeating or routing Amalia's soldiers on Day Five (350 xp)
- ❖ Defeating Amalia herself (500 xp)
- ❖ Defeating Herodi's mercenaries posing as ghosts by the cemetery (500 xp)
- ❖ Becoming allies with Ivannor the Northwind (250 xp)



ENCOUNTERS

TEPHANOMOUS

A blind old man gifted with the sight of omens and signs through a set of 'magic' rune stones, Tephanomous lived through the entire battle for supremacy after Lord Amalric's demise by listening to the rattle of their predictions. There are some who claim that Tephanomous is the voice and conscience of voice of Tor itself – and that when he dies, the city will die with him.

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian Commoner 4)

Initiative: +1 (+0 Dex, +1 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +4, Spot +5

Languages: Aquilonian

Dodge Defence: 12 (+0 Dex, +2 class)

Parry Defence: 11 (–1 Str, +2 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 15 hp

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +7

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Unarmed Strike +1 melee (1d3–1 nonlethal)

Full Attack: Unarmed Strike +1 melee (1d3–1 nonlethal)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +2

Grapple: +1

Special Attacks: Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: Divination; 5 Power Points

Magic Attack Bonus: +2 (+1 class, +1 Charisma)

Spells Known: *Astrological Prediction, Not This Day (Defensive Blast)*

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 13

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Hide and Survival)

Feats: Dabblers, Skill Focus (Perform (ritual))

Skills: Bluff +4, Diplomacy +6, Hide +4, Perform (ritual) +6, Profession (beggar) +4, Sense Motive +6, Sleight-of-Hand +2

Code of Honour: Barbaric

Reputation and Social Standing: 3 (+1)

Possessions: Rags, Stones and Runes, ½ sp

IVANNOR THE NORTHWIND

Born into a life of hardship and violence, Ivannor has always known he was destined to lead his brothers in arms against his foes. He is a massive beast of a man trained in the best ways to crush and kill his foes while the world watches, and he does it well. A powerful ally and deeply loyal friend to have, Ivannor is a horrific enemy to make – and not an enmity that lasts long.

Large Humanoid (Nordheimer (Vanir) Barbarian 10)

Initiative: +9 (+2 Dex, +7 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +7, Spot +8

Languages: Aquilonian, Nemedian (literate), Nordheimer

Dodge Defence: 18 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +7 class)

Parry Defence: 19 (+6 Str, +3 class)

DR: 8 (+4 Spiked Leather Vest, +4 Natural)

Hit Points: 87 hp

Saves: Fort +13, Ref +9, Will +5

Defensive Specials: Fearless, Improved Mobility, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +3

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Cestus +17 melee (1d6+7, AP 2)

Full Attack: Cestus +17/+12 melee (1d6+7, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +10/+5

Grapple: +24

Special Attacks: +1 to damage rolls with any sword, Cleave, Crimson Mist, Improved Grapple, Power Attack, Weapon Familiarity (war sword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 14, Con 19, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 12

Special Qualities: Bite Sword, Versatility (no penalty), Winterkin

Feats: Blood of the Giants¹, Brawl, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Track, Weapon Focus (Unarmed)

Skills: Bluff +6, Climb +14, Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +14, Jump +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Perform (showboating) +10, Profession (gladiator) +8, Sense Motive +8, Survival +10, Use Rope +6, Tumble +8

Code of Honour: Barbaric

Reputation and Social Standing: 12 (+4)

Possessions: Spiked Leather Vest, Superior Warrior's Outfit, Exquisite Cestus, Aquilonian War Sword

¹ This feat appears in *The Hyborian Bestiary*



Winterkin (Ex): Ivannor has the blood of frost giants in his veins, making him immune to the naturally dangerous elements of his parent's natural territory. Ivannor does not suffer any damage or negative effects of any kind from cold-based sources, but suffers double normal damage and negative effects of heat and fire-based sources.

GLADIATORIAL APE

One of the Zamboulan great apes, this beast was captured and sold to Ivannor by a friend of his from his fighting days, and then outfitted with leather bands and steel studs on its knuckles. Its eyes are now protected by a copper mask and patches of armour that were intended to make the gladiatorial fight last longer.

Large Animal

Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 15 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural)

DR: 6 (+4 Leather Bands, +2 Natural)

Hit Dice: 7d8+21 (53 hp)

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +3

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 25 ft., 30 ft. climb

Attack: Banded Fists +8 melee (1d8+5, AP 1)

Full Attack: 2 Banded Fists +8 melee (1d8+5, AP 1) and Bite +3 melee (1d8+2)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 10 ft. (2)

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +12

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Crush 3d8+5

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Alertness, Toughness

Skills: Climb +12, Jump +10

COMBAT

Using its natural instincts to rend others with its claws, a great ape outfitted for gladiatorial combat will smash and tear with somewhat clubbed fists, making a battle last longer than when it can use its puncturing claws.

Crush (Ex): If the gladiatorial ape makes a successful grab can make a single crush attack in place of its two claw attacks. The crush attack automatically inflicts 3d8+5 damage on the target, and needs not roll to hit.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the gladiatorial ape must hit with a claw attack. If it gets a hold on the target successfully, it can then crush.

Skills: The gladiatorial ape has a +6 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

LORI OLIVER

The beautiful and wilful daughter of Seigr Oliver, Ivannor's surgeon and apothecary, Lori came to Nemedian with her family when she was very young. She has almost no accent to her speech anymore, and many of her personal traditions are Nemedian. Her light blue swirl of a birthmark on her chest was foretold to her to be a sign of greatness when she was younger, but she never realised exactly what that meant.

Medium Humanoid (Cimmerian Commoner 2)

Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex, +0 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +2, Spot +4

Languages: Aquilonian, Cimmerian, Nemedian

Dodge Defence: 12 (+2 Dex, +0 class)

Parry Defence: 10 (+0 Str, +0 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 5 hp

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Unarmed Strike +0 melee (1d3 nonlethal)

Full Attack: Unarmed Strike +0 melee (1d3 nonlethal)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +0

Grapple: +0

Special Attacks: –

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 13

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Skill Focus (Heal)

Skills: Craft (herbalism) +4, Diplomacy +4, Heal +6, Knowledge (local) +3, Profession (apothecary) +4

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 2 (+0)

Possessions: Simple Clothing, 1d2 sp



AMALIA OF TOR

The bastard daughter of Lord Amalric himself, Amalia inherited her father's gruff disposition and thirst for power. She is nothing if not persistent, and learned how to fight and kill when she was just a little girl in one of her father's sell-sword training camps. She has a deadly serious demeanour about her, and hates to think that she shares any power at all with the other Lord Barons of Tor.

Medium Humanoid (Nemedian Noble 4 / Soldier 4)

Initiative: +4 (+2 Dex, +2 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages: Aquilonian, Corinthian (dialect), Nemedian (Literate)

Dodge Defence: 15 (+2 Dex, +3 class)

Parry Defence: 16 (+1 Str, +5 class)

DR: 5 (+5 Scale Corselet)

Hit Points: 51 hp

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +6

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 25 ft.

Attack: Broadsword +10 melee (1d10+3, AP 3)

Full Attack: Broadsword +10/+5 melee (1d10+3, AP 3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +7/+2

Grapple: +8

Special Attacks: +1 to hit with Broadsword, Hunting Bow, Heavy Lance and War Spear, Formation Combat (heavy infantry), Power Attack, Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 14

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Intimidate and Profession (mercenary)), Rank Hath Its Privileges, Social Ability (*smear others*), Title (Lord Baron), Wealth

Feats: Combat Expertise, Leadership, No Honour, Steely Gaze, Weapon Focus (broadsword), Weapon Specialisation (broadsword)

Skills: Bluff +8, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +6, Profession (mercenary) +8, Ride +6, Search +6, Sense Motive +8, Survival +4

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 16 (+4)

Possessions: Exquisite Noble's Outfit, Nemedian Scale Corselet, Amalric's Nemedian Broadsword, 106 sp

CHASING FOG AND CATCHING MOONBEAMS

So long as the Player Characters reached the cemetery by the end of day eight, they will manage to interrupt the last meeting between Herodi and Nisunh – and the ritual that would 'bless' Lori Oliver with a child.

When the Player Characters enter the cemetery, read the following scene to them:

As you bound across the shattered headstones and torn lichen that make up the cemetery grounds, you home in on the sounds of voices and come upon a horrible scene. Four men in ivory clothing and white face paint are standing around a stone slab, each one holding the limb of a young Cimmerian girl struggling against them. Nearby stand two other men in conversation with one another.

'Hurry you snake,' a lithely built Bossonian says to an even thinner built man in a flowing black cloak, 'this is done and you pay us proper, right?'

'Of course,' the cloaked one hisses, 'when she is with my child, a thousand gold bits to each of you and I will be on my way. That was the deal, and a Stygian keeps his word.'

'You bastard Herodi,' the woman cries out at the Bossonian, 'Ivannor will have your head for this!'

'He will never...' the man suddenly stops and swivels his head towards you, **'...I knew I heard someone! Kill them!'**

The Bossonian man is Lord Baron Herodi Pagnius and the cloaked Stygian is Nisunh, and the four men are some of Herodi's mercenaries he has been using to pose as ghosts. Herodi will have his mercenaries try and deal with the Player Characters before he will draw his blade and go to help them; he cannot let anyone know he was part of a kidnapping and attempted rape of an innocent member of another Lord Baron's stable.

Nisunh however, despises direct confrontation and solely wants to get Lori knocked unconscious, on his steed and on their way back to Qarnak. During



the combat that will ensue when the Player Characters arrive, although he will defend himself normally, Nisunh will use the distraction of Herodi and his men to try and accomplish the following actions (in the order listed):

- ✦ Nisunh will try to use his Distilled Lotus Nectar to knock Lori unconscious.
- ✦ If the lotus poison does not work immediately, he will use nonlethal damage to knock Lori out instead.
- ✦ Once Lori is unconscious he will grapple her, putting her over his shoulder and calling for his Uncanny Steed.
- ✦ When the Uncanny Steed arrives on the round after it was called (using its Manifest ability), Nisunh will load Lori on the back of the demon.
- ✦ Nisunh will then leap up onto the Uncanny Steed and try to ride off.

The battle will be bloody and fast, with Herodi urging his soldiers on while he is fighting alongside them. It might be hard to stop Nisunh without leaving the Player Characters open to attacks from their other foes.

If Herodi is brought low on his Hit Points (10 hp or less) he will flee into the city, leaving his warriors and Nisunh to die. If he is struck down before he gets a chance to flee, it will change the power structure of Tor forever – which could later make for a very interesting series of side-plots.

The statistics for the ‘ghosts’ can be found on page 76 under Nemedian Mercenaries, and the Lesser Uncanny Steed can be found on page 60. Statistics for Herodi Pagnius and Nisunh the Black can be found in the encounters section.

LEAVING TOR

Once they have confronted Herodi and his unexpected ally, the Stygian rider, and hopefully thwarted this portion of the Atlantean Prophecy, the Player Characters will likely want to tie up what they believe is their unfinished business in Tor.

While they are waiting for the first ‘message’ from Dexitheus, which will steer them toward the next piece of the greater puzzle, they could help Ivannor gain the upper hand over his competitors, return Lori to her father (if they managed to save her), or get some revenge upon Herodi for

being involved with such an evil plot. Games Masters will want to keep track of the amount of time that passes for Prophecy Point reasons, but soon after the events of this chapter have concluded the Player Characters will receive their direction toward the next marked maiden.

PROPHECY POINTS

- ✦ Nisunh was killed, **+0 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ Lori Oliver was kept from being kidnapped. **+0 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ Lori Oliver was killed. **-1 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ Nisunh survived to escape without his Uncanny Steed. **+1 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ Nisunh and Uncanny Steed survived and escaped. **+2 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ Lori Oliver was successfully kidnapped. **+3 Prophecy Points**

EXPERIENCE POINTS

- ✦ Routing Herodi Pagnius (500 xp)
- ✦ Killing Herodi Pagnius (750 xp)
- ✦ Killing or routing all of Herodi’s ‘ghosts’ (250 xp)
- ✦ Killing Nisunh before he could escape, with or without Lori Oliver (800 xp)
- ✦ Destroying Nisunh’s Uncanny Steed (500 xp)
- ✦ Lori Oliver is safely returned home to Ivannor or her father (250 xp)

HERODI PAGNIUS

Born to wealthy parents in Bossonia, Herodi had everything growing up that he could want. What he did not have, he acquired, and soon he came to understand the real power of money. Throughout life he used his parents’ money to get him anything he wanted, including swordsman training in three different styles. He came to Tor to try and profit from the mercenary fallout after Amalric’s death, and found that loyalty can be purchased just as easy as anything else.



Medium Humanoid (Bossonian Noble 6 / Soldier 2)**Initiative:** +5 (+3 Dex, +2 Reflexes)**Sensory Traits:** Listen +5, Spot +5**Languages:** Aquilonian, Bossonian (dialect), Nemedian (Literate), Zingaran**Dodge Defence:** 17 (+3 Dex, +3 class, +1 Dodge)**Parry Defence:** 16 (+1 Str, +4 class, +1 Parry)**DR:** 3 (+3 Quilted Jerkin)**Hit Points:** 46 hp**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +5**Defensive Specials:** +2 additional Defence when fighting defensively**Speed:** 30 ft.**Attack:** Arming sword +11 melee finesse (1d10+1, AP 2)**Full Attack:** Arming Sword +11/+6 melee finesse (1d10+1, AP 2)**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)**Base Attack:** +6/+1**Grapple:** +7**Special Attacks:** +1 to hit with Broadsword, Hunting Bow, Heavy Lance and War Spear, +1 to hit with Bossonian longbow, Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)**Sorcery Knowledge:** –**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 13**Special Qualities:** Adaptability (Bluff and Diplomacy), Enhanced Leadership, Lead By Example +2, Rank Hath Its Privileges, Social Ability (*ally*), Title (Lord Baron), Wealth**Feats:** Combat Expertise, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Bossonian Longbow), Leadership, Weapon Focus (arming sword)**Skills:** Appraise +8, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +10, Gather Information +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (local) +10, Profession (mercenary) +6, Ride +5, Search +7, Sense Motive +10, Tumble +4**Code of Honour:** None**Reputation and Social Standing:** 18 (+5)**Possessions:** Exquisite Noble's Outfit, Bossonian Quilted Jerkin, Zingaran Arming Sword, 122 sp**NISUNH THE BLACK,
STYGIAN RIDER**

One of the dark riders sent by Nefanari to acquire the marked maidens, Nisunh was sent to Tor specifically because of his shrewd tongue and ability to use others

against one another. He is small of body but fast of mind, and has no qualms about doing the unsavoury – even if it means placing his immortal soul in danger. Set will understand in the afterlife; or so Nisunh hopes.

Medium Humanoid (Stygian Nomad 5 / Thief 3)**Initiative:** +10 (+3 Dex, +7 Reflexes)**Sensory Traits:** Low-Light Vision, Listen +8, Spot +6**Languages:** Aquilonian, Nemedian, Old Stygian, Stygian (Literate)**Dodge Defence:** 17 (+3 Dex, +3 class, +1 Dodge)**Parry Defence:** 14 (+1 Str, +3 class)**DR:** 5 (+5 Mail Shirt)**Hit Points:** 42 hp**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +12, Will +7 (+5 against Corruption)**Defensive Specials:** Mobility, Trap Sense +1**Speed:** 30 ft.**Attack:** Zhaibar Knife +8 melee (1d12+1, AP 1)**Full Attack:** Zhaibar Knife +8 melee (1d12+1, AP 1)**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)**Base Attack:** +7/+2**Grapple:** +8**Special Attacks:** +1 to attack with Stygian Bow, Nomad Charge +1, Sneak Attack +2d6/+2d8**Sorcery Knowledge:** –**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 15**Special Qualities:** Born to the Saddle, Favoured Terrain (plains) +2, Sneak Attack Style (Zhaibar knife), Trap Disarming**Feats:** Endurance, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Stygian Bow), Eyes of the Cat, Mounted Combat, No Honour, Stealthy, Track**Skills:** Bluff +6, Diplomacy +7, Hide +12, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (religion) +4, Move Silently +10, Open Locks +12, Perform (ritual) +4, Ride +8, Use Rope +4, Tumble +5**Code of Honour:** None**Reputation and Social Standing:** 7 (+2)**Possessions:** Zhaibar knife, Stygian Mail Shirt, Superior Black Cloak and Traveller's Outfit, Twin Daggers, Three Doses of Yellow Lotus Nectar (Fort save DC 14 or 1d6 hours unconsciousness), 72 sp,**Uncanny Steed**



The Island Girl

The Player Characters have now seen what the Stygian riders mean to do to the 'marked maidens', and unless they are heartless, they should feel like they have to move even faster to stop such travesties. They may have stayed in Tor to wrap up their affairs, or they might have decided to travel instead.

In this chapter the Player Characters will be instructed by one of Dexitheus' trained hawks, about a very dangerous little island where the next maiden has been revealed to be. It will not be an easy journey, nor will it be an easy task to find her, but it will prove to be an exciting leg of their quest nonetheless.

A HAWK FROM DEXITHEUS

1d6 days from the end of *Chasing Fog and Catching Moonbeams*, or when the Games Master decides to have the campaign's main story progress, a golden feathered hawk will find the Player Characters to deliver an important message.

The hawk will not attack the Player Characters at all, and will simply fly away to return later if they try to attack it. As that they should remember that Dexitheus would be contacting them, the hawk will hopefully be accepted, fed and its message delivered without complication.

When they receive the message, which comes in the form of a slip of parchment wrapped around one of its legs. It reads:

'More of this prophecy have I discovered. The maidens must all be with child of Cimmerian blood for the prophecy. The next woman will be found on the island of Orinolo, off the shores of Argos and Shem.

Be careful, the signs will be right for her soon. They will come for her next. May Mitra protect you.'

The message is clear enough for the Player Characters to follow, sending them completely across the mainland of Hyboria to its western shores of Argos.

FINDING ORINOLO AND MAKING THE JOURNEY

The island of Orinolo is one of the Two Brothers, Orabono and Orinolo. They are located near the mouth of the Khoratas River, just a few dozen miles off the coasts of Argos and Shem. The two islands are exact opposites of one another, with one being lush and fruitful for those who have settled it and the other being a rocky basin of swamps and bogs that claim a score of explorers' lives annually. Unfortunately for the Player Characters, Orinolo is the latter.

While the Player Characters may have a number of ways to travel to the island, all the locals or guides they speak to claim the fastest route is by river. If the Player Characters are still in Nemedra or southern Aquilonia they could easily gain passage on a boat headed toward the sea via the Red and Khoratas Rivers. River traffic is plentiful, and a bunk on board a riverboat should not cost each Player Character much more than 25 silver or a few hours' day worth of manual labour. The trip, if taken by the Khoratas River, should only take two weeks due to the river's current and day-and-night boating. At the end of the trip the boat will leave them at the small Argossean port village of Saltve.

Alternatively, the Player Characters could stick to solid ground and travel to Saltve, but this will be a much longer journey – and one that will ensure that the Stygian rider will have beat them to the third maiden easily enough. By horse or wagon it will take the Player Characters a full two months to reach Saltve from the southern border of Nemedra, half again that time if they choose to walk! Games Masters are encouraged to remind the Player Characters of riverboats heading downstream in an effort to help them see a faster method of travel, but if they choose to persevere with land travel – they will simply get to Saltve too late to stop the Stygian rider.

THE JOURNEY TO SALTVE

Whether the Player Characters take a riverboat or not, they will eventually need to end up in a small fishing and boating village called Saltve, located just a few miles east of the Khoratas River's mouth. The Games Master can choose to have the journey to this small village as exciting as he wishes, but obviously a river trip will be remarkably safer and less likely to be struck by bandits or predators. The Player Characters should not simply be idle during this time, as there are many things to be done on board of a riverboat. It is ultimately up to the Games Master, but the trip could give him many opportunities to test his players' choices of skills, feats and other facets of their characters instead of just how strong their steel happens to be.

If the Player Characters chose to go by land to Saltve, they will be exposed to many different dangers that Games Masters could threaten them with. Bandits, mercenaries, wolves, bears, boars and other unexpected threats could make their journey a bloody and tiring one.

Whatever the method they choose to reach the Argossean village, the Games Master should leave room for the following events to take place during the trip. They are designed to better inform and prepare the Player Characters on the island of Orinolo and its hidden dangers.

TRAVELLING TRADER

If the Player Characters are on a riverboat, read the following:

A small boat, four oars at most, draped with silks, barrels and crates bump up along side your hull. A well-dressed Argossean waves up to you, a broad smile upon his face.

'Salts, scarves and steel,' he says with a laugh, 'all at good prices, just for you!'

If they are on land, read the following:

A four oxen wagon laden with silks, barrels and crates sways along on the path toward you. A well-dressed Argossean waves to you from his wagon's bench, a broad smile upon his face.

'Salts, scarves and steel,' he says with a laugh, 'all at good prices, just for you!'

The trader is a man named Scipius, and he has a few dozen items leftover from his trip to Messantia to sell if the Player Characters want to. The following list of goods is what Scipius has to offer; which he will sell at 20% higher than market price unless they can defeat him in a contested Diplomacy skill check versus his Will save.

- ✿ 8 Daggers
- ✿ 2 Hunting Bows
- ✿ 24 Arrows
- ✿ 2 Cutlasses
- ✿ 1 Bardiche
- ✿ 1 Greatsword
- ✿ 3 Great Helms
- ✿ 2 Targe Shields
- ✿ 3 Bolts of Red Silk
- ✿ 2 sets of Noble's Clothing
- ✿ 5 Cooking Kits (Salt, fat, spices)
- ✿ 1 Healer's Kit
- ✿ 3 Bedrolls
- ✿ 5 Candle Lanterns
- ✿ 2 Canvas Tents (folded and packed)

During the buying and selling conversations Scipius will share a few specific details, if the Player Characters ask him *specific* topics. The following topic questions will result in Scipio's answer, shown afterwards.

Q: Do you know anything about the island of Orinolo?

A: *'Orinolo is a horrid place full of deadly creatures surrounded by the worst coastline Argos has ever known. The coastals say it is haunted, but I believe it is just a natural hell.'*

Q: How can someone get to Orinolo?

A: *'Find a small fishing village called Saltve, they sell small boats and maps to the Two Brothers. Good luck finding a guide, few who go there ever return.'*

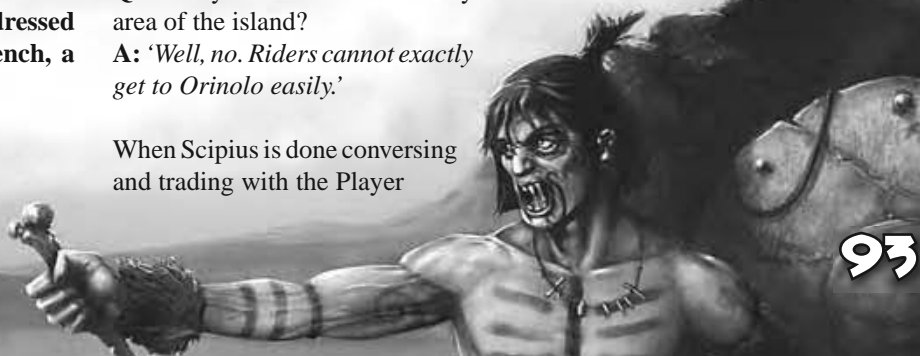
Q: Why would anyone want to live on Orinolo?

A: *'No one would...unless they had a death wish.'*

Q: Have you seen or heard of any 'dark' riders in the area of the island?

A: *'Well, no. Riders cannot exactly get to Orinolo easily.'*

When Scipius is done conversing and trading with the Player





Erebitha's wares

Goods	Animal	Informative Story
Reddish Shells	Carnivorous Snails	'I found them on the shore of a muddy pond and I thought they could be worth something to my city's jewellers.'
Soft Brown Furs	River Lions	'Beware fast moving currents or glassy lakes, it is where the river lions hunt.'
Snakeskin	Constrictor Snakes	'Do not think that the snakes that crush are any less deadly than the snakes that kill with venom; they are not. Also, they can swim as fast as a man!'
Dried Fish Filets	River Piranha	'Muddy rivers that are shallow enough for animals to cross will sometimes attract carnivorous fish that can strip an oxen bare in minutes.'
Gathered Silk	Giant Spiders	'I have to dust their webs with talc before I can collect them, lest my fingers and shears get stuck.'
Long Teeth and Claws	Saltwater Crocodiles	'I would swear that the salties are even meaner than the crocodiles of Stygia, but that would imply that those devils in the Styx were animals at all! Beware any crocodile you see, for they all are related to the snake god.'
White Meat Strips	Saltwater Crocodiles	

Characters, he will go on his way once again. He has no reason to stick around, so he will boat or ride away as soon as the business is concluded.

Statistics for Scipius the Trader can be found in the encounters section.

WILDERNESS HUNTRRESS

If the Player Characters are on a riverboat, read the following:

A long and slender boat, similar to a wide canoe, rows up alongside your riverboat. A swarthy woman in tanned leathers sits in the centre of stacks of furs, hides, strung fish and drying meat.

'Hoi,' the woman says with a cough, 'where are you headed? Have any food for trade?'

If they are on land, read the following:

A campsite looms ahead of you, a small tent flapping in the gentle breeze. A swarthy woman in tanned leathers sits in the centre of stacks of furs, hides, strung fish and drying meat.

'Hoi,' the woman says with a cough, 'where are you headed? Have any food for trade?'

The huntress is a Kothic woman named Erebitha, and she is headed back to her homeland with a full load of exotic hides, furs and meats from the Argossean coasts – including some from the Two Brothers. These items are not extremely valuable in and of themselves except to the right buyer, but they could be quite informative for the Player Characters.

Should they stop and converse or even trade with Erebitha, they will get a chance to ask her about her 'wares'. She has a few stories concerning each of the animal breeds she hunted, which could be very helpful to the Player Characters – as they will have to deal with many of them when they get to Orinolo.

The following table shows what sorts of goods she has, what animals they came from, and what she has to tell the Player Characters about them:

Erebitha is happy to trade some of her animal goods for wine, food or general supplies the Player Characters might have with them. She will not stay long when the trading is over, as she will not want to make friends with the Player Characters – just barter with them.

If the Player Characters tell her or imply to her that they are headed to the island of Orinolo, she will have the following statement to say as she leaves them:

'Do not try to row to Orinolo alone,' Erebitha warns as she moves away from you, 'it is too dangerous without a guide. Go to Saltve, the little village, and



ask for Phemio. He will help you get to the shores of the Ugly Brother, and for a pittance to be sure.'

The statistics for Erebita the Huntress can be found in the encounters section.

PROPHECY POINTS

The Player Characters' trip to Saltve should not have any major impact upon the greater prophecy at all, save for the amount of time they allow it to take for them to get there.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

- ✦ Basic Roleplaying Award for portraying characters well (250 xp)
- ✦ Choosing to arrange for fast river transit toward Orinolo (500 xp)
- ✦ Successfully haggling better prices from Scipius (200 xp)
- ✦ Gathering useful information from Erebita (200 xp)

ENCOUNTERS

SCIPUS THE TRADER

Raised in upper Argos, Scipius enjoys his life as a trader in Messantia's many streets and markets. He is pleasant and fair, but is used to the flowing coins of the City of Riches and sets his prices higher because of it. Although he is limited in his supplies due to a lack of trusted business partners, he makes due with the smithies and suppliers he has.

Medium Humanoid (Argossean Commoner 4)

Initiative: +3 (+2 Dex, +1 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +7, Spot +6

Languages: Aquilonian, Argossean, Shemitish

Dodge Defence: 14 (+2 Dex, +2 class)

Parry Defence: 12 (+0 Str, +2 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 12 hp

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +5

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Unarmed Strike +2 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal)

Full Attack: Unarmed Strike +2 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +2

Grapple: +2

Special Attacks: Weapon Familiarity (greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 15

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Appraise and Profession), Illiterate

Feats: Awareness, Persuasive

Skills: Appraise +7, Bluff +8, Diplomacy +8, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Profession (trader) +8, Ride +3, Sense Motive +5, Survival +3

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 4 (+1)

Possessions: Average Merchant's Outfit, Dual-flapped Coin Purse (–5 to Sleight-of-Hand checks to pickpocket from), 234 ¾ sp

EREBITHA THE HUNTRESS

Athletic, wilful and strong, Erebita is a wandering huntress from the kingdom of Koth. She has a fantastic arm for spearing fish and game alike, and knows a great deal about trapping. Although she once distrusted all foreigners while she was away on her hunting journeys, she has come to enjoy their stories and company when she is so far from her homeland.



Medium Humanoid (Koth Nomad 4)

Initiative: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-Light Vision, Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages: Aquilonian, Kothic, Nemedian

Dodge Defence: 14 (+2 Dex, +2 class)

Parry Defence: 14 (+2 Str, +2 class)

DR: 2 (+2 Leather Coat)

Hit Points: 28 hp

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +3

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: War Spear +6 melee (1d10+2, AP 2) or Hunting Bow +7 ranged (1d8+2, AP 1)

Full Attack: War Spear +6 melee (1d10+2, AP 2) or Hunting Bow +7 ranged (1d8+2, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +4

Grapple: +6

Special Attacks: Nomad Charge +1, Point Blank Shot

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Born to the Saddle, Favoured Terrain (river lands) +2

Feats: Endurance, Eyes of the Cat, Track, Weapon Focus (Hunting Bow)

Skills: Climb +5, Craft (traps) +8, Handle Animal +4, Hide +8, Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (nature) +6, Move Silently +6, Search +6, Survival +8

Code of Honour: Barbaric

Reputation and Social Standing: 3 (+1)

Possessions: Tanned Leather Coat, Average Hunter's Outfit, Hunting Bow (+2) with 8 Arrows, 2 Kothic War Spears, 2 days' worth of Rations, 9 sp

SALTVE AND THE BOAT TO ORINOLO

The Player Characters will eventually make their way to the coastal village of Saltve (pronounced **salt-vay**), where they will need to meet up with the one single man capable and crazy enough to take them by shortboat to Orinolo – a half-addled fisherman named Phemio.

Saltve is a small fishing village of less than fifty people on the southern side of the Khoratas River mouth in Argos. It has served as the primary place to rent or

buy a boat out to the Two Brothers. The majority of the families in the village are simple fishermen or boatmen that live and thrive off the ocean and river delta around them, many of whom know every other person in the village by their first name. It is a simple place that has eighteen cottages along the river, each one with their own dock, a storehouse for all of the food the village stores, and one large building that serves as an inn. The village is very low key and quiet, even at night around the tavern when sea shanties are sung and watered down ale is flowing for a quarter-silver a pint.

When the Player Characters reach Saltve they may want to look around or do some supplies shopping – but the village has no shops or stores, just an inn and docks. The villagers go to Messantia or Orabono to buy their own supplies, so there is no need. Everything else they need they gather from the surrounding areas or pull up from the waters around them.

Sooner or later, when the Player Characters realise that there is nothing else to do in Saltve, they will head to the tavern:

The creaky wooden doors to the village ‘alehouse’ open before you to reveal an exaggerated dining room with mismatched wooden furniture and half-drunk swaggering wenches manning an oversized keg and stew pot. As you enter, every pair of eyes in the room lock onto you...

The tavern is currently home to twelve of the residents of Saltve, the innkeeper Grappus, and the crazy boatman Phemio. The residents will have a number of ‘interesting’ fishing stories and tales to tell, but it is old Phemio that is the real reason why the Player Characters are in the village.

When they eventually get introduced to Phemio, likely because they ask someone how to get to Orinolo, he will ask them to buy him three drinks and sit down to ‘negotiate’:

‘One for my wife, lost at sea,’ Phemio says as he gulps greedily at the first mug of ale. ‘One for my son, taken by bandits,’ he says, raising and emptying his second. ‘And one for my good luck that I did not join either of them!’ he laughs and slams his third empty pint to the table. He looks like he might lose his last meal for a moment, stills himself, and then belches a horribly foul combination of foamy head and sea bass stew odours.





‘For ten silvers each,’ he says with a four-toothed smile, ‘I will let you row my shortboat to the Ugly Brother. For ten more apiece I will show you how to get passed those rocks. And for another thirty per soul I will wish you luck as you step off my boat and onto the island.’

‘What do you say,’ he says as he thrusts a callused and filthy hand forward, ‘we have a deal?’

Phemio has given them three distinct offers. For 10 sp per character he will rent his boat to the Player Characters, at which point they will be on their own to get to Orinolo. For 20 sp he will map out the route he has used ‘hundreds’ of times to get to the island. For 50 sp he will take them all the way to his cove landing point, where he has brought others to before. For obvious reasons, unless one of the Player Characters is a seasoned sea veteran or boatman, this final option is likely to be the best and easiest on them – even if it is expensive.

After the Player Characters decide at what level to hire Phemio’s boat, they will have the evening to get some rest before the shortboat is ready to be taken out in the morning.

Statistics for the Saltve Citizens and Phemio can be found in the encounters section.

THE SHORTBOAT TO THE UGLY BROTHER

Depending on how much they chose to pay Phemio, he will meet them by his rickety dock to take them out to Orinolo. The shortboat is only about twelve feet in length and five feet across, with three sets of oars and strange copper plates riveted to the underside of its sloping hull.

When the Player Characters reach the dock, Phemio will already have everything packed up and ready to go. He will greet them with the following statement:

‘Welcome aboard,’ he laughs and gestures with a shaking bow, ‘six hours, no more, to get to the Ugly Brother. I would pack lightly, and leave your heavy gear in my dockhouse, all it will do is weigh you down and grant you a sure spot to the bottom, it will.’ He gestures to the glorified shack at the base of the dock, ‘It will be waiting for you when you get back, it will. If you get back, of course!’ He laughs loudly...

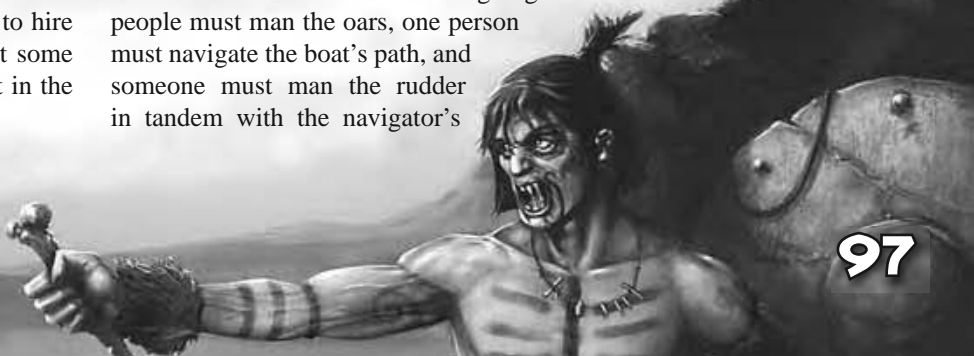
Phemio will gladly lock up (by ‘lock’ he means set a stone in front of the door) anything the Player Characters wish to leave behind, which he will not steal from or even peruse through. It will be waiting for them as he promised when they return.

The trip to Orinolo is broken into five sections: Leaving Harbour, Open Sea, Rocky Reef, Tidal Pool and the Cove Cliff. Each one of these segments is an obstacle for the Player Characters to overcome before moving on. The obstacles are easier with Phemio’s help, but are not impossible to deal with on their own.

LEAVING HARBOUR

The salty spray of each wave that batters against the shortboat stings your eyes and makes your skin creak when you flex it. The boat rocks steeply from side to side as you struggle to row against the push of the sea, as if it did not want you to leave the mainland...

There are five roles to be fulfilled upon the shortboat to make it function as an ocean going craft. Three people must man the oars, one person must navigate the boat’s path, and someone must man the rudder in tandem with the navigator’s





instructions. The following table shows the shortboat roles and what game mechanic must be fulfilled to succeed at it.

Shortboat Role	Check Required for Success
Rower #1	Strength check DC 12
Rower #2	Strength check DC 10
Rower #3	Strength check DC 8
Navigator	Knowledge (geography) / Profession (sailor) DC 10; or a Wisdom check DC 12
Steerage	Profession (sailor) DC 10; or a Intelligence check DC 12

Twice during the journey the Games Master will want to call for a round of these checks. All of these roles must be successful at once; a single failure means that the trip is delayed by an hour past the expected six hour journey. Although this does not mean anything negative for the Player Characters directly, it could make things more difficult on the island if they take longer than ten hours to get there – as it will be dark when they land.

Phemio, if he is on board, will take on the role of Navigator or Steerage – depending on the wishes of the Player Characters. Should he not be on board, or if there are not enough Player Characters to man all of the roles on the boat, this event segment will be a complete failure and they will not reach the island until *long* past dark.

OPEN SEA

As you row forward toward the growing hunk of rock you assume to be Orinolo, you feel a bump on the underside of the shortboat that rocks you slightly. Then another bump, a stronger one. You look into the water to see a grey-blue shape swim under you once more, then the boat is raised a full foot into the air at its keel, coming down with a great splash...

A shark has just slammed into the underside of the boat, and everyone inside of it must pass a Reflex save DC 16 or be thrown over the edge to combat the shark.

Anyone who falls over the side will need to pass Swim checks DC 10 to stay above water, DC 15 if they plan on trying to fight against the shark as it comes to take bites out of them. Anyone left in the boat can use any weapons they might



have on them to attack the shark when/if it draws near to the boat, or they can help their fallen comrades back into the boat. Anyone trying to get back into the boat must pass a Climb check DC 12, gaining a +2 bonus for anyone helping them. Phemio does not want to fight the shark at all, and will simply try to get in the boat and help others if he is on the trip.

The shark will fight until it is reduced to half its Hit Points, when it will swim away.

The statistics for the shark can be found in the encounters section.

ROCKY REEF

The shallower waters surrounding Orinolo is riddled with sharp rocks and steep reefs that make them impossible to traverse in a larger ship, and difficult for small boats. Now the Player Characters must make their way through them to get closer to their island destination.

Orinolo looms ahead of you, a stark plateau of jagged rocks and cliffs topped with lush green swamps. Waves crash against the cliffs with the sound of thunder from this far away, and you can imagine the number of ships that have been dashed against them.



Suddenly a whining screech vibrates from under you, the copper plates of the shortboat grinding noisily against a row of sharp reefstone...

The dangerous reef barriers around Orinolo require five sets of skill checks to steer through without suffering too much damage to the shortboat's 'armoured' keel. Each set of checks begin with all passengers making Spot skill DC 14 checks; these checks represent them looking out for reef shapes and helping keep the steerage from running into or over them. After the Spot checks are made, compare the number of successful passengers to the table below – which sets the difficulty for the navigation of the boat through the reefs.

Reef Rock Checks

Number of Successful Spot checks	Profession (Sailor) Skill Check Required	Alternative ¹ Intelligence Check Required
0	25	27
1	20	22
2	15	17
3	10	12
4	8	10
5+	5	7

¹ Use only if the Steerage handler does not possess ranks in the Profession (Sailor) skill

The shortboat begins at 100% hull efficiency, becomes difficult to handle (-3 to all Profession (sailor) checks) at 25%, sinks when it reaches 10% and is utterly irreparable at 0%. For every point that the above reef skill checks fail by, the shortboat loses 1d6% of hull efficiency.

For example, one the first round of reef checks the five Player Characters and Phemio roll their DC 14 Spot checks and come up with only two successes. This means that Phemio must now pass a DC 15 Profession (sailor) check, but only comes up with a 12, three points less. The Games Master rolls 3d6 and subtracts the total (11) from the current hull percentage before moving on to the next set of reef checks.

Should the boat be sunk or anyone get out swimming, they will possibly be dashed upon the reef rocks and cut to ribbons. Swim checks to stay above water are made at DC 14, and making headway toward the tidal pools are at DC 16. Failure not only can result in drowning (see page 221 of the *Conan Roleplaying Game Second Edition* core rulebook) but it also inflicts 2d4 points of damage upon the swimmer from scraping and bashing rocks.

It takes three Swim checks to cross the same distance as one of the reef rock checks above, making it a deadly swim for all but the most proficient athletes.

TIDAL POOL

When the Player Characters eventually get past the rocky reefs and into the calmer waters directly before the cliffs of Orinolo, they will have to deal with the deadly inhabitants of the tidal pools they must walk through in order to reach the cliffs.

The boat drags bottom across a gritty sandbar, and lying before you is a series of shallow pools filled by the ebbing tides. You can see a remarkable array of colours growing in the clear waters. Flashing fish with silvery sides, spiny urchins the colour of wine, a colony of crabs that have markings that look like eyes on their backs; all of these and more live in the pools. Hopefully you will not disturb them too badly when you begin to drag your boat through...

It is not possible for the shortboat to be rowed or poled through the tidal pool area with more than two passengers, meaning that some of the Player Characters will need to step out into the warm waters in order to pull the boat to the cove at the base of the cliffs. This is physically a tiring, but not difficult task. The dangers lie in the wildlife they might step upon inside the pools.

Each Player Character that walks through the tidal pools will need to roll 2d6, adding +2 if they are listening to Phemio's advice (if he is present) on where to walk and where not to. The total must then be compared to the following table of tidal pool events, and the listed encounter takes place (described after).

Tidal Pool Encounters

2d6	Tidal Pool Encounter
2	Spinefish Lair
3 – 4	Hunter Jellyfish
5 – 6	Blood Urchin
7 – 9	Nothing – Clear Water
10	Gazing Crab Colony
11	White Oysters
12	Buried Treasure ¹

¹ Buried treasure may only be encountered once. After the first occasion it is rolled up treat as Nothing – Clear Water.





SPINEFISH LAIR

The deadly poisonous spinefish lives in shallow waters, where it waits for larger fish to swim over it and get stung by its sharp and numerous spines. The Player Character who rolled this encounter has just stepped into a muddy pool that is home to one of these fish. The Player Character must immediately pass a Reflex save DC 18 or be stung by the fish's rapid attack, which inflicts 1d2 points of damage to the sole of the foot.

So long as any damage was inflicted, the poison listed in the table below is instantly injected into the victim:

HUNGER JELLYFISH

A tiny breed of jellyfish called the hunter lives in small floating colonies in warm, shallow waters in search of small fish and crustaceans to sting, kill and eat. The Player Character has just stuck his foot or leg in a cloud of the little predators, and is going to be stung many times. The Player Character will be stung by 3d6 hunter jellyfish almost instantly, each one inflicting 1 point of damage if any uncovered flesh is in the water. The wounds will be red and angry, incurring a penalty of -5 feet on the Player Character's Movement for 2d6 hours (wounds after the first will have no further effect on movement).

BLOOD URCHIN

Named for their crimson carapace, blood urchins are generally passive molluscs that have moderately toxic spines covering their bodies. The Player Character has just stepped into a tidal recess that is home to several of the dangerous creatures, forcing him to pass 1d3 Reflex saves at DC 12. Each failed save means that he stepped fully onto an urchin, driving numerous spines up into their foot or leg. Each urchin's spines will cause 1d4+1 points of damage in total and call for a save against the poison listed in the table below (if damage was inflicted):

GAZING CRAB COLONY

Small brown crabs as big as a man's fist, gazing crabs are named for the two eye-like spots of white on their

backs – which can be seen at night through several feet of water if the moon is shining. They are very tasty when cooked properly, but can pinch for 1d3 points of nonlethal damage when grabbed without properly protection. The Player Character will have a chance to grab at 1d6 of the animals if he wishes to, otherwise they will scuttle away quickly to their hiding holes.

WHITE OYSTERS

The clear and warm waters that fill these tidal pools are great for a specific breed of oyster that has extremely good tasting meat and a high probability of containing rudimentary pearls within their shells. The Player Character has just kicked over a small colony of 3d6 white oysters, which will prove no problem to scoop up if they wish to. Each white oyster is as big as the palm of their hand, and could be boiled or cooked to serve as a single meal. Additionally, each oyster has a 10% chance of containing a small pearl in it worth 1d6 x 10 sp.

BURIED TREASURE

Orinolo has been targeted for pirate use as a secret cove many times. The Player Character has just stepped down onto a small chest that must have washed into the pools and gotten buried by tidal silt. The chest contains 2d6 x 100 sp, 2d3 gems worth 1d6 x 10 sp each, and a single piece of jewellery that was once worth 500 sp before it spent years underwater.

COVE CLIFF

Looming before you is a jagged cliff of sea worn stone, dripping salty water and algae, nearly fifty feet tall – and this is supposed to be the easiest point to get onto the island!

The Player Characters will need to climb the full 50 feet of cliff, requiring Climb checks at DC 15 to make 10 feet of progress. There are numerous climbing pitons that have been driven into the rocks to help, but many of them have moss or algae growing on them too. Normal falling damage applies if the Player Characters lose

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Spinefish Toxin	Injury DC 14	1d3 Con	6	One per minute
Blood Urchin Toxin	Injury DC 12	1d4 Dex	3	One per minute





their grip or footing (1d6 for each 10 feet fallen), but the jagged rocks at the bottom eliminate the ability to make Fortitude saves for half damage – a falling character will always take the rolled amount of damage.

Phemio, if he is with the Player Characters, will wish them good luck and tell them the following as they disappear over the cliff's ledge:

'Good luck,' Phemio says with a wave and a laugh, plunging his hand into the water to come up with an eel or something similar, 'I'll come back in five days for you, but if you are not here by sunup on the sixth,' he bashes the creature against the side of his keel twice before dropping into the boat, 'I'll take ye for dead!'

PROPHECY POINTS

- ✿ The Player Characters refuse to pay for the help of Phemio, placing their greed before their mission +1 **Prophecy Points**

EXPERIENCE POINTS

- ✿ Basic Roleplaying Award for portraying characters well (500 xp)
- ✿ Hiring Phemio to take them to Orinololo (250 xp)
- ✿ The Player Characters successfully navigate the first portion of the Open Sea (250 xp)
- ✿ Surviving the encounter with the shark (500 xp)
- ✿ Navigating the Rocky Reefs without losing the shortboat (250 xp)
- ✿ Pulling the shortboat through the Tidal Pool area (150 xp); without being poisoned (250 xp)
- ✿ Successfully climbing the cliff wall to reach the island interior (500 xp)





ENCOUNTERS

SALTVE CITIZENS

The fisherfolk of Saltve are simple and pleasant most times, but they are all distrusting of outsiders for the most part. Quick to tell boring stories of their everyday lives, the people that call Saltve home are the average common folk of Hyboria.

Medium Humanoid (Argossean Commoner 2)

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex, +0 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +4, Spot +5

Languages: Argossean (50% also speak Aquilonian)

Dodge Defence: 12 (+1 Dex, +1 class)

Parry Defence: 12 (+1 Str, +1 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 8 hp

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +4

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Unarmed Strike +2 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal) or Gaff +2 melee (1d4+1, AP 2)

Full Attack: Unarmed Strike +2 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal) or Gaff +2 melee (1d4+1, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: +2

Special Attacks: Weapon Familiarity (greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 9

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Knowledge (geography) and Profession), Illiterate

Feats: Skill Focus (Profession (sailor))

Skills: Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Profession (sailor) +7, Survival +3, Swim +4

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 2 (+0)

Possessions: Average Peasant's Outfit, Dockman's Gaff, 2 ¼ sp

PHEMIO THE BOATMAN

Raised in the waters of the Khoratas River and the Argossean shore, Phemio has drunk a bit too much seawater in his lifetime. He spent eight years as a Barachan pirate, only turning away from the life of crime when his wife died in a dock collapse and his son perished to a wave of white fever ten years ago. He is considered to be the only man crazy enough to take others to Orinolo; luckily for the Player Characters – he can.

Medium Humanoid (Argossean Commoner 4 / Pirate 3)

Initiative: +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +7, Spot +6

Languages: Argossean, Barachan, Zingaran

Dodge Defence: 15 (+1 Dex, +4 class); 16 (+1 seamanship)

Parry Defence: 13 (+0 Str, +3 class); 14 (+1 seamanship)

DR: –

Hit Points: 26 hp

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +6

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Dagger +4 melee (1d4, AP 2)

Full Attack: Dagger +4 melee (1d4, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +4

Grapple: +4

Special Attacks: Ferocious Attack, Sneak Attack +1d6, Sneak Subdual, Weapon Familiarity (greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Bluff and Profession), Illiterate, Pirate Code (Barachan Smoke and Rockets), To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter

Feats: Awareness, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Profession (sailor))

Skills: Appraise +4, Bluff +6, Climb +5 (+6 seamanship), Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (local) +5, Profession (sailor) +11 (+12 seamanship), Sense Motive +5, Survival +5, Swim +8

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 5 (+1)

Possessions: Poor Peasant's Outfit, Rusted Dagger, Fishing Kit, 11 sp



SHARK

Known to Argosseans as 'sea wolves', thresher sharks are many in number in the waters surrounding the Khoratas River mouth. They are brave, daring and powerful predators. Anything that makes enough noise and splashing on the near surface can bring these beasts from the depths, which will make the water around them a deadly hazard for anyone foolish enough to get within striking range of their savage teeth.

Large Animal**Initiative:** +7 (+2 Dex, +5 Reflex)**Sensory Traits:** Tremorsense 90 ft., Keen Scent 180 ft., Listen +4, Spot +6**Languages:** –**Dodge Defence:** 16 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +1 Dodge, +4 natural)**DR:** 3**Hit Dice:** 7d8+7 (39 hp)**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +3**Defensive Specials:** Dodge**Speed:** 60 ft. swim**Attack:** Bite +8 melee (1d8+3, AP 6)**Full Attack:** Bite +8 melee (1d8+3, AP 6)**Space/Reach:** 10 ft. (2) / 5 ft. (1)**Base Attack:** +5**Grapple:** +12**Special Attacks:** Blood Frenzy, Constrict, Improved Grab, Sneak Attack +2d6**Sorcery Knowledge:** –**Abilities:** Str 17, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2**Special Qualities:** –**Feats:** Alertness, Great Fortitude**Skills:** Hide +12, Jump +5, Swim +15**Combat**

Argossean sharks generally attack their targets in groups, biting chunks of flesh off in rapid succession until the target is nothing more than blood in the water. Solitary hunters, like the one that attacks in this scenario, are much more likely to knock a target out of its boat, grab it in its many rows of sharp teeth and shake them furiously until they are torn to small enough pieces to swallow.

Blood Frenzy (Ex): A shark that can smell an injured creature within 90 feet of their position will be subject to this special rule. It gains a +2 bonus to all hit and damage rolls, but a –2 penalty to its defence. This state lasts for one minute.

Constrict (Ex): Although not exactly constriction, a shark's jaws that hold onto a target due to the Improved Grab ability can automatically inflict 2d8+3, AP 6 damage to a target each round they maintain the bite.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the shark must hit with its bite attack. If it does so successfully, it can constrict as stated above.

Keen Scent (Ex): A shark's sense of smell is so honed underwater that it can automatically notice creatures by scent up to 180 feet away, but can smell blood in the water up to a mile away.

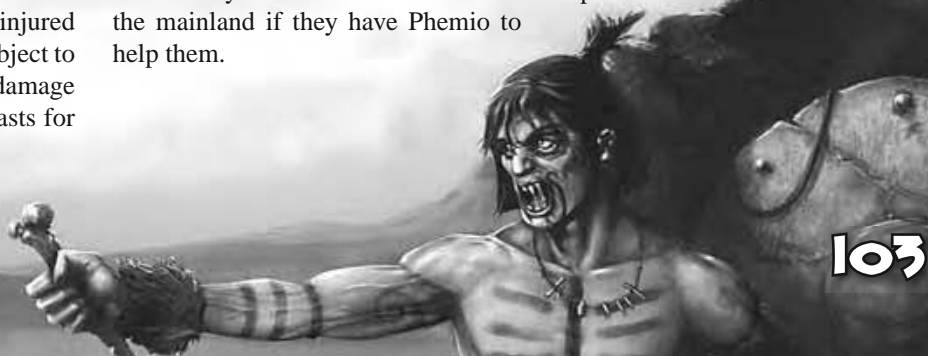
Sneak Attack (Ex): Sharks are masterful at striking silently and from out of nowhere. Any time the shark's target is unable to dodge or parry, or when the shark flanks the target, the shark's attack deals 2d6 extra damage if it damages the target. Should the shark score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. The extra sneak attack damage is only dealt if the shark's bite either bypasses the foe's armour, or pierces the armour without the benefit of the extra damage.

Skills: A shark has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, and can perform the run action while swimming.

THE ISLAND JOURNEY INTO ORINOLO

Once past the turbulent seas and deadly cliffs, Orinolo is a mostly flat island of small lakes, bogs and swamp – a truly inhospitable place. It is covered in loose foliage and thick willowy trees that hang their drooping branches into stagnant waters, turning some areas into moss and algae mounds that rise dozens of feet into the air. Predators hide in every shallow pool or nest of muck, and prey animals are frightfully hard to find. It is a dangerous place, and the Player Characters must walk toward its centre to follow Dexitheus' lead.

Phemio claimed that he would be back to pick the Player Characters back up in five days, which means they should believe that they have only that much time to succeed in finding the Stygian rider. In actuality there is another boat they can take if need be, but they do not know that yet – and it will be a far easier trip back to the mainland if they have Phemio to help them.





At the centre of the island is a very old stone keep called Clearwater, named for the freshwater lake surrounding it, where the Stygian rider is trying to gain access to the woman who fled inside from his flying camel (Uncanny Steed). The Player Characters will need to find the keep and stop the rider before they decide to leave, or else the prophecy will be drawn that much closer to completion.

The following are the different events that could/will take place on Orinolo while the Player Characters are exploring it.

WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS

Whenever the Games Master decides to have the Player Characters deal with a wilderness encounter, he can choose or roll randomly on the table below. The table has two columns of encounters to denote whether the event is rolled during the day or at night. The individual encounter introductions and notes are found afterwards. It is up to the Games Master as to how many encounters a group of Player characters have to deal with during their time on the island.

Orinolo Wilderness Encounter Table

2d6 Result	Daytime Encounter	Night Encounter
2	Saltwater Crocodile	Manticore
3 – 4	River Lion	River Lion
5 – 6	Constrictor Snake	Giant Slug
7	Peat Viper	Bat Swarm
8 – 9	Piranha School	Swamp Panther
10 – 11	Giant Funnel Web Spider	Giant Funnel Web Spider
12	Black Lotus Vine	Bog Lights

BAT SWARM

The Player Characters are caught in the feeding flight of an incensed group of bats, making them unexpected targets of their biting and clawing.

You incessantly swat mosquitoes and gnats suddenly, as you are set upon by a buzzing cloud of the annoying insects. As another pin prick of an insect bit stings the back of your neck, you hear the

flapping of hundreds of leathery wings and then the sky fills with the screeching song of bats. Sensing the swarm of meaty bugs trying to feast upon you, the bats flow downward toward you...teeth bared...

The statistics for the Bat Swarm can be found in the encounters section.

BLACK LOTUS VINE

The Player Characters luck into a very rare and powerful plant – a black lotus vine in full bloom. Although dangerous to harvest, such a find could be useful for a variety of reasons.

A sweet aroma fills the air, something between honey and smoked meat, and your eyes are drawn to the tall green stalk of a plant a ways ahead of you. Thick vines like the curls in a maiden's hair tumble down from the stalk, each one ending in a round flower the colour of night. Skeletal remains of animals lay around and entwined by it, left like sacrifices to the beautiful plant...

The statistics for a Black Lotus Plant can be found in the encounters section.

BOG LIGHTS

The Player Characters are strangely protected against nocturnal predators by the glow of strange lights in the peat bog around them.

As a dark cloud drifts in front of the moon and darkness sweeps across you, a chill passes through you as you notice a light green glow flickering around you. Globes of light float over and around the vegetation around you, casting an eerie pallor over the whole area and making the bog seem that more malevolent.

The lights are simple swamp gases giving off phosphorescent light, which any Player Character will know is completely safe if they pass a Survival skill check DC 15. Most predators are frightened away by the lights, meaning that the Player Characters will not need to risk anymore wilderness encounters if they do not move away from them. Anyone who is not informed of the safety of these lights will instead be unsettled by them, forcing them to pass a Will save at DC 15 to fall asleep in their presence. The lights will fade by dawn.





CONSTRICTOR SNAKE

The Player Characters happen upon one of the large island anacondas that thrive in the waters that flow in Orinolo's swamps.

The moss and peat break suddenly to give way to a pool of open water, and you can see a gentle current rippling around a log just below the surface. Just then the log moves, and a low hiss from behind you sends a shiver up your spine. Your eyes trace the line of the 'log', and it connects to a fang-filled serpent's head – after nearly twenty feet!

The statistics for the Constrictor Snake can be found in the encounters section.

GIANT FUNNEL WEB SPIDER

The foliage around the ground cover is littered with spirals of thin, white wispy material that forms into funnels sporadically.

There are 1d4+1 Giant Funnel Web Spiders in the area surrounding the Player Characters, attacking anyone that gets too close to their webs.

Statistics for the Giant Funnel Web Spiders can be found in the encounters section.

GIANT SLUG

The Player Characters stumble into the path of a horrible and deadly predator, the giant slug.

The ground beneath your feet has been moist throughout all of the island, but you recoil slightly when you take your next step as you slide slightly to one side in a pool of slime nearly an inch thick! You look down and realize that it is not a pool, but rather a trail of slime. Before you can even wonder where it leads to, you discover where it came from – a horrible brown slug as large as a horse rises up to bear its sucker-like mouth at you.

The statistics for the Giant Slug can be found in the encounters section.

MANTICORE

The Player Characters have stumbled upon a horrible and solitary predator called a manticore, or rather – it has tracked them down!

The mists of night have seeped up from the moist ground, and you can hear the slight echo of your own breath getting louder and louder. Then the breathing turns into a rasping growl...and you are suddenly aware that it is not your breathing at all! A huge shape, like a giant cat, bursts in from the edge of the foliage. When you look at the creature again, a man's face filled with shark's teeth leers back at you – but there is only animal predation behind its bloodshot eyes.

This encounter could be a very deadly one for Player Characters that are not battle ready or equipped to take on such a mythical beast, and Games Masters should be aware before they choose to use this encounter segment.

The statistics for the Manticore can be found in the encounters section.

PEAT VIPER

The Player Characters step into a natural ambush; a small poisonous snake could be a huge hazard to them if they are unwary.





There is no narrative introduction to the peat viper encounters, merely a Spot skill check against the peat viper's Hide skill check to see if the animal is noticed before it gets into striking range. If so, the Player Characters can avoid or deal with the animal at their leisure; if not, it will strike at the first target to draw near to it.

The statistics for the Peat Viper can be found in the encounters section.

PIRANHA SCHOOL

The Player Characters find a slow-moving pond that contains flesh eating fish.

You walk up to the bank of a large pond of freshwater, a thin film of reddish algae growing atop the water. You cannot tell how deep it may be, but there are several small trees sticking up from its surface; it could not be too deep. You can see the ripple of swimming fish in the water where the algae blanket has been broken, but no other signs of life aside from the buzzing of flies and the biting of mosquitoes.

The Player Characters could easily choose to go around the pond instead of trying to swim or wade through it, taking at least 1d6 additional hours from their day. If they test the depth of the water somehow, they will find it only four feet at its deepest and moderately solid at the bottom. Of course, it is not drowning that will concern them when they begin to cross.

Statistics for the Piranha School can be found in the encounters section.

RIVER LION

The Player Characters are seen as prey by one of the freshwater dangers of the island, the savage river lion.

A splashing sound draws your attention to a nearby shore of bog that has broken through to the water beneath the peat blanket, where bubbles in the water tell you that something is just below the surface...

If the Player Characters immediately go and investigate, they are likely to be surprise attacked by the river lion

when it jumps out of the hole at them. If they are more careful, they will likely not be ambushed – but battle will occur when the river lion realises his prey is not falling for the trap.

Statistics for the River Lion can be found in the encounters section.

SALTWATER CROCODILE

The Player Characters are set upon by one of the island's deadliest predators, a saltwater crocodile that has wandered far inland.

A loud hiss and the snap of jaws dips your heart in icy waters as a massive reptile easily three times as long as a man tears out of the underbrush, three feet of jaws set with jagged teeth open and bared at you. The crocodile snaps its mouth twice again and expels its lungs in a rumbling exhale before it takes its first clawed step in your direction!

Statistics for the Saltwater Crocodile can be found in the encounters section.



SWAMP PANTHER

A rustle in the nearby underbrush makes you uneasy in the darkness of night, but when a small ground squirrel shoots out across your field vision you are far more relieved. As your nerves begin to finally calm after the rodent trespasser, the night silence is split by the wailing roar of a huge cat – the great black beast that has just sprung down from a nearby willow tree in your direction!

Statistics for the Swamp Panther can be found in the encounters section.

SOMETIME ON DAY ONE – THE EXPLORER

Sometime during the Player Characters' first day of exploring inward on Orinolo, they will discover the remains of the island's last explorer – and a very important clue to push them toward Clearwater Keep.

When the Games Master feels it is a good time for the Player Characters to be given their first clue, read the following:

The buzzing of carrion flies greets you as you break through a thicket into a clearing that is mostly dry and slightly elevated from the moistness of the swamp. You wave away the black insects to reveal the corpse of a man lying at your feet. By the look of his remains he has been here a few days at least. A bloodstained rucksack sits a few feet from his fingerless hand, but no weapons or armour to speak of.

The corpse is that of one late Cedrik Renadio, an Aquilonian explorer that came to Orinolo to seek out the mythical manticore that supposedly lives here. He was bitten by a peat viper and died, but not before he had been on the island for eight days – leaving a decent amount of information in his journal.

His rucksack contains a shovel, two daggers, a change of clothes (average traveller's outfit), a flask of mulled wine, and his wire-bound journal.

