

Shark Nibbles #4

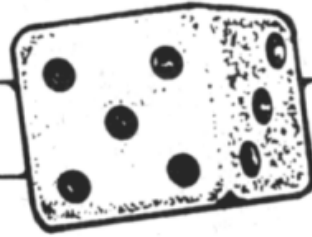
THE UNOFFICIAL MONTHLY SAVAGE WORLDS NEWSLETTER



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With the roll of a die...



In this month's installment of *With the roll of a die...* you'll find *Zatoichi*, the *Blind Masseur* from Kenneth MacArthur, some new *Edges* and *Hindrances* for *Savage Shadowrun* by Gordon Lawyer, *Sitting Duck's* needle gun, the *Unarmed Fighter Edge* from Robby, and the *Elven P.I.* from Theron Seckington. Enjoy, and until next issue—keep it *Savage!*

ZATOICHI, THE BLIND MASSEUR (WILD CARD)



A perennial wanderer, this kind, gentle and polite man often becomes embroiled in the nefarious deeds of local gang lords, corrupt government officials, greedy bounty hunters, and glory-hounding men on behalf of the downtrodden peasants and humble artisans he encounters. His handicapped appearance belies his mastery of the quick draw; and his gregarious manner can shift instantly into a focused, slashing

whirlwind, cleaving mooks and wild cards alike.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, and Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d12, Gambling d10, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Massage) d8, Notice d12, Stealth d8, Streetwise d10, Taunt d8, and Throwing d8

Pace: 6; Parry: 10; Toughness: 6

Edges: Alertness, Block, Combat Reflexes, Danger Sense, Dodge, First Strike, Improved Block, Improved First Strike, Improved Sweep, Improved Trademark Weapon (Sword-cane), Level Headed, Quick Draw, Strong Willed, Sweep, and Trademark Weapon (Sword-cane)

Hindrances: Blind, Code of Honor, Heroic, and Poverty

Gear: Clothes on his back, a little food, a purse (usually near empty, prompting a journey to the nearest gambling house), sandals, a mirror given to him by his mother, cleaning/honing kit for his sword-cane.

Weapons: Sword-cane (Str+4, Weight: 5; Has the appearance of a nondescript walking staff but conceals a masterwork blade).

Special Abilities:

Uncanny Sense: Although blind since the age of 2, the Masseur always seems to operate as if he could see. His Blindness only impedes him at -3 instead of the normal -6.

NEW EDGES FOR SAVAGE SHADOWRUN

Good Rep (Background Edge)

Requirements: Novice

Just as Bad Rep (see below) can inspire distrust in others, a Good Rep can inspire respect. As with Bad Rep, a character doesn't necessarily have to have done something to earn it and the player should hammer out the details beforehand. When dealing with someone who recognizes you and knows of your reputation, you gain a +2 Charisma bonus.

Human-Looking (Background Edge)

Requirements: Dwarf, Elf, or Ork

The character's metahuman features aren't particularly distinct and he can pass as a human. Any Charisma penalties as a result of racism are ignored unless the NPC makes a Notice roll at -2.

Non-Descript (Background Edge)

Requirements: Novice

Your character is completely lacking distinctive features of any kind and can easily go unnoticed. Whenever someone attempts to track you down, they get a -2 on Notice and Streetwise rolls related to the search effort. For obvious reasons, this may not be taken alongside the Attractive Edge or the Distinctive or Ugly Hindrances.

NEW HINDRANCES FOR SAVAGE SHADOWRUN

Bad Rep (Minor/Major)

On the streets, reputation is everything and yours has a stain on it. It doesn't matter whether or not you did something to earn it. It's what everyone thinks they know that matters. The player should hammer out the details of the nature of his reputation beforehand. In game terms, the character applies a Charisma penalty when dealing with someone who recognizes him and is aware of his reputation. It's -2 for the minor version and -4 for the major version.

Bio-Rejection (Minor/Major)

Your character's immune system is highly sensitive to any foreign material. What this boils down to is that your character may not have cyberware or bioware of any kind. If replacement limbs or organs become necessary, they must be cloned from the character's cells. This counts as minor if the character is magically active and major if a mundane. Shamans with a totem which has specific objections to cyberware may not take this Hindrance.

Distinctive (Minor)

Your character has a physical trait (either natural or artificial) which makes him stick out like a sore thumb. Whenever someone attempts to track you down, they get a +2 on Notice and Streetwise rolls related to the search effort. You cannot take this Hindrance in conjunction with the Non-Descript Edge.

Elf Poser (Minor)

Your character thinks elves are the greatest thing since sliced bread and desperately wants to be one. Such behavior can be off-putting, resulting in a -2 to Charisma when dealing with racists (who regard the character as a pervert) and elves (who regard the character as a pest). This Hindrance may only be taken by humans.

THE ELVEN P.I. (WILD CARD)

“Sure, you could go out and get yourself a gnome, with all his gadgets and whatnot, or a human—they have that damnable ‘intuition’ nonsense, or a dwarf, they know all about secrets and hiding stuff. Or you might just put those goldbacks down on this table, lady. What you got is a magical murder, I can tell that just looking at you, and those charms you have say it all. So what you need is a magical detective. I’m your elf.”

Different worlds breed different tactics. The Elven Private Investigator specializes in magical investigation, especially suited for a steampunk world (although he fits into bread-and-butter fantasy just fine). With a varied mix of psychic know-how and mundane investigative abilities, this investigator makes a fantastic ally, or a fearsome enemy in the courts.

NOTE: I used certain powers and abilities (denoted with an asterisk) from Butch Curry’s “Beyond the Veil” supplement (available at the Savage Heroes website as a free download).

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Investigation d10, Lockpicking d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Psionics d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, and Streetwise d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness** 5 (1)

Edges: Arcane Background: Psionics*, Investigator, and New Power

Hindrances: Habit (Major): alcohol and Open Channel*

Special Abilities:

All Thumbs

Low-Light Vision

Powers: *detect arcana*, *mind reading**, *object reading**, and *postcognition**

Gear: Quilted trenchcoat (+1 Armor), revolver, flintlock, or hand crossbow (setting appropriate), knife (Str+1), lockpicks, and hip flask

AN ALTERNATIVE NEEDLE GUN

Needle guns work by extracting slivers from a block of magnetic metal and propelling them magnetically towards their target. While exterior trauma consists of just a few pricks, the attack does a number on the target's innards! They provide a decent amount of punch and good range. However, they're not very effective at penetrating armor (a target's Armor is effectively doubled when attacked with a needle gun.), which is treated as double its normal value against needle gun attacks. They also require a laser battery to power them, with needle pistols taking laser pistol batteries and needle rifles taking laser rifle batteries. A fully charged battery is good for five ammo blocks (3 for shotguns).

