



# CITADEL OF THE WINGED GODS

ADVENTURE 2

BEASTS & BARBARIANS

Golden Edition

UMBERTO PIGNATELLI



## C R E D I T S

A Sword and Sorcery Savage Worlds adventure for a party of four seasoned characters

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**SPECIAL THANKS TO:** Marta Castellano (my wife) queen of all the Amazons, Massimo Campolucci (my uncle), for being the first, real Dhaar, Simone Ronco and Polliotti Yoshi (my friends) for fighting alone against the Valk demons.

Kyros, the fabled gateway to the East, a country of mighty elephants, ancient traditions. But also a troubled land, cursed by a mad king, and constantly at war with the savage Ivory Savannah Tribes.

As if this weren't enough, the southern provinces have rebelled, dragging the whole country into civil war!

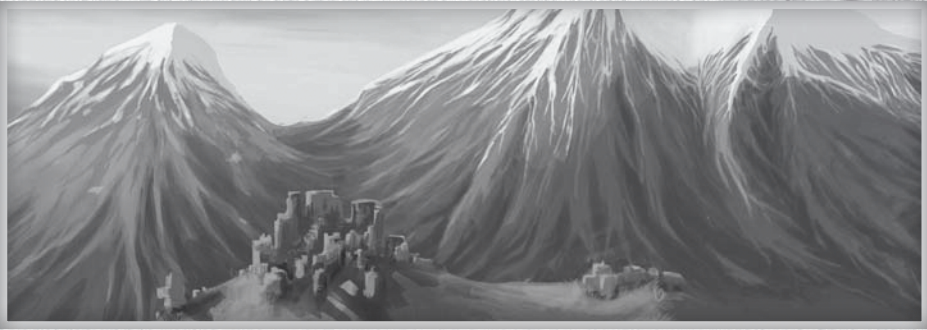
What better place for a mercenary looking for gold?

Clashes of armies, pillaging, fights, and ancient secrets ready to be unraveled await you in the second adventure of the Beasts and Barbarians series!

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Citadel of the Winged Gods*, the second adventure of the *Beasts and Barbarians* Savage Worlds setting.

To play this adventure you need a copy of the core rules of *Savage Worlds* and the *Beasts and Barbarians* Player Guide.

This scenario is made for a party of four Seasoned heroes, with some experience (25-30 Experience Points is ideal), but it can be easily modified for parties of different size and experience by following the instructions in the Player Guide.

If you want, you can play it with characters of your own designing. Otherwise, you can download a set of pregenerated heroes from the same site where you downloaded this adventure.

If you don't use gaming terrain, you will find it handy to have gaming stones and several copies of Burst Templates to represent specific terrain features in fights.

The parts in italics are intended to be read aloud or rephrased by the Game Master to the players.

Now, if you want to play this scenario, stop here. The following sections are intended for the Game Master only.

Instead, if you are the Game Master, keep reading and prepare to venture into the Lands of the Dread Sea!

## CHARACTERS REQUIREMENTS

This adventure is best played by groups with mixed skills. While a warrior or two (with good Fighting, Shooting or Throwing) are very useful, a skilled thief and trap master (Lockpicking) will surely find plenty to do. The adventure features a long trek through a savage region, so Notice, Survival and Healing skills will be extremely precious. A character with Knowledge (Arcana) will also help the party find very useful hints at certain points in the scenario.

Although all these skills are useful, none are absolutely mandatory to play the scenario.

## CHARACTERS    HOOK

The scenario supposes that the heroes are serving as mercenaries in the loyalist army of the Autarchate of Kyros, dispatched south to crush the rebelling cities. If the heroes know one another from a previous adventure, they are hired as a party. Otherwise, they can be strangers assigned by chance to the same military unit. During the few weeks they spend marching south, they get to know each other quite well.

## BACKGROUND FOR THE GAME MASTER

The southeastern region of Kyros is called Ghandar, which in the local tongue means “Lands of the Tigers”.

In its western part Ghandar is a fertile plain, while in the east, as far as the shores of the Brown Sea, it is choked by a vast jungle surrounding a range of tall mountains, the Jungle Peaks. An ancient race of wondrous winged men, named Haakora, once lived on the peaks.

They were powerful sorcerers and had great knowledge, dating back to even before the fall of the Dread Star. From their marvelous city, haughty Haak, hidden among the highest peaks, they ruled over the primitive tribes of humans inhabiting the jungle, who considered them kings and gods at the same time.

The Haakora’s rule was unmatched for hundreds of years but, despite their long lifespan, they were not very prolific, and, after centuries of inbreeding, their race started an inexorable decline.

In that period, the Kyrosians came from the north. They built several cities on the borders of the jungle, among which Azagara was the closest to the Haakora kingdom. The Azagarans were farmers and they burned large chunks of forest in order to extend their cultivations, displacing the jungle tribes, the ancestral owners of that land.

In the end, war was unavoidable: the jungle tribes, led by their winged masters, fought against the Kyrosians. The war lasted for several generations and was in a continuous stalemate: the Kyrosians were better armed and organized than the jun-

gle tribes, but the magic of the Haakora kept the fight hanging in the balance.

The war ended when, with a stroke of luck, Jilar, the prince of Azagara, wounded and captured Kiran, the king of the Haakora. The winged man was dragged to the city in chains, and emissaries from the flying race came to discuss a ransom. But Jilar was a cunning ruler, and he refused gold, ivory and all the other riches the Haakora offered to have their king back.

Jilar said that, as long as the Haakora kept the peace, Kiran would be safe within the walls of Azagara. He then had a small, windowless palace built for Kiran so that he could not fly away, and called it the House of the Red Door.

The king of the Haakora was locked within, constantly guarded by jailers faithful to Jilar. To prevent the mighty being from using his ancient spells to escape, the Azagaran priests tattooed every inch of his body with silver glyphs of power, which blocked his magic and made him fall into a deep slumber.

For this reason, the Azagarans mocked Kiran by calling him the Silver Man.

The Haakora had no choice but to retreat to their mountain city. Their lives were many times longer than those of mortal men, so they hoped that, when Jilar and his evil breed died, Kiran would be free again.

But things didn’t turn out as they expected. Fifty years after Kiran’s capture, a plague killed all the Haakora, and from then on the marbled streets of Haak were inhabited only by the echoes of the wind.

Without their winged masters, the jungle tribes fell under the influence of the Azagarans, more similar to them than the

haughty Haakora. In the space of a few generations, most of the jungle people became loyal subjects of the Azagaran princes, and the memory of their winged gods soon faded.

Today, three hundreds years after the death of the last Haakora, the very existence of the winged race is considered a myth.

But, in Azagara, the House of the Red Door still stands and a sect of very secretive guards, a sort of religious order, constantly watches the Silver Man. Kiran has been asleep for so long that they believe they are guarding nothing more than a silver statue, and the belief is shared by the population and the rulers of the city.

But the truth is very different: Kiran is alive, and the time of his awakening is nigh...

## PART 1: THE AZAGARA CAMPAIGN

Kyros struggles with the Ivory Savannah Tribes in the south, but this isn't the only trouble for the Autarchate. Some cities of the southern region of Ghandar have rebelled once again.

In particular, the princes of Azagara and Sulapul, two of the most powerful strongholds in Ghandar, are leading the rebellion. They know that Ganymedes, Autarch of Kyros, is a madman, and they hope that, if they act quickly, they can achieve independence, and maybe the crown.

So, a month ago, a great army made of the joined forces of Azagara and Sulapul marched north to capture Kenaton, the

second city of the kingdom and the only access point to the Brown Sea.

Ganymedes might be a madman, but his generals aren't. They swiftly led the Autarch's army to Kenaton, preventing the fall of the city by a matter of hours. The rebels' army is still stronger than the loyalists', so Azagara and Sulapul can win if they manage to capture Kenaton, but this will require a long war of attrition, giving the Autarchate time to bring in more troops from the north.

In addition, the rebels don't know about the existence of a second, smaller loyalist army. It moved southward a couple of weeks ago and took a large detour to avoid being sighted. In a few days, it will reach Azagara and Sulapul, which are virtually undefended since all the rebel troops are ten days' away, in front of the walls of Kenaton.

If the loyalists manage to capture the two cities, the rebel army will shatter and the rebellion will end.

This second army, led by the famous General Tunamos, mostly includes mercenary troops, hastily recruited from all over the kingdom and its neighbors. The mercenaries know that, if discovered before attacking Azagara, they will be alone in enemy territory and will meet certain defeat, but the prospect of rich loot is definitely worth the risk.

This is the army the heroes have been assigned to.

### SCOUTING MISSION

*The army has been marching toward Azagara for almost two weeks. You have taken great care to go unnoticed and, using stratagems like marching at*



*night, you are finally only a day away from the enemy city.*

*You have just set up your last camp when a captain of the Autarch's Guard, the only regular corps in this ragtag army, summons you and several other soldiers.*

*"General Tunamos wants to speak you." He says and takes you to the General's tent.*

*Tunamos is a man in his late fifties, with short grayish hair and a scar on his left cheek. He is one of the best generals of the kingdom, a veteran of many battles against the Ivory Savannah Tribes.*

*He is a man of few words, too.*

*"Tomorrow we'll get to Azagara. It is vital to take it by surprise, or give the defenders the least possible warning. So, you are enlisted as additional advanced scouts. Your duty is to prevent anyone between here and the city from alerting Azagara."*

*"Tunamos! For the Three Horns! My riders can do that!" says an outraged voice in a strong foreign accent.*

*The speaker is a Valk rider with long hair thickened with mud to resemble snakes. Like all the Valk, he speaks directly to the General. He is called Druun the Gorgon and is the chief of the Valk mercenaries which make up most of the cavalry of the army.*

*"I know," answers Tunamos in a flat voice. "But I also know your men are much more interested in pillaging the country than in preventing commoners from getting away, and we cannot take any risks this time. So we'll send these men as well as yours."*

*Druun's face turns red with anger but he remains silent. Everyone knows that his men are little more than common bandits.*

*"As you wish." He then says, staring coldly at you.*

*"So, you leave at dawn. Good luck." the General says before dismissing you all.*

The heroes are given horses if they don't have any and are sent north east, while the Valk are sent in other directions. The landscape is flat, with small clumps of tropical vegetation and a few low hills. Nothing relevant happens until midday, when the heroes are allowed a Notice roll to hear the sound of sheep in the distance. With a success, the heroes detect the sound in advance, so they have time to prepare themselves; otherwise, they suddenly stumble upon the flock.

*You see a small flock of sheep, no more than a dozen, herded by two young shepherds. The men are driving the beasts as fast as they can but, when they see you, they abandon the sheep and run off!*

The characters are mounted, while the shepherds are on foot, so they can be easily reached. The men are no fighters and surrender immediately.

If questioned, the shepherds reveal that they spotted the army two hours ago, and they were currently trying to escape, making for their village. With an Intimidation roll, the men confess that a third shepherd took the only horse they had and rode to the village to raise the alarm. The village, Gul, is half an hour away on horseback.

The damage is done but, if the heroes are fast enough, they can reach the village and stop the news from spreading. They are more than an hour away from the army, so turning back isn't an option.

**(M) Shepherds (2):** Use the Commoner's stats. See page 47.

### CHARACTERIZATION:

#### VALK SPEECH

*In the narrative parts of this scenario the Valk characters use some expressions typical of their*

*culture. Use them when portraying one of these nasty fellows to add flavor to the game.*

**Dirty Feet.** *With this derogative expression the Valk refer to the cultures who do not ride on horseback (they walk, so they get their feet dirty).*

**Death of the Lamb.** *This means a painless death, usually inflicted to lambs and other beasts. For a Valk warrior it is a great dishonor to suffer the Death of the Lamb, but the Valk understand that other cultures recoil from pain and giving this type of death is their way to show mercy.*

**For Kumra's Horseshoes!** *Dhaar (the mightiest warlord in Valk history) had a stallion named Kumra. It was renowned for its bad temper and it often killed enemies (and friends) by trampling them. Being killed by a horse is a very dishonorable death for a Valk.*

**For the Three Horns!** *This typical Valk curse refers to the Three Horned Rider, a traditional demon in Valk culture. This hideous creature visits the battlefield riding a black stallion to collect the souls of the fallen ones.*

## THE VILLAGE OF GUL

*It is hard to call Gul a village. It is no more than a bunch of twenty or so mud huts. You are probably too late, because the place seems deserted.*

Indeed, the third shepherd alerted the population and everyone fled, taking their poor belongings with them. They are making for Azagara and they aren't far. A successful Tracking (+2) roll is enough to find them.

While the heroes are exploring the village or immediately before they leave, they hear screams of pain coming from one of the huts. They approach it and witness the following scene.

*A shabby hut stands in the middle of the village. A small cart, laden with the poor possessions of a commoner family and drawn by a mule, is ready to depart.*

*But the cart owner, an old man, is lying on the ground, surrounded by a group of Valk explorers who are torturing him.*

*"I'll ask you again, Dirty Feet. Where is the gold?" You recognize the burly Valk who is threatening the commoner. It is Kumal, nicknamed the Smiling because an axe blow cut off his upper lip. He speaks in a sibilant voice and always seems to be smiling, but there's absolutely nothing funny about him.*

*"There is no gold in the village, I swear!" answers the old man.*

*The Valk's reaction is fast and brutal: they savagely kick the fallen man. You distinctly hear the noise of breaking bones.*

*Just then, another Valk comes out of one of the huts. He is holding a small boy, who is fighting savagely to get free. "Grandpa, Grandpa!" he shouts.*

*An evil grin appears on Kumal's face. He grabs the boy's cloth and tears it away, leaving him naked.*

*"I think I'll make him feel the tip of my knife." Kumal says, while the other Valk laugh.*

No hero worthy of the name will allow a similar torture, so it is time to act!

This scene is crucial for the story. So, if the heroes don't act, the Valk warriors spot and decide to dispatch them, so that no witnesses of their tortures will be left alive (General Tunamos forbade it). In this

case, the party loses the element of surprise (see below).

The battle takes place in the square of the village, a roughly circular area, 8" in radius. In the middle, there is a well (see below). Place Umon, the old man, on the ground near the well. He is incapacitated and does not take part in the fight. He is surrounded by the Valk warriors. One of them is holding Jura, the little boy, who is grappled and can get free as per the standard rules. He receives an action card and is controlled by the Game Master.

The heroes start just outside the square, in one of the side alleys.

The Valk's tactic is simple. While the heroes are more than 6" away, they use the well as cover and pepper them with arrows. When the heroes get closer, they switch to melee. They are vicious fighters, so they try to gang up on a single hero, and they fight to the death.

Kumal uses the Heroes Never Die setting rule. When he goes down, he isn't actually dead but only temporarily unconscious. However, no hero notices that.

**(M) Valk Riders (1 per hero):** See page 54.

**(M) Kumal the Smiling (WC):** See page 51.

## TERRAINS AND PROPS

- **Mule with Cart:** The cart (4" by 4", Toughness 6, grants Medium Cover) is 4" away from the Valk, with the mule hitched to it. If the beast is attacked directly or spooked by the fight (this happens the first time someone draws a Joker), it starts running away the character that has drawn the Joker. Any character along its path must make an Agility roll or be partially trampled, suffering 2d6 damage. With a critical failure, he is com-



pletely trampled and suffers 3d6 damage. The beast moves 6" each round, trying to get away from the square.

- **Valk Ponies:** The Valk's mounts (one beast for each warrior) are bound in a group on the opposite side of the square from where the heroes are located, at least 6" away from the Valk. The beasts are used to fights, so they don't react in any way unless directly threatened.

- **Well:** A simple water well. It grants Medium Cover and has Toughness 8. It can be represented by a Medium Burst Template. The well is 15" deep and it is lined with very smooth stone (-4 to Climbing rolls).

## A PROMISE AND A REVELATION

*"Grandpa! Grandpa!" the little boy you have just saved cries kneeling by Umon, his grandfather.*

*You look at the old one, sprawled on the ground. He must have been a very muscular, imposing man once, but now he is only a frail mass of broken bones, and he is coughing blood.*

*Even so, he finds the strength to caress his grandson's head for the last time. Then, he turns to you and whispers:*

*"I have a proposal for you. Swear to take care of my grandson, Jura, and I'll tell you where you can find more riches than in the great palace of Themrà, the Prince of Azagara."*

If the players hesitate, tell them the man will be dead in a few minutes. They must decide quickly. Only after the heroes make a solemn promise does he continue:

*"In Azagara look for the House of the Red Door. Silver! A man's weight in silver is hidden there!" Then he dies.*

Just then, the heroes hear the sound of hooves.

*Kumal, the smiling torturer you thought you had killed, obviously has more lives than a cat. He has somehow managed to stand up, get to a horse, and now he is galloping away!*

The heroes are too far away to catch him. Has he heard the old man's words? Will he report them to the army's commander? The party will find out soon enough.

## JURA

Jura is a ten-year-old Kyrosian boy. In the space of a few months he lost his father (who went north with the army) and his mother (suddenly killed by a disease). So his old grandfather, Umon, came from Azagara to take care of him.

And now he is gone too, killed by foreign devils! Jura is full of rage and initially he doesn't trust the heroes (after all, they are invading his country) but, if well treated, he will become very fond of them. His presence is purely instrumental to the story, and it is left to the Game Master to decide how his relationship with the party will develop.

## COMPLETING THE SCOUTING MISSION

The heroes hurry to reach the villagers who are fleeing to Azagara, but to no avail. They have already got to the city gates and raised the alarm. The best thing to do now is to report back to General Tunamos.



The heroes aren't the only scouting group to have had bad luck. Other patrols have reported that the army has been spotted and that the city is now in alarm. The Valk commander, Druun the Gorgon, looks at the heroes with eyes full of hate, but says nothing about what happened between them and his men.

Being a veteran, Tunamos knows that plans never survive contact with the enemy, so he tries to make the most of a bad situation. He orders his men to march on Azagara as fast as possible, to leave the defenders little time to organize themselves.