If any of the Player Characters can read Aquilonian, they can read the following entries in Cedrik's journal:

- ✿ *'We have reached the island. Myself and my guard from the north, Krunnan, and his young interpreter Deidre. I did not want to bring the girl along, but Krunnan knows not a lick of anything but Cimmerian, to which I admit is not my strong suit. We camp near some mangroves tonight, and set out inland tomorrow.'*
- ✿ *'No signs of the manticore yet, but I did find scratching marks upon a tree that could have been made by its infamous claws. Krunnan killed a serpent today, we will feast well tonight.'*
- ✿ *'Last night we were awoken by swamp lights. Although I know it to be nothing more than bog gases, Krunnan was visibly shaken and we moved away from them. No other signs of the great beast we are seeking.'*
- ✿ *'We have found an old keep at the inward part of the island. I am calling it Clearwater due to the beautiful lake that surrounds it. The beach is covered in huge red snail shells, and all three of us were enchanted by the striking imagery of the place. We have decided to go and get our boat, pulling it up on ropes, so we can investigate the keep itself.'*
- ✿ *'Krunnan killed a crocodile today, but suffered a very nasty bite on his leg in the process. Deidre tells me that he will be fine, but I have seen lesser wounds get infected before.'*
- ✿ *'It took all day to drag the boat up the cliffs. We camp tonight at the cliff's edge, and then begin to take the boat back to Clearwater on the morning.'*
- ✿ *'I heard it! I heard the manticore's howling wail last night. I have sent Krunnan and Deidre ahead to the keep at Clearwater with the boat. I must go and see if I can find its tracks by daylight!'*
- ✿ *'I found large tracks, like a lion's, in the mud around a small recess in the willows. I believe I may have found the manticore's lair. I will scarcely sleep nearby tonight, for I know the beast is nocturnal and I must get a look at it!'*
- ✿ *'Not much time to write. I went rooting in the lair and was bitten by a tiny brown snake, and now my limbs are going numb even now. I hope Krunnan finds this. My son my cannot no more longer no...' (the rest is scribbles)*





SOMETIME ON DAY TWO - SIGNS OF A STRUGGLE

Sometime during the Player Characters' second day of searching Orinolo, they will get a chance to look for a strong set of tracks leading to Clearwater.

The underbrush parts to reveal an area of underbrush that looks like it was trampled down somewhat. Willow branches have been snapped, grasses broken, peat overturned and water churned to mud.

The clearing was made by Ghun, the Stygian rider who swooped down on his Uncanny Steed (a black camel in his case) to sink crossbow bolts into Krunnan. He missed, and Deidre ran off while the Cimmerian fought against Ghun. Krunnan wounded the Stygian, who flew off before he could be killed, leaving Krunnan to catch up with Deidre at Clearwater (which would end up being the Cimmerian's demise anyway).

The Player Characters will then be given the chance to look for signs of what happened, and perhaps gain a good trail from them. There are three different skill checks that can be made in order to glean information concerning the clearing: Knowledge (nature), Search, and Survival. Each Player Character choosing to look over the area must chose *one* of these skills to roll with depending on their methods of investigation, comparing their results to the appropriate table below.

Investigation Skill Results

Knowledge (nature) Result	Information Gained ¹
10 – 14	The plants were trampled by many sets of feet or hooves.
15 – 19	There is no sign of blood, fur or the like to suggest an animal fight.
20 – 21	There is no sign of an animal's lair that could have been set upon by hunters or trappers.
22 – 25	No sign of the plantlife being eaten or grazed upon means that it is unlikely that a prey animal was involved in any way.
26+	This clearing was made by humanoids, or at least animals trained to ignore all of their natural instincts.

Search Result	Information Gained ¹
15 – 19	There was a crossbow bolt stuck in the mud a few feet out of the clearing. The angle it was jutting out of the ground suggests an arcing shot from above.
20 – 21	The crossbow bolts has no chips or blemishes on it, meaning that it did not strike armour or wood before being de ected. It was likely just a miss.
22 – 25	There is no blood anywhere to be found, meaning nothing could have been hurt badly in the scuffle, if at all.
26+	A tiny bit of black cloth stuck to a high broken willow branch is silk, implying that a scarf or blouse could have been snagged – but how could it happen fifteen feet off the ground?

Survival Result	Information Gained ¹
10 – 14	The tracks making the clearing are from at least two humans and a camel.
15 – 19	The human tracks lead to and from the clearing, heading further inland.
20 – 21	The camel tracks seem to appear and disappear within the clearing, and could possibly be fake.
22 – 25	One of the two human sets of tracks belonged to a large man, the other a small girl.
26+	The large man's had a limp.

¹The information listed is cumulative for each individual table

SOMETIME ON DAY THREE - THE GRAVE AT CLEARWATER LAKE

Either by following the tracks found the day before, or by the grace of the Games Master, the Player Characters should eventually discover Clearwater.

When the Player Characters reach the shore of the Clearwater Lake, they should get the following description:





The swamp breaks suddenly to reveal a huge lake of glassy and still water, so still and fresh that it reflects the sky above it like a greenish mirror. At the centre of the lake, nearly one thousand feet from where you are standing, is a small stone keep behind a rough stone wall, a thin line of smoke rising from its chimney. At the shore of the keep's landing is a small wooden boat pulled up onto the ground.

Once the surprise has worn off, you look around you. Twenty feet or so of grassless sand forms a small beach for the lake, on which are dozens of crimson shells. Ranging from the size of a pea to those as large as a fist, all the way to one that you can see could serve as a helm, these shells are conch-like and smooth.

Also, off to one side is a stack of stones that look like they might cover a grave...

The shells are discarded homes for the growing carnivorous snails that fill Clearwater Lake. Their shells are very attractive and strong, and could fetch 1d6 x 5 sp each from a jeweller who could make items from them. Otherwise they are just scenery.

The keep is where Deidre is currently held up inside while Ghun is outside in disguise trying to get inside at her. See *Treachery at the Keep* for details.

The grave is where Ghun buried Krunnan when he found the body. What had really happened was that Deidre ran off when Ghun attacked in the swamp clearing (see *Signs of a Struggle*) and she took the boat to the keep at the centre of the lake. Once Ghun flew off because of his wound, Krunnan limped to the lake and knew that he had to get to Deidre to protect her – so he tried to swim. The snails were on him in the first few dozen strokes and soon he was paddling *back* to shore to try and get away from the feasting invertebrates – which killed him. By the time Ghun eventually found Clearwater, the body was partially eaten and the snails had retreated back to the water. Switching his clothes with the Cimmerian before burying him under the stone pile, Ghun then flew on his Uncanny Steed to the keep's shore.

Should the Player Characters uncover the grave, they will find the following scene:

Beneath the stones lies the corpse of a hulking man, or what is left of him. Palm-sized rings of flesh have been stripped from his limbs and head to the bone, as if bored away by a steel brush. His black silken cloak and blouse is torn and soaked with the fluids of his decomposition, but you can tell it was poorly fitted for him when he was alive.

THE CARNIVOROUS SNAILS OF CLEARWATER

Clearwater Lake is infested with hundreds of red-shelled carnivorous snails that cannot live long outside of the water, but will come ashore at night if the smell of blood is in the air. The snails will slide out onto the beach to hunt and kill at night only if they are lured by the wounds of the Player Characters, something they might be carrying, or the uncovered grave of Krunnan. If this happens, 1d6 carnivorous snails will emerge from the water every 4 hours to attack. Otherwise they will not have to deal with the snails until they try to cross the lake.

The lake is only five feet deep at its deepest, meaning it is possible to wade across. The snails lurk in the muddy bottom, extending their paralytic probe to thrust into the unwary. Swimmers are less likely to get attacked in this fashion due to the speed of their movement, but they are not automatically immune. Only by travel in a boat or raft can someone almost insure the snails will not attack.

Anyone trying to cross Clearwater Lake has a chance of being targeted by a number of carnivorous snails. The table below shows the various ways of crossing Clearwater, the possibility of being attacked, the frequency in which these checks must be made, and the number of snails will be involved.





Carnivorous Snail Attacks

Method	Chance of Attack	Frequency of Checks	No. of Carnivorous Snails ¹
Wading	75%	Every 50 feet	1d4+1
Failing Swimming (Swim check DC 6 or less)	65%	Every 50 feet	2d3
Poor Swimming (Swim check DC 7)	50%	Every 100 feet	1d3+1
Average Swimming (Swim check DC 10)	35%	Every 125 feet	1d4
Good Swimming (Swim check DC 15)	20%	Every 125 feet	1d4
Superb Swimming (Swim check DC 18+)	10%	Every 200 feet	1d3
Boat, Raft, etc.	5%	Every 500 feet	2d2 - 1

¹ This number is increased by +1 for any target that is currently wounded with exposed wounds

Statistics for the Carnivorous Snails can be found in the encounters section.

Once the Player Characters manage to get across Clearwater Lake to the shore of the keep, they should move on to the next encounter, *Treachery at the Keep*.





ENCOUNTERS

SWARMS

PROPHECY POINTS

- ❖ Losing the tracks, getting lost, or wasting enough time to be forced to go back without getting to the Clearwater Keep **+1 Prophecy Points**
- ❖ Deciding that the island of Orinolo is too dangerous and willingly giving up this portion of the battle against the Prophecy **+3 Prophecy Points**

EXPERIENCE POINTS

- ❖ Basic Roleplaying Award for portraying characters well (500 xp)
- ❖ Surviving an attack by a Bat Swarm (200 xp)
- ❖ Gathering Black Lotus Blossoms (100 xp per blossom); without being poisoned (150 xp per blossom)
- ❖ Learning to trust the Bog Lights (200 xp)
- ❖ Defeating a Constrictor Snake (500 xp)
- ❖ Defeating a colony of Giant Funnel Web Spiders (250 xp)
- ❖ Defeating a Giant Slug (500 xp)
- ❖ Defeating the Manticore of Orinolo Island (1,000 xp)
- ❖ Overcoming an encounter with a Peat Viper (250 xp); without being poisoned (300 xp)
- ❖ Surviving an attack by a Piranha School (350 xp)
- ❖ Defeating a River Lion (650 xp)
- ❖ Defeating a Saltwater Crocodile (800 xp)
- ❖ Defeating a Swamp Panther (250 xp)
- ❖ Deciphering Cedrik's journal (250 xp)
- ❖ Learning enough from the swamp clearing in *Signs of a Struggle* to follow the tracks (200 xp)
- ❖ Managing to cross Clearwater Lake (200 xp); without being attacked by Carnivorous Snails (500 xp)

Both the Bat Swarm and Piranha School are considered to be the same type of creature – a *Swarm*. Swarms are a general classification of creature that is comprised of animals that normally would not be much of a threat on their own, but when they become a mass of dense movement and life they can be very dangerous to anything they come in contact with.

For game mechanic purposes, a single swarm is treated as a single creature or entity with an occupied space of 10 feet. A swarm has a single pool of Hit Dice and hit points, a single initiative modifier, a single speed and a single Defence Value. It is treated for all purposes as one beast.

Although swarms consist of dozens or hundreds of individual creatures, they do not suffer individual casualties as they begin to take damage. They do suffer losses to their body mass, but only when they lose their last hit point has the swarm suffered enough casualties to lose its cohesion and scatter.

SWARM COMBAT

Swarms battle by coming into contact with their targets, inflicting numerous small attacks that add up to effectively one wound. They never provoke attacks of opportunity, nor can they make use of them. They always occupy four connected five-foot squares, with no breaking of the central mass of the swarm. Swarms maintain cohesion like this through any space and can never be moved through.

VULNERABILITIES OF SWARMS

Swarms are extremely difficult to destroy with common physical attacks, as weapons glide through the mass inflicting minor casualties on a huge number of creatures. They do have some specific vulnerabilities however.

A lit torch or similar flaming implement swung into a swarm inflicts 1d3 damage per hit against a non-aquatic swarm. A lit lantern or similarly contained fuel source used as a thrown weapon deals 1d4 points of damage to every five-foot square in and adjacent to where the object breaks.





BAT SWARM

Nocturnal bat swarms scour across the surface of the swamps of Orinolo in search of low-flying insects and the occasional small vermin or bird to get swept up into their tiny gnashing mouths. They spend most of their days in the thick branches of the bogs' willow trees, emerging at dusk to go hunting for blood-fattened mosquitoes and gnats.

Diminutive Animal (Swarm)

Initiative: +4 (+2 Dex, +2 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Blindsense 20 ft., Low-light vision, Listen +11, Spot +11

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 16 (+4 size, +2 Dex)

DR: –

Hit Dice: 3d8 (14 hp)

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +3

Defensive Specials: Half damage from Slashing and Piercing, Swarm traits

Speed: 5 ft., 40 ft. fly (good)

Attack: Swarm (1d6)

Full Attack: Swarm (1d6)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 0 ft. (0)

Base Attack: +2

Grapple: –

Special Attacks: Distraction, Wounding

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 4

Special Qualities: Swarm traits

Feats: Alertness, Lightning Reflexes

Skills: –

COMBAT

A bat swarm flies up and surrounds warm-blooded prey, darting in and biting to grab pieces of flesh. The swarm deals 1d6 points of damage to any creature whose space it can occupy at the end of its move.

Blindsense (Ex): A bat swarm notices and locates creatures and objects within 20 feet through their echolocation sonar. They can 'see' in this way in any amount of darkness.

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn with a bat swarm in its space must succeed in a Fortitude save DC 11 or be nauseated for 1 round by the rain of guano and buffeting of wings.

Skills: A bat swarm has a +4 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks. These bonuses are negated if it cannot use its Blindsense ability.

PIRANHA SCHOOL

Schools of piranha swim through the murky waters of Orinolo's swamps in tightly packed groups that seem docile and pleasant until hunger strikes them – turning them into a water-churning machine of destruction. Since easy prey is so few and far between for them, the piranha of the island are particularly vicious and will attack at the first scent of meat.

Tiny Animal (Swarm)

Initiative: +5 (+3 Dex, +2 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +7, Spot +11

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 15 (+2 size, +3 Dex)

DR: –

Hit Dice: 4d8 (18 hp)

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +3

Defensive Specials: Half damage from Slashing and Piercing, Swarm traits

Speed: 40 ft. swim

Attack: Swarm (2d6)

Full Attack: Swarm (2d6)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 0 ft. (0)

Base Attack: +2

Grapple: –

Special Attacks: Blood Frenzy, Distraction, Wounding

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 4, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 1, Wis 14, Cha 4

Special Qualities: Swarm traits

Feats: Alertness, Lightning Reflexes

Skills: Swim +11

COMBAT

A piranha school swims around and surrounds warm-blooded prey, rapidly biting off small chunks of flesh. The swarm deals 2d6 points of damage to any creature whose space it can occupy at the end of its move.





Blood Frenzy (Ex): A piranha school that can smell an injured creature within 90 feet of their position will be subject to this special rule. It gains a +2 bonus to all hit and damage rolls, but a -2 penalty to its defence. This state lasts for one minute.

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn with a piranha school in its space must succeed in a Fortitude save DC 12 or be nauseated for 1 round by the churning water and painful bites.

Wounding (Ex): Any living creature damaged by a piranha school continues to bleed due to the scalpel-like teeth of the fish, losing 1 hit point per round thereafter. Multiple wounds do not result in cumulative bleeding, and a Heal skill check DC 10 or magical healing will stop the blood loss immediately.

Skills: A piranha school has a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks. A piranha school has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check. Piranha schools can choose to use their Dexterity modifier for their Swim checks instead of their Strength modifier. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, and can perform the run action while swimming.

BLACK LOTUS PLANT

Black lotus plants have a strange, semi-sentient life wrapped in their flowering vines, which can be very dangerous for travellers that accidentally come across them. It is a well-hidden secret by locals that Orinolo has naturally growing lotus plants; if it were known more widely adventurers would come far more often, risking their very lives to get the pollen-filled blossoms.

Black lotus plants are deep green in colour, with a dark black flowering bud at the end of every vine-like stalk. Although they are known for their stretching vines, these stalks are what are truly important, and can reach up to 12 feet in height.

Large Plant

Initiative: +4 (+3 Dex, +1 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Spot +2

Languages: -

Dodge Defence: 13 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural)

DR: 2

Hit Dice: 4d8+20 (38 hp)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +4, Will -3

Defensive Specials: -

Speed: 0 ft.

Attack: Touch +6 melee finesse (poison)

Full Attack: Touch +6 melee finesse (poison)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 10 ft. (2)

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +3

Special Attacks: Magical poison, miasma, poison

Sorcery Knowledge: -

Abilities: Str 2, Dex 16, Con 20, Int -, Wis 2, Cha 26

Special Qualities: Blindsight, Plant traits

Feats: -

Skills: -

COMBAT

Although black lotus plants are not mobile their stalks, blossoms and vines can move quickly to strike flesh in order to drink their liquid and nutrients.

Blindsight (Ex): Black lotus can locate creatures within a 90 foot radius at all times, regardless of lighting conditions.

Magical Poison (Su): The poison miasma (see below) surrounding a black lotus plant is partially physical in nature and partially magic in effect. Black lotuses have a strange seductive quality to them that makes passers-by deliberately want to get closer and inhale their poison. This grants the black lotus plants the ability to add its Charisma bonus to the DC of the miasma's saving throw (already applied below).

Miasma (Su): Black lotus plants are surrounded by a constant heady scent of pollen that forces all within 20 feet of it to make a Fortitude save DC 25 or be affected as though inhaling a black lotus blossom (see page 275 of *The Conan Roleplaying Game Second Edition*).

Poison (Ex): Anything that comes into contact with a black lotus plant or blossom, primarily through its touch attack is immediately affected by the following poison:

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Black Lotus Nectar	Contact DC 17	1d4 Con	3	One per round





CONSTRUCTOR SNAKE

The large brown anacondas of Orinolo use their powerful jaws to get a grip upon a target before wrapping them up in thick, muscular coils capable of crushing bones. Constrictor snakes like the anaconda are generally ambush predators that lay in wait in order to strike, but can be more direct when presented with satisfying prey.

Huge Animal

Initiative: +11 (+3 Dex, +8 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Scent, Listen +9, Spot +9

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 20 (–2 size, +3 Dex, +9 natural)

DR: 4

Hit Dice: 12d8+34 (88 hp)

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +11, Will +5

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 20 ft., 20 ft. climb, 20 ft. swim.

Attack: Bite +13 melee (1d8+8)

Full Attack: Bite +13 melee (1d8+8)

Space/Reach: 15 ft. (3) / 10 ft. (2)

Base Attack: +9

Grapple: +22

Special Attacks: Constrict 1d8+7 (AP 7), Improved Grab

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Alertness, Endurance, Toughness

Skills: Balance +10, Climb +17, Hide +8, Swim +16

Combat

Constrict (Ex): On a successful grapple check, a constrictor snake deals 1d8+8 damage.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a constrictor must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict (see above).

GIANT FUNNEL WEB SPIDER

The Giant Funnel Web Spider is a highly venomous hunter that lives in a silken funnel made of sticky webbing. Its exoskeleton is normally dark brown, but some more lightly coloured varieties have been seen. Orinolo is home to many sub-species of the spider, some growing to the size a young adult human.

Medium Animal (vermin)

Initiative: +3 (+3 Dex)

Sensory Traits: Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 60 ft., Spot +4

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 14 (+3 Dex, +1 natural)

DR: 1

Hit Dice: 2d8+4 (13 hp)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft., 20 ft. climb

Attack: Bite +4 melee finesse (1d8 plus poison)

Full Attack: Bite +4 melee finesse (1d8 plus poison)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: +1

Special Attacks: Poison, Web

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 17, Con 12, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2

Special Qualities: Vermin traits

Feats: Toughness

Skills: Climb +11, Hide +7, Jump +10

Possessions: Armour, clothing, weapons from previous kills

Advancement: 3 – 5 HD (Medium)

COMBAT

Giant Funnel Web Spiders lay in waiting in their funnels, safe from those would come to seek them out but still well within striking distance. When something is either caught in a funnel or sensed along the ground, a Giant Funnel Web Spider will leap at them to try and envenom them. When the target is fully paralysed, the spider can then eat at its leisure.

Poison (Ex): Anything that suffers damage from a giant spider's bite attack is also affected by the following poison:

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Giant Spider Toxin	Injury DC 16	1d6 Dex	3	One per round





Tremorsense (Ex): A giant spider can detect and pinpoint any creature or object within 60 feet in contact with the ground, or within any range in contact with the spider's webs.

Web (Ex): Giant spiders often wait in their webs or in trees, then lower themselves silently on silk strands and leap on to prey passing beneath. A single strand is strong enough to support the spider and one creature of the same size. Giant spiders can throw a web eight times per day. This has a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet and is effective against targets up to one size category larger than the spider. An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 16) or burst the web with a Strength check (DC 20). Both are standard actions. The Strength check DC includes a +4 racial bonus. Giant spiders often create sheets of sticky webbing around 20 feet square. They usually position these sheets to snare flying creatures but can also try to trap prey on the ground. Approaching creatures must succeed on a DC 20 Spot check to notice a web; otherwise they stumble into it and become trapped as though by a successful web attack. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing gain a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. Each 5-foot section has 6 hit points and sheet webs have Damage Reduction 5. (It is not possible to bypass this Damage Reduction with finesse.) A giant spider can move across its own web at its climb speed and can pinpoint the location of any creature touching its web.

Skills: Giant spiders have a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. A giant spider can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. Giant spiders use their Dexterity modifier for Climb checks. Giant spiders have a +8 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks when using their webs.

SLUG, GIANT

The swamps, lakes, and marshes of Orinolo are home to these foul beasts, where it is cool and moist enough for them to thrive between their bloody meals. Giant slugs slide around in the muck, hunting their prey with slow deliberation and dedication.

Giant slugs are huge slabs of mucous-laden invertebrate flesh that range in colour from black to various shades of green. They are seven to eight feet in length, weigh nearly six hundred pounds, and can stretch out their bodies much longer when they need to lash out with their puckered mouth full of rasping 'teeth'.

Large Animal (vermin)

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Sensory Traits: Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 60 ft., Spot +8

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 13 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural)

DR: 5

Hit Dice: 10d8+30 (75 hp)

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +1, Will +1

Defensive Specials: Slime, Weakness to Fire / Salt

Speed: 20 ft., 10 ft. burrow, 30 ft. swim

Attack: Bite +11 melee (1d6+4 plus acid damage, AP 10)

Full Attack: Bite +11 melee (1d6+4 plus acid damage, AP 10)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 10 ft. (2)

Base Attack: +7

Grapple: +15

Special Attacks: Acid

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 12, Con 16, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2

Special Qualities: Vermin traits

Feats: Die Hard, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Track

Skills: Climb +12, Hide +11, Survival +8, Swim +14

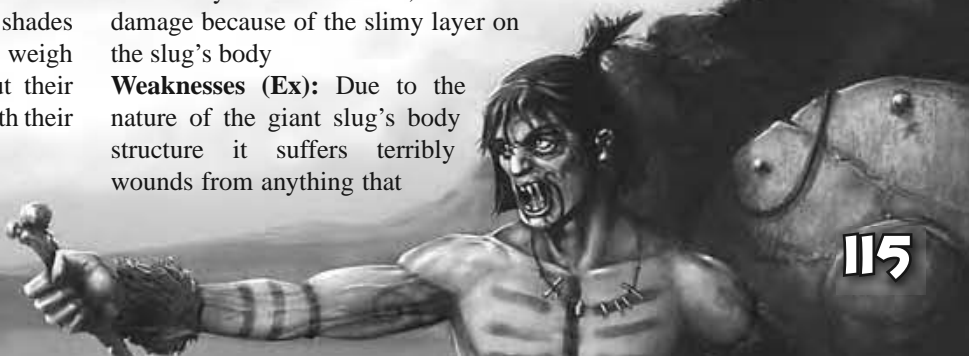
COMBAT

Giant slugs fight simply, sliding forward in order to bite with their saw-toothed mouths – which secrete a constant flow of digestive acids strong enough to eat through metal armour. Giant slugs are best served as ambush predators due to their slow speed out of water, and have been known to lurk in the shallows in order to get one good strike in before their prey can try to escape.

Acid (Ex): Giant slugs secrete powerful digestive acids in their puckered mouths, inflicting terrible burns upon anything that comes in contact with. Not only does this add to the AP of the slug's bite attacks (already figured into the statistics above), but also adds 2d4 acid-based damage to all bite attacks.

Slime (Ex): Giant slugs are covered in a thick mucous membrane that protects it from any sort of weaponry that cannot cut through it. Bludgeoning weapon attacks slide harmlessly off the creature, and inflict half normal damage because of the slimy layer on the slug's body

Weaknesses (Ex): Due to the nature of the giant slug's body structure it suffers terribly wounds from anything that





rapidly dehydrate it. Fire or heat-based attacks inflict double normal damage, and raw salt will inflict 1d4 damage per round upon it.

Skills: Giant slugs have a +8 racial bonus on Climb, Hide and Swim checks. A giant slug can always choose to take 10 on Climb or Swim checks, even if rushed or threatened.

THE MANTICORE OF ORINOLO ISLAND

Created by a horrible sorcerer during the age of the Acheronian Empire, the manticore that lives on Orinolo is a terrifying legend in the flesh. Behind the shark-toothed face of a bearded man curls two black rams' horns. The beast has the sinewy body of a lion ending in a thick, segmented scorpion's tail. Surrounding the deadly stinger of the tail is a cluster of wiry hairs like those found all over a tarantula, which the beast can hurl into the air when threatened.

The manticore lives in several different bog dens on the island, using the cover of night to fall upon its prey, killing it with quick stings from its tail before falling upon them with savage teeth and claws. Although no one will ever know exactly why the manticore was created, or how it has lived so long, it is a rare and deadly foe that occasionally rears its horrid head.

Large Magical Beast

Initiative: +7 (+2 Dex, +5 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Darkvision 60 ft., Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +5, Spot +9

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 15 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural)

DR: 6

Hit Dice: 6d10+24 (57 hp)

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +3

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Claw +11 melee (2d6+5, AP 3) or urticating hairs

Full Attack: 2 claws +11 melee (2d6+5, AP 3) and bite +9 melee (1d8+2, AP 2) and tail stinger +10 melee (1d6+2 plus poison, AP 2), or urticating hairs

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +6

Grapple: +15

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Poison, Pounce, Rake 2d8+2, AP 3, Urticating hairs

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 9

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Multiattack, Track, Weapon Focus (tail stinger)

Skills: Jump +8, Survival +7

COMBAT

Manticores fight much like a lion or other great cat, pouncing on their prey in order to sink their stinger into them repeatedly while raking with their iron-hard claws. If outnumbered or surprised they can also unleash clouds of tiny chitinous hairs that are steeped in mild venom, paralysing their victims before being finished off.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a manticore must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake or sting the target.

Poison (Ex): Anything that suffers damage from a manticore's sting attack is also affected by the poison below.

Pounce (Ex): If a manticore charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +9 melee, damage 2d6+2, AP 3.

Urticating Hairs (Ex): With a snapping shake of its tail, a manticore can loose a cloud of small barbed hairs as a standard action into a 10 foot radius cloud centred on the manticore. Anyone caught in this cloud other than the manticore must pass a Fortitude save DC 19 or become paralysed by swollen joints and irritated skin for 1d6 x 10 minutes. The target(s) may speak painfully, but they cannot move their body parts. After the paralysis wears off, the target(s) are fatigued (–2 to Strength and Dexterity, cannot run) for the following 1d6 hours.

Skills: Manticores have a +4 racial bonus to Spot checks due to their predatory instincts.

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Manticore Toxin	Injury DC 14	1d3 Con	4	One per round



PEAT VIPER

Tiny brown snakes that are very common on Orinolo, peat vipers live on the moist ground and use their potent venom to bring down small game and occasional predators that try to make a meal of the small reptiles. They are not terribly aggressive, but they will strike out of defence to their nests and lairs.

Small Animal

Initiative: +5 (+2 Dex, +3 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Scent, Listen +9, Spot +9

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 14 (+1 size, +3 Dex)

DR: 2

Hit Dice: 1d8 (5 hp)

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 20 ft., 20 ft. climb, 20 ft. swim

Attack: Bite +3 melee finesse (1d3–2 and poison)

Full Attack: Bite +3 melee finesse (1d3–2 and poison)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) (coiled) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +0

Grapple: –6

Special Attacks: Poison

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 6, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

Special Qualities: –

Feats: –

Skills: Balance +11, Climb +12, Hide +15, Swim +11

COMBAT

Poison (Ex): Anything that suffers damage from a peat viper's bite attack is also affected by the poison below.

Skills: Peat vipers receive a +4 racial bonus to Hide, Listen and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus to Balance and Swim checks. They can use either their Strength or Dexterity modifier for Climb or Swim checks, whichever is better.

RIVER LION

A large and powerful prehistoric cousin to the river otter, river lions are sleek and muscular mammals that glide through the swamps and lakes of Orinolo in search of sizable prey to sate their fast metabolism. With sharp claws and tusked jaws, a single river lion can be a deadly surprise for swimmers or travellers. They sometimes go out to sea to hunt, but with the number of sharks and saltwater crocodiles around the island this is only done when hunting is very scarce.

A single river lion is roughly seven feet in length from their tapered, tusked snout to the end of their slender tail. Covered in oily tan fur, they sun themselves on rocks and shores for much of the morning before plunging under the peat blanket of the island bogs in search of prey.

Large Animal

Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +8, Spot +5

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 15 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural)

DR: 2

Hit Dice: 6d8+30 (57 hp)

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +3

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft., 50 ft. swim

Attack: Bite +9 melee (1d8+3, AP 3)

Full Attack: 2 claws +9 melee (1d4+2) and bite +9 melee (1d8+3, AP 3)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +4

Grapple: +11

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Savage Roll

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 14, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 7

Special Qualities: Hold breath

Feats: Alertness, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Run

Skills: Hide +10, Jump +12, Survival +8, Swim +14

Possessions: –

Advancement: 7 – 10 HD (Large)

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Peat Viper Venom	Injury DC 11	1d3 Con	4	One per round



COMBAT

River lions often use the element of surprise to shoot out of the surface of the water to grab an unsuspecting victim in their tusked jaws before beginning to thrash and flip wildly to tear off pieces of the target. If forced into a prolonged conflict, a river lion's claws are sharp and long, but they prefer to use hit and run tactics to kill their prey.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a river lion must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can then begin to hopefully move the target to deeper water. Once it has a target in its mouth it can begin to savage roll as well.

Hold Breath (Ex): A river lion can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to four times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Savage Roll (Ex): River lions use their tusks to get hold of a target and pull off pieces of flesh for easier eating, so they instinctually roll rapidly in the water to do so. River lions performing the savage roll action inflict their bite damage and automatically threaten a critical hit – they do not need to roll to hit, merely to confirm the potential critical hit for double normal damage.

Skills: River lions have a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, and can perform the run action while swimming. River lions also receive a +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks while in the water.

SALTWATER CROCODILE

These large and slender reptiles with powerful tails and sharp-toothed maws live in large families in the shallow sea around the island of Orinolo, coming inland to hunt when shoreline food is scarce. They know a number of waterways into the island's interior through the cliffs, giving them better access than any human could hope. Groups of saltwater crocodiles, or 'salties', grow to nearly twice as long and strong as their freshwater cousins – making sailors fear the huge reptiles that cut through the waves beneath them.

Huge Animal

Initiative: +8 (+1 Dex, +7 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 16 (–2 size, +1 Dex, +7 natural)

DR: 6

Hit Dice: 7d8+28 (59 hp)

Saves: Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +4

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 20 ft., 30 ft. swim

Attack: Bite +13 melee (2d8+12, AP 8) or tail slap +11 melee (1d12+12)

Full Attack: Bite +13 melee (2d8+12, AP 8) and tail slap +8 melee (1d12+4)

Space/Reach: 15 ft. (3) / 10 ft. (2)

Base Attack: +5

Grapple: +21

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Savage Roll

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 27, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

Special Qualities: Hold breath

Feats: Alertness, Endurance, Skill Focus (Hide)

Skills: Hide +3, Swim +16

COMBAT

Saltwater crocodiles are terrifying ambush predators along beaches and shores, hiding along the water's edge until they are in striking range of a potential target and surprising their prey with a leaping attack that can shear limbs or hold bodies. Once grabbed, a crocodile will drag its prey down into the depths to be torn apart and drown.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a crocodile must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can then either begin to Savage Roll or move the target to deeper water.

Hold Breath (Ex): A crocodile can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to four times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Savage Roll (Ex): Saltwater crocodiles cannot effectively chew their food, so they instinctually roll rapidly in the water in an action that tears prey to pieces brutally so as to be swallowed. Crocodiles performing the savage roll action inflict their bite damage and automatically threaten a critical hit – they do not need to roll to hit, merely to confirm the potential critical hit for double normal damage.



Skills: Crocodiles have a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, and can perform the run action while swimming. Crocodiles also receive a +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks while in the water, and can choose to only reveal its eyes and nostrils in murky water to gain an additional +10 cover bonus to its Hide checks.

SWAMP PANTHER

Feared by Orinolo explorers due to their large population on the island, these swamp cats are about 4 feet long and weigh about 110 pounds. They usually hunt at night to make the best use out of their natural stealth and camouflage. They are excellent climbers and have learned how to use the mud and water of their surroundings to travel and hide.

Medium Animal

Initiative: +7 (+4 Dex, +3 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 16 (+4 Dex, +2 natural)

DR: 2

Hit Dice: 3d8+6 (20 hp)

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +2

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 40 ft., 20 ft. swim

Attack: Bite +6 melee finesse (1d8+3)

Full Attack: Bite +6 melee finesse (1d8+3) and 2 claws +1 melee finesse (1d4+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +2

Grapple: +5

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Pounce, Rake 1d4+1

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 19, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Alertness, Track

Skills: Balance +12, Climb +11, Hide +8, Jump +11, Move Silently +8, Swim +8



COMBAT

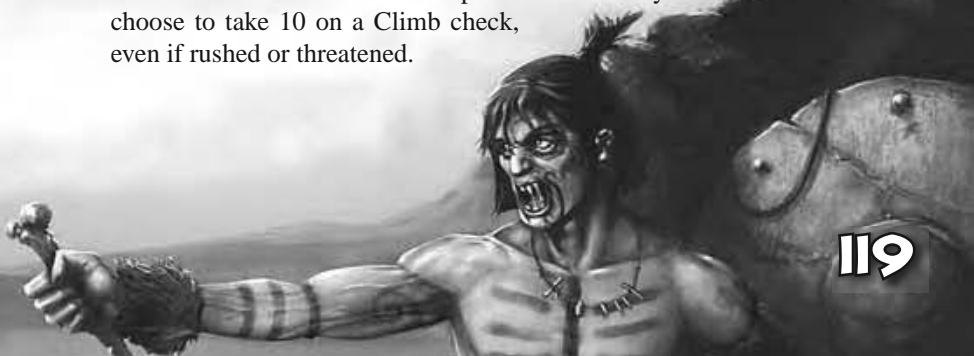
Swamp panthers are powerful and clever predators that use their natural stealth and strength to hopefully leap unto prey and kill them without too much of a fight. They use the willow trees to their advantage, often sleeping all day in order to wait for just the right prey to sleep beneath its perch. They are not fond of long conflicts, preferring to escape and then attack again later when the prey is once more unsuspecting.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a swamp panther must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake.

Pounce (Ex): If a swamp panther charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +6 melee, damage 1d4+1.

Skills: Swamp panthers have a +8 racial bonus on Jump checks and a +4 racial bonus on Hide, Move Silently and Swim checks. Panthers have a +8 racial bonus on Balance and Climb checks. A panther can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.





CARNIVOROUS SNAILS

These red-shelled horrors are unique to the island of Orinolo, and are possibly the result of Acheronian blood sacrifices at Clearwater Keep in the past age. Now the creatures number in the hundreds and breed steadily every season. Their partial diet of algae keeps the waters of Clearwater fresh and clean, but it is their voracious hunger for blood and flesh that makes them a deadly foe for anyone who gets too close to the glassy lake.

Small Vermin (aquatic)

Initiative: -1 (-2 Dex, +1 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Darkvision 30 ft., Scent, Listen +4, Spot +6

Languages: -

Dodge Defence: 9 (+1 size, -2 Dex)

DR: 3

Hit Dice: 1d8 (4 hp)

Saves: Fort +3, Ref -1, Will +1

Defensive Specials: -

Speed: 10 ft., 10 ft. climb, 15 ft. swim

Attack: Probe +4 melee (1d4+3 and poison, AP 3) or Bite +2 melee (1d3+2, AP 1)

Full Attack: Probe +3 melee (1d4+3 and poison, AP 3) or Bite +2 melee (1d3+2, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 1 ft. (0)

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: +0

Special Attacks: Poison

Sorcery Knowledge: -

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 6, Con 14, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

Special Qualities: -

Feats: -

Skills: Climb +20, Hide +10, Swim +10

COMBAT

The carnivorous snail is equipped with a very hard and dense piece of its mantle attached to a powerful muscular 'harpoon' probe, which it thrusts into a target that draws near at amazing strength and speed. This harpoon injects a paralytic poison, hopefully causing the snail's prey to eventually drown and sink so the rest of the colony can feed at its leisure.

Poison (Ex): Anything that suffers damage from a carnivorous snail's probe attack is also affected by the following poison:

Skills: Carnivorous snails receive a +4 racial bonus to Hide and Swim checks due to the design of their shells and ability to dig into mud. They have a +15 racial bonus to Climb checks, as they can scale most surfaces.

TREACHERY AT THE KEEP

Deidre has barred herself inside the keep and will not let anyone but Krunnan inside. To try and combat this, Ghun has switched clothes with Krunnan and is using his masterful acting abilities to try and pose as the Cimmerian and gain the girl's confidence. The Player Characters will likely be the deciding factor as to whether or not Deidre opens the doors - if they can figure out what is really happening.

When the Player Characters get to the keep's door, they enter the following scene:

'Just let me in,' a voice says as you round the corner of the squat stone building, 'that bastard hurt me bad, but I am fine now.' Standing in front of a heavy oaken door banded with rusted iron is an athletically

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Carnivorous Snail Toxin	Injury DC 13	1d2 Str	3	One per round



built man with pale skin and dark hair, wearing a loose-fitting cloth stained in blood around his legs. When he notices you, he turns toward you in shock. ‘Who are you? Nevermind that, help me get these doors open and help her!’

Ghun will try to convince the Player Characters of the following things, through the liberal use of half-truths and the Bluff skill. Each item is followed by the truth of the matter, in case any Player Character beats Ghun’s Bluff with their own Sense Motive.

- ❖ *‘I killed the Stygian that was after her, but yet she still does not open the door.’* **TRUTH** – Krunnan died from his wounds and Ghun switched clothes with him to better his disguise.
- ❖ *‘I buried the poor man by the shore, it was the right thing to do.’* **TRUTH** – Ghun buried the body to hopefully hide how it really died.
- ❖ *‘The girl inside the keep is hurt, the Stygian beast struck her on the head and now she cannot remember me!’* **TRUTH** – Deidre was not wounded, but she is too terrified to do much of anything while the demonic black camel is still inside the keep.
- ❖ *‘Help me get this door open so we can help her.’* **TRUTH** – Ghun does want the door open, but only so he can get the first sneak attack on whichever unlucky Player Character is closest when those doors open.
- ❖ *‘We came here to find our lost friend, but the Stygian attacked us and now we are at odds. Can you help us?’* **TRUTH** – Ghun has no real idea why the Cimmerians are here, as he never found Cedrik’s body (and could not decipher his journal if he had), and has made a likely story to help persuade the Player Characters to aid him.
- ❖ *‘I may not have much money here, but I have some golden jewellery in Messantia, where my sister and I came here from. Help us now, and it will be yours.’* **TRUTH** – Ghun has a pouch full of coin, but as he is faking the role of the Cimmerian anyway, promises of gold are easy to make.

Ghun took his time with his disguise, effectively ‘taking 20’ on his Disguise skill check, giving him a total of 28 on his impersonation of a Cimmerian. This is why he has been able to cover his olive-tan skin and tawny hair to better look like a northman. Any Player Character with reason to question the veracity of his persona can make a Search skill check to look for the flaws in his disguise. If Ghun somehow manages to get inside the doors, he will summon his Steed and try to fly away with Deidre – killing any Player Character that gets in his way.

Ghun’s Uncanny Steed is not far away, just beyond the lake’s edge in case he has need of it. It will arrive in 1d2 rounds if he calls for it, which he will not do until it comes to physical combat.

Deidre saw the flying camel, knew it to be a demon, and has since gone into a slight state of shock inside the keep. If the Player Characters begin to talk to her, using Diplomacy skill checks to help her see that they mean her no harm – which they will get a +2 bonus on if they mention Cedrik or Krunnan’s names. She will not speak much, except to say that ‘black demon can fly, and its rider is a devil’. She is not especially trusting, but she will know the Player Characters as true if they speak of Cedrik, Krunnan and the Stygian. She will especially believe them if they mention or ask about her birthmark – which they might correctly assume she has at this point.

Ghun will try to persuade the Player Characters for as long as he can, but when he thinks they might be on to him – he will spring his attack upon the first target he can while summoning his steed to help him.

THE AFTERMATH

Ghun knows he is as good as dead if he returns to Nefanari without the girl, so he will gladly fight to the death. When he is dead however, they will have to convince Deidre to open the door if they want to take her off the island. They may not, having killed the Stygian rider, feel as though they need to rescue her – but the young woman left alone on this island is not likely to last long.



If they made it to Clearwater in enough time they could convince Deidre to leave with them and get to the cliffside to meet back up with Phemio. If they did not, they will have to carry Cedrik's rowboat to the shore and use that instead.

Once back at Saltve Deidre would go back upon her way, probably heading to Messantia. The Player Characters will then have to wait for Dexitheus to send them the next messenger hawk, which will take them to a different place on their journey.

Statistics for Ghun the Split-Tongue and Deidre Weildawn can be found in the encounters section. Use the statistics on page 60 for Ghun's Uncanny Steed.

ENCOUNTERS

GHUN THE SPLIT-TONGUE, RIDER OF STYGIA

A master of disguises and lies, Ghun was sent to the island of Orinolo after the marked maiden because Nefanari believed that his skills would have proven useful with the locals to get him through the wilderness successfully. She was right, but she could not have known that he would have had to deal with a brutish Cimmerian bodyguard and the Player Characters however!

Medium Humanoid (Stygian Thief 9)

Initiative: +9 (+3 Dex, +6 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Listen +10, Spot +11

Languages: Aquilonian, Argossean, Stygian (Literate)

Dodge Defence: 19 (+3 Dex, +4 class, +1 Dodge, +1 Light-Footed)

Parry Defence: 13 (-1 Str, +4 class)

DR: -

Hit Points: 54 hp (currently 42 hp)

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +7 (+2 against Corruption)

Defensive Specials: Evasion

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Akbitanan Dagger +7 melee (1d4+1, AP 4); Crossbow +9 ranged (2d6, AP 4)

Full Attack: Akbitanan Dagger +7/+2 melee (1d4+1, AP 4); Crossbow +9/+4 ranged (2d6, AP 4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +6/+1

Grapple: +5

Special Attacks: +1 to hit with Stygian Bow, Sneak Attack +5d6/+5d8

Sorcery Knowledge: -

PROPHECY POINTS

- ✦ Ghun was killed. **+0 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ Deidre was kept from being kidnapped. **+0 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ Deidre was killed or left on the island to fend for herself. **-1 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ Deidre was successfully kidnapped. **+3 Prophecy Points**

EXPERIENCE POINTS

- ✦ Seeing through Ghun's disguise and his lies (500 xp)
- ✦ Killing Ghun (750 xp)
- ✦ Destroying Ghun's Uncanny Steed (500 xp)
- ✦ Meeting Phemio on time to have him lead them back to the mainland (500 xp)
- ✦ Deidre is convinced to come with the Player Characters and get off Orinolo (500 xp)



Abilities: Str 9, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 18
Special Qualities: Poison Use, Sneak Attack Style (Dagger, Stiletto, Crossbow), Trap Disarming, Trap Sense +3,

Feats: Eyes of the Cat, Light-Footed, No Honour, Skill Focus (Disguise), Skill Focus (Bluff), Stealthy, Weapon Focus (Dagger)

Skills: Bluff +18, Concentration +6, Decipher Script +5, Disguise +18, Handle Animal +10, Hide +14, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (geography) +26, Move Silently +12, Perform (ritual) +6, Ride +10, Sense Motive +10, Sleight-of-Hand +10, Tumble +12

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 8 (+3)

Possessions: Average Traveller's Clothes (currently Cimmerian and bloodstained), 2 Akbitanan Daggers, Crossbow with 6 bolts, Exquisite Black Riding Boots, Uncanny Steed (camel)

DEIDRE WEILDAWN

Born into servitude in Aquilonia to hired swords, Deidre learned early on that her sword arm would never be as strong as her sharp wit – no matter what her brothers and cousins would like. She grew up learning the tongues of the people her brothers worked for, serving as the negotiator for their rates and the like. When Cedrik came to her cousin Krunnan to hire him as an exploration bodyguard, she saw an opportunity to fleece the poor Argossean for some extra coins – but Orinolo proved to be too much for her ploy.

Medium Humanoid (Cimmerian Commoner 2 / Nomad 1)

Initiative: +4 (+2 Dex, +2 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages: Aquilonian, Argossean, Cimmerian, Shemitish

Dodge Defence: 12 (+2 Dex, +0 class)

Parry Defence: 10 (+0 Str, +0 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 11 hp

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1

Defensive Specials: –



Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Shortsword +1 melee (1d8, AP 1)

Full Attack: Shortsword +1 melee (1d8, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: +1

Special Attacks: –

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 14

Special Qualities: Born to the Saddle, Favoured Terrain (hills) +1

Feats: Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Track

Skills: Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (geography) +4, Profession (sailor) +4, Profession (translator) +6, Ride +5, Survival +4, Swim +3

Code of Honour: Barbaric

Reputation and Social Standing: 4 (+1)

Possessions: Average Traveller's Clothing, Shortsword, 6 Days Good Rations, 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ sp





Aboard the Indigo Storm

The Player Characters are now aware that Dexitheus must know what he is talking about, as they were sent to the heart of the wilderness and discovered someone who was never supposed to be there – but was nonetheless.

In this chapter the Player Characters will be once again instructed via one of Dexitheus' trained hawks. They will have to meet with a particular ship – the *Indigo Storm* – which will take the Player Characters to a currently sailing ship in order find the next maiden targeted by the Prophecy. They may or may not be sailors, but the Player Characters are about to get a taste of the high seas.

ANOTHER HAWK FROM DEXITHEUS

1d3 days from the end of *Treachery at the Keep*, or when the Games Master decides to further the campaign's main story, another golden feathered hawk will find the Player Characters to deliver the next message concerning Dexitheus' divinations.

When they receive the message, it reads:

'The prophecy has pointed out the way to an unlikely route. If the signs are right then you must find the girl on the Thief of Tides, a privateer vessel known off the Barachans. Go to Messantia, find the Indigo Storm and her Captain Fernando Liste. I have sent word and coin to him, he will take you to the maiden. Beware the sea; the prophecy speaks of Atlantis. Godspeed to you.'

MESSANTIA AND THE DOCKYARD

It will not likely take the Player Characters long to reach Messantia from Saltve or the surrounding area, as it is just on the other side of the Khoratas River. They may have already headed that way because it is the richest and most powerful city for many miles, making the arrival of Dexitheus' hawk fortuitous for them.

When they reach the City of Riches the Player Characters will likely want to spend at least one day shopping and seeing the sights such a place can offer. As one of the largest and wealthiest cities in Hyboria, Messantia is full of wonders that most Player Characters will never have seen before. For more detailed descriptions of the city and what it offers can be found in the *Argos and Zingara* sourcebook, or in great detail in the *Messantia – City of Riches* boxed set.

In Messantia, the Player Characters will eventually need to head into the large and impressive dock area to seek out Captain Liste and his *Indigo Storm*. The docks of Messantia are enormous and beautiful to behold, full of three-masted sailing ships and schooners coming back and forth into the port. Its port makes the river docks at Tarantia seem small and less majestic.

When they get closer to they bay and get caught up in the rows upon rows of docks and boat ramps, they will begin to see that they will need help to find the *Indigo Storm*, or at least its captain. If they ask around enough about how to find a specific ship or person in the docks, they will receive the following pieces of advice:

- ✦ *'Every cap'n must set to the ledger in the Guild of Shipwrights, so this Liste man should be on it. Seek out the Guild office on the southern side.'*
- ✦ *'Lots of ships pass in and out every day. The dockhands might know the one you want if you could describe it, but it is not likely. Find some dock men down in the Shallows, the tavern by the fish houses.'*





Depending on where the Player Characters decide to go to seek the information, there are three encounter segments they could involve themselves with.

SEARCHING ON THEIR OWN

If the Player Characters choose to forego what the dockyard people had to say and search the area for the ship themselves, they will not only spend a long time searching rows and rows of docked vessels – they will also attract the attentions of some unsavoury types.

After several hours of searching various ships and crew postings for clues to the *Indigo Storm*, the Player Characters will discover that the sun has set and that the docks are a dangerous place for ‘dirt heels’ like they are.

When the Player Characters are about to walk away from their search and go to the tavern or Guild office, read the following to them:

‘Well, wha do we have here boys,’ a voice slurs from behind you, punctuated by the clattering of wooden mug bouncing empty onto the cobblestones, ‘a crew in waiting? Or pirates searching out their next haul?’

You turn to see a half-dozen swaggering sailors wearing mismatched blouses and breeches tied with bright yellow sashes splattered with grime. At the lead of the group is a bearded lout with scars on his hands and forearms from no doubt years at sea.

‘We do not abide by pirates here,’ he says as he draws a marred wooden club from a worn leather loop, ‘unless they be *our* pirates!’

The six dockyard sailors are just slightly drunken seamen that work in Messantia on a number of regular ships that come and go. After seeing them ask so many questions about ships at





port, they believe that the Player Characters are a group of pirate scouts looking for what ship to next attack. They are a bit too drunk to see reason, and will set to fighting the Player Characters.

The sailors (with the exception of the leader) will stick to using their fists, feet and heads to fight with unless a Player Character draws a deadly weapon and uses it against one of them. The lead sailor is named Barnabus, and he just lost two weeks' wages in a dice game, making him especially eager to take it out on someone. He has already drawn his belaying pin and has no problems using it to inflict lethal damage.

The fight with the sailors will last until either all of them are knocked out, the Player Characters somehow convince them they are not pirates, or if one of the sailors is *killed*. If the latter is the case, the sailors will scatter to try and find the closest pair of Messantia guards to come and arrest the Player Characters.

Statistics for the Argossean Sailors and Messantia Guards can be found in the encounters section.

THE GUILD OF SHIPWRIGHTS

If the Player Characters choose to go to the Guild office in order to figure out which ship is the *Indigo Storm*, they will have to go during daytime hours – the office is only open from dawn until dusk for safety reasons. The docking ledger of the Guild of Shipwrights is a huge collection of tomes and scrolls written in Argossean notes down all of the following for every ship legally brought into port: name, ship's captain, recent port of origin, next port of destination, general cargo, and to what company or kingdom they pay allegiance to (if any). Although much of the information given by a ship's steward is falsified, every ship must check in with the Guild. This means that the ledgers in the Guild office would be worth a fortune to any pirate looking to know what a ship is carrying and where it is headed with it.

So long as the Player Characters go to the Guild office during the daytime, they will be able to simply walk right in. When they do this, read the following scene to them:

A trio of ringing bells chime when you push open the heavy wooden door to the office, and you are immediately assaulted by the heavy odour of too many

sweaty bodies in one cramped room. Ten men in various states of dress and, for one South Islander, undress, stand impatiently in a crowd before you. It seems that all of these men are sailors of some kind, and they all want to speak with the badly shaven rail of a man behind the desk.

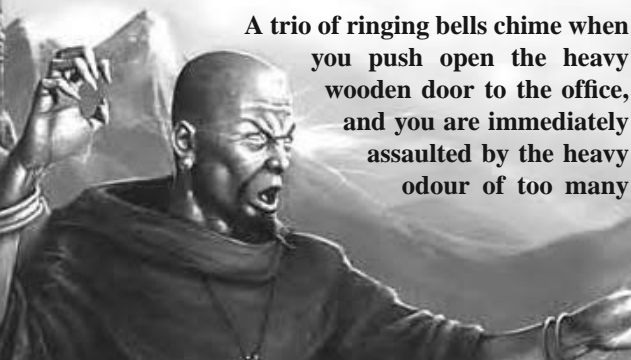
'Alright,' the man barks over the murmuring in the crowd, 'who is next?'

The line will take roughly an hour or so to make its way to the Player Characters, giving them a chance to speak with some of the other men in the room. The following are the names and general description of the men in the crowd, and in the order in which they will meet with the ledgerman at the counter.

- ✦ **Captain Rafio Soprani** – Argossean fishing captain of the *Wave Netter* (Commoner 5)
- ✦ **Nug** – Barachan first mate of the *White Cap*, a shipping vessel empty of cargo (Commoner 3)
- ✦ **Hernan of North Squall** – Cimmerian captain of pirate-hunting vessel, the *Blood of my Brother* (Soldier 4 / Borderer 3)
- ✦ **Zalenso da Rom and Gerebo Ravos** – Zingaran co-captains of the smuggling galley *Trustworthy* (both Thief 3 / Pirate 4)
- ✦ **Rupert Benitios** – Aquilonian river captain of the *Two Lions*, a river longboat he is looking to sell (Commoner 2 / Borderer 2)
- ✦ **Tudano Villi** – Argossean first mate, formerly of the *Risen Dawn*, looking for work (Commoner 3)
- ✦ **Nulu Po** – South Islander captain of the *Zhulo*, a notorious slaving ship posing as a fishing schooner (Pirate 5 / Thief 2)
- ✦ **Julos** – Argossean apprentice to the master woodcutter, here delivering the latest timber invoice (Commoner 1)
- ✦ **'Divius Nivannin'** – Argossean captain of the *Potbellied Maiden*, looking for trade route information; real name is Siviun Dannivin and the ship is really a pirate cutter called the *Kraken's Brothel*. (Pirate 10)

When the Player Characters eventually reach the ledgerman, read the following:

'Alright then,' the thin man says through a cloud of heady pipe smoke, 'what do you lot want? You do not look like sea types, and I do not know your faces or colours. What can the Guild of Shipwrights do for you folk today? Quickly though, I have others to see as well.'



The ledgerman is named Cristo Benail, a Messantian born and bred. He will not answer any questions without being suitably convinced (Diplomacy skill versus his Will save), threatened (Intimidate skill versus his Will save), or bribed (at least 10 sp per question). If asked the following questions however, he will give the listed answers truthfully.

Q: Where is the *Indigo Storm*?

A: *'Oh, let me see...oh yeah, the galley. It is anchored offshore, but some of its crew are around. Likely drinking and whoring down at the Shallows.'*

Q: Where can we find Captain Liste?

A: *'Fernando? That sly dog? Likely three pints in, fifty silvers up, and two women richer than you or I, I'd say! He has the luck, that one. I'd say try Any Port in a Storm, his favourite brothel.'*

Q: Do you know a ship called the *Thief of Tides*?

A: *'Cannot say that I do. Sounds like a pirate vessel, though. There be plenty of them around, too many these days.'*

Q: Have you seen any Stygians on black steeds recently?

A: *'Steeds? This is a dock, not many horsemen come plodding up from the sea. There came in and left a small Stygian cutter, two days past I think. They did not want to check in, so they were forced back out to sea. They might have open ports at the likes of Khemi or Kordava, but not here in Messantia! We got rules, you know?'*

Q: Have you seen anything strange from the sea lately?

A: *'Strange? Apart from the regular masses of odd louts that sail in these parts? No, not really, unless you count...'* Cristo will tell the Player Characters anything odd that might be happening to the sea or coastlines because of the Prophecy Point Total (see page 8).

Q: Anything else they might ask that he does not know the answer to.

A: *'What? I do not think I could tell you if I knew... which I do not. I write all day in a ledger, I cannot go gallivanting around like the likes of you types, would that I could.'*

When they are done asking Cristo questions, there will be a gruff shout or two from the back of the room trying to get the Player Characters to 'hurry up!' or 'move on!', at which point Cristo will tell them that he has business to attend to. He will then look past them into the growing line/crowd in the waiting area and wave up the next client.

Statistics for Cristo Benail the Ledgerman can be found in the encounters section.

IN THE SHALLOWS

The Player Characters could also go to the popular seaside tavern called *Shallows* for information. The tavern itself is a large sprawl of wood, brick and brass built from the salvaged parts of scrapped ships and dock materials. It is a pretty sizeable establishment with a dozen serving wenches, three cooks, two barkeeps and a Madame upstairs with twelve women in her employ.

When the Player Characters enter the *Shallows*, they should get the following introduction:

The oaken door opens before you to reveal a sprawling room full of revelry and merrymaking. Men and women are dancing to a small pipe-and-squeezebox band in the corner, and you cannot help but tap your foot to the catchy tune. Half-dressed wenches stagger from table to table, occasionally gaining the hand of a young man to lead upstairs. The smell of cooking meat and spilt liquor makes your mouth water, and the sour taste of ale is in the air.

The Player Characters will have a chance to enjoy the food, drink and women of the tavern if they feel like it; spending 1 sp for a single meal, ½ sp per ale or rum, and 5 sp for an hour with one of the Madame's ladies. The food and drink is good, the music is entertaining, and only a handful of sailors in the room will end up in fistfights before the end of the night.

So long as they do not do anything unforeseen (like start a bar fight), the Player Characters will be able to get eventually pointed toward a table of sailor-types as the crewmen of the *Indigo Storm*. They will be several drinks up on the Player Characters at this point (no matter what time of day it might be), and feeling very friendly. Should any of the Player Characters be female, they will likely have to deal with several clumsy advances and lewd comments amidst the camaraderie.

If the Player Characters eventually tell the crewmen that they are to speak with Captain Liste, the biggest one of their number will step forward and say the following:

'You want to see the cap'n?' the sailor says through two copper teeth set in his yellowed grin, 'then you have to match



me drink for drink ‘til one of us passes out. Even if you upend your stew, you go ‘til you cannot go on. Deal?’

The sailor is named Greggar the Beardless, and he is the first mate to Captain Liste. His challenge to the Player Characters is for a simple drinking contest, to which he will begin to order straight Kordavan rum for himself and the first Player Character to accept the challenge.

The drinking contest is easy; after each drink is consumed by the contestants, they must first pass a Fortitude save based on the number of drinks they have finished to keep from vomiting. After a few drinks they will begin to need to pass additional Fortitude saves to keep from passing out, and eventually Will saves to have the strength to take the next drink. The table bellow shows the difficulties of these saves and when they must be taken.

Drinking Contest

Number of Drinks	Fortitude Save (Vomit)	Fortitude Save (Pass Out)	Will Save (to Continue)
1	5	–	–
2	8	–	–
3	11	–	–
4	14	–	–
5	17	12	–
6	20	14	–
7	23	16	10
8	26	18	15
9	29	20	20
Each additional drink	+3	+2	+5

If Greggar passes out or gives up, his shipmates will throw their mugs of ale onto him and laugh hysterically at his expense. Lewd comments and gestures will be made toward him, but it will all be in good fun and spirits. If the Player Character passes out or quits first, the sailors will laugh and throw the remnants of their ale mugs on him instead.

The sailors will still stay jovial no matter the outcome and explain that the captain often spends his mainland time in Messantia at a local brothel, *Any Port in*

a Storm. Just having enjoyed the drinking contest was enough for them, and it will make them a little closer to the crew when they sail.

Games Masters should use the statistics for Argossean Sailor for nearly everyone in the tavern, the exception being Greggar the Beardless. These statistics can be found in the encounters section.

ANY PORT IN A STORM

The Player Characters will eventually, for whatever reason, get pointed out to a middle-class brothel called *Any Port in a Storm* located a few streets back from the water’s edge. It is where Captain Liste goes whenever he ends up in Messantia, but not for the same reasons that the Player Characters will initially believe.

When they get to the brothel, read the following to them:

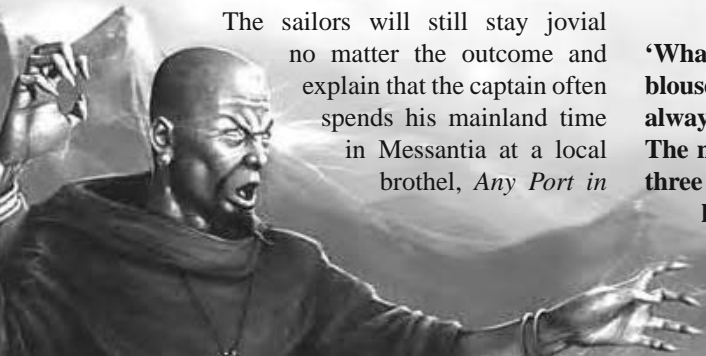
The pleasant if not overwhelming smell of mingling perfumes cloak the odour of the nearby sea as you enter the room. Gold-painted filigree rim white wooden railings and trimmings, a thick carpet of furs dominates the floor of the round room, and a trio of nearly nude women lounge on silken couches. They eagerly look up to meet your gaze when you enter, but it is an older woman’s voice that catches your ear.

‘Come in,’ the exquisitely dressed Shemite says alluringly, ‘for what can Madame Seveine do for you?’

Madame Seveine is a shrewd businesswoman, and she will try to get the Player Characters to hire her girls at every opportunity. When they ask about Captain Liste however, she will explain that her customers have a right to privacy. A Sense Motive check DC 18 while speaking with her will show that she would be receptive to a bribe, but also that she seemed to have a bit of a malicious mood rise when the Player Characters brought up Fernando.

When they manage to get Seveine to bring them to the captain, she will take them into a back hallway and lead them to a curtained room, stepping in rudely to the following scene:

‘What is going on?’ a well-dressed man in a black satin blouse and tan breeches says as you are ushered in, ‘I always pay for privacy, what is the meaning of this?’ The man is holding a small child in his arms, maybe three summers at most, while an attractive woman hides herself under a blanket beside him.





‘These folk,’ the Madame sneers as she backs out of the room, ‘have need to see you *captain*.’

‘I say again,’ the man sets the boy down on the bed and produces a long, thin rapier of shining steel, ‘what do you need of Fernando Liste?’

When the Player Characters explain who they are and that Dexitheus should have informed him of their impending arrival, read the following:

‘Oh, it is you!’ he laughs, dropping the blade onto the table, ‘He said you would likely be longer getting here! Please, sit.’ He gestures to a couch near the end of the room. ‘Where are my manners? This is my wife, Miranda, and our son Pauletto. It is safe to talk in front of them, I swear.’

Fernando’s wife is not a prostitute; it is easier to hide her from his enemies if she lives here in the brothel – a benefit which Fernando pays Seveine handsomely. Whenever he is in Messantia he stops and spends as much time with her as he can before he has to go out

sailing again, but does so under the guise of visiting his favourite prostitute to keep her and Pauletto safe.

