



TALISLANDTA D20

Web Enhancement vol. II

MARUKANS

Once a robust and hearty folk, the Marukans now exhibit a wan and unhealthy appearance. Most have pale sallow complexions, sunken eyes, and limp brown hair. Morose and gloomy by nature, they dress in unflattering garments made of sackcloth and walk about with their eyes downcast.

The Marukan are descended from the ancient Numenians, a people whose lands were destroyed by The Great Disaster. The survivors sold salvage from the ruins, eventually earning enough to acquire a tract of land from the Hadjin, upon which they erected the city of Maruk. For a time the Marukans prospered, selling food crops to Carantheum, Danuvia, and Hadj. But a series of misfortunes beset them. Their crops failed, their animals died, and their people became dispirited. The Marukans continue to labor under this curse to the present time.

Marukans once lived in artful structures of brick and masonry, with domed copper roofs. Now, most of their buildings are in disrepair, the copper plating stripped from the roofs and sold for salvage. Formerly known for its stable family units, Marukan society has fallen apart. Many families have been forced to split up as individuals leave the citystate to find work elsewhere. Those who remain in the citystate now work as dung merchants, menial laborers, subsistence farmers, salvagers and talismancers. Few Marukans marry anymore, and the birth rate continues to drop each year.



Marukans are perhaps the most downtrodden and ill-aspected of all the Talislantan races. Considered harbingers of doom in many lands, Marukans are shunned as if they carried the plague. Fear of curses and bad luck dominates what is left of Marukan culture. Consequently, the people have taken to wearing "Luck Talismans" of many types and descriptions.

MARUKAN RACIAL TRAITS

- ▶ -2 Cha
- ▶ Medium Size: As Medium-sized creatures, Marukans have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size
- ▶ A Marukan's base speed is 30 ft.
- ▶ Automatic Languages: Low Talislan
- ▶ Favored Class: Trader

RELATIONS

Maruk has no allies or enemies of note, as it has little that anyone wants or needs. Though the Marukan government has technically been bankrupt for decades, the Ruling Council continues to offer a reward of one hundred thousand gold lumens to anyone who can successfully lift the curse from the city. The offer still draws a few optimistic mystics, savants and reputed miracle-workers, though not nearly so many as in years past.

RELIGION

Marukans are a superstitious folk who believe that their lives are controlled by the caprices of fate, luck and omens. Hoping to change their fortunes, they seek the aid of Talismancers – minor magicians who specialize in the making of luck medallions, charms and other enchanted items. These individuals claim to be masters of Talismancy, a field of magical study considered somewhat specious by other Talislantans. Their wares are available for sale throughout the citystate.

The Marukans once practiced elaborate funeral rites such as embalming, laving the deceased with scented oils and perfumes, adornment in costly vestments and interment in splendid underground tombs. Now, Marukans are buried with no concern for ritual, while the tombs of their ancestors are plundered for valuables.

LANGUAGE

Marukans are conversant in Low Talislan. Few, if any, Marukans have either the time or inclination to learn more than a smattering of words in other tongues anymore.

NAMES

Common male Marukan names include Merdmire, Marud, Merduk, and Marik. Female names end in an "a", as in Merdmira, Maruda, Merduka, and Marika.

ADVENTURERS

Marukans can be found across the lands of Talisanta, seeking to find what gainful employ they can. Most do not actively seek adventure as such, and those who do become embroiled in such undertakings put it down to their own bad luck at being at the wrong place at the wrong time.

MARUKAN WARRIOR

Medium Humanoid

Hit Dice: 1d10 (10 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 ft.

Armor Class: 15 (+1 Dex, +3 studded leather, +1 black iron shield)

Attack: Spear +3 (1d8 +1 / x3) or Sling +2 (1d4 / x2)

Full Attack: Spear (1d8 +2 / x3) or Sling (1d4 / x2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: None

Special Qualities: None

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

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

Skills: Handle Animal (ogront) +4, Professions (dung collector) +4

Feats: Weapon Focus (spear), Point Blank Shot

Environment: Wilderlands of Zaran

Organization: Squad (2-4), Patrol (5-8 plus one 2nd level sergeant)

Challenge Rating: 1

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: By character class

BATREANS

The Batreans are a primitive folk who dress in rude garments of coarse cloth and dye their hair with indelible blue pigments. Members of their respective genders bear so little resemblance to each other that they seem to be from separate species. Batrean males are huge, slope-shouldered, hairy, and remarkably ugly. Batrean females, on the other hand, are engaging creatures, slender and lovely beyond compare. The males dress in coarse hides; the females, in robes of translucent linen.

The Batreans are believed to be descended from survivors of The Great Disaster, who fled from the Lost Continent after it sank below the waves. If true, then Batreans may be related to the sea nomads of Oceanus.

