

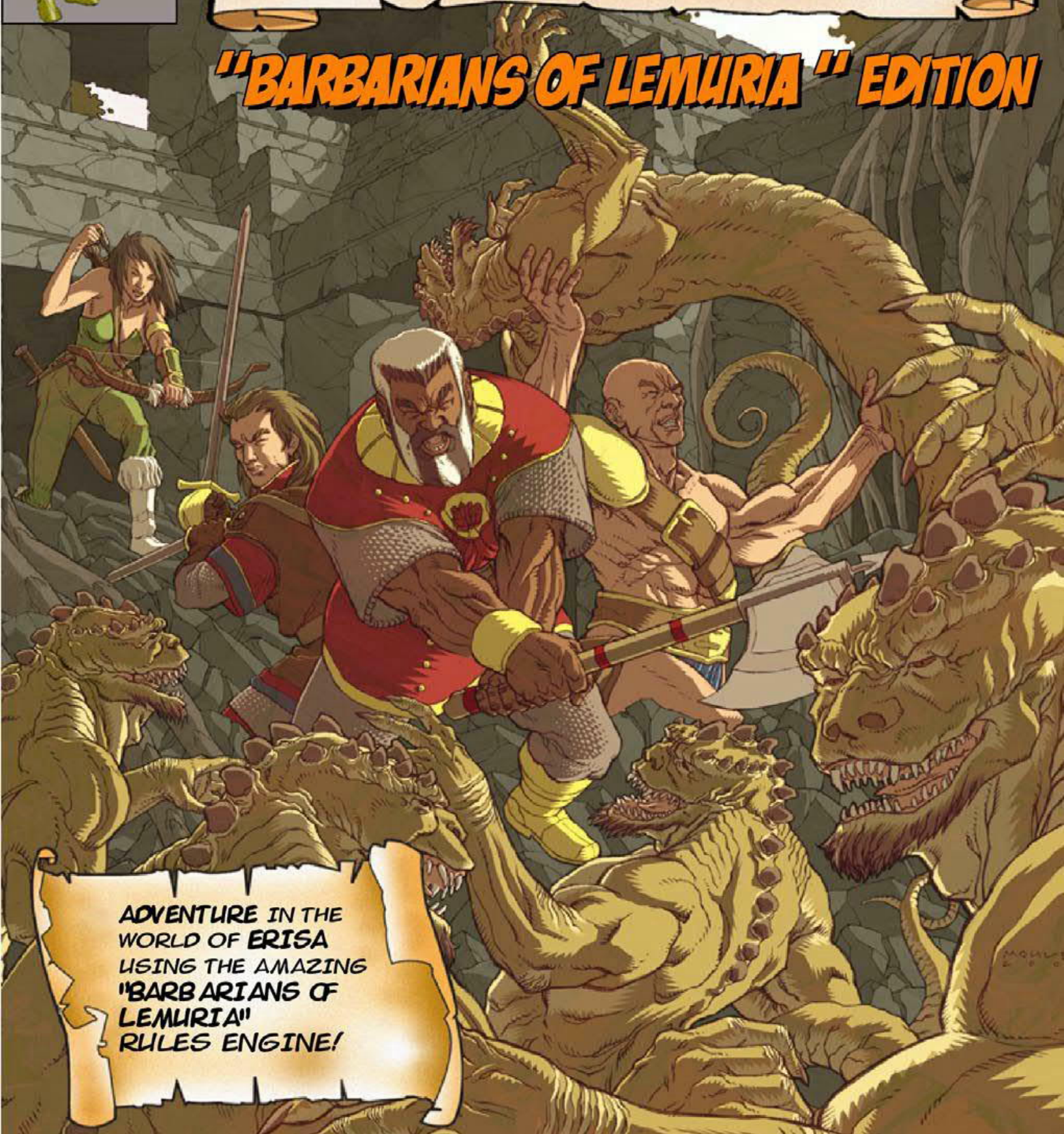
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BEYOND BELIEF GAMES & EVIL DM PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS:

LEGENDS OF STEEL

"BARBARIANS OF LEMURIA" EDITION



ADVENTURE IN THE
WORLD OF ERISA
USING THE AMAZING
"BARBARIANS OF
LEMURIA"
RULES ENGINE!

LEGENDS OF STEEL

By Jeff Mejia & Simon Washbourne

Dedication: Legends of Steel is dedicated to my beautiful wife Scarlett and my sons Anthony, Joshua, and Nicholas. Thank you for encouraging, inspiring, and allowing me to see this dream through.

Acknowledgement While I take credit for writing Legends of Steel and creating the World of Erisa, I must acknowledge the help of some good friends who have helped me along the way in the form of advice, play testing, and inspiration. Special thanks go out to:

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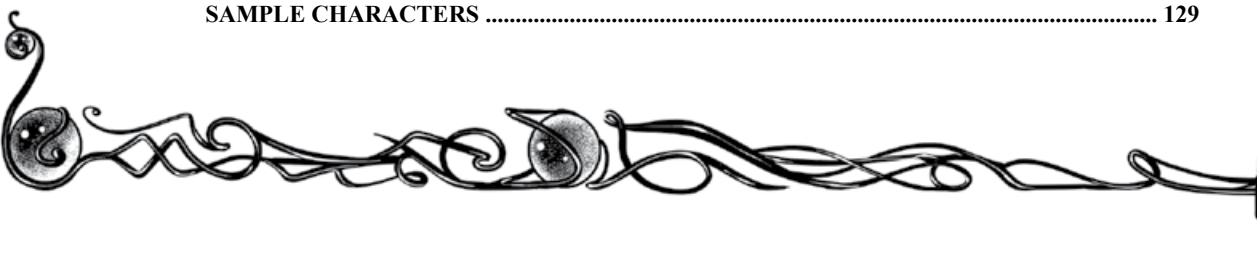
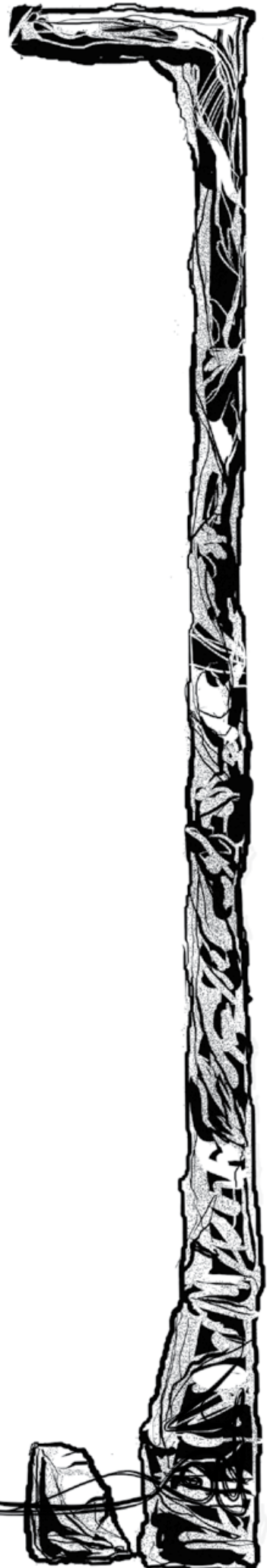
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Legends of Steel and the BoL RPG engine

Legends of Steel – BoL Edition is a campaign expansion for the Barbarians of Lemuria (BoL) RPG Engine. *Legends of Steel* takes *BoL* to the next level, by offering new boons, new options and a brand new campaign world steeped in Sword & Sorcery flavor. The type of Sword & Sorcery adventuring that *Legends of Steel: BoL* attempts to capture is the truly heroic, amazing, over the top action found in the Sword & Sorcery comic books of the 70's, the low budget Sword & Sorcery movies of the 80's and the adventure filled Sword & Sorcery television shows of the 90's.

Be a Hero...Be a Champion...Be a LEGEND!

Grim and Gritty or Sunwords and Somersaults?

Within the genre of Swords & Sorcery there are varying types. Among them are the grim and gritty tales of Frank Frazetta's *Death Dealer*, the action packed and sometimes campy tales of television's *Xena: Warrior Princess*, or the techno-sorcery post apocalyptic world of *Thundarr the Barbarian*. All of these variations of the genre are equally enjoyable in their own rights, but there is the possibility that when the GM says "I'm going to run a Sword & Sorcery adventure," he may be thinking- of the classic Robert E. Howard tales of King Kull while the players are thinking Bruce Campbell's *Army of Darkness*. So, before getting started on the character sheets, make sure that everyone playing is on the same page regarding the tone and setting of the game.

Pulp and Paperback Sword & Sorcery

These are the Sword & Sorcery tales from the pulps of the 1930s and the paperback boom of the 1960s and 1970s. They feature characters such as Conan, Elric, Kull, Thongor, Kothar, and Kane. The tales are set in grim worlds where magic is almost exclusively in the realm of the antagonist. The heroes are mainly warrior types, barbarians or warrior-kings with only their guts and cold steel to carry them through the adventure. In fact, it would not be at all out of line in this style of game for the GM to prohibit the use of magic amongst player characters. While there is a case for magic wielding player characters (The Grey Mouser, Elric, or Kane), the difficulty in obtaining the components and the time and rituals needed to perform even minor magical effects may greatly outweigh any of its advantages in game play.

Comic Book and Cartoon Sword & Sorcery

In the 1970's Sword & Sorcery comic books enjoyed a wide popularity. Every major comic book company published at least one Sword & Sorcery title with varying degrees of success. They published original characters such as DC's *Arak Son of Thunder*, adapted existing properties such as Marvel's *Savage Sword of Conan*, or created thinly disguised copies of such characters like Atlas Comics' *Wulf the Barbarian*.

This category also includes the slew of Sword & Sorcery movies from the 1980s (*Hawk the Slayer*, *Deathstalker*, *Beastmaster*, *The Sword & the Sorcerer*, etc.) and to a smaller extent the TV shows of the 1990s (*Hercules: The Legendary Journeys*, *Xena: Warrior Princess* and *The Adventures of Sinbad*). Let's not forget the Saturday morning cartoon shows such as *Thundarr the Barbarian* and

Conan the Adventurer. These stories, while still retaining some elements found in the classic tales, often strayed a bit more into the fantastic, with mythical creatures and powerful Sorcerers being more prevalent. The medium, being primarily a visual one, had to entertain the reader's eyes with blasts of magical energy and demons rising from smoky cauldrons to do battle with the hero. Player characters who have a limited amount of magical ability fit in better in a campaign of this type than they do in a classic Sword & Sorcery setting. Still, the magic should be very limited and nowhere near the level found in a standard fantasy role playing game. If the character is a spell caster of some type the spells available should be very low key in effect. Spells that cause massive amounts of damage, have flashy effects, or allow the characters to fly, control armies or resurrect the dead should be left out entirely.

The setting for the Legends of Steel – BoL Edition campaign, The World of Erisa, is tailored after the comic book and cartoon Sword & Sorcery example.

first things first

The Core Mechanic of the BoL Engine

Whenever you attempt an action that has some chance of failure, you roll two six-sided die (2d6). To determine if your character succeeds at a task you do this:

Roll 2d6

Add the relevant attribute

Add any relevant combat abilities (if fighting)

Add any relevant career (if not fighting)

Add any modifiers

If the result equals or exceeds 9, your character succeeds. If the result is lower than 9, you fail.

A natural 12 (i.e. two sixes) on the dice is always a success.

A natural 2 (i.e. two ones) on the dice is always a failure.

When to Use This

The mundane actions that your character performs will automatically succeed – buying food, walking down the street, talking to the city guard and so on. Even trickier actions can be carried out without a task roll if your Hero has the appropriate career (even a career rank of 0 will help here) – if you are a merchant, then buying uncommon items isn't too difficult. Most characters should be able to obtain a few coins to buy a plate of food by recourse to their careers; a thief can pick a few pockets in the marketplace, a minstrel can play a rousing tune in a tavern, a blacksmith can mend a few farming implements etc.

It is only when the action can have some sort of repercussions that you should normally resort to the task roll. If the merchant is seeking to buy an ancient relic or the thief is trying to break into a wizard's tower or the minstrel is performing before the king; then it becomes important enough to resort to the die. There is more on this in the chapter on playing the game.



SWORD and SORCERY doesn't always mean "BARBARIAN"

When people mention Sword & Sorcery the first image that usually pops into their head is the brawny, bare-chested barbarian carrying a great big axe or sword. While the barbarian warrior is the most popular character type in the Sword & Sorcery genre, it's not the only one. Heroes in Sword & Sorcery tales include kings, thieves, sailors, soldiers, farmers, and sorcerers. For example in Ray Harryhausen's Sinbad movie trilogy, the hero is a merchant sailor who travels the known world on epic quests. In the Lankhmar stories of Fritz Leiber, The Grey Mouser is a city-bred thief with a thirst for adventure and a love of the good life. Jirel of Joiry, by C.L. Moore, is a warrior queen who faces off against supernatural foes that threaten her kingdom.

Careers

Essentially the BoL system is based around the idea of careers. A Hero may have many careers throughout his life. He may have started out as a brash young barbarian from the cold northlands; then he could have done some thieving in Boskar, followed by a short spell as a mercenary captain and then on to command a pirate ship out of the Albena.

BoL uses this concept and all players get to choose four careers for their characters, at which they have a little ability (rank 0), great ability (up to rank 5, although this would only be after they have gained great acclaim from their adventures) or somewhere in between (ranks 1 to 4). These careers are the key to what the Hero knows and can do.

There are no individual skills in BoL; there are simply these careers. A career gives an immediate overview of a character's capabilities - if she is a thief, you know the character should be able to sneak around, break into buildings and pick locks on chests. If your character is a pirate, you know he should be able to handle a ship or small boat, climb up the rigging and know something about navigation by the stars and so on. Sometimes Heroes are known for what they do, rather than for anything else: Anteus the Gladiator, Jesharek the Alchemist and so on. Other times it could be where they are from: De Silva of Aragos, Talena of Pyrani. And in still other instances, Heroes are often notable for their combat skills: Ballik the Brawler or Risa the Archer.

Attributes

With these careers there are four attributes, which are natural or born traits of a character. Sometimes Heroes are more notable for their attributes: Jandar the Agile or Krongar the Mighty.

Combat Abilities

As the game is mainly about Heroes, there are also four combat abilities, which will be used to determine how well a character can use his fists, a sword or bow, or get out the way of attacks aimed at him.

Character Concept

What kind of character do you want to play? What Sword & Sorcery archetypes excite you? A mighty barbarian warrior? A sly city-bred thief? An adventurous sailor?

Once you decide on a particular career, it's time to put some thought into where they come from and why they do what they do.

Give them a background.

Was your character born in a barn or on a battlefield? Does he have any living parents or siblings? What was his father's trade? Is he city-bred, a farm boy or did he grow up in the great desert? Did he have a privileged childhood?

Give them a Motivation.

"My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father: Prepare to die."

- *The Princess Bride* - William Goldman

Why does your character do what he does? What set him on this path of adventure? Why does he feel the need to explore ruins and kill strangers? What motivates the adventurer?

When creating your character be sure to give some thought to their motivation. The following are some classic examples used in countless tales.

Vengeance:

- Bandits raided your village and killed everyone while you were away hunting. Now you are hunting them down, one by one.
- The local lord lusted after your girlfriend, she spurned his sweaty advances and in a fit of rage he killed her.
- The Wolf Clan has been your clan's sworn enemy for years. At a meeting meant to end the feud your people were ambushed. Somehow you survived. Now it's payback time.

To Win or Win Back a Kingdom:

- You were prophesized to one day wear a crown and tread a despot beneath your sandaled feet.
- Your father was many things; a good general wasn't one of them. He lost the battle, the war, and his kingdom. You pledged to him on his deathbed to return from exile and reclaim your rightful place as king.

Soldier of Fortune:

- You live by your sword. It's all you've ever known: going from one job to another. Sometimes you believe what you're fighting for; other times you just want enough to keep you in wine and whores till a better job comes along.

King's Agent:

- You are a patriot and loyal subject of your liege. You serve at his beck and call, and from time to time he has need of your special skills.



Freedom Fighter:

- Your land has been overrun by an usurper and it has fallen to you and your comrades to free the people from the invader!

Remove a Curse:

- The love of your life has been cursed by an unknown evil. She rests now, safe, but incurable. You have vowed to find a cure, lift the curse, or die trying.

Protect the Child:

- It was written in the holy texts that a child of light shall be born, a child to bring peace to the age of man. It is your duty to protect this child from the evils of the world until she is ready to fulfill the prophecies.

Get Home:

- You haven't seen your wife in five long years. Your sons are becoming men without you, but now the wars are over and all you want to do now is get home. It's going to be a long journey, we best get started.

Bored on the Farm:

- Your father is a farmer, his father was a farmer, and your brothers are farmers. Your uncle, "the rebel" of the family, is a baker. You have *got* to get out of this town.

Hero Out of Time:

- You are from another time or another world. You may be desperately trying to find a way back home or you might feel that your knowledge and skills will be enough to carve out a kingdom amongst these primitives.

Hopefully the preceding examples have helped give you an idea of what type of character you want to play and maybe some possible motives for taking the road to adventure. Talk with the other players in your group and of course the GM about your choices. Together you can choose to be a group of disparate individuals thrown together and forced to cooperate in order to survive, or a tightly bonded team of specialists each working off of each other's strengths. It's all good, and it can all work. Now let's go build a Hero!

Character Race

Whether the Sword & Sorcery hero is a hard-bitten warrior, a magic wielding barbarian queen or a city-bred rogue, they all have one major thing in common: they are all human.

Of course, they are *exceptional* humans and at times there may be rumors of non-human parentage, such as a trace of Fairy blood to explain unearthly beauty or perhaps an ancestor who was said to be a Troll to explain the hero's prodigious strength. Unlike most standard fantasy roleplaying campaigns, *Legends of Steel* is geared towards humans as the only player character species.

Once you have a character concept, you need to determine your attributes. These attributes are important in defining your characters physical and mental make up - his strengths, weaknesses and outlook. Naturally, it makes sense to place the numbers in a manner that reflects your character concept.

attributes

Each character in the BoL system is initially defined by four attributes. These are mainly physical things and on the whole can be used as a general gauge of the characters physical make up. For example, a character with a few points in strength will have a tough looking body and will tend towards the tall and muscular look.

To determine your characters attribute levels, divide four points between the four attributes as desired. You may put at most three points into one attribute or spread them around as you wish. A zero in any attribute represents an average rating. Attributes can go to higher levels than 3, but these would be truly legendary individuals. You cannot start the game with an attribute higher than 3. If you really want to, you can buy down one of your attributes to spend the point elsewhere. Only one attribute may be reduced to -1 in this way.

The attributes are as follows:

Strength

This represents raw physical power, toughness, muscle and so on. It is useful for Heroes who like to bash down doors rather than use the handle or smash open chests rather than pick the lock. Soldiers, barbarians and gladiators often have a high strength.

Strength determines how much Lifeblood a character has and how much damage the character delivers when he hits his enemy with a weapon or his fists. Finally, strength is all-important in determining whether a character can resist the effects of venomous bites or the poisons of assassins.

Use strength when:

Your character is lifting, pulling, bending or breaking things. It is also the attribute to use for a number of other physical endeavours, like swimming, jumping, climbing and arm-wrestling. Sometimes the GM might prefer you to use agility for some of these things but if you have a strong character you should be allowed to use his strength where pure athleticism is concerned.

Agility

This attribute covers general speed, dexterity, coordination and so on. It is a useful attribute for the more subtle type of character. Many thieves, tumblers, pirates and archers will have higher than average agility.

In combat it is used to determine your initiative and whether you hit your target when firing a bow or swinging a sword. Finally, it is used to get out of the way of hidden traps and snares and to dodge landslides and other effects where reflexes are vital.

Use agility when:

Your character is attempting physical endeavours that require speed or coordination, like tumbling, swinging on chandeliers, picking a lock or cutting a purse off a merchant's belt. Sometimes the GM might prefer you to use strength for some of these things, but if you have an agile character, you should be able to use your agility where nimbleness and quickness are key.



Mind

Intellect, willpower, knowledge and psyche are aspects of the mind. This is not big amongst barbarians but it is useful for magicians, alchemists, priests and scribes. Mind is of particular importance for spell casting and defending against illusions and enchantments.

Use mind when:

Your character is trying to remember a fact or some piece of information. It is used where awareness and perception are important; to spot things that are distant or concealed or to hear a thief sneaking up on you.

Appeal

This attribute represents the looks, charm, persuasiveness and overall likeability of the Hero. Merchants, minstrels, nobles, dancers and serving wenches will often be strong in appeal. It is the attribute for any attempts to seduce, haggle or barter the price of goods or get people to look upon him favourably. Appeal can be used to sway the opinion of individuals, crowds or even entire cities!

Use appeal when:

Your character is trying to talk anybody into doing something for him. When your character is attempting to fool, trick or con someone.

combat abilities

Once attributes have been determined then the Heroes combat abilities need to be determined. Again you have four points to allocate amongst four areas with a maximum of 3 in any one of those areas. If you really want to, you can buy down one of your abilities to spend the point elsewhere. You may reduce one combat ability only, to -1 in this way.

The combat abilities are as follows:

Brawl

Hitting people with fists, feet, head as well as throttling, holding and throwing people around. Includes the use of improvised weapons, chairs, bottles, tables and so on. Usually used in combination with agility, the GM might allow you to use your strength instead. If, for example you are trying to wrestle your opponent, then strength could become more important. Tavern brawls are common in Pyrani and heroic characters often have some brawling ability. Having said that, a brawl in a Radu tavern will often lead to the flash of blades and this is where the next combat ability becomes useful.

Melee

This is the skill with hand-held weapons; swords, knives, clubs, axes and spears are all covered under this heading. Adventurers usually need to be able to defend themselves; Heroes always need to. This ability is used in conjunction with your character's agility. There might be the odd occasion where the GM would allow you to use your strength instead of your agility – maybe you are fighting up to your waist in water, where you are so slowed that you agility is of limited use. The skill is normally used to attack opponents, but can also be used to parry blows aimed at you. When your enemy is far away however, the following combat ability might be worth having.

Ranged

Hitting targets with bows, crossbows, slings as well as throwing weapons like spears and knives. Many heroes neglect this skill because it could be considered un-heroic to kill one's enemy from a distance. However, considering the beasts that roam the jungles and deserts, most adventurers would consider it wise to have a means of keeping them at bay. Ranged combat is used together with agility. Strength is used for the damage modifier, but it is halved when throwing or firing ranged weapons. When all else fails, there is of course the next combat ability to consider.

Defence

Call it dodging, ducking or side-stepping, defence is the skill at being able to avoid attacks. Most Heroes believe it is better to kill your enemy before they have a chance to hit back, but other adventurers are a little more cautious and may live a little longer (even if the sagas don't mention them so often).

characteristics

Depending on your character concept you may choose from a wide variety of Boons, and perhaps also suffer from a Flaw or two. Boons provide benefits and flaws are disadvantageous when your character is taking actions associated with those characteristics.

Lifeblood

Lifeblood represents how much punishment and wounding a Heroes body may absorb before he keels over. It is based on a value of 10 plus the strength attribute of the character. When a Hero is struck in combat, his body suffers wounds. The extent of the wounds suffered depends upon how powerful the blow was and is expressed as a number of points. This comes off the Hero's Lifeblood total.

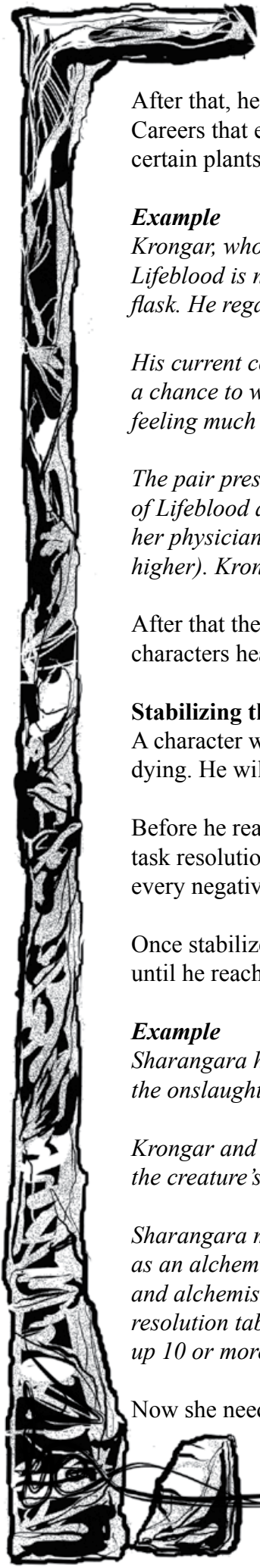
- If, as a result of wounds received the value falls to 0, the Hero falls unconscious.
- If, as a result of wounds received, Lifeblood falls below -5, the character has died. Nothing short of godly intervention (in the form of the expenditure of a Hero Point) will save him.
- If Lifeblood falls below zero the Hero is unconscious and dying. He will lose 1 more Lifeblood each round until he dies (see above), receives medical attention or the gods intervene (by the expenditure of a Hero Point).
- NPC rabble have only 3 Lifeblood. They are killed or rendered unconscious (the player's choice) when they reach 0 Lifeblood or less. At below -5, they are most definitely dead, in a most gruesome way.

Lifeblood for NPCs

Important NPCs are generated by the GM in the same way that Heroes are and will generally have 10 or more Lifeblood, depending upon their strength attribute (Lifeblood could be 9, if strength is -1). Rabble will generally only have 3 Lifeblood.

Recovering Lost Lifeblood

As long as the character is still at zero or positive Lifeblood and provided he gets a chance to rest and take a gulp of water and so on, for about 10 or 15 minutes immediately after a battle, he will recover up to half his lost Lifeblood straight away. This represents recovery from fatigue, bashes and minor cuts/bruises.



After that, he recovers one Lifeblood per day provided the day is taken up with only light activity. Careers that enable a character to heal (physician, perhaps alchemist if he has a potion or access to certain plants/herbs) are able to immediately heal 1 Lifeblood per rank in the appropriate career.

Example

Krongar, who has 13 Lifeblood, is wounded in a battle suffering 6 points of damage, meaning his Lifeblood is now down to 7. After the battle he has a quick rest and downs a few swigs from his wine flask. He regains 3 Lifeblood (half of the damage he suffered).

His current companion, Sharangara of Emesa is a physician of rank 1, which means when she has a chance to work on his wounds, she can restore another Lifeblood point immediately. Krongar is feeling much better now, having recovered four of his lost Lifeblood.

The pair press on for a day and do not encounter any more trouble. Krongar regains a further point of Lifeblood and Sharangara gets to make a roll to double this. The player rolls 8, which adding her physician rank of 1 and mind of 1, gives her 10, which is higher than she needed (requiring 9 or higher). Krongar is now fully fit and ready for more action.

After that they can make a moderate Task Resolution (see page 26) roll each day to double a characters healing rate.

Stabilizing the Dying

A character who has received enough damage to reduce Lifeblood to a minus number is down and dying. He will suffer loss of 1 Lifeblood point every round until he reaches -6 and dies.

Before he reaches -6, he can be stabilized by another character reaching him and making a moderate task resolution roll, using mind and any appropriate career. The difficulty is one level tougher for every negative Lifeblood point suffered.

Once stabilized, the injured character is still out cold but recovers one point of Lifeblood per day until he reaches a positive total.

Example

Sharangara has been attacked in the jungle by a ravenous beast and suffers 12 points of damage in the onslaught. She falls over, bloody and torn, falling to -2 Lifeblood.

Krongar and Argol Arran continue to battle the creature and the barbarian runs his blade through the creature's heart. It falls to Krongar's feet.

Sharangara meanwhile, drops to -3 Lifeblood. Argol then rushes to the aid of his companion and as an alchemist persuades the GM that he has a few powders that will help. Adding his mind and alchemist careers, he receives +2 to his roll. However, the task roll is tough (-3 see the Task resolution table later), so in effect, Argol takes a -1 to his task roll (meaning the dice need to come up 10 or more). He gets 10, and has saved Sharangara.

Now she needs to sleep, but with constant attention she could be on her feet in a couple of days.



CAREERS

Overview

As mentioned earlier, careers are the key to the BoL sytem. The career path of a Hero represents all of his upbringing and experience and therefore can be used to help determine everything he knows; his skills, his knowledge, his expertise and his influence.

You need to choose four careers for your Hero. A minimum rank of 0 may be placed against a selected career and the maximum starting rank is 3.

You have four ranks to arrange your careers as you wish. You cannot buy down a career to gain another point elsewhere. You can get further careers at a later date using Advancement Points (see page 32)

Choosing Your Careers

Choosing the four careers gives a player an immediate handle on his character. A high rank in a career would probably mean that the Hero spent a long period of time following that path; a rank of 0 could mean only a short spell or even just a natural affinity for the career.

The careers give a general knowledge of anything to do with the career, such as who would hold high positions within the profession, where to find the guilds and who heads them, skills and abilities that members of the profession should have as well as helping the Hero obtain employment in the career.

It is important to note that the skills and abilities set out for each career isn't exhaustive. There are no individual skills as such in this game. It is intended only to be a guide as to the type of things that career should help you with. Some careers provide abilities that might also be found in other careers in which case it is up to the GM whether to allow both career ranks to be added in to the task at hand, or whether to simply take the higher of the two ranks. If you can convince the GM that your career could be helpful in other areas explain why or how and the GM may agree and give you a bonus.

Career Path

The main characters in many sword & sorcery stories follow many different paths during their lives of adventure; both Conan and Thongor started as barbarians and at one time or another became thieves, pirates, gladiators, soldiers and even, at the end, nobles.

Many of their travelling companions have several aspects to their character. Jesharek, Krongar's friend is a wizard, alchemist, scribe and physician (and probably other things too).

When you choose your four careers, try to create a story that follows your character's career path. It doesn't have to be long or even great literature but it can hint at places your character may have been and things he might have done.



Career Path Example:

Dagul was born into a family of traders from Crascia, and this naturally led him into a life of buying and selling (Merchant 2). This lifestyle led him to sea trade and introductions to several sea captains in Pyrani and before long he was sailing for far lands and learning the essential skills of a seaman (Mariner 0). On one voyage several years ago, pirates attacked Dagul's ship; the crew was captured and sold into slavery (Slave 1). Dagul's new mistress was now Chandra of Kobar, a powerful sorceress. During his enslavement and until his escape, he used every opportunity to learn the secrets of that great sorceress until he became a passable magician himself (Magician 1).

the careers:

Alchemist (or Artificer)

The scientists and inventors of Erisa, these characters need to be literate. Alchemists are often mistaken for wizards by those who do not understand science. Skills covered are things like making potions & perfumes, plant lore, poisons, medicines, metallurgy etc. This is not a terribly common career for adventuring Heroes, as it requires too much patience. Mind is normally the most important attribute for an alchemist. For each rank above 2 in this career, the character must take a flaw (see page 22).

Assassin (or Slayer)

These covert killers are adept at sneak attacks, killing, information gathering, city lore, persuasion, poisons and lock picking. They tend to have fast reflexes. Most of the attributes are important for assassin characters. In combat, an assassin might gain a brief advantage in a surprise attack; such as out of the shadows or when using a concealed blade.

Barber

The Barbers of Erisa are a crazy quilt of groomers, storytellers, surgeons, dentist and entertainers. The rich have physicians and alchemists, the country folk have midwives and healing women. For everyone else there is the Barber. He may have a shop in the city or work out of a wagon travelling from town to town dispensing ointments and elixirs, setting bones pulling teeth or just telling stories as he delouses you, on Erisa the Barber is the true jack of all trades (but master of none).

Blacksmith (or Metalsmith)

Often found helping alchemists build their inventions, these characters are skilled at weapon and armour making and repair, metallurgy, weapon lore, and have skill in bartering and haggling the price of weapons and armour. Blacksmiths are generally noted for their strength. In combat, a blacksmith might receive a bonus if he is using a weapon he forged himself or if his opponent is wearing metallic armour and he knows its weak points.

Dancer (or Tumbler)

Exotic female entertainers, these ladies are always young, nubile, graceful and energetic. The types of skills that a dancer might have are tumbling and acrobatics, escaping from bonds and seductiveness. Dancers rely mostly on their appeal and their agility. In combat, a dancer might gain an advantage if her opponent is too busy examining her charms. However, dancing is not really a combat career and will rarely be of use against a skilled fighting man.

Barbarian (or Savage)

These characters are not from the cities of Erisa, but from the Druss Mountains, the Desert of Skulls, the Sikkar Plains, or other wilderness areas. They have natural skills in wilderness lore, living rough, berserk rage, beast riding, intimidation, natural instincts and so on. Barbarians are generally noted for their strength, but a good agility is also useful. In combat, barbarians are generally brutal and unrefined. This might come as a surprise to city folks and a barbarian character might gain a brief advantage where the fight is hard and dirty.

Beggar (or Vagabond)

Characters that have fallen on hard times can sell themselves into slavery, turn to thievery or beg for a few coins to pay for their supper. This career isn't a choice for most adventurers; nevertheless you can pick up some skills by living on the street in this way – things like city lore, going unnoticed, appraisal, gossip and so forth. There are no particular attributes that beggars are noted for, although it helps to have a deformity, missing body part or an unsocial disease.

Farmer (or Peasant)

A farmer lives outside the city, but often within half a days travel, so that they can get their produce to the city to feed the populace. They are skilled in basic plant and animal lore, animal handling, cooking, baking and brewing, trading for basic goods and such like. Farmers do not rely on any one attribute over any other. Farmers are not generally skilled combatants and so rarely receive any advantage from this career, except maybe when defending their own lands against raiders and so on.

Gladiator (or Champion)

Often forced into life of professional arena fighters, the gladiator is skilled in one-on-one tactics, exotic weapons, weapon lore, initiative and weapon training. Skilled gladiators are often well known outside the arena, which can be to their advantage. Gladiators should be strong and agile but the most popular ones also have plenty of appeal. They are especially good at fighting in a style 'to please the crowd' and so they might get a combat bonus on certain flashy moves, if not overused and at the GM's discretion.

Hunter (or Tracker)

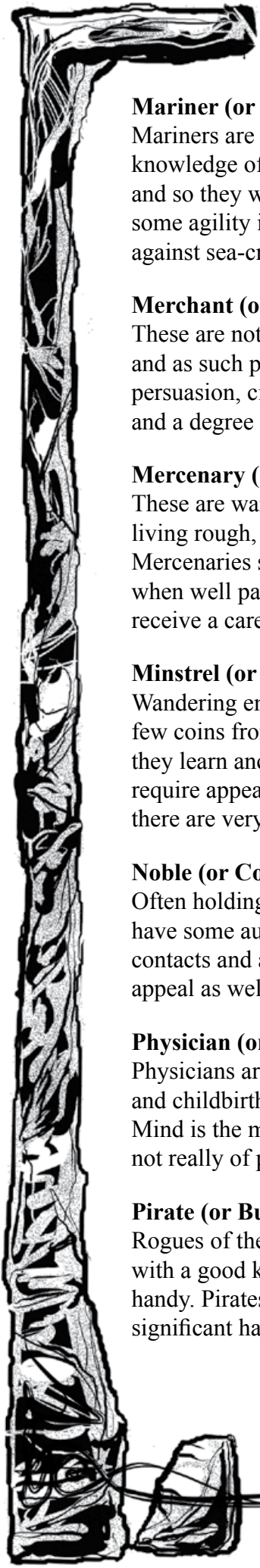
Hunters are rugged outdoor types skilled in wilderness lore, living rough, trapping, tracking, stealth and other similar wilderness pursuits. Agility is important to a hunter, as are strength and mind to a slightly lesser degree. In combat, a hunter may receive a career bonus if fighting a creature of a type he is familiar with but the career is rarely useful against human opponents.

Labourer (Worker)

The labourer is an unskilled or somewhat skilled worker – someone who erects buildings, works in a stable or loads and unloads wagons and riverboats. Laborers often move around doing a range of odd jobs, many of which are seasonal or temporary, so will know a little something about a lot of these things. Labourers tend to find a high strength very useful in their physical endeavors.

Magician (or Sorcerer)

Often a little strange, these characters are knowledgeable of esoteric matters to do with astrology, astronomy and ancient lore. They also have skill in sorcery, which is detailed in a later chapter. Magicians need powerful minds both for their studies and for the will to create and cast mighty spells. Sorcery is a fast track to power but it also brings its own price. For each rank taken as a magician, you must take one flaw (see page 22).



Mariner (or Seaman)

Mariners are sea adventurers; skilled in sea lore, navigation by stars, and boat handling with a good knowledge of local ports and nearby coastlines and islands. Skilled mariners are always in demand and so they will rarely be refused working passage onboard a galley. Mariners need to be strong and some agility is useful too. Mariners may receive a combat bonus in actions at sea and possibly even against sea-creatures that they might have some familiarity with.

Merchant (or Trader)

These are not shopkeepers, these are wide travelled adventurers, who seek new exotic goods to sell and as such pick up a range of useful skills like trading, appraisal, obtaining rare or unusual goods, persuasion, city lore, knowledge of distant places, guild membership. Merchants need quick minds and a degree of appeal.