## THE BATTLE OF AZAGARA

*At daybreak, after a long, tiresome night of forced march, you reach the outskirts of Azagara. It is a city of average size, built on a plain bordered by the jungle. A light morning fog covers the top of its low fortifications, built to protect the*

*population rather from the beasts of the jungle than from a real army like yours.*

*The army of Azagara is deployed in battle formation just outside the walls, in a long line. It is a very bold, or very desperate, way to fight. Prince Themrã's banner flies right on the front line.*

*When the sun is high, the trumpets sound and the battle starts.*

Here follows a brief description of the two armies to help the Game Master explain how the battle scene develops.

### AUTARCH'S ARMY

**Commander:** General Tunamos of Iralal  
– Knowledge (Battle) d10

2 companies of Autarch's Guards (heavy infantry, the only regular troops of the army)

3 companies of mercenary troops (irregular medium and light infantry, the heroes are part of this bunch)

1 company of mercenary slingers of the Independent Cities (veteran troops)

1 company of Valk skirmishers (led by Druun The Gorgon)

*Total:* 1400 Men

## AZAGARA'S DEFENSE ARMY

**Commander:** Prince Themrà of Azagara – Knowledge (Battle) d8

1 company of palace guards (medium infantry, ceremonial troops)

1 company of city watch (light infantry)

1 company of Azagan Javeliners (skirmishers)

12 war chariots (shock elite troops, led by the Prince himself)

*Total:* 600 Men

## BATTLE EVENTS

The result of the battle is scripted: Tumnamos's army is too large to be beaten by Themrà's smaller forces. However, the heroes' deeds can make the victory easier or harder, depending on how they behave at two crucial moments in the fight, described below.

To make things easier, the heroes are assigned to the same unit. The battle is divided in three main "rounds", corresponding to Mass Battle rounds. In the first and third round the heroes must make a Fighting roll, respectively with +2 and +4, and check the Heroes in Mass Battles table. Ignore the Battle roll modifiers on the table: consider only the damage taken by the heroes.

During the second battle round the heroes face a special event. Draw a card from the Action Deck. If a black card is drawn, the special event is Enemies in the Jungle; if the card is red, the party must deal with The Elephants. If a Joker is dealt, the heroes must play both events, one in the second and one in the third round (in this

case, they can skip the Battle roll for the third round).

The events have a fixed duration, in standard combat rounds. If the party manages to fulfill the victory conditions within this time limit, they win the event, saving many troops from massacre. This means that, in the Second Battle of Azagara, the Autarch's Army will have the listed Bonus Tokens.

The heroes should be rewarded with a Bennie, too.

In case of failure, it means that extra troops are required to eliminate the threat, with many casualties on the heroes' side.

## ENEMIES IN THE JUNGLE

**Duration:** 4 Rounds

**Bonus Tokens:** +1

**Background:** The heroes are assigned to the extreme right flank of the army, practically a few yards away from the border of the jungle. Unbeknown to the attackers, a whole tribe of jungle men is hiding in the vegetation; they are allies of Azagara. They plan to flank the invaders, catching them by surprise. Each hero is allowed a Notice (-2) roll. In case of success, he spots the warriors in the jungle, just a moment before they attack!

At this point, the heroes can raise the alarm and try to protect the flank of the army by attracting their comrades' attention. Each hero is allowed a Smarts roll. With a success he is joined by an extra Soldier, plus one for each raise. The character adds +2 to the roll for each Leadership Edge he has. This roll can be repeated each round, but it counts as an action. The Soldiers who come to help enter the battlefield 6" away from the calling hero, and act immediately.



If the whole group fails the Notice roll, they are surprised and must face the first round without any chance of summoning reinforcements.

**Setup:** The heroes are standing on a small escarpment, 12" by 6". The attackers are in the jungle, 10" east of the escarpment. They count as being under Medium Cover until they come out in the open. Each round, a new wave of attackers starts its charge. The escarpment is on higher ground, so a character standing at its top gains +1 Parry and has +1 to Fighting rolls against enemies approaching from below.

**Victory Conditions:** If, at the end of the last round, there is less than one enemy per hero in the area, the party has won the encounter.

Each wave of jungle men includes:  
**(M) Jungle Warriors (2 per hero):** See page 49.

The heroes can count on the support of:  
**(M) Soldiers (1 or more):** See page 53.

## THE ELEPHANTS!

**Duration:** 4 Rounds

**Bonus Tokens:** +1

**Background:** There is a small hill in the middle of the battlefield. The thick vegetation at its top hides two Elephants, with archers and lancers. They are wild specimen, not as big as the fabled War Elephants but still very impressive. Themrà has planned to make them charge down the hill while the two armies are fighting to cause panic among his enemies. Unfortunately, the heroes happen to be right at the foot of the hill when the beasts come out and charge.

**Setup:** Place one fully-manned elephant (see below) on the hilltop. The slope is 12" long and any character moving downhill has +2 to the Running Die. Conversely, the slope counts as Difficult ground when going uphill.

Place the heroes and a group of Soldiers under their control 16" away from the hilltop. The heroes stand no more than 4" away from each other and the Soldiers stand behind them, no more than 2" away from each other.

Both the heroes and the soldiers must check for surprise in the first round.

**Victory Conditions:** The heroes win the encounter if they manage to kill the Elephant in four rounds *and* if at least one Soldier per hero is still alive.

Each elephant is manned by:

**(M) Elephant (1):** See page 48.

**(M) Mahut (1):** See page 51.

**(M) Archers (4):** Use Soldiers stats. Add a bow and Shooting d8. See page 53.

**(M) Lancers (2):** Use Soldier stats. They are armed with very long pikes (Str+d8, 2 hands, Reach 4). See page 53.

The heroes can count on the support of:  
**(M) Soldiers (2 per hero):** See page 53.

## VICTORY

After playing the previous events, the battle finally comes to an end.

*The soldiers of Azagara fight with honor and courage, but in the end the superior numbers of your army turn the tide of the battle. The ceremonial troops of the city yield under the pressure of the mercenaries, driven by the prospect of loot, and are pushed back against the city's walls. At this point, Prince Themrà tries a desperate last charge to free his pinned-down troops, but his sally fails. The Prince himself is killed and his head severed and mounted on a lance.*

*Azagara is falling. Its defenseless gates are torn down and its walls quickly climbed.*

*The attackers are inside. The fighting will soon be over and the pillaging will start.*

## AZAGARA

*The heroes are allowed a Common Knowledge (-2) or Knowledge (Kyros) roll to check what they know about Azagara. Every entry includes the previous information. So a character scoring a raise also receives the success entry information, and so on.*

**Failure.** *Azagara is a minor city in Ghandar, the southeastern part of Kyros. Some weeks ago the city rebelled against the Autarch.*

**Success.** *Azagara is allied with Sulapul, another city in the south. The two cities have*

*had a close relationship for centuries and now they have rebelled together.*

**Raise.** *A long time ago, Azagara subjugated the savage Jungle Tribes. Since then, they have been paying tribute to the city and fighting in its wars. Their military strength is unknown, because they rarely leave the jungle.*

**Two Raises.** *Azagara is currently ruled by Prince Themrà, acting as regent for his older brother, Prince Imar, who is in the north, leading the rebelling army. Themrà is known to be a very bold but impulsive fighter.*

## THE RANSACK

*The mercenaries ransack the city with the ferocity of a pack of wolves. It's impossible to try and stop them and even the officers join troops in the pillaging, raping, and other assorted atrocities typically inflicted on a helpless city by a victorious army.*

*You have seen it all before and know that, despite its brutality, the ransacking is unavoidable.*

Most of the mercenaries simply enter the first house they find and start killing and raping, but the heroes have a precise goal: the House of the Red Door. The only problem is that they haven't the faintest idea where it is, so they must find someone who can help them.

Before plunging into the mayhem, the heroes should patch up wounds and similar things. To simplify things, consider the Golden Hour starting when the battle ends (so the party has an entire hour to use for healing).

The city is in total chaos, so the heroes have various encounters. Some of them are simple hazards, while others are occasions to gather useful information about

their objective. The Game Master should feel free to add other encounters of his own invention.

## FIRE!

While you are moving through the city, you hear many people shouting in terror and, a few moments later, a panicking throng almost tramples you.

*“Fire! Fire! The city is burning!” cries a wild-eyed woman as she rushes past.*

*Then, a cloud of smoke engulfs you. You are choking and risk being swept away by the crowd.*

*Fires are common when a city is being ransacked, and the heroes have been unlucky enough to come across one of them. Getting out of this situation unharmed might prove harder than expected.*

Every hero must first make a Vigor roll, to avoid being intoxicated. Failing the roll means suffering a level of Fatigue (which will last until the beginning of Part 2).

Then, the heroes must move away to avoid being trampled by the escaping crowd. This is a Dramatic Task, based on Agility, requiring scoring three successes in three rounds. Heroes who are suffering a level of Fatigue (due to the smoke) double the penalty in this situation (-2).

At the end of the third round, for each success below 3 they scored, they suffer 2d6 damage due to trampling and rough treating. Armor doesn't protect against this damage.

Once out of harm's way, the heroes can try to stop an escaping citizen and question her about the House of the Red Door, but

the populace is too shocked to be of any use.

## ESCAPING SLAVE

You are walking down a large street, lined with leafy banana trees, when you hear the breathing of someone hiding behind one of the trunks.

The man hiding behind the tree is tall and dark-skinned, clearly one of the Ivory Savannah Tribes. He wears a plain loincloth and a sturdy copper collar, identifying him as a slave.

*“I am just a slave. I have nothing of worth on me. Please let me go!” he pleads.*

If the heroes are aggressive, Zumar the slave tries to run away. He is a commoner, but with the Fleet Footed Edge. If the heroes are pacific, they can convince him, with a simple Persuasion roll, to reveal some useful information about the House of the Red Door. Zumar has one big wish: to be rid of his hated slave collar (Toughness 5, can be opened with a Lockpicking roll too). If the heroes remove the collar, they receive +4 to the Persuasion roll.

*“The House of the Red Door, you say, mbudi (master)? I have heard of it. It is in the Old Quarter, eastward from here, but I don't know exactly where it stands.*

Zumar is telling the truth. He doesn't know the exact location of the House. If he is forced to follow the party, he tries to escape as soon as he has the chance.

## RICH MERCHANT

*You have just met a group of fellow soldiers wearing precious silks taken from a rich house, when you see a figure sneaking away, down a side alley.*

The man is fat and dressed in expensive robes – he’s probably a merchant. He is clutching a small coffer in his hands. If stopped, he falls to his knees and begs the heroes for mercy.

*“Please! Please, mighty warriors! Spare my humble life! I am just a poor trader trying to save myself!”*

If the heroes ask for the coffer, after some hesitation, he hands it over.

*“The savings of a lifetime! Take them and let me keep my life!”*

The coffer contains some cheap trinkets and a few copper coins (worth 10 Moons in total). The man looks too well-off to be carrying such a small treasure. There is definitely something wrong here. With a successful Notice (–4) roll, a hero understands that the merchant is hiding something in his mouth! When he finally spits it out, the heroes see it is a ring set with a big gem, worth 500 Moons.

*“Dirty sons of a flea-ridden dog! May the Winged Gods devour your manhood! May Etu, mother of health, make your butts blossom boils! May Umangyu, father of elephants, bury you under a pile of excrements! Robbing a just man of the fruits of his labor!”*

The merchant, named Akhirem, knows the location of the House of the Red Door, and proposes to tell the heroes if they give him back the ring. If the heroes want to keep the gem, they must win an Intimidation roll against the merchant’s Spirit (d6) or take him with them to be sure he has told the truth. Otherwise, he will provide the wrong information.

The true location of the House is:

*“The House of the Red Door is at the end of the Alley of the Shady Pagodas, third road to the left. You cannot miss it.”*

Akhirem’s wrong directions are:

*“The house of the Red Door is down the first road on the right from the Obelisk Square. You cannot miss it.”*

## RESISTANCE!

If Akhirem has given the heroes the right directions, skip this encounter, otherwise you must run it.

*You turn right at the Obelisk Square, only to be welcomed by a volley of arrows! A makeshift barricade blocks the street and a group of enemy soldiers, probably city guards, are defending it.*

*“Come on, Autarch’s minions! I have an arrow with your name on it!” shouts their leader, whose head is heavily bandaged. If you want to get through, you must fight.*

The battlefield is a road section, 18” long and 6” wide, with north to south orientation. Place the heroes within 6” of the northern edge of the road.

Half of the enemy soldiers are concealed behind a barricade placed 6” from the southern edge of the road and are armed with bows. The other soldiers are hidden in the nearby houses and try to catch the heroes by surprise approaching from the north at the start of the third round. They don’t carry bows.

The guards fight until one of them is still alive. Then, the lone survivor surrenders. He knows where the House of the Red Door is (at the end of the Alley of the

Shady Pagodas) and will tell the party in exchange for his life.

**(M) Soldiers (1 per hero +2):** One of them is an Officer. See page 53.

## TERRAINS AND PROPS

• **Barricade:** A makeshift barrier made of broken furniture, crates, barrels and other scavenged materials. It is 6" long and 1" wide and counts as Difficult ground. It grants Heavy Cover and +3 Armor.

• **Taking Cover:** The road offers a variety of cover, such as broken furniture, barrels, and so on. Place up to ten gaming stones on the battlefield to represent these props. They grant Light Cover, +1 Armor and are considered Difficult Ground.

# PART 2: THE SILVER MAN

## THE HOUSE OF THE RED DOOR

Read the following part when the heroes reach the end of the Alley of the Shady Pagodas.

*You finally get to the end of the Alley of the Shady Pagodas, where you see a small garden and in the middle of it a squat, mysterious-looking building with a red door.*

*A strange atmosphere of stillness surrounds this place. The area is untouched by the turmoil and devastation spreading through the rest of the city.*

*The one-story building has an elegant colonnade and is totally windowless. The only entrance is a reinforced double door made of bronze, whose dark red paint has turned almost brown with the passing of time.*

The door isn't locked and opens silently onto a dark room. Consider the whole room to be in Dark light condition.

Massive columns mark the perimeter of a big hall, which is completely bare except for a round-shaped altar in the center and a door along the opposite wall.

The hall isn't as empty as it seems. The guardians of the house are hiding behind the columns. They are called the Stranglers of the Red House. The Stranglers begin 6" away from the heroes and try to silently sneak up on them from behind using Stealth. Besides the darkness in the room, the columns also grant them Medium Cover. If they manage to engage the party in close combat, they get the Drop.

Don't draw the battle map until the Stranglers try their move. Then, place them according to their Stealth results.

The battleground is the whole hall, 16" by 8", with a small altar in the middle. Place the heroes roughly in the center of the room and the Stranglers according to their Stealth rolls. The Stranglers don't speak and give no quarter – they simply kill all trespassers.

**(M) Stranglers of the Red House (1 per 2 heroes):** See page 52.

## TERRAINS AND PROPS

• **Massive Columns:** Eight big columns, arranged in two lines of four, are placed along the sides of the hall. They grants



Medium Cover, have Toughness 14 and, if the party uses a source of light such as a torch or lantern, they cast shadows that count as Dark areas.

## A CLOSER INSPECTION

Once the fanatical guards are dispatched, the heroes can take a better look at them and at the rest of the House.

The Stranglers are abnormally muscular. With a Healing or Lotusmastery roll, the heroes can also notice that the white of their eyes is yellow, indicating addiction to some type of drug. A Smarts roll reveals another alarming fact: the two men bear a close physical resemblance to Umon, Jura's grandfather. They have a strange red mark on their forehead, and the heroes remember that the old man had one just the same.

The door at the end of the hall leads to a small room, containing some poor pallets, a table and a few chairs. This is where the Stranglers sleep and eat. On a small table there is a bottle of wine, which can be identified, with a Lotusmastery or Healing (-4) roll, as the infamous Wine of Kirem (see sidebar). It is a perfect drug for guards who spend the greatest part of their life sealed in a windowless building.

Another interesting feature is the fact that the House lacks any kind of decoration. Despite being an ancient and important place, there are no statues and no engravings or painting.

What's more, there is no trace of gold, silver or other precious treasures anywhere.

When the heroes inspect the altar, they see that it is made of a single round block of polished stone and it is totally plain. Deep grooves in the floor allow them to understand, with a Notice (+2) roll, that the altar can be moved.

*You push the altar and, to your surprise, it slides to one side, revealing a concealed stairwell going deep into the ground. This house definitely hides something strange.*



### WINE OF KIREM

*A dark-red liquor, as thick as syrup, this concoction is made with Violet Lotus of the Jungle, bull testicles, and other secret ingredients. It is a powerful anabolic steroid, allowing regular users to develop impressive muscles, at the price of a certain dumbness of the mind.*

*If drunk daily, after a week the Wine increases a character's Strength by one die step, but it also lowers her Smarts by one step (if it drops below d4, the character becomes an NPC of animal (A) intelligence). When the user stop drinking the wine, she loses her extra Strength step in d4 weeks and, in addition, she must make a Vigor roll. With a failure, the loss of Smarts is permanent; with a success or a raise she recovers her lost Smarts; only with two raises does she maintain the Strength bonus while also recovering the lost Smarts. In the House of the Red Door there is enough Wine to last for two months. It can be sold, with a Streetwise roll, for 300 Moons.*

## THE HIDDEN TREASURE

*The air coming from the passage is stale, indicating that it has been sealed for a long time. The stairwell takes you to the threshold of a circular, vaulted room. It is empty, except for a strange statue on a pedestal right in the center of it. The*

*statue represents a shapely, bald man, sitting cross-legged in the lotus position, as if sleeping or in deep meditation. The statue is covered in dirt but, under the light of the torches, it shimmers with the unmistakable sparkle of silver! So Umon told the truth: the hidden treasure of the House is not a man's weight in silver, but a man made of silver!*

The heroes also notice that the floor is covered in some inches of dirt and has not been swept for what looks like centuries. As they walk, they step on soft things among the dirt. Initially they can't make out the objects, but then they realize they are feathers. There are lots of them, of various colors, from deep blue to white, and they are incredibly big (a foot long). A successful Survival roll identifies them as those of a giant eagle of some type.

