

GOREAN Adventures

SQ: THE INN ON THE BORDERLAND

TALES OF
GOR
COREAN ROLEPLAYING



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Tales of Gor

GOREAN ROLEPLAYING

FANTASTICAL ADVENTURES ON THE COUNTER-EARTH

Authorised and based on the Gorean books of John Norman
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'They wanted peace, and so they fought for thirty years to be sure of it. They did not learn then, and have not since, that war breeds only war.'

— *Cicely Vivienne Wedgwood, 'The Thirty Years War'.*

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Introduction

Tales of Gor is the official role-playing game of John Norman's Gorean series of novels. *Tales of Gor* and its companion book, *World of Gor*, set out role-playing rules for games in the world of the stories as well as providing background information on the richly detailed setting.

While the system used is the D6 System, which is available open and free online as well as in the *Tales of Gor* book, it has some particular tweaks and could be used with other role-playing games. You'd just need to do a little work to make the conversions.

ERRATA

A few things seemed to escape notice and to get published incorrectly:

Caste of Builders: The Dexterity block which has 1D+1, should be 2D+1.
Mercenaries: The stat-block has a misplaced cut-and-paste, substitute the stat block at the end of this adventure.

Movement: This rules change harmonises metric/imperial (to imperial) measurements. Statistic blocks will continue to use the old calculations for now, but if you want to make people a bit less speedy, use these revised measures.

To determine your movement speed, calculate the following using just the dice, not the pips, of your Run skill. The examples here use a base Run skill of 5D.

- **Base:** Run Skill x 2 yards (10 yards).
- **Jog:** Base +50% yards (15 yards).
- **Run:** Base x3 (30 yards)
- **Sprint:** Base x5 (50 yards).

If you spot anything else that seems off, typos or want clarification on anything, please let me know.

POSTMORTEM STUDIOS

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The Inn on the Borderlands

Emma wrote this scenario as a favour to me, waiving their fee to help me pay for veterinary treatment for my cat.

I am very grateful.

This scenario is designed to be used by a GM as a supplementary adventure that can be dropped into any campaign when the player characters travel across Gor from one location to another.

Typically such travels move the game along in a blink of an eye to reach the next adventure location. This time that is far from the case and the players will be tested as never before.

The setting is a border war between two Gorean city-states. Although they are named here as Lara and Vonda, they can be any two reasonably adjacent cities on the map within the area that the characters are likely to be travelling through. A conflict has broken out between these cities over some trivial, or not so trivial, economic resource or point of honour. A low-level military campaign is now being waged, mostly through the employment of mercenary companies rather than direct conflict.

Gor is home to many mercenary companies, the most famous of which is commanded by the fabled Dietrich of Tarnburg.

By and large, these companies are happy to receive regular payments, in exchange for which they will manoeuvre across the contested area in a contrived fashion that minimises the possibility of actually meeting the enemy and having to fight.

Instead, the companies routinely loot and pillage the area, burning villages and crucifying men who resist as a warning to other communities.

Then they collect their pay.

None of them actually want the conflict to end of course, because this is their livelihood.

The passing of their baggage trains are signposted by plumes of black smoke and the wailing of widowed free women, who find the corpses of their free companions lying in the dirt.

Into this the characters blunder and, caught between manoeuvring companies of infantry and cavalry, they are forced to take refuge in one of the few safe places to be found – a walled and fortified roadside Inn where other refugees have gathered. But as the cold rain of late autumn hammers at the parched earth, the war banner of feared mercenary captain, Sar Haranson, can be seen coming ever close to the Inn on the Borderland.

This adventure places the characters into a situation and other than the beginning and end can take many paths.

This is more of a situation into which the characters are thrust, and they are tested to see how they comport themselves.

It is very important for the Games Master to read the adventure beforehand and to familiarise themselves with the non-player characters.

Part One: Borderlands

THE PATH OF DESTRUCTION

“Anybody hear of plague in this town? The town I’ve left behind was burned to the ground.”

- Scott Walker, “The Seventh Seal”.

The first sign the characters have that they have entered a war zone is when they see thick plumes of grey-black smoke on the horizon and smell something that can only be the scent of burning flesh. Black carrion birds circle overhead, and as the characters progress along the paved road, they come across the blackened smouldering ruins of a small village. There are bodies to be seen and wailing women and children crying over the corpses of their menfolk. What cannot be ignored is the sight of crosses lining a stretch of the road and nailed to those crosses are dead bodies, all men. A woman dressed in ragged and torn robes kneels beside one of the crosses wailing. Two frightened barefoot children stand close by.

The woman is Lady Putatina, and she has found the body of her husband, who was slain with a spear thrust through his chest.

His corpse was nailed to a wooden crossbeam along with nine others as a warning of what will happen if men resist the advance of the free companies.

She is scared when she sees the party approach, and her reaction will depend on how the characters are.

If they look like a predominantly military unit, she will attempt to flee, but her children cannot keep up with her, and so she will have to slow her pace or abandon them. The characters can almost certainly catch up with her if they wish to pursue.

Otherwise, if the characters try to be friendly, the woman will keep her distance but listen to them. Above all, she wants to protect her children and find food. She is a free woman on her own, and the characters may choose to enslave her, or they may wish to take pity on her despite the fact they probably do not share Home Stones.

Putatina and her children are obviously hungry, and the offer of food will help. Dice rolls on various conversational skills can go a long way to reassuring her that the characters mean her no harm. If the characters pursue this path of action reward one or two of them (the ones who initiated the action) to have an Honour point each, setting up the principle in this module that acting honourably will be rewarded.

The woman can explain that this region is suffering from the deprivations of numerous free companies employed under contract by the two neighbouring cities.

She has no idea what the conflict is about (and the players may never find out – such is the fog of war), but she can reel off a list of atrocities that have been committed by both sides.

If she is given food, she will pass the best bits to her children and all of them will eat with ravenous urgency, afraid that the food may be taken away from them without warning.

In doing so, her veil will be loose, and the characters can see she is beautiful if grubby. They get the honour points for not taking advantage of a woman in such dire straits. Otherwise, if they do choose to enslave her, they forfeit the honour points but may make money from selling her later on. This isn't technically a breach of Gorean honour, such women are always vulnerable to slavery, but it isn't that honourable since this isn't their conflict to fight.

She will mention in particular that the most feared commander is Sar Haranson, a military veteran originally from Torvaldsland who wears a crested helm of sleen fur. He fights under a black banner with dark burgundy red stripes and is said to be particularly ruthless.

THE THARLARION RIDERS

The characters may not be too concerned about entering a war zone if they can fight, but circumstances will soon dissuade them from that notion.

As the day progresses their passage through the disputed territory is spotted by outriders for one of the mercenary companies.

Tharlaron riders will be sighted on the horizon, mounted on light, fast-moving lizards as opposed to the heavy shock cavalry used on the battlefield.

The riders will number the party size plus three (so four characters will equate to seven cavalry). They are armed with spears and crossbows as well as short swords and shields.

The characters will look organised and probably won't resemble a straggling band of refugees, so the troop commander will motion for his men to ride down the hill slope towards the characters to investigate. Either the characters are up to no good, or they are ripe targets for theft and looting. Either way, the cavalry commander is going to try his luck.

The characters will probably become alarmed as the riders rein in at short range crossbow distance and cock and load their missile weapons. A volley of bolts will be directed at the party. The GM should mention to the players that there is a line of trees to the side opposite the cavalry and that the tree line will offer considerable cover against a mounted enemy.

The enemy cavalry can, otherwise, ride up close, fire, ride back, reload and ride forward again. This is precisely what they will do until the party looks weakened enough to charge them with spears.

If the characters choose to flee towards the tree line, reward them with generous difficulty factors to the shooting skill of the cavalry. The aim here isn't to inflict severe damage on the characters but rather to push them into avoiding the mercenary units and ultimately stumbling across the fortified Inn which offers shelter. You may need to bring in another wave of cavalry if your players are particularly deadly.

If the characters are wealthy enough to own delectable kajirae, two of the younger, more impetuous outriders will break discipline and charge the party with lowered spears, wanting the glory of seizing the slaves for themselves.

They have no idea how competent the player characters are, and this encounter is in place simply to give the players some easy kills that will make them feel better for all the running away that will follow.

If the players are reluctant to veer away from their original route for too long, the GM should herd them with further enemy contact – mostly skirmish units that fire on them again. Slowly but surely make the characters aware that they can't face roaming army units and they have to find somewhere to hide out.

Permit them to observe more signs of slaughter and arson and pillaging as they blunder around from one set of trees to another in the search for a refuge.

If the characters need further prodding, more refugees could offer them coin for escort to the inn, where they hope to be safe.





Part Two: The Inn

Then as the sun begins to go down in the sky let them see the welcoming sight of a roadside Inn with high walls and a welcome sign swaying in the wind. The GM can at this point inform players that they will be aware that there is a war protocol observed commonly in central Gor that allows refugees to escape the ravages of war in the countryside at places like this.

If they need a little more prompting, have another cavalry unit appear on the hilltop as they stumble into the valley below. It seems that the gate to the Inn's courtyard will close soon, and if they don't hurry, they will be locked out.

As a further inducement have the line of cavalry begin to ride slowly and cautiously down the slope towards them, spear points lowering with cruel intention.

The sign on the Inn reads 'The Quiva' with a creaking wooden board that shows the painted image of a short blade, along with a rusted real one, stabbed into the wood. Arrange things so that the characters reach the gates as they are about to be locked for sundown, with the watchful cavalry close behind.

The Inn Keeper is called Paulus Smade, and he and his two sons are locking up for the night. Paulus has an uncanny ability to scent desperation, and it will be quite clear that the party are in no position to haggle freely over prices.

He has already hiked up his prices as soon as the conflict began to bite and he will demand that the party proves they carry money on them before he allows them through.

If the characters choose to force their way in for any reason, the GM should remind them that this place has a sort of sanctuary attributed to it by ancient protocol, and the cavalry will stand back, but not if they see the characters attack the Inn.

LESS THAN WELCOMING

Smade permits the characters to pass through into the courtyard once he sees the shine of their silver. If he is at all concerned about the troop of mercenary tharlarian riders skulking in the distance, he makes no sign of it. Instead, he simply looks the characters up and down, frowns at the sight of any free women, and leads them towards the Inn as his two sons bolt and secure the main gate.

The Quiva is a medium-sized roadside Inn with a large enclosed courtyard area that surrounds the front and the left of the building. The entrance to the Inn is through reinforced gates at the front, or a stout, heavily barred door at the rear. The windows tend to be narrow in the Gorean fashion for vulnerable locations and have bars set in place, making it impossible for intruders to enter that way without cutting or pulling the bars first.

The ground floor of the Inn is taken up by the reception area, kitchens, storerooms, public room with the log fire and various utility rooms.

Upstairs on the first floor are the different guest rooms ranging considerably in size and comfort. A small attic room sits above the first floor and is currently used to house junk that the Inn Keeper has retained.

The Inn has a basement, part of which is used as storage for bottles and barrels. It is also for several slave cages, each with thick blankets for warmth. None of the pens are currently in use as the only slave of the Inn, Bella, tends to sleep with Smade or a guest if the guest has paid for her use that night. Debtor women can be housed here though.

The courtyard is a wide, open space many times the size of the Inn itself, and includes a couple of outbuildings and room for wagons to be parked. There is also a stable building for riding and draft tharlarions.

