

Draknar Adventures: Part 1

From: WADE DURANT <tinawade@sprintmail.com>
To: The talislanta-1 mailing list <talislanta-1@mars.galstar.com>
Subject: talislanta-1] Adventures on Draknar, part 1
Date: Sunday, February 22, 1998 4:52 PM

Well, the list has been a little slow so I thought I'd try to get something going by giving everyone a brief narrative of the game that I'm GMing on Draknar. Hopefully some of you can use the ideas in your own campaign or if you have some to add to mine, I'd appreciate it.

How they got to Draknar:

Max, the 12th level Tanasian wizard screws up again. Can't remember what he was casting, but it was a difficult spell and he rolled a 1, opening a rip in the fabric of the dimension, throwing everyone in the party into the Void. They floated helplessly for awhile, debated starting some new characters, and generally cussed me out, until strange vessels began to surround them. They realized all was not lost, as they were plucked from the sea of nothingness, loaded aboard void-ships, (stolen design from the D&D Spelljammer game) and brought back to the Rock of Bral, (also Spelljammer's) where they discovered a self contained little realm at war with itself. The "top" side of the Rock was inhabited by what they believed to be relatives of the Archaens, along with a large group of Xambrians, a Gryph forest, a Chrysalids hive, an Ariane obelisk and a few races unknown on Talislanta or their world. Some races have been on the Rock for centuries, from the time when it was flung into the void from their old world (not Talislanta); others have been rescued from the Void as the players were. Luckily they were rescued by the Archaens, and not the denizens of the "underside" of Bral, the Drakken, and other reptilian races such as the Saurud, Drakkar (more closely related to dragons, magic using, wings and all) and the Drathen, a more intelligent relative of the diminutive Paragrac, from the Dessert Lands Cyclopedia. The Drakken and the Archaens have been at war for generations as they float thru the void, trying to find a way back to the positive material plane. The Archaens own all the small void ships, but the vanes that control the movement of the rock are on the underside, controlled by the Drakken.

To make a long story short: The characters had a link to the material plane that had not been cut yet, and the combined magic of the Archaens, Xambrians, Ariane, Chrysalids and the players was able to reopen the rift, bringing the Rock out of the void, into the skies over the south seas of Talislanta. Actually closer to Draknar. Due to the new situation, the Drakken and the Archaens decided it was time to stop fighting and find a place to get of this Rock.

The characters have just become ambassadors for Talislanta, and better do some fast talking before their homeland is overrun by huge populations of possibly hostile races. They convince the Drakken that they now have an entire world to choose from, and should find a place that they would be comfortable in, that they can have all to their own without having to deal with those pesky little mammalian noids anymore. It is decided that the various races will choose explorers to be dropped off in different areas of

each continent to determine if it is inhabited, by who, and will they mind if we move in next door (or in the Drakken's case, can we take it from them). The players know nothing about the other continents, thus don't know that the other continents are inhabited by intelligent races. They convince the leaders that it would be suicide to fly to Talislanta, as many empires would not take it lightly to have this huge floating continent appear over their heads, and they should return their with only a few high ranking representatives to talk to the leaders of the Seven Kingdoms, Dracarta, etc.

Thus ends the adventuring careers of these characters. The players decide they would rather start new characters from the races on the Rock and explore the other continents. One day we might go back and play through the negotiations between the Talislantans and the "Bral-ians". I'll probably come up with the outcome myself and they'll discover some interesting changes when they either return to Talislanta or start new characters their.

Did the Bralians bring magic that had been lost on Talislanta, or perhaps new magic never before seen on this world? Can the Xambrians, who did not go thru the genocide of the Quararians, unite the wandering Xambrians of this world and rebuild a peaceful Xambrian city? Do the Ariane from Bral know how and where the Ariane on this world came from, and if so do they spill the beans to the rest of Talislanta? Are the Talislantan Empires going to allow the Bralians to move in next door, such as in the Plains of Golarin, or other uncivilized area, or will wars break out over territory? (Gee that's an easy one to answer! I doubt the Rajans or Kang will welcome anyone in with open arms)

