

RBL-700

# JOURNEY TO LANG



AN EARTHDAWN ADVENTURE BY LOU PROSPERI

# A DANGEROUS QUEST

Before science, before history, an era of magic existed in our world's dim past. Magic flowed freely, touching every aspect of the lives of men and women of the Name-giver races. It was an age of heroes, an age of fantastical deeds and mythical stories.

In this Age of Legend, bold heroes from all across Barsaive band together—ready to fight for life and freedom against the remaining Horrors and the oppressive Theran Empire, which seeks to bend the rebellious province again to their yoke. Through noble deeds and sacrifice, the heroes of the world forge Barsaive's future, arming themselves for their daunting task with powerful magical spells and treasures.

**Earthdawn** is a roleplaying game set in a world of high adventure, high magic, and terrible danger. The **Shards** series is a collection of adventures, encounters, and setting descriptions for **Earthdawn**, and an excellent resource for **Earthdawn** gamemasters. This volume contains the adventure **Journey to Lang**, designed to introduce players to the **Earthdawn** game and the world of Barsaive. Requires the **Player's** and **Gamemaster's Compendiums** to use.



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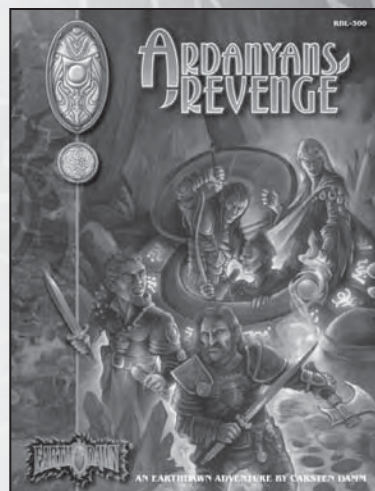
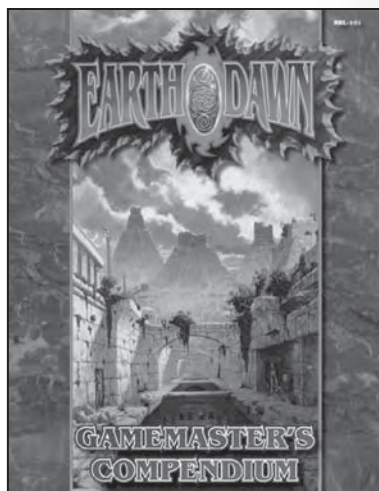
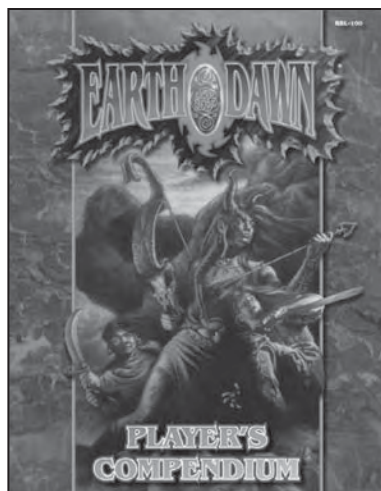
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# JOURNEY TO LANG

*This is where you have to get out. Swim if you're men, take the boat if you're mice—it's your choice, gentlemen.*

• **Siandra, T'skrang Boatman** •



**Journey to Lang** is a short, simple, and straightforward adventure scenario designed to introduce players to the **Earthdawn** game system and the world of Barsaive.

In this adventure, a group of characters are asked by a merchant to travel to a small village situated on a small tributary of the Serpent River in order to discover why the merchant has lost contact with the village. The merchant is originally from the village and worried for his friends and family, as well as concerned for his business, which makes much of its money from trade based on goods only available from that village.

The journey to and exploration of the village reveals that it fell prey to a group of insane obsidimen, corrupted during the Scourge by a Horror that has since moved on to other targets in Barsaive.

## RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

**Journey to Lang** is presented as a series of events. Each is described for the gamemaster, who should use the information given to run each section. There is little text to be read aloud to the players, meaning the gamemaster will have to describe many of the scenes to the characters as he sees fit. Where possible the text describes the terrain and areas the characters will encounter, but much of the detail is left to the gamemaster to devise.

## BACKGROUND

Situated along a small tributary of the Coil River lies the small village of Lang. Since before the Scourge, the people of this village have made their living through trading unique shellfish shells and dyes found only in the small tributary near the village. These shells and dyes are sought after by merchants all across Barsaive, ranging from jewelers to cloth and silk merchants. In addition, nearby the village is an obsidimen Liferock which up until

the Scourge had pleasant and peaceful relations with the village. In fact, the village even managed to acquire certain pieces of obsidimen sculpture from the Brotherhood, which it then traded to merchants along with its own wares.

Since the Scourge, the village of Lang has re-established its trade relations with Barsaive's merchants, most especially with the merchants of Bartertown. One merchant in particular, a dwarf Named Darron, is in part responsible for much of the current trade with Lang. This is due to the fact that Darron is originally from the village of Lang, and shortly after the village was rebuilt, set off to 'make his fortune' in the larger trading cities of Barsaive. Since that time, Darron has established himself as a broker of sorts for Lang's trade goods, sharing the profits with the village.

Weekly shipments from the village have provided Darron with a steady supply of trade goods and have helped him become a merchant of not-so-meager means in Bartertown. Recently, however, Darron has lost contact with the village and has grown quite concerned for his both his business, but also for the friends and family he left behind. Darron fears the village has been lost to the Horrors or some other form of corruption. Though Darron is unaware of it, the reason behind this recent loss of contact with Lang has less to do with the Horrors, and more to do with the reappearance of the obsidimen who lived near the village before the Scourge.

During the Scourge, the village of Lang retreated to its kaer, while the obsidimen Brotherhood made its own preparations. But while the people of Lang survived the Scourge and have since rebuilt their village, all contact with the obsidimen Liferock was lost until recently, that is.

While the villagers of Lang and their descendants lived through the Scourge in the relative safety of their kaer, the nearby obsidimen Brotherhood did not fare so well. Shortly after Lang's kaer sealed itself and just as the Brotherhood was preparing for its centuries-long Dreaming, a Horror infiltrated the Liferock. When the obsidimen entered the Liferock, they were met by the Horror, who, over the four

hundred years of the Scourge, corrupted the entire Brotherhood and slayed all but a handful of obsidimen. These few obsidimen, now forever corrupted by the Horror that infected their Liferock, only emerged a few short weeks ago.

