

# TALISLANTA



THE SCENT OF THE BEAST



# TALISLANTA



## The Scent of the Beast

by  
Jonathan Tweet

An adventure for Talislanta

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of the  
COAST

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## Author Biography: Jonathan Tweet

Jonathan Tweet brings to **Talisanta** the experience of fourteen years of gamemastering plus two and a half years spent co-writing the original **Ars Magica™** game and related products. After a two-year hiatus from writing, he is now freelancing full time and his next game system,



**Over The Edge™**, is being published by Atlas Games in August. Jonathan loves roleplaying because, as Einstein said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge."

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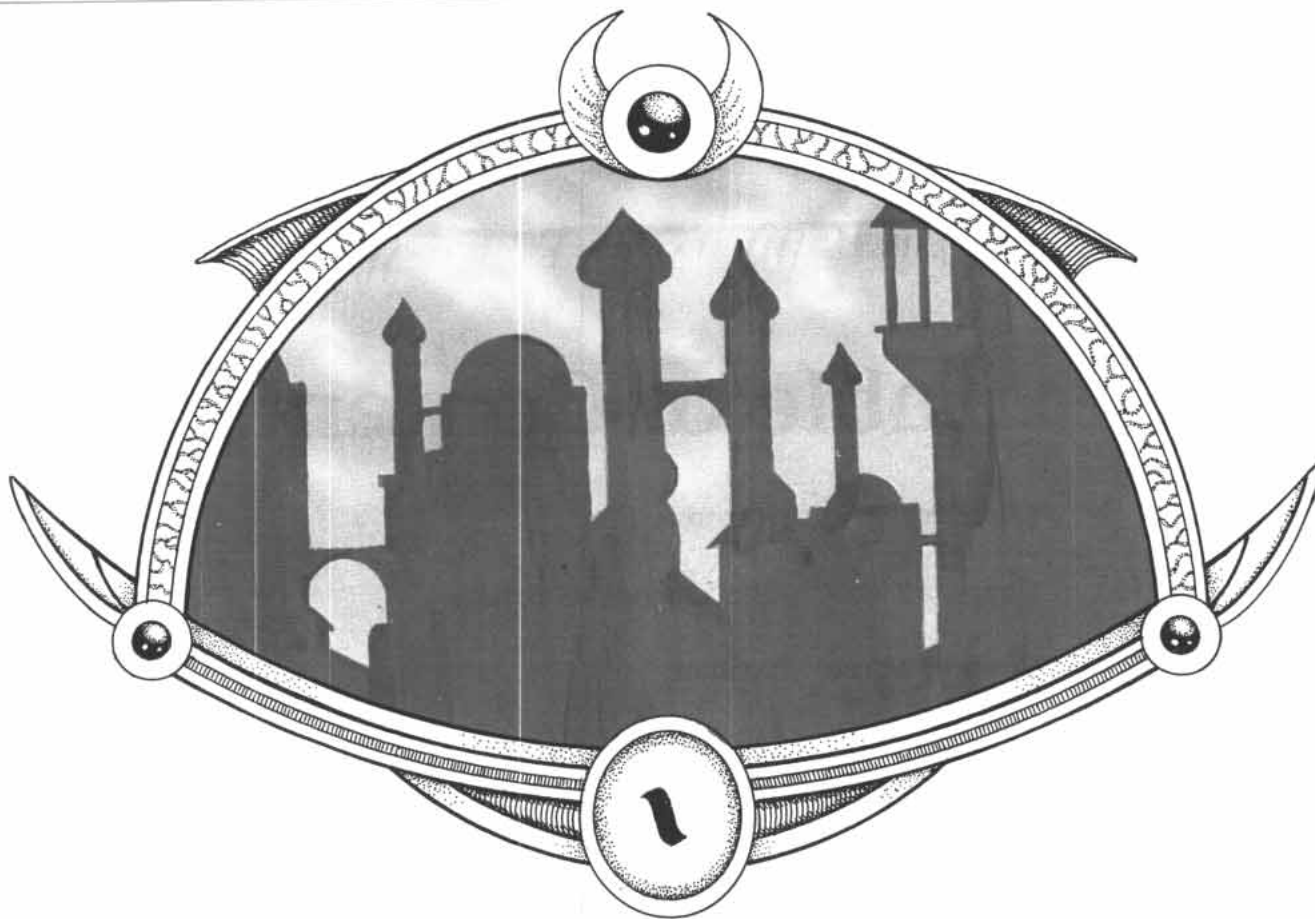
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## INTRODUCTION

*The Scent of the Beast* is an adventure set in the Seven Kingdoms and designed for four to seven beginning characters. It is also designed for a gamemaster new to **Talislanda**, providing an easy to run full-sized adventure.

### Players' Information

To make **Talislanda** easier for players new to the game, this book includes perforated sheets that you can tear out and hand to your players. These sheets explain the basic mechanics of **Talislanda** and describe the unique Talislantan milieu. You can find these sheets in the back of this book.

### GM's Information

This adventure has been specifically designed for a gamemaster who is new to the setting of **Talislanda**. Plenty of details are given throughout the text to keep you from having to rely on your memory of the rules. When you read the adventure, these details will show you how the rules apply to specific situations. Even if you don't use all the details provided, they will show you how to use the mechanics and setting to create a smooth-running **Talislanda** game.

Reviewing the following sections in the third edition *Talislanda Guidebook* will make running the game easier: Sindar (p. 19), Sindarans (p. 68), Tanasians (p. 68), Arimites (p. 76), Farad (p. 97), Beastmen (p. 93), the Tirshata (p. 16). When this text refers to other sections of the *Talislanda Guidebook*, the page references will be preceded by the initials

"GB," as in "GB p. 27." Page references not preceded by "GB" are references to pages within this book itself.

It is also important to familiarize yourself with the chapters "Finding the Traitor" (p. 45) and "Into the Ruins" (p. 56) before you actually run this adventure. The progress of that part of the adventure relies heavily on the unpredictable actions of the PCs, and on your ability to improvise, so you should be familiar enough with the possible events to play them smoothly. You may wish to make notes for yourself about the events you wish to include or emphasize, new NPCs or encounters you want to include, or important text you will want to refer to during play. The other chapters of the adventure are more linear and require less preparation to play, though you should still read through the entire adventure before playing it.

### The Rise of the Sub-Men

This adventure introduces a major event whose repercussions will run through a series of adventures for **Talislanda**: the rise of the Sub-Men. This adventure involves events that are related to the rise of the Sub-Men, and each succeeding adventure in the series will pull the characters deeper into this plot. Each adventure, however, also stands on its own, so you don't have to play all of them.

The rise of the Sub-Men is a serious concern to the people of the Seven Kingdoms. Sub-Men such as the Araq, Beastmen, and Za have always been a menace to the more civilized people around them, but

now a great leader has come to them—the Tirshata. It was the Tirshata who united the Za in ages past, and now a leader claiming to be the Tirshata has taken control of the Za. This adventure begins a series of events that will eventually allow the player characters to save the Seven Kingdoms, or—if they are not up to the challenge—to watch the land fall to the Sub-Men.

## Campaign Style

The *Talisanta Guidebook* identifies five campaign styles for play in *Talisanta*: mercenaries, epic saga, picaresque, explorers of the unknown, and mercantile. This adventure allows you to begin play in any one of these styles, with notes on how to modify the adventure to fit the style of play.

## The Magical Fair

"The Magical Fair" adventure in the *Talisanta Guidebook* is an ideal lead-in to this adventure. If you haven't played "The Magical Fair" yet, do so before sending the characters on this mission; the two adventures will blend seamlessly. If you have played "The Magical Fair" but have also played other adventures in the meantime, then the adventure starts with Abn Qua sending word to the characters that he would like to hire them for a sensitive mission.

## Selling Goods

During this adventure, the player characters will have several opportunities to find valuables that they can sell for hard cash—very many opportunities, if larceny is a habit of theirs. Usually the player characters will find themselves selling miscellaneous goods, often used, and often in markets with which they are unfamiliar. Use the following method to determine the price that the PCs can get for their goods.

Selling Goods Table	
Roll versus Merchant (or d10 + CHA)	
<b>Mishap:</b>	No buyers; wait another day to roll again. If the goods are stolen, the PC gets hassled by the authorities and possibly arrested.
<b>Failure:</b>	One-fourth of maximum price.
<b>Partial Success:</b>	One-half of maximum price.
<b>Success:</b>	Three-fourths of maximum price.
<b>Critical Success:</b>	Full maximum price.

If the goods value 50 g.l. or under, the character can substitute a roll versus Haggle for the roll versus Merchant. When selling goods worth 51 g.l. or more, the character needs the skills of a merchant to do it right. If the goods would give a buyer good reason to

think they are stolen, sellers must also make an Underworld roll (or d10 + INT) and use the lower of the two rolls to determine the price they can get.

Sellers who have successfully rolled versus Appraise Treasure (or d10 + PER) and know the value of their goods can add a bonus to rolls on the above chart (+1 for partial success, +2 for success, and +4 for critical success).

Note that the price received on the roll represents the best price the seller can get in that market after haggling and looking around for a buyer. The only way to do better is to take the goods to another town and try to sell them there.

## Experience on the Road

Since this adventure should take more than one session to complete, it is not fair to make the players wait until the end and then award them only a standard amount of experience. At the end of each play session, give them 5 experience points each, give or take one or two depending on how well they are progressing. In addition, award extra experience as usual for good roleplaying.

If the characters have played "The Magical Fair," they should achieve 2nd level by the end of this adventure.

## Non-Player Character Format

Non-player characters are described in the following format:

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### Name, Race and Profession, Level

---

**Languages:** Pay attention to whether a character speaks High Talislan or Common Talislan. The first language listed is the character's native or preferred language.

**Description:** If the term "man" or "woman" is used, the NPC is a member of one of the races of Men. For non-Men, the terms "male" and "female" are used. Age in years is given, with a general description (e.g., "young adult") if that race's life span varies considerably from earth human. If the NPC has jewelry or other valuables, the description includes the maximum amount for which they could be sold, should the PCs be so unscrupulous as to rob these NPCs or loot their corpses. Generally, a character will be able to sell the goods for 25% to 75% of the listed price, depending on the character's ability to haggle and on how obvious it is that the goods were stolen (see "Selling Goods" above).

INT	PER
WIL	CHA
STR	DEX
CON	SPD

#### Hit Points

Attacks  
weapon

CR (Combat Rating)  
CR for that weapon

Damage  
with STR  
bonus  
included



If the character is not proficient with a weapon, his or her CR is preceded by "d10" to indicate that you must use a d10 rather than a d20 for that character's attack.

**Armor:** Type and number of points stopped. Also, if the character has a shield or other protective armament, it is noted here.

**Field(s) of Magic:** If any.

**Spells per Day:** If any.

Spells favored spell	MR (Magic Rating) MR for that spell	Effect summary of effect
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Note that magicians can cast all spells from their fields of study, but only the spells that are most likely to come into play are listed here.

**Skills:** Specific proficiencies, when applicable, are listed in parentheses.

**Special:** Any special attacks, defenses, or weaknesses.

For less important NPCs, especially mounts, an abbreviated form is used.

## Mechanics

These are some guidelines to help you use the **Talisanta** rules simply and easily.

Unless otherwise specified, a partial success is sufficient for the roll to be counted as successful. If you wish, you may embellish the specific results of partial and critical successes.

When using spellcasting NPCs, you can assume for simplicity that they always cast spells at a level equal to their magic ratings (MRs). That way all you have to do is make a straight d20 roll with no modifi-

ers. For basic spells such as bolts and auras, casting spells at this level provides the maximum average effect with no chance of a mishap, at least at low levels. Spellcasters with higher magic ratings than those listed in this adventure usually prefer to cast spells at a level slightly lower than their MRs, but until you get completely familiar with the magic system, and as long as you are using low-level NPCs, go ahead and assume that the level of the spell equals the caster's MR.

When improvising rolls that are not described specifically, simply choose a skill or attribute that most closely corresponds to the task at hand and have the player roll. Bear in mind that an average person with no skill at all has a 50% chance of succeeding, albeit poorly, on a task with no degree of difficulty modifier. In other words, such a character, rolling d10 instead of d20 with no modifier for an attribute, will get a partial success half the time. A character with a skill rating of just +1, on the other hand, has an 80% chance of success on such a task. If you don't think that your average Talislanta off the street has at least a 50% chance of succeeding at the task in question, assign a negative degree of difficulty modifier (i.e., a penalty on the roll).

## Running Combats

It is important that the combats in this adventure challenge the PCs without overwhelming them, and there is no way that a printed adventure can anticipate the abilities—or lack thereof—of the players and their characters. The number of NPC combatants in each battle is variable. The text gives guidelines for determining just how many enemies the PCs should face, based on their strength, but you should alter the number as you see fit.

If you start running a combat that turns out to be too easy, imagine how you could make it tougher. Are there other NPCs nearby who might join in the combat, such as scouts who had been some distance from the main group? Could the NPCs have alchemical goods they can use to escape or fight back, such as smoke powder or morphi powder? With a little flexibility, you may be able to keep a battle challenging.

On the other hand, if you start running a combat and the PCs are losing badly, you may be able to think of a way out of it for them. Are the attackers willing to accept a surrender rather than the deaths of the PCs? Are there previously uninvolved NPCs who may come to the PCs' aid? Don't overuse that option or the players will feel like bystanders in their own adventure. Could the attackers' morale be worse than that of the PCs, causing them to retreat when wounded? Again, try to keep the combats in balance.





## THE JOURNEY TO TORDAN

### Abn Qua's Offer

Abn Qua (GB p. 315) has brought the characters together to ask them to perform a service for him. This scene picks up where "The Magical Fair" leaves off. If this adventure does not proceed directly from "The Magical Fair," set the scene as you feel appropriate.

Abn Qua explains the situation to the characters:

*"As you know, trouble is brewing to the east. In the Wilderlands of Zaran, the Za tribes have united under the Tirshata, a figure many thought mythical until he appeared seven years ago. What's more, our staunch ally Carantheum is preparing to defend itself from an attack by its traditional enemy Rajanistan. Not only would Carantheum be in a poor position to aid the Seven Kingdoms if we asked for assistance, but we might even be called on to lend assistance to them. And raids by the Beastmen from Golarin have continued unabated, despite the best efforts of our troops stationed in the fortresses of Akmir and Karfan. Furthermore, disturbing reports suggest that Beastmen are now often equipped with better armaments than they were known to use in the past. Since the craftsmanship is beyond their capacity, they must be getting this weaponry from allies somewhere.*

*"The reason I have brought you together relates to the Beastmen. What I am going to relate is confidential information that must not fall into*

*the wrong hands. Let me assure you that the punishment for betraying my confidence is severe. If there are any of you who do not feel qualified to accept a dangerous, secret mission, then please leave now. It would be much better for you to forget I ever mentioned anything about this than to accept this mission and let valuable information fall into the hands of our enemies, whether by accident or design."*

[Point to one of the characters.]

*"Do you wish to remain and hear what I have to say, or would you rather leave?"*

[Wait for a positive answer and then ask the same of the other characters, one by one. Tell any PCs who do not agree that they must leave, then continue when all the PCs agree to the mission, or only those who agree are left.]

*"Recently, items lost to Beastmen in the wilds of Zaran have turned up for sale in and around Cymril. Somehow these items have gotten from the hands of Beastmen to legitimate Seven Kingdoms merchants. Trade goods change hands often in their journeys across the land, so it has been difficult to trace these items back to their source, but we now have reason to believe that someone in or near the Sindaran city of Tordan has been trading with the Beastmen.*

*"Your job will be to travel to Tordan, on the border of Sindar overlooking the Dead River, and find out whether a merchant there has indeed been trading with the Beastmen. In this mission, information is more important than merely stopping the trading. We need to know what the traitor*



has been selling and to whom. Is it weapons, information, magical wares, or something else? We need to know if this person has contact with other such traitors. Once you have this information, of course, anything you can do to put a stop to this trade would be greatly appreciated. I am not in a position to advocate murdering a fellow citizen of the Seven Kingdoms, but neither would it reflect too badly on your performance if a perpetrator were to lose his or her life while resisting justice. Nothing more be said on that matter, I am sure.

*"Keep in mind that trading with the Beastmen is not a crime under Seven Kingdoms law. On the other hand, these are hard times, and we cannot permit actions that undermine our confederation's strength and support our enemies. If necessary, we may be able to bring the traitor or traitors up on charges of one kind or another, especially if it turns out that they are selling compromising information or advanced armaments. Furthermore, if you find it necessary to break a law or two in pursuit of this fellow, I have contacts that would prove expedient in making sure that justice, rather than the letter of the law, is served. Nevertheless, I do not relish calling in favors for the sake of a few relatively untried would-be adventurers, so do not be careless.*

[If the PCs are in a mercantile campaign, skip ahead to "Mercantile Campaign" below. If not, continue immediately below.]

*"But enough of what I want from you. You are no doubt eager to learn what you may expect in return. I am in a position to offer each of you 1,000 gold lumens."*

[If this adventure follows "The Magical Fair," Abn Qua says:]

*"Please consider the 10 gold lumens given to you by Voranil a friendly advance on your pay."*

[In other words, the PCs will each receive 990 additional gold lumens for their efforts.]

How Abn Qua concludes his proposal depends on the campaign style you intend for the campaign. If you and your players haven't chosen a specific campaign style, then use the "Mercenary Campaign" section. This adventure introduces the players to a variety of encounters. You can observe which encounters they enjoy the most and select a campaign style based on their inclinations.

### **Mercantile Campaign**

If the characters are in a mercantile campaign, Abn Qua tells them the following:

*"But enough of what I expect from you. You are no doubt eager to hear what you may expect from me in exchange. Simply put, I have arranged for you to take a land barge to Tordan and back. The ample load capacity of this barge is yours to fill with trade goods of your choice, which you can sell or trade as you see fit along the journey. The necessary papers to cross the border, the use of the land barge, and the use of its crew is yours at no expense. Funded on your own, such a journey would cost in excess of 1,000 gold lumens."*

### **Mercenary Campaign**

If the characters are in a mercenary campaign, Abn Qua tells them the following. If you and the players have not decided on a campaign type, use these words, as cash is always a good motivator for those who haven't chosen any other goal.

*"If you intend to make your livings as mercenaries you will need two things: a reputation, and experience. Succeeding at this mission will prove that you have what it takes to complete a thinking mercenary's job. It should cast you in a good light when bargaining for pay with future employers. In addition, I have the feeling that more and more mercenaries will be called on in the near future to fight the Sub-Men. You might as well start learning something about your enemy, and this assignment is your chance to do just that."*

### **Epic Saga**

For an epic saga, Abn Qua concludes with these words:

*"If you have the heart to help us fight back the Sub-Men, then you're just the kind of people we need right now. Dealing with a traitorous merchant may only be a small blow in defense of the Seven Kingdoms, but completing this mission will give you some of the experience you need before you pit your swords, spells, and wits against our more dangerous foes."*

### **Explorers of the Unknown**

*"This mission is also your opportunity to see firsthand some of the dangers to be found on the borders of our kingdoms before venturing farther into more hostile lands."*

### **Picaresque**

*"On top of the status and wealth you are likely to earn, this mission offers you a free ride across Cymril and Sindar, a journey that many find entertaining, if not luxurious."*

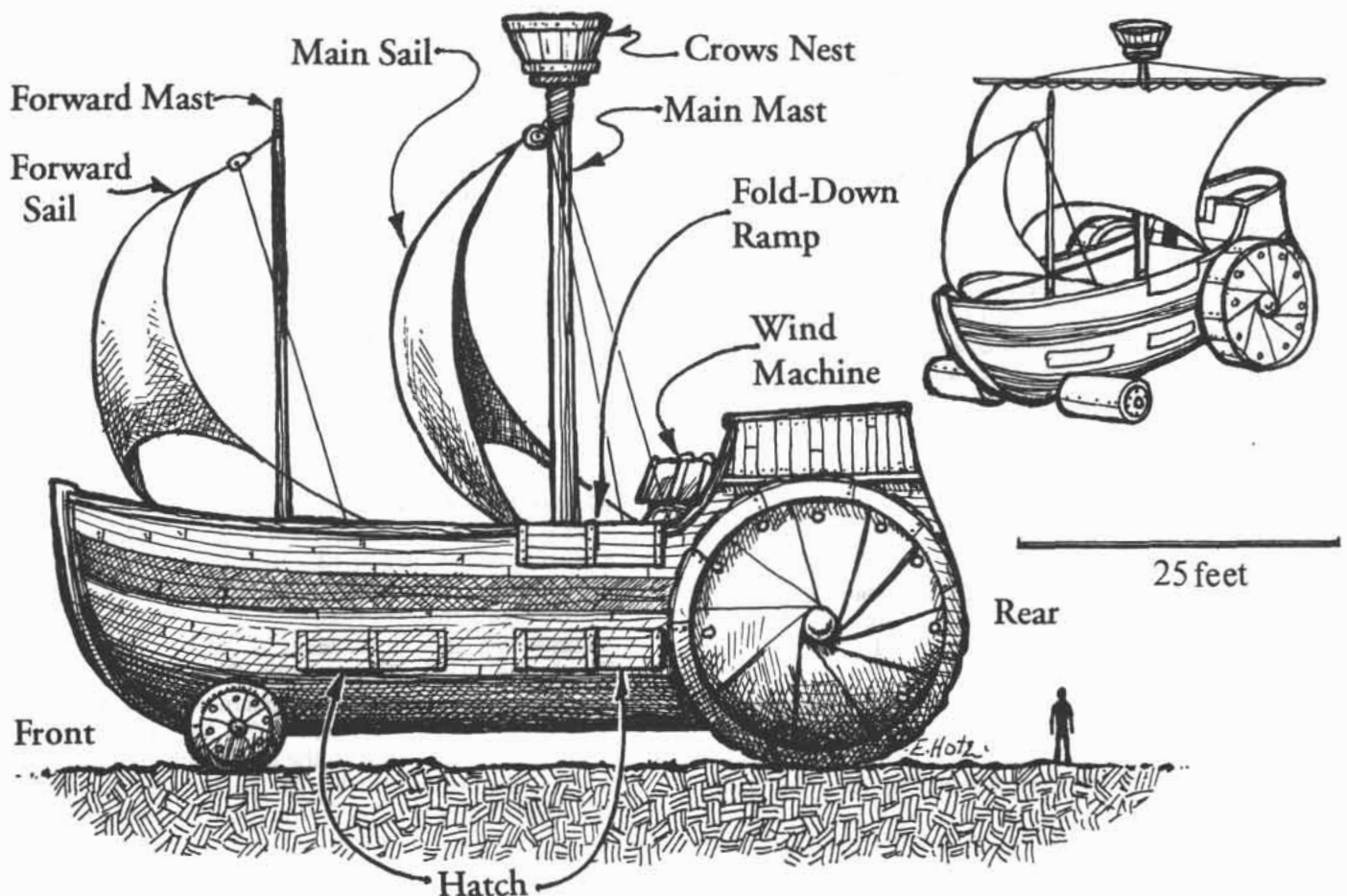
The characters are to accompany a land-ark that is heading to Tordan, there to trade foodstuffs, cloth, and wood for ores, crystals, and gems found in the mines nearby.

Abn Qua says he is currently arranging for other would-be adventurers who may be able to meet the characters en route, or in Tordan. He tells the characters that the password is "urchin eggs," and anyone who comes up to the party with this password will be a mercenary hired at another locale to aid the adventurers. This detail allows you to introduce new characters into the story with ease, either to replace dead characters or to allow new players to bring their characters into the plot. Whenever you need to introduce a new character, have him or her meet up with the group, having been hired by one of Abn Qua's intermediaries and told where the adventurers could be found.

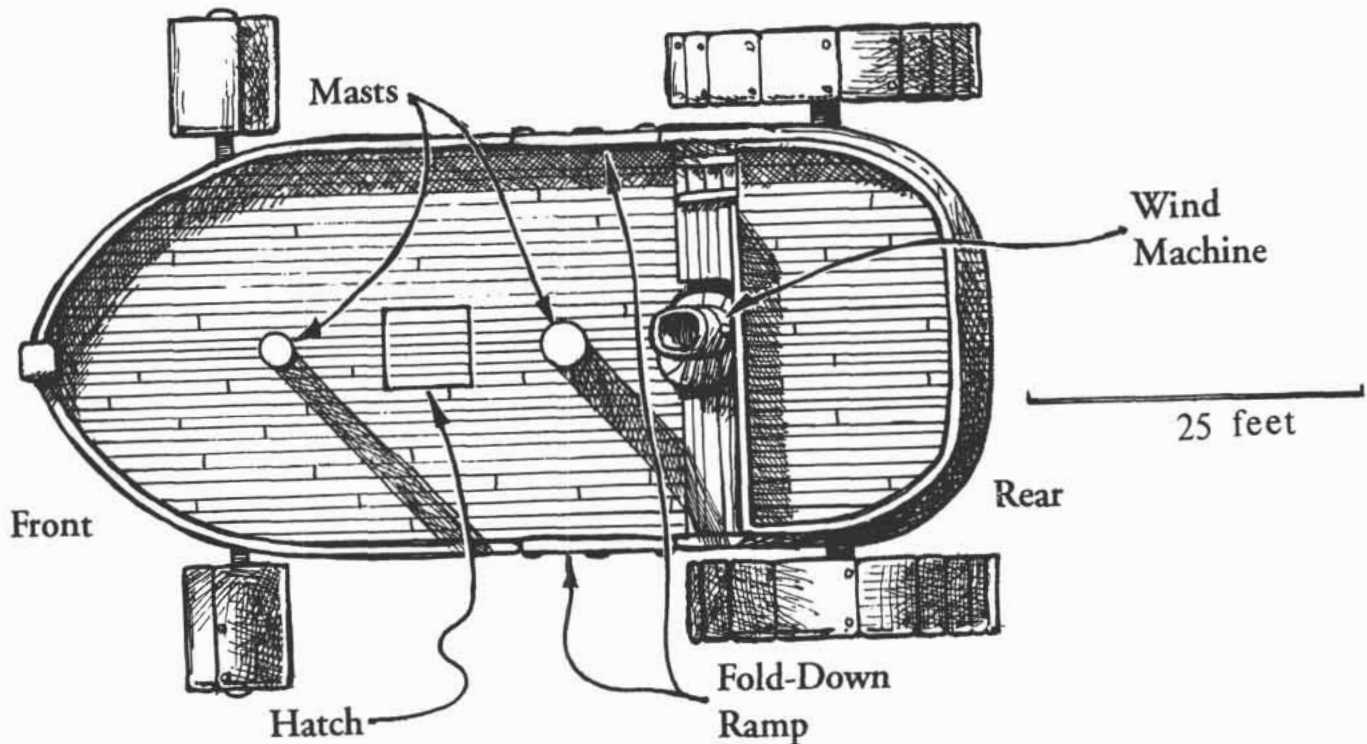
## The Land Barge

The transportation that Abn Qua provides for the characters is a land barge known as the *Ardan*. From stem to stern it is almost seventy feet long, and it spans thirty feet. The hull rests four feet above the ground and rises to fifteen feet. The *Ardan* is equipped with the following:

- **A huge mast and sail, plus one smaller mast.** Since the barge can rely on the wind machine to provide impetus and the front set of wheels to steer, it does not require the complex rigging necessary for a windship.
- **Wind machine.** At the stern stands an apparatus that supports a wind machine powered by storm crystals. Though the captain prefers to rely on favorable winds, the fickle nature of wind and tight schedules force her to use the wind machine at least two-thirds of the time.
- **Ramp.** The hull on either side lets down to form a ramp by which goods are hauled onto or off of the barge.
- **Storage area.** Beneath the deck is a storage area accessed by two hatches on each side of the hull.
- **Independent wheels.** The front pair of wheels steer the ship, each turning independently from the axle. A Yassan technomancer tends the gears necessary to steer these massive wheels.
- **Black iron plating.** The underside of the hull is plated with black iron to prevent damage from obstacles in the event the barge has to travel over rough terrain.
- **Wagon.** For hauling goods to and from the barge, a wagon accompanies the *Ardan*. When the hull is full of goods, the barge pulls the wagon as a trailer. When the hull has space, the crew brings it up onto the deck. The wagon is designed to be hauled by land lizards. Two land lizards accompany the barge, either following behind it, resting on the barge, or carried in the wagon, depending on the speed of the barge and the space available.
- **Brakes.** A large lever at the front of the ship activates all four brakes, producing a tremendous screech of metal on metal.







## The Crew

### Peris, Cymrilian Ark Captain, 4th Level

**Languages:** High Talislan +4 (for talking with merchants and dignified passengers), Common Talislan +4 (for ordering her crew around).

**Description:** Woman, age 37, 6', 130 lbs. Light green skin not colored by enhancements, slender build, three thick brass earrings in her right ear (3 g.l.). Wears practical spinifax clothes, but has an elegant cape that she wears when she needs to impress potential employers, merchants, and so forth. Considers herself completely in command when in her ship. Bear in mind the only true safety found in the Seven Kingdoms is within the walls of a city. Peris is proud of her ability to see her crew and passengers safely through the dangers that lurk in the countryside.

INT +1    PER 0  
WIL +1    CHA 0  
STR 0    DEX +1  
CON +1    SPD 0

**Hit Points:** 19

Attacks	CR	Damage
Dueling sword	+2	d8
Unarmed	+2	1

**Armor:** None.

**Skills:** Appraiser +5, Caravan Master +4, Crew +5, Drayman +5, Pilot (land-ark) +4, Rudimentary Combat (dueling sword) +2, Customs, Urban (Cymril) +5, Customs, Nomad (Seven Kingdoms) +5, Ride (eques) +5.

**Special:** Like all Cymrilians, she must make a WIL roll to resist investigating magical things.

### Oriman, Cymrilian Merchant, 3rd Level

(In a mercantile campaign, Oriman is not part of the crew, as the PCs are in charge of trading goods.)

**Languages:** High Talislan +4.

**Description:** Man, age 31, 6'4", 160 lbs. Light green skin subtly colored by purple enhancements, slender build, short hair, robe of spinifax (magical). He carries a pouch of 50 g.l., but keeps most of his working capital (another 1,000 g.l.) under lock and key on the Ardan.

INT +1    PER +1  
WIL 0    CHA +1  
STR -1    DEX -1  
CON 0    SPD 0

**Hit Points:** 16

Attacks	CR	Damage
Dueling sword	+0	d8-1

**Armor:** +1 robe, 1 point.

**Skills:** Rudimentary Combat (dueling sword) +0, Merchant +4, Administrator +4, Appraiser +4, Haggle +4, Caravan Master +4, Customs, Urban (Cymril) +4, Ride (eques) +2, Swim +2, Barter +4.

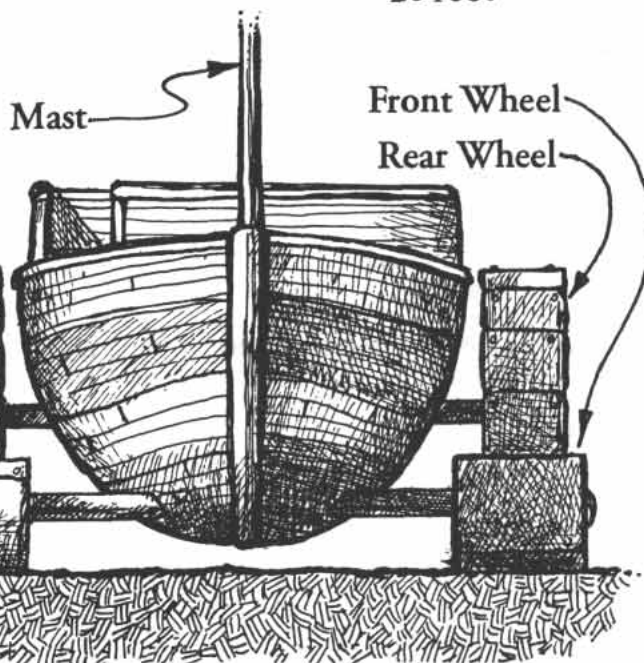
**Special:** Must make WIL roll to resist the urge to investigate magical things.

### Kazi, Danelek Wagoneer, 2nd Level

**Languages:** Common Talislan +1, Sign +1.

**Description:** Female, age 29, 5'9", 140 lbs. Skin blackened by exposure to the suns, hair bleached white and worn in dreadlocks. Her only jewelry is a simple iron ring (1 g.l.). Kazi is awed by the culture and magical ability of the people of the Seven Kingdoms. She prefers the company of fellow laborers and her land lizards to that of higher class people. She made the mistake of following a Cymrilian lover back

25 feet



to the Seven Kingdoms, where his desire for proper status soon overcame the novelty of having a Danelek consort. He dumped her, but she has remained to make a life for herself in the Seven Kingdoms.

INT -1 PER +2  
WIL -1 CHA +1  
STR +1 DEX +1  
CON +4 SPD 0

**Hit Points:** 20

Attacks	CR	Damage
Club	+2	d8+1
Unarmed	+2	2

**Armor:** None.

**Skills:** Drayman +1, Animal Handler (land lizards) +1, Crew +1, Wilderness Survival +1, Rudimentary Combat (club) +2, Customs, Nomadic (Zaran) +1, Ride (land lizard) +3.

**Special:** None.

## Thann, Udig, and Dak, Monad Laborers, 1st Level

**Language:** Sign (including a highly complex form unique to Monads) +1, can understand Common Talislan.

**Description:** Neuter, ages 6 to 10 (adult), 7'-7'6", 500-700+ lbs. Striated black and white skin, tiny cranium, immense torso and limbs. They wear only brown loincloths and sandals. They are incredibly placid and quite willing to work without rest or complaint.

