



A CHAOSIUM PUBLICATION



CANDLEFIRE

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INTRODUCTION

It is suggested that the referee read through the entire Candlefire pack before game-mastering any of the scenarios. All five interlock to some extent and will involve characters or locations which appear elsewhere. It would also be beneficial if the referee were familiar with the three appended cults (Nik-El, Panash, Vrang 2jhomang) as well as Zoob.

The referee also might have the players roll 3D6 for the Physical Attractiveness of their characters. This new characteristic should not be confused with Charisma, which depends on forcefulness and magnetism. The reactions of several characters, among them Fayer, will depend to some extent on the external appeal of the characters, particularly the female ones. Candlefire is light-years away from any sort of sexual equality.

Prices are given in Kerzen silvers, which are equivalent to RuneQuest lunars.

This town and the people and situations in it can obviously be used for further scenarios, as the characters wreak changes upon it.

Specific comments and questions about a particular scenario should be addressed to the author, c/o Chaosium Inc, Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706, and must include a stamped self-addressed envelope.

Candlefire

Candlefire is a resort town, in a fairly civilized country. No gibbering monsters roam its streets, begging for dismemberment. There is evil in Candlefire, but it is not mindless or undirected.

All the permanent residents of Candlefire are human, equipped with all the broad range of human motivations. An occasional troll, dwarf, or elf have been seen here, and communities of them live within a week's travel. There is no chaos near Candlefire, and most residents have never seen a chaotic creature.

Armor and military weapons generally are not worn in town. Those who wear them may attract unwelcome attention.

These scenarios will call for a range of talents, skills, and spells somewhat different from the majority of adventures. A pair of quiet shoes will be

more valuable than a poleaxe, and Silence will be more useful than Disruption. Ironhand may come in handier than Bludgeon, and a throwing dag-

ger may be a better tool than a bow. But not always. Ingenuity and skepticism will pay off handsomely.

Of the five cults represented in town, three will actively recruit new members; writeups are given for these three cults at the end.

HISTORY & BACKGROUND

The Origin of Candlefire

The only thing which showed above the water was the grinning pig.

Yoash stood on the bank and watched the wooden animal bob in the swift river current. Every so often, the flood waters would engulf the animal and it would pitch head down under the surface, and then reemerge, still grinning, as if amused by the frailty of human conveyances. Mired in the river bottom were the broken remains of the overloaded ferry, with a fourth of the goods of the caravan, but fortunately none of its people. The rope which passed through the wooden ring in the pig's nose was presumably secured to or entangled in the wreckage. The travelers gathered beside the sign which said "Safe Efficient Transportation" and "The Number One Ferry to Svyet" and watched their belongings hurtle up from the bottom and down the torrent as the flooded river took possession of them.

"Well," said Yoash to himself, "I can always juggle." He moved away from the bank, set down his bag, took out the balls and batons, and threw the three red spheres into the air.

The sullen travelers had seen him juggle before, and were in no mood for idle amusement, so the initial reaction was indifference. But Yoash had a few tricks he had not shown them yet; a good performer always keeps something in reserve. Soon he began to elicit a few appreciative whistles, then even a laugh or two. The last stragglers abandoned the riverside vigil, breaking free of the spell of the sunken baggage. Vendors brought out their best confections, and meat pastries were heated up. A small bonfire was built. Three young men brought out lutes and reed pipes and began to play; the company whirled into a dance of forgetfulness. When the fire died down and could not be maintained because there was no more

dry wood, the merrymakers lit candles. The festivities went on far into the night.

Within three days, the river had fallen to its normal level, and a week later, a ferryboat was brought down the river from Abing. By then, another caravan had joined the two already stalled at the crossing, and a large fair was in full swing. When the boat took the caravans across into Svyet, Yoash and companions of like mind stayed behind. It would not be long before the next caravan would arrive, and the weary merchants and artisans would surely be in the mood for some cheerful entertainment.

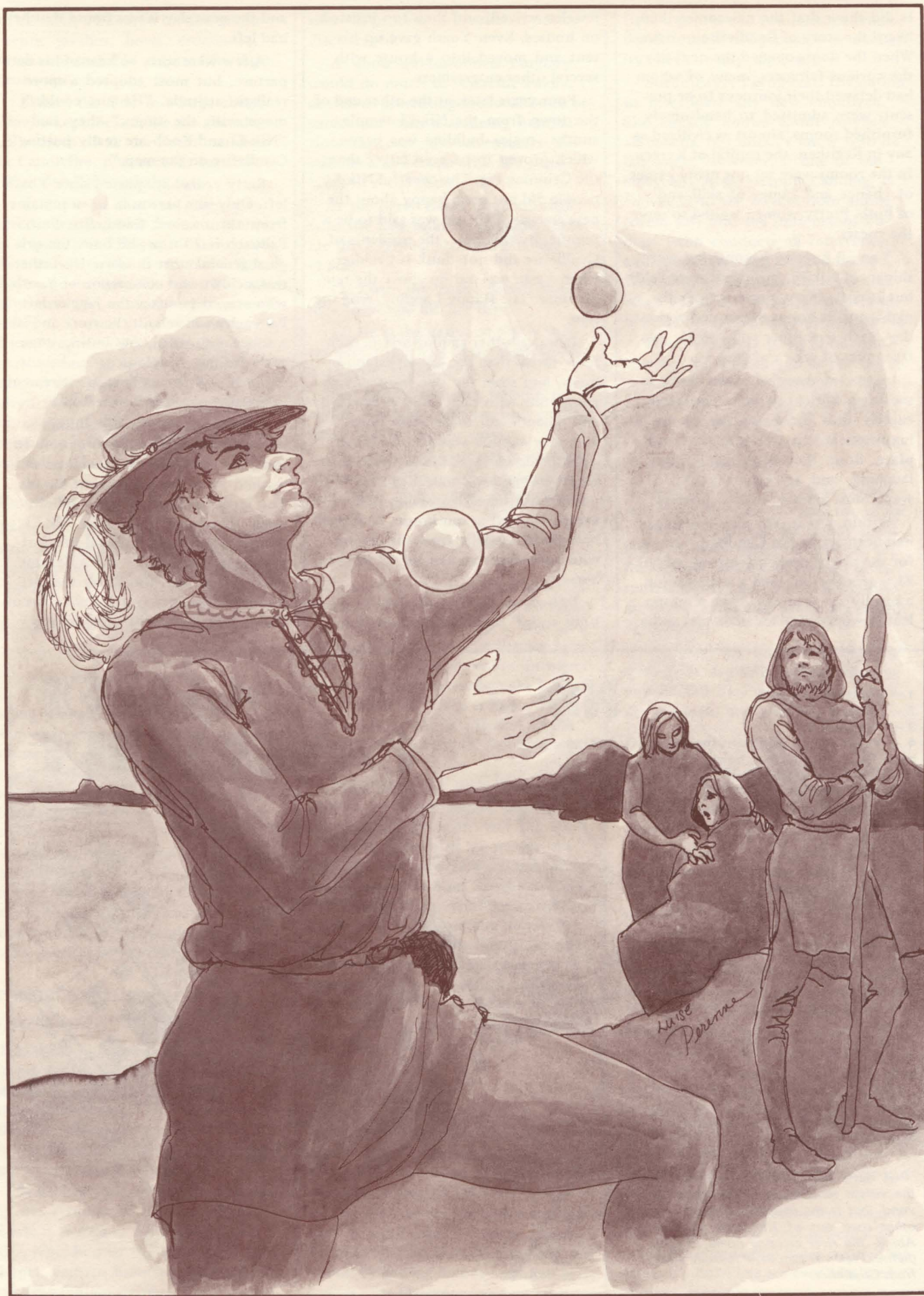
Thus was born the Candlefire Fair, which made this the most popular crossing of the river. From an impromptu diversion, it became a scheduled stop. Pilgrims and traders, emissaries and explorers passed a few diverting evenings in Candlefire, drinking, gaming, dancing, eating, and watching Yoash juggle.

One day an attractive young couple in gaily colored clothes approached Yoash. "Do you own all this land?" they asked him.

"Own?" said Yoash.

So when the next caravan left, they brought their wagons onto the best site near the landing, unloaded planks and bricks and tools, and began building. Not long after, more wagons arrived, bearing more brightly clothed men and women, who unloaded stone, tables, and more tools, and nails, and implements of obscure purposes. When asked what they were building, they always answered, "A temple." "To whom?" they were asked. "Come to the dedication." was the reply.

The day before the dedication, a large sign was placed over the main entrance. The Grinning Pig, it read. Everybody agreed that it was a most peculiar name for a temple, or a deity.



It did show that the newcomers had heard the story of Candlefire's origin. When the doors opened the next day, the curious fairgoers, many of whom had delayed their journeys to be present, were admitted to handsomely furnished rooms, almost as civilized as any in Kreithen, the capital of Kerzen. In the rooms were set out many games of chance and games of skill and of both. Pretty women waited to serve the guests.

You all have to become lay worshipers of Nik-El, the guests were told, but it costs but a single copper tonight, and in honor of our dedication day, each worshiper will receive two free mugs of wine or beer.

A few of those who had come to see hung back, but most thronged eagerly into the luxurious rooms, luxurious at least for that time and place. Soon they were gaming and laughing, and agreeing that Nik-El was a most amiable sort of goddess.

Within a year, ten new buildings had been erected in Candlefire: houses for the priesthood and initiates of Nik-El, a grocery and then a butchershop, a smithy and a tavern. Then a master leatherworker and an alchemist and a

jeweler arrived, and they too insisted on houses. Even Yoash gave up his tent and moved into a house with several other entertainers.

Four years later, at the other end of the town from the Nik-El temple, another major building was begun, which proved to be even larger than the Grinning Pig. The cheerful Nik-El people did not seem happy about the new arrivals. This too was said to be a temple. By this time, the residents of Candlefire did not think it peculiar when a sign was put up above the temple door. The Happy Landing, read the sign.

It was another gaming house, even more lavish than the Nik-El establishment, and soon the two houses were competing with each other in the color and glamor of their attractions. The new temple was run by small quiet men, who smiled only with their teeth. Our god is Zoob, they said, but you do not have to worship him to amuse yourself at our house. And they brought in a juggler from the capital, who knew more and better tricks than Yoash.

"They are burning the Candle at both ends." said Yoash, mournfully,

and the next day it was found that he had left.

A few were sorry to hear of his departure, but most adopted a more realistic attitude. "He just couldn't move with the times," they said. "Nik-El and Zoob are really putting Candlefire on the map."

Sixty years have passed since Yoash left. Only one person in town remains from the original Candlefire Fair. Pallyach is 73 now; he built the original general store in town. His father was a clown and companion of Yoash who stayed on after the juggler left. Pallyach's son rebuilt the store and is a sober and calculating businessman with nothing frivolous or exuberant about him. Pallyach lives in retirement in a little house off Ploam Road.

None of the original buildings remain. Most were built too closely to the river, and were undermined or washed away by subsequent floods. The ferry landing has to be rebuilt every five years or so. The Nik-El temple is still on its original site, but has been "improved" twice. About thirty years ago, the Zoob temple burned down with considerable loss of life; a new priest and three initiates

MAP KEY

- 1 – Marco's leather shop
- 2 – Yokesnip's tailoring shop
- 3 – General store
- 4 – Yoash's Rest. Note that the River-edge Refuge is further down Capitol Road, off the map, on the opposite side of the road.
- 5 – Barbang's smithy and attached garden
- 6 – Stables
- 7 – Silvi's pawnshop
- 8 – Shop of Blandish the alchemist
- 9 – Jewelry shop (Glammet)
- 10 – Spice shop (Speedwell's: The Cloven Hoof)

Uberfluss lives in the house beside the ferry landing.

Fayer lives in one of the houses beside the Nik-El temple.

Anais-In and Hilflos live in Kerzen House.

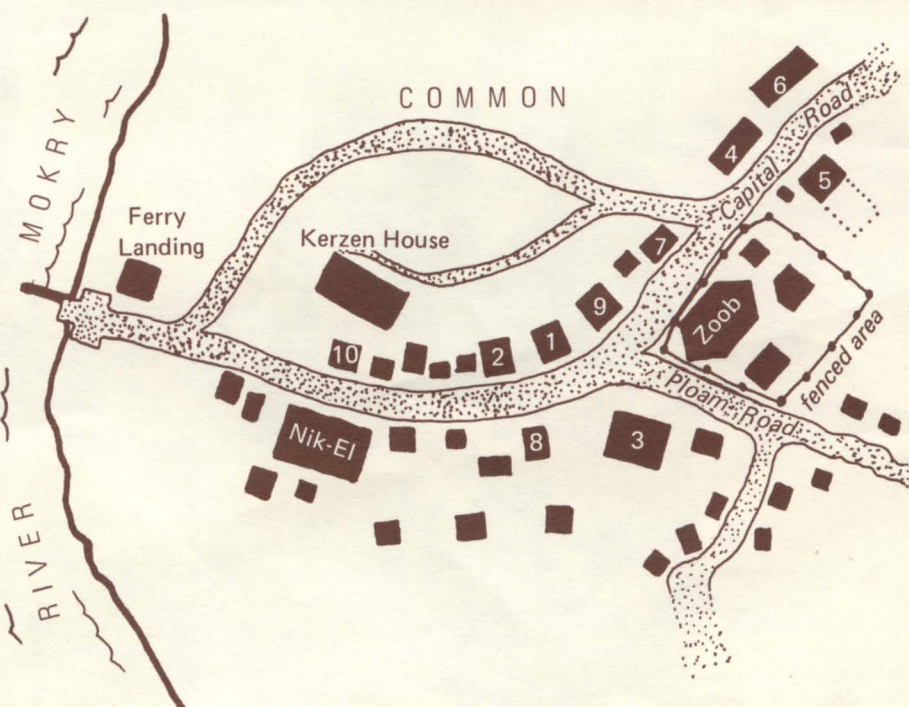
The other three buildings in the Zoob enclosure house most of the rest of the staff of the Happy Landing.

The Common is a low cleared hill above the town. The rest of the area around Candlefire in all directions is forested.

A day's ride down Capitol Road is the village of Kleindorf. Two days beyond that is the capital: Kreithen. Another road out of Kleindorf leads to Abing, the river crossing north of Candlefire. Ploam is two days' journey away from Candlefire.



MAP OF CANDLEFIRE



had to be sent from the capitol. The temple was then rebuilt in its present hexagonal form. Three years later, after another fire was barely contained in time, a high fence was erected around a Zoob "compound", enclosing the Happy Landing and several subsidiary buildings.

Gradually, the center of gravity of the town has shifted away from the violence of the river. The Grinning Pig, which was in the center of the town at the beginning, is now at the west end of the community. Like the Happy Landing, it is surrounded by homes for the cult initiates. The Nik-El cult also maintains an elegant cottage for Fayer Banx, the Rune lord of the associated Panash cult.

Kerzen House was built thirty years ago in order to provide the central government with an official presence, but its influence remains nominal. Its occupants are devoted mostly to sterile record-keeping and maintaining a stiff upper lip. About fifteen years ago, the government tried to impose a small fee on caravans using the Common. There was a furious protest, and the travelers formed a protective association under the guidance of the Nik-El priest. The government, of course, backed down: the upshot is that now the caravaneers pay the fee to Nik-El instead.

The Town

Candlefire is located at the convergence of two roads from the interior of Kerzen, adjacent to a crossing of the River Mokry. It has about three hundred permanent residents and sometimes as many more visitors. The town itself contains about fifty buildings, of which thirty-five are private homes.

Of the remainder of the buildings, the most impressive are the two casinos. Close to the landing is the Nik-El temple, the Grinning Pig. Over the main door is a painted model of the jovial swine. The building is a two-story rectangle stretching along the road for 35 meters.

The Happy Landing is a hexagonal building of three stories, situated between the two roads to the interior at their junction. The front door is on the Capitol Road. It is just as large as the Grinning Pig.

Behind a row of shops along the north side of the main road is Kerzen House. It is a one-story building, about 20 meters long, and not nearly as well-

maintained as the two casinos. The government of Kerzen feels obliged to have a representative of itself and the official religion in this town but is not enthusiastic about exerting much authority over the town. The casinos pay hefty taxes and dispense as much again in bribes, so there is usually little incentive for the central government to interfere. A further unspoken consideration is that Zoob and Nik-El have followers in the capitol and their feelings should not be ignored. Consequently, the State Temple is a bit impoverished. The official representative of the government, who calls himself the Governor, has little actual power. Another resident of Kerzen House is the local priestess of the Healer cult, who performs resurrections, regrows limbs, and treats disease when it occurs. The latter is her most important function, for every disease in Svyet and Kerzen arrives early in Candlefire, due to the many travelers passing through.

There are two inns in town for those disinterested in gambling, or who cannot afford to stay in one of the casinos. Yoash's Rest, the better of the two, was built long after Yoash's departure. The other, Riveredge Refuge, is located about as far from the river as one can be and still be within the town of Candlefire. Both these inns are situated on the Capitol Road. There is a large Common behind Kerzen House, where caravans can pitch tents and quarter their animals, for a small fee (nothing in Candlefire is free).

Along the main road are a number of small shops. There are two jewelers, a master leatherworker, an alchemist/herbalist, a skilled tailor, and a butcher shop. On the Ploam Road, opposite the Happy Landing, is a large general store, with food, dry goods, and more. Just on the river side of the Riveredge Refuge is a smithy and across from it are the town stables.

There is no official constabulary. Order is maintained by employees of the two casinos. Zoob and Nik-El are commercial rivals, but are in perfect agreement on the necessity of keeping the town under control and running without outside interference. Nor are there any judges or courts. There is no extradition from Candlefire to the rest of Kerzen. Occasionally a political refugee is turned over to the Governor, either because the refugee is not wealthy enough to pay the customary asylum fee, or because the culprit is

badly wanted by the government and the town leaders wish for as little trouble as possible.

Candlefire is not a wide-open town. Yoash's Rest's owners would love to have a casino operating on their premises too, but they have been delicately informed of the results of any such attempt, and have chosen to remain innkeepers. Petty crime is tolerated only as long as it does not attract too much attention. Thieves are well-advised to earmark a percentage for one of the two cults.

The People of Candlefire

The visitor will know or be able to find out that:

The most respected person in town is Anais-In the healer. She has been in Candlefire for ten years now, and is a pleasant, middle-aged woman tolerant of human foibles. She has been known to resurrect visitors killed in gambling disputes, which is more than her predecessor would ever have done. Nevertheless, she usually saves her one Resurrection spell for people killed by accident or unprovoked violence. If she has ever had a lover since arriving in town, she has managed to keep him a secret, a remarkable feat in such an environment.

Perhaps the least-respected person in town is Hilflos, the Kerzen governor. His main talents seem to be the making of pointless speeches and the ability to interminably haggle over minutiae. Fortunately, the power of the central government is only nominal in this town, so nobody has to take Hilflos very seriously. He has held his thankless post for 12 years. He is about 60 years old, with a florid face and a round body. A widower, his children are in Kreithen.

The town boasts two very talented craftsmen, known widely for their handiwork. One is Marco, a master leatherworker and bootmaker. Marco is a little over 40, curt, and always busy. Everything calculates he ought to be quite rich by now, but his house and apparel don't show it, so perhaps something is draining off his money. Yokesnip the tailor is about the same age as Marco, and his output just as sought after, but there any similarity ends. Affable, unfailingly courteous, and an excellent story-teller, he is well-liked by almost everybody. His only burden is his daughter Hemmy, who works for him and who complains constantly to anybody who will listen

about how overworked she is. Hemmy is very pretty, so it presumably is only a matter of time before she is lured away to greener pastures.

Glammet the jeweler is very rich. Everybody knows that. His shop is a magnet for burglars, but if any have succeeded, no one is telling. Sharp-eyed visitors have seen bodies of those who made the attempt to steal being carted away from his shop. Glammet used to be a mercenary, and it shows in his attitude and the agility with which he moves about his shop. He employs two young women as clerks, and watches them constantly, not out of esthetic appreciation.

Everybody likes Barbang the blacksmith. Even though he is absent-minded, he is jovial company and not tight with his money. Each of the casinos has its own metalworker, so Barbang doesn't do much weapon or armor work, but makes a good living from horseshoes, kettles, cartwheels, and the like. He is respected for having given a home to Meskit, a slow-witted young boy abandoned by a passing caravan. Azrang, Barbang's assistant, speaks disrespectfully of his master when Barbang is not around; this does not endear him to the workmen of Candlefire, with whom Barbang is very popular.

Agnar Ruggish is the proprietor of Yoash's Rest, the better of the two inns in town. He is a pudgy little man, about 60, with a perpetually suspicious expression. He looks doubtfully at anyone who enters his hotel, as if he expected him to make an attempt to steal the second story.

Scurben owns the Riveredge Refuge, which has the cheapest rooms. He is a large, wheezy man of about 50, who will gladly demonstrate his skill at throwing an axe for any and all prospective guests. This is his way of intimidating the trouble-makers. He considers it a successful night if his inn is still intact in the morning.

Blandish looks like a dwarf, but isn't. The town alchemist, he is short, stocky, and bearded, about 40 years old, and very secretive. He is an initiate of the Sages' cult. Although there is no Sage priest in town, one passes through on a caravan or other expedition often enough to conduct the seasonal services. Anais-In is one of the few people with whom he is friendly.

Overnight Accommodations

If the player-characters investigate

thoroughly, the following possibilities are available for spending the night.

The Casinos

Both casinos have rooms for rent on the second floor. These rooms cost about 20 silvers a night, with prices varying according to season and quality. Nik-El initiates get half-price lodging at the Grinning Pig. Each room has a table, a bed, two chairs, and a good lamp. The best rooms have fireplaces. There is virtually no chance that one will be robbed or assaulted in one of these rooms; the casino guards see to that.

Yoash's Rest

Agnar's price is three silvers a night per person. There is straw on the floor to sleep on. For an extra silver a night, he will rent a rag-stuffed mattress to his patrons. He also serves cold meals for a silver, hot ones for three.

Riveredge

Scurben offers rooms at three silvers a night, for as many people as wish to crowd into a single room. There is no furniture in the room.

The Common

For a fee of two silvers, paid at the Nik-El temple, a tent can be pitched on the Common. After the first night, the fee is one silver a night.

The Woods

For those who cannot even afford the commons, the woods are the last resort. Only the truly penniless select this option, because it is an almost cer-

tain invitation to brigands who attack first and find out you are broke later.

In Candlefire live five priests from whom spells can be learned for the usual price. Naturally their preference is to teach their own initiates, but teaching outsiders brings in useful income. Anais-In has a limited spell repertoire, but, because she has a competent assistant, she is free enough of the time to do a considerable amount of teaching.

Udacha does most of the Nik-El spell teaching, as Zeek is the Adamantine Slim priest responsible for the casting of Bumble spells at high-stakes games, a profitable activity for the cult.

Barbang's main business, of course, is smithing. He does not devote more than one-quarter of his time to Spell Teaching.

Tayna does a considerable amount of teaching to trusted Zoob initiates, but of course this is secret from the community. Podops is frequently available, but people are usually a little uncomfortable about buying spells from him. Tayna does not ordinarily do a Divination to assure the reliability of spell learners, instead relying on the Warding spell to detect hostile intruders.

Two priests visit Candlefire regularly. Buzhi, the priest of the Kerzen state religion responsible for the Can-

Spell Availability

The following spells can be learned from priests resident in Candlefire, or, in the case of Zantra, from a regular visitor who teaches only to Panash initiates. Numbers equal points available by person for variable spells. An "x" indicates that the spell is non-variable. A dash indicates that the listed spell is not taught by that individual.

