

BEAST OF KOLKORIS

In the labyrinth of Kolkoris a monster lurks, hiding its face from the immortal gods. It has ravaged countries and eaten the flesh of the living, but now the gods have declared that the Beast must die.

A Spears & Glory adventure for use with the AGON role-playing game.

HOW TO USE IT

The contests and challenges included are just recommendations. If your heroes do something completely different, change the contests to match. Each contest includes a recommended number of dice, but you can set this to whatever you want if you have enough Strife. Want marching through the swamp to be a lot harder? Spend more Strife.

Contests also include a few notes about what creative abilities the heroes are likely to use, but that doesn't mean those are the only options. If an explanation of a creative ability sounds good, it's good.

Quotes and flavor text are included in italicized blocks. You can read them to your players you prefer or just use them as springboards for your own descriptions. GM Craft tips, notes about running the game in a Classical Greek style and other pointers appear in the sidebar.

THE QUEST: THE GOD SPEAKS

It is a time of great celebration, as the **King of Iperna** prepares to give away his daughter in joyous wedlock. As honored guests of the king, the heroes accompany the procession into the Temple of Athena, there to give offerings to the goddess and ask her blessing on this happy union.

As the bejeweled king finishes his prayer to the gods, a cry of alarm echoes through the pillared hall. The dead stone of the statue has come to life! The face of grey-eyed Athena looks down upon the terrified assembly, her lips issuing a terrible pronouncement:

"Wretched man! Short indeed are the memories of mortals, that you O king should stand in this shrine and without shame ask for a father's blessing! You who gave your first daughter in sacrifice to the Beast of Kolkoris, defying the will of the immortal gods!

"If you would not see your kingdom share the doom which you gave unto her, then the beast must die! Set its head high upon the promontory over that city's harbor for all to see. Too long has it lived, an abomination in the eyes of the gods..."

And then the stone stands lifeless once more.

The old king is distraught and turns to the heroes. Will they do the bidding of the gods?

Beast of Kolkoris is part of the Spears & Glory series of adventures from Lame Mage Productions for use with AGON.

by Ben Robbins

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AGON was created by John Harper.
Purchase the PDF or print copy at
www.agon-rpg.com

SECRET HISTORY OF THE BEAST

What the heroes don't know is that the Beast of Kolkoris is not a man-eating monster lurking in a cave, but a wise and virtuous creature who rules his kingdom with care and nobility. Years ago he was a terrible menace, a savage tyrant driving his people to pillage and plunder their neighbors and bring back sacrifices for him to devour, but love tamed his heart and awoke the nobility locked away in his royal blood.

His grandfather, the king of Kolkoris, had only a single heir, a daughter. She died giving birth to a monstrous child, the creature that became known as the Beast of Kolkoris. Terrible though the babe was, the mourning king could not bring himself to put his daughter's only child to death. He sequestered the creature in the palace, and as it grew he had more and more chambers built beneath the palace to house it, until there was an entire labyrinth for it to roam free and yet remain in captivity.

When the old king finally died, the imprisoned Beast emerged from the catacombs and seized the throne, a throne that was rightfully his as the last heir of the royal line of Kolkoris. Just as his body was bestial so was the heart within him, and as king he vented his furies, ruling his people as a tyrant and spurring them to conquest and slaughter. Far and wide the Beast's soldiers sailed to return with spoils and human sacrifices to appease his hungers.

The citizens obeyed their monster-king, for while they feared him they also knew him to be of the blood of their kings, their rightful lord. For their part in this savagery they earned the anger of the gods as well.

For years Kolkoris was a scourge upon her neighbors, bringing displeasure to the gods on high, until the Beast looked on one maiden brought to him to be devoured and was stricken with love for her instead. He sent forth his fleets no more, and ruled instead with a softened heart, bringing peace and prosperity to his land. But well he knew that his terrible deeds were not without a price, and he feared the day when the punishment of the gods would fall upon his head. And so he secluded himself in the labyrinth of his youth, hiding his face from the heavens and ruling his bright kingdom from the darkness, hoping so to escape his fate.

But the gods do not forget.

QUEST OBJECTIVES

Five objectives, 25 Strife per hero. Major contests within each objective are below.