So, the players started new characters. I know the people dropped off on the continents would probably be experienced, high level representatives of their races, but hey, where's the fun in that! They started off at 1st level. 1 Drakken Warrior (not a dragon rider, because the Drakken on Bral have only seen dragons in their ancient glyphs and carvings, and definitely never ridden one) who REALLY wants to find a dragon to tame and ride, a chrysalid tree-fighter (a very dexterous, four armed, bug-winged insect man with a jovial and at times annoying demeanor), a Braxian Psion and his protector and twin brother, a Braxian Guardian. (Braxians are my own, ebony black, no hair, pure white eyes, no pupils, a race that always births twins, one large, one small, inked from birth empathically. Picture the Acroyear from the old Marvel Comic of the Micronauts for the large one. The smaller ones are Psions/Druas and mind-trackers, and the larger are sentinels/guardians and warriors. I developed a psionic system very similar to the Tal10 magic that each archetype can use to a varying degree. Similar to mysticism, but the power is of the mind, not necessarily "magic" as most define it. Oh, they are also blind, and see through sensing with their minds). There is also a Talislantan Jaka player character, who they find when they first land on Draknar, along with his at times unwilling companion, a Virag shaman (Virag are a Jaka relative that lives on Draknar, yes there is a connection between the Virag and the Virago).

OK enough for now. I'll try to get into the actual adventure on my next post. This is getting longer than I thought it would be. Any comments, criticisms, etc are welcome. Bring it on.

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Draknar Adventures: Part 2

From: WADE DURANT <tinawade@sprintmail.com>
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Subject: talislanta-I] Draknarian Adventures Part 2
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After landing on the east coast of the Draknar continent, the party made its way to the west, through thick jungle, running into many strange creatures never seen on Talislanta or the Rock of Bral. I dug through the Worldbook looking for creatures that were mentioned but never described in detail, and expanded on them. (Rath in my game are a cross between a mangonel lizard and a drac. SMS - what were they really supposed to be?) Before I go on, here are a few races I came up with for the "lost continents" that will be referenced eventually:

Virag: Jaka relative, jungle and mountain dwellers, live in tribal society ruled by the shaman who have limited magic knowledge - Shamanism, Natural Magic, sixth sense (what good is a cat without 6th sense) and some have a natural phasing ability, similar to alter density. Fairly peaceful race, but don't make 'em mad. Very territorial.

Katta: another Jaka relative, partially fury and scaled, like most "mammals" on talislanta. Not nearly as nice as the Virag. They are much closer to Drukh or Beastmen in temperament. They also have magic using shaman, and a few have natural teleportation ability.

In my game, all the "feline" races (have to distinguish a difference between Jaka and Sub-Men somehow, so I'll call them feline) have been gifted in one way or another by their "creator". The Jaka have, or had, the beast lore and animal influence powers. The Virag and Katta are mentioned above. The Xerat are very large humanoids with similarities to the exomorph, and have camouflage ability. There are other undiscovered relatives to the Jaka I haven't developed yet.

Nomen: "human/sub-men" outcasts from the isle of Baratus that have developed a few villages on the mainland and have a trading relationship with the Virag, the Drathen and the Lutran (see below). They HATE the Katta more than dental surgery, and don't care much for the Drakken, who refuse to trade with them because they don't have scales or a tail.

Lutran: diminutive, otter-like humanoids that live in the Draconian Marshes and swamps of the southern part of the continent. Very inquisitive, imaginative river dwellers who harvest the vegetation of the swamp, along with minerals and gems, to trade with the other people of Draknar.

Drathen: underground dwelling intelligent paradracons, from the Cyclopedia of the Desert Kingdoms. They do all the trading with the Drakken. Hence, everyone else needs to keep good relations with them, because they buy all the goods from the Nomen, Lutran,

Virag, etc. A bit high and mighty in attitude despite their small size. They also have some limited magical knowledge.

OK that about does it for the races. (BTW, if anyone wants to use them, OK, but if you use them in anything that gets published, please change the names, because I'm using them in a book I'm attempting to write. All Non-Talislantan names I mention will be or already have been used in it. Of course, if anyone in the Talislanta publishing business wants me to develop them further for a future supplement, well, that's a different story. Thanks)

So on with the story. The party runs across a wagon trail in a valley, cut through the jungle, and of course decide to follow it. Their flying chrysalid scout finds a caravan heading north (behind them) made up of 3 wagons, 3 Drakken and 4 Katta. They also find, thanks to the Braxian's mind tracking and detection abilities, a Nomen tracker/warrior hiding in the jungle tailing the caravan. The scout talks to the Nomen, and after some assurances that the party doesn't live around here and has no clue who "Tyranicus" is; he fills them in on a little local politics, complete with his biases. The Drakken are from Castle Tyranicus, and are trying to start a trade deal with the Katta (they do have some scales!) and his job is to not let this happen. He describes Tyranicus as a crazed mad lizard, bent on wiping out the Nomen and the other Drakken (not completely true) and says that the caravel contains gifts from the Katta to the Drakken to influence Tyranicus' decision to start a regular trade. The Drakken character, Dycon, is not convinced (why should he believe this soft skin) and decides to approach the caravan. The others hastily plan an ambush as the Drakken heads south down the road by himself. (His head is as thick as his scales)