INT 0 PER 0  
WIL -6 CHA 0  
STR +8 DEX -4  
CON +9 SPD -4

**Hit Points:** 31

Attacks	CR	Damage
Smash	d10-4	9*

## Chapter Two: The Journey to Tordan

\*Subdual damage only; see GB p. 49.

**Armor:** None.

**Skills:** None, per se; Monads must be instructed in any task that requires a certain amount of skill. They can perform any relatively simple or mental skill at their current level of ability.

**Special:** Sexless, reproducing by a process similar to cell division.

## Krono, Yassan Technomancer, 2nd Level

**Languages:** Nomadic +4, High Talislan +4.

**Description:** Male, age 13 (appears age 21), 5'7", 168 lbs. Metallic gray skin, "flat" features, squat physique, six-fingered hands. Wears a hooded yellow tunic (with utility pouches) and breeches, heavy leather boots, and gloves. He has various pouches and a black iron strongbox for his tools, of which he is very possessive. After he embarrassed his family in Cymril, his stepfather made him take commissions on land-arks. It's the only way to see to it that Krono is not around to embarrass anyone. Krono believes his work is beneath his potential, and he is often sullen.

INT +2 PER +2  
WIL 0 CHA 0  
STR +1 DEX +9\*  
CON 0 SPD 0

\*Fine manipulation only; overall DEX is 0.

**Hit Points:** 16

Attacks	CR	Damage
Elemental actuator	+4	d8*
Short sword	+1	d8+1

\*Range of 10 feet.

**Armor:** None.

**Skills:** Secondary Magic (technomancy) +4, Engineer +4, Artificer +11, Artisan +11, Rudimentary Combat (short sword) +1, Customs, Nomadic (Desert Kingdoms) +4, Talislantan Cultures +4.

**Special:** Exceptional manual dexterity (see above).

## On the Road

The following are four encounters the player characters can have on their way to Tordan. Each encounter is especially appropriate for one type of campaign. You can use all of them, in which case they are described below in chronological order, or you can select the ones you think your players would most enjoy. Even if you use all of them, some can be given more attention than others. If, for instance, you think your players would not be interested in involving themselves in the politics of Sindar, you can summarize "Oratory of the Neo-Neurians." You might simply say, for instance, that while the Ardan is docked in Durjan, a Sindaran gives a speech in the square calling for a change in the law that would give the Nadir Absolute two votes on the Council of Kings, one vote per brain. If the players aren't too interested, at least this summary fleshes out the background of the adventure and foreshadows the neo-Neurians the characters might meet in Tordan.



## Rules for Trading

If the PCs are merchants in a mercantile campaign, they are in charge of buying and selling trade goods. In this mission, the PCs will be selling to other merchants, not retailing. They have a chance to buy and sell goods at each stop listed below. At each location, the prices vary according to local supply and demand. For simplicity, you may restrict the PCs to the goods listed here, or you may improvise prices for other goods.

Even if the PCs are not merchants, mention to them what goods the *Ardan* is carrying and what *Oriman* is trading in order to make the background of the adventure more real.

At each port, the PCs can buy and sell whatever they wish, though each market has a limit on what is readily available for purchase and what the merchants there are willing to buy, expressed as a number of gold lumens listed under "Limit per Item." For instance, the PCs may notice that they can make a profit of 1 g.l. per pound by hauling quartz from *Tordan*, where it is mined, to *Cymril*. Even if they have several thousand gold lumens to lay down, however, they will be unable to find more than 78 pounds for sale, or 1,482 g.l. worth. The rest has already been promised to other merchants or has not yet been mined. To purchase more than that would require paying a higher price and reducing or eliminating their profit.

These limits are for unknown merchants, such as the PCs. If the PCs return to this area again and again, they may come to know other merchants and find that they can purchase or sell much larger amounts of goods as their reputation grows and improves.

### Cymril

Limit per Item: 1,500 g.l.

Trade Good	Price
Aquavit, good, gallon	50 g.l.*
Glass, green, 10 pounds	50 g.l.†
Produce/grain, ton	100 g.l.*
Quartz, uncut, pound	20 g.l.†
Silver, 10 pounds	20 g.l.†
Skoryx, gallon	778 g.l.†
Timber, hardwood, 100 board feet	10 g.l.*
Tin, 100 pounds	20 g.l.†



### Durjan

Limit per Item: 600 g.l.

Trade Good	Price
Aquavit, good, gallon	52 g.l.
Glass, green, 10 pounds	(40 g.l.)
Produce/grain, ton	105 g.l.
Quartz, uncut, pound	20 g.l.
Silver, 10 pounds	20 g.l.
Skoryx, gallon	700 g.l.*
Timber, hardwood, 100 board feet	11 g.l.
Tin, 100 pounds	20 g.l.

### Uthan

Limit per Item: 300 g.l.

Trade Good	Price
Aquavit, good, gallon	51 g.l.
Glass, green, 10 pounds	(40 g.l.)
Produce/grain, ton	110 g.l.
Quartz, uncut, pound	20 g.l.
Silver, 10 pounds	20 g.l.
Skoryx, gallon	700 g.l.*
Timber, hardwood, 100 board feet	12 g.l.
Tin, 100 pounds	20 g.l.

**Note:** If the PCs hear about a shipment of excellent skoryx and wait for it to arrive, they will be able to buy up to 20 gallons for 40 g.l. each (lowest price whole trip).

### Kiran

Limit per Item: 200 g.l.

Trade Good	Price
Aquavit, good, gallon	51 g.l.
Glass, green, 10 pounds	(40 g.l.)
Produce/grain, ton	115 g.l.†
Quartz, uncut, pound	20 g.l.
Silver, 10 pounds	20 g.l.
Skoryx, gallon	700 g.l.*
Timber, hardwood, 100 board feet	13 g.l.
Tin, 100 pounds	20 g.l.

### Tordan

Limit per Item: 1,500 g.l.

Trade Good	Price
Aquavit, good, gallon	54 g.l.†
Glass, green, 10 pounds	49 g.l.*
Produce/grain, ton	115 g.l.†
Quartz, uncut, pound	19 g.l.*
Silver, 10 pounds	19 g.l.*
Skoryx, gallon	731 g.l.
Timber, hardwood, 100 board feet	14 g.l.†
Tin, 100 pounds	18 g.l.*

\* Best location to buy on this trip (no lower price elsewhere).  
† Best location to sell on this trip (no higher price elsewhere). Price in Parentheses: No one selling this material; PCs can sell at this price but not buy.

In addition to handling the four encounters, the PCs may wish to engage in trade. If you are running a mercantile campaign, see "Rules for Trading."

## Itinerary

Captain Peris plans the following itinerary for the party:

<b>1st Day</b>	Cymril to Durjan, just past the Sindaran border. 80 miles, full day's travel.
<b>2nd Day</b>	Durjan to Uthan. 35 miles, half-day travel.
<b>3rd Day</b>	Uthan to Kiran. 30 miles, half-day travel.
<b>4th Day</b>	Kiran to Tordan. 40 miles, half-day travel.

Captain Peris acknowledges that the land barge may be delayed if there are promising trade possibilities that take more time than expected. The characters should be in Tordan in four to seven days.

There Captain Peris will drop the PCs off and continue into Kasmir. When the PCs have completed the mission, they can send a message by sun-signal to Abn Qua, who will arrange to have the *Ardan* or some other vehicle come by to pick them up in a few days. Otherwise they can find their own means of transportation home.

## Sindaran Cultural Note: Aberrant Weather

Sindar is subject to two types of aberrant weather: acid rain and the black wind. The resourceful Sindarans have learned to deal with both of these phenomena.

Since they are excellent alchemists, the Sindarans have little trouble developing acid-resistant chemicals that in turn are put into dyes, shellacs, and paints. Though Sindaran buildings may look flimsy since the walls are cloth rather than wood or stone, they resist the effects of acid rain very nicely. Acid rain is so easily dealt with, in fact, that many Sindaran alchemists think of it as a boon rather than a curse. They put large glass water barrels out of doors, where they fill with acid rain, giving the alchemists access to free acid for their various alchemical processes.

The black wind is something of a worse problem, but Sindarans have found that when it hits, the black wind tends to follow the lowest path of travel, hugging the ground. Since Sindaran settlements are almost universally on mesatops, most population centers are safe from the black wind's unpredictable effects.

## Cultural Note: Sindaran Speech

Sindarans are exemplars of longwindedness, with more letters per word and more words per sentence than are found in any other race in Talislanta. They present alternatives to everything they say, pointing out opposing views to the views they profess, or suggesting alternate actions to the actions they recommend. To a Sindaran, the directness of other races is unsatisfying and perhaps rude.

### Slang

Below are some slang phrases in common usage in Sindar. These phrases are all borrowed from the speech of mono-encephalons and are therefore much simpler than typical Sindaran speech. Sindarans find them particularly funny precisely because they are not forms of speech that Sindarans normally use.

"Let me sleep on it." This means "forget it;" Sindarans do not sleep.

"I have half a mind to ." This is a joke at the expense of mono-encephalons, whom the Sindarans believe have only half a mind. For example, "I have half a mind to tell that Cymrilian gentleman to kiss a venomous serpent, or perhaps ingest a poison lizard without recourse to mastication. His mundane and magical aptitudes, however, are useful to have at hand."

"Go to bed." Since Sindarans use their beds for only one thing, this phrase is an insult. Its English equivalent is unprintable.

### Names

Sindaran names have an ominous sound to them. If you need to name non-player characters on the spot, you can select a name from the following lists. Generally, Sindaran female names begin with vowels, whereas Sindaran male names begin with consonants, though this rule has numerous exceptions.

Male	Female
Hordek	Istet
Pardan	Uza
Nadar	Omis
Khomat	Urna

## Weather

Consult the rules on pp. 217-220 of the *Talislanta Guidebook* for weather. Roll on the Arid chart every day to see what that day's weather is like. If this adventure immediately follows "The Magical Fair," remember to add +10° to the temperature because the adventure takes place in the median season.

## Oratory of the Neo-Neurians

In an epic saga campaign, this encounter gives the player characters a chance to defend the alliance of the Seven Kingdoms from malcontents.





On the first day, the Ardan leaves Cymril at dawn and travels northwest all day, passing through the wooded hills typical of the Cymrillian landscape. Roll on the Temperate weather chart, GB p. 217. It arrives at the Cymril-Sindar border late in the afternoon and spends four hours going through Customs. For some reason, the Sindaran border guards have decided to be especially picky today. Perhaps they're being paid for overtime. When the border guards actually let the Ardan through, it docks at Durjan. The characters camp in or near the Ardan for the night, with rude accommodations provided for those who do not have their own.

The next morning, Oriman starts buying and selling, or the PCs do in a mercantile campaign. He tells the PCs that they will leave sometime after noon, so until then they are free to wander about or even take the winch-lift up to Durjan and look about; like all Sindaran settlements, Durjan is on a mesatop. While wandering about, the player characters hear that a speaker is planning to give a controversial speech in the square at midmorning. Drop enough hints to the player characters to interest them in this speech.

The speaker is a Sindaran named Undin, a young female with a gift for drawing and leading a crowd. She is a neo-Neurian, one of the few Sindarans who have taken to calling themselves after their ancestors. Her current issue is "One Brain, One Vote." She and her followers argue that the Nadir Absolute, currently Modan, should be allowed two votes on the Council of Kings because he has two brains. They argue that, on the one hand, giving more power to the most intelligent ruler on the council would benefit the Seven Kingdoms as a whole, and, on the other hand, that it is viciously unfair to discriminate against the Sindarans by only allowing them half a vote per brain. To date they have little support among the populace, but they gain more supporters every month.

At midday, a crowd assembles in the plaza. Soon enough, Undin takes to the stand in the center of the square and begins her speech. In true Sindaran form, she carefully explores both sides of the issue, but within an hour she has made a strong case for giving the Nadir Absolute two votes on the Council of Kings. Roll on the Action Table for Undin's oratorical success. She receives a +5 bonus for her Oratory skill, but also receives a -5 Degree of Difficulty penalty because she is trying to effect change in a system that arguably works well enough. In other words, the roll is even on. Elaborate the response of the crowd based on the result given on the Action Table.

The player characters should be able to recognize that ideas such as the ones Undin is proposing breed discord within the Seven Kingdoms, just at a time when the populace needs to unite in preparation for whatever dire plans the Tirshata is forming. If any characters feel compelled to respond, they can speak up in opposition. The Sindarans, eager to hear yet another side to the issue, virtually push the characters to the stage and demand a speech.

If any character gives a speech, have the players at least outline the points they wish to make, if you don't want to make them produce an entire extemporaneous speech. Have the players roll versus Oratory, with the following modifiers:

- Characters who lack the Oratory skill roll only d10 instead of d20 and add only their CHAs.
- Characters who are not Sindaran and thus are unable to speak in the manner of dual-encephalons suffer a -5 degree of difficulty penalty.
- If any player invents either very convincing or very weak arguments, apply a degree of difficulty modifier of -5 to +5 (your discretion).
- If a character speaks in Common Talislan rather than High, the Sindarans mistake the speech for a joke or parody. The audience gets a good laugh at the PC's expense.

If the final result is better than Undin's roll, the characters receive cheers and the crowd seems happy to find someone to justify the status quo. Pleased to have had the opportunity to hear some entertaining speakers, they return to their homes and places of work. If Undin's roll is better, the characters receive polite applause but little else, and then the crowd disperses. If the rolls tie, then the crowd calls for Undin to return and give a counter-counterpoint, after which the character is expected to provide a counter-counter-counterpoint; Sindarans love an extended debate. Repeat the rolls defined above, with ties calling for speeches until one speaker defeats the other.

Regardless of the outcome, a few Sindarans approach any characters who gave speeches to compliment them on being willing to stand up for unity. They offer to buy the characters and their companions a round of skoryx at a nearby tavern. Be sure to get it across to your players that this kind of oratory can be just as important to the career of a hero as combat and magic.

### Debating with Undin

Roll versus Oratory (or d10+CHA)

- -5 penalty if non-Sindaran.
- Bonus or penalty depending on quality of player's ideas.
- Must be in High Talislan.
- Compare roll to Undin's (d20 +0).
- Undin's roll is higher: Undin wins the debate.
- Rolls tie: Audience demands a "rematch."
- PC's roll is higher: PC wins debate.

### Undin, Sindaran Agitator, 3rd Level

**Languages:** High Talislan +10.

**Description:** Female, age 25, 7'2", 200 lbs.

Rough sandy-hued skin, ridge of six hornlike protrusions running along crest of skull, bony chin spur, and emaciated appearance. She wears a light blue silk kaftan and gold earrings (25 g.l. each) attached to a chain from which dangles a diamond pendant (100

g.l.). Medium-sized silver hoops (2 g.l. each) pierce her horns.

INT +7      PER 0  
WIL 0      CHA +2  
STR -2      DEX 0  
CON 0      SPD 0

**Hit Points:** 14

Attacks	CR	Damage
Unarmed	d10+0	1

**Armor:** None.

**Skills:** Oratory +5, Coerce +5, Bribe +5, Espionage +3, Collector (ancient diagrams, blueprints, etc.) +10, Antiquarian Lore +10, Arcane Lore +10, Diplomacy +5, Geography +10, Talislan Cultures +10, Talislan History +10, Customs, Urban (Sindar) +10, Fashion +5, Haggle +5, Barter +5.

**Special:** Dual-encephalon.

## Satada Attack

If you have a militaristic group, or if you want to get things moving with a quick fight, then use this encounter. It suits a mercenary campaign well. On the second day, after Undin's speech, the Ardan sets sail for Kiran. On the way, the party passes an area where satada lie in wait. They ambush the party, hoping to steal slaves from what they believe is an ill-equipped land barge.

## Sindaran Cultural Note: Neo-Neurians

Neo-Neurians are a small minority among the Sindarans. When the Lyceum Arcanum revealed the *Archaeon Codex*, the Sindarans learned that their race is not native to Archaeus but is descended from a race called the Neurians who came to Archaeus ages ago from another world. To most Sindarans, this news is merely an oddity, but to a few it is the central factor in a philosophy that puts Sindarans first among races in the Seven Kingdoms, indeed among all the races of the planet.

Privately, many neo-Neurians would prefer to have the Sindarans rule the Seven Kingdoms or break the alliance with the other six kingdoms. Publicly such talk would be considered tantamount to treason. Wisely, they have decided to make public only the first item on their vague agenda: to give the Nadir Absolute two votes on the Council of Kings. If they can gain support for this measure in Sindar, it will open the door to deeper changes.

A major goal of the neo-Neurians is to improve their skills at Trivarian and to recruit excellent Trivarian players to their ranks, thereby improving their cause's political power in Sindar.

Some neo-Neurians are intent on excavating ancient ruins in an attempt to find out more about their past. They hope, eventually, to be able to find a way to contact the world from which they came, perhaps establishing trade and cultural exchange with any Neurians that they find there.

Determine the number of satada according to the power of the PC group. For each exceptional warrior, such as a Thrall on a mangonel lizard or an Ahazu warrior, let there be two satada. For every other warrior, let there be one satada. For each two remaining characters, let there be one satada. At first level, warriors tend to be more powerful than magicians and alchemists, so PC warriors "count" for more in this case.

Have each character who is making a special effort to watch for trouble make a Scout or PER roll. Make one Hide roll for the satada at  $d20 + 4$ . From the satada's roll, subtract 1 for every satada beyond the first that is present (e.g., if there are five satada,

subtract 4 from the roll). If a character is in the crow's nest, give that character a +2 bonus. If a character is flying and scouting overhead, give that character a +5 bonus. Any characters who roll higher than the satada's roll spot them hiding in the brush. Spotting the satada gives the characters one extra round to prepare for the attack before the satada open fire with their capture-bows.

### Spotting the Satada

Roll versus Scout (or  $d10 + \text{PER}$ )

- +2 if in crow's nest.
- +5 if flying.
- Compare to satada's roll of  $d20 + 4$  (-1 per satada beyond the first).
- Satada's roll is equal or higher: PCs do not spot them.
- PC's roll is higher: PC spots the satada and has one round to prepare for the attack.

The satada lurk behind scrub brush and on small rises, where they can fire their capture-bows and remain in cover. All missile fire directed at them suffers a -5 on the roll for their cover. Similarly, they receive +5 on DEX rolls to dodge magical bolts.

Captain Peris's typical maneuver when attacked is to kick in the wind machine and get out of the situation. The *Ardan* is moving at 8 mph (SPD -3, 70 feet per round) when the satada attack. It is possible that the characters and crew will be able to duck behind cover, that the satada will all miss with their capture-bows, and that the *Ardan* will whisk the characters out of harm's way. While an encounter like this does serve to shake up the group and remind them how dangerous life outside of a city is, you may want to make sure that this encounter amounts to more than that. If so, have one of the satada snag Kazi, the Danelek wagoner. Captain Peris immediately asks the characters if they think they can safely retrieve her. If they say they can, she brakes the *Ardan* to allow the PCs to attack.

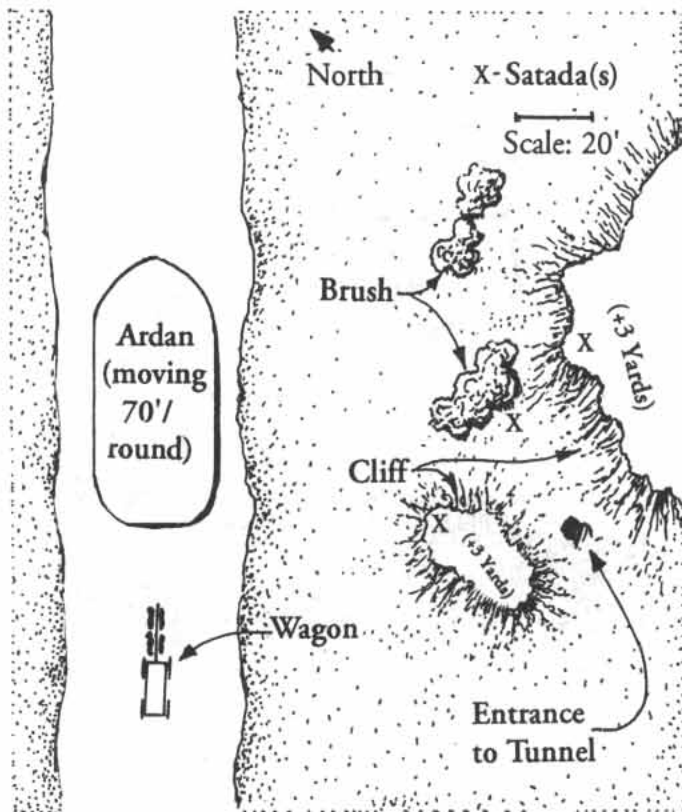
The satada are tough, but not that much of a threat. Their capture-bows are essentially one-shot weapons because in the two rounds that it takes to reload them the PCs can reach them for close combat. They have a fair number of hit points, and there are several of them, but they do not have much magic or overly effective missile weapons.

One of the satada has a **ring enchanted with Mystic Bolts**, level 4. It can use the ring three times per day. The bolt has a range of 40 feet and does  $4d4$  points of subdual damage. Tell the players of any characters struck by Mystic Bolts to record subdual damage separately from normal damage. Characters who drop to 0 hit points or below from subdual damage or subdual plus normal damage are unconscious, but not in danger of dying. Half of the subdual damage returns at the rate of 1 point per round of rest; the other half is like normal damage and must heal normally. To use the ring, the satada makes an INT roll ( $d20 + 1$ ) on the Action Table. On a partial success, the bolt does half damage. On a critical success it does  $8d4$  damage. The target can attempt to dodge by making a DEX roll at least equal to the satada's INT roll.

### The Scent of the Beast







The satada are by no means excited at the opportunity to spill their mortal blood on the surface world all over some Danelek refugee. They are slavers, not fools. When the PCs present a real threat, they retreat to their tunnel.

### Satada Note: The Capture-Bow

have caved in. Perhaps if these cave-ins were cleared, these tunnels would lead to the Underground Highway. Unless the PCs are in hot pursuit of the satada, the satatda will have had time to lose them in the tunnels by the time they break through the portal. PCs intent on following the satada may eventually find them, or they may also find a much larger contingent of satada lurking here.

After the attack by the Satada, the Ardan continues on its journey and docks at a town called Uthan. While the crew is setting up for the evening, a female Sindaran comes to Captain Peris to talk with her about a special opportunity. The captain hears her out and sends her to the PCs to make her offer to them.

She approaches the PCs, perhaps as they are eating or relaxing after the day's travel. She begins her offer by saying, "Excuse me, my fellow citizens of this fine and glorious federation, and allow me to introduce myself. My appellation is Ingond, wife of Hortid and daughter of Khires. The good captain of this magnificent ark has heard a unique offer I am in the position to make, and she wisely directed me to bring this offer to your ears for your kind consideration. If you have a moment to hear out a distressed citizen, then I beg you a moment of your time, but if you are too occupied at this point in time with other matters, then please be gracious enough to inform me as to a later time at which we may be able to speak, if any time presents itself to you as suitable."

Whenever the characters are ready to hear her, now or later, she presents the following offer:

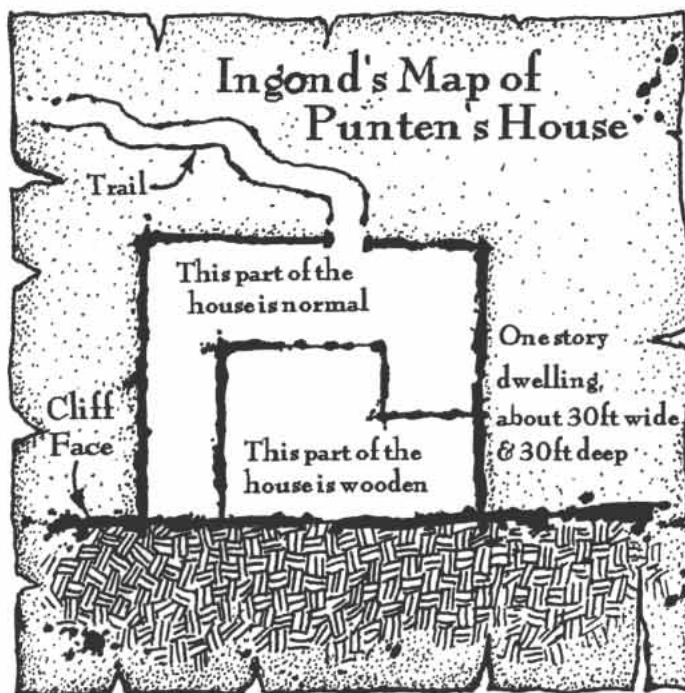
Her grandmother, Punten by name, was an eccentric alchemist who took to living in the hills south of the town. It was Ingond's duty to bring her food and supplies, and in return she would take the alchemical supplies that Punten had created, sell them, and use the profits to buy goods according to written orders.

Five days ago when Ingond took the latest batch of supplies and food to Punten's isolated home, she found that the goods she had left there the previous week had been left to be eaten or ruined by desert rodents. Ingond walked up to the home and called about, but no one answered. She reasons that Punten has finally passed on, and she would like to collect three family heirlooms from her home, as well as collect the body for proper burial.

But here's the catch. Punten had become very distrustful, imagining that other people were conspiring to rob her and take her accumulated wealth. To prevent this, she commissioned a carpenter to build wooden rooms within her house, something unusual for a Sindaran, and purchased several Kasmiran traps with which to protect herself. Ingond has not entered the house herself because she fears those traps, and she hopes that some daring and capable people may be able to help her.

Her deal is this: if the characters enter the house and bring back the three heirlooms she desires as well as the body of Punten, they can, as a reward, also take and sell all her alchemical equipment, raw ingredients, finished products, and indeed anything else they find in the house. Not being an alchemist herself, she does not know the precise value of the goods but expects that they may be in the neighborhood of three or four thousand gold lumens.

If questioned, Ingond can supply the following information:



- **Punten's collection.** Punten collected imperfect things, such as scrolls that had been miscopied, mechanical devices that didn't work, distorted mirrors, and so forth. The characters can keep the collection, if they find anything valuable in it. Punten was of the opinion that imperfection allows people to use magic. Sindarans, who are capable of using their two brains independently, were according to her hypothesis intellectually perfect. Thralls, likewise, were created with identical, perfectly functioning (if not exceptionally powerful) brains, thus keeping them from using magic. Most other races, however, have imperfect brains that allow the use of magic. Her collection reflected her interest in imperfection.
- **The traps.** Punten was too paranoid to allow even Ingond to know what kinds of traps she purchased, but she apparently did spend quite a bit on them.
- **The house.** Ingond can provide a rough map of it, but only the outside. Ingond has never been inside the central, wooden rooms, where Punten's laboratory is located. (See the map that Ingond provides.)
- **The heirlooms.** Ingond insists that the whole deal is off if all three heirlooms are not returned. She may be too polite to say so, but she realizes that unscrupulous people could easily make off with some of these items. They include a silver mirror with a gold, gem-studded frame; a small automaton of a drac capable of walking and moving its head; and a portrait of Ingond's great-great-grandmother, who was a local heroine for leading a defense of the town against satada in the late 5th century N.A.

- **Other contacts.** Punten definitely had occasional dealings with a merchant who sold her various pricy items of unknown identity. She swore the merchant, a Kasmiran, to secrecy, so he never told anyone what he sold her. No one knows where to locate this man now.

## The Trickery Option

Sarista gypsies are by no means the only Talislantans who take advantage of trusting strangers to improve their material wealth. If you want to introduce your players to "Talislantan hospitality," alter this episode slightly. Ingond is tricking the PCs; Punten did not have the silver mirror that Ingond says she had. The PCs agree to return all three heirlooms, but they can only return two of them; the mirror is nowhere to be found. Then when the PCs return, Ingond accuses them of keeping the mirror for themselves! No, she claims, the deal is null and void, and all of Punten's goods are hers to keep, not the PCs'.

Settling this in court, Sindaran style, would be an ugly option. Not only are Sindaran court cases notoriously laborious, but a Sindaran judge is likely to side with a fellow Sindaran over a bunch of wandering, opportunistic adventurers. Even hiring adequate defense would be pricy for the PCs.

So the PCs need to be moving on and can't afford to go to trial. Ingond offers to settle out of court; perhaps she doesn't have the best reputation in the town of Uthan, and she isn't sure how a trial would turn out anyway. She agrees that there is a slight possibility that the PCs are telling the truth about not being able to find the mirror, so she will let the PCs keep some of the fair market value of the goods they took from Punten's house. She will start out offering to let them keep 25%, but they may be able to negotiate a better deal. Have the character with the highest score in Litigator or Diplomacy roll on the Action Table versus that skill. If no one has these skills, substitute an INT or CHA roll using d10 instead of d20.

For 500 gold lumens, the PCs can hire a litigator (level +9) to negotiate for them, but the litigator wants pay in advance.

The chart below shows how much of the loot the PCs can keep, depending on the negotiation roll.

Result	Percentage
Mishap or Failure	25%
Partial Success	50%
Success	75%
Critical Success	100%

If the PCs refuse to abide by Ingond's final demand, Sindaran litigators come to confiscate the goods.

## Punten's Story

Twenty-three years ago, Punten happened across a narrow cleft in a cliff south of Uthan. When

she investigated, she found that the cleft led to an ancient corridor that opened into a large chamber carved out of the rock. Realizing the potential value of the mosaics on the walls, she bought up the land around the cleft and built her home around it. She then devoted herself to puzzling out the secrets of the chamber. Her intent was to solve the mysteries and then go public with them, assuring herself an entry in future history books and perhaps a tidy sum to make her old age more pleasant. A rather rude and hungry land kra, however, recently interrupted her plans.

To protect her discovery, Punten commissioned wooden rooms to be built as the core of her home. While solid walls are highly unusual in Sindar, she put up with them because they made her secrets easier to defend. She also purchased several traps to protect herself.

Two weeks ago, while Punten was studying in the ancient chamber, a land kra forced its way through a breach in the walls that Punten had blocked off with rubble. Helpless, Punten was summarily devoured. The land kra, apparently appreciating the flavor of bony Sindaran, has loitered about the area since then, waiting for the second course. It will be up to the PCs to prevent themselves from adding a few new tastes to the land kra's menu.

## Punten's House

From outside, the characters can see the flat roof of the wooden rooms, to which are attached sand-colored tarps that form the roofs and walls of the more typically Sindaran rooms. There are no windows, but a single doorway grants entrance through the front wall. A small tin chimney coming from the laboratory sticks three feet above the roof, about three feet from the cliff face. Around the house is rocky ground with occasional cactus and scrub, as well as numerous lizards, insects, and arachnids.

Since Punten was celibate since the death of her husband, and Sindarans have no need for sleep, she has no bedroom.

### 1. Laboratory

This room is filled with tables of various heights, all covered with alembics, pots, vials, and tools. The east and west walls are imbedded into the cliff face along the south, so that the south wall is nothing but smooth stone, though characters entering through the north door will not be able to see the south wall itself, nor the door in its center.

Covering the south wall from top to bottom is a **thick, heavy tapestry** depicting the famous Trivarian game between Youn, Ghirlok, and Arz Margintous. This game took place in N.A. 220, and Youn's victory made him the Nadir Absolute. Since Ghirlok and Arz Margintous were both opposed to allying with Cymril, this game is the event that made it possible for Sindar to join the Seven Kingdoms. Any character who makes a full success on a Talislantan History roll knows the significance of the tapestry, while a partial success allows the character



to recognize that the game depicted was an important game in Sindaran history. Remember that even characters without Talisantan History can attempt the roll, but they must simply roll d10, the standard non-proficiency penalty, versus INT.

The tapestry is **trapped**. Punten hoped that if thieves entered her laboratory, they would be satisfied to cart off her alchemical goods rather than look behind the tapestry, but in case they did investigate the tapestry, she wanted a trap that would stop intruders without damaging her laboratory. Thus she has rigged morphiis powder (a powerful soporific; see GB p. 193) to fall and knock intruders unconscious. She included a few pinches of incendiary powder as well, to cause a small explosion and spread the powder.

The trap is quite simple; when Punten would go through the hidden door, she would tuck a vial of morphiis powder in a niche near the door. The weight of the tapestry held the vial in place, and when Punten returned, she would open the door and slide her hand behind the tapestry to retrieve the vial before pushing the tapestry aside.

A character who examines the tapestry for traps can make a roll against Detect Traps (or d10 + PER) to spot the trap. The character must subtract 5 from the roll because the trapmage who designed the trap had an Artificer skill of +5. Even though the trapmage is now far away in Kasmir, this roll is a resisted action because it pits the skill of the PC against the skill of the trapmage. Anyone who makes a successful roll to detect the trap notices a slight bulge in the tapestry about three feet to the right of the middle of the wall; this bulge is created by the vial resting against the tapestry. A successful Disarm Traps roll (or d10 + DEX) allows a PC to hold the bulge so that the tapestry can be moved without spilling the powder. Failing this roll, however, knocks down the vial. If the players can figure out the significance of the bulge and prevent the trap from springing by themselves, then they do not need to roll against Disarm Traps. If the PCs manage to retrieve the morphiis powder undamaged, they have one ounce (two doses) of morphiis powder that they can sell for 300 g.l. total.

If the trap goes off, the PCs hear the sound of breaking glass, see a flash of light at the floor just below the tapestry, and then see grayish powder flying out, covering an area within 10 feet of the trap. Alchemists can recognize this powder instantly, but other PCs will not know what it is until they see its effects. Have every PC in the affected area make a CON roll.

#### Resisting Morphiis Powder

Roll versus CON

Mishap

Sleep two hours.

