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THE TREASON OF DAKAAN

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THE TREASON OF DAKAAN

Iron Kingdoms Unleashed: The Treason of Dakaan will take you on an action-packed journey into an untamed world rich with danger and adventure. The lands of Immoren are yours to explore as you combat the deadly forces of enemy tribes and slaving monsters.

Quick Start Rules for the *Iron Kingdoms Unleashed Roleplaying Game* begin on the following page and will give you everything you need to know to get started playing. The Game Master should read through these rules prior to running the adventure.

Starting on page 18, the *The Treason of Dakaan* scenario offers a complete, stand-alone adventure that lets new players jump right into a challenging and exhilarating roleplaying experience.

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Iron Kingdoms Unleashed: The Treason of Dakaan

QUICK START RULES

Ideal for introducing new players to roleplaying in the wilds of Immoren, the streamlined rules presented here are drawn from the full rules in the *Iron Kingdoms Unleashed* core game. Many special rules and options have been omitted to make it easy to learn the game's fundamentals and begin adventuring immediately.

For players interested in a more in-depth experience, the *Iron Kingdoms Unleashed Roleplaying Game: Core Rules* book and the *Skorne Empire* supplement contain the full game rules as well as more races, careers, spells, and equipment and extensive background on the world of Immoren.

CHARACTERS

Your character is the persona through which you will explore the mysteries and dangers of western Immoren. This adventure kit provides four pregenerated characters, and the full game rulebook offers many more possibilities.

Characters in *Iron Kingdoms Unleashed* are remarkable individuals, ambitious and talented enough to face down the innumerable threats to be found in the savage wilds. They are often stronger, smarter, or more gifted than their fellows, and they have diverse skills and abilities learned over the course of their careers.

The technical details that make up a character determine his special talents and capabilities, how he can operate in the game, and what abilities and skills he starts with. These details include:

- **Race** – A character's race determines his starting stats as well as the archetypes and careers available to him. Race affects height and weight, and some races begin the game with particular benefits and abilities. For example, Warki gains the Adapted [Desert] ability from being an efaarit. See each character's sheet for a description of his racial abilities.
- **Archetype** – A character's archetype largely defines his role in the game and what careers are available to him. Each archetype also has a number of benefits. For example, because he has the Mighty archetype, Tyrant Lexaar adds an additional die to all his melee damage rolls and has the special benefit Righteous Anger.
- **Careers** – Each character in *Iron Kingdoms Unleashed* starts with two careers, which have been selected for the pregenerated characters in this adventure. A character's careers determine which skills, abilities, and starting assets he has. Careers also determine which abilities and skills a character can learn as he gains experience. For example, because he has the Surgeon career, Ashuur starts the game with the Pain Flow and Remedy abilities. See each character's sheet for a description of his careers.

- **Abilities** – A character gains access to his abilities as a result of his career choice. These do not have levels of mastery, but a character must have an ability in order to attempt its use. For example, Eberu has the Prowl ability that grants her stealth when she has concealment.
- **Skills** – Skills represent the specific knowledge, talents, and proficiencies the character develops over time. A character's mastery in a skill is reflected in its level, with level 1 being the lowest and level 4 being the highest. Skills available to a character, and the level of possible skill mastery, are determined by a character's careers. For example, Warki's Brigand and Scout careers have enabled him to develop a mix of military and occupational skills.

CHARACTER STATS

A character's stats are a measure of his natural attributes. Stats provide a numerical representation of the character's basic qualities and are used to determine the success or failure of a variety of die rolls during play. Higher stats represent greater natural aptitude in a particular field. The higher the number, the better the stat.

Stats are broken into two categories: primary and secondary. A character's primary stats broadly determine his fundamental strengths and weaknesses. Each primary stat is further divided into two related secondary stats.

The range of stats for most characters falls between 2 and 8. A character's race determines what his starting stats are as well as what their maximum values can be. The character sheet of each pregenerated character includes the maximum values for each of the stats. A character's stat cannot exceed this value.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY STATS

The primary stats are Physique, Agility, and Intellect. The secondary stats are Speed, Strength, Poise, Prowess, Arcane, and Perception.

Physique (PHY): Physique is how tough, healthy, and physically durable the character is. It reflects the physical attributes of the character. This stat is used to resist poisons, illness, and physical ailments. Physique also helps determine a character's Armor (ARM), his Willpower (WIL), and the number of damage circles on his life spiral.

- **Speed (SPD):** Speed is how fast a character moves. It determines how far a character can move during his turn and helps determine a character's Defense (DEF) and Initiative.
- **Strength (STR):** Strength is a measure of a character's physical strength. It is used to determine how much a character can lift and is a major component of how much damage he inflicts in melee combat.

Agility (AGL): Agility is a measure of a character's reflexes and nimbleness. This stat is used when a character makes a non-combat skill roll involving coordination and reflexes. Agility helps determine a character's DEF and the number of damage circles on his life spiral.

- **Poise (POI):** Poise reflects a character's hand-eye coordination and manual dexterity. It is the character's ability to focus physically. Poise helps determine a character's skill with ranged weapons.
- **Prowess (PRW):** Prowess is a measure of a character's grace, balance, and control over his body. It takes into account practice, conditioning, and training. It helps determine a character's natural talent with melee weapons and partly determines a character's Initiative.

Intellect (INT): Intellect is a measure of a character's wits, powers of deduction, and speed of thought. This stat is used when a character tries to figure something out or uses a skill involving knowledge or problem solving. Intellect also helps determine a character's Willpower and the number of damage circles on his life spiral.

- **Arcane (ARC):** Arcane is a measure of a character's magical power. It is also used to determine a character's skill with offensive magic. Only characters with the Gifted archetype have the Arcane stat.
- **Perception (PER):** Perception is a measure of a character's astuteness, attention to detail, and awareness. It is also used in part to determine a character's defense (DEF) and Initiative.

MAT AND RAT

MAT, short for melee attack, and RAT, short for ranged attack, are two derived stats very important for combat. A character's MAT and RAT are dependent on the weapon being wielded, so they are found within the weapon entries on the character's sheet (p. 10).

MAT is a measure of a character's skill with a melee weapon. A character's MAT with a particular weapon is the sum of his Prowess (PRW) stat, his skill value when using that weapon, and any attack modifiers that weapon has.

RAT is a measure of a character's skill with a ranged weapon. A character's RAT with a particular weapon is the sum of his Poise (POI) stat, his skill value with that weapon's class, and any attack modifiers that weapon has. A character's skill with a thrown weapon is based on his Prowess (PRW) stat.

COMMAND RANGE

Every character has a command range equal to his Intellect (INT) + Command skill in inches. A character is always in his own command range. Command range is used to determine the effective range of certain abilities, such as Battle Plan: Call to Action used by Tyrant Lexaar or Eberu's Cunning archetype benefit.

DERIVED STATS

Derived stats are values computed using a character's primary and secondary stats along with other factors. By combining primary and secondary stats in various ways, derived stats further expand the parameters of what a character can do.

Defense (DEF): The Defense stat determines how hard it is to hit a character in combat. A character's base Defense is the sum of his Speed (SPD), Agility (AGL), and Perception (PER). Defense can be modified further by abilities or equipment.

Initiative: The Initiative stat is used in initiative rolls (p. 6) to determine when a character can act during combat. A character's base Initiative is the sum of his Speed (SPD), Prowess (PRW), and Perception (PER). Initiative can be modified further by abilities or equipment.

Armor (ARM): The Armor stat shows how difficult it is to damage a character. A character's Armor is the sum of his Physique (PHY) and the armor modifiers provided by the armor he wears.

Willpower (WIL): The Willpower stat determines a character's ability to resist the effects of fear and mind control magic. A character's Willpower is the sum of his Physique (PHY) and Intellect (INT).

PLAYING THE GAME

The rules for playing the *Iron Kingdoms Unleashed Roleplaying Game* have been designed to be fast-paced and action-packed. The core mechanics presented here in an abbreviated form are simple, easy to learn, and fun!

SKILL RESOLUTION ROLLS

When a character attempts to perform an action that the Game Master determines has a reasonable chance of failure, the character must make a skill roll. To make a skill roll, roll 2d6 and add the result to the related stat for the level of the skill being used.

$$\text{Skill Roll} = 2d6 + \text{Stat} + \text{Skill Level}$$

When you have the result of the roll, compare it to the target number set by the Game Master. If the total is equal to or higher than the target number, the skill action succeeds. If it is less than the target number, the skill attempt fails.

If the rules do not define a target number for an action a character wishes to perform, the Game Master sets the target number so that it reflect the action's difficulty. Very simple actions, in which there is little chance of failure, should succeed automatically. Actions with a moderate chance of failure should have a target number of 10–12; complex actions should have a

target number of 13–15; and truly difficult actions with a likely chance of failure should have a target number of 16 or more. There is no roll for actions the Game Master deems impossible. Such actions certainly end in failure.

EXAMPLE: Oz's character uses his Detection skill to attempt to find a hidden enemy. Detection is a Perception skill, and the character has a PER of 4. His Detection skill level is 2. Therefore he adds 6 to the roll of two dice. Oz rolls two six-sided dice and gets an 8. He adds 6 to that for a total result of 14. The Game Master determined that the roll would have to be at least 13 to be successful, so the character successfully locates the enemy hiding in the shadows.

A roll of all 1s on the dice is an automatic failure. A roll of all 6s on the dice is an automatic success unless you are rolling only one die. Some rolls also have critical effects that are triggered when a roll succeeds and any two dice used in the roll show the same number.

If the rules do not explicitly state what stats and skills are used for a particular action, the Game Master decides.



ROLLING A D3

Some events call for rolling a d3. This term is short for "roll a d6, divide by 2, and round up." Here's how to read the results of a d3 roll quickly:

$$1 \text{ or } 2 = 1$$

$$3 \text{ or } 4 = 2$$

$$5 \text{ or } 6 = 3$$

ADDITIONAL DICE AND BOOSTED ROLLS

Sometimes a special ability or circumstance allows a character to roll an additional die. This adds a die to the number of dice a character would ordinarily roll. For example, when a character makes a melee attack roll, he rolls 2d6 and adds his Prowess (PRW) stat + his skill with the weapon and the weapon's attack modifier. If the character gains an additional die on this attack, he would roll 3d6 and add his PRW + skill with the weapon and the weapon's attack modifier.

A die roll can include multiple additional dice as long as each additional die comes from a different rule or ability.

Some effects grant characters boosted rolls. Add one extra die to a boosted roll. Boosting must be declared before rolling any dice for the roll. Each roll can be boosted only once, but a character can boost multiple rolls during his turn. When an attack affects several characters, the attack and damage rolls against each individual character must be boosted separately.

CONTESTED ROLLS

If a character is attempting a task that another character directly and actively opposes, both characters make contested rolls. For example, to resolve two characters arm wrestling, they would make contested rolls. One character picking the pocket of another is not a contested roll.

Contested rolls do not have target numbers. Instead, each character makes a skill roll. The character with the highest total succeeds. If both characters have the same result, the roll is a draw and neither succeeds.

COMBAT

The action of the game takes place in the minds of the players and the Game Master until the start of combat, when play moves to the tabletop where player characters and their enemies are represented by miniatures. The Game Master then explains the map to the players and places the miniatures representing the characters, their allies and enemies, and any bystanders on the map.

PLACING MINIATURES

The following guidelines determine the location and positioning of miniatures.

FACING

The 180° arc in the direction a character miniature's shoulders face defines the character's front arc; the opposite 180° defines his back arc.

A character's front arc determines his perspective of the battlefield. A character typically directs his actions, determines line of sight, and makes attacks through this arc. Likewise, a character is usually more vulnerable to attacks from his back arc due to a lack of awareness in that direction.

LINE OF SIGHT

Many situations, such as charging and making attacks, require a character to have line of sight to his intended target. Simply put, a character having line of sight (LOS) means he can see another character.

The Game Master decides which characters have line of sight to each other. He begins each encounter by describing the terrain and how it affects line of sight. Objects such as boulders or tall stone walls completely block line of sight, while those such as a patch of dense forest affect line of sight more dynamically. (For more on terrain and line of sight, see "Terrain" on p. 14).

MEASURING DISTANCES ON THE TABLETOP

Measurements on the tabletop are made in inches, with each tabletop inch equating to six feet.

THE GAME ROUND

The "round" is an abstraction of a very small amount of in-game time. It gives the Game Master a reasonable way to determine the outcome of multiple characters attempting different actions all at relatively the same time.

Once a battle starts, it is fought in a series of rounds. During each round, every character has a turn, in initiative order (covered next). The character whose turn it is, called the **active character**, must end his turn before the next character can begin his turn. The players describe their characters' actions, and the Game Master describes the actions of non-player characters (NPCs). Once all the characters involved in the combat have taken their turns, the game round ends and a new one begins. Game rounds continue until the player characters (PCs) defeat their enemies, escape the battle, or are defeated.

DETERMINING INITIATIVE

At the start of a battle, each character rolls 2d6 and adds his Initiative plus any applicable bonuses. Players roll initiative for their characters, and the Game Master rolls initiative for non-player characters.

Characters activate in the order of their initiative values, from highest to lowest, for the duration of the battle.

If two or more characters end up with the same initiative values, they roll again to determine who goes first, second, and so on.

WARBEASTS AND INITIATIVE

A warbeast activates during its warlock's turn during the Activation Phase (see below). The warbeast can move and take its action either before or after its warlock moves and takes his action. If the warbeast's warlock is incapacitated or killed, it becomes a wild creature under the Game Master's control. It continues to activate on its warlock's initiative, but it acts according to its instincts from that point on.

EFFECTS LASTING ONE ROUND

An effect that begins on a character's turn and lasts for one round expires at the start of that character's next turn. If the character is destroyed, the effect lasts until the point when he would have taken his next turn according to his initiative total.

TURN STRUCTURE

A character's turn has three phases: Maintenance, Control, and Activation.

MAINTENANCE PHASE

During the Maintenance Phase, perform the following steps in order:

1. The player checks for expiration of continuous effects on his character (see "Continuous Effects," p. 12). After removing all expired continuous effects, resolve the effects of those that remain in play. Damage from multiple continuous effects is considered to happen all at once.
2. Resolve any other effects that occur during the Maintenance Phase.

CONTROL PHASE

During the Control Phase, perform the following steps in order:

1. The player decides if he intends to upkeep spells. If he does not spend the upkeep cost, the spell expires and its effects end immediately.
2. Resolve any other effects that occur during the Control Phase.

ACTIVATION PHASE

During the Activation Phase a character can move and act. The type of actions a character can take might be limited by his choice of movement (covered next). A character can take his actions before or after moving but cannot interrupt his movement to take an action.

MOVEMENT

When moving a character, measure from where the front of a character's base is at the beginning of the movement to where the front of the base is at the end of movement.

A character generally cannot move over another character's base. A character can move through friendly characters, however, provided he can move completely past the friendly character's base. Friendly characters step aside to let the character pass, but enemies are not so accommodating.

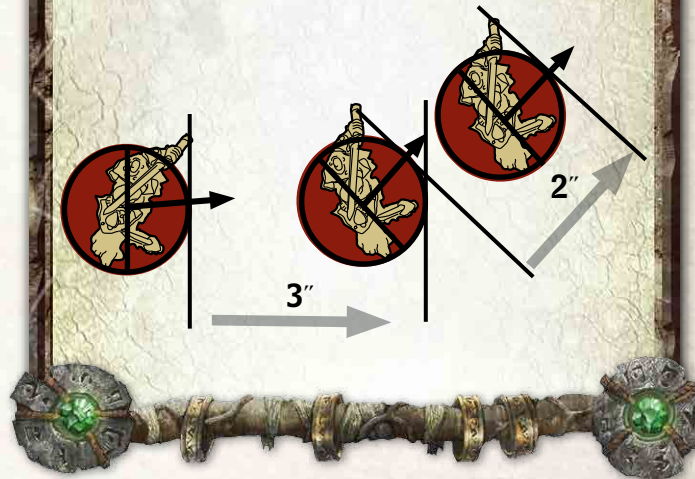
Advancing refers to any movement a character intentionally makes, rather than movement caused by effects such as being pushed. A character can change his facing at any time during his advance, but when he moves he must always move in the direction he is facing. Changing facing by rotating in place does not cost any movement, but a character who changes his facing is considered to have moved. For instance, a character who changes his facing cannot aim that round because he has technically moved.

There are three basic types of movement a character can make during his turn: full advance, run, and charge.

FULL ADVANCE

A character making a full advance moves up to his current Speed (SPD) in inches.

MEASURING MOVEMENT AND CHANGING FACING



RUN

A character who runs during his turn advances up to twice his current SPD in inches. A character who runs during his turn can take one quick action but cannot make attacks or take full actions that turn. A running character cannot use his quick action to cast a spell. A character who forfeits his actions during a turn cannot run that turn.

CHARGE

A charging character rushes into melee and takes advantage of his momentum to make a powerful strike. A character who forfeits his actions during a turn cannot charge that turn.

At the time a character declares a charge, he must also declare which enemy he is charging. A character cannot charge a friendly character. The character must have line of sight to his charge target. The character then advances his SPD plus 3" toward his charge target, in a straight line. The charging character stops if he contacts any obstruction, such as another character or terrain he cannot move through. At the end of the charge movement, the charging character turns to face his target directly.

A character who ends his charge movement with his charge target in his melee range has made a successful charge. His first attack after charging must be against his charge target.

If the character charged at least 3", his first attack was made with a melee weapon, and the attack hits, the damage roll is boosted. Attacks with ranged weapons do not gain boosted damage from charging. If a charging character moved less than 3", the damage roll for his first attack is not boosted because he did not move far or fast enough to add sufficient momentum to his strike. His first attack must still be made against the charge target.

If a charging character ends his charge movement without his charge target in his melee range, then he has failed his charge. If a character makes a failed charge during his Activation Phase, his turn immediately ends.

UNINTENTIONAL MOVEMENT

Characters can move without advancing as a result of other effects, such as being pushed (covered next). Determine the distance a character moves in this way by measuring the distance traveled by the edge of the character's base in the direction of the movement. Unless otherwise specified, a character's facing does not change when it moves unintentionally.