- **Pistol** (Cost 350; Range 15/30/60; Damage 3d6; RoF 1; Weight 4; Shots 15; Ammo: Cost 10, Weight 0.5)
- **Rifle** (Cost 600; Range 30/60/120; Damage 4d6; RoF 3; Weight 8; Shots 25; Minimum Str d6; Ammo: Cost 20, Weight 1)
- **Shotgun** (Cost 450; Range 18/36/72; Damage 1-3d8; RoF 1; Weight 6; Shots 25; Minimum Str d6; Ammo: Cost 20, Weight 1)

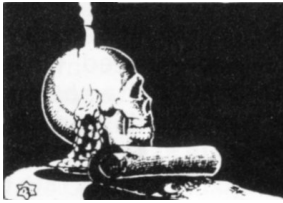
ANOTHER MARTIAL ARTS EDGE

Unarmed Fighter

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d8, Fighting d8

Your character is skilled at fighting without weapons. He is not subject to the Unarmed Defender rules and he may use his Parry against attacks even when unarmed (including Block and Improved Block bonuses). ☞





A Magickal Medley

A Dozen Magical Locks for use in any Savage Fantasy Campaign, by JBLittlefield

The following article is derived from *Magical Locks*, an Open Game Content (OGC) document authored by Ari Marmell and published by Lion's Den Press. You can check out their other offerings online at: <http://www.lionsdenpress.com/>. All text in this article, excepting the specific references to the Savage Worlds rules is designated as OGC under the terms of the Open Gaming License (OGL).

Thing is, though, except for the ubiquitous poison needle (and boy, isn't that so terribly Old School of you?), it seems like the traps are always in the door, or on the knob, or in the walls, or the floor, or the ceiling. Everyone ignores the poor lock. Perhaps there's good reason for that. It's hard to fit much in the way of nasty traps or defenses in a mechanical device that's only a few inches across. But then, this is fantasy. The locks don't have to fit devices inside them, not when it's so easy to enchant the little buggers.

Presented here, then, are a dozen magic locks, fully described and ready for immediate use in your *Savage Worlds* fantasy game. Some are dangerous, some merely difficult to bypass, and a few are just plain odd, but every one of them can serve to remind your players that sometimes bad things come in small packages.

The "Proper Key"

You'll note that most of the entries below refer to "the proper key." Any time someone creates one of these locks, he may also create a key (or keys) that bypass the magical effect, enabling its possessor to open the lock normally. Such keys radiate mild magic, if examined through *detect/conceal arcana* or similar powers.

Unless otherwise noted, assume all of the locks described hereafter have a Toughness of 6 (Blunt, Cutting) and are capable of sustaining two wounds before being broken and rendered useless. Of course, since they are magical, a devious GM is well within his rights in ruling that only magical sources of damage can harm them...

Devouring

This lock, often carved to resemble the face of a leering demon or other beast, immediately bites down and begins to chew if anything other than the proper key is inserted. This automatically deals d6 points of damage (per round), and instantly ruins anything as flimsy as a wire or lock pick. Make an opposed Strength roll (assume a Strength of d6 for the lock) to pull out whatever it was you stuck in!

Disappearance

This seemingly normal lock causes any item inserted into it, and the individual holding that item, to disappear. The target is sent to a predetermined location of the GM's choosing.

Fusing

Most fusing locks are made of abnormally heavy metals (Toughness 8); however, the tumblers and inner workings are as delicate as a normal lock. When any object but the proper key is inserted, the tumblers melt and fuse into a solid lump of metal, preventing the lock from being opened by any normal means.

Only by completely breaking the lock (or the portal to which it is attached) can it be bypassed. The outer portion of the lock remains intact, which can make it difficult for characters to determine exactly why the lock won't open.

Incorporeal

An incorporeal lock appears normal when visually examined. Any attempt to touch it or manipulate it reveals its true nature: It is completely incorporeal. The lock becomes solid only when the proper key is used. An incorporeal lock does not function as a trap, and cannot be disarmed; it can only be bypassed with the proper magics, or by destroying the portal to which it is attached.

Infinite

This appears to be a normal lock, usually crafted of a very dark metal. Its innards contain an extra-dimensional space, which is temporarily dispelled only by the insertion of the proper key. Any other object inserted into the lock, such as a lock pick, simply extends into the extra-dimensional space and never reaches the tumblers. Furthermore, the first time a character attempts to pick the lock, the lack of expected resistance forces him to make an Agility roll or fumble the pick, which is then lost in the extra-dimensional space. An infinite lock does not function as a trap, and cannot be disarmed; it can only be bypassed with the proper magics, or by destroying the portal to which it is attached.

Latching

This lock has tiny arcane runes carved on the interior of the casing, and always remains polished to a bright sheen. If the lock is picked, or in any way opened without using the proper key, all other locks, catches, buckles, and the like within 30 feet are immediately and magically locked. This, of course, includes any backpacks, cases, pouches, and even armor buckles and helms worn or carried by nearby heroes. The arcane lock can be bypassed only through brute force or powers such as *dispel*.

Marking

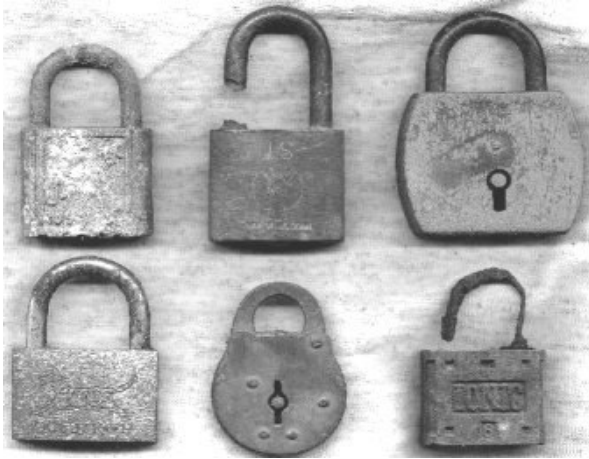
The lock of marking has an unusual symbol etched into it. The symbol varies from lock to lock, and is not magical in any way. Anyone who opens the lock without using the proper key is immediately marked with that same symbol on his forehead (or somewhere equally prominent). The symbol can be visible or detectable only through powers such as *detect arcana*. The symbol can be removed with the *dispel* power, and gradually fades over the course of a month if left alone.