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|---|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1) reach Kolkoris | 2) learn about beast | 3) reach the beast | 4) slay the beast* | 5) bring its head to the cliff* |
| • <i>volunteer for quest</i> | | • <i>enter labyrinth (sneak or fight)</i> | | • <i>exit labyrinth</i> |
| • <i>learn about Kolkoris</i> | | • <i>find way through labyrinth</i> | | • <i>exit palace (sneak or fight)</i> |
| • <i>sailing</i> | | • <i>fight minotaurs</i> | | • <i>fight vengeful mob</i> |

* primary objective

CLASSICAL REFERENCES:
READ A BOOK!

This quest has its roots in the well-known myth of Theseus and the minotaur of Crete but then stands the details on their head.

ONE QUEST OR THREE

If you want to use this adventure as one of three quests and let the heroes choose which to do (the standard Agon style) you can just omit the introduction and have Athena command the heroes to "Slay the Beast of Kolkoris."

Making it a single adventure allows for a more personalized introduction, involving the heroes in what is going on.

1) REACH KOLKORIS

WHO WILL RID ME OF THIS TROUBLESOME BEAST?

The king turns to the heroes, brave warriors of great renown. Will they step forward and do the gods' will?

volunteering for the quest—obstacle contest Orate 2d6 (no Strife). Obstacle, so heroes get the quest even if they are not particularly impressive. Winner is the hero who is the most impressive and boldest.

likely creative abilities—Grace (poise to look good before the crowd), Spirit (show great bravery)

This is really an opportunity for the heroes to brag about their fame and virtues, announce their names and heritage with pride, etc. so let the players have fun with it. Volunteering should rap up with heroes swearing pledges to the immortal gods to complete the quest, probably on the very statue of Athena right before them.

DIGGING UP ANCIENT HISTORY

The heroes doubtless have questions. The king is hesitant to speak of a past he would rather forget but he can be drawn out or shamed into speaking. Heroes could also initiate a simple contest of Lore to recall old stories of Kolkoris—these could be two separate contests or just one if they heroes use Lore and Music as helping dice.

persuade king to reveal past—simple contest Orate 2d8 (2 Strife). Winner is the hero who gets the king to speak.

likely creative abilities—Insight (know when to push, when to wheedle), Lore (remember old tales of Kolkoris), Music (remember old songs)

recall tales of Kolkoris—simple contest Lore 2d8 (2 Strife). Winner is the hero who remembers the old tales.

likely creative abilities—Music (remember old songs)

Failure in these contests means the heroes learn little more than which way the island lies. Any success gives them the following:

Many years ago the island of Kolkoris was a war-like nation, a scourge upon its neighbors. There was terror at the sign of their sails and few could stand against their arms.

*The soldiers of Kolkoris took tribute and sacrifices to carry back to a terrible beast that they worshipped as a god. To stop his kingdom from being ravaged the King of Iperna sorrowfully gave up his own daughter, **Iphicalia**, to the raiders.*

But all that was long ago. In time the raiders from Kolkoris stopped returning and its neighbors could at least live in peace. Few now cross the perilous seas to Kolkoris. What has become of the island and its bellicose people, none can say, but few care to know for it is a land better forgotten.

GET THE COMPETITION GOING

Some players have a hard time getting into the “competitive yet cooperative” style of play. Having a starting contest where the heroes boast about who is the greatest is a good way to warm players up to competition, because it’s a situation where the heroes can compete fairly harmlessly.

If you really want to get the wheels of competition turning, emphasize the reaction of the king and onlookers to the winner of the contest. The king really sees the winner as the greatest hero of the group, his savior in this difficult time. Whenever he addresses the heroes he speaks directly to that hero, dismissing the others as “your faithful companions...”

If that doesn’t get the other heroes fired up to prove themselves and take the first hero down a peg nothing will.

A VOLUNTARY QUEST?

It’s true the heroes were not directly told by the gods to perform this task, but once they accept the quest on behalf of the king and swear to complete it they are bound just like any other quest.

If anything the heroes may feel more obligated because they volunteered.