PUSHED

Sometimes characters are **pushed** as a result of an attack, ability, or spell. When a character is pushed, he is moved, but he is not considered to have advanced. Because the character has not advanced, he cannot be targeted by free strikes. A pushed character moves at half rate through rough terrain, suffers the effects of any hazards he moves through, and stops if he contacts an obstacle, an obstruction, or another character.

A pushed character falls off elevated terrain if he ends the push movement with less than 1" of ground under his base. See "Falling" below for information on determining damage from a fall.

FALLING

A character who is pushed or otherwise moves off an elevated surface to another surface at least six feet (1") lower falls. A **falling** character is **knocked down** and suffers a damage roll. A fall of up to eighteen feet (3") causes a POW 10 damage roll. Add an additional die to the damage roll for every additional increment of eighteen feet (3") the character falls, rounded up.

Fall Damage Roll = 2d6 + 10 + d6 for every eighteen feet (3") of the fall after the first

EXAMPLE: A character falling eighteen feet (3") suffers a damage roll of 2d6 + 10. One falling thirty feet (5") suffers a damage roll of 3d6 + 10, and one falling forty-two feet (7") suffers a damage roll of 4d6 + 10!

If a falling character contacts a character with an equal or smaller-sized base, the contacted character is knocked down and suffers the same damage roll as the falling character.

ACTIONS

A character can act before or after his movement. A character cannot interrupt his movement to act.

A character does not have to take his actions all at once and can perform them in any order. For example, a Skilled character could make a ranged attack, reload, move, and make another attack.

There are three basic types of actions: quick, attack, and full.

During his turn a character can do one of the following:

1. Perform two quick actions.
2. Attack and perform one quick action.
3. Perform a full action.

Some abilities and benefits allow a character to make additional attacks or perform additional quick actions, while others influence what a character can achieve with a quick action. For instance, Sakad's ammo bandolier allows him to draw a round of ammunition and load it into his reiver as part of the same quick action.

A character's choice of movement during his turn might impact which actions he can choose that turn.

QUICK ACTIONS

Quick actions are simple and fast tasks a character can perform in addition to more complex actions, such as attacking. The quick actions a character can perform include:

- Draw a weapon or item (including ammunition)
- Stow a weapon or item
- Reload a ranged weapon
- Cast a spell
- Use a skill or ability that requires a quick action
- Take cover or go prone
- Other fast, simple action at the Game Master's discretion

TAKING COVER

A character can spend a quick action to take cover while within six feet (1") of a terrain feature that can either obscure his body or provide a solid barrier of protection. For one round, the character gains a DEF bonus from attacks made by characters on the other side of the terrain feature. To consistently gain a bonus for taking cover, a character must perform the quick action during each of his turns. The DEF bonus is determined by the nature of the terrain the character uses for cover.

Terrain not dense enough to block an attack but that makes the character harder to see, such as low hedges or bushes, grants **concealment**. A character taking cover behind or within concealing terrain gains +2 DEF against ranged and magic attack rolls.

Terrain physically solid enough to block an attack grants **solid cover**. Examples include stone walls, giant boulders, and massive trees. A character benefiting from solid cover gains +4 DEF against ranged and magic attack rolls. He also gains +2 DEF against melee attacks if the terrain feature is between him and his attacker.

DEF bonuses from cover, concealment, and going prone are not cumulative. A character can claim only the best bonus he is eligible to receive.

GOING PRONE

A character can throw himself to the ground as a quick action to gain a DEF bonus from ranged and magic attacks until he stands up. A character cannot be knocked down while prone.

While prone, the character gains +2 DEF against ranged and magic attacks, gains +4 ARM against blast damage, and cannot

run or charge. When he makes a full advance he can move up to half his SPD in inches. Additionally, the character suffers -2 on his melee attacks against characters who are not also prone. A character who is not prone and targets a prone character with a melee attack gains +2 on his attack roll.

A prone character can stand up at the start of his turn if he forfeits his movement or his action that Activation Phase. A character who forfeits his movement to stand can perform an action, but he cannot make attacks involving movement such as a charge. A character who forfeits his action to stand cannot perform quick or full actions, make attacks, or run that turn. He can use his movement to make a full advance but cannot run or charge that turn.

FULL ACTIONS

The use of some skills requires a character's full attention during his turn. A character making a full action can move but cannot also perform a quick action or make an attack. For example, reloading a crossbow, a long and involved process, is a full action.

ATTACKS

A character who attacks during his turn can make one melee or ranged attack. Some abilities, benefits, and special rules allow a character to make additional melee or ranged attacks. Remember that spells, including magic attacks, are cast as quick actions.

A character who can make more than one melee or ranged attack during his turn can divide them among any eligible targets. Completely resolve each attack before making another.

ATTACKING

When a character attacks, his player makes a skill roll to determine if the attack hits the target. If it does, the player makes a damage roll to determine how much damage, if any, the attack deals. There are three main types of attacks: melee, ranged, and magic.

DECLARING A TARGET

When a character attacks, he can target anything or anyone in his line of sight.





MEASURING RANGE

After declaring the attack, measure to see if the target is within range (melee range for melee attacks, the weapon's RNG for a ranged attack, or the spell's RNG for a magic attack). Measure the maximum range from the edge of the attacking character's base. If the nearest edge of the target is within that distance, it is in range. See "Ranged Attacks" for additional information.

ATTACK ROLLS

To make an attack roll, roll 2d6 and add the character's appropriate stat and skill for the weapon used in the attack. Special rules can change the number of dice in the attack roll or directly modify the final result.

Melee attack rolls use a character's Prowess (PRW) + military skill + weapon attack modifier. This is the character's melee attack score with that weapon, which is abbreviated as MAT on the character sheet.

MELEE WEAPONS



Great Axe

NAME

On a critical hit gain additional damage die

NOTES

6

MAT

11

P+S

RANGED WEAPONS



Throwing Axe

NAME

THROWN – Add STR to the POW of this weapon

NOTES

6

RNG

6

RAT

3

POW

5

AMMO

Magic attack rolls use a character's Arcane (ARC) stat.

The target is hit by an attack if the attack roll equals or exceeds his defense (DEF). Otherwise the attack misses.

KNOCKED DOWN

While knocked down, a character has his base DEF reduced to 5 and melee attacks against him hit automatically.

BACK STRIKE

A back strike is an attack made by a character completely in his target's back arc. He must have been in the target's back arc for his entire Activation Phase up to the moment of the attack. A back strike grants a +2 bonus on the attack roll of any melee, ranged, or magic attack.

MELEE ATTACKS

A melee weapon has a melee range extending 0.5" beyond the character's front arc for any type of melee attack. A weapon with Reach has a melee range of 2".

ENGAGED

When a character has an enemy in his melee range and line of sight, he is engaging that character. When a character is engaged or engaging, he is in melee.

FREE STRIKES

When an engaged character moves out of an enemy's melee range and/or line of sight, the enemy can immediately make a free strike against it just before the engaged character leaves his melee range and/or line of sight. The enemy character makes one normal melee attack with any melee weapon that has sufficient melee range to reach the moving character and gains a +2 bonus on his melee attack roll. If the attack hits, the damage roll is boosted. Free strikes cannot benefit from back strike bonuses.

RANGED ATTACKS

A character can make ranged attacks against any target in his weapon's range that is in his line of sight. A character making more than one ranged attack can divide his attacks among any eligible targets. A character in melee can make ranged attacks only against targets he is engaging.

TARGETING A CHARACTER IN MELEE

A character targeting an enemy in melee combat with a ranged or magic attack risks hitting another character in the combat, including friendly characters. Add a -4 penalty to the ranged attack roll against a target in melee. If the attack misses its intended target and the target was in range, there is a chance it will hit another character engaged in the melee. The attacker must immediately reroll his attack against another character engaged in that combat. If there are multiple valid targets in the combat, randomly determine one of them to roll against. If this second roll fails to hit the new target, the attack misses the target completely.

TARGETING A CHARACTER WITH STEALTH

A ranged attack made against a character with Stealth automatically misses if the origin of the attack is more than thirty feet (5") away.

AREA-OF-EFFECT (AOE) ATTACKS

An AOE attack follows all normal targeting rules. A successful attack roll indicates a hit on the target, which suffers a damage roll of 2d6 + the attack's POW. Center the AOE template over the center of the hit target's base.

Every other character with any part of his base covered by the AOE template is hit by the attack and suffers a blast damage roll of 2d6 + ½ the POW of the attack. Make separate damage rolls against each character in the AOE; each roll must be boosted individually.

Prone characters gain +4 ARM against blast damage.

An AOE attack that misses its target deviates d6" in a random direction. If the target is within range, the point of impact deviates from the center of its base. If the target is out of range, the attack automatically misses, and its point of impact deviates from the point on the line from the attacker to its declared target at a distance equal to his RNG.

MAGIC ATTACKS

A character can make magic attacks against any target in his spell's range that is in his line of sight. Magic attacks are similar to ranged attacks but are not affected by rules that affect only ranged attacks. A magic attack roll does not suffer the target in melee attack roll penalty when the attacker is engaged in melee with the target. (For more on magic, see "Magic of the Wilds," p. 16.)

DAMAGE

The damage inflicted by an attack or other damage-causing effect is determined by making a damage roll. In the case of ranged attacks, magic attacks, and most other damaging effects, roll 2d6 and add the Power (POW) of the attack. In the case of melee attacks, roll 2d6 and add the POW + STR of the attacking character. A boosted damage roll adds an additional die to this roll. Special rules for certain circumstances might modify the damage roll as well.

Compare this total against the ARM of the character suffering the damage. That character takes 1 damage point for every point that the damage roll exceeds his ARM.

A weapon or attack with POW "-" does not cause damage, though it typically causes some other effect.

LIFE SPIRALS

Characters have life spirals consisting of six branches grouped into three aspects that correspond with their primary stats: Physique, Agility, and Intellect. Each branch has some number of vitality points that indicate its health in that area. When a character suffers damage, roll a d6 to determine which branch of his life spiral takes the damage. Starting with the outermost unmarked vitality point in that branch and working inward, mark one vitality point per damage point taken. Once a branch is full, continue recording damage in the next branch clockwise that contains an unmarked vitality point. Continue filling branches as required until every damage point suffered has been recorded.

CRIPPLED ASPECTS

As long as all a character's vitality points are filled in on a particular aspect, he suffers the following effects:

- Crippled Physique: -2 STR.
- Crippled Agility: -2 to attack rolls.
- Crippled Intellect: -2 DEF and cannot upkeep spells.

VITALITY

Instead of life spirals, less important antagonists simply have an amount of damage points they can suffer before being disabled. When they suffer damage equal to their total vitality, they are disabled. At the Game Master's discretion, less important antagonists are simply destroyed.

DISABLED AND GRIEVOUSLY INJURED

The rules for injuries presented here are much simpler than those in *Iron Kingdoms Unleashed Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*. In an ongoing campaign there are additional possible penalties for a character who loses his last vitality point, such as losing a limb or gaining disfiguring scars.

In the included adventure, a character is disabled when all his vitality points are marked. Some effects cause a character to cease being disabled, either directly or by regaining a vitality point, such as from a successful Tough roll.

After resolving any effects triggered by being disabled, if the character is still disabled he is considered grievously injured and cannot take part in the rest of the encounter.

STABILIZING GRIEVOUSLY INJURED CHARACTERS

Some injuries are so significant they require immediate medical attention to save the injured character's life. A grievously injured character must be stabilized after the encounter or he dies. To do this, the treating character makes an INT + Medicine skill roll against a target number of 14. If the roll succeeds, the injured character is stabilized. If the roll fails, the injured character dies.

RECOVERY AND REGAINING VITALITY

When a character regains vitality, he removes the appropriate amount of damage from anywhere on his life spiral. Remember, if a character regains vitality damage while disabled, he is no longer disabled.

After a short rest following an encounter, a character automatically regains vitality points equal to his PHY stat.

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Some attacks cause special effects in addition to causing damage, and some spells and actions can put special effects into play.

CLOUD EFFECTS

A **cloud effect** produces an area of dense smoke, magical darkness, thick mists, or the like that remains in play for a specified length of time. Use an AOE template of the appropriate size to represent the cloud. Every character with any part of its base covered by the cloud's template is within the cloud and susceptible to its effects.

In addition, a character with any part of his base inside a cloud effect gains concealment (see "Taking Cover," p. 8). The cloud effect does not block line of sight from characters within it to those outside it, but it completely obstructs line of sight from characters outside it to anything beyond it. In other words, a character can see into or out of a cloud effect but not through one.

CONTINUOUS EFFECTS

Some attacks cause continuous effects in addition to damage. Continuous effects remain on a character and have the potential to damage or affect him in some other way on subsequent turns. A character can have multiple continuous effects on him as long as each is a different type.

Continuous effects have a chance to expire each round. At the start of the affected character's Maintenance Phase, roll a d6 to check each continuous effect. If the result is a 1 or 2, the continuous effect immediately expires. On a 3, 4, 5, or 6 it remains in play. Determine the status of all the continuous effects affecting a character first, then simultaneously apply the effects of all the ones that remain on him.

Two common continuous effects are Corrosion and Fire.

- **Corrosion** – The character is slowly eroded as if by acid or another noxious substance. Corrosion does d3 damage points each turn to the affected character at the start of each of his Maintenance Phases unless it expires. Characters with Immunity: Corrosion never suffer this continuous effect.
- **Fire** – The character is on fire. He suffers a POW 12 fire damage roll at the start of each of his Maintenance Phases until the effect expires. Characters with Immunity: Fire never suffer this continuous effect.

CRITICAL HIT

A critical hit occurs if the attack hits and two of the rolled dice show the same number. As a result of a critical hit, some attacks cause **critical effects** in addition to damage. The target suffers the critical effect even if it takes no damage from the damage roll.

KNOCKDOWN

Some attacks and special rules cause a character to be **knocked down**. This effect is not cumulative; once a character is knocked down, he must stand or go prone before he can be knocked down again. A knocked down character who stands up or goes prone is no longer knocked down.

While knocked down, a character cannot move, perform actions, make attacks, or cast spells and does not have a melee range. A knocked down character does not engage other characters and cannot be engaged by them. As a consequence, a character is never in melee with a knocked down character. A melee attack roll against a knocked down character automatically hits. A knocked down character has a base DEF of 5. He does not block line of sight and can be ignored for targeting purposes.

A knocked down character can stand up or go prone at the start of his next turn. To stand up, a character must forfeit either his movement or his actions that turn.

A character who forfeits his movement to stand can still perform actions that turn, but he cannot make attacks involving movement, such as charging.

A character who forfeits his actions to stand cannot take quick or full actions or make attacks. He can use his movement to make a full advance but not to run or charge that turn.

A character can go prone at the start of his turn without forfeiting either his movement or his actions.

KNOCKOUT

When a character is knocked out, he is knocked down and his upkeep spells expire. A knocked out character is knocked down even if he has an ability that says he cannot otherwise be knocked down.

While knocked out, a character cannot take actions, make attacks, or move.

At the start of each of his turns, a knocked out character can make a PHY roll against a target number of 12 to regain consciousness. If he fails, he remains knocked out. If he succeeds, he is no longer knocked out and can act normally that turn, though he is still knocked down.

Only living characters can be knocked out.

STATIONARY

A **stationary character** cannot activate. A stationary character does not have a melee range. A stationary character does not engage other characters, nor can other characters engage him. A character is never in melee with a stationary character. A stationary character cannot advance, perform actions, make attacks, or cast spells.

A melee attack roll against a stationary character automatically hits. A stationary character has a base DEF of 5.

STEALTH

A character with stealth is extremely difficult to spot and target. Non-spray ranged and magic attacks declared against a character with stealth when the point of origin for the attack is more than thirty feet (5") away automatically miss.

DAMAGE TYPES AND IMMUNITIES

Some weapons and spells inflict a specific damage type that might affect some characters differently than others. When a damage type is referenced, it is described as an "X damage roll." For example, a spell that causes electrical damage is described as an "electrical damage roll."

A character with Immunity to a certain damage type does not suffer damage from that type. An immunity is a special protection, and a character never suffers damage from a damage type to which he is immune.

FEAT POINTS

Feat points represent a character's luck and raw heroic potential. They can enable him to reroll failed skill rolls, shake the effects of knockdown or continuous effects, or use a number of special archetype benefits. Feat points are gained and spent regularly throughout play. Generally, only player characters and significant NPCs gain feat points.

A character starts each session with 3 feat points and can never have more than that.

GAINING FEAT POINTS

There are several ways a character can gain feat points.

- **Incapacitating or destroying an enemy with an attack:** A character gains 1 feat point for each enemy character he incapacitates or destroys with an attack. In the case of a particularly powerful enemy, the Game Master can award more than 1 feat point to a character or award 1 feat point to each character who helped defeat the enemy. Likewise, a Game Master can choose not to award any feat points if the enemy destroyed was particularly weak or helpless.
- **Critical success on a skill or attack roll:** A character who rolls a critical hit on a skill or attack roll gains 1 feat point.
- **Game Master award:** The Game Master can award feat points to characters for achieving milestones in play or as a reward for particularly inventive or heroic actions or excellent roleplaying.

A character can never have more than 3 feat points. If a character already has 3 feat points and gains another, the additional feat point is lost.

FEATS

Feat points can be spent to accomplish a number of feats. Any character can take advantage of common feats listed below, and there are also a number of abilities and archetype benefits that require a feat point to use.

A character can spend as many feat points during his turn as he wishes and has available.

Any character can spend a feat point to use one of the following feats:

- **Boost Non-Attack Skill Roll** – A character can spend a feat point to boost a non-attack skill roll if he has at least one level of the skill used.
- **Heroic Dodge** – A character can spend a feat point to suffer only half the damage from an attack, rounded up. The feat point is spent after the damage roll has been made.
- **Make a Quick Action** – A character can spend a feat point during his Activation Phase to take an additional quick action.
- **Parry** – A character can spend a feat point during his turn to avoid being targeted by free strikes that turn.

LIVING CHARACTERS

Unless stated otherwise, characters are considered to be **living**. Undead characters and constructs are not living characters.