Mercenary (or Warrior)

These are warriors who work for anyone who will pay for their services. They tend to have skill in living rough, horse riding, intimidation, carousing, and even weapon and armour upkeep and repair. Mercenaries should be strong and agile. Mercenaries are notorious for their ability to fight well when well paid but to fight badly, or not at all, when conned or badly paid. In combat, they might receive a career bonus if the money is particularly good.

Minstrel (or Bard)

Wandering entertainers, these characters are proficient in pleasing crowds of people and earning a few coins from their singing, instruments, performing. Because they travel and are great gossips, they learn ancient legends, are good orators, have some knowledge of city and world lore. Minstrels require appeal as well as agility and quick minds. A minstrel is not generally a combat career and there are very few circumstances where this career will provide a combat bonus.

Noble (or Courtier)

Often holding homes in the city and estates or villas outside the city, these characters are titled and have some authority over commoner people. They are often able to obtain credit, have high-ranking contacts and are skilled in such things as bribery, dress sense and etiquette. Nobles need plenty of appeal as well as clever minds. In combat, having a career of noble will rarely be of benefit.

Physician (or Healer)

Physicians are dispensers of potions and medicines and have practical skills in bonesetting, surgery and childbirth. They are knowledgeable of plant lore, first aid and diseases. They need to be literate. Mind is the most important attribute for a physician character. In combat, the physician's career is not really of particular benefit to a character, although after the fight, they are often most welcome.

Pirate (or Buccaneer)

Rogues of the sea, Pirates are skilled in climbing, sea lore, navigation by stars, and boat handling with a good knowledge of far ports and islands. Pirates need to be agile and some strength is always handy. Pirates might receive a career bonus in sea actions, especially if there is the promise of a significant haul of booty at the end of it.

Priest (or Druid)

Priests reside in their temples in the major cities of Erisa; they are knowledgeable in ancient lore, sorcery, astrology, astronomy and literacy. Their position gives them a certain degree of authority. They need to have clever minds and the best ones have appeal, able to sway their followers.

Serving Wench (or Courtesan)

No tavern is complete without its serving wenches. Their closeness with their customers gives them good skills in seduction, city lore and carousing. Some are even good at taking things from customers without them noticing. It is stating the obvious, but only female characters can choose this as a career. Appeal is the most important attribute for a serving wench. In combat a career in serving wench is of little, if any use, whatsoever.

Scribe (or Scholar)

Scribes are characters who are interested in ancient lore, ancient languages and map making. Obviously this leads to a certain degree of knowledge in these areas too. Scribes need clear minds to do their laborious work and need to be literate. There are not many circumstances where having a career in scribe will have any discernable use in combat.

Slave (or Thrall)

Slavery is not exactly a career of choice. Nevertheless, it does provide the opportunity to pick up a few skills and techniques that other careers do not give and can be useful in rounding out a character concept. The career gives skill in things like humility, going unnoticed, listening and sneaking. Slaves that are used for labour need good strength; female slaves normally find things better (or worse!) if they are appealing. Slaves used to run errands often need high agility. Clever slaves are normally considered to be troublemakers.

Soldier (or Guard)

Soldiers serve as city guards or in the armies of rich nobles. They will have some city lore, perhaps skills in intimidation and riding as well as a limited amount of authority - especially the officers. Strength is normally most important for soldiers although archers and cavalrymen could do with a bit of agility. Officers need to have plenty of appeal to lead their men and quick minds to make sound battle plans. Soldiers are not specialists but will sometimes gain a career bonus in combat.

Thief (or Rogue)

Those who live by less-than-honest means in the streets of the towns and cities. They will have skill in such things as city lore, burglary, sneaking, picking pockets and are likely to have guild membership. Thieves require agility for their trade, but a quick mind also helps. Thieves need to avoid combat where possible so will normally only gain a career bonus in combat when trying to get away and not always then if against city guards.

Torturer (or Gaoler)

A not terribly pleasant career that provides a character that takes this career, strong skills in extracting information from reticent individuals, intimidation, a basic awareness of anatomy and first aid and killing blows with two-handed axes. Torturers are jailers and executioners for the cities of Erisa. They are not often blessed with a great deal of appeal, but strength is handy for beheadings and both mind and agility for torturing. In combat, executioners are not subtle, so skilled fighters will rarely fall to their style, unless prone and helpless.



BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

These attributes, abilities, careers and origins will paint a very broad picture of your character which suits the sword & sorcery genre completely, as people are generally what they appear to be in this setting.

Although the player can attempt to persuade the GM that a certain career will aid a task attempt, the GM is the final arbiter. For example a Hero with rank 1 as an assassin is likely to know something about poisons so the GM would allow the player to add his rank as an assassin to the die roll (based on his mind rating) to recognize a poison in a drink. However being an assassin would not help the Hero to track an escaped slave thought the “Green Death”; you need to be a hunter to do that.

BOONS & FLAWS

Boons are extraordinary abilities that help differentiate your character from the common rabble of the world. All characters are given 1 point to purchase a Boon from those listed. There are however, several Boons that cost more than 1 point. You can receive an additional point if you also choose a flaw from those listed or by spending two Hero points for 1 Boon point. (Hero Points are described on page 25).

Boons

For the most part, having a boon means that instead of rolling two dice to resolve a task, you roll three and drop the lowest die. However, there are certain boons that bestow advantages to the recipients that do not require any type of dice rolling (i.e. Alcohol Immunity).

Flaws

Having a flaw means that instead of rolling two dice to resolve a task, you roll three but you drop the highest die.

How many Boons & Flaws?:

- Each character starts with one free Boon of choice
- A character may take a second Boon if they also take a Flaw or at the cost of 2 Hero Points
- A character may take a third Boon if they also take a second Flaw or at the cost of an additional 2 Hero points
- Some Boons have a cost of 2 – so you will need to take 2 flaws (or 4 Hero Points) to have such a Boon
- If you’d like a Boon that isn’t listed, you can work with the GM to come up with something suitable

The following are a description of Boons culled from the annals of Sword & Sorcery tales:

BOONS

Artistic: You have a skill in creating works of art. Roll an extra die when appraising, dealing in or creating such items.

Attractive: Your character will always look good. Whether she was stranded in the jungle for three months or buried alive in the desert they will appear none the worse for wear, your character may be on death's door but she will look marvelous. Hair slightly mussed but still stylish, any grime will be strategically placed about the body, just enough to look rugged but not disheveled. Roll an extra die in situations where good looks might be important.

Beast Buddy: Dog, monkey, ferret, hawk, leopard, the list is endless. More than a pet, it's your character's buddy. Treat it well and it'll do the same. But before you start to write down a Lion or Grizzly bear, remember, your character will be responsible for their animal buddy's welfare. This isn't as much of a problem in the wilderness as it is when your character will need to interact with a group or needs to spend time in a city. Most authorities frown on people bringing a full-grown lion into their town. So try to think past the "animal bodyguard" impulse when choosing a companion.

Beast Empathy: Domesticated creatures are not afraid of you and you are able to train them more easily. Wild animals are less likely to attack you. Whenever dealing with animals, roll an extra die.

Birthright: Your character inherited an heirloom of considerable value. Perhaps a family sword, ring, or a title to ancestral lands. The item should be exceptional and unique but not overpowering to the campaign. Sword and Sorcery tales are rife with the hero wielding a family heirloom of power as their birthright. You will need to work with your GM to come up with an item that fits both the spirit of the campaign and your particular character concept.

Blind Combat: No light? No problem. By using smell, sound, disturbances in the surrounding air, etc. you are one with the universe. Whatever penalties the GM applies to fighting in the darkness, your character does not suffer at all.

Born Sailor: When dealing with ships or carrying out physical activities on board ship (other than fighting), you may roll an extra die. You don't even need to be a Mariner or Pirate to take this boon.

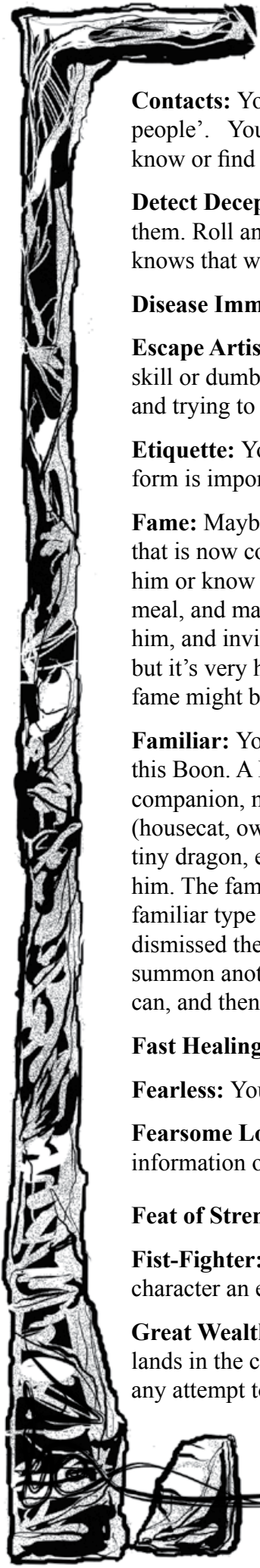
Called Shot: You must have an appropriate career (Soldier, Hunter, Mercenary, or Assassin to take this Boon). Have your hero aim for the rope holding the candelabra, shoot the Sorcerer in the wrist to make him drop the wand, or bounce a chakram off the wall and cut the noose with seconds to spare. Call your shot, take a +2 skill adjustment and then roll the dice. Sorry no instant kills though, in fact, a called shot can't even cause damage.

Carouser: You are the life and soul of any party or tavern. Use an extra die to gain information, make contacts or acquire goods and services whilst in a tavern.

Cast-Iron Guts: Your character does not suffer the ill-effects of alcohol, poison or spoilt foodstuffs.

Combat Reflexes (2): Your character is especially adept in combat; he reacts quickly and evaluates threats more effectively than most. Combat reflexes allow your character the following benefits:

- Add +1 to the Agility attribute for determining initiative. If you tie another character and he doesn't have combat reflexes then you go first, if he does have combat reflexes then resolve it between the two of them in the normal fashion. Characters with this Boon receive +3 to their dodge and parry rather than the standard +2.



Contacts: You keep up a particularly large network of friends, acquaintances and ‘people who know people’. You get an extra die whenever rolling against one of your careers to contact someone you know or find out the ‘word on the street’.

Detect Deception: Anytime someone tries to lie to or con your character, he can see right through them. Roll an extra die to divine fact from fable. He won’t automatically know the truth but he knows that what he’s being told isn’t it.

Disease Immunity: Your character is immune to all diseases, even magical ones.

Escape Artist: Ropes, chains, manacles, even prison cells - nothing holds him for long. Either by skill or dumb luck, he always gets away (eventually). Use an extra die whenever in this situation and trying to break free.

Etiquette: You are an expert in the social graces. You gain an extra die on any task where good form is important.

Fame: Maybe your character saved the king’s life during a big battle or maybe he wrote a ballad that is now considered a classic. Whatever the reason, your character is famous. People either know him or know of him. The average folk will look up to him with admiration, buy him a drink or a meal, and maybe even extend a bit of credit. The finer folk will want to be his friend, be seen with him, and invite him to banquets and weekends at the manor. A good Appeal score isn’t necessary, but it’s very helpful when choosing this advantage. Roll an extra die whenever your character’s fame might be important.

Familiar: Your character must have an appropriate career (Alchemist, Priest or Sorcerer) to take this Boon. A Familiar is a small magical creature that is bonded to a spell caster and acts as his companion, messenger, scout, advisor, etc. The creature often takes the form of a common animal (housecat, owl, ferret, etc.) or its appearance may be more exotic (a winged fairy, an imp, or a tiny dragon, etc.). The creature is completely loyal to the spell caster and can communicate with him. The familiar is at least as intelligent as a normal human. Work with the GM to find a suitable familiar type for your character. Once chosen, the type can never be changed, if a familiar is dismissed then it will go off somewhere and die. If a familiar dies then the spell caster can never summon another one. If the spell caster dies then the familiar will mourn his death, avenge him if it can, and then seek out another master to serve.

Fast Healing: Your character heals at twice the normal rate. This does not include magical healing.

Fearless: Your character has no fear. Magical fear doesn’t even affect him.

Fearsome Looks: Use an extra die whenever you are trying to force somebody to give you information or do something they don’t want to do.

Feat of Strength: Use an extra die when breaking, lifting, pulling or pushing things.

Fist-Fighter: Your character is an experienced unarmed combatant. This Boon allows your character an extra die when fighting unarmed.

Great Wealth: Through inheritance, trade or force of arms you are incredibly wealthy. You own lands in the country, a house in the city, and maybe even a galley in the port. Roll an extra die on any attempt to obtain any goods, services or items you need whilst in your homelands.

Hard-to-Kill: You are particularly solidly built. Add +2 Lifeblood to your total.

Leap: Your character can spring amazing distances upward and forward. If used as part of an attack he gains a one dice Boon to his initial attack roll.

Learned: You may have studied in the great libraries of Akkar, or perhaps lectured at the University of Alcides. Choose any specialty from Engineering, Religion, Flora & Fauna, Geography, Law or Legends. When recalling a fact from your area of specialty, you use an extra die.

Magical Immunity: Your character is immune to any magical effects or illusions. If someone sets off a sphere of flame next to your character it doesn't harm him. But they can still take damage from falling in a magically excavated pit. Remember, not only is your character immune to harmful magic but the helpful kind as well. No magical healing or flying potions for you.

Marked By the Gods: The gods favor you. You have an extra Hero Point.

Natural Leader: Some people were just born to lead. Your character is one of them. For some reason people will look to him for direction. In a crisis situation his orders will usually be followed. Whenever your character needs help to storm a castle or lay siege to an evil temple, all he has to do is go to a tavern, barracks, whorehouse, bathhouse, outhouse, etc., and recruit a bunch of guys to help him out (at least temporarily). Your character gains an extra die when trying to inspire a person or group, or to accomplish a leadership task.

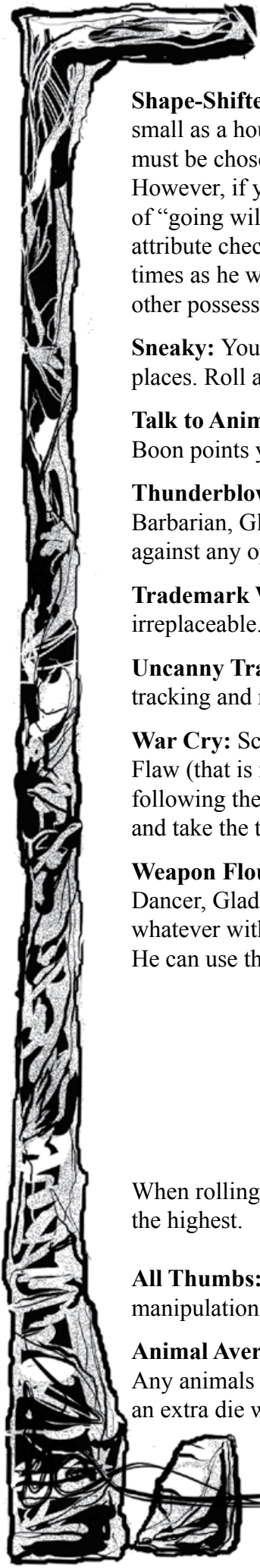
Night Vision: At night or in low light situations your character is able to see as if it were dusk. This does not work in magical darkness or if they are blinded.

Quick Recovery: you are blessed with better endurance than many. When recovering after a combat, you regain an additional Lifeblood point, on top of the half you recover normally.

Right Back At You (2): The character is able to snatch any missile shot or hurled at them. If it is a shot missile (crossbow bolt, arrow) the character is able to deflect it with his own weapon or even barehanded. If the missile is hurled (hatchet, dagger) then the character can either deflect it or catch it and hurl it back (they must still make a successful unmodified skill roll).

Serious Backup: In times of great need the character may call on a very powerful individual (the Guild Master of Thieves, The Patriarch of Heldar, the Admiral of the Northern Fleet) or organization (the Coven of Midnight, The Toscara crime family, the XII Legion) to assist them. Your character must have a career appropriate to the individual they are calling upon – you can't call upon the head of the thieves guild if you do not have thief as one of your careers. They won't solve the problem for your character but they will lend material and direct support in order to help your hero along. When your back is against the wall and you're down to one arrow, it's nice to hear the horns and war drums of the XII Legion coming to your rescue.

Sharpened Senses (2): Your character can see and hear farther than the average man. You may roll one extra die for sight and hearing checks. He can also discern poisons by flavor or smell.



Shape-Shifter (2): Your character has the natural ability to assume the form of an animal, from as small as a house cat to as large as a horse. One specific type of animal (Monkey, eagle, dolphin, etc.) must be chosen. He then gains all abilities of said animal but still retains his personality and identity. However, if your character remains in the form for more than 24 hours straight he runs the risk of “going wild”. That is, forgetting his human form and assuming beast form permanently (Mind attribute check at -1 per hour over 24, cumulative). The character can assume this form, as many times as he wishes. Each transformation taking no more than a few seconds. Clothing, weapons, or other possessions are not subject to the change.

Sneaky: You are particularly quiet and adept at moving without making a sound or lurking in dark places. Roll an extra die where stealth is important.

Talk to Animals (1)-(2): For 1 Boon point your character can talk with a species of animal. For 2 Boon points your character can talk with all animals.

Thunderblow (2): You must have an appropriate career to take this Boon (Assassin, Blacksmith, Barbarian, Gladiator, Hunter, Mercenary or Soldier). Your character's first successful melee attack against any opponent is considered a mighty success.

Trademark Weapon: You have a specific weapon that was made for you and is virtually irreplaceable. As long as you are using this weapon, you use an extra die in combat.

Uncanny Tracker: Your character's amazing natural skill at tracking gains him an extra die for tracking and related rolls.

War Cry: Scares the hell out of your character's opponents that can hear the war cry. They take a Flaw (that is roll an extra die, take the two least favorable results) on all their rolls for the first round following the War cry, and gives Boons to all your character's buddies (that is they roll an extra die and take the two highest) for that round as well.

Weapon Flourish: You must have an appropriate career to take this Boon (Assassin, Barbarian, Dancer, Gladiator, Hunter, Mercenary, Soldier or Thief). Your character can spin his sword or axe or whatever with such style and panache that he gets a free attack while his opponent is staring in awe. He can use this advantage no more than three times against the same opponent.

flaws

When rolling dice and you have a flaw that would come into play, roll 3 dice instead of 2 and drop the highest.

All Thumbs: Roll an extra die when picking locks, firing a bow or crossbow or when doing fine manipulation work.

Animal Aversion: Something about characters with this Flaw is inherently unsettling to animals. Any animals within 10 feet of your character instantly become nervous, skittish and irritable. Roll an extra die whenever interacting with (including riding) animals.

Arrogant: You believe the hype that your city is the jewel of Erisa, but you also let others know it. Roll an extra die when dealing with people of other cities, where your arrogance might annoy or offend them.

City Dweller: You are not very savvy when in the wilderness. Roll an extra die in situations to do with outdoor survival.

Combat Paralysis: You are not really sure what to do when the fighting starts. Roll a d3. This is the number of rounds that you freeze and during which, you can only take defensive actions.

Compulsive Gambler: Your character is always ready for a game of chance. Much of the description of how he spent his loot from the previous adventure must involve some form of gambling to receive his allotment of advancement points. Whenever he is in a tavern or similar in a reasonably sized town there is likely to be a gambling game going on (roll 1 on a die) – in which case, the character will become involved, no matter what he is otherwise supposed to be doing.

Country Bumpkin: the big city is a confusing and heartless place for the new arrival. Roll an extra die in situations to do with urban survival.

Cravings: You are addicted to something and require it every day to function fully. It might be a particular substance; like blood or a rare plant extract or even something physically gratifying like self-flagellation or sex.

Delicate: You are as slender as a wand. Deduct two from your Lifeblood total.

Distrust of Sorcery: You will not knowingly use sorcerous powers or items. When dealing with Wizards, Priests and Alchemists, roll an extra die.

Drunkard: You cannot help but get drunk whenever in port or whenever you can get hold of a bottle or two of the hard stuff. Roll a die when you are required to do something important for the rest of your companions and they are not around. If a '1' comes up, you are drunk and unable to do anything until sobered up.

Elderly: You are not as young as you used to be. If you have not had a decent amount of rest each day, you begin to slow and tire. Use an extra die for any physical action if pushed too hard without rest.

Fear of Fire: You still have no concept of fire and what makes it. You need to make a mind task check in the presence of fire, or cower away from it.

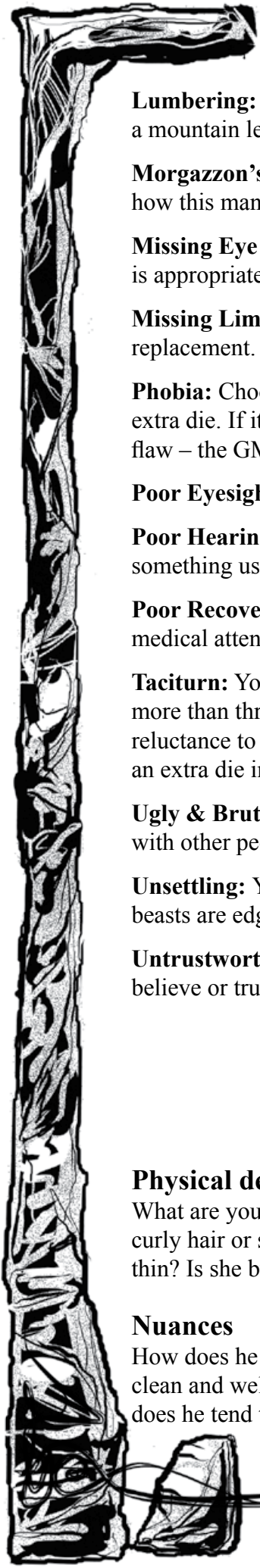
Feels the Cold: You are unable to cope well in very cold conditions. Roll an extra die for any tasks undertaken in a very cold environment.

Feels the Heat: You are unable to cope in very hot conditions. Roll an extra die for any tasks undertaken in a hot desert environment.

Hunted: Someone (a group or powerful individual with agents everywhere) is looking out for you. Whenever you return to a reasonably sizeable city, make a dice roll. If a '1' comes up, there is an agent in that city and he/she/it has spotted you.

Illiterate: You cannot read or write and you cannot choose a career with literacy as a requirement.

Landlubber: You are unused to travelling by sea. Roll an extra die for all activities whilst at sea.



Lumbering: Roll an extra die when balance is important – crossing a narrow bridge or standing on a mountain ledge.

Morgazzon's Curse: You are touched by the Demon of Madness. Work with the GM to determine how this manifests itself.

Missing Eye or Ear: You lost your eye or ear in a fight. Roll an extra die whenever the GM feels it is appropriate to the situation.

Missing Limb: You are missing a hand, arm or a leg. You have a metal hook or a wooden replacement. Roll an extra die whenever the GM feels the situation is appropriate.

Phobia: Choose something that scares you or that causes discomfort. In such situations, you use an extra die. If it is so rare that your character is unlikely to ever come across it, it does not qualify as a flaw – the GM has the final say on what will be allowed.

Poor Eyesight: You use an extra die when trying to observe or spot something.

Poor Hearing: You have worse than normal hearing. Whenever you make a mind check to perceive something using your hearing, you roll one extra die.

Poor Recovery: You do not recover from your injuries as swiftly as other characters. You require medical attention to restore lost Lifeblood and recover nothing from normal rest.

Taciturn: Your character is ridiculously tight-lipped. It's a rare day on which he uses a sentence of more than three words, and it's virtually unheard-of for him to initiate conversation. His extreme reluctance to speak unfortunately means he never volunteers information without being asked. Roll an extra die in social situations.

Ugly & Brutish: You are socially inept. Use an extra die in all situations where you are dealing with other people.

Unsettling: Your looks or something else about you is disturbing to anyone in your presence. Even beasts are edgy around you. Roll an extra die in social situations.

Untrustworthy: You cannot be trusted. Roll an extra die when the situation calls for someone to believe or trust you.

finishing touches

Physical description

What are your hero's height, weight, and eye and hair color. Does he have long or short hair? Is it curly hair or straight? Does he have a beard? Does *she* have a beard? Is he barrel-chested or rail thin? Is she busty and bodacious or slim and athletic? Take a minute and describe your character.

Nuances

How does he walk and talk? Does she speak with an accent? Does she have a lisp? Are her clothes clean and well maintained or sloppy and stained? Is he a happy drunk, everybody's best friend, or does he tend to start fights after a few too many?

Colorful oaths are another staple of the Sword & Sorcery genre. Have your hero pepper his vocabulary with an occasional exclamation such as “By Grun’s hairy scrotum!” or “Feel the bite of my blade you whoreson!”

References

This may sound like something you would find on a job application, but in this case coming up with at least three references will help you better round out your character. These references do not have to be family members, friends or even people who like your character they are just three individuals that your character has had dealings with in the past prior to the current campaign. The details on the three can be as brief or as detailed as you want.

For example:

“Anteus? He’s a killer! I saw him fight four men in the Coliseum a year ago in Crascia. He tore through them as if they were made of papyrus and he did it bare handed! I saw him crush one gladiator’s windpipe with his boot heel.” - Jamaal, the wine merchant

“The kindest man I’ve ever met. My daughter was pregnant and having a bad time of it. Anteus lived in the room down the hall from us. When I couldn’t find work and we were about to be kicked out, Anteus paid our rent and when the time came for my daughter to give birth he helped deliver the baby! Can you believe it? I know of his reputation in the arena, but to me the man is a saint” - Sofia, the washer woman

“He’s the gladiator that travels with the Sulanese woman eh? She’s a looker that one. But don’t let him hear you say a word about her. He’s the jealous type, y’know. Last week some young bravo whistled at her and made a remark. Anteus charged him like a bull and smashed his teeth in. That’s one poor fool that won’t be whistling again anytime soon.” - Arik, the Barber.

Hero Points

This is a game of heroic sagas. Player characters are the Heroes of these sagas. Thongor and Conan always looked like they were down and out but they always came back, whatever the odds. Heroic actions are an integral part of the game. This is where Hero Points come in.

Characters have 5 Hero points to start the game with. If you chose an additional Boon, then you may only have 3 Hero Points. If you chose two additional boons, you may only have 1 Hero Point.

Hero Points are used during the course of adventures to ‘dig deep’ and do heroic (or lucky) things. This is described in greater detail in the next chapter.

Regaining Used Hero Points

Any used Hero Points are recovered, in full, at the end of a Saga. If you had 5 Hero Points to start the Saga and used 3 of them during the adventure, you start your next Saga on 5 points. If you had 3 to begin with, you have 3 at the start of the next Saga. You cannot go above your starting allocation of Hero Points.

playing the game

Performing Actions

To perform an action, you simply roll two dice (2d6). To the result you add your character's most appropriate attribute. If your character is fighting, you then also add the combat ability for the type of attack being made. If your character is not fighting, you then add any appropriate career rank.

You might have a boon from your character's origins that enable you to roll three dice instead of two dice. But you still take the result of only two of those dice. If it is a boon that allows you to roll an extra dice, you drop the lowest die. If it is a flaw, then you drop the highest die.

The GM will then tell you if there is a modifier to your total. For easier tasks, you may get to add to your total. For tougher tasks, you may have to deduct from your total.

If the final number is 9 or higher, you succeed at what you are trying to do. If the final number is lower than 9 you do not succeed.

Rolling Two Ones or Two Sixes

A natural roll of 12 is always a success. In addition, it could be a Mighty Success or even a Legendary Success. A natural roll of 2 is always a failure and it could be a Calamitous Failure.

Task Resolution

The following table sets out the difficulty of a task, the equivalent range for missile fire and the modifier that should be applied to tasks of that difficulty. There may be further modifiers applied based on other circumstances.

Task Resolution Table

Action Difficulty	Missile Fire Range	Modifier to Dice Result
Easy	-	+1
Moderate	Close	0
Tricky	Medium	-1
Hard	Long	-2
Tough	Distant	-4
Demanding	Extreme	-6

Task Resolution Example

Krongar the Mighty, a Northern Barbarian with a strength attribute of 3 is attempting to break down a door, which he is sure blocks his way to a vast hoard of treasure. The GM decides that Krongar has no careers that would be helpful to the task in hand and has already predetermined that the solid door will be a difficulty of hard, or -2. The player rolls 10 on 2d6, adds 3 for Krongar's strength, making 13. He then subtracts 2 for the hard difficulty, meaning that the overall total is 11, which is more than enough. The door bursts open. Assuming our Hero gets through the door, rather than finding hidden wealth he finds a great pit and, having smashed through the door, he finds he is hurtling towards it.

Attempting to leap the pit is an agility task, and Krongar has a 1 in this attribute. Luckily the GM is in a good mood and decides that his natural barbarian instincts will come into play and allows the player to add Krongar's barbarian rank of 2 to the dice roll.

The dice come up 6 and with the +3 gives a total of 9. With a moderate task difficulty, Krongar is across the pit and heading for even greater adventure.

If the task had been set at tricky or harder, Krongar would not have succeeded.

combat

Combat is dealt with in rounds of a few seconds or so in length. In that time a character can fire a bow, strike or parry with a weapon, throw an axe and so on.

Who Acts First?

The character involved in the combat with the highest agility attribute goes first. In the case of a tie, the highest combat ability for the option being used gets to go first. In the event of a tie, the one with the highest and most appropriate career goes first.

If one group can surprise the other, the group with the advantage of surprise can act first and have one 'free' round. Their opponents can only act defensively in that round.

Movement & Distance

It is not intended that you use a tactical grid and figures when playing BoL; combat and movement is handled in an abstract way. Much relies on the GM in setting the scene and the players' interpreting that and, within reason, describing their character's moves and actions.

You can make an agility roll if it becomes important to see who gets somewhere first or if someone can escape a character chasing him. A career might help; for example if a chase occurs in the jungle, the hunter or barbarian careers might be appropriate.

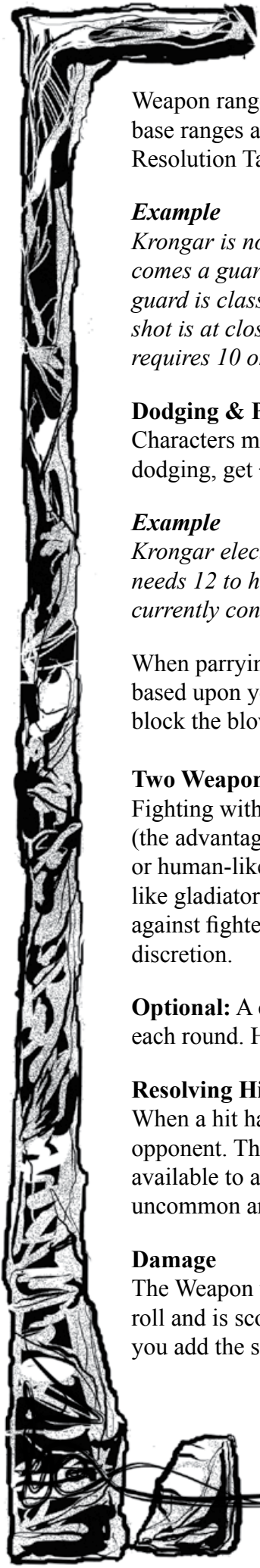
If you really do want to use figures and a tactical board, you can assume that a character can move 25' per round modified by 5' per point of agility. A running character moves at twice this speed. A sprinting character moves at four times normal speed (twice running speed).

Resolving Combat

Combat resolution is similar to Task resolution. Rather than adding a career to the appropriate attribute level though, the most appropriate combat ability level is added.

The required roll is still 9 or more, but this time in addition to any GM determined modifiers (which could be due to range for thrown or fired weapons, or for hitting an enemy from an advantageous position and so on) the opponents' defence rating also becomes a modifier to the roll needed to hit.

The GM could allow, in some rare circumstances, a career to provide an additional bonus. For example, assassins may be allowed an additional bonus when striking unaware enemies, or gladiators may be allowed to make special manoeuvres that could give them a slight edge over an opponent. But such a manoeuvre would most definitely not work twice on the same opponent.



Weapon ranges are given in the weapon descriptions on pages 36 and 37. The ranges set out are base ranges at point blank. Each additional increment is one difficulty level harder on the Task Resolution Table.

Example

Krongar is now standing on the far side of the pit, when through the door he has just destroyed comes a guard with a crossbow. This surprises Krongar and so the guard fires at the barbarian. The guard is classed as rabble and so has a ranged combat ability and agility of 0. The GM decides the shot is at close range for a difficulty of 0. Krongar has a defence of 1 and so, in effect, the guard requires 10 or more to hit ($10 - 1 = 9$).

Dodging & Parrying

Characters may elect to dodge or parry. If you do this you get no attack for the round but, when dodging, get +2 to your effective defence for all attacks directed at you whilst you are dodging.

Example

Krongar elects to dodge and therefore his effective defence will be 3, meaning the guard in effect needs 12 to hit him. However, Krongar can do nothing else in the combat round because he is currently concentrating on not being hit and anyway, was surprised.

When parrying, you get to roll using your character's agility plus melee combat. The modifier is based upon your opponent's melee combat ability. As usual a final total of 9 or more is needed to block the blow.

Two Weapon Fighting

Fighting with two weapons is really a matter of style and provides no specific bonuses or penalties (the advantages largely outweigh the disadvantages of this fighting style). However, against human or human-like opponents, the style might initially be difficult to adapt to. Specialist fighting men, like gladiators or mercenaries might receive a career bonus against non-fighting types or even against fighters of lower career rank, for a few combat rounds. This, as always, is at the GMs discretion.

Optional: A character fighting with two weapons can attack twice or attack once and parry once each round. However, he receives a -2 modifier to each roll.

Resolving Hits

When a hit has been done on your target, the result will probably be that you cause damage to your opponent. The bigger the weapon the nastier the wound is likely to be. Luckily there is also armour available to absorb some or all of the effect of such blows. Shields exist in Erisa, but they are uncommon and particularly so amongst Heroes, more often being reserved for ordinary soldiers.

Damage

The Weapon table on page 37 sets out how much damage a weapon causes. This is in terms of a dice roll and is scored directly against the Lifeblood of an opponent. In addition to the damage shown, you add the strength of the attacker as strength helps the blow do more severe harm.

Protection

The Armour Table shows how much of the blow is deflected and/or absorbed. This is the protection of the armour and takes into account the material used as well as body coverage. Some creatures have naturally tough hides.

Example

The guard was very lucky and got the 12 he needed to hit Krongar. Krongar is wearing his battle harness (1 point of protection), boots (1 point) and bracers (1 point) for a total of 3. A crossbow bolt does $d6+1$ points of damage and the GM rolls 3 and adds 1 for a total of 4 for the guard's shot. Of the 4 points, 3 are absorbed by Krongar's armour and so Krongar receives 1 wound against his Lifeblood total of 13, reducing him now to 12.

Krongar, in anger throws his own spear at the guard, requiring, in effect, a total of 6 to hit (Krongar has a ranged combat rating of 2 and 1 agility and there are no range modifiers and $6 + 3 + 9$) and he gets 7 on the dice for a total of 10.

Damage is $d6$ for the spear, but $+3$ for Krongar's strength and the dice comes up 5 for a total of 8. The guard's armour (leather coat) stops 2 points but the 6 wounds received still does enough to reduce his Lifeblood level to -3 and kill him.

Damage With a Negative Modifier

Some creatures and some weapons cause $d6-1$ or $d3-1$ damage. Where an attack results in 0 (or even minus damage) the result is always a minimum of 1 point, before taking into account of the protection rating of the target.

Automatic Success

Rolling a 12 on any Task roll is an automatic success. This means there is always a chance that you might be able to achieve the seemingly impossible.

Example

Jandar Joth is fighting a losing battle against a wild lion-like creature that is guarding a temple Jandar broke into. The lion-thing has a very good defence (4), in effect meaning that Jandar needs 13 to hit the beast. The player rolls the dice anyway and 12 comes up! Jandar somehow succeeded in hitting the beast with his spear even though his position looked impossible.

If rolling a 12 would have been a success in any event, you have instead achieved a Mighty Success.

Example

Jandar somehow survives the lion-thing's first attack and gets to higher ground, (the GM is kind and gives a $+1$ modifier). The player rolls again; this time he needs 12. Luck is still with him and he gets the required 12! Since 12 would have been a success anyway, it is converted into a Mighty Success.

Automatic Failure

Rolling a 2 on any task roll is an automatic failure. This means there is always a chance that even the best characters will have a momentary lapse.

If rolling a 2 would have been a failure in any event, you have instead achieved a Calamitous Failure.