SAILING TROUBLED WATERS

The waters between Iperna and Kolkoris are treacherous and little known. Few sailors from these parts have any interest in visiting those once-feared shores. It is a difficult voyage, not for the faint of heart.

sailing storm-tossed seas—simple contest Might d8 d10 (3 Strife). Winner is the hero guides the ship through to safety: the stern hand on the rudder. Failure means the ship is smashed on the rocks—proceed straight to the Shipwrecked contest.

likely creative abilities—Orate (inspire the crew), Spirit (bravery to weather the storm)

SHIPWRECKED (OPTIONAL)

If the heroes fail the sailing contest, the ship is lost and the heroes are cast into the unforgiving sea, only to be washed up on the shores of Kolkoris days later, gods willing.

shipwrecked—harmful obstacle contest Athletics 2d10 (5 Strife). Winner is the hero who fights through the surf, leads the others and finds safety. Obstacle, so heroes get to shore no matter what. Contest is harmful, so failure also inflicts wounds as heroes are half-drowned and smashed upon the rocks before reaching land.

likely creative abilities—Cunning (finding a spar or other flotsam to cling to), Might (strength to fight the waves), Spirit (bravery to endure in the face of doom)

making it harder—spend 1 Strife to add d8 Advantage die “weighed down by bronze” to reflect the difficulty of swimming with all those weapons and heavy armor. Before the roll, give each player the option to shed one piece of armor or one weapon to individually cancel the Advantage. If you’re really cruel add up to two more Advantage dice that work the same way and let each hero cancel as many as they want by dropping one item per die.

Staggering up to the palace of Kolkoris as bedraggled, salt-encrusted castaways with no proof of your station except your own virtue is classic hero stuff.

2) LEARN WHERE TO FIND THE BEAST

Kolkoris is a rocky island nation crowned with swaying trees. The eponymous capital city is a gleaming jewel rising up from the great harbor that faces the dawnward sea. It is clearly a peaceful and prosperous realm.

The people are friendly and welcome travelers, but it’s clear they don’t see many foreigners. When the heroes arrive in the harbor in an unknown ship from distant lands, they are met by messengers from the palace who greet them fairly and offer them the hospitality of the king.

PALACE GUESTS

The majordomo of the palace is a grey-bearded old soldier, **Eriton**, a dignified and well-mannered servant of the king.

“It is the will of our king that all worthy visitors are made welcome. You shall find no amenity lacking.”

PREPARE FOR THE WORST

Clever heroes might prepare for the difficult voyage to Kolkoris by demanding or finding the finest ship and crew in the land (simple contest Orate to get an Advantage die) or by offering sacrifices to Poseidon, god of the sea, before setting sail (simple contest Spirit to get an Advantage die, not the same as an Interlude sacrifice).

As always failure gives the Advantage die to the Antagonist instead: the ship isn’t as seaworthy as it looks, the crew fears the journey, or their poor sacrifice offends the Sea God.

Heroes that make no particular preparations are provided an average ship and crew by the king (no Advantage dice either way) unless you spend Strife to create those Advantages against them.

CULTURE NOTE: GRECIAN PALACE

A Grecian palace isn’t a walled castle, it’s a sprawling flat structure of connected halls, courtyards and plazas.

If they ask to see the king Eriton is polite but unyielding:

“The king takes no public audiences. That too is a tradition of our land. So be welcome and take your ease.”

And if the heroes just ask flat out about the beast Eriton isn't helpful either:

“You speak of old myths and legends. There is no beast here.”

Eriton is not exactly lying—in his mind there stopped being a beast in Kolkoris years ago when the king became civilized. Most of the citizens would say the same.

Grilling the majordomo is a dead-end. If the heroes become too strident he will simply excuse himself to attend to matters of state and leave them to the hospitality of the palace.

If the heroes blurt out that they are here to slay the beast Eriton will post an “honor guard” around their quarters (add a free Advantage “carefully watched” against anything sneaky the heroes try) but take no further action. So long as he thinks the heroes don't know the beast is the king Eriton won't think they pose a threat. He obeys the king's command that visitors are treated well to a fault.

THE HIDDEN KING

The heroes are left sitting on their hands in their sumptuous quarters. To move forward they need to discover the following:

- The king does not give public audiences (Eriton may have already revealed this). In fact the king is never seen by his people, preferring to remain in seclusion.
- The king dwells in a labyrinth beneath the palace, never emerging but only coming close enough to the entrance to issue proclamations to his trusted servant Eriton the majordomo. Eriton is the only one who speaks to the king.
- The entrance to the labyrinth is in the (now unused) throne room.

They may also learn:

- The king rules wisely and all the kingdom is peaceful and prosperous (as they have already seen).
- The king is of the noble blood line that has ruled Kolkoris for generations but he was born of an accursed union. Terrible to behold, he hides his face from gods and men. The king *is* the infamous Beast of Kolkoris.