Failure

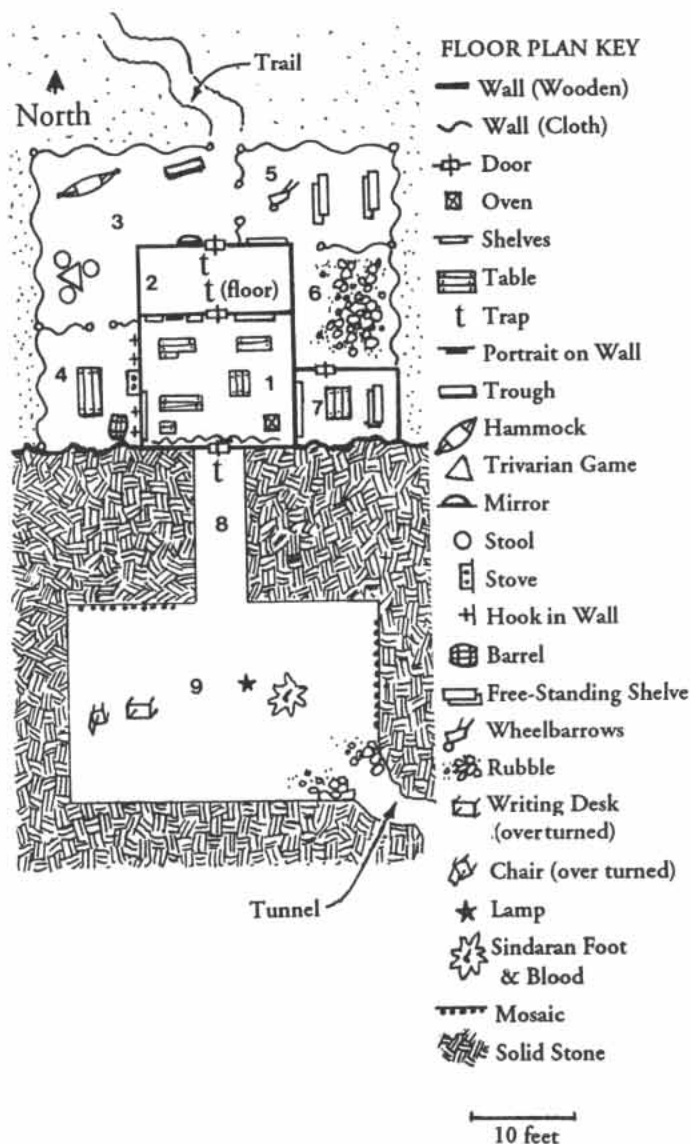
Sleep one hour.

Partial Success

-3 on all Action Table rolls for d20 rounds. Success -1 on all Action Table rolls for d10 rounds.

Critical Success

No effect.



Behind the tapestry is a **hidden door** that allows access to the ancient corridor that goes into the cliff. This door is not locked, but it is trapped (see area 8, below).

On a shelf along the north wall are **two vials**, Punten's latest finished products. One is an alchemical solvent for stone, and the other an alchemical solvent for wood. They are not labeled, however, so the PCs will have to roll versus Alchemical Training or do a little experimenting in order to identify them.

Near the south wall is a **free-standing oven** with a tin chimney leading up through the roof. The fire chamber below the oven is cool, the fire having gone out when Punten did not come back to tend it. Atop the oven is a metal box containing powdered dragon fang; she was preparing incendiary powder, which has now gone bad. If anyone opens the oven door, the botched powder immediately detonates, doing d10 damage to anyone standing in front of it. A successful roll with the skill Alchemical Training allows a character to recognize from the presence of the powdered dragon fang that the oven was being

used to create incendiary powder, and that opening the oven would be a *bad* idea.

A portrait of a stern-looking Sindaran woman wearing a checkered sash hangs on the north wall. This is the portrait of the ancestor that Ingond wants returned to her.

In the laboratory are various **raw ingredients** and **pieces of equipment** that the characters can salvage and sell. The price given for these items represents the maximum price they can get. The items include:

4 dr. contrary vine	x20 g.l.	80 g.l.
1 dose vitriol	x125 g.l.	125 g.l.
+quicksilver vial	x20 g.l.	20 g.l.
3 quicksilver vials	x20 g.l.	60 g.l.
7 dr. balmroot	x5 g.l.	35 g.l.
Oven	x100 g.l.	100 g.l.
Misc equipment		100 g.l.
Total Value: 520 g.l.		

## 2. Trapped Room

Punten had this room designed so that she could install destructive traps that would not harm her laboratory.

The **north door** has a trap against those entering from the north. It consists of a barbed blade powered by a powerful spring. The whole affair is mounted on the wall to the east of the door. If the door opens without the use of the key, the blade springs into the doorway point-first, as described below in the description of room 3.

Additionally, the **floor is trapped**. The stone floor includes several stones that are actually pressure plates. Anyone stepping on them releases trap doors in the false ceiling. Punten has loaded these trap doors with incendiary powder, which will burst into flame when it hits the floor, doing d10 damage to everyone in the room. There is a switch to activate or deactivate the trap near each door, but the switches look like small stones set into the floor, so they are hard to notice. This trap was designed by a clever Kasmlran trappage, so it is hard to detect and hard to disarm.

Players who specifically state that they are looking for traps can make a roll to spot them. Make these rolls in secret for the players so that if they fail to detect the traps, they cannot tell whether this is because they rolled poorly. Characters who have the Detect Traps skill add their level with that skill to their roll, but they take a -7 penalty on the roll since the trappage had a score of +7 with his Artificer skill and this is a resisted action. If the character has no Detect Traps skill, roll d10 plus the character's PER, again with the -7 penalty. Note that Detect Traps is one half of the skill Disarm/Detect Traps.

Degree of Success	The Character Notices
Mishap or Failure:	Nothing.
Partial Success:	Trap doors in false ceiling.
Success:	Trap doors and pressure plates in floor.
Critical Success:	As above, plus disarming switches.

If the characters notice the pressure plates but not the activation switches, they can try to deactivate the trap by jamming the pressure plates. Doing so requires a roll versus Disarm Traps (or d10 + DEX) at -7 on the roll. If the characters fail the roll, the trap is set off.

Just noticing the trap doors is not sufficient to allow a character to attempt to disarm the trap.

Of course, a "quick and dirty" way to disarm the trap is to throw something into the room and shut the door in a hurry. The trap will go off, and the characters will be able to cross the room in safety.

## 3. Patio

This patio is typical of Sindaran homes. It contains a low **trough** filled with water for washing and cooling the feet, a long **hammock**, several tall **stools**, and a **Trivarian game**. The Trivarian game hangs by a silken cord from a tall metal frame, dangling over a three-sided stone table with a stool on each side. On the table and in the pyramid are amberglass playing pieces with symbols imprinted in them. Also on the table is a book that records great Trivarian games of the past. Though Punten was too paranoid to accept the company of other Trivarian players, she did enjoy relaxing by replaying old games and trying to learn in that way from superior players of the past. Unfortunately, the scintilla that illuminated the pyramid from within has worn out, and Punten did not replace it.

Should the PCs carry off the Trivarian game, they may get up to 400 g.l. for it.

The walls of the patio can be pulled aside and tied to the support poles, and even the roof can be pulled back. Sindarans appreciate openness and space.

Hanging on the southern wooden wall near the door is an oval **mirror** approximately two feet high. The frame is gold, with onyx gems set in it. While not particularly beautiful, it is obviously valuable because of its material. This is one of the heirlooms that Ingond wants returned to her.

The door leading to room 2 is **locked and trapped**. Normally, using the key to gain entrance disarms the trap. Picking the lock, however, may not do the job. If a character tries to pick the lock, first have the player make a roll versus Lockpicking. The lock was constructed by a Kasmlran with a +5 Artificer skill, so the character must subtract 5 from the roll to pick the lock. If the player fails the roll, then that character cannot open that lock no matter how hard he or she tries (no second rolls). Of course, all the characters can try, although they must have lockpicking tools and roll versus d10 + DEX to do so.

If a character succeeds in opening the lock, she has a chance to **detect the trap**. Look at the character's sheet and see if she has the Disarm/Detect Traps skill. If so, roll against it at -5. If not, roll d10 + DEX at -5. You want to make this roll yourself rather than telling the player to make the roll because you don't want to give away the fact that there is a trap connected to the door. If the roll succeeds, the character notices that there is an extra mechanism in the lock, no doubt a trap that would normally be disarmed by the key. She can try to disarm it by rolling versus Disarm Traps, still with the -5 penalty for the artificer's skill level. On a mishap, she thinks the trap is disarmed, even though it isn't.

If the character's Disarm Traps skill is +4 or lower, you should roll to see if he disarms the trap. That way, if you roll a mishap, you can tell the player that the character has disarmed the trap, even though he has done no such thing. If the character's skill is +5 or better, there is no chance for a mishap, so let the player make the roll. Of course, you can make it your policy to make all such rolls in secret to keep the players more in the dark as to what difficulties they face.

The **trap** is simply a large, barbed blade that swings through the doorway once the door is opened. Anyone standing in the doorway must make a DEX roll to avoid being skewered. Apply -5 to the roll for the trap's skill. Characters who fail the roll take d10 points of damage; don't forget to subtract for the characters' armor. The blade is set about four feet off the ground, so it will automatically miss a Gnomekin or other short character.

#### Detecting the Trap

Roll versus Detect Traps (or d10 + PER)

Degree of Difficulty: -5

Mishap or Failure Does not notice trap.

Any Success Sees extra mechanism in lock, probably a trap.

#### Disarming the Trap

Roll versus Disarm Traps (or d10 + DEX)\*

Degree of Difficulty: -5

Mishap Thinks it's disarmed.

Failure Can't disarm it.

Any Success Disarms trap.

\*Note: If the PC's Disarm Traps (or DEX) score is +4 or lower, make this roll for the player so that the players will not know if the result is a mishap.

### 4. Kitchen

This simple kitchen has a small stove, dried foods hanging from the eastern wooden wall, a table for preparing food, and a barrel of water. Punten used to carry water from a nearby stream, making several trips in a row in order to accumulate enough to use for a few days.

A **line of yellow powder** encircles the kitchen. Any Sindaran in the party recognizes it as vermin

repellent. Insects, rodents, and other pests that may be attracted to the smell of Punten's food are not willing to cross this line of powder.

### 5. Storage Room

This room contains some possible clues to Punten's activities, including a **shovel**, a small **wheelbarrow**, and a **pick**, which Punten used while excavating the ancient chamber. It also contains canvas for repairs to her walls, oil for her lamps, inks and paper in a small cabinet, and small tools.

### 6. Room Filled with Dirt, Rock, and Rubble

Here's a really big clue for characters who may not have found the door hidden behind the tapestry in the laboratory. This room is filled with **rocks**. Most of them are simply dark brown or gray stones, but some of them have surfaces that have been carved or smoothed. All of this rubble comes from the ancient chamber; Punten carted it here years ago. She piled the rocks here rather than dumping them outside so that no one would see her dumping rocks and suspect that she was excavating something.

### 7. Collection Room

This room contains Punten's collection of **imperfect things**, including a clock that runs fast, an alchemical recipe for alchahest that distorts an important step in the process, and a magical wand that fires an Aeromantic Bolt in a random direction. Perhaps the most valuable item is the dried flower from one of Viridian's failed attempts to hybridize a new, useful plant; he eventually succeeded, creating viridia. The characters could get 500 gold lumens for it, if they know what it is and find the right buyer. An unscrupulous merchant who recognizes the thing may offer 1 gold lumen for it.

Also in this room is a small, iron **automaton of a drac**. When it is tapped on the head, it walks clumsily and moves its head from side to side. This is one of the heirlooms that Ingond wants returned to her.

### 8. Corridor

Punten trapped the door to this corridor with a makeshift catapult that hurls alchahest at anyone who opens the door. Only the character opening the door is allowed a Detect Traps roll at -5 to hear the trap mechanism; if this is successful, the character can stop opening the door before the trap goes off. Otherwise, the alchahest does 4d10 damage to any characters it hits. The characters can attempt to dodge the vial of alchahest by making a roll versus DEX, but they must subtract 5 from the roll for the level of the trap.

The corridor itself is cracked and strewn with small pieces of rubble lying on the floor near either wall. The central path down the middle of the corridor, however, is clear; Punten cleared this path.



## 9. Ancient Chamber

This chamber is where Punten worked to decipher the meaning of the mosaics on the walls. It is also where she met her end. Centuries ago it had two mosaics, one on the north wall and the other on the east. The chamber, however, was abandoned by its creators after it caved in partially.

The first thing that the characters are likely to see is Punten's **overturned writing desk and chair**. The desk contains several books on Sindaran history, including one devoted to imagery and symbolism of the past. Punten was using them to determine the significance of the mosaic. Next to the desk are several sketches that Punten made while trying to reconstruct the mosaic on the north wall.

On the floor are the remains of the land kra's attack: an **overturned lamp** whose oil spilled out and burned, Punten's left **foot**, and a fair amount of Sindaran **blood**. Near the north wall are hundreds of colored tiles, each about an inch across. They are laid out in a pattern showing a standing Sindaran with a red band or cap on his head. This pattern was an attempt by Punten to recreate the original pattern of the incomplete mosaic on the north wall.

The east wall has an ancient mosaic depicting a strange scene. A Sindaran and a Man are facing each other, each with one hand raised as if in greeting. Behind the Sindaran is a dark shape, much like a

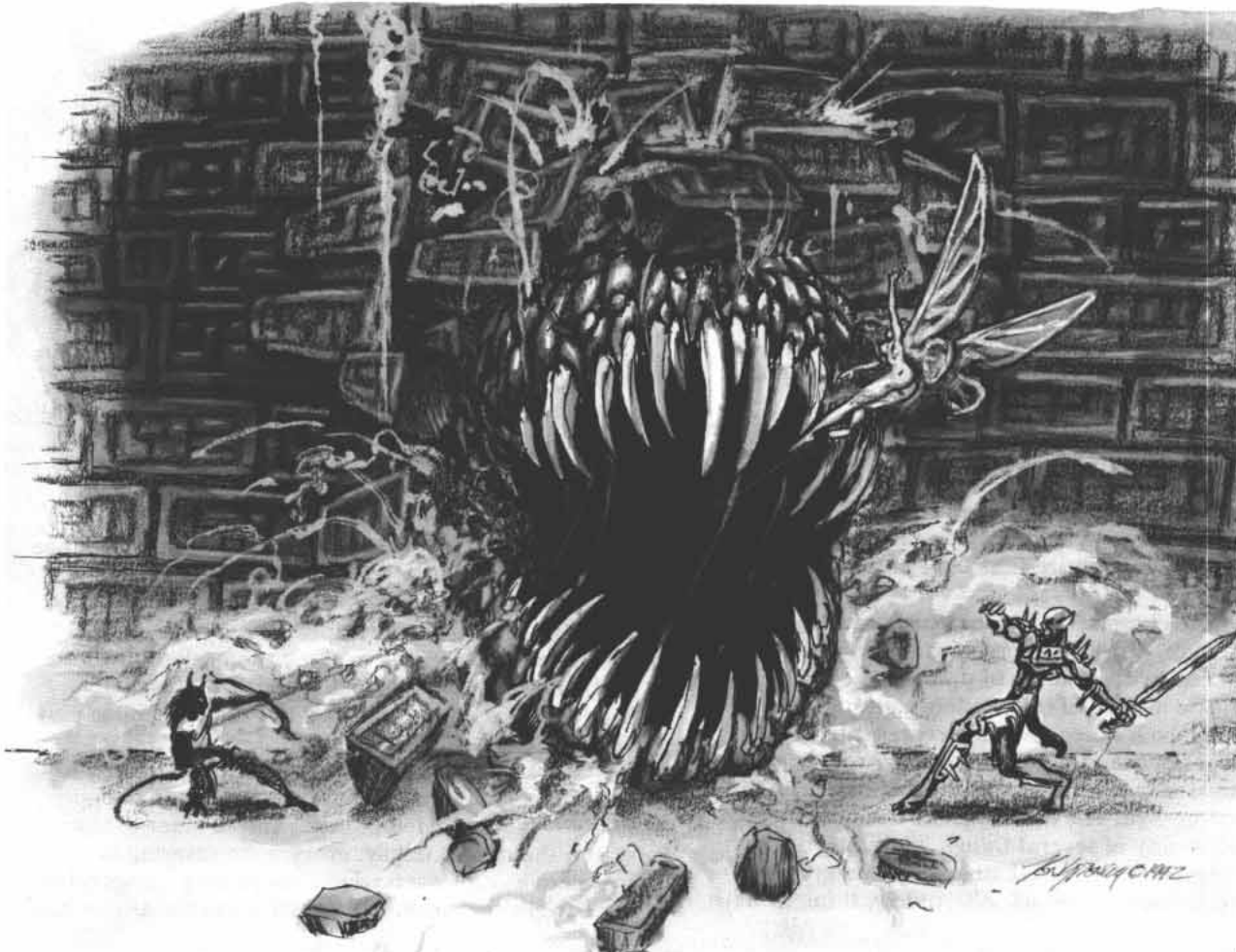
circle resting on a square, with a light gray triangle centered in the circle. Behind the Sindaran and the Man are several of the trees of a temperate forest. Many of the tiles of this mosaic are missing; close examination and a successful roll versus PER allows a character to notice that some of the tiles have been recently glued back into place.

The north wall contains an incomplete mosaic. The heads of three Sindarans are visible, as are parts of their bodies, but more than that cannot be told.

At some point while the characters are in this chamber, the land kra that killed Punten returns, attracted by the vibrations of several footsteps. It attacks by burrowing up through the floor of the corridor (area 8) and then moving down the corridor toward the characters. It expects another easy meal, so if it takes damage equal to half its hit points it will retreat.

The characters may want to retreat down the tunnel to the south of the chamber to escape the kra, but that would probably prove a bad idea. It is probably fast enough to catch them, and fighting it in the narrow confines of the caverns will probably restrict the number of attackers to one or two.

A character who can fly will have a special advantage against the kra. It is not used to fighting flying creatures, and it uses ground vibrations as well as sound to target its prey, so the kra suffers a -5 penalty on rolls to hit a flying character.



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## Land Kra, 2nd Level

**Description:** Twenty-foot long, segmented gray eel, almost insectoid in appearance. Its head sports shrivelled, blind eyes and a gigantic maw lined with sharp, jagged teeth.

INT -9      PER +1\*  
WIL 0      CHA 0  
STR +7      DEX +1  
CON 0      SPD +2

\*It is blind, but its other senses are keen.

**Hit Points:** 16

Attacks	CR	Damage
Bite	+3	d8+7
Tail	+3	d8+7

**Armor:** Thick, segmented hide, 3 points.

**Special:** Burrowing.

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## 10. Tunnel

This tunnel leads to underground caverns within the mountain. Punten had searched them briefly when she first found the chamber, but she found that they were natural caves and held nothing of interest. She had blocked them off with large stones, but these efforts were not sufficient to prevent the land kra from entering when it smelled her.

## Story of the Sindaran Chamber

The chamber that Punten found was created during the Age of Confusion, and the mosaics record images from the Sindarans' past. According to the recently revealed *Archaen Codex*, the Sindarans, originally known as Neurians, came from another dimension or world before The Great Disaster. They first settled on the continent of Simbar, and just before The Great Disaster they built two ships that they hoped would carry them back to their homeland. One ship, unfortunately, crash-landed on Talislanta. The other was not heard from again; perhaps it succeeded in returning to the original Neurian homeland.

The Neurians on Talislanta settled in the area that is now known as Sindar. In fact, the name "Sindaran" is a corruption of "Simbar," the continent from which the Neurians had come. In Talislanta, the Neurians came to be known as Sindarans, and they developed the culture that the PCs are familiar with today.

The chamber was constructed during the Age of Confusion, but it was forgotten until Punten found it hundreds or thousands of years later.

The mosaic of the Sindaran and the Man greeting each other probably represents the first contact between the Neurians and Archaens, which took place in Sindar in the Third Millennium of the Forgotten Age. The dark object behind the Sindaran could be any of several things, including an interdimensional portal, an interplanetary ship, or an interdimensional vessel. Alternately, it might have

purely symbolic significance. Despite her research, Punten was unable to identify it.

The mosaic on the northern wall is even harder to identify because it could be anything at all. Most of the tiles have fallen, and Punten was unsuccessful in her attempts to reconstruct it.

This chamber will no doubt be of great value and interest to Sindaran antiquarians. If the PCs try to capitalize on this discovery, they find that Ingond offers stiff opposition. She points out that her deal with them allowed them to take whatever they found in the house, but not to take anything in the ancient chamber, which was Punten's property and is now Ingond's. Once the PCs entered the ancient chamber, Ingond argues, they were trespassing. Not only does Ingond argue this interpretation of the agreement, but a Sindaran court is very likely to agree with it.

## Stripping the House

The most valuable and portable goods in Punten's house have been listed separately, with prices provided. If the PCs strip the house of all furniture, tapestries, tools, trap mechanisms, and so forth, it will take a day to move and sell the material. Captain Peris and Oriman only consent to the delay if they get a 25% cut in the value of the those goods sold. The PCs can raise 400 g.l. by selling all of the household goods not listed individually; of this they get 300 g.l. and Oriman and the captain get 100 g.l.

## High Time in the Iron Kra

If you have a fun-loving, high-spirited group, especially in a picaresque campaign, your players may enjoy this encounter, which allows the player characters to interact with the locals and a strange set of bar-goers.

The *Ardan* leaves Uthan and travels half a day, arriving in Kiran in the afternoon. Once again the PCs camp in or near the barge. The next morning, Oriman learns that another land barge is coming to town in two days. If you have a mercantile campaign, you might want to force the player characters to snoop around a bit and make friends with the locals before hearing this valuable information. According to a sun-signal message, it is on its way and due to arrive the day after tomorrow. It has a large load of skoryx, and the merchant who owns it should be willing to trade at a very good rate of exchange, since he can deal in bulk. Oriman, naturally, convinces Captain Peris to stay in town for two days and await the other barge. This unexpected delay means that the characters are free to enjoy themselves in Kiran, rest, and relax before heading off again toward Tordan. Characters wounded in Punten's house may also want to heal; see GB p. 43.

Kiran, the characters may be disappointed to learn, is a small town that exists mostly to support its relay sun-signal apparatus and to cater to travelers on the road. Luckily, every town catering to travelers has a tavern where interesting things often happen. In this case, the tavern is known as the Iron Kra.

## The Iron Kra

The tavern is an open-air affair tended by a boisterous Sindaran male. The guests enjoy themselves on a patio that can be enclosed by tarps when the weather is bad. Below are the prices for this establishment. Food and drink from other lands is expensive, while skoryx is relatively cheap.

Food & Drink	Price
Amber wine	2 s.p.
Aquavit (Cymrillian liquor)	21 s.p.
Blossom wine	5 s.p.
Chakos (Arimite liquor)	7 s.p.
Grog (common liquor)	1 c.p.
Meal (full)	1+ g.l.
Meal (simple)	4 s.p.
Mochan (Kasmiran beverage)	21 s.p.
Mushroom ale (Gnomekin)	7 c.p.
Seeds (Aeriad meal)	2 s.p.
Skoryx (Sindaran liquor)	9 g.l.
Tazian fire-ale	not available
Vinesap (Aeriad)	15 s.p.

Several interesting NPCs are also enjoying themselves at the Iron Kra. You can elaborate on them depending on how much you like them and how much interest the PCs take in them. The PCs may wish to engage in contests of strength or skill, swap brags and news, or complain about the opposite sex with the other patrons of the tavern.

### Sindaran Lesser Alchemists

They are telling jokes, laughing, and spending what they've made that day on good skoryx. While they are not working, one brain is resting. The other brain is quickly coming under the influence of skoryx. One of them is showing off a small wooden replica of an ancient windship, his latest addition to his collection.

**Language:** High Talislan.

**Description:** Males and females, ages 25 to 45, 7' 7"4", 180-220 lbs. Rough sandy-hued skin, ridge of six hornlike protrusions running along crest of skull, bony chin spur, emaciated appearance. They wear silk loincloths or kaftans, arm and leg bracers of black iron, and capes.

### Four Thralls

This party is just back from the Eastern Borderlands. They are downing skoryx and bemoaning the lack of fire-ale in these parts. A Thrall PC can read their red and blue tattoos to find out that they are originally from Trang, but that they have spent several years in charge of troops in Akmir. Currently they are on their way back to Taz where they will begin recruiting and training new troops. Anyone who talks to them may find that they are dubious as to the ability of Akmir to survive any concerted attack from the Tirshata's forces.

**Language:** Common Talislan.

**Description:** Two males, two females, ages 12

## Seven Kingdoms Military

### Note: Akmir

The Seven Kingdoms supports two fortresses outside its borders in the Eastern Borderlands. They protect travelers and are meant to be the first line of defense against any attack from the east. The forts are Karfan and Akmir.

Akmir is farther out from civilization, and it is considered a terrible misfortune to be stationed there. The Grand Army usually assigns the dregs of its forces to this locale, including Jhangarans, renegade Ur, immigrant Arimites, and others who do not fit into the elegant hierarchies of the glorious Grand Army. Thus, not only is the fort itself isolated and in disrepair, but the troops there are disorganized, dispirited, and often quarrelsome. Since few of the Seven Kingdoms' own soldiers are there, the military leaders do not often bother to improve the situation.

The four Thralls in the Iron Kra were stationed there as commanders, with the mission to get the troops into shape. They largely failed, and now they have been relieved of that onerous duty.

to 14 (adult), 6'8", 300 lbs. (male) or 6'4", 200 lbs. (female). Their hairless, muscular bodies are covered with tattoos, primarily of red and blue. They wear black iron full garde, with bows, quivers, and two-handed swords strapped to their backs. Their physical features, such as the size of their ears and shapes of their noses, are exactly the same as those of every other Thrall of the same sex.

### A Sindra

He lurks in one corner of the tavern, wearing a gray cape with the high collar typical of Cymrillian magicians. He watches the other patrons of the bar with an almost sinister gaze. The first PC to approach him may learn that he is "what other Sindarans call a 'Sindra,' but that unlike true Sindra, I am actually able to cast minor spells." Obviously he is deluded, unless you want this NPC to be the first Sindaran in Talislantan history to use magic. He espouses his theory that Sindarans, because they originally came from another world, were at first unable to use the magical energies native to Archaeus. After centuries of living here, however, a few Sindarans came to believe, falsely, that they could use magic. This spontaneous delusion foreshadowed the development of actual magical ability in a tiny portion of the Sindaran population, and he considers himself a humble representative of that portion. He says that he is here in the Iron Kra because being in the presence of Archæan natives aids his evolution to a true magically capable Archæan being. Nevertheless, he staunchly refuses to demonstrate his spells or to go into any detail regarding how he acquired this ability. Furthermore, if any other characters approach him, he tells them that he is a poor silly Sindra, hopelessly deluded into believing he can cast



spells; he does not want to attract *too* much attention to himself.

You probably don't want to give the Sindra actual magical ability, but the characters will have no sure method to find out one way or another.

**Language:** High Talislani.

**Description:** Male, age 63, 7', 180 lbs. Rough sandy-hued skin, heavily wrinkled with age, ridge of six hornlike protrusions running along crest of skull, bony chin spur, emaciated appearance, sunken eyes. He wears a gray robe and cloak; on close inspection the characters can see faint arcane symbols dyed into the fabric. The cloak has the high collar typical of the magicians of Cymril's Lyceum Arcanum.

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### Three Bodor Musicians

They are playing on a small, raised platform. They are quite spirited while playing, but prove reserved if anyone talks to them between their sets.

They have been wandering around the Seven Kingdoms as itinerant musicians. Though they do not welcome attention from outsiders, anyone who makes a critical success on a CHA (or Fashion, if the PC is Bodor) roll earns their acceptance. They then relate a rumor they heard from a reliable source: last month a party of Orgovian traders spotted a handful of Rasmirin traveling in the Wilderlands of Zaran. Rasmirin are members of a blue-skinned race exiled to the Outcast Isles far to the north, where they worship Aberon, the ruler of demons. It is rare but not unknown for them to travel the continent of Talislanta in search of aid for their goal of destroying the nation of L'Haan, from which they were banished two hundred years ago.

**Note:** Though the players have no way of knowing it, this minor rumor hints at very large events that the PCs may encounter in later adventures. If you wish, you may invent a different rumor that foreshadows an adventure you wish to play after *The Scent of the Beast*.



**Languages:** Bodorian, High Talislan.

**Description:** Two females, one male, ages 26, 30, and 41, 5' 5"6", 180-250 lbs. Amber skin, round-faced, portly build. They wear smocks, baggy pantaloons, and chain-loop earrings and bracelets of lacquered bronze (total of 4 g.l. per Bodor).

**Special Abilities:** Bodorian sound-sight; they can see sounds as colors.

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### **Two Sarista Gypsies**

A Sarista couple are playing Quatrillion, and they would be happy to allow up to four more people to join them. Quatrillion, of course, is always played for money.

Tonight the Sarista are playing a pokerlike version of Quatrillion. To simulate tonight's version of the game, each player rolls versus Gambling or INT to represent how good a hand he or she has built. Each player then covers the die rolled, to hide it from view

without moving it. Each card player, in turn, puts 1 silver piece into the pot. Then the first player (the one to the left of the dealer, chosen randomly) decides whether to add more to the pot or opt out of the hand. Each successive player must put in as much as the previous player put in or drop out of the hand. When all the remaining players have put the same amount into the kitty and no one raises the stakes, the dice are revealed; remember to add Gambling or INT to the rolls. Whoever had the highest roll takes the pot. In the event of a tie, roll randomly to see who wins.

The two Sarista each add +4 to their rolls, representing their Gambling scores. In addition, they send secret signals to let each other know what cards are in their hands. To represent this cheating, let one Sarista roll at +6 and the other at only +1. One Sarista will often lose intentionally, so that it doesn't seem like both Sarista are always doing well, but the two of them will split their winnings evenly anyway.



They are playing against the outsiders, not against each other. Do not show the dice for the Sarista to the players; just tell them who wins the hand.

The Sarista only allow Sindarans to play if they agree to ante up double, to make up for their extraordinary intelligence.

The PCs can trick the Sarista by making a show of wealth, making it obvious that they are not familiar with Quatrillion, and stating that they will play for low stakes at first until they get the hang of the game. The Sarista will play poorly on purpose to let the "marks" gain confidence, hoping to make back those losses and more once the PCs up the stakes. Wise PCs, of course, will play a few hands, take their winnings, and leave the table.

If one of the PCs is a Sarista, one of these two will slip the secret Sarista inflection for "Dangerous?" into a normal greeting. He wants to know if the other PCs are too dangerous for them to try any funny business. If the Sarista PC says they are, the Sarista couple will refuse to play more than a few hands of Quatrillion before pulling their scam (see below).

### Amfille and Nindol, Sarista Gypsies, 3rd Level

**Languages:** Sarisa, High Talislan.

**Description (Amfille):** Woman, age 27, 5'2", 110 lbs. Olive complexion, green eyes, luxurious black hair. She wears a bright red skirt and blouse, a deep green sash, a multi-colored cloak, and high boots of soft hide. On her hip are a dueling sword and dagger.

**Description (Nindol):** Man, age 25, 5'6", 135 lbs. Olive complexion, green eyes, black hair, neatly trimmed moustache. He wears a blue tunic and pantaloons, a white sash, a brown beret with a blue feather in it, a large black cape, and high boots of soft hide. On his hip are a dueling sword and dagger. Tucked in his boots are various thieving tools.

INT +1	PER 0
WIL 0	CHA +2
STR 0	DEX +4
CON 0	SPD 0

**Hit Points:** 16

Attacks	CR	Damage
Dueling sword	+6	d8
Dagger	+6	d6

**Spells per Day:** 3

Spells	MR	Effects
Eldritch Aura	+2	Stops 4 pts. of damage/level.
Eldritch Barrier	+2	Creates a wall, can take 4 pts. damage/level.
Obsession	+4*	Fills target with a specific compulsion.

\*Since this spell is used in their scam, the Sarista have concentrated in this particular spell, so it has a higher score than their other spells.

**Skills (Amfille):** Secondary Combat (dueling sword, dagger) +6, Rudimentary Magic (witchcraft) +2, Legerdemain +7, Acrobatics +7, Dance +7, Con

+5, Gambling +4, Pick Pockets +7, Seduce +5, Stealth +7, Customs, Nomadic (Sarista) +4, Haggle +5, Barter +5, Ride +7.

**Skills (Nindol):** Secondary Combat (dueling sword, dagger) +6, Rudimentary Magic (witchcraft) +2, Legerdemain +5, Acrobatics +7, Song +5, Hide +4, Stealth +7, Lockpicking +7, Disarm/Detect Traps +7/+3, Gambling +4, Customs, Nomadic (Sarista) +4, Haggle +5, Barter +5, Ride +7.

**Special:** None.

### A Pharesian Peddler

He enters the Iron Kra some time after the PCs do, and before the Sarista leave. He is secretly in league with the Sarista.

### Horvenu, Pharesian Peddler, 2nd Level

**Language:** High Talislan +4, Archaen +4.

**Description:** 6'4", 160 lbs. Skin and hair colored with iridescent red and yellow, slender build. Wears a patchwork cloak and robes of numerous bright colors and carries a staff and a satchel.

INT +2	PER +2
WIL 0	CHA 0
STR 0	DEX +1
CON 0	SPD 0

**Hit Points:** 14

Weapon	CR	Damage
Staff	(d10)+1	d8

**Armor:** None.

**Spells per Day:** 5

Spells	MR	Effect
Invisibility	+4	At least 4th level to make self invisible.
Levitation	+4	Caster moves through air.

**Skills:** Secondary Magic (wizardry) +4, Merchant +2, Appraise Treasure +4, Alchemical skills (Concoct Elixirs, Concoct Medicinal Mixtures, Concoct Powders) +4, Customs, Nomadic (Seven Kingdoms) +4, Arcane Lore +4.