SPELL	Anais-In	Barbang	Podops	Udacha	Zantra	Zeek
Befuddle	x	—	x	x	x	x
Bladesharp	—	—	4	4	—	—
Bludgeon	—	4	—	—	—	—
Coordination	—	—	x	x	—	x
Countermagic	—	—	—	2	—	1
Det. Enemies	—	—	—	x	—	—
Det. Life	—	—	x	—	—	—
Det. Magic	—	—	—	x	—	—
Det. Traps	—	—	—	x	x	—
Disruption	—	x	—	x	—	x
Dispel Magic	—	—	—	—	—	3
Fireblade	—	—	—	—	x	—
Glamour	—	—	—	—	x	—
Harmonize	—	—	x	—	—	—
Healing	7	2	4	6	3	3
Protection	4	—	—	4	—	3
Repair	—	x	—	—	—	—
Shimmer	—	—	—	—	3	—
Speedart	—	x	—	x	—	x
Strength	—	x	—	x	x	x
Vigor	x	x	—	—	x	—

dlefire region, officiates at important ceremonies, but does not stay around long enough to teach spells. His only teaching is done at remote outposts. Zandra, priestess of Panash, also passes through Candlefire regularly, because Fayer lives here, but as indicated elsewhere, she does not teach spells except to Panash initiates.

The following table shows which spells can be learned without leaving Candlefire. All regular spells can be learned in Kreithen.

Yokesnip and Hemmy

YOKESNIP the tailor, age 45

STR 9	01-04 R LEG	1/5
CON 13	05-08 L LEG	1/5
SIZ 11	09-11 ABDOM	1/5
INT 17	12 CHEST	1/6
POW 17	13-15 R ARM	1/4
DEX 15	16-18 L ARM	1/4
CHA 13	19-20 HEAD	0/5

Move 8 Defense 25%
Hit Points 14

Weapon	SR	Attk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
Quartermaster	4	60%	1D8	70%	15
Scissors	8	85%	1D6	55%	12
Lt Crossbow	2	65%	2D4+2	40%	6

SPELLS: Befuddle, Bludgeon 3, Detect Enemies, Detect Life, Detection Blank 1, Glamour (2), Glue 1, Harmonize (2), Invisibility (3), Mobility, Speedart

WHAT NO ONE IN CANDLEFIRE KNOWS

All is not as it seems in Candlefire. Although the casinos appear to run the town, the most powerful figures in the resort are not affiliated with either one of them. The real control of Candlefire is in the hands of Yokesnip the tailor and his daughter Hemmy.

Yokesnip is an agent of the central government of Kerzen. All the well-to-do residents and visitors eventually come to him for clothes, and everybody finds it easy to talk to him. Hemmy complains to all who will listen about the heavy workload her father imposes on her, and hears many interesting complaints in reply from other apprentices and involuntary employees.

Hilflos the Governor is an intentionally ineffectual puppet, whose real task is to conceal the presence of another government employee in town. Yokesnip's contact with the government is not through Hilflos, ever, but through other agents traveling with caravans on ordinary commercial missions.

SKILLS: Act 95%, Bargain 55%, Listen 80%, Oratory 65%, Tailoring 110%

LANGUAGES: Kerzen 100/100%, Svyeti 100/100%

HEMMY, Yokesnip's daughter, age 23 (but looks much younger)

STR 6	01-04 R LEG	0/3
CON 9	05-08 L LEG	0/3
SIZ 7	09-11 ABDOM	0/3
INT 14	12 CHEST	0/4
POW 10	13-15 R ARM	0/2
DEX 11	16-18 L ARM	0/2
CHA 13	19-20 HEAD	0/3

Move 8 Defense 10%

Hit Points 8

Physical Attractiveness 15

Weapon	SR	Attk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
Dagger	9	40%	1D4+2	25%	12

SPELLS: Befuddle, Coordination (2), Glue 1, Invisibility (3), Mindspeech 1, Mobility, Silence

SKILLS: Act 85%, Bargain 35%, Hide in Cover 55%, Listen 55%, Oratory 40%, Spot Hidden 70%

Anais-In

Anais-In is also serving as a sort of unofficial priestess for the state religion of Kerzen at the moment, to the extent that it does not conflict with her beliefs. That is, she teaches her spells to government functionaries (with the government footing the bill), and conducts simple loyalty services for these same functionaries.

Mercenary leaders, political rivals, weapons suppliers, Svyeti officials, and conspirators of all stripes come to Candlefire because of its lawless reputation. Here they believe they are safe, because of the Governor's weakness and because of the casinos' exclusion of outside interference. Kerzen finds it convenient to let Candlefire thrive, as a way of keeping tabs on all threats to its existence, prosperity, and stability.

The central government of Kerzen is actually an efficient dictatorship operating behind a masquerade of benign incompetence. Although it pretends to be intimidated by Nik-El and Zoob, it has long since penetrated both organizations and is utterly unafraid of them. As long as Nik-El and Zoob continue to be useful to the rulers of Kerzen, their operations are, if anything, encouraged.

Yokesnip and Hemmy pay a price for this control. They must watch every word they speak, but by this time, they have become accustomed to their roles, and fill them without undue effort.

Although a gentle person, she is not gullible, and she is not at all shy about collecting debts for healing or other medical treatment.

ANAIS-IN, the healer, female, age 45

STR 7	01-04 R LEG	0/4
CON 10	05-08 L LEG	0/4
SIZ 7	09-11 ABDOM	0/4
INT 11	12 CHEST	0/5
POW 18	13-15 R ARM	0/3
DEX 9	16-18 L ARM	0/3
CHA 18	19-20 HEAD	0/4

Move 8 Defense 05%

Hit Points 10

Uses No Weapons

SPELLS: Healing 7, Protection 4, Vigor; (known by allied spirit) Befuddle, Sleep

RUNE MAGIC: Comfort Song, Cure All Disease, Regrow Limb, Resurrection, Spell Teaching

SKILLS: Find Healing Plants 75%, Listen 80%, Spot Hidden 75%, Treat Disease 100%, Treat Poison 115%

MAGIC ITEM: 10-point POW storage crystal

SPIRIT: allied spirit (in dove)

INT 7 POW 19

Tyal-In

Tyal-In is not nearly as popular as Anais-In. For one thing, she doesn't like to make house calls. She is not very sympathetic to the victims of wounds or poison, implying by her manner that the victims are responsible for their difficulties.

TYAL-IN, apprentice, female, age 29

STR 10	01-04 R LEG	0/5
CON 13	05-08 L LEG	0/5
SIZ 10	09-11 ABDOM	0/5
INT 13	12 CHEST	0/6
POW 13	13-15 R ARM	0/4
DEX 15	16-18 L ARM	0/4
CHA 11	19-20 HEAD	0/5

Move 8 Defense 10%

Hit Points 13

Uses No Weapons

SPELLS: Befuddle, Healing 6, Sleep 1, Vigor (4)

SKILLS: Find Healing Plants 30%, Listen 55%, Spot Hidden 75%, Treat Disease 60%, Treat Poison 80%

Hilflos

Hilflos' incompetence is only partially feigned. He was inadvertently told that the government was going to send somebody to assist him. This was fourteen years ago, and every now and then he still sends a message to Kreithen inquiring as to his assistant's projected arrival date. He is kept busy with paperwork, perfunctory exhortations of devotion to Kerzen, and routine public relations. Once, to the astonishment of the entire town, he was

actually the target of an assassination plot. Unfortunately, the conspirators fled before they could be questioned about the motive behind such a bizarre scheme.

HILFLOS, the governor, male, age 62

STR	8	01-04	R LEG	1/5
CON	13	05-08	L LEG	1/5
SIZ	14	09-11	ABDOM	1/5
INT	11	12	CHEST	0/6
POW	12	13-15	R ARM	0/4
DEX	10	16-18	L ARM	0/4
CHA	6	19-20	HEAD	0/5

Move 8 Defense 00%
Hit Points 14

Uses No Weapons

SPELLS: Befuddle, Detection Blank 1, Dispel Magic 2, Mindspeech 2, Healing 2

SKILLS: Diplomacy 45%, Listen 80%, Oratory 15%, Spot Hidden 55%

LANGUAGES: Kerzen 55/85%, Svyeti 50/65%

Uberfluss the ferryman

Uberfluss is Candlefire's ferryman. This crossing has been a virtual possession of Uberfluss's family for over a hundred years. It was his grandfather's boat which sank, bringing about the first Candlefire Fair 65 years ago. He has a 12-year-old son being groomed to take over his business in another twenty years or so. Uberfluss is on Udacha's payroll, and faithfully reports anything of interest he hears, or any special commissions he receives. He will not deal with Podops, who gives him the creeps. He likes talking with Hemmy.

UBERFLUSS, the ferryman, age 34

STR	17	01-04	R LEG	2/6
CON	16	05-08	L LEG	2/6
SIZ	16	09-11	ABDOM	2/6
INT	10	12	CHEST	2/7
POW	12	13-15	R ARM	2/5
DEX	10	16-18	L ARM	2/5
CHA	9	19-20	HEAD	2/6

Move 8 Defense 00%
Hit Points 17

Weapon SR Attk% Damage Parr% Pts
Quarterstaff 4 50% 1D8+1D6 45% 15

SPELLS: Healing 2, Repair (2)

SKILLS: Listen 55%, Spot Hidden 50%

Marco Deswade, master leatherworker

Marco is famous for his boots and belts, and other outstanding leatherwork. His fame as a whipmaker is much more restricted. Marco is a secret initiate of the Nik-El cult. Since virtually everyone in town is a lay member, it is easy to keep his status secret. Even the Happy Landing people go to the Grinning Pig every so often. Marco happily repeats anything of interest he hears to Udacha.

MARCO DESWADE, master leatherworker, age 44

STR	10	01-04	R LEG	2/3
CON	8	05-08	L LEG	2/3
SIZ	10	09-11	ABDOM	2/3
INT	11	12	CHEST	2/4
POW	9	13-15	R ARM	1/2
DEX	13	16-18	L ARM	1/2
CHA	10	19-20	HEAD	1/3

Move 8 Defense 05%
Hit Points 8

Weapon SR Attk% Damage Parr% Pts
LH Single-stick 8 45% 1D6 60% 15
RH Whip 4 65% 1D4 - 10

SPELLS: Befuddle, Bludgeon 2, Coordination (2), Disruption, Healing 2, Strength (2)

SKILLS: Bargain 40%, Leatherworking 100%, Listen 75%, Spot Hidden 50%

Tydupp, Marco's assistant

Tydupp's clumsiness is a perpetual trial to Marco, as are his demands for money. Unfortunately, Tydupp knows some nasty secrets about Marco, so the latter usually accedes to Tydupp's pressuring. Tydupp's one redeeming feature is that he is an excellent salesman. He keeps half of his earnings in the back of the shop, and the other half is sent to his family in Kreithen. Tydupp is almost ready to retire and move on.

TYDUPP, Marco's assistant, age 22

STR	14	01-04	R LEG	2/6
CON	15	05-08	L LEG	2/6
SIZ	13	09-11	ABDOM	2/6
INT	14	12	CHEST	2/7
POW	15	13-15	R ARM	1/5
DEX	5	16-18	L ARM	1/5
CHA	6	19-20	HEAD	1/6

Move 8 Defense 00%
Hit Points 16

Weapon SR Attk% Damage Parr% Pts
Shortsword 10 40% 1D6+1 35% 20
+1D4
Thrown Rock 5 55% 1D4+1D2 - -

SPELLS: Coordination (2), Disruption, Healing 2

SKILLS: Bargain 60%, Extortion 65%, Leatherworking 50%, Listen 40%, Spot Hidden 55%.

Agnar Ruggish, proprietor of Yoash's Rest

Agnar is mostly concerned with seeing that people don't stay in the guests' rooms without paying, so he often is found waddling along the corridors of the inn. He listens at doors when he can do so unobserved. He occasionally casts Detect Life as an additional check.

AGNAR RUGGISH, innkeeper, age 58

STR	13	01-04	R LEG	1/4
CON	12	05-08	L LEG	1/4
SIZ	7	09-11	ABDOM	1/4
INT	11	12	CHEST	1/5
POW	11	13-15	R ARM	1/3
DEX	7	16-18	L ARM	1/3
CHA	14	19-20	HEAD	0/4

Move 8 Defense 00%
Hit Points 11

Weapon SR Attk% Damage Parr% Pts
Shortsword 9 40% 1D6+1 50% 20
H Crossbow 4 35% 2D6+2 15% 10

SPELLS: Countermagic 1, Detect Life, Healing 2, Speedart.

SKILLS: Bargain 50%, Listen 65%, Spot Hidden 70%

Scurben, proprietor of the Riveredge Refuge

Scurben's goals are more modest than even Agnar's. He is willing to overlook a few cheaters once in a while, as long as things stay peaceful and not too rowdy. He demonstrates his axe skill for anyone who will watch; it helps to keep the level of violence down. He has long since given up hope of ever being rich, and his health is poor. Nevertheless, with a cheerful and companionable wife and two obedient children, he is a happier man than the perpetually worried Agnar.

SCURBEN, innkeeper, age 48

STR	18	01-04	R LEG	1/3
CON	8	05-08	L LEG	1/3
SIZ	16	09-11	ABDOM	1/3
INT	12	12	CHEST	1/4
POW	11	13-15	R ARM	1/2
DEX	13	16-18	L ARM	1/2
CHA	9	19-20	HEAD	0/3

Move 8 Defense 05%
Hit Points 9

Weapon SR Attk% Damage Parr% Pts
Cudgel 6 60% 1D10 55% 20
+1D6

Thrown Axe 2 85% 1D6+1D3 - 15

SPELLS: Bludgeon 1, Detect Enemies, Healing 2, Speedart

SKILLS: Bargain 45%, Listen 60%, Spot Hidden 55%, Spot Traps 40%

Silvi, the pawnbroker

Silvi was the acolyte of a shaman who believed in a rigorous and flesh-mortifying training program. In one exercise in privation, Silvi's left leg became infected and had to be removed. The shaman wouldn't regrow her leg, and showed no sympathy, so Silvi left. Energetic and resourceful, she has acquired a modest amount of property. She is not soft-hearted: pawnbrokers can't afford to be. She has told nobody about the bound spirit in her parrot, who helps keep watch over the shop. She uses no weapons partly because

of her handicap, partly because she relies on spells, and partly because she is an initiate of Zoob. She will Glue the front door shut and Bind or Befuddle the shoplifter, and wait for the enforcers to arrive. She doesn't worry much about pilfering.

SILVI, Zoob initiate, age 38

STR	14	01-07	R LEG	1/6
CON	15	08-11	ABDOM	0/6
SIZ	15	12	CHEST	0/7
INT	15	13-15	R ARM	0/5
POW	17	16-18	L ARM	0/5
DEX	7	19-20	HEAD	0/6
CHA	14			

Move 5 Defense 00%
Hit Points 17

Uses No Weapons

SPELLS: Befuddle, Binding, Countermagic 2, Detect Enemies, Detect Magic, Detect Spirit, Glue 1, Healing 4, Mobility, Repair (2), Spirit Binding

SKILLS: Bargain 45%, Listen 70%, Spot Hidden 70%

SPIRIT: bound spirit (in parrot named Sububi)
INT 10 POW 16

Morena, scribe and archivist of Kerzen House

Morena is officially just a librarian, but is actually in charge of much of the day-to-day recordkeeping and correspondence of the administration, work that Hilflos either can't do or can't afford to be seen doing (in keeping up his cover of being incompetent).

MORENA, initiate of Kreithen, age 24

STR	12	01-04	R LEG	0/4
CON	10	05-08	L LEG	0/4
SIZ	9	09-11	ABDOM	0/4
INT	17	12	CHEST	0/5
POW	11	13-15	R ARM	0/3
DEX	11	16-18	L ARM	0/3
CHA	11	19-20	HEAD	0/4

Move 8 Defense 10%
Hit Points 10

Weapon	SR	Attk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
Quarterstaff	5	45%	1D8	50%	15

SPELLS: Disruption, Extinguish (2), Glue 1, Healing 2, Light, Repair (2), Strength (2)

SKILLS: Evaluate Treasure 30%, Hide Item 25%, Listen 55%, Spot Hidden 50%

LANGUAGES: Dwarven 15/30%, Elvish 25/45%, Kerzen 85/100%, Svyeti 30/60%

Blandish, the alchemist and herbalist

Blandish has sacrificed for one-use of Warding, and his premises are protected by this spell. He keeps two wound and loaded crossbows behind his counter. They are aimed at the wall in case they go off accidentally.

Blandish is close-mouthed, but will talk shop with another sage cult initiate.

Blandish's sleeping powders are bad-tasting, and will only help someone who is trying to go to sleep. His knockout potion will cause unconsciousness within one minute in someone who drinks it if its potency of 15 overcomes the drinker's CON. It will make the drinker groggy (subtract 7 from his DEX) even if it doesn't overcome his CON, and it is completely tasteless. Blandish sells it for 600 silvers per dose, and only to those he trusts (such as other sages) or to those who overcome his conscience with large sums of cash. Blandish will not usually mention this potion to anyone, unless pressed.

Blandish also keeps a small supply of Food Songed jhope, which is a mild but non-addictive intoxicant. He only buys it from elves, whom he can trust to cast Food Song on it (See the Vrang 2jhomang cult writeup for the effects of raw jhope).

BLANDISH, sage cult initiate, age 37

STR	8	01-04	R LEG	1/5
CON	16	05-08	L LEG	1/5
SIZ	5	09-11	ABDOM	1/5
INT	13	12	CHEST	1/6
POW	14	13-15	R ARM	1/4
DEX	17	16-18	L ARM	1/4
CHA	11	19-20	HEAD	0/5

Move 8 Defense 15%
Hit Points 15

Weapon	SR	Attk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
H Crossbow	1	55%	2D6+2	35%	10

SPELLS: Befuddle, Detect Enemies, Detect Magic, Glue 1, Healing 3, Multimissile 2

SKILLS: Find Useful Plants 60%, Listen 40%, Spot Hidden 80%, Taste Analysis 85% Make Blade Venom POT 12, Make Acid POT 6, Make Herbal Poison POT 12, Make Herbal Poison Antidote POT 12, Make Healing Potion POT 7, Make Sleeping Powders, Make Knockout Potion POT 15

LANGUAGES: Kerzen 65/60%

MAGIC ITEMS: Keeps three healing potions POT 7 in stock. Makes all other potions up as needed to help prevent robbery.

Glammet the jeweler

Glammet got prosperous in the first place by fighting, and will not hesitate to fight to protect his present wealth. He has two female clerks that he doesn't trust, but finding someone you can trust is no mean trick in Candlefire.

GLAMMET, warrior cult initiate and former mercenary, age 32

STR	13	01-04	R LEG	1/4
CON	12	05-08	L LEG	1/4
SIZ	10	09-11	ABDOM	1/4
INT	12	12	CHEST	1/5
POW	14	13-15	R ARM	1/3
DEX	17	16-18	L ARM	1/3
CHA	7	19-20	HEAD	0/4

Move 8 Defense 15%
Hit Points 12

Weapon	SR	Attk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
Shortsword	6	75%	1D6+1	65%	20
Arbalest	1	65%	3D6+1	30%	10
Mdm Shield	-	-	-	80%	12

SPELLS: Bladesharp 2, Demoralize, Detect Magic, Healing 4, Multimissile 1, Protection 3

RUNE MAGIC: Warding 2 (one-use only); this spell is cast on his shop

SKILLS: Bargain 45%, Evaluate Treasure 80%, Listen 70%, Spot Hidden 90%, Spot Traps 90%

MAGIC ITEMS: 8-point POW storage crystal; 1-point POW enhancing crystal

THE CAST OF TENS

The following list includes twenty characters who might be met on the streets or in the casinos of Candlefire. These characters can provide local color as extra gamblers, vendors, customers, or characters in a number of other roles.

Each character is given a "Possible Occupation." This is merely a suggestion, based on the spells and skills possessed. Other occupations are also possible, or even appropriate.

Each character is also given a Hide Item score, representing their ability to smuggle a dagger or other weapon into the Nik-El casino.

Cash and Stash are given for each character. Cash is the amount carried, while Stash is net worth. Cash varies with circumstances, of course. Characters encountered in a casino may carry a larger percentage of their Stash than normal.

The Stash is usually not all money, but might be merchandise, livestock, or other property. Both Cash and Stash are given in silver pieces.

The weapons are a sample of the weapons the character might own. Most characters will not carry heavy weapons when walking down the main streets.

Many characters can be either male or female, depending on what is required or the referee's whim. Some can even be made into non-human races.

ODIN, age 20. Possible occupation: mercenary

STR	15	01-04	R LEG	4/6
CON	17	05-08	L LEG	4/6
SIZ	14	09-11	ABDOM	7/6
INT	14	12	CHEST	7/7
POW	13	13-15	R ARM	4/5
DEX	8	16-18	L ARM	4/5
CHA	11	19-20	HEAD	5/6

SPELLS: Bladesharp 2, Detect Spirit, Dullblade 2, Fanaticism 2, Healing 3

SKILLS: Hide Item 05%, Ride 25%

TREASURE: Cash – 17; Stash – 17

WYTH, age 26. Possible occupation: clumsy elf or vagrant

STR	10	01-04	R LEG	0/5
CON	14	05-08	L LEG	0/5
SIZ	11	09-11	ABDOM	0/5
INT	9	12	CHEST	0/6
POW	12	13-15	R ARM	0/4
DEX	8	16-18	L ARM	0/4
CHA	12	19-20	HEAD	0/5

Move 8 Defense 00%
Hit Points 14

Weapon	SR	Attk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
Sickle	9	50%	1D6+1	40%	15
Thrown	4	75%	1D4	—	—
Rock					
Dagger	10	40%	1D4+2	30%	12
Fist	10	45%	1D3	—	—
Kick	10	35%	1D6	—	—

SPELLS: Detect Detection, Disruption, Food Song, Healing 6, Speedart

SKILLS: Hide Item 10%, Hide in Cover 60%
Move Quietly 75%

TREASURE: Cash – 99; Stash – 99

NAU, age 30. Possible occupation: miner, perhaps a dwarf

STR	14	01-04	R LEG	2/4
CON	10	05-08	L LEG	2/4
SIZ	10	09-11	ABDOM	2/4
INT	14	12	CHEST	2/5
POW	8	13-15	R ARM	1/3
DEX	11	16-18	L ARM	1/3
CHA	11	19-20	HEAD	4/4

Move 8 Defense 05%
Hit Points 10

Weapon	SR	Attk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
Battle Axe	8	40%	1D8+2	35%	15
Rapier	7	25%	1D6+1	10%	12
Javelin	3	45%	1D10	15%	10
Lg Shield	—	—	—	30%	16
Dagger	9	45%	1D4+2	30%	12
Fist	9	40%	1D3	—	—
Kick	9	30%	1D6	—	—

SPELLS: Bladesharp 1, Darkwall (2), Detect Gold, Detect Spirit, Detection Blank 1, Healing 2, Speedart, Xenohealing 2

SKILLS: Evaluate Treasure 50%, Hide Item 10%, Listen 50%, Spot Trap 45%

TREASURE: Cash – 60; Stash – 425

lay membership is proximity to role models.

Physical beauty is an asset in this cult. A Physical Attractiveness of 13-16 (rolled on 3D6 for humans) adds +05% to all chances for advancement within the cult, and an Attractiveness of 17-20 adds +10%. However, lack of beauty is not necessarily a handicap, and classic ugliness may even be an advantage.