How do they find all this out? That's up to them. Obvious tactics include wheedling information out of less careful people than Eriton, persuading some lucky serving girl to help the heroes, sneaking around the palace and eavesdropping, etc.

learn palace secrets—simple contest Cunning d6 d8 (1 Strife). Winner is the hero who gets the dirt. Failure means they learn nothing and will have to come up with a new approach to merit another contest.

likely creative abilities—Insight (see the unspoken truth), Orate (win someone over)

making it harder—If the heroes were particularly tactless or adversarial in dealing with Eriton you can add more Strife to up the difficulty or spend 1 Strife to add an Advantage die “unwelcome guests”, making others in the palace more suspicious of them

JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

Based on what they learn in the palace, players may jump to completely incorrect conclusions.

Players may suspect the beast-king is a terrible mindless monster and that Eriton is really running the country, faking audiences with the creature imprisoned in the labyrinth to keep up appearances.

They may also suspect that there are still nefarious things going on, sacrifices being prepared under their noses, etc., and that the hospitality of the palace is just a sham to put them off their guard.

All of which is good and entertaining. Rash decisions are the meat and potatoes of heroic legend.

I FIGURED IT OUT! THE KING IS THE BEAST!

Somewhere along the way the players are going to get suspicious, put the established facts together (we're looking for a beast and there is a king here but we can't see him) and conclude that the king is the beast even before they find out from an NPC. Once you introduce the labyrinth is it almost guaranteed. Good for them! That's what smart players do, they figure things out. Don't cling to it as a big secret.

PROVE YOUR VIRTUE (OPTIONAL)

If the heroes were shipwrecked and arrived in Kolkoris as castaways, you can challenge them to demonstrate their virtue so they are welcomed as renowned heroes and not unfortunate vagabonds.

demonstrate your virtue—simple contest Orate 2d6 (no Strife). Winner is the hero who most impresses the onlookers—he is perceived as the greatest hero of the group. Failure means the hero does not impress anyone but is still given shelter out of charity.

likely creative abilities—Grace (poise signifies character), Music (perform for the onlookers), plus just about any ability that can be used to show prowess if a physical demonstration is given (Wrestling, Aim, Might, etc.)

If they are successful they'll be treated as noble guests, given fine clothing and suitable arms if they are lacking, etc. all in the name of the king. The irony that they may use those same arms to murder the king, their host, should not be overlooked.

3) REACH THE BEAST

Now that they know where the beast is (or at least the suspiciously reclusive king), the heroes need to thread the maze. To do that they first need to get to the entrance.

sneak into the labyrinth—simple contest Cunning d6 d8 (1 Strife). Winner is the hero who leads the way, warns the others to back into the shadows just as guards approach, etc. Failure means the heroes are caught and either return to their quarters under guard or fight (talking your way out is using Orate as a helping die).

likely creative abilities—Hunt (lying patiently for guards to pass), Orate (there's actually a very good reason we're skulking around)

making it harder—Previous Advantage dice you've stacked up against the heroes ("unwelcome guests", "carefully watched") probably still apply.

Heroes will probably opt to sneak in the dead of night, but if they decide to force their way in let them fight some of the warriors described later on. They may have to dash into the maze before the whole palace guard descends upon them.

IN THE LABYRINTH

The former throne room now has a broad staircase in the center of the room leading down into darkness. The stairs end in a chamber with passageways leading in all directions. The heroes have entered the Labyrinth of Kolkoris.

find your way through the maze—obstacle contest Insight d8 d10 d12 (6 Strife). Winner is the hero who finds the way through. Obstacle, so heroes will find their way through eventually, they just take some impairment if they fail. Includes a d8 Advantage die "twisty passages all alike."

likely creative abilities—Cunning (seeing through the tricks of the maze), Lore (knowing the best way to find your way through a maze), Spirit (keeping your head together and pressing on)

WE NEED A BIG BALL OF TWINE

Once the players hear it's a labyrinth they will undoubtedly start proposing the usual methods of finding their way through the maze, like following the left hand wall or marking intersections with chalk or (for the Classically inclined) bringing a big ball of twine and unwinding it as they go.

That's all well and good. The question is can their heroes come up with such clever ideas without the benefit of modern education?