The "statue" is actually the sleeping king of the Haakora, Kiran, and the feathers are what are left of his wings, which, after not being used for centuries, have atrophied and fallen off. Indeed, some small bones still lie at the foot of the pedestal.

Kiran is sleeping and forgotten, but this doesn't mean he is unguarded. The prisoner king is protected by a complex and dangerous trap.

## THE TRAP

The floor hides several pressure plates that activate if a weight heavier than 50 pounds is put on them. There is safe path to reach Kiran, but it is concealed by the dirt.

**Dangerous Path.** The path to reach the statue is 5" long. For each 1" movement, a hero must draw a card from the action deck and check the table below to see if he has stepped onto a pressure plate. If

he has, he is allowed a Notice roll, with the modifier listed in the table, to avoid the trap. If he fails, the trap is triggered as explained in its description. The first triggered trap has the Drop.

The hero's move ends after triggering or detecting a trap. At this point, the other members of the party can move freely on the "explored" 1", as they know where to walk to avoid triggering the trap again.

**Careless Move.** If the heroes walk carelessly, they suffer an additional -2 to Notice rolls.

**Jumping.** A hero can try to jump to make his path shorter (use the standard Savage Worlds rules to determine jumping distance). He draws a card from the Action Deck as usual to check if the plate where he has landed has a trap, but the Notice roll to detect it suffers an additional -1 and the character has -2 to Parry, because he has to regain balance after landing. If he fails the Strength jump roll, the Parry modifier is -4 and the jump is obviously shorter. A new card must be drawn to check if the plate where the hero has landed has a trap.

## TRAP TABLE

Card	Notice	Trap Description
2-3	-	No trap. Clear passage.
4-6	+1	A single blade emerges from a fissure in the ground. Fighting d8, 2d6 damage

7-9	0	Several blades emerge from the ground. 3 attacks x Fighting d6, 2d6 damage
10-J	-1	A dart, concealed in the vault, targets the character. Shooting d10, 2d4 damage
K-Q	-2	Several darts, concealed in the vault, target the hero. 3 attacks x Shooting d8, 2d4 damage
A	-3	A triangular blade shoots from the wall at ankle level and targets the hero Throwing d10, 2d8 damage.
Joker	-4	Several triangular blades shoot from the wall at ankle level and target the hero. 3 attacks x Throwing d8, 2d8 damage.

Once the heroes are near the statue, read the following part:

*The statue is of incredible perfection and its details are so fine it almost seems alive. To your disappointment, you notice that the shimmer of silver is limited to the strange engravings covering the body, which you would call tattoos if you were speaking of a living man. Then, you spot a truly remarkable feature: the statue's feet and arms are tethered to the pedestal with a length of rusty chain.*

As the heroes are examining it, the statue suddenly opens its eyes, revealing piercing blue pupils.

*With a sepulchral voice, as if speaking for the first time in centuries, the statue whispers: "Please... free me!"*

## THE PROPOSAL

Will wonders never end? The statue has just turned out to be a living creature and now he's asking to be set free! Heroes with the *detect/conceal arcana* power feel some very faint magic emanating from him. The runes on his body are written in ancient Kyrosian and their meaning can be understood with a Knowledge (Arcana) roll:

*"For the blood of princes and the power of silver, I forbid you, spirits of the winds, to answer this man's call."*

They seem part of some ritual to prevent the creature from using his magical powers.

The man has strange, sharp features and is totally bald, but he doesn't look like a demon at all.

As if reading the characters' minds, the creature speaks again.

*"I am not a demon, strangers. I was born in this world, though my race is far older than yours. The evil dwellers of this cursed city captured me and are keeping me hostage to prevent my people, the Haakora, from waging war against them. I am Kiran of the Haakora, and I am the king of my people. Bring me to my city, Haak, in the mountains above the jungle, and I promise you'll be rich men!"*

The heroes have never heard either of the Haakora or of Haak, the city Kiran is speaking of. Characters with the Knowledge (Ancient History) skill are allowed a roll with a modifier of -4 to remember a

legend about a city in the jungle of Gandhar inhabited by a race of winged men. But it is a very old story, and surely the mention of “flying men” is only a poetic metaphor referring to their great wisdom.

Freeing Kiran is quite simple. The chains are rusty (Toughness 5) and can be easily broken.

*Once free, the King of Haak slips off the pedestal with great caution. He is very weak, but a light of triumph shimmers in his eyes. “In the end, I am free!”*

### THE REASON FOR KIRAN'S AWAKENING

*Kiran is considered Exhausted throughout Part 2. See the character's description in the Creatures section to understand how he regains his powers. The players might wonder why Kiran has awoken just now. The reason is that the magic of the runes on his body, written by ancient Azagaran priests, is based on the blood of the ruling princes of the city. But on this very day the blood line has*

*ceased to exist. Prince Themrà, ruler of the city, was killed in the Battle of Azagara and, a few hours ago, his brother Imar, chief of the rebels, was murdered by an Autarch assassin in his tent as he was laying siege to Kenaton, hundreds of leagues away from there.*

### AMBUSH!

In the end the heroes leave the House and, at this point, serious trouble starts.

*While you are walking down the road with nowhere to duck for cover, several figures emerge from the shadows. They are Valk warriors and they are keeping their terrible composite bows trained on you.*

*“So, you told the truth, Kumal. They did find something valuable in that house.” The weird looking Valk who is speaking has his hair caked with mud and shaped to resemble snakes. You recognize him as Druun the Gorgon, chief of the Valk Riders. His company has suffered quite a few casualties, but they have certainly fought with valor.*

*Kumal the Smiling, still wearing bandages over the wounds you inflicted on him, stares at you with cold hate.*

*“And now, Dirty Feet,” Druun continues, “hand me what you have found and maybe I'll grant you the Death of the Lamb.”*

The situation is very tense. The players must be warned that the Valk have their bows aimed on the heroes and a single move will cause them to shoot. They must also know that Druun is an evil bastard and for no reason will he let them leave the alley alive.



Keep up the suspense of the moment for a while. Then, before the players can react, go on with the following part.

*Something unexpected happens. You hear the sound of several people approaching from behind the Valk. The riders turn to see what's happening.*

*An officer wearing the bronze armor of the Autarch's Guard rushes into the square, followed by many other soldiers, some of them half naked or drunk, as if abruptly interrupted halfway through the pillaging.*

*"Alarm! Alarm!" he shouts: "All men to the walls! You, dogs, follow me!"*

*The officer is so worried he doesn't even notice that the party and the Valk are in the middle of a standoff.*

*"What's happening?" The Gorgon asks the officer.*

*"An army was sighted an hour ago, coming from east. They are Sulapulians, come to help Azagara! We must rally at the gates immediately, or we'll be crushed!"*

*Fear floats across the Valk's face. He and his men left their horses by the city gates, as you cannot sack a city while being in your saddle, and the idea of fighting on foot is frightening to a Valk. Druun orders his men to put down their weapons.*

*"We'll continue later," he promises with an evil grin.*

*Then the Valk run toward the gates with the other soldiers.*

*"Come on!" the officer shouts at you. "We need you too!!"*

## SNEAKING AWAY OR FIGHTING AGAIN?

*Kiran, who has been silent throughout the encounter, whispers to you:*

*"Come on! This is the right time to leave the city and go to the jungle!"*

Now the heroes must decide what to do: join their army and fight another battle or, as Kiran is asking, become deserters and follow him into the jungle?

The players should be informed that the attacking army is coming from the east. Haak, Kiran's city, is in the jungle westward, just in the opposite direction.

The scenario is written assuming that the heroes will sneak away sooner or later, but this can happen at three different points. The one just mentioned is the first, and the safest of the three.

**First Chance to Escape.** As they are last in the line of soldiers marching to the walls, the heroes can sneak away quite easily, with a simple Stealth (+2) roll. But it is up to the players to decide what to do. If the heroes escape now, skip the Second Battle of Azagara and proceed with the "In the Jungle" scene.

Whatever the heroes' decision, another dramatic event is about to strike the smoldering city.

A wet, cold wind is blowing from the jungle and you notice that the sky is quickly darkening. You understand that soon not only the men, but also the gods will battle over Azagara.

The black clouds of a tropical storm, typical of these lands, are gathering in the sky.

## THE SECOND BATTLE OF AZAGARA (OPTIONAL)

Read this part when the heroes reach the city walls.

*From your higher position on the city walls you understand that the situation is desperate. Less than half of your army has gathered in the plain in front of the walls. The other soldiers are too dispersed in the city, sacking the buildings and killing the surviving citizens, or too drunk to be useful.*

*The enemy army is impressive. Sulapul's heavy infantry is at least four hundred strong. They wear bronze armor and carry shields of hard elephant hide. Behind them are an equal number of slingers. And, behind the slingers, a thousand wild men of the Ivory Savannah Tribes, probably mercenaries who cannot believe their luck: they are being paid to sack the lands of their greatest enemies! And, last but not the least, a whole battalion of heavy cavalry, dressed in gaudy colors but nevertheless extremely deadly.*

*All these troops come from the southern provinces and have many reasons to hate the invaders.*

**Second Chance to Escape.** The odds of victory are definitely in the Sulapulians' favor – they have twice the soldiers and their troops are fresh. If they choose to sneak away now, the heroes must fight a small group of fellow soldiers to leave the battleground.

**(M) Soldiers (1 per hero + 2):** See page 53.

**(M) Officer (1):** Use the Soldier stats, with the Officer Special Ability. See page 53.

After a few minutes, the storm breaks out, covering the party's escape into the jungle.

**Third Chance to Escape.** If the players decide to stay and fight, the battle is handled with the standard Mass Battle Rules. Here follows a brief description of the two armies, with indication of their mass battle tokens. If the heroes successfully completed any Battle Event in the First Battle of Azagara, remember to give their side additional tokens.

General Tunamos's army is doomed to defeat. The heroes can try to escape at the end of the each even-numbered battle round, after checking the results of the Heroes in Mass Battle table. If they stay with their army till the end, it is up to the Game Master to decide what will become of them. They can be made prisoners, for example, and, in this case, the story should focus on their escape.

### AUTARCH'S ARMY

**Commander:** General Tunamos of Iralal – Knowledge (Battle) d10

1 company of Autarch's Guards (heavy infantry, the only regular troops of the army)

1 company of mercenary troops (irregular medium and light infantry, the heroes are part of this bunch)

½ company of mercenary slingers of the Independent Cities (veteran troops)

½ company of Valk skirmishers (led by Druun The Gorgon)

*Total:* 450 Men

Tokens: 2

### SULAPUL'S ARMY

**Commander:** Pantarkos Ilisha – Knowledge (Battle) d8

2 companies of Sulapulian Elephant Tusks (heavy infantry)

2 companies of slingers (regular ranged troops)

4 companies of Ivory Savannah mercenary warriors (skirmishers, irregular troops)

1 company of Sulapulian Sun Riders  
(heavy cavalry, shock troops)  
Total: 2200 Men  
Tokens: 10

## IN THE JUNGLE

Read this part when the party finally manages to escape from Azagara.

*You finally reach the relative safety of the jungle, just before the storm unleashes all its tremendous power. You hear the sound of battle mixed with that of thunder, and you know that your army is on the losing side.*

The heroes know from the first battle that the jungle is inhabited by tribes friendly to Azagara, so they must cross it as quickly as possible, but with caution.

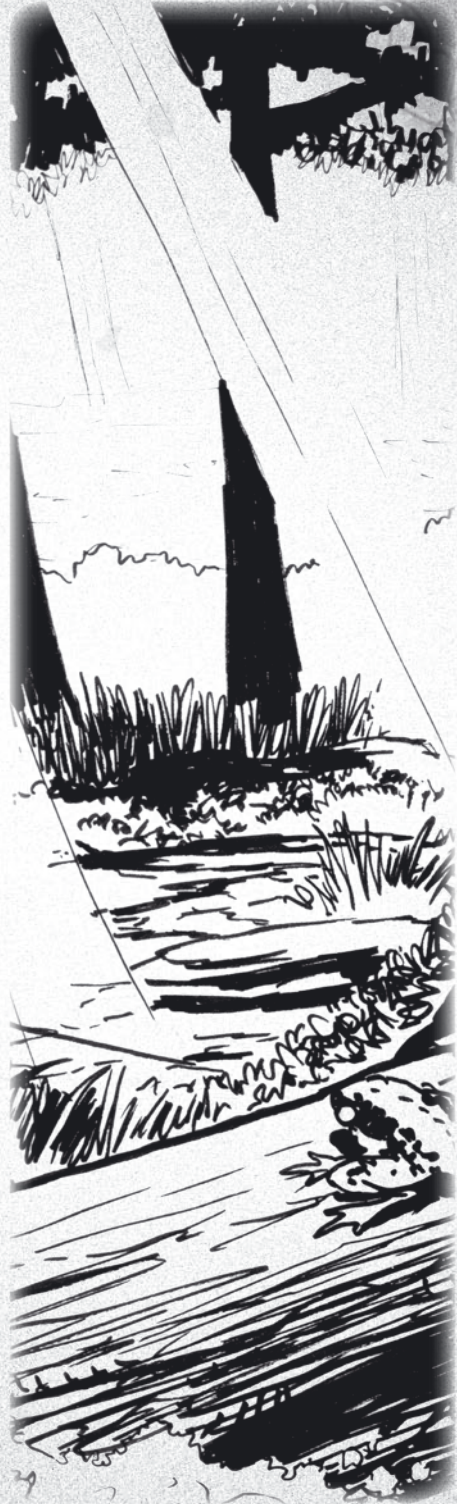
*Kiran, the man you have entrusted your life to, seems slow and confused now.*

*“The jungle is alien to me.” He says with troubled eyes. “It has changed from what it once was. But I am sure that we must go west. The sooner we find my people, the sooner we’ll be safe.” And he starts trailing through the vegetation.*

The first night, the heroes stop and camp by a small river, and Kiran finally bathes.

*As the dirt melts away, your companion’s hairless skin is revealed and you see two strange scars on his back, right below his shoulders.*

With a Healing roll, a character understands that the scars are where his wing joints used to be. Kiran lost his wings after centuries of disuse but he was once able to fly!



Even stranger, as he bathes, his silvery tattoos seem to fade.

*“Their power is diminishing, I can feel it” says the Haakora softly, as if lost in long forgotten memories.*

While they are sitting by the fire, Kiran tells the heroes about his past, but they are unable to determine the duration of his captivity.

Kiran believes he was asleep for fifty years, but he isn't even close to the truth. Three hundred years have actually passed since he was captured.

The next day, the party moves deeper into the jungle. A list of encounters is provided below to make the trip more interesting. Only the first is mandatory and the Game Master is free to choose to run or skip the others. The heroes have an encounter every twelve hours, so this part of the trip is two days long.

## THE MILESTONE

On their first day in the jungle, the heroes make an unusual discovery. Let the players make a Notice roll; the one with the highest score is the lucky finder.

While advancing through the jungle, you stumble upon a standing stone carved to resemble a bird of some type.

*The discovery makes Kiran very excited. “We are lucky! This is one of the milestones of the Path of Light!” He says wide-eyed. “Several hundred years ago, my people made the jungle tribes build a road to our city, so that they could bring us tributes. It is called the Path of Light. If we follow it, it will take us straight to Haak!”*

*The discovery is encouraging, but there is no way of knowing how far the fabled city is and which way the road goes, as it was engulfed by the jungle centuries ago.*

## THE SURVIVOR

The heroes find a lone soldier in very bad shape.

*On the ground you see a man propped against a tree trunk. His uniform, dirty and torn, is still recognizable. He is an Autarch's Guard, a member of your same army. He seems to be sleeping, but the film of sweat on his face and the large red stain on his leg make you understand he is badly wounded.*

Rakhim – this is the soldier's name – has an infected wound and is feverish. He knows he's going to die, and simply asks the heroes for some water and a little company.

*“I was in the second line during the charge of the enemy cavalry. They tore us to pieces. I manage to escape and reach the safety of the jungle with a friend, but we found jungle warriors here, ready to ambush us. He fell, and I killed a savage or two before running away, but one of them pierced me with his spear. I have been wandering since then, but now I'm tired and very thirsty...”*

Rakhim will die in a few hours; the infection is too severe to save him.

## QUICKSAND

The heroes come to an area of dangerous quicksand. Ask the party who the most advanced character is, and tell him to make a Notice (–4) roll. If he succeeds, he spots the quicksand in time to avoid it. A



hero with the Woodsman Edge has +2 to the roll.

Otherwise, he steps into the quicksand, and the second most advanced character must repeat the above procedure. Go on until the danger is spotted or the entire party has fallen into the quicksand.

When the heroes complete the Notice rolls, read the following part.

*There is something strange here, but you cannot quite understand what. Then you realize you are imperceptibly sinking into the ground. Oh no, it's quicksand!*

A character in the quicksand sinks by a third of her height at the start of every round. After three rounds she is totally submerged and, from the fourth round on, she starts choking as per the Savage Worlds drowning rules.

The hero can try to free herself with a Strength (-2) roll. Each success and raise allows her to pull herself up by a third of her height. When she is completely free, she is finally safe.

Characters outside the quicksand area can help their sinking friends with group Strength rolls. A rope or other similar device grants +2 to the Strength rolls of both the victims and the helpers.

## THE SNAKE

*"Stop!" calls Kiran, exhausted. Agreeing that it's time for a brief rest you find a big fallen log and decide to sit and catch your breath.*

Deal each player and NPC in the group an Action Card. The lowest one indicates the victim of this encounter. If the group includes a character with the Bad Luck

Hindrance, he is automatically designated as the victim (dealing the cards is unnecessary).