Driven mad by the corruption they suffered at the hands of the Horror, the obsidimen scoured the land, searching for any sort of food or nourishment, even resorting to slaying and eating wild animals. Eventually, these obsidimen spotted a group of the villagers gathering food in the forest nearby the village and followed them back to the village, where they proceeded to attack the villagers. During the course of the battle, the villagers managed to kill two of the obsidimen, but not before many of their fellow villagers were slain. Fortunately the village was given a slight respite when the remaining obsidimen withdrew into the forest, where they lapsed into unconsciousness. For though more powerful than the villagers by far, the corruption done to them by the Horror and the Scourge has left these obsidimen in a very weakened state. They are only able to remain conscious for 6 to 8 hours at a time.

As soon as the obsidimen were out of sight, the remaining villagers gathered and took shelter in the strongest structure of the village, the cellar below the main ceremonial hall. The remaining villagers, some 100 in number, gathered what food they could before sealing themselves in the cellar. Occasionally they will send a few villagers out to gather a bit more food or any other needed supplies. In addition, three of the villagers set out to search for help. They intended to reach Bartertown, hoping that Darron could help them. Unfortunately, these four were killed by a pride of lightning lizards near the river's edge.

It has been two weeks since the obsidimen's first attack. They have returned several times since, searching for the villagers to no avail, it is at this point that the characters enter the adventure.

## PL?T SYN?PSIS

The characters are in Bartertown when they are contacted by a male dwarf who asks them to meet with his employer, a merchant by the name of Darron. When the characters meet with Darron, he asks for their help in discovering what has happened in his village. After explaining all he knows about the village, he makes his offer, which includes transport on a t'skrang riverboat. If they accept, Darron gives the characters half of their payment in advance, gives them a map of the village and nearby area and instructs them to meet the captain of the ship they will be traveling on the next morning.

The characters travel down the Serpent River on a t'skrang riverboat for two days before being sent out on a small row boat to travel down the small tributary to the village. While on the riverboat, the t'skrang crew invites the characters to participate in a few games of fun. This offers the players a chance to get a feel for how dice are rolled and used in the game, and how actions are performed.

The characters soon arrive at the spot on the river nearest the village and go ashore. Once there they must walk an hour or so to get to the village itself. Along the way they discover two groups of people that were killed

by some sort of creatures near the river. The first of these are the couriers sent by Darron, on what should have been a regular trip to Lang. The second group is one from the village, sent to seek help against the corrupted obsidimen. Just as they come across the second group of bodies, the characters are attacked themselves by a group of lightning lizards, the same ones that attacked both the couriers and the villagers.

When the characters reach the village, they find a number of clues that indicate some sort of attack on the village. Many of the buildings have been partially or totally burned, and a number of bodies are found lying about. Most of these bodies are clearly those of villagers, but there are also a number of obsidimen bodies. While they roam the village looking for more clues, the characters are attacked by the re-animated cadavers of the dead villagers, brought back to a state of undeath by the Horror-tainted corruption of the obsidimen. They might also notice a pair of humans running from building to building but are unable to catch up to them. These are villagers out gathering food and supplies.

If the characters investigate the village thoroughly, they notice a smoke plume that rises from a building that has not been burned like the others. A close examination reveals that this smoke plume rises from a small hole in the ground next to the wall of the largest building in the village. The smoke is from the fire the villagers have lit to keep themselves warm while they hide from the obsidimen.

But just as they make this discovery, the characters are spotted by the corrupted obsidimen who, with fresh food so nearby and handy, attack savagely. At this point, it is up to the characters to defeat the obsidimen and save the village.

## I N BARTERTOWN

The characters are in Bartertown, near the Kingdom of Throal, when they are approached by the representative of a local merchant who needs their help and is willing to pay handsomely for it. The specifics of how they are approached by Darron's representative are up to the gamemaster to arrange. The important thing here is to get the action going

When the characters agree to meet with the merchant, go to the next section, **Meeting Darron**.

## SETTING THINGS STRAIGHT

The gamemaster can devise virtually any reason for explaining why the characters are here at the start of the adventure. Before you start the adventure, make sure you establish that the characters have adventured together before, and that they like and trust each other. This helps avoid the need for introductions, mistrust, or any other sort of double-dealing or back-stabbing that occasionally crops up in early games.

# MEETING DARRON

In this encounter the characters are introduced to Darron, who asks their help in finding out what happened to his village. When the characters meet with Darron, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

*"Many thanks for agreeing to meet with me. I am Named Darron. Let me get straight to the point. I make my trade here in Bartertown through the sale of many different things, but chief among them are unusual types of shells and a number of unique dyes and inks. These things all come from a small village along a tributary of the Serpent River called Lang and cannot be found elsewhere in Barsaive, at least not that I have been able to find. I have a number of couriers in my service who make regular trips to the village to both procure my wares, as well as to deliver messages and payment to the villagers.*

*Last week, my couriers failed to return as usual. I have waited a few days before growing too concerned, as travel in Barsaive is never commonplace or trivial. Nonetheless, it has been several days, and I have grown quite concerned about this matter. My concern is based not only on a loss of business, but also on a feeling of despair and helplessness. For you see, I am from Lang and am greatly worried about the friends and family I have there.*

*What I would like you to do for me is to travel to Land, to discover what has happened. And if some danger has befallen my former home, I would also ask that you do what is in your power to aid the village. I know that this could be nothing, that perhaps my couriers opted to abandon me with the payments they carried. On the other hand, it could be much more serious. It is because of this latter possibility that I am asking your help.*

*As for payment, I can pay 200 silver pieces apiece. I will provide half of this upon your acceptance of my offer, the rest when you return. I have also made arrangements for your transportation*