If the players want their characters to use some inventive technique let the heroes try a simple contest of Insight. If they win it means their character was wise enough to think of the idea the player came up with and they get an Advantage die to help them find their way through the maze (Lore is a likely helping die, meaning they heard someone else did it once). If they fail the Antagonist gets the Advantage die, which means the heroes instead came up with a bad or fatally flawed idea that will just make it harder to thread the maze (like marking all the passages at an intersection instead of the one they came from).

Even mundane ideas like "bring torches" can lead to an Advantage die contest if the heroes want. Failure just means it seems like a good idea but then fails you when you need it, like torches that burn out sooner than expected.

BEASTS IN THE LABYRINTH

After hours trekking through the seemingly endless labyrinth the heroes find signs that they are not alone. A musky smell of a wild beast, faint shuffling or grunting sounds in the darkness, all warn that the beast may be close indeed. Whether they hunt it or it hunts them, the heroes soon face the beast:

A huge beast looms out of the shadows. Snorting, snuffling and pawing the ground, the half-man half-bull lets out a challenging bellow and then lowers its horns to charge.

No big surprise really. Labyrinth = minotaur. Just as the heroes are thinking they can at last confront the infamous Beast of Kolkoris, more minotaurs rush them from side passages. Surprise! Not one beast, several.

MINOTAURS

Name d8 / Monster / Strife 13

<i>Arete</i>	<i>Craft</i>	<i>Sport</i>	<i>Battle</i>
d4 Insight	d4 Heal	d8 Athletics	d8 Aim
d4 Grace	d6 Lore	d4 Cunning	d4 Shield
d10 Might	d4 Music	d10 Hunt	d4 Spear
d6 Spirit	d4 Orate	d8 Wrestle	d8 Sword

weapons: horns 2d6 / 2d6 (sword/sword), charge d10+1 (javelin)

powers: Ambush (choose terrain, +2 first exchange), Defense d8 (tough hide), Natural Weapons
6 divine favor

not immune to mortal weapons, unlike most monsters

<i>left hand</i>	<i>right hand</i>
d8 d6 d6	d8 d8 d6 d6
(defense, left horn)	(sword ability, name, right horn)
d8 d6 d6	d8 d8 d10 +1
(defense, left horn)	(aim ability, name, charge)

costs 13 Strife (1 base, 2 name, 4 abilities, 2 weapons, 4 powers), spend the full cost for each additional minotaur

Tactics:

- Ambush lets the minotaurs choose the starting range, so start at range 2.
- In the first exchange Ambush gives the minotaurs +2 on all checks so attack viciously. Have each spend 2 divine favor to make a second attack, then save the rest to open-end dice.
- Use Left-Hand Attack to strike with a second horn, particularly on the first exchange when Ambush cancels the -2.
- Use Might as a combat helping die when necessary or use Hunt to adjust positioning.

Making it harder:

- spend 1 Strife to get d8 Advantage "they know the maze"
- spend 1 Strife to get d8 Advantage "bestial frenzy"
- spend 1 Strife to get d8 Advantage "animal cunning"

OH, THERE WAS ANOTHER BEAST?

It is possible that your players will completely misinterpret the situation and decide that these really were the "Beasts of Kolkoris," and that the legend got it wrong and there were several instead of one. This could lead to a semi-humorous situation where the heroes escape with one head (or more), sneak to the promontory, realize their quest isn't finished, and then sneak all the way back to finish the job.

Or you can just cut them a break and have them stumble upon the center of the maze (and the real Beast) while they are trying to leave. It's up to you.

A LONG FIGHT...

A fight against multiple full opponents (rather than minions) can take a long time to resolve.

If the fight starts to drag on have the minotaurs attack all out to speed things up: use the dice from the second horn to make left-hand attacks instead of defending and spend divine favor to make even more attacks whenever you can. The heroes will either have to step it up to win or be forced to flee.

Use two minotaurs if there are one or two heroes, three minotaurs if there are three to five heroes, four minotaurs for six or more heroes. The number of minotaurs you use is the total number in the maze—there aren't more lurking elsewhere. It should be a brutal fight.

These are full monsters, not minions, but like their father the minotaurs are not immune to mortal weapons.

If the heroes flee, the surviving minotaurs stalk them through the maze (simple contest of the heroes' Cunning versus minotaurs' Hunt plus Advantages, if any hero loses the minotaurs find them). Heroes can legally call for an Interlude before the contest, hunkering in the dark tunnels to recoup their strength before going on.