Initiate Membership

In order to apply for initiation, a lay member must have impaled an enemy with a rapier. This event must have been witnessed by a cult member. Then, the prospective initiate must convince the examiners that he/she has the necessary flair to qualify for initiation. For game purposes, this is abstracted as CHAx5 or less. Failure forces the prospect to try again as soon as he can again impale an enemy.

It is not imperative that a prospective initiate be particularly agile. One cult hero, Reeler Mykoy, was famed for his elegant stumble.

The following skills are taught to initiates at half price: Quarterstaff, Rapier, Climb, Jump, Move Quietly, and Swim. Initiates are discouraged from engaging in unfashionable activities such as reading. Large shields are prohibited by the cult.

Initiates may learn Coordination, Fireblade, Glamour, Strength, and Vigor at half price. Bladesharp, Bludgeon, and Multimissile, all brutish spells, are prohibited.

Initiates are trained to bear up under Demoralize and Befuddle without losing their savoir faire (though these spells still have their full effect). Every initiate dreads being Harmonized, slaved to a person of inferior taste and bearing.

All initiates are expected to train constantly in snappy repartee and in swaggering. Opponents must be insulted amusingly during combat. No matter how grievously injured, an initiate must say something to the effect of, "I'm all right, really. It's just a flesh wound." All initiates practice casual ways of asking for Healing 6.

It is acceptable to use Blade Venom so long as the initiate is not caught.

Any initiate violating cult precepts will be made to look ridiculous.

Questworld Cult:

PANASH

The Legends of Panash

There are as many stories about the origin and life of Panash as there are members of his cult. Panash himself refuses to resolve the contradictions – a policy entirely appropriate to one who delights in fable and romance.

He is said to have been the son of a king (or of an emperor, or of a mighty wizard, or of a beautiful but secretly married princess) whose existence was an embarrassment to his parents (or usurpers). He was either given to shepherds to be killed, or exposed on a mountainside, or maybe the babies were switched and he grew up in obscurity within the palace itself. One story says that he was brought up by a wolf bitch (a related tale says he was raised by a band of gorillas).

His exploits constitute a bewildering mosaic of events. He made his home either in a forest, a jungle, on a bison "ranch" (a sort of stationary herd), or on the high seas. He was always known to be deadly with his rapier, which was made of silver. He also was supposed to be a great archer, but archery is not a cult skill today. He was a master of the quarterstaff, and was so skilled that once, in a fight over a log bridge, he split his

opponent's staff lengthwise. In many accounts he is said to have worn a mask, to hide his face (this seems hardly credible). He is sometimes accompanied by a faithful companion, either a human, elf, dwarf, centaur, or even, in one cycle, by a trollkin (surely a jest). Hill folk tell stories about his great deeds as a gallant pirate, evidently due to their unfamiliarity with real pirates.

Whatever the truth, the Panash cult today is for all those who adventure primarily for the fun of it, and who are concerned with cutting a proper figure. Bravado and feats of derring-do are highly prized by the Panshees (as cult members are called). Genuine courage and actual recklessness are respected, but not always emulated. The looks of the thing, not the actuality, are what count.

The Runes of this cult are Harmony and Good Taste.

Lay Membership

Lay membership is open to all who wish to lead a life of style, let the substance fall where it may. The only requirement is that the lay member buy a rapier from a priest or lord of the cult. It is not necessary that it be used, or even worn. The main benefit of

Rune Lords (Flynn)

A prospective Flynn (the equivalent of Rune lord) of Panash must be an initiate with a POW of at least 15, who is a master (90%+ skill) in Rapier, Jump, and Swim, as well as in at least two other skills from the following: Climb, Move Quietly, Peaceful Cut, Quarterstaff parry, or Taste Analysis.

The candidate must have scored a critical hit with his rapier upon an opponent when a cult initiate was watching. Convincing the examiners again involves rolling CHAx5 or less on D100. The character may try again if he fails the first try, assuming he has critically hit with his rapier more than once.

Rune lords get the usual benefits of an allied spirit, Divine Intervention, spirit support, and a tasteful suit of iron armor. In addition, they may have either a magically tempered silver or iron rapier (if available, most Rune lords choose the durable iron rapier).

Priests

Prospective priests must have a POW of at least 18, must have been an initiate for at least 3 years, and must be 90% in Banter. This cult has no dreary literacy requirement. Nor is there a DEX x 5% limit on DEX-based skills. Priests are expected to be lithe and nimble.

All Rune spells are available to priests of this cult. A priest must never place himself in Mindlink with one not of the Panash cult. Panash is not an elemental deity, and so the priests of this cult cannot summon elementals, though dearly wish they had access to those marvelous sylphs. Shades, on the other hand, are loathed as hopelessly vulgar.

The cult priests have access to the following special Rune spells:

APLOMB: *1-point spell, duration 15 minutes, range 160m, reusable, non-stackable*

The recipient of this spell will not be out of breath or at a loss for words for the duration of the spell. If underwater or in stifling fumes, the character will still suffocate or drown, but will be able to speak, sing, or yodel up to the last minute. The person under the influence of this spell will radiate a daunting air of confidence in even the most appalling situation. The spell is sometimes known as I'm Hardly Trying Yet.

IN LIKE FLYNN: *1-point spell, duration 15 minutes, range 160m, reusable, non-stackable*

This spell must be cast on a rapier. The weapon's blade takes on an iridescent gleam, making it look like a sword of incredible magical potency. This will cause many opponents to flee in terror. If the spell's users are not outnumbered by more than 2:1, each foe must roll his POWx10 or less or flee. The spell does nothing to enhance actual attack chance or damage. A Flynned rapier never remains stuck in anything it impales, but slides back out easily, though it still does full impale damage. Moreover, the rapier becomes immune to all "dropped weapon" or "shattered weapon" fumbles from the fumble chart.

SURE WOOD: *1-point spell, duration 15 minutes, range 160m, reusable, nonstackable*

This spell must be cast on a wooden quarterstaff. It will add half again to the user's parry chance, and will double the weapon's hit points (usually from 15 to 30) for the spell's duration. It has no effect upon attack chances or damage.

UTTER DISGRACE: *3-point spell, duration permanent, range 160m, one-use, non-stackable*

This spell must overcome the target's POW to work. If it succeeds, the target's nose will swell and deform into

an unsightly protuberance, the target's skin will acquire a sickly jaundiced pallor, and the target's voice will acquire a squeaky, grating quality. The net effect of these changes is to reduce the target's Charisma to species minimum.

This spell is available only to high priests of the cult, and is the cult's only form of retribution other than public shame. Because the spell is so drastic, the priest employing the spell must use Oratory successfully to explain to other cult members why the spell was necessary, or lose a point of Charisma himself.

A successful Divine Intervention will remove the effects of this spell.

Miscellaneous

Rather than likes and dislikes, the cult prefers to think in terms of In and Out. For instance, dapper uniforms are In. Heavy weapons, too many medals, and discipline are Out. Cavalry charges are In. Rhinos are Out. Having a little gold is In. Having a lot of gold is Out. Storms and lightning are In. Darkness and death are Out, except that Vampires are In. However, getting to be a Vampire is almost always Out, though it can depend on your relatives. Ancestors are In. Descendants are Out. Sex is In for men, but dangerous for women. True love is In, especially if it is hopeless.

Questworld Cult:

NIK-EL

Mythos and History

Nik-El is the daughter of the god of Disorder and goddess of Illusion. Her birth was completely unexpected, even by her mother. Nik-El took credit for deciding most of the conflicts and battles of the Gods War, but her claims were ignored by contenders and spectators. Though not alarmed by the inroads of chaos, she nevertheless took part in the Compromise which gave rise to Time: she saw in Time a fertile field for new ventures in unpredictability.

Nik-El has been worshipped wherever beings take chances, either for profit or for the sheer enjoyment of risk and adventure. Primarily, she is a goddess of civilized regions. The harshness of barbarian life leaves little room

for courting unnecessary peril, and danger is rarely perceived as adding pleasantly to the intensity of life. But, townsmen living settled existences frequently come to Nik-El for the chance to add a little spice to their lives, even if the risk they take is confined to a few silvers or a quarrel with their spouse.

Nik-El makes no promises about life after death. That's just one of the chances that the initiate takes. Some sacred texts seem to promise an afterlife of unending celebration and gratification, while other legends and proverbs suggest that Nik-El initiates get no afterlife at all. One thing is certain: Nik-El never resurrects her followers, though she has no objection to other deities so doing. Nik-El worshipers

are buried in the ground, with the mourners raising a great cry of “Good Luck!” as the dirt is thrown over the coffin.

Nik-El is associated with the Runes of Luck and Spirit. The cult claims that the combination of these two Runes constitutes a new Rune. This Rune is Entropy, which the cult asserts is an element Rune. Many confuse Entropy with Disorder or even Chaos, overlooking the fact that Chaos is a form and Disorder a power, while Entropy (it is claimed) is an element. The Nik-El cult explains that Entropy is the embodiment of Luck. Local increases in order (such as the accumulation of wealth) must be accomplished at the expense of others, presumably outsiders. Disorder, on the other hand, is mindless, the promotion of ubiquitous confusion for its own sake. Chaos is even worse: it is slavery. The Nik-El cult calls for increasing one’s own freedom even if it means (as it must) infringing on that of others.

The Entropy elementals are called Tumblers, and are described later.

Nature of the Cult

Those who worship Nik-El tend to be those who follow a life of chance, daring, and reliance on luck. Initiates are expected to take risks, as a way of amassing luck. Adventurers belonging to many other cults sometimes join Nik-El as lay members before dangerous quests, not to ensure good fortune, but to avert evil luck.

This cult is not a close-knit secret clan of grim assassins and criminals such as the Black Fang Brotherhood in RuneQuest. Nik-El initiates go to considerable pains to keep their illegitimate activities hidden from other cult members, because there is no formal prohibition on stealing from or informing on other members. However, the threat of a visit from a hired assassin usually keeps initiates from working too closely with authorities against the interests of other cult members.

Nik-El Rune lords and priests are respected members of their communities, and usually have a legitimate business. Brothels and casinos are considered legitimate in many places.

The Nik-El cult is not a thieves’ guild. All the members are not necessarily criminals. It is quite possible to become a high priest of this cult without having stolen anything more repre-

hensible than a kiss. Tax collectors, acrobats, athletes, entrepreneurs, and others besides crooks frequently find in the worship of Nik-El a congenial expression of their outlook on the world.

A good percentage of Nik-El worshippers are, after all, criminals. The petty ones are hung when caught. The prosperous and successful ones are well-regarded in the community and pay hefty taxes. A Daredevil, as a Nik-El Rune lord is known, is widely admired even by many law-abiding citizens, because he has transcended the criminal way of life to live in defiance of mischance.

The popularity of the cult’s casinos and brothels do not seem to transfer to the cult itself. Nik-El has never achieved real respectability, but that is not one of its top priorities.

Nik-El is associated with several small thug cults, on the order of RuneQuest’s Black Fang Brotherhood. It is also affiliated with some ancestor worshippers. It is friendly to any city or empire that tolerate its activities. It is usually on good terms with these bureaucrats and their cults because it brings revenue to municipal and imperial authorities, in the forms of taxes, license fees, donations, and bribes. Nik-El often covets official approval, because to many the doctrines of the cult smack of chaos, though that suspicion is incorrect.

Nik-El is associated with the small Panash cult, though Nik-El considers that cult frivolous.

This cult dislikes the sages, as well as any attempts to codify or calculate risks. The cult maintains that too much knowledge is a weakness, for it diminishes the element of chance in many activities. In practice, most cult members will avail themselves of any knowledge giving them an advantage in their pursuits. What they really dislike is having to pay for the information. Nik-El casinos have the odds on each game as carefully figured out as possible to ensure that the casino will turn a profit, for example.

Since Nik-El people rarely assassinate or murder, they have little fear from Sense Assassin abilities. Although they won’t often say so in public, Nik-El worshippers privately feel that anti-chaos berserks are virtually indistinguishable from the chaos they hate so much.

The cult usually expresses hostilities by subversion and corruption,

rather than by murder and mayhem. There is too little profit in the latter.

Nik-El members often try to become members of merchant cults, as a form of protective disguise. The merchant cults avidly ferret out and expose such interlopers.

Organization

The cult has no central authority. Each town or city in which Nik-El is tolerated will have a temple, the size and conspicuousness of which will depend on the prosperity of its members and its standing in the community. The high priest of this temple is always the nominal cult authority in town. However, Daredevils need answer to no authority.

A Nik-El temple is usually a casino, brothel, or pawnshop. Such a temple must always have a “lobby” with a statue of Nik-El, provided by the proprietor of the establishment, usually the high priest or a Daredevil. Nobody knows what Nik-El looks like, so there is a bewildering diversity in representations of the goddess. Anyone wishing to enter a Nik-El establishment must become a lay member of Nik-El upon entrance.

Buildings and places are a matter of indifference to the cult, except as investments. All will be destroyed eventually, with any luck. There, the only places endowed with sanctity are the temples. If the location of a temple becomes inconvenient, or if pressure from outsiders makes it uncomfortable, the temple is moved elsewhere.

Legend has it that the holy days were originally selected by lot, but this seems farfetched. Holy days are now on Wildday of Illusion week. The High Holy Day is the holy day of Fire season. On this day, great fortunes are wagered on all sorts of competitions and events.

Lay Membership

Anyone entering a Nik-El establishment is required to become a lay member. This is done by purchasing a small medallion in the lobby. This medallion has the Luck Rune on one side and the Fate Rune on the other. The price is set by the proprietor, but can be as little as a single silver. The medallion is often used in games of chance.

A single point of battlemagic POW must be sacrificed every time that a lay member enters a Nik-El establishment for the purpose of pleasure or

gambling. This Power is sacrificed to the statue in the lobby.

Lay membership is popularly believed to provide limited immunity to the surreptitious expropriation of one's possessions by initiates of the cult. It is true that initiates are encouraged to select outsiders as the targets for illegal activities. It is also true that less choosy initiates use the cult casinos and brothels as convenient locations for finding potential victims. It is contrary to the cult theology to put a stop to this practice. Anyone entering a place of Nik-El must take his chances.

Training is not offered to lay members, who are, of course, just patrons.

No spells are taught at reduced prices to lay members, though most are available at normal prices, except those prohibited to initiates.

Initiate Membership

Lay gamblers or others known to members of the cult may be approached or considered for initiation. If a character has any desire to join, he will have a CHAx5 or less chance on D100 to be approached (unless a PC does the approaching). Nik-El requires her initiates to be lucky. Therefore, the acceptance roll is POWx5 or less on D100. If the luck roll is failed, another try may be made after his next Power gain. A candidate rejected three times is considered fatally unlucky, and not offered any more activities. The candidate must also give up any initiate membership in a Truth Rune cult.

Initiates must serve the cult in some capacity for the first year, usually working in a casino or brothel. After that, he is free, and may become a member of a burglary ring, or other unsavory enterprise. The first year's service may be overt, or performed away from one's home town. Initiates frequently desire to keep their identities secret even from other initiates, and may pose as simple lay members. Only the priesthood knows for sure which lay members are really secretly initiates.

An initiate must sacrifice 2 points of Power to Nik-El every holy day. He must also donate 10% of his income to the cult. He may attempt to keep any income from criminal activities secret, and not pay 10% on it, but if caught, there is a stiff fine, usu-

ally of five times the amount of the unreported income.

Initiates get half-price lodging at any Nik-El casino or brothel. They may get limited protection from other Nik-El members. Burglarizing, abducting, or defrauding other initiates is frowned upon, but not prohibited.

The cult offers training in Rapier and Staff Sling to initiates. Training in the cult skills of Cheating at Cards, Dealing, Seduction, etc., is also at half price to initiates.

All initiates are expected to own and to train with a whip.

WHIP

The cult uses a long, heavy whip, about 2 meters from handle to tip. It requires a STR of 9 and a DEX of 11 to use, has a basic to-hit chance of 10%, a basic Strike Rank of 1, and an ENC of 1. It does 1D4 plus the user's damage bonus if it hits. A special hit with a whip is an Impale. Whips cannot be used to parry with, and have 10 hit points.

Because the tip moves so fast, an opponent's parry is reduced by 10% against any whip. If a whip "Impale" is parried by a weapon, the whip encircles the weapon's shaft and may whip it out of the user's hand. If the character doing the parrying is surprised (roll POWx5 or less to determine surprise) then the whip automatically disarms him. If he is not surprised, then roll STR vs. STR to disarm. If the whip user fails to disarm the target, the target may try a STR vs STR roll to pull the whip from the user's grip.

Whips are unpredictable. Anyone using a whip has a doubled fumble chance. Thus, a character with a 65% chance of hitting with the whip will fumble on a roll of 97-00 instead of 99-00.

Outsiders may learn whip training from the cult at 300/800/1500/EXP. Initiates learn at half price.

Disruption is taught for free to all initiates as a selective entropy-increasing spell. Once learned, it may never be forgotten, even to make room for other memorized spells. Coordination and Befuddle (which causes a mental entropy increase) are taught at half price.

The entropy-defying spells of Silence, Repair, and Multimissile are denied to all initiates. An initiate will forget these spells upon initiation, if he already knows them.

Initiates may sacrifice for one use of any Rune spell available to the cult priests. Nik-El does not provide Divine Intervention for initiates.

Rune Lord Membership (Daredevils)

The Rune lords of this cult are known as Daredevils. They exemplify the ideals of risk taking and defying fate. They are expected to be lucky, though not necessarily rash or foolhardy. They are much admired for their casual disregard of danger and hazards.

A Daredevil candidate must have been an initiate for at least three years. He must have at least 90% proficiency in Whip attack, Shortsword or Rapier parry, and Evaluate Treasure or Spot Hidden. He must also have at least 90% in any two of the following: Head Butt, Move Quietly, Oratory, Pick Pockets, Quarterstaff attack, Rapier or Shortsword attack, or Taste Analysis.

A candidate for Daredevil must know the spells of Befuddle and Coordination, in addition to his automatic knowledge of Disruption.

By his nature, a Daredevil is subject to few restrictions. He does as he likes, let the consequences fall where they may. A Daredevil may not hide his status from outsiders; he is required to wear a golden Nik-El medallion in a conspicuous place at all times (usually on a cord around the neck).

A Daredevil is obliged to bait any sage lord or priest he meets. This often takes the form of a sarcastic sneering remark, and customarily involves the imputation of cowardice. Many Daredevils have reputations for imaginative vituperation. Their taunts do not have to be ill-humored; in fact, it is considered a great coup if the target can be induced to laugh.

Daredevils are expected to find their own iron armor and weapons. The cult has none, and would consider it heretical just to give it away even if it did have some. Iron should be the reward of great peril. Daredevils receive the standard benefits of magical support and allied spirits.

Nik-El does not offer ordinary Divine Intervention. Instead, a successful Divine Intervention from any Runemaster summons an Immense Tumbler. These are described at the end of the cult writeup.

Rune Priesthood

A Rune priest of Nik-El is often given the title of Gambler, whether or not he owns or frequents a gambling establishment. Priests are required to be people of good standing in the community, and therefore are nearly al-

ways members of the dominant race. Although they may have been fugitives from justice at some time in their past career, their record is expected to be clean at the time of acceptance into the priesthood. They must maintain their community standing, but bribery and blackmail are acceptable methods of so doing, in the cult of Nik-El.

The candidate priest must have been an initiate for two years, must have a POW of 18, must read and write the local language at 80%, and must convince the examiners of his luck. This is abstracted as rolling POWx3 on D100 three times in a row. As always, 96-00 on any roll means rejection. Two misses on a single try or a single miss on two separate tries for acceptance means permanent rejection. There is no place in this priesthood for the jinxed.

A priest of Nik-El may never join a Truth Rune cult. Like most priests, those of Nik-El may not train in DEX-related skills, nor may they train up their characteristics. The only exception to this is that priests may continue to train in the whip and may improve with it up to 100%.

Unlike most priests, those of Nik-El only donate 50% of their income to their cult. However, 25% of their income must be distributed in the form of bribes, compulsory donations to charity, and other fees, so they actually only get to keep 25% of income. The amount donated to the cult may be used for training in cult skills or spells, but not that given away as bribes etc.

The only standard Rune spells available to the cult directly are Spell Teaching and Divine Intervention. The priests have access to Shield, Discorporation, and Spirit Block through associate cults. Divine Intervention for the cult is peculiar and limited to the summoning of Immense Tumblers, as described at the end of the cult writeup. The priests may summon Tumblers as a sort of elemental. Priests have access to the following special cult Rune spells:

CRUMBLE: 1-point spell, duration 15 minutes or until weapon breaks, range 160m, reusable, stackable

When cast upon a weapon, this spell causes the weapon to do the same damage to itself as it does to a target, every time it hits. If the target weapon has magical spells cast on it, such as Bladesharp or Crush, it will be im-

mune to the Crumble spell unless more points are in the Crumble than the weapon's spells. Crumble 2 would therefore work against a weapon carrying up to a Bladesharp or Bludgeon 3 (Crumble is a Rune spell, so is worth twice its points in battle magic) or carrying Truesword or Crush 1. If the target weapon holds a spirit, the Crumble must overcome the spirit's POW, and if the target weapon is a spell matrix, the points in the matrix are added to any other spells the weapon may have on it, whether or not the matrix is activated. This spell will not work on Rune metal weapons.

FUMBLE: 1-point spell, duration instantaneous, range 160m, reusable, non-stackable.

This spell is targeted against an opponent. If the target fails to resist a POW vs POW attack by the caster, then the victim must roll on the Fumble Table in RuneQuest.

GRUMBLE: 1-point spell, duration 15 minutes, range 160m, reusable, non-stackable

This is a kind of super-Demoralize. It makes the target completely dissatisfied with any companions and to become disillusioned about the present enterprise or battle. The target will cast no offensive magic, no weapon-improving spells, no Detects, nor any spells (even Healing) to assist comrades. The character may cast Healing and defensive spells on himself, though not Xenohealing. The character will parry at full chance, but only go through the motions of attacking (05% chance for success). The spell must overcome the target's POW to work. A happily married person in the presence of his/her spouse is immune to the effects of this spell for some reason.

STUMBLE: 1-point spell, duration instantaneous, range 160m, reusable, non-stackable

If this spell succeeds in a POW vs. POW attack on the target, the target falls down. For every leg the target has in excess of two, subtract 05% from the spell's chances of success. The spell has no effect on legless targets. If the spell succeeds, all attackers will get a +20% to their attack in that melee round vs the Stumbling target, and the target will get no attack or parry, as per normal falling down rules.

HUMBLE: 2-point spell, duration 15 minutes, range 160m, reusable, non-stackable

If this spell overcomes the target's

POW, the victim's last-used skill will drop to his basic chance for success, plus any applicable bonuses.

MUMBLE: 2-point spell, duration 15 minutes, range 160m, reusable, non-stackable

If this succeeds in a POW vs. POW attack, the target will become incapable of making intelligible sounds, including the casting of spells. The target can still bellow, whistle, scream, etc.

RUMBLE: 2-point spell, duration to end of battle or end of day, range 160m, reusable, non-stackable

Like the Humakt spell of Morale, this must be prepared by a daylong ritual in a holy place of the cult. When activated by the priest, it increases the DEX-based skills (attack, parry, manipulation, and stealth) of those who underwent the ceremony by 10%. This does not include Defense. If activated on a day in which the group does not engage in battle, it lasts until the end of the day. Otherwise, it expires at the end of the battle.