- **Relentless Charge** – A character can spend a feat point during a turn in which he charges to allow him to charge over rough terrain without penalty.
- **Reroll Failed Attack, Skill, or Willpower Roll** – A character can spend a feat point to reroll a failed attack, skill, or Willpower roll. A character can continue to reroll the same failed roll as long as he has feat points to spend.
- **Run and Gun** – When a character makes a full advance during his turn, he can spend a feat point to move up to twice his SPD in inches instead of his SPD as normal.
- **Shake Continuous Effect** – A character can spend a feat point at the start of his turn to shake a continuous effect, which immediately expires.
- **Shake Knockdown** – A character can spend a feat point at the start of his turn to shake knockdown and immediately stand up.
- **Shake Stationary** – A stationary character can spend a feat point at the start of his turn to cause the stationary status to expire.
- **Sprint** – A character can spend a feat point during a turn in which he incapacitated or destroyed one or more enemy characters with a melee attack. At the end of his turn, he can make a full advance.
- **Two-Fister** – A character with a weapon in each hand can spend a feat point during his turn to attack once with a weapon in each of his hands without an attack roll penalty.
- **Walk It Off** – A character can spend a feat point during his turn to immediately regain d3 + 1 vitality points. If a character suffers damage during his turn, the damage must be resolved before he can use this feat. An incapacitated character cannot use Walk It Off.

AWARDING FEAT POINTS

The awarding of feat points is completely at the discretion of the Game Master; the rules here are merely guidelines. That said, the Game Master should *not* award feat points to characters who are attempting to game the system, such as by making repeated and unnecessary Lore skill rolls for the express purpose of picking up extra feat points.

It is worth keeping in mind that these points are expected to be regularly earned and spent throughout play and that they are a resource characters need to fuel their abilities. Being too stingy with feat points has a stifling effect on the game.

TERRAIN

An endless variety of terrain is found in western Immoren, from simple terrain such as hilly grasslands to more challenging terrain such as jagged rockslides and snowy cliffs. In the game, terrain breaks down into three categories: open, rough, and difficult.

OPEN TERRAIN

Open terrain is any ground that does not present challenges to traverse. Characters move at their full movement rate when traveling through open terrain and can perform actions normally. Examples include grassy plains, barren fields, flat rooftops, dirt roads, gently sloped hillsides, city streets, elevated walkways, sparse forests with little ground cover, and paved surfaces.

ROUGH TERRAIN

Rough terrain is any ground that presents enough of a challenge to slow characters down. As long as any part of his base is in rough terrain, a character moves at half rate. Though a character's movement is slowed in rough terrain, he can still perform actions normally. Rough terrain can take many forms, and it is up to the Game Master to determine when terrain is rough. Some examples include thick brush, jagged rockslides, murky bogs, rain-slicked muddy hills, shallow water, and deep snow.

DIFFICULT TERRAIN

Difficult terrain is so demanding that a character can do nothing else while traversing it. Characters do not use their normal movement to travel through difficult terrain. Instead they must use their skills, equipment, and teamwork. Examples of difficult terrain include cliff faces, oceans, vertical walls, and lava. The Game Master determines when terrain is difficult and what skills can be used to pass through it as well as which actions the characters can still perform while engaged in crossing it.

EXAMPLE: A group of characters must cross a section of fast-moving river rapids, and the Game Master determines the terrain is difficult. He then determines that any character attempting to swim across makes Swimming rolls with a -3 penalty. A rope connects trees on either side of the river, and the Game Master determines that characters can climb across with a target number of 13 for Climbing rolls.


TERRAIN FEATURES

Terrain features can be either natural or man-made objects that affect how characters move and fight across the ground they traverse. Terrain features are virtually limitless in their variety, and they vary in how they affect movement, the type of protection they afford, and any adverse effects they cause. The Game Master decides what qualifies as a terrain feature and how it impacts character movement and combat.

OBSTACLES

An **obstacle** is any terrain feature of waist height that the Game Master determines is durable enough to afford protection. Characters can use obstacles as cover (p. 8) from incoming attacks.

Obstacles are low enough that they can be climbed upon or, in some cases, easily crossed. An obstacle must be at least three feet



(.50") thick, such as a raised platform or the sides of a ziggurat, in order for a character to climb atop and stand on it.

An advancing character suffers a movement penalty when he climbs atop an obstacle. Once the character has contacted the obstacle, he needs to spend 2" of his movement to climb up. A character cannot climb an obstacle if he does not have at least 2" of movement remaining. Place a character who climbs an obstacle on top of it with the front of the character's base making only 1" of forward progress. Once atop an obstacle, the character can continue with the remainder of his movement. Remember that a charging character cannot pay this movement penalty, cannot climb an obstacle, and ends his movement upon contact with the obstacle.

A moving character can descend from an obstacle without penalty.

LINEAR OBSTACLES

An obstacle less than three feet (.5") thick, such as a wall or hedge, is a **linear obstacle**. A non-charging advancing character can cross a linear obstacle at no penalty as long as the character can move completely past it. Otherwise the character must stop short of the linear obstacle. A character cannot partially cross, climb atop, or stand atop a linear obstacle.

OBSTRUCTIONS

An **obstruction** is a terrain feature taller than waist height, such as a high wall or a gigantic boulder. A character cannot move through or climb an obstruction. Like an obstacle, obstructions can provide cover (p. 8) from attacks.

FORESTS

A typical **forest** has many trees and dense underbrush, but any terrain feature that hinders movement and makes a character inside it difficult to see can also be designated a forest. A forest is rough terrain and provides concealment to a character with any part of its base inside the forest's perimeter.

When drawing line of sight to or from a point within a forest, the line of sight can pass through up to eighteen feet (3") of forest without being blocked, but anything more blocks it.

WATER

Depending on its nature, **water** can be hazardous. Water is classified as either shallow or deep relative to the character crossing it. What would be considered shallow water to a skorne would be deep water to a diminutive efaarit.

Characters with the Amphibious ability, such as gatormen and bog trogs, are not negatively affected by water and treat it as open terrain.

SHALLOW WATER

A body of water is considered shallow water when it has a depth of at least knee height. Shallow water is not deep enough to swim in and counts as rough terrain for movement.

DEEP WATER

A body of water is considered deep water if it has a depth of at least waist height.

A character cannot begin a charge or run while in deep water. Characters in water deeper than shoulder height must make Swimming rolls to move. Characters attempting to move without swimming do so at a quarter of their normal movement rate. A character in deep water has his DEF reduced to 7.

LIGHT AND DARKNESS

In bright light conditions such as sunlight or a well-lit room, characters follow all the standard rules for combat, detection, and sneaking. Bright light does not provide any bonuses or penalties. It is the assumed condition for most attacks and skill checks.

In dim light, such as the light of a full moon or a few candles, most characters find it more difficult to attack or detect others but easier to hide from their foes. Characters in dim light gain concealment, granting them +2 DEF against ranged and magic attack rolls. Note that some spells and some attacks ignore the concealment bonus.

Characters in dim light conditions gain a +2 bonus on Sneak rolls.

In the complete darkness of a moonless night or pitch-black chamber, it is even more difficult to see a target and even easier to hide. Characters in complete darkness gain concealment and stealth, meaning that nearby enemies have more difficulty hitting them with ranged or magic attacks and more distant enemies are guaranteed to miss them entirely.

Characters in complete darkness gain a +5 bonus on Sneak rolls.

The Game Master determines whether there is enough light for a character to gain the bonuses of dim light or darkness. There are many different sources of light, from guttering torches to roaring bonfires, that illuminate an area around them. When the Game Master determines how much light a source provides, he describes its effects on the lighting and how far it illuminates.

MAGIC OF THE WILDS

At its most fundamental level, magic is a supernatural energy and medium some rare few can manipulate to create drastic and otherwise impossible changes. The manipulation of magic affects the fabric of reality itself, and those who can wield this power are both uniquely valuable to their allies and exceptionally dangerous to their enemies. Evoking magic takes the stable natural laws governing the world and bends, changes, or breaks them outright.

The most basic and primal magic involves directing flows of raw energy by sheer force of will and nerve. In even its simplest form, magic can evoke blazing conflagrations, manifest lightning storms, mimic winter's freezing grasp, or hurl adversaries away with deadly force. Some individuals are capable of tremendous feats of magic by instinct alone, requiring no lengthy training or years of practice. Others struggle for a lifetime to master the smallest trickle of this power and force it to obey them. Differences in power are often a matter of natural-born talent, ambition, and hard-won experience.

ARCANE TRADITIONS

All spellcasters belong to an arcane tradition that determines how their magic works in play. This book explores two of these traditions, will weavers and harnessers.

Most sorcerers and shamans are **will weavers**, who rely on their own physical stamina and the force of their mental will to summon and direct arcane energy. This process can be incredibly taxing to the shaman's body and mind but allows for the subtle weaving of intricate formulae. For these practitioners, siphoning mystical energy from its source is a taxing but rewarding process, requiring concentration and fortitude. The greater the magical power called upon by the will weaver, the greater the risk as he pushes himself to exhaustion.

Harnessers are warlocks who draw on the power of primal fury generated by warbeasts, specially trained or conditioned animals bonded to the warlock. A harnesser forces his warbeasts to fight beyond their normal capabilities to build up a reserve of fury he can siphon off to power his spells.

DETERMINING YOUR CHARACTER'S TRADITION

A character's arcane tradition determines the rules he uses when spellcasting. All characters with the Gifted archetype begin the game with an arcane tradition. Once determined, a character's arcane tradition does not change.

Unless your character begins the game with the Warlock career, his tradition is will weaver. Characters with the Warlock career have the harnesser tradition.

WILL WEAVERS

Will weavers rely on their force of will to summon and harness arcane energy. They do this by utilizing arcane formulae, often through some combination of thinking, reciting, and reading them. The most important aspect is the mental formulation by which the will is invested in the visualized image of the runes, but complex formulae are difficult to maintain perfectly in the mind without assistance. To create mnemonic associations, most arcane practitioners utilize a variety of techniques, which can include chanting of rote phrases, performing sequences of gestures, and referring to complex written passages and diagrams. Many of these techniques are not strictly necessary to complete a spell, but arcanists find it easiest to perform magic by keeping to techniques they have repeatedly practiced, thereby entering into a meditative state.

As a will weaver works his magic, he generates **fatigue points**. Fatigue represents the mental toll of bending arcane forces to the spellcaster's will. A will weaver who operates within the limits of his capabilities runs little risk of overexerting himself, but one who pushes himself to the limit risks exhaustion, becoming unable to cast spells until he takes a respite.

A will weaver can call upon his magic to cast and upkeep spells and to boost magical attack and magical damage rolls. As he does so, the will weaver generates fatigue points. Provided the will weaver does not exceed his ARC in fatigue points, nothing untoward happens. If the character exceeds his ARC in fatigue points, he must make a fatigue roll to determine if he becomes exhausted. A will weaver cannot exceed double his ARC in fatigue points as a result of casting, upkeeping, or boosting spells.

GAINING FATIGUE POINTS

A will weaver gains fatigue points to:

- **Upkeep a Spell** – A will weaver gains 1 fatigue point for each spell he upkeeps during each Control Phase. If he upkeeps the spell, its effects are maintained.
- **Cast a Spell** – When a will weaver casts a spell, he gains a number of fatigue points equal to the COST of the spell.
- **Boost a Magic Attack or Magic Damage Roll** – Each time a will weaver boosts a magic attack or magic damage roll, he gains 1 fatigue point. Boosting must be declared before rolling any dice for the roll. Remember, a single roll can be boosted only once, but a will weaver can boost as many different rolls as he can afford.
- **Increase the Range of a Spell** – A will weaver can gain 1 fatigue point to increase the RNG of a non-spray spell by thirty feet (5"). Each spell cast can have its RNG extended only once as a result of gaining fatigue.

REMOVING FATIGUE POINTS

Will weavers remove a number of fatigue points equal to their ARC each Maintenance Phase.

FATIGUE ROLLS AND EXHAUSTION

If his fatigue points exceed his ARC, a will weaver must make a fatigue roll immediately after resolving each spell he casts. To make a fatigue roll, roll 2d6. If the total is equal to or higher than the number of fatigue points the will weaver currently has, nothing happens. If the total is less than the number of fatigue points the character has, he becomes exhausted.

When a character becomes exhausted, his turn immediately ends, and he cannot cast spells during the next round.

CONTROL AREA

Gifted characters, both will weavers and harnessers, have **control areas**. A control area is a circular area centered on the character with a radius that extends out from the edge of his base a distance equal to his ARC \times twelve feet (or twice his Arcane stat in tabletop inches). A character is always considered to be in his own control area. When a special rule changes a character's ARC stat, his control area changes accordingly. Some spells use the control area, noted as "CTRL," as their range or area of effect.

A character can measure his control area at any time, measuring the distance from himself to any point within his control area.

WARBEASTS AND CONTROL AREA

A warbeast must be in its controlling warlock's control area to be forced or to channel spells.

SPELL STATISTICS

A spell is defined by the following six statistics:

COST – The cost of the spell.

RNG (Range) – The maximum distance in inches from the spell's caster to its target. A RNG of "SELF" indicates the spell can be cast only on the character casting it. A RNG of "CTRL" indicates the spell uses the spellcaster's control area as its range.

AOE (Area of Effect) – The diameter in inches of the template an AOE spell uses for its effects. A spell with an AOE of "CTRL" is centered on the spellcaster and affects characters in his control area.

POW (Power) – The base amount of damage a spell inflicts. The POW forms the basis of the spell's damage roll. A spell with POW "—" does not cause a damage roll.

RANGE REMINDER

Remember that one inch on the tabletop is the equivalent of six feet.

UP (Upkeep) (Yes/No) – Indicates whether the spell can be maintained. A spellcaster can upkeep only one offensive and one defensive spell at a time, and can upkeep spells outside of his control area to a distance equal to his ARC stat \times 10 in inches.

OFF (Offensive) (Yes/No) – Indicates whether the spell is offensive. An offensive spell requires a successful magic attack roll to hit its target. If the attack roll fails, the attack misses and, unless it is an AOE spell, has no effect.

If a stat is listed as "*" the spell does not use the stat in a normal way and contains special rules relating to that aspect of the spell.

EXAMPLE: A spell that has an AOE but does not use one of the standard 3", 4", or 5" templates would have "" as its AOE stat and include rules explaining how its AOE is measured.*

EXPANDING YOUR ADVENTURES

As you continue your adventures in western Immoren, you can draw on many sources for new antagonists, monsters, equipment, and complete adventures. The following sources offer a diversity of material for you to keep playing *Iron Kingdoms Unleashed* for years to come.

- *Iron Kingdoms Unleashed Roleplaying Game: Core Rules* – This book contains everything you need for wild adventure across western Immoren. With new races, dozens of careers, and pages filled with new alchemy, equipment, magic, and monsters, the core rulebook is your comprehensive source for *Iron Kingdoms Unleashed* material.

- *Iron Kingdoms Unleashed: Skorne Empire* – This book has all you need to know about the vast Skorne Empire and its inhabitants. Detailing the skorne race and their history, culture, traditions, and cities in depth, this resource allows you to play games spanning the entire continent of Immoren for the first time.

- *No Quarter Magazine* – The pages of *No Quarter* contain a vast amount of material for *Iron Kingdoms Unleashed*, with articles providing background details and expansions to the core rulebook.

THE TREASON OF DAKAAN

This free adventure is designed for four Hero-level characters in the Skorne Empire. It puts the players in the roles of a small task force of skorne warriors living in the city of Verskone, one of the major cities of the empire. In service to Domina Ramaja of House Kralest, the player characters (PCs) are sent to deal with an issue that could make Kralest look weak in the eyes of the other houses.

Although *The Treason of Dakaan* is designed for a specific group of pregenerated PCs, it can be adapted for use with most skorne adventuring companies. This scenario includes material adapted from *Iron Kingdoms Unleashed: Skorne Empire*.

PLAYERS, BEWARE!

What follows is meant only for those of the Game Master caste. Others who dare to read ahead risk facing the terror of the Void much sooner than they think.

FOR THE GAME MASTER

The Treason of Dakaan is set in desolate eastern Immoren, where the Skorne Empire is the dominant civilization. The PCs are members of either House Kralest or one of the many houses that have sworn fealty to it. The adventure begins in the compound of House Kralest, soon leading into the unforgiving wilderness beyond the fringes of the empire. Eastern Immoren has long been a harsh land, wracked by desert storms and crawling with savage and powerful beasts.

The PCs' goal is straightforward: to return a priceless sacral stone that has been stolen. Primus Dakaan—brother to Domina Ramaja, the leader of House Kralest—recently forced his way into the house's shrine and stole the sacral stone containing the preserved spirit of Ixdavar, one of the house's greatest exalted ancestors. Dakaan fled west into the Mokkar Desert with a cohort of his warriors. Domina Ramaja has demanded the ancestor's safe return; as for her brother, it matters little to her whether he is brought home for punishment or killed outright and sent to the Void.

What the domina does not know is that Dakaan stole the sacral stone in an attempt to lift a terrible curse from himself.

While journeying home from a distant city, he and his escort of warriors fell victim to a pack of genzoul—vicious undead skorne that hunger for the flesh of the living (see “Genzoul,” p. 36). Plagued with the same hunger and doomed to transform into one of the vile creatures, Dakaan desperately sought a remedy for his condition. When the chymists and chirurgeons of House Kralest could offer no solution, Dakaan turned to the exalted ancestors of his house, powerful elder spirits possessing knowledge beyond that of mortals. Through the aid of an extoller, Aptimus Tormak, the primus communed with the spirit of his ancestor Ixdavar, which told him it knew of a way to lift his curse. Dakaan took the ancestor's sacral stone, kidnapped the extoller, and fled. Through Tormak, Ixdavar guided the primus to a decaying fortress hidden in the mountains of the Clawed Peaks.

SCENE 1: CALL TO ARMS

House Kralest is one of the more significant houses in the skorne city of Verskone, which lies near the southern coast of the Skorne Empire. The house's main compound is a stone structure with broad chambers connected by wide, airy corridors, overlooking the sea and the looming islands to the south.

When the adventure begins, read or paraphrase the following:

Domina Ramaja's soldiers come to each of you in the middle of the night and relay her demand that you present yourselves to her immediately. Taken from your chambers, you are led through the slumbering halls of her great house, now strangely absent of low-caste workers and slaves. Even the Hestations who normally patrol the compound are absent, except for your escorts. Whatever business the domina has with you, she means to keep it private.