The characters will learn, if they make enquiries, that the only safe way to leave the tavern will be in the company of a large caravan that has an armed escort. These caravans typically roll past the Inn every week or so, and Smade can estimate that the next one is due in three to four days. If the characters wait until then, they can pass through the Borderlands safely enough as the mercenary companies won't pick on armed caravans. As it happens, events will drive the scenario to a bloody conclusion before those three to four days are up.

An inn of this size should have more staff and Smade is underhanded. Should anyone point this out he'll just shrug and blame it on the war.

SMADE

Any attempt to make small talk with Smade meets with passive-aggressive disinterest. He has been an Innkeeper for fifty years now.

He has come to consider paying customers as a necessary but unwelcome inconvenience to his lifestyle. That lifestyle mostly consists of drinking strong paga and having drunken intercourse with his dark-haired kajira, Bella, who squeals like a Leem during sex. Once inside the reception area of the Inn, those characters who can read will see several handwritten signs above the main desk, amongst them:

- *Free Women are politely reminded that this isn't Ar. Modest veils must be worn at all times in public.*
- *Paying guests are politely asked not to complain about anything. No one asked you to come here.*
- *Itemised bills at the end of your stay can be provided for a surcharge of 5 copper tarsks. Otherwise, just pay what you're told to pay.*
- *Please refrain from making observations relating to the noble character of the Innkeeper as you are about to leave. Uninvited criticism distresses him unduly, and he is often sceptical of flattery.*

A large blackboard displays the prices of the Inn, all of which are criminally exorbitant. Keen-eyed characters may see signs that the prices have been erased regularly and presumably increased as the border war has dragged on.

Prices include (normal costs in brackets):

- **Bread and paga:** 4 coppers (2 tarsk bits).
- **Soup and bread:** 6 coppers (2 tarsk bits).
- **Use of a spoon:** 1 copper (normally free). Note: personal spoons are not permitted within the Inn for hygiene reasons.
- **Seasonal food of the day:** 10 coppers (3 tarsk bits).
- **Lodging:** 20 coppers (1 copper tarsk per night).
- **Blankets (2):** 4 coppers (normally complementary, rental with room).
- **Bath:** 4 coppers (1 copper tarsk).
- **Bath girl:** 4 coppers (1 copper tarsk).
- **Use of sponge, oil and strigil:** 2 coppers (1 tarsk bit, or included in the bath cost).
- **Girl for the night:** 10 coppers (normally a tarsk bit).

A character enquiring about the 'seasonal food of the day' will be told that it is soup and bread.

No explanation will be given by Smade as to why it is somehow more expensive than 'soup and bread' on the list, but he will frown at the question as if it merely confirms to him that guests are idiots who waste his time with their petulant questions.

The GM should feel free to add to the price list with items/services from the main rulebook, suitably inflated to outrageous proportions.

A great visual gag throughout the scenario would be to have a hard copy of the prices displayed on the gaming table and for the GM routinely, without explanation, cross out one or more of the costs and increase them by one or two coppers. Often just before the GM thinks the characters are about to ask for something in particular on the list.

"I run a respectable Inn," he will explain as he creates a ledger page for the party. "No fighting with drawn blades, no wrestling naked by the fireplace, and no racing wild, dangerous animals for sport through the corridors." The Inn is quite busy by now with several guests already occupying the best rooms (those being the rooms with locks on the doors), so he informs them that they will have to double up, although obviously, he will not expect free women to share with men.

It quickly becomes clear that the available 'rooms' are in fact sub-divided portions of a standard size room where Smade and his sons have nailed together some internal partitions. Each space is big enough for a hand made double bunk frame that can house two guests, one above the other. Pinned to the 'bedroom' walls are signs that read 'the management will fine guests who spit on the floor'.

Anyone remonstrating violently with Smade is acting dishonourably, despite the provocation he presents. They will be shouted down and reminded of the risk by other guests and attacking Smade will provoke him, his sons and the men staying at the inn to intervene.

A WELCOME BATH

Bathing is one of the more relaxing and refreshing customs of Gor and characters opting for a hot bath gain an honour point for use later. Free women will refuse to bathe at the same time as men and so the bathing 'slots' during the day are segregated according to the sexes.

Guests opting for a bath will have the use of the bathing room which contains several shallow round tubs made of clay and covered with porcelain, mounted on open bricked platforms, each platform about a yard high. Fires lit beneath the bricked platforms keep the water warm.

Goreans typically bathe in a succession of two tubs, using the first tub to soak, wash and sponge. They then apply oils, rubbing the oils into the skin and scrape away the residue of dirt and oil with a strigil (a narrow spatula-like implement), cleaning the pores of the skin. The second tub of clean water is then used to finish the bathing process.

The assistance of a bath girl (the kajira, Bella, in this case) makes the art of bathing far more pleasurable and relaxing if a character can afford one.

Bella has belonged to Smade for three years and is worked pretty hard as Smade doesn't own any other slaves. She dreams of some wealthy guest taking a shine to her and offering to buy her, giving her a more comfortable life in a city, but it hasn't happened yet. She will, therefore, try her best to be noticed by any man in the party who seems to be high caste or wealthy. If she is hired for bath duties, or for the night, she will do her best to beg that he buys her.

She was initially a Lady of the city of Corcyrus, and will not wish to be taken back to that city as a slave. Any other city (except for Port Kar) will be appealing to her though.

A character who rents the use of Bella for the night will gain an honour point and will wake in the morning in a far happier mood than many of the other guests. This reflects the fact that sex is an essential part of Gorean life and Goreans tend to be sullen and 'off their game' without getting it regularly.

BELLA

Bella is a typical kajira who has succumbed to the Gorean version of Stockholm syndrome and has grown to accept her collar and status in life.

She fears free women and will be visibly cautious of accidentally offending any free female character in the party, but will relax a little (and be very surprised) if they turn out to be sympathetic and/or kind towards her. She has long since lost any hope of being free, and no longer even considers the possibility. She enjoys sex and quite looks forward to the rare nights when a customer is wealthy enough to pay the inflated price for her use.

If asked whether any other slaves are working at the Inn, she will answer 'sometimes'. This refers to the convention that if a free woman guest cannot settle her bills at the end of her stay, she becomes an indentured 'servant' until her invoice is paid.

She is encouraged to find another guest who might settle what she owes on her behalf. If she is unsuccessful in that, after a few days, she is generally enslaved.

Smade tends not to keep these new slaves for very long, usually offering them up for sale after a month or so. At present, no indentured free women are working at the Inn.

If characters strike up a relationship with Bella, she becomes a source of valuable information relating to each of the guests and indeed Smade himself, along with the comings and goings.

Free men and women often underestimate how much a kajira overhears or sees, and a little kindness and some treats can turn Bella into a useful spy in respect of the NPC guests. She will be reluctant to do anything that might anger Smade, though. The best time to ask her questions of importance would be during sex, perhaps cruelly withholding a slave orgasm to demand answers.

Bella's market value is probably in the two to three silver tarsks range, but Smade will not sell her for that. She is his only kajira and is an occasional source of additional revenue when someone chooses to rent her as a bath girl or for the night.

Smade might consider selling her for a ridiculous amount of money, but even then it would be through protracted haggling. He is rather fond of her, even if it's not entirely reciprocated by the girl herself. Owning her would also avoid the problems with her being punished for helping them.

SMADE'S SONS

Smade has two sons, both healthy young men, called Magnus and Rufus. While they don't play a significant part in the module, they will be available to help defend the Inn at the end of the scenario, and they can interact with the player characters.

Both men are frustrated with the limitations of their rural existence at the Inn. They will never own slave girls of their own, they will never gain fame or renown, and they will never trample the jewelled thrones of Ubars under their sandalled feet. In short, they are frustrated with their lives, especially since they are rarely if ever, allowed to use the Inn slave, Bella. Play them as sexually frustrated young men who long for fame and fortune (however naively) and are probably impressed by the swagger and competence of the player characters.

Magnus and Rufus will probably try and impress the player characters in some pitiful manner, seeking some degree of approval or respect, and any sign of friendship from these redoubtable heroes will be eagerly snapped up. Ideally, they would love some sword lessons from the characters, and if a character agrees to show them some techniques and correct their mistakes, grant that player an Honour point (and give the boys a temporary +1 pip in their attack rolls).

Unless the player characters get fed up with the sons and tell them to go away, they are likely to hang around asking never-ending questions about the heroic quests they presume the players have undertaken.

They are especially seeking vivid descriptions of the delicious women the heroes have no doubt bedded in their time.

"Have you ever enjoyed a slave girl from the Tabari? I'm told they're the best dancers in the world!"

"What about women from Ar? Do they squeal when you have them?"

Eventually, Smade will notice this and send the sons away to do errands, apologising brusquely to his guests, with much grumbling on the part of the lads.

THE GUESTS

The primary public room of the Inn also serves as the dining area where hot soup and bread can be provided, along with a locally fermented paga. It is in this main room that the characters will first meet and possibly get to know some of the other guests within the Inn.

The guests are all approachable and/or may approach the characters, and they act as springboards for various role-play vignettes that can take place according to who encounters who. Each NPC has a description indicating their storyline and how they can interact with the player characters. Allow role-playing story-lines to flow naturally from these encounters until they seem to have run a natural course. These encounters may lead to the 'Snout in the Dark' episode eventually. Then move on to the closing scenes of the adventure with the arrival of Sar Haranson and his men. Depending what the players choose, they may interact with some, all, or none of the NPCs residing at the Inn.

HOME STONES

A reminder of the importance of Home Stones. The Gorean setting differs from many heroic settings with the concepts of honour and Home Stones. At least one of the characters (the Lady Valeria) will share a common Home Stone with a member of the party, and it may be that other NPCs do too.

If the characters are honourable (as most non-outlaw Goreans are) their upbringing will have conditioned them to honour their Home Stone at all times and lend support to men and women who share that Home Stone. The GM should remind players that they will benefit from the award of Honour points if they act sympathetically towards men and women of their city.

Broadly speaking, aiding a man who shares your Home Stone gives an award of an Honour point and twice that award if the person in question is a woman.

Each NPC profile also includes a snippet of information that Bella knows about the guest. She may be talked into revealing some or all of the information depending on how she is treated.

FELIX AND CASSIA OF VENNA - CASTE OF VINTNERS

The first sight of these two guests will be in the main public room of the Inn, possibly when the characters have their supper or walk-in for some paga.

Felix occupies a chair to the left of the open fireplace where he is swaddled in a blanket and shaking. His face is pale and gaunt, and he is obviously not well. Standing beside him, looking distraught, and trying hard to ease his suffering with a bowl of cold water and a sponge is his loving free companion, the Lady Cassia. This man and woman have been free companioned now for twenty years and have happily renewed their partnership every year without hesitation. They were travelling to Vonda to negotiate some wine contracts when they were caught up in the border conflict, and Felix was stabbed by a bandit who (although this is not public knowledge) took most of their money. This scene should be played for sympathy as the couple are decent, sympathetic characters.

Although Cassia refuses to accept the possibility, Felix knows he is probably dying. The stab wound is deep, and with just crude stitching and dressing, he is getting progressively worse. An infection has set in, despite the attention of a physician also residing at the Inn. The medicine he has been given doesn't seem to be winning the battle.

Lady Cassia appears a tragic figure for she genuinely loves her free companion, who means the world to her.

