



FANGS OF THE VIPER

A SAVAGE WORLDS ONE SHEET™ BY JASON E. ROBERTS



The heroes must rescue a Syrian princess from an unusual bandit and a would-be suitor.

In the third century AD, the heroes visit the frontier city of Dura-Europos on the Euphrates River. As guests of Quintus Domitius Pompeianus, the Roman garrison commander (*dux ripae*), the legionaries enjoy a formal dinner with the commander's friend and colleague, Herodes, sipping fine wine from silver-plated drinking horns (*rhytons*) and playing games of chance with sheep's knucklebones. The animated topic of discussion: the kidnapping of the young Syrian princess Zenobia, intended as the new bride of Odenathus, leading citizen (*exarchos*) of Palmyra, ally of Rome and the father of Herodes. Herodes begs Pompeianus to permit him to mount a rescue expedition with his Palmyrene archers. Pompeianus reminds his friend that the archers are needed to defend the city from Arab or Persian raiders. If the party fails to seize this opportunity for glory, Pompeianus volunteers the heroes' services. Herodes accepts this approach and asks the heroes to meet him at the Palmyra Gate at the west end of Dura-Europos at dawn to search for Zenobia.

⚔ HERODES

Always well-dressed and coiffed, Herodes soon reveals himself as a spoiled, if clever, aristocrat with limited combat skills. When faced with danger, he seeks safety as his highest priority.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d6, Shooting d4, Stealth d6

Charisma: 0; Pace: 6; Parry: 4; Toughness: 8 (3)

Hindrances: Greedy, Yellow

Edges: Command, Rich

Gear: Bronze breastplate (+3), bronze greaves (+2), legionary helmet (+3), gladius (Str+d6), short bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6), horse.

THE VIPER

A Streetwise roll in Dura-Europos reveals that the kidnapper is a local bandit named Apheicus or "The Viper." His small band operates east of the city, plaguing the trade routes with swift and ruthless attacks. A raise on the Streetwise roll provides

additional information regarding his next likely target, a caravan laden with treasures from the Far East, including silk and jade. If the heroes gain this advance knowledge, they may intercept the caravan before the bandits strike, allowing for a more planned defense. Otherwise, the party encounters the caravan already under attack while traveling the eastern road across the river.

The caravan of Zebidados, a merchant of mixed ancestry with far-ranging connections, consists of two dozen camels burdened with goods and ten mercenary camel riders for protection. However, Zebidados defers to the authority of the heroes, especially if the name "Apheicus" is mentioned. Twelve bandits (use Soldiers from *Weird Wars: Rome*) charge on horses from the north, with drawn swords and terrifying ululations.

CAMEL RIDERS

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: 0; Pace: 6; Parry: 5; Toughness: 6 (1)

Hindrances: Foreigner, Illiterate

Edges: Steady Hands

Gear: Leather armor (+1), parma shield (+1 Parry), 3 javelins (Range 3/6/12, Damage Str+d6), spatha (Str+d8), camel (use Horse stats, but replace Kick attack with Bite).

THE CAVES

Herodes confirms that these bandits are led by Apheicus, but he is not among the dead. A grateful Zebidados claims the only refuge for Apheicus and his men in this area would be in the northwest where several caves provide rough shelter.

There, in a temporary camp, ten bandits await the return of their comrades. Apheicus and his "pet" keep watch over Zenobia in one of the larger caves. If the party approaches peacefully, the bandits challenge, but do not initiate hostilities since they expect payment for successfully capturing the Syrian princess.

⚔ APHEICUS (“THE VIPER”)

The son of a Persian magos and an Arab shepherd girl, Apheicus was born with a deformed left arm, black, scaly and twisted. This abnormality grants him the power to command serpents, including the giant snake that watches over him. Instead of using his arcane gifts creatively, Apheicus fled civilization to pursue his true calling: preying upon the weak. Apheicus holds this misshapen limb tightly against his chest, daring onlookers to stare at his reptilian claws.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Spellcasting d8, Stealth d6

Charisma: -4 (to Romans); Pace: 6; Parry: 6; Toughness: 8(2)

Hindrances: Foreigner, Mean, One Arm

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Beast Master (Serpents), Command, Level Headed

Powers: *Confusion, fear, smite*; **Power Points:** 10

Gear: Scale mail (+2), metal helmet (+3), short sword (Str+d6).

⚔ GIANT DESERT VIPER

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills:

Fighting d8, Notice d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d6
- **Poison (-2):** See *Savage Worlds*. The serpent injects Venomous Poison.
- **Size +3:** The serpent is 20' long.

THE BETRAYAL

Unfortunately, Herodes' motives are less than admirable. Zenobia was promised to him long ago, but because of the shifting nature of local politics, she was offered to his father Odenathus instead. Herodes, through intermediaries, hired Apheicus to kidnap the princess so he could stage a dramatic rescue.

Once the heroes emerge victorious from the battle in the cave, Herodes leads them into an ambush by his most loyal Palmyrene archers (one for each hero) from Cohort XX stationed in Dura-Europos. The archers (use Archer stats from *Weird Wars: Rome*) take up positions on both sides of a small gully (a steep incline of 8") to fire down upon the party. A Notice roll forces normal initiative, otherwise the archers act first. Herodes attempts to ride away with Zenobia once the archers shoot.

FURTHER ADVENTURE

The War Master may continue the tale by having Apheicus' father, Gobares, seek revenge. The wrath of a Persian fire magos is not to be taken lightly. Or the legionaries could escort Zenobia back to the city of Palmyra. The young girl eventually becomes queen of the nascent Palmyrene Empire and leads a revolt against Rome. What sparked her grand ambitions? Was it something her tutor, the Greek philosopher Cassius Longinus whispered? Or perhaps it was the actions of the heroes on that fateful journey...



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