Once the introductions are made, Captain Liste will inform the Player Characters that they are to sail in the morning and to meet him for the longboat trip to the *Indigo Storm*, which he has anchored out in the harbour. He will then shake all of their hands firmly, and say the following before letting them leave:

‘It has been more than a decade since I sailed with Am–,’ he pauses and smirks knowingly, ‘I mean, Conan. I was just a shipmate then, barely a kill on my belt. I still miss those days aboard the *Tigress*.’ He shakes his head and sighs. ‘See you after the morning fog has lifted, out in front of the fishers’ market. If Conan is in danger as the message said, we will waste no more time.’

Statistics for Captain Fernando Liste can be found in the encounters section.





PROPHECY POINTS

The Player Characters' trip to Messantia should not warrant any direct impact upon the greater prophecy, save for the amount of time they allow it to take for them to get there and how long they enjoy the City of Riches before seeking out the captain.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

- ✦ Basic Roleplaying Award for portraying characters well (500 xp)
- ✦ Defeating the group of Dockyard Sailors that may have ambushed them (500 xp)
- ✦ Successfully getting Cristo the Ledgerman to answer their inquiries (250 xp)
- ✦ Successfully finding the crew of the *Indigo Storm* (250 xp)
- ✦ Winning the drinking contest with Greggar the Beardless (250 xp)
- ✦ Meeting with Fernando Liste (150 xp)

ENCOUNTERS

ARGOSSEAN SAILORS

Representing any number of seamen that could be wandering, working or drinking throughout the docks of Messantia, these sailors are sometimes more at home on a ship than on land.

Medium Humanoid (Argossean Commoner 2 / Pirate 3)

Initiative: +4 (+1 Dex, +3 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages: Argossean, Barachan (25% also speak Zingaran or Aquilonian)

Dodge Defence: 14 (+1 Dex, +3 class); 15 (+1 seamanship)

Parry Defence: 14 (+2 Str, +2 class); 15 (+1 seamanship)

DR: –

Hit Points: 22 hp

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +5

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Belaying Pin +5 melee (1d6+2 lethal or nonlethal) or Dagger +5 melee (1d4+2, AP 2)

Full Attack: Belaying Pin +5 melee (1d6+2 lethal or nonlethal) or Dagger +5 melee (1d4+2, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +5

Special Attacks: Ferocious Attack, Sneak Attack +1d6, Sneak Subdual, Weapon Familiarity (greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Profession and Swim), Illiterate, Pirate Code (Barachan Smoke and Rockets), To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter

Feats: Awareness, Brawl, Skill Focus (Profession (sailor))

Skills: Appraise +3, Bluff +3, Climb +5 (+6 seamanship), Hide +3, Knowledge (geography) +4, Knowledge (local) +4, Profession (sailor) +8 (+9 seamanship), Survival +4, Swim +8

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 4 (+1)

Possessions: Average Sailor's Outfit, Dagger, Belaying Pin, 3d4 sp



MESSANTIA GUARDS

Skilled watchmen, the guards of Messantia are well armoured, armed and trained for common city employees. Although not much of a match for a adventuring soldier one on one, the Guard consists of close to three thousand members to call upon.

Medium Humanoid (Argossean Soldier 3)

Initiative: +6 (+1 Dex, +1 Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

Sensory Traits: Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages: Aquilonian (20% speak Bossonian or Argossean)

Dodge Defence: 12 (+1 Dex, +1 class)

Parry Defence: 15 (+2 Str, +2 class, +1 Parry)

DR: 9 (+9 Mail Hauberk and Breastplate)

Hit Points: 11 hp

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +4

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 25 ft.

Attack: Bardiche +6 melee (1d10+1d8+3, AP 5)

Full Attack: Bardiche +6 melee (1d10+1d8+3, AP 5)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +5

Special Attacks: Formation Combat (heavy infantry), Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Search and Sense Motive)

Feats: Skill Focus (Profession (sailor)), Skill Focus (Swim), Weapon Focus (Bardiche)

Skills: Diplomacy +4, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (local) +2, Profession (sailor) +6, Ride +3, Search +4, Swim +6

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 3 (+2)

Possessions: Argossean Hauberk and Breastplate, Argossean Bardiche, Knife, Hyborian Warhorse, 3d6+1 sp

CRISTO BENAIL THE LEDGERMAN

The man who writes the ledgers for the Guild of Shipwrights, Cristo is a young man born in Messantia who will likely never leave the city. He is twenty-four summers old, and he still has yet to see most of what the city has to offer.

Medium Humanoid (Argossean Commoner 2)

Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex, +0 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages: Argossean (literate), Shemitish, Zingaran

Dodge Defence: 13 (+2 Dex, +1 class)

Parry Defence: 11 (+0 Str, +1 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 7 hp

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +4

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Unarmed Strike +1 melee (1d3 nonlethal)

Full Attack: Unarmed Strike +1 melee (1d3 nonlethal)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: +1

Special Attacks: Weapon Familiarity (greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 11

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Diplomacy and Profession)

Feats: Skill Focus (Profession (clerk))

Skills: Diplomacy +4, Knowledge (local) +5, Profession (clerk) +6, Swim +4

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 2 (+0)

Possessions: Average Peasant's Outfit, 12 sp



GREGGAR THE BEARDESS, FIRST MATE

One of Fernando's most trusted of seconds, Greggar is only twenty years old and has seen the death of a hundred men at the end of his greatsword. Forgoing the oftentimes exemplary fighting methods of his compatriots, he abandoned the idea of cutlass fighting when he hit is full height at sixteen. The smash of a good greatblade through an enemy is better than any basket hilted thing any day.

Medium Humanoid (Argossean Borderer 2 / Pirate 3)

Initiative: +7 (+1 Dex, +6 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +5, Spot +5

Languages: Aquilonian, Argossean, Barachan, Zingaran

Dodge Defence: 14 (+1 Dex, +3 class); 15 (+1 seamanship)

Parry Defence: 15 (+3 Str, +2 class); 16 (+1 seamanship)

DR: –

Hit Points: 36 hp

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +4

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Unarmed Strike +7 melee (1d6+3 lethal or nonlethal) or Greatsword +8 melee (1d10+1d8+5, AP 4)

Full Attack: Unarmed Strike +7 melee (1d6+3 lethal or nonlethal) or Greatsword +8 melee (1d10+1d8+5, AP 4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +4

Grapple: +7

Special Attacks: Ferocious Attack, Sneak Attack +1d6, Sneak Subdual, Weapon Familiarity (greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Profession and Swim), Combat Style (trapping), Illiterate, Pirate Code (Barachan Smoke and Rockets), To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter

Feats: Brawl, Skill Focus (Profession (sailor)), Stealthy, Track, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Skills: Appraise +4, Bluff +4, Climb +7 (+8 seamanship), Hide +7, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (local) +4, Profession (sailor) +10 (+11 seamanship), Swim +8, Use Rope +4 (+5 seamanship)

Code of Honour: Barbaric

Reputation and Social Standing: 6 (+2)

Possessions: Average Sailor's Outfit, Knife, Aquilonian Greatsword, Flask of Tortagan Rum, 33 sp

CAPTAIN FERNANDO LISTE

Having once served as just a crewmate on the infamous pirate ship *Tigress* under Captain Belit and her favoured cohort Amra the Lion, Fernando is a charming man with a thick Barachan accent and a flashing wit. He was almost struck dumbfounded when, years after they had parted ways, he discovered that his old friend Amra was really Conan – and that the old pirate had become king of Aquilonia! Ever since, they have stayed in touch through messenger agents and the very occasional meeting in secret. Fernando is King Conan's personal pirate, striking out at Aquilonia's enemies on the ocean and taking in all the loot his ship can carry. Many of King Ctesphon IV's Stygian galleys have been set upon by the *Indigo Storm*. Every port from Khemi to Kordava knows exactly what the tiger ring he wears means – that he is a student of the Pirate Queen Belit, and not to be trifled with.

Medium Humanoid (Barachan Pirate 10)

Initiative: +14 (+3 Dex, +7 Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

Sensory Traits: Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages: Aquilonian, Argossean, Barachan, Ophirean, Southern Islander, Stygian, Zingaran

Dodge Defence: 21 (+3 Dex, +7 class, +1 Dodge); 23 (+2 seamanship)

Parry Defence: 16 (+1 Str, +5 class); 18 (+2 seamanship)

DR: –

Hit Points: 62 hp

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +6

Defensive Specials: Improved Mobility, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Poison Resistance +1





Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Akbitanan Sabre +11 melee finesse (1d10+1, AP 4)

Full Attack: Akbitanan Sabre +11/+6 melee finesse (1d10+1, AP 4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +7/+2

Grapple: +8

Special Attacks: Ferocious Attack (additional attack), Improved Disarm, Sneak Attack +3d6, Sneak Subdual, Weapon Familiarity (greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Bluff and Intimidate), Bite Sword, Pirate Code (Barachan Smoke and Rockets), To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter

Feats: Brawl, Combat Expertise, Quick Draw, Navigation, Skill Focus (Profession (sailor)), Weapon Focus (sabre)

Skills: Appraise +6, Balance +8 (+10 seamanship), Bluff +10, Climb +8 (+10 seamanship), Diplomacy +6, Heal +5, Hide +5, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (geography) +8, Knowledge (local) +6, Move Silently +8, Profession (sailor) +12 (+14 seamanship), Sense Motive +8, Survival +6, Swim +8, Tumble +8, Use Rope +8 (+10 seamanship)

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 18 (+4)

Possessions: Superior Sailor's Outfit, Akbitanan Sabre, 2 Daggers, Khitan Spyglass, Golden Tiger Ring, 101 sp

THE INDIGO STORM

The main part of this chapter is spent on board the *Indigo Storm* in search of the infamous *Thief of Tides*, where the next marked maiden is supposed to be. This encounters section details the events that should happen while they are sailing the great ocean.

GETTING THEIR SEA LEGS

Unless the Player Characters make some terrible error, they should meet up with Liste, Greggar and their crewmates to row out to the *Indigo Storm*. The sailors will man the oars while Greggar passes around a flask of very powerful homemade Tortagan rum to 'wake everyone up'. After thirty minutes or so of rowing through the busy docks, with occasionally Greggar shouting up at a passing ship to 'watch their bow' or 'mind their keel' to avoid collisions, the longboat will reach the outer part of the harbour.

The Player Characters will want the following description:

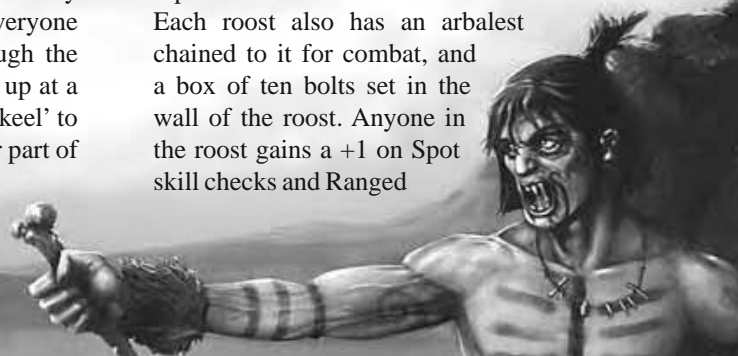
'There she is, friends,' Fernando says the longboat lurches around an outcropping of shore, **'the *Indigo Storm* in all her glory.'** The ship is a Barachan corsair galley set with two masts, instead of the normal single sail, painted a deep blue – the colour of the sea at night – tipped with a stylised masthead. The prow of the ship is carved and painted to look like an armoured man holding a thick spear, the five-foot long head of which looked like it might be cast in steel! It is a fine ship, and you can tell by the smile on the captain's face that he treats her well.

The longboat will get rowed up next to the *Indigo Storm* and sailors still on board the galley will lower heavy ropes to pull it up the side of the hull. When the Player Characters get on board the ship, which may or may not require help from the sailors, they will get an immediate tour while the sailors get the galley ready to sail.

The *Indigo Storm* has three levels; the deck, the cabins, and the belly. Rough descriptions of what can be found in these levels are detailed below.

THE DECK

- ✦ **The Deck:** 120 feet of wooden planking that has been oiled to resist saltwater warping. Many of the crew sleep up here at night when weather permits.
- ✦ **The Hoist:** A block and tackle rig set on the starboard (right) side of the deck. It is used to heft heavy crates, loot or the three longboats in and out of the ship. It adds +5 to the effective Strength scores of the people that use it, with a maximum of ten crewmen on the ropes at a time.
- ✦ **Boarding Ramps:** Fifteen feet of tarred hardwood set with heavy metal hooks at both ends used to cross to other ships in a boarding action. There are three ramps per side, with each ramp able to hold three adult men and their gear at a time without bending.
- ✦ **Sail Carriage:** A heavy lidded box at the bottom of each mast that can house that mast's entire sail to protect it from fire or arrow fire during a ship combat.
- ✦ **Eagle's Roosts:** Walled watchtower-style turrets at the top of each mast used to look out over the ocean. Each roost also has an arbalest chained to it for combat, and a box of ten bolts set in the wall of the roost. Anyone in the roost gains a +1 on Spot skill checks and Ranged





attack rolls due to the excellent line of sight.

THE CABINS

- ✿ *The Crew Hall:* 60 feet hallway set with hammocks, crates, bedrolls and footlockers where the crew keep their gear, sleep and spend their off-duty hours playing dice games and drinking.
- ✿ *The Captain's Room:* A small bedroom with a small but comfortable mattress set in a brass frame, a desk with writing utensils, a written ledger, and a small wardrobe. Fernando sleeps and journals in this room, but he does not spend much time in it otherwise.
- ✿ *Mess:* A 30 square-foot room with three tables bolted to the floor with attached benches, a cooking station, and storage nets for produce or grain sacks.

This is where 'meals' are made, and where the captain occasionally entertains guests to the ship.

- ✿ *Privy:* A smallish room with several pails for crewmate waste

and water troughs that catch seawater to wash with. The pails are expected to be taken up to the deck and emptied over the side hourly by a scullery mate, but this filthy duty often goes ignored until all the pails are full.

THE BELLY

- ✿ *Cargo Hold:* The majority of the central belly of the ship is taken up by netting and short wooden walls to help contain several tons of cargo at any given time.
- ✿ *Brig Chains:* Twelve pairs of stout iron chains are bolted to the floor of the ship, each one ending in a set of rusted manacles. These manacles are strong and well-made (DC 30 to break), and are used to hold any prisoners or unruly crewmates while the captain decides what to do with them.
- ✿ *Rowing Benches:* Two rows of two-man benches that attach to the rowing oars that the ship uses when sails are not practical. When not in use the oars are locked





to each bench and the oaring hole covered with a flap of tanned and oiled leather.

While the tour is underway and the Player Characters are shown to their area in the Crew Hall where they will be able to grab room to sleep, they will need to learn how to walk around on a ship full of cargo and crew while being tossed around by the waves of the sea. For the first few hours any Player Characters without levels in the Pirate class or without the Profession (sailor) or similar skill will suffer a -3 penalty on all Dexterity-based rolls. This penalty is lessened to -1 after 2d6 hours, and then disappears completely after a single day of living on the ship.

HELP OR GET OUT OF THE WAY

During the first few days of the trip the Player Characters will need to figure out what they might be able to do to help out on the ship or else they will earn the disrespect and downright anger from some of the other 35 some Argossean sailors on the ship.

There are a number of things that the Player Characters could do to help the crew of the *Indigo Storm*. The following table shows the various duties that must be performed every day, the skill check required to perform it successfully, and any special notes involved in the duty.

Ship Duties

Duty	Skill Check Required	Special Notes
Scullery (cleaning)	Craft (domestic) or Constitution check DC 10	-
Tending Rigging	Rope Use DC 12	-
Mess Duty	Craft (cooking) or related Profession DC 10	+1 Diplomacy with all shipmates if successful
Cargo Battening	Strength check DC 12	-
Rowing/Mast Turning	Fortitude save DC 12	In icts 1d3 nonlethal damage each hour due to exhaustion
Repairs	Craft (carpentry) or Profession (shipwright) DC 12	-
Trolling	Survival DC15 or Profession (fisherman) DC 10	Natural '1' means a shark is caught and must be killed (see page 103 for statistics)
Roost Watch	Spot DC 18	Success means that an Ocean Encounter can take place (see below), if the Games Master wishes.

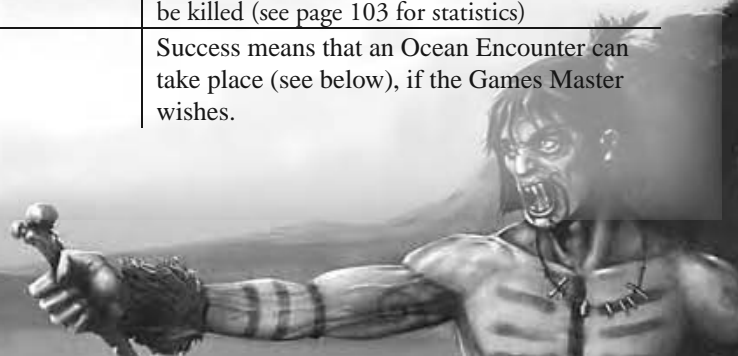
OCEAN ENCOUNTERS

It will take nearly three weeks for the *Indigo Storm* to reach the outlying waters around the Barachan Isles, where Dexitheus told Fernando the *Thief of Tides* could be found. During that trip the ship should encounter each of the following, but only if someone in the Eagle's Roost of the ship passes their daily Spot check to steer the ship toward the event. Otherwise it is solely up to the Games Master to decide when these events take place. Encounters marked with a '*' are encounters that should only take place once, and in the order they are presented here.

SCHOOL OF FISH

'Blues ahead to port!' a sailor shouts from the bow of the ship, 'Grab your spears! Bring as many as you can up!' At his words another crewman runs up from below with a huge canvas roll in his arms, which he unfurls unceremoniously onto the deck. The roll is full of long-hafted spears with ropes coiled around them and attached to the barbed heads. Crewmen from all over frantically reach in and grab the spears before running to the side of the boat and hurling them repeatedly into the waters below, occasionally drawing up huge and flopping fish!

There will be enough harpoons leftover in the canvas for each Player Character to grab one if they feel like they want to help in the fishing. If so, they will be able to make ranged attacks at an effective Dodge Defence of





18. Should they hit a fish, it requires a Reflex save DC 16 to set the barb and begin hauling the fish up the side – which takes 1d3+1 rounds. After that time they could try to catch another. The school of fish will only remain at the surface for 3d6 rounds, at which point they will vanish and the crew will take stock of the number of fish flopping around bloodily on the deck.

OCEAN MISTS

The air takes on a definite chill as the world begins to fill with thick white fog. You can only see a few feet in any direction, and even the sounds you hear seem muffled by the thickness of the mists. The sun is little more than diffused glow above you and your skin glistens with the chill of cold sweat. The mists have risen; hopefully it is not a bad omen for things to come...

The mists impose a –8 penalty on all Spot checks, and a –2 to all Listen checks for 1d6 hours after it has risen. This fog is nothing supernatural or prophecy-related, but it could be a very good opportunity for the Games Master to spook the Player Characters with ill tidings and superstitious sailors. The following are good ways to add an extra creepiness to the encounter, hopefully giving the Player Characters worries that something greater is afoot.

- ☛ Have the sailors get extremely quiet while the fog is risen, even going so far as telling the Player Characters to be quiet ‘else it will hear you!’ if they try to talk.
- ☛ Have a sailor purposefully cut his own arm or chest, dripping the resulting blood onto the deck while counting the drops. When asked, he will say ‘thirteen drops for each of us to keep the devils away’.
- ☛ Have the Player Characters hear the echoing, eerie cries of nearby whales coming to the surface. Unless they are from an oceanic area, it should sound like monsters in the fog.
- ☛ Have Greggar order that the ship come to a halt, the oars withdrawn, and the sails drawn. If asked he will look at the Player Characters and say ‘Evil lurks in the fog and we do not mean to sail to meet it’.

Random Flotsam

2d6 Result	Floating Item is...
2	...the remains of a man’s torso currently being picked at by 1d3 small sharks! See page 103 for statistic details on the sharks.
3 – 6	...an empty barrel that once housed salted meat.
7 – 9	...a crate that has 2d6 ripe citrus fruits in it amongst 3d6 spoiled ones.
10 – 11	...a still-sealed wooden barrel containing twenty gallons of unspoiled ale!
12	...a floating chest containing 5d6 x 100 sp and 1d3 pieces of jewellery worth 1d6 x 100 sp each!

SIGNS OF A SHIP PASSAGE

‘Hoy sir!’ a sailor shouts, pointing a few hundred feet ahead of the ship, ‘Something be in the water ahead, sir!’

‘Drop a longboat,’ Captain Liste replies, ‘gaff it aboard. I want to know what it is.’

The ship will pull near to the object bobbing in the water, and then eight men in a longboat are to row out to the object and fetch it. If any of the Player Characters want to go with, the sailors will happily let them. The rowing to the object is easy enough, and fishing it out of the sea as well. Exactly what the object might be is variable, as determined by the following table:

Other than what the longboat fishes out of the sea, this encounter results in nothing. It is designed as something to get the Player Characters’ hopes up that it is a clue on their hunt for the *Thief of Tides*.

SEA SQUALL

The Player Characters have to deal with their first unexpected storm at sea – and all that it brings with it.

‘Hold fast everyone!’ Greggar bellows over the rising winds and pouring rain, ‘We have been through worse, and we will again!’ He suddenly looks at you, a touch of worry on his squinted eyes, ‘I need that rigging tied taut, the longboats in, and those sails boxed tight...can you do that? Go!’

Greggar has given three duties to the Player Characters specifically, and they can choose how and who to do them. These duties, and how to complete them, are as follows:

- ☛ Tying the rigging tight requires three separate Use Rope skill checks at DC 15. Normally each failed roll will result in the whipping around of a mast-arm during the storm and the knocking of an unnamed crewman overboard to his death.
- ☛ Bringing the longboats in from their hanging points requires three separate Strength checks at DC 18, one for each longboat. Additional hands can add +2 to



the check. Normally each failed check means that the boat slipped out of its hanging points and was swept off the deck to be lost at sea.

- ✿ Boxing the sails into their carriages requires a Use Rope DC 15 check and a Concentration check DC 12 for both of the main sails. Normally failing a Use Rope check means that the sail could not be pulled down before it gets ripped, failing a Concentration check means that the sail is down but will not fit in the carriage without getting waterlogged and damaged, while failing both checks on the same sail means that the ropes snapped and the sail was blown off the mast and sent flapping into the sea.

The Player Characters will do this under the watchful eyes of one of the more experienced crew members. The storm does not look to be serious so Greggar wishes to test out the characters by having them perform important duties whilst under pressure. The crewman will ensure the Player Characters do not foul up too badly and endanger the ship or any of its crew, so the effects of their failing any skill rolls can be ignored on this occasion. The reason they are put through this drill is so that they have some idea as to what they will need to do if the ship encounters foul weather at a later time and lacks the crew to perform these duties.

The sea squall will last 1d3+2 hours of hectic activity, driving rain, splashing waves, and biting winds. When it is over the Games Master should reflect on what the Player Characters' duties did for the scene – and how the other sailors might look upon them if they failed their tasks. Although they will not be damned for their actions due to the circumstances, it will be a few days before they should feel at home with anyone on the ship except the captain – who understands the situation they were placed in.

✿ WHALE CARCASS

The Player Characters are given a chance to see the corpse of a great beast up close, and possibly discover some oddities about its death.

An awful stink thickens in the air and the sky is a cloud of squawking sea birds. Just off the side of the ship you can see a hulking mass of grey-blue streaked with white and red, a mound of something that is the focus of these flocking birds. As the ship draws nearer the smell grows stronger and the birds take to the sky, audibly angered by the intrusion of the galley.

What their absence reveals is some sort of gigantic fleshy beast, obviously a few days dead, that has been worked over by scavengers.

'Whale,' Greggar says next to you, 'a big one too. Takes twenty men to bring them down in the north, looks like this one met with...well...something.'

If the Player Characters are not interested in the carcass, they can simply continue boating by. If they are at all interested in investigating it, Greggar will order the ship to come alongside the floating beast. Although it will require a Fortitude save DC 12 from anyone that wishes to do so without retching, the whale is large enough to be walked upon without too much danger of falling if the person is careful. A dozen or more sharks are feeding on the carcass from below, but as long as no one falls into the water there is nothing to worry about. If someone does, the statistics for sharks can be found on page 103.

Closer investigation of the whale shows thousands of tiny peck-marks where the sea birds have been dining, but the only other wounds on the body are strange and not immediately recognisable. A Heal or Survival skill check DC 15 will reveal them to be three-fingered





claw marks – dozens of them. The claw marks are not deep enough to even get passed the blubber of the beast, but the wounds themselves are necrotic and unnaturally blackened. None of the sailors know what could have caused such wounds, but they will not want to stay in the area much longer if they are told about them. Most will claim ‘sea witchery’ and ‘monsters of the deep’ must have killed the whale.

Nothing much else can be gleaned from the beast except that it died recently, and that the local animals are not fearful of the corpse.

❖ A BLACK GALLEOT!

The Player Characters have a very brief, long distance encounter with a dark ship they will later meet back up with.

‘Hoy!’ the man in the roost cries out, pointing to the horizon, ‘Ship on fore-fore-port!’

‘Let me see,’ the captain says a moment later, walking to the railing with his spyglass in hand, ‘well, what is this?’ He raises the brass and wooden device to his eye and looks out over the waves toward a tiny speck of black on the blue horizon. ‘Small ship, maybe a galleot. No colours, no raised sail. Likely pirates.’ He looks to Greggar, ‘Send up the smoke and rockets, but pull down our flags. This could be a trap.’

The ship is the unnamed ship currently being manned by Sanh-amon, the sorcerous Stygian rider also seeking the marked maiden.

When Greggar fires off the specific Barachan smoke rockets to signal the ship, Sanh-amon will know that he has been spotted and immediately hurls alchemical agents in the water to make it smoke and roil. The resulting black fog will cover the escape of his ship, which will be long gone in an unknown direction when the *Indigo Storm* gets to where they think the ship was.

If asked, the captain will believe that the ship must have been a pirate vessel that did not want to tangle with them, as they are nearly twice as large. The trick with the huge banks of black fog is a new one that he had not seen before, but he does not think anything unforeseen of it. ‘Crafty sea bandits’ is what he will call them before ordering the ship to continue on its original course.

❖ BOAT WRECKAGE

The Player Characters find what is leftover from the last ship that Sanh-amon struck upon in the night – searching for the marked maiden.

‘You had better take a look at this,’ shouts a sailor on the bow, ‘wreckage to starboard!’

As the ship begins to sail forward, the sky turns slightly grey with ashen smoke and the smell of fire, and pieces of wood and flotsam begin to bump against the hull of the ship. The smoking masts of a ship jut up from the water, the rest of the vessel beneath the blue, likely held up by trapped air for now. You look out over the scene, and you are startled by the number of unopened crates and sacks floating amongst the waves – amidst all the dead bodies.

‘To the longboats!’ Greggar shouts, ‘Salvage duty!’

The Player Characters can be involved in the longboat duties if they wish to be, getting a chance to look at the scene a bit closer. With time and investigation, anyone that passes a Search skill check DC 12 can find 1d3 random items off the following list.

- ❖ **Male Corpse** – shredded as if by claws or teeth, some minor burns (maximum of 25 found)
- ❖ **Female Corpse** – all topless, blouses torn off hastily; killed by a cleanly slit throat (maximum of 5 found)
- ❖ **Sack of Edibles** – fruit, vegetables, potatoes in ten pound bags that were caught on a piece of wood and remained floating (maximum of 8 found)
- ❖ **Crate of Textiles** – canvas, wool and spun cotton in an unopened wooden crate (maximum of 6 found)
- ❖ **Crate of Supplies** – carpentry tools, iron nails, and jars of sealing oil in an unopened crate (maximum of 2 found)
- ❖ **Barrel of Freshwater** – an unopened and sealed barrel of drinkable water (maximum of 8 found)
- ❖ **Barrel of Alcohol** – an unopened and sealed barrel of ale, wine or rum (maximum of 4 found)
- ❖ **Box of Wartime Supplies** – a box of either 1d3 crossbows, 3d6 x 5 crossbow bolts, 1d3 hunting bows w/ 6 arrows each (maximum of 3 found)
- ❖ **Box of Medical/Kitchen Supplies** – a box of 1d6 healer’s kits or toolkits of a kitchen worker (maximum of 2 found)





Anyone that chooses to swim down and look at the ship itself will need to make a Swim check to see how long they can stay underwater to investigate, learning something of the wreck while doing so.

Swim check result	Information Gained ¹
7 – 10	The name of the ship is labelled <i>Spraydancer</i>
11 – 15	The ship has burn marks that come up from the lower decks
16 – 20	The doors to the cabin areas below decks have all been torn off their hinges
21+	There are claw marks all around the ship on the railings of the top deck

¹This information is cumulative

The wrecked ship may or may not give the Player Characters any real information, but in case they are able to deduce the truth of the matter somehow, this is what really happened:

Late last night Sanh-amon rowed silently up to the side of the *Spraydancer* and sent his sea demons up the side to kill the men and fetch him the women. Each woman was brought to him and their chests revealed to seek out the mark, and then summarily killed ritualistically by the sorcerer before moving on the next. When they all turned out not to be the one, Sanh-amon set the belly of the crewless ship aflame and sailed away.

❁ MAN OVERBOARD!

‘Man overboard!’ Greggar shouts, ‘Man in the water!’

At those words the crew becomes a blur of training and reactionary skills, setting ropes and leaping over the side toward a limp body a few dozen feet off the fore of the ship. In minutes they have him, and are quickly hauled back up onto the deck. They gently set the man down, and he rolls over onto his back, belching water and blood from his cracked lips.

‘By the gods of the deep,’ he stammers, ‘may you be the last to rescue me this day.’

The man is a slaver named Rulibus, and early yesterday morning he was thrown overboard from the ship he was crewing – the *Thief of Tides* – for stealing rum from the

bosun. His luck was doubly bad however, as he was rescued *this morning* by a small black ship crewed by silent men in cloaks and cowls. He was asked about his ship, where it was headed, and about the female slaves by some ‘hook-nosed git with a bad eye’. When he told them what he knew, which was not much, the man went to stab at him with a ‘wicked looking’ knife, so he jumped overboard again and took his chances in the sea. Now he is rescued again, and he hopes that this will be the last one.

Rulibus knows the general direction that the *Thief of Tides* is going, helping Fernando track it down. He knows that they had a hold full of slaves taken from the northern lands; Asgard and Cimmeria mostly. They sell for a great deal in Tortage to the pit masters and brothel owners. He was just an oarsman however, so he did not get too close to the slaves – especially not close enough to see any tattoos or birthmarks!

Fernando will dislike having a slaver on board, but he will not harm someone that he just fished out of the sea. He will drop him off at the first chance he gets, but unless Rulibus becomes a problem over the next few days, he will have received the rescue he was hoping for.

Should any of the Player Characters selflessly leapt into the ocean to save the man, they should receive a Fate Point for their true heroism.

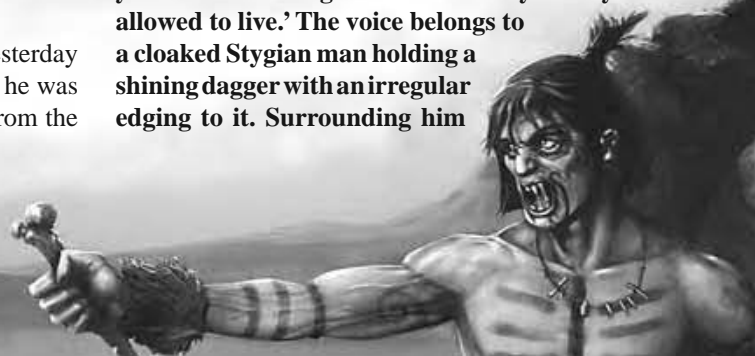
Statistics for Rulibus the Discarded Slaver can be found in the encounters section.

❁ ATTACK AT DUSK!

At dusk on the day after Rulibus is saved, the following scene should be described to the Player Characters:

The sun hangs as a sliver on the horizon, almost ready to disappear beneath the waves. The sky grows darker as you watch, but something is wrong – it is not the sky getting darker, it is the *air* itself. Black fog as thick as smoke trails up the sides of the railings of the ship, and as you are about to call out to someone about it, a sinister voice parts the air.

‘Stand down,’ the voice hisses darkly, ‘we only want your women. Bring them to me and you may all be allowed to live.’ The voice belongs to a cloaked Stygian man holding a shining dagger with an irregular edging to it. Surrounding him





‘Have at you,’ Captain Liste says as he draws his sword, ‘nobody threatens my ship!’

The Sea Demons will attack crew and Player Characters alike, the crew of the *Indigo Storm* will defend themselves, Greggar will try to kill demons before going after the sorcerer, and Fernando is likely to fight any enemy that comes near to him. Sanh-amon himself will stab at anyone who comes and threatens him with his ritual kris, but he will use his spells and alchemical weapons before choosing to join a melee. After the first round of combat, Sanh-amon’s Uncanny Steed will join the fray, flying up from the smaller ship to help him. The Player Characters will be free to fight anyone they want, but with the Sea Demons likely cutting through crew easily, they will likely need to go after them first.

If Greggar or Fernando falls in combat, they will effectively spend a Fate Point to be ‘Left For Dead’ while their crew will drag them to safety. They should survive the battle if the Player Characters do.

If all of the Sea Demons are defeated *before* Sanh-amon, he will try to escape. At first he will try to fly away on his Uncanny Steed, otherwise he will leap overboard into the sea and try to swim away using his alchemical smoke as cover (75% concealment).

When the enemies are defeated, the Player Characters can choose to go into the black galleot currently chained to the side of the *Indigo Storm*, but there is nothing of any value in it at all, except another scrap of parchment with maiden locations on it (like the one they found in Sicas).

Statistics for the Argossean Sailors, Greggar and Captain Fernando can be found earlier in this chapter. Statistics for the Uncanny Steed can be found on page 60 of this book, while statistics for the twelve Sea Demons and Sanh-amon can be found in the encounters section.

are a dozen hunched men in jet cloaks and cowls, each one breathing deeply and raggedly.

‘And if we do not?’ Greggar barks, stomping thrice hard on the planks to signal the captain below of trouble.

‘Then, I suppose,’ the Stygian laughs and his comrades throw back their cowls, ‘we will tear this ship apart plank by plank.’ His allies are hideous black beasts with lamprey faces set in black, oily skin. Their bellies are distended like the starved, and their hands end in three jagged claws that shine like silver in the fading sunlight.



ENCOUNTERS

RULIBUS THE DISCARDED SLAVER

A common sailor who chose to man the sails of the slaving ship *Thief of Tides*, Rulibus is a native of a little fishing berg on the northern Argossean coast. He enjoyed working on larger ships, but did not care for the pay. He turned to working short shifts on various ships, stealing what he could before leaving, and living well on the spoils. Until he was caught and thrown overboard.

Medium Humanoid (Argossean Commoner 2 / Pirate 3)

Initiative: +5 (+2 Dex, +3 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +5, Spot +3

Languages: Argossean, Barachan, Zingaran

Dodge Defence: 15 (+2 Dex, +3 class); 16 (+1 seamanship)

Parry Defence: 13 (+1 Str, +2 class); 14 (+1 seamanship)

DR: –

Hit Points: 20 hp (currently 8 hp)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +5

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Unarmed Strike +4 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal or lethal)

Full Attack: Unarmed Strike +4 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal or lethal)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +4

Special Attacks: Ferocious Attack, Sneak Attack +1d6, Sneak Subdual, Weapon Familiarity (greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 11

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Sleight-of-Hand and Swim), Illiterate, Pirate Code (Barachan Smoke and Rockets), To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter

Feats: Brawl, No Honour, Skill Focus (Profession (sailor)), Stealthy

Skills: Appraise +5, Bluff +6, Climb +4 (+5 seamanship), Hide +6, Knowledge (geography) +3, Knowledge (local) +4, Move Silently +6, Profession (sailor) +6 (+7 seamanship), Sleight-of-Hand +5, Swim +6

PROPHECY POINTS

- ❖ The Player Characters did nothing to help the *Indigo Storm* as a ship (crew duties, help in a storm, etc.). +2 **Prophecy Points**
- ❖ Sanh-amon was killed. +0 **Prophecy Points**
- ❖ Sanh-amon escaped on his Uncanny Steed. +2 **Prophecy Points**
- ❖ Sanh-amon escaped by swimming away. +1 **Prophecy Points**

EXPERIENCE POINTS

- ❖ Basic Roleplaying Award for portraying characters well (500 xp)
- ❖ Helping around the ship like common crewmembers (500 xp)
- ❖ Fishing successfully in the School of Fish event (100 xp per fish caught)
- ❖ Not believing anything is supernatural about the ocean fog (100 xp)
- ❖ Helping retrieve the Sign of a Ship's Passing (100 xp)
- ❖ Performing emergency duties during the Sea Squall (250 xp); successfully (500 xp)
- ❖ Personally investigating the Whale Carcass (200 xp)
- ❖ Personally investigating the Boat Wreckage (200 xp); successfully finding items in the flotsam (100 xp per item)
- ❖ Swimming underwater to investigate the Boat Wreckage (250 xp)
- ❖ Personally helping in the rescuing of Rulibus the Discarded Slaver (250 xp)
- ❖ Defeating the Sea Demons (2,000 xp)
- ❖ Defeating the Uncanny Steed (500 xp)
- ❖ Forcing Sanh-amon to retreat (1,000 xp)
- ❖ Killing Sanh-amon (2,000 xp)
- ❖ Captain Fernando Liste survived the attack without spending a Fate Point (250 xp)
- ❖ Greggar the Beardless survived the attack without spending a Fate Point (500 xp)



Code of Honour: None
Reputation and Social Standing: 4 (+0)
Possessions: Rag Breeches

SEA DEMON

These horrific humanoid beasts are summoned through a *Demonic Pact* made with a higher darkness, called up through the arrangement some evil sorcerers can make with the likes of ancient sea gods. They are slightly smaller than a man, with black, oily skin that seems to drink up light that touches it. They have three-fingered hands ending in claws as sharp as steel, and a ringed mouth full of lamprey teeth set under two pairs of shining yellow eyes. They are terrible beasts that live only to serve and eat, and must consume the blood and flesh of living creatures to maintain their earthly form.

Medium Demon

Initiative: +7 (+2 Dex, +5 Reflex)
Sensory Traits: Darkvision 60 feet, Listen +4, Spot +6
Languages: Demonic

Dodge Defence: 17 (+2 Dex, +5 natural)
DR: 5 (+5 Demonic Skin)
Hit Dice: 5d8+12 (35 hp)
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +1
Defensive Specials: Immunities, Weakness to Fire/Silver

Speed: 30 ft., 40 ft. swim
Attack: Claw +9 melee (1d6+3, AP 2)
Full Attack: 2 Claws +9 melee (1d6+3, AP 2) or Bite +7 melee (1d8+1, AP 4)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)
Base Attack: +6
Grapple: +13
Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Power Attack, Relentless jaws
Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 8, Cha 1
Special Qualities: Aquatic, Hunger
Feats: Multiattack, Toughness
Skills: Climb +8, Hide +8, Jump +8, Move Silently +8, Swim +15

COMBAT

Sea Demons generally rush forward and slash at their foes with their claws, getting in close in order to attach its sucker-like mouth upon the target to feast upon their flesh and blood in great painful draughts. When a sea demon gets its teeth into something, little except the death of the demon can stop its meal.

Aquatic (Ex): Sea demons are utterly at home in saltwater environments, and suffer no penalties or negative effects of any kind while underwater.

Hunger (Ex): Sea demons' manifestations on Earth are fuelled by the continued consumption of living flesh and blood. So long as a sea demon is allowed to devour 10 hit points of living or recently dead flesh or blood each day, they may remain manifested normally. Otherwise, they will vanish with the ebbing of the last tide of the day.

Immunities (Su): Sea demons are immune to all damage inflicted by bludgeoning weaponry, as it slides off of their demonic skin-oils.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the sea demon must hit with a bite. If it gets a hold, it can use its Relentless Jaws attack the following round.

Relentless Jaws (Ex): Once a sea demon has hold of an opponent in its jaws (see Improved Grab, above) it can rasp away flesh and drink blood each round thereafter, dealing standard bite damage. This also gradually 'chews' through its opponent's armour – each round the sea demon uses Relentless Jaws, including the first round, the AP rating of its bite increases by +1.

Weakness to Fire/Silver (Su): Sea demons cannot apply their Damage Reduction to any damage inflicted by fire or silver.

Skills: Sea demons have a +2 racial bonus to their Hide and Move Silently skills, and a +8 bonus to Swim skill checks.

SANH-AMON, SORCEROUS RIDER

Chosen for his ability to follow the signs and omens of the world to seek out the marked maiden on the sea, Sanh-amon is one of Thoth-Amon's most devoted apprentices. He is upset that Nefanari's plot was not revealed to him sooner, and although he will pursue it as his own goals because King Ctesphon IV has ordered him to do so, he would be happy with her failure. Having made a pact with a sea demon to crew his galleot with their spawn, Sanh-amon knows he must be devoted to the cause – else his pacts might cost him dearly.



Medium Humanoid (Stygian Scholar 12)

Initiative: +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +8, Spot +6

Languages: Acheronian, Aquilonian, Argossean, Demonic, Old Stygian, Stygian (Literate)

Dodge Defence: 17 (+3 Dex, +4 class)

Parry Defence: 14 (+0 Str, +4 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 42 hp

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +13 (+5 against Corruption)

Defensive Specials: Spells

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Ritual Kris +9 melee (1d4+1, AP 2) or Alchemical Weapon +12 ranged (see below)

Full Attack: Ritual Kris +9 melee (1d4+1, AP 2) or Alchemical Weapon +12 ranged (see below)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +9/+4

Grapple: +9

Special Attacks: Spells

Sorcery Knowledge: Counterspells, Divination, Nature Magic, Prestidigitation, Summonings; 12 Power Points

Magic Attack Bonus: +11 (+6 class, +5 Charisma)

Spells Known: *Animal Ally, Astrological Prediction, Conjuring, Deflection, Demonic Pact, Desperate Ward (Defensive Blast), Not This Day (Defensive Blast), Psychometry, Sorcerous Garden, Sorcerous News, Summon Beast, Summon Demon, Telekinesis, Ward Dwelling, Warding*

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 20

Special Qualities: Background (Acolyte), Increased Maximum Power Points (triple), Knowledge is Power, Scholar

Feats: Alertness, Iron Will, No Honour, Poison Use, Ritual Sacrifice

Skills: Bluff +8, Concentration +12, Craft (alchemy) +12, Craft (herbalism) +10, Decipher Script +10, Hide +8, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (geography) +8, Knowledge (nature) +15, Move Silently +10, Perform (ritual) +16, Sense Motive +10, Sleight-of-Hand +10, Use Rope +6

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 12 (+3)

Corruption and Insanity: 6

Possessions: Black Silken Blouse and Cloak, Ritual Kris Dagger, 2 Pouches of Black Sea Fog (creates 200' x 200' cloud of black mist), 2 Packets of Acheronian Demon Fire (1d6 fire; Fort save DC 15 or unconsciousness)

DO THEY GO ON?

After the battle with Sanh-amon and his demons, the Player Characters may very well decide that they have stopped the Prophecy in this area and choose to simply move on to the next port. They may also continue on to find the *Thief of Tides* to make sure the girl is safe. This decision is a very important one, especially if Sanh-amon managed to escape in the battle against his demons. If he escaped and the Player Characters believe him to be dead, they might decide this part of the Prophecy is done and over with – leaving the poor girl to her slaver captors and the chance of a re-kindling of the Stygian threat.

Should the Player Characters believe that they are done with this segment of the Prophecy and they ask Fernando to sail to port to await their next message from Dexitheus, this chapter is over and the Games Master should skip all the way to the Prophecy Point gains for the *Thief of Tides* encounter.

If they choose to continue forward as per the original plan and seek out the marked maiden on the slaving ship, they should go on with the last encounter in this chapter – *Catching the Thief of Tides*.

CATCHING THE THIEF OF TIDES

The Player Characters and the *Indigo Storm*, following the directions given to them by the rescued slaver Rulibus, will soon discover their quarry – the *Thief of Tides*. Luckily for the Player Characters and their allies, the slaving ship has fallen under a stroke of bad luck when the squall that likely struck the Player Characters' ship hit them as well.



When the *Indigo Storm* finds the slaver vessel, read the following:

The speck on the horizon grows larger and larger as your ship sails closer to it; turning it slowly from a blur of grey to a large galley. Drawing even closer you can see that it flies Zingaran flags over its crate-tacked deck, but also that it is currently beleaguered by a pair of snapped masts and a number of broken oars. On its barnacle-spotted hull you can see the phrase ‘Demuni de Tedalis’ painted along the bow.

‘Hoy and hail,’ a voice shouts from the damaged vessel, ‘care to help us out? Any aid you could lend would be fine; our luck has not been golden.’ He waves your ship up alongside theirs, ‘What we can give, we gladly will. Just do not leave us like this for pirates to find us!’

The words ‘demuni de tedalis’ in Zingaran mean ‘Thief of Tides’, which is why no one may have recognised that name when asked before. Should any of the Player Characters read or hear the words spoken in Zingaran, they will know that the ship is the slaver that is supposed to have the maiden in it. If none of them understand Zingaran, Greggar will translate the words for them.

The *Thief of Tides* is a smallish ship with only a dozen crew besides the captain, Ivon Bellisian. The gruel that they feed the slaves in the hold of the ship is laced with a powerful sedative, and they are not a ship equipped to do much than traffic the slaves – not capture more. They deal with land-based slavers in the north to capture the would-be slaves, pick them up and sell them at ports like Tortage, Khemi and Abombi.

In the hold of the ship there are twenty-seven Cimmerian slaves chained separately to the floor of the hold. It requires either a Strength check DC 28 to pull the chains out of the floor, or a Disable Device/Open Lock skill check DC 22 to simply open the manacles off of a slave. They are individually chained, so each slave would need to perform these checks to be freed. The master key to all of these chains hangs off the hilt of Captain Bellisian’s arming sword.

The marked maiden is a Cimmerian woman named Roesen chained seventh in the line of slaves down in the hold of the *Thief of Tides*.

She was set upon by slavers and mistreated in every way when she was captured, and is now showing the swollen belly of a mother-to-be (perhaps to the heir of Atlantis). Although she is wearing rags, she does not have anything covering the swirling violet pattern of star birthmarks on her chest.

How they proceed with the *Thief of Tides* is the important matter at hand; it will determine how the encounter unfolds. There are three main ways they can deal with the ship – friendly, neutral, and hostile. Each of these general methods is described below.

Statistics for Captain Ivon Bellisian, the twelve Slavers, Slaves, and Roesen can be found in the encounters section.

FRIENDLY DEALINGS WITH THE THIEF OF TIDES

If the Player Characters decide to help the crew of the *Thief of Tides* in an effort to get closer to them, or simply because they do not believe that anyone should be left adrift to die in the sea, they will be able to come and go freely between the two ships’ upper decks. Backing the Player Characters’ scheme (if it is one), Fernando will lend any help he and his crew can as well.

After a few hours of helping them get their ship put together, the Player Characters will be given greater access to the rest of the ship – which could allow them to get into the hold of the ship and see the slaves. The slavers will not treat trespassers in their work kindly, and getting caught in the slave-hold for any reason will immediately turn this encounter into a hostile one unless the Player Characters can talk their way out of it (requiring Bluff, Diplomacy or Intimidate skill rolls).

It will take 3d6+5 hours to fully repair the damage inflicted to the *Thief of Tides*, after which Captain Bellisian will be so grateful for the aid that he will ask Captain Fernando what he desires in payment – a request he will then defer to the Player Characters. Obviously this could be a good chance to acquire Roesen, asking for her as repayment for the work. Although Ivon will seem confused why someone would want a pregnant and unattractive Cimmerian instead of a fine warrior or a comely wench, he will agree to the exchange and let the *Indigo Storm* have her without complication.



NEUTRAL DEALINGS WITH THE THIEF OF TIDES

If the Player Characters do not want to deal with the slavers using smiles and handshakes, but also do not want to cross blades with them either, they can choose instead to look upon the situation as a plain business transaction.

If they ask the *Thief of Tides* about their slaves, requesting a specific one (Roesen), Captain Bellisian will plead for their help once more before quoting them a price – 70 sp. This is more than what a normal wench would go for, but that is because the woman is already with child; two slaves for the price of one. He will not want to negotiate with ‘dogs that will leave good men for pirates’, but he will sell the girl nonetheless.

This dealing could easily sway into either a friendly or hostile situation quickly enough, so Games Masters will want to make sure they are aware as to the attitudes of the slavers, *Indigo Storm* crewmen, and the Player Characters themselves throughout this encounter.

HOSTILE DEALINGS WITH THE THIEF OF TIDES

There are a number of different events that could end with the Player Characters getting involved in a ship-to-ship combat with the *Thief of Tides*. Some good examples that would bring about a combat are:

- ✦ Ambushing the slavers in order to free their slaves (and Roesen)
- ✦ Refusing to aid the slavers because of their lifestyle/profession
- ✦ Getting caught without a good story in the hold of the *Thief of Tides*
- ✦ Getting caught trying to free Roesen or any other slaves
- ✦ Openly questioning the honour of Captain Ivon Bellisian

Should a combat break out between the two ships, Captain Fernando will order the boarding planks be locked into place as soon as possible – which will take 2d3 rounds. Starting with the beginning of the combat (when the first blade or bowstring is drawn, the slavers will fire their hunting bows at anyone exposed – especially the Player Characters, as they were the mouthpiece of Captain Fernando’s decision. Once the boarding planks are down and secured, Greggar and a half-dozen Argossean sailors will join the Player Characters in attacking the other ship.

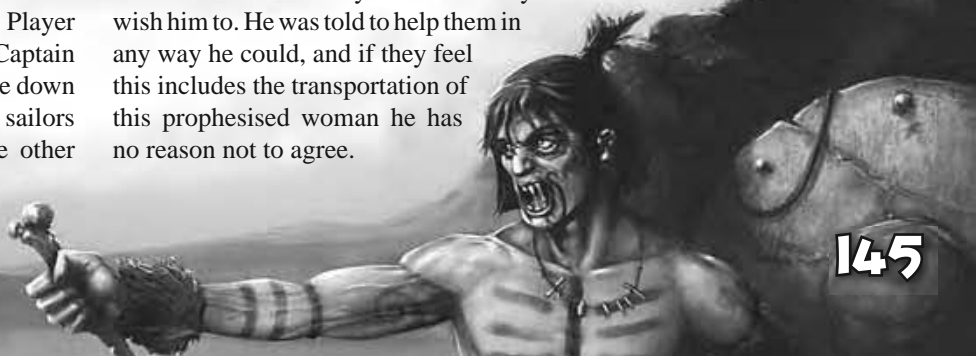


If the Player Characters win, defeating all of the slavers, the *Thief of Tides* and all of its slave cargo will become spoils of the battle. Captain Fernando does not have enough room or supplies for roughly thirty more bodies on the *Indigo Storm*, but he will also not want to just leave them either. The best choice is for the crew to free the slaves, repair the ship and have it follow them to port.

THE AFTERMATH

Whether the Player Characters bought Roesen in order to save her from the Prophecy, or if they chose to kill the slavers and free all of the slaves, they will now have a Cimmerian clanswoman who will give birth to the bastard child of a slaver in roughly four months – who may or may not be the heir to the Atlantean Legions.

Captain Fernando will happily help hide the girl in Messantia like he did with his wife and child, or he will take the woman to anywhere the Player Characters wish him to. He was told to help them in any way he could, and if they feel this includes the transportation of this prophesised woman he has no reason not to agree.





Of course, the Player Characters will receive their next messenger hawk before the *Indigo Storm* will reach whatever port they chose to drop off the girl...

ENCOUNTERS

CAPTAIN IVON BELLISIAN

Raised by his father, who was a cutthroat and a pirate, Ivon always wanted to make more out of his life than just following in his father's wake – so instead of stealing loot and treasure, he chose to steal lives. He has been the captain of a slaving vessel for nearly four years, dodging Aquilonian and Argossean authorities by sticking near to the coasts of Zingara, Tortage and the Black Kingdoms. He is a devilish man that understands the price mistakes can mean.

Medium Humanoid (Zingaran Pirate 10)

Initiative: +10 (+3 Dex, +7 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Listen +7, Spot +9

Languages: Argossean, Barachan, Black Kingdoms, Stygian, Zingaran (literate)

Dodge Defence: 21 (+3 Dex, +7 class, +1 Dodge); 23 (+2 seamanship)

Parry Defence: 18 (+2 Str, +5 class, +1 Parry); 20 (+2 seamanship)

DR: 3 (+3 Leather Doublet)

Hit Points: 60 hp

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +5

Defensive Specials: Improved Mobility, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Poison Resistance +1

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Arming Sword +11 melee (1d10+2, AP 2) or Dagger +9 melee (1d4+2, AP 1)

Full Attack: Arming Sword +11/+6 melee (1d10+2, AP 2) or Dagger +9 melee (1d4+2, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +7/+2

Grapple: +9

Special Attacks: +1 to hit with Broadswords and Arming Swords, Ferocious Attack (additional attack), Improved Trip, Power Attack, Sneak Attack +4d6, Sneak Subdual, Weapon Familiarity (greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

PROPHECY POINTS

- ❖ The Player Characters decided not to continue the search for the marked maiden because Sanh-amon was killed **+2 Prophecy Points**
- ❖ The Player Characters decided not to continue the search for the marked maiden because Sanh-amon was chased away or his body was never found **+3 Prophecy Points**
- ❖ Roesen is freed and promised safety by Captain Fernando **+0 Prophecy Points**
- ❖ Roesen is killed **-1 Prophecy Points**

EXPERIENCE POINTS

- ❖ Basic Roleplaying Award for portraying characters well (250 xp)
- ❖ Deciding to go after the *Thief of Tides* despite Sanh-amon's defeat (250 xp)
- ❖ Helping with the repairs on the *Thief of Tides* (200 xp)
- ❖ Dealing with the slavers in a friendly manner in order to get the marked maiden to safety (250 xp)
- ❖ Buying Roesen as a slave (100 xp)
- ❖ Freeing Roesen without the slavers discovering (500 xp)
- ❖ Battling the slavers on the *Thief of Tides* because they have the 'marked maiden' (500 xp)
- ❖ Defeating Captain Ivon Bellisian and his slavers (2,000 xp)
- ❖ Freeing all of the slaves (1,000 xp)





Abilities: Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 11
Special Qualities: Bite Sword, Pirate Code (Barachan Smoke and Rockets), To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter

Feats: Brawl, Combat Expertise, Eyes of the Cat, Navigation, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (arming sword)

Skills: Appraise +8, Balance +7 (+9 seamanship), Bluff +8, Climb +8 (+10 seamanship), Diplomacy +4, Hide +8, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (local) +5, Move Silently +8, Profession (sailor) +10 (+12 seamanship), Profession (slaver) +8, Sense Motive +8, Swim +6, Tumble +6, Use Rope +10 (+12 seamanship)

Code of Honour: Barbaric

Reputation and Social Standing: 11 (+2)

Possessions: Average Sailor's Outfit, Armoured Leather Doublet, Zingaran Arming Sword with manacle key on hilt, 3 Daggers, 187 sp

SLAVERS

A crew of mostly green Zingaran bandits and pirates, the people who sail on the *Thief of Tides* are little more than highwaymen and thugs on board a ship. They are callous and uncaring louts that care only for themselves and the coin they might be able to make.

Medium Humanoid (Zingaran Thief 2 / Pirate 3)

Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Listen +3, Spot +4

Languages: Aquilonian, Argossean, Zingaran

Dodge Defence: 14 (+2 Dex, +2 class); 15 (+1 Seamanship)

Parry Defence: 13 (+1 Str, +2 class); 14 (+1 Seamanship)

DR: 4 (+4 Leather Jerkin)

Hit Points: 20 hp

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +3

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Cutlass +5 melee (1d10+1, AP 2) or Dagger +4 melee (1d4+1, AP 1)

Full Attack: Cutlass +5 melee (1d10+1, AP 2) or Dagger +4 melee (1d4+1, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +4

Special Attacks: +1 to hit with Broadsword and Arming Sword, Ferocious Attack, Sneak Attack +3d6/+3d8, Weapon Familiarity (greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 13

Special Qualities: Pirate Code (Zingaran trumpets), Sneak Attack Style (dagger), Sneak Subdual, To Sail a Road of Blood and Slaughter, Trap Disarming

Feats: Brawl, Eyes of the Cat, No Honour, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (cutlass)

Skills: Bluff +5, Climb +6 (+7 seamanship), Hide +7, Intimidate +6, Move Silently +7, Profession (sailor) +8 (+9 seamanship), Sense Motive +6, Swim +5, Use Rope +6 (+7 seamanship)

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 5 (+0)

Possessions: Average Sailor's Outfit, Leather Jerkin, Cutlass, 2 Daggers, Bottle of Rum/Wine/Ale, 10 sp

SLAVES, CIMMERIAN CAPTIVES

The men and women of the Stone Circle Clan in southern Cimmeria, the slaves currently within the hold of the *Thief of Tides* are half-drugged by poppy seed oils and have been fed the heady stuff for nearly two months now. They are in no condition to fight and are generally too passive to represent normal Cimmerians.

The statistics below are reduced due to the constant drugging and malnutrition of the slaves.





Medium Humanoid (Cimmerian Barbarian 2)

Initiative: +2 (-1 Dex, +3 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +1, Spot +0

Languages: Cimmerian (10% also speak Aquilonian)

Dodge Defence: 10 (-1 Dex, +1 class)

Parry Defence: 8 (-2 Str, +0 class)

DR: -

Hit Points: 16 hp

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +4

Defensive Specials: Fearless

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Unarmed Strike +0 melee (1d3-2 nonlethal)

Full Attack: Unarmed Strike +0 melee (1d3-2 nonlethal)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +2

Grapple: +0

Special Attacks: Crimson Mist, Versatility (-2 to hit)

Sorcery Knowledge: -

Abilities: Str 7, Dex 9, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8

Special Qualities: Bite Sword, Illiteracy

Feats: Brawl, Track

Skills: Handle Animal +4, Hide +4, Move Silently +4, Profession (farmhand) +4, Ride +4, Survival +5

Code of Honour: Barbaric

Reputation and Social Standing: 1 (-1)

Possessions: Rags

ROESEN OF STONE CIRCLE, MARKED MAIDEN

One of the spearwomen of her clan, Roesen was tricked into drinking the powerful poppy oil along with half of her clan several months ago, allowing the cowardly Zingarans to take them all prisoner and put them in chains. Even though she is not attractive in most senses of the word, she and her fellow women were subjected to numerous violations throughout the tenure of their capture - and now she is with child. Could it be possible that this child is the one in the Prophecy?

Medium Humanoid (Cimmerian Barbarian 2)

Initiative: +3 (+0 Dex, +3 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +2, Spot +1

Languages: Aquilonian, Cimmerian

Dodge Defence: 11 (-0 Dex, +1 class)

Parry Defence: 8 (-2 Str, +0 class)

DR: -

Hit Points: 11 hp

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +1

Defensive Specials: Fearless

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Unarmed Strike +0 melee (1d3-2 nonlethal)

Full Attack: Unarmed Strike +0 melee (1d3-2 nonlethal)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +2

Grapple: +0

Special Attacks: Crimson Mist, Versatility (-2 to hit)

Sorcery Knowledge: -

Abilities: Str 7, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 9

Special Qualities: Bite Sword, Illiteracy

Feats: Brawl, Track

Skills: Climb +3, Handle Animal +3, Hide +5, Move Silently +5, Survival +4

Code of Honour: Barbaric

Reputation and Social Standing: 1 (-1)

Possessions: Rags





Upstream on the Zikamba

In this chapter the Player Characters will be contacted by Dexitheus before they leave the *Indigo Storm*, giving Captain Liste a chance to take the Player Characters to their new destination. It is a dangerous place that most explorers and adventurers avoid, or at least travel quickly through. They are going into the jungles of the Black Kingdoms.

A SEAHAWK FROM DEXITHEUS

1d6 days from when the *Indigo Storm* decided to set sail for port another golden feathered hawk will find the ship and the Player Characters to deliver the next message concerning Dexitheus' divinations.

When they receive the message, it reads:

'I do hope this finds you before you leave the sea, as you will need the ship to reach the next prophesised location. Fernando needs to take you to Xabowa, a village on the Black Coast. There you must move down the Zikamba River; where you will find a stone with three sides. Follow the path that leads from the side that grows the ancient white flowers, that is what the prophecy says will lead the hunter to the marked mother. Go, find her, and keep her from falling into the Stygian's hands. If what I have deciphered is true...the women must not be allowed to give birth. Little else matters.'

The message explains for the Player Characters to go to the Black Kingdoms, which Captain Liste will heed Dexitheus' word and take them to Xabowa. His crew might cause some ruckus at first, complaining about going into 'corsair territory' or 'where cannibals dwell', but Greggarr will quell them quickly with promises of replenished wine stores and fresh meats. Soon enough the ship will turn toward the south and toward a dirty little village called Xabowa.

THE SEA ROUTE TO XABOWA

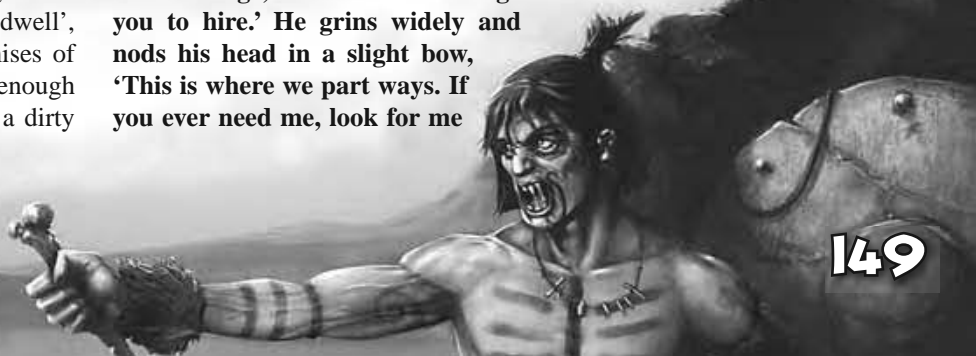
The Player Characters will have nearly two months of sea travel ahead of them, during which the Games Master can choose to add as many seaborne encounters as he might like. These encounters could be the same or similar to many of the ones that could have taken place in the search for the *Thief of Tides* (pages 124 – 148) or the Games Master could invent a few of his own. The trip can be as eventful or fast-moving as the Games Master desires it to be.