Using Hero Points

You can use Hero Points to affect the outcome of a battle or situation and swing the odds to your favour. The following options are available to you:

- A Twist of Fate
- The Luck of the Gods
- Mighty Success
- Legendary Success
- Defy death
- Flesh wound

A Twist of Fate

Where the narrative of a scene has not clearly defined a certain piece of information the player might suggest something that sounds reasonable and make that suggestion become fact. Use of a Hero Point in this manner should be at the discretion of the GM and shouldn't be to effect major changes in a scene and can't be used to change something that has already been established as a fact. For example, if the characters are locked in a dungeon cell, one of them could use a Hero Point to find a loose stone in the wall, that he can pry away, maybe to use to bash the guard over the head when he comes in to serve their slops. Or a character that has failed his task resolution roll to swim after his ship has sunk in a storm could use a Hero Point to describe how, luckily, a wooden spar from the ship's mast floats by, allowing him to stay afloat by clinging to it.

The Luck of the Gods

You can spend a point to roll the dice again whenever you make a task resolution roll (even if you roll a 2, which would otherwise be an automatic failure). If you do this you must use the result of your second roll. If you have a boon that allows you to use three dice instead of two, you use all three dice the second time as well.

Turn a Success Into a Mighty Success

Whenever a player succeeds in combat (or even in non-combat situations), he can turn the success into a Mighty Success at the cost of a Hero Point. The results depend on what the character is doing.

Note: This is effectively the same as rolling 12 on your Task roll, where 12 would normally have been a success. You can do this even if you spent a Hero Point rolling the dice again.

Turn a Mighty Success into a Legendary Success

If you roll a natural 12 when making your task roll that would have been a success in any event (a Mighty Success), at the expenditure of a Hero Point, you can turn that into a Legendary Success. You can do this even if you spent a Hero Point rolling the dice again (as long as you got 12 on the second roll). However, you cannot make a Legendary Success unless you roll 12 on the dice. (In other words you cannot bump up a normal success into a Mighty Success and then spend another Hero Point to make it a Legendary Success).

Defy Death

Hero Points can always be used to keep a Hero alive where he would otherwise be killed. If you have taken sufficient damage to put you below zero Lifeblood but above -6, you may spend a point to put your Lifeblood to zero: alive but unconscious.

If you have received sufficient damage to put you below -5 Lifeblood, you may spend a Hero Point to stabilize and remain alive. You are still unconscious but will recover with several days rest.

Flesh Wound: The player may use a Hero point to totally restore all Lifeblood lost in the most recent incident. This can only be done while the character still has at least one point of Lifeblood.

Mighty Success

If fighting rabble or creatures up to small size, you roll damage as usual but the result is the number of targets that you defeat in that action or combat round. The way they are defeated is up to you – you don't have to kill them; they are out of action and won't be coming back for more.

Example

Four thugs attack Sharangara in an alleyway. Sharangara is not surprised (she was expecting trouble) and she has the highest agility, so acts first. The player rolls 8 and adds 1 for her agility for a total of 9, which is a success. She decides to spend a Hero Point, turning the success into a Mighty Success.

She then rolls a d3 for her dagger and gets a 3. This means that three of the thugs are defeated. The player decides that in one great slashing move, she slices through the first thug's belly with her dagger and rips him open. The second thug takes a nasty thigh cut and falls over, dropping his cudgel. The third takes a slight nick, but drops his cudgel and runs. This simply leaves thug number four, who can now take his go.

When a character achieves a Mighty Success against non-rabble, (that is NPC villains or medium sized or larger creatures), damage is the maximum for the weapon being used plus the roll of a d6. This is as a result of striking the vitals or other tender and less protected areas.

Legendary Success

If fighting rabble or creatures of up to small size, you roll damage as usual but you roll your weapon damage die again. The total number is the number of rabble (or small creatures) you defeat in that action or combat round. The way they are defeated is entirely up to you – you don't have to kill them; they are out of action and will not be coming back for more. See Mighty Success, above.

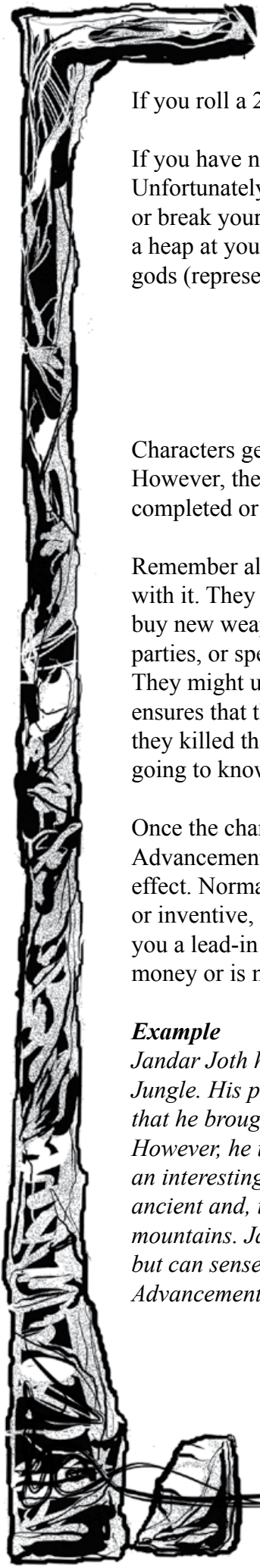
When a character achieves a Legendary Success against non-rabble, (that is NPC villains or medium sized or larger creatures), damage is the maximum for the weapon being used plus 6 plus the roll of a d6. This is as a result of striking the vitals or other tender and less protected areas.

Example

The final thug was actually Zaq Tormis, a NPC villain. He is not defeated so easily and advances on Sharangara, missing her with the wild swing of his club. Sharangara thrusts back and rolls 2. Automatic failure! Her player decides to spend another Hero Point and rolls the dice again, this time getting 12! This is a Mighty Success (because she only needed 10 or more), but she decides the situation calls for a Legendary Success and uses another Hero Point. This time she automatically dishes out 9 points of damage (3 maximum for the dagger, plus 6) and then rolls a d6 for a measly 1 making 10 Lifeblood points of damage in total. Zaq Tormis is wounded very badly and decides he is not paid enough for this hassle; he turns and makes his escape (probably using a Villain Point in the process – see later).

Calamitous Failure

If you roll a 2, you fail to do whatever it is you were trying to do, even if 2 would normally be enough to succeed.



If you roll a 2 and that would normally be a failure, it becomes a Calamitous Failure.

If you have no Hero Points left or you choose not to roll again you have made a Calamitous Failure. Unfortunately, this is a chance for the GM to have some fun with your character. You could drop or break your sword or stumble over a fallen body; you could slip on a pool of blood and land in a heap at your enemies' feet. What actually happens depends on the situation and the whim of the gods (represented by the GM).

advancement points

Characters get better at doing things as they complete their adventures and their fame spreads. However, they have to earn their improvements. They do this at the end of the saga they just completed or before the beginning of the next one.

Remember all that loot they picked up? Well, they have the chance to describe exactly what they did with it. They might live the high life for a few months, drinking or gambling it away. They might buy new weapons and armour (or get their old stuff repaired) or buy horses, or throw expensive parties, or spend it all on women. They might send expensive gifts to their friends. They might use it to buy a new galley, new land or pay off debts. This is the stuff of legends – it ensures that they are noticed and helps their fame to spread. I mean, no one was with them when they killed that great demon in the dark pits beneath the sewers of Tyros, so how else are people going to know about it?

Once the characters have described how they lost or spent all their fortunes, they can gain Advancement Points. How many you give out depends on how they spent their loot to the best effect. Normally, you would give out 2 points. However, if their story is particularly good, amusing or inventive, you can give out an extra point; especially if the way they construct their story gives you a lead-in to the next adventure. On the other hand, if the character keeps back some of the money or is miserly with it, he gets only one Advancement Point.

Example

Jandar Joth has just returned to Al-Khalid from a ruined temple discovered in the "Green Death" Jungle. His player describes how he gambled, wenched and caroused away the haul of gold coins that he brought back, until he had just a handful left. That earns him two Advancement Points. However, he then describes how, he is on his way to the tavern with his last few coins when he spots an interesting looking map on the stall of a silver-haired merchant from Kobar. The map looks ancient and, the merchant assures him, depicts the old city that now lies beneath The Drujistan mountains. Jandar soon parts with the remainder of his cash to purchase the map. He is now broke but can sense the possibility of another great adventure ahead. This is definitely worth the extra Advancement Point.

Spending Advancement Points

Advancement points can be saved for later. When spent you can spend them on the following:

- Attributes
- Combat Abilities
- Careers
- Buy off flaws
- Buy a new boon

Attributes

Attributes may be increased above their starting values. The cost in points is equal to the new value of attribute. So, to increase strength from 1 to 2 costs two points. Attributes can only advance to the next higher value in one go, i.e. you can't jump from strength 1 to strength 3. Humans have maximum attribute scores of 5.

Combat Abilities

Combat abilities can be increased in the same way as attributes. Characters have maximum combat ability values of 5.

Careers

Career ranks can also be improved in the same way as increasing attributes. Characters have maximum career ranks of 5. However, a character can take a new career path too, if he has been doing stuff in the adventure that would make this new career appropriate. It costs one point to get a new career at rank 0.

Buy Off Flaws

You can use 2 points to remove a flaw.

Buy a New Boon

You can use 2 points to buy a 1 point boon that is appropriate to your origins or 3 points to buy a 1 point boon that is from elsewhere. 3 points will buy a 2 point boon that is appropriate to your origins or 4 points to buy a 2 point boon that is from elsewhere.





style of play

Behavior

In *Legends of Steel*, the Heroes aren't so much the "good guys" as they are the "not so bad guys." Good and evil aren't concepts that are at the forefront in daily life, nor are alignments strictly defined and codified. There are many shades of gray in the genre of Sword & Sorcery. There are codes of behavior that the heroes follow in the stories. The heroes of Sword & Sorcery tales were warriors and rogues, but not murderers and violators of the innocent. Such behavior should be for lesser men, and discouraged by the GM as it is eventually destructive to the spirit of the game.

Money and Equipment "Don't weigh me down"

It goes against the grain of the genre to be too detailed when dealing with the actual logistics of an adventurer's daily life. Think of the typical heroes from various Sword & Sorcery tales, most of them traveled their worlds in a loincloth and fur boots, armed with a sword and maybe a dagger. Money and supplies never seemed to be an issue. They lived off the land and always had a few coins for a tankard of ale and a haunch of roast beast at some dingy tavern or other.

When they needed something they bought it or just took it. Many times their patrons supplied the mundane essentials such as a mount and a week's worth of supplies and the GM should feel free to do likewise.

Allow the characters start with whatever gear is appropriate to their career(s) and whatever **other** stuff is agreed between the GM and player. After that, if a character needs other items, he or she can make rolls against appropriate careers, to find, buy, steal, beg or borrow stuff.

Unless it has to do with the adventure at hand, don't sweat the details. Of course don't give away the farm either. If the group needs supplies they should be given the basics: rope, flint & steel, water skins, dried rations, etc. The weapons and armor should be (better than average) military issue, short swords, daggers, spears, leather armor, wooden shields. Special equipment like flash powder, lock pick sets, katanas, and chain armor are the types of things that aren't commonly issued. If your character wants a full suit of plate and a warhorse, then he better do something really special to have earned it.

If you want to do some shopping use this simple monetary system in order for your character hero to buy a weapon, horse, and some grub and get the hell out there and adventure.

One copper piece = one dollar

One silver piece = twenty dollars

One gold piece = one hundred dollars

If record keeping and detailing monetary systems is your character's thing then by all means dress up the coinage by naming the different denominations to suit your campaign (Luna, Drachma, Orb, Peseta, etc.). Difficulty modifiers might be appropriate if the character is in the middle of nowhere, if the item is scarce or expensive and so on. Merchants and thieves are particularly adept at getting hold of stuff and nobles always have more money available. Otherwise, just remember some of the basics of supply and demand. The further your character is from civilization the greater the cost for certain items. Also, most of your characters weaponry in rural areas tends to be of the type that

can either serve double duty as a tool (axe, sledgehammer), or used for hunting (bow, boar spear). There's not much day-to-day use for a katana in the forest.

Wealth

In many Sword & Sorcery tales wealth is the motivator, but it's interesting to note that the heroes very rarely become wealthy. Many stories end with the hero clutching a sack of treasure in one hand and a curvaceous wench in the other, but by the start of the next tale the hero is broke, alone and itching for a new adventure. The GM has to find a fine balance between rewarding the characters and not overburdening them with riches and responsibilities. Many heroes in the genre eventually attain their goals of wealth and fame only to grow bored with the daily business of running a kingdom. Before you know it they are champing at the bit to leave it all behind and set out with just a strong horse and a sharp sword. The challenge for the GM is in finding ways to divest the heroes of their wealth without abusing the characters. Encourage them to be free with their fortune; have them invest in enterprises that will lead to further adventures. Perhaps they purchase a merchant ship and hire a crew, start a settlement on the borderlands, or outfit an expedition. Remember, a wealthy hero is usually a retired hero, and a retired hero is usually bored.





weapons

There is a wide range and variety of weapons used throughout Erisa but most of them conform essentially to a few basic designs with minor differences. The sword is very popular with adventurers but the spear is most common amongst trained soldiers and city guards. In the wilds, adventurers are rarely without a ranged weapon.

Damage From Melee Weapons

When you hit with a melee weapon or a thrown weapon, add your strength to get the total damage.

Damage From Ranged Weapons

When you hit with a missile weapon add half your strength (round down) to get the total damage.

Two-Handed Weapons

If you want your character to have a two-handed version of a one-handed weapon (say a “great” axe) simply add +2 to the damage it does.

Axe

These are usually made with bronze, iron or steel heads on a wooden haft. They can be called war-axes, battle-axes, long-axes or hand-axes. They are one or two-bladed and one-handed versions can be thrown at 10’ range increments.

Bow

This represents a wide variety of weapons, which are used to fire arrows by drawing back the bowstring, which is strung between the two ends of a curving length of wood. All bows are used two-handed. Bows fire at 60’ range increments. Great bows fire arrows at 100’ range increments.

Chakram

This is a spinning hoop of sharpened metal, a bit like a modern Frisbee. It can be thrown so that it returns to the thrower if it misses it’s target. If it hits then it falls to the floor, or sticks in it’s target.

Club

The simplest of all weapons, this is a stout length of wood, used in one hand to bludgeon and batter your opponent. They can be called cudgels, war-clubs, mauls or shillelaghs. One- handed versions can be thrown with 10’ range increments.

Crossbow

A crossbow is a simple device for firing a short quarrel with some force and little training. They take two rounds to load. They are all two-handed weapons and have a range increment of 80’. Great crossbows take three rounds to load, but have a range increment of 100’.

Dagger

This covers all forms of short stabbing, thrusting or slashing weapon, either with one or two edges that can be thrown with a range of 10’ increments or used in close quarters. Highly concealable it is a favourite of rogues and assassins. You do not get two-handed versions of daggers.

Flail

Flails are made with a shaft of wood, mounted by a length of chain with a spike-ball head. They are not too common, but can sometimes be found in gladiatorial arenas. They are unwieldy and therefore incur a modifier of -1 to hit.

Mace

Similar to a club, but with a metal head, often with spikes or flanges. One-handed maces can be thrown at increments of 10', but are not very effective so incur a -1 modifier to hit if used this way.

Sling

A simple leather thong whirled around the head to cast small stones with some force at 30' range increments. Two-handed versions are fitted onto a staff and are called staff-slings. This imparts greater range, making the increments 60'.

Spear

A 5 to 6 foot length of wood with a pointed tip, designed for throwing at 20' range increments, or for using against mounted opponents in particular. In a charge or receiving a charge, add +d3 to the damage. Great spears cannot be thrown effectively.

Staff

A simple stout pole of around 6' in length, used as an aid to walking and an effective weapon. A great-staff is a staff shod with metal ends, for greater effectiveness.

Sword

This weapon is a favourite amongst Heroes. This is the catch all description for all manner of long-bladed, one-handed weapons used all over Erisa, such as cutlasses, tulwars, scimitars, rapiers, broadswords and longswords. Call it what you want on your character sheet, because that will add flavour to your character, but at the end of the day it is a long blade used for killing. Two-handed versions are called bastard swords, great swords, claymores, war blades and battle blades.

Weapon Table

Weapon	Damage	Notes	Great or two-handed version
Axe	d6	Can be thrown	d6+2
Bow	d6	Range 60'	d6+2
Chakram	D6-1	This is a throwing weapon	-
Club	d6-1	Can be thrown	d6+1
Crossbow	d6+1	2 rounds to load, range 80'	d6+3
Dagger	d3	Can be thrown	-
Fist	d2	d3 with brass knuckles	-
Flail	d6+1	-1 to hit	d6+3
Mace	d6	Can be thrown but at -1 to hit	d6+2
Sling	d3	Range 30'	d6-1
Spear	d6	Can be thrown	d6+2
Staff	d6-1	2 handed	d6+1
Sword	d6	Popular for adventurers	d6+2



armour

Amor can often mean the difference between life and death for your character. There are a variety of types and styles of armour and most are expensive, which is why many of the people that wear armour wear a patchwork of differing styles. If more than one type of armour is worn, simply add the protection values of all the armour together.

Battle Harness

A broad leather crossbelt buckled across the chest and used to attach weapon scabbards, arrow quivers and so on. As a result of the amount of leather, metal buckles and so on, the battle harness makes for decent protection and many heroes will simply wear one of these. A battle harness may be worn over other types of armour, though this would be excessively cumbersome and hot.

Bracers

Hardened leather or metallic forearm protection. Bracers may not be worn with gauntlets.

Boots

Heavy leather boots providing protection up to the knees. Not a common item on Erisa, though the sailors and pirates wear them more often. Boots are not worn with greaves.

Chainmail Bikini

To the female Hero what the battle harness is to the male. It is exactly as it sounds - a collection of mail links covering only the barest minimum of the body, allowing a feast for the eyes of any Hero in the vicinity. Not normally worn with other body armour although greaves and bracers can be worn with one.

Coif

A coif is a hood of metal links. It can be worn under other helmets but gets very hot.

Full Helm

This is a heavy metal helmet with nose, ear and cheek guards. It is cumbersome and restrictive. Often kept strictly for use in battle or in gladiatorial arenas. If you are wearing a full helm, you subtract 1 from mind for any tasks where you are trying to spot or listen.

Gauntlets

Heavy leather gloves, perhaps with metal studs or strips. May not be worn with bracers. Whilst wearing these, you subtract 1 from any agility tasks where fine manipulation is important although you do d3 damage with your fist.

Greaves

These are hardened leather or metallic shin guards. They may not be worn with boots.

Helm

A helm is a simple helmet of hard leather with or without metal strengthening.

Leather Coat

This is a coat of thick leather or thinner leather with metal studs or similar. It may be worn under a plate cuirass, though Heroes would rarely do so and besides a person in all of this garb would sweat like a boughpon in the heat of the sun. Whilst wearing a leather coat, you subtract 1 from your agility value.

Mail Shirt

Heroes sometimes wear these in battle. They are simply metal links pieced together to form a shirt or tunic. It offers light flexible protection. A mail shirt is not usually worn with other body armour. Whilst wearing a mail shirt, your defence has a maximum value of 3 and you subtract 1 from your agility.

Plate Cuirass

This is a breastplate and backplate of shaped metal. It is quite restrictive and can get very hot. Heroes tend to avoid these when adventuring although they might wear one in a battle. If wearing this armour, you subtract 2 from your agility value. In addition, your defence is a maximum of 3 whilst wearing this type of armour.

Shield

Shields are not that common in Erisa. Gladiators will use them and sometimes they are issued to soldiers. Heroes tend only to use them for going into battle. Usually made of wood, with perhaps a hide covering and metal boss, they strap to the forearm and have a handle for manoeuvrability. Size wise they are about 18" in diameter for small shields and maybe 2' or more in diameter for larger ones.

Armour Table

Armour type	Protection	Notes
Battle Harness	1	Used to hang weapons from
Boots	1	Foot wear
Bracers	1	Arm guards
Chainmail Bikini	1	Nice!
Full Helm	2	-1 to perception
Gauntlets	1	-1 to manipulation d3 brawl damage
Greaves	1	Leg guards
Helm or Coif	1	Head protection
Leather Coat	2	-1 agility
Mail Shirt	3	-1 agility
Plate Cuirass	4	-2 agility
Shield, Large	2	
Shield, Small	1	

Notes On Combining Armour

A combination of armour types providing 3 points of protection or more also slows a character down. Reduce the wearer's maximum defence to 3.

A combination of armour types providing 5 points of protection or more also slows a character down. Reduce the wearer's maximum defence to 2.

A combination of armour types providing 7 points of protection or more also slows a character down. Reduce the wearer's maximum defence to 1.

A combination of armour types providing 9 points of protection or more also slows a character down. Reduce the wearer's maximum defence to 0.

magic & alchemy

Overview

Magicians, priests and alchemists figure highly in swords & sorcery fiction. That said, these mysterious types do not generally make for good player characters. As a rule, they tend not to be adventurous, preferring instead to engross themselves in their mystical studies. Another factor is that many of them tend to be the villains; often twisted and deranged by their foul necromancies and the dark gods that they worship.

Magicians

In game terms, the most powerful of the spells and alchemies that these characters can perform take a great deal of time and research – something that there is not a lot of during the course of a normal adventure.

However, there are examples of less evil magicians and priests in sword & sorcery fiction, so these careers can make viable options for players as long as they understand the possible restrictions they might face. Inventive players can always come up with something!

Characters with points in the magician career begin play with Arcane Power equal to 10 plus their magician rank. NPC rabble magicians (adepts, students and apprentices) start with only 3 Arcane Power.

All spells fall into one of four classes: Cantrips and spells of First, Second or Third Magnitude. Magicians (who are also called sorcerers, necromancers, wizards and witches) always have rune-inscribed rings, amulets, talismans and trinkets and so forth about their bodies through which they can cast very minor and simple tricks and cantrips. If they are stripped of these items, they have difficulty even with these cantrips.

Spells of increasing magnitude have a greater cost in Arcane Power and increasing difficulty levels to successfully cast. The table below shows these costs and difficulties:

Spell Power Cost & Difficulties

Spell Magnitude	Difficulty	Arcane Power Cost
Cantrip	Automatic/Easy	1 or 2
First	Moderate/ Tricky	5 (2)
Second	Hard/Tough	10 (6)
Third	Demanding	15 (11)

Mind-Affecting Spells

Spells that directly interfere with a person's psyche or his perceptions, such as mind control and mind reading have an additional modifier based on the mind rating of the victim of the spell.

Healing With Arcane Power

Arcane Power does not lend itself to healing injuries of any sort. Accordingly magicians cannot cast spells that repair damage to living things, although they can repair inanimate objects or items using magic.

Cantrips

These are very basic spells allowing the caster to conjure a brief pool of light, the distant sound of laughter, or a spark to light a fire. Cantrips can be used to repair a common object, sour a jug of ale or make the brief illusion of a common object. Other examples might include making a coin vanish, causing a rope to slither up a castle wall or distracting a guard with an imagined sound. Such spells rarely cost more than 1 Arcane Power and only require a skill roll when directly affecting a sentient target or perhaps if the magician has been deprived of his trinkets and fetishes (when the Arcane Power cost would be higher too).

More powerful spells are trickier though and are really the stuff of heroic magicians and villainous sorcerers.

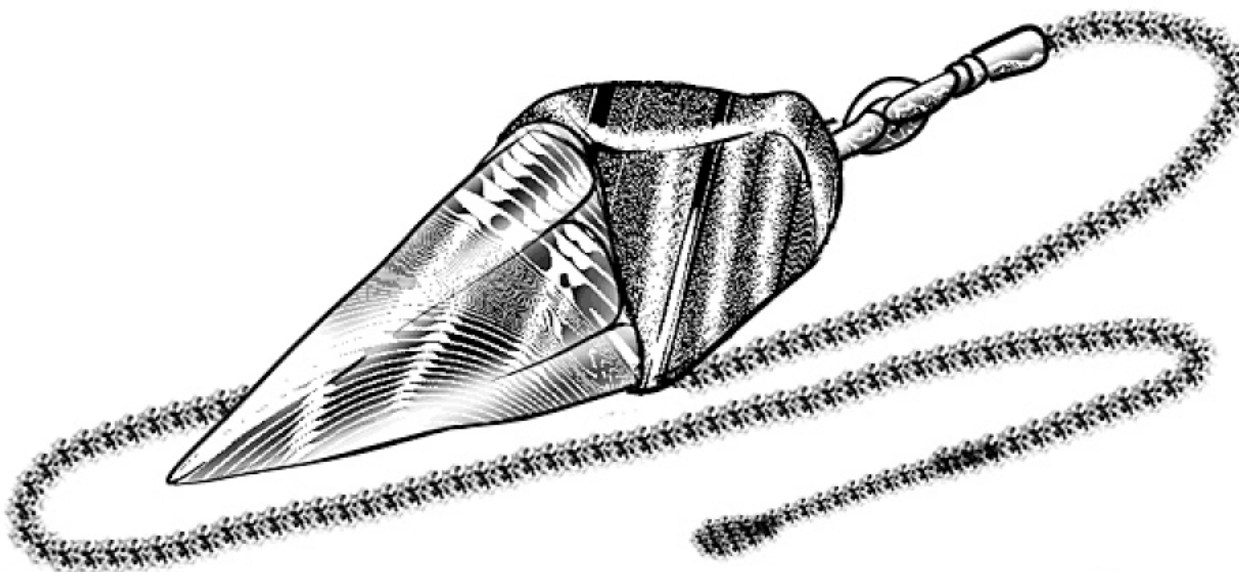
Cantrips

Cost: 1 or 2 Arcane Power

Requirements: None

Minimum: 1 Arcane Power

Difficulty: Easy or Moderate (+1 or 0)





Spells of the First Magnitude

These tend to be spells that the magician can cast during the course of an adventure. They are utility spells; they allow the sorcerer to perform activities that anyone with the right training and equipment could manage. Such sorcery might allow the caster to glide up the side of a cliff – since a normal person with rope and pitons could achieve the same result (eventually). Damaging spells of this type would typically cause 1d6 Lifeblood of damage to the target. These spells cost 5 Arcane Power and have a price too. You must select one casting requirement to be able to produce the spell at all. For every additional casting requirement that the magician can meet, in full, reduce the power cost by one point. The minimum Arcane Power cost of a First Magnitude spell is always 2.

Spells of the First Magnitude are usually either moderate or tricky task resolution rolls.

Spells of the First Magnitude

Cost: 5 Arcane Power

Requirements: -1 per extra requirement taken

Minimum: 2 Arcane Power

Difficulty: Moderate or Tricky (0 or -1)

First Magnitude Casting Requirements

Special Item: An ancient tome, heavy tablet or delicate scroll is required but is relatively easy to come by (some bartering, a short journey or a minor expenditure).

Line of Sight: The caster must be able to clearly see his or her intended target.

Casting Time: The spell will take at least 1d6 x 30 minutes of meditation, chanting, dancing etc. to correctly execute.

Intimate Materials: A personal item of the intended target (or a tile from the target building, for example) is required.

Special Knowledge: The caster must conduct lengthy research before he or she has the necessary information to cast the spell.

Obvious Technique: The caster must gesture, chant, dance or make strange sounds during the brief casting process.

Hour Power: The spell may only be cast at a specific hour of the day.

Ritual Cleansing: The caster must bathe in clean water and essential oils and shave all bodily hair from his or her body.

Wounds: The magician suffers d3 Lifeblood of damage when the spell is cast.

Example

Chandra of Kobar unleashes a javelin-like bolt of flame at Krongar. The GM considers this a First Magnitude spell for the Sorceress and she has line of sight (appropriate for a bolt of fire) and Obvious Technique (she's always putting on a show). With the first requirement to cast the spell met and with one additional requirement taken, the cost is reduced to 4 Arcane Power. The GM thinks the flame is worth 1d6 lifeblood damage for Krongar.

Spells of the Second Magnitude

These are powerful sorceries indeed and are often only possible during the course of an adventure if appropriate research and preparations are made between adventures (see page 32: Advancement Points). Minds can be controlled, buildings levelled and mighty warriors transformed into squealing swine. These spells are defined as activities that would be impossible for a single person. Destroying a door would be a spell of the First Magnitude, destroying the wall is definitely Second Magnitude.

These spells cost 10 Arcane Power. For every casting requirement after the first that the magician can comply with or chooses, you can reduce the cost by 1 point, down to a minimum of 6 Arcane Power.

Spells of the Second Magnitude are either hard or tough task resolution rolls.

Spells of the Second Magnitude

Cost: 10 Arcane Power

Requirements: -1 per extra requirement taken

Minimum: 6 Arcane Power

Difficulty: Hard or Tough (-2 or -4)

Second Magnitude Casting Requirements

Special Item: An ancient tome, heavy tablet or delicate scroll is required and the item will prove difficult to obtain. It is rare or held in a distant land or at the top of a dark wizard's tower, guarded by vicious winged apes!

Rare Ingredients: An expedition is required to locate the necessary items to perform the magic. It will take 1d6 weeks and at least a purse of gold to obtain the necessary items (of course any magician worth his salt would have willing barbarians to track down those special herbs for him)!

Permanent Focus: The caster must undertake ritual tattooing to permanently inscribe the details of the spell on his or her person.

Casting Time: The spell will take at least 2d6 hours of meditation, chanting, dancing etc. to correctly execute.

Ritual Sacrifice: An animal (of at least the size of a lamb) must be sacrificed prior to casting.

Lunar: The spell may only be cast during a specific phase of the moon.

Personal Ordeal: The caster must fast for 2d6 days.

Wounds: The magician suffers d6+1 Lifeblood of damage when the spell is cast.

Example

Chandra has managed to capture Krongar. It would please her to make the big barbarian into her lapdog, to pay him back for having the temerity to dare come to her fortress to steal from her. Whilst he is languishing in her deepest cell, she researches a spell. It would normally cost 10 Arcane Power, but she sends some of her underlings out to an old tomb to fetch a grimoire that she has heard about. Whilst they are gone, she fasts for a week (rolls 2d6, gets 7) and studies the stars for the best time to perform the spell (making a knowledge roll, using her career of magician). When she has all of these things together, Chandra has Krongar brought to her in chains and she sacrifices a small beast. She has now met the first spell requirement plus three additional ones, reducing the Arcane Power cost to 7. The GM determines it is a hard task. She still needs to make a task resolution roll to defeat Krongar's mind (which is zero, so no worries there!).



Spells of the Third Magnitude

These are incredibly rare in any game. These spells bring about natural disasters and terrible curses spanning generations. Such spells cost 15 Arcane Power. For every casting requirement that the caster complies with, reduce the Arcane Power cost by 1. The minimum cost for spells of the Third Magnitude is 11 Arcane Power. Spells of the Third Magnitude are always demanding task resolution rolls.

Spells of the Third Magnitude

Cost: 15 Arcane Power
Requirements: -1 per extra requirement taken
Minimum: 11 Arcane Power
Difficulty: Demanding (-6)

Third Magnitude Casting Requirements

Personal Ordeal: The caster must undertake ritual scarring and/or mutilation and bloodletting to achieve the right frame of mind for casting.

Ritual Sacrifice: A sentient being must be slaughtered to empower the spell (a beautiful wench would be most suitable but they tend to have hairy barbarians trailing behind them that frequently take issue with the whole sacrificing deal)

The Stars ARE Right: The spell may only be cast when the necessary stars and planets are correctly aligned

Place of Power: There is only one place known to man where this spell may be cast and guess what? It's not close!

Demonic Transformation: Casting the spell will permanently (maybe) transform the caster into some horrible demonic form with an even more clichéd maniacal laugh

Wounds: The magician suffers 2d6+1 Lifeblood of damage when the spell is cast

Example

Vulkfind the Black is planning to raise a volcano in the middle of the Heroes' hometown. The GM rightly assesses this spell as being of the Third Magnitude and (as Vulkfind is an NPC) selects 'The Stars are Right' as the first casting requirement and 'Ritual Sacrifice' as the second one (he has arranged for Princess Sonja to be kidnapped from her palace in Tyros, reducing the Power Point cost to 14. The PCs only have 30 days to stop the evil sorcerer and rescue princess Sonja before the coming eclipse spells their doom!

Recovering Arcane Power

The caster recovers 4 Arcane Power spent to create First Magnitude spells at noon or midnight (the sorcerer makes the choice but must live with the choice for the duration of his or her casting life) every day.

Arcane Power spent in the creation of Second and Third Magnitude spells are recovered at the rate of 4 points per lunar month (usually the first night of the full moon but the sorcerer may choose his or her phase). Additionally, whenever the sorcerer casts Third Magnitude magic, a point of Arcane Power is permanently lost. This loss of Arcane Power can be exchanged for the loss of an attribute point instead – it could represent aging and so reduce the magicians appeal by 1, for example (down to negative numbers if necessary).

priests

Priests are the earthly agents of the Gods of Erisa. They bring the word of the gods to their worshippers. Each god has his own followers and their temples are numerous throughout the world.

Devotions

Priests acknowledge and pay respect to all of the Gods, but each priest must choose one above all others (see page 94 for the options available). Sometimes their god actually chooses them.

A Priest receives his powers from the god he is devoted to. Any spells cast by the priest are simply a channelling of the god's powers. In effect, the priest is simply a tool to be used by the gods.

Channelling Spells

A priest can channel the godly powers granted to him by his God. He can do this a number of times equal to his rank as a priest, +1, before this he must perform the rituals, sacrifice, meditations, fasting and/or prayers that his order requires to remain in good standing with his deity. So a priest of rank 3 can channel 4 spells before he has to go back and perform devotions to the gods again. The types of devotions differ from deity to deity and are usually determined by the referee.

The player describes what he wants the spell effects to be. Use the magician spells as a guide to the relative power of the spell required and the difficulties to be assigned. However, you do not have to worry about Arcane Power or spell requirements as the god itself has the requisite power; he is just using his earthly tool (in the shape of the priest) to channel it. A priest can only attempt spells of a magnitude (see magician spell magnitudes) lower than the priest's career rank.

The only difficulty for the priest is whether he can handle the energies that are coursing through his body as he channels the spell effects. This is tested in the form of a task resolution roll in the same way as magicians. Simply check the equivalent magnitude of the spell the priest is attempting to channel and make a task resolution roll, using mind + priest (or druid) rank. A positive modifier (+1) should be awarded to priests casting spells within their own temples.

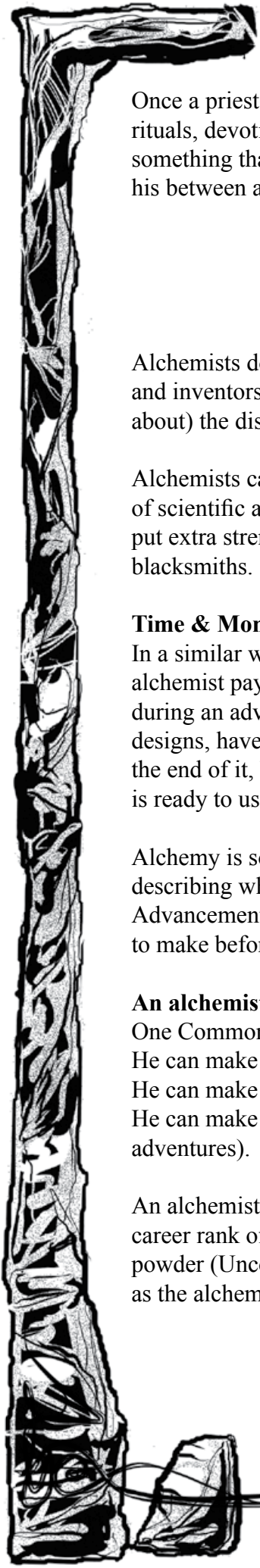
If the roll is successful (i.e. the player gets 9 or better) the spell works in the way expected. If the roll fails the spell doesn't work; the character failed to control the energies.

If a calamitous failure results, the priest has angered his god. The nature of the punishment depends on the whims of the god in question, but should also be appropriate to the magnitude of the spell attempted.

Domains

Each of the gods has one or more domains over which they preside (Ranni is the Goddess of secrets, Heldar is the God of Light, Dawn, Duty, and Oaths and so on) and, if the priest is channelling a spell that is deemed to be of the domain of the god to which he is devoted, he may roll 3 dice instead of 2, taking away the lowest die (working in the same way as a boon).

The GM is the final arbiter on the spells that a god might be able to grant to his priest. For example, a Priest of Roneth (the Storm God) would be able to cast spells that create rain, produce a distant peal of thunder, bring dark clouds over to block out the light or produce bolts of lightning.



Once a priest has reached his limit for calling upon his God he must perform the sacrifices, rituals, devotions, meditation and so on, as appropriate to the god in question. This is not normally something that is done during the course of an adventure – it should be described by the player as his between adventures activities (see page 32: Advancement Points).

alchemists

Alchemists do not cast spells; they change things and create things. They would be called scientists and inventors today. Barbarians often mistake them for wizards, not understanding (nor caring about) the distinction.

Alchemists can create ‘magic’ potions, salves, gasses, liquids and powders. They use all manner of scientific apparatus, flasks, alembics, pots, tubes and crucibles in their experiments. They can put extra strength and lightness into weapons and armour. They often work on their projects with blacksmiths.

Time & Money

In a similar way to magicians, alchemists must pay a price for their science. However, the price an alchemist pays is one of time and money. Alchemy is something that cannot normally be performed during an adventure – it needs time to gather and ready the materials, work out the quantities and designs, have craftsmen build some of the parts and then put the construct together. Even that isn’t the end of it, because the finished article must be tested and corrected several times or more before it is ready to use.