They manage a small vineyard in the hills outside Venna and are incredibly knowledgeable on the art of winemaking.

Both Felix and Cassia fear what might happen to Cassia when Felix dies, for they do not have sufficient funds to settle their account with the Inn Keeper, and in situations like that Cassia will become the property of the Inn. The gentle Lady not only faces the loss of her beloved companion but also the distinct possibility of slavery. Felix is more concerned with securing the safety of his beloved than actually saving his own life.

The arrival of new faces at the Inn will prompt Lady Cassia to cautiously approach them in the hope they might have medical experience. She is already receiving help from the physician, Titus, but has growing suspicions relating to his support which are in fact wholly justified. She will be meek and humble to the characters, practically begging them to assist with Felix in any way they can.

If the party includes a character with Venna as his/her Home Stone, the GM should remind that character that it is honourable to help men and women who share your Home Stone. Otherwise, all options are open to the characters.

Any character examining Felix will be able to determine that he is in a bad way. A reasonable success with a Healing roll will raise suspicions that the symptoms shown are different than you might expect from a straight forward stab wound and are in line with some exotic form of blood poisoning. Cassia will mention that the guest, Titus, has been helping tend to Felix since they arrived.

Still, Cassia will say she doesn't have confidence in his ability as Felix has got progressively worse since the treatment began.

Cassia will attempt to strike up some sort of friendship with any free women in the party because free women at this Inn are in a considerable minority and she feels a little safer in the company of her own sex. She may mention that the other free woman (Lady Valeria) has been somewhat aloof and stand-offish so far.

It is quite possible that characters may wish to speak to Titus and if so turn to the section relating to that NPC.

A character with the Healing skill can make a further diagnosis to work out what to do. A successful roll will suggest that Felix has been poisoned and that the nature of the toxin can be countered by a root that commonly grows in the wilderness in this region – a root called cartell.

Obtaining a cartell root will involve leaving the safety of the Inn, however. A risky prospect in these troubled times.

Felix has almost given up hope and will care only for his Lady, but Lady Cassia hasn't and will not give up hope that she can save her man. She will speak to the party in private and beg them, plead with them, to take the risk to find a cartell root.

Her distress and desperation is genuine, for she truly loves Felix. She has no money to offer, but if the characters seem to be holding out for some reward, she will resort to offering herself for a night of pleasure if they will only save her beloved.

"I am pretty. Beautiful even. I will do what you want for a night if you will save my Felix..."

If necessary, she will remove her veil in private to display what she is offering as payment, and it is evident she is indeed beautiful. There are tears in her eyes as she does this, but she will pay any price to save Felix. An honourable man will probably be moved by the desperation and level of sacrifice the Lady is prepared to make for her loved one's sake and would possibly waive any claim on her.

If so the individual gains two honour points. Otherwise, the character may claim his alternative payment when the root is found. Go to the section entitled 'The Snout in the Dark' for details of what it takes to venture outside the walls.

Lady Cassia will be faithful to her word and will pay the price she had agreed. She will not tell Felix what she has done. If Felix later finds out, he will hate the characters for having taken advantage of Cassia like that. He will also be brutally ashamed with himself that he was unable to spare his lady from having to do what she did.

If the root is procured, Felix will survive and slowly regain his strength. Depending on whether the characters take him with them at the close of the adventure, he may ultimately survive. If the root isn't found, Felix will die shortly before the mercenaries arrive.

Upon Felix's death, the Inn Keeper will demand payment of the accumulated bill from Lady Cassia who of course has no funds to her name sufficient to cover even a fraction of it.

In front of all the other guests, he will have her stripped and placed in loose chains to act as an indentured captive, serving food, working as bath girl and being available for rent for the night. Her redemption price of 87 copper tarsks will be chalked on the redemption board if anyone wishes to pay what she owes.

Bella Knows: *She knows that the Lady Cassia is beautiful, having seen her naked and unveiled when she bathed a few days ago. She suspects that the couple have very little money, certainly not enough to pay their bills, as she overheard them whispering about the dire situation*

TITUS OF AR – CASTE OF PHYSICIANS

Titus is a sociopath who can mimic normal human emotions and come across as a warm, pleasant and friendly individual. He happens to be a Physician of good standing in Ar despite being something of a serial killer. Titus hates the city of Venna (where Felix and Cassia come from) ever since his free companion was killed by raiders from that city ten years ago. He bears a cold detachment to men and women of Venna, and makes it his life mission to poison each one that he can.

Felix's wound offered him the opportunity to lend his services and stitch it up. To fight the infection, he produced a herbal medicine which he laced with a natural poison that he has been giving Felix in increased doses. Not only does he want Felix to die, he wants him to die slowly and in lingering pain and discomfort, added to which he wants to watch the distress of the Lady Cassia as she sees her beloved free companion slip away day by day. He doesn't know that the Lady has insufficient funds to pay her bills upon the death of her beloved, but if Titus did know that he would be happier still at the prospect.

The first encounter with Titus may well be a warm and friendly greeting in the main room as he seeks to ascertain the Home Stones of the characters. He will seem genuinely helpful and may even pay for a round of paga cups.

Any character hailing from Venna will be a marked man or woman as Titus will seek to poison him or her during their refuge at the Inn.

The second encounter with Titus may come after the characters become involved with Felix and Cassia. If they have made successful Healing rolls, they may wonder why Titus's treatment so far has been ineffectual. They may even discover the blood poisoning and then have questions to ask him concerning his diagnosis and treatment.

Titus will be charming, professional and very interested (apparently) in every discovery the characters have made. He will praise their results and observations, and be aghast at their obviously superior skills to spot things he in his haste apparently missed.

He will pretend to take the revelation of the blood poisoning very seriously indeed and after a bit of thought will draw the characters aside to suggest a possible theory.

"I saw no sign of the poisoning when Felix arrived with his Lady. I can't see how I could have missed it. A terrible possibility occurs to me."

He lowers his voice as if the players are the only people he can trust.

"The most likely scenario is that the man's food was poisoned. The soup perhaps. Given to him by the kajira. The Inn Keeper perhaps has his eye on the Lady, and under the fog of war perhaps plans to kill her free companion so that he can claim the Lady under some pretext or other. I think you'll agree this is the most likely scenario."

He will use a lot of prompting phrases like 'I think you'll agree' designed to make the characters go along with him. Basically, he's offering up suspects other than himself.

He will go on to make a further suggestion, again, all in the spirit of helping the party out as best he can.

"What if this apparently kind and loving Lady is anything but?" he muses while rubbing his chin thoughtfully. "What if she is secretly poisoning her free companion? Perhaps she wants to be rid of him? Perhaps she has a lover back in the city of Venna? Perhaps this journey was an opportunity for her to dispose of him?"

And so on.

If any suggestion seems to be convincing with the party, Titus may seek to plant a small dose of the poison where it can be found to incriminate anyone other than himself, all the while continuing to slowly poison Felix with his treatments. Titus will even be helpful enough to agree that the cartell root is likely to cure the poison if it will make the characters think he is on their side.

Anyone searching his room is likely to find the precise poison in Titus's medical bag. The level in the bottle suggests some of it has recently been used. He also has surgical implements for the examination of corpses and many other venoms, poisons and tonics.

Bella Knows: *Titus has been very kind to everyone. Very helpful. For some reason, she finds him a bit scary, but she can't say why. Titus had a free companion some years ago who was killed in a raid by Tarnsmen from Venna. He mentioned it in passing to Smade.*

RANULPH OF LARA – CASTE OF WARRIORS

The first sight of Ranulph will be a brooding, scarred figure dressed in the scarlet of the warriors, hunched grimly over a kaissa board that has seen better days, seated in the corner of the main room with an empty space beside him on the opposite side of the board.

He has the battle-weary look of a veteran of a thousand campaigns, and one who has seen his fair share of horror over the years.

Bella will bring him a cup of paga when the characters first notice him. As he takes the cup from the kajira, he will see the newcomers in turn. With a wry smile, he will raise the cup and enquire if any of them play ‘the great game’.

He seems to be already in the middle of a game, though playing himself. If anyone enquires about that the warrior will smile and respond:

“I play kaissa with Death. He sits opposite me at all times in his grim cloak of battle grey, judging my shallow deeds, my life, and what little honour I have remaining. Can you not see him? He stares at you with keen interest, even now...”

Ranulph will be friendly to any character of the warrior caste or any character who professes an interest in kaissa. He will be generally polite to the others.

He is happy to talk about himself in general terms.

Until recently he fought alongside one of the mercenary companies that are currently marauding the borderland but left when he grew sick of the descent into barbarism that he has witnessed.

“I’m a soldier. I fight under a banner, and I fight against warriors who know their trade. There is no honour, no glory in burning villages and crucifying children and their pets. You think I’m joking? My company crucified animals only three weeks ago.”

It turns out he is a professional soldier from Lara who fought alongside the companies paid for by the city treasury.

“The free companies aren’t what they were thirty years ago. The war between Ar and Cos war set new rules of conduct that did away with honour and professionalism. Where once we fought for honour and glory, now we fight for turnip fields.”

He has drunk a lot of paga and is bitter toward what his caste has become in this region. But at heart, he is a friendly man and will share some cups of paga with the party if they are at all interested, and talk about wars gone by, the Ar/Cos conflict in particular, and theorise on the rise of the new powers on Gor such as a revitalised Port Kar.

“I’m old enough to remember when it was just a city of lawless scum. Now it is the supreme naval power on the Thassa following the naval defeat inflicted on Cos, and they have a Home Stone! Who would have thought it.”

He will play kaissa with any taker, and he is good at the game.

He will wager various baubles he took as loot – bits of jewellery and bits of gold plate that he has cut into smaller pieces. To him, wealth seems irrelevant.

“The Priest-Kings are fickle and shower me with wealth when I least want it.”

The characters will almost certainly notice something leaning against his chair wrapped in purple silk. It looks like a sword scabbard but richly bound.

As he plays with a kaissa piece, Ranulph will notice the interest and say, “now that... that is a treasure. Not like these sparkling trophies. This is what men would fight for with honour.”

The blade, he believes, is the blade that was carried by Apius Molinari, an ancient Ubar of Ar who ruled the city centuries ago. The legends say that Ar was besieged from the south and Apius went to the most magnificent temple of the Priest-Kings.

He placed a sword on their altar and pleaded for the Priest-Kings to bestow the blade with their blessing so that he might lead an attack out through the city gates and shatter the besieging force.

According to legend, the Priest-Kings appeared in the hallowed temple that bore their name and filled the steel of the blade with molten fire. This made the steel as hot as the centre of the sun, an unstoppable force. Apius drew the sword and led his elite regiments out onto the field beyond Ar, where he smote the enemy until they broke and ran.

Since then the blade has been a thing of legend, and it is said that any warrior with honour in his heart cannot be defeated so long as he carries the blade into battle.

Whether the blade actually is the blade carried by Apius is impossible to tell and anyway, the fact is mostly unimportant as it is merely a steel blade with no magical or advanced science properties whatsoever. However, Ranulph believes it still has the blessing of the Priest-Kings, and he will tell a vivid story of how he was cut off from his unit and surrounded by seven warriors of Vonda and how he cut his way through them without a scratch.

He claims the blade was kept for over eighty years in a stone vault which his men looted. It was guarded by ancient Initiates who knew its legacy. Vonda had sent a company of men to find it and take it back to their city when Ranulph came across them. He managed to kill the Vondan soldiers before any one of them could place a hand on the blade's hilt. Now the sword is his.