Repulsion

A lock of repulsion is often created to look like the face of some horrific creature, though many are apparently normal locks. Anyone attempting to open the lock with anything other than the proper key must make an immediate Guts roll and, if failed, roll on the Fright Table. In addition, a character that fails their Guts roll cannot approach to within 12 feet (2") of the lock until they make a second Guts roll at -2.

Rusting

This lock appears to be old and corroded, but is actually in perfect shape for a lock of its type. Any metal item that comes into contact with it instantly rusts, and is effectively destroyed. Magical metal items are immune to this effect.



Self-Locking

This lock simply relocks itself after a set amount of time has passed. The amount of time can range from a single round to 24 hours or more.

Spell-Storing

This lock can contain a single targeted power (*blast, bolt, boost/lower trait, burst, entangle, fear, or stun*). When someone attempts to open the lock with anything other than the proper key, the stored power is instantly cast upon that person (treat the lock as if it was a Wild Card with Spellcasting d8 in order to adjudicate resistance rolls or additional effects). Each such lock will have d6 charges remaining when first encountered.

Taunting

This lock—again, often but not always in the shape of a face of some sort—speaks aloud whenever anyone draws near or attempts to open it, unless they carry the proper key. It mercilessly taunts all present, focusing in particular on anyone attempting to open it, making fun of his skills, his appearance, his fashion sense, and any other target that presents itself. It does so at extreme volume, causing anyone attempting to pick the lock a -2 penalty for the distraction and doubling as an alarm. Treat the lock as having a Smarts of d10 and Taunt d12. ☞



SOME DAY, SOME WAY...

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An illustration of two hands, one from the left and one from the right, holding a small, stylized figure. The figure is wearing a red and blue outfit and has a white mask with a black eye. The background is a light, textured yellow.

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Fantasy Name Generators

A Blast from the Past: Generating Plausible Fantasy Names on the Fly

This article is essentially a straightforward reprint of an article (Character Name Tables) that appeared in Different Worlds #2 (1979), a magazine published by The Chaosium. The original authors were Elaine Normandy and John T. Sapienza, Jr. It is reprinted here without permission. No challenge to the article's copyright status is intended or inferred.

Inventing a reasonable-sounding name for a FRP character is often a problem. You want to avoid the commonplace names ("Joe" or "Fred") so that the character will sound like someone unusual, but you want the name to be pronounceable, too. Random syllable name tables can produce fantastic names, but they just as often give you unpronounceable gibberish.

In order to provide a slightly less random way of constructing FRP names, we have taken existing two syllable names and broken them into two columns. You can roll a d20 for each syllable. You may also continue rolling to produce multi-syllabic names, if you so wish.

The human names are from Celtic and Nordic sources while the Elvish, Dwarvish, and Hobbitish names are taken from the works of Professor Tolkien.



HUMAN MALE NAMES

First Syllable	D20 Result	Second Syllable
Al (El)	1	-aid (old)
Ar (Er)	2	-bert (bart)
Beo	3	-can (con)
Bern	4	-colm
Dan (Don, Dun)	5	-den (dan)
Dlet	6	-fred (fried)
Eael (Earl)	7	-fric
Ethel	8	-gus
Fen	9	-hard
Geof	10	-ing
Hund	11	-lyn
Karl	12	-mund
Ken (Kan, Kin)	13	-neth
Man (Men, Min)	14	-red (dred)
Mel (Mal, Mil)	15	-ric (rich)
Mor (Mer, Myr)	16	-ron (ran)
Od (Ed)	17	-tram (tris)
Sig	18	-with (wuth)
Thor	19	-wine (win)
Wulf	20	-wise

HUMAN FEMALE NAMES

First Syllable	D20 Result	Second Syllable
Ai (Ei)	1	-aine
Ame	2	-da (de)
Ar (Er)	3	-delle (del, dale)
Bren (Brun)	4	-dre (dra)
Cath (Keth)	5	-el (al)
Dier (Der)	6	-en (an)
El (Al)	7	-Freda
Em	8	-ga (ge)
Eri	9	-grid
Eth	10	-hilda (hilde)
Frie (Frey)	11	-ka (ca)
Ger	12	-leen (reen)
Gwen	13	-lia
Hel	14	-lys
In	15	-ma (me)
Is	16	-na (ne)
Jes	17	-ryn
Kar	18	-sie
Kris	19	-tine (tina)
Wan (Wen)	20	-trude

ELVEN MALE NAMES

First Syllable	D20 Result	Second Syllable
Aer (Aeg)	1	-andil (endil)
Ald	2	-andir (anther)
An (Am)	3	-arie (aron)
Car	4	-born (bran)
Cele	5	-brimbor
Curu	6	-dan (den)
Daer	7	-dion (ion, yon)
Di	8	-elion
Ear (Eath)	9	-galel
Edra	10	-gar (garon)
El (Er)	11	-hil (il)
Erel	12	-huil (uil)
Fea	13	-huin (uin)
Finar	14	-lor (dor)
Gil	15	-nael
Glor	16	-nor (or)
Lomi	17	-ras (hros)
Maed (Maeg)	18	-rod (red)
Tharan	19	-rond
Ter (Tur)	20	-we

HOBBIT MALE NAMES

First Syllable	D20 Result	Second Syllable
Adel	1	-adas
Bal (Bil)	2	-anth
Brando	3	-bo (do)
Erl	4	-bold (bald)
Far (Fara)	5	-brand (nand)
Fortin	6	-bras (das)
Fro	7	-come
Gam	8	-doc
Hildi	9	-fast
Ham	10	-gard (ard)
Isen	11	-grim (grim)
Isum	12	-gulas (bulas)
Marm	13	-ilot
Mel	14	-ing (ling)
Meri	15	-mac (mas)
Pere	16	-midge
Or (Gor)	17	-mir
Pip	18	-pin
Sam	19	-wich
Wil	20	-wise