4) SLAY THE BEAST

Having trod the labyrinth, the heroes reach the center of the maze where the Beast of Kolkoris sits on a lonely throne. He rests on a low dais, garbed in royal robes cut to fit his monstrous frame, his horns bowed low as he peruses scrolls of philosophy, poetry and history.

In appearance he is like the savage minotaurs of the maze, but years and wisdom sit heavily upon him.

"I forebode this day in the marrow of my bones."

"Against all the fates I rose above the curse of my birth and ruled my people with justice and wisdom, as my fathers before me had done."

"I have spent these many years hidden in these dark halls, hiding my face from the heavens—shall not the gods be satisfied with that? Shall nothing appease them but my death?"

REVELATIONS

These are the key points that should come out in the interaction with the Beast to give the heroes the complete picture.

- The Beast really is a wise king.
- He has a loving wife and the savage minotaurs were his sons.
- Love helped him overcome his monstrous nature, ending his reign of terror long ago.
- He hid in the labyrinth and ruled from here, hoping to escape the wrath of the gods.

The bad news is:

- His wife is *not* Ipicalia, the daughter of the King of Iperna (players looking for a happy ending might assume she is). The Beast ate her long ago.
- Yes, the Beast used to devour human sacrifices, eat man flesh, suck the marrow from their bones, etc., but that was *years* ago. He's much more civilized now. That makes it all better, right?

Don't be stingy giving out this info. Let the Beast monologue about what a good king he's been and the injustice of it all.

STRIFE BUDGET

Objectives 1, 2 and 4 use fairly little Strife, but the battle against the minotaurs in objective 3 and the warriors in objective 5 use up a lot.

You'll want to have at least 25 Strife left over for a climactic final battle, so don't spend it all. With the Strife you gain from heroes failing contests and average interludes, you should have enough for both the recommended number of minotaurs and lots of minions for the finale.

If you find you have extra Strife, add in Advantages, make contests more difficult, etc.

CLASSICAL JUSTICE

The central question is: can the Beast rise above his past and his birth? Should he be forgiven his terrible deeds because he is a wise and just ruler now?

The gods say no, the Beast must die. The heroes may agree or disagree.

Greek myth isn't about doing the right thing or living happily ever after, it's about making bold decisions and sometimes tragic mistakes, and satisfying or being crushed by the will of the gods. Heroes have to step up and destroy the once-murderous monster as they swore or else defy the gods and pay the price.

WIFE OF THE BEAST

A woman in royal garb rushes into the chamber, only noticing the heroes after she utters a plaintive cry and clings to the king, weeping.

“My love! Our sons are dead! Their blood stains the stones of our home...”

The Beast cries out in anguish. “My sons! Must they pay too?”

This is the beast's wife, **Dorsica**, a maiden brought for sacrifice long ago who the beast came to love instead. It was love for her that mended his rapacious ways and made him the wise philosopher king that he became. Out of love she bore him children, all sons and all monsters like their father, but with no hint of the noble character that burned within him.

JUDGMENT

The heroes may be taken aback by the Beast's wisdom, his cries of divine injustice, and the appearance of his loving and now bereaved wife. They may doubt the morality of their quest: should the beast be punished for his birth? It's so unfair!

They're probably overlooking or unaware of all the people the Beast devoured. If the heroes get bogged down in moral debates, have the Beast unintentionally put the situation into sharp relief:

“When Dorsica was brought before me bound in chains, a love awoke within me that I had never known. I could not devour her like all the others that had come before.”

DEAL THE DEATH BLOW

Despite his monstrous might the weary Beast does not put up a fight, making him an easy victim for whatever hero wants to do the gods' bidding and deal the death blow. But who actually goes down in legend as slaying the beast?

slaying the beast—simple contest Spear 2d6 (0 Strife). Winner is the hero who goes down in legend as slaying the beast. In the unlikely event of failure it means the beast is staggering around the throne room bleeding and cursing the gods but still alive. Repeat the contest with graphic detail.

likely creative abilities—any weapon ability (Sword, Aim) used to strike the blow (change the contest type if a weapon other than Spear appears to be the norm), Athletics (fleet footed heroes can get there first to strike the blow), Cunning (stab before anyone else realizes you're doing it), Orate (convince other heroes to hesitate so you strike the blow)

When the Beast is slain his wife runs out of the room, wailing and crying. On the way out of the labyrinth the heroes find her with her sons, having taken her own life with a dagger.