“But they know I have it, And they are looking for me.”

When asked who exactly is looking for him, Ranulph will answer:

“The Northern Sleen. Captain Sar Haranson. He will come. It is only a matter of time. He can smell the blade like a sleen scents a runaway slave girl.”

If further paga is offered Ranulph will eventually also admit that he and Sar Haranson have crossed swords in the past and that they had both served the city of Lara briefly.

Still, Ranulph grew disgusted with Haranson's atrocities and had prevented him from giving the women of a village to his men.

"The village was a vassal of Lara. We should have protected them. Haranson didn't care. He said his men wanted women. We fought. I cut out his left eye. He will not forget that."

This is the reason why Sar Haranson will arrive in the final act of the scenario.

Ranulph has one last thought, though. He believes he is no longer fit to wield the blade. He feels he has lost his honour. He has done too many things in the last year that he would never have countenanced as an idealistic young man, and he believes the blade will turn on him when Sar Haranson arrives.

"The blade needs an honourable hand to hold it. Were I to find such a man..." his voice drifts off as he stares into his *paga cup*.

The implication here is obvious. If Ranulph believes a member of the party is honourable and deserving, he will pass the ancient blade of Ar to that man in time for the final act.

As will become apparent in the final act, the blade has no magical properties, but several coincidental things will occur to help the warrior who has it.

If Ranulph warms to the group, he will make a suggestion. The forces of Sar Haranson are camped close by and ultimately will make their way to this Inn to seek the blade that Ranulph carries.

It would be wise perhaps to consider some means of escape rather than wait for the caravan that may not arrive in time. He happens to know that a couple of pasangs away there is a fast-flowing river and a secluded boathouse that contains a longboat and oars.

Would the characters be prepared to sneak out under cover of darkness and find that boat? If it is still there, they can return to the Inn and have a backup plan of evacuating to the river if the mercenaries arrive too soon? If they are up for this, it is likely to impress him in respect of the blade, and the GM should then consult the section entitled 'The Snout in the Dark' for further details.

Bella Knows: *Ranulph is intrigued by Lady Valeria. He has been watching her since she arrived. He has told her that he suspects the Lady isn't quite what she seems.*

LADY VALERIA – CASTE OF SCRIBES

NB: Lady Valeria should claim to share a Homestone with one of the player-characters.

The first thing anyone notices about Lady Valeria is her gorgeous clothes. Her robes and gowns are exquisite fabrics of beautiful colours and shimmering designs, though the long hem is streaked with dried mud that she hasn't quite been able to brush clean due to the nature of the fabric. When she glides into a room, men look up from their kaissa boards and wonder what loveliness must perchance lie beneath those veils and luxurious garments. She is obviously wealthy but curiously unaccompanied at this Inn. She has no free companion and no bodyguard. Not surprisingly, all of the men staying at the Inn are curious as to her circumstances and status.

Valeria is a Kur agent who became separated from her men a few days ago when they travelled at night to avoid the various mercenary patrols. Her men are still out there somewhere, she believes, and Valeria is growing more and more impatient waiting for them to find her.

How many Inns are there in the region she wonders that they can be taking so long? She's not even sure how exactly she became separated in the dark, except there was a huge sleen suddenly on their trail and there was something of a panic. Well, she indeed ran as the sleen attacked one of her men, but it's not her fault she couldn't find her way back and was too scared to call out when she heard a cavalry patrol make camp close to the thicket where she lay.

She had no choice but to slip quietly away, travelling downhill in the dark until as the sun rose, she came across the Inn with the gates being opened. She strolled in and presented herself at the front desk and requested a room.

It has been three days, and her men should have found her by now. She will have some harsh words of criticism for them when they do. She's effectively stranded here until they return.

There was considerable relief though when she discovered to her delight that this Inn was the Quiva and it was the actual Inn that she was travelling to anyway. Here on the Borderland, she is to make contact with an opposite number to hand over some important papers that are wrapped in a water-skin folder. These papers are coded and unintelligible to the player characters if they are examined, but the GM will know they pertain to security details in the Sardar region.

By now Valeria has reassured herself that she located the Inn not by chance but through her brilliant grasp of direction and a sense of intrepid resourcefulness. The qualities that have made her such a sought after agent of the Kurii these last five months. As each man arrived at the Inn, she approached them, rather boldly for an unescorted free woman, to determine whether they might perhaps be associated with her contact. Now with the arrival of the player characters, she is prompted to greet them too and subtly determine whether one of them might be the man she seeks.

Lady Valeria will share the same Home Stone as at least one of the player characters. Which one will be determined by the GM. Ideally, it should be a Home Stone that is shared by the largest number of players, but if all the characters have different Home Stones, then the GM should choose the character who is generally the natural leader of the group.

This gives her a connection of sorts to begin with – an essential consideration for a free woman dealing with men on Gor.

Valeria will make the mistake of thinking one of the player characters is her Kur contact, Krassus, simply because by an unlikely coincidence the character is an almost spitting image of Krassus (from a portrait she was shown).

So convinced is she that her contact has turned up at last that she will approach him at some point in the evening in a rather bold manner.

“You don’t know me, Sir, but I know you, and I believe we share a common cause.” She will emphasise those last words with implied meaning, referring of course to the Kurii. Incredibly, and presumptuously, this free woman will place a hand on the character’s forearm! Stress to the player how very bold this is for a free woman as the player has no idea who she is. “Meet me outside in the courtyard, under the overhang, in five ebn (five minutes). I have something interesting for you...”

It is raining outside in the walled courtyard, but there is shelter under the overhang of the roof. Slave rings are set in the wood, above head level.

Free women who are unable to pay their bills are commonly chained here by their wrists on display where they may plead with other guests to settle their bills. Sets of empty manacles swing from the slave rings in the strong wind.

The Lady Valeria is waiting, confident of course that the character is her ally.

The GM should play this encounter partly for laughs, with the Lady jabbering, offering a lot of information without thinking, and preventing the character from initially pointing out she has made a mistake.

If ever the player characters try to do that (smart characters, of course, will prefer to play along and let her speak as much as she wants).

Valeria will typically babble, urgently, in hushed, clipped sentences with an air of presumed authority that may be a little grating to player characters who don’t actually have any allegiance to her cause.

If a character tries to say something she’ll probably speak over him, not really listening, or tell him to keep his voice down because “the Priest-Kings have ears everywhere...”

“You took your time getting here. I’ve been waiting for days! Days, I tell you! The journey here was awful. You have no idea the frustrations I’ve endured! The poor quality food I’ve had to put up with! I am weary of plain turnip soup! I have mud on the hem of my gown! And just look at the condition of my sequined slippers! And there was a sleet! A sleet! Can you believe it? My men ran away! They left me on my own! I’ll be reporting their behaviour, of course. You can be sure of that. I must say you look rather more handsome than your portrait. They gave you narrow beady eyes in the picture. Made you look a bit like an urchin. Try and get another portrait done in future. The one I saw doesn’t do you justice.”

And so on. Basically, Lady Valeria won’t shut up. She will act as if she’s the best agent the Kurii have and expects her colleagues to be in awe of her. She doesn’t even consider the possibility that she’s talking to the wrong man. After a while, she will hand the sealed package of coded papers to the no doubt bemused character.

“These need to be conveyed to the Fourth Claw of the mighty Kur. All praise the Steel Worlds! Urgency is the keyword here! Urgency! I take it you are all men accustomed to fending off danger with keen, sharpened blades and fanatical loyalty to the cause?”

If the characters simply state she’s made a mistake, then obviously Valeria will realise the error of her ways and keep the package for herself.

Still, most players tend to go with the flow in situations like this, hoping to benefit from it.

If she has said too much and realises her mistake, she will try and have the characters killed later on when the correct Kur contact turns up.

Otherwise, she will assume her job is done. Any assistance the characters offer her while pretending to be Kur agents will be accepted as she has lost her own men. All this will change when her true contact turns up.

His name is Krassus.

Bella Knows: *The Lady carries a poisoned pin in an arm sheath on her lower left arm. The Lady had an escort of three men that she lost some days ago, but she assumes they are looking for her. The Lady seems to be impatiently waiting for someone to arrive at the Inn whom she is to meet.*

KRASSUS OF VONDA – CASTE OF WARRIORS

NB: A late arrival sometime after the player characters arrive

Krassus also looks like his portrait, but with those narrowed eyes, Valeria found so unappealing. The uncanny resemblance to one of the player characters should be noticed if the party spot him.

Valeria will realise the terrible mistake she has made as soon as he walks through the main doors and she has a chance to test him with a little bit of Kur conspiracy knowledge.

This is a disaster for her, and obviously, she can't tell Krassus about the mistake she has made, or there may be severe repercussions. He may think she is incompetent just because she made a simple error that could have happened to anyone!

Instead, she will contrive a tale of how she has been sent here to inform Krassus that the characters are carrying important coded documents that have to fall into Kur hands.

Krassus is a competent Kur agent, good with blades and skulduggery. He has little time for the calibre of female agents the Kuriu commonly employ and will be particularly harsh if he finds any perceived mistakes on Valeria's part.

She may think she is on an equal level to him, but he feels he is the senior agent here.

Nevertheless to begin with he will assume what she says is true and will humour and work with her to acquire the papers from the characters, though he is likely to grow more and more irritated by her.

Depending on what the characters do with the documents, Krassus (with or without Valeria's aid as a distraction) may try to steal them in the Inn or maybe even threaten the characters directly if they seem to be weak.

If the characters plan on venturing outside of the tavern (the Snout in the Dark section), Krassus and Valeria will view this as the perfect time to stage an ambush and kill the characters outside of the safety of the Inn's secure walls.

See that section for full details.

Further note: a particularly ingenious player may decide to capitalise on the uncanny resemblance with Krassus and, having disposed of him perhaps, take his place, and pretend to be him in his dealings with the Lady Valeria. This lies somewhat out of the scope for this module but could lead to amusing role-play scenes if an opportunity presents itself.

LEONARD OF VONDA – CASTE OF BUILDERS

This man is an innovative Builder who has spent his life trying to circumvent the technology laws of the Priest-Kings. He was on his way to a nearby city to present his latest invention to the Ubar there in the hope of financial patronage.

Put simply he has invented the hot air balloon for Gor and has a prototype lashed to his wagon outside in the courtyard. The balloon takes a while to assemble and inflate but functions in the style of late 18th century balloons.

Ultimately its usefulness is somewhat limited on the world of Gor where the skies can be the hunting ground for armed tarnsmen. Still, within the patrolled skies of a city-state, it can provide cheap means to transport men and goods over short distances.

Leonard is happy to talk about his invention to anyone who sits down at a low table to join him. The balloon comes into play in the final sequence of this adventure when the mercenaries reach the Inn and attack it.

Bella Knows: *Leonard dreams of owning a slave girl of his own and hopes that if he can gain the patronage of an important rich man he will be able to settle down in a city and purchase a girl. It is his burning ambition in life. He has come here with a strange invention that is covered by a rainproof tarpaulin in his wagon outside.*


THE BLESSED AMBROSE – CASTE OF INITIATES

The Blessed Ambrose has a shaved head, wears white robes and is quite clearly an Initiate even before he begins to tell you of the celestial workings of the Priest-Kings. Which he will do. He's that religious preacher that gives fanatical religion a bad name with his fervent belief that he knows the inner workings of God's mind and if you doubt even a single syllable of what he has to say you're deluded.