*to the village aboard a t'skrang riverboat leaving tomorrow morning.*

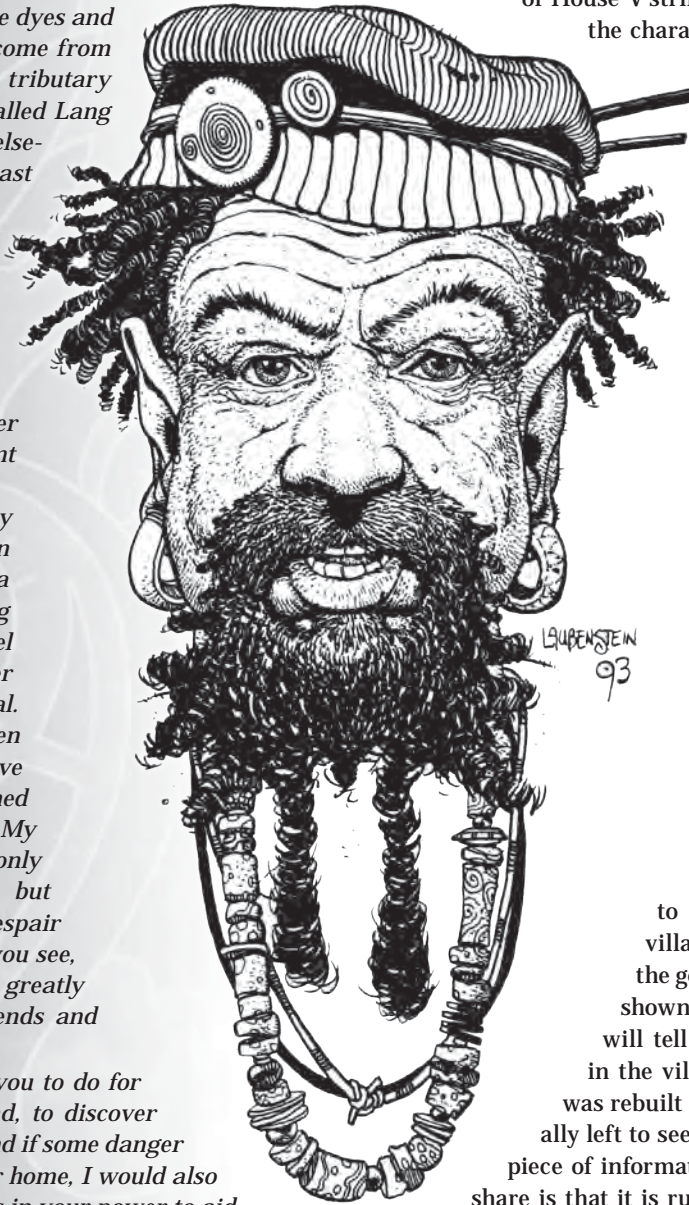
*So, what do you say? Will you help me?"*

As he described, Darron lost contact with the village of Lang last week, when his normal couriers failed to return. Also, the merchant will pay each character 300 silver pieces (which is a lot of silver). Half now, half when they return.

True to his word, Darron has arranged transport for the characters on a t'skrang riverboat. The ship is Named K'sara and is run by Captain Siandra of House V'strimon. The riverboat will take the characters from the small town of

Darranis (a couple of days walking from Bartertown, see the **Barsaive Map** on p. 488 of the **Player's Compendium**) to the head of the small tributary near the village. From there the characters will be given a small boat with which they can reach the village. The riverboat the characters will travel on leaves early every morning, giving the characters enough time to prepare.

If they agree Darron will give the characters a map of the village and surrounding area. Give the players a copy of the **Village of Lang** map, found on p. 10.



## ASKING ABOUT THE VILLAGE

The characters may wish to ask the merchant about the village. Darron can tell them about the general layout of the village, as shown on the map. If asked, Darron will tell the characters he was born in the village shortly after the village was rebuilt after the Scourge and eventually left to seek his fortune. The only other piece of information about the village he can share is that it is rumored to be located roughly one day's walk from an obsidimen Liferock known to exist prior to the Scourge. No word has come from the Liferock since the Scourge, and the merchant believes it was likely lost to the Horrors during the Scourge.

## ASKING ABOUT THE COURIERS

The characters may wish to ask Darron about the couriers. Darron can tell them that there were four couriers, an elf and three dwarfs. All were dressed in traveler's garb,

all wore leather armor, and they carried a strongbox that contained a payment for the village.

## BUYING PROVISIONS

After the characters have agreed, they have time to prepare for their adventure. At this time the characters may wish to buy additional equipment and provisions for their journey. In this case, use the prices in the **Good and Services** chapter on p. 432 of the **Player's Compendium**.

It might be a good idea to suggest the characters buy healing potions, magic potions that help heal damage. In addition, the characters might want to buy rope (a necessity of any adventurers gear). It is up to the gamemaster whether to allow the characters to obtain any other items they may want.

## THE RIVERBOAT JOURNEY

Darron has made arrangements for the characters on the riverboat. All they have to do is show up. The ship leaves regularly each morning and will drop them off at mid-day.

The dock at which the characters find the riverboat is in a small town called Darranis set along the shore of the Coil River. The name of the boat they will be traveling on is the *K'sara*, operated by House V'strimon, a t'skrang trading house strongly allied with the Kingdom of Throal. The captain of the ship is Siandra, a flamboyant—if somewhat obnoxious—female t'skrang Boatman.

When the characters arrive and introduce themselves

to the captain, they will be given a short tour of the ship. Once the ship is underway, the characters are free to move about as they will, so long as they don't interfere with the ship's operations.