OLD SCHOOL TRAGEDY

Why have the Beast's wife kill herself? The idea is not to make the heroes feel guilty but to be true to the genre, because it's not a Greek tragedy unless someone kills themselves.

People hanging themselves, throwing themselves off cliffs or gouging their own eyes out when their pigeons come home to roost—that's Greek myth.

You could instead have her throw herself on one of the hero's spears or stab herself and collapse on her husband's body, but there would doubtless be some player who would demand a contest to stop her in time. Very unclassic.

THE BEAST-KING

Since the Beast never takes actions against the heroes he doesn't need stats and you don't need to spend Strife to bring him in as an NPC, but just in case, here they are:

BEAST OF KOLKORIS

Name d8 / Monster / Strife 15

<i>Arete</i>	<i>Craft</i>	<i>Sport</i>	<i>Battle</i>
d8 Insight	d4 Heal	d6 Athletics	d8 Aim
d4 Grace	d8 Lore	d6 Cunning	d4 Shield
d10 Might	d4 Music	d6 Hunt	d4 Spear
d6 Spirit	d8 Orate	d8 Wrestle	d8 Sword

weapons: horns d8 d6 / d8 d6 (sword/sword), charge d8+1 (javelin)

powers: Defense d8 (tough hide), Natural Weapons

6 divine favor

costs 15 Strife (1 base, 2 name, 7 abilities, 2 weapons, 3 powers)

The Beast of Kolkoris breaks the normal monster rule of only being able to raise certain abilities because love has awoken the man within the beast. He is also vulnerable to mortal weapons like a normal man, as are his minotaur sons.

5) STAKE THE HEAD ON THE CLIFF

ESCAPE THE MAZE (OPTIONAL)

Having slain the Beast and cut off its head, the heroes first need to find their way back out of the labyrinth. You can skip this contest if it seems redundant.

find your way out of the maze—obstacle contest Insight 2d8 (2 Strife). Winner is the hero who finds the way through. Obstacle, so heroes will find their way through eventually, just take some impairment in the process.

ESCAPE THE PALACE

To reach the promontory and display the beast's head, the heroes first have to escape the palace. Their absence from their quarters may have been already noted, and when the soldiers of Kolkoris discover the visitors have murdered their beast-king they will want vengeance.

Fighting inside the palace puts the heroes at a disadvantage: they are boxed in, surrounded on all sides, with little opportunity to break free. The heroes can try to slip past the soldiers now combing the palace and maybe fight on better terms.

get out of the palace—simple contest Cunning 2d8 (2 Strife). Winner is the hero who leads the way or finds a way out. If all heroes lose they are forced to fight in the palace. The combat starts in small dim conditions (range 2). Spend a strife to give the warriors an Advantage die “we have them trapped.”

likely creative abilities—Athletics (run for it!), Grace (nimble flight)

making it harder—Previous Advantage dice you’ve stacked up against the heroes (“unwelcome guests”, “carefully watched”) may still apply.

If you have a lot of Strife remaining you could have two fights, a small one inside the palace against warrior minions only and then a larger fight on the promontory including Eriton.

REACH THE PROMONTORY

If the heroes escape the palace and beat feet to reach the promontory, they are spotted fleeing and pursued by the soldiers of Kolkoris up into the rocky highlands above the harbor. The cliffs are a dead end so there is no chance to escape the soldiers without a fight (meaning: unless the players are exceedingly clever).

Once they are seen carrying the bloody head of the beast-king, alarms spread from the palace down into the city.

Fires begin to burn in the city below, torches carried by citizens panicked at the terrible news coming from the palace. Even high on the cliff top their voices can be heard, leavened in equal parts fear and vengeance.

Clever players may try to find a good defensible position before they are overtaken.

reach good ground—simple contest Lore 2d8 (2 Strife). Winner is the hero who finds a good spot to fight from. If the heroes win they get a d8 Advantage die “terrain advantage.” Failure means the warriors of Kolkoris get the Advantage instead, cutting the heroes off before they can reach a good place to fight from.

likely creative abilities—Athletics (race to the spot ahead of your pursuers), Cunning (trick them into thinking you are going the other way)

Heroes could also initiate an Athletics contest to try to reach the promontory before they are overtaken, technically completing the quest before the fight, but that won’t stop the warriors from attacking...