Ambrose is here because he has had a vision of the apocalypse and he knows that the Priest-Kings are set to cleanse this world with fire and steel and bring about a paradise when they reveal their real faces to humanity. He is old enough to have lived through the near-apocalypse depicted in Priest-Kings of Gor when the gravity weapons threatened to tear Gor apart. He knows for sure that the Nest War was simply a prelude to the actual apocalypse, for which the recent Ar/Cos conflict was another vibrant sign of things to come. He has read the future in the stars and through consulting complex mathematical charts. He believes that Sar Haranson, in particular, is one of the Holy Riders who will raise blessed armies under his banner to cleanse the continent of Gor. Then the Priest-Kings will emerge from the Sardar mountains in a halo of golden light to spawn a garden of earthly delights for the survivors.

There is no need for proof. He simply knows.

The characters will first encounter him as he intrudes without their permission and lays out his apocalyptic visions.



He tells them that he can save them all from fire and sword if they only accept the Priest-Kings into their hearts and swear obedience. Then and only then, when Sar Haranson arrives, which he will do very soon, will they be spared his wrath.

Ambrose is right about one thing – Sar Haranson is coming, but Ambrose doesn't know it is because the Captain wishes to acquire what he believes is the blessed sword of Ar.

Like all Initiates, Ambrose has a distaste for women and will not speak more than a few words to a female character. He abhors physical contact of any kind with women and will consider it an insult to his order to be approached too closely by one. If one touches him, he will have to ritually purify himself.

He has travelled to this region in the belief that Sar Haranson is a herald of the Priest-Kings and wishes to bow down before him.

He also wants to make an offering at a forest shrine close to the Inn. He fears the prowling bands of outlaws drawn to war-torn places such as this.

He will offer money to the characters (twenty coppers tarsks each, but can be haggled up to thirty) if they will escort him outside the walls to the shrine and guard him while he pays homage to the Priest-Kings.

He also hints that the Shrine is home to a holy wise man who can speak in tongues with the Priest-Kings and could answer whatever questions the player characters may have. Turn to the sequence entitled 'The Snout in the Dark' for details of this.

Bella Knows: *Nothing. The Initiate refuses to have any contact with her. He abhors the close proximity of women.*

Part 3:

The Snout in the Dark

There are several reasons why the characters might choose to leave the security of the walled Inn.

They might wish to find rare roots that can save Felix's life. They may want to locate the boathouse on the river bank a few pasangs away. They may wish to accompany the Blessed Ambrose to his Priest-King shrine and consult with the hermit there.

Due to the nature of the war-torn area, the best time to go out is when it is dark. The Inn Keeper can supply hooded lanterns (at a suitably extravagant price) and depending on the reason for venturing out, the characters may have various NPCs with them.

- Lady Cassia is prepared to accompany them in search of roots.
- Ranulph will accompany them if they search for the boathouse.
- And of course, the Initiate will be there if they head to the shrine.

If they decide to do more than one thing on their journey, they may be able to convince any or all of them to come with them, but the others will prefer to remain in the inn.

The characters will require navigation rolls with a difficulty modifier depending on how dark it is. For 5 copper tarsks, the Inn Keeper can sketch the layout of the area on a map if they ask which will make the task easier.

(Difficulty 15 in daylight, 20 at night, reduce by 5 if they have a map)

Navigation rolls will also be required to find each of the objectives. Failing the rolls means the characters simply blunder around in the dark. Whether they are successful or not, they will nevertheless run into 'the snout in the dark'.

This is the savage and rather large sleen that attacked Lady Valeria's armed escort, and the first sign of the beast will be when the characters stumble across the gnawed remains of Lady Valeria's men.

Depending on what Valeria ended up saying, they may or may not know those remains are the men she presumed are still alive and looking for her. The bodies have obviously been chewed by animals, but there is a fair amount of looting that can be done as the group were carrying supplies and coins for Lady Valeria's work.

If the characters are patient and brave enough to spend time searching, they will find random goodies discarded by the attack littered around the area. For each Senses roll award them something good that can sold for a profit, a trinket, bracelet or something else of profit.

Moneywise there are 139 copper tarsks and 37 silver tarsks – a considerable amount of money, but the coins are spread around the ground and can be found in amounts of 5D6 at a time for each round of scrabbling.

The second sign of the sleen will be when the characters stumble across a couple of small cute furry baby sleen.

Ooh! Look how cute they are! The baby sleen will back away, scared of the intruders. And where there are baby sleen...

The characters will be aware of a low growling sound behind them. Yes, mum has arrived. And mum is big. The characters are in the sleen's nesting zone, and it will assume its babies are under threat.

If it is reasonably dark, the sleen will charge in, deliver a couple of savage attacks at a random member of the group and then charge away to the other side. And then repeat.

It will not stand to fight until it has done enough damage to feel confident. The exception is if anyone threatens one of its children. In this case, it throws all caution to the wind and charges back in to fight.

Wise players understanding what is happening may decide to try and calm the sleen with Animal Handling. Apply a -15 difficulty though if combat has already begun and -25 if the babies have been threatened. A successful roll will see her fetch her pups by the scruff and slink off into the undergrowth.

Turning your back and running only turns you into a preferred target for the sleen and the GM should inform any character with Animal Handling of that fact.

When the fight with the sleen is over, a suitable dice roll will find any or all of the locations required.

SCRABBLING FOR THE ROOT

This outcome is simplicity in itself. The characters find the root. If only everything in life was so easy...

THE BOAT HOUSE

Ranulph knows the wooded area reasonably well and is something of a forester in addition to his martial skills and training.

He will lead the characters towards the river bank and follow it north-west for about two pasangs before he is sure that the boathouse is close by. The nearer he gets, the more cautious he will be. The GM should engineer some false scares to make the players think they might be walking into an ambush – sounds in the forest that they assume might be bandits waiting in ambush that turn out to just be skittish animals, and so on.

When the boathouse is located, Ranulph will go into full 'Vietnam skirmish' mode, signalling everyone to hunker down and approach slowly under cover of the remaining trees and bushes, for he thinks he has heard something. The boathouse has a slipway that heads directly into the water with mooring shafts sunk into the river bed.

As the final approach is made, one of the characters will see a sudden flash of movement to his side as a darkened figure races past at high speed. The figure blunders and flails through the bushes, veering away from the dense thorns, making it easy for the character to catch up if he wishes. Allow a couple of contest rolls with a +10 bonus to the difficulty.

If the character succeeds, he will bring down a fleeing slave girl called Esmée who has been hiding out in the vicinity of the boathouse for a couple of weeks, living off whatever she could trap or pick in the woods. Esmée is attractive, probably worth in the region of 80 to 90 copper tarsks as is, but triple that if cleaned up and given some good meals. She will flail and fight until she is restrained. Her collar marks her as the property of a Tyron of Vonda.

“Probably dead if she is alone out here,” suggests Ranulph.

A simple interrogation of the slave will confirm that he was indeed killed by outlaws in this lawless area. Once she understands that she has been caught, Esmée’s slave instincts will kick in, and she will accept her fate. She doesn’t want to be punished. She will make it clear she isn’t a runaway – it’s just that her master was killed. The characters can choose to keep her or set her free.

Esmée is French, from Earth and can speak French and a decent amount of English. She was abducted from Earth nine months ago. If any of the player characters demonstrate that they are from Earth, Esmée will be stunned by that revelation (having never met another person from Earth on Gor so far) and will plead with that character to free her and return her to Earth.

Inside the boathouse, the news is rather grim. The boat is there but has been hacked apart with an axe to provide firewood. It turns out that the slave, Esmée, has been doing that with a nearby wood axe to keep warm by a cast-iron stove. It was safer than venturing deep into the woods to collect dry branches.

In other words, there is no chance to escape by river now.

THE SHRINE

It lies in a forest glade and is a stone plinth with a tapered point that rises to cast the shadow of the sun, like a sundial, mathematically precise and made of clean and polished stone.

The Shrine is home to a hermit-like figure called ‘Nobody’ who lives close by in a small hut made from willow poles and thatch. His ragged and stained robes were once white, suggesting he must have been an Initiate. Still, he is to all intents and purpose somewhat crazy, speaking in a Yoda-like way of irregular sentences (“Coming, they are, red-handed and bloody! Oh, the suffering!”), twitching and seemingly listening to voices that only he can hear. Ambrose holds the man in some form of reverence and explains that ‘Nobody’ can hear the Priest-Kings and if he is asked a question, can answer it with the real knowledge of the Priest-Kings.

This is somewhat true as ‘Nobody’ used to be one of the Priest-King agents who had cerebral implants in his head, allowing the Priest-Kings to monitor and direct his actions.

Then when the Nest War occurred (in Priest-Kings of Gor) much of their network was lost or destroyed. In the case of Nobody, the implants in his head short-circuited frying parts of his brain. His once shaved head is now covered in lank, greasy hair, but on the left side is a raw bald patch where the poor man has been clawing with his fingernails for years trying to quell the hissing and buzzing of the ruined implants located on that side of his skull.

The Priest-Kings can no longer ‘see’ or detect him, and in fact, are now oblivious to his existence, but he can still link to the immense bio-circuit databases in the Sardar mountains.

Without understanding how or why, Nobody has direct access to the sum total of Priest-King knowledge and, yes, if asked a question can divulge what the Priest-Kings know on the subject. This may prove useful to characters who have a chance here to find out valuable bits of information that will help them in later scenarios. The GM is the final arbiter of what Nobody can divulge.

After paying homage to Nobody, Ambrose will conduct complex ritual observations here that are unintelligible to a non-Initiate, but he will seem pleased with the results.

“I spoke to the Priest-Kings. We have their protection for what comes.” He will then cut himself and mark the forehead of each character with his own blood. “You will be spared their wrath,” he will say enigmatically.

Needless to say, this sigil marking has no effect whatsoever on anything that happens going forward.

RETURNING TO THE INN

Make the players test against Stealth with a +10 Difficulty modifier if it is dark. Failing to do so will mean a couple of mercenaries on patrol investigate the area where the characters are lurking. They can choose to hide (the best option) with Stealth rolls again or try to kill the two men swiftly and quietly.

Making any noise, or giving way to a prolonged sword fight will alert the other mercenaries nearby and the characters may then find themselves fleeing a running battle through dark woods in a hasty attempt to return to the safety of the Inn’s walls.

Play this as you see fit. Again, you don’t want to kill the characters, just give them a rough time if they end up making noise.

If Lady Valeria and Krassus want to kill the characters (either because the characters still have the papers or because they know too much), then they will be waiting in the darkness as the party return to the Inn.

Valeria has changed from her cumbersome gowns to wear a woollen huntress’ tunic (long-sleeved with a hem just above her knees) and woollen hose and ankle boots for ease of movement, and a scarf that acts as a veil over her lower face. They have set up some lanterns over the gate of the Inn which eagle-eyed players will realise weren’t lit when they ventured out.

The Kur agents lie in a ditch close by with loaded crossbows. The plan is the characters will be illuminated by the lantern lights as they return to the gates, making good targets. Valeria and Krassus will get a set of shots off with surprise (+10 on their rolls) and have a spare loaded crossbow each for follow up shots at normal effectiveness. Valeria will not engage in hand to hand combat, though she has a long poisoned pin that she can use if the characters find her. Krassus, however, is a warrior and can and will fight hand to hand if the party has been weakened and he thinks he has a chance to finish them off quickly.