**Special:** None.

### The Scam

Horvenu comes into the Iron Kra, putting on an air of happiness and excitement. He goes to the bar, empties a bag of lumens and pentacles onto the bar top, and orders some fine skoryx. After taking a few sips, he loudly tells the bartender, "Yes indeed, my good fellow, business has been brisk. My special powders have proved quite popular here, and I am only too happy to spend some of my ample profits in your pleasant establishment."

Then Nindol calls out to Horvenu, "Hey there, Pharesian, what can you have that the Sindarans here cannot simply make for themselves?"

Horvenu replies, "Ah, though my day's work is through, I am always willing to show my wares to an admirer." He scoops his coins into his bag, slips the bag into a pocket, and walks over to the Sarista. Producing a handful of glass vials from a pouch, he



shows them to the Sarista. "These are very fine enhancements and sparkle powders. Note the unique hues and brilliant sparkles. Wouldn't some enhancements such as these complement the incomparable beauty of your wife?"

Nindol and Amfille stand up and look closely at Horvenu's wares. While Horvenu talks to Nindol, he turns and allows Amfille to take his coin purse from his pocket without anyone else in the tavern seeing it. They talk a while, and the Sarista decide not to buy the powders. As Horvenu returns to the bar, they gather their goods and exit. They mount their equus and ride off, but then the secretly circle around. Nindol secrets himself beside some barrels within 40 feet of the tavern, close enough to cast a 4th-level *Obsession* on the patrons.

Back at the bar, Horvenu returns to his skoryx and there is a pause in the action. The PCs may carry on with what they were doing, as if the action with the Sarista were over. After a minute or so, however, Horvenu reaches into his pocket to buy another round of skoryx, only to "find" his coins missing. Of course, this "theft" is all part of the plan.

Horvenu: *"Robbed! I've been robbed! Those filthy Sarista took my profits!"*

He jumps up and runs out of the tavern as if looking for them. He runs off, but then returns in about a minute. If any PCs try to help him look for the Sarista, he says he thinks they went "that way," and he leads them away from where Nindol is hiding. In any event, he soon returns to the bar and puts his face in his hands, saying, "Ruined. Lost, all lost."

In a minute or so he regains his composure and looks through his bag of powders. He looks around the tavern and walks over to the PCs.

Horvenu: *"Excuse me, my good fellow citizens, but it seems my day's work is not over after all. Those two Sarista, as you may have seen, have robbed me, and I need some coin to see me through the night. My good fellow citizens, can I interest you in some excellent sparkle powder or enhancements? Just 6 g.l., only slightly more than one would pay for products of grossly inferior quality."*

The powders he shows the PCs are indeed nice looking, but they are defective and will last only one hour before flaking off, instead of the 24 hours enhancements and sparkle powder normally last. He has five drams each of enhancements and sparkle powder. If the PCs haggle, let them roll versus their *Haggle* skill or d10 + CHA. He will drop his price to 3 g.l., but only after a show of great pain and desperation.

Horvenu: *"Perhaps I should not be putting myself at risk in this way, but I do need more than I can earn with these powders. If you will permit, let me show you some items I normally do not offer for sale."*

He produces three vials, two labeled "Poison Antidote" and one labeled "Aphrodisiac." If none of the PCs are wounded, or if they seem trusting, Horvenu also produces two elixirs labeled "Healing." If some PCs are wounded and they are distrustful, he will not show these "healing" elixirs for fear that the PCs will try them and find them fakes.

Horvenu: *"These are elixirs I keep for my*

*personal protection. Just 100 g.l. per elixir."* If he is showing healing elixirs, he also says, *"And just 200 g.l. for a healing elixir."* If the PCs decline, he adds, *"Please, help a victim of vile theft. Please be so kind as to purchase these estimable products."*

Unless the PCs seem likely to buy these goods of their own accord, Nindol now casts *Obsession* from his hiding place, targeting the PC who seems to have the most money, though he will not cast the spell on a wizard since wizards have a better chance than most to resist such spells.

Nindol casts a 4th-level spell, and his MR with *Obsession* is +4, so he is "even on." Simply roll d20 on the Action Table. If he makes a success, the target gets a WIL+Level roll, minus 4 because this is a level 4 spell. Make this roll for the player, as the PC does not know that a spell is being cast, and you don't want to make the players too suspicious. Unless the character gets at least a partial success, he or she suddenly gets the urge to buy. This urge lasts 4 rounds, or 24 seconds, which should be enough time for the PC to gather some money and buy as many of the goods as possible. The PC may become angry or even violent if anyone tries to keep him or her from buying Horvenu's goods. Nindol can cast this spell three times before he is out of spells for the day.

If the PCs become distrustful of Horvenu, he loudly defends his honor. If it seems they will be able to test his goods, he makes up some excuse to get out while the getting is good. The PCs can test these goods with the skill *Alchemical Training* or by trying to use them. Testing them alchemically requires access to laboratory equipment, about half an hour's time, and a successful skill roll. A magician's ability to detect magic does not work for alchemical ingredients, nor does the spell *Analyze Enchanted Item*, which works only for magical rather than alchemical creations.

After making the sale, the Pharesian leaves in a hurry, thanking the PCs for their kindness and saying that he must try to find a place to stay where he can trade what goods he has remaining for a night's stay. Actually he takes off to rendezvous with the Sarista out of town.

## Arrival at Tordan

This section describes what the PCs see and experience as they first arrive in Tordan.

The Ardan rounds a bend in the road, skirting a hill to the right, and directly ahead, about two and half miles off, stands a mesa with small, one-story structures atop it. Black birds circle the mesatop. Some characters may mistake this for a town, but it is Tordan's cemetery. Within fifteen minutes, the land barge arrives in croplands and turns north to face Tordan, about a mile and half in the distance. Tordan sits atop a sixty-foot high mesa, and the characters can see the sloping, canvas tops of the buildings as well as a large group of vehicles and people crowding at the mesa's base.

The crops to either side of the road are mostly

within gigantic greenhouses. Viridia, which grows just about anywhere, even grows well in this sandy soil, and the Sindarans also cultivate a variety of tubers and vegetables. For those crops that require more care, the Sindarans have elaborate hydroponics systems, allowing them to grow nearly anything, albeit at slightly greater expense than normal. Most noteworthy are the crops of rainbow lotus, used in the manufacture of skoryx. In addition to preserving moisture, these greenhouses are designed to withstand acid rain, with glass roofs that are immune to acid and chemically treated acid-resistant frames.

To the left is a dry, rocky hill. A few large houses dot the slope, the residences of those Sindarans who prefer openness and privacy to the safety of Tordan.

About ten minutes after the characters first see Tordan, the *Arđan* arrives at the crowd of people at the mesa's base. Already there are three other land barges, plus a bewildering assortment of wagons, drays, and carts. Composing the crowd are grim Arimites, jade-green Dracartans, masked Djaffir, wrinkled Kasmirans, massive Monads, dusky-orange Orgovians, and a smattering of other races. In corrals and mixed among the crowd are various mounts and beasts of burden, including ungainly ahtra, ponderous durges and erds, hissing land lizards, vicious lopers, and the ubiquitous equus. On the barges or in piles around the area are lengths of timber, bolts of cloth stacked ten feet high, huge pottery urns with unknown contents, ingots of tin, crates of food, racks of weapons, and a plethora of smaller or less plentiful goods. This entire mass of people and beasts is in constant motion as merchants circulate in search of buyers, procurers test and sample various wares, laborers load and unload goods, animal handlers yoke beasts to their vehicles, and Sindaran investigators patrol the area. On the outskirts of the area are tents and pavilions of various sizes and designs, including some that seem to have permanent wooden supports. Behind the mass of beasts, people, and goods, a black iron basket continually rises up to the edge of the mesa and returns to the ground, carrying people in each direction.

Captain Peris directs the *Arđan* off the road

onto a flat expanse where the other land barges are docked. She turns to the PCs and tells them that the land barge will stay at Tordan until the next morning, but that her duty to take them to Tordan is done. She thanks them for helping fight the satada and for any other aid they may have offered during the trip and wishes them luck here.

If the characters take this last opportunity to ask her about Tordan, she can tell them the following information:

Tordan thrives on trade and mining. A mine to the north supplies tin, silver, and quartz. In addition, Tordan lies on the Dead River, which serves as a major thoroughfare for merchants heading north and south. The alchemists here also trade their products with non-Sindarans. In turn, they purchase hardwoods from Vardune, foodstuffs not native to Sindar, rainbow lotus for brewing skoryx, Kasmiran devices, weaponry, and magical goods, which Sindarans are unable to construct on their own.

Tordan does not have a reputation as a refined, pleasant city. It's a frontier town with plenty of potentially dangerous transients. "Keep your wits about you," admonishes the captain.

Most of the population is Sindaran, although a strong contingent of Arimites is also present to work the mines. Tordan has a segregated "Foreigners' Quarter" where most non-Sindarans live.

Adventurers often stop by here on their way into or out of the Eastern Borderlands. Few Tordanians make a big distinction between "adventurers" and "bandits." After all, the typical adventurer is someone who wants to make good money fast and is willing to use violence to do so. Tordanians are targets of their attentions almost as often as are the Araq and Beastmen that can be found farther east.

"Be sure to use the signal tower if you need to contact Abn Qua for any reason," Captain Peris reminds the party. The signals travel very quickly, although contacting Abn Qua requires dispatching a messenger from the Sindaran border to go to Cymril.

This chapter describes the city of Tordan,



## TORDAN

including the surrounding sites of interest and NPCs who may come into play. Since the PCs are free to move around the area at will, the important people and places are described geographically rather than chronologically.

### Key to the Map of Tordan and Surroundings

#### Cemetery

When the Neurians, now known as Sindarans, came to Archaeus ages ago, they felt that this world was not theirs, and that it was inappropriate to bury their dead under its surface. Though the Sindarans now generally accept Archaeus as home, they retain the practice of leaving their dead above the surface. They build mausoleums that stand above the ground on short stilts. The wealthy commission stone mausoleums for their families, but the poor simply build wooden or woven biers. Neither the mausoleums nor the biers have roofs, so carrion birds make quick work of the corpses. Long ago the Neurians believed that having their dead eaten by birds allowed their dead to be carried away into the sky, symbolic of the Neurians' desire to return to their home in a flying ship. Now it is merely accepted as fitting to allow the dearly departed to be eaten by carrion birds. Still, the Sindarans would find it horrifying to discover that land scavengers, especially necrophages, had raided their cemetery. For this reason, cemeteries, like this one, are typically situated atop mesas.

#### Players' Handouts

A family of Sindarans lives here. They construct the mausoleums and biers used in the cemetery, operate the winch that hauls the dead and the living up to the mesatop, tend to the grounds, and keep away land scavengers. They all carry silver weapons, which serve both as symbols of their status and as practical defenses against necrophages.

#### Rian, Sindaran Keeper of the Cemetery, 2nd Level

**Languages:** High Talislan +8, Archaen +8.

**Description:** Male, elderly, 7'3", 215 lbs. Rough sandy-hued skin, ridge of six hornlike protrusions running along crest of skull, bony chin spur, emaciated appearance. He wears the traditional black and white checkered robes of a grave-keeper.

INT +6	PER -1
WIL +2	CHA +3
STR -2	DEX -2
CON -1	SPD -3

**Hit Points:** 11

<b>Attacks</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>Damage</b>
Spear*	-1	d10

\*Tipped with silver.

**Armor:** None.

**Skills:** Rudimentary Combat (spear) -1, Collector +8, Administrator +8, Laborer (cemetery-keeping) +5, Artificer (funeral biers) +2, Customs, Urban (Sindar) +8, Haggle +5, Antiquarian Lore +8, Talislan History +8.

**Special:** Dual-enkephalon.



## Summary of the Mystery

Vornel, a Tanasian magician posing as a Cymrilian, is trading with Zhenk, a Za raider. Zhenk leads a small group of Beastmen, and he is helping them get better armaments in order to make the Beastmen more favorably inclined toward the Za and to prepare the Beastmen for an eventual assault on the Seven Kingdoms.

Vornel buys black iron weapons and tools from an Arimite merchant named Grunio. Grunio does not much care what Vornel is doing with all these weapons. After all, he might just be trading them to Seven Kingdoms citizens or allies. If he were to find out that Vornel is trading the weapons to the Beastmen, he would consider himself the victim of trickery and get very angry indeed. Grunio suspects that Vornel is a Tanasian, and believes he might be stockpiling weapons in preparation for an attempted coup d'etat, but that is the business of the Tanasians and Cymrilians. He doesn't much care one way or another who rules Cymril.

Vornel is trading with the Beastmen in order to increase the threat they pose to the Seven Kingdoms and to establish himself on good terms with the Sub-Men. He has told Zhenk that he looks forward to the day that Cymril is razed, in vengeance for the ousting of the Tanasians. Actually, he hopes that when the people of the Seven Kingdoms feel very threatened by the Sub-Men, he and a few other Tanasians will be able to return. He will claim that the threat of the Beastmen would never have grown if the Tanasians had been in charge, and he will attempt to take control, either through political or violent means. Then he will use what information he has gathered from the Beastmen, who think he is an ally, to defeat them. This setup will make him and his fellow Tanasians look like saviors of the land, rather than the traitors they are.

Grunio brings armaments and tools from Arim and sells them to Vornel at Tordan. Vornel takes them to the Dragon's Head ruins, where he meets Zhenk and several Beastmen. There he trades the iron items for booty captured by the Beastmen. He then sells these items to various merchants and uses the money to purchase more weapons from Grunio after skimming a bit for personal profit. Some of these captured items have worked their way back to Cymril, which is how Abn Qua found out about them.

Unknown to Vornel, he is infringing on the mercantile territory of Tarnis, the Farad monopolist who controls weapons trade in his country.

If someone talks to Rian about strange events, merchants traveling by night, furtive meetings, or other such things, he will first demand a good reason why the PCs should be interested in such things. Make a reaction roll (a roll versus the speaking character's CHA or, if Sindaran, Fashion skill) to see how well Rian likes the character. Depending on the

roll and on the reason that the PCs give for their curiosity, he may or may not tell them what he knows. You may also withhold the information if the characters come to Rian too early in the adventure, or you may give it away without a roll if the players are really stuck.

If he gives the information, Rian says:

*"While I cannot be certain that anything I know might be of interest to you, one fact of which I am aware is the untimely death of Ukhait, an unfortunate fellow Sindaran who collected items and articles related to death. A morbid interest, you may well think, and I would be inclined to agree, but there is no accounting for taste. In any event, this Ukhait often explored the Dragon's Head ruins in search of funerary items that may have been left behind by earlier explorers. This habit of hers came to my attention when I was called upon to perform the unpleasant task of arranging her funeral three weeks ago. She was killed in the ruins, you understand. And from what I saw and heard, it would seem that someone, as opposed to something, had brought her to her untimely demise.*

*"Who would have done that?" you may well inquire, and this same fact I would also appreciate knowing, but that fact is beyond my capability to relate. Bandits may have been the culprits, as it is known that there is a Cymrilian by the name of Molith who styles himself as an adventurer but, if one is to believe rumors, has taken to preying on the good citizens of the Seven Kingdoms when the reward outweighs the risk. This Molith roams about these parts, and he or his band may have dealt Ukhait her fatal blow, but that hypothesis leads directly to the question of motive, since Ukhait was by no means wealthy, and had little in the way of ornamentation when she met her end. A prudent guess would put Molith's intelligence above the level at which he would wantonly murder random citizens for their silver earrings.*

*"And if bandits such as Molith are not to be blamed, because greed is to be ruled out as a proper motive, then who would it be who would slay poor Ukhait? Take my proposition for what you think it is worth, but I imagine that someone who was also in the ruins that night had a secret to keep, a secret so terrible that he was willing to kill a young lady to keep it to himself. Something evil and dangerous is brewing in Dragon's Head.*

*"As to the nature of that danger, prudence prevents me from manufacturing a guess, as it would certainly correlate only coincidentally with the truth."*

Rian knows no more than he tells the PCs in the above monologue. Ukhait's body does not remain to be examined by inquisitive investigators, as it was devoured by carrion birds three weeks ago.



Ukhalt, of course, was slain by Beastmen when she stumbled upon them in the ruins three weeks ago.

### Dead River

The Dead River is the dry bed of what once was the largest waterway in the continent. Farther north, bordering Urag, it is only ten to forty feet deep, while farther north it is up to 120 feet deep. Here it is usually about sixty feet deep and 250 feet wide, with a smooth path down the center approximately 100 feet wide.

A ramp leads down from Tordan to the bed of the "river," allowing wagons to come and go. Other than artificial exits, however, there are few easy ways to get from the bed of the river to the land above.

In addition to merchants, satada, Za raiders, behemoths, malathropes, and chasm vipers can often be found in the Dead River, though this close to civilization these dangers are relatively rare.

### Dragon's Head

These ruins date from the Archaen Age, before The Great Disaster. By what little remains of this once-great city, antiquarians have identified it as a Drakken settlement. The Drakken were a race of reptilian giants who were driven out of Talislanta by the Archaens. The mark of the Drakken is still found on the continent. The Watchstone in the Plains of Golarin is their most noteworthy monument, and the Kharakhan Giants are apparently descended from a race of neomorphs created by the Archaens to battle the Drakken; the Saurans and Saurud might also be related to the ancient Drakken. Those who know of such things say that the Drakken survive on the continent of Draknar south of Talislanta.

The ruins are impressive because of their sheer size. Even the tall Sindarans often find the thick walls, massive archways, and broad steps in the ruins overwhelming. Drakken writing is found on many of the walls and pieces of rubble, but Talislantan scholars have never been able to decipher it. This writing is always found carved into stone, and the depth at which the characters are carved varies considerably. Also to be found here are the images that earned the ruins their current name: numerous bas reliefs of dragons or dragon heads. A few bas reliefs depict the reptilian Drakken riding dragons through the air. Because of these images, few Talislantans are sorry that the Drakken were driven off the continent.

A narrow trail leads up the side of the Dead River to the ruins. It has room only for two people to stand abreast, and it is not as smooth as hikers might wish it were.

As have most ruins this close to civilization, Dragon's Head has been picked over thoroughly, although some secrets may remain for those who have the patience to make a careful and prolonged excavation.

It is in these ruins that Vornel meets the Beastmen and trades his goods for those Zhenk and his companions bring. The characters may follow him here in an attempt to spy on him. If they do so, the resulting events are described in the chapter "Into the Ruins."

If the characters come to Dragon's Head for some other reason, such as after buying a treasure map of questionable authenticity or because they have some reason to believe there is something interesting here, they essentially find two and a half square miles of dusty, crumbling ruins. The elements, acid rain in particular, have weathered the ruins into grotesque shapes. While some ruins may offer plenty of potential for excitement, these have already been explored so thoroughly that very little remains to be discovered.

If the PCs are in the ruins, they may run into dracs, Sindaran antiquarians, bandits taking shelter in the ruins, a necrophage, or nothing but harmless vermin.

If you wish the PCs to encounter bandits, use Molith's group (p. 53). A map of the ruins is found on p. 61, if you need to use it.

## The Mines

These mines have struck veins of tin and silver, with quartz finds relatively common as well. Arimites serve as miners, though the Sindaran owners sometimes supervise directly.

At the entrance to the mines are several rooms and chambers carved into the mountain where the captain of the mines directs its operation. Smelters and blacksmiths work here, retrieving metals from the ores and forging them into standard ingots for easy trade. Large durge-drawn drays are stationed here to haul the goods to the Lower Market (area 3 on the map of Tordan), where they are sold to merchants from various lands.

## TORDAN

A city of 5,000 souls placed atop a sixty-foot high mesa, Tordan is described below.

## Key to the Map of Tordan

### 1. Signal Tower

Atop a fifty-foot tower is a giant, round mirror attached to a series of gears and levers in the tower itself. The levers at the ground floor operate a complex series of gears, causing the mirror to reflect sunlight to the next station westward. The Tordan signal tower is the last one on this line of communication; there are no more signal towers to the south.

In front of the mirror is a large iron brazier jutting out from the tower. It is used for casting light on the mirror when the sun isn't shining. At least two Sindarans are always on duty here to send and receive messages. Near the tower is a two-story structure where people can order messages to be sent or pick up those that have been received.

Sending a message to Cymril costs 30 gold lumens: 5 g.l. for getting the message to a relay center on the border, and 25 g.l. for getting it from the border to Cymril by messenger.

### 2. Winch

There are two winches in Tordan, one over the Lower Market, and one near the Foreigners' Quarter. The southern winch, over the market, is the most commonly used winch. The northern one is used primarily for going to and returning from the mines.

Both winches lead three chains over the edge of the mesa and suspend a black iron basket for carrying passengers and goods. These baskets are twenty feet square. It takes about half a minute to ascend or descend. Each winch is powered by four Monads who turn great wheels. A series of ingenious pulleys makes lifting the basket easier than if the Monads had to lift the weight unaided.

Using the winch costs 1 copper piece per person to go in either direction.

At the winch on top of the mesa is a tent where Sindaran investigators and scribes ask the identities and intentions of any noteworthy party, such as wealthy foreigners or well-armed adventurers. Ostensibly they are there to offer aid to newcomers, but they are also keeping an eye on those who come and go. The scribes record the names of noteworthy visitors.

The characters are likely to be asked their names and business. If they provide a vague or questionable reason for coming to Tordan, the scribes will ask for more details. The investigators also warn the characters not to cause trouble in the city, as the investigator force keeps a close eye on troublemakers, and beating a hasty retreat from Tordan may prove difficult since the investigators staff the winches.

While living on a mesatop provides excellent protection from attack, there is some danger for those trapped at the bottom, including visiting merchants and workers in the fields. In the event of an emergency, the investigators can open secret tunnels that lead from the base of the mesa to the top, but the location of these tunnels is naturally a state secret.

### 3. Lower Market

This is the market to which the PCs came on the Ardan when they first arrived in Tordan. The merchants here primarily deal in bulk, with most of the goods never even getting to the mesatop. Instead, they are simply traded here. Goods imported to Tordan and traded here include food, hardwoods, magical creations, and Kasmiran mechanisms. Goods produced here and exported include tin, silver, quartz, alchemical goods, brightly dyed cloth, and skoryx. Goods passing through include Mandalan silkcloth and aquavit.

On the outskirts of the market are various inns and taverns for the comfort of visitors. These establishments are essentially semi-permanent tents, and the service offered there is mostly less than elegant.

If the PCs have mounts, they may want to stable them here rather than take them up into Tordan, where, incidentally, stable fees are much higher. They can also eat or lodge down here if they wish, though better services are to be found on the mesatop.

Service	Price
Meal (large)	9 s.p.
Meal (simple)	1 s.p.
Night's lodging (average)	5 s.p.
Night's lodging (poor)	1 s.p.
Stable fee (basic)	1 s.p.
Stable fee (exotic)	2 s.p.
Groom's fee	1 s.p.

### Description of Services

- Meal (large). Stew of various vegetables with some meat, but not a lot. Served with grog, fresh bread, and crumbly cheese. All you can eat.
- Meal (simple). Hard bread and a small chunk of





cheese. Not very filling, but it may do for a light breakfast.

- **Night's Lodging (average).** Bedspace in a large pavilion, in a separate room sectioned off with canvas walls.
- **Night's Lodging (poor).** Space to stretch out on the ground under a large tarp. Lots of others, mostly the poor, are under the same tarp, so there is little privacy. The tarp overhead is flame resistant and acid resistant, which is the main

advantage to this mode of lodging.

- **Stable Fee (basic).** One day's stay in a stable for one average mount, such as an equus or ahtra. Includes food, water, and an acid-resistant tarp overhead.
- **Stable Fee (exotic).** One day's stay in a stable for a mount that requires special care or extra food, such as a mangonel lizard.
- **Groom's Fee.** Fee to have a groom clean your mount, remove parasites, check for injuries, and

so on. Very important for those who depend on their mounts for optimum performance.

If the PCs investigate the Lower Market, they may find any or all of the following clues, some large and some small.

**Grunio's Wagon.** A durge-drawn wagon with a load of flails, broadswords, stirrups, spurs, hammers, and nails. These items are covered with a tarp, and a few Arimite mentials in Grunio's employ may be hanging around, as may Grunio (see below). A PC who manages to contact the criminal element and claims to be in search of a weapons supplier may be directed to this wagon.

**Vornel's Wagon.** A durge-drawn wagon with a variety of goods, mostly those things provided by the Beastmen: assorted used weapons, red iron mechanisms, Mandalan silkcloth, Djaffir fetish masks, assorted jewelry, specialized artisan's tools, and mochan. The weapons are all of types that the Beastmen would not use, since they keep usable weapons and trade the rest to Vornel. These weapons include crossbows, Dracartan hurlants, Kasmiran spring-knives (often in disrepair), Danuvian halberds, and an Aeriad crescent knife or two. Most of the goods from the last exchange have already been sold, but Vornel tries to sell these things slowly, so that the large volume of goods does not draw attention to him. At least one Jhangaran guards the wagon at all times. There is a small chance that Vornel is here to sell these goods to a merchant, probably a Djaffir. Some Djaffir are willing to purchase such goods without thinking too closely about their origin, though Vornel hides the fetish masks when showing the goods to a Djaffir. Vornel might also show his goods to an Arimite from the criminal underworld in the Foreigners' Quarter. While they have little personal use for these goods, they do have the connections to sell them.

**"Bey Alera's" Ontra.** It is an unremarkable beast, though the PCs may see an unusually tall Djaffir mount it, and prove himself a bit unfamiliar with the beast. See p. 50 for more information about the man who calls himself Bey Alera.

**The Fremikel Trust.** See p. 52.

**The Afhla Trust.** See p. 52.

Staying in one of the nicer inns located near the Lower Market is Grunio, the Arimite merchant who is here to sell weapons to Vornel. In his retinue are several Arimite laborers and several knife-fighters, along with a geomancer. These ample forces both protect Grunio on his dangerous journeys across the wilderness and deal with his enemies. By snooping around, the PCs may well qualify as enemies; see p. 48.

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#### **Grunio, Arimite Merchant, 4th Level**

**Languages:** Common Talislan +5, High Talislan +5.

**Description:** Man, age 36. 5'7", 142 lbs. Swarthy complexion, black hair, dark eyes, hatchetlike features going soft with age. Wears an elegant fur vest, spinifax breeches, drac-leather

boots, and silver rings (20 g.l.). A joyless fellow with little patience.

INT +1      PER 0  
WIL 0      CHA +1  
STR 0      DEX +2  
CON +2      SPD +1

**Hit Points:** 20

Attacks	CR	Damage
Staff, iron-shod	+3	d10
Throwing knife*	+6	d4

\*Can throw two per round with no penalty (thanks to Arimite Knife-Fighting), has four throwing knives.

**Armor:** Clothes enchanted to +1, 1 point.

**Skills:** Rudimentary Combat (staff) +3, Arimite Knife-Fighting +6, Merchant +5, Drayman (wagon) +6, Bribe +5, Administrator +5, Customs, Urban (Arim) +5, Barter +5, Haggle +5, Swim +6.

**Special:** None.

---

#### **Arimite Laborers, 1st Level**

**Languages:** Common Talislan +0.

**Description:** Men, ages 18 to 31, 5'2"-6'2", 90-170 lbs. Swarthy complexions, black hair, dark eyes, hatchetlike features. Wear ratty fur vests, patched breeches, worn hide boots, and black iron rings (2 g.l. per Arimite). They are sullen and suspicious.

INT -1      PER 0  
WIL 0      CHA -1  
STR +2      DEX +3  
CON +2      SPD +1

**Hit Points:** 14

Attacks	CR	Damage
Club	+4	d8+2
Throwing knife*	+4	d4+2

\*Can throw two per round with no penalty (Arimite Knife-Fighting), have four throwing knives each.

**Armor:** None.

**Skills:** Rudimentary Combat (club) +4, Arimite Knife-Fighting +4, Laborer +4, Drayman (wagon) +4, Customs, Urban (Arim) +0, Swim +4.

**Special:** None.

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#### **Arimite Knife-Fighters**

See their descriptions on p. 49.

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#### **Thurzina, Arimite Geomancer, 1st Level**

See her description on p. 49.

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### **4. Upper Market**

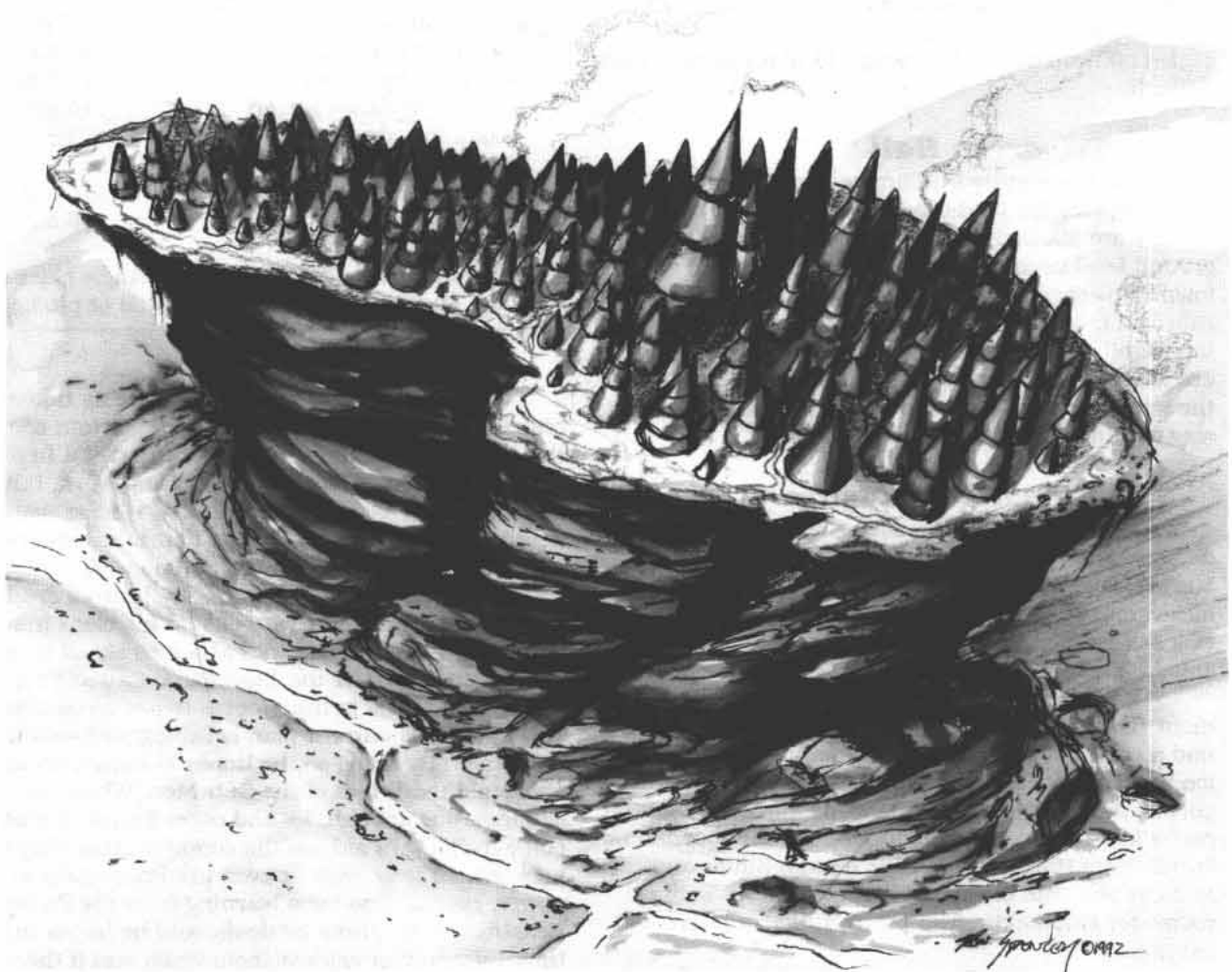
This is an open area three hundred feet across. Temporary booths and tents are common, but several of the booths are permanent. Most of the trading here is on a much smaller scale than that found in the Lower Market. Unlike the frenetic Lower Market, the Upper Market is calm, orderly, and efficient.

Alchemical goods, woods, foodstuffs, and oddities from other lands are commonplace here. In addition to the more exotic potions and powders for which Sindaran alchemists are renowned, Sindarans produce several varieties of less exciting alchemical

- **Anti-Acid Powder:** This powder is usually mixed in paint, dye, or shellac. Anything treated with this powder resists the effects of acid. Without this product, most Sindaran towns would be periodically destroyed by acid rains. This powder does not provide protection from alchemical solvents of alchahest. A pint of the powder, which can cover 100 square feet when mixed into some other medium, costs 5 s.p. and gives protection for about a year.
- **Vermin Repellent:** This yellowish powder is noxious to small animals, including serpents, lizards, spiders, scorpions, and insects. Sindarans spread it on the ground to repel these creatures, especially when forced to spend a night off the mesatop. Each ounce makes a line one yard long and costs 1 c.p.
- **Brilliant Dyes:** Sindarans are famed for their incredibly vivid dyes, which serve to color capes, clothes, and flags. These dyes and dyed cloths are strictly for foreigners, as the Sindarans prefer

- earth tones. Prices vary from 1 g.l. to 50 g.l. per pint depending on the type of dye, some of which are quite exotic.

- There is a well in the Upper Market, which is much like the other wells spread throughout the town. Since these wells are all at least 70 feet deep, it would take too much time to lower and raise buckets to get the water, and that length of rope would prove quite heavy. Instead, the Sindarans use magically engineered pumps that force the water up a long pipe, from which it bubbles up into a large basin. Usually there is a Monad operating each well at all





times from dawn to dusk. At night the pumps are turned off, so most people draw a little extra in the afternoon just in case, though in an emergency the pumps can be easily reactivated. Two Yassan technomancers are in charge of keeping all the wells in the town operative.

### 5. Plaza

This is the center of the town, with governmental buildings stationed all around the plaza. In the center of the plaza is a stand five feet off the ground for public speeches, celebrations, and other attractions.