Let the victim make a Notice (-2) roll. In case of success he notices a small, green snake on the log and avoids it. Otherwise, he incautiously puts his hand on it and gets bitten. The snake has Fighting d8, Str d4 and the Drop, so it automatically bites the hero's hand. It is too small to cause any damage greater than a Shaken result (simply ignore wounds caused by this attack) but, if it Shakes the target, its very bad news.

Let the party make a Survival roll to identify the snake. If everyone fails, Kiran automatically recognizes it.

*You recognize the small, striped creature as a Heartbeat, a venomous snake that can kill you in a few minutes. There is no time to waste – the venom must be sucked out before it reaches the heart, or your friend is doomed!*

It is a Dramatic Task, based on Healing. The party only has three rounds before the venom starts to take effect and they must suck out three doses (score three successes) of it from their companion's veins. A hero can suck out a dose of poison with a Healing (-2) or Survival (-2) roll, two with a Raise. With a critical failure, he messes up the puncture, making further attempts more difficult (-2 to further rolls). The Poisoner Edge grants +2 to the rolls.

The healing Power isn't strong enough to stop the venom this time, but it can help. Any "wound" removed in this way slows down the venom, giving the party an additional round of time.

At the end of the time, check how many doses of venom are still in the victim's system:

**Zero Doses.** The victim is safe; he is only a little shaken up.

**One Dose.** The victim is Fatigued. The Fatigue is recovered with a Vigor roll after one day.

**Two Doses.** The victim is Fatigued and his arm is paralyzed by the venom. It is useless (as per the Broken Arm entry in the Incapacitation table) until the Fatigue is recovered.

**Three Doses.** The victim is in extreme danger. He must make a Vigor roll or die. In case of success, he is Exhausted and his arm is paralyzed as per the Two Doses entry. In case of a raise, the hero is Fatigued, as per the One Dose entry. With two raises the hero is unaffected, simply because he is immune to the toxin! He gains a permanent +2 to Vigor rolls against snake venom.

If the victim survives, he should be rewarded with a Bennie.

## PART 3: THE ROAD TO HAAK

### SHADOWS AMONG THE TREES

*After two days, you are still advancing in the jungle. Your eyes are now quite efficient at spotting the milestones marking the Path of the Light, but they are rarer every mile. The trail is very narrow and untended, so plants of every*

*type cover it, and you are often forced to use your blades to carve out a path. The atmosphere is awfully spooky too, since there is little light and tall trees and sinuous vines similar to sleeping snakes surround you. In addition, you have the feeling you are being watched, but cannot identify the source of your discomfort.*

After a while, one of the heroes casually finds something interesting on the ground, half covered by moss.

*Picking it up, you realize it is a cracked human skull, bearing clear marks of fangs.*

With Survival rolls (or if everyone fails, thanks to Kiran's knowledge of the jungle), the heroes understand that the man was killed by cannibal apes!

*But, alas, your discovery has come a moment too late! You glimpse movement among the trees and, before you can react, a gray shadow clinging to a vine swoops down into the clearing, grabs Jura, and disappears in a flash!*

*"Help me! Help me!" You hear the boy's screams getting fainter.*

If they want to save the orphan, the heroes must Chase the beast.

The heroes can give chase on ground, cutting a path through the vegetation, or jump from one vine to the next, as the Ape does.

In both cases, Agility is used as Chase skill, but there are several other differences between the two ways of moving.

Characters that are on the ground move as they would normally.

Heroes who choose to jump on the vines draw an additional free card each round. On the flipside, they face a complication with any black card, not only with a Club.

The chase ends after five rounds or when the ape suffers the first Wound (see below).

*In the end, the beast gets down on the ground in a small clearing. He throws Jura aside like a discarded toy, and picks up a big branch. Then, growling, it threatens you with this mighty weapon. Now that you are closer, you notice that the beast is far bigger than a man and a malevolent intelligence shimmers in its eyes.*

The heroes must fight the Ape if they want to rescue Jura. The battleground is the clearing, a small circular area, 6" in radius. Place the Cannibal Ape Alpha Male and Jura by the northern end of the clearing, while the heroes are in the southern part at least 8" away from the beast.

The beast is powerful, but it is no match for a party of heroes. The problem is that this specimen is the leader of a large pack and its mates are approaching fast.

The Apes fight to the death. When the heroes manage to kill all the beasts in the clearing, go on with the "Jura Rescued" part.

**(M) Cannibal Ape Alpha Male (1):** Use the Cannibal Ape stats, adding Size +1. It is a Wild Card. See page 47.

**(M) Cannibal Apes (1 per hero):** See page 47.

## TERRAINS AND PROPS

• **Apes from the Sky!** At the start of the second and third round, more Apes join the fight by swooping directly onto the

battlefield (for a total of 1 Ape per hero). Place each Ape in the center of the clearing, and then scatter them by d6" in a random direction. If they end up on the same 1" as a hero, they immediately perform a free attack with +2 to the Fighting roll. The Apes act normally till the round they appear.

• **Junk in the Clearing:** The clearing is full of stones, pieces of wood, and so on. A hero (or an Ape) can easily pick up a stone or other improvised throwing weapon (Damage: Str+d4, Range: 3/6/12).

• **Fallen Tree:** A big tree fell into the clearing and shattered into various pieces. Each of them is big enough to grant Light Cover, +2 Armor and has Toughness 5. Place up to six gaming stones in the clearing, to represent the pieces of the tree, which count as Difficult Ground.

• **Throwers Among the Trees:** Not all the Apes have the courage to join the fight directly. Many of them stay in the trees and pepper the heroes with assorted projectiles: pieces of wood, stones, rotten bananas, and so on. At the end of each hero's turn, if he has acted on a black action card, he is targeted by a ranged attack, as detailed in the table below. All ranged attacks have range 4/8/16 and are considered to be Medium Range.

### Apes Junk Throwing Table

Card	Attack type
2-3	<b>Rotten Fruit.</b> 1 x Throwing d8 attack. d8 damage, if hits it is also considered a ranged Test of Will (Taunt d8).
4-8	<b>Pieces of Wood.</b> 2 x Throwing d6 attacks. Deals d4+d8 damage.

9-10	<b>Vicious Stone.</b> 1 x Throwing d10 attack. Deals d8+d4 damage.
J-Q	<b>Hail of Stones.</b> 1 x Throwing d8 attack. Deals 2d6 damage in a Medium Burst Template.
K-A	<b>Human Skull.</b> 1 x Throwing d8 attack. d8+d4 damage, if hits it is also considered a ranged Test of Will (Intimidate d10).
Joker	<b>Close and Personal.</b> A brave Ape enters the battlefield (as for the Apes from the Sky above).

## JURA RESCUED

*When you kill the last Ape on the ground, the cacophony in the trees and the rain of missiles abruptly stop. You cannot see the Apes, but you know they are still there, looking at you with malevolent eyes.*

*You pick Jura up. The young boy is wide-eyed and scared, but unhurt.*

*Just then, you hear deep growls coming from the thick vegetation. The Apes in the trees around you promptly answer with high-pitched howls.*

*“The rest of the pack is coming!” Kiran says. “Grab the boy and let’s leave this cursed place!”*

Kiran is right. If the heroes don’t move now, in a few moments the full pack will storm the clearing. The battle follows the same rules as the previous one, but there are a lot more enemies.

**(M) Cannibal Apes (4 per hero):** See page 47.

If the heroes decide to run for it, read the following part.

*You run away as fast as you can. You don’t really know which way you’re going, but the farther from the beasts the better. You jump over fallen trunks, swing from vines and avoid ravines, while you hear the angry cries of the Apes behind you. All of a sudden, the vegetation ends and you find yourselves in front of a creek. It is quite large but not deep and marks the border of the very thick jungle area.*

*“Come on! Come on!” Kiran encourages you to cross.*

*When the Apes get to the riverbank, you are almost on the other side. You understand they will go no further and you turn to look at them standing by the water and shouting angered cries.*

*“My people almost wiped out these savage creatures.” Kiran says. “How have they managed to replenish their numbers so quickly?” He asks himself.*

*It is a question that will soon be answered.*

## THE BEACON

*Luckily, your wild escape hasn’t brought you too far from the Path of Light. Kiran soon finds the milestones again and seems optimistic: “This part of the jungle looks familiar to me. If I am not wrong, my people have an outpost nearby. With some luck, tonight we won’t sleep out in the open.”*

Kiran was right. An hour before dusk, the group reaches the outpost.

A strange building stands in a clearing, half engulfed by plants. It is a sort of ziggurat, taller than the trees. It looks very old and untended but it is still accessible.

*“We call these places the Beacons. We use them to communicate with Haak. We can send a message to the city from here, and a patrol will come to pick us up in no time!” the King of the Haakora explains.*

*You walk up the long flight of steps to the empty room at the top of the Beacon, where another smaller staircase leads to the flat roof. On the roof there is an old stone brazier. From this altitude you can see the vast jungle below you and, westward in the distance, a group of tall mountains surrounded by clouds.*

*“There.” Kiran points at the peaks. “Haak is there.” He sounds certain, but the clouds are too thick and you cannot see anything.*

Then the King of Haak goes back to the room and searches it, until he finds a loose slate in the floor. A group Strength roll is required to remove it, revealing a small hideout. Here you find small blocks of a strange black oily substance, very similar to pressed guano, neatly stacked against the wall. Kiran takes a dozen blocks up to the roof and places them in the old brazier.

*“When night falls, we’ll send a message to Haak. There is always a sentinel looking out for signals like these. When they see it, they’ll send a patrol to us!”*

The heroes have a few hours to rest now. Resting heroes are allowed a Vigor roll to remove Fatigue. The party can also explore the jungle or take a closer look at the Beacon itself.

**Exploring the Jungle.** If they do it, the heroes are allowed a Notice or Tracking roll (their choice). With a success, they discover that all around the Beacon, at a distance of three hundreds yards, there are poles stuck in the ground with human skulls decorated with feathers mounted on them. Any character with Knowledge (Arcana) or Knowledge (Religion) understands that their purpose is to keep strangers away under threat of a terrible curse. With a raise, they discover that they are only for show and there is no real magic in them.

**Exploring the Beacon.** There are two areas of interest: the outside of the ziggurat and the room at the top of it. With a successful Smarts roll, the heroes notice that the building is made of rocks of two colors. After some investigation, they understand that this is intentional: from the sky (and the Haakora are a flying race) the Beacon appears to have the shape of a bird with outspread wings. In the room, instead, there are old paintings, but they are too faded to make out what they depict.

Then, when darkness falls and the sky is dotted with stars, Kiran starts the fire in the brazier. The burning blocks produce a strong blue light, but they are not consumed by the flames.

*“Stay back” orders Kiran. Then he pronounces a strange incantation on the brazier and the small fire turns into a pillar of light, so tall you can’t see its end. Kiran remains concentrated for several minutes. When he stops the fire goes out, crumbling the blocks to dust. The King of Haak looks exhausted.*

*“Now we must wait for an answer.” He says and sits down on the ground.*

*Minutes pass, then hours, and no answer comes from the faraway mountain.*

*“It cannot be. It cannot be.” Kiran whispers in disbelief.*

Give the players some time to discuss what to do. They might decide to abandon the mission and go back, or they might decide to stick with Kiran. Whatever their mood, this is a good occasion for some roleplaying.

*Then, before dawn, a blue light briefly shimmers on the top of the mountains.*

*“They saw it! They saw it!” Jura shouts excited.*

*But the mysterious dwellers of the faraway city aren’t the only ones who have seen the signal. Just then you realize the ziggurat is surrounded by a large group of jungle warriors, painted in strange colors and wielding spears and axes.*

## THE JUDGMENT OF THE JUNGLE GOD

*“Calm down. They are jungle tribes, sworn allies of my people.” Kiran says.*

*Then he addresses their massive, scarred leader in a strange musical language.*

*The man clearly doesn’t understand, and replies in broken Kyrosian: “You are my prisoners. Drop your weapons and surrender.”*

The savages are too many, so reacting is a bad idea. But, if the players want to fight, the savages will be happy to oblige.

The battlefield is the ziggurat. Place the heroes in the square room at the top, a 6”

by 6” area, with four 2”-wide entrances on each side. The enemy warriors start on the lower steps of the ziggurat, 9” away from the top. Consider that each step is 1” deep. Going up the steps is considered Difficult Ground. The warriors want to capture the heroes alive, so they do non-lethal attacks.

**(M) Jungle Warriors (5 per hero):** See page 49.

## TERRAIN AND PROPS

- **Reinforcements.** Every time a hero is dealt a black card, two more warriors emerge from the jungle and join the fight. They start at the bottom of the ziggurat, 9” away from the heroes.

Read the following part to the heroes, if they surrender or they are beaten and fall unconscious during the fight.

*The warriors disarm you and bind your arms, ready to take you away.*

*Kiran complains desperately: “No! We must wait for the patrol from Haak! They are on their way here! Please, just a little while!”*

*But the scarred leader of the jungle warriors has no time for his pleas, and you are taken away into the jungle.*

*After a couple of hours of very uncomfortable trekking, you get to a village built in the very heart of the jungle. Women and children watch you in amazement from the doors of their wooden huts.*

*You are dragged to the chief, an obese fellow sitting on a crude throne, who is incessantly munching on food.*

Despite his appearance, Fatbelly is a cunning and devious man.

*“Strangers, why have you desecrated the holy temple of the Claw’s Clan?” he asks, while chewing loudly.*

The heroes can try to find a suitable explanation, but Kiran can bear it no longer and flies into a rage:

*“We haven’t desecrated anything.” Kiran thunders disdainfully. “I am Kiran, King of the Haakora and your lord by law. I used the Beacon, which you left in a deplorable state of decay, to warn my people. Now free us and bow to me, and I might forget your offense!” As he says these words, your companion almost transfigures, his tattoos now gone, and his voice has a power that is clearly inhuman.*

The jungle warriors cower in terror, and Fatbelly stops chewing and drops his food.

*Then a croaking voice rises from the crowd.*

*“When the old gods forget their children, new gods come to protect them! Fatbelly, kill them and send their heads to Azagara. The lords of the city will be grateful to us! So I, Shagga the Elder, say!”*

*The crowd parts and old crone limps forward with a gnarled staff that supports her. She looks at Kiran defiantly, before continuing.*

*“Your race abandoned us even before the birth of my grandmother. You can try to impress us, but I feel you are powerless. Where are your wings, mighty lord? Now you must crawl on the ground like all of us mortals and tremble in front of the new gods.” And she laughs evilly.*

*Kiran calmly answers: “I fear no god, old witch.”*

*“Is that so?” the woman grins. “People of the jungle, have you heard? They challenged our new gods! Now we’ll see if they have the courage to face them!”*

Four warriors (one for each playing character) stick a spear in the ground and the villagers quickly clear the space marked by the four spears. Only you, still bound, and Shagga remain in the open space.

*Then, someone starts playing a drum and the old witch shakes her body in strange, frenetic movements, more similar to an inner torture than to a dance. She whines and whimpers like a beast in pain.*

*Kiran too starts chanting in his melodious low voice, pitting his magic against the witch’s. In the meantime, the foliage along the border of the forest moves and an enormous tiger jumps out into the clearing!*

*“The god! The god!” whisper the villagers behind you.*

*The beast approaches, warily at first and then more boldly. Its golden eyes ignore everyone, except you.*

*With sinuous steps, the mighty animal comes closer.*

The heroes have no choice but to fight the big cat. The battle area is a rectangle, 12” by 12”, bordered by the jungle from the north and by the spears. The villagers, warriors, and Fatbelly are gathered behind the spears and, unless directly threatened, they will simply be spectators of this fight.

The heroes start 2” from the spears, while Shagga is 6” away from the northern border. The tiger is placed 3” from the northern border.

Like all felines, the tiger likes playing with its food, so it only advances 3" and then roars (an Intimidation attempt toward a character) each round. It attacks when it is within 3" of a hero or when at least one character is unbound.

Shagga's tactic is simple. She continues to dance and chant, letting the tiger do the dirty work. She casts *deflection* on herself and then attacks the heroes with *lower trait* and *stun*. In the rounds in which she can't use her magic (see Kiran's Countersong below), she uses Tests of Will against the nearest heroes.

The key to winning this fight is killing the witch before dealing with the tiger, otherwise the party has a very slim chance of being victorious. After discovering that the tiger is immune to weapons, a hero can understand, with a Knowledge (Arcana) (-2) roll, that it is the witch who is making the tiger invulnerable. The same information can be obtained with the *detect arcane* Power, which shows a clear link between the witch and the beast.

The battle ends when the witch is dead and the tiger is killed or flees.

**(M) Shagga the Witch (WC):** See page 53.

**(M) Great Tiger (WC):** See page 49.

## TERRAIN AND PROPS

• **Getting Free:** The heroes are still bound and must get free as quickly as they can. With an Agility roll, a hero can use the spears to cut his bonds. For each success and raise, he receives a token. When he has two tokens, he is free. An unbound character can free a friend with a simple Agility roll (two friends with a raise). Alternatively, a hero can try to break his bonds with a Strength (-4) roll. If successful, he gets free in a single round.

• **Shagga's Dark Pact:** The witch has performed an evil ritual so that, as long as she is alive, the tiger has the Invulnerability Special Ability. The beast can be Shaken but cannot be killed. Yet, dark magic always comes at a price: the witch herself isn't immune at all. If the heroes manage to kill her, the tiger runs off into the jungle and loses its Invulnerability.

• **Kiran's Countersong:** We want to keep our focus on the heroes so, during the fight, Kiran takes something of a back-seat. He doesn't fight, but chants ancient rituals trying to disrupt Shagga's magic. At the start of each round, before Action Cards are dealt, make an opposite Sorcery roll between Kiran and Shagga. If Kiran wins, the evil witch cannot cast any spell during her turn. If he wins with a raise, the tiger also loses its Invulnerability for the remainder of the round. If Shagga wins, she can work her magic; if she wins with a raise, Kiran also suffers a level of Fatigue.