If Krassus is defeated/killed in close combat, Lady Valeria will be alone in the dark and will attempt to find her way round to the back door of the Inn that she left unlocked. She plans on returning to the security of the Inn and pretending she had been there all the time. She is not however in anyway stealthy. Make three difficulty 20 stealth rolls for her. If she fails any of them, she stumbles into a deep ditch in the dark with a scream, giving away her location to the characters.

Otherwise, she reaches the security of the Inn and can hurry to her room. The ditch is ten feet deep with slippery wet mud embankments, and she will have difficulty scrabbling her way up the slope in the dark. Allow characters two dice rolls to discover her with Senses before she can claw her way out. If confronted, she will brandish her poison pin and warn them away. The characters will recognise her voice, of course. If her life is obviously threatened, though, and she has no reasonable path of escape, she will surrender rather than risk death.



Part Three: The Night of the Reavers

When the role-play interaction with the various NPCs reaches its natural conclusion, it is time to move on to the closing act of the module. This is heralded by the arrival of Sar Haranson and his men, which has probably been foretold earlier on through role-play.

The characters will be aware of a heightened sense of alarm from Smade and his sons as Haranson arrives at his gates and demands an audience. Smade is no longer his previously grumpy self because he knows how dangerous the Northern Sleen can be.

Sensibly enough Smade will be reluctant to open the gates and admit Sar Haranson. The Inn Keeper will warn his guests to stay inside as he speaks to the mercenary captain with his sons. Player characters are free to disregard that suggestion of course and follow Smade out into the courtyard. If so, they will overhear and possibly observe the conversation that occurs.

Haranson greets the Inn Keeper cordially enough but demands that the gates be opened. He is searching for a blade that may be in possession of a renegade warrior who is a deserter from the Vondan military. Haranson has three demands – the head of the deserter, the blade the man carries, and, while he is at it, any women, slave or free, residing inside the Inn.

Smade will be alarmed by all of this, and the characters will now see that despite his many character defects, Smade believes strongly that his guests are under his protection. He is not happy with surrendering them to mercenaries. He also has no desire to give Bella away.

By now he will have come to the conclusion that the player characters are resourceful and capable individuals and so he will turn to them for advice on the matter while Haranson and his men wait outside. What happens next depends on the willingness of the party to stand up to Sar Haranson. If they are prepared to fight, then Smade will be bold enough to say no to the Northern Sleen. If the player characters don't care about anyone other than themselves, then Smade will reluctantly capitulate to Haranson. It's basically down to the player characters. By now they may or may not have established some sympathetic relationships with various NPCs and may not want to turn them over to the tender mercies of the Sleen. But if they genuinely don't care, then they can save their own skins and walk away at this point. Such a move would be very dishonourable, and the GM should feel free to strip any accumulated Honour points from the game so far.

Haranson will be furious at being rebuffed, and he will tell Smade that when he attacks, he will kill every man inside the walls. He will then turn away to assemble his men for an assault.

Player characters could, of course, choose to fire arrows or crossbow bolts at the Sleen while he is in plain view with just a handful of men.



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A lucky outright kill would end the game quickly, for with the Sleen dead his men would have no desire to attack the walls of the Inn. But they will only have one combat round to launch an initial volley of missiles before Haranson, and his men turn their light tharlarions around and head back to the available cover of the wooded area. A second volley of crossbow bolts could be fired as they retreat but at a moving penalty to hit of -10. A third final volley at a penalty of -30 could be fired as the riders reach the tree line.

Otherwise, the characters will have an hour or two to prepare for the inevitable assault.

Logical things to do would include:

- Boarding up all the windows and securing both the rear door to the Inn and the gate to the courtyard.
- Any fighting is likely to take place in the courtyard if Haranson can't get through the boarded up rear door. Or windows.

As preparations are being made, Leonard will point out that he has his prototype hot air balloon in crates on his wagon and he could assemble and inflate it in case an escape route is needed.

Obviously, the mercenaries must not be allowed to reach the balloon while it is being inflated.

This means the characters and any associated NPCs will have to fight at the perimeter of the Inn's walls and prevent the mercenaries from crossing the wide ground to where the balloon will sit.

Leonard is obviously worried that missiles might be fired at his balloon, though the balloon can survive many small puncture holes before its ability to rise above the ground is compromised.

There is one dissenting voice amongst the guests – the Initiate Ambrose who tells everyone that the Northern Sleen does the will of the Priest-Kings and he should be welcomed and given whatever he demands. Sensible players will confine him somewhere as a possible risk, but if they do not Ambrose will do his best to disrupt the defenders when the attack comes, maybe even going so far as to run towards the gates to try and slide the heavy gate beam away from its slots.

Haranson is from Torvaldsland and therefore has no interest in the Priest-Kings – he worships Thor and Odin. He will quite happily cut Ambrose down with his axe if Ambrose gets in his way.

There are no 'fixed numbers' for the enemy. Instead, the GM should keep the battle free-flowing with constant minor sorties of rabble level mercenaries scaling the walls at various locations.

This battle scene works best if players are generally cutting down the opposition in heroic form, but rarely have a moment to rest as mercenaries threaten the Inn from all locations.

Add to the tension by having NPCs such as Cassia threatened, prompting characters to have to mount a last-minute rescue, and for the balloon to be threatened occasionally as mercenaries clamber over the all and run at it.

Go for quick kills with the basic enemy – assume a successful hit by a character takes the mercenary down, either dead or injured.

There is no need to roll dice for NPCs who are fighting ‘out of sight’ (you can just narrate how they are doing) but roll for them if they are directly aiding a player character. Basically, a fast-flowing sequence makes for a more exciting battle.

At some point, Sar Haranson will confront one of the characters. He will offer a somewhat more difficult fight, but before it can reach a lethal conclusion, have the combatants separated by some unexpected event (other people getting in the way, for example).

SAR HARANSON – CASTE OF WARRIORS

Sar Haranson resembles a classic Sword Dane of the Viking era. Broad-shouldered, dark-haired, bearded and wearing a steel helm crested with dark sleen fur, he has recently lost an eye to the warrior Ranulph. Over his shoulders, he wears a fur cloak, and he typically fights with a great axe for smashing shield walls and a short sword for stabbing in close quarters.

He is brutally strong but also very intelligent. This is not some brainless barbarian. He has commanded a mercenary company now for several years. He has the typical Northman fatalistic attitude towards life – that he must live a life of glory and renown until he finally dies with a sword in his hand to join Thor and Odin in the feasting halls of the dead.

He cares little for convention or the rules of war. But he is superstitious and believes profoundly in magic. To this end, he heard of the so-called magical sword of Ar carried into battle by the Ubar Apius III over two hundred years ago.

He was thwarted in obtaining it when Ranulph (the military commander from the city Sar is currently contracted to) beat him to it.

The Sword of Ar

As noted, this blade may or may not be the actual sword that Apius carried into battle, though it certainly looks old and well crafted. Whether it is or not, it possesses no extraordinary power, either magical or scientific.

It is just a sword, albeit an exceptionally well made and valuable one that will impress anyone who examines it. However, for the purpose of this scenario, if a character has the sword when it comes time to battle Sar Haranson's men, the GM should allow several coincidences to benefit the character.

For example just as a mercenary is about to deliver a successful blow (with an excellent dice roll), another assailant may accidentally crash into him during the heat of battle, spoiling the strike, or perhaps an NPC might suddenly parry the blade as he crosses the courtyard. There is nothing magical about any of this, but the player can without having to ask for it, benefit up to three times from casual lucky breaks. This may lead him to believe the sword is actually enchanted in some way. Sadly he will never benefit from any such luck ever again.

It only occurs during this scenario. It may be several other sessions of Tales of Gor before the player reluctantly comes to the conclusion that the great sword of Ar is just an ordinary sword after all.

The Sword of Ar is an exceptionally well-crafted, but unremarkable-looking long sword, in the gladius style (akin to a spatha). Damage +3D. It is a priceless artefact. Less than a full gold tarn would be considered an insulting offer, and would mean violence from anyone of Ar.

THE FINAL SCENE

Gradually ensure that the players and the NPCs are feeling overwhelmed and that it is only a matter of time before they tire.

At which point in true cinematic tradition, the balloon will be ready for take-off! Leonard will be at the controls and will start calling out for his friends to join him.

But with this development comes a hard decision. The balloon will not be able to carry everyone. It can carry Leonard, and the player characters, and some of the remaining NPCs. 1D3+1 individuals will have to be left behind. Ultimately the players get to make that decision, in amongst the pitiful cries for help from everyone who wants to climb aboard.

Once the hard decision is made (possibly involving the characters having to force the stranded NPCs away at sword point) Leonard cuts the anchor ropes, and the balloon begins to lift off. In true cinematic terms have a couple of mercenaries leap for the basket and cling on, trying to climb up to board the airship. Characters will have to cut them down as their added weight obviously starts to drag the balloon back towards the ground where it is likely to crash against the walls of the Inn before it can fly past them.

Assuming they manage to break free, the balloon will then rise high up into the air and with the aviation knowledge of Leonard, begin to swing west away from the borderland to safety.



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Lady Putatina

Lady Putatina is representative of many free women who have fallen on hard times. She could be used as a generic substitute for any free woman of modest caste, simply substituting an appropriate craft and/or art skill to represent the appropriate trade.

Agility 3D

Coordination 3D+1

Throwing 3D+1

Evade 3D+1

Stealth 3D+1

Dexterity 3D+1

Care 4D

Sleight of Hand 3D+2

Body 3D

Fitness 3D+2

Reason 3D

Culture 3D+1

Senses 4D+1

Trading 5D+1

Arts 4D

Aesthetics 5D+1

Art (painting) 7D

Craft (Ceramics) 8D

Charm 2D+1

Convince 2D+2

Health: 33/17

Power Damage Bonus: 2D

Accuracy Damage Bonus: 2D

Movement: 9/14/27/45

Mercenary Cavalry

A rapacious mob of sell-swords, mounted on light, fast, scouting tharlarion. Many mercenaries are of low-caste or former outlaw status, selling their skill at arms to gain a new home in the mercenary companies. It's not a lot more respectable, but it's a lot safer. These statistics are for a typical peasant-turned-mercenary, trying to improve their fortunes.

Agility 4D

Athletics 4D+1

Blades 5D+1

Clubs 4D+2

Evade 4D+1

Fistfight 4D+2

Riding 5D+1

Spears 5D

Stealth 4D+1

Throwing 4D+1

Dexterity 4D

Bow 4D+2

Crossbow 5D+1

Draft Beast 4D+2

Rope Work 4D+1

Body 4D+2

Fitness 5D

Endurance 5D+1

Survival 5D

Swimming 5D

Reason 2D

Healing 2D+1

Initiative 3D

Senses 3D

Trading 2D+1

Arts 2D

Charm 2D

Animal Handling 3D

Slave Handling 2D+1

Will 2D+1

Health: 38/19

Power Damage Bonus: 2D

Accuracy Damage Bonus: 2D

Movement: 15/23/45/75

Long Spear: 4D+2 damage.

Light Crossbow: 4D+2 damage, Range 100 ft.

Long Sword: 4D+2.

Armour: Helmet, tharlarion boots, furs and shield.