One by one you enter the central chamber of the domina's house, a stone room lit by guttering oil lamps. Domina Ramaja rises from her seat, a powerful female with bone piercings in her brows and lips, the lacquered armor of her ancestors gleaming in the firelight. She approaches with the bearing of a general marching forward to accept an enemy's surrender, giving a quick nod to acknowledge your obedience. Her words fill the quiet room.

“A matter of great importance has arisen, one that must be addressed with the utmost caution and discretion.”

Domina Ramaja should reveal that her brother broke into the shrine of House Kralest and stole the sacral stone of Ixdavar, one of the house's greatest ancestors. The domina does not know what her brother intends to do with the venerable exalted contained within the stone, but the theft cannot go unpunished.

Directly addressing only members of the warrior caste, Ramaja explains that the PCs have been tasked with retrieving and safely returning Ixdavar's sacral stone to House Kralest's ancestral shrine as well as bringing her brother back for punishment or delivering him to the Void.

Ramaja answers any questions from the PCs to the best of her ability and conveys any necessary information about the task at hand, but she does not deign to speak directly to those of lower castes. If any member of the worker or slave caste speaks to the domina, one of her Hestatians rebukes him. Questions from such characters must be conveyed through a warrior.

The domina can provide the following information to the PCs:

- A few weeks ago, her brother Dakaan returned to Verskone from a journey to the city of Konesaan. On the way back, he and his escort fought off an attack by raiders in the desert. Although victorious, Dakaan and his warriors all suffered light injuries, and they all spent a good deal of time with House Kralest's surgeons—more than Ramaja would have expected.
- Soon after his return, Dakaan sought communication with the house's ancestors. He enlisted one of the extollers, Aptimus Tormak, to commune with the exalted for him on an almost daily basis.
- Dakaan did not kill anyone when he broke into the shrine, though he did take Aptimus Tormak captive. House Kralest's other extollers are certain Dakaan required the aptimus to communicate with Ixdavar, but they cannot surmise his motives.
- A group of Hestatians intercepted Dakaan's escort as they tried to flee through the western side of the compound. A few of Dakaan's warriors fell in battle, several others were wounded, and one was taken prisoner.

Once the PCs have been briefed and any questions have been answered, Domina Ramaja sets them on their way with a few words of advice. Read or paraphrase the following:

"You may even be able to find information here that will help you better understand whatever drove Dakaan to such treachery. But I would not tarry. My brother made little effort to conceal his tracks, but they will not last long in these winds. If you think the traitor has anything of use to tell you, my soldiers will lead you to where he is held."

GATHERING INFORMATION

If the PCs want to gather information before they head out, their escort will lead them to any of the sites related to Dakaan's actions, including Dakaan's quarters, the house's shrine of exalted ancestors, and the site of the battle between Dakaan's cohort and the Hestatian guards. The Hestatians will also take the PCs to the prisoner if asked. If the PCs delay too long, the Hestatians encourage them to head out before the wind scours their quarry's tracks out of existence.

AREA 1: DAKAAN'S QUARTERS

Dakaan's quarters are on the south side of the compound in a square building set apart from the main compound, isolated and private. When the PCs enter Dakaan's quarters, read or paraphrase the following:

This simple chamber held Dakaan and his cohort of warriors. A pair of terrified slaves bows out of your way to give you access to the room. It is sparsely furnished, with cots for two dozen warriors and weapon stands and armor racks for each. The racks and stands are all empty. Uncharacteristically for skorne warriors, the room is cluttered with dinnerware. Stacks of bronze bowls and various utensils litter the floor.

The numerous bowls and utensils are unusual. Skorne do not typically indulge in gluttony, and the warrior caste is particularly unlikely to do so. If a PC asks about the mess, one of the slaves says Dakaan and his warriors each consumed multiple meals a day, eating as if they had been without food for months. This behavior began after their return from the city of Konesaan several days prior.

A character who searches Dakaan's chamber for at least five minutes can make a PER + Detection skill roll against a target number of 12. If the roll fails, the character can make a new roll after spending another five minutes searching the room. If the roll succeeds, the character discovers that neither Dakaan nor his warriors took any personal possessions with them, only their weapons and armor.

Dakaan's personal possessions include a map of the Clawed Peaks that marks the glorious victories of Ixdavar against a rival house. The site of each battle is clearly indicated on the map. A character with the Lore (house) skill who examines the map will recognize its contents and their significance to House Kralest without a roll. Of particular note is Askara Fortress in the Clawed Peaks, where Ixdavar finally destroyed his enemies and claimed the survivors as his slaves. A character with this map gains a +2 bonus to Tracking or Navigation skill rolls related to locating Dakaan's hideout in the Clawed Peaks. Characters without the Lore (house) skill can identify the locations on the map but cannot determine their significance.

ASKARA FORTRESS

Centuries ago, Askara Fortress was a military redoubt from which troops of paingiver beast handlers and monster hunters were sent into the Mokkar Desert to capture and condition warbeasts. When Dominar Ixdavar crushed Askara's defenders, he collapsed much of the fortress's lower chambers to render it useless to anyone who would defy his house in the generations to come. Now it is all but forgotten, one of a hundred such sites across the Skorne Empire that bear witness to the destruction of a once-great house.



AREA 2: THE ANCESTRAL SHRINE

Sheltered within the heart of the compound, House Kralest's ancestral shrine contains the sacral stones of the house's many exalted. When the PCs enter the shrine, read or paraphrase the following:

You enter a dark chamber lit by coal braziers that fill the space with a fog of incense. Deep stone recesses line all four walls. All but one contain a glowing sacral stone housing one of the exalted ancestors of House Kralest. Two towering black statues at the center of this hallowed room watch you with emotionless faces while a senior extoller stands nearby.

The statues are ancestral guardians. Animated by the spirits of exalted ancestors, they protect their brethren in the shrine. The PCs cannot communicate directly with the ancestors, but they can speak with Senior Aptimus Sarrod, the leading extoller of House Kralest. As senior aptimus, Sarrod is responsible for selecting worthy skorne to join the exalted ancestors after death and overseeing communication between the ancestors and the living members of the house. This privilege is not granted lightly and requires sufficient cause. If any character attempts to interfere with the sacral stones or attack the ancestral guardians or the extoller, the ancestral guardians attack relentlessly.

If a PC asks about the missing sacral stone, Sarrod tells him it contained the spirit of Ixdavar. The senior aptimus is clearly upset about its absence and may become slightly defensive about how it was lost. He explains that he granted Dakaan permission to commune with the ancestors, seeing no reason to deny the house leader's brother such a request. He delegated the task of seeing to Dakaan's needs to Aptimus Tormak, one of his most capable subordinates. Apparently Dakaan spent days communicating with various ancestors, though once he contacted Ixdavar, he spoke to no other.

Sarrod will admit this sort of prolonged communication is unusual. Normally, communicating with an ancestor repeatedly causes the spirit to become irritated and resistant. That Ixdavar deigned to speak with Dakaan multiple times was strange, and Sarrod says he warned Tormak to be careful.

If asked about Ixdavar, the senior extoller reveals he was a great tyrant of House Kralest over thirty generations ago and had claimed substantial territory in the Clawed Peaks.

On further inquiry, Sarrod warms to the topic and tells of how Ixdavar once confronted and destroyed a pack of genzoul—debased, undead cannibals—and afterward devoted himself to a deeper study of mortitheurgy, becoming a master of the art before his death. Sarrod conveys his eagerness to see the sacral stone returned to his safekeeping and, to a lesser extent, to see his subordinate Tormak rescued and returned.



AREA 3: THE BATTLE SITE

On the western edge of the compound, Dakaan and his warriors fought their way through a group of Hestatians who attempted to stop them and recover the sacral stone. The bodies of the fallen were pulled into the shelter of the compound's western wall so House Kralest's surgeons could examine them.

When the PCs approach the battle site, read or paraphrase the following:

You come upon the site of a grisly battle. Large pools of dried blood show where Dakaan's Praetorians met a taberna of Hestatians. The bodies of over a dozen Hestatians and three Praetorians have been dragged near one of the compound's walls, where the light of oil lanterns illuminates their waxy features. Peering and probing, three surgeons move from body to body like hungry flies.

The bodies of the Hestatians and Dakaan's Praetorians are lined up in a row. Their wounds indicate a sudden and fierce battle. After the surgeons have finished their examinations, the Hestatians cut off each Praetorian's head. A character can make an INT + Lore (undead) skill roll against a target number of 10 to recognize this behavior as protection against the *karovoul*, a ravening hunger known to afflict skorne under certain circumstances.

The bodies of several Hestatians bear bite marks and large wounds, as if a hungry animal tore away chunks of their flesh. The bodies of the Praetorians bear similar marks, though older and beginning to heal. A character can make an INT + Investigation skill roll against a target number of 10 to identify skorne as the source of the bite marks on the Hestatians. If no character attempts this roll, one of the surgeons announces the fact after a short while or after a member of a higher caste prompts him to reveal what he knows.

Checking the mouths of the dead Praetorians reveals blood on their teeth and scraps of flesh wedged between them. There are wounds on their backs, indicating they were killed as they stopped to feast on the flesh of fallen Hestatians.

AREA 4: THE PRISONER

The Praetorian taken prisoner after the attack at the compound's western edge was dragged off to the kophar cattle pens and put in chains. The Hestatians left him there while they informed Domina Ramaja of what transpired.

When the PCs approach the pens, read or paraphrase the following:

As you approach the cattle pens, the unmistakable scent of blood flows on the wind, and the wet sounds of tearing tissue emanate from the darkened stone building. Lowing in agitation, the kophar stamp their broad hooves and rattle the barbed chains that hold them in place.

Characters who enter the cattle pen see one of the long-horned, thick-skinned kophar cattle on its side, its throat torn out. The Praetorian prisoner strains against his chains as he buries his face in the throat of the dead beast and chokes down great mouthfuls of flesh.

The Hestatians are horrified and want to kill the Praetorian immediately. A PC can make an Intimidation skill roll to make them stand down, or a member of the warrior caste can simply instruct them to do so. Otherwise, the Hestatians attack the Praetorian with their spears, requiring dozens of spear thrusts to finally kill him. Though the prisoner is clearly deranged and mad with hunger—he has already gnawed away much of his own lips—he can still provide useful information to the PCs if the Hestatians do not kill him first. It costs him great effort to speak coherently and to remember things he has experienced.

- His name is Rakath, and he has been a loyal warrior to House Kralest his whole life.
- He and his brothers-in-arms have been growing hungrier by the day no matter how much they eat.
- A few were ready to give up hope and flee into the desert to succumb to their fate, but Dakaan said the ancestors had shown him another way.

Extracting additional information from Rakath requires a successful Interrogation skill roll against a target number of 13. He reveals one of the following pieces of information for each successful roll:

- On the return from Konesaan, Rakath and the others were ambushed at night by a group of crazed slaves in ragged clothes. Surprisingly strong and difficult to kill, the slaves fought with their bare hands and teeth like wild beasts. In the days after the attack everyone who was injured grew increasingly hungry, making it difficult to think clearly, much less focus on the tenets of *hoksune*.
- Dakaan regrets any violence that results from their plan, but he and his Praetorians cannot allow this affliction to overcome them. If it does, Dakaan fears they will become something far, far worse.
- Dakaan and any surviving warriors had planned to head into the desert to the abandoned Askara Fortress, following the instructions of the ancestor spirits.

Before the PCs leave, the wounded Rakath twists hard against his restraints and looks one of them in the eyes, saying:

"East of the city. In the night. The crazed ones attacked us. We killed them, but they infected us. Dakaan said he could help us. The mortitheurges could. Dakaan was wrong."

The last thing Rakath does before the PCs leave is plead with them to cut off his head and send him into the Void. He says what awaits him there no longer holds any power over him; he has endured his own ultimate torments in the world of the living. If the PCs do not do so, shortly after they leave they hear the sound of a Hestatian guard striking the killing blow.

SETTING OUT

Once the PCs gather as much information as they feel they need, they must hunt down Dakaan and his surviving cohort. If the PCs collected the map from Dakaan's chambers, they likely know where the renegade tyrant is headed: a stronghold in the Clawed Peaks west of Verskone. If the PCs did not find the map, they must follow the tracks Dakaan's force left behind.

The Hestatians are under orders to provide the PCs with any reasonable aid. They cannot give the PCs warbeasts (and will scorn them for suggesting they need such valuable resources to deal with a small force of traitors), but they will provide ample food, water, ammunition, and similar supplies.

If a warrior caste character requests mounts for their journey, the Hestatians will provide them with ferox: scaly, catlike creatures the skorne use as battle mounts. Their handler will warn they are dangerous creatures, not suitable for untrained riders; still, the house's need is great enough to overlook this for the time being.

To ride a ferox, a character must make a successful Animal Handling skill roll against a target number of 11. A character can use either STR or INT for this roll, depending on whether the character is attempting to physically dominate the ferox or is using more refined methods of coercion. If the roll fails, the ferox makes a single MAT 7, POW 12 attack against the character, after which the character can try again. A character who uses STR for this roll must make an additional Animal Handling roll the first time he mounts the ferox each day.

Note that none of the pregenerated characters are skilled at riding ferox in battle, so the mounts will be more of a hindrance than a benefit if they attempt to do so. The PCs will need to dismount and leave them behind before joining battle. Failure to do so results in a mounted PC being violently bucked from the ferox's back at the beginning of combat. A character thrown from a ferox suffers a POW 12 damage roll and is knocked down.



SCENE 2: JOURNEY INTO THE WEST

With orders from the domina to locate Dakaan's cohort and retrieve the sacral stone, the PCs set out west across the grasslands. Their journey will take five days on foot or two days if the PCs acquired mounts from House Kralest. Along the way, the terrain shifts from the sheltered cool of Verskone and the coast to the hot, arid sands of the Mokkar Desert. The grey stone ramparts of the Clawed Peaks are visible on the western horizon.

As they travel, the PCs come across small families of nomadic skorne who claim to have witnessed the passing of Dakaan's Praetorians several days earlier. They also catch sight of wild desert raptors circling overhead, then striking swiftly at small prey on the sands below. The PCs may even hear tortured howls at night, the cries of mercifully distant void spirits. These malevolent specters are undead skorne souls that have spilled from the Void back into Caen. Full of hate for all living things, void spirits are a reminder of the agonies that await the skorne after death.

Once the PCs are about halfway to their destination, near the eastern fringe of the Clawed Peaks, they spy a group of four wild cyclopes in the distance.

THE CYCLOPES

The bodies of four fallen Praetorian karax from Dakaan's force lie near the cyclopes, and the traitor's trail leads directly toward them. The cyclopes do not notice the PCs at first. As the PCs get

closer, they see the cyclopes appear to have been injured in recent battle. Though the cyclopes are wearing little besides tattered furs and have only primitive weapons, they are obviously still extremely dangerous.

The PCs know the creatures would be a fine addition to House Kralest's forces and subduing them without doing much harm would gain them favor in the domina's eyes. Cyclopes are very intelligent compared to most other creatures enslaved by skorne as warbeasts, and they can be trained to wear armor and wield weapons, serving as formidable assets in a house army.

The PCs can also simply circumvent the cyclopes if they wish to avoid a fight like the one that claimed the lives of the four Praetorians. Doing so will force them off the trail, requiring a successful PER + Tracking skill roll against a target number of 14 to pick it up again once they have passed the cyclopes. Taking such a detour also puts the PCs in the path of a cutting gale, a dangerous type of intense sandstorm that blows in from the Stormlands to the west (see "Skill Encounter: The Cutting Gale," p. 25).

Unless they are taking extreme measures to conceal their approach, when the PCs come within about 120 feet (20") the cyclopes ready themselves for a fight. If the PCs come any closer or take any hostile action, the cyclopes attack; otherwise, they remain on their guard and try to drive the PCs off with a combination of violent posturing and unintelligible bellowing.



COMBAT ENCOUNTER: EYE-OPENER

Hero-Level Combat Encounter

Encounter Points: 48

Adversaries: 4 cyclopes (see "Cyclopes," p. 34)

ENEMY TACTICS

All four cyclopes were injured by Dakaan's group, rendering them particularly hostile to skorne characters. Once aware of the PCs, the cyclopes fight to destroy them or drive them off. The cyclopes fight as a unit, moving to defend the fallen and teaming up on the most dangerous PCs. Once three of them are disabled, the fourth flees into the desert.

TERRAIN

The battle takes place in open, grassy terrain. A few boulders dot the area, and the four bodies of Dakaan's warriors lie in the center, crushed by the cyclopes' clubs.

The PCs begin within 3" of the map's right edge.