JUMBLE: 3-point spell, duration 15 minutes, range 160m, reusable, non-stackable

If this spell overcomes the target's POW, it will cause a temporary change in an arbitrary characteristic. The affected characteristic is determined by rolling 1D8:

Die Roll	Result
1	Strength
2	Constitution
3	Size
4	Intelligence
5	Power
6	Dexterity
7	Charisma
8	Damage Bonus

If the die roll was 1 to 7, reroll the target species' appropriate dice for that characteristic. A roll of 8 eliminates whatever damage bonus the character might have had (including a negative one).

Of course, this spell might actually increase, temporarily, the affected characteristic of the target.

All the target's abilities and bonuses must be recomputed on the basis of the new value for the duration of the spell.

If the character's INT drops, he may not be able to remember some spells. Determine which ones are forgotten randomly.

If SIZ increases by 3 or more, limb armor straps break and mail on the chest and abdomen will do 1D3 points of damage to each location once. If SIZ drops 3 or more points, armor will hang loosely and limb armor will fall off, and helmets will obscure vision till removed.

If the victim's POW decreases, and the target already has a lowered POW due to spell casting, his POW will be equal to his newly-rolled POW, minus whatever points he was down. For example, if the target had cast 10 points of magic and rolled a new POW of 8, he would have a new POW of $8 - 10 = -2$, thus dying.

Since Power has to come from somewhere, if the spell increases the POW of the target, the Power is drained from the caster. If this POW drain equals or exceeds the current POW of the caster, the caster's spirit ceases to exist. Crystals, bound spirits, etc. cannot be used to supply this POW.

If the target's STR or DEX is lowered, he may no longer be able to use the weapon or shield he holds.

If the target's CON is lowered, and he has already taken damage, he may be killed on total hit points.

Tumblers

The priests of Nik-El can summon the cult elementals, the *Tumblers*. These come in small, medium, and large sizes (and, in response to Divine Intervention, in Immense).

Characteristic	Tumbler Abilities		
	Small	Medium	Large
Attack Chance	20%	40%	60%
Size in Cubic Meters	3x3x3	3x6x3	3x9x3
Hit Points	1D6+6	2D6+12	3D6+18
Whip Damage	2D6	3D6	4D6
Movement Class	12	12	12

The tumbler is a fat humanoid of the same gender as the summoner, clad in motley and carrying a whip. It engulfs victims in a pool of dizzying light and magical color, filling them with confusion. It attacks with its POW vs the POW of the victim.

The tumbler will attack with entropy shock on the first round that its target(s) is engulfed. As long as a target is engulfed, he cannot be affected by the entropy shock after the initial round. However, if he or the tumbler leaves and returns, he will be attacked again. It does not matter whether the character is conscious.

After the tumbler's initial entropy shock attack, it will fight using its whip doing the listed damage. The SR of all tumblers is always 7.

If the tumbler's entropy shock attack succeeds in a POW vs POW roll, check the result on the Tumbler Attack Table below.

TUMBLER ATTACK TABLE	
1D100	Result
01-05	As per Jumble spell, but effect is permanent. Tumbler will disappear at the end of the melee round, and permanently loses 1D10 points of POW.
06-50	As per Jumble spell, but effect lasts for two full turns.
51-75	As per Mumble spell, but effect lasts for one full turn.
76-95	As per Grumble spell, but effect lasts for ten melee rounds.
96-00	As per Stumble spell.

If the tumbler's attack is unsuccessful, roll as above, but add 50 to the die roll. If the result is greater than 100, there is no effect.

If the tumbler causes a permanent change (roll of 01-05 on the attack table) it is forced to disappear at the end of the round. This change is equivalent to a Divine Intervention and consumes a lot of POW.

The result of a tumbler entropy attack cannot be dispelled, but Countermagic will protect against the initial shock. Also, the appropriate Dismiss Elemental spell will work to dispel a tumbler.

As in the case of the Jumble spell, if the target gains POW as a result of the attack, the POW is drawn from the source of the attack, in this case the elemental. If the elemental's POW is

reduced to zero, it is permanently destroyed, and a new one must be sacrificed for. Unless the POW change was permanent, the tumbler will regain the POW normally.

In all ways other than those listed above, tumblers are like ordinary elementals, possessing a 3D6+6 POW and a 1D6 INT, etc.

The Nik-El medallion, with its back-to-back Runes of Luck and Fate, is the tangible representation of Entropy in the world. Therefore, in order to summon a tumbler, the Nik-El priest must have in his or her possession a Nik-El medallion. If deprived

of all his Nik-El medallions, the priest will be unable to summon an elemental.

Subservient Cults

The Humbler: Spirit of Retribution

Any initiate who quits the cult will be sure that some time during the next

year, when least expected, he will receive a visit from the Humbler. If the attack of the spirit is successful, the effect is like that of the Humble spell, except that it is permanent. The Humbler has a POW of 12 plus 1 for every year the initiate was in the cult.

A Rune level will receive two visits from the Humbler.

It is possible for the priesthood to arrange for the Humbler attack to occur at a time convenient for the character, but this is extremely rare.

Some Daredevils challenge the Humbler on the Hero Plane as an extreme form of gambling.

Adamantine Slim

A legendary gambler, Adamantine Slim invented many of the games of skill and chance played today. He also invented many ways to cheat at these games. As if to counterbalance his techniques, he created the following Rune spell, which is available to all Nik-El priests.

BUMBLE: 1-point spell, duration to end of game or the end of the day, whichever comes first, range 10m, reusable, non-stackable

This spell creates a field around the game which will attack any character trying to cheat. The attack will be caster's POW vs cheater's POW. A successful attack will casue the cheater to make his attempt so clumsily that everybody watching will be aware of his intentions. If the caster puts extra POW into the field when setting it up, it will use this extra POW to punch through Countermagic. Detection Blank 2 will thwart the spell as well, but extra POW will also help to punch through Detection Blank.

This spell does not prevent cheating, which would be antagonistic to the doctrines of Nik-El. It merely makes cheating very risky, a commendable situation. The spell is usually cast by priest for the sum of 1000 silvers. Only high-stakes games are protected by this Rune magic.

Associated Cults

Panash

From the Panash cult, Nik-El priests get the Rune spell of Shield. Rune levels of Panash are usually given free room and board at Nik-El temples.

Daka Fal

From this cult, Nik-El gets the Rune spell of Discorporation.

Flesh Man

From the first man, Nik-El gets the Rune spell of Spirit Block.

Miscellaneous

Divine Intervention

Nik-El does not offer ordinary Divine Intervention. Instead, a successful Divine Intervention summons an immense tumbler. This is an entropy elemental with a size of 9x9x3 meters, 4D6+24 hit points, and an 80% attack chance with its whip, which does 5D6 points of damage upon hitting. It takes 7 points of Countermagic to block the effects of an immense tumbler. The tumbler appears with the summoner at the center, and immediately attacks all within its form. Immense tumblers do not attack their summoner, and do not need to be instructed as to their actions, as Nik-El herself instructs them.

In order to summon an immense tumbler by Divine Intervention, a Nik-El medallion is needed, just as with normal tumbler summoning.

fortable livings turning out cheap kettles, pans, stirrups, horseshoes, buckles, and so forth.

As a professional association, Vrang's cult has a prestige just slightly above that of Gowjum, the tax collector's cult. However, individual warriors have achieved a certain popular acclaim in cities, where their prowess is appreciated.

Vrang 2jhomang gets along well with dwarves. Close relations are also maintained with the sages. The latter administer intelligence and knowledge tests to apprentice smiths. The most able of these become armorers and skilled metalworkers. The rejects enter Vrang 2jhomang. The latter cult believes that the tests are qualification tests for entry into the cult, and nobody among the sages has bothered to disabuse them.

This cult is indifferent to chaos, empires, undead, and trolls. Smiths don't understand politics.

Questworld Cult:

VRANG 2JHOMANG

History

Vrang 2jhomang was a blacksmith born about 800 years ago. He was not an especially competent smith — by the age of 21 he had smashed three fingers on his left hand, giving rise to his nickname of Two-Finger Jho. This name was not used in his hearing, however, for Vrang had a foul temper.

Despite his lackluster professional credentials, Vrang became a renowned hero. His fame rests on three accomplishments.

First, he taught men and dwarves how to fight with the hammer. Relations with dwarves have been close ever since.

Second, he invented horseshoes. Actually, his original design was just a flat metal plate nailed to the hooves; it was a clever dwarven smith who suggested the current U-shaped form. This invention has made Vrang's cult popular with horse nomads, but suspect among other animal nomads.

Third, Vrang invented the game known today as Horseshoes. His first idea was to have two teams endeavoring to throw a horseshoe through a hoop. After several fatalities, he changed the rules, then playing the

game on frozen lakes and rivers, and propelling the horseshoe toward a goal with wooden sticks. After more fatalities, the current rules were adopted. As everyone knows, Horseshoes is now played by sticking a number of horseshoes, prongs down, into the ground, and then using hammers to hit wooden balls through the resulting hoops. The enormous popularity of this game among humans and dwarves assured Vrang's apotheosis.

The "2" in the name Vrang 2jhomang was originally placed there as a jibe by a rival, in reference to Vrang's mutilated left hand. The spelling caught on, and is now universally used. This causes little difficulty with the cult, however, since (1) the number is silent, and (2) very few members of Vrang 2jhomang's cult can read.

Nature of the Cult

Vrang 2jhomang is the cult for metalworkers not smart or clever enough to belong to an armorer's guild. Only in desperation would a sane warrior trust his life to a shield, sword, or greave made by a Vrang 2jhomang member; however, these smiths make com-

Organization

There is no cult organization. Services are held in the back of the smithy of any Vrang 2jhomang priest.

Vrang 2jhomang's original smithy used to be a holy sanctuary of the cult. However, it burned down about 400 years ago, and the exact location of the site has now been forgotten. Once in a while an enterprising land speculator sells a Vrang 2jhomang smith some desolate patch of unusable ground, assuring him it is the actual site of the Founder's blacksmith shop.

The cult holy day is Fireday of Stasis week. High holy day is in Storm season. On this day, ceremonies to induct initiates into the priesthood are customarily held beside a natural rock formation called the Pimper knuckles.

Lay Membership

Every apprentice blacksmith is automatically a lay member of Vrang 2jhomang. Apprenticeship usually begins at age 16 and lasts until age 21 or until the apprentice is accepted into the armorer's guild or another cult.

The apprentice owes his master work, loyalty, and discretion. He must sacrifice 1 point of POW per season in worship. There are standard apprentice benefits: training, housing, clothing, food, and access to tools.

Lay members get free training in Smithing and Horseshoe Forging. An

apprentice will be trained to 50% in one-handed hammer attack and parry.

Initiate Membership

A prospective initiate must be a human or dwarven male, have been an apprentice smith for 5 years, be 90% in Smithing and Horseshoe Forging, and have an INT or 10 or less (as determined by the sages' testing). In addition, he must impress the cult examiners — this is abstracted as a roll of (STR+SIZ)x4 or less on D100. A roll of 96-00 always indicates rejection.

The initiation ceremony always takes place on the high holy day. Smith members within three days' journey of the high priest's town gather at his smithy. As usual, they grumble about having to travel in Storm season. The initiates-to-be are first taught the spell of Healing 2 (for free). The morning of the ceremony, they are introduced to the ritual of jhope smoking. Then the high priest summons a small salamander around the initiate, who is unprotected by any armor or magic. The salamander does normal damage to the engulfed initiate for one round. If the initiate survives, the priest calls it away (roll 1D100; if 96-00, the salamander misunderstands and the initiate takes another round of damage). The salamander then becomes the initiate's elemental.

In the final segment of the ritual, the initiate places his left hand on the anvil altar and the high priest smashes the little finger of the initiate's left hand with his hammer. The initiate casts his Healing 2 to stop the bleeding, and is welcomed into the cult as a full member. Vrang 2jhomang initiates proudly display their damaged left hands. They seem to believe that the absence of that finger makes them better blacksmiths.

The initiate may only worship Vrang 2jhomang and associated gods. Every holy day, the initiate must sacrifice 2 points of Power to the god.

The main benefit of initiation is the possession of a salamander. The initiate may summon this small salamander once per season. The summoned salamander is always the one who tested him during the initiation ceremony. If it is ever killed, whether by spirit combat or by physical means, it is gone for good, and the initiate will no longer have an elemental until he can sacrifice for one.

Initiates must spend at least half the year working as smiths. This work provides them with a comfortable income and makes them valued members of the community.

Initiates receive half-price training in any hammer, as well as all lay member discounts.

The initiate is taught the spell of Strength for free upon initiation. Vigor and Bludgeon are both half-price. The following spells may all be learned at normal rates.

Binding, Countermagic, Detect Enemies, Detect Spirit, Dispel Magic, Disruption, Dullblade, Extinguish, Firearrow, Glue, Healing, Ignite, Ironhand, Light, Mobility, Protection, Repair, Silence, Speedart, Spirit Binding, Spirit Shield, Xenohealing

Vrang 2jhomang initiates may not learn any other battle magic spells, either because they require too much concentration (e.g., Befuddle, Invisibility), or because they offend cult dogma (e.g., Coordination, Blade-sharp).

Vrang 2jhomang initiates cannot sacrifice for any Rune magic, even one-use only.

Rune Lord Membership

There never has been a Rune lord of the cult of Vrang 2jhomang.

Rune Priesthood

The priests of Vrang 2jhomang are smiths with sufficient POW to have access to Rune magic. There is no limit on DEX-based skills.

The applicant must be an initiate with a POW of 18 and at least a 25% ability to read and write in some language. The applicant must have trained his STR and CON up to the theoretical limit, and must know the Strength and Vigor spells.

The priest is expected to maintain a jhope garden, but may dispense jhope sticks only to initiates of the cult. Jhope seeds can be distributed only to priests of the cult.

Of course, the priest gets to ally a spirit. This spirit, being a former Vrang 2jhomang initiate, will be more impressed by STR than CHA, hence the roll to ally the spirit is STR+POW vs. the spirit's POW+INT. The spirit cannot have an INT greater than 10, so subtract 8 from any INT rolls greater than 10. The spirit's POW is still 3D6+6.

If the salamander the priest received upon initiation is still in existence, the priest automatically gains the Rune spell of Summon Small Salamander, and now has only the usual restrictions on summoning his salamander.

The following Rune spells are available to Vrang 2jhomang's priests:

Dismiss Elemental, Divine Intervention, Extension I, II, III, Multispell I, II, III, Shield, Spell Teaching, Spirit Block, Warding, and Summon Small and Medium Salamander

Rune priests of Vrang 2jhomang can also sacrifice for the following cult special Rune spells:

BELLOWS: 1-point spell, duration 1 hour, range 160m, reusable, non-stackable

This spell allows the recipient to breathe without harm in any atmosphere, as long as just a little oxygen is present. The recipient is immune to poison gas for the duration of the spell. However, he is not rendered capable of breathing underwater.

POUND: 1-point spell, duration 15 minutes, range 160m, reusable, stackable

Cast on a hammer, this spell adds +10% to attack chance and +1D4 to damage for each point in the spell. The head of the hammer glows dull red.

TEMPER: 1-point spell, duration 15 minutes, range 160m, reusable, non-stackable

Cast on a piece of metal, it will cause the metal to soften as if very hot. It is mostly used for emergency forging when no fire is available. However, it can be used offensively against an opponent's armor or weapons. Longhafted weapons under this spell will do no more damage than a quarterstaff, and swords and battle axes will do no more damage than 1D8. Temper has no effect on wooden weapons. Metal weapons affected by this spell cannot Crush, Slash, or Impale.

If cast at a specific piece of armor, that piece of armor loses half its absorption points immediately. The spell has no effect on padding, or non-metal armor.

The spell can be turned on or off at will by the caster during the spell's duration. Quenching the affected metal in water will turn off the spell, but it may be turned on again 5

rounds after being removed from the water.

Weapons affected by this spell must be reforged after the spell wears off in order to regain their normal damage. Temper acts on spell matrices, but does not affect the magical nature of the weapon.

Subservient Cults

Spirit of Reprisal: The Flying Anvil

So far as can be determined, the Flying Anvil has never been employed and may in fact be purely mythical. The cult hardly has a need for a spirit of reprisal. The priest's control over the jhope supply gives him a powerful weapon for enforcement of cult discipline. Moreover, jhope addiction makes it virtually impossible for anyone to leave the cult. It would take a successful Divine Intervention (by another deity) to remove the jhope addiction. The initiate would, of course, lose any STR or CON gained while addicted, and would lose his salamander. Most cults will not accept jhope addicts as initiates.

Slamfinger

Slamfinger was a dwarf who was one of Vrang's first followers. He is the patron for dwarven members of the cult. The following Rune spell is due to him.

EARTHMIGHT: *1-point spell, duration 15 minutes, range 160m, reusable, non-stackable*

Cast on a human, it will increase STR by 50%, even above species maximum, but not above 28. Cast on a dwarf, it will double STR, up to a maximum of 28.

Associated Cults

City Gods

Vrang's cult is closely associated with mason's guilds, and Vrang's followers often aid them in the construction of fortifications. In return, the city fathers usually turn a blind eye toward the cult's cultivation of jhope.

The Sages

From this cult, Vrang 2jhomang initiates may learn Speak Mostali at half price.

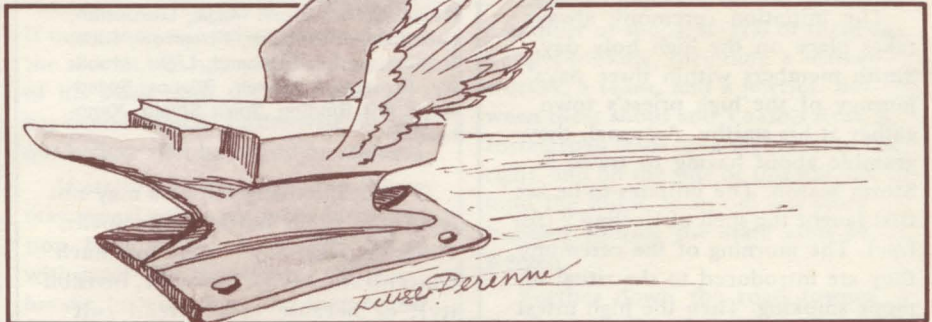
Miscellaneous Notes

Effects of Jhope

Part of the initiation ceremony consists of ritually smoking jhope. This

is the start of a nearly unbreakable lifelong addiction to this herb. The initiate must smoke at least once per day. Each day without jhope results in the irreversible loss of a point of CON.

Jhope addiction clouds the initiate's concentration somewhat. Consequently, the initiate cannot raise any skill above 80%, except for the constantly-used skills of Smithing, Horseshoe Forging, one-handed hammer attack and parry, and Play Horseshoes (the game). Battle magic such as Speedart or Bludgeon, may raise a



skill above 80% for the spell's duration.

Jhope also affects the user's DEX. A jhope cannot maintain a DEX above 16, and cannot train his DEX up at all. Any attempted DEX training always automatically fails. Because the drug impairs concentration it permanently reduces the addict's Defense Bonus to 0%.

On the other hand, jhope heightens the user's STR and CON. Training in both these characteristics is available at half price, and the training always succeeds – no D100 roll is necessary. Any limit on STR and CON increase still applies. Jhope addicts are immune to the ravages of both Wasting Disease and the Creeping Chills.

Jhope and Vrang 2jhomang

Jhope was once abundant in open country. Some nomad tribes cultivated it to feed to their mounts and sold it to occasional non-humanoid addicts, such as griffins and gargoyles. One tribe, the Vitriopsi, incorporated jhope smoking in the rituals of their berserker god. The combination of botanical befuddlement and their own demented rages proved a disastrous combination, and the tribe soon exterminated itself. Other tribes learned from this lesson and ceased cultivation of the plant.

By this time, however, Vrang 2jhomang was already addicted. He obtained some seeds. Luckily for him,

the cultivation is not difficult. Access to jhope seeds is still an exclusive privilege of the Vrang 2jhomang priesthood, but there is hardly any interest in jhope outside this cult, due to the drug's deleterious effects. An occasional giant or jack o'bear will seek out a priest of the cult to obtain a supply of the herb and the priest will usually be happy to make a profitable transaction. This sideline is a closely-guarded secret, as such a clientele would naturally make the cult highly unpopular if word got around.

Vrang 2jhomang and Weapons

The story is told that shortly after Vrang was born, he cut himself on a toy knife (just where he was injured is not recorded). It is known that Vrang 2jhomang was very nervous around sharp edges.

Cult members are discouraged, but not prohibited from using swords, spears, and axes. Since initiates cannot learn the spell of Bladesharp, and learn Bludgeon at half-price, there is little incentive to learn such weapons. The spell of Dullblade is encouraged.

Next to the hammer, the crossbow is the favorite cult weapon. Training in this weapon is usually available at normal cost through one of the friendly dwarf cults. But, the spell of Multi-missile is not available to this cult, for its working is too difficult for most cult members to comprehend. Maces, mauls, and flails are used by cultists too clumsy to use a hammer in combat or by those desiring more potent weapons.

Skill Levels Upon Initiation

Upon completion of the five-year training period, the apprentice will be at 50% in one-handed hammer attack and parry, 40% in some shield parry, 40% attack with a crossbow, and 30% plus manipulation bonus in Climb, Jump, and Ride. All other skill levels will be at basic chance plus bonuses (in the unlikely event such a character has any).

Scenario One:

A SIMPLE TASK

Player Information

The party is hired in Kreithen, the capital of Kerzen, to deliver two packages to Candlefire. The party's employer is Wandelwurtz, a spice merchant.

"Here's the deal," he says. "I give you each 50 silvers now, and when you hand these two packages over to Speedwell in Candlefire, she will give you another 100 silvers each, as long as the packages are still intact and at full weight. These spices are very valuable, so there had better not be any tampering with the packages. The road between here and there is well-patrolled most of the time, so you won't have trouble, even though conditions are a bit unsettled at the moment."

The packages are about five inches on a side and are wrapped in waxed cloth. "One more thing," says Wandelwurtz. "When you get to Candlefire, be sure to go out to the State Building to present your papers to the Governor. He likes to go through the motions of keeping track of who's in town, as if it made any difference. Take my advice: don't go gambling until after you've delivered those packages."

From Kreithen to Candlefire is a three-day trip.

Referee's Introduction

This scenario is intended as an introduction to Candlefire. For one thing, it will get the players here physically, and also allow them to meet a few of the inhabitants. The characters can gamble and get into trouble if they wish. They might even get a hint of the duplicity permeating the town.

Wandelwurtz and Speedwell have a sideline: smuggling forged identity tickets. They are made in Kreithen, given the state seal stamp by a confederate working in the Internal Affairs Ministry, and then transported to Candlefire, where they are sold at exorbitant prices to agents of Svyet and other countries who have entered Kerzen illegally.

The forged tickets are smuggled inside packages of spices. Since spices grow only in certain localities and have to be transported everywhere else, there is a steady traffic in them. Because they can be readily identified by

odor, the packages are almost never opened by tax agents. This makes them ideal for smuggling purposes.

There are risks, however. A main one is that some people who need the forged tickets can't afford them. These are not types who balk at theft or armed robbery. Wandelwurtz has lost two shipments in the past year, and has had to take some precautions to make sure they arrive safely at their destination.

And that is where our heroes come in. The packages they carry contain a thin outer layer of spices around an inner core of dried weed clippings. The fact is that Wandelwurtz doesn't care whether they make it to Candlefire or not: the player-characters are merely decoys. In fact, he has made this shipment even more obvious than usual, hoping to attract attention to it. The real counterfeits, (if that is not contradictory) are going by an entirely different route.

As luck would have it, the bad guys have fallen for the ruse, and are going to try to ambush the party.