4D

Light War Tharlarion

Scale: 3 (+3 to attack the Tharlarion, -3 when it attacks humans, +3 armour, +3 health)

Agility 3D

Athletics 4D

Evade 6D

Fistfight 6D

Dexterity 2D

Body 4D

Fitness 6D

Endurance 5D

Run 6D

Reason 1D

Initiative 3D

Senses 2D

Arts 1D

Charm 1D

Intimidation 2D

Will 2D

Health: 44/22

Power Damage Bonus: 3D

Accuracy Damage Bonus: 1D

Movement: 18/27/54/90

Claws: 4D

Teeth: 4D+2

Armour: Scaly Hide + Scale = 4

Paulus Smade

Paulus Smade is the innkeeper of 'the Quiva', one of Gor's fortified inns that sit on, or not far from, Gor's roads and trade routes. He is a broad, barrel-chested man with a sarcastic and unpleasant demeanour that is a cover for a rather honourable man underneath. Of course, the honour of merchants is upheld by pursuing every last coin that they can and, in this situation that makes him seem even more cruel and heartless.

Agility 2D

Clubs 4D

Fistfight 3D+2

Riding 2D+1

Dexterity 2D

Draft Beast 3D

Rope Work 3D

Sleight of Hand 2D+1

Body 3D+2

Reason 3D

Philosophy 3D+1

Culture 3D+1

Kaissa 4D

Navigation 3D+1

Scholar 3D+1

Trading 7D+2

Arts 3D

Aesthetics 3D+1

Charm 4D+1

Confidence 5D+1

Animal Handling 6D

Bluff 6D

Charisma 5D+1

Convince 7D

Slave Handling 6D+1

Speaking 5D+1

Will 7D

Health: 33/17

Power Damage Bonus: 2D

Accuracy Damage Bonus: 1D

Movement: 9/14/27/45

Knife: 2D+1 damage.

Club: Smade calls his iron-bound club 'Bill'.

3D+2 damage.

Magus & Rufus Smade

The two sons of Paulus, they are two peas in a pod, save that Magnus sports a huge furry moustache, and Rufus sports a big bushy beard. They are not hugely suited to a life as merchants and Paulus puts them to work on anything and everything around the inn. A drudgery they long to escape.

Health: 38/19

Power Damage Bonus: 2D

Accuracy Damage Bonus: 1D

Movement: 12/18/36/60

Staff: 4D damage.

Knife: 2D+2 damage.

Agility 3D

Athletics 3D+2

Clubs 3D+2

Fistfight 4D

Riding 3D+1

Whips 3D+2

Dexterity 2D

Draft Beast 2D+1

Rope Work 2D+1

Sleight of Hand 1D+1

Body 4D+2

Fitness 5D+1

Endurance 5D+1

Reason 3D

Philosophy 3D+1

Culture 3D+1

Kaissa 3D+1

Navigation 3D+1

Scholar 3D+1

Trading 6D

Arts 3D

Aesthetics 3D+1

Craft (Cooking) 3D+2

Charm 3D

Confidence 3D+1

Animal Handling 4D

Bluff 3D

Charisma 3D

Convince 3D+2

Slave Handling 3D+1

Speaking 3D+1

Will 3D+2

Bella

Bella is the inn's only, current, slave. She is overworked, tired, jittery and nervous – but she knows this is the safest place for her. Her former life as a free woman is all but completely forgotten. She has been with Smade some three years, but has been a slave a lot longer than that. She has accepted her fate, status and awakened heat and simply wishes to use her wiles – as she can – to find a more comfortable slavery.

Health: 32/16

Power Damage Bonus: 2D

Accuracy Damage Bonus: 2D

Movement: 9/14/27/45

Agility 4D

Coordination 4D+1

Athletics 5D+1

Pleasure 5D+1

Dexterity 3D+1

Care 4D+1

Sleight of Hand 3D+1

Body 2D

Fitness 3D+1

Endurance 3D+1

Run 3D+1

Reason 2D

Culture 3D

Healing 3D+1

Senses 3D

Trading 3D

Arts 3D

Aesthetics 4D

Art (Dying) 4D

Craft (Clothing) 5D+2

Craft (Cooking) 4D+1

Charm 4D+1

Charisma 4D+2

Convince 5D

Slave Handling 5D

Felix of Venna

One of the pair of vintners from Venna. Felix has a festering wound that is causing him great pain. He is considered crippled until he has been cured and enough time has passed for him to heal.

Agility 2D

Dexterity 3D

Draft Beast 4D+2

Body 2D+2

Reason 4D

Culture 5D+1

Senses 6D+1

Trading 5D+1

Arts 5D

Craft (Winemaking) 9D

Charm 2D

Animal Handling 3D+1

Charisma 3D

Slave Handling 4D

Health: 30/15 (Current health 14)

Power Damage Bonus: 1D

Accuracy Damage Bonus: 2D

Movement: 6/9/27/30

Knife: 1D+2

Cassia of Venna

The free companion of Felix, she is desperate to keep him alive.

Agility 2D

Dexterity 3D+1

Draft Beast 4D

Body 2D

Reason 4D

Culture 6D+1

Senses 6D+1

Trading 6D+1

Arts 3D

Craft (Winemaking) 6D

Charm 4D+1

Animal Handling 4D+2

Charisma 6D+1

Slave Handling 6D+1

Health: 27/14

Power Damage Bonus: 1D

Accuracy Damage Bonus: 2D

Movement: 6/9/27/45

Ranulph of Lara

Ranulph is a grizzled mercenary who has grown weary of the kaissa of men and has become more interested in the purer form. A warrior of Lydius, it was a natural progression to go from living in a city of merchants to being a coin-guard and a sword-for-hire. His robes are grubby and torn, a reflection of the man's soul.

Agility 4D

Athletics 5D
Blades 7D+2
Clubs 4D+1
Evade 5D+1
Fistfight 5D+1
Riding 4D+1
Spears 5D+2
Stealth 5D+1
Throwing 4D+1

Dexterity 4D

Crossbow 5D+2
Draft Beast 4D+1
Rope Work 5D

Body 4D+2

Fitness 6D+1
Endurance 5D
Run 5D+1
Survival 5D
Swimming 5D

Reason 3D

Healing 3D+1
Initiative 4D
Kaissa 4D
Navigation 3D+1
Scholar 3D+1
Senses 4D

Arts 1D

Charm 3D

Animal Handling 3D+1
Command 4D
Intimidation 4D+2
Slave Handling 4D
Will 3D+1

Health: 42/21

Power Damage Bonus: 3D

Accuracy Damage Bonus: 2D

Movement: 15/23/45/75

Long Sword: 5D+2

Dagger: 4D

Heavy Crossbow: Range 150 ft, 5D+1 damage.

Armour: +2, furs and leathers (Ranulph eschews the traditional helm to allow his senses to stay keen.

Leonard of Vonda

Leonard is a member of the Builders, a dark-haired, bearded, handsome and awkward man. He is unconventional, and chafes against the enforced traditionalism of Gorean society and its many taboos. His is a mind filled with ideas that would threaten Gor's status-quo, firearms, cannons, armour, even a primitive idea of a steam engine. Thus far he has been channelling his ideas to borderline-acceptable concepts, but sooner or later he will overstep that mark. One of the many ways he shows his 'dishonour' is in eschewing the colours of his caste (yellow), preferring darker shades with yellow highlights, or a yellow so dark it is almost orange.

Agility 2D

Athletics 2D+1

Fistfight 2D+1

Dexterity 3D

Care 3D+1

Crossbow 3D+1

Draft Beast 3D+1

Rope Work 4D

Body 2D+2

Fitness 3D

Endurance 3D

Swimming 3D

Reason 5D

Philosophy 7D+2

Kaissa 5D+1

Scholar 6D+2

Arts 5D

Art (Architect) 6D+1

Art (Painting) 6D+1

Art (Drawing) 6D+1

Craft (Carpentry) 8D

Craft (Engineering) 7D

Craft (Sculpture) 6D+1

Charm 1D

Animal Handling 1D+2

Slave Handling 1D+2

Health: 31/16

Power Damage Bonus: 2D

Accuracy Damage Bonus: 2D

Movement: 6/9/18/30

Knife: 2D+2

The Snout in the Dark

A huge, female sleen, the Snout in the Dark is scarred, gigantic, old and wily. She is truly frenzied when defending her young, but otherwise possesses a rare level of cunning. She has eluded hunt and capture for a very long time and raised many cubs, elevating herself to a near legendary status.

Scale: +3 (Characters have +1D bonus to hit, The Snout has -1D to its attacks against human-scale targets. The Snout does +3 damage against human-scale targets)

Agility 5D

Athletics 6D

Evade 7D

Fistfight 8D

Stealth 7D

Dexterity 1D+1

Body 4D

Fitness 6D

Endurance 7D

Run 7D

Swimming 5D

Reason 2D

Senses 7D

Arts 1D

Charm 2D+1

Intimidation 4D+1

Health: 44/22

Armour: 1D+2

Power Damage Bonus: 3D (Claws and teeth, 4D+2)

Movement: 21/31/63/105

Sleen Cubs

This pair of, almost cute, baby sleen are hardly helpless, but they are much more timid than their vicious mother.

Scale: -2 (Characters have -2 penalty to hit, The cubs have a +2 to their attacks against human-scale targets. Characters do +2 damage if they hit, the sleen cubs have a penalty of -2 damage).

Agility 4D

Athletics 5D

Evade 6D

Fistfight 7D

Stealth 6D

Dexterity 1D

Body 4D

Fitness 6D

Endurance 7D

Run 7D

Stealth 6D

Reason 2D

Senses 7D

Arts 1D

Charm 2D

Intimidation 4D

Health: 39/20 (Armour +2)

Power Damage Bonus: 3D (4D teeth and claws)

Movement: 21/31/63/105

Esmée

A beautiful (if somewhat too slender by Gorean standards) slave girl, though living in her hide-out has made her grubby and unkempt. She has classic French features, dark eyes and hair, and a hint of a French accent that colours her Gorean. To native Goreans this will be unfamiliar, but to people of Earth it will become apparent quite rapidly. She was the slave of a common merchant, who has been killed in the conflict.

Agility 4D

Acrobatics 6D

Athletics 6D

Escapology 5D

Evade 6D

Fistfight 6D

Pleasure 7D

Stealth 5D

Dexterity 4D+1

Pilot Aircraft 6D+1 (Earth skill)

Rope Work 5D+1

Sleight of Hand 5D+1

Body 2D+1

Fitness 3D+1

Endurance 3D+1

Run 4D+1

Swimming 3D

Reason 2D

Culture 3D

Healing 3D

Senses 3D

Arts 2D

Art (dance) 3D

Charm 3D+1

Charisma 5D

Convince 5D

Slave Handling 4D

Health: 23/12

Power Damage Bonus: 2D

Accuracy Damage Bonus: 2D

Movement: 12/18/36/60

Hatchet: 3D (she will only use it in extreme circumstances, as to touch a weapon without permission means death).

Nobody

Nobody is a former, implanted, spy of the Priest Kings who has been insane for the many years since the Nest War. He is still revered as a prophet amongst the Caste of Initiates and lurks at a remote shrine, living on charity and the scraps that remain after the Caste takes its tithe. In his rare, lucid moments, he is a brilliant scholar.