## ORDER IS RESTORED

The whole tribe watches you in astonishment. You fought their god – and you won.

*Then, Fatbelly bows to you and the rest of the villagers follow suit.*

*"We ask for your pardon, Winged Lord. Forgive us!"*

*Kiran stares intensely at them and, for a moment, you glimpse in him the pride of the king he once was.*

After Shagga's death, the tribe has become very tame and respectful of the heroes. They give them back their weapons and offer them food, jungle wine, and women.



They explain that the Claw's Clan hasn't seen a Haakora, for many long years. The existence of the flying lords survives only in ancient myths and songs.

Kiran accepts to stay in the village for a while, but only to recover his strength. After a couple of days, he becomes anxious to be on the road again, for the last stage of the journey – the trek to the mountains.

The tribesmen know that there is a road to the mountains. They call it the Path of Burden, but this is only a different name for the Path of Light the heroes have been following so far. The alternative name is due to the fact that it was once used to take tributes to Haak, a harsh and dangerous task.

However, nobody has ventured to the mountains in generations, because they are believed to be haunted, and the tribesmen don't know if the path is still clear.

The tribe gives the party plenty of provisions, but no warrior accepts to escort the group. They still fear them and are even more afraid of what they can find among the peaks.

**Getting Ready.** While the heroes are at the village, they recover all their Fatigue and can also ask for the help of a skilled local healer (Healing d8). The presence of the healer and the food and rest are enough to allow them a free Natural Healing roll.

## PART 4: THE CITADEL OF THE GODS

### IN THE MOUNTAINS

*You are finally ready to leave the Claw's Clan. They have given you generous provisions: dried meat, pies made of fruit and a couple of cassava, carved pumpkins full of strong banana liquor, plus several mantles made of thick pelts.*

*"You'll need them. It is very cold in the mountains." Fatbelly says, scratching his massive stomach.*

*Then everybody gathers to see you off and you are soon in the thick of the jungle again. The path ascends quickly and you can finally breathe fresh, clear air. Yet, your relief is short. The mountain trek is hard and the small trail, only two feet wide, meanders along the edge of a ravine. A careless step might have terrible consequences.*

### THE WINGED GUARDIANS

The journey proceeds smoothly until midday, when the heroes encounter their first trouble.

*While you are walking on a very narrow path on the edge of a crevasse, you see hawks lazily circling in the sky.*

*"They are Ka Nam." Kiran says "My people train them for hunting and war. They are excellent scouts and guardians too. In the past they were our closest friends, but today, well, we shall see." As if in response to these words, the hawks start shriek-*

*ing loudly. They definitely don't sound friendly. Then, as a single creature, they suddenly swoop down on you!*

*"I'll try to calm them down! But be ready!" Kiran shouts, his voice almost lost amidst the birds' cries.*

A dangerous fight is about to break out. The battlefield is a portion of the narrow path, 2" wide and 18" long, going from south to north. The steep mountainside is to the east, whereas the crevasse lies to the west.

The characters are on the path, in single file, 1" apart from each other. They can choose their marching order.

The birds start above the crevasse, 12" away from the heroes, and target them.

The fight ends when all the birds are dead or pacified (see below).

**(M) Ka Nam Swarm (1 per 2 heroes):** See page 50.

## TERRAIN AND PROPS

- **Watch your step!** The Ka Nam's tactic consists in attacking the heroes in a swirling whirlwind of talons and beaks, so it is quite normal to try and shake off the wild assault. Any hero Shaken or Wounded by the Hawks must make an immediate Agility roll or move 1" in a random direction (roll a d12 and read it clockwise). If the movement forces the hero against the mountainside, he is automatically Shaken (counts as damaging effect). If the character is driven off the path, he starts Falling (see below)!

- **Falling!** When a hero moves toward the crevasse, he is likely to fall. First, he must make an Agility (-2) roll. If he is successful, he manages to grab onto the edge of the path. A Strength (-4) roll is required

to regain solid ground. If he failed the first Agility roll, he is allowed a second Agility roll, to cling to a bush several yards below. If he manages this roll, he is safe, but suffers Bumps and Bruises and needs a Climbing roll to return to the path. If he fails the second Agility roll too, he falls for 20" and suffers 4d6 damage.

- **Soothing the Birds.** Kiran or any spellcaster with the *beast friend* Power can try to soothe the beasts. It is an opposed roll between the Hawks' Spirit and the spellcaster's arcane ability. For each success and raise, the group of Hawks suffers a "wound", and some individual birds, pacified, fly away. Kiran has +2 to the *beast friend* roll. The cost of the Power is 5 (Medium Swarm) and it must be paid only once during the fight, but the caster can make a soothing attempt each round.

## FLEEING FROM THE KA NAM

*The heroes might decide to try and run away from the fury of the Ka Nam. In this case, the situation is dealt as a normal Chase sequence. If a diamond card is dealt, it means there is a small square area, 5" by 5", where the heroes can fight more easily. If a Joker is dealt, the party finds a small cavern, with a 1" opening, where the birds won't follow. In this case, after a while they go away.*

## AN UNFORGIVING PLACE

*After the battle, Kiran checks the bodies of the fallen birds.*

*"These are wild specimens, not trained ones." He says. "In my time, these beasts were very rare and precious."*

*Then he sighs. "If my people let the Ka Nam go wild, it means they are in deep trouble."*

The heroes march on for the remainder of the day, but at dusk they must find shelter



because the temperature is quickly dropping.

Shelter can be found with a group Survival roll. Only one attempt is possible during the night.

**Failure.** The heroes can't find any shelter, so they spend an uncomfortable night on the path. A Vigor roll is required to avoid getting a level of Fatigue. This roll implies they have food, pelts, and so on. Otherwise, they suffer -2 to the roll.

**Success.** The party finds a narrow ditch. It isn't the best place in the world, but it is protected from the wind and, by staying very close, the characters can make each other warm. They are required a Vigor roll to avoid Fatigue, but they roll with +2 (no modifiers if without food and warm clothes).

**Raise.** The characters locate a small cavern, which is a perfect place to rest. There is a spring in it and large bushes protect its entrance from the wind. Some of them can be cut to light a fire for extra warmth and comfort. If the heroes have food and pelts, they are entitled a Vigor (+2) roll after resting. With a success, they recover a level of Fatigue.

## THE VALLEY OF SILENCE

*The next day, you wake up at the break of dawn.*

*"Today, if the gods favor us, we'll reach Haak." Kiran says.*

*You pickup your packs and start marching again. Every step takes you higher and it almost feels as if you can touch the sky with your finger.*

*Then you have a bad surprise: the path is blocked by rocks. Kiran curses and mutters in his language.*

*A landslide caused the rocks to fall onto the path but, to keep the party a little on edge, ask them to make a Smarts roll to retrieve this information, if they fail, stay mysterious.*

*"There is another way to Haak." Kiran says, grimacing. "But it is very dangerous, and I hoped to avoid it. Well, it is now clear that we can't."*

*The King of Haak leads you back along the trail for a couple of hours and then takes a secondary path, a narrow passage between rock walls.*

*The fissure gradually becomes wider and it soon turns into a rocky valley.*

*"We call it the Valley of Silence" Kiran whispers. "Because being quiet is an absolute necessity here. Do you see those rocks?" He points at some large boulders high on the edge of the valley, which surround it like a crown.*

*"They are very unstable and the mere sound of a human voice is enough to cause a landslide. So, we must keep quiet. Very quiet."*

This situation is handled in an abstract way, as a slightly modified Dramatic Task. The Task lasts 5 rounds, this representing the necessary time to reach the middle of valley. The heroes must do a Stealth roll every round (there must be a group roll if they want to stay together) and with a success they receive an Advancement Token. With a failure, they concentrate so much on being quiet that they do not make any progress during the round. If

someone scores a critical failure, he immediately causes the landslide (see below).

In a situation like this, forward thinking is crucial. Stratagems to reduce noise, such as wrapping rags around one's feet grant +2 to the Stealth rolls.

**The Guarding Trumpets.** Despite their efforts to be silent, the heroes aren't destined to reach the end of the valley without problems. At the end of the fifth round, something happens.

*A deep, hollow sound rips the silence. You are rooted on the spot for a moment, and then the sound of the first pebble shakes you, as rocks start falling all around!*

*"Run!" Kiran shouts. "Run!"*

**Run from the Landslide.** From now on, the attempt at being quiet turns into a breakneck run to reach safety. It is Chase, based on Agility. The Chase's length depends on what portion of the valley they crossed before. So, for each player, it lasts 10 rounds minus the number of Advance-Tokens he has.

For example, if a hero received two Tokens, his Chase lasts  $10 - 2 = 8$  rounds.

For this chase ignore the standard Complication rules, instead the Action Card dealt tells the Game Master what type of danger the heroine must face during the round, as per the Falling Rocks Table.

The card value indicates the type of danger. All dangers are avoidable with an Agility roll if there is no other indication, and the suit of the card influences the penalty of the roll. So, if a hero draws the 8 of Spades, she is hit by falling rocks and suffers 2d6 damage, unless she succeeds in an Agility (-2) roll.

## Falling Rocks Table

Card Value	Effect
2-4	<b>Nothing happens.</b>
5-8	<b>Falling Rocks.</b> 2d6 damage
9-10	<b>Falling Rocks.</b> 3d6 damage
J	<b>Rain of Debris.</b> 2d4 damage.
K	<b>Dust.</b> The air is full of dust. The character must do a Vigor roll or be Shaken by violent cough, sore eyes, and so on.
Q	<b>Blocked Passage.</b> Some stones block this section of valley, making the crossing more difficult. The hero and his entire companion after him (i.e. with a lower card) suffer -2 to their next chase roll.
A	<b>Rolling Boulder.</b> A massive boulder is about to hit the character(s) acting on this card number. She must avoid it with an Agility roll. In case of failure, she suffers 2d6 damage. For the next three rounds, the boulder joins the chase, trampling unlucky heroes (i.e. dealing close combat attacks if possible). It has Agility and Fighting d8.
Joker	<b>Safe Haven.</b> Luckily, this area is quiet. The hero gain +2 to Trait rolls for this and the next round.

Card Suit	Roll Modifier
Hearts	+1
Diamonds	0
Spades	-1
Clubs	-2

*When you are finally safe, though still coughing, bruised and shaken, Kiran says: "I would recognize that sound anywhere. It's the Guarding Trumpets of Haak, sounded to trigger this deadly trap to deal with approaching enemies. Someone in the city must have noticed us, and they aren't happy we're coming. We must proceed with caution."*

## THE CLOUD BRIDGE

*After your terrible experience in the Valley of Silence, you start marching again, wondering what other dangers might lie ahead.*

*Luckily, your trek is almost over and no other peril threatens you for the next few hours.*

*And then you finally see it: a fantastic city made of polished stone perched on a peak!*

*"Haak... I am home." Kiran sighs, his voice full of emotion and reverence.*

But the city is on a nearby mountain and apparently there is no way to reach it.

*"Fear not." Kiran assures you with a smile. "We are a flying race and we built our city so that no walking enemy could access it. But we have ways to let visitors in."*

*Kiran walks to the end of the path, just in front of the city gates. Two hundred yards of void separate you from them.*

*Then the King of Haak turns to you as if in doubt.*

Kiran is not sure what to do. He would normally call out for the city sentinels but

he can't see any. In addition, what happened in the Valley of Silence isn't very encouraging. He asks the heroes for advice. In truth, their decision has no real impact. If they shout and call, nobody answers. If they don't call, the guardian of the city is alerted anyway, since he saw the party in the Valley of Silence and sounded the Guarding Trumpets.

In the end, the heroes must find a way to reach the city.

*"I know how to access the city on foot, but it will drain most of my energy. I need your help." Kiran says.*

If the heroes accept to help the King of Haak, he asks them to make a circle holding hands, and then he starts uttering an incantation in his ancient language.

Kiran is going to perform a very complex magic ritual, costing him 15 Power Points. Every hero is allowed a Spirit roll. For each success and raise, they reduce Kiran's magic cost by one. Heroes with an Arcane Background of any type add +2 to the roll. In addition, Sorcerers and Enlightened Ones can choose to "lend" Kiran their Power Points. For every Power Point they lent him, Kiran's magic cost is reduced by one.

If, at the end of the ritual, Kiran's magic has cost him 7 Power Points or less, all the heroes involved in the ritual feel a strange sense of bonding. They receive a Bennie and, for the rest of the scenario, they have the Common Bond Edge.

*Then, the wind starts blowing, shifting the clouds around the city, but not in a casual way. Their gossamer threads look like they are being woven by a skilled weaver. In front of your astonished eyes,*



*a bridge made of clouds appears between you and the city gates.*

*Kiran smiles at you and says: "Fear not. You can walk on it safely. It will last till dusk."*

It is mid afternoon now, so the heroes have plenty of time.

*Walking on the bridge feels like being in deep sand; you sink a little but the surface is solid. While you are halfway across, you hear strange shrieks, similar to the Ka Nam's, coming from the city.*

*"The Aviary." Kiran says. "These calls come from the Aviary, where my people*

*breed Ka Nam and Ka Ram. So someone is still alive in the city."*

*You aren't sure if this is good or bad news, so you draw your weapons and advance cautiously, but luckily nothing happens.*

*In a few minutes, you are on the other side, finally in the Citadel of the Winged Gods.*

## THE SURVIVOR

*The bridge takes you to the area just outside the gates, where you see two huge bronze trumpets, seven yards long.*

*"They are the Guarding Trumpets that were sounded before." Kiran says.*

The whole city is paved with stones, though many of them are cracked, so finding footprints is very difficult. With a Tracking (-4) roll, a set of human footprints can be detected around the trumpets, but there no clear path to follow. The tracks belong to the Survivor (see below), who moves mainly by flying.

*Haak is a spiral-shaped city, built around the mountain peak, with the king's palace at the very top. Its architecture is exquisite: the buildings are made of polished stone and look so light and slender you think they might soon fly away.*

*But all around there is an atmosphere of desolation. The paving stones are cracked and weeds grow in their fissures, the doors and the windows of the houses are broken and, above all, there is no sign of life.*

Mapping the whole city of Haak is outside the scopes of this adventure. So, if the

players want to have a look around, use the information in the Exploring Haak sidebar. Give each member of the group who wishes to explore the city the chance to make a Notice roll (see below) before going on with the following part.

As Kiran looks around, you can see that his eyes full of sorrow and disbelief.

*"Where are all my people? What happened here?" It is a good question. The streets and houses are all empty but there is no sign of violence. It is as if the whole population had simply moved away.*

With a Smarts roll, the heroes understand that, despite the many warnings they had during their trek, Kiran is reacting very badly to the desolation in Haak. Yet, there must be survivors, because someone answered Kiran's Beacon signal and sounded the Guarding Trumpets.

## DEATH COMES UNNOTICED

*"We must go to the royal palace," says the King of Haak. "If any member of my family still lives in the city, they will be there."*

The party will never reach the palace because, as they are crossing the city, something unexpected happens.

Randomly select a hero. He will be the unlucky victim of the incoming attack.

*While you are walking down a magnificent street, you hear a whistling sound. An arrow has been shot at you!*

*The arrow targeting the victim is fired at Medium Range, but the archer has had a full round to aim and gets the Drop.*



The shooter is Kodor the Survivor (Shooting d8, see page 51).

If a heroine has the Danger Sense Edge, she can use it. In case of success, she senses the danger just a second before the attack and warns the victim just in time, so the Drop is negated.

Everyone instinctively ducks for cover and you don't have the chance to understand where the arrow was fired from. You look around frantically. The city seems as empty and lifeless as before, but you know it isn't.

From now on, the party must deal with a hidden assassin who knows his way around the city perfectly well. What's more, although the heroes don't know it yet, he can fly.

The hardest task in this encounter is to locate the mysterious killer.

This can be achieved using an abstract method, as described below.

Deal action cards to the heroes and to Kodor. Kodor starts with six Concealment Tokens.

He makes a Stealth roll each round he uses to conceal himself (which includes swiftly flying away, taking shortcuts and similar things). With a success, he gains an additional Concealment Token, two with a raise. If he conceals himself, he cannot aim or shoot in that round.

Meanwhile, the heroes can try to locate him with Notice rolls. For every success and raise, Kodor loses a Concealment Token.

How well Kodor is concealed depends on how many tokens he has any given moment, as described below.

### Kodor Concealment Table

Tokens	Effect
8+	<b>Kodor is at Long Range.</b> He cannot be seen or attacked in any way.
6-7	<b>Kodor is at Medium Range, he can shoot normally.</b> He cannot be seen or attacked in any way.
4-5	<b>Kodor is at Medium Range.</b> He can shoot normally but, when he does, Notice rolls to locate him receive +2. He cannot be attacked.
2-3	<b>Kodor is at Short Range.</b> He can shoot normally but, when he does, Notice rolls to locate him receive +2. If a hero scores a raise on the Notice roll, he briefly sees Kodor. In the current round, the survivor can be attacked with ranged attacks (he is 12" away from the party).
1	<b>Kodor is at Short Range.</b> He can shoot but, when he does, he is automatically detected and automatically loses the last Token at the end of the round. He is 6+1d6" away from the party.
0	<b>Kodor is located.</b> He is 6" away from the party. He can try to disappear again but all his Stealth rolls receive -4 for the remainder of the turn.

Kodor's tactic is as follows. While he has at least five Tokens, he only aims and shoots (so, he attacks once every two rounds). He picks his targets at random, to make his position less obvious. He doesn't target Jura – he is a warrior, not a killer.

When he has less than five Tokens, one round he conceals himself and the next he shoots without aiming.

If he drops to one Token, he tries to use Stealth until he regains at least three tokens.

The scene ends when Kodor suffers at least two wounds or is reduced to zero Tokens. In the first case, the wounds make him stop to catch his breath; in the second case, he is clearly spotted.