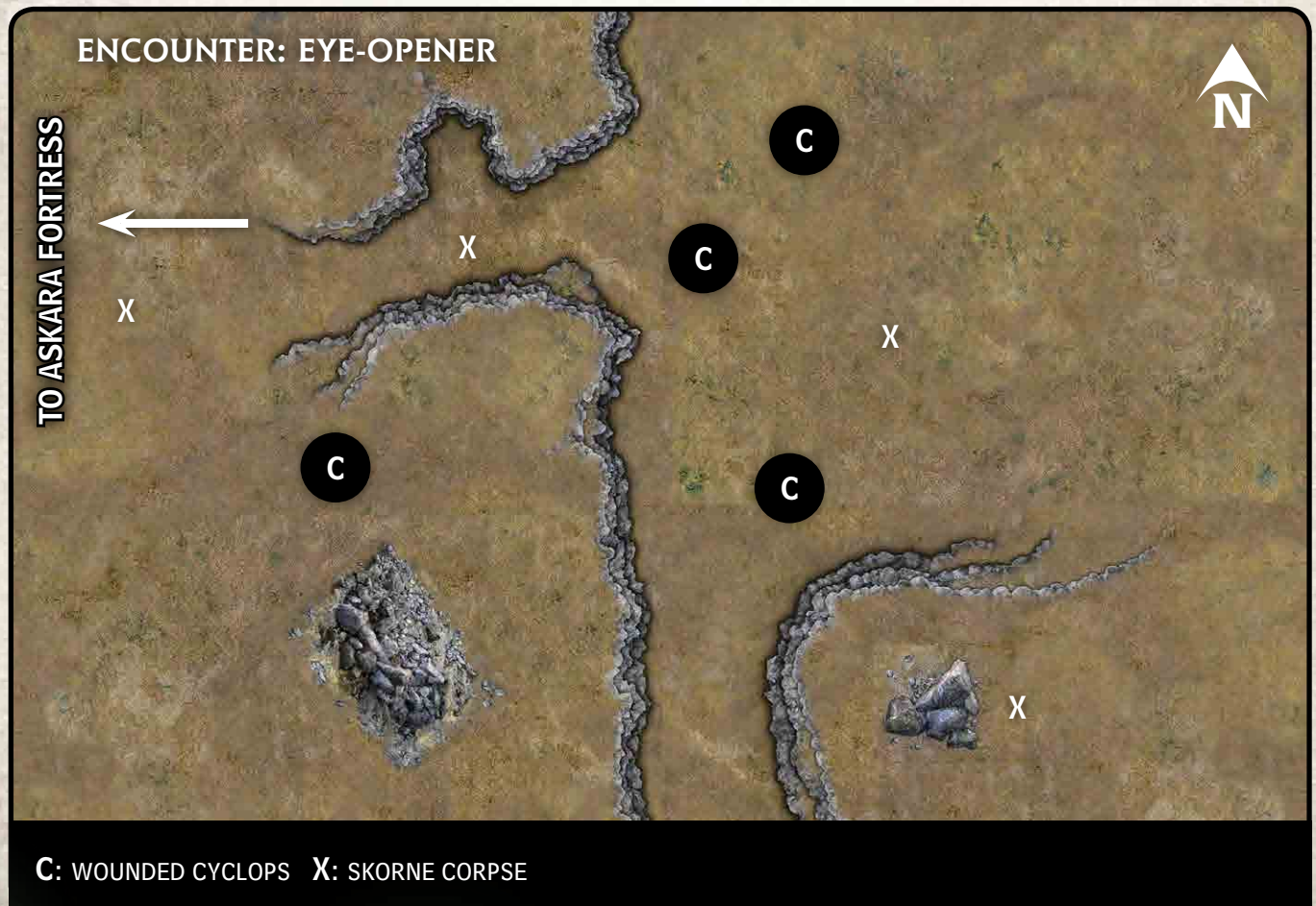
Boulders: A character within six feet (1") of a boulder can spend a quick action to gain solid cover behind it. Solid cover grants +4 DEF against ranged attacks and +2 DEF against melee attacks that originate on the other side of the cover.


Karax Bodies: Each of the four bodies wears the armor of a Praetorian karax. Their spears and shields lie nearby. The first character who spends a quick action searching the bodies finds a set of barbed beast restraints hanging from one of their belts. Each body bears the symbol of House Kralest. Members of the warrior caste, particularly any Praetorians, recognize these fallen skorne as loyal members of the house. A character who examines the bodies can make an INT + Medicine skill roll against a target number of 12. If the roll succeeds, the character discerns that the Praetorians are gaunt and malnourished; moreover, the degree of their starvation far outstrips the amount of time they were traveling; it is as if they had been wasting away for weeks or months rather than mere days.

If the PCs met with the captured Praetorian earlier, they recognize this as the same degree of starvation he suffered; if not, a character can make an INT + Lore (undead) skill roll to determine what he knows about genzoul (see "Lore," p. 37).

AFTERMATH

Any disabled cyclops is grievously injured and will die in eight rounds unless stabilized. A character can stabilize an injured cyclops by making a successful INT + Medicine skill roll against a target number of 14. At the Game Master's discretion, a cyclops can suffer from other injuries instead, such as a broken or missing limb. A stabilized cyclops can be bound or otherwise restrained for later recovery and delivery to Domina Ramaja.





If a PC discovers the beast restraints, he can use them on one cyclops. While wearing the restraints, the cyclops cannot run or charge, and a character who interacts with it gains a +1 bonus on Animal Handling skill rolls because of the barbs cutting into the creature's flesh. A restrained cyclops does not know how to fight alongside the PCs, but it can be led around once it is stabilized.

The PCs may choose to leave a restrained cyclops behind to retrieve later. A character can make a PER + Survival roll against a target number of 10 to identify several rocky buttes fifty yards to the south with enough shade and shelter that a cyclops can safely be left there overnight.

SKILL ENCOUNTER: THE CUTTING GALE

If the PCs choose to avoid the cyclopes, they must move north into the massive Mokkar Desert. Parched and inhospitable, the Mokkar is also wracked by strong winds from the Stormlands to the west. These winds can produce cutting gales—sandstorms so powerful they carry sharp stone shards that can slice open unarmored flesh.

As the PCs venture north, read or paraphrase the following:

You move into the desert to avoid the cyclopes, marching over the shifting, sun-beaten sands. As you travel, a sharp wind tugs at your clothing, quickly building in strength. Soon dark clouds of sand billow to the north as a great sandstorm whips toward you.

A character can make a PER + Survival skill roll against a target number of 10 to identify the storm as a cutting gale and realize the danger it poses. The PCs have one round before the storm is upon them. Between the dunes lie scattered stones and depressions that can shelter the PCs from the storm.

Once the PCs are engulfed by the storm, their line of sight is cut drastically. To spot anything more than twelve feet (2") away, a character must make a successful PER + Detection skill roll against a target number of 12. Characters who attempt Tracking skill rolls or Navigation skill rolls must roll one fewer die while in the gale, which obscures all tracks and blots out all visible reference points.

CUTTING GALE RULES

A cutting gale lasts for $d3 + 3$ hours. Characters who choose to wait out the storm in shelter become partially buried in sand, and vulnerable equipment, weapons, and supplies may become compromised. Roll a d6. On a roll of 1 or 2, a randomly determined chymical item, food ration, or piece of gear is fouled with sand and either damaged or rendered unusable.

A character in a cutting gale moves at half his normal speed due to the strong winds and the irregular, sandy terrain. A character who ends his turn in a cutting gale with any exposed skin suffers $d3$ points of damage.

To navigate free of a cutting gale, a character must make three successful PER + Navigation skill rolls against a target number of 14, spending a full action each time. The successes do not have to be rolled consecutively. If a roll fails, the character

may roll again on his next turn. Any character led by another character within six feet (1") does not need to make Navigation skill rolls to get clear of the storm.

AFTERMATH

Once the PCs deal with the cyclopes or the cutting gale, the rest of their journey into the Clawed Peaks continues without incident. Following Dakaan's trail leads them to the ancient Askara Fortress, carved into the rock of the eastern peaks.

When the PCs arrive at the fortress, read or paraphrase the following:

Dakaan's trail threads between the mountains' stretching fingers into a steep canyon of dry desert sage and parched stone. To the south, the dark stone of the mountain shimmers in a haze of heat. Two high peaks cradle a flat stone edifice. Rough stairs carved into the rock lead from the canyon floor to the structure's main entryway. Two crumbling watchtowers, pocked with chymical scars from shells launched during a war fought here centuries ago, sit atop pillars of stone to the east and west.

SCENE 3: ASKARA FORTRESS

Having tracked Dakaan and his cohort to an ancient fortress hidden in the eastern Clawed Peaks, the PCs are ready to confront the traitorous brother of their domina and recover the ancestor he stole. The main façade of Askara is boxy, carved from the mountain rock, with curling parapets along its upper edge. In the rugged stone to the east and west, two watchtowers jut up, their top levels crumbling.

The PCs can enter the fortress through the main entrance or through one of the crumbling watchtowers. The towers are harder to reach, but they allow the PCs to circumvent a group of warriors Dakaan posted to intercept intruders.

ROLEPLAYING/COMBAT ENCOUNTER: MAIN ENTRANCE

Hero-Level Combat Encounter (optional)

Encounter Points: 25

Adversaries: 4 Praetorian karax, 1 Praetorian swordsman

The main entry to Askara Fortress is a square passage cut into the rock of the mountain face. A flight of stairs just inside the chamber leads down into the fortress. A group of five Praetorian karax stands guard inside the passage. Dakaan ordered these skorne to repel the PCs (see "Praetorian Karax," p. 31), but the ravenous hunger caused by their condition leaves them off guard when the PCs approach. If attacked, the Praetorians attempt to close ranks and fight off the PCs.

At the Game Master's discretion, the PCs can attempt to talk their way past the sentries. Though plagued with hunger due to the infection, the Praetorians are still skorne warriors and loyal to House Kralest, and most of them regret the death of the Hestatians who tried to stop their flight from the compound. This gambit should be difficult, since letting the PCs reach Dakaan condemns the Praetorians to become genzoul cannibals, but a PC

who comes up with a strong argument or appeals to the sentries as honorable warriors may be able to sway them.

The target number for any social roll to convince the Praetorians to stand down depends on the PC's approach. Attempts using skills like Intimidation or Deception have a target number of 15, while direct and honest attempts using Command, Negotiation, or Oratory have a target number of 13. If the roll succeeds, the Praetorians step aside and allow the PCs through. If the roll fails, the sentries are committed to the cause and must be defeated in combat before the PCs can pass.

The main entrance leads past old barracks and warbeast pens and up toward the main hall of the fortress. The passages are thick with dust and debris. Only scraps remain to indicate this site was once home to a large force of skorne.

CRUMBLING TOWERS

Two crumbling sentry towers stand on either side of the fortress, approximately one hundred feet to the east and west of the main entrance. The upper levels have collapsed, leaving piles of rubble near each tower's base. A character can attempt to scale a tower by making an AGL + Climbing skill roll against a target number of 13. If the roll succeeds, the character makes it to the top of the tower. If the roll fails, the character can try again during his next round.

Each tower contains a flight of spiraling stone steps leading down into the fortress. Long, narrow passages wind from the

towers through side chambers toward the fortress's main hall. As the PCs travel through the side chambers, they find the bodies of three Praetorians laid to rest inside, their emaciated bodies covered in seemingly self-inflicted bite wounds. These skorne were members of Dakaan's escort who succumbed to the ravaging. At the Game Master's discretion, these corpses can rise later as genzoul and join the final encounter (see "Combat Encounter: The Genzoul Arise," p. 28)—unless the PCs decapitate the bodies. Otherwise, Dakaan and his escort have already decapitated the bodies to prevent them from rising up.

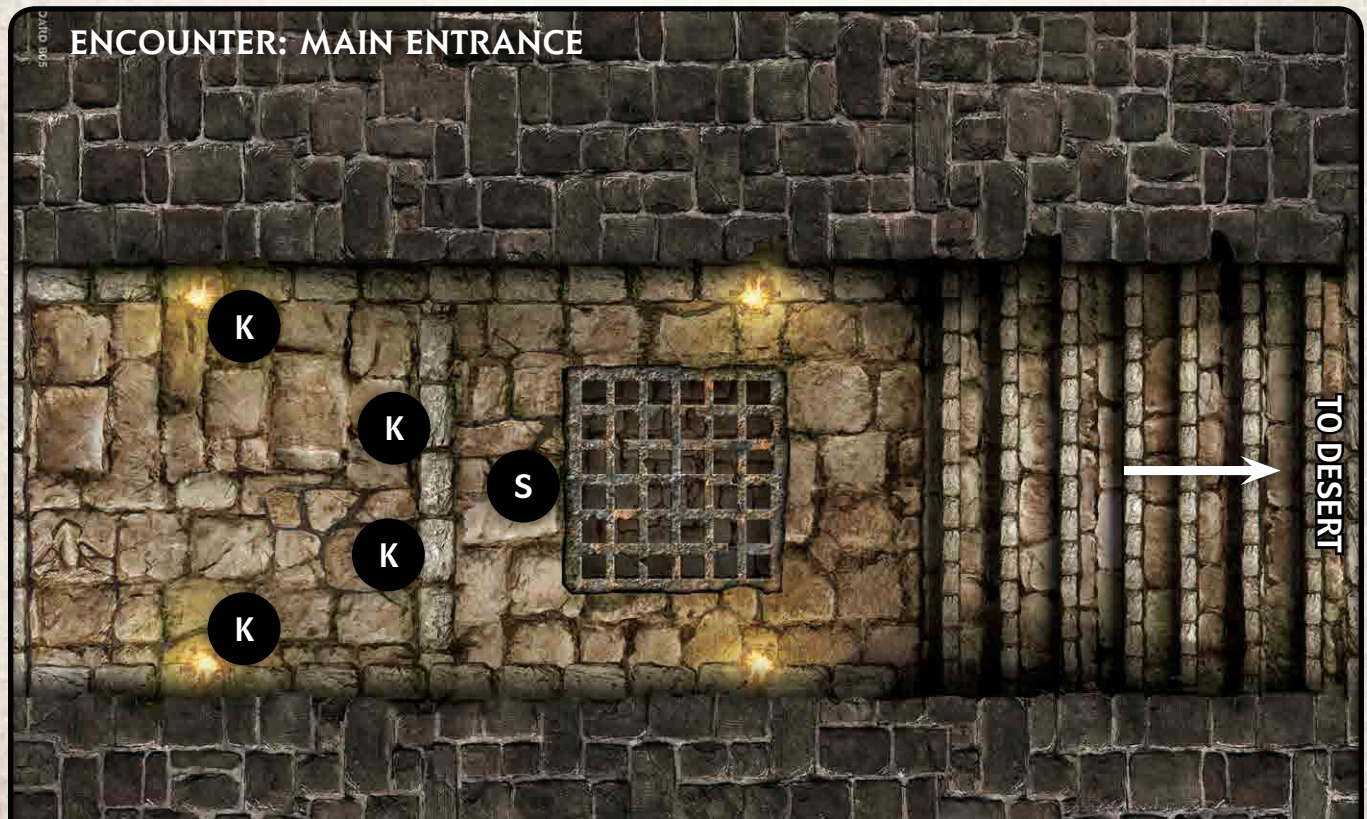
PCs who enter the fortress by climbing the towers avoid the patrol at the main entrance and enter the final encounter at one of the side passages.

THE MAIN HALL

As the PCs make their way into the heart of Askara Fortress, they hear two voices—one weary and desperate, the other sonorous and commanding—engaged in conversation. The sound reverberates through the stone corridors that lead away from the main hall.

Whether the PCs approach the main hall from the northern, eastern, or western passage depends on the route they chose when entering the fortress. Characters who entered through the main entrance arrive at the northern passage, while those who descended from one of the towers arrive at the corresponding passage.

ENCOUNTER: MAIN ENTRANCE



K: PRAETORIAN KARAX S: PRAETORIAN SWORDSMAN

When the PCs approach the main hall, read or paraphrase the following:

The passage opens into a large chamber of dark stone with a high, vaulted ceiling. Inside the chamber are several skorne. Four lie dead on the ground; the rest watch as Primus Dakaan and an extoller engage in a heated argument. The extoller carries an ancestor's sacral stone. Both the stone and the extoller's crystal eye glow brightly, a sign that the extoller speaks with the long-dead exalted spirit's voice, not his own.

If the PCs take a moment to listen to the conversation, they learn the ancestor told Dakaan this place held the key to undoing the horrible affliction that has befallen him and his cohort. Speaking through Aptimus Tormak, Ixdavar reveals that his only desire was to lead Dakaan far from Verskone so he would not tarnish the name Kralest by becoming a genzoul. In the bones of the old fortress, the unliving abominations will not be a direct threat to the city of Verskone or to House Kralest.

As the two speak, the PCs have time to see how deeply the other members of the cohort are afflicted by their condition. Some take ragged bites out of their own flesh and gulp them down; others, trembling with hunger and fatigue, grind their teeth loudly enough to be heard across the chamber. A character can make an INT + Medicine skill roll against a target number of 13 to recognize that these skorne have less than an hour before the affliction consumes them fully.

Once the PCs learn of Ixdavar's deception, read or paraphrase the following:

Speaking with the booming voice of the exalted ancestor Ixdavar, the extoller turns his head toward you, his glowing oculus filling the room with light. "I am not the only one who wishes to stop you from sullyng the honor of your house. Domina Ramaja has sent her own weapons to cut you down like beasts."

Confusion flashes across Dakaan's face, and then his hands snap to his swords. "Let them try."

There is no possibility of the PCs hiding from the piercing sight of the extoller's oculus, which sees not the physical world but rather the luminance of spiritual essence itself. Through Tormak's eye, nothing is hidden from Ixdavar.

ROLEPLAYING/COMBAT ENCOUNTER: HARSH TRUTH

Hero-Level Roleplaying/Combat Encounter

Encounter Points: 45

Adversaries: Primus Dakaan, 2 Praetorian swordsmen, 3 Praetorian karax, 2 Venator slingers

PCs that enter from the main entrance start within 3" of the map's right edge. PCs that enter from the towers start in the marked area.

Ixdavar's threat eliminates any chance the PCs had at a surprise attack. When the PCs enter the main hall, Dakaan and cohort ready their weapons and confront them. Recognizing the PCs as members of House Kralest, Dakaan understands his sister

has sent them to recover the sacral stone and perhaps to destroy him. The primus proclaims that his sister does not understand what she is dealing with and commands the PCs to stand down or prepare to face the Void.

NEGOTIATING WITH DAKAAN

Though he is incensed by Ixdavar's betrayal and mentally unbalanced by the disease raging within him, Dakaan is not yet wholly insane or unreasonable. A member of the warrior caste can appeal to his sense of honor and his adherence to the hoksune code. A character can make a Negotiation skill roll against a target number of 16 or a Command skill roll against a target number of 14 to convince Dakaan stand down. If the character points out that fleeing from one's fate is against the warrior' code, he gains a +2 bonus to the roll.

If the roll succeeds, Dakaan instructs his warriors to put away their weapons. If the roll fails, the PCs can adjust their approach and try one more time. A second failure enrages Dakaan, who suspects the PCs are trying to buy time to mount a larger attack (see "Fighting Dakaan," below).

If the PCs successfully negotiate with Dakaan, he fights by their side when the genzoul arise (see "Combat Encounter: The Genzoul Arise," p. 28).

FIGHTING DAKAAN

If the PCs fail to negotiate with Dakaan or choose to fight him, the Praetorians each charge to engage the closest warrior. Knowing his condition cannot be cured, Dakaan throws himself into the combat with abandon in the hope of dying before the disease turns him into a genzoul. He and his cohort fight to the death. The cohort consists of experienced warriors who know how to fight together effectively, the karax defending the group's flanks while the swordsmen strike from the center.