ELVEN FEMALE NAMES

First Syllable	D20 Result	Second Syllable
Ar (er)	1	-anel (aniel)
Ared	2	-bereth
Cele	3	-brindal
Ear	4	-de
Eil (Ail)	5	-diulas
El (Al)	6	-dorie
Elen (Elem)	7	-drill
Eler	8	-e (we)
Fin	9	-ian
Galad	10	-inal
Glored	11	-loth
I (Y, E)	12	-mire
Lin	13	-na
Mel	14	-niel
Nes	15	-or
Ni (Nim)	16	-riel (rial)
Nien	17	-rina
Seri	18	-sa (se)
Silmar	19	-wen (hwen)
Tinu	20	-wing (wine)

HOBBIT FEMALE NAMES

First Syllable	D20 Result	Second Syllable
Ada	1	-alda
Adaid	2	-bella
Asph (Aspho)	3	-del (odel)
Bella	4	-doc
Ber	5	-donna
Cane (Camel)	6	-gilda
Di (Dia)	7	-gold (golda)
Donna	8	-ia (lia)
Ela	9	-la (ula)
Esmer	10	-manta
Han	11	-mas
La	12	-mira
Lob (Lobe)	13	-mond
Mari	14	-na
Mene	15	-nor (or)
<eria (Meri)	16	-osa
Mim	17	-rida
Mira	18	-rose
Prim	19	-ura
Sara	20	-ylla

DWARVISH NAMES (MALE AND FEMALE)*

First Syllable	D20 Result	Second Syllable
Aza	1	-an (ban)
Bele	2	-atar
Bi	3	-bar (bor, bur)
Bom	4	-char
Da	5	-duil
Dim	6	-dur
Dur	7	-fur (afur)
Dval	8	-ghal
Fela	9	-glamir
Fun	10	-gol
Gim	11	-grim
Kha	12	-gund
Ki	13	-liner (ilni)
Mim	14	-in (din)
Nar	15	-li (ali, ili)
Nau	16	-oin (ain)
Ori	17	-ombur
Tel	18	-or (nor)
Thin	19	-uron (uri)
Thrar	20	-zad



* Female Dwarvish names take the same form as the male, but with different endings: Change the final "l" to "a" and change the final consonants to either "s" or "th".

TAROT

A CRIMINAL ORGANIZATION FROM THE WORLD OF JAMES BOND 007...

Welcome to another issue of Shark Nibbles! Detailed below is TAROT, a criminal organization originally intended for the world of James Bond 007; however, it is easily slotted into any classic espionage-type campaign. In this article I have taken a few pages (literally) from the James Bond 007: Roleplaying in Her Majesty's Service roleplaying game published by Victory Games. All of the flavor text is ©Victory Games and is reprinted here without intending or inferring any challenge to the information's copyright status.

"The increasingly sophisticated technology in today's world has taken intelligence work and crime out of the realm of thugs and brigands and given it over to the scientists and technicians. The man who can make machines and computers obey his slightest command wields more power than any king, president, or pope."

— Karl Ferenc Skorprios

OVERVIEW OF TAROT

Skorprios is the founder and director of a criminal organization named TAROT, which stands for Technological Accession, Revenge, and Organized Terrorism. The name outlines perfectly his goals for the organization. He intends to acquire as much power as he can, using the most ruthless and modern methods available. It has agents in every country, many of them in powerful leadership positions.

At the beginning of the campaign, TAROT should be an unknown entity. It is only now beginning to flex its muscles. Up until the present, it has been the silent force behind wars, military coups, and assassinations. The wealth obtained through these endeavors has financed the growth of TAROT. Because of its apolitical nature, TAROT does not play favorites and is out only to further its own ends by any means necessary.

In a campaign, TAROT will be somewhat limited. It can never afford to finance more than three major operations at any one time. A major operation can be defined as one requiring a hidden installation with laboratories, special equipment, and at least 200 people in order for it to realistically achieve its goals.

TAROT can build these elaborate sites because its members include many captains of industry, like Tetsuro Osato who owns a number of manufacturing and shipping concerns in Japan. Through these companies, the materials for the installations are bought and shipped to their secret locations.

Skorprios has final approval over all schemes, but he rarely presides over their execution personally. He instead appoints someone in TAROT to oversee the construction and operation. In some cases, it is the subsection leaders who run the operations, but they, like Skorprios, are considered too valuable to be placed in such a visible position.

You may feel free to use the leaders or to create your own appointees. Of course, should a subsection leader be placed in charge, he should have more than an ample opportunity to escape—even if the project is destroyed.

The ones who discover the existence of TAROT should be the heroes. From that point on, their parent organization (CIA, MI6, KGB, etc...) will consider TAROT as great a threat as any established power they keep tabs on.

TAROT SUBSECTIONS

TAROT has several distinct subsections. Each subsection and its leader are identified by a card from the tarot deck. No names are ever mentioned outside of the organization, and even on the inside, these people are usually referred to by their code names by underlings and each other.

TERRORISM

Code Name and Card: The Tower

Leader: Achmal al Korba

This department finances the activities of certain key terrorist groups throughout the world, including the Red Brigade, the SLA, and the Weathermen. No one except the leaders of these groups knows TAROT is behind them. It exerts control over non-affiliated groups like the PLO because TAROT controls the majority of the illegal arms trade. Through these methods they have acquired fairly complete files on the strengths and activities of these groups around the world.

BLACKMAIL

Code Name and Card: The Hanged Man

Leader: Giovanni di Fortelli

An easy method of filling the TAROT coffers is either to discover something a rich person wants kept quiet or to entrap him in a compromising situation and then make him pay for the desired silence. This department targets the victims and arranges the indiscretion (or discovers it) so as to bleed the victim. However, TAROT operatives are too smart to kill the golden goose. They will check out the finances of their victim and never demand more than he can afford. The payment may even take the form of company stocks or partnerships.

ASSASSINATION

Code Name and Card: Death

Leader: Marcel Dupre

For those who have a strong desire to dispose of someone they no longer like—political figure, business rival, or unfaithful lover—TAROT includes some of the world's finest killers amongst its membership. While most do not work exclusively for the organization, they never work against it. In return for the occasional murder or three, TAROT offers the assassin protection and a new face or identity if he needs it. The assassin may be subcontracted by TAROT for an assignment they have accepted, or they may be given the task of eliminating someone who has dared turn against the organization.

KIDNAPPING

Code Name and Card: Judgement

Leader: Boris Deminovitch

The easiest money in the world is gained by kidnapping an important person, or someone they care about, and holding the victim for ransom. Political events and the distribution of power can be influenced in this manner. The department is constantly vigilant for any opportunity to increase TAROT's wealth through abduction and subsequent coercion.