*Now you can see your mysterious enemy – a Haakora, probably a warrior. He is physically strong though very old. He has long, white but very dirty hair, a full beard and, amazingly, a mighty pair of birdlike wings! When spotted, he curses with eyes full of rage and madness: “You won’t pillage our city! We’ll fight to the very last man! Soldiers, shoot them!”*

## THE REVELATION

At this point, Kiran recognizes Kodor, the commander of the city’s army during his reign.

*When the winged man hears Kiran’s voice saying his name, he suddenly stops, with recognition in his stare: “Majesty?” He says. “Are you really here? Or is my mind raving again? I saw the Beacon a few days ago, but I wasn’t sure if it was real or a dream.”*

Kodor also reveals that he saw the party in the Valley of Silence and, mistaking them for invaders, sounded the Guarding Trumpets.

As the two Haakora come closer to each other, you can see they are both trembling with emotion. At that point Kodor falls to his knees in front of the king, weeping with joy.

The King of Haak, visibly moved, asks him what happened. Kodor begins:

*“No sword or spear defeated us, majesty, but a pestilence.” The old soldier says.*

*He looks up, showing the old scars on his face. “A few months after your capture, the people started falling ill. The cause, we discovered later, was a herd of infected goats, brought here as tribute by the jungle tribes. Men, women and children developed blisters all over their bodies and then simply died. Very few survived and – it grieves me to tell you – no member of the royal family made it. In the end I was alone, but I have kept watch, awaiting your return. And now you have come!”*

*As the two Haakora are looking at each other in silence, their eyes filled with tears, a voice is heard.*

**(M) Kodor the Survivor (WC):** See page 51.

## EXPLORING HAAK

*The Citadel of the Winged Gods is full of interesting buildings to explore. As we have no space for a detailed description of the city, an alternative method has been devised to determine what the heroes will find. For each half hour of exploration, they are allowed a Notice roll. If they score a success, they roll three dice in sequence on the table below, to form a statement regarding a particular object or location. Naturally, the statements are very generic but, using a little imagination, the Game Master should be able to invent a small scene from it.*

*Example: “An obelisk emanating a strange light is placed in a dangerous location”. The Game Master decides that the heroes find an obelisk that produces a flickering light, but the monument is crumbling and a light push is enough to make it collapse...*



## Haak Statements Generation Table

First Die (d10)	Second Die (d10)	Third Die (d10)
1 A statue...	...made of crystal... (x4)	... crumbles to dust (x0).
2 A dress...*	... aged and dusty... (x1)	... makes the heroes shivers
3 An obelisk...	...with painting of birds...	... is accurately hidden.
4 A vase...*	...emanating a strange light...	... shows signs of recent use
5 A room...	...covered in tiny glyphs...	... isn't what it seems.
6 A book...*	...of alien appearance...	... is the nest of a small critter
7 An engraving...	... stained by bird droppings...	... is placed in a dangerous location
8 A tool...*	...of unknown purpose...	... seems very precious (x10)
9 A passageway...	...engulfed in vines...	... looks familiar.
0 A jewel...*	... clearly out of place...	... makes Kiran remember something.

\* It is an item, and can be picked up. Its market value is equal to the multiplication of the various die results. So, a dress (2) emanating a strange light (4) that is the nest of a small critter (6) is worth  $2 \times 4 \times 6 = 48$  Moons.

xX When an item is marked with xX, use this multiplier instead of the die number. So, a vase (4), of unknown purpose (8), that

crumbles to dust (x0) is worth  $4 \times 8 \times 0 = 0$  Moons (in fact, it falls apart).

## THE GORGON

"In the end, we meet again." A well-known voice says.

You quickly turn and see Druun the Gorgon with Kumal and what is left of the Valk warriors.

The Valk are wild-eyed, beaten and dirty, but their bows are ready to strike. You understand they have seen horrifying things in the jungle and mountains. Nonetheless, they are ready to kill and plunder as usual.

"I have been chasing you throughout the jungle, avoiding quicksand, wild tribes, and many other dangers. But I am finally here! We have found a lost city!" Druun exclaims. Then, he turns to Kiran and threatens him: "Now, tattooed man, you'll tell me where all the gold is hidden, or, for Kumra's horseshoes, I'll pull your entrails out of your belly!"

"Nobody speaks like that to the king!" Kodor shouts enraged, as he draws his sword.

It is a very unwise move. Before the blade is fully out of its scabbard, three Valk arrows have pierced his chest.

"Kodor!" Kiran cries out and runs to support him. "My friend, you cannot die! Not now!"

But the old soldier dies right in the arms of his king.

"So, you see I am not kidding!" Druun grins. "Stand up and take us to the trea-

*sure, or you and your friends will die just like him."*

*"You demand treasure?" Kiran snarls. "You demand treasure in my city? YOU'LL HAVE ONLY DEATH!"*

*Kiran's face transfigures. The King of Haak lifts his head and lets out a terrible shriek, so strong and alien that you can't believe it comes from a human throat. Somewhere in the city, something answers his call.*

*You recognize the sound – it is the same you heard while you were crossing the cloud bridge. You hear the flapping of wings and a shadow covers the sun for a moment. You look up and see the Ka Ram for the first time. They are mighty fighting birds, as big as horses and with razor-sharp talons and beaks.*

*They swoop down on the Valk, who start screaming.*

This is the final battle of the adventure: the heroes, Kiran, and the Ka Ram are pitted against Druun and his band of cutthroats.

The battleground is a large area full of ruins. The fight takes place in a rectangle, 18" by 24", with the short sides along the north-south axis. The eastern border of the battleground is the chasm on the edge of the cliff, while several ruined buildings stand to the west.

Place the heroes and Kiran within 10" of the northern border, and the Valk within 12" of the southern one.

The Ka Ram start the battle flying high (they are 12" from the ground for the purpose of ranged attacks). They act on Kiran's card and, in the first round, they

attack a Valk warrior of their choice (he cannot be a Wild Card). From then on, they move normally.

Kiran is controlling the beasts, and is considered to have cast the *beast friend* Power. You need to keep track of how many Power Points Kiran still has (depending on the result of the Cloud Bridge scene). If he is Incapacitated, the Ka Nam will go wild and pick targets at random. If they are dealt a red card, they attack the closest Valk; if they are dealt a black card, they attack the closest hero.

Druun the Gorgon isn't a fool. He soon understands that Kiran is controlling the beasts and orders his men to dispatch him.

The battle ends when all the Valk are finally dead or have fled.

**(M) Druun the Gorgon (WC):** See page 47.

**(M) Kumal the Smiling (WC):** See page 51.

**(M) Valk Riders (3 per hero + 2):** See page 54.

**(M) Ka Ram (2):** See page 50.

## TERRAIN AND PROPS

- **Statues.** Various statues, representing kings and gods of the Haakora, are placed in the battle area. They are 1" by 1", offer Medium Cover, have Toughness 8, and grant +4 Armor. A statue can also be pushed over with a Strength (-2) roll. Nearby targets (in a 1" by 4" rectangular area around the statue) must make an Agility roll or suffer 2d8 damage. Place up to eight statue on the battlefield, arranged in a geometrical figure of your choice. They must be at least 4" away from each other.

- **The Chasm.** To the east the area is bordered by a chasm, seven hundred yards

deep. Any extra falling into the abyss automatically dies. Wild Cards, instead, are allowed an Agility roll. In case of success, they manage to avoid falling. In case of failure, they grab onto the edge and need a Strength (-4) roll to regain solid ground.

• **Ruined Buildings.** The ruined buildings are roofless structures, each with a door (2" wide) and two windows (1" wide). The walls are quite strong (Toughness 12, +6 Armor) but can be climbed with a Climbing roll. The buildings can be small (4" by 4") or big (6" by 4"). Place up to two small and two big buildings within 6" of the west border of the battlefield.

• **The Broken Gong.** In the area there is also a big bronze gong. It was once supported by two columns that are now collapsed, but a sturdy chain attached to a rock still holds it in place. The chain is an Improvised Weapon and requires Strength d8 to be used. It can be swung with devastating effects. Place a Medium Burst Template on the character using it. All the targets within the template are hit by the attack (the attacker rolls a single Fighting roll) and suffer Str+d8 damage. Shield parry bonuses are ignored by this attack. The chain cannot be moved farther than 6" from where it is attached to the rock. Use a gaming stone to mark this point.

## THE END

The end scene is written assuming Kiran has survived the battle (otherwise it must be changed slightly).

*The King of Haak stands amid the bodies. He closes his eyes and strokes the wings of his old friend and faithful servant, Kodor.*

*"I have found the last of my kin only to see him killed. I am now alone, my very existence is meaningless. You were true friends to me, and I shall leave the entire city to you. Do what you will with it." Then, pointing his finger upward, he says: "Can you see the birds?"*

*A few Ka Nam are flying in circle, as if waiting for something.*

*"They are the spirits of my wife, my brothers, and my friends. They have been waiting for me for too long. I shall join them now. May the winds carry you far."*

*Then, stretching out his arms as if they were the wings he lost centuries ago, he jumps into the chasm. For a single moment Kiran seems to be flying again, but then he plummets downward without a sound.*

*This is the end of Kiran, last king of Haak. Now, the Haakora are no more.*

The heroes have time to explore the city and take any precious item they like. The cloud bridge will, however, only last till dusk, so their time is limited (two hours is appropriate). Each hero is allowed a roll per hour on the Haak Loot table below. Characters with the Treasure Hunter Edge have +2 to the roll; characters with the Thief or Low-life Edge have +1. The bonuses are cumulative. If a single item (results from 16 to 20) is found more than once, the second time it is replaced by the item in the non-single entry directly below.

## Looting Haak Table

Die (d20)	Loot
1-3	<b>Semi-Precious Pottery.</b> Value: die roll x10 Moons.
4-6	<b>Tapestries.</b> Value: die roll x15 Moons.
7-9	<b>Silverware.</b> Value: die roll x20 Moons.
10-12	<b>Books.</b> Value: die roll x25 Moons.
13-15	<b>Jewels.</b> Value: die roll x30 Moons.
16-17	<b>Quiver.</b> With 1d4 rune-engraved arrows. Range increased by 50%. Breaks as normal. Value: 50 Moons/arrow.
18	<b>Fighting Bird Barding.</b> Of excellent making, grants Armor (+2) to any fighting bird. Value: 300 Moons.
19	<b>Bird-shaped Helm.</b> Armor (+3), protects from head attacks, weight: 1 lb. Value: 500 Moons.
20	<b>Royal Ka Nam Egg.</b> If the egg is properly tended (Smarts roll, Woodsman and Beast Friend Edge grant +2 to the roll), a Royal Ka Nam hatches from it after 1d4 weeks. It is a Fighting Bird (see the Beasts and Barbarians Golden Edition) with Smarts and Strength one die step higher than usual. Value: 500 Moons for the egg/1,000 Moons for the bird.

# CREATURES AND NPCs

## CANNIBAL APE

These apes have grayish fur, bulging eyes, sharp teeth, and a very bad temper. They live in large clans in the thick of the jungle and are very good at moving through the treetops. They are quite intelligent as well as dangerous, because many of them have developed a strong appetite for human flesh. Sometimes, they are known to kidnap women to mate with them. However, after a while they get bored and eat them.

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

**Skills:** Climbing d10, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Throwing d8.

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

**Special abilities:**

- **Claws and teeth:** Str+d4
- **Size +1:** They are slightly bigger than humans.
- **Tree Dwellers:** Cannibal Apes are extremely at ease among the trees. When on branches and vines, they can move as on Difficult Ground with no need to make Climbing rolls. In addition, during chases in the trees, they ignore all obstacles.

## COMMONER

A common man or woman; you can tweak the following stats a little to represent specific individuals. When necessary, roll on the Allies Personality Table to add some characterization.

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

**Skills:** Fighting d4, Knowledge (one craft) d6, Notice d4.

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

**Gear:** Bronze Knife (Str+d4) or farming tool (Str+d6, -1 to Fighting rolls).



## DRUIN THE GORGON

Druin is a weird looking Valk warrior in his mid thirties, born in Zandor. He left the troubled East a long time ago and served as a mercenary in many of the wars ravaging the western kingdoms. He is totally ruthless and will gladly kill his brother for some extra money (he actually did, once). During one of his many plunders, he acquired an ancient sword from an Ekulian noble and, impressed by its Gorgon-shaped head, started using a similar hairstyle, believing that the blade brings him luck.

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

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Notice d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (battle) d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Riding d10.

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8(2)

**Edges:** Command, Distract, Luck, Improved First Strike, Quick.

**Hindrances:** Born in the Saddle, Greedy, Delusional (the Gorgon blade brings him luck).

**Gear:** Gorgon Blade (Str+d8, see below), medium armor (+2), dagger (Str+d4), Valk composite bow (Damage: 2d6+1, Range: 15/30/60, AP 1), steppe pony.

**Special abilities:**

- **Gorgon Blade:** A sharp bronze longsword with a hilt resembling a Gorgon's head (a woman with snakes for hair). When it hits with a raise, this vicious blade gains AP 2.

## ELEPHANT

Although only a wild specimen, somewhat smaller and less trained than the true War Elephants of Kyros, this mighty beast still looks impressive. Differently from its bigger and better trained counterparts, it has very short tusks and hasn't been taught to overcome the fear of fire.

**Mahut:** An elephant is led into combat by his Mahut (rider). If the Mahut dies, the Elephant goes wild and tries to leave the fight as soon as possible.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+4, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d6.

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 15(3)

**Special abilities:**

- **Armor +3:** This Elephant is equipped with battle barding and carries a howdah full of warriors.

- **Fearful:** Elephants are the terror of the battlefield. Every character seeing one of these beasts for the first time must make a fear check (+2).

- **Howdah:** The howdah on the Elephant's back is big enough to carry six men, usually four archers and two lancers. It has Toughness 6 and grants the men Light Cover and Armor (+2). The most vulnerable part of the howdah is the strap





securing it to the elephant. It can be targeted with a Called Shot (-2) roll and has Toughness 6. If broken, the howdah, with all of its passengers, falls off the Elephant's back. The strap can be hit only when standing directly under the elephant and these causes (-4) to Agility rolls to avoid Trampling (see below).

- **Large:** Attackers have +2 to attack rolls against these creatures due to their size.

- **Size +5:** An Elephant weighs at least 5,000 pounds.

- **Trample:** Str+9. An Elephant can trample opponents simply by moving over them. The beast must run to use this attack. Targets along the path of a running Elephant must make an Agility roll against the Elephant's Fighting roll or be trampled (Str+Size damage, d12+9).

- **Trunk:** Str+d6.

- **Weakness (Fear of Fire):**

Elephants fear fire, so any fire-based attack requires them to make a fear check and any Trick based on fire receives +4 against them. Elephants don't fear mice, it is only a legend.



## GREAT TIGER

This mighty beast is a particularly large specimen and has a special bond with Shagga the Witch. No one knows if Shagga chose it for its size or if the tiger's unnatural might is caused by the witch's powers.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Stealth d8.

**Pace:** 7; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

### Special Abilities

- **Bite or Claw:** Str+d6.

- **Improved Frenzy:** Tigers may make two Fighting attacks each action at no penalty.

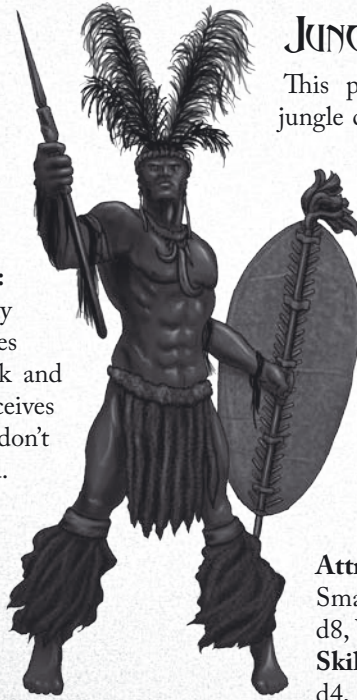
- **Low Light Vision:** Tigers ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

- **Pounce:** A Great Tiger often pounces on its prey to best bring its mass and claws to bear. It can leap 1d4" to gain a +4 to its attack and damage. However, its Parry is reduced by -2 until its next action when performing this maneuver.

- **Size +3:** This specimen weighs over 700 pounds.

## JUNGLE WARRIOR

This primitive warrior of the jungle clans is only a little more civilized than the barbaric Ivory Savannah Tribes. Painted with awe-inspiring war colors, this fierce and proud man doesn't wear any metal armor and is not skilled in the subtleties of tactics but, when in his environment, the jungle, he can be truly deadly.



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

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d4, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6.

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

**Gear:** War club (Str+d8), shield (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness vs ranged attacks), 3 javelins (Str+d4, range: 6/12/24).

### Special abilities:

- **Veteran:** One in every eight Jungle Warriors is a veteran of many battles. He has Strength d10, Vigor d10 and the Frenzy

Edge. He can also carry a Tribal Shield (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness vs. ranged attacks, +1 Intimidation, see the *Beasts and Barbarians Deluxe* for further details).

## KA NAM

The Ka Nam are a particular breed of blue-feathered fighting birds with a curious “crown” of head feathers. Indeed, in the Haakora language, their name means “crowned bird”. The Haakora used them as scouts, to deliver messages, and for war and hunting. The stats below apply to a group of Ka Nam, which is considered a swarm.

Swarms are treated just like a creature. Swarms cover an area equal to a Medium Burst Template and attack everyone within it every round. When a Swarm is wounded, its size decreases to a Small Burst Template (see the Split Special Ability for smaller Swarms). A further hit disperses it.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Notice d6.