TERRAIN

The encounter includes the following terrain.

Columns: The four stone columns in the middle of the room are obstructions that provide cover.

Dais: Characters on the dais where Dakaan and Tormak stand are considered elevated attackers and elevated targets in relation to characters on the hall's main level.

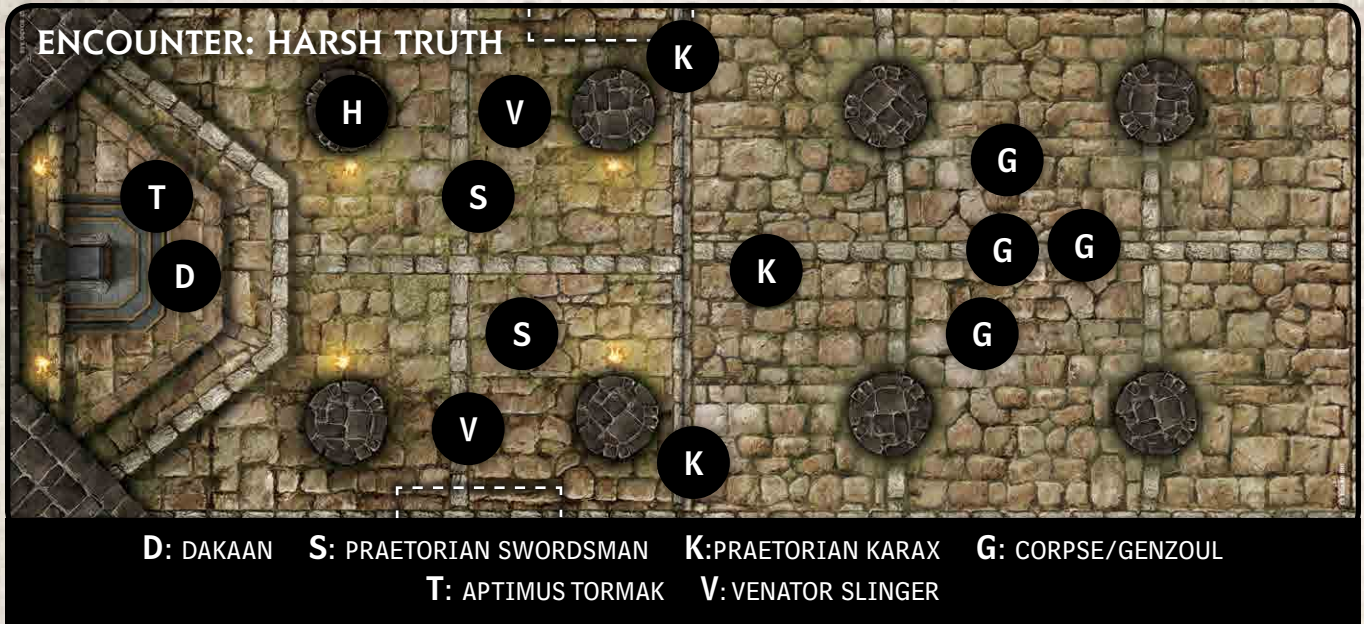
Dim Light: Aside from a few guttering torches, the chamber is poorly lit. Each torch provides dim light up to 36 feet (6").

AFTERMATH

Once all the afflicted skorne fall in combat, Ixdavar speaks again through Aptimus Tormak to instruct the PCs to cut off the heads of all the fallen, including those who died before the PCs entered the chamber.

Unfortunately, the ancestor's warning comes too late. Before the PCs can carry out Ixdavar's instructions, the four skorne who succumbed to the disease before the battle begin to rise. The Game Master may want to have additional genzoul enter from the side chambers leading to the main hall.

ENCOUNTER: HARSH TRUTH



D: DAKAAN **S:** PRAETORIAN SWORDSMAN **K:** PRAETORIAN KARAX **G:** CORPSE/GENZOUL
T: APTIMUS TORMAK **V:** VENATOR SLINGER

COMBAT ENCOUNTER: THE GENZOUL ARISE

Hero-Level Combat Encounter

Encounter Points: 40

Adversaries: 4 genzoul

When the genzoul rise, read or paraphrase the following:

With a sickening sound, four of the dead Praetorians twist and writhe as they rise from the floor to their feet. Their eyes shine with a hungry malice as they slowly work their jaws and bare their teeth like fangs. Seeing living flesh in the room, the gaunt creatures let loose a shrill scream and attack.

Having succumbed to the ravening, the four dead Praetorians on the floor rise up as genzoul. Each of these creatures attacks the closest target, caring little if the target is a former comrade or a PC. Each genzoul fights on its own with no concern for how the others fare. If a genzoul destroys its target, it must use the Snacking ability if it can.

TERRAIN

This encounter uses the same terrain features described in “Harsh Truth,” above.

AFTERMATH

Once the genzoul are destroyed, Ixdavar praises the PCs for their prowess in battle and their skill in destroying the abominations that wear the crest of his noble house. The ancestor informs the member of the warrior caste who comported himself most bravely in the battle that his actions did not go unnoticed and the senior aptimus will be informed. Upon his safe return to the ancestral shrine in House Kralest, Ixdavar will inform the extollers to keep an eye on this warrior, giving him a greater chance at becoming exalted should he fall in battle. Ixdavar

then abandons communication with Aptimus Tormak, leaving the extoller a grateful survivor of the battle.

If the PCs managed to negotiate with Dakaan—and if he survived the battle—the primus approaches one of them. This is likely a member of the warrior caste, but it should be the PC who had the greatest hand in convincing Dakaan during the negotiation.

When Dakaan approaches the PC, read or paraphrase the following:

Despite his sickly pallor, Primus Dakaan is noble and calm as he approaches you. Surrendering his weapons, he says, “You have fought well, and you deserve whatever rewards my sister bestows. Those were brave warriors once—true followers of hoksune—but this affliction degraded them. I will not allow House Kralest to suffer another of its warriors becoming such a thing.”

Dakaan asks the PCs to destroy him before he succumbs to the ravening. If they refuse or attempt to bring him back alive to House Kralest, the primus expires from the disease during the return trip and becomes a genzoul unless his corpse is beheaded (see “Death Rise” ability, p. 37). A risen Dakaan will break free of his captors if necessary and flee into the desert to plague the region and infect other skorne, beginning the cycle anew.

If the PCs elect to fulfill Dakaan’s request and cut off his head, he dies stoically, seemingly at peace. Dakaan’s sacrifice moves Aptimus Tormak to preserve the essence of the fallen primus, capturing his spirit in a temporary sacral stone.

If the PCs failed to negotiate with Dakaan or attacked him instead, the primus and his cohort will rise as genzoul within a few days unless the PCs decapitate the corpses. If the PCs do not take this step, the Game Master can have the genzoul attack the PCs during their return to Verskone or use them in a future adventure.



CONCLUSION

Having confronted Dakaan and faced off against the ravenous genzoul, any surviving characters can make the journey back to House Kralest. Returning Ixdavar's sacral stone and Aptimus Tormak puts them in the good graces of both Domina Ramaja and Senior Aptimus Sarrod, who can reward the PCs with better accommodations, new weapons and armor, or any other benefits the Game Master deems appropriate.

Should Aptimus Tormak return with Dakaan's spirit intact, the extoller will petition for it to be transferred into a permanent sacral stone. He will ask the characters to speak on Dakaan's behalf to the senior aptimus. If they do so, this petition is guaranteed to succeed and each character gains Connections (exalted ancestor).

If the PCs managed to secure one or more cyclopes, the domina takes special note. House Kralest's beast handlers will condition these creatures to become warbeasts, which will contribute greatly to the military power of House Kralest and increase the prestige of the PCs within the house.

Optional: To give the players a taste for earning experience as part of a longer campaign, the Game Master can summarize the XP they would earn for this session (1 XP each as a play award and 1 XP each as a teamwork award). At the Game Master's option, achieving a major goal, such as recovering Ixdavar's sacral stone, could result in a milestone award for another XP, or 1 to 3 extra XP if it marks the end of a major storyline.

Seeing that the PCs have earned valuable experience, Domina Ramaja may determine their prowess would be better used elsewhere in the Empire, perhaps sending them west to join the Archdomina's invading forces. Alternately she can assign them similar tasks in the future, using them as a specialist task force to advance the interests of House Kralest within the east.

ANTAGONISTS

Through the course of the adventure the PCs will encounter several NPC antagonists. Some are misguided fellow skorne, while others are savage, unthinking monsters that yearn to feast on their flesh.

PRIMUS DAKAAN

PHYSIQUE	PHY	7
SPEED	SPD	7
STRENGTH	STR	7
AGILITY	AGL	4
PROWESS	PRW	5
POISE	POI	5
INTELLECT	INT	4
ARCANE	ARC	2
PERCEPTION	PER	4

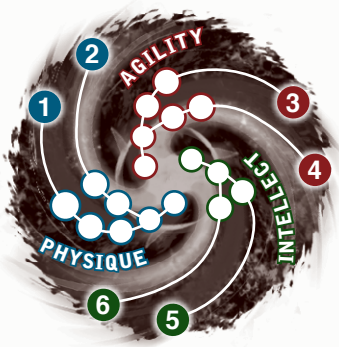


PRAETORIAN SWORD

MAT	POW	P+S
7	3	10

Combo Strike: Instead of attacking with each weapon separately during his turn, this character can strike with both blades simultaneously. Make one attack roll. If the attack hits, double the POW of the weapon when resolving the damage roll.

INITIATIVE	INIT	16
DEFENSE	DEF	13 (PRAETORIAN PLATE -2)
ARMOR	ARM	15 (PRAETORIAN PLATE +8)
WILLPOWER	WIL	10



COMMAND RANGE: 6

BASE SIZE: SMALL

ENCOUNTER POINTS: 10

ABILITIES:

Feat Point – This character starts each encounter with 1 feat point. He is allocated 1 feat point at the start of each of his turns. He can have up to 1 feat point at a time.

First to Fight – This character gains an additional die on initiative rolls. Drop the low die of each roll.

Overtake – When this character destroys one or more enemies with a melee attack during his turn, after the attack is resolved he can immediately advance up to six feet (1').

EQUIPMENT

Praetorian plate armor,
Praetorian sword (x2)

SKILLS:

NAME	STAT	+	RANK	=	TOTAL
Command	SOC		2		•
Detection	PER		2		6
Hand Weapon	PRW		2		7
Intimidation	SOC		2		•
Lore (hoksune)	INT		2		6

As Primus, Dakaan is a distinguished warrior known for his dedication to his house and the warrior code of *hoksune*. He leads a small, practiced unit of Praetorians that act as his personal guardians in warfare and against the danger of rival assassins. His skill as a leader is well known in House Kralest, as is his talent as a swordsman.

Dakaan acts as a liaison between Domina Ramaja and her allies in other cities, traveling throughout the eastern cities of the Skorne Empire. On the most recent journey, a pack of genzouls attacked Dakaan and his warriors. The skorne prevailed, but not before all were infected. Now Dakaan seeks a cure for their shared affliction before it consumes them all.



PRAETORIAN KARAX

PHYSIQUE	PHY	5
SPEED	SPD	6
STRENGTH	STR	5
AGILITY	AGL	3
PROWESS	PRW	5
POISE	POI	4
INTELLECT	INT	3
ARCANE	ARC	1
PERCEPTION	PER	3



KARAX SHIELD		
MAT	POW	P+S
6	0	5

Abilities: The character gains +1 ARM against attacks originating in his front arc.



PIKE		
MAT	POW	P+S
6	4	9

Abilities: The character gains +2 on charge attack rolls with this weapon.

INITIATIVE	INIT	14
DEFENSE	DEF	10
(PRAETORIAN PLATE -2)		
ARMOR	ARM	13
(PRAETORIAN PLATE +8)		
WILLPOWER	WIL	8

VITALITY: 7
COMMAND RANGE: 3
BASE SIZE: SMALL
ENCOUNTER POINTS: 5

ABILITIES:

Defensive Line - While this character is B2B with one or more friendly characters, he gains +1 ARM. While this character is B2B with one or more friendly characters who also have this ability, the bonus increases to +2.

Girded - This character does not suffer blast damage. Friendly characters B2B with this character do not suffer blast damage.

EQUIPMENT

Karax shield, pike, Praetorian plate

SKILLS:

NAME	STAT	+	RANK	=	TOTAL
Detection	PER		1		4
Great Weapon	PRW		1		6
Lore (hoksune)	INT		1		4
Shield	PRW		1		6

Wielding long pikes and heavy shields, Praetorian karax form the backbone of many skorne military cohorts. Trained to fight side-by-side, karax shield their fellows from incoming attacks, presenting a thicket of pikes to repel any enemy charge.



Andrea D'Amico

PRAETORIAN SWORDSMAN

PHYSIQUE	PHY	5
SPEED	SPD	6
STRENGTH	STR	5
AGILITY	AGL	3
PROWESS	PRW	5
POISE	POI	4
INTELLECT	INT	3
ARCANE	ARC	1
PERCEPTION	PER	3



PRAETORIAN SWORD

MAT	POW	P+S
7	3	9

Combo Strike: Instead of attacking with each weapon separately during his turn, this character can strike with both blades simultaneously. Make one attack roll. If the attack hits, double the POW of the weapon when resolving the damage roll.

INITIATIVE **INIT** **12**

DEFENSE **DEF** **10**
(PRAETORIAN PLATE -2)

ARMOR **ARM** **13**
(PRAETORIAN PLATE +8)

WILLPOWER **WIL** **8**

VITALITY: 7

COMMAND RANGE: 3

BASE SIZE: SMALL

ENCOUNTER POINTS: 5

ABILITIES:

First to Fight – This character gains an additional die on initiative rolls. Drop the low die of each roll.

Gang – When making a melee attack that targets an enemy in melee range of another friendly character, this character gains +1 to melee attack and melee damage rolls. When making a melee attack that targets an enemy in melee range of another friendly character who also has this ability, these bonuses increase to +2.

EQUIPMENT

Praetorian plate armor, Praetorian sword (x2)

SKILLS:

NAME	STAT	+	RANK	=	TOTAL
Detection	PER		1		4
Hand Weapon	PRW		2		7
Lore (hoksune)	INT		1		4

Warriors dedicated to the art of the sword, Praetorian swordsmen are a swift and aggressive wing of the martial discipline. Wielding two swords with practiced ease, these skorne wear lighter armor than the heavy Cataphracts, which allows them to close ground on the battlefield and create openings for their tyrants to exploit.



VENATOR SLINGER

PHYSIQUE	PHY	5
SPEED	SPD	6
STRENGTH	STR	5
AGILITY	AGL	4
PROWESS	PRW	5
POISE	POI	3
INTELLECT	INT	3
ARCANE	ARC	1
PERCEPTION	PER	4



SLING

RAT	RNG	AOE	POW
7	8	*	8

Abilities: On a direct hit, center a 3" AOE on the character hit. Characters in the AOE suffer the Corrosion continuous effect.



DAGGER

MAT	POW	P+S
7	1	6

INITIATIVE INIT 14

DEFENSE DEF 12
(SKORNE INFANTRY ARMOR -1)

ARMOR ARM 13
(SKORNE INFANTRY ARMOR +7)

WILLPOWER WIL 8

VITALITY: 7

COMMAND RANGE: 3

BASE SIZE: SMALL

ENCOUNTER POINTS: 5

ABILITIES:

Fast Reload – The character gains one extra quick action each turn that can be used only to reload a ranged weapon.

Return Fire – Once per round when this character is missed by an enemy's ranged attack, immediately after the attack is resolved he can make one normal attack against the attacking enemy. To make a ranged attack, the character's ranged weapon must be loaded.

EQUIPMENT

Ammo bandolier, skorne infantry armor, sling, acid chymical shells (x10)

SKILLS:

NAME	STAT	+	RANK	=	TOTAL
Detection	PER		1		5
Hand Weapon	PRW		1		6
Thrown Weapon	PRW		2		7

Wielding simple slings, these Venators hurl caustic chymical shells at the enemy. Even the most heavily armored and revered champion might forfeit his life with an agonized, humiliating shriek as armor corrodes and flesh melts from bone. Using these weapons, the lowest among the warrior caste can sometimes bring down the greatest with just a few well-aimed shots.



CYCLOPS

PHYSIQUE	PHY	8
SPEED	SPD	6
STRENGTH	STR	8
AGILITY	AGL	3
PROWESS	PRW	4
POISE	POI	3
INTELLECT	INT	2
ARCANE	ARC	*
PERCEPTION	PER	4

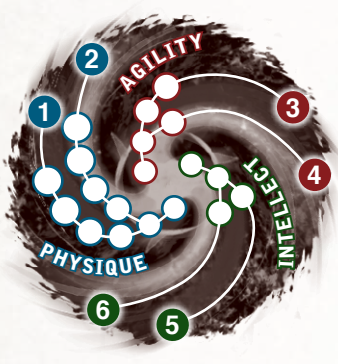


CLUB

MAT	POW	P+S
5	4	12

Abilities: On a critical hit with this weapon, a living target has a chance to be knocked out. If the target suffers damage from the attack, he must make a PHY roll against a target number equal to the attacking character's STR + 11. If the roll succeeds, the target remains conscious. If the roll fails, the target is knocked out.

INITIATIVE	INIT	14
DEFENSE	DEF	13
ARMOR	ARM	12
	(NATURAL ARMOR +4)	
WILLPOWER	WIL	10



COMMAND RANGE: 2

BASE SIZE: MEDIUM

ENCOUNTER POINTS: 12

might wrap themselves in an uncured hide against the cold—only serves to enhance their barbaric appearance.

Cyclopes dwell in caverns within the eastern mountains, with larger concentrations in the eastern reaches of the Shroudwall Mountains. Their caves are often carpeted with the gnawed bones of cattle, skorne, and rival cyclopes. Cyclopes society, or what passes for it, is unforgiving; these brutes delight in the suffering of others and relish the infliction of pain on the defenseless. Weak or otherwise unfit members of a tribe are culled by their bloodthirsty compatriots, ensuring that only the strongest and cruelest survive to perpetuate the cycle. Cyclopes

Brute savages from the eastern wilderness, cyclopes stand between the world of beasts and that of sentient creatures. Perhaps their ability to glimpse the future has kept them from developing, giving them all the benefits of forethought without requiring any true reflection. For them, the immediate and the forthcoming are blended into a single moment.