When the party is about a day away from Candlefire, an attempt will be made to steal the packets of spices.

If the party is about the same size as the thief band, the thieves will attack during the day. If they are badly outnumbered, they will attack at night.

THE THIEVES

MUSTELA, human female, age 23

STR	8	01-04	R LEG	4/4
CON	12	05-08	L LEG	4/4
SIZ	7	09-11	ABDOM	2/4
INT	16	12	CHEST	2/5
POW	5	13-15	R ARM	4/3
DEX	7	16-18	L ARM	4/3
CHA	8	19-20	HEAD	4/4

Move 8 Defense 00%
Hit Points 11

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>SR</i>	<i>Attk%</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>Parr%</i>	<i>Pts</i>
2H Spear	7	90%	1D8+1	75%	15
Shortsword	9	45%	1D6+1	40%	20

SPELLS: Countermagic 1, Dispel Magic 1, Disruption

SKILLS: Listen 40%, Spot Hidden 65%, Trap Set/Disarm 80%

ZAPUS, human male, age 27

STR	9	01-04	R LEG	4/5
CON	13	05-08	L LEG	4/5
SIZ	12	09-11	ABDOM	5/5
INT	13	12	CHEST	5/6
POW	14	13-15	R ARM	4/4
DEX	14	16-18	L ARM	4/4
CHA	7	19-20	HEAD	4/5

Move 8 Defense 10%
Hit Points 13

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>SR</i>	<i>Attk%</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>Parr%</i>	<i>Pts</i>
2H Spear	5	55%	1D8+1	50%	15
Shortsword	7	40%	1D6+1	40%	20

SPELLS: Disruption, Mobility, Protection 3, Strength (2)

SKILLS: Camouflage 65%, Climb 65%, Jump 100%, Listen 35%, Move Quietly 70%, Spot Hidden 50%, Track 60%

BUFO, human male, age 39

STR	13	01-04	R LEG	4/3
CON	8	05-08	L LEG	4/3
SIZ	14	09-11	ABDOM	3/3
INT	6	12	CHEST	3/4
POW	10	13-15	R ARM	4/2
DEX	14	16-18	L ARM	4/2
CHA	10	19-20	HEAD	4/3

Move 8 Defense 00%
Hit Points 9

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>SR</i>	<i>Attk%</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>Parr%</i>	<i>Pts</i>
2H Spear	5	60%	1D8+1	45%	15
			+1D4		
Shortsword	7	30%	1D6+1	35%	20
			+1D4		

Comp Bow 2 55% 1D8+1 20% 10

SPELLS: Countermagic 1, Disruption, Healing 2, Mobility

SKILLS: Listen 50%, Spot Hidden 30%

The Day Attack

Mustela will attempt to set a trap (at 80%) and then Zapus will try to camouflage the tripwire. Next, Zapus will try to camouflage the position where Bufo and Mephitis will hide.

The idea is to have Bufo open up with his bow, inducing a charge by the party which will carry them right into Mustela's trap.

The trap is a tensioned vine which will snap around like a spring into the front rank of the charging player-characters. When the tripwire is stepped on or stumbled over. The trap will do 1D8 damage to the abdomen of all it hits. It will also block the path for another melee round.

Meanwhile, it is the job of Mustela and Zapus to steal the packets. If one of the party is carrying them, the bowman will concentrate his fire on that person. If the packet bearer is heavily armored, an alternative strategy is for Bufo, Mephitis and Zapus to try Disruption, all on that character. With Mustela's POW, she doesn't bother trying.

Note that the thieves will fight if forced to, but they are interested only in securing the packets.

The Night Attack

The principle behind this attack will be the same, but the execution will be different. Bufo and Mephitis try to create a distraction, while Mustela and Zapus steal the packets. Zapus, the stealthiest member of the band, will try to sneak into camp, covered by Mustela, the best spearfighter.

This melee requires conventions for two aspects of night fighting and standing guard: waking up and sleeping in armor.

Waking Up

To be awakened by general racket and melee noise, a character must fail a CON roll. On the first round, the roll must be above CONx5. The next round, it is CONx4, and so on, until the character awakens. The rationale is that high-CON characters will sleep more soundly and thus get more benefit out of their sleep, with the drawback that they are harder to wake up. It seems like a small price for lots of hit points.

Sleeping in Armor

Sleeping in armor makes a lot of sense in dangerous country. However, it is likely to leave a character very stiff after he or she awakens. The penalty for sleeping in metal armor is that for a period of time after awakening (the length of time is up to the referee: an hour, for example), the character's DEX is 4, unless it was already lower. All DEX-based skills and the defense bonus must be recalculated on the basis of this temporary DEX, as must be all strike ranks. If a character slept in cuirboilli or stiffened hide, he will have a DEX of at most 8 for the same length of time. There is no penalty for sleeping in 1 or 2-point leather. Any armor with absorbing power equal to or better than metal has the same penalty as metal.

A character who is kicked or otherwise jostled is assumed to be awake.

The same principles apply to the thieves' strategy at night as during the day: their intentions are theft, not mayhem. If the attack misfires, they will flee, using Mobility.

Outcome

Mustela will never surrender; she is the most ferocious member of the band. The others will promptly surrender if both escape and victory are out of reach. Survivors will offer ransom: 700 silvers each. Each has his ransom buried separately in a hiding place known to him alone for obvious reasons. Each will attempt to ensure his actual release after turning over the ransom by any means possible. Some possibilities include surrendering into the protection of a healer or any "honest" warrior (such as Humakti). If more than one prisoner was taken, the second will not reveal the location of his stash until the first prisoner has been released — otherwise, he will not believe that he would be released.

If sternly interrogated, the thieves may reveal other pertinent information. Each must make a POW roll to withstand the questioning. If one breaks, he will admit that they found out about the party and its mission back in Kreithen. That is all that Mephitis will ever reveal, but one of the others may go further if actually tortured. If so, he must make a CON roll, and if it fails, he will blurt out that what they were really after was not the spices but something hidden inside. Neither Zapus nor Bufo know what the hidden contents are.

This leaves the party with an interesting decision: should they break open the packages?

SAFE IN CANDLEFIRE

One of the first large buildings the party will see as it enters Candlefire along the Capitol Road is the Riveredge Refuge on their left. It is a two-story building with a recent bad paint job. A couple of drunks probably are sitting or sprawled in front of it. Downtown, in the better places, they call this hotel the Riveredge Refuse.

Further along, on the same side of the street, is a large well-built smithy, and, across the road from it, stables. Also on the right, past the stables, is another inn, Yoash's Rest. It is in better condition than the Riveredge Refuge — the drunks in front wear clean clothes.

Ahead, the party will see the town's major road junction, but their attention will probably be diverted by the three-story hexagonal building on their left. It looks opulent and austere at

the same time, has a large sign saying "Happy Landing" above the entrance (if any in the party can read), and, above the sign, a large blue Spirit Rune inside a black circle. If any in the party pay attention to the passersby as well as the buildings, they will see, among others, a burly man wearing an armband bearing this same symbol strolling casually along the road. The other people on the street give him a wide berth. Cheerful people are entering the Happy Landing, but some of those leaving wear doleful expressions.

Near the junction, on the right, are a number of shops, several of them expensive-looking, including a leatherworker, a tailor, and a jeweler. Between these shops and Yoash's Rest, a rutted road leads up a slight hill to the right, and on the side of this hill, behind the shops, is an old one-story building bearing the state arms of Kerzen.

Further down the road toward the ferry landing, the party will see an elaborate two-story building with a painted wooden pig suspended above the front entrance.

At the road junction is a large general store.

If the party walks down toward the Grinning Pig (the building with the wooden pig in front), they will find Speedwell's spice shop opposite it.

Kerzen House

The party might expect to see Hilflos, but the one they will talk to is Morena, who does almost all the real day-to-day work (and the year-to-year work as well, to be accurate). She will give them a brief rundown on the town (e.g., Yoash's Rest doesn't have as many nor as large fleas as does Riveredge Refuge), a short description of the casinos, and an admonition to behave themselves. If they ask, she will direct them to Speedwell's shop, which is not far away. She will point out Anais-In, the healer, as the latter passes by in the hall, and will make a little joke about that being the person to see if you're dead, but not dead broke. Small parties don't usually camp out on the Common, she will say, because of petty pilfering; caravans and large parties post enough guards to discourage this activity.

As the party leaves Kerzen House and returns to the main road, they will see the following little drama:

A young woman is walking quickly down the road toward the ferry landing, but not quickly enough. A heavy-set man comes up behind her, cuffs her on the side of her head, and knocks her to the ground. He grabs her pouch, and as he reaches down, anyone looking can see his armband, which carries a blue Spirit Rune in a black circle. He empties the pouch into his hand as the woman huddles at his feet. The pair is ignored by others on the street. Finally, he appears to find what he was looking for. He picks out a sparkling gem (although the party members don't know this, the woman stole the gem), and flings the pouch and the rest of its contents back at the woman.

If any party member moves to intervene, a passerby will grab him/her by the sleeve and whisper, "Keep out of it. That's Zoob business."

If unimpeded, the heavy man will stalk away without a backward glance at the woman.

The heavy man is Splinch, a Zoob enforcer. If impeded, Splinch's initial reaction will be amazement. After that, it will depend on how many foes he faces. If just one, he will fight. If just two, he will try to Befuddle one and fight the other. If facing a larger group, he will (if he thinks he can get away with it) rabbit-punch one of them and run away. If surrounded, he will yell, "Hey, Zoob!" and then turn over the jewel he took from the woman with a self-assured, malicious smile.

SPLINCH, human male, age 26. Zoob Enforcer

STR	15	01-04	R LEG	2/6
CON	15	05-08	L LEG	2/6
SIZ	15	09-11	ABDOM	2/6
INT	9	12	CHEST	2/7
POW	14	13-15	R ARM	2/5
DEX	11	16-18	L ARM	2/5
CHA	10	19-20	HEAD	2/6

Move 8 Defense 00%
Hit Points 16

Weapon	SR	Attk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
Shortsword	7	65%	1D6+1	40%	20
Fist	8	65%	1D3+1D4	—	—
Kick	8	70%	1D6+1D4	—	—

SPELLS: Befuddle, Bladesharp 3, Countermagic 1, Ironhand 2

Meanwhile, Lurshing Limberdigits is going to try to take advantage of the situation to augment his income. He is an experienced pickpocket. First, he will cast Coordination on himself, to improve his chances (and his defense bonus) by 05%. His Spot Hidden ability

measures his ability to spot an adventurer's valuables. Next, he casts Countermagic on himself, and then Mobility. After all this, he is ready for his move. He uses his dagger, if necessary, to cut the thongs holding the object he is after. His chance of cutting the object free is 95%, but his chance of doing so unnoticed is equal to his pickpocket skill, or 75%. With the booty in his hands, he will attempt to filter back into the throng. If he believes himself noticed, he will bolt and run, counting on Mobility to get himself away. Hide in Cover and Demoralize are desperation measures he may try. If captured, he will offer a ransom of 150 silvers. Under duress, he will go as high as 350 silvers, in small increments, but that is all he can afford. He is not afraid of punishment, because nobody in town punishes pickpockets, unless the deed is done in one of the casinos. Lurshing stays out of the casinos.

LURSHING LIMBERDIGITS, human male, age 34, pickpocket

STR	11	01-04	R LEG	0/5
CON	14	05-08	L LEG	0/5
SIZ	7	09-11	ABDOM	0/5
INT	15	12	CHEST	0/6
POW	13	13-15	R ARM	0/4
DEX	18	16-18	L ARM	0/4
CHA	12	19-20	HEAD	0/5

Move 8 Defense 15%
Hit Points 13

Weapon	SR	Attk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
Dagger	7	60%	1D4+2	50%	12
Thrown Dagger	1	50%	1D4	—	—

SPELLS: Bladesharp 2, Coordination (2), Countermagic 1, Demoralize, Mobility, Speedart

SKILLS: Act 70%, Climb 80%, Hide in Cover 65%, Move Quietly 80%, Pick Pockets 75%, Spot Hidden 75%

Now, back to Splinch. Assuming that the party has not let misguided chivalry get the better of them, Splinch will saunter back down the street to the Happy Landing. However, if he yelled, "Hey, Zoob!" the party will soon find itself surrounded by a goodly number of large burly men, all equivalent to Splinch (for the purposes of the scenario). All throw daggers at 65%, doing 1D4+1D2 points of damage. The party is not advised to continue its interference.

If the referee feels merciful, Anais-In may walk by and try to mediate. Normally, she doesn't meddle with Zoob.

Delivering the Goods

The sign over Speedwell's shop says, "The Cloven Hoof: Spice Importers." When the party finds it, Veronica will not be there. Veronica's clerk, an awkward young man about 25 years old, says with an embarrassed smile that he will take the packages and that the party can return later for their payment. Of course, if the party goes along with this, they'll never see a copper of their fee. Since the Nik-El temple is right across the street, they would be ill-advised to make any difficulties.

Presumably, the party is smart and holds onto their packages. The clerk says that he thinks Veronica is down talking to Barbang the smith about something. (In fact, Veronica is at the stables, picking up the latest shipment of forged tickets, hidden in the saddlebags of an ordinary courier.)

If the party goes to the smithy, only Azrang and Meskit are there. Azrang will say, rather resentfully, that while he works, "Barbang is off chewing the rag with his buddy Blandish, the potion pusher. Bosses do what they like, I've noticed. Tell me, what do you think? Can this town support another blacksmith?" Actually, Azrang isn't working either. He's sitting in a corner, smoking a pipe (which doesn't smell like tobacco), while Meskit hammers at the forge, looking rather enviously at Azrang.

If the party trots down to the alchemist's shop, they will by chance find Veronica there, as well as Barbang and Blandish. Veronica has just sold Blandish some useful potion herbs. She is buttering up Barbang: she hopes to use him as an unwitting smuggler, too. Nobody would ever suspect him of being clever enough to engage in anything like identity ticket smuggling.

When she sees the party with the packages, she will hustle them out of the alchemist's shop and down to her own, where she will pay off the party without even opening or inspecting the packets. If the party has not made a scene or provoked unwanted scrutiny in any way, she will throw in an extra 500 silvers to be divided among the party; she feels generous now that she has her hands on the real counterfeits.

If the party has not somehow figured it out, the referee should not let them know what has been going on. Sometime during a future scenario in Candlefire, there may be an oppor-

tunity to drop a hint as to the true nature of Speedwell's business. But, if everybody who came in contact with her were able to deduce her real activities, she would soon be out of business.

VERONICA SPEEDWELL, human female, age 38, spice merchant and smuggler

STR	11	01-04	R LEG	0/4
CON	11	05-08	L LEG	0/4
SIZ	12	09-11	ABDOM	0/4
INT	16	12	CHEST	0/5
POW	12	13-15	R ARM	0/3
DEX	11	16-18	L ARM	0/3
CHA	11	19-20	HEAD	0/4

Move 8 Defense 05%
Hit Points 11

Weapon SR Attk% Damage Parr% Pts
Shortsword 8 35% 1D6+1 30% 20

SPELLS: Befuddle, Disruption, Glamour (2), Healing 2

SKILLS: Bargaining 40%, Listen 60%, Oratory 35%, Spot Hidden 45%

Now that the party has accomplished its mission, the members may wish to do a little gambling. At least, having come to Candlefire, they will wish to look at the inside of one of the casinos.

GAMBLING HOUSES

The Grinning Pig

Because of the cult's dogma that chance and luck should be allowed to take their course unobstructed, only the minimum amount of control necessary to provide the casino's patrons with a pleasant environment is employed. The main rules which are enforced are:

- 1) All bets are paid off.
- 2) The house gets a 10% cut of winnings in any side bet.
- 3) No obvious violence against patrons is permitted.

4) No visible weapons are permitted, except those carried by casino employees.

Nik-El employees circulate constantly to make sure that the first two rules are enforced. They do not interfere in disputes among patrons, unless forced to by the unpleasantness or violence of the altercation.

Jogasz the doorman discreetly inspects all entering persons. No persons are allowed inside with visible weapons, though a few patrons routinely smuggle daggers into the casino. Of course, no armor at all is permitted. (Heavy men's clothing counts as one-point armor. Women's clothing, of the sort worn in this establishment, does not count as armor.) Only in exceptional circumstances is the wearing of armor considered acceptable within the town limits of Candlefire.

The Nik-El people are not offended by the carrying of weapons within the casino; it is only the visibility of weapons which is opposed. If a patron is carrying a weapon, and the weapon is spotted by another patron or a Nik-El employee, the patron will be required to relinquish the weapon.

The Games of the Grinning Pig

These are some of the games of chance and skill that are played at the Nik-El temple. This is not an exhaustive list, and the competitions change with time and fashion. The referee should feel free to add or substitute games of his or her own devising.

Scraps

This is a jigsaw puzzle to be assembled within 5 minutes. The stakes are usually 10 silvers. The payoff is always six times the stakes, generally 60 silvers.

To determine if the character wins, the referee rolls 1D100, and the character has won if his Mapmaking roll times 1/5 or less is made. The referee should not let the player see the rolls and not let them see which stats or abilities are relevant to the rolls.

Ride the Mechanical Boar

This is operated by four employees in the cellar, two to spin it, and the others for the vertical "bucking." This is a sucker bet for macho types who think they can ride anything. It takes a critical Ride roll to stay on this animal.

The stakes are 10 silvers, and the payoff is 100 silvers.

If the Ride roll is fumbled, not only does the rider fall, but hurts himself and takes 1D6 points of damage to a random hit location. Every so often, a house shill gets on and wins, to encourage more business. Of course, the operators go just a bit easier.

Reelette.

This is a whirling platform set just above a pool of water sunk into the floor. The contestant is seated on a chair in the middle of the platform. The idea is to rise from the chair and jump to the outer edge of the pool without falling into the water.

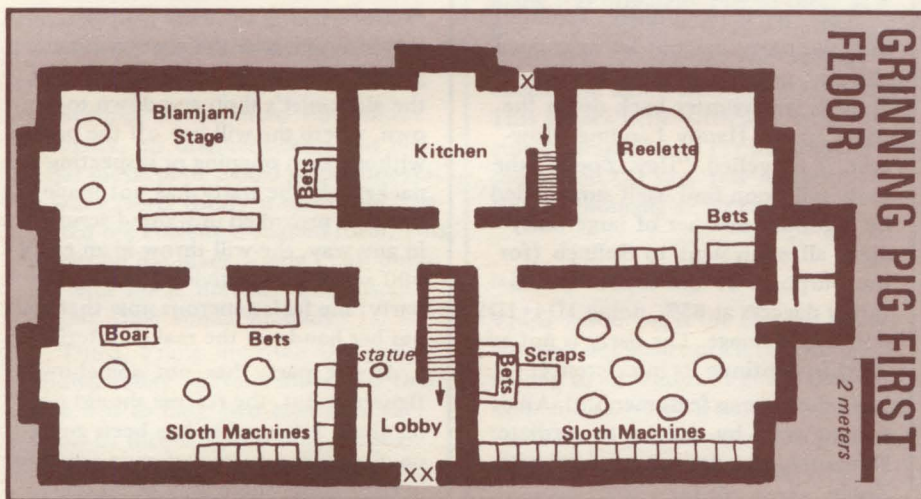
The stakes here are generally 10 silvers, and the payoff is 6 times that, or 60 silvers. The chance for success is equal to the character's Jump roll x 1/5 or less on D100.

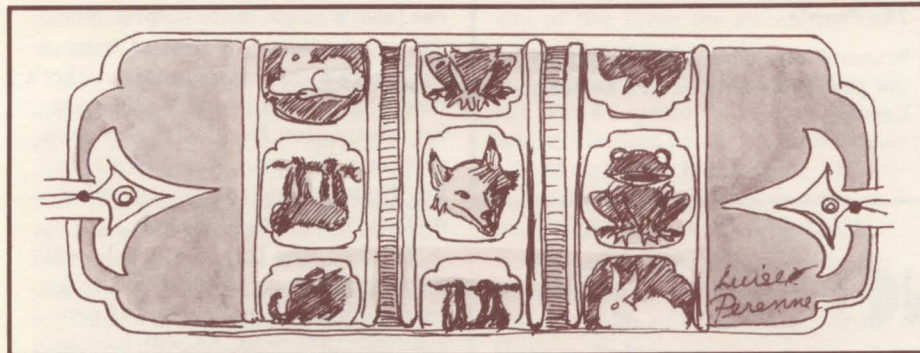
For obvious reasons, women are given the first attempt free.

Blamjam

This is quarterstaff fighting, in an arena five meters in diameter, in one of the casino's side rooms. The competitors are usually patrons showing off for their escorts, but sometimes a casino employee may be challenged. The rules are:

- 1) No armor is allowed. (Men's clothing counts as 1-point armor, but does not cover the head.)
- 2) The first competitor to fall down loses.
- 3) A competitor may fall down voluntarily at any time, but if uninjured, all bets on the fight are void and the competitor is barred from the casino for the rest of the week.
- 4) No spells that are targeted against one's opponent are allowed. Thus, Disrupt, Binding, Befuddle,





Harmonize, or Demoralize are illegal, as is Fanaticism cast on one's foe. Protection, Healing, Bludgeon, Coordination, Strength, and Vigor are all acceptable.

5) Any magic items employed by the loser are forfeit to the winner.

6) No spells may be cast from outside the pit on pain of being expelled from the casino and (depending upon one's social status) possibly severely fined.

7) The entry fee is 10 silvers per person. All winnings are from side bets, from which the house gets a 10% cut. Three or more competitors may try Blamjam at once, but this is rare.

8) It sometimes happens that a competitor is killed. The goddess Nik-El prevents Resurrection within her temples, even by other gods. Not even Divine Intervention for the purpose of resurrection will work here. The body may be removed from the temple and then resurrected, but the character's own Divine Intervention may not be used, as it must be performed in the melee round immediately after death. The healer Anais-In may not have used her Resurrection spell yet this week, and may be willing to cast it even for such a frivolous death, if suitably compensated. Apart from Resurrection, all other forms of Divine Intervention will function within the casino.

Sloth Machines

These games of chance are a fairly recent innovation, and are still controversial. Smelchak doesn't like them at all. They consist of three whirling rings bearing pictures of animals, set into motion by pulling a leather cord.

Each ring has the pictures of five animals on it: fox, rabbit, elephant, frog, and sloth. The payoff is determined by the number of sloths appearing between two arrows, one

on either side of the rings, when the rings come to a stop.

The stake for pulling the ring once is a single silver. If two sloths come up, 20 silvers are given to the winner. If three sloths are between the arrows, the winner gains 100 silvers. If but a single sloth turns up, the character gets nothing, but if he gets a single sloth for three pulls in a row, he wins 5 silvers.

To determine the result, roll 3D10. Each 1 or 2 that turns up represents a single sloth picture.

Side Bets

Side bets are allowed on any competition or game, anywhere in the temple casino area. However, the temple always insists on its 10% cut on the winnings from any such bet. Casino employees constantly circulate through the patrons, and are not always distinguishable from the rest. People winning bets without giving the temple its share are discreetly removed and deprived of the proceeds of the bet. Then, they are escorted from the premises.

Clearly, there is no appeal from the decisions of the Nik-El people, but they do have a reputation for fairness.

The People

Scenario Two contains a description of the people to be seen within the Grinning Pig. Additional cast can be found in the Cast of Tens.