The weather will become warmer and wetter as the *Indigo Storm* sails southward along the coast. By the time the ship is in Kushite waters, the air is thick with tropical humidity and bright cloudless skies. The sailors will be enjoying the good weather and spirits will be up for the first week or two, but as the lack of rain begins to dry them out and the heat continues to grow – morale will begin to slip again.

The last three days of the trip will be in searing heat and stifling humidity, but when the first signs of their destination match up with Captain Liste's maps of the Black Coast, spirits will rise again. A possible end to this gruelling trip is in sight, and they are ecstatic about it.

As the ship draws into the delta of the Zikamba River, the village of Xabowa will be visible and Captain Liste will seek out the Player Characters:

'This is as far as my ship can go, friends,' Fernando says with a smile as he wipes the sweat from his brow with a cloth, 'the delta is too shallow. Take a longboat to the village, there will be river guides there for you to hire.' He grins widely and nods his head in a slight bow, 'This is where we part ways. If you ever need me, look for me





occasionally looking up to see you row slowly in. You can tell by the strings of fish hanging in the sun and the number of thin three-man river canoes pulled up onto shore that Xabowa is a fishing village. You can only hope Fernando was right and they will be able to help you.'

THE VILLAGE OF XABOWA

When the Player Characters pull their longboat up onto the beach they will get many stares and the occasional inquisitive glance from the locals, but no one will choose to start a conversation with them. The people of the village are used to Stygian slavers and Black Coast corsairs stopping here to cause trouble, so new faces are best ignored – if only to avoid instigating trouble.

The village itself is home to seven families living in nine huts. The village leader is a man named Chuga, and he lives in the hut closest to shore as a sign of his importance to the village. There are seven adult men, nine women, two older women, eleven children of ages from six to twelve, and three suckling infants. They live in a tight community that harvests the seed-bearing grasses to the north and east, but primarily lives off the plentiful fishing in the rich waters of the river delta. They are generally easy going and passive, but will take up arms if an enemy presents itself.

in Messantia. You know where.' He turns, pointing to one of the lashed up longboats, 'Good luck to you.'

The Player Characters will be allowed to go to shore in one of the *Indigo Storm's* longboats while the ship itself sails away toward a larger port like Zabhela to re-supply. The waters are calm and the Player Characters have been living on board a sailing vessel now long enough to understand how to row the boat ashore without problems.

When the Player Characters are very close to the beach at Xabowa, they should be given the following description:

The village that lines the muddy beach is a small one, perhaps ten thatch-roofed huts surrounding a central pier of sorts that looks to be Xabowa's gathering place. A dozen or so dark-skinned men and women in leather or fur skirts are moving about performing various duties at the ocean's edge,

The people of Xabowa do not generally speak any other languages than their own dialect of Bamulah (Black Kingdom Tribal), with a few very rare exceptions. One of these exceptions is a pair of brothers, one older and one younger, who have served as professional river guides for several seasons. The older brother is called Zhakah and the younger brother is Xuro. They are the eldest sons of Chuga, and they are the closest thing the village has to adventuring types – and they are seventeen and fourteen years old.

The arrival of the Player Characters will not go unnoticed by Chuga and his sons, who will come seeking them out when they discover that they are not 'just passing through'.

After the Player Characters have asked some of the locals some questions, which will likely go unanswered due to the language barrier between them, Chuga and the boys will come to investigate their intentions.

'Ta suppa boh cakk ii Xabowa,' a fur and feather-clad man says in a huff behind you. Two younger



boys wearing leather jerkins rimmed in leopard fur stand to either side of the noble-looking chieftain.

‘Father Chuga welcome you to Xabowa,’ the older of the two steps forward and gives a slight bow as he speaks in a thick accent, ‘and want know for why you are here. I am Zhakah, this is Xuro. Who are you?’

The boys know several languages known between them, allowing a conversation with the Player Characters. This conversation should reveal the following bits of information, leading the Player Characters to hiring one or both of the boys as guides.

- ❖ The boys are the only two people in the village that speak the ‘pale languages’. They learned them from a crew of sailors who stayed with them for a while during some ship repairs.
- ❖ Elder-father Chuga dislikes the pale people of the north, but he enjoys the glitter of their silver and the supplies they can bring to the village.
- ❖ For 25 sp or a weapon of steel Zhakah will take the Player Characters upstream on the Zikamba on a guided exploration. His brother will do the same for only 10 sp.
- ❖ The village has eight three-man canoes and enough oars as needed for all of them.
- ❖ The Zikamba River is very low this time of year and there are several shallow places that might need to be forded by foot once inland. It will be an easy trip with no real danger of drowning except in the mouth itself – where the silt alone is deep enough to suck you under.
- ❖ Elder-father Chuga has only one punishment for those caught as criminals against his village – death by flaying.

It will be likely that the Player Characters will hire one or both of the boys to serve as their guides for the trip upriver. When that decision is made and the deal is paid for to Chuga, Zhaka will applaud loudly and embrace the arms of the closest Player Character.

‘Father Chuga accepts offer,’ Zhaka says, grinning with ivory teeth, ‘tonight a feast. Tomorrow we go. You stay tonight, in guest yapa.’

Statistics for the Xabowan Tribals, Elder-father Chuga, Zhaka and Xuro can all be found in the encounters section.

THE DINNER AT XABOWA

Sometime later, when the sun has gone down and the air is much cooler, the villagers will have set up a modest feast of fruits, fish and woven dishes of seeds and berries. There are jars of the local salted honey mead called *rupi*, an oily crab jelly that keeps very well over long periods of time called *punajo*, and roasted strips of braided fish and gazelle meat called *kibarala*.

As the Player Characters come to the dinner, read the following:

At the centre of the village there has been a ring of oil torches set into the mud-packed sand around a huge skin that looks like it came from some kind of giant multi-coloured horse with a stretched neck. The skin is rolled out on the ground and several clay and wicker dishes are set along it, with several of the village women already serving for their husbands. They spoon out heaps of the food onto stiff leather pocket-like plates, and it seems customary to eat with bare hands.

‘Curi,’ Chuga says with a wave of his hand, ‘ukka po.’

‘Come,’ Zhaka translates, ‘and eat.’

Over the course of the meal the Player Characters will learn that the Xabowa people are an offshoot of the Bamulan tribe, moved out to the river delta and sea shore when the dangerous Wathali tribe from Darfar moved into the jungle further upriver nearly 200 years ago. Ever since, Chuga and his family line have kept his people safe and happy on the coast. They gave up their jungle god *Jehk’bana* for the sea god *Awopikkanna*, and their village has flourished. They must sacrifice a portion of everything they eat to the sea by throwing grain and butchered parts into the ebbing tides, which is done while a meal is prepared. Through these sacrifices *Awopikkanna* is pleased and he sends plentiful sea weed and fish to be hunted and harvested.

Xabowa is not a very popular place to stop for sailing ships, as it is too far south to see Kushite traders and too far north to serve as a port for Black Kingdoms explorers. The Zikamba River does not lead to anywhere except the jungle, which is why it is rare that





anyone would ever choose Xabowa as their port of call. Chuga claims that there are devils in the deep jungle, and that the ‘pale folk’ who go into the jungle rarely return.

Dinner will be extremely satisfying, with waxen gourds and pottery getting packed with any leftover food for the Player Characters if they accept it. Zhaka will explain that wasting the bounties of the gods is an ill omen to start a journey upon, and that the Player Characters should make sure to bring it with them. As that it is prepared to keep for up to two weeks, they have no reason not to accept the gifts. Each Player Character will also be given a porcelain bottle of *rupi* as well.

After the food has been cleaned up and the torches moved out to the perimeter of the village (to ward away predators), Xuro will lead them to a mostly empty mud-walled hut which they call a *yapa*. Inside the *yapa* are several simple fur bedrolls and grass-stuffed pillows strewn on the floor and a wooden rack for hanging gear and clothing. There is room enough for eight adults and their gear in the single room, and there is a length of animal gut used to tie the door in place. Although it would be relatively easy to break (DC 16 Strength), it serves as the only lock to the *yapa* at all. Small gourd rinds holding freshwater sit in a trio by the back wall of the semi-circular hut, and moonlight filters through the thatch roof in pinpricks that will grow bright with the coming dawn.

Unless the Player Characters want to brave the night along the coastline (which could pose problems if they are discovered by a wandering jungle wolf pack or watering jaguar (see *Jungle Encounters*, page 155), they will be able to sleep soundly all night before being woken to the sound of a warbling horn outside their *yapa*.

When they dress and emerge, they will find Zhaka standing before them:

‘Good, good,’ Zhaka smiles with teeth a shade too white in his dark face, ‘we can leave as soon as

offering is made to Awopikkanna.’ He holds up some kind of lizard with several colourful beads stuffed in its mouth. ‘See you at *canyas* in a moment.’

LEAVING THE VILLAGE

The Player Characters can make an offering to the Xabowan god of the sea before they can leave.

When the Player Characters eventually meet with Zhaka by the sea’s edge, where the *canyas* (canoes) are shored, they are part of the following scene:

‘Awopikkanna, pi na nook,’ Zhaka and Xuro say in unison as they close their eyes. The older brother hurls the lizard into the water, ‘cakkal noo fah.’ He bows and then turns to each of you. ‘What do you give to the god of all waters for safe journey?’

The Player Characters can choose to sacrifice anything they wish to the tribal god, from something as simple as unwanted gear to something as meaningful as their own shed blood. Zhaka and Xuro’s reactions range from head-shaking disdain for those who obviously do not care about the offering to smiles and back-slapping for true believers. Food or other organic things are the best types of offerings, but they will also recognise the importance of any useful gear or weaponry sacrificed as well.

While the sacrifice itself may or may not have any real impact on the safety of the trip, the confidence it builds (or destroys) in the two boys has influence over their skills for the journey. The following table explains what sort of modifiers they might have on their statistics due to the level of sanctity in the Player Characters’ offerings to Awopikkanna.

When the offering is done, the boys will begin to pull the *canyas* into the water and prepare to begin the trip upstream.

Offering Modifiers

Offerings Made by Player Characters	Modifiers
0	– 1 penalty to Listen, Spot and Survival skill checks; – 2 to Will saves
1– 2	No Modifiers
3– 4	+1 bonus to Listen, Spot and Survival skill checks; +1 to Will saves
All	+1 bonus to Listen, Spot and Survival skill checks; +1 to <i>all</i> Saves



PROPHECY POINTS

The Player Characters' trip to Xabowa is not likely to have any major impact upon the greater prophecy at all, save for the amount of time they allow it to take for them to get there and hire the tribal guides.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

- ✦ Basic Roleplaying Award for portraying characters well (500 xp)
- ✦ Helping calm the nerves or alleviate the low morale of the *Indigo Storm's* crew (500 xp)
- ✦ Dining with the Xabowan people without embarrassing themselves or angering the villagers (250 xp)
- ✦ Making acceptable offers to Awopikkanna (500 xp)

ENCOUNTERS

XABOWAN TRIBALS

The people of Xabowa are good natured and pleasant, made up of mostly fisherfolk and their children – who will, in turn, become fisherfolk as well. They do not readily trust outsiders, but they are familial enough with one another to know the village stands stronger than any normal threat.

Medium Humanoid (Black Kingdom Tribesman Commoner 1 / Barbarian 1)

Initiative: +3 (+1 Dex, +2 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages: Bamulah

Dodge Defence: 12 (+1 Dex, +0 class, +1 Black Kingdom Tribesman)

Parry Defence: 11 (+1 Str, +0 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 12 hp

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +0 (-1 versus Terror)

Defensive Specials: Fearless

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Hunting Spear +3 melee (1d8+1, AP 1)

Full Attack: Hunting Spear +3 melee (1d8+1, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: +2

Special Attacks: +1 to hit with spear or javelin

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9

Special Qualities: Illiterate, Versatility (–2 to hit)

Feats: Skill Focus (Survival), Track, Weapon Proficiencies (hunting spear, club)

Skills: Craft (fishing) +4, Knowledge (local) +4, Perform (dance) +6, Survival +6, Swim +4

Code of Honour: Barbaric

Reputation and Social Standing: 1 (+0)

Possessions: Fur Skirt, Hunting Spear, Skinning Knife

ELDER-FATHER CHUGA

The current leader of the Xabowan people, Chuga comes from a long line of his people's leaders. Just as he is training his son Zhaka to one day take over for him, he took over for his father when the venerable Ghuro died from a jungle spider bite nearly twenty years ago. Chuga is a powerful man with a stern sense of family and village-pride that puts the strength behind his voice, his decisions and his spear.

Medium Humanoid (Black Kingdom Tribesman Barbarian 5 / Noble 4)

Initiative: +3 (+1 Dex, +4 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages: Bamulah, Kushite, Watai

Dodge Defence: 16 (+1 Dex, +4 class, +1 Black Kingdom Tribesman)

Parry Defence: 15 (+2 Str, +3 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 42 hp

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +6 (+3 versus Terror)

Defensive Specials: Mobility, Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +1



Speed: 30 ft.
Attack: War Spear +12 melee (1d10+2, AP 2)
Full Attack: War Spear +12/+7 melee (1d10+2, AP 2)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)
Base Attack: +8/+3
Grapple: +10
Special Attacks: +1 to hit with spear or javelin, +1 to hit with war spear and hunting bow, Crimson Mist, Power Attack
Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14
Special Qualities: +1 to Perform (ritual) and Craft (alchemy) checks, Bite Sword, Illiterate, Social Ability (*family ties*), Rank Hath Its Privileges, Title (chieftain), Wealth
Feats: Brawl, Endurance, Skill Focus (diplomacy), Track, Weapon Focus (war spear), Weapon Proficiencies (hunting spear, club)
Skills: Balance +4, Craft (fishing) +6, Diplomacy +8, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (religion) +8, Perform (dance) +10, Sense Motive +8, Survival +10, Swim +6
Code of Honour: Barbaric
Reputation and Social Standing: 18 (+5)
Possessions: Fur Skirt and Tabard, Headdress, War Spear, Dagger, 2 bottles of *Rupi*, Bejewelled Bone and Stone Necklace

ZHAKA, ELDEST SON OF CHIEFTAIN CHUGA

The strong and virile young son of the Xabowan chieftain, Zhaka has always been a curious soul that defied his father's wishes for him to be a staunch and stoic young lad. Growing up he spent a great deal of time with foreigners, learning their languages and enjoying their friendships – even when it ended in treachery and bloodshed. Now almost a man, Zhaka is as fearless as his father but twice as ready to serve his people.

Medium Humanoid (Black Kingdom Tribesman Commoner 1 / Barbarian 3 / Nomad 2)
Initiative: +10 (+2 Dex, +6 Reflexes, +2 Lightning Reflexes)
Sensory Traits: Listen +6, Spot +6
Languages: Aquilonian, Argossean, Bamulah, Cimmerian

Dodge Defence: 16 (+2 Dex, +3 class, +1 Black Kingdom Tribesman)
Parry Defence: 13 (+1 Str, +2 class)
DR: –
Hit Points: 34 hp
Saves: Fort +8, Ref +10, Will +1 (-1 versus Terror)
Defensive Specials: Fearless, Trap Sense +1

Speed: 30 ft.
Attack: Hunting Spear +7 melee (1d8+1, AP 1)
Full Attack: Hunting Spear +7 melee (1d8+1, AP 1)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)
Base Attack: +5
Grapple: +6
Special Attacks: +1 to hit with spear or javelin, Crimson Mist
Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 11
Special Qualities: Bite Sword, Born to the Saddle, Favoured Terrain +1 (river lands), Illiterate, Versatility (–2 to hit)
Feats: Endurance, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Survival), Track, Weapon Proficiencies (hunting spear, club)
Skills: Balance +4, Craft (fishing) +6, Diplomacy +5, Hide +5, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (local) +8, Perform (dance) +8, Profession (river guide) +8, Sense Motive +6, Survival +8, Swim +6, Use Rope +4
Code of Honour: Barbaric
Reputation and Social Standing: 8 (+4)
Possessions: Fur Skirt, 2 Hunting Spears, Skinning Knife, 7 days rations

XURO, YOUNGEST SON OF CHIEFTAIN CHUGA

Eager to become an adult to raise a family of his own, Xuro idolises his older brother and does whatever he can to follow in his footsteps. Although he is not as large or athletic as Zhaka, he has always been slightly smarter and will one day be a great asset to the Xabowan tribe.

Medium Humanoid (Black Kingdom Tribesman Commoner 1 / Barbarian 1 / Nomad 3)
Initiative: +7 (+2 Dex, +5 Reflexes)
Sensory Traits: Listen +5, Spot +5
Languages: Bamulah, Bossonian, Shemitish

Dodge Defence: 16 (+2 Dex, +1 class, +1 Black Kingdom Tribesman)
Parry Defence: 13 (+1 Str, +1 class)
DR: –



Hit Points: 22 hp
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +2 (+0 versus Terror)
Defensive Specials: Fearless

Speed: 30 ft.
Attack: Javelin +7 ranged (1d8, AP 1)
Full Attack: Javelin +7 ranged (1d8, AP 1)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)
Base Attack: +4
Grapple: +4
Special Attacks: +1 to hit with spear or javelin, Point Blank Shot
Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 11
Special Qualities: Born to the Saddle, Favoured Terrain +1 (river lands), Illiterate, Versatility (–2 to hit)
Feats: Endurance, Quick Draw, Skill Focus (Survival), Track, Weapon Proficiencies (hunting spear, club)
Skills: Balance +6, Craft (fishing) +5, Diplomacy +3, Heal +4, Hide +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Perform (dance) +6, Profession (river guide) +6, Sense Motive +4, Survival +6, Swim +5, Use Rope +3
Code of Honour: Barbaric
Reputation and Social Standing: 6 (+3)
Possessions: Fur Skirt, Hunting Spear, 3 Javelins, 7 days rations

THE RIVER JOURNEY

The Player Characters, once they set out upon their journey, will need to overcome numerous hardships as they row upstream on the Zikamba.

The trip to the ‘three-sided stone’ should take two weeks, as long as the Player Characters row all day and pull the *canyas* to shore at night. Zhaka and Xuro will recommend this course of action to the Player Characters, but they will allow for early evening rowing as well if forced to do so. This will shorten the trip by two days, but will add the optional Jungle Encounter called *Moonlight Slavers* (page 158).

During the trip the Xambowan boys will make two Survival skill checks every day, with Zhaka receiving a

+2 bonus from Xuro’s assistance. The result of this check determines the degree of encounter the *canya* group will have that day. Fourteen base days of travel will allow the group to reach the three-sided stone, and the encounter *The White Flowered Path* (page 165). The table below explains what kind of encounter takes place depending on the boys’ Survival check.

If the Xabowan guides lead the Player Characters safely through the wilderness, they may not have to deal with any unforeseen circumstances (unless the Games Master wishes for them anyway).

As a note, Zhaka and Xuro have the ability to spend Fate Points like a Player Character to avoid being killed. Zhaka is considered to have four and Xuro a mere three points.

JUNGLE ENCOUNTERS

The following are encounters that the Player Characters could blunder into or stumble across while they are trying to row their way upstream. Each encounter is detailed as if the Player Characters were in the *canyas* when the encounter begins, but could be adjusted by any Games Master to deal with them on foot if they think it would better fit the individual instance.

HIPPOPOTAMUS

‘Deeper waters ahead,’ Zhaka says as his *canya* pulls ahead into the muddy river’s swell, ‘sunken tree. Take care.’ He points, showing a slick, grey shape in the water, two tiny birds standing on the thin stretch of surface rising out of the water. He nods and reaches out with his oar to test how rooted the obstacle might be, when it rears up suddenly to show a massive mouth full of yellow tusks and pink flesh!

‘Pottomo!’ Zhaka shouts, struggling to keep his *canya* from capsizing as the great leathery beast comes splashing down next to it.

The beast is a bull hippopotamus, and it was napping happily until Zhaka poked it with his oar. It will attack the *canyas* out of its rage, and the water it was resting in

Zikamba Encounters

Survival Check Result	Type of Encounter
1 – 15	Jungle Encounter
16 – 24	Navigation Obstacle
25 +	No Encounter





is only ten feet deep for the purposes of swimming.

Statistics for the Hippopotamus can be found in the encounters section.

LEOPARD

The river has grown shallow and sandy enough that you have had to step out of your *canya* and are currently walking it through the clear waters. Zhaka suddenly drops his boat and pulls out his spear in a flash, looking toward the branches of the trees looming above. At his feet is a partially mauled rodent of some sort, perhaps an enormous rat.

‘Balaam,’ Zhaka whispers, his brothers eyes going wide at the name. Before he can translate however, the beast leaps from the trees at you in a blur of golden fur and black rings.

The slain creature is a huge rodent that the jaguar had recently killed and tried to tree unsuccessfully. Unfortunately this happened just a few minutes before the Player Characters rowed into the area, so the leopard went into hiding to ambush any threat to his meal.

Statistics for the leopard can be found in the encounters section.

JUNGLE WOLF PACK

The Player Characters row into a spot of the river that is thick with bathing predators.

‘Get weapons,’ Zhaka says quietly as he draws his own spear, **‘danger ahead.’** In the shallow waters ahead of you, where some of the rocks can be seen jutting up out of the river, there are several small brown shapes splashing and playing. You can see that they are some kind of dog and more of the frolicking animals are on either side of the river, watching you with cocked heads and perked ears.

The animals are a huge pack of jungle wolves, twenty of them, bathing and playing in the unseasonably shallow waters of the Zikamba. The water is barely deep enough for the *canyas* to be rowed through, and unless anyone is currently wounded (the smell of blood) they might be able to pass through the area slowly enough (requiring a Will save DC 15) to not be considered a threat. If the Player Characters have been



wounded, are carrying particularly strongly-scented food, or perform any fast-moving actions – the wolves will let out a sharp series of barks and will attack as a single pack.

Statistics for the Jungle Wolves can be found in the encounters section.

LESSER SON OF SET

The Player Characters discover the hunting grounds of a powerful breed of snake worshipped by many Set cults, living by the banks of the Zikamba.

You draw back on your oar once more in the murky waters, and almost lose your grip upon it when it bumps into an underwater tree trunk. Thrusting your oar into the unseen depth to push away from the submerged tree, you find that it has moved. Suddenly,





a loud hissing echoes in your ear, and the coils of an enormous black serpent float to the surface of the water around the *canya*.

The lesser son of Set is one of several of the large serpents that live in the area around the Zikamba. In fact, several Set worshippers come seasonally to the area to harvest son of Set eggs to bring back to Khemi and Luxur. Because of these seasonal upheavals, the sons of Set in this area are extremely hostile and fearless of humans. The serpent will attack immediately, trying to overturn *canyas* and grapple with swimmers until they drown.

Statistics for the Lesser Son of Set can be found in the encounters section.

GIANT SPIDERS

The Player Characters run into a colony of deadly spiders – foreshadowing of things to come.

The banks of the river have become white with the silken sheets of spider webs, and you can see several animals as large as hounds spun into feeding sacs on either side of the water. Ahead you can see thick strands of webbing strung across the overhanging branches, making a net to catch animals swimming downstream, but will likely do just as well for you!

The webbing strung across the river will need to be burned, cut down or otherwise avoided unless the Player Characters want to get themselves stuck. As soon as the first strands of the stuff are molested, 1d6+3 giant spiders will emerge from the treetops to come and investigate their ‘catch’. They are black furred with golden streaks, and they are extremely voracious eaters due to the number of predators in the area that might come along and steal their kills.

Statistics for the Giant Spiders can be found on page 114 under Giant Funnel Web Spiders, earlier in this book. Although these spiders are of a different species, their statistics are identical.

SPIDER SWARM

The Player Characters are caught in the path of a likely group of freshly hatched spiders.

The river grows shallow again, and Zhaka steps out of his *canya* to begin to drag it through the rocks and mud. As soon as he takes three steps forward, he shouts and leaps back into it.

‘Shunaya!’ he shouts, pointing to a growing carpet of black specks crawling across the sticky mud unhindered, ‘Spiders!’

The shallow spot in the river is a perfect place for newly hatched giant spiders to cross into other territory, and it so happens that the Player Characters are crossing it at the same time. Being so near water and warm blood makes the fist-sized hunters frenzy with hunger, causing them to seek out the fleshy bits of the Player Characters. The Spider Swarm will attack the nearest warm body to one side of the bank (choose randomly), hopefully incapacitating it before moving on.

The statistics for the Spider Swarm can be found in the encounters section.

WATHALI HEADHUNTERS

An encounter that can only happen in the second week of travels, the Player Characters meet with an excursion from the tribal enemies of the Xabowan.

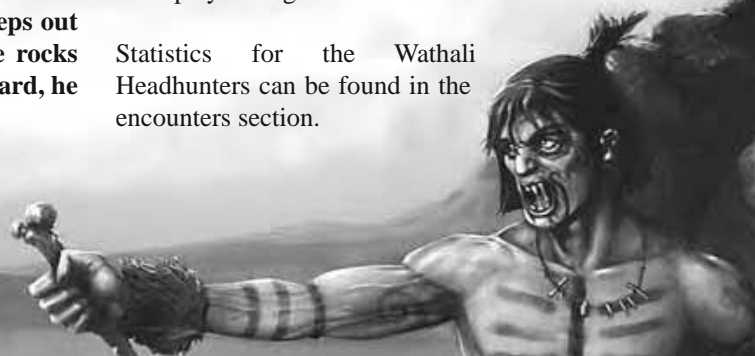
‘Shoo takka takka!’ a growling voice shouts from the bank of the river as a spear comes sailing by your ear, splashing into the water, ‘Deda deda!’ Other hoots and howls join the first as several dark-skinned savages leap into the water, war clubs and spears in their hands, and snarls on their pointed tooth-filled mouths.

‘The Wathali!’ Zhaka shouts, dropping his oar to heft his spear, ‘They mean to take our heads!’

There are seven Wathali head-hunters attacking the Player Characters. They are currently drugged on a specific root from their end of the jungle, making them utterly immune to nonlethal damage and Will saves. They prefer to bash targets with their clubs, if they can, but thrown spears are just as good. Zhaka and Xuro will fight bravely against the Wathali, giving war cries of their own tribe as they do so.

When the Player Characters defeat the head-hunters, Zhaka and Xuro will go about tearing out their bone-rings in the noses of the corpses. If asked, it is because the rings are trophies they will bring back for their father to display – a sign of their manhood.

Statistics for the Wathali Headhunters can be found in the encounters section.





MOONLIGHT SLAVERS (OPTIONAL NIGHT ENCOUNTER)

The Player Characters are too tired at night to notice a group of slavers from Kush, turning them into targets for capture.

There is not likely to be a narrative description of the encounter unless the Player Characters set watches and can manage to defeat the Kushites' Move Silently skill checks with their own Listen rolls. If they cannot hear the slavers coming, the attack will be swift and brutal, allowing the Kushites a full round or two of surprise attacks with their saps and blowguns. If a watch is set and successfully discovers the slavers – they will be able to prepare for them and perhaps ambush the ambushers.

There are only five slavers, but they are very skilled in stealth and knocking targets. Should all of the Player Characters and the two Xabowans be captured, they will lose three days' travel before the slavers will be attacked by local wildlife and the Player Characters set free to avenge their capture and make up for lost time.

Statistics for the Kushite Slavers are in the encounters section.

NAVIGATION OBSTACLES

The following are some frequent encounters that the Player Characters could have to overcome to make their upstream progress on the Zikamba River. Each encounter is detailed as if the Player Characters were in the *canyas* when the encounter begins.

ALGAL BLOOM

The water's current has grown slower in the wider banks of the river here, and the surface is covered in a thick sludge of blooming plants and seamless algae. As your *canya* cuts slowly through the slime, you feel something bump the bottom, and you pray it was just a log.

Everyone currently paddling a *canya* must pass a Strength check DC 15 to be able to move upstream through the bloom. So long as more than half of the paddlers succeed in this check the day is not wasted and upstream progress is made normally. If not, the day is spent trudging through the slime.

If anyone fails the Strength check on a natural '1', it means that the *canyas* were mired in the sludge long enough to attract a predator from the depths. The Games Master should roll a 1d3 and surprise the Player Characters with a Jungle Encounter: 1 – Leopard, 2 – Lesser Son of Set, 3 – Piranha School.

The statistics for leopards and Lesser Sons of Set can be found in the encounters section, while the piranha school can be found on page 112, if needed.

FALLEN TREE

'It be too big to move, I think,' Zhaka says, pointing to a huge tree trunk spanning over the water ahead. Its roots form a canopy to one bank of the river, and its branches are driven deep into the mud on the other side. 'we might have to go ashore.'

Unless the Player Characters decide to spend several hours chopping and hacking at the fallen tree (which has 300 hit points), they will need to draw the *canyas* up on shore and walk around the tree. This will require a Strength check DC 15 to heft the boats, and a Survival check DC 12 to avoid sliding mud or sinkholes around the tree. Failure of the Strength checks means that the pulling will take longer than expected, wasting the rest of the day. Failing the Survival check(s) however inflicts 1d4 points of damage from sharp branches and roots jabbing them.

FAST CURRENT

'Waters are moving straight and fast,' Zhaka says from the lead *canya*, 'oars in and push!'

Everyone with an oar will be required to make three Fortitude saves DC 12, 14 and 16 respectively over the course of the day in the fast currents. So long as every paddling character succeeds two of these three checks the group will make it through the fast currents without complication. Should at least one *canya's* rowers fail the majority of its saves; the group will be pushed downstream instead of up, losing one day of travel.

MUDSLIDE

The water has turned a dark brown with clots of mud, and your arms begin to ache with the rowing of your oars – as if the water itself was getting thicker. Ahead of you the banks of the river are smooth and stretched out into the river, making several dozen feet of slimy mud the only liquid to boat through or over.

Rowing through mud is very difficult work, requiring a Fortitude DC 18 save from every rower or they will strain muscles and pull tendons trying, inflicting





1d2 points of temporary Strength damage upon them. Should anyone be foolish enough to try and get out and walk through the mud, they will need to pass three consecutive Swim checks at DC 15 or they will get sucked down and will suffer double normal drowning damage (see page 221 of *The Conan Roleplaying Game Second Edition*).

SHALLOW WATERS

‘Too thin,’ Zhaka grunts, ‘the water be too thin. We walk.’

Through the section of shallow water the Player Characters will have to carry their *canyas* and move a little slower than they normally would to avoid tripping and falling. This will not have any adverse effects on the Player Characters unless the Games Master wants to have a Jungle Encounter at the same time. Otherwise the shallow waters will only be an inconvenience.

SHARP STONES

‘Take care,’ Xuro says, ‘I just felt stone beneath. Large one. May be more.’

This section of the river is dotted with large rocks with pointed tops just below the surface of the water, making rowing straight through them dangerous. It takes sharp eyes to judge where the rocks are tallest, and where the *canya* can fit through so as to avoid overturning.

The lead person in each *canya* must pass 1d6 Spot skill checks DC 14. Anytime one of these checks fails, that character’s *canya* has struck a rock. The rock causes the rowers in the boat to pass Strength checks at DC 15. Each failed check inflicts 1d6 nonlethal damage upon the riders. If *all* rowers fail their check, their *canya* is overturned, inflicting 2d6 damage each round until three Swim checks at DC 16 are made to right the boat and get back in it before being bashed to death upon the rocks.

VINES

‘Get out blades,’ Zhaka says, pointing to the weave of vines and flowers over the river ahead, ‘two row, one chop.’

Every *canya* must choose a passenger to chop down vines. For 2d6 rounds that person must make melee attack rolls at Defence 10, rolling damage normally. So long as each *canya* can inflict at least 30 points of damage with a slashing weapon during that time, their boat will not get caught in the vines. If a boat gets caught in the vines, all passengers take 2d4 points of damage from slashing thorns.

WATERFALL

The sound of water falling onto stones grows louder and the wet mist in the air becomes like a cloud of water vapour. The river becomes much harder to paddle as the crashing water grows stronger, and you are left staring at a sizeable waterfall – maybe twenty feet or so in height!

The Player Characters will now have to figure out how to get the top of a twenty foot tall waterfall. Climbing the rocks requires two Climb skill checks DC 18, DC 25 if someone is trying to hoist a *canya* at the same time. If not, it will require some inventive skill use or raw strength to pull the *canyas* up the side of the waterfall in order to get past it. Due to the number of jagged rocks at the bottom of the waterfall, anyone failing to Climb successful will suffer double normal falling damage.

REACHING THE STONE

After the equivalent of fourteen days worth of travel upriver, thick with adventure and jungle survival, the Player Characters will reach the notorious ‘three-sided stone’ they will have to set out on foot from – once they discover the right path.





PROPHECY POINTS

- ✦ The Player Characters urge Zhaka and Xuro to push on at night, speeding up their journey **-1 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ The Player Characters spent unnecessary days out of the *canyas*, travelling on foot instead of by river **+1 Prophecy Points**

EXPERIENCE POINTS

- ✦ Basic Roleplaying Award for portraying characters well (500 xp)
- ✦ Helping Zhaka and Xuro take the Player Characters upriver without unexpected encounters (1,000 xp)
- ✦ The Player Characters defeated the hippopotamus (1,000 xp)
- ✦ The Player Characters defeated the leopard (500 xp)
- ✦ The Player Characters got past the jungle wolf pack (250 xp); without combating them (500 xp)
- ✦ The Player Characters defeated the lesser son of Set (1,000 xp)
- ✦ The Player Characters defeated the giant spider colony (500 xp)
- ✦ The Player Characters defeated the spider swarm (250 xp)
- ✦ The Player Characters defeated the Wathali head-hunters (1,000 xp)
- ✦ The Player Characters defeated the Kushite slavers (750 xp); without being ambushed by them (1,000 xp)
- ✦ The Player Characters bypassed the natural obstacles that got in their way (100 xp per Navigational Obstacle)
- ✦ Zhaka and Xuro both survive to reach the three-sided stone (250 xp each)

ENCOUNTERS

HIPPOPOTAMUS

Hippopotami (plural form) thrive in the slow moving sections of the Zikamba, floating along like gigantic heaps of muscle and leathery skin. They live a life of general relaxation unless bull hippopotami clash with one another for dominance or mating rights, but frequently clash with river traffic by overturning boats or crushing them between their massive tusked jaws.

A single hippopotamus can easily get to fifteen feet in length from snout to tail, and nearly half that distance in height when standing on land, making them a sizable threat to small adventurers and their riverboats. It has been known for an angry bull hippopotamus to capsize a boat and killing everyone inside because of a not-so-gentle bump it received from said boat! Very little can stop a bull hippopotamus when it has the idea of eliminating an unwanted river-neighbour!

Huge Animal

Initiative: +2 (+2 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages: -

Dodge Defence: 12 (-2 size, +4 natural)

DR: 4

Hit Dice: 9d8+54 (95 hp)

Saves: Fort +12, Ref +2, Will +2

Defensive Specials: -

Speed: 20 ft., 30 ft. swim

Attack: Bite +11 melee (1d10+10, AP 4)

Full Attack: Bite +11/+6 melee (1d10+10, AP 4)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 10 ft. (2)

Base Attack: +6

Grapple: +21

Special Attacks: -

Sorcery Knowledge: -

Abilities: Str 25, Dex 11, Con 22, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 6

Special Qualities: Hold Breath

Feats: -

Skills: Hide -5, Swim +17

COMBAT

The hippopotami of the Zikamba use their enormous size and strength to dispatch their opponents. They have





massive teeth set in their jaws and can sink them in thick armour or hulls rather easily. If they can get a target into the water they will happily crush them repeatedly in their mouths until they die from blood loss or drowning.

Hold Breath (Ex): A hippopotamus can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to six times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

LEOPARD

Easily the most recognisable great cat in the jungles of the Black Kingdoms, Darfar and Keshan, leopards are huge cats covered in golden or tan fur marked with black or dark brown rings and splotches to better break up their image in the shadowy branches and jungle canopy.

Large Animal

Initiative: +10 (+3 Dex, +7 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +7, Spot +5

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 14 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural)

DR: 3

Hit Dice: 7d8+21 (53 hp)

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +2

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 40 ft., 25 ft. climb

Attack: Claw +10 melee (1d4+6, AP 2)

Full Attack: 2 Claws +10 melee (1d4+6, AP 2) and bite +6 melee (1d10+3, AP 4)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +5

Grapple: +19

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Pounce, Rake 1d4+4, AP 2

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Alertness, Run, Track

Skills: Balance +7, Climb +10, Hide +5 (+12), Jump +12, Move Silently +12, Survival +10

COMBAT

Leopards are fearsome ambush hunters that use their natural cunning to stalk their prey before springing onto their target and biting them to death. Most prey is dealt

with in short order, a pouncing strike from above that slashes them to ribbons before the leopard's jaws can crush their skull.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a leopard must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake.

Pounce (Ex): If a leopard charges a foe on the ground or from a leap, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +8 melee, damage 1d4+4, AP 2.

Skills: Leopard have a +4 racial bonus to Balance, Climb, Hide and Move Silently checks. If in areas of jungle canopy or similar thick foliage, their Hide bonus increases to +12.

JUNGLE WOLF

In the jungles around the Zikamba River and throughout the Black Kingdoms and Vendhya, there lives large roving packs of small scavengers that are a cross between hyena and wolf called 'jungle wolves'. These bands of mottled brown fur and yipping barks travel through the underbrush at remarkable speeds in search of small game and abandoned kills from other predators.

Each jungle wolf is about two-and-a-half feet in height and three feet long, tipped with a short-furred tail and a tight muzzle filled with small but sharp teeth. A single jungle wolf is not much of a threat to a traveller, but these beasts travel in large numbers for a reason, and even a seasoned warrior should beware their yipping calls when venturing through their territories.

Small Animal

Initiative: +7 (+4 Dex, +3 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +7, Spot +5

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 16 (+1 size, +4 Dex, +1 natural)

DR: 1

Hit Dice: 1d8+2 (7 hp)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +0

Defensive Specials: –





Speed: 50 ft.
Attack: Bite: +4 melee finesse (1d4 +1)
Full Attack: Bite +4 melee finesse (1d4 +1)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)
Base Attack: +0
Grapple: -3
Special Attacks: Trip
Sorcery Knowledge: -

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 6
Special Qualities: -

Feats: Track
Skills: Hide +6, Move Silently +6, Survival +1 (+5), Swim +6

COMBAT

Jungle wolves are pack hunters to the extreme, darting in and trying to knock over their targets in order to then swarm over them in large numbers with their sharp teeth. Although a single jungle wolf bite is probably not lethal, twenty of them assuredly can be. In the Zikamba River area, jungle wolves are also known to knock prey down into the water and then attack them incessantly, trying to bite and drown them at the same time.

Trip (Ex): A jungle wolf that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent (+1 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the jungle wolf.

Skills: Jungle wolves receive a +4 racial bonus to Survival checks when tracking by scent.

LESSER SON OF SET

The sons of Set are vast constrictor snakes, cruel and languid. Though they are scarce in most wild places, the muddy banks of the Zikamba are perfect for their eggs to incubate and hatch. Priests of Set and other sorcerers come to these lands to steal their eggs or young, keeping them drugged most of the time until they are fully trained. They are huge serpents with no fear of mankind, and their black scales make them perfect jungle predators that have cost many would-be huntsmen their lives.

Huge Animal
Initiative: +10 (+3 Dex, +7 Reflex)
Sensory Traits: Scent, Listen +9, Spot +9
Languages: -

Dodge Defence: 19 (-2 size, +3 Dex, +8 natural)

DR: 5
Hit Dice: 11d8+21 (71 hp)
Saves: Fort +8, Ref +10, Will +4
Defensive Specials: -

Speed: 20 ft., 20 ft. climb, 20 ft. swim.
Attack: Bite +13 melee (1d10+10)
Full Attack: Bite +13 melee (1d10+10)
Space/Reach: 15 ft. (3) / 10 ft. (2)
Base Attack: +8
Grapple: +27
Special Attacks: Constrict 1d8+10 (AP 8), Improved Grab
Sorcery Knowledge: -

Abilities: Str 25, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2
Special Qualities: -
Feats: Alertness, Endurance, Skill Focus (Hide), Toughness
Skills: Balance +11, Climb +17, Hide +10, Swim +16

COMBAT

Sons of Set of all sizes hunt by grabbing prey with their mouths and then squeezing it with their powerful bodies. While in the water, the serpents frequently grapple one target, pulling him under to drown and constrict him before resurfacing to grab new prey.

Constrict (Ex): On a successful grapple check, a lesser son of Set deals 1d8+10 damage automatically.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a lesser son of Set must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can then constrict.



SPIDER SWARM

When the giant spiders of the Zikamba breed, they do so in massive egg-laying sessions that creates tens of thousands of fertile eggs. When the egg sacs eventually hatch, normally in the dry season, the young spiders form into roaming colonies that eat anything that gets in their path until they have grown large enough to spin their own webs and hunt properly. Although a single young giant spider is nothing, a thousand spider bites can make even a tough warrior a meal for weeks for the colony.

There are 1d8+4 individual swarms in a single encounter with a spider swarm on the Zikamba.

Diminutive Vermin (Swarm)

Initiative: +3 (+4 Dex)

Sensory Traits: Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 30 ft., Spot +4

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 17 (+4 size, +3 Dex)

DR: –

Hit Dice: 2d8 (9 hp)

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +0

Defensive Specials: Swarm traits

Speed: 20 ft., 20 ft. climb

Attack: Swarm (1d6 plus poison)

Full Attack: Swarm (1d6 plus poison)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 0 ft. (0)

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: –

Special Attacks: Distraction, Poison

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 1, Dex 17, Con 10, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 2

Special Qualities: Swarm traits, Vermin traits

Feats: –

Skills: Climb +11, Swim +4

COMBAT

For game mechanic purposes, a single swarm is treated as a single creature or entity with an occupied space of 10 feet. A swarm has a single pool of Hit Dice and hit points, a single initiative modifier, a single speed and a single Defence Value. It is treated for all purposes as one beast.

Swarms battle by coming into contact with their targets, inflicting numerous small attacks that add up to effectively one wound. They never provoke attacks of opportunity, nor can they make use of them. They always occupy four connected five-foot squares, with no breaking of the central mass of the swarm. Swarms maintain cohesion like this through any space and can never be moved through.

A spider swarm crawls across warm bodies in order to bite and eventually paralyse, covering it later in webs to protect them for a slow and lengthy devouring. The swarm deals 1d6 points of damage to any creature whose space it can occupy at the end of its move, requiring the requisite poison saves as detailed below.

VULNERABILITIES OF SWARMS

Swarms are extremely difficult to destroy with common physical attacks, as weapons glide through the mass inflicting minor casualties on a huge number of creatures. They do have some specific vulnerabilities however.

A lit torch or similar flaming implement swung into a swarm inflicts 1d3 damage per hit against a non-aquatic swarm. A lit lantern or similarly contained fuel source used as a thrown weapon deals 1d4 points of damage to every five-foot square in and adjacent to where the object breaks.

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn with a spider swarm in its space must succeed in a Fortitude save DC 11 or be nauseated for 1 round by the prickly hairs and racing legs of the creatures passing over their bodies.

Poison (Ex): Anything that suffers damage from a spider swarm's attack is also affected by the following poison:

Skills: A spider swarm has a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks, and uses its Dexterity modifier instead of its Strength modifier for Climb checks. A spider swarm can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Spider Toxin	Injury DC 11	1d3 Str	2	One per round



WATHALI HEADHUNTERS

Members of the old cannibal tribe that moved into the jungle and pushed out the Xabowans two centuries ago, the Wathali are bloodthirsty savages that pride themselves on the number of skulls they can adorn their huts with. They all wear bone rings in their noses carved from the vertebrae of their foes, but can only wear one if they have killed a human being outside the tribe before.

Medium Humanoid (Darfari Barbarian 6)

Initiative: +9 (+2 Dex, +5 Reflexes, +2 Lightning Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Listen +6, Spot +8

Languages: Bamulah, Darfari, Watai

Dodge Defence: 17 (+2 Dex, +4 class, +1 Black Kingdom Tribesman)

Parry Defence: 15 (+3 Str, +2 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 46 hp

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +1 (-1 versus Terror)

Defensive Specials: Fearless, Mobility, Trap Sense +2, Uncanny Dodge

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: War Club +11 melee (2d6+3, AP 4) or Hunting Spear +10 ranged (1d8+3, AP 1)

Full Attack: War Club +11/+6 melee (2d6+3, AP 4) or Hunting Spear +10/+5 ranged (1d8+3, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +6/+1

Grapple: +9

Special Attacks: +1 to hit with spear, javelin or bludgeoning weapon, Bite

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

Special Qualities: Bite Sword, Crimson Mist, Illiterate, Versatility (–2 to hit)

Feats: Diehard, Endurance, Eyes of the Cat, No Honour, Track, Weapon Focus (war club), Weapon Proficiencies (hunting spear, club)

Skills: Balance +6, Climb +6, Craft (cooking) +4, Hide +6, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +6, Perform (drum) +6, Survival +8, Swim +6, Use Rope +4

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 6 (+1)

Possessions: Fur and Bone Skirt, War Club, 2 Hunting Spears, Skinning Knife, Small Flask of Human Blood

KUSHITE SLAVERS

Travellers from farther north who come into the jungle looking for wayward explorers and adventurers to set upon and capture, these particular Kushites are the second half of an eight-man team that spread out into the jungle. While four of the men might discover the Player Characters, the other four mistakenly followed the tracks from a Cimmerian shipwreck to the lair of a much better hunter than they could ever hope to be...

Medium Humanoid (Kushite Nomad 3 / Thief 3)

Initiative: +9 (+3 Dex, +6 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Listen +6, Spot +8

Languages: Darfari, Kushite, Puntan

Dodge Defence: 14 (+2 Dex, +2 class)

Parry Defence: 15 (+3 Str, +2 class)

DR: 4 (+4 Leather Jerkin)

Hit Points: 28 hp

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +2

Defensive Specials: Trap Sense +1

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Heavy Sap +6 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal), Hunting Spear +9 ranged (1d8+2, AP 1) or Blowgun +9 ranged (1d2 plus poison, AP 0)

Full Attack: Heavy Sap +6 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal), Hunting Spear +9 ranged (1d8+2, AP 1) or Blowgun +9 ranged (1d2 plus poison, AP 0)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +5

Grapple: +6

Special Attacks: +1 to damage with spears, Poison Blowgun, Sneak Attack +2d6/+2d8

Sorcery Knowledge: –





Abilities: Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 10
Special Qualities: Born to the Saddle, Favoured Terrain +1 (jungle), Illiterate, Sneak Attack Style (heavy sap), Trap Disarming

Feats: Endurance, Eyes of the Cat, No Honour, Self-Sufficient, Skill Focus (Hide), Track, Weapon Proficiencies (all Simple)

Skills: Appraise +4, Balance +4, Bluff +4, Climb +4, Heal +6, Hide +10, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (geography) +4, Move Silently +10, Profession (slaver) +5, Survival +8, Swim +4, Use Rope +6

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 8 (-1)

Possessions: Average Explorer's Outfit, Leather Jerkin, Reinforced Heavy Sap, Hunting Spear, 2 sets Manacles (DC 25), Bamboo Blowgun with 6 poisoned darts

Poison (Ex): Anything that suffers damage from a blowgun dart's attack is also affected by the poison below.



THE WHITE FLOWERED PATH

The Player Characters have reached the three-sided stone Dexitheus told them about in his message deciphered about the Prophecy. They will have to beach the *canyas* and choose which of the three pathways to take into the jungle – if they can figure out what Dexitheus meant about the 'ancient white flowers'.

When the Player Characters pull the *canyas* onto the shore and approach the huge slab of stone, read the following:

You are happy to have leaves and soil beneath your feet once more as you approach the massive three-sided stone. Towering almost two men's height into the air and rooted deeply into the ground, the slab of grey rock looks like some kind of monument to the ancient land you are walking in. Chiselled by the wind and rains, the stone indeed has three lateral sides, each one facing a worn out path in the jungle growth; where they lead you cannot say.

One side is bare stone facing a path lined in thick vines; the vines bearing dozens of closed flower buds. The next side is covered in thick moss, tiny ivory blossoms clinging to the side in sparse clumps. The final side has no vegetation at all, but has bloomed from within with the growth of pearlescent crystals that have broken through the crust like sprouts in a vertical garden.

Which path should you choose?

The Player Characters must choose which path they feel represents the 'ancient white flowers'. There is an encounter segment at the end of each path, but only one leads to where the marked maiden and the Stygian rider are.

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Red Wasp Toxin	Injury DC 13	1d4 Dex	3	One per round





No matter what path they choose, Zhaka and Xuro will remain behind at the *canyas* to protect them for the return trip to Xabowa. They will explain that they do not go to where the paths lead, as it is Wathali territory and they are forbidden by their father. They will not abandon the Player Characters however, staying as long as they have to in order to ensure a safe return.

Depending on what path the Player Characters choose, they will have small encounters while walking them. The ‘ancient white flowers’ are the geode crystals blooming out of the stone, marking that path Dexitheus’ divinations spoke of that would lead to the maiden (and the final encounter in this chapter, *Too Late For Anything But Vengeance*). The other paths lead to different encounters, but they are not necessary to the campaign plot.

PATH OF FLOWERING VINES

If the Player Characters decide to follow the path lined in vines bearing flower buds (which are indeed white, if anyone opens one), they will walk for roughly three hours before anything resembling a scenery change occurs.

After the Player Characters have just begun to question if this is the right path or not, read the following scene to them:

The air has been thick with the fragrant smell of the vines’ nectar for hours now, but suddenly a new odour strikes your nose. It is faint at first, growing stronger as you walk further down the path. It is the sickly sour scent of a rotting corpse, and it is strong enough to make you wonder where the dead thing must be hiding. Fifty more paces, and the path ends in a gnarl of branches and brilliantly flowering blooms – each one white as the moon and rimmed in red veins.

That is when the first of the sticky strands drips down from above you, causing you to look up. Caught in the trees, desiccated and partially digested, are the corpses you smell. The vines around them drip with fluids, and you can swear that the path is getting smaller behind you...

The end of the path is the den of a deadly moonblossom plant. It is a carnivorous stalk of vines that grow for several hundred feet to attract prey, and then entangles them within the den to be digested – slowly. The three corpses that had been drawn up into the vine canopy are three of the four men from the second team of Kushite slavers (see *Moonlight Slavers*, page 158). After their run in with Widohaka at the end of the ancient path (see *Said the Spider to the Fly*), they ran away and took a wrong turn – ending up as food for the moonblossom plant. See the Kushite Slavers on page 164 for the equipment their corpses will have with them.

The Player Characters will need to free themselves from the plant, which will likely mean they will have to kill the main stalk without succumbing to the paralytic nectar and digestive vines.

Statistics for the Moonblossom Plant can be found in the encounters section.

PATH OF BLOOMING MOSS

If the Player Characters decide to follow the path marked by the ivory-flowering moss, they will only need to walk for an hour before they will realise they must be going the wrong way. After the Player Characters have walked down the path for an hour, read the following aloud:

This path has been difficult to walk, as most of it has been uphill and slick with moss and puddles of mud, but you are happy to feel it level out and you can see the jungle thins ahead. You break through a few low-hanging branches thick with lichen, and you are shocked to see a fifty-foot drop before you! Ten more paces and you would have surely stepped off the edge into the river and rocks below. You breathe a sigh of relief, but when you stop sighing, the sound continues.

The sigh increases into a hiss, and you turn to see a massive lizard drawing nearer to you, its black tongue snaking out to taste the air as it plods forward on viciously clawed feet. Whether or not it meant to do so, it has you trapped with your back against the ravine, and it looks *hungry*.

The lizard is a female jungle monitor, and it has a nest just a few feet below the edge of the ravine with several eggs in it. It was returning from an unsuccessful hunting excursion when it happened upon the Player Characters and, seeing a possible meal, attacks them.



Statistics for the Jungle Monitor can be found in the encounters section.

PATH OF ANCIENT WHITE FLOWERS

If the Player Characters figure out that the most ancient of 'white flowers' are the geode crystals blossoming out of the three-sided stone they will likely follow the path that will eventually lead them to where the marked maiden and the Stygian rider are.

The path is long and winding, taking the Player Characters deeper into the dark jungle. After two hours of travel, they will discover a change in their surroundings and have to defend themselves from the area's lesser denizens. When the Player Characters have walked long enough, read the following:

Barely enough sunlight is filtering down through the interwoven canopy for you to believe it is still day, and the ground is moist and sticky beneath your feet despite the increasing amount of gravel in the soil. As the ground grows even stickier, you look down to see that you are walking in great swaths of white webbing. Looking around, letting your eyes adjust for it, you can see more of the sticky substance in the trees and grasses. Clumps of it foretell the animal remains within, and a chill passes through you when one of the larger webbing-packages struggles from within.

That is when you feel the piercing stare of many eyes from the darkness, and the webs' creators come forward to add you to their store of meals to come!

There are eight giant spiders and two spider swarms in this area, all of which are under the pheromone control of Widohaka. They will attack the Player Characters without hesitation, trying to web them up and save them for their master's meals. The fight will be sudden and brutal, throughout which one of the giant spiders should be noted as running over to the largest web-sac and biting it and webbing to keep it still.

Once the fight is over and the spiders are dead, the web-sac should still be struggling and all Player Characters can be asked to make Listen skill checks DC 14 to hear the whimpering sounds coming from within it.

Should they choose to open the web-sac carefully, they will reveal the fourth unlucky Kushite slaver – the one that got caught by Widohaka:

The white webbing tears aside and you gasp at what you find within. A grown man, skin wet with sweat and blood, his eyes pale and sightless in their sockets, lies paralysed within the sac. He gasps for air and his swollen tongue lolls about, and you can see the black of old blood in his throat. Between gasps, he looks up at the sound of your breathing...

The Kushite is all but dead already from the necrotic toxins in his blood, as a Heal check of any calibre will reveal, but he has a few important things to tell the Player Characters – if they can keep him alive long enough to tell them.

He will say the following things in the following order, starting with the first. It requires a Heal skill check DC 10 to get the second phrase, DC 12 for the second, DC 14 for the third and finally DC 16 for the last. After he says the last line, or the last line that the Heal checks provide for, he will let out a shudder and his mouth will fill with dark blood from his suddenly collapsed lungs.

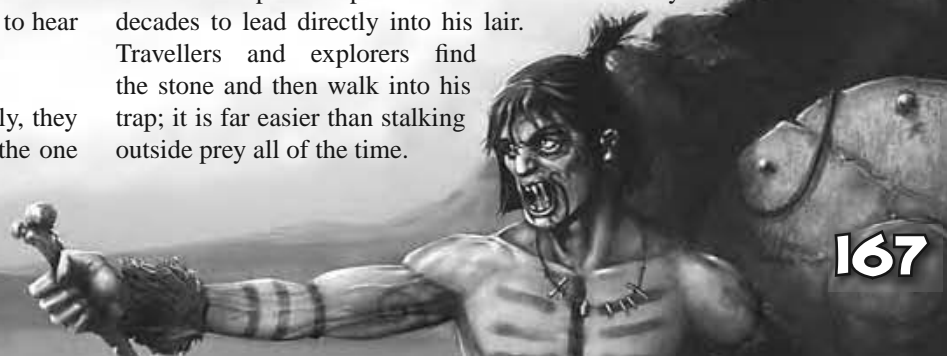
- ✦ *'It is huge...it makes meals of men...inside the cave...'*
- ✦ *'We battled a black horse...slew it...but the rider went into the cave...'*
- ✦ *'The screaming...I think it was not just me screaming in the darkness...'*
- ✦ *'I saw them...men wrapped as I am...dozens of them in the dark...'*

When the Kushite dies, the Player Characters will have but only one more place to think about going – further down the path toward the cave of Widohaka. When they do so, they can move on to the next encounter segment.

Statistics for the Giant Spiders can be found under 'Giant Funnel Web Spiders' on page 114, while Spider Swarms can be found on page 163.

SAID THE SPIDER TO THE FLY...

The Player Characters will need to push on the web-laden path toward a large black cave where the path ends. Within that cave is the abomination known as Widohaka, who has sculpted the path from the stone over many decades to lead directly into his lair. Travellers and explorers find the stone and then walk into his trap; it is far easier than stalking outside prey all of the time.





When the Player Characters reach the cave's entrance, read the following:

Smooth grey stone rises up from the ground to form the mouth of a dark cave before you. The ground and walls of the cave are spotted with spider webs, and tiny black and brown predators watch from their well-strung traps. There is an air current from within the cave that pulses past you, almost as if it were breathing...

Going inside the cave will require some kind of light source. A lantern or lamp is going to be best, but least likely to be common adventuring gear. Torches are most commonplace, and will burn away smaller webs and plants, causing smoke to gather somewhat in the cave. This will impose a -1 penalty to all ranged attack rolls and Spot skill checks.

Traversing the cave requires two Climb skill checks at DC 12 and one Jump check at DC 10 to avoid pitfalls and scale ledges. Failure of any of these checks inflicts 1d6 falling damage automatically. These are not traps, but instead are simply natural obstacles within the cave. For obvious reasons, Widohaka ignores these altogether.

At the end of the cave is a larger room that serves as Widohaka's lair. It is easily forty feet in width, twenty in height, and fifty feet long. When the Player Characters reach the room, read the following introduction to them:

As the walls of the cave suddenly spread outward to create a huge subterranean room around you, you cannot help your eyes widening at the sight. The walls and floor are covered in patches of thick, cottony webbing, some of which surround a dozen or more huge web-sacs that you know hold human beings from their shape. The flicker of the light gives you reason to wonder if they are still moving inside those silken prisons.

The Player Characters should each be given a Listen check against Widohaka's Move Silently to see if they can hear him on the ceiling. This should be a Spot check against his Hide if they specifically look above them for traps or ambushes. If they discover him before he strikes from above, they will not be surprised or



caught flat-footed on the first round of combat. If not, he will simply drop upon the closest target holding a light source (the flame hurts his eyes).

Regardless as to how Widohaka is introduced, the following description should be given:

The horror looming over you is easily twice as tall as a man, covered in glistening black skin and hair. It is some kind of twisted mix of man and spider, with the upper torso of a Black Kingdoms tribal attached to the lower abdomen and legs of a huge tarantula! Its arms end in sharp claws and its maw is a knot of fangs and pulling appendages. Eight passionless red eyes stare out from around its misshapen head, and bluish venom drips menacingly from its two dagger-long fangs...

Widohaka is a breed of ancient spider-beast that has lived for many decades here in the cave area, protecting its rapidly growing kin in the area while hunting the indigenous animals and people that draw too close to its territory.



When the Player Characters eventually defeat the spider-thing, they will be free to search its lair if they so choose. There are thirteen cocoons, only seven of which contain anything but partially digested animal matter. Should the Player Characters begin to cut open the cocoons, they will find the following:

- ❖ A partially armoured soldier's corpse in a brigandine coat wielding a poniard, 11 sp
- ❖ A terribly digested tribal with a bone knife
- ❖ A young boy with sharpened Darfari teeth and a light mace made of obsidian
- ❖ A large hunting hound with an iron-studded muzzle
- ❖ A partially digested man in an explorer's outfit with three gold teeth (worth 10 sp each)
- ❖ A recently deceased Stygian man in a torn black silk cloak, wielding a ritual dagger, 102 sp
- ❖ A recently deceased woman with the proper birthmark on her breast and manacles around her wrists

Obviously the Player Characters followed the divinations correctly; they and the Stygian rider were simply not the only things that were hunting the marked maiden.

Statistics for Widohaka the Spider-Thing can be found in the encounters section.

THE SOLEMN RETURN TRIP

The Player Characters, having discovered that the Stygian rider did not take the marked maiden away, will then walk back to Zhaka, Xuro and the *canyas* for their trip back downstream. The trip can be exciting or quiet if the Games Master wishes it to be, but it is quicker and easier because of the party will be moving with the current.

RETURNING TO XABOWA

When the Player Characters reach the village of Xabowa, Chuga will be waiting to welcome his boys (if the survived the trip) and the Player Characters. As soon as the initial greetings are over, Chuga will say something to his sons, pointing inland of the village. When he does so, he then gestures to the Player Characters.

'Elder-father says man is here to see you,' Zhaka says with a puzzled look, 'man rides strange furred horse, and claims to have your bird. Come, this way he waits.'

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?

In case the Player Characters manage to see into the past using sorcery, or the Games Master is feeling particularly sharing, the following events occurred in order so that the marked maiden and the Stygian Rider to being dead by the time the Player Characters discovered them.

- ❖ The Kushite slavers were taking a trip to the south to sell several northern slaves when they chose to stop nearby for supplies
- ❖ A Cimmerian slave escaped into the jungle, and a team of eight Kushite slavers went out after him – bringing with them the slave's sister as collateral
- ❖ The team split into two groups of four, one that may have run in with the Player Characters; the other finding the lair of Widohaka.
- ❖ The Stygian rider found the lair at the same time (following the divinations surrounding the Prophecy as Dexitheus had). During his combat against the Kushites, Widohaka awoke and set upon them all.
- ❖ Three Kushites were chased off by the rider's Uncanny Steed into the moonblossom plant's area – where they killed the steed, but the plant killed them.
- ❖ The remaining Kushite was bitten by Widohaka, but only made it as far as the giant spider colony before collapsing from the poison.
- ❖ Widohaka took the maiden and the Stygian inside to serve as its next meals.
- ❖ The Player Characters arrived a few days later, too late to save any of those involved.





On the way to see this unexpected guest, Zhaka will explain that his father says the man arrived nearly a week ago and has been riding from the north every two days to see if you have returned. Every visit he brings spices and tools as gifts for Chuga, so as to not wear out his welcome, and he always comes alone. When the Player Characters eventually get to this person asking for them, they will be somewhat shocked to see a pale-skinned northerner brushing a camel. He is not familiar to the Player Characters, but he acts like they are old friends when they appear.