The Batreans are a simple folk who live in huts made of woven thatch and subsist on a diet of tubers, fruit, fowl, and shellfish. Prior to the island's occupation, males and females traditionally lived apart. Now the two sexes are strictly segregated by their Imrian masters, who have killed off most of the males, saving only a few dozen for use as breeders.

Breeding males are kept in thornwood pens and allowed out only to take nourishment and relieve themselves. The females still live in huts, but are closely watched by Imrian guards. Batrean males seem unmoved by the beauty of their females, whom they largely ignore except during the males' brief, week-long mating season. Female infants are raised by the women. Male children are largely ignored, which may



BATREAN RACIAL TRAITS

- ▶ Males: +2 Str, -1 Dex, -4 Int, -4 Cha; Females: -2 Str, +4 Cha
- ▶ Medium Size: As Medium-sized creatures, Batreans have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size
- ▶ A Batrean's base speed is 30 ft.
- ▶ **Pheromones (Ex):** The pheromones of a Batrean Female act as a spell of the Influence Mode although no roll is required for success and the spell only has an effect on humanoid males.

Range: 50 feet

Duration: 3d20 rounds

Resistance: Will save a -3

Area: Multiple targets

On a failed Will save, the victim of the pheromones will be open to any suggestion made by the Batrean Female. Victims cannot be made to harm themselves or their loved ones but will be open to almost anything else including dangerous or illegal actions.

- ▶ Automatic Languages: Chanan, Low Talislan (females only)
- ▶ Favored Class: Barbarian (males), Rogue (females)

explain their diminished learning capacities.

The customs of the Batrean people are also divided along lines of gender. The males are crude, boorish, and slovenly, and seem possessed of a limited intellectual capacity. Batrean females, on the other hand, are exceedingly clever. They possess the ability to emit a scent that beguiles males of almost all humanoid species, making them susceptible to suggestion. This talent develops at the onset of puberty, and manifests a sweet smelling musk, so subtle that it may not be noticed. While male Batreans and Imrians are immune to this pheromone, males of most other humanoid species are not. Nasal plugs or filters afford some protection against this ability, though such devices are not uniformly reliable (see sidebar).

RELATIONS

Until the island was annexed by the Imrians, it was the custom among the males to sell their womenfolk for gold, a practice many believe the females instigated as a means

of escaping their loutish mates. Now the Imrians control the sale of Batrean females, and Imrian brass rings are used as currency on the island.

The Imrians breed Batrean females for sale as slaves and concubines, transporting them via their crude coracles to such distant lands as Faradun, the Kang Empire, Arim, Hadj, and Zandu. Aside from this, Batre has no relations with the outside world.

RELIGION

Batreans have no organized religion. The females are said to know something of magic, though the males are far too dense to comprehend such things. Batrean females adorn the bodies of their dead with garlands of flowers prior to burial, a custom that is still tolerated by the Imrians. Males had no such customs.

LANGUAGE

Most female Batreans are fluent in both Chanan and Low Talislan, while the males are barely conversant in the former of these two tongues.

NAMES

Common male names sound harsh and brutish, such as Thag, Vrog, and Zhug. Females have mellifluous sounding names like Saiel, Jalea, and Shalisa.

ADVENTURERS

While rare, there are Batrean adventurers. Among the males of the species, a few escaped or freed slaves have taken up adventuring since a return to their home island is out of the questions. More numerous, Batrean Females have often been able to win their freedom and many have taken up adventuring as a means to acquire wealth and power with the goal of eventually freeing their kin on Batre.

BATREAN WARRIOR

Medium Humanoid

Hit Dice: 1d10 (10 hp) (Barbarian 1)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 30 ft.
Armor Class: 12 (+2 hide armor)
Attack: Club +5 (1d6 +4 / x3)
Full Attack: Club +5 (1d6 +4 / x3)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: None
Special Qualities: Immune to Batrean female pheromones
Saves: Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +1
Abilities: Str 18, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 7
Skills: Climb +8, Jump +6
Feats: Endurance, Power Attack
Environment: Batre (continent wide as a slave)
Organization: N/A
Challenge Rating: 2
Treasure: Standard
Advancement: By character class

BATREAN ESCORT

Medium Humanoid

Hit Dice: 1d6 (6 hp) (Rogue 1)
Initiative: +1
Speed: 30 ft.
Armor Class: 1
Attack: Dagger (1d4)
Full Attack: Dagger (1d4)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Sneak Attack +1d6
Special Qualities: Pheromones, Trap finding
Saves: Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +1
Abilities: Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 18
Skills: Balance +4, Bluff +8, Escape Artist +8, Gather Information +8, Hide +6, Listen +5, Move Silently +8, Perform +8, Sense Motive +5, Spot +3
Feats: Weapon Focus (dagger)
Environment: Batre (continent wide as a slave)
Organization: N/A
Challenge Rating: 1
Treasure: Standard
Advancement: By character class