WARRIORS OF KOLKORIS

Whether it’s in the palace or on the promontory, the warriors of Kolkoris come on with a mad rush, tears of bitterness and fury in their eyes at the death of their king (double points if the heroes are actually carrying around his severed head).

Leading them is the old warrior Eriton, now garbed in full panoply and wielding his arms with the vigour of a man many years younger.

“Vile deceivers! To murder our king, the host who took you into his home, beneath his very roof! Such treachery!”

With a mighty cry the grey-bearded warrior leads the brave men of Kolkoris to the attack.

ERITON, AGED MAJORDOMO

Name d6 / Man / Strife 10

<i>Arete</i>	<i>Craft</i>	<i>Sport</i>	<i>Battle</i>
d8 Insight	d6 Heal	d6 Athletics	d4 Aim
d6 Grace	d10 Lore	d8 Cunning	d8 Shield
d4 Might	d6 Music	d6 Hunt	d6 Spear
d8 Spirit	d10 Orate	d4 Wrestle	d6 Sword

weapons: spear, sword, shield

armor: d10 (helmet, breastplate, greaves)

6 divine favor

<i>left hand</i>	<i>right hand</i>
d8 d8 d8 d6	d6
(spear, shield, shield ability, name)	(spear)

costs 10 Strife (1 base, 1 name, 5 abilities, 3 armor)

Tactics:

- instead of attacking Eriton uses Tactics, War-Cry or Battle-wise on a hero right before the warriors strike so that the -2 per victory applies to the hero's defense roll

WARRIOR OF KOLKORIS

Name d6* (minion of Eriton) / Man / Strife 7

Arete d6 / Craft d6 / Sport d8 / Battle d8

weapons: spear, sword, shield -or- javelin, sword, shield (half of each)

powers: Defense d8 (represents armor)

* if the Beast is still alive warriors use his d8 Name die

<i>left hand</i>	<i>right hand</i>
d8 d8 d8-or-d6	d8 per minion d6 d6 +1 per minion
(shield, defense, sword-or-spear)	(battle ability, name, sword-or-spear, gang bonus)
d8 d8	d8 per minion d6 d6+1 +1 per minion
(shield, defense)	(battle ability, name, javelin, gang bonus)

costs 7 Strife (1 base, 4 abilities, 2 armor) + 1 for each warrior after the first. Max of 16 warriors (22 Strife) if heroes have d6 Name or 20 warriors (26 Strife) if any hero has a d8 Name.

Making it harder:

- spend 1 strife to add d8 Advantage "avenge dead king"
- spend 1 strife to add d8 Advantage "knows the lay of the land"
(advantages can be added to Eriton, the warriors, or both)

A LONELY LEADER

Eriton's tactics are only effective when he has some minions to lead. If you are short on Strife you can drop the warriors to Sport d6, reducing their cost by two so you can get two more minions. You can also drop their Defense, reducing their cost by another two.

In this fight you are better off having more weak minions than a few strong minions. If you can only afford basic d6 warriors (costing 1 Strife each) to get a bunch, go ahead and do it.

EPILOGUE: VICTORY OR DEFEAT

If the heroes succeed, the Beast is dead and the people of Kolkoris have seen the price of offending the immortal gods. Victory!

As the sun shines on the severed head of the Beast, high atop the promontory for all to see, a great wail of despair rises up from the people of Kolkoris. Their wise and noble king is dead, and the royal line that has ruled their land for generations is extinguished. The gods have punished them for the innocent sacrifices they offered up to their monster king.

If the heroes fail to slay the Beast, their quest is lost and the gods' anger is unappeased. At the command of mighty Zeus, Dionysius stretches his ivy-covered staff over the labyrinth of Kolkoris. A madness falls over the already savage minotaurs, blinding them to friend or foe, stranger or kin. In their frenzy they rip their own mother limb from limb and devour her.

When the Beast of Kolkoris discovers the tragedy he is driven to a tortured rage. He emerges from the labyrinth and lords over his own people with a bloody fist and gluttonous maw, inflicting unspeakable horrors upon them in his madness. Kolkoris becomes a land of terror, until the battered citizens finally murder their monster-king. Kolkoris remains a barren land, haunted by its past.