When they are introduced, read the following as a closing statement to this chapter of the campaign:

‘Hello, friends of Aquilonia,’ the man says with a wide smile, thrusting a skin of wine into your hands, ‘the priest of Mitra sent the hawk to me, I have your message.’ He looks shiftily from side to side and whispers, ‘your instructions.’ Then he becomes bold and loud again. ‘I am Tirinus of Shamar, wine merchant and friend to you. Come, my caravan is a few hours north of here. We have a long way to go, and I have camels for you there.’

The Player Characters may have some qualms about simply believing the man’s story, but he is an excellent liar and extremely genial toward the Player Characters. He will wait for them to decide to join him, but if they completely refuse he will go ahead and produce the slip of parchment from Dexitheus’ hawk (which can be read in the beginning of the next chapter). Beyond that to convince them, he can only wait for them to make a decision – hopefully one that leads them north toward the message’s destination.

Statistics for Tirinius of Shamar can be found in the encounters section.

PROPHECY POINTS

- ✦ The Player Characters choose the proper path on the first attempt **–1 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ The Player Characters choose the proper path on the second attempt **+0 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ The Player Characters only take the proper path after the other two do not lead to the maiden **+1 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ The Player Characters uncover the corpse of the marked maiden **–1 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ The Player Characters choose not to look for the maiden or the rider when they discover the humanoid feeding-sacs **+1 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ The Player Characters do not question Tirinius of Shamar’s presence at all, simply going with him because he says they are supposed to **+1 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ The Player Characters follow Tirinius of Shamar, but not until he produces Dexitheus’ message **+0 Prophecy Points**

EXPERIENCE POINTS

- ✦ Basic Roleplaying Award for portraying characters well (500 xp)
- ✦ The Player Characters choose the proper path on the first attempt based on their deciphering (500 xp)
- ✦ The Player Characters choose the proper path on the second attempt based on their deciphering (250 xp)
- ✦ The Player Characters escaped the moonblossom plant (250 xp)
- ✦ The Player Characters killed the moonblossom plant (500 xp)
- ✦ The Player Characters defeated the jungle monitor (750 xp)
- ✦ The Player Characters defeated the giant spiders and spider swarms on the path (500 xp)
- ✦ The Player Characters defeated Widohaka the Spider-Thing (2,000 xp)
- ✦ The Player Characters discovered the maiden/Stygian rider in their web-sac (250 xp each)
- ✦ The Player Characters chose to follow Tirinius to his caravan (250 xp); after being shown ‘proof’ (500 xp)



ENCOUNTERS

MOONBLOSSOM PLANT

A deadly and distant relative to the predatory lotus family, the moonblossom is a rare throwback to the ancient days when dinosaurs ruled the jungle and often left carcasses to rot after their kills. Moonblossoms would sprout from the carcass in days in order to not only digest the remains, but also to paralyse scavengers with its vines to add them to the pile to be digested!

Huge Plant

Initiative: +4 (+3 Dex, +1 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 13 (–2 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural)

DR: 4

Hit Dice: 10d8+20 (65 hp)

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +6, Will –1

Defensive Specials: Plant traits

Speed: 2 ½ ft. (cannot run)

Attack: Whip-like Vine +9 melee (1d4+4)

Full Attack: 2 Whip-like Vines +9 melee (1d4+4)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 15 ft. (3)

Base Attack: +7

Grapple: +19

Special Attacks: Constrict, Digest, Improved Grab, Poison

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 16, Con 14, Int –, Wis 2, Cha 26

Special Qualities: Blindsense, Mindless

Feats: –

Skills: –

COMBAT

Moonblossom plants use their whip-like vines to grasp its foes, coating them with paralytic sap and digestive nectar while drawing their meals up into their upper stalks for easier feeding. Their ability to bend and twist toward prey is remarkable, even thrashing toward the scent of flesh and exhaled breath, like some other agitated predators.

Blindsense (Ex): Moonblossom plants can locate creatures within a 90 foot radius at all times, regardless of lighting conditions.

Constrict (Ex): On a successful grapple check, a moonblossom plant deals 1d6+6 damage plus its paralytic poison sap.

Digest (Ex): A moonblossom plant that manages to succeed in a grapple check with a living target can choose to rub it with its digestive nectar of its blossoms. If it pins the foe, it begins to dissolve and siphon flesh, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution damage each round the pin can be maintained. For each successful round of digestion, the moonblossom plant gains 3 temporary hit points.

This digestion is how it keeps itself alive and growing. For every week it does not receive at least one hit point worth of flesh for each of its Hit Dice, it withers and loses 1 HD. However, for every full-grown medium-sized animal it drains completely, it gains and grows 1 HD (maximum of 1 HD per week).

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a moonblossom plant must hit with its whip-like vine attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict (see above) or pin for the *digest* ability.

Poison (Ex): Anything that suffers damage from a moonblossom plant's Constrict attack is also affected by the poison below.

JUNGLE MONITOR

The slender brown jungle monitors of the Black Kingdoms are a rare sight outside of their nesting communities. They are never far from the trail of their next meal, always ready to fill their bellies with hunks of meat – rotten or fresh; it is all the same to these beasts. These are cousins to the grassland giants of Khitai; part scavenger and part predator, jungle monitors are deadly combatants that have powerful jaws, sharp claws, and saliva made up of concentrated rot and illness.

A single jungle monitor is around ten feet in length and three or so wide, with a deep-mouthed head filled with sharp teeth at one end and a thin, whipping tail at the other. They tend to be brown or greyish in colour with splotchy green markings upon them,

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Moonblossom Sap	Contact DC 14	1d3 Dex	4	One per minute



making them very effective ambush predators for a beast their size in their home territory.

Large Animal

Initiative: +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +6, Spot +4

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 13 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural)

DR: 6

Hit Dice: 8d8+24 (60 hp)

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +3, Will +2

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft., 20 ft. climb, 20 ft. swim

Attack: Bite +10 melee (1d10+4, AP 3) or Tail Slap +8 melee (1d6+2)

Full Attack: Bite +10 melee (1d10+4, AP 3) and 2 Claws +5 melee (1d6+4, AP 2); or Tail Slap +5 melee (1d6+2)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +6

Grapple: +14

Special Attacks: Disease, Rending Bite

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 2

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Alertness, Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Climb), Track, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills: Climb +12, Hide +6, Move Silently +6, Survival +12, Swim +12

COMBAT

Jungle monitors use their deadly jaws to cause horrid wounds that can almost guarantee infection due to their diet of rotten meat and muddy water. They are voracious predators that know the value of a quick kill; but they also cannot leave enemies to fight while it feeds, tearing into one foe long enough to guarantee it will die before turning on another.

Disease (Ex): A jungle monitor that attacks a living creature with its jaws will almost invariably pass on a

terrible illness of some kind. The damaged target must pass a Fortitude save DC 13 daily for 3d6 days or be struck with a fever. After 1d2 days of incubation the target will lose 1d4 Dex and 1d3 Con daily until the target can overcome the disease.

Rending Bite (Ex): The jaws of a jungle monitor are extremely strong, gripping and tearing off chunks of meat with a single yank of its head. This means that any wounds inflicted by the jungle monitor's bite attack are difficult to heal or treat naturally, adding +3 to any Heal check DCs involving them.

Skills: Jungle monitor lizards have a +8 racial bonus on any Survival check due to their hardy healthiness and predatory instincts. They also have a +6 bonus to their Climb and Swim checks due to the strength of their clawed limbs and tail.

WIDOHAKA THE SPIDER-THING

An ancient creature created by magic and left to fend for itself in the jungle, *Widohaka* is the name that the Wathali tribesmen gave the creature when they discovered it for the first time. Roughly translated, it means 'god of the web' in Darfari, and the Wathali treat it as the embodiment of a deity. They do not worship the black-skinned spider abomination, but they respect its territory and its earthly needs.

Large Aberration (animal/demon)

Initiative: +10 (+3 Dex, +3 Reflex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Sensory Traits: Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense, Listen +5, Spot +5

Languages: Demonic

Dodge Defence: 21 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +9 natural)

DR: 7

Hit Dice: 12d8+48 (102 hp)

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +10

Defensive Specials: Aberration traits, Susceptible to Magic, Weakness to Fire / Silver





Speed: 40 ft., 30 ft. climb

Attack: Claws +11 melee (1d6+2, AP 1) or Bite +10 melee (1d4+1)

Full Attack: 2 Claws +11 melee (1d6+2, AP 1) and Bite +6 melee (1d4+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +9

Grapple: +15

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Poison, Web

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 16, Con 19, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8

Special Qualities: Aberration traits

Feats: Alertness, Fleet-footed, Skill Focus (Move Silently), Stealthy, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills: Climb +20, Hide +8, Jump +12, Move Silently +10, Survival +8

COMBAT

Widohaka prefers to ambush prey that has become twisted up in the webs it or its ‘children’ have spun, using darkness and altitude to surprise foes. It slashes at its enemies to try and get them caught in its webs, then biting them to paralyse their bodies for a later snack.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Widohaka must hit with its claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action using its spider legs without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can Bite without requiring a roll to hit against the held opponent.

Poison (Ex): Anything that suffers damage from Widohaka’s Bite attack is also affected by the following poison:

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Widohaka’s Toxin	Injury DC 18	1d2 Dex	2	One per round

Susceptible to Magic (Su): Widohaka was created by magic and is held together by a strange force of the arcane that leaves it partially weak against outside magics. Widohaka suffers a –4 penalty to all saves versus magical effects.

Tremorsense (Ex): Widohaka can detect and pinpoint any creature or object within 60 feet in contact with the ground, or within any range in contact with its webs.

Web (Ex): Widohaka often waits in its webbing canopy within the cave or in the upper jungle, lowering itself silently on silk strands to leap onto prey passing beneath. A single strand is strong enough to support Widohaka and one creature of Medium size. Widohaka can throw a web six times per day to try and entangle a foe. This has a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet and is effective against targets up to Large size. An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 18) or burst the web with a Strength check (DC 22). Both are standard actions. The Strength check to entangle a foe includes a +4 racial bonus to its DC. Widohaka creates sheets of sticky webbing on the ground 20 feet in diameter around near the entrance of its lair. Approaching creatures must succeed on a DC 20 Spot check to notice a web; otherwise they stumble into it and become trapped as though by a successful web attack. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing gain a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. Each 5-foot section has 6 hit points and sheet webs have Damage Reduction 5. (It is not possible to bypass this Damage Reduction with finesse, but fire inflicts double damage without being reduced by DR.) Widohaka can obviously move across its own web at its climb speed and can pinpoint the location of any creature touching its web.

Skills: Widohaka’s lower spider body in conjunction with its strong arms give it a +10 bonus to all Climb checks.





TIRINIUS OF SHAMAR, OPPORTUNISTIC VILLAIN

Originally just a simple caravan raider from the farmlands of Aquilonia, Tirinius gave up the life of banditry when he stole an entire caravan from a Shemite merchant nearby Shamar. He took on the role of trader, going to where the money is – and selling anything he has to make it. Slaves, drugs, poisons; whatever he has to peddle to make his coin he will. When Dexitheus' hawk flew overhead and one of his huntsmen brought it down, he read the message and decided that agents of King Conan would be likely worth a pretty penny to a friend of his in Stygia...

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian Nomad 7 / Thief 3)

Initiative: +11 (+3 Dex, +8 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Listen +12, Spot +12

Languages: Aquilonian (Literate), Argossean, Cimmerian, Shemitish, Stygian, Zingaran

Dodge Defence: 18 (+3 Dex, +4 class, +1 Dodge)

Parry Defence: 15 (+1 Str, +4 class)

DR: 4 (+4 Leather Jerkin)

Hit Points: 41 hp

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +11, Will +4

Defensive Specials: Mobility, Trap Sense +1, Uncanny Dodge

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Arming Sword +10 melee (1d10+1, AP 2) or Dagger +11 melee (1d4+1, AP 1)

Full Attack: Arming Sword +10/+5 melee (1d10+1, AP 2) or Dagger +11/+6 melee (1d4+1, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +9/+4

Grapple: +10

Special Attacks: Improved Feint, Nomad Charge +1, Sneak Attack +2d6/+2d8, Weapon Familiarity (greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 20

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Bluff and Diplomacy), Born to the Saddle, Favoured Terrain +2 (plains), Sneak Attack Style (dagger), Trap Disarming

Feats: Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Diehard, Endurance, Eyes of the Cat, Leadership, Mounted Combat, No Honour, Quick Draw, Track, Weapon Focus (dagger)


Skills: Appraise +14, Bluff +20, Diplomacy +18, Disable Device +6, Hide +12, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +8, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +8, Profession (trader) +12, Ride +10, Search +8, Sense Motive +12, Survival +6, Tumble +10, Use Rope +6

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 16 (+3)

Possessions: Aquilonian Arming Sword, Superior Silk Blouse and Cotton Breeches, Superior Leather Boots with hidden Dagger Sheath, Leather Jerkin, 2 skins of rare Wine, 1 pouch Salt, 45 sp





Wine, Women and Blood

The Player Characters will travel several hundred miles with a caravan of unlikely 'merchants' toward the southern Stygian border, where Stygia meets Darfar and Kush. Dexitheus' message explains that they are to follow a caravan to the edge of Lake Zuad, but his divinations did not warn that the caravan could be a bigger danger than the Stygians...

THE MESSAGE FROM DEXITHEUS

Nearly two weeks before the Player Characters returned from the deep jungle, one of Tirinius' caravan archers saw a golden-feathered hawk flying overhead. Hawk's feathers are a prized commodity to fletchers such as him, so he shot the beast down and was surprised to find a scroll tied to its leg. After bringing the scroll to Tirinius (who can read), he saw several clues to making a fortune.

Reading the message, he knew that there were friends (or at least allies) of King Conan within a few days' march from him. If he could convince them that *his* was the caravan they were seeking to take them north, he could divert the route slightly and bring them to an old friend of his. His old friend despised Conan, and would pay handsomely for allies to the King, if only to make them suffer in proxy for the Cimmerian's crimes.

The hawk itself was plucked and butchered that evening, serving as a rare delicacy for the caravan's officers and the archer who brought it down – a Bossonian named Trunnel. Trunnel also bears golden fletching on all his arrows afterwards, something that a clever Player Character might notice if they succeed in a Spot check DC 15 while investigating him.

Should the Player Characters ever receive a chance to look at the message, it reads:

'Friends, Mitra be praised that I now know what these maidens mean to your journey. One of them will give birth to a true Atlantean, he who will topple Conan's rule. This is dire, dire indeed. From Xabowa, the signs say you go north to where the purple lotus grows. The next maiden is a long way off, over two moons says the divinations. Meet with a caravan heading north, they will keep you safe on your journey to the next maiden. They must, because you are our king's only hope. I will give offerings to Mitra in your name, and his.'

The message is clear – the Player Characters are to join with a caravan and head north to 'where the purple lotus grows'. For any traveller familiar to the general area, this would likely be assumed to be the notorious Purple Lotus Swamp. As revealed later, this is not the case. Fate will work out as it should, but not before the Player Characters are duped, betrayed, seduced, and blooded.

TIRINIUS' CARAVAN OF LIES

The caravan that Tirinius is in charge of is a roaming gang of thieves and bandits who turned in their highway ambushes and night-cloaks for merchants' dress and fencing of ill-gotten gains. The caravan consists of seven wagons with wide wheels for moving across different terrain types, sand included. The wagons contain an assortment of items that Tirinius and his officers have procured for the caravan to sell. When the Player Characters are introduced to the caravan three of the seven wagons are filled with tuns of fine wines stolen from the vineyards at Shamar. Two are dedicated to the housing of caravan personnel, one is solely for their own necessary supplies, and the last is where Tirinius and his wife live in private.





When the Player Characters are first brought to the caravan, several miles north of Xabowa, read the following to them:

You approach a ring of several covered wagons turned circle around a roaring campfire. Sitting around the campfire are near a dozen people, dining and drinking. As soon as Tirinius is within earshot of the camp, he hops down from his camel and waves.

‘I found them,’ he shouts, ‘just like the message said. Get a fresh skin and some drinking horns, these weary souls need wine to wash the taste of savage places from their mouths!’ He pauses, and looks over to you, ‘Come then, let us introduce you.’

Beside Tirinius, there are a handful of other caravan employees that travel with and work for him. They are all exceptionally loyal to him (he pays quite well), and they are all well aware of the situation with the Player Characters. These other people are:

- ❖ Donnagh Faire, Tirinius’ wife and mother-to-be
- ❖ Vuxanna, Tirinius’ mute ‘seamstress’ (assassin)
- ❖ Trunnel Estivil, archer and scout
- ❖ Gunnoran, ‘cook’ (muscle)
- ❖ 3 Caravan Guards
- ❖ 2 Caravan Teamsters

Every member of the caravan are well-versed in shady practices and underhanded lifestyles, most of whom were part of Tirinius’ original band of highwaymen before he turned to a more ‘civilised’ form of thievery. They are aware that the Player Characters cannot know what is really going on, and that they will surely be getting a late-night visit from Vuxanna should they be the one that leaks any undue information to them. This is represented by a +3 bonus to their Bluff skill checks and Will saves against any questioning from the Player Characters.

Donnagh Faire has been married to Tirinius for over two years. She has yet to be able to bear a child for him, and is unaware that she is with child now. By the end of the trip to Zuad she will be showing a belly, and Tirinius will be ecstatic. She is covered in many layers of tattoos, one of which covers a particular birthmark on her chest completely.

Vuxanna is a Zamorian cutthroat that Tirinius acquired years ago, saving her from a headsman’s axe – but not before



she lost her tongue. She is a consummate assassin and Tirinius uses her to settle scores he cannot do himself; she also is his most fearsome threat to those who know what she does for him.

Trunnel Estivil is an old friend of Tirinius. They grew up together in the farmlands, and his bow has never been pulled for another man. He is the most loyal of the caravan officers; some might claim that he is closer to Tirinius than even his wife.

Gunnoran, or Gunnoran the Grizzly, is a huge-limbed Hyperborean that originally came to Aquilonia to capture Tirinius for his crimes against a Nemedian merchant house. Tirinius made a better offer however, and now Gunnoran unsheathes his steel for the caravan.

The caravan guards and teamsters are not especially good at the jobs that they have chosen, but they perform them to the best of their ability without looking like complete amateurs. Anyone who studies them for any period of time (1d6 hours) will be allowed to make a Sense Motive skill check DC 18 to see that they do not enjoy their job – they seem to tolerate it, as if something better might be coming along soon.



The people of the caravan are not necessarily bad people or evil by any means, they simply know that a stolen coin spends just as well as an honest one – but is ten times easier to earn!

Statistics for Tirinius of Shamar can be found on page 174. Statistics for Donnagh Faire, Vuxanna, Trunnel Estivil, Gunnoran and the Caravan Workers can be found in the encounters section.

ENCOUNTERS

DONNAGH FAIRE, MARKED WIFE OF TIRINIUS

Bastard daughter to a Cimmerian warrior that passed through Nemedias twenty years ago, Donnagh would be very attractive if not for her many scars and tattoos she has acquired over the years. As it is, she is quite a comely warrior-woman. She has only just become pregnant by Tirinius, a situation that will reveal itself as destiny later.

Medium Humanoid (Cimmerian Barbarian 2 / Thief 6)

Initiative: +9 (+1 Dex, +8 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages: Aquilonian, Cimmerian, Nemedian

Dodge Defence: 16 (+1 Dex, +4 class, +1 Dodge)

Parry Defence: 15 (+2 Str, +3 class)

DR: 5 (+5 Mail Shirt)

Hit Points: 51 hp

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +4

Defensive Specials: Fearless, Trap Sense +2

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Arming Sword +8 melee (1d10+2, AP 2) or Dagger +8 melee (1d4+2, AP 1)

Full Attack: Arming Sword +8/+3 melee (1d10+2, AP 2) or Dagger +8/+3 melee (1d4+2, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +6/+1

Grapple: +8

Special Attacks: Crimson Mist, Sneak Attack +3d6/+3d8, Versatility (–2 to hit)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 13

Special Qualities: Bite Sword, Jack of all Trades, Sneak Attack Style (Arming Sword, Dagger), Trap Disarming
Feats: Brawl, Eyes of the Cat, Iron Will, Light-Footed, Track

Skills: Appraise +3, Bluff +12, Climb +4, Diplomacy +8, Handle Animal +4, Heal +3, Hide +8, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +10, Perform (song) +6, Profession (trader) +4, Sense Motive +8, Survival +6

Code of Honour: Barbaric

Reputation and Social Standing: 5 (+2)

Possessions: Average Merchant's Clothes, Aquilonian Arming Sword, Dagger, Simple Mail Shirt, 12 doses Dreamdust (see page 186), 18 sp

VUXANNA THE SEAMSTRESS, TIRINIUS' ASSASSIN

Born a concubine, Vuxanna was thrown into a dungeon cell after biting off the lower lip of her owner during their first coupling. Her tongue was cut off as punishment, but the Ophirean lord wanted her head as well. Tirinius rescued her to get back at the lord, who had cheated him several times at dice, and she silently pledged to be his forever. Ever since she has honed her blade and her skill with it to a razor's edge – with which she ends the lives of those who stand in her saviour's way.

Medium Humanoid (Zamorian Temptress 1 / Thief 9)

Initiative: +16 (+4 Dex, +8 Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Listen +12, Spot +10

Languages: (comprehend only), Aquilonian (literate), Cimmerian, Nemedian, Ophirean, Shemitish, Zamorian (literate), Zingaran

Dodge Defence: 20 (+4 Dex, +4 class, +1 Dodge, +1 Light-Footed)

Parry Defence: 14 (+0 Str, +4 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 64 hp

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +12, Will +7

Defensive Specials: Trap Sense +3



Speed: 30 ft.
Attack: Zhaibar Knife +7 melee (1d12, AP 1) or Crossbow +10 ranged (2d6, AP 4)
Full Attack: Zhaibar Knife +7/+2 melee (1d12, AP 1) or Crossbow +10/+5 ranged (2d6, AP 4)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)
Base Attack: +6/+1
Grapple: +6
Special Attacks: Poison Use, Sneak Attack +6d6/+6d8
Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 15
Special Qualities: Comeliness, Savoir-Faire, Skill Mastery (Climb, Hide, Move Silently, Open Lock), Sneak Attack Style (Dagger, Crossbow, Zhaibar knife), Trap Disarming
Feats: Light-Footed, No Honour, Skill Focus (Move Silently), Weapon Focus (Zhaibar Knife)
Skills: Appraise +6, Balance +8, Climb +5, Concentration +6, Craft (poison) +10, Craft (clothing) +4, Decipher Script +5, Disable Device +9, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +12, Forgery +10, Hide +19, Intimidate +8, Jump +6, Move Silently +20, Open Lock +8, Ride +6, Search +8, Tumble +8
Code of Honour: None
Reputation and Social Standing: 5 (+1)
Possessions: Average Merchant's Outfit, 2 Zhaibar knives, Crossbow with 12 Bolts, Dagger, 10 Sewing Needles (6 steeped in Great Serpent Venom, see page 279 of *The Conan Roleplaying Game Second Edition*), 15 feet of spun twine and silken thread, 10 sp

TRUNNEL ESTIVIL, MERCENARY FRIEND

A trusted and close friend to Tirinius, Trunnel has always been there. Growing up together in the hills and farmlands of Aquilonia, Trunnel has only ever been apart from Tirinius for two years – the years he spent serving as a marksman for the Bossonian barony. When he learned that Tirinius had travelled near to where he was he broke camp and deserted in order to rejoin his friend's band of thieves. Now he helps get Tirinius around Hyboria, and places arrows in anything he is told to – *anything*.

Medium Humanoid (Bossonian Borderer 2 / Soldier 6)
Initiative: +14 (+3 Dex, +5 Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)
Sensory Traits: Listen +12, Spot +14
Languages: Aquilonian (Literate), Cimmerian, Kothic

Dodge Defence: 17 (+3 Dex, +4 class)
Parry Defence: 19 (+3 Str, +5 class, +1 Parry)
DR: 7 (+6 Mail Hauberk, +1 Steel Cap)
Hit Points: 62 hp
Saves: Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +4
Defensive Specials: +2 Defence while fighting defensively

Speed: 25 ft.
Attack: Broadsword +15 melee (1d10+6, AP 3) or Hunting Bow +14 ranged (1d8, AP 2)
Full Attack: Broadsword +15/+10 melee (1d10+6, AP 3) or Hunting Bow +14/+9 ranged (1d8, AP 2)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)
Base Attack: +8/+3
Grapple: +11
Special Attacks: +1 to hit with Bossonian longbow, Combat Style (archery), Formation Combat (Fighting Spirit), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot
Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 12
Special Qualities: Adaptability (Spot and Survival), Favoured Terrain (Hills) +1, Officer
Feats: Alertness, Combat Expertise, Endurance, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Bossonian Longbow), Skill Focus (Spot), Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Track
Skills: Appraise +5, Bluff +12, Climb +6, Craft (bowyer/fletcher) +10, Hide +6, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (geography) +10, Move Silently +5, Ride +8, Sense Motive +6, Survival +12, Use Rope +5
Code of Honour: Mercenary
Reputation and Social Standing: 12 (+3)
Possessions: Aquilonian Broadsword, Average Traveller's Clothes, Aquilonian Mail Hauberk and Steel Cap, Bossonian Longbow with 18 hawk-fledged arrows, Dagger, 22 sp

GUNNORAN THE GRIZZLY, FORMER HUNTER OF MEN

A large and imposing man raised to believe that the hunt is the most important part of a man's life, Gunnoran learned early on that man *was* the hardest animal to hunt as well. Serving as a private fetch for criminals



and deserters, Gunnoran had no love for his Nemedian employers – as shown by his willingness to abandon his contracts in favour of Tirinius' coin. He is big, strong and a bit of a sadist; this is exactly why Tirinius wanted him to be his new muscle when the two first met.

Medium Humanoid (Hyperborean Barbarian 5 / Borderer 4)

Initiative: +9 (+1 Dex, +8 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +12, Spot +12

Languages: Aquilonian (Literate), Hyperborean, Nemedian (Literate), Nordheimer

Dodge Defence: 16 (+1 Dex, +5 class)

Parry Defence: 18 (+5 Str, +3 class)

DR: 6 (+5 Mail Shirt, +1 Steel Cap)

Hit Points: 72 hp

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +1 (-1 against Corruption)

Defensive Specials: Trap Sense +1, Uncanny Dodge

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Greatsword +15 melee (1d10+1d8+8, AP 4) or Unarmed Strike +15 melee (1d6+5 lethal or nonlethal)

Full Attack: Greatsword +15/+10 melee (1d10+1d8+8, AP 4) or Unarmed Strike +15/+10 melee (1d6+5 lethal or nonlethal)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +9/+4

Grapple: +18

Special Attacks: Crimson Mist, Improved Grapple, Versatility (-2 penalty), Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 11

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Listen and Spot), Bite Sword, Favoured Terrain +2 (mountains)

Feats: Brawl, Diehard, Endurance, No Honour, Skill Focus (Survival), Stealthy, Track, Weapon Focus (Greatsword), Weapon Focus (Unarmed)

Skills: Balance +8, Bluff +10, Climb +12, Craft (cooking) +3, Diplomacy +6, Heal +5, Hide +8, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (geography) +6, Move Silently +10, Profession (slaver) +7, Search +6, Sense Motive +6, Use Rope +8

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 8 (+3)

Possessions: Superior Traveller's Outfit, Hyperborean Greatsword, Aquilonian Mail Shirt, Spiked Steel Cap, 8 pair Superior Manacles (DC 28), 112 sp

CARAVAN WORKERS (GUARDS AND TEAMSTERS)

Tirinius keeps only the most loyal of backstabbers and thieves in his employ, ensuring their loyalty through the unspoken threat of Vuxanna's knife in the night. They are dastardly and clever in their act as caravan employees, but they are ultimately little more than hired knives.

Medium Humanoid (Aquilonian Thief 4)

Initiative: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages: Aquilonian, Zingaran

Dodge Defence: 14 (+2 Dex, +2 class)

Parry Defence: 13 (+1 Str, +2 class)

DR: 5 (+5 Mail Shirt)

Hit Points: 21 hp

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +1 (-1 versus Corruption)

Defensive Specials: Trap Sense +1

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Dagger +4 melee (1d4+1, AP 1) or Crossbow +5 ranged (2d6, AP 4)

Full Attack: Dagger +4 melee (1d4+1, AP 1) or Crossbow +5 ranged (2d6, AP 4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +4

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack +2d6/+2d8, Weapon Familiarity (Greatsword)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 12

Special Qualities: Adaptability (Bluff and Hide), Sneak Attack Style (Crossbow, Dagger), Trap Disarming

Feats: Eyes of the Cat, Light-Footed, No Honour, Stealthy

Skills: Appraise +4, Bluff +10, Handle Animal +2, Hide +8, Intimidate +6, Move Silently +8, Profession (caravan worker) +2, Search +4, Sense Motive +4

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 4 (+2)

Possessions: Average Traveller's Outfit, Aquilonian Mail Shirt, 2 Daggers, Crossbow with 6 bolts, 3d6+3 sp

THE JOURNEY - TRAVELLING WITH THE CARAVAN

It is going to be roughly two months of overland travel with the caravan before they reach the 'city' near Lake Zuad. The first week will be along the edge of the jungle, the next six will be savannah and desert travel, and then another two weeks in the hot grasslands leading to the lake. During this time there can be many different encounters that Games Masters can unleash upon the caravan, depending on their need for action and excitement during the journey.

There are a number of specific encounter segments that should take place throughout the journey. Many contain important pieces of information that the Player Characters might be able to use to figure out that something is amiss, others are simply encounters with hostile elements in order for the Player Characters to shed blood and protect the caravan – making Tirinius' eventual betrayal that much harder on them.

The following encounter segments are listed in the order in which they should occur. If the encounter segment is specific to a particular terrain on the journey, it will be noted in parenthesis after the name of the segment. Games Masters can even alter these slightly to better fit other terrains if they choose to.

AS THE CARAVAN SETS OUT

The Player Characters are instructed their role within the caravan during the trip, which amounts to a great deal less than they likely thought they would.

'Everything is packed up,' Tirinius says with his flashy smile, 'so we should move out within the hour. Everyone has duties on the road, friends. I lead, Donnagh keeps me sane. Vuxanna patches up our clothes and coverlets. Trunnel looks for danger and brings in the meat; Gunnoran cooks it, and so on.' He grins, as if he has a joke he is not telling you. **'You lot are to keep up, stay safe, and drink as much wine as you can stomach if you wish. I only ask that you**

leave us a few casks to sell, and that you leave the night watches to the men. Is that a fair deal?'

Tirinius wants the Player Characters to be happy and complacent during the trip, as they are obviously important and dangerous souls that could do a lot of harm to him if they knew what was really happening. He is willing to give the Player Characters any amount of food and drink they desire, even producing small amounts of illicit drugs from Vendhya and Khitai if they seem amenable to the idea. So long as they believe him and his caravan to be friendly, the easier it will be for him to give them over at Lake Zuad.

Player Characters that are untrusting of Tirinius and his friends can make Sense Motive rolls against their Bluff skills, but will likely only reveal that the caravan members are definitely hiding something – it is unlikely they will see danger in this deception. If they make a big enough fuss about the caravan's motives, Tirinius will add a powerful sedative to their wine later that night and they will wake up in chains (see *Dreamdust and Manacles*, page 186).

Should any of the Player Characters try to gauge the heading and direction the caravan is moving, it would require either a Survival skill check DC 25 or a Knowledge (geography) check at DC 20 to determine that the caravan is indeed moving north – just not at enough of an angle to get the Purple Lotus Swamps. Anyone scoring a 30 or higher on either of these checks will know immediately that the caravan is several degrees off course. If this fact is brought up, Tirinius will laugh off the remark, claiming to 'already know they are off course, but only to avoid the bandit paths of Darfar'.

If the Player Characters wish to take their own watches at night, hunt for their own food, or act as scouts for the caravan, Tirinius will not disallow them to do so – he will merely make sure that they always have a caravan member on hand to watch them. In any case, Tirinius will make a fuss about them not having to do what he pays his people for, but that they are welcome to do so if they wish to. The only exception to this is if the caravan is ever under attack; the Player Characters will be expected to draw arms and help in any way they can. Tirinius knows that he will not be able to spend any coin if he is dead!

Tirinius wants the Player Characters to be treated as guests until the last possible moment – when he will drug them and hand them over to a savage mercenary at Lake Zuad.

SCUBBORN MULES AND CAMELS

‘Come then,’ a voice grunts from around the corner of a wagon, ‘get a move on you dumb beast! Unh...I hate you!’

One of the caravan workers is currently struggling with getting a camel to move into its wagon yoke, and has gotten extremely frustrated with the animal. He has struck it twice with his fist already, and only recently began shouting at it.

The Player Characters could just walk casually around the corner, which would prompt the caravan worker to stop what he is doing and immediately act as though he was tending to the animal. He will seem suddenly friendly and amiable with the beast, but should a Player Character offer to help he will gladly accept.



If the Player Characters are careful when investigating the scene, they will want to make Move Silently checks. The caravan worker's Listen check to notice them will be made at a – 2 penalty due to his dealing with the animal. If they manage to sneak up on him they will get a chance to witness him throw a fist or two into the animal's side. His frustration is extremely evident and anyone with at least 4 ranks in Handle Animal can tell he has very little training on how to try and do what he is doing. If they choose to call him out on his lack of skill, he will stammer and try and back talk his way out of the situation. He will claim that it is ‘because he is not the regular teamster’ or that he is ‘better with a crossbow than a camel any day’.

While this encounter will not prove anything other than the ineptitude of the caravan workers, the Player Characters might decide it is strange that the people hired to work the caravan are so bad at their duties.

WATCHERS IN THE DARK (EDGE OF JUNGLE)

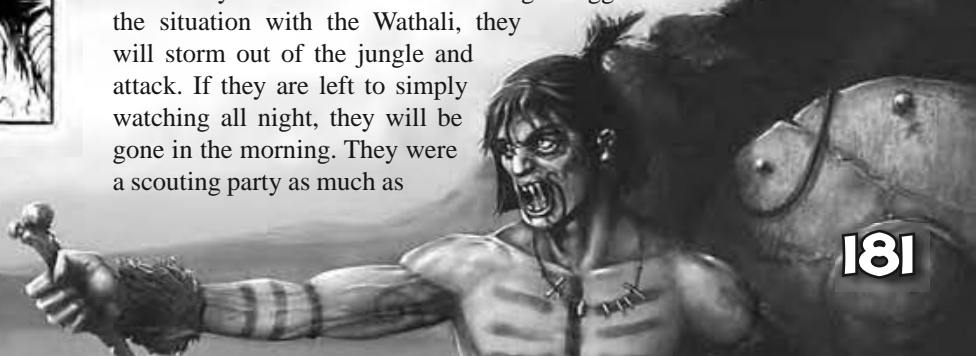
The Player Characters are being watched by the jungle natives as they camp outside the jungle. This encounter should happen at night, which will make for a creepier setting for the possibility of a direct confrontation.

At night in the first week of travel from Xabowa, any Player Characters that choose to take a night watch will need to make a Spot check DC 15. Those who succeed can witness the following scene:

Outside the light of the flames of your camp you can see shapes moving here and there in the edge of the jungle. At first you believe it is only animals and moonlit shadows, but the flash of metal and the shine of human eyes tell you otherwise. So far they have not come out from the jungle.

There are 3d6 Wathali head-hunters lurking in the jungle, but they are not looking for a fight. They heard the commotion of the caravan and are simply investigating the situation, but will attack if provoked – or if they are obviously seen.

If the Player Characters do something to aggravate the situation with the Wathali, they will storm out of the jungle and attack. If they are left to simply watching all night, they will be gone in the morning. They were a scouting party as much as





a hunting party; a caravan full of armed men and women is not an easy enough target for them to attack.

Statistics for the Wathali Head-hunters can be found on page 164.

**ATTRACTING ANIMALS
(SAVANNAH)**

The caravan's mounts and labour animals have attracted a pack of predators, which will attack the caravan at dusk or dawn. This encounter can be visited multiple times during the journey if Games Masters wish it; there are several options as to what kinds of predators could find the caravan. The following table shows what species of predators could hunt the caravan and the number of them present in the attack.

Savannah Predators

1d6 Result	Type of Predator	No. of Appearing
1	Great Baboons	2d4
2 – 3	Lions	1d4
4 – 5	Mandrills	2d3+1
6	Great Hyenas	1d4

The animals will strike from long grass or sunken areas of terrain to attempt to sneak up as close as possible to the caravan, striking at the first or last wagon's animals before moving on to any humans.

Statistics for the Great Baboons, Lions, Mandrills and Great Hyenas are all found in the encounters section.

RAMPAGE! (SAVANNAH)

The caravan is unluckily put directly in the path of a wounded animal – an animal that can kill a man with a single thrust of its huge horn!

The camels erupt into snorts and spitting, the first wagon shifting quickly under the motion. The lead teamster shouts something incomprehensible, pointing at what looks like a huge horse of some kind charging toward the caravan. The beast is thick and armoured in white-gray flesh, a streak of red splashed down its side, and a two-foot long spike of a horn growing from its frothing muzzle. It

is moving very quickly, and does not look to stop just because you and your wagons are in its way!

The 'beast' is a white rhinoceros, wounded painfully (but not badly) by a hunter several miles away. When it was wounded it killed the hunter and ran, and occasionally the lodged spear in the beast brushes against something and sends a jolt of pain through the animal. When this happens the rhinoceros tries to 'run away' from the pain, as it is doing when it happens across the caravan.

The rhinoceros is too angry to be talked down or dealt with using the Handle Animal skill in a mundane fashion. Spells could possibly help, but it is most likely that the beast must be put down before it kills anyone or destroys a wagon.

Statistics for the Rhinoceros can be found in the encounters section.



A MIDNIGHT ARGUMENT (SAVANNAH)

The Player Characters have a chance to overhear a slight disagreement between a caravan worker and Tirinius. The disagreement will have strange overtones to it, and the Player Characters might begin to wonder why they are talking in secret about something that seems so mundane a topic.

Sometime at night, when all of the Player Characters are supposed to be asleep and a caravan guard is on watch, the argument will happen. If any Player Character(s) are awake or sleeping lightly nearby, they can hear the following exchange with a Listen check DC 15.

‘It is not too late,’ one of the teamsters sighs, ‘we could still head east toward Kush. Why should we bring them there anyway? I hate that place.’

‘You will,’ Tirinius says, almost with menace in his voice, ‘because we have to. The message said they are important to Conan, which makes them important to us. We go.’ He laughs, but it is not necessarily a joyful sound. ‘Or Vuxanna will sew you a new uniform.’

‘No,’ the worker replies quickly, ‘I love my job, boss, really I do. It was a stupid idea, the wine talking.’

‘Then stop drinking it.’

The argument obviously was whether or not the caravan should go to Lake Zuad or not, and the briefest mention of Vuxanna ends it. Anyone listening to the conversation can make a Sense Motive check DC 16 to know that the caravan worker is not simply afraid of where they are headed, but of something *else* as well. In truth it is a combination of Prince Durambe, the ‘ghosts’ of the Tlazitlan, and Vuxanna that the worker fears, not the place at all – especially not the place the Player Characters think they are going.

Should anyone score 22 or higher on their Sense Motive check they will also be able to realise that Tirinius is directly threatening the worker using Vuxanna. This may or may not surprise the Player Characters, but it does give them reason to distrust Tirinius and be wary of Vuxanna.

If any Player Character decides to join the discussion or bring it up afterwards to any party involved, the response

they will get is simple – the caravan does not normally come this way, and the Player Characters’ journey is too important to let some ‘cold feet’ stop it.

Statistics for the caravan worker and Tirinius can be found on pages 174 and 179, respectively.

SANDSTORM (DESERT)

It is the middle of the afternoon, the sun is baking you in your skin, but yet it seems to be growing darker and darker. You look around and squint against the dimming sun, but all you can tell is that the sky has gone from tan to brown, to nearing a dusky black.

The wind begins to howl, and suddenly you know why the sky is black. It is the wall of sand that is coming crashing toward you through the air. You are in the path of a mighty sandstorm!

The sandstorm will last 3d6 x 2 minutes, requiring a Fortitude save DC 18 from every member of the caravan not inside a covered wagon. Everyone exposed will suffer 1d6 damage from the scouring sands every minute, but those who pass the Fortitude save will take this damage as nonlethal instead of normal. Anyone who is knocked unconscious by this damage will begin to drown in the blowing sand, as per the normal rules for suffocation (see page 221 of *The Conan Roleplaying Game Second Edition*).

When the sandstorm ends there will be almost no sign of the caravan’s passing, or of its intended trail by landmarks. It will take Trunnel several minutes to regain his direction and heading after the storm, during which time the Player Characters may want to use their own Survival skill to aid him. A check at DC 15 will allow them to show Trunnel the right way, DC 20 will reveal that the caravan is still far too east to be making a timely trip to the Purple Lotus Swamp, and DC 25 will tell the Player Character that the caravan is not pointed in the proper direction at all.

If they bring this fact up to Trunnel or Tirinius, he will laugh at them and tell the Player Characters that they can ‘trust him’ and that he ‘knows a safer route’. If they persist that their current heading is wrong, Tirinius will give in to them and say ‘Okay, have it your way. We will go by your route tomorrow. But tonight, we drink and enjoy our last bandit-free evening!’



Of course, Tirinius does not mean that. He will signal Donnagh to put dreamdust in the Player Characters' wine and food that evening, allowing them to be captured and their route to Lake Zuad to continue. If that happens, Games Masters may wish to skip ahead to the segment titled *Dreamdust and Manacles*.

RAIDERS (DESERT)

The caravan is attacked by roving desert horsemen, an ironic situation for a group of cutthroats and bandits. The Player Characters may or may not notice the combat prowess of their caravan hosts, but it could make them at least wonder a few things.

'Hi ya ya ya!' a voice shrills out as its owner rides over the next sand dune, 'your gold or your blood, makes no difference to us!' A dozen men on horseback riding fast and hard toward the caravan have crested the hill, each with a golden steed beneath them. Their swords have been coated in charcoal to reduce reflection, but look no less deadly as they swing them above their heads while they charge forward...

There are twelve desert raiders riding down into the caravan with the intentions of killing anyone who resists them, pillaging the wagons for anything worth stealing, and riding off into the desert. They believe that the caravan is as it appears, but they are in for a much more difficult time when Tirinius and his friends unveil some of their talents and skills.

During the fight the Player Characters can choose to battle with the raiders if they wish to. The caravan workers will take up positions atop the wagons and use their crossbows whenever they get the opportunity, but the others will perform specific actions during the combat that could make the Player Characters wonder exactly who they are travelling with – and perhaps be more wary around them.

During the combat, each of the following instances should take place:

- ☛ Tirinius should use his Hide skill to get to the flank of a raider and use his Sneak Attack.

- ☛ Donnagh will tap into her Crimson Rage ability, draw her blade and go to bloody work. She will begin raving in Cimmerian while she goes about to slaughter, but her words will nearly all be very colourful profanity.
- ☛ Vuxanna is obviously silent throughout the battle, but she should move like an acrobatic shadow. She should at one point leap up into the saddle with a raider before gutting him with her Zhaibar knife.
- ☛ Trunnel will leap up onto the most stable wagon and begin to loose arrows into the raiders' horses instead of the raiders themselves. When he drops his first horse he could be heard with a Listen check DC 18 saying, *'No one steals our haul, especially not bloody savages.'*
- ☛ Gunnoran will produce his greatsword from the cooking wagon and stand defiantly in the charge of one of the raiders, swinging with all his strength while roaring, *'Finally! Something to cut that is not turnip or salt meats! Fools you are to fight the Grizzly!'*

These instances might not make the Player Characters think oddly of their hosts, but it could make for interesting conversations about them later. They will obviously avoid revealing any facts of their true pasts, but they could enjoy a few old stories. If asked about where a bunch of merchants learned how to fight like they did, they each have a practiced answer.

- ☛ Tirinius will say that he learned how to swing a sword defending his father's farm against raiders 'just like these'.
- ☛ Donnagh will say that the fire is in the blood of all Cimmerians, and that she could not help but give in to it.
- ☛ Vuxanna cannot say anything, but Tirinius will claim that she had a rough life before he hired her.
- ☛ Trunnel does not have to lie; he will simply say that he served two years in the military of his homeland.
- ☛ Gunnoran will laugh at them, saying that he was a butcher before he was a cook and that chopping up a man is just as easy as a lamb.

Statistics for the Desert Raiders can be found in the encounters section.



OASIS BATH (DESERT)

The caravan discovers a small but clean oasis where everyone will want to stop and enjoy a short bath and rest from the oppressive heat of the Kushite desert.

‘Finally!’ Trunnel shouts happily from astride his horse, ‘Freshwater ho!’ He is pointing to a small ring of frond trees surrounding a tiny pond of crystal blue water.

The caravan members will not hesitate to disrobe as soon as they see the water and run headlong into it, with even the women utterly careless as to who might see them naked. The Player Characters can choose for themselves if they want to bathe, which they will all likely need to do after travelling several months in the wilderness at this point.

If they decide to go down to the oasis, bathing or not, they will have a chance to look closer at their ‘friends’. A simple Spot check DC 12 will reveal most information, but any scars seen can be roughly guessed as to what inflicted them with a Heal skill check of DC 18 or more.

Each individual has the following information to glean from their bodies, if watched closely.

- ❖ Tirinius has a few small stab wounds on his upper body, most likely from knives or daggers.
- ❖ Vuxanna is not marred on her body except for several long scars on her back obviously from a lash or scourge.
- ❖ Trunnel has numerous small scars on his arms and chest, and a few on his back. They could be from swords of any kind, but the largest one on his shoulder is from a spear. He also has the Bossonian crest tattooed over his heart, but a ragged (self-inflicted) scar cuts an ‘X’ over it.
- ❖ Gunnoran is a map of puckered scars abrasions, as if he has seen a great deal of combat and bloodshed.
- ❖ The caravan workers have a few scattered scars and tattoos on them, but are minor wounds. They are not seasoned warriors like the others.
- ❖ The primary reason for the Player Characters to pay attention during the oasis scene, Donnagh will reveal a great deal of information when she disrobes. The Cimmerian woman has several scars on her arms and legs, but much of her old wounds have been covered by tribal tattoos. One particular tattoo that might draw some attention is that of a large vine wrapping Donnagh’s belly. The vine has specifically shaped leaves and closed flower buds, but a Craft

(herbalism) or Knowledge (nature) check DC 20 will recognise the vine as a Lotus Vine, DC 30 will show it to be a purple lotus vine.

Additionally, no matter whether or not the Player Characters take note of Donnagh, Vuxanna will see something special upon the woman. Although she cannot speak, she can snap and point, which she will do when Donnagh has had a chance to splash in the water for a few moments.

‘What is it?’ Tirinius laughs at his mute friend, who is snapping loudly and pointing at his wife’s nude form. Giving an exasperated look with a roll of her eyes, she gestures to her own stomach, running her hands outward in an exaggerated manner. ‘What?’ Tirinius says, immediately sobered and gasping as he looks at Donnagh, ‘By the gods and their graces! When?’

‘I am not sure,’ Donnagh smiles and rubs her hands over her noticeably distended belly, ‘but it is true. We are with child, my love. I was going to tell you when we reach...’

‘Open wine for all tonight!’ Tirinius shouts as he splashes up to his wife and throws his arms around her, ‘Toasting the pending birth of my first son!’

There will be many cheers from the caravan members, and Tirinius will open the finest casks of wine and tear the rinds off exquisite cheeses in celebration. He will not care to post guards or watches, and he will get staggeringly drunk with his friends. It will be a powerful jovial evening, with no talk of ills or woes. If anyone is still injured from earlier conflicts, they will not even complain about their wounds. It is a night where skins and spirits are raised; the last time before Tirinius makes the decision to put the Player Characters in chains.

GETTING CLOSE NOW (GRASSLANDS)

The caravan have crossed the desert and entered the tropical grasslands of Kush, only a few weeks away from Lake Zuad.

The Player Characters might notice at this point that the area they are travelling through is not the jungles of Darfar, and that they are still headed in the wrong direction. It is also possible that they have figured out that Donnagh is the woman



they are supposed to protect (the baby, the purple lotus tattoo, Cimmerian and so on), so they may not wish to say anything.

If they remain silent about the situation, Tirinius will proclaim that the caravan is drawing close to an excellent place to sell some wine and supplies. He will explain that they will move as far as they can during the day, but as soon as the sun begins to go down they will make camp and empty the half-drunk wine tuns and half-eaten meat barrels.

He claims this feast is to make room for the new supplies they will soon purchase, but it is Tirinius' plan to make sure that the Player Characters are thickly sedated for the last week of the trip. When it becomes obvious that they are not headed toward the Purple Lotus Swamp, he wants to ensure they will not be a problem before he can sell them to Prince Durambe.

The DC for Survival and Knowledge (geography) checks made to figure the caravan is headed in the wrong direction has been lowered to 20. If brought up at this time, Tirinius will cave in quickly. He will claim that 'Trunnel lost the trail and we are trying to find it. Since you seem to know the way, would you help him in the morning?' Of course, he gives in so easily because he knows that he will be drugging all of the Player Characters in some fashion later that evening.

The encounter segment *Dreamdust and Manacles* occurs normally (unless it was called upon earlier due to crafty Player Characters) on the evening of this segment.

DREAMDUST AND MANACLES

Tirinius decides it is about time that the Player Characters spend the rest of the journey to Lake Zuad in chains, so he arranges for a feast of wine, brandy and stewed meats to sedate them heavily.

When it is time to stop travels and make a camp for the evening, Tirinius gathers everyone together near the recently stoked campfire for his little announcement.

'Gather around, all,' Tirinius shouts, sipping from a glass bottle of strong liquor by his face's reaction, 'I have a job for each of you this night.'
He smiles widely and lets out a

loud and hearty laugh. 'We have two half-full casks and a barrel of meat that needs stewed and eaten. Is everyone up to the task? No one gets off light, either. Two mugs and a bowl all around! I need to make some room in these wagons, for the rest of our trip is upon us!'

There is a cheer amongst the caravan members, and Donnagh sets to preparing the cups and bowls...

The time for subtlety has passed and Tirinius is ready to put the Player Characters in chains, but not when they could possibly fight back. He has prepared Donnagh and Gunnoran to spike all of the Player Characters' food and drink with a powerful Khitan drug called 'dreamdust'. Once imbibed it has a cumulative effect that will render most beings unconscious for many hours. During the time while the Player Characters are out, Tirinius plans on getting them into manacles and shackles while feeding them dreamdust-laced food and water for the remainder of the trip (however long that might be).

To hide the fact that the Player Characters may be drinking and eating poison, the Games Master should offer them several options of fare to choose from – all of which will be laced thoroughly. Tirinius has been careful to make sure that he has bottles and servings of all the same foods and drinks without the dreamdust, but he has not done the same for his caravan workers. After a course or two, many will be falling asleep in their seats or 'drunk on their backs'. This too was designed to help the Player Characters feel trusting of the meal.

The following are all of the different types of items Tirinius is offering:

- ✿ Red Zingaran Wine
- ✿ White Aquilonian Wine
- ✿ Blackberry Brandy
- ✿ Gunderman's Grog (ale and rum)
- ✿ Salted Fish
- ✿ Stewed Pork
- ✿ Stewed Turnips
- ✿ Broth-soaked Bread

Depending on how much the Player Characters decide to eat and drink, the DC against the dreamdust can reach truly momentous heights. The base statistics for dreamdust is as follows:



Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Khitan Dreamdust	Ingest DC 22	2d6 hours of Unconsciousness	4	One per hour

Each additional portion or item containing dreamdust that is eaten in the hour before the first Fortitude save is made increases the DC of the save by +2, the duration of unconsciousness by +1, and the number of saves by +1. For example, if a Player Character had two mugs of wine, a shot of brandy and a bowl of stew they would need to make seven Fortitude saves at DC 28 or fall unconscious for 2d6+3 hours.

Should a Player Character either utterly avoid eating or drinking from the drugged food, or perhaps pass all the required saving throws to resist its effects, Tirinius will have to take more drastic methods. He will signal Vuxanna to sneak up on the character in question and use her sneak attack ability and an unarmed strike to knock the character out. If *that* does not work either, Tirinius will make a signal for the caravan to fall upon the character(s) and use nonlethal damage to knock them out. He would rather not go to such extremes, but he will if he has to.

Once the Player Characters are soundly unconscious (one way or the other), Tirinius will slap Gunnoran's manacles on their wrists while the Hyperborean 'takes 20' with his Use Rope skill (total of 28) on their feet. While it will be possible for the Player Characters to escape their bonds, it will be highly unlikely – especially with the diluted dreamdust added to their broth daily.

Effectively, once the Player Characters have been knocked out, they will be restrained and tossed into the back of the wagon that they were just working so hard to empty of supplies!

Statistics for Tirinius can be found on page 174, whereas the other caravan personalities can be found earlier in this chapter.

THE MORNING AFTER..

When the Player Characters awake to their swimming heads and bondage, Tirinius will be standing over them.

'Sorry about the ropes,' Tirinius says with his same haggler's grin, 'but I have to make sure you are safe and sound for our friend who is waiting for you. You must forgive our misdirection, as we are not going anywhere near that wretched swamp I'm afraid. Lake Zuad is where you are headed, where Prince

Durambe will pay handsomely for you all.' He takes a sip of a drinking horn before continuing, 'You see, Conan killed the man's brother years ago I hear, and I know he has gold and ivory to spare. All is fair in profit, you see?'

'Of course you do not,' he shakes his head slowly in disappointment, 'your type rarely has the head for business.'

The Player Characters are not gagged, but they are still being drugged repeatedly by Donnagh and Vuxanna with diluted dreamdust broth three times daily for the rest of the trip. They are -2 on all Strength or Dexterity-based rolls, fall in an out of consciousness almost hourly, and cannot raise their voices above a spoken level.

For the remainder of the journey they should be treated as if they barely know what is going on around them, like everything is in a haze except their inability to move. Only when the antidote – a strong tincture of witch hazel and peppercorn – is given to them will they snap out of it. By that time however, it will already be too late.

THE REPUTABLE PRINCE DURAMBE (LAKE ZUAD)

Just as the caravan reaches the outskirts of Lake Zuad, soldiers of Prince Durambe happen upon it and take it prisoner – much to the chagrin of Tirinius, who was hoping it would be a peaceful transaction.

Due to the drugged perceptions of the Player Characters, they do not receive an account of what happens between Prince Durambe's soldiers and the caravan. Instead, all Player Characters will be allowed a Will save DC 15 to remain awake and coherent enough to hear the encounter segment take place around them. If they pass they can hear the following narrative points over the course of several minutes. If they fail, they need only be told the first and last points.

❖ 'There it is, Lake Zuad,' one voice says before there is the commotion of men and women shouting incomprehensibly. 'What in the hells is this?' another shouts, sounding like Tirinius.

- ❖ 'Prince Durambe knew not you were coming,' a new voice barks, 'why should we not kill you?'
- ❖ 'We have gifts for the reputable prince,' that voice definitely belongs to Tirinius, 'from an old acquaintance.'
- ❖ 'Reppedable? Ackwantence?' the voice grunts back mockingly, 'You speak silly, pale man. You try confuse. You prisoners! You all come with us, now!'
- ❖ 'Stay your hand, friends,' Tirinius says with a sigh, 'Durambe will be pleased to see us, be assured.'
- ❖ 'You'd better hope so,' you feel someone jerk you to your feet, hot breath on your face, 'these slaves look sick.'

One of Prince Durambe's patrols saw the caravan wagons coming towards the village near Lake Zuad and were dispatched to investigate. When the patrol leader saw the Player Characters tied in the back of a wagon and heard Trunnel say they were headed to Zuad, they chose to act and intercept it. When Tirinius claimed that they were heading to see Prince Durambe, the patrol leader knew that they were friends or assassins – either must be brought before the Prince in custody.

It will be an hour or more before the caravan is brought at spear point to the village on the southern edge of Lake Zuad. When they arrive there, the Player Characters will be given the antidote – but not before. They must simply fade in and out of unconsciousness until they are placed before the Prince (see next encounter).

As that no combat should occur in this segment, statistics for the twenty Zuadi Warriors are not necessary. If they are somehow needed by the Games Master, they can be found on page 200.

PROPHECY POINTS

- ❖ The Player Characters do nothing to help the caravan move faster along the paths chosen **+1 Prophecy Points**
- ❖ The Player Characters choose to engage the Wathali head-hunters when they could have let them be **+1 Prophecy Points**
- ❖ The Player Characters do nothing after the sandstorm to help find the proper path **+1 Prophecy Points**
- ❖ The Player Characters make the leap of logic that the lotus vine tattoo over Donnagh's growing belly is the meaning of 'where the purple lotus grows' **-1 Prophecy Points**
- ❖ The Player Characters never notice the caravan is not on the right path or direction **+1 Prophecy Points**

EXPERIENCE POINTS

- ❖ Basic Roleplaying Award for portraying characters well (500 xp)
- ❖ Helping the caravan with basic chores and watches, even though the Player Characters were told they did not have to (250 xp)
- ❖ The Player Characters openly acknowledge that there is something odd with the caravan members (100 xp)
- ❖ The Player Characters bypass the Wathali head-hunters without fighting them (250 xp)
- ❖ The Player Characters survive an attack with the Wathali (500 xp)
- ❖ The Player Characters defeat a group of savannah predators (500 xp)
- ❖ The Player Characters defeat the rampaging rhinoceros (1,000 xp)
- ❖ The Player Characters manage to survive the sandstorm without being knocked unconscious (250 xp)
- ❖ The Player Characters defeated the desert raiders (750 xp)
- ❖ The Player Characters notice something special about the caravan members' scars at the oasis (250 xp)
- ❖ The Player Characters must be physically subdued by the caravan members on account of not eating the poisoned food (250 xp)
- ❖ A Player Character manages to get out of his bondage (even if immediately re-captured) (500 xp)

ENCOUNTERS

GREAT BABOON

These enormous mammals run in smaller troops than their cousins, rarely getting over a dozen due to their voracious food requirements. They also tend to be darker-furred than their kin, ranging from dark brown to nearly black. Because edible fruits and grasses can rarely sate such large animals, great baboons tend to be more predator than omnivore. Generations of this heavily leaned diet has forced their teeth and claws to grow much larger, much like those of a great cat.

Large Animal

Initiative: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +6, Spot +8

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 15 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural)

DR: 5

Hit Dice: 5d8+5 (28 hp)

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft., 30 ft. climb

Attack: Bite +7 melee (2d4+4, AP 3) or Claw +6 melee (1d6+4, AP 1)

Full Attack: Bite +7 melee (2d4+4, AP 3) or 2 Claws +6 melee (1d6+4, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +11

Special Attacks: Rage

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 4

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Alertness, Weapon Focus (Bite)

Skills: Climb +14, Jump +12, Survival +8

COMBAT

Great baboons fight in pairs when possible, with one ducking in and leaping out with snapping bites while the other charges in with raking claws. Like their cousins, should even a single great baboon be injured, a wash of bloodlust will pass through the ranks of a great baboon troop like wildfire.

Rage (Ex): A great baboon that takes damage in combat (or sees a member of its troop damaged) flies into a berserk rage the following round, biting targets until either it or they are dead. It gains +4 Strength, +4 Constitution and –2 Defence. The creature cannot end its rage voluntarily, and will attack the closest target that most recently injured it or another great baboon.

Skills: Great baboons have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

LION

One of the most fearsome predators on the Hyborian savannah, lions are unafraid to chase down and hunt nearly any animal it shares territory with. These streamlined hulks of four to five hundred pounds of muscle, teeth and claws have even been seen taking down elephants that could be caught in a good ambush. Lions allow their females to do most of the hunting and grooming, but when it comes to dealing with an honest threat to the pride the thick-maned males come forward to dispatch it quickly and ferociously.

Large Animal

Initiative: +10 (+3 Dex, +7 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +5, Spot +5

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 15 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +3 natural)

DR: 3

Hit Dice: 8d8+24 (60 hp)

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +2

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 40 ft.

Attack: Claw +10 melee (1d6+5, AP 2)

Full Attack: 2 Claws +10 melee (1d6+5, AP 2) and Bite +5 melee (1d10+2, AP 3)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +6

Grapple: +15

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Pounce, Rake 1d6+2, AP 2

Sorcery Knowledge: –





Abilities: Str 21, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Alertness, Run

Skills: Balance +7, Hide +3 (+12), Jump +13, Move Silently +11

COMBAT

Lions fight like the quintessential great predatory cat. They slink up under cover of tall grasses if they can and ambush their prey with a powerful raking leap. In a direct confrontation lions tend to use their claws to put targets on their back before setting to sink their thick jaws upon them.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a lion must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake.

Pounce (Ex): If a lion charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +5 melee, damage 1d6+2, AP 2.

Skills: Lions have a +4 racial bonus to Balance, Hide and Move Silently checks. If in areas of tall grass or similar cover, their Hide bonus increases to +12.

MANDRILL

Mandrills are ape-like creatures that can get to be as large as some gorillas, moving with great agility on all fours. They have spindly tails that rise up over strange and swollen furless bottoms and wiry grey or brown fur everywhere else. The mandrill's most impressive feature, save for its very long canine teeth, is their rippled, multi-coloured muzzles – which range from red and blue to violet. It is said that the colouration of the muzzle was the gods' gift to the other savannah animals; a way to see the primates coming and give everything else a chance to run. They are a rare sight in large numbers on the Hyborian savannah, but have been known to come out when the sun is low to hunt.

Medium Animal

Initiative: +5 (+2 Dex, +3 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +5, Spot +5

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 15 (+2 Dex, +3 natural)

DR: 2

Hit Dice: 5d8+10 (32 hp)

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 40 ft., 30 ft. climb

Attack: Bite +6 melee (1d8+3, AP 3)

Full Attack: Bite +6 melee (1d8+3, AP 3) or 2 slams +6 melee (2d6+3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +10

Special Attacks: Crush, Rage

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 6

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Alertness, Improved Grapple, Track

Skills: Balance +8, Climb +8, Jump +8, Survival +8

COMBAT

Mandrills are powerful fighters capable of unleashing terrible ferocity and savagery, tearing men limb from limb or puncturing organs with their dagger-long teeth. Easily angered and deadly, any group of mandrill encountered should be treated as one breath away from violence.