**Pace:** 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

### Special Abilities

- **Flight:** Ka Nam swarms fly at a Pace of 10 and have Climb -1.
- **Split:** This flock is clever enough to split into two smaller flocks (Small Burst Templates) should its foes split up. The Toughness of the smaller flocks is lowered by -2 (to 5 each) and their Agility is lowered by a die step.
- **Storm of Claws:** A Ka Nam flock inflicts hundreds of tiny scratches every round, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template. Damage is applied to the least armored location (victims in completely sealed suits are immune). In addition, as these beasts are very fierce and naturally tend to

target the eyes and other vital spots, they automatically do an Agility Trick on targets caught in the template.

- **Swarm:** Parry +2; since the flock includes dozens of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons only deal half damage. Area-effect weapons work normally.



## KA RAM

The Ka Ram are giant fighting birds. The Haakora used to train them for battle, and they caused great terror among their enemies. Despite not being trained, these specimens are still very dangerous.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d10.

**Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

### Special Abilities

- **Beak or Talons:** Str+d6.
- **Fear:** Ka Ram are impressive creatures, forcing characters to make a Spirit roll the first time they see these fearsome birds.
- **Flight:** Ka Ram fly at a Pace of 12 and have Climb -1.
- **Size +1:** Ka Ram are bigger than a man, with a wingspan of over fifteen feet.
- **Swoop Down:** A Ka Ram swooping down on its enemies (from a height of at least 12”) gains +2 to attacks and damage rolls.



## KIRAN, KING OF HAAK

Kiran is the king of the Haakora, an ancient race of winged men. Since he was captured by his ancestral enemies, the Azagaran, three hundred years ago, his race has died out, although he still doesn't know it.

Kiran is bald and has deep blue eyes. His body is covered in ancient silver tattoos, which the priests of Azagara gave him to block his magical abilities. However,

with the extinction of the Azagaran royal bloodline, the power of the tattoos is fading and Kiran is slowly recovering his abilities during the adventure, as shown below.

**Part 2:** Kiran is Exhausted, and cannot use any Power.

**Part 3:** Kiran is Fatigued, he only has half his Power Points and can use only Novice Rank powers.

**Part 4:** Kiran regains his full stats.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Healing d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d10, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Sorcery d10, Stealth d6, Survival d6.

**Charisma:** +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Sorcery), Charismatic, Command, Common Bond, Power Points, Evil Eye, Impressive Aura, New Power, Noble.

**Powers [30 PP]:** *Barrier* (Wall of wind), *beast friend* (only birds), *boost/lower trait* (ancient blessings or curses), *deflection* (wind spirits protects the target), *fear* (ghastly voice), *stun* (high-pitched bird shriek).

**Hindrances:** Anemic (still frail after many centuries of sleep), Loyal, Vow (return to his people and restore his reign).

**Gear:** None, but he will pick up a weapon as soon as possible.



## KODOR THE SURVIVOR

This old Haakora warrior used to be the general of Haak's army. He has lived alone in the deserted Citadel of the Winged Gods for centuries and his mind has start-

ed to fail, but he is still a dangerous enemy. Kodor is completely loyal to Kiran.

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

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d8, Intimidation d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d10.

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

**Edges:** Improved Dodge, Trained Thrower (bow).

**Hindrances:** Loyal, Vow (protect the city of Haak).

**Gear:** Bow (Damage: 2d6, Range:12/24/48), bronze short sword (Str+d6), light leather armor (+1).

### Special Abilities

- **Flight:** Kodor's wings allow him to fly at a Pace of 8 with Climb -1.

- **Haak's Knowledge:** As long as he remains in the Citadel of Haak, Kodor gains +2 to Stealth, Notice and Survival rolls, because he is very well acquainted with the environment.



## KUMAL THE SMILING

Kumal, the most trusted lieutenant of Druun the Gorgon, is an evil individual even by Valk standards. He likes torture, murder, and assorted maiming, only for the sake of inflicting pain. During a fight, an axe blow severed his upper lip, so he wears a permanent, twisted smile. But, in truth, there is nothing to laugh at in him.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d4, Intimidation d4, Shooting d8, Riding d10.

**Charisma:** -6; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8(1)

**Edges:** Ambidextrous, Born in the Saddle, Nerves of Steel Steady Hands, Two-Fisted.

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Greedy, Ugly.

**Gear:** Iron battle axe (Str+d8), bronze dagger (Str+d4), Valk composite bow (Damage: 2d6+1, Range: 15/30/60, AP 1), boiled leather armor (+1), steppe pony.

## MAHUT

The profession of the Mahut, an elephant trainer and rider, is very ancient and highly respected in Kyros. In battle, the Mahut wears heavy armor and a face mask resembling Umangyu, the Elephant God. The Mahut's place is not in the howdah (the carriage on the elephant's back); instead, he sits cross-legged directly on the elephant head, to be completely focused on controlling the beast.

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

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Riding d8, Notice d6.

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8(3)

**Edges:** Born in Saddle, Steady Hands.

**Gear:** Heavy armor (+3), Mahut stick (Str+d4, reach 1).

**Special abilities:**

- **Blessing of Umangyu:** A Mahut has a single Bennie that he can use to soak up a wound for his elephant, as per the Born in the Saddle Edge.

- **Stabilized Howdah:** As long as the Mahut isn't Shaken or wounded, the men in the howdah benefit from the Steady Hands Edge.

## STRANGLER OF THE BED HOUSE

This incredibly strong man has a sculpted body but a rather dull expression on his face, caused by the Wine of Kirem, a



powerful drug he is addicted to. Perfectly silent and inhumanly patient, he has a single task: preventing intruders from entering the House of the Red Door in Azagara. The Stranglers are chosen among the lower classes and serve for a period of twelve years. Then, they receive a generous pension and a small plot of land, and keep forever the secret of what is hidden in the Red House. Umon, Jura's grandfather, was once one of them.

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Stealth d8, Notice d6.

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7

**Edges:** Brawny, Thief.

**Gear:** Dagger (Str+d4), strangler's ligature (see Special Abilities).

**Special abilities:**

- **Hardy:** The Strangler doesn't take a wound from being Shaken twice.
- **Low Light Vision:** The Strangler spends most of his life in the dark hall of the House, so he is used to poor lighting. He sees perfectly well in all light conditions, except total darkness.
- **Strangler:** The Stranglers are particularly skilled in strangling their victims with silk ligatures. If they have the Drop, they perform a particular Grappling attack with their ligatures. A strangled target has an additional -2 penalty when rolling to get free and suffers Str+d4 damage from grappling instead of the normal Str.



## SHAGGA THE WITCH

This old, toothless crone is far more dangerous than she appears. She made a dark pact with the evil entities dwelling in the shadows of the jungle, and now she masters powers that aren't meant for humans. All the members of the Claw's Clan, Fatbelly included, fear her.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d4

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Stealth d4, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Taunt d8, Sorcery d10.

**Charisma:** -2; **Pace:** 3; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 4

**Edges:** Arcane Background (Sorcery), Extra Power Points, New Power.

**Hindrances:** Elderly, Lame, Ugly.

**Powers [20 PP]:** *boost/lower trait* (curses), *deflection* (swift motions), *stun* (hypnotic hand motions)

**Gear:** Gnarled staff (Str+d4, 2 hands, +1 Parry, it is a sorcerer's staff, as described in the *Beasts and Barbarians* Player Guide).

**Special abilities:**

- **Dark Pact:** As long as Shagga is alive, the Great Tiger has the Invulnerability Special Ability.
- **Sorcery Dance:** Shagga's dance is the manifestation of the dark entities she worships, which take control of her body, making her capable of moving with incredible agility, despite her old age and her physical affections. When dancing, Shagga has the Improved Dodge and Improved Block Edge (already accounted for in her stats). Each round, before performing any action, she *must* move at least 3" in a straight line to retain these advantages. If she stops or is prevented from moving, she loses them immediately.

## SOLDIER

Average medium infantry soldier of the Kyrosian army or other military corps of the Iron Empire.

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

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Notice d4, Intimidation d4, Shooting d6, Throwing d6.

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6 (1); **Toughness:** 7(2)

**Hindrances:** Loyal.

**Gear:** Bronze short sword (Str+d6), shield (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness vs. ranged attacks), bronze medium armor (+2).

**Special abilities:**

- **Officer:** One in every ten Soldiers is a lieutenant. He has Smarts d6, Fighting d8, and the Command Edge.

## VALK RIDER

A short, bowlegged horseman of the steppe. This individual is a ruthless mercenary who works for whoever offers him the best wage. He has no morals and is interested only in pillaging and getting rich.

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

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d4, Intimidation d4, Shooting d10, Riding d10.

**Charisma:** -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6(1)

**Edges:** Born in the Saddle, Steady Hands.

**Hindrances:** Bloodthirsty, Greedy.

**Gear:** Bronze short sword (Str+d6), bronze dagger (Str+d4), Valk composite bow (Damage: 2d6+1, Range: 15/30/60, AP 1) boiled leather armor (+1), steppe pony.



# THE BOOK OF LORE: KYROS

This section expands the background information about Kyros found in the *Beasts and Barbarians Golden Edition*. It is mostly useful to the Game Master, but he can decide to share part of it with the players, especially if one of them comes from this highly civilized but war-torn land.

## THE LAND OF KYROS

Kyros is blessed with a great array of landscapes. In the north, along the banks of the Sword River, there are fertile plains, dotted with rich towns, and the climate is pleasantly warm.

Going south, the land becomes hilly and the climate a little hotter and damper. Many of these hills are farmed by the industrious Kyrosian farmers but many are still engulfed by the jungle, especially in the savage region of Gandhar, in southwestern Kyros. Here a great jungle, stretching as far as the Brown Sea, surrounds a mountain range with lofty peaks.

Westward, the landscape is harsher. The hills turn into barren mountains and the Red Desert extends its lifeless tendrils into the verdant heart of the kingdom of the elephants.

Southern Kyros is potentially the richest part of the land. A vast plain extends almost as far as the Buffalo River to the south and the Red Desert to the west. Its

soil is as fertile as the blessed limbs of Etu, the Goddess of Fertility, and you can drop a seed anywhere and see it grow into a vigorous plant, full of fruits, in no time.

## PLANTS

Kyros boasts a large variety of plants. Besides a vast array of homegrown species, there are so many wild plants, especially in the jungle, that a Syranthian sage could spend his entire life studying them. Banana, cassava, mango and other sweet fruits of unknown names grow untended, and they are staple elements in the diet of the tribes living in the largely unexplored jungles.

But the jungle also hides several dangers. Grandmothers tell children tales of carnivorous plants and of the unholy appetite of the Girl Born from a Flower – and not all of them are just bedtime stories.

The Kyrosian jungles are a paradise for Lotusmasters too, as many types of Lotus grow on the vines of giant mangroves, and new varieties are discovered every day.

## ANIMALS

In Kyros, the vast variety of plants is matched by an equal variety of beasts: from crocodiles lazily swimming in the Sword River, to dangerous tigers in Gandhar, and countless species of monkeys and apes. But the real king of the Kyrosian lands is the elephant.

There are many species of elephants, from the wild specimens living in the southern plains, to the mighty giants of the north, and the very intelligent Sword River pachyderms, also known as Sage

Elephants. Indeed, some claim that these creatures, smaller than the other elephants, are as intelligent as humans, if not more, and virtually immortal. Regardless of the truth, the Sage Elephants are almost extinct now, as is another very important variety: the War Elephant.

The War Elephants, bred by the Autarchs, were huge, virtually fearless beasts, and they were the mightiest weapon of the Kyrosian army. After Kyros became part of the Empire, the War Elephants almost became extinct and only a dozen still survive in the Autarch's personal army. They are just a few, but they can still spread terror among the enemies.

## THE KYROSIANS

### PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The people of Kyros tend to be dark-skinned, with brown eyes and thick, black hair. They are a little paler than the Ivory Savannah Tribes and their features are usually regular and pleasant. The typical Kyrosian males wear a *tula*, a short skirt, and, due to the mild climate, they are usually bare-chested. The *tula* is white and it is a way to show social differences: the *tula* of a worker is often dirty, while that of a merchant or noble is spotless. Women wear a longer *tula*, called *telu*, which can be of many colors, and young girls wear a sort of silk corset that leaves the navel exposed, so that Mother Etu can constantly see and bless it. Older people of both sexes wear longer garments, called *tulamon*, and



widows are recognizable by the hood that always covers their hair.

Another typical item of clothing is the turban, a piece of fabric wrapped around the head and kept in place by a small jewel, used mostly by men and seldom by women.

The Kyrosians love jewelry. Both sexes wear rings, pendants, earrings, and nose rings, and young women wear bejeweled navel studs to honor Mother Etu.

### SOCIETY

Kyros has a very stratified social structure. The state is ruled by the Autarch, and below him are the nobles, owners of the land. The Kyrosian laws say that only the first-born inherits the land, so the second sons usually join the army or accept a secondary role in the family. Immediately below the nobles there are the merchants. Trade thrives especially in the north, thanks to the Gold Route (see below), so merchants are only slightly inferior to the nobles in those areas.

Then come the craftsmen, farmers and day workers, and lastly the slaves. Kyros has a large number of slaves, around twenty percent of the total population, but it is still a low percentage if compared to other ex Iron Empire countries, especially Tricarnia. This is due to the social importance of farming: being a farmer, a good one, has always been respected in Kyros (though it doesn't make a man rich), and many Kyrosians prefer to work the land themselves rather than employ slaves.



## CULTURAL OBSESSIONS: INDIVIDUALISM AND NURTURING THINGS

Kyros is a very ancient nation, older than the Empire itself, and, according to the Syranthian sages, it existed even during the Keronian rule. So, its culture is very sophisticated: literature, art and religion are greatly developed, as are architecture and medicine.

This doesn't mean that Kyros is a peaceful land.

The Kyrosians are very individualistic and personal power has a strong appeal on their souls. Even among humble farmers quarrels about who best tends his fields are common. This has caused an endless streak of inner wars, treasons and bloodshed that are still continuing today.

On the positive side, the Kyrosians have a common urge to nurture things. Every house has a garden, if the owner can afford it, and the cities are always full of well tended parks. Agriculture has a great importance in their way of life, not only for its immediate economic benefits, but for the importance that growing plants has for each Kyrosian. As said before, farmers are respected people in the Kyrosian culture.

The national animal is the elephant, which represents the Kyrosian spirit very well. This calm beast is capable of sudden bursts of violence, causing large-scale destruction, but its poise and wisdom remind the Kyrosians of a basic truth: everything grows in peace.



## ECONOMY

Kyros has two big revenues: agriculture and commerce.

Agriculture is practiced throughout the country. The Kyrosians produce a large quantity of vegetables, and taxes are usually paid in kind.

Kyros's other great source of income is commerce. Given its position, all trade from the northern kingdoms to the southern ones and Lhoban must pass through Kyros. A great trade road, the Gold Route, follows the Sword River and allows a constant flow of goods in both directions. The Sword River itself is very placid and with heavy traffic.

The Gold Route is protected by the Golden Guards, including soldiers from the cities of Kyros and Kenaton, which share the revenues in equal parts. This is the reason behind the age old alliance between the two cities.

From Kenaton, the Golden Route becomes a naval route, crossing the Brown Sea till faraway Lhoban.

Despite the many villages and towns along the Sword River and the constant watch of the Golden Guards, the Gold Route isn't as safe as one might believe. Thieves, marauders, and bandits, coming from southern Kyros and from the northern mountains of Syranthia, force the traders to be cautious and to hire personal guards if they want to reach the end of their journey with their goods as well as their lives.

## GOVERNMENT

The Autarch is the absolute ruler of Kyros. The Autarchate was abolished after Kyros became part of the Iron Empire, but it was restored after its secession (2370 AF).

The Autarch traditionally rules the whole country from the White Seat, a marvelous throne made of elephant tusks placed in the Autarch's Palace in Kyros City.

Many Autarchs were bloody tyrants, and the situation isn't any better today. The commoners have always had a sort of veneration for the Autarch, seen as a kind of demigod, but the recent deeds of Ganymedes II, the current Autarch, are quickly reducing his popularity.

Except for Kyros City, the rest of the kingdom is organized in a feudal structure. Nobles control their feuds, pay trib-

ute to the Autarch, and have the right to muster a small personal army. The amount of tribute paid to the Autarch is usually inversely proportional to the distance between a nobleman's lands and Kyros City, while the opposite is true for his personal army: the farther a nobleman is from the Autarch's throne, the bigger and better organized his army is.

This is the cause of one of Kyros's main problems: the rebellious provinces (see below).

## THE MADNESS OF GANYMEDES II

Ganymedes II became Autarch ten years ago. A shabby man in his thirties, Ganymedes is hopelessly mad. His malady probably started in the troubled period before he took power. The would-be Autarch suffered a poisoning attempt by one of the other claimants and survived by a miracle. But the poison heavily damaged his mind. Still today, Ganymedes is paranoid (someone might say this is a healthy habit for a ruler, but in this case it is pushed to the extreme) and trusts no one. On the other hand, he is also naive and childlike, and easily gulled by those around him. These two aspects of his personality usually alternate in an unpredictable and very dangerous way.

As Ganymedes is unable to govern, all the decisions are taken by a Council, whose members are the actual rules of the country. Their task is to keep the nation working and to prevent the Autarch from doing irreparable damage with his mad decisions. In truth, the Council is constantly torn by hidden struggles.