### 6. Governor's Hall

This four-story structure houses the leadership of the town and huge number of scribes and bureaucrats.

### 7. Investigator Hall

The investigators meet, train, and receive their assignments in this broad, three-story structure.

### 8. Prison

Aboveground, this structure is only one story tall. The cells are all underground. Since Sindarans hate to be confined out of the open air, these accommodations serve to deter crime.

Since the two entrances into the prison can be sealed off from above, breaking out of it proves quite difficult.

### 9. Trivarian Hall

This three-story building is an important meeting place for Tordanians. The better Trivarian players are allowed to use the lower levels, with the ground level used almost solely by the leaders of the town. This segregation allows the leaders to congregate and talk among themselves while remaining in the vicinity of other citizens. Sindarans of all classes are welcome here, providing a rare opportunity for the wealthy and the poor to mingle, if only on their way to and from their respective floors.

### 10. Green Bottle Inn

The Green Bottle Inn serves travelers of middling means. The poor usually stay near the Lower Market, where prices are very low, and the wealthy merchants stay in much nicer establishments. If the PCs ask around for decent lodgings, they will probably be directed to the Green Bottle.

The Green Bottle has three floors plus a basement. The ground floor has a kitchen, a few rooms, and a common hall where the characters can buy food and drink. The upper floors all have rooms for guests, and even the roof has tarps for those who prefer fresh air to staying indoors. On the roof can be found, from time to time, Blue Aeriad, Sindarans, and Gryphs. The basement has storage, as well as rooms for Gnomekin, who prefer subterranean lodging.

Each room has a simple bed or two with a straw mattress and linen sheets, a washstand with a tin ewer and washbasin, pegs on the walls for cloaks, a window with small panes of glass in a wooden frame, a chamber pot, and a simple lock on the wooden door (-3 on rolls to pick it).

The common hall on the ground floor boasts a diverse array of visitors, including Djaffir merchants in voluminous robes and fetish masks, green-skinned Dracartans, dour and swarthy Arimites, aloof Sindarans, and representatives of other races.

Lodging	Price
Room, one bed	6 s.p.
Room, two beds	1 g.l.
Stable, basic	4 s.p.
Stable, exotic	1 g.l.
Groom fee	2 s.p.

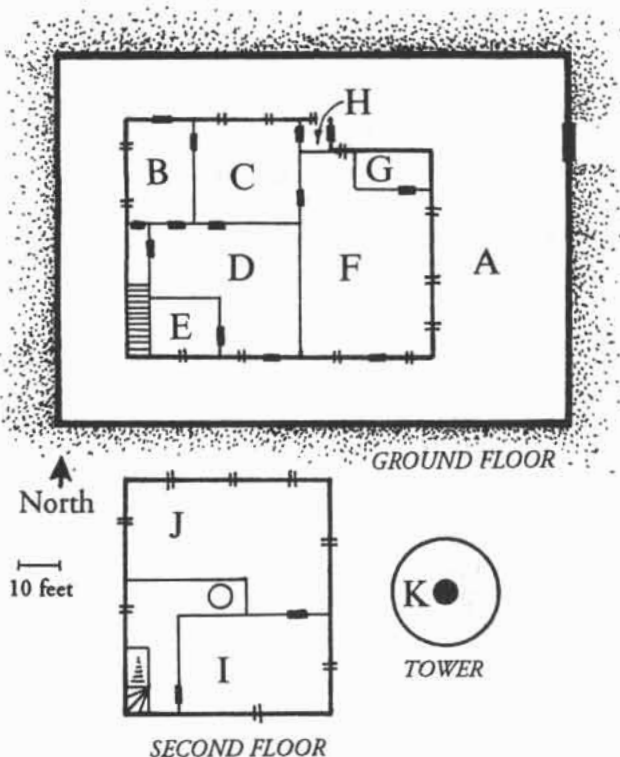
Food and Drinks	Price
Amber wine	3 s.p.
Aquavit (Cymrillian liquor)	3 g.l.
Blossom wine	8 s.p.
Chakos (Arimate liquor)	7 s.p.
Giant waterbug (Aeriad meal)	4 s.p.
Grog (common liquor)	1 c.p.
Meal (full)	1+ g.l.
Meal (simple)	1 s.p.
Mochan (Kasmiran beverage)	3 g.l.
Mushroom ale (Gnomekin)	7 c.p.
Rock urchin (steamed)	10 g.l.
Seeds (Aeriad meal)	15 c.p.
Skoryx (Sindaran liquor)	10 g.l.
Tazian fire-ale	2 g.l.
Thaedian nectar	8 g.l.
Vinesap (Aeriad)	15 s.p.
Zandir wine	15 s.p.

Prices listed for drinks are for a single glass or cup. Multiply times ten for a bottle or pitcher.

### 11. Vornel's House

Vornel is a Tanasian wizard who has taken up residence in Tordan. Back in Cymril, certain connections he had with the attempted coup d'etat in 603 N.A. would make it hard for him to find work, but here in Tordan he passes as a Cymrillian. He has made a decent living enchanting magic items, but recently he has taken on the role of merchant as well.

What no one knows is that he bears a grudge against the Cymrillians who ousted his class from power, and he concocts wild schemes about how he will regain power for the Tanasians. Causing trouble to the Cymrillians in the process is not an undesired side effect. His current plan is selling weapons to the Beastmen. By doing so, he hopes to enrich himself and build the threat of the Sub-Men. When the threat is dangerous enough, he and other Tanasians will come to Cymril's aid, on the condition that they will be returned from exile or even put once again in power. He has also been learning from the Za and the Beastmen with whom he deals, and he hopes to use their information against them when and if the



#### FLOOR PLAN KEY

- |           |                    |
|-----------|--------------------|
| Wall      | Stairs Down        |
| Door      | Spiral Stairs Up   |
| Window    | Spiral Stairs Down |
| Stairs Up |                    |

Tanasians come to power in defense of the Seven Kingdoms.

Vornel is in contact with superior Tanasians, but the contact is infrequent, to protect the identity of the superiors should Vornel be captured. When Vornel goes on his trading missions, he goes to Kasmir and there sends coded messages by private courier to his superiors, as well as receiving responses to his previous messages. Vornel knows his immediate superior only by the name "Vallia," which he correctly assumes is an alias.

To protect himself, Vornel has several Jhangaran bodyguards (one per character in the group, or six, whichever is greater). He purchased them as slaves on a trip to Djaffa, but they are legally "free" in Tordan because the Seven Kingdoms prohibits slavery. To keep them in his service, he told them that they each owe him 200 g.l., which he claims is what he paid for them; actually he paid 50 g.l. for each. He keeps an account for each and promises them that he will free them when they have earned 200 g.l. on this account. He credits them for each day of service, but debits them for all expenses, such as food and lodging. By carefully manipulating the numbers, he has kept them in his service for years, and only one of them has developed a credit of more than 50 g.l. Vornel knows enough to treat the Jhangarans well, so they are relatively loyal and mostly resigned to their fates.

### Chapter Three: Tordan

Vornel hates being stuck outside of his beloved Cymril, and he takes out this frustration on the Sindarans around him. He has come to see the Sindarans as haughty, obtuse, long-winded, and insufferable, and he has not been quiet about his opinions. That the Sindarans are smarter than he is only makes him hate them more. Many Sindarans resent his presence, but since he is one of a handful of magicians in the city, they still find it necessary to work with him. He has, however, come to the unfriendly attention of the neo-Neurians, who would like nothing more than to see this fellow leave Tordan. Some neo-Neurians have taken it upon themselves to spy on him in an effort to catch him doing something illegal or immoral. They would naturally use this information to pressure him to leave Tordan.

The house usually contains at least a servant, a watchdrac, and two or three guards. When Vornel is away on a trading mission, he leaves one guard on the premises.

#### Vornel, Tanasian Wizard, 3rd Level

**Languages:** High Talislan +5, Sign +5.

**Description:** Man, age 44. 6'3", 160 lbs. Light green hair and skin, plain features, narrow build. Wears a high-collared cloak and robes of green fustian, gloves, and pointed shoes. He walks with a staff.

**Special:** Fascinated by magic (WIL roll to resist).

See p. 61 for complete stats.

#### Jhangaran Bodyguards, 1st Level

**Languages:** Common Talislan +0.

**Description:** Males, ages in mid-twenties, 5'11"–6'4", 135–165 lbs. Marbled brown and sepia skin, elliptical cranium, hairless. They wear leather armor, yellow wrappings for arms and legs, yellow linen cloaks, and sandals. They carry spears and wear daggers on their hips. They precede statements with one-word commands, such as "IHeal!" or "IDie!"

See p. 61 for complete stats.

### Key to Vornel's House

#### A. Tiled Courtyard

A watchdrac named Gid guards the house and patrols through the courtyard. Gid is trained to hiss loudly when disturbed and to attack intruders. Those entering the area without a member of the household present will be held at bay by Gid, unless they try to escape, in which case Gid attacks.

#### Gid, Watchdrac, 1st Level

**Description:** Five-foot long, mottled brown, wingless dragon.

INT -7	PER +4
WIL 0	CHA 0
STR 0	DEX +2
CON +2	SPD +2

**Hit Points:** 9

Attacks	CR	Damage
Bite	+3	d4
Claws	+3	1

Note: The watchdrac can strike with both bite and claw each round.

**Armor:** Scaly hide, 2 points.

**Skills:** Tracking (by smell) +5.

**Special Abilities:** Keen sense of smell.

## B. Parlor

An elegantly furnished room where Vornel entertains his important guests.

## C. Dining Room

The guards eat here together, but Vornel eats alone or with special guests.

## D. Kitchen

A large kitchen filled with plenty of food, but not of the highest quality. A generous store of fine aquavit can be found here.

## E. Servant's Room

A Danelek woman named Tari serves as the general servant for the household; she cooks, cleans, and performs other services. She lives in this simple room. Unknown to Vornel, she has a dagger hidden here for emergencies.

## Tari, Danelek Servant, 1st Level

**Languages:** Sign +0, Common Talislan +0, a little High Talislan.

**Description:** Female, age 20, 5'8", 120 lbs. Skin blackened by exposure to the suns, hair bleached white and worn in dreadlocks. She wears a blue-green smock.

INT -1	PER +2
WIL -1	CHA +2
STR +1	DEX 0
CON +4	SPD 0

**Hit Points:** 14

Attacks	CR	Damage
Dagger	+1	d6+1

**Armor:** None.

**Skills:** Secondary Combat (short bow, dagger) +1, Mounted Combat (land lizard) +1, Stealth +1, Waylay +1, Ambush +0, Tracking +3, Wilderness Survival +0.

**Special:** None.

## F. Barracks

Bunks for the guards, trunks with their meager private possessions, and a small table where they play dice or cards.

## G. Guards' Bath

The guards use this room for bathing. It has a large tin tub, pitchers, and towels.

## H. Storage

Tools, a mop, acid-resistant lacquer, and so on.

## I. Laboratory

Where Vornel crafts magic items, something he hasn't done in a while. It has various magical tools and raw materials worth 100 g.l. His spell book is behind a secret panel on one wall.

## J. Vornel's Bedroom

Stylish, but small and cluttered. Green is clearly the dominant color here.

## K. Study

Vornel's favorite room, a circular structure made of green glass. It is thick enough that only the vaguest images can be seen through it, thus providing him with privacy. A ledger here reveals that he has made trips "to Ikarthis" every two weeks, and that he traded weapons purchased from Grunio for "miscellaneous goods." These trips, naturally, were actually to trade with the Beastmen. Vornel destroys the messages he receives from Vallia, so there is no evidence of his contact with his superiors.

A locked chest contains the following:

- 5,000 g.l. in lumens and pentacles.
- Certificates from a moneylender in the Business Quarter. They are worth 15,000 g.l., but they must be signed over by Vornel to be of any value.
- A small bag with four diamonds of 8 carats each. They are valued at 400 g.l. each.
- A vial of paralytic liquid (see below).

The chest is locked; the characters must make a Lockpicking roll at -6 to open it, or they can batter it open. It has 20 hit points and 3 points of armor. Knocking the chest around, however, will upset a vial of alchemical liquid in the box. This releases gas that will pour out of the chest if it is opened. The gas affects characters within ten feet of the chest, and is the equivalent of paralytic powder. Every affected character must roll versus CON.

## Resisting Paralytic Gas

Roll versus CON

Mishap	Paralyzed two hours.
Failure	Paralyzed one hour.
Partial Success	-4 on all Action Table rolls for 20 rounds.
Success	-1 on Action Table rolls for 10 rounds.
Critical Success	No ill effects.

Since the wood is only one inch thick, even a 1st-level Magic Portal will allow a wizard to make an opening in the chest.



## 12. Altek's House

Altek is the head of the neo-Neurian movement in Tordan and the surrounding area. She uses her large, elegant house for meetings of the neo-Neurians, as well as more neutral social functions.

Altek would be more than happy to discuss neo-Neurianism with a Sindaran PC. If a non-Sindaran is present, however, she will lie and say that their aims are very minor, merely proper respect for the Sindarans in the rulership of the Seven Kingdoms. She points out that Sindarans are so trusting and preoccupied by intellectual pursuits that they rarely stand up for themselves when it comes to mundane matters, such as politics. For example, the Kasmirans are all but demanding the erection of a huge wall to separate them from the Wilderlands of Zaran, while the Sindarans are not asking for any special treatment. That, she says, is an example of how Sindarans don't usually take pains to ask for their fair share. She explains that all the neo-Neurians want is a fair share for the Sindarans.

If no non-Sindarans are present, however, she may explain more of her aims, which include devoting as much of the Seven Kingdoms' resources as possible to finding a way to contact Neuria, wherever that may be. She foresees a huge expedition to the Lost Continent to find out what can be learned about that former homeland of the Sindarans.

As you roleplay Altek, remember that she is a canny and experienced politician, and she is not likely to let neophytes get the upper hand.

---

### Altek, Sindaran Politician, 8th Level

**Languages:** High Talislani +14.

**Description:** Female, age 43, 7', 180 lbs. Rough sandy-hued skin, ridge of six hornlike protrusions running along crest of skull, bony chin spur, emaciated appearance, very wrinkled face. Dusty gray silk kaftan, dark gray cape, silver earrings (25 s.p. each) and necklace (5 g.l.).

INT +6	PER 0
WIL +1	CHA +3
STR -1	DEX -1
CON 0	SPD 0

**Hit Points:** 24

Attacks	CR	Damage
Sword, dueling	+0	d8-1

**Armor:** None.

**Skills:** Rudimentary Combat (duelling sword) +0, Collector (political essays) +18, Administrator +11, Litigator +14, Oratory +11, Diplomacy +11, Talislantan History +14, Coerce +11, Customs, Urban (Sindar) +14, Fashion +11, Antiquarian Lore +14, Haggle +11, Metaphysical Doctrines (alternate dimensions) +11.

**Special:** Dual-encephalon.

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## 15. Montaid the Waker's House

Unlike most Sindarans, Montaid is not emaciated and has a hint of a pot belly; she is considered fat by Sindaran standards. She weaves for a living,

though since she "awoke" several years ago, she also accepts gifts from those who come to her for advice.

She often takes long walks by herself in the wilds around Tordan, searching for berries and plants that she can turn into dyes for her weaving. Other townspeople may tell the PCs to go to her for information about the lay of the surrounding land before they go heading out into the wilderness.

Montaid is easy to find as everyone in the town knows where her shack is. She lives in a simple hut where she sits cross-legged on the floor and weaves most of the day. Around her in her single room are a chamber pot, a water urn, piles of colorful leaves and berries, a mortar and pestle, rolls of yarn and string, and an uncommon sight in a Sindaran home—an uncomfortable bed. On the floor by one of Montaid's knees is a shallow begging bowl with a few pieces of silver in it. A loaf of aromatic bread sits on the floor next to the bowl, a gift from a recent visitor. Mixed with the fruity scent of the bread are various woody and tangy aromas from the plants Montaid has gathered in her wanderings.

Montaid pays no attention to visitors unless they address her. Indeed, the characters could walk away with her money and weavings if they wanted, and she wouldn't lift a finger to prevent it. Once addressed, she says, "Greetings, strangers. How is it that you come to see an old weaver?"

Whenever the PCs ask her a question, she invariably responds with a question of her own, perhaps related or unrelated to the PCs' question. Once the PCs answer her question, she answers the question they originally asked. She requires no gift for her services, but if a townspeople has come along as a guide, not giving a gift would make the PCs look petty and cheap.

If a PC responds to one of Montaid's questions with yet another question, Montaid will respond in kind. She will not answer any questions until the PCs first do so.

Montaid is unconcerned with the nature of the answers to her questions. Even nonsense will satisfy her.

Questions Montaid might ask:

*"What is it that leads you to suppose your inquiry is so vital as to demand a response?"*

*"What has brought you such a remarkable distance from the land of your people?"*

*"In whom, of all the people you know, do you place the most trust?"*

*"In all the world, what is the object, achievement, or experience you most desire?"*

*"What visage did you bear before your grandparents were born?"*

*"What is the meaning of your appellation?"*

What Montaid knows:

- Someone disguised as a Djaffir merchant came to ask her about merchants in the area. He left when she asked him who he really was, so she did not tell him anything.

- The wizard named Vornel is really a Tanasian, not a Cymrilian.
- The neo-Neurians are after much more than they will admit.
- A Sindaran was killed in Dragon's Head three weeks ago. Apparently someone was doing something in the ruins, and she stumbled onto it.

What Montaid doesn't know:

- That Vornel is dealing with the Beastmen.
- That Arimites are dealing with Vornel.
- Who the man disguised as a Djaffir is.

---

### Montaid, Sindaran Waker, 3rd Level

**Language:** High Talisian +12.

**Description:** Female, age 55 (late middle age). 7' tall, 230 pounds. Rough skin the color of light golden sand. The six horns running along the crest of her skull are off-white and unadorned. Her chin spur has curled inward several times around, which is considered a mark of intelligence among Sindarans. Her ears and her foremost horn are pierced, but she no longer wears rings in them. She is fat by Sindaran standards, with the hint of a soft pot belly. She wears a simple, light green silk kaftan and no jewelry of any kind. Montaid is untroubled by the doubts, worries, concerns, and desires that confuse the minds of most sentient beings. Nothing bothers her. She always responds to any question with a question of her own, and does not answer until her questioner has first answered her. Most Wakers have some quirk like this, though no two have been known to have the same quirk.

INT +9	PER +3
WIL +5	CHA 0
STR -3	DEX -2
CON -2	SPD -4

**Hit Points:** 12

Attacks	CR	Damage
None		

**Armor:** None.

**Skills:** Collector (woven goods) +12, Artificer (dye-making) +12, Artificer (weaving) +4.

**Note:** Since only one brain is active, she cannot play Trivarian.

**Special:** Effectively a mono-encephalon, though the one brain she does use is exceptionally well trained, orderly, and efficient.

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### Business Quarter

The buildings here are clean, brightly colored, and tall. Sindarans, Kasmirans, and a few Cymrilians and Arimites are walking through the streets carrying messages, business offers, responses to business offers, legal briefs, notes of credit, and other official papers to and from the various businesses in operation here. Commonly traded goods include rights to the mine's profits (essentially stock), portions of trading companies (more stock), letters of credit for raw materials such as gold or tin (like commodities), and vital information about rivals and such.

## Cultural Note: Sleepers and Wakers

Most Sindarans prefer to apply both of their brains to the tasks of daily living, and try to schedule intellectually difficult endeavors during the part of the day when neither brain is resting. But a very few who devote themselves to understanding the universe allow one brain to meditate and contemplate freely while using the other to make a living, see to the body's needs, and generally take care of business. Those who have adopted this lifestyle are called Sleepers, because unlike the majority of Sindarans, they need to sleep. Since only one brain is really involved in day-to-day life, when it needs rest, the Sindaran must actually sleep.

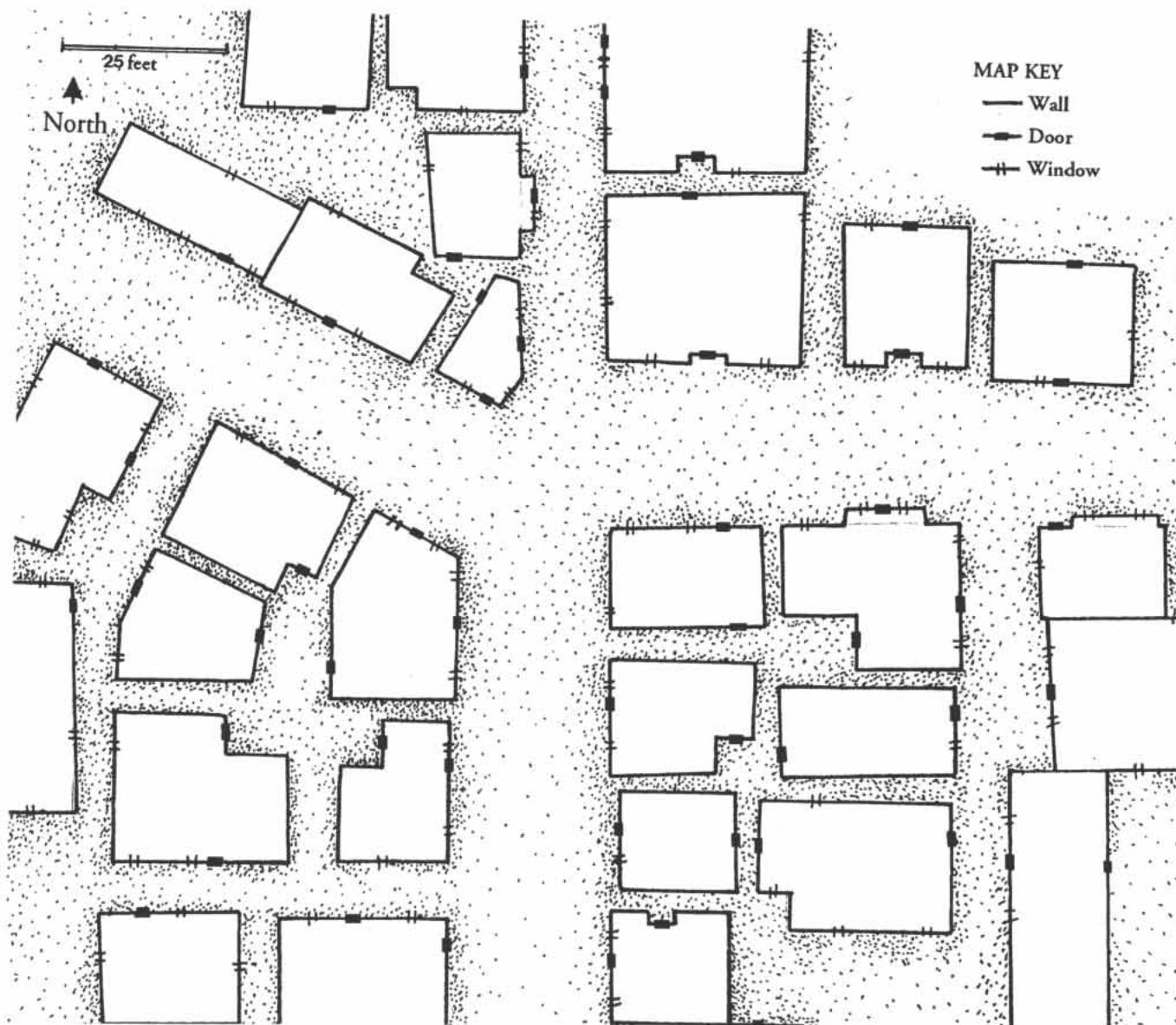
Once the contemplative brain is satisfied with its understanding of the universe, it takes over the job of daily living and allows the other brain to contemplate and discover Truth for itself; Sindarans believe that Truth with a capital T cannot merely be taught, but only grasped personally. Sleepers generally take decades to reach this stage of understanding, and some of them never do. When the contemplative brain takes over, the Sleeper becomes incredibly wiser overnight. At that point, the Sleeper is called a Waker. In practical terms, little has changed, since the Sindaran must still sleep, but the change in names reflects the greater understanding that the Sindaran now possesses. In personal terms, Wakers are uniformly cheerful, undemanding, patient, and satisfied, and their newfound clarity of thought more than makes up for their lack of skill in most endeavors.

Since Sleepers and Wakers must take time out every day for sleep, they cannot work as steadily as other Sindarans. This handicap, plus their inability to play Trivarian, keeps them from competing with other Sindarans for positions of wealth and prestige, so they usually accept menial occupations. While the low social status of Sleepers and Wakers discourages most young Sindarans from adopting this way of life, those who do choose it are untroubled by their position. For them, meaning in life comes from knowing that they are seeking answers to the big questions, questions that their busier kindred have no time to ponder.

### Foreigners' Quarter

Rude houses of stone and tarps fill most of this sector, though various other houses more fitting to the various inhabitants can also be found here, including the occasional glass home of a Cymrilian.

While Arimites predominate in this area, representatives of many races can be found here. In addition to Arimites and the races of the Seven Kingdoms, one can find Aamanians on pilgrimage, Zandir in search of adventure, Sarista looking for



**Section of the Foreigners' Quarter**

easy marks, Dracartans seeking profitable trading partners, Jhangarans looking for work, Mandalan refugees escaping the brutal rule of the Kang, and other races.

### ***Government Quarter***

The buildings here are large and ostentatious, the streets broad and clean. Few people are in the streets, but the buildings themselves teem with activity as the Sindarans jockey for position in the hierarchy.

### ***Poor Quarter***

The houses and buildings here are often in disrepair. Many inhabitants cannot afford proper acid-resistant treatments for their homes, and the occasional acid rain is slowly eating away their houses. The streets are narrow and torturous, often changing with the erection or destruction of a flimsy house. Neo-Neurian support is strong in this quarter. These poor Sindarans have the menial jobs that many foreigners would gladly take for lower pay, so

these Sindarans are in direct competition with non-Sindarans. Sindaran alchemists, for a counterexample, have no serious competition from other races, so they can afford to be egalitarian.

Small businesses such as grogshops, pawnshops, tailors, and exterminators are quite common here, and many people simply work in their homes.

### ***Wealthy Quarter***

The mines to the north and the Dead River route to the east have both made Tordan a crossroads for wealth. This area is home to those who have taken a cut of the wealth produced and traded here. The homes are tall, clean, and elegant. In the streets one mostly sees servants of the various wealthy houses running errands. Places of business are rare here. Those who live here generally work in the Business Quarter or Government Quarter, and no one cares to have stores conveniently close to home because they have their servants to do the shopping anyway.

A motley group of adventurers may attract some attention wandering through this area. Perhaps



protective servants approach the party to ask their business, or even a few investigators could inquire about the party's interest.

## Events in Tordan

Overall, Tordan is administered very well by the insightful and intelligent Sindarans. They manage to keep the markets here bustling and to make most foreigners feel welcome. The leaders here are proud of how well Tordan accommodates the needs of its populace as well as those of visitors from afar.

News of the Tirshata has naturally been of interest to the Tordanians, as they are on the border of the Wilderlands of Zaran. Unlike the Kasmirans, however, they do not seem overly worried. They are confident that news of any attack will precede the Sub-Men by a healthy margin, and they further believe their mesatop provides excellent protection if they were to be attacked. Without windships or magic, the Sub-Men would be hard pressed to launch a formidable attack on Tordan.

The only apparent unrest in Tordan is between the neo-Neurians and the traditional Sindarans. The neo-Neurians are in a strange position in Tordan because the Sindarans here are dependent on non-Sindarans for wealth. Not only do merchants from other lands provide the profitable trade, but even the wealth of the nearby mines is primarily in the hands of Arimites. On one hand, this constant exposure to those of other races makes many Tordanians highly tolerant of non-Sindarans. On the other hand, many Tordanians resent the presence and influence of so many "strange people."

Giving vent to the feelings of those who dislike the "foreign" influence on Tordan is the neo-Neurian movement. The leader of the neo-Neurians is Altek, whose support to date is small but steadily growing. As in Durjan, the main issue currently being argued is "One Brain, One Vote," but there are also some neo-Neurians who want to see the mines placed under Sindaran control. Some would even favor

## Cultural Note: Sindaran Sleeping Patterns

Each Sindaran brain requires rest and sleep, just as the brain of a mono-encephalon does. The advantage for dual-encephalons is that they can allow one brain to sleep while the other continues to function. Typically, both brains function during the middle eight hours of the day, with one brain sleeping from four o'clock PM to midnight, and the other sleeping from midnight to eight in the morning. While one brain is sleeping, the Sindaran is not as intellectually capable as when both are awake. In game terms, subtract 5 from the Sindaran's INT when one brain is sleeping.

Whenever faced with difficulty, a Sindaran is capable of waking a sleeping brain and thus functioning at full capacity. Sindarans who are traveling or who must coordinate their schedules with mono-encephalons change their daily cycles to match their needs. At certain times, a Sindaran will sleep with both brains at the same time in order to function with both brains for the rest of the day, but they typically find unconsciousness disorienting, even frightening.

having the Arimites move to the mountain where the mines are and simply settle there, although they would not have nearly as safe a location as they do on the mesatop of Tordan.

Unknown to the citizens of Tordan, a much more serious conflict is playing out under their noses. With the massive amount of trade moving into, out of, and through Tordan, the Tanasian Vornel has managed to buy weapons from an Arimite merchant and sell them to the Beastmen without anyone discovering this plot. Indeed, the only people who know much about Vornel's actions are the PCs and a Farad assassin going under the guise of a Djaffir named Bey Alera.



## FINDING THE TRAITOR

This chapter guides you in running the adventure once the player characters reach Tordan. At that point, the PCs are free to find the merchant who is dealing with the Sub-Men in any way they wish. What actually happens now will depend on the players' initiative and imagination, as well as on the pacing needs of the adventure. For example, if the characters are bogging down and not getting anywhere, you may want to have them stumble on an important clue to get things moving.

To put this chapter to best use and be ready to run this open-ended portion of the adventure, read through this chapter, familiarize yourself with some of the different ways the adventure can progress, and perhaps decide for yourself what course of events would be most interesting for you and your players.

If you are confident in your ability to "wing it," you can draw part of the adventure out just as long as you want. The PCs can get to know strange people, carouse in the bars, get invited to classy parties, find their valuables filched by enterprising thieves, come to the unwelcome attention of the investigators, break into Vornel's house for evidence, break into someone else's house following a false lead, get caught up in a raging brawl between neo-Neurians and tough Arimite miners, find and develop a romantic interest, enter a bragging contest with another band of adventurers, nose around Dragon's Head, or watch the suns set over the desolate Sindaran landscape. Even if you are not totally familiar with Talislantan culture, improvise. Remember, you're holding an adventure book that none of your players are going to see. If you need time to think and

improvise, pretend to search through the book for the information. When you have decided how to handle some new and unexpected turn of events, *voilà*; you've "found the section you were looking for" and you can tell the players what happens. They'll buy it because they'll think you're reading it here. After all, cunning is a highly cultivated virtue in Talislanta.

This chapter is divided into separate sections, each detailing an event or summary of possible events. Since the player characters decide for themselves where to go and what to do, these sections are not in chronological order. Use them as you see fit, depending on the actions of the player characters and on the needs of the plot.

You will almost certainly want to start with the sections "Settling Down" and "Investigations," and these may lead to any of the other sections. There is no need to use all the sections listed here. If they don't fit the plot, leave them out and possibly recycle them in a later adventure.

The sections presented here are as follows:

- **Settling Down:** The PCs find a place to stay and get to know the town.
- **Investigations:** The PCs use wits, magic, or coin to find clues to the merchant's identity.
- **Attack:** Grunio's Arimites attack the PCs to protect his secret dealings. Use this encounter if the players want a fight.
- **Bey Alera:** A tall Djaffir shadows the PCs. He turns out to be a Farad who is also looking for the merchant and who may help the PCs in a variety of ways. Use this encounter if you want to

add a sense of mystery and mistaken identity, or if the players are stumped.

- **Weapons Merchants:** Two groups of weapons merchants are meeting in the Lower Market to set prices. These meetings are an important clue to Vornel's dealings.
- **Molith's Bandits:** The PCs encounter a mixed group of "adventurers" who may help or fight the party. Molith may provide clues if the players are stuck or provide an opponent if the players are spoiling for a fight.
- **Zeroing in on Vornel:** The players identify him as the culprit and decide where to take it from there.
- **If the Players Get Stuck:** Refer to this section if the players are having a hard time solving the mystery.

## Settling Down

The first order of business will be for the PCs to find a place to stay. If they ask around, they will be directed to the Foreigners' Quarter, and specifically to the Green Bottle. Depending on their personalities, the PCs may want to wander a bit, get to know the city, maybe make some friends among the inhabitants, and generally make themselves comfortable after their journey. Naturally, the people they meet will be curious as to the PCs' reason for coming to Tordan. If they have not yet devised a suitable cover story, they will soon appreciate the need for one. You may arrange for the PCs to meet NPCs who will be important later on in the story. They might meet any of the following characters:

- **Arna:** A Sindaran neo-Neurian, speaks High Talislan. Naturally, she will only befriend another Sindaran. If there is a Sindaran in the group who is interested in neo-Neurianism or feigns interest, she may be able to arrange a meeting with Altek. She collects scrolls in dead languages. Use the Sindaran artisan archetype in the appendix for her stats.
- **Ghunore:** A Sindaran lesser alchemist, speaks High Talislan. He is curious about foreigners, as he has not traveled much himself, and would be happy to serve as a guide for the PCs, provided they are not too rowdy. He collects ancient pottery. Use the Sindaran artisan archetype for his stats.
- **Davik:** An Arimite miner, speaks Common Talislan. He knows that well-armed travelers are often burdened with heavy coin purses, so he has a habit of easing their troubles. He can serve as a guide, gather information ("But I'll need to grease a few palms, so . . ."), and otherwise help the PCs. While he does not risk outright theft, he may exaggerate how much money he needs to provide certain services or pieces of information. Use the Arimite miner archetype for his stats.