ROBBERY

Code Name and Card: Wheel of Fortune

Leader: Lady Victoria Lynn Richmond

The fastest way to acquire money is from a bank or similar financial institution. Of course, it can be tiresome filling out all those forms and waiting for a proper credit check, so TAROT has streamlined the process through robbery and burglary. Their methods, though, are not to hold the tellers at gunpoint and demand all the available cash in the bank. This department will scout the building to be robbed and plan the methods so that by the time the is discovered the thieves will have had ample time to flee. This department keeps tabs on large banks, depositories, and transfers of large amounts of money and specie.

MILITARY ACTION AND OPERATIONS

Code Name and Card: The Chariot

Leader: Major Nicholas Burke

For an enormous fee, TAROT will be happy to organize a small bush war or military skirmish. Through its own resources TAROT can supply or locate a commander for the forces and recruit the men. This section devises the tactics and strategy to be used on the mission. Depending on the size of the mission, the number of men necessary, and the cost of the equipment, such operations can cost upwards of 5 million dollars. Such missions are not common, but when they are carried out they are always quite lucrative. This department also implements all operations by the specialized departments that require more than five persons.

INTELLIGENCE

Code Name and Card: The Hierophant

Leader: Nsei Mbenga

To have become so powerful, Skorprios has learned the importance of having relevant and current information. His contacts and spies around the world keep him apprised of the latest developments as well as the activities of key figures. These informants include people who work directly for TAROT as well as people whom are paid for their information. This department is interested in the tiniest detail about important people, organizations, and events.

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Code Name and Card: The Magician

Leader: Dr. Isa Nakahara

Skorprios' insistence that TAROT operatives use the most sophisticated equipment makes this department one of the most important in the organization. Skorprios employs a number of brilliant renegade scientists from around the world. These people and their technicians have free rein as to what they work on so long as TAROT equipment remains at the cutting-edge of technology. Of course, the new inventions have to be tested in the field—even if they cause wanton destruction and death.

THE DIRECTOR: KARL FERENC SKORPIOS

Karl Skorprios has a slender athletic build and is approximately six feet tall. He has no distinguishing scars or physical handicaps. His features are handsome and aristocratic. He has black eyes and his black hair has a distinctive white streak running back from the middle of the forehead.

Skorprios is an expert with the knife, pistol, and garotte. The man is considered highly dangerous and is a ruthless adversary who shows no mercy to his opponents or victims. He has openly admitted his desire to gain as much power and rule as much of the world as he can.

Karl Ferenc Skorprios was born to Gypsy parents who performed in traveling carnivals and circuses. His mother was a fortune teller and his father a trick knife thrower. His mother was accidentally killed by the father during their act; he had reportedly been drinking before the performance. Skorprios, then 12, took his mother's death hard. Three days later, the father was found dead at the bottom of a cliff. The official investigation concluded that he had staggered off the cliff while drunk, yet there were rumors that he had been pushed.

Skorprios stayed with the circus for another year, continuing the knife act that he had learned from his father. When he was 14, he heard of a group of smugglers who were having problems getting raw opium across the border from Turkey into Greece. Knowing that Gypsies roam the countryside freely, Skorprios offered his services and made the delivery. When he realized how easy—and how exciting—it was, he began smuggling things across the border on a regular basis. The circus manager heard of Skorprios' sudden riches and became suspicious. He kept an eye on the youth, and when he had gathered sufficient evidence, he ordered Skorprios to leave the troupe. Skorprios cheerfully left.

He continued working with smugglers along the Aegean until he heard about two feuding gangs whose leaders' maneuvers against each other were drawing too much attention. Skorprios accepted the assignment to end the rivalry by killing one of the leaders—as assignment no one else wanted because of the possible repercussions. Skorprios approached both leaders and finally eliminated the one who offered him less money. In this way, he received double payment for one assassination. Within six months, Skorprios removed the other leader and gained control of both gangs. He employed some of the most vicious gunmen in Greece and was soon raiding the cargoes of other smugglers, forcing them to pay a high price for protection.

With the fortunes acquired from these activities, he extended his interests inland and took over a drug syndicate working out of Turkey. During the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, Skorprios began a profitable black market in medicines and foodstuffs. He managed to operate under the Soviets' noses without being molested by occasionally arranging the capture of persons the Soviets wanted.

During the 1970s, Skorprios extended his empire to include white slavery, counterfeiting, and, as always, assassination. He maintained strict control over his people, weeding out those who proved weak or disloyal and recruiting others whose professional expertise he needed or admired. No one knew just how far Skorprios' influence extended or what other enterprises—legal or otherwise—he owned or controlled. In 1976, however, he became a veritable recluse while still maintaining strict control. His seconds-in-command ran his various interests efficiently. Over the next year Skorprios organized and built TAROT, supposedly influenced by the old deck his mother had handed down to him.⌘

Kusarigamas & Katanas

Japanese-style Weapons in Savage Worlds, by JBLittlefield and John Briquelet

OK, first things first—this is not meant to be a historical treatise on Japanese weapons! I propose nothing more than a simple system which allows you to add Japanese-style weapons to your Savage Worlds games. If I have taken liberties with terms and descriptions in this article, then so be it. I'm not an expert on this subject. Damn it Jim, I'm just a gamer! I should also mention that this material is copyrighted. It will appear (hopefully) in a future Savage Worlds product that John Briquelet and I are working on (hence the use of the terms Akoto, Akotoan, Arabor, and Order of the Dragon). Look at it as a preview of things to come and so, while you should feel free to use this material for your own personal use, please don't include it in any published (for-profit or otherwise) ventures without first getting permission from John Briquelet. That said, enjoy and 月あなたの常のダイスのエース! (I'm not an expert on the Japanese language either, but that's supposed to say, "May your dice always ace!")



概観 (Overview)

For the Daimyo and the true warrior there is but one choice when it comes to weaponry—the “long-short” (*daisho*). The *daisho* consists of the long sword (*katana*) and the short sword (*wakizashi*). Often a third weapon, the dagger (*tanto*) is used as well. The only other alternative is the longbow (*daikyu*). The *daisho* are so perfectly balanced, they can also be used as short-range missile weapons, should the need arise.