The Happy Landing

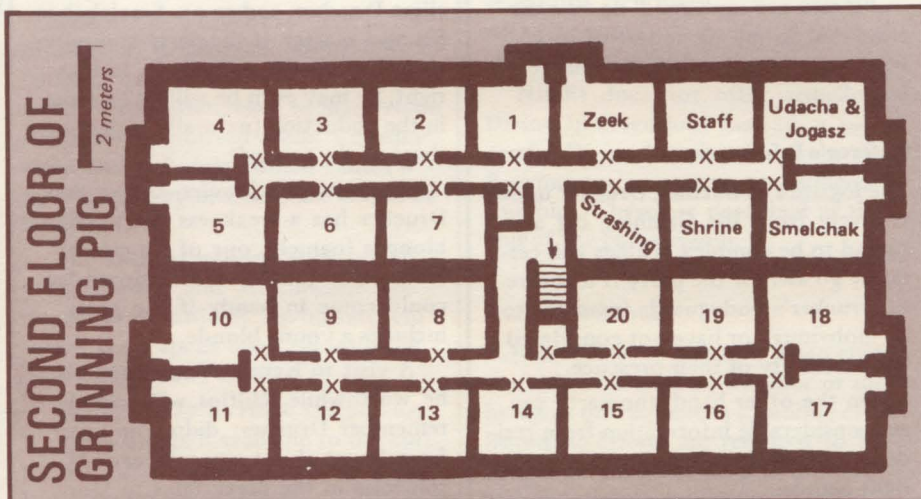
This casino operates in much the same fashion as does the Grinning Pig. The games are the same, except that Blamjam is replaced by Points. The Happy Landing also takes a 10% cut on any side bets, and all other house rules are the same as well.

Points

This is another nasty game for those who want to show off. Instead of fighting with quarterstaves, the competitors throw daggers at one another. They stand in front of high wooden walls about 8 meters apart. Otherwise, the rules are the same as Blamjam. Speedart, Protection, Healing, and such spells are permitted, but not spells which must overcome the opponent's POW. Only contestants may cast any spells, and the first one to fall down loses. Zoob does not care whether losers who are killed resurrect themselves.

At this range, the daggers come very fast, but it is still possible to employ one's Defense bonus (though not to dodge outright). The crowd favors disdain dodging, glaring contemptuously at their opponents. The Zoob people encourage this attitude. (When Zoob people compete, they always dodge – and usually win.)

A line is drawn a meter from the back wall and in front of the contestant. The contestant is forbidden to cross this line while the game is in



progress — he cannot approach his opponent.

The contestants need not take turns throwing their daggers, but may throw them as fast and as furiously as they can.

The People

Scenario Five contains descriptions of the people to be seen in The Happy Landing.

Scenario Two:

SNATCHING DRUCKER

Player's Information

The Duke of Jawain, a powerful noble in the Kingdom of Svyet, wants to hire a team to kidnap a man named Drucker from the Grinning Pig. Drucker embezzled a lot of money from the Duke, and extorted even more by threatening to reveal certain of the Duke's unsavory activities. These activities having been covered, the Duke is ready to move against Drucker, but the latter is safely across the border in Kerzen, from which there is no extradition.

The team is to cross into Kerzen and abduct Drucker from the Grinning Pig, where he is holed up. The Duke will give the team 500 guilders (equivalent to wheels) for successful accomplishment of this task, if Drucker is delivered to him alive. He will pay 200 guilders for certain proof of Drucker's death.

The Duke's henchmen are all well-known to Drucker. The Duke needs reliable people who are not known to Drucker and preferably people unknown to the powerful of Candlefire.

He will provide the team with a precise description of Drucker, and a drawing of their target, which they must commit to memory and then destroy.

"If you are captured," he tells the team, "keep my name out of it. I will compensate you upon your release."

Referee's Information

The logistics of hustling Drucker unobtrusively from the Grinning Pig are bound to be complex. Things will certainly go awry if the party is unaware of Drucker's bodyguards (who try to be inobvious), or have not considered the possibility of their presence.

On the other hand, the party can get considerable information from residents of Candlefire, if they ask the right people.

Barbang the blacksmith can tell the player-characters that Drucker still owes him for reshoeing three horses. Azrang, who thinks Barbang is far too forgetful, and much too lenient about collecting on debts (Azrang has been addicted to jhope for only three years) can give names and descriptions of the three riders: Hazel is short and brown-haired; Hemlock is tall, husky, and fair-haired; Drucker is short and fat.

A member of a Sage cult may be able to wheedle the knowledge of the knockout potion from Blandish. An offer of sufficient money may also do the trick. The players should be encouraged to read the Nik-El writeup (the Sages are not friendly).

Agnar, proprietor of Yoash's Rest, is able to give a description of the three. Drucker and his guards stayed there one night before they took lodging at the Nik-El temple. Agnar may also have heard something useful. Agnar is likely to charge for information given.

Smelchak is unhappy about many things. If suitably flattered or if Oratory is used on him, he will give vent to his dissatisfactions: Udacha pampers that lightweight Fayer, brings in sloth machines, ignores his advice — and propositions, gives refuge to that slime Drucker, and so on. Smelchak is his own master. If the party commiserates eloquently and puts it to him right, he may even be willing to assist in the abduction (naturally expecting a share of the reward).

Glammet the jeweler knows that Drucker has a weakness for young blondes (namely, one of his clerks) and gawdy jewelry. This knowledge could come in handy if the party includes a young blonde.

A visit to Kerzen House may also be worthwhile. Hilflos will vaguely remember Drucker: didn't he enter from Svyet about a month ago? If someone in the party talks to Mor-

ena, she is much more helpful. She can supply the exact date of entry, the names and occupations of Drucker's companions, and possibly other useful information from official records, such as a floorplan of the Grinning Pig. None of this government information comes free of charge.

If asked, the Duke of Jawain will advance the party 1500 silvers to be used in bribes, supplies, etc. If persuasively pressured, he will increase the advance to 2500 silvers. He intends to deduct this from the party's reward, but if they deliver Drucker alive, he will probably be so gratified that he will forget about deducting it.

There are some people it is important not to talk to.

If Yokesnip or Hemmy get the idea that the party is too interested in Drucker, they will tip off Udacha, in such a circuitous way that the Nik-El priestess will not know the original source of the information. Yokesnip wants to know the secrets Drucker has about the Duke of Jawain, and doesn't want him abducted until he has finished conniving those secrets from the extortionist. He will, therefore, interfere with any group he thinks intends to kidnap Drucker.

If either the ferryman Uberfluss or Marco the leatherworker is asked about Drucker, they will pass on the information to Udacha.

It is important to the party that the abduction be carried out as bloodlessly as possible. Nik-El will demand a wergeld (blood money) for any of their people killed in the raid, starting at about 2000 silvers for a low-level initiate. If Jogasz is killed, it will not be possible to appease Udacha: she will always hire Zoob assassins to get the party.

The party must also secure some means of escape from Candlefire. In case of trouble, Uberfluss has standing orders to put his wife and child on the ferry and pole it out into the middle of the river, to prevent it from being commandeered.

The Grinning Pig

As you enter the lobby from the road, there is a closet on your left, in which cloaks, capes, and weapons are stored for patrons. Jogasz has a perfect memory of who goes with what. Just beyond the closet is the statue of Nik-El. To enter the casino, one must pass

between the statue and the stairway leading to the second floor. Everyone entering must become a lay worshiper of Nik-El. This involves purchasing a small medallion (for a silver) and giving a point of battle magic POW to the statue of Nik-El in the hallway. To be allowed up the stairs, a patron staying in one of the rented rooms must present his Nik-El medallion, but need only give up his POW upon first registering. The statue is quite striking; it is of an ugly young woman dancing. The folds in the robes, the grace of a curved finger, the intelligence in the knit of an eyebrow all hold promise that there is more to her than the surface antithesis of beauty. Many patrons touch her hand for luck as they enter.

On the casino's first floor are the games. Blamjam, reelette, and ride-the-mechanical-boar are each in a separate room, provided with an individual betting station. The fourth gambling room has scraps and card games. Zeek is usually found here. Entrance to the privies is found through this room. The kitchen, into which only employees and initiates are allowed, contains the stairs to the cellar, where the wine is kept and the mechanical boar is controlled.

The second floor is devoted to guest rooms, except for the six-room suite in the northwest corner, which houses Udacha and Jogasz, Smelchak, Zeek, and some others. It also contains the Nik-El shrine. Although this set of six rooms has its own hallway sealed off by a door, lay worshipers exhibiting a strong interest in initiation are occasionally allowed in. The cult keeps its secrets, but is not as obsessed with privacy as is Zoob.

The Target — Drucker

Drucker is as obnoxious as his ill-gotten gains allow him to be. He is fat, squat, and purple in the face. Especially when he has been drinking, he looks vile and stupid, but only the vile part is ever accurate. The Duke of Jawaine was not the first to underestimate Drucker.

DRUCKER, human male, 42 years, Nik-El initiate

STR	11	01-04	R LEG	1/3
CON	8	05-08	L LEG	1/3
SIZ	10	09-11	ABDOM	2/3
INT	16	12	CHEST	2/4
POW	16	13-15	R ARM	1/2
DEX	10	16-18	L ARM	1/2
CHA	7	19-20	HEAD	1/3

Move 8 Defense 10%
Hit Points 8

Weapon	SR	Attk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
RH Dagger	9	65%	1D4+2	40%	12
+ Blade Venom (see below)					
LH Single-stick	9	40%	1D6	65%	15

SPELLS: Befuddle, Bladesharp 4, Coordination (2), Disruption, Glamour (2), Glue 1, Healing 2, Mobility, Protection 4 — Drucker does not keep Healing in mind while gambling, and does not keep Glamour in mind at other times.

SKILLS: Cheat at Cards 65%, Listen 35%, Move Quietly 40%, Oratory 25%, Pick Pockets 55%, Ride 60%, Spot Hidden 80%

MAGIC ITEMS: 3-point spell resisting crystal; 8-point POW storage crystal

Drucker's dagger is kept in an airtight sheath which is waxed on the inside. The inner wax surface is coated with POT 12 Blade Venom. This is worth two doses, but the dagger must be returned to the sheath after the first strike in order to receive the second dose. Moreover, evaporation, while slight, does gradually decrease the potency of the venom by 2 points every hour. After three hours of gambling or carousing away from his room, Drucker's Blade Venom's potency will be diminished to only 6 points.

Drucker's Bodyguards: Hazel and Hemlock

Hemlock and Hazel are both quite handsome. Unlike Drucker, they never dress in Nik-El motley (and are not members of the cult). They are not fond of their employer, but professional ethics and poverty keep them tied to him. In rare moments, they let their distaste show. Hazel is short and brown-haired, while Hemlock is tall and husky, with fair hair.

HEMLOCK, human male, 27 years old

STR	18	01-04	R LEG	2/6
CON	16	05-08	L LEG	2/6
SIZ	17	09-11	ABDOM	2/6
INT	10	12	CHEST	2/7
POW	9	13-15	R ARM	2/5
DEX	14	16-18	L ARM	2/5
CHA	6	19-20	HEAD	2/6

Move 8 Defense 00%
Hit Points 18

Weapon	SR	Attk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
RH Brass Knuckles*	7	85%	1D3+2 +1D6	—	10
LH Brass Knuckles*	7	85%	1D3+2 +1D6	—	10
LH Club†	6	60%	1D3+1D6	80%	20

* Hemlock will usually strike with both fists at SR 7 in a fight.

† Hemlock will use any convenient piece of wood for his 'club.' He will use it to parry with when facing weapons that do a lot of damage.

SPELLS: Bludgeon 2, Demoralize, Healing 2, Ironhand 3, Protection 2

SKILLS: Listen 30%, Ride 60%, Spot Hidden 40%

HAZEL, human female, 24 years old

STR	15	01-04	R LEG	2/5
CON	15	05-08	L LEG	2/5
SIZ	7	09-11	ABDOM	2/5
INT	15	12	CHEST	2/6
POW	16	13-15	R ARM	1/4
DEX	15	16-18	L ARM	1/4
CHA	14	19-20	HEAD	0/5

Move 8 Defense 10%
Hit Points 14

Weapon	SR	Attk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
Dagger	8	50%	1D4+2	35%	12
Thrown Rock (or similar object)*	2	75%	1D4	—	—

* Hazel will always cast Firearrow on anything she throws at a foe (such as a chair leg or roll of coins).

SPELLS: Countermagic 1, Darkwall (2), Detect Enemies, Firearrow (2), Harmonize (2), Glue 2, Lightwall (4), Mobility

SKILLS: Listen 70%, Move Quietly 75%, Oratory 20%, Ride 80%, Spot Hidden 75%

MAGIC ITEMS: 10-point POW storage crystal

Hemlock and Hazel are competent bodyguards, and work hard to protect Drucker. They have their reputation to consider; it makes them look bad if the person they are supposed to be guarding comes to harm. Their primary loyalty is to each other. In a crisis, they will be reasonable. A captured bodyguard can always be ransomed — a dead bodyguard is out of business. If one of them is in great physical danger, the other will come to help, ignoring whatever danger Drucker may be in. If one of them is merely under restraint or Befuddled, the other will concentrate on saving Drucker, counting on Drucker to ransom the captured comrade if necessary.

Drucker is not a fool, and knows of his employees' divided loyalties. He has assured them that he will ransom them if they are captured while protecting him (assuming Drucker escapes). Surprisingly, they believe him. Even more surprisingly, Drucker might actually do it, provided that the ransom demand was not too exorbitant (in the neighborhood of 200-500 silvers). If both guards were captured and a high ransom was asked, he would try to induce the captors to murder the two of them, to save him money and relieve him of the threat of their vengeance.

In a fight, Hemlock will usually wade right in, while Hazel stands behind him, casting spells and throwing Firearrowed objects. Hemlock counts

on her good judgment, and follows her lead in a complicated situation. She will often throw a Lightwall or Darkwall to cover the escape of the person they guard, as well as Gluing doors behind him, Harmonizing a pursuer, or throwing her deadly missiles. Their main goal is to enable Drucker to escape, not to kill off any attackers.

THE PEOPLE OF THE NIK-EL TEMPLE

Udacha, the priestess

Udacha is short and slim, with a habitual watchful expression. Unlike most members of the cult, she dresses inconspicuously. She is rarely alone; Nik-El priestesses are believed to bring good luck. She has sworn to protect Drucker, and will do so to the best of her ability.

UDACHA, priestess of Nik-El, age 34

STR	14	01-04	R LEG	0/5
CON	14	05-08	L LEG	0/5
SIZ	7	09-11	ABDOM	0/5
INT	15	12	CHEST	0/6
POW	18	13-15	R ARM	0/4
DEX	17	16-18	L ARM	0/4
CHA	15	19-20	HEAD	0/5

Move 8 Defense 20%
Hit Points 14

Weapon	SR	Atk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
RH Whip	3	95%	1D4	—	10
LH Short-sword	6	80%	1D6+1	85%	20
Staff Sling	1	70%	1D10	40%	15

SPELLS: Countermagic 2, Disruption, Healing 6, Protection 4, Strength (2); (known by allied spirit) Befuddle, Bladesharp 4, Coordination (2), Detect Enemies, Detect Traps (2), Speedart

RUNE MAGIC: Fumble, Grumble, Shield 2, Spell Teaching, Summon Small Tumbler, Summon Medium Tumbler

SKILLS: Listen 75%, Oratory 35%, Spot Hidden 75%

ALLIED SPIRIT: kept in black cat
INT 13 POW 17
Move 9 Defense 25%
Hit Points 2

When Udacha casts Strength on herself, she has a 1D4 damage bonus.

Udacha is married to Jogasz the doorman. She tries hard to be pleasant, and is well-liked in the community. She is quite homely.

Zeek, priest of Nik-El

Zeek is almost as short as, and is even homelier than Udacha. His gaunt face is usually amused, particularly when he is watching a Bumbled game.

ZEEK, priest of Nik-El, Adamantine Slim subcult. age 25

STR	12	01-04	R LEG	1/4
CON	12	05-08	L LEG	1/4
SIZ	8	09-11	ABDOM	1/4
INT	10	12	CHEST	1/5
POW	18	13-15	R ARM	1/3
DEX	14	16-18	L ARM	1/3
CHA	13	19-20	HEAD	1/4

Move 8 Defense 10%
Hit Points 12

Weapon	SR	Atk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
RH Whip	4	80%	1D4	—	10
LH Rapier	6	60%	1D6+1	70%	12
Lt Crossbow	2	70%	2D4+2	25%	6

SPELLS: Befuddle, Coordination (2), Disruption, Healing 3, Strength (2), Speedart; (known by allied spirit) Countermagic 1, Dispel Magic 3, Disruption, Protection 3

RUNE MAGIC: Bumble, Spell Teaching

SKILLS: Listen 65%. Spot Hidden 50%

ALLIED SPIRIT: in jeweled necklace
INT 8 POW 15

Zeek does not care much one way or the other about Drucker. Since Udacha wants him protected, he will try to protect him as much as possible. If Drucker is defeated, he will not care to seek vengeance.

Smelchak the daredevil

Smelchak is dressed flamboyantly, with appalling taste. He is handsome in a brutal sort of way, and has difficulty smiling. In his opinion, Smelchak does not get the deference he deserves as a Daredevil of Nik-El. There is no love lost between him and Udacha, who ignores his advice on most temple-related matters. He can't understand why she married Jogasz, when she could have been one of his lovers. Most of all, he resents her fondness for Fayer, the Flynn of Panash. Fayer gets the attention and respect Smelchak should be getting. Smelchak's obligatory jibes at sages (such as

Blandish the alchemist) are usually ill-humored taunts.

SMELCHAK, Daredevil of Nik-El, age 36

STR	16	01-04	R LEG	1/6
CON	16	05-08	L LEG	1/6
SIZ	11	09-11	ABDOM	1/6
INT	15	12	CHEST	1/7
POW	15	13-15	R ARM	1/5
DEX	18	16-18	L ARM	1/5
CHA	13	19-20	HEAD	0/6

Move 8 Defense 25%
Hit Points 16

Weapon	SR	Atk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
Whip	3	115%	1D4+1D4	—	10
RH Rapier	5	100%	1D6+1	110%	18

LH	[5]	10	80%	1D6+1	115%	18
Rapier				+1D4		
Thrown Dagger	1	130%	1D4+1D2	—	—	
Mdm Shield	—	—	—	—	85%	12

SPELLS: Befuddle, Bladesharp 4, Coordination (2), Countermagic 1, Disruption, Protection 4, Speedart; (known by allied spirit) Bludgeon 4, Disruption, Healing 4

RUNE MAGIC: (known by allied spirit) Shield 1

SKILLS: Evaluate Treasure 90%, Move Quietly 80%, Oratory 75%, Pick Pockets 95%, Spot Hidden 65%, Taste Analysis 75%

MAGIC ITEMS: two iron rapiers

ALLIED SPIRIT: in iron rapier (RH)
INT 9 POW 18

Ember the employee

Ember is a typical casino employee; he is alert but works no harder than he must. Use his stats for as many employees as needed.

EMBER, initiate of Nik-El, age 23

STR	14	01-04	R LEG	1/5
CON	13	05-08	L LEG	1/5
SIZ	12	09-11	ABDOM	1/5
INT	12	12	CHEST	1/6
POW	11	13-15	R ARM	1/4
DEX	11	16-18	L ARM	1/4
CHA	12	19-20	HEAD	0/5



Move 8 Defense 00%
Hit Points 13

Weapon	SR	Attk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
Whip	5	55%	1D4+1D4—		10
RH Short-sword	8	45%	1D6+1 +1D4	35%	20
LH Short-sword	8	65%	1D6+1 +1D4	60%	20
Sm Shield	—	—	—	60%	8

SPELLS: Bladesharp 2, Coordination (2), Countermagic 1, Disruption, Speedart

SKILLS: Evaluate Treasure 40%, Listen 60%, Move Quietly 50%, Pick Pockets 40%, Spot Hidden 60%

Jogasz the doorman

Jogasz is a tall, thin man with quick eyes and a confident manner. He is conspicuously unarmed and relies on the pressure of convention and his persuasive tongue to induce patrons to comply with house rules about no weapons or armor. Strashny is available if force is required. Doorman is one of the most responsible positions in a Nik-EI casino. Udacha relies heavily upon his judgment. He has been married to Udacha for some time now.



JOGASZ, initiate of Nik-EI, age 39

STR	14	01-04	R LEG	2/5
CON	13	05-08	L LEG	2/5
SIZ	14	09-11	ABDOM	2/5
INT	15	12	CHEST	2/6
POW	15	13-15	R ARM	1/4
DEX	9	16-18	L ARM	1/4
CHA	16	19-20	HEAD	1/5

Move 8 Defense 05%
Hit Points 14

Carries no arms and avoids fighting

SPELLS: Befuddle, Countermagic 1, Detect Enemies, Disruption, Light, Vigor (4)

SKILLS: Listen 80%, Oratory 65%, Spot Hidden 75%

Strashny the bouncer

Strashny looks half-asleep most of the time. His job is to look big, dumb, and slow. Big he is, but not the others. The idea is to lull would-be cheaters and other miscreants into believing that Strashny won't notice anything not happening right under his nose, and won't understand it even if he does notice it. A slight signal from Strashny is all that is necessary to bring the discreet intervention of a casino employee. His spear is kept behind a curtain at one of the betting stations, and he brings it out in dire emergencies.

STRASHNY, initiate of Nik-EI, age 25

STR	16	01-04	R LEG	3/4
CON	10	05-08	L LEG	3/4
SIZ	17	09-11	ABDOM	3/4
INT	15	12	CHEST	2/5
POW	10	13-15	R ARM	2/3
DEX	14	16-18	L ARM	2/3
CHA	9	19-20	HEAD	1/4

Move 8 Defense 10%
Hit Points 12

Weapon	SR	Attk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
Fist	7	90%	1D3+1D6—		—
Kick	7	50%	1D6+1D6—		—
Grapple	7	80%	Special		—
2H Spear	3	75%	1D10+1 +1D6	80%	15

SPELLS: Befuddle, Disruption, Glue 2, Mobility, Protection 2, Vigor (4)

SKILLS: Listen 80%, Spot Hidden 75%

Fayer of Panash

Fayer smiles easily and often. He exudes genuine self-assurance and confidence. He is always dressed in the latest fashion and he is always polite, even when insulting someone.

Fayer is everything a Flynn of Panash should be: handsome, gallant, glamorous, witty, and sensible. He is an ornament to any building he enters and Udacha makes sure he gets free food and drink in the Grinning Pig — he attracts customers.

Fayer will come to the aid of a damsel in distress, but he won't be

silly about it. If the odds are discouraging, he will try to be in a different room.

FAYER BANX, Flynn of Panash

STR	10	01-04	R LEG	1/5
CON	14	05-08	L LEG	1/5
SIZ	11	09-11	ABDOM	1/5
INT	14	12	CHEST	1/6
POW	17	13-15	R ARM	1/4
DEX	13	16-18	L ARM	1/4
CHA	19	19-20	HEAD	0/5

Move 8 Defense 20%

Hit Points 15

Physical Attractiveness 17

Weapon	SR	Attk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
Quarterstaff	4	80%	1D8	95%	15
Rapier (iron)	6	110%	1D6+1	105%	18

SPELLS: Fireblade (4), Protection 4, Strength (2), Vigor (4); (known by allied spirit) Healing 7, Mobility, Shimmer 4; (contained in crystal) Befuddle, Demoralize, Harmonize

RUNE MAGIC: (known by allied spirit) Shield 1, In Like Flynn

SKILLS: Climb 100%, Jump 90%, Listen 95%, Move Quietly 70%, Peaceful Cut 60%, Spot Hidden 70%, Swim 80%, Taste Analysis 50%

ALLIED SPIRIT: in rapier
INT 12 POW 18

Fayer is an enthusiastic recruiter for Panash, and tries to find new members for the cult, including any player-characters he meets at the Grinning Pig. Becoming a lay member of Panash involves buying a rapier from Fayer. Panash rapiers cost 150 silvers, but this lay membership is permanent, and does not have to be renewed every holy day. Fayer cannot induct new initiates himself, though he can provide witness of the required impale (see Panash cult for details). The initiation ceremonies are conducted by the priestess Zantra, on her regular visits to the town.