## THE AUTARCH'S COUNCIL

### TUSAL THE CALDEIAN

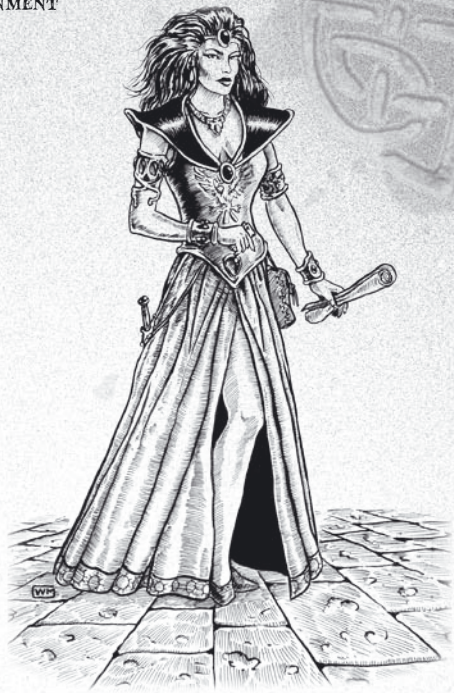
Tusal is Ganymedes's personal advisor or, as he is called when he is not present, the Sinister Hand of the Autarch. He is a tall, bald man of gaunt aspect, coming from faraway Caldeia. His age is unknown and nobody has ever questioned him on the matter. People usually feel uneasy when they look into his black, hypnotic eyes. Tusal came to Kyros City a few years ago to take the post of court astrologer, a position of scarce importance, but his whispers quickly gained the Autarch's ear. "What Tusal thinks Ganymedes says" is the common phrase murmured in the Autarch's palace these days. Tusal has a very bad influence on the ruler's weak mind: he encourages Ganymedes's obsession to gain more personal power. The Sinister Hand has also persuaded him to create a secret police, the Autarch's Hands – or simply the Hands – to deal with traitors, real or imaginary. In truth, the Hands are highly trained assassins and spies who answer directly to Tusal and are responsible for all sorts of devious acts, obviously carried out in the name of the Autarch.

Tusal deeply hates Ramatides of Keron, but hasn't found a way to get rid of him yet.

### RAMATIDES OF KERON

Ramatides, a plump, mature man, is the Prime Minister of Kyros and Treasure Keeper of the Kingdom. A faithful follower of Ganymedes as well as his uncle, he is the man who put the Autarch on the throne, a decision that he is now starting to regret.

Ramatides does his best to keep everything running, making sure that trade along the



Gold Route flows regularly, and deals with Kyros's various problems as well as with the mad projects the Autarch often proposes. Ramatides and many others see that Ganymedes's mind is quickly worsening, and much of the blame is placed on Tusal and his ill advice. Ramatides suspects Tusal of being a Caldeian agent, and he is looking for evidence in order to discredit him in the eyes of the Autarch.

### ILLYRIA OF KYROS

Illyria is the Holy Wife of the Autarch. An ancient tradition states that the Autarch must have as his only official wife the Chosen Priestess of Etu, goddess of fertility, and her sons are first in the line of succession.

However, the Autarch is also encouraged to keep a harem of concubines because, given the dangers of political life in Kyros, a great number of potential heirs ensures the stability of the kingdom. In truth,

when the Autarch dies, his various heirs fight savagely for the succession, but this is how Kyrosian politics works, and it is accepted.

Following the tradition, Illyria sits on the Autarch's Council, but she has no real power. She is a pretty woman in her twenties, but a big problem troubles her. Despite many attempts, she still hasn't sired an heir and she has started to suspect that either Ganymedes is infertile or someone is interfering with her pregnancy. She refuses to believe she might be barren since, for a priestess of Etu, this would be sacrilege, and the punishment is being trampled to death by the holy elephants in Kyros City's main square. Illyria doesn't trust Tusal but she considers Ramatides a dear and reliable friend.

## ROMANOS AND TUNAMOS

Romanos and Tunamos are brothers. Minor nobles from north Kyros, they are now respectively First and Second General of the Kyrosian armies, both with a seat on the Council.

Their family lacked the means to support them, so they joined the army, showing great tactical acumen.

During the internal war for succession, Romanos joined Ganymedes, while Tunamos sided with Afrates, Ganymedes's older brother. In the end, Ganymedes won but, thanks to Romanos's intercession, Tunamos was pardoned and sent on a dangerous assignment in the south, to protect the Etulicams from the Ivory Savannah Tribes.

In the last five years Tunamos has demonstrated his valor on the battlefield and redeemed himself, while Romanos has

remained at court, dealing mainly with politics.

The Autarch now considers Tunamos a hero. He has promoted him to Second General of Kyros and given him a seat on the Council. He has also assigned him the very important mission of crushing the rebel cities of Azagara and Sulapul (see current adventure).

Despite still being First General, Romanos isn't very happy about Tunamos's success. Many have heard him speak badly of his own brother, calling him a "turncoat" and "ready to bite the hand that feeds him", which is very strange because, despite his personal feelings, Romanos is a true politician and has never openly offended any other Council member.

Romanos used to be a close friend of Ramatides's, but something has happened between the two and now Romanos is often seen in the company of Tusal. What is really going on is a mystery to all.

## THE AUTARCH'S HANDS

*This secret group includes assassins, thieves, and, most of all, spies. Nobody, except Tusal, knows the real size of this impressive network of shady individuals, but its reach certainly extends very far. As a matter of fact, paranoia is spreading among the population of Kyros, since anyone can be a Hand and even the mildest negative comment about the Autarch can result in imprisonment and torture in the dungeons of Kyros City.*

*In addition, the Hands carry out several of Tusal's "personal projects", all of them with the goal of increasing the Sinister Hand's personal power.*

*The Game Master can fully exploit the potential of this excellent group of bad guys.*

# KYROS'S PROBLEMS

Kyros is plagued by two great problems, detailed below.

## REBELLIOUS PROVINCES

The problem of the rebellious provinces has existed since the beginning of Kyrosian history and it cyclically return. In the current age, the most problematic provinces are the following:

**Ghandar.** Ghandar, the southeastern part of Kyros, has always created problems, because its two main cities, Azagara and Sulapul, have a strong bond, similar to that between Kyros City and Kenaton. In the past, Sulapul and Azagara received no aid from the Autarch in dealing with the jungle tribes and, now that everything is settled, they deem it unfair that they should continue to pay tribute to the central government.

**Bulzama.** Bulzama is the biggest city east of the Red Desert. It is built in a grassy plain full of marshes and mosquitoes. Bulzama is ruled by the Damahut, or Fanged Prince, a priest warrior follower of Umangyu, leader of a big army of warriors and elephants. The Damahut is obsessed with justice and has publicly claimed that the Autarch must be removed, because he is unable to rule. For now he has done nothing to support his words, and the generals of the Autarch, very busy with the Ghandar rebellion, are advising the king to simply ignore him, until sufficient forces are gathered. Some say that the Damahut hasn't acted yet because he is busy making an alliance with an ancient power dwelling in the marshes.

**Ehyulam.** The province of Ehyulam stretches just south of the Gold Route. It is a hilly land full of farms, pastures, and thick jungle never touched by the plow. Ehyulam is famous for its horses, the best in all of Kyros, and the biggest horse market of the southern kingdoms was once held in Ehyalon, the capital of the province. But today Ehyulam is plagued by a serious problem – fierce bandits dwelling in hidden gullies in the thick of the jungle. Their leader is a mysterious man named Stone Face and his sheer presence makes farms, villages and roads unsafe. The Prince of Ehyulam, Tomosos, fought a fierce war against the bandits, but they aren't common outlaws and Stone Face prefers fighting to fleeing. Two months ago, Tomosos was killed in an ambush and now the province is under the formal government of Prince Koramosos, son of Tomosos, a seven-year-old boy. So, Ehyulam has asked the Autarch for help but, for now, the central government cannot send any troops, as they are all needed to suppress the Ghandar rebellion.

**Julaya.** At the height of Kyros's expansions, the Etulicams extended deep into the Ivory Savannah. Julaya was the biggest settlement ever built by the colonists and it soon became a fully Kyrosian city, surrounded by well tended farmland and protected by a strong army, capable of resisting the assaults of the mightiest Ivory Savannah Tribes. The Autarch appointed a special governor, the Watcher of Julaya, and intended to use the city as a base for expanding further south. But this never happened. Twelve years ago, a big dark cloud covered the sky over Julaya and the surrounding lands, instilling great fear in the hearts of the citizens. When the cloud dispersed after three days as dark as nights, almost all the people of Julaya were dead and the city was occupied by a strange Ivory Savannah Tribe led by a woman, called the Mistress of the Dancing Shad-

ows. The few lucky survivors who managed to escape told wild, incoherent stories of horrible creatures, the Dancing Shadows, which murdered all the Kyrosian in the city and its surroundings. The stories cannot be checked, because the troops sent to Julaya never came back. Today the Julaya province is a haunted place: the Etulicams are empty ruins, the farmland is engulfed by the savannah, and nobody lives in the area, though flickering lights can be seen coming from Julaya at night. The roads are abandoned and crossing the region isn't safe at all, since those who spend a night within its border usually don't wake up.

## THE ETULICAMS AND THE IVORY SAVANNAH TRIBES

Kyros borders on the Ivory Savannah to the south. The borders have never been stable, due to constant wars with the Ivory Savannah Tribes. This area is very fertile and the Ivory Savannah Tribes have used it for centuries as graze land for their herds. Yet, its fertile nature also drives every true Kyrosian to farm it and turn it into a wondrous garden. So, it is easy to understand why it has always been disputed.

Kyros's colonization in the south is mainly carried out by building the Etulicams. This is a Kyrosian word meaning "garden of Etu" and indicates a settlement surrounded by a large area of farmed land. The Etulicams are of variable size, from small farms to fully developed villages. Regardless of their size, they share some common features: they are heavily fortified, and usually muster a strong militia. All the people in an Etulicam, including women and the elderly, are trained to wield a weapon if the need arises. The dwellers of the Etulicams come from all over Kyros and even from farther lands. The reason is simple: the Autarch grants

the colonists property of the land, as long as they have the strength to hold it against the Ivory Savannah Tribes.

The typical Etulicam dweller is either a hardened frontier man that would do anything to hold his land against the murderous Ivory Savannah Tribes or a peaceful, but very determined follower of Etu, convinced that his life's goals is to enhance the world by extending the cultivated areas. He can be beaten and threatened but, if left alive, he'll stubbornly return to farm his land.

In truth, there is no real way out of the current situation. The Ivory Savannah Tribes are too numerous for the Etulicam militia, even with the support of the Autarch's troops. Year after year, the wild men come back, following the buffalos' migration.

On the other hand, although the larger Ivory Savannah Tribes are usually strong enough to destroy the smaller Etulicams, the bigger ones are no match for them. When trying to conquer a large Etulicam, the Tribes' tactics usually consists in ignoring the fortified village and in concentrating their attacks on the cultivations. A herd of buffaloes driven to the fields of an Etulicam is usually enough to cause severe food problems in the area.

The irony of it all, which everyone seems to ignore, is that both races fight in the name of Etu: the Kyrosians adore her as protector of agriculture, and the Ivory Savannah Tribes as mistress of life and mother of the buffaloes.

So far, the goddess has shown no special favor to either party.

# KYROSIAN RELIGION

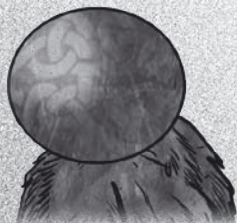
## ETU'S CULT

Etu, the Mother of Everyone, is a major goddess both in Kyros and in all the southern lands of the Dread Sea Dominions. She is represented in various ways; the most common is a pregnant woman with large hips who is sitting placidly cross-legged. The position of her legs is very important, because the living energy slowly flows into the entire world from them. Another representation of Etu is the Dancer. In this form, Etu is a young girl who dances to the sound of ancestral music. The source of the music is the green emerald in her navel, named Kavra, a word meaning Source of All. Through

Etu's dance, plants, animals and all living creatures grow, develop, and finally die when the goddess stops dancing. But death is only a temporary state. Etu dances and rests continuously, alternating life and death in the world.

## ETU'S PRIESTESSES

The cult of Etu is deeply rooted in the Kyrosian society. The priests are almost all females, and many are skilled healers and midwives. In the absence of a Fagir (see below), they have the task of supervising agriculture. Etu is also strongly connected with sex and, in some periods of the year, holy bacchanals are held. Two other traditions deserved to be mentioned: the Days of the Open Doors and the Consecration of Life.



On certain days of the year, the doors to Etu's temples are open and any man, young or old, handsome or ugly, who enters a temple is allowed to be joined with one of the priestesses.

The Consecration of Life, instead, is a tradition that the Iron Empire tried to root out when Faberterra ruled over Kyros, but it is still very common in certain regions of the country.

According to this tradition, before getting married, a virgin must spend three days in the temple of Etu as holy prostitute. The money earned through this religious service goes to Etu's priestesses. After this period, the girl is free to marry with the blessing of the goddess, and any baby conceived while she is in the goddess's service is considered a legitimate child of the girl's husband.

Etu's priestesses have a certain political power: one of them, chosen by a council of priestesses and Fagiri, is given to the Aurtarch as his only legitimate wife, a tradition that ensures everlasting fertility to Kyros.

## THE FAGIRI

Fagir means "man who eats" in the Kyrosian tongue and refers to the common tradition of feeding these religious figures when they come to a house.

A Fagir is a wandering priest of Etu with great skills in the agricultural field. He decides when it is time to plant and to harvest and knows how to cure the most common plant diseases. The Fagiri incessantly move across the land as industrious ants giving advice where needed, especially in the Etulicam region, and they are not shy of taking the hoe or sickle if a farm needs help. The Fagiri are pacifists, in the sense that they cannot kill anyone directly. Yet, they are

free to curse the Ivory Savannah Tribes and even to guide a punitive expedition against them as long as they their hands don't take anyone's life. As a political group, they have great importance and contribute to the policy of building and protecting the Etulicams.

## UMANGYU

Umangyu is the Elephant god, a very ancient deity worshipped almost exclusively in Kyros. Umangyu is portrayed as an old man with long, elephant-like tusks or as a mighty elephant, and he is the god of knowledge and justice.

Elephants live longer than men and, thanks to their very good memories, don't forget even the smallest of facts. So, Umangyu's followers are considered the historical memory of Kyros. In remote stone temples, generation after generation, old shriveled priests whisper ancient knowledge to young disciples so that it will not be lost. Nothing is written in the temples of Umangyu, but everything is handed down in oral form.

Umangyu's priests know the laws and customs, so they act as judges. Even the nobles must respect a verdict from the voice of Umangyu, because the rage of the Elephant god is slow to come but always terrible.

In many places, the profession of Mahut, the trainer and rider of elephants, is linked to the cult of Umangyu and he is often also an executioner, as death sentences in Kyros usually imply being trampled by elephants.

**The Temple of the Twelve.** There is a legend about a very old temple somewhere in the southeast of Kyros where twelve mysterious priests of Umangyu live. They are so old that they remember the age before the rise of the Keronian Empire



and, according to the legend, they know the whole history of the world and have answers to all the questions. Many have looked for them, but nobody has managed to find these mysterious priests.

## THE CULT OF THE STRANGLER

This dark cult of Lotusmasters is a well-kept secret. The temples of the Strangler are usually hidden in the jungle, or in graveyards, caverns, sewers, and similar places.

What is the Strangler?

This name can refer to two different things.

First, the Strangler is a particular poison made only by cult members. It is totally flavorless and there are many different ways of delivering it. The effects are always the same: the victim's throat swells and closes and he dies of suffocation in a few minutes, while his face turns blue. The interesting fact is that the "death" caused by the poison is not always permanent. In certain cases, from one to three days after his death, the victim awakens and says that all he can remember of his post-mortem experience is a tall man with a blue face.

This is the Strangler, the deity at the Threshold of Death.

The survivors are then contacted by other members of the cult, usually those who poisoned them, and are persuaded to join the sect, to serve the strange being they saw "on the other side". They become skilled Lotusmasters and poisoners, fanatically loyal to their dark divinity. Criminals, nobles and other shady figures often employ the Cult of the Strangler for

their goals, as the cultists are always ready to use their skills on someone, in the hope of "awakening" a new follower.

The Stranglers are, for obvious reasons, very attentive to security and they always show themselves wearing a blue mask.

### THE STRANGLER POISON

*It is a Lotus concoction imbued with the Poison Power. It is very lethal (+4 to opposed rolls). A victim killed by the poison is allowed a Spirit roll. Then he draws a card from the Action Deck, plus two for each success and raise on the Spirit roll, up to a maximum of nine total cards. If a Joker is drawn it means that he "awakes" from death, reporting a vision of the Strangler. To determine the moment of the awakening, consider that a card drawn represents 8 hours. So if a character draws four cards and receives a Joker as his fourth card, it means he will come back from the dead after 32 hours. Only cult members know the recipe of the Strangler.*

## HORSES OF KYROS

Kyros is also famous for its excellent horses, given the many influences in their blood. They have the quickness of the Red Desert stallions, the endurance of the Valk ponies, the fierce temperament of the Ivory Savannah striped horses, and the might of the working horses of Faberterra.

Horses, just like people, tend to be unique. So, when a character buys a mount, the Game Master can decide to roll twice on this reworked version of the Allies Personality Table. The same table can be used to add extra personalization to dogs, hawks, and other pets, for example those acquired with the Beastmaster Edge.

## Animal Ally Table

d20	Personality	Special Rule
1	Big	+1 Size.
2	Cruel	+1 Damage inflicted.
3	Old	Lower Vigor by one die step.
4	Happy	Raise Spirit by one die step.
5	Fast	+1 Pace.
6	Gung Ho	Raise Vigor by one die step.
7	Lazy	-1 Pace.
8	Sneaky	Stealth d6 or raise Stealth by one die step.
9	Bright	Raise Smarts by one die step.
10	Dumb	Lower Smarts by one die step (minimum d4).
11	Aggressive	Raise Intimidation by one die step.
12	Agile	Raise Agility by one die step.
13	Impressive	Grants the rider/master +1 Charisma.
14	Clueless	Lower Notice by one die step.
15	Mysterious	Grants the rider/master a Bennie, which can be used only when interacting with the animal (for example, on Riding rolls or Shooting while on horseback).
16	Wild	+2 to Spirit rolls, but unaffected by Leadership Edges.
17	Slow	-1 Pace.
18	Fearless	+2 to Fear checks.
19	Cowardly	-2 to Fear checks.
20	Combat Trained	Fighting d6 or raise Fighting by one die step.