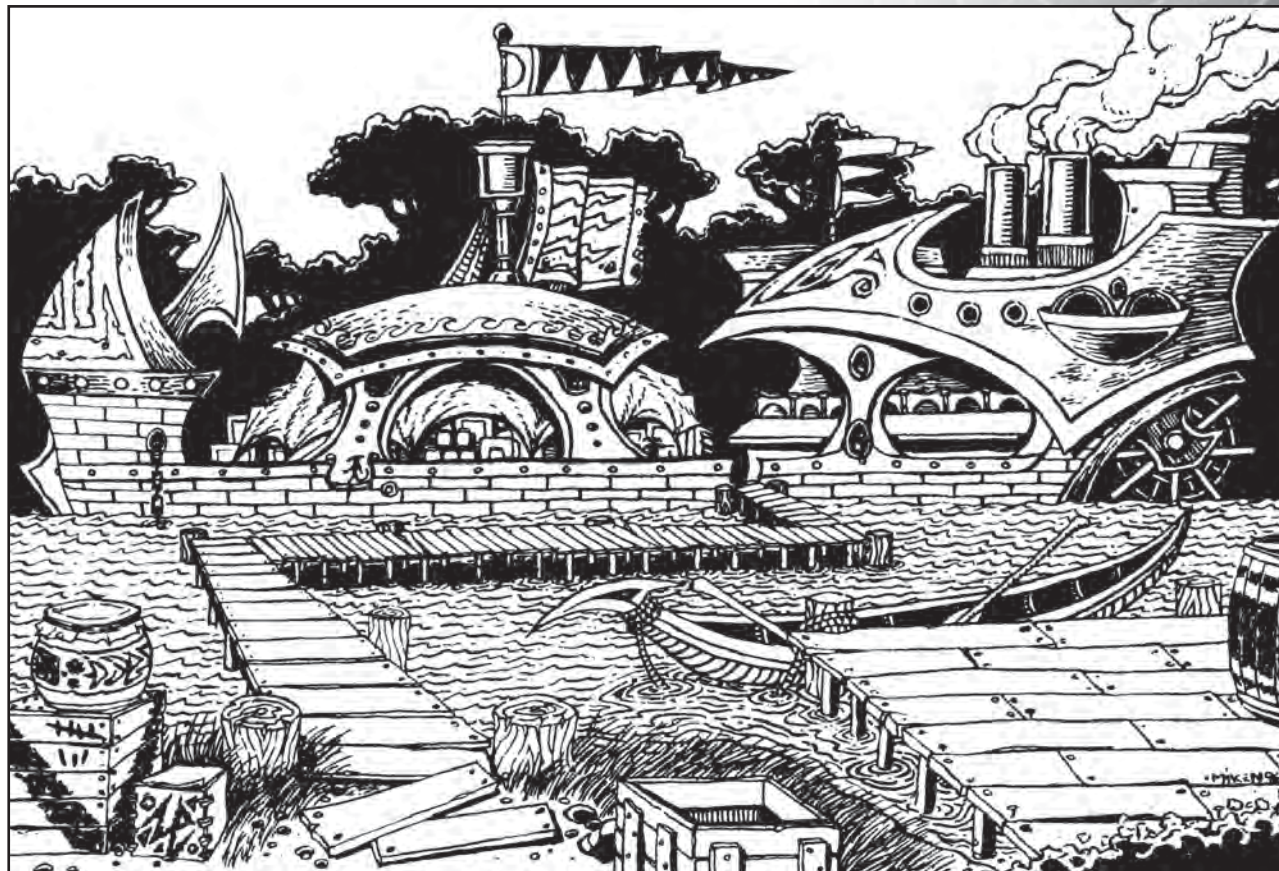
## ACTIVITIES

The trip on the river will take half a day, and along the way, the characters will be invited to participate in a couple of different activities aboard ship. Two of these, *Swinging on Ropes* and *Knife Throwing*, are described below.

### Swinging on the Ropes

Along both sides of the riverboat are several long ropes attached to hooks that run up and down the sides of the boat. The t'skrang crew members use these ropes to move up and down the ship. In fact, they are used almost exclusively by the t'skrang. Only passengers of other races (such as the characters) use the passageways themselves. Though most t'skrang use the ropes simply to move up and down ship, some make very fancy acrobatic moves while swinging, partly to impress the characters, but also simply because it is in the t'skrang nature to be flamboyant.

Before letting the characters try, one of the t'skrang will demonstrate. To swing on the ropes, a character grasps the rope and jumps out over the water. The hard part is to hold yourself up while being ready to land. The t'skrang who demonstrates, named T'shar, does this flawlessly, making it look much easier than it really is. To swing on the rope, the character must make a Dexterity (6) Test. If the test succeeds, the character swings out and lands safely, though not elegantly. A Good result (10-12) means the character lands easily, looking almost as confident as T'shar. An



Excellent or better result (13+) means the character lands perfectly, looking as though he had done so many times before. This actually impresses the other t'skrang on the ship.

If the test fails, the character makes a Strength (5) Test to hold on to the rope. If the test succeeds, the character grabs the end of the rope but ends up in the water and must be pulled out. A Good result (9-10) means the character slips down the rope just near the surface of the water. An Excellent or better result (11+) means the character almost fell but managed to right himself just in time. Let each of the characters who want to try this have a turn.

## Knife-Throwing

Another popular activity onboard is knife throwing. At the far end of the riverboat (the stern) there is a large circular target mounted to a pole. There are several knives and daggers sticking into the board. This is where the t'skrang crew practice knife throwing, which has grown into a gambling activity of sorts.

If any of the characters ask about the board, the t'skrang crew will explain what it is used for. If they don't ask, one of the crew might ask the characters if they want to play a little game of knife throwing.

This game is played between two players at a time. Each player gets five throws at the board. For each throw the character makes a Dexterity or Throwing Weapons Test against a Difficulty Number of 6. If the test succeeds, the knife hits the board, but scores no points. If the test result is greater than 6, the character scores a number of points equal to the test result, to a maximum of 12, which indicates a perfect bullseye. A Pathetic result (1 or 2) indicates the knife is thrown overboard and lost. Too bad.

The gamemaster should make tests for the t'skrang playing with the characters. Each t'skrang has a Step Number of 8 in the Throwing Weapons skill. After each player has made five throws, add up the total points they scored. The player with the highest total wins—a common bet for this game is 1 silver piece for each point by which the winner beats the loser.

## THE SMALL STREAM TO LANG

Aside from the two activities previously described, the trip on the riverboat will be uneventful for the characters. On midday, the riverboat will stop to drop off the characters near the junction of the river and the tributary that Lang is located on. At this point, the characters are given a small rowboat (though big enough to carry all the characters), which they must use to get to the village. The boat has two pairs of oars, which can be manned by characters of any race aside from windlings. From where the riverboat drops them off, the characters will have to travel for about one hour to get to the stretch of river nearest the village.

The riverboat will return each day, prepared to pick up the characters. If the characters are not visible at the place where they were left within that one day, the boat will continue on its trip, and the characters must either make it back to Bartertown on their own or wait until the next day.

There are clear signs that mark the spot on the river nearest the village. These consist of a small beach where

the small boat can land, as well as a flag flying atop a high pole near the beach. These are just as Darron (as well as members of the riverboat crew) told the characters they would be. Once the characters have beached their boat, go on to the next section.

## ARRIVAL

In this encounter, the characters land their small boat near the village and begin their investigation of what has happened to Lang. After landing, the characters walk from the river to the village. Along the way, they discover the fate of a number of the villagers and Darron's couriers and are attacked by the same creatures that killed Darron's couriers as well as the villagers. When the characters land their small boat, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

*From your small rowboat you easily spot the flag marking the small beach ahead of you as that used by the village of Lang. As you glide towards the shore, you spot a boat much like your own in size and style, tied to a small tree near the beach. The boat looks well weathered and is partially filled with water, likely from the rains that passed through this area not long ago.*

*The whole area along this stretch of river is disturbingly quiet, and you wonder if whatever fate befell Darron's couriers awaits you as well.*

*After beaching your boat and tying it to shore, you make your way along the path that leads towards the village. After the past two easy days aboard the riverboat, you are about to earn your pay.*

## FROM THE RIVER TO THE VILLAGE

The little beach the characters have landed at is used by the villagers of Lang to gather the shellfish and underwater plants that provide them with the goods they trade with Darron. The boat tied to shore was left there by Darron's couriers and has been abandoned for well over a week. It has rained here recently and the beach as well as the main land are still partially soggy. On the inland side of the beach is a small path that leads from the beach to the village. This is a very well worn path, one that the characters will have no trouble at all following.

Walking from the river's edge to the village takes the characters roughly one hour. The path that leads away from the beach heads through a lightly forested area, eventually leading to the village. It is along this path that the characters will get their first clues as to what has happened in the village of Lang.