Fayer openly wears a rapier all the time, including inside the Grinning Pig (with the acquiescence of Udacha). If Fayer wished it, Udacha would permit one of his initiates (not a mere lay member) to wear a rapier within the casino as well, if accompanied by Fayer. Naturally, the initiate would need to be a person of style.

There are those in town who consider Fayer a very superficial person. They may be right.

Zantra, high priestess of Panash

Zantra's high station is proof that one does not need to be old to rise to the top in the Panash cult.

With her enviable talent for spotting new trends in fashion and taste

about three months before they arrive, she can only continue to accumulate power and prestige in her cult.

When Zantra teaches spells, she does not give a Charisma discount. Instead, she demands one. She charges 20% extra for all spell teaching for the added status acquired by the pupil by having been in a Mindlink with Zantra for a week. Although some priests are willing to teach spells to lay Panshees who are initiates of associated cults, Zantra is too busy to teach spells to any but Panash initiates.

For each spell learned from Zantra, the initiate receives a cumulative 1% chance of going up a point in CHA. This chance is rolled once after each new spell is gained.

ZANTRA, high priestess of Panash, age 24

STR	11	01-04	R LEG	0/5
CON	14	05-08	L LEG	0/5
SIZ	8	09-11	ABDOM	0/5
INT	10	12	CHEST	0/6
POW	18	13-15	R ARM	0/4
DEX	17	16-18	L ARM	0/4
CHA	16	19-20	HEAD	0/5

Move 8 Defense 15%

Hit Points 14

Physical Attractiveness 15

Weapon	SR	Attk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
Quarterstaff	3	80%	1D8	85%	15
Rapier	5	85%	1D6+1	50%	12
Sm Shield	—	—	—	65%	8

SPELLS: Detect Traps (2), Glamour (2), Strength (2), Vigor (4); (known by allied spirit) Befuddle, Fireblade (4), Healing 3, Shimmer 3

RUNE MAGIC: Aplomb, Divination 5, Divine Intervention 4, Shield 2, Spell Teaching 2, Sure Wood, Utter Disgrace, Warding 1

SKILLS: Banter 95%, Listen 80%, Oratory 65%, Spot Hidden 50%

ALLIED SPIRIT: in afghan hound

INT 11 POW 16

Where the People are

When the casino is in operation, there is always one person at each betting station. Several people work in the kitchen, and servers continually move to and from the kitchen. There is at least one operator by the blamjam, reelette, and boar games. The card room is usually quite crowded.

Zeek can be found in the card room. Udacha is not always in the gaming area; she has religious duties. Fayer is often in the Grinning Pig. If there is a particularly good blamjam match, he will watch; he will not fight himself unless a large fee is offered. Smelchak circulates through the gaming area, trying to avoid Fayer and trying not to glower at the customers. Strashny generally stays in the blam-

jam and reelette rooms, watching for undeclared side bets.

Drucker is usually in a card game. It may be protected by the Bumble spell. Otherwise, he might be found in the reelette room; he has been known to pay young women to make the attempt. Hazel indignantly refused when he asked her.

Hemlock and Hazel try to keep watch over Drucker without seeming to be connected to him. They work in shifts, so that only one of them is actually in the same room with him a large part of the time. In the card room, for instance, the guard on duty might be kibitzing another game or participating in a low-stakes game nearby.

Scenario Three:

GUARD DUTY

Player's Information

Barbang, blacksmith and priest of Vrang 2jhomang, is leaving for the capital. It's Storm season and the initiation ceremonies there are going to be held in four days. He is taking Meskit, his apprentice, with him, but leaving Azrang, his initiate, behind. He needs additional competent help to guard his smithy and garden.

A small tribe of Bolo Lizard riders, ancient enemies of the Vrang 2jhomang cult, are in the vicinity, ostensibly to participate in the various pleasurable activities of Candlefire. These nomads are adept woodcarvers and their work, particularly their wooden sculptures of fantastic animals and scenes, are prized by more settled peoples. At Candlefire, they market these carvings to merchants who carry them to larger cities.

These nomads always seem to arrive during Storm season, just as Barbang is preparing to leave for the capital. In the past, his shop and garden have been looted and vandalized. This year he means to prevent depredations upon his property. He will hire up to five guards, at 70 silvers each, to watch over his property while he is gone, a period of seven days. He will also arrange for food and lodging at River-edge Refuge for the guards.

Potential Player Information

If the characters ask Barbang, Azrang, or Meskit about the fenced garden, they will be told that the plants are jhope, and will be relayed only the positive information about it in the Vrang 2jhomang cult writeup in the front of this book.

If asked about jhope, Anais-In will say that elves hate the Vrang 2jhomang cult because of it. She sympathizes with the elves and wishes the smith

cult would do away with jhope, but (she will sigh) religion is religion.

Blandish won't talk freely, except to another Sage and in private. In these circumstances, he will admit to having a small supply of Food Songed jhope, obtained from elves.

Referee's Information

Well, too bad Barbang doesn't really know what's going on. The Bolo Lizards aren't the culprits — the real ones are a band of aggressive elves upset about the cult of Vrang 2jhomang's use of unrefined jhope. It's hardly Barbang's fault for not knowing, for elves are uncommon in Candlefire, and none live within four days travel.

When jhope is harvested with Food Song, it loses its addictive and deleterious properties, but also its advantages. It becomes a mild and pleasant intoxicant, and is occasionally used by elves in this form. The elves consider the Vrang 2jhomang cult's use of jhope in its unrefined form as sacrilegious abuse of a plant. Vrang 2jhomang's association with dwarves doesn't make them any fonder of the cult. However, the Smith Cult has never quite grasped the elves' enmity or its causes.

Elves and their allies frequently try to raid the gardens of Vrang 2jhomang smiths, to cast Food Song on the jhope plants and then uproot them, carrying them away if possible. These raids are usually carried out by teams of young hotheads, mostly lay members, who are often careless of consequences. Theft or vandalism are often part of these raids.

At several points during this scenario, the players may wonder whether they are on the right side. Ethical ambiguities are part of role-playing and should not be discouraged.

Barbang will not be present unless the balance of force absolutely requires it for satisfying play.

The Food Song Commando

This team of up to ten elves, together with a minotaur (for safety), intend to stage a raid on Barbang's garden and smithy. Only three are actually initiates of Aldrya. The leader of the group is Pyrus, the smartest and most experienced member. All the elves carry a bow and a shortsword, and wear leather. Some of the elves are fervently carrying out a religious mission, but others are just looking for trouble.

While Pyrus is the nominal leader of the commando, there is a hothead faction led by Rhus, and they want to go much further than the majority. Besides Rhus, the other hotheads are Nelumbo and Atropa; in addition, Rhus commands the loyalty of Bombax. It is mostly through his insistence that the minotaur was brought along. Rhus and his followers will try to break into the smithy, and will not be content with just taking the plants. Moreover, even though the main party will run away if they encounter substantial opposition, Rhus and his friends will stay to fight. This will force the rest to return and aid them, so how deadly the resultant melee gets will depend largely on the ferocity of the smithy's defenders, and on how much control Pyrus is able to exert over his troops. If Bombax is injured, things probably will get out of hand.

While the elves only intend to do damage to the smithy's property, the actual outcome will depend on the personalities of the defenders and the elfen party. Apart from Bombax, the elves are willing to take and to ransom prisoners.

The elves should not be made to be or sound particularly attractive. There is a strong streak of bigotry in their makeup.

The Elf Attack

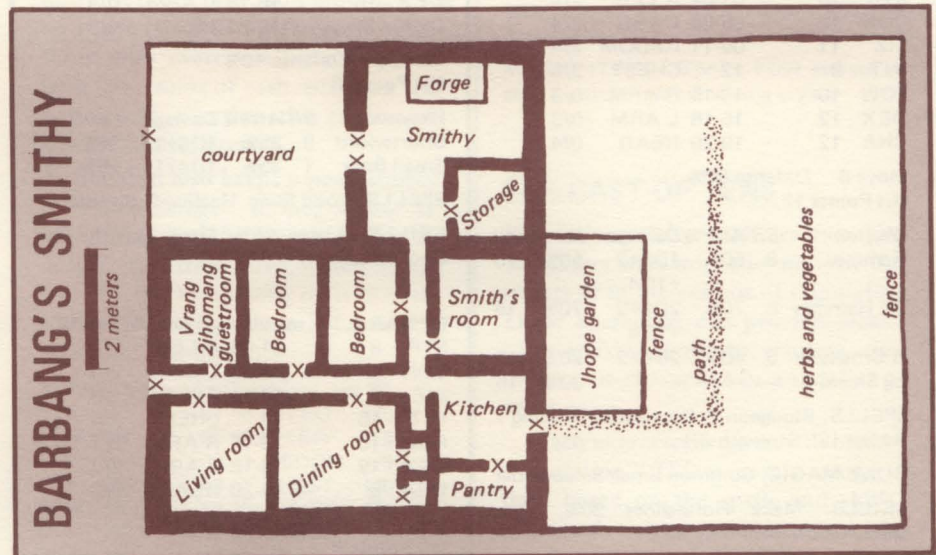
The elves will remain in the vicinity of Candlefire for about five days, seeking the right time to attack, probably at night. The Bolo Lizard Riders walk or ride by the smithy once in a while, and this should maintain surveillance and distract the defenders.

The elves will climb the fence behind the trees, using that cover to get into the garden. They will wait for their best opportunity. The referee

should roll for wind direction. Their unfamiliar vegetable scent may carry to the horses across the road in the stables. Most of the elves will try to keep the defenders tied down while the rest invade the jhope garden, Food Song the plants, and uproot them. They will try to do this quickly, before the defenders realize that most of the bowmen are not particularly effective.

Anais-In will talk to him very gently, making him understand that he should never again come anywhere near Candlefire. Then she will insist that he be released back to the elves, without ransom.

If a party member has been killed, Anais-In will determine randomly (among both party members and elves) who receives the resurrection attempt. Since the elves were the aggressors, af-



Rhus and the other hotheads may circle the smithy to enter by the front gate, if the rear attack seems to be going well.

The size of the raiding party can be adjusted to the strength of the defenders, but should always include elements of both factions.

The Diversion

The Bolo Lizard Riders are allies of the elves as Earth worshippers. They do not take any active part in the attack, being basically unaggressive. However, they will try to act as suspiciously as possible, in order to draw attention from the elves. Each night, they will slip away to a camouflaged camp 6 km from Candlefire. The elves hope that the smithy's defenders will follow the Bolo Lizard Riders, leaving the smithy unprotected.

Outcomes

Anais-In will insist that any dead elf be returned to the elves for proper burial. She will be adamant.

The elves will ransom any captives. The ransom will be 1000 silvers for each initiate and 400 silvers for each lay member. If the defenders somehow manage to capture Bombax,

ter all, there will always be at least a 50% chance that her Resurrection will be cast on a dead player-character.

If the elves win, they will offer to ransom prisoners at roughly the same rates as those they would have paid. Of course, they will loot their prisoners of all magic items. They will vandalize the smithy after all the plants have been harvested. If they can do so without harming the trees, they may set fire to the smithy.

Defenders

BARBANG the blacksmith, priest of Vrang 2jhomang

STR	16	01-04	R LEG	2/6
CON	16	05-08	L LEG	2/6
SIZ	14	09-11	ABDOM	2/6
INT	7	12	CHEST	2/7
POW	18	13-15	R ARM	0/5
DEX	14	16-18	L ARM	0/5
CHA	16	19-20	HEAD	0/6

Move 8 Defense 05%
Hit Points 18

Weapon	SR	Atk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
Hammer	7	100%	1D6+2 +1D4	90%	20
2H Hammer	5	80%	2D6+2 +1D4	80%	15
H Crossbow	2	70%	2D6+2	25%	10

SPELLS: Healing 2, Repair (2), Speedart, Strength (2); (known by allied spirit) Bludgeon 4, Disruption, Vigor (4)

Scenario Four:

ASSASSINATION**Player's Information**

On a short journey to Kreithen, one or more members of the party are approached by a haggard young man with the following story:

"I come from a well-to-do family that lived near here, about a day's ride from the capital. Last year I went to Ploam, to conduct some delicate negotiations about mining rights in the Cymrsh Hills. When I returned, I found that our lands had been confiscated, my wife sold into slavery, and that the rest of my family, parents, brother, sisters, and baby daughter, had all been slaughtered.

"The people who had done this were three: Jestok and Krova Tachybrach, and their daughter Tayna. They sneered at me, for they had powerful friends in Kreithen, and told me that my lands and fortune were theirs now. They underestimated my resolve for vengeance.

"They felt safe behind their fences, guards, and spells, but I could not be stopped. One night I broke in and slew Jestok and Krova, but Tayna escaped. Only when she is dead will my revenge be complete.

"She has hidden herself well, but I have found her refuge. She is a betting station attendant at the Zoob temple in Candlefire. I cannot enter the temple -- she knows me and I would be killed before I ever got near her. But, if you will kill her or bring her to me that I may kill her, and if it is done so that she can never be Resurrected, I will pay well. My regained fortune will be of use for something.

"The reward is 12,000 silvers for her body."

The young man, named Anyag, can provide a floor plan of the first two floors of the temple, but has never met anyone who has been on the third floor and was willing to describe it.

Agnar also states that Tayna stole a POW storage crystal from among his family's treasures. The crystal, he promises, will go to the one who kills her or brings her to Agnar.

Referee's Information*The Real Plot*

If the players have been through the first four scenarios, they will be now

be used to the idea that things are not as they seem. They are being hired to kill a high priestess, no mean trick. Anyag is actually another priest of Zoob, one who wishes to take over the lucrative Candlefire branch of the cult.

The Cult of Zoob

The Zoob cult has a well-kept secret, known only to the top levels and trusted initiates: there is no Zoob. The cult just worships ancestors, in Daka Fal fashion, but for many reasons it is convenient to have the appearance of a special cult, instead of looking like the money-making enterprise it really is. For one thing, cults are treated differently by the government, and are given more autonomy. Secondly, the power of a cult to enforce its wishes is respected more than that of a merely profit-oriented organization. Third, the belief that the Happy Landing is a temple makes potential burglars, assassins, and other undesirable think twice before entering.

Not being a cult has advantages: no tiresome religious formulas to comply with and no tithes to pay.

There is a small ancestral shrine on the third floor of the temple, where none but the most trusted are admitted. There is a phony shrine to Zoob set up in the lobby. Nobody is required to worship there in order to be admitted to the casino.

Zoob does not balk at assassination. Having no religious compulsion to take risks or to invite the actions of chance, this group coldly pursues its own interests, with little regard for considerations other than the practical. On the rare occasions that the Nik-El cult decides to have someone killed (usually a matter of personal or sacred vengeance), they often hire a Zoob initiate to do the deed.

Succession within the cult is often decided by murder, but a convention has arisen to keep this mayhem within bounds. To minimize the bloodletting during internal power struggles, assassinations of Zoob people are almost always carried out by outsiders. If a top priest is killed, the rest of the house simply transfers its loyalty to the new priest in control. All priests of Zoob understand that

their followers feel only commercial loyalty to their superiors.

Zoob assassins are used exclusively for missions against outsiders, mostly for money. Unless they are actively seeking personal power, the assassins stay aloof from the power struggles, and avoid difficulty about transfers of loyalty.

All the initiates, unless bribed to look the other way, will defend any attacked priest(ess). After all, since the attack is staged by outsiders, there is no way to be sure that this is part of the power struggle as opposed to a raid from a hostile organization. Everyone, including the temple assassins, will try to prevent intruders from killing Tayna, but their duty to defend her ends with her death.

The People of Zoob

The visible priest of Zoob is Podops, a chunky man with a forbidding eye. He rarely smiles, and most people feel uncomfortable in his presence. His main functions are to teach spells and manage the casino.

The actual chief priest of the Happy Landing is Tayna Tachybrach, who mediates between the worshippers and the ancestors. She monitors activity in the casino in the role of a part-time cashier at one of the betting stations. In Candlefire, outside the trusted initiates of Zoob, nobody knows Tayna's secret except for Yokesnip, Hemmy, and Udacha. Due to the danger of assassination, Tayna's safety demands secrecy. Obviously, at least one other branch of the Zoob organization (the one headed by Anyag, has discovered her identity.

The premier assassin of the Candlefire branch of Zoob is Mirtis, Rune lady. She rarely fails. When on missions, she often wears iron armor under her cloak. She is training her assistant, Dauthus, in the science of efficient homicide, but he has a long way to go before he reaches her level of expertise.

It seems that the Zoob cult has exhausted its subtlety in concealing the identity of Tayna. For the immediate protection of its important people and the enforcement of order in the casino, the cult relies almost entirely on brute force and physical intimidation.

THE HAPPY LANDING

The First and Second Floors

Entrance to the Happy Landing is through the triangular lobby. Kharon opens the door and stands well back as the patrons enter. The phony Zoob shrine is in the back of the lobby, against the stairway. It contains a small black statue of a three-armed man: all three arms end in daggers instead of hands.

The first room entered is the show-room. Passing by a row of sloth machines, one sees a stage, in front of which are several benches. Some sort of entertainment is often presented on the stage: jugglers, actors, or clowns, for instance. This is also where points is played. A floor to ceiling wall at one end protects the patrons from inaccurate throws. Scraps is played in the far corner, in front of the betting station.

In the other large room are the games of reelette, ride-the-tiger (the Happy Landing's version of ride-the-mechanical-boar), various card games, and of course, more sloth machines. The privies are off this room, next to the betting stations.

Each room has two Anthophilos-like guards. When Tayna is working one of the betting stations, either Mirtis or Dactylia will be in the same room, trying to keep watch without being noticed.

The second story consists of mainly guest rooms. The three rooms above the lobby are never rented. Room 2A has concealed holes in the floor from which the lobby can be watched. Room 2B has a small real shrine for ancestor worship. It is in this room that spells are taught to outsiders. Room 2C has a closet with a hidden staircase. This is the only way to the third floor.

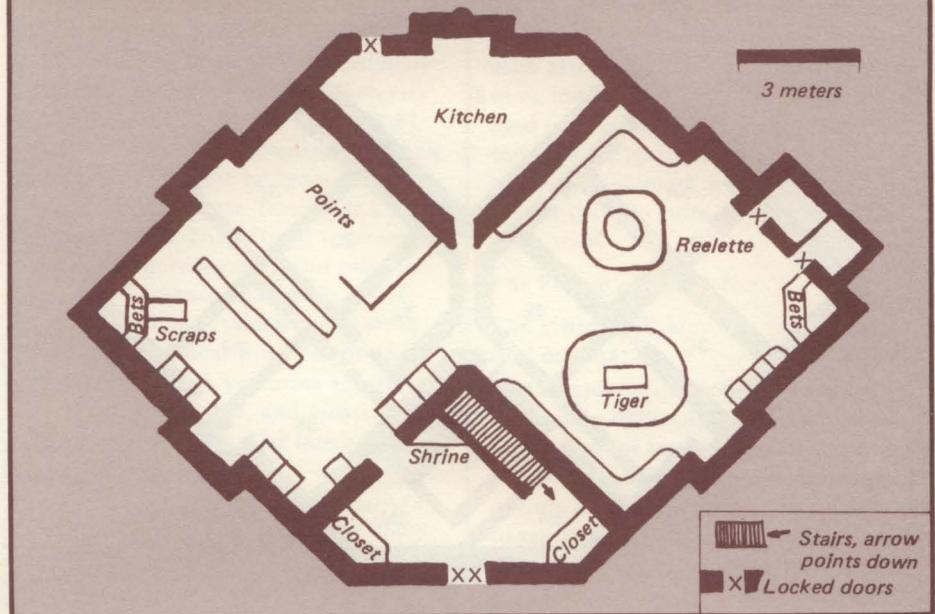
The entire casino lobby is protected by a Warding 1 spell, with the wands buried in the walls. The spell was cast by Tanya, and is triggered by people that enter intending her harm. Room 2C is also protected by Warding 1, likewise cast by Tanya.

The Third Floor

Normally there is a guard at the top of the stairs (Anthophilos-type). If the Warding has been triggered, there will be more people waiting, depending on who is on the third floor at the time.

All third floor doors are locked.

FIRST FLOOR OF HAPPY LANDING

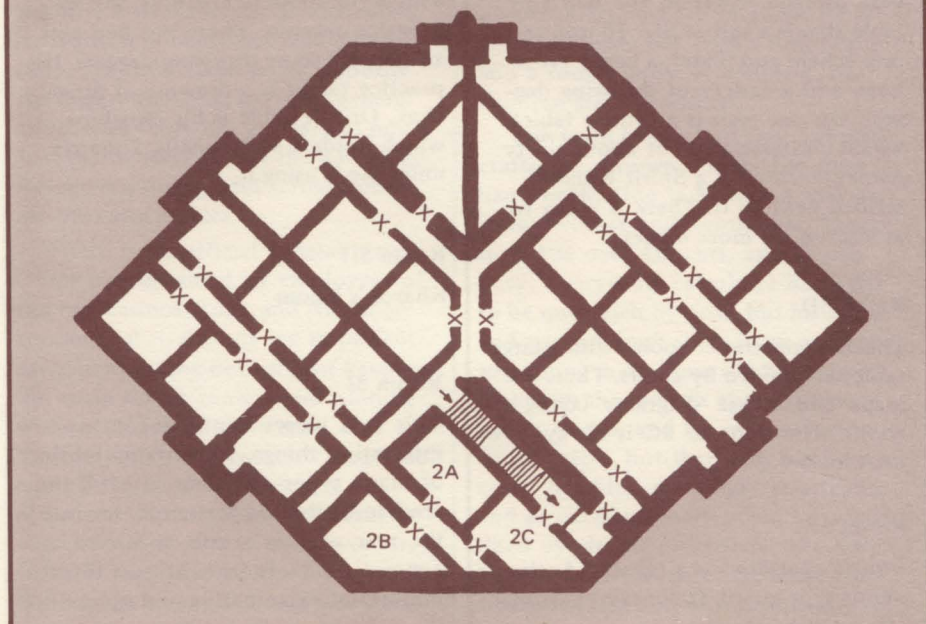


Room 3A

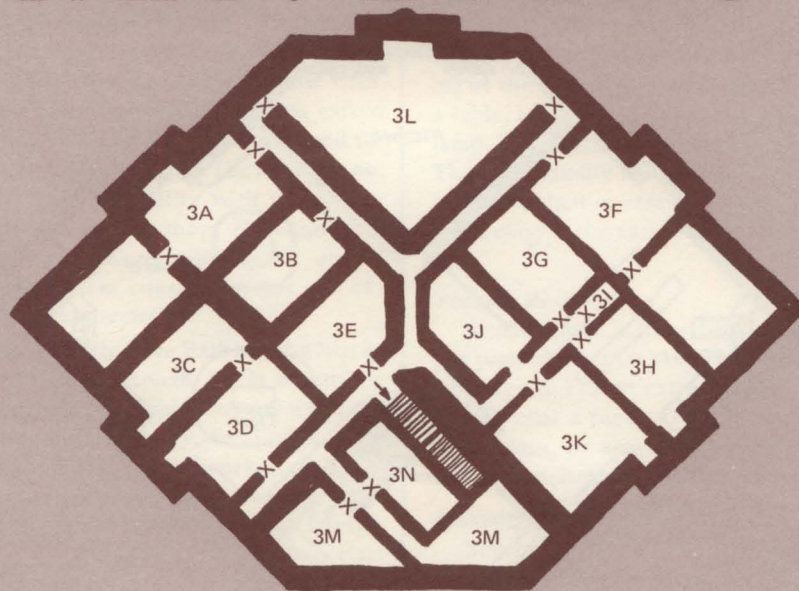
This and the attached bedroom are Tayna's quarters. She possesses the usual sort of shamanistic paraphernalia. This room has the best furniture in the Happy Landing, and is stocked with luxury items: silks, tapestries, paintings, ceramics, enameled glass-

ware, and furs. The bedroom contains even more of these, plus a feather mattress and expensive blankets and satin sheets. There may even be a mirror on the ceiling. All this stuff is worth thousands of silvers (depending on who it was sold to, it might bring 1500 to 5000 silvers).