Dycon approaches the Drakken caravan leader, and not knowing the protocol and mannerisms of the Drakken on Draknar, he proceeds to insult the leader, who challenges him to one on one combat. Dycon, being large on honor and short on brains, accepts and proceeds to get his butt kicked. But this provides the perfect distraction that the Nomen needs, and with the help of the rest of the group, launches a surprise attack on the caravan. The Katta are tough, mean and nasty, but are caught by surprise, once again due to the help of the mental abilities of the Braxian characters, and the 2 remaining alive after the first 2 rounds decide to cut their losses and head for the hills, so to speak. The Drakken on the other hand are not as easily deterred, and fight the group to a standstill. Dycon lays unconscious in the middle of the trail throughout the entire battle. The party eventually retreats, after firing the wagons and cutting the beasts loose (beasts pulling wagons were loper-like, and only controllable by the Katta). The Drakken grab what they can, and head north, leaving the Dycon in the road. He was unworthy of their attention. The party returns later, salvages what they can from the wagons, wakes up Dycon, tells him a lie about the Katta turning traitor on the Drakken and attacking them. The strange torturous devices found in the wagons convince Dycon that they weren't the most honorable creatures in the world anyway.

The party is invited back to the Nomen village, in the hopes that they can find a guide to take them west to the lands of the Drakken King.

Next Time: Darkling Danger, More Darkling (fun with Load), and Raknids!!

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Draknar Adventures: Part 4

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Subject: talislanta-1] Draknarian Adventures Part 4
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Quite long, but if you read the first two parts, you gotta read this.

Yes this is part 4, you didn't miss anything. I'm actually skipping part 3 for now, for a few reasons. First, we may be playing again very soon, and I wanted to see if anyone had any input to this, the most recent part of the adventure. Second, part 3 consists of playing through the adventures previously posted by someone on this list (forgive me for not giving credit; I can't remember who it was. Would the author please stand up and take credit where credit is truly due.[Ed. Note: The Monk]) called Darkling Danger, and the other Darkling adventure where the players trade bodies with darkling to infiltrate and dispose of the fanatical leader, Load. So it's nothing completely new.

For now, lets just say they totally fell for the ruse in Darkling Danger, and they got rid of Load and made it back to their bodies, with a few interesting hitches along the way. (The Drakken character was transformed against his will, while unconscious, actually) I'll get into details later.

The players have split up temporarily, some going ahead to the new outpost being built between Tower Rock and Castle Tyranicus. One of the players was unable to play for a while due to heavy work schedule. Damn Qualcomm, those slave drivers! If you know anything about Qualcomm, you know that was not meant seriously.

The remaining party, including NPCs, was a Braxian Psion, his brother the Guardian (Big fighter type, with minor mental powers), a Nomen hunter (Outcast Baratan), a Virag shaman, and a Chrysalid warrior. See parts 1 and 2 for descriptions of the Non-Talislantan races.

They travelled west through the Jungles of Draknar, and discovered as they descended into a valley from the ridge of the mountains, that the trees here were different. They were huge! 200' from the ground to the first large branches. Most of them were in the range of 500 to 800 feet tall and had trunks as big around as a large stadium. There was enough open space under the branches for a squadron of crested dragons to fly, and that's just what they saw. Well, only one actually. In their desperate search for somewhere to hide, they stumbled into a group of caverns in the root system of the trees. Actually, the root system seemed to be filled with openings and passageways.

After escaping certain BBQ into these passages, they delved deeper into the roots of the tree and discovered a huge cavern. Not really a cavern though- the roots of the tree went deep and then curved in on themselves, forming a huge opening below ground, easily 100' across and 400' deep. (I got this from a book of cities put out by the same people,

who do the "Grimtooth's Book of Traps" series, I'm sure you've seen them.) On their way from the surface, the Psion could feel a very powerful presence deep within the tree, far below ground. Not just powerful, but strangely evil.

They came upon the cavern from the top, just as the walls of the thing started to slope downward. One of them almost fell into it. They could not see the bottom, but dropped a torch and saw that it was not anywhere close. (Very damp, slight mist, no real chance of a fire, and don't worry.) They could see, about 150' below and on the other side of the cavern, a strange platform that seemed to be formed out of the tree roots, but intended for use by things other than the tree. The Chrysalid recognized it as similar to the type of biomantic shaping of wood used by the chrysalids. His antennae perked up, thinking that there are, or were chrysalids here. He later would discover that his race had not lived here for hundreds of years. They made their way down and across the cavern, by flight, levitation (Alter density, actually) and climbing down the sides of the cavern wall made up of easily climbable roots and vines. On the way they encountered cave mantids, but made it down ok. (Mantids from the Desert lands cyclopedia.)