Crush (Ex): A mandrill that makes a successful grab can make a single crush attack in place of its two slam attacks. The crush attack automatically inflicts 4d6+6 damage on the target, and needs not roll to hit.

Rage (Ex): A mandrill that takes damage in combat (or sees a member of its troop damaged) flies into a berserk rage the following round, biting and slamming targets until either it or they are dead. It gains +4 Strength, +4 Constitution and –2 Defence. The creature cannot end its rage voluntarily, and will attack the closest target that most recently injured it or another member of its troop.

Skills: Mandrills have a +6 racial bonus on Climb and Jump skill checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.



GREAT HYENA

These monstrous beasts are as large as a warhorse, twice as strong, and have jaws that can crush plate mail into unrecognisable heaps of metal. They are some of the deadliest predator/scavengers the savannah can produce, especially when rains are thin and prey is scarce enough to force them after groups of humans. Their intelligence makes them efficient hunters and powerful foes, and it is only by the grace of the gods that they are not more numerous than they are.

Large Animal

Initiative: +6 (+1 Dex, +5 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +7, Spot +5

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 13 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural)

DR: 4

Hit Dice: 5d8+20 (43 hp)

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +2

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 60 ft.

Attack: Bite +10 melee (2d6+12, AP 9)

Full Attack: Bite +10 melee (2d6+12, AP 9)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +15

Special Attacks: Trip

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 6

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Alertness, Track

Skills: Hide +0 (+4), Jump +10

COMBAT

Although most targets can be dispatched in a single snap or two of their powerful jaws, great hyenas prefer to throw a target (or its mount) to the ground to be dealt with by the slower pack members or the young (which are equal to normal hyenas).

Trip (Ex): A great hyena that hits with its bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent (+4 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the hyena.

RHINOCEROS

Thick-skinned and powerful animals, the white rhinoceros of Kush are generally docile beasts that have evolved a powerful weapon against hunters and would-be predators. On the tip of its wide snout it bears a thick keratin horn that can punch through plate armour in an instant. These huge herbivores can be taller than a draft horse, and are wondrous and powerful; and best left to their own unless a traveller wants to risk an impaling charge!

As a note, the hit points in italics what the rhinoceros currently has after its wounding from the hunter.

Large Animal

Initiative: +6 (+6 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +14, Spot +3

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 15 (–1 size, +6 natural)

DR: 5

Hit Dice: 8d8+40 (76 hp) (*70 hp*)

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +3

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Gore +13 melee (2d6+12, AP 5)

Full Attack: Gore +13 melee (2d6+12, AP 5)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +6

Grapple: +18

Special Attacks: Powerful charge, Trample

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 2

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Alertness, Endurance, Improved Natural Attack (gore)

Skills: Survival +8

Possessions: –

Advancement: 9 – 12 HD (Large), 13 – 24 HD (Huge)

COMBAT

Rhinos use their natural horn to great effectiveness, tearing their head side to side in order to puncture anyone nearby, but their most deadly moment is the impact after a devastating, trampling charge.



Powerful Charge (Ex): When a rhinoceros charges, its gore attack deals 4d6+24, AP 10 points of damage instead of the normal amount.

Trample (Ex): As a full-round action. A rhinoceros may move up to twice its speed and literally run over any opponents at least one size category smaller than itself. The animal merely has to move over the opponents in its path; any creature whose space is completely covered by the trampling creature's space is subject to the trampling attack. If a target's space is larger than five feet, it is only considered trampled if all of its occupied spaces are moved through or over. If the trampling creature moves over some of a creature's space, the trampled creature can make an attack of opportunity at a -4 penalty. A trampling creature that accidentally ends its movement in an illegal space returns to the last legal space it occupied, or the closest legal position it can. A rhinoceros's trample attack deals 2d10+12 bludgeoning damage. If a target does not take an attack of opportunity against the trampling creature, they may instead make a Reflex save DC 22 for half damage. A target can only suffer Trample damage from one given creature once per round, no matter how the movement moves over them.

DESERT RAIDERS

Groups of raiders rise and fall throughout the trackless wilderness of the desert, and these bloody-handed Ghanatans are a perfect example of it. They are barbaric thieves that do all of their business on the back of fast steeds with a scimitar in their hands, and no one looking like they have even a single silver is safe from their predation.

Medium Humanoid (Ghanatan Nomad 8)

Initiative: +9 (+3 Dex, +6 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +6, Spot +10

Languages: Ghanatan, Kushite, Shemitish, Stygian

Dodge Defence: 16 (+2 Dex, +4 class)

Parry Defence: 16 (+2 Str, +4 class)

DR: 5 (+4 Leather Jerkin, +1 Steel Cap)

Hit Points: 50 hp

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +3

Defensive Specials: Mobility

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Scimitar +11 melee (1d8+3, AP 2), Ghanata Knife +10 melee (1d8+3, AP 1)

Full Attack: Scimitar +11/+6 melee (1d8+3, AP 2), Ghanata Knife +10/+5 melee (1d8+3, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +8/+3

Grapple: +10

Special Attacks: +1 to damage with scimitars and Ghanata knives, Nomad Charge +1, Ride-by Attack, Spirited Charge

Sorcery Knowledge: -

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Born to the Saddle, Favoured Terrain +3 (deserts), Illiterate

Feats: Diehard, Endurance, Mounted Combat, Self-Sufficient, Skill Focus (Ride), Track, Weapon Focus (scimitar)

Skills: Appraise +5, Balance +6, Bluff +6, Hide +8, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (local) +8, Profession (raider) +6, Ride +17, Search +6, Survival +10, Use Rope +4

Code of Honour: Barbaric

Reputation and Social Standing: 6 (+0)

Possessions: Average Horseman's Outfit, Shemitish Leather Jerkin and Steel Cap, Weapon-blacked Scimitar, Ghanata Knife, Shemitish Racing Horse, 11 sp, 3 flasks water

THE BLOODY COURT OF PRINCE DURAMBE

Prince Durambe is a half-Kushite/half-Tlazitlan warlord who was nearly killed by Conan nearly a decade and a half earlier, when the Cimmerian was serving as a mercenary. They met on the field of battle just as Durambe was gaining enough power to be a real contender in local politics. Conan's forces demolished Durambe's, and many of his surviving men were subsumed into his rivals' armies. Durambe was crushed, and his hatred has done nothing but blossom alongside his power base.

The Player Characters have been brought as prisoners, as prisoners of prisoners in fact, to the semi-permanent village of Prince Durambe's mercenary cadre. The drug in their systems will be remedied quickly, but not before they are lashed to posts outside the dark noble's 'palace'. It is here that the Player Characters will be given a chance to win their freedom in a series of bloody events, perhaps also getting some vengeance against Tirinius in the process.



There is much more at stake however, as it seems that Durambe's warriors have brought several other players into his little game, and amongst them is the Stygian rider.

Once the Player Characters are ready to be awoken from their dreamdust-laden fugue, they should receive the following introduction to the scene:

'I thought you said he would recognise you!' Trunnel shouts from one side of you as your head spins free of the drugs in your system. You are still blinded by a hood of some kind, but you can hear voices all around you, but you are standing and tied to something thick and hard behind you.

'He is not the man I remember,' Tirinius says sadly beyond your other ear, 'this was not at all what I thought would happen!'

'Silence!' shouts a loud voice ahead of you, 'uncover them!'

Light assaults your eyes instantly and you blink away tears from the dryness. You quickly look around to find that not only are all of the men of the caravan, yourselves included, lashed to thick wooden posts in the yard of some lopsided wood and stone building. From your vantage point there are some faces next to posts that you do not recognise, either.

The women are chained by the neck to a throne dais ahead of you, on which sits a corpulent dark-skinned man with peacock feathers tied in his long, matted hair and golden handprints painted upon his almost comically distended chest. In his hand he holds a war mace studded with what shines like gemstones.

'Welcome to my birthday celebration,' Prince Durambe says from atop his ivory throne, 'entertain me and live. Fail...and die.'





Prince Durambe has taken all of the women on his dais as his slaves, Donnagh and any female Player Characters included. They have been disrobed, painted with ivory-coloured pigments, and chained to the dais – within striking range of his guardsmen's tulwars. The chains are very strong (DC 35 to break) and the locking mechanism lies under Durambe's throne (DC 24 Open Locks). He always has two Zuadi guardsmen next to him, and there are thirty Zuadi warriors (of the one hundred at Lake Zuad) in his presence at all times. Vuxanna is nowhere to be seen – this is very important for an encounter segment later.

The men from the caravan have been lashed tightly to stout poles along with the Player Characters; all of their gear has been stripped of them and piled in a wagon nearby. In addition to the people that the Player Characters recognise, there are four others tied to posts that they do not know. These new faces are listed below, by name and a short description.

- ❖ Saude, a Darfari club-for-hire with prodigious ritual scarring on his muscular body
- ❖ Abbut Vad, a road-weary traveller from Shem who looks nothing like a warrior
- ❖ Ssik Po Clawe, a bestial half-man/half-jaguar creature with dark skin and a snarling feline face (he is bound in chains instead of rope)
- ❖ Akritephon, a barrel-chested Stygian with a shaved head and fierce black eyes that he cannot keep off of the women on the dais. He has dozens of scriptures tattooed to his chest and arms (described in his statistic block for those who can read Old Stygian).

The area of Durambe's village is a rather lush place. Lake Zuad sits dark and still behind his ramshackle palace and trees sway all around in the humid winds blowing in from the south. There are rows of scattered leather tents arranged in rings around the southern side of the lake to house his soldiers, and the sound of soldiery echoes out at all times.

When the Games Master feels the Player Characters are ready to move along, read the following:

'My wife is with child!' Tirinius abruptly shouts, 'I'll give you anything my fair prince, just let us go.'

'The marked one is already bearing the boy?' the Stygian adds unexpectedly, his voice sinister with intention. 'I want her as well! Your weight in Stygian gold for her!'

'Silence!' Durambe barks, yanking on Donnagh's chain to have her fall at his feet so he could look upon her. 'I trade lives for lives here, caravan man. But it is my birthday,' he rubs his numerous chins with his hand in thought, 'so I will be gracious. The pit will decide who gets your bride and your womb-wet whelp.' He points toward a large ring of broken stones and his warriors run to his side, lifting his dais into a litter and carrying him toward them.

'To the pit!'

Warriors will not cut the bonds of the men, they will instead lift them up and over the top of the post and carry them at sword point to the pit. The only one to give the armed men any trouble is the jaguar-man, who claws at them many times until he is dropped to the ground and dragged by his chains.

Once at the pit, the Player Characters can see that it is a ten foot deep hole in the lake clay lined with sharpened wooden stakes pointing downward to keep those dropped down from climbing out without aid from above and blood has stained many of the stakes. It is roughly thirty-five feet in diameter, and elevated benches are positioned all around it to watch the events below.

Durambe will explain that he is going to hold a little 'birthday tournament' here at the pit today. He is going to pair up the captives into fighting teams, who will be chained together at the ankle with ten feet of chain, lowered into the pit, and set against another pair of fighters. There are no weapons other than fists, teeth, nails and the pit itself allowed. Fighters do not have to fight to the death, as he can sell any slaves that survive, but all fighters must be bloodied and rendered unconscious to be eliminated. The winning team will not only get to go free, but they will win the 'breeding cow' (Donnagh) to fight over if they choose.

The pairings will be as follows:

- ❖ Tirinius is paired with Trunnel
- ❖ Gunnoran is paired with the Player Character with the lowest Strength score



- ❖ Saude is paired with a caravan worker
- ❖ Abbun Vad is paired with Ssik Po Clawe
- ❖ Akritephon is paired with a caravan worker
- ❖ The Player Characters are paired with one another as best as possible
- ❖ A remaining Player Character (after the above pairings) is paired with a caravan worker

Once the pairings have been taken up, they are brought over to a Zuadi warrior with several lengths of chain to be lashed together. This would be the most opportune time for a captive to attempt escape, which is why the following narrative scene should be read to the Player Characters – to dissuade them from simply running for their lives.

‘You cannot make me do it!’ Mius, one of the caravan teamsters, yells as the dusky-skinned man is about to slip his ankle in the manacle, ‘I will not die in that hole!’ He cries out, kicking the shackler in the nose with a spurt of blood before running haphazardly toward the edge of the camp. Before he can make ten full strides he is punctured a half dozen times by hurled spears, his body thrown side to side by their impacts.

Even the jaguar-man looks subdued as Mius’ body bleeds out into the grass, propped up on a tripod of protruding spear hafts.

There are easily thirty Zuadi warriors surrounding the pit, each armed with several hunting spears that they would gladly hurl at anyone else trying to escape. Should a Player Character think it wise, they will not think so for too long when the spear attacks start. If this does occur, the escaping Player Character has 3 rounds to give up and surrender before Durambe will order them killed.

Once the pairings are complete, Durambe will have each pair assigned a random colour – which will be smeared in greasepaint upon their backs. These colours will assign who fights who in the first round of fights. Although the colours themselves do not matter, the Games Master must associate the pairs with numbers for fight matching.

The Games Master rolls a d20 for each non-Player Character pairing, assigning them the number rolled. One of the Player Characters from each of their pairings will want to do the same, making note of their number. The numbers will then be compared to decide who fights who. Starting with the lowest number rolled, the pairs are matched with the next highest number in the list. Thus if there are pairs that rolled 2, 3, 9, 9, 11 and 12

the matching would be 2 and 3, 9 and 9, 11 with 12, and so on until all pairs have a match. Should there be an odd number of pairs; Durambe will assign two of his Zuadi warriors to be chained together to make up numbers.

Once everyone has their first match arranged, the fighting can begin.

Statistics for the caravan workers and officers can be found starting on page 177. Tirinius’ statistics can be found on page 174. Statistics for Prince Durambe, his two Zuadi guardsmen, the thirty Zuadi warriors, and the remaining captured warriors can be found in the encounters section.

THE PIT FIGHTING BEGINS

The Player Characters are now involved in a bloody sport of pit fighting for the enjoyment of Prince Durambe and his friends. Before they are lowered into the pit on hammocks of gazelle-leather (to avoid jabbing them on the stakes), there should be some basic rules outlined for all fights taking place in the pit:

Armament – The fighters are unarmoured and unarmed except with their bodies, and the length of chain between them. If the chain is ever free of a body it can be used as a flail, inflicting 1d6 damage with a Critical range of 20/x3. Any weapons that end up thrown into the pit by Durambe or his warriors are legal to be used as well, but not anything smuggled in by a fighter – an offence that will earn the transgressor several hunting spear attacks for their trouble (which will bring weapons into the pit, however).

The Stakes – Anyone slammed into the wall of the pit suffers 1d3+1 hits from stakes, each one inflicting 1d6 damage (plus the Strength modifier of the person slamming them, if any). They are rooted in the clay on boards well buried, requiring a DC 25 Strength check to rip one off the wall if desired.

The Chain – The length of chain between the fighter pair is very strong (DC 35 to break), and the manacles are of a good quality (DC 24 Open Lock). They are designed to keep no more than ten feet between the two members of a pair (two squares in tactical combat). When the chain is taught (ten feet between them), both individuals suffer a – 2 penalty to their Dodge Defence values. Otherwise the chain is simply a tether to keep them from moving too far apart.



The Bystanders – It is twelve feet to the edge of the pit, and another three feet to where the benches sit for people to watch the pit events. Anyone making any sort of attack (with a ranged weapon perhaps) at someone outside the pit will suffer a -2 penalty to hit because of the slope of the pit’s walls.

The Rules – The rules are simple: fight to survive. When a fighter is unconscious (or dead), they are considered to be eliminated from the match. Obviously this means that some fighters could be beaten to death, or impaled repeatedly upon the pit’s stakes. In the case of the Player Characters, they may still have Fate Points to survive ‘dying’ in the pit, but it will not save them from being eliminated.

Eliminated Fighters – Should a fighter simply be eliminated instead of killed, they will be set to the side and roped to Durambe’s dais. As far as the prince is concerned, they are his property now and will be used as he sees fit after the pit games are done. When one member of a pair is eliminated or killed, the remaining fighter is on his own for the rest of the games; no replacements will be made.

There are a few very specific narrative instances that will occur during the first rounds of combat, no matter who fights whom or how the fights’ outcomes pan out.

- ✦ When Gunnoran is paired with the weakest Player Character he will turn to them and smile, ‘I am sorry we had to fool you. Tirinius thought it was a good idea; much gold in Durambe’s pockets. In exchange for your forgiveness, I will kill our foes in the pit. It would not be the first fighting pit Gunnoran has seen, be assured.’
- ✦ When Ssik Po Clawe and Abbun Vad fight for the first time, the jaguar-man will be visibly angered by his lack of mobility – so much that he will try to cut Abbun’s foot off with his claws to free him, likely killing him in the process!
- ✦ Akritephon will laugh loudly when he is dropped into the pit, ‘Akritephon the Thrice-Damned need no partners to win whore’s leash!’ He will grapple the caravan worker he is paired with, wrap his neck in

the chain, and snap the poor man’s neck like a twig. He will then use the chain as a flail in his combats.

- ✦ Tirinius and Trunnel will not give mercy when they fight, even if it is against their former comrades. Tirinius wants to be free with Donnagh, and nothing will get in his way because of it.
- ✦ All of the other fighters who can inflict lethal damage with their fists (or stakes, claws, etc.) will do so. If they cannot, they will settle for nonlethal damage. The Player Characters can choose to inflict whatever kind of damage they want to, obviously earning more cheers for a bloody show.

It should be noted that any Player Character that specifically does not want to hurt the other captives with lethal damage, choosing to solely use nonlethal attacks, should gain a Fate Point for risking their own lives for their morals.

ALL NON-PLAYER CHARACTER FIGHTS

There are several ways to handle the pairings of Non-Player Characters for their matches. Some Games Masters might want to simply narrate the endings of these battles to better fit their idea how the story will pan out, others might want to roll each individual stroke and punch for the players to witness. Ultimately it is up to the Games Master to do what is best for his campaign, his gaming group and the enjoyment of his players.



ADDITIONAL MATCHES AND ROUNDS

After the first sets of matches have been fought, their winners will have to then immediately roll again in the same fashion to be matched against another winning pair. Again, if there are an odd number of winners, Durambe will donate two Zuadi warriors to the fray.

These fights will go on all day until there is only one pair left that could fight, when Durambe will make the following announcement:

‘Excellent! Excellent!’ the dark prince applauds with his meaty hands, ‘that was the best birthday present I have ever given myself!’ He snaps at two of his warriors, who begin to lower the hammock to pull the fighters out of the pit. ‘As promised, in the morning you will be released to go free, the Cimmerian cow to go with you. I am a man of my word, and let no man in this camp try to stop you!’

LATE NIGHT VISITOR

During the night, long after the fights are over, Vuxanna sneaks (and carves) her way through the camp (she hid with the gear in the caravan wagons) and frees any of the surviving pit fighters – the Player Characters included.

You awake to the *whump* of a body falling in the grass next to you. You are eye to eye to the glassy stare of a guard whose throat has been opened ear to ear. You suddenly feel the iron touch of the manacle on your ankle come loose and you swivel your head to see Vuxanna crouched next to your feet.

She raises one finger to her charcoal-blackened lips, the rest of her face a shadow against the night. You can see that her arms up the elbows are soaked in blood, and a long curved knife glistens with crimson in the starlight. She points to a pile of equipment, your equipment, near you and smiles wickedly.

Vuxanna has spent the early evening going from tent to tent in utter silence, cutting the throats of all but two men in each tent – to preserve the sound of men sleeping in them. Her kills have numbered near seventy thus far, and she thinks that should be sufficient for the captives to escape. Vuxanna has a special hatred for the mistreatment of captives, and she has always been close to Donnagh.

She is now headed to Durambe’s ‘palace’ to free Donnagh, which the Player Characters will also want to likely save (especially if Akritephon is still alive). Vuxanna releases *all* of the surviving captives. Depending on who lived and died in the pit fights, she could have created some new problems for the Player Characters.

The following list describes what each captive will do when freed (if they are alive and capable).

- ✦ Tirinius will accompany Vuxanna in freeing Donnagh.
- ✦ Trunnel will accompany Tirinius if he goes to free Donnagh, otherwise he will slink away into the night.
- ✦ Gunnoran will apologise to the Player Characters again for kidnapping them, and then escape the camp.
- ✦ The caravan workers will simply run into the night. They are honourless bandits and just want to survive.
- ✦ Saude will escape.
- ✦ Abbun Vad, if he still lives, will try to put the manacle back on; ‘I do not want to die’ he whispers over and over again.
- ✦ Ssik Po Clawe will hiss at the other captives, pick up the guard’s corpse, and run off into the night. If anyone can beat his Intimidate total with a Diplomacy skill check, they can convince him that revenge against Durambe is better than simply escape – which will set him against the Zuadi warriors remaining in the camp.
- ✦ Akritephon will summon his Uncanny Steed (his is a black warhorse) and try to beat Vuxanna’s group to the palace to take Donnagh away. He will be less than stealthy about it, waking up the ten guardsmen in the building, Durambe, and the remaining twenty-five warriors in the tents (see *The Alarm is Raised* below).

Depending on the state of the captives and the actions of the Player Characters (and whether or not Akritephon is still alive), it is possible that a new fight could break out immediately. Even if one does not take place upon their freeing, Vuxanna’s group (if any) will head inside the ‘palace’ to free Donnagh, which could alert others to their presence as well.



THE PALACE OF DURAMBE

If the Player Characters go into the wood and stone structure of the palace, they will find that it is little more than a ruined building of two rooms – a foyer and a sleeping room. There are six Zuadi guardsmen in the foyer (two awake, four asleep), and four more in the sleeping room with Durambe. Durambe and his personal guards are asleep, along with Donnagh.

Should the group moving upon the palace manage to deal with the two awake guardsmen, they should have no trouble freeing Donnagh. Unless someone rolls a natural '1' upon a Move Silently skill check within a room with living sleepers, they will be able to move about without waking anyone. Whenever they wish to take an action other than movement however, they will have to pass a DC 10 Move Silently – or they will wake the nearest guard. A guard that wakes or spots trespassers will begin to shout and cry out, which raises the alarm (see below).

THE ALARM IS RAISED

Whether Akritephon is alive and foolishly attacks the palace head-on, or if the Player Characters do something loudly, or if a guardsmen simply gets lucky enough to see the escaping captives, the alarm will be raised and chaos will erupt in the camp.

The guardsmen in the palace will take positions at the door to the foyer and the windows to the sleeping room, but they will not exit the palace – they must protect Durambe.

The rest of the camp on the other hand, will awaken to find most of their brethren and battle-brothers dead in their cots and bedrolls thanks to Vuxanna's skill at assassination. It will take 3d6 rounds after the alarm is raised for the Zuadi warriors to (the twenty-five remaining soldiers) shake off the sight of so many of their own butchered like they were and come to where the alarm was raised.



If the Player Characters fail to get out of the camp before the Zuadi warriors begin to converge upon them and they will have a major fight on their hands.

DURAMBE'S COWARDICE

If all of Durambe's Zuadi guardsmen are killed and he is still awake and alive, he will plead for his life:

'Take her,' the man weeps, throwing down his gem encrusted mace of leadership at your feet, 'let me live! It is my birthday!'

He is a coward and in horrible shape for someone who once was a skilled soldier, but he will fight back with the dagger hidden under his pillows if someone comes to attack him. It will not likely be much of a fight for seasoned adventurers, but he will do whatever it takes to try and survive. If the Player Characters negotiate with him, trying to get more out of him, he will gladly give them anything in his listed possessions (see his statistics in the encounters section) in trade for his greasy skin. Additionally, he has two small sacks of gold chips and flakes under his bedding, each one worth 1,000 sp, that he will not immediately offer – but will give up if need be.

Statistics for the Uncanny Steed, if summoned, can be found on page 60.

ONCE THE BATTLES ARE WON AND ESCAPES ARE MADE

How the situation surrounding the Player Characters' escape unfolds is greatly up to their decisions and the surviving captives. Durambe could survive to despise the Player Characters, or he could be killed to leave his mercenaries in the hands of a new warlord. Akritephon could escape with Donnagh, she could be killed in the melee trying to free her, or she could end up happily in the arms of her husband. Tirinius could perish in the pits or once freed, perhaps by a Player Characters' hand, or he could beg forgiveness of them if they help free Donnagh. The Player Characters could run into the night, leaving the camp to its own chaotic end – or they could choose to stay and see all of the Zuadi dead.

PROPHECY POINTS

- ✦ The Player Characters manage to kill Akritephon **+0 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ Akritephon wins the pit fighting tournament **+1 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ Akritephon escapes with Donnagh **+5 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ Donnagh escapes with someone besides the Player Characters or Tirinius **+2 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ Donnagh escapes with Tirinius **+1 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ Donnagh escapes with the Player Characters **+0 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ Donnagh is killed **-1 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ The Player Characters decide to remain in the camp after Donnagh is safe or killed to exact revenge on Durambe's men **+1 Prophecy Points**

EXPERIENCE POINTS

- ✦ Basic Roleplaying Award for portraying characters well (500 xp)
- ✦ Each match of pit fighting won (500 xp); with a caravan worker as a paired fighter (750 xp)
- ✦ Defeating Gunnoran in the pit fights (500 xp)
- ✦ Defeating Tirinius and Trunnel in the pit fights (1,500 xp)
- ✦ Defeating Saude in the pit fights (750 xp)
- ✦ Defeating Ssik Po Clawe in the pit fights (1,000 xp)
- ✦ Defeating Abbut Vad in the pit fights (200 xp)
- ✦ Defeating Akritephon in the pit fights or after being freed (1,250 xp)
- ✦ Destroying Akritephon's Uncanny Steed (500 xp)
- ✦ Defeating pairs of Zuadi warriors in the pit fights (750 xp)
- ✦ Being the winning pair in the pit fights (1,000 xp)
- ✦ Going with Vuxanna to free Donnagh (250 xp)
- ✦ Successfully freeing Donnagh without raising the alarm (1,000 xp)
- ✦ Successfully freeing Donnagh despite the alarm being raised (1,500 xp)
- ✦ Killing Durambe (500 xp)
- ✦ Defeating Zuadi warriors (350 xp each)
- ✦ Defeating Zuadi guardsmen (500 xp each)

ENCOUNTERS

**DURAMBE, MERCENARY
PRINCE OF ZUADI**

Calling himself a prince to lend credence to his role as a leader of paid sell-spears and mercenaries, Durambe was once just another member of the Tlazitlan soldiery that scattered after Conan killed the hierarchy of their culture at Xuchotl many years ago. He raised a small army in the passing time with hopes of eventually setting out against Aquilonia's king, but has since grown too fat and sedentary to do anything but lie around and torture captives for his own amusement.

Large Humanoid (Kushite/Tlazitlan Soldier 3 / Noble 6)**Initiative:** +0 (-3 Dex, +3 Reflexes)**Sensory Traits:** Listen +6, Spot +10**Languages:** Aquilonian (literate), Kushite, Shemitish, Tlazitlan**Dodge Defence:** 9 (-1 size, -3 Dex, +3 class)**Parry Defence:** 18 (-1 size, +3 Str, +5 class, +1 Parry)**DR:** 1 (+1 Steel Cap)**Hit Points:** 92 hp**Saves:** Fort +13, Ref +0, Will +8 (+7 against Corruption or Terror)**Defensive Specials:****Speed:** 10 ft.**Attack:** Gem Encrusted War Mace +10 melee (1d8+4, AP 2)**Full Attack:** Gem Encrusted War Mace +10/+5 melee (1d8+4, AP 2)**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)**Base Attack:** +7/+2**Grapple:** +10**Special Attacks:** +1 to damage using any spear, +1 to hit with war spear and hunting bow, Feud, Formation Combat (*heavy infantry*)**Sorcery Knowledge:** -**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 5, Con 22, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15**Special Qualities:** Enhanced Leadership, Lead by Example +2, Rank Hath Its Privileges, Social Ability (*ally*), Title (mercenary prince), Wealth**Feats:** Carouser, Great Fortitude, Leadership, No Honour, Toughness (x2)**Skills:** Appraise +5, Bluff +8, Diplomacy +5, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (local) +8, Profession (mercenary) +10, Sense Motive +12**Code of Honour:** None**Reputation and Social Standing:** 22 (+5)**Possessions:** Old Tlazitlan Steel Cap, Ivory and Wood Dais/Litter, Various Jewellery worth 1,000 sp, Gem Encrusted War Mace worth 5,000 sp, Silver Dagger, Golden Hookah worth 1,500 sp

Feud (Ex): All Tlazitlans and their kin share this special racial ability. As a people they are able to harbour deep and unending hatreds that can push them to a state of fervour just short of barbaric madness when dealing with the target of their feud. A Tlazitlan can declare a feud against one enemy or closely connected group of enemies at a time. The target(s) could be anything from the corner butcher who shorted the character's order to the entirety of the Stygian Priesthood. The feud lasts until all his declared enemies are destroyed, at which point a new feud could be called one month later if desired. While feuding, the character gains a +2 bonus to all melee attack and damage rolls against the target(s) of the feud, but suffers a -2 penalty to Defence Value against their attacks due to the frenzied lack of self-control in their fighting style.

ZUADI WARRIORS

Kushite tribals who have been taught in the old Tlazitlan style of combat, the basic Zuadi warrior is a spear throwing, club-wielding killer that waits only for the signal from a guardsmen or Durambe to shed anyone's blood - even their own if required of them.

Medium Humanoid (Kushite Nomad 3 / Soldier 4)**Initiative:** +10 (+2 Dex, +4 Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)**Sensory Traits:** Listen +6, Spot +6**Languages:** Kushite, Tlazitlan

Dodge Defence: 15 (+2 Dex, +3 class)

Parry Defence: 16 (+2 Str, +4 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 55 hp

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +2

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Hunting Spear +10 ranged (1d8+5, AP 1) or War Club +9 melee (2d6+3, AP 4)

Full Attack: Hunting Spear +10/+5 ranged (1d8+5, AP 1) or War Club +9/+4 melee (2d6+3, AP 4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +7/+2

Grapple: +9

Special Attacks: +1 to damage with spears, Formation Combat (*skirmisher*), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Born to the Saddle, Favoured Terrain +1 (savannah), Illiterate, Sneak Attack Style (heavy sap), Trap Disarming

Feats: Endurance, Self-Sufficient, Track, Weapon Focus (hunting spear), Weapon Proficiencies (all Simple), Weapon Specialisation (hunting spear)

Skills: Bluff +4, Climb +6, Hide +6, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +8, Move Silently +6, Profession (mercenary) +6, Survival +8, Use Rope +4

Code of Honour: Mercenary

Reputation and Social Standing: 8 (+2)

Possessions: 3 Hunting Spears, War Club, Loincloth, 3d6 sp

ZUADI GUARDSMEN

Only a few Zuadi warriors are promoted to the rank of Durambe's personal guard. They are required to have protected him from some kind of threat before, and they are granted better equipment because of it.

Medium Humanoid (Kushite Nomad 3 / Soldier 7)

Initiative: +11 (+2 Dex, +5 Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

Sensory Traits: Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages: Aquilonian, Kushite, Tlazitlan

Dodge Defence: 16 (+2 Dex, +4 class)

Parry Defence: 20 (+3 Str, +6 class, +1 Parry)

DR: 5 (+4 Leather Jerkin, +1 Steel Cap)

Hit Points: 70 hp

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +3

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Tulwar +14 melee (2d8+3, AP 3) or Hunting Spear +14 ranged (1d8+6, AP 1)

Full Attack: Tulwar +14/+9 melee (2d8+3, AP 3) or Hunting Spear +14/+9 ranged (1d8+6, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +10/+5

Grapple: +13

Special Attacks: +1 to damage with spears, Formation Combat (*skirmisher*, *improved skirmisher*), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 12

Special Qualities: Born to the Saddle, Favoured Terrain +1 (savannah), Illiterate, Officer, Sneak Attack Style (heavy sap), Trap Disarming

Feats: Endurance, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Tulwar), Self-Sufficient, Track, Weapon Focus (hunting spear), Weapon Focus (tulwar), Weapon Proficiencies (all Simple), Weapon Specialisation (hunting spear)

Skills: Bluff +4, Climb +8, Hide +5, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (local) +8, Move Silently +5, Profession (mercenary) +8, Ride +4, Search +5, Sense Motive +5, Survival +10, Use Rope +6

Code of Honour: Mercenary

Reputation and Social Standing: 9 (+2)

Possessions: 2 Hunting Spears, Shemitish Tulwar, Leather Jerkin, Steel Cap, 5d6+5 sp

SAUDE TAKKA, THE BLOOD OF THE JUNGLE

A mercenary by trade, savage by soul, Saude left his tribe when hunting became too scarce and the old traditionalists began to turn back to the hunting of men solely for their flesh. Saude is a rudimentary student of the Darkarra, the belief that cannibals do not eat beasts for their flesh, but instead for their spirits. He has never achieved true enlightenment in this path as his father Szolo Xo, but he hopes to one day acquire such mystic abilities as well.



Medium Humanoid (Darfari Barbarian 6 / Nomad 2)

Initiative: +14 (+2 Dex, +8 Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Listen +10, Spot +10

Languages: Darfari, Kushite, Stygian, Watai

Dodge Defence: 18 (+2 Dex, +5 class, +1 Black Kingdom Tribesman)

Parry Defence: 16 (+3 Str, +3 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 58 hp

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +3 (+1 versus Terror)

Defensive Specials: Fearless, Mobility, Trap Sense +2, Uncanny Dodge

Speed: 40 ft.

Attack: War Club +13 melee (2d6+5, AP 4) or Hunting Spear +11 ranged (1d8+3, AP 1)

Full Attack: War Club +13/+8 melee (2d6+5, AP 4) or Hunting Spear +11/+6 ranged (1d8+3, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +8/+3

Grapple: +15

Special Attacks: +1 to hit with spear, javelin or bludgeoning weapon, Bite, Improved Grapple

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Bite Sword, Born to the Saddle, Crimson Mist, Favoured Terrain +1 (jungle), Illiterate, Versatility (–2 to hit)

Feats: Brawl, Diehard, Endurance, Eyes of the Cat, Fleet-Footed, Skill Focus (Survival), Track, Weapon Focus (war club), Weapon Proficiencies (hunting spear, club)

Skills: Appraise +4, Balance +6, Bluff +6, Climb +8, Hide +6, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (religion) +4, Perform (drum) +7, Sense Motive +5, Survival +8, Use Rope +4

Code of Honour: Mercenary

Reputation and Social Standing: 12 (+4)

Possessions: Leather Skirt, Ebony War Club, Hunting Spear, Skinning Knife, 8 sp

ABBUN VAD, UNLUCKY TRADER

Caught in the wake of a bandit attack when his merchant caravan went astray from the path, he tried to head toward the nearest body of water – which ended up being Lake Zuad. He was instantly captured and set to be the new entertainment for Durambe.

Medium Humanoid (Shemite Commoner 3)

Initiative: +2 (+1 Dex, +1 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages: Aquilonian, Kushite, Shemitish (literate), Stygian

Dodge Defence: 12 (+1 Dex, +1 class)

Parry Defence: 10 (–1 Str, +1 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 11 hp

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Dagger +0 melee (1d4–1, AP 2)

Full Attack: Dagger +0 melee (1d4–1, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +1

Grapple: +0

Special Attacks: +1 to hit with any bow, +1 damage with any bow within 100 feet, +1 damage on *coup de grace*, Weapon Familiarity (Shemite bows)

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 9, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 13

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Alertness, Persuasive

Skills: Bluff +5, Diplomacy +6, Gather Information +5, Knowledge (geography) +4, Profession (trader) +4, Sense Motive +4

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 3 (+0)

Possessions: Simple Clothing, Dagger, 22 sp



SSIK PO CLAWE, JAGUAR-MAN OF DARFAR

One of the bestial jaguar-men, Ssik Po is a lithe, dark-skinned man with yellow and black splotches on the backs of his arms, neck and shoulders. He has strong, thin-fingered hands that end in sharp white claws, and padded feet good for climbing. His face is extremely feline, his split cat's palate covering long and sharp teeth. He has golden predatory eyes, and pointed ears that twitch at the slightest sound of trouble. In dim light he might pass for human, but a careful eye will show him for what he truly is. It was his wanderlust and curiosity that brought him to the Zuadi warriors that eventually subdued him, but not before he ripped the bowls from three of them!

Medium Monstrous Humanoid (Barbarian 8)

Initiative: +16 (+4 Dex, +6 Reflex, +2 Lightning Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Scent, Listen +14, Spot +12

Languages: Pidgin Darfari, Pidgin Kushite

Dodge Defence: 22 (+4 Dex, +2 natural, +6 class)

Parry Defence: 16 (+3 Str, +3 class)

DR: 1 (+1 Natural)

Hit Dice: 78 hp

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +10, Will +3

Defensive Specials: Improved Uncanny Dodge, Mobility, Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +2

Speed: 40 ft.

Attack: War Spear +11 melee (1d10+3, AP 2) or Claw +12 melee (1d6+3)

Full Attack: War Spear +11/+6 melee (1d10+3, AP 2) or Claw +12/+7 melee (1d6+3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +8/+3

Grapple: +15

Special Attacks: Improved Grapple, Pounce, Rage

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Bite Sword, Crimson Mist, Versatility (no penalty)

Feats: Alertness, Brawl, Diehard, Endurance, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Survival), Track, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills: Balance +12, Climb +12, Hide +10, Intimidate +8, Jump +12, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (nature) +10, Move Silently +12, Search +8, Sense Motive +6, Survival +12, Tumble +10

Code of Honour: Barbaric

Reputation and Social Standing: 8 (–2)

Possessions: Kushite War Spear, Hand-made Ivory and Turquoise Jewellery worth 250 sp, Anaconda-skin Loincloth

Pounce (Ex): If Ssik Po charges a foe, he can make a full attack, so long as these attacks are all targeting the same foe.

Rage (Ex): If Ssik Po takes damage in combat he flies into a berserk rage the following round, tossing aside his weaponry and instead clawing his targets until either he or his opponents are dead. He gains +4 Strength, +4 Constitution and –2 Defence. Ssik Po cannot end his rage voluntarily, and will attack the closest target that most recently injured him. This ability *does not* stack with his Barbarian Crimson Mist ability.

Skills: Ssik Po receives a +4 bonus to Balance, Climb, Hide, Jump and Move Silently skills because of his honed predatory instincts and slightly evolved body.





AKRITEPHON THE THRICE-DAMNED, BLACK RIDER

The rider Nefanari sent to Lake Zuad specifically to intercept the marked maiden, shown to her through her demonic divinations, Akritephon is a sadistic and cruel savage warrior raised in the slave pits of Luxur. He has killed no fewer than 100 men with his bare hands, and claims to have strangled the life from a great Darfari anaconda when he was twelve. He is tattooed with the three written curses of Set's Mysteries, each one given to him when he killed a priest or acolyte during his training as a warrior for the Black Ring. The tattoos read: *'Obey the darkness within, lest the darkness without oppress'*, *'Venom in the heart, venom in the soul, venom in the blood'* and *'Truth wrapped in lies is the dagger wrapped in silk'*.

Medium Humanoid (Stygian Barbarian 6 / Nomad 6)

Initiative: +16 (+2 Dex, +10 Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

Sensory Traits: Low-light Vision, Listen +10, Spot +10

Languages: Aquilonian, Kushite, Old Stygian (literate), Stygian, Zamorian

Dodge Defence: 19 (+2 Dex, +7 class)

Parry Defence: 20 (+5 Str, +5 class)

DR: 5 (+5 Crocodile-leather Jerkin)

Hit Points: 118 hp

Saves: Fort +13, Ref +12, Will +5 (+3 versus Corruption)

Defensive Specials: Fearless, Improved Mobility, Mobility, Trap Sense +2, Uncanny Dodge

Speed: 40 ft.

Attack: Unarmed Strike +18 melee (1d6+5 lethal or nonlethal, AP 2)

Full Attack: Unarmed Strike +18/+13/+8 melee (1d6+5 lethal or nonlethal, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +12/+7/+2

Grapple: +21

Special Attacks: +1 to hit with Stygian bow, Improved Grapple, Nomad Charge +1, Power Attack

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 12

Special Qualities: Bite Sword, Born to the Saddle, Crimson Mist, Favoured Terrain +2 (plains), Illiterate, Versatility (–2 to hit)

Feats: Brawl, Diehard, Endurance, Eyes of the Cat, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Stygian Bow), Fleet-footed, No Honour, Skill Focus (Survival), Toughness (x3), Track, Weapon Focus (unarmed combat)


Skills: Appraise +5, Balance +7, Bluff +8, Climb +8, Heal +4, Hide +5, Intimidate +14, Jump +10, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (religion) +8, Profession (soldier) +6, Search +8, Sense Motive +6, Survival +10, Tumble +7, Use Rope +6

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 10 (+4)

Possessions: Crocodile-leather Jerkin, Reinforced Fighting Gloves, Superior Traveller's Outfit, Uncanny Steed, 2,500 sp worth of gold ingots





The Trial at Qarnak

In this chapter the Player Characters will be told to go and rescue the last maiden at an ancient and magical ruin called Qarnak in Stygia. Dexitheus knows the last marked woman is going to be there, and he knows that time is running very short for the Prophecy to be fulfilled or stopped. When the Player Characters reach the ruins of Qarnak however, they will discover that not all the maidens are *unwilling* subjects! In fact, they will be brought face to face with the real heart of this scheme – the demon lord Amantherodi! By the end of this chapter the Player Characters will have stopped the Atlantean Prophecy, dealt with Nefanari, and sent Amantherodi back to the Great Beyond...

...or they will have allowed the Atlantean Legion to rise against the world of the living.

THE FINAL HAWK FROM DEXITHEUS

2d6 days from their escape from the mercenary camp at Lake Zuad, Dexitheus' next and final messenger hawk will find them. The growing mystical link the Player Characters have with the course of the Prophecy has made divining them more difficult the closer they get to Amantherodi's lair, so the hawk is flying on its last bits of strength when it finds them.

The hawk will collapse and crash land when it finds them, ploughing headfirst into the ground. The hawk will break a wing and several internal bones from the fall, dying shortly after the Player Characters go and retrieve it. Like the others, it has a scroll tied to its leg.





When they read the message, it reads:

'In Mitra's name I hope this finds you better than I can. The future around you is clouded by the eclipse of the Prophecy's growth. I pray you are well, and that you have not fallen. The last marked woman has been shown to me, and she is to be found at the heart of the vipers' nest in Stygia. The ruins of Qarnak, where the serpent-men came to die when wounded by the Atlanteans, holds the last maiden in its stone cliffs. Get to Khnemu, where Set is strong, and go north on the Styx to the ruins. The last maiden is close to giving birth, and the signs say that the Prophecy is nigh. There is a darkness there I cannot read, be wary.'

GETTING TO KHNEMU

The tiny lake of Khnemu can be found in the foothills of the Taian Mountains, along the eastern bank of the Styx's deepest feeding tributary. It will be quite a trek for Player Characters that take the journey on foot, especially without some kind of guide or local help to get them there. Without some help to guide them it is possible for the Player Characters to wander aimlessly through the plains of Stygia trying to find where they should be going.

STYGIAN SCOUTING PATROL

The Player Characters are discovered by a Stygian military patrol roaming through the local area, giving them someone to ask direction from – or at least take their horses and chariot!

The sound of galloping hooves drums closer and closer until you can see mounted men heading in your direction. Dust kicked up from the heat-baked ground has hidden their number, but you would say at least a dozen horses are riding directly toward you.

As the group draws nearer still you see that it is not nearly as many horses as you thought. You cannot help but draw your jaw tighter when you see the majority of the cloud is being kicked up not by hooves, but by the wheels of two chariots.

The Player Characters may or may not even try to talk to the Stygians, as they are somewhat related to the overall enemy of King Conan at this time. If they decide to attack the patrol, the soldiers will have no issues fighting back. The horsemen will ride in hard and use their khopesh blades to keep the Player Characters edged to the outside of the conflict for the chariots to perform their ride-by attacks.

The Stygian soldiers are well-trained and well-equipped, but possibly not ready to deal with a group of seasoned adventurers. If they lose half their number or both of the chariot crews they will try to flee, heading toward the nearest Stygian populace for reinforcements (which they will return to the area with in a few days). There are six mounted Stygian warriors riding Stygian warhorses, and two light chariots each holding two more Stygians.

If the Player Characters decide not to attack the patrol and instead talk to them, they will be treated gruffly unless there are any Stygians in the Player Character group. Obvious Shemites, Aquilonians or other high northerners will be treated especially poorly. While they parlay with the Player Characters, the Stygian chariots will stay back in case they need to charge while the horsemen make a semi-circle around them.

With the proper Diplomacy or Intimidate skill rolls, bribes, or other methods of convincing, the Stygian warriors can 'help' the Player Characters in the following ways.

- ✦ They can draw a simple map that will lead the Player Characters to the Styx tributary, but not all the way to Khnemu.
- ✦ They are too low on the military pecking order to know anything at all about the Prophecy, so any mention of Qarnak will only get shrugs and wives' tales about ancient serpent men and cliffside tombs.
- ✦ They will not escort the Player Characters unless they want to accompany them back to a military camp a day's ride away – which would likely be a very bad idea for agents of King Conan.
- ✦ They will not willingly part with horses, weaponry or armour, but they will sell rations and water at ten times the normal price.
- ✦ They know of a small village a few days' walk to the east that had a stallion farm in it. It might cost the



STYGIAN WAR CHARIOTS

Although there are feats and rules for riding and fighting in chariots found in the *Stygia-Serpent of the South* sourcebook and other previously released material, not all players and Games Masters will have access to them. For those who do not, the following rules can be used for the charioteers if combat occurs with them.

- ✿ The Stygian warriors driving and riding in a chariot drives using their Profession (charioteer) skill, allowing them to use all of the same abilities and feats a mounted warrior would with his Ride skill.
- ✿ The Stygian warriors on the back of the chariots suffer a -2 penalty to their attack rolls, they can move the full amount of the chariot's Movement and still make their Full Attack.
- ✿ The driver of a chariot has 60% cover, while the warrior attacking from the back only has 25% cover.
- ✿ Any melee attack made from the back of a chariot that moved during that action gains an additional +2 to hit and damage against targets on foot.
- ✿ A chariot moves on its driver's Initiative, with the two Stygian warhorses pulling it attacking at that time. The attacking warrior rolls his own Initiative and attacks at that time.

Player Characters double what a normal riding horse would cost, but it is a source for fresh and healthy steeds. The village is called Quf, and it will have an inn/tavern, the stallion ranch, and twenty homes for three times that number of Stygian peasantry.

This encounter gives the Player Characters the opportunity to either steal some horses (perhaps even a chariot or two!), equipment, and some Stygian warrior uniforms if they think of it. Moving on Stygian warhorses across the plains will be much faster than trying to walk, and being able to pose as a member of the Stygian military could help the Player Characters immensely through other encounters. Even if they do not manage to take these amenities, hopefully they will gain the information they might need to continue on their journey.

Statistics for the Stygian warriors can be found in the encounters section.

TRADERS FROM EASTERN SHEM

Your nose is somewhat lifted into the air from the sudden smell of roasting meat and burning incense on the wind. You squint against the monotony of the waving grasses and shrubs of the plains, and soon you see the rise of tents on the horizon. The tents have brightly coloured stripes along their canopies, which should mean only one thing – traders.

There are three large kiosk-style bazaar tents erected over three wagons on the horizon. Less than an hour later the Player Characters can be at the pavilion between the three marketplace tents. They are owned by three Shemite traders; Geren, Habbin, and Kureed. They are bound eventually for Kheshatta from Kutehemes, making a yearly trip to the city to sell their Shemite bows and what fish they can catch on the River Styx along the way. To avoid the Styxian crocodiles they often take the tributary instead of the main river – this makes them very useful to the Player Characters.



Not only do the traders have a great stock of items for the Player Characters to buy or trade for, but they also just recently travelled through the very area that the Player Characters are supposed to find. The traders will be typical salesmen in all ways, haggling fiercely at every opportunity.

The following table shows what percentage chance the traders have of possessing any particular type of item, the number of that item they have available, and the adjustment to market pricing the traders will charge for their goods. The Player Characters might be able to haggle this price adjustment down a maximum of -10% of market price, but Diplomacy or related Profession skill rolls may be required.

Shemite Trader Stock

Item Type	Inventory Chance	Quantity	Price Adjustment
Simple Weapons	70%	1d6+1	+20%
Martial Weapons	25%	1d2	+30%
Exotic Weapons	5%	1	+40%
Shemite Bows	100%	2d6	+25%
Light Armour	45%	1d2	+20%
Medium Armour	20%	1d2	+25%
Heavy Armour	–	–	–
Helmets	30%	1d3	+10%
Shields	35%	1d2	+10%
Clothing	70%	1d3	+5%
Adventuring Gear	85%	1d6+1	+10%
Riding Camel	100%	5	+20%
Containers and Carriers	80%	1d4	+5%
Class Tools and Skill Kits	35%	1d3	+20%
Food and Drink	90%	2d6	+10%

If for some reason that the Player Characters decide to attack the traders to gain all of their goods, the Games Master should roll for three items from each of the categories on the table above. These items are what

the traders will have for them to claim in addition to six draft horses, three wagons and three multi-coloured canvas tents.

If the Player Characters decide to buy anything from the traders, they will be able to ask a question of the trader performing the transaction. The trader will give one of two answers; a helpful one if the Player Character paid over normal market price for that item, or a more confusing answer if they managed to get a 'deal' on their purchase.

The following are examples of questions the Player Characters could ask, and the two types of answers the traders could give. The first answer listed (A1) is the helpful one, the other (A2) is the confusing one.

Q: Do you know where to find Khnemu?

A1: Keep heading northeast from here, cross the river to the eastern bank and then follow it north to Khnemu.

A2: Cross the river to the east. If you reach Shem, you have gone too far.

Q: Do you know anything about Khnemu?

A1: Not too much, there is not much there for us traders. It is a little lake surrounded by old temples. Many gods have worshippers there, and pilgrims travel there all year long.

A2: I know it is best to stay away from that nest of zealots.

Q: Do you know where to find Qarnak?

A1: The ruins? Never been there myself, but I knew someone who claimed to have dug up some ancient bones of men with the legs of serpents out of those cliffs.

A2: Why would I? There is no one alive there to trade with.

Q: Do you know anything about Qarnak?

A1: They are some old ruins set in the red cliffs of the Taians facing the bend of the Styx. I know they are avoided by the locals, and that they claim they are haunted by ancient spirits. But Stygians claim so much is haunted by ancient spirits, who knows what is just superstition?

A2: I know to stay the nine hells away from it.

Q: How can we cross the river to the eastern bank?

A1: There are several boatmen who make their livings helping people cross, and if you are far enough south on the tributary you can just ford it. Watch out for crocodiles, though.



A2: On a boat. I hear that people make their livings taking people across rivers.

Q: Have you seen anything strange in your travels from the east?

A1: Strange? Not really, but we are used to things being different here than in Shem. Stygia is a very old kingdom filled with ancient magics and beings, some of which have never been seen in hundreds of years I'd say.

A2: Besides you and your companions? I'd think not.

The traders will share a loaf of bread and bottle of wine with the Player Characters to 'seal their deal', but will ask that they move along when their business is concluded. Travellers are not likely to come visit the traders' tents if a group of well-armed adventurers are lurking around.

Use the statistics for Abbun Vad on page 202 for the three Shemite traders, changing their possessions to the following: Fine Merchant's Outfit, Dagger, 5d6 x5 sp

RELIGIOUS PILGRIMAGE

The Player Characters cross paths with a marching pilgrimage of religious fanatics headed to Khnemu, giving them several good options to reach the lake community.

'All hail Hap-I,' a voice chants out before several others mirror her words, 'bringer of the water to the lotus of eternal life!' The chanting comes from a throng of half-robed travellers walking slowly toward you from the west. They have robes of white linen stitched with silken ribbons open at the waist to reveal their naked chests. The women are heedless of their nudity, and the men are all clean-shaven. Two of the travellers carry heavy brass censers filling the air with grey smoke. As they approach you can see a porcelain tablet in the white-knuckled hands of their leader, the woman whose painted eyes regard you glassily when they look upon you.

'Have you felt the warming embrace of Hap-I?' she asks.





There are thirteen pilgrims of the worship of Hap-I crossing the Stygian plains to Khnemu to worship at the temple there. They are all somewhat euphoric from the constant diluted green lotus incense burning in the censers, but they are aware of their surroundings enough to defend themselves.

The lead priestess, Hotephari, carries the three writings of Hap-I on her tablet. These writings explain that Hap-I is the father of all lotus plants, the keeper of papyrus reeds, the ally of Set, and the hand that pours water from the Styx onto the crops of Stygia. She is leading this small pilgrimage to Khnemu to make offerings of lotus seeds to the temple.

The pilgrims will happily talk about their faith and their journey with the Player Characters, unless any of them openly show that they worship Isis or outsider gods to Stygia. They are friendly, warm and peaceful unless their faith is verbally attacked (or they are physically attacked). Hotephari is always looking for converts to her religion, but she will not tolerate sacrilege.

When dealing with the pilgrims, the following rules and important information should be made note of:

- ✿ The green lotus smoke from the censers applies a –2 penalty to all Will saves and Wisdom-related skill checks when within 10 feet of the group. The euphoria lasts for 1d6 hours after the affected Player Character leaves the area of effect.
- ✿ The constant glassy-eyed look of the pilgrims makes it decidedly difficult to read their expressions, adding +5 to the DC of using Sense Motive skill checks against them.
- ✿ If combat breaks out with the pilgrims, their fanatic zeal allows them to ignore nonlethal damage and stay conscious from 0 to –9 hit points.
- ✿ If combat breaks out with the pilgrims, the two holding censers can wield them as a mace that inflicts an additional 1d3 points of heat damage.

The Player Characters could deal with the pilgrims in a number of different ways. Under the headings below there are the most common examples of the interaction with the Hap-I cultists.

Ignore Them – The Player Characters could simply ignore them and let them pass, never knowing where they were headed but also not risking a combat with religious fanatics.

Track Them – The Player Characters could easily let them go on their way to Khnemu, following a mile or so behind them in order to use their tracks to guide them. If they do this it will require a Survival skill check DC12 to keep with the tracks, but it will lead them directly to the natural bridge just south of the hill stairs.

Join Them – The Player Characters could choose to lie to the pilgrims and join up with their pilgrimage falsely in order to find Khnemu with them. This will require the abandoning of any horses or wagons, as the pilgrims are walking slowly to make the trip more significant to their god. If the Player Characters do so, they will also have to disrobe from the waist up while they walk the rest of the way.

Question Them – The Player Characters could try to get some information as to where Khnemu is, how far it will be, how they are getting there, and so forth. This will be decidedly difficult between the pilgrims' constant chanting and talk of religious conversions, but possible. If they can manage to get a pilgrim talking (Diplomacy DC 18) about their trip instead of their god, they will receive a +2 bonus on further Knowledge (geography) or Survival checks to gain heading or direction toward Khnemu.

Fight Them – The Player Characters could decide to deal with the pilgrims physically. Perhaps they saw the robes and censers as a good cover to get in and out of Khnemu without drawing too much attention to themselves, or maybe they are just tired of trying to be converted to Hap-I. Whatever the reasoning, they could choose to attack the pilgrims.

Whatever they decide to do regarding the pilgrims, the Player Characters will likely be heady with green lotus incense for several hours to come.

Statistics for the thirteen Hap-I Pilgrims can be found in the encounters section.



REBEL CAMP

The Player Characters discover a 'hidden' camp of anti-Ctesphon IV rebels that may or may not wish to help them find Khnemu, depending on how they interact.

'Halt where you stand, outsiders!' a low and muffled voice cries out as several men and women wearing woven cotton cowls leap up from the high grasses to point deadly crossbows at you. 'State your business and your allegiance or you will know how fast asp venom can kill you!'

The speaker is the leader of a small rebel cell of former Stygian labourers, slaves and deserters that have banded together to fight against the corrupt rule of King Ctesphon IV. The leader's name is Typhamon, and he has ten friends currently surrounding the Player Characters armed with heavy crossbows dipped in farmed asp venom.

If the Player Characters make an aggressive response in any way, Typhamon will whistle and the rebels will shoot their crossbows at random targets before dropping them and drawing scimitars. They are traitors to the crown of Stygia and they are not taking any chances getting caught and fed to the crocodiles at Luxur. It is also possible that the Player Characters could be wearing Stygian soldier garb (if they stole some, bought some, etc.). If that is the case, the rebels will demand that they throw down their weapons immediately – giving the Player Characters a single moment to try and convince the rebels.

The Player Characters will likely feel they have to cover their true allegiance, which will require them to come up with a different answer. If they fail to answer at all, the rebels will attack. If they try to claim a Stygian allegiance (thinking these Stygians are patriots), the rebels will attack. If they successfully intimidate the rebels, they will not have to answer at all before the rebels take their shots and then flee instead of pressing combat.

If the Player Characters choose instead to announce that they keep no allegiances at all, and are believed by the rebels, they will be allowed to pass without harm. Should they choose an outside allegiance, like that of Shem or Punt, the rebels will be helpful. They will point out where Stygian patrols can be best avoided, and perhaps they might try to hire the Player Characters for their ongoing fight.

Although unlikely due to the danger in doing so, the Player Characters could also give it away that they are agents of the Crown of Aquilonia. If they do, there should be a few moments of tension and awkwardness while

Typhamon weighs the honesty of the comment. When he decides to believe them, he will laugh and put away his crossbow (the others doing the same). After apologising for nearly killing them all, he will invite the Player Characters back to their camp in a nearby gully.

AT THE CAMP

If the Player Characters are invited back to the rebel camp they will find it to be a row of four large tents and six covered wagons in the middle of a sinkhole gully. There are only fifteen rebels that live in the camp, but they are all devoted on raiding King Ctesphon IV's trade shipments and the lesser patrols. They will gladly feed the Player Characters and water their mounts, trying to get as much information on Aquilonia as the Player Characters will want to try and get about Stygia from them.

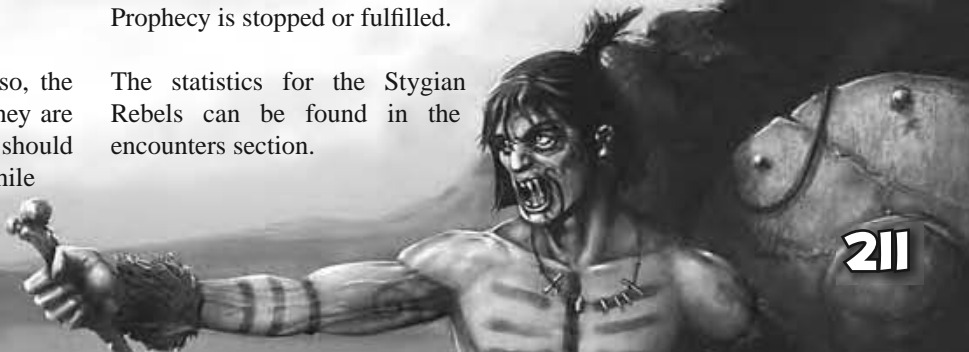
They have a dozen Stygian warhorses, ten lightly used suits of Stygian bronze hauberks with steel caps, twenty khopesh blades, thirty spears, four Stygian bows with 100 arrows, and twelve heavy crossbows with 48 bolts dipped in asp venom (which they still have several jars of as well). They will gladly sell or trade these items to any Player Characters that can seem convincing of a fight against Ctesphon IV, which might require Bluff or Diplomacy skill checks.

The rebels know the way to Khnemu very well, as it is considered a safe place to go for several different religious beliefs – including those amongst them that still worship Set. They claim to worship the serpent god in its original incarnation rather than the perverse thing that Thoth-Amon and the Black Circle have turned it into. Of course this is not really the case, but it is what they believe nonetheless.

If the rebels draw out a map to Khnemu for the Player Characters, they will reach the shores at the natural bridge in less than a week's time.

They will also try to recruit the Player Characters in an upcoming attack on a royal advisor to the king, which is to take place at the Khemi bazaar in two months. Whether or not the Player Characters choose to join them at that time is a different matter, as it will be long after the Prophecy is stopped or fulfilled.

The statistics for the Stygian Rebels can be found in the encounters section.





THE HERD HAD TO COME FROM SOMEWHERE

The Player Characters are near enough to the river tributary that they cross into the path of a huge herd of water buffalo on their way back into the plains from the river's banks.

The land ahead of you is a field of gray-brown bodies and curling horns. Over half a hundred hulking water buffalo are milling around in your path. They are grazing on the long grasses and short shrubs, the line of dried mud staining their lower bodies revealing a recent frolic in a body of water. Although they seem a peaceful group, their twitching ears and constant looking around makes you slightly nervous...

The herd of water buffalo is 60 animals strong, and can be bypassed with slow movement and good control over the Player Characters' mounts. As long as the herd does not stampede at them,

they will be able to get by them and use their huge trail of muddied ground as a path to the natural river crossing (which they used to cross earlier this day).

There are a number of reasons why the herd could become panicked and try to trample the Player Characters. They are as follows:

- ✦ Every Player Character riding, leading or driving a mount must pass a Handle Animal skill check DC 12 to keep their animal from whinnying, grunting, or testing the ground with a water buffalo. Each failure of this check has a 50% chance of causing a stampede.
- ✦ Each meat-eating animal (dogs, cheetahs and so on) that might be companions or pets with the Player Characters has a 25% chance of spooking the buffalo by their presence alone.
- ✦ The water buffalo can smell the blood in the air of the wounded, triggering their wish to flee from members of the herd that could attract predators. Any Player

Character currently with unhealed wounds has a percentage chance equal to their number of lost hit points of starting a stampede.

- ✿ Any loud noise (Games Master's discretion) has a 50% chance of setting off a stampede.
- ✿ Any aggressive action toward a member of the herd (attacking, clapping on a flank, etc.) will instantly cause a stampede.

Statistics for the individual water buffalos can be found in the encounters section; although it is unlikely they will remain around long for a prolonged battle.