Under Akotoan law, only the Daimyo and those belonging to the warrior class may utilize the *daisho*. Common soldiers often carry spears (*yan*), one of several types of polearms (*naginata*), staves (*bo*), clubs (*tetsubo*), or swordbreakers (*jittes*). Some soldiers are also trained in the use of the *daikyu* as well. Peasants, and others who are not trained as warriors, often employ farming implements (scythes, flails, pitchforks, axes, etc.) as weapons when conscripted to fight. The *pedang*, a heavy broadsword with a dual-edged blade, is a favorite of adventurers in Akoto, and is the only sword-like weapon allowed to those not of noble birth.

As far as restrictions on weaponry, The Brothers of the Order of the Dragon, are the only Akotoans who may ignore the usual strictures as their religion forces them to excel in all things they do. In addition to the aforementioned weapons, the priests of Rokokuman often use more exotic weaponry: The iron fan *jitte* (a *jitte* that has several blades that fan out like a hand fan), the *kusarigama* (a hand scythe with a weighted chain attached just beneath the head), the *kausinke* (a wooden handle with a length of weighted chain and wood attached), the *masakari* (an axe with a bifurcated weighted chain

attached to the base of its handle), the *kawanga* (a length of silken cord with a small grappling hook on one end and a lead ball on the other), and the *shuriken* (a small metal spike designed to be thrown at close range).

武器の記述 (Weapon Descriptions)

Daikyu: The *daikyu* is the Akotoan version of the ubiquitous longbow. The *daikyu* differs from the standard longbow in that two-thirds of its length is above the hand grip. The *daikyu* is nearly six feet in length. It is a composite-type bow, being composed of different types of wood, lacquered, and oftentimes wrapped in cord. At full extension, the fletching of the arrow is just behind the eye. Arrows are nearly three feet in length and are made of the straightest bamboo and fletched with hawk feathers. There are many different types of arrows, each designed for a specific purpose. The quiver, which normally contains 30 arrows, is worn low on the right hip.

Jittes: The term “*jittes*” refers to a family of weapons, all slightly different in form, but with one purpose—catching, and possibly breaking, an opponent’s sword. They have long pointed blades designed to exploit an opening whenever one presents itself. Most *jittes* take the form of a foot-long metal spike with one or more short blade-catching extensions extending from the hilt at various angles. Those armed with the *jitte* normally employ two such weapons, their main purpose being to parry an opponent’s sword strikes until an opening presents itself. The most unique form of *jitte* is the iron fan *jitte*, whose blade is actually several thin blades that can fan out, much like a hand-held fan. The Brothers of the Order of the Dragon are normally the only individuals that employ this variant.

Katana: The *katana* is probably the finest sword available in all of Arabor. Each is an individual creation and they are considered family heirlooms. Losing one’s *katana* is a great dishonor. The blade, which is approximately three feet in length, is made of tempered steel, and is possessed of great strength and flexibility. Only one side of the blade has a cutting edge. A *katana* does not have a hilt, instead it has a long (one foot in length) handle made of wood, which is wrapped in cord and then lacquered. The *katana* is stored in a scabbard made of wood, covered in leather, and lined with sheep wool. It is worn suspended from a wide sash worn about the waist. In times of peace, the scabbard is worn so that the cutting edge of the blade faces the earth. During times of strife, this is reversed. Turning one’s scabbard so that the edge is face-up is seen as a sign of hostile intent. One never draws the *katana* unless he intends to use it.

Kausinke: The kausinke is nothing more than an eight-inch wooden handle to which is attached three foot-long pieces of hardened wood. Each segment is attached to the next by two links of chain. The weapon is designed to neutralize an opponent's weapon and is especially useful against swords and polearms. Often, a character armed with a kausinke will also employ a jitte. Once he has entangled (or caught) his opponent's weapon, he used the other to strike a blow. This weapon is normally only used by the Brothers of the Order of the Dragon, although because of its similarity to the threshing flail, it is seen in the hands of peasants and common soldiers from time-to-time.

Kawanga: The kawanga is an eight-foot length of silken cord to which is attached a small grappling hook at one end and a weighted lead ball at the other. The normal technique is to use the grappling hook to entangle your opponent or cause him to lose his footing. The lead ball is then used to deliver a crushing blow. Like many of the other exotic weapons, the kawanga is normally only seen in the hands of Rokokuman's priests, although the secret brotherhood of assassins—known as the shinobi, also employ this weapon; however, they use it as a tool as well—the grappling hook can be used to catch and drag items, as well as allowing them to use the cord as a climbing rope.

Kusarigama: Yet another weapon used mainly by the Order of the Dragon. The kusarigama is simply a hand-scythe with two lengths of weighted chain attached to the haft or the attached end of the blade. Some versions allow the chain to be stored in the weapon's handle and then drawn out—often, much to the surprise of one's opponent! The length of the chain varies from four to ten feet or more. Some versions replace the chain with strengthened silken cords. The user attempts to entangle his opponent with the chains and then closes in for the kill using the sharp curved blade. The *masakari* is a similar weapon; however, the hand scythe is replaced by an axe with a weighted blade.

Naginata: The naginata is the generic term for a polearm. A length of such weapons varies between six and ten feet, with an average length of about eight feet. A heavy pointed blade is attached to the end of a wooden stick. The butt end of the weapon is often weighted and many times pointed so that if the primary blade is ever disabled, the character can “cut down” the haft and use the other end in defense. The blade of a naginata includes a metal sheath which fits over the haft. This prevents an opponent from easily lopping off the blade and rendering the weapon useless.

Shuriken: These weapons are small, cheap, easily concealed, and deadly at close range. For these reasons they are an obvious favorite of the shinobi although they are also utilized by the Order of the Dragon as well. Each shuriken is a six-inch metal spike. One end is weighted and the other is honed to a razor-sharp point. They are held in the palm of the hand and thrown with an overhand motion or a flick of the wrist (depending on the range to the target). They will not penetrate armor; however, if aimed at a vulnerable area—the eyes, ears, throat, etc. —they are quite deadly.

Tanto: Forming the unofficial third member of the daisho, the tanto is analogous to a dagger. Its construction is similar to the katana; however, it is only two feet in length (18 inches of which is the blade).

Wakizashi: The second member of the daisho, the wakizashi is analogous to a short sword. Its construction is similar to the katana; however, it is only three feet in length (two feet of which is the blade).