Alchemy is something that is done, in effect, between adventures. At the time that the player is describing what he does with his treasure obtained during the previous adventure (see page 32: Advancement Points) he should use this as his opportunity to describe the sort of item he would like to make before the next adventure begins.

An alchemist can attempt to make:

One Common Preparation per rank he has in his career (maximum five items).

He can make one Uncommon Preparation per two full career ranks (maximum two items).

He can make one Rare Preparation per four career ranks (maximum one item).

He can make one Unique Preparation per eight career ranks (maximum one item per two adventures).

An alchemist can work on Common and Uncommon Preparations at the same time, so one with a career rank of 3, could produce one Potion of insect repellent (Common) and one enhanced strength powder (Uncommon) between adventures. This is not possible with Rare and Unique preparations, as the alchemist needs to devote all of his time and energy to the project.

Where it takes an alchemist more than one adventure ‘downtime’ to create something, this is referred to as stages.

You have to roll for each ‘stage’ of the preparation. In other words, when producing a Unique Preparation, an alchemist of rank 2 would require four stages to complete his work. At each stage he would have to make a successful roll. If he fails at any stage, his work is ruined and he must begin again (or give up).

The Task Resolution difficulty of creating Alchemical Preparations is set out below:

Alchemical Preparations Table

Preparation	Difficulty	Modifier to Dice Result
Common	Moderate	+0
Uncommon	Hard	-2
Rare	Tough	-4
Unique	Demanding	-6

Note: The table above assumes access to a proper laboratory/shop and having the raw materials present. Otherwise increase the difficulty level by one step.

Additional Modifiers:

Where the alchemist is analysing a previously unknown object or potion: increase the level of difficulty by one step.

Where the alchemist is simply repairing an object or refreshing a potion: reduce the level of difficulty by one step, but only for Common and Uncommon Preparations.

Common Preparations

These are potions, devices and creations that can readily be created by other professions without the use of magic. They are not common knowledge but rather the result of careful observation and experimenting by knowledgeable practitioners.

Potions

These concoctions and poultices could be prepared by an ordinary herbalist, someone with the knowledge, skill and expertise to mix and brew a variety of raw materials in the right proportions. They tend to be ordinary things that could be found at the drug store of modern times. These tend to be temporary effects, except those that heal or restore:

Pain-killers
Fever relief
Animal poison
Alcoholic spirits

Sleep inducers
Acids
Insect repellent



Devices

These are also finer made items of common use. The alchemist mixes the metals and materials but a blacksmith might be needed to put the item together. Normally they are lighter and stronger than other items created under normal conditions.

Weapons
Locks
Tools

Armour
Traps

Damaging or healing items that in themselves would not normally cause any damage (i.e. not weapons or armour) typically cause or cure 1d3 Lifeblood of damage to the recipient.

Weapons and armour would cause or negate an additional point of damage caused by a Mighty or Legendary Success.

Other potions and items would have to be worked out between the player and the GM using the above as guidelines.

Example

Argol Arran feels that the group will need some insect repellent perfume for their journey through the Deathlands Swamp. He is an alchemist of rank 1, so he can make one common preparation before the adventure begins. He is in a tavern room so he is making do with whatever resources are at hand. Therefore the difficulty moves from Moderate to Hard (-2). Argol does have mind 1 and alchemist rank 1. This means he must roll 9 to make the perfume.

Uncommon Preparations

These things are in an alchemist's knowledge and beyond the normal village shamans' or witches' ability to produce from commonly found materials. These materials are normally obtainable at the local marketplace or from relatively accessible places and are easily stored.

Potions

These would be mixtures that imbue the recipients with improvements or reductions to their normal capabilities. These tend to be temporary effects, except those that heal or restore:

Faster speed
Improved vision
Infatuation

Enhanced strength
Growing or shrinking
Instant sleep

Devices

Uncommon devices would be items that require detailed research and technical ability normally outside of a common blacksmith's skills:

Very elaborate locks and traps
Artificial limbs (with few or no moving parts)
Weapons secreted in common items

Creations

These are chemicals or machines, which are often complex beyond the skills of the best blacksmiths or jewellers or the most cunning distiller. Examples would include:

Flash powder	Light-producing chemical
Fire self-starter	Rust reversal
Lighter armour	Harder weapons
Perfectly pitched musical instruments	

Damaging or healing items that in themselves would not normally cause any damage (i.e. not weapons or armour) typically cause or cure 1d6 Lifeblood of damage to the recipient.

Weapons would give a boon (see page 19) to allow the wielder to roll an extra die.
Armour would negate the -1 penalty to perception or manipulation rolls or reduce the agility penalty by 1.

Other potions and items would have to be worked out between the player and the GM using the above as guidelines.

Rare Preparations

Known, but only produced in the larger city-states or the hidden laboratories of isolated alchemists. These miracles are things that are often heard of in a storyteller's tale and presented as magic.

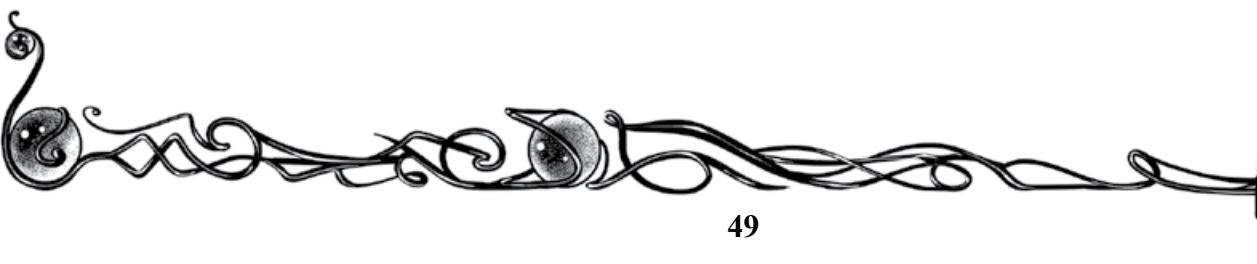
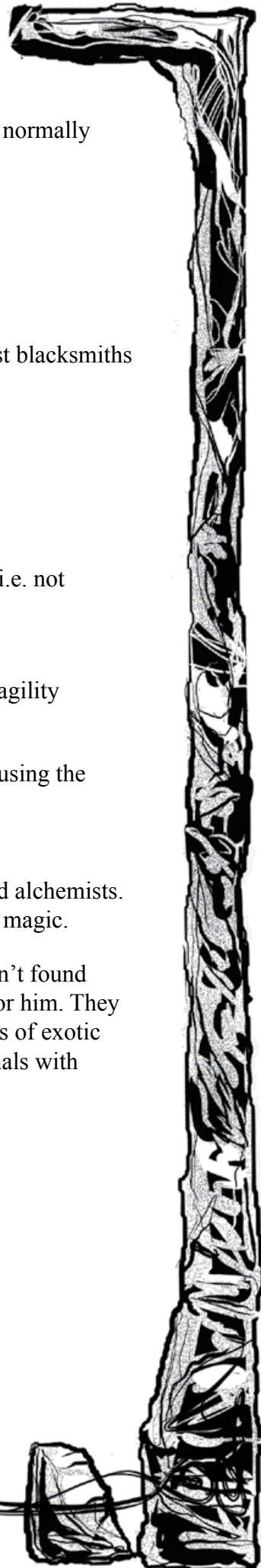
Ingredients for these creations are usually rare, exotic or easily spoiled. They often aren't found the region the alchemist is located in and he will need to hire adventurers to obtain it for him. They could range from near extinct animals, plants raised under special conditions, distillates of exotic minerals, materials that can only be produced under starlight or moonlight and/or animals with special diets.

Potions

Rare potions and effects would include:

Love	Plague cure
Appearance of youth	Paralysis
Shapechange	Invisibility

These tend to be temporary effects, except those that heal or restore.





Devices

Would be along the lines of the following:

- Flying machines
- Lightning-Cannon
- Unbreakable weapons
- Hardened armour (doubled protection)
- Invisibility belts
- Lighter-than-air belts

Creations

Creations would include:

- Breeding plants and animals into deadly life forms
- Automatons and guardians from living suits of armour

Damaging or healing items that in themselves would not normally cause any damage (i.e. not weapons or armour) typically cause or cure 2d6 Lifeblood of damage to the recipient.

Weapons would give a boon (see page 19) to allow the wielder to roll an extra die. In addition, they are unbreakable and ignore armour, except that created by an alchemist, which is halved (see below).

Armour would negate the -1 penalty to perception or manipulation rolls or negate the agility penalty. It would also ignore the maximum defence for chain shirt or plate cuirass. The protection provided by such armour would be double the normal for that type of armour.

Other potions and items would have to be worked out between the player and the GM using the above as guidelines.

Unique Preparations

These things are mentioned in ancient writings and in the legends of lost races. To see one of these in a lifetime is unusual. Once found they are guarded and secreted away from curious eyes - often for centuries.

The raw ingredients for these may take several years to decant, grow or infuse. Necessary plants, animal parts and/or minerals may be only located in far away lands or exotic environments (undersea, north slope of a mountain top, a swamp-drowned tomb, mummy coffin and anything involving danger and travel.) Once gained they must be preserved in exotic ways or else lose some of their potency.

Potions

Such unique elixirs and effects would be things like:

- Immortality
- Permanent alteration
- Perfect regeneration

Devices

These unique artefacts would include:

Brain transfer machines
Intelligent dwellings
Semi-Sentient machines

Creations

These are concepts beyond the imagination of many people of Erisa although relatively achievable by the Sorcerer-Kings. These could include:

Creating life from chemical vats
Vats for cloning individuals
Brain transfers
Create man-beast hybrid life-forms

Damaging or healing items that in themselves would not normally cause any damage (i.e. not weapons or armour) typically cause or cure 3d6 Lifeblood of damage to the recipient.

Weapons would give a boon (see page 19) to allow the wielder to roll an extra die. In addition, they are unbreakable and ignore armour. Armour created by an alchemist would provide half the protection. The weapons also cause an extra dice of damage when they hit.

Armour would negate the -1 penalty to perception or manipulation rolls or negate the agility penalty. It would also provide treble the normal protection for that type of armour.

Other potions and items would have to be worked out between the player and the GM using the above as guidelines.

Example

Jesharek Jool (mind 3, alchemist 3) decides to create a unique sword for his friend Krongar. He knows his work will take two stages to complete. In the first stage, he describes how he obtains the rare and precious metals that he needs to prepare the blade, spending all of the money that he received on his last quest. He then makes a roll and gets 7 on the dice. Adding his +6 (mind+career rank) he gets 13. Subtracting the difficulty, he ends up with 9 and just succeeds. He has now completed stage 1. Next he needs to find a rare scroll that he believes should be in the catacombs beneath the ruins of Oosal and gathers some adventurers to assist him. He will be able to attempt stage 2 when he returns with the ancient text.



optional rules

Optional Armour Rules

The armour rules are really designed so that players can take one or two pieces as they see fit, in keeping with their character concept – maybe piling a bit more on if they are going to battle or fighting in the arena and so on.

However, for some layers, the armour rules as written don't work. If that is the case, try one of the following or come up with your own. The beauty of *Barbarians of Lemuria* is that you can change things without worrying too much whether some other rule elsewhere will get “broken”.

Option 1: Simply increase the penalties for wearing heavier armour.

Option 2: Only allow characters with appropriate careers (soldier, mercenaries, gladiators) to wear metallic armour types (maybe even setting the limit for armour penalties at the rank in the career – so a soldier of rank 2 could wear 2 points of protection before he starts suffering from the armour he is wearing).

Option 3: Any character wearing protection with a value of over 3 will become exceedingly hot and uncomfortable. For every hour wearing the armour, make a task resolution roll. If they fail, they are at (an additional) –1 agility, until they remove it.

Option 4: Armour absorbs a variable amount of damage. This allows for the fact that a character will not wear armour that provides total coverage; there will be places where the armour is thicker and better and there will be unprotected or less well protected areas.

Very Light Armour

This represents maybe just some light leather protection – a pair of boots and bracers or a padded jerkin. You might even allow it to represent thick or good quality clothing.

Protection d2-1

Light Armour

This armour might represent the above protection plus a helm or similar. It might be a battle harness or chainmail bikini. It might be a leather jerkin and bracers or a leather helm, bracers and greaves.

Protection d3-1

Maximum defence 3

Medium Armour

Medium armour represents robust leather protection covering most areas, especially the torso area. It might represent thick or boiled leather over just a few of the most vulnerable parts of the body. Or it might be a simple light mail shirt and perhaps leather bracers or a helm.

Protection d6-2

Maximum defence 3

-1 Agility



Heavy Armour

This armour would be a fairly heavy leather or studded leather brigandine with a helm, bracers and greaves. Or it might be a light mail shirt, helmet, greaves and bracers. Or a metal helm, greaves, gauntlets and a studded leather or mail shirt.

Protection d6-1

Maximum defence 2

-1 Agility

Very Heavy Armour

This would be predominantly mail and plate armour, including a breastplate or heavy mail shirt, metal bracers and greaves and a full helm.

Protection d6

Maximum defence 1

-2 Agility

Adding a shield adds +1 protection.





adventure ideas

One thing I can promise with *Legends of Steel*; you will never run out of sources of inspiration for creating adventures. Just about every issue of every Sword & Sorcery comic is its own adventure. The entire genre was built for the short story. Back in the pulp infancy of Sword & Sorcery there were no “Trilogies” or “Cycles” or “Wheels” there were just short stories bursting with action and adventure that were usually resolved in less than forty pages.

The genre and pacing

I can’t stress enough how important it is to keep to the spirit in which *Legends of Steel* was created. When preparing adventures for your players, try to revisit key examples of the genre. Pop in a DVD of *Beastmaster* or *The Scorpion King* for instant inspiration. Flip through a few issues of *Red Sonja* or *The Savage Sword of Conan*, re-read Fritz Leiber’s *Swords against Deviltry* or *Imaro* by Charles Saunders. As stated earlier, for the most part the Sword & Sorcery genre is presented in the short story or episodic format. When planning an adventure try to match the pacing of the genre. For example, take an outline for a simple minor quest or mission:

- An opening scene
- An action scene
- The hook with a bit of background to set up the adventure
- An action scene
- Preparation and travel
- An action scene
- Arrival
- A setback or plot twist
- Action scene
- Return
- Ending scene

Now when I say action scene I don’t necessarily mean combat. The best action movie directors realize that twenty minutes of pure bloody combat is about seventeen minutes too long. Utilize the skills and Edges that your players have chosen for their characters and create obstacles for them to overcome. Action and danger could be in the form of scaling a cliff or temple wall, piloting a ship through storm tossed waters, or disarming a deadly trap; anything that gets the players involved, gets them planning, and gets them rolling dice.

Make it thrilling

Be sure that you use colorful narrative to describe the action. Characters in Sword & Sorcery tales never just “sneak over and kill the guard”. They “slink through the shadows up behind the lone guardsman and with an iron grip, wrench his neck until the snap of bone and tendon can be heard. They then lower the lifeless body to the cold stone floor and melt back into the shadows, to continue their way to the inner temple.”

Make it Heroic

In the genre of Sword & Sorcery it is especially important to allow the heroes to be heroic. As the game master, encourage swashbuckling and daring actions. Remember, that for the sake of fun and adventure, the laws of physics can and should be suspended from time to time. Reward players whose characters embrace risky actions and cinematic play. If the characters fail in some swashbuckling ploy (and they will) remember to go easy on them. The goal is to encourage over the top gaming. Players will get attached to their characters and they may not always take chances on cinematic feats if they know that if they fail the GM will nail them for it every time.

Capture, don't kill

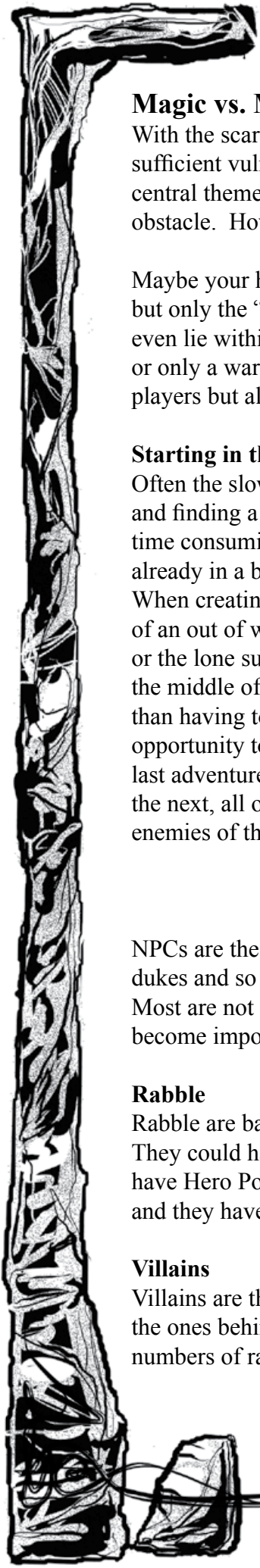
Killing your heroes means the end of the game, capturing means more adventure. Inform your players that in Sword & Sorcery sometimes it's okay to get captured, it may even be a necessary part of the story. Getting captured may allow characters insight into your villain's ultimate plan and lets them and any allies who may have been separated earlier regroup. Of course, once you have the characters in your clutches give them a way to escape--torture them a bit first, give them a good beat down or feed a couple of disposable prisoners to the alligators to show the players that you mean business, but escaping from the enemy can and should play an important role in any adventure.

Outrageous coincidence happens...a lot.

Coincidence is a mainstay of the Sword & Sorcery genre. Don't be afraid to use coincidence to further the success of your adventure. Of course the charm that the old witch woman gave your character in the bazaar three years ago just happens to be the key needed to open the hidden tomb. Naturally the only survivors of the battle are you and your comrades. And yes, the young Prince just happens to be traveling in the same direction as you are, so giving him a hand against that band of assassins is no trouble at all.

Magic items

Encountering a Magic item in *Legends of Steel: BoL* should be a rare and special occurrence. In many fantasy games the players have at least one magic weapon and a half a dozen or so minor magic items. Magic items exist in *Legends of Steel: BoL*, make no mistake about that. However, there isn't the focus on them that you find in traditional fantasy games. There are no "Magic shops" where you can buy a lightning wand or a "+3 sword". If the players somehow acquire an enchanted item, it should be so rare as to have a name and a history. In the genre of High Fantasy, magic is common to the point where it borders the mundane, not so in Sword & Sorcery tales. With the exception of potions and maybe minor charms, magic items in the Sword & Sorcery genre are usually in the form of relics or ancient artifacts created for a specific task. The Barbarian Prince doesn't use a +2 axe; he wields The Blood-Axe of the Bear Killer Clan (which just happens to add +2 to all damage results). By making magic rare its value increases hundred-fold. If and when your players gain a magic item, it should be a defining moment. Take into account that the heroes represent a tiny segment of the general population, and only one in twenty would choose the path of a Mage. Of those, how many will ascend to the level at which the crafting of magic items is even possible? The average NPC has more than likely heard stories of sorcerers, witches, and magical curses, but few will have had any dealings with authentic practitioners of magic. Workers of magic should be rare; therefore items with magical powers should be rarer still.



Magic vs. Monster

With the scarcity of magical items or weapons it's only fitting that supernatural creatures be given sufficient vulnerabilities that allow the heroes a chance at overcoming them. This is one of the central themes of *Sword & Sorcery*: a man with guts and cold steel in his hands can overcome any obstacle. However, it shouldn't be easy for the heroes.

Maybe your hero's sword does *hurt* the Elder Demon, forcing it to dissipate and fight another day, but only the "Spear of Kings" can slay it forever, and therein lies the adventure. The magic could even lie within the hero: perhaps only "a son of the Kings of the North" can defeat the Dark One, or only a warrior-maiden of untouched purity can tame the fire-sword of Kamballah. Challenge the players but always give them the opportunity and tools to succeed.

Starting in the middle—"The Adventure pit"

Often the slowest part of an adventure is the start. Gathering the characters together, introductions, and finding a common reason why this group would even be together in the first place, can be a time consuming challenge. Why even deal with it? *Sword & Sorcery* tales often begin with the hero already in a bad situation. They could be in jail, unconscious in an alleyway, lost in a desert, etc. When creating adventures for *Legends of Steel* try to emulate this style. Have the characters be part of an out of work mercenary unit, a crew of a small merchant ship that hasn't been paid in months, or the lone survivors of a caravan attack. Or jump right into the action and start the adventure in the middle of a battle or a back alley brawl. Nothing gets the game going quicker for the players than having to roll dice right after they sit down. Starting adventures this way is also an excellent opportunity to divest the characters of any excessive loot or commitments. For example: In the last adventure the heroes could have been given lands and titles as a reward for a job well done. In the next, all of this could be lost following a military coup as the heroes find themselves branded enemies of the state and on the run from the new regime.

non~player characters

NPCs are the citizens, rogues, workers, innkeepers, traders, seamen, warriors, acolytes, viziers, dukes and so forth that the characters interact with every day in the course of their adventures. Most are not even named and their attributes and careers are largely unimportant. If NPCs abilities become important, you define them by describing them either as 'rabble' or as 'villains'.

Rabble

Rabble are basic run-of-the-mill mooks. Their attributes, combat abilities and one career are all at 0. They could have something at -1 to get a 1 somewhere else. They have 3 Lifeblood and they do not have Hero Points or Villain Points. If they are wizards, they are called adepts, students or acolytes and they have 3 Arcane Power.

Villains

Villains are the archenemies of the Heroes. They will be created just like creating a Hero. They are the ones behind the nefarious plots that the character's become involved in. Villains often have huge numbers of rabble at their disposal.

Villain points

Villains have Villain Points, which are used by the GM in the same way the players use their Hero Points. Villain Points can also be used for the villain to effect his timely escape from the clutches of the Heroes; just as they are about to advance on the evil necromancer he smiles and turns, opening a secret panel in the wall by which he makes his escape, to begin some other nefarious plot.

taverns

Taverns have always been a mainstay of Sword & Sorcery fiction. The hero in your typical S&S tale is a loner, often a wanderer, and a hired sword wandering from city to city looking for opportunity. His free time is spent in taverns, drinking, gambling, whoring, and carousing. Generally the characters in Sword & Sorcery tales frequent taverns and wine shops in the tougher parts of town. Every hero has a favorite place where they can drink their fortune away. But as their fortunes change so may the places they go to blow off steam.

Low end Tavern

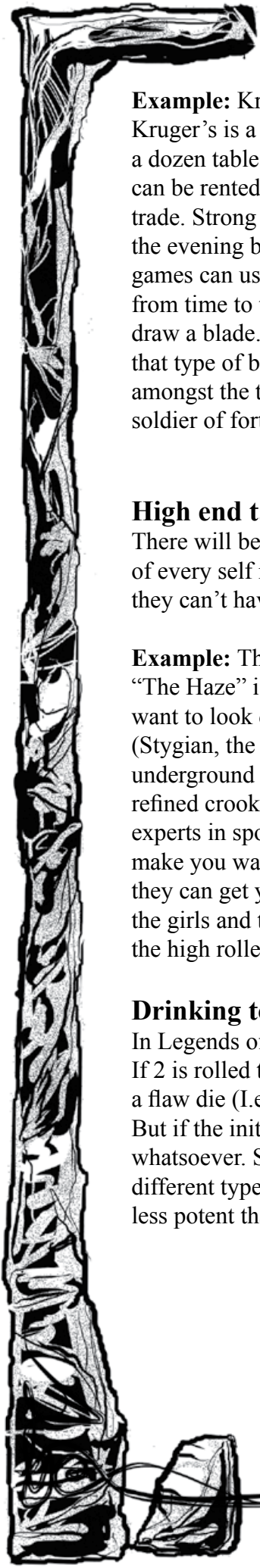
Every city has an area where decent folk steer clear of, a place where the usual rules don't apply, and even the powers that be turn a blind eye to the goings on. This is the part of town where you will find Rico's

Example: Rico's

This is a nasty rat-hole of a place that only the truly desperate would frequent. Petty criminals, beggars, and other truly unsavory types make up the clientele. The city-watch doesn't patrol the streets in this section of town, and if they have specific business in these parts, they never arrive at less than squad strength. The swill that's served here can barely be called wine, the beer tastes like horse piss on a good day, and the house stew is made from anything caught in the alley. There are no entertainers because no one has coin to spare. The bar girls are toothless, poxed and at least twenty years past their prime (if they ever had a prime). There are no gaming tables but someone always has dice. Be warned though, there are no friendly games here, gambling is a serious and bloody business at Rico's. The owner asks no questions and serves anyone who can pay. For a price he can act as a go-between for anything from fencing to kidnapping. He knows quite a few high people in very low places. He doesn't trade in information, only in connecting interested parties with each other. What comes of it he neither knows nor cares. Rico's is a kind of unofficial neutral ground for the various gangs and criminals in the city. No one knows when it became so; just that it has always been that way.

Average tavern

Looking for place that caters to working-class Joes? It could be a soldier's bar, dockhand's bar, or even an expatriate's bar. This is the type of place that is a couple of notches above the rat hole, but still interesting. You can get a meal and the girls working the trade still have most of their teeth, a couple might even be pretty. Conan most likely hung out here when he was working as a mercenary. Still, it's a rough crowd. Count on most of the clientele being regulars and recognizing those who aren't. At best the regulars will get closed mouthed and beg off any attempts at conversation, at worst they will become territorial and confront the strangers stinking up their place. This is an excellent opportunity to utilize the social skills available in the game as the characters try to bluff or charm their way through this type of encounter. It will also make an excellent base of operations once the characters have established themselves, spent a bit of coin, and become regulars.



Example: Kruger's Tavern

Kruger's is a bar that caters to soldiers, both active and retired, mercenaries, and bodyguards, it has a dozen tables, several booths, and a bar. There is one private room that doubles as a storeroom but can be rented. There are also about 6 curtained stalls in the back where the "house girls" work their trade. Strong spirits and food are served all day and well into the night. Entertainment is provided in the evening by a variety of performers as well as the girls who work the room. Dice, chess, and card games can usually be found with modest amounts of money changing hands. Disagreements arise from time to time and generally turn into fist fights. For a place alive with fighting men, few ever draw a blade. To do so in Kruger's is to incur the wrath of the staff and regulars who don't tolerate that type of behavior. Even though it's a rough, place Kruger's is known for a bit of respectability amongst the trade. Kruger's is the ideal place if your looking for work as a sellsword or info in the soldier of fortune world.

High end tavern

There will be times when the heroes come into riches beyond their wildest dreams. And it's the job of every self respecting GM to divest them of those riches as quickly as possible. But no one said they can't have fun while they're losing it all. Welcome to the Purple Haze.

Example: The Purple Haze

"The Haze" is where the "Quality" go to commit their debaucheries, at least the young ones who want to look daring. High priced drinks, exotic wines, beautiful women and plenty of Black lotus (Stygian, the best!) are available here. There is high stakes gambling and even a decent pit in an underground arena for some illicit sport. Make no mistake, the owners are crooks, but they are refined crooks--into the long con. The fights are fixed, the games favor the house, and the girls are experts in spotting a mark. Everyone there has one goal: to separate you from your gold quietly and make you want to come back for more. Why should they roll you for one night's coin purse when they can get you hooked on the girls and the games and milk you dry? The digs are top notch as are the girls and the food. And as upscale as it is, there is an even more elaborate "room upstairs" for the high rollers; if you have to ask the price of something then you can't afford it.

Drinking too much

In Legends of Steel your character will make a moderate strength roll for every hour of drinking. If 2 is rolled then your character is incapacitated. A failure means your character is drunk and adds a flaw die (I.e. rolls 3 dice and takes the results of the worst two) to any action taken, until sober. But if the initial roll is a Mighty Success, then they can drink the night away with no ill effects whatsoever. Sobering up is a moderate strength roll as well – rolled every hour. There are of course different types of liquors and the GM should allow modifiers for such. After all, watered wine is far less potent than whiskey.

The morning after

Once you heroes are drunk and feeling no pain, have fun role-playing the nights carouse. Gambling, fighting, wenching and general mayhem are the order of the night. But don't forget the morning after. Someone has to pay the bill and the consequences could be an adventure in itself.

If your character ended up drunk, as the result of a Critical Failure, then roll on the following carousing table to determine what happened whilst you were "out of action"

Carousing results table (roll 2d6)

2. Spend 50% of your treasure on wenches, wine, narcotics, etc.
3. Spend 100% of your treasure on wenches, wine, narcotics, etc.
4. Robbed while drunk - lose all your treasure and equipment.
5. Robbed and beaten while drunken, as above but wake up with a wound (1 point of Lifeblood)
6. Incarcerated for drunken hooliganism - Wake up in jail.
7. Shanghaied! You awaken from your latest revel on a ship that has already set sail. Welcome to the navy!
8. Party with a VIP - gain the acquaintance of a dissolute noble, up and coming Merchant, or an entertainer of repute
9. Married while drunk.
10. Rumor of treasure - you overhear whispering thieves and gain a lead on a vast sum of wealth.
11. Win a ship or deed. The ship may be in need of repairs and the crew hasn't been paid in a few weeks. The land title is to a large but very rundown estate.
12. Make an enemy for life. You shamed him in front of everyone. Yeah, you were drunk at the time. But no matter. Payback is a bitch and it's just a matter of time.





Druss mountains

the Ice sp

the darklands

sikkar pl

the free cities

Boskar

teve

emerald ocean

alben

the high mountains

hogar

arag

the great forest

emesa

Belsa

deathlands swamp

taurus



ERISA

sulanese empire

fort melas

Silver coast

"green death" jungle

amra isles



campaign section

We hope you find *Legends of Steel* so much fun to play that soon a full-blown campaign is born. To that end we have included a glimpse of our own campaign world of Erisa. On Erisa you will find mighty nations, hidden lands, and warring factions. We scoured dozens of resources to try and bring some of the most iconic staples of Sword & Sorcery together in one world. Erisa has both the glittering cities and the serpent haunted ruins fans of Sword & Sorcery love.

the world of erisa

Erisa is a world conceived in the mind of the author close to twenty years ago. During that time it has gone through several revisions but always staying true to its origins as a world of adventure. This gazetteer provides just enough information on the various regions, nations, and city-states to give the reader an idea of the land and the possibilities for adventure that each place holds. It's our hope that these nuggets of information open corridors to possibilities and inspire you to create fun and exciting gaming sessions for yourself and your players



Akkar

The holy city of Akkar, called Akkar the Golden, is dedicated to The celestial family of Roneth, God of the Skies, his wife Aviva, Goddess of oceans, and their daughter Oram, goddess of rivers. The city is famous for its beautiful and elaborate system of fountains, park lined lakes and ponds, public wells and bathhouses. The fertile region surrounding the city is fed by the Masar River and produces an abundance of grains and exotic fruits. Akkar is an extremely orderly and well run city; however, this comes at a price, individual freedoms are severely curtailed and any actions that lie beyond the acceptable norms sanctioned by the theocratic rulers are frowned upon.

Strengths

Holy city: Akkar happens to be the home of the three major temples honoring the Celestial Family. The temples are centers of learning for hundreds of worshipers. There are other smaller temples to the various gods of Erisa, but the city is dedicated to the celestial family.

Fertile Region: Wheat, barley, dates, figs, oranges, limes, and many other crops are grown in this abundant land. Because of its fertile soil and pleasant climate, the Masar river valley is thought to be blessed by the gods. Many exotic fruits, that are grown nowhere else, are available in Akkar.

Orderly society: the government of Akkar is administered by a theocratic council headed by the three high priests of the Celestial Family. Order is the watchword in Akkar. The streets are clean, lit, and safe to walk at any hour. There are no beggars, the market place is muted, and there are Temple watchmen on every corner.

Weaknesses

Oppressive theocratic rule: The Council controls all facets of life in Akkar. Nothing of any significance occurs without permission by the council. The Eyes of Akkar are the equivalent of a religious secret police and they insure that the status quo is maintained and that any subversives who would undermine the harmony of the holy city are dealt with quickly.

Rifts within the temple of Aviva: Aviva is the goddess of oceans and patron of sailors. As of late many merchant seamen have been tithing and donating large amounts of coin to her temples looking for blessings in their seagoing mercantile ventures. This influx of worshipers and revenue was welcome at first, but recently there is a growing schism within the clergy between those who are pushing for the temple doctrine to move into the provinces of fortune and mercantile ventures, and the more conservative faction that want a return to the fundamentals of the faith. This rift has weakened the temple and is threatening to affect worshippers as lines are drawn and the debates become more heated.

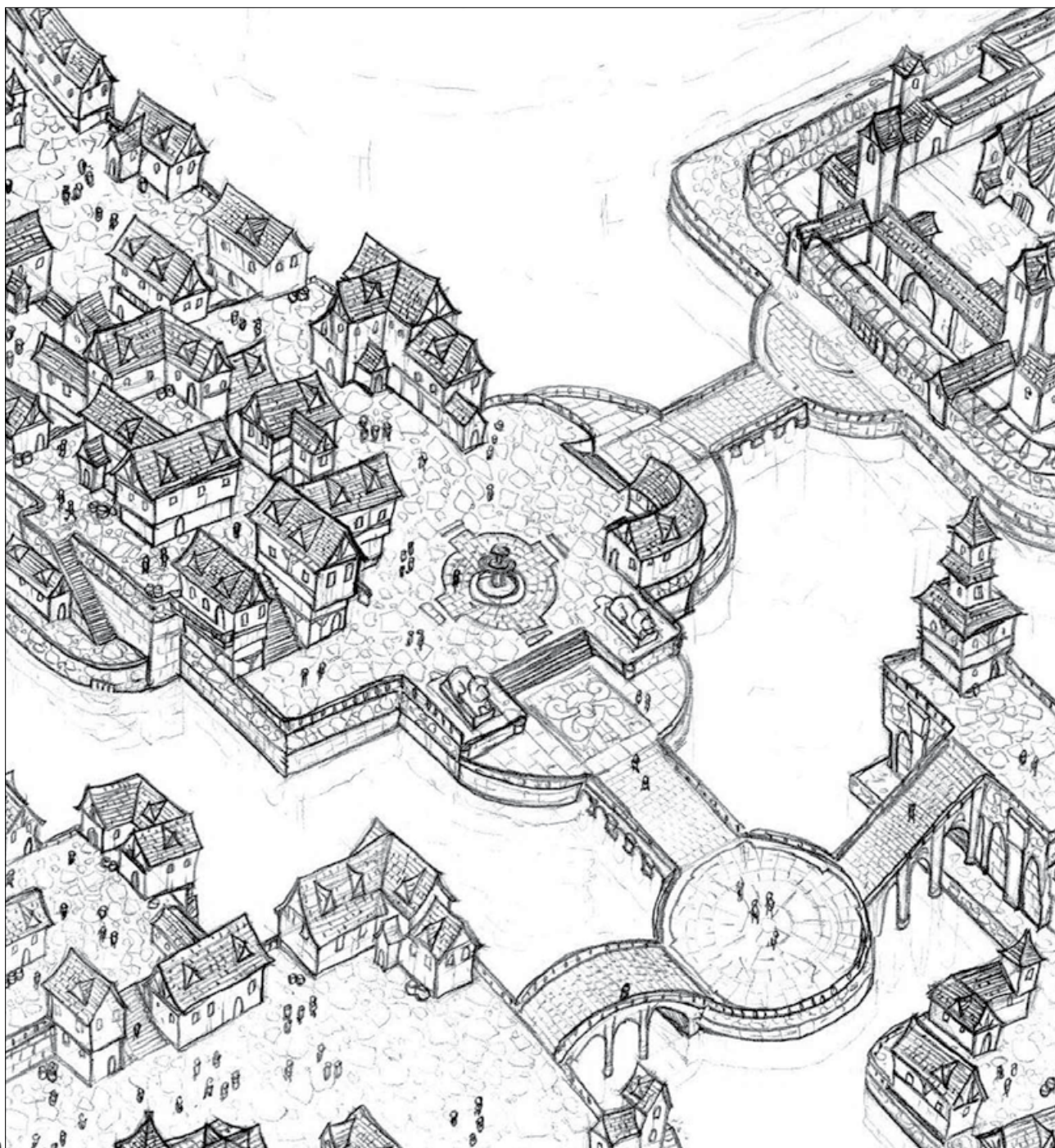
Opportunities

Trade: The excess grain and exotic produce from the region is exported, much of it bought by Al-Khalid. But goods from the northern continent are highly prized. Fortunes can be made quickly by brave and enterprising men with fast ships.

Libraries of Akkar: Akkar boasts a number of religious libraries that contain documents, maps, relics and other items of historical and religious significance. There are also several rich private collectors of antiquities that are always on the lookout for rare items of lost or unknown origin.

Threats

God-War: The recent troubles within the temple of Aviva have given the agents of Yar a unique opportunity. The sphere of luck in new ventures and mercantile voyages was once the province of Kai-Na, the goddess of fortune. With the growing popularity among seagoing merchants to placate and tithe to Aviva, the temple of Kai-na has seen a large drop in revenue. This has resulted in strained relations between the two temples, a situation that the agents of Yar are quick to exploit. Seeds of misinformation and veiled threats are being planted amongst the clergies and followers of both temples with the ultimate goal on instigating a full blown God-War between the two temples which (amongst many other repercussions) will disrupt seaborne trade throughout the region.