SECOND FLOOR OF HAPPY LANDING



THIRD FLOOR OF HAPPY LANDING



Room 3B

This is Dactylia's room. It contains a bed, table, and chair. On the wall hangs a drawing, recognizable as Hilflos the governor. It is full of holes, obviously having been used as a dagger target. On the table is apparatus for making 12 POT Blade Venom, together with some of the appropriate materials.

Room 3C

This is the room of Mirtis, the Rune lady assassin. Next to the bed and table stands a suit of SIZ 10 iron armor (chain and plate), a heavy crossbow, and a variety of throwing daggers. On one wall is a bronze tablet which contains a list of about thirty names, each with a Spirit Rune inscribed next to it. There is room for at least thirty more names.

Room 3D

This is a conference room, with a large table surrounded by chairs. There are maps and house diagrams laying about. The door to 3C is always kept locked.

Room 3E

This is quarters for a reliable Anthophilos-type guard. It contains personal effects and weapons.

Room 3F

This room and the attached bedroom are the quarters of Perdit and Vincita. They are usually here, working on new game designs for the casino. Many of the games played in the Happy Landing are their design. Judging by the documents on their drafting table, their new game has the working title of SacredSymbolSearch.

Room 3G

This is the room of Dauthus, the apprentice assassin. There is a bed and table, with some throwing daggers. His practice target is a drawing of Smelchak. On the table is his crossbow, which holds a Multimissile 2 matrix, unless he is using it.

Room 3H

Kharon's Room

Room 3I

This is a closet containing many interesting things. It contains fabric of many types and some Spirit-Rune armbands. Behind this stuff, set into the rear wall, is a safe: a locked, concealed box. It takes at least three minutes of examination and successful Spot Hidden to find it. Detect Magic

will also find it, but will alert everyone in the house.

The safe contains: a 10-point POW storage crystal; three gems set into a Spirit-Rune medallion; the Zoob Assassin's Manual – reading this will increase one's Thrown Dagger by +20% after 5 weeks of training, up to a maximum of 75%, and one time only; a list of 10 future targets; a scroll – "Picking Out the Bodyguards", which adds +05% to one's Spot Trap after a week of training – one time only; another scroll "Task Force Report on Time/Motion Efficiency in Pseudo-Luck Establishments," which is unfinished; two hundred gold pieces; and a ring with a cloisonne design showing a closed eye. This last is an Invisibility matrix. To be used, it must be attuned, and while attuned, the owner's POW is permanently lowered by 3 points. This Power must come from the attuner, and not a crystal, spirit, etc. Technically, the attuner's characteristic POW remains the same for purposes of POW gain rolls, for qualifying as a priest, resisting magic as Rune lords, etc. As long as the matrix remains attuned, the matrix itself will remain invisible. It has 3 points of POW to resist attunement with.

Room 3J

This is Samson's room.

Room 3K

This room belongs to Podops. In addition to the usual personal effects, there is a locked box hidden under the bed. Inside the box is Podops' journal. An unaccountably vain man, Podops plans to write his memoirs. The journal contains little of interest to authorities, but is a revealing account of the infighting and backbiting with the organization. This journal would be worth good money to sages or to Nik-El (say, 600 silvers).

Room 3L

This is the shrine of the ancestors. The altar is at the point of the V, opposite the fireplace. The altar is a brutal, unadorned pillar, bearing only a Spirit Rune. Around the top of the walls is an attempt at a frieze, with interlocking Death and Spirit Runes. The workmanship looks indifferent and hurried. The walls themselves are nearly invisible behind displays of the tools of the Zoob trade: daggers, knives, darts, axes, maces, garrotes, swords, nets, traps

of all sorts, a hundred torture instruments, javelins, bows, crossbows, blades concealed in at least fifty ingenious ways ...

Behind the altar in a large chest, usually kept locked, are the genealogical records of all the Zoob members in Candlefire, plus records for some other Candlefire inhabitants.

At any time that this room is entered, there is a 01% chance that there is a spirit here. This spirit should be determined randomly from the Daka Fal Summon Ancestor table. The spirit type (friendly, neutral, malign, or evil) refers to its reactions to Tayna. A friendly spirit will attack a non-Zoob person entering the room, as will a neutral one that is not immediately given POW by the intruder. Malign or evil spirits will not attack, but may submit to spirit binding if the intruder has the spell and initiates the combat.

Rooms 3M

These two storerooms contain construction materials, cloth, tools, and other useful, but not very valuable objects.

Room 3N

This storeroom contains parchment, ink, pens, and many scrolls. Most of the scrolls are of no particular value, being construction diagrams, calculations of various types, maps, popular romances, and the like. However, stuck away in a corner of a small desk are three extremely incriminating letters in the Kerzen language. They would be worth at least 10,000 silvers to the central government. They are correspondence with a high government official, discussing the amount of the bribes he is to receive, which of his opponents will be eliminated, and what services he is to render in return.

POSSIBLE SCENARIO EVENTS

General Notes

This scenario is free-form, and can go in many directions. Zoob is a dire organization, but easily predictable in most circumstances. The cult shares the same profit motivation as Nik-El, but without inconvenient moral, religious, or personal scruples.

It may be that the adventuring party has scruples of its own, which cause it to balk at cold-blooded murder, regardless of the evilness of the target, perhaps inducing the party to modify the objectives of their mis-

sion — a process which should not be discouraged.

A good old-fashioned burglary would do much to discredit Tayna, as well as presenting the local Zoob organization with a stunning humiliation. However, the adventurers will still need to reckon with the possibility of retribution.

If the party elects to go through with the assassination attempt, there are three general plans from which to choose.

(1) Enter the casino during business hours and kill her then.

(2) Be in the casino at night, find the secret stairway to the third floor, explore it, and find her.

(3) Try to spot her outside the casino. Since she goes out only in disguise, this will not be easy.

The referee should not permit the use of the Vision spell in this scenario. After all, it will set off the Warding.

Entering by Stealth

Both the front door of the casino and the secret stairway to the third floor are protected by Warding 1. These are keyed to Tayna's enemies because she cast the spell. Other hostile intruders not specifically intending her harm will not set off the Warding. Alarm will not be given, for instance, if the party merely enters to do reconnaissance.

Zoob rarely has to fear burglars, thieves, or other simple criminals. Its sinister reputation and the suspicion that some of its people are assassins are enough to scare off ordinary malefactors. However, that reputation and the Warding leaves the Zoob people complacent about the safety of their casino. Thus, there is usually only a single guard at night (after the casino closes) at the front door, and another at the top of the third floor stairway. These are all like Anthophilos.

Entering by Disguise

Not all Zoob employees are Zoob initiates. Anybody who controls or comes into contact with any substantial amount of money or responsibility must be an initiate, but the service people such as waiters and waitresses may be hired help. The party may try to infiltrate one of its number into the casino by getting him or her hired in such a role. The referee may want to

issue a gentle and roundabout reminder that there will probably be a security check on any applicant.

Specifically, Tayna casts Divination to investigate any new employee. She already knows about Anyag's ambitions, but doesn't know who he has hired. However, if one of the party enters the Happy Landing, is conveyed to the second-floor shrine (room 2B) into the presence of Podops (who conducts all interviews), and has Tayna cast her Divination, there will be obvious consequences when Tayna discovers the connection between the party member and Anyag.

If a warning is given about the security check, it should be phrased in such a way that it will not give away Anyag's true identity, if the party has not already guessed.

Entering by Renting

If asked, Anyag will provide enough money for the party to take rooms for a couple of nights at the Happy Landing. The party members will not get the fireplace rooms, but rooms in the central eight. The three front rooms are never rented out, as per the casino description.

The party will know that there is a third floor, as this is obvious from the outside, but they will not know where the access is.

Help From Yokesnip

The party will not be able to get much help from the town residents. Nobody in town wants to mess with Zoob, with one exception.

Yokesnip (see the beginning of the Residents of Candlefire section) knows who Tayna is, and is aware of the plot against her. In fact, the government is actually promoting the plot, in order to weaken Zoob a little. Anyag is not knowingly their agent, but he is much less competent than Tayna. Therefore, Yokesnip (if he is still alive after Scenario Four) will try to provide help without betraying his true role.

It will not be easy for Yokesnip to create the opportunity to help the party. He may, through Hemmy, hire one of the party members as an assistant. Tayna needs a new robe. Since she doesn't leave the temple, the tailor and an assistant will have to come to her, leaving Hemmy to mind the shop. The fitting will be done in room 2A (with the observation holes covered by a rug. No outsiders are ever admitted to the third floor.

Naturally, Yokesnip will make sure that his “assistant” is not carrying any weapons, as he can’t afford to be implicated in the assassination. However, the character may be able to find out something useful about Tayna from the meeting.

Yokesnip could tip a party member, in a casual way, about the Warding spell on the front entrance. That much is common knowledge in the town anyway. The party would have to deduce the possibility of the other Warding for itself. Yokesnip knows where the secret stairway is, but it may be difficult for him to communicate this knowledge without tipping his hand.

The referee may be able to think up another way in which the tailor can give aid, but the most important consideration, no matter what method is chosen, is that the tailor himself should always remain uninvolved directly.

Co-opting the Adventurers

If the party hangs around Candlefire, especially if trying to spot Tayna leaving the casino, the Zoob people have a chance of figuring out what the party is up to (an INTx1% chance rolled for each Zoob person coming in contact with the players seems reasonable). If Zoob blows the player’s cover this way, Podops may attempt to “turn” the player-characters, sending them back to assassinate Anyag instead. He will offer the party 5000 silvers to do the job. (The referee will get a lot of practice in role-playing creeps in this scenario.)

Since the Zoob people now know who the player-characters are, and their chances for success in killing Tayna are greatly reduced, the party may be well-advised to accept this offer. If the players do, the referee may play it out, or he may simply assume that they will succeed; Anyag is, as the central government has correctly deduced, not very competent.

Anyag’s (and his guard’s) stats are at the end of this scenario.

Outcomes

If the party succeeds in killing Tayna so that she cannot be resurrected, Anyag will pay the 12,000 silvers he promised. The party will also get her crystal. Any prisoners taken by the defenders of the Happy Landing will be released unharmed, as long as not too many of the Zoob people (outside of

Tayna) were harmed. Anyag will now become the new priest in Candlefire.

If the party tried and failed, Anyag doesn’t know them. Tayna will have no objection to freeing party members in return for ransom, after they have told her all they know. They will have to come up with the ransom themselves. Zoob will charge about 1500 silvers for low-level initiates, 2000 for higher-level initiates, and at least 3000 for Rune levels. Naturally, Zoob’s organization will pocket any valuables the captives carried.

If the party simply abandons the project without making a serious attempt, nothing will happen. Once the Zoob organization becomes aware of their activities, it will not be satisfied until it finds out what they were planning. The assassins may try to take a prisoner for interrogation. Flight sufficiently far from Candlefire will get the party to safety.

If the party redirects its efforts towards burglary, neither Anyag nor Tayna will be pleased. Escape to distant parts will again put the party beyond their reach. Tanya will direct her main efforts towards preventing a future burglary, and Anyag will recruit a new snuff team.

As always, a party member who comes up with a particularly ingenious strategem of a leader who, by thoroughness and attention to detail, ensures that no disasters befall the team, should be awarded a chance at a Charisma increase. The award should not be made just for a successful mission, but for success directly attributable to the character’s cleverness, foresight, or leadership.

PEOPLE AT THE HAPPY LANDING

Podops and Bodyguard

PODOPS, priest of Zoob, age 35

STR	13	01-04	R LEG	1/6
CON	14	05-08	L LEG	1/6
SIZ	14	09-11	ABDOM	1/6
INT	14	12	CHEST	1/7
POW	18	13-15	R ARM	1/5
DEX	11	16-18	L ARM	1/5
CHA	9	19-20	HEAD	0/6

Move 8 Defense 10%
Hit Points 16

Weapon	SR	Attk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
Dagger	9	55%	1D4+2	30%	12
			+1D4		
Light Mace	8	50%	1D8+1D4	40%	20
Thrown Dagger	3	55%	1D4+1D2	—	—
Mdm Shield	—	—	—	55%	12

SPELLS: Befuddle, Bladesharp 4, Coordination (2), Detect Life, Harmonize (2), Heal 4

RUNE MAGIC: Spell Teaching

SKILLS: Act 70%, Disguise 75%, Listen 45%, Move Quietly 45%, Spot Hidden 55%

NOTE: Podops does not possess an allied spirit.

SAMSOM STENODERM, Podops’ bodyguard, age 26

STR	18	01-04	R LEG	3/5
CON	13	05-08	L LEG	3/5
SIZ	12	09-11	ABDOM	4/5
INT	10	12	CHEST	4/6
POW	15	13-15	R ARM	3/4
DEX	10	16-18	L ARM	3/4
CHA	5	19-20	HEAD	2/5

Move 8 Defense 00%
Hit Points 13

Weapon	SR	Attk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
Hvy Mace	8	65%	1D8+2	45%	20
			+1D4		
Thrown Dagger	3	60%	1D4+1D2	—	12
Mdm Shield	—	—	—	60%	12

SPELLS: Countermagic 1, Demoralize, Healing 2

SKILLS: Obey Orders 100%, Spot Hidden 40%

Tayna Tachybrach

Tayna is as cheerful and friendly as anyone in the Zoob temple, an intentionally conspicuous contrast to the more impressive Podops. Since she is not known to be a priest, her spells are not available to outsiders for teaching.

Tayna does not often venture beyond the Happy Landing and its associated houses. When she does, she goes in disguise as an old woman. Dactylia usually applies her disguise. Tayna is a born actress and can be old very convincingly. Tayna is often accompanied outside by Mirtis.

TAYNA TACHYBRACH, Zoob priestess, age 27

STR	14	01-04	R LEG	0/5
CON	14	05-08	L LEG	0/5
SIZ	12	09-11	ABDOM	0/5
INT	14	12	CHEST	0/6
POW	18	13-15	R ARM	0/4
DEX	16	16-18	L ARM	0/4
CHA	16	19-20	HEAD	0/5

Move 8 Defense 15%
Hit Points 15

Weapon	SR	Attk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
Shortsword	6	80%	1D6+1	80%	20
			+1D4		
Thrown Dagger	1	80%	1D4+1D2	—	12

SPELLS: Befuddle, Bladesharp 4, Demoralize, Detect Life, Disruption, Harmonize (2), Shimmer 4; (known by allied spirit) Detect Spirit, Healing 4, Multimissile 4, Spirit Binding, Spirit Shield 3, Xenoheal-

ing 2; (known by bound spirit) Coordination (2), Detection Blank 3

RUNE MAGIC: Divination 2, Extension 1, Resurrection, Spell Teaching, Summon Ancestor 2, Warding 2

SKILLS: Act 100%, Disguise 50%, Evaluate Treasure 40%, Hide Item 35%, Listen 80%, Oratory 25%, Spot Hidden 90%

MAGIC ITEM: 6-point POW storage crystal, currently containing a bound spirit.

SPIRITS: allied spirit (in dagger)
INT 16 POW 17

bound spirit (in crystal)
INT 6 POW 12

The Zoob Assassins

MIRTIS, Zoob Rune lady, age 31

STR	17	01-04 R LEG	10/6
CON	17	05-08 L LEG	10/6
SIZ	10	09-11 ABDOM	10/6
INT	15	12 CHEST	10/7
POW	17	13-15 R ARM	10/5
DEX	18	16-18 L ARM	10/5
CHA	8	19-20 HEAD	10/6

Move 8 Defense 20%
Hit Points 18

Weapon	SR	Atk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
Shortsword	6	90%	1D6+1	65%	20
			+1D4		

Thrown	1	120%	1D4+1D2	—	12
Dagger					
H Crossbow	1	105%	2D6+2	40%	10

SPELLS: Countermagic 2, Detection Blank 2, Extinguish (2), Harmonize (2), Invisibility (3), Protection 4; (known by allied spirit) Befuddle, Dispel Magic 2, Healing 6, Silence, Speedart

RUNE MAGIC: Extension 1 (known by allied spirit)

SKILLS: Climb 80%, Hide in Cover 90%, Listen 50%, Move Quietly 115% (minus 25% for armor = 90%), Ride 80%, Spot Hidden 75%, Trap Set/Disarm 85%

MAGIC ITEMS: 13-point POW storage crystal, gold bracelet on left wrist acts as Coordination matrix; 3 doses Blade Venom POT 12 for daggers and crossbow bolts.

NOTE: Mirtis lacks Rune lord Divine Intervention, since Daka Fal doesn't give it.

SPIRIT: allied spirit (in raven)
INT 11 POW 18

DAUTHUS, Zoob initiate, age 26

STR	14	01-04 R LEG	2/4
CON	13	05-08 L LEG	2/4
SIZ	7	09-11 ABDOM	2/4
INT	11	12 CHEST	2/5
POW	16	13-15 R ARM	2/3
DEX	15	16-18 L ARM	2/3
CHA	7	19-20 HEAD	2/4

Move 8 Defense 05%
Hit Points 12

Weapon	SR	Atk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
Battle Axe	7	60%	1D8+2	35%	15
Thrown	2	75%	1D4	—	12
Dagger					

H Crossbow	2	70%	2D6+2	25%	10
Mdm Shield	—	—	—	65%	12

SPELLS: Countermagic 1, Harmonize (2), Healing 2, Mobility, Protection 3, Silence, Speedart

SKILLS: Climb 55%, Hide in Cover 60%, Listen 35%, Spot Hidden 45%, Trap Set/Disarm 40%

MAGIC ITEMS: Heavy crossbow is a Multi-missile 2 matrix; a healing potion POT 7, and a Blade Venom potion POT 12 for the crossbow and daggers.

Dactylia

DACTYLIA, casino employee and part-time alchemist, age 43

STR	9	01-04 R LEG	0/5
CON	14	05-08 L LEG	0/5
SIZ	8	09-11 ABDOM	0/5
INT	14	12 CHEST	0/6
POW	16	13-15 R ARM	0/4
DEX	18	16-18 L ARM	0/4
CHA	5	19-20 HEAD	0/5

Move 8 Defense 15%
Hit Points 13

Weapon	SR	Atk%	Damage	Parr%	Pts
Thrown	1	90%	1D4	—	12
Dagger					

L Crossbow	1	75%	2D4+2	35%	6
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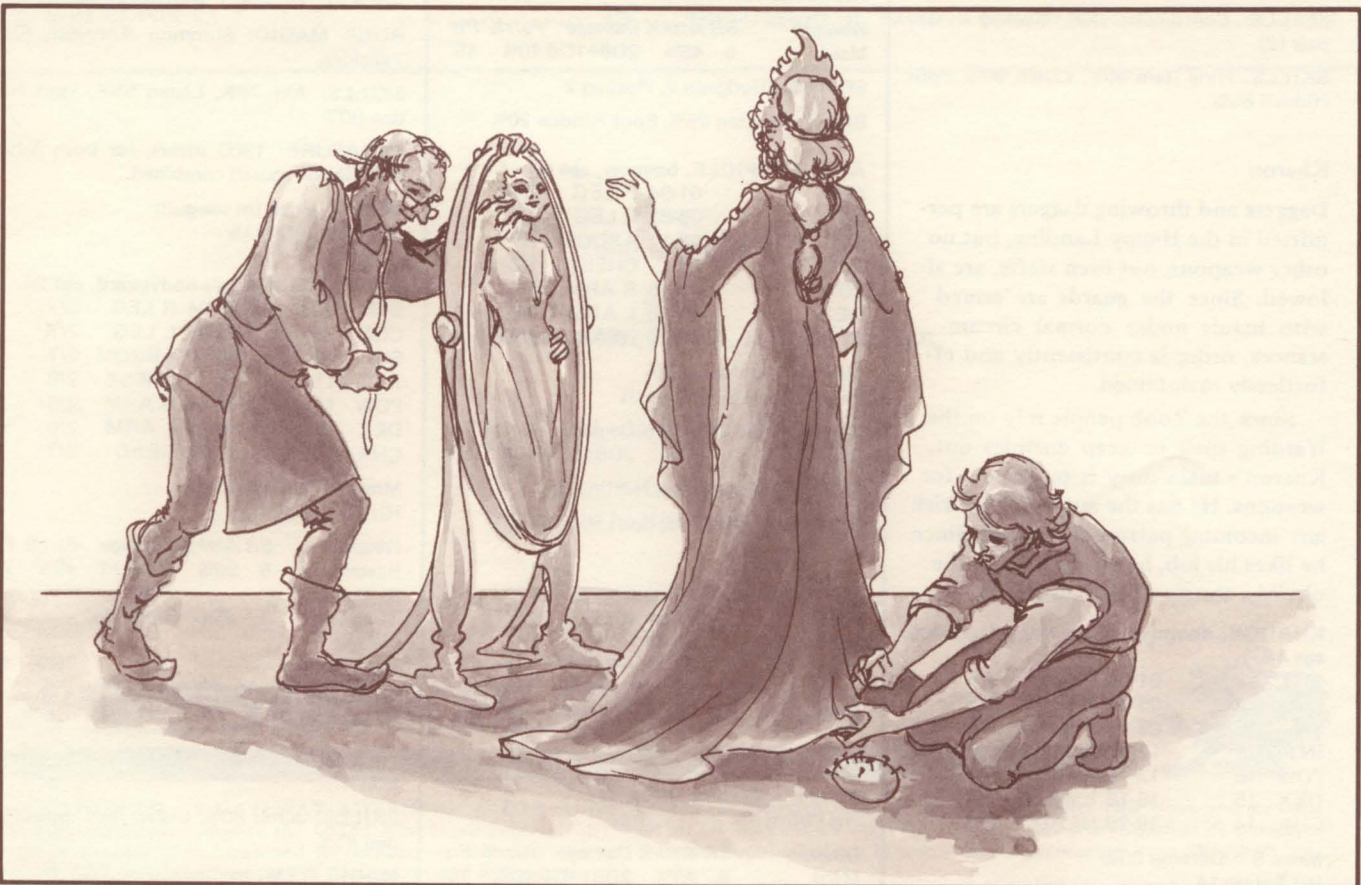
SPELLS: Coordination (2), Firearrow (2), Harmonize (2), Healing 2, Mobility, Shimmer 4, Speedart

SKILLS: Act 60%, Disguise Others 70%, Listen 95%, Spot Hidden 70%, Make Blade Venom POT 12, Make Healing Potion POT 7

MAGIC ITEMS: Dactylia always carries at least one each of a Blade Venom POT 12 potion and a healing potion POT 7

Perdit and Vincita

Perdit and his wife Vincita are incestuous fraternal twins and their stats are



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