NEW PRESTIGE CLASSES

SCENT OF A BATREAN

In his famed book, "Perception and Delusion," the estimable Kabros, sorcerer and one-time ruler of ancient Phaedra, states emphatically: "The ability of Batrean females to influence males of other species can be attributed to their scent, which possesses aphrodisiac properties similar in effect to tantalus vine. Batrean males, who as a group suffer from chronic sinus difficulties, are evidently unaffected by the potent pheromones emitted by their mates."

Intrigued by Kabros' writings, I endeavored to find some means of putting his claims to the test. An opportunity unexpectedly presented itself in Zandu, where, as a courtesy to a Farad monger, I volunteered to chaperone three Batrean concubines whom he intended to sell in Arim. The Farad went off to tend to other business, leaving me to watch over his wagon, in which were safely secreted his lovely charges. Plugging my nasal passages with two small wads of compacted silkcloth, I entered the wagon, employing a minor bit of legerdemain to foil the Farad's locks.

The Batreans greeted me with obvious delight, and pressed their charms upon me in a most generous fashion. All went according to my most optimistic plans, until a sudden sneeze caused my hastily improvised nasal filters to be expelled. I came to my senses sometime later, awakened by the shrieks and curses of the Farad monger, who had returned to find the concubines missing, and with them, all of his gold. Happily for myself, the Batreans had been kind enough to hide me, dazed but unhurt, in a clump of nearby bushes. I deemed the results of my experiment to be sufficiently conclusive, and departed the area post-haste."

VERMILLION THORN

The Vermillion Thorns are a small sisterhood of courtesan-assassins based in Zandu. They are trained in the arts of entertainment, seduction and murder. Though most are found in Zanth, demand for their talents leads Vermillion Thorns to travel the nations of Talislanta.

Only the most beautiful women are chosen to join this elite sisterhood. They are selected by scouts who often present themselves to underprivileged young ladies on the streets of Zanth with offers to rise above their squalid stations. Once taken in, the pupils undergo rigorous trainings and are then introduced to "polite society" as courtesans.

Hit Dice: d6

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Vermillion Thorn, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria:

Gender: Must be female

Racial: Must be Zandir

Ability: Must have Cha 15+

Base Attack Bonus: +2



Skills: Bluff +5; Diplomacy +4; Perform: Dance, Any One Instrument, Oratory, and Sing +4; Hide +4; Move Silently +4; Open Locks +3; Profession (Courtesan) +4

CLASS SKILLS

The Vermillion Thorn's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Appraise (Int), Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gamble (Wis), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Culture, Local) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Perform (All) (Cha), Profession (Courtesan) (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Vermillion Thorns prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Vermillion Thorns gain proficiency with Battle Fans and Butterfly Pins (q.v.). They do not gain any new armor or shield proficiency.

The Art of Seduction (Ex): Vermillion Thorns become extremely proficient in the art of seducing their targets. The Vermillion Thorn must spend ten minutes focusing on a target that is present and visible (or on the depiction and description of one who is

not). Once this study is complete, the Vermillion Thorn adds her Vermillion Thorn level as an insight bonus on all Bluff, Diplomacy, Perform, Profession, and Sense Motive checks to seduce the target.

Initially, a Vermillion Thorn can have only one target at a time. For every three Vermillion Thorn levels gained beyond the first, a Vermillion Thorn may have one additional target.

Poison Use: Vermillion Thorns are trained in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying a poison.

Death Attack: If a Vermillion Thorn studies her victim for 3 rounds and then makes a sneak attack with a melee weapon that successfully deals damage, the sneak attack has the additional effect of possibly either paralyzing or killing the target (Vermillion Thorn's choice). While studying the victim, the Vermillion Thorn can undertake other actions as long as her attention stays focused on the target and the target does not detect the Vermillion Thorn or recognize the Vermillion Thorn as an enemy. If the victim of such an attack fails a Fortitude save (DC 10 + Vermillion Thorn's class level + Vermillion Thorn's Int modifier) against the kill effect, the target dies. If the saving throw against the paralysis effect fails, the victim is rendered helpless and unable to act for 1d6 rounds plus 1 round per level of the Vermillion Thorn. If the victim's save succeeds against either effect, the attack is treated as a normal sneak attack.