The **tetsubo**, **bo**, and **yari**—the club, staff, and spear—require no special explanation, other than to say that the yari is not capable of being thrown because it has a long and heavy blade. The nageyari is the Akotoan “throwing spear”. Other commonly seen weapons include the daijo (flail), the hand axe, the battle axe, the knife, and the scythe.☞



Weapon	Damage	Weight (lbs.)	Cost (zeni)	Min. Strength	Notes
Battle Axe	Str+3	10	300	d8	-
Great Axe	Str+4	15	400	d10	AP1, Parry -1, Requires two hands
Bo	Str+1	8	10	-	Parry +1, Reach +1; Requires two hands
Daijo	Str+2	8	100	d6	Ignores shield Parry bonus
Hand Axe	Str+2	2	50	d6	-
Jittes	Str+2	3	150	d6	Parry +1, Special*
Katana	Str+4	6	1000+	d6	AP1 when used two-handed
Kausinke	Str+2	5	200	d6	Parry +1, Special **
Kawanga	Str+1	4	150	d6	Parry +1, Special **
Knife	Str+1	1	25	-	-
Kusarigama	Str+2	5	200	d6	Parry +1, Special **
Masakari	Str+3	7	250	d8	Parry +1, Special **
Naginata	Str+4	20	200	d8	AP1, Parry -1, Reach +1, Requires two hands
Pedang	Str+3	8	300	d6	-
Scythe	Str+3	15	150	d8	Reach +1, Requires two hands
Tanto	Str+1	1	100+	-	-
Tetsubo	Str+2	5	50	d6	AP1, Parry -1, and Str+3 if used with two hands
Wakizashi	Str+3	4	500+	d6	-
Yari	Str+2	8	100	d6	Parry +1, Reach +1; Requires two hands

* If you successfully make a called shot against your opponent's weapon (-2 to the attack roll) his weapon is entangled and he may not use it effectively until he can beat you in a normal opposed Strength test. If you get a raise on the attack roll and your opponent's weapon is a katana or wakizashi, roll a d6—the blade is broken on a 4+. On the defense, your opponent's blade is caught if he rolls a 1 on any die and broken is he obtains a critical failure.

** If you successfully make a called shot against your opponent's weapon (-2 to the attack roll) his weapon is entangled and he may not use it effectively until he can beat you in a normal opposed Strength test. If using the kawanga, you may also use this weapon to improve your chances at a successful grapple (+2 to the attempt) or to knock your opponent off his feet—make a called shot against his feet. He must then win an opposed Agility test against your attack total or he falls to the ground and counts as being prone.

Weapon	Range	Damage	ROF	AP	Weight	Cost	Min. Strength	Notes
Daikyu	12/24/48	2d6	1	1	5	350	d8	Reloading counts as regular action, arrows cost 1z each and weigh 1/5
Nageyari	3/6/12	Str+2	1	-	5	100	d6	May also be used as a melee weapon (Str+1)
Shuriken	3/6/12	Str+1	2*	-	1/5	25	-	-
Katana (<i>Thrown</i>)	2/4/8	Str+3	1	-	As above	-	-	-
Wakizashi (<i>Thrown</i>)	2/4/8	Str+2	1	-	As above	-	-	-
Tanto (<i>Thrown</i>)	3/6/12	Str+1	1	-	As above	-	-	-

*One shuriken from each hand as a single attack (i.e., no MAP applies).



The Granite Beak

A Savage Encounter for any Fantasy Setting by Graham Patterson

BACKGROUND

Player's Notes: The Pass of Analach has long held a reputation of calamity and slaughter. The vale is long and narrow, climbing higher and higher up through the surrounding tree-capped hills. Near its highest point, the granite walls of the encircling hills come almost together in a choke point. It is through here that the Road of the Lame King passes. High above this point juts a great knob of stone, shaped like a great eagle's head and beak. Local legends hold that in ages past, a powerful elemental lord imprisoned a god of the air in the granite of the area. There he has slumbered through the intervening millennia, ever close to the sky above, but eternally locked in a prison of stone.

The truth of this legend has never been tested, but whether true or not, the knob of rock has always been known as the Granite Beak. It has also, has always been a place of slaughter. From ancient times to the present, brigands and worse have occupied the caves that riddle the surrounding cliffs. Preying on travelers and merchant caravans struggling through the Pass of Analach, the rocky track has been soaked in blood over the centuries. The present inhabitants of the cave atop the Granite Beak are indeed quite nasty and vicious. Their victims number in the dozens. An abomination named Moan, a half-fiendish harpy, and her flight of harpies has taken up residence. Their toll for passage is both screams and blood.



GM's Notes: This adventure was created for a fantasy-style campaign, and may be placed in any isolated borderland area with surrounding hills or mountains. The characters will no doubt need to make their way through the high pass in order to proceed to wherever it is they are going. Any adventurers worth their salt are going to realize the ambush potential of this location and together with the site's grim reputation will approach it with caution and preparation. They will of course need it. Moan and her harpies will know of travelers' movements long before they reach this point (unless the characters have been moving with magic and extreme stealth). They will have fully prepared their assault. The direction the heroes approach from need not matter as the side of the encounter can be interchanged from the north or the south.

The harpies, secure in their ambush positions, are nearly impossible to Notice (-4) from the ground, but those who have access to flying spells or abilities can spot the waiting harpies with a Notice roll at -1. As soon as they sense they have been seen, the harpies will initiate their ambush plan (see *The Opposition: Tactics* hereafter).

Characters that are defeated and killed will be quickly transported up to the caves that the harpies reside in and promptly devoured with bone-sucking glee. If Moan takes two wounds of damage, or more than half of the harpies are killed, they will seek to escape up into the cave at the "mouth" of the Granite Beak. There, depending on the opposition, they will either coordinate another attack or flee the area.

LOCATION

The Granite Beak towers 180-feet above a highland pass and road known as the Lame King's Road. The two cliffs come together in a choke point about 20-feet wide. The Granite Beak juts out nearly 50-feet from the eastern cliff face, towering over the road far below and the cliffs on the western side of the pass. The eastern cliff face is nearly 60-feet higher than the western cliff. The granite beak truly looks like an eagle's visage from a distance, but on closer examination is actually a natural, if somewhat strange, formation.