The feel was very "Alien"-like as they made their way from the platform out in the cavern into the tunnels where the platform attached to the walls, hoping to find an easier path down than climbing. The psionic impression on the Psion was now very strong and almost overwhelming, and they soon found out why. He decided he would open his mind up to it and try to communicate with it. Bad move. This did clue them in to what it was, but it also gave away their exact position, and very soon the walls began crawling with Raknid Warriors. Yes this old Chrysalid hive was now a Raknid hive. But something was different. The Psion felt an evil, not just a queen Raknid trying to feed her brood and protect herself. There was something else going on.

They fought their way back to the platform (almost like when Ripley was running from the Queen Alien and ended up with her back to the railing, with the drop ship missing. I did my best to make the players feel that way too), killing 8 or so Raknids. The Braxian warrior was knocked out in the fight and was being dragged, and the Psion was out of it from attempting to scramble the psionic signals the queen was sending to her warriors. That, along with a few well placed spells and a few oil flasks lit on fire and thrown into the passageways slowed the Raknids enough to let the players fly and/or climb back up to where they had entered, carrying their wounded.

They made it back up to the surface, all the way praying to whatever gods they had that the dragon had decided to leave. It had, luckily, and they ran away from that particular tree as fast as they could. Their interest was peaked though, and they now think it is their duty to flush the evil infestation of Raknids from the tree and discover the secrets left by the chrysalids hundreds of years ago. They searched thru the forest and found that most of the trees had these huge caverns in the roots, a perfect place of a new chrysalid society to call home. (Right in the middle of the continent of Draknar. Won't the Drakken love it!!) They decide that they need help though, and are headed north to find the rest of the group, and perhaps learn of an easy method to clear out a Raknid hive.

That is where we left off, but here is what I have planned:

Here is a description of the group that I typed up as reference for when we play. (Rather than retype the entire thing)

The party will hear or see signs of a group of Drakken in the forest. They are camped under a cavern tree (uninhabited).

Leader: Sharg level: 7

Net throwers: Grath, Rast levels: 3, 4

Pikemen: Horst, Frak levels: 6, 2

Sharg possesses a small staff that has the ability to disrupt mental powers, such as mental control, detection, etc. It also prevents scrying by magical means and makes surrounding area invisible to those in the ethereal plane, such as mystic's spell. They use this item to disrupt a queen Raknid's control over the hive and others. This staff was taken from a Neferatan ship that was shipwrecked by a powerful magical storm off the northern coast of Draknar. The ship is still hidden in a bay on the coast. There are other artifacts aboard that the ship that the Drakken either feel are too unknown and dangerous to touch, or they just didn't think was anything special. Only Sharg and Horst know the exact location of the ship. This group is a group of outcasts from Tyranicus. The Nefaratans are searching for their lost ship and the staff. Anyone possessing it will be found eventually and better have a good explanation.

If they are approached silently, the party will hear that Rast is becoming impatient about not being let in on the secret location of the ship and the stash of wealth the group has accumulated. There is some division in the group but it is clear that Sharg is in control and will take no shit from the rest of the team. He is up to any challenges that the rest care to offer. They may also hear comments about Brunr's plan to take over the outpost when the fortress is complete. They obviously don't like Brunr. (Brunr is the commander at the new fortress to the north, who is secretly on the side of Tyranicus)

Garak (The Nomen hunter, yea I know the name is stolen) knows that they are outcasts, but the question is, from Tyranicus or from King Khark's kingdom (Tower Rock). If approached, the Drakken will be hostile unless they can be bribed or bested in combat through a formal challenge. They are outcast but still conform to MOST of the Drakken rules of conduct. Rast and Frak are not quite as honorable as the others and would have no problems stabbing someone from behind.

If any psionics are used around them, it will not be successful and Sharg will know because the staff grows warm and glows. Also, the Braxians "see" with the powers of their mind, not with their eyes. If they come within 50' of the rod, they become blind, and essentially useless (allow a very difficult saving throw, say -10 vs. will, success

means -5 on everything and a huge migraine headache) and the Drakken, if paying attention, will know they are there.

So, do they make friends, tell the Drakken where the Raknid are, and work together, or do they steal the rod to use against the Queen Raknid, do they try to kill the Drakken (No Drakken characters here now) and take the rod, or do they slink away before they are noticed? Can the rod be turned off so as not to effect the Braxians? We'll see.

Comments, anyone?

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