Al-Khalid

Al-Khalid is a major trading city of the southern continent. It's located between the Great Sea and the Drujistan Mountains. Raids from Jaga and Morgal mountain tribesmen are plaguing the city's spice farms. Al-Khalid is governed by a council of senior guildsmen. Spices and exotic opiates are the main exports. There is a fairly large slave trade because of the proximity to the jungles to the west. Slavers from Al-Khalid often brave the large jungle and raid villages in the interior for slaves.

Strengths

Location: Al-Khalid has no close neighbors. Any force thinking to invade it must cross a great deal of territory to lay siege to the city. The lack of food producing farms and pasture land means that any invading force won't be able to do much foraging for supplies (regular food crops could be grown as well, but the money is in the spices). Any invaders will need a large logistics and support system to keep their soldiers fed and supplied during a siege.

Resources: The area surrounding Al-Khalid is one of the few in the world with the right combination of weather and soil conditions to produce a wide variety of rare and valuable spices and opiates; as such, Al-Khalid is a very rich city.

Weaknesses

Defense: Militarily, Al-Khalid is weak. The navy is small and only concerned with policing their immediate coastline. The army is manned by paid mercenaries that patrol the spice farms and try to keep mountain raiders from disrupting production and attacking caravans. Military expeditions into the Drujistan Mountains to eradicate the tribes have all failed miserably.

Opportunities

Tribal Wars: Two of the major mountain tribes, the Morgal and the Jaga, are in a fierce territorial war. There are factions among the guilds that support the funding of one side in the hopes of gaining concessions from them once they defeat the other. Another faction advocates letting the tribes bleed themselves dry and then funding an army to destroy the survivors, ending the problem for good.

Threats

Tribal Unification: more than anything else, the people of Al-Khalid fear the possibility of a leader rising from amongst the mountain tribes, a leader with enough strength and charisma to unite the disparate tribes and bring them down upon the city in a frenzy of blood and steel.



Albena

Albena is one of the four cities that make up the Free Cities League. It was once a major port. But, following a crushing defeat by the fleet of Radu, its power in the area has been broken. The city of Albena is a shadow of its former self. The government is barely functioning. Lawlessness and banditry are rampant in the city and surrounding countryside. The other cities in the league send support but it doesn't seem to be doing much good. The people left in the city appear to be simply waiting for the invading fleets from Radu to come and finish the job.

Strengths

Alliances: Albena is still a member of the Free Cities League. By treaty, the other cities are supposed to come to the aid of Albena if it is attacked.

Weaknesses

Military Defeat: The navy has just suffered a very costly defeat against forces from Radu. Part of that defeat was attributed to Radu's use of sorcery and flying creatures. The "dragons" destroyed dozens of ships with their fiery breath and now the survivors of that horrific battle are warning anyone who will listen. With each telling, the tale of "The Sorcerer of Radu and his dragons" becomes greater.

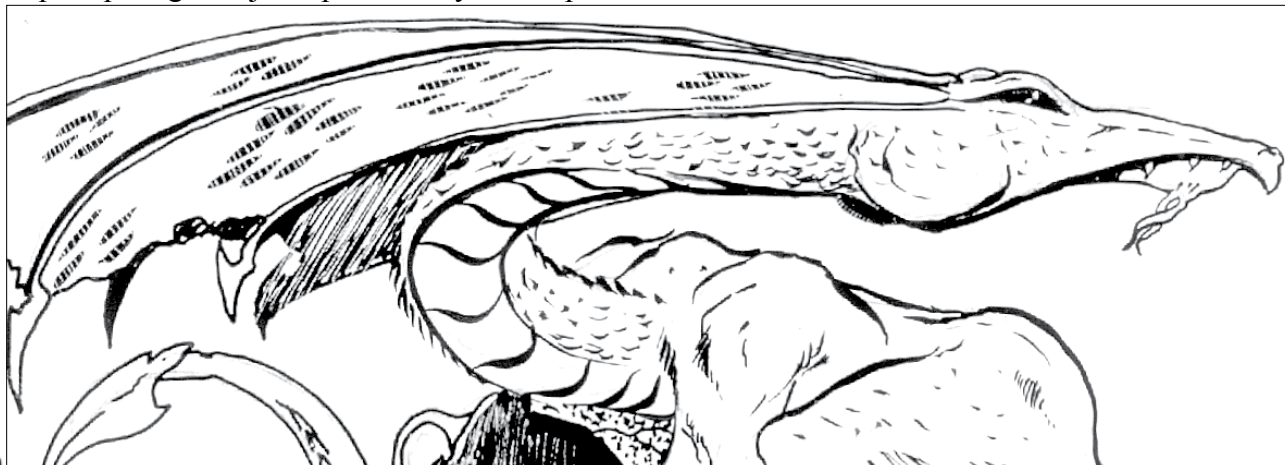
Lawlessness: After news of the naval defeat reached the city, a large exodus took place, mostly from the members of the upper classes who could afford to leave the city quickly. Soon order broke down as most of the ruling class and officials had fled. There has been looting and several fires in various districts. The granaries are full, mainly because of the lack of transport to move the grain out, but they are well guarded by the grain merchants and their mercenary guards.

Opportunities

Hidden opportunity: The picture looks bleak for the people of Albena, but there are two sides to every coin. There may be an opportunity here for an individual of strong will and charisma or a small determined group of individuals to galvanize the people and dispel the sense of doom that pervades this once proud city.

Threats

Radu: An invasion by Radu is considered by many a foregone conclusion. The question is whether to put up a fight or just open the city and hope for the best.



Aragos

Aragos is the second oldest city in the Kingdom of Tyros. It is a city of grand traditions and culture. The Baron of Aragos can trace his lineage back to the four founding families of Tyros (the royal family being the only other house that can make such a claim). During the great Sikkar invasion Aragos was sacked. Although the city was rescued by King Bron, the terror of those days is still recalled vividly and has left an indelible stamp on the psyche of the city and its people.

Strengths

Civic pride and tradition: As the second oldest city in the kingdom. Aragosseans are a very proud lot and will not hesitate to give you their full genealogy at the first opportunity. They are also, for the most part, very patriotic and loyal to the king.

Well trained militia and garrison: Aragos boasts a very well trained militia. Also, the Barons personal guard is a large private force of professional soldiers, second only to the royal bodyguard in Tyros. In addition, the veteran 4th Legion is garrisoned outside of the city and the Barons ministers in the capital of Tyros lobby constantly to make sure the 4th stays right where it is.

Sorcery: Baron Aragos is said to be a sorcerer of some skill. As of late he has turned over most of the day to day administration of the Barony to his eldest son. The Baron hasn't been seen in public for quite awhile and there are rumors that he has unlocked some great sorcery that demands his full attention. The rumors of the Baron's sorcerous experiments have reached the royal court in Tyros and His Majesty is said to be concerned.

Weaknesses

Extreme bureaucracy: The government is surprisingly free of corruption. However, the ministers are considered extremely conservative, as is the city government. The bureaucratic hoops that one has to jump through to get anything done are staggering.

Fear of invasion: As stated earlier, the Sikkar invasion left a mark on the psyche of the people of Aragos. It was the only city in Tyros to be completely ravaged. Baron Aragos is determined that his city is never again threatened.

Opportunities

Arcane refuge: Aragos is safe for practitioners in the arcane arts. Its one of the few places where researchers of magic are not persecuted. In fact, the Baron actively seeks learned individuals to supplement his own "research."

Settlers in the woods: Homesteaders are beginning to clear areas in the northern tip of the Great Forest. Land grants in the Borderland area are cheap. And mercenaries can find ready work manning the new outposts.

Threats

Supernatural magnet: No one finds it surprising that Aragos has become a lightning rod for supernatural phenomena. Weird occurrences, sightings, hauntings, and other events have become almost commonplace in the city and its environs.

The king is concerned: His Majesty's advisers in Tyros are alarmed at rumors of the Baron's delving into the supernatural. They are advising the king to convene a secret investigation into what the Baron is up to; possibly to summon him to court to answer a few questions. A summons to court is never done lightly, so solid evidence is needed that a threat to the throne exists.



Belsa

Belsa is a large and prosperous province of the Kingdom of Tyros situated in a temperate valley. Belsa's harvests are more than enough to feed the province and much of the rest of the kingdom. This prosperity, however, is tempered with the fact that the King's tax collectors take a huge portion of each year's harvest to meet the needs of the rest of the kingdom. A great deal of revenue is lost feeding the legions in the north and filling the king's coffers. The Baron of Belsa and the grain merchants of the city realize this and there are rumors that the city may soon declare itself independent of Tyros. Coincidentally, large numbers of mercenaries have been arriving in the city and the majority of this year's trade with Hogar has been Belsa grain for Hogar steel.

Strengths

Self Sufficient: Belsa is far from the central government of Tyros and has prospered in a semi-autonomous state for several decades. They have excellent trade relations with the other cities in the region, particularly the City-State of Hogar, and the ruling classes enjoy the support of the people.

Weaknesses

Untried Militia: While the provincial militia does a good job of keeping the peace and chasing the occasional band of river pirates or bandits about, they have never had any experience in combat on a large scale. If Belsa declares independence, it is certain that Tyros will send an army to crush the movement.

Loyalists: Not everyone is dead set on independence. There is a small but well organized opposition that is still loyal to the King. These "Loyalists" may prove troublesome for The Baron and the rebellious guildsmen.

Opportunities

Be All You Can Be: There promises to be steady employment for professional soldiers once the wheels begin to move the province towards secession.

Counter Insurgency: In an atmosphere of secession there are various factions at work trying to push forward their agendas. Each of these factions has plots and missions that require agents and operatives to carry them out. No doubt, the Baron has his own people working on thwarting any threats to the movement. Player characters can find themselves in a variety of roles either supporting or hunting down enemy agents.

Threats

Send in the Legions: There is no way that the throne of Tyros will let this secession take place. The king will send legions almost immediately to put down this revolt and hang all of the leaders.

Boskar

Boskar is called the “city of thieves” by many. It is located just inside the Sikkar Plains, in the foothills that separate the High Mountains and the Druss mountain ranges. This is another city founded by adventurers (see Hogar) who happened to be in the right place at the right time. It began as a trading post established by a group of merchant-adventurers from Teve who secured permission to establish a trading settlement from the local tribe of Sikkar. This Trading post soon grew to a decent sized town as the free cities of the coast began acquiring an appetite for Sikkar Bison. A profitable trade in livestock was going on when a group of settlers came down from the nearby hills with huge gold nuggets. Boskar’s main industry went from livestock to mining overnight.

Strengths

Mines: The discovery and mining of precious metals has enabled the “Bosses” to afford material and manpower to build improved defenses for the city and hire troops to man the walls.

Boomtown: People from all over are flocking to Boskar. Dozens of caravans and groups of people with “gold fever” enter the city everyday. The demand for goods and services has far surpassed what the original inhabitants can provide, so now the call has gone out for artisans, laborers and other professionals to come to Boskar and seek their fortune.

Weaknesses

Greed and corruption: Those that aren’t able to stake a claim of their own are doing their best to take advantage of those who have. Corrupt officials, dishonest merchants, ladies of questionable virtue, and charlatans of every stripe prey on each other like piranhas. Taverns, Lotus dens, and brothels provide their services at a premium price. Even a decent meal and a bed for the night could leave a man broke. People are complaining, but the council of men who run Boskar (collectively known as “the Bosses”) are slow to react as they are making coin hand over fist themselves.

Opportunities

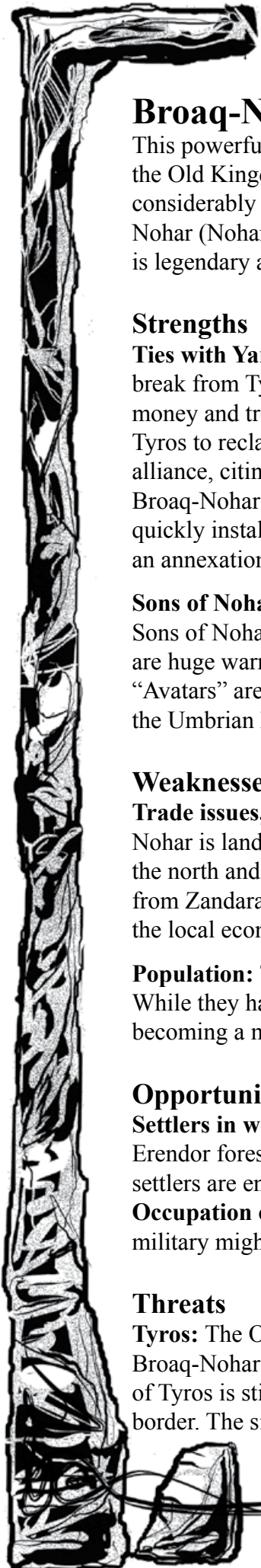
Wide open town: In such an environment it’s not hard for the enterprising adventurer to see opportunity at every turn. Law enforcement exists for those who can pay for it and consists of gangs of toughs working for the different bosses.

Gold! : Many people try their hand at mining in the hills. For some it’s profitable. For most it’s deadly. Hill tribes, bandits, wild animals, other miners, and nature herself will all conspire to end any dreams of riches.

Threats

Sikkar: If worrying about everyone else in the city wasn’t bad enough, there are still the Sikkar outside the walls. The wagon people are seriously starting to rethink this whole trading post idea. Seeing the large influx of people and the wooden stockades being replaced by stone walls is not helping their disposition. There are many calling for a council to gather the tribes for war and rid these dirt diggers from the “Sea of grass” permanently.

Radu: all of this prosperity and growth hasn’t escaped the attention of Shen-Ka the ruler of Radu. He has sent emissaries to the Bosses with pledges of friendship and military aid in case threats from the Sikkar become more serious. The Bosses aren’t too keen on any “help” from a sorcerer. While they haven’t turned Radu’s ambassadors away, they are wary of them.



Broaq-Nohar

This powerful city-state was once the easternmost city in the Kingdom of Tyros. It broke from the Old Kingdom a generation ago and, with “aid” from the island nation of Yar, has since grown considerably in strength. Broaq-Nohar is governed by a Military council. The people of Broaq-Nohar (Noharians) are said to make the finest soldiers in the world. Their bravery and iron discipline is legendary and it was a major blow to the Kingdom of Tyros when they seceded.

Strengths

Ties with Yar and Umbria: The Noharians openly allied themselves with Yar. Following their break from Tyros, Broaq-Nohar was immediately recognized as an independent state by Yar. Soon money and troops from Yar arrived in the newly formed nation in support against any attempts by Tyros to reclaim the city. Since then, the nations of Yar and Broaq-Nohar have maintained a strong alliance, citing their cultural origins as basis of their friendship. Recently the allied forces of Yar and Broaq-Nohar spearheaded a successful “war of liberation” on the island Kingdom of Umbria. They quickly installed a new government. The Noharians call it an alliance; the rest of the world sees it as an annexation. Resources from Umbria are being exclusively exported to Broaq-Nohar and Yar.

Sons of Nohar: There are rumors of a secret government sponsored cult of Nohar (known as the Sons of Nohar) that is using sorcery to create a race of Godlike warriors. These “Avatars of Nohar” are huge warriors, similar to men but with the strength, stamina and appearance of bulls. The “Avatars” are said to have been used as shock troops to devastating effect, in the final battle to usurp the Umbrian king’s throne.

Weaknesses

Trade issues, limited room and resources: In recent times the most valued commodity in Broaq-Nohar is land. The Noharians are feeling hemmed in by Tyros to the south and the Erendor Forest to the north and west. High Tariffs from the kingdom of Tyros on overland trade and the constant raids from Zandaran Freebooters and pirates from the islands in the Sea of Teeth have taken their toll on the local economy.

Population: The lack of room and resources has forced the Noharians to limit their population. While they have adapted well to making do with limited manpower, the current situation is becoming a major concern for the ruling council.

Opportunities

Settlers in woods: There has been a recent push to clear and settle the eastern portion of the Erendor forest. Some want to reach as far as the Raven Hills. Land grants are being issued and settlers are encouraged to clear and farm the new lands.

Occupation of Umbria: The recent occupation of Umbria has enabled Broaq-Nohar to exercise its military might and gain valuable trade concessions with the government of Umbria.

Threats

Tyros: The Occupation of Umbria, skirmishes on the border and signs of a strengthening of the Broaq-Noharian /Yar alliance have not gone unnoticed at the court of the High-King. The Lion of Tyros is stirring. Two legions are being dispatched from the capitol to the Tyros / Broaq-Nohar border. The situation is growing increasingly tense.

The Witch Queen: As the settlers from Broaq-Nohar destroy the forest, there are whispers that the Witch Queen of the moors is angry at the incursions being made into areas she considers part of her realms. Hunters and settlers from Broaq- Nohar have been found ritually staked out and gutted along forest paths. Others have simply disappeared, presumably “taken by the forest.” Soon there will be a showdown between the Witch Queen and the Armies of Broaq-Nohar.





Crascia

Located between Dalan's forest and the mineral rich Red Hills, Crascia is a vibrant and powerful city. Trade abounds here as river traffic from the mighty river Tros and overland trade from the Kings Road passes through Crascia massive bronze gates. In Crascia, commerce is king. The Council of Guilds and the powerful Walmar hold the true reigns of power and direct the Baron and his court of sycophants.

Strengths

Crossroads in trade: An abundance of natural resources and a secure location have insured prosperity for the people of Crascia. As mentioned previously, Crascia is a major trading hub in the kingdom of Tyros.

Home of the Free Merchants Guild, ("The Walmar"): The Free Traders Guild, better known as the "The Walmar" after its founder Guild master Walmar, is headquartered here in the city of Crascia. The Walmar is quite possibly the largest merchant guild on Erisa. It has thousands of members and their powerful caravans cross throughout the known world. The mercantile power of the Walmar is such that only the most powerful states can challenge them economically. They own a powerful merchant fleet and employ enough mercenary guards for its ships, caravans, and warehouses, which, if mustered, would equal a large army.

Weaknesses

Weak Baron: Baron Orastes of Crascia is quite possibly the least capable Baron to hold the reigns of power since the founding of the city. As such, he rules in name only: signing declarations and presiding over ceremonies as instructed by his "advisors." His steadfast loyalty to the crown is the only thing that is keeping him in his position.

Organized crime: With so much money being made and businesses thriving, it almost goes without saying that there would be a strong organized crime presence. Several "Families" operate out of Crascia.

Politics and Feuding Guilds: For the most part the guilds work in harmony: after all violence is bad for business. However, there are times when disagreements and feuds boil over into the streets, especially during election years. At such times there is plenty of opportunity for fighting men or those with specialized skills.

Opportunities

Mercantile opportunities: For merchant adventurers, Crascia offers many opportunities to find funding for new ventures into distant lands, and return with exotic goods that can be sold at great profit. Small companies and private expeditions are funded everyday by the powerful lending houses of the city. The gates of Crascia have seen the first steps of many legendary journeys.

Threats

Bandits from the forest and hills: Though the Legion provides security for the city and surrounding farms and villages, it can't be everywhere at once. Dalan's Forest and the Red Hills are home to many groups of desperate men who prey on the commerce and riches that travel the King's road. Much adventure can be found fighting or better yet, joining these vicious outlaws.

Emesa

The southernmost member of the Free Cities League, Emesa has avoided much of the depredations caused by the Pirates of Radu. Emesa is a beautiful city with “broad streets and temples that kiss the sky.” Its bustling port is filled with ships plying the coast of the Southern Sea. The renowned University of Alcides is located in Emesa. Students from all over the world come here to study at the feet of some of the most learned sages and scholars in the land, making Emesa a truly cosmopolitan city.

Strengths

Trade Hub: Emesa is at a crossroads of trade. The city is a primary trading partner with the western lands across the sea.

Merchant Fleet: Emesa boasts a large merchant navy which can be pressed into service to defend the city should the need arise.

Center of Learning: The University of Alcides enjoys autonomy within the city-state. Its council of regents recognizes that the interests of the University often coincide with the interests of the city, so the two governments often work hand in hand. In case of emergencies, the resources and talent of the university will be at Emesa’s disposal.

Weaknesses

Small Army: Emesa’s small army has always met their needs; they mostly patrol the roads and man a series of small border forts along the Deathlands Swamp. Should a significant threat present itself to the city, the army may not be enough to defend it.

Opportunities

Crossroads for Trade and Culture: There are few places in the world with academic resources and libraries comparable to that of the Great Library of Alcides. Scholars from all lands meet here to discuss, debate, and research lost knowledge and new innovations.

Gateway to the Western Kingdoms: Emesa is currently the only port that regularly receives ships from the western kingdoms. If an enterprising group of merchant adventurers decide to invest in a ship, who knows what opportunities they will find in the exotic lands of the western kingdoms?

Threats

Red Snake Cult: A secret cult has been spreading amongst many of the intellectuals in the city. The cult advocates a hedonistic lifestyle and promises forbidden pleasures for their followers. Mind altering substances and exotic orgies are used to recruit followers. The cult is a front for an elaborate plot from Yar to eventually destabilize the current government and replace it with officials who are members of the cult and, thereby, unwitting agents of Yar.

Hogar

A Member of the "Free Cities League," Hogar is located high in the mountains. Hogar's main industry comes from timber, mining, and metal smithing. The armorers and weapon smiths of Hogar produce the finest swords and mail in the known world. They also benefit from overland trade with the City of Belsa across the mountain pass. The city is ruled by a self appointed Duke (actually a wily and brave mercenary captain, who just happened to be in the right place at the right time). "The Duke" is a man of the people, he keeps the people of Hogar and the outlying settlements warm, fed, and safe--what more can one ask of a ruler?

Strengths

Excellent Defense: Hogar possesses a good sized militia that are well trained and very well equipped. The city is only accessible through certain mountainous passes that are well defended.

Stability: Economically, Hogar is very stable with a ready market for all their exported goods. Their arms and armor bring top prices as do all of their finished metal goods. Timber from Hogar is sought after by the shipwrights in Emesa.

Weaknesses

Isolation: Hogar imports all of its grain and much of its other food as well. The winters are fierce in the mountains and there is always rationing in the winter months when the passes are snowed in.

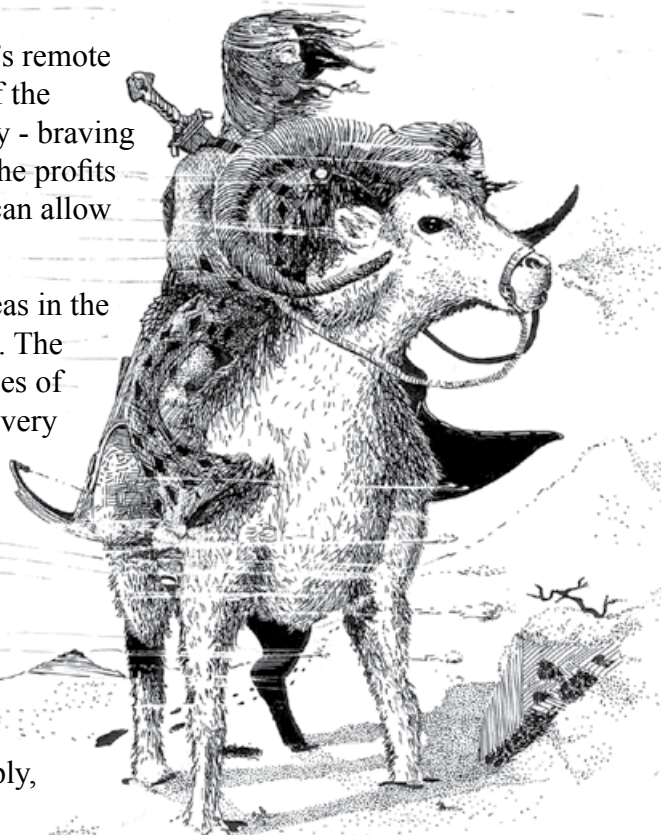
Opportunities

Small Investment, Big Returns: Because of Hogar's remote location, their weapons and armor are rare in most of the world. For the few hardy souls who make the journey - braving the mountains, bandits, hill tribes, and other perils--the profits from even a modest sized caravan of such weapons can allow a man to retire in comfort.

Ruins in the Mountains: There are several large areas in the mountains littered with ruins from ancient kingdoms. The native mountain tribes consider them ill favored places of sorcery and evil with vile creatures haunting them. Every so often though, word spreads of some lucky band of treasure hunters who manage to return from these cursed places with ancient treasures.

Threats

As stated earlier, much of the foodstuff for Hogar is imported. The limited domestic food supply is always a concern. If, during the winter months, something were to occur to taint the stored food supply, famine would quickly spread in the isolated region.



Jandahar

Jandahar is the smallest, poorest, and most remote of the “Southern Kingdoms.” The land is filled with feuding tribes, roaming bandits, vine-covered ruins, mysterious statues, haunted temples, and monolithic stone carvings. Centuries ago, the lands of Jandahar were rich and known for their vineyards. But their king, in a gambit for power, unleashed demonic powers beyond his control. The king died and the land was cursed with plague and pestilence. Since then, Jandahar has limped along. The lands are ruled by a loose council of Tribal chiefs and weak warlords. The city is ruled by a Prince, but his authority ends at the gates of his palace. The true power in Jandahar belongs to a group of assassins known as the Shades of Hala. The “Shades” are a religious death cult that specialize in quick and silent assassinations. None of the cult have ever been taken alive. Their high priestess is rumored to be the avatar of the death goddess herself.

Strengths

Hidden Cult: Jandahar is home to a secretive and powerful cult of assassins “The Shades of Hala.” It is whispered that there is no escaping from the Shades once they have laid claim on your soul.

Weaknesses

Poor Land: Economically Jandahar is the poorest of lands. There is literally nothing of value exported. Most people live at subsistence level.

Weak Government: The government of Jandahar is riddled with members of the Shades of Hala.

Opportunities

Oracle: In the ruined village of Hagath there resides an Oracle, a priestess of the goddess of fortune, Kai-na. She is said to grant every soul the answer to one question, but always at a great cost. Kings and peasants, scholars and madmen from throughout the world make the pilgrimage to the oracle.

Threats

Agendas: The Shades of Hala are weaving great schemes of world domination. They dream of bringing everyone under the thrall of their death goddess and are secretly building an army of drugged, mindless “zombies” to act as cannon fodder in their holy war against the unbelievers. Adventurers will be drawn to Jandahar by the rumors of lost treasures in the ancient ruins, but will end up tangling with the evil cultists. The cultists seek to capture rather than kill, so they can “enlighten” their victims and use them to their own ends.



Kobar

Kobar is also called The City of Stone. It is located in the heart of a remote region of the Drujistan mountain range. Kobar's days of glory are long past. Some of the residents claim to be remnants of the ancient Juna peoples whose empire stretched the length of the Drujistan Mountains. The city is ruled by an Emir known as "Rosan of Kobar" he is a sorcerer of some power, said to be able to command the demons of the earth. Once a large horde of Morgal warriors attacked the city. The Emir is said to have animated the 20 foot tall statues that surrounded the city walls. These golems of stone smashed and scattered the attacking horde and saved the city.

Strengths

The Citadel of Stone: A brotherhood of sorcerers are said to live in a citadel upon nearby Mount Alba. They are powerful, but extremely reclusive. It is rumored that the Emir is their master, and therefore at his bidding.

Temple of Na-Ko: The Desert God's main temple is located in Kobar. The priests are said to be powerful elementalists, able to magically manipulate earth and stone.

Weaknesses

Poor city: Despite its more powerful denizens, Kobar is not exactly growing concern. The Emir is much more concerned with attaining sorcerous power for his order than providing for the well being of his subjects.

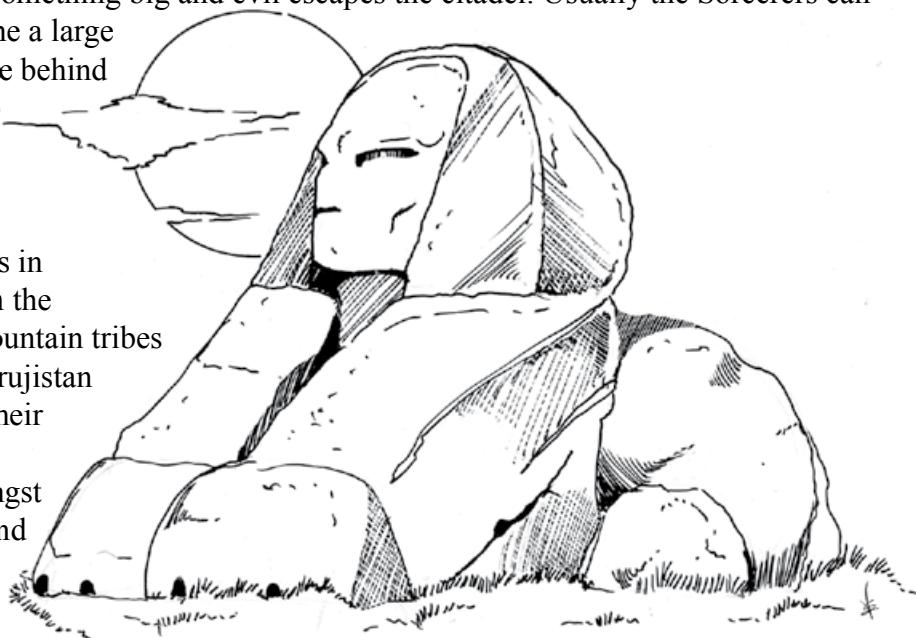
Opportunities

The Citadel's treasures: A citadel of Sorcerers? Such a thing is unheard of. Surely the most horrific of deaths await anyone foolish enough to venture there. And yet, some have mentioned that The Citadel of Stone holds riches beyond imagining.

Pest control: Every so often something big and evil escapes the citadel. Usually the Sorcerers can handle it. But from time to time a large steel blade with a lot of muscle behind it is the only thing that will do the trick. Enter our heroes.

Threats

The Jaga and Morgal: Just as in Al-Khalid, Kobar suffers from the depredations of the savage mountain tribes that make their home in the Drujistan Mountains. While they keep their distance from the city and the Citadel, they play havoc amongst the outlying villages, farms, and roads.



Kumar

One of the major Southern Kingdoms, Kumar's wealth comes from its many gold and gem mines. Kumar is often in armed conflict with Padjistan over the control of border mines and other territorial issues. As such, there is steady employment for mercenaries in Kumar. The beautiful Queen Sybillia of Kumar is obsessed with defeating Padjistan and having Kumar become the dominant power in the south. It is whispered that she has even gone so far as to entertain an alliance with Priest-Kings of Yar in order to gain an advantage that will break the military stalemate with Padjistan. Queen Sybillia rules with an iron fist. She is personally involved and has the final say in any major policy decisions.

Strengths

Strong Army: Kumar has one of the best trained and well equipped armies in the world. The constant skirmishes with the forces of Padjistan have created a battle hardened force as tough as the rugged mountains they call home.

Economic Power: The mines of Kumar supply a great deal of wealth. Queen Sybillia spends much of that wealth on her army and her network of spies in her quest to destroy Padjistan.

Weaknesses

Border War: Kumar is currently involved in a series of costly border disputes with the city-state of Padjistan that disrupt mining production. Neither side is able to make any significant progress against the other, nor is negotiation an option.

Unhappy Populace: For a country as rich as Kumar, you wouldn't know it to look at the place. There are few luxuries outside of those afforded to the queen and her court. Public works function adequately and the people are fed but almost all of the money goes to the military. The queen's secret police see that any talk of revolution is quickly crushed but the whispers continue as the people become unhappy with their queen.

Opportunities

Opportunities for Fighting Men: Anyone skilled in the arts of war will find a ready market in Kumar.

Ending the Stalemate: There are rich rewards awaiting anyone who can provide the Queen with a way to gain the upper hand in her struggle with Padjistan.

Instigate a Coup in Padjistan: The Queen will be more than willing to back any type of real effort to destabilize or overthrow the current government in Padjistan.

Threats

Threats from Padjistan: All of this animosity is not going unanswered. The Emir of Padjistan would like nothing more than to add Queen Sybillia to his private collection of oddities and he has a way of getting what he wants.

The Peasants are Revolting: The populace has had just about enough of their uncaring queen and her mad obsessions of conquest. Domestic forces may soon act on their plans to stage a coup.



Padjistan

A southern Emirate built on the wealth of its mines, Padjistan is in a constant state of conflict with Kumar over mining rights. The Emir of Padjistan is a collector of oddities. His palace is reportedly the most magnificent in the known world. He will spare no expense to attain any wonder or artifact for his collection. (He recently heard reports of a sorcerer in the north who raises dragons--now he wants a dragon.) The Emir is the actual head of state but most day-to-day business is conducted by a dizzying collection of ministers.

Strengths

Resources: The mines of Padjistan produce huge amounts of mineral wealth.

A Strong and Unconventional Army: The Emir of Padjistan spares no expense to keep his army well equipped. And, as is his nature, the Emir has gone to great lengths to hire a wide variety of unconventional forces. Among the many special units, the army of Padjistan has a war elephant contingent, two companies of Sikkar horse archers, a "Foreign Legion," and the Emir's personal Royal Bodyguard of female warriors, none of which are under 6 feet in height.

Weaknesses

It's Good to Be the Emir: With each passing day it becomes more apparent to the nobility of Padjistan that the Emir is mad. Unfortunately, the Emir has the support of the military and the people, so there is little anyone can do about it.

Secret Factions Plotting Overthrow: In every country there are those who believe they could do a better job of running things and Padjistan is no exception. These groups are secretly aided and financed by Kumar. One serious misstep by the Emir and several factions wouldn't hesitate to shake up the status quo.

Opportunities

Now Hiring: As in Kumar, there is plenty of work for a mercenary, both the average sword swinging trooper and those who possess unique skills that may not be fully appreciated by other more conventional armies.

The Great Game: Assassinate the Emir, or protect the Emir. Either job could prove to be lucrative and deadly.

Threats

Kumar and Its Queen: Queen Sybillia has a special pit in the bowels of her palace waiting for the Emir of Padjistan.

Assassins from the Cult of Hala: The Cult of Hala has just sent the Emir a gift to add to his collection of oddities - a garrote made from the braided hair of maidens sacrificed to the Grey Queen. It's a message - they are coming.

Pyrani

Pyrani is a major port city on the shores of the southern sea. It is ruled by a Governor-Regent appointed by the King of Tyros. Economically, Pyrani is vital to the Kingdom of Tyros, which is why the king appointed his brother, Prince Crixus, as Governor-Regent rather than trusting one of his Barons to rule there. He also gave his brother two well equipped legions with which to maintain trade and defend the city.

Strengths

Busy Port: Pyrani is an established trading partner with the city-state of Zandara. It is also one of the few ports that welcomes trade with Yar.

Two Strong Legions at Hand: The 9th and 12th Legions are stationed in Pyrani and it's environs. The 12th legion is currently training in shipboard combat and will eventually serve as a marine legion.

Weaknesses

Cruel Governor: While Prince Crixus is loyal to his brother, he is a cruel and ambivalent ruler.

Opportunities

Graft and Corruption: The Governor and his cronies are always on the lookout for new opportunities to line their pockets. With the right bribes and payoffs, almost any action short of rebellion will be overlooked. Crixus was given one mandate by the king: keep order enough to ensure trade. Anything else is at the governor's discretion.

Threats

Agents from Al-Khalid: Organized criminal elements from Al-Khalid have set up several illegal operations in the city. This has had a detrimental effect on income of the local criminal element. A turf war that will affect the entire city is about to break out.



Radu

Radu, also known as the Dark City, is not part of the Free Cities League. It is a nest of outlaws, pirates, beast-men, barbarians, and priests of forbidden gods. Radu is reportedly ruled by a powerful sorcerer from Yar known only as Shen-Ka. In a recent battle with the City-State of Albena, it's said the sorcerer summoned several dragons to set the enemy ships afire.

Strengths

Unconventional Forces: Radu's forces include a large pirate fleet, mercenary troops, barbarian tribesmen, were-creatures, and sorcerers. Shen-Ka has also managed to domesticate the "dragons" (actually large wyverns) that live in the frigid northern mountains. The fire that they reportedly breathe is actually canisters of highly flammable oil that their riders light and hurl at ships during battle. In the chaos of combat, it appears that the dragons are setting the fires.

Magic: Radu is one of the few kingdoms that actually uses sorcery openly. It makes this fact known to its enemies and lets the implication of summoned demons and vile curses work for it. The effect on enemy morale is very apparent as can be seen in the campaign against Albena.

Weaknesses

Resources: Radu is a land of thick forests and high mountains. There is little arable land, most of the food is imported or comes from the sea.

Factions: the same "unconventional forces" that make Radu a formidable enemy also have the potential to tear the land apart. Beast-men, outlaws, priests, etc. each have their own agendas. Rifts and feuds are frequent and bloody. Much of Shen-Ka's time and energy is spent keeping these factions in line.