## Investigations

Starting from scratch, the characters need to get familiar with Tordan in search of clues.

When the PCs talk with an NPC, the first and most important question is which language they use. Someone who speaks to a common laborer in High Talislan is likely to be seen as a snob, while someone who speaks to a professional in Common Talislan is likely to be seen as a dimwit. In neither case is assistance likely to be forthcoming. If your players enjoy playing out their characters to the hilt, this investigation gives them a good opportunity for some humorous dialogue. Even if you don't want to adopt the speech habits of High Talislan or Common Talislan, at least point out to your players which language each NPC speaks to them.

The PCs may resort to petty bribery, laying down gold lumens in exchange for information.

### Bribing NPCs for Information

Roll versus Bribe (or d10 +CHA)

Mishap:	The NPC provides false information and promptly reports the PCs to the authorities as "suspicious strangers."
Failure:	The NPC takes the money and provides false information.
Partial Success:	The NPC declines the offer if she has no information, or gives vague information if she does know something.
Success:	The NPC declines the offer if he has no information, or provides details if he does have the information.
Critical Success:	The NPC trusts the PCs completely and provides any information she can. If the NPC doesn't know the information that the PCs seek, he points out someone else who may know.

### Information the PCs May Learn

There are several rumors that the PCs may hear in the course of their investigations. Some lead directly to Vornel, some indirectly, and some away from the goal of the adventure. Use the quotes below as you see fit, or improvise others.

- A Sindaran (such as Ghunore, described above):  
*"If you seek after merchants who trade in armaments, I would highly recommend visiting the Lower Market, distasteful place that it may be, and locating a Djaffir fellow who is known by the name of Alabin. If he is not the very one whom you seek, then at least he may be able to inform you as to other traders in armaments who compose his*



competition.”

- An Arimite miner (such as Davik, above):  
“Blades? Yeah, I can tell you who’s sellin’ blades, man. It’s us, it’s the Arimites. Look, we got all this black iron, and in case you’ve been lucky enough to steer clear of Arim, let me tell you that it’s not the best place to grow food, see? Rocky, hilly, and wherever there’s smelting going on, it’s dirty as a durge is dumb. So we’ve got to buy nice things—including nice womenfolk; did I ever tell you the one about the beautiful Arimite woman? Her own snoring woke her up, get it?—so anyway, like I was sayin’, we’ve got to buy things, so we’ve got to sell things to get the coin to do that buyin’. And what do we sell? Black iron and blades. And death, too. Yeah, with the Revenants, we actually sell a lot of death to outsiders. Brings a lot of gold into Arim, it does. But let’s not talk about the Revenants, if you don’t mind. Someone might be listening. So, here’s the point, someone’s selling blades, and I’ll bet you it’s Arimites. After all, when there’s a sale to be made, not everyone is too particular about who’ll be doin’ the buyin’ and who the bleedin’, if you see what I mean.”
- A Dracartan Merchant: “Certainly, my good people, you are aware that information is a commodity much like tin or hardwoods. There is a limited supply; some people have it, and other people want it. A successful merchant is no more free with his knowledge than he is with his pyramids. And yet, I believe your inquiries might not go entirely unsatisfied. Come a little closer, so that the chances of our words riding the winds to the ears of others shall be lessened. There is among us merchants a newcomer, a stranger, and a strange one at that. He is a Djaffir, quite a tall fellow, about six feet. I point this fellow out to you not because I know him to be a scoundrel or because I know his story will be of interest to you, but because he is certainly a strange one. As a Dracartan, I am familiar with the Djaffir, and this one strikes me as strange. Something about his manner leads me to believe that he is up to something. Now you can identify him first by the robes and fetish mask that all Djaffir wear. Secondly, you can differentiate him from the honest Djaffir merchants here by his height and his habit of keeping an eye on other people’s business rather than tending to his own duties.” Note that the Dracartan’s reference to pyramids means “coins.” Carantheum mints red iron coins called pyramids. Use the description from the Dracartan desert scout archetype (GB p. 86) as a guide for this fellow’s stats.
- A Sindaran neo-Neurian (such as Arna, above): “I take it, then, that you are seeking someone who would be capable of doing something out of the ordinary, something strange and perhaps distasteful or illegal. Well, one name comes immediately to mind, and that name is Vornel. He is a Cymrilian, and many of us wish that he had never chosen to darken Tordan with his presence. Imagine this man, a guest in our fair land, and he

has the gall to insult Sindarans, to show his disdain for Trivarian, and revile the neo-Neurian cause as a—and I quote—‘monstrous delusion.’ If it were not for his ability to cast the occasional useful spell or to enchant a few magic devices, his presence would certainly not be tolerated. Now while we’re on the topic, let me ask you this: are all Cymrilians so vile and so ignorant of their own defects?”

## Using Skill to Investigate

In addition to Bribe, explained above, there are other skills that may come into play as the characters investigate the mystery. Below are some ways to handle these skills if they are used. If the skill is used to trick or manipulate an NPC and you think the PC has a good chance to succeed in the attempt, then use one of the NPC’s attributes as a penalty on the skill roll. In other words, this is a resisted action. If you think the NPC has a good chance to resist, let the NPC make a roll against an appropriate attribute; in that case the PC succeeds only if his or her roll exceeds the NPC’s roll. In other words, this is an opposed action. Finally, you can apply a degree of difficulty modifier as a bonus or penalty if you wish.

- Fashion. Use instead of CHA for reactions of NPCs from cultures similar to those of the PCs. This skill can help characters make a good impression and win the trust or respect of those from whom they want information.
- Con. If the characters can develop a good story, a successful Con roll can allow them to get information or other aid without resorting to the common and expensive tactic of bribery.
- Espionage. If a character with Espionage wishes to try to gather information solo, he or she can hang around the Lower Market, eavesdrop on merchants’ conversations, talk to the right people, and perhaps uncover something. Allow the character to make one roll per day. In fact, if you wish to speed through the entire investigation stage of the adventure, you can have everyone make these rolls to determine whether they’ve gathered information rather than roleplaying the attempts, but that’s only a good idea if you are very short on time. For characters without this skill, have the players roll d10 +PER.
- Forgery. A successful roll allows a character to create documents that identify the PCs as special operatives for the Grand Army intelligence branch, letters of recommendation that would get the recipient to trust the PCs, or other ingenious devices. An unsuccessful roll can get the characters in a lot of trouble, and Abn Qua will not think kindly of employees who must be bailed out of jail on their first mission in his service.
- Interrogate. If the NPC on which this skill is used is free to walk away from the PCs, then cranking up the pressure and using Interrogate is likely to have exactly that effect. The character must make a critical success to get information without simply driving the NPC away. If the NPC is somehow stuck, such as if the PCs know

something incriminating about him or her, then only a partial success is necessary to get some information.

- **Seduce.** Well, let's just say that some people have been known to be more talkative and agreeable when they are relaxed.
- **Torture.** If you have players whose PCs will gladly torture someone for information, my sympathies to you. Nevertheless, this skill can produce valuable information from reticent sources, although it can also make enemies very quickly.
- **Aristocrat.** The only way to hobnob successfully with the elite of Tordan is to make a successful roll on this skill. Otherwise the elite are likely to snub the PC.
- **Natural Telepathy** (Muse special ability). Muses can read minds to find others' secrets. This power is very effective, but a 1st-level Muse cannot use it often.

### **Magical Investigations**

Spellcasters in the party may be able to aid the course of the investigation through magic. Below are some ways that the PCs may try to use their magic, so be prepared. If a player with a magic-using character is unfamiliar with the magic system, you may even want to drop some hints to the player. You may require that the player make a successful roll versus INT before giving these hints.

- **Crystalomancy, Crystalomantic Scrying.** Allows the crystalomancer to spy on someone at a distance. The trick is that the crystalomancer needs some piece of stone from that area, such as a pebble or gemstone. Once the character acquires such a stone, however, it is relatively easy to spy on an NPC of choice and gather some interesting information.
- **Mysticism, Astral Projection.** The mystic can travel astrally and spy on people on the material plane. Seeing onto the material plane is very difficult, however, so learning anything of value, such as seeing what Vornel has in his house, may require a critical success on a PER roll.
- **Mysticism, Soulsearch.** After speaking at some length with Vornel or some other NPC, the mystic can find that person by means of this spell. This would allow the mystic to find out where Vornel is going, which would be especially useful for tracking him in the ruins of Dragon's Head; see below.
- **Natural Magic, Commune with Nature.** In the town of Tordan, most of the nature spirits are driven away by the bustle of sentient activity, and the others are hard to hear in such a civilized area, so there is little that a natural magician can learn there. Outside of town, however, the spirits are usually willing to talk. In Sindar, which still suffers occasional aberrant weather as a result of The Great Disaster, the spirits of nature are a little strange. The winds are often hostile and demented; they are the ones, after all, that bring the black wind and acid rain. The spirits of plants and animals are very reserved. In

Sindar, only the toughest living things can survive. Even the spirits of stone are gloomy, since they must put up with the acid rain instead of hiding from it as the little lizards and insects can do. While such an environment may be disturbing for the natural magician, one can still learn things of value from the spirits. The natural magician may be able to find out about Beastmen coming to Dragon's Head, or about Vornel visiting Dragon's Head on his way back to Tordan, or about a female Sindaran being killed in the ruins three weeks ago.

- **Witchcraft, Obsession.** Can make targets feel compelled to tell all they know.
- **Wizardry, Magic Portal.** This spell can be very useful for getting into places that would otherwise be denied to the PCs, including locked trunks or wagons that they want to investigate surreptitiously.
- **Wizardry, Spellbind.** Although highly intrusive, and therefore not useful for getting information in a friendly and cooperative manner, Spellbind does allow a wizard to render an NPC helpless, thereby making him or her more susceptible to threats.

### **The Attack**

Once the characters have had time to nose around and learn some things, and immediately if play begins to bog down, the characters are attacked. Assume that Grunio has heard about their snooping and thinks they are after him. He sends some of his servants to deal with the problem.

Leading the attack is Inir, an unfortunate fellow who was touched by the black wind two years ago. The wind gave him exceptional strength and a thick hide, but it also gave him a hideous visage and is causing him to age at three times the normal rate.

Also involved is Thurzina, a geomancer. Most often she uses her spells to aid miners, but she can also use them in combat just like any other magician. Thurzina is smart enough to keep to the rear of the party and to exercise the better part of valor if the knife-fighters are unable to protect her.

The other combatants are Arimate knife-fighters who guard Grunio and deal with his enemies.

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#### **Inir, Arimate Knife-Fighter, 2nd Level**

**Language:** Common Talislan +2.

**Description:** Man, age 27. 5'7", 160 lbs.

Swarthy complexion, body covered with hairy lumps of bone and gristle, matted black hair, dark eyes. He wears a heavy fur vest and leather breeches. He has boots, black iron armbands (1 g.l. each), and huge black iron earrings (5 s.p. each). He carries six throwing knives and a two-handed sword.

INT 0	PER 0
WIL 0	CHA -5
STR +4	DEX +3
CON +4	SPD -1



**Hit Points:** 18

Attacks	CR	Damage
Sword, two-handed	+5	d12+4
Knife, throwing*	+5	d4+4
Lance	+5	d10+10**

\*Can throw two per round with no penalty using Arimate Knife-Throwing skill. Total of six knives to throw.

\*\*Only effective with mounted charge; damage bonus is for a typical equus mount.

**Armor:** Skin (2) and leather (1), 3 points.

**Skills:** Secondary Combat (two-handed sword, lance) +5, Arimate Knife-Fighting +5, Mounted Combat +5, Mountain Climbing +5, Hunter/Gatherer +2, Customs, Urban (Arim) +1, Swim +5, Haggle -3.

**Special:** Inir was touched by the black wind two years ago, mutating his body hideously. He is one of the lucky few who actually receive some benefit from the black wind, specifically greater strength, improved constitution, and an unnaturally thick hide. Unfortunately, he is also aging at three times the normal rate. After two years of this new form, he has come to accept that the condition is permanent. He has taken advantage of the transformation by taking a job as a bodyguard and enforcer for Grunio.

### Arimate Knife-Fighters, 1st Level

**Language:** Common Talislan +1.

**Description:** Men, ages 19 to 25. 5'2"-6'2", 90-170 lbs. Swarthy complexions, black hair, dark eyes, hatchetlike features. They wear fur vests, hide boots, sackcloth breeches, and armbands and earrings of black iron (total of 3 g.l. per knife-fighter). They each carry four throwing knives and a scimitar.

INT 0	PER 0
WIL 0	CHA 0
STR +1	DEX +3
CON +2	SPD +1

**Hit Points:** 14

Attacks	CR	Damage
Scimitar	+4	d10+1
Knife, throwing*	+4	d4+1
Lance	+4	d10+10**

\*Can throw two per round with no penalty using Arimate Knife-Throwing skill. Total of four knives to throw.

\*\*Only effective with mounted charge; damage bonus is for a typical equus mount.

**Armor:** None.

**Skills:** Secondary Combat (scimitar, lance) +4, Arimate Knife-Fighting +4, Mounted Combat +4, Mountain Climbing +4, Hunter/Gatherer +1, Customs, Urban (Arim) +1, Haggle +1, Drayman (wagon) +4.

**Special:** None.

### Thurzina, Arimate Geomancer, 1st Level

**Languages:** Common Talislan +3, High Talislan +3.

**Description:** Woman, age 27, 5'3", 139 lbs. Swarthy complexion, long black hair in a single braid, dark eyes. Wears a sackcloth dress lined with fur, black iron rings and earrings (total 3 g.l.), and hide boots. Carries an iron-shod staff and two throwing knives.

INT +2	PER 0
WIL +1	CHA -1
STR 0	DEX +2
CON +2	SPD 0

**Hit Points:** 14

Attacks	CR	Damage
Staff, iron-shod	+3	d10
Throwing knife*	+3	d4

\*May throw two at once; has two throwing knives.

**Armor:** None.

**Spells per Day:** 4

Spells	MR	Effect
Geomantic Aura	+3	Stops 4 pts./level.
Geomantic Bolt	+3	Does d4 damage/level.
Pass Through Earth & Stone	+3	Can walk through earth.

**Skills:** Secondary Magic (geomancy) +3, Rudimentary Combat (staff) +3, Arimate Knife-Fighting +3, Arcane Lore +3, Customs, Urban (Arim) +3, Cartography +3.

**Special:** None.

### Running the Combat with the Knife-Fighters

The knife-fighters are most likely to attack under cover of darkness to aid their approach and their escape, if necessary. Since thrown knives have



a relatively limited range, the Arimites would prefer to attack the PCs by surprise somewhere in Tordan rather than ambush them in the wilds. See the map "Detail of Foreigners' Quarter" for the layout of a typical section of the Foreigners' Quarter, where the attack is most likely to take place. Determine the nature of the buildings depending on where the PCs are. For instance, the site could be the inn where the PCs are staying, or a shop that the PCs are just leaving. If possible, the Arimites will attack from different directions at a distance to allow them at least one shot with their knives before closing for melee combat. The exact placement is up to you, and you can even invent a different layout for the area if you wish.

During the fight, Thurzina stays in the background, out of direct peril, and uses spells against the PCs. If threatened directly, she may flee. If the entire group of Arimites is threatened, she casts *Pass Through Earth and Stone*. At level 3, it can affect herself and up to two other characters within 10 feet of her, allowing them to sink into the earth and flee at normal speed. It lasts 3 rounds, giving them the chance to run at least 270 feet at Inir's speed before they have to surface. Unless the PCs can track characters moving through the ground, the Arimites almost certainly escape using this method.

If the Arimites threaten to destroy the party and bring the adventure to an unfortunate end, Bey Alera may arrive at an opportune moment and tip the scales of battle in the PCs' favor. See "Bey Alera" below.

### **Modifiers on Combat**

- **Missile Range:** -1 to attack rolls per 10 feet of distance. In such close quarters, it is unlikely that the attacks will be past the effective ranges of the weapons (60 feet for the throwing knives).
- **Darkness:** Lights from homes and businesses partly illuminate the scene, but characters without night vision will suffer -1 to attack rolls. Ignore this modifier if the Arimites attack during the day, or if the player characters have sufficient light sources.
- **Cover:** If characters take cover from missile attacks, those attacks may suffer -1 to -10 on the roll, depending on the extent of the cover.
- **Defensive Capabilities:** The knife-fighters can defend against two attackers simultaneously, while Thurzina can only defend against one. Any additional attackers enjoy undefended attacks; the defender's CR is treated as 0. Each PC will also have a defensive capability that may come into effect (GB p. 47).

## **Bey Alera**

Vornel is organizing a considerable weapons trade with the Beastmen, and the citizens of the Seven Kingdoms are not the only ones who are concerned about this traffic. Tarnis, the Farad monopolist who controls weapons trade, resents

Vornel's intrusion into his mercantile territory. As long as few other people are willing to sell the Beastmen weapons, Tarnis can charge them very high prices and make an obscene profit. When other merchants, however, begin to sell the Beastmen weapons, Tarnis has to lower prices to remain competitive. Vornel's dealings with the Beastmen threaten to cost Tarnis many thousands of gold lumens. Never one to sit idly by while others endanger his profits, Tarnis has sent an assassin named Ezzirno to Tordan to track down whoever it is who is threatening his monopoly on trade with the Beastmen and "deal with the situation."

The Farad, because of their trade in k'tallah and slaves, have been banned from the Seven Kingdoms. Ezzirno, therefore, has been forced to adopt a false identity in order to search for Vornel in peace. Currently he goes by the name Bey Alera and adopts the garb of a Djaffir merchant or bandit. First, he had to shave his beard. A beard is a sign of status in Faradun, but a professional assassin cannot allow social conventions to interfere with an assignment. Like a true Djaffir, he always wears a leather fetish mask in public. In addition, his robes cover his skin; the Farad have flint-gray skin, while the Djaffir have dark brown skin, so he keeps himself covered at all times. The Djaffir, however, do not usually wear gloves, so Bey Alera has to paint his hands brown. If anyone were to remove his mask, they would see by his flint-gray skin and chiseled features that he is a Farad.

The amount of information that Bey has about Vornel is entirely dependent on the needs of the story. See "Meeting Bey Alera," below.

One small clue that Bey Alera is not who he claims to be is height. He is 6'1" tall, just about average for a Farad but taller than almost all the Djaffir. Bey intentionally hunches when he can, but someone familiar with the Djaffir may recognize his height as unusual.

Bey rides an ontra, a one-humped ahtra. As he explores Tordan in search of the merchant dealing with the Beastmen, he leaves it in a stable near the Lower Market. If the PCs see him on it, however, perhaps as he explores the ruins looking for signs of the Beastmen, they may be able to notice that he is not completely at ease on the beast; he is used to riding an equus. Naturally, no true Djaffir would be ill at ease on an ahtra.

## **Meeting Bey Alera**

Bey is a plot device for you to use freely at your discretion. He is very important in pacing the adventure, so do not forget about him. There are several ways the PCs may meet Bey, and several ways that he can advance or delay the climax of the adventure.

## **Red Herring**

If your players are doing a fine job of moving toward the climax with Vornel, Bey can serve as a wrinkle in the plot. The PCs may hear about a

strange Djaffir merchant lurking about, and if they don't already know that "Djaffir merchant" is what most Djaffir bandits call themselves, NPCs are happy to provide the information. The PCs may spend some time hunting down this fellow in the mistaken belief that he is behind the sales to the Beastmen.

Alternately, Bey may take an interest in the PCs, who may catch sight of him in the shadows. With his skills of Stealth, Hide, and Tailing, he should be able to evade them easily. Once the PCs know they are being watched, they may get nervous and expend time and effort trying to find Bey.

When the PCs finally confront Bey, he may provide hints or a deus ex machina; see below.

## The Cavalry

In the fight with the Arimites, if the PCs are really suffering, Bey may make an opportune appearance, darting out of the shadows and slaying an Arimite with his Assassinate skill and possibly a dose of venomwood resin. If he does intervene, assume he has been watching the PCs, that he has figured out that they are after the weapons trade as well, and that the Arimites are involved. It therefore suits his needs to help the PCs out, and it keeps the story rolling, if otherwise the player characters would be butchered.

## Hints

Once the PCs contact Bey, he may reveal hints as to the mystery. After all, if he can get some other people to take the risk of dealing with Vornel, he can accomplish his mission with minimal personal risk, a proposition very appealing to prudent Farad logic.



Unfortunately, in this case, he does not know everything. What he does know is some piece of the puzzle that the PCs lack, such as that the Arimites are bringing weapons to Tordan for sale, or that something is going on in the ruins, or that Vornel is a Tanasian, or that Vornel is buying weapons apparently for sale in Kasmir, but he never actually sells the weapons there.

## Deus Ex Machina

If you want to get on with the action or if the players are having a hard time following more subtle clues, Bey may come to them with the straight goods: that Vornel is meeting the Beastmen in the ruins, that he is trading weapons to them, that the Arimites are providing the weapons, and so forth. This easy solution to the mystery might not fit the story, but if the player characters have ingeniously cornered Bey after a long attempt, perhaps they deserve the information. Also, if you are working on a limited time schedule, this information will help you bring the story to a rapid close.

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### Ezzirno (Bey Alera), Farad Assassin (Djaffir Merchant), 3rd Level

**Languages:** High Talislan +4, Nomadic +4, Sign +4.

**Description:** Man, age 31, 6'1", 160 lbs. Flint-gray skin, chiseled features, dark and narrow eyes, hands painted dark brown. Wears a leather fetish mask, voluminous robes, cloak, and headdress of light linen cloth, and boots of soft ahtra hide. His clothes cover his entire body, except for his hands. Carries a curved dagger on his hip, a short sword hidden under his robe, and three vials of venomwood resin, also hidden.

INT +1	PER +1
WIL +1	CHA -2
STR 0	DEX +1
CON 0	SPD 0

**Hit Points:** 16

Attacks	CR	Damage
Dagger	+3*	d6**
Short Sword	+3*	d8**

\*CR is +4 when making an undefended attack using Assassinate skill.

\*\*+3d10 damage on the first successful hit, if coated with venomwood resin; he has two doses of this poison. On an undefended attack, he receives +4 to damage from his Assassinate skill.

**Armor:** None.

**Skills:** Secondary Combat (dagger, short sword) +3, Assassinate +4, Disguise +4, Hide +4, Stealth +4, Tailing +4, Customs, Urban (Faradun) +4, Ride (equus) +4.

**Special:** None.

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### Ontra, 1st Level

**Description:** 6'2" at the shoulder, 530 lbs. A strange hybrid creature that somewhat resembles a long-legged, deformed equus.

INT -8      PER 0  
WIL 0      CHA  
STR +6      DEX 0  
CON +6      SPD +8

**Hit Points:** 38

Attacks	CR	Damage
Bite	+1	d4+6
Kick	+1	d10+6

**Armor:** Leathery skin, 1 point.

**Special:** Travel up to six days without requiring rest, subsist one month without water, bear burdens of four hundred pounds.

## Weapons Traders

Grunio and Vornel are not the only people trading weapons in Tordan. Other merchants deal in weapons, mostly from Arim. These weapons include knives and blades destined for Kasmir, where weaponers will use them in spring-knives, blade bracers, and bladestaffs; swords bounds for Taz, where they will be used to arm the Grand Army; weapons heading to Carantheum to support the defense effort against the impending Rajan Jihad; and weapons headed for Faradun to supply the Farad's slave warriors.

The weapons merchants know the value of monopolies, and they often meet in the Lower Market to agree on the prices that they will charge farther south. The weapons traders form two loose-knit groups. Within the groups, the merchants cooperate, but the two groups compete with each other for the available profits. Outside of these two groups, Vornel is the only merchant dealing in weapons in Tordan.

The merchants are all aware of their competition, so they know that Vornel is buying weapons from Grunio. The essential clue, however, is that each group thinks that Vornel is a member of the other group, when in fact, he is a member of neither. After all, he does not sell his goods in the regular market, so he has no need to fix on a strategy with fellow merchants. In addition, each group believes that Grunio deals primarily with the other group, when in fact he deals primarily with Vornel.

If the PCs investigate weapons merchants, they easily find these fellows, probably enjoying a meal together or looking over each others' goods.

## The Fremikel Trust

The Fremikel Trust is a group of merchants whose members are Frel, a Cymrilian geomancer who uses his magic to aid his mercantile concerns; Mikhuto, a Sindaran who serves as the group's scholar and legal advisor; and Elinom, a Dracartan with trading contacts across the continent. Currently Mikhuto and Elinom are in the Lower Market making plans for future sales, purchases, and travels. They are busy, and the PCs cannot meet with them unless they make some effort, such as a very good roll versus CHA or Fashion, a roll versus Merchant to be accepted as a fellow trader, or waiting around until they are not so busy. Offering them money only

inspires laughter, unless it is over 100 g.l.

Once the PCs have an audience with Mikhuto and Elinom, they are free to talk and ask questions, albeit not at length. Both of the merchants will say that they know of no unsavory dealings by their partners or underlings, but that the Afhia Trust certainly has some merchants who are willing to deal in slaves, k'tallah, poisons, and other contraband. The Afhia Trust, they explain, is composed of Afhia, a Djaffir; Sokurt, an Arimite; Onindon, a Sindaran; Thunik, another Sindaran; and Vornel, a Cymrilian.

If the PCs inquire about Grunio, they say he deals almost exclusively with the Afhia Trust.

## The Afhia Trust

The Afhia Trust includes four members: Afhia, their leader and main financial backer, a Djaffir; Sokurt, a dour Arimite with valuable connections in Arim; Onindon, a Sindaran who easily handles the complexities of Sindaran laws and tariffs; and Thunik, another Sindaran, the specialist in ancient, magical, or otherwise exceptional trade items. Currently Afhia is camped near the Lower Market in a grandiose tent guarded by several Djaffir and Dracartans. Sokurt, Onindon, and Thunik are also currently in Tordan, and they spend a good deal of time with Afhia, enjoying his hospitality and planning strategies.

Gaining admittance to the tent requires the PCs to get past the guards. A forged letter of recommendation, getting to know a guard off-hours at a local tavern, or a good con job can get a PC into the tent, though without weapons of any kind. Alternately, the PCs can wait nearby to intercept merchants as they enter or leave the tent, in which case a CHA or Fashion roll may be necessary to get the merchant's favorable attention.

Once the PCs talk to the merchants of the Afhia Trust, they may learn either or both of the following facts:

*"If suspicious characters are whom you seek, watch for an exceptionally tall Djaffir who rides his ahtra as if he had been too long under the suns. He seems inquisitive, and his identity and motivation are somewhat in doubt."*

*"As to unscrupulous merchants, you need look no further than the Fremikel Trust, those rogues who beat our prices through bribery, dissembling, exaggerated praise of their second-rate goods, and dealings in all manner of contraband, including slaves, poisons, and, some suspect, k'tallah. The merchants in the Fremikel Trust include Frel, a Cymrilian; Vornel, another Cymrilian; Mikhuto, a Sindaran; and Elinom, a Dracartan."*

Or, if Sokurt is speaking, in Common Talislan:

*"Cheats, scoundrels, liars, and rogues—let me tell you who they are: the Fremikels. There's*



two Cymrilians, Frel and Vornel; then a snooty Sindaran named Mikhuto; and then you've got Elinom, a Dracartan. They're for sure up to no good, let me tell you. Drugs, slaves, poisons, defective magic wands, junk armor, spoiled potions, anything profitable they'll sell."

If the PCs ask why Vornel's name was not also used to invent the name Fremikel, the Afhia merchants say it is probably because Vornel is a junior partner. If the PCs inquire about Grunio, the merchants say that he deals almost exclusively with the Fremikel Trust.

## Putting It Together

Talking to these two groups can clue the PCs in on two facts: Vornel is acting on his own, and Grunio is selling to someone besides these two groups, who supposedly share a monopoly on weapons trade.

## Molith's Bandits

In their investigations, the PCs may encounter Molith and his band of "adventurers." He is a rogue magician from Cymril who leads a small band of warriors. Relatively inexperienced, they stay close to the safety of civilization. To date Molith has not yet determined whether licit adventuring is as profitable as outright banditry, so his band has tried a little of each.

There are several ways the PCs might meet Molith. Use the one that suits you best.

### Attack

Instead of or in addition to the attack by Arimites, enemies of the PCs might hire Molith to attack the PCs. Molith will try to ambush them somewhere in the wilds. His employers are certainly not paying him enough to face certain death, so he is more than willing to retreat or surrender, as the case may be. Molith is a very businesslike fellow; if he is beaten he will tell the PCs whatever he knows, apologize for introducing himself in such a rude fashion (i.e., with a crossbow bolt), and promise never to test his skill against them again. He holds no hard feelings against them, as he regards adventuring strictly as business.

### Random Encounter

If the characters are wandering about or searching Dragon's Head, they may come across Molith. He is bright enough to see that the ratio between their wealth and combat ability is too low to warrant an attack, and he will welcome them in a friendly manner. He is especially interested to hear what is happening in Cymril. *"Please understand that news of even more important events travels slowly to these frontier areas. Can you tell me who is favored to win the Wizards' Duel at the Magical Fair?"* Or, if the fair is over, he asks who has won it. He takes his hospitality seriously, and may take offense if the PCs

do not share the aquavit and cheese that he offers. Depending on the needs of the story, he may be able to tell the PCs about Beastmen he saw riding out of Dragon's Head a few weeks back, or about a certain "Cymrillian" merchant he saw entering the ruins one night.

## The Cavalry

If your characters are ever in serious danger of losing a fight in a permanent way, especially somewhere outside the city of Tordan, perhaps Molith and his bandits will ride over the hill and into the fray. If you don't want to roll all the dice that would be involved in conducting the fight, you may assume that Molith is able to defeat or rout the enemy, if adjudicating combat like that fits your GMing style. Once Molith and the PCs have defeated the PCs' enemies, Molith will expect some loot for his aid. *"Naturally honest people such as yourselves would not look askance at an honest worker taking fair compensation for his labor. I have, after all, extended your lives by a considerable span."* If the PCs are heavily wounded and beaten, he may lighten their load by relieving them of such burdens as earrings and purses. If they look capable of putting up a fight, he may be content with looting the NPCs or taking 500 g.l. as pay. In a pinch, he will accept an IOU, and he will certainly try to collect on it.

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## Molith, Cymrillian Rogue Magician, 2nd Level

**Languages:** High Talislan +4, Archaen +4, Common Talislan +4.

**Description:** Male, age 23, 6'1", 140 lbs. Light green skin, slender build, long nose. Gray cloak, breeches, and tunic. Rides a graymane named Duster (see below).

INT +2	PER +2
WIL 0	CHA -2
STR -1	DEX +1
CON 0	SPD 0

**Hit Points:** 14

Attacks	CR	Damage
Sword, dueling	+3	d8-1
Crossbow, heavy	+3	d10

**Armor:** Leather, 1 point.

**Spells per Day:** 5

Spells	MR	Effect
Arcane Bolt	+4	d4 damage/level
Arcane Aura	+4	stops 4 pts./level
Invisibility	+4	1 round/level

**Skills:** Secondary Magic (wizardry) +4, Secondary Combat (dueling sword, heavy crossbow) +3, Appraise Treasure +4, Hide +4, Stealth +3, Customs, Nomadic (Seven Kingdoms) +4, Ride +3, Swim +3, Haggle +0.

**Special:** Fascinated by magic.

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## Graymane Mounts, 1st Level

**Languages:** Equan +2.

**Description:** Horselike cross between a reptile and mammal. 5'2" at the shoulder, 450 pounds.

INT +1      PER +3  
WIL 0      CHA 0  
STR +3      DEX +3  
CON 0      SPD +7

**Hit Points:** 15

Attacks	CR	Damage
Kick	+4	d12+3

**Armor:** Thick hide, 1 point.

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### Ahkun, Sindaran Bandit, 1st Level

**Languages:** High Talislan +7, Common Talislan +7.

**Description:** Female, age 25. 7'4", 220 lbs. Rough sandy-hued skin, ridge of six hornlike protrusions running along crest of skull, bony chin spur, emaciated appearance. Wears a tan, striped kaftan, dusty green cape, and two red iron earrings (1 g.l. each). Ahkun serves as the contact for the band, passing easily in Sindaran cities. She is serious and matter-of-fact except when indulging in her favorite pastime, drinking skoryx.

INT +6      PER 0  
WIL 0      CHA 0  
STR 0      DEX +1  
CON 0      SPD 0

**Hit Points:** 10

Attacks	CR	Damage
Longsword	+2	d10
Short Bow	+2	d8

**Armor:** Leather, 1 point.

**Skills:** Secondary Combat (longsword, short bow) +2, Collector (rare animal bones) +7, Bribe +1, Con +1, Coerce +1, Customs, Nomadic (Seven Kingdoms) +7, Ride (equus) +2, Haggle +1, Antiquarian Lore +7, Appraiser +7.

**Special:** Dual-encephalon.

**Possessions:** Three flasks of skoryx.

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### Burd, Vert, and Thog, Danelek Hunters, 1st Level

**Languages:** Common Talislan +0, Sign +0.

**Description:** 5'8"-6'2", 100-200 lbs. Skin blackened by exposure to the suns, hair bleached white and worn in dreadlocks.

INT -1      PER +2  
WIL -1      CHA +1  
STR +2      DEX 0  
CON +4      SPD 0

**Hit Points:** 18 each.

Attacks	CR	Damage
War flail	+1	d12+2
Short bow	+1	d8
Dagger	d10+1	d6+2

**Armor:** Leather (land lizard hide), 1 point.

**Skills:** Secondary Combat (war flail, short bow) +1, Mounted Combat (land lizard) +1, Stealth +1, Waylay +1, Ambush +0, Tracking +3, Wilderness Survival +0, Customs, Nomadic (Zaran) +0, Barter +2.