## DARRON'S COURIERS

Ten minutes after leaving the beach, the characters learn the fate of Darron's couriers. Off to the side of the path lie the bodies of four Name-givers, the victims



of a pride of hungry lightning lizards. As the characters approach, have each make a Perception (6) Test. If any of them succeeds, tell the character's player that he spots what looks like an elf's body lying in the brush along the left side of the path. If none of the characters succeed at this test, go on to the next section, **The Dead Villagers**.

When the characters investigate the bodies, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

*Looking over to the left you see your first signs of trouble. It appears to be an elf, a dead elf, lying in the brush along the path. A closer look reveals three other bodies, all dwarfs. The bodies seem to have been burned or somehow scorched to death.*

*One of the dwarfs holds a broadsword, clutched tightly in his dead hands. The blade is stained with what looks like dried blood. After looking closer, you see the dwarf is not simply clutching the sword; it seems the dwarf's hand has in fact melted onto the sword's handle. Between the torsos of the other two dwarfs lies a small strongbox, which appears singed or scorched. As your eyes move down along the dwarfs' bodies, you notice that their lower legs are missing and appear to have been chewed off. It seems you've discovered the fate of Darron's couriers after all.*

The bodies are those of Darron's couriers, who arrived just after the first attack by the corrupted obsidimen. They did not make it too far before coming across a small pride of hungry lightning lizards that attacked them savagely.

As they examine the bodies, characters with Creature Lore (or a similar Knowledge Skill) may make a test against a Difficulty Number of 7. If the test succeeds, the character recognizes that the couriers were very likely killed by a creature known as a lightning lizard. These creatures are able to shoot bolts of lightning from their eyes, as well as create electrical armor around their bodies. A complete description of lightning lizards appears on p. 8.

## SEARCHING THE BODIES

If the characters search the couriers' bodies, they find little of value, except for the strongbox. The couriers each carried 10–15 silver pieces, a dagger, a backpack with an adventurer's kit, the clothes on their backs and rations. Each of the couriers is wearing leather armor, except for the dwarf with the sword, who wears hardened leather. Beyond this the only other item of note is the broadsword, melded into the hand of one of the dwarfs. Taking this broadsword requires cutting it free from the dwarf's hand, a disgusting task to say the least.

The strongbox contains 500 silver pieces, the payment for the village for their most recent shipment of goods, as well as a few letters from Darron to some of the villagers. The box is locked, and opening it requires a successful Lock Picking Test against a Difficulty Number 12. If the players consider keeping the money, remind them that the couriers were sent by Darron with a payment for the village. This will hopefully remind them that they shouldn't take it and instead try to deliver it to the village.

After the characters have finished examining the bodies, they can move along the path towards the village.

# THE DEAD VILLAGERS

Shortly after leaving the bodies of Darron's couriers the characters come across the bodies of three of the residents of Lang, also victims of the lightning lizards. These bodies are clearly out in the open, right in the middle of the path the characters are following. When the characters reach the sight of the dead villagers, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

*Only scant minutes after leaving the sight of the dead couriers you find more evidence of danger along the path between the river and village. Up ahead, right in the middle of the path, lie three more bodies. This group is comprised of an elf, a dwarf, and a human, and each has the same singed and scorched wounds, which tells you it's likely they were killed by the same threat that killed Darron's couriers.*

*But where the previous bodies seemed to be those of travelers, these are not so. The bodies are dressed in poor clothes, each carrying only a small sack. Only two of these carry any sort of weapon. One, the dwarf, carries a dwarf sword, still in its scabbard. The second, the human, carries a short sword. None of them wears armor of any sort, making them easy prey, even here, close to their village.*

*But before you can look much more closely, you hear a rustling in the brush off to the right of the path. Turning quickly, you see three large lizards some 30 yards behind, coming out from under the brush. The lizards' eyes glow a bright blue as they turn to face you.*

Like Darron's couriers, these villagers were attacked by the lightning lizards. Unfortunately, the lizards have returned to snack on the corpses just as the characters find them. The lightning lizards attack the characters immediately. This will give the players their first taste of combat in **Earthdawn**. If there are six or more players, three lightning lizards attack the characters. If there are five or fewer players, only two lizards attack.

## FIGHTING THE LIGHTNING LIZARDS

In each of the first 3 rounds, 2 of the lizards will use their Lightning power, while the third creates its Crackling Armor. After 3 rounds, all 3 lizards will have their Crackling Armor. Hopefully the characters can get to one before this happens. Try to focus the lizards' attacks on the toughest characters for the first round or two, as these characters have the best chance of surviving one or two hits from the lizards before being seriously hurt.

The best strategy for the characters is to move into close range with the lizards. The creatures are easy to hit and damage, but have very dangerous ranged attacks. Also, a Beastmaster can use his Dominate Beast talent to great effectiveness here if he is able to control one of the lizards and have it attack another. This reduces the danger to the characters and helps beat the lizards as well.

If the fight goes badly for the characters, have the lizards make physical attacks against them instead of using their

Lightning power. Another possibility is that these lightning lizards are only able to use their Lightning power every other round. This would greatly reduce the threat they pose, while still providing a good challenge for the characters. Above all, try not to kill any characters in this fight. It's okay if one or more end up unconscious, but don't kill them. Even if you have to fudge some dice rolls, keep the characters alive and let them win this fight. They'll need all the help they can get later on, as a much tougher fight awaits them when they get to the village.

## Lightning Lizards

<b>DEX:</b> 6	<b>STR:</b> 5	<b>TOU:</b> 5
<b>PER:</b> 9	<b>WIL:</b> 12	<b>CHA:</b> 5
<b>Initiative:</b> 7	<b>Physical Defense:</b> 7	
<b>Number of Actions:</b> 2	<b>Spell Defense:</b> 11	
<b>Attack (3):</b> 9	<b>Social Defense:</b> 7	
<b>Damage:</b>	<b>Physical Armor:</b> 3	
Claws (3): 8	(6; see text)	
	<b>Mystic Armor:</b> 8	
<b>Death Rating:</b> 34	<b>Recovery Tests:</b> 2	
<b>Wound Threshold:</b> 9	<b>Knockdown:</b> 6	
<b>Unconsciousness Rating:</b> 26		
<b>Combat Movement:</b> 35	<b>Full Movement:</b> 70	
<b>Powers:</b> Climbing <sup>S</sup> (3): 9, Crackling Armor (3), Lightning (10): 22, Spellcasting (3): 12		
<b>Legend Points:</b> 255		
<b>Equipment:</b> None		

**Loot:** Eyes worth 150 silver pieces (counts as treasure worth Legend Points).

### Commentary

Traveling in prides of 3–13 individuals, lightning lizards are 4 feet long with 3 foot long tails and weigh roughly 200 pounds.