Opportunities

Chaotic Region: By its very nature, Radu is a chaotic land. Shen-Ka's generals keep order to an extent, mostly in the city and the border forts. The countryside is wild and deadly. Heroes undertaking missions or quests in Radu might be able to slip in without notice.

Threats

Loss of Control: if Shen-Ka should show even the slightest weakness, there will be several factions, including a few in his own circle of under-priests, who would gladly kill him and attempt to take over.

United Front: though the defeat at the battle of Albena was a staggering blow, the Free Cities could still manage to unite under a strong leader and keep Radu's aggression in check.



Taurus

Taurus is the westernmost city in the Old Kingdom. The region Taurus oversees is an untamed wilderness bordering the Deathlands Swamp. Taurus is sparsely populated by settlers taking advantage of the large land grants offered by the crown to develop these wild lands for lumber and farming. Other cities in the kingdom see Taurus as a rough and uncultured oversized village (still protected by a wooden stockade) and the men of Taurus as simple bumpkins. The truth is that the men and women of Taurus are of hardy stock, used to defending their homes at a moments notice from enemies, both human and monstrous, that emerge from the Deathlands Swamp. As such they have little time for entertainment or gossip. Even amongst the local nobility, the intrigues and niceties of “court” are a world away from their daily reality.

Strengths

Self-sufficiency: The folk of Taurus are a tough bunch. Every man, woman and youth old enough to bend a bow is trained as a warrior. Weapons are never far from their hands and they are always ready to defend themselves or aid their neighbor. They have an extremely strong sense of community. The people of Taurus more than make up for their small numbers in determination and pure stubbornness. They have tamed the land and are starting to see a return on their investment of sweat and blood. They have pride in their accomplishments and intend to hold on to the homes they have built.

20th Legion garrison: The city of Taurus is the garrison home of the 20th Legion (4,200 officers and men). Normally a city proudly boasts of having a legion to patrol its lands and defend its walls. Unfortunately the 20th has the worst reputation of all the Legions of Tyros. Almost the entire outfit consists of misfits, convicts, troublemakers, repeat deserters and worse. The officers are no better, with command slots being filled by disgraced nobles and incompetent fools. However, it is a full strength Legion and can still fight as such when properly motivated.

Weaknesses

Small population: It takes a certain type of person to try and tame wild country. Those types are very rare. The people of Taurus may be determined and stubborn but there are still too few of them to properly secure their lands beyond the walls of the city.

Siege mentality: If the people of Taurus walk around carrying boar spears and long bows looking as if they are going to be attacked at any minute, it's because they probably are. The people are dour, stoic, no-nonsense types. Even the children seem to have an edginess to them from living on dangers doorstep.

The 20th: Often the 20th Legion is more trouble than its worth. 90% of the crime in the city can be directly linked to soldiers of the legion. The relations between the Baroness and the Legion's commander are strained to the point of breaking. Despite curfews, harsh punishments, and even hangings misconduct by the Legionnaires is still a major problem. In the garrison itself, morale is non-existent. Every trooper knows why they are there and some even take perverse pride in their disgraced status.

Opportunities

Intrigues with Belsa: The Baron of Belsa has been trying to convince his cousin the Baroness of Taurus that secession from Tyros and an alliance with him will strengthen their situation. The Baroness has always been loyal to the crown, but recently she has become increasingly frustrated that her requests for supplies and her complaints about the 20th are falling on deaf ears.

Swamp ruins: There are rumors of an ancient, treasure-filled, half sunken city somewhere in the Deathlands swamp. Over the years groups of mercenaries and other adventurers have allegedly braved the swamp ghouls and other monsters to return loaded with ancient coins and other treasures. Taurus is an ideal staging area for such an expedition.

Land grants: Land on the border near the swamp is cheap. A group of strong determined men could establish a freehold.

Rebuild a Legion: Could your heroes be the ones to change the fortunes of the 20th? Imagine the challenge of taking a rag-tag bunch of losers and turning them into a first class fighting unit. Imagine the fame your heroes would gain as commanders of such a unit. Not to mention the loyalty of the soldiers who would follow you to the gates of hell, or at least into that great big treasure filled ruined city in the swamp.

Threats

Denizens of the Deathlands Swamp: Serpent-men, Savage tribes, and outlaw gangs. The people of Taurus must remain forever vigilant against all of these threats.

Treason! : The path the Baroness of Taurus may be taking is a dangerous one. There will be direct consequences if she decides to ally herself with Belsa.



Teve

The city-state of Teve is controlled by the War-Priests of Kesh and the resulting religious fervor is strangling the city. What started as an answer to the threat of Radu has quickly turned into a full blown coup led by the Priests of Kesh. Martial law has been declared and every able bodied person has been pressed into service. The War-Priests control the government, the military, and the granaries. Any protest is treated as treason or, worse yet, blasphemy.

Strengths

War-Priests of Kesh: Teve is at war and, as fate would have it, the city is the home to the largest temple in the known world dedicated to the war god, Kesh. The temple also serves as a military academy and offers a large, well trained core force of warrior priests.

Strong Military: The War-Priests promised to strengthen Teve's defenses, and that they have done. The army and navy have been bolstered by the new conscripts. The War-Priests are a tough and dedicated cadre and their experience is shaping a well trained fighting force. While the military has only seen limited action in skirmishes with raiders from the northern forest, they have conducted themselves well.

Weaknesses

Populace under Pressure: War priests don't generally make good governors. The people of Teve are being "motivated" to face the threat from Radu, but the strain is starting to show. Teve was once a vibrant port of call and folks were used to a few liberties that have been drastically curtailed since the Priests declared martial law.

Opportunities

Forays against Radu: Anyone wanting to get in a little "sword time" can find quick employment in the army and navy of Teve. If marching and drilling aren't your particular fondness, then work in one of the scout ranger units might fit the bill nicely.

Threats

Agents from Radu: The Dark City is the largest threat to Teve at the moment. There are doubtless agents of Shen-Ka in the city, possibly even in the clergy of Kesh itself.





Tyros

Also known as The Old Kingdom, Tyros is the largest realm in the known world. The nation is ruled by a hereditary king and a council of Barons. The Barons are responsible for keeping order and providing taxes to the king. In exchange, the King maintains the legions for the defense of the realm and regulates trade throughout the land. The central government of the king has become despotic and corrupt. More and more of the Barons are becoming unhappy with the situation. Unfortunately, they have yet to unite and spend most of their time squabbling amongst themselves--raiding each others villages and nursing blood feuds. But even if they unify, civil war is out of the question. There is the constant threat of the Sikkar tribes from up north. At the first sign of internal strife, hordes of bloodthirsty barbarian tribesmen will overrun Waylander's Pass and invade Tyros. It was over fifty winters when last the Sikkar hordes swept down from their cold plains and laid waste to much of Tyros, only the Hero-King, Bron "The Hammer," was able to lead the knights of Tyros and turn the hordes in time to save the kingdom. Ever since then, a great deal of gold has been spent on fortifying the mountain passes through the plains and keeping the garrisons manned and fed.

Strengths

Pride: Tyros's main strength lies in her tradition. Citizens of Tyros are proud and rightly so. They have civilized much of the world around them. Their legions are now few but they are still well trained and formidable. If roused the Lion of Tyros could prove to still have some bite left.

The Legions: The Legions of Tyros are perhaps the largest and most professional force on the entire Northern Continent. Each Barony sends its young men and women for a mandatory five year service in the Legions. From their arrival at the training center outside the capital, all ties with their home Barony are stripped and they are indoctrinated in the "Code of the Legion" and service to the King. After training, they are subject to posting anywhere from the northern borders and Waylander's Pass, to sea duty in the south. When not defending the realm and ensuring security, the legions are responsible for maintaining public works and helping with the annual harvests. The discipline in the legions is harsh but the esprit de corps is high as is their loyalty to the king.

Weaknesses

Corrupt Government: The government of Tyros is as corrupt as they come. If you any have any dealings with the government bureaucracy, be prepared to be gouged with demands for bribes and "gifts." Politics in The Old Kingdom are a subtle and deadly art, with various Baronial houses, guilds, and factions vying for power and influence. All of this corruption and jockeying for position makes it very hard to get anything worthwhile done.

Plotting Nobility: The king's position has never been a secure one. This is why he is such a strong supporter of the Legions. His Majesty's barons are always looking for ways to improve their lot and secure a pathway to the throne.

Opportunities

Games of Tyros: every five years the city of Tyros holds a series of grand games and contests, in honor of its patron deity, Obar. Athletic, artistic, and martial competitions are held. The games are open to anyone. Nations throughout the known world send their best to the games to compete. For five weeks every five years, under the amnesty of the games, competitors from Sikkar Horsemen to Padjistani Lore Masters to wrestlers from Hogar come together to see who is the best in their respective fields.

Threats

The Sikkar: To the north of Tyros across the High Mountains lay the vast plains of the Sikkar; these barbaric tribesmen once almost wiped Tyros from the map. Their invasion was checked and repulsed at great cost. But everyone knows all it takes is one strong leader to emerge and unite the tribes and the Sikkar will be back.

Yar: While Yar is not an overt threat, the land of the priest-kings schemes and plots to weaken the old kingdom at every opportunity. These threats are almost always covert. The agents of Yar have refined espionage to a fine art.





Umbria

Umbria is a large island kingdom south of Yar and to the east of Broaq-Nohar. It had been a long standing free monarchy; a decade ago there was a coup by a group of Nobleman and Military officers led by Marshall Jagan. King Tarn Ironhawk III and the rest of the royal family were assassinated in their sleep. After several battles with loyalist forces the usurpers (with considerable aid by Noharian forces) were victorious. Martial law was immediately declared and the new government headed by Marshall Jagan allied itself with Yar and the city-state of Broaq-Nohar.

Strength

Military Rule: The military, headed by Marshall Jagan, has unified the nation under its strict rule. Umbria boasts a large modern army. No expense has been spared in equipping the troops with the best arms and training available.

Navy: Umbria's navy is it's pride, the ships are modern and the crews are well trained. They have a great deal of experience in dealing with the pirates from the Sea of teeth as well as raiders from the Southern Kingdoms.

Alliance with Yar & Broaq-Nohar: Umbria has strong economic, political and military ties with both Broaq-Nohar and Yar. Much of the raw materials mined and harvested from the island are sold to these nations at bargain rates. In exchange for these generous concessions Yar and Broaq-Nohar insure the military governments continued rule of the land. The Noharians have a security force of 500 troops for their embassy in the capital and most high level government posts are administered by advisors from Yar.

Weakness

Inexperienced military: As stated earlier, Umbria has a large and well equipped army; however, it is an army that has never been tested in combat against any other force larger than a group of bandits. The army is more like a large police force whose main duty is keeping the military government running. The lack of experience is further evidenced the government's refusal to employ experienced mercenaries to act as training cadre.

Puppet of Broaq-Nohar and Yar: Umbria's status as an independent nation is a façade. The country is a puppet of Broaq-Nohar and Yar. Marshall Jagan and his Generals make no official moves with out the approval of "advisors" from Broaq-Nohar and Yar.

Unhappy populace: The general populace of Umbria is unhappy with the current state of affairs. Unfortunately there is little the people can do about it considering the stranglehold the government has on the island. The populace usually expresses their displeasure with a general bad attitude towards government representatives and a "go slow" work mentality.

Opportunity

Dreams of glory: King Tarn was popular with the people but he wasn't the best administrator or politician. Marshal Jagan and the council feel that under their government, Umbria will be able to take its place amongst the great nations.

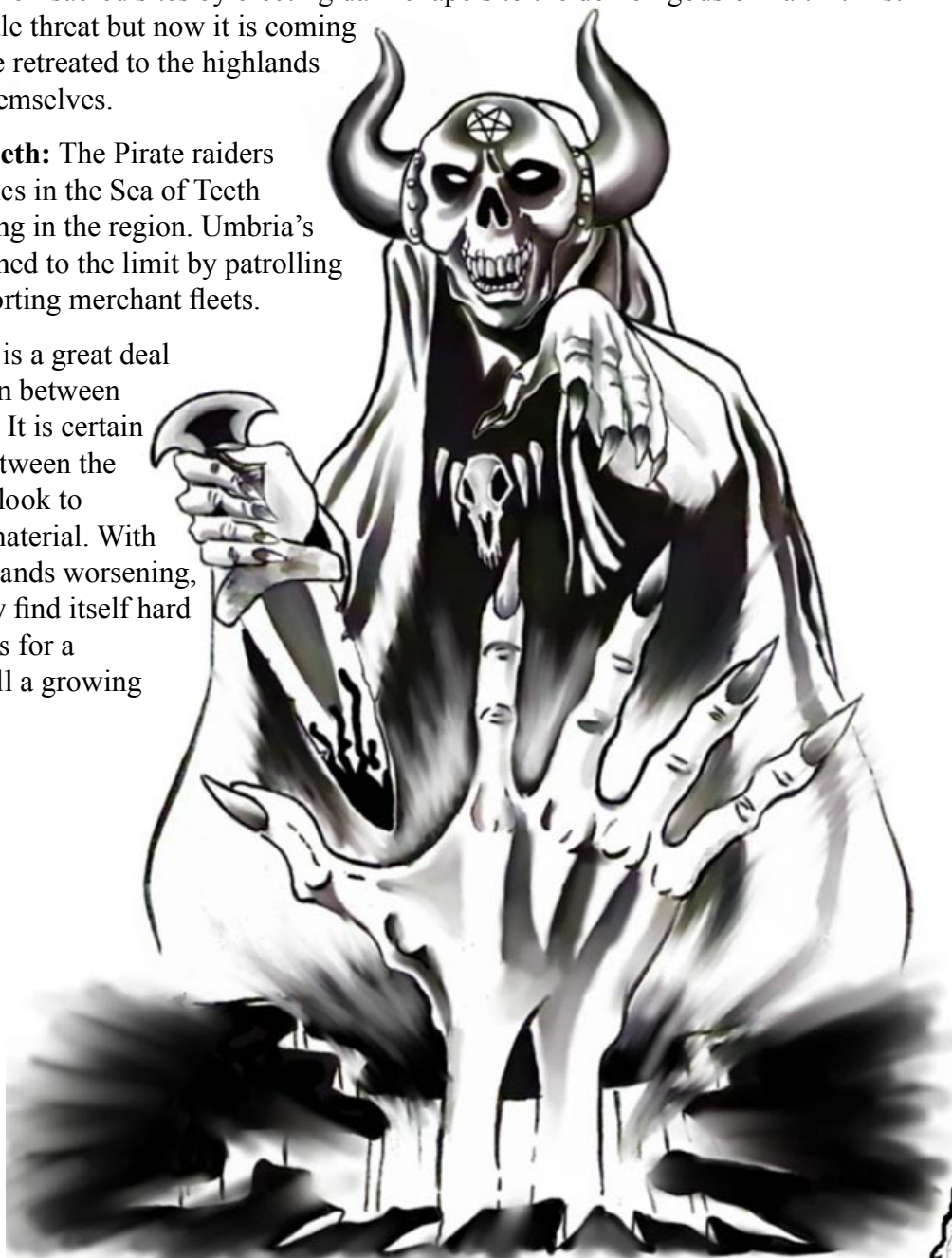
Threats

Revenge and revolution: It was always assumed that the entire royal family had been killed on the “Night of Blood.” However, it has recently been discovered that Prince Talon Ironhawk escaped that night and has been raised by one of King Tarn’s closets advisors and friends, Brother Stern, a warrior priest of Heldar. Talon is now a young man and has secretly returned to Umbria to retake his throne and settle the blood debt between his family and the Usurpers. He has reportedly established himself in the mountains north of the capital. Patriots are flocking to the highlands to join him.

Druids: The Druids of Umbria have always remained neutral in the politics and affairs of the nation and have been left to practice their ancient rites in peace far away from the eyes of city men. Since the ascent of Jagan and his Advisors from Yar there has been a steady movement to do away with the Druids and destroy their sacred sites by erecting dark chapels to the demon gods of Yar. At first this was only talk and idle threat but now it is coming to pass. The Druids have retreated to the highlands and are making plans themselves.

Pirates of the Sea of Teeth: The Pirate raiders who emerge from the isles in the Sea of Teeth play havoc on all shipping in the region. Umbria’s navy is strong but stretched to the limit by patrolling coastal villages and escorting merchant fleets.

War with Tyros: There is a great deal of saber rattling going on between Broaq-Nohar and Tyros. It is certain that if war breaks out between the two, the Noharians will look to Umbria for troops and material. With the situation in the highlands worsening, Jagan’s government may find itself hard pressed to provide troops for a demanding ally and quell a growing revolt.





Yar

To the east lies Yar, a mysterious island kingdom. Few have ventured there. Fewer yet have ever returned. The bleak island kingdom of Yar is the last vestige of an ancient empire that once stretched from across the Broken Lands, past the Moors of the Witch-Queen, and down to the Desert of Skulls. The people of Yar are the descendents of that once great race. They brood on their cold island plotting, communing with their Demon-Gods, and waiting for an opportunity to regain their former glory. The people of Yar are distinctive in that they consider body hair filthy; the priesthood and nobility especially go to great pains to rid themselves of all growth. The government of Yar is a highly structured Theocracy consisting of followers of the Demon-Princes, Morgazzon and Yago.

Strengths

Sorcery: The Priest kings of Yar are demon worshipping sorcerers and they are proud of it, revel in it, and dare anyone to try and do something about it (defeated foes make especially succulent sacrificial offerings).

Masters of Intrigue: What the Priest-Kings lack in military strength, they more than make up for in the realm of espionage. Agents of Yar have infiltrated every royal court, key government post, and guild house in the known world.

Gathering Power: Slowly but surely, through their plots, alliances, and intrigues, the Priest-Kings are widening their web of influence and power throughout Erisa. Just about every government and organization has been infiltrated by at least one agent from Yar. They influence the direction of policy and steer many heads of state.

Weaknesses

Disliked: Because of their blatant worship of demons, most people are uncomfortable around Yarians. They are always the first ones suspected of any crimes or wrong doings and are always blamed when ill fortune or pestilence strikes.

Closed Society: The Priest-Kings go to great lengths to keep their aura of mystery. It is rare to ever encounter a Yarian outside of a few traders or diplomats. Yarian ports are closed to all but authorized traders. Any non-Yarians visiting the island are closely watched and only allowed in certain areas of the cities. The only non-Yarian that one would encounter in the interior of Yar are slaves or escaped slaves.

Opportunities

Become an Agent: The Priest-Kings of Yar are always on the lookout for a few men and women who are able to check their ethics at the door and join one of the most powerful organizations in the world. When the eventual conquest is complete, the rewards for those who have shown their loyalty will be beyond belief.

Alliance with Broaq-Nohar: Yar has alliances with both Umbria and Broaq-Nohar. Broaq-Nohar is the only true ally as Umbria is a puppet state in all but name. The Noharians however, provide military might and muscle that Yar lacks.

Threats

Demons: The Priest-Kings of Yar treat with demons regularly. The arcane powers that the Priest-Kings have been given are great, but this is all at a horrendous cost. The demons demand souls for their services and the Priest-Kings aren't very particular where the sacrifices come from. If they stop coming though, there will be consequences.

Counter insurgency: not all nations are simply allowing the Yarians to have their way. There is a concerted effort by several kingdoms such as Tyros and Al-Khalid to ferret out nests of Yarian spies and other agents. Their success has been limited up to now, but they are gaining ground.



Zandara

Known as “The City of Golden Chains,” Zandara is the nexus of the slave trade in the southern lands. Kumar and Padjistan have a constant need for strong backs to work the mines, and the slave masters of Zandara are more than willing to meet their demands. In addition to slaves for labor, Zandara also provides exotic slaves from all the known lands to fulfill any desire or vice, from expertly trained gladiators to amply endowed pleasure slaves. Slave Raiders from Zandara are feared throughout the lands of the known world. Zandara is governed by a council of merchants who elect one of their number to act as Prime Minister for a ten year period.

Strengths

Economic Power: Zandara has profited well from the taxes on the slave trade. Whatever the city needs it is more than able to buy.

Merchant Fleets: In addition to the trafficking in human lives, the fleets of Zandara travel the known world carrying trade items such as walrus ivory from the northern seas to cinnamon of the orchards of Jandahar.

Weaknesses

No Respect: Though much of the known world profits from trade with Zandara, they are generally condemned as slavers and pirates. Zandarans are considered by many governments a necessary evil that must be tolerated for the economic good.

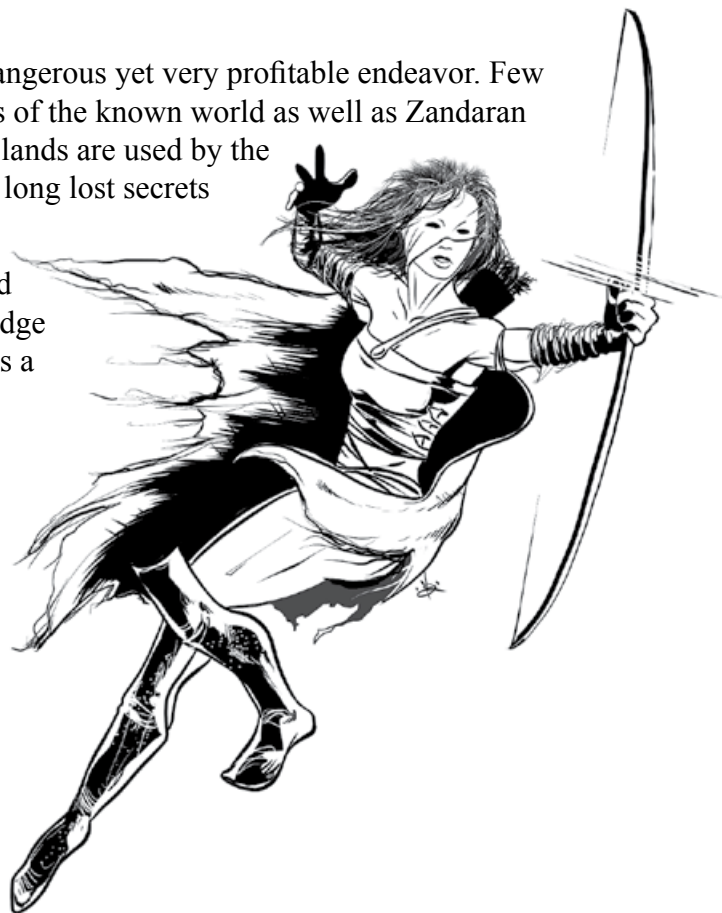
Opportunities

Raiders of Zandara: The slave trade is a dangerous yet very profitable endeavor. Few know the oceans, seas, and major waterways of the known world as well as Zandaran sailors. Many hidden coves and uncharted islands are used by the raiders. Some of these sanctuaries may hold long lost secrets and treasures of their own.

Fort Melas: The Zandarans have established a military outpost on the silver coast at the edge of the Green Death Jungle. They refer to it as a “trading post.”

Threats

Slave revolt: Whenever you have large amounts of slaves, you will have revolts, specially if the slaves are former soldiers. An entire campaign can be devised around the characters either leading a slave revolt or thwarting one.



Amra Isles

In this tropical island chain there is a monastery dedicated to St. Raphine, run by a religious order of women known as the Sword Maidens. These Warrior / Priestesses are extensively trained in the arts of combat and are sent into the world to defend women and children from the lust and greed of men. They directly oppose slavers and followers of Nogar-Sai.

Broken Lands

These lands were once part of the ancient empire of Yar. Three major cities were located here, but their names, once cursed and forbidden, have since been forgotten. Whatever transgression the people of the forgotten cities committed, it was enough to have the gods wipe them and their civilization from the world of man. Today, these lands barely sustain life at the most basic and barbaric level. Even so, small groups of escaped slaves from Yar and elsewhere eke out a living of sorts here and, from time to time, treasure hunters have been known to brave the Broken Lands in search of the ruined cities.

Corsair Coast

The Coast is so named because the Pirates from the Sea of Teeth and slavers from Zandara raid the villages and towns in this region. The raids have subsided a bit since the growth of Broaq-Nohar's navy.

Erendor forest

This primeval forest serves as a buffer between the lands claimed by the city-state of Broaq-Nohar and the Moors of the Witch-Queen. The dark forest of Erendor is virtually impenetrable and often seems alive. All sense of time and place is lost for anyone brave enough to enter its embrace.

Dalan's Forest

Dalan's forest is a picturesque area of tall redwoods and thick oak. The woods are carefully harvested and much of the forests have been parceled to noble families and men of wealth to be used for hunting and relaxation; however, there are still areas with ancient ruins, stone altars and barrow mounds that even the hardest forester will not enter.

Darklands

The Darklands are a collection of deep conifer forests that lead into the great Ice Spires. These forests are home to savage tribes of were-beasts and other monsters. Many of these tribes have fallen under the influence of the sorcerer who rules Radu. They worship the sorcerer (who is himself said to be part beast) as a god, and serve him with fanatical loyalty.

Deathlands Swamp

The Deathlands swamp is nearly impenetrable. The air is humid and oppressive; the water is fetid and as thick as sludge in some places. The insects are large and carry death. Carnivorous plant life struggles with huge reptilian creatures for dominance in this emerald tinged hell. Deep in the heart of the Deathlands there are Tribes of wild men (descendants of escaped slaves, convicts, and outlaws) who call the swamp home. They are rarely seen but actively raid settlements on the outskirts of the swamp.



Desert of Skulls

The Desert of Skulls is an unforgiving place. Unlike the rocky scrub desert of the Broken Lands, the Desert of Skulls consists of endless miles of sand dunes, with only an occasional oasis or monolithic ruin to break the monotony.

Drujistan Mountains

The Drujistan Mountains are home to the ancient Juna, Morgal, Jaga, and a hundred other bloodthirsty tribes. The mountains are treacherous and filled with treasure for anyone brave enough to test their luck against the wicked steel of these savage mountain tribesmen.

Great Forest

This ancient forest lies in the kingdom of Tyros but it has in no way been tamed by civilization. Semi-barbaric tribes and monstrous beasts call the Great Forest home. There are also areas littered with the haunted ruins of long forgotten kingdoms.

High Mountains

These are the located in the center of the northern continent. The mountains are home to many dangerous creatures and extremely territorial tribes. Even the barbarian Sikkar and the Legions of Tyros avoid tangling with the tribesmen of the High Mountains.

The Ice Spires

The Ice Spires are home to the tallest of the mountains on Erisa. Living in this frozen and inhospitable land are hardy tribesmen who eke out a living in a state of semi barbarism hunting mammoths, ice worms and other creatures that call the cold barren spires their home.

Moors of the Witch-Queen

Whether she is a witch, a queen, a demon, or a goddess, she has lived in the moors since the kingdoms of men first arose. In her moors her power is supreme: every living thing from the swamp cats to the giant willow trees pay her homage and obey her commands. There are several tribes of escaped slaves and other outlaws who now make their home in the moors and pay the Witch-Queen tribute.

Red hills

The Red Hills separate the Moors of the With-Queen from the Kingdom of Tyros. The witch-Queens influence stretches into the hills but much of the range is a “no mans land.” Because the Red Hills act as a buffer of sorts between Tyros and the Witch-Queens domain, it is an ideal destination for criminals, outlaws, and escaped slaves.

Sea of Teeth

Hidden amongst the maze of islands and deadly reefs in the sea of Teeth are bands of pirates who raid the nations of that region with impunity. There have been several military expeditions into the archipelago to hunt down the pirates but none of the expeditions have been the least bit successful.

Sikkar Plains (Sea of Grass)

The mighty Sikkar are a nomadic people who call the “Sea of Grass” their home. Dozens of tribes travel in their wagons following the herds of bison. Each tribe is independent of the others, though they do meet throughout the year in large gatherings to trade and arrange marriages. They live for the simple pleasures of hunting and raiding each other for horses and women. They worship the Bull-God and talk of a day when the tribes will unite and plunder the stone walled cities of the south.

Silver Coast – Jungle of Green Death

It is known as the Silver Coast because of the profit it brings those who can survive its dangers. Slaves, spices, ivory, and rare woods are here for the taking if you can survive the ancient ruins, monstrous beasts and bloodthirsty savages.

Voltan Range

Separating the Broken Lands from the Sikkar Plains, the Voltan Range is said to be the home of the great dragons.

Waylander’s Pass

Waylander’s Pass has been the avenue for several invasions of Sikkar hordes in the past. After the most recent invasion half a century ago, a series of fortifications were built to defend the pass against further incursions from the Sikkar.





GODS OF ERISA

Almost every hero in Sword & Sorcery literature eventually runs afoul of the Gods, and it is no different on Erisa. When the Gods interfere with mortals it's usually to relieve boredom, advancing some elaborate strategy that involves improving their position in the Pantheon, or to oppose the strategy of a rival God. The Gods sometimes act as patrons to the heroes, using and abusing them as the situation warrants. Heroes will rarely come into direct conflict with the gods though they may interact with their agents or Avatars.

Though the Gods rarely play a direct hand on Erisa, their influence is undeniably felt through their worshippers. They are invoked often in oaths, prayers, and pleas. Their agents are abroad furthering the mysterious agendas of their masters. The following is a brief list of some of the major deities worshipped by the peoples of Erisa. The list is by no means complete as many demi-gods, hero-gods, family gods etc. are venerated as well. The names given are the ones most associated with the deities in question – different cultures, however, may have different regional names for the same deity.

We have also included a few suggested areas of influence that each deity might grant to their priests. Players are encouraged to work with the GM's to create spells and miracles appropriate to their own campaigns.

Ashar: Goddess of thieves and the night

Ashar is invoked by thieves, watchmen, and anyone who does business during the dark of night. There is no known organized following for Ashar, but shrines to her are often found in hidden grottos. Ashar would grant spells related to thievery, darkness, deceptions or illusions at night, nocturnal animals, and movement. Priests of Ashar gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for spells cast at night.

Aviva: Goddess of the oceans and seas

Aviva is one of the three Gods in the "Celestial Family". She is the wife of Roneth and the mother of Oram. Sailors and those traveling or making their living on the seas pay her homage. Aviva would grant spells related to manipulating the waters of the oceans and seas of Erisa and befriending and seeking aid from creatures of the sea. Priests of Aviva gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for spells cast while in the ocean.

Bol-Vy: God of strength and of the Sikkar

Bol-Vy was an ancient Sikkar Chieftain who legend says, was raised to Godhood for his bravery and love of his people. Warriors dedicate fallen enemies to him. Shamans offer prayers to him to insure healthy herds and rain. Because of his legendary strength and fighting prowess, he is known as the Bull-God. Priests of Bol-Vy may be granted spells that strengthen, protect, aid in battle and survival. They also gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for spells cast while in The Sikkar Plains.

Hala: Death goddess

Hala is a goddess who is revered more out of fear than love. Most seek to show respect and placate her in order that her attentions turn elsewhere. She considers undead a personal affront to her authority and her clergy are instructed to root out any undead and destroy them. Priests of Hala may be granted spells of divination, communication and protection. Priests of Hala gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for spells cast while combating undead.



Heldar: God of light, the dawn, duty and oaths

Heldar is the truthsayer and the guardian. He is said to see the truth of everything and cannot be deceived. Oaths made in his name are the strongest. If broken not only is the transgressor damned, but his line as well, for five generations. Priests of Heldar may be granted spells of divination, light, duty, protection and combat. Heldar's priests gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for spells cast at dawn or in daylight.

Honir: God of nature, beasts, and hunters

Honir is the personification of nature, as man sees him. Therefore he is worshipped as a provider and teacher to mankind. The lessons of hunting, agriculture, husbandry, and generally living at one with the land as a partner rather than a despoiler are foremost in the teachings of his clergy. Priests of Honir are known as Druids they may be granted spells related to nature, the elements, animals, survival. Priests of Honir gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for spells cast while in the wild.

Grun: God of the common man, the laborer, the slave.

Grun is the God venerated by most of the people of Erisa. His temples and shrines are found in every city and village. He is the God of perseverance and hope. Priests of Grun may be granted spells of endurance, strength, and protection. Priests of Grun gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for spells cast while subjugated, imprisoned, or under duress.

Inisa: Fire goddess

Inisa represents the destructive force of fire rather than beneficial. As with the goddess Hala, offerings are made not to entreat her but to ensure that her fiery gaze is directed elsewhere. Temples to Inisa are powerful in larger cities where the offerings from various guilds are quite substantial. Priests of inisa may be granted spells involving fire and destruction. Priests of Inisa gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for spells cast while causing destruction.

Jeris: Goddess of lovers, passion, lust and vengeance

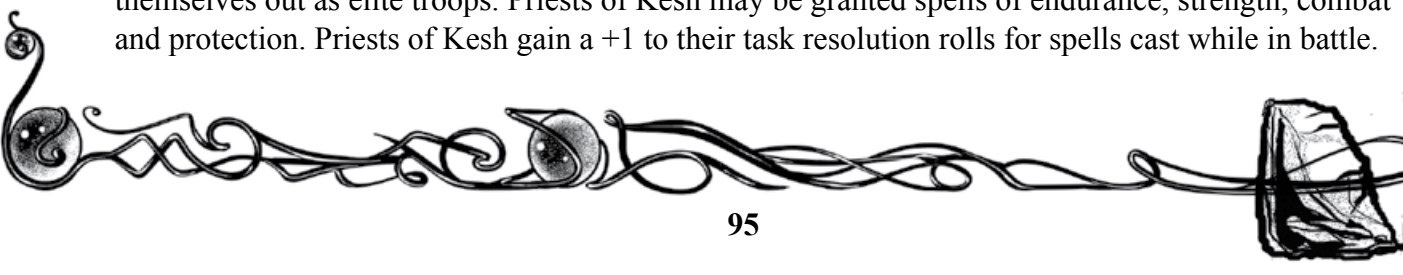
Jeris has a dual aspect, that of passionate love but also carnal lust and infidelity. She is invoked by young lovers as well as adulterers who seek to keep their liaisons secret. She is also the goddess of vengeance and of those who have been slighted. As you can imagine, mans nature being what it is, her temples are rich in offerings. Priests of Jeris may be granted spells involving beauty, revenge, lies, and deception. Priests of Jeris gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for spells cast for love or revenge.

Kai-na: Goddess of fortune

Kai-na is the patron goddess of merchants, gamblers and anyone in need of good fortune. Which is to say everyone offers this goddess prayers. Unfortunately, she is fickle and at times very particular with her favors. Priests of Kai-na may be granted spells of any type or sphere. Priests of Kai-na gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for all spells cast, but only 50% of the time.

Kesh: God of battles

Lord Kesh is representative of warfare as a noble endeavor. Kesh is revered by professional soldiers and mercenaries. His most devoted followers administer the finest military academies in the world. Kesh also has several orders of Warrior monks who are dedicated to the art of warfare and often hire themselves out as elite troops. Priests of Kesh may be granted spells of endurance, strength, combat and protection. Priests of Kesh gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for spells cast while in battle.





Morgazzon: The Demon-Prince of Madness

Morgazzon is said to be the bastard son of Nogar-Sai and a succubus. He is handsome, witty, and completely psychotic. He is worshipped by lycanthropes, also by the people of Yar and of late, Umbria. Priests of Morgazzon may be granted spells of deception, pain, destruction and madness. Priests of Morgazzon gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for spells cast beneath a full moon.

Obar: God of honor and perfection

Patron of Tyros, Obar is the god of honor, perfection, and nobility (at least the ideal of nobility). Obar is also the patron of the games of Tyros. The current royal family of Tyros is believed to be descended directly from Obar, and therefore infused with his wisdom. Priests of Obar may be granted spells of divination, knowledge, endurance, strength, and agility. Priests of Obar gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for spells cast defending those of noble birth.

Obra-Irca: God of travelers, scholars, knowledge.

Obra-Irca is known as the Journeyer, his priests travel throughout the lands of Erisa gathering knowledge and exchanging news. Priests of Obra-Irca never remain in one place for long, a year at the most. The priests maintain libraries in remote areas where the accumulated knowledge of their travels is cataloged and kept safe. They also maintain hostels and roadside shrines where one can find safety from the elements. It is generally considered an honor to offer a "follower of the path" a meal and bed for the night. Conversely turning away or harming a traveling priest of Obra-Irca is considered very bad luck. Priests of Journeyer are often accompanied by a faithful hound. Priests of Obra-Irca may be granted spells of travel, defense, knowledge, and communication. Priests of Obra-Irca gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for spells cast while on a road, trail, path, or highway.

Oram: Goddess of rivers daughter of Aviva

Oram is the goddess of lakes, rivers, streams generally any fresh waterways natural or manmade. Bridges are sacred, to her and most folk utter prayers to her before and after their crossing. Priests of Oram may be granted spells that involve freshwater, waterbourne travel and animals that dwell in freshwater. Priests of Oram gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for spells cast while in a body of freshwater or on a bridge.

Na-Ko: God of the earth, mountains and desert folk, also known as The Scorpion God

Na-Ko is the patron Deity of the Desert peoples of the Drujistan Mountains and the desert of Skulls. Scorpions are sacred to Na-Ko and his gem filled desert temples are said to be guarded by giant man-scorpions. Priests of Na-Ko may be granted spells of survival, sand, the desert, earth, desert creatures, heat and cold. Priests of Na-Ko gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for spells cast while they are in contact with earth or stone.