Agility 2D

Dexterity 2D

Sleight of Hand 2D+1

Body 2D+2

Fitness 4D

Reason 5D

Philosophy 7D

Culture 6D+1

Kaissa 5D+1

Scholar 6D+1

Arts 2D

Charm 5D

Confidence 7D+1

Bluff 7D

Charisma 7D+1

Convince 6D+1

Intimidation 6D+1

Speaking 7D+1

Will 6D

Health: 34/17

Power Damage Bonus: 2D

Accuracy Damage Bonus: 1D

Movement: 6/9/18/30

Sar Haranson

You can take the raider out of Torvaldsland, but you can't take Torvaldsland out of the raider. Sar is, technically, a mercenary but he is mostly out to line his own pocket and wealth. A man with very little honour and no small amount of greed, Haranson uses conflict as an opportunity to plunder all sides, while – at the same time – being paid by at least one of them. Brute force and a generous hand with gold makes up for a lack of real leadership or tactical skill.

Agility 5D

Athletics 5D+1

Blades 7D+1

Clubs 5D+1

Evade 5D+1

Fistfight 7D+1

Riding 5D+2

Spears 5D+2

Stealth 5D+1

Dexterity 3D

Bow 4D+2

Draft Beast 4D+1

Rope Work 4D+1

Sailing 5D

Body 4D+2

Fitness 7D

Endurance 5D

Run 5D

Survival 5D+1

Reason 2D

Healing 2D+1

Initiative 3D+2

Navigation 2D+1

Senses 2D+1

Arts 1D

Charm 3D

Animal Handling 3D+1

Command 4D+1

Intimidation 3D+1

Slave Handling 3D+1

Will 3D+1

Health: 45/23

Power Damage Bonus: 4D

Accuracy Damage Bonus: 2D

Movement: 15/23/45/75

Torvaldsland Axe: 6D+2 (one-handed), 7D (two-handed).

Dagger: 5D

Knife: 4D+2

Armour: 3D (Small Shield, Furs and Leathers, Helm).

Northern Bow: 4D, range 50 ft/

Haranson's Guards

A motley crew of savage men who care only for women, gold and easy victory.

Agility 3D

Athletics 5D

Blades 5D

Evade 5D

Fistfight 5D

Riding 4D

Spears 6D

Throwing 5D

Dexterity 3D

Care 4D

Crossbow 5D

Rope Work 5D

Body 3D+2

Fitness 5D+2

Endurance 4D+2

Run 5D+2

Swimming 4D+2

Reason 2D

Senses 3D

Trading 3D

Arts 2D

Aesthetics 5D+1

Art (painting) 7D

Craft (Ceramics) 8D

Charm 2D

Command 3D

Intimidation 3D

Slave Handling 3D

Will 3D

Health: 41/21

Power Damage Bonus: 3D

Accuracy Damage Bonus: 2D

Movement: 15/23/45/75

Short Spear: 4D+2

Long Spear: 5D+2

Short Sword: 4D+2

Armour: 2D+1 (Helmet and Small Shield).



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Settlement Rules

You may want to run a game based around the high castles of a city, an inn in the wilderness, a village, or some other permanent structure or colony. Settlements have statistics blocks, just like characters – though they are different – and these are used to measure the settlement’s capabilities.

SCALE

Settlements have a scale, and this works in a very similar way to normal scale, but is not compatible with it. The same manner of bonuses, penalties etc work as with normal scale, just applied to settlements. Scale limits the maximum die-type for all other settlement statistics (the maximum being the scale number).

- *Small Village/Fortified Farm: +1 (tens of population)*
- *Medium Village: +2 (Hundreds of population)*
- *Large Village: +3 (A thousand population)*
- *Small Town: +4 (Thousands of population)*
- *Medium Town: +5 (Five-thousand population).*
- *Large Town: +6 (Tens of thousands population).*
- *Small City: +7 (Fifty-thousand population).*
- *Medium City: +8 (A hundred-thousand population).*
- *Large City: +9 (A half-million population).*
- *Metropolis: +10 (A million population).*

Cities can attempt to grow, but this causes strain. The example later in this section explains how. Pips of damage done by city growth are assigned randomly:

Roll 2d6:

- 2: Honour
- 3: Scholarship
- 4: Comfort
- 5: Comfort
- 6: Fortune
- 7: Fortune
- 8: Fortune
- 9: Supplies
- 10: Supplies
- 11: Law and Order
- 12: Military

SETTLEMENT STATISTICS

Settlements have a number of statistics that interrelate to each other. Each one reinforces another statistic and weakens another.

Player actions can influence these statistics, bolstering them, damaging them by completing adventures aimed at doing so and rolling somewhere around 1-5 dice (equal to the experience points garnered from the adventure).

Divide the result by 5 to get the number of pips of ‘damage’ and/or reinforcement the adventure creates, and roll this number of pips, dividing by 5, twice, applying it as damage or gain to the related statistics.

Fortune

Reinforces Supplies. Threatens Honour.

Fortune represents the wealth of a City-state. Fortune can be rolled to hire mercenary forces, to raise funds for new city walls, to make large purchases and represents the settlement's trading capability.

- A wealthy city tends to be a peaceful city has plentiful supplies, even though many can be 'useless' luxuries, but gold has a corrupting influence.
- Turia is, likely, the strongest city on Gor in terms of Fortune.

Law and Order

Reinforces Honour. Threatens Comfort.

Law and Order represents the effectiveness of the guards and officials, along with the trust the people have in those forces. Law and Order can be used to gauge the effectiveness of these forces within the city, the struggles of the black markets and thieves and can be rolled to represent the city cracking down on criminal enterprise

- An ordered city tends to be an honourable one, albeit at the point of a blade, but the ever-present threat of arrest or enslavement tends to weigh upon the population.
- Tharna is, likely, the most ruthlessly enforced city on Gor.

Honour

Reinforces Military. Threatens Scholarship.

Honour represents the law-abiding nature (without compulsion) of the citizens, and their pride in their Home-Stone. Honour gives the citizens zeal and strength of character.

- An honourable city has little problem raising troops or having its warrior caste fight to the last man, but it is held back by concerns about innovation and dangerous knowledge – the codes of the Priest-Kings.
- The City of Ar is, perhaps, the most honour-bound city on Gor, despite its lessened state and wounded pride.

Comfort

Reinforces Scholarship. Threatens Military.

Comfort represents the quality of life of the citizens. Goreans don't necessarily need much in terms of luxury or comfort, but this allows for it and means a plentiful supply of food, livestock and goods.

- A comfortable city has more space in its culture for study, innovation and artful distraction, but its citizens are likely to become soft.
- As well as being wealthy, Turia is probably one of the most coddled and comfortable cities – raids notwithstanding.

Scholarship

Reinforces Fortune. Threatens Law and Order.

Scholarship represents the level of innovation and the honing of the philosophical arts within the city. It helps determine the wealth of knowledge in its libraries and the strength of its Caste of Scribes.

- A scholastic culture with constant innovation learns to make the most of its land and resources, but chafes against the enforcement of laws and codes and is constantly tempted to transgress.
- Ko-Ro-Ba may be the most innovative and knowledge-oriented city on Gor, despite having been punished in the recent past for its transgressions.

Supplies

Reinforces Comfort. Threatens Fortune.

Supplies measures the material wealth of the city and its stock of supplies. Supplies can help it to withstand a siege, make more trade arrangements and can measure the availability of rare materials, tools or devices.

- A city with a supply surplus can invest more into the comfort of its citizens, keeping them happier. Maintaining these supplies does, however, threaten the overall wealth of the city.
- The Vosk League, with its sharing of supplies between its many settlements, is remarkably robust in maintaining its needs.

Military

Reinforces Law and Order. Threatens Supplies.

Military measures the overall combat strength of the city and the effectiveness of its troops. This is a crude measure of the city's soldiers, levies, tarsnmen and fleet. A naval city will have half this score in terms of ground troops, a land-locked city will have no naval strength at all without allies or great investment.

- A city with a strong warrior caste, a strong military, tends to be a secure and law-abiding one. Maintaining a large, volunteer military is, however, extremely costly in terms of supplies.
- Ar once had the greatest army and Cos the greatest navy. Of late, however, it is Port Kar that has the greatest fleet and the grandest army probably now belongs to the Salerian Federation, under the rule of Ti.

SETTLEMENT PERKS

Settlements can have descriptive perks. These can be just about anything, and provide a bonus die when they seem to apply. Here are a handful of examples:

- *Famous For Something: Pick a thing, baths perhaps, sculptures, a particular product. Whatever it is, it gains a bonus die. The service from a bath girl in a city famed for its baths, for example, is made with a +1D bonus.*
- *Grand Library: +1D bonus to Scholarship.*
- *High City Walls: +1D in defensive military battles.*
- *Reputation: People from this city carry the reputation of the city with them, and can get a +1D bonus to appropriate social rolls where this reputation might play out.*

SETTLEMENTS IN ACTION

Characters Attack

Imaginaria is a medium-sized town, somewhere on the main Gorean continent. It doesn't really matter where, but it is a Scale 5 city, with 5D in every single statistic, conveniently enough.

Imaginaria has incurred the wrath of a group of players after being used and abused by the town's administrator. They want revenge. As a result they have engaged in an adventure that led them to raid, and then burn down, the town's treasury. That earned them three experience, which translates to a three dice attack against the city's Fortune.

That attack scores 4+1+6, and 2 on the Wild-Die for a total of 13. That's two pips of damage to Imaginaria's Fortune, dropping it to 4D+1 from 5. This also has a knock on effect of 2D gain to Honour and damage to Supplies.

The 2D honour gain rolls 2+6, and 5 on the Wild-Die for a total of 16 – which is +1D Honour (but it sticks at 5 as it can't go higher).

The damage to supplies rolls 4+4, for a total of 8. That's one less pip of supplies, dropping it to 4D+2.

The Games Master interprets this all to mean that the Administrator has managed to keep the raid quiet and has made it sound like not much was lost from the treasury in the fire. Nonetheless, high caste members of the town council have been panicking and buying up personal supplies.


These kinds of actions generally take up to a month to have a full impact, things don't change that quickly.

The Settlement Grows

Imaginaria wants to expand, to do so it needs to encourage its citizens to have children, or to attract people from other cities, villages or settlements to live there. To do this they open up what remains of their treasury to offer a stipend for raising children or settling within the town's walls.

The Administrator rolls 4D+1 from its Fortune to try and encourage these settlers, scoring a total of 12.

That's two pips of growth, raising the Scale to 5D+2.



The strain of growing so rapidly also causes it to lose one pip of Comfort and one of Fortune.

Growing a settlement usually takes at least a year.

The Settlement Builds

Imaginaria is definitely down on its luck, stretching its finances increasingly as it grows.

To compensate for its drained coffers it attempts to open up new mines and farmlands by exerting its stores and supplies to invest for the future.

The Administrator rolls a total of 18, which is enough to raise the town's Fortune by 1D (to 5D, recovering their losses), which also pays off by increasing the amount of available Supplies by two pips (to 5D+2), while reducing their Honour to 4D+1 as mercantilism and competition for the new opportunities set people against one another.

Postmortem Studios brings the Counter-Earth to life in the World of Gor roleplaying game.

In this adventure, *The Inn on the Borderland*, the adventurers will be caught up in the conflict between two Gorean cities, and the devastation that creates for those who live near them.

An inn offers refuge, but also threat as a mercenary company has little respect for the conventions of peace that govern such a place.

Ta Sardar Gor!

