

FATE: Black Amazon of Mars

Draft 1.0 April 09, 2013 - Blue Tyson

SETTING

Old Mars. Where you can breathe the air and water is hard to find. Colonisation from Earth and the population growth of the native humans has driven the old races out in most cases. The same is happening to the primitive tribes and wilderness areas. The cold desert Norlands is one such area that still survives, near the ancient city of Kushat, beyond which lies the Gates of Death.

From the story introduction, first publication:

"Grimly Eric John Stark slogged toward that ancient Martian city—with every step he cursed the talisman of Ban Cruach that flamed in his blood-stained belt Behind him screamed the hordes of Ciaran, hungry for that magic jewel—ahead lay the dread abode of the Ice Creatures—at his side stalked the whispering spectre of Ban Cruach, urging him on to a battle Stark knew he must lose!"

ISSUES

The Talisman of Ban Cruach has been stolen!
The Riders of Mekh are expanding their territory

THE PLAYERS

Eric John Stark

N'Chaka, Man-Without-a-Tribe
Outlaw of Mars
Very Bad Girl Magnet

F: Incredible +4
A: Remarkable +3
S: Excellent +2
E: Remarkable +3
R: Good +1

I: Incredible +4
P: Incredible +4

Resources Typical (+0)
Popularity -Excellent (-2)

Other Skills

Amazing (+5) Alertness, Sword, Spear
Incredible (+4) Intimidation, Survival
Excellent (+2) Contacts, Investigation, Ride
Good (+1) Guns, Stealth

Ciaran the Warlord of Mekh

Lust For Conquest
With This Axe I Rule!
No, I Won't Take Off My Helmet

F: Remarkable +3
A: Excellent +2
S: Excellent +2
E: Remarkable +3
R: Good +1
I: Remarkable +3
P: Remarkable +3

Resources Remarkable (+3)
Popularity Incredible (+4) [Riders of Mekh only, initially]

Other Skills

Amazing (+5) Axe
Incredible (+4) Intimidation, Leadership
Remarkable (+3) Ride, Survival, Disguise
Excellent (+2) Deceit

Camar the Martin

Overoptimistic Thief and Warrior

F: Excellent +2

A: Good +1

S: Good +1

E: Excellent +2

R: Typical +0

I: Good +1

P: Good +1

Resources Poor (-1)

Popularity Typical (0)

Other Skills

Excellent (+2) Burglary, Lore

Good (+1) Ride, Survival

Thord

Mekh War Party Leader

Ciaran's Second In Command

Insecure of Prowess

F: Excellent +2

A: Good +1

S: Good +1

E: Excellent +2

R: Typical +0

I: Good +1

P: Typical +0

Resources Good (+1)

Popularity Good (+1) with the Riders of Mekh only

Other Skills

Remarkable (+3) Whip, Sword

Excellent (+2) Ride, Survival

Riders of Mekh

Barbarian Cavalry With Spears

Good (+1) quality army

Otar

Old Madman

Adviser to Ciaran

F: Feeble -2

A: Poor -1

S: Feeble -2

E: Typical +0

R: Good +1

I: Remarkable +3

P: Good +1

Resources Poor (-2)

Popularity Poor (-2)

Other Skills

Good (+1) Lore, Mysteries

Thanis

Kind-hearted but Dodgy By Necessity

Sister of Balin

F: Typical (+0)

A: Good +1

S: Typical +0

E: Good +1

R: Typical +0

I: Good +1

P: Typical +0

Resources Typical +0

Popularity Typical +0

Other Skills

Good (+1) Burglary

Balin

Pretty Good Thief
Looks Out For Thanis

F: Typical (+0)

A: Excellent +2

S: Typical (+0)

E: Good +1

R: Typical +0

I: Good +1

P: Typical +0

Resources Typical +0

Popularity -Good -1

Other Skills

Excellent (+2) Burglary, Contacting, Sleight of Hand

The Old Race

Good (+1) telepaths

Typical (+0) fighters

Vulnerability to heat

Ban Cruach

Ancient Martian King.

Has a statue and a sword at the Gates of Death. You can interact with his personality with the Talisman of Mekh. A highly competent and efficient ruler and general in his time, he broke the hold of the Old Race on the Norlands.