Nohar: God of war and victory

Unlike Lord Kesh, Nohar is the god of war, for the sake of conflict. Followers of Nohar revel in the lust of battle and the taste of victory at any price. Nohar is of course the patron god of the city-state of Broaq-Nohar. Priests of Nohar may be granted spells of Combat, strength, and endurance. Priests of Nohar gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for spells cast while on a battle field or killing ground.

Nogar-Sai: Evil, undead

The “Dark One” is evil personified. His followers worship him in the hopes that he blesses them with power. This power comes in the form of un-life that he bestows upon them. Many of Nogar-Sai’s priests and high placed worshipers are Vampires, Liches, and Necromancers who yearn for the power of immortality. Nogar-Sai’s sacrificial altars are stained with the blood of innocents. Priests of Nogar-Sai may be granted spells of pain, destruction, deception, and despair. Priests of Nogar-Sai gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for spells cast against living beings.

Ranni: Goddess of secrets.

As one would expect the followers of Ranni meet in secret. Their numbers and hierarchy are unknown. Because they worship that which is hidden and covet knowledge that no one else possesses, they are a force to be reckoned with in a world steeped in hidden lore and intrigue. Priests of Ranni may be granted spells of stealth, secrecy, knowledge, and deception. Priests of Ranni gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for spells cast to conceal, hide, or deceive.

Roneth: God of the sky, rains, and crops

Roneth is the sustainer of life who showers the world and ensures the harvests. He is also the Storm that brings the bite of winter and the winds which nothing made by man can stand against. Priests of Roneth may be granted spells that deal with the weather, elements, and plant life. Priests of Roneth gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for spells cast while under a clear sky or a storm.

St. Raphine: Demigoddess of righteous vengeance and the protector of children.

St. Raphine was a warrior priestess of Heldar who died single handedly successfully defending an orphanage from a horde of ghouls. Her cult has a growing following and is spreading throughout the nations of Erisa. St. Raphine is the guardian of homes and children. There is a monastic order in the Amra Isles where priestesses are trained in the arts of combat and sent forth to defend the faithful. St. Raphine holds a special enmity towards Nogar-Sai, the god of undead. Her priesthood will go out of their way to root out and destroy any worshippers of the Dark One. Priests of Saint Raphine may be granted spells of protection, combat, divination and light. Priests of Saint Raphine gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for spells cast while defending children or a home.

Yago: Demigod of violent death, murder, and chaos.

The Lord of Murder is a prince amongst the demons who serve Nogar-Sai. His area of influence is violent death, murder and the chaos that they create. He is the patron of a cult of particularly violent assassins known as “The Children of Yago”. Priests of Yago may be granted spells involving pain, deception, and poison. Priests of Yago gain a +1 to their task resolution rolls for spells cast while attempting to murder someone.



BESTIARY OF ERISA

Here you will find creatures to populate your world of adventure from the ordinary but deadly Alligator to the extraordinary Yeti. Naturally, we can't possibly list every creature, natural or not, that populate a fantastical world where the discovery of the unknown is frequent and fraught with danger. As the Referee, if you're not comfortable with creating a creature from the ground up, just pick one of the following beasts and change their stats, skills and weapons around a bit. In the game, nobody will guess that you took the stats for a Gila monster and turned it into a four-armed ape man that has armored scales on its belly. Or you can use the following table as a guide to creating your own creature – decide on it's size and that will give you the basics of your creature – the rest you can work out from there:

<i>Creature Size</i>	<i>Average Damage</i>	<i>Average Lifeblood</i>	<i>Base Move*</i>	<i>Example</i>
Tiny	1	1	15'	Scorpion
Very small	d2	2	20'	Ferret
Small	d3	5	25'	Hawk
Medium	d6-1	10	25'	Boar
Large	d6	20	30'	Gorilla
Very large	d6+2	30	30'	Yeti
Huge	2d6-1	40	35'	Rhinoceros
Massive	2d6	50	35'	Elephant
Enormous	2d6+2	60	40'	Dinosaur
Gigantic	3d6	70	40'	Dragon
Immense	3d6+2	85	45'	Hydra
Colossal	4d6	100	45'	Kraken



Common Animals:

ALLIGATOR

Attributes

Strength 4
Agility 1
Mind -2

Combat Abilities

Attack with 1 bite +1; damage 1d6+2
Defence: 1
Protection: 2 (tough/scaly hide)
Lifeblood: 20

ANACONDA

Attributes

Strength 4
Agility 1
Mind -1

Combat Abilities

Attack with constriction +2; damage 1d6
Defence: 0
Protection: 1 (tough hide)
Lifeblood: 20

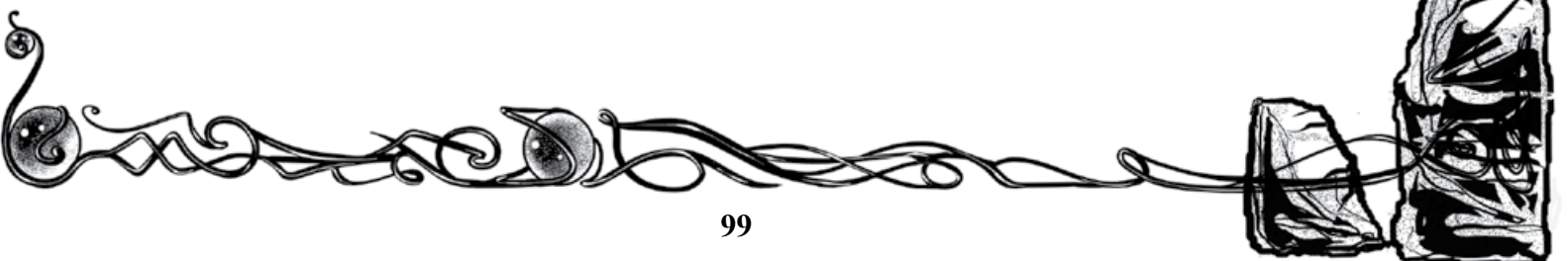
BEAR

Attributes

Strength 4
Agility 0
Mind -1

Combat Abilities

Attack with 1 bite + 1; damage 1d6
Attack with 2 claws +0 per attack; damage d6 (+ special)
Defence: 1
Protection: 1 (thick pelt)
Lifeblood: 20
Special: If the bear hits with both claws, it can grapple its opponent causing a further d6 constriction damage



BISON

Attributes

Strength 5
Agility -1
Mind -2

Combat Abilities

Attack with horns +2; damage 1d6
Attack with 2 hooves +0 per attack; d6 damage
Defence: 0
Protection: 1 (tough hide)
Lifeblood: 20

BOAR

Attributes

Strength 2
Agility 0
Mind -1

Combat Abilities

Attack with 1 bite +1; damage 1d6-1
Defence: 0
Protection: 1 (tough hide)
Lifeblood: 10

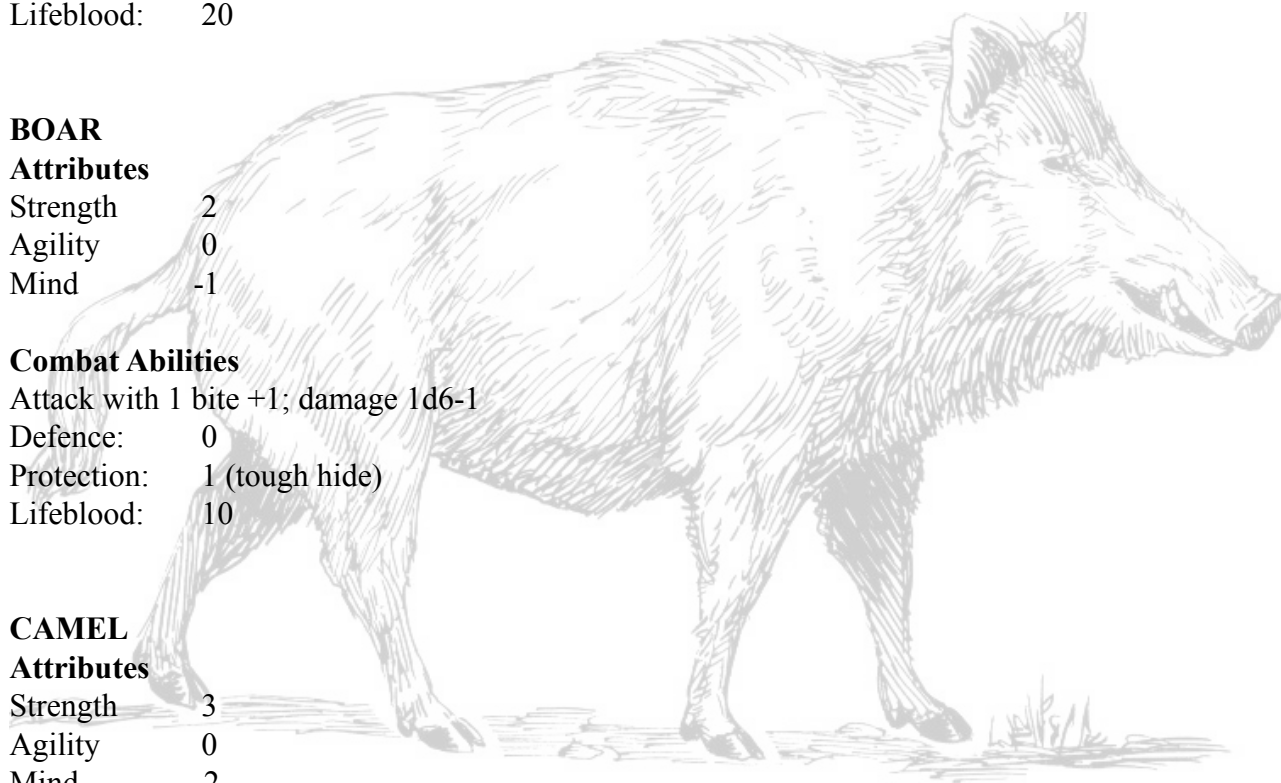
CAMEL

Attributes

Strength 3
Agility 0
Mind -2

Combat Abilities

Attack with 1 bite +1; damage 1d6-1
Attack with 2 hooves +0; d6-1
Defence: 0
Protection: 1 (thick pelt)
Lifeblood: 20



COBRA

Attributes

Strength 1
Agility 2
Mind -1

Combat Abilities

Attack with 1 bite +1; damage 1d3 + poison
Defence: 2
Protection: 1 (tough hide)
Lifeblood: 10

(Poison: Cobras are venomous; one bite can paralyze and kill their prey within minutes. The victim dies from suffocation, as the lungs and heart stop. To avoid being paralyzed, make a Hard task check using Strength. If paralyzed, you get another Hard check after a couple of minutes – this time, if you fail, you are killed).

ELEPHANT

Attributes

Strength 10
Agility -2
Mind -1

Combat Abilities

Attack with tusks +1; damage 2d6-1
Attack with hooves (trample) +0, 2d6-1
Defence: 0
Protection: 3 (thick hide)
Lifeblood: 40

FERRET

Attributes

Strength -2
Agility 2
Mind -1

Combat Abilities

Attack with 1 bite +3; damage 1d2
Defence: 3
Protection: 0
Lifeblood: 2





GORILLA (Carnivorous)

Attributes

Strength 3
Agility 0
Mind 0

Combat Abilities

Attack with 1 bite +1; damage 1d6-1
Attack with 2 claws +2 each attack, damage d6-1
Attack with all 3 at +0
Defence: 2
Protection: 1 (tough hide)
Lifeblood: 13

HAWK

Attributes

Strength -2
Agility 2
Mind -1

Combat Abilities

Attack with 1 peck +3; damage 1d3
Attack with 2 claws +2; damage d3
Defence: 2
Protection: 0
Lifeblood: 3

HORSE

Attributes

Strength 5
Agility 0
Mind -1

Combat Abilities

Attack with 1 bite +1; damage 1d6
Attack with 2 hooves +0 each attack, damage d6
Defence: 0
Protection: 1 (tough hide)
Lifeblood: 20

LEOPARD

Attributes

Strength 1
Agility 3
Mind 0

Combat Abilities

Attack with bite +4; d6-1 damage

Attack with 2 claws +2 per attack; d6-1 damage each
(Attack with all 3 attacks at +1 each)

Defence: 2
Protection: 0
Lifeblood: 10

LION/TIGER

Attributes

Strength 2
Agility 2
Mind 0

Combat Abilities

Attack with bite +4; d6 damage

Attack with 2 claws +2 per attack; d6 damage each
(Attack with all 3 attacks at +1 each)

Defence: 2
Protection: 1 (tough hide)
Lifeblood: 15

MONKEY

Attributes

Strength -1
Agility 4
Mind 0

Combat Abilities

Attack with bite +3; d3 damage

Attack with 2 claws +2 per attack; 1 damage each
(Attack with all 3 attacks at +1 each)

Defence: 3
Protection: 0
Lifeblood: 3



RHINOCEROUS

Attributes

Strength 8
Agility -3
Mind -2

Combat Abilities

Attack with horn +2; 2d6 damage
Attack with 2 hooves +0; 2d6-1 damage
(Attack with all 3 attacks at -1 each)
Defence: 0
Protection: 3 (Tough hide)
Lifeblood: 40

SHARK (GREAT)

Attributes

Strength 8
Agility 0
Mind 0

Combat Abilities

Attack with bite +3; 2d6-1 damage
Defence: 1
Protection: 2 (Tough skin)
Lifeblood: 40

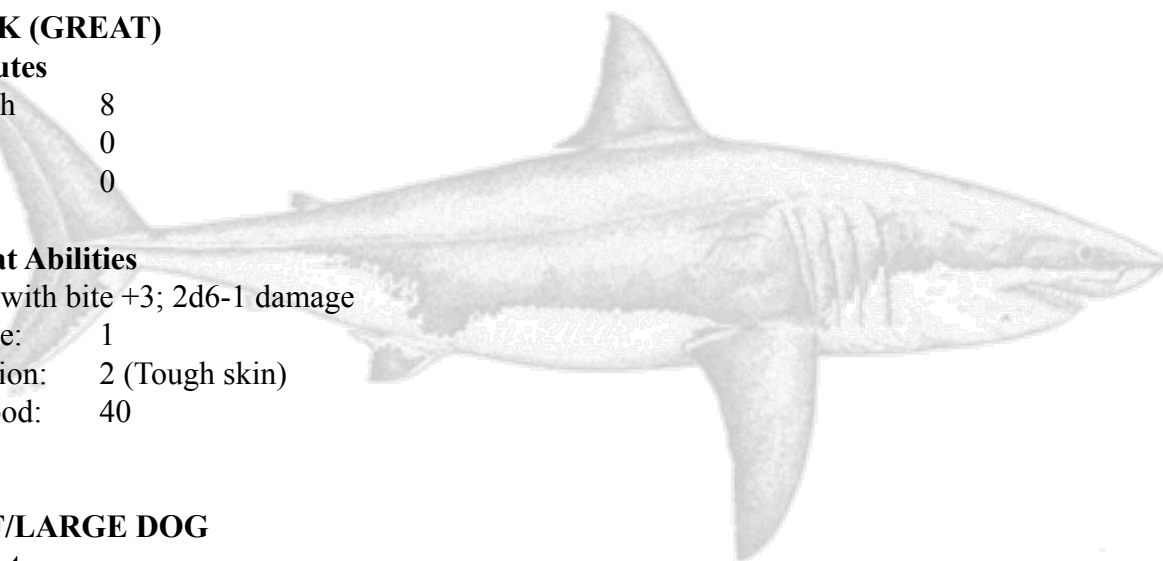
WOLF/LARGE DOG

Attributes

Strength 0
Agility 1
Mind 0

Combat Abilities

Attack with bite +3; d6-1 damage
Defence: 1
Protection: 0
Lifeblood: 7



Monsters & Other Menaces:

BASILISK

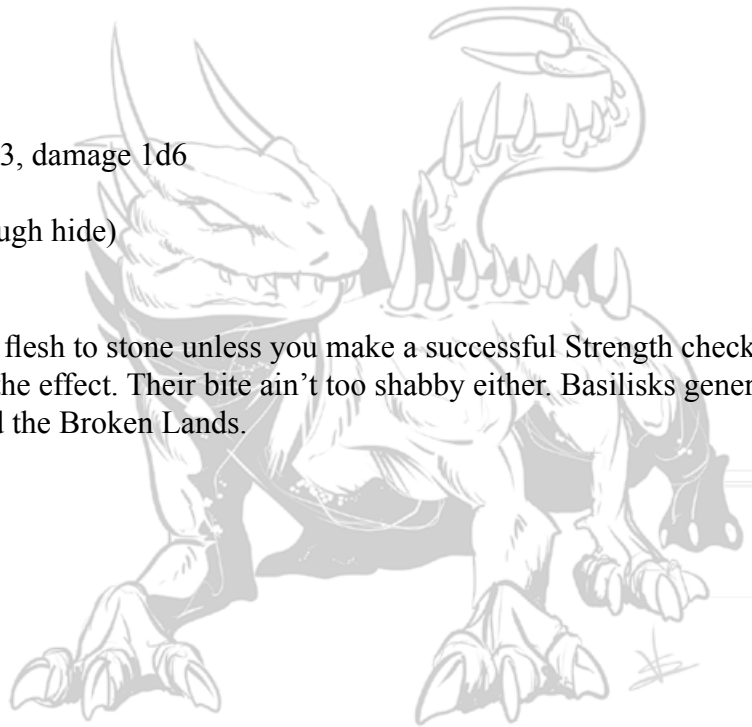
Attributes

Strength	5
Agility	1
Mind	0

Combat Abilities

Attack with 1 bite +3, damage 1d6	
Defence:	1
Protection:	2 (tough hide)
Lifeblood:	20

Their gaze will turn flesh to stone unless you make a successful Strength check (Hard task difficulty) to avoid the effect. Their bite ain't too shabby either. Basilisks generally inhabit the Desert of Skulls and the Broken Lands.



CHIMERA

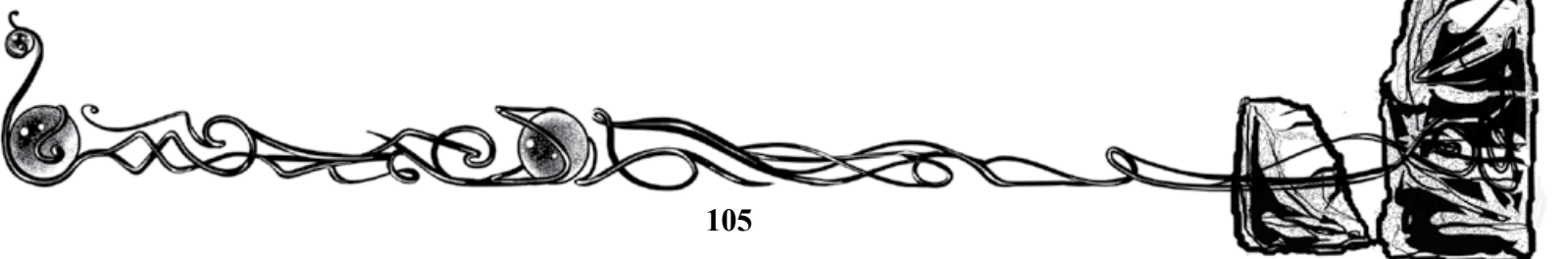
Attributes

Strength	8
Agility	-1
Mind	0

Combat Abilities

Attack with bite:	+1; 2d6-1 damage
Attack with horns:	+1; 2d6-1 damage
Attack with Fire-Breath:	+4 (ranged) 2d6+2 damage
Defence:	0
Protection:	3 (Tough hide)
Lifeblood:	40

This large bat-winged creature is as large as a rhinoceros and has a horse-sized dragon's head that breathes fire, a Lion's head, which has a nasty bite and a goat head that will gore you with its four-foot long horns. Chimera typically dwell in the High Mountains of the northern continent.





DEMON

Attributes

Strength	variable
Agility	variable
Mind	variable

Combat Abilities

Attacks	variable
Defence:	variable
Protection:	variable
Lifeblood:	variable

Demons can assume any form the GM wishes; from a 40-foot tall, serpent-fanged, troll to a six year-old boy named Damien. Or just toss two random creatures together and add the heavy smell of brimstone. You now have a classic sword & sorcery demon. Some demons use magic and will therefore have magician ranks. Some demons are immune to mundane weapons.

DINOSAUR

Attributes

Strength	12
Agility	-1
Mind	-2

Combat Abilities

Attack with 1 bite	+3, damage 2d6
Attack with 2 claws	+1, damage 2d6
(Attack with all 3 at +0 each attack)	
Defence:	0
Protection:	4 (very tough hide)
Lifeblood:	50

These are huge prehistoric reptilian creatures. For simplicity's sake consider these to be Allosaurus or T. Rex type dinosaurs. Dinosaurs are found in the Green Death Jungle. (If you wish to expand upon the types of dinosaur for your game, there are more dinosaurs to be found in the core BoL rulebook).

DJINN

Attributes

Strength	variable
Agility	variable
Mind	variable

Combat Abilities

Attacks	variable
Defence:	variable
Protection:	variable
Lifeblood:	variable

Like demons, djinn can do and be just about anything; used wisely by the Referee they can be very entertaining.

DRAGON

Attributes

Strength	15
Agility	-2
Mind	1

Combat Abilities

Attack with bite:	+1; 2d6-1 damage
Attack with Fire-Breath:	+4 (ranged) 3d6 damage
Defence:	0
Protection:	5 (tough, scaly hide)
Lifeblood:	70

Dragons are gigantic flying lizards that breathe fire. They are extremely rare and inhabit remote mountain regions.

HYDRA

Strength 16
Agility -1
Mind -1

Combat Abilities

Attack with 1 bite +2; damage 3d6+2 (+ poison)

(If the first bite hits, the creature has a second attack at +1 to hit (at the same or a different opponent). If that attack is successful, it gets a third attack at +0 to hit and so on, until it misses or all heads have had an attack).

Defence: 0

Protection: 4 (tough hide)

Lifeblood: 80

A Hydra is an immense serpentine creature with eight heads of venom-dripping nastiness. Each head gets an attack. Hydras generally live in swamplands and marshes such as the Deathlands Swamp and the Moors of the Witch-Queen.

Special: 8 heads (Each head takes 10 points of damage to “kill”).

Special: Poisonous Bite (At the end of the battle, make a Tough task check, using strength, each minute to avoid an additional 1 point of poison damage, until you succeed the check or pass out and then die)

GIANT SNAKE

Attributes

Strength 6
Agility 0
Mind -1

Combat Abilities

Attack with constriction +0; damage 2d6-1

(Attack with fangs +2; damage d6+2 (+ poison)

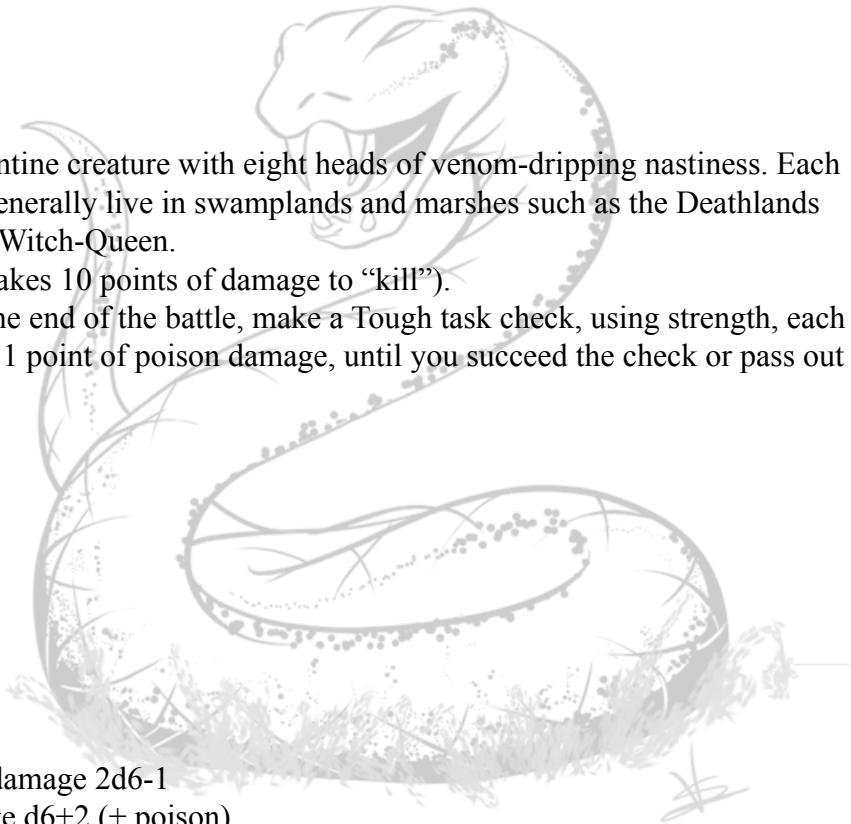
Defence: 0

Protection: 2 (tough hide)

Lifeblood: 35

A giant snake consists of 40 feet of body. Some are constrictors and some have poisonous bite. In rare cases, giant snakes are known to be both constrictors and have poison fangs.

(Poison: Giant snakes are venomous; one bite can paralyze and kill their prey within minutes. The victim dies from suffocation, as the lungs and heart stop. To avoid being paralyzed, make a Tough task check using Strength. If paralyzed, you get another Hard check after a couple of minutes – this time, if you fail, your hero is killed).



GIANT SPIDER

Attributes

Strength	2
Agility	1
Mind	-1

Combat Abilities

Attack with bite; damage d6-1 (+ poison)

Defence:	1
Protection:	0
Lifeblood:	10

(Poison: Giant spiders are venomous; one bite can paralyze and kill their prey within minutes. The victim dies from suffocation, as the lungs and heart stop. To avoid being paralyzed, make a Moderate task check using Strength. If paralyzed, you get another Moderate check after a couple of minutes – this time, if you fail, your hero is killed).

KRAKEN

Attributes

Strength	18
Agility	-4
Mind	-2

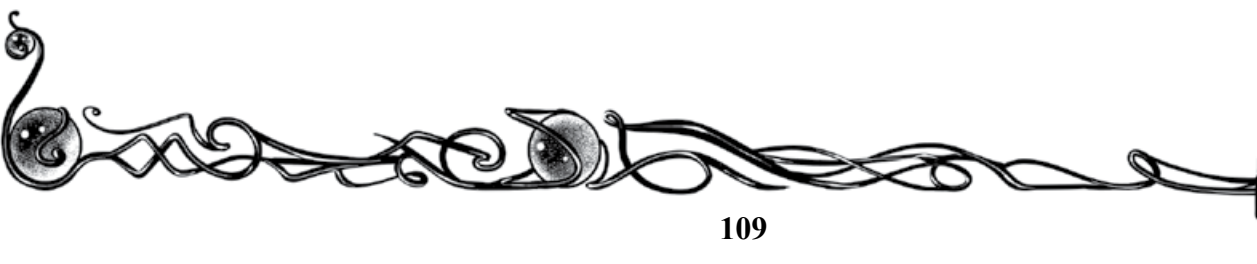
Combat Abilities

Attack with 2 tentacles +0; 4d6 damage

If both tentacles hit, the Kraken will swallow whole whatever it has a hold of.

Defence:	0
Protection:	6 (very tough rubbery hide)
Lifeblood:	100

The Kraken is the largest sea-monster known. It is a colossal squid-like beast with eight tentacles long enough to drag down the largest war-galleys. The biggest of these creatures is reputed to exist in the Sea of Teeth. Although the creature has eight tentacles, in combat it generally only grabs with two of them, whilst the others just thrash about violently.





GRIFFON

Attributes

Strength	6
Agility	0
Mind	0

Combat Abilities

Attack with bite +1; d6+2 damage	
Attack with claws +2; d6 damage	
Attack with all three at +0 each attack	
Defence:	0
Protection:	2 (tough hide)
Lifeblood:	20

Griffons are about the size of a large warhorse. They have the body of a lion and the head, claws, and wings of a giant eagle. Griffons dwell mostly in mountain areas, however, since they enjoy beef and horseflesh, it's not uncommon to have them near farming and ranching communities. In rare occasions, if raised from infancy, griffons can be raised as mounts. The emir of Padjistan is said to have several in his royal stables.

MINOTAUR

Attributes

Strength	4
Agility	0
Mind	-1

Combat Abilities

Attack with weapon +1; damage by weapon type	
Attack with horns +2; damage d6	
Defence:	0
Protection:	0 (or by armour)
Lifeblood:	20

Minotaurs are huge humanoids that possess the body of a large man and the head of a bull. They breed with human women. The women always die in childbirth and the Minotaur offspring are always male.

OGRE

Attributes

Strength	5
Agility	-1
Mind	-2

Combat Abilities

Attack with weapon	+0; damage by weapon type
Defence:	0
Protection:	0 (or by armour)
Lifeforce:	25

Ogres appear as extremely large and horrific looking humanoids. They shun civilization, though, at times, they do hook up with bandit gangs or mercenary outfits for loot.

THE UNDEAD

Undead are corpses that have been reanimated through vile magics and alchemies or they are creatures that have been kept alive for so long that they resemble dead things. Ancient undead are dry and dusty, brittle-boned and often retain some of the powerful arcane sorcery that they had in life. Other, more recently created, undead are either skeletal cadavers, often wearing the remains of the dusty old clothes or rusty armor that they were buried in or, they are simply rotting corpses given the semblance of life by dark necromancies, shambling along puppet-like and mindless.

The Undead do not have *Lifeforce* and therefore do not suffer from wounds like living things. They have *Lifeforce*, which is a measure of the arcane powers that give them their apparent life. When *Lifeforce* reaches zero, they are returned to the death that they were so rudely brought from.

UNDEAD, MUMMIES

Attributes

Strength	4
Agility	-1
Mind	-1

Combat Abilities

Attack with fists	+1; damage d6
Defence:	0
Protection:	4
Lifeforce:	30

Mummies are slow moving, however, they're relentless and fear nothing. They are susceptible to magical fire or weapons, in which case their protection is negated.

UNDEAD, SKELETONS

Attributes

Strength	0
Agility	0
Mind	-2

Combat Abilities

Attack with weapon	+0; damage by weapon type
Defence:	0
Protection:	0 (or by armour)
Lifeforce:	5

Often used by necromancers as troop fodder, skeletons can follow simple commands and make excellent sentinels.

UNDEAD, VAMPIRES

Attributes

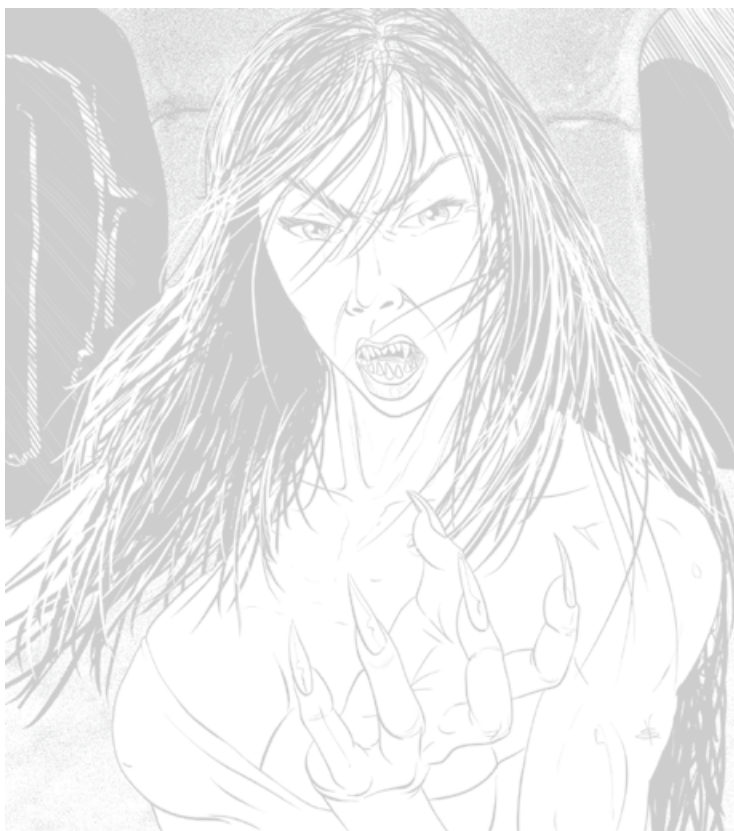
Strength	2
Agility	2
Mind	2

Combat Abilities

Attack with bite	+2; damage d3 + special
Attack with two claws	+1; damage d6-1
Defence:	2
Protection:	0
Lifeforce:	30

A Vampire is a powerful form of undead that is only active at night. Vampires feed off of the lifeblood of the living. They may assume the form of a bat, wolf, or rat at will, their gaze acts as a powerful infatuation spell so powerful that those who fall under it obey the vampires every command to the best of their ability (roll opposed Mind check to resist their influence). If they are reduced to zero lifeforce, they assume a mist form and must wait until the next night to assume their corporeal form again. They are only truly defeated by a stake through the heart, exposure to sunlight, or total immersion in running water. Some of the older vampires are masters of both magic (sorcerer ranks) and the sword.

(Special: If a vampire bites a mortal, it will drain the lifeblood from the mortal's body at 1 lifeblood per round. Each point drained will either restore the Vampire's lost lifeforce or, if the Vampire is at full lifeforce, will add temporary lifeforce. If the Vampire is also a sorcerer, lifeblood drained can be used to replenish Arcane Power instead).



Undead, Zombies

Attributes

Strength	2
Agility	-1
Mind	-2

Combat Abilities

Attack with two claws +0; damage d6-1	
Defence:	0
Protection:	0
Lifeforce:	12

Undead, Ghouls

Attributes

Strength	3
Agility	1
Mind	0

Combat Abilities

Attack with bite +2; damage d6-1	
Attack with two claws +1; damage d6-1	
Defence:	0
Protection:	0
Lifeforce:	13

Zombies and Ghouls are physically powerful undead with an unhealthy appetite for player character flesh. They are persistent, ravenous, and travel in packs. While Zombies are mindless, Ghouls are cunning and often use ambushing tactics when hunting prey.

WERE-CREATURES

Attributes

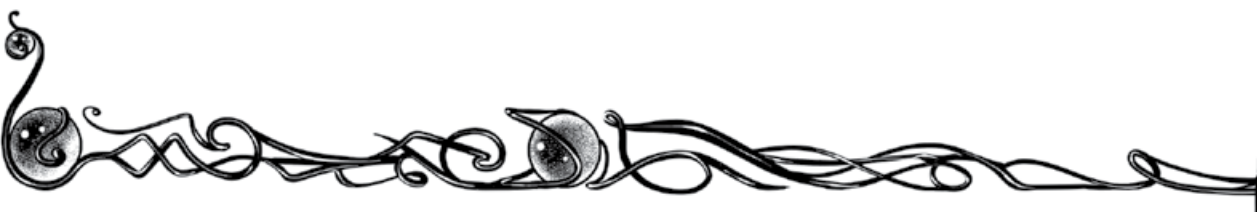
Strength	4
Agility	2
Mind	0

Combat Abilities

Attack with bite +2; damage d6+2	
Attack with two claws +1; damage d6+2	
Defence:	2
Protection:	1+3 (thick pelt + special)
Lifeforce:	15

Were-wolves are usually encountered in a hybrid form. Since Lycanthropy is considered a curse, were-wolves are savage and bloodthirsty to the extreme. Were-wolves and the larger were-Bears inhabit large areas of the Darklands and many serve as shock troops in the armies of Shen-Ka, the Sorcerer king of Radu.

Special: If not using silver weapons, the were-creatures receive an effective protection rating of 4. With silver, the protection rating is the thick pelt only (1).





WYVERN

Attributes

Strength	9
Agility	1
Mind	-1

Combat Abilities

Attack with bite	+2; damage 2d6-1
Attack with stinger	+0; damage d6+2 (+ poison)
Defence:	1
Protection:	3 (scaled hide)
Lifeblood:	40

A dragon-like winged creature similar in size to an elephant that has a wicked bite and a long tail that ends in a poison stinger. Victims must roll versus their Strength (a Tough task) to avoid the effects – initially paralysis. A second check is needed after a minute or two, to avoid death (this time a Demanding task).

Wyverns have reportedly been domesticated by the Sorcerer- king of Radu.

YETI

Attributes

Strength	5
Agility	0
Mind	-1

Combat Abilities

Attack with bite	+0; damage d6+2
Attack with 2 claws	+1; damage d6-1
Defence:	1
Protection:	2 (very thick pelt)
Lifeblood:	30

Yetis are similar to ogres in build but more savage in disposition. They inhabit the highest peaks of the Ice Spires. Their thick furred bodies provide excellent camouflage in the snowy wastes of the Spires.