When dry, their yellow-and-green skin glistens as though oiled. Lizards bloated from feeding within the past 48 hours (in which they eat one-third of their body weight), are docile unless provoked. Hungry lizards, by contrast, show remarkable aggression.

### AFTER THE FIGHT

After the characters have defeated the lizards, they can inspect the bodies of the villagers more closely. Like the couriers, the villagers have been partially eaten by the lizards. One is missing a leg, one an arm, and the third both an arm and a leg. The bodies have very little on them. In the sacks they carry are a few silver pieces (15 total

and a few days worth of trail rations. In addition, one of the sacks (that of the dwarf) also contains a large stone dagger, wielded by one of the obsidimen who attacked the village, the villagers were carrying this to show to Darron, or anyone who might be able to help them, to convince them of the threat of the obsidimen.

When the characters find the stone dagger, the characters can attempt to identify it. If one of them makes a successful Ancient Weapons (or a comparable Knowledge Skill) Test against a Difficulty Number of 8, he recognizes the weapon as a type often used by obsidimen. Likewise, if an obsidimen character makes a successful Perception (7) Test, he also can identify the dagger as being the type used by obsidimen. Likewise, if an obsidimen character makes a successful Perception Test against a Difficulty Number of 7, he also can identify the dagger as being the type used by obsidimen. This information, however, does not tell the characters anything about why the villagers were carrying the dagger. If the characters remember that Darron mentioned the village was located near an obsidimen Life-rock, they may begin to piece things together. If not, don't worry too much, as soon as they get to the village, they'll learn first hand what happened.

The characters can earn money and Legend Points by taking the eyes from the lightning lizards. Each eye is worth 150 silver pieces, which count as Legend Points at the end of the adventure. Beastmaster and Wizard characters may know about lightning lizard eyes, so be sure to tell their players when the time comes. In addition, the characters can sell the stone dagger. It is worth approximately 1,200 silver pieces if sold when the characters return to Bartertown.

A Beastmaster's player may want to keep one of the lightning lizards alive to use as a pet or guard animal, through use of his Dominate Beast talent. This will not work, as each use of the talent only lasts a short time. This



would require the Beastmaster to do nothing else during the adventure except maintain control of the lizard. If the player thinks of this, explain the situation to him but give him credit for trying.

## THE VILLAGE OF LANG

In this encounter, the characters arrive at the village and find it in partial ruins, the result of the attack by the obsidimen. As the characters explore the village, they find evidence of what has happened but no people to speak of. A closer look reveals the bodies of several villagers as well as two dead obsidimen. As the characters continue their search, the corrupt obsidimen begin to approach the village. At this point, the characters are attacked by the dead villagers, who have been re-animated as cadaver men by the Horror corruption the obsidimen carry with them. Now the characters must defend themselves and hopefully find the truth before the obsidimen return.

When the characters reach the village, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

*You come to the end of the path you've followed from the river and have at last found the village of Lang. Upon seeing the village, it is no wonder Darron has heard no word from anyone here. The village lies seemingly abandoned, obviously the victim of some foul occurrence.*

*The village is made up of 20 or so buildings. Most of these are rather small in size, made of wood with thatched roofs. Many of these have holes in their walls, which appear to have been smashed in by some sort of being. Others are either wholly or partially burned, and you can see many small plumes of smoke rising from many different buildings throughout the village. In the middle of the village stands a building much larger than the rest. This building shows little to no damage from this side, but who knows what lies beyond your vision.*

*Whatever has done this to the village has left it in ruins, a shattered version of its former self. And now before you lies the heart of your task: to discover what fate has befallen this village and, if possible, rescue it from whatever threatens it. Assuming there is something of the village to rescue that is.*

The village of Lang consists of a small number of wooden buildings arranged as shown on the map on p. 10.

Most of the buildings in the village are small one or two room buildings, each home to a family. Some of these house extended families, while others house two families. Some of these buildings also have small workshops, where the people of the village prepare the shells and dyes that they trade with Darron.

One of the buildings, the largest in the village, serves as a village center. This is where the village leaders meet, where village meetings are held, etc. This building, unlike any other in the village, has a root cellar. This cellar is the same size as the building. This cellar is where the surviving

population of the village is in hiding from the corrupt obsidimen.

## SEARCHING THE VILLAGE

The characters will likely wish to search the village in hopes of learning what happened. Here are a few important discoveries they make during their search.

### More Dead Bodies

As the characters search the ruins of the village they find a pair of obsidimen bodies, alongside one of the burnt buildings. These are the corrupt obsidimen killed by the villagers. Next to the obsidimen bodies are the bodies of a number of villagers killed by the obsidimen before they were killed by the remaining villagers.

There are a total of five dead villagers—two dwarfs, and three humans. These bodies appear to have been pummeled to death, and, unlike the previous bodies, none of these has been eaten. None of the bodies bears any weapons, as the villagers have collected the weapons to help defend themselves should the obsidimen find them. Each of the bodies wears leather armor, and each dwarf has a battered buckler on one of his arms. From the looks of the bodies, the villagers have been dead for about a week. Later on, as the characters continue to search the village, these bodies will be re-animated into cadaver men and attack. (See **Cadaver Attack** on p. 10 for more information.)

The obsidimen bodies have cuts and gouges all over them but sport no weapons of any kind. Like the villager bodies, the obsidimen have been dead for approximately one week, but only Onnaro knows enough about obsidimen to recognize this.

### Scavengers

As they search the village, have the characters make a Perception (7) Test. Any character who succeeds notices a figure moving about the ruins. This is one of the villagers scavenging for food. If the characters try to track down the villager, he will disappear into the nearby forest. Ideally the characters should not be able to catch any of these villagers at first, as it will add to the sense of mystery and suspense if the characters notice someone or something moving about the village but are unable to catch it.

While they search, give the characters three or four chances to spot scavengers in the village. Whether or not the characters notice the scavengers, the villagers will have spotted the characters and will report their presence and location to the rest of the villagers in hiding. This will be helpful when the characters find the villagers, because the villagers will guess (correctly) that the characters were sent by Darron.

If you want, you can allow the characters to catch one of the villagers. The villager will be afraid at first, but a successful Charisma Test against his Social Defense of 6 should help calm him down. Also, if the characters have not yet thought to look in the main building or have not yet noticed the different smoke plume, catching a villager is a good way to help the characters find the villagers.

If the characters do catch one of the villagers after they have found the bodies, the cadaver men attack before



they are able to get to the main building. Go to **Cadaver Attack** below.