The pass below is rough and covered with stones and scree along the cliff bases. The Road of the Lame King is little more than a dirt track, little used of late. The road to the south and north of the choke point slopes upwards at a gentle 15 degrees. The surrounding land is rough and barren. Granite hills covered in coarse mountain grass and occasional copses of stunted mountain pine are the norm. Ravens can be seen perpetually circling the sky about. These creatures roost in small crevices and cracks that line surrounding cliffs and hills.

The cliff face itself is rough and cracked. Numerous small caves and larger passages dot the surrounding cliffs beneath the Granite Beak. Ledges and loose stones abound. Heroes attempting to climb the peak may do so. The climb is a difficult one though, so all Climbing rolls are made at -2. The jutting Granite Beak is more difficult to scale and is more weathered and smooth. Together with several overhangs that must be passed, there are fewer hand-holds and the cave opening is nearly 35-feet from the edge of the cliff. This portion of the climb imposes a -4 penalty to Climbing rolls.

At the base of the "Beak", on the south side near where the mouth would begin, is a 7-foot wide and 4-foot high opening. This opening is visible (with a successful Notice check) from the southern road but only at a distance of 300 feet or less from the choke point. Within is a spacious cave nearly 15-feet wide and 40-feet long. It is here, amidst a bewildering array of foul smelling rubbish and detritus, that the harpies make their lair. There are 15 rough and foul-smelling nests, hundreds of gnawed and broken bones, scraps of clothing, bits of wood and rusty armor, piles of dusty leaves, feathers and other cast-off bits and pieces.

A cursory search (Notice check) will reveal the following: a full cask of fine Ghanic wine (worth 250 gold), 16 different swords (mostly short and broad, all of average make and quality), two spears, three bronze helmets (all with green feather crests), two dozens arrows, a broken bow, a shield with a reddish dragon sigil on the front, a rotting haunch of meat (mountain goat), a small chest containing 230 silver and 45 gold, and a backpack containing the following: 3 magical potions (each contains one dose and is capable of healing d3 wounds or removing one's Shaken status), a magical dagger (+1 Fighting and ignore range modifiers if thrown), a magical rope (+2 on Climbing rolls), and five uncut diamonds worth 300 gold each. Lying deeper in the cave, in a crevice underneath a stone and beside a larger nest (-2 to Notice checks) is a sack containing a silver flute engraved with vines and leaves (350 gold), an amethyst brooch (125 gold) and a small leather bound manual of 50 pages. The manual contains a number of arcane rituals and processes which are left up to the GM to create.

THE OPPOSITION



HARPIES (x11)

Harpies appear as a grotesque combination of reptile, bird and human woman. Their torsos are human while the lower half of their bodies and claws appear dinosaur-like. They have large reptilian wings that sprout out of their backs. Their faces are hideous caricatures of old women. Extremely strong, they often wield old bones as clubs, though most attack with a pair of iron-hard razor sharp claws. Usually found in small "flights" of 5 to 20 creatures, they are a great hazard to lone travelers and small groups in the out of the way, wild places of the world.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Intimidate d6, Stealth d6,

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

Special Abilities:

Claws: Str +1

Flight: A harpy has a Flight Pace of 16" and an Acceleration of 4"

Fly-By Attack: Harpies add +1 to their Fighting rolls when flying by a victim.

Captivating Song: When a harpy sings, all creatures (except harpies) within hearing must make an opposed Spirit roll or fall under the harpy's spell.

Creatures that are deaf or have no discernible mind are immune to this effect. A captivated victim will walk directly towards the harpy as if under the effect of the *puppet* power and take no other actions other than to defend himself. Upon approaching to within 10 feet of the harpy, the target gets another Spirit roll. If the victim fails the roll, it offers no resistance to attacks as long as the harpy continues to sing. If the victim succeeds on either roll they are unaffected and cannot be affected again that day by that particular harpy.

MOAN (Wild Card)

Moan appears as a particularly foul and ugly harpy, and has two looping horns that flow backwards over her red-tinged hair. Her skin is mottled yellow and green and her breath reeks of brimstone. Her voice is as smooth as butter, and extremely seductive. She speaks the Trader's Tongue fluently and wears magical bracers on her wrists. These thin silver bands are engraved with rows of turtles, each one biting the tail of the preceding reptile. These bracers bestow a +2 on her Dodge rolls

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Intimidate d6, Stealth d6,

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

Special Abilities:

Claws: Str +1

Flight: A harpy has a Flight Pace of 16" and an Acceleration of 4"

Fly-By Attack: Harpies add +1 to their Fighting rolls when flying by a victim.

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Infernal Heritage: Because of her infernal heritage, Moan takes only half damage from fire and cold based attacks. She also has certain arcane abilities. She has 20 Power Points and access to the following powers: *dispel*, *healing*, *invisibility*, *obscure*, and *puppet*. These things do not come without a price, however. Moan cannot enter sanctified ground and takes an extra 1d6 damage from holy or blessed weapons.

Background: Moan is unsure of her origin but is obviously fiendish. One of her earliest memories is killing the entire flight of harpies she was born into when they tried to kill her. Originating somewhere in the eastern highlands where harpies are more common, Moan made her way westwards and eventually gained control of a flight of harpies after killing the previous "Mistress". Naturally dominant, undoubtedly intelligent and definitely vicious and cruel, she led her flight to the Granite Beak nearly half a year ago. Finding the location occupied by a small band of brigands, she easily



defeated them, feasted on their flesh and blood and soon enough discovered the natural cave near the Beak's "mouth". Since that time, she and her flight have preyed on passersby and grown more and more brazen and confident. Her flight recently killed a small group of adventurers, though in defeating them nearly half of her harpies were slaughtered. Since that time she has experimented with different methods of more effectively dealing with her prey.

Tactics: As heroes approach the choke point of the pass (within 50 feet) Moan will command five of her flight to begin singing from hidden ledges in the cliffs above. Each character will need to make five consecutive opposed Spirit checks or be captivated by the harpies' songs. Those failing any of these rolls will walk to the cliff wall immediately. As they come within 20 feet, the harpies above will push boulders and rocks down on the hapless characters. At this point, any captivated heroes will get a second opposed Spirit check and if successful, attempt an Agility check to suffer only half damage from the rock fall. Anyone failing their Spirit check takes the full 6d6 points of damage from the resulting avalanche of stones and boulders. At this point Moan and the other harpies will swoop down to engage survivors with their fly-by attacks. Moan will concentrate her spells on obvious spellcasters first, and archers second. The harpies will coordinate their attacks and fly past in two separate waves.☞

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