RIVER PIRATES OF THE BELSA

The heroes have arrived in the city of Belsa, located on the river of the same name. They have just been hired by a local merchant, Dagoberto, to bring a bandit named Joubert to justice. Dagoberto is a moderately successful business man who owns several wine shops in and around the city of Belsa. His only son, Murillo, was killed in a raid when the river pirates, headed by the bandit Joubert, attacked the caravan he was leading. The authorities of Belsa made only a half-hearted attempt to investigate. But Dagoberto suspects that Joubert has connections within the government who protect him. Joubert and his men are based in the forest and strike quickly from the river bank in their fast moving canoes. They disappear into the woods and reappear weeks later further up or down river from where they last struck, to raid again. Dagoberto has agreed to pay the PCs 300 pieces of silver if they bring Joubert to justice. In addition, there is a bounty of 100 silver pieces sponsored by the river men's guild.

A Spy:

Dagoberto has, at great cost, found a man who can provide an "in" for the PCs. Jonah is a brigand who has worked on Joubert's crew, but holds no love or loyalty to the bandit leader. Dagoberto has paid to have Jonah vouch for a number of the PCs to join the river pirates. Jonah will lead the PCs into the great forest to a large campsite where over 30 brigands are preparing for some mischief. Jonah will remain with the PCs and aid them in getting back to Belsa with Joubert.

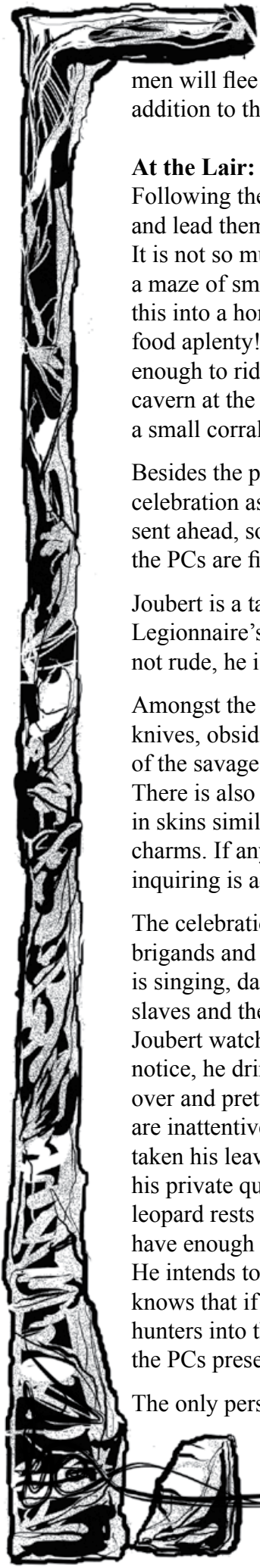
Blood In, Blood Out:

Unfortunately, even with Jonah vouching for them, the heroes can't just join up and become trusted members of the band. There is an initiation. Though Joubert is not present, the initiation is conducted by his lieutenant, a pirate by the name of Madoc. There are several ways that the PC's may prove their worth in joining the river pirates, they can choose from the following:

- **Trial by combat** – They must best Vitar, the band's "Master at Arms," using cudgels.
- **Trial of skill** - they must insert their hand in a puzzle box and unlock it from the inside. This requires three Lockpicking rolls. If all three rolls succeed, then the box is unlocked. If any of the rolls fail, the PC's hand is severed by a razor sharp trap in the box.
- **Trial of bravery** - Stripped of clothing and weapons, they must cross the Pit of Death: a very slim plank over a pit containing two alligators. Three successful Agility rolls are needed to cross the pit safely. If they refuse a trial then they will be killed outright. If the heroes attempt any one of these trials and succeed, they will be accepted into the band with much drunken revelry. If they fail any of the trials and yet somehow survive, they will be beaten half to death and left for dead in the wild (which would be a great way to introduce a "man in the wilderness" scenario, with the PC surviving, tracking down the pirates and exacting revenge). Additionally, any PCs with sufficient woodcraft or survival skills could remain hidden and silently track the pirates back to their lair while the other PCs "join" the pirate band.

River Booty:

Once they are accepted into the band, they will be expected to participate in the upcoming raid. Madoc has learned that a shipment of slave girls is being brought to several of the city brothels by a slaver from Tyros. There are 2 river barges, 8 river men, 20 slave girls, and 15 guards. The pirates, led by Madoc, will wait till late night and then attack under the cover of darkness. The riverboat



men will flee if they can, but will fight if cornered. The guards are well paid and will fight. In addition to the slave girls, there is assorted loot aboard: foodstuffs, cloth, spices, tobacco, etc.

At the Lair:

Following the successful raid on the river barges, the bandits gather the slaves, load them with loot, and lead them into the forest. Madoc leads the pirates to their base, a complex they call "The Lair." It is not so much hidden as it is out of the way, lying beyond the forest in the hills. The Lair itself is a maze of smaller interconnected caves fed by the cavernous maw entrance. The pirates have made this into a home of sorts. A spring provides fresh water, and, if one considers fungi as edible, there is food aplenty! A slight draft can be felt moving back and forth through the caves, though not strong enough to rid the caves of the smell of smoke, cooked meats and unwashed bodies. Outside the cavern at the base of the hill is an earth and wood stockade. This contains a shed for the canoes and a small corral for livestock.

Besides the pirates from the raid, there are 30 brigands and a dozen slaves in camp. There is much celebration as the loot and the new girls are brought into the main cavern. Word of their arrival was sent ahead, so, by the time the raiding party reaches the lair, a raucous feast is well underway and the PCs are finally introduced to Joubert.

Joubert is a tall, handsome rogue with dark features and an aristocratic air about him. He wears a Legionnaire's short sword, dirk, and under his shirt can be seen the glint of fine chainmail. While not rude, he is not overly friendly, at least not to those he doesn't know yet.

Amongst the carousing brigands are several huge hairy men in buckskins, sporting bone-handled knives, obsidian tipped spears, and stout curved bows.. These are members of the Bear Clan – one of the savage tribes that live in the wild lands of the great forest. Joubert is courting their friendship. There is also a very exotic looking woman at Joubert's side petting a leopard. The woman is clad in skins similar to those of the wild men but of softer pelts and cut so as to expose her curvaceous charms. If any ask, her name is Puna. She is Joubert's "advisor" and a witch woman. Anyone inquiring is advised to give her a wide berth, as it is common knowledge she cavorts with demons.

The celebration goes on well into the night and everything one can imagine happening with drunken brigands and helpless slaves happens. There are fist fights, knife fights, and food fights. There is singing, dancing, and gambling. The brigands waste no time in taking their pleasure with the slaves and they aren't gentle about it. One slave girl and two brigands don't live to see the next day. Joubert watches it all with an evil grin, and participates in most of it. But, if anyone takes care to notice, he drinks nothing stronger than cider. The following morning most of the pirates are hung over and pretty much useless. The half dozen that are on guard duty are sober enough, but even they are inattentive as they take their turns with the slave girls and sneak in a cup or two. Joubert had taken his leave of the revelry in the early hours, taking a slave girl and Puna with him. He retired to his private quarters; a side cave that has been fitted and secured with a heavy oaken door. Puna's pet leopard rests on a pile of furs outside of the room, next to the entrance. At this point, the PCs should have enough information to formulate a plan of action. Jonah will insist on being kept informed. He intends to stay with the PCs until he can collect the rest of his reward and get far away. He knows that if he stays behind someone might remember that he was the one who brought the bounty hunters into the band to begin with. This isn't to say that Jonah is in any way reliable, but, as long as the PCs present the best odds for his survival, he's steady enough.

The only person Jonah is loyal to is Jonah. Following the latest raid, the Pirates will lay low for

several weeks while the authorities in Belsa go through the motions of sending out extra patrols along the river and the river barges are more vigilantly guarded. This will generally be “downtime” for the pirates, who will feast every night and enjoy the fruits of their labors. Eventually though, the wine will run low and the slave girls will start to lose their novelty and freshness. This is where Joubert and his lieutenants will begin to enforce discipline and initiate make-work gangs to keep the men from getting bored as the boss plots the next raid. If the PC’s decide to stay a while and get to know the Lair and the surrounding area, they will discover the following over the course of several days:

- The alliance with the Bear Clan (the delegation at the feast) is tenuous at best.
- Security at the Lair is rather lax. The pirates have such a fierce reputation and their base is so well hidden that they have become complacent.
- The Lair is about three days travel from the nearest civilized village at the edge of the forest. The dense woods make travel by horse impractical.

Rumors at the Lair:

These rumors could be true or false as the GM sees fit to expand the adventure

- Joubert is rich and has treasures in his room. He is attempting to amass enough to buy a title and relocate to Tyros or Pyrani.
- Joubert has a secret identity in the city of Belsa and is courting a noblewoman named Vorena. He’s hoping her father’s connections will help him realize his own goals.
- Puna is insanely jealous of Joubert’s “fancy girlfriend.” She knows she can’t compete with a noblewoman and is getting increasingly bitter.
- Madoc has been promised command of the pirates once Joubert leaves, but he is getting impatient. He is also in love with Puna but, despite several dalliances with her, Madoc knows that Puna will never leave Joubert. If and when the PC’s manage to bring Joubert to the city of Belsa, the bandit will hang for his crimes. The river raids will continue as someone else (Madoc perhaps) assumes leadership of the pirates. If Joubert is slain by the PCs, Madoc will make a show of swearing revenge but, in reality, the PCs have done him a favor and, once tempers cool, it will be business as usual on the river.



Dramatis Personae

Joubert:

Joubert is the leader of the river pirates. He is a handsome rogue who exudes a definite quality of leadership. Joubert is charming and an accomplished bladesman. Rumor has it that he is an exiled member of a minor noble house from Emesa. He has occasionally mentioned his time as a legionnaire, so many assume he may have served as an officer. Joubert is a callous man and will use whomever he needs to in order to attain power. The activities of his band of river pirates serve as a means for him to build a quick fortune so that he may live the life of privilege that he feels he is entitled to. To this end, he has assumed an alias of a young gentleman trader in the city of Belsa and is currently courting the daughter of a powerful noble, hoping the connections will pave his way to a life amongst the quality.

Attributes

Strength 0
Agility 1
Mind 1
Appeal 2

Combat Abilities

Brawl 0
Melee 2
Ranged 1
Defence: 1

Careers

Noble 0
Soldier 1
Pirate 2
Merchant 1

Lifeblood: 10
Villain Points: 5

Protection: 2 (Leather boots, leather bracers)
Weapons: Sword d6
Dagger d3

Jonah:

Jonah is a willow thin bandit with a hooknose and a nasty disposition. His one talent is survival and his only loyalty is to himself. Those around him seem to come to bad ends eventually. Jonah is a coward, but has some skill with a knife, usually demonstrated when stabbing an unsuspecting victim from behind.

Attributes

Strength -1
Agility 3
Mind 2
Appeal 0

Combat Abilities

Brawl 0
Melee 1
Ranged 1
Defence: 2

Careers

Mariner 0
Vagabond 0
Thief 2
Pirate 2

Lifeblood: 9

Protection: 1 (leather jerkin)
Weapons: Dagger d3

Madoc:

Madoc is an escaped slave and gladiator. He has been with Joubert for three years, Madoc is a steady lieutenant and a strong enforcer with little imagination. However, he has recently acquired a desire for Puna, the boss's woman. And this has led to thoughts that maybe he could run the outfit as good as or better than Joubert. Though Joubert has spoken of retiring and handing leadership over to him, he is becoming impatient.

Attributes

Strength 2
Agility 3
Mind -1
Appeal 0

Combat Abilities

Brawl 1
Melee 2
Ranged 0
Defence: 1

Careers

Slave 1
Vagabond 0
Gladiator 2
Pirate 1

Lifeblood: 12

Protection: 2 (leather boots, bracers)

Weapons: Sword d6+2

Vitar the "Master at Arms":

Vitar is a defrocked Warrior-Priest of Kesh and an outlaw. He is a mountain of a man standing over 6' in height. Vitar is skilled in the use of just about any weapon and uses a large war club in combat. His loyalty, such as it is amongst bandits, belongs to Madoc who once saved him from drowning in quicksand.

Attributes

Strength 3
Agility 1
Mind 0
Appeal 0

Combat Abilities

Brawl 1
Melee 3
Ranged 0
Defence: 0

Careers

Priest 2
Thief 0
Soldier 2
Pirate 0

Lifeblood: 13

Protection: 3 (leather boots, battle harness, bracers)

Weapons: War Maul d6+2+3



Puna:

Puna is a true mystery. She appears to be from one of the many savage tribes that call the borderlands home, but she seems to hold no allegiance to any of them. Her beauty is wild and exotic but no one besides Joubert (and more recently Madoc) has ever sampled her charms. When other savages encounter her, they give way and make warding signs when she passes. The pirates think of her as a sorceress or witch. She has uncanny powers over beasts in the forests and has been known to brew both poisons and healing elixirs for use by the pirates. She wanders the camp in next to nothing, flaunting her beauty and daring any to react to it. The pirates benefit from the potions that she brews for them, but they worry about the plans she might be planting in their leader's ears at night. Also, seeing all that beautiful flesh walking around, but never being able to touch it makes them surly. They do not understand her--what she is or where her powers come from--and what they don't understand they dislike. Puna's constant companion is a large forest leopard she can apparently communicate with. She loves Joubert, but lately she is realizing that his honeyed words may be hollow. Feeling spurned by him, she has begun a dalliance with Madoc to try and get a rise out of the pirate leader. Puna is a mystery. At the referees discretion, she could be given several magical charms or spells to bend the will of men, control beasts, or command nature (vines that bind victims at her command or ground that turns to quicksand come to mind). Also, Puna's loyalties could vary as it suits the referee and the direction of the adventure. Feeling spurned and wrathful, she could take her revenge on all the band including the PCs. She could be loyal to Joubert and hunt down the PCs using her own unique skills, or she might possibly fall in love with one of the PCs and open a whole new set of complications.

Attributes

Strength	0
Agility	1
Mind	1
Appeal	2

Combat Abilities

Brawl	0
Melee	1
Ranged	0
Defence:	3

Careers

Barbarian	1
Dancer	1
Physician	1
Sorceress	1

Lifeblood: 13

Protection: 0 (none)

Weapons: Dagger d3

Joubert's Pirates:

The river pirates are a collection of bandits, deserters, convicts and slaves, with a smattering of out of work mercenaries. They are a bit harder than most outlaw gangs since Joubert insists on conducting "initiations" to weed out the weak and inept. Under Joubert's leadership, they have had a run of good fortune lately so morale is high. The wine and women have been flowing freely and even the lowliest of the band has silver in his pocket and meat in his belly. They are all classed as rabble. Among the crew of cutthroats the PC's will encounter are:

Unger:

Unger is pretty much despised by everyone (and among this bunch that's saying a lot). He has a nose for trouble and enjoys fanning the flames of discord. Unger has dirt on everyone and will not hesitate to use his knowledge to his advantage. He always seems to be slinking around, listening and eavesdropping. The only thing that keeps him alive is that for some reason the boss has taken a shine to him. Joubert knows Unger's true nature but, as long as he remains loyal, Joubert will protect him.

Attributes

Strength 0
Agility 0
Mind 1
Appeal -1

Combat Abilities

Brawl 0
Melee 0
Ranged 0
Defence: 0

Careers

Pirate 1

Lifeblood: 3

Protection: 0 (none)

Weapons: Dagger d3

Koll:

Koll is a six year old boy. His mother was taken in a raid two years ago; by her dress and demeanor it was believed she was a noblewoman or the wife of a merchant. The plan was to ransom her and the boy, but the abduction and subsequent abuse addled her mind and she died before revealing her family name. Koll was allowed to live and has been cared for by the slaves of the camp and the occasional gesture of kindness by the pirates. Koll earns his keep by emptying the slop buckets, gathering firewood, and doing anything useful to earn a scrap of bread to eat. He admires the pirates and longs to be one of them. He has one possession that no one knows of: a locket with a picture of his mother and a man, possibly his father. He keeps it hidden behind some rocks near his sleeping place and often looks at it when the others sleep.

Attributes

Strength -1
Agility 1
Mind -1
Appeal 1

Combat Abilities

Brawl -1
Melee -1
Ranged 0
Defence: 2

Careers

Kid 1

Lifeblood: 2

Protection: 0 (none)

Weapons: none



Fat Ethel:

Fat Ethel is a repulsive, ugly, she-beast. Weighing close to 300 lbs, towering near six feet, and sporting a shaven head, Ethel is a sight to behold. She is in charge of the day to day running of the Lair, a job that she takes to with an iron fist and a rawhide bullwhip. The slaves tremble in fear of her and even the pirates give her a wide berth. To Joubert and Madoc she is respectful, but to all the other pirates she is a hellion. Fat Ethel is a bully and a sadist. She is happiest when applying her lash with glee to the backside of a squirming slave girl. The only person in the lair she noticeably avoids is Puna.

Attributes

Strength 2
Agility -1
Mind 0
Appeal -1

Combat Abilities

Brawl 1
Melee 1
Ranged -1
Defence: -1

Careers

Pirate 1

Lifeblood: 5

Protection: 0 (none)

Weapons: Whip d2+2 (+ special)

Ingko:

Ingko has been a soldier, a pimp, a thief, and an assassin. His last occupation ended badly and brought him here. He is a bit paranoid since the man he killed was connected to a powerful criminal guild--a guild that is known to be vengeful. Ingko seems to see something familiar in one of the PCs. It may be his usual paranoia, but still...

Attributes

Strength 0
Agility 0
Mind 0
Appeal 0

Combat Abilities

Brawl 0
Melee 0
Ranged 0
Defence: 0

Careers

Soldier 0
Thief 0
Assassin 1
Pirate 0

Lifeblood: 3

Protection: 1 (leather tunic)

Weapons: Dagger (x3) d3
Sword d6

Bear Clan Savages:

The closest of the tribes to the Pirates Lair is the Bear Clan. Joubert has been trading with them regularly and has even lent them some of his men and canoes when the Clan crosses the great lake to raid other tribes. However, there are still older members of the clan that feel city men, of whatever breed, only bring more city men who will eventually cut down the trees, fence off the land, and begin building stone houses. They are advocating the pirates be wiped out. They are all classed as rabble (unless you wish to create any leader types, for any reason).





the betrothed

GM NOTE

As written, this is a fairly linear scenario. However, it is quite likely that your players will do something different to what is written, in which case you need to be aware of the overall structure of the (simple) plotline, in order to react to a changing scenario structure. For example, the characters might rumble Elgar Glent (Zythrus Morn) straight away and therefore you will need to use what is noted below simply as a guide for what happens next.

THE GAME'S AFOOT! (Plot outline)

The characters become involved with an old merchant, Elgar Glent, whose pretty daughter Rayma is kidnapped for nefarious purposes by the nobleman Lord Jumery of Aragos. The heroes are offered a large amount of gold to travel to the Lord's castle, break in and rescue the girl – only they have to act quickly because the merchant is concerned that the Lord will force himself upon her at the first opportunity.

TRUTHS & LIES! (GM Info – not for the players)

Elgar Glent is not a merchant and his name is not Elgar Glent. His real name is Zythrus Morn, a priest of Yago (a dark god). The girl is not his daughter, but a princess from a far city who had travelled to Aragos to begin preparations to be wed to Lord Jumery (an arranged marriage). Zythrus himself had drugged and kidnapped the girl that very evening and he was taking her to his temple for sacrifice to his evil master. (He owes Yago much and only a virgin of noble birth will appease the God's dark soul). Unbeknown to Zythrus, Lord Jumery had agents watching his bride-to-be and they reported that her guardian had been killed by evil sorceries and she had been kidnapped for wicked purposes. Acting swiftly, Jumery called in his adviser, Magroth (a magician) and he promptly summoned three winged devils to find the princess and bring her to safety (which they have done).

WINGS OVER THE ROOFTOPS! (Introducing the PCs)

One or two of the most appropriate characters will be returning to their lodgings late one night having been out on the town, when they hear a woman's scream from around the corner up ahead. Presumably, they will investigate – when they get there, they will see an old guy fending off a winged devil-creature flapping at him and, just disappearing over the rooftops into the night-sky, two more of these creatures carrying a girl between them.

The creatures carrying the girl are too far off for the characters to do anything, but the one flapping around the old guy's head can be dealt with. Assuming the heroes rush to the man's aid, use the following stats for the winged creature:

WINGED DEVIL

Attributes

Strength 2
Agility 1
Mind 1

Defence: 1
Protection: 0
Lifeblood: 12

Combat Abilities

Attack with bite +2; damage d6-1
Attack with two claws +1; damage d6-1
Attack with all 3 at +0

Having assisted the old guy (who appears very upset and highly agitated), he then thanks the characters for helping him and tells his story (a lie):

His name is Elgar Glent, a merchant from Crascia. He and his daughter, Rayma are staying here in Aragos, to do a few deals before returning home. They were returning from a late meal at a local tavern when these devil-creatures came over the rooftops and grabbed Rayma, before they could do anything about it. Elgar says he is certain that the devil-creatures are things sent by Lord Jumery, a wealthy and cruel nobleman who has had his eye on Rayma ever since he saw her a few days ago. Elgar explains that Lord Jumery asked him several times to send his daughter over to his estate and even offered money for her hand in marriage! Elgar says that Lord Jumery has an adviser, a magician named Magroth the Dour, who is easily capable of summoning these devil-creatures to do his bidding. Elgar explains that he is fearful for his daughter's chastity and that he would offer a great sum of money for the girl to be returned to him speedily. He is desperate to get the characters to agree to travel to the Lord's estate to rescue his daughter and they must do it quickly – he wants his daughter delivered safely back to him before sunrise. If they do not have horses, he says he can arrange them and tells them to meet him on the hour at the east gate of the city, where he will have horses waiting for them. At this point, Elgar also tells the characters that he did some checking around and discovered the location of the exit to a secret tunnel, built as an escape route out of the castle that the characters can use to gain access.

DARK DUNGEONS

Within about half an hour of leaving the city, the characters arrive at the Lord's castle. It is a strong-looking fortress, perched atop a high cliff and built to withstand a siege. Following the directions given by Elgar, the characters can fairly readily locate the exit to the escape tunnel hidden behind dense foliage at the base of the cliff.

The tunnel is dark within and any character with some sort of danger sense or survival/awareness (barbarian and hunter careers help here) may be able to determine that some wild beast has been using this as its lair. However, exactly what sort of beast is uncertain at this moment. A hunter might find spoor or marks, indicating a large cat.

The tunnel leads into the cliff face and fairly steeply upwards – sometimes on a natural incline and sometimes with steps cut into the rock. There are tunnels leading off the main passage at various junctions, but with ample light it is apparent which is the tunnel to follow. Occasionally the faint noise of soft footfall can be heard off in the darkness...

At some point, the beast will appear at the rear of the group and launch itself at the character at the rear. The beast is a ravenous and maddened leopard with the following stats:

LEOPARD

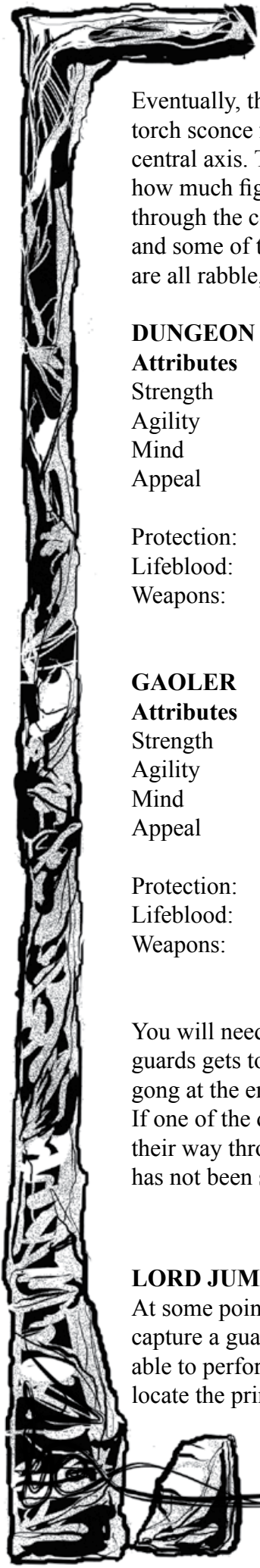
Attributes

Strength	1
Agility	3
Mind	0

Defence:	2
Protection:	0
Lifeblood:	10

Combat Abilities

Attack with bite +4; d6-1 damage
Attack with 2 claws +2 per attack; d6-1 damage each
(Attack with all 3 attacks at +1 each)



Eventually, the characters will come to a long flight of stairs leading up to a blank stone wall. A torch sconce fitted to the wall to the side acts as a lever allowing the wall section to pivot on a central axis. This doorway leads into the cellars and dungeons of the castle proper. It is up to you how much fighting you want the characters to do at this stage; you can allow the characters to get through the cellars up into the castle proper without incident, or you can have them meet the gaoler and some of the dungeon guards (2 or 3 per hero in the party at most) before they do so. The guards are all rabble, with the following stats:

DUNGEON GUARDS

Attributes

Strength	0
Agility	0
Mind	0
Appeal	0

Combat Abilities

Brawl	0
Melee	1
Ranged	-1
Defence:	0

Protection:	2 (Leather coat)
Lifeblood:	3
Weapons:	Spear d6 damage

GAOLER

Attributes

Strength	3
Agility	1
Mind	1
Appeal	-1

Combat Abilities

Brawl	2
Melee	2
Ranged	-1
Defence:	1

Careers

Slave	1
Beggar	0
Thief	1
Gaoler	2

Protection:	2 (Leather coat)
Lifeblood:	13
Weapons:	2-handed axe d6+2+3 damage

You will need to determine how careful the heroes are being and whether at any point one of the guards gets to raise the alarm. It's not so easy to raise the alarm in the dungeon area – there is a large gong at the entrance to the castle proper, which is to be sounded in the event of a prisoner breakout. If one of the dungeon guards can get to it and sound the gong, the heroes will probably have to fight their way through more guards from upstairs and Lord Jumery will be alerted. However, if the alarm has not been sounded, the heroes will be able to sneak out of the cellars and into the castle.

LORD JUMERY'S CASTLE

At some point, the heroes will need to find out where Princess Rayma is being held. They might capture a guard or one of the castle servants to seek the information. A magician character might be able to perform some sort of location spell. Any suitable means should be allowed a fair chance to locate the princess – she is in a suite in one of the guest towers.

If the characters have a suitably sneaky means of getting to the princess's room without being spotted (dressing up as servants or guards is an obvious one), then they should be able to do so. Another option would be to get outside the castle and climb up the tower wall to the balcony and then in through the window.

Princess Rayma is calmly at repose on her bed. A maid is sat in a chair watching over her and will leap up and scream if anyone enters the room – bringing three guards nearby running to the bedroom (The maid is classed as rabble with a –1 strength, +1 appeal and for the guards use the same stats as the dungeon guards). If the maid is made to talk, she knows nothing other than she was asked to watch the princess and let Lord Jumery know when she awakens. The maid is aware that Lord Jumery plans to wed the princess but does not know the details.

Princess Rayma seems to be in a deep magical sleep and will not awaken. If the characters spend too long talking to the maid/fighting the guards/trying to get Rayma to wake up, then have shouts of alarm sound outside as they have been discovered and to get the characters moving quickly. Remind them that daybreak is not too far away by now either.

RIDE LIKE THE WIND!

Assuming the heroes abduct Rayma from her bedroom and make good their escape, they will soon be on the way back to the city. If the alarm was raised back at the castle then there will be some form of pursuit – the quickest the pursuers will be the winged-devils that carried Rayma off in the first place (there will be two of them if one was killed in the opening scene, otherwise there will be three of them).

If the characters decide to try to outride the winged creatures and maybe escape into trees, they will need to make Hard riding rolls, using agility and any appropriate careers. Otherwise, they will be forced to fight! Use the stats for the winged devil from the opening scene.

There may also be pursuit from up to 12 castle guards and even Lord Jumery himself. If this is the case, and the pursuers catch up with the characters, Lord Jumery will wish to talk and negotiate with the characters before attacking them. Through these negotiations it may become apparent that the characters have been duped by Zythrus Morn, in his guise as Elgar Glent. If this is the way the conversation turns, then Lord Jumery will offer to pay the characters a pile of gold coins to go back to Aragos and kill Zythrus Morn and bring his head back to the castle as evidence.

For the castle guards, use the stats for the dungeon guards above. Lord Jumery has the following stats:

LORD JUMERY

Attributes

Strength	1
Agility	1 (0)
Mind	0
Appeal	2

Combat Abilities

Brawl	0
Melee	2
Ranged	0
Defence:	2

Careers

Noble	3
Soldier	1
Mariner	0
Merchant	0

Protection: 3 (Mail shirt)

Lifeblood: 11

Weapons: Sword d6+1 damage

ZYTHRUS UNVEILED!

If the characters return to Aragos without discovering the truth of the matter first, they will ride in through the city gates shortly before sunrise, where Zythrus will be awaiting them. At this point, Rayma begins to awaken from her enchanted slumber and on her face will be a look of sheer horror as she sees Zythrus approaching although she is still unable to talk. The character carrying Rayma will notice this reaction. Zythrus approaches the characters demanding the return of his “daughter”, but is suspicious because he has noticed the princess is waking up and recognizes the need to act quickly, before he is rumbled.

However this plays out, it will likely come down to a battle with Zythrus Morn. His stats are as follows:

ZYTHRUS MORN PRIEST OF YAGO

Attributes		Combat Abilities		Careers	
Strength	0	Brawl	0	Alchemist	0
Agility	1	Melee	1	Scribe	0
Mind	3	Ranged	0	Assassin	1
Appeal	0	Defence:	3	Priest	3

Protection: 0 (no armour)

Lifeblood: 10

Weapons: Dagger d3 damage

Villain Points: 5

Domain: Violent death, murder & chaos, +1 to his task resolution rolls for spells cast while attempting to murder someone.



sample characters

ANTEUS

At 6'3 and 300 pounds Anteus is one of the most physically imposing Gladiators to ever fight in the Grand Arena of Pyrani. He is a former champion in unarmed combat and favors a fighting style which relies on his strength to deliver punishing blows. Despite his violent career in the arena, Anteus is a somewhat soft hearted and introspective soul. His father was a physician, and Anteus is trained in those arts as well. He is especially adept at delivering babies.

Attributes

STRENGTH	3
AGILITY	1
MIND	-1
APPEAL	1

Combat Abilities

BRAWL	3
MELEE	0
RANGED	-1
DEFENCE	2

Careers

PHYSICIAN	1
LABORER	0
SOLDIER	0
GLADIATOR	3

LIFEBLOOD	15
HERO POINTS	3



Boons

TRADEMARK WEAPON (CESTUS) – Anteus uses an extra die whenever fighting using his specially crafted brass knuckles

HARD-TO-KILL – Anteus is a tough customer – he has 2 extra lifeblood

FIST-FIGHTER – Anteus is an expert in unarmed combatant. He gets extra die when fighting unarmed.

Flaws

POOR HEARING – Anteus has taken one too many blows to the head – use an extra die whenever checking to see whether he has heard a soft noise

Armour

None

Weapons

Cestus d3+3

BROTHER STERN

Brother Stern is 50 years old. He has dark skin, grey hair, a full beard, a broken nose, and is built like a bear. He is a Warrior-Priest of Heldar and a former general in the Umbrian army. When the king of Umbria was overthrown Stern was entrusted with Prince Talon and they escaped into exile.

Attributes

STRENGTH	1
AGILITY	0 (-1)
MIND	2
APPEAL	1

Combat Abilities

BRAWL	1
MELEE	2
RANGED	0
DEFENCE	1

Careers

BLACKSMITH	0
SOLDIER	2
MERCENARY	0
PRIEST	2

LIFEBLOOD	11
HERO POINTS	6



Boons

TRADEMARK WEAPON ("RED MAIDEN") – Brother Stern uses an extra die whenever fighting using his specially crafted two-handed battleaxe

MARKED BY THE GODS – Stern has an extra Hero point

Flaws

ELDERLY- Brother Stern is not as young as he used to be. He must use an extra die for physical activities if pushed too hard without rest.

Armour

Mail shirt (3)

Weapons

Great Axe "Red Maiden" d6+2+3

DE SILVA

De Silva is the 4th son in a minor Noble house from the city of Aragos. As befits a noble scion of Aragos he was given an education in the arcane arts and sent forth by his father to make his fortune. Despite his lack of lands or fortune, De Silva carries himself as an Aragossean noble would be expected to.

Attributes

STRENGTH	-1
AGILITY	1
MIND	3
APPEAL	1

Combat Abilities

BRAWL	1
MELEE	1
RANGED	1
DEFENCE	1

Careers

NOBLE	2
MERCHANT	0
SOLDIER	0
MAGICIAN	2

LIFEBLOOD	9
HERO POINTS	5
ARCANE POWER	12

Boons

ATTRACTIVE- Roll an extra die when looks matter in an encounter

Flaws

ANIMAL AVERSION: Any animals within 10 feet of De Silva instantly become nervous, skittish and irritable. Roll an extra die whenever De Silva interacts with animals.

ARROGANT: De Silva believes Aragos to be the jewel of Erisa, and never lets an opportunity to let others know this pass. Roll an extra die when dealing with people of other cities, where his arrogance might annoy or offend them.

Armour

None

Weapons

Rapier d6-1
Dagger d3



RISA

Risa is a warrior woman of Sulanese origin. She was raised on the great plains of the Goban. Fleeing an arranged marriage, Risa made her way south and soon began earning a living as a mercenary archer. As part of a guard force to a visiting Sulanese merchant, Risa eventually came to the Akkarian continent. She has since met and fallen in love with the gladiator Anteus of Pyrani.

Attributes

STRENGTH	0
AGILITY	3
MIND	0
APPEAL	1

Combat Abilities

BRAWL	-1
MELEE	1
RANGED	3
DEFENCE	1

Careers

TRACKER	1
BARBARIAN	1
MERCENARY	2
HEALER	0

LIFEBLOOD	10
HERO POINTS	5

Boons

ATTRACTIVE – Risa is a beautiful young woman and without realising it, this often helps her get what she wants. Use an extra die whenever her good looks might affect things

TRADEMARK WEAPON (BOW) – Risa uses an extra die whenever fighting using her specially crafted double-curved bow

FEARLESS- Risa is aware of her limitations, but she has never been afraid of anyone or anything.

Flaws

PHOBIA (Enclosed spaces) – Risa is used to the wide outdoors and doesn't like being "caged" as she calls it. Use an extra die whenever she is enclosed and affected by her fear

Armour

Leather Jerkin (1)

Weapons

Sword	d6
Dagger	d3
Great Bow	d6+2



TALENA

Talena was a city bred urchin who eventually found herself on a pirate ship. Her quickness and agility soon made her a welcome member of the crew. She came under the protective wing the ship's first mate who taught her the skills of a sailor and warrior. Now in her early 20's Talena has been at sea for most of her life, serving aboard all manner of vessels from pirate carracks to Zandaran slave galleys.

Attributes

STRENGTH	1
AGILITY	2
MIND	0
APPEAL	1

Combat Abilities

BRAWL	0
MELEE	1
RANGED	1
DEFENCE	2

Careers

VAGABOND	0
SERVING WENCH	0
THIEF	2
PIRATE	2

LIFEBLOOD	11
HERO POINTS	3

Boons

RIGHT BACK AT YOU- Talena is able to snatch any missile shot or hurled at her. If it is a shot missile (crossbow bolt, arrow) she is able to deflect it with her own weapon or even barehanded. If the missile is hurled (hatchet, dagger) she can either deflect it or catch it and hurl it back (she must still make a successful unmodified skill roll).

ESCAPE ARTIST – Talena has been captured many times but there are never any chains or bars that can keep her in. Use an extra die whenever trying to break free of captivity.

Flaws

ARROGANT- Talena's arrogance is of a more personal nature. She feels that she has to prove that she is as good as any man, even in situations where there is nothing to prove.

Armour

None

Weapons

Throwing Axes (x3)	d6
Daggers (x3)	d3
Sling	d3



TALON IRONHAWK

Talon is the son of the late King Tarn Ironhawk of Umbria. Ten years ago Tarn was killed in his sleep by assassins and his throne usurped by Marshall Jagan, a demon worshipping nobleman and his military council. Unbeknownst to the usurpers, Prince Talon, then a young lad of 8 years, was spirited away by Brother Stern, one of the king's most trusted advisers. Stern has raised Talon as his foster son. The two have traveled across Erisa, serving as warriors for hire. Talon is now of age and is determined to regain his throne and free his people from the grip of the evil Marshall Jagan.

Attributes

STRENGTH	1
AGILITY	1 (0)
MIND	1
APPEAL	1

Combat Abilities

BRAWL	0
MELEE	2
RANGED	1
DEFENCE	1

Careers

NOBLE	1
MERCENARY	2
SCRIBE	0
VAGABOND	1

LIFEBLOOD	11
HERO POINTS	5



Boons

NATURAL LEADER - Some people were just born to lead. Talon is one of them. For some reason people will look to him for direction. In a crisis situation his orders will usually be followed. Whenever Talon needs help to storm a castle or lay siege to an evil temple, all he has to do is go to a tavern, barracks, whorehouse, bathhouse, outhouse, etc., and recruit a bunch of guys to help him out (at least temporarily). Talon gains an extra die when trying to inspire a person or group, or to accomplish a leadership task.

Flaws

None

Armour

Mail Shirt (3)

Weapons

Sword	d6
Dagger	d3
Bow	d6