—PROFESSOR VIKTOR PENDRAKE, MONSTERNOMICON

DESCRIPTION

Common in the east, cyclopes are a brutish race of savage primitives that stand up to nine feet tall, but whose form otherwise closely resembles that of the more civilized races of man, elf, or even skorne. Cyclopes have a single, centrally located eye. This organ is the focus of their unique abilities, for it allows them to perceive brief glimpses of the immediate future.

In the wild, cyclopes form loose, nomadic tribes of related individuals that band together to hunt larger game and to offer protection against the monsters that roam the eastern plains. These tribes have little in the way of culture, craft, or even language, and the most technologically advanced object in a cyclopes' possession is likely to be a particularly well-weighted tree limb kept on hand as a favored club. Their almost complete lack of clothing—at best they

do not hesitate to engage in cannibalism, and the strongest members of a tribe will eat the bodies of the recently dead.

Cyclopes rely on the power of their prescient eye in hunting as well as in combat, using its gift of foreknowledge to bring down game as dangerous as titans and desert hydras while armed with little more than heavy rocks and bone clubs. With insight into when and where to strike and when to fall back from imminent blows, cyclopes regularly achieve what civilized forces with advanced weapons and armor cannot. This power does not manifest in the same manner in all cyclopes; some have abilities that make them preternaturally gifted trackers, warriors, or even shamans capable of wielding crude but effective magic.

The skorne have enslaved cyclopes for centuries, turning them into finely honed weapons of war. Once properly conditioned and outfitted with arms and armor, cyclopes make exemplary warbeasts. They can carry out surprisingly complex instructions while maintaining their bloodthirsty instincts and prescient edge. Indeed, many in the Skorne Empire feel they have elevated the brutes, granting them the gift of a greater destiny as a tool of their skorne masters.

COMBAT

Wild cyclopes will attack anything they might be able to maim, kill, or eat, whether their aim is to secure food or to eliminate an intruder. Their tactics are rarely more complicated than charging forward and bashing a target to death, but their precognitive abilities make this crude strategy quite effective.

Cyclopes enslaved by the skorne follow orders with surprising discipline, bringing to bear whatever armaments they have been issued with a skill hard to reconcile with the wild abandon of their feral counterparts. Heavily armored cyclopes equipped with halberds and shields stand guard over important personages or anchor lines of skorne troops. Those chosen for their surpassing bloodthirst act as line breakers, armed with falchions the size and weight of a man. Still others are trained to wield oversized reiver cannons, crushing foes no matter where they hide.

ABILITIES:

Foresight – This creature gains an additional die on attack rolls. Discard the lowest die of each roll.

Preternatural Awareness – This creature gains boosted Initiative rolls, and enemies never gain back strike bonuses against this creature.

CREATURE TEMPLATES:

Alert, Hunter, Juvenile, Pack Hunter, Starving

SKILLS:

NAME	STAT	+	RANK	=	TOTAL
Detection	PER		2		6
Great Weapon	PRW		1		5
Survival	PER		2		6
Tracking	PER		2		6

LORE

A character can make an INT + Lore (extraordinary zoology) skill roll to determine what he knows about this creature. He learns all the information up to the result of the roll. The higher the roll, the more he learns.

10: Cyclopes are towering one-eyed savages commonly found in the east. They have a very limited capacity for even basic craftsmanship and are often armed with tree limbs, bones, or rocks. They wear little more than scraps of hide.

12: The skorne have been enslaving cyclopes for untold generations for use as warbeasts. Those in the service of the Skorne Empire receive finely crafted arms and armor and are surprisingly skilled and disciplined warriors.

14: Cyclopes have the ability to perceive brief flashes of the immediate future, which allows them to correct a strike that would otherwise have missed or to turn aside a blade before it finds purchase in their hide.

16: A cyclops' preternatural senses stem from its single eye. If a cyclops loses its eye or is otherwise blinded, it can no longer see into the future. Cyclopes deemed useless as warbeasts are sometimes lobotomized and used as strong but simple laborers, often set to tasks such as carrying heavy or cumbersome loads.



GENZOUL

In my time among the skorne, I encountered very little that frightened those warlike people—which makes the horror they feel regarding the genzoul particularly noteworthy. These degenerate undead cannibals represent the worst possible fate to the skorne mind—immortality without reason or honor.

—PROFESSOR VIKTOR PENDRAKE, MONSTERNOMICON

PHYSIQUE	PHY	7
SPEED	SPD	6
STRENGTH	STR	6
AGILITY	AGL	3
PROWESS	PRW	5
POISE	POI	4
INTELLECT	INT	3
ARCANE	ARC	—
PERCEPTION	PER	4



BITE

MAT	POW	P+S
7	3	9

Gorge – If this weapon damages a living character, this creature immediately regains 1 vitality point.



CLAW

MAT	POW	P+S
7	2	8

INITIATIVE	INIT	15
DEFENSE	DEF	13
ARMOR	ARM	14
(NATURAL ARMOR +7)		
WILLPOWER	WIL	10

VITALITY: 14

COMMAND RANGE: 3

BASE SIZE: SMALL

ENCOUNTER POINTS: 10

DESCRIPTION

The skorne outlook on life and death is grim and fatalistic. Their world is so full of pain and suffering, their afterlife so devoid of hope, that they do not blanch at horrors that would turn the stomach of even the most hardened campaigners of western Immoren. But there is a fate that gives even mortitheurges and paingivers pause: *karovoul*, or the ravening, which causes nearly all skorne thus afflicted to transform into the abominations called *genzoul*.

Apparently unique to the skorne race, *karovoul* is a malady of the mind that can spread quickly among isolated communities of skorne, causing a ravenous hunger in skorne for the flesh of their own kind. Skorne hermits are particularly susceptible,

especially those who practice the mortitheurgical arts or extreme forms of asceticism and self-flagellation. The precise cause is unknown, though some skorne scholars believe meditative self-privation combined with study of the Void can lead to the onset of *karovoul*. Outbreaks have also been documented among small, isolated Praetorian patrols and outposts, typically those in the most far-flung reaches of the wastes.

The ravening can spontaneously manifest in an individual skorne or among small groups, and the bite of those who have succumbed to the disease swiftly carries the infection to others. In rare cases, entire decurium of skorne warriors have been infected, degenerating into *genzoul* and laying waste to whole regions before being put down.

The course of this affliction consists of two phases. The first takes place while a victim is still alive, and the second extends past the death of the body. Within days of infection, an affected skorne will begin to feel an insatiable hunger for meat, preferring raw flesh over cooked. It is possible to stave off the disease at this stage through fasting and considerable will, but few succeed. Eating the meat of ordinary beasts has little impact on the hunger of *karovoul*, and soon the afflicted feel compelled to eat skorne flesh, and the fresher, the better.

Should a skorne give in to these cravings and feast upon living flesh, the disease progresses. The skorne's appetite grows even as his body wastes away and expires; his life force is consumed as the corpse transforms into an undead state, still wracked with hunger. This process takes time, during which the body appears inert. If the corpse is not dismembered and burned, it will rise as a *genzoul* within a handful of days.

Unlike shambling thralls or other undead of western Immoren, the *genzoul* is a canny hunter, often lurking near watering holes in the desert to await the arrival of caravans or supply trains. They remember much of what they knew in life and are quite adept at ambushing solitary travelers or those who wander too far from an armed camp. *Genzoul* infected at isolated outposts may even linger in their fortifications, waiting for the next group of reinforcements to arrive.

A *genzoul* typically lunges from concealment when its prey is distracted and vulnerable. At the moment of attack, all higher awareness is lost as the creature tears at its victim with abandon. Alarmingly, any wounds a *genzoul* has suffered mend rapidly as it gorges on gobbets of raw flesh, and the creature grows stronger with each bloody mouthful.

The way *genzoul* linger between life and death is terrifying to the skorne. Some surmise that a *genzoul* is the hunger of the Void given physical form—a horrific mockery of the exalted state all skorne warriors aspire to achieve.

COMBAT

Genzoul approach combat with cunning and careful consideration, and they can communicate and cooperate with others of their kind. At the approach of any significant force, a *genzoul* either hides until it passes or attacks stragglers, dragging their bodies to a safe feeding place. Groups of *genzoul* sometimes fall upon outlying villages or small caravans, attacking the most heavily armed before moving on to the more vulnerable.



LORE

A character can make an INT + Lore (undead) skill roll to determine what he knows about this creature. He learns all the information up to the result of the roll. The higher the roll, the more he learns.

12: Genzoul are a kind of predatory, undead skorne found in desolate wilderness regions.

14: Genzoul gain vitality as they eat the flesh of sentient creatures. A few mouthfuls of flesh can heal minor wounds, and consuming an entire corpse allows them to mend more severe injuries.

ABILITIES:

Death Rise – A skorne character who dies as a result of the ravening rises as a genzoul in d3 days unless the corpse is decapitated. A newly risen genzoul gains Ravening, Snacking, Terror, Undead, +2 PHY, and +1 STR. It has a number of vitality points equal to twice its new PHY and gains a single POW 3 bite attack with the Gorge ability and two POW 2 claw attacks.

Ravening – A character damaged by a bite attack made by this creature has a chance of being infected with the ravening. Immediately after the attack has been resolved, the damaged character must make a PHY roll against a target number of 14. If the roll succeeds, the character resists the disease. If the roll fails, the character contracts the ravening. The first symptoms manifest after d3 days, at which time the character develops an insatiable appetite for flesh. While infected, once per day the character must make a Willpower roll against a target number of 20. If the roll fails, the character attempts to sate his hunger by feasting on any meat he can acquire, regardless of the source.

Every six hours, an infected character must make an additional PHY roll against a target number of 16. (Reduce this number to 14 if the character consumed one or more pounds of flesh from a living sentient creature in the past six hours.) If the character passes three of these rolls, he fights off the disease. If the character fails three of these rolls, the disease moves on to the advanced stage.

During the ravening's advanced stage, the character cannot regain vitality by any means. Every three hours thereafter, the character must make a PHY roll against a target number of 16. (Reduce this number to 14 if the character consumed one or more pounds of

16: Genzoul do not begin as undead; instead, they transform after eating the flesh of their own kind. They are afflicted by karovoul, a ravening hunger that causes a compulsion for cannibalism. Those bitten by genzoul usually succumb to this impulse and eventually become genzoul in turn.

flesh from a living sentient creature in the past three hours.) For each roll that fails, the character suffers d3 damage points. If the character becomes incapacitated as a result, he dies and rises as a genzoul. If the character passes three of these rolls, he fights off the disease.

Snacking – This creature can spend a quick action to devour any living character destroyed within its melee range to immediately regain d3 vitality points.

Terror – This creature has Terror [Willpower +4].

Undead – This creature is not a living creature and never flees.

CREATURE TEMPLATES:

None.

SKILLS:

NAME	STAT	+	RANK	=	TOTAL
Detection	PER		2		6
Sneak	AGL		2		5
Survival	PER		1		5
Tracking	PER		2		6

Note: The genzoul retains the skills it had in life. The above skills represent an average selection of skills.

PREGENERATED PLAYER CHARACTERS

ASHUUR

“THE SCHOLAR”

MALE SKORNE CHIRURGEON/MORTITHEURGE

Description: A tall, lean skorne dressed in a scholar’s robes. Your expression is always neutral, though your eyes move constantly to capture every detail. Faint, self-inflicted surgical scars ring your body where you sliced yourself open to better understand the workings of your internal organs . . . and how best to extract arcane might from the excruciation of flesh.

Background: You are one of the premiere physicians of House Kralest. Born into the worker caste of a lesser house, you rose to prominence by virtue of your sharp wits. After years of studying anatomy and immersing yourself in the ancient lore stored in the house’s archives, you distinguished yourself by demonstrating swift mastery of skorne magic. When Domina Ramaja of House Kralest learned of your skill in the mortitheurgical arts, she demanded that your former master give you to her greater house.

You combine the studied lore of the ancient sage Kexorus with the skorne art of mortitheurgy. You are quite skilled at keeping prisoners alive long enough for the paingivers to extract useful information from them, and just as skilled at bending the power of your arcane might to heal the wounds house soldiers receive in combat.

Attitude: Calculating and studious. Your work requires you to analyze and circumvent problems, often when you have limited information. Experience tells you that actions taken without careful consideration often lead to greater suffering.

Personal Goal: You constantly seek understanding and knowledge, and you pursue any opportunity to learn more about the past, the ailments that plague the skorne, and your own physical and mental limits.

RELATIONS WITH OTHERS:

Eberu, “The Paingiver” – The paingiver’s understanding of the torments a body can endure is commendable. Though your methods differ, you see her as a bit of a kindred spirit.

Tyrant Lexaar, “The Cataphract” – The position of tyrant commands respect no matter who wears the mantle, but Tyrant Lexaar seems truly worthy of the rank. His aggressiveness and readiness for warfare are a testament to his commitment to the warrior code. Surely the eyes of the extollers are on him, ready to exalt him when the time comes.

Sakad, “The Venator” – The Venator is a warrior, but he is at the bottom of his caste and you are near the top of yours. You chafe knowing his position in the house is higher than your own despite your superior knowledge and intellect. You resent being given orders from him and are liable to interpret them loosely at best.

Warki, “The Efaarit” – The efaarit’s presence is unusual. You expect to see slaves in chains or bearing pain hooks, but the semblance of freedom he enjoys demonstrates his usefulness. You find him an interesting companion who can provide you with insight into a new way of examining the world.

SERVANTS OF THE HOUSE

As a worker, you are below all warriors within the social order of House Kralest. Among your current companions, only the slave rates lower. Despite this, your mortitheurgical skill grants you a certain grudging respect from those of higher station. The knowledge and powers you possess are rare and difficult to acquire, making you a valuable asset for your party.



ASHUUR

ARCHETYPE: GIFTED

Those with the Gifted archetype are born with the capacity to work magic. This potential can be latent, discovered only later in life, or it can be pronounced from an early age.

Additionally, a Gifted character begins the game with one of several benefits. Characters gain additional benefits as they accumulate experience points. Ashuur has Combat Caster.

COMBAT CASTER

When this character makes a magic attack roll, he gains an additional die. Discard the lowest die of each roll.

FEAT: REVITALIZE

This character can spend 1 feat point during his turn to immediately regain a number of vitality points equal to his PHY. If a character suffers damage during his turn, the damage must be resolved before he can use this feat. An incapacitated character cannot use this benefit.

IRON WILL

This character can reroll failed Willpower rolls. Each roll can be rerolled only once as a result of Iron Will.

PAIN FLOW

When this character suffers damage, he determines the branch of his life spiral affected.

REMEDY

When this character is B2B with a non-incapacitated living character, he can use a quick action and spend 1 feat point to cause any continuous effects on that character to expire.

Alternatively, while B2B the character can spend 1 feat point to grant a friendly non-incapacitated living character an additional die on his next roll to resist poisons, toxins, or disease.

WORKER CASTE

This character gains boosted Craft skill rolls.

WILL WEAVERS & FATIGUE POINTS

Most sorcerers and arcanists are will weavers, who rely on their own physical stamina and the force of their mental will to summon and direct arcane energy. This process can be incredibly taxing to the spellcaster's body and mind but allows for the subtle weaving of intricate formulae.

GAINING FATIGUE POINTS

A will weaver can gain fatigue points in a number of ways.

- **Upkeep a Spell** – A will weaver gains 1 fatigue point for each spell he upkeeps during each Control Phase.
- **Cast a Spell** – When a will weaver casts a spell, he gains a number of fatigue points equal to the COST of the spell.
- **Boost a Magic Attack or Magic Damage Roll** – Each time a will weaver boosts a magic attack or magic damage roll, he gains 1 fatigue point. Boosting must be declared before rolling any dice for the roll. Remember, a single roll can be boosted only once, but a will weaver can boost as many different rolls as he can afford.
- **Increase the Range of a Spell** – A will weaver can gain 1 fatigue point to increase the RNG of a spell by thirty feet (5"). Each spell cast can have its RNG extended only once as a result of gaining fatigue. Spells with a RNG of CTRL or SP cannot be affected in this way.

REMOVING FATIGUE POINTS

Will weavers remove a number of fatigue points equal to their ARC each Maintenance Phase.

FATIGUE ROLLS AND EXHAUSTION

If his fatigue points exceed his ARC, a will weaver must make a fatigue roll immediately after resolving each spell he casts. To make a fatigue roll, roll 2d6. If the total is equal to or greater than the number of fatigue points the will weaver currently has, nothing happens. If the total is less than the number of fatigue points the character has, he becomes exhausted.

When a character becomes exhausted, his turn immediately ends and he cannot cast spells during the next round.

GEAR

NAME	BENEFIT
LEATHER ARMOR	
SPYGLASS	+ 2 to PER rolls to see long distances
CHIRURGEON'S KIT	+ 1 to Medicine rolls

WORN ARMOR

NAME	DESCRIPTION/NOTES	SPD	DEF	ARM
LEATHER ARMOR			-1	5

CONNECTIONS

NAME	DESCRIPTION/NOTES	PAGE #

SPELLS

ARCANE TRADITION NAME	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
INFLUENCE	1	10	-	-	N	Y
The spellcaster makes a contested Willpower roll against target living enemy hit by this spell. If the spellcaster loses, nothing happens. If the spellcaster wins, he takes control of the character hit. The character immediately makes one normal melee attack, then Influence expires.						
INVIOLEABLE RESOLVE	2	6	-	-	Y	N
Target friendly character gains +2 ARM and automatically passes Willpower rolls to resist Terror.						
STRANGLEHOLD	2	10	-	11	N	Y
A character damaged by Stranglehold forfeits either his movement or his action during its next turn.						



NOTES

PERMANENT INJURIES

SPOKEN LANGUAGES

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

GOLD

EBERU

“THE PAINGIVER”

FEMALE SKORNE BLOODRUNNER/TORMENTOR

Description: A slender, graceful figure who wears the lacquered armor and flowing garments of the bloodrunners, your face hidden behind a paingiver’s mask. You wield the deadly razor lash, a terrifying and difficult-to-master implement that can be as dangerous to its wielder as its target.