Once the Vermillion Thorn has completed her study of the target, she must make the death attack within the next 3 rounds. If the death attack attempt fails or if the

Table 1: Vermillion Thorn Prestige Class Progression

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1	0	0	+2	+2	The Art of Seduction, Poison Use, Death Attack
2	+1	0	+3	+3	Uncanny Dodge
3	+1	+1	+3	+3	Sneak Attack +1d6
4	+2	+1	+4	+4	Performance Mastery
5	+2	+1	+4	+4	Sneak Attack +2d6
6	+3	+2	+5	+5	Improved Uncanny Dodge
7	+3	+2	+5	+5	Sneak Attack +3d6
8	+4	+2	+6	+6	Coquettish Airs
9	+4	+3	+6	+6	Sneak Attack +4d6
10	+5	+3	+7	+7	Hide in Plain Sight

Vermillion Thorn fails to launch the attack within 3 rounds of completing the study, 3 new rounds of study are required before she can attempt another death attack.

Sneak Attack: This is exactly like the Rogue ability of the same name. The extra damage dealt increases by 1d6 every other level (3rd, 5th, 7th and 9th). If a Vermillion Thorn gets a sneak attack bonus from another source, the bonuses on damage stack.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Starting at 2nd level, a Vermillion Thorn retains her Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) regardless of being caught flat-footed or struck by invisible attackers. (She still loses any Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized).

If a character gains uncanny dodge from a second class the character automatically gains improved uncanny dodge (see below).

Performance Mastery (Ex): The Vermillion Thorn gains a confidence in and reputation for certain of her Perform skills. Upon gaining this ability, the Vermillion Thorn selects a number of Perform skills equal to 3 + her Intelligence modifier. When making a skill check with these Perform skills, she may add a +3 competence bonus.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): At 6th level, a Vermillion Thorn can no longer be flanked, since she can react to opponents on opposite sides of her as easily as she can react to a single attacker. This defense denies rogues the ability to use flank attacks to sneak attack the Vermillion Thorn. The exception to this defense is that a rogue at least four levels higher than the Vermillion Thorn can flank her (and thus sneak attack her).

If a character gains uncanny dodge (see above) from a second class the character automatically gains improved uncanny dodge, and the levels from those classes stack to determine the minimum Vermillion Thorn level required to flank the character.

Coquettish Airs (Su): By dint of body language, speech, and mannerisms, a Vermillion Thorn learns to emphasize her attractiveness to those around her. Those who would find the Vermillion Thorn attractive (regardless of creature type or size) find themselves blinded by her beauty, grace, wit and charm. Creatures so affected regard her automatically with a friendly

attitude (unless they make a Will save to negate this effect). If the creature is currently being threatened by the Vermillion Thorn or her allies, however, it receives a +5 bonus on its saving throw.

The Vermillion Thorn may affect a number of creatures whose combined HD do not exceed twice her level, or at least one creature regardless of HD. If there are more potential targets than she can affect, she chooses them one at a time until she chooses a creature with too many HD. The effect lasts one day per level of the Vermillion Thorn.

Creatures so affected are not controlled by the Vermillion Thorn, but perceives her words and actions in the most favorable way. She can try to give the subject orders but must win an opposed Charisma check to convince them to do anything they wouldn't ordinarily do. Affected creatures never obey suicidal or obviously harmful orders. Any act by the Vermillion Thorn or her allies that threatens the affected creature(s) breaks the effect.

Hide in Plain Sight (Su): Sometimes, even the most alluring must hide their beauty. At 10th level, a Vermillion Thorn can use the Hide skill even while being observed. As long as she is within 10 feet of some sort of shadow, a Vermillion Thorn can hide herself from view in the open without having anything to actually hide behind. She cannot, however, hide in her own shadows.

NEW WEAPONS

Battle Fan: Battle fans are rare weapon appearing to be ornate, attractive folding ribbed fans. The ribs are constructed of metal and the fabric is commonly made from spangalor. The tip of each rib is sharpened, allowing it to be used as a slashing weapon. This weapon, common only in Zandu and popular among female duelists and courtesans, can be used with the Swashbuckler feat (p. 149, Talislanta d20 FRP).

Butterfly Pin: These attractive 4-5" long metal pins topped with a heavy decorative knob (usually formed like a butterfly with colored lacquer wings) are worn decoratively in the hair. They can also, conveniently, be used as stabbing and throwing knives. This weapon, common only in Zandu and popular among female duelists and courtesans, can be used with the Swashbuckler feat (p. 149, Talislanta d20 FRP).

Table 2: New Weapons**Exotic Weapons**

<i>Light Melee Weapons</i>	Cost	Damage		Critical	Range	Wt.	Type
		(S)	(M)				
Battle Fan	15 g.l.	1d3	1d4	20/x2	-	1	Slashing
Butterfly Pin	5 g.l.	1d3	1d4	19/x2	10 ft.	1/4	Piercing

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