Talisman of Ban Cruach

An artifact of importance to Kushat and when used you can commune with the personality of the dead ancient king and discover some of what life is like and of beyond the Gates of Death.

Sword of Ban Cruach

Icebreaker

Old Race Bane

Force Sword with Beam Multi-Attack Old Race (+5)

PLAYERS UNFAMILIAR WITH THE STORY SHOULD NOT READ THIS

This could be run for one player, using Stark or their own equally highly capable character with Warrior skills. The story sequence then will likely be as the short novel.

ONE PC VERSION

1. Stark's friend Camar has been Taken Out to the death. He stole the Talisman of Ban Cruach from Kushat and now entrusts it to you.
2. Stark travels with the Talisman, running afoul of the Riders of Mekh and their leader Lord Ciaran. He experiences contact with Ban Cruach's personality.
3. Stark escapes and goes to Kushat where a brother and sister discover what he has been up to and Stark tries to warn the city and its nobility to expect an attack.
4. The Riders attack Kushat. Stark fights for the defense, seeking out Ciaran personally.
5. Stark just manages to defeat Ciaran, forcing helmet removal. The secret is revealed, Ciaran is really Ciara. Force of personality and ability and past successes enable her to retain her leadership position. Now she can reveal she had more than warriors-as-equals interest in keeping Stark around given her secret is out. Something his Aspect will compel him to be

interested in.

6. Stark and Ciara travel with Balin beyond the Gates of Death to put things right. They discover the Old Race of telepathic cold dwellers and are taken captive.

7. Stark manages to get free and thanks to his familiarity with the ancient king is able to operate his sword - a super science force weapon designed to combat the Old Race and make things very hot for them.

8. Stark defeats them and frees his friends, returning to Kushat.

MULTIPLE PC VERSION WITH STARK

If a group of two or three wanted to play Stark and friends then if one PC has modern medical skills or advanced superscience gear Camar could be saved and become a PC or saved or not with Stark and the healer. The Riders of Mekh and Old Race opposition would need to be beefed up minion style to provide a challenge capable of capturing them. Otherwise, play would continue with the above sequence as the adventure skeleton.

MULTIPLE PC VERSION WITHOUT STARK

Stark has gone off with the Talisman, leaving his dying friend as requested. The PCs discover Camar before he expires, or stop him doing so if within their skills and he asks them to help Stark.

If the PCs can find and rescue Stark then the sequence can continue as above. They will likely have an easier time convincing the Kushat people of danger depending on how motley and dodgy they actually are. Add a couple of junior officers using Thord as a guide that the PCs can oppose in the battle for Kushat. There will be plenty of garden variety Riders of Mekh for them to handle if they feel like it, but leaders are key as usual.

THE LADDER

Being a big Marvel Super Heroes fan from way back, this is how I like to think:

Value Adjective

- +13 Cosmic 5 (Class 5000)
- +12 Cosmic 3 (Class 3000)
- +11 Cosmic 1 (Class 1000)
- +10 Legendary Z (Shift Z)
- +9 Legendary Y (Shift Y)
- +8 Legendary X (Shift X)
- +7 Unearthly (Epic)
- +6 Monstrous (Fantastic)
- +5 Amazing (Superb)
- +4 Incredible (Great)
- +3 Remarkable (Good)
- +2 Excellent (Fair)
- +1 Good (Average)
- +0 Typical (Mediocre)
- 1 Poor
- 2 Feeble (Terrible)
- 3 Awful 0 (Shift 0)
- 4 Abysmal

FASERIP - basic human attributes

Physique is split compared to Core, into a Strength component and an Endurance component, the latter of which should be used for the Stress track. Reason is native intelligence.

Fighting (Fight)
Agility (Athletics)
Strength
Endurance
Reason
Intuition (Notice)
Psyche (Will)

secondary

Popularity is a measure of charisma, reputation and public influence. If you like, bad people can have a negative popularity ladder equivalent. Supervillains, mass murderers, ruthless thugs in The Ball, etc.

Popularity
Resources

REFERENCES

Short Novel

Black Amazon of Mars - <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/32664>

Author

Leigh Brackett (ology) - <http://leighbrackett.blogspot.com/>