## Smoke Plumes

As noted in the village description, smoke plumes rise from several of the buildings. Most of these come from burned homes and workshops, the result of fires that spread in the chaos of the attack. The recent rain has extinguished most of the fires, but the soggy ruins cause many streams of dark black smoke to arise. One of these smoke plumes, however, comes from a small fire the villagers have built in their shelter. The plume exits a small vent hole in the ground along the wall of the main building. Unlike the other smoke plumes, this one is grey in color and much more steady.

As the characters move about the village, have each of them make a Perception (6) Test. If any character succeeds, inform him that the smoke plume is both lighter in color and more steady than the others. If the characters decide to investigate this, go to **Finding the Villagers** on p. 11.

## CADAVER ATTACK

About one-half hour after the characters have entered the village, the corrupt obsidimen awaken from their slumber and begin to approach the village in search of food. It will take the obsidimen about 10–15 minutes to reach the village, but the characters will feel their effects long before that. As the obsidimen awaken, the Horror corruption within them causes the dead bodies of the villagers to be re-animated as cadaver men who attack the characters.

It is best if this attack occurs after the characters have found the bodies of the village, but before they have found the surviving villagers. If one of the villager scavengers is with the characters during this attack, he will flee for the main building, leaving the characters behind.

There are a total of five cadaver man that can attack the characters (the obsidimen bodies are not re-animated). If there are four or more characters, all five attack. If there are four or fewer characters, only one per character attack.

## FIGHTING THE CADAVER MEN

The cadaver men will attack the characters in no particular manner. They simply attack the nearest living targets—in this case, the characters. The cadaver men should not pose too big a problem for the characters, who may think they are the real threat to the village. The real threat is of course, the obsidimen, who arrive roughly 10 minutes after the battle with the cadaver men.

If the characters have met with one of the scavenging villagers or have deduced the hiding place of the remaining villagers, they may contact the villagers after defeating the cadaver men. In this case, go to **Finding the Villagers**, below. If not, they can continue their search of the village, until the obsidimen return. When this happens, go to **Confrontation!** on p. 12.

### Cadaver Men

<b>DEX:</b> 4	<b>STR:</b> 6	<b>TOU:</b> 7
<b>PER:</b> 4	<b>WIL:</b> 6	<b>CHA:</b> 4
<b>Initiative:</b> 4	<b>Physical Defense:</b> 6	
<b>Number of Actions:</b> 1 (4; see text)	<b>Spell Defense:</b> 6	
<b>Attack (3):</b> 7	<b>Social Defense:</b> 11	
<b>Damage:</b>	<b>Physical Armor:</b> 0	
Claws (3): 9	<b>Mystic Armor:</b> 1	
<b>Death Rating:</b> 39	<b>Recovery Tests:</b> 3	
<b>Wound Threshold:</b> 11	<b>Knockdown:</b> 6	
<b>Unconsciousness Rating:</b> Immune		
<b>Combat Movement:</b> 22	<b>Full Movement:</b> 44	
<b>Legend Points:</b> 150		
<b>Equipment:</b> None		
<b>Loot:</b> None		



### Commentary

During the Scourge, some residents of citadels infested by Horrors chose death rather than face such evil beings. From these suicide victims, some of the more intelligent Horrors created the animated corpses known as “cadaver men,” undead beings capable of feeling only pain. Although most cadaver men retain their human intelligence, their miserable existences have filled them with hatred of the living and driven most insane. As a result, social contact with cadaver men, though possible, is unsettling for living beings. Cadaver men are also cannibals, but contrary to popular myth do not require sentient flesh for survival.

### Rules

Cadaver men become easily enraged, flying into a manic fury if they experience any significant pain, such as being subjected to a Pain spell or receiving a Wound.

**Rage:** An enraged cadaver man makes 4 attacks per round until it has killed the source of the pain or 10 rounds have passed, whichever comes first. If a cadaver man cannot determine who caused it pain, it attacks and kills the nearest living creature. When enraged, a cadaver man will often use the Aggressive Attack combat option (see the **Combat** chapter of the **Player’s Compendium**). The effect of the rage overcomes any penalties they may suffer from the pain itself; this means the cadaver man ignores Wound penalties or any Harried or Knocked Down penalties the pain would normally cause.

## FINDING THE VILLAGERS

The hundred or so surviving villagers are all huddled together in the basement of the largest building in the village. In the cellar of this building the villagers have built a small fire which is the source of the light grey smoke plume (see **Smoke Plumes**, on p.10). The villagers have also gathered all the food they could, as well as some fresh water and what few weapons they could collect. The cellar of the building is very crowded, and most of the villagers are sitting or lie huddled close together.

The characters can find the villagers hiding here in one of two ways. The first is by noticing the smoke plume that rises from the foundation of this building. If they have come to the main building based on this information, they will see that the smoke rises from a small hole dug in the ground alongside the foundation of this building. The building itself has not been damaged at all.

Or characters might find and catch one of the scavenger villagers during their search. In this case, the villager will lead the characters right into the building and towards the cellar. Unless the characters caught the first scavenger, the villagers will know about the characters and will be expecting them.

If the characters come to the building without one of the scavengers, they will have to figure out on their own where the villagers are hiding. This is not too difficult. Any character who makes a successful Perception (6) Test notices that the large building has a foundation and very likely a cellar.

## ENTERING THE BUILDING

Getting into the building itself is very easy, as the door is not locked or barricaded. The main room of this building holds several long benches, as well as a few large tables. The stairway to the basement is located in the far left corner away from the main door. The stairway is made of stone and leads down to a large, braced wooden door. This door is strongly barred on the far side and cannot be smashed down. The characters will have to talk their way through. There is a small hole in the door through which the characters can talk to the villagers.

Getting the villagers to open the door requires a successful Charisma (8) Test. If the players come up with good reasons for the villagers to trust the characters, lower the Difficulty Number to 7. If the characters mention that Darron sent them, lower the Difficulty Number to 5. Of course, if the characters have one of the villagers with them, he will get the other villagers to open the door.

### Speaking to the Villagers

Once the characters have gotten the villagers to open the door, they can explain why they are here and what they have found. The primary spokesman for the village is its eldest leader, a dwarf woman named Jorra. She will be very glad to see the characters, as she believes they have been sent to rescue them by Darron. She will think that the group they sent out for help must have reached Barter-town to ask Darron for help, and she will ask the characters about Linna, Rianna, and Kor—the three villagers sent to get help. If or when the characters explain the true story—including what happened to the rescue party—Jorra and the other villagers will be shocked and saddened but still thankful for the characters' presence. If the characters have the strongbox with them the villagers will be especially thankful, because the money will help them rebuild their village.