CROSSING THE TRIBUTARY

The Player Characters will eventually need to cross the fast-moving waters of the Styx tributary in order to get to the side of the shore where Khnemu lies.

The cool waters of the river ahead of you have put a wet chill into the air that feels great against your travel-weary face. Only a hundred feet or so across with papyrus reeds as tall as a man for dozens of feet on either side, you begin to look for a way across.

When the Player Characters eventually reach the tributary that feeds into the River Styx, they will need to get to the eastern bank if they want to ever reach Khnemu. They have several options as to how they can try to cross to the other side however, as described in the following sections.

NATURAL CROSSING

Either through information given to them by others previously on their journey, with a Spot check DC 20, or a Knowledge (nature) check DC 16 the Player Characters could find a natural stone crossing of the Styx tributary. It is roughly eight feet wide and only a few inches above the flow of the water, which splashes over constantly when the natural flow-holes beneath cannot keep up with the current. This makes the natural bridge a treacherous place to cross, but far safer than swimming and able to be used by wagons and carts.

Anyone crossing the hundred foot bridge on foot will have to pass three Reflex saves DC 15 or slip and fall. Anyone that slips can make another Reflex save DC 20 to catch the bridge instead of falling into the flowing water. Should someone fall, they will immediately have to cross using the Swimming method below.

HIRE A BOATMAN

There are several professional boatmen every few miles on the tributary's bank. It will take 3d6 hours to find the nearest one, but the Player Characters could hire the boatman to bring them across. The trip is 5 sp per person or horse, but the boats will not be big enough for wagons, carts, or travelling more than two individuals at a time (man and horse counts as two individuals).

These boatmen make their lives not asking questions or making small talk with those they bring across the river, but they will comment if spoken to. Most are simple folk that do not know much in the way of the political situations around them, but they can talk all day about the threat of crocodile attacks and the amount of rain it takes to swell the banks of the tributary.

Finding a boatman will make the trip to the eastern bank a very easy one, but it will cost the Player Characters a handful of coins for such ease.

Use the statistics for Stygian Peasantry found in the encounters section for the boatmen.

SWIMMING

Although it might prove too difficult for some travellers, the Player Characters could want to try and simply swim across to the other side (or they had no choice because of falling in). The water is not especially deep at ten feet, or fast-moving this far south of the Styx bend, making it seem like an easy 100 foot swim from bank to bank. The only problem is the number of brown vipers that live in the waters here.

For every twenty feet that someone must swim they are required to pass not only a Swim check DC 12, but they also have a 25% chance of getting within striking range of an underwater viper, getting attacked normally. There are dozens of these small brown snakes swimming around in the currents, making it difficult for someone to fight the serpents. Most often the swimmers just feel a sharp pain in their arm or leg, and then their bodies begin to grow cold as the venom takes over.

Use the statistics for the Peat Viper found on page 117 for the attack and poison values of the brown vipers swimming around in the tributary.





ENCOUNTERS

PROPHECY POINTS

- ❖ No attempt to make the trip faster (horseback rather than on foot, asking directions from locals, etc.) +1 **Prophecy Points**
- ❖ Anyone outside of the Player Characters learning of the real reason they are headed to Khnemu +1 **Prophecy Points**
- ❖ Allowing a Stygian warrior patrol to get away after meeting the Player Characters +2 **Prophecy Points**

EXPERIENCE POINTS

- ❖ Basic Roleplaying Award for portraying characters well (500 xp)
- ❖ Dealing successfully with a Stygian Patrol (500 xp); without resorting to combat; (750 xp); and managing to steal their uniforms for further encounters (1,000 xp)
- ❖ Dealing with the Shemite traders (250 xp); while getting more useful answers to the Player Characters' questions than confusing ones (500 xp)
- ❖ Dealing with the Hap-I pilgrims long enough to discover where they are going (200 xp)
- ❖ Joining the pilgrims on their travels in order to reach Khnemu (200 xp)
- ❖ Taking the robes and other accoutrement of the pilgrims in order to sneak into Khnemu unquestioned (250 xp)
- ❖ Making allies with the Stygian Rebels (750 xp)
- ❖ Being forced to kill the Stygian Rebels (1,000 xp)
- ❖ Getting past the herd of water buffalo (250 xp); even if it stampedes (500 xp)
- ❖ Crossing the Styx tributary by hiring a boat (100 xp); using the natural crossing (250 xp); by swimming (500 xp)

STYGIAN WARRIOR

Whether driving the war chariots of the Stygian army, marching in its phalanxes, or firing arrows from the rear flanks, the loyal warriors of the Stygian Empire are devout soldiers that follow the rulings of King Ctesphon IV. They rarely ever question the orders of the king, as they are backed by the House of the Black Circle and the highest priests of Set.

Medium Humanoid (Stygian Soldier 3)

Initiative: +6 (+1 Dex, +1 Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

Sensory Traits: Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages: Aquilonian, Shemitish, Stygian

Dodge Defence: 12 (+1 Dex, +1 class)

Parry Defence: 18 (+2 Str, +2 class, +1 Parry, +3 Shield)

DR: 6 (+5 Bronze Scale Hauberk, +1 Steel Cap)

Hit Points: 30 hp

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2 (+0 against Corruption)

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 25 ft.

Attack: Khopesh +6 melee (2d4+3, 18–20/x2, AP 4), War Spear +6 melee (1d10+3, AP 2) or Stygian Bow +6 ranged (1d12+2, AP 2)

Full Attack: Khopesh +6 melee (2d4+3, 18–20/x2, AP 4), War Spear +6 melee (1d10+3, AP 2) or Stygian Bow +6 ranged (1d12+0, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +6

Special Attacks: +1 to hit with Stygian Bow, Formation Combat (Heavy Cavalry), Ride-By Attack

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 10

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Chariot or Mounted Combat, Weapon Focus (khopesh)

Skills: Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (religion) +6, Profession (charioteer) +3, Ride +7, Sense Motive +2

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 5 (+2)

Possessions: Stygian Bronze Scale Hauberk, Steel Cap, Crescent Shield, Stygian Khopesh, 2 War Spears, Stygian Bow (+3) with 12 arrows, Light Chariot, Stygian Warhorse

HAP-I PILGRIMS

Followers of the god responsible for the growth of sorcerous gardens, lotus flowers and papyrus reeds, these zealous travellers are so infused with lotus essence that they cannot help but ignore the ravages of the real world. They are nothing if not devoted, and they believe very much in a policy of 'sound body, sound soul'.

Medium Humanoid (Stygian Commoner 4 / Scholar 1)

Initiative: +4 (+3 Dex, +1 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages: Aquilonian, Old Stygian, Stygian

Dodge Defence: 14 (+2 Dex, +2 class)

Parry Defence: 15 (+3 Str, +2 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 20 hp

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +4 (+2 against Corruption)

Defensive Specials: Spells

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Dagger +5 melee (1d4+3, AP 2) or Censer Flail +5 melee (1d8 plus 1d3 heat, AP 2)

Full Attack: Dagger +5 melee (1d4+3, AP 2) or Censer Flail +5 melee (1d8 plus 1d3 heat, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +2

Grapple: +5

Special Attacks: +1 to hit with Stygian Bow, Spells

Sorcery Knowledge: Nature Magic; 3 Power Points

Magic Attack Bonus: +2 (+1 class, +1 Charisma)

Spells Known: *Animal Intercessor (Defensive Blast), Summon Beast*

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 12

Special Qualities: Background (lay priest), Knowledge is Power, Scholar

Feats: Alertness, Iron Will

Skills: Concentration +6, Diplomacy +6, Handle Animal +4, Heal +4, Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (religion) +7, Profession (priest) +4, Sense Motive +4

Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 6 (+3)

Possessions: Religious Half-robos, Stygian Dagger, some have Incense Censers, 2d4 Green Lotus seeds in a velvet pouch

STYGIAN REBELS

Disenfranchised due to the dealings of Thoth-Amon, this group of desperate men want nothing more than to see as many members of the Stygian soldiery bleed as they can.

Medium Humanoid (Stygian Soldier 3 / Nomad 3 / Thief 2)

Initiative: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

Sensory Traits: Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages: Aquilonian, Kushite, Shemitish, Stygian

Dodge Defence: 12 (+2 Dex, +2 class, +1 Dodge)

Parry Defence: 18 (+2 Str, +3 class)

DR: 5 (+4 Leather Hauberk, +1 Steel Cap)

Hit Points: 30 hp

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +2 (-1 against Corruption)

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Scimitar +10 melee (1d8+2, AP 2) or Heavy Crossbow +9 ranged (2d8 plus poison, AP 5)

Full Attack: Scimitar +10/+5 melee (1d8+2, AP 2) or Heavy Crossbow +9 ranged (2d8 plus poison, AP 5)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +7/+2

Grapple: +9

Special Attacks: +1 to hit with Stygian Bow, Formation Combat (Skirmisher), Point Blank Shot, Poison, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Born to the Saddle, Favoured Terrain (plains) +1

Feats: Chariot or Mounted Combat, Endurance, Stealthy, Track, Weapon Focus (scimitar)

Skills: Bluff +4, Handle Animal +7, Hide +14, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (religion) +6, Profession (soldier) +5, Ride +10, Search +4, Sense Motive +6, Use Rope +4

Code of Honour: Barbaric

Reputation and Social Standing: 6 (-1)

Possessions: Leather Hauberk and Steel Cap, Stygian Scimitar, Heavy Crossbow w/ 4 poisoned quarrels, Dagger, 2d6 sp

Poison (Ex): Anything that suffers damage from a Stygian Rebel's heavy crossbow attack is also affected by the following poison:

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Asp	Injury	1d2 Con	7	Immediate/1 minute/1 hour/1 hour
Venom	DC 20			hour/1 hour/1 hour/1 hour



WATER BUFFALO

Living in huge wild herds through the southern half of Hyboria, water buffalo are a source of meat, leather and bone used by many hunter tribes and wild communities. They are hulking beasts made of woolly fur and thick muscle similar to an oxen, but with much flatter and less pointed of horns.

Large Animal

Initiative: +4 (+4 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Scent, Listen +7, Spot +5

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 11 (–1 size, +2 natural)

DR: 4

Hit Dice: 5d8+15 (38 hp)

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +3

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 40 ft.

Attack: Gore +8 melee (1d8+9)

Full Attack: Gore +8 melee (1d8+9)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +13

Special Attacks: Stampede

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 4

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Alertness, Endurance

Skills: Swim +6

Possessions: –

Advancement: 6 – 7 HD (Large)

COMBAT

Water buffalo are not easily threatened into a direct attack except during mating season, or when protecting a calf. The biggest danger when dealing with water buffalo is not their horns (although they should be avoided if possible), it is the chance that the herd could become frightened and stampede.

Stampede (Ex): If panicked or frightened, water buffalo will first form a spearhead out of the herd and then try to outrun any creatures attempting to provoke or surround them. If pressured the entire herd will turn on opponents and charge at them, trampling anything that stands in their way. Any creatures caught

in a stampede that are the same size or smaller than the charging buffalo take 1d12 hit points of damage for each every five buffalo in the herd. A successful Reflex saving throw (DC 18) halves the damage.

KHNEMU AND THE RING OF TEMPLES

The Player Characters have reached lake Khnemu, or rather the grassy cliff that holds it up in the southern foothills of the Taian Mountains. They will have to manage to get up the cliff, get past the temple guards in some way, and take possession of one of the boats to go north to Qarnak. This is not going to be an easy task due to the fact that Nefanari paid the templars at Khnemu too well for them to be lax in their duties; not to mention another surprise she has concocted for anyone coming too near to her dark schemes.

Khnemu is a lake named after the god attributed for the waters of the Styx itself, situated at the top of a foothill, ringed by three sizable shrines. The lake itself flows over the edge of the hill's plateau, creating a gently rolling waterfall that feeds into the tributary. There are several sets of cobblestone steps set in the hillside to climb up to the lake's edge and the shrines, and two sets of chains that allow boats in the lake to be brought down slowly to the river below. The Player Characters should not have any trouble walking up to the top; their problems will begin when they reach it.

The following events involve the ring of shrines at lake Khnemu, and should occur at the first possible opportunity during the Player Characters' visit. It is up to the Games Master to try and include them if the actions of his Player Characters allow for it, and up to the players to figure out any ways to circumvent them.

THE LAKESIDE - TEMPLARS AND WORSHIPPERS

When they Player Characters arrive at the top of the steps, they will see the following:

As you round the last crooked step the grasslands are no more, a field thick with papyrus reeds and flowering lilies surrounds a large glassy lake. Three stone buildings set on the shores of the lake, each facing its surface on a different edge. A large boat sits in the lake in front of each of the temples. You can see other people walking around in small groups across



the lakeshore, but it is hard to tell who they are and what they are wearing from this far away...

Depending on what the Player Characters are wearing and what they choose to do when they reach the lakeside, there are several different elements that could interact with them.

TEMPLARS

There are several groups of dedicated Stygian guards roaming the area called templars; it is their job to keep the temples safe from outsiders. They are well-trained, well-equipped, and utterly conscientious in performing their job – especially since Nefanari has recently filled their pockets with gold to deal with trouble using extreme prejudice.

Stygian templars move around in units of six, three holding their poleaxes and three holding Stygian bows with arrows notched. They distrust anyone not in some kind of uniform, and are on orders to question and detain anyone who is not of Stygian heritage.

Unless the Player Characters are wearing some kind of disguise (Stygian uniforms, religious robes and so on) they will need to be extremely stealthy to get to where the boats are chained to the shrines.

If they are noticed, the templars will not immediately attack unless it is obvious that the Player Characters are not just tourists or worshippers. They will instead yell out in Stygian for them to halt and throw down their weapons. If they do so, the templars will try to take them into custody – if only long enough to throw them in the snake pit of the shrine to Set. If they hesitate for even a moment, a full fight will ensue immediately.

If the Player Characters are in some kind of disguise, the templars will try and see through their stories with Sense Motive checks against their Bluff checks. They will be rude and intimidating, even to those they believe to be members of the same army. They are very condescending toward even cultists of Set, and far more so toward ‘common’ soldiers. This will probably make any conversation with disguised Player Characters short and unfriendly, but it will likely allow them to avoid combat.

There are a total of thirty templars wandering Khnemu, none of which are allowed inside the shrine with their weaponry on their person. Statistics for the Stygian Templars can be found in the encounters section.

CULTISTS

There are three shrines around Khnemu; to Set, Hap-I and Khnemu himself. A dozen or so cultists from each religion can be found in and out of their respective shrines, all of them filled with the holy lotus incenses common to Stygian temples. They are less than trusting of those outside of their faith, and they will react violently to outsiders trespassing in their shrines. If the Player Characters are not in disguise the cultists will try to convert them; unless they are found in a shrine – at which point they will simply try to kill them as trespassing infidels.

If the Player Characters are disguised as Stygian military the cultists will simply avoid them. It is a well known fact that the military is an instrument of Set’s faith under King Ctesphon IV, so trying to convert them is futile.

If the Player Characters are instead disguised as pilgrims, the cultists allied with their proposed faith will seek them out to bring them to the shrine to ‘worship’, whereas the cultists of the other two faiths will regard them coldly but not with any hostility.

The cultists are likely the best way the Player Characters have to get inside one or more of the shrines in order to release the chains that lower the boats to the river.

Use the statistics for the Hap-I pilgrims earlier in this chapter for the cultists at Khnemu.

THE LAKE

The lake of Khnemu is a cool, freshwater source that is home to several species of local fish and small reptiles. There is almost no reason for the Player Characters to decide to go swimming or even wading in the lake itself, especially if they were aware of the lake’s largest resident – a gigantic Styxian crocodile called Amanophut.

Amanophut does not come onto land because he is kept well fed by the cultists of Khnemu, but will happily take a bite out of anyone foolish enough to go for a swim (willingly or not). It is considered a holy and protected servant of the god Khnemu, and should the Player Characters try to harm the gigantic black beast, all of the cultists at the lake will come to its rescue.

Statistics for Amanophut are the same as the Styxian Crocodile, and can be found in the encounters section.



THE BOATS

The three boats in the lake can each comfortably fit ten men and their gear, so long as they are slowly lowered down the rolling waterfall by the chains tethering them to the shrines. The chains are slipped over iron rods that keep the boat from flowing down unfettered and are able to be slipped off with a DC 14 Strength check. The only issue is that without the chains and the lowering mechanisms inside the shrine, the boat would float to the edge of the waterfall and then roll down the hill to smash itself against the rocks below.

Unless the Player Characters want to suffer the 10d6 damage from riding in a rolling riverboat down a waterfall, they will need to lower the boat before they get in it. This means that they will have to get inside at least one of the shrines, deal with the encounter inside, lower that shrine's boat, then get back down to the river level to use it without getting captured or killed.

THE SHRINES

The three shrines are little more than empty three-walled buildings littered with old offerings and gifts, each with a cranking bronze wheel mechanism that holds the boat in the lake on two stout chains and can swing it over the edge of the cliff to lower it onto the river below. The Player Characters will want to get inside of one or all of the shrines in order to free at least one of the boats in order to get to Qarnak successfully.

The shrines are simple structures kept by the cultists, each with its own individual encounter found below.

KHNEMU AT NIGHT

Should the Player Characters decide it would be easiest to hide out during the day and move at night, they will quickly realise that Khnemu is much more than just a trio of shrines. Nefanari saw in her visions that if anyone was going to stop her they would have to use the lake to get to Qarnak – so she seeded the whole area with night demons.

If the Player Characters are active during the night while at Khnemu, read the following to them:

The night seems thicker here, and the meagre torches that are hanging from the simple buildings even seem to be muted by its darkness. You believe that now is the best time to make your



move, but something catches your eye, something black sliding against the black curtain of night. It was only there for a second, but it was enough to send a chill up your spine.

The Player Characters get an immediate Spot check against the Hide skill result of the night demons, which all roll a single die for simplicity's sake. If they can see the night demons they can avoid being caught flat-footed when the horrible creatures attack them. If they fail to do so, the night demons will get a single round of surprise attacks.

There are ten night demons lurking the grounds of Khnemu at night, normally travelling in pairs. Statistics for the night demons can be found in the encounters section.

THE SHRINE TO KHNEMU

Should the Player Characters decide to go to the shrine to Khnemu, they will find a simple place that holds a strange mystery to it.

The inside of the simple grey building is intricately carved with many writings, most of which you presume tell about the story of the god. At the centre of the sizeable space you see a looming marble statue that serves as a fountain. Humanoid with a ram's



head, the statue hoists a water jug on its shoulders with streams of freshwater splashing down from the palms of its hands. Directly beneath the two streams is a heavy bronze wheel lashed with two rusted chains held taut to the boat outside.

There is not any specific trap or trick set in the shrine to Khnemu. Other than a few random cultists that might be wandering around to be dealt with, the Player Characters only have to wade into the water pool and operate the chain wheel.

The chain mechanism is greatly rusted due to the constant splashing of water upon it, making it decidedly difficult to operate quietly. Five total Strength DC 15 checks are required to turn the crank enough times to lower the boat to the tributary. Each of these checks represents 2d6 minutes of cranking. Due to the rust on the mechanism it also requires a Concentration DC 18 check every ten minutes to keep the wheel from erupting in an echoing screech that will assuredly attract the attentions of 2d6 cultists and a unit of templars.

There are 1d3–1 cultists in the temple at any given time, which will treat the Player Characters according to the notes above. Use the statistics for Hap-I pilgrims found on page 215 for these cultists, but arm them all with incense-burning censers.

THE SHRINE TO HAP-I

Should the Player Characters decide to go to the shrine to Hap-I, they will find a beautiful but deadly garden within its walls.

The heady smell of flowers and incense assault your nose with their sweet numbing odours as you enter the dimly lit shrine. The whole room is lush, growing with thick walls of ivy and flowering plants. Hummingbirds buzz from flower to flower and several brightly coloured butterflies flit to and fro. At the centre of the room is a standing brass wheel wrapped in thick chains, the very same chains that hold the boat in the lake just a few hundred feet away.

As you take a step toward the mechanism, the pale of flesh catches your eye. You look again and you see the naked form of a young man wrapped in vines, his hands held forever in prayer as dozens of long thorns hold his corpse in place.

The plant that the young cultist was sacrificed to is one of two deadly emerald lotus stalks that protect the

mechanism. When the cultists need to operate the machine, two members of their faith are offered to the plants to appease them while many others rapidly turn the crank. The Player Characters are not so lucky as to have many numbers and willing sacrifices, so they will likely need to kill the plants if they want to free the boat unmolested.

The chain mechanism is well lubricated and tended by the cultists, causing it to be easy to operate. Five total Strength DC 10 checks are required to turn the crank enough times to lower the boat to the tributary. Each of these checks represents 1d6 minutes of cranking.

Beside the two emerald lotus plants in the shrine there are normally 1d4–1 cultists tending the garden as well. They will be armed with sickle-shaped knives used for papyrus pruning that are treated as shortswords.

Statistics for the cultists are the same as the Hap-I pilgrims found on page 215, and the emerald lotus can be found in the encounters section.

THE SHRINE TO SET

The Player Characters could end up working their way inside the shrine to Set, where they will be forced to deal with several human foes and possibly a very deadly inhuman one.

The inside of the black-enamelled shrine is covered in small relief sculptures of serpents, with an enormous alabaster cobra rising up from the floor around coils as large as a man. Two gilded discs form its eyes, and you can swear that they are looking *at* you. In its coils lies a polished brazen wheel wrapped in chains, chains which you know tether the boat outside.

Several robed men and women kneel before the ledge of a well, and a trio of barrel-chested men in armour join them in a group to one side. Although all of them are humming their hymns softly, you can hear breathing from the darkness beneath them.

There are six cultists and three Stygian templars praying at the sacrificial pit when the Player Characters arrive. Depending on how loud they were coming in – if they are even trying for stealth – they might be able to sneak past the praying Set worshippers using their Move Silently and Hide skills to get to the chain mechanism. If they are noticed, both cultist and templar will attack.





The chain mechanism is frequently used and tended to by the cultists, causing it to be easy to operate. Five total Strength DC 10 checks are required to turn the crank enough times to lower the boat to the tributary. Each of these checks represents 1d6 minutes of cranking. In order to turn the mechanism quietly the operator(s) must double the amount of time it takes to crank it while passing a Concentration DC 20 check for each ten minutes of cranking. Should these rolls not be passed or attempted, the noise from the clanking wheel will break the prayers' meditations and bring them running.

If the Set worshippers are alarmed in any way and brought into conflict with the Player Characters, they will attack straight away without any need for banter or dialogue. They are disallowed to bring their weaponry into the shrine, so they will strictly use unarmed and grappling attacks in an effort of getting them in the pit with the shrine's guest.

The pit's mouth is roughly has a ten foot radius and is located at the centre of the room just twenty feet behind the chain mechanism.

THE THING IN THE PIT

If a Player Character falls, climbs or is thrown into the pit, they will first suffer damage from a twenty foot fall before their eyes adjust to the dimly lit conditions.

The floor of the well is not water, unfortunately enough, but thankfully neither is it stone. You landed hard on loosely packed sand, knocking the air from your lungs and sending a wave of impact through your bones. You struggle to regain your breath, only to hear something large looming above you...

At the bottom of the pit is a well-fed naga, a half-serpent half-woman aberration that lives off sacrifices hurled into the pit. She will attack anyone that falls into the pit. The bottom of the pit is a larger lair for her, roughly fifty feet on all sides. She keeps the clothing of her victims piled in the southeast corner, which she uses as her nest to hatch any eggs she manages to lay – when she can incapacitate a male sacrifice long enough to use him to impregnate her.

Use the same statistics for Hap-I pilgrims found page 215 for the Set cultists, but give them each the Improved Grapple feat. Statistics for the Stygian templars and the naga can be found in the encounters section.

**TAKING THE BOAT
DOWNSTREAM**

Assuming the Player Characters managed to lower a boat to the tributary, they should not have too difficult a time getting back down the cobblestone stairs to get inside, release the chains, and let the current take them further into the bend of the River Styx.

If they simply detached a boat in the lake and let it float over the rolling waterfall, there is a 75% chance that the boat will need too many repairs to hold more than 1d6 individuals. There are ample materials around to make the repairs if any of the Player Characters know how, but unless the boat is fixed or another one lowered to the river – they might have to walk along the shore all the way to Qarnak.

The boat trip to the bottom of the cliffs at Qarnak should only take ten hours downstream, during which time the Player Characters can get some much needed rest. The waters are not very rapid and are more or less crocodile-free until after the bend of the Taian Mountains, making it a relaxing journey.

WALKING ALONG THE STYX

Although a boat ride to Qarnak would be safe and peaceful, walking along the banks of the tributary is very dangerous. Many predatory animals that would ignore a floating boat might see a group of humans trudging through the mud and rocks of the bank as an easy meal.

Not only will a walking trip take 3 days due to the terrain and the bends in the river, but a Survival check DC 18 each day will be required by a scouting Player Character to avoid an encounter with an animal. If the daily check is failed, or if no one scouts out ahead of the group, the Games Master should roll on the table below to show what sort of animal will interact with the Player Characters, how many of the animal will be present, and where to find the statistics for said animal in this book.

Riverbank Encounters

1d6	Encounter	Number	Statistics Reference
1 – 2	Water Buffalo	2d6	Page 216
3	Constrictor Snake	1	Page 114
4	River Monitor	1	Page 171 (see Jungle Monitor)
5	Hippopotamus	1d2	Page 160
6	Styxian Crocodiles	1d2	Page 222





ENCOUNTERS

STYGIAN TEMPLARS

Devoted soldiers of the Stygian military, the templars are powerful fighters that are trained to keep all of the proper sacraments of Set by the teachings of the Black Circle. They are unshakeable in their faith of the scaled god, and they will not back down from any infidel. They are the holy elites, and they cannot be steered to do anything but their duties.

Medium Humanoid (Stygian Soldier 8)

Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +2 Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

Sensory Traits: Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages: Aquilonian, Old Stygian (literate), Stygian (literate)

Dodge Defence: 16 (+2 Dex, +4 class)

Parry Defence: 20 (+3 Str, +6 class, +1 Parry)

DR: 6 (+5 Bronze Scale Hauberk, +1 Steel Cap)

Hit Points: 60 hp

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +3 (+1 against Corruption)

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 25 ft.

Attack: Khopesh +12 melee (2d4+3, 18–20/x2, AP 4), Pollaxe +12 melee (2d6+7, AP 8) or Stygian Bow +11 ranged (1d12+3, AP 2)

Full Attack: Khopesh +12/+7 melee (2d4+3, 18–20/x2, AP 4), Pollaxe +12/+7 melee (2d6+7, AP 8) or Stygian Bow +11/+6 ranged (1d12+3, AP 2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1) or 10 ft. (2) with pollaxe

Base Attack: +8/+3

Grapple: +15

Special Attacks: +1 to hit with Stygian Bow, Formation Combat (Heavy Cavalry, Heavy Infantry), Improved Grapple, Ride-By Attack

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 12

Special Qualities: Officer

Feats: Brawl, Chariot Combat, Weapon Focus (khopesh), Weapon Focus (pollaxe), Weapon Specialisation (pollaxe)

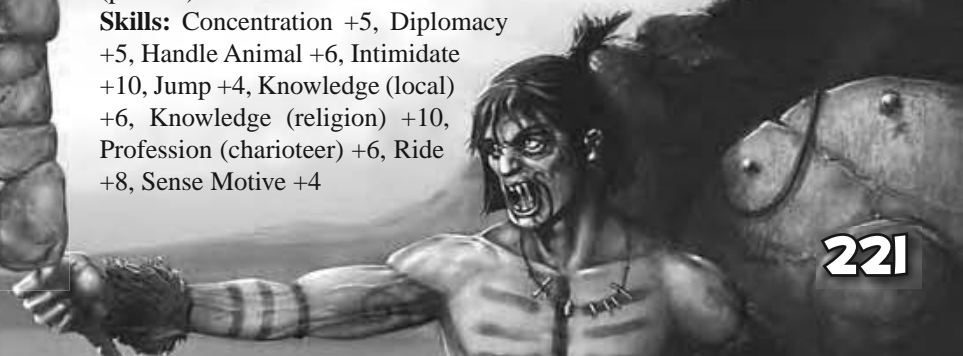
Skills: Concentration +5, Diplomacy +5, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +10, Jump +4, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (religion) +10, Profession (charioteer) +6, Ride +8, Sense Motive +4

PROPHECY POINTS

- ✦ The Player Characters fought the night demons but did not manage to destroy all of them, leaving at least one to report to Nefanari **+2 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ The Player Characters were seen for who they truly are and did not eliminate the witness(es) **+1 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ The Player Characters managed to steal a riverboat without alerting any Stygian templars that were not dealt with **–1 Prophecy Points**
- ✦ The Player Characters chose not to worry about the boat and walk **+1 Prophecy Points**

EXPERIENCE POINTS

- ✦ Basic Roleplaying Award for portraying characters well (500 xp)
- ✦ Entering the Khnemu community without immediately being attacked (250 xp); without being seen at all (500 xp)
- ✦ Dealing with groups of Stygian templars (500 xp per group); without having to fight them (750 xp per group)
- ✦ Dealing with groups of cultists (250 xp); without being discovered as trespassing infidels (500 xp)
- ✦ Killing Amanophut the Crocodile (1,000 xp)
- ✦ Killing the Night Demons (500 xp each)
- ✦ Killing ALL of the Night Demons (500 xp extra)
- ✦ Using the chain mechanism in Khnemu's shrine (175 xp); without making a sound (250 xp)
- ✦ Killing the Emerald Lotus plants in Hap-I's shrine (500 xp each)
- ✦ Using the chain mechanism in Hap-I's shrine (150 xp)
- ✦ Using the chain mechanism in Set's shrine (150 xp); without alerting the praying worshippers (500 xp)
- ✦ Killing the naga in the sacrificial pit (1,500 xp)
- ✦ Using a stolen boat to travel downstream successfully (500 xp); without destroying any of the boats in the process (750 xp)





Code of Honour: Civilised

Reputation and Social Standing: 10 (+4)

Possessions: Stygian Bronze Scale Hauberk, Steel Cap, Stygian Khopesh, Stygian Pollaxe, Stygian Bow (+3) with 10 arrows, 500 sp in gold baubles

STYXIAN CROCODILE

Amongst the massive crocodiles that line the banks of the River Styx in Stygia and Shem, the Styxian crocodiles are a race of true throwbacks to an ancient age. These near-black beasts are made up of thick, knobby hide and have long mouths filled with interlocking teeth as long as daggers. They are much more sinister than a common crocodile, often choosing to attack large prey that draws too near just because they have the opportunity.

In just a few years a good example of an adult will be around twelve feet in length, while some who have been reported to have lived for decades can easily grow as long as thirty feet in length! The old beast Amanophut is easily twenty feet from nose to tail, and has lived at Khnemu for at least one generation of Stygian kings.

Huge Animal

Initiative: +10 (+1 Dex, +9 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision, Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 16 (–2 size, +1 Dex, +7 natural)

DR: 8

Hit Dice: 10d8+50 (95 hp)

Saves: Fort +12, Ref +10, Will +4

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 20 ft., 30 ft. swim

Attack: Bite +14 melee (2d8+13, AP 9) or tail slap +14 melee (1d12+13)

Full Attack: Bite +14 melee (2d8+13, AP 9) and tail slap +9 melee (1d12+13)

Space/Reach: 15 ft. (3) / 10 ft. (2)

Base Attack: +7

Grapple: +24

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Savage Roll

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 29, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 1, Wis 13, Cha 3

Special Qualities: Hold breath

Feats: Alertness, Endurance, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (hide)

Skills: Hide +1, Swim +17

COMBAT

Styxian crocodiles have a very simple technique to deal with nearly anything it attacks – bite it and roll until the target comes apart. They can batter things around with their tails as well, but the simple thrash–until–dead method generally does in all but the toughest of victims.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a Styxian crocodile must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can then begin to hopefully move the target to deeper water. Once it has a target in its mouth it can begin to savage roll as well.

Hold Breath (Ex): A Styxian crocodile can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to four times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Savage Roll (Ex): Styxian crocodiles cannot effectively chew their food, so they instinctually roll rapidly in the water in an action that tears prey to pieces brutally so as to be swallowed. Crocodiles performing the savage roll action inflict their bite damage and automatically threaten a critical hit – they do not need to roll to hit, merely to confirm the potential critical hit for double normal damage.

Skills: Styxian crocodiles have a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, and can perform the run action while swimming. Crocodiles also receive a +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks while in the water, and can choose to only reveal its eyes and nostrils in murky water to gain an additional +10 cover bonus to its Hide checks.



NIGHT DEMONS

Summoned by the sorceress Nefanari and her demonic master, the night demons are foul humanoid things that only exist when the sun is not shining and fire is not burning their black, inky skin. They have sickle-like hands that end in wicked hooks which they use to disembowel their foes, rolling around in the spilt organs when the battle is over to fuel their sadistic existences. Night demons have black skin with a satiny finish, no hair or facial features of any kind, but can 'see' nonetheless.

Medium Outsider (demon)

Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Listen +3, Spot +20

Languages: Demonic, Old Stygian and Acheronian (understand only)

Dodge Defence: 17 (+2 Dex, +1 Dodge, +4 natural)

DR: 2

Hit Dice: 6d8+12 (39 hp)

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +8

Defensive Specials: Dodge, Rubbery Flesh, Weakness to Fire

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Claw +10 melee finesse (1d8+2, AP 6)

Full Attack: 2 Claws +10 melee finesse (1d8+2, AP 6)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +6

Grapple: +8

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack +3d6

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 17, Cha 14

Special Qualities: Blindsight, Manifest

Feats: Multiattack, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills: Climb +10, Hide +20, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Jump +10, Move Silently +18

COMBAT

Night demons use their innate stealth to get into prime assassination positions, tearing at the softer organ masses of their victims to inflict the most amount of damage they can at once with their vicious claws.

Blindsight (Ex): Night demons have blindsight, the extraordinary ability to use a combination of magical, non-visual senses to operate effectively without vision. This ability makes invisibility and concealment (even magical darkness) irrelevant to the night demon. This ability operates out to a range of 60 feet. A night demon cannot distinguish colour or visual contrast with its

blindsight (which means it cannot read). It is immune to spells or spell-like effects with a range of Evil Eye and to other gaze attacks. The night demon is immune to being blinded. Blindsight works underwater and in a vacuum.

Manifest (Su): As a standard action, the night demon can either leave Earth and return to its home place, or appear on Earth. In either case, it manifests at the new location at the end of its action.

Rubbery Flesh (Ex): Night demon flesh is so resilient and rubbery that their Damage Reduction is increased to 6 against bludgeoning weapons, and bludgeoning weapons always have an Armour Piercing rating of 0 against night demons.

Skills: The night demon's black, light-absorbing body coupled with its preternatural stealth and cunning, give it a +8 bonus to all Hide and Move Silently checks.

EMERALD LOTUS PLANT

Emerald lotus is an iridescent green plant with a sharp, musky odour. Its vine-like sections are dotted with very sharp thorns, and it grows only with the blood of its victims – often given in the form of animal or human sacrifices by the plant's zealous caretakers.

Many sorcerers grow clippings of wild emerald lotus to protect their precious herb and alchemy gardens, keeping them sated through trespassers and frequent offerings. The leaves and flowers of the plant can be dried and smoked as a very powerful hallucinogen that adds to the magical potency of the imbiber, but can quite addictive; leaving many addicts an ashen and withdrawn image of their former self. This is why the cult of Hap-I tend to have many allies amongst Stygian sorcerers and scholars.

Large Plant

Initiative: +4 (+3 Dex, +1 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Low-light vision

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 13 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural)

DR: 2

Hit Dice: 4d8+20 (38 hp)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +4, Will –3

Defensive Specials: Plant traits





Speed: 2 ½ ft. (cannot run)
Attack: Whip-like Branch +7 melee finesse (1d4+4)
Full Attack: 2 Whip-like Branches +7 melee finesse (1d4+4)
Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 15 ft. (3)
Base Attack: +3
Grapple: +11
Special Attacks: Blood Drain, Blood Frenzy, Constrict, Improved Grab
Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 16, Con 20, Int –, Wis 2, Cha 26
Special Qualities: Blindsense, Mindless
Feats: –
Skills: –

COMBAT

Emerald lotus uses its whip-like branches to sink its hollow thorns into its foes, drinking of their blood quickly and efficiently. Their mobility is remarkable, even leaning and thrashing toward the scent of blood in the air, like any other agitated predator.

Blindsense (Ex): Emerald lotus can locate creatures within a 90 foot radius at all times, regardless of lighting conditions.

Blood Drain (Ex): An emerald lotus that manages to succeed in a grapple check with a living target can suck its blood with its thorns. If it pins the foe, it drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution damage each round the pin can be maintained. For each successful round of blood drain, the emerald lotus gains 5 temporary hit points.

Blood Frenzy (Ex): An emerald lotus knows when a possible food creature is injured within 90 feet of their position, flying into hunger frenzy and will become subject to this special rule. It gains a +2 bonus to all hit and damage rolls, but a –2 penalty to its defence. This state lasts for one minute.

Constrict (Ex): On a successful grapple check, an emerald lotus deals 1d6+6 damage.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, an emerald lotus must hit with its whip-like branch attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict (see above) or pin for the *blood drain* ability.

NAGA

The naga (both singular and plural) are an ancient race of all-female Set-worshippers that once were human, but gave their bodies over to the dark god in sacrifice to become powerful creatures. He taught them how to make the men of the world serve them, become fathers to their young, and to sustain them like cattle sustains the tribes. They became his priestesses, his lustful slaves; and they were enthralled by his power.

This naga is roughly seven feet in length, with a olive-skinned, supple and attractive feminine torso atop the coiled trunk of an asp. Her eyes are an unearthly green with golden slits, and her ivory smile hides a pair of small fangs. The ends of her fingers are wickedly sharpened talons of bone.

Large Monstrous Humanoid

Initiative: +14 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative, +6 Reflex)
Sensory Traits: Darkvision 60 ft., Low-light vision, Listen +11, Spot +12
Languages: Old Stygian

Dodge Defence: 19 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +1 Dodge, +5 natural)

DR: 2

Hit Dice: 7d10+7 (45 hp)

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +10, Will +5

Defensive Specials: Dodge, Regeneration (Ex) 1d6

Speed: 30 ft., 30 ft. swim

Attack: Claw +9 melee (1d3+3 and poison)

Full Attack: 2 claws +9 melee (1d3+3 and poison) and tail +5 melee (1d8+5)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +7

Grapple: +18

Special Attacks: Constrict, Improved Grab, Poison

Sorcery Knowledge: Hypnotism. 15 Power Points

Magic Attack Bonus: +8 (+3 natural, +5 Charisma)

Spells Known: *Domination, Entrance, Terrible Fascination (defensive blast)*

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 21

Special Qualities: –

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Combat Expertise, Deceitful, Improved Natural Attack (tail)

Skills: Bluff +12, Climb +10, Concentration +11, Diplomacy +13, Hide +12, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (religion) +12, Move Silently +12, Sense Motive +12



COMBAT

The naga prefers not to use combat to deal with their enemies if they do not have to, relying on what little sorcery they have instinctively in them to lure victims to their venomous embrace. In certain situations like the one caught in the sacrificial pit of the shrine of Set, they often coat their weapons and claws with their toxic saliva, paralyzing a foe in order to then properly dedicate the kill to the Snakefather.

Constrict (Ex): On a successful grapple check, a naga deals 2d8+10 damage.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a naga must hit with its tail attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict (see above).

Poison (Ex): Naga saliva is a deadly paralytic venom that they coat their weaponry in. Anything that suffers damage from a naga's claws or weaponry is also affected by the following poison. This also happens to occur if something is kissed or licked by a naga.

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Naga Venom	Contact DC 15	1d3 Dex	5	One per round

Skills: Naga have a +4 racial bonus to Climb, Hide and Move Silently skill checks due to their flexible serpentine bodies.

THE RUINS OF QARNAK

The ruins of Qarnak are not like other ruins found throughout Hyboria. They are not a set of broken buildings and walls laid low; quite the contrary. The River Styx bends westward here, having cut a deep canyon into the Taian Mountains on its way to the western sea. Qarnak

exists in the side of the canyon wall, a series of small openings surrounding a larger one. The largest opening is the main entrance, leading into a network of smaller tunnels and rooms. Numerous temples and tombs exist within the red cliff walls, situated between two huge colossi once carved to look like Acheronian kings – but have been worn to seem like faceless forms.

Qarnak was where the ancient serpent-men of Stygia originally entombed their dead. They used powerful magic and slaves to dig tunnels to lay their remains, placing inscribed boulders in the tunnels to mark the graves. Over a thousand different serpent-men were laid to rest here, but it was in the age of the last Atlanteans that saw Qarnak most heavily populated.

Just a few years before Atlantis was swallowed by the sea, the serpent-men were pushed by the bronze-wielding men away from the coasts. Several of the leaders of the serpent-men chose Qarnak as a fitting place to hide, but the Atlanteans found them regardless. A bloody battle was fought in the dark tunnels, and the Atlanteans were pushed back long enough for the eldest of the serpent-men at Qarnak, a creature called *Amantherodi*, to place a large stone in the mouth of the main tunnel. He sealed his enemies out and warded the stone against them. Unfortunately for the rest of the serpent-men inside however, who were trapped inside to starve and perish. They all died in the darkness of the tunnels, but Amantherodi became something else.

Over the following centuries Qarnak became a target of grave robbers and artefact hunters due to the number of inscriptions in Old Stygian that refer to it. Smashing the warded boulder to pieces over decades and chiselling new entrances into the external tombs through the cliff face, the tomb-tunnels of Qarnak became an open ruin for commonplace plunder and exploration.

Any Player Character with the Knowledge (ancient history) or Knowledge (local – Stygia) skill(s) could make a check to learn information about this place. The table below shows the amount of information that can be given to a character whose skill check reaches the listed result.



Qarnak Information

Knowledge (ancient history) result	Knowledge (local – Stygia) result	Information ¹
5 – 10	11 – 15	Qarnak is an ancient tomb complex that was opened a hundred years ago.
11 – 15	16 – 20	It was the resting place to serpent-men and Giant Kings.
16 – 20	21 – 25	It was sealed from the inside by the ancient serpent-men.
21 – 25	26 – 30	It is said to be haunted by the spirits of the serpent-men that died trapped in the tombs.
26+	31+	There is a strong and powerful evil presence said to dwell inside.

¹ This information is cumulative.

The ruins of Qarnak are considered a dangerous place without the added threats that the Atlantean Prophecy has called into being. The Player Characters are in for a difficult and treacherous trip into the twisting tunnels, temples and tombs of the ruins. They will need to persevere however, or the Prophecy will be fulfilled and Amantherodi will use them to destroy the realms of mankind.

REACHING THE CLIFFS

When the Player Characters reach the cliffs under Qarnak, they should be given the following description to prepare them for how they will be getting inside.

Two towering faceless colossi cast their great shadows over the river ahead, between their massive feet sits two small boats tied to stakes driven into the red stone of the cliff. Two men in Stygian armour see your approach and draw back their bows...

The two men are Stygian templars left to watch the boats. They are just two of several templars inside the ruins; it is simply their shift to watch over the boats.

When they see the Player Characters' boat (or group on foot, if need be), they should be about 200 feet away. The templars will use their bows until the Player Characters are within pollaxe range, at which point they will switch to using them.

The boat, if left to the current of the Styx, will move 20 feet closer per turn. For each person rowing as well, 10 feet can be added to that total, up to a bonus of +30 feet. The water is about fifteen feet deep in most places in the canyon, but there is a twenty foot long rock shelf between the colossi that is only three feet deep, making a decent place to beach boats and get out.

The templars are exactly like the ones sent to Khnemu, but these two also have grappling hooks and rope ladders coiled in piles nearby if they needed to ascend to the ruins without waiting for their replacements. There is a more permanently attached rope ladder rolled up at the landing of the entrance that can be dropped down to the bank.

After dealing with the two templars, the Player Characters will need to figure out how to scale a hundred feet of red stone cliffs. There are a few ways they can hope to make it, or they can come up with one on their own. Some of the notes concerning the climb are as follows:

- ✦ Besides the ranged attack roll needed to hurl a grappling hook properly, it requires a Strength check DC 20 to get the heavy metal hook high enough to catch on the entrance. A heavy crossbow or arbalest can be rigged to fire the grappling hook in order to bypass the Strength check, but the shot will suffer a – 5 penalty to hit.
- ✦ Using a simple rope will require five Climb checks at DC 15, each one gaining 20 feet of altitude.
- ✦ There are numerous foot and handholds in the cliffside, making it a relatively easy but lengthy climb. It takes 10 Climb checks at DC 12 to scale the cliff, each successful check gaining 10 feet of altitude.
- ✦ Using a rope ladder (by grapple or by lowering the chained one from the entrance) requires only five Climb checks at DC 8, each one gaining 20 feet of altitude.

Once the climb is completed the Player Characters will find themselves at the mouth of the main temple/tunnel.

Statistics for the Stygian templars can be found earlier in this chapter, on page 221.



THE MAIN TUNNEL

The Player Characters are now inside the ruins of Qarmak, and they find themselves in the main tunnel/temple of the ruin. They are not alone however, and they will need to overcome the ‘watchdog’ Nefanari’s rider left for them before they can enter the internal tunnels of the ruin to find her.

The red stone of the cliff gives way to faded browns as the sun ceases to reach inside of the entrance. The walls are smooth and wind-worn, but the floor is covered in the scuffs and gouges of heavy items being moved in and out of the tunnel. Fifty feet deep, the main tunnel ends at a low stone arch covered in weathered and worn inscriptions.

As you step nearer you hear an almost derisive snort from the darkness beyond, then the galloping of hooves. Suddenly the darkness bursts outward like a bubble, a massive black warhorse with glowing red eyes charging out from it directly at you!

The horse was once the Uncanny Steed originally summoned for Nefanari’s personal rider, Ammuphis Typh. Unlike the other demonic steeds that the Player Characters have dealt with, which were summoned in a lesser form by Thoth-Amon for their missions, this steed is a mighty beast amplified by the strength of the Prophecy.

Depending on the total number of Prophecy Points earned by the Player Characters’ actions so far, the Demonic Stallion has the following physical aspects and augmentations:

Demonic Steed Prophecy Adjustments

Total Number of Prophecy Points	Physical Effect	Game Effects ¹
0 – 10	Larger and More Muscled	+5 to hit and damage, +50 hit points, +3 Damage Reduction, +3 to all Saving Throws and Skill Checks
11 – 13	Eyes Burn Red	Always passes Spot checks
14 – 16	Hooves and Teeth Smoke Constantly	In icts 1d6 fire damage to Bite and Hoof attacks
17 – 19	Bat Wings	Removes limitations on Flying Movement
20 – 22	Serpentine Head	Bite damage uses 2d6 instead of 1d8
23 – 25	Black Bronze Barding	Damage Reduction increases to 10
26 – 28	Huge Fangs	Adds Naga Venom to Bite attacks (see page 225)
29+	Flaming Mane and Hooves	Adds 1d6 to existing fire damage

¹ These bonuses are cumulative.

Once they have dealt with the Demonic Stallion the Player Characters are free to begin the dangerous exploration of the ruins of Qarnak.

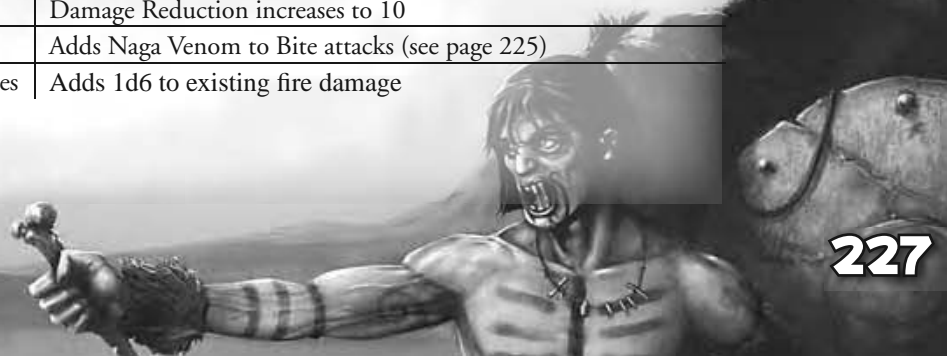
The Demonic Stallion uses the same base statistics as the Lesser Uncanny Steed on page 60, with the above modifications.

EXPLORING QARNAK

The tunnel becomes much smaller beyond the archway, only three men across at best, and perhaps ten feet high. The ground is even and smooth from centuries of feet and *other* methods of locomotion rubbing against it, and you can see several smaller tunnels and gateways shooting off from the main corridor.

Somewhere, faint as a whisper on the wind, you can hear a baby crying...

The tunnels within the ruins of Qarnak have been sealed and uncovered many times over; making them a twist of natural halls and rooms sandwiched between new expansions and dug up hollows. This makes Qarnak a difficult place to navigate to a specific place very quickly. In the case of the Player Characters, they are trying to get to the heart of the complex to stop Nefanari, which is where she is conducting her ritual to know the herald of the Prophecy. This will require them to do a bit of exploring.





There is at least one infant in the main chamber with Nefanari and Amantherodi, and it is cold, hungry and very upset. Its cries and wails will echo throughout the ruin complex, giving the Player Characters something to try and home in on as they explore the darkness. The sound is faint and echoing, making it very difficult to track effectively, but it is better than simply wandering the miles of tunnels within the mountains.

Whoever is currently in the lead to make a Listen check at DC 25. Failure means a random roll on the table below, which could result in a number of different encounters (including the right path!). Success means that the first table below is bypassed altogether and the Games Master should move the Player Characters into the next un-encountered event segment on the second table. These events are the important ones that will eventually lead the Player Characters to Nefanari's ritual chamber. This second table's event segments can only occur once, and always in the order listed.

Qarmak Random Exploration Table

2d6 Result	Type of Encounter
2	Inhabited Temple of Set
3	Inhabited Tomb
4 – 5	Patrolling Templars
6 – 7	Empty Corridor
8 – 9	Ransacked Tomb
10	Sealed Tomb Entrance
11	Uninhabited Temple
12	Go to <i>Event Segment Table</i> below, choosing the first un-encountered event segment listed

Event Segment Table

Order of Occurrence	Event Segment Name
1 st	Atlantean Corpse
2 nd	Birthing Room
3 rd	The Sacrifices
4 th	Ritual Room

INHABITED TEMPLE OF SET

The Player Characters have found one of the several small temples to the Scaled God as the serpent-men once worshipped him. Unluckily for them, these places sometimes are still home to the god's children.

You climb up a step into a larger room, your light suddenly bouncing off brushed copper scales set in the floor and ceiling. There is a large statue standing in the centre of the shining room is a basalt statue of a man with a serpent's head, holding bejewelled replicas of the ankh and flail of rulership. The statue is waist deep in a stone recess in the floor; a recess which, as your eyes adjust, is home to a slithering mass of brown and green snakes undulating like a scaly sea of death!

The snake pit holds an asp swarm, which will ignore the Player Characters unless they choose to get within 10 feet of its edge (especially if they try to steal the jewels in the statue. The ankh weighs twenty pounds and is worth 10,000 sp, while the flail is eighteen pounds and is worth 12,000 sp.

Statistics for the asp swarm can be found in the encounters section.

INHABITED TOMB

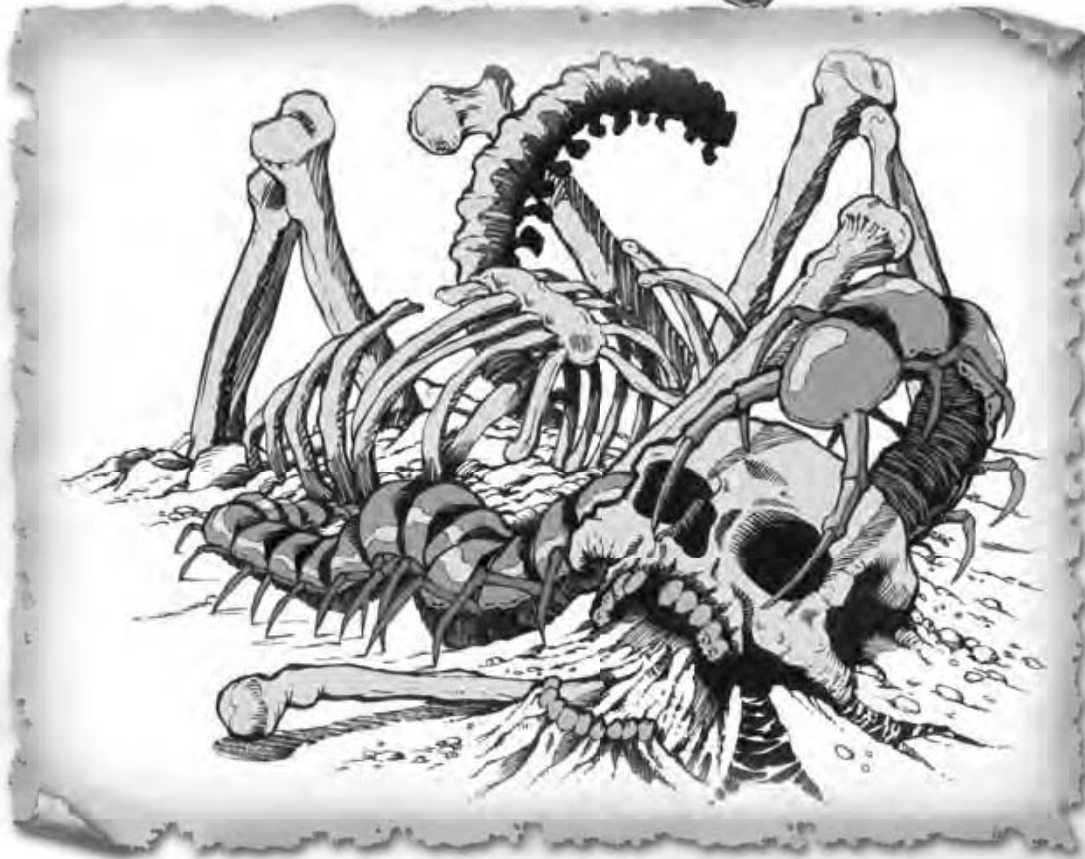
A pile of bones on a raised dais in the centre of the room tells you that you have found one of the many open tombs in the ruins. It is an unremarkable room except for the bones, which you would have thought would be laid with more care. In fact, one of the two sets of humanoid bodies looks so dishevelled that it could have *fell* onto the dais.

The bones are of grave robbers that were ambushed by the giant centipedes or giant scorpions that live in the tomb now, Games Masters choice. There are either 1d4+2 giant centipedes *or* 1d3+1 large giant scorpions in the room, lurking behind the dais to ambush anyone who gets too close.

If they manage to do so, searching nearby the grave robbers' remains will find a bronze dagger of average quality, a tarnished silver ring with an opal in the setting (worth 50 sp), and 3d6 sp.

Statistics for the giant centipedes and giant scorpions can be found in the encounters section.





PATROLLING TEMPLARS

The tunnel shifts to one side very abruptly, and you can hear footsteps echoing your way from the side corridor. The flicker of torchlight shows from which direction the sounds are coming, meaning that your lights are likely doing the same for them. The pace of the steps increases, and the sound of a blade emerging from its scabbard tells you to be ready.

Nefanari is well aware that there are dangers in the ruins not under her control, so she brought two boats full of Stygian templars with her. The Player Characters are about to run headlong into a small unit of 1d3+1 of them.

Use the statistics on page 221 for the Stygian templars.

EMPTY CORRIDOR

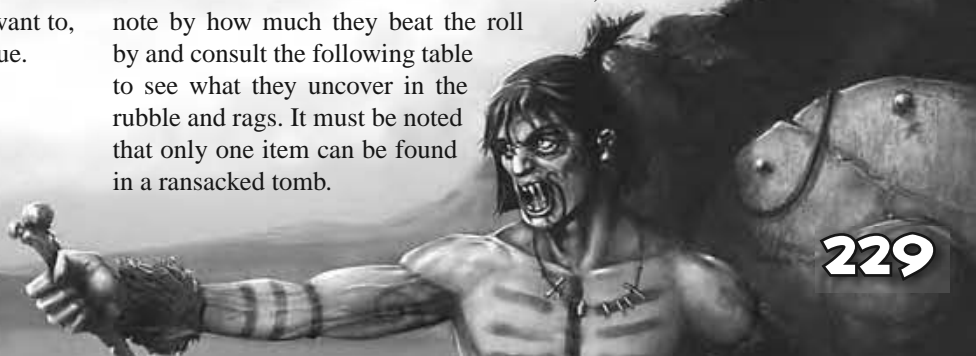
The Player Characters are moving through a long and winding hall or tunnel without anything of note within it. They can spend some time investigating if they want to, but they will not discover anything of note or value.

RANSACKED TOMB

You have to squeeze yourself past the shattered slab in the doorway to the small room you have just entered. Inside you see that you are not the first to have discovered this place. Stones have been toppled, bones are scattered everywhere, and the remnants of a torch lie a few feet from you. This place has already been pored over, but perhaps they missed something.

There have been 1d6 other people in this room before, each one a skilled grave robber or researcher looking for treasure and/or artefacts. It is possible to have missed something though, and the Player Characters will have to roll higher on a Search skill check than they did. The previous searchers had an average of +10 on their Search checks, and the Games Master should roll each separately before having the Player Characters roll theirs.

The Player Character that rolls highest and higher than the best result of the Games Master's rolls, should note by how much they beat the roll by and consult the following table to see what they uncover in the rubble and rags. It must be noted that only one item can be found in a ransacked tomb.





Uncovered Tomb Loot

Beat Result By...	Item(s) Discovered
1 – 3	Bracelet or Armlet worth 3d6 x100 sp
4 – 6	Jewelled Ring or Pendant worth 1d3 x 1,000 sp
7 – 9	Stygian Bronze Dagger
10+	Atlantean Bronze Halfblade (see <i>Atlantean Corpse</i> page 231)

Other than anything they might discover in the tomb, there is nothing of note in these rooms except for some worn-away writings of names in Old Stygian.

SEALED TOMB ENTRANCE

A heavy stone slab is wedged and mortared into the wall ahead of you, some worn-away writing on its outside possibly giving directions that you cannot hope to read. Although the tunnel continues on beside it, your curiosity is pulling at your mind about what could be behind it.

Moving the sealed stone can be done in three main ways: manually, structurally, or magically.

Trying to manually move the stone from its place requires a total of 50 Strength passing DC 20 Strength checks. For example, if four men with Strength 13 (total of 52) each pass a DC 20 check, the mortar cracks and the boulder comes loose.

Trying to break the boulder structurally requires hammers, mattocks or similar tools inflicting a total of 50 points of damage to the boulder (it has a Hardness of 8). This will be tiring and noisy work that might (35%) attracts the attention of a group of Stygian templars (see above).

Using a magical spell, such as *Burst Barrier*, simply needs to either pass a DC 30 Strength check or inflict 30 points of damage beyond the boulder's Hardness to upset its position and cause it to fall loose.

Anyone within 5 feet of the entrance when the boulder is removed will be buffeted with several centuries-old air,

forcing them to pass a Fortitude save DC 15 or wretch violently for 1d3 rounds.

If the Player Characters get inside the tomb, read the following:

The thick scent of mould and stale air hangs in this room, and your torch makes smoky wisps of the layers of spider webs that coat the entire room. At the centre is a raised pile of stones, upon which rests the skeletal remains of something near half again as tall as a man, but with a serpent's neck and huge fangs set in a reptilian skull. Lying around it are several sacks and chests that look as though they would turn to rot and dust when you touch them.

Beside the skeleton of the serpent-man, which would be a treasure to scholars in faraway lands, there are numerous items in the rotting chests and sacks around it. The following list shows what can be found in a newly uncovered tomb.

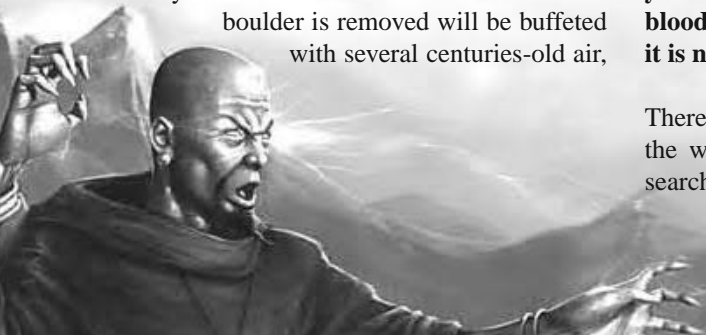
- ✿ 1d3-1 Bronze khopesh blades
- ✿ 2d3 pieces of golden jewellery (worth 2d6 x50 sp each)
- ✿ 1d4 pieces of bejewelled art (worth 2d6 x100 sp each)
- ✿ 1d3-2 Unstrung Stygian Bows made of Bone (+5)
- ✿ 5d6 Bronze Arrowheads
- ✿ 5d6 ancient golden coins (worth 2d6 x10 sp each)

It should be noted that any Player Character that chooses not to desecrate the grave within the tomb out of altruistic beliefs (rather the fear of curses or retribution) should receive a Fate Point for their higher ideals.

UNINHABITED TEMPLE

The high-ceilinged room that you just entered was once some kind of shrine or temple, but has since fallen into long disrepair. The once towering statue of Set has been toppled, his reptilian features barely visible in the large dusty chunks of basalt. There are places on the walls where gems have been pried free from ancient relief sculptures, and there is nothing but dust and bones in the snake pit at the centre of the room. It is eerie to know that several hundred years ago this place was likely home to countless bloody sacrifices; especially with how grey and empty it is now.

There is nothing to find within the empty temple, but the wandering Stygian templars are too devout to go searching in such a defiled place of their faith, making it



an excellent place for the Player Characters to rest. They will not likely want to waste an entire evening while the ritual is taking place, but they could take a moment to bind wounds and ready themselves if need be.

ATLANTEAN CORPSE

The Player Characters find a room that saw the end of one of the ancient Atlantean warriors that came to deal with the serpent-men. There is something to be learned from the remains, and more to be scavenged from it.

You brush aside a thick layer of spider web and step down into a recessed room that looks only recently uncovered, albeit empty. Only a few boulders, square-cut stones that must have fallen from the ceiling decades ago, lie in the centre of the room.