**Special:** None.

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### Land Lizard Mounts, 2nd Level

**Description:** Giant lizards, 8'-10' long, 1,800-2,600 lbs.

INT -8      PER -2  
WIL +4      CHA 0  
STR +7      DEX -4  
CON +6      SPD -1

**Hit Points:** 26 each.

Attacks	CR	Damage
Bite	-2	d6+7
Kick	-2	d8+7
Tail	-2	d8+7

One attack per round.

**Armor:** Scaly hide, 1 point.

**Special:** Detect the scent of salt at distances of up to one-half mile.

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### Zeroing in on Vornel

Once the player characters have identified Vornel as the culprit, what are they going to do? Hotheaded PCs may want to bring him immediately to justice, but doing so would prevent the PCs from getting the information they want, and would also nullify the climax in the ruins. You may wish to remind them that they are supposed to gather information, not just punish a potential traitor. The PCs should try to witness Vornel's actions so as to find out exactly what he is doing. To do so, they may wish to unearth the following information:

- **Vornel's Schedule:** Vornel is set to leave Tordan with a load of weapons "for Kashmir" at a convenient time, such as the evening that the PCs decide to investigate him, or perhaps the evening of the next day. If the PCs are wounded, you may have Vornel leave in a few days, to give the PCs time to heal. It is easy to learn this information by asking around the Lower Market. Upon learning this, the PCs should have enough information either to trail him or to wait for him in Dragon's Head.
- **Confronting Vornel:** This is probably bad idea, as he may well avoid making the meeting with the Beastmen. Instead he will sell his weapons in Kashmir as he says he intends to do, although he may well take a significant loss when he does so. He may dispatch a guard to bring word to the Beastmen that he cannot make his meeting, in which case the PCs may be able to follow the guard or spy on the disappointed Beastmen who show up in Dragon's Head.
- **Just Knowing about the Ruins:** If the PCs figure out that things are happening in the ruins before they know about Vornel, they may stake out the ruins and wait to see what happens. This tactic requires some patience, but it generally works well enough.

## If the Characters Get Stuck

These are some clues that you can give the players if they are having a hard time tracking down Vornel.

### ***Bey Alera***

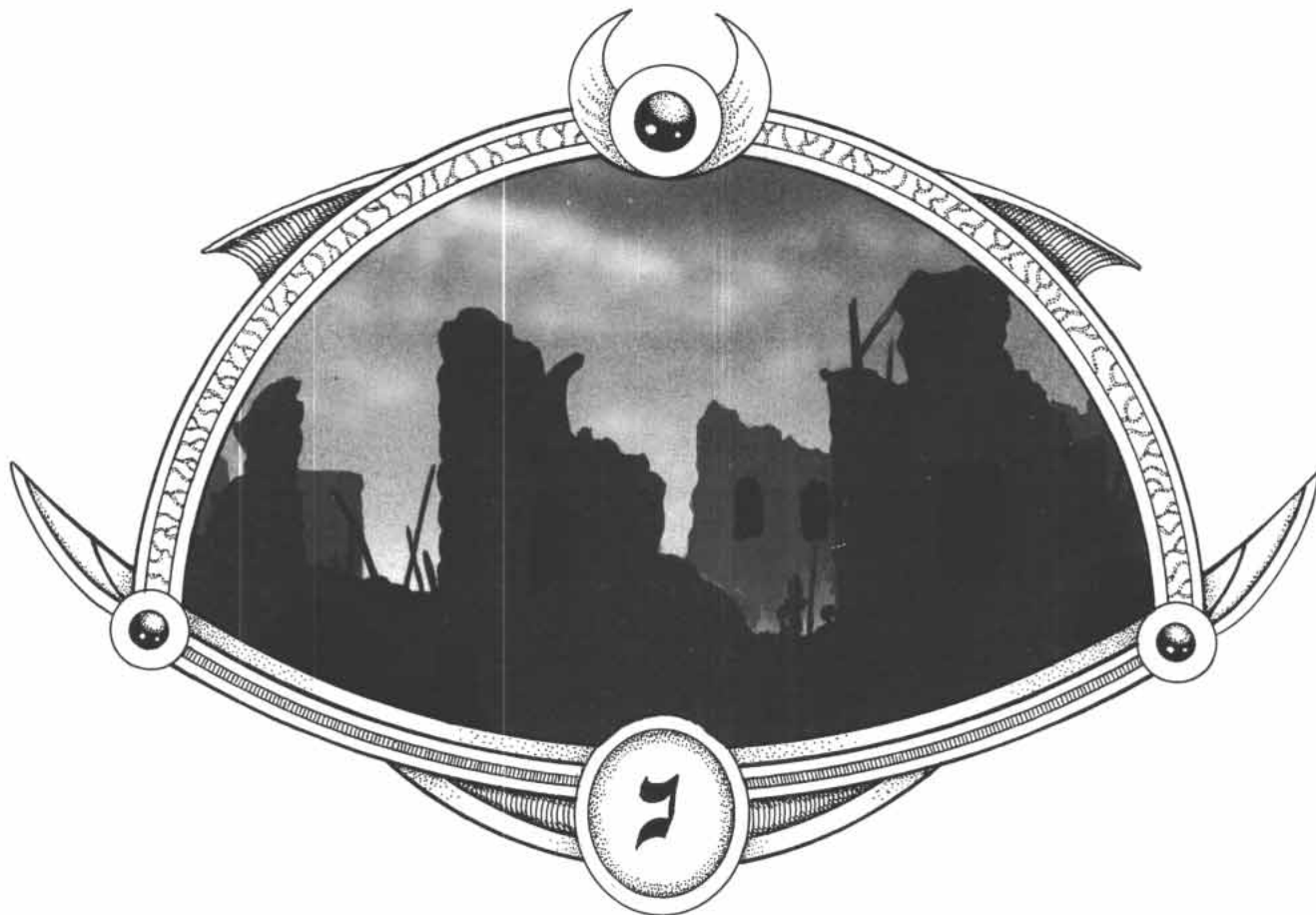
He realizes that the PCs are looking for Vornel, and he either meets them and tells them where to look, or leaves anonymous messages for them.

### ***Petty Theft***

A guard of Vornel's tries to sell some red iron jewelry to passersby, and buys food or drink with a mixed lot of gold lumens, Dracartan pyramids, and silver pieces. He has stolen these things from Vornel's last trading mission, and he is trying to earn a little extra drinking money. If confronted, he is very wary and likely to leave at the first opportunity, though it will later be easy to identify him as he hangs out around Vornel or his wagon.







## INTO THE RUINS

Ideally, the PCs have discovered that Vornel is trading with the Beastmen and that he meets them in Dragon's Head. Other conclusions are possible depending on the actions the PCs take, but this one allows a climactic battle with several Beastmen and a Za raider, so you may want to manipulate the situation to get the PCs to this conclusion.

### Events in Dragon's Head Ruins

Below are the events that will take place unless the PCs intervene. Depending on what the player characters know, where they are, and what they decide to do, they may intervene at any time. Each event is followed by a number. If the PCs intervene at that point, look at the section with that number in the following text to see what results from that intervention.

A map of the ruins is provided for you to use as you see fit. If the PCs ambush the Beastmen and Vornel separately as they move through the ruins, then use the map (perhaps with minor changes) for each of the confrontations. The map can also be used if the PCs track Vornel to the meeting place and attack the Beastmen there.

### Sequence of Events

- 6–10 PM

Vornel purchases weapons from Grunio, has them loaded onto the wagon, and also loads his other goods. (1)

- 10 PM

- Midnight

- 1 AM

- 1–2 AM

- 2 AM

Vornel and his crew leave Tordan. (2)

The Beastmen arrive in Dragon's Head at the rendezvous spot. (3)

Vornel arrives at Dragon's Head. One scout moves north and the other south along the Dead River to watch for oncoming travelers. (2)

Vornel and two guards hike up the slope to Dragon's Head and meet the Beastmen. The others remain with the wagon. Vornel looks over and approves the Beastmen's goods. They string ropes over the edge of the riverbed and lower them to the wagon, where Vornel's guards attach the weapons. The Beastmen force their darkmanes to haul the goods up to the ruins, and then attach their trade goods to be lowered down to the wagon. (4) Vornel and his guards return to the wagon and continue toward Kasmir. The Beastmen load the goods onto their travois and head east. (5)

## Trade Goods

The following are the goods that Vornel has in his wagon to trade to the Beastmen:

30 war flails	x12 g.l.	360 g.l.
30 broadswords	x10 g.l.	300 g.l.
60 stirrups and spurs	x1 g.l.	60 g.l.
1,000 nails	x1 c.p.	10 g.l.
10 hammers	x1 s.p.	1 g.l.
3 healing elixirs	x200 g.l.	600 g.l.
1 Talisman primer*	x1 g.l.	1 g.l.

Total Value: 1,332 g.l.

Total Weight: 600 lbs.

• A battered book intended for teaching High Talisman to children, useful for Beastmen and Za who want to learn how to interpret letter and military messages that they intercept.

The following are the goods that the Beastmen have to trade with Vornel:

40 drams Araq blood	x25 g.l.	1,000 g.l.
10 bolts Mandalan silkcloth	x5 g.l.	50 g.l.
30 gallons mochan	x10 g.l.	300 g.l.
20 pounds green glass	x5 g.l.	100 g.l.
30 pounds red iron	x8 s.p.	24 g.l.
mixed valuables*		450 g.l.
used armaments**		50 g.l.

Total Value: 1,974 g.l.

Total Weight: 350 lbs.

\*A bag full of gold lumens, gold pentacles, bits of costume jewelry, Dracartan pyramids (triangular coins of red iron), silver pieces, and a few small gems. These are plunder from Beastmen raids on traders crossing the Wilderlands of Zaran between the Seven Kingdoms and Carantheum.

\*\*Garde, full garde, crossbows, and a tri-bow.

## 1. Loading Up

If the PCs confront Vornel while he is readying for the journey, he pretends to be insulted at their accusations, refuses to explain himself, and has his guards try to muscle the PCs away. If the PCs fight him and his guards, he will call for the investigators and attempt to flee or protect himself with magic. The investigators arrive in force and arrest all concerned. While the PCs may have enough evidence to get Vornel convicted, they almost certainly will not have enough clout to get away from the investigators in time to intercept the Beastmen. The Beastmen arrive at Dragon's Head, wait for Vornel, and then leave when he misses the rendezvous.

If the characters do not fight Vornel, he leaves as usual, but he does not stop at Dragon's Head for trade. The Beastmen arrive on schedule and leave when they see him pass.

## 2. En Route

The Dead River as it borders Sindar has steep walls 60 feet high and 250 feet apart. Down the center is a smooth path approximately 100 feet wide. There are plenty of rocks and fissures to provide hiding places, if the PCs wish to ambush Vornel.

Unable to call for the investigators, Vornel finds himself in a sticky situation if the PCs attack him here. His guards fight while he tries to flee. If he cannot escape harm, he surrenders. He explains that he has plenty of wealth to pay his ransom, and if they let him go he will give them more money than they have been paid to find him. He can afford to pay them each 2,000 g.l., but he will start out offering 500 g.l. each. He also promises to give up his trade with the Beastmen and leave the Seven Kingdoms.

If the PCs accept, he can indeed sign over to them his funds, most of which are on account with a Kasmiran moneylender in Tordan. The PCs will have to sign the appropriate documents to receive the cash. If the PCs try to take his money and then arrest him, he tells the investigators. Although Vornel is a traitor, extorting money from him is still illegal, and the PCs will get into hot water.

The PCs actually walk away from the adventure richer if they take Vornel's deal. Here you can see whether the PCs are in this adventure for the cause or for the pay.

## 3. Intercepting the Beastmen

This option allows the players to attack the Beastmen as they head toward the ruins, as they move through the ruins, or as they wait for Vornel. If the PCs are well prepared, stealthy, and perceptive, they may be able to attack the Beastmen by surprise. Regardless, Zhenk attempts to flee unless the Beastmen clearly outclass the PCs in combat ability.

On the plains, the Beastmen and PCs are likely to spot each other at a distance of about 300 to 500 feet. If the PCs are using light sources, the Beastmen can spot them up to a mile away.

In the ruins, the Beastmen can smell the PCs as they approach, probably at a distance of 50 feet even if the PCs are out of sight. If the PCs think to try to stay downwind, let one player make a Hunter/Gatherer (or d10 + INT) roll, subtracting 1 from the roll for every PC beyond the first in the party. Compare this roll to a PER roll for the Beastmen (+2 PER). If the Beastmen beat the PC's roll, they smell the PCs and prepare for combat. If not, the PCs can gain surprise on the first round they attack.

When the Beastmen are attacked, they release the travois for better maneuverability, though they still try to defend the goods they were carrying.

I hope that your characters either are mounted on equus or have enough sense not to attack the Beastmen in the plains outside the ruins. Imagine this scene as the climax to the adventure: the Beastmen, with twenty arrows each and riding darkmanes, circle the PCs and pepper them with arrows until they are dead or weak enough to take on in melee. The Beastmen refuse to enter melee as long



as they can use their bows and as long as the opponents don't prove better archers. A few PCs may have missile weapons, and the magicians may be good for a few spells, but this situation would certainly shift the odds towards the Beastmen's favor.

Vornel still comes to the ruins looking for the Beastmen. The PCs can ambush him as well, or return surreptitiously to Tordan and then Cymril. This option, from Abn Qua's point of view, is better than attacking Vornel because it stops the trade without Vornel's knowledge. The investigators can then be alerted to observe him to find out more information before arresting him.

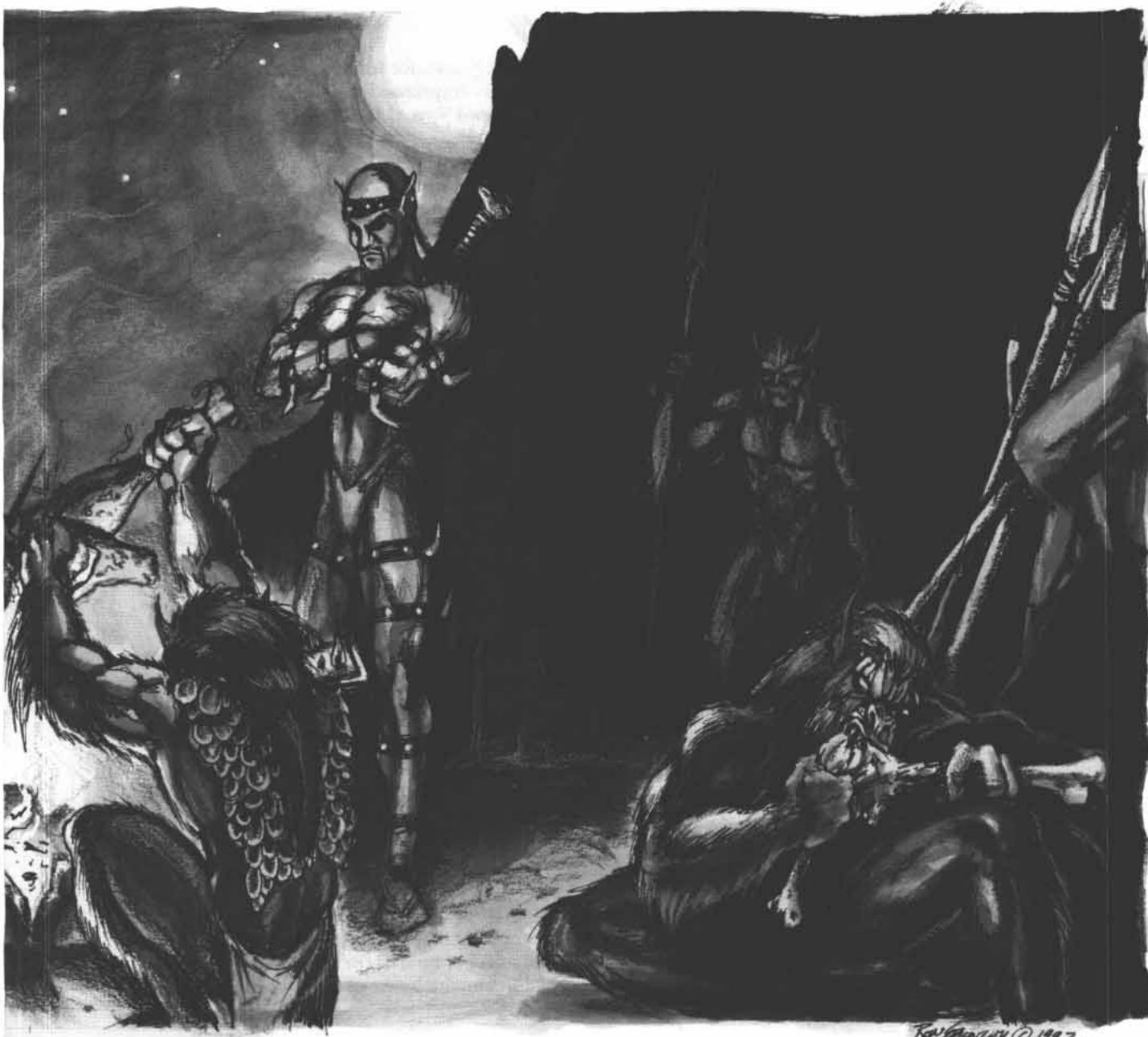
#### **4. During the Trade**

This approach allows the PCs to spy on Vornel and the Beastmen, but it runs the risk of forcing a combat with both groups at once. The PCs may choose between barging in on the Beastmen and

spying on them. If the PCs spy, they see an important piece of information, though they may not recognize it as such yet. When Vornel meets with the Beastmen, before they speak, he pulls off a boot and hands it to the Beastmen. They pass it around, sniff it, and pass it back to Vornel. Comical though it may seem, this greeting ritual is very important. For the Beastmen, this ritual allows them to get familiar with the person with whom they are dealing. In addition, if he were to cheat them in some way, they would all know his smell well enough to track him down and kill him. People from civilized countries who have tried to negotiate with the Beastmen have always found them hostile and uncooperative. Part of the reason, though only part of it, is that the civilized people did not perform this sniffing ritual. Knowledge of this ritual may come into play much later in this series of adventures.

The Beastmen place one of their number outside their ruins to scout around. If he calls out, or





if he does not return regularly, the meeting with Vornel breaks up and the Sub-Men go out looking for their comrade. Since the Beastman scouts by scent, not sight, simply hiding cannot keep a character safe. The Beastman makes a  $d20 + \text{PER} (+2)$  roll to detect the presence of the characters. Only a roll versus Hunter/Gatherer allows a character to stalk the Beastman and stay downwind of him, in which case the Beastman only detects the character if his PER roll beats the PC's Hunter/Gatherer roll. A character who thinks to stay downwind but does not have the skill Hunter/Gatherer must roll  $d10 + \text{INT}$ .

In a fight, both Zhenk and Vornel attempt to flee, perhaps with some of the most valuable and easily carried trade items. If Vornel gets away, he flees to Ikarthis, where he attempts to contact other Tanasians and get far away from Tordan.

If the PCs can remain undiscovered until the Beastmen are hauling the weapons up the side of the Dead River, they can attack when the Beastmen are

distracted, and possibly cause the goods to fall down to the floor of the Dead River.

### **5. Vornel Leaving**

This confrontation is much like #2, except that the PCs will really have to hustle if they hope to follow and catch the Beastmen.

Alternately, they may be able to force Vornel to reveal that the next meeting is planned two weeks from that night, and the PCs can be there to ambush the Beastmen. If Abn Qua or the investigators find out about the return of the Beastmen, however, they insist on having more warriors there to be sure that none of the Beastmen get away. The PCs need not even be there.

### **6. Beastmen Leaving**

Much like confrontation #3, except that the PCs will have a hard time chasing down Vornel. They can,



of course, simply wait for him to return. Abn Qua would be mighty impressed if the PCs get the Beastmen without Vornel finding out about it.

## Running the Fights

The middle of a combat is a bad time for you to be consulting this book or the *Talislanta Guidebook*, so familiarize yourself with this section until you are confident enough to run the battle mostly from the top of your head.

### Tactics

The tactics used by the NPCs vary with the circumstances under which they are attacked. Generally, the leader tries to escape while the underlings hold off the PCs.

The Beastmen prefer to fight on equusback, and prefer to use their bows if they can. They also try to double- or triple-team opponents, to make up for their clumsiness; remember the rules for defense capabilities and undefended attacks. If the situation looks hopeless, they may break and run.

Zhenk takes to his graymane at the first opportunity and gets out of the situation. Of course, if escape is unlikely, he throws himself into the melee with maniacal zest.

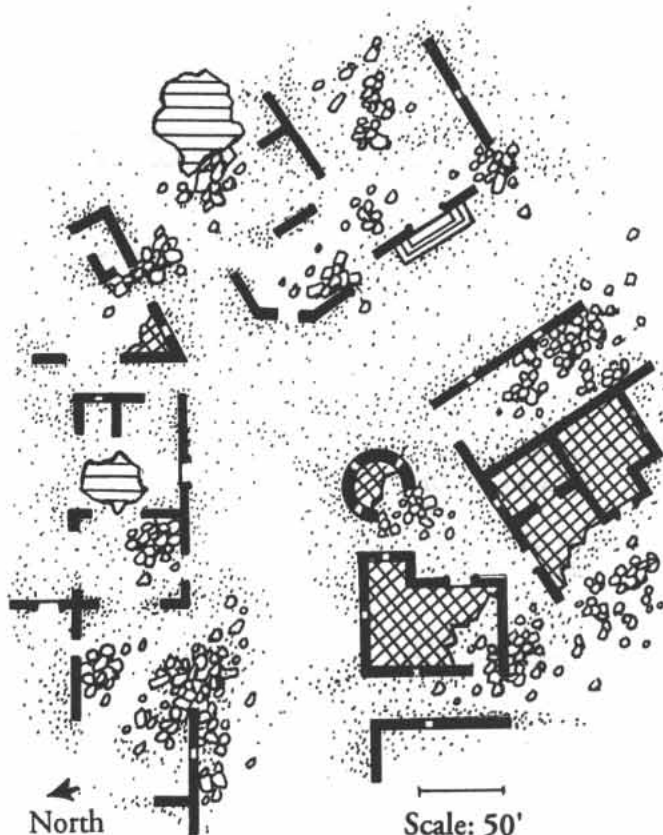
The Jhangarans fight stolidly, usually taking the defensive. They may flee once Vornel appears to be safe. If seriously threatened, they surrender.

Vornel may cast a few spells if the fight looks even, but otherwise he makes himself invisible and escapes. If he can make it to the wall of the Dead River, he levitates to get away more quickly than those who have to climb.

### Modifiers

When conducting the fights with the Beastmen, with Vornel and his guards, or with both together, remember to use whichever of the following modifiers apply:

- **Darkness:** -2 on rolls to hit for characters without night vision, -1 if the characters have lamps, torches, or a wizard's *Radiance* spell. None of the NPCs have night vision.
- **Mounted:** The Beastmen receive +2 to their CRs when fighting a character who is not on horseback. This bonus also detracts from the PC's chance to hit.
- **Charging:** The Beastmen charge on their first melee attack. This maneuver gives them -1 to hit but +2 on damage. The other characters usually do not charge.
- **Missile Fire:** -1 penalty per 10 feet of distance. The Za's and Beastmen's short bows have an effective range of 150 feet, so they suffer an additional -5 when firing on targets between 151 feet and 300 feet.
- **Defensive Capabilities:** The NPCs can only defend themselves against one attacker at a time. Additional PCs attacking one NPC in a single



#### MAP KEY

Wall (4' - 20' high)	Hole (3' - 10' deep)
Window	Rubble
Door or Archway	Steps
Roof	

round receive undefended attacks (+1 on rolls to hit or the target is treated as having CR 0, whichever is better for the attacker). Remember that the PCs have limits to their defensive capabilities as well.

- **Bonus Versus Wounded Opponents:** Beastmen receive +1 to their rolls to hit when fighting a wounded opponent.
- **Compulsion to Feed:** The brutal Beastmen must make a WIL roll (-2 WIL) in order to resist the urge to feed when food is available. A fallen PC counts as "food." If a Beastman devours a PC who has 0 or fewer hit points, he does d4+2 damage to that character every round until the Beastman succeeds at a WIL roll.

## Vornel and His Guards

Vornel has one guard for every character in the party, and at least five altogether. He treats them well enough that they are reasonably loyal, but not entirely suicidal.

### Vornel, Tanasian Wizard, 3rd Level

**Languages:** High Talisian +5, Sign +5.

**Description:** Man, age 44. 6'3", 160 lbs. Light

green hair and skin, plain features, narrow build. Wears a high-collared cloak and robes of green fustian, gloves, and pointed shoes. He walks with a staff.

INT +2	PER 0
WIL +2	CHA 0
STR 0	DEX 0
CON 0	SPD 0

**Hit Points:** 16

Attacks	CR	Damage
Staff	(d10)+0	d8

**Armor:** None.

**Spells per Day:** 6

Spells	MR	Effect
Invisibility	+6	Invisible 1 round/level.
Arcane Aura	+5	Stops 4 pts./level.
Arcane Bolt	+5	Does d4 damage/level.
Levitation	+5	Moves 100'/round (SPD 0)

**Skills:** Primary Magic (wizardry, enchantment) +5, Arcane Lore +5, Customs, Urban (Cymril) +5, Ride (eques) +3, Merchant +3.

**Special:** Fascinated by magic (WIL roll to resist).

## Jhangaran Bodyguards, 1st Level

**Languages:** Common Talisian +0.

**Description:** Male, ages in mid-twenties, 5'11"-6'4", 135-165 lbs. Marbled brown and sepi skin, elliptical cranium, hairless. They wear leather armor, yellow wrappings for arms and legs, yellow linen cloaks, and sandals. They carry spears and wear daggers on their hips. They precede statements with one-word commands, such as "I Hear!" or "I Die!"

INT -1	PER 0
WIL -1	CHA -1
STR +1	DEX +1
CON +2	SPD 0

**Hit Points:** 14

Attacks	CR	Damage
Spear	+2	d10+1
Dagger	+2	d6+1

**Armor:** Leather, 1 point.

**Skills:** Secondary Combat (spear, dagger) +2, Mounted Combat (marsh strider) +2, Tracking +1, Stalking +1, Camouflage +0, Hide +0, Detect/Disarm Traps +2/+1, Set/Detect Snares +2/+1, Interrogate +0, Customs, Tribal (Jhangara) +0, Swim +2.

**Special:** None.

## The Sub-Men

The Beastmen are led by Zhenk, a Za raider who supplies what passes for intelligent leadership among the Sub-Men. Zhenk is strategically more important to the Beastmen, who are amassing weapons, so if a fight looks dicey Zhenk retreats to bring word back to the Beastmen leaders. They are all mounted, and the Beastmen drag travois behind their darkmanes. There are two Beastmen for every warrior in the PC party, and one Beastman per other player character.



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### Zhenk, Za Raider, 3rd Level

**Languages:** Common Talislan +2, Sign +2.

**Description:** Male, age 22, 5'6", 140 pounds. Wrinkled, yellow-green skin, deep-set eyes, shaved skull, mustache worn in long braids; wears armor made of land lizard hide with black iron studs and spikes, black loincloth, leather boots, Za whipsash serving as a belt, Za wristblades strapped on wrists; wields a Za broadsword (a heavy scimitar with a jagged, saw-edged blade), and a horn short bow with a quiver of twenty arrows.

INT -1      PER 0  
WIL -1      CHA 0  
STR +2      DEX 0  
CON +4      SPD 0

**Hit Points:** 20

Attacks	CR	Damage
Za broadsword	+3	d10+2*
Wristblade	+3	d4+2
Whipsash	+3	d6+2**
Horn short bow	+2	d8

\*All damage taken from this jagged blade heals at half the normal rate, whether healed magically or naturally.

\*\*On a partial success, the whipsash strikes the target for half damage, but does not entangle. On a full success, the whipsash does full damage and entangles the target's leg or arm (wielder's choice). On a critical success, the whipsash does double damage, entangles a leg or arm, and brings the target down.

**Armor:** Za battle harness, 2 points.

**Skills:** Secondary Combat (proficiency in all weapons shown above) +2, Mounted Combat +3, Tracking +3, Stalking +3, Scout +3, Camouflage +2, Appraise Treasure +3, Customs, Tribal (Za) +2, Barter +3.

**Special:** None.

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### Beastmen Hunters, 1st Level

**Languages:** Sign -1, Common Talislan -1.

**Description:** Males, ages 12 to 15 (adult). 5'10"-6'2", 140-220 lbs. Bodies covered with bristling brown fur, bestial features, fangs.

INT -2      PER +2  
WIL -2      CHA -2  
STR +2      DEX -2  
CON +1      SPD +1

**Hit Points:** 16

Attacks	CR	Damage
Horn short bow	-1	1d8
Broadsword	-1	1d8+2
Claw	-1	1d4+2
Bite	-1	1d4+2

**Armor:** Skin, stops 1 point.

**Skills:** Secondary Combat (bow, dagger, broadsword\*) -1, Mounted Combat (darkmane) -1, Tracking (by scent) +3, Stalking -1, Set/Detect Snares -1/+3, Hunter/Gatherer -1, Torture -1, Customs, Tribal (Beastman) -1.

\*These Beastmen have trained to become proficient with broadswords, in addition to their normal weaponry.

**Special:** +1 combat bonus versus wounded opponents, compulsion to feed (must make a WIL roll or break off combat to feed on fallen enemies).

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### Furgh, Graymane Mount, 2nd Level (Zhenk)

**Language:** Equan +3.

**Description:** 5'1" at the shoulder, 500 pounds, resembles a cross between a horse and a lizard, mane and tail braided.

INT +1      PER +3  
WIL 0      CHA 0  
STR +3      DEX +3  
CON 0      SPD +7

**Hit Points:** 18

Attacks	CR	Damage
Kick	+5	d12 +3

**Armor:** Skin, 1 point.

**Special:** None

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### Darkmanes, 1st Level (Beastmen)

**Language:** Equan +2.

**Description:** 5' at the shoulder, 400-600 lbs. A horselike creature resembling a cross between a mammal and a reptile.

INT +1      PER +3  
WIL 0      CHA 0  
STR +3      DEX +3  
CON 0      SPD +7

**Hit Points:** 15

Attack	CR	Damage
Kick	+4	1d12+3
Bite	+4	1d4+3

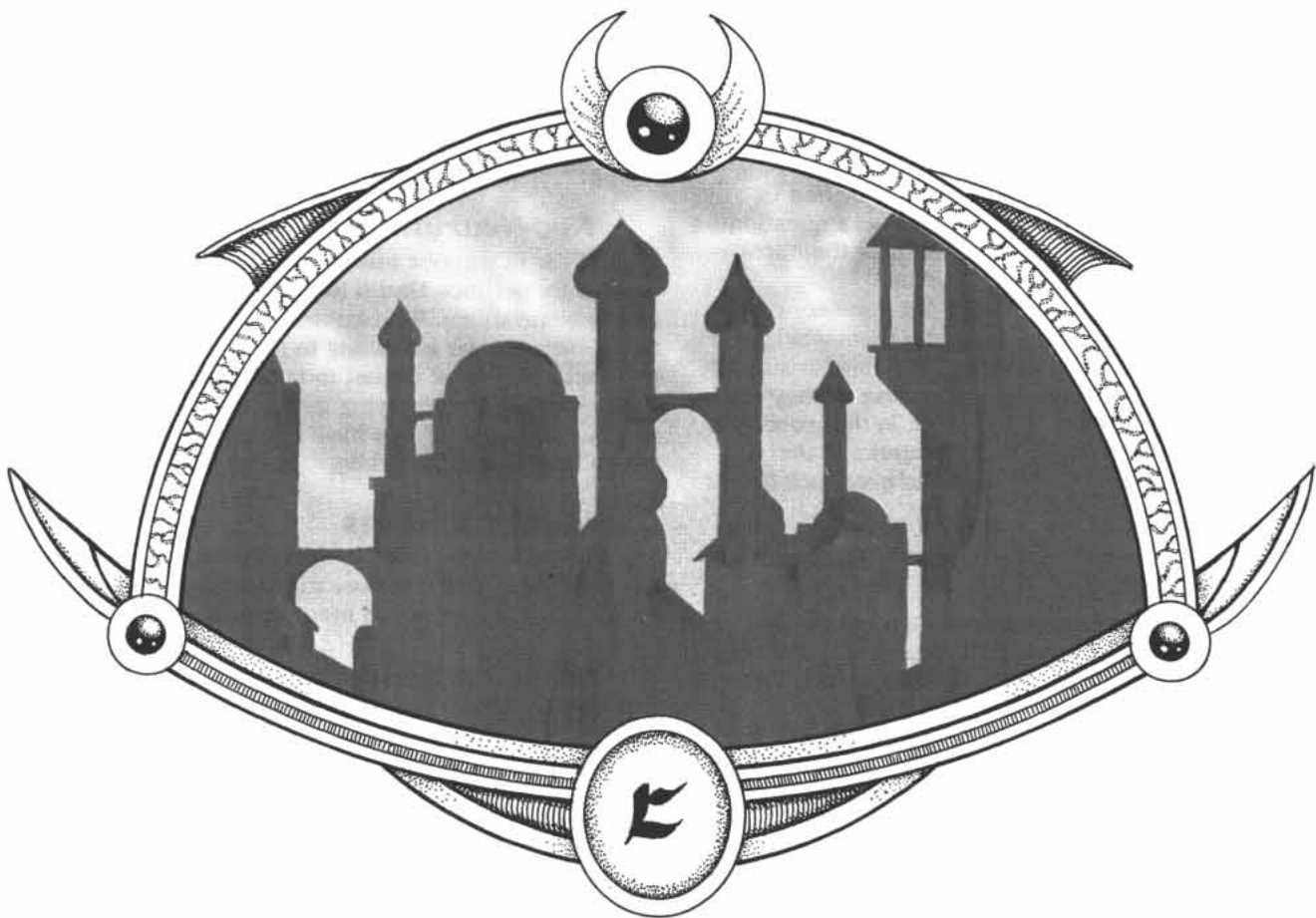
Can both kick and bite in the same round.