Background: You come from a small rural desert community to the east. Born into the worker caste, you spent your early years herding and butchering cattle for houses in the city of Konesaan. One of the paingivers identified your natural talent for butchery and negotiated with your parents to have your skills tested as a paingiver. The bloodrunners taught you to turn your natural talents against other skorne, and your anatomical expertise soon made you a match for even the most boastful warriors.

In the years that followed, you found your true calling among the paingivers and rose from the lowly rank of initiate to the elevated position of tormentor. As a tormentor, you’ve served many masters in many houses, most recently coming into the employ of Domina Ramaja of House Kralest. You have occasionally been sent on missions to assassinate rebellious vassals or capture important individuals to torture for critical information.

Attitude: Patient and thoughtful. You’ve heard enough skorne seal their own fate by careless talk, so you measure your words—and actions—at all times. The paingiver mask you wear often says more than any petty speech could, anyway. At your core, you are a problem solver, and you’re quite capable of finding inventive and creative ways around obstacles. Admittedly, your investigative arsenal relies on torture and interrogation, but why not? Opening an artery or two is often the most expedient solution to a problem.

Personal Goal: Knowing you will never see exaltation and will never be preserved from the Void, you spend your life seeking to perfect the tormentor’s arts. One day, perhaps, you will do the impossible—coax the truth of the Void from the dead. If you know what torments await you, perhaps you can die ready to face your ultimate fate.

RELATIONS WITH OTHERS:

Ashuur, “The Scholar” – The surgeon is clever and knows his anatomy, but he talks too much. His talent as a mortitheurge would make him a dangerous opponent if the time came to destroy him. The best plan would be to strike at him while he sleeps and use drugs to keep him feeble.

Tyrant Lexaar, “The Cataphract” – The tyrant is a skilled warrior and confident in battle, but he has a thick skull. His confidence could be turned to your advantage if you need to take him down—his heavy armor leaves him impervious to many strikes, but you could slip a dagger under his breastplate, puncture his diaphragm, and leave him slowly suffocating.

Sakad, “The Venator” – Sakad is most dangerous at a distance. If you ever receive orders to destroy him, you should approach unnoticed and close into melee range, where his weapon is less effective. A slash across the tendons in his forearm will keep him from firing and let you take him alive.

Warki, “The Efaarit” – The efaarit’s talent for survival is tied to the desert environment. Best to leave it with a bleeding wound and track it as it returns home for aid, after which its people can be captured and enslaved.

SERVANTS OF THE HOUSE

As a paingiver, you are technically part of the worker caste, but members of your discipline occupy a unique position above others in the caste. Paingivers are afforded more privilege and respect—or fear—than workers can normally expect, and they answer to their own code of behavior and rules.

You are associated with House Kralest, but you are not permanently bound to it. The house has bartered with local leaders of your caste for your services as an infiltrator and interrogator, keeping you on hand for those occasions when your special services are required. You obey the domina and those she has appointed to command you, but only as an extension of your loyalty to your caste and its function.



EBERU

ARCHETYPE: CUNNING

This character possesses a tactical genius and adaptability that gives her +1 on attack and damage rolls in combat. While in her command range, a friendly character listening to her orders also gains +1 on attack and damage rolls. This bonus is non-cumulative, so a character can gain this bonus from only one Cunning character at a time.

Additionally, a Cunning character begins the game with one of several benefits. Characters gain additional benefits as they accumulate experience points. Eberu has Hyper Perception.

HYPER PERCEPTION

The character's keen senses miss few details. The character's PER rolls are boosted.

ANATOMICAL PRECISION

When this character hits a living target with a melee attack but the damage roll fails to exceed the target's ARM, the target suffers d3 damage points instead of the damage rolled.

PROWL

This character is virtually invisible while in the shadows or in terrain that grants a degree of concealment. The character gains stealth while within terrain that provides concealment, the AOE of a spell that provides concealment, or the AOE of a cloud effect.

SPECIALIZATION (ASSASSIN'S BLADE)

The character does not suffer attack roll penalties when attacking with an assassin's blade.

TAKE DOWN

This character can use Take Down any time she incapacitates another character with an attack and while the incapacitated character is in this character's melee range. The incapacitated character regains 1 vitality point and is no longer incapacitated but is considered to be manacled, tied up, unconscious, or otherwise out of action for the rest of the encounter. Once the combat portion of the encounter has ended, the subject of Take Down is at the mercy of the victors to be questioned or worse.

TORTURE

This character can torture a helpless subject within her power. For every two hours she spends torturing a subject, the subject loses 1 PHY. If the subject is reduced to 0 PHY, he dies. The subject regains +1 PHY for each complete day he is not tortured. Subjects reduced to 1 PHY will say anything they believe the torturer wants to hear to end the torture. Torture is especially effective at attaining confessions, regardless of actual guilt. Skillful interrogators combine a variety of methods to arrive at the "truth."



GEAR

NAME	BENEFIT
TORTURE IMPLEMENTS	While employing torture implements on a helpless subject, a character gains +2 to her Interrogation rolls and causes an additional point of PHY reduction per hour when using the Torture ability. These tools inflict d3 damage per Interrogation roll or hour of torture
PAINGIVER ARMOR	

SPELLS

ARCANE TRADITION NAME	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF

NOTES

Large empty box for notes.

PERMANENT INJURIES

Empty box for permanent injuries.

SPOKEN LANGUAGES

Empty box for spoken languages.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Empty box for religious beliefs.

GOLD

Empty box for gold.

WORN ARMOR

NAME	DESCRIPTION/NOTES	SPD	DEF	ARM
PAINGIVER ARMOR				5

CONNECTIONS

NAME	DESCRIPTION/NOTES	PAGE #



TYRANT LEXAAR

“THE CATAPHRACT”

MALE SKORNE CATAPHRACT/TYRANT

Description: A tall and powerfully built skorne who bears the heavy armor of the Cataphracts with a stern and unflinching demeanor. Your face is usually twisted into a scowl, especially when you are forced to interact with those of lesser castes.

Background: You are not only a member of the Cataphracts—the elite, heavily armored warriors of the skorne—but also a tyrant, the leader of your own house and steward of its dynasty. As a Cataphract, you cleave to the hoksune code, fighting any enemy without fear or hesitation and embracing the likelihood of death in battle. The other warrior disciplines, the Praetorians and Venators, both claim to be adherents, but in your heart you know only the Cataphracts truly follow the way of Vuxoris the First Exalted.

Your house is small but distinguished among those that have sworn fealty to Kralest. Your two houses have intermingled for generations, elevating members of your direct family as they married into glorious House Kralest. You often travel to the compound of Kralest to confer with Ramaja, its domina, on matters of great importance.

Attitude: Direct and intractable. Your ancestors fought countless campaigns over generations to build up House Kralest and your own house. Any skorne who questions your actions denies the very essence of the warrior code. Your rigid training and upbringing have not prepared you for strange missions such as the one you are on, and you had never expected to earn glory for your house in the company of such a peculiar assortment of lower-caste companions. But you will adjust. A tyrant must make the best use of the weapons at his disposal, feeble though they might be.

Personal Goal: You desire only to fulfill the wishes of your domina and gain honor for your house. You are trying to accept that accomplishing

her goals may require the expertise of your lessers, who have skills you do not. You will endeavor to command them well. But fighting as a Cataphract is what you were born to do, and only in battle are you truly alive. It is the only true path to honor, glory, and eventual exaltation.

RELATIONS WITH OTHERS:

Ashuur, “The Scholar” – Chirurgeons are typically beneath your notice. Only Ashuur’s commitment to understanding the greater mysteries of mortitheurgy makes him worthwhile in your eyes, though his value is chiefly that of a weapon you can wield against the enemies of your house. You grant that he is intelligent, but his intellect makes him as annoying as he is useful.

Eberu, “The Paingiver” – The paingivers spit on the code of hoksune, fighting from the shadows without honor or discipline, but they are a necessary evil for any tyrant or dominar who wishes to increase the influence of his house. Their freedom from hoksune lets them do necessary things no warrior would. In truth, you feel uneasy whenever Eberu is behind you, but you would never give her the satisfaction of seeing this.

Sakad, “The Venator” – Sakad is technically a warrior, but you were taught that those who fight at a distance are cowards. In your opinion, long-ranged weapons are worthwhile only for hunting. Given the odd assortment of individuals under your command, he is the closest to a soldier and therefore better than the others, but you would prefer to have a *taberna* of Cataphracts fighting by your side.

Warki, “The Efaarit” – It is not your position to question the wisdom of your domina in this matter, but you would prefer to see that thing toiling in a quarry, not guiding a tyrant of the skorne around like a reptile hound sniffing out prey. You prefer not to address this creature directly, so you relay orders to him through Sakad as necessary.

SERVANTS OF THE HOUSE

As a tyrant, you are not only among the upper echelons of the warrior caste, but also the leader of your own small house. You and your dynasty are tied to House Kralest through blood, and you are eager to earn glory in Domina Ramaja’s name. That she chooses to chain you to a mixed-caste group of lesser skorne is confusing, but it is not the place of a tyrant to question the decisions of his domina. All who oppose her shall die on the point of your spear.

TYRANT LEXAAR

ARCHETYPE: MIGHTY

This character is in peak physical condition. He is incredibly resilient and capable of feats of strength that defy imagination. Mighty characters gain an additional die on their melee damage rolls.

Additionally, a Mighty character begins the game with one of several benefits. Characters gain additional benefits as they accumulate experience points. Tyrant Lexaar has Righteous Anger.

RIGHTEOUS ANGER

When one or more other friendly characters are damaged by an enemy attack while in this character's command range, this character gains +2 STR and ARM for one round.

BATTLE PLAN: CALL TO ACTION

This character can spend 1 feat point to use this ability. Using a battle plan is a quick action. When a character uses this battle plan, each friendly character in his command range who is under his command and is knocked down immediately stands up or goes prone.

CATAPHRACT

This character can wear Cataphract armor.

DEFENSIVE LINE

While this character is B2B with one or more friendly characters, he gains +1 ARM. While this character is B2B with one or more friendly characters who also have this ability, the bonus increases to +2.

NATURAL LEADER

A character with this ability increases his command range by 2".



SAKAD

“THE VENATOR”

MALE SKORNE BUSHWHACKER/VENATOR

Description: A pale-skinned skorne of average height and build clad in a worn suit of Venator armor. You have the piercing eyes of a predatory bird looking for its next meal. You hold your reiver in a ready position at all times.

Background: You were a low-ranking *amiger* of a unit of Venators that helped quell a slave revolt in Verskone months ago. The slaves had stolen explosives and planned to destroy many valuable structures in the city. Your reiver’s needles cut down the leader of the revolt and broke the remaining slaves’ spirits, earning you respect among your peers.

When Domina Ramaja learned of your deed, she immediately elevated you to the position of *dakar* to lead your brothers in combat. When she bestowed the honor, the domina informed you she may call upon your skills should another need arise. Since then you have dwelt in the compound of House Kralest, honing the skills of your warrior discipline.

Attitude: Eager and aggressive. Although Venators are looked down on by Cataphracts and Praetorians and occupy one of the lowest echelons of the warrior caste, no true strategist denies their value in war. You embrace the opportunity to show your brothers-in-arms that a Venator can be as committed as any other warrior to the code of hoksune. You do not fear death, only dishonor.

Personal Goal: You seek to prove the value of the Venator discipline to your traditionalist companions. A single warrior’s reiver can shift the tide of battle as easily as a Cataphract’s blades. With the war of conquest underway in the west, you hope to show Domina Ramaja you are worthy to join the Army of the Western Reaches and earn glory for her house.

RELATIONS WITH OTHERS:

Ashuur, “The Scholar” – Because Ashuur is part of the worker caste, you should feel comfortable telling him what to do, but his reputation as a gifted mortitheurge make you hesitate. Best not to antagonize him in case you need his skills.

Eberu, “The Paingiver” – You find paingivers unsettling, and Eberu more so than most. Talking with her is like talking to a dust serpent: you spend every moment wondering when she will strike. Her skill in her craft is uncontestable, though. Were she a member of the warrior caste, you could even respect her.

Tyrant Lexaar, “The Cataphract” – You respect Tyrant Lexaar but also secretly envy the respect he commands. He owes you nothing, yet it grates on you when he ignores your contributions. Although you would never say so aloud, you think he might be a bit thick-headed and lacking in imagination. Yet you obey him, as is your duty.

Warki, “The Efaarit” – The little efaarit smells a bit odd. His weapon isn’t as proper as a needle-spewing reiver, but you must admit you’re impressed by his proficiency with it. If he had been born a skorne, he would have made a fine Venator.

SERVANTS OF THE HOUSE

As a Venator, you stand above the worker and slave castes in skorne society, but the Venators’ use of ranged weapons places you above only inexperienced Hestatians and members of rural militias among the warrior caste. Some Venators go out of their way to abuse those of lower standing, but you do not. In most cases, you simply fail to notice them.



SAKAD

ARCHETYPE: SKILLED

This character relies on his wits, skill, and luck in equal measure. A Skilled character gains an additional attack during his Activation Phase if he chooses to attack that turn.

Additionally, a Skilled character begins the game with one of several benefits. Characters gain additional benefits as they accumulate experience points. Sakad has Preternatural Awareness.

PRETERNATURAL AWARENESS

The character's uncanny perception keeps him constantly aware of his surroundings. The character gains boosted Initiative rolls. Additionally, enemies never gain back strike bonuses against him.

CRACKSHOT

The character can accurately track his target despite its attempts to take cover. When making a ranged or magic attack against a target that has concealment, cover, or elevation, this character gains +2 on the attack roll.

FAST RELOAD

The character gains one extra quick action each turn that can be used only to reload a ranged weapon.

SENTRY

Once per round when an enemy is placed in or moves into the line of sight of this character, this character can immediately make one attack targeting that enemy.

SPECIALIZATION (REIVER)

The character does not suffer attack roll penalties when attacking with a reiver.



WARKI

“THE EFAARIT”

MALE EFAARIT BRIGAND/SCOUT

Description: A short, slight figure wrapped in the loose clothing of your desert home. Your skin is the color of bleached earth, and your features are broad and flat. Your expression changes little, as if no new enemy or discovery surprises you much.

Background: Your tribe has dwelled for generations in the dunes of the desert the skorne call the Mokkar, staying far from the few patrols brave enough to enter the arid expanse. Always looking for new opportunities, you approached a group that had lost its way, offering to guide them home for a price. At first they tried to take you as a slave, so you slipped away, returning the following day and repeating the offer. They refused your offer, but you monitored their progress from afar, knowing their cause was hopeless. When only two of the original twelve remained, they agreed to your terms. Since then you’ve been loosely affiliated with one of the skorne houses, acting as its foremost desert guide.

Other efaarit may scowl at the idea of working with the slavers, especially in such a close capacity, but you aren’t other efaarit. The leader of these skorne rewards you handsomely for leading her soldiers through the worst parts of the desert. They know that without you they would wander blindly until Father Sun drank up their water and Mother Dune hid their bodies, so they treat you with something approaching respect.

Attitude: Pragmatic and unconcerned. If the slavers turn against you, you can fade away into the desert, where they will be unable to follow. You’ve overcome every danger you’ve encountered so far, and any new problem that arises can be dealt with in turn.

Personal Goal: For the short term, you are looking to amass riches from these skorne to bring back to your tribe. In the long term, who knows? Perhaps you’ll travel west, as some other tribes have done, and see what new opportunities await there.

RELATIONS WITH OTHERS:

Ashuur, “The Scholar” – The rest treat the scholar like they treat you, paying him little attention and only as necessary. Given his ability to weave magic, mend flesh, and knit bones, you’d expect them to treat him with more respect. Well, just because the others don’t recognize his importance doesn’t mean you need to make the same mistake.

Eberu, “The Paingiver” – The stealthy female is dangerous, and all the others seem to realize it. Everyone is afraid of her, even the biggest and bravest one. Best to keep an eye on her at all times and do nothing to arouse her animosity.

Tyrant Lexaar, “The Cataphract” – The big warrior is loud and tells the rest what to do. Although he is a chieftain of sorts, he listens to the higher-up female chieftain who pays you and feeds you. You find this more than a little confusing.

Sakad, “The Venator” – The smaller fighter is the smartest one among these skorne. Only he seems clever enough to carry weapons that can kill his prey from far off, rather than risk close combat. Fighting by his side seems to be the wisest course of action.

SERVANTS OF THE HOUSE

Because you’re not a skorne, the others want to call you a member of the slave caste. If it makes them feel better about themselves, who cares? You aren’t bound to the house like other slaves are. You can leave whenever it suits you. Sure, it means everyone else thinks that they’re above you, that they’re better than you, and that they can tell you what to do. Let them believe whatever they want. Outside the walls of their cities, if they don’t listen to you, they will die of dehydration within days.



WARKI

ARCHETYPE: SKILLED

This character relies on his wits, skill, and luck in equal measure. A Skilled character gains an additional attack during his Activation Phase if he chooses to attack that turn.

Additionally, a Skilled character begins the game with one of several benefits. Characters gain additional benefits as they accumulate experience points. Warki has Deft.

DEFT

The character has nimble fingers and steady hands. The character gains boosted AGL rolls.

ADAPTED (DESERT)

An efaarit gains the Pathfinder ability while in a desert environment. Additionally, an efaarit can reroll failed Survival and Tracking skill rolls while in a desert environment.

CAMOUFLAGE

The character gains an additional +2 DEF when benefiting from concealment or cover.

FAST RELOAD

The character gains one extra quick action each turn that can be used only to reload a ranged weapon.

FIND COVER

At the start of combat before initiative is rolled, this character can immediately advance up to twelve feet (2") and perform a quick action to take cover or go prone.

ONSLAUGHT

At the start of his turn before moving or taking any action, this character can make one ranged attack. After the attack has been resolved, the character must charge or run. The ranged attack is made before declaring a charge target.

PATHFINDER

This character can move over rough terrain without penalty.

SHALLOW BREATHING

An efaarit gains +2 to PHY rolls to resist inhaled toxins and is immune to gas effects.





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