As you walk around them though, you gasp at the sight of an armoured skeleton lying on the floor. So many cobwebs and dust layers its exposed skull that you would think it a hundred years old or more. Its leg bone is snapped of at the ankle where the stones must have fallen onto it. It wears a helmet and breastplate made of bronze and cast in a style that you have never seen before, and lying in the dust is a pair of matching blades. The bronze looks still good and sharp despite being possibly centuries old.

The corpse was already dead when the stones came down and crushed its foot. If the Player Characters search or loot the remains, they will also find a slender bronze arrowhead on the floor under its ribcage (the poisoned arrow that killed him).

Besides the arrowhead, the following items can be found on the Atlantean corpse: two Atlantean Bronze Halfblades, one Atlantean Bronze Helm, and one Atlantean Bronze Breastplate. Descriptions of these items are below.

Atlantean Bronze Halfblade – Like a shortsword forged with an axe’s edge, a halfblade is a one-handed martial weapon similar to a miniature broadsword. It is used to chop at an enemy rather than thrust, hence its slightly rounded tip.

Atlantean Bronze Helm – Forged from a single piece of Atlantean bronze, the visorless helm was popular with the two-handed fighters of Atlantis’ infantry. It has a curving nose-guard that looks somewhat like a hawk’s beak, low-swept points at the jawline, and a somewhat oval-shaped point at the back of the head. It was said that an unarmed Atlantean soldier could always take off his helm and smash a foe with it. Other than the material it is made from, this is no different functionally than a normal helm.

Atlantean Bronze Breastplate – Sculpted to look like the well-muscled chest of a human man, this breastplate looks as though it should be form-fitting to the wearer. It is not however, and a stiff undershirt would be needed to wear this comfortably. Above the left breast of the sculpted chest is a strange but somewhat familiar pattern of swirling stars – the birthmark of the women involved in the prophecy, and the insignia for the Atlantean Legion!

Atlantean Bronze Halfblade

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Armour Piercing	Range Increment	Hardness	Hit Points	Weight	Type
Atlantean Halfblade	2d4	20/x3	3	–	8	6	5 lb.	Slashing

Atlantean Bronze Breastplate

Armour	Damage Reduction	Max Dex Bonus	Armour Check Penalty	Sorcery Failure	Speed	Weight
Atlantean Breastplate	6	+3	–3	60%	30 ft.	16 lb.





Games Masters should pay attention to how the remains are treated. Did the Player Characters fully loot it? Did they smash it up? Were they gentle? These types of questions will be important later if the Prophecy comes to fruition, as this corpse will be one of several in the ruins that will rise to defend the demonlord controlling them.

ATLANTEAN BRONZE

The weapons and armour of Atlantis were often cast from a special alloy of bronze and silver in a long lost forging method that created a light but strong material that resisted tarnish and rust better than any other material known to mankind. Although not as sharp or hard as Akbitanan steel, Atlantean bronze lasts effectively forever, barring the misuse of foolish men who may not know what they have.

BIRTHING ROOM

The Player Characters enter the room in which the marked maidens (or at least Nefanari) had their babies for the pending ritual. Just how much blood and viscera can be seen at the foot of the birthing table is highly dependant on how many marked women were killed or saved by the Player Characters' actions throughout the campaign. Should one have gotten captured, and then there will be two birth's worth, two women means three births, and so on. It must be noted that even if all of the maidens were killed or saved there will still be the remains of the last birth – Nefanari's.

The stench of soured blood and boiled wine assaults your nostrils as you enter a room littered with stone tables. Your eyes fall upon one of them, a trough of blood, waste and other matter at the foot of it, a red-brown splatter running down its side. Next to it you can see several tools of silver, including a bloody knife as long as your hand.

'S-she,' a voice whispers from the other side of the table, 'made me h-help her.'

The voice belongs to a local midwife, Radifi, that Nefanari bought

from her husband for a sack of gold and put her to work making sure that the babies needed for the ritual were brought into the world safely. Even though Nefanari used *Bound to the Course* to ensure the destined timing of the birth(s), she knew little about the labour process, forcing her to acquire help.

The midwife has since been bitten by Nefanari's asp and lies on the floor of the birthing room, dying. Unless the Player Characters have something that can instantly cure deadly venoms. She will say that the baby (or babies) has the 'bluest of eyes, like the sea', before she dies, but she can be kept alive using the Heal skill for a few minutes longer to tell of other facts about the birth. For each successful Heal skill check DC 20, the Games Master can have Radifi say one of the following quotes.

- ✿ 'She would not let me use bronze or gold, only silver. It fears the sun metals.'
- ✿ 'Her sleeves, it lives in her sleeves.'
- ✿ 'I-I tried to kill it, the baby, but I could not.'
- ✿ 'I heard the thing's voice...the darkness is alive.'
- ✿ 'She kn-knows you...are...cominggg...for...he-er... baby...'

Radifi will die after saying the last phrase, or when a Player Character fails to pass the Heal check to keep her alive. If they look closely at her, she has bloodstained hands from serving as a midwife, but she also has two small puncture wounds from the asp's fangs below her jawbone.

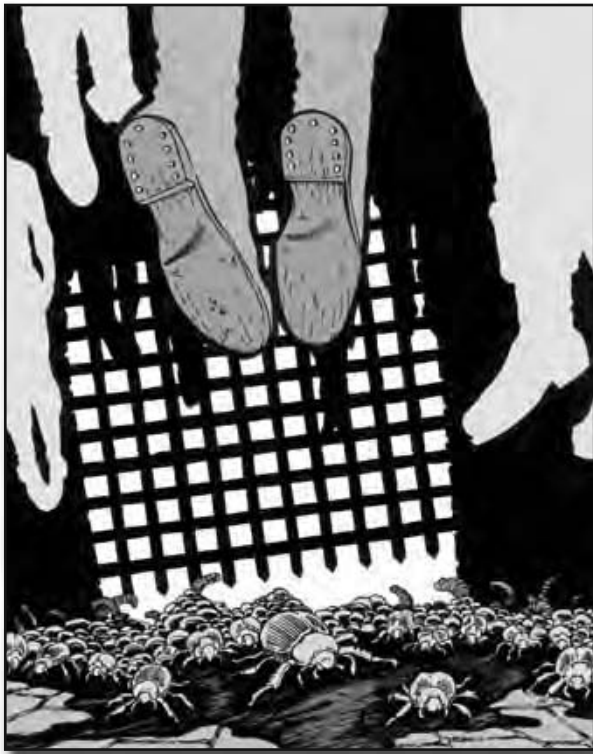
Other than the silver birthing knife (counts as a dagger), there is little else in this room.

THE SACRIFICES

You hope your light is playing tricks on your senses as you step through the archway to the next room, but your nostrils are telling you otherwise. A circular room with a somewhat sloping floor, there are at least twenty bodies of naked men and women hanging by their wrists from pitons on the low ceiling. Their fronts have been cut or torn open like the folds of a robe, their insides rolled out in red ropes. Many of them have symbols cut into their faces. The slope of the floor has created a foul collection of blood and waste in the centre of the room; a sludge of death.

Before the horror of the situation can fully settle in, the pool erupts with insects! Black-shelled beetles as big as cats fly and crawl toward you, their mandibles clacking for fresher meat...





There are $8+1d6$ giant Stygian scarabs in this room feasting on the sacrifice leftovers, putting them in a bloodthirsty feeding frenzy. The entrance of the Player Characters gave them a new target for their hunger, so they will need to deal with these beasts before they can move on.

It should be noted that if any of the marked maidens were taken away by Stygian riders they eventually ended up here after they gave birth, which the Player Characters might notice if they look at anyone who died in the sacrifices.

Statistics for the giant Stygian scarabs can be found in the encounters section.

RITUAL ROOM

'You are too late,' the milk-skinned woman in green silks sneers at you when you enter the room, 'the blood will prove true, and my lord will have the army of Atlantis! With the undying legion at his command, all the kings of men...even your precious Conan... will be like grain before the scythe! The heir of Atlantis will be his! Even if it be the fruit of my own womb!' She tears open her silken blouse to reveal her prophesised starry birthmark. The last maiden needs not be rescued at all, as she is already here and trying to fulfil the prophecy!

'Finissh the trialsss,' an eerie and echoing voice washes over you from all of the shadows in the room at once, 'no infidel can hope to ssstand againsst my power.'

The sorceress stands behind a large stone covered in etchings and painted writing, next to her is an olive-skinned man with a forward-curved sword of Akbitanan steel in each hand. **'Go!' she howls at him, 'Protect our baby; he who will crush the world of men!'**

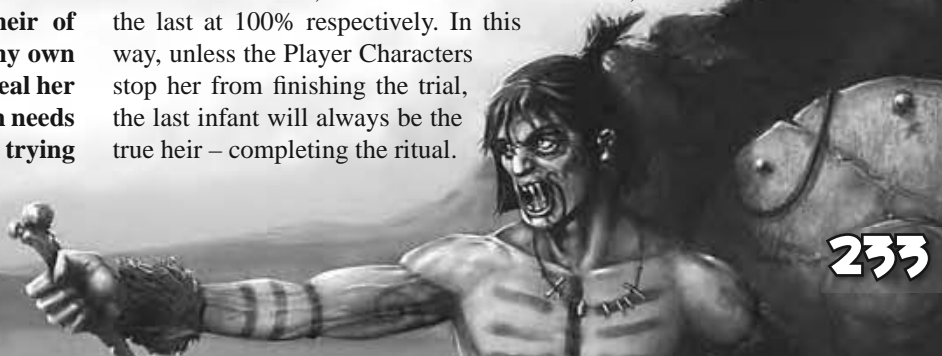
'Rissse,' the otherworldly echo says, 'rissse and protect the vesssel of your lord'sss rebirth!'

With that the Stygian begins to walk forward, blades flashing before him. Suddenly the skeletal remains of several huge serpent-men rise from the ground to join him; the shine from his blades is paled by the green glow in their empty eye sockets...

Five serpent-risen and Ammuphis Typh will engage the Player Characters while Nefanari tries to finish the Trial of Blood.

The stone that she will use to perform the Trial of Blood is the largest chunk of the stone that Amantherodi warded against all Atlanteans to seal Qarnak in the ancient times. When she draws the ritual dagger's tip across the leg of the infant(s) and then drops the blood upon the stone it will react with the ancient spells of the demonlord. If it is the heir of Atlantis it will bubble and smoke away when it touches the warded stone, if not it will simply run off harmlessly.

How long the ritual takes depends on the overall actions of the Player Characters. Nefanari must pray and prepare for 2d3 rounds over each infant before she can test them on the following round. Each infant she has in her possession has an equal percentage chance (round up) of being the heir. For example, if there are three infants to be tested they each have a 34% chance of having their blood tested true. If an infant fails the test Nefanari will set the screaming baby aside carelessly and move on to the next, with adjusted percentages. So, if the first infant of three tested false, the next one would be at 50%, and the last at 100% respectively. In this way, unless the Player Characters stop her from finishing the trial, the last infant will always be the true heir – completing the ritual.





During the combat Ammuphis and the serpent-risen will try to keep the Player Characters from getting to Nefanari and the infant(s), but it is possible that they could either get past them or use ranged combat to attack her (or the infant(s)). If Nefanari is injured during her ritual, she has to pass a Concentration check with a DC equal to 10 plus the amount of damage she suffers or be forced to start that set of prayers over again (rolling a new 2d3 rounds).

If the Trial of Blood is completed during the battle with the serpent-risen, Amantherodi will possess the body of the true-tested heir at the end of the following round. If this happens, the Games Master should go to the encounter segment titled *The Heir of Atlantis*.

If the infant(s) is killed the trial fails and Amantherodi will be forced to possess a new body for his immediate vengeance. If Nefanari is alive he will use her, Ammuphis if not. If both of these bodies are dead, he will find a nearby Stygian templar (who will enter the room at the opportune moment). If this happens, the Games Master should go to the encounter segment titled *Amantherodi's Return*.

Statistics for Ammuphis Typh, Nefanari and the serpent-risen can be found in the encounters section.

THE HEIR OF ATLANTIS

The Player Characters failed to stop Nefanari from testing one of the infants true as the heir of Atlantis, and now the ancient serpent-man demonlord Amantherodi has possessed it to gain control of the undead legions storming the shores of Hyboria even now.

‘Yesss!’ the voice booms through the hall as the skeletal serpent-men fall to pieces instantly, the magic holding them together failing as the room grows darker around you, **‘the Legion iss mine!’**

‘Take the heir, my lord,’ the sorceress shouts, tears streaming from her eyes, **‘he is ready! Come to me, master! Ctesphon be damned! Thoth-Amon be damned! The world welcomes Amantherodi, Lord of the True Children of Set, Hand of the Undying Legion!’** She holds the baby aloft, like an offering to the darkness enveloping her. **‘Death to all his foes!’**

There is a flash of light and the offered body explodes into a pulse of blackness that is too

dark for your eyes to look upon, tendrils of darkness swirl outward like vines grasping at the air, and a terror slides out of the darkness. It is ten feet tall atop its black and violet coils, the bulging upper torso of a man, thick arms ending in six-fingered talons, and the glistening crimson head of an enormous hooded cobra. Its eyes – the eyes of the human being that gave its life in exchange for this thing’s – stare down at you contemptuously.

‘And now, you wormy warm thingsss of fur and pink flessh,’ Amantherodi hisses, **‘the Legion marchesss.’** **You can hear the sounds of stepping and dragging feet from behind you, and you look for a moment to see a line of dead men in ancient armour moving your way.**

There are 2d3 Atlantean Legionnaire warriors that were entombed in the ruins of Qarnak with the serpent-men who have now risen because the Prophecy was fulfilled, one of them is the one-footed corpse from *Atlantean Corpse*. They will obey the orders of Amantherodi now, since the heir’s life force was used to bring him into being on Earth. They will attack the Player Characters as if they were fighting in their Improved Heavy Infantry formation while Amantherodi gloats and laughs. The demonlord will only fight when he thinks he has to, because he is sure that he cannot be defeated.

All of these Atlantean Legion members are carrying the best weapons to fight against Amantherodi, and crafty Games Masters might design narrative scenes that show the Player Characters that bronze effects the demonlord strangely.

Nefanari will not try to fight the Player Characters at all if she can help it, even after the ritual is complete. She will not escape or leave her master’s side however, and will force her pet asp to bite her if taken captive. She would rather die than risk the sort of punishments that Thoth-Amon would devise for her when he discovers she had a different master the whole time.

If he is still alive, the Stygian rider Ammuphis Typh will flee at the first sight of the demonlord. He enjoyed the part he played in this whole ordeal up to this point – but he draws the line at apocalyptic demons.

Statistics for the Atlantean Legionnaires are in the encounters section. Statistics for Amantherodi the Serpent-Lord can be found in the encounters section along with the special rules for his connection to the Prophecy Point total.



AMANTHERODI'S RETURN

The Player Characters have stopped the Trial of Blood ritual and snuffed out the Atlantean Prophecy, but they still have to deal with the fury of the demonlord that they just thwarted.

'No!' the omnipresent voice booms, bringing a cascade of dust drifting down from the ceiling, 'Worthless wormsss of warm flesssh! The Legion...the time is passst! Infidelsss!'

Depending on the body that Amantherodi has left to possess (Nefanari, Ammuphis Typh, a random templar and so on) the Games Master should describe that person suddenly shaking and quivering while spitting up black blood. Their body should go limp and rise into the air.

There is a flash of light and the floating body explodes into a pulse of blackness that is too dark for your eyes to look upon, tendrils of darkness swirl outward like vines grasping at the air, and a terror slides out of the darkness. It is ten feet tall atop its black and violet coils, the bulging upper torso of a man, thick arms ending in six-fingered talons, and the glistening crimson head of an enormous hooded cobra. Its eyes – the eyes of the life it just stole – stare down at you contemptuously.

'And now you meddling maggotsss,' the thing hisses down at you while flexing its claws, 'you pay for your insssolenssse.'

Amantherodi will immediately attack the Player Characters mercilessly. He has spent the last few centuries preparing for this day, and they have just ruined everything. It will be another millennia before the stars are right again, so he is understandably upset.

If he is still alive, the Stygian rider Ammuphis Typh will flee at the first sight of the demonlord. He enjoyed the part he played in this whole ordeal up to this point – but he draws the line at apocalyptic demons.

Statistics for Amantherodi the Serpent-Lord can be found in the encounters section. As the Atlantean Prophecy has been thwarted, the Prophecy Point total is likely to be much lower than if Nefanari would have been successful. In fact the Prophecy Point total is reduced by –10 when Nefanari dies, and is reduced automatically to zero when Amantherodi is destroyed.

WHEN AMANTHERODI IS DESTROYED

When the Player Characters eventually manage to destroy the demonlord's physical form, they will get the following narrative conclusion:

The final blow strikes home and the air grows silent and still. Amantherodi freezes in place instantly, his eyes growing glassy as he looks down at his enemies in disbelief. There is the thrum of energy in the air, and all of your skin tingles like in a lightning storm.

'No, not again,' the serpent-lord hisses quietly, 'not by mortal men! No!'

There is ripple that passes through the beast's flesh like dropping a stone in a still pond, bouncing back toward the point of the final wound. When the ripple reaches itself again you are thrown to the ground as the demonlord explodes into a cloud of oily black dust; dust that soon disappears like steam upon a looking glass until there is nothing more of the thing.

'Thiss...' the voice echoes again from the shadows, '...iss not the lasst.'

It is unlikely that the Player Characters will want to stay in a demon-haunted ruin, so they will probably leave. Having defeated Amantherodi, they have one last thing to do as part of their role in this – report back to Pallantides, Dexitheus and King Conan.

They likely saved many tens of thousands of people by stopping the Prophecy. For that they should all receive three Fate Points immediately. They may or may not need them for the journey back to Tarantia, but they were hard earned and the Player Characters deserve them.

The meeting with King Conan's court and the rewards they can receive from them are all covered in this book's *Epilogue*.





PROPHECY POINTS

The Player Characters have thwarted the Atlantean Prophecy and broken the *Bound to the Course* curse laid upon them, so they no longer gain or lose Prophecy Points.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

- ✦ Basic Roleplaying Award for portraying characters well (500 xp)
- ✦ Defeating any Stygian templars (300 xp each)
- ✦ Scaling the cliff to gain entrance to Qarnak (250 xp); without using rope or ladders (500 xp)
- ✦ Destroying the Demonic Stallion (500 xp)
- ✦ Finding the Ritual Room in four consecutive Listen checks (1,000 xp)
- ✦ Killing an asp swarm (500 xp)
- ✦ Destroying a group of giant centipedes or giant scorpions (1,000 xp)
- ✦ Opening a sealed serpent-man tomb (500 xp)
- ✦ Keeping the midwife alive long enough to learn what she knows (200 xp per piece of information)
- ✦ Killing the giant scarabs (500 xp)
- ✦ Killing Ammuphis Typh (1,000 xp)
- ✦ Destroying the serpent-risen (750 xp each)
- ✦ Killing Nefanari (1,000 xp); before she can finish the Trial of Blood (2,000 xp)
- ✦ Destroying members of the Atlantean Legion (500 xp each)
- ✦ Destroying Amantherodi the Serpent-Lord (3,000 xp); if the Prophecy was fulfilled (5,000 xp)

ENCOUNTERS

ASP SWARM

In the temples of Set that cannot afford the manpower to keep a son of Set fed and happy, masses of venomous asps can be almost self-sufficient. Individual snakes will come and go to feed as they need to, but the mass remains in the temple pit – always ready to do the instinctual bidding of the great Scaled God.

Medium Animal (Swarm)

Initiative: +5 (+2 Dex, +3 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Scent, Listen +9, Spot +9

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 14 (+1 size, +3 Dex)

DR: 2

Hit Dice: 16d8 (72 hp)

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1

Defensive Specials: Swarm traits

Speed: 20 ft., 20 ft. climb, 20 ft. swim

Attack: Swarm (2d6 plus poison)

Full Attack: Swarm (2d6 plus poison)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 0 ft. (0)

Base Attack: +0

Grapple: –

Special Attacks: Distraction, Poison

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 6, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

Special Qualities: Swarm traits

Feats: –

Skills: Balance +11, Climb +12, Hide +15

COMBAT

For game mechanic purposes, a single swarm is treated as a single creature or entity with an occupied space of 10 feet. A swarm has a single pool of Hit Dice and hit points, a single initiative modifier, a single speed and a single Defence Value. It is treated for all purposes as one beast.

Swarms battle by coming into contact with their targets, inflicting numerous small attacks that add up to effectively one wound. They never provoke attacks of opportunity, nor can they make use of them. They always occupy four connected five-foot squares, with no breaking of the central mass of the swarm. Swarms maintain cohesion like this through any space and can never be moved through.





An asp swarm of any size slithers over warm bodies, often biting repeatedly after realising that they cannot eat the target. Any corpse can attract vermin after all, thereby still serving as a good meal anyway. The swarm deals 1d6 damage to any creature whose space it can occupy at the end of its move, requiring the requisite poison saves as detailed below.

VULNERABILITIES OF SWARMS

Swarms are extremely difficult to destroy with common physical attacks, as weapons glide through the mass inflicting minor casualties on a huge number of creatures. They do have some specific vulnerabilities however.

A lit torch or similar flaming implement swung into a swarm inflicts 1d3 damage per hit against a non-aquatic swarm. A lit lantern or similarly contained fuel source used as a thrown weapon deals 1d4 points of damage to every five-foot square in and adjacent to where the object breaks.

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn with an asp swarm in its space must succeed in a Fortitude save DC 18 or be nauseated for 1 round by the weight and sensation of so many serpents upon them.

Poison (Ex): Anything that suffers damage from an asp swarm's attack is also affected by the poison below.

Skills: An asp swarm has a +4 racial bonus on Hide, Listen and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Balance checks, and uses its Dexterity modifier instead of its Strength modifier for Climb checks.

GIANT CENTIPEDE

Like a rope of orange-brown chitin lined with fast-moving legs and tipped with a pair of short spiky pincers coated in a potent neurotoxin, giant centipedes are prehistoric hunters of dark places that prey on the unwary. They are fast and wily, emerging from a tiny sinkhole or burrowed lair in a flash of motion, paralysing their prey with their pincers in order to feast upon their decaying flesh.

Medium Animal (vermin)

Initiative: +6 (+3 Dex, +3 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 60 ft., Spot +4

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 16 (+3 Dex, +3 natural)

DR: 2

Hit Dice: 6d8+12 (39 hp)

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2

Defensive Specials: Vermin traits

Speed: 40 ft., 10 ft. burrow, 40 ft. climb

Attack: Pincer +6 melee (1d6+2 plus poison)

Full Attack: 2 pincers +6 melee (1d6+2 plus poison)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +4

Grapple: +6

Special Attacks: Poison

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 17, Con 14, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 5

Special Qualities: Vermin traits

Feats: Run, Track

Skills: Climb +14, Hide +12

COMBAT

Giant centipedes are not terribly tactical fighters, preferring to ambush their prey and stab at them with their pincers repeatedly until their poison utterly paralyses them. After the target loses motor functions completely, the centipede can begin its slow and painful feast.

Poison (Ex): Anything that suffers damage from a giant centipede's pincer attack is also affected by the poison below.

Skills: A giant centipede has a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Climb and Hide checks, and uses its Dexterity modifier instead of its Strength modifier for Climb checks. A giant centipede can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Asp Venom	Injury DC 20	1d2 Con	7	Immediate/1 minute/1 hour/1 hour/1 hour/1 hour/1 hour
Giant Centipede Toxin	Injury DC 15	1d4 Dex	5	One per round





GIANT SCORPION

Scavengers and predators of small animals, giant scorpions rarely hunt humans for their food. They will defend their existing meals however, and are equipped to do so despite their instincts not to. Between their powerful stinger and crushing claws, it is a very good thing that giant scorpions are not a *natural* enemy of man.

Large Animal (vermin)

Initiative: +1 (+1 Reflex)

Sensory Traits: Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 60 ft., Spot +4

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 10 (–1 size, +1 natural)

DR: 7

Hit Dice: 5d8+10 (33 hp)

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +2

Defensive Specials: –

Speed: 50 ft.

Attack: Claw +7 melee (1d6+4, AP 3)

Full Attack: 2 Claws +7 melee (1d6+4, AP 3) and Sting +2 melee (1d6+2 plus poison, AP 1)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (2) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +3

Grapple: +11

Special Attacks: Constrict 1d6+6, Improved Grab, Poison

Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 10, Con 14, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 2

Special Qualities: Vermin traits

Feats: –

Skills: Climb +8

COMBAT

Scorpions evolved a tail stinger full of potent poison for a reason, and their combat style reflects it. Scorpions do their best to grab prey in their pincers and hold them still to be stabbed repeatedly by their stinger. Instinctively a scorpion will not let go of a victim it has grabbed until it is dead, and often does not even let go then – choosing to begin eating them with their slashing mandibles.

Constrict (Ex): Scorpions deals their normal claw damage on any successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability the scorpion must hit an opponent the same size or smaller that it with a claw attack. It can then automatically choose to make a free constrict or sting attack against that target, suffering no attack of opportunity for doing so. Scorpions can use their Dexterity instead of Strength as the bonus to grapple checks.

Poison (Ex): Scorpions are equipped with a potent poison in their stingers that paralyzes muscles and organ functions while tissue slowly liquefies for easier eating on the part of the scorpion. Anything that suffers damage from a scorpion's sting attack is also affected by the poison below.

Skills: Scorpions have a +4 racial bonus on Climb, Hide and Spot checks.

GIANT STYGIAN SCARAB

Giant Stygian scarab beetles are housecat-sized insects that live a nocturnal cycle of seeking out fleshy meals to stave off the desert thirst. Although they are capable of rapid and well-controlled flight, they rarely do so due to the cost in bodily energy to do so, preferring to wait in burrows and sinkholes for nightfall before venturing out and trying to overtake sleeping travellers or their mounts. There are countless small nests of the black-shelled creatures living in Qarnak due to the tunnels and tombs; always a surprise for explorers unready for them.

Small Animal (vermin)

Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex)

Sensory Traits: Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 60 ft., Spot +5

Languages: –

Dodge Defence: 14 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +1 natural)

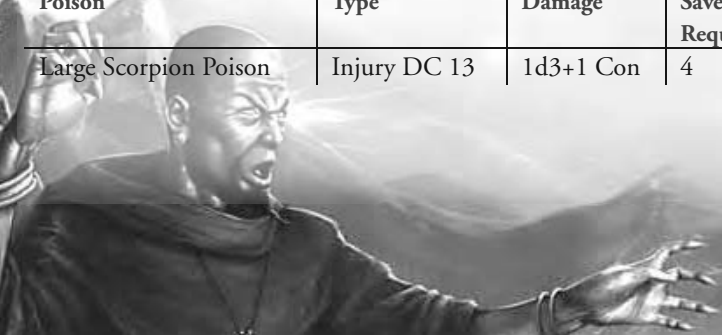
DR: 3

Hit Dice: 3d8+6 (19 hp)

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +1

Defensive Specials: –

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Large Scorpion Poison	Injury DC 13	1d3+1 Con	4	One per hour



Speed: 30 ft., 10 ft. burrow, 30 ft. fly (good)
Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d6+2 plus ability damage)
Full Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d6+2 plus ability damage)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)
Base Attack: +3
Grapple: +1
Special Attacks: Visceral damage
Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 14, Con 15, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2
Special Qualities: Vermin traits
Feats: Alertness, Track
Skills: Climb +12, Hide +8, Survival +6

COMBAT

Giant Stygian scarabs bite their foes with mouthparts that are not specifically designed for combat – pinching and tearing gobs of flesh instead of slicing or shearing it off like a normal predator.

Visceral Damage (Ex): The kind of wound that a scarab's mouthparts leave is extremely painful and damaging to the surrounding tissues. Whenever a scarab successfully inflicts damage upon a living target with its bite attack it also inflicts 1 point of temporary Dexterity or Strength damage (attacker's choice). These wounds are also notoriously hard to heal, adding +5 to the DC of any Heal skill checks made to patch them up.

Skills: Giant Stygian scarabs have a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. A scarab can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. Giant scarabs use their Dexterity modifier for Climb checks.

SERPENT-RISEN

Summoned and animated by the demonic power of their former kinsmen Amantherodi, the serpent-risen are skeletal serpent-men devoted to the will of their dark master. Eight feet of magically connected bones, serpent-risen are the body of a man topped with a large serpentine neck and skull. Two orbs of green fire rest in the empty eye sockets, gazing coldly down on their foes as they silently crush and tear the life from them.

Large Undead Aberration
Initiative: +0 (–1 Dex, +1 Reflex)
Sensory Traits: Darkvision 60 ft., Scent, Listen +10, Spot +10
Languages: Serpentine, Old Stygian (understand only)

Dodge Defence: 14 (–1 size, –1 Dex, +6 natural)
DR: 3
Hit Dice: 10d12 (65 hp)
Saves: Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +7
Defensive Specials: Ambulatory Limbs

Speed: 30 ft.
Attack: Bite +7 melee (1d4+3, AP 2), Claw +7 melee (1d6+3, AP 2)
Full Attack: Bite +7 melee (1d4+3, AP 2), or 2 Claws +7 melee (1d6+3, AP 2)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)
Base Attack: +5
Grapple: +16
Special Attacks: Improved Grapple, Power Attack
Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 9, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1
Special Qualities: Mindless, Undead Traits
Feats: –
Skills: Climb +10, Jump +10

COMBAT

Serpent-risen do not have the spell casting capabilities or natural venoms of their former lives, but they are magically strong and supernaturally resilient. They do all that they can with their reanimated bodies, clawing and biting anything they get their bony hands upon.

Ambulatory Limbs (Su): The serpent-risen are immune to critical hits like all undead; however, if a critical hit is confirmed against them, the serpent-risen loses a limb (although it suffers normal damage). When this occurs, roll a d20: 1 – 4 means a lost left leg, 5 – 8 is the right leg, 9 – 12 indicates the left arm, 13 – 16 is the right. A 17 – 20 means the serpent-risen lost its head. These pieces will still move and fight as normal, but only by reducing the main body to 0 hit points will cease their animation.





**AMMUPHIS TYPH,
NEFANARI'S PERSONAL
BLACK RIDER**

Chosen for his devotion to Set and his unquestioning loyalty to what he believes to be Thoth-Amon's plan, Ammuphis is the personal rider for the last marked maiden – Nefanari herself. He is strong and fast with his twin-khopesh fighting style, making him a deadly foe for one or several opponents. His faith in the Black Circle is dauntless, and he will do anything for King Ctesphon IV.

Medium Humanoid (Stygian Soldier 8, Borderer 3)
Initiative: +12 (+3 Dex, +5 Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)
Sensory Traits: Listen +8, Spot +10
Languages: Aquilonian, Old Stygian, Stygian (literate), Zamorian

Dodge Defence: 18 (+3 Dex, +5 class)
Parry Defence: 21 (+3 Str, +7 class, +1 Parry)
DR: 5 (+5 Bronze Scale Hauberk)
Hit Points: 80 hp
Saves: Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +6 (+1 against Corruption)
Defensive Specials: Two-Weapon Defence

Speed: 25 ft.
Attack: Khopesh +15 melee (2d4+5, 18–20/x2, AP 6)
Full Attack: Twin Khopeshes +11/+6/+1 melee (2d4+5, 18–20/x2, AP 6) and +11 melee (2d4+4, 18–20/x2, AP 6)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)
Base Attack: +11/+6/+1
Grapple: +14
Special Attacks: +1 to hit with Stygian Bow, Formation Combat (Heavy Cavalry, Skirmisher), Power Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting
Sorcery Knowledge: –

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 12
Special Qualities: Combat Style (two-weapon combat), Favoured Terrain +1 (urban), Officer
Feats: Brawl, Chariot Combat, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Eyes of the Cat, No Honour, Track, Weapon Focus (khopesh), Weapon Specialisation (khopesh)
Skills: Bluff +8, Concentration +6, Handle Animal +8, Hide +5, Intimidate +10, Jump +5, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (religion) +12, Move Silently +4, Profession (charioteer) +7, Ride +10, Sense Motive +6, Tumble +4
Code of Honour: –
Reputation and Social Standing: 12 (+4)
Possessions: Stygian Bronze Scale Hauberk, Two Akbitanan Stygian Khopeshes, Superior Traveller's Clothes, 43 sp, 3 doses of Venom Antidote, Demonic Stallion

ATLANTEAN LEGIONNAIRE

Called into animation by the magic of the Prophecy, the soldiers of the Atlantean Legion are steadfast and powerful soldiers that number 10,001 along the western coast of Hyboria. There are a few of their number scattered in tombs and catacombs across the mainland – like those that came to Amantherodi's call in the ritual chamber – but the majority of the Undying Legion will march up from the waves that swallowed Atlantis ages ago.

Medium Undead
Initiative: +2 (+2 Reflex)
Sensory Traits: Darkvision 120 ft., Listen +10, Spot +10
Languages: Atlantean, Old Stygian (understand only)

Dodge Defence: 14 (+4 Natural)
DR: 8 (+6 Atlantean Bronze Breastplate, +2 Atlantean Bronze Helm)
Hit Dice: 8d12+8 (60 hp)
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +7
Defensive Specials: Resistant to Blows, Undead traits

Speed: 20 ft.
Attack: Halfblade +10 melee (2d4+7, AP 3)
Full Attack: Halfblade +10 melee (2d4+7, AP 3)
Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)
Base Attack: +4
Grapple: +9
Special Attacks: Despair, Formation Combat (Heavy Infantry, Improved Heavy Infantry), Power Attack
Sorcery Knowledge: –



Abilities: Str 20, Dex 10, Con –, Int –, Wis 12, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Mindless, Undead traits

Feats: Alertness, Great Fortitude, Toughness, Weapon Focus (halfblade), Weapon Specialisation (halfblade)

Skills: Climb +12, Jump +12, Move Silently +5, Swim +12

Possessions: Atlantean Bronze Breastplate, Atlantean Bronze Helm, 2 Atlantean Bronze Halfblades, Rotten Uniform

COMBAT

The Atlantean Legionnaires fight exactly as they once did in life, except they now do so without feeling pain or fear. They walk slowly forward over any obstacles, chopping with their blades until their enemies are no more. They exist to fight and destroy, and little else.

Despair (Su): At the mere sight of an Atlantean Legionnaire, the viewer must succeed in a Will save DC 14 or be paralysed with fear for 1d3 rounds. Targets cannot be affected again by despair for 24 hours, whether or not they pass the save.

Resistant to Blows (Ex): Atlantean legionnaires are made of ancient and incredibly resilient bones that endured the ravages of time, and they can weather remarkable amounts of damage. Physical attacks only do half damage, applied before any DR.

NEFANARI; BETRAYER OF THOTH-AMON, ACOLYTE OF AMANTHERODI

Born of a Stygian noble and a Cimmerian slave, this attractive woman was given a gifted life by her father's inheritance. Once a learned student under the House of the Black Circle, Nefanari came to Qarnak years ago to learn more about the enigmatic serpent-men of ancient times, drawn to it unknowingly by the royal Atlantean blood in her veins. While there she was seduced by the mysterious presence of Amantherodi, learning of her destiny and the destiny of the six other marked maidens. She began to prepare the divinations and machinations for the upcoming Prophecy as the demonlord instructed her, becoming closer to Thoth-Amon in the process so she could use him to bring her demonic master back to this world to crush all who would oppose them!

Medium Humanoid (Half-Cimmerian/Half-Stygian Scholar 12 / Temptress 4)

Initiative: +11 (+3 Dex, +8 Reflexes)

Sensory Traits: Listen +10, Spot +8

Languages: Acheronian (literate), Aquilonian, Cimmerian, Old Stygian (literate), Serpentine (understand only), Stygian (literate)

Dodge Defence: 20 (+3 Dex, +6 class, +1 Dodge)

Parry Defence: 15 (+0 Str, +5 class)

DR: –

Hit Points: 62 hp

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +11, Will +17 (+6 against Corruption)

Defensive Specials: Hidden Asp, Spells

Speed: 30 ft.

Attack: Dagger +12 melee (1d4, AP 1) or Hidden Asp +8 melee (1d4 plus poison)

Full Attack: Dagger +12/+7/+2 melee (1d4, AP 1) and Hidden Asp +8 melee (1d4 plus poison)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1)

Base Attack: +12/+7/+2

Grapple: +12

Special Attacks: Hidden Asp, Spells

Sorcery Knowledge: Curses, Divination, Nature Magic, Prestidigitation, Summonings; 12 Power Points

Magic Attack Bonus: +12 (+7 class, +5 Charisma)

Spells Known: *Animal Ally, Astrological Prediction, Blast Wave (Defensive Blast), Bound to the Course (see sidebar), Conjuring, Deflection, Demonic Pact, Dream of Wisdom, Greater Demonic Pact, Ill-Fortune, Lesser Ill-Fortune, Sorcerous Garden, Summon Beast, Summon Demon, Telekinesis, Visions, Weapon Curse (defensive blast)*

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 19, Wis 17, Cha 20

Special Qualities: Background (Acolyte), Comeliness, Dance of Desire 1/day, Increased Maximum Power Points (triple), Knowledge is Power, Savoir-Faire, Secret Art (sorcery), Seductive Art +1, Seductive Savant, Scholar

Feats: Alertness, Carouser, Iron Will, Menacing Aura, No Honour, Poison Use, Ritual Sacrifice, Tortured Sacrifice



Skills: Bluff +18, Concentration +12, Craft (alchemy) +16, Craft (herbalism) +16, Decipher Script +14, Diplomacy +10, Gather Information +12, Handle Animal +10, Hide +12, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (ancient history) +14, Knowledge (arcana) +22, Knowledge (local) +16, Knowledge (nature) +15, Move Silently +10, Perform (ritual) +18, Sense Motive +10

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 20 (+3)

Corruption and Insanity: 6; Total Devotion

Possessions: Ritual Dagger, Silken Dress, Hidden Asp

Hidden Asp (Ex): Nefanari has a trained asp always coiled around her arms and waist that she uses as a weapon and defender while she is performing other actions. When she would normally have the opportunity to attack the asp will lash out at the nearest enemy within 5 feet and try to bite them, whether or not Nefanari chooses to attack.

Poison (Ex): Anything that suffers damage from the asp's attack is also affected by the following poison:

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Asp Venom	Injury DC 20	1d2 Con	7	Immediate/1 minute/1 hour/1 hour/1 hour/1 hour/1 hour

NEW SPELL: BOUND TO THE COURSE

Power Point Cost: 1 per target

Components: V, S

Casting Time: One standard action

Range: Evil Eye

Area: Targeted creatures must be within 30 feet of one another

Duration: 1 year plus 1 month/level or until completed

Saving Throw: Will negates

Prerequisites: Magic attack bonus +1, Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks, can only be learned through a *Greater Demonic Pact* (or by someone involved in one)

Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for the targets' saving throws

This spell allows the caster to link a number of targets to a set pattern of events. These events may or may not be known to the target(s) or fully understood by the caster, but by naming the particular event or moment (see the birth of a child, the death of a friend and so on) when the spell is cast, the spell binds them to fulfil it.

The targets may not realise that they are fulfilling the event as detailed, but their actions are being twisted and manipulated by the greater scheme of fate. It is up to the Games Master to decide if a named event or action is too specific or too broad, and how that will unfold over the course of the spell's duration. The spell has no effect other than making sure that the target(s) are placed in the 'course of action' they must take in order to fulfil the caster's cursing command.

This is a very effective tool for Games Masters to blame fate and destiny for strange and unlikely coincidences, but can be misused by careless casters. If a Games Master believes that a character is misusing the spell, they will begin to suffer horrible 'luck' as the power of fate turns away from them forever – eliminating their ability to ever use Fate Points.



AMANTHERODI - DEMONLORD OF THE FALLEN SERPENT-MEN, ETERNAL FOE OF ATLANTIS

Formerly the spiritual leader of the serpent-men that came to Qarnak to hide from the Atlanteans, Amantherodi was the cornerstone of faith in the cliffside community. It was his idea to seal up the tunnel and ward out the Atlanteans, and when his brothers and sisters began to starve and die around him he looked to darker forces to help him survive – drawing him into the Great Beyond. In the vast blackness his hatred allowed him to grow in power, becoming a powerful entity in his own right.

With this newfound power he began to set the pieces of his master's gambit, tracing the bloodlines of those touched by Atlantis' royalty, until he eventually found the one who would help him come back to Earth and get his revenge on all the realms of mankind. Nefanari would free him; the long removed descendant of the Atlantean legionnaire that was trapped in the tombs with the serpent-men to die at their arrows. She would be the one that opened the gates one way or another, and through his puppetry of her Amantherodi would become whole again.

Large Outsider (Demon)

Initiative: +22 (+6 Dex, +12 Reflex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Sensory Traits: Listen +12, Spot +18

Languages: All Human Tongues and Serpentine

Dodge Defence: 30 (-1 size, +6 Dex, +14 natural, +1 Dodge)

Parry Defence: 28 (-1 size, +6 Str, +13 natural)

DR: 10 (+10 Natural)

Hit Points: 130 hp

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +17, Will +17 (+14 against Corruption)

Defensive Specials: Does Not Suffer Critical Hits, Spells, Weakness to Bronze/Gold

Speed: 40 ft., 30 ft. climb

Attack: Claw +25 melee (1d8+6, AP 6) or Tail +26 melee (2d6+6, AP 4)

Full Attack: 2 Claws +25 melee (1d8+6, AP 6) and Tail +23 melee (1d8+12, AP 10), or Bite +23 melee (1d8+3 plus poison, AP 4)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. (1) / 5 ft. (1) or 10 ft. (2) with tail

Base Attack: +20/+15/+10/+5

Grapple: +30

Special Attacks: Constrict, Improved Grab, Improved Sunder, Poison, Power Attack, Rip Armour, Spells

Sorcery Knowledge: Curses, Divination, Hypnotism, Necromancy; 22 Power Points

Magic Attack Bonus: +16 (+10 natural, +4 Charisma)

Spells Known: *Astrological Prediction, Blessing of Fate, Bound to the Course, Chill of the Grave (defensive blast), Death Touch, Domination, Entrance, Greater Sorcerous News, Hypnotic Suggestion, Ill-Fortune, Lesser Ill-Fortune, Mass Hypnotic Suggestion, Psychometry, Raise Corpse, Savage Beast, Sorcerous News, Terrible Fascination (Defensive Blast), Visions*

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 20, Cha 19

Special Qualities: Limited Manifest, Prophecy Point Bonuses

Feats: Multiattack, No Honour, Steely Gaze

Skills: Balance +20, Climb +26, Concentration +20, Craft (herbalism) +26, Decipher Script +25, Diplomacy +10, Handle Animal +20, Heal +22, Intimidate +30, Jump +30, Knowledge (ancient history) +30, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Knowledge (nature) +22, Move Silently +18, Perform (ritual) +30, Sense Motive +20, Tumble +18

Code of Honour: None

Reputation and Social Standing: 18 (-5)

Possessions: None

COMBAT

Amantherodi believes himself akin to a god, and fights like he has not a care in the universe. He might grab a target just to laugh in its face one round while crushing the life out of the next in the same breath. He uses spells when he feels it is necessary or amusing, but normally only with the kinds of magic that cripple or handicap rather than kill – he saves such pleasure for the foes that he can get into his fanged jaws. If fighting a worthy foe, he will gladly use his hard-as-diamond claws to open them up before casting them aside for his summoned minions; perhaps



even summoning up his dead foes to fight alongside him when they have expired!

Constrict (Ex): Amantherodi deals 2d8+12, AP 10 damage with his constriction attack after any successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Amantherodi must hit with a claw attack. This attack inflicts normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it gets a hold, it can then begin to make bite, constrict or rip armour attacks without need for further attack rolls.

Limited Manifest (Su): Amantherodi, as a comparatively young demonlord, can only enter the earthly plain through the willing sacrifice of a human being or the unwilling sacrifice of a servant. Entering through an unwilling target, who must worship a god within the Stygian pantheon, costs Amantherodi 10 Power Points and the target can resist with a DC 28 Will save.

Poison (Ex): Amantherodi is equipped with a potent demonic syrup as their venom, ripping the life force from anything he bites. Anything that suffers damage from Amantherodi's bite attack is also affected by the following poison:

Prophecy Point Bonuses (Su): Amantherodi is empowered by the destiny of the Atlantean Prophecy that will lead to his eventual return to Earth – one way or the other. While the stars are properly aligned and the moon is charged with his destiny, Amantherodi has several abilities depending on the level of power infused in the Prophecy; measured by the Prophecy Point Track.

The following table shows the additional powers Amantherodi has depending on the total Prophecy Points.

Amantherodi's Prophecy Point Bonuses

Prophecy Point Total Reached	Bonus ¹
3	+2 to all Saving Throws
5	+5 to Listen and Spot skill checks
10	+1d6 damage to Claw attacks
15	+3 Damage Reduction
20	+2 to Defence Values
25	+10 Power Points
28	+3 to Magic Attack Bonus
30	+15 hit points
35	Bite Poison is now DC 22
40	Regeneration of 1d6 hit points per round
45	+5 to Saving Throws
48	+5 Damage Reduction
50+	Bronze/Gold only ignores <i>half</i> (round up) Damage Reduction

¹ These bonuses are cumulative.

Rip Armour (Ex): When Amantherodi is grappling an enemy, he may elect to make a special claw attack directly against the enemy's armour rather than against the enemy himself. Amantherodi makes a standard melee attack roll and if successful, any damage he deals is subtracted permanently from the armour's Damage Reduction, as he simply tears off chunks with his free claw.

Spells (Sp): Amantherodi casts spells as though he were a 20th level Scholar, spending Power Points as normal.

Weakness to Bronze/Gold (Ex): Amantherodi's earthly form is sensitive to the metals of the dawn and day – bronze and gold. Against weapons or items made of these materials the demonlord does not apply his Damage Reduction and can be struck for Critical Hits normally.

Poison	Type	Damage	Saves Required	Save Interval
Amantherodi Venom	Injury DC 20	1d8 Con	1	Immediately





Epilogue

The Player Characters have defeated Amantherodi and Nefanari, thwarted the Atlantean Prophecy, and possibly saved the world from the ravages of a demonlord's undead legion. They have only but to return to Tarantia to report these matters to their original superiors.

Getting to Tarantia should be simple compared to thwarting the Atlantean Prophecy, even if they do have to cross all of Stygia, Shem and several other small kingdoms on their way back. As a reward for their outstanding service the Games Master might wish to make the trip uneventful – or he could throw them immediately back into another adventure on their journey home.

DID THE ATLANTEANS RISE?

Depending on the outcome of the Prophecy, there could have been several minutes where the undead Atlantean Legion marched upon the shores of Hyboria. If this happened rumours will spread like wildfire about them. Depending on the coastal community, they will have different tales to tell, but they will all say one thing – that armoured soldiers walked in endless ranks like an army up onto the beaches and shores, killing anything that stood against them.

They will also gossip about how as quickly as they appeared and began the slaughter they turned and walked back into the sea. Whether the Hyborian people ever believe the Player Characters' stories about being the reason the Legion returned to their watery graves is unlikely, but the Player Characters and the royal court of Aquilonia know better.

RETURNING TO TARANTIA

It will not take long once the Player Characters get back within the walls of Tarantia for a member of the Black Legion to report to Pallantides that they have returned. Without the need for secrecy and cloak-and-dagger dealings any longer, Pallantides will go out into the city in search for the Player Characters immediately.

It is best to have him find the Player Characters when they are in the middle of doing something public, like shopping or eating in a pub. Whatever the case may be, he will find them and greet them.

'Three cheers and a joyous cry, my friends!' Pallantides says as he strides over to you and takes each of you, one at a time by the shoulders for all to see, 'This is not a time for mundane tidings and simple prattle! Come, come with me to the palace. A dinner for you all, I declare.'

He will not take 'no' for an answer, and will explain loudly that King Conan himself wants them to sit at his table this evening. If they refuse the king, which is unlikely, the crowd around them will begin to make jests and cheer them to go. They might still choose to avoid this dinner, but it would be foolish to deny the king of Aquilonia a chance to reward them – so it is their choice to make.

The dinner will be in one of the private banquet halls in the royal palace, and Pallantides will show the Player Characters to the grounds personally. He will order them hot baths, handmaidens to help them get dressed, and order new fineries for them if he must. The crown will pay for everything, and Pallantides will spare no expense upon them.



THE DINNER AT KING CONAN'S TABLE

When the Player Characters are brought to the dinner table, they are seated in the first sets of chairs next to one side of the high-backed 'dinner throne'. The opposite side is reserved for Queen Zenobia and Prince Conn (Conan II), but other than his family – the Player Characters are sitting closer than anyone else. It is a huge honour, and will raise all of their Reputation scores by +5 as the guests, witnesses and serving staff begin to talk about them.

The Player Characters will be seated after some of the other guests; Dexitheus, Pallantides, Sir Trocero, and Prospero will be seated with them. They will be treated to mulled wine and cold ale while they are given several minutes to converse with these important and famous individuals.

When the initial conversations die down, the herald will announce the royal family's entrance:

'Please stand,' the herald speaks loudly and clearly at the door, 'for your ruler and saviour King Conan the First, her grace Queen Zenobia, and the young prince Conan the Second.'

The queen entered first in a gown of gossamer silks from Khitai, her simple crown nestled in her dark tresses of hair.

'Sit, sit,' Conan says as he enters, his young boy weightless in his huge arms, 'we are all friends here.' He sets the young prince in his chair and sits at the head of the table. He is wearing a simple velveteen blouse that only barely hides the bulk of the king's muscle beneath, and his crown sits slightly crooked on his grey-speckled hair. 'I am pleased to see you all again,' he says, gesturing for a server to fill his goblet, 'the priests say that I have you to thank for a great many things tonight. Is this true? Tell me of your adventures, friends. I thirst for more than wine these days.'

King Conan will wait and listen to any sort of replies the Player Characters give, the whole time food dishes will come and go. He will goad them on to tell the exciting specifics, and many of the other table guests will add in their thoughts and feelings when



they are given a chance. If the stories get too grisly or racy Queen Zenobia will put her hands over her son's ears with a knowing smile, earning an eye roll from her husband.

When the stories are done, King Conan will order everyone's cups filled and then he will stand:

'To the newest allies of this court,' Conan says with a smirk, raising his goblet toward you in a toast, 'and to my new friends. Long may we run and fight together, and a good death to each and every one of us.' He drinks deeply, a spark of sadness in his eyes that he could not have been with you upon your adventure.

'To friends and adventure!' Pallantides adds, with several others adding their cheers.

The dinner will continue for a course or two, with all of the guests eventually leaving. Queen Zenobia will take Conn away when he begins to get bored, and King Conan will draw the Player Characters aside. He is slightly drunk but he will sound sober enough when he addresses them.

'So,' the king says, taking his crown off and setting it down with a sigh as if it weighed as much as a mountain, 'what can this old king do for his new friends? I know the hunger of your pockets, and I



remember the gleam of fame in a wench's eyes in my youth. You were my sword in these things, and I will not soon forget such a thing. What can the crown of Aquilonia do for its saviours?'

The Player Characters can ask for nearly anything if they truly wish to. Aquilonia is a very rich kingdom with many allies across the globe, and Conan will not look poorly upon them for asking for monetary or material rewards – after all, he used to all the time!

No matter what they ask for, they may also add the equivalent of the Noble class feature 'Social Ability – ally' to their character sheets. This ally is King Conan, and so long as they are friendly with him and his kingdom, they can retain all of the benefits and drawbacks that come along with it.

AS THE FUTURE ROLLS ON...

The Player Characters have stood against zealots, monsters, beasts and demons in the name of Aquilonia, and they have survived. They began as unlikely individuals in the wrong place at the right time, and now

they are marked heroes of the largest realm of Hyboria. They will be known in many places they go upon their next travels and adventures, and the actions they have taken will echo through the years long beyond their own deaths.

With greatness comes responsibility however, and when word begins to spread that they are the new allies and friends of King Conan they will attract the attentions of those they might not wish to. Conan once told them that he had many enemies that would use his friends and family against him; now they were counted amongst those friends.

How long will it be before King Ctesphon IV sends agents against them? When will they appear in Thoth-Amon's dark visions? Will Amantherodi's whispers reach new ears to seek revenge upon the souls that stood against his will?

The Player Characters have travelled the world to become heroes but they cannot escape what sorts of problems and obstacles fame will bring, and how it will affect their next adventures...

'She betrayed us,' Thoth-Amon said with a knowing sneer, 'just as I predicted.'

'How many loyal followers did we lose?' if King Ctesphon was upset, he made no sign of it.

'It is hard to tell,' the other answered, 'Nefanari swayed many with gold before they could report to us.'

'And the serpent thing?' the king asked, 'Is it a further worry?'

'It was defeated, my lord,' the sorcerer replied. 'I have sent guards to the ruins to keep outsiders from entering, and I have already prepared for another student to accidentally find the right spells to bind the demon to our will.'

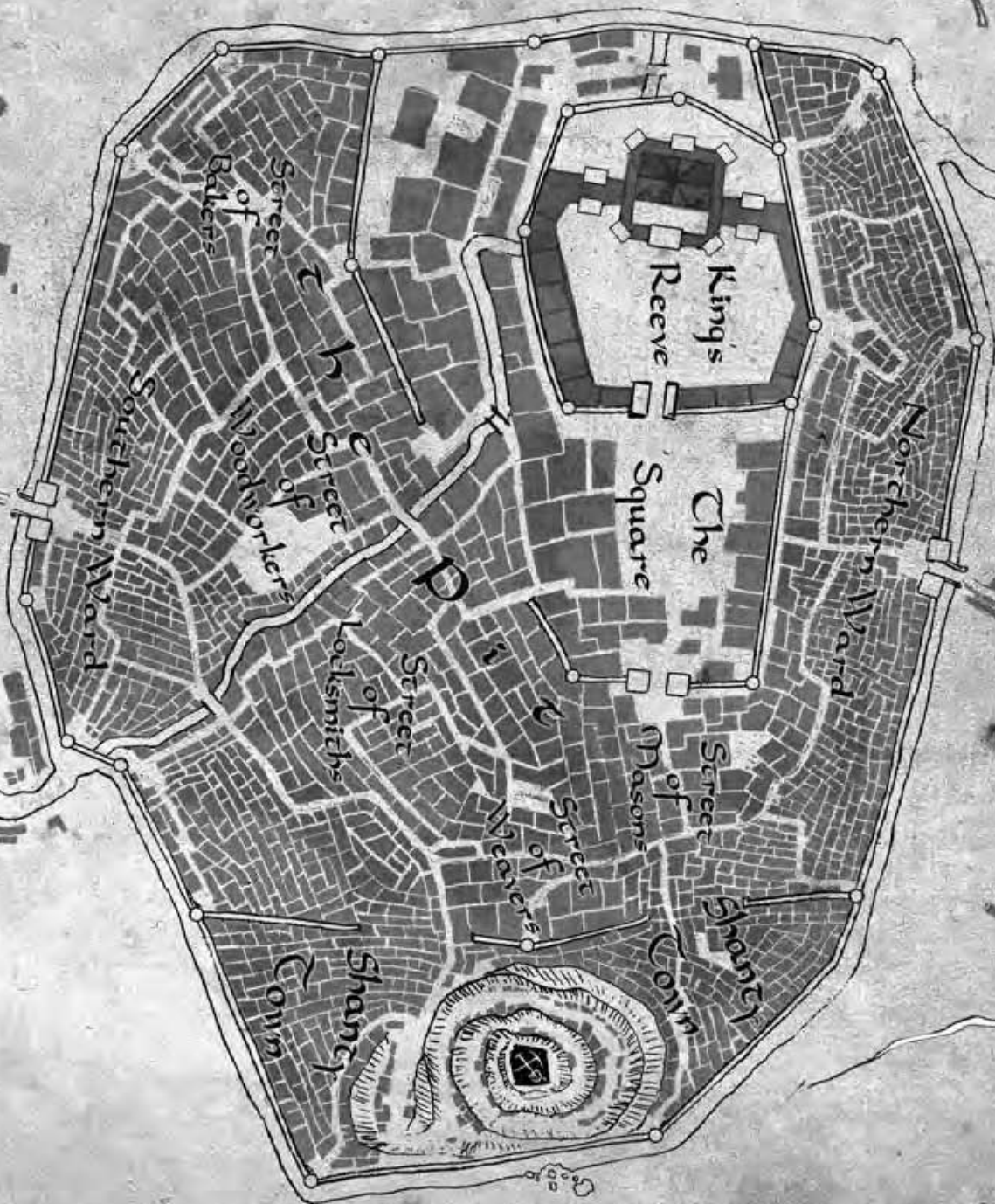
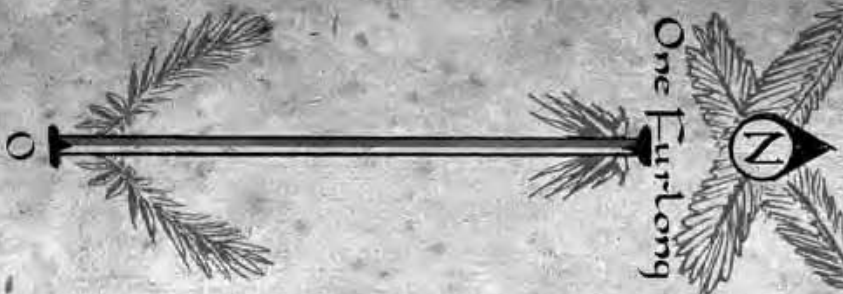
'No,' Ctesphon growled, 'ward the room and forget this snake demon. I dislike having to wonder when the demon will try to use us as it used your former apprentice. Ward the room and be done with the beast.'

'As you will it, sire,' Thoth-Amon hissed, disappointment hidden in the cold tone of his voice. 'What of the Usurper's meddling minions?'

'The so-called heroes?' the Stygian king unfurled an ancient scroll made of crocodile leather, his eyes alight with sadistic glee as they pored over what he saw written upon it, 'I have something else entirely for them to worry about...'

The City of SICAS

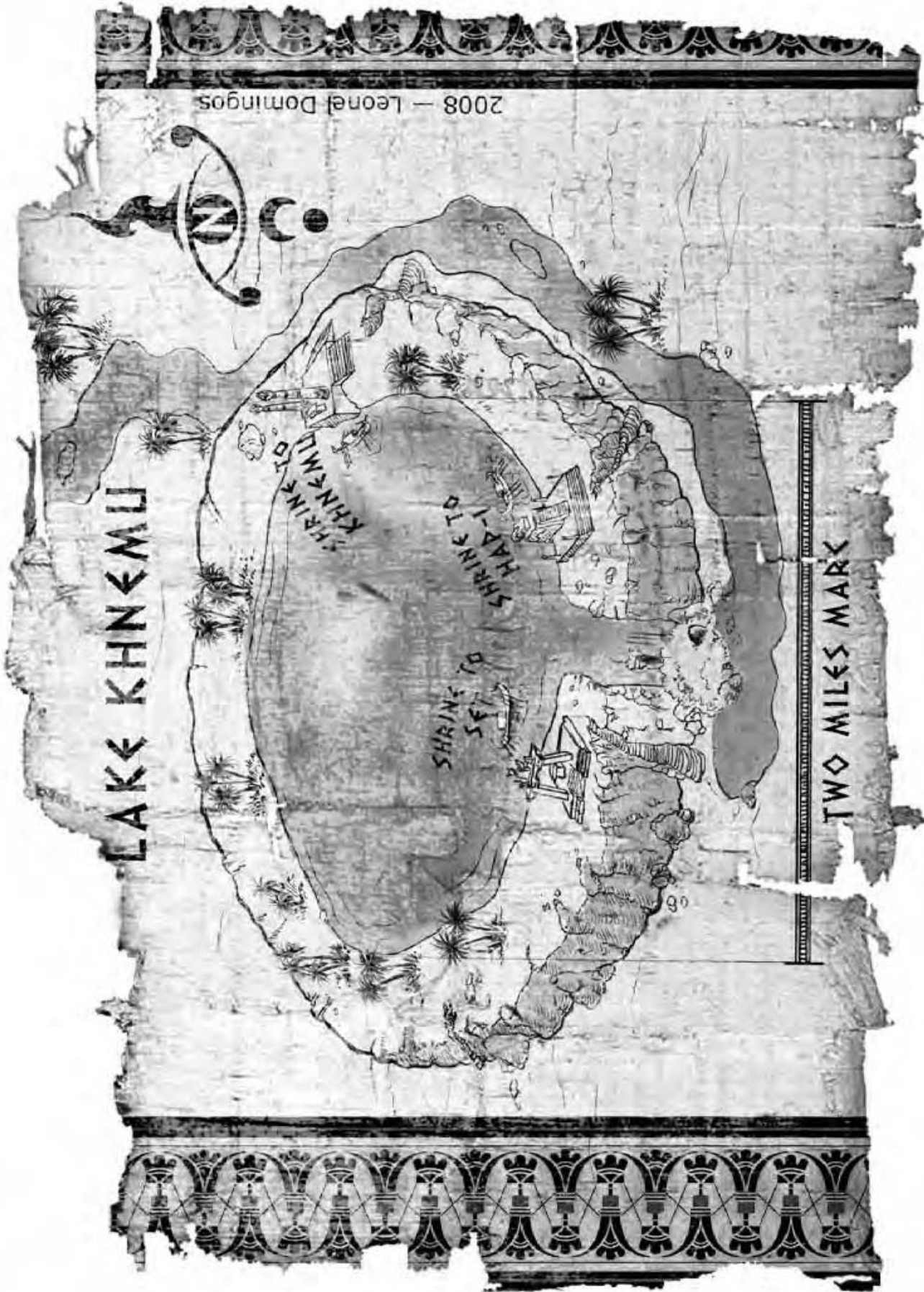
One Furlong



2008 — Leonel Domingos

LAKE KHNEMLU

TWO MILES MARK



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At the height of King Conan's reign, when he and his queen had blessed the world with a son and the kingdoms of Hyboria were separated by thin lines of tension and borders that were fragile as glass, there existed a prophecy. The prophecy spoke of the Blood of Atlantis, the true blood of the rulers of the world, which would flow in the veins of a young girl, who would give the fallen continent of Atlantis an heir – an heir that would unseat all the kings of men.

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