**Armor:** Thick skin, stops 1 point.

**Special:** None.



*The Scent of the Beast*



## ENDING THE ADVENTURE

There are various things the PCs may wish to do before ending the adventure.

- **Turn in Captured Beastmen.** The PCs may accuse the Beastmen of murder or attempted murder as appropriate. The Sindarans will try them at length, conducting the whole affair in High Talislan, which the Beastmen cannot follow. They will certainly be found guilty and sentenced to death, though the government may stay the sentence if the Beastmen provide all the information they have on the Tirshata, the Beastmen's plans, and so forth.
- **Turn in Vornel.** If he survived, he may face charges under some catch-all law such as "endangerment of the confederation." Depending on the recommendations and testimony of the PCs, he may be exiled or imprisoned.
- **Return Journey.** The return to Cymril may be uneventful, or you can use encounters that you skipped on the journey to Tordan, or invent others. Probably your players want to get their reward, and letting their return pass without incident would be a ruling. On the other hand, if you want to get a picaresque campaign in full swing, the PCs could always be captured by satada on the way back, taken via underground tunnels to the Quan Empire, and sold there as slaves. When they escape, they find themselves hundreds of miles from home. Such a turn of events, however, is a bit beyond the scope of this adventure, so you're on your own if you elect to exercise this option.

- **Find Heirs.** Some of the costume jewelry that the PCs find in the Beastmen camp belonged to citizens of the Seven Kingdoms who were killed in Beastmen raids. Through a bit of work, the PCs would be able to find the relatives of these deceased and return the jewelry to them. The heirs would be very grateful more for the items' significance than for their intrinsic value. The PCs would soon earn a reputation in Cymril for honest and forthright conduct. The PCs can probably find the owners of jewelry worth about 100 g.l.
- **Get Their Reward.** See below.

### Reward from Abn Qua

When the player characters return to Cymril, Abn Qua invites them into his chambers and congratulates them on a job well done. He offers his sympathies for any characters who may have been lost, asks them for complete details, and promptly pays them in gold pentacles.

Once business is out of the way, he orders as servant to bring out some aquavit, mochan, mushroom ale, vinesap, chakos, and fire-ale for the characters to enjoy. After a few sips of mochan, he relaxes noticeably and asks the characters if they have any questions for him about their mission. While he cannot reveal details of how he came across the information or why he was so interested in this affair, he might be able to fill in details or make connections that the PCs failed to make.

He also asks them if there is anything they've learned from their adventure and whether there is anything they would do differently if they had to perform such a mission again. Abn Qua's questioning is a chance for the players to think over their strategies and to learn from their mistakes.

When all is said and done, Abn Qua congratulates the characters again and asks them whether they would consider themselves available for similar dangerous jobs if the opportunity arose. If they say they would be, he says, *"Very good. In that case, you may very well be hearing from me again. In the meantime, keep yourselves safe and good luck to you all."*

## Experience

Each character gets a base 4 points for the adventure. In addition, each character receives the following points for specific accomplishments by the group:

- Keeping the Beastmen from getting the weapons: 2 points.
- Finding out that the Za and Beastmen were working together: 1 point.
- Capturing a Beastman: 1 point.
- Killing Zhenk: 1 point.
- Capturing Zhenk: 2 points.

Most groups should earn 7 points, though those that do exceptionally well may earn up to 10. This, of course, is in addition to XP that the characters may have gained at the ends of previous game sessions. On top of this, award 1 to 3 XP per character based on how well the players roleplayed.

Remember that it takes 25 XP to increase a level, 10 XP to gain an additional +1 with a weapon or skill, and 5 XP to gain a +1 bonus with a spell. See GB pp. 55–57 for more details.

## More Adventure Ideas

In part, this adventure was designed to showcase the various possibilities in a **Talislanda** campaign. Look back over the course of the adventure and see what your players liked. Did they have the best time interacting with the strange folks in the Iron Kra, or did their eyes really shine with excitement when they were foiling Punten's traps? Now that you've seen a little bit of several types of play, you can decide which your players like most, and which you will emphasize in your campaign.

Many of the NPCs have complete stats that you can re-use for later play, either to represent the return of those characters or to serve as stats for similar characters. For instance, the Sarista gypsies in the Iron Kra may cross the PCs' path again sometime, or you can use those stats for other Sarista they may meet. You can increase or decrease their level, change their genders, alter their clothing, and you have another set of Sarista, without nearly as much work as it takes to work them up from scratch.

For other adventures that might arise from this one, you might try the following ideas:

### Neo-Neurians

If the PCs spoke out against Undin on the way to Tordan, perhaps Undin identifies them as a threat to neo-Neurianism. Who knows to what extent the neo-Neurians may be willing to go to neutralize their political opponents, or just to take personal revenge? Remember, in a roleplaying game, the phrase "character assassination" can have two meanings, either of which might be appropriate.

### Punten's Ruins

There may be more to those ruins than noticed at first glance. A secret door may lead to more ruins, or the tunnels could hold more secrets and dangers.

### Molith's Bandits

If you did not use Molith in the adventure, perhaps his group has been causing trouble in the area, and the PCs are hired to track him down. If he met the PCs on good terms, then perhaps the PCs could find him and strike some kind of deal with him to make it look as if they had killed him. If diplomacy and a bottle of aquavit is the best way to pick up the reward, let the characters be rewarded for their ingenuity.

### Trading

The prices of goods in the various towns between Cymril and Tordan can serve as a guideline for heavier trading in that area, or trade in other lands. As the PCs come to know a trade route, keep in mind that the law of supply and demand will regulate and probably alter prices slightly. If the PCs find that selling one specific product in Tordan nets a very high profit, and they bring a lot of this product into Tordan, they may saturate the market, drive prices down, and reduce their own profits. In addition, other merchants will notice the same profit potential, and they will bring their own supplies to sell, thus increasing the supply and lowering the price until the profit to be made is fair but not excessive. This law of supply and demand allows you, as GM, to alter prices in order to maintain game balance, making no one product too profitable or not profitable enough.

Of course, being a merchant in the Seven Kingdoms involves a lot more than calculating prices and profits. The PCs may have to negotiate with (read "bribe") border guards, avoid sabotage from competing merchants, fight off bandits, establish a reputation for reliability, befriend important political and economic figures, protect wares from acid rain, deal with unruly land barge crews, and more. The profit to be made by mundane buying and selling may be enough to motivate the PCs to trade goods, but how they handle the various dangers and obstacles that beset them will determine if they become truly successful.



## APPENDIX

### Glossary of Names

**Altek:** Sindaran neo-Neurian leader, female (p. 41).  
**Amfille:** Sarista gypsy, City of Kiran, female (p. 28).  
**Ezzirno** (Bey Alera): Farad assassin, City of Tordan, male (p. 51).  
**Grunio:** Arimite merchant, man, sells weapons to Vornel (p. 36).  
**Horvenu:** Pharesian peddler, City of Kiran, male (p. 28).  
**Inir:** Arimite knife-fighter, City of Tordan, male (p. 48).  
**Molith:** Cymrillian rogue magician, City of Tordan, male (p. 53).  
**Montaid:** Sindaran "Waker," female (p. 42).  
**Nindol:** Sarista gypsy, City of Kiran, male (p. 28).  
**Oriman:** Cymrillian merchant, Peris's employer, male (p. 10).  
**Peris:** Cymrillian land-ark captain, female (p. 10).  
**Rian:** Sindaran gravekeeper, male (p. 31).  
**Thurzina:** Arimite geomancer, woman, works for Grunio (p. 49).  
**Vornel:** Tanasian magician and merchant, man, buys weapons from Grunio and sells them to Zhenk (p. 61).  
**Undin:** Sindarin agitator, City of Durjan, female (p. 15).  
**Zhenk:** Za bandit, male, leader of Beastmen (p. 62).



Appendix

### New Skills

#### Lesser Alchemy

The skill of Lesser Alchemy is a trades and crafts skill. It is quite common in Sindar.

A lesser alchemist creates various chemical goods common throughout Sindaran culture, including acid-resistant chemicals, vermin repellents, phosphorescents, flame retardants, and preservatives. Learning to be a lesser alchemist takes considerably less brains and training than learning alchemy proper. A lesser alchemist can generally make 3–4 gold lumens per level of ability each week, or 5–6 gold lumens for a Sindaran.

**Attribute Modifier:** INT.

#### Disguise

Disguise is a thieving talent. It is especially common among Arimite Revenants and other assassins and is also often found among the Sarista.

Characters with this skill are able to alter their own and others' appearances through the use of makeup, clothing, and false hair, teeth, or other devices. Disguise can be used to add or decrease the signs of age, mask gender, hide scars or other distinguishing characteristics, or create a resemblance to another individual or race. The ability to resemble another person, however, is only skin deep; Disguise alone will not allow a character to act, move, or speak like someone else. Whenever a character uses this skill, the GM should assign an appropriate degree of difficulty modifier depending on the amount of difference between the character's natural state and the desired appearance.

**Attribute Modifier:** PER.

### New Archetypes

The following are several archetypes that may be useful in running the adventure. These archetypes represent more "normal" professions, rather than those that are most commonly found in adventuring groups. Players who wish to do so, of course, may use one of these archetypes as the basis for a player character. If so, however, you may wish to allow the character to alter the skills slightly so as to make the character more likely to survive in an adventuring career. For instance, you may wish to give an Arimite miner Secondary Combat rather than Rudimentary, in exchange for dropping one of the other skills. Assume that this miner is a little more martially oriented than most, which is what makes him or her willing to take an adventuring career. If you simply need to replace a dead PC with a temporary character, you can use the archetype unmodified.

## ARIMITE MINER

**Homeland:** Arim.  
**Language:** Common Talislan.  
**Physical Characteristics:** 5'2"-6'2", 90-170 lbs. Swarthy complexion, black hair, dark eyes, hatchetlike features.  
**Attributes:**  
 INT -1 PER 0  
 WIL 0 CHA -1  
 STR +2 DEX +2  
 CON +3 SPD 0  
**Hit Points:** 12

*Arimite miners are renowned for their diligent work, though they do not make pleasant company. Though they are not formally trained as warriors, they are familiar with the Arimite art of knife-fighting.*

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Skills:** Rudimentary Combat, Miner, Laborer, Drayman (wagon), Artisan (mining tools), Mountain Climbing.

**Equipment:** Fur vest, hide boots, sackcloth breeches, armbands and earrings of black iron, choice of one weapon, pouch, iron flask of chakos.

**Wealth:** d10 gold lumens in silver pieces.

**Roleplaying:** See Arimite knife-fighter, GB p. 76.

**Note:** Miners are able to use their picks as weapons. Familiarity with their use makes them automatically proficient with them as weapons. A mining pick has the following stats:

Pick d10 damage 10 lbs. +2 STR 3 g.l.

Note that these stats make the pick a decidedly inferior weapon, but that's because it is designed for mining, not maiming.



## SINDARAN ARTISAN

**Homeland:** Sindar of the Seven Kingdoms.  
**Language:** High Talislan.  
**Physical Characteristics:** 7'-7'4", 180-220 lbs. Rough sandy-hued skin, ridge of six hornlike protrusions running along crest of skull, bony chin spur, emaciated appearance.  
**Attributes:**  
 INT +6 PER 0  
 WIL +1 CHA 0  
 STR -1 DEX +2  
 CON -1 SPD 0  
**Hit Points:** 10

Most Sindarans can find work that uses their intellect rather than their brawn. While this fact makes Sindaran society top-heavy—lots of merchants, accountants, and alchemists, but few ditch-diggers—the Sindarans compensate by trading heavily with other lands and hiring foreigners or Monads as laborers.

**Special Abilities:** Dual-encephalon; all Sindarans are ambidextrous, can concentrate on two different subjects simultaneously, and can avert the need for sleep by resting one brain at a time. They are also allowed two attempts for any die roll to resist mental influence.

**Skills:** Rudimentary Combat, Collector (includes ability to appraise the specific type of commodity being collected), Administrator, one trade and craft skill, Haggle.

**Equipment:** Silk loincloth (males) or kaftan (females), arm and leg bracers, cape, choice of one weapon, silver earrings and necklace, Trivarian game, collection (scrolls, curios, antiques, or some other category of collectibles), flask of skoryx (Sindaran liquor).

**Wealth:** d12 x 50 gold lumens in coins and collectibles.

**Roleplaying:** See Sindaran collector, GB p. 68.

**Note:** A common profession in Sindar is lesser alchemist (see above).



## SINDARAN POLITICIAN

**Homeland:** Sindar of the Seven Kingdoms.  
**Languages:** High Talislan.  
**Physical Characteristics:** 7'-7'4", 180-220 lbs. Rough sandy-hued skin, ridge of six hornlike protrusions running along crest of skull, bony chin spur, emaciated appearance.  
**Attributes:**  
 INT +6 PER 0  
 WIL +1 CHA +3  
 STR -1 DEX -1  
 CON 0 SPD 0  
**Hit Points:** 10

*Sindaran politics involves two strategies. The most direct route to power is to improve Trivarian skills, and the less direct route is to sway the opinions of notable Trivarian players. Sindaran politicians, therefore, are skilled at Trivarian and at courting the favor of other skilled players.*

**Special Abilities:** Dual-encephalon; all Sindarans are ambidextrous, can concentrate on two different subjects simultaneously, and can avert the need for sleep by resting one brain at a time. They are also allowed two attempts for any die roll to resist mental influence.

**Skills:** Rudimentary Combat, Collector (includes ability to appraise the specific type of commodity being collected), Administrator, Litigator, Oratory, Diplomacy, Talislanian History; plus Bribe, Coerce, or Seduce.

**Equipment:** Silk loincloth (males) or kaftan (females), arm and leg bracers, cape, choice of one weapon, silver earrings and necklace, Trivarian game, books of political history, collection (scrolls, curios, antiques, or some other category of collectibles), flask of skoryx (Sindaran liquor).

**Wealth:** d10 x 200 gold lumens in coins and collectibles.

**Roleplaying:** See Sindaran collector, GB p. 68.



# PLAYERS' INFORMATION ABOUT TALISLANTA

## What is Talislanta?

Talislanta is a continent on the planet Archaeus. It measures approximately 1,500 miles from east to west and about 1,000 miles from north to south. The climate varies from frigid to temperate to arid to tropical.

A great variety of nations and races make their homes on Talislanta, with the races of Men composing a definite minority. The more advanced societies have cultures similar to those of Renaissance or even Enlightenment Europe, with democracy not unknown. The major difference between Talislantan cultures and those of earth, however, is that Talislantans use magic instead of technology. For instance, Talislantans do not have telegraphs, but they do have seeing stones for instant communication.

Talislantans know of other continents on the world of Archaeus, but they know few details about them.

## History of Talislanta

Ages ago, Talislanta was home to an ancient race known as the Archaens. They lived in floating sky-cities and mastered magics of which present-day Talislantans can only dream. In a cataclysm that has come to be known as The Great Disaster, their sky-cities fell, and with them their entire civilization. This fall of the Archaens ushered in the Age of Confusion, a time of brutality, ignorance, and fear that lasted for centuries. The New Age is reckoned to have begun with the founding of the city-state of Phaedra. In the year 112 N.A., the Cult Wars between the Orthodoxists and Paradoxists broke out, and in 148 N.A. exiled Phaedran wizards founded Cymril. In 222 N.A., when the Kasmirans, Sindarans, Aeriad, and Muses joined in an alliance with the Cymrilians, Thralls, and Gnomekin, the Seven Kingdoms was established.

While wars occupied kingdoms to the east and west, the Seven Kingdoms built great roads in their territories and reached a high level of civilization, civil satisfaction, and arcanology or magical technology. The confederation of the Seven Kingdoms is now a center of trade, culture, and learning on the continent of Talislanta.

## The Seven Kingdoms

Seven very different but mutually allied kingdoms compose the Seven Kingdoms.

**Astar:** A peaceful land of glades, streams, and meadows is a fitting home for the Muses, butterfly-winged people who delight in song and verse but are loath to work or fight. Only their natural telepathic powers have kept them from being overrun by more militaristic powers long ago.

**Cymril:** The central kingdom, at whose capital the Magical Fair is held every year. The surrounding land consists primarily of wooded hills. Cymrilians are slender and green-skinned, and they are fascinated by things magical. Sixteen years ago their magical college, the Lyceum Arcanum, discovered the *Archaen Codex*, an ancient book of magic that has changed life for many citizens and has brought up many secrets from Talislanta's past.

**Durne:** The grassy knolls and hills of this land show no sign of habitation; the entire kingdom of Durne is underground, where the short, sturdy Gnomekin live. Their work with crystals is unsurpassed. Durne is connected to the other kingdoms and to everywhere else on the continent by the Underground Highway, a vast stretch of subterranean roads. When on the surface and subjected to the light of Talislanta's twin suns, Gnomekin wear amber opticals over their eyes to keep out the bright light.

**Kasmir:** The Kasmirans are gray-skinned, wrinkled paranoids who hoard treasures in windowless towers and hide their goods behind elaborate locks and traps. Since their desert kingdom lies between Cymril and the Wilderlands of Zaran, they are outspoken about the threat of the Sub-Men.

**Sindar:** A dry, dusty land northeast of Cymril. The Sindarans are tall, gaunt, ugly, and dual-brained. They are noted for their love of collecting. The *Archaen Codex* has revealed that the Sindarans are not from this planet, but are descendants of people who came here long ago from "somewhere else."

**Taz:** Southwest of Cymril lie deep jungles and swamps in which the tribal Thralls, gigantic warriors created in forgotten ages, make their homes. Because all male and all female Thralls look alike, they tattoo themselves with outlandish symbols and designs to express their individuality. Originally created specifically for combat, the Thralls have proven invaluable in the armies of the Seven Kingdoms.

**Vardune:** This densely populated land to the west of Cymril is home to the Aeriad. Though their ancestors could fly, present-day Aeriad have only vestigial wings and must use bracers of levitation to fly. The Green Aeriad are herbalists, gardeners, and botanomancers (plant magicians), while the Blue Aeriad are the guardians of Vardune.

## Recent History and Current Events

Seventeen years ago, in the year 603 of the New Age, a trio of Tanasians tried to overthrow the popular, liberal Wizard King of Cymril and return their old regime to power. With their fall came the fall of the Tanasian culture in Cymril. The Tanasians are now outcasts, unwelcome in their homeland and resentful of their exile.

Sixteen years ago, in the year 604 of the New Age, the Lyceum Arcanum of Cymril discovered the *Archaen Codex*, an ancient book that revealed many



secrets of Talislanta's past and described new types of magic that have spread across the continent. Motivated by this new knowledge, the Lyceum is now organizing expeditions to explore ancient ruins and distant lands for more clues about Talislanta's forgotten history.

Seven years ago, in 613, an individual claiming to be the Tirshata united the Za tribes under his rule. The original Tirshata united the Sub-Men during the Age of Confusion and destroyed civilization on Talislanta. This new "Tirshata," whoever he may be, has already risen to leadership of the Za, and many believe he will attempt to ally the Beastmen, Araq, and other Sub-Men across the continent.

Carantheum, in the desert to the west, is currently the most important ally of the Seven Kingdoms.

The Gnomekin report that heavily armed Ur clansmen have been spotted in the Underground Highway. To date hostilities have not broken out, but the Gnomekin are requesting additional military support.

In Aaman to the west, the new Hierophant of the Orthodoxists has been expanding his armies, and his enemies the Zandir are preparing to defend themselves from a possible invasion.

The unscrupulous Farad merchants have been banned from the Seven Kingdoms after they sold the secrets of windship arcanology, secrets possibly stolen from Cymril, to the nihilistic Rajans.

Despite these changes, for many citizens of the Seven Kingdoms life continues as usual and prosperity is commonplace. Only a few realize how much life could change for them if events continue unchecked.

## Money

The standard currency in the Seven Kingdoms is the gold lumen (g.l.), which weighs one-twentieth of a pound, or four-fifths of an ounce. A common laborer earns approximately one gold lumen per week. One gold lumen can buy a dagger, a good meal, a week's road rations, a mug of Tazian fire-ale, or a simple cloth tunic and breeches.

Silver pieces (s.p.) are also in common usage, valued at ten silver pieces to the gold lumen. A silver piece can buy a pair of gloves, a waterskin, a simple lock, a skimpy meal, or a day's use of a stable.

A copper piece (c.p.), valued at ten to the silver piece, can buy a mug of grog, a loincloth, or a torch.

For larger transactions, gold pentacles are especially popular because their intricate design makes them hard to counterfeit. Each gold pentacle is worth five gold lumens. A typical mercenary earns approximately one gold pentacle per week. A gold pentacle can buy a short sword, a Kasmiran lock, a cup of Thaedian nectar, or an hourglass.

## Law

A new Wizard King of Cymril, elected in 601 N.A., has established just and liberal policies throughout the kingdom. Slavery is against the law, and

universal suffrage is the rule. Proud of their civilized life, the Cymrilians rely on courts to settle their disputes, and citizens are spared the violence so common in many of the other lands of Talislanta.

## Transportation

The most common mount used throughout the continent is the equus, a horselike creature that resembles a cross between a mammal and a reptile. Graymanes are the most common breed in the Seven Kingdoms, but other breeds are found in various areas.

Land-arks, huge wagons powered by the wind, carry trade goods along the Seven Roads. When the wind is unfavorable, land-arks resort to wind machines that generate wind through magic.

Though windships are the pride of the Seven Kingdoms, their expense and difficulty in handling reserve them primarily for use by the military.

## Aspects of Talislanta

When playing the **Talislanta** game, bear in mind the following quick facts:

**Common Talislan and High Talislan:** The most common language on the continent, Talislan, comes in two forms, Common Talislan and High Talislan. Speakers of Common Talislan regard speakers of High Talislan as snobs, while speakers of High Talislan regard speakers of Common Talislan as low-class.

**Importance of the Past:** Present-day Talislantans are pale shadows of their ancestors. The various races of Talislanta are mostly, in one way or another, descended from the Archaens. Various races, such as the Thralls and Araq, were actually created by the Archaens. It is the dream of civilized people to recapture some of the lost glory of their ancestors.

**The Great Disaster:** The magical calamity that ended the reign of the Archaens did permanent damage to Talislanta and other continents. Strange and destructive weather, the curse of devolution suffered by the Aerials, and the wastes to the east of the Seven Kingdoms are all results of The Great Disaster.

**Precarious Civilization:** While civilization may be high and refined in certain areas, you rarely have to travel far before reaching dangerous wilderness. The cities of Talislanta can be seen as isolated pockets of civilization in an otherwise wild and dangerous land.

**You're Not in Kansas Anymore:** Talislanta is populated almost entirely by strange people who are found neither in earth history nor in typical fantasy clichés. There are Men here, but they do not fit the racial types known on earth. In Talislanta you'll find no horses, no oxen, no lions or tigers or bears. Oh yes, and no elves.

# TALISLANTA RULES SUMMARY

## Attributes

Each character has eight attributes that represent basic, inborn traits.

**Intelligence (INT):** Your intellect and powers of reason.

**Will (WIL):** Your willpower, determination, faith, and wisdom.

**Perception (PER):** Both your natural senses, such as sight and hearing, and intangible traits, such as intuition and psychic sensitivity.

**Charisma (CHA):** Your powers of persuasiveness.

**Strength (STR):** Your physical power.

**Dexterity (DEX):** Your agility, coordination, and fine motor skills.

**Constitution (CON):** Your endurance, stamina, and durability.

**Speed (SPD):** How swiftly you move.

Generally, these attributes range from a low of -4 for a Muse telepath's abysmal speed to +8 for a Sindaran collector's uncanny intelligence, with 0 as the average. Each skill, including those for combat and magic, has one attribute designated as its modifier. Thus a positive attribute gives you a bonus and a negative score gives you a penalty.

## Skills

Whenever your character uses a skill, you roll a twenty-sided die (d20) and add the level of the skill. If you do not have the skill in question, you must roll a ten-sided die (d10) and add the attribute that normally modifies that skill. The gamemaster may apply a bonus or penalty to your roll, depending on the difficulty of the task.

When you have your total, consult the Action Table. Using the result on the Action Table, the gamemaster will then tell you the results of the action in question.

If you attempt to use a skill against someone, you must subtract that character's appropriate attribute from your roll. For example, it is harder to sneak up on someone with a high PER than it is to sneak up on someone with an average or low PER. If the other character's attribute is negative, it effectively becomes a bonus on your roll.

If you attempt to use a skill against someone who is actively resisting, that character receives a roll on an appropriate attribute or skill. You only succeed if your roll exceeds that of the other character, and if you get a successful result on the Action Table.



## Action Table

Modified Die Total	Result
0 or less	Mishap
1-5	Failure
6-10	Partial Success
11-19	Success
20 or better	Critical Success

## Combat

The combat rules are similar to the rules for skills.

First, you must determine your Basic Combat Rating (BCR). If you have any combat skill at all, at 1st level your Basic Combat Rating equals +1 + DEX. If your DEX is negative, then you may have a negative Basic Combat Rating.

At 1st level, when you are a beginning character, your BCR counts as your Combat Rating with every weapon with which you are proficient. Through experience and specialization, however, you may raise individual weapon skills above your BCR.

When in combat, you must first roll for initiative. The character with the highest SPD on each side rolls d20 and adds SPD. The side with the highest roll acts first.

When attacking an opponent, you apply the difference between your Combat Rating and your opponent's to the die roll, essentially adding your Combat Rating and subtracting your opponent's. Then consult the Action Table to determine whether your attack was successful. If your target is using a shield, you must subtract 2 from your attack roll.

If your attack was successful, you roll for damage. Each weapon has a damage rating expressed as a type of die. You roll that die to determine how much damage you do. For example, a dagger does d6 damage, and a longsword does d10 damage. To your damage roll you add your STR. If the attack roll was a partial success, divide the total by two. If it was a critical success, multiply it by two. The total damage is then subtracted from your target's hit points.

If your target is wearing armor, it reduces the damage your opponent suffers. Each type of armor has a certain protection value, and that number is subtracted from damage each time the wearer is hit. Leather armor, for instance, has a protection value of 1, so someone in leather armor takes 1 fewer point of damage than normal from every hit.

Anyone reduced to 0 hit points or lower is unconscious and on the verge of death. One round later, the gamemaster rolls d20 and adds the character's CON plus any hit points that the character currently has. This means you have one round, for example, to cast a healing spell on a dying friend before the roll is made. A critical or full success means the character makes a full recovery. Characters who receive a partial success recover if they can get some kind of medical attention, but suffer some form of permanent injury. A failure of mishap means the character dies.

## Magic

You can only use magic if you have the skill Primary, Secondary, or Rudimentary Magic. At 1st level, your Basic Magic Rating (BMR) equals your INT +1. Generally, your Magic Rating (MR) with every spell you know equals your BMR, but through experience you can concentrate on certain spells and increase your MR with them.

Each day you can attempt to cast a number of spells equal to your Basic Magic Rating +1. Even if you fail on your roll to cast a spell, that attempt counts as one of your castings. Your ability to cast more spells returns completely within 24 hours.

When you cast a spell, you may attempt any level you want. The higher the level, the greater the effect. Roll d20, add your Magic Rating, and subtract the level you chose for the spell. Refer to the Action Table to see whether you succeeded with your attempt to cast the spell.

If the target can resist the spell, such as by dodging a bolt or by resisting a domination attempt through will, he or she gets to roll versus a specified attribute. Your spell only takes effect if your roll to cast it was higher than the target's roll to resist it.

All spellcasters can detect the presence and relative strength of magical auras, though you must concentrate for at least a minute and make a PER +Magic Rating roll to succeed.

## Time and Movement

Each round represents six seconds of time in the game world. That is enough time to cast one spell, use a weapon, perform most skills, or take one other simple action.

A character's speed is governed by the SPD attribute. A SPD of 0 means the character can move 100 feet per round. Every point above 0 means the character can move an extra 20 feet per round, and each point below 0 means the character is 10 feet per round slower.





# TALISLANTA

## Character Sheet

Name

Race

Sex

Age

Profession

Hometown

INT  
PER  
WIL  
CHA  
STR  
DEX  
CON  
SPD  
XP  
LEVEL  
HP(max)

Physical Characteristics

Personality Traits

Character Portrait

Character's Symbol

HP

SKILLS

Languages

Special Abilities

Primary

Secondary

Rudimentary

COMBAT

Basic Combat Rating:

Weapon

Rating

Damage

Weight

Armor

Protection

Weight

Shield

Weight

MAGIC

Basic Magic Rating

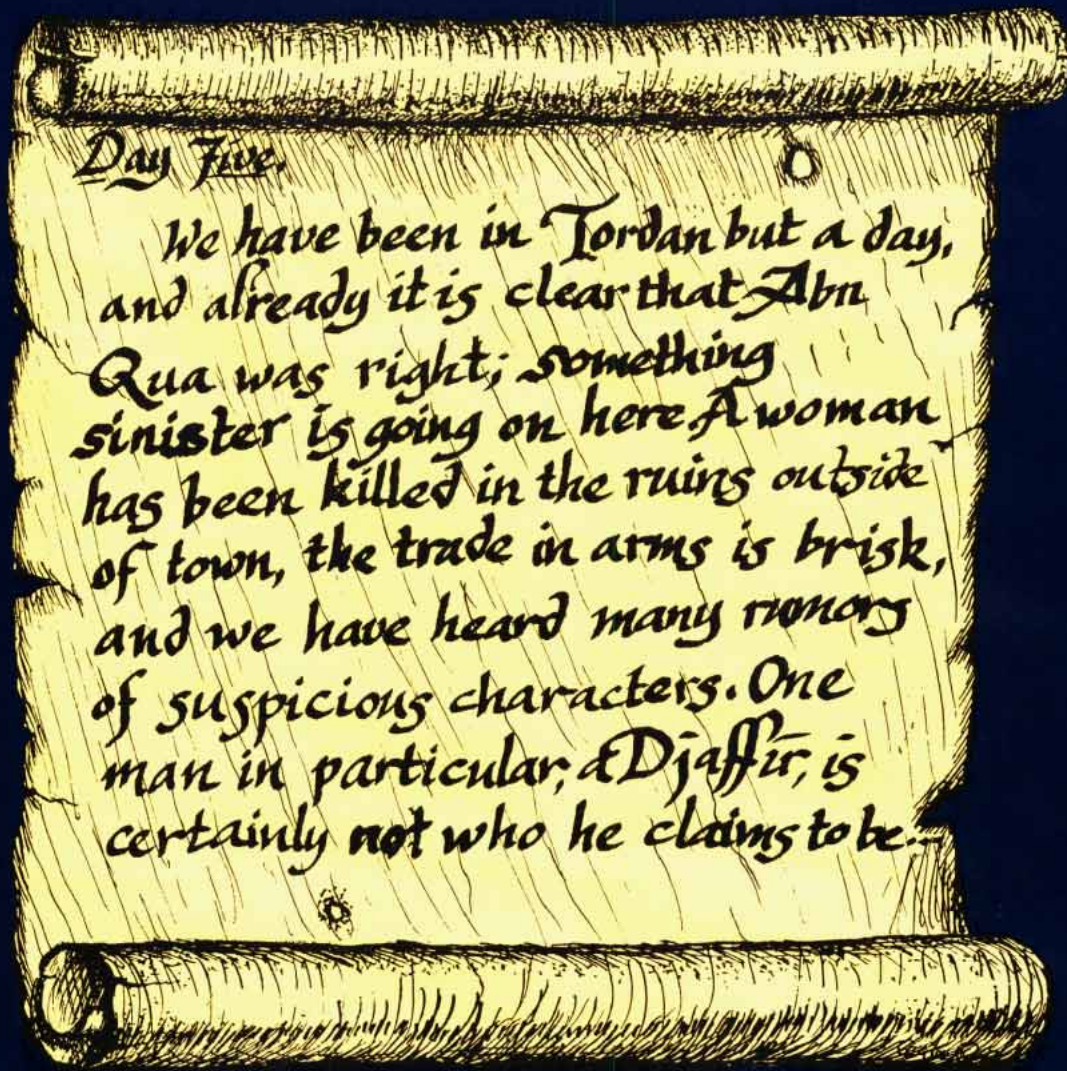
Fields of Study

Spells  
per Day

**WEALTH**Copper  
PiecesAmanian  
CoppersOceanian  
Radiants**Gold  
Lumens**Silver  
PiecesImrian  
Brass RingsQuan  
Emperors**Gold  
Pentacles**Dracartan  
PyramidsL'Haan  
AdamantsZandir  
Crescents**Other Valuables****Gems****ASSOCIATES****POSSESSIONS***Weight***SPELLS. Magical  
Skills***Speed/Conveyance**Maximum Encumbrance**Total  
Weight***CAMPAIGN NOTES**



# The Mystery Begins



*Day Five*

*We have been in Tordan but a day, and already it is clear that Abn Qua was right; something sinister is going on here. A woman has been killed in the ruins outside of town, the trade in arms is brisk, and we have heard many rumors of suspicious characters. One man in particular, Djaffir, is certainly not who he claims to be.*

Get involved in the rise of the Sub-Men with the first full-length adventure ever published for the **Talislanta** system! Designed as a starter kit, *The Scent of the Beast* introduces both players and GMs to the rules and setting of **Talislanta** in a mystery adventure that samples from several different styles of play. Let your players journey to Sindar in search of a traitorous arms merchant and experience the first of a series of adventures that will take them straight to the heart of the Sub-Men uprising.

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