Eventually, Jorra will explain that last week the village was attacked, and the survivors all retreated to this cellar. She will also ask the characters if they have faced the Brotherhood. This should catch the characters off guard a bit, unless they have already guessed the truth about the obsidimen bodies they found in the village. If the characters respond by telling the villagers that they killed the cadaver men, the villagers will look quite puzzled and ask again if they have killed the Brotherhood. If the characters remain confused about this, Jorra will explain that the village was attacked by a group of several obsidimen, seemingly corrupted during the Scourge.

At some point, the characters will likely attempt to convince the villagers that their village is safe, and that they can come out of hiding. Persuading the villagers to leave the cellar will be difficult, especially if the obsidimen are still alive. Also, if an obsidiman player character is present, many of the villagers will be especially afraid of him, making it ever more difficult to convince the villagers that it's safe to come out. If the characters convince the villagers to leave the cellar, they will insist on remaining in the building until they have proof that their village is safe.

During the characters' discussions with Jorra and the villagers, they will hear a faint growling sound coming

from outside of the building. When the villagers hear this sound, they will panic. If they have left the cellar, they will all run towards the stairs as they attempt to return to their shelter. If they are still in the cellar, they try to push the characters out of the cellar and lock the door behind them. At this point, Jorra will inform the characters that the Brotherhood has returned—and that unless the characters can defeat them, the village is doomed.

## CONFRONTATION!

It is best if the obsidimen arrive in the village after the characters have found some clues as to what has happened. Also, it may be best if the obsidimen return to the village after the characters have found the dead obsidimen and villagers, and after the attack by the cadaver men.

The obsidimen approach the village from the west, seeking out any living creatures. When the characters go out into the village, the obsidimen will be approaching them quickly and attack as soon as they are able. There are a total of four obsidimen remaining (two died at the hands of the villagers). If there are fewer than four players in the group, reduce the obsidimen's number to one per character.

### TALKING WITH THE  BSIDIMEN

The characters may try to talk with the obsidimen when they confront them. This is next to useless, as the obsidimen are corrupted beyond salvation and cannot be reasoned with unless one of the characters gets an Excellent result on an Interaction Test against a Difficulty Number of 11, the Social Defense of the obsidimen (see the **Gamemastering** chapter of the **Gamemaster's Compendium** for more information on Interaction Tests). If the test succeeds, all it does is confuse the obsidimen, stopping them from attacking right away. Within a few minutes at the most, the obsidimen will attack anyway. If an obsidiman character attempts to talk to them, he only needs a Good result to prevent them from attacking instantly. But again, their corruption has driven these obsidimen beyond sanity, and within a few minutes, they will attack regardless.

The obsidimen attack simply because they have been driven insane and corrupted by the Horror that occupied their Liferock. They have an unnatural desire for destruction and such.

### TAINED  BSIDIMEN

<b>DEX:</b> 6	<b>STR:</b> 7	<b>TOU:</b> 7
<b>PER:</b> 4	<b>WIL:</b> 5	<b>CHA:</b> 4
<b>Initiative:</b> 6	<b>Physical Defense:</b> 6	
<b>Number of Actions:</b> 1	<b>Spell Defense:</b> 6	
<b>Attack (3):</b> 9	<b>Social Defense:</b> 6	
<b>Damage:</b>	<b>Physical Armor:</b> 3	
Unarmed (5): 12	<b>Mystic Armor:</b> 1	
<b>Death Rating:</b> 42	<b>Recovery Tests:</b> 3	
<b>Wound Threshold:</b> 12	<b>Knockdown:</b> 7	
<b>Unconsciousness Rating:</b> 34		

**Combat Movement:** 22    **Full Movement:** 44

**Karma Points:** 10    **Karma Step:** 3

**Legend Points:** 75

**Equipment:** None

**Loot:** None

### Commentary

These obsidimen were adepts prior to the Scourge. Except for their ability to use Karma, their corruption has essentially erased any and all of the talents and abilities they learned from their Disciplines.

### Fighting the Obsidimen

The relatively small number of obsidimen should enable the characters to defeat them but don't avoid harming (or even killing) the characters if that's what happens. **Earthdawn** is a very dangerous world where even the most experienced adept can die quickly. If you prefer not to kill the characters and if one or two end up dead after the battle, it's possible that the villagers have one or two Last Chance Salves (see the **Goods and Services** chapter of the **Player's Compendium**) that they would be willing to use to save the fallen characters. This serves as a good reminder of how deadly **Earthdawn** can be, without resulting in the permanent death of any character.

## AFTERMATH

Alter the characters' fight with the corrupt obsidimen, the adventure is over, for good or bad. Hopefully, the characters have defeated the obsidimen and removed the threat they pose to the village of Lang. Otherwise, the characters will have died trying to save an innocent village

from one of the many after-effects of the Horrors and the Scourge.

If the characters succeeded in killing the obsidimen, they have made the village safe, at least for now. The villagers hold a feast in the characters' honor, celebrating their bravery and heroism. Jorra writes a letter to Darron telling him of the characters' efforts and encouraging him to pay them some sort of bonus.

The characters probably have a full day before they are to meet with the t'skrang riverboat, giving them time to rest or possibly help the villagers start to rebuild Lang. The characters can now return to Darron in Bartertown to claim the rest of their payment. Darron pays the characters as promised, and does his part to spread word of their deeds among his associates in Bartertown and the kingdom of Throal, which in turn begins the spread of their Names across Barsaive.

### AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

The creatures presented in this adventure have listings for Legend Points. These are the points characters earn for defeating the creatures. By successfully completing the adventure each character should earn an approximate total of 500 Legend Points.

In addition, each character earns the remainder of the money owed them by Darron (with a bonus of 100 silver pieces), the money earned for the lightning lizard eyes, and the stone dagger. Not a bad wage for a few days' work.



# EARTHDAWN SHARDS: SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The **Shards** series is a collection of adventures and encounters for the **Earthdawn** game. Intended as an inexpensive adventure resource for **Earthdawn** gamemasters, they are also a springboard for aspiring writers. The **Shards** series is published and available for purchase online from *DriveThruRPG.com*—it is possible that a collection might see print at a later stage. Please read the following guidelines very carefully before submitting your idea for a Shard. Submissions that do not conform to the guidelines may not be accepted.

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Short adventures, encounters, and setting descriptions for **Earthdawn**, written to be used with the rules contained in the **Earthdawn Player's** and **Gamemaster's Compendiums**. A Shard can also contain new creatures and gamemaster characters. The tone and style of the text should fit the **Earthdawn** setting (refer to previously published adventures to get an idea of what we are talking about here). As mentioned above, the **Shards** series also serves as a hunting ground to find potential new writers we can send outlines to and ask to participate in bigger projects, so succeeding here may result in future agreements.

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